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Socialization of Mon National in Hinthagon, Bago Township in Mon Tradition and Custom

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Abstract

Socialization is a lifelong process, and it links the individual, the society, and the culture. Mon parents living in Hinthagon teach their children since infancy Mon language, Mon literature and how to be dressed as Mons, which together constitute their ethnic identity. They also have them socialized through participation in religious and social activities of Mon tradition. The children develop a sense of subjective ethnic identity and also that of responsibility to maintain Mon culture. Therefore, to the Mon nationals in Hinthagon socialization leading subjective ethnic identity is an important factor to maintain their ethnic identity as Mons. The objectives of this paper are to elicit how the Mons in Hinthagon maintain their ethnic identity, how they have children socialized through Mon traditional activities, and what are the results of that socialization. To implement those objectives, enquiries were made of parents, guardians, and teachers of Mon literature through In-depth Interview and Key Informant Interview. To be more comprehensive, the children were also asked questions through In-depth Interview. The questions were so formed as to bring out the Mon's cultural traits contributing to Mon identity. Data were added to by the way of taking photographs and recording the talks.

Key words: socialization, ethnic identity, traditional activities

Introduction

Socialization is a lifelong process, and it links the individual, the society, and the culture. Immediately after they are born, the people begin to absorb through unconscious and conscious learning - situational, social, and symbolic - the etiquette, mores, values, beliefs, and practices of their society. It is therefore the process through which culture is transmitted from generation to generation (Scupin, 2000).

Materials and Methods

The objectives of this paper are to elicit how the Mons in Hinthagon maintain their ethnic identity, how they have children socialized through Mon traditional activities, and what are the results of that socialization. To implement those objectives, enquiries were made of parents, guardians, and teachers of Mon literature through In-depth Interview (IDI) and Key Informant Interview (KII). To be more comprehensive, the children were also asked questions through In-depth Interview (IDI). The questions were so formed as to bring out the Mon's cultural traits contributing to Mon identity. Interviews conducted at Hinthagon reveal that most Mons have their children undergo socialization by four age groups, namely: infancy to age 5; age over 5 to 10; age over 10 to 18; and age over 18. Data were added to by the way of taking photographs and recording the talks.

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Connection between socialization and subjective ethnic identity

The majority of Mon nationals in Hinthagon said Mon parents' training of their children in Mon cultural habits is concerned with their subjective ethnic identity only. In other words, they believe only subjective ethnic identity can make for the maintenance of one's culture. One male Mon informant age 79 responded on the importance for the parents to be conscious of their Mon identity. He said:

“One's children becoming Mon or not is concerned with his consciousness only. If a person perceives him-self as Mon national, he would teach his children Mon customs. But a Mon who speaks Myanmar language and disregards Mon customs would not teach them to his children.”

One male Mon informant age 75 responded on the importance of parents' self-concept on ethnic identity:

“I have one brother who lived together with his family in the centre of Bago. His wife is a Mon national yet their children cannot speak Mon language because the parents themselves do not perceive Mon national so that they teach their children to speak Bamar language in daily life. The reason for this issue is that the parents perceive themselves as Bamar nationals and not as Mon nationals. So, Mon ethnicity is on the basis of their attitudes or mind but not the locality”.

Socialization from infancy to age 5

According to the response of most Mons living in Hinthagon, Mon parents teach their children from infancy to age 5 how to speak Mon language and conduct themselves in accordance with Mon tradition and customs.

Teaching the spoken Mon

Almost all the Mons in Hinthagon said they teach their language since infancy how to speak Mon language for two reasons:

(1) Those who accept themselves as Mon national speak Mon language. On this a 49-year-old Mon woman said:

“One of my friends, a Mon woman, lives in Kyaukmyaung, Yangon. It is their residence for a variety of reasons, but her family with self-identification of Mon ethnicity speaks Mon at home. Her children speak Myanmar language to their Bamar friends, but when I visit or phone them, they speak Mon.”

Another Mon male added:

“A Mon national speaks Mon only if he values his language. If not, he will speak Myanmar language. His valuation of Mon language comes from his subjective Mon identity.”

(2) Most Mons nationals in Hinthagon replied that while using spoken Mon contributes to the maintenance of Mon culture they also believe that it pays more for a Mon to be bi-lingual (in Mon and Myanmar language). On this a 48-year-old Mon mother, a stall keeper, said:

“A Mon who speaks both Myanmar and Bamar languages will meet with convenience in every situation. If a child who has been taught spoken Mon approaches a visitor at home, he or she can be called back in Mon so that the visitor would not feel inconvenienced. Again, I sell garments at the market. I know Mon language, so when a Mon customer approaches I greet her in Mon. She often buys my wares perhaps feeling a Mon should favour another Mon above others.”

Moreover, a Mon who can use spoken Mon usually gets help from another in faraway places. On this a 40-year-old Mon woman said:

“Last Year, I went to Kawthaung (Taninthayi Region) where my husband was hospitalized. I had no friends there, but there also was another Mon patient. His family heard us speaking Mon language and readily offered help. Unfortunately my husband died and they gave me every help until my husband was properly buried. If we had not known spoken Mon they would not have known us as Mons.”

Therefore most Mons in Hinthagon teach their children since infancy using Mon language. They lovingly speak to a child in Mon whether the latter knows it or not, so that he or she may become familiar with the Mon language and its sounds and easily master it upon growing up. On this a Mon mother in Hinthagon said:

“All members in the family lovingly speak to my daughter, since age 3 months, in Mon to familiarize her with spoken Mon. She was always spoken to in Mon so she understood well though she could not respond in Mon language yet. Now at age 2, her listening skill has so developed that she needs a little teaching only to speak Mon language.”

To become familiar with Mon language, especially most Mon mothers in Hinthagon give their child at age 3 or 5 days its Mon name and started using it. The first son is given its name at age 5 days, other children at age 3 days. A boy's name has 'Min', equivalent to "Maung" in Myanmar language, and 'Naing', equivalent to 'U' in Myanmar language after

he had been ordained as monk, at the beginning of his name. A girl's name has 'Mi', equivalent to 'Daw' in Myanmar language, at the beginning. However, Mon names being difficult to pronounce, Mon children enroll at school with Bamar names. Therefore, the Mon nationals in Hinthagon have both Mon and Bamar names. On this 29-year-old Mon mother with a daughter said:

“My daughter is named ‘Peindevichan’ (ပိုင်ဒေဝီဆာန်) in Mon language which is used at home. At school friends and teachers will find that name difficult to pronounce so she has been enrolled with the name of Myanmar form, Panndevichan.

Mon children since age 1 to 2, when verbal skill usually begins, are taught Mon words and phrases of everyday use. Most of the Mon parents perceived that Myanmar language is easy to learn once they enrolled at school but Mon language is difficult to learn for its need to be voiced with the tongue rolled up.

Moreover, a child is usually taught very common Mon words such as come (kalein / ကလိန်), give (kaw / ကော), names of human bodily parts such as ear (kathoe / ကသို), nose (mone / မုန်), mouth (paing / ပိုင်), and eye (mawh / မော့); and other words such as cat (akoda / အကိုဇာ), dog (kalay / ကလေး), pig (kalwait / ကလွေ), and ox (kalee / ကလိ). A Mon mother said on teaching of Mon language thus:

“When we are out walking to and fro with baby, we teach it Mon words for pig or cattle upon meeting them. Mon language is a bit difficult to learn, but Myanmar language is easy to learn once a child is enrolled at a Basic Education school on reaching school going age. No special arrangement is needed to teach a child Myanmar language.”

Hinthagon has no pre-Primary school conducted in Mon language so parents try hard to teach spoken Mon to their children at home. In this activity, mother is mainly responsible because father is out most of the time earning his livelihood. A 35-year-old Mon woman, married to a Bamar for certain circumstances and in the habit of residing at parents' home and that of parents-in-law by turns said:

“The whole parents' family speaks Mon. I wish my daughter to have self-concept of Mon ethnicity, so she has been taught in Mon since she was only months old. When she speaks Myanmar, she is asked to repeat what she said in Mon. she is given a treat to do so; it takes effort teaching her like that. A parent with the consciousness of Mon identity teaches the children as such

since their infancy. At my parents'-in-law home my child speaks Myanmar. She knows which people are to be spoken to in what language."

Hinthagon has a majority of Mons so Mon children who are young enough to play by themselves speak Mon to one another. On this a Bamar woman residing in Hinthagon said:

"Mon children even when they have been taught Myanmar language, speak Mon in adulthood".

Teaching behaviour conduct

Being Buddhists, the Mon parents teach their children since age 2-3 how to conduct themselves religion-wise. Saying one's prayers like "Okasa---" and Nine Attributes of the Buddha are taught to them in Mon. A Mon mother said:

"My daughter has been trained since age 2-3 to do like what I do beside me when I say my prayers at night before going to bed. Then she is made to do obeisance to us parents. Now her religious conduct is quite satisfactory."

In addition, Mon children are usually told religious stories before going to bed, and taught to raise their hands in touch on seeing pagodas and how to offer food to monks on their alms-round. Thus a Mon mother said:

"My child is 3 years old. When a monk comes for alms-food she firstly does obeisance to him and then asks for the small container. After an adult has put some curry in it, she takes and places the small container inside the monk's alms-bowl. Then she raises its palms in touch in worship. It is imitating us. A child knows no end in learning."

Practices given to a child aged 4-5 are: to regularly visit a monastery where it must first do obeisance to the Buddha, then the abbot before proceeding with other things; not to have a meal without first offering a small portion of it to the Buddha; not to pass a monk's shadow on the road but stop to let him pass by; and to respectfully speak to those older than itself.

Socialization from age over 5 to 10

Most Mons nationals in Hinthagon responded that Mon parents train their children age over 5 to 10 in dressing as a Mon national, speaking Mon language, reading and writing Mon literature, and participating in Mon traditional activities.

Mode of Dress

Most Mon nationals in Hinthagon said Mon parents socialize their children since age over 5-6 by way of dressing them in Mon national costume for *Padaytharpin* (tree-like

wooden stand on which offerings are hung) procession and other ceremonies. Especially at the *Padaytharpin* procession the Mon children wear their national dress made at considerable expense of their parents. Requirement for their wearing of national dress is meant to make them participate in Mon festivals through their awareness of Mon cultural traditions and to develop in them the consciousness of Mon identity. The children are only happy going out in a new dress, let alone their maintenance of Mon ethnic identity and Mon culture. On this a Mon mother remarks:

“My children have been asked since age about 6 to participate in the Padaytharpin procession. Of course, it costs me some money to make new Mon costumes for them. However, they might come to appreciate the Mon traditional dress as Mons, and be conscious of Mon customs.”

Use of spoken Mon

The majority of Mon dwellers in Hinthagon said that most Mon children enrolled at age 5 at government-recognized schools speak Myanmar language. But after school has given over they speak Mon the rest of the time because all family members at home speak Mon and the language is in everyday use at *Monsanpya* in the east of Hinthagon. On this a 7-year-old Mon said:

“I have been taught since infancy to speak Mon at home. Only when I went to school I learned to speak Myanmar. I speak Mon to Mon students at school or Mon friends at home. But I speak Myanmar language to Bamar friends.”

Teaching Mon literature

Almost all the Mon nationals in Hinthagon send their children to the informal opened in summer to learn Mon literature (Figure: 1). This activity is carried out because of the fear that the Mons might go into extinction one day. The Mon literature is difficult to learn and such schooling usually begins at age 7-8. On this a 48 year-old Mon man said:

“Mon literature is too difficult to follow at age 5. Such a child might be going to informal school for fun only. Only after two years of learning could a child sit for examination if he wishes to.”



(Figure: 1) Mon children attending the Mon literature class in summer

According to the interview, Mon literature classes go on at *Sasanadippa* Mon monastery (situated across the motor road at Bogone ward) and at Basic Education Primary School at Monsanpya (the eastern part of Hinthagon ward). That course is informal and part-time, opened during school holidays in summer. Opened around mid-April, the Mon literature class, running from 8:30 am, then 11:00 pm - 4:00 pm, lasts for about two months, closing on full moon and new moon days. When the course is finished, the students have to sit for examination, and those declared passed with credit are given awards at the Mon National Day ceremony. Some students attending the course remain in eligible for taking the examination for one reason or another.

Mon literature class, being not government-recognized, does not have formal prescribed texts. Mon abbots in a leading role choose suitable lessons to be taught at the class. The Mon primer is taught first, to be followed by historical facts of the Mon such as their overtime kingdom, famous kings, court officials and heroes, birth stories of the Buddha, and outstanding Buddhist person (*Bhadradevi* / ဘဒ္ဒဒေဝီ). The teachers always put emphasis on the need to keep Mon literature alive forever on the part of young students. On this a 9-year-old Mon girl of Third Grade said:

“Among Myanmar monarchs was one ruling queen only. She is Shinsawpu, the Mon Queen. She built pagodas and her reign was very efficient.”

Students of Mon literature class numbered about 200 at the school and about 100 at monastery in 2012. The numbers are much different because many parents send their children to the class at *Monsanpya* only for fear of their coming to harm in traffic accidents on the motor road. The presiding abbot leads the class at the monastery. The number of teachers at the school is inconsistent; there were six teachers in 2012. Mon teachers from Mon State used to come to the Basic Education Primary School at Monsanpya to help. Nowadays, as a growing number of Mon youths know Mon literature **in addition to their school education**

they teach Mon literature to others for free so that their Mon culture may live on. On this the leading Mon teacher, age 45, of the class at Monsanpya said:

“An ethnic group with its own spoken language and literature functioning will never go extinct. An ethnic group without its literature will lose the spoken language over years. Such a group with spoken language only cannot last for long. Therefore the children are being taught Mon literature, and they don’t have to pay anything for that.”

Participation of the children in activities based on traditional customs

A majority of Mons in Hinthagon said that Mon children since age 5-6 are being trained to participate in *Padaytharpin* procession, to join the association for cooking alms-food for Sabbath day (Figure: 2). A 6-year-old Mon girl said:

“As my elder sister did, I joined the association for offering Alms-food on Sabbath Day. Weekly we go around happily for donations rain or shine. Our return we are treated to sancks.”



(Figure: 2) Mon children participating in the *Pataytharpin* procession Socialization from age over 10 to age 18

According to most Hinthagon-dwelling Mon nationals’ response, children since age 10 are usually trained in activities such as: offering food to monks and Sabbath-keepers at dawn; joining the association concerned to prepare curries on the night before; taking bedrolls, offerings and other things to parents and grandparents already at the monastery and receiving Buddhist precepts administered by the monk. Moreover, most children have been trained to maintain their Mon literature since age 7-8. Therefore, they on reaching age over 10 usually develop the personality of preserving the Mon identity.

Teaching Mon literature

According to Mon parents, most of their children on reaching age over 10 come to have a self-concept of love for their ethnicity and literature, resulting in their desire to learn

Mon literature and also their consciousness to preserve Mon culture. On this a 13-year-old Mon girl of Seventh Grade, an outstanding student at Mon literature class, said:

“I learned Mon literature since age 6, for reasons like: not to be ignorant of Mon literature as a Mon; to understand Mon films and songs; and to speak Mon as well as read Mon writings of others.”

On this a 13-year-old Fourth Grader said:

“If satisfied only with the ability to speak Mon, one would find it difficult to become Mon-literate. I have learnt Mon literature so that the literature as well as ethnicity would not go extinct in the distant future.”

Most of the Mon parents train their children to attend the informal school opened in summer, and always tell them that one who is not Mon-literate would lose social acceptance.

On this a 12-year-old Mon Fourth Grader said:

“I should be ashamed to admit ignorance of Mon-literate to a visitor at home, or to mix with other Mons in such a state. That is why I have learned it.”

However, a minority of Mon children are only interested in playing for fun and do not attend the Mon literature class. On this a 12-year-old student commented:

“At the Mon literature class in summer girls number more than boys. After lunch recess, boy students usually do not come back for afternoon session. One learns Mon literature based on one’s consciousness.”

Most Mon nationals in Hinthagon responded that the children learn Mon literature up to age 18 only because afterwards, they have to go into business and a few of them go to university and have little free time to learn Mon literature.

According to the response of Mon nationals in Hinthagon, the children are fed sweets and cakes donated by well-wishers everyday so that they might become interested to learn Mon-literate. Moreover, parents by way of motivation use various means such as giving the children pocket money or buying them new clothes so as to motivate in them a willingness to learn Mon literate. There also are other motivation done by chairman and members of Mon literature and culture Committee and young Mon adults.

Therefore *Monsanpya* in the east of Hinthagon have street signs in Mon script. In fact, Mon literature is used in any event related to the Mon, e.g Mon National Day celebration and *Padaytharpin* procession (Figure: 3). A 13-year-old female six Grader, born of Mon father and Bamar mother, said about learning of Mon literature thus:

“I learn Mon literature because of my interest in it, and to fulfill my wish to read Mon script at Mon national Day celebration and, Padaytharpin procession. Moreover, I receive kyat 200 (2012) as pocket money on going to Mon literature class.”



(Figure: 3) Mon writing seen at Mon traditional festivals held at Hinthagon

Mode of Dress

The majority of Mon nationals in Hinthagon responded that the children age over 10 come to have an awareness of their responsibility to keep Mon culture because of various ways of socialization. Therefore they go to social events and festivities dressed in the traditional Mon costume. A Mon mother with children said:

“I made my children since age seven wear Mon costumes on going to ceremonies. Now at age 15, they go dressed in Mon costume to any event related to the Mon. They have become familiarized with it. The other day a monk’s discovering event was held. When the time came to invite the monk, all group members went off in Mon traditional dress to bring the monk. That is testimony to their being united.”

Participation of Mon children in activities of Mon tradition and custom

Most Mons living in Hinthagon responded that most children have been trained to maintain their Mon literature for long and to participate in Mon traditional festivals for their association. Thus they know how to properly speak to a monk and become familiar with the monastery. On this a 16-year-old boy remarked.

“Since age 10 I have been used to accompanying parents to the monastery every Sabbath day during Buddhist lent and receiving Buddhist precepts there.”

They are also asked to hang offerings on tree-like stands for *Padaytharpin* procession to be held on 1st waning of Thadingyut (September-October), and to entertain guests with delicacies on the evening before. On this an 18-year-old Mon boy said:

“At age seven, I joined an association based in some other street, but at age sixteen, mother recognized an alms-food cooking association. We did not get bored going on alms-rounds. At that time we were young and adults led us. Now that we are adults, it is our turn to lead the association.”

Most of the Mon parents always teach their children in associations to always be considerate towards younger persons. On this a Mon mother said:

“I have five children. Each has been trained since childhood to be considerate towards younger siblings. Thus, when they joined alms-food offering associations later on that considerateness continued. For example, sometimes little food is left for them after the Sabbath-keepers have been feasted. Older children let the younger ones eat the remaining food, and they have their lunch back at home.”

Making friends

Most Mon youths in Hinthagon responded that as children are admonished by parents to participate in activities of Mon tradition and culture they become friends Mon to Mon mostly. A minority claim they make friends with non-Mons whom they usually meet at university. On this an 18-year-old Mon girl at university said:

“I have non-Mons for friends. When invited, I go to their donation ceremonies and birthday, but I have Mon friends too.”

Many youths in Hinthagon are likely to meet more Mons than other nationals for their participation in Mon traditional activities. Therefore, they are more likely to choose a Mon as life partner. On this an 18-year-old female university student said:

“Even one Mon out of ten is unlikely to marry a non-Mon. At Monsanpya in Hinthagone are Mon associations related to Mon traditional activities. For most Mon boys, if one finds a love interest, he joins the association she belongs to, and tries to be on affectionate terms with her.”

Socialization from age over 18

Mode of Dress

Most Mons age over 18 in Hinthagon wear their traditional dress in social activities: Mon National Day, Union Day, and religious festivals. Wearing of that costume at *Padaytharpin* processions and monastic ceremonies is meant to have others recognized their Mon ethnicity. On this a 24-year-old youth said:

“At whatever ceremony of the Mon held in Hinthagon, most Mons wear the Mon costume as a habit, without consulting one another. It is like second nature to them on that date of celebration.”

Use of spoken Mon

For their socialization since childhood, the majority of Mon nationals accept themselves as Mon nationals. They are proud to be Mons. On spoken Mon a 19-year-old Mon girl said:

“A Mon girl wearing a Mon traditional costume but ignorant of spoken Mon will be looked down upon. So all Mons should be able to speak Mon language.”

When they meet a Myanmar friend, they happily talk in Myanmar. When Mons meet each other, they greet and speak to each other in Mon in front of other non-Mon nationals without shyness and self-consciousness. On this a 20-year-old female university student of Mon national said:

“I never feel ashamed to speak Mon; that is my own language. At university, I greet a Mon friend in Mon on meeting him or her. If we do not behave this over long term, the Mon language will go extinct, to be followed by Mon culture.”

Moreover, the majority of Mon nationals in Hinthagon persuade their children to speak Mon as well as listen to Mon songs. A 19-year-old Mon girl who sings Mon songs at annual Mon National Day ceremony held at *Monsanpya* said:

“I sing Mon songs every year at Mon National Day celebration to honour Mon ethnicity. For training myself, my mother buys me music tapes.”

The Mons in Hinthagon responded that they not only speak Mon themselves but also indirectly persuade others to do so. In the east of Hinthagon (*Monsanpya*) densely populated by Mon pedlars on their rounds cry out the names of their wares in Mon. Non-Mons are a minority there. Again, non-Mon pedlars patronized by Mons gradually pick up bits of Mon language. On this a 46-year-old pedlar said:

“I have been a pedlar around Monsanpya for 15 years. I did not know spoken Mon in the past but I do now after learning bits of Mon language from Mon customers.”

According to the view of almost all the Mons, most of the non-Mons living at *Monsanpya* have lived for various reasons so long in this region that they have become

familiar with the Mon language. They are able to speak Mon because it is everyday language used by almost all the people at *Monsanpya*. On this a Mon man said:

“A non-Mon national originally resided in Monsanpya no 4 road. When a Mon residing in the same ward addressed him in Myanmar, he pretends not to hear and replies only when greeted in Mon”.

According to the interview, most of the Mon nationals married to non-Mons usually speak early on two kinds of language: Mon language and Myanmar language in the house. In fact, when those non-Mon nationals lived together with their spouses in this quarter for a long time, they understood Mon language. Female non-Mon nationals in Hithagon can speak Mon language fluently in daily life. According to some Mon youths, the cause of this subject is that they always buy necessary needs for the family in the shop at Hithagon. Regarding this case, a Mon respondent who opened a store in the house said:

“A female non-Mon national married to a male Mon national lived in this ward, and then she lived together with her husband in Monsanpya no. (8) Street. One day, when she buys some thing from my store, I was rather surprised by her Mon speaking skill because she can speak fluently Mon language more than native Mon nationals”.

Participation of the Mon adults in activities of Mon tradition and culture

The majority of Mons in Hinthagon responded that because of socialization of their children in various ways, they take pride in performing the rites of Mon tradition. Most of the Mons in Hinthagon said that the leading Mon adults help young Mon adult age over 18 along by teaching them how to lead the conduct of traditional festivals and social events, to have what attitude in team work, to be considered as a leader, towards younger people, and how to make a sacrifice. The majority of Mon nationals in Hinthagon are enthusiastic about participating in social associations. But they participate up to age around 40 because they have little free time due to household duties. The minority of them give services up to age 45 in their association because they are free of responsibility for household duties. Once over age 40, they give general supervision but not a leading role. On this a 65-year-old Mon man said:

“We in adulthood had been leaders in the conduct of social affairs. As a leader of alms-food cooking team I necessarily stayed awake the whole night. Now, we are too old and it is the youth’s turn for those duties. We only supervise the youth in social activities.”

Almost all Mon women in Hinthagon participate in those social associations up to their marriage only. They stop to do so because of family duties when they get married around age 25-30.

Discussion

In Hinthagon-resident Mons study, almost all the Mon parents with subjective ethnic identity teach their children in many fold ways to have subjective ethnic identity. They train their children to learn Mon language and literature, to wear Mon dress on significant occasions, and to participate in social activities including traditional festivals. In teaching to develop self-concept in a Mon, whatever necessary is provided by the Mon monks, leaders, parents and donors. For this and other means of socialization, Mon children since age over 10 begin to develop subjective ethnic identity. Therefore, those children in adolescence need no special teaching to speak Mon in daily life and participate in religious activities of Mon tradition. They, at age over 18, begin to eagerly participate in social activities such as giving assistance in teaching of Mon language, holding of Mon National Day ceremony, and in traditional religious activities such as going on alms round for offering food on Sabbath days and *Padaytharpin* procession. That is due to instilling of subjective ethnic identity in them since infancy. Without that sentiment they will not follow Mon customs. For example, a youth would play for fun with friends, rather than participate in an alms-round in sunshine.

This study of Hinthagon-resident Mons is similar to that of Park (2007). In his study, he reported the family's socialization was significant for maintaining ethnic identity. Likewise, the study of Phinney and Cross (cited in French et al, 2006) in which it was stated that individuals may have positive feelings towards one's group membership but these are based solely on accepting what one is socialized by one's family.

However, these scholars do not discuss the important role of subjective ethnic identity in the socialization of children which is brought about by parents. Only parents with subjective ethnic identity would bring about meaningful socialization of their children. Without subjective identity a culture, wherever it exists, can go extinct at a certain time.

In more support of this, Makabe's finding (1979) in which socialization depends on subjective ethnic identity. Therefore, socialization leading to subjective ethnic identity could be considered a major factor to maintain ethnic identity.

Conclusion

Most of the Mon parents in Hinthagone with subjective ethnic identity shape their children in various ways to inculcate the sense of ethnic identity into their children's mind.

The majority of Mon parents in Hinthagon begin to make their children participate in social activities at age 6-7 so that they get a chance to become friends. In these communal activities, boy meets girl and a chance for the choice of a life partner appears more likely. Moreover, believing that the ability to speak Mon language not only helps Mon culture but also serves self-interest, Mon parents teach their children since infancy to speak Mon and be familiar with the Mon language. For these circumstances the Hinthagone-dwelling Mons are able to maintain their Mon traditions to date. Therefore, to the Mon nationals in Hinthagon socialization leading subjective ethnic identity is an important factor to maintain their ethnic identity as Mons.

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