THE STRUCTURE OF CHIN SOCIETY

A TRIBAL PEOPLE OF BURMA ADAPTED TO A NON-WESTERN CIVILIZATION

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To R. Heine-Geldern

Foreword

The University of Illinois Studies of Cultural Regularities is so named because of its search for recurrent or cross-cultural regularities in cultural structure and change. Such change represents orderly and understandable transformations of social types, or evolutionary sequences, in which the types may be characterized by features of more than local interest and the processes of change become recognizable as recurrent phenomena (Steward, 1960; Steward and Shimkin, 1961).

Dr. Lehman's present analysis of the Chin is part of this broad program of studies in cultural evolution. The author was one of the architects of the program when it first began in Illinois in 1952. The program is far ranging, since, theoretically, it may subsume any causal or explanatory analysis of cultural change, whether in prehistoric, early historic, or contemporary phenomena.

The program, of course, has no monopoly upon these objectives, but it does strive for an over-all consistency in endeavoring to develop a coherent methodology appropriate to its purpose.

The primitive, pre-Columbian world had long been the traditional subject matter of anthropology, and it was less than three decades ago that the change in, or evolution of, so-called tribal societies under contemporary influences of the Western or early industrial world became an important object of anthropological study. Investigations of acculturated peoples, at first carried out

principally as "community studies," viewed the local society in isolation, as tribal societies had been studied. Eventually, many efforts were made to place the local group in its larger state, national, or world context.

This larger context today obviously includes the many-faceted influences from the emerging world industrial culture—a complex that includes developing technology, mass production, increasing occupational specialization, greater transportational facilities and education, enhanced social mobility that arises from ever changing occupational specialization, and new ideologies that relate to the altered underpinnings of society. Such features are affecting all parts of the world in some degree. Within the last decade or two, they have begun to have noticeable effects upon the Chin people of Burma.

The cultural transformation, or evolution, of tribal societies, however, does not, as Dr. Lehman makes clear, depend solely upon intrusion of modern world influences. Prior to the impact of the industrial revolution—an impact which is still tenuous and incipient and has by no means culminated in Burma, let alone in the Chin Hills—the Chin were drawn within the orbit of the Burman civilization and reacted to it. This involvement of the "backward" Chin, the people with the "little tradition," to the civilized state, the people with the "great tradition," created aspirations among the Chin which were limited by economic potentials.

Like many marginal people, especially hill dwellers, of India and Southeast Asia, the Chin were thus "subnuclear," as Lehman has aptly employed the term, to the centers of greater achievement, wealth, social differentiation, and cultural intensification. More specifically, some of the Chin, especially the northern group, developed status lineages, which had created a kind of hereditary hierarchy through control of lands and their production, a marriage system which made certain lineages economically and politically subservient to others, and warfare which channeled trade to privileged families.

This pre-European development of hereditary status within a comparatively backward people raises a very fundamental question of cross-cultural regularities of process and structure. In cultural history there are repeated instances of a breakthrough from egalitarian, kinship-based societies to an incipient system of hereditary lineages within the older structure; or, to state this in reverse, there are survivals of clans and other structures based upon extended

kinship groupings within incipient states, realms, chiefdoms, or kingdoms. Comparative examination of such instances suggests certain cross-cultural regularities but leaves some of the underlying processes in doubt. In all cases, productive surplus is a precondition of status lineages, which affirm their positions partly through control of material wealth and attendant ceremonies. The mechanisms by which this arrangement developed seem to be varied. In East and West Africa, warfare may have been a major factor. In Polynesia, Goldman suggests that a strong feeling of status rivalry was responsible, but status rivalry itself is left unexplained. On the Northwest Coast of North America the fur trade provided wealth for the intensification of lineage status, but does not explain how certain lineages came to control this wealth.

Lehman's analysis of the Chin adds new insights into the processes underlying formation of status lineages. There is a comparatively dense population as tribal societies go—some twenty persons per square mile—and sufficient surplus and specialization in production to permit unequal distribution and control of wealth. Warfare was one means of concentrating this wealth. Another means was a system of preferential marriages which created obligations of certain lineages toward others, that is, of the wife-takers toward the wife-givers. Underlying these mechanisms were aspirations toward the ideal of the sophisticated Burman society, which provided a psychological or value orientation, despite the comparative paucity of material support for its achievement among the Chin. In this respect, the relation of the Chin to Burmans appears to resemble somewhat that of the Carrier of the interior of British Columbia to the Northwest Coast Indians. The Carrier, who had been formerly organized in simple hunting bands, created a status system in imitation of the Northwest Coast Tsimshian on the basis of the fur trade. The answer to why the subordinate or socially inferior groups among the Chin or Carrier were willing to concede status to and provide support for special lineages may be partly that certain entrepreneurs were able to control the flow of goods by taking the initiative in economic affairs. In addition, the inferior people may have found vicarious satisfaction in the status system, especially in such institutions as ceremonial giving to their social superiors.

With reference to very recent influences from the emerging world industrial culture, Lehman's study adds new dimensions to the University of Illinois project, which was financed by the Ford

Foundation in 1956-60 and is to be published in summary form in a single volume and more fully in a series of monographs. In Mexico, Peru, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanganyika, Malay, and Japan, where the project's field research was done, it appears that the initial reaction to new production and commerce is within the framework of the traditional social structure. Among the Chin, access to wage labor, establishment of stores, and the appearance of salaried positions creates an inflow of wealth not based upon traditional marriage alliance, control of land, trade, and warfare. It seems likely that, as highways and airways penetrate the Chin Hills, specialized cash crop production will increase, land tenure and land use will become individualized, and extended kin groups and status lineages will lose their traditional importance. Meanwhile, Chin acculturation will be retarded more by lack of local resources than by ethnic barriers to individual mobility in a multiple society, such as the Indians and Europeans present to the East Africans, or the Europeans and Chinese present to the Malays. Since the Chin Hill lands have never been alienated to foreign-owned plantations, as in Mexico, Peru, Africa, and Malaya, a large class of landless wageworkers cannot be expected, except as Burman towns draw people from their native habitat.

In the Chin Hills, as among the Kaguru of Tanganyika, who will be described in another of the project publications, we see the acculturation of a tribal people to the modern world, but the former had previously possessed status lineages, which reflect their subnuclear position and are partly utilized in dealing with the new influences. The Kaguru were strictly egalitarian. Moreover, the Chin are not subservient to an alien class of middlemen, as the Kaguru are to the Indians. By contrast to both the Chin and Kaguru, the formerly tribal Kipsigis of Kenya, owing to the richness of their land and accessibility of local markets, have already individualized land tenure and are rapidly losing native social institutions. The difference between these three tribal societies, the Chin, Kaguru, and Kipsigis, appears to be more a question of rate of acculturation than kind, the Kipsigis having far outstripped the others. In the long run, however, the Kipsigis may be limited by the great amount of land alienated to Europeans and the entrenched position of the Indians in middle-class occupations.

JULIAN H. STEWARD

Preface

This monograph is based upon field research carried out in the Chin Hills of Burma between February, 1957, and August, 1958.

CONDITIONS OF FIELD WORK

My wife and I toured widely through the Chin Hills, though we did not visit more than a small part of the whole territory. Much of our work centered upon the social and economic basis of tribal distributions and culture-element distributions within the Chin Hills, matters which are crucial to the central problem of the research.

Our period of continuous residence in any one village was rather short by modern anthropological standards. We stayed at Haka (one of the chief towns of the Central Chin Hills) doing linguistic work for about three months. We lived in Hnaring, a large village in the southernmost part of Haka Subdivision, for a total of about six months: an initial period of five months and a month's revisit half a year later. We spent about three months in Matupi, a large village and a remote administrative center in the northern portion of the Southern Chin Hills. This period included part of December, 1957, and March, April, and part of May, 1958. The end of March and most of April, 1957, was spent in Kalemyo-Tahan, among the plains Chin (Lushai).

Each place in which we toured or resided had a distinctive language that was mutually unintelligible with all others. Consequently we were never able to dispense with the services of an interpreter. We were, however, most fortunate in having as our interpreter Mr. Lian Uk of village Aibur, Haka Subdivision. I trained him for the first three months of our stay in the hills, May-July, 1957, in a technical linguistic approach to translation. His English was rather good, he knew the various languages with which we were working, though not all equally well, and he was an excellent field assistant in every respect. Use of such a trained interpreter together with such working knowledge of the native language as we did possess helped overcome some—though certainly not all—of the limitations usually imposed on ethnographic work by use of interpreters. We were also fortunate in that our assistant had kinship and friendship connections strategically valuable for our entree and rapport in both Hnaring and Matupi and that he was very highly regarded, as a Chin, by all segments of the populations concerned—old and young, traditional and acculturated, pagan and Christian, the high-born lineages and the low. Our assistant's status tells us something about the nature of Chin society. It is a society where the prestige of things and persons connected with an outside civilization is great, where pagan and Christian segments get along exceedingly well within the same village and do not form separate cliques and factions, where youths and young men are often close friends of adult men of high rank and high native cultural attainments. It is a society where friendships between a man of high and one of low status are possibly more common than friendships between two men of high status.

We carried out a small amount of systematic anthropometric work, considerable descriptive linguistics, and in one settlement site, a little stratigraphic archaeology. We undertook some investigation into cultural psychology (projective testing, collection of drawings, child-training observation, and the like), and a great deal of general ethnography. We studied material culture while collecting specimens for the American Museum. Technology and folklore were somewhat slighted. The former, however, is fairly well covered in existing literature (notably Parry, 1932). Folklore turned out to be very unsystematically organized and rather poorly preserved in the present-day Chin cultures we studied. A full, year-round study of Chin swiddening (shifting agriculture) was not possible in our work because we had to move about frequently in different parts of the hills and were required to go to Rangoon for renewal of our Burma Stay Permits (visas) at a crucial point in the Chin agricultural year (a whole month including parts of both January and February, 1958). Our absence from the hills at just this time also made our study of technology more difficult, since it is only at this time of the year that many of the native crafts are pursued.

Official social and economic statistical sources generally do not exist for the Chin. Owing to the nature of the terrain, the large size of village populations, and the short periods of our residence in any one village, we had to collect local statistics on the basis of restricted samples.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This paper is based upon materials collected during a field expedition generously financed by a grant from the Social Science Research Council, New York City. I am grateful to the Council and particularly to Dr. Joseph B. Casagrande, at present Head of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Illinois and at that time on the staff of the Council.

My mother, Mrs. Olga Lehman, J.D., was kind enough to give me additional funds to make field work possible.

Professor Julian H. Steward, of the Department of Anthropology in the University of Illinois and Director of Studies of Cultural Regularities, sponsored me during part of the field period. He has encouraged my research in every way and has seen this monograph through to publication. His theory of cultural ecology is fundamental to much of my work, and my debt to him is incalculable.

I wish to thank Dr. Harry L. Shapiro, Chairman of the Department of Anthropology of the American Museum of Natural History, for arranging funds for making a large collection of ethnographica both from the Chin Hills and from Burma proper. The catalog of the collection, which should prove interesting to the student wishing to know more of Chin ethnography, is on file in typescript at the American Museum. I must also thank my former teacher, Prof. Robert Heine-Geldern, of Vienna, Research Associate of the American Museum of Natural History, for arranging with Dr. Shapiro to have me make that collection.

Dr. Margaret Mead, Associate Curator of Ethnology of the

American Museum, was of considerable help to my wife and me when we were considering methods of making observations on cultural psychology and child behavior.

There are numerous other persons whom I must thank for kindness and assistance: U Zahrei Lian, Minister for Chin Affairs in the government of the Union of Burma; Mr. Ngun Tho, then Subdivisional Officer, Haka, and Mr. Ba Chit, then Sub-Treasury Officer, Haka; Mr. F. Za Hoe, B.A., B.L., then Subdivisional Magistrate, Matupi, and Mr. L. Gin Za Cin, B.G.M., then Sub-Treasury Officer, Matupi; U Thio Ling, then Chairman, Lautu Circle, Haka Subdivision, and the officials of Hnaring, for allowing us to stay and work in Hnaring, and for arranging our living accommodations there; the people of Hnaring, patient informants and friends who almost without exception proved eager to help us in every way; Rev. and Mrs. R. G. Johnson, American Baptist Mission, Haka, who gave us hospitality and information and found us our field assistant; U Sein, then Parliamentary Secretary, Kayah State, through whose courtesy we were allowed to use the Kayah State Guest House as our Rangoon headquarters; U Law Yone, Editor of *The Nation*, Rangoon, who first put us in touch with U Sein; Thang Ceo (Dar Cia Pa), our cook and household manager; Professor Gordon H. Luce, for his courtesy while I was in Rangoon and for his patience in discussing with me many philological and historical points and putting at my disposal his philological material on the Chin; Albert Siamkima Kawlhring of the Lushai Hills, my assistant when I worked briefly in Kalemyo and Tahan, who later gathered information of a specialized nature from the Lushai while I worked among the Chin; Mr. J. Lian Uk, without whom this work could never have been done, my indebtedness to whom is recorded, I trust amply, in the body of this paper.

And in the United States: Prof. Theodore Stern, Department of Anthropology, University of Oregon, who gave me, in preparation for my own work, his yet unpublished excellent grammar of Siyin Chin.

My wife, Sheila Geyer Lehman, has at every point, in the field work and in the writing, worked at my side actively, intelligently, and loyally.

My student at the University of Illinois, Mr. Philip D. Young, prepared the maps.

My intellectual debt to the structuralist school of social anthropology in England and on the Continent should be obvious. I am persuaded that a rigorous approach to social anthropology is necessary for truly scientific work. I have tried to weld a developmental and historical view of my facts to an explanation that is consistently structural and formal (see Lehman, 1959a). I trust I have succeeded in doing this rather than in being merely eclectic.

In particular, I owe an intellectual debt to Dr. Rodney Needham, of the Institute of Social Anthropology at the University of Oxford, and to Dr. Edmund R. Leach, of the Department of Anthropology of the University of Cambridge. Dr. Needham was kind enough to correspond with me about the analysis of the matrilateral prescriptive marriage systems and to confer with me twice on related topics. From both I derived considerable clarification of matters of comparative ethnography and of method. And, of course, to their respective publications on the structural analysis of Kuki-Chin society and Kachin society, I owe very much. I could not have done my analysis of the Chin systems of kinship and marriage or of the structure of Chin social and cultural symbolism without first reading Dr. Needham's work on the Kuki.

TECHNICAL TERMS AND ORTHOGRAPHY

Several technical terms, such as lineage, segment, fission, segmentation, connubium, and the like, are indispensable for any specialized discussion in social anthropology. I have employed them freely in this paper, but always with an explanation of the particular meaning I ascribe to them. I have also referred to the literature for further explication of these terms. The word "prestation," which occasionally appears, is now common in social anthropology. There is a sizable literature about the notion of prestation, stemming from the early work of Marcel Mauss. Prestation may be ordinarily translated into English as "gift," but our English conception that a gift is something that is freely given does not apply to formalized systems of exchange. Since these exchanges differ also from payments in the market, only "prestation" conveys the proper meaning. Similarly, the word "swidden," used here for an agricultural field cleared by slashing and burning, is a Scandinavian term, which has become common in English writing (see Izikowitz, 1951; Conklin, 1957).

A NOTE ON THE ORTHOGRAPHY OF CHIN WORDS

In a general paper such as the present one, it is unnecessary to use a systematic (phonemic) notation for Chin words to indicate the tones. Haka Chin is already written in a standard Roman orthography. This orthography unfortunately fails to show significant tone, but the tonal system in the Haka Chin language is undergoing some sort of fundamental alterations (Lehman, 1959b). A description and analysis of the Haka language and its tonal system will be published in the future. The occasional Kanpetlet, Matupi, and Lautu words used here are so few that there would be no purpose in recording them in a systematic transcription or in bothering to record the tones here, although their tonal systems present no such problem as does that of Haka Chin. I have put these words in a broad phonetic notation (see p. 107, n. 1).

The Haka Chin orthography should be self-explanatory, with the following exceptions: final *h* indicates the glottal stop. Elsewhere *h* indicates aspiration.

I use the hyphen in polysyllabic words to avoid ambiguous readings of *h* where it occurs between such syllables. *c* is pronounced [ts] in Haka itself, but varies in most other places with a more common [c]
aw stands for a phonemic [ɔ]
ng stands for the velar nasal [ŋ]
o is the diphthong [ou]
What used to be written *kl* (as in "Klangklang") is now more correctly written as *tl* and *thl,* as in the name of the village, *Thlantlaang.*
ṭ is not a retroflex but an alveolar, postdental stop. Its release is often affricated, and some authorities (notably Bright) have therefore treated the same stop in Lushai as a cluster /tr/.
s before *i* is frequently [ɕ], especially in loan words where the donor language has [ʃ].

Finally, all words written as starting with a vowel in fact begin with the glottal stop, which is a nonsignificant feature of onset.

There is unfortunately no usable grammar or dictionary of Haka Chin available. The transcription in the *Linguistic Survey of India* is quite bad, but the New Testament in Haka Chin is available and some Haka Chin school texts are obtainable. Hence my use of the official orthography will have the added advantage that the terms I use here can often be followed up in other sources.

Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this monograph is to present a theoretical interpretation of Chin society as an example of a kind of society found among many of the peoples inhabiting the hills of Southeast Asia, and not to report a complete ethnography. Chin society is "tribal" because it has a cultural tradition that is markedly distinct from that of the surrounding plains and valley civilizations. It is fairly isolated and is not normally included in the network of social and political institutions of these civilized states, and it has no such institutions of its own. Its religion is mainly animistic, and its language is unwritten.

The structure and organization of the society and culture of the hill Chin, however, reflect their adaptation to an environment in which the neighboring civilizations are as important as their own physical habitat. Chin society and culture, therefore, must be understood in terms of a dual adaptation: first, an adaptation to local resources by means of a particular technology, and second, a response to Burman civilization. The Chin social system shown is so largely molded in response to the problem of manipulating relationships with complex, nuclear, Burman society, that we shall propose setting up a special class to accommodate it. This class

will be called subnuclear society. It is distinct both from peasant society and from purely tribal society.

To understand how Burman civilization affected Chin society it will be necessary first to distinguish the major Chin divisions, since these differ in social structure and culture, and to trace the history of the Chin and to describe the nature of their contacts with the Burmans. Next, the adaptations of the Chin to their own habitat in terms of land use, land tenure, and settlement must be delineated. Once these features are understood, it is possible to understand the nature of Chin property, wealth, and status, which are the elements round which Chin society organizes itself to deal with Burman civilization. This will lead to an analysis of Chin social structure, trade, and religion and to examination of the processes by which the presence of Burman civilization with its stratified state-level society has influenced the development in Chin society of such features as a ranked, stratified lineage system. Finally, contemporary changes will be examined against the background previously delineated.

1

Habitat, Identity, and History of the Chin

THE CHIN AND THEIR NEIGHBORS

In discussing relations among the various peoples of the Union of Burma, the following convention is useful. The dominant population of the great river plains which speaks Burmese is called Burman. All the various peoples that together make up the country's population may be collectively called Burmese. This convention is usually employed in Burma and in the literature about Burma.

The term "Chin" is imprecise. It is a Burmese word *(khyang)*, not a Chin word. It is homologous with the contemporary Burmese word meaning "basket," but I am informed by Professor G. H. Luce of Rangoon that it is in fact an old Burmese word *(khyan)* meaning "ally or comrade" (Luce, 1959b). No single Chin word has explicit reference to all the peoples we customarily call Chin, but all—or nearly all—of the peoples have a special word for themselves and those of their congeners with whom they are in regular contact. This word is almost always a variant form of a single root, which appears as zo, yo, kšəu, šəu, and the like. The word means, roughly, "unsophisticated." A few groups in the Southern Chin Hills have adopted a variant of the term "Chin" for themselves.

There are a number of peoples related to the Chin who are not usually called Chin. All are within the Kuki-Chin linguistic group. Some, however, may not be part of the Chin system of social entities

Fig. 1. *M'Kang* woman of Thluk village with earplugs of truncated gourd set with beads. Women wear little blankets on shoulders, sometimes used as breast cover.

discussed in this paper. All inhabit territory in or adjacent to Burma's Chin Hills. Some are found in the Chittagong Hills Tracts of East Pakistan, and certain of these groups are called *khyang*, a rendering of the Arakanese variant of the Burmese term "Chin" (see Bernot and Bernot, 1958; Bessaignet, 1958). So far as is known the Chin of the Chittagong Hills Tracts should be classified with the Chin

of the Kaladan River drainage (former Arakan Hills Tracts), who are principally in contact with and adapted to the Arakanese variant of Burman civilization. Other Chin peoples, found in India, include the Lushai and the Lakher or Maya of Assam. These peoples have sociocultural systems very similar in form and content to those of the Chin Hills Chin, and these societies are adapted to Burman rather than to Indian civilization. The old Manipuri kingdom claims that it once ruled over the Lushai Hills country, but there is no reflection of any such rule in the Lushai society or culture.

Another group of Kuku-Chin speakers are the Kuki (Shakespear, 1912). *Kuki* appears to be a Manipuri term. (Manipuri, or Meithei, is the Kuki-Chin language of a long-Hinduized people who have for many centuries ruled the Manipur Valley.) Kuki peoples inhabit the relatively low hill country in Manipur, Cachar, Tripura (or Tipperah), and possibly the northern part of the Chittagong Hills Tracts. The so-called New Kuki, especially the Thado, are Northern Chin who were pushed out of the Chin Hills proper into Manipur and into the Naga Hills of Burma and Assam by Lushai in the middle of the nineteenth century. Some of the Old Kuki, such as the Vaiphei (see Carey and Tuck, 1896; Needham, 1959), consist of refugees from the Chin Hills who were forced out earlier by similar pressure at the end of the eighteenth century. Others seem, however, to have been in Manipur much longer. On the whole, the Kuki fall more into the orbit of Manipuri than of Burmese civilization.

Finally, there are also little-known Chin living in the plains proper of Burma and Arakan. These are designated as the *ašəu* and appear to be transitional between the Chin and Burmans. Stern (1962) has published on the Plains Chin. For further information on tribal nomenclature and the relationship among the tribes, see Embree and Thomas (1950) and Hobbs (1956).

The Chin are affected by Burman civilization because they have always had close relations with it. These relations included trading with Burmans and raiding Burman settlements. In some cases there were political relations of a kind described later in this paper. In order to understand these relations we must shortly enter into a brief, generalized, and frankly speculative discussion of Chin history. This is not an exercise in the historical reconstruction of Chin culture, and it is not an attempt to explain Chin social forms by appeal to their supposed origins.

THE CHIN HABITAT

The Chin country comprises the mountainous region lying along Burma's western border with India and Pakistan and extending almost the whole length of Burma from north to south. Within it lie the Chin Hills Proper, which has since 1949 constituted the Chin Special Division, a semiautonomous governmental unit of the Union of Burma. A Chin member of Parliament serves in the Union cabinet as Minister for Chin Affairs (Chin Special Division Act, 1948). This division extends from about 24° 10′ N. to about 20° 30′ N., and falls wholly between 92° 50′ E. and 94° 10′ E. Thus the maximum north-south length of the country is very roughly 250 miles and its width is generally under ninety miles (Ghosh's 1956 figure of 100-150 miles is a gross error), the more usual east-west distance in most parts of the hills being from forty to seventy miles.

Within this territory there are said to be about 220,000 Chin (Hobbs, 1956, p. 721—1953 estimate). The Lushai, living in an area of about 8,000 square miles, were said to number about 150,000 in 1949, or approximately nineteen persons per square mile (see Embree and Thomas, 1950, p. 38). The 1931 *Census of India* reported about 345,000 persons speaking about forty-four distinct Chin and Chin-related dialects (*Census of India,* 1939, pp. 183-184, 198). Most of these dialects and languages are mutually unintelligible. Embree and Thomas (p. 14) estimate that there were 350,000 Chin in all of Burma in 1943 and 554,842 Kuki and Chin peoples including those in Pakistan and India in 1931.

On the whole these figures are only roughly accurate and they are sociologically almost meaningless in themselves unless we take into account the clustering of the population in villages, the distance between villages, the size of agricultural fields, and the effective man-land ratio, all of which vary from village to village but fall into fairly clear patterns that distinguish political and cultural regions. Average population density for the Northern Hills in 1949 (KTA, 1953, p. 17) was seventeen persons per square mile. The 1953 census estimates show twenty-five persons per square mile, but this density varies from thirty-five in the Tiddim Subdivision to fifteen in Haka. In the Southern Hills it is under fifteen (Ghosh, 1956).

The Chin Hills are a series of generally north-south oriented ranges, but south of 22° N. there are large regions in which this pattern is interrupted by cross-cutting local ridges, valleys, and

irregularities. The highest point in the Chin Hills, Victoria Peak far to the south, is 10,018 feet above sea level. In numerous other localities the peaks reach from 8,000 to 9,000 or more feet (the geology and climate are best dealt with in Carey and Tuck, 1896, Vol. 1). The terrain is generally quite precipitous. The predominant bedrock is clay shale, and the soil, which is often only a scant few inches deep where tilled, is largely weathered bedrock.

The climate is chiefly influenced by the monsoon winds, but, owing to the altitude, the weather is most often cool. My own temperature records made during two years, at various altitudes, in half-shade at four feet off the ground, gave a maximum in the upper nineties (F.) during the hottest month, recorded both at about 7,000 and at 3,500 feet. My coldest readings were mainly at 4,800 feet, but I have information from Haka at 7,000 feet. Temperatures seem rarely to go much below 30° F. Ghosh (1956) gives a 1931-40 mean annual average daily temperature of 50.6° F. for Haka and 64.3° F. for Kanpetlet. Carey and Tuck report that on rare occasions snow falls in the Hills, but persons now living in Haka do not recall snow ever falling, although their lands extend up to just over 8,000 feet. The Chin say that snow never falls on Victoria Peak. At around 9,000 feet, in January, I have seen about two inches of snow-like frost on the ground, and the Haka Chin word *hawrha,* by which the natives often understand the English "snow," really signifies a heavy hoar frost of this type. The mission at Haka reports that frequently a Chin, being told that snow falls, will object that, on the contrary, it grows.

There are three seasons, which are respectively hot, wet, and cold, and which relate to the Chin agricultural year in the order given. The cold season begins sometime in mid-November, reaches a peak of cold in January, and tapers off until the start of the hot season, sometime in mid- or late February. There are usually a few evanescent showers about this time, but they seem to have no effect on the local flora. After February the temperature rises sharply, but even in the hottest season there are many days when the thermometer fails to reach 90° F. Temperatures in the deep valleys—for example, the bed of the Manipur River below Falam, at Var Camp, 1,300 feet above sea level—are almost unendurably hot at all seasons of the year, but Chin leave such regions uninhabited. In April there are some showers which are accompanied by tremendous gusts of wind, particularly at night. These showers

help sprout the newly planted grain crops and wild plants. The true monsoon rains begin in May, when there may still be as many dry as wet days, but in June the rains come almost daily, then every day. From this time on, the maximum daily temperature rarely exceeds 80° F. Early in June some rivers are almost unfordable (only the Kaladan is completely so) and the crude, dirt motor roads from Haka through Falam to Kalemyo in the plains are washed out completely at some points. The rains continue until late August, then taper off gradually through September but often do not end until well into October (see graph in Ghosh, 1956).

Annual rainfall at Haka averages about 100 inches. Falam, thirty-five miles north-east, gets about seventy inches or more, and at Tiddim, much farther north, about fifty-five inches usually falls (Carey and Tuck, 1896). Ghosh gives Haka a mean annual rainfall of 89.53 inches, Kanpetlet 105.56 inches (1956). McCall (1949, p. 31) says that the Lushai Hills get from seventy to 170 inches a year. The rains on the western slopes (Lushai side) are less invariable than on the Burma side. The length of the rainy season in the hills is in marked contrast to that in the "wet zone" of the Burman plains. The hills receive about five months of heavy rain as compared to about three for the plains. The Kale Valley, marching with the foothills of the Northern and Central Chin Hills, is in Burma's "dry zone," with only recurrent light rain from June through August.

Throughout the rainy season the Chin Hills are very wet, cool, and misty. The dry season is especially marked in the south, where dust lies thickly on all paths and cleared spaces. Maximum normal humidity at Haka is 93 per cent in August, and the minimum, 40 per cent in January (Ghosh, 1956).

The flora of the Chin Hills has been described by Carey and Tuck (1896, p. 7 ff.). These authorities label as "primaeval forest" a thick, wet monsoon tropical forest with teak stands which is confined to the foothills and does not extend upwards into the Chin habitat. Subtropical forest is found above this zone to 3,000 feet; but the Chin rarely occupy such low altitudes or gather products from its forests. Above 3,000 feet is pine forest in which the preponderating species is *P. khassia.* This is really a high, cool monsoon forest with mixed stands of evergreen and deciduous trees. In its lower and middle altitudes it has some oak trees, with scatterings rather than stands of a host of other trees, such as various figs,

wild guava, willows, pyinkado *(Xylia dolabriformis),* and banyans. The larger banyans with aerial roots exist only on occasional flat, poorly drained places, generally in or near settlement sites. Pyinkado, which is very rare, is the only hard wood of consequence in the hills except for a very few dwarf teak trees near Falam. Pine becomes increasingly predominant above 5,000 feet, where there is an Alpine flora in which rhododendron and numerous flowers are characteristic. Carey and Tuck (1896, p. 7) state that the Alpine flora is found as low as 4,000 feet and also clothes the highest peaks and ridges along with the densely clustered but very thin-stalked, cold-forest bamboo (*Dendrocalamus hookeri,* Munroe). Grass is widely found, except in the denser forests. Flowering bamboos, which have thick walls, a diameter of perhaps four inches, and are useful to local technology, are found at low altitudes in the rolling country on the south and west. They are characteristic of the Lushai jungles. Other bamboos of intermediate thickness which have some use in native technology are found both in and near the village sites everywhere.

The distribution of grasses, bamboos, and the Alpine flora may be governed as much by exposure to wind as by sheer altitude (and perhaps by the nature of soil and by rainfall variations). I have noted somewhat dwarfed pines at about 8,000 feet on the peak above Haka where wind exposure was not severe. This occurrence may be explained by the presence of a lake at that place. Grass seems to flourish especially on high, flat ridges between wide and wind-swept valleys. Wild plantains characteristically occur at remarkably high altitudes.

The supervention of grass upon jungle felled for swiddening does not seem to be a great problem. Land shortage is not yet great except in the immediate vicinity of the administrative "towns" of Falam, Haka, and Tiddim. Overcropping of fields resulting from a shortage of swidden lands leads to encroachment by grass, but where grass does grow thickly, cultivation is not usually practiced. Grass follows where there is overcropping and under fallowing, but it chiefly occurs where it is deliberately cultivated for thatch or where it follows forest fires. The latter are caused infrequently by escaped swidden fires and more frequently by fires that are lighted to drive game but get out of control in thick jungle.

Mountain ravines are usually overgrown with rather thickly tangled jungle which resembles rain forest.

In the northern and central regions the Chin occupy the slopes only from about 4,000 feet to a little over 7,000 feet. In the Southern Chin Hills, as also in Lushai land, occupancy extends downslope to 3,500 or even 3,000 feet, but most settlement sites are found well above the lowest level farmed and below the highest altitudes farmed.

Carey and Tuck's abbreviated list of the characteristic fauna need not be reproduced here, but some comments are in order since hunting plays a significant part in the Chin culture, although not everywhere in Chin diet (see discussion of distribution and importance of gods controlling game animals, in Shakespear, 1909, 1912).

The largest animals hunted are rhinoceros, elephant, and gaur (*Bison gaur*, or "wild mithan"). Few of these are now found in the Chin Hills proper. Even in the past, before firearms had driven much of the game away, these animals were hunted only by particularly adroit hunters, far from home in the foothills next to Burma or in the Lushai country, which is less precipitous. The major game animals today are: Himalayan black bear, Malayan sun bear, tiger (rare), leopard, lesser felines such as the civet cat, wild boar, various monkeys (macaques, semnopiths, and some gibbon—*Hylobates hoolocki*), ordinary and flying squirrels, barking deer, *sambhar* deer, mountain goat, porcupine, and various rats. There is a great variety of birds, some of which are hunted for their plumage and some for their ritual significance (e.g., hornbills). Some are important because their flights are taken as omens (e.g., Indian cuckoo shrike, minivet). There are numerous birds of prey, which often decimate domestic fowl.

Fish are prominent in Chin diet. Fishing methods depend on the size of the fish and upon the size of the streams in which they are to be caught. Fishing techniques include the use of fish traps of bamboo, of framed and unframed circular casting nets, of earth dams and fish poison, of communal weirs constructed in the larger streams, and lately, of dynamiting streams. The organization of large and small fishing expeditions is a characteristic feature of Chin social life, and fishing also plays some part in Chin religious ritual. Parry (1932) gives an account of fishing and of the role of the local fauna in the cultural life of the Lakher, who are closely allied to the Haka Chin. I shall deal somewhat with the latter subject in connection with hunting (see also Stevenson, 1943).

The local environment of the Chin is defined largely with reference to their use of it and plays a basic role in Chin cultural and social life. The deep emotional associations which the natural environment has for the Chin are expressed in various ways. Animals and birds play a great part in ritual myths, in "secular" folk tales, and in casual oral literature. These feelings are also expressed in the sentiments of several classes of secular songs in Haka proper, in which references to certain kinds of landscape play a prominent part. They are expressed again in the imagery of poetical self-portraits—the memorial songs (*va hla*)—composed by or for prominent hunters, in which boastful pride is curiously mixed with self-deprecation in the recounting of their relationships to the jungles and the animals they hunt (see p. 184). They are likewise expressed in the use of the names of flowers as female personal names and for allusions to "feminine" beauty and contentment. The Chin tend to think of their country as a landscape of beautiful flowers, as is shown by the contemporary Lushai national song (popular also in the Chin Hills), "The Flowers of Our Hill Country" *(Kan Tlang Ram Par)*, in which a large number of varieties are cataloged lovingly and at length.

HISTORY AND DIVISIONS OF THE CHIN

We cannot be sure when the Chin first entered the territory they now occupy. Leach (1954, 1961a) believes the hypothesis that the Southeast Asian peoples as known today immigrated from the region of China is a pure myth. He points cogently to the fact that the hill peoples and the plains peoples are now defined by their mutual relationships in present sites. Historical linguistics, archaeology, and racial relationships definitely indicate that the ancestors of these various peoples did indeed come from the north, but they did not come as the social and cultural units we know today and cannot be identified with any particular groups of today.

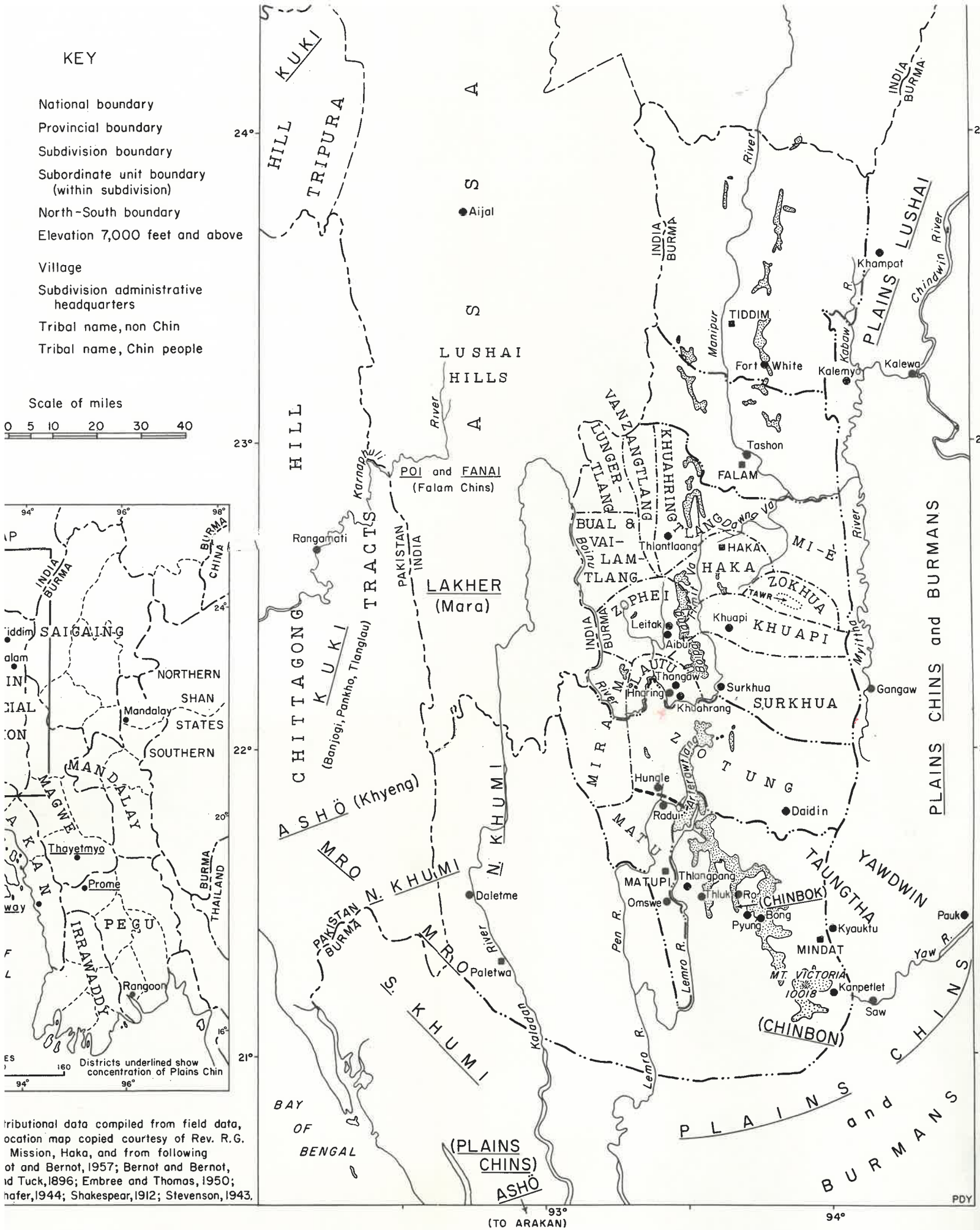
History shows, however, that both hills and plains peoples have moved about within the general region of Southwest China and Southeast Asia over considerable distances for many centuries, until the recent past. The apparent close linguistic relationship among the several Tibeto-Burman languages of Burma (to go no farther afield) indicates clearly that in the not very distant past the ancestors of such different peoples as the Naga and the Chin formed

a relatively unitary speech group. This group must have occupied some fairly restricted region (see Shafer, 1955). Moreover, there is some documentary evidence (e.g., Pelliot, 1904; Luce, 1959a, b) that the historical Burman nation crystallized amidst a congeries of peoples who were located in the hills and plains in Burma's northern half. It would be naive to identify peoples represented in early Chinese sources, which were devoid of ethnological sophistication (see Weins, 1954), with peoples actually known today. But the suggestion of a north to south movement of ethnic groups, even early in the Christian era, cannot be simply brushed aside.

The earliest Burman inscriptions put the Burmans in Upper Burma in roughly the middle of the ninth century, A.D. Before this, there had been kingdoms of the Mons and the Pyu in the major river valleys of Burma, but they do not seem to have ruled the plains bordering the present-day Chin Hills (see Hall, 1955, pp. 122-123). There is no information on the relations between those pre-Burman civilizations and any inhabitants of what are now the Chin Hills—or any peoples ancestral to the Chin.

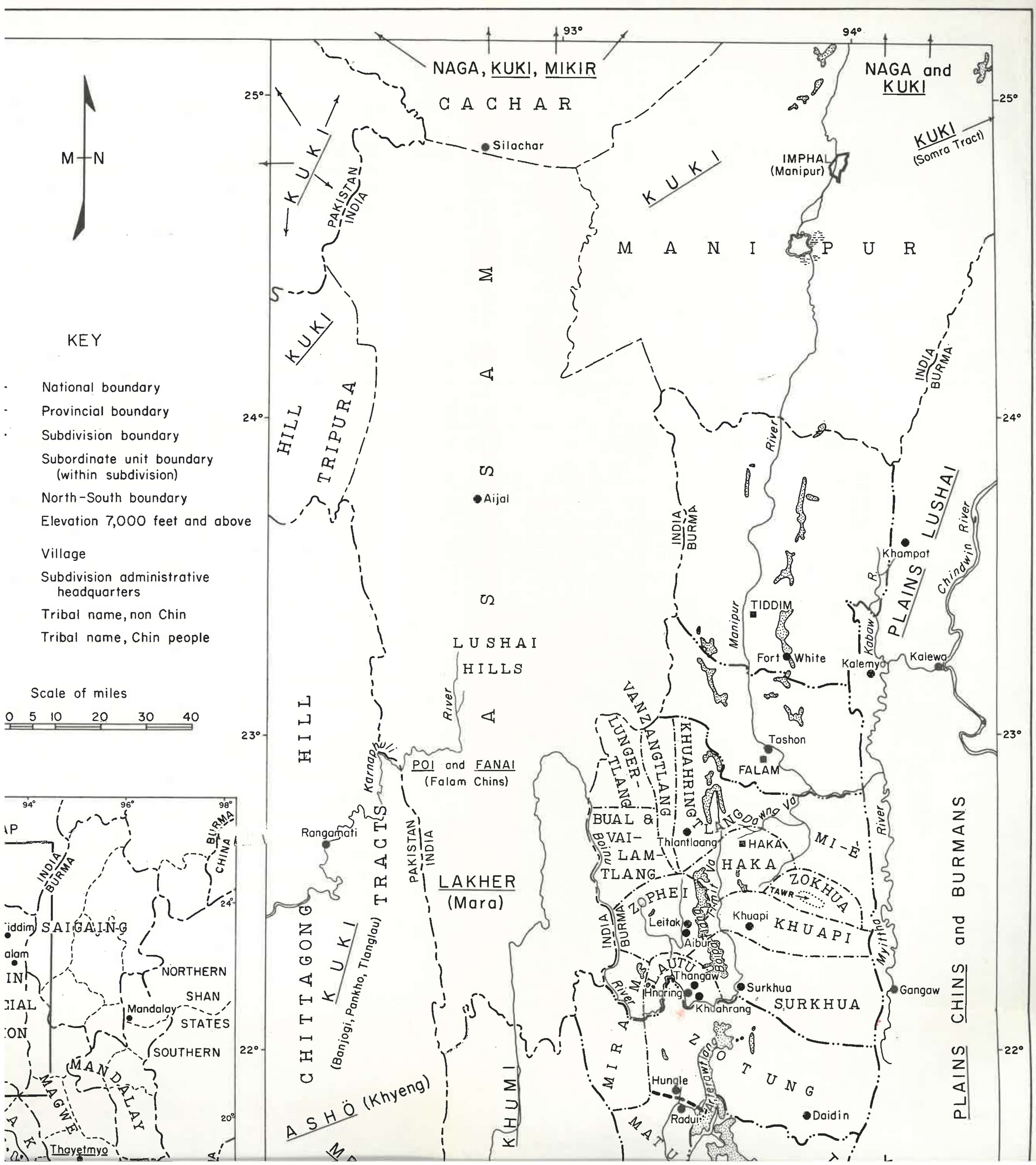
Luce (personal communication) puts the entry of the Chin into the general region of Burma somewhere between the fourth and the middle of the eighth centuries A.D., but the evidence does not seem to me to support even this broad surmise. The earlier date is derived from the fact that many Northern and Central Chin use the word *tʌŋ-ka* (coinage, money, silver), which is derived etymologically from the name of a Gupta rupee coin of India, brought East by Samudra Gupta in the middle of the fourth century. Luce says the Chin should at that time have been in the Hukawng Valley, well north of the Chin Hills, in order to have adopted the word, for the word cannot have come via Burmese. While many Chin words concerning items characteristic of the culture of the civilized peoples take the form of written or "old" Burmese, this cannot be one of them, since the old Burmese form would be *diŋ-ka*. It seems, however, even more likely that the word is part of a large group of words in Chin which have been introduced by the British Indian troops speaking bazaar-Hindi. *Tangka* is a perfectly ordinary Anglo-Hindi word for rupee coinage.

Luce's later (eighth century) date is derived from the fact that the land route from China to India was unmentioned in the literature and so presumably closed after about A.D. 300 until about A.D. 750. He argues that, had any major society come in through



tributional data compiled from field data, ocation map copied courtesy of Rev. R.G. Mission, Haka, and from following ot and Bernot, 1957; Bernot and Bernot, id Tuck, 1896; Embree and Thomas, 1950; hafer, 1944; Shakespear, 1912; Stevenson, 1943.

KI CHIN TRIBAL AND LINGUISTIC DISTRIBUTION


NAGA, KUKI, MIKIR
NAGA and KUKI
KUKI (Somra Tract)
CACHAR
Silachar
KUKI
IMPHAL (Manipur)
MANIPUR
PAKISTAN INDIA
KEY
National boundary
Provincial boundary
Subdivision boundary
Subordinate unit boundary (within subdivision)
North-South boundary
Elevation 7,000 feet and above
Village
Subdivision administrative headquarters
Tribal name, non Chin
Tribal name, Chin people
Scale of miles
0 5 10 20 30 40
HILL TRIPURA
KUKI
ASSAM
Aijal
INDIA BURMA
River
Manipur
TIDDIM
Fort White
Kalemyo
Kalewa
Kabaw
Khampat
PLAINS LUSHAI
Chindwin River
LUSHAI HILLS
HILL
Karnaphuli
POI and FANAI (Falam Chins)
Tashon
FALAM
VANZANGTLANG
LUNGER-TLANG
KHUAHRINGTLANG
BUAL & VAI-LAM-TLANG
Boinu
Thlantlaang
HAKA
Dawngva
MI-E
ZOKHUA
TAWR
ZOPHEI
Leitak
Aibur
Khuapi
KHUAPI
Myittha River
Gangaw
LAUTU
Thangaw
Hnaring
Khuahrang
Surkhua
SURKHUA
MIRAM
ZOTUNG
Hungle
Radui
Daidin
MATU
PLAINS CHINS and BURMANS
LAKHER (Mara)
CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS
Rangamati
KUKI (Banjogi, Pankho, Tlanglau)
ASHÖ (Khyeng)
KHUMI
SAIGAING
NORTHERN SHAN STATES SOUTHERN
Mandalay
MANDALAY
MAGWE
Thayetmyo
BURMA CHINA
25°
24°
23°
22°
93°
94°
96°
98°
20°

the region north of the Chin Hills and through Manipur after A.D. 750, it would have been noted in the chronicles. He believes that most of the hill peoples arrived between the two dates mentioned. He gives fairly convincing evidence that the first few centuries A.D. must have been a period of the influx of Sino-Tibetan–speaking peoples, and in particular of Tibeto-Burman speakers, into Southeast Asia. (On the Chinese pressure causing this movement see Weins, 1954.) Luce points out that the Chin seem, on the basis of linguistic evidence from more recent times, to have split the Sak-Kadu–speaking group of peoples. These peoples are now found as remnants on both the northern and southern margins of the Chin-speaking area of Burma. Luce takes this to indicate that the Sak-Kadu group preceded the Chin into Burma and that the Naga were in their present area before the influx of the Chin. This, he maintains, would bring the Chin in rather late, perhaps toward the end of the period his two dates encompass.

But Luce does not accord due importance to the close relationship between the Naga and the Chin languages or to the possibility of a fairly close relationship between the Chin and the Sak-Kadu (or Thet) languages. If, as it has occasionally been suggested, these languages are related closely, there is little reason to suggest that the ancestors of one group came into the general Burma region earlier than the ancestors of the other. The peculiar split in the Sak-Thet-Kadu group remains unexplained, but this difficulty is minimized, though not solved, when we recognize that they were plains-dwelling people, whereas the Chin, who intervene between their remnants, occupy the mountains. One must always distinguish between plains and hills when dealing with this material. The Sak-Kadu peoples must somehow have skirted round the hill country, and it is not surprising that they did not occupy it.

Luce also admits that the Meithei, linguistically part of the Chin group, must have conquered Manipur before his proposed date for the entry into the Chin Hills of the main body of Chin. For Manipur, which lies just to the north of the Chin Hills, there is genuine historical material to work with, but the data so far available make clear only that the Chin *may* have been in Burma, either north of their present range of occupation or somewhere within it, any time after the beginning of the Christian era. Quite possibly they completed the occupation of the whole of their present area well into the middle of the first millennium A.D. Luce has also suggested to

me that peoples related to the Chin were probably involved as mercenaries in the early history of such principalities as Tripura, bordering the Lushai Hills on the west. This, however, also requires historical investigation.

Another kind of evidence that may possibly throw some light on the historical crystallization of the Chin peoples consists of inferences of varying degrees of probability drawn from the pattern of linguistic relationships in the Chin Hills. My inferences are based on discussions with Luce and on correspondence with Professor T. Stern of the University of Oregon, both of whom have done descriptive and comparative linguistic work among the Chin. Stern considers that many of the following tentative suggestions are rather likely, but not yet demonstrable.

I must begin by drawing a boundary between the Northern and Central Chin (hereafter called Northern) and the Southern Chin. This division differs from that conventionally used in the literature. The term "Southern Chin" usually refers more or less exclusively to the *ašəu* or plains Chin, who live south, east, and west of the Southern Chin Hills. Culturally, however, there is a remarkably sharp boundary separating the northern from the southern cultural and social systems *within* the hills.

The peoples of the Kanpetlet, Paletwa, and Matu areas constitute a distinct social type, which I call Southern Chin. They live in the former Arakan and Pakokku Hills Tracts and comprise the so-called Chinbok, Chinme, Chinbon, Khumi, Mro, Matu, and other groups who were not administered until recently by either the British or the Burmans. The Northern Chin comprise nearly all the Chin of the Haka, Falam, and Tiddim areas, and also the Lushai and Lakher on the Assam side. But we must exclude most of the peoples known as Kuki in the Chittagong Hills Tracts, Assam, Manipur, and Tripura, for their social organization is very much like that of the Southern Chin. The boundary between Northern and Southern Chin, as I draw it, lies between the Matu country and the Zotung country (see Map I), the latter being within the Haka cultural area. The boundary line lies approximately along 21° 45′ N. The Southern type has a relatively poor material culture and simple social structure; the Northern is more elaborate on both counts.

Viewed in greater detail, of course, the situation is somewhat less simple. We have seen above that many of the Kuki fall more into the orbit of Manipuri than of Burman civilization. Moreover, in

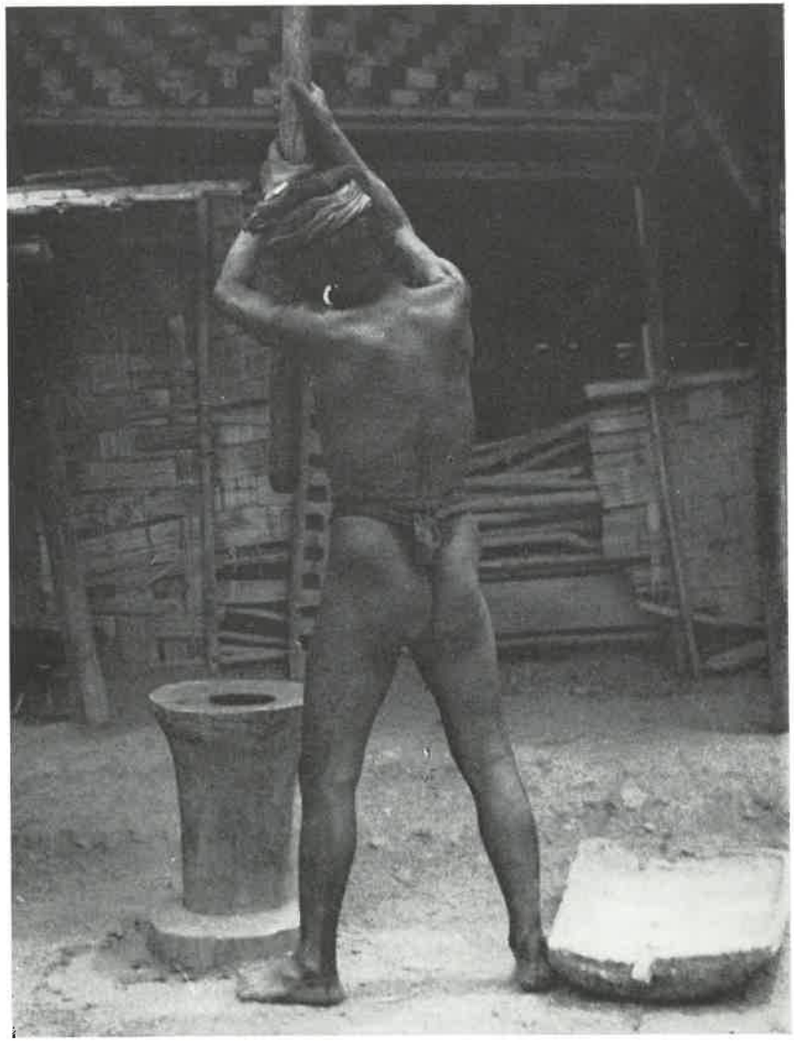


Fig. 2. Matupi man pounds materials for making gunpowder. Handled trough can be used for feeding pigs or other purposes.

spite of many general and specific similarities between Kuki social organization and that of the Southern Chin, many features of social structure and culture are peculiar to the Kuki. I ascribe these

Fig. 3. New Hnaring memorial post at a *lung dawnh.* Note metal pin *(hruk pi)* round which woman's hairknot is wound. A married woman, she is bare above the waist and wears old-style everyday skirt of checked gingham dyed indigo and blue-grey.

Kuki features largely to two facts: first, the Kuki relationship to Manipuri Hindu civilization and their direct involvement with the Manipur state apparatus; second, the fact that many Kuki groups are remnant societies, having been pushed from the Chin Hills proper into alien and hostile country where they live on lands not their own. However, there is no absolute separation between the Kuki and some of the northernmost Chin of Burma. The New Kuki appear to resemble in culture the Tiddim Chin. Even some of the Old Kuki, like the Vaiphei, were not long ago "Tiddim-type" Chin. In addition, the Tiddim Chin and the Lushai have deep-rooted economic relations with Manipur, Tripura, and Assam, where they plundered regularly. The Tiddim area, which has cultural pecularities setting it off clearly from Falam and Haka, was also involved in the wars between Burma and Manipur. Furthermore, at least some Tiddim Chin groups and the Lushai and their close relatives, the Hualngo of Falam Subdivision, lack the institution of prescriptive marriage alliance characteristic of Central and Southern

Chin. In the light of these facts, I propose a supplementary distinction between true Northern Chin and Central Chin.

The Northern Chin proper are those of Tiddim Subdivision. The Tiddim social and cultural system is basically complex, and so, despite important structural distinctions, belongs with that of Central Chin rather than with Southern Chin. Nonetheless, the Tiddim Chin, unlike the Central Chin, seem to have been historically transitional to Kuki types of society and culture. Like the Kuki, they were somewhat within the orbit of Manipuri as well as of Burman civilization. In this study I have generally ignored the distinction between the Central and Northern Chin and considered them both Northern in type because I shall deal almost exclusively with the Chin of Burma's Chin Hills. The structure of Chin society as a whole will be better understood, however, only when research has been done on the Tiddim Chin.

In the South, groups such as Khyang and Chaungtha in Paletwa Subdivision have an old relationship to Arakan like that of some Old Kuki to Manipur and Tripura (Hughes, 1876-77). Their land tenure appears to be validated by old documents from the Arakanese kings (see Harvey, 1961).

Both the population and the territorial range of the Northern Chin are greater than those of the Southern Chin. It seems, however, that the range of linguistic diversity and the degree of intragroup linguistic differentiation is greater in the South than in the North. The Northern group shows relative internal linguistic homogeneity.

There are several Southern Chin linguistic groups, such as Mro and Khumi (see, e.g., Shafer, 1941, on Mru; *passim* in *Linguistic Survey of India;* and *Census of India,* 1921, Burma, report volume, p. 3 ff., under "Sak," "Chin," and "Mro"), which have often been classified as "aberrant." Some of these, notably the Mro (or Mru), have some vocabulary elements that may possibly be Mon-Khmer rather than Tibeto-Burman, and other elements that seem to be inexplicable in that they lack cognates among the better known Chin languages (see Luce, 1959 a, b). Stern and Luce seem to have found a fairly small number of peculiar items from Karen, which are also inexplicable unless they are Mon-Khmer in origin. They appear to be cognate with items in Chin. In the latter case the cognates are found not only in Southern Chin but also in Northern Chin (Laizo, the Falam language).

There are several possible interpretations for this picture. First the seeming aberrancy of such groups as the Mro may not be significant. This in turn would magnify the significance of the internal linguistic diversity within the Southern group as a whole. Second, the words in both Chin and Karen which have unknown provenience may very possibly belong to an archaic Tibeto-Burman stratum, since Karen (Greenberg, 1953) is pretty well established as a relatively distinct branch within the Tibeto-Burman group. If, as is most probable, the Karen branch represents one of the earliest periods of intrusion into Burma, the Chin may not be such recent arrivals as Luce and others have suggested. However, we cannot exclude the possibility that the Chin borrowed this segment of their vocabulary. Third, with the center of gravity for the distribution of the Chin language shifted to the internally more diversified Southern area, the best inference is that the present Northern group had its origin somewhere well south within the present Chin area.

There is some evidence that the present Northern group may have its origins in an explosion of population, possibly starting about the sixteenth century.

There are Burman inscriptions dating from the thirteenth century onward which refer to the Chin of the Chindwin Valley. There is also persistent reference in the legends of almost all Northern Chin and Lushai to a former home in the Chindwin Valley. Thus, it is likely that the population explosion, if such it was, followed an influx of relatively powerful groups from the plains. These groups probably contributed to the development of more ramifying political systems, sometimes with chiefs, and they were also probably ancestral to at least the ruling lineages throughout much of the area. Chin origin myths uniformly refer only to the ruling lineages when speaking of the plains homeland or of migration. Archaeological evidence supports this interpretation. It is likely that the present Northern Chin languages came in with this new population, though not all at one time. These inferences do not depend to any great degree on assigning specific historical value to the Chin legends. The more definite linguistic and inscriptional evidence is all that is necessary.

It follows that the development of the present Northern Chin was preceded by a movement into the plains from the linguistic center of dispersal in the Southern Hills (Diebold, 1960). If this center was in the hills, the Chin, contra Luce, cannot at first

Fig. 4. Hnaring girls pound maize. Both wear "silver" belts.

have been basically a plains people. Before Burman occupation of the nearby plains, the Chin may, however, have occupied the plains and hills without much ecological distinction. It is also likely that the movement into the plains gave rise over a long period of time to the plains Chin of the present day (but see Stern, 1962, pp. 2-6; Loeffler, 1959, 1960).[1]

The large population of the modern Northern Chin, the extent of their area of occupation, the relative homogeneity of their cultures and languages, and the volume of literature concerning them apparently have made them a standard of comparison in the determination of what is "representatively Chin" and what is not. Such a standard of representativeness is not valid.

The earliest mention of the Chin in Burman inscriptions of the Pagan kingdom dates from the thirteenth century A.D. and refers to the Chin as "allies" or "comrades" (that being the meaning of the term "Chin") in the lower valley of the Chindwin (literally, "the hole of the Chin"). The places mentioned in old Burmese and the modern place names in the Chindwin Valley, however, suggest to Luce (1959b) that the Chin were left to themselves in the Upper Chindwin. No places above Monywa are mentioned in the inscriptions. By the twelfth century the Burmans had occupied the Yaw and Kyaw valleys abutting on the Southern Chin Hills where, to judge by more recent conditions, they could not have failed to be in contact with the Chin of the Southern Hills.

Before this time we can say nothing about possible contacts of Southern Chin with the Sak kingdoms in Central Burma or on the Arakan side, or with the early Pyu or Mon kingdoms. But the Chin were certainly in the present Southern Chin area for an indefinite time before the Burmans occupied the Yaw drainage. Indeed, one may suppose that they had moved south, east, and then north, and occupied the Chindwin Valley before the Burmans got there. If so, then the Sak-Kadu group may have been split by some combination of the Chin and the Burmans. The Chin probably moved south of about 21° N the approximate southern limit of the Hill Chin region proper, as well as into the plains immediately east of the hills. The traditional routes link-

[1] To judge by their relationship to the Khyang, the plains Chin before the seventeenth century must have lived in the Arakan Yoma, technically hill country but south of the hill Chin proper and in close interaction with civilized peoples.

Fig. 5. Matupi man repairing musical instrument. Toward the end of each of several bamboo tubes a vibrating reed is set in and this is sealed inside a gourd with beeswax. Each tube is tuned by means of a fingerhole stop and a blowing tube is set in at a different angle.

ing Burma proper and Arakan, which are the likely routes by which the Burmans populated Arakan to give rise to the Arakanese variant of Burman culture and Burmese language, are in fact south of the Hill Chin, at least south of their center of distribution. It is possible that the link that must be postulated between the now dispersed remnant groups of Sak-Kadu was also south of the line, perhaps at the An Pass (Harvey, 1961, p. 40, on the Chakma). It is, in any case, hardly necessary to account for the split in the Sak-Kadu group by assuming that the Chin entered the Chin Hills proper much later than the Sak-Kadu themselves. More likely the split between the Sak of the Irrawaddy Valley in Burma and the related Andro-Sengmai of Manipur may have resulted from the subsequent *northward* movement of the Chin into the Chindwin. The route into Manipur from Burma has traditionally been either north of the Chin Hills proper or through the northernmost part of the hills themselves. The people of these hills have been remarkably little affected in more recent centuries by the

passing of Burman troops to fight in Manipur (see especially Grant-Brown, 1911, p. 31, and map; Harvey, 1961, pp. 40-41).

Our historical reconstructions should begin not with the origins or the immigration of pre-Chin ancestral groups, but rather with the development within the general region of Burma of symbiotic sociocultural systems: civilizations and hill societies. This development seems in fact to have arisen from linguistic and ethnic congeries, no part of which could originally have had the forms of the present-day societies or cultures.

Ethnic and linguistic differentiation certainly existed at an early period. The ancestors of the Chin and of the Burmans must have been distinct from each other even before they first appeared in Burma. Undoubtedly, these various ancestral groups were descended in part from groups immigrating into Burma, starting about the beginning of the Christian era. But it is also probable that some of these groups were in Burma in the remote past, long before a date indicated by any present historical evidence. We are not justified, however, in attaching more than linguistic significance to the terms "Chin" and "Burman" at such dates. Chin history begins after A.D. 750, with the development of Burman civilization and of Chin interaction with it.

If we accept, even provisionally, the notion of a population "explosion" starting in the Northern Chin Hills at some rather arbitrary date such as the sixteenth century, and arising initially from pressures in the Chindwin Valley, we have then to account for these pressures.

Up to a certain point in the history of Burman civilization the valley of the Chindwin above Monywa was left pretty much outside the control of the Burman kingdoms. It was in the hands of the Chin, who, according to Luce, were considered allies, possibly because they held this flank of the developing Burman state against its enemies, such as the Sak (Thet). Contact between the Chin and the Burmans to the south does not seem to have been very intimate. There is some mention of a slave trade downstream from Monywa. To judge by the present-day method by which the Chin farm jungle lands in the plains of the Kale Valley and by the practices of plains peoples farming submontane regions in Southeast Asia, it is most probable that the Chin farmed the Chindwin Valley as they do now their hills, that is, by "slash-and burn" methods. The ecological distinction is not between hills and plains, but between methods of utilizing the landscape.

Fig. 6. A Matupi woman spinning in doorway of her house.

By the middle of the twelfth century the Shan "invasions" into Burma had become serious. Whether the Shan irrupted into Burma, as is traditionally supposed, or whether they had, as Leach suggests, "always" been there, makes little difference. Henceforth, they became a political force within Burma, founding principalities here and there and contending, often successfully, with the Burman kingdoms for hegemony. In A.D. 1397 we first hear of the Shan

fortress city of Kale (the Burmese Kalemyo). The Shan had founded it in the Chindwin Plain, at the foot of the Chin Hills, along with similar fortress towns (at the edges of civilization) on the Upper Chindwin, Kabaw, and Tamu river drainages in the same region (Grant-Brown, 1911). There does not seem to be any clear evidence that the Shan populated the region densely, although the town of Kale had double walls and a moat measuring a mile square. The Shan here appear to have been driven eventually into a cul-de-sac. We know nothing of the effect of this situation upon the Chin. The Shan continued to fight among themselves and with the Burmese kingdom of Ava. They finally conquered Ava in 1527. Throughout this period, the peace of the Upper Chindwin must have been seriously disturbed, which surely affected the Chin.

In 1555, the Burmans reunited the kingdom of Burma by defeating the Shan. The Burman king, Bayinnaung, conquered Ava, and in the same year set about to pacify the kingdom up the Chindwin to the neighborhood of Monywa. From that time until about 1562 he engaged in campaigns with Manipur. This conquest involved the whole Kale region, since it was on the route to Manipur. Until the nineteenth century the rule of the Kabaw Valley was disputed between Burma and Manipur, having been alternately in the hands of one or the other during the recurrent wars between them. From the sixteenth century onward, the Kale Valley remained (until well into the British period) under a Shan prince (the Kale Sawbwa), although the whole area came more and more under Burman influence. Above all, it became increasingly a disturbed, partially empty frontier.

All this activity undoubtedly affected whatever Chin population was in the region. We do not know, of course, whether the Chin of these plains were, as Luce has suggested, "pushed" up into the hills. I have set forth above what indirect evidence there is to this effect from linguistics and Chin oral tradition. Some Chin have recently resettled the Kale Valley (see Hobbs, 1956). A few of these seem to be genuine plains Chin villages, probably from the Yaw Valley. The women have the tattooed faces of the old-fashioned plains Chin as far south as the Yawdwin and of the Chin of the Southern Chin Hills. The rest of the Kale Valley Chin villages are inhabited by Chin from the Northern Hills, and the largest, Tahan, was founded in recent decades by Lushai from India.

We do not know when the ancestors of the ruling lineages of

either the Lushai or the Falam-Haka Chin entered the hills. There is, however, some evidence that the Northern Hills must have been occupied by other Chin at some early time. For instance, some of the so-called "Old" Kuki of Manipur-Assam probably did not arrive there as recently as the rest of the Old and the New Kuki. The New Kuki were pushed out from the Chin-Lushai country by their near relatives, the Lushai, in the 1700's and 1800's. The Old Kuki seem first to have been mentioned in the Manipur chronicles about 1554 (Shakespear, 1909, p. 373). The cultural and social organization of the Kuki, and especially of the "older" Old Kuki, resembles that of the Southern Chin in style and simplicity. There is indirect but genuinely historical evidence that, sometime in the sixteenth century, there was some sort of population "explosion" in the Northern Chin Hills.

In what way may this population explosion have been associated with the development among the latter-day Northern Chin of their characteristic cultural elaboration and developed forms of social and political organization (chieftainship and the like)? We must first consider a special factor that may have contributed to the development of Northern Chin political organization—the introduction of firearms. Undoubtedly it took place long after the initial development of Northern Chin society and must have been a factor only in the later phases of that development. We have to consider also the part played by the marginal involvement of the Northern Chin in the wars between the Burmans, Manipuris, and others in the Chindwin area.

Various authorities have suggested that guns first reached the Chin by different routes. One route suggested is that up the Kaladan River from Chittagong. Another is from Manipur over the hills. Embree and Thomas (1950) suggest that guns came first from the Burmese. Each of these suggestions is probably correct for different parts of the Chin country, but for our purposes it is especially interesting that the first recorded use of guns by Burman troops was in campaigns against Manipur. In 1755 (Stevenson, 1943, historical chart) there is the first mention of the use of Chin levies in the campaign against Syriam in the delta of lower Burma. It is quite likely that at about this time or not long afterward, some guns (firelocks) reached the Chin. Yet in 1777 (Lewin, 1870, p. 56) some tribes in the interior of the Lushai country, who were employed in raids into Assam, did not yet have firearms.

The wars between the various Northern Chin and Lushai that led to the consolidation of the larger supralocal tribal realms and networks of alliance began as recently as the early eighteenth century. They also led to the first expulsion of the "newer" Old Kuki into Manipur. The expansion of tribal realms in the Falam-Haka area in the Chin Hills, strengthened subsequently by renewed connections with Burmans now fighting almost continuously against Manipur (1714-54 and on), pushed the ancestral Lushai further into Assam. It was, however, as recently as 1780 that the Sailo clan began pushing northward within this country to wrest control over the whole Lushai area from the various related clans that had hitherto held sway locally. This conquest was not complete until about 1810 (see McCall, 1949, pp. 35-37).

After 1700 there came a phase of great tribal wars and political expansion that almost certainly was made possible by Chin involvement in Burman expeditions within the Chindwin region. There is reason to believe that before this time there had already been more than a century of development of the same sort, but on a smaller scale. Oral tradition, although unreliable for particular facts and dates, asserts that there had long been several rather unstable supralocal chieftaincies. For instance, it is fairly certain that Zahaus ruled over Lushai villages, that is, there were already cases of tribal hegemony. It is this initial phase of the development of the distinctive Northern Chin society and culture that has the greatest theoretical interest for us.

The Chin, who had lived for some time in the Chindwin Plain, had been driven into and were now restricted more or less to the hills, where there were already other Chin living. The Chindwin Chin certainly had a long history of direct and stable contact with the civilized peoples of the lowland: Kadu, Burman, and Shan. From sometime in the sixteenth century they were increasingly forced to look out from the foothills over a Chindwin-Kale-Kabaw-Myittha plain that had become politically and economically unsettled. Contact between the hills and plains did not cease, but it could only have been unstable and irregular, perhaps actually precarious. Thus, the initial political development among the inhabitants of the Northern Chin Hills took place precisely at a time when contact with civilized resources and trade had been significantly interrupted, even if it cannot be shown that the ancestors of today's Northern Chin came from the plains. From this

time on the initiative for organizing the flow of goods into and within the hills had to come from the Chin themselves. It required the formulation of a new pattern for the organization of local social and economic resources.

In much of the mountainous area of Southeast Asia, removal of immediate forms of contact between a hill folk and its civilized neighbors is often connected with the emergence or maintenance of more elaborate cultural and social forms. This was first noted by Scott (Scott and Hardiman, 1900, Vol. I, Pt. 1, p. 511) for the Wa, and Leach (1961a) has suggested the wide applicability of this principle.

In concluding the historical section of this study, let us consider some ways in which this principle has worked in the case of the Chin. The development, in the Northern Chin Hills and adjacent areas which had supralocal organization, particularly after 1700, was apparently accompanied by gradual intensification of Chin warfare and raiding into the Burma plains and into Assam, Chittagong, and Manipur. At the same time some of the Northern Chin became marginal participants in the local quarrels between the Shan and Burmans in the Kale Valley and elsewhere in the Chindwin region. Occasionally the Chin made political use of Burmans and Shan fleeing from defeat in those quarrels. These refugees became organizational and symbolic focuses for the strengthening of certain of the hill chieftaincies (cf. Carey and Tuck, 1896, p. 20 ff.). There was fairly regular enslavement of Burman war captives by the Chin. This is very different from a relatively quiet and stable marginal trade relationship between border communities of Chin and Burmans, such as probably existed in the Chindwin Valley earlier and seems to have existed on the edges of the Southern Chin Hills.

Instead of stable trade and an interspersal of Burman and plains Chin communities, which gave way gradually to a purely Chin population in the hills, where the Burmans occasionally raided for slaves, there was a persistent hammering at the outer defences of civilization by the hills Chin themselves. At the same time, the Burmans took little interest in the Chin or the Chin country. This pattern of raiding into civilized territory and carrying off booty was often the chief purpose of the emerging pattern of elaborate political and social organization. It had the effect of filling out the Northern Chin inventory of material culture. Booty obtained by

raiding helped provide a new flow of luxury goods into the hills, which, in turn, inevitably led to a concentration of wealth in the hands of powerful families. This wealth served as capital for the pursuit of the peaceful trade that continued alongside the raiding. Partly, however, the Northern Chin elaborated their material culture on the basis of their own resources of technology and economy, which was supported by the new inflow of goods from the outside. The new social organization could be and had to be more independent of immediate reliance on Burman technology than previously.

Although the relatively less developed cultures of the Southern Hills even now rely almost exclusively upon Burma for outside goods, the Northern Chin, through raiding and trading in all directions, were able to add Assam, India, and Chittagong as sources of materials and ideas. The reader can refer to Parry (1932) on the Lakher for an estimate of the way these different regions contributed to the cultural inventory of the Northern Chin and their nearby congeners.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHIN CULTURE AND BURMAN CIVILIZATION

Before further consideration of the major divisions of the Chin, it is necessary to examine the Chin attitude toward Burma, the symbolic significance they ascribe to Burman civilization, and their conception of their relationships with the Burman people. Indeed, we may speak legitimately of a single, over-all, Chin cultural and social system, despite the great diversity among the various Chin social types, precisely because the pattern of this diversity is, as we shall show, ordered largely in response to a single major variable—the local mode of relationship to Burma.

Most of the peoples of the Chin Hills have culturally stereotyped ideas about Burma and its civilization, although they usually lack genuine substantive knowledge of Burma based upon direct acquaintance with this country. The Central Chin of the Haka, Lushai, Lakher, and related areas refer to Burma and to the Burmans in two ways. The term *kawl*, which seems to be used only by the Lushai and the Haka Chin proper (speakers of *Lai holh*), refers to the Burman as a man and to the country he inhabits (*kawl ram*) in a somewhat derogatory sense. These Chin profess low regard for the Burmans and Burman social behavior, but their

conception of Burman behavior is largely a stereotype based on very limited first-hand experience. They have a much higher regard for their own Chin codes of social and interpersonal behavior and a much clearer idea of the latter. They have always felt at a disadvantage among the Burmans, since they lack—and envy—the wealth of the latter and cannot well obtain what they need because widespread Chin ignorance of or inefficiency in the Burmese language is a handicap to successful trading. The Burman, on the other hand, has held a low opinion of Chin in recent times, despite having called them "allies" in the early days of the Burman kingdom. Excepting peoples living immediately adjacent to the Chin country, most Burmans have little idea of the identity or location of the Chin. The Burmans usually referred to the Southern Chin as "wild Chin," or "stinking Chin." Burman traders and occasional representatives of the Burman government and military forces took advantage of the Chin in various ways. Therefore the Chin's designation of the Burmans, *kawl mi* (a Burman person), connotes rudeness, fickleness, deceit, and treachery (Embree and Thomas, 1950, pp. 15-16).

The Chin have another word, *vai*, for the Burmans and their culture, which is more widespread in the Northern Chin area than is *kawl*. *Vai* but not *kawl* is used in ritual formulas and in poetical language in Haka, and it is undoubtedly an older and more fundamental way of referring to Burma. Its connotations, unlike those of *kawl*, are good. Those of *kawl* derive from intermittent, indirect, and unpatterned interaction between individual Chin and Burmans on an *ad hoc* basis, and such contact was so infrequent that the Chin did not even consider the existence of positive rules governing behavior between one Burman and another. The Chin lacked direct knowledge of Burman social structure and social organization, and failed to understand the subtleties and niceties of value, pattern, and convention that underlie them. But the Chin were acquainted with the wide range of goods in Burma and with the fact that Burman society had much apparatus lacking in Chin society. On this knowledge the Chin based their high valuation of Burman civilization as distinct from the Burman people.

To the Chin, Burman culture and society differed from his own rather in quantity than in quality. That is, he saw Burman civilization in terms of the large number of traits, of material, technological, and social features which Burma possessed and the Chin did not. While the Chin had a somewhat ambivalent attitude, which in-

cluded contempt for and fear of the Burman social personality and fear of the power of the Burman state as represented by the king, what really concerned him was the sheer quantity of cultural possessions, material and nonmaterial (e.g., named social roles). His conception of Burman civilization thus evoked both envy and respect. The Chin preferred his own hill country, owing to its cool climate, its relative freedom from tropical fevers, and its beauty, but he also was vividly aware of its relative poverty and of the difficulties of his existence there.

Vai, a term which takes similar forms in Lushai, Lakher, Lautu, Zophei, and other dialects or languages within the area, connotes this positive concept of Burman civilization. It is used in contrast to such terms as *zo,* the common Chin name for themselves, which expresses their view of being backward and uncultivated (but see p. 55). In the Zophei-speaking country about two days march south of Haka town, there is a high mountain ridge known as *zo-vai-lam tlaang,* which means roughly "the ridge (*tlaang*) which you cross on the road (*lam*) connecting the *zo* and the *vai* (Chin and Burman) countries." It appears, then, that *vai,* used in reference to Burman civilization, also signifies "outside," "over there."

Some examples of the use of *vai* will illustrate better how it symbolizes the Chin outlook on Burma. In the Haka Chin culture there are numerous sacrificial rituals aimed at securing health and prosperity for the sacrificer, his family, descendants, and his crops and livestock. Through many of these rituals runs one preponderating prayer formula, addressed to whichever of the village and household gods and spirits is to receive the sacrifice: "Give us the goods of the *zo* country and the goods of the *vai.*" *Vai,* then, stands for civilization—the place from which a greater quantity and diversity of things are to be had.

Vai is the correlative of *zo,* but *zo* has another correlative, *lai* (see p. 54), which has a decidedly ambiguous connotation, best rendered as "intermediate," although basically *lai* means "center." The Haka villagers call themselves *lai,* thinking of themselves as better than their cultural near relations to the south, who in turn call themselves *lai,* resent the term *zo,* and apply it only to the people even further south. All of these peoples in the Northern Chin sociocultural system are *zo,* however, in relation to civilization and to "outsiders" like the Southern Chin.

Vai is also used as a qualifying prefix for certain items of Northern and Central Chin material culture. For example, a certain kind of blanket woven in the Haka area is called *vai-puan* (*ve-pũ* in Lautu) because its technique is said to be too complicated for most women who weave on a belt loom, and it is consequently very rare and highly valued. Its prominent feature is a broad band running across the center, woven of silk in an elongated diamond pattern and in a satin embroidery weave (design on the obverse surface, the reverse showing only a smooth, white surface). It is the difficult technique rather than any intricacy of design which makes this blanket outstanding among Haka Chin textiles. Throughout the Haka and Lakher areas, there is found a ceremonial knife which the former people call *kingkawtnam* but the Lakher call *vai na,* "the knife of civilized workmanship." It is supposed to be used to cut off trophy heads from enemies in war, but its actual use is in the ceremonial dances celebrating the taking of heads. The steel blade is of excellent workmanship, and the handle is of cast and polished brass, wrapped with red-dyed leather or cane and capped with a plume of red-dyed goat's hair. It is made only by the Haka people, who are generally acknowledged to be the leading craft technicians among the Chin, and it is traded to the outlying areas (see Parry, 1932, p. 54, and drawing, p. 47, fig. 1).

In many Chin legends it is evident that the Chin considered themselves in principle but not in fact copartners with the Burmans in the realm of civilization as the Chin understand it. A similar belief is prominent in the mythologies of many other hill peoples of Burma and Southeast Asia generally. The Kachin are a case in point. Their elaborate tales of the beginnings of the human world, which were said to be kept by families of hereditary bards, read almost like anthropological element distribution studies, listing the traits characteristic of the hill folk and of the Shan and Burman civilizations (see Hanson, 1913). This self-conscious and ambivalent awareness of the difference between the resources of the hill peoples and of the valley peoples is an outstanding characteristic of many Southeast Asian peoples. The feeling is always expressed that some ill fortune has led to their deprivation of the trappings of civilization.

Chin tales of this character are only skeletal. They seem to be not so much tales as general notions vaguely held by many people in many regions. I have elicited such stories from the Haka area

(Hnaring, Haka, and Aibur), my assistant and I collected versions from the Hill Chin of the Kanpetlet region, and I have been told by a highly acculturated Tiddim Chin (Kaptel village) that his people possess a tale that is identical in almost all points to that of Haka. I have not been able to elicit any such legends from Matupi in the very heart of the Southern Hills, but they may exist there, too. Scott (1910, pp. 443-444) gives a version whose provenience is not specified, but it is virtually identical with the one related by Browne (1873) from the plains Chin of Thayetmyo District in Lower Burma. I quote from Scott's version:

> The Chins were subjected to such long continued and systematic ill-treatment on the part of the Burmese, that traditions accounting for this form a part of the national religion. All mankind, they say, is descended from a woman called Hlinyu who laid 101 eggs, from the last laid of which sprang the Chins. Hlinyu loved the youngest best, but he had gone away, and before she found him again the whole world except bleak mountain ranges had been partitioned out among her other children. So the Chin first man got the hills, and as compensation was given elephants, horse, cattle, goats, and pigs and fowls. Unfortunately, Hlinyu appointed the Burman brother to look after him. . . . He pretended to teach him, but only showed him the blank side of the slate, so that the poor Chin never learned a single letter. He rubbed the elephant's back with cowhage, so that the Chin's bare legs were so tickled that he refused to have such an unpleasant animal and gave all the elephants to the Burman. . . . The Chin mounted to ride on the horse, the Burman's wife got in the way, and was knocked down; and as compensation for the injuries she received, and to quiet her clamor, the horse had to be handed over. Then at the Burman's instigation the Chin went over to view his buffaloes clad in a fiery red garment. The buffalo naturally chased him up a tree, and before he could gain the earth again the buffaloes had gone the way of the elephants and horses. . . . When the boundaries of the different countries were marked out, the Burman took very good care to mark his with stones and pillars but he persuaded the Chin that tufts of grass were good enough for him. These were all burned away by the jungle fires, and then the despoiled Chin had to live wherever the Burman told him.

In the Kanpetlet story there were two children, the offspring of the first man and woman. When they came of age, a piece of leather was dropped from the sky for the first boy, but being uneducated he did not know it was to be used for writing. He cooked it and ate it. Then an egg was dropped, and, as he ate the egg, he read omens from it (a common Southern Chin method of divination) which showed that he would thereafter be known as Chin.

Later a piece of leather was dropped for the second boy. The boy wrote on it and became the ancestor of the Burman people.

The Hnaring legend, which may be taken as representative of the Haka-Falam area, is rather plain and is sketched here only vaguely. It is a tale of three brothers who had been given two forms of writing: writing with charcoal on stones and writing on leather. Two of the brothers went off to Burma, and it is thought they were ancestral to the Burmans. The third brother, who was the ancestor of the Chin, lost the writing on stone in some undisclosed way. He also lost writing on leather because a dog ran off with the leather and ate it.

There is another set of stories whose form and territorial distribution shed some light on the subject under discussion. These tales concern the origin of the Chin generally or of the particular local Chin group in which the tale occurs. They refer not to the origin of cultures but to the origin of Chin groups in the Burma plains and their subsequent degradation to the condition of hill peoples. The historical value of these tales is certainly slight but not nil. These legends, however, are very significant in symbolizing the Chin attitude toward their own and Burman culture.

All groups possessing these stories also have other myths which relate that their ancestors originated locally out of a hole, a cave in a hilltop, or from a rock, or which recount a totemistic connection with some animal native to the region. But the stories that the Chin originated in the plains are not universally distributed among the Chin. To the best of my knowledge they are not found among the peoples of the southern interior (such as Matu). In the Southern Hills they occur only on the edges of Burma proper (Kanpetlet-Mindat region), and in the North among some of the Tiddim Chin, the Chin of Falam and Haka proper, and the Lushai. Related tales, found among the other people of the Haka Subdivision, purport to tell of the coming of ancestors from farther north.

The two classes of tales are distinguished, though imperfectly. The first recounts how the people originated where they now live. The second holds that they migrated from elsewhere (for evaluation, see Stevenson, 1943, pp. 11-12, Map II). The first class of tales is more classically mythical in character, whereas the latter always has elements which purport to be history and are often claimed to be such by the tellers. The traditions of migrations do not generally treat of the ultimate "origins" of man or of "first men,"

whereas the other tales do. Both kinds of stories, however, serve as charters of the social structure.

It is interesting that the Lushai and Falam legends specify that all the people came from the Upper Chindwin Plain, though for the Lushai this admittedly excludes the pre-existing inhabitants who have been absorbed. South of the Haka-speaking villages in Haka Subdivision the legends change character and recount how the ruling lineages, for example, of Zophei (Leitak-Aibur), came from what is now the border between the Falam and Haka Subdivisions. These lineages must somehow have been connected with the more northerly Chin groups who say they came from the Chindwin Plain. All local origin tales south of Haka proper refer only to the "royal clans" (*bawi*). They serve as charters for the system of stratified and ranked clans and lineages and the associated organization of hereditary chieftainships and supralocal political organization. Thus these legends purport to connect the development of the complex form of Chin sociopolitical organization to a former close connection with the plains civilization of Burma.

Still farther south, in the Lautu-speaking country in the Haka Subdivision, the two classes of tales become somewhat fused. The story here concerns the descent of local people from the mystical impregnation of a girl through some fruits she had eaten. Her family had come originally from farther north, and the story involves also a magical elephant which was owned by a foreigner (Indian or Burman) who had wandered into the area. This story again accounts only for the local Lautu aristocracy (the *Lian Chin Bawi*), who comprise the ruling lineages of the area, all of which are said to form a single clan for which an obviously mythical genealogy is appended to the tale. There are fragments of similar legends in Zotung as far south as the border between the Northern and the Southern Hills.

The people on the Burma borders of Kanpetlet area also speak of having come up from the Yawdwin in the past and having pushed out the earlier inhabitants to the south and east and into the interior. The people around Mindat have a relatively more elaborate material culture than many other Southern Hills Chin and are in direct control of the trade passing from the Yawdin (Burma) into the Southern Hills. We shall later analyze the whole pattern of tribal dispersion in the Kanpetlet area from the point of view of the political relations which the passage of this trade

from Burma has set up. The claim that this group came from the Burma plains may be true, but the really significant feature of this legend is that it serves as an ideological basis for their lineage and political organization, and connects it to their relations with neighboring Chin groups and with Burma.

It is interesting that the stories place this immigration in the fairly remote past, although these same people are even today in much more regular and direct contact with the Burmans (of the Yawdwin) than is any other Southern Chin group in the vicinity. But this present contact is not felt as an identification with Burman civilization. Owing to their material poverty, rugged habitat, and physical separation from Burman society, these Chin are now sharply differentiated from even the relatively poor Burmans and plains Chin of the Yaw Valley.

Among the Falam Chin and the Lushai the two classes of origin legends are to some extent interchangeable, depending upon whether one wishes to emphasize the difference between the Chin and the Burmans or the close identification of Chin with Burmans. I have had more than one Falam informant tell me with some embarrassment that nowadays it seems inconvenient or foolish to talk of origins from rocks and hills and trees (for such legends in this region see Lian Kim, 1953-54; Stevenson, 1943). With increasing social integration with Burma, a plains origin legend is emphasized (see e.g., Suang Cin Pau, 1952-53).

In the abundant literature on the Lushai there is little mention of the story of an origin in the Burma (Chindwin) plains. It is usually said that the first Lushai man arose on a mountain in the Falam area. Yet the Lushai also have a story that long ago they lived around Khampat, which is a small place in the vicinity of Mawlaik, Upper Chindwin Division. There is said to be a tree there (banyan) which was planted at the instigation of a Burman Buddhist monk (no Lushai are Buddhist), when the Lushai were forced out of the area. The tale states that a prediction was made that the Lushai would return to the area when this tree was cut down. I collected this tale in Tahan, which is a Lushai village in the Kalemyo area in the Burma plains. My informant from the Lushai Hills tells me it is current there, too. The Lushai began to come and settle in Tahan in numbers only after World War II, and it appears that the legend is being used as a *post hoc* justification for a recent settlement. Several things, however, are note-

worthy. First, they have not settled around Khampat, but some forty miles south of it. Second, though the Lushai have been settled in India for a long time and have been separated from Burma by the Chin Hills, it is toward Burma and the Burma plains that many of them have recently turned, in accord with their traditional outlook in which Burma and trade goods from Burma play a regular part.

I have been unable to discover the precise background of the Tahan movement. It is some decades old, but land hunger, famine, and the dislocations following World War II in Lushai land were major factors. There is no reason to believe that the Burmans invented the legend to instigate or encourage immigration; on the contrary, the Burmans have tried to discourage Lushai immigration. Nor is there any reason to believe that the general notion of a former home in Burma was foreign to traditional Lushai culture. It is not impossible that the Khampat version of the legend may be the recent inspiration of the numerous Lushai nativistic visionaries (see McCall, 1949, pp. 219-225, on revivalism—*Hlimsang*). It is probable, however, that the recent emphasis upon the story of a Lushai origin in the Burma plains has come about, as elsewhere, because of the new opportunities for participation in the Burman economic and political order.

The ethos of the Lushai adjustment to the Tahan-Kale scene bears heavily on my whole thesis concerning the Chin (hence also Lushai) concept of plains civilization. The Lushai came down from the hills, cut the jungle as swidden farmers, then made irrigated rice fields. They seem to have prospered and are no longer subject to the periodic famines of their Lushai Hills. They feel that their level of living is more civilized than that of the Burmans of the region who are not, on the whole, remarkably prosperous. But even though the Lushai lives in a Burman style of house, practices Burman agriculture, and wears Burman or Western dress, the local Burman lives differently and much more comfortably. The Lushai are Christians; the Burmans are Buddhists. The Lushai know little of the internal workings and amenities of Burman culture and society, and they base their comparison solely on the fact that many Tahan Lushai are wealthier and have more material possessions than many of the local Burmans.

One often hears stories purporting to tell of the close relationships that existed in the more recent past between the Chin and

the Burman "king," that is, the state. They speak of the alliance by which Chin from certain chieftaincies helped the Burmans in their wars with Manipur. Sometimes it is alleged that the Chin in the Tiddim area acknowledged the paramountcy of the Burmese king. I have already examined the extent of these politico-military relationships between the Chin and the Burmans in connection with the Manipur wars. We shall never know exactly how deep such relationships went in any one locality, but there is every reason to suppose that the Chin made as much as they could out of transient alliances for purposes of personal aggrandizement.

There is no evidence that the Burmans ever claimed regular administration over any part of the hills. On the contrary, in the South where there were relatively peaceful and regular relationships between the Burmans and Chin no such political integration was considered. Occasional slave raiding by Burmans in the Southern Chin Hills has been reported, but its importance may have been exaggerated in Chin legends.

The practice among the plains and Southern Chin of tattooing the women's faces (whence the term *Chin-me*, i.e., "black Chin") was allegedly taken up to discourage the Burmans from kidnaping Chin girls "for the king." Scott (1910) repeats this as if it were true, but the practice is widespread among other peoples in Burma and Southeast Asia, where the same explanation could not possibly hold. Besides, the internal evidence from the Southern Hills shows quite clearly that, contra Scott, these people believe that the tattooing does not disfigure but enhances their beauty. Each "tribe" has its own designs in facial tattooing, and the custom is part of the local sociocultural symbolism. The explanation offered by the aforementioned legend expresses local Chin feeling about their relations with Burma. None of the Northern groups who boast of close relationships between themselves and the Burman state practice tattooing. Yet they speak of their alleged political connections with Burma in terms of recurrent wars or invasions by the Burmans in the Northern Chin Hills. Thus, it is said, the Siyin (a Tiddim area "tribe") were involved in a war with the "Burmans" (really the Kale-Shan Sawbwa), who were allies of the Tashons (a Falam Chin "tribe," enemies of the Siyin). They captured from the Burmans a certain cannon which, in token of their triumph over the forces of the "Burman king," they fired in a periodic ceremony until, in recent years, it exploded (Carey and Tuck,

1896, Vol. I, pp. 226-234). Actually this Siyin affair and alleged alliances and conflicts with Burma seldom involved the Chin with the Burman state, which was far away in Ava-Mandalay and had little direct control over the Kale area. It involved them rather with the local Shan Sawbwa and/or with his agents and with bandits in rebellion against him or against Burma. At most the plainsmen used one Chin group to prevent or punish raids into the plain by another. It pleased the Chin to cite such episodes as instances of alliance with or subjection to Burma.

Similarly the Hnaring Chin have often said to me that independence (of Burma from England, since 1948) is all well and good, but now that "we rule ourselves we are not so great—our former rulers were more important people." This desire for close identification with the sophisticated outside world is a constant theme in the culture of the Chin, though in this instance it is undoubtedly used largely by the aristocratic Chin who bemoan the passing of the prerogatives of chieftainship, which the Union of Burma government has abolished.

One cannot be at all certain of the nature of the Burman raids into the Southern Hills. It is probable that in these raids also the Burman "king" was usually "represented" either by local bandits or by regional warlords from the Yaw area whose authority under the Burman kings was questionable.

This brings us to Chin words for foreign concepts and to loan words in Chin vocabulary. The people of the Yaw area (as of other remote parts of Burma) speak a dialect of Burmese, which in its preservation of some differentiated final stops and other features, is supposed to resemble old Burmese. More exactly it resembles the written forms, rather than the spoken, of Burmese words, where the two differ. Yaw Burmese was probably the language spoken by Burmans and/or Burmanized Chin in such border trade centers as Gangaw. Until recently Chin from the interior of the Haka Subdivision who traded in these parts of Burma were proficient in this form of Burmese.

There is also in Haka Chin and in other Northern and Central Chin languages a segment of vocabulary that comprises nouns referring to a number of cultural items found in Burmese culture; for example, the pair of alternate morphemes (*leŋ/lɔŋ*) referring to wheeled vehicles and/or boats, *none of which the Chin have.* These morphemes figure in Burling's list of widespread T-B

cognates in tribal languages (Burling, 1959). Almost all these items are part of the everyday vocabulary of the Chin, and fall within the Chin concept of their own cultural milieu. Some of them are probably derived from the common Tibeto-Burman vocabulary.

Perhaps the most interesting of the Burmese-derived words is the Haka Chin word *siang.* The commonest traditional occurrence is in the compound *siang-pahrang.* This is the Haka word for "king," a role completely absent in Chin society. The word is a pronunciation, after the Burmese written canon, of what in modern Burmese is pronounced */shín bá-yín/*, one of the official titles of the kings of Burma signifying "elephant lord" (see Cornyn and Musgrave, 1958). It also serves in Haka Chin as a member of such noun compounds as *siang inn* (school) and *siang bawi pa* (Christian missionary), that is, "government building" and "the lord representing the official culture." In these cases the "king" is the King of England. This etymology is not usually apparent to contemporary speakers of Haka Chin, but its phonological and morphological validity can be demonstrated in several ways, and it was worked out for me first by a speaker of the language.

THE MAJOR DIVISIONS OF THE CHIN

We can now return to a consideration of the differences between the major divisions among the Chin, especially that between North and South (see p. 14). Houghton's (1892) "Southern Chin" are the plains Chin of Thayetmyo Division in Burma proper. Plains and hills Chin differ so greatly, however, that we must consider them separately. Whereas the hills Chin live isolated from Burmans, the plains Chin live interspersed among Burman communities; and, while the plains Chin were maintaining their cultural and linguistic identity, the processes of acculturation to Burman society were constantly at work (Stern, 1962). Whereas the hills Chin is a swidden farmer, the plains Chin is primarily a farmer of irrigated paddy fields. Like all plains agriculturalists in this part of the world, he often practices dry farming on marginal land, so that the distinction between dry farming and irrigated, permanent-field farming is not absolute. The traditional hill swidden farmer, however, never farmed "wet" rice and as a consequence never owned a plough or draft animals, whereas the plains Chin did, and used the water buffalo to pull his plough and his cart. The hills

Chin, at least in the Southern Hills, probably always had a few buffalo which had been bought in the plains and brought into the hills to be slaughtered for sacrifices and feasting, but fundamentally the water buffalo was foreign to the hills Chin, while possession of the mithan (*Bos frontalis*) was peculiar to hills culture. It is an animal of great symbolic value, the beast of choice in major sacrifices, the common measure of value in exchange transactions including bride price, and an animal figuring prominently in metaphors concerned with beauty, strength, and so forth. Contra Houghton, it is never yoked, and is allowed to roam and graze in the jungle or on current and fallow swiddens.

The Southern Chin, then, are those Chin living in the southern portion of the Chin Special Division proper. They occupy most of Matupi Subdivision, Paletwa Subdivision, and Kanpetlet Subdivision, these three forming together the Southern District, Chin Hills. The Kanpetlet Subdivision was formerly known as the Pakokku Hills Tracts and was then under the nominal administration of the Pakokku District of Divisional (British) Burma; Paletwa was the Arakan Hills Tracts, administered from Arakan on the southwest. Matupi, in the heart of the hills, was successively under the nominal supervision of Arakan, Pakokku, and the Chin Hills, in the last instance subject to the Haka Subdivisional office.

All of these were largely mere paper administrations. Much of the so-called administering consisted of a tour, perhaps once a year in the dry season, when an officer from headquarters, with his interpreter and a few soldiers, would pass quickly through the territory, hearing cases between villages and between persons within villages, pacifying rebellious groups, discouraging outrages, taking evidence on village boundaries, enforcing the making and maintenance of intervillage mule tracks, and admonishing villagers not to change the location of village sites without express permission (see Matupi Headmen's Register). Villages were later required to build rude inspection bungalows for these touring officers, as was the rule in the more regularly administered parts of the hills. Otherwise there was little control over these outlying parts as long as the inhabitants maintained reasonably peaceful relations with the regularly administered villages and did not raid the plains. This situation continued until World War II.

Along the banks and foothills of the Kaladan River Arakan maintained a fairly constant administration over the Hills Tracts,

the land of the Khumi, where the river provided a regular means of communication. Semi-Burman towns are to be found scattered in the Chin lands well up the Kaladan at Kaletwa (ca. 21°41′ N.) and at Paletwa (capital of the region, ca. 21°20′ N.). The northern and eastern boundaries of the Arakan Hills Tracts were very indefinite. To the north was the Lakher (*Maγa* or *Shen-du*) country, brought under the administration of the Lushai Hills of Assam (India) only during the late 1920's; to the east was the Matu country. In the heart of the Arakan Hills Tracts the Khumi, Mro, and so on (see p. 17) are still among the ethnologically least known and most problematical groups. There is evidence in recent unpublished reports on the Khumi for questioning the idea (see Luce, 1959a, b) that the Khumi are in some way, culturally and linguistically, only "semi-Chin"; rather they are in many ways typical of Southern Chin peoples. This statement is based on my studies in Matupi, a region unknown in previous literature, and in the Kanpetlet area.

The situation in Kanpetlet (Pakokku Hills Tracts) is still relatively obscure.[2] Until my tour there we had no idea of the distribution of cultural traits in the area, except that provided in Rainey's (1892) useful summary, and no conception of their social organization. The various ethnographic censuses of Burma (see p. 17; Embree and Thomas, 1950, pp. 17-18; Lowis, 1910) listed numerous "tribes" in this area, but most of them are defined very vaguely, although Lowis attempts to pin some down to particular localities and to make up synonomies in some cases. Much of the information on which these lists were based was certainly obtained secondhand from Chin communities living at the borders between hills and plains. These were often plains Chin who themselves had no clear idea of the hills Chin. Some of the information was gathered during census operations, which were never extended systematically to the greater part of this region, and much information was based on the answers obtained from Chin from the interior who happened to be traveling or sojourning in regularly administered territory at the time of census taking.

The administration in Kanpetlet was long confined to the eastern fringes next to Burma proper, where the Burman town of Kanpetlet

[2] In 1961 I undertook some months of intensive ethnographic and linguistic field work in Kanpetlet Subdivision, but the results of that work are not reported in this paper, except for a few points that were needed for minimum clarification or to correct gross errors.

is found, and possibly to the northern edge which bordered on the more fully administered Haka Subdivision of the Chin Hills. As of early 1958, the Kanpetlet Chin were still practicing blood feud and some were only just beginning to develop a desire for money. These were the last relatively unacculturated people of the Chin Hills.

Matu lies west of Kanpetlet across the Lemro River, some seventy-five miles from Mindat (five days' walk over some of the worst trails in Burma) and about 140 miles (nine or ten days' walk) south of Haka. The first irregular administration of Matupi began as recently as the late 1920's, increasing only slightly until the end of World War II, and it was not brought under permanent administration (with the establishment of a separate Matupi Subdivision, its seat at Matupi village) until about 1946-47.

Until the late 1920's the Matu people were barely mentioned in the literature. Matupi was first seen by a European in 1923, before which even the location of the village was not certain. Its ethnographic affiliations were completely unrecorded. After the Anglo-Chin rebellion which began in 1918, the Haka Chin insurgent elements retreated into remote jungles and raided into Matu beyond the British administrative frontiers. This caused troubles that reverberated in administered territory, so expeditions were sent out. The rough location of Matupi village was only then specified in the literature. This is all the more surprising inasmuch as it is said to have been at one time a village of perhaps 1,000 houses (almost certainly an inflated figure) and is even now a village of nearly 400 houses, the largest native village in the Chin Special Division. Matupi had, aboriginally, the simplest social organization and general culture in all the Chin Hills, but it has undergone great and rapid cultural changes within the last decade.

Matupi Subdivision now comprises some groups not belonging ethnologically to the Southern Hills Chin. I have already indicated that the boundary between Northern and Southern Chin falls between the Zotung country and the Matu country. Zotung belongs culturally with Haka in the central region of the larger Northern Chin category, but is administratively in Matupi.

Matupi social and cultural forms are the extreme of Southern Chin simplicity and the most consistently different from the Northern Chin. In the rest of this study, I shall use Matupi culture and

society as an illustration of typical Southern Chin. Actually there is a fair range of cultural diversity and social complexity within the Southern Chin area, even though the distinction between North and South holds quite generally. In agriculture the distinction between North and South is perhaps less absolute than it is for other matters. The Chin of the Kanpetlet Subdivision generally grow a variety of crops like that of Haka rather than Matupi. The essentially northern Lushai are more like Matupi and the South than like Haka, Falam, and Tiddim in growing rice and organizing farm work on the basis of large cooperative work groups.

The Northern Chin proper grow grain crops other than rice as their staple food, although the Chin on the borders of the Lushai-Lakher country grow mainly hill rice, as do the Lushai and Lakher. This distribution is explained by the terrain, hill rice being preferred only where there are rolling, relatively low-lying slopes. The rice-growing Lushai and Lakher belong culturally with the Northern Chin.

The Northern Chin rarely build their houses of bamboo, except on the western edges of the area and in Lushai-Lakher country. Instead they use roughly hewn planks on a standardized floor plan which is about the same throughout the area, even for Lushai and Lakher. Those to the far north (Tiddim area and part of Falam) build with the floor partly or wholly upon the ground, the Haka area builds on pilings, and the Southern Chin build on pilings, always using split and woven bamboo. The floor plan varies somewhat from one region to another. It is most aberrant among the Khyang of the Chittagong Hills Tracts on the Pakistan side (Bernot and Bernot, 1958). The use of bamboo in architecture is largely determined by the geographical setting. The large jungle bamboo needed for such construction is rarely found near the Northern settlements, owing to the height and steepness of the country. It is too far from the village sites and grows in insufficient quantity. The importance of bamboo lands to the growing of hill rice can be seen in Parry's table of crops (1932, p. 583). Possibly the southern and western portions of the hills contain fair proportions of the volcanic detritus which even the Haka Chin prefer for the cultivation of dry hill rice. From Zotung northward, the soils are overwhelmingly decompositions of clay shale.

In material culture and technology the differences between

North and South are considerable and definitive. Except for the excellent Southern Chin basket and matwork[3] in split rattan cane (*Calamus erectus, Roxb.*), the native tools, pots, and other products are more refined in the North. Until recently, Matupi Chin wove much of their cloth[4] of wild "flax," something which was rare in the North. It is impossible to say whether it was ever common in the North or whether cotton formerly played even a small role in native Matupi weaving. Iron agricultural implements were cruder in the South than in the North; hoe and ax blades were smaller. Whenever possible a few tools were imported from Burma, ready-made to Chin patterns either by Burmans or by plains Chin in the Yaw area. Otherwise, Burman work knives were imported, and when these were dulled they were reworked by the villagers into Chin hoes and axes. This nonprofessional smithing was done on an open fire with a plain flat stone as an anvil. Professional smiths, the Malayan piston bellows forge, the ability to work from raw steel other than knife blades and to work in brass, gong metal, solder, and so on, were all traits common in the North and traditionally absent in the South.

It has been shown (pp. 27-28) that the difference between the elaborate social organization of the North and the simple one of the South is largely due to the fundamentally different way in which these two kinds of Chin were related by trade to plains Burman. The need for widespread organization to promote this trade was not present in the South where Chin communities on the east and west abutted directly upon plains regions of fairly dense Burman settlement.

In the North the stimulus to local technological development seems to have been the more highly organized character of trade. This resulted in supralocal political systems with a consequent development of social stratification, which in turn stimulated importation and production of a wider range of luxury goods. Trade in the North required an elaborate social organization because it could not proceed smoothly by itself, owing to the uncertainty of Burman settlement in the Kale-Kabaw Valley. Perhaps elaboration of the Northern Chin technology and institutional facilities

[3] Kanpetlet mats are nowadays much in demand in Haka Subdivision, but may not have been prior to British rule.

[4] Especially the men's scanty (two fingers' width as against ten inches in the north) breechclouts and women's skirts.

for expanding and preserving the cultural inventory came from the need to make up in local technical and social resources for the uncertainty of the flow of goods from regular markets in plains Burma.

Leach, citing Scott (Leach, 1961a; see above p. 27), says it is characteristic of the hill peoples that the farther the group is from direct contact with the plains culture, the more elaborate is its own, but Leach and those he cites fail to take account of the positive stimulus to cultural elaboration in the relationship with civilizations. This principle seems to have wide application in Southeast Asian hill civilization.

A traveler to the south may enter the Northern Chin Hills from the Kale Valley, going by truck from Kalemyo over precipitous, rude roads about eighty-two miles to Falam, the capital of the Chin Special Division. He passes into the Chin-settled hills at Fort White, turning south to Falam through the southernmost settlements of the Tiddim Chin area, or he may turn north into Tiddim.

The peculiarities of Tiddim culture cannot be listed here (see summary statements in Stevenson, 1943; Carey and Tuck, 1896). Tiddim has skilled craftsmen, hereditary chiefs, and a social system based upon the stratification of lineage, all of which serve to place them with Haka and Falam, although there are some important differences in the rules of marriage. Moreover, like the latter peoples the Tiddim Chin also live above the Kale-Kabaw-Myittha river systems of the Upper Chindwin Valley. Some portion of the Tiddim population also derives apparently from the adjacent plains. The wars, population movements, and political expansion of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (and probably earlier also) involved supralocal realms of Tiddim, Haka, and Falam, as well as Lushai, in a single network of interaction.

As one proceeds south from Falam the network of political and social interaction remains unbroken. One goes thirty-five miles by jeep to Haka, the center of a cultural area of its own, which has the most developed technology in all the Chin Hills, a fact recognized by almost all Chin. But in the Haka region cultural-historical relationships and sociocultural structure are still clearly Northern. From here south one goes on foot nearly 130 miles (eight to ten days' journey) to the southernmost border of the Zotung country. Here is the village of Hungle, which is a scant six miles away from

the northernmost Matu village (*Khɔŋŋaŋ*, or *Radui Khuathar*), across one of the Pen River headstreams. The people of Hungle village have had military alliances and intermarried for a long time with people of villages even north of Haka, and more recently with the leading clans of Haka town. But similar relations with the Matu people are firmly denied. The Matu are a different people and the very notion of intermarriage with them is distasteful. Evidence exists, however, of fairly important traditional relationships between Matu and Zotung. Legends say that the Matu are either descended from the Zotung people or have come from the Zotung country. This myth may reflect the tacit relationship of dependency in which the Matu lived with Zotung, who fed them a certain quantity of trade goods from Burma and may have occasionally protected them in war. This need not have led to much intermarriage, but the evidence is not clear.

2

Chin Land Use and Agriculture

GENERAL FEATURES

Before undertaking a more detailed treatment of the culture and society of each of the two major divisions among the Chin, we must make some general remarks about Chin systems of land use, agriculture, and ownership of landed property. Without such information it would be difficult to comprehend the political and social organization as means for making use of both local and external resources, that is, as systems of ecological adaptation. This chapter must not, however, be thought of as a treatment of Chin economics. It is concerned chiefly with the way the Chin people use their technology for living in their local environment. The way this is reflected in their cultural symbolism will be dealt with in Chapter 10.

The shifting agriculture practiced by most hill Chin is called swiddening by anthropologists. The Burmese call fields cultivated in this manner *taun-ya,* the Indians call them *jhum*. Some Chin also cultivate permanent fields, growing rice in banked, irrigated fields in lowlands and valley bottoms. This is the regular mode of cultivation for some Chin villages in the Chittagong Hills Tracts and it is becoming increasingly usual among some of the Kuki of Manipur. In Burma the plains Chin follow it also, but the distinction between permanent and shifting cultivation does not depend merely upon the difference between hilly and plains terrain. Chin

coming from hills in Kabaw Valley begin by planting crops in fields cleared from plains jungles in the same kind of swidden pattern that is used back in the hills. Eventually they open up more and more permanent fields, but these take time to complete. Burmans farming jungle lands bordering the hills also practice *taun-ya* farming along with their regular farming of irrigated rice fields.

Since 1949 there has been an increasing spread of irrigated rice farming in the Chin Hills proper, stimulated by the improvement schemes adopted by independent Burma. This has meant the importation of methods, tools (plough, harrow), and draft animals (water buffalo) not hitherto part of the Chin cultural landscape. This new method of farming has not yet become common enough to affect seriously the over-all Chin agricultural picture. It is practiced only by a few villagers rich enough to afford the animals and to hire labor for excavating the fields and leveling the terraces. Moreover, many villages have little or no river valley land and so can have no wet rice fields. Irrigated rice is generally grown along with swidden crops. It gives a grain surplus which can be loaned, sold to administrative towns, or kept for feasts or emergencies.

Prior to World War II commercial orchard agriculture was introduced mainly in Tiddim, which has developed far ahead of most other parts of the Chin Hills on this basis. There is a big trade with the Chindwin Plain in oranges and other fruits, involving whole fleets of jeeps and trucks owned by prosperous Chin of Tiddim who are frequently officers in the Chin regiments of the Burma army (see Hobbs, 1956). I have very little knowledge of this and little has been published on it. Still very much in the experimental stage are the government agricultural loan programs for stimulating the growing of tea and coffee in parts of the Chin Hills. Processing of the tea leaves and coffee beans is still a great problem, and so is transport of the product out of the hills to markets in Burma. At present only Tiddim and Falam are sufficiently accessible.

Apart from the cultivation of wet rice, all Chin practice swidden cultivation, which, despite early reports to the contrary, is carried out with the hoe.[1] The handle, about a foot long, is a naturally forked stick whose shorter arm is inserted into a socketed hoe blade

[1] In the Fall of 1962 the government introduced a plan to promote cultivation of the hillsides in permanent, terraced fields, but at this writing nothing more is known of this plan or of its intended scope.

with a working surface of five or six square inches. Hoe blades are frequently attached to dibbling sticks in planting, but one uses the hoe on the hillsides while bending horizontally from the waist. The axes for felling forests (and for general woodcutting) are of two kinds, one with a tang set into a straight wooden handle about eighteen inches long, the other socket-hafted to a forked stick whose handle is also eighteen inches long. Northern axes have a working surface of at most some ten square inches and are all single edged. Some axes in the North are made of surface layers of steel, forge-welded to an iron core (Parry, 1932). Southern tools are more crudely forked (without the Malayan piston bellows) and have smaller working surfaces. In the South there is a special weeding knife shaped like a very small sickle and attached by a tang to a pencil-like wooden handle. It is mainly a woman's knife and is carried by most women in their girdle strings. A socket-hafted ax turned 90° on its handle, so that the working surface faces the user, serves as an adze, and in the north there are similarly hafted gouges for woodworking. Numerous large and small work knives are used, made on Burmese patterns, but the ceremonial knife (*kingkawtnam*, p. 31) is peculiar in shape.

Swidden sites generally range in altitude between 4,000 and 7,000 feet, but these are only rough limits and much depends upon regional land form. Land below 4,000 feet is frequently valley bottom land, poorly drained and malarial. In the south and west, where the slopes are less steeply inclined and the land is more rolling, it is used almost 1,000 feet further downslope. Generally a greater altitude range is utilized for farming than for situating settlements, but this varies from region to region. Some Chin (see Stevenson, 1944) tend to settle on ridges and so cannot farm above village sites. Others, in southern Matupi Subdivisions, settle near river banks, while some Kanpetlet villages extend from a stream bed up a very steep slope onto a defensible spur. They cannot then farm below the level of the village site.

Earlier (p. 9) it was noted that there is no great problem of grass encroaching upon cultivated areas. Stands of the giant bamboos (e.g., *mau [Melocanna bambusoides]* in Haka) are not common. They occur more often in rolling country in the west and south and in the Lushai country where moisture is considerable. In these regions, the usual building material is woven split-bamboo. *Mau* is used for water vessels and the like, but a thinner walled

bamboo (*Dendrocalamus hamiltonii*?) is split and woven into floors and walls for buildings whose frames are of wooden poles.

One consequence of the uneven distribution of the giant bamboo is a famine which occurs at regular intervals, usually about every twenty years, when the jungle bamboos flower. At these times (see Lewin, 1870) great hordes of bamboo rats appear, fed by the flowering, and devour the rice crops. In the agricultural year 1959-60 such an infestation occurred in the Lushai Hills and surrounding regions, where it was reported that in some villages the total grain harvest was only two or three baskets. This is probably an exaggerated estimate of the damage, since it is hard to conceive of their having sufficient seed left after such a disaster to plant the next year's crop; and yet whole regions have survived such famines periodically and resumed production of good rice crops.

The rest of the Chin area does not usually experience genuine famine but they have periodic serious food shortages, especially when there has been a short harvest. Then the poor, widows, and others of small working capacity who have insufficient stores of grain from previous years, must rely for food on jungle roots and leaves until the new harvest. In the spring months, however, jungle vegetables are a common part of the diet in any event.

The Chin have been practicing their swidden agriculture for a very long time; consequently there is now little cutting of really virgin jungle. Owing to this fact, some of the generalizations about swidden agriculture which appear in the technical literature (see especially Conklin, 1957; Freeman, 1955) require some modification if they are to apply to the Chin situation. They were made on the basis of data from peoples practicing pioneer swidden farming. There appears to be some genuine virgin jungle in the hills, but for one reason or another it is never used for agriculture. For instance, the thick stands of mixed forest and undergrowth found on perennially moist land along mountain water courses is different in appearance from jungle land found elsewhere within the Chin area of occupancy, but it is never cut down for swiddens. Neither are the pine forests furnishing reserves of timber and fuel. The Chin recognize a category of what we might call virgin or climax forest (*hmawng thiam* in Haka), but a good forest for swiddening is one where the trees have grown to a considerable height (not necessarily girth) and there is a certain level of vine and brush growth. They prefer land that has grown up very nearly to a primary

state, but few villages have enough land to let this happen very often, and it takes many years for full growth to reassert itself on cut-over land. It is true that climax forest is rarely found, the word *thiam* is rare, and the distinction between virgin forest and reused forest is of small agricultural significance.

Since the climate of the Chin Hills produces a dry monsoon forest without a profusion of difficult buttress-root systems, the Chin do not erect scaffoldings for the purpose of felling even the largest trees. This diminishes the work needed to cut primary forest and may also account for the Chin preference for felling this kind of forest to make new swiddens. In any case, heavily forested land makes more favorable agricultural land and favors under certain conditions the re-establishment of mixed forest growth rather than grass on fallow swidden lands.

Taller trees are pruned of their boughs to a certain height, while medium-sized trees are completely pollarded if the tops are within climbing reach. Such pruned and pollarded trees are not ordinarily felled, but are left standing and are incompletely burned in firing the fields. The smaller trees and lesser vegetation are completely cleared where possible. Unfelled trees usually regenerate as coppice growth on an abandoned swidden, and many trees above a certain height survive firing. Such incomplete felling promotes the eventual regeneration of mixed forest approximating a climax state. The amount of brush left on the forest floor after felling is variable. Some is needed to form an ash bed, but most of the saplings and larger branches are carried off for use in the construction of fences and for firewood. This, and the fact that swiddens are often fired after there have been one or two showers, reduces the amount of burning. A swath of several feet is cleared around the swidden before it is fired, and this cuts down the spread of fires to adjacent forest.

Some Chin are said to prefer bamboo land for swiddens where it is available, although it appears to lend itself more easily than mixed forest to the supervention of grasslands. In the Chin regions where I have had field experience, bamboo stands are usually far away from the villages and are preserved from burning because they are a valuable technological resource.

The problem of grass is less troublesome than the problem of erosion. Erosion here is a result of planting a swidden several years in a row. Weeding must be very thorough after the initial

year to eliminate grass and new forest growth. Furthermore, crops after the first year tend to be very thin and so plant cover during the rainy season is often too sparse to hold the soil. This condition lasts during the first years after the abandonment of the swidden. The more years in succession a swidden is planted, the worse the erosion problem becomes. It is hard to treat separately from the problem of population, since over-use of swiddens is a result of land shortage.

Excessive population of this kind is not yet common outside of parts of Tiddim Subdivision and the administrative towns of Falam, Tiddim, and Haka. These towns, however, are not under swidden occupancy. Consequently the difficulties mentioned cannot be attributed to Chin swidden practice, but in many parts of the North, villages are beginning to feel the population pressure on land resources.

The schemes for the cultivation of such commercial crops as coffee are primarily meant to reduce shifting agriculture—which requires a great deal of land per head of population—and to stop the periodic firing of the forests in order to protect the trees and ground water. At present they are forestry measures rather than measures for local economic improvement. The populations of the administrative towns include large numbers of civil servants and shopkeepers who keep permanent garden plots in cultivation on the nearby hillsides. They also require large amounts of firewood, which they cut on hillsides close to the village site itself, unless prevented by police. These abuses result in a disruption of the local groundwater table, ruining the drainage and runoff patterns and thus preventing the regeneration of forest land.

Ordinarily Chin villages have a rule that firewood may be gathered only on reserved lands at stated distances from the settlement site. Felling for lumber, firewood, or swiddens next to the village is usually forbidden because cut-over land is easily ignited by sparks and poses a great fire hazard for the villages, where buildings are of old dry wood and roofed with dry thatch.

NORTHERN CHIN FARMING

Northern Chin farming is done in steep, high-altitude, cool monsoon forest. Consequently, while most of the three Northern subdivisions (plus Zotung in Matupi Subdivision) are included,

the rolling, low-lying country on the western borders of Haka is excluded. Here, as in the neighboring Lakher and Lushai Hills, there is abundant bamboo forest and bamboo architecture is the rule.

The Northern Chin agricultural system has been treated by Stevenson (1943). The staple crop is not rice but maize, although a great deal of millet and a varying amount of hill rice are also grown. Other prominent field crops are legumes (sulfur beans, peas of two or three kinds, and runner beans). Subsidiary field crops include melons, mustard greens, and pumpkins. Yams and taros, though cultivated, form a less important part of the diet, except during annual seasons of grain shortage. At such times wild yams and tubers are also gathered. Potatoes are common nowadays; plantains are grown in house gardens or next to the village. Bottle gourds, cucumbers, and tobacco are grown in house gardens, though cucumbers are also found among the vines growing round and over the field houses in the swiddens. Sesamum seed is grown partly as a field crop, partly as a kitchen crop. In the south sesamum seed is eaten as a ground meal, but in the north sesamum seed oil is being used more and more in cooking. Various spices and condiments including turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) and roselle (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) grow on the margins of the swiddens, while leeks, onions, garlic, chilis, and indigo grow in kitchen gardens.

This system of agriculture produces a large number of food plants so that the Northern Chin diet is more varied than the Southern. The distinction between kitchen garden and field crops is not absolute. Even maize is at times grown at home, and the same can be said for most major crops except millets and rice. Some crops, even those having recognized distinct modes of cultivation and so considered as separately named plant types by the Chin, are not even kept separate in the seed stores. Intercropping is common, especially mixing maize with various peas and beans in a single field plot and planting pumpkins with almost any other crop. Other crops are usually planted in separate stands.

The Northern Chin classification of swidden lands is formally based on altitude. In Haka there are two classes: *lai lo* and *zo lo*. This division is so fundamental, not alone for the Chin view of their agriculture but also for the Chin view of their whole world, that I must enlarge on it. From a study of the use of the term *zo*

lo we arrive at a fuller understanding of what the Chin mean when they call themselves *zo*.

A village in any given year decides as a body where the fields are to be located. Individual families or groups of families do not make fields in lands of their own choice. Powerful landowners in parts of the Haka area used to be able to make their fields wherever they owned land. The village may have all its fields in one place (such a place is called a *lopil*) or in more than one place if no single *lopil* ready for felling is big enough. *Lo* is the general word for swidden and for the plot cultivated by a single household. Each *lopil* comprises one or more tracts, each bounded by natural features. These tracts are the units of ownership that pass in sale and in formal gift exchange. They are almost always given proper names. Such a named tract is called *lo hmun*.

Each *lopil* is either *lai lo* or *zo lo*. It is now customary to say that *lai lo* are "warm fields." Strictly speaking, this is an error of translation. The proper term for warm climate is *chim* (cf. *shim* in Stevenson, 1943). *Chim ram* is the warm country, the low-lying country. Actually the Chin do sometimes speak of warm fields, particularly the Falam Chin of Zahau. What Haka calls *lai lo* is in fact in *chim ram*. Nevertheless, *lai* means the "center," "the navel," "the homeland," or "intermediate" (see p. 183). In the present context it signifies fully productive and intensively cultivated fields.

Correspondingly, *zo* is often translated as "cold." The *zo lo* are found rather high up on the hillsides, so high that many villages have no *zo lo* (above 5,000 feet). *Zo* contrasts not with *Chim* but with *lai*, just as in other contexts the Haka call themselves *lai mi* and call the people subject to them and farther south, *zo mi* (and Falam people call themselves *lai-zo*—see p. 30).

Haka Chin, Lushai, and others speak of their country as *zo ram* (the cold country) or *zo tlaang ram* (the cold hill country). The translation "cold" stems from an error of understanding on the part of missionaries and administrators. They saw that *zo* fields were located up in the cold country and the other fields were called *chim* (warm), so they assumed that the word *zo* meant cold. The Chin accepted this translation, since it fitted the facts of the location while the true meaning of *zo* is rather difficult to formulate.

Zo lo are poorly cultivated and less productive fields, but this translation does not show the ambivalent quality of the word *zo*.

Chin are *zo mi* because they lack the civilization of the Burman, whose culture they envy, however still will not emulate. So also in agriculture, we shall see presently that *zo lo* may be the swiddens of first choice under certain circumstances.

Because the high lands are constantly windblown, the soil is loosened and there is poor natural vegetation. *Zo lo* are therefore farmed only one year and then left fallow for some years. If a *zo lo* is farmed every year, annual cutting and burning of new forest is necessary. This seems at first disadvantageous, since *lai lo* can be used several years in a row with no cutting and little serious firing in the second and subsequent years. There are, however, advantages outweighing the disadvantages.

Zo lo need only indifferent clearing of trees and brush. Cover is sparse to begin with and the trees are small. The *zo lo* are planted mainly to maize, which the Chin say requires little clearing. Besides, heavy clearing in windy areas would lead to the eventual encroachment of grass. The heavy clearing of *lai lo* is necessary, not only because of the kinds of crops grown there, but also because the land will be less productive after the first year and consequently it will be necessary to have every square inch available for sowing. Heavy initial clearing inhibits the eventual growth of weeds during the first growing season and in the season between successive agricultural years. Weeding and cultivation, which take place two or three times in a growing season, are considered the most onerous and back-breaking tasks in Chin agriculture. The small amount of weeding necessary on *zo lo* makes this kind of field attractive to work.

Zo lo are never planted to rice. Millet requires well-cleared land, and so is rarely planted in *zo lo*, and then only in small, separate plots. More often, in years when the village's main swiddens are *zo lo*, a small supplementary *lopil* is cleared in *lai lo* especially for the planting of millet and a few specifically warm-land crops. Similarly, in a year when peas are to be planted there are two possibilities in choosing between *zo* and *lai lo*. Either there will be a supplementary *lopil* in *lai lo*, or else in a peas year (see below) fields will be wholly in *lai lo*. I think that the latter is the more common alternative.

A village almost always has more of its farmland in *lai* than in *zo lo*; however, *zo lo*, used one year only, requires a much shorter fallow period than *lai lo*, as indifferent clearing and the nature of

the vegetation of the higher slopes permits quick regeneration of forest. The fallow period for *zo lo* is seven to nine years, while *lai lo,* depending on the number of years in succession it has been used, needs up to forty years to regenerate satisfactorily, though it is usually recut much sooner because it is urgently needed and there is no other choice. It sometimes happens that a large amount of *lai* land is insufficient for an adequate rotation cycle, whereas a relatively small amount of *zo* land is sufficient. The choice of whether to work a *lai* or a *zo lo* is finally made on the basis of an estimate of how much labor and trouble may be saved in the long run without endangering the food supply. A *lai lo* can be used three or four successive years, rarely five, occasionally seven. Some of the numerous factors affecting this are: the sheer man–land ratio, the warmness of the climate in the region, the type of soil and natural vegetation on the particular *lopil,* the consequent amount of time that will be needed to allow the forest to regenerate, and the amount of *zo* land also available. A gamble is made on the future, a weighing of the long-run advantages of using a field several years in a row as against the disadvantages of letting scarce lands lie fallow a very long time. Powerful landlords, however, commonly used to cut their personal *lai lo* in a new place each year, using fields not necessarily in the current village *lopil.* This is no longer allowed.

Different villages have different practices in deciding when to use *zo* and when to use *lai lo,* if they have both kinds of land. One practice is to use *zo* lands year after year until no more are left and then use *lai* lands each for three or more years until some *zo lopil* are again usable. This method makes it unnecessary in most years to farm fields after the year in which they are cleared. Such farming always makes for a somewhat reduced crop yield.

The Northern Chin agricultural system depends on farming several major crops. Rice, a relatively unimportant one, is grown in warm fields in a particular kind of soil. If there is enough of such land in the village's current *lai lo,* then all its fields that year will be likely to have some rice. Otherwise only those households fortunate enough to have fields with requisite soils will plant rice, although few villages are without some rice land. In any case, rice will be planted only in the year in which a field is newly cleared. It is considered a superior food, but this is partly because of its scarcity, and if there is a choice, Chin sell rice rather than eat it.

Only millets (*faang*) figure in ritual for grain increase (see Table I), and apparently this is the ancient staple in the North. Maize is called, derivatively, *fang-vawi.* In Matupi the ritual grain is rice, and millet is not generally grown there for food, although *Eleusine corocana* is grown to make a coarse variety of grain "beer." Several species of millet are grown, but in any particular year not all are grown in one village. Millet makes excellent grain beer, though different species, including grain sorghums, make different grades of beer. Ordinarily mashes from several grains are mixed together, for example, mixtures of millet with either rice or maize. Millet as food has not the prestige of rice, though many people prefer it for its flavor. Sorghum is often considered a coarse grain fit for use only as pig fodder, but in Hnaring it is grown as a crop of equal importance with maize. Millet's great advantage is that it can be stored as long as forty years. For this reason it is rarely sold or consumed, but is saved for feasts, for times of shortage, and for use in ritual. Maize stores only moderately well when dried and taken from the cob, and so is consumed, with supplies often being quickly exhausted. The older and harder the kernels get, the harder they are to cook, but maize remains the great staple. The year it grows poorly, the other crops will be even poorer. The rice, if any, is used after the maize. Then an attempt is made to get by on a small amount of millet, with great reliance on such things as yams, which are not highly regarded. If possible, resort is had to a staple diet of sulfur beans as an alternative to drawing on the millet supply. In any case, a grain food (or sulfur beans and other starch substitutes like yams) is considered basic to any meal.

In this respect food shortages are often quite artificial. There may be enough vegetables, but a family will not eat many in the absence of grain. It is only when staples remain in short supply for a considerable period that vegetable supplies also tend to be short.

Maize, millet, and rice are never intercropped with one another. If they are grown in the same field, they are still in separate plots, for they are sown and tilled differently and harvested after growing periods of different lengths.

One of the most interesting features of this agricultural practice is the system of crop rotation, which concerns the cultivation of various pea and bean crops. Stevenson (1943) has made a valuable study of crop rotation, although with some inconsistency. He says

TABLE I. Summary Chart of the Agricultural, Ceremonial and Secular Calendar of a Haka Chin Village

Month	Agricultural activities	Communal agricultural decisions and rites in agricultural fields[1]	Rites at the village bual (communal place of sacrifice) and secular activities in the village
December	Start to fell trees in new swiddens.	*lo rin zoh nak* with one day's *zarh* or abstention from work. This sacrifice is needed before clearing a new swidden. Landowners first call meeting to make swiddens and arrange assignment of plots to householders.	Fourth - seventh Chin moons. Annual festival and six-day *zarh*, but village not taboo to outsiders. These sacrifices are made to all the place-guardians *(khuahrun)* of the village territory. Done by cooperating groups of three-ten houses each. Also season of housebuilding and rites for new houses.
January	End pea and bean *harvest*; harvesting of great millet and sulfur beans.	One such sacrifice done for each *lo hmun* by the household working the owner's own field that year. Also *lo nam* communal sacrifice to a bad spirit, if such exists in that year's swidden. Only now can clearing be started on day after sacrifices.	
February		The sacrifice of *lopil nam* is made to spirits *(khuachia)* inhabiting unusual topographical features in the *lopil*.	Pots made and general off-season work done. Many feasts, house rites, feasts of merit, trading expeditions, etc. Group fishing.
March	Fire fields		Hunting, game drives by firing dry jungle slopes. Hunting rest of year by whoever has spare time.
April	Fire fields	Begin building field huts and platforms for bird-frightening (only older established households may build the more elaborate structures). This requires *lo ai sa*, a sacrifice to permit one so to build. At same season, roughly, is performed the series of sacrifices called *lo sa thah* (field flesh kill). First one man sacrifices from a central point in the *lopil* in sight of all the fields. Then each household sacrifices to each outstanding topographical feature in its own field: springs, big stones, large depressions, etc. This is performed at the chief upright post *(sut)* of the field hut, just as house rituals are performed at the major *sut* of the dwelling house. In the year of opening a new swidden a pig is sacrificed, otherwise a chicken.	
May	Plant crops of all kinds		Eighth-tenth Chin moons, May-July. Activity such as intensive cultivation. No household sacrifices requiring *zarh ulh* (rest and restriction of household to house and barring of outsiders).
June	Cultivation (some three weedings)		
July	Harvest of *ru rial (Panicum miliare?)*		Some group fishing in brief slack season.
August		When crops are a couple of inches above ground "they now exist" and a chicken may be sacrificed if the growth seems slow (one day abstention involved).	Rites from this time to collect the soul of grain and to request the grain to grow in the ears of the standing crops.
September	Millet harvested; maize harvested.	At first harvest each household sacrifices a chicken at the main *sut* of the field hut performed on a mat and a winnowing sieve. At this season families live for days, even weeks, in the field hut to weed and later frighten birds from the headed grain. This harvest sacrifice is made to the *khuachia* to whom *lo sa thah* was made.	Rites to drive away famine (*thlai no thoi* or *faang no thoi*—crop, or millet, youth-release). Done when millets are ready for harvesting. Done at village *bual*.[2]
October (start of Chin cycle of moons)	Cotton harvested		Between last and first moon of Chin calendar sacrifices are made for fertility and prosperity both communally and house-by-house. The village is supposed to be taboo to outsiders at this time. Done "when fish lay their eggs."
November	Hill rice harvested; start pea and bean harvest.		

[1] Major rites for increasing grain stored in bins are usually absent. They are present, e.g., in Matupi, a rice growing area. Here also we find them as rites at rice harvest direct at sheaves cut from a plot planted first in each field near the field hut. There is no "rice mother" complex.

[2] The village "altar" is called *bual* in Haka old village, but people in other parts of Haka Subdivision when speaking in Lai often say *mual*, which, because of its wide occurrence in the Central Chin Hills is, I suspect, the more common and older form. Haka villagers not infrequently adopt unusual words and locutions deliberately to signify their exalted separation from other Lai-speaking people. Elsewhere in this paper I shall use *mual* and *bual* interchangeably.

that the Zahau Chin practice a scheme of rotation based upon three, six, or nine years' use of a field (i.e., field rotation cycles in periods divisible by three only). He links this to a planned interdigitation of the crop and field rotation schemes. This may be correct for the Falam area, but Haka Chin insist—and it would appear from the data—that the two kinds of cycles are quite independent of each other. Stevenson's own data do not in fact prove that even in Falam the two are closely bound to one another. The field rotation system depends upon irregular factors, such as the state of regrowth of trees on potential *lai lo,* which cannot be exactly predicted. Stevenson furthermore seems to have overschematized his material He complains throughout his work that he often found the ordinary cultivator "too dull witted" to give an orderly presentation of the relevant facts, and had to secure cooperation from local chiefs in working out the following formal scheme: start from the opening of a new *lopil.* The first year sulfur beans are planted; the second, bush peas; third, runner beans; fourth, another variety of sulfur beans; fifth, bush peas again; and sixth, runner beans, and so on.

Let us examine his facts in connection with the principles in force in the Haka area, which are implied in what Stevenson himself says in the paragraph following the material summarized above: a peas year (*phiang kum*) is the basis of the cycle; it has ceremonial significance. The whole cycle is enforced strictly by mythical sanctions and taboos ensuring that peas are always planted in a peas year. The Haka count always begins with a peas year; this may or may not be a year in which a new swidden is cleared. There are two kinds of peas, greyish and red (pod?), but they are not given different names or planted at different times. Three to five kinds of beans are used, including runner beans but excluding sulfur beans, which are not a relish crop but a supplementary staple. In Haka most kinds of beans can be planted in any year and do not figure in the cycles of crop rotation. They are grown in limited amounts and some are used only for their leaves, which are the basis of a common vegetable soup. Haka does not distinguish between kinds of sulfur beans, at least not for purposes of the rotation count.

In Haka, peas are planted one year and then two years go by without the planting of peas. In the fourth year, or as they say, every three years, peas are planted once more. Starting again

Fig. 7. Haka bird-scaring apparatus—vertically hung bamboo clappers.

from a peas year, the second year following (that is two years after the peas year) sulfur beans are planted. The cycle, then, is: peas, nothing (runner beans in Falam), sulfur beans, peas.

Sulfur beans (*Canavalia ensiformis*) store well when unhulled and therefore are an important food reserve, but only the poor have to eat them regularly. Their taste, and the fact that they must be hulled and elaborately leached to rid them of poison, make them unpopular as a food.

Swiddens are felled during the cold season. Firing takes place in the months of March and April, when a few showers have already fallen and some green shoots have already come up to inhibit full burning. Grain is planted then and the seed holes are not often covered up, because it is hoped that rains will soon come, cover them up naturally, and cause the plants to sprout quickly. If sowing takes place too early this will not happen, and birds eat much of the seed.

Table I shows a scheme of major events in a northern agricultural year, together with an outline of the general calendar of secular and ritual activities in the village. Most data come from Hnaring and Aibur. No comparable scheme for the South will be presented, since adequate data were not gathered. The southern agricultural

Fig. 8. Haka grain field. Cane lines extend from platform of field hut to bird-scaring apparatus throughout field.

year is fairly simple. Planting begins a few weeks earlier than in the colder North. Rice, the only staple grown, is planted in May and harvested, according to variety, from late August or early September through November. A note on agricultural ritual and magical concepts connected with rice growing is appended to Table I.

Almost all crops are sown by dibbling holes at regular intervals (the interval between holes varies for each crop), and dropping several seeds into each hole. Broadcasting is rare, though used at times for supplementary crops sown amidst a crop already planted.

There are some other crops in the Northern Chin agricultural system. One is cotton, which is frequently sown in fairly large plots in *lai lo*. It can be grown, the Chin say, only in a newly cut *lai lo*, hence most villages cut a small area of new *lai lo* in any year in which they must plant cotton—and that is almost every year. Often this amounts simply to extending the cleared area of a *lopil* already in use, but there are other alternatives. In the agricultural year ending in the autumn of 1957 Hnaring Longtlaang had been using a certain *lopil* (they have no *zo lo*), and they

Fig. 9. Fallow swidden in Zotung a year after use, showing coppice regrowth of pollarded trees.

were planning to use it again the following year for the last time before letting it lie fallow. Nonetheless, while I was still there they performed the rites to allow them to cut a new swidden, for they were about to clear a small part of the *lopil* to be opened in the late autumn of 1959 and used in full in 1960. This would, in 1958, be used only for growing cotton. They had already chosen their new *lopil* a year in advance. This, they felt, would save them performing the rites in question in a year in which the major effort of actual felling had to be made.

Sugar cane is grown and there are now a few cane presses in the hills, but these are a new introduction. Formerly cane of several varieties was used only for chewing. Cane is sown in small amounts in the fields. Several fruits are common, though they can hardly (except for bananas) be called regular foods in Chin country. Guavas, which grow wild within the village, bitter oranges, pomelos, and citrons are found in many villages, but though the citrus trees are deliberately grown in house compounds and are nominally owned, they are not treated as property of importance or as serious foods. The fruits can be picked without

permission and are usually eaten green with salt—especially by children and, at night, courting couples. Often they serve as kickballs for children.

Cotton and most of the fruits mentioned above are absent in Matupi, or were until recently. Most Matupi weaving used to be done in indigo-dyed wild "flax." Cotton is obtained through trade.

SOUTHERN CHIN FARMING

The following discussion refers mainly to Matupi, where rice is the great staple, to the virtual exclusion of all other grains. Maize may have been recently introduced and is used as a casual filler crop along field margins.

Vegetable crops are few; the diet is unvaried compared with the North. Pumpkins, though now commonly grown and eaten, are a recent introduction. Yams and taros are planted to some extent and are used during the season of annual food shortage, but only for a few weeks, after which wild tubers and the calcareous fruit of certain banyan trees are used for vegetable food. The major plant cultivated for use as a vegetable relish is the large "white pumpkin," *Benincasa ceriferra savi* (see Watt, 1889, Vol. I, No. 429, pp. 439-440).

Few condiments are grown. Salt substitutes are still common. Cooking is almost exclusively by boiling, except for the roasting of meats at large feasts. Cooking in oil with spices in the Indian fashion, which is common now in the North, is still rare. This poverty of diet may possibly account for the peculiar Matupi attitude to rice. Many persons over thirty years old profess a dislike for rice, so much so that they can eat only one cup a day (dry measure, hulled, before cooking), where they needed three before. This is supposed to cut down on their ability to do really heavy work. Soil conditions here produce such high yields of rice that they have nevertheless not adopted other staples; at least that is the explanation offered by the villagers.

A field is used only one year and then lies fallow about twelve years, and the state of forest regrowth once again determines this cycle. The size of fields in Matupi more nearly approaches five acres on the average than it does in the North, but throughout the Chin Hills most household fields are between three and six acres in size. Variations in size have to do with the number of workers

Fig. 10. A Matupi swidden newly cleared and burned with mixed work group sowing.

available for felling and cultivating, the number of mouths the crop must feed, and so on. A good deal of this variation is accounted for, however, by the ambition of the farmer himself. After a field has been cleared and even planted an ambitious man will be seen extending his fields at the margins if there is unused space in which to do so. The larger size of fields in Matupi is in part due to the greater availability of land. A person may have a field in two or three different swiddens in any one year, but this is uncommon.

In part of the Kanpetlet area maize is more common as a supple-

Fig. 11. Matupi swidden fenced to keep out pigs and small wild animals.

mentary crop. In general the range of crops of the *Ng'men* (see Chap. 4) resembles that of Haka rather than Matupi (see Rainey, 1892). A sort of pseudoterracing of the cultivated slopes is commonly found here. This is produced by felling tall trees across the slope in steep and gullied portions of a swidden to guard against soil slippage. It may be common owing to some local peculiarity of soil or rainfall, but it is also found in the North, in Haka and Falam areas, primarily on slopes whose conformation is a flattened *V* drainage fold, subject to erosion.

WORK GROUPS IN CHIN AGRICULTURE

In the agriculture of the rice-growing South (as among the Lushai) we find cooperative work groups. These are also present in the North, but are economically unimportant because the large number of crops cultivated, each with its different time to be harvested, requires such a tight schedule of operations that a farmer dare not take days together to work on the land of others. He helps friends or relatives only on rare occasions when they

Fig. 12. Matupi planting methods. Man on left uses dibble; man on right uses hoe.

are still working after he has finished a particular task. The rice-growing communities which do not have this cooperative system of farm work tend to have smaller fields. A single family, working alone, will live day and night at the fields during the height of the working season.

One difficulty with working in cooperative groups is that the persons in such groups do not ordinarily have their fields near one another. A man's field neighbors one year are not his field neighbors the next, except by accident, yet his work group is more or less stable for several years in a row. Consequently a work group works one day in one part of the swidden, and the next day in a part perhaps half a mile away or even in a swidden some miles away in a different direction from the village. This lessens the usefulness of living in the field huts continuously during the agricultural season, for it is often nearly as easy to walk back to the village as to walk back from where one has been working to one's own family field hut. In Matupi few fields are more than four miles from the settlement.

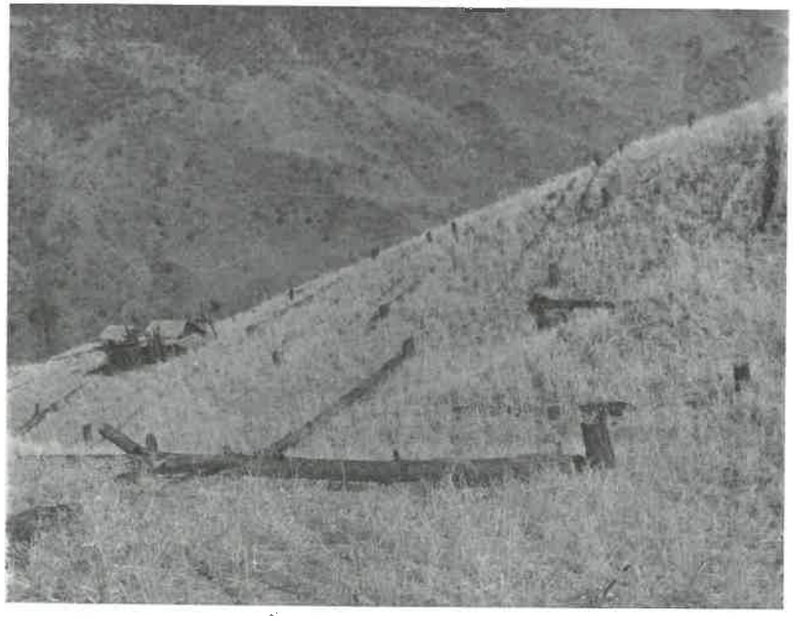


Fig. 13. Newly harvested Kanpetlet swidden, with logs felled across slope to retard soil slippage.

Most work groups remain the same in basic composition for about five years, gradually adding new members and dropping those who have married. The group is a wholly voluntary one of young men and women. Young married adults also help one another with some regularity, but these groups are smaller and less organized. Older persons and households form cooperative ventures with only one or two other such units. A well-established family with several children needs a big field, and will eventually have many hands to work its field because its older children will be involved in work groups of as many as fifteen members.

SETTLEMENT STABILITY IN CHIN AGRICULTURE

Throughout the Chin Hills swiddens are shifted frequently, but settlement sites rather rarely. This is less true of the Kuki who have never been able to establish themselves as undisputed owners of large village tracts. Consequently they are less tied to particular

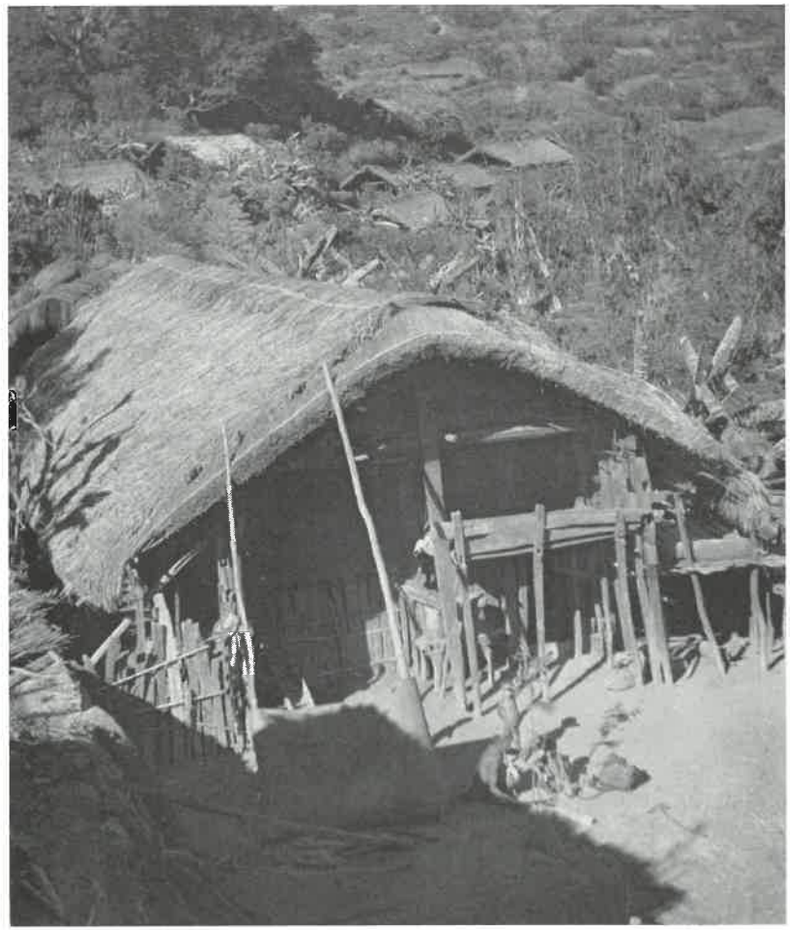


Fig. 14. Hnaring settlement pattern. Householder in front yard prepares to sacrifice a fowl in shadow of mat at foot of stairs. Note random arrangement of houses along saddle ridge.

tracts and, often on the sufferance of some local prince, practice a form of pioneer swiddening, though not necessarily in actual virgin jungles. Chin generally have their fields within seven miles of the village. This enables them to go out to the fields at about 6:00 A.M. and return to the village before sundown to cook and

Fig. 15. Matupi settlement pattern in relation to fields.

eat the evening meal. Villages with lands at all adequate, if they own tracts farther away than this, let other villages use them.

Some less fortunate villages have to farm lands at a greater distance, but they do not necessarily establish new settlements there since these lands are frequently in the territory of another village. It is difficult to bring home the harvested grain from lands far from the village. In such cases granary barns are established at some distance in between and supplies for consumption are taken home from here gradually. Otherwise, separate granaries are not universal. Such villages as Leitak and Aibur, which are located high up on very steep slopes, have granaries halfway down the hillside, on the way to the warm fields. But most Haka area villages have no granary barns and each household keeps its grain bins (large mud-plastered, mat bins) in the dwelling house. In the South separate clusters of granary houses are found just outside each village.

Settlement sites are relatively stable. An important village like Haka has probably existed in roughly the same place for centuries. The present location of Hnaring village appears, from my brief examination of ash-pit layers at old house sites, to have been in

Fig. 16. Aquaflume in a settlement at Matupi. Note houses facing each other across descending series of terrace plazas.

continuous use for some 200 years, but the village center has often shifted within this location during this period. Throughout such an area as that of Haka many factors combine to give stability to settlements. The political system discouraged moving, while feud and warfare everywhere limited, but did not prohibit, the breaking away of daughter villages. Population was unevenly spread because settlements cannot be situated in all kinds of terrain and there are only a few good sites available. Omens must be taken by hepatoscopy before establishing a new village. If a bad omen is read, new omens have to be taken until a favorable one is attained, for the site is likely to be the only one serviceable. Another factor promoting settlement stability is the fact that houses are built of hewn planks in the North. A house stands about fifteen years, and is then dismantled and largely rebuilt of the same planks, with replacement of only the most weather-beaten.

There is, nevertheless, a certain amount of rather random shifting of village sites, even in the North. This appears to be due, in the first place, to the fission of village populations into dissident factions and to the founding of daughter villages on a mother village's distant lands. Otherwise it is due to the existence of

alternate preferences for siting villages on particular kinds of terrain. One preference is for a site high up on a ridge and readily defensible, but hard to reach from the fields and far from water sources. Sites near water supplies are also considered good, or sites far enough downslope so that water may be brought into the village, perhaps from miles away, by means of bamboo flumes, but they are not so readily defensible. The more defensible kind of site was commoner before European administration than it is now, and is now commoner in Tiddim than elsewhere. A frequent compromise between these alternatives in Haka area is to locate the village out on a low, bluff mountain spur, relatively defensible but within reach of water. Such places are not abundant. Hnaring is located in an exceptional way, strung out along a flat saddle ridge. It is relatively inaccessible on three sides, except by tortuous field trails from the east and west, a long, steep track on the south, and a readily guarded road on the north. Most Central and Southern Chin villages, however, are simply located on mountain slopes. The steeper the slope, the more defensible the site.

Southern Chin have somewhat less permanent settlements. One common practice is to shift back and forth among several sites within one village agricultural tract. This involves a certain amount of random shifting in the vain attempt to find the perfect location, especially under pressure of warfare. Nowadays, with village shifting prohibited by law, a village will try to establish a more or less temporary settlement when it has to farm lands on the slopes on the other side of a high ridge or peak from its regularly established settlement site. Since the earlier part of this century there has been a tendency for people in Matupi to move westward toward Arakan in search of greater prosperity and of the security of territory brought under regular British administration during the nineteenth century. Within recent decades this has led to a considerable migration from Matupi to the Lushai Hills and to the establishment of Matu hamlets near Aijal, and also among the Khumi in Paletwa Subdivision.

Villages throughout the Chin Hills are usually about seven miles apart and rarely more than twelve. A good day's journey for porters carrying upwards of fifty or sixty pounds each is about twenty miles, but some will make almost thirty miles, while exceptionally good walkers, lightly burdened, can do over thirty miles between sunrise and some time well after nightfall.

3

Land Tenure and Inheritance

PROPERTY AND STATUS

Land tenure and the inheritance of property play an important part in the social organization of the Chin, especially in the development of differential status and ranking in the lineage systems of certain Chin groups. In Northern Chin society it might appear that persons who achieve high status for their lineage and thereby political dominance, do so primarily by first gaining control of unusual wealth. I suggest, however, that social, economic, and political development of Northern Chin lineages resulted from their desire to further economic intercourse with Burman civilization and also with Assam, Manipur, and neighboring regions. The term "economic intercourse" is used rather than "trade" in order to emphasize the fact that trade and raiding were often combined in the expeditions into Burma.

More effective organization of trade and raiding brought both more wealth, which in many ways benefited the society as a whole, and a flow of luxury goods and prestige-conferring foreign goods which the organizers—persons whose position was founded on special capacities as leaders—kept for themselves. It is therefore probable that both the privileges and the wealth came at the same time. Thereafter, it may be assumed, social privileges enabled certain lineages to acquire greater control over economic resources, which in turn gave them more social privileges.

The military strength of the high-status lineages made them allies

whose support was sought. Since alliance in Chin society means, in effect, marriage alliance, the persons of high status were able to exact ever higher marriage prices for their daughters. High-ranking lineages also came to control landownership, mainly by exacting large parcels of land as part of the marriage price. Chin legends of cases in which aristocrats seized lands by fiat must not be discounted, because they were undoubtedly able to do so after they had already achieved positions of social and military power in the society.

Once status differences emerged, persons in straitened circumstances sought the economic protection and aid of the aristocrats in exchange for which they bound themselves, and often their descendants, to their protectors. This gave a classlike character to the system of social stratification in Northern Chin society. The circumstances which brought persons to submit themselves under bondage (excluding "slaves" taken as war captives) included the need for sustenance during periods of food shortage, the need to ransom oneself or one's relatives, the need to pay a fine imposed by law, or the wish of a potential victim of blood revenge to seek sanctuary. (See Stevenson, 1943, for a discussion of debt bondage in the Falam area.)

It would appear, therefore, that in the development of Northern Chin high-status lineages, wealth accrued to those with social privileges quite as much as social privileges arose from the possession of wealth. Moreover, it is clear that the society as a whole benefited materially from the existence of these more elaborate social and political forms and that initially the emergent status lineages were accorded privileges as much for their ability to bring such organization into being as for their control of a major economic surplus.

LAND AND PROPERTY IN MATUPI

Among the Matupi Chin the system of land tenure is exceedingly simple. Within a settlement, any available house sites are more or less freely taken by anyone who wishes to build (but see pp. 88-95). Ownership of farmlands rests with minimal lineage segments, which are usually individual households whose members work swiddens each year. The cooperative work groups among these people have no joint rights in fields or in their produce. Except

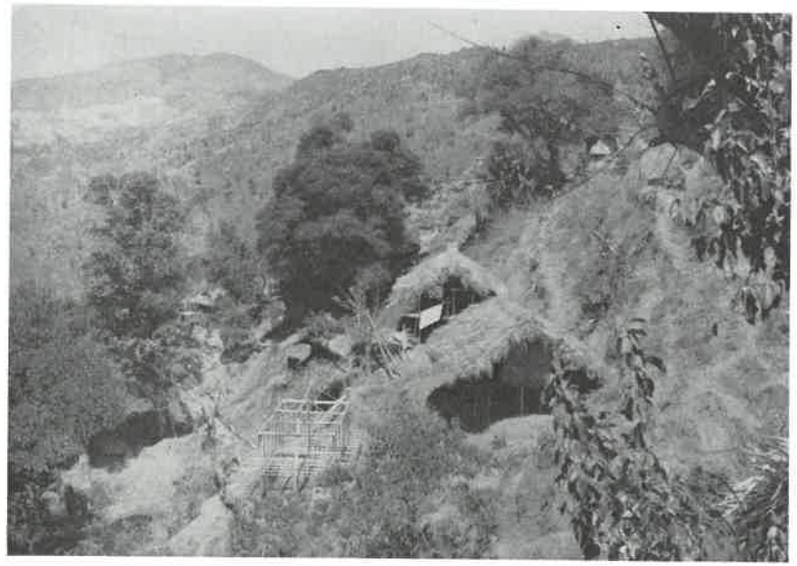


Fig. 17. Matupi houses in three stages of construction, with new swiddens in distant background and older fallow swiddens in middle background.

for a few trivial cases, such as a house inhabited by incapacitated persons, there is one field plot for each household each year. These lands are inherited according to the rule of primogeniture, ultimogeniture, or some combination of the two (see below). In nonstratified Matupi society, however, land inheritance does not lead to any noticeable concentration of lands in a few hands. Lands are quite freely sold by individual households, and the fortunes of lineage segments vary so greatly over time that a household may sell some or all of its land at some time.

The Matupi open a new swiddening place each year. In each the individual household plots are demarcated by tradition, though very vaguely so. These household plots may be sold or inherited. A household usually owns a plot outright in at least one such swidden land, often in more than one, but not necessarily in all. Some households own plots in one or more lands or own a plot large enough so that they can afford to subdivide it and let part of it out to another household.

Plots may be acquired by a household for use in two ways.

Fig. 18. Man putting lead weights round edges of fishing net of circular casting type.

First, for a large sum, variable in amount, land may be permanently sold to a household, which it then passes on to its own heirs, or sells again. More often such a plot is rented for one year, and during that period the household working the field has sole rights of access and of ownership of the crop. The rent is a sum payable, in various amounts but chiefly in grain, in an amount and at a time determined in the individual agreement. Hence payment of the rent does not depend upon the harvest to be reaped from the plot rented. In fact, in Matupi both the above mentioned kinds of agreement are called "sale," being distinguished only as sale for a short period and sale in perpetuity.

Where one household has a larger plot than it needs, and the plot of a friend or relative is very small and the friend or relative has a low working capacity, the two may share the working of the land that year and have a common granary the next year.

In Matupi, sons inherit a father's property. Widows usually are allowed to remain in their late husbands' houses and thus also to continue to use their property. But this is a right allowed them by

the heirs and is freely revocable by the latter, particularly when a widow has no sons and the heirs are her late husband's collateral agnates. The same rule also applies in the Haka area of Northern Chin society, where, however, the category of women's property is more substantial.

In Matupi grain is lent at interest, which brings considerable wealth to a few persons. The interest rate is 100 per cent per annum, that is, one basket of interest per year for each basket of grain lent. These loans are rarely paid off and the lender eventually is provided with an assured annual income, since he can afford to make more and more such loans from his mounting stocks.

However, neither the selective inheritance rules nor the occasional existence of wealthy men of the sort last mentioned have given rise to a permanent distinction between rich and poor or high and low lineages in Matupi. The fortunes amassed are never really great, and a variety of circumstances causes the wealth to pass out of the hands of such lineages after a generation or so. This will be better understood when we have analyzed the Matupi lineage system.

LAND, PROPERTY, AND STATUS IN HAKA CHIN SOCIETY

The Northern Chin systems of landholding and inheritance are much more complicated. The effective holders of farm plots in almost all cases are again individual households, and in most villages only a few families own the bulk of the land. This does not in most instances earn them much rent. Rents are nominal and do not comprise a share in the crop, although there are also share-cropping arrangements in force in this society. The bulk of the population works on rented plots. In Hnaring, each family pays its landlord, only in the year in which a new *lopil* is opened up, one brood hen (*ar-pi*), one brood sow (*vawk-pi*), and one large pot of grain beer (*zureng-pi*).

In such a village as Hnaring the plots are assigned at the pleasure of the owner. If he has lands in the current *lopil* he is in principle required to allow his debt-bound followers to work plots on his land rent free. He is also likely to give preference, at least in assigning the more fertile plots, to his friends and followers who are not his bondsmen, but in general he agrees to rent some sort of plot to anyone who asks, provided a plot is available at the time.

In other villages, such as Aibur, the individual household plots are heritable even though they are part of lands owned by landlord–aristocrats. Rent is payable for their use, but in principle eviction for nonpayment would not be allowed, although no cases have come up within memory which might test this rule. Not every house owns a plot in every *lo hmun*.

The real profits from landownership do not come from rents but from other privileges associated with ownership: the right to dispense rented plots and thus secure the loyalty of followers; the right to make one's own fields as large as possible and to make them each year in a new place, even though the rest of the population must keep on using the same field several years in a row; the right to make one's *lai* fields in any land one owns, even though it is not in the *lopil* currently being worked by the rest of the village. All of these bring considerable agricultural wealth to the landowner, and wealth leads to further political power and then to further wealth. Moreover, a landowner with extensive lands can afford to have his own household fields large enough to be worked on a sharecropping arrangement. He will invite the household of a commoner, not necessarily one of his bound followers, to till his field, each party taking half the crop. The plot is generally so extensive and fertile that each party profits from the arrangement. The disadvantage to the working household is the amount of labor needed to work such a field. Each year a different household is asked to work a field on this basis, and for no more than a single year.

In Hnaring, a double village of nearly 300 houses, fifteen houses own all the land in the two administrative villages of Khuahlun and Longtlaang. Of these, five own only a few scattered fields. Ten have extensive holdings in virtually every one of the *lopil* in their own villages. All large owners have some fields in the Hnaring village other than where they reside, and also in other villages. All the large owners in Hnaring are of the same maximal lineage, that of the hereditary aristocrats and rulers of Hnaring. The largest single owner, Lian Kulh, chief of Hnaring Khuahlun, owns lands comprising some 1,700 individual household plots. The other large owners each own at least several hundred plots. One man owns about twenty plots of land, three own two to five plots each. In a sample census of one-fifth of the whole village, five houses of commoner status returned a history of having once owned

a bit of land, though this usually means that an ancestor once owned some.

The lands owned by households consist of large tracts (*lo hmun*), each one having a name. In general a single *lopil* will contain more than one such named tract.

Lands are generally owned by minimal lineage segments, or single households. In the case of a few large holders, the inherited lands are held by somewhat larger groups roughly equivalent to minor or even major lineage segments. But the houses comprising such lineage segments hold land jointly by virtue of *ad hoc* agreements, not by any special rule of inheritance. This is to prevent lineage segmentation from taking effect too rapidly within politically powerful lineages.

Many goods other than land make up inherited property (*ro*), especially those used in formal exchanges, marriage payments, ceremonial feasting, and the like (see Head, 1949; Stevenson, 1943). Two kinds of goods deserve special mention. The first is the class of heirloom goods—certain locally woven ceremonial blankets, certain precious kinds of jewelry, large and small brass gongs, brass pots, large, glazed rice-beer pots, firearms, and other items imported from civilized territory. These are the luxury goods, the symbols of rank for whoever owns them, and commoners own only small quantities.

The other class is livestock, particularly mithan, obscurely related both to the domestic cow and to the wild bison or gayal, with which the literature sometimes confuses it. It does no work and produces no food, but it is the beast of highest value in sacrifice, the one the gods and spirits love best. The Feasts of Merit, which validate and confirm the high standing of a lineage or a household, are major occasions for the sacrifice of mithan.[1] Prominent feasters wish to kill many mithan in the course of such a performance, and a major Feast of Merit must include the slaughter of at least three. Hence, since one cannot do without mithan if

[1] If a man can afford it he will sometimes slaughter a mithan simply for meat. An animal, to be fit for sacrifice, must be without blemishes and of one color, not piebald; also a mithan has to be of pure breed—not a cross with other kinds of cattle. Mithan not meeting these standards still have value in exchange, but can be slaughtered only for secular purposes. In this system of exchange, the mithan is a sort of money, not in the sense of currency but in the sense of a prime medium of capital savings and investment which is more than a mere store of value, because it is subject to natural increment.

one is seeking social position of the highest order, mithan have the highest value in the system of exchange and prestations in rank-conscious Haka Chin society. Low values are expressed by minor jewelry or pigs, the higher first of all by *sia-te* (baby mithan), next by *sia-pi* (fertile females), then by *siapi le siate* (mother with offspring), and finally by *ki-kawng* (adult bull mithan). In addition, the value of any one item in this scale has a fairly fixed relation to the value of any other, although these ratios (e.g., of gongs of a certain size to mithan of a certain sort) do change over long periods of time. The scale as a whole has tended over the years to rise sharply in *cash* value. In the case of gongs, pots, pigs, or necklaces, the size further determines the value of the item.

In Haka area the rules of inheritance vary widely from village to village (Head, 1949, pp. 20-29). Sometimes the rule is that of primogeniture, sometimes ultimogeniture; often the eldest and the youngest share the estate (*ro co*). It is common for the youngest son, who is theoretically expected to care for the parents in their old age, to inherit the house site (*hmun-pi*), a piece of property valuable only as the "seat" of an aristocratic line. Often there is a system of body-pairing (see Stevenson, 1943) whereby the eldest son and the youngest share the bulk of the estate, while a smaller portion is divided between the next eldest and the next youngest, and so on.

The inheritance of a man, particularly of aristocratic lineage, passes in most cases only to sons by a major wife, that is sons whose hereditary rank is most nearly equal to his own. This is discussed further in connection with the lineage system (p. 109 ff.).

4

Southern Chin Social Systems

POLITICAL AND TRIBAL RELATIONSHIPS

This section will discuss how tribal and cultural element distributions are in part dependent upon the relationship of the whole Southern Chin region with Burma. The following section will show that kinship institutions serve to link people together in formal networks of only narrow geographical compass, usually within a radius of about ten miles round any community, the average distance between communities. Even within this compass there are no distinct political offices, and beyond it consanguineous and affinal relations shade off imperceptibly into relationships of feud and war. As a consequence, the numerous so-called tribal groups of villages throughout much of the Southern Chin Hills are set off from one another rather sharply as political enemies, without integrative institutional connections. They correspond generally to major or minor linguistic units, but some are linguistically mixed and others have mixed historical antecedents.

The Northern Chin differ from the Southern Chin in that the various linguistic, geographic, and named tribal entities are linked together in far more widely ramifying, even expanding, networks of formal alliance institutions with specialized political offices. Among both sets of people there is an intimate connection between warfare and affinal alliance, since warfare is not uncommon between villages of the same tribal unit. In the Southern Chin Hills hostile relationships tend to extend far more widely than affinal

networks, although this hostility has certain positive economic aspects.

There seem to be elements of an over-all system in which each tribal group takes its place. The system appears to be founded mainly upon the dependency of the Southern Chin Hills on trade with its civilized neighbors in Burma and Arakan. Moreover, the relatively closed character of the Southern Chin systems of segmentary lineages and affinal alliances, which will be examined below, is connected with the hostile relations between different tribal units and is consequent upon the systems of trade.

Prefatory to this analysis of the over-all Southern Chin "tribal" system, it is necessary to state that the lists of Southern Chin peoples found in the early administration reports (Rainey, 1892), in the *Linguistic Survey of India*, and in the several decennial issues of the *Census of India* are not what they purport to be. The names in these lists are not always designations of linguistic units or of homogeneous ethnic groups which are recognized by the people themselves through their use of a common native name. Some of the terms are merely Burmese epithets applied to the Kanpetlet Chin with whom they are in most regular contact. *Chinbok* and *Chinme* mean, respectively, "stinking Chin" and "black Chin," the latter referring to Chin whose women so heavily tattoo their faces as to appear quite black-faced. *Chinbon* apparently refers in a general way to the southernmost of the Chin of the Kanpetlet Subdivision. Nonetheless, some of these terms make fairly precise reference to meaningful entities in the Chin sociocultural system. Other entries on these lists, such as *Twisheep* and *Twi-li-chaung*, are the names of villages, or of small valleys (*chaung*), which were administrative units on the eastern edge of Kanpetlet, with "chiefs" created and appointed by the British.

Other terms are used by certain groups of Chin to designate themselves or other groups of Chin. These terms make sense in the context of the complex political and economic systems of tribal entities, which will be examined here.

To show how such a system of intertribal and intergroup relationship works we can take a sample cross section, starting in the east with a group bordering directly upon Burma proper and proceeding into the interior along one or more lines of trade. Such presentation cannot pretend to deal with all the Southern Chin, nor even with all such systems of trade, for there are several systems,

Fig. 19. Villagers of New Thluk, branch of Thluk. Note red-dyed cane girdles and narrow loincloths of men and boys. House frame in background is of bamboo.

which differ as they start from several different points of contact between civilization and the Southern Chin Hills. Although my delineation of these relationships is admittedly based upon incomplete and in some cases probably inaccurate data regarding many particulars, the formal characteristics of the system as here set forth are substantially accurate. The only useful published account of the peoples in question is that of Rainey (1892), and the system I discovered in my investigations is in great measure also implied in his account of tribal distributions.

Our starting point is the villages in the vicinity of the present administrative settlement of Mindat. Among the peoples I shall mention, only these people, the *Ng'men* (but not all their clans), claim to have originated in the plains and to have come up from the Yawdwin into the easternmost part of northern Kanpetlet Subdivision, displacing some and absorbing other earlier inhabitants. These people control the entry of trade from this region of Burma into the hills and identify themselves with civilized territory. They are a rather warlike group and maintain an attitude of disdain

Fig. 20. Man and women of *Ng'men* tribe. Woman second from right wears short, indigo-dyed kilt and some wear the tunic (*tzui*) of a type found also in Haka area.

mixed with fear and patronage toward Chin of the farther interior. The *Ng'men* have a fairly elaborate material culture. Their costume includes multicolored striped blankets, men's sitting cloths, men's loincloths in the form of a genital sheath, women's sleeveless shirts, and other items not found west of there. The *Ng'men* seem to be what the *Linguistic Survey of India* (Vol. III, Pt. 3, p. 329) calls the Northern Chinbok; *Chinbok* would then signify the hills Chin of the eastern edge of Kanpetlet, who control trade from the Yaw drainage.

As we go west we continue to meet people whose culture seems generally the same as that of the preceding people, and who still answer to the name of *Ng'men.* They all speak dialects of a single language, and a few clan names are very widely distributed throughout *Ng'men* territory. Vis-à-vis other groups of villages, the *Ng'men* think themselves a single entity. Between the villages of the Hlet Lawng stream, which are *Ng'men,* and those of the next watershed west—for example, between Ro and Thluk (Khreup on some maps)—is the first of the "tribal" boundaries. In the most easterly of the villages on the other side of this boundary, Thluk

Fig. 21. *Ng'men* boy and man trading at Kyauktu, a Burmese village in plains east of Mindat. Note loincloth of type peculiar to *Ng'men* and characteristic Kanpetlet Chin knife-sheath basket *(shim pem).*

and Yophong, a few women today wear the *Ng'men* sleeveless shirt, and friendships are made with *Ng'men.* But all are classed as *M'Kang* and are culturally and linguistically unlike the *Ng'men.* This group has the same provenience and intermediate position as is given by the *Linguistic Survey of India* for the category, *Chinme,* but the latter term (see below; also Rainey, 1892) signifies very dense facial tattooing, and while *M'Kang* tattooing is heavier than *Ng'men,* that of Southern Kanpetlet is denser still. In the *Ng'men* language, *M'Kang* refers to all the peoples west of the Hlet Lawng drainage but east of the Lemro River. These people are ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous.

Three villages, including Thluk and Yophong, call themselves by a related word, *Kaang,* and speak a single language. Some *Ng'men* clans, moreover, are supposed to be descended from these *M'Kang,* and are called, collectively, *M'Kak-tu* (*M'Kang* lineages). True *M'Kang* call the more westerly *M'Kang "Tamang"* (which is ap-

parently a Zotung word applicable to the western *M'Kang* and Matu peoples). The *Tamang* and *M'Kang* languages are distinct.

The literature speaks of "the *M'Kang*" as "the cane-bellied Chin," because men and boys wear girdles formed of numerous rounds of red-dyed cane. They also wear indigo-dyed loincloths so narrow as to leave the testicles fully exposed on either side. However, not all cane-bellied Chin are called *M'Kang*. The Matu, for instance, wear the same costume, but are never thought of as *M'Kang*, and they tattoo their women's faces with a very different, much less closely spotted design. Some cane-bellied Chin are called *'Dai* and not *M'Kang* or Matu.

M'Kang, then, means the people who are intermediaries in the Burma trade between the *Ng'men* and the Matu on the other side of the Lemro. *M'Kang* with direct access to the Burma markets apparently became *Ng'men* (the *M'Kak-tu*). Some of the *M'Kang*, those otherwise called *Tamang*, maintain friendly relationships with the Matu and even intermarry with Matupi (e.g., Thlangpang village). *M'Kang* is indeed a unity of sorts from the point of view of the *Ng'men*, but some of them are more like Matu in several respects; for instance their common relationship to another line of trade southward from Zotung (Northern Chin).

'Dai designates various peoples displaced and looked down upon by the *Ng'men*. They are mainly located to the south and southwest of *Ng'men*, and some so-called *'Dai* are found immediately south of *Matu* territory. In general, trade goods do not pass from *'Dai* to *Matu*, and it is uncertain where the *'Dai* get their goods, though they are in regular contact with *Ng'men*.

The category *'Dai* is very heterogeneous, culturally and linguistically. Some *'Dai* men wear red cane belts; others, to the east, wear a short, brilliantly striped kilt. There are other crosscutting distinctions within this category which the people themselves recognize, such as that between villages on high hill slopes and those downslope, close to streams.

What is said of the category *Yindu* in the *Lingustic Survey* seems to apply to the *'Dai*. Rainey (1892) says that the *Yindu* also claim to come from Burma proper, as do the Chinbon, and that the Chinbok claim relationship with the Northern Chin.

The *Matu* people are the farthest interior of the Southern Chin, and traditionally were at the extreme end of several trade routes. First is the route we are analyzing here; second is a route from

Arakan to the west, which sets up its own system of interdependencies and tribal groupings and embraces such peoples as the *Khumi* and *Tawa* (or *Ta-ɔ*). There are numerous significant cultural similarities between *Khumi* and *Matu*. Third is the trade route that enters the Southern Hills from Zotung to the north. There are legends purporting to show that the *Matu* people were originally from Zotung territory and immediately connected with the Zotung people of specific villages. This is interesting in view of the great cultural, social, and linguistic differences between the *Matu* people, as Southern Chin, and the Zotung, as Northern Chin. The people of *Matu*, comprising Matupi (formerly the largest Chin Hills village) and a number of villages north, west, and south, do not all claim a single origin, but there is a fair degree of linguistic unity among them.

Matu is characterized by remoteness and systemic marginality and for these reasons is poorer than any other Chin group mentioned here. Trade filters in uncertainly from several directions, and one striking consequence of this in the social organization is the absence of any traditional bride-wealth payments. *Matu* culture bears the marks of a society that has been literally pushed from all sides into a cul-de-sac.

The term *Matu* is at present used by the people of *Matupi* themselves, in the form of *bʌdu*, but they insist that it is not a word of their own. There are reasons for supposing that it is actually a term originating outside the area, probably on the Arakan (*Khumi*) side, or even among the *Lakher*. These people, again, get a large measure of their identity from the peoples pressing around them. The people of Matupi village call themselves *ŋʌ-la*, and they speak of their language as *ŋʌ-la 'ɔl*, and of their territory as *ŋʌ-la bɛn*.

This state of affairs should be contrasted with that among the Northern Chin. The undeveloped state of Southern political organization traditionally made travel between areas hazardous and difficult. Consequently it was rare for any group of people not bordering upon Burma to have any direct access to Burmese markets. They had to depend upon what was handed over from one village, and from one region, to the next. In the Northern Hills, while certain border communities controlled a major share of the trade and had a reputation for supplying traders, people from the most remote places in the hills frequently had direct access to Burma.

The Southern system was made possible by *regular* contact with *stable* Burmese markets available at the edges of the Southern Hills. This allowed certain groups to maintain an effective monopoly of this trade. The distributional pattern of Southern quasi-tribal entities, then, is in part (though certainly not altogether) consequent on the conditions of the Burma trade.

SOUTHERN CHIN SOCIETY

The following account deals almost exclusively with Matupi, which has the simplest Southern Chin social system. The Southern Chin have patrilineal descent with corporate, unilineal descent groups, which are segmentary, though perhaps not consistently so (*M'Kang* lineages appear not to be segmentary). The process of *cleavage*, leading to the existence of lesser *segments* included within larger ones, easily gives way to *fission*, by which the several lineages are no longer arranged in increasingly inclusive hierarchies and are merely juxtaposed (see terminology discussed in Goody, 1958, pp. 58-61). The corporate functions, furthermore, by which the different segmentary levels are to be distinguished, are not in every instance clearly discernible—though they exist in principle.

First, there are patrilineal *clans*. Each village is largely inhabited by a single clan, and the clan of a Matupi village is not found elsewhere, but complications may arise where there are temporary or semipermanent, but incompletely separated, daughter villages attached to a parent village. Where there is only one settlement unit ("ward") within the village, the clan is by definition equivalent to a maximal lineage; hence it is the unit of exogamy, and we may speak of village exogamy. Otherwise there is little to distinguish the corporate functions of the clan from those of the village. There may be a common ancestor to whom all the clan members are related equally, more by stipulation than by genealogically demonstrated descent (Fried, 1957), but where there is more than one maximal lineage in the village, the clan is not given the name of the apical ancestor, or any other specific clan name, and no one will respond with a clan designation when asked his lineage affiliations.

The clan generally owns the village and its lands, but this means little, since control over access to house sites, residence, and use of farm land is in the hands of lineages and lineage segments. There

is no political organization at the level of the clan, as such; indeed, the several wards or maximal lineage settlements are quite likely to be at war with one another within the same village. This has a peculiar consequence: the warring settlements are adjacent, but they are clearly demarcated and named; yet the swidden fields are not correspondingly distributed, and so there is no necessary relationship between a man's lineage affiliations and those of his field neighbors. The latter may be from any household in the village, and sometimes from another village.

In Matu, each village (clan) has a distinct ceremonial cycle, a distinct set of myths and gods, and these are served by a ritual officer whose office is not hereditary. *Ng'men* religion is differently organized. Each *Ng'men* village his its own hereditary priests, but a clan—although each has a separate origin tale—may be widely dispersed (see Jordan, 1958-59).

Within a village there are likely to be some households whose clan affiliations are not those of the rest of the inhabitants. These will have been brought in as affines to one of the resident maximal lineages. It is the latter which control access to settlement rights.

Next, there are named *maximal lineages*, the basic units of exogamy. A maximal lineage is usually named for its ancestral founder, but it may also be referred to by the name of the land where its settlement ward is located, or by the name of its most important current leader, who is generally also the leading figure in the senior major segment.

The maximal lineage is the chief political unit. There are no inherited offices, in fact no distinct political offices at all, and no word for chief, headman, or the like. This is one major difference between the Southern Chin social system and that of most of the Kuki tribes in Manipur, whose social organization has been elucidated by Needham (1958, 1959a). Nevertheless, a single individual is commonly recognized as the leader in each maximal lineage settlement. Sometimes there are two leaders, and then either name may be used as the settlement or lineage name. The lineage leader is generally the key figure in arranging the composition of disputes and in convening councils of lineage elders and household heads both for judicial purposes and for making communal decisions affecting the agricultural work cycle.

The genealogically most senior major segment is often the most prominent in its maximal lineage, but there are exceptions. Actually

the major segments within a maximal lineage compete for precedence. It is likely that the pedigrees of the maximal lineages are adjusted from time to time in accord with changes in political leadership among their major segments. Differences of opinion as to who is the leading figure of a maximal lineage undoubtedly lead to the formation of new lineage groups, major or even maximal. In the pedigrees given in Matupi the birth order of any group of brothers who were supposed to be founders of several lineage segments was not usually a subject of general agreement.

Lineages are not differentially ranked or stratified among any of the Southern Chin. Some individual households have status achieved by the male head who uses his wealth in frequent performance of sacrificial Feasts of Merit, at which his lineage fellows and even persons from other settlements are entertained. The leaders of lineage and settlement groups are always among such wealthy feast performers. But this status is not hereditary, nor are the feasts graded as they are among the Northern Chin. Here one simply gives more feasts of the same general sort. Among the Southern Chin a high-status household feels rather strongly that it ought to marry its daughters only to another wealthy house. (This provides an additional cause of segmentation, as seen below.) The rank of a Southern Chin family does not, however, depend upon the rank of families from whom it gets its wives. Any advantage in status gained by marriage to a woman of good family cannot be passed on by inheritance.

The distinctiveness of the maximal lineage as the broadest organized political unit is best seen in a consideration of warfare and feud. Matupi is made up of a number of maximal lineage settlements which are often at war with one another. Actually, these "wars" are raids or murders often involving only individual families, in which case they are not much different from blood feud as it might exist within a single undivided settlement. But the means for settling what we call war depend solely upon the existence of direct or indirect affinal ties linking the warring parties. No common authority is recognized by both sides. On the other hand, all such arguments within a settlement would ordinarily be dealt with by rather clearly defined procedures, in which the chief part is played by the leader of the maximal lineage and the lesser leaders of the settlement. There is nothing to distinguish wars between settlements within Matupi from wars between Matupi

(or rarely only some of its lineages) and other villages. In case of fighting between widely separated villages even affinal ties are absent and only the distance between them keeps such a war from being continued over a great period of time.

Each settlement contains a number of *major lineage segments.* A major segment is always a descent group, named for its founder. There are no native terms denoting, respectively, clan, maximal lineage, major, minor, and minimal segments. There is, in Matupi, only a single term (*phuŋ*) which covers both maximal and major lineage. Thus you can ask a man his *phuŋ* and he may respond with the founder's name, either of his own major segment or of the major segment that is "senior" in his own maximal lineage. It is, however, more common to ask for a man's *hɤl,* technically the maximal lineage's ward settlement, but often taken as roughly equivalent to *phuŋ*. The response is likely to be variable, and it is understood even in maximal lineage settlement that it can either be the name of maximal lineage, the name of the present settlement leader, or the actual place name. Finally it is common also to ask a man his *ben,* that is the "side" he comes from, understood to mean what people (or place inhabited by a people) he belongs to. His answer, if he is in a strange village or on the road, will be to give the name of his village with linguistic group (in this case *ŋʌla* or *bʌdu,* that is "Matu"). Note that this refers to a group coextensive with his clan (plus resident affines and other immigrants), but is not a clan name. If a man is asked his *ben* within his own village he will respond with the name of his settlement, though it is possible for him to give instead one of the other ways of designating his maximal lineage.

The major lineage segment is the unit of prescriptive marriage alliance—what Needham calls an *alliance group.* Each major segment has its own particular set of major segments from which it takes wives and another to which it gives wives. In a given maximal lineage, the set of wife-givers (or wife-takers) for each major segment may overlap the corresponding set for one or more other major segments, but will rarely be the same. Furthermore, a major segment is not allowed to include in its set of wife-takers a lineage that gives wives to any other parts of its maximal lineage (and vice versa). It is not, however, prohibited in Southern Chin to give women to the wife-givers of one's own wife-givers; no interdiction applies beyond one's own immediate affinal lineages.

Fig. 22. Women and children in Matupi village. Note woman's breast cloth, short kilt, and earplugs made of sections of bamboo.

The consideration of major lineage segments reveals numerous complications and some apparent internal contradictions. First, within a maximal lineage, there is no apparent difference in standing between named major segments representing different orders of cleavage. If *A* is the name of a maximal lineage and its "senior" major segment and *A1* the name of another major segment of lineage *A*, and *A2* the name of a major lineage arising out of *A1*, we shall find no difference between the standings of *A1* and *A2*, although the pedigrees preserve a record of their different orders of segmentation. Indeed, *A* itself, as a major lineage, has no particular precedence despite being the "senior" lineage and the lineage whose leader may also be leader of the common maximal lineage, a fact that has no bearing whatever upon the jural status of the ordinary members of major segment *A* in maximal lineage *A*. In my records from Matupi, over a span of twelve "generations" (which may or may not be a true historical record), major and maximal segmentation within the clan occurred usually thrice in any given genealogy. Demographic and political considerations alone seem to determine whether a second or succeeding segmentation arose

Fig. 23. Matupi men sit on dismantled house wall and talk.

from a relatively "junior" line produced at the first segmentation or directly from the "senior" line.

Second, it is sometimes difficult to classify a lineage segment as either maximal or major. For instance, there are maximal lineage settlements in which some of the named lineages are unrelated to the others and have come in as politically subordinate units, often from outside the village. These have to be treated as major segments in terms of the marriage rules, even though they are not included within the pedigree of the maximal lineage of the settlement, and no attempt is made to graft them onto that pedigree. Such a group is a major segment because it has a single, definitive set of named lineages as its wife-takers and another as its wife-givers; it does not usually marry within the settlement. The inhabitants of the village always speak of this sort of a group in contexts showing that they consider it a major segment of perhaps uncertain genealogical affiliations. But, unlike other major segments, its wife-takers can be wife-givers to other segments in its settlement ward (and vice versa).

A settlement sometimes includes one named lineage which is an affinal ally (usually wife-*taker*) of another in the same settlement, though both usually belong to the same village clan. Polit-

ically it seems to be subordinate to the lineage for which the settlement is named; it does not provide the leading personage of the settlement. The superior status universally accorded the wife-giving lineages by wife-takers is of slight value, in Matupi, having relevance only in the domestic and not in the politico-jural domain. This difference in status may, however, be the reason for the political subordination of an in-resident wife-taking lineage. Such a lineage figures in the pedigrees of the local clan as a *maximal* lineage, and seems to have once had political status as such (probably also a separate settlement). It is, however, thought of as small and weak and is not highly esteemed, being often omitted, or added as an afterthought, when a list of maximal lineages is being given.

There are also settlements named for a descent group which has no named branches or segments. These settlements usually contain other named lineages, but the settlements are named only for the first mentioned. These are popularly considered "maximal lineages" from the standpoint of marriage and politics, but not from the standpoint of genealogy. The other lineages in its settlement will not intermarry with it, but little attempt is made to graft them onto its pedigree.

In Matupi the two complications last mentioned are closely related, that is, where a settlement includes two intermarrying "maximal" lineages, and where a settlement has a "maximal" lineage without branches as well as other named groups politically subordinate. In both cases we may infer either that maximal lineages have grown small and invited other people in to strengthen the settlement, or that a major segment (or even a minor internally undifferentiated and unnamed segment of a lineage) has founded a separate settlement, due to a factional dispute, and has invited others in, again for purposes of numerical strength.

Finally, we come to the really difficult cases. When there is a settlement where one of the named lineages has the same name as the maximal lineage of another settlement, they are treated as two separate major lineage segments of the same name. In terms of the political system the second is clearly not subordinate to the senior major segment whose name it bears. Rather it is subordinate to the politically dominant lineage segment within its own settlement.

In terms of the rules of marriage such a group will always figure as a separate unit in the lists of wife-givers and wife-takers or

other major lineage segments, who in turn do not usually intermarry with the maximal lineage settlement of the same name as the first-mentioned lineage segment. We can thus formulate a general rule: the name of a major segment serves to differentiate it from maximal lineages or major segments only in its own settlement. No effort is made to lose sight of the genealogical pedigree by which such segments are shown as branches of their namesake lineages in other settlements. The problem in these cases is less serious for the anthropologist than for the villager. The fact that his lineage name may refer either to his major segment or his maximal lineage can confuse him. In giving the name of his major segment he must specify that he is *not* of the settlement whose maximal lineage also bears that name.

Minor or *minimal lineage segments* are always unnamed, but important. The causes (chiefly demographic) which lead to their formation are fundamental factors in the process of cleavage and segmentation. Given the rule of prescriptive matrilateral cross-cousin marriage, this kind of segmentary development is exceedingly likely, if not inevitable.

The population of a lineage or segment is not always able to maintain parity with that of its established wife-giver and/or wife-taker lineages or segments. In any given major segment each household has its own distinct set of marriage allies of either kind. The set comprises households with whom recent and earlier marriages have been made. It may be roughly the same as the set belonging to some other households in the given major segment, may only overlap that of other households in the segment, and yet may be quite distinct from that of still other households in the given major segment.[1] The households which share roughly the same set of wife-givers and wife-takers are usually collaterally related at a maximum depth of two generations. That is, they are a deceased man's patrilineal descendent households in the first and second generations. These may be called *minimal* or *minor lineage segments.* Given the high death rate and the consequent large proportion of households in which only one child (or none) survives

[1] In some cases one major segment either takes wives from or gives them to more than one other major segment. Some of its households will then have, say, their wive-givers in one of the two wife-giving segments, some in only the other wife-giving segment, and some in both wife-giving segments. However, in practice any household has its own particular wife-takers or wife-givers among only some other households in its respective traditional alliance groups (major segments).

to the age of reproduction (survivors include girls who cannot continue the patriline), it is not surprising that such minor segments often comprise only one or two households. The average number of persons per house in the South is just under five, in the North, just over five.

Precise definition of these minor segments is clearly not easy. It is usually impossible to say where one leaves off and another begins, or how many sublevels are in the minor segment, because minor segments are not discrete corporate entities.

The Southern Chin practice prescriptive matrilateral cross-cousin marriage. This marriage system is fundamentally political in its nature and in its strategic motives. This is the view of systems of enduring affinal alliances between descent *groups* that is taken by both Leach (1957) and Fortes (1959).

There is a categorical verbal injunction for a man to marry a real or classificatory mother's brother's daughter (MBD).[2] In decreasing order of preference this category comprises an actual MBD, FMBSD, a FFMBSSD, and finally a woman of the same major segment or segments as the foregoing. The number of cases in recorded Matupi genealogies where marriages were in accord with this injunction, and the number of marriages with a true MBD, were considerably greater than chance and demography would have led us to expect. But the "exceptions" were also very numerous. Since these records cover a genealogical depth of twelve generations, I cannot account for this fact by supposing it to express a disruption in the orderly working of the system.

All prescriptive systems of marriage, as Needham points out (1958), have an attendant prohibition; namely, that one must not give women to groups from which one has taken women. In other words, there are always *negative prescriptions* which state that once a marriage has been made, a reverse marriage may not be made without legal penalty; any marriage establishes a categorical alliance. The Matupi Chin furthermore do not consider even reversals of affinal relationship incestuous.[3] Rather, like other Chin, they have *well-institutionalized* rules for the compensation that must be paid when such alliances are reversed, thereby allowing

[2] The abbreviations used for kinship categories refer to ordinary English: F-father, M-mother, H-husband, W-wife, S-son, D-daughter, B-brother, and Z-sister. The system of symbols is also used by Needham.

[3] At any rate marriage of this sort with a mere classificatory affine is not a moral offense in the way that marriage *or* even sexual relations are with a parent, child, or sibling.

for even these exceptional marriages. These marriages, too, establish categorical alliances. Needham has underemphasized the fact that these negative "prescriptions" alone can result in a system of prescriptive, asymmetrical marriage, or connubium, as he defines it, even where marriage with persons not previously one's classificatory affines is fairly common.

The negative prescription seems the more important, structurally because most Chin groups have a similar negative rule of marriage, but many Northern Chin groups (including Lakher) do not have the positive injunction to marry the real or classificatory MBD. We have already noted the large number of Matupi marriages with people who were not even classificatory MBD, in spite of positive injunction. Most of these perhaps were marriages into emergent new major lineage segments, but some were marriages with old established major segments with whom no affinal relationship of one kind or the other had previously existed. These marriages were looked down on but were not penalized, and were always in conformity with the negative rule, adherence to which exceeded 80 per cent of all marriages recorded.

There are always numerous named lineages, some with considerable generational depth, to which a given lineage may not be affinally allied in any way. A certain number of newly contracted affinal relationships are normal, expectable, even predictable, because of the production of new lineage segments and the probability of demographic parity being imperfectly maintained between affinally allied lineage segments (see Livingstone, 1959; Needham, 1960b).

The Southern Chin seem to have a marriage rule like that of the Purum Kuki, and the marriage cycles that result from the operation of the system ought to resemble those formulated for the Purum by Needham. But Needham also tells us, following the ethnographer of the Purum (Das, 1945), that it is very unusual to marry into a lineage other than one already an affinal ally of the proper category. This latter restriction is not found among the Chin I have studied. Among the Purum, however, as Needham points out, all lineages are allied to all others, so that, from the viewpoint of ego's lineage, the society is exhaustively categorized into two exclusive groups, wife-givers and wife-takers, so that the only possible exceptional marriage would in fact be a specifically forbidden one.

It might be thought, nonetheless, that prescriptive asymmetrical

marriage must ordinarily involve a prohibition against marrying into lineages to which one is not already affinally allied. Yet we have among Chin, Southern and Northern alike, only systems that must be regarded as prescriptive asymmetric matrilateral marriage with no such prohibition. How can we account for this?

It makes a great deal of difference whether we think of systems of prescriptive marriage as basically political systems of alliance (as I prefer to do) or primarily systems of "indirect exchange" and reciprocity, or dualistic ideology, as Lévi-Strauss (1949) and Needham have treated them. They propose what I understand Leach (1957) to deny; namely, that the *structural logic* of systems of prescriptive marriage can be understood only in terms of their function as ideally well-ordered, cyclical exchange. The patterns of exchange inherent in prescriptive marriage systems are indeed best demonstrated by applying to them the analytic notion of marriage cycles, as Needham insists, and the notion of the marriage cycle as basic to an understanding of the breeding system and bridewealth circulation set up by rules of marriage. It does not follow, however, that exchange or cycle are the basic functional principles of these systems.

From the viewpoint of exchange and conceptual analysis, an asymmetric prescriptive marriage system requires a minimum of only three categories of lineages: wife-givers, wife-takers, and agnates of ego's own lineage. As Needham observes, these can be reduced to only two categories of relationships, wife-giver and wife-taker, if we omit ego's agnatic line from consideration. On this basis it is analytically admissible to exclude the category of all lineages not affinally allied to ego's lineage as being outside the conceptual system underlying prescriptive asymmetric marriage. It would not, however, be admissible to consider the actual lineages in question as outside the society or even outside the *system* of marriage viewed functionally as a political system.

I submit, furthermore, that the basic rules of prescriptive marriage among the Chin and related peoples of Hill Southeast Asia are expressions of, and follow from, the more general political strategy of making marriage serve as a particular kind of differentiated alliance where the obligations between the parties are asymmetrical. If this is accepted, it is no longer necessary to think of this fourth category as outside the system. In fact it is produced largely by lineage segmentation, that is, by a demographic situation and by rules of strategic choice—the restriction of effective affinal alliance to particular household-sized units leading to segmentation—inherent in the social order. The marriage rules are fundamentally adapted to just this state of affairs, and the prohibition against marrying into lineages other than one's established allies can add nothing to the consistency of an asymmetrical prescriptive marriage system.[4]

If the Purum generally marry only previously existing affines, because of the fortuitous circumstance that all lineages have become interallied, this probably reflects the fact that the Purum, like most Kuki, are a small, remnant people living in alien territory with perhaps a reduced population and range of lineages.

It may under certain conditions be so marked a preference as to amount to an additional prescription with a corollary prohibition on marrying with anyone but established allies, but in these cases we may speak of "closed" systems of asymmetrical marriage alliance.

By closed systems I mean systems where the political sphere has restricted geographic extent and there is no tendency to expand it through more and more ramifying affinal linkages. Here the production of new lineage is slow, or absent. By these criteria the Southern Chin systems are closed. They are, however, not so closed as, say, the Purum system analyzed by Needham. "Closedness" is a matter of degree, the most extreme degrees being a special case, as among the Purum.

In an open system, by contrast, marriage with MBD may be a general preference, but is rather infrequently practiced. These systems, on the contrary, favor and encourage the continual estab-

[4] Needham, in his analysis of Aimol Kuki society (1960), goes beyond the notions of exchange and reciprocity. For him asymmetrical systems are basically expressions of a well-nigh universal dualistic mode of thinking. The complementary opposition between the conceptual categories, wife-giver and wife-taker, is for him the formal, logical foundation of prescriptive asymmetrical marriage. He goes on to show that (to a great extent) the prestations passing between the two parties to such an affinal relationship fall into two classes: goods going to wife-givers as tokens of honor, and goods of a kind that typically accompany women in marriage. He also shows effectively that categorical dualistic oppositions pervade the social symbolism, ritual, and cosmologies of these people and that these oppositions are integrated in metaphor and idiom, as well as in function, with the opposition in the marriage system. To this point I fully accept Needham's analysis. However, I wish to go beyond the analysis of the formal, conceptual distinctions to which his wide-ranging comparative interests restrict him for the time being.

lishment of new marriage alliances far and wide within and outside the community (see Bruner, 1959, on the Toba Batak of Sumatra) as a means of expanding or strengthening a relatively complex network of political relations. Production of new lineages and segments is relatively rapid and continuous.

These latter statements apply characteristically to most Northern Chin systems of prescriptive marriage. The more ramifying political system of the Northern Chin, as conditioned by their special relationship to Burma, supports this kind of system; the Northern Chin are often explicitly aware of the political motives which underlie their marriage rules.

Open and closed systems are both systems of prescriptive asymmetrical marriage alliance by Needham's first and most general definition, that is, *they result in structurally categorical relations among descent groups,* and their respective systems of exchange are both "indirect exchange." Finally, incest prohibitions, in Chin society generally, forbid both marriage and sexual intercourse, and extend to parents and parents' siblings, own children, siblings and half-siblings, immediate parallel cousins, and all close agnatic collaterals. This last is obviously a variable class depending upon the current processes of cleavage and segmentation. Given the nature of segmentation, the incest rules have to apply less widely than the rules of exogamy, which chiefly affect marriage. The exogamic rule applies fairly consistently to one's own whole maximal lineage, but the prohibition against taking a wife, say, from one's own wife-giving group applies more strongly to near than to distant classificatory affines.

I have already indicated that the Southern Chin rule of marriage is not connected with any sort of class hypogamy. The institution of bridewealth exists throughout much of the South, though not in Matupi, but payment for women from good families is not very different in kind or amount from that for women of ordinary families; the prices are not the highly inflated ones of the rank-preoccupied Northern aristocrats. This is consistent with the Southern marriage rules. Many informants suggested that the family of the bride profits little if at all from this transaction. The institutionalized gifts and the feast that the bride's family must make for the wedding often cost more than the bride price it has received. From Mindat to the Lemro River the size of bridewealth decreases both absolutely and relatively to dowry, until the bridewealth disappears across the Lemro in Matupi. This is quite consistent with the Matupi lineage system and with this form of prescriptive marriage! A Matupi wedding entails only a small institutionalized dowry in lieu of the elaborate wedding rites and feasts which would elsewhere be paid by the bride's people, and there is no rule of bride service after marriage. There are, however, numerous small, recurrent presentations due the bride's father or brothers from the groom throughout the postmarriage years. This accords with the nature of divorce among the Matu, which concerns only the wife, the husband, and any paramour of the wife. The husband must be compensated by another man, and not the wife's agnates, for loss of his wife, or else there is no divorce. Clearly, complementary filiation is of small importance here (see Leach, 1957; Fortes, 1959).

SOME MATUPI KINSHIP TERMS

Below are a few selected terms of relationship from Matupi. The Matupi kinship terminology, like much of the Matupi culture, is remarkably little developed. The terminology is congruent with the system of marriage and lineage relationships set forth earlier, but only barely so. The compass of relatives to which kinship terms are extended is extremely narrow, and second degree collaterals are rarely accorded kinship terms in either address or reference, while affines of affines are never accorded kinship terms. Many of the terms listed here are terms of reference only, and are not well known. They are said by all informants (including two from nearby villages) to be very technical and not in common use. They are actually descriptive expressions such as "the brother of my wife," rather than specialized terms, and are regarded as circumlocutions.

1. *a pa:* F, FB
2. *a nu:* M, MZ (latter actually called *nu mi-jae,* mother's sister)
3. *ki ŋa nu:* FZ; *ki ŋa nu-va:* FZH; *ki ŋa nu-sa:* FZ children
4. *a pu:* MB, WF; *a pu-nu:* MBW, WM; *pu-sa:* MB children
5. *a se:* W parents; *ma-xa:* HF; *ma-ni:* HM (*xa:* FZH f.s.)
6. *mi-jae:* elder siblings, parallel cousins
7. *mi-nae:* younger siblings and parallel cousins
8. *ki sa:* child
9. *sa-va:* DH-lit. "child's husband" (he is addressed as *ki sa:* "child")

10. *bui na phuŋ:* "wife-taker line"
11. *pum sae:* FF, FFB, MF, MFB; *num sae:* FM, FMZ, MM, MMZ

Commentary: The points congruent with the marriage system are: father's brother and mother's brother are kept distinct, as are father's sister and mother's sister. Parents' parallel siblings are merged with parent terms. Mother's brother equals wife's father, while father's sister is distinct both from wife's mother and mother's brother's wife. The children of father's sister and of mother's brother are likewise distinct from one another and also from parallel cousins, who are merged with siblings. Affinal terms are almost always descriptive phrases, rarely used except as terms of reference. The corresponding terms of address do not in particular reflect the marriage system, or even the lineage system. An example is term 9, where daughter's husband is addressed as one addresses one's own children. A number of such instances occur which might by themselves be taken as congruent with such a radically different marriage system as a two-section (symmetrical cross-cousin marriage) system or a system of bilateral filiation. The terminology as a whole, however, could not be used with such a system. Curiously, no term is used for relatives in more than one generation, which makes the terminology very unlike other Southern Chin and Northern Chin (Omaha type) terminologies. Correspondingly, nothing in descending generation term 2 parallels the terminology for the grandparental generation. Grandchildren are designated only by circumlocution; some might be classed in term 10 (e.g., one's daughter's children).

In view of the lineage system and the system of marriage, it is clear that formal extensions of kinship go far beyond the range of persons indicated by this list of distinctive terms of relationship.

5

Northern Chin Social Systems

NORTHERN CHIN SOCIETY AND ITS TRIBAL DIVISIONS

The Northern Chin ecology, its relatively elaborate material culture and specialized technology, the hierarchy (see p. 44 ff.), the prestige economy of status-validating Feasts of Merit and the related supralocal political organization with its specialized offices all serve to accumulate capital for both the internal economy of the hills and the external economy of trade with civilization. Ultimately its two economies are one. The local, subsistence economy is so arranged that people can devote surpluses of locally produced goods or of time and energy to the acquisition of civilized goods, if only the peace and security exist to permit production of these surpluses in sufficient measure. Some civilized goods are necessary to the life of all classes of people, and the external trade is in part interdependent with an internal trade placing great reliance upon professional specialist producers. The materials used and the classes of goods produced in each of these two economies overlap considerably, and in both the production of luxuries for the prestige economy is an extension of the production of goods for general use.

The elaborate material culture, the prestige economy, the panoply of social gradation, and the persistent tendency to form supralocal realms all serve as symbols of the Chin claim to a place in the scheme of civilization and its environment. This symbolic incorporation of Burman civilization, or of Chin notions of it, is necessary

because of the difficulty and instability of substantive Northern Chin contacts with Burman markets and communities.

The concentration of a wide variety of luxury goods and of conspicuous wealth in the hands of a few relatively powerful and high-ranking families and persons serves the entire society, in that it would be impossible for this rather expensive symbol to be incorporated or acquired by everyone, not only because there are great differences of wealth in the society, but also because the total Chin economy is too poor to be able to make anything except a token claim upon civilized markets and goods.

As a preliminary step to outlining the basic social and political structure and organization of the Northern Chin, let me describe briefly the present administrative and ethnological map of this area, so far as it seems relevant.

My term "Northern Chin Hills" means something more than the present administrative Northern Chin Hills District (under the Deputy Commissioner, Northern Chin Hills, Falam). All of that district falls within the Northern Hills of my scheme, but in addition there are the several village circles comprising the linguistic area of Zotung, which belong to Matupi Subdivision, Southern Chin Hills District (Deputy Commissioner, Mindat, in Kanpetlet country).

The Northern Chin Hills District comprises three subdivisions, each under a subdivisional officer who is, ex-officio, Subdivisional Magistrate. From north to south, these subdivisions are: Tiddim, Falam, and Haka Subdivisions, each named after its administrative headquarters' town. Falam serves also as the Northern District headquarters and as the capital of the Chin Special Division, the seat of the Deputy Commissioner, its principle administrative officer.

The officers mentioned and their counterparts in the Southern District are, together with their associate officers of the administrative and treasury services, civil servants appointed by the government of the Union on the advice of the Minister for Chin Affairs and his council of Chin members of the Union Parliament.

Since I shall not deal with Tiddim, I need say only that it is a fairly distinct linguistic area. A number of distinctive grammatical and phonological features distinguish its languages and dialects from those in Falam and Haka. The degree of heterogeneity within Tiddim need not be discussed here (see Stern, 1955); the tribal

Fig. 24. Hnaring villagers: Za Kheng, acting *tlang bawi* (ritual officiant) of Hnaring Longtlaang in suit with sash and medal, with relatives and followers. At his right, his wife wears red, yellow, and green brocaded silk skirt, *hni ṭial*. To her right, man wears *cawng nak puan*, blanket of somewhat similar cloth. Woman at right of line wears everyday double skirt.

groups in the area are fairly well listed and described by Carey and Tuck (1896, Vol. I), Stevenson (1944), and Embree and Thomas (1950).

The several Falam languages, each centering on a major village, seem closely related, and a knowledge of one makes it easy to learn the others. Some localized linguistic and ethnic groups were in whole or in part included (until the abolition of chiefs after Burma's attainment of independence) within the so-called tribal areas named for other tribes or village complexes, whose chiefs held sway over them at the time of the imposition of British authority. The imposition of this authority "froze" the composition of these "realms," though they had traditionally been very fluid (see Stevenson, 1943).

Haka Subdivision seems to be more heterogeneous linguistically.

The mutually intelligible dialects of Haka and its immediate satellite villages, of the complex of villages centering on Thlantlaang to the west and of the *Mi-e* complex of villages, comprise one language, *Lai holh*. Each of these village clusters is a primary or secondary political system in the larger system of war, trade, marriage alliance, and general culture. These languages are closely akin to the languages of Falam and Lushai. Indeed, a few villages within the borders of Falam Subdivision might equally well be in the Haka cultural and language area. As one goes south from Haka and Thlantlaang, the linguistic picture becomes more varied.

The peoples south through Zotung participate in a single network of trade, exchange, alliance, and attendant cultural symbols. This network depends on the paramount position of Haka in power politics and technological development. Numerous details of culture, however, set off each of these peoples, and even particular villages. Some Lakher chiefs in Assam belong to the ruling clans of Haka and Thlantlaang, and these, though not other Lakher, follow the Haka Feast of Merit series. Lakher material and artistic culture is almost exactly like that of Haka (Parry, 1932).

There are some major phonological and grammatical differences between the language of Haka with its closest linguistic relatives and most of the languages south and southwest of Haka and Thlantlaang, and while there is little mutual intelligibility among the languages of the so-called "independent villages" of the literature, they share in common a number of distinctive grammatical and phonological features setting them off from Haka. They are, however, all closely related to the Haka language. This is true at least of the group of languages included in the categories *Zophei* (former *Zolamnai*), *Lautu*, and *Zotung*, all of which, in a general way, but especially Lautu, are akin to the Lakher or *mʌγa* language of Assam.

The Southern languages, while exceedingly diverse, all have numerous phonological and grammatical features not found in the North.

CLAN AND LINEAGE SYSTEMS OF NORTHERN CHIN (HAKA)

Leach (1957) considers Haka Chin to lack a segmentary lineage system, but my own field data show that the Haka Chin lineage system is indeed segmentary, and I propose to sketch its general

features. (For everything in this discussion of Haka social organization, compare in detail Head [1949, pp. 1-44]; I present nothing from Haka that is not confirmed in my own field notes.)

There are patrilineal *clans*, which can be distinguished clearly from lineages. A clan is said to have been founded by a particular man, usually associated with some miraculous event, or animal or plant, but this rarely if ever associates the clansmen totemically with the animal or plant species.

The clan is generally dispersed and is in no sense corporate. For example, in Lautu, a linguistic area in Haka Subdivision, the hereditary ruling lineages all claim to be one and the same clan, *lɛchi pʌthla*—the descendants of Lian Chin.[1] The clan also serves as a means of defining a political arena: the multitude of commoner clans and lineages in Lautu are at times said to be "Lian Chin people," by courtesy, as it were, though they are not actually supposed to be descended from Lian Chin. Indeed, intermarriage is quite common between the various branch lineages of the Lian Chin clan proper.

In the language of Haka village, what I call clan is referred to as *phun*, but there is no such distinctive term in Lautu which serves to distinguish clan from lineage. In Lautu, a word cognate

[1] Throughout the present section I use terms from the "provincial" Lautu language sparingly, and use the equivalents from Haka speech *(Lai holh)* wherever possible. I can justify this procedure on the grounds that I am dealing with a well-integrated, area-wide social system whose language of intercommunication and argumentation in civil cases between linguistic groups is Lai. I am aware that the equivalents in Haka speech are often folk-guesses at a translation into a metropolitan language which they often control indifferently. However, I follow native practice in this regard. The system would not work over this wide area if there were not some such convention in force.

Lai is also the language used in the other area-wide contexts. The Haka-area Feast of Merit cycle is, with variations, a single cycle, and in connection with it there are a number of classes of conventional songs (e.g., *va-hla*). These are always sung in what the local people produce as an approximation to Haka speech (cf. Parry, 1932, p. 179).

Circumstances made it necessary for me to work in Hnaring through an interpreter, and it was his practice throughout the work to keep all proper names for persons, groups, species, and all technical terms in the native language when translating informant texts with me. Characteristically, he often put words from such contexts as clanship and marriage not into Lautu speech (*lʊ tɣ ry*) but into Lai. As I had some control of the latter language, I noticed that even the Hnaring informants, knowing that the information was being given to an outsider (whose native language, incidentally, was "Zophei," not Lai) often put such words into Lai in the original text. In almost all instances I managed to go back and get the native Lautu terms, but I have usually preserved the Lai forms in the present exposition.

with *phun* is used as an alternative to the usual word for lineage, though it can also, apparently, mean clan. The word *chung*, however, in both tongues, refers only to lineages at various levels of segmentation. *Phun* signifies generally "a kind of people" or a "descent." In this connection it is interesting that hereditary class rank (see below) inheres in clans rather than in lineages.

Lineages, like clans, are patrilineal, but reckon membership by genealogical demonstration. Lineage and clan genealogies differ in kind. Lineage genealogies seem more genuine than clan genealogies and, concomitantly, there is much less telescoping of generations in lineage genealogies. Within a clan, maximal lineages are always said to have been founded by the "sons" of the clan founder, as if all had the same genealogical depth. A lineage genealogy usually has instances in which a man's descendants are "faithfully" recorded over a period of two or more generations, even though no segmentation is said to have taken place during this interval. People are not recorded, however, when their lines have died out very long ago. The founders of lineages are generally not associated with miraculous events.

Hereditary class rank inheres in the clan as a whole. Thus in Haka area there is a fundamental distinction between aristocratic and commoner clans corresponding to the class divisions *bawi* and *chia*. Status rank (see Leach, 1960) varies within any clan, however, and the terms in which status rank and class rank differences are discussed are the same (*bawi* and *chia*). Status rank is not absolutely hereditary. A wealthy commoner can often pay a high marriage price and so marry a woman of high class, and if his descendants continue this practice they will achieve high status rank with many privileges of the aristocratic class except, of course, the privilege of being in line of possible succession to hereditary headmanship or chieftainship. Such people are said to be *bawi phun* (aristocratic people), though they still belong to clans that are *mi-chia* (commoners and, see below, certain grades of "slaves"). This fluctuation in fortunes over time is a major factor in the rapidity of lineage segmentation in this society.

Corresponding to rise in status for commoners is devolution of status within aristocratic clans. Status differences and lineage segmentation among aristocrats are closely connected with polygyny and the rules of inheritance, both of which are more important in the case of aristocrats whose social and political privileges are validated and exercised by means of material wealth.

Every man should have a major wife (*nu tak*), although the wife of a monogamous commoner is, for all practical purposes, automatically his major wife. This is, among other things, a wife for whom full bride price has been paid, a woman who is of full rank in her own family, that is, who is a daughter of her own father's major wife and who, if possible, is of class rank (clan) equal to or better than her husband's. The marriage system is hypogamous.

A woman may fail to meet one or more of these qualifications and still be a major wife. For instance, a man of aristocratic clan, for lack of wealth or by reason of his personal character, may be unable to obtain a wife of rank equal to his own. He may hope eventually to obtain such a woman, but finding that he cannot, he can have a ceremony (*ar hmanh*) performed which renders her fit to perform the household sacrifices and rituals with him. This last capacity is the definitive sign of a major wife.

A very wealthy man may have two or more wives of rank equal to his own or better. In such cases the major wife is the one to whom he was first betrothed with the explicit intention of making her his major wife. She alone will be able to perform the household rites with him, though if she has no sons by him the sons of a minor wife can inherit from him. It is with the intention of insuring himself against the failure to produce inheriting sons of good birth that a man takes a minor high-born wife.

Sons by other than major wives cannot inherit the paternal estate if there are sons by the major wives, but the sons of non-major wives (*nu chun*) can still share in it indirectly, since the father often settles a portion of his holdings on them during his lifetime. He settles their mother in a separate house built and endowed for her and she holds a portion of his lands and goods as head of that separate household. The bulk of his estate and hereditary office, however, cannot pass to them.

A man, particularly an aristocrat, may also have male issue by two major wives. This happens for instance when a man divorces, or is divorced by (see Head, 1949, pp. 18-20), his first major wife, *nu hring*, or when she dies and he marries another. The second major wife is styled *nu tlai*. Her sons have in theory no claim on most heirloom property held by their father during his marriage to *nu hring*, if he has sons by the latter, but otherwise they inherit as sons of major wives. This is a common source of newly named major or perhaps even maximal lineages, and fre-

quently one such lineage will be called simply *nu-hring*. Opposition is common between them and often one of them emigrates. The clan of aristocrats among the Lakher (Parry, 1932, p. 580) called *Nonghrang* (i.e., *nu-hring*) is not related to the lineage *nu-hring* of Leitak-Aibur (in Zophei country, south of Haka), which is a branch of a local clan, the descendants of Lian Bawi (see Stevenson, 1943, p. 170).

Noninheriting sons and/or sons inheriting minor shares do not necessarily give rise at once to lineage segments of markedly lower rank than that of their inheriting brothers. The high social position of an aristocratic father carries over initially to his noninheriting sons. This is a means by which such sons may establish independent fortunes, since they can use their prestige to secure popular favor and a good bride price for their daughters. Also, inheriting sons may share the management of large landed estates with their noninheriting brothers in instances where very large tracts are involved, and this is not uncommon in the case of families descended from chiefs. Such families frequently comprise large, virtually unsegmented major lineages of perhaps three generations depth.

However, the existence of noninheriting sons does tend to give rise eventually to separate minor lineage segments, and subsequently to produce new major segments, possibly new maximal lineages, although the data do not demonstrate this last clearly. Noninheriting sons and their descendants may fail, through lack of wealth, to contract favorable marriages, and as a result they lose rank and are unable to ask high prices for their daughters in marriage. On the other hand, if such sons succeed in maintaining their lineage rank through favorable marriages, it is often accomplished by means of wealth, the source of which is other than the parental estate. Such sons and their descendants tend to be in competition for rank and for followers with the inheriting sons and their descendants. Thus, a noninheriting son is likely to contract his strategic marriages among major and minor segments that are not the classificatory affinal allies of the inheriting sons, and this seems to lead to major segmentation in, or shortly after, the generation of these sons themselves.

We recall from Chapter 3 that the rule of inheritance in Haka Chin society combines primogeniture with ultimogeniture in various ways, the youngest son generally getting the father's house (see also p. 150).

Haka tradition recognizes that noninheriting sons tend to split away from their families and lose interest in maintaining the behavior and social obligations of aristocrats toward family and followers and become jealous and uncontrolled. The stereotyped character in Lai holh, *mi hrok-hrolh* (literally a habitually deceitful person, actually a devil-may-care person careless of social rules and obligations), is frequently associated with noninheriting sons of chiefs and aristocrats.

Polygyny is rare among men who are not fairly well off. Chin, with their cultural interest in differential rank, profess to find it difficult to maintain domestic harmony with a plurality of wives in a single establishment. Where several such women are found in one household, those other than the major wife are almost always either minor wives of rank very much lower than the husband's or slaves of his household. In the latter instances their children are, in principle at least, sired by persons of other households and belong to the household head in the status of his children of very low rank. Female household slaves cannot contract a marriage, and their male descendants, who can marry, form a class of "true" slaves (*sal*). Slavery and debt bondage are now illegal.

Children by minor wives have a somewhat lower status rank than those by the major wife. The lower the rank of the wife, the lower the rank of the children; and the rank of these children is even lower if no estate has been settled on them in their father's lifetime. Children by very low-ranking wives are scarcely different from ordinary commoners, or even bond slaves. Bond slaves are a class of descendants of debtors who went into bondage but not into household slavery. They, like ordinary commoners, are called *mi-chia*, and are under the hereditary protection of a powerful family. In clan membership an aristocrat's children by low-ranking wives are *bawi* by courtesy only, and are without aristocratic privileges.

Persons of mixed class or status rank are discussed and placed in the same terminology used for various types of crossbreeds between the mithan and the cow. Such persons and their descendants in an aristocratic clan are not pure (*thiang* in *Lai holh*), consequently they are limited in their participation in communal sacrificial rites and are often accorded only those social courtesies due to commoners. Such lines are impure in approximately the same sense (and with approximately the same social and ritual disabilities) as are lines descended from or through persons who were slaves

(*sal*), bastards (*lak fa*), or thieves (*mi fir*), or were said to possess the evil eye (*hnam ngei*).[2]

Persons are frequently accused of being descended from a slave, bastard, thief, or possessor of the evil eye. Such accusations (*zo langh*) are recognized at law as a major class of offenses that amount to *de facto* degradations of the status rank of the accused's lineage. Heavy compensation is demanded of the accuser, usually equal to *phun-thawh*, that is, the category of marriage price which varies with the wife's clan and lineage rank and which, then, serves to validate the lineage status rank of the husband and of his children by her. It is always demanded when the accusation is held by the judges to be false, and when the accusation is held true a penalty may also be levied against the accuser. These accusations are serious offenses against the orderly working of the social system.

Lineage segmentation and rank differences within the clan fall within the scope of Fortes' concept of *complementary filiation:* lines of descent from different wives of the same husband will tend to form separate lineage segments, this tendency being the more pronounced as the difference is between wives of different status and class rank. In this patrilineal society, descendants of women of different and unequal lineages tend to form distinct descent groups, although, as Leach (1960) insists, the relationship with mother's own lineage does not involve any sort of membership in it and so is a matter of affinity.

The rank of any local descent group is mainly a result of the grade of marriage alliance its men have been able to arrange from generation to generation. If a man's descendants by a given wife for two or three generations fail to maintain a grade of marriage alliance at least equal to his own, their lineage gradually loses its former high rank. If a man has several wives and all his descendants by each contract equally good marriages, complementary filiation might not produce, at least for the first two or three generations, major lineage segmentation or cleavage.

Leach (1960), in discussing status and class among the Lakher, suggests that lineages can lose rank but that no commoner lineage can raise itself to aristocratic standing; or at least that this is the native view officially held. Actually native views on the matter vary greatly, even among knowledgeable aristocrats concerned

[2] For purposes of ritual service a pure commoner is qualified, whereas a person of mixed *bawi* and *chia* antecedents is not.

with such things. Some insist that, despite changes in what I call status, the terms *bawi* and *chia* apply properly only to clan class rank, and that this cannot be altered. This, however, is an ideal statement complicated by a supply of terms inadequate to the discussion of differences between class and status rank. Other informants admit that the matter cannot always be determined precisely. All admit that over a large number of generations it is likely that true genealogical connections will be strategically "forgotten," so that a lineage of commoners that had consistently maintained high status through successful marriages would probably become true aristocrats. This would amount to the establishment of a new clan, and so far we have found no instances of such a thing.

The ambiguity of the terminology dealing with rank and mobility carries over into jurisprudence. There are a number of social and economic privileges belonging to *bawi* only, but it is not clear whether this means *bawi* by status or by class, or both. Hence, innumerable quarrels about such civilities arise, many of which come to law in the village courts. The opposing arguments in such cases take the view that *bawi* rank can be won or lost through mobility, and that *bawi* rank is immutable. Actually both points of view are recognized as legitimate in legal arguments and, as a result, such cases are never satisfactorily settled and may drag on for more than a generation. This polarity is a fundamental principle of Haka Chin law and society.

This simultaneous existence of mutually contrary but equally valid legal rules of interpretation also complicates the definition of the status or rank of "slave" (see above) and it is undoubtedly related to the common misinterpretations in the literature (Stevenson, 1943; cf. Leach, 1954) of the distinction between the so-called autocratic and democratic forms of political organization, which alternate with each other cyclically in Central Chin as in Kachin society, a matter treated elsewhere in this work.

Let us further consider the distinctive features of maximal, as against lesser, lineage segments. Legends always maintain that maximal lineages currently recognized in any clan were all founded by the "sons" of the clan founder. We may say that the maximal lineages are simply all those so founded. The laws of primogeniture, or whatever preferential system of inheritance is in force, are not systematically read back into this lineage-founding situation. Conse-

quently it is not possible to speak consistently of senior and junior maximal lineages of a given clan. Informants at times speak as though this were possible, or as though they felt it ought logically to be so, but we find, for instance, that each of the ruling families of the Lian Chin clan, falling into a large number of its many maximal lineages and located in different villages in Lautu, is supposed to possess a token item of property—a spear, a bead, or so on—that it has inherited directly from the clan founder. That is, a large number of the clan founder's sons are supposed, on this evidence, to have each inherited heirloom property (which cannot be settled upon noninheriting sons) from their "father." This is the true mark of the maximal as against the lesser lineage segment.

In general *maximal lineages* are nonlocalized, while major segments tend to be found in only one village, or in two wholly contiguous villages such as the two villages of Hnaring, or in a mother village and its politically subordinate satellites. Under some conditions maximal lineages may be fairly localized. They may be dispersed over a wide region, but may have a seat (see Chap. 3 on inheritance of *hmun pi*). Rules of preferential inheritance operate within the maximal lineage, and consequently the different major segments correspond to so many junior or senior lines in the maximal lineage, but this is not sufficient to cause a maximal lineage to have a seat. With fortunes varying over a period of some generations, there is no necessary, consistent difference in rank or power between the several junior and senior major segments of a given lineage. But where a certain maximal lineage also holds a major political chieftainship the segment holding that office and located in the seat of that power is *de facto* the political focus of that entire maximal lineage. Indeed, this enhances the solidarity of such a maximal lineage, since outsiders tend to act respectfully toward all members of that lineage because of their connection with this seat of power. In fact, the dispersal of the segments of that lineage is governed to a great extent by political strategy; junior sons are sent out to villages of wife-takers as in-resident affinal allies, and at times as tribute takers. These far-flung villages are directly or indirectly under the sway of such a seat of power.

Thus, Haka is clearly the seat of the whole clan of *Zathang*, because Haka is a major locus of political, economic, and military power with influence extending to the southern limits of Zotung. The Lian Chin clan in Lautu has no such dominant village. In

Haka, within Zathang, two important maximal lineages, *Sangpi chung* and *Sangte chung*, both have their seats in Haka town. There are also other branches.[3] Sangpi, the elder branch, held hereditary chieftainship of Haka's immediate satellites, while Sangte, the younger branch, was given large holdings in Haka, on the basis of which it ruled, directly or as affinal overlord, or otherwise had power over many villages and ruling families elsewhere in Haka area. Within Haka town the heads of Sangpi and Sangte were equally chiefs on account of their external realms, and Sangpi and Sangte occupied different settlement wards and so could be said to have different realms even within Haka itself. No one actually ruled over Haka as a whole.

Sia Vung, the maximal lineage providing all the *bawi* families of Hnaring in the Lautu country, has its seat in Hnaring Khuahlun, the older of the two contiguous communities making up Hnaring. But it is found also in Hnaring Longtlaang, the other community, whose chiefs were almost of equal importance with the chiefs of Khuahlun. Hence, the localization of the seat of this maximal lineage is less perfect than in the Haka instance above, owing to the lack of clearcut dominance by either of the Hnaring communities. *Sia Vung* is also found in the villages founded from Hnaring Khuahlun on its lands across the Boinu River. The chief of Hnaring Khuahlun used to take tribute from these satellite villages; hence there is a good case for some degree of localization of *Sia Vung* in Hnaring Khuahlun.

The *major segment* is generally localized and named, and is clearly a subdivision of a maximal lineage. There are junior and senior major segments, and this depends upon the position of their respective founders in the table of inheritance of the maximal lineage. Moreover, major segments of a given lineage have different ranks and different political positions, particularly in the case of aristocratic clans. Thus in Hnaring, the *Sia Vung* lineage of the Lian Chin *bawi* clan is the maximal lineage comprising all Hnaring aristocrats. Within *Sia Vung*, the Khuahlun chiefs are of *Pe Thua* major segment. This is the senior and elder branch. The Longtlaang chiefs come from *Le Kha* major segment. There are also other segments in *Sia Vung*, some of virtually equal rank with *Pe Thua*

[3] Moreover some of Haka town's greatest aristocrats with power over villages far from Haka belong to another clan, *Khenglawt*, which regularly gives wives to Sangte and ruled in Haka village before Zathang clan (Shwe Mang Ling, 1960).

(*Peng Thang?*) and *Le Kha* (*Lian Khar*), as they own large tracts of land; but some are of very much lower standing. Each of the major segments is found in both villages (Khuahlun and Longtlaang).

Major segments are not the fundamental units of status rank, since minor segments of a given major segment will often differ among themselves in rank. They are, however, the fundamental units of exogamy by definition. Intermarriage, though infrequent, is allowed without penalty within both clan and maximal lineage, but forbidden in principle within the major segment.

Major segments are usually named after their founders, but this is not a simple matter. A man may found a minor segment, always unnamed, which eventually develops into a major segment. His name is then attached to it retroactively, but major segments do not necessarily preserve the same name. Pe Thua, after whom Hnaring Khuahlun's chief lineage is named, was a son of Sia Vung, according to the genealogies. But while some persons call the present chief's line *Pe Thua*, others now call it by the name of a nearer ancestor, *zʌ-thia*. Persons wishing to claim a close kinship and equality of rank with the chief's family, but whose branching from it took place about the time of Za Thia, insist the chief's lineage is really *Pe Thua*. It is, however, admitted that names tend to change every three to five generations.

Intermarriage is at present allowed not only within the range of families descended from Pe Thua, but even within the range of families embraced by the name Za Thia. Informants explain this by remarking that, by now, the rank of the families in *Za Thia* varies greatly.

When a minor segment becomes major, it is no longer included within its former major segment despite the apparent implications of lineage names, and there is a significant break in the hierarchical ordering of segmentation where minor segments pass over into major segments. Technically, the major segments stand to each other as juxtaposed through a process of fission rather than cleavage (Goody, 1958). This, however, does not detract from the essentially segmentary character of the lineage system as a whole. The distinction between cleavage or segmentation, and fission or juxtaposition, is analytical rather than real. Where rank differences are great, minor segmentation passes, via major, into maximal segmentation, as the marriage within Pe Thua shows.

The *minor segment* poses several analytic problems. It is unnamed and localized and it tends to be a unit of status, status being generally established and validated over a period of some three generations. Since minor segments can become major, and since major segments frequently contain families or households of unequal rank, we must, at least provisionally, recognize as the fundamental unit of status a *minimal lineage segment* approximately equivalent to an agnatic household, or this plus the households of the founder's recently married sons, at a later stage in the growth cycle of the domestic group.

Status is established at law by marriage alliances contracted *by the household*. Agnatic collaterals and affines indeed figure in marriage arrangements and in the apportionment of marriage prices, but this has to do chiefly with the distribution of the price which a family gets for a daughter given in marriage. The household is still the unit that contracts *for* its own wives, and it is primarily the acquisition of wives and not the marrying out of daughters that makes status for a descent group. Let us then call the minimal segment the fundamental unit of status insofar as it is a fundamental unit of wife-taking.

Minor segments are the units of affinal alliance in a rather special sense. This is a hypogamous marriage system, where the wife-givers are often one's political superiors. The affinal relationship is then between basically unequal parties. A lineage takes women from a powerful lineage very largely because it needs powerful allies. It is needed much less by the opposite lineage as an ally follower; hence, a unit of affinity means primarily a unit *with* which alliance is sought, a unit which is wealthy and numerous enough to be a worthwhile ally. This should resolve any apparent contradiction in saying that the minimal segment is the unit of wife-taking (one side of an affinal relationship), while the minor segment, which includes minimal ones, is the unit of affinity.

Minor segments are one's classificatory affinal allies. They are produced to a certain extent by demographic processes of much the same character as those producing similar lineage segments in the Southern Chin systems (see Chap. 4), processes colored, however, by the special character of the Northern prescriptive rule of marriage (see below). Minimal segments tend to be rapidly and continuously produced since the marriage system shows a decided preference for diversifying its alliance connections, quite apart

from any demographic pressures to do so. The search for new allies by newly produced minimal segments is met and complemented by the various forces (e.g., preferential inheritance rules) that produce differences in rank, status mobility, and consequently cleavage within major segments.

The forces which produce cleavage within major segments act so that each resulting minor segment seeks followers among slightly different groups of households. Two such groups of households (wife-takers) will often overlap; still each minor segment is treated as a separate unit of classificatory affinity because of its peculiar collocation of follower segments. The larger a major segment becomes and the more daughters it has available for marriage, the greater are its chances for getting follower households of marriage allies. Thus, the greater the size of a major segment, the greater its tendency to give rise to minor segments.

This is possible within the area-wide system only to the extent that a relatively large number of wife-taking households is constantly available; possible only to the extent that the population can continue to supply personnel for the production of new minor segments. These conditions clearly require a large population, perhaps even an expanding one and/or expanding geographic scope for the whole system. Undoubtedly the rapidity of lower-level segmentation characteristic of the Northern Chin systems could not be supported by demographic forces acting to produce the special character of the Southern segmentary lineage system, but elucidation of the demographic regime fulfilling the conditions of this system is not yet possible.

Needham (1960a) is certainly correct in pointing out that the production of a large number of daughters in a given (major) lineage (segment) need not lead to a general reallocation of exogamic and affinal relations to lower levels of segmentation. The possibility of plural marriage always exists as a way of absorbing such apparent surpluses of marriageable women. Only a large-scale shift from a restricted to an expanding demographic regime intimately coupled with a change in the level of integration will suffice to produce, say, a Northern out of a Southern Chin type of lineage and marriage system.

I wish to postulate provisionally just such a development in Chin society, but this hypothetical relationship between the Northern and Southern lineage and marriage systems need have at present only heuristic value. The same general principles of lineage structure and of marriage alliance operate in both the North and South, and the Northern system is a more complex and expanding version of the very system found among the Southern Chin.

We must now consider further the ambiguity and imperfection of the distinction between minor and major segments. Minor segments pass over into major segments, and the analytic criteria which allow us to distinguish the minor segment consist in processes leading directly to the production of new major segments.

There is no separate native term distinguishing major segment from maximal lineage, and likewise there is no special term for the minor segment. All are called *chung*. There is, however, in Lai a word, *hrin*, which directly concerns the minor segment. The word means "to be born," "birth," and in the present context it signifies descent-line, or lineage in a somewhat loose sense. It is used correlatively with *thlak*, which means "to drop something inadvertently," and here signifies agnates beyond *hrin*. People often speak as though *hrin* signifies a uniform kind of subdivision of *chung*. *Chung* can mean either a maximal lineage or a major or even minor segment. Consequently it would be difficult to say of what the *hrin* is supposed to be a division. It is more profitable to think of *hrin* as indicating a general awareness that cleavage or fission tends to occur as a lineage-forming process within all levels where it is appropriate to use the term *chung*.

If *chung* refers to maximal lineages, then *hrin* are the units within it, the major segments. This is exemplified in the way agnatic collaterals of a bride's family share in meat feasts given by the groom's family. The groom's side, at one point in the marriage formalities, must kill an animal for the bride's family to eat, usually a pig (*vawk*), although the flesh is known at law as *ar-sa* ("chicken flesh") and the ceremony is called *ar-sa-thah* ("chicken-flesh kill"). Apart from weddings, most flesh gifts to wife-givers are actually fowl flesh. Only nearer collaterals of the bride share in this *ar-sa*, and in principle, those sharing *ar-sa* may not intermarry, hence *ar-sa* sharing serves to symbolize the solidarity of the unit of exogamy. Conversely, those agreeing to cease sharing each other's *ar-sa* are free to intermarry. Recognition of the existence of incipient fission within a group sharing *ar-sa* at any moment is frequently enough to permit marriage between the subdivisions, which thereafter will give formal recognition to the *de facto* situation by ceasing to share each other's *ar-sa*.

Thus, in Aibur, Khar Mang, elder brother of my assistant, is

married to a woman of his own *hrin*. No one could raise serious objections to the marriage because this *hrin* was six generations deep, inclusive of the parties concerned, and it is recognized that they will hereafter split apart for all purposes of marriage and *ar-sa*.

It is clear from the foregoing that *hrin* cannot be understood simply as major segment. It is obvious that *ar-sa* does not really make the *hrin*. In practice a large major segment is bound to have subdivisions which are already in the way of becoming separate major segments in their own right. Besides, major segments are also called *chung*, and informants insist that whatever is *chung* can have within it *hrin*. There are also cases where fission occurs in a major segment owing to the fact that one branch takes wives perhaps from a family which has traditionally been recipient of wives from the other branch. From such cases it is clear that the unit with which classificatory affinal relationships are sought is often a unit smaller than, and included within, the major segment.

Let us suppose that there is a major segment *A* to which I am wife-taker and then I give a daughter in marriage to a line *A1* (my effective affinal relationships having been chiefly with *A2*). *A1* and *A2* will undoubtedly cease to take *ar-sa* together thereafter. Moreover, I must at once pay compensation to *A2*, since I have violated a prohibition against reversing the direction of an affinal relationship. More exactly, I no longer have the obligation to give *ar-sa* to *A1;* hence such *ar-sa* as might have gone there from me cannot now be shared by *A2* to whom I still owe *ar-sa* and I must compensate *A2* for the loss of this *ar-sa*.

This example shows that the imperfect distinction between the major and minor segment has a parallel in the imperfect way the minor segment is the unit of alliance. Alliance is sought and effected within minor segments, but in the aforementioned case I must pay compensation (*ar-sa-leih-nak*, i.e., "turning aside the *ar-sa*") to other branches of the major segment of my affines, which indicates that formally affinal relationships are extended classificatorily within the major segment.

Indeed, it is often said that *ar-sa* makes *pu* (MB, WB) of all the *hrin* of my (real) *pu*. Obviously this is an ambiguous statement. Verbal statements might approximate practice under a static demographic regime or a less ramifying political system, but it probably would not then be possible to distinguish such a unit of segmentation as the minor segment.

The minimal segment, however, would still be discernible. If my household takes a wife from *A*, then *A*'s whole major segment must be considered my classificatory wife-giving affines. Major segment *A* will not, however, treat my entire major or even minor segment as their wife-taking affines. This is consistent with the direction in which *ar-sa* gifts go at the marriage festivities, and serves to single out the minimal segment as a unit. Should some branch of *A* subsequently take wives from a branch of my major segment, I should have either to abstain from sharing in the *ar-sa* coming to my collaterals; or else I should have to pay *ar-sa-leih-nak* to my affines in *A*, since to eat their *ar-sa* is to cease to be their wife-takers, a source of *ar-sa* for them. No part of *A* would have to pay any kind of compensation to me or to any branch of my major or minor segment.

A qualification has to be made of our whole discussion of the lineage. The full complement of levels of segmentation is probably found only among the aristocratic clans. The political and economic forces making for internal differences of rank are more important for aristocratic than for commoner clans. Among the commoners (*mi-chia*) the distinction between clan and maximal lineage is so small as to make it often unnecessary to speak of clan as such. Their maximal lineages are frequently nonlocalized, but concomitant with the greater tendency of commoners to marry either within the village or within a small number of villages, such a group has a relatively narrow geographical extension. Indeed, among commoners the distinctions among the successive levels of segmentation are much reduced, except the distinction of the minor segment, which remains strong.

One Hnaring informant, when asked his *chung* (lineage, and it could also in the context have been interpreted as clan), insisted that the question of lineage pertained to aristocrats only and that "We *mi-chia* (commoners, or in this case a category of slaves) have no *chung*." This is not strictly true, and several interpretations might be put on this declaration, but for him, and for the numerous male and female companions on this occasion who assented strongly to what he had said, the statement has great symbolic importance in the context of interclass relations.

Residence is both virilocal and neolocal and bride service is almost nonexistent. With rare exceptions a wife goes to live with her husband. A married man may at first live with his parents, but

except that among some classes of people the youngest son inherits the house site of his father, men build new houses soon after marriage. This is delayed only by the need to accumulate funds to meet the costs of building materials and of ceremonies for the founding of the house.

Elderly parents may go to live with married children; a father to one of his sons, a mother often to a married daughter. Migration used to be common; commoners might wander off to another village to seek better conditions under a new chief or headman. Disinherited or dispossessed aristocrats, often in fairly large lineage groups, would leave a village and either found a new one or reside in the village of a classificatory or real wife-giver. Or else, junior "sons" were sent by a powerful house to reside in a village of wife-takers ruled by them. All of these instances, including the last two, which might appear to resemble instances of uxorilocal residence, are simply variations on the pattern of neolocal-virilocal residence. Female household slaves must live with their masters, hence may not marry. A widow's residence varies greatly; she may reside in her late husband's home, or with her own agnates or her husband's agnates (rare), or she may remarry. The levirate is rarely practiced, though known.

MARRIAGE ALLIANCE IN HAKA CHIN SOCIETY

I turn now to a discussion of the system of marriage among the Haka Chin. Needham (1959, p. 402) has insisted that related people such as the Lushai and Lakher do not have prescriptive (asymmetrical, matrilateral) cross-cousin marriage. It is my contention that the Lakher, whose marriage rules are like those of Haka, have precisely such a system, although in a form rather more complex than that found among the Kuki or the Southern Chin. The Lushai, however, have no prescriptive marriage alliance; differential lineage rank is little developed among them (absent in Hualngo), while the Lushai and Hualngo but not other Chin have the institution of the bachelors' house, though they are part and parcel of an over-all central Northern Chin political system.[4]

I agree with Needham that a prescriptive (as against a merely preferential) rule of marriage exists only where it results in systematic and enduring structural relationships among local descent groups, but the injunction not to give wives to groups who are wife-givers, and vice versa, is in itself quite sufficient to produce this very result. The Haka Chin have the negative rule of marriage in question. Presumably, this is true of all Northern Chin, but published data on Lakher and Falam are inconclusive and some Tiddim Chin may marry a real MBD frequently. Haka Chin, in any case, *prefer* to marry a real or classificatory mother's brother's daughter. No other prescription or preference is given. They are absolutely forbidden to marry a father's sister's daughter. Where such marriages do take place contrary to law, various well-institutionalized and compulsory means exist to put the system right; compensation must be paid (in the form of *ar-sa-leih-nak*—see p. 120). After this the newly made (reverse-direction)marriage is treated as a prescriptive alliance which itself cannot be reversed except under severe penalty.

Ar-sa-leih-nak, incidentally, is ordinarily *sia-pi*, a female mithan that has produced offspring. The current value of *sia-pi* is about K. 200 (200 Burmese kyats, or $50), one of the highest categories in the traditional Haka Chin system of formal payments, fines, and the like (see Head, 1949; and p. 80).

The Haka Chin, then, have prescriptive matrilateral cross-cousin marriage. The establishment of an affinal relationship involves corporate descent groups in a connection that lasts over time, though not indefinitely.

In Chin marriage the social relations between wife-givers and wife-takers are asymmetrical. Obligations in the relationship between taker and giver are those between an inferior and a superior, respectively. The marriage price is a very costly and complicated affair of many specialized categories, at least for aristocrats and affluent commoners (see Head, 1949), and it goes to the bride's people and also to her mother's brothers, real or classificatory. The matter does not stop here, however. Prestations of many kinds are repeatedly due the men of the wife-giving lineages, not only at recurrent crisis rites but also on innumerable irregular occasions. Wife-takers also have an obligation to provide assistance in the form of grain beer (*zu*) and food when their wife-givers perform one of the major feasts. Male wife-givers must be addressed in respectful language; a teknonym is a form of respectful address here. Above all, a woman's family has a lien on her offspring by

[4] Informant data, January, 1962, demonstrate the absence of prescriptive marriage in Lushai.

virtue either of her irrevocable membership in her natal lineage or of the enduring relationship between the lineages established by the marriage (Leach, 1957). This and the quality of social relations involved are exemplified in the following.

On the occasion of any feast or festival other than a marriage ceremony the performer or host must validate his relationship to certain classes of relatives such as agnates and *pa-tung* (wife-givers)[5] by serving them with ceremonial flesh called, again, *ar-sa*. If they do not come and eat, this amounts to repudiation of the relationship, but it is especially important at the marriage that the bride's people take this *ar-sa*, and to ensure that they will there is an important category of the marriage price called *ar-sa ei-nak* ("for the eating of *ar-sa*"). This is a payment that must be made in advance to the people on the bride's side who are to take various parts of her marriage price; it is given to induce them to come and participate by eating the *ar-sa*.

It is usually explained that by eating *ar-sa* the man who takes the bride's chief price (*inn-pi co*), that is, her father or one of her brothers (Head, 1949) accepts an obligation to be responsible for the welfare of the married couple and some right over their offspring. Should they, for instance, have no children or should none of their children survive, they would ask the *pu* (wife's brother) who took the marriage price to come and sacrifice a chicken in their behalf. While he sacrifices this chicken he must make an invocation declaring that he is not angry at them and that therefore they should be allowed to have offspring. It is held that anger by the *pu* has an evil influence on the married couple, and he must rid himself by sacrifice even of unconscious anger toward them. For, as with persons who have the evil eye (*hnam ngei*), anger (or jealousy of the prosperity of others) need not be willed to cause illness. (Thus the evil eye is a reflection of conflict over rank and wealth in this society.)

The relationship between a man and his *pu* (his mother's brother or his wife's father or brother) is an enduring one owing to the "lien" on a sister's children and owing further to the fact that marriage payments are made not only to the bride's agnates but also to her classificatory wife-givers, and to her mother's brother in particular. These circumstances carry the relationship into the

[5] The correlative term for wife-takers, *nu zuar*, means "women sold"; compare *patong* and *ngazua* in Lakher (Parry, 1932).

first ascending generation. Moreover, some of the payments in the marriage price are deferred for many years and the actual marriage price is only the beginning of a long series of prestations, which must pass to a man's wife-giver not only in the next generation at the marriage of his daughters but also within the present generation on numerous occasions. They culminate upon the wife's death in the husband's payment of death dues to her agnatic relatives (Head, 1949).

The marriage payments are not a simple return for a wife and/or rights over the offspring she will bear. Rather, they are earnest money (cf. Dumont, 1957, p. 31) indicative of further payments to come. Bridewealth pays, in a sense, not for the marriage as such but for the right to an alliance with the wife-giver and his agnates. This alliance relationship, however, if it is to endure, must be formally and symbolically expressed and reaffirmed from time to time. Payments continue to run in the same direction as the marriage payments proper, and if they cease subsequent to the marriage itself, the *pu* may become angry with the evil consequences mentioned above.

This alliance is not reciprocal in a simple sense in terms of the substantial and other benefits passing between the two parties, but the system of interdependence and corporate relationships does exhibit reciprocity. Women have great value and their children continue one's lineage. Furthermore, a powerful ally is a protector and enhances one's prestige so that one may in turn ask from others high prices for one's own daughters. The *pu* also has a number of obligations toward his *tu* (sister's son), which we shall now examine.

He should aid and protect his *tu*, but because the MB (*pu*) is superior in status he cannot be forced to do so. He must at all times offer his *tu* (as a lord will offer his common followers) hospitality (especially grain beer), food, lodging, and economic assistance in adversity.

Homans and Schneider have insisted that in patrilineal societies with systems of matrilateral marriage, familial relationships between father and son are in general stern and authoritative, while relationships between a man and his mother's brother are in general friendly and permissive. They suggest that if there is asymmetrical cross-cousin marriage, it will be with MBD, because this generates the least psychological tension. They fail, of course, to suggest

why there should be a system of prescriptive marriage alliance in the first place. They suppose that jural authority in such societies is completely paternal, what might be called complete father right (see Leach, 1957). This, however, is not necessarily so; the so-called lien exercised by mother's brother over sister's son is a measure of jural authority by the former over the latter. A man stands as a potentially authoritarian figure over both his sister's son and his sister's husband or daughter's husband, and has to be continuously placated. Yet, he is also supposed to be, and in fact often is, loved and respected, owing to his obligation to aid his *tu* in adversity.

The male Chin's relationship with his own father is equally ambivalent, as implied by the rules of residence and preferential inheritance. Antagonism between father and son is common, but the Chin father goes to considerable lengths to provide for sons who are technically not his proper heirs. The residence rules being neolocal, tension between fathers and grown sons is not as great as it might be if they were to live together in extended families with the father managing the agricultural and domestic economy of his sons. Moreover, as the first observers of the Chin long ago indicated (Carey and Tuck, 1896; Newland, 1894), the Chin father is an openly and decidedly indulgent parent, at least to his younger children. It is quite common to see a middle-aged father, a man perhaps of exalted position or a fierce warrior, with his baby or young child of either sex slung on his back in a blanket, or to see him playing with children or feeding them and allowing them the greatest liberties with his person. Such liberties are not ordinarily taken with one's mother's brother.

In this society succor and authority go together; hospitality is something a man can force on others as a measure of his power over them and indulgence is a condescension that the powerful, and perhaps they alone, can afford to display. Thus, a man of high status and class often prefers to be intimately friendly with persons very much his social inferiors, even slaves, who are not in competition with him for rank, as his social equals are. It is all too easy to get into quarrels with the latter, especially over the ubiquitous beer pot of conviviality. Likewise, it is surprising to the casual observer to see men of middle age and of considerable social standing spending hours together in casual conversation with mere children and adolescent boys (not their own children and often

their *tu*). In these cases a man can relax and not be constantly asserting himself in the exhibitionistically forceful manner of the status-conscious Chin male. Of course these are only selected kinds of situations and of social types of personality, and many equally typical Chin men behave socially in somewhat different ways. Nevertheless, the kinds of social relations I have just presented impressionistically are very characteristic of Chin society.

The foregoing implies a qualification to Needham's interpretation of the division of prestations into two classes among the Purum: kinds of goods associated with, and accruing in formal exchanges to, wife-givers; and an inferior class of goods associated with and passing to wife-takers. He assigns to the first class such important things as grain beer and chickens, and suggests, though with reservations (1960a, p. 95), that these two classes are, in appropriate social contexts, almost altogether mutually exclusive. This may be so among the Purum, but if the inconclusive Purum data are viewed in broad comparison with the known ethnographic facts from other Chin societies, we may doubt that the two classes are really so completely distinct.

The laws of hospitality require that a host serve his guest with the best food and drink, hence *pu* serves these to *tu* when *pu* is host. Also *pu* owes protection to his *tu*, hence succor and general hospitality, which also demands that prestigeful goods pass on regular and irregular occasions from *pu* to *tu*, that is, from wife-giver to wife-taker, as such. There are even some items figuring in Needham's prestigeful class which pass in this direction when *tu* is a performer of a Feast of Merit and his *pu* is obliged to give him assistance. Needham is basically correct in his classification, but his conception of the way these two classes of goods are channeled in social exchange is too simplified to ring true, in view of the part that forced hospitality as a measure of status plays in the everyday life of Chin, Naga, and others, and the part that grain beer plays in hospitality. There is furthermore a conflict among the various Chin idioms for symbolizing and conceiving of rank. *Pu* is superior to *tu* in the marriage relationship, but he need not be *tu*'s rank superior in all other contexts, since competition for rank and alternative bases of rank are built into Chin society and its legal institutions. Certain kinds of goods always proceed from the individual who is attempting to validate his position in a relationship or who is attempting to force a claim in the context of a relationship, as in

sacrifices of goods to the gods and spirits, but such goods need not always proceed from suppliant to supplicated. In Chin etiquette the means for getting something from another is to give him a gift. This applies even between a man and his social inferiors.

Needham (1958) similarly oversimplifies the case for goods of the inferior class, goods passing with women in marriage to the groom's side, and goods comprising very largely items associated with women's life, such as jewelry, ornamental and expensive cloths woven by women, ceremonial headgear, weaving apparatus, and kitchen pots.

The prestige of these goods, it is true, is more or less restricted. In Chin cosmology a fundamental division (Parry, 1932) exists between the pursuits of women and those of men; between the world of the forest, and the game animals which men pursue in the hunt and the narrower realm of the home, and the village (a mere enclave of culture in a vast forest world). Significantly, the only really important taboos associated with women, menstruation and sexual intercourse, are connected with hunting and with rites controlling hunting and affecting the spirits of the forest and of game animals. There are few such restrictions within the realm of the home, village, and cultivated field, and women and men participate almost equally in most daily tasks. True, few men weave, but there is no real prohibition against it, and a man will spin as a kind of a joke, or if he is idle. Men often cook, though they rarely prepare daily meals. Only men are smiths or fell forests for swiddening, however, probably because of their greater strength.

The division between male and female goods is also far from absolute. The best ceremonial blankets figuring in sacrificial offerings (e.g., the *can-lo puan;* see Parry, 1932) are worn on festive or ritual occasions by both sexes (as owners) if they can afford them. Cooking pots (crude but comparatively expensive brass pots brought from Burma and Assam) figure prominently in the marriage price given by the groom and in all sorts of compensation payments, along with other purely prestigeful goods, mithans and the like. Moreover, *hlawn,* the property with which a woman is endowed, is not a clear-cut category of goods. Head (1949) mentions several instances when it must pass from a woman, on her death, to her husband's male relatives, to her daughter's husband, and so on. Some of it may then be treated simply as *ro,* the category of goods, particularly heirloom goods, which is heritable in the male line. Significantly, certain kinds of beads, for example, the Haka *pum-tek* (see Head, 1949; Parry, 1932, plate facing p. 290; p. 000 below), an expensive bead used on women's necklaces, are also worn by men as part of the ceremonial garb during the performance of rites celebrating their killing of dangerous beasts and human enemies and at funerals (see Parry, 1932, plate facing p. 249, which should correctly appear without the turban). This bead frequently figures as a major item of *ro.* The hereditary chief of Hnaring Khuahlun has as his token of direct descent in his clan and lineage a supposedly old and very large *pum-tek* bead, which is a prized possession, neither his nor his major wife's alone, and will pass on to his heir on his death. It is always kept on the person of his major wife; this has probably been a family custom for a very long time. Old and beautiful *pum-tek* beads are articles of great exchange value and prestige for the family that has them. They are obligatory payments (actually, or in name, payable as an equivalent amount in currency) in several categories in the marriage price, payments which go to men of the bride's agnatic lineage, to men of her own wife-giving lineage, and also to such women as the bride's father's sister.

We now turn to a discussion of part of the formal basis of the marriage alliance system. Marriage alliance is by definition enduring, but the Chin do not conceive of it as perpetual and authorities agree that all prescriptive marriage systems have means for adjusting to the production of new lineages (Needham, 1960b) and for preserving the essential structure of the system while allowing for variation over time in the strength and standing of various lineages.

Lévi-Strauss (1949) has discussed at length the means by which such systems permit the cancellation or lapse of an alliance after a certain number of generations, and we have already seen that status mobility and lineage segmentation are quite common in Chin society. Consequently we may expect that alliances will be allowed to lapse with some frequency. This expectation is borne out by the necessity of revalidating affinal alliance from time to time through the giving of prestations and *ar-sa* to one's wife-givers. Failure to give (or accept) these gifts amounts to public repudiation of the relationship. If the alliance is based upon an actual marriage in the present generation or in the recent or well-remembered past, and if the parties involved are either immediate, true affines, or relatively close classificatory ones, such repudiation

is treated as an insult and is brought to court. *Hmai tlam* is asked by the wife-giver, a special compensation payable chiefly for infraction of the rules governing behavior toward one's wife-givers. If, however, the relationship is a more distant one, such a repudiation may amount to very little. Alliances not reaffirmed by a subsequent marriage within a few generations (three or four, but there is no formal rule) are considered weak or broken. Moreover, the pattern of segmentation makes it probable that a fairly distant collateral of one's wife-giver is not one's actual affine. These matters are treated flexibly in legal practice. Some alliances, though not reaffirmed by subsequent marriages, are remembered and so remain effective for a long time, if the relative political positions of the respective lineages make it worthwhile.

The prohibition on giving women to real or classificatory wife-givers has one extension common in such systems elsewhere, but not among the Southern Chin. It is illegal to give women to some of the wife-givers of one's wife-givers. A scheme of three categories of lineages, whatever its advantage in analyzing the logical properties of such a system, could never fulfill this requirement.

Four is the minimum number of actual lineages needed, and this extension of the affinal prohibitions follows from the lien which a man holds on the children of his sister. There is a whole class of marriage payments comprising several distinctly named categories which is collectively called *pu-man* (mother's brother's price) and which goes to a real or classificatory mother's brother of the bride, or to his direct male heirs. In taking this price from the groom's people, he also eats *ar-sa,* thereby signifying his relationship to the groom's family as a wife-giver. This class of extended classificatory wife-givers need not include such people as the wife's brother's wife's father. The latter would be included only if he took the *ar-sa,* that is, if he were also the taker of the bride's *pu-man.* This prohibition does not imply that simply any marriage with the *pu* of one's own *pu* is considered a reversal of the status relationships between wife-giver and wife-taker.

This complication makes no difference in the applicability of the notion of marriage cycle, since the marriage cycle is a device for analyzing the relations among actual descent lines by a prescriptive marriage rule and not a statement of the relations between any fixed number of descent lines; the three such lines which are the categorical formants of asymmetric alliance—ego's line, his wife-givers, and his wife-takers—do not imply that three descent groups ought to marry in a circle.

For much the same reason, the development of rank hypogamy in a system of prescriptive asymmetric marriage alliance does not necessarily threaten its basic structural arrangements, as Lévi-Strauss (1949) has suggested. On the contrary, the Northern Chin system, in this respect as in others, is a natural evolution from the Southern system, given the external political tendency toward stratification in the Northern societies. When Lévi-Strauss tells us that systems of asymmetrical exchange marriage are ideally based upon a relationship among equals, he is speaking not of status in the marriage system but of status in the sense of rank (cf. Leach, 1961a, pp. 346-347), but in fact one leads naturally to the other, without necessarily interrupting the cyclical character of the marriage arrangements or leading to the formation of two noninter-marrying "castes."

In the South, where there is no class and little rank, the flow of prestations, the rules of respect, and the political functions of affinal alliance in the making of war and peace indicate a relative status inequality between the two parties to an affinal relationship. This relative status inequality is not transitive, but even in Matupi there is an overt preference among wealthy men within the appropriate wife-taking lineages. There is sometimes an attempt made by wealthy families to prevent marriages by their daughters to men of low standing, but the one instance of this I observed may well have been due to a recent tendency in Matupi to imitate Haka marriage arrangements.

In the North, rank differences are relatively fixed attributes of the lineage system over time, yet the system of status differences inherent in the asymmetrical connubium is not radically affected. Major wives are not taken from lineages whose status-rank in general is lower than one's own lineage status. Wives may, however, be taken from lineages whose status is about equal to one's own, and this produces no conflict. One renders them the necessary respect and payments but makes similarly large exactions and demands for respect from one's own wife-takers. One's position as a wife-taker does not produce one's general standing within the marriage system because, if the system is at all workable, all wife-takers are necessarily wife-givers to someone, but people whose external rank (status-rank or class-rank) is high regularly give

daughters to persons of somewhat lower rank, and demand differentially high marriage prices. Position within the marriage system and status-rank position reinforce one another rather than conflict with one another.

One is prohibited from marrying one's daughters to certain of one's wife-givers' wife-givers, not because any considerations of rank and stratification in the society have rendered the affinal relationship transitive, nor because those people are one's superiors either in rank or within the marriage system, by virtue of being superiors to one's own wife-givers, but solely because the people involved have taken *ar-sa* from you and are thereby your affines. They have contracted a *direct* relationship to you through your own wife-givers.

They can do this because of their lien on their own sister's daughters, and considerations of rank and stratification do play a considerable part in this. The existence of *pu-man* is consistent with the inflated marriage prices and claims in this society (see Head, 1949). This inflation of marriage prices and categories has clearly come about because lineages with great economic and political power, and hence of great value as marriage allies, have been able to get more and more for their women in marriage. They have also been enabled, by this competition for their women, to execute the lien on the children of their daughters, and they have used this lien to exact further payments, this time for the marriage of the daughters of these daughters.

Even class-rank has little effect on the structural basis of the marriage system. Class is in principle inherent in clan membership, but clans as such do not play a large part in the marriage system. The preferential position of the leading lineage segments of aristocratic clans in the marriage system has at least as much to do with their status rank as with class rank. The status rank of families in lines of direct inheritance within aristocratic clans, however, does tend to be fixed over a long period of time.

Such a family of *bawi* (aristocratic) clan and lineage is very unlikely to take a major wife from any but another *bawi* lineage of good standing, for to do otherwise would cause a conflict between general social position and relative positions in the marriage relationship. It does readily *give* its women to lineages of commoner clans provided these lineages are of high rank (more or less equal to *bawi* standing), but under such circumstances there cannot be

a direct circulation of women from true *bawi* to commoner *bawi* and back to true *bawi*. There are, however, indirect ways in which this may happen.

The high-status commoner lineage in question will continue to be involved in cyclical marriage arrangements with a large number of other commoner lineage segments, and the *bawi* lineage in question will be similarly involved with other *bawi* lineages, their other wife-takers and their wife-givers. In fact, this situation provides a regular link in marriage between the commoner and aristocratic classes, so that they do not, despite the existence of social stratification, tend to form two mutually isolated marriage subsystems. Persons and lineage segments of lesser status-rank within *bawi* clans supply further links between classes in marriage cycles, for they can both take wives from high-status commoners and give women to slightly higher status *bawi* clan lineages.[6]

If the establishment of a marriage connection means the establishment of an enduring alliance between two lineage segments, what then is the nature of a man's relationship with the lineages (the so-called "other" lineages) who are neither his agnates nor his affines by a previous marriage?

To begin with, the whole system has a fundamentally dualistic conceptual basis. The conceptual categories are both tripartite and dual: agnates, wife-givers, and wife-takers, of which agnates are not a category of affinal relations. The system can be comprehended in this formula, but the society cannot. Moreover, most of the other lineages are in prescriptive affinal relations directly or indirectly (at one or more removals in cycle) with ego's own affinal lineages, so they are part of ego's marriage system, since they are part of a single marriage cycle with ego (for the accepted meaning of cycle see Needham, 1958), although not ego's affines.

Ego may contract either sort of marriage with such a lineage. There are always many such lineages available in his society, owing to segmentation and to the shifting fortunes of lineages, and all difficulty is removed by supposing that these lineages stand to him, for purposes of the marriage arrangements, in the same position as his distant agnatic collaterals! We already know that the unit of exogamy in this society is the minor segment of a

[6] There may be some affinal alliances that are not part of any true, closed cycle, especially where absolute status differences separate a pair of affines. Both will, however, be involved in other affinal relationships which do belong in closed cycles.

lineage. Segmentation can occur so rapidly that even very close agnates may break off relationships by ceasing to share *ar-sa,* and so become eligible to intermarry, though in practice such intermarriages are rare. This gives us two minor segments, though of very shallow depth.

An important corollary is that known marriages with, say, a father's brother's daughter are treated legally, rather differently from what we might expect. Such marriages are frowned upon, but there is no particular penalty attached to them, nothing like *ar-sa-leih-nak.* They are legal and permissible provided the two lineages have become legally separated. In this respect all agnatic collaterals, near and distant, are in principle treated alike; they are potentially marriageable without special compensation.

This is precisely the position of all those lineages not agnatic collaterals of ego and not at a given moment in a relationship of affinity with ego. Thus, we do not need a fourth *conceptual* category for the analysis of our system, since we can merge these problematical lineages with the category of agnates, a reference category that has already been disposed of. The dualistic basis of a system in which the effective and comprehensive categories are two, wife-givers and wife-takers, remains intact.

The kind of *marriage cycle* characteristic of the Haka Chin system ought to be formally similar to that worked out for the Purum Kuki by Needham. Maybury-Lewis (1960, p. 195) has shown that there must be such cycles when a society has a rule specifying that wives can be taken only from groups to which wives are not given. A simple table of the current marriage relationships among the major and minor lineage segments of a community would show this. The only problem in constructing a table for a Haka village such as Hnaring would be the rather large number of segments that would have to be entered and the fact that many of them have no names. Such a table would show all the marriage cycles of the form $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow \ldots N \rightarrow A$ made possible by current prescriptive affinal relations, where the arrow indicates the direction in which daughters are given as wives. Needham has rightly insisted that no other formula deserves the name of marriage "cycle."

No such table could show in what sense—if at all—women are actually passed round in such a marriage cycle.

We can speak of analytic marriage cycles without specifying

the actual cyclical exchange of women, but the notion of marriage cycle is derived from the theory of indirect exchange, and it should be possible for a cycle to be completed or closed in some practical way. The marriage cycles set up by a prescriptive system are, as Needham says, only analytic and the question cannot be raised whether one or more of them actually functions or not, but surely they bear some relation to the actual practice in the society of a kind of marriage in a circle. It should at least be possible for such cycles to be closed in accordance with the actual lineage relations and the rules of marriage.

A cycle or a set of cycles derives from the standing affinal relations of the descent groups in a society at a given moment, but these relations, though enduring, are not permanent. Can we, for example, speak of marriage in a circle, if such circles may be closed only after the relations of affinity defining them have lapsed? I think the definition of an exchange cycle is necessarily related to the period of time affinal relations are stable. However, I also think that the notion of cycle and exchange is applicable to the Haka Chin marriage system.

The instances in Haka society of marriage with a real or classificatory MBD are relatively few, while newly made alliances constitute a high proportion of all recorded marriages. Hence, it is not especially common for a lineage segment to marry into the same alliance group twice in two successive generations or even twice in three successive generations, and even close agnatic collaterals do not share all their affines in common.

A lineage segment or its successors, however, contracts successive marriages over several generations within a fairly restricted circle of the lineages available in its marriage community. It usually marries into a family descended directly from families which were its standing affines a few generations before.

I can suggest one hypothetical explanation for this tendency. A given minor segment *A* fails to take a wife from one of its current classificatory affinal groups *C* for one or two generations. Another segment *B* of *A*'s major lineage, however, closely related to *A* as cosharer of *ar-sa* and member with *A* of a single wife-giving alliance group, does take a wife from *C* during this time, so *A* at the end of this time is no longer the wife-taking affine of *C,* but *B* is. This may eventually motivate *A* to contract a new marriage with a descendant of *C* because of its relationships with *B,* but this

would work only because a large number of constantly segmenting descent groups is involved in numerous overlapping sets of such relationships over not two but three, four, or more generations. Again, the construction of a table that could test this hypothesis would be a truly formidable task, since the marriage relations extend far beyond local communities and marriages over several generations would need to be entered in the table.

There is a unit which I shall call a *lineage cluster* and which maintains cyclical connubial relations over several successive generations. Although it has no corporate reality, it can be formally described. A lineage cluster consists of a small group of minor lineage segments. Its core is a set of segments collaterally related as agnates, but it includes a fair number of segments not so related to this core. The segments are not all of the same major or even maximal lineage.

Two such clusters may be thought of as maintaining connubial relations over quite a number of successive generations, as respectively wife-givers and wife-takers to one another in a given marriage cycle. Two or more segments belonging to a single cluster in one such cycle may be quite differently assorted in some other cycle. Any given lineage or segment is involved in several cycles simultaneously, because women are not necessarily available in any given lineage at any given moment. For any given cycle, lineage clusters are related in such a way that cluster *A* gives women to cluster *B* and so on through *C* . . . to *N* and back to *A* again. Any two clusters are so related that, in generation *1*, some but not all segments in *A* contract marriages in *B*. In generation *2* a different set in *A*, which may overlap with the first, contracts marriages in *B*, and so on. Over several generations in *A*, any given segment *a* and its direct successors successively marry women from one or another of the segments in lineage cluster *B*. A segment *b* in *B* in the previous generation has given women successively to one or another segment in the same lineage cluster as *a*, though not necessarily to *a* itself. Within this scheme, over a period spanning from one to three or four generations something very like substantively closed marriage cycles of the sort specified earlier can be derived from actual marriages, proceeding through a fairly small number of steps. The steps correspond partly to actual lineage segments and partly to lineage clusters. Some segments will drop out of a cluster from time to time and some will be added, owing to shifting alliance preferences, status mobility, and devolution of rank, and

owing also to other accidental variations. On the whole their continuity of membership is considerable.

TERMS OF RELATIONSHIP IN HAKA CHIN SOCIETY

It is unnecessary to discuss in full all the terms of relationship, since a good deal can be learned from an examination of selected classificatory equations of one kin type (Murdock, 1949, pp. 133-134) with another. Certain equations are widely held to be diagnostic of such marriage systems; others are said not to fit such systems.

I shall not argue here the merits of the theory that kinship terminologies are primarily reflections of certain kinds of marriage systems (see Postal and Eyde, 1961). A prescriptive marriage system undoubtedly exercises a notable influence on kinship terminology, though possibly not so as to run counter to the effect of rules of descent and residence. Murdock, who has made a thoroughly convincing case for the paramount influence of coresidence and descent upon terminologies, did not distinguish between prescriptive and preferential systems of marriage. The Chin terminology is of an "Omaha" type, and shows instances of the equation of kin types of two different and successive generations. It therefore fits highly institutionalized forms of patrilineal descent with well-formed unilineal descent groups and patrilocal or virilocal residence. Nevertheless, the same equations are in striking harmony with a prescriptive, asymmetric marriage system.

The essential equations in the Lai (Haka) language are:

1. *nu:* M, MZ, FBW
2. *pa:* F, FB, MZH
3. *ni:* FZ, HM
4. *ṭa:* FZH, HF
5. *pu:* MB, MF, MFB, FF, FFB, WF, MBS, WB
6. *pi:* MBW, MM, MMZ, MFZ, FM, WM, WBW
7. *tu:* FZS, DH, BDH, ZS, SS, DS, ZH
8. *u:* EB (m.s.), EZ (w.s.), elder parallel cousin (same sex)
9. *nau:* YB (m.s.), YS (w.s.), younger parallel cousin (same sex)
10. *far:* Z (m.s.)/*tar:* B (w.s.) and close parallel cousin of opposite sex to speaker
11. *fa:* S, D, BS (m.s.), BD (m.s.)

12. *nupi/nutlai/nuhring:* W
13. *pa sal:* H
14. *va:* BS, BD (w.s.)

(All terms unless obviously used by one sex only are used by both.)

The first two equations are self-explanatory. The third and the fourth equations complement each other and are examples of both male and female speakers' usage, showing that father's sister is different from wife's mother, hence there cannot be symmetrical cross-cousin marriage. It shows also that a woman may be expected to marry a father's sister's son, real or classificatory, but not a mother's brother's son. The fifth equates MB and all grandfathers, as it is a term showing classificatory age respect. Mother's brother is the same as wife's father, and even mother's brother's son and wife's brother are the same, which is congruent with a system where a man marries a real or classificatory mother's brother's daughter. More important, the respect due the men of one's wife-giving lineage is such that they are addressed by terms which in ego's own lineage are reserved to the second ascending generation. Equation 6 indicates that the wife of equation 5 is not the same person classificatorily as equation 3, that is, mother's brothers marry elsewhere than with father's sisters. Equation 7 is the reflex of equation 5, to be expected in the type of marriage regime in question. Father's sister's son is in ego's generation, as is sister's husband, while sister's son is in the first descending generation, but these, together with daughter's son and son's son, are terminologically relegated to the second descending generation, in view of the lower status of men of one's wife-taking lineages. While the three ideal lines of agnates, wife-takers and wife-givers, are kept distinct in ego's generation and generations first ascending and descending, all three merge terminologically in the second ascending and descending generations. This is consistent with the differential respect shown to wife-givers as against wife-takers and is also consistent with the theory of the lien which a lineage holds on its daughter's children. This curious but not discordant fact is also a reflection of the rapidity of segmentation and the relative rarity of the actual marriage with mother's brother's daughter, real or classificatory. It reflects the fact that, with the vagaries of a lineage's political and status fortunes, and with the constant production of new lineage segments, the descendants of one's immediate wife-takers and wife-givers may be expected, within a

span of three or four generations, to fall into a rather changed genealogical picture, some lines continuing to be allied as in the past, some not, and some being allied in reverse.

Where the terms from Zophei and Lautu villages (Aibur and Hnaring, respectively) are the same as those of Haka, they are cognate both with Haka terms and with one another. At two points the Zophei and Lautu terminologies show distinctions not present in Haka. Zophei has a term *pai* (in Lautu, *piʌ*) which designates the following kin types: DH, ZH, BDH. This simply serves to differentiate between men who take our sisters as wives and men who are descendants of our own sisters.

Zophei and Lautu differentiate between wife-givers, in lower generations than the grandparental, and cognatic ascendants in the second generation. All grandfathers are called *ma pɔ* in Zophei and all grandmothers *ma nu* (in Lautu, *mi-pa* and *mi-nu*). This does the same thing as the foregoing equation, by differentiating between direct and collateral relatives, but it does so less perfectly, since the terms are also used for all siblings of the actual grandparents and marginally for the spouses of all these. Almost everyone except primary relatives is addressed not by a kinship term but by a teknonym, or if the person addressed has no children, by the proper name. This emphasis on addressing people by names and teknonyms and general terms such as "little fellow" (*ky-ky,* used in Lautu for any young person at all, regardless of relationship or lack of it) is common elsewhere in the Chin Hills. I know of one case in Matupi where a married man with no children is addressed as "father of no-name." In Haka a person addresses, say, his mother's brother sometimes as *ka-pu* (my *pu*) and at other times by his teknonym, and almost always refers to him by his teknonym.

POLITICAL SYSTEMS OF NORTHERN HILLS (HAKA) CHIN

The Southern Chin had no distinct political offices and no specialized political institutions, but the Northern Chin had both. A striking feature of the Northern political system, however, is its instability and the disparity between the elaborated native model of political life and its often meager substance. The chief aim of this section is to understand the roots of this disparity.

The Northern Chin have village headmen (*khua bawi*) who govern the village together with a council (*tlang pi*) and one or more subsidiary officers, in particular the *tlang-bawi,* or village

ritual officer.[7] The latter, a man of pure lineage, commoner or aristocrat, is chosen by the villagers. Higher level political structures rise and fall, but the village system remains intact through the changes in fortunes of realms and alliances, which constitute the higher level structures. I shall refer to these higher level political networks as supralocal organization.

In Haka Subdivision the office of village headman is usually hereditary within leading lineages of aristocratic clans. Where not hereditary, it may pass to lineages of nonaristocratic clan (not of aristocratic class rank). Moreover, some headmen among the Northern Chin have autocratic powers and some lean more heavily upon their councilors. The term "autocratic" must be taken very loosely.

Stevenson (1943, Chap. 2, pp. 11-18) draws a categorical distinction between autocratic and democratic political types, resembling that between *gumsa* and *gumlao* among the Kachins, as described by Leach (1954). Leach explains that the Kachin political system and the relationship between its two varieties are in large measure conditioned by the external relationships of Kachin society to Shan Valley civilization, an argument that holds for the Chin, but in a different way. I do not wish to criticize the dichotomy between the autocratic and democratic forms in all its implications, for it is clearly a useful one for many purposes, and I employ it throughout what follows. I do, however, find that some of its apparent implications are invalid when applied to the Chin.

Autocratic village headmanship among the Chin is always hereditary within aristocratic (*bawi*) clans. This is true even in Lushai, where lineage ranking is otherwise absent. Where it is not autocratic, it may pass to families who are not in *bawi* clans, though this is not always specified. It is implied by such writers as Stevenson and Leach that the democratic variety is generally associated with an attempt to repudiate the privileges of inherited social rank. Among the Kachin this is possibly the case, but among the Chin it is not.

The difference between autocratic and democratic politics in Chin society is a matter of the difference between status rank and class rank; a matter of the difference between conceptualizing rank as a hereditary, fixed attribute of certain descent groups only, and

[7] These terms may be defined as: the general population, the community at large (*tlang*), lord, headman (*bawi*), great, main, exemplar (*pi*), and village realm (*khua*).

conceptualizing it as a function of the changing wealth and power of lineages. With the latter conceptualization, the privileges of high rank are less extreme, and there is greater solidarity within the community as a whole, but this conceptualization of rank is never unconditionally accepted in Haka society.

The effects of the democratic conceptualization of rank are felt mainly at the level of the village and less at the level of political units of larger scope. The conflict between the two principles of assigning social rank is inherent in all Northern Chin social systems of which I have any knowledge, and the principle of status-rank is present even where clan class ranking is firmly entrenched. The legal system recognizes both principles as valid; both are discussed under the headings of *bawi* (aristocrats) and *chia* (commoners). The latter word is a stem alternate of the verb, *chiat*, "to render precincts taboo, impure, by performing a sacrifice."

Nowhere does anyone dispute the fact that *bawi* rank carries special privileges. People question only the basis for assigning rank, and even democratic headmen are generally of *bawi* rank.

There is, as Stevenson (1943, p. 19) has observed, no clear-cut correspondence between a hereditary system of recruitment to political office and the presence of realms. At most the two are roughly correlated. The great realm of Tashon[8] in Falam Subdivision, when first encountered by the British, already had a history of at least two centuries. Yet this realm was ruled for a considerable period from Tashon village, which apparently had a democratic constitution. It was ruled by the council of elders of that village, who were presumably all aristocrats. The British installed a chief in accordance with their general policy, but this chief had no traditional authority. Tashon was nevertheless a very large and powerful realm and the only important military rival in the Falam area of the power of Haka and Thlantlaang to the south.

Authorities from Carey and Tuck on refer to the "independent villages" south of Haka, although none tells exactly which villages are meant. Roughly they are the villages now comprised in Zophei and Lautu circles and the Zotung villages. In Zophei apparently there were no real chiefs, that is, officers in one village owning or otherwise taking regular tribute from surrounding villages, although dissident people from Leitak founded Aibur to the im-

[8] *Tlašun* locally, *Suntla* in Haka, the spelling "Tashon" reflects the Burmese pronunciation.

mediate south, on lands belonging to Surngen (a Lautu-speaking village). Zophei villages were generally ruled by hereditary headmen of *bawi* clans, and were independent only in that their dependence upon such centers as Haka and Thlangtlaang was indirect. They were not conquered by Haka but were under its power and were the protected, wife-taking allies of Haka or other centers, paying an indirect tribute, in the form of marriage payments to the lineages of their wife-givers, and tribute to a junior line of the protecting clan which was sent to reside among them (*mi-put*).

Lautu had hereditary headmen in each village, all headmen being of the same clan, Lian Chin. At least one of them was a chief, the hereditary headman of Hnaring Khuahlun, who took regular tribute from some of the immediately surrounding villages and especially from the trans-Boinu River settlements founded from Hnaring itself. His lands, and Hnaring's lands in general, extended into the territory of other villages and were rented to the latter in return for regular tribute payments. He, like other Lautu headmen, was usually allied with one or another of the leading centers of power, such as Haka, and one leading family in Hnaring, not always that of the chief, had a current wife from Haka's Zathang clan.

Zotung had hereditary headmen, though perhaps no actual chiefs, but independent status was again relative. They were allied with one another and with important Lautu lineages, and also with lineages as far north as Haka. Haka sometimes raided as far south as Matupi, though perhaps this did not occur before the Anglo-Chin rebellion of 1918.

Haka was the major power center in the Central Chin Hills, possibly the single most powerful village in all the Chin Hills. The word Haka in another form, *Hal-kha*, which means "bitter-request," is taken by some Chin to refer to the acknowledged hauteur, uncompromising aristocratic demeanor and assertiveness of the Haka folk, particularly the Haka *bawi*. The people of Falam and of more distant and hostile Tiddim generally interpret the name in this way. Haka had, however, no single paramount chief of its own. The Zathang clan was so powerful that its several local branches each had a chief, in particular the hereditary leaders of the Sangpi and Sangte lineages. Each such chief had his realm of satellites and allies among the different villages of Haka area. Virtually

Fig. 25. Lian Kulh, chief of Hnaring Khuahlun, with his son and heir. He wears *canlo puan*, a red, indigo, and yellow brocaded blanket, and *pawng pi*, the aristocrat's turban of Haka area.

anyone of full-status *bawi* rank within the *bawi* clans, such as Zathang and Khenglawt, had potential chief prerogatives.

The independence of the villages south of Haka did not therefore mean exclusion from supralocal organization, for supralocal organizations or even realms did not necessarily have a single paramount, hereditary chief.

Hereditary rank can be treated comparatively. The Matupi Chin do not recognize social stratification, but there is something similar to Northern *bawi* status, though it is not hereditary in Matupi. Persons accorded this status must be wealthy and must also be performers of the (ungraded) Matu Feasts of Merit. Each performance of this feast gives the performer the privilege there, as elsewhere, of adding to the structure and ornamentation of his dwelling house: a gable (*voi khʌp*) to the front of his house, that is, a projecting roof peak, thatched and crescent-shaped; certain notched or stepped poles stuck horizontally into the floor frame of his house, the stepped heads of the posts projecting forward on either side of the doorway, into the common plaza, each step on the pole indicating a feast performed. Forked upright wooden planks, crudely carved, to each of which has been tied a sacrificial mithan or buffalo at a feast, stand clustered against a tree in the center of the common plaza near the house. The feasts here, as elsewhere, are a means of raising the standing of a household and are focused upon the propitiation of the spirit of the house. A feast performer is *bawi* (the term adopted from Haka is now used) because he has used his wealth to treat his settlement mates to food, drink, and entertainment. He is expected to be generous with his wealth and to make loans (at high interest) when requested (see p. 77).

Powerful Matu families prefer to wed their daughters only to other good families. Rank is not hereditary and classes do not exist, but the wealthy and powerful do form, in a small way, a group with special privileges. Rank and privilege are implicit in all Chin social systems, even the simplest.

In the Haka area rank is much more pervasive and is of two sorts: status rank and class rank. Both are firmly anchored in the lineage system, and high rank is never supposed to be achievable by individuals within a single generation. The measure of rank is everywhere the grade of marriage price a lineage has been accustomed to pay for its wives. In other words, a lineage's rank is a function of its hereditary affinal ties with other lineages. The

question is whether a family that has achieved high status and good affinal connections may be admitted to a full share of the privileges of *bawi*. Emphasis on status rank has nothing at all to do with democracy. Status rank is no more than a weaker form of class rank, and in the North rank is always hereditary.

There is similarly no absolute difference between the autocratic and democratic principles of political rule. Where democratic headmen exist there is some tendency for persons to hold *bawi* rank in virtue of status more than in virtue of class, but there is no democratic principle in the rule of any realm or chiefdom. On this account Stevenson's application of the term "democratic" to realms is open to objection. There was no single chief of Haka, yet autocracy was the principle of Haka politics, and concomitantly great emphasis was laid upon class clan rank. Among the independent villages to the south, hereditary headmen without pretensions to chiefly standing were only a little less autocratic than actual chiefs of realms, because of their connection with chiefs and realms beyond the confines of the village rather than because of their inherent powers as village headmen.

Village government, whether by hereditary headmen or by councils and elected headmen (as in some Falam villages), is never of itself as autocratic as village government deriving power from other sources. It is inherently communal, involving a council of elders, whereas a true chief (who is usually a headman in his own village) is relatively free of such controls in exercising his power over villages other than his own. His external powers depend, first, upon his position as a preferred marriage ally who receives inflated marriage payments, and second, on his position as a landowner who may exact rents wherever he owns land, whether at home or in outside villages. These lands usually come to him as part of the marriage payments. His powers depend finally upon his ability to muster followers in raiding expeditions and war, which require both wealth and an affinal and other following.

Hereditary headmen who were not chiefs generally had somewhat autocratic powers. These autocratic powers always arose because of their connection with powerful chiefs or with powerful realms (see Stevenson, 1943, p. 14). The power of autocratic headmen, as of chiefs, was derived from their position as preferred wife-givers and as landowners, and in turn their position in the local marriage market derived from their marital and political

relationships with powerful families elsewhere. These local families were powerful precisely because they were involved in an institutionalized network of supralocal political, economic, and social relationships. Headmen were autocratic not because they were headmen but because they were wealthy aristocrats. It is interesting that the thigh-eating chiefs of the Kachin (those exacting flesh dues) exist only under aristocratic (*gumsa*) regimes (Leach, 1954, p. 121 ff.).

Increasing emphasis upon hereditary rank generally and class rank in particular is a concomitant of autocratic rule at all levels. Moreover, the systems of rank in Northern Chin society are a reflection of the more or less ubiquitous existence of supralocal forms of social and political organization, some weak, some strong. Class rank in particular is exactly what might be expected to arise in the form of fixed privilege by inheritance, where individual lineages have accumulated such wealth and power that it is hard if not impossible to unseat them. Great differences of wealth between powerful families and others can, however, only arise where the political conditions provide for their accumulation and perpetuation. Such wealth cannot be accumulated locally in such a poor country as the Chin Hills, unless there is a well-organized system for the circulation of wealth over large regions.

Haka, for example, was a powerful realm, but had no single chief; its several chiefs were apparently independent of one another. Yet, throughout the Haka area, direct or indirect affinal alliance among local chieftains and headmen afforded direct access to sources of autocratic powers. These autocratic powers were never fully developed; tyrannical headmen who discounted the controls of the village councilors were never successful for very long any more than they were in Falam area. Their powers, moreover, usually were not as great as those of a Haka chief or of the Haka *bawi* clans.

Tashon was like Haka. It was a powerful realm with no single chief. But, to judge by Stevenson's recapitulation of the facts, its realm was even less consolidated than that of Haka, for it was ruled by a council of village elders. Consequently, as Stevenson says, the powers of the headmen in the villages subordinate to Tashon tended to be democratic. These headmen were not allied directly or indirectly to a single powerful personage or lineage in the paramount village. In Tashon as in its subordinate villages, the

powers of the leading families were equal and so each family held the others in check. They apparently cooperated in council, but no single network of alliance and affinity could build up autocratic powers. Tashon, however, was only relatively democratic. Its rulers, and presumably the various headmen in the realm, came only from lineages of *bawi* clans.

A chief or a true autocratic headman draws his councilors mainly from families of little influence and relatively low rank. He can control them more effectively, and they will readily enforce his orders and execute his exactions to a degree that his fellow aristocrats would not.[9] The autocrat is an aristocrat who has arrogated powers to himself in defiance of his fellow aristocrats. He cannot afford to let them compete with him in any way as his equals or near equals.

Symptoms of simpler forms of political organization always exist along with the more elaborate forms. If there were a region with no supralocal organization within our larger area, we might be tempted to interpret these symptoms as a tendency toward a truly community-centered democratic temper. Supralocal organization is ubiquitous, however, whether as consolidated realms, weakly consolidated realms, or simply networks of alliance and affinity. Concomitantly, hereditary rank is everywhere a leading principle, despite the conflict between class rank and status rank. How should we account for this coexistence of political forms and principles?

Village government is not wholly autocratic precisely because it is never completely merged with, or subsumed under, large political units. It is always to some extent autonomous, preserving its integrity and continuity of the social order during the recurrent declines in the political fortunes of larger political units, because the larger units and networks are very imperfect. Moreover, the principle of status ranking allows for the reallocation of political power to descent groups that currently possess the economic means to exercise it.

To understand this, it is necessary to examine the differences and connections between the prerogatives of a village headman (*khua-bawi*, settlement lord) and a country chief (*ram bawi*).

The headman and not the chief, as Stevenson (1943 p. 18) points out, gets virtually all dues owed directly to rulers by subjects. He

[9] Furthermore the councilors (*tlang pi*, see p. 139) as their title implies represent the interests of the village community at large as against the externally based interests of the aristocracy as such.

(in council), and not the chief, has the major share of control over the day-to-day activities of the village people. He organizes communal work, presides over judicial proceedings, makes and enforces rules. This is, however, much less true now than it was before pacification by the English. He gets payments of flesh dues whenever a sacrifice is made or when a kill is made in the hunt (see Stevenson, 1943). He and his councilors collect fines from the administration of justice, some of which go to pay for communal expenses, but much of which is consumed at public feasts of *zu* (grain beer) and meat given by the councilors. He can tax the villages whenever he thinks fit for the cost of communal rituals.

As an example of personal dues owed directly to rulers, we can consider the dues owed the headman of Hnaring Khuahlun. The payments due him as headman, however, are not wholly separable from what is due him as a chief, that is, because of his powers and prerogatives as an aristocrat. This is characteristic of the whole system.

When any villager of Hnaring Khuahlun shoots a wild animal, the headman gets meat of the liver and meat from along the backbone and one hind quarter. Whenever a domestic animal is sacrificed for any private purpose, he gets one hind leg and one foreleg. When the villagers go fishing in groups, the largest fish caught is given to the headman. The headman can order the villagers to build his house without an absolute obligation to pay them in any way. But in practice he kills one or more mithans and distributes shares of the meat to all households (*tlang zam*, to distribute common shares in a kill). When the time for housebuilding comes, the meat that has already been given serves as an invitation to work, and the headman then kills another beast to feed the workers. According to the headman, this killing of mithans for housebuilding is voluntary on his part, though obligatory on the part of other *bawi* in the village who wish to have houses built with village assistance. Other villagers, however, insist that the headman, too, is obliged to pay them in this way.

The headman can ask several families (usually four) to till his household fields each year. He may ask any commoner family and usually asks only the strongest. This privilege, however, is not different in kind, but only in degree, from what is allowed any landowner.

Finally, at the opening of every fifth *lai lo* swidden land (*lo-pil*), the headman collects from each household two baskets of millet to defray the cost of the peace offerings to enemy villages which the headman of this village had formerly to pay when the village became involved in a war. The peace offering consisted of one *sia-pi* (grown female mithan), and the average current price of *sia-pi* is K. 200, while the average price of a basket (now equal to a five-gallon kerosene tin) of millet is K. 10. There are about 130 paying households in Hnaring Khuahlun. This tax has great value to a headman, for peace offerings were not always being made by so powerful a village as Hnaring Khuahlun. The villagers were simply being taxed for certain payments long since completed and for the mere possibility of future peace offerings.

The Hnaring Khuahlun headman, who is chief of seven villages including his own, is also the village's largest single landowner and head of its aristocratic lineage. As headman he has the privilege of getting many families to work his fields, but this depends on the amount of land he owns. Other autocratic exactions, such as the tax for peace offerings, are enforceable only because he controls many commoners and has the backing of most other *bawi* families of the village as leader of their common maximal lineage, and both of these controls over the public stem directly from his position as landowner and from his position in the marriage alliance system. These are also the sources of power for chiefs, although a chief gets few if any such direct exactions from his subjects.

Payments come to a chief in two ways, direct and indirect. Direct payments come from subject villages at stated periods, often annually. They usually consist of annual tribute, peace offering of some baskets of grain, one or more mithans, or some other goods. These dues are collected by village headmen and passed on to the chief or to his surrogates, such as in-resident junior lineages of the chief's clan. More exactly, the headman pays the chief and then assesses a levy upon the households of his village to pay for the cost and the trouble. The indirect payments from outlying villages come to the chief not as a ruler but as a landowner and a wife-giver. Most of his revenue is collected in this way.

He may also collect a payment for allowing a new village to be founded on lands belonging to his village. In the case of Aibur, however, which was founded by dissidents from Leitak on land belonging to Surngen, there is no record of recurrent tribute.

Surngen was pleased simply to have friends and allies settled nearby. The event took place some generations ago, and since that time Aibur has not been subject to Surngen in any way. It is not certain whether any payment would have been made to Surngen as a village or to the several landowners of Surngen for these lands, which were too far away for Surngen village to use as fields.

Land outside his own village will have been acquired by a chief and his forebearers mainly as part of marriage payments from outlying villages. The chief's power abroad in this respect is not different from his power at home, which depends upon his wealth in land and his wife-taking allies within his own village. Records of landholdings in Hnaring show that most lands owned at home and abroad by any lineage have been accumulated as marriage payments.

When a satellite village is founded on a village's distant lands, the power accruing to the mother village and to its headman as chief, in consequence of this event, is tenuous. The founding of Aibur is a case in point. Another instance is the founding of Sate, nine generations ago, by a Hnaring chief.

Sia Vung, the founder of Hnaring's maximal *bawi* lineage, had several sons. Only one, Pe Thua, the founder of the major lineage of the headmen of Hnaring Khuahlun, took his inheritance. Another founded one of the major lineage segments in Hnaring. A third son, Tin Ling, who should have taken the inheritance, fell in love with a slave. On this account his family eventually fell in status rank and are now *mi-chia*, but the current elected (post-independence) headman of Sate, descended from him, has made an advantageous marriage and is now of high rank. Sia Rung, still another son, founded a village between Fanthen and Ngaiphaipi. Thua Lung, the last son, was sent to found Sate village, across the Boinu River from Hnaring.

Thua Lung was a successful hunter and used to send meat to his father in Hnaring. His father demanded lots of such tribute from this son and eventually demanded the flesh of a wild albino boar to eat. The son sent back the reply: "Eat your own penis." Then the father, Sia Vung, sacrificed a white chicken and cursed Thua Lung with it, so that it is said Sate suffered greatly and eventually burned down, the fire killing Thua Lung.

Thus Sia Vung, having used the founding of Sate to settle an estate upon a noninheriting son, did not in consequence establish

any clear-cut right to tribute from Sate. What he got, he got as father of Thua Lung. He had hoped to have a friendly village nearby, a possible ally in war, and since the Sate population was composed of commoners and subordinate *bawi* from Hnaring, there would surely be some major and minor lineages with members in both villages, hence numerous ties of kinship and marriage alliance would exist between the two villages.

Sate was later refounded, three generations ago, by the then headman-chief of Hnaring Longtlaang, who invited commoners from villages Thangaw and Khuahrang to settle on his lands in that place, and sent his son by a junior wife to be its headman and founder.

In any given village each of the important aristocratic households is likely to hold fairly extensive lands within the village land boundaries. The hereditary headman may have more privileges than the others, because he is a leading landowner and because he is the leading figure of the more or less united *bawi* families of the maximal lineage in question, but this depends to a considerable extent upon the degree to which the headman's family has been able over a fairly long period of time to maintain its wealth and dominance. His family must have withstood the tendency for the fortunes of particular lineages and segments to fluctuate. In order to do this, a family has to have a preferential command over outside sources of power, marriage alliances, and lands in other villages. If, however, a headman has no other villages under him, he is in theory only a headman. He is a chief only if he controls headmen in outlying villages who are usually his hereditary wife-takers, his junior collaterals, his debtors on account of peace settlements. This kind of control is tenuous, and his family cannot be the exclusive wife-giver lineage to any lineage.

In this same hypothetical village, other *bawi* families also can contract advantageous affinal alliances outside the village. From extramural wife-givers they derive political support, and from extramural wife-takers they get wealth, in particular, external lands. The external lands thus acquired are not large continuous tracts (such as may in the past have been got by conquest), so the possibility of founding satellite villages on such lands is remote. Nevertheless, some of these families may eventually come to be equal with their headman's family in their access to outside sources of wealth and power. This must lead sooner or later to situations

such as that of Haka or even Tachon, where no one aristocratic family is sufficiently dominant to have chief powers or the powers of an autocratic headman, even though the village as a whole dominates a large region.

We can now evaluate Stevenson's very common contention that headmen are significant and chiefs virtually superfluous. A chief is in effect nothing but a headman whose autocratic prerogatives in his own village, as headman, derive largely from his outside connections and those of the other aristocrats of his village. The autocratic powers of a chief outside his own village are always more fictional than real. Sometimes the chief, such as the chief of Zahau in Falam area (Stevenson, 1943), may nearly dominate a tightly woven network of external alliances, but he merely exerts more or less exclusive influence over subordinate headmen of his realm. He gets significantly more revenue in marriage payments from outside than do the other aristocratic families in his own village, but they will all get some external marriage payments.

If, then, we measure the powers of a realm in terms of special external revenues and dues coming to one particular figure, its autocratic headman, we must wholly agree with Stevenson's evaluations of the relative powers of chiefs and headmen.

However, let us consider the total amount of wealth accruing to a ruling village, and the power this gives it over area politics and over the fortunes of all villages involved in its network of alliance. Such a village as Haka gave its daughters to aristocratic families far and wide outside of Haka. Haka also sometimes had to take women from outside, but lost no advantage by doing this, because they took women from families and villages that were also centers of major power, roughly their political equals, but they gave their women to their political inferiors. Haka as a whole, or the Haka *bawi* clan of Zathang as a whole, maintained decisive power on this basis for a very long time. Furthermore, its position in a far-flung marriage network, its organizing capacity in war and trade, and its capacity to maintain relative peace by means of alliances and conquests all supported a considerable circulation of wealth in the economy of a large area. This permitted the maintenance of hereditary, autocratic political systems at all levels, contributing even to the rise of such petty chiefs as that of Hnaring Khuahlun. It made absolutely no difference that there was no single paramount chief at Haka.

There was no real difference between the roles and rights of headmen and of chiefs, and consequently it is not possible to assess, as Stevenson does, the relative importance of these two kinds of offices. It is a mistake to think of pre-British headmen as having ever been under the jurisdiction of chiefs. In many respects Hnaring was subordinate to Haka, yet Hnaring Khuahlun and later even Hnaring Longtlaang had chiefs of their own.

Within an autocratic supralocal realm there were autocratic headmen. Some had power beyond their own villages and were thought of as chiefs. Haka was the center of power over a realm of great extent and was so large and wealthy that each of its constituent lineage settlements had its own fully empowered autocratic headman. Each of these was also a chief, so Haka had several chiefs. This was a direct consequence of the very size and power of Haka itself. Smaller centers of power, centers of such realms as Zahau in Falam area, had single headmen who could be counted as realm chiefs. This was a mere accident of size and history.

A chief is in effect simply a hereditary headman, landowner, and aristocrat, whose holdings and connections beyond his own village are very extensive compared with those of his village fellows. He has some control over other headmen and this gives him added prestige and consolidated power at home. If his home is also the center of power of a realm, the powers of the realm will tend to be concentrated in his person and office, but whether such a figure dominates a realm does not determine whether the realm is autocratic. A comparison of Haka and Tashon shows this very well. The degree of autocracy in a realm is determined by large-scale economic considerations. These factors determine whether or not it has been possible for certain families of *bawi* to amass and preserve great amounts of wealth at the expense of other *bawi* families. If this has been possible, then certain families, but not necessarily a single line, will more or less decisively dominate the alliance structure and the general power structure of the realm. This permits the management of the realm to be consolidated in the hands of one or more families in a village center of power, and produces an autocratic regime. Without these conditions the realm may still be powerful, in virtue of the military power of a central village, but this realm will be diffusely controlled. This seems to have been the case with Tashon.

Native theory would have us distinguish sharply between chiefs

and headmen, but this wish is based upon the fiction that the processes which permit the lineage wealth and power to be built up and maintained could actually be carried so far as to lead to absolute dominance by a single family over long stretches of time. The economy of the Chin Hills never in fact allows this to happen. We shall see subsequently why the native theory on this point nevertheless persists.

What we have described for Haka and more generally for the Northern Hills Chin seems to resemble the picture of Kachin politics described by Leach (1954). Here, too, native theory would have us believe that (in *gumsa* regimes) thigh-eating chiefs rule over several villages, in none of which there can be another thigh-eating chief as headman. (A thigh-eating chief takes flesh-dues because he controls access to land.) Leach observes that this does not correspond to the facts, and native theory has somehow to account for the fact that there are also thigh-eating chiefs subordinate to others who nevertheless rule over one village only; so it is said that the chief of a large realm can delegate these rights to headmen under him. In any case, some persons claim such privileges, even though they are subordinate politically and despite the Kachin rule that a chief has paramount rights over all the lands of a realm. No parallel to this paramount right in land exists for the Northern Hills Chin. They base their claim to the privilege on an assertion that such rights belong to them because they are hereditary aristocrats who are at the same time headmen.

ECONOMY OF NORTHERN CHIN POLITICAL SYSTEMS

We must conclude that realms, though not chiefs, are of great importance in Northern Chin society. This importance cannot be measured in terms of the relative or absolute amounts of revenue accruing to realm chiefs, or in terms of the consolidation of specifically political controls in the hands of those who manage a realm. Its most direct measure is the degree of autocracy and of aristocratic privilege that realms permit at all levels in the political system. The ultimate measure of what supralocal organizations in general, and realms in particular, do for the entire social order is the relatively reliable circulation of large amounts of wealth that they permit.

The relationship between supralocal organization and the circulation of wealth is determined by the necessities of trade with Burma. I shall not repeat this argument here, except to recall the difficulties of maintaining the Burma trade where contact with Burman communities and emporia was perennially unstable, which required a degree of centralized economic political organization not needed or found in the South. This organization could go just so far in its development.

The leading political figures often aspired to roles effectively barred to them. This system could amass concentrations of wealth by trading and raiding on an organized basis, and could support the institution of professionally specialized craftsmen to elaborate the material culture inventory, but its essential capital—the small range of basic goods locally produced for subsistence plus exchange—remained very low. The system could easily overextend itself, and would then fall prey to internal dissensions and external competition. Extended beyond a certain point, the power of a realm or of a chief produced a very small economic return for the burdens of administration and of subjection falling upon all segments of the population. Such power could not be allowed to last.

The idealized notion of a chief as an official placed above headmen in a neat hierarchy was further strengthened by the imposition of English administration. It is very easy to complain about the English always wanting to put in well-ordered systems of chiefs and subordinates wherever they wished to institute indirect rule in a tribal area, but that, of course, was their prerogative, since obviously an hierarchically organized line of administration would be more efficient for them. The greater trouble is that they tended there as elsewhere to discover such chiefs where they did not in fact exist. The English were hardly alone in this failing. They were deceived by the system and by the exaggerated pretensions of leading figures in the tribal realms they encountered.

Stevenson (1943) has clearly outlined the difficulties engendered when the English made fixed boundaries for a tribal chief's realm. They ignored the facts that realms correspond indifferently to ethnic or linguistic units and that other kinds of ties and alliances cut across such realms. Moreover, the realms themselves were geographically unstable and were constantly being altered by warfare and intrigue. It was an error to suppose that certain ethnic units were wholly subject to others in the organization of any Chin realm.

Leach (1961a) has made this point with general application to the political organization of hill tribes over a large part of Southeastern Asia. He observes that mutually exclusive or wholly inclusive geographical boundaries were not essential to the existence of political entities in this part of the world, civilized and tribal alike.

It is impossible with the data at hand to measure the contribution of any supralocal organization among the Chin to the circulation of wealth, or to show precisely how these organizations permitted the successful prosecution of economic relationships with Burma, and to a smaller extent, with India. In fact, it is often hard to understand exactly how the quantities of goods bought (and not looted) from the civilized outer world were paid for.

6

Aspects of Northern Chin Economics

THE PROFESSIONAL SPECIALIST IN TECHNOLOGY

It is sometimes said that true professional specialization does not exist where the craftsman has to produce the bulk of his own food. Many of the results commonly attributed to the development of professional specialist production in a society, however, are present at times even under these imperfect conditions.

Chin specialization is of two kinds: individual and local. The individual professional craftsman is skilled more than others in his village in the manufacture of some item or class of items, for example, plaited bamboo mats. Many other persons are also able to make these mats, and small crude mats are made at home by poorer persons, who consequently have poor mats and few of them, for they take time and skill to make.

The matmaker of Hnaring Longtlaang is a commoner. He makes mats, particularly expensive ones, at the request of anyone who can afford his services. He is also an active farmer, but his fields are less extensive than the fields of other households of comparative size and working strength. He did not inherit his trade, but took it up because he had acquired the skill as a youth by watching a professional matmaker at work.

Unlike the hypothetical tribal, nonprofessional specialist, this man is able to reckon the value of his work in terms of the cost of materials and the cost of his time. He is very explicit on this

Fig. 26. Hnaring blacksmith's "Malayan" piston bellows forge.

subject, although not about the principles of matmaking; he professes to be puzzled as to how his manual operations result in a properly made mat. There is little craft lore, and the man is an entrepreneur rather than a skilled craftsman. He can tell exactly how long it takes to make any given kind of mat, including the time taken to gather and prepare materials. Consequently, he is able to estimate quite closely the number of orders he may safely

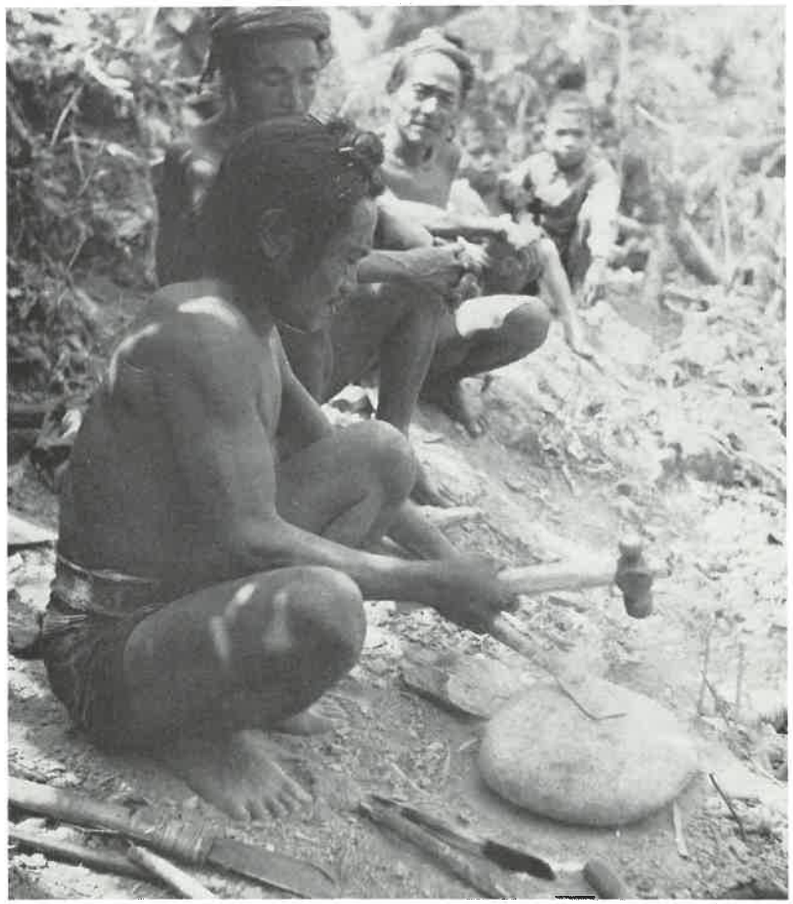


Fig. 27. Matupi men beat an old knife into a hoe at an open forge.

take and fulfill in a year. He figures this in terms of the amount of food he will have to buy during the time spent making a particular item, which he weighs against the price he can get for that item. He knows that food costs are high and that, if he wishes to make a cash profit from his services, he has to spend a certain minimum of time working in his own fields. His time is treated as the classical scarce means allocated among competing claims. Formerly he would have decided the amount of food he would need as payment

for a given amount of time spent away from agricultural work. Since he could not live only on such payments in food, he had to know the maximum amount of time he could spend making mats.

Other craftsmen, such as smiths or itinerant traders or peddlers, work the same way. Peddlers calculate their prices quite closely in terms of the cost of goods and of travel and food on the way, and in terms of the cost of feeding their households at home during any given number of days a trading expedition may last. Many villages have blacksmiths who are hereditary village servants paid for their repair of arms and agricultural implements by a tax of grain and meat levied by the headman on the villagers. This work is done mostly between harvest and the next planting, but in seasons when agricultural work is light they also take private orders at piecework rates. This smith is a kind of village officer, apparently common in Falam (Stevenson, 1943) but no longer common in the Haka area.

These craftsmen are professionals in that their work is carried on with an understanding of profit margins. This degree of specialization gives a village access to a greater degree of skilled production and a wider range of native-produced goods than would be possible if every man made his own things or called on specially skilled persons merely to assist in difficult tasks. These craftsmen are in some ways full-time specialists. The blacksmith works at his trade for days and weeks together in certain seasons; other craftsmen do not work merely in their spare time or in certain seasons, but also devote whole days or even weeks exclusively to craft production. This makes it mandatory for them to calculate carefully the value of time spent in craft production rather than in direct subsistence activities.

Local specialization generally involves whole villages. In villages such as Aibur and Hnaring one finds large concentrations of craftsmen, such as workers in brass, silver, and bell-metal ornaments. Unlike individual specialization, local specialization serves as a sort of division of labor allowing for a rational allocation of productive effort over a region in which subsistence resources are not evenly distributed. It permits a number of villages to form an interdependent economic network and gives the craftsman access to a large enough market and a constant enough demand for his products to allow him to work in season as a full-time specialist, something not always possible when he serves only a single village.

An example of local specialization is the case of Khuahrang, a Lautu village six miles east of Hnaring. The village specializes, among other things, in the production of crude earthenware cooking pots. Some people engage in making these pots at all seasons of the year, but production is concentrated in the agricultural off-season, roughly from January to April or May. There are several reasons for this concentration: first, pots made in the dry season tend to fall apart in firing less often than pots made during the wet season. Second, this is a season when work can be done without taking time from farming. Third, at this season the men of the village can travel about selling their pottery. Fourth, in the off-season housebuilding and refurbishing go on everywhere, and the market for housewares is likely to be good.

The pots are very crude, the most commonly made being round-bottomed, globular in body, with a short but constricted neck and a simple outward-flaring lip. Diameters at the mouth vary from about a foot to five inches or less. These pots are used for storing water, for boiling grain and vegetable soups (*buh-ti*), and for general cooking. They are tempered with grit and bits of concreted clay. The potters' clay is obtained from lateritic formations which are common all over this area. Hnaring has readily accessible clay banks, perhaps to a greater extent than has Khuahrang. In fact, the whole northernmost, and newest, hamlet in Hnaring is called *luŋ hmɔ pa.* (the clays). Hnaring, however, does not make pots. Khuahrang pots (like most Chin pots) are made from solid lumps of clay by a paddle-and-anvil method and the upper part of the body is often crudely decorated with a band of simple, incised geometric designs. They are so poorly fired that when anyone buys a pot, he at once refires it by inverting it in a shallow depression with brush loosely piled up over it and lighted. The fire burns itself out, the pot cools, and then it is ready for use. No glaze or resin glaze is used (see Stern, 1957).

It is worthwhile inquiring why Khuahrang specializes in this industry, in view of the slight special skills needed for making such crude wares and in view of the common occurrence of clay elsewhere in the region in which these pots are marketed. Like many specialist villages Khuahrang is poor in agricultural lands. Its fields are few in proportion to its large population, while its lands are situated on slopes much steeper than usual in this part of Lautu. Its newly developed wet rice fields, which lie next to

Fig. 28. Hnaring man removing Khuahrang pot after refiring it immediately upon purchase.

the stream separating it from Hnaring, are narrow and at the same time regularly subjected to the depredations of the Hnaring mithans.

Khuahrang village has about 300 houses, which makes it the largest village in Haka Subdivision. Khuahrang is always spoken of by its neighbors as a very poor village, but its houses are on the whole better constructed and newer than those of Hnaring (which is always short of wood for building). Its people seem prosperous, well fed, and well clad, but it is considered poor as a consequence of its poor agricultural situation, because the villagers have to purchase a major portion of their food. Food costs are high in a country where soil and climate do not make for abundant food surpluses and where transportation is not easy. The countryside could not support many such villages, yet it supports Khuahrang very well.

Not all specialist villages are necessarily prosperous, but Khuahr-

Fig. 29. Hnaring girl weaving on belt loom. Unwed, she wears an upper cover, a cheap, black cotton Burmese *eingyi*. Necklace is of *pumtek* beads and coins, and she smokes a woman's water pipe, *nu kuak*. In right hand is a porcupine quill for working colored threads into brocade design.

ang is very well off. In 1957-58, the Lautu trans-Boinu villages wished to increase their population. At present all six of them are part of a single administrative circle, together with several Zotung villages centering about Rezua and Ruava. The Lautu trans-Boinu villages, which are in the Matupi Subdivision, wished to form an independent circle of their own, but the law requires a certain minimum population for the constitution of a circle. They invited people from Khuahrang to move to Sate, Leikhang, and the other trans-Boinu villages. They offered good and abundant farm lands, and the Hnaring mithans cannot cross the Boinu, a major river. The Khuahrang people declined to move, explaining that they were content where they were. Their pots were much in demand and were sold over an area with a radius of some twenty or more miles around Khuahrang. They also make other things, such as the wooden frame, rollers, and gears for the native cotton gin, and mass-produced clay bowls for women's water pipes. These are all sold widely nowadays in exchange for cash and formerly in exchange for well-established quantities of grain, one pot for its contents in grain. They felt well paid for these services. Furthermore, they constituted a general labor reserve for the region. Whenever a major building task had to be done, Khuahrang folk could be hired to do it.

Khuahrang villagers are known throughout Lautu as people successful in any enterprise requiring manual skill and strength. Their response to a newly introduced example of modern technology is pragmatic; although the particular skills and operations involved may not be known, the idea that manual skills can be widely applied is appreciated. This matter-of-fact attitude toward modern technology is to a certain extent characteristic of all Chin villages.

These people are entrepreneurs, whose work is less a matter of great skill than of an economic division of labor. Together in one place and in sufficient numbers they can produce goods in sufficient quantity to serve a market large and constant enough to justify their activity. No single producer need take more time than is permissible from subsistence labors.

Such a village produces quantities of goods, not on individual order in anticipation of a regular, recurrent demand. Kanpetlet villages by contrast, which have a reputation for the production of very fine cane mats, make these mats only occasionally when orders are given, though other Kanpetlet villages specialize in mass production of pots, metal tools, and other things (Rainey, 1892). An intermediate degree of specialization is practiced by the Northern Chin craftsmen who manufacture brass, solder and silver jewelry, and girdles. They work mainly on individual orders, but can expect to get many such orders at certain times of the year and can in consequence plan to work continuously at these times.

Among the most elaborate products of the Northern Hills Chin are the elaborately embroidered and multicolored blankets and skirts, woven exclusively by women on belt looms (for technology, see Parry, 1932, p. 94 ff.). Cloth goods are very costly. A good Haka *cawng-nak* blanket costs upwards of K. 600, or $130. The market for such expensive goods is too irregular to permit professionalization, yet these women are in many respects the most skilled artisans in all the Chin Hills. Certain of the best weavers in Haka town have considerable reputations and their products are sold widely. Good blankets are used in marriage payments and other formal prestations in the culture, but weaving remains a purely domestic industry. Some women in the southern part of Haka Subdivision, however, regularly make one or two of the coarse white, general purpose blankets (*zo puan rang*, white blanket from the *zo* people, south of Haka) for sale. Every woman makes them for her own household, but these blankets are cheap, wear out rapidly, and are in constant demand, hence there is always a market for additional supplies. Products of private domestic industry are often carried for casual sale by travelers who are actually on other business. Even heirlooms can be sold this way. This has nothing to do with the trade in specialist-produced manufactures.

THE ROLE OF TRADE

Trade is an important part of the social life of the Northern Chin. It depends upon the establishment and maintenance of region-wide markets, channels of communication, and standards of demand and exchange, and also upon the existence of peaceful conditions and the regular circulation of wealth. A small amount of regular intervillage trade goes on in the Southern Hills, for example, where one village can sell pots within its normal marriage circle in Ng'men country, without the existence of supralocal organization, but highly institutionalized and professionalized trade cannot.

Locally produced luxury goods, such as metal ornaments, hairpins, or flintlock guns, are sold mainly to wealthy persons, with the materials being brought from Burma and India. Many of these items are included in the two classes of heritable goods, *hlawn* (female) and *ro* (male), and circulation of them is closely connected with regional systems of marriage exchange. About one-third of the marriages among aristocrats are politically motivated and are between relatively distant villages.

The role of trade in Northern Chin society cannot be fully gauged without reference to the external trade with Burma (and India). The most important item traditionally imported from Burma is iron in the form of raw steel ingots, knives, and other tools, which Chin smiths forge or reforge into steel tools for war, farming, and general use. Salt also comes from Burma and was very dear until recently, so that salt substitutes, such as water leached through ash, were very common. Salt, both from Burma and from a few irregularly worked deposits in the Chin Hills, is traded in small packets or cones over considerable distances. In Matupi there are still some old people who have not altered their scale of value to accord with the fact that salt is now easily and cheaply bought in shops. They still sell a good chicken (otherwise costing perhaps K. 2 or K. 3 [21¢ to 42¢]) for a mere pinch of salt. All the brass, bell metal, aluminum, and silver come either from Burma or India. These metals and all the products made from them comprise a large proportion of Chin heirloom goods and are standard categories in all formal exchange transactions. The round bell-metal gongs come from Burma, while several kinds of brass pots come from both India and Burma. The pots called *mar-lei* come from India through the Lushai people (called *mar* in Haka). Haka Chin jewelry is made from specially imported raw metal or from gongs, brass vessels, and such, which are melted down. Silk for the embroidered blankets is imported, as are one or two dyes not locally extractable.

The Chin pay for all these things in a variety of ways (see Trant, 1827, cited in Stern, 1962, p. 4). Those Chin who grow maize often save the husks and sell them to Burma, where they are used to wrap the large cheroots smoked by Burman women. They gather beeswax (the price in 1958 was K. 3 in hills, and K. 10 at Mandalay, per vis of 3.6 lbs.) and stick lac and similar jungle products to sell in Burma. Nowadays service in the Burma army and coolie labor on public projects, such as roads in the Chin Hills and adjacent Burma, are major sources of petty cash. It is impossible to find out exactly how imports were paid for in pre-European times, but clearly the Chin had no particular source of income for purchasing outside goods, and still have none. They simply sold what goods or services they could from time to time and raided and looted when payment was not possible. It was a very precarious, though fundamental, trade and in principle the situation is the same today, without the raiding and looting.

How was this trade organized? It was channeled through certain centers in the plains. The most important in the North seem to have been Kalemyo and Gangaw. In Haka area, the greatest traders came, and still come, from Khuapi and the Senthaung region, which has the most immediate access by trail to Gangaw. Itinerant peddlers from Khuapi are still common throughout the Haka area at certain seasons, but these places did not control the external trade the way the *Ng'men* controlled it in the South. Small and large groups went to Burma directly from the remotest places in the interior, although the pack trade in smaller items was carried into the hills by small peddlers, often from villages bordering on the plains. How the goods circulated in earlier times once they reached the hills is not certain; no doubt partly from village to village and partly by itinerant traders, as is the case today. Large items needing expensive portage (huge glazed beer pots, for example) and goods of great value were often acquired directly by villages in the interiors by sending their own expedition to the plains, but the circulation through marriage exchanges and other such networks also played a considerable part in moving costly heirloom goods from one area to another. In any case the more powerful groups from the interior, such as Tashon, Haka, and Thlantlaang, commonly sent expeditions to raid and trade in the plains. There was no way in which the entrepôt villages at the plains borders could have found the independent means to purchase the large amounts of costly civilized goods that circulated throughout the hills, even if they were subsequently to be paid for by the villages farther in the interior. Capital sufficient for pursuing a large-scale trade with Burma was never, in traditional times, accumulated by individuals or single villages.

The distribution of tribes and cultural areas in the Northern Chin Hills can be partly understood by having reference to this

external trade, although the facts of trade cannot explain why particular villages figured as the great centers of political and military power. Tiddim area is characterized by the fact that it sits astride the routes of war and trade between Manipur and the Upper Chindwin. Tiddim traded in Burma at Kalemyo and Khampat. Burma armies went through parts of Tiddim on the way to and from Manipur, and the retreat from Burma into Manipur during World War II was made through Tiddim on the only motor road then in the Chin Hills. Tiddim was the only Chin area immediately adjacent to the great fortress and market town of Kalemyo.

Falam area covers trails running up from the Myittha Valley. It also has direct routes into the Lushai country of Assam and to the south. It is transitional, and the villages of the northern part of Falam area (Lumbang, Tashon, etc.) have close cultural connections with Tiddim, while to the south cultural connections are closest with the Haka Chin. In the west, the Hualngo of Falam are simply Lushais living in Chin country.

Haka undoubtedly owes its great importance to its unique position on all the routes from both east and west. It draws upon the Gangaw and Daidin trade and also upon the trade south through Falam from the Myittha Valley. Likewise, Thlantlaang subarea controls another direct route into the Lushai country, the route to the South Lushai Hills. The subarea of Lautu is closely connected to the Lakher country through language, culture, and trade. Zotung has most immediate access to the Burma plains via Daidin. A map of some routes in the Chin Hills (Map II) is appended to this paper.

How important is the trade economy to Chin culture and society? It has often been asserted that Chin society is largely a self-sufficient village society. This is related to the assertion, already shown to be misleading, that only village-level social organization is fundamental and that social organization above the village level is of small importance. Though not true, it is founded on a correct observation. It is obvious and significant that the great bulk of the material goods in any village household (luxury wares and items in ordinary use taken together) are or can be made within the village. A greater proportion of goods in a Burman village than in a Chin village comes from outside and is made by specialists, therefore the Chin can be adjudged less well integrated into a

ramifying economic and political organization than are even the most marginal peasants within civilization. This, however, is a very misleading measure of the structural importance of trade and of connections with civilization.

First, many of the items made in a village home are made of iron, silk, or brass, all from the outside world. The technology of village subsistence and self-sufficiency depends in this respect upon the external and interregional trade. Second, the range of what can be produced within the hills depends upon organization of interregional and intervillage trade and the related institutions of professional craftsmanship. Third, a great deal of what comes from the outside world may be classed as luxury goods, but these luxury goods are essential to the social and political organization, since the current rules of prestation and hospitality would not function without them. Except for mithans, there is no class of goods figuring in formal prestations that does not come directly or indirectly from trade with civilization. Such items include three kinds of brass pots, three sizes of bell-metal gongs, iron spears, silver and/or brass girdles for women, silver bracelets and earrings for women, all the important kinds of blankets woven in Haka (needing silk for the embroidery or imported dyestuffs), the larger kinds of glazed pots in which grain beer is universally kept and served—and many other things besides.[1]

The Chin people using their traditional technology could exist in their environment without importing much except perhaps iron; they do not know how to make stone tools. But it would be a Chin culture and society completely different from what Chin culture and society are in fact.

[1] The various beads of coral, amber, and cornelian, but especially *pumtek* beads, so important among the Haka Chin prestige goods and heirlooms, were also imported (see Head, 1949). Their ultimate provenience—to judge by their close similarity to the *śalagrama* stone of Hindu iconography and to amulets worn by Tibetan traders in Rangoon—is the Tibet-Himalaya area, but in recent times they seem to have been made in Mandalay especially for the Chin trade. *Pumtek* signifies a stone of lightning or thunder—miraculous in origin.

There were also innumerable curios brought from the plains. Within a short time such a curio acquired a name and an inflated value as an heirloom and often passed from hand to hand as part of the marriage payments. They gave considerable prestige to the family that held them. I recall, for example, *sui ŋaleng* ("gold trout"), a paper weight in the form of a jointed brass fish, which a British officer readily sold to the present proud owner, an ex-soldier in Hnaring, for K. 350.

Without trade some local varieties of Chin culture and society might not be very different from what they are now—Matupi, for example—but the tribal and culture trait distributions of the Southern Chin area as a whole would be vastly altered. In the North the entire political organization depends directly upon the systems of trade, both internal and external.

Above all the Chin view of themselves and of their own culture would be vastly affected. The place of Burma in the mythology would be changed, and the identity of the Chin as *zo-mi*, "the backward people," "the people of the hinterland," would be meaningless.

It is not fruitful to assess the importance of trade and exchange in the Chin economic picture in the usual way. The key to its importance is not its size, but its position in the organization of social life.

We can now see why the Northern Chin think of their political system as being more elaborate and stable than it really is. The prominent persons in the main realms were also organizers of personnel and capital in the enterprises of trade and marauding. Their political position depended upon this function. Real political privileges were exercised in the village, but autocrats cannot have been unaware that political power depended upon trade and the circulation of wealth and, ultimately, upon manipulation of connections with civilization.

The Northern Chin are very much concerned with outside civilization. They fully understand that it has resources far greater than those available within the hills. Chin, in particular politically important Chin and individual Chin who traded with Burma a good deal, have always been quite aware that what made Burman society so much more powerful than Chin society was organization: as Chin say, Burma had a king but the Chin did not. Chin chiefs capitalized on any slight connections they happened to have with Burma. If they had been raided by Burman bandits and had repulsed them, they had "won battles with the king at Mandalay." If they had been asked to bring mercenaries to the service of a governor in the Kabaw Valley or of a general leading troops into Manipur, they were "allies of the king of Mandalay." Whole realms claimed power over other Chin groups because they had a mandate from "the king," because they were his "allies."

The Northern Chin model of political organization was based upon their conception of Burma and upon their awareness that their political order depended upon relations with civilization. The Chin thought of their society as having a claim in principle on civilization and having been unjustly deprived of its benefits by the Burmans. Likewise, they tended to think of their political order as being, in principle, of the same kind as that of Burma. But there was no way the political system could be made to measure up to this ideal.

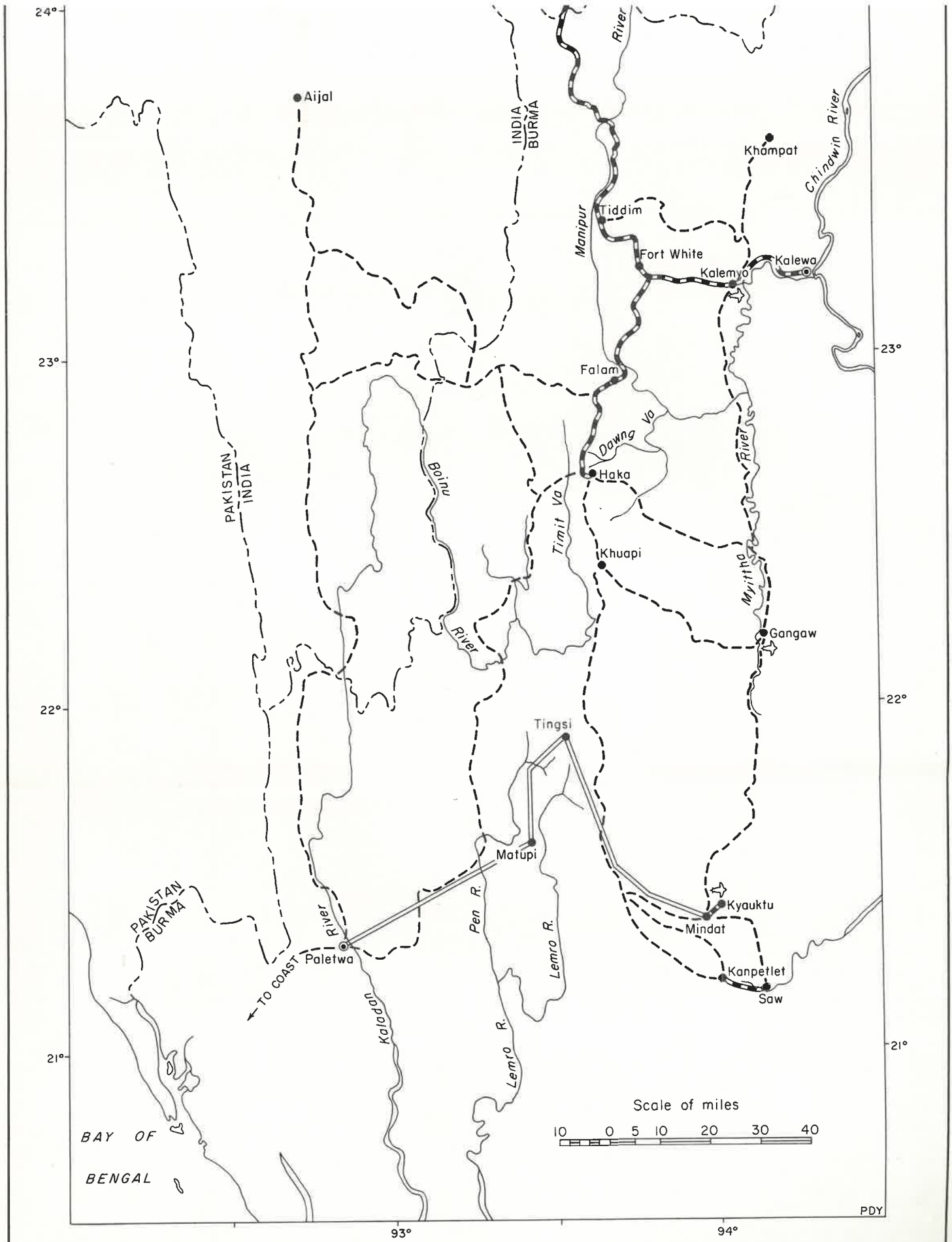
7

Some Conceptual Structures in Chin Religion

CATEGORIZATION OF THE CHIN LANDSCAPE

Let us now examine some features of Chin culture which, in their formal structure, are common to both North and South. For an understanding of how Chin conceptualize their local environment we must consider a few relevant religious concepts and categories. I shall draw almost exclusively on material from Haka area, but in all but relatively minor details the conceptual distinctions found here are found also in the rest of the Chin area. Some differences and also some similarities will be noticed between this material and what is reported in the literature on the Lushai, Kuki, and Lakher. In part the differences reflect the selection of facts I am making here; in part they reflect deficiencies in my field data in matters where Chin culture has changed greatly in recent decades; and in part they are real differences.

A pervasive distinction is made between *khua* and *ram*. *Khua* is the settled area, *ram* is the general countryside. *Khua* is what is inhabited, what has feeling, "soul." In all that follows we are dealing with what Chin aver to be a single word, *khua*. Thus, *ka khua ruah a har,* "my spirit to think it is difficult," that is, "I am surprised"; *ka khua a sik*, "I feel cold," or simply *khua-sik*, "it is cold"; *kan khua,* "our village." The general class of spiritual beings (and by extension weather, clouds, etc.) are also *khua* (see below on gods and spirits). *Khua,* then, is that in which life is felt to exist,



TRADE ROUTES AND TRADE CENTERS IN THE CHIN COUNTRY

KEY
Unsurfaced truck road
Projected road
Trail
Trade center
River port
Railroad center (nearest to Chin country)
Airstrip
N
M
IMPHAL (Manipur)
Tiddim
Fort White
Kalemyo
Kalewa
Khampat
Gangaw
Falam
Haka
Khuapi
Tingsi
Aijal
Chindwin River
Manipur River
Myittha River
Tlawng Vo
Tlmit Vo
Boinu River
INDIA
BURMA
PAKISTAN
INDIA
PAKISTAN
INDIA
25°
24°
23°
22°
94°
93°

by extension also a lively, human, warm place, that is, a village and its houses and kitchen gardens. This is related to the first morpheme in the word *khu-mi* ("man") that is, the Khumi Chin.

Ram means "grass" according to the mission glossaries. Actually its meaning comprises all kinds of shrubs and forest undergrowth, even trees and uncultivated, uncut plant life in general, but especially grass land, because grass land is uncultivable. *Ram* is the countryside owned by the village, and also the country controlled by a center of power, that can be used for cultivation if cut over and cleared. It is the abode of unnamed spirits and the abode of the spirits which control the wild game sought in the hunt. In the forest one treads softly, uses special vocabulary so as not to offend the spirits of the game, and uses euphemisms and circumlocutions for referring to the larger game animals by name.

Khua, then, is culture and cultivation in a wilderness of *ram.* The only important taboos connected with females and sexual activity attach to matters affecting hunting, that is, affecting activity in *ram.* Hunters before going on a hunt should abstain from women. Menstruating women are dangerous, but only because they displease the animals of the jungle; they are in no other way taboo (see Parry, 1932). Men are at home in *khua* and *ram;* women chiefly, if not solely, are at home in *khua. Khua* is pleasant, alive, protective on the whole; *ram* is hostile, and here represents the world at large, or at least the world of the hills. The Chin then tend to think of their villages as outposts of culture in the forest.

The agricultural fields are transitional between the two categories. Women work in the field beside men, and in the fields are huts in which some aspects of family living are carried out. Table I shows that ceremonies concerned with agriculture and the fields are sometimes carried out in the village and sometimes at the fields. Those ceremonies performed in the fields are sometimes similar to sacrifices for dwelling-house spirits of the village (those performed at the main post of the field hut, for instance), and sometimes are made to placate jungle spirits (swidden-opening sacrifices).

We shall notice again and again in the present chapter this characteristic conceptual structure: a duality, consisting of an inclusive and an included member, plus a third, transitional category. It is not dissimilar to the conceptual dualism underlying the

fundamental categories in the marriage-exchange system: wife-givers, wife-takers, plus "agnates." Wife-takers are not merely inferior in status to wife-givers; the wife-taking unit is a minimal lineage segment, while the wife-giving unit is a more inclusive lineage segment. The category of agnates cuts across the other categories, since it is among agnates (together with unrelated lineages) that new marriage alliances in either direction can be made.

The classification of goods figuring in prestations also fits this pattern of dualism with a transitional state, a mode of conceptualizing structural relations between or among categories quite pervasive in Chin culture and social life. Needham (1958) gives a general statement of the congruence between the conceptual structure of symbolism in a culture and the structure of certain forms of society. The mode of thinking specified above is congruent with a social system whose conceptual structure is conditioned by an ambivalent distinction between civilization (*vai*) and the category *zo;* between culture and the wilderness, with the notion of *lai* as a transition between the two (see pp. 30, 54).

Fundamental dichotomies of this kind are not peculiar to Chin or even to Southeast Asian hill peoples, but in Chin culture we have to look beyond mere dichotomy or dualism to the built-in instability of the distinctions, the ease with which you can pass from one category to its opposite, the structured indeterminacy as to whether the Chin do or do not include themselves within the large category of civilization. The distinctions between classes of supernatural beings and orders of ritual are very similar.

SPIRITS AND GODS

The general category of spiritual beings is comprised in one of the significations of *khua.* Spirits are conceived of as affecting human affairs in many ways. In particular they control welfare and prosperity, although this belief is not held to contradict the idea that illnesses have their natural causes. Illnesses can be treated by placating the spirit who may have set the cause to work, or by treating the symptoms themselves. Spirits always need placating. They are not necessarily malevolent, but they are capricious in their dealings with human affairs and demand their due gifts just as do other social categories. One can compare this aspect of the

relationship with spirits to the relationship with one's mother's brother (*pu*).

The most general category of spirits simply exist; they have no specific homes or individualities. These are *rai;* indeed all spirits are *rai,* although most kinds can be more exactly identified. A common instance of the term *rai* is in the expression *rai-fanh,* malaria and similar endemic fevers. *Fanh* (see Head, 1949) means "to take possession of," as when a girl decides she wants a certain young man as a husband and one night simply moves to his sleeping place or to his house and begins to live with him. *Xai* in Matupi refers to all the spirits which in Haka are called *khuachia,* and *ɣai* among the *Ng'men* means "to be well."

Khuachia are literally "bad spirits," that is, dangerous (*chia* means "taboo," see p. 141), and include the myriad spirits of places, particularly of large rocks, springs, and other outstanding topographical features. They, too, cause illnesses, but they are more clearly identified because they have location.

Each village has one or more persons, usually women, who are seers or *shamans* (I use *shaman* loosely here). They do not cure illness, but enter into a self-induced trance with the help of considerable draughts of grain beer, in which state they find out which spirit has caused the illness—or whether some other agent such as *hnam,* an evil-eyed person, has done it—and with what kind of sacrifice the patient must placate the spirit. These women are *khuavang nu,* "familiars of spirits." Their calling comes upon them as a seizure; it is not sought, and can come upon anyone at all, usually in adolescence. Shamans are needed by the population to divine the causes of illness and the requirements of sacrifice, but few people wish to become shamans themselves, or to have their children become shamans. Their social status is generally low. They claim to travel to the land of the dead and tell what they have seen there, and claim to know about the god or gods; but many Chin profess indifferent faith in these reports, the moreso as the descriptions of the supernatural world conflict with one another. The spirits they chiefly deal with are *khuachia.* It may be a well-known *khuachia,* one with a name and a history in local folklore, or simply "a *khuachia* who inhabits such and such a place."

Khuachia are found everywhere, both in *khua* and in *ram,* but in *ram* they tend to be found where cultivation has taken place, that is, where particular topographical features are well known.

Certain kinds of *khuachia* are said to be associated with particular classes of illness. For instance, the great mounds thrown up by white ants, or the *khuachia* in them, cause a number of women's illnesses in Hnaring. Such *khuachia* are imperfectly personified. *Khuachia* can also be translated "dangerous place."

Certain *khuachia* are found near the settlement site and hence are specially concerned with village welfare. They are thought of as village guardians, and for this purpose they must be placated with sacrifices at stated intervals, and also irregularly whenever it is divined that some misfortune has been caused by the wrath of one of them. Thus Hnaring must sacrifice a full-grown mithan to the spirit of the Boinu River (though actually it is some miles from the village) once every few years. Such guardian spirits are called *khuahrum*. They are more personified than are ordinary *khuachia;* there are said to be *bawi khuahrum* and *chia* (commoner) *khuahrum,* and even slave *khuahrum*. They have the greatest power of any locality spirits over the welfare of the village as a whole. *Khuahrum* usually inhabit a lake or mountain peak.

Certain gods inhabit the *mual* (see Table I), the village sacrificial precinct, usually located near a large banyan tree[1] well within the village site, and these gods have considerable power. The *mual* is the altar (usually with several sacrificial stones on the ground) set up by a settlement's founder headman, and is called after him. This is the altar of the village as a social collectivity linked with the founders, that is, participating in a tradition handed down from the past. Here are performed many recurrent sacrifices to the *khuachia* and other spirits. But the actual spirit at the *mual* is not clearly delineated; it is not the spirit of any human ancestor. Aibur villagers have a saying which is translated: "*khuahrum, mual,* and natural springs." It expresses the order of power of the spirits of these places.

Next is a general class of spirits protecting houses and/or families and persons attached to them. In general they are associated with particular places in the house at which certain sacrifices are to be performed—at the main post (*sut*) in the back of the house, or at a certain post at the upslope (*chaklei*) wall, in the thatch above which the household's consecrated sacrificial reed flutes, basketry trays, and other ritual paraphernalia are kept (see Parry, 1932). Once again direction and location are important.

[1] The tree can be transplanted to the chosen site.

Haka Chin houses are always oriented across the slope of a hill. The doorway to the inside of the house is on the downslope (*thlanglei*) side of the front wall, the stairway on the upslope side of the front edge of the veranda. Orientation to the cardinal directions plays little part in Haka culture. The important directions are those relative to major landmarks and relative to the slope of hillsides, so that, as in related languages, words for north and south serve primarily as words for upslope and downslope, respectively.

House spirits are associated with the term *zing*. For instance, when a child reaches the age of a few months, a sacrifice is performed to put it under the protection of its *zing*. When surprised, a man will often cry out, invoking his *zing* and *vai*. These are twin words denoting the same thing in a somewhat poetic fashion common in the language. This class of spirits is not well defined; its members are not clearly individuated.

Finally there are the spirits that may be called gods. In Haka there is *khuazing,* who is not worshiped, but rules over everything. He is not spoken of very much and is not clearly conceptualized, but again, in amazement or in sudden trouble, a man will cry out: "*maw khuazing, maw lulpi*" Lulpi is a goddess, or perhaps (to judge by comparison with Kuki and Plains Chin) a sort of primordial mythic ancestress, but the villagers where I worked could give no information about her. Stories about a primordial flood and about an ancestral brother and sister and their trials and tribulations under the patronage of *khuazing* ("when the rocks and stones were soft") exist, but only in skeleton form. The notion of *khuazing* has been contaminated, even among the most devout pagans, by the Christians' use of this word for their God, a fact most Chin I have spoken to of these matters have volunteered. *Khuazing* is a sort of mythological, ancestral prototype of the class of ordinary *zing*. The Chin, perhaps under Christian influence, have also adopted the Lushai word *paṭhian,* meaning God, as roughly equivalent with *khuazing*.

CATEGORIES OF RITUAL LIFE

We can understand more about the distinctions between *khua* and *ram* if we examine the kinds of ritual proper to each and the kinds of ritual that cut across this distinction. The series of Feasts

of Merit is variously termed *bawi-lam*, "the way to attaining bawi status," or *inn lam*, "the way to (aggrandizing) the house," because social status goes hand in hand with the right to build a complete house. When a young married man establishes a separate household, he must first build a wattle house; he may not build a full field hut. Over the succeeding several years, while getting together the materials for building a wooden house, he must perform a series of sacrifices to his house spirits in order to establish his house as a ceremonial entity. This rule is now in abeyance in all but a few villages.

Beyond this point, if he is wealthy, he may perform a series of Feasts of Merit which permit him to adorn his house with certain long platforms and carved fences and to plant in his front yard carved forked planks, to each of which he has tied a sacrificial mithan during the course of such a feast. The highest of such feasts in Haka area is *Khuangcawi*. The series need not be described here, since it has been described by Head (1949) and the *Khuangtsawi* cycle of Falam has been described in Stevenson (1943). The Falam cycle is somewhat different from the Haka cycle, and in particular the ceremonial costume worn by the participants in Haka is more elaborate. The woman pictured in the frontispiece to Parry's *The Lakher* (1932) is dressed in the regalia of the wife of the performer of a Haka *bawi* feast. In Lautu there is no actual *Khuangcawi* feast, no actual raising of the performer's wife on a platform from which she scatters valuables to the guests in the yard. They simply perform the feast of *Lawngtuk*, which elsewhere is a feast equal to *Khuangcawi* for those who have already performed the latter. *Lawngtuk* is "to celebrate the fence" and allows one to erect a palisade in front of the house compound. Each succeeding *Lawngtuk* allows a performer to cut a large circular opening in this fence.

In a *bawi* Feast of Merit, which takes several days to perform, many people from one's own village and guests invited from other villages are fed and entertained with dancing and drink. One's achievement of status is proved by one's ability to entertain all these people on a grand scale. One attempts to put on as much show as possible and, in particular, to sacrifice as many mithans as possible. There is also a special ritual meal given to selected guests who have already performed *Khuangcawi* or its equivalent, or nowadays who have any sort of high social standing. It is called

sa reo (baked flesh). The performer forces excessive amounts of food and brandy (*zu reo*) upon these guests, and they are forced by attendants armed with sticks to consume it all.

This competitive forced hospitality, and the attempt to validate status by public consumption of quantities of property, allies this series of feasts to the class of potlatches. Let us, however, discuss these feasts from the standpoint of the way they connect the world of men with the spirit world.

In the Feasts of Merit, sacrifices are made to all sorts of beings. In the first day or two numerous smaller beasts, such as goats, pigs, and chickens, are sacrificed to all the local *khuachia*, known and unknown. A platform is erected some days before the main feast, with about twenty wooden posts forming a railing alongside, each with a carved phallic head, and one chicken is sacrificed to the *khuachia* at each such post. Numerous sacrifices are also made to house spirits at special rites inside the house at the back post, at the ceremonial place under the eaves at the upslope wall, and in the yard at the foot of the stairs to the veranda. The prayers at each of these sacrifices ask for prosperity and welfare: "Give us the goods of the *zo* country and of the *vai* country."

The major sacrifices, however, consist of the ritual slaying of one or more mithans (one or more grown females, *sia-pi;* one grown male, *kikawng*). The meat is consumed by the guests. Animals sacrificed are supposed to go up to *mithi khua* (dead people's village, the land of the dead, the afterworld). There they serve in a special way to validate the status of the performer, his household, and his immediate lineage segment.

If one's status is to be permanent, it must be established in the world of the dead. When the performer dies, he hopes to have those mithans with him in *mithi khua*. But the matter is not so simple. He has assured himself by this sacrifice of possessing signs of status and property in the land of the dead hereafter, and he has also pleased the inhabitants of the afterworld by giving or sending these gifts there. Prestations must be constantly sent to superiors to placate them and to validate one's own status by maintaining one's connections with them. The sacrifices are at the same time a validation of status in the eyes of the living public, because these are fed with the valuable meat of the slain mithans, though not all the mithans slain for food figure in the sacrifices proper.

Fig. 30. *Sa reo*, the forced feeding of selected guests at Feast of Merit, Khuahrang village. It is held on ornamental platform, with phallic-headed posts, along downslope side of performer's front yard.

An illustration will show how a sacrifice functions as a prestation. At one point in the Lautu *Lawngtuk* feast, a pregnant female mithan is slain. The fetus is taken from her, its head is wrapped in a *canlo puan*, an ornate, embroidered cotton blanket with an indigo ground, and the bundle is set above the front roof peak of the house. It is supposed to ascend directly to *mithi khua* and say to everyone: "Look, this man is very great and generous; he has even invited an unborn baby mithan to his feast and given me this expensive blanket to be wrapped in." Then when the performer dies his status will have been established ahead of him in *mithi khua*.

It is to be noted particularly that the inhabitants of *mithi khua* mentioned above are not further distinguished by the Chin. These sacrifices are not sent simply to a land of ancestors, though that

Fig. 31. Performer shoots sacrificial mithan with bow at Feast of Merit. It is actually slain by driving an ax blade into base of its skull. Some of the men holding rope tied to the mithan must be performer's wife-givers.

is also implied, they are not sent simply to the spirits such as *khuazing*, but to all of these collectively. The sacrificer is maintaining an alliance relationship between two realms of unequal prestige. The gifts demonstrate his ability to continue to meet similar claims upon his fortune, in exchange for which the fortune is more or less guaranteed. He is also establishing, to a certain extent, the status potentialities of his descendants, but those descendants themselves must validate this status. He is re-establishing continuity between a tradition, stretching from an ancestral past into future generations. Part of what distinguishes *khua* from *ram* is its continuity with a ritual tradition from the ancestral past.

The idea that one's dead ancestors act to guarantee the prosperity of their living descendants is specifically denied by informants,

who say that such a thing may be possible, but has never been held traditionally.

In a sense, a giver forces his status pretensions upon those to whom he sends gifts, whether the receivers are in this world or another. The giving of gifts does not necessarily imply that the giver accepts a suppliant and inferior status in a relationship, as we have seen in discussing the relations between wife-giver and wife-taker.

Let us now turn from the Feasts of Merit to consider related feasts and celebrations in connection with *ram*, the realm of the forest. There are Feasts of Celebration for the slaying of the larger wild animals (*saram*, animals of the forest). The barking deer, *sakhi*, is too small and too common, but the red deer or sambhar (*sazuk*) is sufficiently important, so is *saza*, the wild goat, and *sathar*, the ibex, and of course the bear (*vawm*). The *fung* (*Bison gaur*), the rhinoceros, and the elephant now are hunted only by great hunters, as they do not live in the Chin Hills any longer. The smaller wild cats, the wild boar (*sahngal*), and above all, the larger jungle cats (*cakei*), which stand in a class apart, are also celebrated. For the killing of these animals one is entitled to perform *sasawm tuk* (wild animal-increase celebration). This is important mainly for the world of the living; it is not certain whether the animals killed and celebrated will stand to one's advantage in the next life, though it is said to be likely, but these killings may be celebrated after one's death, as we shall see later on. One can also give a killed animal to someone else, and the recipient can then perform the celebration and get credit for it. These celebrations, which require only small sacrifices, are evidence of a man's status with respect to *ram*. Their purpose is to insure that game will continue to let itself be caught and not disappear from the forest.

The skulls of all the wild animals killed, except for *cakei*, are hung on the veranda walls of the house of the killer and/or celebrant. He also hangs there the heads of the mithan sacrificed at his feasts, and also the heads of animals killed in the jungle but not celebrated—skulls of barking deer and even the feet and feathers of smaller birds. The adornment of the dwelling-house veranda with as large a number of trophies as possible is one of the most characteristic aspects of the cultural landscape of a Chin village.

There are certain animals of the forest that hunters avoid and whose remains will never be brought into a house. Among them are the "black monkey" (*Hylobates hoolocki*?) and the loris, about both of which there are myths. These are reported in Stevenson (1943). The loris is avoided because it is a mysterious nocturnal beast, "who will not look at the sun." It is the *sa-huai*, "ill-omened animal," "the fearsome animal," "the dangerous beast." The concept of *huai* is applicable to *ram* only. It is the danger of the great unknown (cf. Lushai *ram-huei*, the terrifying jungle spirits).

Cakei is loosely translated as "tiger," but the class also includes leopard (*paw-lai*) and ocelot (*paw-te*), while the true tiger is called specifically *paw-pi*.[2] The *cakei* cannot be brought within the village, because it is as dangerous in death as it is in life. It appears to have a sort of soul, though this is never made explicit. Its skull is not kept as a trophy skull. The killer can, however, perform a ceremony for it, called *cakei fim* (to deceive, or to turn away, the tiger). The performer and his male guests must dress in female clothes and jewelry and even smoke the *nu-kuak*, the woman's water pipe (illustrations of all these items in Parry, 1932). Women can never hunt and the tiger will see that those he suspected of slaying him are after all only women, so he will not harm them. In the afterworld he will also serve the slayer who has performed *cakei fim*, going before him on the journey to the land of the dead.

This is also true of the slain human enemy, who if celebrated will go ahead of the slayer announcing the arrival of this great personage in *mithi khua*.

Both the *cakei* and the human victim have died in a state known as *sar*. This is identical with the Lakher concept of *saw* (Parry, 1932, p. 143 ff. and *passim*). Contrary to Parry, however, these individuals (*cakei* and people slain) do not "have" *sar*, for *sar* is not a kind of soul (*thla, thlarau*). It is the state of the soul of one who has died in violence, or in a violent accident. An individual dying "in *sar*" is dangerous, because his soul does not go to the land of the dead unless placated; it haunts *khua* and lurks in *ram*, hunting living men and causing them ill fortune, misery, disease, and death. Even when placated it should be avoided. Persons dying in *sar* are buried in a special cemetery (*sar thluan*) far away from the village. The sporadic presence of wer-tiger tales among the Chin is related to the conception of the tiger as having a soul.

[2] From such triads is derived the connotation of *lai* as "intermediate."

The head of the slain enemy is not kept in the village. It is put up on a post well beyond the village gate. The killer, if he takes the head, must perform the celebration of *ral sawm tuk* (the celebration of increasing the [slain] enemy).

For both *cakei fim* and in *ral sawm tuk, sar lam,* the dance of *sar* is performed. There are a number of regional variations on this dance. It is performed in the boastful and self-assertive manner characteristic of the ideal behavior of the status-conscious Chin male. It is danced in the front yard by all male and female adults present. The men carry spears which they thrust up and down, but old men move about within the circle of dancers singing the boastful but plaintive songs of great hunters and warriors, the *va-hla* (see p. 11). These songs are often composed by great men themselves, though others can compose the songs for them. A great man hopes that his *va-hla* will be remembered after he dies, to perpetuate the memory of his importance. There are some *va-hla* texts in Parry (1932, p. 179 ff.) and they are always composed in the Haka language (*Lai holh*). *Sar lam* is also danced at funeral and memorial celebrations (*lam serh*), at Feasts of Merit, and at general celebrations of all sorts, but these occasions are felt to be extensions of the proper use of the dance for occasions actually dealing with *sar* (overcoming it by a show of defiance).

The correct male attire for the performance of this dance and other related dances of celebration is illustrated in Parry (1932, opposite p. 249); the beads are *pumtek,* the blanket is *canlo.*

The concept of *sar* cuts across the distinction between *ram* and *khua.* Victory over *sar* helps preserve *khua,* the realm of people. This is accomplished through celebrations reinforcing links to the afterworld. In this connection the use of the dance *sar lam* in the *lam serh* funeral rites is significant.

Rites in celebration of bumper crops (see Head, 1949) are exceedingly rare and I know almost nothing about them, for the Chin of this region have an exaggerated idea about what a truly good harvest ought to be. It is an almost unattainable ideal of prosperity, and leads to many of the so-called food shortages. Expectations of what the harvest ought to be, of what standards of consumption ought to be taken as normal, are so inflated, that in an ordinary year excessive claims are made on the harvest. Consequently one rarely hears a Haka Chin admit that a crop has been a really good one.

Fig. 32. Rack of sacrificial posts, here as in North incised forked planks, used to tie sacrificial mithan or buffalo to when sacrificing at Feast of Merit. Each forked sapling indicates one sacrificed animal.

The Feasts of Merit and of Celebration are not completely separable, as they appear to be in Falam (Stevenson, 1943). For instance, a man cannot perform *cakei fim* for a leopard unless he has already performed *bawi-te* in the Merit series, while only a man who has done *Khuangcawi* may perform *cakei fim* for a real tiger. In such cases, the right to perform *cakei fim* will go to a relative in the slayer's maximal lineage who has the necessary qualifications. Failing this relative, the right may be sold to a nonrelative for a fixed price in *pumtek* beads.

Chin prefer to leave the fearsome *cakei* strictly alone, and most Chin also avoid taking the heads of human enemies. Chin, unlike Lushai, are merely nominal headhunters. The Lushai used to take heads on a grand scale, and kept human trophy skulls in the *zawlbuk* (bachelor's house—an institution absent among the Northern Chin proper). The Lushai also kept tiger skulls as house trophies.[3] The Haka area Feasts of Merit and Celebration are very similar to those of the Lakher; the Lakher (or that branch which follows the *Khuangcawi lam* series) have borrowed them from Haka (see Head, 1949, pp. 34-37; Parry, 1932, pp. 136 ff., 372).

THE MEMORIAL COMPLEX AND CONCEPTS OF THE PERSON: THE CULT OF PROSPERITY

No discussion of Northern Chin religious conceptions is complete if it omits the preponderating theme of personal memorialization. A great deal has been written, in the comparative ethnology of the hill peoples of the Burma-India borderlands, about a "megalithic" complex (see Heine-Geldern, 1959). This is supposed to be, historically, a fertility cult, focused on the sacrifice of cattle, the taking of heads, and the erecting of monuments in stone and/or wood for deceased persons who have achieved some social standing and prosperity. It is frequently supposed that erecting these memorials to the dead and keeping human trophy heads serve to connect the living with the ancestral dead of the village. It is supposed also that the skulls so collected carry in them the soul-stuff of slain enemies, and that this soul-stuff is added to that of the village to enhance its prosperity and the fertility of its crops, livestock, and human population. When prosperity declines, heads must be taken.

Whatever may be the case among the Naga and other such peoples, Burma Chin practices cannot be so interpreted. The

[3] In this respect and in the respect where the Lushai defy that which is fearsome by incorporating it, and in respect of the Lushai tendency to trance states and mystically oriented, pentecostal nativistic movements, the Lushai differ from most Chin groups and appear relatively "Dionysian." Clearly they have borrowed several Naga customs and elaborated Chin patterns of warfare considerably. I suggest that this pattern of development has its origins as a virtual reign of terror initiated by the Lushai in their passage and expansion into alien lands, where they were in competition with previous inhabitants for land—for living space.

Fig. 33. Hnaring vault grave. Body is put in lengthwise and vault is closed with a flat stone, then pit is filled in with earth. Deceased can be buried in house yard or village cemetery and may be interred with blankets, weapons, etc.

Fig. 34. Memorial posts in the style of the Lai-speaking villages of Haka, on roadside.

interpretation that I shall propose, however, is not unrelated to the usual one.

One overpowering concern of all Chin men and even women is that they should not be forgotten after they have died. Some compose *va-hla* to perpetuate the memory of their deeds as warriors, hunters, and brave men, and most people with no *va-hla* have children and descendants to aid in perpetuating their memory. Often a man without issue would come to me while I was in the field and request some good photographs of himself, because he would otherwise be forgotten.

Memorials cannot be understood without reference to funeral

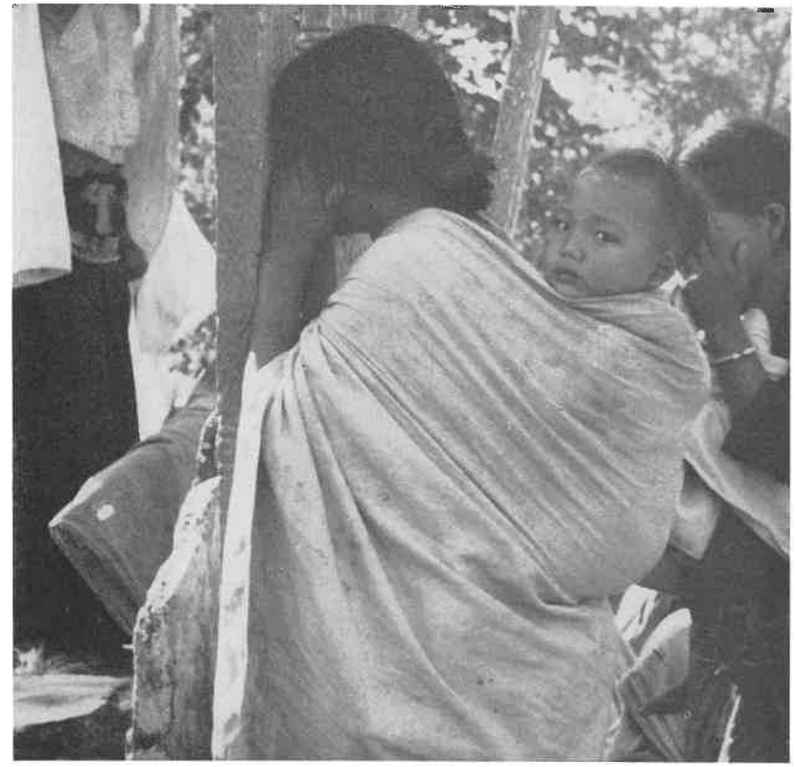


Fig. 35. Hnaring woman mourns at a memorial post (*thing ṭial*). At left is *lung dawnh*, stone-faced memorial platform. Note Northern Chin utility blanket used as baby-carrying sling.

monuments. The Southern Chin generally cremated the dead. Those in Kanpetlet then place the ashes in an urn which is put under a small capstone supported on three or four small upright stones. These are placed in a grove outside the village. Haka Chin bury the dead (except those who die in violence) either in the house compound or in cemeteries immediately outside the village. Matu cremate and erect houses of the dead on the cremation grounds. Memorials in Haka area are erected elsewhere than at cemeteries, though some men also request their agnatic relatives to set up on their graves a small wooden replica of a Chin dwelling house elaborately carved in geometric designs. The de-

Fig. 36. Threadsquares of colored cotton *(chɔ bʌ-li)* used in Lautu area as tokens of money carried by dead to get into *mithi khua,* village of the dead. Mounted, with trophies of animals slain by deceased, on grave site memorial post.

signs are often filled with red paint, and small figurines of people, even of women's loom properties, are put on the veranda. Real houses are almost never decorated with either carving or paint. Inside the houses of the dead are left miniature offerings of food on miniature dishes. A few Chin have said that possibly the spirit

Fig. 37. Wooden memorial figures at Zamual village, near Falam, with modern inscribed stones for a deceased Christian villager. Note low stone platform here.

of the deceased actually returns to this house at times, but this is a belief not widely held.

It seems that the soul of the deceased is entertained here before it is finally sent off, with appropriate ceremonies, to the village of the dead. These ceremonies are performed some months after the funeral, within a year after death. The Chin are not explicit on the meaning of these rites, but near the houses of the dead are hung squares of colored cotton yarn wrapped round a frame of two crossed sticks (threadsquares, or *Fadenkreuze*—see Kauffmann, 1960). These and attendant paraphernalia symbolize what the dead take with them to pay their way across certain barriers on the road between the land of the living and that of the dead. This evidence, combined with the general theory of death rites propounded by Hertz (1907), leads us to expect that there will be a ceremony to end the primary mourning period held some time after the actual funeral. There are in fact a series of these rites,

although they are not performed for everyone who dies and they are very rare these days. The name (*lam serh*) of such rites signifies "to make a dance" for the deceased in the sense of a ritual prestation.

The important memorials, however, are the *lung dawnh*. A *lung dawnh* is a platform some three feet high, formed of earth and rubble and faced and capped with large flat stones. The size of a *lung dawnh* depends both upon the importance of the deceased and upon the resources of those who erect it after his death. A man or woman without issue fearing he will die soon may even erect a *lung dawnh* for himself. At the *lung dawnh* are usually found posts (*thing ṭial*) with carved geometric designs (*a ṭial*). Some of the designs are purely decorative, while others are a sort of code indicating that in life the deceased possessed a quantity of heirloom goods, particularly necklaces. Some of his prized possessions and trophies, but not trophy heads, are hung on this post: for example, an enameled tin plate, a bottle of *zu* (grain beer), or some prized item of foreign manufacture.

At these *lung dawnh* one often finds one or more rows of stones, each stone indicating that the deceased had killed and celebrated an animal of the forest, or sacrificed a mithan. Some persons insist that a stone can be placed there for any animal, whether celebrated or not. This set of small stones is called *lung sawm rel* (literally "stone increase count," i.e., counting up killings and memorializing them in stones).[4] This custom is not followed in Haka village, but is widespread in Haka Subdivision.

In Falam one finds near the *lung dawnh* three-dimensional human figures in wood. On these figures are carved symbols of heirloom property and stylized horns, each pair signifying a sacrificed mithan, and also symbols of animals killed in the chase. No such representational carving exists in Haka area.

Nowadays, however, the Haka Chin language has been reduced to writing, and one often finds near the *lung dawnh* upright slabs of stone with writing on them. These inscriptions show clearly and poignantly the things and accomplishments Chin desire to have memorialized. A characteristic memorial stone will list what the deceased owned and did in his lifetime that gave him prestige: mithan, a gun, a pair of shoes, a pair of socks, enameled dishes,

[4] There is also *pa-sawm rel*—each stone representing a man slain or a woman seduced, since this amounts to killing her husband.

Fig. 38. Miniature houses at a Khuahrang village grave site, with vertical stones set on each grave.

a tin spoon; that he killed a number of animals of several kinds, paid such and such a *man-pi* as marriage price for his wife, and so on. I have taken these examples from actual stones in Lautu and Zophei. They are also set up for Christian Chin, but in this case a cross is also carved or painted on the stone.

Memorial *lung dawnh*[5] are set up largely as places for travelers along the road to sit and rest their burdens. The traveler will recall the dead man as he enjoys this benefaction. These platforms are in no way visited by the spirits of ancestors. They do not contribute directly to the fertility or prosperity of anyone living; however, indirectly they do.

The relationships between the realms of the living and the dead are reciprocal. In order for one's secular status to have a lasting effect, it must be validated through sacrifice to the other world and also memorialized in this world. The prosperity of the living is guaranteed by a connection with past generations. This connection

[5] There are other kinds, some set up by youths in honor of a popular village girl, others, quite elaborate, serving as places where the villagers turn out to welcome returning warriors, or guests coming to attend a feast, with liquor and other delicacies.

is supplied not only by a sacrificial link to the world of the dead but also by the substantive memorials of the prosperity and achievements of those who have gone before. I cannot, however, claim that any Chin has ever made this interpretation explicitly. I have formulated it on the basis of evidence from those aspects of Chin social life where prestations can be directly studied, and also from the fact that Chin attach the greatest importance to memorialization as something to hand down as an inheritance to future generations.

8

Chin Attitudes and Psychological Orientations

Before treating present-day cultural and social change I wish to make some rather general, speculative remarks about a few predominant Chin attitudes and psychological orientations toward themselves and their social and cultural world. Some of these observations derive from life-history materials given by Chin informants and from a few psychological tests, but that evidence is incomplete and of a specialized nature.

The memorial complex shows that the Chin is deeply concerned with possessions, with material and nonmaterial things, which can be called by name or enumerated. This concern colors the whole of the typical, institutionalized, Chin attitude to other people and to his own culture. The Chin tends to verbalize and symbolize social relationships in a metaphor of concrete things which become surrogates of human relations. Power over others (status) is thought of and acted out in terms of enforced hospitality, coercive feasting, and the like. What Rorschach tests we administered showed uniformly few if any "human" responses, only animals and inanimate things.

Chin dream life has a similar atmosphere. Chin art, except for the Falam memorials, is purely geometric and concentrates on small design elements, repeated endlessly. When a Chin talks of his relationships with persons close to him, parents, children, spouse, he launches into a discussion about things, for instance, marriage prices involved, or the possessions owned by the person.

The number of actual kinds of items involved in marriage payments is fairly small, a dozen or so at most. But the number of named categories of marriage prices amounts to several dozen at least. There is a recurrent attempt to increase the number of items, as well as the diversity of kinds of items, and this is done chiefly by calling the same kind of item by different names when possible. Each minor innovation in a Chin weaving pattern gives the skirt or blanket a new generic name; it becomes a new kind of thing. A large gong is called *dar-khuang*, a smaller one of the same kind is *ba-leo*, and so on.

The overwhelming concern with enumerated inventories in social and cultural life is undoubtedly due to the Chin preoccupation with civilized Burma. Their view of Burman civilization is concerned almost solely with inventory of Burman social and cultural life, not with differences in what we might call patterns of social relations or values. They also view their own culture against this background and they are very much aware of cultural differences in terms of these considerations; they imagine that their political and cultural institutions are more elaborate than they really are.

The preoccupation with things is common among the Chin because so much in actual Chin social and cultural life depends upon trade, exchange, and circulation. This can be accepted independently of any theory about the Chin relationship to civilization. Correlations between an orientation to people and culture in terms of things and a social preoccupation with trade and circulation can be found even among peoples not directly dependent upon a civilization (in all potlatching societies).

This preoccupation with things gets in the way of social relations. This is illustrated by the belief in the evil eye (*hnam ngei*). It is universally assumed that envy must be abroad and that one's possessions incite it. Some persons simply cannot help themselves; they envy someone and it brings him disease or death. This recalls the theory (Leach, 1961b, p. 25) that a pervasive belief in witchcraft not associated with particular persons working deliberately is closely connected with the degree of hostility generated in social relations (cf. Kluckhohn, 1944). The Chin evil eye is a kind of witchcraft and its basis is envy and hostility. This is overtly expressed by the Chin themselves. Status competition is strong and is concerned with the giving of gifts of enumerable material possessions. This excites the envy, which is an automatic feature of Chin social life, and gives rise to the evil eye.

This orientation to property and the use of property as a means of manipulating people through giving and taking is taught to the Chin from his infancy. It is in many respects the only major formal discipline given the child. The child is rarely punished or seriously admonished. Toilet training is very relaxed; one simply calls the dogs to clean up a mess. Formal weaning is unknown; the mother soon gives birth to another baby and another still, and the older child (between the ages of two and four) learns to avoid competition for its mother's breast. It has meanwhile been fed some solid food from the earliest weeks of its life and this now fully replaces nursing.

Children are allowed to take what seem to a European great liberties with the persons of their parents and elders, whether the latter are of high rank or low, but a child is regularly subjected to a discipline with regard to the importance of things in human relations. A baby in a blanket sling on its mother's back or its older sibling's back cries; the carrier picks up some flower, stick, or stone and gives it to the infant, not talking to it but clucking softly and patting its buttocks. If the infant takes the proffered item, it generally quiets down; if it refuses to accept the offering, it is usually beaten. The older a child gets, the more certainly it will be beaten or at least severely reprimanded if it does not respond by taking what is offered and appearing pacified. Similarly, if a child has a toy, a usable artifact, or simply a twig or pebble, its elders will often demand it suddenly. They will soothingly say to a small child, "*tse-tse-tse*," and the child will give it up or be severely disciplined.

The Chin feel that this treatment makes the child grow up to be self-assertive and imperious, the ideal behavior of a status-seeking Chin adult male. In short, it will teach the child to throw tantrums and to associate tantrums of frustration with competition between persons for the giving and taking of things.

9

Recent Social and Cultural Changes

CASH ECONOMY AND MODERN TRADE PATTERNS

The present chapter lists some of the more obvious and important recent changes in Chin culture and society, but first we must see how the rising importance of the cash economy among the Chin has affected the course and rate of change.

The effect of a cash economy often depends upon how much access people have to cash itself, but among a people like the Chin, economically and geographically marginal, it is felt only to the extent that they have access to markets where cash can be spent. The Chin's difficulty in exploiting their claim upon Burman resources is only partly in finding enough local resources to exchange for foreign goods. The greater part of the difficulty is transportation and communication. These have always been uncertain and have had to be maintained by all sorts of makeshifts.

This situation has persisted up to the present time. Until very recently the outside world, including Burma proper, has had little economic interest in the Chin Hills, so the Chin have been somewhat short of cash, but not altogether without sources of money. Tribal people less marginal to the interests of the modern international economy have been more directly than the Chin subject to change through the influx of cash, because for a long time the Chin could not spend the money that had been regularly available to them for sixty years or more. The Chin have always wished

for some way to increase their outside buying power. They first began to get money in some quantity from the British administration, for military service, for work as porters and road laborers, and because small-scale trading and brief sojourns into Burma were increasingly easy owing to the imposition of settled conditions throughout the area, but they were not at once able to make the desired purchases with this money.

Money came at first to a few individuals in amounts too small to enable the Chin to afford many goods made in the outside world, although from the very first small purchases of personal items such as cloth have been common. Moreover, when cash was brought into the hills it was still difficult to get back into Burma to spend it, and there were no regular supplies of foreign goods available within the Chin Hills. The few items brought back by individuals at first did little to change the general culture, for the supplies could not be assured and the purchases tended not to be repeated, at least not on a large scale.

Cash was converted into heirloom goods (coin bracelets, coin rings, coins strung on necklaces of *pumtek* and other beads), and it was used in traditional payments and in formal exchanges. Standard cash equivalents were established for all the usual categories of prestation, which continued to be payable nominally in kind, although actual transactions took place to a larger and larger extent in cash. One result was an inflation of the traditional secular economy, and especially of the prestige economy of feasting (see Stevenson, 1943). This became a serious problem before and during World War II when cash flowed in freely while the British were fighting in the hills, although even fewer goods than before were available for purchase, aggravating a situation that had already been current for forty or fifty years. The large number of old Victorian and early George V rupee and half-rupee coins that are now found throughout Haka have clearly been in possession of leading families for many decades. Even prior to these developments the Haka Chin had tended, whenever and however possible, to inflate the demands made upon others for marriage prices. New prices and new categories of prices were always being made up, and once paid became "traditional." A simple examination of the prices listed in Head (1949) shows this inflationary tendency quite clearly. Almost every *bawi* lineage has some special price that it alone is traditionally allowed to claim in marriage.

Fig. 39. Haka Old Bazaar lines, showing Nepalese influence due to fact that this quarter was settled by Gurkha and Indian ex-soldiers.

A small inflow of cash was not so dangerous as to threaten native economy so long as this money could be channeled into the prestige economy and there be converted into capital for organizing political networks, expeditions to trade for outside goods, and the like. Small sums were thus aggregated into amounts large enough to be useful. This, however, was feasible only up to a point and, as Stevenson predicted, its eventual results were seriously inflationary. The increasing use of cash in this way could bring in more and more heirloom goods and luxuries for the wealthy few, but could not add anything to the welfare of the general population, or even seriously affect its standards of consumption. General access to foreign goods was not being substantially increased, and during World War II access even to luxury goods was diminished while the cash intake rose rapidly, so that the inflation of the local economy, the subsistency economy included, became dangerous. Table II illustrates the proportions and scope of this inflation. The cash values of traditional purchases and exchanges became excessively high and the wealthy could consume huge quantities of

goods in feasting and marriage prices, and they paid for these goods with cash that was relatively useless for secular purposes.

The table requires amplification, best made in terms of the details of money circulation in the Haka Chin village of Hnaring during the year of field work in 1957-58.

During this year a small, somewhat westernized, wealthy household paid about K. 50 for tea, condensed milk, clothing, and cloth. It paid about K. 150 for hired labor and incidentals. Its direct cash income came chiefly from the sale of surplus food crops and was approximately equal to what it spent. But this household could in fact raise a good deal more within the village on fairly short notice.

Persons with large reserves of ready cash (K. 2,000 and more) had saved money mainly from previous military service or coolie labor, but few persons remain in military service long enough to save more than a few hundred kyats. Wealthy individuals, however, are generally of high social rank and this also brought them a good proportion of their cash reserves in the form of high marriage prices collected for sisters, daughters, and sisters' daughters. Persons with this amount of wealth are rare in even the most prosperous of villages (administrative towns excluded).

Hnaring had 264 households during 1957-58, with a resident population (exclusive of military personnel away on duty) of about 1,200 persons.

It is estimated that there were during the field period about eighty soldiers in active service from Hnaring, none as officers, few if any as noncommissioned officers. Almost all sent some money home four to six times a year, in amounts totaling K. 150 to K. 300 per person. There are eight men married to Burman girls in Burma, and most of these require Hnaring relatives to send money out to them a few times a year. This represents an unknown drain on Hnaring's cash resources. Salaries to the two headmen and the circle chairman are nominal and six military personnel receive pensions, the total income per year for the village from such sources not exceeding K. 20,000. This is a very generous annual figure and includes salaries coming to the several teachers in the government primary school in the village and to the headmaster of the school in Sate, who resides in Hnaring. Hnaring Longtlaang sold perhaps K. 400 worth of food outside the village in a year, Khuahlun perhaps a similar amount. A village like Hnaring prob-

TABLE II. Summary of Selected Effects of the Cash Economy on the Local Economy, Before and After the Second World War

Category	Stevenson (1943) Falam (Zahau)	Head (1917) Haka town	Zotung (1935) Lehman	Haka area[1] 1957-58
Holding of *Khuangcawi*[2]	Rs. 250/–			K. 4,700/–
Grown male mithan (*Kikawng*)				300/–
Female mithan (*sia-pi*)			Rs. 50/–	200/–
Small mithan (*sia-te*)			25/–	100/–
Rice (1 tin)				15/–
Maize (1 tin)				5/–
Sulfur beans (1 tin)				3/–
1 very large pig[3]		Rs. 50/–		60/–(100/–)
1 medium-sized pig		5/–	6/–	20/–
1 piglet				8/–
1 eating hen			/50	2/–(3/–)
1 goat				20/–
Zu mash for one pot				10/–
A four-span brass pot (*Marlei*)			10/–[4]	10/–
Large brass gong (*darkhuang*)			50/–	90/–(100/–)
Small gong (*darchawn*)				25/–
Medium-old *pumtek* beads		10/–	10/–	80/–and up
Old and large *pumtek*		30/–		100/–and up
1 *cawng nak* blanket (good quality)		80/–		400/–(average)
Total marriage prices paid (Haka standards for a woman)[5]				
Full *Bawi*			700/–	1,500/–(2,000/–)
Low-ranking *Bawi*				100/–(700/–)
Good commoner				170/–and up

[1] Haka area includes Zotung, although latter is in different Subdivision officially. 1935 Zotung figure, not standardized, gathered from informants.

[2] Cost in cash and kind after subtracting contributions of affines and agnates.

[3] Difference between this and next size due to fact that largest pigs are pen-fattened.

[4] This figure is suspect.

[5] Prices are roughly as per attempted Zotung standardizations, 1957, but show (in brackets) also higher amounts actually current in 1957-58 in Haka area.

Note that the scale of cash effect is roughly the same in 1917 and 1935.

Before independence, in Haka area, a *Khuangcawi* performer might kill in any one day twenty mithans, or even more; nowadays administration keeps this down to three to five. Total cash costs have risen greatly, despite this sort of reduction in expenditures of actual resources in kind.

The prewar rupee was roughly worth 25c, the Burmese kyat is officially now worth 21c. These equivalents, however, are of small meaning in themselves.

ably has a maximum annual cash income of K. 75,000. Villages without many residents in military service have far less. The administrative towns have more, but it is not known how their much

larger incomes affect the economy of the hinterland. It seems likely from examination of purchase schedules in Hnaring and elsewhere that few households spend under K. 10 a year in cash for goods from outside the village and the Chin Hills. This includes the yearly K. 2 house tax, which is actually a severe burden for poorer houses whose annual cash income and output barely balance. Other houses spend much more, as we have seen. A few purchases of much greater value are made periodically—heirloom goods of the traditional sort, and foreign goods ranging from table service through men's suits and shoes to an occasional sewing machine. In any event, in a village such as Hnaring with about 300 houses, the total cash output is probably less than the total income, but by a relatively small amount that I cannot at present estimate. This surplus goes to a mere handful of householders in the village, usually not more than several hundred kyats to any given person or house. Except for the major shops in Haka and Falam, traders rarely make a cash profit. They must buy food, which is expensive, and stock large numbers of items that move very slowly if at all; and they must travel to purchase stocks in Mandalay or Rangoon at least once a year. They also tend to spend more, because they live in a far more acculturated (westernized and modern Burman) style owing to their external experiences in the army or in school. Yet even the poorest shopkeeper will in a normal year turn over some thousands of kyats.

Stevenson shows how Falam authorities attempted to stem this dangerous inflation by artificial means, sometimes reducing markedly the cash prices of certain goods, at other times reducing the standard prices in kind for certain traditional categories of prestation (1943, p. 124 ff.). Similar measures were tried in Zotung as late as 1957. These were stop-gap measures at best and did not get to the heart of the trouble. Stevenson does not seem to see that cash was being spent in this generally deleterious way because it could not be channeled into other more useful expenditures, as many Haka Chin now point out. As he says, the great increase in cash intake in the Chin Hills had eventually to lead to the destruction of the prestige economy of feasting, but the reason was not simply that the Chin did not know how to use this wealth wisely. This inflation in fact threatened the whole native economy, and could not of itself have led to its positive reorganization.

After the war several events connected with Burma's achieve-

ment of independence made access to markets much easier than it had ever been in the past. This led to a decline in feasting when the potential feasters themselves shortly realized that they could turn their resources of cash to better use by investing in buffalos and other things needed to make wet paddy fields, by purchasing more things on the outside market and generally improving their standard of living. There was little point in consuming surpluses that hitherto could only be turned to economic advantage by expending them in feasting one's potential followers and getting status in the village. Moreover, all classes of the population now had direct access to market goods, with little need to rely on the channels of the aristocratic political system whose capital was accumulated through the prestige economy.

Traders came through the hills in ever greater numbers, shops were opened in the towns in numbers never before thought of, motor roads brought goods into the hills as far as Falam, Tiddim, and Haka. Government development schemes aided the process. Also, there were more sources of cash: schools were opened and brought salaried teachers; the Chin Special Division had a budget to spend locally, on an unprecedented scale, for civil services, road construction, and related matters. Travel into Burma was simplified and consequently opportunities to earn money outside the Chin Hills also increased significantly. Finally, the Chin were in great demand in the Burma army, for Chin troops had played an outstanding part as loyal soldiers against the Karen insurgents in 1949.

At the present time there are very few Feasts of Merit performed by the Haka area Chin. I think there were three during my eighteen months there and in 1962 there were two, both in Surkhua village. Some of those who have recently performed one or more such feasts have remarked that they regret the huge amounts of cash thus consumed in the older days and that they would now, if they had the money already expended, use it differently. The class of people formerly most involved in the traditional economy were mostly aristocrats who tended also to be the greatest purchasers of foreign goods, and to a great extent it is still the traditional aristocrats who can afford to buy most foreign products, for they have the money to use in securing education, jobs, and other new sources of income.

The traditional system of marriage payments has not yet shown serious signs of deteriorating, for a variety of reasons. First, it does

not lead to a wasteful consumption of goods in the way that feasting does, although marriage payments for a high-ranking wife drain off a good deal of a family's reserves. This circulates wealth that can be then turned to productive ends. Second, there has from time to time been some sentiment among the more acculturated and educated Chin and among devout Christians in favor of abolishing or at least reducing and simplifying these payments, but this sentiment has borne little fruit. The ramifications of the system of payments have prevented this from taking effect, because for any girl married the number of claimants of some price or other is great and the probability is that some, often a large number, of the claimants will be neither Christian nor educated. These payments can still be enforced at law according to the constitution of Burma and the Chin Special Division Act, so there is no escape from the payment of marriage prices, of formal gifts, and of traditional legal compensations, even for persons no longer interested in such things.

Finally, in recent decades an important change in the commercial sources of foreign goods has occurred, apart from goods brought in by government agencies such as cooperative stores and civil supply stores which cater chiefly to officials in administrative towns. More and more Chin traders and shopkeepers transport themselves and their heavy goods by river boat up and down the Chindwin from Kalewa, and air travel from Kalemyo, Gangaw, and Kyauktu (for Southern Chin, such as Matupi shopkeepers) is now common.

With the exception of a few better established shopmen, most Chin go to the cities without previous regular connections or sources of supply. They go from shop to shop, buying a bit here and there, speculating on what goods might find buyers at home. The result is that they pay cash and rarely have any credit.

The items that sell most universally are cheap cotton clothing, ready-made: men's undershorts and "tee" shirts are first in the list everywhere, then children's clothing in the Western style. Thereafter, the variety of items available not only in the shops but even from peddlers in remote village areas is quite large. It ranges from toothpaste, toothbrushes, handkerchiefs, combs, buttons, sewing thread, and needles on up to aspirin and "May and Baker" sulfa tablets—literally a household word throughout much of the Chin Hills. The shops carry a wider variety of the same kinds of goods and add condensed milk, salt, sugar, tobacco, cigarettes, matches

(flint and tinder have nearly disappeared), tea, coffee, iron tools of the greatest variety, small steel traveling trunks and lock-boxes, ready-made wool suits, and even a few traditional heirlooms, cheap Chin-woven cotton utility blankets, and other items bartered at the shops for foreign goods. All businesses, peddlers and shops alike, sell ink, pens, pencils, and copybooks. Cheap grammar school texts are available at the better shops. Villagers who can afford it buy supplies of kerosene for hurricane lamps or even for pressure lamps. Sesamum oil for cooking is also bought and government stores sell plains rice to persons buying provisions for a Feast of Merit. Virtually every Chin house has some enameled metal tableware; most have Western style spoons and ladles. Enameled metal drinking cups are now standard throughout the country, owing no doubt to their use in the army. They replace cups of wood and ritual cups of mithan horns. The standard large measure of grain is the five-gallon kerosene tin. The standard smaller measure is the cup, generally a condensed milk tin.

Chin in the headquarters towns own jeeps and trucks, sometimes whole fleets of them which ply with passengers and goods between the hills and Kalemyo, at least in the dry season. Many jeeps belong to shopkeepers, and in Tiddim, to commercial farmers. These people generally own a house or two in Kalemyo where they can store spare parts and surplus goods, where they can stay when traveling, and can repair their vehicles. Chin apparently own much of the land in Kalemyo, renting some of it to Chinese and Burman merchants. Some Chin jeep drivers and assistant drivers come from remote hill villages. They are well paid for their dangerous occupation, for roads are hazardous and the vehicles ancient and in constant need of repairs.

A whole lore has grown up among younger Chin in Haka area about jeep drivers: a devil-may-care breed, looked down upon because of their often wild and socially irresponsible behavior, but admired for their boldness and ability to earn money. Indeed, the jeep is commonplace, a household word far in the interior of the subdivision, where no jeep has ever been seen. The word is daily on the lips of women who have never traveled from their native villages and have never in their lives seen a wheel, let alone a vehicle.

It is impossible for me to gauge the extent of literacy among the Chin or the extent of its cultural effects, but these effects are

certainly large. In theory there is compulsory attendance to the fourth primary standard, but not every village has a school, and a few children refuse to attend when they can. It is noteworthy, however, that most parents, whether or not old-fashioned, are more than willing to have children attend school, and many will support boys in a private middle school (where the government has not established one) for years on end, even though the school has never produced a successful candidate in a state examination. Moreover, the majority of Northern Chin males aged forty or less can read and write, although many of them have not been to school. There are seven government high schools in the hills, which for some years have regularly turned out a larger proportion of successful candidates for university matriculation than has the average high school in Burma proper, despite the fact that Burmese is the official language, a language even now not common among the Chin and with far less prestige than English, which many people know slightly. Much of this drive for education is due to the general, traditional prestige of civilized accomplishments, and not just for economic improvement.

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN CULTURAL ATTITUDES

The Chin are a people whose culture and accomplishments are changing rapidly with little strain, precisely because the culture was traditionally oriented toward trying by every means to achieve the attainments of civilization whenever the opportunity arose. The prestige of anything from the outside is great, though not necessarily of any sort of institutionalized behavior. Novelties are readily accepted, even new concepts, if they are attached to concrete things and practical procedures. Thus Western curative medicine was at first rejected in favor of native practices, but is now all too blindly accepted, though not public health measures or long-range therapy. Injections, antibiotics, antimalarials, and worming medicine are sought by people of all kinds and ages, westernized or not. Even shamans readily come for medicine, though sick people under treatment often continue as a precaution to hold sacrifices as directed by these mediums.

Belief in the traditional religious concepts, if it was ever general, is now badly shaken, even among tradition-oriented older people. They believe in ghosts and *khuachia* almost implicitly, but all treat

the gods with an attitude of reservation, though sacrifices are still performed by non-Christians.

Above all, one notes the rapidity and ease of change in much of the Chin Hills. The young people who have become educated often return to their native villages and fit smoothly into the company of their elders who may still be clad in loincloths and practicing the traditional religion. Communication between the generations in these instances is surprisingly unbroken. Christian and pagan have few unresolvable conflicts and accommodate to each other's prejudices and taboos with considerable good will, not only in the same village but even within the same household. This is a particularly outstanding feature of Chin cultural change and adaptability.

There are, and have been, tendencies in other directions also. One can draw a distinction between traditionally powerful aristocratic families, families of headmen and chiefs, some of whom still bemoan the old days of their departed prerogatives, and the rest of the people, more often committed to the newer times and ways. But the former are merely ambivalent in their views and are simply not fully committed to the new, though they speak often and at length of its economic advantages and greater security, health, and comfort. The last serious attempt to turn back the clock was the Anglo-Chin rebellion between 1918 and 1920 (see Hobbs, 1956, p. 723; Stevenson, 1943, Historical Table), a political movement by certain chiefs who saw in World War I an opportunity to throw off a foreign yoke so as to be able to resume internecine wars. There had as yet been little effective cultural contact at that time, and this was not a nativistic movement or a cultural rejection.

Much of the opposition and resistance to change that does exist, and has existed in the recent past, has been less a rejection of the new than an expression of the ambivalence with which the Chin have always viewed outside civilization. Chin have been inclined to accept concrete elements but to recoil from new standards of personal and interpersonal behavior. Their contact with civilization has generally been of a kind that showed them the former but gave them little insight into the latter. There are, of course, a large number of instances where elements and standards of personal behavior are not separable, and these have formed the points about which difficulties in acculturation have grown up in recent decades; they are clearly connected with the traditional lines of stress in Chin society, the conflict between *bawi* and *chia*.

EDUCATION

Thirty or forty years ago, the aristocrats did not wish their children to go to school, nor did the children wish to go. Education itself was not thought useless; it was simply not understood. One studied under Burmans, who were not well liked. One sat in a building instead of roaming about, hunting and fighting—ideal behavior cultivated by aristocratic Chin. One had to act subservient and respectful to teachers, whereas the behavior regularly expected of a male Chin aristocrat was a self-assertive, temperamental one. It is significant that the change in the response to education has taken place with very little government pressure to force children to attend schools. Indeed, for a time during the 1930's educational opportunities were curtailed, Burmese was dropped as the chief language of instruction, and standard Chin dialects were substituted in each subdivision. This meant that above a certain standard, progress was difficult, since at that point in education a switch either to English or Burmese had to be made. Despite this, there was, and is now, an effort made by many Chin to put their children in schools and to keep them there when they can.

REGIONAL VARIATION: CASE HISTORIES OF ACCELERATED CHANGE

On the whole, as we might expect, the areas and villages more remote from the towns are more traditional in their behavior and culture, but it does not follow that areas more recently brought under administration or recently subjected to the full impact of the forces of communication and contact have so far changed very little. On the contrary, as soon as such opportunities are open to them they tend to change and catch up rapidly. Indeed, the more remote and isolated regions have motivations, peculiar to themselves, impelling them toward such change. An interesting example is Matupi.

Matupi was at the time of the first European contact with the hills the most remote and poorest of all hill Chin societies. Above all, it was at the very end of the trade and communication lines to the outside world. It is also the most recently opened to administration of all areas in the Chin Hills. It was not actually pacified until the late 1920's and it was not subject to regular administration until the middle 1940's, although a primary school was established there in the middle 1930's. The Matupi villagers were known for

Fig. 40. A Matupi shop and its stock.

their wildness and military power. Yet in the last fourteen years, Matupi has become one of the most rapidly changing parts of the Chin Hills.

The reasons for this are complicated and not altogether easy to untangle. Trade with Burma was at best imperfectly secure for Matupi, but in the years of World War II even this was severely interrupted. During the years of the Karen and related rebellions in the newly independent Burma (1949) it was again interrupted, because the insurgents had one of their points of concentration along the eastern edge of the Southern Chin Hills. At this time there appears to have been one of Matupi's recurrent food shortages. Intertribal warfare had been sufficiently reduced so that travel between villages was safe, although a decade earlier the farthest a Matu would dare to travel was a short two-days' journey, and that not in all directions. I have already mentioned a tendency in Matupi area to react to pressures from the east by moving gradually westward. In the early 1920's the Anglo-Chin rebellion

had displaced some Lautu villagers and they had plundered Matupi and the surrounding villages, giving further impetus to this tendency.

In late 1947 quite a number of the inhabitants of Matupi moved westward, a number of families eventually reaching Aijal in the Lushai Hills. Here they found both the peace and the sources of foreign goods they sought. They also found money and foreign goods of a kind that they had hitherto not known. Many of them worked as road coolies and amassed cash reserves of some thousands of rupees. Meanwhile, other Matupi inhabitants over the years had occasion to drift north to Falam and Haka, where they had similar experiences, while a few, as early as 1929-30 had been deported to Falam for murder and had returned with new ideas. Finally a few of the men had found their way to the Burma army.

When conditions affecting Matupi itself were improved, many of the migrants returned home, bringing with them a new idea of life. Matupi village had meanwhile become the permanent headquarters of a subdivisional office. For the first two years or so not a shop existed and no foreign goods were regularly available, except what was brought in for the officers and police by the Civil Supplies Management Board. Yet by the time I arrived in late December, 1957, there were thirteen permanent shops in the bazaar line, all run by Matus from Matupi or nearby villages, and a fourteenth run by a man from Surkhua in the Haka area. By May, 1958, there were seventeen shops either opened or being built, all the additional shops operated by Matus, and at least two Matupi ex-soldiers had by that time failed in business and closed up shop.

Of course the immediate presence of government played its part in these changes. During 1956-57 a local government order prohibited the wearing of the traditional red cane belts by the men, made the men wear loincloths wide enough to cover the genitals, and forced the women to wear skirts some inches longer than traditional. The rapidity of cultural change here is, however, explained largely by factors other than government interference. Some Matupi families have even adopted a reduced version of the Haka marriage-price system together with a distinction between social classes, for Matupi was first administered from Haka.

Once the Matupi Chin were released from the pressures that had traditionally isolated them and forced them in upon their own resources, their traditional inclination to seek out a more

elaborate culture and way of life was automatically set in motion. It is the general opinion of most government officers who have any contact with this village and area that it is in many respects the fastest developing region in the Chin Hills at the moment, though it is still far behind most other regions in actual attainments.

The second case is that of the Kanpetlet Subdivision in general, particularly the part of it on the route between Matupi and Mindat. With Matupi subject now to such great changes, Kanpetlet and especially the *M'Kang* tribe had been left the most undisturbed, or least acculturated, region in the hills. Its patterns of trade had been little disturbed except during the troubled times in the 1940's, when in any case there was no place the people could go. Blood feud is still common among them. One young man from the Kanpetlet *Ng'men* tribe earned a degree from the university in Rangoon and was made headmaster of the high school at Mindat in 1958; he is currently deputy inspector of schools. The American Baptist missionaries have had only slight influence.[1] In Mindat and surrounding villages the Paris Overseas Mission (French, Roman Catholic) is present but its influence is restricted, though it has been in the area thirty years. There are abandoned Buddhist monasteries in more than one village, testifying to that faith's lack of success in proselytization, despite a government program of Buddhist missions. Several *Ng'men* villages are nominally Buddhist. Quite a few Kanpetlet Chin have served in the Burma army, but on the whole their influence for change has been very small.

Ng'men and *M'Kang* villages usually give the returning soldier the choice of either resuming native habits and in some cases native dress, or leaving the village. Most, including many non-commissioned officers and a few commissioned officers, chose the former. There is, however, no objection to "modern" houses on the Burmese pattern of sawed planks, corrugated iron roof, and even a window or two.

The *M'Kang* of northwestern Kanpetlet Subdivision had little use for money as late as 1956. In that year the late botanist-explorer F. Kingdon-Ward made a collecting trip through the area, and declared to the officials that the trails here were virtually the roughest and least developed in Burma, though he had traveled in some very remote regions of the country. Moreover, he had

[1] By 1961 this was beginning to change: the entire *Ng'men* village of Ro became Baptist, nominally, chiefly as a political expedient.

the greatest difficulty in arranging for village porters; they did not want the cash he offered them, though some would work for glass beads and similar items of trade.

This was still supposed to be the case when I first toured the area in early January, 1958. Yet, when I came through again from Mindat in February and March of that year, the villagers along the route were not only willing to provide coolies for cash, they insisted upon it. If my coolies from one village to the next wished to stay with me a second day's journey, the villagers where I camped would threaten trouble if I did not reject the first porters and hire instead porters from the present village. This requires some background.

Some time in autumn, 1957, a man from Matupi had murdered a schoolboy from Thluk, a *M'Kang* village. The murdered boy's villagers were outraged because for this backward area he had been a valuable asset, having had several years of schooling. They demanded a huge compensation from Matupi, some thousands of kyats, which Matupi either could not or would not pay up. They immediately threatened revenge on every and any Matupi inhabitant coming through their territory.

Matupi men thereupon refused to serve as porters for the shopkeepers in Matupi going to take goods up from Burma through Mindat. There are alternate routes used by some merchants, but none common or direct. Consequently, the Matupi shops, by the time of my first arrival in Matupi, were almost bare of many necessities.

We went from Matupi to Mindat in January, 1958, only by joining the party of the Matupi subtreasury officer who had with him a patrol of ten policemen from Matupi Station, armed with rifles and carbines. This party was also joined by the Matupi shopmen and their porters. The vast majority of the porters were women and young boys and girls—the men were still afraid to go through *M'Kang* territory.

Rumors circulated periodically during the five-day walk that the uncles of the murdered boy were in the forest near Thluk and were going to ambush the caravan and slaughter the first Matupi man they saw. This ambush never occurred. Then a delegation from the aggrieved party was supposed to be at Mindat waiting to negotiate the matter of compensation. This party never showed up, though they were sought. The threat was deliberately kept up, no

effort being made either to settle the issue or carry out revenge on any of the numerous opportunities.

It became obvious upon my return that this might be related to the new-found desire of the Kanpetlet villagers to work for cash as porters. When I discussed the matter with local officials the following explanation emerged as most probable in the eyes of all of us, though it has not yet been proved.

There was a motor road being forced through from Mindat westward. Up to the time of my leaving Burma in 1958 it had been cut only twelve miles, and there was no prospect of its being pushed farther until after the coming rains. It was likely to be extended another five or seven miles the next working year, and was proceeding toward Matupi via a point on the high ridge above Bong, thence somewhat north of Ro and Thluk.[2] It had not yet reached half the distance between Mindat and Bong, but it was already important. Contact between the villages of the interior and Mindat was being vastly improved. In other ways, too, largely because of a recently enlivened plan of administration in the subdivision and the district, communications were being improved and a new flow of outside goods and influences was reaching the interior.

A new desire for money might be explained by all these developments. But how was this money to be obtained? *M'Kang* people rarely serve in the army. There is little work available for them as porters or road laborers, but there is a considerable carrying trade plying the route between Matupi and Mindat serving the Matupi shops. The Matupi people had until this time maintained an exclusive hold on the porterage of this trade, taking the empty boxes out from Matupi and returning fully loaded from Kyauktu and Mindat. They passed through Kanpetlet territory, but the Kanpetlet people did not share in the profits, except for selling a few handsful of rice and some firewood to the passing caravans.

With these facts in mind it appeared probable that the crisis between the *M'Kang* and Matupi might serve to open up opportunities for the Kanpetlet people to share in the profits of this carriage by preventing Matupi porters from passing through. There is some reason to suppose now that the threat of revenge and blood feud was not genuine, but that it was being deliberately handled

[2] The western part of the alignment shown on Map II for this road was substantially altered in 1960-61.

so as to serve other ends as well. It seemed that an important step in cultural and social change had been suddenly undertaken.[3]

This is the territory where, not many years earlier, the inhabitants had greeted the news of Burmese independence with a total refusal to recognize government administration: "We are independent, there is no more government," they said; and the officer then in charge of the area was forced to take stern measures to restore recognition of government in Kanpetlet area. This, like the Anglo-Chin rebellion, must be understood more as a political than a cultural rejection.

Kanpetlet (the *M'Kang* and the *Ng'men* at least) stands apart from the rest of the Chin Hills in its pattern of reaction to modern times. Its recalcitrant conservatism in social life, the way the village community tends to force even returned soldiers and army officers into the traditional mold, has made this region a problem and a puzzle to administration. I did not do field work in this area until 1961 (four months in the *Ng'men* village of Bong and a tour in the *M'Kang* country) and so I did not appreciate this problem until after the present work had been substantially written, but my field work has persuaded me that these people are not so different from the other Chin as some officers have supposed. They, too, have a society and culture traditionally oriented to Burman civilization, and the very proximity of Burman society to their territories has conditioned them to preserve with especial vigor their standards of behavior as a symbol of their special identity and role in an unequal cultural and economic relationship with other societies.

GENERAL TRENDS

These instances should illustrate the scale and rate of change in the Chin Hills, and the patterns which it takes. The Chin people have for centuries looked out upon the civilized world, conscious of its material benefits, though ambivalent toward its people,

[3] As of 1961 the shop goods porterage was still largely in the hands of Matupi, the murderer had been hanged, and the argument was nearly forgotten. But Thluk villagers nowadays are very eager to earn money as coolies, and have been carrying government stores from Mindat increasingly. Villages off the main routes, however, are less eager for cash. In April, 1961, my party of three spent some fourteen hours trying to buy nine cups of rice from villagers of Yophong; there was a slight scarcity of rice. However, they were willing to part with a number of native products for my museum collection and insisted on large cash amounts in payment.

proud of their own distinctive heritage, yet acutely aware of their own disadvantageous situation, continuously dependent upon civilization for a good deal that is basic to Chin culture and social existence. These circumstances colored and molded almost all aspects of Chin culture and the Chin social order, though not so as to make Chin society more Burman in appearance or structure.

Today, released from some of their physical and economic isolation, most Chin are deliberately pursuing a course of progress toward civilization with a zeal and at a pace that is impressive. There is indeed a division of opinion between those more oriented to the old ways and those more committed to the new, but it is more often a matter of degree than of kind. The old ways themselves were implicitly oriented to a positive outlook upon civilization and progress, and the degree of harmony with which old-fashioned and new-fashioned fellow Chin get along with each other today testifies, I think, to the considerable degree of importance that a positive orientation to civilization has for all Chin.

There are certainly problems and differences of opinion on how to approach the new era. The economic situation continues to be critical, communications networks necessarily remain primitive, and the resources of the hills are still very uninviting to the outside world. There are many older style Chin who remain committed more or less to the old ways, not so much because they do not wish for a more abundant life as because they feel lost in the spirit of the new times which they simply do not understand. They want the substance but fail to identify the premises and patterns which underlie it.

In their enthusiasm for a status in the modern world, many Chin voice a wish to have a Chin state immediately, on a basis of equality with the other states of the Union of Burma. Some even envision the Chin Hills as an independent nation. This may show a naive estimation of the economic and demographic resources of the Chin Hills. But those who wish for such things do not do so because they wish to return to an aboriginal state of Chin culture. They are educated and acculturated people with a fairly large interest in civilization and the outside world. Some even feel that there is more value (in the large world picture) in their ties with the English language than with Burmese, in an orientation to European ways rather than to Burman ways. This, too, may be a naive estimation of the realities of modern world politics, but it is not a nativistic reaction.

The ex-chiefs, who at times grow nostalgic over the *zu* pots, sing songs, tell stories of the good old days, and wonder whether the English might ever return, do not act this way in a spirit of simple revivalism. They speak again and again of the importance and world-wide prestige of the Europeans and of the Chin connection with them.

This sort of thing is probably scheduled to die out soon, for better or for worse. The younger generation of educated Chin, particularly those from Haka, Falam, and Tiddim areas, where contact and economic relations with Burma are now much more satisfactory than before, are more and more committed to casting their fortunes with an independent Union of Burma and with its language and culture, though not at the price of losing their identity as Chin. The Chin regiments in the army and the Union constabulary have served Burma very well. A Chin from the North, U Vum Ko Hau, was for several years Burma's Minister Plenipotentiary in Paris. The number of Chin graduates of Rangoon University is impressive and many are sent for further study to universities in England and America. In the years in which I have been associated with the University of Illinois at least two young Chin have taken courses there.

The typical Chin way of dealing with their recent integration into the formal political network of Burman society and the modern world perpetuates traditional ways of relating to Burman society. It perpetuates social and cultural organization, in Firth's sense, not a fixed social structure (Firth, 1954, 1955). It perpetuates values and principles basic to the old relationship with Burman civilization. These values and principles consist of traditional ways of looking at problems, traditional expectations and decision procedures in the face of recurrent problems of relating to the local and external environments. They imply traditional social and cultural understandings, techniques and ideas that are adaptable to an environment embracing both the local scene (the forest, the agricultural fields) and the Burman milieu.[4]

How far social-cultural structure has been extended to the newer situation poses a problem that cannot yet be solved. I think that important social structures of the Northern Chin have been better

[4] On an advanced view not committed to having structure imply stasis or any kind of equilibrium, all this that Firth calls organization is itself part of the social-cultural structure; being the thoroughly structured processes of strategy that give the social system the flexibility required for preserving continuity in the face of novel problems.

preserved and have proved more adaptable than those of the Southern Chin, where extravillage ties were traditionally of a more limited character.

Certain aspects of the Chin tradition, such as mythology, ritual organization, warfare and headhunting (the latter absent from most Southern Chin cultures), have been noticeably attenuated, and the suppression of warfare and hunting has certainly had significant effects on the internal organization and ecology of Chin society. Warfare and headhunting, however, were always ancillary to the ecology of swidden agriculture, the prevailing mode of subsistence. Their immediate demographic consequences were probably rather small, and their chief effect was on patterns of settlement. In the Central and Southern Chin Hills, and probably the rest of the Chin area, they were part of the system of political and economic ties between villages and they served primarily to make and break political alliances. Their suppression was attended by the building of better roads and regular communications within the hills. Better communications, the growth of population, and involvement in a world-wide market economy served to give the panareal social organization a more stable basis than did intervillage warfare and plundering the plains beyond the Chin Hills, but the principles of this panareal organization remained largely the same. They continued to be predicated upon the use of a marginal economic surplus for the purpose of exercising a tenuous claim upon the resources of civilization. They continued to be based less upon supralocal chieftainship (which has now been abolished) than upon a widely ramifying system of kinship and alliance.

The graded Feasts of Merit, which were such a spectacular feature of traditional Chin culture, have in many places nearly vanished since World War II, but these feasts were pursued only by the relatively wealthy few, and their economic function, which has been rather well treated by Stevenson (1943), was to gather the marginal surpluses of the community in channels of formalized exchange so that these surpluses could be used by political organizers as capital for the society's claim on the resources of a wider economy. The prestige economy served to maintain a large cultural inventory by permitting the politically and economically successful households and lineages to amass wealth and a wide range of material goods, often from distant places. Such goods found their way only gradually, if at all, to the rest of the population. At the same time the feasts increased the prestige and political power of

a few persons and kinship groups over their fellow villagers and their affinal allies outside the village.

This panareal political organization made possible increased intervillage trade and maintained trade routes with Burma, Manipur, and other places. Warfare was usually followed by conquest, widespread feudal alliances, and therefore, periods of extended peace. Peace permitted the population to grow better crops and pursue their crafts undisturbed, to produce capital for the pursuit of the Burma trade, both directly and via the prestige economy. The panareal organization also permitted the marshaling of parties for raiding the Burma plains, and Chin expeditions combined both plundering and trading activities. The general character of the panareal social and political organization has largely remained what it was before contact with modern civilization. Its economic and social functions have remained fairly stable. Only its immediate technique has changed, with the introduction of better communications and access to outside markets.

The Chin have needed to devise or borrow remarkably little to replace cultural traits that have been given up. Ritual is lost partly because its mythological functions were never systematic, and it was supported by relatively few specific social roles (see Head, 1949; Parry, 1932). The large-scale rites of the Chin have now begun to disappear, but the lesser ones, by which the population maintains relations with its local environment, have survived far better and still flourish in most places. These include rites to cure illness, to insure good crops, and to deal with other matters of concern to all elements of the population. The major village-oriented rites, that were performed annually or irregularly by or on behalf of the entire community, have almost everywhere diminished in importance, but have not died out except in villages where the major part of the population has become converted to Christianity. These rites had been controlled by semipolitical, priestly officials who maintained a very slender esoteric tradition; few of these functionaries are now left.

By and large the Chin have not become Buddhists, though Buddhism is the religion of the Burman civilization, and to be Burman is very nearly synonymous with being Buddhist. Christianity is a definitive force in the Chin Hills (see Hobbs, 1956). Near the Northern and Central administrative village centers of Haka, Falam, and Tiddim there are whole villages that have become converted to Christianity. But many of the converts are

only nominal Christians, having been converted solely because so many of their fellows had already been converted that it was no longer possible to celebrate the pagan rituals. Missionary activity in the Chin Hills as a whole has not been extraordinarily successful.

Hobbs estimates that not much more than 20 per cent of the total population adhere even nominally to any form of Christianity. Of this by far the largest portion adhere to the American Baptist Mission. Data collected more recently indicate that at most 22 per cent of the Chin Hills population has ever adhered to this church, and for some years the percentage has been declining so that now the church just balances its regular loss of members with new conversions.[5] The other Christian churches (Catholic, Seventh-Day Adventists, etc.) have far fewer converts even in the very restricted areas in which they operate. Most Chin Hills villages are either all pagan or include only a handful of Christians, many of whom have been converted while in residence elsewhere, while traveling, or while serving in the army. These villages are without local churches, although the mission has been operating almost continuously in the hills since 1899 when it was established at Haka.

The basic ideology of traditional Chin religion continues to flourish almost everywhere in the hills.[6] That ideology is preponderantly concerned with memorialization, and is precisely the part of the religion most closely tied to the basic organization of the whole culture and society.

What has changed or been dropped from Chin culture under modern conditions is largely connected with the autocratic *phase* of traditional Northern and Central Chin society. The basic social and cultural system, however, lives on.[7]

[5] By 1962 membership had increased once more.

[6] Absence of published studies and the fact that they are virtually not to be encountered south of the Falam Subdivision preclude discussion of Chin syncretic religious movements—revitalization movements—such as Pau Cin Hau and related cults in Falam and Tiddim, or Hlimsang among the Lushai (see Hobbs, 1956; McCall, 1949).

[7] In March, 1962, the army took over control of the Union of Burma and established as the main institution of government a revolutionary council. The Parliament, the Constitution, and the ministries of the states of the Union, including the Chin Special Division, were abolished. The states and the Chin Hills are now governed by their own revolutionary councils, largely civilian in composition, but the rest of the administrative structure of the Chin Hills as described in this paper remains intact.

10

General and Theoretical Conclusions

THE CHIN AS AN EMERGENT PEASANTRY

My intention has been to make a formal analysis of Chin culture and society to show that they are organized with reference to a bipolar ecological adaptation: adaptation to local environment as defined by a historically given technology, and adaptation to a wider environment inclusive of the neighboring civilization of Burma. Traditionally the Chin were a tribal people, not participants in the social institutions of a civilization. Nevertheless, their great concern with civilization and the thoroughgoing fashion in which their cultural traditions were molded by that concern were similar to the reaction of a peasantry to civilization in which it participates institutionally.

In order to clarify this observation, to set this study in a wider theoretical context, and to relate it to the Studies of Cultural Regularities of the University of Illinois, I must say a few things about anthropological concepts of a peasantry, so that we can see to what extent Chin society and culture were traditionally like those of a peasantry and to what extent it may be advisable to put this society and culture in some newly devised category.

A peasant community is a rural, agricultural community. It practices subsistence farming, but it also produces some commodity (crop or labor) that attaches it in greater or lesser degree to a wider market and, therewith, a wider society. Peasant communities

are usually associated with both a folk cultural tradition and a cultural tradition belonging to the elite of the wider society and the state. Redfield has called this distinction one between a Little Tradition and a Great Tradition (see Marriot, 1955; Lehman, 1959).

The peasantry is somewhat separated from social communication with the larger society, so that it inevitably maintains some sort of individual cultural tradition. The peasant community often makes deliberate use of this distinctive tradition, of its collective self-image, for protection, as a closure against encroachments by the superior power of the more sophisticated segments of the larger society, but a peasantry is not self-sufficient. It claims political or physical protection from the larger society, and it claims some share in the resources of an intercommunity, national, or world economy. It is part of the institutional (economic, political) network of the larger society (civilization).

Some peasant communities produce a commodity for which the larger society has great demand, others produce commodities for which there is only marginal or discontinuous demand. In proportion as a peasant community is one kind or the other it is harder or easier to exercise its resources for the exploitation of the claim on the wider economy, and so must maintain a highly distinctive local cultural tradition. It cannot afford to maintain the standards of the larger society (cf. Wolf, 1955; Lewis, 1955; Lehman, 1959a).

The other participants in the University of Illinois Studies of Cultural Regularities worked in areas that fall broadly into two categories. The communities in Malaya, Japan, and Latin America comprise the first category of traditional peasant communities, each in a distinctive civilization. More recently they have all come under varying degrees of penetration by the economic institutions of Western industrial civilization with all its social and cultural consequences. Within this group there are several analytic variables. Japan, with one type of indigenous civilization and economy, has never been penetrated by means of colonial rule; Malaya has been so penetrated; Latin America had an indigenous civilization which was then replaced by the Spanish tradition, a preindustrial phase of Western industrial civilization itself. Plantations and/or haciendas or field factories were productive arrangements that were established in Malaya and Latin America, but not in Japan.

The second category comprises chiefly African communities.

These were tribally organized prior to the colonial period. Whether at that period they were peasants in some sense and whether they really had state-level political institutions remains problematical. In studying these communities we are interested in the various ways in which the colonial social and economic organization has been altering the native societies and cultures and producing emergent new forms of peasantry.

The Chin of Burma, because of their clear but marginal relationship with a civilization, do not fit clearly into either of the foregoing categories; yet they serve in some measure as a control against which to view any generalizations coming out of studies of the more classical instances of peasantry.

The Chin are probably a peasantry today. They have been integrated into the governmental structure of the Union of Burma (cf. Hobbs, 1956). There is regular administration, though it is not very pervasive in the day-to-day lives of the people. There are schools and attendance is good. There is a fair circulation of small amounts of money through the local economy. The hill Chin, however, with the exception of some in the Tiddim area (Northern hills), remain swidden farmers and do not produce any regular crop or other commodity for the outside market. They are so marginal that it is often difficult to say through what resources they are principally connected to a wider economy and society. Their current major resource is their own manpower which is employed in the Burma army.

Each of the various local Chin cultures is, however, a well-structured variation on a single tradition, not related to the authoritative, elite tradition of civilized Burma as a "little tradition" to a "great tradition." As in the past, Burman civilization and now Western international civilization serve the Chin as ideal models of what their own society and culture ought to be like, and this gives the Chin *social system* a unity of sorts.

Chin society traditionally found itself in the most marginal of peasant situations: a fundamental economic adaptation to a civilization without inclusion in that civilization's institutional network and without permanent, formal structure to its interaction with the Burman population. This is a limiting case between peasantry and tribal society. It is of little consequence whether we say that this case falls within or just outside of the formal category of peasantry. The basic organization of Chin culture and society

seems to have remained vital up to the present time and to have been little affected as yet by the recent intrusion of the institutions of civilization. The British colonial administration, from the 1890's to the end of World War II, was not universally effective in the hills and often deliberately preserved aboriginal social and cultural forms, except for such things as warfare and headhunting. It retarded the establishment of better contacts with Burma and with Burman civilization as a matter of policy. Yet the Chin have been in contact with civilization for a long time, and the category Chin, I submit, makes no sense apart from this relationship to civilization.

This paper has two points of special interest to the University of Illinois project. First, it discloses that this particular kind of relationship to a civilization—tenuous, one-sided, almost wholly economic and ideological in character, but stable over a considerable period of time—has affected the structure of a culture and society in many ways. This is significant in view of the apparent similarity between the typical organization of Chin culture in the traditional past and the organization by which it is currently adapting to institutional incorporation into both Burman national society and modern industrial civilization. There is probably a similarity between the traditional Chin social and cultural structure, or some of its characteristics, and that of a certain type of very marginal peasantry now found where formerly independent tribal groups are being brought into colonial and emergent national societies and into the world-wide sphere of the cash economy.

Second, this paper describes this kind of relationship in the case of a civilization remote from Western or industrial civilization. It seems, moreover, as though the means by which Chin culture approached its traditional Burman, civilized neighbor in the past have proved extensible to the present-day approach to a phase of Western civilization.

CHIN SOCIETY AS A SUBNUCLEAR SOCIETY

The relationship between Chin culture and society and its neighboring valley or plains civilization can be generalized conveniently if we set up a category distinct from tribal and peasant types. This category comprises a whole series of mountain-dwelling peoples in a region stretching from Assam across all of mainland Southeast Asia and into the tribal area of southwest China. The

Chin represent only a small segment of a wide arc of variation within this broad type of tribal peasant society and culture.

I call this type of society and culture "subnuclear." The term is borrowed, but with altered meaning, from Kroeber's *Anthropology* (1948). Kroeber deals with similarities in style, but I am not concerned with that. I refer to groups of cultures and societies that abut on a civilization ("nuclear" culture area) but are distinct from that nuclear culture and its society. They are not civilized, but neither are they primitive. The subnuclear society's adaptation to civilization is so complete that it is necessary to propose a categorical relationship between the two.

A subnuclear society lacks permanent, supralocal institutions of an independently political nature, and it does not participate in the political network of a nation-state. It has, however, a perdurable, if marginal, economic dependence on plains civilization. The consequences of this dependence ramify throughout the tribal social, political, and ideological culture and its institutional organization, but the respective cultural traditions of the tribe and its neighboring civilization in the descriptive sense of an element list (style) are often quite distinct.

The relevance of this state of affairs for our understanding of hill Southeast Asia has already been recognized in the literature. Leach (1954) has analyzed the relationship between tribal political organization of the Kachin of Northern Burma and the presence of Shan civilization in the adjacent valleys. He has also shown how an intimate, and symbiotic, relationship between hill and valley peoples is characteristic throughout the entire Indo-Burman area (1961a). He does not place sufficient emphasis on the dependence of the tribal cultural and social structure on this symbiosis, because he is more interested in the formal dissimilarity between the cultural traditions and social structures of the respective groups. In the French literature on Indo-China there are also a number of unstructured descriptions of a stable relationship between tribal and civilized peoples. The Swedish ethnologist, Izikowitz, in his book on the Lamet of Laos (1954), has called those people "hill peasants."

SOME METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY

In closing I should like to speak about the relations, as I conceive them, between a formal structural analysis of ethnographic data

and an ecological theory of social and cultural systems. I have tried to combine the two in the present study. In formal analysis I wish to adhere to the tradition of the British and Continental structuralists, but it is necessary to found this kind of work on philosophical premises different from those implied in much of theirs.

I agree with most of them in seeing structure as exhibiting the interplay of formal, logical, ideal, or conceptual categories and relations, but I insist upon going beyond the analysis of ideal, conceptual structures in culture and society. I cannot conceive of a formal structure except as "realized," or "actualized," in the existential phenomena of cultural and social life. I see structure as the formal property of sociocultural systems, and if we speak of social and cultural systems as "structured systems," we can avoid the pointless controversy as to whether structures as such inhere only in models or in reality.

A system, in all but the exiguous instance of totally rigid systems, is a set of relations among elements where some interdependencies among the elements are more fundamental than others, and where the whole set of interdependencies and interrelationships are contingent upon certain localizations of stress and strain. This is the practical mathematician's definition of the concept of system or organization (Wiener, 1956, pp. 322-323). Structured, organized systems, then, need not be characterized as ideally states where everything is dependent upon everything else, static and rigid. This has been subjected to considerable discussion by philosophers of the structuralist method in social anthropology. Leach (1954) has proposed that we drop our habit of thinking of structure as being in equilibrium, at least static equilibrium, but he does not give us any reason for dropping this habit, that is, he does not redefine the notion of structure, so as to show that structure does not imply this sort of equilibrium. Professor Firth, in a number of publications, has also taken the matter up and proposed the useful concept of "social organization" as the "dynamic" counterpart of "social structure," but has, I fear, continued to temporize with the necessity of reconsidering the general implications of the notion of structure itself.

I submit that the structuralist's usual notion of structure is at fault precisely where he tends to treat structure idealistically rather than as a property of systems. In science, we find that there are two

categories of systems: closed systems, such as the total universe,[1] and open or dependent systems. Sociocultural systems are certainly not closed. They do not exist in an idealistic vacuum of pure value, nor are they closed systems in respect of their allocations of energy. The interpersonal networks playing so prominent a part in the structuring of these systems (Nadel, 1958)[2] are relations between human beings who are actors and derive their energy from external sources.

It seems to me, therefore, that the "localization of stress and strain" leading to the contingent interdependencies of structure and organization in culture and society can profitably be understood as set up, in part at least, by the system's adaptation to an environment. This environment is, for analytic purposes, external to the system itself (Lehman, 1959a), but it must not be too narrowly taken as comprising only a supposed objectively defined, geophysical setting of resources. It is an accepted doctrine, which there is no reason to challenge, that a culture defines its resources by means of its historically given technology. The environment to which a culture is adapted likewise includes other cultures (see Steward, 1955; Lehman, 1959a).

I find the idea of cultural ecology essential to a consistent social anthropology committed to structural methods of analysis, if social anthropology is to be productive without throwing away its formalist birthright. Adaptation, of course, implies developmental change, but developmental analysis must not be confused with the pseudo-historicism so much deplored by European structuralists. It depends upon the synchronic analysis of the development of whole systems; not upon the tracing of historical origins for traits and complexes. No functionalist should find any quarrel with cultural ecology, although cultural ecology is functionalism, not in a naive Malinowskian sense but in the sense Radcliffe-Brown intended; it is interested in the general functions of the system as such. Today's practitioners of British structuralism do not seem dismayed at having to deal with actual history, even with the

[1] And probably languages, whose structure is best analyzed without appeal to extra language facts (e.g., meaning), because of the especially arbitrary nature and composition of linguistic signs.

[2] Nadel, however, appears to define social structure purely in terms of role-to-role relations in interaction, that is, in terms of serial relations rather than cross-cutting principles of order.

tentative reconstruction of particular cultural facts and earlier states of social systems. Such interests are acceptable so long as these reconstructions have a likelihood that can be measured against a knowledge of social and cultural systems based upon comparative synchronic analysis. Such undoubted formalists and structuralists as modern descriptive linguists find no conceptual or methodological difficulty in dealing with history and reconstruction so long as they are not forced to consider such matters as "ultimate origins" (Hoenigswald, 1959). The properties of structured systems evolve in space and time.

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Index and Glossary

The Chin, who occupy the mountainous region along Burma's western border with India and Pakistan, provide an excellent example of the acculturation of a tribal people to a complex civilization.

As the author points out, the structure of the society and culture of the various Chin tribes reflects their adaptation to an environment in which neighboring civilizations are as important as their own physical habitat. Thus, he discusses Chin society and culture in terms of a dual adaptation: first, an adaptation to local resources by means of a particular technology, and second, a response to Burman civilization.

Because the Chin social system is so largely molded in response to the problem of manipulating relationships with complex, nuclear Burman society, the author sets up a special class to accommodate it. He calls this class subnuclear society. It is distinct both from peasant society and from purely tribal society.

This study of the Chin provides an example of a kind of society found among many of the peoples inhabiting the hills of Southeast Asia and adds new insights into the processes underlying formation of status lineages.

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