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博士論文

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Nationalism in Refugee Camps at the Thai-Burma Border: Karen People's Struggle for *Kawthoolei*

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碩士班期間，不記得哪位老師曾說過，碩博士論文最值得一讀的，就是謝辭。謝辭的內容不都差不多：寫論文期間的嘔心瀝血、情感來源、感謝名單等。雖然至今都無法理解爲什麼謝辭才是最值得一讀的部分，不過，爲了讓自己的論文借閱率高一點，也來寫個謝辭吧。當然，還有一個原因，這本論文是用英文寫成，雖然已找人修改，也儘量寫得文學性一點，但畢竟沒喝過洋墨水，讀起來還是很繞口。寫些謝辭，說不定，比較有人願意借出來壓泡麵。

爲什麼會想寫泰緬邊境克倫難民的民族主義運動？這是每個人聽到我的論文主題後都會問的一個問題。倒不是因爲朋友們對此主題有多好奇，而是爲什麼我會選擇不再針對台灣原住民進行更深度的研究，而要跑去泰緬邊境克倫難民營蒐集博士論文資料，畢竟，碩士論文是台灣原住民的自治運動，也發表過幾篇文章，繼續深入研究下去，應該可以小有成就。

這個問題，是一個很容易回答的問題，也是一個很難回答的問題。容易回答，因爲只要給一個官方的標準答案便可，即難民研究很重要，但難民中的民族主義卻少有人研究之類的答案。很難回答，則在於論文題目的選擇，是來自於自身的生命經驗與台灣政治環境衝突下的抉擇。然而，這種抉擇，在台灣的政治環境中，很難說出口。在申請中研院亞太研究中心的博士候選人培育計畫，以及大綱口試時，我曾把此寫在計畫中。但最後的論文，沒有提到。因爲，指導教授認爲，那份「原因」，可能引起爭議。不過，既然論文已經過關，那麼，寫在謝辭中，應該沒有問題了。就讓我們從這邊開始謝辭吧。

我一直相信，學術研究，應該要對社會有所實際影響。尤其是，如果研究對象是弱勢群體，這項研究更應該要能用來改變弱勢的社會位階。當然，這是一種非常理想主義的知識論。因爲這種信念，我的碩士論文以台灣原住民自治運動理論爲主題。不外乎希望透過研究，讓台灣原住民在追求自治的路上，盡其所能給予一臂之力。簡單說，我的學術研究熱情，來自於對追求公平與正義的渴望；來自於對生我養我這塊土地的熱愛。但，這份熱愛，卻因爲某種近乎掠奪式的認同政治，而被澆熄。

大約從 2000 年開始吧，台灣便陷入一種狂熱的認同政治：愛台灣。這塊土地是生我們養我們的土地，熱愛這塊土地本就應該。但是，如何愛台灣呢？在這個認同政治的後面，愛台灣只有一種方式：支持台灣獨立。若說支持台灣獨立，也沒有不對。畢竟，兩岸分治已數十年，各自獨立，早已是事實。可是，

當愛台灣的方式被限定爲只有支持台灣獨立，而其餘不支持台灣獨立的主張，都等同於不愛台灣甚至是「第五縱隊」時，那就是問題了。愛台灣已經變成一種政治正確。

在這種政治正確的背後，更可怕的是血緣的正確：只要你/妳是本省人，就自動成爲愛台灣的台灣人；只要你/妳是所謂的外省人，就自動被歸類爲不愛台灣的人。於是，本省人如果反對台灣獨立，社會的普遍反應是：「啊，那都是中國民黨的毒。」但如果是外省人反對台灣獨立，反應立刻變成：「外省仔就是這樣，吃台灣米喝台灣水，還心向中國。」在此邏輯下，電視上的談話節目，可以討論外省人到底愛不愛台灣；某些外省第二代籌組協會，以宣示自己愛台灣；本省人不需要證明自己愛台灣，但外省人卻需要不斷地證明自己愛台灣。這是一個什麼樣的社會？

記得博士班一年級的某天，趁沒課時，去西門町奧斯卡戲院看二輪電影。電影是梅爾吉普遜主演的。電影名稱已記不得，但開場時，是梅爾吉普遜主演的排長，在即將帶部隊前往越南參戰時，他說：你們之中有日本裔、有德國裔、甚至有印地安人，但你們現在在美國國旗下，爲了美國而戰……當時，戲院的前方座位有一些老伯伯，他們看到這一幕便開始流淚。社會學訓練而來的敏感度，讓我悄悄地走到老伯伯的後方，聽到他們輕聲地哭著說：「國家不要我們了，我們逃到這邊，父母也沒了，親人也沒了，現在國家也不要我們了。」沒錯，他們是不愛台灣的外省人。不久，報紙上出現一則新聞，大意是說，陳水扁擔任總統後，有許多老先生、老太太在港澳機場批評這位台灣之子，他們拿著台灣政府給他們的就養金，卻批評台灣，養老鼠咬布袋，不愛台灣，而且拿著就養金去資共，台灣政府應該要考慮刪除他們的就養金。看到這則新聞，我才知道，原來只有國民黨政府可以被批評，民進黨政府不能被批評，原來改革開放30多年的中國，竟會在乎這些老先生、老太太帶回家鄉跟親人過日子的每月台幣萬把塊的就養金。是的，這些老先生、老太太是不愛台灣的外省人。

還有很多其他例子，比方說，在課堂上，有同學公開批評外省人不愛台灣；當美國攻打伊拉克引起全球反戰示威，台灣也同步舉辦反戰示威時，只因爲組織反戰遊行單位，政治立場上偏統，便有媒體指責反戰的這群人不愛台灣，原因是，美國保護台灣，在美國需要支持的時候，我們需要支持他們，不支持，就是不愛台灣。原來，爲了愛台灣，可以支持一個帝國主義的行爲。總總的一切，讓人感到無奈與無力。

研究熱情來自於改革社會的期待，當發現這個掠奪式的認同政治幾乎席捲

社會，而失去是非對錯的價值標準時；當發現自己不論做多少事情，最後都會因爲自己的血緣而「被判斷」愛不愛台灣時，我的研究熱情被澆熄了，也覺得不需要再付出了。剛好台北海外和平服務團（Taipei Overseas Peace Service, TOPS）在徵選泰緬邊境難民援助志工，「或許該離開這個土地了……」心中想著，就報名了志工徵選。後來的劇情，就是順利被選上，隨後休學一年，到泰緬邊境從事偏遠泰鄉村與難民營的援助服務工作。

或許因爲閱讀了幾本民族主義的書，修了幾門跟族群與民族主義有關的課，加上台灣的環境，讓自己對類似「民族主義」的現象特別敏感。在泰緬邊境的難民營中，我發現一股民族主義運動正在進行著。此運動的政治目標不太一致，一般難民對民族主義領導組織也諸多不滿。但，大家仍願意支持領導組織，爲了一個不太一致的政治目標共同前進。看到難民們被「圈禁」在特定區域，身處在流離失所中，卻仍堅強地追求他們的政治目標，即使大家對此政治目標如何實現，並沒有共同的看法。他們的努力與堅強，再次喚醒我的研究熱情。「研究是爲了追求一個更爲公平與正義的社會，不是嗎？公平與正義，難道只限於台灣嗎？」我這樣問自己。於是，決定以泰緬邊境克倫難民的民族主義運動爲博士論文主題，在服務約滿後，返台繼續博士學位。

然而，繼續學位以及準備論文的過程中，卻遭遇許多難題。最爲現實的難題就是經濟壓力。雖然博士班一年級時，曾獲得中華扶輪教育基金會的博士班學生獎助，以及同時參與台北市立師範學院浦忠成教授的國科會研究計畫，而小有存款。但存款絕不足以支撐接下來的田野所需的長期抗戰。所幸，在台灣立報副總編輯廖雲章、張正的協助下，順利於回台兩個月內，得到台灣立報半職新聞編譯的工作，並在羅永清的邀請下，參與台灣大學地理系蔡博文老師主持的原住民部落地圖繪製計畫。讓自己不但能解燃眉之急，同時也有餘力爲日後經濟斷炊的日子預做準備。部落地圖計畫雖然在 2006 年一月結束，但立報的半職編譯仍在進行。2007 年一月前往泰緬邊境進行第一階段的三個月田野工作時，台灣立報同意讓我在海外發稿，以免薪水中斷。第一階段田野工作結束後，指導教授張茂桂老師推薦我翻譯一本加拿大多元文化主義的專著，以及在張茂桂老師與江宜樺老師的推薦下，順利申請到中央研究院亞太研究中心博士候選人培育獎助。在這些工作與獎助的支持下，雖然最後一年完全沒有經濟來源，也得以較無後顧之憂地拼命撰寫論文。

一本論文的產出，單靠準備過程中的閱讀與思考，絕對不夠。很多時候，一本論文所採用的研究方法、所偏好的理論觀點，早在我們修課的過程中，就

已經慢慢浮現，甚至奠定。而論文，則是我們將過去所學的方法與理論予以實踐的過程與產品。雖然大學時期曾上過方法論，博士班期間，因爲碩士不是就讀社會系，需要補修碩士班的研究方法，但對於什麼是「研究方法」，總是一知半解。在此情形下，社會系汪宏倫老師、鄭陸霖老師與陳東升老師合開的「方法論」，以及中央研究院社會學研究所張茂桂老師開設的「後田野工作專題討論」給予我很多的啓發。森林系盧道杰老師雖然沒有教過我，但在短暫地參與盧老師的原住民傳統領域研究計畫中，讓我真正了解何謂以及如何實踐紮根理論。人類學系謝世忠老師是引領我進入族群關係與族群衝突領域的導航員，謝老師所開設的「第四世界專題研究」與「族群理論專題討論」二門課，帶領我進入人類學的世界，理解如何透過「人類學視角」來理解族群衝突與族群運動。人類學系童元昭老師的「族群、歷史與國家」一門課，則讓我對於族群與國家之間的互動關係，有更深入的認識。張茂桂老師、王甫昌老師及范雲老師合開的社會運動課程，讓自己對於透過什麼途徑來理解各式各樣的社會運動，包括民族運動，有了不同於人類學的視角。江宜樺老師則是引領我投入民族主義相關研究的啓蒙老師。江老師所開設的「國家認同專題討論」與「民族主義專題研究」奠定了我對民族主義的基本認識，雖然此認識，迄今仍只能說一知半解；另外，江老師的「多元主義專題研究」則讓我在思考民族主義與族群衝突時，能用更爲多元的觀點爲之。中央研究院亞太研究中心張雯勤老師介紹泰國清邁大學的 Buadaeng Kwanchewan 教授予我認識，也讓自己在找不到任何跟克倫民族運動有關的文獻時，得以靠 Kwanchewan 教授所推薦的幾篇關鍵文章，慢慢找出所需要的資料。

寫作過程中，一定會遇到鬼擋牆；怎麼想都想不出來，怎麼寫都寫不出來。也會莫名低潮想大喊「老子不玩了」。單純的鬼擋牆或低潮，比較好解決。找幾個朋友喝一攤、看場電影、去夜店放縱一下自己，就得了。如果兩者攪在一起，就糟糕了。那會讓自己情緒極度不穩，整天看啥都不順眼，連走在校園內看大學生帶著笑容騎腳踏車，都會心中暗罵：「愚蠢大學生的愚蠢笑容，簡直愚蠢至極！」或是，看到晴天就不高興，因爲人家可以出去玩耍，而我得死守研究室；看到傾盆大雨，則心中舒爽，因爲大家都沒法兒出門了。簡直到了得靠詛咒所有人的幸福與快樂，才能讓自己有動力繼續拼命寫論文。

問題是，單純的鬼擋牆或低潮，甚少出現。絕大多數是兩者同時出現。於是，朋友就成了聽自己怒吼與喋喋不休的對象。泰緬邊境 TOPS 領隊賴樹盛、計畫專員 Yvonne Huang 以及 TOPS 所有同事、Saw Hen Nay、Saw Hey Soe、Saw

Tha Blay、Saw Thar Win、Saw Jae Dee、Saw Way Htoo、Naw Khu Khu、Naw Lah Poe、Naw Lashee、Naw Eh Thaw、Naw Htoo Htoo、Kun Waen、Kun Duean、Kun Nong、Miles、Kun Salinee；已在非洲工作的 Tracy Jenifer；重回泰緬邊境蒐集碩士論文資料的 Andrew；台北的歐思佑、羅永清、鍾宜杰、吳憶樺、江怡雯、陳可樺、林芳如、蔡佩如、陳曉鳳、吳宜瑾、洪婉茹、陳玫伶、葉書宏、邱屏瑜、許菁芳、吳建毓、李介中、葉長城、楊穎超、劉惠敏、朱政騏、吳鴻昌、梁秋虹、劉怡寧、曾凡慈、錢念群、Capo、賴聰進、盧俊偉、王子培、曹玉玲、袁秀慧、黃蘭欣、蔡中民、李思儀、陳超群、Doyu、Hong May；台南的吳雅雯、Katy、李雨涵；暨南大學莊國銘與笵文鶯；中原大學丁文卿；負笈加拿大的 Saiviq；赴菲律賓擔任上帝僕人的吳雯菁；香港工作的 Takuma 與許杏宜；於新加坡攻讀博士學位的潘婉明；新加坡國立大學任職的祁東濤；遠在美國的李樹山；高雄的林慧年；桃園的吳幸玲；屏東的 Sasala；中壢的小薛；眷村兄弟與兒時玩伴高成功、李大順、吳子強、施勝藍；專科時期的換帖兄弟廖鴻達；以及其他所有人，非常感謝妳/你們陪我喝酒聊天、吃飯扯淡，及聽我怒吼與發牢騷。（其實，我很怕寫這種需要列名單的謝辭。因爲，曾經幫助我的朋友太多，容易掛萬漏一。但是，請相信我，此處沒有註明的朋友，不是因爲妳/你們不重要，而是我的大腦記憶體只有 256M，實在想不起來很多的聚會與細節。）

除了朋友外，很多老師也在討論的過程中，充當心理諮商師，不僅傾聽我近乎憤世嫉俗的囉唆，還得忍受無理的衝撞。首當其衝的，就是指導教授張茂桂老師。投入張師門下，四年來，張老師不僅想辦法讓我在經濟上沒有後顧之憂、更在每一次的討論過程中，忍受我的情緒。張老師的包容與關心，以及理論與方法上的寶貴意見，是讓我能夠順利完成論文的原因之一；雖然，每次的討論，我總是不受教的情形居多。這本論文，並沒有完全達到張老師的期待，我知道。但看到我在如此複雜的田野環境中所盡的最大努力，張老師不但不予苛責，仍願意力挺至最後。趙彥寧老師在大綱口試結束後，立刻和我敲時間討論如何修改日後的寫作方向，並不時發信詢問論文進度，雖然趙老師不是指導教授，卻仍將我當成指導學生一樣照顧。此外，江宜樺老師調任研考會主委後，仍願意百忙之中擔任我的口試委員，並且在我低潮時，將公務排開，諮商開導，以及透過莊國銘學長表達關心；口試委員王宏仁老師在大綱口試中所給予的方法論建議與鼓勵；蔣斌老師在關鍵時刻的出手相助等等，都讓我感激萬分。

由於論文是以英文撰寫，因此，需要找人幫忙校訂文法與用語。感謝在台灣唸博士班的美國友人 Josh、香港工作的許杏宜、被稱爲語言天才的萬毓澤、

台灣立報編譯 Kate 謝、中原大學陳滄堯老師，以及即將赴美國攻讀博士的張宏久等人，抽時間校訂我的 Chinglish。

就業壓力從博士班四年級開始就如影隨形。感謝浩然基金會，讓我獲得其海外 NGO 工作夥伴計畫的機會，而得以在曼谷 Focus on the Global South 進行訪問研究一年，不僅暫時解除了就業壓力，也可以繼續修改論文。在 Focus on the Global South 訪問期間，泰國 Thamasaart 大學政治系 Decha Tangseefa 教授邀請我去他授課的班級針對克倫難民的民族主義運動進行一場專題演講。感謝 Decha 教授，讓我有機會將泰緬邊境的故事告訴更多人。

另外，要謝謝家人在情感上的支持，尤其是已近八十歲的老父。寫論文期間的情緒不穩，他看在心理，卻幫不上忙，只能默默地承受。兒子已近 40，不但不能替家中分責，還讓他操心，著實不孝。

最後，要特別感謝泰緬邊境所有的克倫難民朋友，沒有妳/你們的協助，這本論文絕不可能完成。願以此論文，紀念你們所流過的血與淚。

Special thanks to all those refugee friends.
Without your assistance,
this dissertation can never achieve.
To all the sweat and blood you have shed.

摘要

現代世界是由享有主權的民族國家所構成，並一直被視爲是一種自然的、全球性的 national order of things。在此秩序中，所有人都被預期屬於某個國家。但，跨國界難民不屬於任何國家，他們是對此秩序的污染。國際援助組織針對難民的救援行動，希望使難民離開兩國之間的邊界。這種行動，目的在穩定既有的 national order of things。不過，對某些類型的難民來說，他們有他們自己的方式去重新界定此 national order of things。難民的民族主義運動即是一例。

自緬甸獨立後，便陷入長期內戰。現在，共有超過 14 萬的克倫難民被暫時安置在泰緬邊境。在淪爲難民之前，他們透過民族主義運動重新界定 national order of things；在淪爲難民之後，他們仍然堅持他們的民族運動。在本文中，我探究克倫族如何透過重建、使用與詮釋其文化、歷史與記憶等符號，以延續其民族主義運動。

克倫族堅持其民族主義，是源於其神話中對理想國的預示。他們的理想國是一個美麗的、和平的 Kawthoolei。爲了實現理想國，在流離失所狀態下，他們利用機會，讓難民營成爲克倫領地的延伸（extension of Karen territory），並在其中建立他們的社會性文化。因爲社會性文化是一個根於領土上的文化。在這個不是真正的領土中所建立的社會性文化，稱之流離失所的社會性文化（displaced societal culture）。爲了有效凝聚難民們的民族歸屬意識，革命組織透過各種組織性的活動、民族主義符號的使用，以及集體性社會記憶（social memory）之建構，來動員群眾。不過，群眾並非被動地被動員，他們也透過自發性的活動來凝聚彼此的民族情感。甚至，流離失所此狀態本身，也成爲一種激發民族主義意識的力量。社會性文化中的各種符號，創造出一種同時性（simultaneity），讓所有難民在同一時間內，共同承載相同的記憶與經驗。

克倫難民堅持其民族運動的力量，是來自於一個詮釋並理解過去歷史、當前苦難與未來希望的信念體系。這個信念體系，一方面是根源於他們的神話中對於理想國的預示，一方面則是構築在日常性的生活實踐之上。於是，民族主義，就克倫難民來說，不是某些理論家所說的國家擘畫，而是一些與日常生活及制度安排盤根錯節在一起的社會實踐。

關鍵詞：national order of things、克倫領土的延伸、流離失所的社會性文化、社會性記憶、同時性

Abstract

The contemporary world consists of sovereign countries. It has been perceived as a globally accepted national order of things. The global order prescribes that all people must belong to a particular country. However, transnational refugees do not belong to any countries, thus constituting an anomaly and a challenge to the interstate system. Even if a refugee crisis results from communal war, a nationalist movement may still exist among the stateless people. The nationalism among Karen refugees of present-day Burma is a salient example and the focus of this dissertation.

Before being degraded into refugees, the Karen had launched a nationalist movement on their soil in order to politically territorialize their land. However, since becoming refugees, Karen people have been forced to abandon their homeland to reside in refugee camps in Thailand. The refugees are banned from using the camps as a base to launch a counterattack against the Burmese government. Yet, they still make the best use of their situation in the quest to achieve Karen statehood. At times, the reality of displacement even becomes a powerful force to mobilize Karen nationalism.

Nationalism is a movement to territorialize a physical space belonging to a particular national community. The Karen National Union (KNU) attempts to territorialize their homeland through hard and soft struggles. The former entails deploying landmines and strategic battles, while the latter is geared toward political alignment, humanitarian programs, and human rights campaigns. As they are located on a foreign land, such a process of territorialization seems impossible to materialize in the refugee camps. Yet, because of a tacit consensus between the KNU and the Thai authorities, the camps to a certain degree have been transformed into an extension of Karen territories. In this context, refugees have even been able to build their displaced societal culture.

This new societal culture comes alive through various daily practices. Karen refugees utilize various activities, from the economic to the socio-cultural, and from the organizational to the non-organizational spheres, to re/forge their national consciousness and to inspire people's blood loyalty toward their struggle. The

experiences of fleeing their homeland as well as the collective memories of the unsuccessful revolution are then internalized and become the moral fabric of the camp community.

Because refugees are enclosed in designated spaces, the displacement condition constitutes an integral feature of the refugees' societal culture. The reality and experiences of displacement and "fencedness" are continually incorporated into daily activities so as to re/forge the Karen refugees' national belonging. The most important point is that through these daily practices, the exiles have been able to maintain their cultural association with the native land. Refugees, in essence, have become symbolically "restored" to their aspired homeland.

Nationalism frequently places a potential or real nation at the centre of its concerns and seeks to promote autonomy, unity, and identity by pursuing an ideal kingdom. Such an ideal kingdom is often the ultimate goal desired by members of a particular nation. Karen nationalism is no exception. Yet, a universal consensus on how to reach the imagined utopia has never emerged in Karen history. Fortunately, after being exiled for over twenty years, the KNU has finally adopted a blueprint for realizing the ideal kingdom. It is the pursuit of a democratic and federal Burma. Even though such a blueprint has not attained a universal consensus, Karen refugees remain strongly supportive of the KNU.

The belief that one day "returning to live in the aspired *Kawthoolei* with dignity" is what inspires the exiles to stand by the KNU and assert their national identity. Where does the belief stem from? I argue that such a notion is firmly rooted in the refugees' history and their system of interpretation of their present plight and prospective happiness. Nationalism in this regard is the defining social practices interwoven with people's daily lives, and institutional arrangements in defiance of adversity.

Key Words: national order of things, extension of Karen territory, displaced societal culture, social memory, simultaneity

Contents

Introduction

Along the Thai-Burma border there are about 140,000 refugees displaced by the communal war in Burma (Map 1).[1] The largest group of them is the Karen. They have survived in displacement for over 20 years despite a dearth of economic, social, and political opportunities. Their survival would have been in further jeopardy were it not for the assistance of international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) and for the tolerance of the Thai government. The Thai government tolerates Karen existence for many reasons. Before Manerplaw, the KNU headquarters, was fallen into the hands of the Burmese Junta in 1996, Karen lands had been used by the Thais as a buffer zone to prevent potential intrusion from the Burmese Junta. Back in those days, with a mutual understanding between the Thai authorities and the Karen National Union (KNU), the Karen people were allowed relatively free entry across the Thai border to purchase essential and even material materials. However, since the Burmese took control of Manerplaw and since Karen refugees flooded the border area, the Thai government has changed its immigration policy and made it much more restrictive. At the same time, however, more and more foreigners have arrived at Mae Sot and other border towns to supply humanitarian aid. The INGOs and their staff have brought economic growth to the border towns, in particular Mae Sot, as they bring in aid and expertise.[2]

From 2007 to 2008, I had visited the Mae Sot area for three times, and had lived for an accumulated period of nine months. My first visit from February 2004 to February 2005 was in the name of a volunteer working for the Taipei Overseas Peace Service (TOPS). Then, on 15 January 2007 and 15 August 2007, as well as 5 January 2008, with the approval of my doctoral advisor and dissertation committee, I returned as a researcher to do my fieldwork.

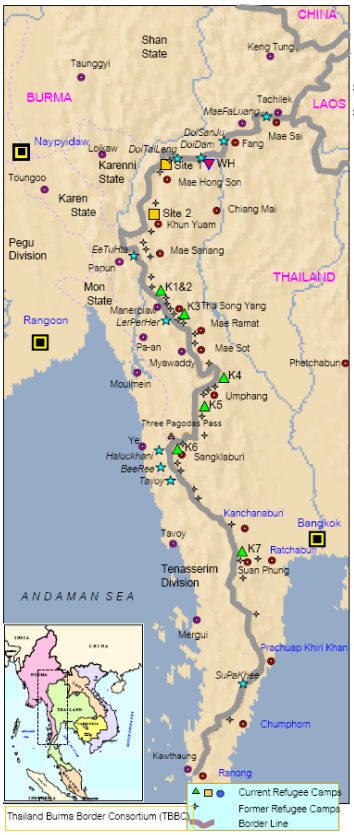
My research is about Karen nationalism, an ideology holding Karen subgroups together despite lacking international recognition and the benefits of a centralized

[1] The total figures are fluid because resettlement and new arrivals continue on a daily basis.
[2] Further details will be discussed in Chapter 4.

state.[3] Karen nationalist ideas and practices are held dearly by Karen refugees, although its goal to own a State is difficult, if not impossible, in the eyes of outsiders, particularly living in displacement. Therefore, despite facing such odds why and how such nationalism exists among refugees, what the meaning and characteristics of the movement are, and what the strategies that the nationalists use to mobilize its people's loyalty are become the interesting issues for the students of nationalism.

Map 1

Burmese border refugee sites with population figures: May 2009



	TBBC Feeding[1] 31-May-09	UNHCR Population[2] 31-May-09		
		Female	Male	Total
Chiengmai Province				
WH Wieng Heng (Shan Refugees)	673			
Mae Hong Son Province				
Site 1 Ban Kwai/Nai Soi[3]	19,241	9,028	9,341	18,369
Site 2 Ban Mae Surin	3,965	1,810	1,868	3,678
K1 Mae La Oon (Site 3)	16,305	7,131	7,742	14,873
K2 Mae Ra Ma Luang (Site 4)	17,123	7,148	7,370	14,518
Subtotal:	56,634	25,117	26,321	51,438
Tak Province				
K3 Mae La	37,000	16,293	16,266	32,559
K4 Umpiem Mai	14,824	6,672	6,880	13,552
K5 Nu Po	13,883	5,245	5,435	10,680
Subtotal:	65,707	28,210	28,581	56,791
Kanchanaburi Province				
K6 Ban Don Yang	4,290	1,725	1,661	3,386
Ratchaburi Province				
K7 Tham Hin	7,952	2,472	2,391	4,863
Total:	135,256	57,524	58,954	116,478

State of Origin of Registered Population

61% **Karen**	6% **Pegu**
17% **Karenni**	1% **Irrawaddy**
7% **Tenasserim**	1% **Rangoon**
5% **Mon**	2% **Other** (Chin, Kachin, Magwe, Mandalay, Rakhine, Sagaing, Shan, Unknown)

- IDP Site
- Wieng Heng: Camp Committee
- Sites 1 & 2: Karenni Refugee Committee (KnRC)
- Camps K1-K7: Karen Refugee Committee (KRC)

Source: http://www.tbbc.org/camps/2009-05-may-map-tbbc-unhcr.pdf

[3] The term state itself can refer to an independent country, an autonomous or semiautonomous region inside a sovereign country, or to a sub-political unit with powers granted by the central government. In order to avoid confusion, in this dissertation I will use the capitalized word "State" to refer to an independent country and the lowercase "state" to indicate other political designs. But I follow common usage when it comes to specific terms such as "nation-state," which also refers to a sovereign country.

The Refugee and the National Order of Things

Refugees have been a historical phenomenon, but it only came to the attention of governments in 1921 when the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (LNHCR) was created as the first international humanitarian regime for refugee relief. Its primary concern was to coordinate international efforts to alleviate refugees' plight, and in particular to help countries that receive refugees from outside the national borders. Since the LNHCR was created, the international community has regarded refugees as an issue that needs to be dealt with urgently.

Why are refugees perceived as an emergent issue? They are believed to be as an "aberration" and a violation of the "national order of things" that requires "fixing." Lissa Malkki argues that since the first modern nation, namely the sovereign nation-state,[4] walked on the world stage, a world consisting of modern nations has been a globally accepted "national order of things" (Malkki, 1995: 5).[5] This global order prescribes that all peoples are to belong to a particular sovereign country. Within each country, they are not solely objective constituents of the nation, but are also subjects sharing a common sense of belonging as well as having the entitlements and rights to demand protection from their State, for the State is exclusively equipped with the coercive apparatus such as the military and police forces. However, refugees are a displaced people lacking all these features of citizenship. They have lost membership of their own countries either through personal choice, or as in most cases, through being forced to flee in extreme conditions. Being refugee means that they are not entitled to hold citizenship or belongingness of any other countries, either. In other words, they do not live or survive as members of any particular country. The refugee phenomenon is hence perceived as an aberration of the national order of things by nation-states that make up the "international" system.

A common feeling of belongingness is nourished in a national culture that is

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[4] Elshtain (1993) and Hobsbawm (1997) argue that the 1789 French Revolution gave birth to the modern nation, while Anderson (1983) believe that the modern nation first appeared in the *creole* states of America at the end of the 18th century. However, if we refer modern nation to "sovereign" States, Stephen D. Krasner argues that we have to refer it as the result of the Westphalia Treaty. Please see Krasner, 1999: 1-9.

[5] Nevzat Soguk defines the modern world as one consisted by the citizen/nation/State ensemble, which is taken as a matter of course. Please see Soguk, 1999: 30.

regarded as a matrix wherein people can learn the valued moral. Since refugees are displaced from that matrix, they are not viewed as "honest citizens" by those countries embracing the national order of things, but as bodies without moral bearings. In addition, no matter what reason causes people crossing an international border to seek shelter in another country, refugees are believed to represent a symbol of a country's failure to prevent, respond or resolve internal crises. Refugees lose not only citizenship but also the protection of the modern nation. Under such a condition, unless treated quickly, as Malkki suggests, the refugee will inevitably develop "either apathy or a reckless attitude that 'the world owes me a living'," and "further sinks into the underworld of terrorism and political crime" (Malkki, 1997: 63-65).

Two years after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, in 1993 alone violent communal rivalries contributed to a humanitarian crisis of 25 million refugees worldwide (Gurr and Harff, 1994: xiii). In 2005, by rough estimates, around 50 million refugees survive outside their home communities (Martin, ed al, 2005: 1). If such a large number of refugees really sink into a hotbed for terrorism and political crime, the world will face a much bigger chaos than it does today.

The United Nations has made several efforts to help resolve refugee issues through international cooperation. For instance, it established the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, and the 1969 Organization for African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugees Problems in Africa. Today, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the leading organization charged with managing refugee issues. Under the mandate of these international conventions, several measures are implemented for refugee protection. For example, before the Cold War, the UNHCR usually urged host countries and other third countries to provide refugees with a life without fear by granting them asylum (Lang, 2002: 16-17). Although after the Cold War repatriation replaces resettlement as the main policy to deal with refugee issues, the principle of non-refoulement has still been the main one to regulate the process of repatriation.[6]

[6] This principle prohibits the expulsion or repatriation of refugees to the countries of origin wherein they will suffer persecution.

As discussed, the refugee phenomenon is deemed as an aberration of the national order of things, needing to be dealt with urgently. Most of the efforts of the international community, to a certain degree, are oriented toward restoring that "order." Because of the international protection regime, refugees can once again acquire the presumed membership of particular modern nations through resettlement or repatriation. The measures that the protection regime has taken hence seem to have compensated for the protection that refugees should have received in their own countries. But, as Soguk and Vernant argue, in a world actually composed of mutually exclusive and territorially bound spaces, the existence of refugees alone implies that their relationship to a sovereign space must be redefined (Soguk, 1999: 11; Vernant, 1953: 3-4). The international protection regime's efforts to re-embrace refugees as full-fledged members of a sovereign country are thus essentially a means to redefine that relationship.

However, it does not mean that refugees always survive as if they were bodily agents without a subjective initiative, simply waiting to be used for the recovery of the national order of things. In fact, refugees are also conscious agents, with their own subjectivity, who are capable of changing the world and of redefining the national order of things by their own means. Nationalism is usually the means by which refugees employ to alter political inequality. The nationalist movements in Palestine and the exiled Tibetan community in India are some obvious examples. The Palestinians have struggled for their statehood against an international order dominated by Israel and the West, while exiled Tibetans have never abandoned the quest for a national status recognized by the existing international order.

The nationalism existing among Karen refugees, the concern of this dissertation, also illustrates how refugees actively pursue their goals. When I practiced my fieldwork in the Mae Sot area, I often saw pick-up trucks carrying soldiers in plain clothes to enter and leave refugee camps as if they were not bounded by barriers. The Karen National Union (KNU), an organization leading the Karen struggle against the Burmese Junta, organizes the Karen Unity Seminar once a year, in which representatives are invited from seven districts in the Karen state, to refugee camps and K-organizations such as the Karen Youth Organization (KYO), the Karen Educational Department (KED). The issues discussed in the seminar are

quite diverse but can be encapsulated into three categories: the direction of nationalism, the developmental problem in the Karen state and the influence of resettlement on the future of the Karen. It is known that serving as soldiers in the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), the military wing of the KNU, is voluntary and receives no monetary compensation. Rather, KNLA soldiers only receive in-kind pay consisting of rice, salt, dried chilies and dried fishes. Despite the lack of material incentives, many people are still willing to serve for the KNLA.

Why do Karen refugees make use of nationalism to redefine the national order of things? Actually, the method employed by Karen people is not a new one but a continuity of a past movement whose goal has not been finalized. That is to say, before becoming refugees, they had already launched a nationalist movement. However, because the goal has not been realized, they still persist in the struggle. Then, why did the Karen people engage in a nationalist struggle before even becoming refugees?

Some scholars argue that people launch a nationalist movement because of an ancient hatred of *la longue durée* (Brown, 2001), a fear for national safety (A. Lake and Rothchild, 2001), or an anger against human rights abuses committed by ruling nationalities (Van, Evera, 2001; Appadurai, 2000, 2006). In the case of Karen nationalism, all of the above perspectives seem to account for the causes of Karen nationalism to a certain degree.

As we already know, the demarcation of territorial boundaries in the former colonies was an arbitrary decision made by imperial countries. Anthony Smith argues that such demarcation is either a product of the colonial power's unilateral decision or of a treaty's stipulations. The colonists seldom took ethnic boundaries into consideration while demarcating borders among different colonies (Smith, 1991: 107). Because among native groups there had usually been some ancient hatreds of *la longue durée* before colonizers assumed power, the arbitrary demarcation of lands ensured that ancient animosities would continue to exist within the newly created political communities.

Before Britain assumed colonial power, the land today known as Burma was ruled by a Burman dynasty. The kings of Burman dynasties had always enslaved the Karen people by such means as a heavy poll tax, enforced military recruitment and

others (Keyes, 1977; Hayami, 2004; Gravers, 2007). Therefore, an ancient hatred of *la longue durée* had already existed between the Karen and the Burman before British colonization.

After assuming power, for the purposes of efficient governance Britain recruited different groups into separate governing sectors. For example, the Burman people were usually employed as agents of civil sectors while the Karen people were normally recruited into the military department.[7] After the middle of the colonial period, the Burman, the Karen and other ethnic nations began to voice their national aspirations in droves. These aspirations to some extent were conflicting with each other. For instance, during the last few years of colonization, the Burman began to demand an independent country comprised of all ethnic groups, but the Karen believed that owning a state based on self-determination was the only way to avoid being enslaved by the Burman.

When the colonizers found it increasingly difficult to govern the colonies, they normally chose to hand ruling power over to one of the native groups without deliberately considering the existing tensions and conflicts among these groups. A similar situation also occurred in Burma. Before Britain left Burma, a furious conflict between the Burman and other ethnic nations was about to explode. The colonial administration had had the opportunity to deal with the simmering tensions, but it was unwilling to deal with it deliberately. Instead, the British simply handed ruling power over to the Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League (AFPFL), a nationalist organization, in which most of the positions were occupied by the Burman, to let them negotiate with other groups on the future of Burma.

Led by Aung San, the chief aim of the AFPFL was to construct a country based on the principle of "Unity in Diversity" (Sheppard, 1997:574-575). Due to the assassination of Aung San, however, subsequent leaders of the AFPFL sabotaged the principle and promulgated instead the ideology of "One race, One country"—an ideology regarded by all other ethnic nations as a menace to their political future and national safety. Since the diverse national expectations were not satisfied, the

[7] The colonizers might select one group to contend with the antagonists or recruit some antagonistic groups to balance/relieve the inter-group conflicts. Such recruitment had been the strategy used to maintain the stability of colonies and to ensure the efficiency of the governance.

Karen and other ethnic nations decided on taking up arms to fight for their future. Burma was thus engulfed in a communal war since it acquired independence in 1948. After 60 years of communal war, at present, around 140,000 refugees are now settled in refugee camps located along the Thai-Burma border.

If the goal of the Karen struggle is merely to prevent being enslaved and human rights atrocities committed by the Burman, the most rational option for refugees should be waiting in the camps to redefine the national order of things. After all, as discussed above, refugees are not viewed as honest persons by the nation/State/citizen ensemble. They are perceived as an issue that needs to be dealt with urgently. Meanwhile, the efforts of the international protection regime aim to redefine refugees' relationship to space of sovereignty and further stabilize the territorial bounds of a sovereign State. If refugees passively await the redefinition of their relationship to a sovereign space, one day they will be resettled to third countries or integrated into host countries. At that moment, they will no longer live with suffering and fears. But, they still persist in their struggle even surviving in displacement for over 20 years. Their nationalism must possess an important meaning for them. Otherwise, it is hard to imagine why Karen refugees are so persistent in the struggle.

According to some researchers' discussions, nationalism's political pursuit is a kind of normative aspiration, an aspiration that inspires people's support or even sacrifices for the common good. Yael Tamil suggests that self-determination as a political pursuit of nationalism has come to be seen as a democratic ideal for all mankind after the emergence of the modern nation (Tamil, 1993: 60). From her viewpoint, in the minds of many people, the nation, since its appearance in the modern world, has already "become the only valid source of state legitimacy" (Tamil, ibid: 62). Following Tamil, we can almost say that in the minds of many people, too, to rule themselves as a nation has become an ultimate faith, because, for the vast majority of people, this faith represents a common good worth sacrificing for. Many believe that they can acquire real freedom and terminate their suffering only after the faith is realized. In summary, as an ultimate goal, nationalism is a common good for a dispossessed people: it is the aspired political destination that their forefathers have sacrificed for.

As Appadurai contends, nationalism has always been "a source of high normative hopes, of popular struggles for freedom and of reliable contests for the provision of justice and security for many human beings" (Appadurai, 2000: 129).[8] Based on this assumption, one can make out why nationalist movements sometimes drive people to extremes or motivate people to pursue nationalistic ideas despite high personal costs. In the case of Karen nationalism, if there were no such normative implications, it would be hard to imagine why Karen refugees are so persistent in the struggle and why my Karen friends often responded to my interview with the following phrases: "we will never give up," "we will go back to our homeland one day," or "we will fight until get freedom." Besides, it would also be difficult to comprehend why many people refuse to receive resettlement opportunities supplied by other countries if such a normative dimension did not exist.[9]

Of course, critics may argue that if a normative dimension really exists in Karen nationalism, why did so many refugees decide to leave their homes for third countries? It is indeed true that many people wish to live in third countries, but this does not mean that they have abandoned their nationalist movement. For those who chose to be resettled in third countries, it is almost without exception that they had brought along with them a Karen flag, handfuls of soil from Karen state, and other national symbols in their luggage.[10] The resettled refugees even organize overseas K-organizations and affiliate their organizations with the KNU.[11] After being granted ID cards or residential rights in host countries, some of them even returned to the Thai-Burma border to join the ceremony of the Karen Revolution Day, to attend the Karen Unity Seminar, or to teach in the schools in refugee camps.

To account for these puzzles, a reasonable explanation is probably that nationalism's normative aspect has been internalized into the minds of Karen people

[8] Margaret Moore and Michael Ignatieff also argue that nationalism is always normative since it intends to appeal to the good of the nation, please see Moore, 2001: 5; Ignatieff, 1993: 10.
[9] For example, Dr. Simon, one of the Christian leaders, once refused an opportunity supplied by Australia. Cynthia, the famous refugee doctor, refused the chance to leave for America because "once I leave, I will lose the chance to stay with my people, my community."
[10] Here, the Karen state is not the one aspired by the Karen. Instead, it is the strategy of the Burmese Junta to strike against the Karen cause. The details will be discussed in chapter 2.
[11] For instance, the Karen Community of Minnesota (KCM) and the Overseas Karen Network Organization (Norway).

and ingrained as a belief system before they were displaced. That is to say, they believe that they can acquire real freedom and live without suffering only after the national order of things is successfully redefined. Since a faith in the nationalist movement has been deeply ingrained in the minds of the people, there is no reason that they can easily forget or even abandon the nationalist movement after falling into refugees. It is the internalized and ingrained belief system that motivates Karen refugees to support their nationalist movement.

However, accepting or even confirming the normative implication does not mean that we can just use this perspective to explain the characteristics or meanings of a particular nationalism. The condition in which "every phenomenon is the result of pursuing normative hope" tells us that there is a commonality existing in every nationalist movement and making all struggles indistinct from each other. If such a perspective were complete, then the story about nationalism, including the Karen struggle, would be nothing to tell of.

As a matter of fact, all nationalist movements are unique. They are movements responding to particular historical and life contexts. History can be used as an anchor to understand the present situation facing particular nationalities. If the present situation is so difficult, it can be used as evidence to interpret the historical events that led to this quandary. After combining an interpretation of historical experiences and an understanding of the present situation, national members may begin to project a better future. When they convince themselves that a better future awaits them, they will stand up to struggle for that aspired end. I believe that only by exploring a people's historical and life contexts can we begin to understand why and how a normative dimension exists in a particular nationalism and to capture the characteristics of a nationalist struggle.

In the case of Karen nationalism, learning from relevant literatures and field observations, I have noticed that before being degraded into refugees, memories, myths, ceremonies and other cultural symbols were the means by which Karen mobilized their passion and loyalty toward the nationalist struggle. For example, San C. Po, regarded as the father of Karen nationalism, argues that distinct historical experiences, myths and memories illustrate why the Karen cannot stay with the Burman in the same country and why they need their own state (San C. Po, 1922).

In addition to historical experiences and collective memories, there are additional cultural symbols that mobilize refugee support for nationalism. In light of this, I maintain that Anthony Smith's ethno-symbolic approach is a useful perspective to explore the characteristics of Karen nationalism.

According to Smith, compared with the modernist perspective, the ethno-symbolic approach can more adequately explain the characteristics and meanings of nationalism since it spells out which populations are likely to launch a nationalist movement under certain conditions, what the content of their nationalism is likely to be, and why nationalism so often has a widespread popular appeal (Smith, 1996a: 362).[12] Smith suggests further that a nation is a territorialized community with a distinct public culture. Collective memories, myths, customs, symbols and rituals are components of the public culture, and are all organically related to particular communities. This means that not only do they frame an objective context in which people can symbolically know the boundaries among different communities but also constitute a subjective belief system by which people are able to know the values and morality of the communities. These components are ethnically related cultural symbols, which Smith perceives as ethno-symbols. Ethno-symbols not only make a nation visible and distinct, but also provide charters and title-deeds of the "homeland" (1999: 140). For Smith, no matter if a nation is a potential or an actual one, both are attached to a certain landscape. By means of symbols, says Smith, "every member of a community participates in the life, emotions and virtues of that community and, through them, re-dedicates him- or herself to its destiny" (1991: 78). Because all participation is situated in a particular landscape, and because all features of the landscape are a part of the participation, these components are attached to the landscape. As a result, the more participation there is, the closer the connection between the nation and the land is built (1999:

[12] Although many so-called modernists propose interesting perspectives on how to understand nationalism, such as Ernest Gellner's high culture (1983), Eric Hobsbawn's threshold principle (1991) and Benedict Anderson's print capitalism (1991), their explanations are either too abstract to be easily applied to specific cases, or so one-sided as to overemphasize the importance of the influence of capitalism or industrialization. The most important is that, as Smith argues, they all neglect the role of ethnic ties, which makes them unable to capture the "persistence of ethnic ties and cultural sentiments in many parts of the world, and their continuing significance for large numbers of people." As Armstrong argues, they overlook that a nation is a recurrent community which repeatedly appears, transforms and disappears throughout history. Please see Smith, 1996b: 360-361; Armstrong, 1982: 4-5.

150-151).

Following the above, we can say that the tight connection between the land and the nation implicates a normative link. That is to say, such a link comes about when people live together on the same land for hundreds of years, when they pass down their myths from generation to generation, and when all the features of a space become etched into our memories and lives. Then, the tighter the connection between the nation and the land is, the less toleration a people has for the intrusion of outsiders.

In order to make the connection and attachment continue, to construct a political nation based on self-determination becomes the best option. Self-determination mandates that a potential or an actual nation is entitled to exert exclusive authority over its territorial landscape. It also means that a new nation can freely develop in the landscape. When a particular nation can exert exclusive authority over and freely live in the landscape, then the nation will not need to worry that the connection and attachment might not continue. For constructing the nation successfully, nationalists have to mobilize people's passion for and loyalty toward their nation. In Smith's view, the roots of passion and loyalty lie in the ethno-symbols. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the meanings and contents of ethno-symbols in order to understand the characteristics of a particular nationalism.

I agree that we can understand Karen refugees' nationalism through exploring the memories, myths, ceremonies and other ethnic symbols. After all, these symbols are components of a culture which, as Schafer says, can shape the interests of the bearers, bridge members' understandings of the past and the future, and direct them to a familiar common goal (Schafer, 2008). However, it is undeniable that in Smith's view the ethnically related cultural components are attached to certain landscapes wherein particular national communities dwell. It is also undeniable that most nationalist movements are launched on the land inhabited by particular nationalities. Because of the organic connection discussed above, they attempt to territorialize the land into their political space. Before becoming refugees, the Karen people indeed launched their struggle on Karen land and attempted to territorialize the land into their national space wherein they could rule themselves. But at present Karen refugees are settled in fenced spaces supplied by the government of Thailand. They

do not dwell in their own national landscape. Because of being displaced from their homeland, they are also uprooted from such a matrix. Living under such a displaced condition, then, what are the methods that Karen refugees employ to utilize these components to maintain their loyalty towards the goal of their nationalist movement? Do they combine the displaced condition and the ethno-symbol related components to inspire grassroots' blood loyalty? Does displacement itself become a symbol influencing refugees' nationalism?

In addition, who is responsible for the use? According to Smith, intellectuals play the critical role in using the cultural components to mobilize people's support. But, a government is also important. By way of the government's military, administrative, fiscal and judicial apparatus, the values, symbols, myths, traditions and memories can be regulated and disseminated (Smith, 1991: 55). Jeremy M. Weinstein argues that a rebel government is critical to national mobilization. According to his argument, a rebel government can limit the violence orchestrated by the central government, and can highlight the experiences suffered by their people to justify their struggle. In the process of identifying State violence, the rebel government can establish institutions to manage its relations with the civilian population and to mobilize its people's blood loyalty (Weinstein, 2007: Ch.6). In the book edited by Yossi Shain, examples ranging from Middle Eastern to African ethno-nationalist conflicts lend the insight that nationalists taking flight with civilians normally construct an exiled government to ensure that the seeds of nationalism are planted in the minds of refugees (Shain, 1991).

Following the above, we can almost assert the critical role of a "centralized government" in a nationalist movement. However, in my field, there is no such government as the establishment of such a political body is strictly forbidden by the Thai authorities. The KNU certainly has an office in Mae Sot, but it is not allowed to set up any branch offices in refugee camps. While the KNU has some so-called "departments" to implement its policies, both KNU officers and the grassroots do not think that the KNU embodies any equivalent apparatus in refugee camps. Even under such a condition, the KNU is still perceived as a leading organization for the Karen struggle. Then, how does the KNU exert its influence upon the nationalist movement in displacement?

In sum, I argue, we need to explore the meaning, characteristics, and strategy of Karen nationalism through exploring the ethnically related symbols. Some ethnically related symbols, such as myths and historical memories have been recorded by scholars and the Karen people themselves. Therefore, we can, to a certain degree, understand Karen nationalism through examining these folk literatures. Literature examination is certainly important since it can provide us with an overview of the roots and reasons behind the Karen struggle. However, a full understanding cannot be realized through literature review alone. After all, while a literature may narrate a people's struggle in history, it tends to be static and cannot shed light on the current dynamics inspiring refugees' blood loyalty. Therefore, in addition to examining the literatures, we need to pay extra attention to everyday events, processes and relations in the camps because, as Lissa Malkki argues, they constitute a shared body of knowledge that is spontaneously and consistently interpreted and acted upon to form an understanding of one's national blueprint (Malkki, 1995: 52-54).

Structure

In Chapter 1, I will demonstrate how I attained access to Karen refugees, the research methods and limitations of the dissertation, as well as a brief description of Mae Sot.

Jurgen Kocka suggests that history is a tack that can be used for self-positioning and primitive self-recognition (Kocka, 2006: 8). In order to understand why the Karen refugees still persist in struggling for their own state, therefore, it is necessary to place this question in the context of the historical background of Karen nationalism. Chapter 2 briefly introduces the critical reasons leading to the Karen revolution and the historical process of that struggle. Through the brief review, we will have a historical understanding of how Karen refugees interpret the displacement situation and how the current condition influences the nationalist movement existing among the refugees.

In Chapter 3, I present a closer investigation into the religious tensions that engulf Karen refugees. It is known that the modern national consciousness and the

first group of educated elites among the Karen resulted from the efforts of early missionaries and British colonization. Another development is that since the Karen stood up in 1949 to fight for their state, Christians have dominated the leadership of the movement. The religious conflict in 1996 between Christians and Buddhists even resulted in the most serious split among the Karen, the largest flow of refugees, and the reassertion of Christian hegemony. It is thus often heard that the Karen revolution is a Christian cause (Rogers, 2004: 153). Even though most of the refugees do not think that their nationalist movement is reducible to a Christian cause and that there is any religious tension among themselves, they nevertheless agree that "religion" is a critical factor that might be exploited by the Burmese junta to strike against them. Through exploring historical events and the present situation inside refugee camps, we will begin to understand whether Karen nationalism can be seen as a Christian cause. Additionally, I will illustrate how "religion" influences Karen refugees' ideas of the situation and of their nationalist movement.

Chapter 4 discusses the contest over the control of the Karen space. The Karen space includes Karen territories within Burma and the refugee camps along the Thai-Burmese border. The geographic regions of contestation can thus be divided into two parts: one is the struggle within Burma while the other is the contest in refugee camps. Regarding the first part, I trace the historical process in which the idea of the Karen state comes to be crystallized and different nation-building strategies are utilized by the KNU and the junta to seek control of the Karen state. As for the second part, I illustrate how and why the KNU is able to exert its influence upon refugee affairs within the camps, even transforming them into an extension of Karen territories. I discuss this process by analyzing the Thai government's attitudes and policies towards refugees, as well as the delicate interactions between the Thai authorities and the refugees.

Refugees are regarded as cultureless and immoral bodily agents, since they are uprooted from the land whereon they can proceed with a meaningful and moral life. However, culture includes various practices, institutional and uninstitutional, as well as cultural logics. A cultural logic is the abstract dimension of a culture while the various practices are the results of embodying cultural logics (Scott, 1993: 322; Chao, 2001: 123). Yet, this embodiment does not come into being automatically,

but comes true through individuals' daily practices. In the meantime, the human being is the transmitter, interpreter and inventor of cultural logics. Unless the members of a particular nation die out, the culture belonging to them should not disappear. Instead, they are supposed to possess agential powers to embody the culture in any place. Karen refugees are also a transmitter of their culture. Therefore, they are surely able to reconstruct their national culture in order to restart a meaningful and mortal life. In Chapter 5, we will see how Karen refugees reconstruct their culture in displacement through various daily activities. Some of these activities are even institutionalized as facilities in refugee camps. Thanks to the newly born culture, they are no longer cultureless and immoral bodily agents.

In Chapter 6, I discuss the situation of the refugee camps and how the logic of displacement itself nourishes Karen refugees' national belonging. Then I examine the methods that Karen refugees use to re/form their national belonging in order to mobilize grassroots support of the nationalist movement amid exile. Both in practice and in theoretical terms, I explore the reasons as to why the logic of the refugee camps can give rise to the Karen's common sense of belonging. Constructing a new identity composed of multiple locations and constrained by the displacement condition, I also discuss the alternatives that displaced Karen people utilize to interpret, transmit, pass on, and consolidate their belief in nationalism.

Nationalism normally has a political blueprint. Such a political blueprint outlines the normative aspirations pursued by a particular nation. As mentioned, Karen refugees persist in their nationalist struggle even after being forced into exile. However, have the Karen nationalists changed their blueprint in accordance with the realities of exile? If so, why has a change in programmatic orientation been able to convince people to remain supportive of the struggle? Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation. In addition to summarizing the arguments of this dissertation, I also address the above questions in order to paint a fuller picture of the Karen refugees' nationalism.

1. Studying Up

Encountering Karen Refugees

This dissertation is mainly the result of three times of fieldworks. The first time was practiced since 15 January 2007 till 31 March 2007, the second from 15 August 2007 to 31 October 2007, and the last from 5 January 2008 to 5 April. Nevertheless, the observations acquired during my term of volunteer from 5 February 2004 to 3 February 2005 are also the materials that will be analyzed in this dissertation.

In 2004, because I was fed up with the political disorder in Taiwan, I decided on suspending the doctoral program and joined Taipei Overseas Peace Service (TOPS) as a volunteer for the humanitarian assistance implemented in Karen refugee camps.[13] The place where I was assigned was Mae Sot, the largest commercial town along the Thai-Burma border. I arrived at Mae Sot on 11 February 2004. TOPS had implemented some humanitarian assistance programs in three refugee camps before my arrival. At the first time, I got into Mae La refugee camp, what came to my view immediately were the typical images that we can get from movies or photos: shaggy houses, many crippled people and backward sanitation.[14] Later, I noticed that the scenes and outlooks were not the only realities about the camps.

Since I started the master's degree program, I have been attracted by the phenomenon of nationalism and heavily exposed myself to the literatures regarding nationalism. The autonomous movement of Taiwan Indigenous Nations is the topic of my master thesis. Because of the personal interest and the academic training, I

[13] Honestly, before joining TOPS, I had no idea on Karen refugees and the communal war in Burma. Neglecting the situations of Burma is the usual phenomenon in Taiwan since Burma has not been the country of concern by the government of and the people in Taiwan. The same as other people, if I knew anything about Burma, it was because of the fame of Aung San Suk Kyi. Fortunately, thanks to TOPS, I had chance accessing myself to Karen refugees and their struggle, and to write their story here.

[14] Actually, except for the cripple wounded by landmines, the style of houses in refugee camps is the traditional Karen style; the reason that the sanitation system is backward is because we compare it to modern society, if we do not do any comparison, we will find that it is also typical in Karen village. The real situation inside refugee camp will be illustrated in the following chapters.

noticed a nationalist movement existing among Karen refugees. The movement has lasted since Burma achieved independence in 1949. It could be sensed by a number of educational, cultural and quasi-military activities, as mentioned in Introduction. The phenomenon ignited my interest and curiosity. In order to understand the background of the movement, I began to collect and read some books and articles written by Karen as well as interview some elders and commanders.[15] After these efforts, I found that the movement might be the key to not only determine Karen people's own political future toward either an independent Karen State or "one state" of Democratic Federation of Burma, but also lead Burma into a peace or a continuous war.

It was probably because I reached the refugees as TOPS' volunteer, some of the people I encountered were willing to tell me the experiences they underwent, even the sensitive political opinions. Of course, some people still suspected my intention for they could not realize why a volunteer of educational organization was so interested in the political issues regarding Karen revolution. Such distrust did not disappear after my volunteer contract ended in February 2005. In the following story, we can see the influence of the distrust.

In any case, because of some friends' trust, I had chances to access myself to the sufferings of Karen refugees. According to my observations, it was probably due to being refugees for over 20 years, everybody got lost. There seemed no concrete direction that grassroots could follow. As a student believing in the idea of *action research,* I always believe that research is not merely a research. Instead, it should be a means useful for empowering the weak. After listening to the stories and seeing the predicament, I decided to continue the Ph. D. program and chose Karen nationalism as the topic of my dissertation. I hoped that this dissertation, from the process of practicing it to the final publication, could be the fuse to ignite my Karen friends' awareness of the predicament facing them. Thus, what I experienced and

[15] For example, Mae La Refugee Elders (AD), The Allegation: The Relationship between Karen and British Government and The Historical Journey of Karen-Burman Smoldering Racial Conflicts; Thuleibo (2004), The Karen Revolution in Burma; Karen National Union (2000), The Karens and Their Struggle for Freedom. Ba Saw Khin (1999), Fifty Years of Struggle: Review of the Fight for a Karen State. Critics might criticize that I should first read academic literatures as they are written more thoughtful. However, I believed that the books written by local people could give me more chances to understand local understandings of their struggle. The most important is that it was not easy to collect academic literatures in such a remote border town.

observed during the term of volunteer, perhaps not too many, are also the field materials in this dissertation.

Fieldwork at Border

Some of the Difficulties

The road to realizing the idea of action research, however, is not always as smooth as presumed, especially when the researcher and researched have no cultural tie and the situation in research field is so complicated. Striding on the road to practicing action research, some critical difficulties happened to me. Although they were finally solved during the research, one of them almost made me give up the topic.

The first difficulty is the misinterpretation brought about by diverse languages. If researchers can neither speak local languages fluently nor read local scripts, they will have to rely on interpreters,[16] and the findings carved out by researchers will to some extent be determined by interpreters. This circumstance will result in dissimilar understandings of the same ideas that different researchers are going to explore. Karen language is a language without modern terms or abstract political phrases, such as market, federalism, nationalism, national identity or democracy. Although I spent a lot of time learning Karen language, but still could not speak it fluently nor can I read Karen scripts. Because of the characteristics of Karen language, when the questions proposed touched on the abstract political ideas but the interviewees could not speak English, the interpreters had to make use of some specific instances with which they were familiar to explain and further to interpret the meanings of the terms which I used. At that moment, whether the interpreters could explain my questions with sufficient precision depended on if they could capture the critical concepts of my questions.

If the interpreters have relevant knowledge, and we can discuss the related issues often, the problems will be solved more easily. Usually, people who had such knowledge had worked for INGOs or K-organizations already. They might be able

[16] When I was in Mae Sot, most of the literatures collected were written by English. Actually, there were indeed some literatures written by Karen scripts. However, because I entirely could not understand the local scripts, I did not ask for such books or articles.

to do me a favor to translate some parts of interview, but the limits of their time did not allow them to help me all the time. If I hired an interpreter, the problem also could be solved to the greatest extent. But, in the first fieldwork, for I did not have any financial support but just some money I saved. The money I saved could only support the expense of transportation and food. So, it was totally impossible to hire any people to help my work, even part time interpreter, either. Before I went to Mae Sot for the second term of fieldwork, I was granted a scholarship by Center for Asia-Pacific Area Studies, Academia Sinica. I was supposed to have enough budgets to hire an interpreter, then. As I said, those who had relevant knowledge had worked for INGOs or K-organizations already. I hence did not find proper people to assist my research.

Although most of my friends were willing to interpret or translate for me, but not all of them could properly interpret or translate what I would like to explore. As a result, I could not expect the precision of the interpretation or translation. For example, Saw A, one of my friends, used to work for an INGO and with an anti-government group. He was quite interested in political issues. When I volunteered for TOPS in 2004, we usually discussed the political future about Burma. One day in the second time of fieldwork, I went to Um Piem Mai camp to interview a religious leader, I thought that he could translate my questions precisely, but, I was wrong. During the interview, I found that this religious leader could not entirely answer my questions. At that moment, I thought it might be that I did not articulate my questions. However, after the interview, I requested Saw B, another friend, to type down what I got. According to Saw B, Saw A did not precisely catch up the points of my questions.

In order to lessen the influence of language as much as I could, in the first and second terms of fieldwork, I usually interviewed people who could command English. Nevertheless, the speeches in the ceremonies or in openly organized activities are also important. These speeches normally proceeded in Karen language. Such speeches bear witness to how Karen leaders, in displacement, mobilize grassroots' passion and loyalty towards their movement publicly. I always recorded the speeches while attending these activities. It was therefore necessary to find someone to translate them for me. In addition, most of the Karen refugees either

cannot speak English or are not able to command it. People who can speak English usually worked for INGOs or Community Based Organizations (CBOs). They had the chance to crystallize their political opinions by discussing with foreigners. If I insisted on learning from them, I would miss the opinions from the people who did not have the chance to touch outer world.

Fortunately, a couple of days before I practice the third time fieldwork, Saw B's brother quit his job in on CBO, whose name is Saw C. The focus of the CBO was on the human right issues inside Burma. He also had a lot of experiences and knowledge of Karen nationalist movement. I hired him as my interpreter, and the problem of translation was to the greatest extent solved.

Secondly, a field paranoid about security involved me in the rumor of spy. Mae Sot is a border town. Entering downtown from the nearest borderline only costs 10 minutes, which is along Myawaddy, the border town controlled by the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA). The DKBA is the alliance of Burmese Junta. There is a border gate located at that borderline and all the people who would like to enter Thailand are supposed to pass through the gate. However, not all the people obey the regulation. Owing to the deteriorating economic situation inside Burma, many people come to Thailand as illegal migrant workers.[17] In additional to the migrant workers, there are many people who come to Mae Sot to extract the information of the KNU. They are the spies of Burmese Junta.

The Karen revolution is still going on. The KNU has its subject organizations, such as the Karen Youth Organization (KYO), the Karen Women Organization (KWO) and others. All have branch offices in Mae Sot. The Junta has been scheming to thoroughly beat down the KNU. If the KNU is thoroughly beaten, Karen people will have no chance to go back to their homeland as the KNU is the organization that has been leading Karen people to fight against the Junta. The memories of taking refuge in jungles and taking flight to Thailand still haunt the minds of Karen people. Since there are many spies entering Mae Sot to detect information of the KNU, Karen refugees are thus always paranoid about security. Living in such circumstances, everyone could be a spy without heed.

It was around September 2004 that I began to spend more time visiting migrant

[17] The details of the situations in Mae Sot will be described in the next section.

schools as TOPS planned to extend the assistance programs to migrant communities. The backgrounds of the students in these schools cover many minorities from Burma. The Burman is also included. In addition, I tried to seek chance to go to Karen territory to witness the real situation inside Burma. Since then, I often got some phone calls from strangers speaking Burmese. One day's afternoon, hot and humid, I sat in front of a small shop to enjoy ice-lolly. One guy approached me to chat. I knew the guy because I once shot photos for his family. It is thus not so weird that he came to me to chat. But, the first question he asked startled me: "Do you work for KNU?" Just a couple of days ago, Saw U, a Karen soldier, agreed to take me to see the situation inside Burma. You must be able to realize how I was startled by such a question.

Due to such experiences, I thought that I was probably targeted as "someone" whom was needed to pay attention to. Because I was a volunteer of TOPS, stayed in TOPS office, and indeed did not do anything really involving the Karen cause, I was not quite afraid of the inexplicable phone calls and questions. Several days before my contract ended, I chatted with Naw M, who was a staff the KWO. She inquired what the real job I did since some people talked to her that I was a spy.

When I worked as a volunteer, I tried my best to help refugees and illegal migrant workers. But, just before coming back to Taiwan, I suddenly became a spy and a targeted person, by Karen refugees and intelligencers respectively. I did not know whether I should be angry about or cry for such a ridiculous consequence. In August 2005, I went back to Mae Sot to visit some friends to maintain the relationship needed for the future field research. The KYO gave me a badge which exclusively belongs to the members of KYO. At the moment of receiving the badge, I thought the rumor might have been dispelled. However, it was not. The consequence even lasted until I went back to Mae Sot in 2007.

In the mid January 2007, I went back to Mae Sot without any resources but just some money and books to crystallize the problematic and embody the proposal. When I was not in Mae Sot, many of my friends were resettled to third countries already. Therefore, the first thing I had to do was to rebuild new friendship and to refresh trusteeship. While I requested Naw E to introduce some friends to me, Naw J warned her that I was a spy. I then knew that the rumor did not go away even I had

not shown up in Mae Sot for almost one and a half years. Even some western volunteers heard the rumor. One volunteer from England told me, for lack of the information on the issue of Taiwan Straits, "You are a Chinese, interested in politics always, and China government supports SPDC, so you must be the spy from China, to collect the information of KNU."

In the first two weeks, I almost could not have any progress, since I did not know who believed in me while who did not. I also did not know how to make other Karen people believe that I was really, really a poor graduate student. It was the critical time. The situation for this dissertation was getting worse. I had to think over if I had to give it up.

Naw E knew me very well, so she once promised that she would do me any favor I needed. But, according to Naw E's words, while Naw J told her that I was a spy with quite many "proofs," the trusteeship between us was quaked.

Naw E asked me to retrospect the possible reason causing the rumor. When volunteering for TOPS in 2004, I was in charge of organizing an event for the youths of Karen refugees and Taiwan Indigenous youths to interact with each other. It was a gathering that they can share respective political opinions about self-determination and experiences of social movement with each other. While I prepared for the activity, I needed to contact with the KYO and the KWO off and on. Because of frequent contacts, there was a good relation between these two K-organizations and me. I hence had some chances to ask some questions confusing me. Due to the disciplines of political science and sociology, the questions in which I was interested were almost about politics, such as the reason of Karen revolution or the political imagination about their future country. When I went to KNU controlled areas, I sometimes asked the questions about the numbers of troops quartered in that place. I was a volunteer of an organization of which the assistance programs are in the educational field but I always asked questions on politics. I told Naw E that it might be the reason causing the rumor.

Fortunately, after hearing my explanation, Naw E believed in me again. Also fortunately, other friends, especially TOPS staff, trusted me and helped me to

reconstruct the trusteeship.[18] Even acquiring their trusteeships, I knew that I still need to do something to smash the rumor. I wrote a statement of which the aim was to have myself opened to Karen. My strategy was that "you think I am a spy, well, I ask any question which spy is interested in, openly. I will do anything that a spy will do." I even began to joke myself as a spy to any people. If there was any interview, I always told interviewees that I was regarded as a spy, if "you don't believe in me, I won't come to disturb you anymore, if you trust me, let's have an interview and next time have a good drink."

No one could make sure whether I could successfully smash the rumor. But, in the second fieldwork, I was invited by the KNU to lecture for the youths in a workshop on politics for one week, from 8 to 12 October 2007. Because of the invitation, I was surely that the strategy was quite successful.

With the rumor smashed, it seemed that no other predicament would obstruct me. There indeed had been no serious predicament since I finally "voluntarily became a spy." However, one event thoroughly frightened me.

In the first and second fieldworks, I accommodated in TOPS office. The topic of my dissertation required me to explore the symbolic systems used by refugees for national belonging construction. To attend ceremonies was necessary for exploring how the symbolic systems were used to mobilize people's engagement in nationalist movement. Some ceremonies were organized in Karen territory, so I needed to cross the border to do observations. The border-crossing surely violated immigration laws of Thai government. Some activities were held in the camps. According to the regulation, outsiders can not enter the camps without a camp-pass issued by the Thai authorities. But, it was very difficult to acquire the camp-pass. As a matter of fact, unless INGO workers, almost no one could be granted the pass because Thai authorities were not willing to let people know the real situations inside refugee camps. Even volunteers of INGOs, sometimes, could not obtain the camp-pass.

Therefore, I always entered refugee camps without a camp-pass. The research was thus basically practiced in the process of violating the law of Thai government. Therefore, in order not to cause TOPS any trouble, I decided to rent a house to live

[18] For example, Naw H introduced Saw 1 while Naw M let her boyfriend, Saw 5, accept my interview. Besides, Saw 6 and Saw R always answered my question if I felt confused anytime.

alone in the third fieldwork.

There were no special things while I lived alone. But, the assassination of Saw Mahn Sha frightened me. Because Karen revolution had been going on, the news regarding small battles between the KNU as well as the Junta and its alliance the DKBA can be heard off and on. The battles are no exception on the Burma side. So, it is safe if we inhabit in Mae Sot. After all, Mae Sot is on the soil of Thailand. Thai authorities have exclusive sovereignty over their soil. I had never heard that any KNU officer was injured in Mae Sot by the Junta. But, the assignation occurred in Mae Sot. When he was taking rest at his home, three guys approached him and shot him dead. As said, Mae Sot is a town congested with spies. After hearing the news, I then began to worry about my situation. After all, as the previous experiences showed, I was targeted as someone needed to pay attention to.

After the assignation happened, I also lapsed into the paranoia of security. What I was concerned about was not the physical security of myself, since, according to my life philosophy, if it is really the "day" to see Yama, there will be no where you hide in. Therefore, what I was exactly concerned for was that someone might break into my house and steal my laptop and portable hard disc while I was not at home. It is the research ethics that we can not use the real name of interviewee if we have to cite any words of any people. But, in my field notes, all the people I contacted with and interviewed were written with their true names. Besides, the records of interviews were also in the portable hard disc. If my laptop or hard disc was stolen, I could not imagine what trouble would cause to my friends. It was not impossible for something like this to happen. Months before I practiced the second time fieldwork, some thieves intruded TOPS office and stole TOPS' laptop and digital camera. The stolen stuffs were later found in Myawaddy, the town controlled by the DKBA.

The Practices

Even facing such conditions, some probably so dramatic, I still try my best to finalize the research by the ways/steps as below:

First of all, participating in relevant activities and observing the collective symbols. In the field, I realized that the Karen were always dressed in traditional

costumes in traditional or special days regardless of whether they were going to perform cultural activities or merely attended the ceremonies. Traditional costumes represent a cultural form with symbolic meanings. It is thus not surprising that Karen wear it while showing up in those special days. However, I also noticed that there were some national totems on the costumes, such as national flag and/or Karen drum, and the colors of costumes were even the same as those of the national flag. The costumes are thus infused with political meanings. If there was Karen dance as a performance presented to audiences, the dancers usually laid out some scripts, for instance, KNU, KNLA or Karen. In the layout, there should be some implications worth carving out. Apart from the layout, the strength exerted by the performers and the passion emitted by the songs were also the ways to inspire the national affection. In addition, there were many ceremonies or other organizational activities in the camps. I always saw some people lecturing in these activities. Without exception, the topics of the lectures were related to the fate of Karen people or the situation inside IDP areas. For example, in March 2007, I went to Bible School for attending the closing ceremony, a student lectured with the topic of "Patriotism." Thus, it is necessary to observe and record how these symbols were used in cultural performances, ceremonies and rituals, and how those participants and attendants employed the implications of these symbols to mobilize and even to strengthen the national solidarity among Karen refugees.

Secondly, exploring the world of meanings by interview. To observe and record the details regarding the process of rituals or ceremonies is certainly essential to understand how the passion of the people is ignited and how the collective consciousness is built and rebuilt. Yet, we still can not understand what performers and audiences perform and see. It is therefore not unnecessary to interview some performers and audiences to catch their inner thoughts. One thing we have to bear in mind is that different ways of interview should be employed. For undereducated people, interview is merely a way to dig out their opinions; for those highly educated, however, it is the way to induce them to speak out their political thoughts or even delicate political ideas. Karen people in camps lived in a surrounding with less access to information, so they liked to know the results of my interview or even my opinions. Actually, in the mid March 2007, I went to Engineer Study Program

(ESP) School of Mae La Camp to visit one friend who teaches there. I requested him to introduce some Karen youths to me for interview. I did not know whether or not it was coincidence that all of them were eager to know my opinions about Karen nationalism. During the first term of my fieldwork, I found that interviewees usually feared recording machines. In the second and third fieldwork, therefore, I attempted to catch the thoughts of interviewees by chatting to carve out what they were unwilling to express with my use of recorder in the first term. Certainly, formal interview is still needed. Different from the topic in the previous term, in the second term, I focused on non-political opinions such as how the interviewees perceived and interpreted the cultural performances and ceremonies as well as their memories of histories.

Thirdly, discussing with Karen refugees by the ideas of action approach. Learning from action approach, I believe that the whole process of research, from the research practice to the knowledge production, can empower the weak. The KYO set up one learning institutes in Mae Sot, called the Karen Youth Development Program (KYDP). Before I came back to Taiwan in mid March 2007, I discussed with the Vice Principal of the KYDP on the possibility of teaching some courses there. I was welcomed at that moment. Regrettably, I got information after coming back to Taiwan that the KYDP was suspended owing to the budget shortage. However, fortunately, the KNU held a "Workshop on Constitution and Politics" in Mae Sot. The leaders of the KNU selected some outstanding youths from refugee camps, liberated areas and inside Burma to attend the workshop.[19]

The aim of that workshop was to train up the future leaders for the prospect Democratic Federation of Burma. I was invited to take charge of one course from 8 to 12 October 2007. My friend, Saw E, working in the KNU, expected me to lecture on geopolitics. Because I did not bring the books relevant to geopolitics and I needed to collect some data useful for my research, I asked Saw E whether it was possible to lecture nationalism and social movement. The answer was positive. Yet, he still hoped that I could bring some knowledge regarding geopolitics to their youths. After knowing that, I immediately requested some friends in Taiwan sending some relevant books to me. Nevertheless, as I need to collect some data

[19] The meaning of liberated areas will be discussed in Chapter 4.

useful for this dissertation, I still divided the course into two parts, nationalism as the first half and geopolitics as the second. The title of the course was "The Workshop on Nationalism and Geopolitics."

While I contacted with Karen refugees in 2004, I observed that there seemed to be a religious conflict in Karen community. When I officially started my fieldwork, I often heard that people complained about the domination of Christians. As we will see in Chapter 3, the religious conflict once resulted in a serious split among the Karen and even further brought about the fall of Manerplaw, the KNU headquarter. In order to make the members in the workshop understand the possible causes of the conflict and to find out the resolution to ease the conflict, I assigned some articles written by Westerners to encourage, or perhaps more properly to say, to enforce them to reflect on their own history and the present situation.

The articles I required them to read clearly pointed out that Christianity has been the nature of Karen nationalism since it was launched in 1949. This article ignited discussion in class, in Karen language, of course. It was the first time of being invited to lecture, and hence I did not bring along recorder to record the discussion. Yet, in the last day, I concluded: "……if you don't want any religious conflict to happen again, you have to place it under the sun rather than cloud it. The problem will not be solved if you do not face it. As you said, SPDC can always find the weak point of KNU, they can also always dig out the problem you cover. When they dig it out, well, you will face another predicament."

After the conclusion, many attendees came to me and share their opinions with me. There was no exception that they all agreed with my perspective.

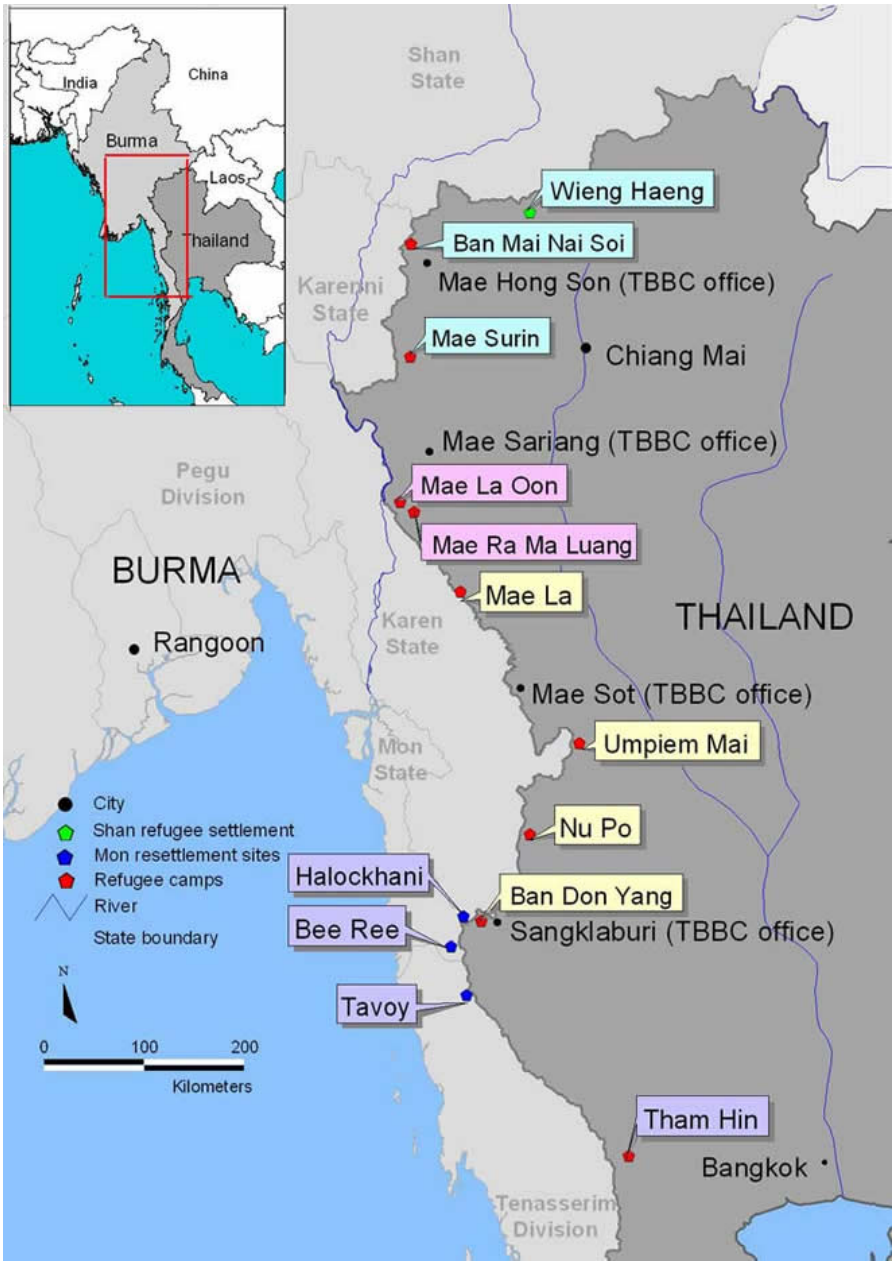
Mae Sot: the Burgeoning Town

Access and Governance

Mae Sot is located in Tak province in north western Thailand. It is the biggest and the most important commercial town along the Thai-Burma border (Map 2). Gems, teak, antiquities, drugs imported from Burma and China, as well as people, particularly Burmese people,[20] are all available for a price.

[20] When I use the terms "Burmese people" and "Burmese", I mean the people from Burma no matter what their national or ethnic backgrounds are. The term "Burman" is used to indicate the ethnic

Map 2



Source: http://www.tbbc.org/camps/camps.htm

It takes eight hours to get to Mae Sot from Bangkok by bus while the bus trip from Chiang Mai takes six hours. Bus tickets to Mae Sot are readily available at both the Bangkok and Chiang Mai bus terminals. Each day, five buses depart from

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nation that is the main ethnic nation in Burma and the most powerful group in the SPDC government. Yet, for some Karen people, they do not distinguish "Burmese" and "Burman" very clearly. They usually use these two terms interchangeably to indicate the same group: Burman.

Bangkok with direct service to Mae Sot while two buses depart from Chiang Mai with direct service to Mae Sot.[21]

Traveling from Chiang Mai to Mae Sot, four checkpoints are passed. Two checkpoints are passed when traveling from Bangkok to Mae Sot. Because the borderline connecting Thailand and Burma is long and hard to monitor, Burmese and Thai people can cross the border easily and undetected at any number of points and for any number of reasons. Burma is notorious for its drug trade. Thai authorities set checkpoints on most roads with access to border towns in order to maintain order inside border towns. It is the official and formal function of these checkpoints. Checkpoints also have some unofficial functions. I will explore the unofficial function in the following discussions on economic activities in Mae Sot.

Mae Sot lies four kilometers from the Moei River, part of the natural borderline separating Thailand from Burma. Asian Highway 1 (AH1) crossing the Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge officially links Mae Sot of Thailand and Karen state in Burma. The Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge was constructed in 1997. The bridge connects Mae Sot and Myawaddy.[22] Myawaddy, ruled by the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) is in Karen state, Burma. The DKBA was formerly a part of the Karen National Union (KNU), but it split from the KNU in December of 1994.[23]

Actually, the DKBA is the military wing of the Democratic Karen Buddhist Organization (DKBO). Even though the management and administration in Myawaddy is established by the DKBO, as the DKBA is the visible and well known body implementing DKBO's policy, we usually use DKBA rather DKBO to indicate the ruling power in Myawaddy. Since the DKBA split from the KNU, there have been many battles between the KNU and the DKBA. Battles are normally launched by orders from the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), the military regime of Burma. Because the DKBA follows the orders of the SPDC, Myawaddy is therefore deemed a SPDC-DKBA alliance ruled town.

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[21] The timetable is often changed. So, folks read this dissertation at different time will have different opinions.

[22] The Karen claims that their land includes nine *ddy*s: Tharawaddy, Hanthawaddy, Myawaddy, Ketumaddy, Kantarawaddy, Thalawaddy, Dawayawaddy, Zeyawaddy, Irrawaddy.

[23] The split is important in the history of Karen nationalism and it will be discussed in Chapter 3.

An immigration checkpoint must be passed in order to enter Myawaddy legally. The checkpoint is located at the left side of the entrance to the Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge (Picture 1) while facing the gate. Before 2007, the Immigration Office, when facing the entrance of the bridge, was located on a street to the right side of the bridge. In 2008, the Immigration Office was moved to the AH1 roadside to the left of the bridge. Foreigners can apply for a visa-extension in the office before the legitimate duration of their stay in Thailand has expired. In addition, foreigners are also permitted to go across the bridge to Myawaddy for renewing the visa.

Picture 1: Entrance of Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge

Owing to the longstanding war between the Burmese government and ethnic nations, and the complicated situation between the KNU and the DKBA, foreigners are not allowed to stay in Myawaddy overnight. They are required to come back to Thai territory before 5pm. Thai citizens registering with Mae Sot authorities to go to Myawaddy can apply for a border-pass in a border management office that was specifically established for Thai citizens. Yet, Thai citizens can not stay in Myawaddy overnight, either.

Mae Sot has its own airport. It is a military airport even though civilian airplanes can still land there. Before the end of 2005, Phuket Air had scheduled flights between Bangkok and Mae Sot as well as Chiang Mai and Mae Sot. Due to the high fuel costs and a lack of passengers, Phuket Air has since cancelled all flights. Now it is purely a military airport.

Inside Thai territory and just to the right side of the Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge (facing the entrance) sits a border market where people can buy cheap snacks and 3C productions imported from China as well as handmade costumes imported from Burma. In this market, most of the employers are Thai citizens while most of the employees are Burmese migrant workers.[24]

Facing the entrance of the Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge, some ferries are located on the left side. The ferries are around 200 meters from the bridge. These ferries are the gateway by which Burmese people transport goods and commodities needed in Burma and traded by Thai businessmen back and forth between Mae Sot and Myawaadee. In order to govern this lucrative gateway, Thai authorities have established a branch of the border management office near the ferries. Burmese people can choose to take a boat to Mae Sot and pay the fee for entering Thai territory at that office. All workers responsible for transporting the commodities are Burmese migrant workers.

According to the regulations set by Thai authorities, Burmese people have to apply for a one-day pass to enter Thai territory. A one-day pass is available at the official checkpoint at the entrance of the bridge. Normally, no application will be rejected because the pass is usually just used to prove legal entry to Thailand and to let the Thai authorities collect entrance fees. Burmese citizens holding a one-day pass can not work in Mae Sot and have to return to Myawaadee before the border closes at 5pm. Hundreds of Burmese people crossing the Moei River on ferries to

[24] The term "Burmese migrant workers" is used to indicate the people migrating from Burma to Thailand for job opportunities. There is no ethnic content in this term. In the following discussion, I will use Burmese migrant workers, migrant workers and Burmese migrants interchangeably. Theoretically, the meaning of "Burmese migrants" is broader than it of "migrant workers" because the former includes economic and political migrants while the latter merely includes the economic. But, as Margaret Green, Karen Jacobsen and Sandee Pyne say, most of the Burmese people coming to border towns with multiple reasons. Coming for meal sometimes is not purely the economic, it includes the fear of human rights abuse such as enforced labor. Please see, Margaret Green, Karen Jacobsen and Sandee Pyne, 2008.

Mae Sot can be seen every day, and the Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge is bustling with people during the day time.

I used to go to the bridge four times each morning around 9am and three times each afternoon around 5pm to shoot pictures. In the morning, a great deal of people entered Thai territory using the bridge and ferries and then took a *Song Teao* to downtown. *Song Teao* is the local bus back and forth between downtown and the border as well as between Mae Sot and other border towns. In the afternoon, *Song Teao*s crowded with Burmese people arrived one by one at the bus stop in front of the entrance of the bridge.

Yet, among these shuttle migrants, a lot of Burmese people indeed enter Thai territory with one-day passes and work in Mae Sot, such as the venders in the traditional market in the downtown. Many of them just go back to Myawaddy before the border closes. There are also a lot of people who enter Thai territory with one-day passes and do not return to Myawaddy. Once they stay in Mae Sot past 5pm, they immediately become illegal migrants.

In addition to those becoming illegal migrants by overstaying their one-day pass, there are many crossing the river to enter Mae Sot directly without any pass. Actually, people wading back and forth across the river between Myawaddy and Mae Sot can be seen everyday. For many Burmese people, this is a daily activity.

Before 2005, there was no embankment along the river around the Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge. However, the central government of Thailand had already decided to develop Mae Sot into a special economic zone. In order to maintain social order and lessen the flow of illegal migrants, Thai authorities finally decided to construct an embankment and scheduled border patrols to cruise the area around the border bridge. Even such measures are actually not able to lessen the flow of illegal migrants because of three reasons.

Firstly, the Moei River is actually a long natural borderline that is as porous as a net through which fish can shuttle backwards and forwards. Police and patrols are not able to cruise it all the time. The embanked river around the border bridge is only a short section of the Moei River. Far from the border bridge there is no embankment and people can cross the river much easier. Secondly, even the short section of the river near the border bridge can not be cruised completely at a certain

period of time unless Thai authorities set up securities every couple of steps. Thirdly, wading across the river back and forth between Myawaadee and Mae Sot is a daily activity for many Burmese people.

The depth of the river changes in dry season and rainy season: it doubles its size in rainy season. Yet, it does not mean that it is dangerous to cross it in rainy season.[25] Burmese people just walk across the low and sluggish river in the dry season and swim or wade with temporary breath-stopping across the swollen river in rainy season. Patrols and police around there do not really check the one-day passes of those who wade across the river directly. The daily activity is therefore never ended. It is for this reason that one Chinese-Thai businessman estimates that around 70% of the total number of Burmese migrants are illegal entrants.

The reason why the Burmese people enter or stay in Mae Sot illegally can be roughly sorted into the economic and the political.

The ongoing communal war, the corruption of military regime, and the failure of management all hurt the economy of Burma. In Burma, the daily laborer rate for road construction is around 5 Baht per day while it is around 3000 Baht per month in Mae Sot. The wage for working in cloth factories is around 3500-4000 Baht per month. A lot of Burmese people hence migrate, legally or illegally, to Mae Sot for a meal.[26]

Due to the communal war and the ensuing need for labors to construct roads to attack ethnic military groups, countless Burmese people are forced to work for the SDPC without payment. In addition, the ethnic backgrounds of some anti-government groups make their ethnic nations the target for the military operations of the SPDC which also results in the flow of illegal migrants. They flee

[25] According to Thornton's opinions, the river is very dangerous in the rainy season because of the muddy and swift of the river. Please see Thornton, 2006:51. Yet, I had never heard that there was anyone drowned in the river or washed away by the river water. They always seem to know the most proper and safe time to proceed with the activity.

[26] The average standard salary for Burmese migrant workers is around 3000-4000 Baht. On this pay is not possible for Thai to survive in Mae Sot, but, compared to it in Burma, it is a huge money for Burmese migrants. According to the labor law of Thailand, the minimum wage must be around 7000 Baht, but it is not applied to Burmese migrants. For proprietors of factories or shops, to gain the most profits is the purpose. Decreasing personnel cost is one of the ways to gain profits. The expectation of reducing personnel cost is the thrust pushing Thai residents out of the labor market while the comparative high salary is the traction pulling the Burmese migrants into the market. That the job opportunities are occupied by Burmese migrants is therefore the natural outcome of law of maximal profits.

to Mae Sot for a life without fear. Some of them remain in downtown while some of them find a way to settle themselves in refugee camps.

Normally, those who migrate to Mae Sot for economic survival are usually perceived as voluntary migrants as they are not displaced by natural disasters or wars. They are seen to leave their homeland of their own voluntary will. With regard to those leaving for a life without fear, they are usually identified as involuntary migrants and termed as refugees. Nevertheless, the factors that encourage the Burmese people to enter and stay in Mae Sot, legally or illegally, with the interconnected social, economic, and political factors in Burma. The interconnectedness makes it difficult to purely distinguish between "economic" and “political” migrants, or in another words, voluntary and involuntary migrants. (Dennis Arnold and Kevin Hewison, 2005: 320). The distinction is simply an ideal type. I will illustrate later through examples that some people come to Mae Sot not only for economic but also for political reasons.

Illegal and legal simultaneously

If the Burmese migrants enter Thai territory illegally, they are not permitted to work and stay in Mae Sot. Even those entering with one-day passes are not supposed to work in Mae Sot either. However, according to a report written by the Federation of Trade Unions-Burma (FTUB), Burmese migrant workers constitute around 95% of the laborers in the roughly 200 factories in Tak province (FTUB, 2004). At the same time, according to Thai regulations, migrant workers need to register with the Thai authority. One Burmese migrant worker might possess two identifications that contradict each other: illegal migrant yet legal migrant worker. How can they show up illegally but work legally? How does this contradictory situation happen?

According to Arnold and Hewison, following the Chatichai Choonhavan government (1988-91) policy of "constructive engagement" with Burma, factories began to open in and relocate to Mae Sot. Constructive engagement means an increasingly porous border for capital, goods, and laborers. When the cost of labor increased during the boom decade of Thailand (1986-96) and wages grew at 8% a year, increasing numbers of Burmese workers started to migrate to Thai territory for

low-wage jobs often shunned by locals. Such jobs are primarily found in fisheries processing, agriculture, domestic work, sex work, and labor-intensive factories. The economy of Mae Sot hence increasingly relied on the cheap migrant workers (2005: 319).

In 1996 when KNU headquarter were captured by the Burmese Junta, numerous people fled from Burma to Thai territory. Among the people who crossed the border some were settled in refugee camps while some were not. Refugees plus the previous migrants generated a more complicated situation in which it is much more difficult for Thai authorities to manage the illegal migrant workers. In order to prevent the situation from getting out of control, the chamber of commerce in Tak province proposed a solution to congress. In 1997, the Thai congress directed that migrant workers have to be registered and issued temporary work permits. Since then, if Thai employers want to hire Burmese migrant workers, they need to apply for work permits for their workers; furthermore, if they live in Mae Sot, a residence permit is needed as well. That Burmese people possess legal and illegal identification simultaneously therefore occurs.

Any employer who hires a migrant worker without a work permit will be fined. Of course, the fine is normally deducted from the worker's wages. If migrant workers are arrested, they will end up for nothing and be deported to Burma.

Another situation results in the coexistence of legality and illegality. The costs of work permit and residence permit are deducted from workers' wages. Because the employers pay the fee for their employees in advance, if the employees quit the job before the fee is repaid, employers will lose money. This creates incentives for employers to control their workers. Employers usually give copies of the permits to workers while keeping the originals along with themselves. If polices stop Burmese migrants to check their permits, as long as they present the copies, generally there will be no problem unless there is an order from the central government to crack-down on "illegal" Burmese migrants. Yet, copies are not recognized by the police. Under this situation, Burmese migrants work in the workplace legally but appear in other places illegally as if they do not have any legal documents. What is interesting is that even though the copies are not recognized by police, it does not mean that the people holding the copies will be arrested and deported. I saw polices

stop couples of Burmese migrants to check their documents. They just presented their copies of the permit and left without any harassment.

Not all migrant workers hold work permits. The permit fee is paid by the employer in advance. Sometimes, employers running small factories and farms can not afford to or simply do not want to pay it. So, many workers remain illegally. Besides, as the registration is undertaken only twice per year, it also leaves many workers illegal through much of the year.

Economic activities

Mae Sot is located in Thai territory, but in downtown it is easier to encounter Burmese migrants and hear Burmese language than to encounter Thai citizens and hear Thai language. Under the situation of the continual flow and deportation of Burmese migrants, no one can accurately tell the proportion of Burmese migrants to Thai residents at any given time. My friend, Naw G, used to tell me that in Mae Sot, 80% of the total population consists of Burmese migrants. However, the remainders are not exactly natural Thai citizens. The proportion of foreigners such as aid workers and tourists is so small that I will not discuss it here. Yet, many Burmese people who stay in Mae Sot for a long time, save some money, know some big men, or have relatives in the Mae Sot area are granted or "make" Thai IDs. For this reason, she said that in Mae Sot naturally born Thai residents are supposedly less than 15% of the total population. Naw G is a Karen who escaped from Karen state and arrived in Mae Sot in 1996. She acquired a Thai ID in 2003. In addition, most of the Karen people who have Thai IDs and work for INGOs are from refugee camps; the refugees are from Burma and can be deemed involuntary Burmese migrants.[27]

As a matter of fact, the institutional blindness to the number of Burmese migrants is the outcome of deliberate measures. Mae Sot needs cheap labor but is unwilling to recognize it publicly.

[27] Before 1980s, Karen land was perceived as a buffer zone preventing the potential intrusion from Burmese Junta. At that period, the KNU was unofficially allowed to show up in Thailand's border town. Some of KNU leaders make Thai IDs for themselves and their children. When their children grow up, they usually work for INGOs. Because they are the descendents of KNU leaders, they are normally the supporters of Karen cause. This situation results in the close relationships between INGOs and the KNU.

Because of the distinctive structure of the population, the economy in Mae Sot is therefore underpinned by, and the life over there is embraced by, Burmese migrants. The economy underpinned, the life embraced by Burmese migrants and the paradoxical legal status of Burmese migrant workers commonly generate a distinctive ambiance of Mae Sot. This ambiance is also related to its borderness mentioned above. All the economic and social-cultural activities take place in such ambiance.

The economic activities are similar to other cities in Thailand but just smaller in scale.

In downtown, there are two large-scale hospitals; one is public while the other is private. There are two telephone companies, one telegram office, and four banks of which one is the branch of national bank, which is the Bangkok Bank. In addition, there are four 7-11s, one two story bookstore, one traditional market, one night market where people can have a delicious dinner, one disco pub where there are live performances, three mini supermarkets one of which is Tesco, a couple of clinics, and a myriad of restaurants, guest houses, hotels, internet bars, sex houses, karaoke bars, massage shops, night bars, tailors shops, mobile phone shops, grocers, hardware stores, jewelers, computer shops, and electronic shops.

Two one-way roads which serve as Mae Sot's main roads intersect downtown. Most of the shops along the main roads are run by Chinese-Thai whose parents, grand parents, or great-grand parents came from the provinces of Southern China such as Fujian and Guangdong. A few are from Laos and Burma. Other shops and bars in downtown are run by Thai and Chinese-Thai. A street passing in front of the public hospital, Mae Sot General Hospital, intersects with the two main roads. This street and its nearby areas are occupied by Muslims. Most of the Muslims are from Burma. During British colonization of Burma, a lot of Indians and Indian Muslims moved to Burma for business. After Burma acquired independence, some of them fled to Thailand's border towns to survive. These Muslims live together naturally. Later on, Burmese migrant Muslims came to stay with them and the areas they lived in became Muslim areas gradually. Along this street, all the shops are run by Muslims.

In the suburbs of Mae Sot, there are many big quarries, cloths factories, lumber-mills, and sandstone polishing factories. The biggest cloth factory contracts with Camel to manufacture its products. Camel is an international brand famous for outdoor T-shirts and trousers.

Generally, the industries in Mae Sot are small-scale and labor-intensive. It is very similar to the economic model of Taiwan around the 1970s. In the downtown, we can easily find "small factories" crowded with workers. They sit and work side by side. The so called small factory is usually a house or the first floor of an apartment along the roadside. If we walk by on the street without paying attention, we will never know where the factory is and how many factories we pass by. The reasons are that the doors of the factories are usually closed and the outward appearances of those factories make people believe that they are supposed to be "homes." When the owner of the factory puts some sewing machines or jewelry polishing machines inside particular house, it becomes a factory immediately.

It is even labor-intensive in big factories and sex houses. In big factories, Burmese laborers sit side by side to work as well. In this respect sex houses are labor-intensive. Burmese girls sit side by side inside and outside the houses with bare midriffs, miniskirts or other sexy dresses to wait for the coming of costumers.

Except for bank receptions, doctors and nurses in hospitals and clinics, teachers in public schools, public servants, as well as the management and running of shops and companies, Burmese migrants dominate almost all job opportunities because of the low salary standard. For example, in the traditional market, almost 80% of vendors are Burmese migrants while Burmese migrants riding tricycles to carry Burmese migrants can be seen at every corner.

What described above is the normal daily scene of Mae Sot. As we look deeper, we will find that the economic activities are founded on a distinct exchange model. The structure of population and the paradoxical legal status of Burmese migrants jointly create a gray zone wherein, by the operation and the manipulation of the exchange model, illegal migrants can survive and simultaneously fall prey for corrupt officials wanting bribes and bosses wanting laborers (Thornton, 2006:74).

The model can be divided into two types: one is legal and permitted by law while the other is illegal by nature yet conducted above table as if legal.

According to my interviews conducted in 2004, the yearly work permit is around 2500 Baht. Because of the hike in petrol prices, the fee for a work permit was hiked up too. In 2008, the fee for purchasing a yearly work permit is around 3,900 Baht. If there are 1000 Burmese migrants, legally or illegally, the Thai authorities can gain 3,900,000 Bhat per year let alone the amounts of Burmese migrants are more than 1000 and residence permit is not included yet. These huge economic profits allow illegal migrants survive in Mae Sot. They are granted legal work permits even though they immigrated to Mae Sot illegally. They exchange the price of a work permit for the survival in Mae Sot.

As for the second type, there are two sub-types. One takes place between individual Burmese people and the police while the other occurs among people involving in the exchange activities.

Along the road of the riverbank nearby the border market, many vendors sell crags, shrimps, as well as unlicensed wine and cigarettes. They cross the border river without passes. Because they only sell the commodities along the road of riverbank rather than entering the downtown, they are not the concern for police and the patrols. Such unconcern provides a practical understanding of the border situation.

As discussed above, people dwelling in two sides of the border always proceed with their daily economic activities. However, the demarcated boundary between Thailand and Burma transformed the previously natural economic activities into illegal ones. In order to avoid potential trouble, Burmese people know that they can give some cigarettes or other materials to the police or patrols for a “peaceful appearance.” This type of exchange activity can be seen quite often. During the period of my fieldworks, I saw it whenever I went to the border market.

An exchange model which usually takes place between two people is small in scale. In addition to this small sub-type model, there is a larger one.

Since the legal status of Burmese migrants is vague, they are easy prey for corrupt officials. If a Burmese migrant arriving in Mae Sot illegally and having no work permit is stopped by police, he/she will be fined 500 Baht. If a Burmese migrant coming to Mae Sot with a one-day pass and having no work permit is stopped by the police, he/she will be fined as well.

If the police are undertaking a crackdown on illegal migrants, or "big-men" from the central government are visiting Mae Sot, those who are usually fined legally will instead be detained and deported to Myawaddy. Certainly, because it is not possible to go back to the workplace, the work opportunities of migrants who are "legally detained and deported" might be ended at the moment they are detained.

However, as mentioned above, the borderline is a porous net. Anyone who has been deported can usually come back to Mae Sot at any time if they want. As a joke circulating in Mae Sot says, "When the police want to deport illegal migrants, they stop the car in front of entrance of the border bridge and let the migrants walk back to Myawaddy by crossing the bridge. When the Thai police chat with Burmese officials, the migrants wade the river to Mae Sot again. They are even back in Mae Sot faster than the police. If the police come back to Mae Sot and encounter the arrested migrants who are supposed to be in Myawaddy, they just nod to each other and say *Sawadee krap*." Anyway, police driving vans full of people to the border bridge is widely seen in Mae Sot.

Not all Burmese migrants found in Mae Sot are working there. Some people are in Mae Sot waiting for a meeting with a "carry" in order to go to other big cities for higher pay.[28] The cost of the trip to Bangkok is 8000 Baht per person, which includes the petrol cost, driver fee, profits of the carry, and a "kindness to police." When migrants come back to Mae Sot, they have to pay the police at the checkpoints again.

As it is not necessary to provide documents or IDs while buying tickets or boarding the bus, the Burmese migrants normally come back to Mae Sot by public bus. When they are asked to disembark and wait at a checkpoint, I seldom saw a disturbance occur. There might be a customary price. On 5th January 2008, I took the night bus to Mae Sot. When the driver stopped in front of one checkpoint, all the passengers left their seats and waited to register their name with the police, peacefully and orderly. It turned out that they were all Burmese migrants and they were going back to Burma. It is obvious that a tacit understanding exists between

[28] "Carry" is job agent. They are so nicknamed because they usually use Carryboy minivans to take Burmese migrants to other cities. Please see Phil Thornton, 2006: 77.

the police and Burmese migrants. The tacit understanding allows this exchange model to operate smoothly.

This tacit understanding exists on every corner in Mae Sot. Even some sex houses are protected or run by police.

Therefore, as Thornton told us: "every meal cooked, shirt washed, road or house built, rice paddy planted, fish caught, garment sewn has been done by migrant sweat. Hotels, manufacturers, construction companies, governmental officials and police all the advantage by either underpaying illegal migrants or stealing their money. Tourists, aid workers, and people like me, reap the benefits of this by enjoy cheap food, accommodation, cleaning services and transport" (2006: 104). One Thai official even acknowledges, "if there are no Burmese, who is going to fill all the factories? It's easy money for the police, Immigration and the rest—that's why they keep it going. They are only active when Bangkok orders a crack-down on illegals" (ibid: 106).

Cultural Activities

Thailand is called Buddha kingdom. Buddhism is the national religion but other religions such as Islam, Christianity and Catholicism are not prohibited. The same as in other cities, there are many monasteries in Mae Sot and most of the local Thai residents are Buddhists. In addition to monasteries, there exist three Mosques and one Chinese Temple. The Birthday of Buddha, Water Festival, and any other nationwide holidays are celebrated in Mae Sot as well. The difference is that because Buddhism is also the national religion in Burma and most of the Burmese migrants are Buddhists, they also attend all the Festivals related to Buddhism. In addition, they attend all of the celebrations for Thai nationwide holidays. As the population of Burmese migrants is more than Thai people, most of the attendees are Burmese migrants.

Loi Katong is one of the most important traditional holidays in Thailand. People put small lightships made of flowers into river to thank Buddha for the rich water resource, to pray for the blessing from Buddha, and/or to beg for the departure of misfortune. The day to celebrate depends on the circulation of moon. According to the western calendar, *Katong* usually occurs in the middle of November.

In 2004, I went to Moei River to watch people launching the lightships. As anticipated before going there, the riverbank was crowded with Burmese migrants. Some Thai employers even rented *Song Teao*s to drive them back and forth between downtown and the border river. They went there and put lightships in the river to pray for their own health, their family's health, as well as for a change in Burma.

According to Chinese culture, the 7th lunar month is the ghost month. In this month, the door of hell is opened and the ghosts leave for the world of human beings. People who are alive have to prepare some sacrificial offerings to the ghosts for their blessing and safety. Some rich people distribute foods to the poor. In Mae Sot, the rich Chinese-Thai practice this culture as well. What is interesting is that on the day of food distribution the Chinese Temple is always crowded with Burmese migrants waiting to receive the distribution no matter whether or not they have a job (Picture 2). They can get one pack of rice that weighs around 5 kilos. It can feed one person for a couple of weeks. Even during Chinese New Year, Burmese migrants know where they can ask for red envelopes. All the rich and benevolent Chinese-Thais will give them a red envelope if they congratulate them with the hands folded.

Burmese people surely have their own holidays. According to Karen myth, there are nine *ddy*s in the Karen land and Myawaddy is one of the *ddy*s. Therefore, quite many Burmese people migrating from Myawaddy to Mae Sot, whose ethno background is Karen.

The 15th of August of the Karen calendar is the *La Gu Gi Se* known as Wrist Tying Day. A big celebration is usually organized in a monastery located in Mae Ba, a suburb of Mae Sot. When La Gu Gi Se was organized, many of the Karen migrants went to Mae Ba to celebrate their traditional festival. Interestingly, in addition to Karen, people with other ethnic backgrounds also went to the celebration. When I volunteered for TOPS in 2004, I went to Mae Ba to attend the celebration. Some of my friends told me that there were some Burman people over there. I did not know exactly which organization organized the celebration, but I presumed that it was organized by the KNU. KNU leaders appeared and lectured and most of the Karen wore traditional costumes on which a Karen flag or Karen drum was

embroidered.[29] Students from one migrant school which has a connection with the KNU performed the traditional *Don Dance*. The dance is performed only among Burmese-Karen.

Picture 2: Burmese Migrants Waiting for Rice distribution.

On ordinary days, the police sometimes set temporary checkpoints in downtown to check for illegal migrants. However, on such days with traditional cultural meanings, the police do not check people for documentation. They even dispatch police to where the celebration is being held to maintain order. During other days, Burmese migrants might be arrested, detained, hassled or asked for bribes, but on such days, they do not need to worry about the police. They have freedom to travel in Mae Sot even if they enter Thai territory legally. I call it "freedom derived from days" or "one day freedom."

[29] These two symbols represent the Karen revolution. It is unusual to see Thai-Karen wearing costumes embroidered with these two symbols. In Chapter 6, we will see how the Karen make use of these symbols to mobilize people's loyalty toward and passion for their nationalism.

Non-statused Refugees

The reason that Burmese migrant workers come to Mae Sot is because they can not survive in Burma. Some of them are coming for a meal, yet some cross the border not only for a meal but also for political ends or a life without fears.

In August 2004, one day, while idling around downtown, I found that the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) Mae Sot branch was crowded with people who were trying to apply for refugee status or asylum. I met one Karen family who lived behind the office of the UNHCR. They did not participate in anti-government movements while they were in Burma. They were just ordinary civilians. Yet, because the military regime enforced a relocation policy and the soldiers of the regime raped any girl they encountered in the family's village, they decided to flee to Thailand. They did not settle in the refugee camps because they preferred to have the 'normal' life of other migrant workers. The parents of the family were looking for a job in downtown.

On another day, I met a teacher in a migrant school. He used to take part in anti-government movements. The school he taught at was located in the yard of a Community Based Organization (CBO). It is the B-1 organization. The name of the B-1 organization lets people think that it might be a group devoting itself to free trade with Burma, but it actually has been implementing many projects to enlighten ordinary Burmese civilian to turn against the military regime. It is as a matter of fact a political organization rather than a pure economic organization. The teacher also participated in the activities launched by the B-1 organization.

The B-1 organization is an underground organization. It is not registered with the Minister of Interiors (MOI). By law, it does not have the right to implement any project no matter whether it is political or humanitarian.

The teacher is an activist personally engaged in activities that the military regime seeks to terminate while the family belongs to an ethnic nation targeted for abuse. They all are the victims and are not able to survive in their own land. According to the definition of the *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees 1951* (1951 Convention), there is no doubt that the family and the teacher are

refugees.[30] Yet, since they did not register with UNHCR, they do not have refugee status. They are non-statused refugees.

As a matter of fact, many non-statused refugees live in Mae Sot. They appear in Mae Sot for various reasons. One day in March 2008, I went to the B-1 organization to visit a friend who settled in Mae La camp but left to work with the organization. I met Naw B who was from Myawaddy. Naw B and her brother came to Mae Sot a couple of months before my visiting. Due to the human rights abuses against Karen people and the support of the political transformation of Burma, they left for Mae Sot to work with the B-1 organization. They did not register with the UNHCR. They had Burma IDs but had no documents to prove their legal identification in Mae Sot. In addition, B-1organization had been a target the SPDC continued to attempt to exterminate. If they went back to Burma, they would be arrested, detained, or even executed "legally" by the SPDC. However, neither Naw B nor her brother registered with the UNHCR. They did not enjoy the protections of the 1951 Convention. For these reasons they are non-statused refugees.

If there exist non-statused refugees, there must exist statused refugees. What does the status in question imply?

Refugee registration is one of UNHCR's routine works. Through registration, refugees are issued a refugee card by the UNHCR and thus acquire refugee status. After registration, the term "refugee" is no longer an ambiguous term used to identify a category of the population fleeing from their homeland. Rather, refugees become a group protected by the 1951 Convention and theoretically enjoy the rights provided for them.

If one refugee registers with the UNHCR, he/she will have the entitlement to apply for resettlement to another country, to reject refoulement.[31] The status of a

[30] The definition indicates that refugee is someone who is (1) outside his or her own country of origin: (2) in fear of persecution "for the reasons of race, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion," determined on an individual basis: (3) owing to such fear, is unable or unwilling to to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country. Please see Lang, 2002: 14.

[31] During the Cold War, the Western approaches to refugee policy focused on the status of "exiles" that is the notion that people are "voting with their feet" by seeking resettlement opportunities. After 1990s, because of the unending internal wars around the world and the compassion fatigue of host countries, repatriation became the predominant focus for refugee solution. Yet, consider that the refugees might be persecuted or even executed by the regime of their countries of origin, non-refoulement as the principle which prohibits the expulsion or the return to the place where they might face human right abuse has attainted the status in customary international law. Lang, ibid:

refugee might be hence perceived as "refugeeship." The term "non-staused" therefore signifies a refugee without refugeeship. Non-statused refugees can be deported by a host country to the country of origin even though their life or freedom probably will be threatened when doing so.

"Statused" and "non-statused" are therefore not only a way to group and define involuntary migrants, but also a way to manage the distribution of humanitarian resources and to practice the protection of refugees.

By Thai authorities' regulation, refugees are not allowed to leave refugee camps. In Chapter 4, we can see if refugees wanna leave the camps, they have to "buy" permission. In the meantime, the UNHCR periodically carry out registration in refugee camps. Therefore, theoretically, statused refugees are all fenced in refugee camps and only non-statused refugees can be found in Mae Sot. But, the truth is that there also exist statused refugees in Mae Sot.

Most of the Karen working with INGOs use to be settled in refugee camps but are granted Thai IDs for various reasons. After acquiring IDs, they leave the camps for working in Mae Sot. Acquiring a Thai ID does not mean that they will loose refugeeship, however. As registration is periodically conducted in the camps, so long as they go back to refugee camps to register with the UNHCR when the registration is conducted, they will still retain UN cards and enjoy the entitlements provided by international conventions. By my experiences, many Karen working for INGOs went back to refugee camps to register with the UNHCR when the process of registration began. For instance, in one INGO, five of the total nine Karen staff hold UN cards; another organization is jokingly termed a branch of KNU as over 90% of its Karen staff bear refugee status.

Nevertheless, actually merely a handful of refugees stay in Mae Sot. Most of the refugees, statused and non-statused, are settled in the refugee camps at the border areas.

16-17; regarding the legal aspects and the practices of non-refoulement, see Guy S. Goodwin-Gill, 1996: 137-155.

2. Karen's Struggle in History

The Origins and Classification of the Karen

The Karen is one of the native nations dwelling in Burma.[32] In Burma's 1931 census, 17 linguistic groups were identified as Karen. Yet, according to Karen nationalists, there are 28 cultural and linguistic groups within the Karen. But, all these groups fall broadly under the categories of Skaw and Pwo Karens.[33] The Pwo is largely concentrated in the Irrawaddy Delta and the northern Tenasserim. The Skaw is more diffused; they dwell throughout the Irrawaddy Delta, Tenasserim, the Pegu range between Irrawaddy and Sitan, as well as the eastern hills bordering with Thailand (Lee, 2001: 10). Karen languages are generally recognized as belonging to the Siamese-Chinese sub-family of the Tibeto-Chinese languages (Marshall, 1922/1997: 8).[34]

Interestingly, "Karen" as a label was originally used by outsiders to designate the people who speak the Karen language. It is not the term originally used by Karen people to designate the "self." The Skaw Karen call themselves *Bua K'nyaw* while the self-designative term in Pwo Karen is *Phloug*. The reason that "Karen" becomes the self-designative term is that when western missionaries came to Burma to spread Christianity, they first encountered the Burman and learned that the Burman called the indigenes who spoke a different language *Kayin*. The Burman differentiates between Skaw and Pwo by the names Bama Kayin (Burmese Karen) and Talaing Kayin (Mon Karen) (Lebar, 1964: 58; Stern, 1968: 299). The early missionaries therefore used "Karen" to designate this native nation. Thus, Hayami Yoko suggests that the term "Karen" is a top-down term (Hayami, 2004: 23).[35]

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[32] Burma is not the only country where the Karen inhabits. The areas inhabited by the Karen range from southern Yunnan province in China southward through Laos, Burma and Thailand.

[33] In the field, some Karen people said that the Pa-O and the Karenni are also members of the Karen. But, Ronald D. Renard indicates that most of the Pa-O people do not see themselves as a subgroup of Karen. Please see Renard, 1980: 4-17. When I traveled to a Pa-O village, my Karen friends usually reminded me that we were in a Pa-O village. On the contrary, if we visited a Karen village they never reminded me in such a way. The Karenni is known as "longneck people." They pursue their own state through their revolutionary organization and differentiate themselves from the Karen.

[34] Saw Aung Hla explains the linear development on the pedigree of the subgroups. Please see Aung Hla, 2004: 113-122.

[35] Harry Ignatius Marshall notes that some believe this term "is derived from the name by which

The KNU estimated in 1994 that the total Karen population was around 4 million. Due to the extreme conditions facing the Karen people everyday, which include war, imprisonment, unexplained disappearances, as well as the resettlement policy being implemented in refugee camps, no exact figures of the Karen population are currently available.

The Karen did not originate in Burma. The original habitat of the Karen people was in *Htee Hset Met Y'wa*, the land of flowing sand bordering the source of Yellow River in the Gobi Desert (KNU, 2000: 5). Saw Aung Hla, a Karen historian, suggests that in the years between 1134 BC and 1122 BC, during the Xia dynasty, a cruel and despotic king ruled over the land of China. Karen dwelling in the land suffered a common fate with other peoples living under Xia's rule. In order to escape this despotism, the Karen began migrating southward (Aung Hla, 2004: 103). They crossed the Gobi Desert and migrated to Tibet, Yunnan Province and then to Southeast Asia (Klein, ND: 84, Marshall, 1922/1997: 5).[36] The first wave of migration to Southeast Asia occurred in 1125 BC. The places to which Karen settlers migrated are now known as Tonkin, Siam and Burma. Around 90 tribes first migrated into Burma while 33 tribes remained in China. The second wave of migration to Burma was in 739 BC (Aung Hla, ibid, 103-112).[37]

The origins of the Karen mentioned above are generally accepted by scholars and the Karen themselves. Nevertheless, there are three other non-mainstream theories regarding their origins. Firstly, E. B. Cross heard a story that "the Karen came westward across a body of water called *Kaw* or *Kho* which was so wide that hornbills spent one week flying across it." He concluded that "the Karen people were Caucasians from India who crossed by the Bay of Bengal to the Irrawaddy

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Red Karen call themselves." Red Karen is so-called Karenni. Please see Marshall, 1922/1997: 6.

[36] There are some debates regarding the exact place of the land of flowing sand. Please see Klein, ND: 84; Dun, 1980: 1-3.

[37] Almost all peoples have their own legendaries of origin and migration. The importance of this kind of legendary does not lie in whether it is true. Instead, it is the way to understand how a group of people comprehend their origins, and how a collective memory of migration is used and interpreted. As Wang Mingke, borrowing the concept of Marilyn Silverman, in his book researching ethnic Qiang (羌族) says, such legendary tells us how the past led to and created the present and how constructions of the past are used to explain the present. Please see Wang, 2003: xii-xxii. Actually, there are various versions on the legendary of migrating to south. One of the more universally accepted is *Htaw Meh Pa*. *Htaw Meh Pa* is the mythical founder of Karen, who lived in an unknown land to the north. When the place Karen people dwell was overpopulated, *Htaw Meh Pa* decided to lead his descendants to seek a new land.

Delta" (Renard, 1980: 34).

Secondly, Harry Ignatius Marshall suggests that the Karen might be one of the four ancient tribes of China, namely, Ch'iang.[38] "Ch", the first part of the word, means people; "Yang" is the distinctive tribal name. Turning to the Karen tongue, *Bua* means people; K'nyaw is composed of *K'*, which is the prefix for a tribal group, and *Nyaw*, which is a derivative of *Yang* with the final *ng* softened to *aw*. The final nasal *ng* softened to the open syllable *aw* can be found in many words in dialects or in Burmese; and *n* and *ny* are interchangeable. Thus it is like the source from which the Burmese *Kayin* is derived (Marshall, 1922/1997: 8).

The third theory posits that the Karen is the lost tribe of the Jews. This interpretation is derived from the traditional religion of Karen. In 1827, during the pre-colonial period, when the early missionaries first encountered Karen, they were surprised at Karen monotheistic traditions, including a creation story similar to that in the Book of Genesis in the Old Testament. For example, in the work of Francis Mason, an early missionary, a translation of a portion of the Karen *Y'wa* (God) poem reads: "God is unchangeable, eternal; he was in the beginning of the world. God is endless and eternal; he existed in the beginning of the world. God is truly unchangeable and eternal; he existed in ancient time, at the beginning of the world. The life of God is endless; a succession of worlds does not measure His existence. God is perfect in every meritorious attribute, and dies not in succession of worlds" (cited from Klein, ND: 89).

In the minds of the early missionaries, only religions based on the Old Testament or the New Testament had the character of monotheism. When missionaries found out that monotheism also existed in Karen's belief system, they thought that Karen might be one of the lost tribes of Israel, or at least the Karen must had been in contact with Jews who were believed to have migrated to the East in ancient times (Marshall, 1922/1997: 10; Hayami, 2004: 28).

Ronald D. Renard argues that except for some parallels between the Karen and

[38] The pronunciation is similar to the Qiang people (羌族) in China. According to Chinese myth, Fu Xi (伏羲), You Chao (有巢), Shen Nong (神農) and Xuan Yuan (軒轅) are the four ancient peoples in China. Wang Mingke in his book on the Qiang argues that the Qiang were derivative of the Shen Nong. Please see Wang, 2003: Ch 5. The third theory about Karen's origins suggests that the Karen are the same as the Qiang.

the Ch'iang all the non-mainstream theories are dubious if we examine the relationship between the time of the Karen migration and the chaos in their original habitat (Renard, 1980: 35). Regarding the Karen as a lost tribe of the Jews, Mikael Graver in his work implicates that the early missionaries drew a link between the Karen and the Jews not to prove that the Karen are really the descendants of Jews, but simply to make their preaching easier and more successful (Gravers, 1996: 251-252). However, it is important to note that this interpretation reflects the relationship of Christianity to Karen nationalism. The relationship will be discussed in Chapter 3. As to the first theory, it is just a flash in the pan; it does not incite any debates or further exploration.

Beginnings of National Subjectification

The Karen nationalist movement was launched at the end of the colonial era. However, by briefly retracing the relationship between the Karen and the Burman, we find that the movement has its roots in the communal tension between the Karen and the Burman over *la longue durée*.

Pre-colonial period: Oppression and "Enlightenment"

According to a booklet published by the KNU,[39] "the Karen descend from the same ancestors as the Mongolian people, settled in Htee Hset Met Ywa (Land of Flowing Sands), a land bordering the source of the Yang-tse-Kiang river in the Gobi Desert. From there, we migrated southwards and gradually entered the land now known as Burma in about 739 BC……The Mons were the next to enter this area, followed at their heel by the Burman……Both the Mons and Burman brought with them feudalism, which they practiced to the full. The Burman later won the feudal war, and they subdued and subjugated all other nationalities in the land. The Karen suffered untold miseries at the hand of their Burman lords……"(KNU, 2000: 1-2).

From KNU's point of view, the Karen once lived in better conditions, but due to the subjugation of the Burman and the Mon, they became slaves. The oppressed image is the conventional account of the self-recognition in the pre-colonial period.

[39] This booklet is used to propagandize the cause, goal and legitimacy of Karen struggle.

Fro instance, Smith Dun, a Karen general educated under British tutelage, says that the Karen once lived with happiness, but after the Mon and the Burman came to Burma, they sooner lapsed into enslavement (Dun, 1980:4).[40]

In the pre-colonial period, the Karen did not appear to have political structures beyond the village or local levels, in contrast with their Burman, Mon and Shan neighbors who established city kingdoms to guard against invaders (Smith, 2000: 11).[41] In addition, they did not have written language to convey knowledge and history (Dun, 1980: 5; Cheesman, 2002: 209-210).[42] For these two reasons, the Karen had been exploited by peoples who had relatively more advanced political systems that superseded the local level. While Mon ruled over Lower Burma, many Pwo Karen developed a close association with the Mon people and converted to Buddhism. These Pwo Karen gradually assimilated into Mon society and lost their language. When the Burman king in Upper Burma attacked the Mon kingdom in the 1750s and 1780s, Karen people were persecuted for supporting the Mon (Fink, 2001: x-xi).

In 1824-1825, due to tensions over territorial boundaries between the Burman-led Kongbaung kingdom and British India, Burman-led troops crossed into India and the British responded by sending troops into Burma. Unable to repel British troops, King Bagyidaw was forced to cede Arakan and Tenaserim to Britain in 1826. This conflict is referred to as the first Anglo-Burman war.

Before the war, a few American missionaries had been granted permission by the authorities of Burman kingdom to enter Lower Burma, though they were not allowed to enter eastern Burma. After the war, some American missionaries established churches in the British-controlled areas. When the Karen heard that the

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[40] For example, under Burman feudalism, Karen people were levied annual imposts estimated to be nine to ten kyats of silver per head, which was double the amount required of a Burmese family. Those residing along the routes traveled by the army on the way to the war against Siam were forced to join the army to supply the needed manpower. Please see Hayami, 2004: 35; Rolly, 1980: 16.

[41] Smith Dun, citing the words of Dr. Mason and Dr. Dodd, two early missionaries, opines that it is not unlikely that the Karen formerly had their own government. For example, when Mason traveled in a Karen region, his translator always told him stories about the beautiful capital of the Karen country. In addition, noting the fact that Karenni had been free from the control of Burman feudalism and British colonialism, Mason thought that the Karen country might have existed a long time ago. Nevertheless, Mason mentioned that his translator had never given him a satisfactory answer as to the exact location of the beautiful capital. Please see Smith Dun, 1980: 1-4.

[42] Actually, according to Karen myth, the people once had their own written characters encapsulated in a book, but they lost it while migrating southward. The written characters apparently looked like "chicken script." Please see Kwanchewan, 2007.

British defeated a Burman-led kingdom, they believed that the end of Burman feudalism was in sight (Stern, 1968: 306), and that the prophesy given by their *Y'wa* myth was going to be realized. This myth told the Karen people that their white brother would come to them with knowledge to save them out of enslavement. Accordingly, a steady stream of Karen from nearby Burman-controlled areas traveled to Arakan and Tenaserim to learn the "knowledge" brought by the early missionaries, their presumed white brothers.

In 1832, borrowing from Burmese script, an American missionary, Dr. Wade, created the Karen script and translated the Bible and other Christian literatures into the Karen language. Since then, the Karen has had its own written system.

Knowing Karen people were eager to learn from the early missionaries, the Burman officials suspected that the Karen would conspire with the British to remove them from power. The officials hence imprisoned Karen either for converting to Christianity or for being able to read and write (Fink, 2001: xii). Despite these hurdles, the Karen had the opportunity to learn the script as well as to access the "knowledge" and skills brought by their "white younger brethren." because of the work of missionaries. Missionaries established schools and taught Karen people some technical subjects in Karen, English and Burmese languages, which could be practically used at the village level. The construction of printing presses to serve religious and educational needs stimulated the emergence of the first Karen language press, The Morning Star, in Rangoon in 1842 (Gravers, 1996: 252; Keyes, 1977: 56). Under British tutelage, there gradually arose a group of Karen elites that included teachers, doctors, clergies and other intellectuals.

At the same time, due to the abuses of the Burman feudalism, in the second Anglo-Burman war of 1852-1853, many Karen desired to fight with the British in order to achieve the future prophesized in their *Y'wa* myth. The myth told the Karen that after the white brother came to them, they would have an ideal kingdom within which they could be free from fear of the oppression imposed by other people.[43]

[43] Such kind of belonging, according to Lebar, can be regarded as national consciousness consistent with the European sense (Lebar, 1963: 59). He believes that the roots of Karen nationalism began with British rule after the first Anglo-Burman war and took shape in the second Anglo-Burman war. However, because the Karen had yet to propose a certain political blueprint, I argue that the national consciousness in this period was merely an incipient national consciousness. Further details will be discussed in Chapter 3.

In 1881, as a sign of the growth of a nascent national consciousness the Karen National Association (KNA), the precursor to the current KNU, was organized to "promote Karen identity, leadership, education, and writing and to bring about the social and economic advancement of the Karen peoples" among different dialect groups and religions, as well as to act as the spokesman to protect Karen against future Burman domination (Smith, 1999: 45). This was the first nationalist organization in Karen history.

The seeds of Karen nationalism notwithstanding, Britain assumed colonial power over Burma in 1886 following its annexation of Upper Burma and Lower Burma after the third Anglo-Burman war in 1884-1885 and the removal of Burman king (Sheppard, 1997: 571; Klein, ND: 2). Burma was proclaimed a province under the dominion of British India.

Colonial Period (1886-1948): Ethno-National Claims

After assuming ruling power, Britain instituted two political systems designed to keep the Burmese under control. The first system divided Burma into two jurisdictions: Burma Proper (or Ministerial Burma) and Frontier (or Scheduled) Areas. The second one imposed a plural society on Burma.

Britain instituted the first "divide and rule" system because London was unwilling to expend the resources of Britain and of India to rule the whole of Burma. According to British understandings, the Frontier Areas were a region deficient in resources, while Burma Proper was abundant in agriculture products. For Britain, the areas deficient in resources were not worth paying much attention to even though Burma was proclaimed as a province of British India. Accordingly, in the first divide and rule system, only Burma Proper was directly governed by the British Indian Governor while the Frontier Areas were ruled by native nations. For example, in the Frontier Areas, Britain recognized the status of the traditional confederations of Karenni and Shan. Their traditional political systems hence could be sustained (Silverstein, 1980; Smith, 1999).[44] Such a divide and rule system was

[44] The letter dated October 1886 from Lord Dufferin to the Secretary of India Viscount Cross said that the best way to rule Burma was to divide it into Burma Proper and unknown border areas: "We have to deal not with disintegrated masses as in Burma Proper, but with large organized units……If we secure the allegiance of these rules, we obtain as far as can be foreseen most of what

then considered the most efficient way to administer Burma

In addition to territorial division, the British imposed a "plural society" on Burma as a second mechanism to divide the Burmese. Plural society was a concept proposed by colonial officer J. S. Furnivall to serve a utilitarian purpose. In order to consolidate their colonial administration following the overthrow of the Burman kingdom, the British frequently recruited hill people such as Chin, Kachin and particularly Karen into the colonial defense force, but they primarily recruited Burman into the civil sector (Furnivall, 1956), thus reinforcing the existing ethnic divide.

These two systems resulted in some unintended consequences, however. The first was that dividing Burma into two jurisdictions resulted in decreased connections between Burma Proper and Frontier Areas. This division affected the Karen in particular since the Karen ranged from the eastern mountainous areas to the western plains. Christian Karen could make contact with their fellows who lived in the plains through churches, and those serving in colonial defense force could travel to the plains for official errands. Yet, the majority of Karen villagers in the mountains had never ventured beyond their locality and seldom had a chance to have contact with the plain Karen. Thus, it is not surprising that when nationalist thought was fermenting among plains Karen thanks to the Karen National Association (KNA), Karen in mountainous areas still had little idea of the emerging consciousness (Fink, 2001: xv).

The second unintended consequence was that British imposition of a plural society with ethnic groups occupying particular social and economic strata strongly influenced Karen and Burman's understandings toward each other (Fink, ibid: xvii). As mentioned, Karen people were usually recruited into the arm force while the Burman were normally recruited into the civilian sector. This exclusionary policy infuriated many Burmans and was believed to symbolize Britain's colonial power over their vanquished kingdom. With the arm force seen as a symbol of British colonization, Karen people were naturally perceived by the Burman as supporters of colonialism.

For the Karen, however, serving in the British arm force was regarded as a

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we required." Please see Martin Smith, 1999: 41.

means to realize the new world prophesized in *Y'wa* myth. Moreover, by serving for the British arm force, the Karen believed that they could protect themselves from enslavement by the Burman.

Before Burma acquired independence on 4 January 1948, both Karen and Burman elites did not hesitate to express their respective nationalist sentiments and political desires.

In 1917, the Chelmsfor-Montagu hearing was held in India to discuss the feasibility of introducing more self-governing institutions to Burma. The Karen National Association (KNA) and the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) each sent delegates to the hearing. The YMBA called for the separation of Burma and India in order to construct Burma as a distinct nation. The KNA, fearing the Karen would once again be enslaved by the Burman, argued that Burma should retain "strenuous training under British governance" (Smith, 1999: 51). In 1920, Britain formed the Burma Reform Committee Investigation (Whyte Committee) to investigate which powers should a reformed Burma administration be endowed. Recognizing a transition to self-government was inevitable, the KNA argued for a gradual transition and called for a separate Karen electorate, alongside the Burman; this was to protect the Karen from domination by the Burman in the new legislature. Meanwhile, radical Burman elites insisted that Burma had to be endowed with all administrative powers while their more conservative brethren accepted limited self-government but insisted on rebuffing the right of the Karen to elect their communal representatives in the future legislature. Despite the strong objections from the Burman, the KNA was still granted five seats in the 130-seat legislative Council (Smith, 1999: 51).

In light of the strong Burman opposition, the KNA believed that a communal electorate would not provide the Karen with sufficient protection from majoritarian rule. Karen leaders started to pursue a new goal: regional self-rule. Yet paradoxically, the Karen hoped that their "self-governing" region would remain under British sovereignty. They believed that this arrangement was the only path to advance socially, politically and economically without fear of being subject to Burman's subjugation. In 1928, San C. Po, viewed as the father of Karen nation, traveled to London to argue for the Tenasserim Division to become a separate Karen

Division federated to Burma but administered by the Karen apart from Burma Proper (San C. Po, 1928).[45] This was the first time that Karen proposed a separate administrative area distinct from the Burman's. At the end, however, the Britons were unwilling to grant San C Po's request because they believed doing so would infuriate the already restive Burman.

In 1930, the We Burmese Association (WBA) was formed to pursue the separation of Burma and India. In 1937, Burma and India were separated and Burma received a new constitution. Before Burma was partitioned from India, the WBA had opposed the communal electorate reserved for ethnic nations as they believed it was a strategy of Britain to divide Burma. The British nevertheless continued the communal electorate even after the partition. Dissatisfied, the Burman-led WBA decided to pursue outright independence.

During World War II, Japan promised the WBA independence for Burma. With Japan' support, the WBA, then known as the Thirty Comrades, went to Hainan Island and Taiwan to receive military training in 1940-1941 and returned to Burma equipped with Japanese troops. The Burmese Independence Army (BIA) was established and upon the capture of Rangoon, Japan granted "independence" to Burma (Sheppard, 1997: 572-573). However, before the collapse of the colonial administration, Karen had fought alongside the British against Japan and Burman nationalists. In retaliation for Karen's loyalty to the British, Burman nationalists committed violent crimes against the Karen, including murder and rape. Karen in turn retaliated against Burman, and the communal war between these two groups was ready to explode (Guyot, 1978).

After assuming control over Burma, Japan nominated a puppet government. Understanding that this so-called independence was merely ruled by a puppet government, Aung San, one of the members of the WBA, organized the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) in August 1944 to pursue genuine independence (Kratoska, 2002; Sheppard, 1997: 573). Interestingly, the Karen Central

[45] Actually, there are many kinds of sayings regarding the separate Karen Division. Rolley (1980) and Fink (2001) claim that San. C. Po demanded a separate state; Smith (2000) argues that San C. Po dedicated himself to a Karen state or homeland; Christie (2000) believes that he desired a special Karen state within a federalized "United States of Burma." However, in the work of San C. Po, he used the words province, state and country to indicate the Karen-governing areas. In order to not confuse readers, I use the neutral word "Division" to indicate what San. C. Po seemed to strive for.

Organization (KCO) was included in the AFPLF. The KCO was formed in 1943 to counter Japanese influence among the Karen and to prevent potential communal war between the Karen and the Burman during the Japanese occupation (Fink, 2001: xxiv). San C. Po was the chief patron of the KCO. The BIA was reorganized as the Burma National Army (BNA) and declared war on Japan on 27 March 1945.

Britain retook control of Burma after Japan was defeated in World War II. On 17 May 1945, Britain published a White Paper which stated that Burma was destined to complete self-rule with dominion status in the British Commonwealth similar to that of Canada and Australia (Silverstein, 1980: 65). With respect to the Frontier Areas, the White Paper ensured that the hill people, who were thought to be at a lower level of political development, would remain under British administration temporarily until they "are in a position to associate on more equal terms and until their people are willing to accept some suitable form of incorporation into that wider Burma polity" (Christie, 2000: 110).[46] Nevertheless, the White Paper was rebuffed by the AFPFL since it was perceived as another divide and rule scheme and an obstacle to the construction of a united Burma (Silverstein, 1980: 65-66).

Following a mass meeting in Rangoon, the KCO dispatched a 'Humble Memorial of the Karens of Burma' to the British secretary of state for Burma on 26 September 1945. The political demand of the meeting was to create the "United Frontier Karen States" that would include the "whole Tenasserim, Salween District, adjacent parts of Ministerial Burma where there was as substantial Karen population—and even the Karen populated parts of the border regions of eastern Thailand" (Christie, 2000: 111).[47] The British government did not respond to the request, however. Two months later, the KCO modified their proposal and pledged that the ultimate goal of the Karen was to federate with "moderate Burmese brothers sympathizing our national aspiration in the achievement of a Federated Dominion of Burma," but that British's protection was still expected due to their fears of Burman domination. Nonetheless, even this modified proposal was neglected by London

[46] Cited from House of Commons Debates, 1 June 1945: 411 HC Deb. 5 Series (HMSO, London, 1945), c. 495.

[47] In Martin Smith's findings, the territorial possessions the Karen acquired were large. They included "the entire Tenasserim Division as well as the Nyaunglebin subdivision of Pegu district and territory in Siam stretching as far as Chiang Mai." Please see Smith, 1999: 72.

(Renard, 1990: 100; Smith, 1999:72; Rogers, 2004: 82).

In March 1946, the first Panglong Conference was held, attended by delegates from Rangoon as well as Shan, Kachin and Chin chieftains. Karen representatives did not formally attend the Conference but participated as observers. The discussions revolved around the question of future autonomy for the ethnic nations. Despite the absence of a Karen platform, this Conference delineated a future Burma comprised of autonomous states for some ethnic nations. Notwithstanding reassurances from the delegates from Rangoon, all the representatives from the Frontier Areas doubted that Burman would permit them genuine self-rule (Fong, 2005: 125-126).

It is noted that the Karen had other objectives in mind and this was the reason that they did not attend the Conference (Fong, 2005: 126). In August 1946, a Goodwill Mission comprised of four trained Karen lawyers went to London to voice their demands for a national status under British direction on the basis that "95% of Karen in the hills are illiterate, and at least 90% of the whole population of Karen in Burma still do not even understand Burmese to an appreciable extent" (Rolley, 1980: 16). As the previous political demands, the voice was ignored by London again.

This voice was neglected for several factors. First of all, India was desirous of independence and the British Indian Army was no longer available to maintain political and social stability in British India including Burma. Secondly, the AFPFL and its military wing, the People's Volunteer Organization (PVO) had become the most powerful local opposition force in Burma and the one most capable of launching another war against British colonial rule. Thirdly, in London, the Labour Party took over power from the Conservatives. The propaganda of the Labour Party resonated with that of the AFPFL in that it was leftist in orientation and emphasized the right of self-determination for colonized peoples (Klein, ND: 46). The new British government stated that "Ministerial Burma and that known as the Frontier Areas are merely parts of the whole. They have been one in the past and they must remain one in the future" (Smith, 1999: 77). Britain decided to loosen its control and grant independence to Burma, designating the AFPFL as the only political party eligible to represent the independent Burma in political negotiations with London (Fong, 2005: 126).

Aung San went to London in January 1947 and signed an agreement on the 27 of that month with the British Labour Prime Minister Clement Atlee. The accord is known as the Attlee-Aung San Agreement, which promised that Burma would gain full independence within one year. It also stipulated an interim period in which an elected Constituent Assembly would decide the shape of the future Burma and the need "to achieve the early unification of the Frontier Areas and Ministerial Burma with the free consent of the inhabitants of those areas" was reaffirmed (Christie, 2000: 113). Since no representatives from any other ethnic nations were party to the accord, it was not perceived by other ethnic nations as a legitimate agreement (Fong, 2005: 131).

To Karen, the agreement represented a failure to achieve their political demand. Karen leaders decided to take action for themselves. The KCO, the KNA, the Baptist KNA, the Buddhist KNA and the Karen Youth Organization (KYO) gathered at the Vinton Memorial Hall in Rangoon for a pan-Karen Congress. They agreed to merge together into the Karen National Union (KNU) on 5 February 1947. The main resolutions of the Congress were to call for a separate Karen state with a seaboard and the continuance of racially exclusive Karen armed force (Smith, 1999: 83-84). The calls were set aside by Britain, as usual.

Following the agreement, while Karen nationalists were agitating for statehood, Aung San began preparing for talks with the Frontier Areas in order to earn the support of frontier peoples. On 12 February 1947, Aung San trekked to Shan areas to negotiate with all hill peoples in the hope of winning their support for the Union of Burma, during a meeting called the second Panglong Conference. At the conference, some deals were made. For examples, Aung San assured that "if Burman receives one Kyat, you will also get one Kyet" and "full autonomy in internal administration for the Frontier Areas is accepted in principle" (Smith, 1999: 78). The Karen did participate in the Conference due to their distrust of Burman-led AFPFL. Later on, Britain appointed a Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry (FACE) to investigate the problem of communal tension between the Burman and other ethnic nations. The Karen not only did not support the Committee of Enquiry, but even issued a statement before the Committee noted ominously: "The Karens of this area firmly claim that their right of self-determination be recognized by the

concession of a separate Colony for the Karens. If the British fail to honor this great responsibility of theirs, the Karens should not be blamed if they think of other alternatives to achieve their legitimate objectives" (FACE, quoted in Renard, 1990: 100).

This was the first time that the Karen proposed self-determination as their right. In addition, from the statement, it was obvious that the Karen was unsatisfied with British negligence of their political request. They were warning Britain that they would not deny the possibility of pursuing their aspired State through military means. As usual, Britain never responded to the statement.

On 9 June 1947, the Constituent Assembly was organized. Aung San proposed 14 resolutions as the basis for a prospective new constitution. His resolutions were based on the idea of a "union in diversity" in which the autonomous status of frontier nations was respected, equality between Burman and other native nations was ensured, and the liberal tradition on the separation of church and State was adopted (Silverstein, 1980: 143).[48] The main achievement of the Assembly was the adoption of a new constitution which was later implemented on 24 September 1947. The Karen also boycotted the Assembly and rebuffed the 14 resolutions.

Aung San was assassinated on 19 July 1947. U Nu, a man described as an obsessed and perverse Buddhist, succeeded Aung San. He had never supported Aung San's idea of unity in diversity (Silverstein, ibid: 148-149). Fortunately, the new constitution adopted during the second Panglong conference was not renounced by U Nu.

In the constitution of 24 September 1947, there were still some special institutional arrangements for Frontier Areas. During the colonial period, the people of the Shan areas and of the Karenni regions had been ruled by their ***sawbwas,*** the chiefdoms, and appeared as confederated states under British Trusteeship. They hence acquired the right under the constitution to decide after 10 years whether or not to secede from the Union of Burma. Until that time, they could rule themselves

[48] According to Renard, the KNU refused to participate in the elections for the Assembly. "Many Assembly seats set aside for Karens then went to members of the Karen Youth Organization." Although the KYO was one of the early organizations of the KNU, Renard suggests that the KYO was more favorable to staying within the Union of Burma and did not press for a separate Karen state. Please See Renard, 1990: 101.

through their traditional ***sawbwas***. A Kachin state without the right to secede was established (Smith, 1995: 226; 1999: 82; Fong, 2005: 132). There were no provisions for the Karen and other ethnic nations, as "the entire question of the Karen's future was left to be decided after independence" (Rogers, 2004: 84).

There are two main reasons that U Nu still followed the ideals of Aung San. Firstly, U Nu believed that foreign powers were assisting frontier nations' independence to obstruct the prospective union of Burma. In order to acquire independence as soon as possible, he did not go against Aung San's ideas. Secondly, it had been rumored that the assassination of Aung San was the plan of U Nu. It is said that U Nu avoided contradicting his predecessor's ideas in order to calm suspicions that he was behind the murder of Aung San.

Burma's Independence and the Karen Revolution

Since it acquired independence on 4 January 1948, Burma has been plagued by unending violent conflicts inseparable from the Karen question. The following section divides the history of Karen nationalism into three phases.

The First Phase: Saw Ba U Gyi and His Four Principles

In early February 1948, Saw Ba U Gyi wrote to U Nu demanding a response to the proposal for an independent Karen State including the entire Delta area that had been issued at KNU's Second Congress. On 11 February, the KNU organized demonstrations in dozens of towns and villages demanding an independent Karen State. 400,000 Karen participated in the demonstrations, which aimed to compel the AFPFL to engage in negotiations with the Karen. However, U Nu held firmly to his position that if Karen people wanted a state, they would have to amend the constitution through constitutional procedures; independence was entirely not an option. This meant that the Karen state would have to be part of Burma rather than a truly separate one. The negotiations failed. To send a signal to U Nu, the Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO) seized Katon and Moulmein, the third largest city in Burma. In order to avert the imminent armed communal conflict, the Regional Autonomy Enquiry Commission was formed, with the assistance and the intermediation of Britain, to investigate Karen's grievances. The Karen repeated

their demand for an independent Karen State. Meanwhile, the KNU maintained that "attainment of this objective will not of course shut out the possibility of what will always be regarded as the ultimate goal, namely the Common Federation of all the Peoples of Burma." A joint Mon-Karen state in Tenaserim was also mentioned. This illustrated the fact that the KNU's platform was not racially exclusive; they could still accept the idea of a federation of ethnic groups (Sheppard, 1997: 577).

However, following rumors that the KNU would try to unseat U Nu by setting up a coalition government with non-AFPFL politicians, U Nu not only rejected Karen demands but also secretly trained the military to avert the "potential coup" (Sheppard, 1997: 578). The negotiations were thus fruitless. On 9 August 1948, fighting officially broke out in Karenni state after their nationalist leader, U Bee Tu Re, was murdered by AFPFL's military police. After learning Karenni's uprising, the Karen and Mon decided to take up arms against the AFPFL. 31 January 1949 was the day witnessing the war began for Karen statehood (Smith, 2000: 13; Fong, 2005: 137-138). The uprisings by the Karenni and the Karen opened a floodgate: the armed communal conflict quickly spread to other ethnic nations.

The British and the ambassadors from the Commonwealth arranged a ceasefire talk on 6-8 April 1949. However, U Nu told Saw Ba U Gyi in markedly strong terms: "I won't relinquish even an inch of the Karen state. If you want it, fight for it." Total communal war between the Karen and the AFPFL broke out despite the arrangement.

On 20 May 1950, the KNU declared the establishment of an independent Karen State and designated Toungoo as its capital. They established a Government for Kawthoolei in Toungoo and reorganized military units under a unified Kawthoolei Armed Forces (KAF). Saw Ba U Gyi assumed the position of Prime Minister. Following the fall of Toungoo, the KNU designated Papun, a city near the Thai border, as the new capital. From 15 to 17 July 1950, the KNU organized a congress in Papun. The congress approved Saw Ba U Gyi's Four Principles as the *raison de'etre* for revolution. These principles were first implemented through the establishment of the Kawthoolei Governing Body (KGB) for managing the KNU areas (Sheppard, 1997: 580; Fong, 2005: 145). The Four Principles are as follows:

1 There shall be no surrender.

2 The recognition of the Karen State must be completed.

3 We shall retain our own arms.

4 We shall decide our own political destiny.

On 12 August 1950, Saw Ba U Gyi was ambushed while traveling to an area near the Thai border. The death of Saw Ba U Gyi resulted in ineffective leadership and factional splits in the following decades.

In order to win the confidence and loyalty of Karen, the AFPFL proposed a political amnesty. U Nu not only allowed the Rangoon Police Department to reinstate 91 Karen policemen who had been suspended when the war broke out, but also agreed to restore loyal Karen to their positions in the AFPFL (Renard, 1990: 104). In September 1952, the AFPFL formally established a Karen state that encompassed most of the areas already occupied by the KNU. This was the climax of political amnesty. It represented the efforts of the AFPFL to bring Karen people into the union of Burma. In addition to the amnesty measures, the AFPLF also made use of some techniques to split Karen's revolutionary force. They did it by creating viable rival leaderships both within and outside the Karen state. With the support of U Nu, in order to organize the political movement both inside the Karen state and among the Karen intermingling with Burman outside the state, the United Karen League (UKL) outside the Karen state and the United Karen Organization (UKO) inside the Karen state were formed (Silverstein, 1980: 218-219).

The KNU did not accept the Karen state proclaimed by the AFPFL for three reasons. Firstly, the state was limited to the eastern hills and mountainous areas, and it had no access to the sea. This meant that the AFPFL was merely abandoning the areas that they had already lost. Secondly, an estimated 80% of the total Karen population inhabited in the Delta areas, which were excluded from the state proposed by the AFPFL. If the Karen accepted this proposal, the majority of Karen would live under the domination of the AFPFL regime. Thirdly, the formation of the two aforementioned Karen organizations was part of U Nu's strategy to undermine Karen's unity.[49]

[49] According to Jack Fong, the KNU rebuffed the proposition of the Junta for two reasons. Firstly, the state proposed by the Junta severed Karen's access to the sea; secondly, many urban infrastructures were already in place to promote a strong local economy. Please see Fong, 2005: 147.

The Second Phase: Leftist and Nationalist Conflict within the KNU

Since 1952, the KNU had cooperated with the Communist Party of Burma (CPB), yet it was not until KNU's First National Congress in November 1953 that the Karen nationalist movement embraced a leftist agenda. At the Congress, the Karen National United Party (KNUP) was formed as the leftist wing of the movement. The KNUP was established with support from the Karen of the Delta region and championed itself as KNU's vanguard party based on the perception that many Delta Karen remained loyal to the AFPFL because the KNU's foundation was "still not firm and did not reach all levels." The KNUP believed that only farmers and forestry workers could be relied upon. The Second Congress, in addition to cementing a leftist turn in the nationalist movement, also confirmed a campaign to attract international support. One of the resolutions of the Congress was to release a memorandum to the Thai government and other ethnic nations stating that the KNU would seek recognition from the UN for their Kawthoolei Free State (Fong, 2005: 149-151).

However, the leftward turn did not mean the absence of opposing voices. In December 1954, Tha Hmwe, the successor of Saw Ba U Gyi replaced KGB with the right-wing Karen Revolutionary Council (KRC). The KRC was comprised of Delta and eastern division representatives who hailed from all the KNU brigade districts (Fong, 2005: 155). The CPB was an organization dominated by the Burman. Believing this kind of organization represented Burman's interests, the KRC had not been willing to cooperate with the CPB. Within the KNU, most of the leadership was occupied by Christians. The fact that the CPB believed in atheism bred further distrust of the secular Leftists by the Christians. The ideological tension between the KRC and the CPB increasingly "translated into the KNUP and the KRC operating almost as separate political entities" (Sheppard, 1997: 586).

Because of this ideological tension, in April 1956, the Democratic Nationalities United Front (DNUF), the first attempt by the KNU at transcommunal cooperation, excluded the CPB from the body. The DNUF was comprised of Karen, Karenni, Mon and Pa-O. In order to acquire support from other ethnic nations in the DNUF, in the second Karen National Congress held between 26 June and 11 July

1956, a resolution was made that "the political name 'Kawthoolei' replaced the ethnic name 'Karen' in most of official titles" (Smith, 1999: 171).

In 1959, the KNUP allied with the CPB to form the communist-inspired National Democratic United Front (NDUF).[50] In April 1960, with the assistance of Tha Hmwe, the KRC set up the Nationalities Liberation Alliance (NLA),[51] which again excluded the CPB. In actuality, the formation of the NLA was a product of personal talks between Tha Hmwe and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), Thailand, the CIA and the Kuomintang (KMT). Due to their fears of communist expansion, these organizations and governmental bodies asked Tha Hmwe to reject the leftist path. A KNU veteran Skaw Ler Taw argued that "Unless we change our line we will get no help. The quickest way to get help will be to drive out the left leaders" (Smith, 1999: 213).

The inner tensions and international fear of communism together resulted in a change of political line for the next several decades and the split of the KNU in the 1960s.

At this time, the Shan and the Kachin stood up to ask for independence through their paramilitary organizations: the Shan State Independence Army (SSIA) and the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO). They sought independence in accordance with the right inscribed in the constitution of 1947. U Nu believed that if the Shan and the Kachin were drawn into the communal war, the Union of Burma would dissolve soon. In order to prevent the potential dissolution of the Union, U Nu and his AFPFL convened a Federal Seminar on 24 February 1962. He prepared to discuss with the Shan, the Karenni and other ethnic nations a proposal for a Federal Union. Nevertheless, Ne Win disagreed with U Nu. In contrast to U Nu, Ne Win thought that the Seminar was the first step toward dissolving the Union of Burma. Fearing the country would disintegrate, he launched a coup on 2 March to discharge the power of U Nu (Lang, 2002: 36; Fong, 2005:169-172). The Shan and the Kachin hence took up arms to fight for their political destination.

Under Ne Win's regime, the constitution of 1947 was suspended and a small

[50] The NDUF was comprised of the KNUP, the CPB, the Karenni National Progress Party (KNPP), the Chin National Vanguard Party (CNVP) and the New Mon State Party (NMSP).
[51] The NLA was comprised of the KNU, the NMSP, the Chin Democracy Party (CDP) and U Nu's short-lived Parliamentary Democracy Party (PDP).

military oligarchy called the Revolutionary Council ruled Burma until 1974. The Council formed the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) to deculturalize ethnic nations and to practice the "Burmese Way to Socialism." Not only could the languages of ethnic nations not be taught in schools, but also the private economy was not allowed to exist.

Tha Hmwe was aware that due to the leftwing turn of the KNU, had no Western countries been willing to give the KNU financial support. The ideological dispute within the Karen nationalist movement finally burst into the open at the Third KNU Congress in April 1963. Tha Hmwe proposed that the KNU must abandon its anti-imperialist stance in order to win over assistance from the West. In addition, he argued that the KNU needed to redefine its enemy along racial rather than class lines. Tha Hmwe's proposal did not garner support, however, and he and eleven KRC members left the Congress. Afterwards, Ne Win called another round of peace talks during which he urged the ethnic nations to surrender unconditionally. Strikingly, Tha Hmwe and his KRC comrades signed the peace treaty with Ne Win in March 1964 (Sheppard, 1997: 588-589). This move not only dealt a major blow to the Karen nationalist movement but also led to serious debates on its future direction. Later on, with the rise of Bo Mya, the right wing militarist, the fate of the KNUP and of its leftist line was decided.

The cadres of the KNUP left the KNU for the Delta, which was considered as the birthplace of KNU resistance (Smith, 2000: 14). However, in 1966, Ne Win launched the notorious "Four Cuts" as a strategy to eradicate the Karen nationalist movement. The Four Cuts aimed to cut the insurgents off from their support system, which was largely based among the civilian population, namely the supplies of foods, funding, intelligence and manpower (Lang, 2002: 38; Falla, 1991: 28). Without military support from the KNU in the eastern mountainous areas, the KNUP faced severe defeat. By April 1975, following the return of Mahn Ba Zan to the East, the last KNUP troops had been evacuated to the sanctuary of the eastern mountainous areas (Sheppard, 1997: 594).

The Third Phase: Federal and Rightist Lines

U Nu had fled the regime of Ne Win after the latter launched a coup in 1962. U

Nu did not surrender, but continued to lead his Parliamentary Democracy Party (PDP) even after the coup. Notably, the NMSP, CDP, the KNU led by Bo Mya, and the PDP led by U Nu in Bangkok sat around the table to discuss the possibility of allying with each other. In an unprecedented move, U Nu even acknowledged the justice of the ethnic nations' cause that he once denounced as the undoing of the Union of Burma. On 25 May 1970, based on a mutual understanding among the NMSP, CDP, KNU and the PDP, the National United Liberation Front (NULF) was formed in Bangkok (Smith, 1999: 287).[52]

The political purpose of the NULF was to overturn Ne Win's regime and to campaign for a "just, democratic, progressive, developed and peaceful Federal Union Republic. Both the NULF and the Federal Union Republic would be based on the principles of equality and justice and would include all nationalities in the Union. This would mean that national boundaries between the different races, including the Burmans, would have to be re-examined……As a result, this would bring the total number of states in Burma to eight: Arakan, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Mon, Shan and, for the first time, Burman" (Smith, 1999: 288). Interestingly, at this juncture, Thailand was willing to express its kindness to the Karen nationalist movement. With the help of Bangkok, the NULF alliance was cemented, and the KNU was able to receive international recognition. A KNU liaison office was allowed to open in Bangkok and even the CIA started to support the NULF (Smith, ibid: 288; Fong, 2005: 186). Nevertheless, Bo Mya's decision to join the NULA stunned many veterans who refused to cooperate with the PDP. To stamp out resistance to his decision, Mya had eight company commanders executed on 22 February 1971. However, in a dramatic reversal, U Nu turned against the federalist compromise that he had negotiated with the ethnic nations. Foreign assistance led U Nu to the conclusion that the federalism desired by ethnic nations would lead to foreign interference in Burma. He resigned from the NULF accordingly.

As Silverstein observes, since Burma achieved independence, U Nu had sought to harmonize Burma through Buddhism while Ne Win emphasized the Burmese Way to Socialism (Silverstein, 1999: 53-57). Although both of them had once held

[52] The founding members of NULF were KNU, CDP, NMSP and PDP.

peace talks with ethnic nations, these peace talks eventually led to proposals for an integrated Union imbued with Burman-Buddhist culture. Both men were inherently opposed to the cause of ethnic nations. The only major difference between U Nu and Ne Win was that the former more or less believed in democracy while the latter entirely rejected democracy by abolishing the parliament and establishing a one-party military regime. The ethnic nations never had faith in the central government under the leadership of either of these men, and thus felt little choice but to engage in armed struggle. It is noteworthy that U Nu had been ousted from power in a coup launched by Ne Win rather than through a democratic election. For this reason, U Nu had led his party since the coup and had been waiting for the opportune moment to regain the power. U Nu's resignation from the NULF was therefore foreseeable at the time of the NULF's formation. The sacrifices of the eight commanders were hence meaningless.

In September 1974, the 9th KNU Congress was held and the new KNU Constitution was drafted. In the new Constitution, several important resolutions were drafted. For example, the KNUP, the leftist vanguard of the KNU, was eliminated; the KNU became the highest organ for and represented the whole Karen people; there was to be no class division among the Karen and patriotism was to be the sole ideology; and the decision to sever formal relations with the PDP was made (Smith, 1999: 295-296). Even though the resolutions of this Congress dissolved the KNUP and incorporated it into the KNU, two signs indicated that the right-wing line had not been materialized until 1976. First, the KNU implicitly accepted the anti-imperialist line by adopting the "national democratic principle," which was the political program proposed by the KNUP. Second and the most important, Mahn Ba Zan, the leader of the KNUP and the perceived leftist sympathizer, still occupied the presidency of the KNU (Fong, 2005: 188-189).

Bo Mya often told the outside world that *Kawthoolei* was "a 'Foreign Legion' for Thailand, guarding their borders and preventing intermingling between the Burmese Communists and the Thai Communists. If the West would help us with money and recognition, they would not regret it" (Smith, 1999: 297). Nevertheless, the two signs mentioned in the previous paragraph made Thailand and Western countries, particularly the United States, wary to offer real support to the KNU even

though they knew that the KNU would serve as a buffer zone severing the connection between the CPB and the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) (Fong, 2005: 189).

On 19 May 1976, the National Democratic Front (NDF) was formed. Its goal was in pursuit of a new federation based on the principle of self-determination.[53] Due to the legacy of U Nu, the PDP was excluded from the founding members of the NDF. A few months later, on 10 August 1976, Mahn Ba Zan stepped down from the presidency of the KNU and Bo Mya succeeded to the position. Bo Mya consolidated his power by taking over the positions of KNU's president, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Defense and Chief of the Karen National Liberal Army (KNLA). From this point forward, the rightist line was consolidated.

In the early years of the NDF, as Martin Smiths notes, it rarely proved effective because of the internal conflicts among its members. For example, the KNU complained that only the KNU had been providing arms, financing and training to less powerful NDF members such as the PNO and the ALP. Moreover, the KIO and the SSPP had joint treaties with the CPB while the KNU, the PNO and the KNPP clashed with the CPB. To make matters worse, territorial disputes among some members such as the KNU and the NMSP resulted in armed clashes in 1987 (Smith, 1999: 387-388). Nevertheless, the NDF was a historic achievement as it represented the fist time since independence that a peaceful Federal Union was adopted as the common goal of all main ethnic opposition groups in order to win the support of the Burman and find a way out of the disastrous cycle of insurgency (Smith, 2000: 15). The NDF statement issued by the Plenary Central Presidium Meeting on 30 October 1984 stated clearly (Sheppard, 1997: 595):

> *The NDF does not want racial hatred. It is struggling for liberty, equality and social progress of all indigenous races of Burma because Burma is a multi-national state inhabited and owned by all. In the co-called Burma of today, the National Democratic Front intends to establish a unified Federal Union with all the ethnic races including the Burmese.*

[53] NDF was comprised of KNU, KNPP, Pa-O National Organization (PNO), Kayan New Land Party (KNLP), Arakan Liberation Party (ALP), Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), Lahu National United Party (LNUP), Palaung State Liberation Party (PSLP), and Shan State Progress Party (SSPP). Later on, some parties left while some joined. In 2008, the NDF still exists, at least, in name.

The federalist line of the NDF is still based on the principle of self-determination through creating national autonomous states, including a Burman state. However, as before, the NDF's federalist line stunned the KNU veterans because it was, as Fredholm says, "a considerable break-down from their earlier, separatist demands." For example, only two months before the NDF was formed, Bo Mya had issued a declaration announcing to the world the "independence" of "the Republic of Kawthoolei" (Fong, 2005: 195; Smith, 1999: 506). But within only two months, Bo Mya changed his mind.

In order to implement the Burmese Way to Socialism, the Ne Win regime had to nationalize private companies and expelled foreign businessmen considered by the regime as the agents of imperialism (Silverstein, 1999: 57). Moreover, due to the protracted communal war, some twenty military opposition groups remained active in more than one-third of the country, controlling largely the ethnic nations' areas and making these areas free-fire zones (Smith, 1995: 224-225). Under such conditions, defense spending consumed over 40% of the national budget even though Burma had faced no external enemies since independence (Fong, 2005: 210). The government's leftist development policy and excessive defense spending together not only bankrupted the economy of Burma, but also caused a shortage of basic necessities. In the meantime, in the areas controlled by the KNU and other ethnic opposition groups, the black market trade with Thai businessmen in teak, timber and other raw materials, was booming. The black market trade made the ethnic areas richer than the country ruled by the Junta. The contrast economic conditions within Burma and the insurgents controlled areas resulted in a fact that most of the articles needed for daily use in Burma had to be imported from Thailand through the black market trading.

The regime used a dramatic strategy to control the situation, on the one hand, and to strike against insurgent groups, on the other hand. Nevertheless, the strategy was ultimately unable to expunge the financial resources of opposition groups; instead, it absurdly destroyed the national economy. On 5 September 1987, an official radio broadcasted a message which declared to the whole nation, without explanation, that the 25, 35 and 75 Kyat currency notes would cease to be legal after one week. Ne Win's regime had thought that this demonetization would cut off

the financial support of ethnic opposition groups from black market trading. This dramatic strategy, in fact, produced little effect on the funds of these groups since most of their funds were valued in foreign currencies like the Thai Baht or the Chinese Yuan (Fong, 2005: 208-209). Rather, the demonetization policy rapidly collapsed the country's economy because it wiped out the savings of families across the country. Devastation to the economy took a further downward spiral when in December 1987 the United Nations declared Burma as one of the Least Developed Countries in the world (South, 2008: 77).

Many Burmese perceived the UN designation as an insult to their national dignity, and blamed Ne Win's one-party regime and its Burmese Way to Socialism for their economic problems. Popular anger against the authoritarian regime henceforth exploded. Beginning on 16 March 1987, university students nationwide gathered for demonstrations in all of Burma's major cities. The demonstrations rapidly attracted the support from monks and other civic groups. Following a series of anti-government demonstrations, Ne Win stepped down from power on 23 July 1987 to alleviate the outpouring of anger against the central government. His resignation ostensibly signaled the end of the Burmese Way to Socialism (South, 2008: 43). Civilians remained dissatisfied and took further action, however.

On 8 August 1988, another mass demonstration rocked Rangoon, which was to demand a multi-party system for Burma. Unfortunately, the nationwide demonstration was quelled by Ne Win's loyalists, forcing thousands of students to flee to KNU areas. On 18 September 1988, Ne Win loyalists assumed power with the ascendance of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). On 15 November 1997, the SLORC was officially dissolved and was replaced with the 19-member State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). The original top four military strongmen of the SLORC retained their positions in the SPDC while other members became senior military officers (Lang, 2002: 8).

Student protestors grew up under the propaganda of Ne Win's regime, which demonized ethnic opposition groups as illiterate gangsters and human rights abusers. They were largely ignorant of ethnic nations' struggles. When the students arrived in the KNU areas, they were stunned to discover a high standard of education and functioning of quasi-governmental departments. Removing the initial false

understandings of the KNU, the students came to hold the KNU areas as a base to struggle for the future democratization of Burma, and formed the All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF) to pursue this vision. The students were committed to overthrowing the military regime by cooperating with their ethnic allies in the guerrilla base hidden in the jungles of KNU areas. With such an oppositional sentiment getting strengthened, the Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB), the largest gathering of ethnic opposition groups in Burma's history, was formed on 18 November 1988 (Smith, 1995: 241; Sheppard, 1997: 596-597). The major political goal of the DAB, whose chairperson was Bo Mya, was to construct a democratic Federal Union. United as never before, ethnic nations dropped their separatist desires while Burman democratic activists in turn agreed to collaborate with them toward realizing a federation with genuinely autonomous states.

The forging of ties between ethnic nations and Burman opposition groups created a new political situation in which a tri-partite dialogue could be pursued. Lawyers for the DAB started to draft a new federal constitution (Fong, 2005: 223). Martin Smith even argues that the DAB and the SLORC became "two declared governments in the country, each committed to the annihilation of the other" (Smith, 1999: 22). The significance of the DAB in the history of Karen nationalist movement is profound. Through the DAB, the KNU areas came to be viewed as the base for the democratic movement of the whole of Burma rather than merely as a rebel state of the Karen separatist movement.

In 1990, the political parties geared up to campaign for parliamentary seats in the first general election in the history of Burma. In the election, the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi won 392 of the 485 total seats, compared to only 10 seats for the SLORC-backed National Unity Party (NUP) (Sheppard, 1997: 598). However, as most people had anticipated, the SLORC rejected the results of the election and arrested many newly elected members of the Parliament. In an atmosphere of state terror, dozens of newly elected figures from the NLD fled to KNU's areas wherein they formed the National Coalition Government Union of Burma (NCGUB) to press for democratization. Once again, the KNU areas were in the spotlight as the base of campaigning for a federal Burma. The KNU took center stage in endorsing a federal Burma on 31 July 1992. On that

day, the NLD, NCGUB, DAB and the NDF together signed the Manerplaw Agreement to pursue a Federal Union comprised of eight states including Karen, Kachin, Burman, Chin, Mon, Karenni, Arakan and Shan, a union where all ethnic nations would enjoy equality, the right of self-determination, democracy and basic human rights to the fullest extent (Smith, 2000: 15; Sheppard, 1997: 599). Because of these events, Manerplaw became the "capital" in the border areas and, along with Rangoon, represented one of the "two centres of politics in Burma" (Smith, 1999: 442).

Regrettably, these good times did not last long. The KNU went into decline in the mid-1990s due to three factors: the peace talks, the constructive engagement between Thailand and Burma, and the defection of the DKBA.

Firstly, peace talks between other ethnic nations and the central government clearly weakened KNU's position. The regime's State nationalism had been advocating "national unity" and "national consolidation." In practice, this had entailed the renunciation of armed insurrection and the return of armed groups to the legal fold (Lang, 2002: 46). After Ne Win occupied ruling power, the Four Cuts claimed a heavy loss of life and civilian displacement. As words of casualties spread, front-line commanders reported back that the grassroots wanted their leaders to seek peace via ceasefire talks (Smith, 1999: 443).[54] During the 1990s, a growing number of ethnic opposition groups turned their backs on the anti-government fronts and returned to the legal fold with the SLORC-SPDC. In 1991, the PNO, a member of NDF, was the first entering into the legal fold when it signed a ceasefire agreement with the SLORC (Smith, 2000: 24). By 1994, the Kayan New Land Party (KNLP), the Karenni State Nationalities Liberation Front (KNSNLF), which split from the KNPP in 1978, the Shan State Nationalities Liberation Organization (SSNLO), which was composed of a Pa-O majority, and even the powerful KIO and its Kachin Independence Army (KIA) had all signed ceasefire agreements with the SLORC (Smith, 2000: 24; Fong, 2005: 251).

[54] For example, the KIO claimed that the verifiable deaths of its people were 33,336 in the years from 1961 to 1986. In 1989, a statement was broadcasted from the radio station of Wa areas: "Every year the burden of people has become heavier. The streams, creeks, and rivers have dried up, while the forests are being depleted. At such time, what can the people of all nationalities do?" Please see Martin Smith, 1995: 225.

Although the Burman-lead groups sought sanctuary in the liberated zones, they did not develop a coherent strategy to campaign for a democratic federation. Some of them preferred a non-violent campaign on the basis of the results of the 1990 election while others believed that armed resistance was the best way to change the country. The split of the ABSDF in the KNU areas was the most obvious example of the splintering of the movement. The ABSDF split into two main groups, one headed by Dr. Naing Aung and the other led by Moe Thee Zun (Smith, 1999: 443-444).

The second reason that the KNU suffered a decline was the constructive engagement between Thailand and Burma. Before the 1980s, the KNU had been functioning as a buffer zone between the CPB and the CPT. However, with the decline of the CPB and the defeat of the CPT, the KNU no longer mattered to the Thai government as a buffer zone. Instead, the image of the KNU was gradually transformed into an insurgent group of Burma. Aspiring for natural resources in the eastern mountainous areas of Burma, the Chatichai Choonhavan government (1988-91) in Thailand initiated a new policy toward Burma, known as "constructive engagement" (Arnold and Hweison, 2005). When diplomatic relations between Thailand and Burma began to improve, the KNU hence found itself increasingly marginalized. Logging deals and gas pipelines going through the Karen state to Thailand were the most obvious examples of this trend. Eventually, Burma joined Thailand in the Association of South East Asian Nations, leaving the KNU and other ethnic opposition groups as terrorists in the region's governmental vocabulary (Smith, 2000: 15-16).

The third factor, the defection of the DKBA, not only undermined the strength of the KNU but also created a heavy flow of refugees who cross the border in search of a sanctuary in Thailand, a situation that continues to this day. As mentioned in the previous section, the leadership of the KNU had been dominated by Christian Karen. Although the KNU still gained the support of Buddhist Karen, who comprised about 70%-80% of frontline KNLA soldiers, that Buddhist Karen soldiers had long complained of anti-Buddhist discrimination, forced labor and conscription of child soldiers by Christian officers was an undeniable truth (Gravers, 1999: 89).

In 1989, a Buddhist leader U Thuzana wanted to build a pagoda on the summit of the mountain surrounding the KNU's headquarters. He was granted permission to construct the pagoda but was not allowed to paint it since it could be spotted as a landmark by enemies. A few years later, when the construction of the pagoda was finished, the Buddhist Karen gathered to worship in celebration. Nevertheless the event was shouted down by the KNU and some of the worshipers were beaten by some men loyal to Saw Charles who is a relative of Bo Mya (Gravers, 1999: 90-91). Dissatisfaction among Buddhist solders began to simmer.

The SLORC did not miss the opportunity to exploit the tension within the KNU. While recognizing Bo Mya as the KNU's top leader and negotiator, the SLORC deliberately leaked a message to the effect that if Bo Mya did not wish to enter into the legal fold, the SLORC would engage in talks with another opposition group that was eager for peace (Smith, 2000: 446). KNU leaders thus began to suspect that U Thuzana might be a spy for the SLORC. In December 1994, U Thuzana, along with 1,000 Buddhist Karen, formed the Democratic Karen Buddhist Organization (DKBO) and its military wing, the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA). They declared their resignations from the KNU on the grounds of religious discrimination (Rogers, 2004: 148-149). This was the last straw for the decline of the KNU. On 2 January 1995, U Thuzana and his fellows met with Maung Hla, an officer of SLORC. Maung Hla promised him peace and development in the Karen state. On 3 January 1995, the KNU declared war on the DKBO and the DKBA (Fong, 2005: 244-245).[55]

Because the DKBA once fought side-by-side with the KNU, they were familiar with the latter's strategy and the military forts. Equipped with the intelligence and assistance of the DKBA, the SLORC successfully captured Manerplaw on 27 January 1995. Over 100,000 refugees hence fled to Thailand to seek refuge.

Following the fall of Manerplaw, Bo Mya was replaced by Tamalabaw as the KNU president in the 11th KNU Congress. Delegates at the meeting still stuck to the goal of an autonomous Karen state and the formation of a Federal Union (Fong, 2005: 248).

[55] However, from the perspectives of Rogers and Fong, there are other different reasons causing the defection of DKBA. The details will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Since the capture of Manerplaw, the KNU areas have been dwindling. Recognizing that it was losing strength, the KNU could not flatly refuse to engage in the ceasefire talks. However, as Lang says, whenever the Junta expresses goodwill to negotiate with the opposition groups, they at the same time secretly prepare military operations to eradicate their confronting negotiators (Lang, 2002: 47). In other words, ceasefire talks are merely part of central government's military strategy; the talks are in fact designed to allow the regime to enter into and to kill in the ethnic areas freely (Fong, 2005: 259). Since 1997, when the KNU has tried to engage in dialogue with the SPDC, the latter has always simultaneously launched military operation against Karen villages in the KNU areas.

In any case, the KNU has not been completely defeated. The younger leaders have conceded that the armed struggle alone cannot achieve the desires of the Karen people. They believe that a political platform is needed as well (Smith, 2000: 16). The victory of the NLD in the 1990 election and the ensuing detention of Aung San Suu Kyi have attracted international attention to the need for peace in Burma. Recently, the KNU and other ethnic nations have formed the Ethnic Nationalities Council (ENC), cooperating with the NLD to campaign for a Federal Union in hopes of a "Tripartite Dialogue" (Lian, 2006: 7-13).

3. Religious Conflict in Karen Nationalism

Carlton Hayes suggests that nationalism has a warmth and pietistic character, a kind of spiritual quality that can provide satisfaction to man's craving for immortality and freedom of his nation. This craving can further inspire people's passion and love for their nation. Because this kind of emotion "is likely to be shared to the full not only by an elite but by the mass of common people," nationalism can unite diverse subgroups and inspire people's loyalty toward their nation (Hayes, 1960: 15-16).

For the Karen people, the KNA, which was formed in 1881, can be described as the first organization in Burma to possess a modern national consciousness. And Karen elites since then have attempted to mobilize people by the call of Karen nationalism. However, as in many places, Karen nationalism has not always been successful in uniting subgroups. The historical conflicts between Buddhists and Christians within the Karen community, in particular the split of the DKBA from the KNU in 1994-1995, provide but a vivid example.

Some suggest that the reason Karen nationalism had failed to unite all is because it had been predominantly a Christian cause. For example, in his lecture on Karen history in 1970, Saw Tha Din, a nationalist, emphasized that Karen identity with a "Christian sense" was authentic (Gravers, 1996: 253). Hayami Yoko also suggests that Karen nationalism has been perceived as a movement of "Christian non-conformists" since Christians have long dominated the leadership and discourse of the cause (Hayami, 2004: 17). In this respect, Karen Buddhists felt marginalized, if not excluded, by the Christian leadership. As a result, religious tensions had always existed in the Karen community and the nationalist movement had not been able to unite the Karen into a whole. As Theodore Stern argues, religious agitation characterizes the Karen society. Charles F. Keyes goes even further by asserting that the Karen nationalist movement ought to be associated with this religious agitation (Stern, 1968; Keyes, 1977).

Religion indeed can be used to mobilize a nationalist movement, since, from Elie Kedourie's perspective, religion as a primordial binding force can be transformed into a nationalist ideology in that a common faith for centuries implicates a tenacious loyalty (Kedourie, 1994:51). Nevertheless, in the case of Karen, Christianity is not the primordial binding force since it was introduced into Karen society by nonnative missionaries.[56] If what Kedourie says is correct, for the Karen the "genuine" primordial binding force should be animism. In addition, even conceding that Christians have dominated the discourse of the Karen nationalist movement, the ultimate goal of Karen nationalism has been a pursuit of a State belonging to the whole Karen people rather than a theocracy reserved for Christian Karen. If this theory is true, what historical process can explain why such a monolithic image of Christian-ness had characterized Karen nationalism? Is this image the plain truth?

Whether such a judgment about Karen nationalism is fair or not, it is true that religious tensions had long disunited the Karen community. But under what specific historical context did these tensions come to characterize Karen society? What are the consequences of the religious agitation? Does such agitation still exist in Karen refugee camps? If nationalism itself cannot really function as a binding force for all subgroups within the Karen community, how was the notion of a Karen nation able to emerge in the first place? From the *ex post facto* perspective, I argue that the answers can be captured through the following angles.

Firstly, Mikael Gravers argues that religion often provides a timeless and overarching fundamental cosmology (Gravers, 2007: 229). Examining relevant literatures, I found that the early Karen steadily accepted the Gospel in accordance with a myth which is perceived as a critical traditional religious concept supplying them with a cosmology. Theoretically, religion does not merely represent a sacred domain, but it also works by designating cosmology as a mechanism to construct a cognitive boundary. Within the cognitive boundary, an individual's self-recognition and the direction of living in the mortal world are modulated, imbuing secular life with meaning. While the cosmology of Karen's traditional religion had influenced

[56] The total figures of Christians have never been more than 30% of the total population. Please see KNU website, www.Karen.Org.

their views on Christianity, interpreting their traditional religion's cosmology is hence the first step to examine how the Karen perceived the arrival of missionary and Christianity.

Secondly, in addition to the religious angle, investigation into the historical situations facing the Karen is also needed. Karen people do not distinctly separate the economic, political and religious dimensions of their world; they usually interpret current situations or events through their traditional cosmology (Gravers, 2001: 4). In the plains areas, many Karen people converted to Buddhism from early on. After Britain colonized Burma, the plains Karen, like the Burman, faced moral and social disorder as a result of the missionaries' works. Most of the plains Karen nevertheless remained faithful to Buddhism despite the onslaught of Christianity. However, Buddhist Karen did not exclude Christian leaders' political ideas but accepted many of them. Before the Karen Goodwill Mission headed off London in August 1946 to voice their political demands, Saw Po Chit writes: "[The nature of Karen and Burma] are in fact different and distinct genuses and it is a dream that Karen and Burman can ever evolve a common nationality" (Gravers, 2007: 229-230). It must be that the situation facing the Karen caused Saw Po Chit to have such strong words.

Last but not least, the Karen refugee camps have existed along the Thai-Burmea border for over 20 years. In some refugee camps, people who believe in the same religion normally settle in the same area. However, it does not mean that these religiously defined areas were necessarily born out of a religious consideration among the settlers. Moreover, in refugee camps, most organizational activities cater to the entire Karen population irrespective of religion. If we wish to understand whether the Karen nationalism still bears a monolithic image and whether the religious agitation still exists among the Karen, I believe that it is necessary to step into the life of refugees because it serves as a micro interactive context by which to understand what goes on in Karen society on the macro level.

Cosmology and Millenniumism

According to Harry Ignatius Marshall, there are three critical and distinct

religious concepts in Karen society: *bgho*, animism and *Y'wa* myth,[57] among which the *Y'wa* myth is the most important (Marshall, 1922/1997: 210-211).[58]

From Genesis to Utopia

The Y'wa myth was first recorded by the American Baptist missionary Dr. Francis Mason in 1834 while he was trying to translate some poems depicting heaven, Satan, the fall of man and other Biblical themes (Gravers, 2001: 8). Although there are several versions of Y'wa myth, the contents of the myth can be roughly categorized into three different but interrelated themes: Genesis, being orphans and the sufferings, the return of white brother with the Golden Book and the coming of utopia.[59] The myth reflects the cosmology of the Karen: an understanding of the past, a view on the present and a vision of the future. Based on the cosmology, the myth not only represents the original narrative of the Karen, but it also leads to a change in the political minds of the Karen and fosters an ideology of Karen nationalism.

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[57] Firstly, *bgho* is the impersonal power residing both in men and things. This power can be imparted to objects. Through this power, objects become charms for good or for evil. If human being possesses *bgho*, he or she will have the ability to do wonderful things. Secondly, the Karen conceives of everything more or less having a presiding spirit and a distinct personality, which have to be appeased. They assign personal attributes to various sacred spirits belonging to the physical objects in the world. For instance, the vegetative force in the crops is personified as the Goddess "Hpi Bi Yaw." Please see McMahon, 1876: 914.

[58] Because the myth of Y'wa was originally collected by missionaries, they usually compared the myth to the Old Testament and replaced Y'wa with God to indicate the creator. Therefore, even when discussing the same theme, in different versions, we can find different usages such as God, Great Lord or Y'wa. Additionally, regarding the spelling of Y'wa, different writers have different spellings. For example, Harry Ignatius Marshall uses "Y'wa" (Marshall, 1922/1997); Mikael Gravers uses "Yuwah" (2001) and Dr. Francis Mason uses "Ywah" (Rajah, 1993). When I worked in the field, according to informants, "Y'wa" is the proper spelling. In order to not get confused, I will only use Y'wa to indicate the creator. In the plains areas, the Karen dwellings with Burman have increasingly accustomed themselves to Burman society including Buddhism culture. Furthermore, Pwo Karen is more acculturated into Burman society than Skaw Karen. Theodore Stern, therefore, believes that the myth was primarily from the Skaw community. Please see Stern 1968: 301-303.

[59] Critics might say that every culture is supposed to be an integral part within which the values and the structural systems are all exclusive to other cultures. Legend or myth is the charter of the culture; and the values and structural systems are the realization of the charter. Therefore, there only exists an inner-consistent legend or myth. Nevertheless, as Edmund R. Leach argues, this functionalism perspective is uncalled-for. It wrongly perceives legend or myth as history and further biasedly distinguishes them into correct and false versions. As a matter of fact, due to the different tellers from different places, the variations always exist. In addition, legend or myth is a narrative of ideas; it does not tell of the occurred events, instead, it teaches us the cosmology of a certain cultural community and leads us to understand how the members of the cultural community perceive the past, the present and the future. If we regard legend or myth as a narrative of ideas rather than as a set of rules or of historical events, then, following the Leach's arguments, the requirement of inner-consistence will be a matter of no importance. Then, it will be possible to catch the inner-meaning of the myth or legend. Please see Leach, 2003: 300-303.

The first theme regards the Genesis. Y'wa is the creator of the world, who is described as a cosmogonic deity with immortality and eternality. According to a poem translated by Dr. Mason, the characterization of Y'wa is given as follows:

"God is unchangeable, eternal;
He was in the beginning of the world.
God is endless and eternal;
He existed in the beginning of the world.
God is truly unchangeable and eternal;
He existed in ancient time, at the beginning of the world.
The life of God is endless;
A succession of worlds does not measure his existence.
Two successions of worlds do not measure his existence.
God is perfect in every meritorious attribute,
And dies not in succession on succession of worlds." (Mason, 1884: 96)

From these verses, it can be seen that the defining traits of Y'wa are immortality and eternality, which also symbolize the power and ability of Y'wa. Y'wa is understood to be omniscient and omnipotent, and believed to have created the first two human beings who would command the world.

> "God is complete and good, and through endless generations will never die. God is omnipotent, but we have not believed him. God created man anciently. He has a perfect knowledge of all things to the present time. The earth is the footstool of God, and heaven his seat. He sees all things; we are not hid from his sight. He is not far from us, but in our midst…….He created man, and of what did he form him? He created man at first from the earth and finished the work of creation. He created woman, and of what did he form her? He took a rib from man and created the woman." (Cross, 1854: 300)

The first two human beings are a couple. The first couple lives among wild trees bearing seven types of fruits of which six are edible and one is forbidden. Y'wa commands the couple not to eat the inedible one. One day, a serpent appears and tells them the inedible one is the sweetest and richest of all the fruits. It will

transform them into gods and enable them to ascend to heaven. The man does not trust the serpent, yet the wife is convinced and eats the forbidden fruit. When Y'wa knows that the couple disobeyed his command, he lays a curse on them, declaring that they and their offspring will be subject to suffering, aging, and death (Mason, 1884: 97-98). The name of the serpent is Mu Kaw Li, a male figure, who used to serve Y'wa, but is ostracized for insulting Y'wa. The other servants of Y'wa have since tried to kill Mu Kaw Li, but they have never accomplished this mission. Hence, Mu Kaw Li continues to roam around the world and spreads lies and causes deaths (Marshall, 1922/1997: 213). In some versions, the serpent is a female figure, named Nauk'plau.

"Nauk'plau at the beginning was just,
But afterwards transgressed the word of God.
Nauk'plau at the first was divine,
But afterwards broke the word of God.
God drove him out and lashed him from his place:
He temped the holy daughter of God.
God lashed him with whips from his presence;
He deceived God's son and daughter."

"Ywa in the beginning commanded,
But Nauk'plau came to destroy.
Ywa at the beginning first commanded,
Nauk'plau maliciously deceived unto death.
The woman E-u and the man Thay-nai----
The malicious fiend enviously looked upon them.
Both the woman E-u and the man Thay-nai
The dragon regarded with hatred.
The great dragon deceived the woman E-u,
And what was it that he said to her?
The great dragon deceived them unto death,
And what was it that he did?
The great dragon took the yellow fruit of the tree,

And gave it to Ywah's holy daughter.
The great dragon took the white fruit of the tree.,
And gave it to Ywah's son and daughter to eat.
They kept not every word of Ywah,
Nauk'plau deceived them. They died.
They kept not each one the word of Ywah,
Then he deceived and beguiled them unto death.
They transgressed the words of Ywah,
Ywah turned his back and forsook them.
After they had broken the commands of Ywah,
Ywah turned his back upon them and left them." (Cross, 1854: 301-304)

Through these myths, we can understand the origins of human beings, the creation of the world and the descending of men from the cosmology of the Karen. However, the roots of the Karen people were not mentioned in the myths above, but appear in other versions of the Y'wa. Two different versions explain the origins of the Karen in strikingly dissimilar ways:

> "When Y'wa created the world he took three handfuls of earth and threw them round him. From one sprang the Burmans, from another the Karens, and from the third the Kalas, the foreigners."

> "At the beginning there were two people……One day, in the mud of their paddy field they found 101 crabs and ate them. Then it follow that first woman gave birth to 101 children. Each of these children had his own language. They were the Karen, the Lua', the Northern Thai, the Shan, the Burmese and so on. That is how it was in the beginning." (Rajah, 1993: 241-242)

In these two myths, the common theme is of the Karen as the elder brother, and the Burman, the Thai and the white people as the younger brothers, who were all descendants of Y'wa (Marlowe, 1979: 170). As the beginning of Y'wa, these groups were supposed to possess civilizations on an equal footing. But in real life, the Karen civilization lags behind the other so-called "brothers." The myths offer two reasons to account for this discrepancy. First, Y'wa once gave a book representing

knowledge to all the "brothers", but, due to negligence by the Karen, the book belonging to the Karen was destroyed by fire and chickens. This fiasco ensured that Karen would fall out of progressiveness and failed to keep up with other civilizations. The second reason is that the Karen, just like the first couple, is cursed to bear suffering. Y'wa is the creator who commands the world and human beings. The Karen are created by Y'wa, they thus have to obey Y'wa's commands. However, due to their disobedience, the Karen is cursed and left orphaned. On the contrary, the civilizations of Karen's other brothers have been gradually developing since they have carefully followed the books given by Y'wa. Being abandoned without knowledge and the protection of Y'wa, the Karen not only live in a relatively primitive state but also are subject to oppression by their younger brother, the Burman.

From here, we examine the second theme.

> "Once upon a time the Great Lord called all the people to him, the Thai, the Burman, the Shan, and the European to come and get the book of learning which he was to grant them in order that they might be able to read and write. The Karen at this time were busy cutting grass in the foothills in order to feed the water buffaloes of all the people and so said to the others……we must cut the grass to feed the water buffaloes, you go first and we will go get it later. The others went and got their books of learning and then came back. The Karen were still at work cutting grass on the hill. They called out to the Karen, 'Come and get your book'. The Karen said, 'Brothers, we have not finished cutting enough grass to feed the water buffaloes. Will one of you get it for us?' Some of the others went back to the place where the Great Lord was distributing the books and got it. They brought the Karen their book. The Karen were still busy cutting the grass on the side of the hill and had not yet cut enough so they could come down and get the book. They called our and said, 'Put it in a tree.' The others put the book in the tree for them. In a while it fell out and was eaten by the animals." (Marlowe, 1979: 170-171)

"Book, little chicken scratches in the earth, chicken scratches.
Can't read, can't read at all.
Book, little chicken scratches, chicken scratches.
Can't read, can't read al all."

Since then, the Karen people have lost their literature and knowledge, and were "forced to endure a life of poverty, toil, and adversity in the jungle" (Renard, 1980: 2).

> "The Karen was the elder brother, and obtained all the words of God. God formerly loved the Karen nation above all others, but because of their transgression, He cursed them, and now they have no books, yet He will again have mercy on them, and love them above all others."
>
> "God departed with our younger brother, the white foreigner. He conducted God away to the west. God gave them power to cross waters and reach lands, and to have rulers from among themselves. Then God went up to heaven. But He made the white foreigners more skillful than all nations."
>
> "When God had departed, the Karen became slaves to the Burmans, became sons of the forest and children of poverty; we scattered everywhere. The Burmans made them labour bitterly, till many dropped down dead in the jungle, or they twisted their arms behind them, beat them with strips, and pounded them with the elbow, days without end." (Dun, 1980: 6)

Combining these two reasons, Hayami Yoko argues, the absence of a patron and of knowledge reflect the self-image of their status among surrounding peoples with more centralized political organizations, such as the Burman, Mon and Thai (Hayami, 2004: 27). Nevertheless, Y'wa once loved the Karen above all other peoples. Now, examining the third theme, "Y'wa offers the Karen the consolation that at some future date, 'foreign brothers' will bring the gift of literacy—in the form of a golden book—back to them" (Keyes, 1977: 52). Nevertheless, the whites, their younger brother, will not come to them from heaven. They will instead come to

them by sea with the Book which they had been looking forward to possessing. Nonetheless, they have not seen their younger brother for ages, so how will they recognize each other if the whites really come? They will recover the relationship through fighting.

"Great mother comes by sea,
Comes with purifying water, the head water.
The teacher comes from the horizon;
They comes to teach the little ones."

"The white foreigners will come in ships, and shoot at the Karen; and the loads of their cannon and muskets will be changed to savory plantains and sweet sugar-cane; and the Karen will eat them. On the other hand, the Karens, armed with adzes, will go and make holes in their ships. Then the Karens and white foreigners will recognize each other as brethren." (Mason, 1884: 21-22)

When their white brothers come to them in the future, they will be saved out of enslavement and ignorance. They can further establish a new kingdom. The new kingdom exclusively belongs to them, that is to say, they can rule themselves in the kingdom. In the kingdom, there will be no class division. It will be a utopia for the Karen.

"The Talien (Mon) kings have had their season;
The Burman kings have had their season;
The Siamese kings have had their season;
And the foreign kings will have their season;
But a Karen king will yet appear." (Gravers, 1996:251)

"When the Karen king arrives,
There will be only one monarch;
When the Karen King comes,
There will be neither rich nor poor.
When the Karen king arrives,
The beast will be happy,

When the Karens have a King,

Lions and leopards will lose their savageness." (McMahon, 1876: 82)

In Pursuit of the Millennium

In the previous section, we learned of Karen's cosmology from the Y'wa myth. The cosmology in the Y'wa myth closely parallels the Old Testament, a "fact" which deeply impressed the American Baptist missionaries who began to preach among the Karen in the early 19th century. In addition to this similarity, one more thing surprised the early missionaries. There is a morphemic similarity between "Y'wa" and "Yahweh," the Old Hebrew term for God. Owing to these two factors, Mason believed that the Karen must be the descendants of one of the ten lost tribes of Israel.[60] A. R. McMahon illustrates thus, "Dr. Mason, in some of his earlier publications, was inclined to think that the Karens were of the Hebrew descent…….he says, 'Since some of their traditions are so definite and truthful, they must have been derived from the Bible; and, as they contain nothing peculiarly Christian, they could not have come from persons acquainted with the New Testament, they are Old Testament traditions, so that we are shut up to the conclusion that they come from the Jews'" (McMahon, 1876: 96).

Whether or not the Karen are the descendants of Jews is not the concern here, but as Benedict Rogers says, it was believed by many early missionaries that the parallel between the cosmologies in the Karen myths and in the Old Testament proved that God had truly planted seeds to prepare the Karen for a direct relationship with Him (Rogers, 2004: 45). Since more and more missionaries heard about the myth on the Golden Book and since the Karen greeted missionaries with delight, scholars argue that those early missionaries "credited the story" and "quickly presented themselves as the foreign brothers bringing the Karens the golden Book," and raised their expectations of converting the Karen (Keyes, 1977: 52, Kwanchewan, 2007b: 77; Gravers, 2007: 233).

[60] With reference to the discussion on the connection between the Karen and the Jews, please see Marshall, 1922/1997: 10-13; Keyes, 1977: 52-53; Renard, 1980: 40; Raja, 1993: 245-247; 2002: 525; Rogers, 2004: 41-43; Gravers, 2007: 233-234. The above writers only cite the explanations and arguments in the texts of early missionaries to disclose how the early missionaries figured out the connection. The most interesting insight is proposed by Jonathan Falla, a journalist, who used to travel to the Karen state accompanied by his Karen friend. After comparing the myths of the Karen and the Bible, he lists twelve similarities between them. Please see Falla, 1991: 230-231.

Having examined the literature, I argue that for the purpose of preaching, the early missionaries played the role of the younger brother by three strategies. They neglected the difference among various versions of the Y'wa myth; created a Karen script and established mission schools; and employed symbolic and physical violence other religions, particularly Buddhism.

First, the missionaries intentionally neglected the functions and importance of different, non-Christian versions of the Y'wa myth. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Karen in the plains areas lived side by side with the Mon and the Burma, and were also ruled by the Mon and the Burman kingdoms, both Buddhist communities. Most of the plains Karen converted to Buddhism because of this connection. In contrast to the Christians, the Buddhist Karen believed that millenniumism is to be realized differently. Mikael Gravers suggests that, because of the Buddhist influences, the plains Karen had not been waiting for the return of their white brother but for the coming of the Buddha, Ariya Metteya. In his book published in 1850, James Low, a British officer, also wrote that the book of knowledge and writing would be given to the Karen by *Kachaklong* who dressed like a Buddhist monk. Despite the salience, however, these different earlier versions were rarely mentioned in the texts written by missionaries. Mason had never used the Buddhist texts of millenniumism for preaching even he was the first missionary recording the Y'wa myth (Gravers, 1996: 252; 2001: 9-10).

Because of this strategy, scholars believe that the early missionaries combined the Old Testament with the mythic versions that were most adaptable with it. After combining these two texts, they explained to the Karen the meanings of the Bible in order to convert the Karen more conveniently (Keyes, 1977; Renard, 1980; Gravers, 1996; Raja, 2002; Hayami, 2004). Moreover, in order to eschew the difficulty of defining the real Lord: God or Buddha/Aria, Mason and his colleagues adopted the word Y'wa in praying and preaching (Gravers, 2007: 234).

Secondly, the early missionaries created the Karen script and established mission schools for their preaching work. A printing machine was shipped to Burma in 1813 to support the missionaries' work with the Burman. Initially, the early missionaries attempted to convert the Karen by means of Burmese script. However, owing to their strong desire for understanding their Golden Book, it became

necessary to provide the Karen, the elder brother of the whites, with a Bible written in their own script. In 1832, another four machines arrived in Burma to support the missionaries' conversion of the Karen. In the same year, missionary Jonathan Wade created the Karen script out of the Burmese script. With Mason's help, *The Morning Star*, the first monthly magazine in Skaw, was published in 1842 in Tavoy. Later, Wade finalized the translation of the New Testament from English into Skaw and published it in 1843. The Pwo New Testament was published in 1853. From 1843 to 1853, the missionaries even set up the Karen Mission Press in Tavoy; it published 63 books of Christian literature and distributed them to Christian Karens (Renard, 1980: 32-33; Hayami, 2004: 42; Gravers, 2007: 236; Kwanchewan, 2007b: 79).

In addition to preaching and teaching the Karen script, the missionaries established schools for the locals. In these schools, the Karen language, English and other subjects useful for the villagers were taught. Kwanchewan Buadaeng cites a passage from a letter of an evangelist, which is stated as follows: "A great deal of the success and growth of the Karen work is due to their Christian schools….Every Karen field developed a system of Christian schools, usually primary school in the villages, and middle of high schools in the central town" (Kwanchewan, 2007b: 77). Tens of thousands of Karen went to the areas where there were schools managed by their white brothers to learn the script and knowledge that they were supposed to have possessed hundreds or thousands of years ago. In 1875, with the efforts of missionaries, the first Baptist College was institutionalized in Rangoon and was nicknamed Karen College (Smith, 1999: 44). As Peter Kunstadter says, foreigners, as "younger brothers" with the key to knowledge, material wealth and power were able to legitimize their mission to improve literacy and convert the natives to Christianity (Kunstadter, 1979: 156).

Thirdly, the early missionaries accentuated differences between Buddhism and Christianity by symbolic and physical violence. In terms of symbolic violence, I argue there were two kinds of violence: one was based on theological difference while the others resulted from the missionaries' own ideology that distorted the Karen myth and took advantage of the situation facing the Karen. Regarding the first kind of symbolic violence, Gravers tells us that the early missionaries often incited theological debates between them and Buddhist monks. They fiercely

criticized Buddhism as a religion that merely provides individual salvation while lauding Christianity for offering a universal kingdom wherein all converts can obtain salvation (Gravers, 2007: 236). As for the second kind of symbolic violence, we already know that the early missionaries, after learning about the Y'wa myth, presented themselves as younger brothers of the Karen. Before the arrival of missionaries, many Karen were enslaved and lived without access to education. For example, under Burman feudalism, Karen people were levied with annual imposts that estimated nine or ten kyats of silver per head, an amount that was double that of a Burmese family. Those residing along the routes traveled by the army on the way to war against Siam were enforced to join the army to supply the needed manpower (Hayami, 2004: 35; Rolly, 1980: 16).[61] The early missionaries were influenced by some religious movements in which their ideology included the belief that their preaching would ultimately benefit all of mankind and prepare the world for the Second Coming (Raja, 1993: 249). Knowing the situations facing the Karen, the missionaries defined Buddhism as a part of Burman despotic regime while elevating Christianity as a superior civilization. Combining these two kinds of symbolic violence, the missionaries produced highly destructive consequences. For example, the missionary Bullard once invaded a pagoda spire considered a holy symbol for Buddhists (Gravers, 2007: 236).

These strategies of violence succeeded in converting numerous Karen to Christianity. After the first Karen was baptized in 1828, there were 11,878 baptized Karen within 25 years (Hayami, 2004: 36-34).

From the above discussion, it seems that the Karen did not express any resistance during the process of being indoctrinated by Christianity; they simply passively accepted Christianity because the Y'wa myth worked as a binding symbolic structure that had preordained the Karen to adopt Christianity centuries ago. If we further consider the Christian domination of the leadership in the KNU and the defection of the Buddhists, it seems not too bold to accept that the Karen is a Christianized nation and this specific nation-ness characterizes the ensuing nationalism. If we blindly accept this perspective, however, we may fail to fully consider the Karen's subjectivity and their own initiative during interaction with the

[61] Other details can be found in Francis Mason's book. Please see Mason, 1884: 14-17.

whites at critical conjunctures.

In actual fact, the Karen as a collective agent and the myth as a binding symbolic structure are not two independently given sets of phenomena. Borrowing the concept from Anthony Giddens, a duality, not a dualism, exists in the relationship between these two phenomena, which means that the Y'wa myth not only works as a structure to delimit the Karen way of thinking but also functions as a medium to enable Karen's subjective initiative.[62] In the following discussion, we will see how the myth enables the Karen to express their subjective initiative.

From the Y'wa myth, we realize that in Karen cosmology millenniumism is an expectation held by generations after generations. The Millennium is expected to begin with the return of their white brothers and of the Golden Book, and to culminate in the ascension of the Karen king. Through generations of Karens holding the expectation that millenniumism will be realized, the Y'wa myth as a symbolic structure has been internalized as a collective memory. This collective memory not only dictated how the Karen understood the present situation but also influenced their interpretation of and interaction with the whites. The encounter between the Karen and a British diplomat in 1795 was the first critical conjuncture where the myth serving as a collective memory enabled the Karen to demonstrate their subjective initiative.

According to the Y'wa myth, the Mon, the Burman, the whites and the Karen have their respective kingdoms. Since the mid-1700s, when the last Mon Kingdom was annihilated by the Burman king, numerous rumors on the imminent Karen kingdom spread among the Karen, which explains why the Karen were rejoicing during their first encounter with the whites. This also explains why Karen people were disappointed when the British diplomat refused to play the role preordained in the myths: "In 1795, a British diplomat from the embassy in Rangoon visited a Karen village, accompanied by a Burman guide. Immediately, the villagers surrounded him and greeted him with delight, believing he was the white man returning their book. But the Burman guide became anxious when the Karen

[62] A duality means, "The structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize. Structure is not 'external' to individuals: as memory traces, and as instantiated in social practices, it is in a certain sense more 'internal' than exterior to their activities in a Durkheimian sense." Please see Giddens, 1984: 25.

villagers started telling the diplomat that they believed that the white man, having given them the lost book, would set them free from all their oppressors. In actual fact, the diplomat was there to arbitrate a dispute between Britain and Burman, which Burman feared would invite Britain to invade the country. The Briton sensed his guide's discomfort and declared, 'Tell them they are mistaken……I have no acquaintance with this god called Y'wa. Nor do I have the slightest idea who their white brother could be'" (Rogers, 2004: 41).

Following the visit, the diplomat returned to Rangoon and left the Karen disappointed. He told the story to his superior, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Symes, who subsequently published the story in his book in 1872, which named *An Account of an Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava in the Year 1795* (Rogers, 2004: 41). No one can be certain whether Symes' book ever brought up the idea that the Karen might help the British if they decided to invade Burma. Nevertheless, the British did indeed obtain assistance from the Karen during three times of Anglo-Burman wars. The British since then began to pay more attention to the Karen.

The second critical conjuncture happened during and after the first Anglo-Burman War. Before the war, Karen villagers had heard news that the British were the white people described in the myth. The British arrival reminded them of the prophesy that their white brother would come to them by sea. During the war in 1824-1825, some Karen quietly supported the British because they believed that their situation would be improved if the Burman kingdom was removed. Burman officials, angry with their collaboration, punished Karen in the areas under their jurisdiction (Fink, 2001: xi). After the British won the war, Ko Tha Byu, the first Christian Karen, wrote to Mason, "……in a little more than ten days, however, we heard that the foreigners had taken possession, and that those who wished to go to the city and liberty. Then the Karens rejoiced and said, 'Now happiness has arrived. The thing has come by water. Now we may make breath'" (Mason, 1884: 19).

Before the war, missionaries had been granted to preach in Lower Burma. Probably owing to the unexpected encounter between the British diplomat and Karen in 1795, however, they were temporarily banned from preaching to the Karen until the war ended. The first missionary to preach to the Karen after the war was Adoniram Judson, who arrived at Karen districts in 1826, the year Britain won the

first Anglo-Burman War.

In 1828, Reverend George Boardman converted the first Karen whose name was Ko Tha Byu.[63] After the first Karen was baptized in 1828, within 25 years, there were more than 10,000 Karen accepting the new faith. Nevertheless, Hayami Yoko argues that the widespread conversion to Christianity was mainly the product of efforts by the Karen themselves. For example, in 1837, the emperor of the Burman dynasty began to prohibit the missionaries' work in Lower Burma and forced them to evacuate from the areas, leaving the work of preaching in the hands of Christian Karen. When the missionaries returned in 1839, there were more than 600 people waiting to be baptized. Saw Quala was Mason's translator. When Mason arrived in Toungoo, a major Karen region, in 1854, he became seriously ill and returned to the USA. Saw Quala and some Karen evangelists continued his work on their own initiative. When Mason returned to Burma, 28 churches had already been founded in the Toungoo area, with 1,880 new converts (Hayami, 2004: 37-39).

Conversions increased rapidly because the Karen exerted their subjective initiative. In the beginning, the missionaries worked by using the Burmese language. The Karen, however, did not want to learn the Bible by the Burmese language, stating that "The Burmese language is not our language, and their ways are not our ways" (Decha, 2003: 93). After all, the Karen believed that their white brother would bring them their lost scriptures. Because of the aspiration for having their own script and their dislike towards using the Burmese tongue, the missionaries had to create Karen script to entice Karen's interest in Christianity.

The invention of the Karen script certainly made preaching more successfully. Yet, the Karen did not merely express their agency through accepting Christianity and learning the Karen script alone. Rather, they exerted subjective initiative while learning the "expected knowledge" since the script and the Bible represented

[63] Ko Tha Byu was a criminal waiting to be sold in a slave market. A Christian Burman brought him to Judson and asked Judson to share the Gospel with him. When he discovered the Bible, he wondered if it was the Golden Book. After hearing the Gospel, he declared that the Golden Book was brought back and decided to be baptized by Boardman (San C Po, 1928/2001: 2; Rogers, 2004: 50). As we already know, the missionaries were impressed by the parallels between the Y'wa myth and the Bible. After knowing that they were identified as the younger brother of the Karen, they intentionally combined the Y'wa myth and the Bible. Therefore, it is believed that the Gospel Ko Tha Byu heard was not the original one, but rather, it was the result of combining the Y'wa myth and the Bible.

civilization, power and the emancipated future prophesized in the Y'wa myth. Ko Tha Byu wrote to Mason: "We next heard that teacher Wade, at Maulmain, had made Karen books….Then many of the Karens, here and there, learned to read their own language; and we remembered that the elders had said again, 'Children and grandchildren, the Karen books will yet arrive. When their books arrive, they will obtain a little happiness'" (Mason, 1884: 21-22). A Karen pastor recalled that when a messenger traveled to deliver the Karen Bible, he had to be wary of the Burman. When the Bible was delivered to the Bassein region, "news spread quietly, and the entire village assembled to see the miraculous arrival of the Karen book" (Hayami, 2004: 41).

After the first Anglo-Burman War, missionaries established schools in the British-controlled areas. A steady stream of Karen from nearby Burman-controlled areas enrolled in the new schools to learn how to read and write (Fink, 2001: xii). In these schools, some technical subjects such as mathematics and architecture practical for villagers were taught in Karen, English and Burmese languages. For sure, the schools were utilized by the missionaries as a medium to assist them in their preaching. Nonetheless, the Karen believed that by studying in mission schools they were fulfilling the prophesy, which is, after facing tough situations for ages their ideal kingdom was about to come.

In the myth, when Y'wa gives the Books to the Karen and their brothers, he does not treat anyone differently. As David H. Marlowe argues, Y'wa does not single out the Karen to be illiterate. It is only the subsequent behavior of each group after the event specified that the difference emerges (Marlowe, 1979: 172). Thus, the Karen exerted their subjective initiative when taking the opportunity to acquire power, knowledge and civilization. A brethren who assisted Ko Tha Byu in preaching in Rangoon wrote to Mason about Ko Tha Byu, "He was very anxious that he should early be taught to read, not only Burmese and Karen, but, as soon as practicable, English, in order that he might get a better knowledge of things than he could through the two former languages" (Mason, 1884: 46).

In the first conjuncture, the Burman translator was anxious while the Karen talked to the British diplomat on the returning of the Golden Book. Even the diplomat disappointed them but the Karen still firmly believed that their white

brother would come to them on day. When the missionaries showed up with the Bible and the knowledge and created the scripts that "should" belong to them, the Karen knew that the prophesy was realized. However, Karen's exertion of subjectivity was an anxious concern for the Burman ruler. After finding out that more and more Karen were being baptized and attending mission schools, Burman feudal officers jailed Karen either for simply being Christian or for being able to read and write. They did so in order to prevent the work of missionaries and to keep the Karen under control (Fink, 2001: xii).

The situation became difficult for the Karen, yet it did not hamper their quest for knowledge. For example, when *Morning Star*, the first vernacular journal, was established with the help of missionaries in Rangoon, it was initially used for propagating mission affairs. It, however, soon became a medium used by the Karen elite to promote modernization and education. Saw Quala wrote in *Morning Star* that with the translation of the Bible, knowledge will not be lost even after the white brother leaves Burma and returns to their home (Gravers, 2007: 236). In the second Anglo-Burman War of 1852-1853, many Karen even aspired to fight with the British in order to achieve a future in which they could be free from the Burman's oppression.

Lebar believes that the Karen national consciousness in the Western sense was gradually arising after the Second Anglo-Burman War (Lebar et al, 1964: 59). Though such a national consciousness was certainly emerging, it was not quite a consciousness in the Western sense. As David Miller argues, since the French Revolution, the nation has aspired to be a "community of people with an aspiration to be politically self-determining" (Miller, 1995: 19). In order to achieve such a political aspiration, a nationalist movement requires a political blueprint. Although the Karen desired to fight with the British, they did not propose a political objective in order to be "politically self-determining." They fought with the British because they believed it was the only way to end the suffering imposed by Burman's oppression and the only path to realizing the prophesy foretold throughout the ages in the Y'wa myth. To be more precise, there was not a genuine Karen nationalist movement. I would argue that what the Karen possessed was a kind of collective consciousness that aspired to realize millenniumism rather than a nationalist

consciousness in the Western sense.

Religious Confrontation and Nation-Formation

A group of Karen elites including teachers, doctors and other intellectuals gradually arose with the growth of interactions among the missionaries, the British and the Karen. These elite groups and other Christian Karens took the opportunity to serve with the British in fighting against the Burman. This was not the whole picture, however. During the early period of the British colonization, not all Karen were loyal to Britain. In plains regions, in fact, Buddhist Karen posed as a serious concern that needed to be dealt with by the British and by the early missionaries.

Buddhists' Prophecies and Rebellions

Most of the plains Karen were Buddhists. Influenced by Buddhism, these Karen were expecting the advent of the era of the *Ariya Metteya,*[64] or the coming Buddha. A sacred song within the Buddhist community goes as follows:

> "The Lord his messengers doth send,
> And he himself will quickly come;
> The priests of Boodh, whose reign is short,
> Must leave the place to make them room." (Stern, 1968: 304)

According to Buddhism, argues Stern, before the arrival of the *Ariya Metteya*, the world, all mankind and the Buddhist doctrine itself, will all decline. Being an omnipotent ruler, the coming *Ariya Metteya* will singlehandedly eliminate mankind's sins and lay a new foundation for a new world (Stern, 1968: 300-301). Buddhist Karen believed that immorality would engulf all humankind, and even the monks were not immune. Only the *Bu Kho* could be exempted from immorality. *Bu Kho* is a person with *pgho*, a kind of magical power that can be used to accomplish unusual tasks and is attributable to Y'wa (Marshall, 1922/1997: 210). In a Pwo version of the Y'wa myth, *Ariya* is a son of Y'wa. He will come to the mortal world

[64] There are some different spellings of this term: In his 1999 book, Mikael Gravers uses *Ariyametteya* while in the articles from 1996 and 2007, he uses *Ariya Mettaya*. Theodore Stern uses *Arimetteya*. The term Kirsten Ewers Andersen uses is the same one in Gravers' articles. V.V.S. Saibaba, in his book on the Buddhism in Southeast Asia, uses *Arit-Metteyya*. Please see Stern, 1968; Andersen, 1981; Gravers, 1996, 1999; and 2007; Saibaba, 2005.

to rescue humanity from decline and sins. When he arrives, poverty, ignorance and violence will all disappear (Gravers, 2007: 233). Before the arrival of *Ariya*, the person who can perform *Pgho* is perceived as the "selected" lay religious leader. *Bu Kho*s usually transform themselves into *min laung*s, leaders of millennium movements, in order to prophesize that the time of *Ariya Metteya* is approaching (Gravers, 1999: 100).[65]

In the previous section, I mentioned that the early missionaries perceived Buddhism as part of the Burman despotic regime and hence often deployed symbolic and physical violence to attack the symbols of Buddhism. For example, the missionary Bullard once attacked a pagoda spire hoisted by Buddhist Karen monks. V.V. S. Saibaba says, the pagodas are built as acts of devotion and the spire of a pagoda represents the Buddha himself. Buddhists usually express their faith in periodic visits to monasteries and pagodas (Saibaba, 2005: 63). When the Buddhist Karen saw the missionaries, they also wondered if they were the prophesized white brothers. However, their white brothers destroyed the spire of the pagoda and discriminated against Buddhism. The behaviors of the early missionaries confused and infuriated the Buddhist Karen. Later, after Britain won the second Anglo-Burman War and annexed Lower Burma, Buddhist Karen turned to rebellion, becoming one of the most pressing problems for the Britons at the time.

The Buddhist Karen still believed in the millenniumism prophesized in the Y'wa myth since the myth had been etched into the collective memory of the entire Karen race. Only because of Buddhist influences, was the way to realize the millenniumism different from non-Buddhist Karen. Before the first Anglo-Burman War, the Buddhist Karen under the leadership of *Bu Kho*s in their cults had been waiting for the arrival of *Ariya Metteya*. When they heard that Britain had won the

[65] Although Buddhism influenced the Buddhist' millennium movements, it does mean that these movements were identical. In fact, the styles of Buddhist millennium movements were quite diverse since they were more or less determined by the character of the *Bu Kho*s and by how the *Bu Kho*s understood and interpreted myths and Buddhism. In Stern and Gravers' works, there are many examples. Here, I will only discuss a few. For example, when the missionary George Boardman found a cult in a village to the far east of Tavoy, around half of the villagers had worshiped a book left by a *Bu Kho*. The *Bu Kho*, clad as an ascetic, had preached a "living and true God" and instituted the worship of a book. When the book was brought to Boardman, he found that it was the Oxford Book of Paslms and Common Prayers. They asked Boardman whether or not it was the Golden Book. When Boardman pronounced that it was an English prayer book, the *Bu Kho* gave up his cult and the cult soon collapsed. Please see Stern, 1968; Gravers, 1999.

war, some believed it was time to mount uprisings to realize the Karen kingdom. While some Buddhist Karen considered the missionaries and the British army as their white brethren, the same foreigners not only disdained Buddhism but also attacked the pagodas whenever the British army, wearing their boots, entered monasteries and "ransacked pagodas for their gold and silver Buddha statues" (Gravers, 1999: 8-9). These behaviors infuriated the Buddhists, including the Karen and other native nations, and further led to the transformation of Buddhist cults into rebels.

Among these uprisings, the most important was a *ming laung* movement in 1856. The *ming laung* gained all its support from Papun, north of Moulmein near Bassein. The group attacked Christian villages and ambushed the British forces. Worried that the Buddhists would ruin their efforts, Mason asked the British to arm Christian Karen, but the British hesitated, fearing that Christian Karen were not faithful to Christianity and might stand with Buddhist Karen.[66]

During this period, another Karen *ming laung* issued "royal proclamations" and claimed that "the Karen have a natural right to this country, which was formerly held by their ancestor, since which time it has been conquered by four nation: the Puthees (Chinese), Talaings (Mon), Burmese and English, but the time has now arrived for the Karens to assert their rights and reconquer the country." His aim was to establish a new dynasty in Pegu, the ancient capital of the Mon kingdom.[67]

Following the above discussion, we can see an obvious split within the Karen. Stern suggests that the two separate movements' shared Y'wa myth indicated that they were by no means distinct but were linked to one another (Stern, 1968: 304). However, the Y'wa myth could not constitute a unified millenniumism. On the one hand, the early missionaries interpreted the myths with a colored lens and turned against Buddhism, hence the millenniumism pursued by Christian Karen did not appeal to Buddhist Karen. On the other hand, owing to the different character of the *Bu Kho*s, there were no identical Buddhist millennium movements.

Although the religious divide was visible within the Karen, a unified millenniumism movement did appear after the 1880s.

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[66] The details on the movement can be found in Gravers, 1999: 102-103 and 2007: 238.
[67] The details on the movement can be found in Gravers, 1999: 103-104.

A Nation in the Making

The formation of the *Dawkalu* in 1881, the Karen National Association (KNA) (Cheesman, 2002: 203), exemplified the emergence of the Karen nationalist consciousness. Before this, the Baptist College, nicknamed Karen College, was founded in Rangoon in 1875, which Martin Smith suggests as an important center for spreading Karen nationalist ideas (Smith, 1999: 45). By the end of the 19th century, under the tutelage of American missionaries and the British, some Karen acquired the opportunity to study in the USA and England. After completing education abroad, Karen students usually returned to serve in the British colonial administration in Burma. These Western-educated Karen elites and those schooled in the Baptist College came to organize the KNA in 1881. According to Smith and Fink, the objectives of this organization were to unite the Karen from diverse dialect and religious groups, to protect the Karen from Burman's domination, to promote Karen identity, leadership, education and writing, as well as to strive for the social and economic advancement of the Karen people (Smith, 1999: 45; Fink, 2001: xiii).

The KNA claimed to represent all Karen, regardless of religion and geographic location, and aimed to promote a pan-Karen identity for two reasons. The first reason was to seal the already deep cracks among the Karen, while the second objective was to portray itself as a unified nation before the eyes of the masses.

Firstly, the uprisings led by the Buddhist Karen and the reactionary response taken by the Christian practitioners resulted into a Karen population divided into two primary groups, the Christian and so-called heathen Karens. Compared with Buddhist Karen, Christian Karen, who were taught by the missionaries, were trusted more by the British. Along with their religious affiliation, Christian Karen were regarded as better educated and thus had greater opportunities to serve with the colonial administration. The combination of religion, education, and other forms of cultural capital possessed by Christian Karen rendered them more "civilized" in the eyes of British colonialists. On the other hand, heathen Karen, in particular the Buddhist Karen, were deprived of the resources to study abroad for high education because they did not have access to the mission schools. The dearth of opportunities meant that Buddhist Karen were in general less educated compared with their fellow

Christians. Moreover, like the Burman, Buddhist Karen were perceived as less civilized by the British merely because their religion was regarded as despotic. In order to quell the uprisings of the Buddhist Karen, the missionaries requested the British authorities to arm Christian Karen. Although Britain did not end up supporting Christian Karen, the request of the missionaries and attacks against Buddhist Karen persuaded Karen intellectuals to reconsider the goal of unifying the Karen without regard of religion and dialect. The Buddhist uprisings served as a remote cause encouraging the formation of an all-encompassing Karen organization. However, there was an immediate trigger for the formation of an organization that could represent all Karen.

In 1880 a representative of the British Queen came to visit Rangoon, yet the Karen was not included in the reception ceremony. Even though the Karen had been recognized by the outside world since the first conjuncture in 1795, they were not yet recognized as a people, a nation. Instead, because of the Buddhist uprisings, the Karen seemed to be split into two camps: the Christianized and the heathen. They had not yet been publicly involved in any activity with an image of the Karen as a nation.[68] The visitor from England probably could expose the Karen disunity to the eyes of the masses. The visit made Karen leaders realize the necessity of appearing before the masses as a unified nation. One Karen leader said to the township officer, "in this country there are only two major races: Burmese and Karen. If you place the Burmese as the first one, you should place the Karen as the second one. And, if you place the Burmese in the second place, then you should place the Karen in the first place." Eventually, the officer granted the Karen delegates an invitation to attend the reception ceremony. "The following day in the newspaper the names of the Karen and Burmese who were given permission to be at the party were reported…[and thus,] by the end of 1880, the Karen people were recognized in newspapers and by the representatives of the Queen. And it was really something for the Karen elders to think about profoundly."[69]

At any rate, these two triggers made the Karen elites decide on forming an

[68] Some similar explanations can be seen in Marshall, 1922/1997: 300-311; Decha, 2003: 100-102.
[69] From Rev. T. Than Bya's article, "The visit of the queen's Representatives and the Birth of the Karen National Association." Cited from Decha, 2003: 100-101.

organization to promote the image that the Karen was a unified people.

The founding of the KNA was obviously another way to realize millenniumism. What was less obvious, however, was that the KNA was the first organization formally established to ponder the meaning of "a Karen nation" and to strive for a unified Karen nation. To promote the Karen identity, to protect Karen culture and to advance education were believed to be the keys to constructing Karen nationhood. And public exposure before the masses during the ceremony was a strategy to propagate an image of Karen nationhood to the world. In the end, however, the KNA were ultimately unsuccessful in realizing their ideals.

Following the Third Anglo-Burman War, Buddhist rebellions occurred countrywide. In response, the British launched an operation to pacify the rebels.[70] Some missionaries viewed pacification as a chance to propagate the Christian faith and were surprisingly active in the operation. Though in the past they were unwilling to arm Christian Karen, this time around the British provided weaponry to converted Karen, who would display their loyalty to Britain by actively fighting against the rebels. However, the Buddhist Karen, for the survival of Buddhism, were also active with the Buddhist rebellions. As Gravers says, the missionary Smith found that "the heathen Karen villages constitute the base of supplies to the party [of rebels]" (Gravers, 2007: 238).

Although the Buddhist Karen did not intend to restore the crown to the Burman king, the enemy of the whole Karen, eventually, the Buddhist Karen and Christian Karen still became the adversaries in the desperate battlefield. The confrontation between these "two Karens" demonstrated that the efforts of the KNA to unify the Karen as a whole failed. Nevertheless, the conflict resulted in several unintended consequences. The first was that the Christian Karen realized they were not orphans anymore. They had the white brothers leading them.[71] Before the massive Buddhists rebellions exploded, the Karen could not organize their own troops. But, this time, under the leadership of their white brothers, the Christian Karen were able

[70] Mikael Gravers suggests that the pacification was an important concept in the language of colonization. The British believed that Burma could only become civilized and attain a democratic constitution if the colonial power was successful in introducing "peace" to the country by quelling resistance. Please see Gravers, 1999: 8.

[71] Whether or not the British viewed the Karen as their brothers is debatable. I am here only concerned with Karen's self-recognition and the ensuing movement.

to do so on their own. The second was that the KNA was identified by the missionaries and the British as a legitimate organization that not only had the right to represent all Karen but also had the privilege to collaborate with the colonial government. Thirdly, some missionaries and British officers perceived that the Karen nation was coming into being. They believed that the nationalist effort led by the KNA would be instrumental in unifying the Karen people and in marginalizing other movements led by heathens.[72]

If the argument that the Karen nation was coming into being were true, it would legitimize the charge that Karen nationalism was Christianized and merely a product of the missionaries' religious intentions and of the inner conflict between the Christian Karen and the Buddhist Karen. Such a view is problematic, however. Nationalism as a political movement necessarily entails an ideological blueprint that spells out the means by which a nation can realize its self-determination and desired ends. Yet, at the time, the KNA did not propose any political ends but only aimed at unifying the Christian Karen and the heathen Karen by engaging in non-religious cultural activities, protecting Karen from Burman threats, promoting Karen identity and struggling for Karen social and economic advancement. Therefore, I would argue that Karen nationalism as such did not truly emerge.

Karen nationalism only appeared after the 1910s and became a visible movement after 1921. It was to some degree a combination of the millenniumism prophesized in Y'wa myth and the response to the burgeoning of Burman nationalism that Karen nationalism came into being. In 1906, the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) was formed. The YMBA, at its inception, concentrated on religious issues such as requesting the British to enter monasteries without wearing shoes and more or less replacing the role of the Buddhist *Sangha* (order of monks). The YMBA soon switched its attention to political issues.

In 1917, the YMBA sent a delegation to the Chelmsford-Montagu hearings in Calcutta to ask for Burma's separation from India and for recognition of Burma as a distinct nation. As the only organization representing non-Burman's native nations,

[72] For example, in the 1866 rebellion, the missionary Dr. Vinton said that "I never saw the Karen so anxious for a fight. This is just welding the Karens into a nation, not an aggregate clans…." (Smith, 1999: 45)

the KNA, fearing that the Karen would not be treated equally by the Burman, insisted that Burma was not ready for self-rule and should remain under British control. In 1921, with home rule being granted, the KNA changed their position and demanded a separate electorate to protect the Karen's interests and identity vis-à-vis the Burman majority. In the Whyte Committee, which was formed to investigate political reform in Burma, Dr. San C. Po served as a representative for the Karen. In 1928, Po even proposed to create an independent Karen State as a protectorate confederating with Great Britain (Smith, 1999: 49-51; Fink, 2001: xvii-xix). Since then, the Karen had continuously proposed similar claims under the British administration, until 1949 when the Karen launched their own revolution.

It is obvious that the nationalist ideas of the KNA were to pursue a lay political end in which the Karen could live without fear. However, these ideas were still very much informed by the millenniumism prophesized in the Y'wa myth. This is illustrated in the following story. When the Whyte Committee arrived in Burma and entered a Karen village in the plains area, the members of the committee were invited by a Karen elder to see his white elephant in order to fulfill a prophecy: "When three 'whites' meet there will be peace and plenty, progress and prosperity, and an ideal Government will reign supreme." His invitation was prompted by the desire to bring together the Whyte Committee, the white brother and the white elephant (San C. Po, 1928/2001: 8). Moreover, the reason why the Karen wanted a confederacy with Great Britain was because they desired the protection of Britain, a desire that can also be traced back to a prophecy: "Great ruler, afterwards we heard that, after staying three years, the white foreigners would return. Then we wept loud……If the foreigner go away, the race of the Karens will be wholly cut off" (Mason, 1884: 20).

Though Karen nationalism formally appeared at the end of the 1910s, it had not been able to unify the Christian and the heathen Karens owing to two reasons. Firstly, religious enmity hindered the forging of national unity. Those who advocated nationalist ideas were almost all well-educated Christians. Christian Karen's efforts had the support of many missionaries and a few British officers because the latter sympathized with the Karen as a Christian minority and viewed the Buddhist Burman negatively (Fink, 2001: xviii). I do not possess irrefutable

evidence to prove that educated Karen leaders showed disdain to the Karen heathens. But the truth is told that the KNA eventually solved its lack of organization in the Buddhist community by forming the Buddhist Karen National Union (BKNA). It is thus quite reasonable to presume that the enmity between these two Karens, resulted from the extant pacification policy, still existed.

Secondly, British colonial design aggravated the fragmentation of the Karen population. Britain divided Burma into two administrative units: Burma Proper, which was directly ruled by the British colonial administration, and Frontier Areas, which was ruled by the respective political systems of the native nations. The areas inhabited by the Karen encompassed these both regions, thus breeding the difficulties of linking these two groups by political ideas. It was certainly true that, as Fink says, the Christian Karen in Frontier Areas were able to develop minimal links with the Karen living in Burma Proper. Still others serving in the colonial defense force did possess opportunities to maintain their connections with fellow Karen in Burma Proper. Yet, while both these Karen subgroups might have shared nationalist ideas with the KNA, many Karen in the Frontier Areas could not networked with their counterparts in Burma Proper as they either did not understand or were uninterested in learning about the nationalist ideas of well-educated Karens (Fink, ibid: xv). This lack of interest worsened the fragmentation of Karen. The political cleavages fostered by the British administration hence reinforced the already severe divide between Christian and heathen Karens.

Karen nationalism in this period was not understood, accessed and embraced by most Karen. I defined it as an incipient nationalism, which means that it is a type of nationalism with a political blueprint but still not embraced by most members of a particular nation.

Interestingly, although the KNA's goal to unify the Karen was not achieved, two external factors gave the KNA a hand in successfully unifying the Karen. They were the Burman's desire for independence and the Japanese intrusion in Burma.

During 1939-1940, a broad Burman patriotic front was created, whose goals were to reject any form of self-government and to demand immediate independence (Christie, 2000: 107). During World War II, Japan promised the WBA, which was formed in 1930, that they would help Burma to achieve independence. With

Japanese support, the WBA—then known as the Thirty Comrades—went to Hainan Island and Taiwan to receive military training in 1940-1941. They returned to Burma with Japanese troops. Upon the capture of Rangoon, Japan granted "independence" to Burma. During this period, the Karen fought alongside the British against the Japanese and Burman nationalists. It was during this time that the Karen did not differentiate among themselves with respect to their belief systems. The British-Karen forces were made up of hill and plains Karens, all of the religious communities. The distinction between different "Karen nations" was disappearing in the face of threat. In retaliation for the Karen's loyalty to the British, Burman nationalists committed violent crimes against the Karen including murder and rape. In return, the Karen retaliated against the Burman. During the time, xenophobia was exchanged on both sides. The communal war between the Karen and the Burman was about to explode (McVey, 1978). As the KNU once said, the internal conflict "has not left the Karens untouched or asleep" (Smith, 1999: 63).

Because of the war between the two allied groups, Great Britain and the Karen against Japan and the Burman, and because of mutual hatred between the Karen and the Burman, the Karen came to achieve some degree of a unified nation. Nevertheless, that the fragmental or even mutually antagonistic Karens were forging into a unified nation does not mean that a modern Karen nation was in the making.

Walker Connor claims that a modern nation can be said to appear when most of the designated population has come to share a national self-consciousness (Smith, 1998: 163). Although Connor does not tell us exactly the meaning of national self-consciousness, I think that Wang Xien's thesis on national consciousness is illuminating. Wang argues that national consciousness implies that the designated population is conscious not only of identifying each other as their fellow but also of the need to pursue a common political end (Wang, 1998: 142-143). The first part of this definition seems universal because all social groups more or less share a certain degree of collective consciousness. The second part of the definition is more critical. Only a group that is conscious of the necessity of pursuing a common political end can be regarded as a nation. This is because the nation, as many scholars believe, is by definition a community aspiring to self-determination as a political end.

At the time the Karens were forging into a unified nation, it was apparent that

they had acquired some kind of a collective consciousness. Otherwise, the different Karen denominations would not have collaborated with each other in the fight against the Japan-Burman alliance. Even so, the formation of a unified Karen nation did not satisfy Wang Xien's second point about national consciousness, because the Karen had not yet committed to the pursuit of a common political end. Rather, this collective consciousness emerged out a xenophobia toward the Japanese and the Burman alliance, and, most importantly, out of their loyalty to Britain. Since the Y'wa myth as a collective memory was deeply etched in the minds of the Karen, they must have believed that if they expressed their allegiance to the British, their white brother would help them to construct their preordained utopia. As I have shown in the previous section, the political pursuits proposed by the KNA prior to the explosion of World War II could indeed be perceived as the utopia the Karen had aspired for. However, in actual fact the realization of a utopia was not the main concern of the Karen during World War II. Fearing that they would be persecuted by the Burman after Japan granted independence to Burma and facing the atrocities committed by the Japanese and the Burman, the Karen believed that supporting their white brother, the British, would help them to repel Japan's intrusion. In this regard, they merely fought for survival needs rather than political self-determination. Thus, in this sense, the Karen was still very much in the tentative phase of an incipient nation rather than in the full-fledged stage of the modern nation.

The tortuous experiences during World War II made the Karen believe even more in the prophesy that the Karen's situation would worsen if their white brother had left. Karen leaders were more convinced that the Karen and the Burman would never coexist peacefully. After World War II, when Britain retook control of Burma, Karen leaders from all Karen organizations followed the resolutions they had made previously at many meetings without any disagreement. They began to make appeals to Britain for granting Karen people a State. During this period, there were many organizations claiming to represent the Karen. On 5 February 1947, the KCO, the KNA, the Baptist KNA, the Buddhist KNA and the KYO gathered in Rangoon for a pan-Karen congress. Over there, they agreed to merge together into the Karen National Union (KNU) in the hope of leading the Karen nationalist movement. Unfortunately, until Burma gained independence, calls from the Karen had never

been taken into consideration by the British, their white brother.

Religious Opposition in Karen Nationalism

Karen nationalism has developed into an armed movement since it formally emerged in April 1949. The purpose of the movement has been to pursue a separate Karen State. As seen in Chapter 2, since the Karen and other ethnic nations stood up for their States, Burma has been engulfed by communal war in which no individual from any community could avoid from. As a result of the communal war, the Christian Karen, the heathen Karen and other Karen were once again unified into a nation. What made this period different from World War II is that this time the process of unifying the different Karens not only transformed its incipient nationalism into modern nationalism but also witnessed the rise of a modern Karen nation. Despite this, Karen nationalism as a modern nationalist movement had not always been an effective vehicle for uniting the Karen people, as was hoped by the early missionaries. The split of the DKBA in 1994-1995 was a serious setback for nationalism.

DKBA's Split: The Setback

In December 1994, conflict between the Buddhist Karen and the Christian Karen gave rise to the formation of the DKBO and its military wing, the DKBA. The DKBA even supported the SPDC to attack the KNU. It conquered Manerplaw, the KNU headquarters, in January 1995. From relevant resources, a couple of interrelated reasons resulted in the split.

According to Gravers, the Buddhists comprised about 70 to 80% of the field solders in the KNLA. As for the higher positions in the KNLA and in the KNU, even though there are no exact figures, it is believed that the Christians have dominated most of the leadership. Yet, most of the Buddhist soldiers were recruited from poorer villages (Gravers, 1999: 89), making the army highly unequal in terms of religion. During British colonization, because of discrimination by the British authorities and missionaries, the Buddhists were not as eager to go to school as their Christian fellows. When obtaining education became a norm among the Christian Karen, the Buddhist Karen paid more attention to learning and maintaining

Buddhist precepts rather than to obtaining education brought by westerners (Gravers, 2007:237-239). After Burma acquired independence, the whole country was swept by the growth of nationalist movements by all ethnic nations, which further limited the educational opportunities for the Buddhist Karen. As a result, Buddhist Karen's educational level remained substantially lower than that of their Christian counterpart.

In the Frontier Areas where Karen live, there is an abundance of timber and teak. Before the fall of Manerplaw, the KNU traded timber, teak, other lumber and materials with Thai businessmen to buy weapons and ammunition. After assuming power to rule Burma, Ne Win pursued an isolationist policy and shut down many companies, factories and schools funded or run by westerners because he feared the influence of foreigners and other countries. Nonetheless, the vast needs of materials or goods still remained. The factories were once able to produce quite a few goods were shut down while others were not able to satisfy the vast needs of the Burmese. Numerous goods that were sorely needed inside Burma were consequently imported from Thailand through areas controlled by armed nationalist groups. For this reason, quasi-free trade zones bordering with Thailand were formed.

The so-called quasi-free trade zones were not tax-free zones as businessmen still had to pay tax. The Karen areas were divided into seven districts within which district offices were responsible for administration while brigades took charge of security and military action. The central KNU did not provide the districts with funds. Thus, taxing and trade became the most important sources of funds for these areas. However, there were no formal rules determined by the central KNU to regulate how much taxation the districts could impose. The amount of tax was mostly dependent on the local leaders' decisions and the businessmen's relationships with the local leaders. The flexible decision making and implementation structure made corruption become a plausible source of "personal income." Some Karen leaders even traded with Thai businessmen for their own aggrandizement. According to Jack Fong's findings, the KNU central leaders knew the situation, but they were not able to change it as they did not provide funding to the local branches. Instead, it was the other around: the local activists were obligated to provide the central KNU with funds (Fong, 2004: 351-352).

An additional problem stemmed from the mismanagement of funds by Karen leaders. According to Martin Panter, "some leaders admitted that, for example, a ceremony which cost 5,000 Baht was recorded in the accounting books of 6,000 Baht. The transfer of a patient to a Thai hospital cost 2,000 Baht but it was recorded as 3,000 Baht. 'It was generally in small amounts, but in a 'dishonest fashion'" (Rogers, 2004: 145). Most of the leadership was dominated by Christians while the majority of frontline soldiers were Buddhist Karen and Animist Karen. Although Christian leaders earned money through trade and taxation, Buddhist Karen were never a beneficiary of these activities. The impoverished foot soldiers suffered death and injury and carried heavy loads, but the educated Christian leaders lived in relative luxury. From Gravers' point of view, this economic disparity increasingly stirred the Buddhists' resentment against their rich, autocratic Christian leaders (Gravers, 1999: 89; 2001: 22).

Despite this growing resentment, the Buddhists and heathen Karens still supported the central KNU. They still believed that the Karen needed a homeland where they could rule themselves and live without fear. However, it was also true that ordinary Karen had suffered from over 40 years of fighting while their utopia had yet to come by and many Buddhist Karen felt tired of fighting with no end in sight. One time, from the works of Gravers, an influential monk named U Thuzana prophesized that after constructing 50 pagodas in Karen areas, peace would come and the Karen would be able to build their ideal community (Gravers, 2001: 22). His thoughts attracted many followers, including ordinary villagers and soldiers. He appealed to his followers to construct pagodas in war zones, and urged them, by adhering to Buddhist teachings, staying in the combat zone between the KNU and the Burmese army to stop the fighting.

In 1989, U Thuzana acquired the permission to construct a pagoda on the summit of a hill. The hill was located at the junction of the Salween River and the Moei River. However, Manerplaw, the KNU headquarters, was located near the hill, then perceived as an important strategic location. Because of the security concerns, the KNU did not allow U Thuzana to paint this pagoda white, as they feared that the white pagoda could be spotted by the enemy to target the KNU headquarters. The KNU also restricted visits to this pagoda in order to prevent any spies from

detecting information under the guise of pilgrimage.

These measures intensified the resentment among the Buddhist Karen. A few years later, when the construction of the pagoda was finished, the Buddhist Karen gathered to worship. In the meantime, it was said that U Thuzana could supply food to the worshipers and that the worshipers would not be forced to be porters for the KNLA. They could freely travel with a certificate issued by the monk. Furthermore, the monk taught Buddhist soldiers that they should not serve in the KNLA, should not kill Burman and should be neutral (Rogers, 2004: 147). The hearsay and the instructions made the KNU suspect that U Thuzana was a spy sent by the Burmese Junta. Saw Charles,[73] a relative of Bo Mya, banned worship and allowed his men to beat the worshipers. In response, the Buddhist Karen staged a protest. When a Christian colonel threatened to shoot down the *hti,* a symbol of Buddha on the top of pagoda, the conflict escalated (Gravers, 1999: 91).

Later, U Thuzana again asked for permission to build another pagoda in Manerplaw but this request was flatly rejected. The Buddhist Karen had complained for some time that their Christian leaders looked down on them. When the request was rejected, the Buddhist Karen who had followed U Thuzana became further convinced that they were being repressed by their Christian leaders, and were determined to do something for their faith if their demands were not fulfilled (Gravers, 1999: 91). In December 1994, U Thuzana, along with 1,000 Buddhist Karen, formed the DKBO and the DKBA. They declared their resignation from the KNU on the grounds of religious discrimination (Rogers, 2004: 148-149).[74] On 2 January 1995, U Thuzana and his followers met with Maung Hla, an officer of the Burmese Junta. Maung Hla promised him peace and development in the Karen state (Fong, 2005: 244-245). This meeting let the KNU suspect even more that U Thuzana was a spy deployed by the Burmese Junta. On 3 January 1995, the KNU declared war on the DKBO and the DKBA. With intelligence and assistance from the DKBA, the Burmese Junta successfully captured Manerplaw on 27 January

[73] Saw Charles is related to the wife of Bo Mya. He was promoted based on their relationship rather than on his achievements. He had been accused of rape, murder, excessive taxation, and forced conscription of child solders. Please see Gravers, 1999: 90-91.

[74] However, Gravers has a different opinion. He says that U Thuzana went into seclusion at a monastery to meditate for 49 months before the DKBA and the DKBO were formed. Please see Gravers, 1999: 91-92.

1995. Over 100,000 refugees fled to Thailand to seek refuge.

Unending Religious Divide

Due to the early missionaries' preaching and British policies, the Karen was divided into more than two camps. These cleavages rendered national unity among these Karens extremely difficult. The nationalist movement launched by the KNU unified the Karens into a nation to pursue their common goals. However, following the split of the DKBA, we can see that the religious tension was not eliminated by nationalism. Rather, it was just relieved thanks to a more urgent concern: a separate Karen State. Nevertheless, because of the interrelated reasons discussed above, the religious tension was released and a setback for Karen nationalism occurred. These developments tell us that nationalism did not always successfully unite various groups within a particular nation.

The split of the DKBA was a devastating blow for Karen nationalism. Firstly, it brought about the appearance of Karen enclaves. Secondly, it to some degree made the religious tension more conspicuous and sustaining. There are two tiers of Karen enclaves. The first tier divides the Karen into KNU and DKBA enclaves. The second tier occurs inside the KNU enclave that is further divided into IDP, KNU-controlled and DP enclaves. The term IDP stands for Internally Displaced Persons while DP represents Displaced Persons. The DP enclaves are known to the world as refugee camps along the Thai-Burmese border. The disposal within and the dynamic relations among these enclaves will be discussed in Chapter 4 and 6. Here, in the last part of this chapter, I will focus on the influence of the split on the harmony within the Karen.

In 1996, the DKBA began to attack Karen refugee camps located in Thai territory. They burned houses and took hostages to force refugees back to Burma. Na Nam Mui, a DKBA colonel, said that the DKBA was formed as a result of the injustice that had been directed toward the Buddhist Karen because the Buddhist Karen's right to practice their belief had been suppressed.[75] When I practice my first term of field work in January 2007, Naw E, one of my interviewees, furiously

[75]The opinions are from a DKBA colonel, Please see, "Interview: DKBA Colonel Breaks Silence," on http://www.karen.org/news2/messages/382.html. Accessed on 7 December 2008.

told me, "If KNU has accountability, transparency, and rule of law, DKBA will not split. The corruption, they do not want to take care, high position people committed crimes, they don't want to arrest, they discriminate other religion, that's why DKBA split." Combining these two comments, it is not too surprising that when the DKBA raided the camps in Mae Sot they targeted Christian pastors.[76] The raids lasted until the camps around Mae Sot were resettled to the places a bit further from the border. The reasons about moving the camps to the places further from the border will be discussed in the next chapter.

During these raids, the Christians suffered the most from burnt houses, looting and death. According to my interviewees, they normally did not raid houses around monasteries in the camps since the people living around monasteries were usually Buddhists. In this regard, these operations could probably be regarded as target raids. However, the DKBA also kidnapped monks and attacked Buddhist soldiers who were loyal to the KNU. The most obvious example is that Saw 3, the Buddhist leader in Um Piem Mai camp, was kidnapped by the DKBA. Thus, the operations should be seen as quasi-target raids rather than actual target raids. These quasi-target operations led many ordinary Christians and Christian leaders to hide themselves in and around monasteries. Knowing some Christian KNU leaders sought refuge in monasteries, according to Saw A and Naw E, the DKBA sent spies to settle around the monasteries to detect who worked for the KNU. As mentioned, the DKBA cooperated with the SPDC since its formation. Therefore, it had always been believed by some people that there must be some DKBA or SPDC spies hiding in Buddhist inhabited areas within the camps. Saw D, a Buddhist, said that for this reason the Buddhist Karen in the camps had been suspected by their Christian fellows as the lackey of the SPDC and the trusteeship between these two Karens faced dire challenge. Christian Karen's disdain for Buddhist Karen and the serious complaints of Buddhists towards the Christian fellows could be heard off and on.

It was around 1998 when the DKBA stopped raiding the camps. DKBA's halt

[76] The pastors from the Seventh Day Adventist denomination were particularly targeted. As discussed above, Saw Charlie was perceived as the man of Bo Mya. They were the followers of the Seventh Day Adventist denomination. The Seventh Day Adventist denomination was thus perceived as the religion of Bo Mya and the pastors from this denomination were particularly targeted. This showed their obvious hatred towards whoever believed in the same religion as Bo Mya.

of raids on the camps relieved the tension between these two religious communities. In addition to DKBA's halt of raids, another factor also helped to alleviate the tension: refugee camps as closed spaces have pushed the emergence of an intermingled life-circle. This can be explored through two aspects.

First of all, the geographic religious line is not strictly maintained in refugee camps. Before degrading into refugees, in the Karen areas of Burma there had been Christian villages. These villages were either the result of relocation implemented by the early missionaries or the result of conversion of the whole village. The Buddhist villages existed in the plains areas. Owing to the religious line, the Karen was divided into Christian Karen and heathen Karen for a long time. Such a religious line, however, even though it had not been broken, was not strictly maintained in the camps.

It is true that in some camps people who believed in the same religion normally lived together. Therefore, some places were crowded with believers of the same religion. For example, in Mae La camp, most of the people settling in Zone A and Zone C are Christians while most of the dwellers in Zone B are Buddhists. However, such obvious religious distinction appeared naturally, meaning, it was not the result of any decision or policy involving religious intention. Moreover, it is not universal in all camps. In Un Piem Mai camp, there are two zones: Zone A and Zone B. Zone A is inhabited half and half by Christians and Buddhists while Buddhists dwellers in Zone B outnumber Christians. In any case, the Buddhists and the Christians live together with each other in each zone. Even though there appears to be a religious line in Mae La, no one perceives Zone B as a Buddhist Zone and the other two zones as Christian Zones. In summary, refugees are not settled on the basis of religious line and the camps are not surrounded by religion, either.

Secondly, refugee camps are closed spaces. Refugees are fenced in the surroundings wherein personal, economic, educational and cultural activities proceed with. There indeed are some mission schools and Buddhist schools in the camps, yet the mission schools only exist at the high school level and the college level, and only a few students can study at these religious schools. Most of the students study in the non-religious schools. In the camps, we can see hospitals, libraries and many shops. All these facilities are not established according to

religious cleavages. As a result of the lack of job opportunities, it is quite common to see people idling around and chatting with strangers. I dare not say that all refugees ignore religious identity when deciding whether or not to chat with strangers, but I have never heard of anyone making friends with others for religious reasons. The most important point is, the facilities supported by INGOs have never recruited staff or received visitors based on religious consideration, either. The lives of the Karen who have settled in the camps are, in fact, intermingled.

In summary, except for the religious activities such as worships, mass meetings or reunion conferences organized by churches or monasteries, religion does not delineate a clear-cut line for the Buddhists and the Christians within refugee camps. For this reason, refugee camps have been shaped into the closed spaces which surround the intermingled life-circles wherein Karen refugees live.

However, an intermingled life-circle does not indicate that the tension between Christians and Buddhists is sealed. Instead, the tension, I argue, has transformed into a kind of ingrained stereotype that hides in their respective collective memories. The stereotype is partly derived from the memory trace paved by history and partly based on the life experiences of themselves. The stereotype is off-and-on used by the Christians and the Buddhists, respectively, to mirror each other when the switch that triggers the collective memory is turned on. Once the switch is turned on, the stereotype immediately become a memory flow that, to some degree, permeates their self-recognitions and the recognition towards each other.

One day in August 2007, I went to Mae La to attend the Wrist Tying Ceremony. It was the evening before the day the ceremony was to formally begin. I was accompanied by a friend who is a Christian. We went to the top of a hill that overlooks Mae La to shoot pictures at sunset. The biggest monastery was constructed on the hill and the biggest pagoda in Mae La is also on the hill. We chatted at the side of the pagoda over a soft drink. My friend is an open-minded youth. He knew of the past split between the DKBA and the KNU. Even though he was a Christian, he disagreed, like most of my friends, with what was done to the Buddhists by the early Christian leaders and acknowledged that many of the Christians' thoughts and behaviors were very bad and loathsome. Nevertheless, when I mentioned why most of the leaders were Christians, he gave me a surprising

answer:

> "I don't mean to discriminate them, but Buddhists do not much care for education. They usually end their education after secondary school, and then become busy making money. But we are always taught by our pastors to serve our people. That's why you can see most of the people in further study programs are Christians."

I am not sure whether or not it is true that Buddhist Karen prefer making money over getting a higher education, but his response, more or less, corresponds to what was discussed above. Namely, even though learning Karen script became a norm in Christian community during colonization, the Buddhist Karen still paid little attention to learning the Karen script to this day. Moreover, after the DKBA split from the KNU, they were granted permission by the Burmese Junta to run their own business in their areas. Myawaddy, now known as a DKBA town, is located opposite of Mae Sot and on the border with Thailand. After the DKBA split from the KNU, they quickly occupied Myawaddy and transformed it into their base. Religious freedom, peace and "development" have been the target of the DKBA, even if it meant cooperating with the SPDC. "DKBA just wants to make business" was heard quite often while I practiced my field research in Mae Sot.

Not surprisingly, when I talked to my Buddhist friends, the accusation triggered strong emotions. Saw D told me that when he studied in primary school, Christian teachers always asked students not to pray to Buddha because He was an idol. Moreover, before they started to teach, the Christian teachers always led the children in prayer by citing the Bible. "Step by step," said Saw D, "Buddhist children become Christian children. That's why educated Christian youths are in larger numbers than Buddhists." In addition, when he studied in schools, he recalled, the pastors were usually invited to lecture but he had never seen any monk being invited to lecture. "So, when I was student, a Buddhist, I felt I was dominated by Christian. I think, Christian students like Buddhists to become Christian."

Saw D's opinions were similar to Naw C's. Naw C is a Buddhist, whose uncle is a commander of the X^{th} brigade. According to Naw C, her uncle is the highest-ranked Buddhist leader in this brigade, which is highly unusual because

very few Buddhists can be promoted to such a high position. While recalling her experiences of studying in the camp, she said:

> "In the school, before, if you are Buddhist, you don't have the chance to go to the front, you will always get behind. If you are Christian, you will get support. You can imagine, children get support, they are more active. And they felt like, they have many support, they want to try hard, children don't get anything, ok, maybe people don't like me, so, I don't want to try, I don't want to involve in that group anymore. So, they make themselves far and far, far and far. During my time in refugee camp, one year, the whole school, 20 students, high school graduates only one is Buddhist, one Buddhist Paw Karen. One is a lot already, because, before me, one guy only, he is Paw Karen, but he is Christian. Me, Paw Karen, Buddhist. After me, in 1995 and 1996, one Buddhist Paw Karen. After that, I don't know, very few. As I know, Paw Karen, if they reach middle school, like 5, 6 and 7 standard, they will quit the school. They said, they don't want to study anymore."

Saw A used to work for the Free Burma Ranger (FBR). Before he applied for resettlement, we once discussed this issue. He told me that the Buddhists were not treated equally by Christian leaders. Especially in the KNLA, most of the frontline soldiers were Buddhists, but they were not equally promoted.

> "When DKBA organized, Buddhist are very happy, one big monk is just like my father, he asked to help them. But, they stay with SPDC, that's why I do not work for them…….long long time ago, most of the people in Burma are Buddhists. Later on, they going to school, they change their life, some are got baptized to be Christian, some of the young guy fall in love with the Christian girl, when they go married, the have to follow the girl. ……For me, I love Buddhism, I don't like to be Christian, that why I choose a Buddhist girl. Please, ask your Christian friend (Karen), where are they from and what do you believe before you become Christian, grand mom, father……Even KNU leader now Christians, before, they are Buddhists. Next generation, Buddhist people will less and less."

Although the stereotype influences the self-recognition and the other-recognitions of the Christians and the Buddhists, it fortunately seems to not destabilize or to devastate the intermingled life-circle. It does not result in a serious conflict between the Christians and the Buddhists, either. At least, during my terms of fieldwork, I did not hear or find any devastating conflict or instability that resulted from the stereotype. I think, probably two external factors have prevented such a devastating influence.

The first factor is that closed spaces made the Karen people tolerate and accept the stereotype projected toward them and each other. The reason is quite obvious. Refugees cannot leave the camps and have to live with each other. Their lives are intermingled already. There is no place to hide unless they isolate themselves in their homes. The second factor is that the banner of unity makes people tolerate each other. This factor, according to my observations, is more critical. When I was in Mae Sot and the camps, "unity" was a term heard quite often. When I tried to explore the difference between Skaw and Pwo, "there is no Skaw and Pwo, there is only Karen" was usually the words I obtained. After being refugees for around 20 years and after the devastating split of the DKBA, any thought that is implicated as a way to differentiate we-group and other-group in the Karen by religious and language lines is perceived as a way to disunite the Karen. All the Karen refugees I contacted told me that the SPDC was good at disuniting other ethnic nations through various techniques. Religion is the one they used and DKBA' split from the KNU was the most significant example. Therefore, under the banner of unity, "there is no religious problem" among the Karen. The banner of unity also leads the Karen to tolerate and accept this stereotype.

However, the aspiration for unity more or less unconsciously consolidates the Christian hegemony. The observations below reveal that among Karen refugees Christianity is more conspicuous than Buddhism or even more valued by Karen leaders in each stratum.

According to the results of my interviews, the schools' supporters, *vis-à-vis* INGOs, hope that religious influence can be reduced to a minimum when teachers teach in the classes. Moreover, I did not have a chance to talk with high school and primary school students about religious issues; therefore, I could not assert that

teachers still asked students to pray with the Bible in the same way as my friends once experienced. However, my Buddhist friend's feelings still occurred to me when I attended some ceremonies. I attended five schools' graduation ceremonies, which included the No. 2 High School, the Leadership and Management Center (LMC), the Engineer Study Program (ESP), the Leadership and Management Training Center (LMTC) as well as the Bible School. Among these schools, the No. 2 High School was transformed from a mission school while Bible School was a Baptist college. For these two schools, inviting pastors or religious leaders to lecture to students who are going to graduate is quite reasonable. They actually invited pastors to lecture to students. ESP and LMC are not mission schools. Pastors were still invited to lecture in these two schools while monks were not invited. Before the graduation ceremony formally proceeded in ESP and LMC, all the students had to stand up and followed the pastor's benediction. In such circumstances, Buddhist students had only two choices, one was to stand up but keep silence while the other was to pray the same way as their Christian classmates did. Only LMTC set the religious ceremony apart from the graduation ceremony. Even so, in LMTC, the religious ceremony was only organized for Christians rather than for both Christians and Buddhists.

From 8-10 October 2007, the KNU organized a workshop called "Constitution and Politics" in Mae Sot. The KNU selected some youths who represented each district and each K-organization to attend the workshop. I was invited to lecture about nationalism and geopolitics. In my class, all of the 12 attendees were Christians. When I told Saw E the situation, he said that the KNU does not have a priority policy. That is to say, the KNU does not recruit Christians prior to Buddhists. However, the attendees were all Christians beyond the shadow of a doubt.

On 8 January and 31 January 2008, I crossed the Moei River into the Karen state for the ceremonies of the Karen New Year and Karen Revolution Day. During the New Year ceremony, it was the same as I predicted, no monks were invited to lecture while a pastor was. I asked Saw F, a teacher from a school in a KNU-controlled area, whether or not all the dwellers and soldiers were Christians. He answered that the estimated figures of the number of Buddhists were around a

third of the total armed forces. “It is not important, because we do not force them to listen, they can leave when pastor pray.” I indeed saw many Buddhists leave when the pastor lectured. During the Revolution Day ceremony, some leaders, including Buddhist and Christian leaders, sat at the side of the stage. Before the ceremony began, according to procedure, leaders had to lecture to the crowd. I arrived at the place a little bit late. By the time I arrived, they were just on the step of a procedure where they invited KNU leaders to lecture to the crowd. Therefore, I could not make sure whether or not any religious leaders were invited to lecture, but, the leader representing the KNU during the lecture was, coincidently or not, a Christian and asked all the attendees to pray with the Bible regardless of the religious beliefs.

When I recounted what I observed to Naw C, she was surprised. “They still?” said Naw C. When Saw X, a Buddhist leader in Mae La, heard about the situation, he even told me: “I can understand because they always do this before. I don’t like it, but I accept, because we have to unite. This situation will be changed.” At the same time, it seemed that all my Christian friends were quite inured to the circumstance since they did not give me any judgment or comment about it.

These facts show the existence of Christian hegemony. This hegemony results from the domination of the Christians over the leadership because Karen nationalism sprouted during the colonial era. As Hayami says, the early missionaries make full use of Karen myths to facilitate their work, but the Karen also take the chance to learn writing, knowledge comparable to their lowland’s neighbors (Hayami, 2004: 41). The efforts of the Karen were to realize the millenniumism prophesized in the Y’wa myth: the arrival of the Karen kingdom. It was the pursuit of utopia.

When the Christian Karen devoted themselves to learning the “knowledge” and the scripts brought by their white brothers, the Buddhist Karen still paid more attention to the precepts of Buddhism. This brought about a consequence that the first group of educated elites was basically comprised of Christians. Later, as a consequence of the British distrust toward the Buddhist Karen, the Christian Karen had more chances to serve in the colonial administrative and military bodies. Therefore, the development and sprouting of Christian hegemony is an unwitting result.

This unwitting result once divided the Karen into two main groups: Christian and non-Christian. However, because of a common concern, a Karen State, these two Karens were unified into a nation. In order to pursue their own State, Animists, Buddhists and Christians were all mobilized to sacrifice for the cause. It was time to shatter the Christian hegemony. However, owing to many Christian leaders' strong religious preferences and corruptions, the Christian hegemony was not shattered, but consolidated. The hegemony not only resulted in the split of the DKBA, but also intensified the collective memories of Buddhists and of Christians toward each other. The collective memories are intermittently recalled when some incidents or situations relevant to religions occur.

The KNU does not have a priority policy, but because of the religious insensitive behavior by Christian leaders, the Christian hegemony currently seems to be an absolute result. In one aspect, the absolute result happens unconsciously, because it is not the outcome of policy. Rather, it is just the consequence of numerous insensitive behaviors toward the latent religious tension. In another aspect, it is a conscious effect. "Unity" is a term often heard among the Karen. Under the banner of unity, they close their eyes to the religious tension in order to not let it be used by the SPDC as a technique to split the Karen again.

Even though the Christian hegemony exists among the Karen, it does not mean that the Karen nationalism is a Christianized cause because it has been concerned with all Karen rather than merely the Christian Karen. The most important thing is that the goal of Karen nationalism is to pursue a lay political community where they can rule themselves rather than construct a religious kingdom.

In any case, after being refugees for over 20 years, the Karen nation is divided into many enclaves. With the addition of latent religious tension among the refugees, how does the KNU seal the tension, make the enclaves adhere to each other, and further re/forge the national consciousness? These questions will be discussed in the following chapters.

4. Contesting the Control of Karen Space

Physically, a space where a particular national community lives in is an arena where the wonderings, battles, essential economic activities, rituals, cultural ceremonies, almost all individual and collective activities take place within.[77] In this regard, the space seems just a physical container wherein the various individual and collective activities are played out. However, such a space is far from an objective container.

When a particular national community inhabits in a space for generations, the space has been transformed into the traditional landscape of the nation already. The transformation lies in the fact that through generations' practices the various activities becomes an intrinsic part of particular nation's collective experiences and memories while the combination of the activities and of the experiences/memories not only invests the space with national kin significance but also makes it emerge as a national landscape witnessing the survival, declining, dying, and prosperity of particular national community. Then, as Anthony Smith argues, the "piece of land has a special place in the hearts and minds of the members of this community, just as this community has a special affinity with a particular historical landscape" (Smith, 1999: 150-151). In other words, the transformation makes the space functions as an organized world of meaning, a "territory comes to be viewed as the repository of shared collective consciousness" (Williams and Smith, 1983: 503), historically unique and poetic to particular nation.

If each nation can have its own national space, the world will be as peaceful as a paradise. The problem is that there are physically not enough "rooms" available

[77] Here, I use "space" rather than the more commonly used term "territory" to describe what the Karen struggles for, because there exist two kinds of contests among Karen refugees. The struggle for a Karen state is certainly a contest for Karen territory. Yet, there is another form of contest among the refugees--contest over the management and administration of refugee camps. Because the camps are on Thai soil the Thai government naturally holds sovereignty over them. If the term "territory" implies sovereignty, it would be difficult to spot the contest among the refugees. As we will see in the following discussion, it is more appropriate to describe the second contest as the one over a space for refugees' survival and a base for the expatriate Karen nationalist movement.

for all the national communities aspiring for the unique and poetic national space (Conner, 1994; Gellner, 1983; Guibernau, 1999; Hobsbawm, 1990). Therefore, history has witnessed that many spaces are claimed by two or more communities as their territories. As Decha Tangseefa contends, the national space is always a site of contestation over political control (Decha, 2003: 145). If the conflicting claims cannot be solved, rival communities often resort to armed contestation in the name of nationalism. This explains in part why fighting to wrest control over a particular land has been a recurring theme throughout human history.

Once a peaceful contest turns into the form of a military movement, it frequently results in the displacement of people. This situation often occurs when two or more spatially contiguous powers claim control over the same space. Jennifer Hyndman thus argues that "human displacement does not occur in neutral spaces, reducible to particular places and void of political meaning. Histories of conflict and antagonistic but spatially contingent relations of power are often what force people to move from their homes in the first place" (Hyndman, 2000: 20). If human displacement resulting from a military conflict crosses borders into another country, the issue of spatial contestation will become more complicated.

First of all, cross-border displacement violates the territorial principle that has been perceived as fundamental to the modern nation. Since the 1789 French Revolution, a State with borders and boundaries congruent with both the nation and the State has been one of the central pursuits of nationalists. Earnest Gellner's definition describes thus, "Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent" (Gellner, 1983: 1). This principle, as Lissa Malkki argues, has come naturally to signify a national order of things, an order in which the "refugee is itself an aberration of categories, or, a zone of pollution" (Malkki, 1995: 4-5).

This principle creates the prototypical condition within which members of a nation are simultaneously citizens of the State, leading to a citizen/nation/State ensemble (Soguk, 1999: 30). Under such a pure condition, the State has the power to not only exert jurisdiction over its citizens' activities, but also to implement laws within its territory. While this scenario seems natural enough, it should not be taken for granted because refugees as a people are deprived of such an ensemble.

Refugees are frequently forced by circumstance to cross borders to seek shelter in a spatially contiguous country. Based on humanitarian principles, many host countries usually agree to supply these migrants with a land to construct refugee camps. In theory a host country holds jurisdiction over both the refugees and the camps. In reality, however, a host country's laws are often not implemented in the camps, nor are the laws of the refugees' country of origin. While the host country may be able to institute special laws to exercise jurisdiction over refugee affairs, they are constrained by international conventions that protect the rights of refugees. For example, because of the non-refoulement principle, it is against international law for a host country to unilaterally repatriate refugees back to their country of origin if such an act will threaten refugees' lives or freedom. Repatriation procedures require the participation of an international protection regime, overseen in particular by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

As a result of this anomaly, the jurisdiction and management of refugee camps are inherently a contested manner, especially so since refugees may constitute a disruptive presence for a nation-state's democracy, welfare and security (Soguk, 1999: 28).[78]

Secondly, if cross-border displacement is the product of an armed nationalist struggle, it becomes even more problematic for the receiving country. Throughout history, defeated armed nationalists usually take flight with civilians to seek refuge in another country.[79] While the host country may be sympathetic to the refugees for

[78] Indeed, for others, refugees are perceived as victims of events for which they cannot be held accountable, and hence they are often regarded as deserving of help and charity. No matter what stance a country may hold toward alien refugees, once a cross-border displacement has occurred, the receiving country is always required to issue a prompt policy response. The attitudes of host countries towards refugees to some degree depend in part on international and domestic pressures and the host country's relationship to the native country of the refugees. Please see Soguk, 1999: 28-29. For example, in January 2004 the United States discussed with the Thai government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on expanding resettlement opportunities for the refugees residing in Thailand. It seems that in this instance the Americans were playing a positive and proactive role. Yet, back home, the Americans were less welcoming towards refugees from Cuba and Haiti for diplomatic reasons. So-called "rafter" refugees from Cuba and Haiti have been the objects of indifferent laughter in late-night TV shows." Please see HRW, 2004: 3.

[79] They take flight with civilians for three reasons: Firstly, the influx of refugees can be a source of military recruitment. Secondly, NGOs and other countries will look after the refugees, so bringing them along will not create additional sources of strain. Moreover, host countries can at least afford to provide a temporary sanctuary for the refugees and to allow third parties to assist the refugees. This means that the defeated nationalists can devote more attention to planning a counterattack in their native land. Thirdly, refugees are protected by international conventions from arbitrary action

humanitarian reasons, it is at the same time concerned about being misunderstood by other countries that they are deliberately protecting an alien "insurgent group." Such a misunderstanding could jeopardize the receiving country by engulfing it into a potentially devastating international conflict. For instance, when a power crosses the border to attack the "insurgents" and the refugees, the host country will respond because such an act, even if targeting only refugees, is still regarded as an intrusion of the host country's sovereignty. Although it is naturally within the host country's purview to fight back when its borders are compromised, such an operation may cause the refugees' enemy to believe that it is actually fighting on behalf of the "insurgents." Regardless, an international conflict is likely to arise as long as the host country is perceived as harboring the rebels.

In order to avoid the ramifications of providing shelter, the host country tends to implement certain policies to ensure that the refugees and their nationalist leaders understand the boundaries of acceptable behavior. Oftentimes, this involves imposing some restrictions upon refugees' freedoms and requesting the intervention of an international protection regime. For example, refugees are usually housed in refugee camps without the right to mobility. However, as argued before, the spaces occupied by the displaced are a political and social construct, and are thus intrinsically a site of contestation. In the case of Karen refugees, such contestation can be found in two aspects: one is the control of Karen land inside Burma while the other involves the management of the affairs inside refugee camps.

In this chapter, I will explore how the contest over the control of Karen land and the management of refugee affairs took shape and evolved. Firstly, I will explore how such a contested space inside Burma is respectively imagined, established and competed for by the Karen and the Burmese Junta. Secondly, I will examine the paradoxical relationship between the Thai government, the international protection regime and the KNU, in order to discuss the nature of the spatial competition within and the political meanings of refugee camps.

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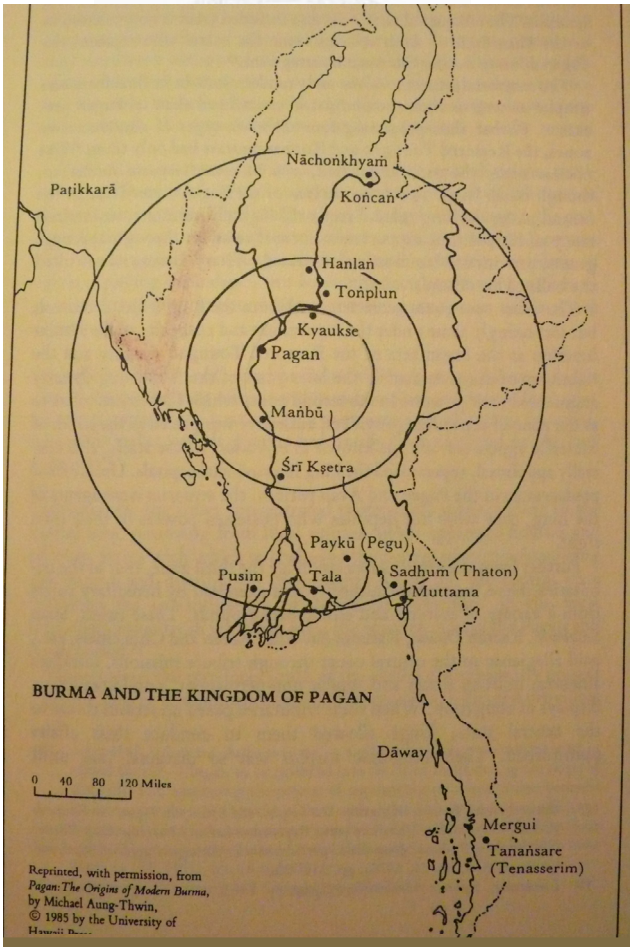
by the receiving country. If a rival camp crosses the border to attack refugees, the action will be viewed as an intrusion and will result in an international conflict. Therefore, to take sanctuary with civilians in refugee camps means that they need not worry the potential attack from the hostile party.

The Contests for/in Karen Territory

Before the Communal War

During the pre-colonial era, Burma was ruled by several competing regimes including the Burman, Mon, Shan, and Arakanese kingdoms. These regimes not only defended their territories but also fought for the control over other powers' territories. After hundreds of years power struggles, the Burman's Toungoo Dynasty (1486-1597) and Kongbaung Dynasty (1753-1885) from the plains areas conquered other forces and gradually wielded authority over a region loosely corresponding to present-day Burma (Lang, 2002: 30-31). Although the Burman dynasties eventually upheld jurisdiction over the entire Burma, it did not directly rule it. As Robert H. Taylor explains, the central dynasties ruled Burma with different governance designs in three regions (Taylor, 1987: 20-25) (Map3).



Map 3: Early Burma. From Taylor: 1987: 21.

As seen in map 3, the central circle was directly ruled by the central dynasties. The mid-circle is referred to as the zone of dependent provinces where the governing authority, known as *myo win*, was placed in the hands of centrally appointed officials. The outer circle represents the distant hills, referred as the tributaries under the authority of diverse primordial political systems such as the Shan *Sawbwa*, Karennni *Sawbwa*, and Karen chief systems (Taylor, 1987: 22). These primordial political systems enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy. 280 years before British colonization, the central dynasties began to centralize their governing powers by crippling the powers of *myo win*s and Burmanizing the lifestyles and cultures of the dependent provinces (represented by the mid-circle). They also increased control over the hill areas. Nevertheless, this increased control concerned only military recruitment and the acquisition of minerals and timber resources; cultural homogenization of the hills was not an objective (Taylor, ibid: 24-25). Even so, the dynasties' extension of control over the hill areas bred hatred and grudges among the ethnic nations. Recall my findings in Chapter 3, when the Burman dynasties launched wars on their Thai counterparts, Burman troops nearly always forced the Karen to serve as porters on their way to Thailand, or confiscated Karen homes to serve as military camps. These measures also led to widespread disaffection among the Karen.

Because of the centralizing project of Burman dynasties, the central and mid-circles were perceived as having been transformed into Burman lands even though the Burman were not the only ethnic nation inhabiting there. Meanwhile, the peoples residing in the outer circle still maintained their political systems and to some degree sustained their cultural diversity. Landscape is an important medium for human beings "to embody their feelings, images, and thoughts in tangible material" (Tuan, 1977: 17), since, according to George W. White, it means that identity is expressed and even invested in the landscape, making the space a basis for collective identity (White, 2004: 40). Therefore, in spite of the lack of irrefutable evidence to prove that the neglect of the central dynasties helped to strengthen ethnic nations' identity and their aspirations for owning land, it is plausible to believe that the ethnic nations' affinities with their land were still maintained. Later, after Britain assumed power over Burma, its divide and rule

policy not only institutionalized and politicized ethnicity (Furnivall, 1956: 74-140), but also strengthened ethnic nations' aspirations to control over their own territories.

Recall that the British policy divided Burma into Burma Proper and Frontier Areas. The former comprised of Upper and Lower Burma which corresponded loosely to the central and mid- circles, while the latter represented the outer circle. London was not willing to expend the resources of Britain and India to rule the entire Burma (Smith, 1999: 41). In the eyes of Britain, the Frontier Areas were simply a jungle region in which more than 100 backward tribes lived that presented no threats to colonial power.[80] Britain, for this reason, followed the governing rules of Burman feudalism, meaning they only directly ruled Burma Proper while allowing the "backward tribes" in the Frontier Areas to preserve their traditional political systems. In addition, as Hazel J. Lang says, because of the British divide and rule policy, interactions between Karen in the hills and the plains were discouraged (Lang, 2002: 31). This policy of no contact further reinforced the separation between the people living in Burma Proper and Frontier Areas (Fink, 2001).

The contrived geographical division and the different ways of governance divided Burma into two contiguous spaces with ethnic-national implications. As discussed, a space itself is an organized world of meaning. The Burman dynasties' centralization policies did not reach the hill areas, where the ethnic nations lived. This limited reach ensured that the ethnic nations could preserve their worlds of meaning. Later on, the British divide and rule policy physically created two separated areas, a Burma Proper governed by Britain and the Frontier Areas ruled by ethnic nations' traditional political systems. British discouragement of interactions between the two areas instilled a sense of separateness among the people living in these two regions. Consequently, different ethnic nations, based on the separated ruling system, could, through various political and cultural activities, continue to assert their identification with the space they lived in. While their activities possessed ethnic-national features, the distinct spaces they fostered were

[80] As the Burma Frontier Areas Committee of enquiry later said, "These hill areas contain more than 100 distinct tribes. The great majority, however, are too small to be of political importance and the four largest, Shans, Kachins, Chins and Karens, dominate more than 95% of the Frontier Areas between them." Please see Lang, 2002: 31.

likewise imbued with ethnic-national implications.

This administrative division, however, was not responsible for motivating ethnic nations living on these separate districts to struggle for territorial control. Rather, there were other factors giving rise to such a struggle.

As aforementioned, the Burman was not the only ethnic nation inhabiting Upper and Lower Burma. Many Karen, in fact, inhabited the Delta and other plains areas in Lower Burma, while the Chin also dwelled in the Upper Burma zones adjacent to the highlands. These ethnic nations suffered from Burman feudalism and other policies such as Burmanization. They were thus willing to give Britain a hand to strike down the last Burman dynasty in three Anglo-Burman Wars. Believing in the Y'wa myth that their white brother will come to save them out of enslavement, the Karen were more actively involved than other national groups in assisting Britain. In order to secure these ethnic nations' allegiance, Britain recruited many members of ethnic nations into the army and the police, favoring particularly the Karen. Fearing that the Burman might rebel against the British to restore their feudalism, the former were normally recruited into the civil section of the colonial government. Mary P. Callahan argues that colonialism institutionalized an unequal relationship between military and civil authorities in favor of the military (Lang, 2002: 31). Since the army and police were regarded as the most powerful instruments in the colonization of Burma, the ethnic nations that were recruited to fill these roles were seen as accomplices of British colonialism by the Burman majority.

This recruitment policy produced an antagonistic emotion that aggravated the relationship between the Burman and other ethnic nations. As Sugata Bose says: "Through rigid classificatory schemes employed in colonial census and maps, the state made it harder to maintain peaceful coexistence of multiple social identities" (Lang, 2002: 33). At the same time, the missionary and the colonial government cooperated with each other to enhance the educational infrastructure of the ethnic nations of Burma Proper and the neighboring highlands. The renewed vigor in expanding education was aimed to produce a people loyal to the colonial government. Nevertheless, such an educational policy also had the unintended effect of giving rise to a group of indigenous intellectuals who would later play a key role

in the struggle for their own territories. For example, a generation of Karen intellectuals would later found the *Morning Star* in Rangoon in 1842, the first periodical to use the native language. According to Lebar, through British tutelage, these intellectuals also learned about the notion of a modern nation (Lebar, 1964: 59). In any case, all these policies, to some degree, gradually inculcated a national consciousness into the minds of the ethnic nations.

Before Burma acquired independence, leaders and intellectuals of ethnic nations had believed that to rule themselves in their own states was not only their national aspiration but also vital for checking Burman's despotism. Since most of the Karen inhabited in the plains areas in Lower Burma, they suffered the most from Burman feudalism for successive Burman rulers tried to homogenize the diverse cultures existing in Lower Burma. In addition, because they had believed that, with the arrival of the white brother, they would have their own ideal kingdom, the Karen were more proactive in realizing opportunities to construct their own state. For example, in 1928, San C. Po went to London to lobby the British to grant the Karen people a separate division federated to Burma but administered by themselves (San C. Po, 1928). It was the first time that an ethnic nation petitioned to own a space with modern political meaning. In 1945, they even asked for the creation of the "United Frontier Karen States" (Christie, 2000: 111).

Knowing that Britain would grant Burma independence, ethnic nations in the colony demanded political autonomy in droves. From the perspective of the ethnic nations, the best political arrangement for Burma was a federation composed of all ethnic states. However, the Burman, once dominating Burma, believed that Burma should be a unified country in order to correct the errors of the British divide and rule policy. Aung San, the first president of Burma, agreed to build a federal union with the principle of "Unity in Diversity," yet he was assassinated within one year after Burma's independence and his successors did not follow his principle. Struggles for territorial control between the Burman and other ethnic nations thus exploded.

Confrontational Contests in IDP Areas

Ne Win assumed power after a coup d'état on 2 March 1962. Six years later, in

order to stifle the ethnic nations' uprisings, he launched the notorious Four Cuts operation. The operation may not be the only cause weakening the strength of the ethnic military opposition groups,[81] but it is the most powerful factor causing a large-scale displacement of people from the ethnic nations' territories to beyond the Thai-Burma border. At the same time, there was also a massive internal displacement of people; the areas to which they were forced to migrate are called Internally Displaced Persons areas (IDP areas). IDP areas stretch over all ethnic states, including the Karen state. At present, 7 Karen refugee camps are located along the border in addition to those in the IDP areas. These refugees are identified by the government of Thailand as Displaced Persons.[82]

The Four Cuts operation, which is still ongoing, was officially endorsed by Ne Win in 1968 as the Burmese Junta's strategy to strike down ethnic nations' struggles. The operation aims to cut ethnic military opposition groups off from their support systems, which were primarily rooted within the civilian population providing the KNU with food, funding, recruitment and intelligence. Martin Smith describes the Four Cuts operation as scorched earth campaigns (Smith, 1999: 258); it is an extreme measure of taking over territories. The Junta utilized some extreme military strategies to carry out the operation. Meanwhile, the Karen launched some counter-actions against Junta's strategies.

Firstly, Burmese Junta color-coded lands on the map of Burma to decide how to launch a military strategy. The Junta divided Burma's map into three colors: black for insurgent-controlled areas, brown for disputed areas claimed by both sides; and white for free areas fully controlled by the government. In the counterinsurgency literature, the white area represents the fact that ethnic armed groups have been removed and that the area was won over by the government itself. The idea is that "each insurgent-coloured area would be cleared, one by one, until the whole map of Burma was white" (Smith, 1999: 259). Therefore, as Maung Aung Myoe indicates, Burmese Junta is not only concerned with "the elimination of insurgents," but also with the building of "white areas" (Lang, 2002: 39). On the

[81] The details can be seen in Chapter 2.

[82] Why Thailand defines the Karen refugees as displaced persons rather than refugees will be discussed in next section.

contrary, the KNU defines the areas controlled by themselves as emancipated zones and those "white areas" as fallen zones.

As Anssi Paasi argues, maps of state boundaries are also maps of meanings (Paasi, 2005: 19). To invest the map with meaning is not only a strategy used by both sides to battle for the control of the targeted spaces but also a claim with normative implications. In the case discussed here, the Junta and the Karen not only delineated the boundaries they occupied but also invested some specific meanings into the map. As discussed, a space represents an organized world of meaning. For the Junta, although the Burman dynasties had not ruled the highlands areas directly, those areas were still perceived as a part of the dynasties. This historical claim over Karen lands led the Burman to believe in the idea that Britain's divide and rule separated their country. Based on such an understanding, as seen from Chapter 2, the Burman had also campaigned for a unified country before and after Burma's independence. For the Junta, mostly composed of ethnic Burman, coloring the whole map of Burma with white not only indicates the reunification of a divided country but also implicates pursuing a glory once enjoyed by the early dynasties.

For the Karen, however, the white-coded areas represent the exact opposite—a loss of an organized world of meaning on the one hand, and the distortion and destruction of a collective identity, on the other hand. Additionally, as I have argued before, a territory is a repository of shared collective consciousness and a site where a memory is stored. Thus White writes that, "Individuals learn the history and ideology of their nation when they are young; then, the expressions of history and ideology in the landscape serve as constant reminders of specific histories and ideologies and even make historical events and figures and ideological figures and beliefs more concrete, thus more real" (2004: 41).[83] Therefore, when a nation cannot express its values, institute its laws, and launch a movement in its own space, it means that the group identity among the members of particular nation is repressed.

[83] As Anthony Smith argues, a physical space that can separate the "homeland" from other lands is a defining characteristic of nationhood. Owning a physical space, practically, means that the national culture is not rootless; that national members have a physical base to pursue essential economic goals, and that one can recognize clearly an area of self-governing. The most important feature, however, is a sense of owning a natural right to one's homeland. The sense may stem from myths, legends or even imaginations, yet it implies the normative aspirations of any nation as a rooted community. Therefore, for a nationalist movement, the pursuit of a natural homeland has been one of the most important political projects. Please see Smith, 2008: 35.

Moreover, when such a space is occupied by the Other, it also implies that the Other has intruded into the collective consciousness of the nation. And when a people cannot render their national beliefs, thoughts and ideas concrete within their own space, they might not able to construct a "real" consciousness. Under such a scenario, the collective consciousness that exists may become distorted by the fall of the national space.

Consequently, for both sides, "coloring" was not only a means to confirm their respective domains but also a tool to invest meaning into the map and legitimatize their actions.

Secondly, along with the Four Cuts operation, the Burmese Junta commits atrocities on a horrendous scale, from forced labor to forced migrations, from crop destruction to land confiscation, and from torture to rape and murder. These atrocities are planned actions, and a deliberate effort to intimidate the indigenous nations. Some of these violent measures even occurred one after another to form a series of unending atrocities, which continues to this day.[84] The following descriptions are some examples of the human rights abuses committed by the Junta.

In August 2004, when I volunteered for TOPS, I was in charge of a study tour project inviting Taiwanese Indigenous youths to the Thai-Burma border to exchange with Karen youths experiences on social movement organizing and cultural survival. The Karen youths were chosen by the KYO which is perceived as the youth wing of the KNU. In a workshop, Saw J told us that his father was captured by Burmese troops and forced to transport food and other materials for them. When an opportunity arose, Saw J and other family members escaped and hid themselves in the deep jungle. A couple of days later, Saw J went out of the jungle to find his father. However, what he found was a body bound by ropes and dotted with bullet holes. "He was tortured and executed by Burmese soldiers," said Saw J. This is a traumatic but a very typical series of violence against a male captive: forcing him to labor, torturing him in the process and killing him in the end.

If Burmese troops capture a female, rape is added into the series of atrocities.

[84] Decha Tangseefa sorts the atrocities into three categories: Food and crop destruction, material expropriation; forced relocation, forced labor and torture; and killing. In his dissertation, he describes each atrocity in detail. Please see Decha, 2003: 156-163.

The Karen Women Organization (KWO) in its investigation unearths a shattering story: "In ten of the 35 fully documented cases included in this report, women recounted experiences of being abducted from their villages and forced to work as porters. In some cases women were able to escape within a few weeks but in others they were enslaved for periods of up to three years. All of them were routinely raped almost every night by one soldier or by groups of soldiers" (KWO, 2004: 17-18).

In order to protect their fellows and to expel the government troops, the KNU organized political activities and directed armed operations in the hope of ending the atrocities.

One strategy the KNU adopted at the beginning of the revolution was to divide its potential territories into seven districts with respective brigades and to assign KNU members as districts officers. The territorial division allowed the KNU to assess which parts of Burma belonged to them and who were in charge of the districts. Brigades are units of the KNLA. Districts offices are responsible for civil services such as education, taxation as well as forest affairs while brigades take charge of battles and other activities related to security.[85] Because of this division, at present the KNU is able to readily distinguish which parts of Karen land are taken by the Burmese Junta, and which parts are under its own control.[86] For example, according to Saw B, the KNU understands that in brigades 7, 5, 2 and 6 most parts of Karen land are controlled by Burmese Junta and its ally, the DKBA. After spotting the exact location and occupier of a domain, the KNU then can deploy its military strategy.[87] In addition, since IDP mostly reside in areas occupied by the Junta, the KNU also knows from analyzing the domain which regions are in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

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[85] Since it is wartime now, the district offices to some degree are replaced by brigades. We hence usually use the word brigade to indicate the unit in charge of the affairs in Karen territory.

[86] For example, according to Saw B, in brigades 7, 5, 2 and 6 most parts are controlled by the Burmese Junta and its ally, the DKBA. Since IDP live mostly in areas occupied by the Junta, the KNU can then know the regions in need of humanitarian assistance.

[87] Ananda Rajah once addressed an interesting perspective regarding the relationship between the Karen and the Junta. Borrowing from Giddens's concept of frontier, he suggests that the Karen nationalist movement can be perceived as a kind of traditional state. According to Giddens, the frontier of traditional state refers to an area on the peripheral regions wherein the political authority of the center is thinly spread. In the areas along the Thai-Burmese Border, where Karen separatists are found, there is a corresponding absence of Burmese troops and other administrative apparatuses of the Junta. So, the Junta-Karen frontier region and the separatist movement there can be regarded as a kind of traditional state. Please see Rajah, 1990.

Secondly, the KNU makes use of various military means to struggle for territorial control. Here I can use one example as an illustration. To prevent the Burmese Junta's intrusion into Karen villages, the KNLA often deploys landmines in the jungle or the frontline of certain areas. On 31 January 2004, I crossed a bordering river to the Karen state to attend the Karen Revolution Day celebration. A military Major, a friend of mine, took me to see the place where they buried the landmines and told me not to walk too far from the house I was accommodated in and from the square where the celebration was held. The "rebels" had buried landmines to safeguard the square from the Junta's attack.

To the Karen's dismay, however, the landmines deployed by the KNLA not only strike down Burmese troops but may also seriously harm the rebels' fellow countrymen. Saw C suggested that the places where the landmines were buried were sometimes only known to the KNLA soldiers. It was thus quite common to hear that Karen villagers got injured by landmines. In fact, in February 2007 a girl, one of Saw Q's friends, was seriously hurt by landmines in her village in a KNU controlled-area. After being rushed to the Mae Sot General Hospital, one of her feet had to be amputated because of her injury. In the same month, when I went to a village near the border to follow up on the TOPS' educational program, I also witnessed many children who had been injured by KNLA landmines.

Despite the brutality, the actual capacity of the KNU to control their territory has been dwindling since Manerplaw was captured by the Burmese Junta after the DKBA's defection from the KNU, as discussed in Chapter 2. Until now, news on battles between the KNU and the Burmese Junta and its ally can be heard every now and then. Although the KNU still has headquarters near the Thai-Burma border, the KNLA seldom initiatives extensive battles against the Burmese troops. Instead, the KNLA usually defends only its existing areas of control when Burmese troops attempt to fight them. Presently, instead of military actions, the KNU struggle relies heavily on political alignment with other ethnic nations, humanitarian programs, and human right campaigns.

Regarding the political alignment, the Karen State Coordinating Body (KSCB) implements programs with other ethnic nations to campaign for Burma's democracy. The KSCB implements these programs under KNU authority. Many KNU leaders

are also members of the KSCB, which was formed because the KNU soon came to believe that the pursuit of ethnic nations is a political issue that should be resolved by political approaches. As for humanitarian programs, with the funds and materials donated by missionary organizations and INGOs, the KNU and other K-organizations have reached remote IDP areas to supply the refugees with educational equipment, medicines, training workshops, and other forms of humanitarian assistance.

The human rights campaigns can consist of two functions. The first function is to investigate human rights abuses in IDP areas and broadcast to the outside world the atrocities committed by Burmese troops. Apparently, this function is a direct response to the Four Cuts operation. The second function is related to the Junta's development projects. Since the early 1990s, the Burmese Junta has constructed infrastructures throughout Burma, which include dams, roads, and military barracks. Though acting in the name of infrastructure construction, Burmese troops appear to have other interests in mind, namely, to force villagers to evacuate from their land. In addition, as a result of the infrastructure projects, the Junta can more easily transport troops and military materials in-and-out of the ethnic territories. The forcefully relocated people are usually settled in planned zones under the surveillance of Burmese troops.[88] In Karen territories, with the assistance of international organizations, the KNU and other K-organizations have organized campaigns to demonstrate against the Junta's construction plans.

For example, the Upper Salween Dam and Lower Salween Dam were planned to be built in the northern Karen state. In order to construct these two dams, the Junta evacuated the villages surrounding the construction areas. The Karen Rivers Watch (KRW), in response, organized campaigns to demonstrate against the evacuation.[89] In January 2007, the KRW organized a press conference in Mae Ba, a Thai village close to Mae Sot, to expose to the international community of the atrocities committed by the Junta in Karen territories. The previous chairperson of

[88] In January 2007, Saw R and Naw L took me to a school in a relocated "village" near the border river. We went there to follow up on the educational program supported by an INGO. Before we crossed the river, they told me not to speak English but Thai so as to pretend my identity. . No more than 100 meters, a Burmese military security guard was watching us while we discussed the needs of the school.

[89] Details regarding the plan to construct these two Dams, please see KRW, 2004.

the KYO hosted the conference and the KNU general secretary was present to announce the campaign. They defined their campaign as a just movement based on self-determination and the defense of their homeland.

Conceptually, I argue, the activities on which the KNU rely heavily can be defined as a soft struggle while the Burmese Junta's battles, wars and other strategic atrocities can be defined as a hard contest.[90] The difference lies in the forces and resources available to an exercise and the distinct consequences resulting from it. A hard contest involves movements aiming to completely control a particular space through military strength, or so-called "hard power." This struggle aims to control directly a particular space, specially the ownership of sovereignty. As sovereignty is intrinsically exclusive, I believe it is a primary reason as to why all Karen people inside Burma are either under KNU protection or the Junta and its ally's control.

A hard contest usually results in casualties and displacement, which further ignite emotional reactions such as sadness and fear. By way of exploiting these emotions, contesters can encourage or force people to accept their control or jurisdiction. In the discussion of Chapter 5, we will see that when the situation allows, some refugees leave the camps to visit their relatives remaining in Burma. Yet, very few would stay there for long. When I asked the reason for not staying there, "I do not dare to go back because SPDC burned my village, they kill they see" and other similar words are the answer I often got. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that fear is the most exploitable emotion.

Indeed, the emotions coming from a hard contest could be exploited by the contester to force its hostile community to accept its power or jurisdiction. However, as Arjun Appadurai states, a full attachment produced by death and fear is the impetus to propel national members to sacrifice for their nationalist movement (Appadurai, 2000: 132-133). Worrying about the subsistence of their nation and of their own lives, individuals tend to become actively involved in a nationalist movement. Therefore, emotions also can be used by the contester in an inferior situation to strengthen the solidarity among members and the affinity with the homeland. Yet, the precondition for effective counterattack is that they need to have

[90] Such soft struggles have the function of forging ae sense of national belonging. This part will be discussed in Chapter 6.

a hard power that is strong enough. For the KNU, out-of-date weapons, inferior intelligence technology, and lack of funds often cripple its ability to launch an effective counterattack. Probably knowing these weaknesses, the KNU usually stages soft struggles to foster their soft power and to consolidate their gains.

Statecraft and "Jurisdiction" in Displacement

Reluctant Concessions

In the previous section, we know how the IDPs come into being and how the KNU struggles for the control of its territory despite facing displacement and the Junta's attack. However, displacement does not only happen within Karen territories. As A. Hensen says, much of the world's contemporary refugee population is found clustered along international borders (Donnan & Wilson, 2001: 113). As seen along the Thai-Burma border, the transnational migration of refugees is a serious issue, with approximately 140,000 Karen refugees settling along the border. Because the civil and military leaders of the KNU also routinely cross the border into Thailand, competition for the control of this space is also a major problem.

The first Karen refugee camp sprang up in February 1984. In the same month, Thailand's Ministry of Interior (MOI) invited the Coordinating Committee for Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand (CCSDPT), an umbrella group of voluntary agencies involved in humanitarian assistance, to supply the refugees with resources necessary for daily subsistence (Lee, 2001: 36-37; Lang, 2002: 84).

From 1984 to the mid-1990s, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had not been invited to participate in the management of refugee affairs. One argument on the absence of UNHCR involvement was that Thailand was not a signatory country to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees—two international conventions providing a legal definition of and juridical fabrics for the refugee.[91] Therefore, Thailand was obliged to require the involvement of the

[91] According to the 1951 UN Convention, a refugee is someone who is: firstly, outside the country of origin; secondly, in fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; thirdly, owing to such fear, is unable or unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of the country of origin. Basically, the definition lies on an individual basis. Please see Lang, 2002: 14-17.

UNHCR in refugee issues. This argument, however, is only a partial explanation. There were other reasons for Thailand to discourage UNHCR management as well.

Firstly, Thailand is the only country not engulfed by communism and civil war in Southeast Asia, making the country a natural haven for displaced persons since the first wave of refugees from Indochina in the 1970s. Thailand had felt tired of "receiving" refugees and did not want to gain the spotlight on Burmese refugees again. If Thai government had the UNHCR involved in the issues on Karen refugees, the spotlight that Thailand had avoided to gain would project on it with the participation of the UNHCR. For this reason, since the first Karen refugee camp appeared in 1984 until the mid-1990s, Lang argues that the humanitarian relief effort on the border has been a relatively low-key, low-publicity affair, managed by local authorities and their NGO partners (Lang, 2002: 91).

Secondly, while the refugee's status is principally under the protection of the aforementioned international conventions, refugees are still perceived by the Thai government as a potential threat to its sovereignty. These two conventions require sovereign States to follow three principles: non-refoulement, asylum, and international protection (UNHCR, 2001: 29-69). The principle of non-refoulement requires that the host countries shall not repatriate refugees to their countries of origin if their lives will be endangered. Asylum refers to Article 14 (1) of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution." International protection means that the host countries have to respect the rights of refugees (Decha, 2003: 188-189). Refugee camps are accordingly under the direction and authority of the international protection regime. The Executive Committee of the Programme of the UNHCR is responsible for advising the UNHCR on how to exercise its functions and approving the latter's assistance programs. A host country's laws such as criminal law and civil law are not implemented in refugee camps (Decha, ibid: 180-181), exempting such spaces from the sovereignty of States.

Yet in actual fact, for the contemporary international system, refugees are widely regarded as an aberration of categories and a zone of "pollution" that need to be dealt with urgently. The aim of the two conventions is not to erode a host country's sovereignty; rather, it is to solve the crisis resulting from the incongruity

of the citizen/nation/State ensemble. For example, in Jeff Crisp's article, the 1951 UN Refugee Convention envisages the local integration of refugees. The Convention assumes that refugees will eventually attain self-sufficiency, enabling their settlements to be "handed over" from the UNHCR to the authorities of the host countries and to be naturalized as members of the host countries. According to Article 34 of the 1951 Convention: "the contracting states shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees" (Crisp, 2004: 2-3). Thus, Nevzat Soguk suggests that the international protection regime is not a tertiary order, it rather functions as a practice of regimentation to produce, stabilize and empower specific territory and territorially activate the citizen/nation/State ensemble (Soguk, 1999: 188).

Nevertheless, the Thai government prefers to deal with refugee affairs with its own administrative ordinances. It issued *Regulations Concerning Displaced Persons from Neighboring Countries* on 8 April 1954 and the *1979 Immigration Act* to exercise jurisdiction over refugees and the places they settle. As Decha points out, Thailand deals with refugee affairs on the basis of discretionary policy decisions rather than international laws or specific domestic laws (Decha, 2003: 181-182). From the perspective of Thailand, refugees do not exist in the country but are displaced persons "who escape from dangers due to an uprising, fighting, or war, and enter in breach of the Immigration Act." Based on this definition, refugees are *prima facie* illegal immigrants (Lang, 2002: 94). The Thai government allows "displaced persons" to take shelter in its land merely for humanitarian reasons. They have to stay in certain places and have no right to leave. If they leave the designated places, displaced persons will be jailed or repatriated immediately. When the situation in Burma improves, they are required by Thailand to return to their own countries.

Interestingly, before the mid-1990s, Karen refugees did not face such rigorous treatment. From my observation, I believe that there are two reasons for this. Firstly, at that time, the refugee camps were in fact temporary shelters. As most of my friends inhabiting in Karen territories along the border told me, when Burmese troops came close to their villages they fled to Thailand by crossing the border river. Once the situation improved, many simply went back to their villages. Saw W even

expressed that it was seldom for a family to stay in Thailand for over a month. Due to the temporary status of their stay, Thailand rarely had to forcibly expel Karen refugees and to risk condemnation from the international community. Secondly, the economy in Mae Sot flourished owing to the influx of refugees. This seems counterintuitive as refugees are presumed to have taken flight without many personal belongings. How had these underprivileged individuals been able to bring about an economic boom in Mae Sot? This puzzling phenomenon merits further discussion below.

We already learned from Chapter 2 that Ne Win's Burmese Way to Socialism ruined the economy and resulted in a material deficiency in Burma. Yet, during the same time, there was a growth of exports of teak and other lumber as well as commodity imports. As many commodities needed inside Burma were imported through Mae Sot and passed through Karen lands and then to Burma, the demand for commerce nurtured the potential for an economic boom in Mae Sot. The black-market trade mushroomed and, in the meantime, the KNU established border gates to levy taxes. Due to the abundant commercial activities, the economy in the KNU areas along the border blossomed and some villages even became rich, especially those where the KNU officers lived. The KNU usually crossed the border river to Mae Sot to purchase the materials they needed, including military materials. When refugees started to move into Thailand, this kind of economic exchange prospered further. Many KNU officers settled their families in Thailand and some of their soldiers even crossed the border pretending to be refugees and became avid consumers in Mae Sot. Saw G told me that, before Manerplaw was captured by the Burmese Junta, "you can see a lot of *Song Teao*s go and come. At that time, there are around 100 times from Mae Sot to Begelow per day. They transport refugees in-and-out Mae Sot everyday. Those drivers make a lot of money."

For all the reasons above, the Thai government wanted to protect its sovereignty, but still had to deal with refugee affairs flexibly in order to safeguard its economic interests. But the relationship between the Thais and the Karen has changed dramatically since the mid-1990s.

The fall of Manerplaw in January 1995 resulted in the exodus of 100,000 people seeking refuge in Thailand. The Thai authorities was unwilling and unable to

shoulder the duty of receiving refugees, even though it has had an obligation to provide refugees with asylum based on humanitarian principles. The scale of the humanitarian crisis was simply too great for the Thai economy to handle. In order to lessen the demographic pressure, the Thai government invited INGOs to offer humanitarian assistance to Karen refugees, yet at the same time, it did not desire intervention by the international protection regime. One issue, however, propelled Thailand to compromise with the international protection regime: the repeated intrusion of the DKBA into Thai territories.

Before the mid-1990s, many small camps were located extremely close to the border without the jurisdiction and protection of Thai authorities. Since Manerplaw was captured by the DKBA, the group had always crossed the border during the dry season to attack these camps in order to force Karen refugees returning to their homeland. Take Mae Sot as an example, a town lies 4 kilometers from the Moei River on which the Friendship border bridge crosses. Entering downtown form this part of border only takes 5 minutes by motorbike. Up until the mid-1990s, at least three small camps were located in the rural areas of Mae Sot, which can be reached from downtown in only another 10 minutes. Easy access facilitates the DKBA to traverse the border river to attack these small camps.

Thailand would not like to get involved in the struggles between the KNU and the Burmese Junta, but DKBA's operations directly intruded on Thai sovereignty. In order to protect its people and sovereignty, the government of Thailand decided to bring the intrusion to international attention by involving the UNHCR in refugee affairs.[92] With the assistance of the UNHCR in 1998, the small camps at risk of attack were relocated to places further from the border.

As a result of the huge number of refugees, the intrusion of sovereignty by the DKBA, and the involvement of the UNHCR, the refugee issue once again drew a spotlight from the international community. Although Thailand compromised with the international protection regime, it did not mean that the former had succumbed

[92] According to Lang and Decha, the Thai government allows the UNHCR to be involved in Karen refugee affairs in five aspects: witnessing the process of admission; assisting the Thai authorities in registration; collaborating with the Thai authorities on relocating the camps at risk of incursion; providing complementary assistance in shelter areas; and giving a hand to the refugees for safe return. Please see Lang, 2002: 94; Decha, 2003: 186.

to the international protection regime. On the contrary, owing to the DKBA's intrusion, Thailand began to uphold its sovereignty and jurisdiction over Karen refugees more strongly than before. The international protection regime became a means by which the Thai authorities could uphold their territorial integrity while also legitimating their control over refugees.

Conflicting yet Coexisting Jurisdictions

S. A. Jones argues that four functions exerted by a State can transform a boundary into a border: allocation, delimitation, demarcation and administration. Allocation means that contiguous States cooperate with each other to manage the physical space existing among them; delimitation represents the confirmation of the boundaries of a border; demarcation delineates the border through a physical space; and administration is the combination of direct and indirect monitoring over the border and relevant affairs (Giddens, 1998: 145). While his definition concerns the transformation of the traditional State into a modern nation-state, it is still useful for understanding the assertion of sovereignty by a modern State, as illustrated in Thailand's policy towards Karen refugees. I will use the four functions to discuss how the Thai government promotes its sovereignty over refugee camps.

Allocation. From Chapter 2, we know that from the 1950s to the 1980s, Karen territories bordering with Thailand had functioned as a buffer zone between the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) and Communist Party of Thailand (CPT). After the 1980s, however, the power and influence of these two communist parties declined sharply. Coveting the natural resources in the eastern mountainous areas of Burma, Thailand carried out a new policy called "constructive engagement" towards Burma to amend their historical antagonism (Arnold and Hweison, 2005). The decline of communist power coupled with Thailand's renewed vigor for normalization meant that the Karen lands' status as a buffer zone was no longer as important. At the same time, though, Thailand remained concerned about whether the Burmese Junta would invade its territory by attacking the KNU when opportunities arose. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 2 and the previous section, Thailand was invested in the economic benefits of Karen settlement in the border towns after the Burmese Way to Socialism bankrupted the Burmese economy. For

these reasons, when the first refugee camp appeared on Thai soil, refugees' activities were not restricted and the Karen territory bordering with Thailand was still unofficially acknowledged as a buffer zone, according to Saw E, one of the leaders of the KSCB.

With the approval of the Thai authorities, the Karen Refugee Committee (KRC) was set up to cooperate with the CCSDPT to deal with refugee affairs when the first Karen refugee camp was established in Thailand. Thailand's Ministry of Interior (MOI) became charged with overseeing the security and administration of the refugee camps. At the beginning, however, the MOI neither established branch offices in refugee camps nor did it increase the Thai military force to patrol the areas settled by refugees.

Delimitation. On 27 January 1995, the DKBA captured Manerplaw, the KNU headquarters. Since then, the DKBA has always crossed the border to attack refugees in the dry season. The many attacks launched by the DKBA led Thailand to realize that the weaknesses of the KNU could not even protect its territory and fellows. If the KNT could not effectively control its territory, the buffer zone would never function as expected. Actually, after Manerplaw was captured by the DKBA, Thailand already knew that the buffer zone had collapsed. Now, Thailand had to delimit its border to speak out its sovereign claim. Nevertheless, the government of Thailand was not able to physically delimit a particular space since the physical border between Thailand and Burma had already been defined in the 19th century. Instead, Thailand embarked on a kind of symbolic delimitation, by relocating the small camps from sites very close to the border to farther places and by restricting Karen refugees' freedom of activities and mobility.

For instance, the Thai government relocated Shaw Klaw, La Kaw Bono, and Heh Bon camps to Mae La camp. The MOI also set up branch offices in the new camps, while the Royal Thai Army and Thahan Phra (paramilitary rangers) established check points on the main roads leading to the camps. From the main gate of Mae La, on the main road, there are two checkpoints located on the right and left sides where every passenger, car, and motorcycle has to pass through when approaching the camp. Thailand even stationed an army contingent and security

guards by the main gates of each camp (Map 4).[93]

As Anthony Giddens suggests, the nation-state as a power holder expresses its sovereign claim by monopolizing the instruments of violence (Giddens, 1988: 145), because by doing so it stabilizes the internal order of the State, wards off any intrusion on its sovereignty, and protects its citizens from external threat. With the military as a coercive instrument stationed around the camps, it exemplifies by far Thailand's strongest sovereign claim. The MOI's branch offices inside the settlements further signify Thailand's assertion of sovereignty. If the DKBA intrudes the camps, it would be the most obvious violation of Thailand's sovereignty.

Demarcation. As discussed, in order to protect its sovereignty, the Thai government moved the small camps away from the borderline to avoid potential DKBA attacks. How did they decide which places were safer? I argue that two criteria were used to determine the sites for relocation: *distance* and *isolation*. For example, Mae La camp is now the largest camp along the Thai-Burma border, and is actually a combination of Mae La and at least three smaller camps: Shaw Klaw, La Kaw Bono, and Huay Bong. These latter three camps were initially located in the rural areas of Mae Sot. Before being moved, the distance from Shaw Klaw to the border was merely 1 km. As we learned from Chapter 1, Mae Sot lies 4 km from the border bridge. Entering downtown from this part of the border only takes 5 minutes by motorbike, and going from downtown to these small camps takes only another 10 minutes. It is hence relatively easy to cross the river to attack these small camps.

Now, departing from Mae Sot by car, and driving at roughly 100 km/h, it takes 45 minutes to arrive at Mae La, which is a little bit further away from the border bridge. Un Piem Mai camp is located in Un Phang district. It is a combination of some small camps located in Pho Phra, a township near another part of the border river. The MOI moved the refugees settling in Pho Phra township to a hill in Un Phang district and set up a new camp, called the Um Piem Mai camp. Only through a two-lane road can one access this camp. Departing from Pho Phra and driving at roughly 80 km/h, it takes around one and a half hours to arrive at Um Piem Mai. If

[93] I did not have a chance to interview Thai soldiers, but, from my experience of serving in the army, I was able to estimate the numbers of soldiers stationed near Mae La.

going there from Mae Sot, it will take around 2.5 hours.

Therefore, through the demarcation for relocating the camps, I argue, Thailand is declaring that "we decide where the refugees can stay, and the places where refugees stay are under our sovereignty."

Administration. Refugee camps are in principle under the jurisdiction of the MOI, under which the Provincial Office and the District Office have direct responsibility for daily matters in the camps. According to its regulations, the MOI undertakes its jurisdiction by intervening in camp activities. For instance, refugees cannot leave the camps; the Karen national flag cannot be raised in public spaces while the Thai national flag must be raised in each facility in the camps; and the KNU cannot have any branch office or organize any activity in the camps. The INGOs implementing humanitarian assistance are allowed to take pictures of their assistance program activities, yet they cannot shoot pictures of refugees' daily lives. Everyone who would like to visit the camps needs to apply for a camp-pass. Besides, INGO workers and other visitors have to leave the camps before 5pm.

These numerous functions obviously constituted an exercise of sovereignty by the Thai government. Through these functions, the Thai government demonstrates to the outer world, especially to the Burmese Junta and its ally, that it possesses not only *de jure* but also *de facto* sovereignty, meaning that the camps were a part of its territories and under its sovereign jurisdiction. However, the MOI has not been heavily involved in the routine management of the camps since it has been unwilling to directly take charge of refugee affairs. The reason that Thailand stood up and made its sovereign claim was just that the DKBA intruded on its sovereignty. After expressing its ability to exercise sovereign power and after knowing that the DKBA would not provoke it, Thailand dropped the burden of camp administration to the KRC, which, in principle, needs to follow the fundamental regulations and instructions issued by the MOI.

With the termination of the MOI's camp administration, and of the previous role of Karen lands as a buffer zone, a tacit consensus gradually emerged, that refugee camps were transformed into "Karen spaces." The remaining parts of this chapter will provide us a detailed discussion.

The KRC, UNHCR, and other INGOs cooperate with each other under the

regulations of the MOI. There is one MOI meeting each month, which is organized in each of the camps. The MOI, KRC, and all INGOs delegate one or two representatives to attend the meeting. In the meeting, INGOs and the KRC present the difficulties they face to seek the possible solutions, but the meeting is usually a formality and cannot solve any substantive problems. The MOI sometimes expresses its opinions or places restrictions on refugee affairs such as reminding INGOs not to take people who do not have a camp-pass to enter the camps or not to shoot pictures which are not relevant to the humanitarian projects of INGOs.

The INGOs only take charge of humanitarian assistance, while the security, actual administration, legislation, law enforcement and judiciary decision are on the shoulders of the KRC. Roughly speaking, the KRC takes charge of arranging the transportation of supplies to camps, assisting the UNHCR in registering new arrivals, the total population, births, and deaths as well as in the distribution of rice supplied by the Thai-Burmese Border Consortium (TBBC). It is also responsible for resolving disputes, maintaining harmony among refugees, organizing the referral of refugees, and ensuring that refugees follow camp regulations, as well as imposing penalties on those who violate the regulations (Kengkunchorn, 2006: 43).

The KNU, as the organization leading revolution with its administrative departments, was supposed to bear the responsibility for looking after refugees. Unfortunately, according to MOI's regulations, the KNU is not allowed to set up branch offices or become involved in the affairs in the camps since the Thai authorities would not like the Burmese Junta to misunderstand that they were supporting the "insurgent group escaping from Burma." The KRC hence replaces the KNU to take charge of all aspects of camp administration under the regulation of the MOI. However, there is an intimacy existing between the KRC and the KNU, so that the camps to some degree can be perceived as an extension of Karen territory or at least a Karen space exiting outside Burma. We can examine it through macro and micro angles, respectively.

From the macro angle, the KRC can be considered as an agent of the KNU in the camps. The actual administration and management are under the charge of the KRC. In order to not provoke the Burmese Junta, the KNU is neither allowed by the Thai government to establish offices nor permitted to organize any activity in the

camps. Nevertheless, the KRC leaders are usually members of the KNU,[94] and as such, they have an obligation to obey KNU policies. Besides, some K-organizations work in the camps, assisting the KNU in some administrative work. They are the proxy governments of the KNU, but serve the camps in the name of Community Based Organizations (CBO). Therefore, the KNU is in effect influential in the camps.

Take Mae La as an example, the administration of Mae La is made up of three different levels of administrative bodies: Section leaders, Zone leaders, and a Camp Committee. The Camp Committee consists of a 5-person Executive Committee and a 10-person Ordinary Committee. The Ordinary Committee supervises affairs regarding security, the judiciary, education, health, the administration of food and aides, as well as youth and women affairs (BLC, 2007: 21). The security inside the camps is at Karen's hands. I am not sure whether the KNLA is responsible for the security of the camps. Yet, I do know that at least two departments of the KNU are involved in the camp affairs. Health, food, and medical aides are under the policy of the Karen Health and Wealth Department (KHWD), while the education affairs are coordinated by INGOs and the Karen Education Department (KED) in the name of CBO. As CBOs, they can carry out the policy decided by the KNU without worrying about the intervention of the Thai government. As for youth and women affairs, they are coordinated by the KYO, the KWO and INGOs. These two K-organizations also exist and work in the name of CBO. However, they are actually the original member organizations combined to construct the KNU.

According to KRC's regulations, the camp leaders in each camp are elected by the residents of each camp. However, the military wing of the KNU sometimes can determine who is going to be in the position. According to Burma Lawyer's Council's investigation, in No Poe camp, an elected KRC chairperson was dismissed before he took his position and was replaced by another person because of pressure from the local military organization (BLC, 2007: 4).

In addition to the executive role, the KRC also acts as a legislature and a judiciary. The BLC's investigation indicates that the KRC uses rules and regulations

[94] I do not have exact numbers, but, since I began to contact with Karen refugees, all the camp leaders I approached were simultaneously members of the KNU.

as they think fit or in line with the guidance that they receive from internal or external sources. Yet, due to a lack of formal legislative process, the KRC sometimes directly uses KNU laws in order to maintain the consistency of law enforcement between the camps and the Karen territory (BLC, 2007: 7-8). Attachment 2 is the law legislated and enforced by the KRC.

From the micro angle, the Karen space exists based on a tacit consensus between the MOI and the KRC, or even the KNU. The tacit consensus can be understood from various instances. I, here, will only discuss it by giving a few examples. The KNLA as the military wing of the KNU is not allowed to station in the camps in order to prevent from Junta's accusation of supporting an insurgent group. Truly, the KNLA does not station in the camps. However, not stationing in the camps does not mean that the KNLA does not exist there. The 7th brigade is in the back of Mae La. Therefore, many KNLA soldiers settle their families in Mae La. On off-duty days or vacation, they usually go back to Mae La to visit their families. For them, the Mae La camp is just like their "hometown." After a vacation, they go back to the military camps they serve in.

There are at least five gates in Mae La. Only the main gate is guarded by the Thai army, while others are guarded by the Karen themselves. The KNU has its cars to transport plain soldiers, materials and refugees in-and-out of the camps. It is not unusual to see KNU cars transporting solders, without wearing uniforms, entering and leaving off the Mae La camp. Because any car or people entering and leaving Mae La have to register the name and purpose on a regulative list, normally, these cars enter and leave Mae La through the gates guarded by the Karen. Naw E told me that it was for not making the Thai army and themselves any trouble. They seem to not require permission from the MOI to leave the camp. What is interesting is that, when they drove the cars bypassing the checkpoints guarded by the Thai army on the main road, I had never seen that they showed any required documents to the guards.

The first time that I crossed the border river adjacent to Mae La to interview a commander in the Karen territory was on a Sunday in September 2004. Naw E took me to Mae La to interview a Major. After the talk, I thought that we would go back to Mae Sot. However, Naw E asked me whether I would like to visit Karen territory.

As volunteers of INGOs, we are prohibited to cross the border river. In order to not result in trouble, Karen people neither lead INGOs workers crossing the border unless there is an important ceremony or festival organized in Karen soil. Therefore, I surely would not like to miss the chance to cross the border. After some calls and arrangements, she said that a pick-up truck was going to transport some materials to Karen territory and we could go with that truck. For not causing any troublesome matters, she asked me to pretend that I was sleeping since my face was looked like Japanese rather than Karen. When we bypassed the checkpoints on the main road, I heard a Thai army officer asking the driver, in Thai, where the car was going. The drivers answered a name that I did not know and then we passed the checkpoints successfully without any further questioning even though I was in that truck. Of course, no document was required.

In addition to KNU, the KED, KWO and KYO all have their own cars. It was also quite often to see these cars transporting their staff and necessary materials for the humanitarian programs entering and leaving the camps. The most obvious example is that Saw 9, one of KED's leaders, due to the necessity of coordinating with the KED staff in Mae La and in Mae Sot, usually stayed at Mae La for four days and worked in Mae Sot for three days per week. He just drove the KED car back and forth between Mae Sot and Mae La.

What's more interesting is that no matter what K-organizations the Karen work with, they all possess K-IDs such as KNU, KED, KWO or other K-cards. Sometimes, when they are checked by Thai soldiers or police at the checkpoints, they just show the K-cards and they can pass the checkpoints.

By MOI regulations, outsiders have to apply for a camp-pass if they would like to enter the refugee camps. Applicants have to prepare a photocopy of a Thai ID or passport, a recommendation letter from INGOs and a letter stating the purpose of visiting the camps. The process of applying for a camp pass usually takes one month. And, normally, unless the outsiders work for INGOs, it is not possible to be granted a camp-pass. However, if the outsider would like to attend cultural activities in the camps or to visit refugee friends, no camp-pass is in fact needed. My friends always told me that if I would like to visit them or attend any activities, they would inform camp leaders and arrange someone at the gate guarded by a Karen to take me in. To

inform the leaders is necessary. Thai soldiers sometimes buy food at the market in the camps. If they see any outsider, he or she might be in trouble. Yet, if his or her entry is known by the camp leaders, the leaders will know how to solve the trouble.

As mentioned, it is not allowed to raise the Karen national flag in the camps. I went to Mae La quite a few of times. Even during the Karen New Year festival or other activities, I did not see Karen flags raised. In this regard, the Karen refugees indeed do not violate the regulations. Yet, the Karen national flag can be seen on the walls in each house. On the days the festival or activities organized, I usually saw the flags hanging on the walls in the places where the activities were organized. In addition, in the Bible School of Mae La, they even boldly raised a Karen flag just like a place owning exterritorial privileges.

Following the discussions, we can find that the camps are not entirely under the jurisdiction of the MOI. Rather, a two-layered jurisdiction exists in the camps. The first-layer jurisdiction is based on the sovereignty of Thailand. The legitimacy of managing the camps is derived from the 1954 Regulations and the 1979 Immigration Act. Because the Thai authorities do not want to be deeply involved in refugee affairs, it merely published a handbook to regulate the camps. Due to this stance, the KRC is able to exercise the second-layer jurisdiction, which is legitimatized by the handbook published by the MOI. On the other hand, the two-layered jurisdiction is also based on the tacit consensus between the KNU and the MOI. Because of the consensus, the KNLA soldiers can appear in the camps, the affinity between the KRC and the KNU is acknowledged and all the K-organizations can enter in-and-out of the camps freely.

Owing to the tacit consensus and its ensuing consequence, the camps can be regarded as an extension of Karen territory, or at least a Karen space outside of Burma. However, the consensus does not exist in a written accord. In other words, the consensus is not legitimate. The final sovereignty over the camps is at the hands of the Thai government. Thailand can thus destroy the consensus unilaterally, and this kind of unilateral destruction in fact often happens. We can find the destruction at institutional and individual levels.

At the institutional level, the BLC gives us an apparent example. According to their investigation, all camps have a judiciary whose main role is to ensure the camp

rules and regulations are adhered to. The judiciaries hear criminal cases and sentence the penalties to the criminals. The more serious cases involving murder, raping, drug and human trafficking, timber and weapon smuggling are supposed to be judged by the MOI. But, it is not always the case, especially when the convicted are the Thai refugee affairs authorities. For example, following the rape of a 14-year-old girl in Mae La by a Thai soldier, the victim was transported to the Mae Sot hospital for medical care and examination. However, when the MOI learned of the news, it intervened and the girl was removed before the examinations were completed. And, of course, the Thai authorities refused to launch a judicial investigation into the case, so the girl had no chance to seek justice (BLC, 2007: 11-14).

At the individual level, the unilateral destruction is somewhat more ridiculous. In the camps, mobile phone is a daily necessity for refugees. Almost all adults own mobile phones. That mobile phones are so prevalent is due to various reasons. Some refugees are granted Thai IDs and work in the border towns or other cities while their relatives are still in the camps. In order to stay in contact with their relatives more easily, they buy mobile phones for their relatives. Or, some volunteers or INGO staffs leave their phones to their friends in the camps before going back to their countries. Therefore, some refugees hold quite up-to-date mobile phones. But, if Thai soldiers see the phones of refugees are more stylish than theirs, they confiscate refugees' phones for the reason that refugees can not have such modern equipment.

In any case, the KRC establishes an office in each camp. These KRCs are the agents of the KNU to look after refugees and to administer the affairs inside the camps. Even the tacit consensus is very often violated by the MOI and others representing the Thai authorities, the KRC to a high degree functions as the agent of the KNU. With their functioning, the camps were gradually transformed into a Karen space outside the Karen territory. According to Anthony Smith, a nation is a territorialized community (Smith, 2008: 35), suggesting that a nation must be rooted in a particular space. As long as refugee camps continually exist and function as the Karen space, the displaced Karen peoples are not the pure refugees anymore. Rather, they are a displaced nation, meaning that as a nation they have a space to root but it

is not “their” space. Yet, so long as they can occupy this particular space, they are able to reorganize or relaunch their nationalist movement from the space.

Nonetheless, a space is just a physical base for a nation. A nation is also a cultural community. Borrowing from Hannah Arendt’s concept, Liisa Malkki suggests, because of the deprivation of their homeland and culture, refugees are merely naked human beings (Malkki, 1995: 11-12). If the Karen would like to be away from nakedness, they need to reestablish a culture within the current space wherein they survive. After all, as Benedict Anderson argues, nationalism “has to be understood by aligning it……with the large cultural systems……” (Anderson, 1991: 12). Do Karen refugees reestablish their culture in displacement? If yes, what kind of culture is it? I will discuss the topic in the next chapter.

5. A Displaced Societal Culture

A culture belonging to a nation is an important factor making a particular nation tangible, recognizable and durable. From the perspective of primordialists or ethno-symbolists, the culture plays the critical role of sustaining the life of a nation. For example, Anthony Smith indicates that the maintenance and durableness of national communities are rooted in the strength of a nation's culture (Smith, 2008: 39). It is reasonable that these scholars possess such a perspective, for they basically believe that a nation is intrinsically a cultural community. Nevertheless, even the modernists do not rebuff the importance of the national culture in sustaining the durableness of a nation. Benedict Anderson argues that we have to connect nationalism with some cultural systems prior to the appearance of modern nationalism since these cultural systems are grounds for the appearance of the modern nation and nationalism (Anderson, 1999: 18-19). Earnest Gellner further asserts that the nation is a natural product of industrial development. Nevertheless, he also believes that it is necessary to build a high culture to maintain national durableness (Gellner, 1983: 37-38).

Although the importance of a culture is emphasized by scholars from different schools of nationalism, they do not agree on its defining qualities. Normally, primordialists or ethno-symbolists regard myths, ethno-history, symbols and the homeland as central features of a national culture (Armstrong, 1982; Hutchinson, 2001; Smith, 1999, 2008). For the modernists, however, cultural contents are considered differently. Gellner argues that culture is irrelevant to memory, symbols or others valued by primordialists or ethno-symbolists. Rather, it is a means created by a ruler, based on mass education and a common language, to erase diversity within the national community (Gellner, 1983). For Anderson, the religious community and dynastic realm are cultural systems useful for the appearance of a nation (Anderson, 1999: 19-37).

In spite of different opinions on the contents of the national culture, scholars from different camps of nationalism do not deny that territoriality is a major feature of the culture. Because, as Smith says, attaching to specific places and drawing spatial boundaries to differentiate my/our land from the outside are by nature the

characteristics of any nation. This is because a territory serves as an objective base supplying a space wherein individuals can ground their culture through daily practices, and because it functions as a subjective terrain where individuals grown from (Smith, 2008: 36).

Because of this territorial feature, refugees are always perceived as a group of "naked population" since they are uprooted from their land. Even if they are originally members of a particular nation, they are still seen as "torn loose from their culture" (Malkki, 1995:11-15).

I agree with scholars' perspectives about the importance of culture. This is because culture frames the context within which politics occurs, political and social systems are structured, individual and collective identities are linked, the meaning of individuals' behaviors are understood, and boundaries between different communities are defined (Ross, 1997: 47-49).[95] However, I cannot agree with the perspective regarding refugees as a naked population.

Culture, conceptually, includes a variety of practices and sets of cultural logics. Cultural logic refers to the abstract dimension of culture while the various practices constitute the results of an embodying cultural logic (Chao, 2001). These practices are further comprised of institutional and non-institutional activities. Only after the abstract logic is embodied into the practices does the culture become recognizable, accessible and tangible. And only then are individuals able to capture the boundary of and the practical dimension within the cultural context. Yet, the embodiment does not come into being automatically; it can only occur with individuals' daily practices as transmitters, interpreters and inventors of cultural logics. That is to say, individuals' daily practices can embody cultural logics into a tangible, recognizable, accessible culture.[96]

These daily practices, as Will Kymlicka suggests, "covering full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational, and

[95] Territory is crucial to human identity. As Edward Relph said: "There is for everyone a deep association with the consciousness of the places where we were born and grew up, where we live now, or where we have had particularly moving experiences. This association seems to constitute a vital source of both individual and cultural identity and security, a point of departure from which we orient ourselves in the world." Please see White, 2004: 40.

[96] Certainly, individuals' activities not only embody the cultural logics into tangible cultural practices, but also possibly, voluntarily or/and involuntarily, cease or even abandon some embodiments. The Cultural Revolution occurred in China is the most obvious example.

economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres." It is the "everyday vocabulary of social life, embodied in practices covering most areas of human activity." Some of these daily practices are even "institutionally embodied in schools, media, economy, government and others." All these daily practices are combined into a societal culture (Kymlicka, 1996: 76).

Because the embodiment of culture relies on individuals' daily practices while drawing boundaries is the natural character of nation, as a culture belonging to whole nation the societal culture is surely also "territorially concentrated." Yet, the territorial feature does not mean that refugees are a naked population.

Indeed, societal culture must be grounded on a particular territory. It is also doubtless that refugees are uprooted from the land whereon their societal culture is grounded. When refugees are displaced, the societal culture in the original place they inhabit are thus surely gotten rid of and they indeed seem cultureless. Nonetheless, if embodying abstract logics into tangible culture relies on individuals' daily practices and drawing boundaries is the character of nation, societal culture must exist wherever a nation inhabits. That is to say, unless a particular nation is exterminated, displacement only means that the members of the nation might have a chance to reground their societal culture on a new land where they are going to start their new life. After all, cultural logics will not be extinct unless the nation bearing the cultural logics dies out. Inasmuch as the national members still survive, they will have the ability to re-embody cultural logics into a tangible culture by way of various daily practices.

However, refugees are normally settled in refugee camps located in other countries rather than their own territory. They do not have any entitlement to bargain with the host countries concerning the places of settlement and the activities that they can pursue. If the societal culture cannot be regrounded in refugee camps, it must be the result of host countries' attitudes. As learned in the previous chapter, refugees form an aberration of the national order of things, which needs to be dealt with urgently. After refugees arrive on the land of host countries, usually the host countries merely allow them to take temporary shelter in given spaces and to wait for assistance from international humanitarian agencies. Since nationalists usually take flight with their refugee fellows, for not resulting in tension and conflict

between themselves and the countries where refugees flee from as well as not giving nationalists any chance to use refugee camps to be a military base outside their territory, the host countries usually do not encourage or even directly forbid the activity that might ignite a sense of nationalism among refugees. Refugees' daily practices are hence limited to the essential activities for daily needs. In summary, they are merely allowed to temporarily settle in refugee camps and to be fed with humanitarian aid; they are not allowed to embody the culture logics into culture practices.

In the case of Karen refugees, the situation is different. In the following examinations, we will see although Karen refugees are not allowed to leave refugee camps, they can still proceed with cultural practices. Some practices are proceeded with by themselves while others are with the assistance of INGOs. There are also some facilities existing in refugee camps, such as schools and a governing body, which match Kymlicka's definition of institutional practices. Besides, as discussed in the previous chapters, a combination of the Thai government's buffer zone policy and a tacit consensus between the KNU and Thai authorities transforms refugee camps into an extension of the Karen territory. Hence, here, I argue, a societal culture indeed exists in the camps on Thai soil, even though it does not exist in their territory. I define such a societal culture existing in "non-territorial territory" as a *displaced societal culture*.[97]

In this chapter, I will discuss the formation and features of the displaced societal culture. Firstly, I will describe the facilities functioning in refugee camps. Secondly, I will explore the features of daily practices through categorizing these practices into economic and socio-cultural activities.

[97] As argued, every human must inherit parts of cultural logics. Therefore, critics might argue that when people immigrate to other countries, they also embody these cultural logics by daily activities. In addition, in some immigration areas, there exist some facilities, such as school and hospital, belonging to immigrants. These cultural practices obviously encompass most parts of immigrants' life. Then, immigrants' culture is also the societal culture. However, in Kymlica's concept, territoriality is the crucial character of societal culture. The territoriality indicates that a governing body representing the whole community manages, administers and/or rules the specific space. It is a kind of state governance or quasi-state governance. However, immigrants do not have such territoriality or are not allowed to own such territoriality. They do not have such governing body, either. In the case of Karen refugees, however, refugee camps are transformed into Karen space by a tacit consensus between the KNU and Thai authorities, the cultural embodiments inside the camps thus can be perceived as a kind of societal culture. As a matter of fact, in his argument on the difference of national minority and ethnic group, Kymlicak has an inspiring and insightful discussion on the reason why immigrants do not have societal culture. Please see Kymlicka, 1996.

Facilities

There are many facilities in refugee camps. Concerning religion, Christian, Buddhism and Islam are the dominant religions and there hence exist churches, monasteries and mosques in the camps. The proportion of respective religions to the total population is different in each camp. In Mae La, Christians make up 50% of the population, Buddhists 40% and Muslims 10% (Lee, 2001:31); In Nu Poe camp, Christians make up 58%, with significant minorities of Buddhists 31% and Muslims 11% (Kengkunchorn, ibid: 40).

The camps in Thai territory along the Thai-Burma Border are known as Karen refugee camps. Nevertheless, the ethnic composition is quite diverse. In those camps, Muslims, who are the descendents of Indian Muslims and were settled in Rangoon or other cities during the British colonization of Burma, are usually identified as another ethnic group. When the communal war broke out, the Muslims fled to Thailand. Because they can not speak Karen but only Burmese, Karen refugees call the Muslims "Burmese" even though they are not ethnic Burmese. Very few Karen refugees believe in Islam except those marrying Muslim.[98]

In addition to Muslim, people with other ethnic ties can also be seen in the "Karen refugee camps." The news that the UNHCR urges Western countries to enlarge their quotas for accommodating refugees has spread in Burma, resulting in a situation that more and more people belonging to other ethnic nations, such as Kachin and Chin, leave Burma for the opportunities of being resettled to other countries. Even some Burman officials who do not agree with the policy of the SPDC come to camps for resettlement. In February 2008, I went to Mae Sa Riang to visit a KRC branch to inquire into the possibilities of crossing the border river to observe the situations in two camps inside the Karen state. In the KRC office, I met one Kachin person who had just arrived at the Mae La Oon camp two months ago. He sold his belongings and settled himself in the camp for resettlement.

In camps, most of the churches belong to Baptist, Seventh-Day Adventists and Roman Catholic systems. They are the dominant denominations among Christian refugees. But, in Mae La, there are some minor denominations such as the Holy

[98] According to the Islamic canon, Muslims cannot marry heretics.

Family, the Ja Howa, the Anglican and the Haleluya. Some families even carry out religious practices by building a small church and naming themselves a new denomination. However, this kind of new denomination is unknown to outsiders. That is why in the survey carried out in 2001 by Lee Sang Kook, the churches totaled fourteen while I found out that the number reached a total of twenty-eight even excluding the small denominations organized by families (Lee, ibid: 34).

The Baptist Church has great influences in camps. That numerous believers belong to the Baptist Church is one of the reasons. However, the most important thing is that the Bible School,[99] the biggest theological seminary of the Baptist Church in Karen refugee camps, boasts strong funding and support from abroad, educates a lot of youths and organizes many religious activities for consolidating the solidarity among believers.

In Zone C, Mae La, the Bible School is an institution of one of the further study programs that cultivate a lot of educated youths. It therefore has a strong influence on youths. Besides, the Bible School is also the main Baptist church in camps and gains a lot of funding and support from abroad. For example, the Baptist Church from South Korea often dispatches pastors to attend the reunion and volunteers to teach in the school; the representatives of the Baptist Churches from England, USA and Australia usually visit the school and provide huge donations; volunteer teachers sent by the Church in Nagaland also visit the school every year.

As more and more other ethnics arrive in camps, there are some facilities specifically established for them. Before I came back from the Thai-Burma border after completing the third term of fieldwork, in Zone C, Mae La, I found that Kachin, Chin and other ethnic nationalities started constructing a new church because they could not understand what the Karen pastors say in Karen churches.

Regarding educational facilities, there are nursery schools, primary schools, secondary schools, and high schools in the camps. However, the further study facilities are different in each camp. For example, in Mae La, by my understanding, there exist a Further Study Program (FSP), an Engineer Study Program (ESP), a

[99] Bible school is one of the Baptist organizations under the Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Church (KKBC). KKBC is the confederation of all the Karen Baptist Churches. It is consisted of several sub-organizations such as Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Church Youth Organization (KKBCYO), Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Church Women Organization (KKBCWO) and the Bible School.

Leadership and Management College (LMC), a Leadership and Management Training College (LMTC) and a Bible School. In No Poe, Teacher Preparation Course (TPC) and Karen Economic Development Course (KEDC) are established for further study. As for Um Piem Mai, Teacher Preparation Course (TPC), a Special English Program (SEP), an English Internship Program (EIP), a Resident Teacher Training (RTT) and a Vocation Training (VT) are the further study programs.

The enrollees of one further study program in one camp are not limited to the settlements in the same camp. They recruit students from the adjacent camps. For instance, in the end of March 2008, before I finished the third term of fieldwork I saw a poster of EIP recruiting new students in Mae La when EIP is established in Um Piem Mai. Besides, in the campuses of the FSP, the Bible School and the LMTC, many students hail from No Poe, Um Piem Mai and Mae La Ma. There are dormitories established for the trans-camps students in each camp. There are also some hospitals in each camp that were constructed and supported by INGOs. As a matter of fact, all the public facilities are financially supported by INGOs.

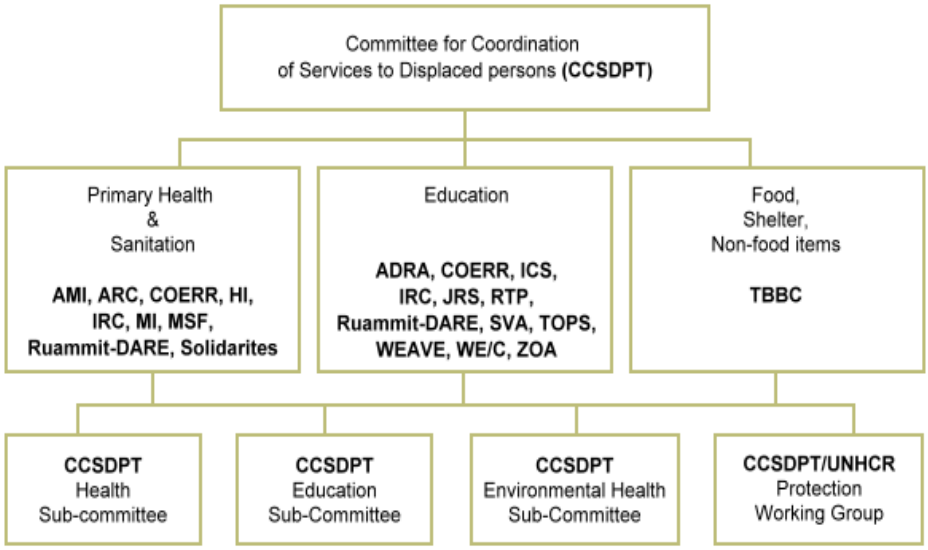
In these schools, Karen, English, Burmese and Thai languages were taught as language courses. But, generally, the language used to teach other courses such as history, geography, mathematics and basic science is Karen language, particularly the Skaw Karen language. All the textbooks, newsletters, booklets circulating among refugees are written in Skaw Karen. I did not acquire any evidence to prove that the domination of Skaw Karen was legitimized by any policy or decision of the KNU. However, as the Skaw Karen comprised of the majority of refugees and occupied most of the leaderships in the K-organization since the KNA, the first national organization of the Karen, was formed in the early 1900s, it was thus not such surprised that the domination of the Skaw existed as a reality that seemed to be accepted by everyone. In any case, Skaw Karen language was could be perceived as the *de facto* official language in refugee camps. Nonetheless, as mentioned, more and more other ethnic people came to refugee camps for various reasons. Therefore, the KED had discussed that whether other basic courses should be taught in Burmese. In the last conversation between one KED minister and me in April 2008, the minister expressed that the basic courses should not be taught in Burmese based

on the reason: "It is just like if you go to USA to study, you can not ask the school teach the subjects in Karen. You have to learn by English. Here, the same. It is Karen refugee camps. They come here voluntarily. They have to learn our language." However, being aware of the domination of the Skaw, the KED also began to ask that Pwo Karen language should be taught in at least primary schools. According to the minister, he hoped that both of the Skaw and Pwo could be the official languages in the future. Before I came back from the third term of fieldwork, I even noticed that a school was being built for those students needing to learn Pwo Karen. The School could be perceived as the Pwo Karen language institute.

Humanitarian assistance dates back to 1984 when a large influx of Karen refugees escaped from Burma and appeared along the border. At that time, the Thai MOI invited INGOs to provide emergency assistance to around 9,000 Karen refugees seeking asylum in the Tak Province. To avoid competition and a waste of resources, INGOs established the Karen Sub-Committee under the Coordinating Committee for Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand (CCSDPT). In 1990, CCSDPT Karen Sub-Committee was renamed as CCSDPT Burma Sub-Committee to extend the assistance to other ethnic nations like Karenni and Mon. On 21 May 1991, CCSDPT Burma Sub-committee was granted approval to provide assistance under the jurisdiction of the MOI in accordance with its guidelines (Lee, 2001: 37).

Under the structure of CCSDPT, Medecins Sans Frontiers (MSF), Aide Medicale Internationale (AMI), American Refugee Committee (ARC), Handicap International (HI) are responsible for medication, health and sanitation; Taipei Overseas Peace Service (TOPS), Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Zuid Oost Azie Refugee Care (ZOA) and others take charge of education; Thai-Burma Border Consortium (TBBC) as well as Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees (COERR) are in charge of food, relief and educational supplies such as the materials of constructing houses. The structure of CCSDPT is as follows:[100]

[100] The CCSDPT website, http://www.ccsdpt.org/members.htm



In addition to the public facilities supported by INGOs, there is a private facility without the support of INGOs in each camp, which is the market. There are two main markets in Mae La, one is near Zone C while the other is in the middle of Zone B. Until early 2000, there was a market outside Mae La but was closed by the Thai authorities for security reasons. These two markets are dominated by Muslims, for most shops there, regardless of size, are run by Muslims.[101] In the markets, except for the shops selling food and cosmetics, there are several barber shops, electronic appliance shops, DVD & CD renting shops, and tea shops.

What is interesting is that unlike other cities and towns the markets do not encompass all shops but are dotted with many small shops all over the camp. People just remodel their houses into shops for selling commodities.

Furthermore, some INGOs team up with K-organizations to implement vocational training programs such as Income Generation carried out by KWO and TOPS to empower refugees. This program encourages and trains Karen women to design and produce Karen costumes, ***Sarong*** and other handicrafts. The purpose is to promote the social status of Karen women in the displaced situation. There hence exist some shops selling these products with the board written "with support from

[101] Karen rarely live in the areas where is predominantly aggregated by Muslims. As to the Muslim Karen, they become Muslims owing to intermarriage, because their partners are not easily accommodated by other non-Muslim Karen, they usually live nearby the areas aggregated by Muslims.

XXX organization."

Economic Activities

Economic activities can be sorted into market, employment and essential economies. Take Mae La camp as an example, as mentioned, there are two main markets in Mae La, one is near Zone C while the other is in the middle of Zone B. The markets do not encompass all the shops. There are many small shops all over the camps, remodeled by refugees' houses. People can have meals or tea and coffee, buy vegetables, snacks, cookies, cold drinks, betelnut, cigarettes, DVD players, breads, salt, cooking oil, soy sauce, clothes and shoes, as well as rent DVDs or CDs in the markets and other small shops. Alcoholic drinks including beers, liquors, and wines are not allowed to be sold in camps. However, as mentioned, refugees always know how to eschew regulations. On the surface, they do not sell alcoholic drinks. The fact is that they do not sell alcoholic drinks to strangers and outsiders. Any one with whom they are not familiar cannot buy any alcoholic drinks successfully. They only sell liquor to people with whom they are familiar or they trust.

The goods sold in markets and small shops are partly imported from Thai traders, partly bought by Karen refugees from border towns. In Mae La, it is quite common to see Thai traders entering for business.[102] Some of these traders are farmers living in the villages adjacent to Mae La while some are dwellers owing business in border tows.

The traders from the adjacent villages as well as Mae Sot or Thak Song Young usually drive pick-up trucks to camp to sell commodities to refugees. The trucks are loaded with vegetables such as celery or cabbage, fruits like watermelon or pineapple, snacks, and goods. Sometimes refugees come with their friends or relatives to carry what they want back to their shops. Sometimes Thai traders just drive the pick-up trucks into the camp to provide shopkeepers with goods. Thai traders enter camp not only to sell goods but also to purchase goods. They enter the camp to buy handicrafts made by refugees including polyethylene bottles, cans, glass bottles, and so on. In addition, refugees usually utilize the lots under or near

[102] According to the regulations of MOI, if outsiders want to enter camps, they need to apply for a camp pass or a radio pass, but I had never heard of any Thai traders entering a camp with a "pass."

their houses to raise livestock such as pigs or chickens. They sell the livestock to Thai traders to make money. What is interesting is that there are some Thais who have shops in the markets. These Thais are from Mae Sot or Thak Song Young. According to Lee Sang Kook, they come to open their shops in the morning and leave in the afternoon (Lee, 2001: 51). These Thai businessmen do business in the camps without applying camp-passes. According to the regulation of the MOI, outsider has to apply a camp-pass or radio-pass if she/he would like to enter refugee camps. But, according to my interviews, I had never heard that these businessmen entering the camps with any "pass." Therefore, the same as the relation between the Thai authorities and the KNU, meaning the existence of a tacit consensus, such a special "relationship" must also exist between the traders and the Thai authorities, even though I could not carve out any obvious evidence.

In the case of Mae La, the market economy not only can be found inside the camps, but also can be seen outside the camp. There are a couple of gates in Mae La. The gate closest to the market in Zone B is one of the biggest gates. Facing the gate, a shop run by the Karen Women Organization (KWO) is located on the right hand side of the gate. People can buy Karen costumes, ***sarongs,*** and Karen flags at this shop. In front of the gate, there is a large lot filled in the morning and afternoon with parked pick-up trucks and crowded with people, Thai traders, and refugees.

Secondly, with the help of INGOs, the employment economy is formulated. INGOs cooperate with K-organizations to supply refugees with education, medical care and food. Therefore, in each camp, all the schools and clinics are established by INGOs. They also establish safe houses for vulnerable individuals. In these facilities, INGOs hire refugees as medics, nurses, doctors, teachers, principals, coordinators, trainers, office workers, accountants, capacity builders, social workers, and so on. The salary of refugees working for INGOs in camp facilities starts at 500 Baht.

The third is the essential economy. Two sub-types are included in the essential economy, one of which is supported by INGOs while the other is refugees' simultaneous activities. Regarding the first sub-type, INGOs support refugees the basic essential subsistence. TBBC supplies essential rations including rice, dried chilies, dried fish, salt, a few vegetables, fish paste, cooking oil, and charcoal.

	April 2008
Rice	15 kg/ adult: 7.5 kg/ child < 5 years
Fortified Flour	0.50 kg/ adult: 1 kg/ child < 5 years
Fishpaste	0.75 kg/ person
Lodised Salt	330 gm/ person
Mung Bean	1 kg/ adult: 500 gm/ child < 5 years
Cooking Oil	1 ltr/ adult: 500 ml/ child < 5 years
Dry Chillies	40 gm/ person
Sugar	125 gm/ adult: 250 gm/ child < 5years

Source: http://www.ccsdpt.org/members.htm

The second sub-type is the simultaneous essential activity. The rations cover the basic needs of daily life, but they cannot satisfy all demands. As Naw N told me, "We are human. Sometimes we want to eat meat. Sometimes we want some fruit." It is thus not unusual to see Karen refugees buying food that is not included in the rations. Refugees are not allowed to leave the camps, but they are allowed to use the natural resources around the camps. In order to have more kinds of food without wasting money, some people go to the hills, rivers, or bamboo jungles adjacent to the camps to gather fish, bamboo shoots or other edible wild herbs.

Because of deficiency in spaces, little lands can be used to cultivate crops. There are a few lots to grow vegetables along streams and houses nearby, though. People who settle along streams and have vacant lots adjacent to their houses will be acknowledged that they have the right to use the alluvial soil and the vacant lots. For this reason, the scene that some lands are fenced by bamboo wherein people plant vegetables such as water spinach is not so strange. Normally, villagers cultivate vegetables for self-consumption, but they sell some in their houses or to other shops if the production is abundant.

As illustrated earlier, it is permissible to leave camps temporarily for gathering fishes, bamboo shoots, bananas or other eatable herbs. But, not all refugees have the time, energy and will to gather these foods. After people harvest the crops, they might sell them in their houses. However, as these are the daily foods for Karen

people rather than commercial goods, few people are interested in what they grow. It seems that they sell not for profit, but only for not wasting the harvest.

In order to attract more people's eyes, some people use what they gather to make homemade snacks such as fried bananas, salted bamboo shoots, fermented sugar cane juice and fried fishes.

The same as the children in other cities or towns, children in camps are also attracted by snacks. That children buy snacks in shops is a usual scene in the camps. Besides, since job opportunities are scarce for the adults, and some adults cannot work due to wounds injured in a battle, or, jobless adults need to fill up the empty of their lives by consumption, it is thus that people while away their time in the markets and small shops.

In some underdeveloped countries such as Laos or Thailand, one essential economy is that people make use of motorbikes as taxis to earn money. Running motor taxis is also an economic activity in the camps. The capital for buying motorbikes comes from those who leave and work outside the camp. The people who give financial support to refugees to run motor taxis can be roughly sorted into three categories: refugees resettled to a third country, people acquiring Thai IDs and working in Thailand, and those who leave and illegally work outside the camp. People working outside the camps have the ability to support their relatives who are still in the camps. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the ambit located nearby Mae La is like a rectangle. The distance from the fourth checkpoint to the fifth one is around one kilometer. If people who settle in Zone A have to attend a meeting organized at the end of Zone B or further, they might take these motor taxis to save time and energy.

Socio-Cultural Activities

The socio-cultural activities can be categorized as organized and personal activities. The organized activities can be further divided into political, cultural, societal, educational, and religious ones. Regarding the political activities, by MOI regulations, refugees are not allowed to launch political movements or to organize any activity with a political purpose. However, countermeasures always exist in

places where regulations are implemented. As learned in Chapter 4, there are many K-organizations in the camps. All K-organizations, to some degree, implement policies or organize activities that are useful for solidarity with the Karen National Union (KNU). For example, the Karen Youth Organization (KYO) has been educating the next generation to insure continuity in the ongoing struggle for democracy and self-determination through a planned information sharing program as well as through education on politics and history that are taught and delivered in organized workshops (KYO, ND: 4). The KYO carries out training workshops at least twice a year. In the workshops, courses on community development, community organizing, management, and leadership are often provided by all K-organizations. According to its chairperson, the KYO also organizes infantry drills such as marching, standing at attention, and standing at ease. The purpose of the infantry drill is to train the youth to be disciplined as well as familiarize them with the basic dos and don'ts of the army.

Concerning cultural activities, the KRC and other K-organizations organize *La Gu Gi Se*, the Wrist Tying Ceremony, every year. It is the most important traditional cultural ceremony in the Karen community. In Mae La, it is usually a two-day ceremony organized on the field in front of the biggest monastery located in the hills inside Mae La. On August 27, 2007, I was invited to go to Mae La for the Wrist Tying Ceremony. I arrived the day before the Wrist Tying Ceremony. In the evening, the field in front of the biggest monastery was crowded with people. Some students from primary and high schools performed the Dong Dance for the people who came to attend the ceremony. A couple of camp leaders gave lectures after the dance. The next day was the Wrist Tying Ceremony Day and many young people went to attend the activity in order to enjoy the culture and make friends with each other.

In the case of societal activities, there are many holidays. Normally, the celebration of these holidays is organized through the cooperation of K-organizations and INGOs. Some of these holidays are organized in accordance with holidays celebrated nationwide in Thailand. Other holidays are held in accordance with holidays from the Karen calendar. Some holidays are prepared according to holidays or issues commemorating or concerning the international community, while some holidays are arranged just to provide more interaction

among refugees. For example, in the first category, the Karen Refugee Committee (KRC) often organizes the birthday celebration of the Thai king.[103] In the second category, the KYO usually holds a Youth Day for the youth while the KWO arranges Women Day for all women in the camps. In the third category, the KWO, KYO and other K-organizations usually gain support from INGOs, especially the medical organizations, to organize HIV Day to convey the importance of preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS. Finally, in the last category, football is the most popular sport and it is quite normal to see football contests in the camps. In addition, inter-school activities are organized by K-organizations and INGOs. For example, the KWO and TOPS hold Inter-Nursery School Activity Day in which parents are invited to participate in activities, such as performances and sports, with their children.

Other than these traditional activities, some activities are derived from the practices of K-organizations' programs. Take the KWO for example. It is in charge of the affairs concerning women, among which community caregiving is an overall activity focusing on caring for vulnerable members in the community and maintaining social harmony. As part of the overall activity, a Safe House provides women who suffer from rape, domestic violence, trafficking and other abuse with protection and vocational training.[104]

Educational activities are shaped by workshops or training programs supplied by INGOs or K-organizations. For example, the KWO empowers Karen women through various training and informal education methods to build their skills and confidence. Leadership Training teaches women the skills they need in order to work side by side with men in the process of decision-making. The Women Protection Program addresses the awareness of preventing violence against women. The Women Discussion Forums encourage women to share their life experiences as well as knowledge of women's affairs occurring in the Karen community.[105] Another example is KSNG's programs. The KSNG has ten working groups within

[103] Lee believed this is the obvious example of the influence of Thai culture on refugees. My understanding is that refugees celebrate these kinds of days for three reasons: to kill time, to show friendship to the Thai authority, and to obey the requirements of the Thai authority.
[104] Karen Women Organization website. http://www.karenwomen.org/projects.html
[105] Ibid.

each there are five executive committees. The KSNG prepares training workshops for the leaders of executive committees. Workshop topics are related to leadership, management, finance, proposal writing, and report writing. Following workshops, committee leaders go back to their working groups and organize the training needed for the members in each working group.

In addition to the activities conducted by K-organizations, INGOs also play a role in educational activities. For example, TOPS has implemented the Training of Trainers, Teacher Training, and Parent-Teacher Meetings. All these training workshops are designed to provide teaching techniques and relevant knowledge updates to nursery school teachers in Mae La, Nu Poe and Um Piem Mai camps.

The last category is the organized religious activities. Christianity has had a great influence on refugees. Every Friday and Saturday night, people can be heard singing hymns in their homes. During the day on Saturday and Sunday, people usually go to churches. The Bible School is the main church of the Baptist system in Karen refugee camps. Each year, three reunions for Karen Baptists are organized in the school. During the March 31, 2008 reunion, representatives from inside Burma, IDP areas, KNU areas, other camps, and even Thai-Karen villages attended the reunion. Although Christianity has had a great influence on the Karen people, it does not mean there are no activities involving other religions. Leke is a small religious cult among Karen people in Thailand and Burma. This cult believes the Karen written characters currently used are not the real Karen characters.[106] Leke seeks to replace the current Karen characters with the "real" ones. They believe the real Karen characters are derived from the imprints left in the sand by chickens. In 2006, the number of Leke members in Mae La was around fifty. Even though they faced problems such as the lack of funds to manage a school and the uncertainty of how many members will be resettled to another country, they were still active in strengthening and cultivating their cult by continuing Leke schools, looking for funds, and publicizing their religion to the outside world (Buadaeng, 2007).

As for individual activities, young people like to play football, volleyball, *takraw,* and the guitar. The first three activities are sports. Whether or not these

[106] They are surely not the real Karen characters as evidence has proved they were created by Western missionaries who adopted Burmese characters to create the current characters.

activities can be conducted relies on the condition of the weather and the time. It is not possible to play such sports at night. Yet, playing guitar and singing are not based on weather conditions and they are often seen in camps. After school and on holidays, youth play guitars and sing in many homes. In addition, some young people form bands and practice what they compose everyday. These bands usually perform at birthday parties or celebrations. There are even movie theaters in the camps. The so-called movie theaters are just shabby houses. Refugees put a television and a DVD player inside a house, making it an instant movie theater. Inside some movie theaters, the space is divided into two parts: one part is the living space of the shopkeeper while the other is for playing movies.

In the evening, refugees tend to stay at home unless there are celebrations or performances in the fields in front of monasteries or churches. The performances and celebrations are usually organized after 7 p.m. Some people like to attend these activities. If there are no activities in the evening, people usually stay at home to chat, sing (with pop songs and hymns being the most popular), watch DVDs, listen to the radio as well as read and write homework assignments. If there is no television at a person's home, or the television or the DVD player is out of order when the person wants to watch a movie, they usually go to a neighbor's home or shop where there is a working DVD player and television.

Following from the above discussion and description, we realize how Karen's societal culture is embodied in refugee camps. Since a nation is a territorialized community for Karen refugees to survive in refugee camps rather than in their land of origin, I define this culture as a displaced societal culture. Because of such a culture, Karen refugees are culturally recognizable and tangible. Also because of the culture, Karen refugees survive as a displaced nation with subjective initiative, rather than bodily agents without subjectivity.

As discussed in Chapter 4, national space is an important medium for national members to embody their feelings, identity and collective consciousness. The space thus becomes the repository of shared collective memories. Because of the character of national space, George W. White hence argues that nation that cannot express its belief, value and other emotion and passion in their own landscape always feels suppressed (White, 2004: 41). In the previous chapter, we realized that refugee

camps to some degree are transformed into Karen space. Nonetheless, the camps are not located in the land of origin. Instead, they are on Thai soil. How do Karen refugees, within such a space, make use of the displaced societal culture to reconstruct their collective consciousness? Does the "Karen space" have any influence upon the process of reconstructing refugees' national consciousness? Do Karen refugees intentionally and/or actively utilize the culture and the space to mobilize fellow nationals for their nationalist movement? All these questions will be discussed and argued in the next chapter.

6. Re/forging National Belonging

Realizing from the preceding chapters, the Karen has become a stateless and displaced nation. Although stranded in the circumstance of displacement and statelessness, the Karen has not abandoned the dream of being politically self-determining. They not only reground their societal culture in refugee camps, but also continue the nationalist movement to pursue the expected but unaccomplished goal of a Karen state.

In theory, nationalists usually attempt to mobilize grassroots support for their movement by inspiring individuals' sense of the exigency of maintaining the completeness and survival of their nation. Once the sense is inspired, individuals will understand that the completeness and survival of their nation is threatened and that national extinction would endanger their personal security, and then realize the necessity of following their nationalists' calls. Michael Ignatieff calls this sense "national belonging." He defines it the foremost belonging since it can protect individuals from violence: "where you belong is where you are safe; where you are safe is where you belong" (Ignatieff, 1993: 10).[107]

According to his argument, it seems that once a sense of national belonging is inspired, individuals will stand up and follow the calls of nationalists. However, how can such a sense of belonging be successfully inspired? The question, I suggest, is related to how this sense of belonging is forged prior to its invocation by a nationalist movement.

Ignatieff says that belonging "means being recognized and being understood." "To belong is to understand the tacit codes of the people you live with; it is to know that you will be understood without having to explain yourself" (Ignatieff, 1993: 10). Therefore, national belonging involves mutual recognition and understanding. If mutual recognition and understanding exists among members of a nation, both among nationalists and individuals, a collective perception of national survival and completeness may also be formed. If we understand national belonging as grounded in mutual recognition and understanding, such belonging should be first forged and

[107] Arjun Appadurai regards such sense as "full attachment." Please see Appadurai, 2000: 130.

then prompted in a cultural context shared by nationalists and individuals. Such a culture is national culture. National culture, in one aspect, is a context within which individuals' identity, through various cultural practices, is forged and they will know who are or are not their fellows; in another aspect, it is a kind of "social radar," a term borrowed from Henry E. Hale (2008), providing a framework for interpreting the actions and motives of the self and others. As Hutchinson says, culture is "not just symbols, traditions or rituals, but rather the meanings and orientations to collective action" (Hutchinson, 2001: 76).

National culture provides the context in which mutual recognition and understanding is nourished. That is to say, it is a culture in which individuals learn the meaning of national survival, completeness, self/other differentiation, as well as capture the reason that nationalists ask them to support the nationalist movement. Within such a cultural context, the collective perception of national survival and completeness can be nourished, and the sense of belonging among individuals can be more easily incited to support the nationalist movement.

Theoretically, national belonging, forged through various cultural practices, usually operates as a foundation upon which individuals know which community they belong to. Only after individuals sense that the survival and completeness of the nation is threatened can belonging then further be inspired as an interface to mobilize individuals' support of a nationalist movement (Wang, 1998: 142-152). However, in the following explorations, we will see that the national belonging among Karen refugees is simultaneously forged and inspired to support their nationalist movement. How then is this national belonging forged and inspired simultaneously?

I suggest that the simultaneous occurrence results from two different but complementary ways of forging national belonging: positively, by defining the nature of the nationalist movement, and negatively, by delegitimizing those forces opposed to the movement.

Firstly, regarding the positive definition, nationalism usually positively defines the political pursuits of its movement, such as unity, self-determination, cultural revival, and/or dignity, as the common good aspired by all members of the nation. The common good is generally believed to be necessary for national survival or

completeness. To obtain popular support, nationalists often have to make their fellows sense that it is necessary to support their movement since the common good can only be acquired by way of such a movement. However, grassroots people also have their way to forge people's belonging.

In the case of Karen refugees, we realize from the preceding chapters that fulfilling the ideal kingdom prophesized in their Y'wa myths is the common good that Karen people have been pursuing. In the previous chapter, we also learn that Karen refugees have regrounded their societal culture, through various daily practices, in refugee camps. In the following explorations, we will see how, through daily practices, the idea and meanings of the common good are instilled into the lives of refugees and made use of not only to forge, but also to incite, a sense of national belonging to support the nationalist movement.

Secondly, with regard to the negative definition, nationalism usually defines opposition forces as oppressors to justify its own movement. Contemporary sub-state nationalism and stateless nationalism is launched to resist the nationalism representing existing sovereign States as this nationalism tries to eliminate cultural or national diversities either through assimilative policy or by violent operations such as ethnic cleansing (Guibernau, 1999; Catt & Murphy, 2002). From the viewpoint of sub-state or stateless nation, such an aggressive form of nationalism, borrowing from Appadurai, is predatory nationalism (Appadurai, 2000: 132-138). For the sub-state or stateless nation, negatively to define the antagonistic and aggressive nationalism justifies the cause of its own national struggle. It is thus argued that there is a strong internal connection between the right to resist tyranny and the right to self-determination (Moore, 2001: 146-152). Such a negative definition can also be seen in the current nationalist movement in Karen refugee camps.

In this Chapter, I will explore how Karen refugees' sense of national belonging is simultaneously forged and inspired as the interface to support their nationalist movement.

Displacement and Belonging

When conducting my fieldwork in Mae Sot area, I observed a strong sense of national belonging existing among Karen refugees. This sense of national belonging was clearly evident in the way Karen refugees expressed to me that their identification with the Karen nation supersedes their identification with tribal and religious subgroups. As noted earlier, the Karen can be roughly categorized by language: Pwo and Skaw Karens; by region: hill and plain Karens; or by religion: Christian, Buddhist and Animist Karens. Whenever I tried to record the background of interviewees according to these categories, I always got a strong response. "I am Karen, Karen is Karen, no need to distinguish……" was always voiced out resolutely and decisively as if an oath. If I did not encounter such a response, it was usually either because the interviewees understood that the question was a formality necessary for my research or for I phrased the question in a way that did not emphasize the subgroup identification: "Are you Buddhist or Christian" rather than "Are you Buddhist Karen or Christian Karen."

I also observed manifestation of a strong sense of national belonging in another situation. On 3 April 2008, the last day of my third fieldwork, in the afternoon, Naw G said that she would see me off at the bus station. Her friend, a Thai Karen, drove her to the bus station. She introduced her friend as a Thai Karen. All of my Karen friends who live or work legally in Mae Sot held Thai IDs. Therefore, I sometimes teased them that they were "fake Thais." When Naw G introduced her friend as a Thai Karen, I asked Naw G, "The same as you?" She said: "No, no, I am Karen. He is Thai Karen." I tried to figure out how she understood her identity by asking her, "You are not Burmese Karen?" She responded sternly, "No, there is no Burmese Karen. Karen is Karen. I am Karen from Karen state, but he is Thai Karen."

Kymlicka argues that national belonging is forged in a societal culture comprised of various daily practices. These practices are recognized and realized through daily activities. In Chapter 5, we already realized that Karen refugees had regrounded their societal culture by various daily practices. Therefore, the strong national belonging described above must be re/forged through practicing these daily activities. Prasenjit Duara argues that practices, symbols and narratives can be the

means to forge national identity (Duara, 1996: 165). Regarding the forging of national identity, what Duara says is basically correct. But, if we consider how national belonging is forged and inspired simultaneously, I further suggest that symbols and narratives are not separate from practices. They are either endogenous to or closely associated with daily practices. Because of this inner-connection, Karen refugees' national belonging is simultaneously re/forged and incited.

In Chapter 5, economic and socio-cultural activities are the categories that I used to illustrate the components and features of the societal culture in refugee camps. In the next section of this chapter, I will also, by way of these two categories, explore how Karen national belonging is re/forged and inspired through the practices, symbols and narratives.

Economic Activities

Economic activities forge refugees' national belonging, partly because of the symbolic functions inherent in the activities and partly because of the restrictedness of the activities themselves.

The symbolic functions of economic activities can be observed in some projects of K-organizations. The Income Generation Project of the Karen Women Organization (KWO) is one of the obvious examples. The project is designed "to promote self-sufficiency and improve living standards of women and their families. By providing new opportunities for people in the camps to earn an income, they can supplement the basic rations they receive." In order to achieve the goal, with the assistance of TOPS, "the project opened a shop in Mae Sot, Thailand, in 2004 selling Karen Handicrafts to raise money for KWO work and for women weaving in the camps."[108] The shop located in Mae Sot was named Borderline. Along with Borderline, the KWO also runs a few shops selling the handicrafts in the camps. All the handicrafts are sold in these small shops inside the camps or are transported to Borderline.

The handicrafts manufactured by the KWO are mainly traditional Karen costumes, *Sarong*s and Karen bags. The weavers from the KWO in the camps do not manufacture modern T-shirts or fashion clothes. Indeed, the label "traditional" does

[108] Please see, http://www.karenwomen.org/shop.html

not mean that they manufacture the handicrafts without any alteration. Of course they make alteration to the color or style of traditional bags and costumes in order to introduce them to non-Karen customers more easily. For example, traditionally, unmarried female Karen can only wear "white, loose, unfitted garments, falling from the shoulders over the body" (Marshall, 1922/1977: 35-38). Only after getting married, females may wear shorter costumes, falling from neck to waist, dyed with black and red colors. Whether designed for married or unmarried women, the costumes are all ornamented with tassels, rolled up with narrow strips, at the neck and around the arm hole. On the one hand, the costumes manufactured by the KWO, break away from the traditional restrictions and express weavers' creativity through the use of colors, but, on the other hand, still maintain the traditional style. At present, unmarried Karen girls usually wear pink, light purple or light blue short costumes, rather than the long, white costumes. Sometimes, the weavers embroider the Karen national flag, Karen drum or Karen horns, the typical symbols representing Karen nationalist movement, on the costumes and bags. Yet, these newly designed items are still fitted with the traditional loose and unfitted tassels. In general, such alterations are not viewed as a departure from tradition, but rather as a creative enrichment of tradition.

Such alteration, in one aspect, links the designs with the past and imbued them with political meanings, in another aspect. From my interviewee's perspective, whether new or traditional, the dresses all belong to Karen. "You can distinguish Karen from other ethnics by their dresses. If you wear any kind of costumes like me, people will know you are Karen," said Naw E. According to KWO website, "Weaving is a central part of Karen tradition and culture."[109] Therefore, not only are weaving and wearing Karen dresses part of the process of forging Karen belonging, but buying Karen dresses is also part of the same process because, as Naw E said, "in Burma usually only Karen would like to buy Karen dress unless you buy for other people."

Among refugees, the significance of weaving, buying and using Karen handicrafts is somewhat different. All the handicrafts manufactured by the KWO are attached one or two tags explaining that the handicrafts are manufactured by female

[109] please see, http://www.karenwomen.org/shop.html

Karen refugees and that buying these handicrafts can promote their self-sufficiency and enhance the status of females during the process of reconstructing the Karen community. Thus, manufacturing and selling these handicrafts implies not only weaving cultural meanings but also sewing a common story, hope and expectation into the products which reads: "we are refugees, running from the Burmese Junta since we do not have our own state. If you buy our products, you can help us." Every handicraft is hence not purely a handicraft. Physically, it is an object that can be touched, purchased, worn or reached by any human activities. Symbolically, it connotes a story concerning Karen refugees. The manufacturing itself not only involves producing a product with cultural meaning but also transmitting the story. Nevertheless, the transmittance of the story does not happen automatically. The story transmittance relies on consumers' purchasing. Purchasing of the handicrafts not only involves the consumption of a cultural product but also the transmission of the story for refugees.

The purchasing of handicrafts by visitors of course can transmit the story of Karen refugees. I often bought the postcard sets as gifts for my friends in Taiwan while doing fieldwork in Mae Sot. Every time I gave them the postcard sets, I always explained why and where I bought them in order to tell of the stories of Karen refugees. Also, I suggested my friends to order the handicrafts from the website to help Karen refugees to reconstruct their community. When I conducted my fieldwork, if there were any visitors coming from Taiwan, TOPS and I would always take them to Borderline to purchase the handicrafts. On the way to the shop, we usually explained how they could help by purchasing the handicrafts.

Yet refugees can not leave the camps. Unless they purchase the handicrafts for their friends outside of the camps, the story behind the products will never be transmitted beyond the boundaries of refugee camps. Therefore, when they purchase and use these handicrafts manufactured by the KWO, both the physical product and the interwoven connotation then circulate inside the camps. The condition occurs especially when they purchase those handicrafts with political symbols such as the Karen national flag, Karen drum and Karen horns. The national belonging is thus re/forged and inspired in the process of manufacturing and purchasing these handicrafts.

In addition to handicrafts, the T-shirts manufactured by K-organizations are equivalent in function though different in approach. Many K-organizations work in refugee camps and they always hold a series of workshops or meetings inside and outside the camps. When they organize such activities, they usually produce some T-shirts. Always, they print or embroider some slogans and/or totems on these T-shirts to represent their organizations or their activities (Picture 3). Some of these T-shirts are distributed to the attendees while some are sold to refugees and people outside the camps. These T-shirts are not cultural products, but the inner political connotation is the same and what can be transmitted and circulated is also the same. The details will be discussed in next section.

Picture 3: T-Shirt for Karen Unity Seminar

In summary, with the manufacturing, purchasing and use of these productions, the sense of belonging is re/forged and incited to mobilize refugees' support of the nationalist movement.

With respect to the influence of restrictedness upon the forging of Karen's national belonging, this aspect can be observed in the area of humanitarian aid. As noted in Chapter 4, the KRC replaces the KNU to administer affairs inside the camps, such as ration distribution, dispute resolution and education, under the

regulation of the Ministry of Interior of Thailand (MOI). The MOI is responsible for directing and regulating the affairs inside the camps in name only. It does not really get involved directly in the internal administration and management of the camps' affairs. These responsibilities are usually at the hands of the KRC. Moreover, due to a tacit consensus existing between the KNU and Thai authorities, refugee camps to a certain degree can be perceived as the extension of Karen territory. However, Karen refugees are a group of people fenced inside the camps located on the designated land. In general, without permission, not only are refugees not allowed to leave, but outsiders are also prohibited from entering the camps. Although some Karen people find ways to leave the camps to work in the border towns as illegal migrant workers, and some outsiders know how to enter the camps without applying for a camp-pass, these are exceptions to the formal situation. The formal situation is that the restrictedness of leaving and entering the camps make Karen refugees maintain a level of isolation. Isolation creates a condition in which refugees sense their displacement and thus further strengthens their national belonging.

Lee Sang Kook argues that the aid distribution administered by the KRC is one of the crucial factors imbuing refugees with the sense of belonging. Here, I agree with his point of view. Although some refugees utilize the lots nearby their houses to plant vegetables, the land inside the camps is basically insufficient for every household to engage in such essential economic activities. Due to the lack of land for farming, the Karen refugees are completely reliant on the rations supplied by Thai-Burmese Border Consortium (TBBC) for their subsistence.

The KRC cooperates with the TBBC to distribute the rations. Ration distribution is highly centralized. Each camp follows KRC's regulations for ration distribution. Firstly, TBBC transports essential rations to each camp on specific days each month. In accordance with a list recording the numbers of households and the numbers of people in each household, the camp committee distributes the rations to zone committees, which in turn distribute them to section committees. Finally, the section committees distribute the rations to each household.

As already discussed, the camps can be perceived as an extension of Karen territory. However, the condition of being fenced into a particular space, being heavily reliant on food rations supplied by outsiders, and being recorded on a list

used for distributing rations, I argue, reminds refugees that they are members of a distinct world in which they survive collectively. Their predicament reminds them that if the Karen nationalist movement is successful, they will not need to run away from their homeland to survive in refugee camps and rely on the rations of international aid groups. Therefore, in the repeated process of distributing the ration, as Lee suggests, "the refugees are connected among themselves in the procedure and structure of aid distribution by the mediation of the KRC," and refugees' sense of belonging to the community and sharing in the same destiny is imbued (Lee, 2004: 5).

Socio-Cultural Activities

The socio-cultural activities can be divided into organizational and spontaneous activities. I will focus more on the organizational activities. In these organizational activities, the methods to re/forge and inspire Karen refugees' national belonging can be divided into three types: activities implicating or even explicating the purpose of pursuing the objective of the Karen nationalist movement, the usage of nationalism symbols, and narratives with political meanings.

The first type can be most obviously found in the political activities of K-organizations. These political activities are intrinsically designed to maintain and preserve grassroots' supports of the nationalist movement. For example, the KYO hopes that the youths in the camps can acquire a strong sense of belonging even though surviving in displacement. The KYO believes that if the youths in the camps can maintain a strong feeling of belonging, they can become a potential base of support for the Karen nationalist movement. Therefore, in order to ensure continuity in the ongoing nationalist movement, the KYO organizes many political activities which focus on educating the next generation. They usually attempt to achieve the goal by imbuing the minds of Karen youths with political consciousness through planned information sharing programs or training workshops (KYO, ND: 4). The politics inside Burma, the history of the Karen nationalist movement and the policy of the KNU are usually taught during these activities.

The KYO believes that through these activities, Karen youths in the camps will realize the history of the Karen nationalist movement, understand the policy of the

KNU and learn some knowledge useful to the Karen's political future and that the youths will pass on the mission, inherited from their forefathers, to future generations.

However, in refugee camps, organizing political activities is prohibited by MOI regulations, because the Thai government does not want the Burmese Junta to misunderstand that they are protecting or even supporting an insurgent group fleeing from Burma. These political activities are thus usually organized in the form of training workshops, such as the Leadership and Management Workshop and the Proposal Writing Workshop. In these workshops, the training is normally designed to help youths acquire the knowledge or skills necessary to reconstruct the Karen community and/or empower the local Karen in IDP areas.

Very few workshops directly explicate the hidden political purpose. Workshops which do directly explicate a political purpose are normally organized in border towns rather than in the camps. Organizing such workshops in border towns is a way to avoid potential sanctions by the MOI.

For instance, I was once invited by the Karen State Coordinating Body (KSCB) to lecture on nationalism and geopolitics in a workshop called "Constitutional, Law and Politics" from 8 to 12 October 2007. The workshop was designed to educate youths about constitutionalism and political knowledge for constructing the future country. At present, the official policy of the KNU is to pursue a democratic federal Burma rather than independence. Yet, there are many types of federal systems and very few refugees know exactly what a federal system is and what kind of federalism the KNU is pursuing.[110] Moreover, many refugees continue to believe that the KNU is struggling for independence; they do not know that the KNU has already changed the direction of its policy. Therefore, the KNU hoped the youths could learn the ideas and concepts regarding federalism from the workshop in order to cultivate them as a base of constructing the prospective country.

[110] For example, Saw 7 was the commander of Xth brigade. When I asked his imagination of the prospect country, a democratic federal Burma was the answer I got. When I further explored "do you want to hold Burma passport or Karen passport," Karen passport was what Saw 7 wanted. However, it is not possible to hold Karen passport if Karen join federal Burma. So, I inquired "can you tell me what your understanding of federalism is," Saw 7 did not tell me anything but just asked me to explain the meaning of federalism first. After I explained the difference between federalism and independence, he seemed to lapse into confusion. Finally, I got a typical answer: "I don't know that, I just know to follow KNU policy."

Secondly, nationalism symbols can be divided into modern slogans and traditional totems. The modern slogans can be seen on the certificates issued by schools, on the back or chest of T-shirts manufactured by K-organizations and schools, and on the newsletters or other publications published by K-organizations. For example, the slogan "we are able" is printed on the certificate issued by the Engineer Study Program School (ESP). The slogan, according to Saw 2, means that after learning knowledge all youths will have the ability to rebuild the new country (Picture 4).

Picture 4: The Slogan on ESP Certificate.

The traditional totems include the Karen national flag, the map of the Karen state, K-organizations' logos, the pictures and paintings of the Karen national flag, drum, and horn, as well as the profile of Saw Ba U Gyi (Picture 5).

Picture 5: T-Shirt with Saw Ba U Gyi's profile, produced by the KNU.

Due to the regulations of the MOI, we can neither see the political activities that are allowed to organize in the camps, nor see the symbols associated with nationalism that are permitted to be displayed "publicly" in the camps. The definition of "publicly" is to hang or raise these symbols openly during festivals, rituals and other activities organized outdoors.

In the case of modern slogans, as noted earlier, the Thai authorities does not want to create trouble in its relations with the Burmese Junta; it is thus impossible to raise or hang such slogans outdoors. However, when it comes to traditional totems, the regulation is not carried out as strictly. The national flag is the most obvious example.

A national flag is a typical symbol of nationalism. It always implies or explicates the belief the nation persistently pursues, the morality the nation values or the spirit the nation owns. Most importantly, a national flag is the symbol representing the sovereignty particular nationalist movement vows to protect or persists in struggling for. Therefore, any insult to the flag, such as tearing it up or striking it, is regarded as a symbol of declining national consciousness or as a violation of sovereignty. In order to prove that their belief or morality never falters, or to declare that their sovereignty can never be offended, individuals usually stand up to fight so that their flag will continually blow in the wind.

Actually, the national flag has been a symbol easily igniting people's passion

and loyalty towards their nation, as well as mobilizing people to sacrifice for their nationalist movement particularly when the nation is facing a dire predicament. That is why when Saint Joan held the flag of France in the war of 1429, her fellows immediately stood up to fight against the British army even though they were almost defeated after couple of months' severe battles. With similar patriotism, during the period that China was trampled by Japanese militarism, after a Girl Scout sent Republic of China's flag to the soldiers in Sihang warehouse besieged by Japanese troops, the soldiers insisted on raising up the flag on the roof of the warehouse although they might expose themselves to ferocious Japanese fire while raising up the flag.

The camps can be perceived as an extension of Karen territory. The management and administration are mostly at the hands of the KRC. Therefore, in theory, refugees have the free will to raise or hang their national flag. But, theory does not always match with reality. Refugees do not have such free will. Probably knowing the significance of the national flag, refugees are prohibited to raise or hang their national flag in public. As a matter of fact, regardless of the emotional aspect, while the KNU actually exists in the camps, if Thai authorities allow refugees to openly raise or hang their national flag, it is no less than admitting that Karen sovereignty exists within the territory of Thailand. Thailand is not the confederation confederated with the Karen. Therefore, the Thai government's prohibition is understandable.

Nevertheless, the Thai government does not entirely prohibit exhibition of the Karen national flag. After all, historically, the war between the Burman dynasty and Thai dynasty had never ended. Although such war no longer occurs in the modern day, the historic antagonism to some degree still exists in the minds of many Thais.[111] From the discussion in the previous chapter, the KNU controlled areas inside Burma had played the role of a buffer zone preventing the intrusion of Burmese troops into Thailand while the buffer zone also contributed to the economic burgeoning in Thailand's border towns. The KNU actually hence had

[111] For example, I once asked a Thai friend why she disliked the Burman. She answered my question by an interesting comparison: "Do you like Japanese?" Perhaps she got the image from the news that all "Chinese" did not like Japanese. In any case, it proved that the hatred to a certain extent still existed among Thais.

contribution to Thailand. Moreover, if the Thai government overly suppresses refugees' passions, it will probably result in serious chaos in refugee camps. If there is any chaos resulting from undue suppression, the camps might immediately draw international attention and that is what the Thai government wants to avoid. They are certainly unwilling to offend the Burmese Junta, but they do not want to spoil the relationship with the KNU, either. Therefore, the Thai government does not entirely suppress refugees' expression of their passion for and loyalty towards their nation. If refugees want to raise or hang Karen flag in the outdoor arenas of ceremonies or festivals, they can ask for permission from the MOI. According to my Karen friends, the MOI normally does not turn down such requests. However, the MOI requires that the refugees must at the same time raise or hang the Thai national flag. If refugees are granted the permission to raise their national flag, the height of their flag has to be lower than the height of Thai flag. If they hang the Karen flag on the wall during outdoor activities, the Thai flag has to be hung alongside the Karen flag.

From the perspective of refugees, such regulations seem unreasonable because Karen flag is not only the symbol of their political expectations but also of their sufferings. They have never had any intention of offending the sovereignty of Thailand. They merely want to see "their flag" raised or hung openly to remind themselves of the blood their forefathers bled, and to call on people's persistence in pursuing the goal of statehood. However, they do not give up any chance to see their flag erected before people's eyes. While I conducted the fieldwork, I attended a few activities organized by schools, K-organizations and churches. I had never seen the Karen flag absent during these activities. Karen refugees always asked for permission to let their flag be displayed in front of the eyes of refugees.

Although refugees are principally prohibited from openly raising or hanging their national flag, pictures or drawings of the Karen horn, Karen drum and other symbols do not encounter the same prohibition, especially the Karen horn and Karen drum. The reason is that they are intrinsically cultural totems. For Thai authorities, cultural totems are not related to politics. Nevertheless, for Karen refugees, there is no clear-cut line between cultural and political totems. Surviving in displacement, even cultural totems are imbued with political meanings or

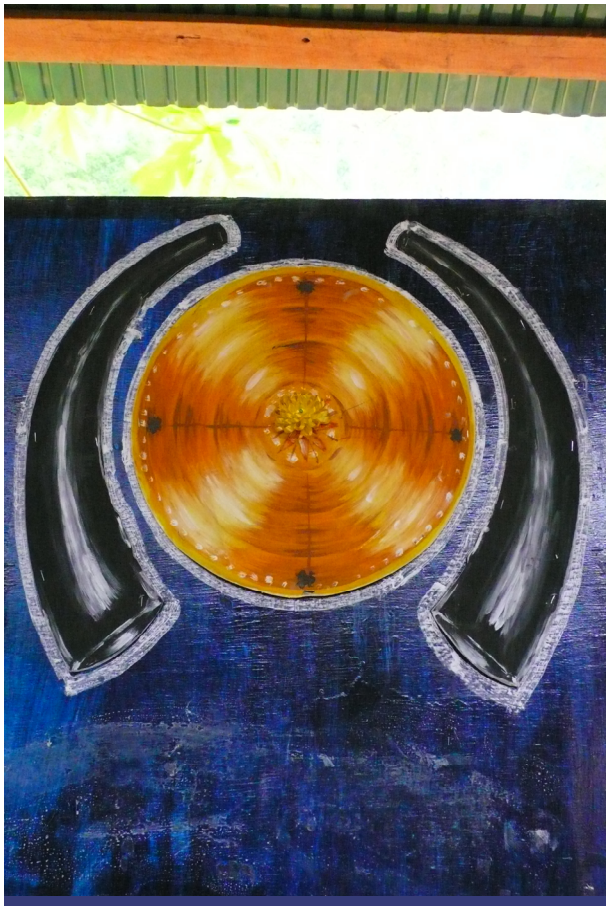
functions to re/forge national belonging and further to mobilize grassroots' support of their nationalist movement.

Sometimes, the usage of such "cultural" totems is associated with the Karen flag or other political slogans. Such use of totems can most often be seen on T-shirts, bags and scarves (Picture 6). In addition, I also saw that they hung the Karen horn on the wall in a ceremony organized outdoors. In the upside of the horn is the Karen flag. The Karen flag and other slogans are obviously political symbols. The unaccomplished political aspiration is symbolically internalized into these symbols. When refugees see these symbols, they not only see the physical symbols but also read the internalized political aspirations. Therefore, by associating the cultural totems with the political symbols, the totems are imbued with political meanings.

Picture 6: Karen flag and horns are embroidered on Karen scarf.

Another way to use the totems is within the oral flow. The oral flow is a daily dialogue context. The totems do not physically exist in the flow. Instead, the totems are the images constructed by words. Karen refugees interpret the images in accordance with the real circumstance they are in. In the process of using the images, the totems are endowed with new political meanings. For example, traditionally, the Karen drum is used in weddings, funerals or other rituals as a rhythm instrument.

Yet, Saw R once told me that four frogs are sculptured on the surface of the drum. These four frogs are arranged one by one, forming a circle which means unity. So, when "we see the drum, or when we hear the beat, we have to remember, we need unity, we want our state. If you see people wear this kind of clothe, that means he is the real Karen." (Picture 7) In the oral flow, the use of the totems is an abstract usage. The oral flow is equivalent with daily conversation. Whenever the daily conversation is proceeded with, the oral flow occurs. Through the oral flow, the image and meanings of the totems are planted into the minds of people. As will discussed later, when seeing other physical symbols or hearing any news about IDPs or Karen struggle, the image and meanings will be recalled to inspire people's passion for and loyalty toward their struggle.



Picture 7: The drawings of Karen drum and horns. The four black frogs are on the surface of the drum.

Although some symbols of nationalism are prohibited from use in the public

sphere, they are not prohibited from use in private sphere at all. Therefore, all K-organizations know how to fully make use of the "right" to use the nationalist symbols to re/forge and inspire Karen national belonging.

As discussed above, almost all of the K-organizations manufacture T-shirts on which the political slogans are printed while holding the workshops. The slogans printed on T-shirts are usually related to the political ideas that the workshops focus on or would like to advocate. And these political ideas usually imply either the necessity to pursue the goal of Karen statehood or shortcomings in the process of advancing Karen nationalism.

Some of the T-shirts are distributed to the attendees while some are sold to people who do not enroll in the workshops. People who do not enroll in the workshops might buy such T-shirts merely because they like the design, or because they want to identify themselves with the nationalist symbols on the T-shirts. Regardless of their reason, once the T-shirts are at hand, they are worn as daily clothing. For the attendees, they also wear such T-shirts as daily clothing after the workshops finish. Wearing T-shirts is a private affair belonging to the private sphere. Even though people who wear such T-shirts with nationalism symbols idle around refugee camps, such acts do not violate the regulation of the MOI since these nationalist symbols are not openly raised or hung in the public sphere. However, the nationalist symbols make the T-shirts become a moving media expressing the political ideas that are advocated by the K-organizations. Therefore, when one person idles around the camps wearing such a T-shirt, it means that he or she is expressing the political ideas that particular K-organization would like to advocate. Then, the idea crosses the doorstep out of the workshops into the daily scene within which refugees proceed with daily practices, and reminds whoever does not enroll in the workshops of the unaccomplished goals of their nationalist movement.

In addition, almost all K-organizations manufacture almanacs representing their organizations. On these almanacs are printed not only totems representing K-organizations but nationalist symbols are also obviously used (Picture 8). According to my observation, almost every household hung two to three almanacs on their walls.

Picture 8: The almanac issued by the KNU.

Generally speaking, modern political slogans can not be openly displayed. However, in some situations, the slogans can be openly exhibited. Such a situation seems paradoxical, or even absurd. If the slogans are not openly hung or raised in the public sphere, how can they be openly exhibited? The situation occurs in some ceremonies or festivals. If there is a ceremony or festival belonging to the whole Karen, such as the Wrist Tying Ceremony of the Karen New Year ceremony, high school students or primary school students normally perform the traditional *don dance* before the ceremony or festival begins. When they perform the *don dance*, they usually arrange themselves in formations which display political slogans. For example, their *don dance* arrangement might form the characters ‘freedom” or “Kathoolei.” If the idea the refugees would like to display is sensitive, the slogans

are usually laid out in Karen characters. If what refugees would like to display is not too sensitive, they are usually in English characters.

It is important to note the different types of display. To raise or hang the slogans openly is a formal display. In the case, for example, of a public festival lasting two days, the slogans are usually hung on the wall one or two days before the scene is decorated. They are not immediately taken down after the activity ends. Therefore, the function of the slogans operates for at least three to four days. In the camps, there are many "days," such like the KYO Day, the KNU Day, the KWO Day, the Revolution Day, the New Year Day, the Children Day…… In addition to these K-days, some international ceremonial days are also celebrated in the camps, such as Children Day, Labor Day, HIV Day and others. If Thai authorities allow refugees to freely and openly raise or hang the slogans, these slogans might be seen everywhere in anytime. And then, the function of the slogans probably will last without stop. I suggest that this is the reason why the MOI does not allow refugees to hang slogans openly.

Nevertheless, in activities such as the *don dance* described above, the functions of such slogans only operate for a few minutes. When the dance ends, they cease to operate. The most important is that laying out the slogans is just a segment of the dance. For the MOI, since the *don dance* is a famous cultural performance, the slogans laid out through alphabetic formation are probably merely regarded as a segment of a cultural activity. Besides, not all dances include the same slogans. What kind of slogans will be displayed depends on the situation. According to Saw W, a Buddhist leader specializing in designing the lay out of such performances, sometimes, merely the names of K-organizations, such as KWO or KNU, are laid out since they are just the names already known to everyone. Using the slogans in the process of performing the don dance is thus not of concern to the MOI in this situation.

Thirdly, with regard to narratives with political meanings, these occur in the ceremonies organized by schools, churches and K-organizations. Whether the ceremony is a graduation ceremony for students or a celebration for fetes, nationalist leaders are usually invited to lecture. If no nationalist leaders are invited, arrangements are made for school principals, student/follower representatives,

pastors or guests from K-organizations to lecture. As an activity, "lecture" itself does not have any special connotation. Even the lecture is given by a nationalist leaders, the condition is still the same. The reason why the lecture is meaningful in re/forging and igniting Karen refugees' national belonging is rooted in the topic of the associated narrative. The topic of narrative endows the lecture with meaning and makes the function of lecture operate. I attended the Wrist Tying Ceremony, a Reunion Meeting at a Bible School, and a couple of graduation ceremonies.[112] With almost no exception, the people who were invited to walk onto the stage lectured about the situation in IDP areas/refugee camps, Saw B U Gyi's four principles or other topics related to the Karen nationalist movement. Therefore, the narrative with political meanings is always included in the procedure of ceremonies.

Lectures on such topics, firstly, seem to be a passage with political meanings. Before entering the passage, refugees' belief in and passion for their nationalist movement might be wore down by their everyday displaced lives, because they see no hope of going back to their homeland, are continually fed by international humanitarian aid rather than relying on themselves, and have no legal opportunity to work outside of the camps. Nevertheless, in the process of hearing the lecture, emotion is ignited, passion is incited, and the blood loyalty is mobilized again. In the Reunion Meeting organized by the Bible School in March 2007, for example, I witnessed that in the sermon, when the pastor encouraged attendees by comparing the displacement facing Karen refugees to that faced by the Jewish people, almost all attendees' eyes filled with tears.[113]

Such a passage not only exists in the organizational ceremonies, but also can be found in activities conducted in the private sphere. On 15 January 2008, Naw E invited me to Mae La to attend her family reunion party. Since UNHCR has urged western countries to enlarge their quotas for accepting Karen refugees, more and more refugees have decided to go to third countries. Many of Naw E's family members have also left. In order to maintain the bonds among family members, they

[112] In March 2007, and 2008, I attended three graduation ceremonies in Mae La camp, the student representative and principal all lecture on the same topic, that is, Karen nationalist movement. These three graduation ceremonies were organized in Bible School, Leadership and Management Training Center (LMTC) and Engineer Study Program School (ESP).
[113] After the sermon, there was even a national anthem singing competition.

hold a reunion party in Mae La camp every couple of years. The family members who work in border towns or who were resettled to other countries will go back to attend the party if it is possible. Naw E's family is a Christian family. Therefore, a pastor was invited to lead the party. Before the party started, a worship had to be conducted. It was an activity held in the private sphere, yet the pastor prayed not only for the family members, but also for their nationalist leaders. According to my records, at that party the pastor prayed to God to give the Karen leaders the wisdom and strength to lead their people, and asked the family members not to forget the situation in the refugee camps.[114]

In summary, such lectures are arranged, designed and experienced as if a matter of course. Therefore, I believe it is reasonable to assert that every ceremony must include such a passage; if there is no such passage, the ceremony will not be a completed one. That is to say, if there is no such lecture, the ceremony's function to re/forge and inspire Karen belonging will not operate well, just like sunlight that can not illuminate the earth as if it is covered by cloud. Due to this necessity, the lecture, as the passage, is further transformed into a ritualized plot internalized within these ceremonies. After the lecture is ritualized as the internalized plot, the ceremonies then become the perfect means to re/forge and inspire refugees' national belonging just like the light of the sun can nourish all lives on the earth.

The above discussions suggest that Karen refugees' national belonging is mainly passively re/forged and inspired top-down in the process of organizational activities. In fact, compared to private activities, I was invited to organizational activities more often, so I naturally paid more attention to this type of activity. Refugees themselves also consciously re/forged and inspired their national belonging through some activities with symbolic meanings. August 2007, Saw R was going to be resettled to the USA. On 27, he invited me to experience the

[114] Actually, in 2004, I experienced such a lecture a couple of times while attending some organizational activities held by K-organizations. But, I could not make sure whether the lecture could be understood as a passage. In August 2007, 2 days after my arrival, some students from National Dong Hwa University arrived at Mae Sot as well. They went there for a 14-day study tour. On a Saturday morning, the students and I went to Hsa Htoo Lei Learning Center to attend the principal's birthday party. At that party, knowing we were from Taiwan, one KNU leader invited us to attend his family's reunion party on the next day morning. On the next day, we went there and I saw such a lecture again. Since that day, I began to assume that the lecture might be a kind of passage. With the more experience, my assumption was confirmed.

refugee life with him before he headed for America. He lived with his uncle's family. Some other orphans also lived with them. In the evening, the members of both families were asked by Saw R's uncle to enter a room to watch a DVD. I did not enter the room as I was drafting the questions that I would present at the next day's interview. However, the sound of that DVD was quite loud. I could hear the dialogue on the DVD said. Yet, it was not possible for me to fully comprehend the dialogue because it was in Karen language. However, I had already learned some Karen sentences and words. I heard some familiar words from the DVD, which were *Da The Ble* (freedom), Saw Ba U Gi and others. At the same time, I heard the sound of explosions and the melody of the Karen national anthem. At that moment, I realized that Saw R's uncle and other people were watching a DVD concerning the Karen revolution. It is thus obvious that Saw R's uncle was trying to re/forge and to incite the national belonging of the families' members through watching the DVD.

Another obvious example is the composition and singing of songs. Many refugee youths organize rock bands to perform songs they compose themselves. By means of simple recording machines and computers, some of the youths even recorded a couple of albums. Normally, in one album, there must be two to three songs relevant to nationalism. As William Howland Kenney discuss, folk music usually contains collective memory (Kenny, 1999). When refugees compose the songs, they not only write down the collective sufferings, but also project the national aspiration. By way of combining the collective sufferings and national aspiration, composers intend to ignite people's emotion and call on them to devote themselves to their nationalist cause.[115]

Saw M is identified as a nationalist singer and composer since his songs are all related to revolution, democracy or nationalism. Saw C said that these songs are nationalism songs. Even love songs sometimes include the story regarding Karen nationalist movement. Under is the translation of lyrics of one popular love songs.

"Before I love you the most and when Lah Ku flower bloom I give you

Oh, pretty girl, now you and I are getting far and far

[115] Regarding the power and influence of music, please see Annie J. Randall, 2005. In this book, Randall compiles some articles in which the common topic is how music is used by grassroots and nationalists to mobilize people's loyalty or even to call on people's sacrifice.

Our country is not a peaceful country; we have to cross over the Salween River.

But I have to miss you.

As for you pretty girl, you do not miss me.

When Lah Ku flower bloom I miss you until there are full of tears in my eyes.

Do you remember the day that we live in the village?

Living in the village, and have to feed the parents,

There is not enough money to buy food

Pretty girl is up sat and pity on her parents.

She is sad that there is not peace in the country

Mom and Dad forgive me I will go and find for money.

As the season change, I heard about your news

I am hurt and pain very much

Pretty girl you may not remember the thing behind

Mother, father and siblings who left behind, talk about you and they cry painfully

You do not pity on them

You have pass through poorness life, why don't you remember that life?

Come back to your place, with this song I hope you will remember your village"

From the lyrics, we can easily capture the symbolic meanings of the song. As discussed above, there is no clear-cut line between cultural and political activities. Under is the translation of lyrics of a song composed by Saw W. It is accompanied by the notes of the traditional Karen harp. Saw W, a Buddhist leader in Mae La, is more interested in cultural creation than stepping in political activities. However, we can see that even his song can not be separated from Karen nationalism.

"Ancestor tell us their torturing, oh I heard it and I feel very nervous

We have to separate and have to flee out and live far away from one another

Oh, I pity on it, Oh I dream of it, and I feel very nervous, I keep the suffering inside my heart

My tears come down

All brothers, teachers grand mom, Mom and Dad and everyone I call back your

spirit,

Pur lar may you come back, come back and like among your children

For people neither who Nor Lort Nor Klaw persuade and follow,

who live in other places and for those who

have to run on the mountainous and face problem and in trouble

Oh, I pity on it, Oh I dream of it, and I feel very nervous, I keep the suffering inside my heart

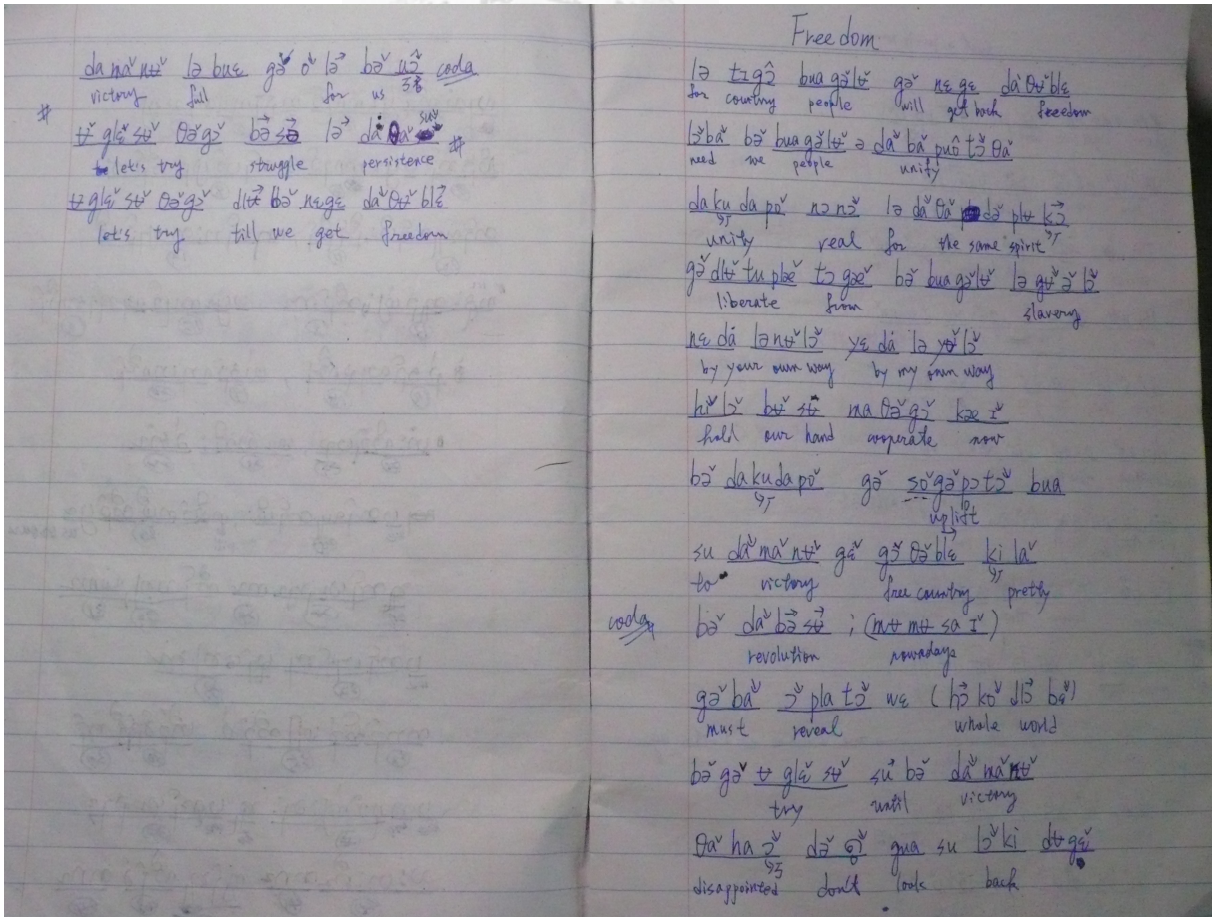
My tears come down

Live together in unity like banana

wear red threat, white threat and blank threat on your wrist

try to maintain our ancestor culture and way of thought

Grandmom and granddad are worry that it will get lost"



Picture 9: Lyrics of One Popular Nationalist Song among Karen Refugees.

The above discussions help us to understand that within the displaced societal culture, some daily practices themselves possess symbolic meanings and functions, the symbolic meanings and functions of some practices are rooted in the restrictedness of the practices themselves, while some are imbued with symbolic meanings and functions through political narrative or nationalist symbols. In summary, these symbolic meanings and functions are related to either the common experience of displacement or to express aspirations for the eventual realization of the political goals of the nationalist movement.

Within the societal culture, there might be no correlations or close links among these practices. The lack of correlations or close links makes these practices seem to be the independent nodes existing in different places and times, and also makes the meanings and functions related to these practices operate independently. However, the symbolic meanings and functions are all related to the common displacement experience and aspirations for unaccomplished political goals. Within a particular space, the experience and expectation can be reached without limitations of time and place. That is, no matter what place you are in, as long as you are in refugee camp, you will always undergo the same experience, namely, being fenced in the camp, as other people do.

For instance, although only a few people are interested in or have access to the workshops organized by K-organizations, the ideas discussed in the workshops can still spread beyond the workshops' doors and enter into the daily scene by way of the T-shirts on which political slogans are printed. In other words, the displaced experience can be repeatedly manifested and the political expectation is recurrently iterated without the limitations of time and place.

With the repeated experience and recurrent iteration, a kind of simultaneity is created. The meaning of simultaneity is not that all refugees are involved in the same or different practices at the same time.[116] Instead, it is an abstract track that

[116] This term is borrowed from Benedict Anderson. In his original usage, simultaneity is an understanding of "meanwhile." It is a "homogenous, empty time." In this homogenous and empty time, acts are performed at the same clocked, calendrical time, but actors who may be largely unaware of one another. Such a homogenous and empty time shows the character of nation. He says, an American will never meet or even know "the names of more than a handful of his 240,000-odd fellow-Americans. He has no idea of what they are up to at any one time, But he has complete confidence in their steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity." Please see Anderson, 1999: 24-26.

can link up the various practices as well as their symbolic meanings and functions. The simultaneity makes refugees know in the meantime what they are going to do, experience and inherit. For example, on the wall in Saw R's home are hung some almanacs with nationalist symbols. He usually wears the T-shirts bought from K-organizations, on which the nationalist slogans are printed. In the afternoon, he walks to attend a workshop on the topic of how to improve youths' leadership ability. On the way to the workshop, many refugees wearing the T-shirts or Karen costumes bearing similar symbols pass by. Moreover, he can also hear many youths playing guitar and singing the songs with nationalist themes. In the evening, he probably phones his friend to talk about the latest news on KNU policy or the situation inside Burma.

Because of the simultaneity, the separated and various nodes are linked and even further weaved into a symbolic net which encompasses all refugees regardless of whether they are consenting or dissenting. Within the symbolic net, the experiences of displacement and political aspirations are repeatedly manifested and iterated. Karen national belonging is thus re/forged and inspired in the process of repeatedly experiencing and iterating the experience and expectation.

A Just Nationalist Movement

Arjun Appadurai argues that for most modern nations all the remarkable and known diversities are micro-attachments that need to be erased in the process of constructing so-called imagined communities. In the process of constructing the imagined communities, majorities usually take advantage of the power in hand to sacralize the sovereignty, mystify the territory and further imbue national attachment with religious tributes. In this process, majorities normally "strive to close the gap between the majority and the purity of the national whole." In the meantime, the diverse micro-attachments make the majorities upset since these micro-attachments imply the fakeness of what the majorities are eager to construct. In order to eliminate the fakeness, "bodily violence in the name of ethnicity becomes the vivisectionist tool to establish the reality behind the mask……Of course, such violence breeds counterviolence, which takes on similar vivisectionist

forms." As a result, the nationalist movements antagonistic to one another break up (Appadurai, 2000; 2006).

In the case of Karen nationalism, though the historical Burman dynasties did not try to erase the cultural identity of Karen people, as illustrated in Chapter 2 and 3, the Karen were indeed frequently the target of violent policies carried out by Burman kings. After the assignation of Aung San, the leaders who succeeded to his position attempted to construct Burma as a union homogenized by Burman culture and Buddhism. These efforts strengthened the fear of ethnic nations, including the Karen. That is why all ethnic nations insisted on constructing their own state after the British left Burma.

Since 1968, the Burmese Junta has even launched the notorious Four Cuts operations to suppress the nationalist movements of the Karen and other ethnic nations. As discussed in Chapter 4, the Four Cuts operation has been the strategy utilized by the Junta since it was founded to exert control over Karen territory. In order to make the operation function successfully, the Junta commits a lot of atrocities, such as enforced relocation, rice field destruction and killing. Soldiers are even ordered or permitted by their superiors to rape Karen girls who are suspected of being supporters of the KNU.

In light of the discussions in Chapter 3, we can see that Karen nationalism in the beginning was a movement aimed at pursuing the ideal kingdom prophesized in the Y'wa myths. It is still a movement aiming at the realization of their ideal kingdom. But, because of the atrocities encountering the Karen, Karen nationalism is further regarded as a movement pursuing justice. Why can nationalists define their movement as a just movement? "A just movement" is obviously a positive self-definition of the nationalism of the self. I argue that nationalists usually justify their movements by discrediting their antagonists' movements.

Margaret Moore's discussion of the book by Allen Buchanan offers us a succinct argument. Buchanan suggests that Just-cause nationalism usually connects the right to resist tyranny with the right to self-determination, or secession (Moore, 2001: 145-154). Facing so many atrocities committed by the Junta, Karen refugees also connect their nationalist movement with the atrocities they experience and then define their nationalism as a just movement. Saw E's opinion is a typical definition:

"our Karen struggle, taking up arms to struggle is just, not to oppress other people, not to govern the whole country, but only to defend our people from other atrocities by the ruling junta, so, it is just and fair."

Nevertheless, how do Karen refugees engage in such a self-definition? My findings show that such a self-definition is proceeded over time through a social memory shared and reconstructed by nationalists and grassroots refugees. Maurice Halbwachs argues that there are usually two essential types of memory within social memory: historical and autobiographical (Devine-Wright, 2003: 11). The former refers to the history of suffering experienced by numerous nameless forefathers while the latter is refugees' experiences of taking flight and of their personal suffering. Nevertheless, in the case of Karen refugees, there is another essential type of memory within social memory: cognate. It refers to the events which have happened to the Karen who still live in DIP areas but, through some actions, these events are transformed into the memory commonly shared by refugees and IDP people.

Conceptually, it should be that this social memory as a whole is the device which functions as a way to justify Karen nationalism as well as to re/forge and inspire refugees' national belonging. Practically, these three essential memories function separately through different daily activities: formal education, speech communication and usage of media. These daily practices, woven together with the three essential memories, come together to form the social memory to justify Karen nationalism.

Historical Memory

Historical memory is usually written in textbooks and passed on through formal education. The suffering experienced by the forefathers of the Karen and the blood their forefathers bled are written in their history textbooks. The history textbooks were edited by the KED and ZOA. ZOA is an INGO responsible for educational issues in refugee camps. They requested some Karen elders who had extensive experiences and knowledge to write these history textbooks. These elders are typically regarded as historians because of their experience and knowledge.[117]

[117] The role of the historian in nationalism has been discussed in many insightful literatures. Please

It has been the policy of the KNU to define nationalism as a just movement. A booklet published by the KNU says: "Throughout history, the Burman have been practicing annihilation, absorption and assimilation against the Karen and they are still doing so today….Thus, we have been forced to fight for our very existence. In this document, we venture to present a concise outline of the Karen's struggle for freedom; the Karen case, which considers just, righteous and noble…." (KNU, 2000:4). The booklet is an official KNU document which records the aims, policies, programs, and beliefs and serves as a guideline for orienting the nationalist movement. Therefore, as the educational department of the KNU, the KED has to follow the above policy while requiring historians to write history textbooks even though the book writing is done by both the KED and ZOA. Thus, the textbooks were written on the grounds for justifying the cause of Karen nationalism.

According to Saw P, three main topics are written about in the textbooks: the long-term oppression and discrimination by the Burman dynasties, Burmese Junta and the Burman; the British contribution to the modernization of the Karen; and the reasons behind the Burmese Junta's denial of a Karen state. Acquiring from relevant literatures concerning Burma that was written by Karen or foreigners, these three topics indeed dominated the development of Karen history. Writing about these three topics is thus not so strange; however, because these three topics were written on the grounds for nationalism and most of the historians writing the books once took part in the nationalist movement, these three topics are written from a one-sided perspective. These historians pared off the content of the history books in order to accord the orientation of the books with the KNU's political goals; if not useful for realizing the Karen cause. As a result, they only emphasize the legitimacy of the Karen nationalist movement as well as the oppression committed by Burman dynasties and Burmese Junta while downplaying the atrocities committed by Karen soldiers upon ordinary Burman.

Unfortunately, the contents of these history textbooks are all written in the Karen language, so it is not possible to cite them to prove the above suggestions. However, based on numerous interviews, it is not unfair to propose the above suggestions. On 24 February 2008, Saw Y, the minister of one KNU department and

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see Breuilly: 1996: 157-158 and Smith, 1996b: 177-182.

a nationalist leader, said, "We should teach people the correct history. Yes, the Burmese government committed a lot of atrocities against us, but we also did a lot of revenge. Sometimes on the front lines our soldiers abused the Burmese just out of revenge. But grassroots are facing the same situation as us. We all suffer from Burmese government." As a minister and nationalist leader, his words lend credibility to my suggestions.[118]

From the above, we can understand the present Karen history writing is not centered on objective descriptions. It is instead oriented toward a mission to re/forge and to inspire Karen national belonging by negatively defining the antagonist's movements, policies and other actions. This one-side perspective has also been inscribed in the minds of the Karen people and has become apart of their collective memory.

In fact, such one-side perspective can be seen everywhere. Although we all know, and perhaps believe, that history must be written without bias. The reality also expresses to us that history textbook has never been written objectively. The history we learn from textbooks is always written and interpreted by the people who either have or succumb to the power to accord the history with political or national purpose. Therefore, such a phenomenon is not such weird in refugee camps particularly after Karen people suffered a lot of atrocities committed by the Burmese government. Nonetheless, such a one-side perspective to some degree leads to a predatory nationalism.

This one-side perspective not only describes Burman dynasties and Burmese Junta as cruel and ferocious rulers but also portrays ordinary Burman people as minions of the ruler. They cooperate with each other to strike against the Karen nationalist movement. This has contributed to Karen refugees' hatred toward both

[118] Another example is about the historical position of the DKBA. Saw P was responsible for editing history textbook. According to his sayings, within the textbooks, the history of the nation was recorded only to 1995. 1995 is the year witnessing the split of the DKBA. The split gave rise to the fall of KNU's headquarters and resulted in more than 100,000 refugees fleeing to Thailand for shelter. The DKBA even crossed the border river to attack refugee camps to enforce the refugees returning to Burma. However, neither these incidents are written nor the reason of DKBA's split is mentioned in the history textbook. Saw P said, the split of the DKBA is an historical fact difficult to be positioned. The KNU would not like to view the DKBA as their enemy. Instead, the KNU still embrace a hope that the DKBA can unify with them to commonly struggle for the Karen state. Besides, many refugees either know some friends working for or have some family members serving with the DKBA. In order to not result in inner conflict among refugees, the DKBA is not discussed in their history textbook.

the Junta and the grassroots Burman, and, to a certain degree, a predatory national belonging has appeared among Karen refugees. This is evident from many interviews.

In the mid-January 2007, I returned to Mae Sot for the first term of fieldwork. I talked to Naw E more than once about the possibility of constructing a federation with the Burman. She said, "You know, we are always told Burmese are very bad. In our books, our teachers always say 'never trust Burmese.' So, when I grow up and meet Burmese, I feel upset because I don't know how to stay with them. Yes, many Burmese are very bad. They lie, they always want to master others, but after I work for this organization, there are many good Burmese also. But, our textbooks never say that." As a matter of fact, when I chatted with my friends over beer, it was common for me to hear them say "I don't like Burmese people" or "I never trust Burmese people." One night, Saw D, Saw R, an American volunteer and I had dinner in the night market at Mae Sot. An illegal, female Burman migrant came up to us to sell us a handmade snack. The American gave her 20 Baht without taking the snack. After seeing what the American did, Saw R told us: "We never help Burmese people because they are our enemy. Because of them, we become refugees." As a matter of fact, grassroots Burman are also suffering from Junta's despotism. If they could survive in Burma, they would not need to cross the border to work as illegal migrants in Thailand.

Autobiographical Memory

The autobiographical memory is transmitted by speech communication. Through speech communication, the original personal autobiographical memories are orally transmitted and circulated among refugees, and further become "our memory."

Memories of living and escaping the homeland are daily narratives among refugees. They are heard in many situations. These daily narratives are transmitted in the form of a "story." David Mellor and Di Bretherton argue that for indigenous Australians, the significance of telling stories is in the sharing. In the process of telling and listening to the stories, the characters of the original personal stories change. They become our story and, in such a social context, the identity is built

around them (Mellor & Bretherton, 2003: 48). The same as Mellor and Bretheron, Karen national belonging was also built up and inspired in the process of sharing stories. Sometimes, it occurs in organizational activities, such as sermons in churches. Sometimes, it can be found when some critical events happen. The one that deserves the most mention is the daily conversions between elders and children born in the camps. The first situation was already discussed in the previous section. Here, I will more focus on the second and third situations.

The Occurrence of Critical Events

The split of Hting Maung, the commander of the 7th brigade, is the most obvious example. Hting Maung participated in the Karen revolution starting in 1949, was a member of the KNU central committee and had been the commander of 7th Brigade since 1970. Surprisingly, he went to Rangoon in January 2007 to meet with the Burmese Junta without KNU central committee's approval. This meeting finally led to a separate peace treaty signed by Hting Maung and the Junta. The announcement came on January 31, which was the 58th anniversary of the Karen revolution.[119] He set up a new Karen organization, the Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army Peace Council.[120]

Hting Maung was granted an area to pursue economic development. According to the treaty, Hting Maung and his group were entitled to manage the area. Saw G said the reason Hting Maung decided to sign the treaty was that he saw no future for Karen nationalism. He had been fighting against the Junta, but his men were very poor. Because the KNU proclaimed that the Karen people must continue the fight, he and his men insisted on guarding the jungle. But, many KNU leaders and/or their families were resettled to third countries or acquired Thai ID cards. They did not need to live in refugee camps or the jungle anymore. Seeing that condition, Hting Maung was thus tired of the proclamations and fighting. He believed he had to develop the area he controlled in order to bring a better life to himself and his followers.

[119] Two days before the event, I asked the possibility of crossing the border river to attend the revolution ceremony and was granted permission. However, because of the unexpected event, the KNU cancelled all activities.

[120] Please see the details on http://www.irrawaddy.org/aviewer.asp?a=6656&z=163

Once the news of the split had spread, all of my friends were infuriated. They emotionally discussed the reason Hting Maw defected and the potential results of the defection by comparing the present event to what happened in the past. The discussions always ended with the conclusion that Burmese Junta was intelligent to split the Karen people, and it was urgent for the Karen people to unite.

A few days after Hting Maung's defection, I chatted with Naw E about the event. She told me that Hting Maung had fought in the jungle for over 30 years. He once was seriously injured and almost died. Facing more and more people's decisions to go to other countries, he still insisted on staying in the jungle. He was viewed as a hero of the Karen revolution. Following Naw E, it was thus understandable why all my friends felt upset and infuriated. As a hero, Hting Maung was expected to act as a model. However, Karen refugees' hero decided to accept the Junta's suggestion to manage a special economic zone instead of persisting in the revolution. The revolutionary hero became an interest-seeker. From their standpoint, Hting Maung's decision was unacceptable. In order to unleash their emotions, they combined the event with the other incidents in history to demonize the image of the Junta, although the Junta was indeed evil. By demonizing the Junta, they once again convinced themselves that the purpose of the Junta was to first split the Karen nationalist movement and second to eliminate Karen people. By demonizing the Junta, the legitimacy of Karen nationalism was once more justified.[121]

When I was in Mae Sot area, almost without exception, all my Karen friends drew an analogy between Hting Maw and other "defections," and asserted that all of them were trapped by the SPDC. After observing the behavior of Karen refugees, it is clear such events are not merely "current events." They are, rather, the segments of historical flow within which many similar events exist. These events, through compared and interrelated, are all regarded as the result of the Junta's successful strategy and proof of Karen people's weakness. As the Junta knows Karen people's weaknesses and is able to successfully launch its strategies, the memories of past suffering are recalled while fears of being ruled by the Burman are wakened. In

[121] This type of discussion also happened in February 2008 when the general secretary of the KNU was assassinated in his house in Mae Sot.

order to not submit to the Burman, it is necessary to call on Karen people's blood loyalties toward their nation. Therefore, the main issue discussed at the Karen Unity Seminar held in KNU-controlled areas 1 to 4 February 2007 was how to unite the Karen.

To sum up, every time such an event happens, past experiences are mentioned as the examples for comparison and proof. Since past experiences were mentioned as a result of present events, emotions have been stirred up; the sense of urgency in uniting together is prompted and the blood loyalty toward Karen nationalist movement is strengthened.

Daily Conversions between Elders and Children

Since Karen people have survived as refugees for over 20 years, many from the younger generations got married. The truth gave birth to new generations in refugee camps. For those children who were born in the camps, they do not have any personal memories and attachment connected to their "homeland." Maybe their parents or grandparents still have a strong attachment to Karen land, but their homes are in refugee camps. Refugee camps are the physical space embracing them and giving meaning to their lives. Therefore, to say that refugee camps are physically their homeland is not an unreasonable point of view.

In order to let the younger generations know that their homeland is Karen state rather than refugee camps, elders usually tell them stories about the trees, rivers, and mountains in Karen territory to connect the younger generations with their real homeland. Of course, the experiences of escaping from the atrocities committed by the SPDC are also told. These stories not only prove what the younger generations learn from school but also serve as a way to pass on to youth the experiences that their parents and grandparents endured. Then, the stories originally belonging to the older generations now become the stories of the younger generations and further link them to the Karen territory.

In the end of March 2008, I went to Mae La to interview some young Karen to capture their ideas on "home, homeland and country." Without exception, all of them perceived the land inside Burma as their homeland. Because, "my parents' homeland is Karen state, they always tell me the situation in Karen state, so my

homeland is Karen state." With Saw H's translation, I got the impressive words from a 12 years old girl, which probably can be the proof of my argument: "I was born in refugee camp. When I grew up, I learned in refugee camp. In one day, my teacher said, 'tomorrow is Martyr Day, so no class.' My teacher said she will go to celebrate Karen Martyr Day in Karen state. When I came back to my house, I asked my father about Karen state. He told me 'This area is not your country. This is Thailand. Your country is over that side in Burma.' Then my father starts tell me more stories about my homeland. But before the situation happen, I really think I am in my country."

Cognate Memory

The cognate memory is mainly constructed through the usage of media. It is the memory associating refugees and the people who survive in IDP areas.

There exist many anti-government organizations in border towns and refugee camps. They exist in towns and camps in the name of Community Based Organizations (CBOs), for example, the Burma Issues (BI), the Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG), the KWO, the KYO, the Care for Karen Internally Displaced People (CKIDP), the Karen Department of Health and Welfare (KDHW), the Backpacker and many others. The BI, KHRG and the CKIDP are the organizations responsible for recording the human rights abuse inside Karen IDP areas. The KWO and the KYO are the branches of the KNU. The KYO and KWO normally cooperate with INGOs to implement humanitarian aid programs and carry out the policies of the KNU. However, they also send working groups to Karen IDP areas to record the human rights abuses committed by the Burmese Junta.

Besides, the KYO, KWO and the Karen Students Network Group (KSNG) sometimes took youth to IDP areas to experience the life of IDP people and to record the real situation themselves. This kind of activity is usually part of a series of workshops.

On the one hand, using the media to record the human rights abuses inside Burma is a strategy to beat the Burmese Junta and to justify their movements. On the other hand, it is also a means to re/forge and to inspire the Karen nationals' belonging.

Regarding the strategy of beating the Junta, everyone knows that human rights abuse is a universal crime. Any human rights abuse is prohibited by international conventions (Buergenthal et al, 2007; Lauren, 2008). Certainly, whether or not human rights protection can be effective relies heavily on individual countries, but the legitimacy of any government committing serious and extensive human rights abuse will undoubtedly be questioned. Therefore, these K-organizations attempted to justify the cause of their nationalist movement by using the media to let the world question the legitimacy of the Junta's rule. They endeavored to draw the spotlight on Burma by publishing publications and DVDs/VCDs. They hoped that after focusing the spotlight on Burma, their nationalist movement would acquire the supports of the international community. Therefore, after finishing every mission, they normally published newsletters or other publications to broadcast what they saw inside IDP areas. In addition to the publications, they also produced DVDs/VCDs in which human rights abuses were recorded.

The use of the media was also a means to re/forge and to inspire Karen refugees' national belonging. Sometimes, these organizations organized workshops or film nights in the camps. During such activities, the DVDs/VCDs were played and refugees could see the real situation inside Karen territory.

Basically, the refugees living in the camps needed not worry about security. Their lives could not possibly be harmed by the Burmese Junta because, as argued in Chapter 4, the camps are located on Thai soil, and Thai soldiers are responsible for the outer security of the camps. Any attack from the Junta would be regarded as an intrusion of Thai sovereignty. Indeed, the older generations have the experiences of escaping from Junta's atrocities; however, after arriving at the camps, "escaping" is not the situation they must undergo anymore. Contrary to this, the people in IDP areas are still haunted by such situations. They have to face the potential abuse, killing and rape every day. People in refugee camps have free education and medical care while those in IDP areas have nothing. Escape and death are just like the life homework that the people in IDP areas have to complete. Therefore, taking youth to the IDP areas, and playing DVDs/VCDs shot in IDP areas to the people in refugee camps are the methods to link refugees with their IDP fellows.

The living situation in IDP areas is horrible and dangerous while the living

situation in refugee camps is comfortable and safe. The horrible experiences that refugees once underwent have become stories of the past, but the horrible experiences are the present stories of their IDP fellows. These K-organizations, through the use of media, attempt to construct an "our memory" within which both the people in camps and IDP areas are embraced. In the process of constructing the "our memory," refugees are reminded that not only the people surviving in the camps, but the numerous, nameless IDP peoples suffering from the atrocities are also their fellows.

For the older generation, the horrible and dangerous lives of the fellows in IDP areas recall the experiences that they once endured, and symbolically put them back in the past. For the younger generations who do not have such experiences, the horrible and dangerous living situation in IDP areas is proof of what the older generations have told them and what they have learned in school. The DVDs/VCDs transform the words they learned from textbooks into pictures, and the symbolism they acquired through their older generations' story-telling into the living pictures.

As a freelancer once organized photo exhibition to express the voice and story of Karen refugees,[122] I believe, the influence of "picture," including photography and movies, is more powerful than textbooks and story-telling. As Saw E once told me: "I remember, one time, we had them see video about the IDPs, many people cried, they asked, 'Is it true?' At that time, I know, they do not really know the situation inside Burma. Their parents can understand, because they ran away, their villages were burned, they families were killed. But, young generation have everything, they don't need to worry about anything. But, KYO tried a lot. They go to IDP and take the situations back, and let the people know." In any case, while watching DVDs/VCDs, refugees' emotions towards their fellows are inspired and extended from the people surviving in the camps to those still victim of the savage atrocities of the Junta. The "our memory" is constructed and their blood loyalties to their nationalist movement are also incited.

Following the aforementioned discussions, we can see that the social memory

[122] In Jun and July 2005, I had a photo exhibition in the gallery of Taipei City Hall. The title of the exhibition was "Life in Periphery, Dignity under Displacement." It was one of the series activities of TOPS, of which the purpose was to nourish people's awareness of refugee issues.

is the combination of past and present experiences. These experiences do not function separately. Actually, they are commonly used to negatively define the rule and the movement of the Burmese Junta. In the process of dejustifying the Junta, the belief "our nationalism is a just movement" is strongly rooted in the minds of refugees. Like Daniel Bar-Tal's judgment on the collective memory of physical violence, the stories and experiences regarding the dead and wounded become the salient, concrete evidence of a group's status as a victim (Bar-Tar, 2003: 86). The victim status can justify refugees' nationalism. The nationalist movement of the Karen refugees is authenticated by political expectations and through the experiences of being displaced which are reiterated in various daily practices. That is to say, as a nation, they are naturally entitled to be politically self-determining, and, as a displaced nation resulting from the savage rule of the Junta, they undoubtedly have the right to go back to their territory to rule themselves with dignity.

A nationalist movement must have an ultimate political goal. The goal is supposed to be not only the aspiration the national members intend to pursue but also the utopia the people aspire for. Chapter 2 makes it clear that the pursuit of Karen state is the ultimate goal of Karen revolution while Chapter 3 further suggests the pursuit of the statehood is the realization of the ideal kingdom prophesized in their Y'wa myth. Theoretically, there must be a consistent political blueprint to reach the ultimate goal. However, the history of Karen revolution has tells us that such kind of political blueprint does not exist. When conducting the fieldwork in the Mae Sot area, I heard from grassroots refugees many critiques about the unclear blueprint. Even now, many people still do not understand what the exact policy is to reach the ideal kingdom. How does the KNU publicize and propagate such policy and how do the grassroots perceive it? This topic will be explored in the next, also the last, chapter.

7. The End: Striding toward Our Future

Here we are at last, a long way from Haida Gwaii,
not too sure where we are or where we are going, still
squabbling and vying for position in the boat, but somehow
managing to appear to be heading in some direction.
At least the paddles are together, and the man in the middle
seems to have some vision of what's to come.
Bill Reid, cited from James Tully, 1995: 23

The contemporary world consists of sovereign countries. It has been perceived as a globally accepted national order of things. The global order prescribes that all people must belong to a particular country. However, the reality is that not all have the opportunity to live as citizens of a nation-state, recognized in the order. They are in a liminal status, in which they could not claim to be "natural" or "legal" members of a modern nation in the world. Transnational refugees displaced by communal war are vivid living illustrations of this anomaly.

Communal war and the refugee exodus that follows can be frequently found in the ex-colonies. History has told us that after the departure of the colonial administration, groups with different identities or cultural backgrounds have often launched their respective nationalist movements to struggle for their own modern nations. It is their method to define the national order of things. Militant nationalist movements, moreover, normally bring about a communal war engulfing the whole land in which they originally live. In order to flee from the war, people need to leave their homeland to seek shelter in neighboring countries. In the meantime, history also tells us that these groups still maintain their struggles even though surviving a displaced situation.

The topic of this study, nationalism among Karen refugees along the Thai-Burma border, helps us to understand the features of nationalism under this condition, and to think of the challenges to the order.

Some may argue that the understandings or experiences of the situations facing

the members of particular community, such as the plight or exploitation in daily life, a sense of relative deprivation in the power structure, and threats to cultural completeness, serve as the impetus inspiring people to struggle for their own modern nations. In the case of the Karen, the daily situation, such as enslavement by Burman kings and landlords, had indeed influenced their aspiration for redefining the national order of things. However, the understandings and experiences of the present situation are not purely a reflection of individuals' reactions to the present. The past can influence or even determine how people understand the present and lead people to react. Therefore, in Chapter 2, we learned that the Karen, owing to a history of persecution, believed that they could only live without fear after acquiring their own state constructed on the basis of self-determination.

What is interesting is that the Karen did not distinguish between the economic, political and religious dimensions of their world. Rather, they usually interpret current situations or events through their religious system and *vice versa*. The reason that religion can be a reference point is that it often provides a timeless and overarching foundational cosmology. This cosmology can provide its bearers with a presumed "real history" and a cognitive boundary, modulating an individual's self-recognition and direction of living in the mortal world as well as imbuing the secular life with meaning. In Chapter 3, we realized that the Y'wa myth played this vital role of cosmology and further led to the emergence of Karen nationalism.

Why has nationalism endowed people with a spiritual quality that can arouse their emotions and loyalty toward the nation? Some suggest that nationalism can relate all its assumed members to their nation's authentic past, help individuals to identify their forefathers and descendants, and inspire them to realize the ideal future. Because such a spiritual quality can motivate people to believe that a utopia awaits them, nationalism is able to unite diverse groups within the nation to move on the road to the future. This quality indeed exists in Karen nationalism. If it were nonexistent, Karen nationalists would not have risked their lives in 1949 by standing up for their imagined kingdom. Yet, this spiritual quality did not successfully unite diverse groups within the Karen as was hoped, as the divide between Christian and non-Christian Karens remained strong.

During the colonial period, it was the Japanese intrusion and the atrocities

committed by the Japan-Burman alliance that propelled Karen nationalism to unite diverse subethnic groups. After Burma acquired independence, fearing enslavement by the Burman, all Karen stood up to fight for their survival in the name of the Karen nation. However, religious tensions did not really disappear; they did not come to the surface because they were subsumed under the growing aspiration for statehood. Tensions still existed in the shadow. Since the KNA was set up, the Christian elites have dominated the leadership of the nationalist movement. Owing to many Christian leaders' strong religious faith and corruption, this domination became hegemonic, re-igniting tensions and causing the defection of the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) in 1995. The DKBA split further led to the fall of Manerplaw and the ensuing refugee flow.

Because of Christian hegemony, some believe that Karen nationalism is intrinsically a Christian cause. Yet this domination was not a result of any conscious decision on the part of the Karen elites, but was instead an accidental consequence of both colonization and missionary efforts. Knowing the influence of the Y'wa myth, the early missionaries fully made use of it to facilitate their works. Meanwhile, the Karen also took pains to learn writing and other knowledge that could elevate their status vis-à-vis the Burman. From the perspective of the Karen, the efforts of both themselves and their white brother were to realize the millenniumism prophesized in the Y'wa myth. It was a way to pursue the preordained ideal kingdom.

Two other situations provided the Karen an opportunity to unite once more under the banner of Karen nationalism. The first one is the displaced living condition while the other is the exigencies of unity. At first, refugee camps were not set up on the basis of religions lines, and Christians and non-Christians coexisted in the same enclosure. The fenced life-circle of the refugee camp kept religious tensions under control. Secondly, after being refugees for over 20 years, maintaining unity despite adversity has been a moral obligation that every refugee has to bear. Under the banner of unity, Karen refugees ignored religious tensions in order to prevent exploitation by the Burmese Junta to divide the Karen people.

Generally, a nationalist movement is proceeded with in the space of particular national community. For the community, the space is not only a physical place

where culture can root in, political institutions can be based on and activities can ground upon, but also a place where national members' emotion and affection can be attached to and memories can be rooted in. Through nationalism, not only are spatial boundaries drawn, the frontiers of a people's loyalty and attachment are also demarcated. Therefore, nationalism is always regarded as a movement to territorialize a particular nation.

Before they were made into refugees, because of brutal attack from enemies the Karen had indeed launched their nationalist movement in their land to politically territorialize the land. However, as they became refugees, they are fenced in refugee camps in Thailand rather than freely living in their homeland. They cannot use the camps as a base to launch a counterattack since the camps are on Thai soil. From Chapter 4-6, we learned that the current Karen struggle is constrained by these territorial limits. Nevertheless, Karen refugees still make use of the situation facing them to continue the struggle to the great extent possible. Under some conditions, physical displacement has even become a powerful force to mobilize their nationalist feelings.

Although the Karen struggle originated in their homeland, it has now become a transnational movement. In KNU controlled-areas, the territorialization movement still exists. The KNU attempts to continually territorialize their national space through hard and soft struggles. The former is proceeded with by deploying landmines and strategic fighting while the latter is processed through political alignment, humanitarian programs, and human right campaigns.

Refugee camps are located on Thai rather than Karen soil; the militant territorialization thus seems impossible to exist in the camps. Yet, interestingly, because of the Thai authorities' unwillingness to be deeply involved in refugee affairs, the KNU has in real life replaced the MOI to play the role of camp management. Moreover, a tacit consensus now exists between the KNU and Thai authorities that the camps have to some degree transformed into an extension of the Karen territory. Although the camps can be perceived as a Karen space outside Karen lands, the final jurisdiction over the camps is ironically not possessed by the Karen. Instead, it is at the hands of Thai authorities. From Chapter 4, we know that the Thai authorities can unilaterally abolish the consensus when they see fit. This

kind of unilateral abolishment can be seen off and on.

It is normally the case that the status of refugees is decided by host countries. However, such a decision cannot entirely exclude the involvement of the international humanitarian regime. Perhaps host countries can forbid some activities of refugees, but they cannot entirely ban the daily tasks of refugees. And while host countries may have the power and right to repatriate refugees, such an act cannot be legitimated without the participation of the international humanitarian regime, in particular the UNHCR. Owing to these complications, Karen refugees have a chance to continue their nationalist struggle in camps.

The first goal of Karen nationalism is to rebuild the societal culture. According to most nationalism scholars, a culture belonging to a particular nation plays a critical role in the nationalist movement. Such a culture is called the societal culture. Students of nationalism argue that as a cultural matrix the societal culture can enable members to understand the values or norms of the nation as well as the reasons they have stood up to fight for redefining the national order of things. Refugees are uprooted from the land where their culture can ground upon, hence they are perceived as cultureless bodies. This uprootedness also explains why they can no longer saturate themselves in their cultural matrix to behave as complete human beings. It is certainly true that a culture needs a physical place to ground itself and to equip itself as an important factor making nation tangible. It is also beyond question that refugees are displaced from the societal culture within which they can place themselves in an environment from which to proceed with various meaningful activities. This, however, does not mean that refugees do not have the capacity to rebuild a culture and to restart a meaningful life while facing displacement.

In Chapter 5, we found that Karen refugees have made use of loopholes to rebuild the culture through a variety of daily activities. Some of these activities are practiced by themselves while some are with the assistance of INGOs. These activities encompass social, educational, recreational and economic practices, both public and private. Parts of the activities are even institutionally embodied as the facilities.

The original meaning of societal culture is that it is a culture belonging to a

particular nation. Since a nation is a territorialized community, such a culture must also take root in the territory of the nation. However, Karen refugees do not dwell in their own territory. They survive on the soil of Thailand. Nonetheless, because of the tacit consensus between the Thais and refugees, the latter's camps are transformed into a *de facto* extension of Karen territory or Karen space outside of Burma. Such a culture taking root in a "non-territorial territory," I argued, constitutes a displaced societal culture, which allows Karen refugees to survive as a displaced nation with a subjective initiative, rather than as bodily agents without subjectivity. Also because of the rebuilt matrix, Karen refugees are culturally recognizable and tangible.

As a result of the unsuccessful revolution, the Karen people are uprooted from their homeland and are forced to take shelter in Thailand. Owing to physical displacement, refugees cannot freely rebuild their societal culture in any place but only in the space where they are fenced in. From Chapter 6, we saw that by practicing various daily activities, the experiences of fleeing from the homeland as well as collective memories of the unsuccessful revolution become internalized as the social and moral fabric of the refugee community. Equipped with these lessons, Karen refugees are able to adopt various kinds of strategies, including economic and socio-cultural, as well as organizational and non-organizational, to re/forge their national consciousness and to inspire people's loyalty toward their struggle.

Researchers on nationalism believe that a culture is not simply an aggregate of symbols, traditions and rituals, but rather it is a social radar that congeals individuals' collective consciousness and actions. That is to say, through participating in the practices within specific cultural contexts, people are capable of realizing the motives of the self and the others, defining and recognizing the boundaries among different groups, modulating the political consciousness, as well as forging and maintaining a common sense of belonging. Karen refugees' national belonging is also re/forged in the process of participating in the various cultural practices.

Because refugees are fenced in and all cultural practices are proceeded with in the designated spaces, not only displacement but also fencedness constitutes the inner feature of refugees' societal culture. The reality and experiences of

displacement and fencedness, through these activities, are continually used to re/forge Karen refugees' national belonging. As a result, Karen nationalism in refugee camps becomes practices processed in everyday life. The most important is that through daily practices, an aspiration for the ideal kingdom and memories of the homeland are strengthened, and individuals' relationship to the homeland is linked and rekindled. As a result, refugees are "restored" at least symbolically to their aspired homeland. Through the act of linking, they symbolically become members of their native land.

Nationalism is by no means a blind movement. Nationalism always places the potential or real nation at the centre of its concerns and seeks to promote its autonomy, unity and/or identity by pursuing an ideal kingdom. Such an ideal kingdom is the ultimate goal aspired by the members of a particular nation. The goal is supposed to be not only the aspiration the national members want to pursue but also the utopia the people desire for. They believe that a life with dignity rather than exploitation and fear will arrive if the utopia is fulfilled. They also convince themselves that their economy, society and politics can prosper in accordance with their national will if the ultimate goal is realized. Therefore, the action to define the national order of things is actually a movement pursuing the utopia.

According to the discussions in Chapter 3, Karen nationalism also has an imagination of the utopia. Yet, a unanimous perspective on how to reach the expected new world had never existed in Karen history. This study argues that the Karen understanding of pragmatic means to realize the ultimate goal, to some extent, is influenced by the real situations facing the people. Therefore, different perspectives on how to realize the ultimate goal can always be heard even though they all believe in the necessity of fulfilling the utopia.

The Y'wa myth tells the Karen that one day they will have an ideal kingdom. What is the ideal kingdom, then? According to my interviewees, since the Karen people stood up to fight, they have been pursuing their *Kawthoolei*. What is *Kawthoolei*? Some of my interviewees said that it is a land whereon there is a kind of black flower sprouting and growing easily and freely, while some other people suggested that it is a beautiful land without evil. Combing these two sayings, it seems that the Karen imagine themselves as the flower while the ideal kingdom they

pursue is the land without evil, where they can live freely and without fear.

However, on how one can realize *Kawthoolei* the Karen have never reached a common understanding. In the imagined world, it is not necessary to associate *Kawthoolei*, the ideal kingdom, with a political system. However, in the real world, the ideal kingdom has to be realized through any kind of political system. The first concern is that *Kwthoolei* should be an independent country or a political entity federating with other political entities. Chapter 2 told us that there had been conflicting perspectives on how to politically make *Kawthoolei* come true. As Saw K, a Karen historian of over 70 years old, once said, most of the Karen people did not know the exact political blueprint they were fighting for. "At that time, people don't really know what they want. Federation or independence, they don't know, even our leaders are not sure. Just because we are oppressed by Burmese for a long time, so people stand up to fight."

Such a lack of consensus seems to be the defining character of Karen nationalism, which does not disappear even in displacement. When I was conducting fieldwork, I noticed that most of the elders did not really know what the practical ways to realize *Kawthoolei* were. All of them could articulate that they were fighting for freedom. But to what extent could the elders say that their aspired freedom had already been acquired? All the people I interviewed insisted that freedom could only be obtained after acquiring a state whose legitimacy is based on self-determination. Following this saying, it is clearly that *Kawthoolei* is a state constructed on the basis of self-determination. However, the actual manifestation of self-determination can range from a sovereign country, to a federal state and to an autonomous region. Most of my interviewees did not understand which level of statehood that they desired, or what self-determination meant for them. They simply knew "we want our state, we fight for *Kawthoolei*."

Fortunately, perhaps as a result of being uprooted for over 20 years, the KNU has gradually crystallized pragmatic strategies to make the ideal kingdom come true. The current policy of the KNU is to pursue a democratic federal Burma wherein all ethnic nations can rule themselves in their own states. When a democratic country is built, the Karen will have no need to worry about being enslaved by the Burman again and can rebuild their culture, economy, and lives just like the flower in

Kawthoolei.

In the present political institution of Burma, except for the Burman, all main ethnic nations are granted some degree of autonomy. However, these so-called states are not built on the basis of the principle of self-determination. They are, on the contrary, the "kindhearted offers" given by the Burmese Junta. Since Burma acquired independence, the central government has aimed to consolidate the national order of things wherein the Junta is the only party qualified to assume ruling power. Since the Junta mainly comprises the Burman and has implemented the policy to Burmanize the whole country, the Burman, even having no state, is still naturally enhanced to the superior position in comparison with other ethnic nations. That is why ethnic nations attempt to reconstruct a country wherein the Burman also "should" have its own state. If the Burman has its own state, all ethnic nations will be legally equal with each other and the Burman will no longer stand as the host of the country. In such a country, all ethnic nations will have their own lands to govern themselves. Although the areas or sizes of the homelands are probably not the ones they originally pursued, it is still believed that they can live in those places freely as the homelands are legitimatized on the basis of self-determination.

Such a political confirmation is partly a consequence of uprootedness and partly a product of the international community's understandings of the Burma issue. More than twenty years of displacement has forced the Karen to reflect on past strategies. Because there had never been a unanimous political blueprint, their nationalist movement could not meet success. Owing to the failed revolution, more than 140,000 Karen people have become refugees. In addition, due to the Junta's atrocities, numerous people in Karen land are degraded into internally displaced persons. As some of my interviewees expressed, the grassroots people suffer the most from 60 years of communal war and 20 years of displacement, and it is time to adopt a strategy that can lead people to reach the ideal future much sooner.

It is indeed true that the former colonies were granted independence after World War II ended. However, the granting of independence was aimed in part by the imperial powers to stabilize the original borders of the ex-colonies that were drawn by colonial administrations. That is to say, the powers' decision was focused on maintaining the stability of national order of things. The erstwhile colonizers did

not encourage Third World nationalists to pursue a country fully independent from the previous colonies because such a movement was viewed as destabilizing to the national order of things. At present, the international community's understandings of the Burma issue are that the ethnic nations' struggles and other anti-government movements all share the same character: they were a reaction to the crisis resulting from dictatorship. The international community believes that so long as democracy is realized in Burma, many nationalist movements in the country will naturally cease to function. Therefore, the whole international community, including official foundations and INGOs, is attempting to restore the political order by campaigning for the realization of democracy in Burma. As a movement unable to successfully achieve its nationalist claim by itself, the Karen cannot but follow international community's solution to Burma. Under the context, the KNU realizes that their dream of an independent kingdom could never come true and that their people might continue to live as displaced refugees if the armed movement could not propose a moderate political blueprint. Fearing these prospects, the KNU currently makes a lot of attempts to cooperate with other ethnic nations and anti-government groups to voice to the world the crises occurring inside Burma.

For instance, Saw J, a former leader of the KYO and the Karen Teacher Union (KTU), once went to the International Labor Organization (ILO) to testify the human rights abuses being committed by the Junta. The KNU even organized the Karen State Coordinating Body (KSCB), whose mission is to draft programs for the development of a future federal State and to cooperate with other groups to pursue democracy for Burma.

While we may credit the nationalist leaders for their pursuit of pragmatic political strategies, we must not neglect the influences of INGOs. There are many INGOs implementing humanitarian assistance programs along the Thai-Burma border. When I conducted fieldwork, I was often asked by Karen leaders and grassroots to express my opinions about the Burma issue, in particular about the possibility of independence and federation. It is quite reasonable to expect that other INGO workers are also being asked the same questions. INGO workers' opinions probably do not play a central role in reaffirming Karen nationalists' new political strategies, but they more or less have a significant influence on the process. After all,

most INGO workers hail from Western societies, and are regarded by Karen as their younger brothers according to the Y'wa myth. Their opinions could not be ignored.

Most importantly, INGO workers are usually perceived as individuals coming to bring to Karen the magical Pandora Box, within which there are many resources useful for the Karen cause, such as knowledge, computer techniques and others. The aid workers are perceived as intelligent people. Therefore, their opinions are to a certain degree not negligible. Some INGOs even intentionally promote the idea of federation. Consortium, for example, not only published a history textbook with a multicultural perspective, but also set up a learning institute wherein the students come from all the ethnic nations within Burma, including the Burman. The institute aims to teach students how to reconstruct a country based on mutual understanding and reconciliation.

Nonetheless, Karen opinion about the KNU's political blueprint is not unanimous. Some refugees insist that independence is the only destination they have been sacrificing for while some can accept a federation for Burma. Yet, even those accepting a federation do not necessarily understand its meaning. When I was in Mae Sot, I often talked with people to explore their opinions about the current KNU policy. As said, the Karen language lacks modern political terms such as independence, federation, democracy and others. I thus always needed to illustrate the precise meaning of federation and independence by means of citing some examples with which Karen were familiar. After knowing the meaning of federation, some of the people originally insisting on independence could accept it while some simply expressed that they just wanted to follow Saw Ba U Gyi's Four Principles. According to the discussion in Chapter 2, the Four Principles required the establishment of an independent Karen State. However, those who insisted on following the Principles did not really understand that the same Principles advocated independence. Besides, after 50 years of communal war, the Four Principles have been interpreted by many people with different political stands. Unless such diverse interpretations are wholly disclosed to members of the community, no one can totally make sure that their understandings of the Principles are as originally explicated by Saw Ba U Gyi.

In order to inform people about the meaning of federation and why the pursuit

of federation has been adopted as their fundamental policy, the KNU and other K-organizations often held workshops to propagandize the fundamentals of Karen nationalism. One of the KYO staff told me that they periodically went to Karen villages and townships to organize such workshops. They also organized the workshops in refugee camps and border towns. Saw H, N and X, for example, told me that they learned about the concept of a federation from such workshops. Saw H was a youth who used to serve for the KNLA as a voluntary soldier; saw N was a retiree of the KNLA; and saw X was one of the Buddhist leaders in Mae La camp.

However, in Burma a lot of lands in Karen areas are confiscated by the Junta. As discussed, nationalism is a movement territorializing the land of particular community. The current policy of the KNU is to pursue a democratic federation. However, they still need to delimit the borders and boundaries of a future Karen state. If all lands are in the hands of the Junta, it will not be possible for the Karen to territorialize them into the territory of their federal state. In order to promote successful territorialization, Saw Q and his organization bear a mission. They periodically travel to Karen IDP areas to measure the lands confiscated by the SPDC and to examine the prospects of a Karen state: "Many Karen lands are confiscated by SPDC, so we started to survey, document it. That will be the evidence, when democracy comes, that will be our land again. Before democracy comes, we have to do something for our people."

Surely, not all people agreed with the blueprint proposed by the KNU. For example, Saw S accepted the idea of a federation but in his heart the final destination that the Karen had to reach still should be independence. He work for a medical organization providing the Burmese people with free medication. Naw I works for an INGO; she also believes that the Karen people should have an independent country. As a matter of fact, around half of my interviewees regard independence as the final goal of the Karen cause. Nevertheless, most of them still stand with the KNU or support its policy. Naw I, for example, after duty, takes the responsibility of implementing some KYO's programs, even though one of the KYO's missions is to promote the formation of a Democratic Federation of Burma.

As discussed, it is almost impossible for the international community to support the armed movement aiming to construct a sovereign body independent

from Burma. Critics might argue that Karen refugees have no choice but to accept and follow the blueprint proposed by the KNU.

I cannot rebuff such an argument. But, here, in the last part of this dissertation, I wish to give another perspective to my readers. As we have learned from the previous chapters, no matter how contradictory the political blueprint and the political stance the KNU once proposed and held, the Karen people still stand with the KNU. Despite surviving in displacement and feeling unsatisfied with many policies of the KNU, Karen refugees still do not hesitate to express their support. Why? Because they know that the KNU has advocated the ideal future for the whole Karen. They understand that even though many leaders have decided to be resettled in third countries, the KNU would not abandon them. They are also sure that one day the KNU will bring all of them back to their homeland. They all have awaited the arrival of that day.

Before the end of my last term of fieldwork, one night, I invited some friends to have barbecue and beer in downtown. Among them, Saw L was granted a Thai ID and acquired full citizenship, and now works for a medical INGO. Saw B did not have a Thai ID, but he works for an educational CBO whose mission is to promote education for the children of Burmese migrant workers. Saw V was going to relocate to the USA soon, so he came to downtown to buy some useful things. He used to work for a medical CBO that often dispatched trained medics to IDP areas to supply IDP people with medical care. While we relaxed over beer, we discussed about the movie Rambo IV. The topic of Rambo IV is about the story of the Karen struggle. All of my interviewees and friends watched that movie while I conducted the last term of fieldwork. In that movie, after desperate rescuing actions in Burma, Rambo finally goes back to his homeland. It is a peaceful, tranquil and beautiful land. He stands on the side of one road, staring at the distance. Though no one knows where the end of the road is, he has reached the soil of his homeland. I cited this part to tell them that one day, like Rambo, you will be able to return to your beloved homeland. After hearing my words, all of them toasted without a voice, but their eyes were brimmed with tears.

Following the above, also based on the emotional prowess, I argue, for Karen refugees, for the belief that one day "going back to live in the aspired *Kawthoolei*

with dignity" is not merely a dream, but an aspiration worth fighting for, they thus still support the KNU and their nationalism despite surviving in adversity. Where is this prowess derived from? This prowess is firmly rooted in the refugees' past and in a system of interpretation of their present plight and prospective happiness. Without a doubt, it is a belief to which they all feel related. Nationalism in this regard is not a State propaganda growing out of a practical necessity as has occurred in many modern nation-states, but it is a powerful force that weaves together a people's social practices, daily lives, and institutional arrangements in defiance against the adversaries surrounding them.

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www.Karen.Org

Karen Women Organization (KWO)

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Attachment 1:
Backgrounds of People Quoted

Name	Brief backgrounds
Saw A	From Um Piem Mai camp; worked for a CBO and an educational INGO; had Thai citizenship; Buddhist; resettled to the USA.
Saw B	From Mae La camp; worked for a CBO; once studied in India; has pink card; Christian.
Saw C	From Mae La camp; worked for a CBO; Christian.
Saw D	From Nu Poe camp; served for the KNLA and an educational INGO; had Thai ID; Buddhist; resettled to Australia.
Saw E	From Mae La camp; works for the KNU as intelligence agent; Christian.
Saw F	From Mae La camp; teaches in IDP land; Christian.
Saw G	From Mae La camp; taught in a high school in Mae La; works for an educational INGO; Christian; has Thai ID.
Saw H	From Mae La camp; graduated from BLC's school; once served in the KNLA as part time soldier; Christian; resettled to the USA.
Saw I	From Mae La camp; Christian leader; principal of one Christian school.
Saw J	From Mae La Oon camp; previous leader of the KYO; Christian.
Saw K	Karen historian living in Mae Saraing; has Thai ID; Christian.
Saw L	From Mae La camp; works for a medical INGO; has Thai ID; Christian.
Saw M	Nationalist singer; Christian.
Saw N	From Nu Poe camp; a retired soldier; works for the KNU as intelligence agent; Christian.
Saw O	From Mae La camp; teacher of one further study school; Christian; resettled to Australia.
Saw P	From Mae La camp; principal of one further study school; Karen historian responsible for editing history textbook; Christian.
Saw Q	Served for the KNLA; works for a CBO as civil leader; Christian.
Saw R	From Mae La camp; served for the KNLA; worked for an educational INGO; has Thai ID; Christian; resettled to the USA.

Saw S	Works for a medical CBO; Christian.
Saw T	From Mae La camp; works for a political CBO; Christian.
Saw V	From Mae La camp; worked for a medical CBO; Christian; resettled to the USA.
Saw W	From Mae La camp; Buddhist leader.
Saw X	From Mae La camp; Buddhist leader; works for a political CBO.
Saw Y	Works for the KNU as a minister; Christian.
Saw 1	Served for the KNLA; has Thai ID; preaches in a Thai church as civil leader.
Saw 2	From Mae La camp, leader of the ESP school; resettled to Australia; Christian.
Saw 3	Buddhist leader in Um Piem Mai camp.
Saw 5	Has not live in refugee camp; from Yangoon; studied in England; has Thai ID; works for an educational INGO; Christian.
Saw 7	Commander of X^{th} brigade. Christian.
Saw 9	Leader of the KED; studied in India; families were resettled to third country; Christian.
Saw 12	KNU veteran; has Thai ID; works for an educational INGO; Christian
Naw B	From Myawaddy; works for a political CBO; Christian.
Naw E	From Mae La; worked for a political CBO; now works for an educational INGO; has Thai ID; Christian.
Naw G	Works for an educational CBO; has Thai ID; Christian.
Naw I	From Nu Poe camp; works for a political CBO and a cultural INGO; has Thai ID; Christian.
Naw J	From Mae La camp.
Naw K	From Mae La camp; father is DKBA's leader; once served for the KNLA and taught in high school in Mae La; has Thai ID; works for an educational INGO; Christian.
Naw L	Born in Thailand but has been working for Karen refugees.
Naw M	Works for a female CBO and an educational INGO; studied in England; has Thai ID; Christian.

Naw P	From Mae La camp; 12 years girl; Christian.

Attachment 2: Laws/Rules/Regulations Implemented by the KRC

Serial NO of rules	Case depends on of offence	The judgment
(1)Drugs	– Drug (methamphetamine) dealer, trafficker – Possession of drugs (methamphetamine) – Amphetamine and heroine user – Smoking opium, marijuana is a crime	– Fine (5000) bath (6) months detention – Fine (2000) baths and (3)months detention – Fine (500)baths – Can be treated and rehabilitated
(2) Murder	Killing or act that result in death is a murder	Detention and forward to mother organization
(3) Death	A sudden burst of anger, unable to control temper, with only one assault cause death is a murder	Detention and forward to mother organization
(4) Evil plot	An evil plot, be it against individual , group of	Fine (500) baths and (6) months detention
(5) Hiding weapon	– Gun away kind of weapon must not be kept in camp. –Anyone hide weapon act against the law.	Forward to mother organization
(6) A suspicious person	A suspicious person who is being interrogated to determine whether he is really the enemy's spy, if he is found to be really the enemy's man working for the enemy	After interrogation forward to mother organization
(7) Raping woman	– Raping woman, having sex with woman – Have a consensual sex with woman under 15 years old is a rape	Fine (2000) baths and (6) months detention
(8)Adultery	– A woman who has husband but sleep with other men – Knowing that a woman has husband but still sleep with the wife of another man is adultery.	Fine (2000) baths and (6) months detention
(9) Abortion	– A pregnant woman try to terminate her pregnancy by asking the midwife to do – Aborting the child by means of massage or taking drugs is act of killing/ destroying the child in the womb	Fine (1000) baths Fine (500) baths
(10) Stealing	– Taking anyone's property without his/ her consent – Taking or making use of public property as will without permission, that belong to a house, an office, a church, a school or any public storeroom, is an act of stealing.	Fine (500) baths and one month detention Fine (1000) baths and (6) months detention
(11) black marketing	Public property that kept in a warehouse, taking out and sell it for one's own benefit is an act of stealing or black marketing	Fine (3000) baths and (6) months detention
(12) Making liquor for sale	Producing or sell liquor is an act that violate the law	Fine (2000) baths or (3) months detention
(13) Gambling	Gambling of any form that includes cockfighting	Fine (1000) baths Fine (1000) baths

(14) Act destructive to good character	- Prostituting, Pleasure seeking to satisfy lust is an act destructive to good character	-Educating -Warning -Asking to leave the camp
(15) Get drunk and causing chaos	-Drunk, screaming, shouting and cursing, such Chaos is an act breaking the laws	-Detention (24) hours -Education
(16) Cheating	-A trusted person entrusted to keep things, items of value such as gold, silver, precious stones but cheated on it by using it up destroying and stealing –is an act of cheating	-Have to repay (3000) baths and fine (300) baths -Have to repay (5000)baths and fine (500) baths - Have to repay (10,000) baths and fine (1000) baths
(17) Discriminating to religion	-Disrespect to religion, verbally abusing, insulting, ridiculing defaming someone's faith is an act of discriminating to other people's religion.	Admonishing and educating and ask to leave the camp
(18) Video, Film	-Video that causes damage to national honour , and -Social honour and detrimental to national unity -Video or film that promote lust and degrading acts must not be shown.	(1) Educating and warning (2) Fine (1000) baths (3) Asking to leave camp
(19) Starting a fire	- cooking, lighting lamp, candle and burning rubbish nearby . - Things that can explode when bum	Fine (100) baths Fine (500) baths Fine (1000) baths
(20) Disobedient and disrespect to law	- Anyone who disobey and Disrespect the law	Educating and warning Fine (100) baths
(21) Causing damage and pain	- Argument that result in quarrelling and beating and causing pain to one another - Cutting each other with knife and machete	Fine for medical cost (500) baths Fine for medical cost (1000) Detention (6) months
(22) Child support	-Have to support the child till he/she 16 years age	(200)baths per month till the child reach 16 years age
(23) Wife support	-wife support (200) baths per month or - Fine once and for all	-Has to support wife (200) baths per month till she died or remarried Fine (10,000) baths
(24) Divorce	Divorce is possible only when both husband and wife agree	
(25) Marriage and Jill	-Engaged or agree to marriage before the presence of elders and dignitaries but later break the engagement / agreement	Fine-for the sufferer (1000) baths Office tax (10,000) baths
(26) Infectious disease	Tuberculosis and elephantiasis	Has to be quarantined or stay at the clinic
(27) Raising animals	If cattle, buffalo, sheep and goats Are raised in camp	- Education and warn the owner -Fine (100) baths -Making leave the camp
(28) Breeding dog	Dogs that are kept as pet in house the owner must look after them well ,and put identity mark on it Mad/sick dogs that bite people	-Warning --Must be killed

Source: Burma Lawyers' Council, 2007: 53-54

Attachment 3: Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABSDF	All Burma Students Democratic Front
AFPFL	Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League
AH1	Asian Highway 1
BI	Burma Issues
BIA	Burmese Independence Army
BKNA	Buddhist Karen National Union
BNA	Burma National Army
BSPP	Burma Socialist Programme Party
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDP	Chin Democracy Party
CKIDP	Care for Karen Internally Displaced People
CNVP	Chin National Vanguard Party
CPB	Communist Party of Burma
CPT	Communist Party of Thailand
DAB	Democratic Alliance of Burma
DKBA	Democratic Karen Buddhist Army
DKBO	Democratic Karen Buddhist Organization
DNUF	Democratic Nationalities United Front
ENC	Ethnic Nationalities Council
ESP	Engineer Study Program
FACE	Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry
FTUB	Federation of Trade Unions-Burma
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
ILO	International Labor Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
KAF	Kawthoolei Armed Forces
KCO	Karen Central Organization
KDHW	Karen Department of Health and Welfare
KED	Karen Educational Department

KGB	Kawthoolei Governing Body
KHRG	Karen Human Rights Group
KIA	Kachin Independence Army
KIO	Kachin Independence Organization
KMT	Kuomindang
KNA	Karen National Association
KNDO	Karen National Defense Organization
KNLA	Karen National Liberal Army
KNLP	Kayan New Land Party
KNPP	Karenni National Progress Party
KNSNLF	Karenni State Nationalities Liberation Front
KNU	Karen National Union
KNUP	Karen National United Party
KRC	Karen Revolutionary Council
KSCB	Karen State Coordinating Body
KSNG	Karen Students Network Group
KTU	Karen Teacher Union
KWO	Karen Women Organization
KYO	Karen Youth Organization
LNHCR	League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
MOI	Minister of Interiors
NCGUB	National Coalition Government Union of Burma
NCUB	National Council Union of Burma
NDF	National Democratic Front
NDUF	National Democratic United Front
NLA	Nationalities Liberation Alliance
NLD	National League for Democracy
NMSP	New Mon State Party
NULF	National United Liberation Front
NUP	National Unity Party
PDP	Parliamentary Democracy Party
PVO	People's Volunteer Organization

SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
SLORC	Sate Law and Order Restoration Council
SSNLO	Shan State Nationalities Liberation Organization
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
SSIA	Shan State Independence Army
TBBC	Thai-Burmese Border Consortium
TOPS	Taipei Overseas Peace Service
UKL	United Karen League
UKO	United Karen Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WBA	We Burmese Association
YMBA	Young Men's Buddhist Association

Attachment 4: 中文簡要版

一 難民與 National Order of Things

現代世界是由享有主權的民族國家所構成。這種由主權國家所構成的世界秩序，一直被視爲是一種自然的、全球性的 national order of things。在此秩序中，所有人都被預期屬於某個國家，享有該國國民所應有的權利，並受這個國家所保護。不過，跨國界的難民卻不屬於任何國家。他們不僅得不到原生國家的保護，甚至被認爲是對此秩序的污染。他們是失根的人群，隨時可能淪爲政治上的恐怖主義，因而是極需要被處理的現象。聯合國分別在 1951 年、1967 年以及 1969 年制定三項難民法，以作爲處理難民的基本法。聯合國高級難民公署（UNHCR）則肩負處理難民現象的責任。在冷戰以前，聯合國高級難民公署通常敦促安置國（host country）與第三國，以提供就地安置或庇護的方式，接受難民，讓難民能再次成爲某個國家的成員。雖然冷戰過後，「遣返」成爲主要的處理難民方式，但前面兩種處理方式，並未被取消。此外，遣返必須遵守 non-refoulement 的原則。就是，遣返必須是在難民的生命、自由等不會因爲遣返回原生國而受到危害。

因爲國際援助組織的行動，希望使難民離開兩國之間的邊界，以再度成爲某個國家的成員。因此，學者指出，這種行動，目的在穩定既有的 national order of things。不過，並不是所有的難民都被動地讓國際組織使用，以重新回復這個秩序。對某些類型的難民來說，他們有他們自己重新界定此 national order of things 的方式。跨國界難民的出現，可能是內戰造成，可能是天災造成。如果跨國界難民的形成，是導因於以民族主義爲名的內戰，而民族主義份子也隨難民逃往鄰近國家，那麼，原來在其原生國內的民族主義運動，就有可能延伸至難民營內。此民族主義運動，就是難民們用來重新界定此秩序的方式。本論文的研究對象，克倫難民的民族主義，就是最好的例證。

二 民族主義與理想國度

難民們爲什麼仍不放棄自己的民族主義，並堅持用他們的方式來重新界定此 national order of things？Tamil, Appadurai, Igniteff, Moore 等都表示，所有的民族主義目標或多或少帶有某種規範性的期待。因爲，民族主義者希望透過民

族主義運動，來實現一個他們所期待、所追求的理想國度。特別是，如果一個民族主義運動是以「民族自決」爲口號，這種規範性的意義就更爲明顯。畢竟，「民族自決」本身，就是一種規範性的期待，期待透過自決的實現，建立一個屬於某個民族自己的政治體系，讓此民族能依照自己的意願發展自己的政治、經濟與文化。在我的論文對象，克倫難民之中，這種規範性意義也的確存在。畢竟，如果這種規範性意義不存在，就很難說明以下的認知與想法爲什麼會瀰漫在難民之間：「we will fight until get freedom」、「we will go back to hour homeland one day」。可是，就是因爲幾乎所有的民族主義都具有某種規範性意義，所以，才不能單純地用規範性的角度來解釋民族主義運動的意義。因爲，「規範」二字可以解釋所有現象，也等於沒有解釋任何現象。

民族主義通常是在一個既有的 state 中進行。這個 state，不單是現代意義的國家，也包括王朝、封建領地等具有特定疆域的政治體系。在此政治體系內，民族主義企圖爭奪既有政治體系的控制權，或重分配既有政治體系的權力。克倫族在成爲難民之前，的確是在既有的政治體系內，企圖透過民族主義運動來重新界定此體系的疆界。可是，成爲難民之後，他們卻處在泰緬邊境，而不是他們所期待生活的疆界內。換言之，成爲難民後，此民族主義是在另一個土地上進行。在此情形下，欲探討克倫難民的民族主義運動，就需要針對此特殊性來探討，才能了解，爲何這種規範性意義會深植在草根群眾心中，以致淪爲難民後仍未被放棄，以及淪爲難民後，又如何繼續動員群眾以支持此運動。

三 族群-符號論作為研究途徑

經過 2007 年 1 月到 3 月的前置田野工作，以及跟克倫族有關文獻的閱讀，我發現，Anthony Smith 的途徑：「族群符號論」，會是好的研究途徑。根據 Smith 的看法，神話、族群過往、記憶、習俗儀式等，不僅能讓某個潛在的或真實的民族之成員認同彼此，也能讓一個民族社群被外界認知。另外，因爲這些族群-符號在某個特定的領地上被不斷實踐，也讓這些符號與特定領地結合，而讓某個民族社群成爲領土化的民族。他指出，某社群的成員透過不斷參與在某的領地內的日常性活動，而將他們的情緒、德行等，在這些日常性活動的過程中，灌注予這個領地，從而讓自己與此領地產生密切的情感聯繫。

在成爲難民之前，克倫族在自己的土地上進行各種日常性實踐，並透過這些日常性實踐，讓自身與土地產生道德的情感聯繫。可是，成爲難民後，他們

不是在自己的土地上，而是在泰國。雖然在泰國，他們的日常性實踐並未因此而失去；在難民營中，仍然可以看到這些實踐性活動。那麼，他們如何在流離失所狀態下，理解並重新詮釋這些活動，以及「流離失所」的本身是否成爲一種可以用來動員群眾的符號，便是本論文所嘗試要回答的問題。

四 Cosmology and Millenniumism

在田野中，經常會不經意地聽到難民們對基督教領導人的不滿。他們認爲，領導職位多數由基督徒佔有，佛教徒卻只能在第一線。由這些抱怨中，隱約發現，在克倫難民存有一股宗教緊張，甚至衝突。1994 年佛教徒自組 DBKA 而從 KNU 中分裂，則似乎印證了克倫族內部隱含的宗教衝突。因而有人說，克倫民族主義是一個基督教的運動。這種說法正不正確？爲什麼會有這種說法的出現？可以從下面來討論。

1 Y'wa 神話

從一些文獻對克倫族神話故事的討論中，我發現，從西方傳教士首次進入克倫族的居住區開始，就不斷有克倫人改宗成爲基督徒。透過整合不同研究中所提到的神話故事，大致拼湊出克倫族的宇宙論與千禧年主義。大意大概是：「造物主 Y'wa 創造了幾個人，白人跟克倫族是兄弟。Y'wa 給這幾個兄弟代表知識的書，因爲克倫族本身的疏忽，使得象徵知識的書毀損。Y'wa 相當生氣，於是帶著白人兄弟離開，讓克倫族陷入苦難生活中。不過，Y'wa 並沒有完全放棄克倫族，祂留下訊息，有一天白人兄弟會帶著象徵知識的書回來找他們，帶他們離開苦難，建立自己的理想國度。」

2 接受基督宗教

當西方傳教士來到緬甸，首次接觸到克倫族的神話，發現克倫族神話的宇宙論與舊約中的宇宙論，相當類似。他們很驚訝，認爲，上帝早已在克倫族的心中埋下接受舊約的種子。加上克倫族人發現傳教士帶來的聖經以及現代化設備，他們相信傳教士就是神話中的白人兄弟，他們來帶領克倫族人脫離緬甸王朝的奴役。結果是，一方面，傳教士扮演神話中的角色，努力將神話中所預示的「知識」傳給克倫族人。另一方面，克倫族人也把握這個機會，努力讓神話中所預言的理想國實現。在傳教士的傳教過程中，不僅聖經被教導，一些實用的知識，例如英文、木工等也被傳授。

3 克倫人的主體性

克倫人並不是被動地接受傳教士的傳教，相反，因爲神話本身作爲一種記

憶軌跡（memory trace），才讓克倫人努力向他們的白人兄弟學習知識。另一個加速讓他們向傳教士學習的動因是，1824-1825 年的一次英緬戰爭。

神話告訴他們，白人兄弟將會乘船而來，而在這個戰爭中，他們發現從海上而來的英國打敗緬甸王朝，更讓他們相信他們需要傳教士帶給他們的「知識」。接下來的第二次及第三次英緬戰爭，傳教士與英國人合作。改宗後的克倫人則一方面爲了實現神話的預言，他們相信，只要跟著他們的白人兄弟，就可以打敗緬甸王朝，建立理想國度，擺脫奴役狀態；一方面因爲傳教士與英國人的信任，他們參與戰役，與英國共同對抗緬甸王朝。英國戰勝後，基督教的克倫族便有機會進入殖民政府，他們通常在軍隊中工作。

不過，就在改宗的克倫族人積極向他們的白人兄弟學習，並且加入英國攻打緬甸王朝的時候，居住在仰光地區的克倫族人卻對千禧年主義有不同的解釋。佛教徒相信，世界總有一天會道德崩潰，那時候，Y'wa 會派遣一位身穿袈裟的人來拯救世界。但是，在這之前，他們必須繼續投入佛教經典的研讀。所以，他們並未加入英國人的陣營。加上西方人對佛教的暴力，讓他們利用緬族的叛亂，也透過他們的運動來實現 Y'wa 的預言。英國在鎮壓這些叛亂的時候，也徵用基督教克倫族。這造成克倫族內的宗教緊張。

五 民族主義作為統一次群體的力量

1881 年，基督教精英成立 Karen National Association（KNA）。有感於克倫族的分裂，KNA 希望將不同的語言群體統一在「克倫族」這個標籤下，保護克倫族以對抗緬族、提倡克倫族認同與發揚文化等。他們希望讓外界認識整體的克倫族，而不是宗教上的克倫族。KNA 是第一個思考「什麼是克倫族」的克倫組織。1910 年代末期，緬族的民族主義開始興起，緬族人向英國積極爭取緬甸的自治。爲了避免再次被緬族人奴役，KNA 也向英國表達政治意願，例如，1928 年，San C. Po 前往英國，希望英國能讓克倫族成立一個加盟於大英國協的 state。

Hayes 認爲，民族主義具有一種精神性的內在特質（spiritual quality），此特質可以統一或整合一個群體內的不同次群體，讓他們理解自己所屬的民族爲何。就此來看，KNA 的確在進行這樣的工作。不過，在克倫族的民族主義歷史中，這種內在特質的運作，並不成功。在殖民期間，由於兩個原因，使得 KNA 並未完成這一點。首先，英國在緬甸實行分治。其將緬甸分爲 Frontier Areas 以及 Burma Proper，前者由山區各民族按照自己的方式管理自己，後者則受英屬

東印度總督的管轄。由於克倫族的分佈地區，包括 Frontier Areas 以及 Burma Proper，造成了落後 Frontier Karen 跟進步的 Proper Karen。其次，基督教與佛教徒之間的距離，並沒有因爲 KNA 的建立而消弭。這也是爲什麼 KNA 隨後會協助佛教徒成立 Buddhist KNA 的原因。

可是，兩個外部因素，讓民族主義的這個功能實現：緬族爭取獨立以及日本侵略緬甸。

1930 年，緬族精英成立 We Burmese Association（WBA），開始爭取緬甸獨立。緬族的動作，讓克倫族感到憂心，害怕被奴役的歷史重演。二次大戰，WBA 甚至支持日本進攻緬甸，因爲日本答應他們，一旦成功打敗英國，就讓他們獨立。二戰期間，日本與 WBA 聯軍，造成克倫族人大量的傷亡。他們甚至在克倫村莊性侵克倫女性。這個經驗，讓克倫族知道，他們無法與緬族和平共處。這次，不論是 Frontier 還是平原地區的克倫族，不論是佛教徒還是基督教徒，都加入英國以對抗日本。

日本戰敗，英國重回緬甸，緬族精英積極地向英國爭取獨立。此時，克倫族也積極向英國爭取成立 Karen state。遺憾的是，直到 1948 年緬甸正式獨立，他們的 state 都沒有成立。1949 年，大規模的民族武裝運動爆發。此次的武裝運動，也是幾乎所有的克倫族都參與其中，不分地區與宗教。可是，民族主義似乎仍沒有辦法有效統一各個次級群體。最明顯的例子是 1994 到 1995 年間 DKBA 的分裂。

1994 年到 1995 年間，大批佛教徒因爲不滿 KNU 領導人的宗教偏好，例如，幾乎只有基督徒會被升遷爲領導職務，以及基督徒領導人的貪污和打壓佛教徒的宗教活動，而成立 DKBA，並從 KNU 中分裂出來。DKBA 甚至與緬甸軍事政權合作，攻擊 KNU 總部。造成約 10 萬名的難民逃往泰國。之後，直到 1996 年，他們數次在乾季時越過界河攻擊難民營，尤其是基督教領導人。基本上，他們不攻擊佛教徒，除非這位佛教徒是 KNU 領導人或軍人。於是，有些基督徒假裝自己是佛教徒，藏身在難民營內寺廟周圍。DKBA 甚至派間諜住在寺廟附近，以打探誰是假的佛教徒。在這期間，許多佛教徒被當成間諜。

DKBA 的分裂與行動，不僅造成難民內部的宗教緊張，也證實民族主義的內在特質無法實現「統一」的功能。到了 1998 年左右，DKBA 停止攻擊行動，舒緩了宗教間的緊張關係。但是，真正讓宗教關係舒緩，並讓民族主義「整合次級群體」的功能實現，卻靠另外兩個外部因素：交雜的混居環境以及緬甸軍事政權隨時計畫重擊 KNU。

1 交雜的混居環境 (intermingled life-circle)

在 Mae La 營, Zone B 主要是佛教徒；Zone A 與 Zone C 主要是基督教徒。但是，這種區分不是特意劃分的，而是自然而然的居住習慣。在 Un Piem Mai 營, Zone A 的基督徒與佛教徒各約一半；Zone B 則是佛教徒多於基督徒。學校就學，除了少數宗教學校外，其餘都是非宗教學校；營內的活動，除非是宗教性活動，否則都是以全體克倫族爲對象。換言之，在難民營內，「宗教」並未畫出明顯的生活界線與空間的界線。相對的，由於共同被「圈禁」在特定的空間內，使得兩個宗教群體的克倫人必須彼此接觸，也讓兩個群體的族人的生活交雜在一起。

2 緬甸軍事政府隨時計畫重擊 KNU

KNU 是唯一領導克倫族的組織。如果難民再分彼此，很容易被緬甸政府所利用，而再次分裂 KNU，那麼，他們回到自己的家園，在自己家園建立理想國的願望就無法實現。所以，爲了「unity」，不能觸碰宗教問題。

緊張關係雖然化減，民族主義的「統一次群體」功能似乎也在實現，卻不意味佛教徒與基督徒間的隔閡不存在。相反，正因爲這些外部因素只能在客觀的生活層面進行統一的作用，不能在主觀上讓佛教徒與基督徒捐棄歧見，而使得彼此對彼此存有一種根深蒂固的刻板印象（ingrained stereotype）。這些刻板印象瀰漫在兩個宗教群體之間與之內。這個刻板印象，可能因爲某個事件或對話，引發彼此的情緒對應，從而更加強這個刻板印象。

六 克倫民族主義的空間爭奪

一般來說，民族主義運動是發生在某個民族社群所擁有的空間（space）內。即使像庫德族這樣的 diaspora，也是在他們的傳統土地上進行。他們成爲 diaspora，是因爲他們的傳統土地被現代國家所瓜分，使得他們無法成爲一個統一個民族。

對一個社群來說，他們所居住的空間不僅是文化、制度等都能有所憑藉的地方（place），也是社群成員的情感可以與之聯繫的地方。民族主義運動，則是透過疆界的確認，將這個空間予以領土化，以讓社群成員的情感聯繫有所範圍，也能讓成員區分他我。因此，民族主義運動總是被視爲是一個將某個土地「領土化」的運動，透過領土化這個土地，民族社群也成爲領土化的民族。

可是，對於跨國境的難民民族主義運動來說，如何解釋？他們住在難民

營，難民營不是在自己的民族空間內，而是在鄰國的領土範圍內。很顯然，這個運動，沒辦法將他們所居住的空間予以領土化。那麼，這個運動如何進行？就這個跨國境的領土化運動來說，克倫難民透過以下方式進行：

1 劃定地圖並賦予意義

緬甸政府從 1970 年代開始，將緬甸地圖分爲 3 種顏色：黑色代表叛軍控制區；棕色代表政府軍與叛亂團體仍在互相爭奪的地區；白色則是完全由政府控制的地區。相反，KNU 則將白色地區視爲淪陷區，黑色地區爲解放區。克倫土地也因此被劃分爲這三種顏色。

對克倫族來說，劃定並賦予地圖以意義，不僅是軍事上的策略，也具有規範性意義。那代表，「我們在爭奪的是我們的土地」。解放區意味我們的家園仍在我們手上，我們將會爲了這個家園繼續奮戰。

劃定地圖這項行動，不需要在自己的土地上進行，這是一種沒有空間限制的行動，可以在邊境城鎮進行。

2 區分作戰單位以掌握地圖上的顏色變化

KNU 將克倫族的土地分爲七個區，每一區都有區辦公室，以負責該區的行政事務。此外，KNU 在每一區配置武裝部隊，以負責安全與作戰事宜。不過，因爲武器與彈藥缺乏、人員徵補困難，以及經費缺乏，KNU 所能有效控制的地區愈來愈少。此外，國際社會不支持克倫族的武裝民族主義。現在，KNU 不主動進行武裝行動，只是被動地保護既有控制區。埋設地雷或詭雷是他們最常用採用的方法。

3 發動軟爭奪

軟爭奪（soft struggle）也是一個可以跨越領土疆界的行動。這種行動，一方面是因應緬甸政府從 1970 年代開始進行的四斷策略（Four Cuts）；一方面是因應自己的武裝力量不足；再一方面是因應國際社會對緬甸議題的了解。

從尼溫（Ne Win）於 1968 年上台後，緬甸政府便對各民族的武裝運動發動四段策略：切斷叛亂團體的食物來源、資金來源、人員徵補來源以及情報來源。爲了達成這四項戰略，軍事政府犯下許多人權侵害事件，包括強制遷村，不從就槍斃；焚毀莊稼與沒收土地；強暴與殺戮等。四段策略讓緬甸成爲人權侵犯最嚴重的國家之一。此外，也造成大量內部流離失所的人口（internally displaced persons）。

爲了因應緬甸政府的四段策略、自身武裝力量不足，以及爭取國際社會的支持，KNU 透過人道援助與人權抗爭來進行民族主義的軟爭奪。

(1) 人道援助

包括不時派成員前往 IDP 地區，提供教育資源、藥物或其他人道的援助。人道援助工作，通常是由設於泰國邊境城鎮的 Community Based Organization (CBO)進行。部分 CBO 與國際性非政府組織（INGO）合作，由 INGO 提供部分人道資源與訓練，再由 CBO 派員前往 IDP 地區進行人道援助工作。

(B) 人權抗爭

人權抗爭，目的在把緬甸內部的人權迫害情況公諸予外界。KNU 希望透過這種方式，讓國際社會對緬甸政府施加壓力，以讓緬甸政府正面回應各反抗團體的政治訴求。人權抗爭，通常與其他民族的反抗團體合作，包括緬族的反抗團體。因爲，KNU 認爲，國際社會認爲緬甸的問題在於「獨裁」。只要民主化，就可以解決緬甸的所有問題。所以，KNU 相信，透過與其他各民族反抗團體的合作，可以讓國際社會對緬甸施壓，進而完成其政治期盼。

這種軟爭奪，與軍事策略的硬爭奪不同的是，後者是透過軍事力量完全控制某一區，是一種清楚的主權爭奪。軟爭奪，則透過不與主權有關的行動，一方面，讓自身與同胞保持情感上的聯繫，動員 IDP 地區群眾的情感，以讓其繼續支持 KNU，一方面則可以避免觸怒泰國政府而讓其無法從泰國的邊境進行民族主義運動。

4 難民營：克倫領土的延伸

難民營的空間爭奪，不是軍事意義上的爭奪，而是難民營內部事務管理的權力關係。KNU 本身並未積極爭奪內部事務的管理。但是，因爲幾個原因，使難民營內事務管理的權力關係出現變化：KNU 控制地區扮演緩衝區（buffer zone）的角色以防止緬共與泰共結合，以及阻止緬甸政府趁亂攻打泰國；國際人道組織的介入，讓泰國不能對難民事務行使專斷性的權力。加上泰國政府向來不願意積極涉入難民事務，使得難民營內的事務，基本上是由克倫難民委員會（Karen Refugee Committee, KRC）與 INGO 共同處理，泰國政府只提供原則性的指導。

根據觀察，KRC 成員，多數也是 KNU 成員，他們必須遵守或執行 KNU 政策。此外，雖然 KNU 不被允許在營內設立辦公室，但眾多以 CBO 爲名的組織實際上是 KNU 的下屬組織，他們也必須執行 KNU 政策。更重要的是，KNU 的法律，也在營內被執行。這些因素，使得 KNU 實際存在於難民營，對難民事務具有影響力，從而使難民營成爲爲 extension of Karen territory 或 Karen space outside of Burma。

由於 KNU 在某種意義上的確存在於難民營內，並且對難民營內的事務有相當影響力。因此，難民營，可以被視爲是克倫領地在泰國境內的延伸，或是緬甸之外的 Karen space。這是一種非領土性的領地（non-territorial territory）。KNU 實際存在於難民營的事實，泰國政府不會不知道。只是，只要 KNU 不是公開地在營內進行活動，也沒有公開地設立辦公室，泰國政府便繼續讓此現象繼續存在，彷彿 KNU 與泰國政府二者間存有一種不可言說的默契。因此，這種非領土性的領地，其出現與運作是建立在泰國政府與 KNU 之間的默會共識（tacit consensus）之上。

這種非領土性的領地之存在，沒有任何文件或條約來支撐其合法性。因此，泰國政府可以單方面地在打破此共識，而讓 KNU 知道，泰國才是難民營的主人。對此，KNU 與難民無計可施。這種情形，分別出現在制度層面與個人層面。就制度層面來說，在營內，竊盜、傷害等是由 KRC 的司法委員會進行審判。謀殺、性侵、販毒甚至人口販賣等嚴重案件則由泰國內政部（MOI）設在營內的辦公室來處理。不過，MOI 不一定會處理。例如，在 Burma Lawyer's Council（BLC）的報告就指出一個案例，一位女孩遭到泰國軍方性侵，加害人從未受到審判；被害人也未獲得正義。個人層面的共識破除則比較荒謬。泰國軍方的任何人，如果看到難民手中的手機較其先進，他們會沒收難民的手機，原因是：難民不能擁有這麼好的手機。

七 流離失所的社會性文化（displaced societal culture）

由於此非領土性的領地，使克倫族有了一個基本上可以被視爲屬於自己的民族空間（national space）。雖然 KNU 並未擁有此空間的最終主權，但是，因爲此空間，讓克倫難民不再是純粹的難民，而成爲 displaced nation。因爲，他們雖然流離於他們的故土之外，卻沒有失所在無根的狀態。另外，更重要的是，難民們在這個空間領域內，透過各種日常性的活動，建立起屬於他們的社會性文化 (societal culture)。

何爲社會性文化？根據 Will Kymlicka 的定義，社會性文化是一種包含人類所有行動的文化。包括社會的、教育的、宗教的、娛樂的以及經濟的活動，都包含在內。社會性文化涵括了人類生活的公領域與思領域。在其中，某些日常性的活動，甚至成爲某種制度而被固定下來。

根據 Lissa Malkki，Jennifer Hyndman 等人的研究顯示，因爲流離失所於故

土，而故土又是他們的文化得以生根、得以持續的物理性空間，因而，難民向來被視爲是沒有文化的生命體（cultureless bodily agents）。事實上，文化包括了抽象的文化邏輯（cultural logics）與具像的文化實踐（cultural practices）。人，作爲文化邏輯的承載者，會將此邏輯帶至任何地方，並透過再實踐而將此文化再次具體化。除非，人類死絕，否則，文化就會存在於人類存在的任何地方。

如果難民營內沒有任何文化，不是因爲他們流離失所於故土之外，而是他們被禁止在難民營內進行文化活動。由於泰國政府並未禁止難民在營內進行文化活動，因而，Kymlicka 社會性文化中所包括的各種活動，也出現在難民營內。某些活動，也因爲長期性的實踐，而被固定爲制度性的實踐（institutionalized practices）。

由於克倫空間的實際存在，克倫難民不再是純粹的難民，而是 displaced nation。另外，克倫難民在這個不是領土的領域中，透過日常性實踐，重建了屬於他們的社會性文化，進而成爲在文化上可以被認知的 displaced nation。不過，因爲這個空間不是克倫族的傳統空間，而是難民營；他們沒辦法自由進出難民營，而是被圈在其中；他們沒辦法選擇棲身在何處，而是另一個主權國家決定其棲身何處。但 Kymlicka 所定義的社會性文化，卻是一個在自己的領土上所建立的文化。面對這樣的情形，我稱之爲流離失所的社會性文化（displaced societal culture）。

八 重/塑民族歸屬感

不論是如 Benedict Anderson、Eric Hobsbawm 等民族主義現代論者，還是 Anthony Smith、John Hutchinson 等的族群符號論者，都同意文化對於動員群眾的效忠以及參與某個民族主義運動，具有重要性。因爲，只有在參與某個文化的過程中，個人才知道彼此的政治態度爲何、價值信念爲何，也才能理解爲何他們要效忠或參與某個民族主義運動。那麼，克倫難民如何透過文化參與，主動與被動地表達他們對其民族主義的忠誠與支持？在克倫民族主義中，我發現，某些實踐活動的本身就具有民族主義的符號性意義，有些實踐活動則因爲流離失所的事實而被賦予了民族主義的意義，另外，流離失所這個事實的本身，在某些情形下，也成爲塑造民族整體意識，動員群眾的力量。所有這些活動與符號，將難民包圍住，不論同意與否。換言之，克倫難民們是生活在各種抽象的、與具象的符號之中，在這些日常性的符號之中，他們被日常性的動員。

這些活動，可以分成，透過正面地塑造民族意識的方式來動員群眾的活動，以及透過負面地界定緬甸政府來正當化自己的行動。

1 正面地塑造民族意識

(1) 經濟性活動：

經濟性活動具有符號性意義，部分來自於該活動所承載的民族主義目的，部分則來自於這個活動的被限制性。前者如 KWO 所編織的克倫傳統服飾，或其他 K 組織爲了某個工作坊而製作的 T-shirt 等；後者則是難民營內人道物資的發放。

KWO 在其所製作的服飾上綁有一個標籤，說明 KWO 製作這些產品的原因，以讓購買者知道，他們購買的不是一件克倫服裝，而是一個民族流離失所的故事與對回歸故土的期待。透過購買這個行爲，KWO 可以將克倫族的故事告知世人。另外，由於難民們被圈在難民營內，因此，當難民們自己購買這些產品時，等於透過購買這個行爲，讓他們的故事不斷地在難民營內流通。

此外，各個 K 組織會爲了某個工作坊而製作 T-shirts。在 T-shirts 上，他們會印上一些代表工作坊主題的標語。通常來說，這些標語都與民族主義有關。雖然只有參與工作坊者才會被分送 T-shirts，但沒有參與者，也可以購買。難民們不僅在工作坊期間穿著這種 T-shirts，也會在日常生活中穿著。當這些 T-shirts 從工作坊跨越大門進入日常生活領域中，代表工作坊的標語也隨之進入日常生活中。於是，這些 T-shirts 成爲沒有時間與地點限制的活動性媒介，宣揚工作坊的民族主義理念

難民營內人道物資的發放，是由 INGO 與 KRC 合作處理。以發放米糧爲例，TBBC 將米糧運往難民營，KRC 則依照各區的家戶數，將米糧發送下去。每一次的發送物資，都再次讓難民了解：我們被圈在難民營，沒辦法外出，沒辦法工作，只能靠外界援助，從而產生了一體感。

(2) 社會-文化性活動：可分爲組織性的與自發性的

A 組織性活動

難民營內有許多的 K 組織。這些組織每年都會舉辦許多工作坊。因爲泰國 MOI 禁止難民在營內進行任何政治性活動，所以，這些工作坊通常以人道服務的方案訓練爲名，例如方案寫作工作坊（Proposal Writing Workshop）。不過，因爲這些工作坊的目的都在培養年輕一輩的人才，累積年輕人的相關既能與知識，以讓他們成爲日後民族主義運動的中堅，所以，這類工作坊是典型具有民族主義意識的工作坊。

除了工作坊之外，在組織性活動中，民族主義符號被經常性地使用，以型塑民族歸屬感，動員民族忠誠。民族主義符號可細分爲現代標語及傳統圖騰兩類。前者使用於幾種情形：首先，K 組織爲舉辦工作坊，會製作 T-shirts，在這些衣服上，他們會印上代表該組織或該工作坊目的之標語。其次，在各級學校結業證書上，會印有代表民族主義的標語，例如，在 Energy Study Program (ESP) 這個學校的結業證書中，就印有「no vision, no nation」。第三，在節慶活動中，學生會表演傳統的 Don Dance，在表演過程中，他們會排列代表民族主義的文字，例如，Freedom, Kawhtoolei 等。

除了現代性標語，傳統圖騰也在各活動中被大量使用。這些圖騰包括克倫旗、克倫鼓與克倫角等。其中，第一項屬於政治性符號，後兩項則屬於文化性符號。只是，對克倫難民來說，文化與政治之間並無明顯界線。在流離失所的狀態下，所有文化性符號都被賦予政治性意義。例如，克倫鼓的鼓皮上，雕有四隻青蛙。四隻青蛙一隻接一隻地排成圓形。這個形狀被難民們理解爲：統一。因爲克倫族經歷過數次嚴重分裂，其中，DKBA 的分裂，更讓 KNU 總部淪入 SPDC 之手。因此，對他們來說，統一是當務之急，因此，他們將任何形似統一的事務，都理解爲統一。

克倫旗是政治性圖騰，原則上被禁止公開懸掛，但卻有例外。按照泰國 MOI 的規定，難民們不能在營內公開懸掛或升揚克倫旗。如果爲了舉辦活動而需要懸掛或升揚克倫旗，需要申請。一般來說，MOI 不會拒絕此種申請。只是，在懸掛的同時，泰國國旗也必須懸掛，且高度必須高於克倫旗。有意思的是，被禁止公開懸掛，卻不意味被禁止公開使用。最常看到的使用方式，就是將克倫旗印製在 K 組織所製造的衣服上。

另外，K 組織也利用機會製作年曆，發送到各家各戶。幾乎每一戶人家都會有兩到三幅 K 組織的年曆。在年曆上，除了有這些民族主義符號外，還有 K 組織寫來鼓勵人心的口號等。更常見的是，這些年曆會擺上 K 組織幹部的照片。除了務實性的使用功能外，這些年曆更重要的功能是，K 組織透過年曆的發放，進入難民的日常生活之中，讓難民知道，他們不孤單，他們沒有被遺棄，K 組織與他們在一起。

除了上述的民族主義符號，另一個更爲重要的，也更具有動員效果的，是具有政治意義的 narrative。

在難民營內，不論是學校畢業典禮開始前學生代表或校長的演講、家庭聚會前的祝禱、重大節日民族主義領導人的致詞，或是基督教會的彌撒或其他活

動開始前的致詞等，幾乎沒有例外，都會提及克倫族的歷史、Saw Ba U Gyi 四個原則、祝福領導人身體健康以帶領族人回到家園，或要大家即使再安置到第三國，也不要忘記自己的家鄉。因此，這些活動前的演講、致詞、祝禱等，似乎成爲一種 passage。每一個活動都要有。沒有，就像一個功能不完備的活動。這種「必要性」，讓這些 passage 成爲一種儀式化的 plot，這種 plot 內在於這些典禮活動之中。當這個 passage 成爲儀式化的 plot 後，這些典禮活動，就成爲塑造難民的民族歸屬之最佳工具。平日的難民生活：看不到未來，重度依賴外界援助、不能自由離開難民營等，都會消磨難民的民族熱。但通過此 passage，難民的民族主義熱情被重新喚醒。

B 自發性活動

自發性活動表現於家庭聚會自行收看克倫革命運動的 DVD，以及樂團創作民族主義歌曲等。

這些實踐，可能彼此沒有相關性，就像存在於不同地點，不同時間上，各自獨立的節結 (node)。可是，因爲這些節結的符號性意義都與流離失所及被圈在難民營的經驗，以及未被實現的政治期盼有關，加上這些符號所代表的意義，透過不間斷的日常性實踐，而被不斷地傳播、重述，從而產生一個「同時性」。同時性，不是指在特定時間內，一群人同時在做一件相同或不相同的事情。而是說，在一個時間內，很多人在進行的事情，或許不同，卻同時承載、傳遞與重述這個日常實踐中所具有的符號性意義；由於此符號性意義與民族主義有關，因而將民族主義的政治期盼與動員延續下去。

2 負面地界定緬甸政府來正當化自己的行動

如同 Margaret Moore 所言，民族主義運動都會將他們民族自決的正當性與政府的壓迫扣連，以藉由否定政府的正當性，來正當化自己的行動。在克倫難民營中，他們是透過建立集體性的社會記憶（social memory）來正當化自己的行動。在克倫族用以正當化自身民族主義運動的社會記憶中，除了我們慣常看到的歷史性記憶（historical memory）與自傳性記憶（autobiography memory）外，尚有同族性記憶（cognate memory）。

(1) 歷史性記憶

在 KNU 的宣傳小冊子中，他們自己將自己的民族運動視爲正義的運動。這種立場變成克倫教育部（Karen Education Department, KED）在編輯歷史教材時的方針。另外，由於編輯歷史教材的人，多數是曾經參與過革命戰爭的人，他們自身的經驗也會影響到他們對歷史教材的編寫。於是，他們寫出來的教材，

就成爲單一觀點的教材。單方面強調緬甸政府對克倫族的壓迫，卻不提克倫族軍人也曾犯下的人權侵害事件。雖然 KED 的教材編寫，不是獨立完成，而是與 INGO 合作，例如 ZOA，一個來自荷蘭的 NGO。可是，作爲 KNU 的下屬單位，KED 必須遵守 KNU 的政策。此外，在「尊重主體性」的前提下，INGO 也不會過度介入 KED 的教材編寫之立場。

其實，單一觀點的歷史性記憶，不獨出現於泰緬邊境。歷史，一直是由有權力的人來進行詮釋。單一觀點的歷史性記憶，可以在任何地方看到。只是，存在於克倫難民之間的單一觀點歷史性記憶，卻讓克倫難民產生一種掠奪性的民族意識，而存在於緬族掠奪性的民族意識卻是克倫族起兵反抗的原因之一。例如，友人喝醉後，常常喊著要殺光 Burmese。在他的概念中，Burmese 等於 Burman 等於軍事政權。

(2) 自傳性記憶(autobiographical memory)

自傳性記憶是以一種「故事」的形式出現。逃難與艱困的生活，在難民之間，一直是兩個主要的敘事主題。這些故事，會透過兩種方式，而將自己的故事變成我們的故事。

A 關鍵性的事件

每一次的關鍵性事件，會讓難民們將曾經發生在自己身上的經驗、自己曾聽過的事情，與這個關鍵性事件連結。例如，2007 年 1 月，第七作戰旅指揮官 Hting Maw 決定接受 SPDC 的建議，將其控制區發展爲特別經濟區。他的決定，被 KNU 視爲叛離革命。他曾數次受傷，卻仍堅守革命。因此，被克倫難民當成英雄。可是，他們的英雄卻在晚年叛離革命。Thing Maw 的決定讓難民們回憶歷史中曾發生過的分裂，並將這些事例連結起來，再次告訴自己相同的結論，即：緬甸政府很聰明，能夠利用各種方式分裂克倫族，以滅絕克倫族。

B 世代間的日常對話

老一輩的難民，爲了讓年輕一輩的難民，特別是在營裡出生的年輕人，仍能與故土有情感性的聯繫，會透過日常性對話，讓年輕人與克倫族的故土產生情感性的聯繫。

(3) 同族性記憶 (Cognate Memory)

同族性記憶，是讓難民們與 IDP 地區相連結的記憶。

A 生命作業 (Life homework)

難民生活在難民營內，不用擔心基本的生活問題，醫療、教育等問題，他們甚至不需要擔心安全問題。他們不用害怕是否會被緬甸軍人追趕，不用躲在

叢林中，隨時面對死亡與侵犯。可是，難民所不用擔心的事情，對 IDP 地區的克倫人來說，卻像是每天都在必須面對與完成的生命作業。老一輩的難民當然有相同的經驗，可是，他們現在生活在難民營內，這些經驗已經成爲過去的記憶，而不是當下必須完成的生命作業。在難民營出生的年輕人，更是連親身的經驗也沒有。

爲了讓難民們不要忘記 IDP 地區同胞正在面對的苦難，K 組織會定期派工作小組前往 IDP 地區，拍攝當地的生活狀態，紀錄 IDP 同胞所遭受的人權迫害。然後，他們會在難民營內播放這些 DVD 或 VCD，以讓難民們知道 IDP 地區克倫族人的狀況，也希望用這種方式挑動難民們的情緒，重/塑民族歸屬意識，進而動員他們對民族主義的忠誠。

B 受難者地位 (Victim Status)

透過這幾種方式進行的社會記憶，他們建立起「克倫族的受難地位」。這個記憶不斷地提醒克倫難民們，如果不是緬甸軍事政權不願接受克倫族的政治訴求，他們就不用革命；如果不是緬甸軍事政權的殘酷的四斷策略，他們就不會流離失所；如果不是緬甸軍事政權的獨裁，他們就不會飄蕩在泰緬邊境。利用這種方式，他們正當化自己的民族主義運動。

3 Symbolically restored to homeland

總的來說，難民們透過這些日常性社會實踐，就如同 Anthony Smith 所說，符號性地與其家鄉連結。也符號性地回到他們的家園，成爲故土的一份子。

九 結論

民族主義應該都會有一個政治上的願景。此願景被民族成員視爲一個他們所期待的理想國度。在這個理想國度中，他們相信，他們可以按照自己的意願發展自己的政治、經濟與文化。自緬甸獨立後，克倫族就在追求一個建立於民族自決原則之上的 Karen state。1956 年，KNU 第二屆全國會議將 Karen state 定名爲 Kawthoolei。何謂 Kawthoolei？按照克倫族老人的說法，Kawthoolei 是一個沒有暴虐的世界，在那個世界中，有一種黑色的美麗花朵自由地盛開著，沒有人會踐踏這種花朵。對照前面所介紹的 Y'wa 神話，我們幾乎可以認爲，克倫民族主義所追求的 state，就是他們心中的理想國：Kawthoolei，而他們則是那些美麗的花朵。

可是，怎麼實現這個理想國度？在想像的世界中，理想國可以不用透過任何現實的政治制度來實現。可是，在現實世界中，任何理想國度都需要靠政治

制度來落實。如同民族主義研究者所說，現代世界是一個由主權國家所構成的世界。因此，任何的理想國度，如果不是獨立的民族國家，就是某個國家的某個邦。那麼，對克倫難民來說，他們所期待的 Kawthoolie 到底爲何？從歷史上來看，他們有時候追求的是成爲大英國協治下的一個邦國，有時候他們要獨立，有時候又追求民主緬甸聯邦。這個理想國，如何在政治層面上落實，並不一致。

所幸，經過 60 多年的內戰，以及 20 多年的流離失所，KNU 確定了實現理想國的方式。按照 KNU 的政策，他們所追求的是民主的緬甸聯邦。可是，這項政策，並沒有被所有人接受，也不是所有人都知道 KNU 的當前政策是追求聯邦。即使如此，多數人仍然支持 KNU。雖然很多 KNU 領導人與草根群眾，決定到第三國，可是，難民們仍然願意支持 KNU。原因在於，KNU 是從克倫革命發生至今，唯一一個持續帶領克倫族對抗緬甸軍事政權的組織。他們相信 KNU 終有一天可以帶他們回到自己的家園。他們都在等待這一天的到來。即使安置到第三國的人，也都認爲，他們總有一天會回到自己的 Kawthoolei。雖然沒有人知道這一天什麼時候會到。

這樣的信念，來自何處？是來自於一個詮釋並理解過去歷史、當前苦難與未來希望的信念體系。這個信念體系，一方面是根源於他們的神話中對於理想國的預示，一方面則是構築在日常性的生活實踐之上。於是，民族主義，就克倫難民來說，不是某些理論家所說的國家的擘畫，而是一些與日常生活及制度安排盤根錯節在一起的社會實踐，基於對追求理想國的堅持，透過這些實踐，再/塑造民族歸屬感，動員群眾的情感，以支持民族主義運動。