

## Chapter I

### Introduction :

the theoretical approach

to trans-state ethnic nationalism

The Mon people are one of the ethnic minorities that constitute Myanmar. Myanmar's Mons who have perceived themselves to foster nationhood but have been marginalized under the oppressive military regime that has dominated the country's political life for over 40 years. Each year a sizable number of the Mon people flee from Burmese military operations and Karen shelling into Thailand for asylum. From Thailand's viewpoint, Mon people are different from other ethnic groups in Burma in the sense that the Mon people with their renowned literature and high culture, had established close relations with Siam until the invasion of the Mon Kingdom by the British in the nineteenth century. Even today there remain Mon diasporas on Thai soil as the result of centuries-old close relations with Siam.

Since independence, the Mon minority, like other ethnic minorities in Burma, has aspired to a certain degree of self-determination but the Mon nationalist movement and their demand for

autonomy have been suppressed by military regime. Throughout forty years of fierce struggle for autonomy, the Mon nationalists have founded several military bases along the Tenassarim coastline in the southern part of Burma and lay claim to an unbroken line of nationhood stretching from the Medieval period, hence nationalism. The question as to whether the Mon people have a trans-state ethnic nation or not, has been raised, criticized and argued by various groups involved in Southeast Asian Studies. Until recently an image of Mon trans-state nationalism has surfaced as a salient feature of Mon migration and diasporas when unprecedented numbers of Mon people who fled into Thailand for asylum acted as a catalyst for a resurgence of the nationalistic sentiment which lingers in and around Thailand's major Mon diasporas. Moreover, after the release of Thailand's the best-known film of the year 1993 entitled "Salween", describing the tragic life of ethnic nationals living across the Salween river, millions of Asians, particularly Thai people, came to the realization that they are living amidst the constant movement of a sizable number of alien ethnic nationals who move back and forth across international borders, as in Medieval times.

Some questions remain to how the international community could have prevented the tragic scenario whereby

millions of Myanmar's ethnic nationals have been marginalized by the Central government over 40 years of the nation-building process and as to how ASEAN (The Association of Southeast Asian Nations) in coordination with the U.N can put pressure on the Central Government of Burma in an effective way. An expectation also exists, amongst Asian peoples that peace and democracy can be built at the heart of Burmese nation-building and that Myanmar as well as Indochina will be the next example of economic miracles in the Far East. The Mon people, like many other trans-state ethnic nationals such as the Kurds, the Tibetans and so on should be studied not merely as a category of refugees, but as an independent collectivity or as a nation whose population can be seen in a variety of dynamic forms; refugees, diaspora populations, immigrants, the internally displaced, refugee-warriors, and so on. This model of independent collectivity or nation should be adopted precisely because most of these categories are transitory and being subject to any changes in the regional environment, we are not readily made aware of what has kept them subject to these transitory categories even after centuries of struggle. It is the long-established sentiment of ethnic nationalism as a major cause of those myriad categories, with several related problems as consequences of their presence, that betrays the deep-seated man-made fragmentation of Myanmar.

### Purpose of the study

Most of the Western traditional theories on nationalism are based on limited case investigation. On the surface these theories appear to be logically ordered but in fact they are not universally applicable or even empirically testable (Norbu 1992: 10) . This work seeks to come to grips with certain aspects of nationalism that can be assessed in an empirical and scientific way rather than in a Western normative way. The existence of nationalism can be proved in a scientific way through the study of the tangible aspects of media, as the facilitating structure for social communication, and of message as the idea or essence of nationalism.

The research will deal with the study of the existing network of the nationalist movement , with regard to media and of message , upon which the Mon nationalists have drawn to maintain their social cohesion as well as to propagandize their ideology among their members. The messages themselves will be scrutinized to capture the elements which constitute the essence of trans-state ethnic Mon nationalism. In the research , a focus will be placed upon the media and message under the control of Mon nationalists who have lived their lives in various transitory forms; refugees, the internally displaced, refugee,-

warriors, diaspora populations and the like. It is only in these two dimensions of media and message that we can come to grips with the structural network of the nationalists and thereby we can prove , in a more empirical way; the existence of transborder ethnic nationalism.

The subject-matter to be addressed can be separated into four major points:

1. Which modes of mass media , formal education, telecommunications, social communication , the Mon nationalists adopt in the maintenance of their social or ethnic cohesion? (This section will be based largely on the outcome of field research: interview and observation)

2. Which theme of ideas have been emphasized as the epistemology of their nationalism. (This will be based on field research)

3. What factors, political, economic, ideological and social, have influenced Mon leaders in their decision to make use of certain kinds of media: journal, radio broadcast, facsimile, leaflet and so on. (This will be based on the interpretation of relevant literature and the outcome of library research on the four impact areas, as defined in the conceptual framework. )

4. How has the host country , in this case Thailand , has responded to the presence of ethnic Mons and their nationalism on her soil.

My argument is that , to comprehend point 3, it is necessary to draw upon certain press reports along with conceptual tools , (as will be explained in the section entitled literature review), to cast light upon the structural networks and the varied roles that Mon nationalists have assumed. These two techniques are necessary precisely because the results of the field work have limited potency to illustrate the complex features of the trans-state context in which certain modes of media and themes of ideas have been adopted by the nationalists to maintain their ethnic cohesion and sense of nationalism. In short, this work strives to answer the following questions :

1. What is the trans-state nature of ethnic Mon nationals ?
2. What are the impacts which the host country and the country of origin have exerted upon the Mons in their dealings with the ethnic minorities in their respective territories ?

### Hypothesis

Trans-state ethnic nationalism cannot operate in the absence of a trans-border network of mass communication. This is the most significant mechanism by which nationalistic messages, as the essence of discourse, both written and spoken, have been diffused and transmitted over generations within cultural boundaries , whether traditional or modern. These trans-border

networks and nationalistic messages are fruitfully used for political, economic, ideological and social ends.

### Literature Review

The theoretical focus is placed mainly upon those individuals who should be identified as trans-state ethnic nationals and their consciousness of holding the sentiment of ethnic nationalism. The term trans-state ethnic national is based solely on their conspicuous behavior ; engaging in trans-state network operations in such areas as mass communication and social mediation, as will be illustrated later. As observed, in response to the changing trans-state environment , these trans-state ethnic nationals have frequently appeared in various roles such as refugees, the internally displaced, diaspora populations, refugee-warriors and so forth. All of these categorizations are justifiably impermanent and some can be considered purely as transitory roles. The notion of trans-state ethnic nationalism can be viewed as the virtual root cause of the cyclical continuum of the fluid problems of refugee exodus, armed conflict, social revolution and international conflict ,etc.

This section proceeds from the logical question , as to why the conceptual shift from the concept of refugee-warrior communities, provided by Zolberg , to the new theoretical vistas of trans-state ethnic

nationalism , must be created , and thereby , the relations between the cause and consequence as well as their implications can be traced.

Zolberg concludes that the refugee-warrior community is not a passive group of dependent refugees but represents a highly conscious refugee community with a political leadership structure and armed sections engaged in warfare for political objectives, be it to recapture the homeland, change the regime, or secure a separate state (Zolberg : 1989)

He also suggests that in recognition of their nature , as being both dependent objects and actor subjects in their own right, we call them refugee-warrior communities. To exist, they require sanctuary in a neighboring country which permits military operations from its territory. Without a friendly base, the community in exile can exist only as refugees. This pattern can be found in various subsequent movements. notably the Khmer, the Afghans, the Eritreans and the Namibians.

I agree with the validity of this concept in that it helps to explain some negative aspects of the nature of those ethnic minorities moving back and forth across the Thai-Burmese border. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that in the real situation, there is no dividing line between the purely passive refugee and the refugee-warrior. It is



wise to note that in some cases refugees are deemed as a relatively passive group , not because they are naturally passive or peace-oriented , but largely because their number are relatively few and therefore they fail to develop an armed force of their own to challenge their more powerful adversary in the quest for the recovery of their homeland.

In some aspects of their activities, various larger groups of refugees seem to have formed their refugee-warrior communities not because they desire the status of being warriors or pure actor-subjects in their own right but largely because, as I observed, they have perceived that their expectation is either somewhat unfulfilled or needs to be kept alive and their homeland is still their final expectation. It should be noted that a transformation of refugees into warriors will continue to exist as long as there is neither mutual compromise nor absolute victory on either side of conflict. This can be seen in Kampuchea, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Kurdistan and the former Yugoslavias. In short, refugee problems can be traced through the explanation of their root cause and their consequences seen through their proper historical development and hardly the other way around.

As stated earlier, this research is directed at those who wish to perpetuate the cause of nationalism , trans-state ethnic nationals as a

term to cover the consequential categories; refugees, the internally displaced, refugee-warriors, diaspora populations, supporters and the like. It should be remarked that these categories can be traced to a common cause but possibly with different interests. Maintaining the sense of nationalism both euphoric and aggressive, has unavoidably propelled nationalists to struggle for the recovery of their homeland whereby some of them have consciously passed through these transitory categories. These transitory categories will certainly surface in the international arena as long as they, nationalists, still keep their sense of trans-state ethnic nationalism alive.

Ethnic nationalism can be defined as politicized social consciousness centered on an ethnic identity born out of shared commonalities seeking to achieve unity, autonomy and group interest by mobilizing ethnic-based constituencies. Central to this definition is the notion of ethnic identities which may be defined as an aggregation of ethnic variables such as race, culture, language, society, etc, on which the ethnic group differentiates itself from generalized others (Norbu: 1993)

Dawa Norbu argues further that ethnic nationalism is not fundamentally different from ideal type nationalism; it exhibits most of the essential characteristics of nationalism. The only significant difference is that ethnic nationalism is retarded, small scale and limited in

its goals, in comparison with large scale nationalism for obvious reasons. These differences spring not from the logic of ethnic nationalism but from the specific historical situation in which it finds itself, that is, the multinational state whose mechanisms are monopolized by the dominant ethnic groups. Had it not been for this fact, ethnic nationalism would have progressed logically and necessarily along the various stages of nationalism. Apart from such difference, both large scale nationalism and ethnic nationalism are rooted in ethnicity or what is called traditional components.

It should be noted that trans-state ethnic nationalism differs from ethnic nationalism only in the sense that it has spread across the trans-state areas of the international borders , largely because the imposition of political boundaries does not respect the virtual ethnic map. Therefore, the picture in which a number of ethnic national minorities throughout the world have struggled to redraw the international boundaries of political maps they deem unfair, is becoming a defining feature of the post cold war period. The structure of transborder ethnic nationalism has been facilitated more and more due to the following factors.

1. The global expansion of political economy.

All parts of the world today are experiencing the irresistible and limitless economic imperative that has stimulated rapid expansion across the boundaries of all political units in such various areas as trade, labor, production and capital. These phenomena challenge the traditional notion of economically self-sufficient zones. This can also be explained in connection with the evolution of global capitalism. Zolberg points out that it was only in the latter part of the twentieth century that all political and economic structures became truly global in scope. The remaining economically self-sufficient zones were incorporated into a global network of trade and production organized along capitalist lines and subject to all of the processes engendered by these activities (Zolberg: 1988). In the context of Southeast Asia, a number of ethnic national minorities who have for centuries organized their own transborder networks must have had a very stable financial source based upon those transborder networks seen in forms of military liaisons, licit trade as well as smuggling, otherwise these nationalist movements could not have sustained themselves for such a very long period of time, particularly in the area of arms purchases. The financial sources of these trans-state nationalist movements are unlikely to dry up as long as there is continued demand for logs, gems, fancygoods , etc., in neighboring countries. This is particularly relevant to Thailand, and China, which link themselves not only to regional economic centers but also to the larger world markets in

a period when Southeast Asia is generally considered to be the fastest growing financial and export-oriented market in the world.

## **2. The increasing power of mass media**

Because of the rapid expansion of global telecommunication and transportation, from the center into developing societies, all parts of the globe seem to be linked into a single network. The uncontrollably growing intensity of all types of mass communication has frontally challenged the sacrosanctity of state sovereignty and her borders. It should be noted that a number of international borders were constructed based on political expediency during and after the period of colonialism. These newly constructed international borders were usually superimposed on the ethnic map, leading to the division of pre-colonial ethnic nations into fragments , against their will. Many ethnic minorities have perceived these international borders as legally constructed but socioculturally unrealistic artifacts. Moreover, the state not only fails to control the growing flow of telecommunications across its borders but also can not govern human movement simply because most international borders are porous. This can be seen in the case of Burma-Thailand where millions of people in ethnic minorities have full access to the world situation in regard to their movements through all kinds of broadcasting media , such as television, radio, facsimile. Weiner argues

that it is these porous borders that enable members of an ethnic group divided by an international boundary to move freely back and forth and to maintain their social cohesion (Weiner: 1985)

As explained earlier, both trans-state and non-trans-state ethnic nationalism are based on the same traditional components, which nationalists specifically emphasize to perpetuate their ethnic nationalist communities. These traditional components are basically composed of system-wide symbol, language, and pan-ethnic identity. These three components can be discerned in everyday social communication and mass mobilization through the examination of the structure of the nationalistic data base. But it should be remembered that it is not only through these three broad traditional components that nationalism is perpetuated, but also through a number of modern or universal ideas which the nationalists use to promote their goals, these appeared in several forms of message. These ideas can be transmitted through all modes of social media, social learning, telecommunication and formal education. Norbu emphasized that we should not, in practice, conceive mass communication as neutral because one can input any information one likes. There are however, serious limits beyond which intended messages may lose their appeal, relevance and even validity. Such limitations to new messages include the influences of religion, folklore, literature, common myth and symbols.

Norbu argues that any material or message pertaining to ethnic identity and, of course, ethnic nationalism is transmitted much more easily than state nationalism through the available channels of social communication. We must add that it is not only the traditional components of state nationalism which are easily transmitted through the channels of mass communication. Moreover, ethnic nationalism tend to pick up certain new ideas and egalitarian values, freedom, equality and fraternity that enhance and reinforce ethnic nationalism, and substantiate and support nationalist claims to ethnic nationhood (Norbu: 1992)

We can conclude that the epistemology of any transborder ethnic nationalism is made up of the following components and ideas.

**A. components**

1. system-wide symbols and cultural values
2. pan-ethnic identities
3. language

**B. other ideas or themes of ideas**

1. freedom
2. equality
3. fraternity
4. democracy
5. historical territory or homeland
6. common destiny
7. common genealogy

8. common ancestry
9. and other ideas depending upon the context of a study case

## **Diasporas**

Diasporas can be viewed as one form of trans-state ethnic nation. Gabriel Sheffer concludes that ethnic diasporas are created either by voluntary migration or as a result of expulsion from the homeland and settlement in one or more host countries. In host countries, the diasporas remain as a minority group. In their host countries diasporas preserve their ethnic, or ethnic religious identity and communal solidarity. This solidarity serves as the basis for maintaining and promoting constant contact among activist elements in the diasporas. These contacts have political, economic, social and cultural significance for the Diaspora, populations, their host countries and homelands. This is also the basis for the organized actions of the diasporas. Organized diasporas deal with various aspects of their cultural, social, economic and political needs in a way that either complements or conflicts with the activities of the host government. The emergence of diaspora organizations provides the potential for conflicting pressures and problems. In order to avoid undesirable conflicts with the norms or law established by the dominant group in their host countries, At certain periods, however, real or alleged



dual loyalties which are generated by the dual authority patterns may create tension between elements in the host country and the diaspora. And most importantly, the capability of diasporas to mobilize resources in order to promote or defend the interests of their homelands within their host countries, will result in the formation of either conflictual or cooperative triadic networks involving homeland, diaspora and host country. These triadic relations are now an integral part of international politics and influence the behavior of all parties involved. (Gabriel Sheffer : 1986)

Myron Weiner also explains the role of diasporas in international relations. He argues that diasporas are not necessarily political good news for the government of a sending country; nor are they necessarily good news for the home country or the foreign affairs of the government of the country in which they reside. They have become a political factor that governments of both sending and receiving countries need to take into account. (Myron Weiner : 1985)

Weiner provides certain concrete examples concerning the activities of diaspora populations. He asserts that these people invariably seek to recreate their own religious, social, and cultural institutions and, where permitted, they often develop their own media, schools for their children, religious institutions, and political organizations. The initial concern of migrants is often to preserve their cultural heritage as well as

transmit that heritage to their children. They protect the interests of the community. Community members may turn to their country of origin to assist them in both objectives; and in turn, they may attempt to influence the policies of their host country toward their country of origin (Myron Weiner: 1985)

Ernest Gellner delineates the behavior pattern of social adaptation among diaspora populations. He argues that under conditions of modernization the erstwhile specialized minority group loses its disabilities, but also alas its monopoly and protection. Previous training and orientation often make the group perform much more successfully than its rivals in the new economic free-for-all. At the same time the group background also contains a tradition political importance which had to be surrendered along with the communal right of self defense. To enter the profession or workplace , they had to made themselves politically and militarily impotent , so as to be allowed to handle tools which, in the wrong hands, could prove powerful and dangerous. Some economically brilliant groups of this kind have behind them a long tradition of dispersal, urbanization and minority status (Ernest Gellner : 1993)

Scheffer cites several cases of diasporas in terms of their impacts or influence in the political, ideological social arenas. She raises the case of the Irish community in the US which has become increasingly

involved in support for the IRA. She also reasons that Greeks in the US are engaged in a nationalist revival in their increased activities on behalf of their homeland; and finally, American Blacks who continue to show interest in African matters and especially in developments in South Africa. All these ethnic groups have intensified their pressure on US foreign policy makers. (Scheffer: 1986)

Esman studied the case of Chinese diasporas in Southeast Asia particularly in terms of their economic influence, upon both homeland and host societies. It should be noted however, that some elements of his analysis are neither up-to-date nor accurate. With regard to Chinese Diaspora in Southeast Asia, he suggests that many Chinese entrepreneurs operate through secretive trans-national economic networks of Byzantine complexity beyond the control of the individual states, but which have close links to Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, and shadowy connections with the People's Republic of China. It should be noted that these networks have now largely disappeared because all forms of foreign investment are regarded as positive rather than negative if they have their basis in areas of legitimate business.

Even though diasporas seems to be one form of trans-state ethnic nation with its population structured along the lines of dual loyalties, there is a tendency for diaspora populations to assimilate into the mainstream society of the host country,

particularly where there is no element of socio-cultural bias and discrimination.



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## **Conceptual Framework**

This conceptual framework is developed from the general ideas and definitions proposed by Sheffer, Weiner and Gellner. But it should be remembered that those general ideas and definitions were proposed on the basis of Western perceptions and some of the criticisms can not explain the present situation of Asian diaspora, particularly diaspora of the Mon and of the Chinese, with which most Western scholars are unfamiliar. Not until recently have some Western academics and journalists come to understand more deeply the role and certain features of diaspora in Southeast Asia. This new understanding is evinced by articles in a number of English language journals and magazines : the Times, the Sunday Telegraph, the Guardian, News Week, Time International and so on.

The Sunday Telegraph of August 22 1993, p. 19 : title :  
China's New Confidence ,

“With massive military defense cuts now coming on stream, many believe that a monumental shift in Asia's geo-political tectonic plates is under way. One key reason for that perception lies in the shifting role of the Chinese diasporas, once regarded by Peking as a capitalist opposition in exile. Today, those same expatriates are bankrolling the investment surge that has transformed the Motherland and

helped stave off communist collapse. When the People's Republic was in its infancy, rich, successful Chinese were stigmatized as ethnic as well as class traitors, making them objects of suspicion at home, and the targets of Peking's vituperative propaganda abroad. But in the past few years, Chinese tycoons from Southeast Asia, Hongkong, even Taiwan, have been greeted by the Communist leadership in Peking as if they were heads of state. Up to 80 percent of the \$180 billion of foreign money invested in China as of the end of last years is, in fact, Chinese money going home.

I herein develop the concept of diaspora with regard to social culture. In general, a diaspora operates dual major functions, so as to sustain its lifeline. First, in order to avoid the dissolution of their cultural distinctiveness and social bonds, the diaspora population maintains certain collective characteristics through their cultural boundaries which are composed of one or more nationalistic components, (see the literature review). The diaspora need to use all available channels : social opportunity , education, technology-based advantage and mass media, so as to perpetuate their cultural heritage. Even so some of their cultural elements have inevitably been led to the dustheap of history by the standard idiom-based civilization of their greater host society.

Secondly, the diaspora population has consciously or unconsciously developed certain new cultural forms, such as accent, belief, idiom, and professional identity out of the combination between their own culture and that of the host society. This can be seen in the cases of Mon, and Chinese diaspora in Thailand, and Indian, and Chinese diaspora in Malaysia. The reason behind their perception of their culture in a somewhat unbroken form lies in the availabilities of trans-state communication between the diaspora and the homeland.

### **Diaspora and its Impacts**

The complex features of diaspora's impacts can be broadly categorized into four triadic impacts produced and reflected in three major areas, namely, the diaspora, the host country, and the home country, for the purpose of analysis on the part of research. Some elements of the impact area concept are developed from studies by Scheffer (1986) and Weiner (1985) and some from the collected articles in journals and magazines, such as Time International, the Far Eastern Economic Review, The Economist, Le Monde and some up-to-date Thai published documents.

#### **1. Political Impact**

Diaspora members may turn to their homeland in facilitating or achieving their political objectives in their host country. The government of the home country may try to negotiate with the host country through diplomacy or otherwise financially and militarily support the Diaspora members a clandestine way. A situation which discomfits the host country's government. In some cases, the diaspora members may attempt to influence the policies of their host country towards their homeland, particularly in cases where they play significant economic and political roles.

## 2. Socio-cultural Impacts

Diaspora members seek to create their own religious, social and cultural institutions. This socio-culturally strong behavior pattern may pose a threat to their host country. In contrast, the discrimination against the culture of the diaspora community by the authorities or intolerant inhabitants of the host country may lead to socio-cultural conflict.

## 3. Ideological Impact

Diaspora members in some cases, propagandize ideas, thoughts or ideologies which seem contrary to the norm or law of the host country with regard to national ideological solidarity and unity.



Diaspora members are sometimes divided in their attitudes, political or social, towards their home country's government. This ideological divergence may lead to embarrassment for the host government in dealing with the home country in the area of international relations.

#### 4. Economic Impact

Diaspora members may co-operate with the home country's government, so as to promote international investment, trade and technology transfer. This may pose a threat to the host country's government, particularly when the home country is running sizable trade surpluses with the host country. In the case of Chinese diasporas in Southeast Asia, entrepreneurs in the diasporas have assisted the home country in developing key industrial bases as well as infra-structure through trans-state financial and technological transfer. It is also the case that some businessmen in the diasporas through their contacts, have assisted their non-ethnic business counterparts and the government of their host country by accelerating trans-state labor and financial flows from the home country.

#### Methods of Data Analysis

The unit of analysis is the political, economic, socio-cultural and ideological impacts produced and reflected among the three major areas : the diaspora, the home country and the host country.

The method of data analysis will proceed through the following stages:

1. To collect all the relevant materials on the subject from a variety of sources, such as journals, magazines, previous research works, The documented speeches of politicians, data recorded from interviews and at seminars.

2. To order this collected data chronologically.

3. To analyze the chronologically ordered data in terms of causation of impacts and then find out what can be considered as pattern, definable as repeated causative sequences. At stage 3, we can extrapolate the patterns of impact causation from these repeated events.

4. To organize the analyzed data accompanied by its patterned impacts as well as and their causation into the three major interrelated areas where impacts are produced and reflected namely, the diaspora, the home country and the host country.

5. To complete any imprecise sequences of the impact evolution among those three major areas by drawing upon the results of the field work. At this stage, the data from the field work is expected to confirm the accuracy of data analysis as well as to provide detailed situations or events.

6. To test the hypothesis

Even though the methodological process is designed to confirm the accuracy of the analysis, it needs to have certain interested

academics to supervise all the stages of the methodological process. I select the following distinguished academics:

1. Dr. Chayachoke Chulasiriwongs, The Department of International Relations, Chulalongkorn

2. Dr. Vinita Sukrasep, The Department of International Relations, Chulalongkorn

Materials for the study of the impact areas are obtainable from the following locations:

1. The National Archives of Thailand
2. The Library of the Royal Siam Society
3. The Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn
4. The Institute of East Asian Studies, Thammasat University
5. The Library of the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University
6. The Central Library of Thammasat University
7. The Thai-Mon Association

### **Field Work**

1. Observation
2. Structured Interview

One hundred Mon individuals who are supposed to be observed as well as interviewed will be selected on the basis of their own hierarchy of leadership. This means that this targeted group must be answerable to the general affairs of the Mon nationalists and of course that they have been elected to participate in the decision-making process in the main areas, of mass communication, finance and logistics. These one hundred individuals will be drawn from the three social categories: 40 from the group of refugees, 30 from the group of Thai-Mon diaspora population and 30 Mon-related activists. Selection from these different social categories is made on the assumption that each category has undergone a different set of experiences. Refugees who may possess a stronger sense of ethnic Mon nationalism than the Thai-Mon Diaspora population largely due to their status of being homeland inhabitants and holding non-Thai citizenship. The group of 30 Mon-related activists who are socioculturally distant from those born in the homeland , naturally possess a less strong sense of ethnic nationalism.

As for field observation, I will observe the modes and kinds of mass media adopted by the Mon nationals and the ideas for social cohesion which they emphasize through those adopted media. This work requires close observation largely because it deals with the sensitive issues of culture and media. I need to take account of the detailed setting and daily activities of those selected individuals. As

mentioned, the field observation plays an important role in the field work but at the same time it may turn the field work into a kind of socio-culturally-biased writing if the researcher lacks the value-free skill of observation precisely because an observed subject needs interpretation. On this point, I view myself as having a basic social knowledge of the Mons, ranging from Dvaravatti art and Mon culture to local Mon history. It is the researcher with appropriate knowledge of the context who can most successfully carry out cross-cultural research in an effective way. In the eyes of Asian academics, a number of academic works carried out by Western academics reveal a limited understanding of the Asian context.

As explained in the section on the methodology of data analysis, the result of the field work will be drawn solely to complement the process of analysis which serves as the main body of this work. In other words, this work is composed of two major parts: library research and field research, but the results of the field research will confirm the accuracy of data analysis as well as provide very detailed records of events. It should be noted that the context in which a number of impacts attached to the action or reaction among the three major areas needs the very detailed data from the fieldwork in conjunction with the well-structured data from the library research. Moreover, the data from the examination of the mode and kind of communication will be used to

explain the relation between those modes and kinds of communication adopted by the Mon nationals and the varying degree of impacts produced and reflected among the three major areas of Mon diaspora refugee camps, host country (Thailand), and home country (Mon state).

As for the structured interviews, the following questions will be posed to those 100 selected.

1. What mode of communication: circulation of information, learning, association and formal education have you adopted in your group's communications in Thailand and Burma ?
2. What special topic have you adopted to report the situation in Burma (for example, human rights violations, culture, social gatherings, political meetings)
3. What kind of media: journal, magazine, radio broadcast, facsimile, television broadcast, academic report, telephone communication used in making your members consciously aware of their shared commonalties.
4. What is the consequence or feedback from the operation of those adopted modes of media (for example, public protest, authority warning)
5. Are you satisfied with your adopted media and its operation, if not, how can it be improved ?
6. What kind of data do you send through your media?

7. What problems arising from the operation of those media are the Mon nationalists facing?
8. From your viewpoint, what is the main theme of the Mon ethnic nationalism ?
9. Who has paid the cost of the media operation?
10. What do you feel are the prospects for the continuance of the Mon national community?
11. What has been your most successful experience in using the strategies and techniques of the media so far?
12. What factors, political, economic, social and ideological have influenced your group communication through mass media.
13. Can you group improve, on its strategies and techniques of social communication through mass media?
14. What ideas or theme of ideas do you think is most effective in mobilizing your group members for political and economic ends?
15. What is the difference between your nationhood and other types of nation from your point of view?
16. Do you think your nationalistic sentiment would survive in the absence of effective mass media?

It should be noted that the field observation of the real situation, where the Mon nationalists use all the techniques of media as well as the virtual mode of social communication, is lent more weight than the interview technique since people usually do not reveal what they view as secret or a specialized group technique. Therefore, this work requires the close observation of the daily activities of the 100 selected subjects. It is on the basis of this close observation that we can come to grips with what theme of ideas and what modes of media they use in the maintenance of their social cohesion as well as their greater trans-state ethnic nationalism. At the very least, it is anticipated that this field work will avoid the pitfalls of gross oversimplification as well as misperception with regard to the multi-faceted context of the Mon nationals.



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