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Socio-economic life of Pale Palaung tribe
lived in Pindaya Township, Myanmar



ATLANTIC INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

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Key words: socio-cultural phenomena, cultural pattern, cultural criteria, cultural traits, long house, tea plantation.

Introduction

Objectives

Although there are many differences in our society, the duty of anthropologist is to bring out traditions of our nationals to understand and respect between each other.

Therefore, (1) I want to fulfill one of the aim of subject of anthropology which is collecting data in field research and registration task.

(2) I have to get one of the evidence for new generation of anthropologist when they study in ethnography.

(3) I intend to extract distinguished patterns of culture among our ethnic groups.

(4) I want to know the appearance of new patterns of culture by studying the traditions and their life style

(5) I intend to know that it is continuing only the culture and traditions are beneficial to human society.

Description

Ethnography is a form of research focusing on the sociology of meaning through close field observation of sociocultural phenomena. Macro-ethnography is the study of broadly-defined cultural groupings, such as “the English” or “New Yorkers”. Micro-ethnography is the study of narrowly-defined cultural groupings such as local government or members of a society. Cultural patterning is the observation of cultural patterns forming relationships involving two or more symbols. Ethnographic research is holistic, believing that symbols cannot be understood in



isolation but instead are elements of a whole.

The concept of the ethnic group thus combines both social and cultural criteria, and the study of ethnicity focuses precisely on the interrelation of cultural and social process in the identification of and interaction between such groups. Ethnic groups have several basic characteristics that define their nature and distinguish them from other societal group. These include: ascribed status, consciousness of kind, shared values and traits, and limited interaction among groups.

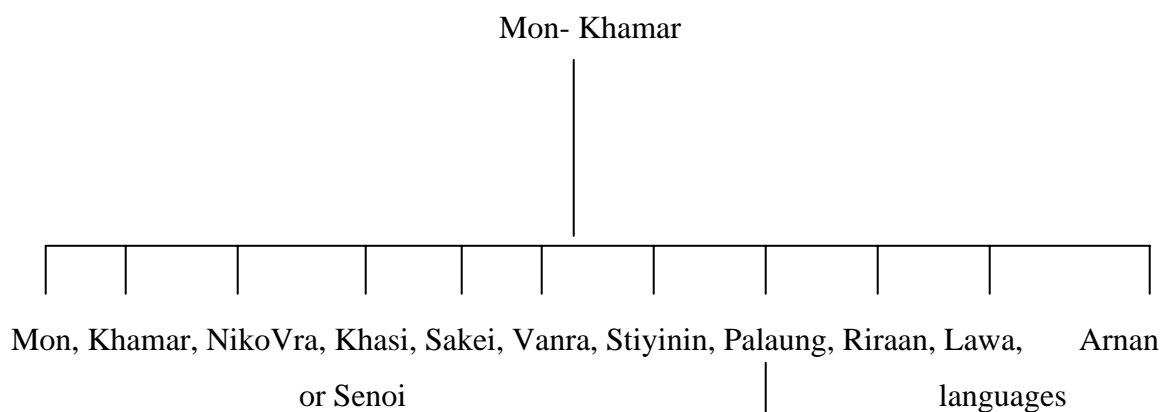
1. Historical context

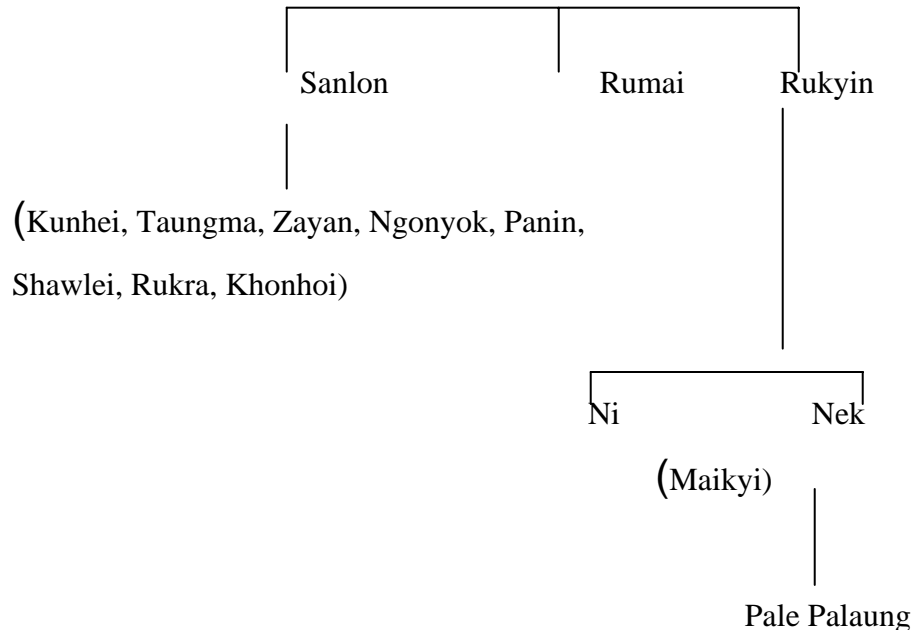
All people have an ethnic identity, which they retain so long as they identify with their group. Membership is not based on achievement, although, as we shall see, it is possible to pass from one ethnic group to another. People from one group can be assimilated into other ethnic groups. These groups are not always culturally homogeneous group but the individuals within a group generally share certain distinctive cultural values and traits that symbolize their identity. Several ethnic groups in a single society may share a great many traits.

The Palaung ethnic group are a member of Mon Khamar stock There are three kinds in Palaung; Shwe Palaung, Ngwe Palaung and Pale Palaung. Most of them live in Shan State, Myanmar. I would like to focus on Pindaya Township, southern Shan State. Majority of the people are found in Northern Shan State at Namsan, Thipaw, Kyaukmei, Momeik, and in the Southern Shan State at Taungyi, Pindaya, Kalaw, Yaksauk township.

The following chart is one of the identifying for palaung tribe based on language. According to the chart, Pale Palaung is one of the Mon-Khamar stock and in Palaung ethnic groups: Sanlon, Rumai, and Rukyin. These are also called Shwe Palaung, Ngwe Palaung and Pale Palaung.

Chart for descended Pale Palaung tribe based on Linguistics





Ethnic groups have several basic characteristics that define their nature and distinguish them from other societal groups. These include ascribed status, consciousness of kind, shared values and traits and limited interaction among groups.

2. Ascribed status

‘People are members of ethnic groups primarily by birth: thus, members of ethnic groups share myths of a common ancestry or place of origin and an historical heritage. Such myths may have a factual basis, but often this is difficult to determine. Because of this biological dimension of membership by birth, ethnic groups are often associated with the idea of race, as it is socially defined by the people themselves rather than the anthropologist’.

According to the legend of Pale Palaung ethnic group, they derived from Prince Sun and Princess Dragon. They have three sons. The tribe is the youngest son of them. He is called Ra-an. It means the people who live at the top of the mountain. A feeling of kinship is common among members of a particular group.

3. Consciousness of kind

Ethnic groups are categories by which people both identify themselves and differentiate themselves from members of other ethnic groups. Together, various ethnic groups comprise a map of the society, which helps everyone to organize their interpersonal relationships. All people have an ethnic identity, which they retain so long as they identify with their group. Membership is not based on achievement, although, as we shall see, it is possible to pass from one ethnic group to another. However, people from one group can be assimilated into other ethnic groups. As individuals they may be adopted or may marry into a group and there by gain admission on



the basis of fictional kinship. In groups, people may adopt the values and customs of another group and in time be assimilated into it, a process that may take several generations.

4. Shared value and traits

Ethnic groups are not always culturally homogenous groups, but the individuals within a group generally share certain distinctive cultural values and traits that symbolize their identity. Several ethnic groups in a single society may share a great many traits. On the other hand, the cultural patterns of members of one ethnic group may differ greatly. If we look at the continuity of ethnic groups overtime, the culture of a certain culture is closer to that of another contemporary culture than to the other culture.

It is distinguished ethnic groups from one another are of two kinds; certain value and cultural signs and symbols. The first one may include specific religious belief, standards of morality or assumption about the nature of reality. The next one includes language, dress house form, general life style, ritual expression and so forth. The most obvious elements of culture are its material products. Most anthropological ethnographies began with extensive descriptions of dress, housing, tools, and other human products.

The Pale Palaung nationals have their own dress distinguished from others. The Pale males were black long trousers and white or milky white jacket for young man and black jacket for old man. They wear turban all the time except paying homage to elder or Buddha. Most of their turbans are face towel. But for ladies' turban, there are two kinds. One is for single and another is for marriage woman. For single, the turban is colorful hat and for marriage woman, turban is special embroidered with beads made by their own. Jackets are with long sleeves and not overlap in front. The *longyi* design is vertical line and colors are red, green, blue, and violet. Their fringe is decorated with sequences and colorful thread. They wear rattan ring on the waist as an ornament.

Ethnic identify is thus not based as much a common culture as on a common sense of identity, which is expressed in certain cultural values and symbols. The culture of any given ethnic group or society consists of its unique collection and integration of these traits by people who consider themselves to comprise a single group. Cultural traits that distinguish ethnic groups from one another are of two kinds. First, there are certain basic values of which the members are committed and certain standards by which their behavior is judged. Second, there are cultural signs and symbols- features such as language, dress, house form, general life-style, and specific rites expressing their distinctive belief-which people show to establish their identity. In Pale society, they live other distinguished nationals such as; Shan, Lahu, PaO, Danu, and Taungyo.

This figure show ethnic boundaries are based on select cultural differences that become symbols of the identity of an ethnic group.

	Ethnic groups				
	A(Shan)	B(Lahu)	C(PaO)	D(Danu)	E(Taungyo)
Languages					
Foods	they eat the same style				



Political Views					
Dress					
Beliefs	Buddhism				
Economic type					

5. Housing pattern

One of the most striking features of life in the tribe is communal house, for an extended family. Longhouses are community dwellings consisting of a series of individual family linked together to form a longhouse. Such dwelling typically combine household and group spaces for both household and community functions. They facilitate the balancing of the economic social and political interests of the household with those of the group. A more professional description is given by Lewis Henry Morgan. Regarding long- houses society of Iroquois, Pale Palaung nationals' housing pattern is not only a single house but also long house the same as Iroquois tribe. The long- house consisted of a strong frame of upright poles set in ground, which strengthened with horizontal poles attached with withes, and surmounted with a triangular. The houses accommodated from five or six families up to thirteen families. Each household is made up on the principle of patrilineal kin. However the married man sometimes brought their wives house to live with them. In spite of this fact, there was a numerical ascendancy of the particular clan to which the house belonged.

Tourism requires the construction of an object, an itinerary, a commentary. Although a guide friend observed to me that tourism is fact finding, the facts have been created framed, labeled, named, reproduced- by complex interplay among tourist and the industry.

The traditional house was a marvelous not complex structure- architecturally, socially, symbolically. The construction followed precise rules of number, size and directionality, and it required the ability to mobilize enormous resources of materials and labor. Socially and symbolically, the house represented not only the ability of command such resources but also the high status of the owner. Once completed, it was a visible statement of the owner's genealogical ties to important ancestors, and it became the locus of ritual activities that demonstrated the family's extensive social networks in the present.

Occasionally, the Palaung itself is modernized. It may be transformed into a single designed to evoke or it may be remodeled to make a private home that is a prestigious combination of traditional architecture.



Long house of Pale Palaung in Southern Shan State

6. Ritual and Ceremonies of Pale Palaung

A ritual is almost always a collection of symbols, which a good analysis separates out and considers one by one. You may find an event that is entirely ritual, for instance, initiations, weddings, funerals, and other rites of passage, and rites of intensification like Christmas, Thanksgiving and the pledge of allegiance to the flag. Cultural systems are not just rules for behavior, ways of surviving, or strait jackets to constrict free expression, as we remarked in the section on private language. All cultures are also rhythms, music, architecture, the dances of living. To look at culture as style is to look at ritual. Almost every act in life is ritualistic and ritual can be an instrumental act charged with a special energy.

There are many definitions of ritual. Some limit ritual to public ceremony several limit ritual to religion. The definition used here sets no limits on context, but insists instead on the functions performed by the event. If we classify the types of ritual, we will see rites of deference, rites of passage, rites of intensification, rites of reversal and instrumental rites. Rites of deference show difference in status. Rites of passage associated with the change of status of an individual or group of individuals. Rites of intensification is to reassert social relations to intensify social bonds. Rites of reversal prohibitions normally enforced are lifted according to rules of their own. Instrumental rites include magical incantations. Such rites are tricky because actions that to an outsider appear as ritual are likely to be seen by the actors as simply instrumental steps without symbolism.

The most famous ritual is TarTetpwe (Last day of Thingyan festival). Others are noviation ceremonies, Thadingyut and Dazaungdine (lighting candle festival). TarTetpwe is one of the pagoda festival in new year. Most of the Palaung and other people who are neighbours of



the Palaung are looking forward the festival. A novitiation ceremony is a religious ceremony of Buddhist male It is called in local language Shinbyu. It has to undergo making a novice. This ceremony is held to celebrate the Buddhist rite of initiating a boy into the Buddha's order. The usual state purpose of this ceremony is to enable the boys concerned to inherit the Buddha's legacy. Lighting festival is held at the full moon night of the 7th and 8th month of Myanmar calendar. In the olden days, oil lamps were the chief means of lighting. They have been replaced by candles and electric lights in now a day. One interesting feature of the festival is various amateur shows. Another night –time activity of the festival is sending up fire-balloons to pay respects to Cula Muni pagoda which is believed to be in the abode of gods. The result is a merry explosion of one fire-creacker after another as the children clap their hands and cheer the ascent of the fire-balloon.

7. Value system on social organization

One of the few cultural universals is that of groups based on the principle of kinship. Humans have developed a surprising variety of simple kinship groups. But in some form or other kinship groups are found in all societies. Kinship rests on its biological relationships. Kinship system may include socially recognized relationships based on actual genealogicalities. Kinship is the case of social organization. Rad-cliff Brown suggested that there is a high correlation between patterns of interpersonal relations and kinship system. There are two major types of kinship system; matrilineal and patrilineal. Kinship ties fall into three categories; consanguinity, affinity and functional ties.

All societies practice some form of exogamy, the rule that a person must marry outside of the culturally defined kinship group of which he is a member. Mating between parent and child and between brother and sister are considered incestuous in almost all societies.

Malinowski (1931) argued that the family would disintegrate as a viable social unit if there were no sanctions against sexual unions of members within the family. These sanctions serve to reduce conflicts in both emotions and roles between family members.

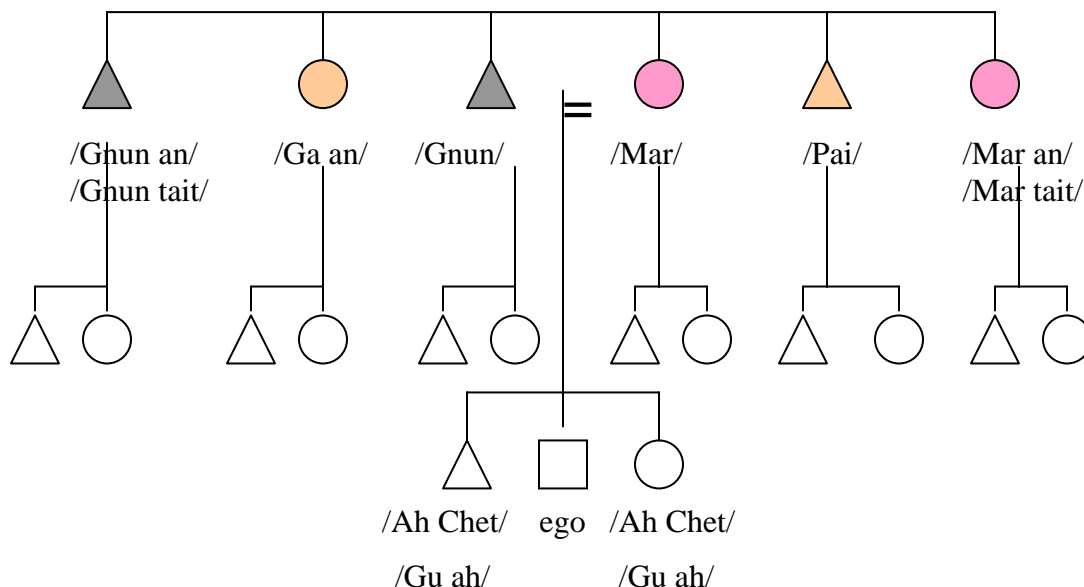
Societies not only forbid certain types of marriages, they may also encourage or require other. A common social preference is marriage to one's cross-cousin. Kinship systems, such as our own, do not distinguish between descent through the male line and descent through the female line and therefore, make no distinction between different types of cousins. Many societies, however, trace kinship ties through either the male or the female line.

In Pale Palaung societies, some village has basic families but in some villages are extended families. Their adoptive children are the same as their own children. I also found patrilineal kinship system, but not too strong. In the societies, there are (6) clan. Namely, Rawpra, Karnwe, Sinrine, Guntarit, Guanta, Paraw. They are not allowed to marry the same clan.

They have their own distinguished kinship terminology. For example,
Father---/Gnun/
Mother--/Mar/
Grandpa--/Tar/

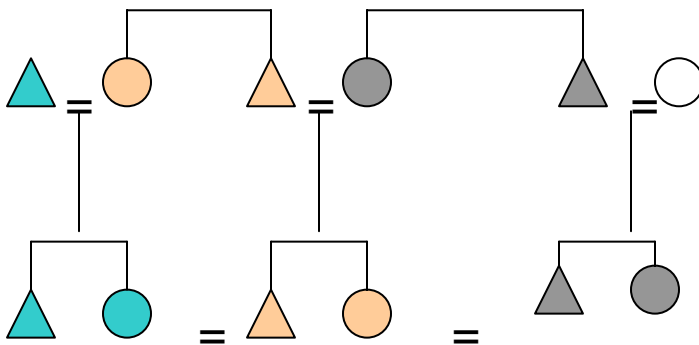
- Grandma--/Yar/
- Father's elder brother--/Gnun an/
- Mother's elder brother--/Pai/
- Father's younger brother--/Gnun tait/
- Mother's younger brother--/Pai ah/
- Father's elder sister--/Ga an/
- Mother's elder sister--/Mar an/
- Father's younger sister--/Gun tait/
- Mother's younger sister--/Mar tait/
- Elder brother-----/ Ah Chet/
- Elder sister-----/ Ah Chet/
- Younger sister ---/Gu Ah/
- Younger brother---/Gu Ah/
- Father in law---/Pine/
- Mother in law--/Kan/

Chart of Pale Palaung kinship type



According to the chart, they call the same father's brother as their father and like this their mother's sister are the same as mother. They also call their first cousin are the same as their brother who born the same parents. Furthermore, they call their Father in law is the same as their mother's brother. It is because, they allow to marry cross cousin marriage.

Chart for First cousin marriage type



A world view provides people with their basic assumptions about reality. Religion provides them with the specific content of this reality, with the things in the people's model of the universe and with relationships between these things. Religion is also based on the person's ability to transcend the self, to step outside of and contemplate oneself, one's fellows, and the universe. It is based on the human need to make sense out of human experience and find some order and significance in the whole human situation.

People are model builder. They can invent new ways to live and plan for the future. People are also plagued with anxieties and forebodings not only about their won lives but also about human destiny and humanity's place in the universe. Most of Pale are Buddhism. They also believe in animist. In their village, there is no animistic shrine, but it is particular place. For example, guardian spirit of a village is placed in western part of the village, guardian spirit of Buddha teaching is placed at south of the village. It also has shaman for traditional treatment and health care.

8. Limited interaction among groups

While members of the group may interact freely with other group's members, these role relationships are colored by ethnicity. The others in one sense, are always outsiders. Interaction with outsiders generally occurs with the highest frequency in those areas of life not considered crucial to the identity of the group and not reserved only for its member. People of diverse ethnic background commonly meet in market places or at political or religious centers. On the other interaction with outsiders that threatens to diminish the cultural distinctions of a group must be resisted.

In Pale Palaung society, they always meet at their monestry and traditional festival such as Thingyan, Frist crop eating and Pagoda festivals.

Particular role in an ethnic group may be reserved only for members of the in-group. Thus, outsiders may be permitted to attend ethnic ceremonies, but priestly offices and leadership are generally reserved for members of the group. Ethnic boundaries persist despite a great deal of



interaction between groups, including persons from one group to another. It is becoming clear that this flow is more common than formerly believed and that is results from conquests, migrations, social interactions, trade and the assimilation of ethnic groups by dominant societies.

9. Economic types

One broad area of culture in which social organization plays an important role is that of economics- the creation, distribution, and use of property and labor. Economics deals with materials goods and human property and with the labor associated with producing, distributing and maintaining them. It is also concerned with how people exchange and utilize goods and services and with what strategies people develop to use goods and services for their own purposes.

Main economy of Pale Palaung nationals are plantation of plane tea. The plant is substituted for opium plantation 20 years ago. Nowadays, the plant is commercial plantation. In the horticulture, they pluck four times a year. They common pluck in April, July, August and November, December are the most. Before Thingyan, the tea is called *ShwePe Moe Lok*. It means free from rain. It is best quality for drinking tea.

In all areas of Shan State, they have circular market days. 5 days 1 time. They happy during the time and they don't want to do their work as usual. It is one of the distinguished matters. If I describe the same time of market day, (1) *Taungyi, Aunban, Nankhut, Bekin*, (2) *Pinlaung, Sakar, Tanyin*, (3) *Kalaw, Phekhon, Shwe Nyaung*, (4) *Nyaung Shwe, Sisai, Hopone, Minpon, Pindaya, Ywangan, Ywetsut, Nanpan, Thikyit*, and (5) *Heho*. In the market days, the nationals who live near the areas go and sell their own products and buy whatever they needs.

10. Institutionalization and Socialization of Palaung

The nature of institutions can be made clear by contrasting them with groups and by looking at institutionalization as a process. But there is no continuity of teams from one day to the next. School and college football are more institutionalized. In othe words, they have a set of formally organized procedures.

In the societies certain types of instruction are formally organized, creating groups whose members have clearly defined roles. The institution of education thus includes teachers, a body of information to be taught, suitable rituals of instruction, places for meeting, and material equipment and supplies.

Institutions are also linked to the material culture produced and used by groups. Education is associated with buildings, blackboards, movie projectors, and books. In Pale Palaung societies who live in the area, they go to government school in 5 year old child. In the villages, they go not only to their institution, but also to monastery to learn their Palaung language as a summer school. As for socialization, they learn their tradition before they go to school up to adult age.

How do institutions relate to the broader concept of culture? Both are accepted ways of doing things. The answer is that institutions are cultural procedures that have become formally organized and enforced by the groups serving the institutional function. Obviously, there is no



sharp line between institutionalized and uninstitutionalized cultural traits. Some may be formally organized and enforced by groups within the society. Thus the process of institutionalization is a continuous one. Informal instruction is carried on in homes and communities among Palaung societies.

Furthermore, religious behavior is highly organized in some societies, as are political processes and warfare in others. Moreover, people in one society may give higher priority to one institution than another. It appears that as societies become more complex, the number of institutions within them increases. Complexity apparently demands a more formal organization of groups and their activities in order to maintain the integration of the society.

11. Acculturation and culture change in Palaung

Acculturation occurs when groups having different cultures come into intensive firsthand contact, with subsequent massive changes in the original cultural patterns of one or both groups. It always involves an element of force, either directly, as in conquests, or indirectly, as in the implicit or explicit threat that force will be used if people refuse to make the changes those in the other group expect them to make. Other variables include the degree of cultural difference, circumstances, intensity, frequency, and hostility of contact, relative status of the agents of contact who is dominant and who is submissive and whether the nature of the flow is reciprocal or nonreciprocal.

It should be emphasized that acculturation and diffusion are not equivalent terms. One culture can borrow from another without being in the least acculturated. In the course of acculturation, any one of a number of things may happen. Sometimes, one of the cultures loses its autonomy but retains its identity as a subculture in the form of a caste, class or ethnic group. This is typical of conquest or slavery situations, and melting-pot ideology.

Extinction is the phenomenon whereby so many carriers of a culture die that those who survive become refugees living among people other culture. For example, long house is rare village among the Palaung ethnic group. In Southern Shan State, a few village can be seen the long houses. It may be only 5 villages.

Both sought the origins of cultural phenomena and assumed the existence of stages or logical progressions of culture. Contemporary people with varying cultures were looked upon as exhibiting phases through which culture as a whole passes. Although major sequences of growth were perceived their reconstruction depended upon the existence of what were deemed survivals of older elements in otherwise more evolved settings and the existence of whole groups exhibiting total life-ways exemplifying early evolutionary stage.

Culture change is crevice, building upon itself. Whatever shortcomings existed in the bald evolutionary scheme of barbarism to savagery to civilization, and criteria of progress such as the agriculture and writing they established a habit of thought to expect change to follow from preceding conditions.

Change can be initiated from within a given culture or borrowed from another culture. Characterizations of the properties of the two or more autonomous cultural systems come into contact. The study of the nature of the contact situation and analysis of conjunctive relations



established between the cultural systems under contact and the study of the cultural processes which flow from the conjunction of the systems.

Change occurs by analogy of potential innovations to the existing cultural inventory and social system. Cultural inventory is used here to mean the aggregate of definable things, material and nonmaterial, characteristic of a given culture, while social systems.

Culture change is selective. All evidence to date seems to indicate that cultural changes on an operational level of analysis occur as they are perceived or interpreted to improve, enhance, enrich or preserve social identity. In Palaung ethnic group, they have their original tradition. But some Palaung who live in urban areas, they wear blouse and longyi for ladies and shirt and longyi for man. They also practice like city people. They don't want to follow conservative idea. Among educated Palaung people, they act, speak, and wear the same as other city people. But for special occasion, they wear their traditional dress and practice their traditional ways.

12. Internal and external culture controls

Cultural control may be thought of as control by the mind, as opposed to social control which involves overt coercion. Example of cultural control also can be found in Pale Palaung society. For instance, people refrain from committing to marry the same clan so much from fear of legal punishment as from a sense of deep disgust at the thought of the act and from the shame they would feel in performing it. Cultural controls are built in or internalized and rely on such deterrents as fear of supernatural punishment and magical retaliation.

But internalized controls are not wholly sufficient even in the tribes, every society develops customs designed to encourage conformity to social norms. These institutions are referred to as sanctions. They are externalized controls and involve varying mixes of cultural and social control. According to Radcliffe-Brown, a sanction is a reaction on the part of a society or of a considerable number of its members to a mode of behavior which is thereby approved (positive sanctions) or disapproved (negative sanctions). Sanctions also may be either formal or informal and may vary significantly within a given society.

Sanctions operate within social groups of all sizes. They include not only the organized sanctions of the law but also the gossip of neighbors or the customs regulating norms of production that are spontaneously generated among workers on the factory floor. Sanctions must be consistently applied, and the society's members must know generally of their existence.

Social sanctions may be categorized as either positive or negative. Positive sanctions consist of incentives to conformity, such as awards, titles, and recognition by one's neighbors. Negative sanctions consist of threats, such as imprisonment, corporal punishment, or ostracism from the community for violation of social norms. As an example, the village leader and monk have punishment authority in cheating others and thief. They also have not only small case crime but also disputing among villagers.

Sanctions also may be categorized as either formal or informal, depending on whether or not a legal statute is involved. Formal sanctions, such as laws, are always organized, because they attempt to precisely and explicitly regulate people's behavior. Informal sanctions emphasize



cultural control are diffuse in nature, involving spontaneous expressions of approval or disapproval by member of the group or community. To show how informal sanctions work, we will examine them in the context of power relationship among the governmental official personnel and local authoritative person. In village level, most of the authoritative person is village leader and the most powerful one is monk among Pale Palaung villages.

Conclusion and recommendation

If I conclude as far as I know, the society is very kind and hospitality. They have at least 6 clans and they practice exogamous family. Their main plantation is plane tea. Palaung tea is the most famous product in the whole country. But they have other economy. Their life style is simple and their role is very rarely changed. They don't want to change their life. Because they are strong believed in Buddhism and they want to go pilgrim other places in the whole country. They adore their traditional dress and most of them wear their dress. But for urban societies, they wear their dress in special day such as, wedding ceremony, pay homage to elders and seasonal activities. In remote villages still practice common house for their family members. Therefore, I would like to recommend that areas where the Pale Palaung live villages are very attracted for tourists and very pleasant and interest tradition and colorful areas.



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