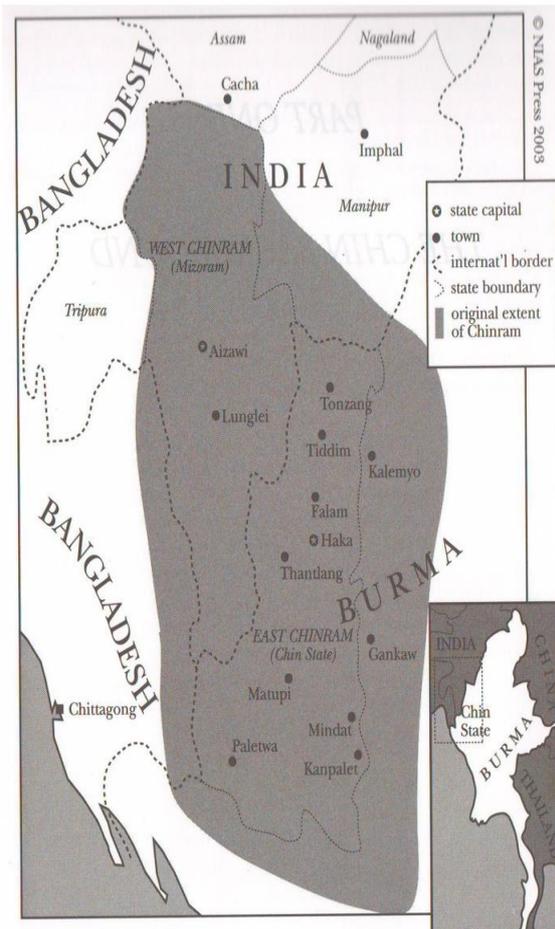


Chin Ethnic Identity and Chin Politic in Myanmar

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Background of Chin State

Chin State is located within Myanmar, and has a shared border with Rakhine State in the south, Bangladesh and India in the west and north, and Sagaing and Magway Divisions in the east. The whole state has 13,906.97 square miles in area, and consisted of 3 districts which are Mindat district including Mindat, Matupi, Kanpalet, Paletwa, Hakha district including Hakha and Thanhlung, and Falam district including Falam, Tedim, Tuanzang. Chin State is over 300 miles long in south to north, and in east to west, it has 100 miles width in the widest and over 30 miles in the narrowest areas generally (Chin State Government, 2012). Currently, there are more than four hundred thousand chin population is staying in chin state. Historically, Chin State, also calls **Chinland** is a very remote, independent, and isolated part of western Burma. Infrastructure in Chin State is very poor, with no fully paved roads, making access difficult.

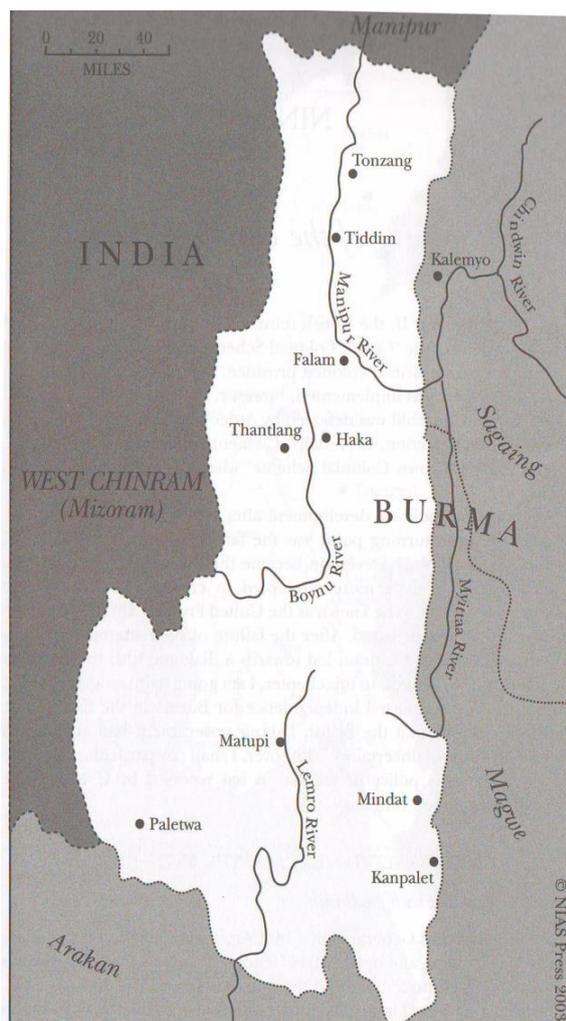


Source: In Search of Chin Identity

According to Chin Hills regulation 1896, the Chin Hills has been recognized for the common historical and culture heritage of the chin tribes. The British divided Chinland into three administrative districts as Chin Hills District (Chin state), Lushai Hills District (Mizoram State in India) and the Chittagong Hill tracts of Bangladesh¹. The land is a very important starting point to discuss traditional administration and land division. For instance, it is also to the cultural and political system of chin society. Land is very important part of the heritage. It is traditional to share with public or give a tax or give to family heritage. It is even more difficult to distinguish between the political system and administration, as it is deeply rooted in the traditional land division process and defines the autonomy of the village. Chin State was governed by the 'Chin Hills Regulation' of the British government in 1896. After being used as hilly regions by, Chin state was named as '**Chin Special Division**' on the Fourth of January, 1948 with the combination of Chin mountain ranges and some of Rakhine mountainous regions according to 1947 Constitutional Law article 196, and 'Chin Special Division Act, 1948' was enforced instead of Chin Hills Regulation, 1896.

¹ See *In Search of Chin Identity*, pp.95.

Chin State has been isolated and discriminated against politically, socially and economically by the government and development actors. According to the national household record of UNDP in 2011, Chin State is the poorest area in Myanmar. The main challenge is the insufficient road and transportation systems. Most areas do not have a proper road and public transportation. Many areas have constructed the village link roads by their own contribution, partly supported by International Non-government organizations. Most of the people are relying on self-constructed roads, and motor bike is a major vehicle to mobilize around the areas. Furthermore, chin state is depending on three major road links as Pakhuku-Mindat-Matupi in southern Chin state, Kalay-Kankaw-Hakha-Thanglang in the middle part of chin state, and Kalay-Kankaw-Falam-Tedim-Tonzang in northern part of chin state (IID, 2013). These just opened after Myanmar has emerged as a democratic government from junta government. In fact, the area is facing limited education, health care and employment opportunities. Consequently, the people are struggling very much to find the ways of improving their living standards, education and healthcare. Many people have moved into downstream areas such as Yangon, Mandalay and Kachin State for a better life. Furthermore, many people have flowed into neighboring to secure their life, education and livelihood. However, numerous people believe that the God promise land is “our Chin State” and still embedded staying in the chin state and survive naturally.



Meanwhile, there is no economic incentive for local farmers as an alternative to cultivating in the forest and destroying a big forest. Large forestlands are cut and burned for agriculture purpose. Sometimes, wood is also used for construction and commercial purposes. No one could have predicted the negative impact of destroying forestlands in the chin state. Consequently, climate changes, soil erosion and deforestation are large impacts on the local farmers and local residents. Some experts said that in the chin state there remain lots of wildlife and needs to be conserved and equally treated as a human. However, because of the negative impacts of human beings, the nets of wildlife have been destroyed. Therefore, the way of conservation for future utility of ecological practice of the chin state in local context is one of the crucial responsibilities for the Chin People.

The Myth of Founders

Chin people is one of the Tibeto-Burman groups and has migrated along the river of Ayeyawaddy. For instance, the history of Chin people was documented in the middle of the eighth century in Chindwin valley, Sagaing region in Myanmar. Mostly, the Chin people lived in the mountains and Chindwin river basin, and did not go to war with Burmese people. However, the Chin people fought with Burmese people because of language². In some ancient stories, it was described that the Chin put his language in leather book and Burmese people put his language in the stones. When the dark came to them, the leather was wet. When the sun rises again, the stones became very hard and the language of Burmese remained. However, the language of Chin people was eaten by a hungry dog during the dark time, and in this way, the chin people lost their own language. In fact, that was the reason why the Chin speaks different dialects on the earth. After that, the Chin resettled in the west mountain as chin hill and the Mizoram state in India.

Villages were established throughout the mountain ranges of Chin State in accordance with different tribes with diverse languages. New land finders had to face and struggle with the dangers of wild animals and other challenges according to shifting cultivation methods, and resided in individual families as well as groups when new lands were found with the leader who vested in first. The system which was used in choosing a leader was termed 'First Smoke Maker'. Land for late comers was distributed by the first lodged person. As the leaders of group residing areas, the ones who could remove the danger of wild animals, who are physical strong in hunting, and the adventurous and brave ones were selected in former Chin tribes. The villages were named after the names of their founders. There was a tribal leader in villages set up with more than a single tribe collectively, for each tribe; the most intellectually and physically perfect person among them was designated as the leader. In addition, chin people believe that a rock called "Chinlung" is the original place of the earth. However, the original belief of Chinlung is not in written documents and no one can point out the location where the chinlung is. However, every Chin tribe differently describes it in various ways, such as legend stories and traditional songs. However, some authors predicted that the place might be existed somewhere in China or Tibet.

The way of life of Chin

Animism was the original religion of Chin Tribes. It was noted that two American Christian evangelists arrived Ha-Kha on March 15, 1899, and in April 1904, Tee-Tain. Buddhist monks were known to be in Min-Tut, southern Chin State, in 1899, and northern Chin State Tee-Tain in 1946. Studies showed that the missions of Christian evangelists started Christian religion in Chin State after 1886 when Britain colonized Myanmar. Now, the majority of Chin people believe in Christianity and it was carried out by the mission of American Baptist Mission in early twentieth century. Moreover, the Christian mission was expended in the Chin state according to the strategy plan of Zomi Baptist Convention through Chins for Christ in one century (CCOC) in 1964 (Pum, 1998). The belief in Christianity also based on three major factors, 1) the social political change of British colonial power, 2) the missionary factor and 3) the similarity between Christian and Chin philosophy – the belief in an ancient creator is one of the major facts to become and believe in Christianity. In order to

² See *In Search of Chin Identity*, pp.14

understand the Chin philosophy in religion, the religion sensitivity is strongly embedded in their hearts. It is always related with Chin social structure and traditional ways of living style – including ancient practice in shifting cultivation, social relation among different tribes, and practicing giving a respect.

Even though Chin People speak different dialects; the principal of traditional philosophy was very similar. This traditional norm has many factual similarities to Christian religion³. Especially, the traditional belief started with the concept of “mal rhai, mui hla and Ma cael kho”.

1. Mal rhai or Kho means the God.
2. Muihla means the guidance spirit
3. Ma Cael kho means village of death

The “Mal rhai” is the phenomenon of Chin traditional religion. He is the owner of the earth, father of God and is the creator of the earth. People need to give a respect on him, and his power is extremely high. He can give food and water through rain and seasons. That’s why every Chin people has a similar practice on offering the “God” at the beginning of cultivation, in the middle of cultivation and at the end of harvest. Moreover, the people believe that God is watching everybody on the earth from the sky, if the people do some bad things, he or she would be punished. This is the way of social pattern and norms, to avoid killing, stealing and hurting the people.

“Muihla” is the guidance spirit who is very powerful in treating the disease. When the people get sick they offer the “Muihla” in the forest or the tree or at the top of mountains. However, the ancient stories did not clearly identify the power distinction between the “Mal rhai” and “Muihla”.

As I earlier mentioned, “Ma Cael kho” is the village of death. Chin people also traditionally believe that after the people died, the soul goes to “Ma Cael Kho”. Sometimes, the “Ma Cael Kho” is also defined as the sacred place for the people where the soul can enjoy peacefully. In fact, the people think that there might not be any favored traditional food or thing of their family soul. Thus, when the people died, they put small things with the death body.

In addition, in analyzing the traditional belief, norm and practice of chin people, it is strongly similar with Christianity belief in the Bible. The Bible clearly defines that “the earth is created by God, who is always guiding the people, and whenever you need anything you can ask to God”. Moreover, the Bible also describes that after the people die, the soul will be kept in the heaven. Meanwhile, the Bible states that the heaven is a very sacred place for the soul, and there is not suffering of life and can enjoy peacefully. Again, the traditional belief of Chin People in “Ma Cael Kho” and the Christian’s belief in “Heaven” are very similar. The perspective on Christian life is an integral part of social, culture, traditional and the ways of living style of Chin people. **Writing history from a social-culture perspective is very much about the history of mentality**⁴. This is one condition of the ways of believing Christianity in Chin society. It is also believed that whenever a Christian society in chin state is intentionally attacked, it becomes one of the important threats not only toward the Christianity but also the traditional, norm, belief and the way of living of Chin people.

³ See *In Search of Chin Identity*, pp.22

⁴ See *In Search of Chin Identity*, pp.106

Looking at the intersection between ethnicity and religion, Chin people strongly believe that the religion beliefs and practices are ethnic identity. It is also leading to the effect of uniting members of the group, and ensures the group or the people or the tribe's existence and often its ethnic identity. In Chin state, 90 percent of population is Christian, in a country that is predominantly Buddhist. It also is viewed as an integral part of the Chin identity. It is particularly true that Christianity helps to unify the Chin and share the common identity in the world. For instance, the planting of crosses is a very important figure of their beliefs, but many crosses have been destroyed by Burmese government. As a result, many Christian organizations came together, prayed together, and documented what was going on in a decade. That documentation will be carried for the new Chin generation in the world and it would be retained in the Chin history. The Chin social system has been categorized into three social classes as so-called Noble class "Bawi Phun", so-called Ordinary Class "Mi-Chia phun", and Slaves called "Sal Phun"⁵. Even there are diverse aspects categorized in social class; I will mainly describe the land owner called "Kho Kung" and the ordinary "Pal Nam" in my article. The "Kho Kung" is the lord of the soil and has the power to distribute the land to community. Meanwhile, he had a responsibility to protect his villagers from any danger and enemy. "Pal Nam" means the villagers and had to take the responsibility according to the order of the land owner, and sometimes, the decision of major opinion of the villagers. In fact, when the villagers hunted in the forest, they also gave some portion of meat to the land owner. Above tradition and norm clearly mention that Chin people tend to choose their leader by themselves and live independently in their community. The social construction, administration and broadly called political aspect are mainly based on belief and practice of traditional living and way of living style. In comparing the administration structures of Chin traditional and colonial administration, chin hill had been separately administrated in Myanmar, basically independent structure. The Chin is an independent people, strongly opposes any national and international interference not only because of political sovereignty but also for maintaining traditional religious beliefs and culture practices.

The discoursing on Federalism into Chin society

At the beginning of federalism, I would like to address the meaning of a Union. The oxford dictionary explicitly defines that **UNION** is the actions joint together, and work together especially in political context moreover in power sharing and administration. However, the definition of Myanmar government is totally different from the major concept of the union terminology. In addition, the oxford dictionary addresses that federalism is a political concept and a system of government which is based on democratic rules and institution, and power sharing between the local government and state government. State government is also called as Union government.

Historically, the concept was also clearly defined in vital agreement of Burma in order to get independence from British. In the statement in Panglong agreement, the delegation of different ethnic groups of Myanmar was clearly defined. For instance, General Aung San represented majority Burmese and the so-called frontier areas such as the Chin, Kachin and Shan because they were independent people before and after British colonization. In fact, General Aung San also recognized that the frontier areas had the right to regain their freedom, independence and sovereign nation

⁵ See *In Search of Chin Identity*, pp.35

status. Not only the Chin hill but also Kachin state and Shan state have the same status on strong identification and traditional administration. Thus, after Panglong, Chin hill started including, and has been administered under Burma administration structure.

When the representative from Chin addressed *“kan ram cu kan mah te in le kan phunglam ning te in uk kan duh”* in Panglong Conference on 12th February 1947. It meant *“we want to rule our country by ourselves according to our own political system”*⁶.

Across Myanmar, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples have been negatively affected by the political system and development agenda. Especially, Chin state remains impoverished and underdeveloped. Consequently, violation of human rights has been frequently caused by the military government. Moreover, freedom of expression and worship are being strongly prohibited in some areas. Myanmar had been more than sixty years ruled by the junta government. The union political system has been destroyed and dominated by majority Burmese people. Moreover, the junta government had created **“Burmanization”** in different government eras. Today, Myanmar is called the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, but the concept of union only exists in the newspaper and concept notes, not in practical application of the state. In fact, the administration and political decisions have been being dominated by central Burmese government even when the country is called the Republic of Union of Myanmar.

In fact, most of the local Chin people want to know the answers of the following questions;

- What is federalism? What are the advantages and disadvantages of federalism?
- What is the importance of local autonomy and local democracy? What is the proper role of local government?

So far, the distinction between the roles and responsibilities of local government and state government, and the understanding level of Chin people is very diverse. According to the discussion of Chin Youth Forum, Chin youth stressed that federalism was the fundamental right for Chin society to address own needs, sovereignty, governing body and common philosophy in Chin state. Meanwhile, Chin political parties highlighted in their policy that federalism was a political system and it should not be demanded but should be created among Chin and Myanmar society. For instance, Chin people from Chin state believe that federalism is self-determination, and self-administration to promote the life of Chin people for sustainable development. However, many of Chin people still believe that federalism is self-determination and isolation from the union state, especially from the Union of Myanmar. Many people also believe that after Chin state becomes a federal state from Myanmar, we can create a better future and rule Chin state by ourselves, but the financial situation and food security will be a challenge. Many people also observed in some circumstances of Mizoram state – the place shares its border with India and Myanmar. If there is border tension or social and religion conflict, commercial issues and food supply are highly challenged. These also are some of the stresses of local Chin people in Chin state. Therefore, different institutions from Chin society such as local ethnic, Chin educated people, and political parties defined the means of federalism differently. Meanwhile, federal idea and philosophy are also

⁶ See *In Search of Chin Identity*, pp.212

hidden in their own institutions and never show up for the common understanding on federalism. The fact also points out that the awareness on federalism and political system in major Chin population is very weak in Chin society.

“The Federal System wished by Chin People is to be drawn up and achieved based on the equity with other national people. Federal is to strengthen the Union more. However, Myanmar public is anxious because the series of Burmese leaders have smoked their minds with the wrong idea that Federal is the system that will break the Union. The idea still caves in the thoughts of the public until today” said Salai Mang, CEO of Chin World Media.

As there are differences between the Federal set in the policy of parties led and established by Burmese People and the system in the policy of Chin party, Chin League of Democracy formed and run by Chin People ourselves, it is time to answer clearly the question which side Chin People are standing for. The difference is to discuss, negotiate, and shape at the table as Panglong agreement was signed based on the equity.

“Federal is in the hands of all National People, not with Burmese People or Burmese parties. Building a Federal Union where there is equity for National People by debating and discussing between the Union National people is to gain the long lasting peace”, expressed by Salai Tin Royal, Leader of Political Campaign for Chin League of Democracy Party.

As the leader of Chin party, Chin People need someone who is able to discourse on a level with other people, and other leaders of the parties to be able to structure a Federal Union. There is no way for participants at State, District, or Township level in other parties apart from Chin political party, as they are under the central committee, to be able to treatise equably with leaders of other people’s parties.

The perspective on Forming Political Parties

Myanmar, so-called Burma is formed by diverse ethnic groups, with over 135 different ethnic groups and is using more than 100 different languages and dialects. In fact, Burmese, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Mon, Rakhine and Shan are highly categorized as major ethnicities in Myanmar. Meanwhile, they also are recognized as the founders of the Union of Myanmar, as well called the Union of Burma. Before the British occupied the territory of Burma, those areas had been ruled by various kingdoms and local tribal leaders. Furthermore, before Burma achieved her independence in 1948, those ethnic areas had had no political relation and/with the Burma areas. Especially during colonial regime, the chin hill was ruled as the “frontier area” according to chin hill act in 1896. It means that chin hill had been administrated through local traditional leaders and chiefs because the traditions, beliefs, norms and the ways of living were different from Burmese. British had promoted Christian missionaries to support the education of the Chin people. Thus, the Chin language had been created using roman alphabets for easier communication.

“Politics means not only for forming a government and gaining the power. It is for guiding a government to serve fairly and rightfully for the people on the correct track; raising the national features, literature and culture, traditional law as well as personal features; and

preventing the control and overwhelming of other countries” Ngai Sak, Chair of Chin League of Democracy Party.

He also concluded that as no exact policy was set and drawn up for Chin People in political parties like NLD and USDP led by Burmese People, Chin people who carry out their policy were, instead of being politicians, performing alike political staffs supporting in the background to achieve the policy set by other people. It was needed to accomplish the policy drawn up by Chin people ourselves, not undertaking as the staffs for the policy established by any other people, as being a nationality started constructing the Union of Myanmar.

According to the Panglong Legal agreement, the document officially promised the rights of self-determination of the indigenous nationalities. Moreover, the Shan and Karenni have been granted the right to separate after 10 years. For other groups, territories have not been clearly defined whether it should be separated or not from the Union. However, General Aung San was assassinated and the promise of Panglong was broken. The political and administration system had been dominated by the junta government for more than 60 years. Different ethnic groups and some people have started to establish their own military to go against Burmese military. Critically analysis the above causes and an effect, breaking the promise of “Panglong agreement” has been a major starting point to increase civil wars in Myanmar. Moreover, the spirit and the promises of Panglong are strongly embedded in the hearts of different ethnic groups. It is one of the major keys to establish different ethnic political parties in Myanmar.

There are ten Chin political parties and most of them are based in Yangon, Myanmar. Those are; Chin League for Democracy Party, Chin National Democratic Party, Chin Progressive Party, Asho Chin National Party, Zomi Congress for Democracy, Zo Democratic Party, Mro Party, Ethnic Nationality Development Party etc. In analysing the current policies of Chin Political parties, they are very similar in some points such as development of Chin people and tribal groups, the federalism, and self-administration. However, the way of interpretation on federalism is slightly different. Some do not have a concrete strategy and interpretation on federalism. It also depends on how they connect alliances with different ethnic political parties in Myanmar. The idea of establishing political party also has different facts and reason.

According to my observation on Chin political parties, I have categorised three different patterns in Chin politic. *The first one is the geographical fact, the second is searching their tribe identity and the last one is interpretation on the wheel of democracy.* The qualification of leader also strongly sticks on people-centre orientation such as leadership, knowledge and Personality.

In Myanmar, Chin people live not only in Chin state but also in Magwe division, Bago division, Mandalay, Ayeyawaddy, Yangon, and Rakhine states. Overall, most of the chin population is in Chin state but many of Chin population also settle outside of Chin state. Most of them are minority population in Rakhine, Magwe, Bago and Sagaing regions. This is one of the first facts, why the Chin political parties want to establish political institution in Myanmar. Even the Chin political parties cannot cover the rights of Chin people from outside of Chin state, but can alliance with different political parties in those areas in Myanmar. It is political engagement with different political

institutions and gives grantee for their language, culture, traditional, identity and representative in democratic system.

According to the Myanmar national constitution, if there are more than 50,000 populations, the ethnic group also has the right to elect one ethnic affair minister in the area. The problem is that selecting a representative for them is not the choice of those ethnic groups, but mostly centralized by the government. *Therefore, Chin ethnic groups from outside of Chin state want to nominate their representative, and contest between the chosen one of the ruling party and their own selection.*

In terms of searching Chin identity, Myanmar has more than thousands of national identity problems and still cannot solve them at the moment. For instance, most of the cases could be seen in rakhine state, Bagon and Magwe regions. Most of the Chin people do not have national identity cards, in consequence, they cannot travel to other places, cannot vote for their representative in democratic system. Those Chin people need protection and national identity. Moreover, the Chin people are not comfortable with those conditions; and the rights and national identity are needed to be promoted. In those areas, Chin people are minorities; and the rights of Chin people are required to be protected everywhere, and the heritage of generation such as culture, language, dialect, traditional and forestry, conserved. Moreover, the Chin people from outside of Chin state want to involve in political dialogue and state-building as well. *Therefore, Chin Political Parties have been established based on their tribe groups and showing their national identity in political transformation of the state.*

The term "Nationalism" also refers to the common feelings and sense of social, cultural and political attachments (Kscowid, A.1998). Meanwhile, Godfrey strongly agreed that the nationalism was to promote and defend a particular culture and the way of life of own identity. For instance, when a person migrates into another country, he still continues the practices of his beliefs and tradition, is interested in his homeland news and cheers for his country; even when he is far away from his native. Nationalism is also the fundamental social, cultural and political solidarity (Godfrey, 2008). This phenomenon is a significant tool to establish political parties and promote national identity in Myanmar as well. We can say that Chin politics is in search of chin national identity in order to protect its national tradition, culture, language and beliefs. *Deeply go to the ground, chin politics is the promotion and protection of tribe-based national identity as well.*

The threats of foreign investment pressures are also one of key factors to establish ethnic political parties in Myanmar. Now we see most of the raw materials are being produced from ethnic areas. According the lessons learned from previous investment, for instance, in mining at Kachin state, it also is related with resource sharing between the local people and the state. The identity and the resource areas of investment from foreign country were forgotten, and the systematic condition for ethnic areas was never been taking into account. They mainly engaged with the Burmese/ national government who mainly dominated in the politic of Myanmar. Furthermore, Myanmar is located in the strategic economic zone of Asia and a very important place for trade and foreign investment for future global economic trend. Especially, India's look east policy is one of the important facts to establish chin political parties. For instance, in development processes, many issues of ethnic groups of Chin state are neglected. According to India's Look East Policy, the policy begins inter-relation between India and Myanmar in new political phase. The challenges of India and china play a vital

role in social, economic and politic of Myanmar. India felt that the influence of China was a new threat for future strategic plan of them in the near future. Thus, India wanted to play closer ties with Myanmar new government, and Singapore played an important role to interact between India and Myanmar. Finally, India established IEP and had had a strong advantage to engage systematically in social, economic and politic of Myanmar (Strachan, Kang, and Sinha.2009). Therefore, India started building trade route to Myanmar – from Rakhine deep sea project to India, Mizoram state. The trade route passes many ethnic areas of Chin people, and also is one of the threats to affect the way of living and tradition of Chin people. Those international pressures are also some of the stresses to establish Chin ethnic political parties in Myanmar. Looking at the east watch policy, we can clearly see the engagement level of India with national government. The national government and India have never regarded the future of challenges in Chin state. The community people have always been neglected in the development agenda of those two countries, the event is called inclusive development agenda. This is also one of the stresses to forming Chin political politic or tribe group party as like as developmental oriented structure.

Chin Perspective and Myanmar National Politic

Before we start discussing the concept of chin politics, the means of ethnicity needs to be defined clearly because most of the chin people strongly regard on their ethnic identity or tribe group identity. Ethnicity is socially constructed, and defines the category of the people who has common tradition, origin myth, culture heritage, homeland, language, dialect and experience (Isajiw , 1974).

Thomas Hylland Eriksen also described that “ethnicity and nationalism are universal structures of the contemporary world”. For instance, “ethnicity is a group of people who has a property aspect on dynamic and shifting social relationships regarding on class, gender and nationhood”, Esiksen (2002). Therefore, ethnicity is a leading introduction to the field of Chin ethnic identity and Chin politic in Myanmar to cover recent tradition, culture, language, social, and politic.

Current political atmosphere of Myanmar is unpredictable and I personally assumed that no individual political party can form the government in 2015. Preparing for the unity manner, United Nationalities Alliance (UNA), led by National League of Democracy (NLD) and National Brotherhood Federation (NBF) were founded. UNA has more than eight major ethnic groups’ political parties and NBF has more than 20 ethnic political parties included. Both of alliance groups want to encounter the current political problems, literature, culture and tradition of different ethnic groups, and fundamentally, the rights of their own identity in the country. Thus, some of the Chin political parties joined NBF and some joined UNA for future political cooperation and alliance culture.

In Myanmar political sphere, chin political parties are explicitly standing on peaceful democratic transition with equity. Moreover, chin political parties eager to engage and enlarge the political system of Myanmar as based on former political right of chin and believing on co-founder of the union of Burma. Thus, they look forward to have an administration power, executive power and judicial power to ensure the right of chin people in democratic transition of Myanmar.

Post-Election and Lessons Learned

In post-election, there are nine candidates from Chin national Democratic Party and twelve candidates from Chin progressive party elected. Therefore, two candidates for upper house, two candidates for lower house, and five candidates for state level parliament were elected in Chin national party. Moreover, four candidates for upper house, two candidates for lower house and six candidates for state level parliament were elected from Chin progressive party. Furthermore, one candidate from a tribe group political party, call ethnic national development party (ENDP) was elected for state level parliament. In addition, two members of Chin political parties were selected for two minister positions in Chin state government. Mr. Kyaw Nyein was selected for Ministry of Forestry and Mines, and is the representative from Chin Progressive Party. Meanwhile, Mr. Ral Mang was selected for Ministry of Planning and Economics, and is the representative from Chin national democratic parties (Lall.M, San New.N, Myat Theint .T, and Aye Nyein.Y, 2015).

With the advent of democracy, not only national and states' elections are raised but also townships and villages level elections are held as well. On the other hand, there are still many blockages that blur the transition. Generally, there are two main obstacles, which are the side of government and the side of people. The grassroots are still *treated as the way they had been previously* and the local *media is still discriminated*. On the people's side, because of not trusting the government, they do not participate well in the government business as good citizens. There is still lack of being well-informed. They do not know who their representatives are. Although there had not only been national or state level election but also election for award administer or village administrator, they *did not participate well*. The main problem is, in some parts, there are civil societies, but in others there is still lack of civil societies. Although there are some civil societies, there is no cooperation between them. It means collaboration practice is still weak among civil societies and they just focus on social welfare as they used to under the former military government.

In the perspective of local Chin people, the following questions are not clear in their minds until now.

1. How federalism looks like?
2. Who can form the government in 2015? One party (USDP or NLD) only can form or not?
3. What changes can a tribe representative political party make?
4. What are the roles and responsibilities of ethnic political parties?
5. What are the roles and responsibilities of state and regional MP?
6. What are the roles and responsibilities of Lower House?
7. What are the roles and responsibilities of upper house?

Mostly of the political campaigners has convinced them based on development oriented politics such as health infrastructure, education infrastructure and road construction but has not granted protection of the rights of Chin people. At the same time, there has been very little explanation on democratic system and practice in grassroots level. It has led to the point that they just voted for their tribe people because they felt that being politician was a quota system and took advantages from the state such as in salary and several benefits. To some extents, these are very true in current Chin politic.

For example, Chin state is one of the focus areas on development agenda of Myanmar. Especially, infrastructures such as road and official buildings construction have been a famous tender issue in current Chin state government. Most of the tender opportunities have gone to the close-friends of ruling party – called Union Solidary Development Party (USDP). When the construction was done, the people also thought that it has been constructed by the people of USDP. In fact, the community people think that their tribe people get the opportunities to have benefits because they support and collaborate with ruling party. The fact is because of poverty and the government being only looking toward the benefits of their interests. Therefore, many of local elites have occurred and dominated the tender opportunities of the Chin state government, and it in turn has been expending its political power to use as a tool for 2015 election. Many campaigners have been carrying out those strategies to win again in 2015 election regardless of promoting and protecting the rights of Chin ethnic people. We can call those messages as tender opportunities selling of our rights to others and establishing local elites to take over the rights of local people in Chin state (Aung Ling, Secretary-1 of Chin League).

Conclusion

To conclude the article, chin state has diverse and multiple dialects, language, norms, traditions and religions, and is eager to set up own identity based on its context. Especially, from a small tribe to a big tribe group, they want to get their own identity and self-administration according to the history of myths and traditional practices. It means that every tribe group has the same rights and the same opportunities in its life. For instance, every tribe group has its own customary law and traditional land use authority. Moreover, the rights are leading them to establish federal system in their own destination, ensuring, respecting and protecting minority rights. Therefore, most of the ethnic political parties believe that Federalism is the best way to ensure and protect their own identity and own people in Myanmar. In fact, ethnic political parties play officially in the democratic system of Myanmar, demanding federal administration in the political agenda. For instance, by looking at the Chin ethnic political parties, they have the same vision, that is to initiate the federal state and ensure the rights of Chin people in Myanmar. Meanwhile, ethnic armed groups have been opposing the political system of Myanmar because the junta administration and democratic practice of Myanmar is not ensuring the political rights of ethnic people and indigenous people in term of social, cultural, traditional and administration. Mostly, Myanmar democratic transition has been a favor to the majority Burmese people, discrimination toward ethnic people in different levels of constitution and bureaucratic system, mainly dominated by central government as well. In fact, the minorities feel that they have to retain their language, their religion, their custom and be granted to be full members of the state. Especially, Chin political parties have been strongly standing on “We are co-founders of the Union of Myanmar, also called the union of Burma”. I assume that if there is no federal system in Myanmar, the rights of ethnic groups will be neglected and the civil war will not end. In fact, the ethnic people and ethnic arm groups will fight to retain them in political agenda of Myanmar. However, the ethnic minorities of Myanmar need to tolerate the fact that inclusion is the best way to establish the union state rather than separation from the union state. Majority of them also need to recognize the philosophy of federalism and protect the rights of ethnic people, indigenous people and their ways of life. It means that the Union of Myanmar is found together with multi-nationality.

The now-called the Republic Union of Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, is made up of eight major ethnic groups, each composed of many minority tribal groups. Therefore, the vastness of cultural diversity creates difficulty in the making of the Union a Unitarian country. Under the forty-year long military rule, the country was indoctrinated by the 'one nation, one language and one religion' ideology which led to "**Burmanization**". However, it has also caused the outbreak of civil war across the country and national uprising of democratic revolutions that have cost thousands of lives, made millions of people homeless, created refugees, and finally stateless. Therefore, all the political leaders and intellectuals agree that the only way to solve the ethnic conflicts and political crisis is to form a federal union state in which the central and regional powers are evenly shared and distributed so that each ethnic group has the rights to stand with ethnic identity, promote their right to self-determination and self-administration. Especially, in remote places like Chin State, for instance, where people primitively live, the majority of people are overwhelmingly unfamiliar to what federalism is and how it could guarantee their political rights, the rights to self-determination and self-administration. Moreover, the Chin People has a limited view (of aspect) on how the indigenous, knowledge, value and the perspective can imply the core system of federalism.

In analyzing above information and the facts, not only chin political parties but also ethnic political parties are eager to establish and practice federalism in Myanmar because we have different cultures, traditions and own values. However, the level of understanding between the political parties and the grassroots level community is different. For instance, the community people in ethnic areas basically understand that federalism is self-administration, and sometimes isolation from the Union. Moreover, the people do not know what are the strengths and the weaknesses of federalism in an ethnic area. The expression also depends on their own experience traditionally and socially, and current circumstances in ethnic areas. In fact, the common understanding on federalism, peaceful federalism, and political engagement among majority Burmese and ethnic people is needed. Especially, the majority Burmese people need to understand the concept of federalism, union administration training and peaceful transformation in political practice. In addition, many ethnic political parties want the government to initiate "the second Panglong" as a peaceful political transformation and a real democratization. They also believe that without federal system in Myanmar, the country will not be able to end the civil war and socioeconomic system will be continued to suffer.

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