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► **To cite this version:**

François Robinne. Making ethnonyms in a clan social organisation: The case of the so-called Kachin subgroups (Burma). Christian Culas, François Robinne. *Inter-Ethnic Dynamics in Asia. Considering the Other through ethnonyms, territories and rituals*, Routledge, pp.57-78, 2009, 9780415836784. halshs-01866849

**HAL Id: halshs-01866849**

**<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01866849>**

Submitted on 4 Sep 2018

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### 3 Making ethnonyms in a clan social organization

The case of the so-called Kachin subgroups (Burma)

*François Robinne*

#### **Ambiguity and consequences of the censuses**

The extreme linguistic complexity prevailing in continental South-East Asia encouraged the categorial approach which did not become established, systematically at least, until the second half of the nineteenth century in the circles influenced by colonial policies. For want of more recent material, to my knowledge the most accurate estimations of the current population – in terms of ethnic division – are based on the 1911 and 1931 censuses; the principle, used notably by Smith (1999: Map 2) and by Michaud (2000: 15), consists in applying the general demographic evolution index to the ethnic categories. It was thus possible to establish the following average proportions on the basis of a total population of about 14,647,497 inhabitants according to the 1931 census (Smith 1999: 30), compared to a total of about forty-five million inhabitants at the beginning of the 2000s: the Burmese and the Arakanese would nowadays seem to represent 65 percent of the population, the Karen 9 percent, the Shan 7 percent, the Indians 7 percent, the Chin 2 percent, the Môn 2 percent, the Kachin 1 percent, the Palaung-Wa 1 percent and the Chinese 1 percent. Although the overall proportions are probably close to reality, the great weakness of current estimations lies in the question of the criteria prevailing formerly for the identification of ethnic groups.

As in India, to which Burma was still attached at the end of the nineteenth century, the British organized several censuses. Rujaya Abhakorn (1999: 188) has stressed the difficulties the British faced in mapping out the 'ethnolinguistic' landscape. Contemporaneous with the annexation of Burma, which took place in three successive stages, three population surveys were undertaken by the British in 1872, 1881 and 1891. The last one mentions eight 'races' in what was then the Burmese Province of the Indian Empire: the Burmese, the Shan, the Môn, the Karen, the Malay, the Chinese, the Europeans and the Eurasians (Abhakorn 1999: 187–188). Grierson, the author of *Specimen Translations in Various Indian Languages*, published in 1897, then of the monumental *Linguistic Survey of India*, published in 1927, elaborated a three-point methodology: the selection of a passage from the parable of the Prodigal Son to be translated into several languages, the translation into English of a vernacular text, and the elaboration

of vocabulary lists. Though the linguists made it possible to define the complexity of the main linguistic families (Matisoff 1983) and to draw up maps (Condominas 1978; Michaud 2000), the categorial process had begun, and it continues to be in this ethnicizing sphere that, for the past fifteen years, the National Convention's negotiations, whose purpose is to create a third Constitution, have failed; the theme of national unity on this ethnic basis is at the centre of the 'four political objectives' of which people are reminded at the beginning of every publication and television broadcast, in a text made obligatory by the junta.

In Burma, there are officially considered to be a hundred and thirty-five ethnic groups divided into '8 major ethnic national Races'.<sup>1</sup> These are divided up as follows: twelve Kachin groups are distinguished, as well as nine Kayah groups, eleven Kayin groups, fifty-three Chin groups, nine Bamar (Burmese) groups, one Môn group and thirty-three Shan groups. But this classification is not based on anything tangible apart from, it would appear, a vague territorial grouping according to the administrative division of the country on an ethnic basis; on the linguistic level, for example, the Austro-Asiatic Wa, Danaw and Palaung are classed among the Shan – that is to say the Tai-Kadai family – while the pan-Kachin movement only considers itself as having six subgroups, without counting the surprising amalgams associating, for example, the Naga with Chin subgroups; the latter, like the Kachin, are sometimes presented according to their ethnic membership and sometimes according to their clan referent, when the two are not confused.

Like this official classification, the many Burmese monographs devoted to the minorities are confined to the accumulation of cultural characteristics presented without links of continuity or articulations. This folk setting is the counterpart of the image the minorities themselves cultivate. During the big Kachin ritual called *manau*, which was held in December and January 2000/2001 at Myitkyina, and was the largest since the signing of the ceasefire in 1994, many Kachin women made a detour via the market to buy a 'traditional' costume, while acknowledging that the only thing traditional about it was its name. The Burmese authorities made an appearance alongside members of the Kachin Christian elite, some of whom were wearing ritual hats, which used to be reserved for shamans, for the occasion: a basketwork hat coiffed by peacock feathers, a toucan's head and wild pigs' tusks for the Rawang officiants. In the Burmese context, where the slogan of national unity and ethnic claims mutually correspond, the folk elements act as a foil in this power struggle. In Burma, it is interesting to note that the consensus around folklore manages to unite the central government and the minorities, without, however, their interests coinciding:

Since both cultural state nationalism and ethnic ideology employ the same type of cultural markers (race, language, religion and territory) in depicting the respective communities, then ethnic ideology must necessarily define itself as a reaction to, or a constituent of, the state-national ideology.

(Brown 1994: 2)



Despite their divergences, the non-Burmese minorities and the central Burmese authorities are united in a common logic of working towards the racial primacy of administrative division. However, this is only one aspect of the inter-ethnic relations favouring the minorities' relationship with central government, and does not take into consideration the network dynamic which tends locally to relegate ethnic membership to a position of secondary importance. In the Kachin case, the generalized exchange system managed to adapt to the centralization process generated by the colonial, then Burmese, authorities as well as by Christian proselytism; this alliance system symbolizes the coherence of the pan-Kachin movement, to which it confers a sociological strength, better than the artificial grouping together of six ethnic groups in the discourses of the Kachin elite. The term Kachin, in fact, covers a multi-ethnic ensemble for which the fact of belonging to the same Tibeto-Burmese linguistic family – never explicitly claimed – is certainly not sufficient to establish a link of continuity. According to Jinghpaw terminology – that is to say, the dominant group with hegemonic tendencies – the Kachin component is the following: besides the Jinghpaw, the Lanwngwaw, the Rawang – of which the Nung and the Lungmi are part – the Lachid, the Zaiwa and, more paradoxically, the Lisu.

The geographical distribution of each of these groups goes beyond merely Kachin State in Burma. They settled all over a vast mountain region between the north-east of India in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, the south-west of China in Yunnan, the Kachin State but also the north and north-east of Shan State in Burma. They do not all consider themselves Kachin, either because the term is unknown to them or because they reject it: the distribution of these groups goes across borders, contrary to the very notion of Kachin, which refers to an ensemble of ethnic groups localized in northern Burma.

The debate on this notion of Kachin is partly distorted because the fact that two levels of scale are involved is not taken into account: one is local, its referent being the clan, the other national, its referent being the ethnic group. 'In other words' – to adopt Claude Lévi-Strauss' phrase (1977: 313) about the Kachin, suggested to him by the theme developed by Michel Izard (1977) in the seminar on Identity – 'the ethnonym is essential outside and secondary inside'. This is the premise I intend to take up again here concerning the Kachin, who in times of peace lost the coherence they found in times of war. The demonstration is based on three parts; the first devoted to the construction of the ethnic group-nation, the second to the categorial limits in which the burgeoning pan-Kachin movement is enclosing itself, and the third to the significance of clan organization and its trans-ethnic dimension.

## **Burma: construction of an ethnic group-nation**

### *The non-pertinence of ethnicity in the Burmese kingdoms*

As has been shown by the historians of the 'reconstructivist' movement, like Victor B. Lieberman (1978) and Michael Aung-Thwin (1998), the spirit of



conquest guiding the Burmese kingdoms' military expeditions relegated ethnic categories to a secondary position: the Burmese kings were not fighting the Shan or the Kachin, who in this general sense did not yet exist, but virtually autonomous political structures – despite the remote overlord and vassal relationship – which were potentially dangerous. After the colonial administrators and missionaries, British historians, 'stuck in their own intellectual and political world', to use Aung-Thwin's expression (*ibid.*), interpreted these conflicts as inter-ethnic struggles. The two Burmese Constitutions and the Acts which preceded them can be interpreted as sharing the same aim: that is, an ethnic division of the country begun by the British in order to 'divide to reign', as the saying goes. We know today that this ethnocentric vision stands up neither to a reinterpretation of the ancient sources, particularly the inscriptions and the Burmese royal orders, nor to recent investigations in the field (Zhusheng 1997; Sadan 2000, 2002; Robinne 2007a, 2007b).

In the inscriptions of the Pagan era, between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, only a few nationalities are mentioned, these mainly slaves who had been set free or presented as gifts on the occasion of pious constructions. The kingdom of Pagan, like the other Burmese kingdoms which succeeded it over the centuries, was a conquering kingdom, and the wars undertaken against Assam, the Shan States, Siam and the kingdoms of Pegu, Arakan or Manipur were, in each case, accompanied by massive deportations which neither the inscriptions nor the royal orders recount explicitly. According to Than Tun (1978: 157–158), the ethnonyms listed in the Pagan inscriptions between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries are confined to the Burmese (*Mirma*), the Khmers (*Krawm*), the Chinese (*Cin*), the Indians, the Kadu (*Sak*), the Kanyan, the Karen (*Cakraw*, an ethnonym which this author – with no certainty – links to the prefix *Ya* of women's names), the Pyu, the Taungthu<sup>2</sup> – which literally means 'mountain dweller' – and the Thet. G. H. Luce (1959: 52–74), for his part, counted a total of fourteen nationalities mentioned in the inscriptions of this era.

These lists are not representative of the linguistic complexity prevailing at the time. The inscriptions are generally associated with the donation of a pious foundation; only the slaves (who included a certain number of prisoners of war from non-Burmese civilizations) presented as gifts on these occasions are mentioned factually according to their skills – musicians, archers, ritual officiants – rather than according to their ethnic membership, strictly speaking. The Jinghpaw – considered today as the spearhead of the pan-Kachin movement – appear once in a totally different context: a sort of general inventory common in the last days of the Pagan kingdom. This is a text dating from 30 September 1378 reproduced in a royal order of 1679 (Than Tun 1985, II: 39–40). In this text, 101 groups are distinguished and divided into four main categories: Burmese, Shan, Môn and Indian. Although part of the Shan group, this would seem to be the first time the Jinghpaw are mentioned as 'Sin Po'.

According to Wang Zhusheng (1997: 48, 57), who bases his work on Chinese sources, the ancestors of the Jingpo – the Chinese written form since their official recognition in 1953 – arrived in Burma in the Triangle region, that is to say between the Nmai Hka and the Mali Hka, whose confluence forms the

Irrawaddy, around the fifth century AD. The first Burmese mention of the Jinghpaw is without doubt contemporaneous – or a few years later – to the massive arrival of this Kachin group on Burmese territory; that is to say, well after the Palaung (Austro-Asiatic) groups, who had long been settled in the region, and after the Shan's (Tai-Kadai) arrival in the rice-growing plains of Upper Burma. Although the Tai chronicles date the arrival of the first Shan in Burma back to around the sixth century AD (Sai Aung Tun 2001: 11), the historical presence of the Shan sawbwa in the north and south of Shan State only dates from the thirteenth century (Robinne 2000a, 2000b). That of the Hkamti-Tai sawbwa in the north of Kachin State would seem to be earlier, and to date from the second half of the eleventh century: from 1049 for the Hkan Ku region, 1149 for the Lokhun region and 1196 for the region of Singalaing Hkamti, etc. (Saw Noi Pi 1996; quoted by Sai Aung Tun 2000) – that is to say, during the first Burmese kingdom of Pagan. If the Jinghpaw are only mentioned – as Sinpo – in a Burmese inscription dating from the end of the Pagan era, this is because on the one hand the northern limits of the kingdom of Pagan went no further than Bhamo, in the south of Kachin State, and, on the other, because Upper Burma became a Chinese province called Chêng-mien after the invasion in AD 1284 (Than Tun 1978: 24 and 32). The Sin Po or Theinbaw – that is, the Jinghpaw – is not there mentioned again by the Burmese administration for another four centuries.

***Kachin: from the given to the retrieved name***

The Jinghpaw are only mentioned again from the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards in the Burmese royal orders. The endonym 'Jinghpaw' is from then on assimilated to the exonym 'Kachin'. The royal order dated 30 March 1807 is worded as follows in its English translation (Than Tun 1987, VI: 35–36):

Order:

Shwe Daung Letwè Kyaw is appointed Myo Wun – Town Officer, Mogaung

(2) After having suppressed the rebellious Kachin Thein Paw Auaing Asaing – Kachin Jinphaw Barbarians,<sup>3</sup> around Mogaung, Myo Wun – Town Officer, Mogaung, shall treat well those who surrendered by giving (some of their leaders) some official responsibilities (like being chiefs of some place or group with suitable titles).

Myo Wun – Town Officer, Mogaung, shall send some Kyauk Nwa – a species of cattle known as Stone Ox, to Amarapura.

This order was passed on 30 March 1807 and proclaimed by Baya Kyaw Htin, Liaison Officer.

The Burmese version of the original text shows that the ethnonym Kachin is given as the equivalent of the vernacular transliterated term *Ka khyan* – *Ka*



*khyao* in the Burmese written form – in the last volume of the Royal Orders (Than Tun 1990, X).<sup>4</sup> It is also found in the forms Ga-hken, Ka-Cheen, Ka-Khyen, KaKhyen, spellings which are all connected to the same bi-syllabic expression whose literal meaning is ‘Red Earth’ (Zhusheng 1997: 5). It is this term Kakhyyen which appears in the title of the first British account of the Kachin known to date, after the 1835 to 1836 expedition from Assam (Hannay 1847). The neologism ‘Kachin’ precedes the old term ‘Sinpo’, both being associated with ‘barbarians’. It would consequently seem that the term Kakhyyen was used several centuries after the ethnonym Sinpo (Jinghpaw), and several years before the actual term Kachin was employed.

The confusion of the two terms Jinghpaw and Kachin, whatever their transcriptions, occurs in a context of colonization and Christianization established even before the annexation of Upper Burma in 1866, at a time when the British presence was being doubly felt: first from the north-west, from the Assam plains towards the Arunachal Pradesh and the territories occupied by the Naga and Kachin groups, rich in rock salt, jade and teak and in arable land good for tea-growing (Hannay 1847; Sadan 2002); then from the south with the first voyages of the Irawaddy Fleet which sailed up the river as far as Bhamo, the commercial vanguard of the three successive waves leading to the total annexation of Burma.

Just as the Kachin advance contributed to the breakup of the Hkamti-Tai principalities in the far north, a manuscript report preserved in the archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Paris, dated 20 June 1890 – an English translation signed by M. Joseph Pilinsky (2002), then Consul in charge of the French Vice-Consulate in Rangoon – testifies to the violence of the conflicts which also opposed the Kachin to the Palaung.<sup>5</sup> Here are two short extracts:

In the last hundred years, the Kachin have spread into the south and have settled in most of the circles driving the Palaung out of them.

(Robinne 2002: 155)

To sum up, 12 Palaung villages were completely destroyed and their inhabitants reduced to leaving the country. 4 of the Kachin villages were burnt on 9 different occasions and 30 Kachins (men, women and children) were killed, without counting the 4 chiefs murdered at the beginning. The Bhamo column’s passage through the area put an end to this struggle.

(Ibid.)

In order to ‘pacify’ the region, the British sent several expeditions, bloody to say the least, several accounts of which have come down to us (Crosthwaite 1912; Hertz 1960 [1912]). At the same time, they brought the appellation Kachin into general use.

This term ‘Kachin’ alone is the focus for the divergence periodically confronting the pan-Kachin movement’s construction. This is because it contains the seeds of division; meant to symbolize union, its use is locally a conflictual vector, partly because of the dominant group’s hegemonic tendency. If, today, a

Jinghpaw speaker is asked his ethnic membership, his reply is indiscriminately Kachin or Jinghpaw, with no account being taken of the different levels of scale to which the two terms refer. Likewise, Kachin as a general rule is associated, both by outside observers (Burmese or not) and by Kachin subgroups, only with the Jinghpaw. In the one case, this is just as much due to ignorance of the cultural and linguistic diversity as to a desire to give oneself a reference standard; as for the non-Jinghpaw subgroups, they are definitely reluctant to use the appellation Kachin with which they have difficulty identifying although they do not purely and simply reject it.

Not only is the ethnonym the focus of the Jinghpaw's hegemonic tendency, but, what is more, it is considered to emanate from the central British, then Burmese, authorities. In order to escape this twofold constraint, the current tendency is to try to translate 'Kachin' into a vernacular term taken from mythology. The Jingpo of Yunnan put the prefix Jingpo in front of the expression *wunpawng amyu ni* (Zhusheng 1997: 4), that is to say 'all of the Jingpo lineages'<sup>6</sup>; since the 2001 ceremonies, the expression which seems likely to become predominant on the Burmese side is *wunpawng* or *wunpawng amyu ni*, that is to say 'centre + clans' (Hanson 1954: 711), but it does not seem to be unanimously accepted, for the community of clans is not sufficient to define Kachin unity. The Jinghpaw try, for example, to impose their point of view by putting Wunpawng in front of the ethnonym Jinghpaw, that is to say 'the Jinghpaw union', but although the expression Wunpawng Jingpo has been adopted among their neighbours in the Yunnan where only the Jingpo, strictly speaking, are concerned, this is not the case on the Burmese side, where the union of six ethnic groups constituting the pan-Kachin movement is still a controversial matter. The Jinghpaw elite, by attempting to translate the term Kachin into the vernacular in their favour, are intensifying the conflict: to the Jinghpaw's Jinghpaw Wunpawng, the Zaiwa reply with a Zaiwa Wunpawng. Paradoxically, the neologism Kachin appears, in spite of everything, more consensual than the vernacular expressions meant to translate the exonym.

After a Christian *manau* held at Myitkyina in 1977 to commemorate the centenary of Christianity in Kachin State, the vernacular expression Wunpawng Mungdam was chosen to signify Kachin State, thus taking into account the reluctance of the other subgroups who did not wish the name of the State to be associated with the Jinghpaw. Other vernacular expressions were also proposed to signify Kachin: Pawng Yawng, '*pawng*', with the connotation of 'to add, to have in common, to share', 'to be round', 'to be central, to be of prime importance' (Hanson 1954: 523); or again Mungkan Wunpawng, whose literal meaning is United Nations. Although the terms Wunpawng and Pawng Yawng are derived from the same name Shapawng Yawng, the mythical ancestor of all the Kachin subgroups, this appellation is not unanimously accepted either. During the meetings held at the *manau* in 2001, some objected that these expressions were void of meaning: 'to what unity? to what populations do these expressions refer?'

The fundamental questions had been asked, indicating, if this was necessary, the absence of any prior reflection liable to define the 'Kachin' phenomenon, for



though the political content is more or less known, the sociological content is yet to be defined. A similar remark could be applied to the exonyms Chin, Shan, Karen, Palaung, etc. It is, nevertheless, towards such ethnic division that the Constitutions for the Union of Burma moved in uniting under generic terms a variable number of endonyms.

### *The Constitutions' ethnic division*

Marking the rupture with a past in which the ethnic dimension was not dominant, the *Scheduled District Act* instituted in 1886 – the year after the annexation of Upper Burma by the British – outlined the ethnic profile of the future Constitutions. Unlike in the successive Burmese kingdoms to which the capture of Mandalay put an end, the distinction was from then on made between Upper and Lower Burma, on the one hand, and between highlands and lowlands on the other. At the same time, a distinction was established within the Frontier Areas, which were divided into two categories: the *Excluded Areas* – among which figured the Shan States because of the very hierarchical political organization of each of the 'Möng' (*müang*) governed by the 'sawbwa' or Shan princes whose authority was not initially questioned by the British – and the *Partially Excluded Areas*. There were two categories of the latter, depending on whether their representatives had or not the right to elect members to the parliament. In contrast to the coherence of the 'chains of societies' (Amselle 1990: 16) which had prevailed until then, Martin Smith (1999: 43) points out that:

The map of Burma becomes a curious patchwork of various little administrative islands. The Kachin Hills, for example, remained entirely in the *Scheduled Areas*, with the exception of the enclaves of Myitkyina and Bhamo, peopled by Shan and Burmese, which were placed in the *Partially Excluded Areas* with rights to electoral representation in Rangoon.

The 1935 Government of Burma Act established a distinction between Burma and 'the dominions of the Crown' which were part of British Burma and did not include the Karenni (Eggar 1937: 55). Although preceded by the preliminary treaty of Panglong in 1946, the 1947 Constitution was drawn up in a rush in order to prepare the independence of 1948. Burma was then made up of British Burma (i.e. Central Burma), the Arakan and Lower Burma, as well as the Karenni States, the Shan States, Kachin State and the Chin Hills Districts. The second Constitution, which came into being on 12 February 1974, reinforced the ethnic division of the nation. Since this date it has been composed of seven predominantly Burmese Divisions, spread out all over the Irrawaddy valley and in Tenasserim, as well as of seven peripheral states whose names are associated with the majority or dominant ethnic group: Kachin State, Kayah State, Karen State, Chin State, Môn State, the State of Arakan and Shan State.

Though the two Burmese Constitutions were orientated towards the building of an ethnic group-nation, the other ethnic minorities, minorities among minorities,

such as the Wa, the Palaung, the Pao, the Môn, the Arakanese, the Naga, etc., were, however, excluded from the talks (Smith 1999: 73). The immediate consequence was to plunge Burma into nearly five decades of civil war. Moreover, this artificial division is in no way representative of the linguistic imbrication prevailing in the field; in several regions of South and North Shan State where investigations have taken me the Shan are in the minority, whereas they are in the majority in the rice-growing plains of Kachin State. The 1974 Constitution consequently marked a strong reinforcement of ethnicization on the part of the Burmese central government, thus intensifying the nationalist demands and ethnic wars which the Chinese Communist party, the parallel opium market and religious conflicts initially helped to increase and complicate.

The events of 1988 and the subsequent elections deprived the junta in power of any legitimacy. The creation of a new Constitution, the only possibility for the emergence of a constitutional state and for legitimizing today's government, is one of the priorities announced by the Burmese authorities. But as the Constitution is by definition the result of a popular consensus emanating from the Chamber of Representatives, preparatory negotiations to be held in the context of the National Convention have been constantly postponed, due principally to the non-participation of the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, but also to the opposition stemming from the ranks of the minorities who hold the majority of votes. The last session in May 2004 included not less than 633 delegates from the 'national races' out of a total of 1086 delegates invited – that is, more than half.<sup>7</sup> And there is little doubt that the solution is to be found outside the essentially conflictual process of ethnic reification which neither the central government nor the minorities are willing to abandon.

Though the ethnonym Kachin was, in the first place, the product of the colonial era and, later, of the nationalist movements resulting from the two Constitutions, the creation of ethnic categories and racial divisions is, nevertheless, not due to the colonial process alone.

## **The racial organization of the mythical universe**

### *Emergence of the racial categories in Jinghpaw mythology*

The Jinghpaw mythology recorded in recent years, that is to say revisited by the Christians and adapted to the burgeoning pan-Kachin movement, presents a racial vision of the world at its creation.

After the Jinghpaw ancestor, known by the name of Shan Htoi Gam the eldest,<sup>8</sup> had 'mixed his blood' with Jan Shayi, the daughter of the Sun or of one of his descendants considered to be one of the six higher spirits, the great 'races' of the world were born. The alliance of men with the daughters of the six higher spirits establishes a link of continuity, on the one hand, with the distribution of the world into six racial categories and, on the other, with the reduction of the pan-Kachin movement to six ethnic subgroups. Nonetheless, the mythical



reference does not clearly show through in the elite's discourse. The criteria regarding the origin of this number of six are vague; they are limited essentially to two constraints: being a native of Kachin State and a Christian, which makes it possible to include, against their will, the Lisu, whilst excluding a certain number of other groups, like the Nung, the Lungmi, the Tarung, the Kadu, as well as the Shan or Burmese Buddhist Palaung.

Whatever the case, the mythical couple had six sons, of solar descent by their mother, who themselves had six male children:

- 1 Mung H pang Gam is considered to be the grandfather of the Tibetans, and the Chinese according to certain informants.
- 2 Mung H kye Nan is supposed to be the grandfather of the 'Chinese living in the mountains to the south', or the ancestor of the Koreans.
- 3 Dabam La is generally acknowledged as being the grandfather of the 'Sam' chiefs (*wa*), the Jinghpaw equivalent of the Shan *sawbwa*. They are sometimes associated with other 'Asian' groups such as the Kayin and the Kayeh (Karen), as well as with the Yudiya (Thai).
- 4 Lamun Tu is presented as the grandfather of all the lines composed of Indians called Gara<sup>9</sup> and of Gurkhas (Gorhka); the Jinghpaw-Dureng chronicle makes him the ancestor of the Kadu Kanan.
- 5 Danda Tang – Chyauwawng Tang in the Dureng chronicle – is associated with a vanished civilization, lived in Burma (*Abawt pan yawng tang abawt pan yawng amyu*) and is presented as being the ancestor of the Burmese.
- 6 Shapawng Yawng, said to signify 'the heart of the hardest trees', is unanimously accepted as being the grandfather of the Jinghpaw.

My Jinghpaw informants' account is limited to the enumeration of these six 'races', the Kachin elite's official version being henceforth claimed as the 'traditional' version. However, a undoubtedly much older version settles on nine, a number which is just as recurrent in mythology as that of six. The Dureng chronicle mentions, as well as the six racial categories, the following three 'races' :

- 7 Gaw Ra Hka, the ancestor of the Gorhkas.
- 8 Sharoi, the ancestor of the American Indians.
- 9 Kying, the ancestor of the Karen.

The creation process of humanity continues while specifying the guidelines for social organization, clan exogamy according to the principle of generalized exchange. The appearance of the different Kachin subgroups begins this great mythical project.

Shapawng Yawng – or Shapawng Dingmang Yaw in the Dureng chronicle – 'mixed his blood' with one of the daughters of the higher spirit Madai *nat* known by the name of Madai Ja Hkawng, Ja Shagri being her spirit name. From their union were born the six subgroups known by the generic name of *wunpawng*, which appeared successively in the following order:

- 1 Hkang Gam: the ethnonym Khyang can be recognized in this form used formerly by the Burmese to designate the Chin (Sakhong 2003: 3)
- 2 Nung Naw for some, Rawang Naw for others, respectively the ancestor of the Nung Lungmi and the Rawang. In certain accounts, the Rawang are presented as the third son, he himself being a descendant of the Nung.
- 3 Kadu Kanan La, the grandfather of the Kadu, a Shan (Tai) subgroup whose representatives nowadays live in the south-west of what is today Kachin State.
- 4 Lamun Tu according to the Dureng chronicle. The fourth son is generally identified with the Lisu.
- 5 Taungbau Tang, the grandfather of the Lawngwaw (or Maru in the Jinghpaw pejorative form) of which he today constitutes one of the main clans which, in this case, however, is presented as an ethnic group.
- 6 Pawng Yawng U Ma Wa, also called Tingli Yaw or Jawa Rumja. He is considered to be the ancestor of the Jinghpaw. Like his father Shapawng Yawng, he married one of Madai's daughters, Madai Hpraw Nga, 'Madai the White Buffalo', and is said to have led men onto earth; he is supposed to have shown them how to make sacrifices by giving their own lives.

The Jinghpaw are present in mythology as the youngest sons (*uma*). This is reminiscent of the principle of ultimogeniture by virtue of which the inheritance of the parents' possessions and the status of hereditary chief is attributed to the youngest son, their elders being meant to leave to conquer new arable lands in which to create new chiefdoms and, with these, new lineages whose names are for the most part toponyms (Leach 1979 [1954]; Robinne 2007a: 290; 2007b: 128).<sup>10</sup> In absolute terms, the youngest son's superiority over his older brothers has as a consequence the superiority of the Jinghpaw over the other so-called Kachin subgroups; though mythology gives them legitimacy, it is, to say the least, a controversial point in the construction of the pan-Kachin movement. Not only do the other groups refute the extension of ultimogeniture to the ethnic community level; also, amongst these the Lisu distinguish themselves from the others by not including the rule of the youngest son's precedence in their social organization.

Similarly, it is interesting to note that the Christian reinvention of the mythical account clashes with the discourses of the pan-Kachin movement's leaders. For mythology does not mention, either in the short version of six ethnic groups or in the long version of nine ethnic groups, all the subgroups officially presented as Kachin. Only five of the six subgroups appear in the mythical account – the Jinghpaw, the Nung, the Lawngwaw and the Lisu, given moreover as 'brothers' of the Chin, and, more surprisingly, the Kadu. Apart from the Rawang, who have recently politically outflanked the Nung, two so-called Kachin subgroups are omitted in the oral tradition: the Zaiwa and the Lachid – presented by Wang Zhusheng (1997: 60, 311 note 10) as a breakaway branch of the Jinghpaw, along with the Lawngwaw.

These are not the only contradictions. They can be explained by the fact that, locally, recognition of the unitarian pan-Kachin movement contains in itself the seeds of discord because of this categorial approach based on six ethnic groups.



***The pan-Kachin movement's six subgroups***

The so-called Kachin subgroups are presented by the elite as an emanation of the mythical heritage, with all the variants over time and the manipulations due to local interests this supposes. Even if we leave aside the Dureng variant, which recognizes nine ethnic groups, the Jinghpaw oral tradition and the Kachin elite's discourse do not tally. The variations between the two versions, the mythical and the official, are numerous:

- Although the number of six ethnic groups is common to both versions, the ethnic categories are not the same – of the six from mythology, only the Lawngwaw, the Lisu and the Jinghpaw are presented today as coming under the authority of the pan-Kachin movement, along with the Zaiwa and the Lachid.
- Mythology presents the Jinghpaw as the ancestors of the Lachid and Zaiwa subgroups, with variants of this ancestry, whilst they are supposed to hold the same rank within the pan-Kachin movement.
- The official discourse associates the Nung Lungmi with the Rawang, one of the six Kachin groups; however, it is the Nung Lungmi who symbolize the seventh star on the caps of the Kachin Independent Army's soldiers.
- The case of the Chin and the Lisu remains problematic. Whilst the Chin have similarities from the social and religious organization point of view with the Jinghpaw, beside whom they figure in mythology, they are not part of the six in the current pan-Kachin movement, unlike the Lisu who, however, possess nothing enabling one to identify them with the Jinghpaw. Territory is here a decisive element in Kachin membership in which the ethnic component is primarily a political choice.

To add to the confusion, the contradictions and the manipulations these ethnonyms give rise to, the various so-called Kachin groups also have their own vernacular terms (see Table 3.1).

Though the idea of 'race' is present in mythology, the 'Kachin' phenomenon is yet to be invented, even in its contemporary version, despite the fact it was prescribed by the pan-Kachin movement's elite. According to Lehman (1979: 232), 'Kachin is not an ethnic category corresponding to no immediate linguistic family and to no homogeneous grouping'. This brings us back to the fundamental question considered above: whether the ethnic categories are locally secondary in importance to the dynamic of clan networks.

**The clan referent's flexibility and primacy*****Generalized exchange***

Once the racial categories have been established in the mythical account – but not the actual Kachin phenomenon as such – the emergence of clan organization

Table 3.1 Vernacular terms used by 'Kachin' groups

→	<i>Lisu</i>	<i>Jinghpaw</i>	<i>Rawang</i>	<i>Lawngwaw</i>	<i>Lachid</i>	<i>Zaiwa</i>	<i>Kachin</i>
Lisu	Lisu	Ahpu	Tchopa	Maru	Aichan	Zai wa	
Jinghpaw	Lisu or Wawyin	Jinghpaw	Rawang	Maru or Lawngwaw	Lashi	Azi	Jinghpaw
Wunpawng							
Rawang			Rawang				
Nung Lungmi	Lashi	Aphu	Rawang	Maru	Ngawchang	Zaiwa	
Lawngwaw		Shidong Poma*	Rawang	Lawngwaw		Za waw	
Zawo							
Lachid		Shidong					
Hpok*		Langwo*	Lachid	Zaiwa			
Zawo*							
Zaiwa	Laying	Shatung	Rawang	Lawngwaw	Lachiq	Zaiwa	Zai zo
Winpawng							

Note

The ethnonyms followed by the sign\* are taken from Wang Zhushong's work (1997: 45).



follows on from them, the latter being exactly that sung by specialists at marriages, funerals or exorcism sessions. Whilst Shapawng Yawng the younger is presented, as we have seen, as the ancestor of the ‘human races’, Pawng Yawng the younger is given as that of the six main Jinghpaw clans. Their order of appearance is the following:

- 1 Marip wa Rumja Magam, the Marip clan;
- 2 Lahtaw Naw lawn, the Lahtaw clan;
- 3 Magawng La, the Lahpai clan;
- 4 Matsaw Nhkum, the Nhkum clan;
- 5 Yawpang tang, the Maran clan.

Gilhodes (1922: 162) and my current informants agree, some eighty years later, that the five original Jinghpaw clans were all, by order of the higher spirits, in a relation of wife-givers to wife-takers according to the *mayu dama* generalized exchange system – on which Marcel Granet (1939), and later Claude Lévi-Strauss (1967 [1947]), based their theories. Even if, like every other sphere concerning social issues, it is in perpetual recomposition, its exogamic principle – which involves at least three clans before a return alliance is possible – has retained its significance in most of the groups considered here, including to a certain extent the Lisu, who tend to become part of this alliance network (Robinne 2007a, 2007b). This system still structures matrimonial exchanges, as well as all ritual exchanges in general, despite the process of lineage segmentation due to village fission and also the overall tendency towards centralization to which Christian proselytism contributes. The five primordial clans are thus segmented into several lineages, most of which bear the names of places. Grierson (1927: 500–502) made the most complete list of these (see Table 3.2).

British observers – administrators or religious representatives – writing about the so-called Kachin subgroups often confused the names of clans with those of ethnic groups. In their monumental *Gazetteer of Upper Burma*, the first volume of which was published in 1900, Scott and Hardiman (1900: 373) describe the ‘Chinghpaw tribes’ associating the names of clans with the names of ‘tribes’: ‘The five parent tribes are thus the 1) Marips, 2) Lahtawngs, 3) Lepais, 4) ‘Nhkums, 5) Marans’. Far from being the product of one individual’s observation, this ‘tribes/clans’ confusion can be found in the writings of several nineteenth-century authors. Gilhodes (1922) put the Gauri and the Jinghpaw on the same level, whereas the former are a lineage of the Laphai clan, one of the five Jinghpaw clans. Grierson (1927, Vol. III, Part II: 500) also presented the Kachin as being divided into five ‘tribes’: ‘The Kachins themselves are divided into five tribes, which all claim to be descended from the grandson of the first ancestor. These tribes are the Marip, Lathawng, Lepai, ‘Nkhum, and Maran.’

The quality of the observations, regardless of the colonial stereotype into which their authors strayed, seems at first sight to be questionable, since many of the writers confused the names of clans with ethnonyms. The light shed by

Table 3.2 The five primordial clans are segmented into several lineages, most of which bear the names of places

<i>Jinghpaw clans</i>				
<i>Marip</i>	<i>Lathawng (Lahtaw)</i>	<i>Lephai (Laphai)</i>	<i>Nkhum (Nhkum)</i>	<i>Maran</i>
Singdonkha	Tabor	Thama	Mashan	Lana
Om	Salor	Kaori	Chikyot	Laika
Ningrong	Sana	Sampawng	Shirè	N'ting (Ningting)
Lema	Tingra	Szi (Asi, Ithi)	Watao	Makan Ningting
N'kang	Malu	Samkha	Panma	
Demao	Lawkhum	Lassa	Nawgo	
Gawlu	Kashu	Wawang	Wurung	
Lakang	Paochan	Phunkan	Kanlangcha	
Tingrum	Nawkhum	Sadan		
Singlwi	Kaddaw	Singma		
N'ding	Tingut	Lakhum		
Lasum	Waga	Paran		
P'howlu	Ninglaw	Khunru		
Waja	Selawang Ngawn	Krawn		
Maraw	Lamun Selawang	Kara		
	Tingsa Selawang	Tingsa		
	Phaoyan Selawang	Möngsi		

Source: Grierson (1927: 500–502).

investigations carried out over the last few years tends to show that instead of being a confusion, the amalgam makes sense. This evidence reveals that clan organization takes precedence over ethnic categories, a dimension which was incomprehensible to the observers of the time caught up in their logic of ethnic categorization then at its height. It is, therefore, very significant to note that, in these texts from the colonial period, the same clan or lineage can be associated with several ethnic categories. For example, Scott and Hardiman (1900) associate the Lepai [Lahpai] 'tribe' – in fact, as we have seen, a clan – with the Jinghpaw (p. 373), but also with the Szi 'or Asi or Ithi' [Zaiwa] (p. 376) as well as with the Kaori [Gauri] (p. 377), who are themselves lineages of the Lahpai clan; elsewhere (p. 382), the Szi and the Marip are put on the same level on the occasion of inter-marriages. Most probably this is not an error or a wrong interpretation on the first observers' behalf, but a faithful transcription of the replies given in accordance with the investigators' expectations. This is corroborated by current investigations. To the question 'which group do you belong to?', people spontaneously reply with the clan name while staying as close as possible to the lineage subdivisions; the toponymic referent is, in this respect, a mnemonic technique which makes genealogical reconstitution and, with it, memorization of the migratory paths followed by the ancestors easier. In a cognatic system, the clan referent takes precedence over ethnic membership.

The relations between the different clans and lineages are expressed in terms of wife-takers (*mayu*) and -givers (*dama*). As Gillhodes (1996: 162) showed,



mythology defines the direction of clan exchanges: the Marip are *dama* for the Maran, who themselves are *dama* for the Nhkum, who themselves are *dama* for the Lahpai, who themselves are *dama* for the Lathaw, who in turn are *dama* for the Marip. Clan exogamy takes precedence over all other considerations; except for the fact that Christianity has become a criterion superior not only to ethnic membership but also to clan and lineage membership.

Not only is the confusion of the British administrators significant of the secondary importance attributed to ethnic categories – however vague and malleable cultural markers may be – by the people involved themselves, but, what is more, the primacy of clans and lineages extends beyond the limits of ethnic categories. Thus, the five lineage groups – the Marip, Maran, Nhkum, Lahpai, Lathaw – described by Anglo-Saxon authors like Green (1934: 254) and Leach (1979 [1954]: 80) as being Jinghpaw clans are in fact common to the other so-called Kachin ethnic groups. The appellations may vary, but these five clans have equivalents from one language or dialect to another. For example, the Jinghpaw, the Lisu and the Lawngwaw mention the clan correspondences shown in Table 3.3.<sup>11</sup>

Among the Christian community, a minority of religious officials wish to ‘clean up’ the logic of generalized exchange; but this only concerns preferential marriage with matrilineal female cross-cousins, which, though this is more theoretical than a reality, was unacceptable for all the Christian representatives questioned. Although this tendency has been systematized among other groups – as Cornella A. Kammerer (1990)<sup>12</sup> has noted, for example, among the Akha (Hani) Christians of Thailand – the Christians of Kachin State do not fundamentally question the reference to clans and lineage groups. On the other hand, there seems to be a tendency developing for membership of such and such a congregation to take precedence over clan prescription in matrimonial matters, which itself more or less overlays ethnic division: roughly speaking – reality is not so impermeable – it may be said that the Rawang, the Nung Lungmi and the Lachid have joined the Assemblies of God and the Churches of Christ, the Lisu and the Lawngwaw are divided between these churches and the Baptists, whilst the Jinghpaw are mostly Baptists. Nonetheless, even if the denomination – the members of each Christian congregation say they belong to different religions – takes precedence over clan membership, two members of the same Church can only marry if they are in a wife-giver/-taker relationship. Infringements are very rare, and arrangements between families of ‘different religions’ can only be made when faced with a *fait accompli* after a ‘marriage by kidnapping’ (Robinne 2007b).

*Table 3.3* Clan correspondences mentioned by the Jinghpaw, the Lisu and the Lawngwaw

<i>Jinghpaw</i>	<i>Lisu</i>	<i>Lawngwaw</i>
Marip	Zi hpa	Lanin
Maran	Ngau hpa	Je nin
Nhkum	Wa hpa	Yao nin
Lahpai	La hpa	Cao dung and Lao nin
Lathaw	Li hpa	Banin

***Migratory paths: the trans-ethnic space of lineages***

Consequently, despite certain Christian intrusions, all introductions between two people begin with their clan and lineage membership. This starting point will make it possible to define the potential nature and degree of kinship, in order to determine whether their respective families are in a wife-taker/-giver relationship and the attitude they should adopt towards each other. This implies knowledge of genealogical depth without which no social relations are possible. It is therefore essential for everyone to be able to trace their genealogical ascendance and, through this, to reconstitute the migratory paths followed by their ancestors.

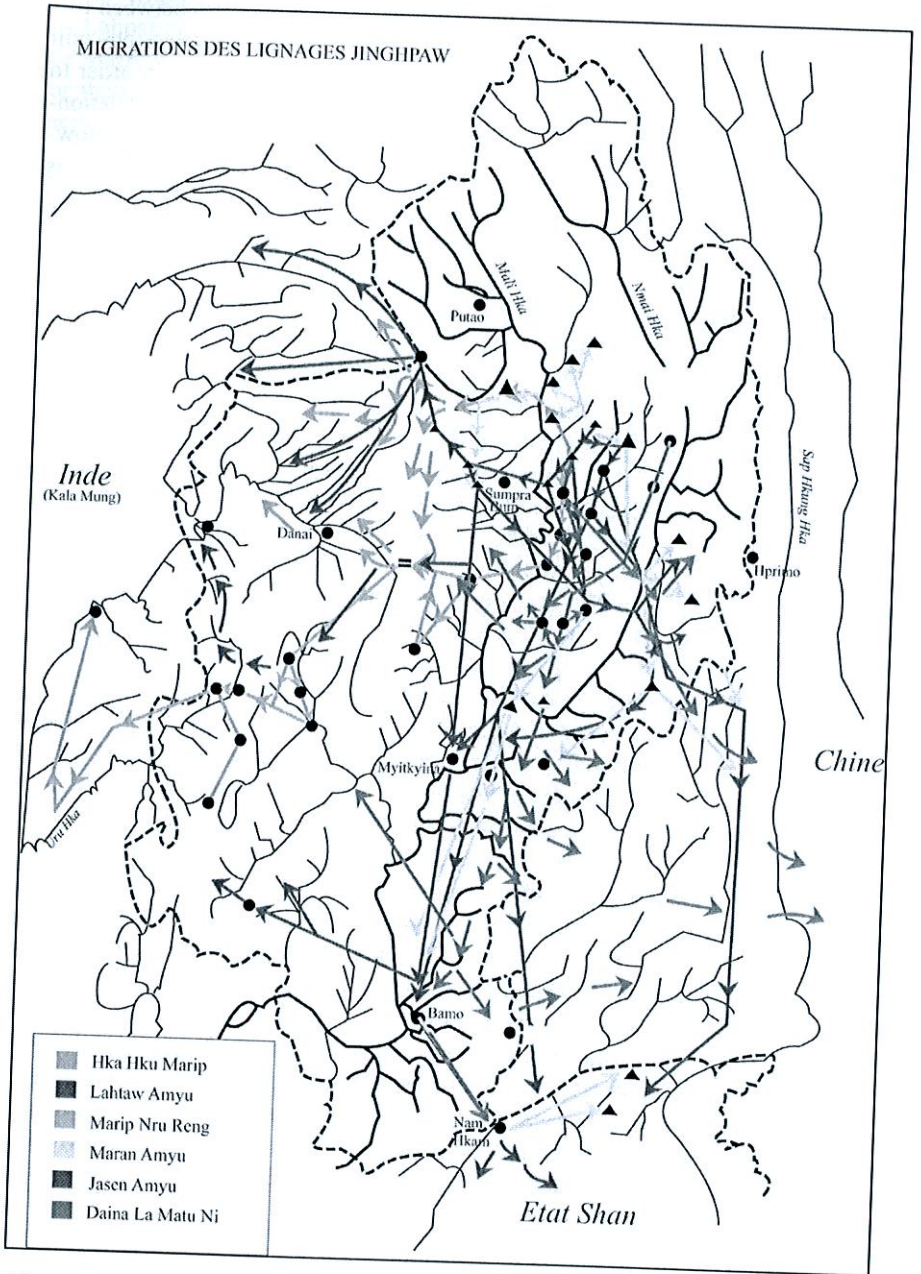
Here again, the ethnic criterion appears secondary compared to the necessary knowledge of the migratory paths taken by each of the corresponding clans and lineages. Allowing for exceptions, such as the memorization of a case of incest, the lack of a temporal dimension contrasts with the precision of the successive stages accomplished during these migrations. For what takes precedence over the computation of time is the computation of social relations which in turn transcends ethnic categories. Once again, we are indebted to Grierson (op. cit.) for having been the first to describe in detail the geographic localization and the migratory paths followed by the clans (which he terms 'subgroups'). A similar exercise has been undertaken recently by numerous scholars from Kachin subgroups (Collective 2001). The juxtaposition I have made of each of these maps makes it possible to show, in Map 3.1, the general movement from north to south, with settlement occurring around the lowlands:

Not only do ethnic categories disappear behind the imbrication of different ethnic groups and subgroups, but it is in the relationship with others – with their prescriptions and proscriptions – that clan and lineage coherence is created. The pan-Kachin movement's coherence thus oscillates between three spheres: (1) on the political level, the Kachin concept is emerging in its conflictual relationship with the Burmese central government but, with no foundation other than the continuous repetition of the ethnic referent, the pan-Kachin movement loses in peace time what was its driving force in times of war; (2) on the religious level, Christianity considered as a whole is opposed to Buddhism but the diversity of the different Christian Churches is introducing new categories which cut across, to a greater or lesser extent, the ethnic ones, with all that this implies in terms of conflictual relations inherent to the categorial approach; and (3) on the sociological level, generalized exchange defines the direction of exchanges between different clans and lineages in association with space, but, not being considered a common sociological vector by the higher political and religious interested parties, it is no longer sufficient to give the pan-Kachin movement the intrinsic coherence it lacks.

**The impasse of the categorial approach**

The appearance of generic appellations attributed to one or several groups is a modern phenomenon with exponential effects, due to which the multiplication of ethnic categories results in the emergence of just as many isolates produced by





Map 3.1 Superposition of the routes of migration followed by seven Jinghpaw lineages (Collective 2001).

the overall dynamic. The nationalist demands resulting from the two Constitutions has given way, in the post-civil war years, to identity reconstruction movements with the same ethnic basis. But, as it is emerging today, the burgeoning pan-Kachin movement has equipped itself with a multi-ethnic and multi-denominational framework without its fundamental structure as yet managing, on this basis, to create a meaningful picture. The elite rapidly attempted to raise Christianity to the level of an unavoidable vector around which the whole burgeoning pan-Kachin movement would be focused; the ambition might seem justified to the extent that, without doubt, more than 90 percent of the Kachin subgroups in Burma today declare themselves to be Christian. It is less so insofar as, on the one hand, the Catholic, Anglican, Baptist and Evangelist congregations – with all the independent Churches underlying the Protestant movements – establish between themselves a distance which has repercussions on social relations and, on the other, the plurality of Christianity tends itself to reify ethnic categories at the same time as it relegates the trans-ethnic vector, the *mayu dama* system, to a secondary position. Also, because of the anthropologists who for a long time had no doubts about ethnic categories being the dominant ones – one of those obvious facts that are sometimes still accepted without question – this trans-ethnic space has undoubtedly become more difficult to define today than it was yesterday.

Despite the cultural differences and the political or religious antagonisms, articulation zones necessarily federate multi-ethnic ensembles even though these are not always stated by the interested parties. With regard to the so-called Kachin subgroups, internal coherence can be found in the overall dynamic of exchange networks which generalized exchange helps to codify. Until 1963, the village chiefdoms, although scattered and often antagonistic, were, despite everything, part of the sphere of this exchange network capable of drawing the different subgroups into its coherence. Intervillage and multi-ethnic coherence seems to have established itself of its own accord, for the creation of a large Kachin category came into being in the first half of the nineteenth century with the arrival of the first settlers. This category includes several mountain subgroups, first animist then Christian, whose membership of the same Tibeto-Burmese linguistic family was certainly not sufficient to distinguish them from their Buddhist Palaung or Shan neighbours. Although not formulated in these terms, the reason for this selective grouping was linked to the presence of a vast exchange network which the articulation zones helped regulate and codify. The main articulation zones operating between the different so-called Kachin subgroups can be summarized as follows:

- Interactive political systems defined by the vernacular terms *gumchying gumsa*, *gumrawng gumsa*, *gumlao* and *gumyu*, the latter being a transitory system between the choice of a political organization of the hierarchical *gumsa* type or of the egalitarian-inclined *gumlao* type;
- Similar ritual forms structured by an esoteric language built on an old Jinghpaw language known only to the initiated;



- A social organization governed by the hierarchical interdependence of the wife-giving (*mayu*) and wife-taking (*damu*) clans.
- The whole referring to the sources of a mythical referent all the more consensual for being one which can be instrumentalized at will.

Although they do not give rise to a generic vernacular term – unlike among the Hani, who call the prescription and proscription rules of social action *zha* (Kammerer 1990: 332) – these different articulation zones were meaningful because everyone could identify them, whatever the particularities – and there were many of them – of the different so-called Kachin subgroups. As such, they acted in their complementarity as vectors in the link between communities in a host of villages often far from each other and, in appearance at least, virtually autonomous, between which were wedged the vital areas of space reserved for cleared land and hunting. These articulation zones were not fixed but adapted themselves to the course of events they sometimes inopportunistly disrupted, and without always having any real spatial harmony, depending on the specific interests of each village and/or clan unit. Although possessing a wealth of variants, even contradictions, both in space and time, they were capable of forming a common sociological framework, thus bringing to the multi-ethnic ensemble its coherence, even before the generic appellation ‘Kachin’ had been attributed. Not only did the articulation zones pre-exist the emergence of a pan-Kachin ideal born with colonialism, but the processes concomitant with colonization, Christianization and centralization helped put an end to them.

The social change brought about by colonization, Christianity and the years of civil war were partially responsible for the rupture with ancestral consensual forms, but it is finally the current transition from oral to written tradition which is causing the most radical break, as the young generation forgets genealogical ancestry. Paradoxically, while sociological coherence was disintegrating in the exhilaration of the metamorphosis of the Christian elite and of their representatives in the field, the neologism Kachin established itself, apparently enhancing the coherence the multi-ethnic ensemble was losing in substance. The pan-Kachin movement’s propensity to break the thread of discord constituted by the ethnic element and its nationalist horizon depends on its capacity to integrate the trans-ethnic space represented by the clan and lineage networks.

The Kachin example shows that two levels of scale need to be identified. On the level of minority-to-minority relations, these are today no longer political structures which make sense – they were disintegrated in 1963 – and neither are the religious structures, which remain too divided. The social structures centred on the *mayu dama* system have, on the other hand, remained perennial, with the flexibility and adaptation this implies. The exogamous clan system with the renewal of alliances after the fifth clan or, for commoners, after the third clan, has been considerably disrupted. Though centralization in the lowlands combined with the disintegration of political structures and the abandonment of ultimogeniture has not fundamentally challenged the *mayu dama* system, the latter’s form no longer has much in common with the system described by Gilhodes, or

even by Leach. The clans have multiplied, and the lineages have split up to such an extent that two marriages formerly considered as incestuous are, in certain cases, possible today. And in order to show the core of the system's perennality, it is, paradoxically, the contradictions, the adaptations, even the splits or the metamorphoses concerning it on which the analysis must be focused.

The level of scale above, involving this time the relations of minorities with the central authorities, shows that notions of Kachin ethnic categories and subgroups cannot, however, be totally ignored. Created by the central government, these ethnic categories were then locally reappropriated by the people concerned themselves. This is notably the case for the pan-Kachin movement and the various Kachin nationalist movements born with colonialism, which developed after independence and were accentuated by the years of civil war; the 1994 ceasefire underlined the fact that while war sustains nationalism, peace makes it necessary to give sociological depth to the community artefact in order to prevent the existential ideal disappearing with the last warlords.

If Christianity is to constitute the vector of the pan-Kachin movement, as the elite wish it to do, it must, like generalized exchange, assimilate its contradictions. The annual Christian Union conference constitutes, in this sense, the most convincing approach, but ethnic and religious membership attenuate its ecumenical aspect and its propensity to become the artefact of the Kachin phenomenon's construction. In this phase of social recomposition, the unifier common to all Kachin subgroups has yet to be invented. Whilst the Kachin elite develops the categorial approach for unitarian purposes (six multi-ethnic and multi-denominational subgroups united the same pan-Kachin movement of which Christianity is the self-proclaimed vector), the central government, on the other hand, uses the same categorial approach as a factor of division and weakness. The success of the 'divide to rule' of colonial times leaves little doubt as to the outcome of this power struggle.

## Notes

- 1 For a detailed list, consult the website [www.myanmars.net/people/ethnic.groups.htm](http://www.myanmars.net/people/ethnic.groups.htm).
- 2 A Karen group, the 'Taungthu', are found in the Pahan region lower down the Salouen; the Pao of Shan State consider them as very close to themselves; Taungtha are also found in the central Burma region not far from Mount Popa; Tibeto-Burmese Taungyo are located in the Lake Inle region. Each of these ethnonyms means 'mountain dweller' in Burmese.
- 3 Checked with the original Burmese version (Than Tun 1987, VI: 400), the expression 'Kachin Jinphaw Barbarians' is the translation of what is written in Burmese *Kakhyan sinpo aruin*.
- 4 The term Khyan designating the Chin is mentioned in the Pagan inscriptions (Luce 1959).
- 5 This manuscript document was discovered by M. Hugues Jean de Dianouk; a copy was given to me by Marie Hélène Cardinaud. See Robinne (2002).
- 6 In fact 'clans' and by extension 'lineages'.
- 7 Source taken from the official newspaper *The New Light of Myanmar*, 2 February 2005, p. 5.



- 8 The eldest of three brothers, he is presented as the ancestor of 'the yellow race', the second as the ancestor of 'the black race' and the third as the ancestor of 'the white race' and 'the red race' (Robinne 2007b).
- 9 Pejorative appellation, known more in South-East Asia as Kala or Kula. Jean Baffie presented a paper on this subject during the workshop on the theme of ethnonyms which took place at the IRSEA in March 2003.
- 10 See, on this subject, Chapter 4 in this work.
- 11 For a detailed analysis of clan correspondences, see Robinne (2007b). Actually, the clan correspondences are conditioned by the matrimonial alliances, and may vary from family to family. For example, according to Adee Che's own experience, his Lisu clan Ngaw shi is equivalent to the Jingpaw clan Marip, and we could multiply the examples in Kachin State, in Shan State and everywhere the Lisu and Kachin live together (see Dessaint 2008: 98).
- 12 Reference communicated by Vanina Bouté.