

APPENDIX I

SOME DOCUMENTED CASES OF LINGUISTIC CHANGE

1. *Jinghpaw become Shan*

The first European to visit Hkamti Long (Putao) was Wilcox in 1828. He recorded of the Shan area that 'the mass of the labouring population is of the Kha-phok tribe whose dialect is closely allied to the Singpho'. Other non-Shan dependents of the Shans were the Kha-lang with villages on the Nam Lang 'whose language more nearly resembles that of the Singpho than that of the Nogmung tribe who are on the Nam Tisang'.

The prefix 'Kha-' in Hkamti Shan denotes a serf: 'phok' (*hpaw*) is a term applied by Maru and Hkamti Shans to Jinghpaw. Kha-phok therefore means 'serf Jinghpaw'.

In 1925 Barnard described Hkamti Long as he knew it. He noted that the Shan population included a substantial serf class (*lok hka*) divided into various 'tribes' which he supposes to have been of Tibetan origin, but he remarks: 'I have not been able to obtain even a small vocabulary of their language as they have been absorbed into the Shans whose language and dress they have completely adopted.' It would appear that Barnard's *lok hka* must include the descendants of Wilcox's Kha-phok and Kha-lang. The inhabitants of 'the villages on the Nam Lang' now speak Shan; but the Jinghpaw-speaking population on the other side of the Mali Hka—who call themselves Duleng—claim to be related to these 'Shans' of the Nam Lang.

Of the Nogmung, Barnard recorded: '(They) are gradually being absorbed by the Shans . . . they have adopted the Shan dress and nearly all speak Shan in their houses.' Some Nogmung, however, still spoke a variety of Jinghpaw in 1925. They called themselves *Sam-hpyen*, which is Jinghpaw for 'Shan soldier' and presumably they at one time had the status of mercenaries to their Shan overlords.

Feudal obligations of this kind were broken down during the British occupation and in 1940 a Jinghpaw school was started

at Nogmung. The tendency for the local inhabitants to become Shan may therefore have gone into reverse. The Nogmung are probably becoming Jinghpaw again.

References

Wilcox (1832). Barnard (1925); (1934).

2. *Assamese become Jinghpaw*

During the period 1824–1837, in which the British first made contact with the Jinghpaw of Assam and the Hukawng Valley, there are repeated references to the fact that the Jinghpaw enslaved Assamese in large numbers and traded them back into Burma through the Hukawng. Some of these slaves were traded onwards to Shans and Burmese, but some were retained in the Hukawng. It is quite clear that in 1835 when Bayfield and Hannay visited the Hukawng these Assamese slaves were still palpably Assamese.

Throughout the 19th century the descendants of these Assamese slaves continued to play a vital part in the economy of the Hukawng. They remained 'slaves' but became Jinghpaw in speech and custom. In 1925 the slaves were compulsorily released. There were found to be 3,466 slaves out of an estimated total population of 7,903. Of the slaves released, all of whom spoke Jinghpaw, 2,051 claimed to be of Assamese origin.

References

Selection of Papers (1873), especially Bayfield and Hannay. Barnard (1930).

3. *Nagas become Jinghpaw*

The following is a quotation from Dewar (1931):

'The Pangaw and Pyengoo Nagas, who reside in the hills lying north and east of the confluence of the Namhpuk and Tanai rivers, were the first to leave their ancestral homes at the headwaters of the Namhpuk. They migrated about ten generations ago, occupying their present sites with the permission of the Kachins to whom, according to the Kachin tribal custom, they gave presents. The Pangaw Nagas have intermarried freely with Kachins and, but for a few households

who in appearance, dress, habits and customs are practically the same as Kachins, may at the present day be considered an extinct clan. The Pyengoo Nagas, chiefly the men, have almost entirely adopted the Kachin dress, but they still observe many of the habits and customs of their ancestors. The validity of their long residence in their present hills is amply proved by their appearance, the familiarity with which they speak the Kachin dialect, and the statements of their neighbours in the Dalu Valley, the Shans and Kachins.'

Of the Pyengoo Nagas mentioned here, their overlord, the Kachin chief of the Lajawn tract, says: 'We have been their overlords for the past four or five generations. I do not know how we became their overlords. It was during the time of the Mogaung Wa (i.e. the Shan *saohpa* of Mogaung) when the Hawseng (Shans) ruled all the country.'

The other ethnographic details recorded by Dewar concerning the 'Pyengoo Nagas' are consistent with the view that these people are now culturally indistinguishable from other Kachins.

References

Dewar (1931), pp. 268, 277, 278-9.

4. *Shans become Jinghpaw. Assamese become Jinghpaw and then becoming Shan*

When the British took Assam in 1824 there were a number of distinct Shan groups living in the general area of Sadiya and Ledo. Among these were a group referred to by contemporary writers as *Phakeal*. It was then reported that when Mogaung was sacked by the Burmese King Alompra (Alaungpaya), in the mid-18th century, a Mogaung prince, one Chow Ta Khuen Meng, had founded a Shan colony on the Tarung river at the west of the Hukawng Valley. It is probable that this was close to the modern Ningbyen. While there, these 'Phakeal' Shans appear to have formed an alliance with Jinghpaw of the Tsasen clan. Later a sub-colony was established in Assam. The Phakeal in Assam lived at Moongkong Tat (i.e. Mōng Kawng Tat), their Jinghpaw allies close by at Ningroo (Ningru). Both groups there acquired large numbers of Assamese serfs.

The British policy in Assam from 1824 onwards was to

release slaves held by Shan and Jinghpaw chiefs. To escape this 'persecution' most of the 'Phakeal' Shans and their Jinghpaw allies returned to their former sites on the Tarung river in the Hukawng Valley. This time the Shans put themselves in alliance with the Jinghpaw chief of Ningbyen. Some remained at Ningbyen while others went south down the Chindwin and either founded or usurped control of the Shan state now known as Sinkaling Hkamti. They appear to have taken some of their Assamese serfs with them. Some of the descendants of these Assamese serfs, intermarried perhaps with their Kachin and Shan masters, fetched up, eventually, at the village of Maukkalauk (Chindwin river, lat. 25° 35'). They have lately been described as follows: 'The people of this village now talk Kachin, wear Kachin dress and are called Kachins. They have learnt Shan, however, and if the present processes continue will no doubt in time 'become' Shans and eventually Burmans. When this has happened someone may perhaps discover that they are of Shan origin. Yet they are not even Kachins. Their headmen says they came from the neighbourhood of Ningbyen . . . where they had settled for a time and adopted the Kachin language and customs, but they had arrived there when his father was a little boy from Assam where they wore white clothes and spoke some language they have entirely forgotten.' (Grant Brown).

Here we seem to have a case of Assamese slaves becoming Jinghpaw and then becoming Shan.

At Ningbyen there is still a population described as Shan. They are subordinate to the Ningbyen Jinghpaw chief. Presumably they regard themselves as being the descendants of the 'Phakeal' Shans. They speak Jinghpaw.

References

Hannay (1847), ii. Kawlu Ma Nawng (1942), pp. 31, 32, 42. Grant Brown (1925), Chapter 2. Various items in the early literature, such as that given in *Selections of Papers* (1873) and Butler (1846), add details to this story.

5. *Miscellaneous 'Kachins' become Jinghpaw*

In 1825 the Assam 'Singpho' comprised two main groups. One of these, consisting of Tsasen-Jinghpaw, was subordinate to an Assamese district ruler known as the Muttuck Gohain;

the other was a more miscellaneous group subordinate to the Hkamti Shan ruler of Sadiya. Many of these 'Singpho' had apparently arrived in Assam along with their Shan overlords direct from the Putao area to the east (Map 4). We have contemporary evidence that the language they spoke was not comprehensible to the other Singpho. Name lists of Singpho village headmen from this Sadiya-Tenga Pani area suggest that the group included Lisu, Northern Nung and Duleng families.

As a result of the British occupation of Assam and the later development of the Assam tea industry the Hkamti Shans of Assam lost both their political status and their lands. The survivors live mixed up with the surviving Singpho. The principal language of the joint community appears to be Tsasen-Jinghpaw. All Assam 'Singpho' now speak the same language.

References

The evidence is very scattered but see especially: Neufville (1828), Wilcox (1832), Butler (1846), *Selection of Papers* (1873), Michell (1883), Mackenzie (1884), Needham (1889), Kawlu Ma Nawng (1942).

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