

**SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF SHAN GYI NATIONAL
OF LEINMAWGYAN VILLAGE TRACT
TAIKKYI TOWNSHIP, NORTHERN DISTRICT,
YANGON DIVISION**

Submitted by

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INTRODUCTION

The Union of Myanmar is composed of Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Myanmar, Mon, Rakkhine, Shan national races. The crucial factor for her perpetuation is unity of these national races. Only when the customs, traditions, nature and cultural features of one race are made known to others, then will they come to understand each other well and respect one another. Furthermore, they will be able to interact in kindred spirit and have peaceful, congruent relationships in doing so.

For above reasons, I have chosen to do a case study on the social organization of the Shan Gyi national of the Leinmawgyan Village Tract, Taikkyi township; a sub-race of the Shan National. The research is done from the anthropological aspect. Having villagers who speak Myanmar well and those who have sound knowledge of their ancestral traditions are great assets to the survey and make interpretations unnecessary. Moreover, from having opportunities to participate in their festivals and celebrations, I was able to collect valid and reliable data. The differences in the ancient and modern traditions are also noted.

To have data on the economy, administration and cultural traditions, seven survey trips were made to the village of study during 1997 to 1999. It is hoped that the research findings will help the different nationals of the country to have better understanding of the Shan Gyi culture and their traditions, which will strengthen the solidarity of the nationals, in turn.

The study of the social organization of the Shan Gyi national is done with the following aims and objectives.

- (1)** To submit in part fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of M.A.
- (2)** For other national races to be aware of the culture and traditions of the Shan Gyi National.
- (3)** For the nationals of the Union of Myanmar to have a better understanding of each other's culture and thus obtain national solidarity.

It is fascinating, in a way, how a group of Shan nationals came to reside among the Myanmars, in a place quite distant from the Shan State, which is their original habitat. The background history of Leinmawgyan village, starting at the point how the very first settlers came to reside in today's Leinmawgyan area, is presented in Chapter One following numerous interviews with the elderly villagers. It is also presented how the village survived the disasters, such as earthquakes and the aftermath effects. The village, being geographically connected with the Bago Yoma, was often disturbed by wild elephants from the forest of the hills.

In studying a particular society, it is important that the society in question is viewed in terms of their physical, mental and social images. Therefore, in Chapter Two, the origin of the Shan language and literature is presented. Shan language and literature can be traced back to as early as the Thayay Khitaya era (AD 73 to 80) of the Pyu kingdom. Being descendants of the Sino-Chinese, they have mongoloid features. Chapter Two deals with not only the details of the physical aspects of the Shan Gyi nationals of Leinmawgyan but also their nature and temperament.

In studying the life-style of a group of people, it is important to find out how they are related to one another, what kind of relationship they have among their family members or their kin. Kinship ties and influences of tradition on choice of partners, and relationship within family members are discussed in Chapter Three.

Chapter Four deals with social activities, including traditional festivals and dances, commemorations, betrothals, marriage ceremonies, religious ceremonies, and traditional cuisine, describing how they live, choose partners; what aspects of their traditions they conform to; and the kind of food and meals they like to have. Since the Shan Gyi nationals are an exclusive group of people, it is not extraordinary to find some outstanding features of culture which are rather unique in its own way. However, some very interesting aspects of Shan culture, such as the dances and the cuisine are studied in this chapter.

