

IDENTITY, IMAGE AND ETHNIC CONFLICT IN BURMA
A CASE STUDY OF MON PEOPLE

By

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

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Abstract

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Burma's ethnic conflict is one of the longest conflicts in the world. The conflict has been ongoing since 1948. The conflict has resulted in the loss of thousands of lives and thousands more have become refugees or internally displaced persons. This study attempts to explain the root causes of ethnic conflict in Burma through an in-depth analysis of the Mon ethnic group as a case study. Based on the results of the analysis, the study presents possible solutions to the conflict.

The results show that the conflict is caused by three major factors: threats to ethnic identity, nationalist sentiments, and images of out-group. When the Mon ethnic identity was identified and measured, the Mons are highly nationalistic and strongly identified with their group. Thus, they are prompted to respond to threats to their identity. Major factors explaining the threats to Mon ethnic identity are the loss of territory, downgrading of identity, restrictions on the teaching of language and literature, and practicing of culture, the destruction of national symbols, internal migrations and population transfer, intermarriage, and threats of annihilation.

The Mon have a barbarian image of the Burman because they see Burman as superior in capability, inferior in status, and as having harmful intentions. The level of in-group identity also

has a positive correlation with the level of barbarian image. These two variables (identity and barbarian image) also have positive correlations with the level of conflict. This implies that those who have higher levels of in-group identity and a greater barbarian image of the Burman results in higher levels of conflict. The level of barbarian image also shows a positive correlation with the forming of alliances with other non-Burman ethnic groups and fighting against the Burman.

The current Burmese government's "seven steps road map" will not provide a solution to the ethnic conflict in Burma. Burma's ethnic problems could be solved by dialogue among all stakeholders, democratization, power-sharing, and the forming of a super-ordinate identity. These can happen through the establishment of a genuine federal political system that guarantees autonomy to all ethnic groups in Burma.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
LIST OF TABLES, FIGURES, AND MAPS	x
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xii
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION: THEORIES OF ETHNIC CONFLICT	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Social Identity Theory	8
Nationalism	15
Image Theory	17
2. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES AND METHODOLOGY	27
Research Hypotheses	27
Methodology	28
Quantitative method	30
Qualitative method	37
3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	40
Ethnicity	40
Migration of ethnic groups	43
History of ethnic conflict prior to colonial rule	46
Ethnic conflict under British rule	49
Ethnic conflict aftermath of the colonial rule	52

4. ETHNIC IDENTITY OF THE MON	56
The ethnic identity of the Mon and its nationalistic values	56
Measuring the level of ethnic identity of the Mon across demographic variables, educational systems, and regions, and a comparison to the levels of ethnic identity of non-Burman ethnic groups of Burma	73
5. THREATENING OF ETHNIC IDENTITY AND ETHNIC CONFLICT	87
Threats of Ethnic Identity and Ethnic Conflict: A Case Study of the Mon	93
Losing territory and political status	94
Downgrading the ethnic identity	97
Threatening language and literature identity	102
The suppression of Mon cultural and historical celebration	117
The restrictions on Mon language publications and abolishment of Mon national symbols	124
Population transfer or migration in Mon areas	128
Intermarriage and identity threat	132
Threat of annihilation	135
6. IMAGE AND ETHNIC CONFLICT	140
Testing Hypothesis II: Identifying the image of the Mon over the Burman	141
Testing Hypothesis III: Identity, image and ethnic conflicts	152
Testing Hypothesis IV: Barbarian image and tendency actions	156
Forming alliance and fighting for autonomy in the historical context	158
Forming alliance with the Burman	163
Problem with alliance	165
The images of other Non-Burman ethnic groups over the Burman and their action tendencies	167

7. THE EFFECTS OF CONFLICT	172
Cause loss of life.....	173
Rapes and other human rights violations	174
Forced labor	175
Refugees and internal displaced persons	176
Child soldiers	180
Economy	180
8. RESOLUTIONS OF ETHNIC CONFLICT IN BURMA	182
Recent attempts at resolving ethnic conflicts.....	182
Cease-fire agreement	182
International intervention	185
Burmese military government's Road Map to conflict resolution	190
Political processes for a peaceful resolution of ethnic conflicts in Burma	193
Countrywide cease-fire.....	193
Political dialogue and democratization.....	194
Power sharing	195
Forming a new common identity.....	199
9. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATION, LIMITATIONS, AND CONCLUSION	213
Discussion.....	213
Implications.....	217
Limitation of the study and future research	220
Conclusion	221

BIBLIOGRAPHY	223
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APPENDIX

A. Status of Armed Ethnic Opposition Groups as of 2010.....	253
B. The SPDC's 'Seven Step Roadmap'	256
C. Members of Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB) as of 2010	257
D. Composition of the Different Ethnic Groups under the 8 Major National Ethnic Races in Myanmar (Burma)	259
E. Some Survey Results	266
F. Survey Questionnaires	267

LIST OF TABLES, FIGURES, AND MAPS

TABLES

Table 1. Image theory attributes	19
Table 2. Images and policy predispositions	19
Table 3. Sample of Mon ethnic group	38
Table 4. Sample of non-Mon ethnic Groups.....	39
Table 5. Ranking components of Mon identity	72
Table 6. Means and standard deviation of overall scale and subscales	81
Table 7. Responses on ethnic identity questions among Mon respondents.....	85
Table 8. Means and standard deviation of scales with respect to demographic variables.....	86
Table 9. The Mon's and Burman's military forces during the fighting in Prome: 1405 A.D.....	143
Table 10. A comparison of military forces during the Burman's marches to the Mon Kingdom (Pegu) 1408 A.D.....	143
Table 11. A comparison of military forces during the march of the Mon to the Burman territory (Toungoo) 1418 A.D.....	144
Table 12. Poverty rate between Mon and Burman regions in Burma (UNDP, 2009)	147
Table 13. Correlations among the level of identity, barbarian image endorsement, and political separation	155
Table 14. Correlation between barbarian image and action tendencies.....	157
Table 15. Correlations between the imperialist image and action tendencies	168
Table 16. Responses on image and political conflict questions among Mon respondents	170
Table 17. Responses on image questions among other non-Burman respondents	171

FIGURES

Figure 1. Levels of identity by education levels	76
Figure 2. Differences in the level of identity between the Mon monks and laymen	76
Figure 3. Out-group differentiation scale by age groups	80
Figure 4. Levels of identity by ethnic groups	81
Figure 5. The 63rd Mon National Day Poster.....	121
Figure 6. Correlations among the level of identity, barbarian image endorsement, and political separation	156
Figure 7. Correlation between barbarian image and action tendencies	157

MAPS

Map 1. States and Divisions.....	44
Map 2. Distribution of Burma's main ethnic groups	45
Map 3. Early inhabitants of Burma's ethnic groups	59
Map 4. Map of the Mon Territory.....	61

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AASYC	All Arakan Students' and Youths' Congress
ABSDF	All Burma Students' Democratic Front
AFPFL	Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League
ALP	Arakan Liberation Party
ALD	Arakan League for Democracy
ARNO	Arakan Rohingya National Organisation
ARMA	All Ramanya Mon Association
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BSPP	Burma Socialist Programme Party
CNF	Chin National Front
CPB	Communist Party of Burma
CRPP	Committee Representing the People's Parliament
DKBA	Democratic Karen Buddhist Army
FCDCC	Federal Constitution Drafting and Coordinating Committee
HRP	Hongsawatoi Restoration Party
HURFOM	Human Rights Foundation of Monland
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internal Displaced Persons
ICG	International Crisis Group
ISSP	International Social Survey Program
ILO	International Labour Organization

KIC	Karen Information Center
KIO	Kachin Independence Organization
KNA	Karen National Association
KNDO	Karen National Defense organization
KPF	Karen Peace Force
KHCPS	Karen History and Culture Preservation Society
KNU	Karen National Union
KNPP	Karenni National Progressive Party
IMNA	Independent Mon New Agency
ICG	International Crisis Group
LNO	Lahu National Organization
MAR	Minority At Risk
MAU	Mon Affairs Union
MPF	Mon People's Front
MND	Mon National Day
MLCC	Mon Literacy and Culture Committees
MNEC	Mon National Education Committee
MNLA	Mon National Liberation Army
MNDF	Mon National Democratic Front
MNDO	Mon National Defense Organization (MNDO)
MRC	Monland Restoration Council
MTA	Mong Tai Army
MNDAA	Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army

MNDA	Mon National Defense Army
MTUF	Mergui-Tavoy United Front
MUL	Mon Unity League
NDAA	National Democratic Alliance Army
NCGUB	National Coalition Government Union of Burma
NCUB	National Council Union of Burma
NDF	National Democratic Front
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLD	National League for Democracy
NMSP	New Mon State Party
NSCN	National Socialist Council of Nagaland
NULF	National United Liberation Front
NUPA	National Unity Party of Arakan
OMCC	Overseas Mon Coordinating Committee
PNO	PaO National Organization
PSB	Press Scrutiny Board
SIT	Social Identity Theory
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council
SNLD	Shan Nationalities League for Democracy
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
S.H.A.N	Shan Herald Agency for News
SSA	Shan State Army
SSNLO	Shan State Nationalities Liberation Organization

SSNA	Shan State National Army
SURA	Shan United Revolutionary Army
PRF	Patriotic Front of <i>Rwanda</i>
UN	United Nations
UNA	United Nationalities Alliances
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNLD	United Nationalities League for Democracy
USDA	Union Solidarity and Development Association
UWSP	United Wa State Party
UWSA	United Wa State Army
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Project
UNPO	Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization
UMA	United Mon Association (UMA)
WNO	Wa National Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Ethnic conflicts have become a dominant form of political violence in several countries since the end of the Cold War. The number of ethnic conflicts had increased since 1950 and reached a peak in 1993-1994 (Wimmer, 1997, p.1). As of 1993, around the world there were nearly 80 ethnic conflicts out of which 35 were classified as civil wars (Gurr, 1993). Moreover, the Uppsala Conflict Data Project (UCDP) reported that there were 58 major armed conflicts in the world from 1990 to 2002. Of these conflicts, 49 were ethnic related (Eriksson, 2003, pp.45-52). The most recent one was the conflict in Georgia in 2008. Due to the ethnic conflict in South Ossetia and Abkhazia of Georgia, Russia invaded Georgian territory and occupied two Georgian separatist provinces in 2008. Such conflicts have greatly threatened regional and international stability.

Although ethnic conflicts in other parts of the world have been extensively studied by social scientists, the ethnic conflict in Burma has not been studied systematically. In fact, Burma's ethnic conflict is one of the longest conflicts in the world. Conflicts between Burman and non-Burman ethnic groups can be traced back 11th century. However, the current conflict began right after Burma gained independence from the British in 1948 when Mon, Karen, and Arakanese nationalities demanded autonomy and cultural and political rights from the Burmese government. A newly introduced democratic system lasted for a decade after decolonization, from 1948 to 1958, but the government did not address the ethnic issues properly. The primary demand of ethnic nationalities is autonomy for their homeland.

After Burma's military dictators led by General Ne Win took control with a coup d'état and abolished the democratic system in 1962, other ethnic groups such as Shan, Kachin and Karenni followed the example of Mon, Karen and Arakanese and began to fight against the Burmese government. The conflict has continued for nearly six decades.

The current military government has been negotiating with ethnic insurgents since 1989. Some ethnic armed groups have reached cease-fire agreements with the government while others are still fighting against the government. A cease-fire without a political resolution could not bring a lasting peace. Some of the ethnic groups that agreed to cease fires have already resumed their fight against the regime, and others such as the New Mon State Party are preparing to resume fighting if there is no political resolution in the near future.

In response to the demands of opposition parties and international communities, the Burmese military government proposed a "seven-step road map to democracy" to solve Burma's political crisis. However, the road map has been criticized by the opposition groups and international communities as a way for legitimizing military rule in Burma. In order to implement the roadmap, the regime held a National Convention to draft a new constitution. However, most of the representatives allowed to participate in the convention were handpicked by the Burmese military regime. The convention finished drafting the constitution in 2007, and the government held a referendum to approve the constitution on May 10, 2008. According to government reports, the constitution was supported by 92 percent of the voters. Burmese opposition groups rejected both the constitution and the referendum for lack of transparency and democratic value, and for not addressing the grievances of ethnic nationalities.

Although international communities have been pressuring the regime to initiate a meaningful political dialogue with the opposition parties and ethnic groups, the regime has

ignored the calls and continues to launch war against ethnic groups such as Karen, Shan, and Karenni. The world community responded to the problem by means of both isolating and engaging Burma. While the U.S and Western countries have responded by imposing economic sanctions, ASEAN, China and India have been engaging with the regime. Neither approach is working. The conflict has caused thousands of lives and thousands of refugees to flee to neighboring countries. Thousands more became internally displaced persons (IDPs). The conflict has also caused economic instability and led Burma to become one of the poorest countries in the world.

It should be noted that the major ethnic conflict in Burma is the conflict between Burman and non-Burman ethnic groups rather than among non-Burman ethnic groups. However, democratic forces joined the conflict after the 1988 countrywide uprising for democratic change in Burma. Democratic forces are mostly Burman. Their primary goal is to restore democracy in Burma. Thus, the current Burma political conflict consists of three parties: Burmese military dictators, democratic forces such as National League for Democracy (NLD), and non-Burman ethnic groups. However, the goal of this dissertation is to study the ethnic conflicts rather than ideological conflicts, so that only problems between the Burman (Burmese) military regime and non-Burman ethnic groups are mainly discussed in this dissertation. Specific objectives of this dissertation are (1) to explore potential explanation for the continued ethnic conflicts in Burma by applying three conflict theories or approaches: Social Identity, Nationalism, and Image, and (2) to assess the current peace processes and offer potential resolutions for the conflicts. The questions to be addressed are: what are the root causes and consequence of ethnic conflict in Burma? What are the possible resolutions and strategies to solve the ethnic conflict in Burma?

Ethnic conflicts in Burma are hypothesized to have been caused by a combination factors: threat to national/ethnic identity, nationalism, and images of one ethnic group over another. Archives, surveys, and interviews are used to measure or assess those aspects in this study. This research is expected to provide systematic assessments to better understand ethnic conflicts in Burma and find potential solutions for a long lasting peace for the people of Burma.

Theoretical framework for explaining the causes of an ethnic conflict

The term “ethnic conflict” is generally used to describe a wide range of internal conflicts including the identity conflict. According to Barcovich, “an ethnic conflict is a conflict that involves two or more groups that perceive themselves as different and are seen by others as different” (p. 2). Moreover, ethnic conflict can also occur when ethnic groups have incompatible goals or values (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, June 2010, p.23). Generally, ethnic conflicts occur when the government fails to address an individual ethnic group’s basic needs. Grievances are formed when such needs are denied or are not met. The desire to remove these grievances is “the characteristic of the development and conduct of ethnic conflict” (Burcovich, 2003, p. 2).

The theoretical framework of this dissertation is drawn from three intergroup conflict approaches or theories: Image Theory, Nationalism, and Social Identity Theory. These approaches are used to examine the root causes of the ethnic conflict and resolution in Burma. In fact, there are many alternative approaches or theories for explaining ethnic conflicts around the world. Examples are: modernization, ancient hatred, and colonialism (Horowitz, 1985; 1998). However, each of these approaches has its own shortcomings and does not well explain Burma’s ethnic conflicts.

According to the modernization approach, as a country becomes modernized and developed, the ethnic identity disappears because the modernization networks of communications provide greater political and economic interaction among ethnic groups and bring previously isolated ethnic groups closer. Their ethnic identities are replaced with loyalty to the larger community (Harff and Gurr, 2004, p.96). However, the approach was empirically rejected as more of ethnic conflicts occurred in developed countries such as Canada, Scotland, Wales, Belgium, and Spain in 1970s and 1980s. As the approach failed to explain ethnic conflicts in the developed world, the approach was modified and argued that modernization creates and recreates new ethnic identities to suit particular political goals such as competing for the same economic niches. In other words, modernization makes different ethnic groups want the same things and causes competition for the same scarce resources and political status. As people compete for these resources, their ethnic identities become more important to them and group boundaries are more sharply defined (Connor, 1993; Newman, 1991; Horowitz, 1998). Modernization stresses that “the benefits of modernity are not equally spread among ethnic groups” (Horowitz, 2000, p.101). Therefore, any uneven distribution of resources could result in ethnic conflicts between groups. However, the modernization approach does not explain most ethnic conflicts that have occurred in least developed countries such as Burma, Sri Lanka, Chad, Ethiopia, Southern Sudan, and Papua New Guinea (Horowitz, 2000, p.101).

The second approach for explaining the cause of ethnic conflicts is “ancient hatred.” This approach suggests that ethnic conflicts occur due to ancient hatred and historical memory. According to Horowitz (1985), “Memories of earlier, lapsed conflicts, centuries and sometimes millennia old, can be revived to fit contemporary conditions” (98). The approach assumes that the threat of in-group security is based on the concerns about possible threats to their security

from outgroups. They do so by comparing how an outgroup behaved in comparable circumstances on previous occasions. If the previous behavior was hostile, the current response may also be hostile (Posen, 1993; Fearon, 1994; De Figueiredo and Weingast, 1997; Horowitz, 1998). Thus, the antecedent hostility is an explanatory variable to explain a current conflict. For example, the Sinhalese and Tamil kingdoms fought recurrently in ancient Sri Lanka (Ceylon) and Acholi and Langi clashed intermittently in pre-colonial Uganda (Horowitz, 1985: 99). So the past hostilities or historical memory significantly explain contemporary ethnic relations. However, Horowitz argued, “a current conflict cannot generally be explained by simply calling it a revived form of an earlier conflict because many ethnic group antagonisms were created under colonial rules” (Horowitz, 1985, p.99). But he warned that one needs to be very careful on this point, because the histories of some groups, such as the Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka, have been rewritten to emphasize implacable enmity even in the face of considerable cooperation and assimilation (Horowitz, 1985, p.99). Furthermore, he argued, although the approach may explain some conflicts, “traditional antipathy is far from sufficient in explaining all current conflicts” (Horowitz, 1998, p.6).

Although the “ancient hatred” approach may explain some cases like Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka, it cannot be used to explain many other cases. Many conflicts are recent. Even in the case of Burma’s ethnic conflicts, some conflicts (such as Karen, Chin, and Kachin) have started in modern times while others (such as Mon, Shan, and Arakanese) began in ancient times.

The final alternative approach is the colonialism. The colonial rule is used mostly to explain ethnic conflicts in Asia and Africa (Horowitz, 1985). Under the colonial rule, different ethnic groups were put together under a central administration and ruled by a “divide and rule”

policy. Such policy created major ethnic conflicts in Asia and Africa because the rule promoted differential treatment of ethnic groups. In other words, the rule gave preferences of one ethnic group over the others. For example, the colonial rule protected one group from others and employed certain groups in colonial administrative posts (Horowitz, 1985, pp.157-60). Such preferential treatment created a clear field for comparing the disparities between advanced and backward groups. The group comparison caused ethnic hatred toward each other because backward groups believed that they gained less benefits compared to advanced groups. Therefore, backward groups often initiate ethnic violence while the advanced groups are often victims (Horowitz, 1985, p. 166). Again, in the case of Burma, some scholars, government officials, and politicians have been arguing that conflict in Burma is a result of the British divide and rule policy. This approach may be applicable to the ethnic conflicts in Burma to a certain extent, e.g., the conflicts between the Burman and the Karen, Chin, and Kachin. Colonialism is not, however, applicable in the case of Mon, Shan, and Arakanese because these ethnic groups have had conflicts with Burman long before colonial rule.

Therefore, this dissertation attempts to apply three other relevant theoretical frameworks, Social Identity Theory, Nationalism, and Image Theory, to explain the root of the ethnic conflicts in Burma. The Social identity theory provides us with a tool to understand how one ethnic group identifies with other ethnic groups, and how threatening the ethnic identity could lead to ethnic conflicts. As an ethnic identity becomes threatened, nationalism arises, and ethnic violence occurs. Therefore, nationalism also becomes an important factor in understanding ethnic violence. The Image Theory is particularly useful in determining the image of an in-group toward out-groups and its resulting conflicts or actions. When a group holds certain images over

an out-group, their responses to the conflicts are based on those images. A more detailed discussion on the application of each approach is presented in the following.

1. Social Identity Theory

A. Theory

Political scientists apply the Social Identity Theory (SIT) to explain political behaviors such as ethnic conflicts, racism, and political extremism. The SIT was originally used in social psychology. The SIT was originally developed by Tajfel and Turner in 1979 in order to understand the psychological basis of intergroup discrimination. Tajfel (1970) conducted a series of experiments based on the minimal group paradigm to examine how the social identity process would affect intergroup behaviors or intergroup conflict. The authors found that even in this minimal group condition, the allocation decisions concerning both in-group and out-group members led the members of one group to discriminate in favor of the in-group to which they belonged and against the out-group (Tajfel, 1970). These findings led to Tajfel and Turner's SIT (Tajfel and Turner, 1979 and 1986). Tajfel (1978) defined the social identity as ~~that~~ "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his [her] knowledge of his [her] membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (p. 63). According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), there are three theoretical principles of the SIT: (a) social identity and self-concept, (b) social comparison, and (c) social identity and social structures.

(a) Social identity and self-concept

According to the SIT, people or group members strive to maintain or achieve a positive social identity. In other words, people prefer to have a positive self-concept rather than a negative one. In order to achieve a positive identity, groups seek and maintain some positive distinctiveness from each other because part of our self-concept (or identity) is identified in terms of group affiliation. By affiliating with a favorably valued ingroup, people can achieve a positive identity. This need leads to social comparisons that favor the in-group over the out-group and has obvious consequences in the fostering of conflictual intergroup relations (Brown, 2000, p.311, Gaerner et al., 1999).

(b) Social comparison

Tajfel and Turner (1986) extended Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory. However, Tajfel and Turner's (1986) social comparison is somewhat different from Festinger's social comparison. The SIT suggests that people evaluate their own group's worth by comparing it to that of other groups. Being a member of a group provides the individual with the social identity which in turn enables the individual to compare their in-group with relevant out-groups. Such comparisons allow individuals to gain self-esteem or positive self-concept. Because of our presumed need for a positive self-concept, it follows that there will be a bias in these comparisons to look for ways in which the in-group can, indeed, be distinguished favorably from an out-group. Since it is assumed that people prefer a positive self-concept, they view their in-groups more favorably than out-groups. Such view creates inter-groups bias comparisons (Brown, 2000, p. 312). Therefore, the comparison creates conflict over scarce social resources, economic resources, values ideology, and unmet needs regarding identity, security, status or power" (Cottam & Cottam, 2001, p.89).

(c) Social identity and social structures

According to the SIT, when the social identity of a group is threatened or negative, individual group members pursue three strategies: social mobility, social creativity, and social competition.

Social mobility: when the social identity of a group is threatened or is perceived as being negative, the individual member will attempt to disassociate themselves from the in-group by joining a group that is higher in status. For example, Yee and Brown (1992) conducted an experiment by creating high- and low-status teams of young children. They found that the children preferred to be in the higher status group. However, such an option is not always possible. If the dominant group boundaries are impermeable, the subordinate group will not be able to join the dominant group. For example, there are many people around the world who want to be Americans, but that is possible only for some of them. In the case of ethnic groups, it is more difficult to change their identity. For example, an African American cannot change his/her identity to be a white.

Social creativity: if individuals cannot change their groups, they use alternative options to enhance their identity. That is named the social creativity. The social creativity includes three strategies: (1) comparing the in-groups to the out-groups on a different dimension. e.g., in Burma, ethnic Mon often compare themselves to ethnic Burman in terms of their culture and literature rather than numbers of population or military power because the Mon culture and literature has a superior role in the history of Burma; (2) reevaluating the comparisons, so that previously negative dimensions are perceived as positive; and (3) comparisons within their in-group instead of comparing themselves to members of the dominant group. For example,

Rosenberg and Simmons (1972) found that self-esteem among blacks who made comparisons with other blacks was higher than in those who compared themselves with whites.

Social competition: when group members' social identity is threatened in the group, they might directly compete with the out-group to attain positive distinctiveness or positive identity. However, it occurs only when subordinate groups believe that their group status was illegitimate and unfair. In other words, group competition occurs only under these circumstances: 1. the boundaries between the groups are relatively impermeable; 2. the status differences between them are somewhat unstable; and 3. those differences perceived to be unfair or illegitimate (Brown, 2000, p.330).

B. Social Identity and Ethnic conflicts

The social identity theory (SIT) is one of the most applicable theories for intergroup studies. The theory not only explains well how groups come into conflict, but also explains a wide range of political events such as racism, ethnic conflict, nationalism, and political extremism (Cottam et al., 2004). According to the SIT, social groups become conflictual when they engage in social comparison with other groups. They do so in order to enhance their self-esteem. When the outcome of that comparison is negative, groups are motivated to change their status. However, in the case of ethnic groups, changing the group is not possible. In order to change group status, ethnic groups must engage in social competition because they believe that the out-groups (dominant group) have an unfair advantage. However, when the dominant group feels that their dominant position is threatened by a subordinate group, the competition can lead to a conflict (Cottam et al., 2004, p. 173).

For example, in the case of ethnic conflict in Nigeria, the Hausa have a superior position in terms of political power. When other groups compared their groups' status to that of Hausa, they felt an unfair disadvantage. Such negative feeling led other groups to challenge the Hausa's superior position. This, in turn, threatened the Hausa's dominant position. Thus, conflicts occurred. The outcome of the conflicts led to the Ibos ethnic group rebellion in the Southeast of the country and finally the Ibos declared independence in their region where they were the numerical majority, calling themselves the Republic of Biafra. A civil war broke out in 1967, when the government refused to let them secede (Cottam et al., 2004, 173-4).

The SIT also explains the political extremism. According to the SIT, such extreme political violence or conflict occurs as a result of scapegoating which results from the social causality assessments. Under normal conditions, conflicts among groups can occur for a variety of reasons such as resources, territory, security, and power. However, in conditions of severe socioeconomic and political despair and depression, the environment is often conducive to the identification of one group as a scapegoat, a group that is blamed for all of society's illnesses. For example, some ethnic groups such as Jews, Armenians, and Tutsis were targeted as scapegoats in Germany, Turkey, and Rwanda respectively. Jews were blamed for bad things that happened to Germans during German economic hardships. This led to the killing of millions of Jews. The poor treatment of Jews was justified in the form of dehumanization of the scapegoat where Germans described Jews as less than human (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Staub, 1989).

C. Social Identity and Conflict Resolution

Social Identity theory not only aids our understanding of the causes and outcomes of conflicts, it also provides us the knowledge of how to resolve those conflicts. The theory

provides three conflict resolution approaches are: *Contact Hypothesis*, *Decategorization*, and *Recategorization or Superordinate*. These three approaches all have their origins in the social identity theory ; all recognize that group memberships become incorporated into person's self-concepts and that these social identifications have important consequences for person's behavior.

(a) Contact hypothesis

Gordon Allport (1954) introduced the contact hypothesis to eliminate prejudice among groups. The goal of the hypothesis is that “bringing members of different groups into contact with one another in various ways is the best way of reducing any tension or hostility that might exist between them” (Brown, 2000, p.342). However, the hypothesis works only under certain conditions. One of the conditions is that the contact groups must have equal status. Therefore, the minority group should have an equal status with majority group in order for the contact hypothesis to be applicable (Brown, 2000, p.243).

(b) Decategorization

The idea of decategorization is introduced by Brewer and Miller (1984) as a way of reducing the intergroup discrimination and stereotyping. According to the decategorization approach, boundaries between the two groups become less rigid during contacts, and ultimately they will be dissolved altogether. In order to decrease boundaries between groups, all interactions should take place on an interpersonal level, rather than on the group level because in this 'personalized' form of contact, individuals are interested in an individual's information and less attentive to the group-based information. The relations between groups will improve “when contacts are people to people, not race to race” (Brown, 2000, p.348). An example is former President Clinton's “Come Together Fellowship”. This program helped for improving American

racial relations by supporting black and white individuals who belong to existing clubs and groups to get to know each other better. Moreover, the approach could also lead to assimilation.

According to Brown (2000), this approach has a generalization problem. It can prevent only individuals that have been in contact with individuals from other groups from becoming prejudice. It cannot prevent prejudice against individuals who have not met or contacted individuals in other groups.

(c) Recategorization or Superordinate approach

Instead of decategorization, Gaertner et al. (1999) proposed a different method to reduce prejudice between groups. It is recategorization or superordinate identity. Recategorization is not trying to eliminate the categories; instead, they redraw the boundaries of categories. In other words, it recategorizes the previous in-groups and out-groups into a new superordinate category so that the former out-groupers can be perceived as fellow in-groupers. According to this approach, rather than attempting to eschew group references altogether, it allows keeping minimal group salience or identity while optimizing the various contacts. Gaertner et al. (1999) demonstrated that through two experiments. The experimental results show that recognizing subgroups within the superordinate identity is the best method of lessening the intergroup bias. According to the author, establishing “a common superordinate identity while simultaneously maintaining the salience of subgroup identities would be particularly effective because it permits the benefits of a common ingroup identity with arousing countervailing motivations to achieve positive distinctiveness” (Gaertner et al., 1999, p. 201).

2. Nationalism

The concept of nationalism is similar to that of social identity because it also explains how people attach to their groups. If individuals have higher self-esteem, they are more likely to attach to their group. According to the SIT, people prefer their in-groups over out-groups. They are motivated to feel good about their group. Similarly, nationalists are group members who are motivated to have strong and positive attachment to their nation and who identify themselves with a particular group or nation first and foremost. Since nationalists are strongly attached to their nation, they are committed to unity, independence, dignity, and the well-being of their national community and nation-state. Therefore, in a nationalistic country, even if people dislike their government, they still love their national community and nation-state (Cottam and Cottam, 2001, p.2).

Dusan Kecmanovic (1996) suggested that loyalty to a national group is one of the fundamental characteristics of nationalism, and an individual who identifies with a particular group or nation first and foremost is called a nationalist. Nationalists are primarily loyal to his/her perceived national community and nation-state (Cottam et al., 2004, p.192). For example, if a group of people call themselves Burmese, they also see themselves as a part of Burmese people.

Nationalism has been an important factor for explaining ethnic conflicts. Nationalistic conflicts broke up Yugoslavia and collapsed the Soviet Union. By understanding nationalism and nationalistic behaviors, we are able to explain and predict future conflicts and violence. Nationalism can be explained by many factors. Some studies have used non-psychological factors like nationalistic symbols, nationalist discourse such as literature, poems, collective memory, and songs to explain nationalism, while others have used psychological factors such as

social identity, stereotypes, and prejudices.

Nationalistic symbols can have the power to motivate people into becoming more nationalistic. These symbols are flags, historic events like success in a great battle; and the idea of motherland or fatherland. Since nationalists deeply value the independence, unity, dignity, and well-being of their national community, they respond readily to the use of symbols to mobilize them to achieve national goals” (Cottam et al., 2004, p. 193). During crisis, leaders use these symbols to mobilize their citizens to become more nationalistic.

Nationalism is also caused by a set of myths such as collective memory of victimization and heroism. For example, ethnic Mon in Burma have collective memory of their genocide by the Burmans, and also of a great and glorious history. Similarly, Serbs have collective memory of defeat in the battle in Kosovo and of victimization by Croats.

Such discourse has existed for a very long time. Nationalist elites use them during crises to motive people to become more nationalistic. For example, Serb leaders used the discourses during 1987 and 1991 to motivate Serbians to become more nationalistic and against other nationalities such as Croats, Muslim, and Albanians in former Yugoslavia. When there is a conflict between two groups, the nationalist discourse is transformed into a mass-mobilizing, and an extreme nationalist ideology (Abrams, 2003).

There are many psychological factors such as social identity, stereotypes, social categorization, and personality that can be used for explaining the causes of nationalism. However, according to Searle-White (2001), of these factors, threatening the national identity plays a prominent role in explaining the causes of nationalism. Without understanding the national identity, the author argues, our understanding of nationalist conflicts is incomplete. Thus, we need to understand how emotional aspects of conflicts are related to the national

identity. He demonstrated this point by studying the two nationalist conflict cases: Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Tamils and Sinhalese in Sri Lanka. He found that in both cases, threatening identity is a major factor causing the rise of nationalism in those societies. In other words, conflicts between ethnic groups arise when one ethnic group sees other groups as a threat to their identity. According to Searle-White, when our identity is threatened, we feel our identity is fragile. It is ~~what~~ what leads us into nationalist conflicts and violence' (p. 4). For example, the massacre of 50,000 Armenians in 1894 and 1896 by the Turks threatened not only physical survival of Armenians, but also their cultural survival as a distinct group. Such threats could result in political conflict, including rebellion and secession movements.

3. Image Theory

A. Theory

The studies of image could go back to 1950s when Kenneth Boulding (1956) applied the concept of image to study international systems and examined the effects of image on self and others on foreign policymaking processes. However, the image theory was developed by Richard Cottam in 1970s (Young and Schafer, 1998). Cottam (1977) developed a theory of images with the critical assumption that ~~man~~ man behaves in perceptually patterned way." In other words, there are identifiable perceptual patterns that, in addition to interests and situational constraints, guide individuals' behavior (Young and Schafer, 1998, p.79). The theory of images has been expanded extensively by Richard Herrmann and Martha Cottam (Herrmann, 1984; Cottam, 1986). Herrmann (1984) incorporated image theory into the gestalt theory and Heider's balance theory. Based on these theoretical linkages, Herrmann argues that ~~images~~ images of other are responses to perceptions about one's own position" (Yong and Schafer, 1998, p. 80). The author constructed imperialist and child images to exemplify the notion of balancing self-conceptions with images

of the other. Martha Cottam (1986) extended the image theory in a new direction. Her focus was on the “cognitive process of categorization and specifically the assignment of characteristics to external entities (as opposed to internal motivation)” (Young and Schafer, 1998, p. 80). This led her to develop several images that states or groups have towards each other. In her study, she categorized seven images: enemy, hegemonist, dependent all of the enemy, neutral, ally, dependent of the United States, and puppet of the United States.

Cottam and Cottam (2001) defined image as “a category or a stereotype that provides the perceiver with a body of knowledge about the perceived” (p.88). Moreover, according the authors, images can also be defined as “parallel to that of in-groups and out-group” (p. 96). Cognitive images are vital to our understanding of the world. Basically, people cannot process all the information they receive about their environments. Thus, they use images such as categories, schemes, perceptual patterns to organize and simplify their environments. Images also provide information concerning out-groups; they offer “an automatic screen that helps us to determine what is correct or important and what is false or irrelevant” (Cottam, 1994, p.18). In the end, people use images to predict future actions and to plan their responses, and policy makers use images to carry out their strategic goals.

Cottam and Cottam (2001) provided seven main components of the image theory: enemy, ally, imperialist, colonial, barbarian, rogue, and degenerate images. An individual group member or country uses these images to view another individual group member or country. Components of these images are organized into sets of attributes, which describe the target country's capability, decision-making process, culture, and intention.

Table 1. Image attributes (Cottam and Cottam, 2001, p. 98)

Image	Capability	Culture	Intentions	Decision Making	Threat/ Opportunity
Enemy	Equal	Equal	Harmful	Small Elite	Threat
Barbarian	Superior	Inferior	Harmful	Small Elite	Threat
Imperialist	Superior	Superior	Harmful	A Few Groups	Threat
Colonial	Inferior	Inferior	Benign	Small Elite	Opportunity
Degenerate	Superior or Equal	Weak-Willed	Harmful	Confused, Differentiated	Opportunity
Rogue	Inferior	Inferior	Harmful	Small Elite	Threat
Ally	Equal	Equal	Good	Many Groups	Threat

Table 2. Images and policy predispositions (Cottam and Cottam, 2001, p. 121)

Image	General Policy Predisposition	Policy Predisposition in Intense Conflicts
Enemy	Wary Suspicion, containment	Hostility, defense
Barbarian	Fear, form alliances (e.g., ethnic alliance of Burma, NDF)	Preemptive strikes, precipitate alliance intervention
Imperialist	When domination is stable: fear, avoid conflict, submit	When conflict is unstable: anger, shame, struggle for liberation
Colonial	Paternalistic policy guidance and direction	Most commonly nonviolent repression
Degenerate	Contempt, mobilize for competition	Disgust, offensive aggression
Rogue	Derogate, isolate	Hostility, violent repression (genocidal violence)

For example, the image of country A regarding country B is “~~e~~enemy” if country A perceives country B’s cultural status and capability as “~~e~~equal”, decision-making of country B as “~~s~~small elite”, and intention of country B as “~~h~~armful”. In other words, the enemy image arises when the relationship between the two groups or countries that are similar in cultural status and in power or strength is characterized by intense competition. Such relationships generate a sentiment of threat and a behavioral inclination to eliminate the threat by attacks. On the other hand, country A perceives country B as an “~~a~~lly” image when the two countries are not only equal in cultural status and capability but also are “~~v~~ery much like one's own group in value” (Cottam and Cottam, 2001, p.97). Once a country is classified with a particular image,

information about that country is evaluated through that particular perceptual screen (Cottam and Cottam, 2001, p.19).

Many studies have been done over the three decades and significantly contributed to the advancement of the image theory (Cottam, 1994; Cottam and Cottam, 2001; Cottam and McCoy, 1999; Blanton, 1997; Alexander et al., 1999 and 2005). The image theory was extensively applied to the international conflicts in Latin America and other parts of the world. Those studies extended our knowledge and understanding of international conflicts. They also contributed to the theoretical development of the image theory.

Cottam and Marenin (1999) examined the problem of cooperation between the US and Mexico with respect to the drug war. Illegal drugs flowing into the U.S from Mexico has exacerbated drug problem in the U.S. The U.S. had problems with illegal drugs flowing from Mexico for many years. According to the authors, “about 70% of cocaine, 20% of heroin, 50% of marijuana, and 90% of methamphetamines consumed in the U.S. enter from or are produced in Mexico” (p. 209). In order to enforce drug trafficking, cooperation between the two countries often conflicted due, in part, to the two countries have competing attitudes about nationalism and different perceptual imagery. The US perceives Mexico as a colonial image while Mexico views the US as an imperialist image. As a result, these images have created an atmosphere of mistrust between the two countries and exacerbated disagreements in terms of drug enforcement. Moreover, when negative images of other countries are combined with nationalism, it creates more animosity and confrontational behaviors

According to the authors, due to their nationalistic characteristics, instead of solving drug trafficking problems, they blame each other for the problems and neither country wants to recognize its own weaknesses. For example, while Mexico blames the U.S. for a heavy appetite

for drugs, the United States blames Mexico for corruption and trafficking. Moreover, both countries do not want the other to interfere with their domestic affairs. For instance, Mexico does not want the U.S. to tell them how to police while the United States does not want Mexico to tell them about public health problems in the U.S (Cottam et al. 2004, p. 214-15).

While Cottam and Marenin explained how imperial and dependent images have caused cooperation in the drug war between the United States and Mexico, Shannon Blanton (1996) explained how Ronald Reagan's negative image of the Soviet Union led to more aggressive policies in Latin America. According to Blanton, Ronald Reagan's enemy image of the USSR, dependent image of El Salvador, and positive self-image of the U.S. led him to implement a more aggressive policy toward El Salvador during the 1980s when El Salvador was experiencing civil war. Since the U.S saw El Salvador as a dependent image, the U.S saw El Salvador as an inferior country. Therefore, it is viewed as "needing its careful guidance" (Blanton 1996, p. 26). Thus, the U.S. leadership viewed military support for anti-Communist forces in El Salvador as necessary, since El Salvador could not fend for itself (Blanton, 1996).

For Reagan, international politics became a struggle between the good, democratic United States and the evil, totalitarian Soviet Union. Thus, the guerillas in El Salvador were regarded as pawns of the "Evil Empire". U.S. military support to El Salvador reflected an attempt to resist the perceived evil. Blanton concludes by suggesting that U.S. policy was tied to Reagan's images of both the USSR and El Salvador. Unable to see the complexity of the political and social problems of Latin America, Reagan used the enemy and dependent images to depict the Soviet Union and El Salvador, respectively, and to affect his aggressive policymaking and support for right-wing forces within El Salvador.

Cottam (1994) also applied image theory to explain U.S. intervention policy in Latin America. The author argues that enemy and dependent images explain U.S. intervention policy in Latin America both during the Cold War and post-Cold War. Although the enemy image disappeared after the Cold War, the dependent image of Latin America still remains. During the Cold War, U.S. leaders viewed the Soviet Union in the enemy image and Latin America's countries in the dependent image. As a result, the U.S. implemented containment policies concerning the Soviet Union and intervening policies in Latin America. The dependent image is said to be that of a "childlike people, incapable of making and implementing decisions without guidance from one's own state" (Cottam, 1994, pp. 10-11). As a result, the U.S. ended up intervening in many crises in Latin America from the intervention in Guatemala in 1954 to the Cuban Revolution and the later Bay of Pigs fiasco.

Cottam and McCoy (1999) shows that misrepresentation of one's image resulted in a failed U.S. mission in Somalia. The authors argued that the U.S.'s image of Somalia which is dependent misrepresents of the U.S. policy toward Somalia. The U.S. image of Somalia was tied to a view that Somalis were a "simple childlike culture; an ineffectual culture, incompetent people who must be guided by their superiors; people who have insignificant power and can be dealt with easily" (p. 131). This was clearly a miscalculation of Somalia. It worsened the U.S. policy choices. As a result, the U.S. was forced to withdraw its forces from Somalia. Thus, if the situation or environment change, but the image does not change, the policymaker will misread the situation and will worsen the policy outcome.

Alexander et al. (2005a) applied image theory to study the image of Lebanese regarding the U.S. by surveying one hundred forty-five Lebanese participants. According to the study, participants were more likely to hold the barbarian image of the United States than the enemy,

imperialist, or ally images because participants perceive the United States as having relatively superior power, inferior cultural status, and goals that are incompatible with those of Lebanon. Furthermore, according to Alexander et al., social identification also has an impact on the formation of images. In their study in Lebanon, Alexander et al. concluded that those who identified with the Arab world had a barbarian image of the U.S and those who identified with the West had an ally image of the U.S.

However, only a few studies applied the image theory to internal conflicts or ethnic conflicts. For example, Michael Infranco (2005) studied genocide in Rwanda and Garcia (2008) studied Drug Cartels in the United States respectively. Infranco (2005) applied the image theory to explain the behavior of perpetrators in pre-genocide, during genocide and post-genocide periods in Rwanda. According to the study, Hutu extremists had a negative or rouge image of Tutsis long before the genocide occurred. But as the civil war between the Patriotic Front of *Rwanda* (PRF) and the government progressed, the violence became more intense. Hutus started attacking Tutsis because Hutus believed that Tutsis were supporters of the PRF. The attack was not on a genocidal scale. During the genocide, the political elite of the Hutu continued to stress the negative image of Tutsis and started the mass killing of Tutsis. The killing was mainly ~~driven~~ by Hutu fears that Tutsis had an ultimate ambition to regain the dominance they had lost in the post-1959 period” (p.256).

During both pre-genocide and during genocide, Hutus had a ~~rouge~~” image of Tutsi and viewed them as having an inferior capability and culture. In post-genocide, the image of Hutus regarding Tutsis shifted from ~~rouge~~” to ~~barbarian~~” because the RPF gained victory against the Hutus controlled government. Tutsis’ capability changed from an inferior to a superior. Therefore, ~~the~~ likelihood of a new genocide was minimal.” However, in post-genocide, Infranco

(2005) argued that it was hard to assess Hutus' emotional state because they were reluctant to discuss their views of Tutsis. But "there was still a feeling from the Hutus side that the Tutsis had harmful intentions towards them" because Hutus who fled to refugee camps believed that if they went back home, they would be arrested or killed for their acts of genocide (Infranco, 2005, pp.254-256).

Garcia (2008) also applied the image theory to study Drug Cartels in the United States. Garcia examined the images of Latin American drug traffickers and the U.S. law enforcement officers regarding each other. Garcia also examined how each group's image dictates the behavior of these actors. The study suggested that the U.S government or law enforcement has a rogue image of drug traffickers and drug traffickers have an image of the U.S. law enforcement as imperialism. These images play major roles in how law enforcement implements drug trafficking policies and how drug traffickers responded to law enforcement. Garcia argued that "when it comes to making decisions about the allocation of resources to fight these criminal elements, they are being made based on the stereotypes the government has, and not on the actual security threat these narcos pose to our communities" (p. 28). In some cases, some drug traffickers were being prosecuted and given harsh sentences even when they were not violent offenders and did not pose a real security threat to communities. For instance, "court observations indicated that prosecutors are actually legitimizing or even elevating the reputation of some of these non-violent offenders" (p.28).

B. Image and nationalism

The manifestation of images causes different political behaviors depending on whether or not the people are nationalistic. For example, Cottam and Cottam (2001) argued that if people are nationalistic, they view the territorial state and national community as their main political in-

group and other states are potential out-groups and view domestic out-groups as being disloyal to the nation. Nationalists use image to perceive out-groups or other countries when other countries offer either opportunities or threats (p. 97). For example, in Cottam and Marenin (1999), the authors argue that when the nationalism combines with images of other countries, nationalists tend to be more sensitive to threats from abroad and also perceive the in-group in a highly positive manner. The relation between the US and Mexico with respect to the drug war become more intense because the Mexican leadership is highly sensitive to the US demands, especially when it comes to sovereign issues and drug enforcement.

C. Image change

When compared to beliefs and attitudes, an image is considered to be more difficult to change. Once it is formed, image is hard to change. An image can change, but it will take considerable policy efforts to bring about that change. If it changes, most of the time, it changes only in intensity. For example, in the case of Ronald Reagan, the U.S. image of El Salvador at the beginning of the conflict was viewed as a high threat level, and with the passage of time and the processing of information, that image changed to a low threat level. Sometimes image can change according to issues. In the case of Mexico and the U.S., according to Cottam and Cottam (2001), the US image toward Mexico changed after Mexico refused to sell natural gas to the U.S. in the late 1970s. Instead of selling to the U.S., Mexican government burned it off since other buyers were not available (p. 162). After this incident, the US image of Mexico changed from colonial to lean toward an allied image. Another factor of image change is if its attribution changes. For example, if the attributes of Mexico's image such as capability or culture changes, it will change the U.S image of Mexico.

These images are all dependent on how one country perceives others. They are not based on facts. However, they are important for analysis of policy decision because, in some cases, policy makers do not really perceive other countries based on actual facts in the policy making process, but are based on policy makers' perceptions of other countries. For example, policy makers or state leaders perceive other countries' power based on the perception of power rather than actual power. In other words, when policy makers define and evaluate a conflict with another country, policy makers do not perceive intention on basis the other's actual power (Cottam and Cottam 2001, p.22)

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES AND METHODOLOGY

A. Research hypotheses

This study attempts to test four hypotheses on the premise that the ethnic conflict in Burma is caused by three main factors: threatening identity, nationalism, and the image of one group about another. Identity is important to individuals or groups. According to the Social Identity Theory, people affiliate or identify with their own groups because the increase in their group identification will also increase their self-esteem. Similarly, according to Searle-White (2001), national or group identity “allows us to provide our lives with a purpose and a sense of value as well as give us a chance to value ourselves more positively” (p.47). Therefore, threatening a group’s identity not only threatens psychological annihilation but also physical annihilation. In other words, the threatening of group identity poses a threat to physical survival as well as cultural survival. Consequently, the threatening of identity could result in rising nationalism, which then results in political conflict including rebellion and secession movements. The ethnic identity and nationalist sentiments may play an important role in the ethnic conflict in Burma.

In order to understand the root causes of ethnic conflict in Burma, we also need to understand how ethnic groups perceive themselves and each other. According to the image theory, the perceptions of one another are based on seven images: ally, colonialist, imperialist, enemy, rogue, dependent, and barbarian. All of these images have accompanying policy predispositions or action tendencies, and conflict parties use these images in planning and executing conflicts. In other words, when other ethnic groups are perceived to fit one of these images, particular policy patterns occur (Cottam and Cottam, 2001, p.121). For example, the

barbarian image appears when in-group sees out-group as a threat, harmful intentions, culture inferior, and/or a capable superior. So when a barbarian image is present, conflict will occur. Since the out-group has a superior capability, the in-group prefers to engage in indirect conflict, or to form alliances to fight for their demands (Cottam et al. 2004, p.53). In this study, therefore, I plan to test the following hypotheses:

H1: If a threat to ethnic identity is perceived, then ethnic conflict will occur in Burma.

H2: If the Mon views the Burman as relatively superior in power, inferior in cultural status, and a source of threat or harmful intention, then a barbarian image would be endorsed.

H3: If the Mons strongly identify with their ethnic group, they would have stronger endorsement of the barbarian image of Burman and would more likely pursue conflict or political separation.

H4: If the image of the Mon regarding the Burman is a barbarian, the Mon would form an alliance with other ethnic groups to fight for their autonomy.

B. Methodology

The ethnic conflict in Burma has been the conflict between the majority Burman and seven other major, non-Burman ethnic groups (Arakanese, Chin, Kachin, Kayar, Karen, Mon, and Shan) rather than among the non-Burman ethnic groups themselves. Of all these non-Burman ethnic groups, the Mon has the longest history of conflict with the Burman. The conflicts between the Mon and the Burman have been going on since 11th century A.D. Most studies have used other ethnic groups such as Karen and Shan as a case study to describe ethnic conflicts in

Burma. However, only a few studies have been investigated the case of Mon ethnic group. Therefore, this research chooses to study the Mon as a case study. Given the longest-standing conflict with the Burman, studying the Mon case would allow us to better understand the root causes of ethnic conflict in Burma.

This study employs both qualitative and quantitative research methods. According to Robert Murray Thomas (2003), the combined method provides the best answer to research questions because “each research method is suited to answering certain types of questions but not appropriate to answering other types” (p.7). In other words, methods have their own drawbacks, e.g. the quantitative method has limitations on explanatory power and the qualitative method has limits generalization. While quantitative methods allow us to compare results and outcomes, the qualitative method will tell the story behind the quantitative comparisons and results. By applying both qualitative and quantitative methods, we are able to answer research questions, which are not answered by either method alone. Furthermore, according to Kidder and Fine (1987), applying both methods also “enhance the validity and reliability of one’s study” (p.72). Therefore, in this study, a combination of the two research methods was employed to capture a more realistic explanation of ethnic conflict in Burma.

The quantitative research allows identifying images and level of ethnic identity of an ethnic group, while the qualitative method is used to describe how those images and components of ethnic identity would cause the conflict and how the conflict could be solved. In the qualitative method, the study uses archives, interviews, statements, and speeches for an in-depth analysis of ethnic conflict in Burma. In the quantitative method, the study uses survey data collected among the Mon people. From those survey data, the level of ethnic identity of the Mon people from different demographic backgrounds and geographic areas are examined. The image

of the Mon regarding the Burman is also identified and analyzed to understand how the image perceptions may lead to the conflicts.

(1) Quantitative method

Surveys

Surveys were conducted in order to measure the level of ethnic identity and to identify the images the Mon ethnic group has of the Burman. The surveys include the Mon population who reside in Burma and overseas, i.e., Thailand, United States, and Europe. The survey participants included political and social leaders, political and social activists, students, workers, and Buddhist monks. Most of them are also highly aware of the political issues in Burma and are highly involved in political and social activities. The participants also represent diverse demographic backgrounds and political and social interests. Participants included members of political parties, women's groups, youth groups, Buddhist monk groups and other civil society organizations.

Due to the political situation in Burma, conducting surveys in Burma was a great challenge. Under the watch of the Burmese military intelligence, the volunteers who helped conduct the survey and those who participated in the survey risked being arrested or punished. Therefore, most of the survey's samples from the Mon population inside Burma were taken when groups of them came to the conferences, meetings, training classes and social events held in the Thai-Burma border areas. Some survey samples were taken at the teaching monasteries, where Mon monks from various towns and villages go to study the teaching of Buddha.

Even though a complete-random sampling approach was not employable in the surveys, the sample populations were from most of the Mon areas inside Burma.

Samples were mostly collected during meetings and conferences, where the attendees were representatives from different Mon organizations based in different areas inside Burma. For example, the Mon youth's conference invited two representatives from each township of Mon areas while the Mon National Conference's attendees were representatives of most of the Mon organizations in Mon areas. Similarly, the Mon Women's Conference and Mon Monks' Conference participants were representatives across Mon State.

Survey procedures

The first set of samples was taken in May 2006 during the Third Mon National Conference held in the New Mon State Party (NMSP)'s controlled area. About 88 representatives from 24 Mon organizations attended the conference. Most of the conference attendees were Mon representatives from Burma, overseas, and Thailand. The questionnaires were distributed at the conference; sixty representatives took the survey and returned the questionnaires the day after.

The second set of samples was taken during the Mon Youth's Conference held in NMSP's administrative areas in February 2007. Attendees were representatives of the Mon youth organizations from inside Burma. There were about 50 representatives at the conference. Thirty of them completed the questionnaires.

The third set of samples was taken at the conference of the Mon Buddhist monks held on the Thai-Burma border in May 2008. About 60 monk representatives from inside Burma attended the conference. Of these attendees, 50 of them responded to the survey. The fourth set of survey was taken during the Mon Women's Conference at Thai-Burma border in May 2008. About 50 women from across Mon State attended the conference and 30 of them responded to

the survey. Some of the samples were taken in Mon areas inside Burma during the meetings and social training classes organized by the Mon Youth Progressive Organization (MYPO) while others were taken at a temple where student monks from different parts of Mon State came to study the teachings of Buddha. Buddhist monks were included in the survey due to their prominent social and political roles in the Mon society.

For the Mon population from outside Burma, the surveys were taken from the Mon residing in the United States, Europe, and Thailand. The first set of the samples was collected during the 12th annual conference of the Monland Restoration Council in Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA in December 2006. The questionnaires were distributed at the beginning of the conference and the respondents returned the completed questionnaires on the same day. Of 100 attendees, 70 responded to the questionnaires. Surveys were also conducted among the Mon living in Akron, Ohio and Wilmington in North Carolina in the United States. The survey was also conducted online. The respondents were from different countries around the world including Burma.

Online survey

The online survey was conducted from September 2009 to January 2010. The survey was designed to include not only the Mon ethnic group but also other ethnic groups in Burma such as Arakanese, Chin, Karen, Kachin Shan, and Burman for the purpose of comparing among the Mon, Non-Burman, and Burman ethnic groups.

For the Mon participants, one additional question was added to the online questionnaire to determine if they had already participated in the paper-survey conducted earlier. If they had taken the paper-survey, they were excluded in the overall analyses. But they were included in the analysis which used only online samples.

The online survey consisted of 45 questionnaires on the identity, images, and action tendencies. Totally, 287 people responded to the survey. Of these 287 respondents, 135 are Mon, 52 Chin, 31 Shan, 19 Karen, 16 Arakanese, 4 Kachin, and 30 Burman. Nineteen, out of 135, Mon participants had to be excluded in the overall analysis because they had already participated in the paper-survey.

As the Mon ethnic group was the focus of this study, the questionnaires were prepared both in Mon and English. For other ethnic groups including the Burman, the questionnaires were only provided in English. Non-Burman ethnic groups were very responsive to the survey. However, given numbers of Burman population living outside Burma, the response from the Burman ethnic group was relatively low. One of the possible explanations could be that the Burman do not want to express either positive or negative views toward non-Burman ethnic groups as the questionnaires are racially, culturally, and politically sensitive. Since the limited number of Burman responders was too small to be representative, the Burman group sample was excluded from the comparison. Thus, a total of 257 were used for the analyses.

Participants

A total of 692 people participated in both paper and online survey. Of these, 540 are Mon ethnic group and 152 are non-Mon ethnic groups. Of these 540 Mon ethnic group 389 are male and 145 are female. Of the 389 males, 245 are laymen and 145 are Buddhist monks. 319 of the participants lived in Burma while 199 lived outside Burma. 22 of them did not identify location (Table 3). For non-Mon ethnic groups, 82% are male and 12 % are female. 42% lived in Burma while 58 % lived in overseas. Since Burman ethnic group sample is not used in the analysis, the usable sample of non-Mon peoples for the analysis is 122 (See table 4).

Online survey procedure

The survey questionnaires for all of the ethnic groups were posted on the website created for conducting the online survey (<http://www.monstudysociety.org/>). The invitation messages were distributed to social and political email groups and networks with a Burma focus. Most of the related social and political email groups are available at <http://www.burmalibrary.org/show.php?cat=518>.

For example, for the Mon ethnic group, the invitation message was distributed in the Monnet Yahoo Group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/monnet/> and Mon Youth social network at <http://monyouthfoundation.ning.com/>. Each of these groups had about 300 and 200 members respectively at the time the invitation message was distributed. After the initial invitation, follow-ups or reminder messages were sent out every two weeks until the closing date of the survey. For other non-Burman ethnic groups the invitation messages were distributed to their respective Yahoo Groups as well as Burma's related Yahoo Groups. The invitation message for the Burman ethnic group was distributed only to Burman's related Yahoo Groups. Totally, the messages were distributed to approximately 20 Burma's related Yahoo Groups. The numbers of members of those groups ranged from 100 to 4,000.

Survey design

In order to test the validity of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted in May 2006 with 16 Mon youths on the Thai-Burma border. In the study, the youths were asked not only to fill out the questionnaire but also to make comments and suggestions on questionnaire to assure the items were clearly stated or have unambiguous meanings. Based on their responses, some changes were made in the structure of the questionnaire. In the final version of the questionnaire, the questions were organized into 2 two major parts: ethnic identity and image.

The questionnaire began with demographic questions which include age, gender, education, and the area of origin or country of residence. The first part of the questionnaire included five components of national identity: ethnic pride, ethnic preference, out-group comparison, out-group differentiation, and ambitions for autonomy. The second part included questions measuring the perceived structural relations between the Mon and the Burman and the Mon's images of Burman.

Most of the questionnaires used for measuring Mon ethnic identity in this study were adopted or translated from the National Identity Survey prepared by the International Social Survey Program (ISSP), Blank and Schmidt (2003), Mummendey et al. (2001), and Dekker et al. (2003). The ISSP National Identity Survey provides a wide range of attitudinal variables, which are related to sense of national or ethnic identity. These include national pride, national preference and nationalist orientations or attitudes. The nationalist oriented questionnaires include the national comparison and attitudes toward out-groups such as immigrants and minorities (ISSP). However, some of questionnaires designed by ISSP, Blank and Schmidt (2003), Mummendey et al. (2001) were designed for nations with states such as Australia, Canada, USA and Germany, not for nations without states such as Mon or Basque. The questions related to the national flag, anthem, or national institutions are not applicable to measurement of the ethnic preference or pride of the Mon because the Mon currently do not have their own national institutions or national flag although overseas Mons use NMSP's flag as a national flag. Therefore, some survey questions developed by Dekkar et al. (2003) to measure the Basque ethnic attitudes were incorporated in this study.

Some of the questions in this survey were also uniquely designed for measuring Mon ethnic identity based on the Mon culture, literature, religion, and historical background. For

example, a question asking if the participants feel that the Mon are noble people can be used to indicate their ethnic pride. Mon music has had a long history and has been popular among the Mon populations in recent years. Thus, the questions on their preference of Mon music over those of Burman and other nationalities may be a more reliable measure for the Mon ethnic preference.

A total of sixty five questions were formulated to measure the Mon ethnic identity and Mon's image of Burman. Of these sixty five questions, 25 questions attempt to measure ethnic identity and 20 questions are the measure of images. Other questions are included to ask opinions on ethnic conflict related issues and to test the validity of the survey (See Appendix F). The overall scale was created by assigning the 5-point Likert scales (1= strongly agree to 5= strongly disagree) to each item.

For demographic variables, respondents were asked their age range, gender, level of education, and country of residence for demographical and regional analyses. The income variable is not included in the study because there is not systematic documentation of incomes in Burma.

The respondents were also asked the type of education systems under which they were educated and level of education they have completed. The monastic education has four levels: basic, middle, high, and Dhamasariya standards. In order to measure the general education of the respondents, the monastic education levels are coded to be equivalent to the levels of state education, e.g., Basic and middle standards under the Monastic system were coded as equivalent to the levels of elementary school under the state education system. Dhamasariya was coded as equivalent to 3-4 four years college education or BA/BS Degree. Some of Buddhist monks who

have studied in colleges and universities in Sri Lanka were considered to be educated under the state education system.

For image analysis, the survey questionnaire instrument was adopted from Alexander et al. (2005a, 2005b, and 1999) and Bilali (2004). The questionnaire items include perception of goal compatibility, harmful intention, relative status, and relative power between the two ethnic groups. The questionnaire was prepared both in Mon and English. The relative power was assessed based on three items, by asking respondents whether they viewed the Mon as superior, equal, or inferior in comparison to the Burman in terms of military, political and economic power. The respondents can rank their opinion on each of these three items from one to five where one is strongly agree and 5 is strongly disagree with the statement. For example, to assess the relative economic power, respondents are asked to respond the following items. 1) the Mon are wealthier than the Burman and vice versa, and 2) the Mon and the Burman are equal in terms of economic power. For the relative status, the respondents are asked how they perceive the statuses of the two cultures. The questions include 1) The Mon's culture is superior to the Burman's culture, 2) The Burman culture is superior to the Mon culture, and 3) The Mon's and Burman's cultures have an equal status.

(2) Qualitative method

The research uses published interviews, speeches, press releases, newspapers, reports, and existing literature for an in-depth analysis of ethnic conflict in Burma. The newspapers and journals published inside Burma are accessed via the internet. Many ethnic group- based newspapers and reports published in Thailand and along the Thai-Burma border provide valuable resources for the analysis. Burma Online Library (<http://www.burmalibrary.org/>) also provides

valuable resources. It contains thousands of Burma related articles, news, and books. Moreover, this study also collects information from reports published by various human rights organizations and government agencies. The qualitative method is used in explaining identity threat and ethnic conflict, the effects of conflict, and conflict resolution, but the qualitative data are used only to supplement the quantitative data (survey data) in measuring image attributes such as in-group and out-group capability, culture, and intentions.

Table 3: Sample of Mon ethnic group

Characteristics	N	%
Male (laymen)	245	45.88
Male (Monk)	144	26.97
Female	145	27.15
Age 16-20	148	28.19
Age 21-30	161	30.67
Age 31-40	141	26.86
Age 41-50	49	9.33
Age 51-60	19	3.62
Age 60 Over	7	1.33
Elementary	157	30.49
High School	161	31.26
1-2 College	48	9.32
BA/Bsc	128	24.85
Advanced Degree	21	4.08
State education	345	66.86
Monastic education	171	33.14
Burma	319	61.58
Overseas	199	38.42
Leaders*	52	9.63
Non-leaders**	488	90.37
Total	540	100

*Sample was collected from 3rd Mon National Conference at Thai-Burma border

** Sample was collected somewhere else

Table 4. Sample of non-Mon ethnic groups

Characteristics	N	%
Male	99	81.82
Female	22	18.2
Age 16-20	3	2.46
Age 21-30	47	38.52
Age 31-40	42	34.43
Age 41-50	11	9.02
Age 51-60	12	9.84
Age 60 Over	7	5.74
Elementary	1	0.8
High School	12	9.84
1-2 College	16	13.11
BA/Bsc	59	48.36
Advanced Degree	34	27.87
Burma	48	41.74
Overseas	67	58.26
Total	122	100

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A. Ethnicity

Burma is the second largest country after Indonesia in Southeast Asia with a land area of 676,000 square kilometers (Than, 2005). It is also one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. Burma is made of eight major ethnic groups: Burman, Mon, Karen, Karenni, Shan, Arakanese, Chin, and Kachin. Each of these ethnic groups has its own language, culture and customs. In addition, there are many smaller groups such as Wa, PaO, Palaung, Padaung, Naga, and Kokang. Over one hundred dialects are spoken by these ethnic groups. Some ethnic groups such as the Chin have 53 dialects or sub-ethnic groups. According to the Burmese military regime, the State Peace Development Council (SPDC) (formally the State Law and Order Restoration Council), Burma has 135 national races (Smith, 1994, p.18; Than 2005) because the government considers each different dialect as a separate ethnic group. For example, the government considers the Chin as 53 separate ethnic groups (Min, Hla, 2000; See Appendix A). Other ethnic groups such as Chinese and Indian or Rohingya (Muslim) are not included in Burma's list of national races (Smith, 1994, p.35).

As of the year 2000, Burma's population was slightly over 50 million (Than, 2000, p. 68). According to a 1983 census, Burman constituted 69 percent of the total population. The next largest groups were Shan (8.5 %), Karen (6.2 %), Arakanese or Rakhine (4.5 %), Mon (2.4%), Chin (2.2%), Kachin (1.4 %), Karenni (0.04 %), and others including Chinese and Indians (5.4%) (Smith, Martin, 1999; Steinberg, 2001:p.xx; and Than, 2005). However, the percentages of non-Burman ethnic groups may well be underestimated. The majority of non-Burman ethnics are living in rural areas, which the government has designated as war zones

because armed conflict between government troops and ethnic armed groups often occur in those areas. Due to security reasons, it has been very difficult to gain access to those areas and collect accurate census data. Since ethnic groups are defined along linguistic lines, members of those ethnic groups who are no longer speaking their native languages were counted as Burman. Smith (1994) pointed out that “territorial borders and population statistics are keenly disputed. Quite consciously, there has been no attempt to take an accurate ethnic survey since the last British census in 1931, which itself contained many errors” (Smith, Martin, 1994, p.17). Although the non-Burman ethnic groups officially account for one-third of the country’s population, the non-Burman states accounts for more than 50% percent of the total land of the country (Kramer, 2009, p.4).

In terms of religion, Buddhists constituted 89.4 percent of the population, while about 4.9 % were Christian, 3.9 % were Muslim, and 0.5% were Hindu (Than, 2005, p. 69). Ethnic Chin and Kachin are predominantly Christians while Arakanese, Mon, Burman, and Shan are predominantly Buddhists. Both the Karen and Karenni groups comprise a mix of Buddhist and Christian population. Because the Burman and the Buddhists are the majority in the country, it is not surprising to see that Burman culture and Buddhism have significant influences in the political and social life of the people of Burma (Smith, Martin, 1994, p. 33).

In terms of ethnic territory, Burma is divided into 14 administrative regions, comprising seven states and seven divisions (See map 1). The names of the states are based on the major ethnic group inhabiting the particular regions. Most ethnic groups are the majority in their respective states (Kramer, 2009, p.4.) However, some smaller ethnic groups are also living in those non-Burman ethnic states. For example, there are many other smaller ethnic groups such as Pao, Palaung, Wa, Lahu, and Akha living in Shan State, while many Shans also live outside

Shan State such as Kachin and Karenni, and many Burmans also live in the cities and larger towns of non-Burman states (Kramer, 2009, p.4; See map 2). The seven divisions are designated as Burman areas, but there are substantial numbers of non-Burman ethnics living in the seven divisions. For example, there are many Karens and Mons residing in the Tennassarim Division, many Karens living in the Irrawaddy Division and many Mons living in Pegu and Rangoon Divisions (Kramer, 2009, p.4).

Since the Burman don't have their own state, non-Burmans feel that their states are treated as subordinated states to Burman regions. Burman are commanding and controlling their affairs. For example, a Shan leader, Chao-Tzang Yawngghwe" suggested on drafting Burma's constitution that Burman leaders should concentrate on Burman affairs rather than controlling and commending all ethnic groups' affairs in Burma. In his words, " if they [Burman] love their people, the Burmans, must focus their attention and energy on the Burma State [Burman region] and its government, as must nationalities' elites and leaders on their respective states and governments...Burman elites and leaders must therefore re-orient themselves to serving their own Burman people, to develop them, improve their lives, etc., instead of aspiring to be great "national" leaders, big bosses, and big brothers of the alleged "more backward" areas and ethnic groups" (Yawngghwe, 1999). Therefore, to prevent the monopolization of power by Burmans, non-Burman leaders proposed that the Burman should also have their own state just like all other major ethnic groups (Smith, Martin, 2002, p.8). In a draft constitution written by Burmese opposition groups at Thai-Burma border, Burma is divided into eight states instead of seven. The draft assigned Burman into one state, but the draft did not state which regions are included in the Burman state (FCDCC, 2008). However, the new constitution adopted by the Burmese military government in 2008 does not assign Burman to a state. The constitution keeps the seven

divisions and seven states but has created six self-administered areas for smaller ethnic minority groups. These are the Naga Self-Administered Zone in Sagaing Division; the Danu, Pao, Palaung, Kokang Self-Administered Zones and the Wa Self-Administered Division in Shan State (Burma2008's Constitution). Although non-Burman ethnic groups have been assigned to their own states, the Burman have controlled all the administrative and military powers in those states (Smith, Martin, 1994).

A. Migrations of ethnic groups

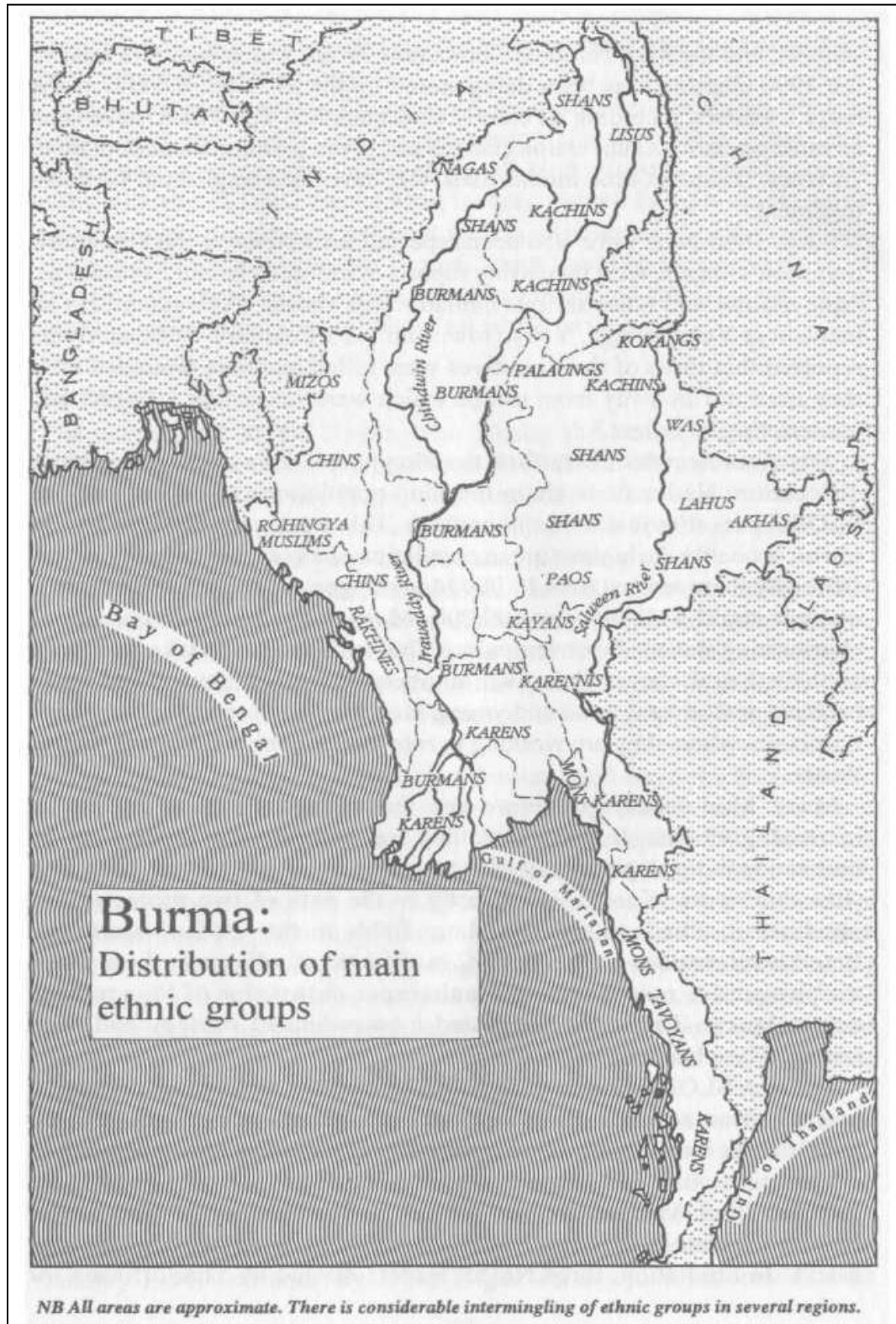
Of all the ethnic groups, the Mon are considered to be the first group to arrive in present-day Burma (Fredholm, 1993, p.19; Smith, Martin, 1999, p.32). Although their arrival date is not exactly known, most historians believed that the Mon arrived in present-day Burma around 1000 B.C. (Thein, Tun, 1995, p.7). They settled in today's Lower Burma and established their Kingdoms in Thaton and Pegu. They were also the first group to have contact with Buddhism in India and introduced Buddhism to the rest of Southeast Asia (Fredholm, 1993, p. 19). The second group to come to Burma was the Pyu. Their arrival is estimated to be around the third century A.D. However, Pyus were assimilated into various ethnic groups in Burma and no longer exist as a distinct ethnic group in Burma (Bunge, 1983, p.4). The Burman are believed to be the third group to arrive. Their arrival is estimated around the ninth century A.D. And they settled in Central and Upper Burma (Fredholm, 1993, p.20). It is believed that Arakanese were also part of the Burman migrations into the area (Silverstein, 1980, p. 13). Some historians have claimed that the Karen and Chin arrived before the Burman. However, Fredholm (1993) argued

Map 1. States and Divisions



Source: Karen Human Rights Group, 2005

Map 2. Distribution of Burma's main ethnic groups (Smith, Martin, 1994)



that there is little evidence for this claim (p. 20). Shan arrival date into Burma is not exactly known. Some historians believed that Shan entered Burma before Christian era while other believed after that. However, a Shan historian, Sai Aung Tun believed that Shan entered Burma at least 12th century A.D. since the word *Syam* (Shan) appeared on the stones inscriptions of Pagan many times (Tun, Sai, 2009, pp. 20-21).

C. History of ethnic conflict prior to colonial rule

Prior to colonial rule, the Mon, Arakanese, Shan, and Burman were independent kingdoms. While the Mon kingdom covered today's lower Burma, the Burman kingdom centered in Pagan which is located in today's central Burma. The Arakanese and Shan ruled the territories where their states are currently located. However, the third Burman empire brought Mon, Shan, and Arakanese kingdoms under Burman rule (Bunge, 1983, pp. 11-13). The history of Burma prior to colonial rule was one of bloody conflicts between Mon, Shan, and Arakan ethnics and the Burman (Bunge, 1983, pp. 11-13). The well-known wars between Burman and non-Burman were the three Burman empire's wars of 11th, 15th, and 18th centuries. All of these three major wars started between the Mon and the Burman and subsequently spread to all of Burma and part of Thailand and India. Although the Burman attempted to integrate various ethnic groups during these three major wars, none of these wars successfully integrated the various ethnic groups living within its imperial administrative domain. Groups such as the Kachin, and Karenni, and Chin had never been directly ruled by Burman kings (Curtis, 1995, p. 273). Karenni State was not incorporated in formal Burma border until 1948 (Fredholm, 1993, p. 25).

Among all of the ethnic groups in Burma, the Mon and Burman had the bloodiest conflicts in the pre-colonial era and also had the longest ethnic conflict in the history of Burma.

The conflict between the Mon and Burman began in 1057 A.D. when Burman King Anoratha invaded the Mon Kingdom, Thaton, and captured the Mon king, Manuha, along with 30,000 of skilled workers, intellectuals, priests, and other hostages and brought them to the Burman Kingdom, Pagan (Bunge, 1983, p. 5; Tucker, 2001, p.13). The capture can also be called an “all-out ‘capture’ of culture” (Fredholm, 1993, p.22). The captured Mon served Burman in many ways. Since the Mon civilization was highly developed, Burman adopted the Mon’s culture, arts, alphabets, and writing system as well as religion, Theravada Buddhism (Fredholm, 1993, p.22). The war was also “the first of a long series of the Mon-Burman wars that have continued in one form or another to the present day” (South, 2003, p. 73). The war was also the beginning of first Burman empire.

The occupation of the Mon Kingdom by the Burman came to an end in 1287 when Mongols invaded and destroyed the Burman Kingdom, Pagan. After the Burman Kingdom was destroyed, the Mon regained their independence and established their kingdom in Martaban, near their former kingdom, Thaton. Later the capital of the kingdom was moved to Pegu, north of Thaton, where today’s Pegu Division is in lower Burma. At the meantime, Burman had established their Kingdom in Toungoo, southern central Burma (Fredholm, 1993, pp. 21-22).

The independent Mon Kingdom lasted until 1546 when the Burman King, Tabinshwehti of Toungoo again invaded the Mon Kingdom. A Mon rebellion assassinated Tabinshwehti in 1550 but the revolt was crushed by Bayinaung, the successor of Tabinshwehti. This was the beginning of the second Burman empire’s war, during which Burman attempted to integrate all neighboring regions into Burman’s empire under the leadership of Bayinaung. The successive Burman kings ruled the Mon kingdom until 1752 (Fredholm, 1993, pp.21-22; MUL, 1997, p. 2).

In 1752, Mon overthrew the Burman ruler and regained their independence. Mon also occupied Upper Burma, the heartland of Burman. However, the occupation of the Mon did not last very long. U Aung Zeya, a Burman village headman, proclaimed himself king of Burma, Alaungpaya, and fought against the Mon occupation. As the Burman rebellion became stronger, the Mon retreated. Finally, in 1757, the Mon kingdom fell under Burman rule again (Fredholm, 1993, p. 22).

The Mon occupation in Upper Burma angered Alaungpaya, and he determined to exterminate Mon race in Burma because he saw the Mon as a threat to the Burman. Following the occupation of the Mon kingdom, Alaungpaya ~~per~~secuted the Mon by massacring over 3,000 learned Mon monks near Rangoon; by burning down holy scriptures and monasteries; by proscribing Mon language and literature; and by genocidal mass execution whereby thousands of Mon were exterminated in several stockade-inferno holocausts. Racial discrimination was rife and hundreds of thousands of the Mon fled to Siam (Thailand) for safe heaven” (MUL, 1997, p3). This war between the Mon and the Burman led to the third Burman empire’s war, which the Alaungpaya dynasty extended beyond the border of Burma, into the northern part of India and into the northern part of Thailand in the south (Turker, 2001,p.28).

Similarly, the conflict between the Arakan ethnic group and the Burman has existed since the 11th century A.D. The Arakanese kingdom was repeatedly invaded by the Burman. The last Burman invasion of Arakanese kingdom was in 1785 when ~~B~~urmans defeated and destroyed the Arakanese kingdom, exiling the Arakanese king along with 20,000 of his subjects” (Silverstein, 1980, p.13). The Arakanese have been fighting to regain their autonomy from the Burman since then.

The Shan were also repeatedly invaded by the Burman. Unlike the Mon and the Arakanese, the Shan were granted autonomy when the British left Burma. The Mon and the Arakanese were left under the Burman rules. However, Shan autonomy was lost in 1962 when General Ne Win consolidated Burman rule by overthrowing the democratic government and nullified the 1947's constitution and Panglong Agreement (Smith, Martin, 2004).

2. Ethnic conflict under the British rule

Burma was colonized by the British, from 1824 to 1948, for more than one hundred years. However, the British did not control the whole of Burma until 1886 (Smith, Martin, 1999, p.40). The British fought three wars in order to capture the entire country. In the first war, 1824-26, the British occupied today's Arakan State, Mon State, and Tenasserim Division. In the second war, in 1852, the British took over today's Irrawaddy, Rangoon, and Pegu Divisions and put most of lower Burma under their control. After the final war in 1886, the British occupied the whole of Burma (Smith, Martin, 1999, pp. 40-41).

The British rule added more ethnic groups – Karen, Chin, Kachin, and Karenni—into Burma's ethnic conflict. Like other colonial rules in Asia and Africa, the British ruled Burma with a 'divide and rule' policy. In fact, Burma was already divided long before the British arrived (Curtis, 1995, p.273). But, the British took advantage of the divided society and applied the 'divide and rule' policy. Its 'divide-and-rule' further divided the divided society by favoring some groups, such as the Karens, Chin, and Kachins and discriminated against others such as Burman (Clements and Kean, 1994, p. 12). For example, British recreated ethnic identity of Karen, Kachin and Chin by introducing Christianity and by inventing their writing systems (Smith, Martin, 2002, p. 7). In doing so, the ethnic identity of those ethnic groups became more

salient and more different from that of Burman. For example, by adopting Christianity, Chins are able to unify different Chin tribes under a common identity (Sakhong, 2004). In other words, Christianity provides a new identity that allows the Chin tribes to unify and differentiate themselves from the Burman, who are Buddhists.

Similarly, the rise of Karen nationalism is also partly due to the reconstruction of its ethnic identity by the British. As Robert Taylor (1987) stated, ‘modern forms of ethnic nationalism in Burma are derived from the misguided racial theories and ascriptions of the colonial period. As with other minority groups in Southeast Asia, Karen ethnic identity has been labeled an artificial construction, based on speculative missionary ethnography and political expedient colonial classification’ (cited in South 2004, p.30). As former Prime Minister of Burma in the 1950s, U Ba Swe, claimed that ‘[i]n order to separate them culturally from the Burmese, they [British] converted the Karens to their religion and also created a separate literature and privileges for them’ (cited in Smith, Martin, 2002, p.7)

The British also gave preference to the non-Burman ethnic groups such as Karen, Chin, and Kachin over the Burman, and used non-Burman ethnic forces, especially Karen, to fight against the Burman. One of the preferences was military recruitment of Karen, Chin, and Kachin into the British army. The British recruited Karen, Chin, and Kachin for its army and police forces because they were loyal to the British (Tucker, 2001, pp.32-33). As of 1939 there were only 472 Burmans in the British-Burma Army, as compared with 1,448 Karens, 888 Chins and 881 Kachins (Smith, Martin, 1999, p. 44).

Moreover, the British also gave political preferences to most non-Burman groups. Since Non-Burman ethnic groups had never regarded themselves as Burman, the British offered them self-determination in exchange for nominal control. For example, the thirty-four Shan city-states

were brought under British rule by 1889, but their princes retained power over their respective territories (Fredholm, 1993, p. 25). The Karenni State and Kachin State did likewise. This relationship remained unchanged until after Burma's independence. While non-Burman groups enjoyed self-determinations, Burman were centrally ruled by the British (Fredholm, 1993, pp. 24-26).

The British occupation of Burma was followed by the arrival of Christian missionaries. Missionaries converted Chin, Kachin, and many Karens to Christianity. The missionaries not only provided them with a modern education, but also provided them with modern political institutions. With the help from the British, the Karen formed their first political party, Karen National Association in 1881 (Fredholm, 1993, p. 27).

Having received a modern education, the Karen were recruited for administrative positions under the British in Burma (Fredholm, 1993, 27). As of 1939, non-Burman outnumbered Burman by 20 to 1 in senior positions of the industry and commerce (Fredholm, 1993, p. 27). The majority of Burman nationalists resented the support given to these ethnic groups by the missionaries because Burman nationalists regarded all kinds of ethnic, economic and political developments as the mechanism for the continuation of colonial rule and consequently as a threat against Burman hegemony and identity (Fredholm, 1993, p. 27). Therefore, the Burman felt that, compared to those non-Burman ethnic groups, they were a disadvantaged group or backward group under the British rule. Thus, the “divide and rule” policy threatened the Burman ethnic identity and hegemony, which the Burman had enjoyed for many centuries. As a result, violence between Burman and Karen broke out right after Burma gained her independence. Indeed, the Burman initiated the violence by denying any ethnic rights to the

Karen, and the Karen became victims. The British rule also made the identity of other ethnic groups more salient and, in turn, led them to demand autonomy to secure their identity.

3. Ethnic conflict aftermath of the colonial rule

Burma's ethnic conflict started long before British rule. However, the fighting between the Burman and non-Burman (especially Mon) stopped during the British rule (South, 2003, p.33). The current ethnic conflict in Burma started right after Burma gained her independence from the British in 1948 (South, 2003, p.34). The Mon, Karen and Arakanese started fighting against the Burman- dominated government for their ethnic rights. While ethnic groups such as Shan, Chin, Kachin, and Karenni were granted autonomy under the Panglong Agreement, Mon, Karen, and Arakanese were denied even the basic rights to promote their culture and literature (South 2003, p.35).

The Karen under the leadership of the Karen National Union (KNU) and its armed wing- Karen National Defense organization (KNDO)--fought against the Burman dominant government. By 1949, the second largest city of Burma, Mandalay, fell under the KNU, and the Karen was also able to control most parts of Burma except Rangoon. When the KNU did not received any arms supplies from the British as expected, the KNU was no longer able to defend the offensive of Burman forces. Therefore, gradually, the KNU retreated to rural areas near Thai-Burma border. In September 1952, the Burmese Parliament created a Karen State within Burma. However, this action did not appease the KNU because the state territory did not include the Irrawaddy Delta area home of the largest settlement of Karen population. The Karen arms-struggle continues today (Smith, Martin, 1999, pp. 20-25).

The Mon took up arms under the leadership of the Mon People's Front (MPF) right after Burma's independence along with the Karen to fight against the Burman-dominated government. In August 1948, Mon and Karen leaders signed an agreement to fight together for the attainment of the independent Mon and Karen States. In 1958, the MPF surrendered their arms to the Burma central government in exchange of an autonomous Mon State, which was promised by the government. Most of the MPF leaders gave up their armed-struggle, but Nai Shwe Kyin, who did not trust the government remained underground and continued the struggle (Note: Nai Shwe Kyin later founded the New Mon State Party (NMSP), which had fought against the government till 1995). In 1962, General Ne Win took power in a military coup, and arrested most of the MPF leaders (Fredholm, 1993, pp. 131-135).

The promise of creating an autonomous Mon State was not honored by the Burman authority (Fredholm, 1993, p.132). Due to this failure, the trust between the Mon and Burman was essentially destroyed. Although the government betrayed the MPF and imprisoned most of the Mon leaders, the Mon armed-struggle continued under the leadership of NMSP until the NMSP reached a cease-fire agreement with the current military regime in 1995.

The Arakanese secession movement also began in 1948 when a group of Arakanese nationalists formed the Arakan National Liberation Front to fight for the independence of Arakan State. The Arakanese, like the Mon, surrendered their arms to the central government in 1958 in exchange for an autonomous Arakan State. Due to the military coup in 1962, the creation of Arakan State was not realized. Two years later, the Arakan National Liberation Party was formed to continue the struggle, for Arakan independent state, that is ongoing till today (Fredholm, 1993, pp. 173-175).

Nationalist movements of other ethnic groups such as the Shan, Kachin, and Chin were not started until the early 1960s when the Burman leaders accelerated a Burmanization policy and imposed Buddhism as the official religion of the country. Another reason was the failure by the government to honor the Panglong Agreement, a treaty signed between those ethnic groups and the Burman leaders in 1947, the eve of Burma's independence. The Agreement stated that Shan and Karenni could secede from the Union 10 years after joining should they wish. However, when Shan and Karenni prepared to secede from the Union, the Burman leader, General Ne Win took power from the central government in a military coup and violently crushed the efforts of the Shan and Karenni. As a result, the Karenni, Shan, and Kachin joined with the Mon, Karen and Arakanese in their secession struggles (Fredholm, 1993, pp. 99-109).

As of 2009, there are about 37 armed-resistant groups in Burma (See Appendix A). Most of these armed groups are formed along ethnic lines. Most of them are fighting for their ethnic rights and the rights for self-determination. Some of them are fighting for their independence. Of these 37 armed groups, 24 of them signed the cease-fire agreements with the government while 13 of them including the Karen National Union (KNU), Shan State Army (SSA) (South), Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), and Chin National Front(CNF) and are still fighting against the government (Washington Post, September 25, 2009) . Recently the government has pressured cease-fire groups to transform into “Border Guard Forces” which will be operated under the Burma Armed Forces controlled by the Burmese military government (Wall Street Journal, March 10, 2010). However, most of the cease-fire armed groups rejected the government's demands. The fighting between the two sides is imminent. In fact, the government had already defeated an ethnic Kokang group in the north-eastern border area of Burma. The fight between the Kokang and government forces caused 37,000 refugees to flee to

neighboring China. The government is preparing to launch attacks on other ethnic armed groups, especially the United Wa State Army which is known to be the strongest among the ethnic armed groups (Washington Post, September 25, 2009). These current episodes suggest that the ethnic conflict in Burma will get worse before it gets better.

CHAPTER FOUR

ETHNIC IDENTITY OF THE MON

Before analyzing the identity and ethnic conflict in the case of the Mon people, the ethnic identity of the Mon should be defined and the levels of Mon ethnic identity should be measured. Therefore, this chapter is divided into two main sections: (I) identifying the ethnic identity of the Mon and its nationalistic values, and (II) measuring the level of ethnic identity of the Mon across demographic variables, education systems, and regions, and a comparison to the levels of ethnic identity of non-Burman ethnic groups of Burma. Survey data and archive materials are used as supporting evidence in an attempt to answer the following specific questions: Who are the Mon? What are the levels of ethnic identity among the Mon? How does the level of ethnic identity differ across age, gender, education, social status, and geographic regions? What is the level of Mon identity compared to those of other non-Burman ethnic groups in Burma?

Section I. The ethnic identity of the Mon and its nationalistic values

Similar to a group identity, an ethnic identity forms by sharing common myths, ancestors, language, culture, historical memories, and territory. By sharing any of these common characteristics, people are not only felt to “belong together and share the same feelings and tastes” (Smith, A., 1986, p.24), but also are able to differentiate their group from “other types of human group and social bond” (Smith, A., 1999, p. 127). A positive identity and self-esteem can be achieved through identifying with a community or an ethnic group. When people identify with an ethnic group, they feel a “sense of sharing in a vastly extended ‘family’ which claims descent from a single, usually heroic and glorious, ancestor” (Smith, A., 1999, p. 127). Therefore, the ethnic identity of the Mon will be identified by these characteristics.

The Mon is an ethnic group living in lower Burma and part of Thailand. It is said to be emigrated from Southern China around 2,000 B.C or earlier (Hla, Pan, 1992, p.11). The exact Mon population is unknown. It has been estimated that there are about 7 million Mon around the world of which about 4 million are in Burma and about three million in Thailand. However, only one – two million of them still speak Mon (South 2003, p. 22).

Is it possible to define the Mon identity since they have lost their independent kingdom over 250 years ago, and since many of them have been assimilated into Burmese or Thai? Regarding this aspect, a former Thai prime Minister, Anand Panyarachun, who shares the Mon ancestry, said in his speech at the 30th anniversary of the Mon Youth Community of Bangkok, ‘saiel phaen din tae mai saeil chard Mon’ (the Mon lost their country, but not their national identity),(Kaowao, June 20,2005). According to Emmanuel Guillon (1999), the ethnic identity of the Mon can be identified through sharing a common ancestry, myths, symbols, language, culture, and history, religion, and territory (p.15). These characteristics are very important for the Mon to be able to identify themselves, to be identified by others as a distinct ethnic group, or to set Mon apart from other ethnic groups.

In this study, therefore the ethnic identity of the Mon was identified by the following seven characteristics: (1) common ancestry and origin, (2) associated with a territory, (3) sharing historical memory, (4) common religion, (5) common language, (6) common culture, and (7) common customs.

(1) Common ancestry and origin

Mon people believe that they have a common ancestor and origin. They trace their ancestors and origin back to the Yangtze River Valley in Southern China from where they believe they originally migrated (Hla, Pan, 1992, p.4-6). The Mon are part of the Mon-Khmer

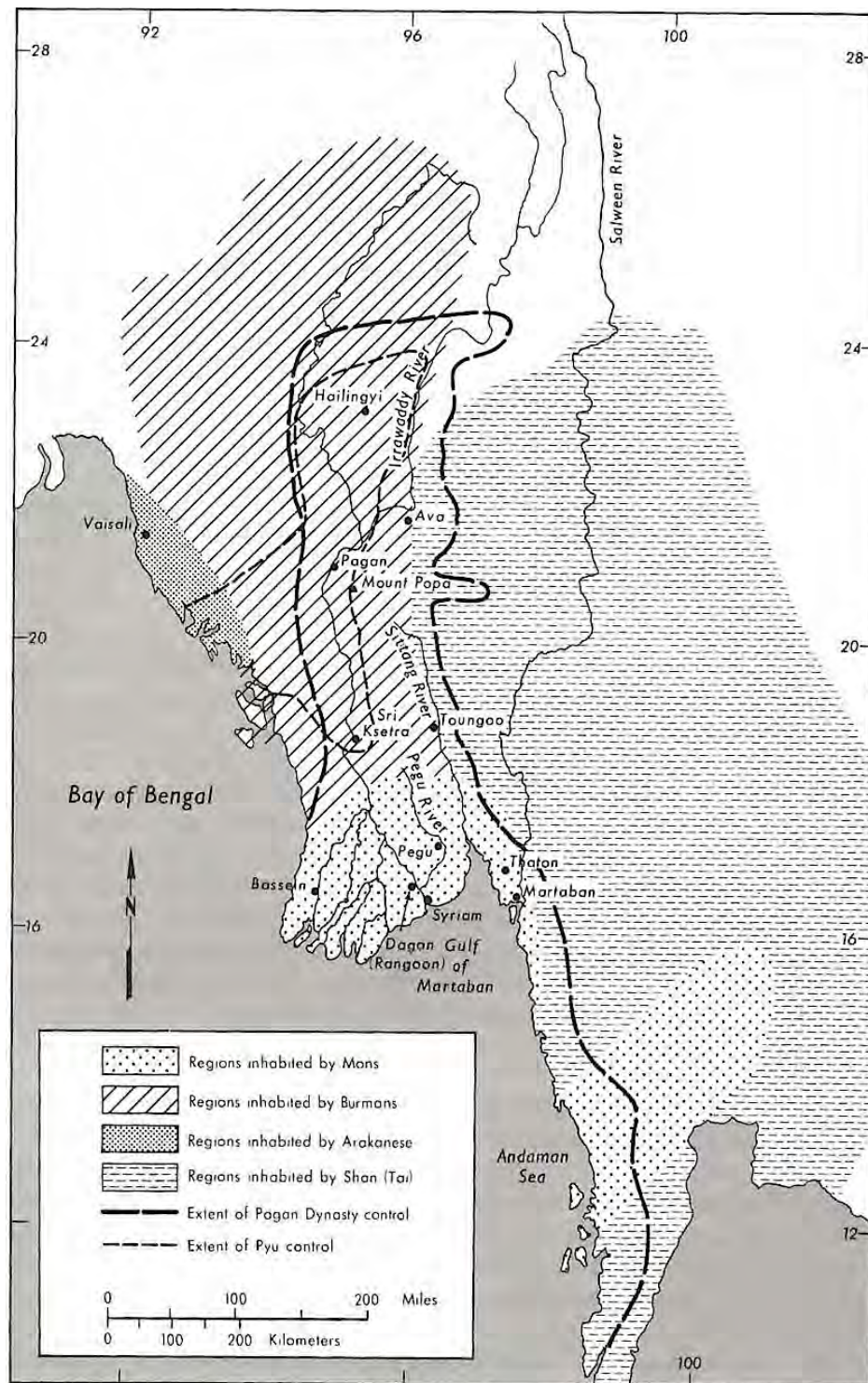
group which had lived in Southern China long before time immemorial. Therefore, they are said to be close cousins of the Khmer who now live in Cambodia. The Mon-Khmer people are also known as the pioneers of paddy- or wet-rice cultivation (Hla, Pan, 1992, p.12). As they searched for fertile land for rice cultivation, they moved down from Southern China to the Southeast Asia, probably no later than 2000 B.C (Hla, Pan, 1992, p.4-12).

The homeland of the Mon used to be the whole lower Burma and some parts of today's Thailand (See map 3). The first Mon kingdom in Burma was well-known as Suwarnabhumi, which means the "Golden Land" (Fredholm, 1993, p.9) and was founded around 500 B.C (Phyare, 1883, p.288). It is also known as Thaton, which is located in today's Lower Burma. The Mon expanded their kingdom into northern and central Thailand during the first millennium (Thein, Tun, 1995, p 7-9).

The Suwarnabhumi kingdom collapsed when it was invaded and occupied by Anoratha, a Burman King, in 1057 A.D (Thein, Tun, 1995, p.8). Currently, under the Burmese military rulers, a small area in southern Burma, along the coastal strip of land bordering the Gulf of Martaban is designated as Mon State or the homeland of the Mon. The Mon civilization also flourished in Thailand or old Siam under the Mon Kingdoms of Dvaravati and Haripunchai until the 12th century A.D. The kingdoms were occupied by the Khmer and later by the Thai (Foster, 1986, p.59-60).

Many Mon are still living in Thailand, but most of them are assumed not to be descendants from Dvaravati and Haripunchai kingdoms. They are descendants of the Mon refugees from Burma who fled to Thailand during the Mon-Burman wars that occurred during

Map 3. The early inhabitants of Burma's ethnic groups (Bunge, 1962, p.6.)



the 16th century and 19th centuries (Foster, 1986, p.59-60). Since they are not the descendents from Dvaravati and Haripunchai kingdoms, most Mons appear to be less attached to their ancient homeland in Thailand. However, some of them still have dreams of restoring their ancient homeland in Thailand. According to the survey data collected in this study, 61 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Mon homeland in Thailand should be a part of the future Monland.

(2) Association with a territory

Another characteristic of ethnic identity is to possess ties to a particular locus or territory, which they call their own” (Smith, A., 1986, p.28). The territory does not have to be actually possessed nor does it require residence. It could be a place that ~~has~~ a symbolic geographical center, a sacred habitat, a homeland” (Smith, A. 1986, p. 28).

Although members of an ethnic group may be living around the globe, having lost their homeland centuries ago, they still use the territory as a potent memory. For example, Mon’s homeland in Thailand is just a potent memory for the Mon. Most of them are no longer residing in that land. The Mon from Burma have a binding memory of the historic Mon kingdoms and did possess territories which they can call their own. It has been known as Ramonnyadesa (Ramaññadesa), the country of Raman (Raman represents the Mon in old literature) (Hla, Pan, 1992, p. 45). It is located in today’s lower Burma. It is comprised of three provinces, Bassein, Pegu, and Mottama, and each province consisted of 32 townships (Thein, Tun, 1995, p. 7-11). The first capital of Ramonnyadesa was the city of Thaton (Thein, Tun, 1995, p. 7-12). Thaton

Map 4. Map of the Mon territory: Old Monland (Grey) and current Mon State (Red)
(MUL, 1997).



was established around 500 B.C (Phayre, 1883, p. 288) and ended in the 11st century A.D when the Burman king, Anoratha, invaded and destroyed the kingdom (Thein, Tun, 1995, p. 8).

The second capital of Ramonnyadesa, was Mottama. It was founded by a Mon King, Magadu. Magadu built Mottama and founded his dynasty in the 13th century (Thein, Tun, 1995, p11-12). The capital was later moved to Pegu (Hongsawatoi). Pegu was founded in 752 A.D. by two Mon princes, Samala and Wimala, from Thaton, Suwarnabhumi kingdom. Pegu was the third capital of Ramonnyadesa until 1757 when the Burmans again invaded and occupied the Mon kingdom (Thein, Tun, 1995, p11-12). After repeated invasions and occupation by the Burmans, the Mon finally lost all of their territories to Burmans with the fall of Pegu in 1757.

In 1974, in response to a long and persistent fight for ethnic rights of the Mon, the Burmese government designated a small area in southeastern Burma as “Mon State”. That designation covers a very small fraction of the three provinces ruled under the old Mon kingdom (See map 4). Presently, the primary area of Mon settlement in Burma is along the coastline of *Tenasserim Peninsula*. In Thailand, the Mon population is concentrated near Bangkok and along Mae Klong River (Schrock, L. 1970, p.3).

(3) Common historical memory

Having a common historical memory means “sharing a connection to events that marked the lives of the generations which preceded us” (Chandra, 2006, p. 411). In doing so, it provides unity among a group’s members from one generation to the next. Ethnic identity is meaningful only if a community is built upon shared memories (A. Smith 1986, p.25). Moreover, according

to Mikael Gravers (1999), “historical memory is crucial to defining identity, legitimizing classifications, or rendering subjective concepts of, for example, an ethnic movement authentic” (p.145). Therefore, “categories of ethnic self-determination are grounded in deep and shared historical experience” (South 2008, p.4).

In addition, the ethnic identity can also be formed by narratives about the past and present glories and traumas where “the “other” was either the defeated (in case of glories) or the victorious (in traumas), are the building blocks of national/ethnic identity” (Auerbach, 2008, p.4). The Mon have shared historical memories of both glories and traumas. Such historical memories appear to have provided strong building blocks of identity in the modern national sense and coherence among the Mon.

For the historical memories of glory, the Mon was the first ethnic group to arrive in Burma and the first to introduce Buddhism to Burma and Southeast Asia. They also share the memories of well-developed civilizations and being the rulers of Lower Burma and part of Thailand. They are still very proud of these glorious historical memories. According to the survey data, 69 % of respondents are proud of the fact that the Mon were the first arrivals in Burma, 93% of them are proud of the fact that the Mon introduced Buddhism to Burma, and 97% of them said that they are proud that the Mon established great kingdoms and ruled lower Burma. Moreover, 99% of the respondents are proud of the Mon language and the literature that once flourished in Lower Burma and 99% of them are proud of once having established a well-developed civilization (See Appendix E).

One of the most significant memories shared among Mon is that the founding of Hongsawatoi (Pegu), a glorious Mon Kingdom. The Hongsawatoi kingdom was founded by the two Mon princess from the Thaton Kingdom in 572 A.D or 1116 Buddhist Era. The kingdom

was initially founded by the two princes as a small province kingdom. When the capital of Ramonnyadesa was moved to Pegu (Hongsawatoi) in 13th Century A.D., the kingdom was expanded to include all of lower Burma.

Long before the kingdom was founded, Lord Buddha passed through that area and saw two hongsa (Brahman ducks) resting in a small submerged land. The Buddha predicted that one day this land would become the land where his religion, Buddhism, would flourish. About 1500 years later, the land was colonized by the Mon. As Buddha predicted, the Mon founded a prosperous kingdom and spread Buddhism throughout the Southeast Asia (South, 2003, p. 53). [Note: Brahman duck or hongsa later became Mon national symbol. It has been used in flags, logos, seals and so on].

In 1947, during the time when the Mon ethnic identity was at its lowest point, Mon leaders marked the Mon National Day on the founding day of Hongsawatoi. The Mon National Day was adopted in memory of founding Hongsawtoi Mon Kingdom, in order to encourage Mon people to embrace the Mon identity. Since it was adopted, the Mon National Day has become one of the most significant events in Monland, Lower Burma, as well as among the Mon in Thailand. In 1990s, as Mon exiles immigrated to the United States, Canada, Australia, and some European countries, they continued the annual celebration in their new lands. The following are some excerpts from statements issued by the Mon in exile on the Mon National Day.

Today, Mon people around the world mark the 61st Mon National Day in commemoration of the founding of the last Mon kingdom, Hongsawatoi, and in celebration of their national identity, pride and heritage.... (The Joint-statement on the 61st Mon National Day, February 22, 2008).

Wherever we may be in this world, on this day we join hands together to commemorate our people's history, our cultural lineage and tradition. Serving as a reminder of our ancient cultural lineage, Mon National Day reunites our people, rekindles their spirits, and preserves their original traditions of, dress, dance, food, and conduct. In essence, the celebration of Mon National Day intends to reawaken

cultural and political awareness, ceremoniously, in memory of Hongsawatoi (The Joint Statement of the Worldwide Mon Communities on the 56th Anniversary of the Mon National Day, February 17, 2003).

On the other hand, the Mon people also share horrific memories. One of the most horrific stories being shared among the Mon is the day Hongsawatoi (Pegu) fell. In 1757, a Burman ruler U Aung Zeya (Alaungpaya) invaded and occupied the Mon Kingdom, Hongsawatoi. During the occupation, the Burmans killed thousands of Mon including women, children, and learned monks, and caused many thousands more to flee to Thailand as refugees. Moreover, the occupiers burnt and destroyed all the Mon writing records they could find (MUL, 1997, p. 3). The occupation not only brought an end to an independent Mon Kingdom, but also threatened the Mon identity. Mon nationalists believe that the destruction of the Mon by the Burman was similar to the destruction of the Jews by the Nazis. Thus, they mark this historic day as the Holocaust Memorial Day of the Mon. The day Hongsawatoi fell to the Burman, or the Holocaust Memorial Day of the Mon, is commemorated each year, especially by the Mon in exile. In Burma, the commemoration of this day has been discouraged by the ruling Burmese government. The following is an excerpt from the statement issued by the Mon in exile on the 251th Anniversary of the Fall of Hongsawatoi.

Today, Mon people around the world observe the 251st anniversary of the Fallen of Mon Kingdom Hongsawatoi. In memory of tens of thousands of Mon who were brutally persecuted by Burman ruler, U Aung Zeya, at the falling of Hongsawatoi, this day is also celebrated as Holocaust Memorial Day of the Mon People.... In 1757, U Aung Zeya invaded and devastated the Mon kingdom by killing tens of thousands of innocent Mon civilians. Over 3,000 Mon Buddhist monks were massacred in Pegu city alone, while other countless numbers of monks, pregnant women, and children throughout the kingdom were burned alive in stockades or were killed in other unimaginable ways. The ruthless destruction of the Mon by U Aung Zeya and his army was similar to the destruction of Jews by the Nazis (The Statement on the 251st Anniversary of the Falling Day of the Mon Kingdom Hongsawatoi May 27, 2008).

Mon leaders and activists use these historical memories to promote nationalism among the Mon. Although the Mon in Thailand have been living there for centuries, they still share these memories with the Mon residing in Burma. They also celebrate the Mon national day and commemorate the fall of Hongsawatoi. In fact, their grandparents or great grandparents were the victims of that genocide.

(4) Common religion

Although religion may not be a good indicator for the Mon ethnic identification, religions are very important for some ethnic groups such as Chin and Kachin in unifying small tribes into an ethnic group. As Lian Sakhong (2004) points out in *In Search of Chin Identity*, Christianity provides a unified identity and brings different tribes of Chin together. In his words,

Christianity provided the means of overcoming clan and tribal identities, and at the same time helped to create a new society where people identified each other as brothers and sisters in one faith, or members of community of faith. Unlike other Christian communities in other parts of the world, the community faith in Chin society was contained by the boundaries of Chinram, and therefore this community of faith was identical with ‘Chinness’ or a Chin national identity. Thus, Christianity and Chin-ness were inseparably intertwined in a new Chin society (p. 244).

The Mon are probably the oldest Buddhist community in the world except for the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka (Weng, April 2008). The Mon were also the first to adopt Buddhism in Burma and Thailand (Weng, April 2008) and “played a leading role in the transmission of Theravada Buddhism to Southeast Asia” (South 2003, p. 67). Presently, about 99 percent of the Mons are Buddhists and a small percentage are Christian (South 2003, p.24). According to the survey data as mention earlier, about 93 % of the respondents are very proud that Mon were the first to adopt Buddhism in Burma and were the pioneers of Buddhism in Southeast Asia.

Although the Buddhism provides a lesser degree of Mon ethnic differentiation from the Burmans, most of whom are also Buddhists, Buddhism does provide the Mon with nationalistic values. For the Mon, Buddhism is not only a religion but also a symbol of their civilization. For instance, many popular religious historical sites in Lower Burma, Pagan (capital of the first Burman Kingdom), and Northern Thailand were initially built by the Mon (Hla, Pan, 1992, p.22; Tucker 2001, p.14). For examples, the oldest Pagoda in Thailand, Phra Pathom, at Nakhon Pathom province was built by the Mon during Dvaravati kingdom in the 7th century A.D. (Hla, Pan, 1992, p.22). The great “Shwe Dagon Pagoda” (Kyaik Dagon, in Mon language) in Burma was built by the Mon about 2500 years ago (Thein, Tun, 1995, p.43). According to the Mon chronicles, the two Mon merchants (brothers), Tapao and Tapaw, who were on their trade trips, met the Lord Buddha right after he gained the enlightenment or he became the Buddha. Those two Mon brothers also are known as the first people to meet and to donate food to the Buddha after he gained enlightenment (Thein, Tun, 1995, p.43). After they donated food to the Buddha, the Buddha pulled out 8 strands of hair from his head and gave it to the Mon brothers. The holy relics were brought back to the then-Monland and presented to King Okkalapa. The king built a pagoda, on the top of the Soinguttara hill in Rangoon to enshrine the hairs of Buddha (Thein, Tun, 1995, p.43). The pagoda was name “Kyaik Dagon.” The Mon word “Kyaik” means pagoda and “Dagon” is the name of the city where the pagoda was built. The “Kyaik Dagon” is the pagoda which is known to the world as the “Shwe Dagon Pagoda” of Burma at present day. The “Kyaik Dagon” is one of the symbols of the Mon’s identity and civilization in Burma. The Mon are still very proud of having built the great pagoda. Quoting a Thai-Mon leader, “all Mon and Burmese know that Burmese didn't built the pagoda. Mon people built it” (Bhumiprabhas,

February 28, 2001). Those historical sites serve as proof of a flourishing Mon civilization in both Burma and Thailand.

(5) Common language

The Mon language is a member of the Mon-Khmer language family (Guillon, 1999, p. 3). It is totally different from both Burman and Thai languages (Hla, Pan, 1992, p. 4). Mon written records are believed to have existed since the 6th century A.D. One of the oldest written records of the Mon was found in stone scripts at Nakhon Pathom in Thailand and dated around the 6th century A.D. Guillon (1999) suggested that by 6th century ~~the~~ script had already been in use to record the Mon language for some time. In other words, these are certainly the oldest inscriptions that have been found up to the present, but they certainly are not the first to have been made” (p.79). The Mon later introduced its writing system to the Burman in the 11st century A.D (Guillon, 1999, p.53).

Other ethnic languages of Burma such as Karen, Kachin, and Chin have many different dialects. Even Burman has two or three different dialects (See Appendix D). In contrast, the Mon has only one language with no other dialect. That is why their language serves as a very unique identity for the Mon.

Although common origin or descent, culture, myths, and territory are important for the Mon ethnic identity, a common language seems to be a more important factor for the Mon ethnic identity and for its survival. This premise is supported by the survey respondents in this study-- almost one hundred percent of the survey respondents strongly agreed that being able to speak Mon language is very important in identifying whether someone is Mon (See Table 5), suggesting that they believe the Mon language is a defensive line for the survival of the Mon

ethnic identity. Mon politicians, elders, and reverend monks often remind their fellow Mon in their social and political speeches of the importance of Mon language and literature to the Mon identity. For example, in the Mon Language Summer Training Graduation Ceremony in 2007, Ven. Palita, a prominent Mon leader reminded parents and teachers that, “If Mon language and literature extinct, so do the Mon people. Mon language and literature are the life of Mon people” (IMNA, Video Clip, April 24, 2007).

In reality, marking the Mon identity with one’s ability to speak the Mon language is very challenging. It will exclude Burmese-speaking Mon and Thai-speaking Mon. In Burma, many Mon were born to Mon parents but they do not know how to speak Mon. Even though they are pure Mon biologically, often they are not identified as pure Mon socially because they do not speak Mon. Since they cannot speak Mon, it is difficult for them to be integrated into the mainstream Mon community. Such evidence can be seen in the Mon communities abroad. One good example of this is the Mon community in Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA. A small group of Burmese-speaking Mon would like to join the Mon community in Fort Wayne. Even though they are welcomed by the community, they have faced difficulties in communication since most of the Mon in Fort Wayne do not speak Burmese. They are less likely to be integrated in the community although they identify themselves as Mon.

In Thailand, the majority of Thai-Mon cannot speak Mon. Among those who can speak, only a few can read and write Mon (Thianpanya, May 11, 2003). However, they identify themselves as Mon through culture and ancestor lineage (Wilai, December 2006). As South (2003) argued, “the restricted use in modern times of the ancient Mon tongue has had an important effect on the number of people identifying themselves as ‘Mon’, of whom there are perhaps one-and-a-half million, five percent of whom live in Thailand. This figure corresponds

roughly with the number of Mon speakers, but does not include the very large number of people of Mon decent who do not speak the language” (South, 2003, p.18).

Mon and Thai cultures are indistinguishable and interracial marriage between Thai and Mon is relatively high (Wilai, December 2006). Therefore, identifying the Mon with a culture or ancestry may not last very long unless the Thai-speaking Mon retain their mother language which is very different from Thai. Recently, the Thai government has allowed the teaching of the Mon language and literature in Thai State schools where Mon people live in Thailand (Kin, in IMNA, June 28, 2006). It is a positive sign for the revival of the Mon language in Thailand.

However, overall, the Mon language is still at risk. A prominent Mon scholar, Dr. Nai Pan Hla, claimed that the Mon language is a dying language and to revive the Mon language is the top job for Mon leaders (Janssen, March 15, 2000). UNESCO also listed the Mon language as one of the World’s Languages in Danger (UNESCO 2009). UNESCO ranked the Mon language as a vulnerable language.

While Mon leaders believe speaking, reading, and writing the Mon language is the top priority for the survival of the Mon ethnic identity, successive Burmese governments have banned the teaching of the language in Burma in order to assimilate Mon into the Burmese population, which poses a great threat to the Mon ethnic identity (See Chapter Five for detailed analysis).

(6) Common culture

Among all the ethnic groups in Burma, the Mon were the earliest inhabitants and had developed a rich culture in very early time. By the 6th century A.D., the Mon civilization had already developed in Thailand (Guillon, 1999, p. 79). By the 11th century A.D., the Mon

civilization was flourishing in Lower Burma (Guillon, 1999, p.53). But, the Buddhist religion has influenced Mon elites since the second half of the first millennium (South, 2003, p. 58). Therefore, most of Buddhism's precepts and traditions are incorporated into the Mon culture, e.g., the religious celebration of the birthday of the Buddha. The Mon culture was influenced by the Buddhism and by Indian culture (Guillon, 1999, p.54). Mon art, literature, customs, and religion were spread throughout Burma and Thailand. Both Burman and Thai cultures were influenced by the Mon culture (Guillon, 1999, p. 53-54). Therefore, some aspects of the Mon's culture cannot easily be differentiable from those of Burman and Thai. However, Mon nationalists in Burma have tried to differentiate the Mon culture from that of Burmans as much as possible since they believe that maintaining the Mon culture is also important for the existence of the Mon ethnic identity. For example, they invented Mon national dresses in 1974 in order to show that Mon national dresses are distinctive from Burman dresses. As Wongpolgan (2007) pointed out, "the Mon national costumes were invented in order to serve the Mon nationalistic ideology and show unity. Though the style of dress is virtually indistinguishable from that of the Burmese in general, by opting for particular colors and patterns the Mon show the distinctiveness of their ethnic identity and establish ethnic boundaries" (p.68). The majority of the survey respondents (99%) in this study also agreed with the Mon nationalists on this aspect (See Table 5).

(7) Common customs

Of the seven characteristics for measuring the ethnic identity, the practice of Mon customs is ranked as least important by the survey respondents. This result appears to match the

general observation of today's Mon people, especially younger generations. Many of them are no longer interested in the customs such as worshipping spirits or *Kalook* (in Mon).

In conclusion, all the above mentioned seven factors play their respective roles for identification of the Mon identity. However, they may not be equally important in defining the Mon ethnic identity. Most of the survey respondents ranked the language (speaking Mon) as the most important factor indentifying a Mon and ranked "read and write Mon" and "maintain Mon culture" as the second and the third most important factors, respectively. Custom was ranked the least important factor (See Table 5).

Table 5. Ranking components of Mon identity

Rank	Statements	Ms	SDs	++	+	Neutral	-	--	N
1	Can speak Mon language	1.04	0.27	97%	3%	0%	0%	0%	182
2	Can read and write in Mon	1.10	0.44	92%	7%	0%	1%	0%	182
3	Maintain Mon's culture	1.13	0.37	88%	11%	1%	0%	0%	182
4	Born from both Mon parents	1.26	0.63	80%	16%	3%	0%	1%	182
5	Have a Mon ancestor	1.30	0.62	76%	20%	2%	1%	1%	181
6	Identify him/herself as a Mon	1.47	1.00	74%	15%	4%	3%	4%	183
7	Practice Mon's custom (e.g., pay respect to a Mon's Spirit)	2.17	1.26	37%	36%	7%	12%	8%	182

++, Very Important; +, Fairly important --, Not Important at all; -, Not Important; Ms= Means; SDs = Std Deviation

Section II. Measuring the level of ethnic identity of the Mon across demographic variables, educational systems, and regions, and a comparison to the levels of ethnic identity of non-Burman ethnic groups of Burma

A. Measuring the level of ethnic identity of the Mon across demographic variables, educational systems, and regions

This section measures the level of Mon ethnic identity across demographic variables-- age, gender, level of education, status--, educational systems, and regions by using the survey data collected among the Mon population living inside and outside Burma. The levels of the ethnic identity of the Mon general public and those in leadership positions of a number of Mon civil and political groups were compared to find out if there is a difference between the two statuses. In order to investigate whether there are any differences in the levels of ethnic identity based on the educational levels, educational systems, or regions of residence, the levels of identity of the participants with different education levels, those educated under the monastic education system and under the state educational system and those residing inside and outside Burma were compared.

In this study, the ethnic identity is measured by two components: nationalism and patriotism because they are specific expressions of the national/ethnic identity (Blank and Schmidt, 2003). Therefore, the overall Mon ethnic identity is operationalized into these two factors and is measured by averaging the scales of fifteen items in the survey questionnaires (Table 7). In order to assess the level of ethnic identity among respondents more specifically, the two factors are further broken down into four attributes: (1) ethnic pride, (2) ethnic preference, (3) group comparison, and (4) out-group differentiation. In other words, the overall measure or general scale is also broken down into these four subscales. The first two subscales, ethnic pride

and preference, were created by averaging three items each while the later two subscales, ethnic comparison and out-group differentiation, were created by averaging four items each, as showed in Table 7. Each subscale is analyzed against each demographic variable.

The measures of the two items, ashamed to be Mon and want to be other nationalities, were reversed because they have negative covariance with other items. In other words, these two items were phrased in reverse. Thus, they have negative covariance with other items. The individual subscale Cronbach's alpha (α) statistic ranged from 0.53 to 0.78 (Table 7).

The Cronbach's α measures the internal consistency and reliability of summated scales and the α value of 0.70 is considered to be the minimum acceptable score (Bland and Altman 1997). The detailed measures of the Mon ethnic identity are presented in the following.

A. 1. Measures of the overall scale for the ethnic identity of the Mon

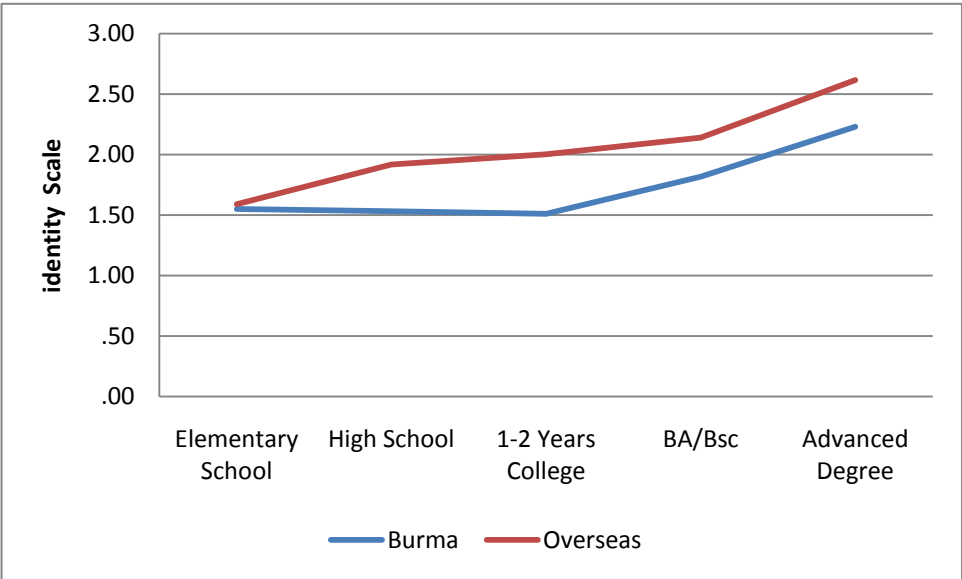
As previously mentioned, the general or overall scale for the Mon ethnic identity was developed by averaging the 15-items in the questionnaire, and the Cronbach's α statistic for the scale is 0.84 (See table 7). The overall scale mean shows that respondents generally expressed a medium-high level of ethnic identity ($M=1.73$, $SD= 0.58$) where a lower mean indicates a higher identity level and a higher mean indicates a lower identity level.

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the effect of demographic variables on the level of ethnic identity. Results show that only education level and regions are statistically significant at $[F (4,419) =6.78, p < 0.000]$ and $[F (1,419) =3.90, p < 0.049]$, respectively. The education system, leadership status, and gender did not show any statistical significance, suggesting that there are no differences in the level of identity between the leader and non-leader status or between the genders.

The results of main effects indicate that respondents with lower educational levels showed higher degrees of identity than those with higher educational levels, and respondents who live inside Burma showed higher degrees of identity than those who live overseas. However, there is a significant interaction between these two factors [$F(4, 419) = 4.84, p < .001$]. There are no differences in levels of identity among those with an elementary education, regardless of the region of their residences. However, the levels of identity among those with higher education were different between the regions of residence (See Figure 1).

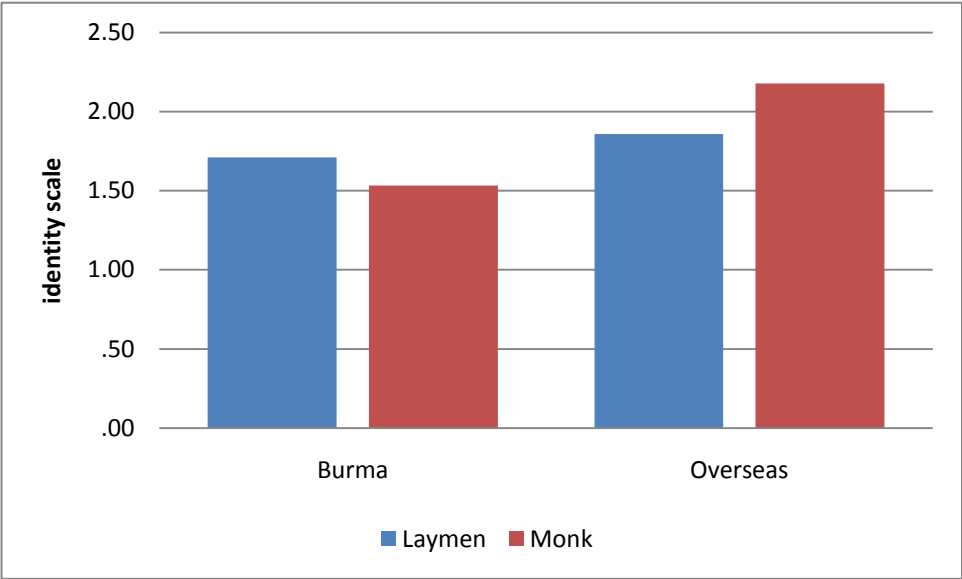
When the samples of laymen and Buddhist monks are compared, the result shows that Buddhist monks have higher level of identity ($M = 1.62$) than the laymen ($M = 1.77$). The ANOVA also shows a statistical significance between the two groups [$F(1, 523) = 7.14, p < .008$]. It is not surprising that Mon monks show higher levels of identity than laymen because the monks have been playing major roles in revivals of the Mon language and culture (Note: Their role will be discussed in detail in the next chapter). When comparing the monks from Burma and the monks overseas, the overseas monks show lower levels of identity (Figure 2). The means and standard deviations for each explanatory variable are presented in Table 8.

Figure 1. Levels of identity by education levels.



Note: Lower scales correspond to higher levels of identity.

Figure 2. Differences in the level of identity between the Mon monks and laymen



Note: Lower scales correspond to higher levels of identity.

A. 2. The ethnic pride subscale

The ethnic pride subscale was developed by averaging three items (Table 7). The subscale Cronbach's α statistic is 0.53. The score of the subscale shows that the respondents expressed a strong sense of ethnic pride ($M=1.33$; $SD=0.54$). For example, 96% of respondents reported that they were proud to be Mon while 87 % believed that Mons were noble people. Only 3% of the respondents said that they were shameful to be Mon (Table 7). When an ANOVA is conducted for the effect of demographic variables on the levels of ethnic pride, only educational levels and regions were statistically significant at $[F(4,423) = 2.82, p < 0.025]$ and $[F(1,423) = 7.64, p < 0.006]$ respectively. Moreover, there is no interaction between the two variables. The results of the main effect indicate that lower educational levels show higher levels of ethnic pride. Again, compared to the respondents who are living in Burma, respondents overseas show lower levels of ethnic pride.

A. 3. The ethnic preference subscale

The ethnic preference subscale was created by averaging three-items (Table 7). The subscale Cronbach's α statistic is 0.63. The subscale score indicates that the respondents generally expressed a great sense of ethnic preference ($M= 1.51$; $SD = 0.67$). For example, 84% of respondent preferred the Mon music over the Burman music; 84% preferred the Mon drama than the Burman drama; and only 2% preferred to be other ethnic nationalities than the Mon.

An Analysis of Variance was performed to assess the effect of demographic variables on the level of ethnic preference. The test reveals that only education levels and regions are again statistically significant, $[F(4,422) = 5.62, p < 0.000]$ and $[F(1,422) = 11.06, p = 0.001]$, respectively. However, there is an interaction between these two variables, $[F(4, 422) = 2.01,$

$p=0.022$]. The results of the main effect suggest that the respondents with lower educational levels show higher levels of ethnic preference than those with higher educational levels. The respondents from inside Burma again show higher levels of ethnic preference than those living abroad (Table 7).

A. 4. The group comparison subscale

The group comparison subscale is created by averaging 4-items related to a comparison of the in-group culture, status, and region with those of out-groups (Table 7). The Cronbach's α statistic for the subscale is 0.78. The subscale score indicates that participants show a medium-high level of group comparison ($M= 1.62$; $SD= 0.76$). For example, when respondents were asked to compare their culture and social status with the out-groups, 88% of respondents believed that the Mon culture is superior to Burman culture; 82% believed that Mon have higher social status than the Burman; 79% believed that the Mon have the highest social status among all ethnic groups in Burma; and 82% believed that the Mon region is the best region in Burma.

The Analysis of Variance indicates that only educational level and regional differences are statistically significant, [$F(4,421) = 7.90, p < 0.000$] and [$F(1,421) = 6.24, P < 0.013$], respectively. There is no interaction between the two variables. The results of main effects suggest that respondents with lower education show higher levels of out-group comparison than those with higher education. Compared to the Mon living outside Burma, ($M=2.03$; $SD=0.752$), Mon living in Burma ($M= 1.18$; $SD= 0.735$) show higher levels of out-group comparison. Again, the education level is negatively correlated with the level of group comparison. Although age is not statistically significant at 95% ([$F(4,421) = 1.65, p < 0.17$], it is significant at 83%. Younger age groups show higher levels of out-group comparison than older age group. In other

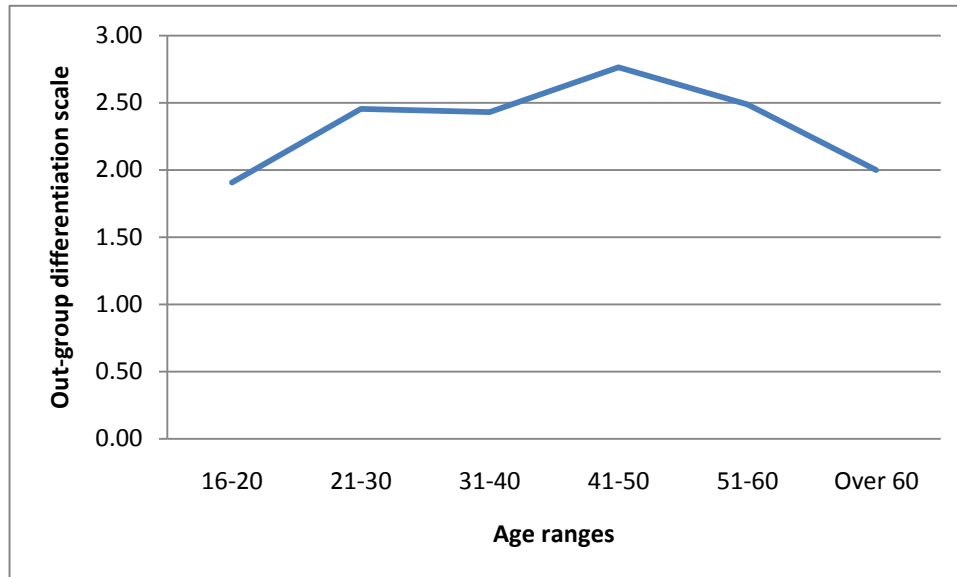
words, younger ages feel more superior to out-group than older ages. Overall, the data show that the Mon feel superior in terms of culture and social status when they are compared to the out-group, especially to the Burman.

A. 5. Out-group differentiation subscale

The out-group differentiation subscale consists of four-items related to the perception of interracial marriages and migration (Table 7). The Cronbach's α statistic for the scale is 0.63. The mean and standard deviation of the out-group differentiation subscale ($M= 2.32$; $SD= 0.97$) is higher than the means of the previous three subscales (Table 8). This result suggests that the respondents had a low degree of out-group differentiation even though they had high levels of ethnic pride, preference, and out-group comparison. For example, 68 % of respondents believed that the Mon should not be married to the Burmans while 62 % believed that Mon should not be married to all other nationalities. Moreover, 73 % of respondents agreed that all Mon should live in Monland while 44% agreed that non-Mon should not live in Monland.

The Analysis of Variance indicated that only education level and regional differences are statistically significant at $[F (4, 422) =4.27, P < 0.002]$ and $[F (1, 422) =4.94, P < 0.022]$ respectively. Age, leadership status, and educational system are not statistically significant at 95%. However, age range shows marginal significant $[F (5, 422) =1.94; P < 0.087]$. There are no interactions between the education level and region factors. Again the results of main effects suggested that the participants with lower levels of education have a higher out-group differentiation and Mon living in Burma still show higher out-group differentiation than the Mon living outside Burma. Younger age range also marginally shows higher out-group differentiation than older age range (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Out-group differentiation scale by age groups

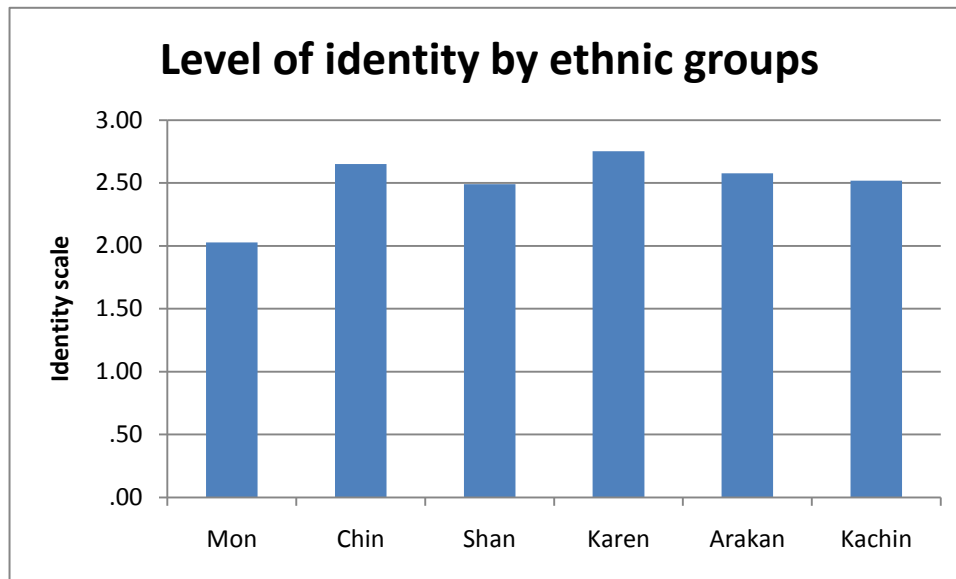


Note: Lower scales correspond to higher levels of identity.

B. A Comparison of the ethnic identity between the Mon and other non-Burman ethnic groups of Burma

The study also compared the level of Mon identity with other non-Burman ethnic groups of Burma. The other non-Burman ethnic group samples were comprised of 52 Chin, 31 Shan, 19 Karen, 16 Arakanese, and 4 Kachin (Table 6). Since the sample size from each group was too small to compare among the individual ethnic group, all samples from other non-Burman ethnic groups were combined. Therefore, the non-Burman ethnics included a total number of 122 samples. Since the sample of other non-Burman ethnic groups was taken only from the online surveys, the comparison was only made with the online samples of the Mon ethnic group. A total sample of the Mon ethnic group was 135.

Figure 4. Levels of identity by ethnic groups



Note: Lower scales correspond to higher levels of identity.

Table 6. Means and standard deviation of overall scale and subscales

Groups	Overall Scale	Ethnic Pride	Ethnic preference	Group Comparison	Out-group Differentiation	N
Mon	2.03 (.68)	1.53 (.68)	1.66 (.70)	1.95 (.94)	2.75 (.99)	135
Non-Mon	2.61(.59)	1.75 (.67)	2.19(.77)	2.84 (.90)	3.35(.85)	122

Note: Lower means correspond to higher levels of identity.

Results show that the Mon respondents indicate a higher level of identity ($M=2.03$, $SD=0.68$) than the other non-Burman ethnic respondents ($M=2.61$, $SD=.59$) in the overall scale. Of all ethnic groups compared, the Mon ethnic group shows the highest level of identity (Figure 4).

Results from the ANOVA show that the difference between the two groups was statistically significant [$F(1,255) = 53.65$, $P < 0.000$]. The Mon respondents also show significantly higher

level of identity in all subscales ---ethnic pride [$F(1,255) = 6.84, P < 0.009$] ; preference [$F(1,255) = 33.044, P < 0.000$] ; out-group comparison [$F(1,255) = 59.16, P < 0.000$]; and out-group differentiation [$F(1,255) = 26.80, P < 0.000$] . The differences of the means and standard deviations for the overall scale and all subscales between the two groups are shown in Table 6. An ANOVA test was also conducted in order to find out whether or not the education level influences the level of identity. The result shows that even when education level was controlled the two groups are still statistically different, and the Mon respondents still show a higher level of identity than other non-Burman ethnic groups.

Conclusion

The ethnic identity of the Mon can be defined through a common ancestor, territory, language, culture and historical memories. Of these factors, language, literature and culture are ranked at the top as the most important factors for identification of Mon ethnicity. Therefore, banning the teaching of the Mon language and literature and the practice of Mon culture would be a great threat to the Mon identity.

When the levels of Mon ethnic identity were measured, respondents showed a medium-high level of overall ethnic identity. Of all the variables tested, education levels showed the most significance in the overall scale and all subscales. Of all explanatory variables, only educational levels and regional differences are statistically significant in explaining the level of Mon ethnic identity: lower level of education and respondents living in Burma show higher level of ethnic identity. Respondents who are living in Burma have higher levels of ethnic identity than those

who are living overseas. In other words, the data suggest that region and education play major roles in explaining the differences in the level of Mon ethnic identity.

When comparing the subscales, respondents expressed a high ethnic pride and ethnic preference, a medium-high in-group comparison and a medium out-group differentiation. The analyses also show that components or subscales of ethnic identity are a cumulative hierarchy. These results agree with the finding of Dekker et al. (2004). As the subscales move from the ethnic pride to the out-group differentiation, the mean of the subscales increases. Again, only educational levels and regional differences variables are significant in all subscales. But age groups showed marginal statistical significance in out-group comparison and differentiation scales. Gender, status, and education system did not show significant differences in either overall scale or subscales.

It is expected that the overseas respondents were rated lower in levels of identity compared to those who are living inside Burma. One possible explanation is that since they live in different parts of the world, they are exposed to different cultures. Some of them may have already adopted the cultures of their host countries. Thus, they are less likely to differentiate themselves from out-groups. On the other hand, the respondents living inside Burma generally feel constant threats of identity from the Burman ethnic group and Burmese government because the Burmese government has banned the teaching of the Mon language, violated human rights, and fostered a flood of Burman migrants into the Mon areas.

Although age groups were not statistically significant in the overall scale, they did show marginal significance in out-group comparison and differentiation scales. The younger Mon tend to score higher in the nationalistic items such as the out-group differentiation and comparison.

The result may be an indication that the Mon may become a more nationalistic society in the future if the education levels of the people do not improve.

The level of identity between genders is not significantly different. One possible explanation is that the perceptions of female respondents regarding ethnic identity may be influenced by their male counterparts because the Mon national affairs have been dominated by males and influenced by male ideologies.

There are also no different perceptions between those respondents in leadership positions and the general public regarding the level of ethnic identity. In terms of education system, some Mon tend to believe that the Mon who were educated under the monastic education system would be more nationalistic than those who were educated under the state education system. However, this study finds no significant differences between the two educational systems with respect to the level of ethnic identity.

Compared to the other non-Burman ethnic groups, the Mon respondents showed a higher level of ethnic identity. Based on the long and strong historic and cultural backgrounds, the Mon appear to rate themselves higher than other non-Burman ethnic groups.

Table 7. Responses on ethnic identity questions among Mon respondents

Items	Responses (%)								
	Ms*	SDs	++	+	Sum	-	--	Neutral	N
Ethnic Pride ($\alpha=.53$)	1.35	0.54							
Noble	1.48	0.89	71%	16%	87%	3%	2%	8%	533
Proud to be Mon	1.25	0.56	80%	16%	96%	1%	1%	2%	537
Shame to be Mon (Reverse)	1.32	0.76	79%	15%	94%	1%	2%	3%	528
Ethnic Preference ($\alpha=.63$)	1.51	0.67							
Prefer Mon music to Burman's music	1.64	1.01	63%	21%	84%	5%	3%	8%	531
Prefer Mon drama to Burman's drama	1.55	0.96	69%	15%	84%	3%	2%	10%	537
Want to be other nationalities (Reverse)	1.29	0.69	80%	14%	94%	1%	1%	4%	537
Group Comparison ($\alpha=.78$)	1.62	0.76							
Culture superior	1.44	0.90	75%	13%	88%	3%	2%	7%	526
Higher status than Burman	1.62	1.02	66%	16%	82%	6%	2%	10%	534
Higher status to all other ethnic groups	1.74	1.09	60%	19%	79%	5%	4%	12%	535
Best region in Burma	1.69	1.02	59%	23%	82%	4%	4%	10%	528
Out-group differentiation ($\alpha=.63$)	2.32	0.97							
Should not marry to Burman	2.17	1.52	54%	14%	68%	9%	15%	8%	532
Should not marry to all ethnic groups	2.31	1.41	42%	20%	62%	15%	10%	13%	532
All Mon should live in Monland	1.97	1.26	53%	20%	73%	13%	5%	9%	527
Non-Mon should not live in Monland	2.81	1.43	29%	15%	44%	27%	13%	16%	525
Overall Scale ($\alpha=.84$)	1.73	0.58							

* Lower means correspond to higher levels of identity.

++, strongly agree; +, agree; --, strongly disagree; -, disagree; Sum = the sum of strongly agree and agree; Ms = Means; SDs = Standard Deviations.

Table 8. Means and standard deviation of scales with respect to demographic variables

Characteristics	Overall	Pride	Preference	Comparison	Differentiation
Male (laymen)	1.81 (.62)	1.41 (.59)	1.52 (.67)	1.69 (.81)	2.47 (.99)
Male (monks)	1.62 (.53)	1.27 (.44)	1.47 (.66)	1.50 (.71)	2.13 (.93)
Female	1.72 (.57)	1.31 (.51)	1.54 (.71)	1.64 (.74)	2.23 (.95)
Age 16-20	1.47 (.45)	1.18 (.39)	1.31 (.60)	1.35 (.49)	1.91 (.88)
Age 21-30	1.81 (.57)	1.39 (.53)	1.57 (.68)	1.67 (.75)	2.45 (.95)
Age 31-40	1.81 (.59)	1.41 (.59)	1.55 (.63)	1.71 (.82)	2.43 (.95)
Age 41-50	2.00 (.70)	1.46 (.64)	1.68 (.81)	1.94 (1.02)	2.76 (1.02)
Age 51-60	1.87 (.62)	1.38 (.43)	1.65 (.78)	1.92 (.94)	2.49 (.80)
Age 60 Over	1.56 (.37)	1.33(.33)	1.29 (.40)	1.50 (.60)	2.00 (1.10)
Elementary School	1.57 (.44)	1.26 (.44)	1.38 (.63)	1.40 (.56)	2.14 (.86)
High School	1.65 (.55)	1.28 (.49)	1.44 (.63)	1.52 (.69)	2.21 (1.05)
1-2 Years College	1.85 (.63)	1.39 (.56)	1.53 (.68)	1.72 (.87)	2.56 (.94)
BA/Bsc	1.88 (.62)	1.44 (.57)	1.65 (.71)	1.85 (.84)	2.42 (.93)
Graduate School	2.28 (.69)	1.68 (.73)	2.08 (.80)	2.42 (.93)	3.10 (.94)
State education	1.83 (.62)	1.39 (.56)	1.56 (.71)	1.73 (.80)	2.44 (1.0)
Monastic education	1.54 (.43)	1.25(.43)	1.40 (.59)	1.40 (.62)	2.04 (.86)
Burma	1.64(.53)	1.28 (.47)	1.44 (.64)	1.55 (.70)	2.16 (.94)
Overseas	1.89 (.64)	1.47 (.62)	1.67 (.74)	1.75 (.86)	2.58 (1.00)
Leaders	1.72 (.60)	1.36 (.41)	1.43 (.49)	1.71 (.70)	2.58 (1.0)
Non-Leaders	1.83 (.48)	1.35 (.55)	1.52 (.69)	1.61 (.77)	2.16 (.94)

CHAPTER FIVE

THREATS OF ETHNIC IDENTITY AND ETHNIC CONFLICT

One hypothesis of this dissertation is that ethnic conflict in Burma is caused by threatening ethnic identity. Ethnic conflict may be caused by either minority or by majority ethnic groups threatening the other. While the minority groups respond to the threats by separating themselves from the majority group (e.g. demanding autonomy or independence), the majority responds to the threats by assimilating or eliminating of the minority groups. “Anything that can be perceived as a threat to identity can set off a large response” to ethnic or nationalist conflict (Searle-White, 2001, p.76).

According to the SIT, people strive to achieve positive identity or positive distinctiveness and use both hard and soft strategies to achieve it (Hornsey and Hogg, 2000, p.144). Soft strategies include “the use of totems, icons, and symbols; or gentle, benign intergroup competition” (Hornsey and Hogg, 2000, p.144). Such strategies are less destructive and less violent, and the group behavior is relaxed and celebratory. Hard strategies such as negative stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination of the out-groups are more violent and destructive. The group behaviors resulting from these strategies are characterized by fear, anxiety, and destructiveness (Hornsey and Hogg, 2000, p.144). Therefore, “[t]he search for distinctiveness becomes aggressive when it is conducted within the context of identity threat. In the absence of identity threat, distinctiveness is maintained through more benign strategies” (p.145).

Similarly, Stein (1996) argued that not all intergroup conflicts become violent. Conflicts become violent or intensified only when identities are threatened and incompatible. Responses to the identity threat may also depend on the degree of group identification. People who highly identify with their own groups feel more committed to protect their groups than those who do not

(Doosje et al., 1999; Bilali 2004, p.13). Therefore, when an ethnic group feels threatened, the group with a higher degree of group identification is more likely to respond to and lead the conflict than the group with lower in-group identification (Mackie et al., 2000; Bilali, 2004, p.13,).

Therefore, threatening ethnic/national identity is a major factor for explaining ethnic conflicts. The conflicts between groups arise when one ethnic group sees the other group as a threat to its identity (Searle-White, 2001, p. 4). An ethnic identity becomes threatened when an ethnic group identity is attacked or downgraded (Hornsey and Hogg 2000, p.145) and when one group does not want to recognize the legitimacy of the other group (Auerbach 2008, p.4). For example, in the case of Israel and Palestine, “each side sees itself as a national entity, entitled to all the legitimate rights of a full member of the family of nations” (Auerbach, 2008, p.4). However, while Israel recognizes Palestinian national identity, Palestine does not want to recognize Israeli Jews as an ‘authentic nation’ (Auerbach, 2008, p.4). Some Palestinian armed groups such as Hamas want to destroy the Jews and do not want to recognize the existence of Israel.

An ethnic group identity also becomes threatened when a dominant groups imposes assimilation policies on the minority groups (Cook, 2002, p.3). A dominant group may try to eliminate the languages and cultures of minority groups in order to assimilate them (Cook, 2002, p.3). The minority groups resisted the threat by revolting against the majority group. For example, in non-nation state like Burma, assimilation policy imposed by one group is always resisted by other ethnic groups because “distribution of power among identity groups prevents any single group from establishing itself as the central national community to which others must assimilate” (Cottam & Cottam, 2001, p.195).

Ethnic conflicts in Burma have arisen because the non-Burman ethnic groups feel the threatening of their identities from the assimilation or Burmanization and annihilation policies of the majority Burman. According to Alan Collins (2002), current civil war in Burma is caused by the nation-building approach of Burma's dominant ethnic group's assimilation policies or Burmanization which has attempted to assimilate Burma's ethnic minorities. The non-Burman ethnic groups resist these policies by armed struggles in order to protect their identities (Collins, 2003, p. 27).

Burma's ethnic conflict in modern time began in 1948 when some non-Burman ethnic groups such as Mon and Arakanese realized that their ethnic identities were unsecured under the Burman-dominant government. However, the conflict has built up long before 1948. During the British rule, Burmans believed that their ethnic group was marginalized or disadvantaged. Their language and culture were threatened. As a result, the Burman nationalist movement emerged in 1930's to advocate for political independence and the reinstatement of Burman language and culture as the national language and culture in Burma. As Silverstein (2007) pointed out, a Burman nationalist party, Dobama-Asiayone, or Our Burman Organization, "demanded political independence, the use of Burmese [Burman] as the national language, the restoration of Burman national dress, the Burmanization of the schools and the unification of all the peoples in the country under the indigenous rule" (p.98).

The Burman nationalist movement and its political demands became a threat to the identities of non-Burman ethnic groups who did not have autonomy (Collins, 2003, p. 29). Consequently, both Mon and Arakanese (Rakhine, in Burmese) formed their nationalist organizations and revolted against the government. According to Martin Smith (1999), "[a]ll these ethnic Mon and Rakhine parties were formed largely as a result of concern over the

continued decline in the public expression of their languages, culture and traditions in Burman-majority areas, and their fears were hastened by the rapid advance made by the Burman nationalist liberation movement in the 1930s” (Smith, Martin, 1999, p. 53).

Wars broke out between the Burmese government and ethnic groups such as Mon, Karen, and Arakanese in 1948 ~~—~~after it became evident the Burmans would dominate postcolonial Burma” (Collins, 2003, 29). Some ethnic groups (e.g. Shan, Kachin, and Chin) did not take up arms against the Burmese government at that time because they were granted autonomy under the Panglong Agreement in 1947. In other words, their ethnic identities were secured under the agreement. They later joined the conflict in early 1960s when the Burmanization policy was accelerated and began to threaten their identities.

After independence, successive Burmese governments believed that the expression of non-Burman ethnic languages and cultures would threaten Burma’s national identity (Brown, David, 1988). Burma’s national identity is basically Burman identity. The government defined Burma’s national identity based on the Burman language, culture and Buddhism. It restricted the teaching and learning of non-Burman languages, cultures, and non-Buddhist religion (Brown, David, 1988). According to David Brown (1988), ~~—~~the Anti-Fascist People’s Freedom League (AFPFL) was essentially a Burman ethnic nationalist movement which articulated the goal of Burmese independence in the name of a defense of Burman ethnic language and culture and of the Buddhist religion, portraying the independent Burmese state as the successor to the Burman dynasties of the past” (p. 56). In 1952, the government ~~—~~decided that all government business was to be conducted in the Burman language, Burmese history would be taught from the perspective of Burman nationalism, and the sole language used in education would be Burman” (Collins, 2003, p.29).

Tension between the government and Christian ethnic groups such as Kachins escalated as the government attempted to legalize Buddhism as the state's religion in 1961 (Smith, Martin, 2002, p.8). In 1962, the government accelerated its Burmanization policy (Collins, 2003, p.29) which attempted ~~to~~ create a culturally, religiously, and linguistically homogenous "Burmese" "[Burman] nation" (Edith, Bowles, 2000, p.5) and ~~be~~ behaved toward non-Burman ethnic groups as a "Master Race", claiming that the only true Burmese is Burman and Buddhist" (quoted in David Brown 1988, p. 60). Such policy caused a threat to the ethnic identity of non-Burman ethnic groups. The nationalist movements accelerated in Kachin and Shan states in early 1960s and the emerging of ethnonationalism led to ethnic conflict and threatening the existence of Burma as a unified country (Collins, 2003, p. 29).

Non-Burman ethnic leaders have claimed that their armed struggles against the Burmese government are only due to the government's policies that are threatening their ethnic identity. On the 63rd Mon National Day, the Chairman of the New Mon State Party (NMSP), Nai Htaw Mon, reaffirmed that the objectives of the party were to prevent the extinction of Mon race and to re-gain self-determination for the Mon people (IMNA, January 30, 2010). Similarly, the Karen National Union (KNU) stated, ~~th~~ "throughout history, the Burmans have been practicing annihilation, absorption and assimilation (3 A's) against the Karens and they are still doing so today. In short, they are waging a genocidal war against us. Thus we have been forced to fight for our very existence and survival....Unless we control a state of our own, we will never experience a life of peace and decency, free from persecution and oppression. We will never be allowed to work hard to grow and prosper" (Karen History and Culture Preservation Society (KHCPS), 2006, p.6-7). Moreover, Secretary General of KNU, Zipporah Seinz wrote in the Irrawaddy news online that, ~~th~~ "our cultures and traditions are given no protection. We will be

given no rights to practice our customs, or to speak and teach our languages. The process of Burmanization that has already been going on for decades will be accelerated” (Seinz, October 13, 2009).

Smaller ethnic groups such as Pa_O in Shan State also claim that their fighting against the regime is for protecting their ethnic identity. A Pa_O rebel group claimed that the Burmese government is trying to destroy their culture. Although the group signed the cease-fire agreement in 1994, the group felt that their culture is gradually disappearing. Therefore, a PaO rebel group led by Khun Thurein resumed fighting in 2007, after 13 years of cease-fire with the government. The group leader said, “I would rather die fighting than bowing down to the pressure of the Burmese military regime to lay down arms without a political solution” (Aung, Ko, January 2009).

In summary, the threatening ethnic identity is one of most important factors for explaining ethnic conflicts in Burma. The fear of losing ethnic identity is a major motivation for the rising ethnonationalism and emergence of the non-Burman nationalist movements after the independence. Since their ethnic identities are defined along the linguistic, cultural, and religious lines (e.g. Kachin and Chin), losing the linguistic and cultural rights and religious freedom are major threats to the non-Burman ethnic identities. Thus, they have demanded autonomy or self-determination to defend their inalienable rights, identities, and physical threats from the Burmese government.

In order to understand more details of identity threats and ethnic conflict in Burma, an in-depth analysis of identity threats and ethnic conflict in the case of Mon ethnic group is presented in the following case study. The combination of survey data and archived materials were used in the analysis.

Threats of Ethnic Identity and Ethnic Conflict: A Case Study of the Mon

Not all identity factors previously discussed (in Chapter Four) are equally important in terms of explaining the ethnic conflict in Burma. The explanatory power depends on which factor provides more unification and stronger identification for an ethnic group. For example, if an ethnic group believes that their language is more important to the ethnic identification, language would become more salient for threatening ethnic identity of the group. Or, if the religion is more important to the ethnic identity, the religion would become more salient for threatening ethnic identity of the group.

The threatening ethnic identity of the Mon by the Burman dominated government is one of the main factors causing the ethnic conflict between Mon and Burman. As suggested by the survey data (presented in Chapter four), the Mon have a strong overall ethnic identity and almost 90% of Mon respondents perceived that the Mon and Burman are two distinct ethnic groups (Appendix E). Not surprisingly, when the government refused to recognize the Mon as a distinct ethnic identity in 1947, Mon leaders declared that the Mon qualified as a distinct ethnic group because the Mon have distinct culture, language, literature, religion, and historical homeland; therefore, Mon should have the rights to self-determination in their homeland (NMSP, 1993, p. 21).

There are two types of threats to the Mon ethnic identities: cultural and physical threats. According to Searle-White (2001), any attacks on these identities “contribute to the sense that national identity is fragile” (p.73). However, “threat to cultural survival of a people ‘ethnocide’ which is the ‘systematic destruction of a culture’ might be even more of a threat to national or ethnic group than an attempt at genocide or physical threat” (Searle-White, 2001,p.74). Indeed,

the ethnocide or the assimilation and annihilation policy imposed by the Burmese government have caused more threats to the Mon ethnic identity than the genocide. Presently, the threats facing the Mon identity include (1) the loss of territory and political status, (2) downgrading the ethnic identity, (3) restricting or banning the teaching Mon language and practicing Mon culture, (4) suppressing Mon cultural and historical celebration, (5) destroying Mon's ethnic symbols, (6) transferring population and internal migrations, (7) intermarriages, and (8) physical attack or abuses. How each of these factors would threaten Mon ethnic identities and contribute to the conflict between the Mon and Burman ethnic groups will be discussed in details.

(1) Losing territory and political status

As mentioned in Chapter Four, the association to a common homeland is one of the factors identifying Mon ethnic identity. Losing territory of Mon homeland also threatens to Mon ethnic identity. Prior to the 18th century, Mon kingdoms covered the whole lower Burma (See map 4 in Chapter Four). However, after repeated invasion and occupation by its neighbor, Burman,-- in 1057 A.D., 1546 A.D., and 1757 A.D.-- Mon kingdoms lost its sovereignty and territory.

Restoration of homeland with political power is important for the Mon to maintain its distinct ethnic identity in the future. At the eve of Burma's independence, Mon leaders demanded political and cultural rights in Mon areas in Lower Burma. But the government rejected the demands. Following the government's rejection, the Mon held a three day National Conference in Pa-Auk village, Mudon Township, in late 1947. The Conference unanimously resolved that _...the Mons now demand their full birth-right for the recreation of a Mon State exercising full right of self-determination' (cited in South, 2003, p.105). Mon leaders believed

that only full independence of homeland could protect and promote Mon identity (NMSP, 1993, p.21).

After Burma gained independence in January 1948, Shan, Kachin, and Karenni ethnic groups were granted autonomous states in their respective territories. Chin was granted a special region status. But Mon, Arakanese and Karen were not granted autonomous states in their regions. In response, thousands of Mon demonstrated in Moulmein and demanded the government to create the Mon State with full rights of self-determination. The government crushed the demonstration and arrested Mon leaders (NMSP, 1993, p. 22). The Mon started rebellions against the government right after Burma gained her independence from the British in 1948 (South, 2003, p. 104-105). Part of their struggle was to restore Mon homeland and create an autonomous Mon State in lower Burma.

In 1974, the government designated a small strip of land in Southeastern Burma as the new Mon State. The designated Mon State covers just a small part of old Monland and does not include the city of Pegu, a former capital city of the Mon (See map 4). The State obtained no political rights or ethnic rights. The majority of the Mon were not satisfied with the creation of a new symbolic State, where the Mon has no political or administrative power. Mon leaders often describe the Mon State as a tasteless or meaningless. For instance, Ven. Palita, a respected Mon monk nationalist, published a poem in the Gatab Ket (Modern) Magazine in 1975, warning the Mon people that the Mon State granted by the government was not a real state; Mon should not ~~–taste~~ the tasteless Mon State.” The government arrested and sentenced him to seven years imprisonment in 1976 (Zin, 2003) [Note: He was released after serving 3 years]. At the 3rd Mon National Conference held near the Thai-Burma border in 2006, he reminded the attendees that the current Mon State is still a meaningless Mon State. He added, only armed struggle can regain

political power and ethnic rights in Monland. He also urged the NMSP, who had cease-fire agreement with government, to resume fighting (Ven. Palita's Speech, April 26, 2006).

Including Pegu city in future Mon State is important for Mon ethnic identity. The Pegu city was the latest center of the Mon civilizations and most Mon people, from Burma or Thailand, are mentally attached to the place as part of their territory and their identity. The use of the founding day of Pegu as their National Day is an evidence of their cherishment of Pegu. Therefore, the inclusion of Pegu city in today's Mon State is very important to the Mon ethnic identity. In the draft of Mon State's constitution, the territory of the future Mon State comprises of five districts--Tavoy, Beik, Moulmein, Thaton, and Pegu—which covers from Pegu to Tannasarin divisions. Pegu city must be included in future Mon State (Ramonya Constitution of Mon State (Draft), 2009). [Note: Mon State constitution was drafted by the Mon State Constitution Committee in 2000 and completed in 2009. The members of the committee were comprised of Mon leaders from various Mon organizations including the New Mon State Party].

According to the survey data, 62% of respondents strongly agree and agree to include some parts of old Mon territory in today's Thailand in the future Mon State. But, 94% of respondents strongly agree to include Pegu city (the capital of old Mon kingdom) in the future Mon State, while 71% agree and strongly agree to include all old Mon territory which covers from Tannasarin Peninsula to the Sarak town (Sarak, Thayat in Burmese, is a town currently in Irrawaddy Division) in the future Mon State (Appendix E). Sarak town is known as the land mark of the border between the Burman kingdom and the Hongsawatoi Mon Kingdom in the 15th century, during the rule of Mon King Rajadhirat.

A Mon armed group, Hongsawatoi Restoration Party, used the name "Hongsawatoi" for its group to inspire Mon people about their armed resistances. The organization's name

–Hongkawatoï‘ was referred to old Mon Kingdom Hongkawatoï (Pegu). The group splintered from the NMSP in 2001. One of its objectives was to restore the old Mon kingdom, Hongkawatoï (Pegu). The group was attracted by many young Mon nationalists in overseas. The group is still active in Tennesarim division.

Although the number of Mon speakers have declined in Burma, Mon nationalists still have desire to reclaim old Mon territory in lower Burma and even in some parts of Thailand. In 2007, during the ceremony to commemorate the Hongkawatoï Fallen Day/Holocaust Memorial Day of Mon People , the president of the NMSP, Nai Htaw Mon, said in his speech that even though the Mon have lost its independence for over 250 years, they can re-establish their state and achieve the rights to self determination. But, they must be united and find better strategies to achieve the goal (MUL, May 8, 2007).

Since the lost of territory is a threat to the Mon ethnic identity, the restoration of Monland where they can exercise full ethnic and political rights is the first priority for the Mon in order to prevent the Mon identity from extinction. At present, however, the Mon are not able to secure any territory because thousands of Burmese troops have taken base and tens of thousands of Burman have migrated into Mon State. Strong desire of the Mon to maintain their territory as part of their identity and the unwillingness of the Burmese government to grant the rights to the Mon have been a source of conflict between the Mon and the Burman.

(2) Downgrading the ethnic identity

A group identity becomes threatened –when one's in-group is criticized, downgraded, or attacked” (Hornsey and Hogg 2000, p.144). Therefore, another factor that threatens the Mon ethnic identity is downgrading or dehumanizing of the Mon ethnic identity by the Burman. After

the Mon lost their independence in 1757, they were not only physically and culturally persecuted, but also psychologically persecuted. Their ethnic name “Mon” which had been known by others for centuries was substituted as “Talaing” by the Burman occupiers. In other words, Burman changed the name of the Mon to Talaing in order to downgrade the Mon race from a civilized race to a downtrodden one. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica (1911), the word Talaing means “downtrodden given by the conquering Burmans” (p.366). Moreover, according to Yule and Burnell (1903), “the word ‘Talaing’ is the term by which the Muns [Mons] acknowledged their total defeat, their being vanquished and the slaves of their conqueror. They were no longer to bear the name of Muns or Peguans. Alompra [Alaungpaya] stigmatized them with an appellation suggestive at once of their submission and disgrace. Talaing means (in the Mun language) ‘one who is trodden under foot, a slave’...” (p. 890). The word “Talaing” could also be interpreted as “bastard” (Guillon 1999, p.19). It could come from Mon word of *Ita Luim*, ‘Father, [we] Perish’ (Halliday, 1917, p.3).

However, some scholars refuted the claim and insisted that the Talaing term does not mean downtrodden. They suggest that the term is driven from Tralinga/Talinga, a region in India. According to Pyayre (1884) the Talaing was derived from Telingana in India because some Indian colonists from Telingana settled in Thaton, Mon Kingdom and those colonists later emerged into the Mon race. Thus, Burman called Mon “Talaing” to refer the Mon from that race. In his words, “The people of Pegu[Mon] have long been known to the Burmese and to all foreigners by the name of Talaing, which is obviously connected with the word Telingana; but the name by which they call themselves is Mun or Mwun” (p.28). This claim is questionable since the word “Talaing” rarely known by others before the Alaungpaya invaded Mon Kingdom in 1757. For example, Forchhammer, who spent most of his time studying Mon archaeology and

literature, stated that prior to Alaungpaya invasion of the Mon Kingdom, Hongsawatoi in 1757, ~~the~~ name Talaing was entirely unknown as an appellation of the Muns [Mons],” and they were known as Mons or Peguans (cited in Yule and Burnell, 1903. p.890). There is also no trace in Mon writing regarding the word Talaing (Halliday, 1917, p.3). Moreover, according to Guillon (1999) since Mon in Thailand has been known as Mon, not Talaing, ~~it~~ is evident that it [Mon] must be derived from the real name of these [Mon] people” (p. 19).

Although the exact meaning and origination of the word ~~Talaing~~” may not be exactly known, there is no doubt that the term is derogatory and racist (Guillon, 1999, p. 19) and was used to dehumanize the Mon race during the Burman’s occupation of the last Mon kingdom, Hongsawatoi (Pegu) in 1757 in order to motivate Burman soldiers to massacre the Mon. According to the SIT, dehumanization was applied during the massacre or genocide. Dehumanization of victims make it easier for ordinary people to participate in a genocide or mass killing as they see the victims as less human (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Staub, 1989). In the case of Genocide in Rwanda, Infranco (2004) suggested that Hutus dehumanized Tutsi as cockroaches before killing them (p. 58).

The word ~~Talaing~~” was not only used during the war, but also continued to be used after the war. The word Talaing appeared as official name for the Mon during the Burman’s Konbound Dyansty from 1757 to 1826 and under the British rule (Hla, Pan, 1995). Since the Burman occupiers introduced that name Talaing to the British and foreigners, most books or articles written by the Burman or westerners (e.g. The Talaings by Haliday 1917) during the British rule referred the Mon as ~~Talaing~~”.

Since the term is understood by the Mon as downtrodden, the Mon feel that their identity is fragile and downgraded when they were referred as ~~Talaing~~”. They have been defending their

identity from being fragile and downgrading by any means. According to Searle-White, “the fear of psychological annihilation can be as real a fear as of physical annihilation” (Searle-White, 2001, p. 76). For instance, one Mon wrote in a Mon discussion group (Monnet) in responding to his Burman counterpart who referred Mon as Talaing, “They [Burmans] consistently used Talaing word to.... humiliate Mon, suppress Mon national spirit, pride, glory, prestige and dignity....” (Monnet, September 1, 2009).

Another Mon said, “...we, Mon people, don't like to be called “Talaing” anymore!... “Talaing”, which could be defined as “Fatherless” in Mon, would never be a choice for Mon people to call themselves no matter which language it's derived from!...”. (Monnet, September 1, 2009). Another Mon said, “I don't care where is this word originated from but don't like to be called [Talaing]. It is really touched deeply to the heart...(Monnet, December 12, 2009).

Whenever one uses the word “Talaing” to refer the Mon, the Mon see it as an attack or insult. A prominent Mon scholar, Dr. Nai Pan Hla felt disgraced when he read the word “Talaing” in Burmese school text books and Burmese history books (Hla, Pan, 1998, p.29). The insensitivity to this fact could also lead to acts of violence. Such an instance took place in the Government Nursing Training School at the Rangoon General Hospital in 1954, where a Burman student repeatedly called a Mon student “Talaing.” The Mon student said that he did not like to be called Talaing, but the Burman student did not stop. The Mon student became very angry. One day, when the Burman student called him “Talaing”, he picked a steel bell ringer and hit of the Burman student on the head. The Burman student died on the spot. The Mon student was charged for murder and sentenced to life in prison, but the sentence was later reduced to 10 years due to good behavior (Zar, 2006, p.9-12).

The “Falaing” name not only provokes anger of the Mon but also provokes the nationalism among the Mon. Mon leaders have been fighting to eliminate the use of the word “Falaing” in referring the Mon since the British rule. Mon leaders requested British rulers not to use “Falaing” in referring to the Mon in official languages and in any publications. Therefore, in 1930, the British administration in Burma, under the governor, Sir *Joseph Augustus Maung Gyi*, (*Note: Sir J. A. Maung Gyi is a Mon by ethnic*) issued a Circular (Memo) instructing all governmental departments to substitute “Falaing” word in all literature and languages with the “Mon”. The circular read as,

The word “Mon” should be substituted and recognized for the word, “Falaing”. The government of Burma is now aware of the fact that the word “Mon” is more adequate than the word “Falaing” so commonly used by the people of Burma. The Governor now therefore directs in the meeting of the Council that henceforth the word “Mon” should be used in all literature and languages (cited in Hla, 1998, p. 31).

The circular was reissued to all government’s departments in 1947, as Burma prepared for independence from the British (Hla, Pan, 1998, p.31). However, after Burma gained her independence, the word “Falaing” was continued to be used in some Burmese publications. In 1975, Ven. Palita, the Secretary General of Mon Literature Committee wrote a letter requesting Burmese government again not to use the word “Falaing” to refer the Mon in any Burmese publications (Ven. Palita’s Letter dated August 13, 1975). The government ordered the Burmese Literature Commission not to use “Falaing” word in any Burmese publications in order to prevent the rising of Mon nationalism and provoking conflict between the Mon and Burman (Ministry of Education, Order No. 447/2 ma sa ka (Ta) 11/75, 9/4/1975). However, some Burmans continue using the word “Falaing” to refer the Mon today. The conflict between the two groups will continue as the Burmans continue to use the word “Falaing” to refer the Mon

and as the Mon continue to defend their identity from downgrading and dehumanizing by any means.

3. Threatening language and literature identity

The threatening of Mon language, literature and culture are the most important threat to the Mon ethnic identity. According to survey data, Mon language, literature, and culture are ranked as the most important factors for the Mon identification (See table 5). Threatening of these factors posts significant threats to the Mon ethnic identity.

The language, literature, and culture of the Mon people are in danger due to the restrictions and repressions by the successive Burmese governments (South, 2003, p.36). According to the *Minorities At Risk* (MAR), which tracks politically-active ethnic groups throughout the world from 1945 to the present, the risk of Mon language and culture were ranked at level 3, which means the activities of culture and language are sharply restricted. The UNESCO place the Mon language in the “in danger” category (UNESCO’s report, 2009). The banning on teaching of an ethnic language may not be a great threat to an ethnic group whose ethnic identity is not defined along the linguistic line. However, for the Mon, distinctive language is one of important factors for their ethnic identity. Accordingly, Mon leaders often remind the Mon people that if Mon language becomes extinct so do the Mon people (IMNA, Video clip, April 24, 2007).

Since 1962, all government schools in Burma including non-Burman ethnic areas have been instructed to teach all curriculums in the Burmese language. According to the U.S. State Department, Burmese remained the mandatory language of instruction in state schools, and teaching in local languages was not offered. Even in ethnic minority areas, most primary and

secondary state schools did not offer instruction in the local ethnic minority language. There were very few domestic publications in indigenous minority languages” (U.S. State Department, February 25, 2009).

Indeed, the suppression of Mon language and literature does not start in the modern time; they have been under the threat of Burmanization for nearly a thousand years (South, 2003, p.35). During the first two Burman occupations of the Mon kingdoms in 11th and 15th centuries, Mon languages and literatures were not as seriously threatened as they are today because the suppressions of the Burman rulers during these periods were less severe (NMSP, 1993, p.3).

However, the Burman's occupation of 1757, led by U Aung Zeya (Alaungpaya), attempted to destroy the Mon identity including language, culture and literature. Following the occupation, Alaungpaya and his followers not only committed the killings of Mon populations but also committed the destruction of Mon culture, literature, artifacts, and intellectuals. According to a Mon historian and political leader, Nai Tun Thein, “the racial oppression practiced by Alaungphaya was worse than that of previous [Burman] kings. He ended the cultural autonomy adopted by the former Myanmar rulers of the Pagan era, and by kings Tabinshwehti and Bayinnaung, and colonized the Mon state” (Cited in South, 2003, p.80). “Alaungphaya was the first Burman king to consciously manipulate ethnic identity as a means to military and political domination” (South, 2003, p. 80). Due to the persecutions, many Mon had no choice but to adopt the language and culture of the Burman victor. As Emanuel Forchammer (1851) stated, “Alongpra [Alaungpaya] consigned the Talaing [Mons] literature to the flames, defaced their inscriptions, prohibited the use of the Talaing [Mons] languages, and destroyed every town and village that ventured to oppose this progress. The Talaing [Mon] of today have

nearly merged with the Burmans, their own vernacular is almost forgotten, their literature has not been rewritten, and their history and traditions are nearly effaced from their memory”(p.2).

The Mon population in Burma also dramatically declined after the war of 1757. Before the war, most of the inhabitants of the Irrawaddy Delta were the Mon. For example, Bassein, one of the three provinces of the former Mon kingdom, was one of the most populous Mon settlements before 1757. But after the war, Mon population in the Delta dramatically declined. According to the population census recorded in 1856, nearly half of the population in Henzada district, located in the Delta area, was ethnic Mon (Smith, Martin, 1999, p. 43), but, by 1911 –out of a total population of 532,357 only 1,224 describe themselves as Mon, of whom only 399 could speak Mon and not even 50 write it” (Smith, Martin, 1999, p. 43).

There were many reasons for the decline of Mon population and speakers in Burma. One major reason was the restriction of using Mon language following the war. As Spearman (1879) stated, “[t]he use of their own language, which is harsh and guttural, differing from Burmese in almost every word and totally different in combination of words and sentences and in idiom, was more than strongly discouraged by the Burman conqueror Aloungbhoora [Alaungpaya] and by his successors,[and] no longer permitted in the monasteries or elsewhere within the Burman dominions: In Pegu it has almost died out ...” (p.51). Similarly, the Census of India reported that, “Upon the conquest of Pegu by Alaungpaya in 1757 the Burmese strongly discouraged the use of the Talaing [Mon] language.... Its teaching in the Buddhist monasteries or other schools was then prohibited” (India Census Commissioner, 1912, p. 208). Due to the persecutions by the Burman rulers, many Mon dared not to speak Mon and changed their identity from Mon to Burman (NMSP, 1993, p.3; South 2003, p.80-81).

Another reason is that, as Mon lost their sovereignty and become slaves of Burman kings, some Mons lost self-esteem or positive identification in their own group and switched their identity from Mon to Burman. For example, according to Lieberman, after 1757, “many bilingual southerners who had hitherto identified themselves as ‘Mons’ may suddenly have found it politic to become ‘Burmese’” (Cited in South, 2003, p.80). Since the Mon and Burman are geographically and culturally very close, changing the identity from Mon to Burman is not so difficult. The Burman also welcomed such changes as it is one way of assimilation. The other cause for the decline of Mon population in Burma was that many Mon fled to Thailand to escape the persecutions by the Burman (MUL, 1997, p.3). After the falling of last Mon kingdom, thousands of Mon including royal family and aristocrats fled to Thailand. In Thailand, they were treated well by Thai court. They were allotted free land for housing and farming (Wongpolganon, 2007). Moreover, “those high-ranking officials in the Mon court were assigned their former positions in the Siamese court (Wongpolganon, 2007, p.54).

In early 1900s, the population of Mon speakers appears to have reached the lowest point in Burma’s history. Some British rulers as well as some Burma’s natives believed the Mon were already in extinction. For example, in 1920, British Major Enriquez praised Karen people for their loyalty to the British government that “if it was not for the advent of the British, they [Karens] would probably have disappeared like the Talaings [Mon]. As it is, they are now a greatly flourishing race, passionately loyal to the British Government” (Po, 1928, p.23). Similarly, a Karen leader, San C Po, proposed the future of Burma’s federal union be comprised of Burman, Shan, Arakanese and Karens. In his words, “Like the powerful British nation formed of four mighty nations in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, a great Burmese nation may be formed of the four principal races of the country, the Burmese, the Karens, the

Arakanese, and the Shans; each nation with its own country and its own distinctive national characteristics, ready to unite for the good of the whole country” [Po, 1928, p.65]. These notions suggest that the Mon were no longer recognized as a distinct ethnic group in Burma.

The fear of extinction of the Mon ethnic identity was the major motivation for the Mon nationalists, and those died hard Mon rose up and started the Mon nationalist movement near the end of British colonial rule. In 1939, the first Mon social and culture organization of modern time, All Ramanya Mon Association (ARMA) was founded by the Mon intellectuals. The aim of the movement was originally to revive the Mon culture and literature (MNSP, 1993, p.10). The ARMA blazed a trail for the Mon nationalist movements that emerged in the mid 1940s. Many of its members (e.g. Nai Po Cho and Nai Ngwe Thein) later became the leaders of Mon nationalist movements in the following decades .

In 1945, Nai Po Cho, a former member of ARMA formed the United Mon Association (UMA), the first overtly political Mon organization of modern time. Among the import tasks of the UMA was the adoption of Mon National Day, a celebration of the founding of Mon kingdom, Hongwatoi in the eight century A.D., in order to promote the Mon ethnic identity. The organization pushed for the official recognition of the Mon language and the establishment of a Mon polity within the emerging Union of Burma (South, 2003, p.101). In order to discuss the Mon national affairs, UMA held the first Mon National Conference in late 1946. Based on the conference's resolutions, Mon leaders submitted a seven-point political demand including culture, literature, and executive administrative rights to the Burmese government. However, the demand was rejected (South, 2003, p.105). The government claimed that ‘Mon and Burman are the same; therefore separate ethnic Mon identity should not be contemplated’ (cited in South 2003, p. 110).

Clearly, Burman leaders miscalculated a growth of the Mon nationalism by rejecting the seven-point political demand from the Mon. After Burma gained her independence, most of non-Burman ethnic groups in Burma were granted political and cultural autonomy, except the Mon and Arakanese because Burman leaders claimed that these two races were already assimilated into Burman race. As Jossef Silverstein (2007) described, “[t]he Mons and Arakanese, who had no separate area under the British, put forth claims for statehood in 1948. Their demands were opposed by Burman assimilationists who argued that separate states were unnecessary because Arakanese, Mons and Burmans were intermixed physically, culturally, and historically” (p.102). The rejection angered Mon nationalists and the Mon called for the creation of fully independent Mon State, instead of an autonomous state in the federal union (South, 2003, p.105).

Subsequently, the Mon nationalist movement escalated. For the lack of consideration and the rejection of the will of the Mon people by the government, a group of frustrated Mon youths raided police stations around the city of Moulmein and other parts of Mon areas in 1948. The modern Mon armed revolution started on that day (Note: That day was later recognized as the Mon Revolutionary Day which has been celebrated by the Mon in Burma and in overseas).

In August 1948, Mon and Karen leaders signed an agreement to fight together for the attainment of the independent Mon and Karen States. The Mon took up arms under the leadership of the Mon National Defense Organization (MNDO) and later under the Mon People's Front (MPF), along with Karen, to fight against the Burmese government (NMSP 1993, p.29). The Mon's and Karen's forces occupied the city of Moulmein for two weeks, but after negotiations with the government broke down, they eventually retreated (NMSP 1993, p.29). The retreat followed by persecutions of the Mon. About one hundred Mon villages were burnt down by the Burmese forces (MUL, 1997, p.5).

As the Mon rebellion gained momentum in early 1950s, the government granted some culture and literature rights to the Mon and allowed the teaching Mon literature and language in government's schools (NMSP, 1993, pp. 54-57). The government also held peace talks with the Mon People's Front (MPF) to discuss the Mon issues, especially for creating an autonomous Mon State in lower Burma (NMSP, 1993, pp.54-57). After many rounds of peace talks, the MPF agreed to surrender their arms to the government in 1958 in exchange for creating an autonomous Mon state within Burma (NMSP, 1993, pp.54-57). Among the MPF leaders, only Nai Shwe Kyin, who did not trust the government, remained underground and continued the armed struggle (Fredholm, 1993, pp. 131-135) [Note:Nai Shwe Kyin later founded the New Mon State Party (NMSP), which had fought against the government until 1995].

In 1962, General Ne Win took over the power in a military coup. The promise of creating an autonomous Mon State was not honored by the Ne Win's government (Fredholm, 1993, pp.131-135). Instead, the government arrested most of the MPF leaders and imprisoned them (NMSP, 1993). By this action, the government essentially destroyed the trust between the Mon and Burman. The Mon were left with no other choice than to return to the armed struggles. Although most of the MPF's leaders were imprisoned, the Mon armed-struggle emerged again under the leadership of the New Mon State Party (NMSP) founded by Nai Shwe Kyin.

After General Ne Win took over the power in 1962, the government imposed a tougher assimilation policy 'Burmanization' (Edith, Bowels, 2000). The government banned the teaching of all non-Burman ethnic languages and literatures in both government and private schools. The International Crisis Group (ICG) documented that,

After the 1962 military coup, the use of ethnic minority languages in the education system and for publication of newspapers and books was banned. Ethnic minority communities saw this as a deliberate policy by the central government to Burmanise them: The ethnic non-Burman communities of the

country have systematically been deprived of their birth right to teaching their own ethnic languages and literature and to preserving their own cultural heritage, under a policy of Burman ethnocentrism and Burmanisation traditionally exercised by the successive Burman-dominated governments in Rangoon (ICG, May 7, 2003).

Martin Smith (1994) also described the Burmanization as “[f]or many citizens, the open discrimination against ethnic minority groups in matters of culture, education, language and religion is the most disturbing evidence of a long-term policy of 'Burmanisation' carried out by all governments since independence” (Smith, Martin, 1994, p.103) and the trend toward Burmanization continued under current military regime (State and Peace Development Council)(SPDC) (Smith, Martin, 1994, p.35).

Regarding the government's ban of the teaching Mon language in schools, a Mon national conference was held in Moulmein on February 26, 1978. About 600 representatives including 300 Buddhist monks from all over the country attended the conference. The conference passed a resolution to form the All Ramonyadesa Mon Culture and Literature Committee. Based on the conference's resolution the committee wrote a letter to the government of Burma demanding the government to immediately allow the teaching of Mon language from primary to high schools in both Mon State and in Mon areas outside the Mon State and to provide costs for teachers' salaries and for publishing text books. The committee also demanded to recognize the Mon language as official language in Mon State (Letter to the President of Burma, February 26, 1978). The demand was rejected. The rejection outraged the Mon population, especially Mon monks who were in the fore front of the civil movements for protecting the Mon national identity.

In 1980s, the government further restricted the teaching of Mon language. Prior to 1982, although the teaching of Mon language was banned in state and private schools, the teaching of

Mon language was allowed in the monasteries. In 1982, although the government did not directly ban the using of Mon language for the monastic educations per se, the government required all Mon monastic students to take examinations in Burmese language. This requirement indirectly forced them to replace the Mon language with the Burmese language even in the monastic education. The Mon monasteries have been using Mon language as the medium for teaching Buddhist literature even under the British rule in Burma, and that monastic education has been the backbone of the Mon language and literature for many centuries. As Thein Lwin (2000) indicated, after the Mon lost their sovereign independence to the Burman kings, “the Mon monasteries served as the only centre of Mon language and literature teaching. Even under the British colony (1885-1948), the Mon language was allowed to be taught in schools in the Mon areas under the British administration” (p.5).

The new government’s requirement outraged the Mon monks. Most of the Mon monks refused to take the examination in Burmese and boycotted the government’s examination (The Mon Forum August 30, 1998). In outrage, some Mon Monks disrobed and joined the Mon armed revolutions. Some of them left to Thailand and continued to peruse Mon language and literature rights. In 1992, Overseas Mon Young Monks’ Union based in Bangkok, issued a statement and stated that “[t]he Mon language, whose alphabet was borrowed by the Burman, is forbidden to be taught in schools. Throughout the colonial period and until 1981 monks could sit for the Pali examination in Mon, but now Burmese is the only permitted language” (Cited in Smith, Martin, 1994, p.108).

In prevention of further disruptions to the Mon monastic education, Mon monk leaders formed an examination board called “Ramonna Nikarya” and offered examinations equivalent to those of government’s. However, some young monks were less motivated to take the

examination since it was not recognized by the government. Thus, senior Mon monks continued to lobby the government to allow the examination in Mon, but the government never granted a permission until it was asked as one of the conditions for the cease-fire with the NMSP in 1995. [Note: in negotiations for a cease-fire agreement with the government, the NMSP demanded the government to allow Mon monks to take government's examination in Mon language again. The government finally granted the request as part of the cease-fire agreement.] (Mon, Kasuah, 2008 p.110; The Mon Forum, March 31, 2003; ICG, August 20, 2009).

As the repression of Mon language and cultures increased in Burma so did the intensity the Mon nationalist movements. Even though the Mon armed struggle was nearly halted for awhile after the MPF lay down its arms in 1958, the struggle regained momentum in early 1970s. Most of the leaders of the MPF were released from jail in early 1970s and some of them rejoined the armed struggles under the leadership of the NMSP. The members of Mon National Liberation Army (MNLA), the arm wing of the NMSP, increased from hundreds in early 1970s (NMSP website) and reached three to four thousands in 1988 (South, 2003, p. 141). (Note: The total members including both army and administrators reached 7,860 by the time it reached the cease-fire agreement with the government in 1995 (IMNA, April 29, 2010).

The administrative activities of the NMSP grew with the growing strength of the party. The NMSP created many departments including departments of health and education in 1970s. Of these departments, the Mon National Education Department, formed in 1972, is the most important department for the revival of Mon language and literature and for embracing the Mon nationalism among Mon youths (Lwin, 2002). The department comprised of two committees: the Mon National Education Committee (MNEC) and the Textbook Committee. The department opened many schools in the NMSP's control areas. As of 2000, the MNEC has supervised the

teaching of Mon language and literature in 340 primary and secondary schools. Of these 340, 150 are directly control by the MNEC and 190 are under the Burmese government control. The schools served 46,202 students and 826 teachers were employed (Lwin, 2002).

The education policies of the MNEC and the Burmese government's are contradictory. While the Burmese government's education policy embraces Burmanization with the expense of other non-Burman nationalities, the MNEC embraces Mon nationalism and anti Burmanization (Lwin, 2002). For example, Burman see Burman Kings such as Anoratha, Bayintnaung, and Alaungpaya as heroes for conquering the Monland, while the Mon see them as invaders for the same reason. The Mon treats Mon king, Rajadhirit, who had never lost a war against the Burman in his forty years reign, as a hero (Lwin, 2002; Lwin 2007). The MNEC not only provides education and teaches Mon language to Mon students, it also promotes the Mon ethnic identity and nationalism by teaching Mon culture, language, literature and history. Indeed different perspectives of history of Burma cause wider conflict between Mon and Burman (Lwin, 2002; Lwin, 2007).

In another front, Mon Buddhist monks and Mon leaders came out with a new idea for reviving the Mon language after the government rejected the demand of the All Ramonnyadesa Mon Culture and Literature Committee in 1978. In early 1980s, rather than openly aiming for teaching Mon language and literature, Mon monks initiated summer schools to teach Buddhism and Buddhist culture to Mon children. Since the government granted permission to teach Buddhist culture to school children to prevent the influence of other religions, especially Islam, Mon monks took the opportunity to promote the teaching of Mon language. Initially the government was not aware that the summer school movement would threaten the government's Burmanization policy. They supported the movement in order to prevent the influence of other

religions among the Buddhists. Indeed, in order to teach Buddhism to Mon students, those students needed to learn basic Mon language. Thus, Mon Buddhist monks opened Mon language schools under the pretext of Buddhist culture schools (personal communication, Ven. Eidasara 3/7/2010). [Note: Ven. Eidasara was Mon literature activist in 1980s.] Mon Buddhist monks play major roles in promoting the Mon language (Zin, 2003). [Note: This is in agreement with the data collected in the survey conducted in this study. The survey results showed that Mon monks have a higher level of ethnic identity than laymen. They are more nationalistic and they are more active in revival of Mon language than the ordinary public (See Chapter Four)].

The summer school movement has gained momentum and many Mon students have joined the Mon summer schools. Hundreds of young Mon monks and university students have volunteered to be Mon language teachers (Mon Summer School Statistics Report, 2008). The Mon Literacy and Culture Committees (MLCC) have formed across Mon State, Karen State, Pegu, and Tenasserim Divisions where Mon people live. As of 2007, over 60,000 students participated in the program (Mon Summer School Statistics Report, 2008).

As the Mon summer schools gained momentum under the leadership of MLCC, the government viewed it as a threat to its Burmanization policy and started harassing and oppressing the Mon summer schools. For example, in May 2000, Mon State SPDC (Mon State Peace and Development Council) ordered the MLCC in Moulmein to shutdown the Mon summer schools in Moulmein and forced the committee to sign a promissory note not to open the Mon summer schools again. The committee had opened Mon summer schools in 11 city wards of Moulmein and taught 500 Mon school children (The Mon Forum, June 2000). The authority threatened the committee members with imprisonment if they continued to open the Mon

summer schools (The Mon Forum, June 2000). Therefore, the committee had to shut down the schools.

Since the language and literature are important for the Mon identity, the Mon public requested the NMSP to include the rights for teaching Mon language in its cease-fire negotiation with the Burmese government in 1995. Thus, the NMSP made the following requests in regard to preserving Mon language and literature in the cease-fire negotiation.

1. To allow teaching of Mon language in government schools in Mon State as a minor subject.

2. To build more government schools in Mon State and upgrade schools and education levels in various Mon villages and provide more assistance to those schools.

3. To assist building Mon National High School in undeveloped areas in Mon State.

4. To allow Mon monks to take government sponsored Buddhist literature examination in Mon language (The Mon Forum, August 30, 1998)

The government agreed to these demands to a certain extent. The government agreed to allow the teaching of Mon language in government's schools outside the regular school time, and it also agreed to allow Mon monks to take government sponsored Buddhist literature examination in Mon language.

Initially the agreements were implemented smoothly. But, only three years after the cease-fire agreement, the oppression against the teaching of Mon language were again implemented by the government (The Mon Forum, August 30, 1998). As Mon students became more interested in Mon language classes, the government felt a threat to its national unity policy or Burmanization policy. Thus, it ordered a shut down teaching of the Mon language classes in government's schools as well as a complete shut down of the Mon National Schools managed by

NMSP in the government controlled areas. The order stated, ~~the~~ State must not allow the establishment of unregistered illegal schools and teaching in there in any regions and villages. We will take action against who do not follow according to this order. And if the teachers, the students and supporters consider or plan against the laws and order and implement into action, they must be completely taken action according to emergency acts” (Letter no. 083/2-5/Ma Ya ka Date: July (6), 1998., translated by and published in The Mon Forum, August 30, 1998). In 1998, 170 schools were ordered to shut down teaching Mon languages by the government and over 10,000 students lost their opportunity learning Mon and language (The Mon Forum, August 30, 1998).

On August 26, 1998, the NMSP wrote a letter to the government, chairman of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), General Than Shwe and requested to reopen those schools and to allow the teaching Mon in government schools (NMSP letter to SPDC chairman dated August 26, 1998). But, the government rejected this. Once again, Mon people felt that they were betrayed by the Burmese government as they were in 1958. Since then relationships between the NMSP and the government became strained. Not only the MNSP, but the Mon public was outraged by the government’s action. Some Mon nationalists even called upon the NMSP to resume fighting against the regime.

In 2001, a group of NMSP members splintered from the NMSP and formed the Hongsawatoi Restoration Party to resume fighting against the government. One of the main reasons was that the Mon people were still denied their literature and culture rights even after the NMSP reached a cease-fire agreement with the government (Kaowao, November 13, 2001).

The oppression of Mon national schools has continued in the following years. In some cases, the government has forcibly converted Mon national schools to government schools. In

others, the government seized the schools and forced the schools to relocate, threatened to shut down the schools, and harassed or arrested the teachers. Moreover, in some villages, the authorities accused Mon school teachers or school administrators of being involved in politics or supporting anti-government groups and arrested and tortured them. Some teachers from the schools had to flee to the Thai-Burma border for safety.

For instance, a Mon National Middle school in Lamine, Ye township, Mon state, was forced to relocate after the school's land was seized by local authorities. The school was supported by the Lamine Mon community. About 300 students enrolled in the school (IMNA, October 21, 2005). A Burmese army battalion based in Ye Township also warned villages that ~~they~~ they must immediately stop teaching Mon education and the Mon national schools must be under government control starting from this year and follow all curriculum and instructions issued by the SPDC's administration" (Kaowao, May 23, 2004), and ~~if~~ if the teachers would not stop teaching Mons in the schools, the school will be shut down indefinitely" (Kaowao, May 23, 2004). In November 2002, the Burmese authority arrested Nai Manate Ong, an official from the Mon Education Department and used him as porter and forced him to resign from his duty in the Mon Education Department (The Mon Forum, March 31, 2003). A Mon teacher who was able to flee to the Thai-Burma border explained The commander and his troops came to my house and threatened me not to teach at the Mon National School, instead they want me to teach at their (SPDC) school and offered me three times the salary I make now,' (Kaowao, February 10, 2006). Nai Sunthorn, the Secretary General of the Mon Unity League, claimed that these practices are inkeeping with the junta's systematic policy of ethnic cleansing,' (Mon, Chan and K. Goe, June 22, 2006).

Due to the government's suppression, the numbers of Mon National Schools have declined. In 2008-2009 school years, numbers of school reduced to 268 from 340 in 2000. The enrollment declined to 35,000 from 46,202 in 2000 (Lwin 2002; Interview with Mi Sar Dar, Head of the MNEC, May 31, 2010).

Despite the government's oppression and restrictions, Mon language school movement is still active in rural and NMSP's control areas. Some Mon national schools were run and supported by the local community rather than the NMSP's education department (Maraoh, Blai and Weng Mon, December 15, 2009). The Mon Summer School movement is also still growing under the Mon monks' leadership.

Because the Mon believe that Mon language and literature is a life line for the Mon identity, they have taken every opportunity and made every effort to revive and nurture the Mon language and literature. As described above, the Mon language school movement has grown to a Mon national movement rather than a group or an organization's movement. A Thai analyst described that Mon literacy movement as "Fighting without weapons" (Wilai, 2006). The conflict will continue as long as the Burmese government uses its power in response to the Mon language and literature movements.

(4) The suppression of Mon cultural and historical celebration

The celebration of Mon National Day (MND) has become one of the biggest celebrations of Mon cultural and historical identity. The celebration also has been a mass movement for reviving the Mon ethnic identity. The MND celebration is annually held on the founding day of the Hongsawatoi Mon kingdom, 1st Waning Day of the 11th month of Mon lunar calendar, which usually falls around February in the western calendar. It is widely celebrated in Mon areas in

Burma. As some Mon have migrated to overseas, the MND celebration spreads all over the world including Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada, and Europe. At the celebration, Mon leaders give speeches and tell Mon history, and Mon young men and women perform Mon traditional dances and different types of cultural shows. The MND is not only used to celebrate Mon cultural and historical identity but is also used as an event to embrace Mon nationalism and urge Mon people to continue the fight for their ethnic rights.

For years, Burmese government has tried to ban the celebration. But, it has not been able to do so because the Mon have taken the risk of being arrested or jailed and participated in the event in mass. Even though the Burmese government was not able to ban the celebration, it has imposed various kinds of restriction to limit the event as much as possible. The government requires the Mon to apply for permissions to celebrate the MND, limits the municipality of the celebration, bans or censors the MND posters, publications, and speeches, and even harasses or threatens the people who organize or join the celebration.

When the NMD committees request permissions for the celebration, most often, the government neither approves nor rejects it. Even though no explanation was ever given, it has been speculated that approving the requests would mean the government officially recognizes the MND and rejecting it would ignites the nationalism among the Mon. In times when the authority was such nonresponsive, the committees went ahead with the celebration without any permission.

However, the government authority did publicly prohibit the MND celebration in some specific occasions. An example is the celebration of the Golden Jubilee Mon National Day in 1997. Mon people had prepared for months for the special celebration of the Golden Jubilee

Mon National Day. They planned a mass gathering with festivities in the Maing Dar field in Moulmein, the capital of Mon State. The MND committee requested permission from the government as required. The government waited to reject the permission right on the eve of celebration when the committee completed all the preparations for the event. It appears that the authority purposely chose the time to reject the permission in order to humiliate and harass the Mon people.

The government authority gave a reason for the rejection: the government has celebrated the Mon State Day every year, so that the Mon do not need to celebrate the Mon National Day. The Mon State Day, March 19, was designated by the government on the day which the Mon State was created. For the Mon, the government's creation of Mon state was not remarkable since the state has no political or ethnic rights. Therefore, most Mon do not consider the Mon State Day to be celebratory.

The Golden Jubilee Mon National Day was very significant event for the Mon and the rejection created more dissatisfaction with the government. The MND committee issued a statement to express its disappointment and frustration with the rejection. A part of the statement cited in the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (May 1997) read:

Like other ethnic nationalities in Burma, we, people, warmly accept the 1st Wanning Tapotwe day is an historic and important day for us to celebrate the Mon National Day. Additionally, we have been waiting for the coming of the Golden Jubilee Mon National Day for several years (in this century). Meanwhile, we, the central celebration committee, have attempted and prepared to celebrate a most brilliant ceremony of the Golden Jubilee Mon National Day in this year....However, we, Mon people, are unlucky, because after several rounds of discussion with government authorities, the celebration is absolutely prohibited to celebrate in Maing Dar ground. (Cited in The Human Rights Foundation of Monland, May, 1997).

One good example for the restriction on municipality is the restriction on the MND celebration of the Mon who were living in Rangoon, former capital city of Burma. Prior to 1990, the MND celebration was allowed outdoors on public grounds in Rangoon. Due to the mass participation in 1990, the government began to restrict the event. After 1990, the government allowed the celebration to be held only indoor where limited numbers of people could participate. But, the government totally barred the celebration in Rangoon in 2000. The government's justification was that Rangoon is not part of Mon State. Since then MND celebration was totally banned in Rangoon. The ban outraged the Mon people because Rangoon is a historical city of old Monland (The Mon Forum, March 31, 2003).

In fact, the MND celebration is restricted even inside Mon state. The government bans any activities that would make Mon identity more salient. For example, in 2003, the MND committee in Mon State put up posters with a portrait of Mon Queen Mi Jao Bu, who ruled the Mon kingdom in the 15th century A.D. Queen Mi Jao Bu was the only queen who reigned in the history of Burma and was respected by the Mon (Note: Mon women's organizations around the world use her birthday to mark the Mon Women's Day). The posters could help greatly to embrace the Mon identity and nationalism, so that the authority barred the committee from putting up the posters. The committee put them up anyway in Mudon and Thanbyuzayat townships which are the home to hardcore of Mon nationalists. The SPDC's Minister of Home Affairs, U Tin Hlaing, was angry to see the posters and ordered to take them down immediately (The Mon Forum, March 31, 2003).

In 2010, the Central Committee of the MND printed posters with the picture of the map of an old Mon kingdom, Suwumnabumi (Thatôn) (See figure 5.1). The description on the poster was written in both Mon and Burmese languages. After the posters were put up in every town

and cities in Mon areas, the government ordered the committee to erase the Burmese language description in the posters, as the authority claimed, for its threat to the national unity. The posters were already put up, so the committee had no choices but to make changes. The Overseas Mons condemned the government's action in their joint statement. The statement stated that the military regime –continues to repress our cultural celebrations... Recently, the regime ordered a Burmese historical text which had chronicled our history of the Mon Kingdom, Suvannabhum (Thatôn), to be removed from Mon National Day's signboards and posters” (The Joint-Statement of the Overseas Mon Organizations on the 63rd Anniversary of the Mon National Day, January 30, 2010).

Figure 6: The 63rd Mon National Day Poster



Another type of restriction on the MND celebration is that the censorship of speeches and published materials made to distribute during the MND celebration. Before the celebration, the committee is required to submit the speeches and publications to the government authority. The government makes sure that speeches and publications do not embrace the Mon nationalism or

threat the government's assimilation/Burmanization policy. Any contents that embrace the Mon nationalism and express political views are usually censored. For example, in 2009, the government censored speeches and publications prepared to be delivered in the main event of MND, organized by the Central Committee of the MND, held in Kaw Kamein (Beelu Kyun, in Burmese). About 15,000 people attended the celebration (Maraoh, February 17, 2009). The censored part of the speeches and pamphlets were obtained by Independent Mon News Agency (IMNA) at Thai-Burma border. One of the censored paragraphs reads:

—We have to fight for Mon national rights by ourselves. Even we face hardships and difficulties, we must not give up. I would like to urge that if we try with individual strength, with group strength, with thousands strengths, unanimously in unison, we will definitely get what we want.”

In the pamphlets, the government also censored a paragraph reads —After 1962, the Mon language in schools and universities was banned. Following that, taking Buddhist literature examinations in Mon language was also banned. In order to get the permission back, we have to struggle again” (Maraoh, February 17, 2009).

The Mon also use the MND celebration as an opportunity to express their political views and demands. However, only overseas Mon and Mon living in NMSP's control areas could have such opportunities since no freedom of expression is allowed inside Burma. In the NMSP control areas, the MND celebration includes military parade from the Mon National Liberation Army (MNLA). The NMSP usually issues the MND statement expressing the party's political views. For example, in its 2009's MND statement, the NMSP criticized the Burmese military government for not being able to solve Burma's political problem and for its human rights violations. The statement also called for the unity among Mon both inside and outside Burma for

the sake of the Mon national self-determination (Statement on 62nd Mon National Day, New Mon State Party, and January 10, 2009).

The Mon communities in exile not only celebrate the MND in their respective countries, but also jointly issue statements to express their concerns on the human right violations in Mon areas and to express their demands for political, cultural and ethnic rights. For example, overseas Mon jointly issued a statement on the MND in 2008 in which they called upon the Mon, Burmese military and international community as follow:

We strongly urge Mon people around the world:

- (1) To build solid unity among ourselves and to work together for our causes,
- (2) To promote our culture and literature wherever we are,
- (3) To launch effective international campaigns against the illegitimate rule of Burmese military regime, and

We appeal to the international community:

- (1). To increase pressure on Burmese military regime to initiate political dialogue with the NLD and the ethnic nationalities.
- (2). To stop all kinds of human rights abuses committed by the Burmese Army in the parts of Burma that are the homelands of the Mons and other ethnic nationalities.

In the U.S., the largest MND celebration is annually held in Fort Wayne, Indiana, a home to the largest Mon community in the U.S. The celebration is usually attended by the local government officials including Congressman. e.g. Rep. Mark Souder (Kaowao February 20, 2006). The City of Fort Wayne officially recognized the Mon National Day in 2002. In the proclamation, Mayor Graham Richard urged “all citizens of Fort Wayne to recognize this event and to participate appropriately in its observance” (City of Fort Wayne, March 2, 2002).

(5) The restrictions on Mon language publications and abolishment of Mon national symbols

The Mon language publications such as newspapers, journals, magazines, books, etc. would encourage the Mon to read, write, and learn Mon, and thus they are important for the survival of Mon language and literature. However, the government has not only imposed publishing restrictions but also threatened or shut down the presses, publishers, or organizations that take part in promoting Mon language and literature.

The government also restricts or prohibits the using of symbols and banners that are salient to the Mon identity. Inconceivably, there were instances where the government replaced the cultural symbols of the Mon or ruined archaeological artifacts such as century-old Mon's stone inscriptions.

After 1962, the government not only banned the teaching of ethnic minorities' languages in both government and private schools and also banned the publishing non-Burman language publications under the 1962's Printers and Publishers Registration Law (Smith, Martin, 2002, p.9). Any person or organization who wants to publish journals, magazines or books is required to request permission from the "Press Scrutiny Board (PSB)." Burmese language publications are also required to go through the scrutiny board but they are more likely to be given permission as long as they do not go against the government's power (The Mon Forum, March 31, 2003). The government encourages and easily grants permission to publications that promote the Burman's culture, literature and identity. For non-Burman ethnic publications, the governments ban any publications that go against government's power as well as those promote ethnic identity. Consequently, only a few non-religion publications have been

published in Mon language (Note: there are many religious publications in Mon language because religious publications are less restricted).

In order to promote or nurture Mon language and literature, Mon writers as well as Mon social and cultural organizations have tried to get permission from the PSB for producing Mon language publications. However, chances to have permission has been very slim. According to the report from the Mon Forum (2003) where thousands of Burmese language publications were granted permissions, a yearly average of about one or two Mon publications were permitted. The application process often takes longer than it does for publications in Burmese language. As a Mon literature activist from Rangoon expressed, '[e]xcept the religious books (on Buddhism) in Pali language, the Press Scrutiny Board (PSB) does not allow any printing of Mon magazines, journals, and books. Although we applied with translations (from Mon to Burmese), we have to wait for over one year' (cited in The Mon Forum, March 31, 2003).

The government also shut down Mon publishers or organizations that promote Mon literature. The All Ramanya Mon Association (ARMA), which mission was to promote Mon culture and education, was forced to shut down (South, 2003, p. 123). The organization was the first Mon cultural and literature organization in modern time. A Mon language journal, *Ṭatap Khet* (means *Ṭ-modern*) which attempted to express political views and promote nationalist spirits was prohibited in 1977 (South, 2003, p. 123). In December 2002, the government closed down the Kaung Mon Press, a Mon language publishing house in Rangoon, because the government accused the press of publishing non-permitted Mon publications. In fact, the crackdown was *a* part of government's *assimilation policy* (Mon Forum, March 31, 2003).

As the government has deliberately restricted the activities for promoting Mon language and literature, the nationalism and resistance arises among Mon. Instead of asking for

permission from the PSB, Mon literature activists ask permissions from the NMSP for their publications. After the NMSP signed cease fire with the government, the NMSP was allowed to publish journals or magazines for its activities and organizing purposes. In some occasions, Mon writers published Mon language publications under the name of NMSP (Interview with Nai Hongsar Bound Khine, Head of NMSP's Foreign Affairs Office, May 27, 2010). Some activists went to Thailand to publish Mon publications and smuggled them back into Burma. For example, The 250th Hongsawatoi Fallen Day Committee published a journal to mark the 250th anniversary of Hongsawatoi Fallen Day in 2007. Such journal would never be allowed to publish in Burma because of its admiration of the Mon identity and nationalism. The journal was published in Thailand and distributed in Burma under the name of the New Mon State Party.

In recent years, two Mon news groups (Kaowao News Group and Independence Mon News Agency) were established in the Thai-Burma border areas. They regularly publish newspapers, magazines or journals in Mon, Burmese, Thai, and English languages (Kaowao and IMNA websites). Although their newspapers are banned in Burma, they are very popular among the Mon overseas. In this information age, Mon Diasporas have created many Mon websites, blogs, and social networks to promote Mon language, literature, and their ethnic rights. However, some of these sites are blocked by the government in Burma.

Following the assimilation policy, the government has also defaced the Mon national and cultural symbols. For an example, in 2007, the government changed the name of the “~~Mon~~ Cultural Museum” located in the capital of Mon State to the “~~L~~iterature and Cultural Museum”. The museum was established about thirty year ago with aim of encouraging the Mon to study and discover more about their culture and history. The government removed the word “Mon” from the name of the Mon museum. The Mon communities including monks and students were

outraged by the government's action. 'The government has consistently shown us they don't care about our rights...' said a Buddhist monk, 'It also proves how untrustworthy they are in handling our affairs' said a prominent Mon historian, and 'we, students were dissatisfied with the government's attempt to destroy and dissolve the Mon culture' said a Mon university student (HURFOM, December 21, 2007). Moreover, in the same year, the government replaced stone sculptures of Mon national symbol Brahmin Duck (Golden Sheldrake) on the entrance of the Moulmein-Muttama Bridge with sculptures of Burmese lacquer offering-vessels (HURFOM, December 21, 2007).

Moreover, recently, government's authority reconstructed the five centuries-old Mon's stone inscriptions, situated at the Shwe Dago Pagoda. The inscriptions were not only important archeological evidence but also very valuable, historical elements for the Mon. The inscriptions were partially damaged during the Nargis Cyclone that hit Burma in May 2008. Instead of restoring the original Mon writings, the authority re-inscribed the stones with Burmese and English words. The Mon public was outraged by this government's exploitation of Mon's historical entities but could do little to stop the Burmese authority as there is no rule of law in Burma.

In regard to the destroying the Mon stone inscriptions, a Moulmein resident expressed that, 'They [the Burmese government] have tried to eradicate us [the Mon people], our literature, our culture, and our history many times.' A member of the Mon Literature and Culture Committee also expressed 'I say this because they are destroying our Mon inscriptions. We ethnic minorities should maintain our ancient literatures' writing styles as much as we can, and preserve things written in [for example] the Mon language or the Shan language' (Chan, March 25, 2010).

(6) Population transfer or migration in Mon areas

Another threat to the Mon ethnic identity is the population transfer or migration of Burmans into the Mon areas. The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) stated that, “[t]he Burmanization policy proves the motives of the ruling Burmese junta to exercise complete control over the Mon and other ethnic nationalities, aptly referred to as the ‘Population Transfer’” (UNPO, July 16, 2003). According to the U.S. State Department report,

the government continued to resettle groups of ethnic Burman in various ethnic minority areas through the establishment of ‘model villages’ in Rakhine State and other regions. Many of these new inhabitants had been released from prison on the condition that they resettle in a ‘model village.’ Government jobs in ethnic minority regions, including as teachers, were increasingly reserved for ethnic Burmans (U.S. State Department, 2008 Human Rights Report: Burma, February 25, 2009).

Moreover, the Mon Forum reported that,

besides banning of the teaching of Mon language and the promotion of Mon literature, the military regime, SPDC, also implements ‘population transfer’ by bring Burmese people especially the soldiers, civil servants and business people into the Mon areas. First they bring those Burmese soldiers into Mon village and appointed them as village headmen and the leaders of militia force. Those people are the main supporters for the regime in the implementation of ‘assimilation policy’ or ‘Burmanization policy’ (The Mon Forum, March 31, 2003)

There are two main reasons for flooding of Burman migrants into the Mon areas. One is the increasing Burma’s military forces in Mon areas and the other is the labor demands in the Mon areas. After the cease-fire agreement between the MNSP and SPDC was signed in 1995, Burmese military presence in Mon areas was substantially increased. Before the cease-fire, Burma Army had 10 battalions in Mon State. Now it has 30 battalions (The Human Rights Foundation of Monland, May 2009, p. 14-15; MUL Report Presented at the Seventh Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, April 21-May 2, 2008). One of the reasons for an increase in Burma Army forces in Mon areas is that the government has attempted to take a

complete control over the Mon population (UNPO, July 16, 2003). Before the cease-fire agreement, the government was not able to reach some areas, designated as black and grey areas, due to the threats of the NMSP. The government attempted to take those areas by means of deploying army and population transfer.

The military confiscated thousands of farmland and plantations from Mon farmers without or with small compensations. The land confiscation is part of Burma's army self-sufficient program which Burma army units have been ordered to provide rations for their own units (Kramer, 2009, p.23). Burma Army confiscated over ten thousand acres of land for military use and government so-called development projects and Army self-sufficient programs between 1995 and 2000 (HURFOM, June 18, 2004). Farmers who have forced to give up their land migrated to Thailand to seek for jobs. As farmers migrated to Thailand, the government brought Burman people such as retired military officers, their families and friends into the black areas of southern Mon State to live and work in the projects run by the Burmese Army on confiscated land" (Ctoik, 2007, p.94). Moreover, Burman migrant workers from upper Burma also took advantages of the situations and moved to Mon areas and to work in the confiscated lands for the army and for state-run projects and other businesses operated by military personnel (All Arakan Students' and Youths' Congress (AASYC) et al. 2009).

The other reason for Burman migrants moving into the Mon areas is labor shortages in the Mon areas. As the Burmese army have committed human rights violations such as land confiscation, force labor, rape, torture, and killing in the Mon areas, thousands of Mon young men and women escaped to neighboring countries especially to Thailand and Malaysia. In Malaysia about 5,000 of Mons were registered as refugees by the Mon Refugees Organization (Kaowao, October 18, 2009). Over one hundred thousand Mon are living in Thailand as migrant

workers or economic refugees (Siribhakdi, Bangkok Post, February 09, 2008) and over 70,000 people became internally displaced person (Thailand Burma Border Consortium, October 2008). Although they live in those countries illegally and are in fear of arrest or deportation, they still believe that they are safer to live in the neighboring countries than living under the military rulers in Burma. As many of the young Mon men have left their homes, the farms and plantations in the Mon areas face worker shortages.

The poverty rates in Burman regions were relatively very high compared to that of Mon State (United Nations Development Programme, May 1, 2008). Therefore, thousands of Burman migrants' workers came to seek jobs in Mon areas for better pay. Recently, the Mon Affairs Union (MAU), a coalition of Mon political organization, conducted a survey that over the past ten years, Burman population in the Mon areas increased about 30%. The report also detailed the numbers of Burman migrants in each Mon village and which part of Burma they came from (MAU, Report on Migration in Monland, 2009). Those migrants did not only work there but also brought their families to settle there. The Mon do not have political authority to prevent or regulate the migrations.

The government also has taken advantage of the situation and systematically implemented population transfers. The government encouraged the Burman to move to Mon areas and assigned former ethnic Burman soldiers as village headmen or militia leaders to protect these migrants. A secret document reported to be distributed within the Burmese army urged Burman from upper Burma to seek jobs in non-Burman areas and settle there. The document stated, "If the jobs are not available in our motherland, proper Burma, we must work [seek jobs] in ethnic nationalities' areas" (the document was translated by and published in Woman and Child Rights Project (Southern Burma), December 2008). These migrants were protected by the

Burmese army based in those ethnic areas. For example, in October 2007, a Burman migrant worker raped a 23 year old Mon young woman in Kawzar village as she was working in a rubber plantation. The case was reported to the local Burma's Army but the authority took no action. Frustrating with the lack of response from the authority, a group of Mon youths attacked the Burman migrants and fighting broke out between the two groups (The Mon Forum, January, 2009).

Most of the Mon population see this mass migration as a great threat to Mon identity. According to the survey data, 85% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the migration to the Mon State was threatening to Mon identity. A 60 years-old, Han-gan villager, expressed that "Many people have been speaking Burmese language more and more since these Burmese have arrived. Many young people are married to Burmese. Therefore, our Mon language and literature are at risk due to the integrations of Burmese from the middle part of Burma" (cited in All Arakan Students' and Youths' Congress (AASYC) et al. 2009, p.20). This issue is widely discussed among the Mon leaders in their meetings and conferences. In the 3rd Mon National Conference, overseas Mon organizations submitted a paper regarding the government population transfer policy and urged the Mon leaders to prevent the migrations (Overseas Mon Coordination Committee (OMCC), April 26-29, 2006). The conference extensively discussed the issue but it did not reach a concrete solution. Some Mon leaders are frustrated with the situation since they did not have political authority to defend and regulate these migrations. Some Mon nationalist armed groups decided to take the matter into their own hands. In November 2006, a Mon armed group led by Nai Chan Dein attacked a group Burman migrants workers and killed three and injured 12 workers (The Mon Forum, January, 2009).

(7) Intermarriage and identity threat

Intermarriage is another factor threatening the Mon ethnic identity. According to Spickard (1991), most ethnicity theorists believed that intermarriage is an important factor explaining the ethnic identity. According to the author, if there is no ethnicity, there is no intermarriage. Thus, intermarriage is also a threat to an ethnic identity. It is also an ultimate form of assimilation in which minority groups finally losses their distinct identities. According to Milton Gordon, ‘If the marital assimilation takes place fully, the minority group loses its ethnic identity in the larger host or core society’ (cited in Spickard 1991, p.10). It is also one of the most explainable factors for the degree of assimilation from one ethnic group to the others (Spickard, 1991, p.10).

The intermarriage is one of the most effective ways of assimilation of non-Burman ethnic groups into the Burman ethnic group. Thus, successive Burmese governments have systematically implemented intermarriage policy between ethnic women and ethnic Burman soldiers to assimilate non-Burman ethnic groups to Burman ethnic groups. For many years, the government has encouraged its army to marry non-Burman women while they are on military duties in non-Burman areas by force, persuasion or manipulation. According to Edith T. Mirante who lived in Thai-Burma border areas for many years, especially in the Mon areas, “the SLORC (State Law and Order Restoration Council, official name of Burmese military government) has frequently been accused of deliberate ‘Burmanization’ by encouraging Burman soldiers to force ethnic minority women into marriage and religious conversion” (Mirante, 1997, p.5). The Women and Child Rights (December 2008) reported, “past military governments and the current military regime have effectively used Burman soldiers to further their assimilation project by encouraging marriages with non-Burman ethnic women” (p.15).

Recently, Women and Child Rights Projects of Southern Burma, a local human rights group obtained a document believed to be issued by the Burmese army to its soldiers. The document was titled “Program to Mix Blood with Non-Burman Women”. Similarly, Christianity Today obtained a document titled “Program to Destroy Christian Religion in Burma” (Christianity Today, April 2007, p.21). The document was believed to have originated from the Burmese Defense Service and circulated among the Burmese soldiers (Christianity Today, April 2007, p.21).

In the document titled “Program to Mix Blood with Non-Burman Women”, obtained and published by the Woman and Child Rights (December 2008), Burman soldiers are encouraged to marry to non-Burman ethnic women in order to assimilate the non-Burman ethnic groups through intermarriages; ordinary Burman people are also encouraged to settle in non-Burman areas through employment and marriages; and the Burman are embraced as masters or a superior race and non-Burman are treated as inferior races. A part of the document read (as translated by the Woman and Child Rights) “since the ethnic women had [have] low civilization and... are easily appreciating the Burman men, it is a good opportunity to persuade them to be Burmans accordingly to our traditional Burmanization policy.” The document continued, “As we Burmans, have a high civilizations, all our Burman comrades need to notice [realize that] organizing the people by the people is the most effective ways. We can maintain our race only when we can assimilate other non-Burman people to become Burmans.” As stated in the document, the following cash incentives are offered for getting married to non-Burman ethnic women---

If a Burman soldier can marry an ethnic woman and girl, the State will provide cash incentive in addition to monthly salaries (a) 500 Kyat for an ordinary woman; (b) 1000 Kyat if the relatives of a village headmen or respected persons in cities and towns; (c) 1500 Kyat if the woman has a degree from universities

and (d) 2700 Kyat if the woman is educated and rich or relatives of highly respected leaders in her community (the original document in Burmese language was translated and published by the Woman and Child Rights Project, December 2008).

The “mixed blood” policy has been condemned by the Mon women’s community. On the Mon Women’s Day in 2009, five overseas and local Mon women’s organizations released a joint-statement concerning this issue; They stated that “Similar to prior Burmese governments, the current regime has applied “mixing blood and fusing culture” tactics to assimilate ethnic nationalities. In doing so, the regime’s army encourages its troops to manipulate ethnic women and girls into marriages which often results in forced marriages” (The Joint Statement on Mon Women’s Day, March 7, 2009). According to Fink (2000), Burmanization policies such as offering cash incentives to Burman soldiers to marry ethnic women “have served to drive ethnic peoples toward more extreme nationalism and have convinced some ethnic leaders that they cannot protect their people and cultures without independent states” (Available at <http://www.culturalsurvival.org/ourpublications/csq/article/an-overview-burmas-ethnic-politics>).

According to the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, “Mon identity is disappearing as a result of inter-ethnic marriage.” (p. 281). Non-Burman ethnic groups; especially the Mon, “viewed inter-ethnic marriage with the Bamar as an attempt to eliminate ethnic nationality groups as well as a form of “Burmanisation” (p.151). As a Mon NGO worker said, “Now there is a lot of intermarriage. The mixed population increases and increases. Because of this, after marriage, many people don’t speak Mon, and they don’t preserve the culture” (Center for Peace and Conflict Studies , June 2010, p.151).

Viewing the intermarriages as a threat to the Mon identity, Mon leaders often urge Mon young men and women not to marry other ethnic groups, especially to the Burman. According to survey data, about 68 percents of respondents agreed that Mon people should not be married to

Burman and 62 percent agreed not to be married to all other nationalities than the Mon (See Table 8). The respondents appear to believe that, compared to other ethnic groups, the Burman are more threat to the Mon identity.

(8) Threat of annihilation

According to Searle-White (2001), another threat to the ethnic identity is “an actual physical attack” (p. 76), or a threat of being annihilated as a people. The current military regime has been alleged for using a policy of annihilation or ethnic cleansing (Edith, Bowles, 2000). As mentioned earlier, the Mon experienced repeated physical attacks since the 11th century A.D. They even faced genocide in 1757 when Burman soldiers targeted and killed the Mon during the Burman’s occupation of the Hongsawatoi (Pegu) Mon kingdom.

A Mon monk who witnessed the genocide of 1757 described the scenes as:

Alaung Paya and his soldiers threw more than 3,000 monks to the elephants, the elephants trampled on them, the elephants killed them. Their velvet and satin robes, the officers wore; their cotton robes, men used for pillows, rice-bags, and towels to wipe their feet. They were strewn over the face of the earth, the holly robes; their alms bowls were turned into household pots. The monks who will live fled east of the Sittang River to the towns of Sittang, Pan, Shwegyin, Martaban, Labun, Zimme, Yodaya and the Shan towns. The Burmese soldiers seized all the people of the Mon country, men and women, and sold them some for an hundred pieces, some for fifty, some for twenty-five, some for twenty, some for fifteen pieces. We were sold in the market, we were sold like cattle in the market, and the Burmese soldiers made merry with the price. Sons could not find their mothers, nor mothers their sons, and there was weeping throughout the land (Sayadaw Athwa III. 148, as quoted in Harvey1967, p.325).

According to the Mon chronicles, the killings were similar to the Holocaust where the victims were put in stockades and burnt alive (MUL, 1997, p.3). Through oral history, the Mon in Thailand and in Burma still have memories of the genocide. The destruction of the Mon by the Burman king, Alaungpaya, traumatized the Mon for generations.

Not only that horrific past experience, but the Mon have a constant fear of physical attacks or abuses by the Burmese army in present days. Like other non-Burman ethnic groups in Burma, Mon people have been abused, raped, forced to labor and porters, and tortured and killed by the Burmese army. Thus, one of the objectives of forming the Mon National Liberation Army (MNLA) in early 1970s was to provide protection for the Mon people from physical attacks or abuses of the Burmese army (Kaowao, August 28, 2009).

Mon people hoped that human rights abuses in Mon areas would decrease after the NMSP cease-fire agreement with the government. Although human rights abuses improved in some areas, human rights abuses continue in Southern Mon state. After the cease-fire agreement between the NMSP and SPDC was signed, some Mon armed groups were formed to protect the people from the abuses of Burmese army. As human rights abuses increase in those areas so do the activities of small Mon armed groups. Among these small armed groups, one group led by Nai Chan Dein has been well-known and gained a lot of support from the local communities. His group has been active in southern Ye township. The Burmese army troops based in the area often suffer under the surprised attacks of the group. Therefore, the authority offered monetary awards for the information leading to the capture or killing of Nai Chan Dein. But, many local villagers have supported Nai Chan Dein's group because they believe the group's presence helping reduce the abuses of Burmese army and the Burman migrants who have enjoyed support from the Burmese army. Even though the government has black-listed Nai Chan Dein's and other Mon armed groups, many local Mon people have positive views on the group. Here are a few excerpts from the Mon Forum, which reports the voices of the local communities.

__If we have no independence, no rule of law and if people are suffering from abuses of the Burmese army, armed forces like Chan Dein's group who oppose the Burmese army should remain' (The Mon Forum, January 2009, p.5)

__Without a Mon rebel armed force, the government will do whatever they want to do...If Chan Dein's and others groups continue fighting, they can prevent the government from committing various abuses' (The Mon Forum, January 2009, p.5)

__Mon population [people] should provide them [armed groups] with money and some assistance. They are fighting for our nation. Without Chan Dein's group, not only the abuse of the Burmese battalion, but there will be more abuse from the Burman people' (The Mon Forum, January 2009, p.5)

__We have been abused by the different Burmese battalions for my whole life. Nobody can stop them until now. The NMSP has a cease-fire but they cannot stop abuses by the government. So a group like Chan Dein, I believe, they can limit the abuse and the activities of the Burmese battalions in southern Mon State' (The Mon Forum, January 2009, p.5)

__I think my ex-husband did the right thing [for joining Nai Chan Dein's group], because there are hundreds of people who were abused [by the Burmese army]. Even the NMSP could not protect those people. For those who were abused by the Burmese army, they had nowhere to run. So, instead of staying as a victim, people have to oppose these Burmese troops in their own way. That was what my ex-husband did. I do not find him doing anything wrong for that' (the Mon Forum, January 2009, p.5).

In 2008, these small armed groups were consolidated under the name of Mon National Defense Army, led by Major Jalon Htaw who broke away from the NMSP. In his

communications to the overseas Mons representatives, in January 2009, Major Jalon Htaw explained that one of the objectives of his organization is to protect or defend the Mon people from Burma's Army abuses or attacks. The more physical attacks or abuses from the Burman or Burmese army, the more Mon people will support the Mon's armed groups, and ethnic conflict will continue as a consequence.

Conclusions

The case study of the Mon ethnic group shows that the threatening of ethnic identity does play dominant roles in ethnic conflict between the Mon and Burman. The lost territory, dehumanization or identity downgrade, threatening of language, culture, and literature, abolishing national symbols, migrations and population transfer, intermarriage, and physical attacks are important factors for threatening the ethnic identity. However, of all these factors, threatening of Mon language appears to be the most serious threat to the Mon ethnic identity.

Despite the repressions and obstacles, due to their rich cultural heritage and high civilization background, the level of Mon ethnic identity such as Mon ethnic pride, preference, out-group comparison, out-group differentiation are still strong and alive. Most Mon leaders believe that Mon ethnic identity will survive and Mon will be able re-establish a sovereign Mon State. The late president of the NMSP, Nai Shwe Kyin, predicted that Burmanized Mon will soon reclaim their Mon identity and the Mon identity may be even stronger than that in the pre-independence era if the Mon gain their political power or self-determination. Even though the struggles of the Mon for gaining political power have faced uphill battles, so far, there are no signs of slowing down. As writing this dissertation, a full scale of civil war is looming between

the MNLA and Burmese military because the NMSP publicly rejected the government's demand for the MNLA be transformed to the Border Guard Forces, which will be operated under the Burmese army. The NMSP rejected the demand because the current Burma's constitution does not guarantee any ethnic rights.

Overall, as long as the Mon ethnic identity is threatened, the Mon nationalism continues to rise. Unwaveringly, the Mon will continue to fight for their ethnic rights--this was once plainly described by Nai Shwe Kyin, the late president of NMSP, as ‘if we are beaten, next generation will carry on’ (Fahn, 26 January, 1995). The suppression of the Mon ethnic identity would intensify the Mon nationalism and, in turn, prolongs the nationalist conflicts between the Mon and the Burman. Therefore, conflicts between the Mon and Burman may continue in coming decades or even centuries unless there is a lasting political solution.

CHAPTER SIX

IMAGE AND ETHNIC CONFLICT

To understand the complexity of Burma's ethnic conflict, one also needs to understand the images of one ethnic group over another and types of action tendencies a group would pursue based on its image of an out-group. According to Stein (1996), image is "a set of beliefs ... that an individual or group is convinced are valid...When these individual images are shared within a group, they become stereotyped" (p. 94). As mentioned in Chapter One, there are seven images: ally, colonialist, imperialist, enemy, rogue, dependent, and barbarian that a group or a country uses to perceive out-groups. All of these images are accompanied by policy predispositions or action tendencies, and conflict parties or groups use these images in planning and executing conflicts (Cottam and Cottam, 2001, p. 121). For example, the barbarian image is formed when an in-group sees an out-group as a threat, with harmful intentions, inferior culture, and/or a capable superior. If the barbarian image is present, conflict will occur. If the out-group has a superior capability, the in-group prefers to engage in indirect conflict, or to form alliances to fight for their demands (Cottam et al. 2005, p. 53).

Images are also formed in response to the basic human psychological need for an identity (Stein, 1996). Therefore, an image is not only shaped by international or perceptual structures but also shaped by the identity. Higher degrees of in-group identity are positively correlated with higher degrees of negative image of out-groups, which, in turn, would create higher degrees of conflict. Moreover, according to Cottam and Cottam (2001), the manifestation of the images varies with the level of attachment of the people to a nation or how they identify with a group. Individuals who highly identify with a country or a group would have a higher tendency to respond to a threat or an opportunity (p. 97). This chapter discusses the testing of

three hypotheses, which are the second, third, and fourth hypotheses of this dissertation, and is related to the images of the Mon and other non-Burman ethnics over the Burman. An analysis was also conducted to determine if the two groups have different images of the Burman. Both qualitative and quantitative data were used to test the three hypotheses. Qualitative data included both primary sources such as interviews and newspapers and secondary sources such as existing literatures. Quantitative data included the survey and other available statistical data.

I. Testing Hypothesis II: Identifying the image of the Mon over the Burman

The second hypothesis is: -- If the Mon view the Burman as relatively superior in power, inferior in cultural and social status, and with having harmful intentions, then a barbarian image would be endorsed. The Mon's image of the Burman is measured by three attributes: perception of out-group capability (superior or inferior), out-group status (superior or inferior), and out-group intentions (harm or benign) (Cottam and Cottam, 2001, pp.98-99).

A. Perception of out-group capability (superior or inferior)

In international conflict, military capability is mainly focused on determining the capability of a state (Cottam and Cottam, 2001, p.152). However, in a domestic conflict, the capability of an ethnic group is determined by different factors. Some studies used only military factors to measure an ethnic group's capability while other studies used economic and political factors to measure an ethnic group's capability. In the case of Alexander (2009), the author used economic and political factors to measure capability between white and black ethnic groups in the U.S. In the case of Infranco (2005, pp: 123-4), the author used only military factors to measure capability between Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups in Rwanda. However, this study uses

all three of these factors to measure the capability of an ethnic group in Burma because all of these factors are important. Unlike Black and White ethnic groups in the U.S., the ethnic groups in Burma have their own armed groups and they are fighting for autonomy. Therefore, all three factors are important in measuring an ethnic group's capability in Burma.

Although the military power is easy to measure, the economic and political powers are not easy to measure especially for ethnic groups within a country. Therefore, capability is measured in this study by perception rather than reality. However, some statistical data were used in supplementing the perception data.

According to the survey data, the Mon people believe that they are better off or richer than the Burman, but their military and political strengths are much weaker than that of Burman. Eighty two percent of the respondents agreed that Burmese army is superior to the Mon National Liberation Army (MNLA).

This was also true in the historical context. Historically, the Mon were inferior to the Burman in terms of military strength. However, there were some periods when the Mon were able to balance Burman military power and were able to defend their kingdom from Burman invasions. During the reign of Mon King Rajadhirat from 1383 to 1422, Mon fought a forty years war against the Burman and were able to defend the Mon Kingdom, Pegu, from the Burman invasions (Fernquest, 2008). The following example shows how Mon defended their kingdom (Pegu) from the Burman invasion.

In 1386 Minkyizwa[sawke], King of Ava [Burman], attacking Pegu sent out two columns, one to move down the valley of the Sittang, the other through the Tharrawaddy down the valley of the Hlaing or Myitmaka [along the Irrawaddy]. This invasion being unsuccessful it was renewed the following year and again a force went by land down the Hlaing river as far as the town of Hlaing [along the Irrawaddy], where they were defeated by the Talaings [Mon] under Razadirit [Rajadhirat] and pursued as far as Prome, but no permanent occupation of

Tharrawaddy was effected by the victors [Mon] (Perkins, 1959, p. 24) (Cited in Fernquest, 2008, p.77).

The following tables compare the military power between the Mon and Burman in three major wars of the early 15th century A.D. In the first war, the Mon were superior in horse power but inferior in elephant and man powers. In the second war, Mon were inferior in all three elements. Then in the third war, Mon were superior in elephant power but inferior in horse and man powers. Although the Mon seem to be inferior in military power overall, they were able to balance Burman military power and were able to defend and defeat the Burman invasion for forty years.

Table 9: The Mon's and Burman's military forces during the fighting in Prome: 1405 A.D. (Fernquest, 2008, p.89)

State	Elephants	Horses	Soldiers
Ava (Burman)	200	3,000	50,000
Pegu (Mon)	100	8,800	40,000
Advantage	+100	-5,000	+10,000

Table 10: A comparison of military forces during the Burman's marches to the Mon Kingdom (Pegu) 1408 A.D. (Fernquest, 2008, p.89).

State	Elephants	Horses	Soldiers
Ava (Burman)	800	20,000	200,000
Pegu (Mon)	200	3000	80,000
Advantage	+600	+17,000	+120,000

Table 11: A comparison of military forces during the march of the Mon to the Burman territory (Toungoo) 1418 A.D. (Fernquest, 2008, p.89).

State	Elephants	Horses	Soldiers
Ava (Burman)	300	4,000	80,000
Pegu (Mon)	350	1,000	70,000
Advantage	-50	+3,000	+10,000

After the passing of King Rajadhirat, the Mon's military power steadily declined. The Mon kingdom fell under Burman rule again in 1539. The Mon struggled and regained their independence in 1740, after over 200 years of Burman rule. However, due to their weakness in military power, the Mon were not able to maintain independence for a long period of time. Not long after the Mon pushed the Burman back and took over the Burman heartland, in today's Upper Burma, for a short period of time, the Burman revolted and finally reoccupied the Mon capital Pegu. Because they were outnumbered by the Burman, the Mon lost their independence and fell under the Burman rule again in 1757 (South, 2003, p.80). After the Mon lost their independence, the Mon's military power became very weak compared to that of Burman. Although the Mon staged several rebellions against the Burman from 1757 to 1885, they never succeeded (South, 2003, pp.80-81, 87-89).

After Burma gained her independence, the Mon rebellion started again but with small armed strength since the Mon population had also been shrinking during the colonial rule. The Mon's armed power has taken different shapes and forms but it has never vanished. By 1988, prior to NMSP signing a cease-fire agreement with the Burmese government, the number of soldiers in MNLA was about 3,500 compared to over 190,000 strong Burmese soldiers at the time (ICG, September 27, 2002; South, 2003, p.141). Presently, the Burmese army has over

400,000 soldiers while the number of soldiers in the MNLA has declined to less than 1000 after 15 years of cease-fires (Weng, Lawi, March 12, 2010; ICG, September 27, 2002). That was why the NMSP leaders declared that if the Burmese army attacked them, they would wage guerrilla warfare rather than fighting a conventional war (Weng, Lawi, March 12, 2010).

The economic power of the Mon is also measured by perception of the people rather than by actual statistical economic data because, thus far, there are not a lot of actual statistical data such as per capita income data available for comparing economic power between the Mon and Burman. The survey participants were asked whether they think that they are richer than the Burman and whether their regions are more developed than the Burman's regions. However, whenever possible statistical data were used to supplement the survey data. According to the survey results, 51% of the Mon respondents believed that they were richer than the Burman and 56% of them believed that the Mon's region is more developed than the Burman's regions (Table 16). This perception also is supported by the poverty rate by regions in Burma which were documented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 2009. According to the UNDP, Mon State was ranked in the top three in terms of the lowest poverty rate among all states and divisions in Burma and the poverty rate in Mon State was lower than all three Burman regions--Sagain, Mandalay, and Magwe divisions (Table 12). Due to the higher poverty rate in the Burman regions, thousands of Burman migrant workers have flooded into Mon areas to seek employment (Toik, 2008, p.92). Wages in the Mon region are triple the wages paid for the same job in Burman regions. For example, daily wage in Mon State was 3000 kyat (\$US 3) while it was 1000 (\$US 1) kyat in Burman region, Upper Burma (Toik, 2008, p. 92). Therefore, the Mon believe they are economically better off than the Burman. The historical Mon's economic power may have also contributed to this perception. Historically, the Mon regions were very

prosperous. Due to its prosperity, a former Mon Kingdom, Suwannabumi (Thaton) was known as Golden Land (Fredholm, 1993, p.9).

Given the favorable geographical location, Mon people can reach other parts of the world through both seas and land. The Mon are commerce oriented and they have been trading with other countries since time immemorial (South, 2003, p.60). The economic power and the wealth of the Mon were also evident during the colonial rule. A rich Mon businessman, Nai Ouk was recognized as a hero in the history of Burma for being the first and only businessman who had the courage and wealth to compete with a British company, Irrawaddy Flotilla Company, while Burma was under the British rule. The Irrawaddy Flotilla Company was founded in 1865 and was the largest fleet company in Burma. It grew from seven ships to over 600 ships by 1920s (The Irrawaddy Flotilla Company Website). Nai Ouk owned a transportation business with seven ships that provided transportation along the Salween River in lower Burma. As his business grew in lower Burma, the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company waged a price war against his business by first cutting the ship fare for passengers in half. In response, Nai Ouk cut the fare lower than Irrawaddy's fare. And the Irrawaddy cut the fare even lower. In response, Nai Ouk provided free passage for all passengers. Due to his anti-British attitude by using wealth and business power along with patriotism, Nai Ouk became well-known in Burma's history. The story showed that historically the Mon did have superiority in economic power in Burma (Nai Ouk Biography: Available at <http://www.monstudysociety.org/resource.html>, date accessed: 7/05/2010).

Table 12: Poverty rate between Mon and Burman regions in Burma (UNDP, 2009).

State/Division	Poverty (%)	Food	Rank	Rank
Mon	21	4	3	2
Sagaing	27	5	4	3
Mandalay	45	17	11	14
Magwe	44	14	13	11
Union	36	11		

The political power was also measured by perception in the survey, by asking the participants whether the Burman have more political power than Mon. Sixty three percent of the respondents believed that the Burman have more political power than the Mon. After the Mon lost their sovereign kingdom, they never regained political power. Since the Burman still control political power in Burma and in the current Mon State, the Mon feel inferior in terms of political power. Part of their armed struggle today is to regain political power in their homeland.

Overall, the Mon believe that they are superior in economic power but inferior in both military and political power. The average of the capability scale shows that the Mon are low in the capability (mean = 3.35) (Table 16), and their overall capability measure is inferior to the Burman.

B. Out-group status (superior or inferior)

In terms of cultural and social status, the Mon appear to believe that they are superior to the Burman. As previously presented in Chapter Four of this dissertation, historically, the Mon civilization is much earlier than that of the Burman. By the time the Burman came into present Burma, seemingly as hunter-gatherer communities, the Mon had gone well past their Neolithic

revolution” and were already settling in the lowlands and valleys, subsisted mainly on the paddy rice cultivation (Mon, Min T., 1983). In addition, the Mon have other important accounts added to their national pride-- they established kingdoms with a well-developed civilization in lower Burma and in central and northern Thailand; they are the pioneers of Buddhism in Burma and Southeast Asia; and their writing system precedes the Burman writing system (note: The Burman adopted Buddhism and the writing system from the Mon after the conquest of Suwannabumi, Thaton, Mon kingdom in the mid 11th century A.D.). Thus, as shown by the survey data, most of the Mon believe that their culture is superior to that of Burman and they have a higher social status than the Burman. According to survey data, 88% of the respondents believed that the Mon culture is superior to Burman culture, and 82% believed that the Mon have a higher social status than the Burman (Table 16).

Because the Mon perceive that they are superior in cultural and social status to the Burman, the Mon are less likely to tolerate attacks or questions of their status by the Burman. One such example is, as documented by the NMSP (1993, pp.15-16) what took place during a negotiation between the Mon leaders and the Burman authority, for allowing the Mon monks to take the Buddhist literature examination in the Mon language. Mon leaders asked the Burman authority to produce Buddhist literature examination questions in the Mon language for Mon monks. Although Mon monks were allowed to answer examination questions in Mon language, the questions were produced in Burmese. Since most Mon monks traditionally learned Buddhist literature in Mon, they did not understand the questions in Burmese very well. That was the reason why Mon leaders requested that the Burmese government produce questions in the Mon language for the Mon examinees. The authority complained that they did not have personnel

who were fluent in Mon to write the questions. Then, the Mon leaders suggested using the service of prominent Mon monks who were also authorities in Buddhist literature in the same way as the government used the service of Burmese monks in writing the examination questions. The government authority rejected the idea because they were worried that the Mon monks would leak the questions to the Mon students. The Mon leaders were outraged by the Burman authority's questioning of the integrity of the Mon monks and replied that ~~we~~ "we don't think Burman monks are more honest than the Mon monk" (NMSP, 1993, pp.15-16). The negotiation ended without any results.

Moreover, the Mon cannot tolerate Burman domination because they see their cultural and social status as superior to that of Burman. One example of this can be seen in the following remark made by a senior Mon monk who was consulted by the NMSP as to whether the party should participate in the upcoming 2010 election. ~~If~~ "If we look back our history, we had our own kingdoms and had been ruled by ourselves. We should not forget this. Now they [the Burmese military regime] force us to live under their rule. It is impossible for us to do that" (IMNA, November 24, 2009 and NDF Bulletin, No.4, November 2009, p.6).

C. Out-group intentions (harmful or benign) and threat

According to Michael Infranco (2004), ~~harmful~~ "harmful intentions are defined by ingroups viewing outgroups as having malicious plans for them" (p.67). The survey data show that 83% of the Mon respondents believed that Burman leaders in general didn't have good intentions over the Mon. In other words, the Mon view the Burman as those who have harmful intentions toward the Mon. Moreover, 76% of the Mon respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Burmans are

violent while 87% believed that Mon would be in danger if the Burman had power (Table 16). Therefore, Mon view Burman as having harmful intention and threats.

These perceptions appear to have been generated from the experiences of the Mon in dealing with the Burman over the centuries. The hostilities between the two groups went back to the 11th century A.D. when the Burman occupied and destroyed Mon Kingdom, Thaton. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the Mon sovereign kingdoms were sacked by the Burman three times over the 800 years. The most brutal one was in 1757 when Burman leader, Alaungpaya occupied the Hongsawatoi Mon kingdom, Pegu, and cruelly killed thousands of Mon civilians. The Mon capital Pegu was torn down and Mon literature and cultural properties were destroyed. These atrocities remain in the memories of many of the Mon till the present. In memory of those killed in the barbaric acts of the Burman invaders during the fall of Pegu, the Mon annually hold the Mon's Holocaust Memorial Day in order to remind the people to come together for such atrocities would never take place in the future (Background and Objectives of Holocaust Memorial Day of the Mon People, Available at <http://www.mrc-usa.org/hfd.html>).

To make the matter worse, successive Burmese governments have honored Burman kings (Anoratha and Bayinnaung, who invaded and occupied Mon kingdoms and Alaungphaya (U Aung Zeya), who committed atrocities against the Mon, as heroes. And, their biographies are included in school textbooks which all students in the country are required to learn. This seems, for the Mon, that the government knowingly pours salt on the wound. Recently the Burmese military government erected these three Burman kings' statues in new capital of Burma, Ne Pyi Daw, to embrace the Burmese nationalism (Lintner, Asia Times Online, August 25, 2010; IMNA, Editorial, May 17, 2010). The embracing of the spirit of former Burman kings, especially Alaungphaya, who has committed atrocities against the Mon, has threatened the Mon in

a very significant way. Accordingly, the Mon around the world expressed their concern in 250th anniversary Hongsawatoi Fallen Day, that “Although U Aung Zeya [Alaungpaya] passed away over 200 years ago, his evil spirit (acts of evil) is still alive and well in Burma. The successive Burmese military regime has indoctrinated his evil spirit into its Army in order to launch systematic ethnic-cleansing campaigns in Burma. Over the last five decades, the Burmese Army has committed various human rights abuses including rapes, tortures, and killings of the Mon and other ethnic nationalities. No different from its predecessors, the current Burmese military regime has continued to nourish the U Aung Zeya’s doctrine and has continued to oppress ethnic people including Mon, Karen, and Shan. As a result, hundreds of thousands people have fled their homes and become refugees in neighboring countries and many more have been internally displaced” (Statement on the 251st Anniversary of the Fallen Day of the Mon Kingdom Hongsawatoi, May 27, 2008).

Moreover, current the Burmese military have committed various human rights abuses against the Mon. The abuses serve as a reminder of the past atrocities and reinforce the negative image of the Burman.

Over all, the Mon believe that their cultural and social status is superior but their capability is inferior to Burman. Moreover, they view the Burman as a threat and as having harmful intentions to the Mon. These perceptions of the Mon have been generated by experience that the Mon have in dealing with the Burman over the past 800 years. A long history of hostilities between the two groups and the current oppression and human rights abuses against the Mon by the successive Burmese governments reinforce the negative image of the Burman. In short, the Mon do endorse a barbarian image over the Burman because they see the Burman as relatively superior in power, inferior in cultural and social status, and harmful intentions.

II. Testing Hypothesis III: Identity, image and ethnic conflicts

This section will test the third hypothesis that “If the Mons strongly identify with their ethnic group, they would have stronger endorsement of the barbarian image of Burman and would more likely pursue conflict or political separation.”

In order to test this hypothesis three variables: level of ethnic identity, level of barbarian image endorsement, and level of conflict or political separation require measurement. The level of ethnic identity was already measured in Chapter Four and found that the Mon strongly identify with their ethnic group. Also, in testing the second hypothesis, it was concluded that the Mon do endorse a barbarian image of the Burman. Therefore, here, only the level of barbarian image endorsement and degree of conflict were measured.

Following the method of Alexander et al., 2005a, two items were used for measuring the level of barbarian image endorsement. The two items are: “Burman are violent people” and “If Burman have power, Mon will be in danger”. The two items are combined to create a scale of the barbarian image endorsement.

According to the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, inter-ethnic conflict is defined as “incompatible goals or values, or the perception of incompatibility, between, but not restricted to, one ethnic group and another” (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, June 2010, p.23). Therefore, the level of conflict was measured by a scale, which is calculated by averaging four items which are related to political integration, separation, and territorial claims (Table 16). All of these four items except federalism are incompatible political goals with Burman. Since the federation is related to a political integration, it was negatively correlated with political separation and territorial claim items. So it was used as a reverse question for measuring the level of incompatible political goal. The lower scale corresponds to a higher incompatible

political goal and vice-versa. A higher incompatible political goal also means a higher potential for ethnic conflict.

In order to understand the correlation of identity and image with political separation and integration perceptions, two items of political goals (independence and federation) were also tested independently.

Results show that the mean scale of the barbarian image endorsement and the standard deviation of the scale are 1.77 and 0.73, respectively. Among the Mon respondents, 76 % believed that Burman are violent people and 87% believed that if the Burman gain power, the Mon will be in danger. The level of identity is positively correlated with the level of barbarian image endorsement ($r=.38$, $p<.000$). Respondents who have higher levels of ethnic identity show higher levels of barbarian image endorsement. These two variables (identity and image) also show a positive correlation with conflict scale ($r=.52$, $p<.000$ for identity and $r=.28$ $p<.000$ for barbarian image). The results indicate that as the people highly identify with their Mon ethnic group, they strongly endorse a barbarian image of the Burman. The people who strongly endorse a barbarian image of the Burman are more likely to pursue conflict. This assumption is also supported by the survey data-- 87% of the respondents desire to have an independent Monland and only 41 % agreed or strongly agreed that future Monland should be part of the Union of Burma (Table 16). When asked which parts of Burma should be included in future Monland, 94% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Pegu city should be included in Monland, while 71% agreed or strongly agreed that the Monland should cover the whole lower Burma (from Irrawaddy to Tenassarim Divisions). Overall, the conflict scale shows that the Mon respondents rated a medium-high on the conflict ($M= 1.89$, $SD=.75$).

Thus, these results support the conclusion that those who have higher levels of identity and barbarian image endorsement would have higher level of ethnic conflict. The results also show that both identity and barbarian image endorsement levels have a positive correlation with independence item and negative correlation with the federalism item. Therefore, respondents who have higher levels of identity and have a strongly barbarian image endorsement strongly endorse a political separation. For those who are less likely to identify with their group and have a low level of barbarian image endorsement, they are more likely to prefer a political integration or federalism.

Therefore, political separation and territorial claims are more likely to contribute to the conflict. For example, one of the reasons for the Mon to fight against the Burmese government is to regain political power and autonomy and to reclaim some parts of their old territory. On the other hand, one of the policies of successive Burmese governments is “non-disintegration of the Union” (Fink, 2005). To prevent non-Burman ethnic groups from political separation or autonomy has been the main reason for government to wage wars against the Mon and other ethnic groups. But, for non-Burman, it is their right to secede from Burma or to have an independent state if they wish. That was the agreement that was signed between the Burman and non-Burman ethnic groups such as Shan and Karenni in 1947. According to survey data, 78% of the Mon respondents and 83% of other non-Burman respondents believed that all ethnic groups have the right to secede from Burma. Apparently, Mon and other non-Burman ethnic groups prefer a political separation and greater autonomy or independence, while Burman prefer integration and a unitary political system.

Although non-Burman see the federalism as a form of political integration into Burman rule, most Burman still cannot agree to form a federal union because they consider that

federalism is a process of political separation or independence for non-Burman. For example, Vice Senior General Maung Aye, the No 2 ranking general of Burma's army, said that Burma would “disintegrate” if a federal system of government were to be granted to non-Burman ethnic groups (Weng, Lawi, February 11, 2010).

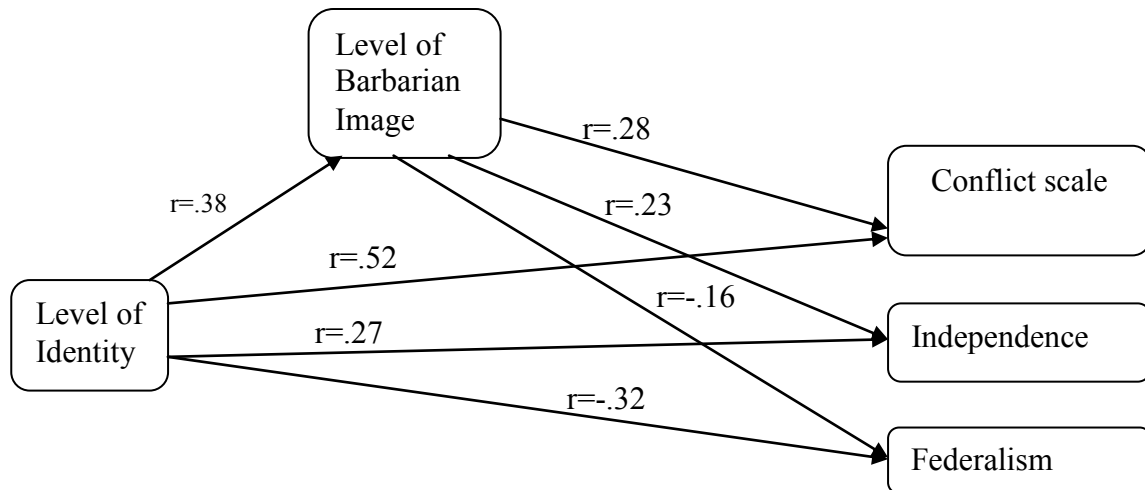
In Summary, the level of identity is positively correlated with the level of barbarian image endorsement. These two variables also have a positive correlation with the level of ethnic conflict and political separation and negative correlation with political integration. In other words, respondents who strongly identified with the Mon ethnic identity strongly endorsed the barbarian image of the Burman and have a higher level of conflict.

Table 13. Correlations among the level of identity, barbarian image endorsement, and political separation

Correlations		Identity scale	Barbarian Image	Inter-group Conflict scale	Independence	Federalism
Identity Scale	Pearson Correlation	1.00	0.38	0.52	0.27	-0.32
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.00**	0.00**	0.00**	0.00**
	N	540	537	534	527	522
Barbarian Image	Pearson Correlation	0.38	1.00	0.28	0.23	-0.16
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00**		0.00**	0.00**	0.00**
	N	537	537	534	527	522

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure 6. Correlations among the level of identity, barbarian image endorsement, and political separation



III. Testing Hypothesis IV: Barbarian image and action tendencies

To test the hypothesis IV: “If the Mon’s image of the Burman is as a barbarian, the Mon would form an alliance with other ethnic groups to fight for their autonomy”, only online survey samples are used. Samples taken via the paper survey were not included in the analysis because the questionnaires did not include the measurement of action tendencies. The measurement of action tendencies includes forming alliances, cooperation and fighting against the Burman. Forming an alliance was measured by one item; cooperation was measured by two items; and fighting against the Burman was measured by one item (Table 16). Again the level of barbarian image endorsement was measured by the two items as described in the section above.

The results show that 87% of the respondents believed that Mon should form an alliance with other ethnic groups to fight for autonomy; 83% believed that in order to reach their goals, Mon should fight against the Burman; 18% believed that Burman have cooperative values, while

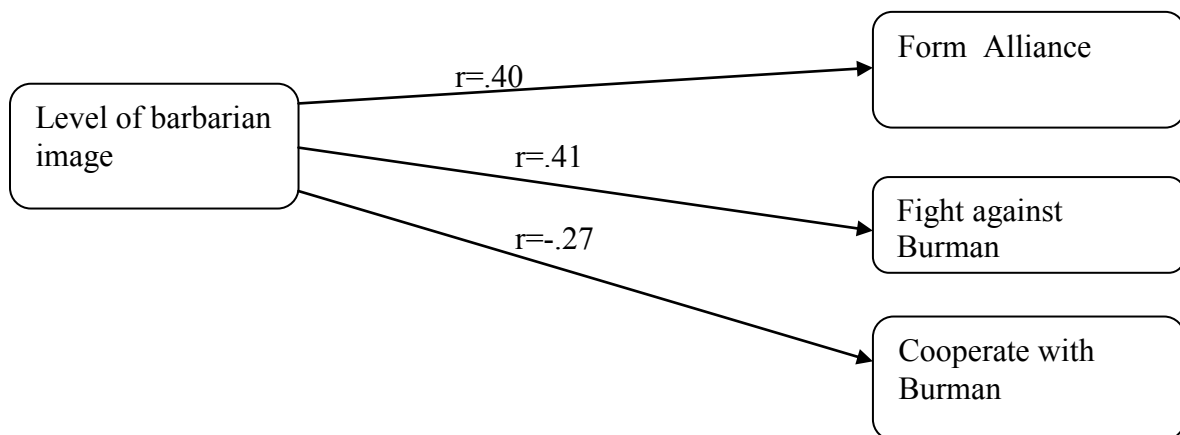
34% believed that Mon should work with Burman in order to achieve their goals. The barbarian image endorsement scale has a higher positive correlation with the forming alliance and fighting against the Burman, ($r = 0.40$, $p < 0.000$) and ($r = 0.41$, $p < 0.000$) respectively. But it has negative correlation with cooperation ($r = -0.27$, $p < 0.000$).

Table 14. Correlation between barbarian image and action tendencies

	Correlations	Cooperation	Form Alliance	Fight Against Burman
Barbarian Image Scale	Pearson Correlation	-0.27	0.40	0.41
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00**	0.00**	0.00**
	N	134	134	134

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure 7. Correlation between barbarian image and action tendencies



A. Forming alliances and fighting for autonomy in the historical context

These statistical results agree with the historical context. Since 1948, Mon have been forming and joining many alliances in order to defend against the threat of the Burmese army or to fight for autonomy. Most of their alliances were/are with non-Burman ethnic groups. Their alliances included both political and military alliances. Their first alliance was with Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO) in 1948. The KNDO was formed in 1948 to prevent atrocities committed by the Burmese army and to fight for an independent Karen State. Like the Karen, the Mon also formed Mon National Defense Organization (MNDO) to fight for similar purposes. As soon as the MNDO was formed, Mon and Karen leaders signed a four point agreement to fight for independent Mon and Karen States in lower Burma. According to South (2003), ~~the~~ document was to serve as the basis for a series of important agreements struck over the coming decades of between the Mon and Karen insurgents, helping to cement an alliance that lasted for nearly fifty years” (p.108).

Immediately after the agreement was signed, KNDO and MNDO joint-forces occupied Thaton and Moulmein (South, 2003, 108). [Note: Moulmein is current the capital of Mon State while Thaton is a former capital of the Mon kingdom]. Meanwhile, Mon and Karen leaders were holding a series of negotiations with the Burmese government to form an autonomous state for both Mon and Karen. But the negotiation broke down and the government started launching offensives. The Mon-Karen forces retreated from Moulmein and took bases in the outskirts of Moulmein to prepare another around of attack (South, 2003, 108; NMSP, 1993).

In 1949, the MNDO and KNDO launched another attack. With the help of the MNDO, KNDO attacked Insein, a town about fifteen miles from Rangoon and held it for one hundred and twelve days (South, 2003, 109-112). Due to the intense offensives by the government forces, the

KNDO was not able to hold the town any longer and withdrew its force to the outskirts of Rangoon. Following the military withdrawal, both KNDO and MNDO suffered several military setbacks. Their leaders were jailed or assassinated. For example, Saw Ba Oo Kyi, the leader of KNU, political armed wing of the KNDO, was assassinated by the government while Nai Hla Maung, the leader of the Mon Unity Front which was the political armed wing of the MNDO, was arrested (South, 2003, 113-114). By the end of 1950, the MNDO was dissolved. Its army was later consolidated under the Mon People's Front (MPF) which was formed in 1952. The MPF surrendered their arms to the government in 1958 in exchange for peace and a political solution leading to the creation of Mon State

The second military alliance that the Mon joined was the National Democratic Front (NDF). The NDF was formed in 1976 and its membership consisted of non-Burman ethnic groups. One objective of the alliance was to increase military cooperation among the non-Burman ethnic groups in fighting against the Burmese army. They made a commitment that if one of its members was attacked by the Burmese army, other members would provide military assistance (Collins, 2003, p. 30). The alliance was initially formed by nine members. By 1990, the number of members reached 13. The NMSP joined the alliance in 1982. After joining the NDF alliance, the NMSP played a major role in the alliance. Nai Shwe Kyin, late NMSP president had served as the chairman of the alliance from 1990 to 1995 until the NMSP signed a cease-fire with the Burmese military regime (Email Correspondence with Nai Pe Thein Zar who was a NMSP representative to the NDF from 1990 to 1995: June 13, 2010).

The alliance also went through rough times. In 1988, fighting broke out between the Mon and Karen due to the territorial disputes. The fight nearly brought the alliance to a collapse (Collins, 2003, p.30). Moreover, in the early 1990s, some of its members left the alliance as they

reached cease-fire agreements with the Burmese military regime. After the prominent group members such as KIO and NMSP signed cease-fire agreements with the government in early 1990s, the alliance was weakened militarily and politically. However, the remaining members kept the alliance united “because it ultimately benefited the minorities” (Collins, 2003, p. 30).

The alliance became stronger again after the Burmese military regime threatened to use military force on the cease-fire groups if they refused to transform Border Guard Forces (BGF) by April 28, 2010. It increased cooperation among its members and other ethnic armed groups. In response to the threat, the alliance declared that if Burmese army attacks one of its members, it would launch systematic attacks on multiple fronts. Mai Phone Kyaw, General Secretary of the NDF, warned that if Burmese army attacks one of its members, “[t]he flames of civil war will be fuelled. We are discussing amongst ourselves to open many front lines around the country if the junta opens even one,” (Mizzima News, April 26, 2010). Moreover, he added that if the government uses force, “our armed groups will launch attacks systemically across the country” (Too, April 27, 2010). After the government forced the NMSP to transform its army into BGF, it rejoined the alliance. [Note: NMSP did not want to disclose when it re-joined the alliance] (Interview with Nai Hongsar Bound Khine, Head of NMSP Foreign Office, May 28, 2010). Currently, the members of the NDF comprise of 8 armed groups: the Karen National Union (KNU), Chin National Front (CNF), New Mon State Party (NMSP), Arakan Liberation Party (ALP), Palaung State Liberation Front (PSLF), PaO National Liberation Organization (PNLO), Wa National Organization (WNO), Lahu Democratic Union (LDU), (NDF Bulletin, No.04, November 2009).

For the NMSP, military alliance is very important because its military wing, MNLA, is not as strong as those of some other ethnic groups such as Kachin and Karen. After it signed the

cease-fire with the Burmese military regime in 1995, its military strength declined from 3-4 thousands to less than a thousand in 2010. Indeed, NDF alone is not enough to balance the threat from Burmese army. Thus, the NMSP is seeking alliances from other ethnic armed groups which are not currently NDF members such as Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) and the United Wa State Army (UWSA). [The UWSA is the strongest ethnic armed group which has about 20,000 soldiers]. In early May 2010, the party leaders secretly met Wa and other former communist armed groups near the China-Burma border to seek for an alliance (BBC Burmese Service radio, 5/23/2010 and personal communication with NMSP Foreign Office 5/24/2010). [Note: former members of Communist Party of Burma(CPB) were initially excluded from NDF due to differences in political ideologies. After CPB was collapsed in 1989, these armed groups are fighting for their ethnic rights rather than communism].

Moreover, as reported in the BBC Burmese Service and confirmed by the NMSP's office of foreign affairs, the NMSP also met other ethnic armed groups such as Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) and Karenni National Progressive Party (KSPP). The three current NDF members, KNU, CFN, and NMSP held three days meeting (from May 21 to 23, 2010) with two non-NDF member, KSPP, and KIO to form another military alliance. The alliance agreed to join in military defense if the Burmese army attacks one of its members. The alliance also reaffirmed their goals to fight for self-determination that guarantee ethnic rights including culture, literature, and language rights and equality for all ethnic groups in Burma (BBC Burmese Service, May 25, 2010, and personal communication with the NMSP Foreign Office, May 26, 2010).

In addition to the military alliance, the Mon have also joined political alliances. Currently the NMSP and other Mon organizations are members of the Ethnic Nationalities

Council (ENC). The ENC was formed in 2001 under the name of The Ethnic Nationalities Solidarity and Cooperation Committee (Yawnghwe, Chao-Tzang and Lian H. Sakhong, 2004, p.1). The name was later changed to “Ethnic Nationalities Council”. One of the objectives of forming the ENC is to prepare for tripartite dialogue with the Burmese military government and the National League for Democracy, the Burmese opposition party. The council members are comprised only of non-Burman ethnic groups (ICG, May 7 2003, p.24). This alliance is based at Thai-Burma border and has an office in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The alliance is very important for building unity among non-Burman ethnic groups (ICG, May 7, 2003, p.24).

Another political alliance that the Mon have joined is the United Nationalities Alliance (UNA). The alliance is based inside Burma. The UNA is a coalition of 12 non-Burman ethnic political parties in Burma which won 67 parliamentary seats in Burma’s 1990 election. The members are the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD), Mon National Democratic Front (MNDF), Zomi National Congress (ZNC), Arakan League for Democracy (ALD), Chin National League for Democracy (CNLD), Kayin National Congress for Democracy (KNCD), Kachin State National Congress for Democracy (KNCD), Kayah State All Nationalities League for Democracy (KSANLD), Kayan National Unity and Democratic Organization (DOKNU), Mra People’s Party (MPP), Shan State Kokang Democratic Party (SSKDP), Arakan People’s Democratic Front (APDF) (Son, Mon, Feb 22, 2009). The alliance was formed in 2002 to prepare for eventual political dialogue with the government. The Mon National Democratic Front (MNDF), which won 5 parliamentary seats in the 1990’s election, is the co-founder of the alliance. Nai Ngwe Thein, the vice chairman of the MNDF, has been serving as the patron of the alliance since it was formed (Thein, Ngwe, 2009, pp.116-118).

Most of the UNA members were subsequently annulled by the Burmese military government. For example, MNDF was abolished by the government as a legal political party in 1995. But, the group regularly meets to discuss matters, such as the needs of the nationalities, how to solve the political problems, the literature and culture of the nationalities, and the right to map [non-Burman] destiny” in order to prepare for the political dialogue with the government (ICG, May 7, 2003, p.59). The alliance was often invited to meet with the representatives of the UN or the U.S. when they visited Burma to discuss the Burma’s political issues (ICG, May 7, 2003, p.60). The alliance also regularly issues statements and expresses its views on the ethnic issues in Burma. Regarding the constitution referendum in 2008, the alliance declared that “We view this referendum is not free and fair at all, as the junta’s puppets of regional authorities and departments, member of Union Solidarity and Development Association-USDA and Swan Ah Shin (Master of Strength) and authorities of polling booths had committed many sorts of riggings such as misleading, coercion and fraud.... We hereby claim that we strongly disapprove the referendum as it was not free and fair; and we also urge the people for further revealing of sufficient and precise facts and figures through verbal statements and documentary evidence.” (Statement upon the Result of Referendum, UNA, June 2, 2008).

B. Forming alliance with the Burman

Generally, the Mon are reluctant to join any alliances comprised of Burman, including opposition Burman in exile. If they join such an alliance, they are less likely to play any active roles. For example, the Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB) is one of the biggest political alliances that has been opposing the military rule in Burma since 1988. The alliance was comprised of 24 organizations including Burman (exiled Burman) and non-Burman ethnic

groups (See Appendix D). The alliance was formed in 1988 after thousands of Burman fled to the ethnic areas near the Thai-Burma boarder (Collins, 2003, p.32). Although the Mon joined the alliance initially, they later withdrew from the alliance. Currently, no Mon organizations are in the alliance (See Appendix D). Similarly, overseas Mon organizations are also reluctant to join any alliances or organizations that are comprised of Burman. For example, the Mon community in Fort Wayne, IN, the largest Mon community in the U.S., is operated independently from the Burman community who live in the same city. [Note: most of Burman in Fort Wayne are exiled Burman and they also oppose the current Burmese government]. They are reluctant to participate jointly with the Burman in any social, culture, and political events. The conflict between the two communities will be discussed in details in Chapter 8.

One of the major reasons for the Mon to be reluctant to cooperate with the Burman is that the Mon do not trust the Burman. The Mon do not believe that working with the Burman would reach their goals. According to survey data, 79% of Mon respondents believed that Burman cannot be trusted. 69% believed that Burman would not honor agreements they make with the Mon (Table 16).

There are many stories or historical facts which built up this distrust. During the fighting for Burma's independence in 1940s, 3,000 Mon soldiers fought along with 5,000 Burman soldiers (NMSP, 1993, p. 24). But after Burma gained her independence, Burman leaders did not agree to grant cultural and linguistic rights to the Mon. In other words, they did not want to recognize the sacrifice of the Mon and refused to share the fruit of independence.

In 1958, the MPF surrendered their arms to the Burman-dominant government because the government promised to create an autonomous Mon State in exchange. But, Burman leaders again broke their promises. Instead of creating an autonomous Mon State, the government

arrested the MPF leaders and put them in jail. These historical facts created a greater distrust of the Burman.

Burmese opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi has acknowledged the existence of such distrust. In one of her letters, she said “Our ethnic nationalists still harbor a deep feeling of mistrust of the majority Burmese, a mistrust natural to those who have not been accorded justice and fair play. In trying to build up a strong union, our greatest challenge will be to win the confidence of those who have only known repression and discrimination” (cited in Fink, 2000). Therefore, conflict in Burma is not just conflict between Mon and the Burmese government. It is conflict between Mon and Burman ethnic groups.

C. Problems with alliances

To maintain a unified and stable alliance is not an easy task. Every group member in most alliances has their own interest. Most of the time, their group interest is prioritized over the interest of the alliance. The differences in their goals and strategies have made the cooperation among non-Burman ethnic groups more difficult (ICG, May 7, 2003, p.7, p.23). Such differences brought the NDF to a near collapse in early 1990s.

In the early 1990s when the government started peace negotiations with ethnic armed groups, the NDF had a policy that all its members should hold talks with the government collectively as a group. But, the KIO left the alliance and held talks with the government by itself. Later, NMSP, KNPP and KNU followed the steps of KIO and held talks with the government on their own instead of staying together per the policy of the alliance. Even though the KNU failed to reach an agreement with the government, the NMSP, KIO, KNPP, and Shan

State Progress Party (SSPP) left the alliance and signed cease-fire agreements with the government (ICG, May 7, 2003, p.23).

Another example is a problem with the military alliance in the northern part of Burma. As the government has attempted to transform ethnic armed groups into the Border Guard Forces, ethnic armed groups along the China-Burma border formed an alliance called Myanmar Peace and Democracy Front (MPDF) in March 2009. Its members are the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA), also known as Mongla group based in Eastern Shan State, Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), also known as Kokang group, and the United Wa State Party (UWSP). Because they refused to transform into the Border Guard Forces, the Burmese army attacked the militarily weakest member of the alliance, Kokang in August 2009. Although the alliance guaranteed a mutual security for its members, it did not turn out that way in practice. None of its other members assisted the Kokang. Only USWA sent out 500 troops initially and recalled its troops on the next day. As a result, the Burmese troops took over the Kokang region within two days and drove out 37,000 refugees into China (McCartan, September 10, 2009).

To summarize the image and the action tendencies of the Mon, they endorse a barbarian image over the Burman and view themselves to have an inferior capability compared to the Burman. Therefore, they have formed many alliances militarily and politically with other ethnic groups in order to defend against attacks from the Burmese army and to fight for autonomy. The Mon formed an alliance with the Karen in 1948 and joined the NDF in 1982. Even though the NMSP left the NDF in 1995, the NMSP has been actively seeking alliances with other ethnic groups again when the government pressured them to transform into the Border Guard Forces. It rejoined its former alliance, NDF, and is actively seeking to form alliances with other ethnic

groups who are not yet members of the NDF. The Mon joined the Ethnic Nationalities Council and the United Nationalities Alliance. But they are reluctant to enter into alliances with the Burman or that are comprised of the Burman. One of the reasons is that they do not trust the Burman based on their past experience in dealing the Burman leaders. Given their barbarian image of the Burman, they don't believe that cooperating with Burman and working with Burman will help to achieve their goals.

The images of other non-Burman ethnic groups over the Burman and their action tendencies

The images of other non-Burman ethnic groups over the Burman were also analyzed in order to find out how they view the Burman. According to the survey data, other non-Burman respondents believed that they were inferior in capability and in status and perceived Burman as having harmful intentions. For example, only 13% of the respondents believed that their army was superior to the Burmese army; 16% believed that their economic power was superior to the Burman's economic power; 14% believed that their ethnic groups' political power was superior to that of Burman. In terms of cultural and social status, 50% believed that they were superior in culture and 29% believed they were superior in social status. Overall, other non-Burman ethnics perceived that their cultural and social status was inferior to that of Burman. In terms of intention, only 13% believed that Burman leaders have good intention. Therefore, their image of the Burman is an imperialist.

Although their images over the Burman are different from the image of the Mon over the Burman, their action tendencies are similar to the Mon. They also believe in forming alliances with other non-Burman ethnic groups and fighting against the Burman. The table

below shows the correlation between imperialist image and action tendencies. Like the barbarian image, the imperialist image has a negative correlation with cooperation with the Burman and a positive correlation with fighting against Burman and forming alliances with other ethnic groups.

Table 15. Correlations between the imperialist image and action tendencies

Correlations		Cooperation	Fight Against Burman	Form Alliance
Imperialist Image	Pearson Correlation	-0.24	0.39	0.41
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00**	0.00**	0.00**
	N	122	120	121

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Conclusion

The Mon believe that their cultural and social status is superior to the Burman but their capability is inferior to the Burman. They perceive the Burman as having harmful intentions and a threat given a long history of hostility between the two groups and the human rights abuses of the Burmese army at present. Therefore, their image of Burman is barbarian.

The level of ethnic identity and level of barbarian image endorsement show a positive correlation. This explains that respondents who strongly identify with their groups also strongly endorse the barbarian image. Moreover, these two variables also have a strong positive correlation with conflict scale. The respondents who strongly identify with their group and strongly endorse barbarian image are more likely to push for a political separation or an independence from Burma. When looking at the action tendencies, respondents who highly endorsed the barbarian image also strongly endorsed the forming of alliances with other ethnic

groups and fighting against the Burman to reach their goals. But they are less likely to work with Burman in pursuing their goals. Because, they believe that Burman cannot be trusted, do not honor any agreements that have been made, and do not have cooperative values.

In contrast to the Mon, other non-Burman samples show that other non-Burman ethnic groups have the imperialist image of the Burman rather than the barbarian image. The data also suggest that other non-Burman ethnics view themselves as inferior in status, and inferior in capability compared to the Burman. In addition, they view the Burman as having harmful intention. They also believe in forming alliances with other non-Burman ethnic groups and fighting against the Burman to reach their goals and they don't believe that working with Burman would achieve their goals.

Table 16. Responses on image and political conflict questions among Mon respondents

Items	Responses (%)								
	Means	SDs	++	+	Sum	-	--	Neutral	N
Capability scale	3.37	0.901							
Mon army strength inferior	1.84	1.15	52%	30%	82%	5%	6%	7%	244
Mon army strength superior	4.16	1.15	6%	5%	11%	30%	52%	7%	244
Mon are richer than Burman	2.45	1.26	32%	18%	51%	15%	6%	28%	529
Mon political power superior	3.50	1.59	22%	7%	29%	24%	39%	8%	406
Status scale	1.53	0.83							
Mon cultural status superior	1.44	0.90	75%	13%	88%	3%	2%	7%	526
Mon social status superior	1.62	1.02	66%	16%	82%	6%	2%	10%	534
Barbarian image scale	1.77	1.05							
Burmans are violent	1.92	1.27	55%	21%	76%	8%	7%	9%	531
Mon will be dangerous if Burman have power	1.62	1.09	66%	21%	87%	4%	5%	4%	531
Intention									
Burma leaders have good intention	4.41	0.98	3%	1%	4%	16%	67%	13%	134
Cooperative scale	3.48	1.03							
Burman have cooperative value	3.65	1.32	11%	7%	18%	23%	35%	24%	133
Work with Burman	3.32	1.41	12%	22%	34%	20%	30%	16%	134
Action									
Fight against Burman	1.73	1.18	61%	22%	83%	7%	2%	7%	134
Alliance									
Form Alliance with non-Burman	1.56	0.98	67%	19%	87%	7%	4%	3%	134
Political Separation Scale	1.89	0.75							
Independence	1.57	0.99	66%	21%	87%	3%	3%	7%	527
Federalism	3.21	1.55	18%	23%	41%	14%	33%	12%	522
Federalism (Reverse)	2.79	1.55	33%	14%	47%	23%	18%	12%	522
Future Monland includes Pegu	1.28	0.65	80%	14%	94%	2%	0%	4%	531
Future Monland includes Lower Burma	1.92	1.16	52%	19%	71%	9%	4%	16%	525
Other supplement data									
Burman honor agreement	3.90	1.24	7%	8%	15%	25%	44%	16%	133
Burman cannot be trust	1.83	1.23	57%	22%	79%	7%	7%	7%	531
Mon region is more developed than Burman region	2.37	1.33	38%	18%	56%	17%	7%	20%	415

++, strongly agree; +, agree; --, strongly disagree; -, disagree; Sum = the sum of strongly agree and agree;

Table 17. Responses on image questions among other non-Burman respondents

Items	Responses (%)								
	Means	SDs	++	+	Sum	-	--	Neutral	N
Capability	3.71	1.05							
Non-Burman army strength inferior	1.84	1.15	14%	49%	63%	7%	7%	23%	121
Non-Burman army strength superior	3.57	1.03	7%	6%	13%	49%	14%	24%	121
Non-Burman economic superior	3.55	1.04	5%	11%	16%	44%	16%	24%	121
Non-Burman political power superior	4.02	1.07	2%	12%	14%	36%	41%	9%	122
Status	2.77	1.19							
Cultural status superior	2.47	1.22	30%	20%	50%	21%	4%	25%	122
Social status superior	3.08	1.16	13%	16%	29%	35%	8%	28%	121
Intention									
Burman leaders have good intention	3.96	1.16	4%	9%	13%	27%	43%	17%	122
Imperialism	1.89	0.79							
Burman are arrogant.	1.89	0.79	42%	40%	82%	6%	3%	9%	122
The Burmans exploit resources in non-Burman areas and keep all the profits for themselves.	1.83	0.97	45%	38%	83%	5%	2%	10%	121
The Burmans use some non-Burman to oppress their own non-Burman people	1.97	0.93	32%	49%	81%	5%	2%	12%	121
Cooperative	3.25	0.93							
Burman have cooperative value	3.77	1.03	5%	6%	11%	46%	23%	20%	133
Work with Burman	2.70	1.20	12%	45%	57%	16%	11%	16%	134
Action									
Fight against Burman	2.39	1.32	35%	23%	58%	18%	8%	16%	120
Alliance									
Form Alliance	2.23	1.22	36%	28%	64%	9%	7%	20%	121
Trust									
Burman honor agreement	3.45	1.37	12%	14%	26%	23%	30%	21%	121
Burman cannot be trust	2.32	0.92	32%	42%	74%	9%	3%	14%	122

++, strongly agree; +, agree; --, strongly disagree; -, disagree; Sum = the sum of strongly agree and agree;

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE EFFECTS OF THE CONFLICT

Burma's ethnic conflict has caused thousands of lives, refugees and internal displaced persons (IDPs), and thousands more became refugee-like. The conflict has also caused human rights abuses such as killing, torture, rape, forced labor, and forced relocation and has caused thousands of underage boys to become child soldiers. The abuses were committed by both Burmese army and ethnic armies. But, compared to the Burmese army, ethnic armies commit the atrocities on a much smaller scale. The U.S. Department of State stated that due to the ethnic conflicts, human rights abuses such as "killings, beatings, torture, forced labor, forced relocations, and rapes of Chin, Karen, Karenni, Rohingya, Shan, Mon, and other ethnic groups by government soldiers" are widespread in Burma. "Some armed ethnic groups also may have committed abuses, but on a much smaller scale than the government army" (U.S Department of State, February 25, 2009). Overall, the conflict caused Burma to become one of the poorest countries in the world.

Due to the widespread of human rights abuses, recently, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights to Burma, Tomás Ojea Quintana, has recommended to the UN to consider establishing a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the war crimes against humanity by the Burmese military government (Kemp, March 12, 2010). He recommended that,

Given the gross and systematic nature of human rights violations in Myanmar over a period of many years, and the lack of accountability, there is an indication that those human rights violations are the result of a State policy that involves authorities in the executive, military and judiciary at all levels. According to consistent reports, the possibility exists that some of these human rights violations may entail categories of crimes against humanity or war crimes under the terms of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Quintana, March 10, 2010, p.29).

So far, seven UN members-- Australia, Britain, Canada, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and the United States-- have supported the Commission of Inquiry to investigate the war crimes in Burma. (Mizzima News, September 23, 2010). The following subsections discuss social and economic conditions resulting directly or indirectly from over sixty years of ethnic conflicts in Burma.

A. Causes of loss of life

Burma's ethnic conflict has caused thousands of lives even though there are no independent reports to verify the exact numbers of those who lost their lives during the sixty years of Burma's civil wars. According to the government statistics, there were tens of thousands of casualties and deaths in the open civil war of 1948-52 (Smith, Martin, 1999, p. 101). The government estimated that the death of insurgents in the battle were 2,000 each year compared to the loss 500-600 government troops (Smith, Martin, 1999, p. 101). Insurgent leaders, however, claimed that death tolls of government troops much higher. KNU has estimated the government casualties about 1000 death a year in the Southeast front alone (Smith, Martin, 1999, p. 101). In the Kachin State alone, the Kachin Independence Organization claimed that the deaths of civilians at the hands of government were estimated about 33,336 from 1961-86 (Smith, Martin, 1999, p. 101). However, under present circumstances it is impossible to verify any of these claims or statistics, but it has been estimated that over 1 million people have lost their lives as result of conflicts over five decades (Smith, Martin, 1999, p. 101). Indeed, these figures did not include who have died due to the causes indirectly related to the conflict such as famine and diseases. According to Lee et al. (July 2006), the mortality rate in the war zones in eastern

Burma are higher than in other areas. The authors argued that there are many factors contributing to the high mortality rate but —the impact of conflict is unmistakable” (p. 1125).

B. Rapes and other human rights violations

Like other conflicts around the world, women and children are the most affected. In May 2002, Shan Human Rights Foundation (SHRF) and Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN) reported the Burmese Army uses of rape as a systematic weapon of war against the ethnic populations in Shan State. According to the report, there were 173 incidents of rape or sexual violence against 625 women and girls committed by Burmese soldiers from 52 military battalions between 1992 and 2001. The twenty five percent of those rape cases resulted in death. The report concluded that the 83 percent of the rapes was committed by those who held officer ranks in the military, and the rapes were disregarded by the Burmese military regime in order to terrorize and subjugate the ethnic Shan (SHRF and SWAN, June 2002).

In April 2004, the Karen Women Organization (KWO) also released a report on the rape cases committed by the Burmese troops in the Karen areas. The KWO documented 125 cases from 2002 to 2003 against ethnic Karen population in Karen areas (KWO April 2004). The KWO's report alleged that Burmese army used rape to intimidate, control, shame and ethnically cleanse Karen people and as a military strategy to fight against the Karen National Union. The report said, "Most of these incidents have been committed with impunity, creating a climate of fear for Karen women in Burma" (KWO, April 2004, p.6). In 2007, the group issued another report and documented 4,000 cases of human rights violations including rape, murder, torture and forced labour in Karen area between 2005 and 2006 (KWO, February 2007, p.1).

In Southern Mon State, Burmese Army also conscripted women for sexual slavery and practiced systematic sexual violence against the ethnic Mon women. The Woman and Child Rights Project (Southern Burma), which documented the incidents of rape or sexual violence in southern Ye township, a small area of Mon State, reported 37 cases of rape and sexual violence against 50 women and girls. The victims were between 14 to 50 years of age (Woman and Child Rights Project (Southern Burma), July 2005). The violence included “gang-raped, beat, kicked, slashed and killed women” (Woman and Child Rights Project (Southern Burma), July 2005, p. 1).

Due to the widespread sexual violence in Burma, a group of noble peace prize and women activists, after hearing the testimony of a group of rape victims from Burma in New York in March 2010, recommended to the International Tribunal to investigate the rape crime in Burma (Roughneen, March 11, 2010). According to their Press Release, “The quasi-legal event featured compelling testimony - the first ever - of 12 women from Burma who have suffered rape, torture, and other crimes at the hands of the military junta. The event highlighted the egregious human rights crimes, including rape as a weapon of war, and called for policymakers to demand a last resort: the International Criminal Court” (Nobel Women’s Initiative, Press Release, March 6 2010).

D. Forced labor

Forced labor became a major issue in 1990s as the government stepped up military offences against ethnic insurgents. As the military offences against the insurgent groups increased, so did the forced labors. The government forced villagers to build military barracks and roads and to carry ammunitions and military supplies to the front lines. In July 1998 the International Labor Organization (ILO) had published the results of a commission of inquiry into

the use of forced labor in Burma along with a set of recommendations to be implemented by the regime if it wished to remain as an ILO member in good standing. The report stated that Burmese military regime practiced ~~“widespread and systematic”~~ use of forced labor in Burma, especially in the ethnic areas (HRW, 2000). A year later, with no perceived progress, the ILO adopted a resolution to ban Burma from the ILO meeting and technical assistances (HRW, 2000). Finally, the government issued an order to ban forced labors and allowed the ILO to open an office in Rangoon in 2002 to monitor the forced labor situations in Burma. However, forced labors are still widespread in rural areas where the ILO could not gain access. According to the U.S. Department of State’s country report, forced labor was still widespread in Burma. The report said, ~~“government and military use of forced or compulsory labor remained a widespread and serious problem, particularly targeting members of ethnic minority groups...The government's use of forced labor in support of military garrisons or military operations remained serious in ethnic or religious minority regions”~~ (U.S Department of State, February 25, 2009). Due to the continuing of forced labor, in February the 2007, the government and ILO reached another agreement called Supplementary Understanding, to allow ~~“the~~ ILO to set up a system allowing citizens to register complaints with the ILO without government retaliation; it also requires the government and the ILO to investigate jointly allegations of labor abuses referred by the ILO” (U.S Department of State, February 25, 2009).

E. Refugees and internal displaced persons

The ethnic conflict has also caused hundreds thousands of refugees to flee into neighboring countries: Thailand, China, India, and Bangladesh. In 2001, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrations (USCRI) estimated that more than 450,000 Burmese refugees and

asylum seekers were in neighboring countries (USCRI, 2002). As of the RI estimates, 276,000 refugees were in Thailand (mostly ethnic Mon, Karen, Shan, and Karenni); 52,000 mostly ethnic Chin in India; approximately 122,000 ethnic Rohingya in Bangladesh; and an unknown number in China (mostly Kachin). Some have sought refuge in Japan, South Korea, and elsewhere (USCRI, 2002). However, some of refugees were repatriated after ethnic armed groups reached cease-fire agreements with the government. For example, in 1995, 11,000 Mon refugees in Thailand were repatriated after a Mon political armed group, the New Mon State Party, signed the cease-fire agreement with Burmese military regime (HRW, 1996). By cooperating with the United Nations Commission of Human Rights (UNHCR), more than a hundred thousand of Rohingya refugees were repatriated in Bangladesh (U.S Department of State, February 25, 2009). Despite these repatriations, due to continuing fighting between some ethnic armed groups and Burma's army, people are still fleeing to neighboring countries. As of 2008, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that there were about 150,000 Burmese refugees lived in refugee camps in Thailand, about 21,000 Rohingyas lived in refugee camps in southeastern Bangladesh, and approximately 200,000 others lived outside the camps (U.S Department of State, February 25, 2009). The most recent refugee plight was due to the fighting between the ethnic Kokang and Burmese army which caused over 37,000 refugees to flee to China (Washington Post, September 25, 2009). However, after the government took control the area, most of them returned home.

Ethnic conflict also internally displaced over a million people. The causes of internal displacement are various. However, forced labors, forced relocations, persecutions, and fighting between Burmese army and ethnic insurgents are major causes of the internal displacement. According to the Refugee International (RI) there an estimated one million Burmese were

internally displaced at the end of 2008. About a half million were displaced on the Eastern border alone over the last decade (IDMC, March 5, 2009). Most of them were non-Burman ethnic groups who lived in rural areas where the armed conflict occurred. However, the numbers of displaced persons in government controlled areas were not available due to the political sensitivities of the Junta” (TBBC, October 2008, p.8). As of October 2008, there were reportedly over 100,000 Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Karen state (TBBC, October 2008). Moreover, a new displacement was also reported in Chin State as a result of human rights violations and severe food crisis. Those peoples were at risk as the government restricted humanitarian aids. Thailand-Burma Border Consortium reported “IDPs living in the areas of Myanmar still affected by armed conflict between the army and insurgent groups remained the most vulnerable, with their priority needs tending to be related to physical security, food, shelter, health and education. Humanitarian access to this population continued to be very restricted” (IDMC, March 5, 2009, p.1).

Among a half million internal displaced persons in Burma’s Eastern border, about 224,000 people were temporarily settling in areas controlled by the cease-fire ethnic groups, about 101,000 of them were hiding in the armed conflict zones. The later was the most vulnerable group. Approximately, 126,000 villagers were forced to relocate by the Burmese army into a designated relocation sites (TBBC, October 2008, p.3). And “an estimated 66,000 people were forced to leave their homes in order to avoid armed conflict and human rights abuses during the past year alone” (TBBC, October 2008, p.3).

Although the NMSP has a cease-fire agreement with the government, there are still many IDPs in Mon areas because some Mon armed groups are still fighting with the government. According to Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), “Mon civilians have not only

undergone human rights violations as suspected supporters of splinter groups, but also continuing conscription for forced labour such as guard duty and portering services” (p.7). As of October 2008, 70,000 civilians remained internally displaced in Mon areas, by a vast majority in the NMSP controlled areas (TBBC, October 2008, p.34). Overall, ~~there~~ an estimated three million people have been forced to migrate within and outside of Myanmar due to conflict, persecution, human rights violations and repressive government measures” (TBBC, October 2008).

One of the causes of human rights violation in rural areas is due to the government counter-insurgent policy. The government employed 'four cut' policies to cut off insurgents from accessing food, finances, communication, and recruits in rural areas of Burma (USCRI, 2002). To do so, the government relocated thousands of population from rebel controlled- areas to the government-controlled areas. Most of refugees were those who refused to relocate or who fled the relocation areas because they could not survive the harsh conditions faced them at the government-controlled sites (USCRI, 2002). Human Rights Watch reported, ~~The~~ relocations were accompanied by killings, rape, and other forms of torture, and scores were believed to have died from malnutrition and related diseases” (HRW, 1998).

Hundreds of thousands of Burmese lived in neighboring countries in refugee-like circumstances, including about a quarter-million in Thailand and ten thousand more in Malaysia (USCRI, 2002). Many may have fled Burma because they feared the persecution. However, these people are categorized as ~~fleeing fighting~~” person. They are not recognized by host countries as refugees (USCRI, 2002).

F. Child soldiers

Another problem directly related to the conflict is the use of child soldiers. As Burmese military regime stepped up against ethnic insurgents in early 1990s, it increased the number of Burmese soldiers from 190,000 to 400,000 (ICG, May 7, 2002). To do so, the government conscripted underage children into the army and used those child soldiers to fight against ethnic insurgents (HRW, 2007). According to the estimation of the Human Rights Watch (HRW), “children may have accounted for 35 to 45 percent of recruits in the national army” (HRW 2007, p.8). After training, they were deployed to combat ethnic insurgents. Sometimes they were forced to participate in “human rights abuses against civilians, including rounding up villagers for forced labor, burning villages, and carrying out executions” (HRW, 2007, p.8). Burma’s record on child soldiers is “the worst in the world” (HRW, 2007, p.8). Ethnic insurgents also recruited child soldiers but it is in a smaller scale (HRW, 2007, p.6).

Consequently, the Human Rights Watch recommended the UN Security Council to take action against the use of child soldiers in Burma. The recommendations read “In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1539 (paragraph 5) and 1612 (paragraph 9) on children and armed conflict, adopt targeted measures to address the failure of the SPDC to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers. Consider measures recommended by the secretary-general including the imposition of travel restrictions on leaders, a ban on the supply of small arms, a ban on military assistance, and restriction on the flow of financial resources” (HRW 2007, p21).

G. Economy

Overall, the conflicts have caused Burma to become one of the poorest countries in the world. At the end of World War II, Burma was relatively rich country compared to its neighbors

Thailand and Malaysia (Rieffel, May 2010). However, after decades of ethnic conflict and government repressive policies, Burma became one of the least developed countries in the world in 1987 because the conflicts —have prevented the market from functioning efficiently” (Rieffel May 2010, p.2). Most of Burma’s —socioeconomic indicators placed it among the world’s most impoverished in 2000” (Rieffel, May 2010, p.2). Poverty rate in 2007 was 32 percent for the country as a whole while 36 percent for rural population. Burma ranked 77th out of 135 countries in the Human Poverty Index (UNDP, May 1, 2008). In terms of human development, Burma ranked 138th out of 182 countries in 2008 (UNDP, 2009).

Conclusion

Due to the over six decades of ethnic conflict between the Burman and non-Burman ethnic groups, Burma has suffered from not only economic deterioration but also various kinds of human rights violations. The conflict causes thousands of refugees flee to neighboring countries and over a million became internal displaced persons. Human rights abuses such as killing, torture, rapes and forced labor are widespread. Children underage have been conscripted into soldiers and sent to the front line of the battles. Unless ethnic conflict is solved, people will continue to suffer from various social and economic hardships in Burma. Tens of thousands of people will continue to flee from the country; hundreds of thousands more are expected to become refugees and internal displaced persons if the cease-fire between the government and some non-Burman ethnic armed groups broke down, which is imminent due to the continued pressure from the government to strategically place the cease-fire groups under its control.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RESOLUTION OF ETHNIC CONFLICT IN BURMA

Ethnic conflicts in Burma have been ongoing for decades, and the lives of most ethnic civilians have been severely affected by the conflicts. To resolve the ethnic conflicts in Burma is not an easy task, but it is necessary in order to establish a lasting peace and a stable democracy in Burma. As Kramer (2009) pointed out, “Ethnic conflict is the central issue in Burma, and needs to be addressed to end the civil war and achieve a lasting political solution. Otherwise, the prospects for peace and democratization are grim” (p. 5). This chapter discusses recent attempts at resolving the conflicts and proposes political processes for peaceful resolution of ethnic conflicts in Burma.

I. Recent attempts at resolving ethnic conflicts

A. Cease-fire Agreement

As of 2010, there are 37 armed groups in Burma (See Appendix A). All of them are non-Burman ethnic groups except the All Burma Students’ Democratic Front (ABSDF), the members of which are primarily Burman. Of 37 insurgent groups, the United Wa State Party (UWSP) is the strongest group followed by the KIO. The UWSP is 20,000 strong (Moe, April 30, 2010). The KNU used to be the strongest insurgent group before its Buddhist faction, Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), broke away in 1994. Since then, the KNU lost not only its military strength but also its territories.

Burmese government began to negotiate cease-fire agreements with ethnic insurgent groups in 1989. By 2009, the government had reached agreements with 13 major insurgent groups and 15 small armed groups (See Appendix A). The KNU had negotiated peace talks with the current government twice, the first negotiation occurred in 1995 and the second one was in 2004 (Kramer, 2009.p.13), but neither was successful.

Among all of those ethnic groups, the Mon has the longest history of conflict with the Burman. As discussed in previous chapters, the conflict between the Mon and the Burman goes back to 1057 A.D., when Burman King Anoratha invaded and occupied the Mon Kingdom, Thaton and continued until lower Burma, which covered most of the Mon territory, became a British colony in 1858.

The modern Mon armed revolution began in 1948, when Burma gained her independence and the Burmese government denied basic cultural and linguistic rights for the Mon. In 1958, the Mon People's Front, the largest Mon's armed resistance organization, surrendered their arms for peace and democracy promised by the government. However, after they surrendered their arms, the government broke its promise and arrested and jailed most of the leaders of the Mon People's Front.

Refusing to give up, the Mon armed resistance took a different turn and reemerged as the NMSP. Nearly forty years of struggle against Burmese government did not bring significant political change. So the NMSP decided to change its strategy. The NMSP signed a cease-fire agreement with the Burmese military regime in 1995, in hopes of solving political differences through dialogue.

Militarily, the NMSP is not as strong as the UWSP or KIO, but the NMSP is politically one of the strongest among the Burma's ethnic groups. It often openly criticizes the government for the lack of political development in Burma. The NMSP initially attended the government's sponsored convention but withdrew its participation in 2006 because of the lack of democratic processes in the convention.

Right after the cease-fire, the government granted some business concessions to the NMSP and promised to increase the development projects in Mon areas. The government also granted some rights such as the teaching of Mon language in state schools outside of school time. But, the government banned the teaching of Mon language within three years of the cease-fire. In response to the NMSP's withdrawal from the sponsored convention, the government withdrew most of the business concessions granted to the party in 2006 (Minority at Risk). Despite the lack of political developments between the Burmese military regime and the NMSP, NMSP is still trying to maintain a cease-fire with the regime and continues to demand political dialogue (IMNA, April 24, 2010).

Similarly, the government has refused to hold political talks with any other cease-fire groups. Instead, the government has pressured all cease-fire armed groups to transform into the Border Guard Forces and operate under government control. This causes tension between the government and cease-fire groups to reach a critical point where the cease-fire can break down any time. Overall, after twenty years of cease-fire between the government and the majority of ethnic armed groups, there is no clear sign of political solution in Burma (Kramer, 2009, p. 23).

B. International intervention

Since the military took control in 1988, the international community has pressured the Burmese military regime to restore democracy and to initiate political dialogue among the three major parties, Burman opposition party, NLD, Burmese military government, and non-Burman ethnic groups. It is often referred as “tripartite dialogue.” However, in dealing with Burma's political problems, the international community is still deeply divided between the countries that are calling for constructive engagement and those advocating for isolation of Burma. While the U.S. and Europe have taken the isolation approach by imposing limited sanctions on Burma, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has pursued a 'constructive engagement' policy by cooperating with the Burmese military regime. In 1997, the ASEAN admitted Burma as a full member in the regional body. Japan uses a “carrot and stick” policy by using its foreign aid as a tool to address Burma's problems, while China has not only shielded the Burmese regime from any UN action but also has provided the regime with a life line of finance and material support such as arms and military hardware to fight against the ethnic insurgents (HRW, 1996; HRW, 1998).

The UN has used diplomacy to help solve Burma's political conflict. Beginning in 1991, the UN has passed numerous resolutions in order to stop human rights violations and bring about a political dialogue between the military regime, the democratic forces, and non-Burman ethnic groups in Burma (UN General Assembly Resolutions on Burma). Based on those resolutions, the former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed a Malaysian diplomat Razali Ismail as a special envoy to Burma in April 2000, in order to initiate negotiations between the government and opposition groups (HRW, 2001). Despite several attempts, he was not able to persuade the regime to initiate meaningful dialogue with the NLD and ethnic leaders.

Again, the presiding UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, assigned another special envoy, Ibrahim Gambari, to push for a dialogue. Gambari has already visited Burma eight times since he was appointed as a special envoy to Burma in 2006, but, there are no signs of that his mission would be successful (Mizzima News, June 26, 2009). The U.N Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon himself visited Burma in July 2009 to push for a political dialogue. He left Burma disappointed and said ‘I believe the government of Myanmar failed to take a unique opportunity to show its commitment to a new era of openness’ (Cited in Horn, July 5, 2009). The Burma issue was also discussed in the UN Security Council but no resolution was passed due to the strong opposition from China and Russia (HRW, 2009). Despite a number of resolutions and diplomatic efforts, the UN has not yet been able to bring the Burmese government to start a ~~tripartite~~ tripartite dialogue”.

The U.S. also has tried to help solve Burma’s political and ethnic problems for nearly two decades. From 1990 to 2009, the U.S. took the isolation approach by imposing limited sanctions and refusing to engage with the regime (Hadar, March 26, 1998; Asia Society Task Force Report, March 10, 2009, p.1). The U.S. sanctions mainly targeted Burmese military leaders and its business allies. For example, the U.S. banned Burmese officials from travelling to the U.S. and banned imports that directly and indirectly benefit the regime (HRW, 2009, p.228-9).

However, in 2009, the Obama’s administration changed the isolation policy and decided to apply the ~~carrot and stick~~ “carrot and stick” policy toward Burma because the administration believed that the previous isolation policy was ineffective (Rhoads, September 25, 2009). The administration has been open to engagement if the Burmese military regime moves forward with the democratic process. Compared to the previous administration, the Obama administration appears to give more attention to ethnic issues than just democratization. In November 2009, the U.S. sent

Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Kurt Campell, to talk with the Burmese government regarding the political process (Moe, November 4, 2009). The U.S. delegate met with the government officials, ethnic leaders and leaders from NLD and tried to achieve genuine dialogue that would lead to the national reconciliation in Burma (Moe, November 4, 2009).

Thus far, the new U.S. efforts also seem to be failing to persuade the Burmese regime. Recently, the regime announced election laws that ban Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of NLD and a democracy icon, and other political prisoners from participating in the upcoming election (AP, Mar 12, 2010). Because of that, the NLD and United Nationalities Alliance (UNA) boycotted the election. Kurt Campbell said in his trip to Asian countries, ‘The U.S. approach was to try to encourage domestic dialogue between the key stakeholders, and the recent promulgation of the election criteria doesn't leave much room for such a dialogue’ (Cited in AP, Mar 12, 2010). But the U.S. will work with its allies to push for political dialogue (AP, Mar 12, 2010).

Like the U.S., the E.U. has also imposed a series of sanctions on Burma. In October 1996, the E.U. imposed an arms embargo on Burma and a ban on visas for senior government officials (HRW, 1997). The E.U. countries also suspended high-level bilateral visits to Burma and withdrew military personnel from their embassies in Burma (HRW, 1997). In March 1997, the E.U. suspended trading benefits for Burma under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program (HRW, 1998). In an effort to end the political stalemate in Burma, the EU sent a four-person exploratory mission to Rangoon in July 1998 to discuss human rights and democratization (HRW, 1999). The mission met with government officials and Aung San Suu Kyi but returned with no immediate results. Therefore, on October 11, 1998, the E.U. extended sanctions for another six months (HRW, 1999). In April 1999 the E.U. strengthened its common

position by prohibiting the sale, supply, and export of equipment, which could be used for internal repression or terrorism, to Burma (HRW, 2000). In April 2010, EU extended its economic sanction another year and is also exploring a political resolution in Burma (Wielaard, AP, April 26, 2010).

While western countries like the U.S. and the EU have tried to isolate Burma, the ASEAN took a constructive engagement approach. In fact, ASEAN countries are busy making business investments to take advantage of Burma's rich natural resources. For its constructive engagement policy, the ASEAN admitted Burma as a full member in 1997 despite the opposition from the EU and the US (HRW, 1998). Thailand has played an active role in attempting to bring about political dialogue in Burma. It pressured ethnic armed groups such as the NMSP to enter cease-fire agreements with the government (Minority at Risk). In 2003, Thailand hosted an international conference to solve Burma's political problems (AP, March 30, 2004). Besides Burma and Thailand, participants of the conference included Singapore, Italy, China, Indonesia, Austria, France, Germany, India, Japan and representatives from the United Nations (AP, March 30, 2004). The ASEAN continues to support the regime's road map and has urged that the Burma's upcoming election should be accountable and transparent.

The Japanese policy toward Burma is a two-track policy or "carrot and stick policy" (HRW, 1998). However, the difference between the Japanese and the current US policy is that Japan does not impose sanctions on Burma. Japan provides limited economic assistance to the Burmese military government and at the same time urges improvements in human rights and the restoration of democratic rule in Burma. For example, on November 8, 1994, Japan announced that if the regime released Aung San Suu Kyi, Japan would extend \$10 million of its foreign aid,

which was suspended right after the military government took the power in 1988 (HRW, 1995). Aung San Suu Kyi was released from her house arrest in 1995. Some analysts argued that the release of Suu Kyi was part of Japan's carrot and stick policy (HRW, 1996). However, Suu Kyi was arrested again in 2000. Again Japan urged the military regime to release Suu Kyi in order to continue its foreign aid to Burma. Following Suu Kyi's release in 2001, Japan disbursed the 4.9 million of its 29 million US Dollars Official Development Assistance (ODA) loan approved earlier for the renovation of a hydroelectric plant in eastern Burma. In August 2002, the Japanese foreign minister met with Suu Kyi and the military regime to push for progress in democratization and human rights, but made no further aid commitments (HRW, 2003). Apparently, Japan has used its foreign aid as a tool to help bring democracy and improve human rights in Burma. However, there is no clear evidence that the Japanese carrot and stick policy is helping to bring political negotiations in Burma.

China is a key supporter of the Burmese military regime. While other countries pressure the Burmese military regime to solve political problems, China sold billion of dollars worth of arms to the regime. In 1992, China sold \$1.2 billion worth of military hardware, including naval warships (Jendrzejczyk and Liddell, 1996). In 1994, China sold about \$400 million worth of helicopters, armored vehicles, rifles and parachutes to Burma (HRW, 1995). Moreover, China also sold several Chinese naval vessels with a \$40 million interest-free loan in 1994 (HRW, 1995). In January and February 2002, the Chinese military delivered sizeable shipments of arms to Burmese naval bases (HRW, 2002). Arms supplies remained a crucial element of Chinese-Burmese relationship.

However, the recent attacks on Kokang, ethnic Chinese, by the Burmese regime angered the Chinese officials because the attack forced 37,000 Chinese ethnic refugees into China (Petty, Reuters, February 10, 2010). China officials called on the Burmese regime to improve the stability of Burma-China border. In response, the regime apologized for the attack on the Kokang and reestablished the stability of the border (Petty, February 10, 2010). Recently, Chinese officials were mediating BGF talks between the United Wa State Party and Burmese military government (S.H.A.N, March 1, 2010). The talks have not reached toward a solution. While China provides diplomatic support in the international arena (e.g. opposing UNSC solutions on Burma), China is also protecting Burma ethnic groups such as Wa and Kokang from Burmese military attacks because these groups are ethnically related to the Chinese (S.H.A.N, March 2, 2010).

C. Burmese military government's Road Map to conflict resolution

Many Burmese political analyses, ethnic minority political leaders, Burma's democratic forces, and international community believed that Burma's ethnic conflict could be solved through dialogue and democratic process (Oo, Than, September 1, 2008; Naing, September 8, 2008; Jha, October 3, 2007 ; IMNA, July 12, 2007). That is why international communities such as the UN, the U.S. and EU have urged the Burmese military regime to initiate a "tripartite dialogue" among the regime, democratic forces, and ethnic minorities for restoring democracy and national reconciliation in Burma (Jha, October 3, 2007; Oo, May, October 22, 2007).

In response to international pressure, the Burmese government laid out its own version of a political solution in Burma. In 1993, the government proposed a seven-step road map for democratic transition in Burma (ICG, August 2009, p.5). The first step of the road map is to hold

a National Convention for drafting a new constitution. After the constitution is completed and approved by a referendum, an election will be held. Then, the power will be transferred to the winning party (Appendix C). However, the international community has been divided between those who support the road map and those who are against it. While Japan, ASEAN and China are supporters of the road map, the U.S. and the E.U. see the road-map processes as undemocratic (Harding, February 13, 2008).

Holding a national convention and a free election are not new strategies for the Burmese regime. In 1990, the government held a free election, but it refused to hand over the power to the winning party, NLD. Instead, the regime placed the party leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, under house arrests. Aung San Suu Kyi has been detained for 15 of the past 20 years. The government also held a National Convention in 1993 to draft a new constitution. However, the convention was postponed in 1995 when the NLD withdrew from the convention. The NLD contended that the convention was dictated by the regime and representatives were not allowed to freely debate or express their views (ICG, August 2009, p.4-5). In addition, most of participants in the convention were handpicked by the military government (ICG, August 2009, p.5) and most of elected representatives from the 1990 election were not allowed to participate in the convention (ICG, August 2009, p.5).

However, due to international pressure, the regime resumed the National Convention in 2006 to finish drafting the constitution. Again, like previous sessions, the convention was not democratic. The thirteen ethnic cease-fire groups presented 13 points to add in the new constitution, but they were not allowed to discuss and were flatly rejected by the military regime (Euro Burma Office (EBO), 2010). The rejection was not acceptable by opposition groups and

ethnic leaders. Therefore, some cease-fire groups withdrew or limited their participation in the convention. However, the regime continued drafting the constitution with its handpicked participants and completed a new constitution in 2007. And, the regime held a referendum in May 2008 and declared that the constitution was approved by 92 percent of the voters (Petty, February 10, 2010). But the opposition parties and ethnic leaders claimed that the constitution was approved by fraud. The regime held the referendum right after Burma was hit by the cyclone Nargis which killed 134,000 of people and caused about 24 millions homeless (Petty, February 10, 2010). Moreover, according to the new constitution, the Burmese military will hold 25 percent of the seats in the Parliament without contesting in elections (Burma 2008 Constitution). The constitution is not only undemocratic but also “does not address the main grievances and aspirations” of non-Burman ethnic groups (Kramer, 2001, p.34).

According to the regime’s road map, an election was held on November 7, 2010. Most ethnic armed groups and political parties did not participate in the election because the regime did not review and revise the 2008’s constitution. To make matters worse, the regime has made various attempts to force cease-fire armed groups to transform their armed forces into “Border Guards Forces or Village Militias” before the election. Most of major cease-fire groups refused to accept the government’s proposals (See Appendix A). In August 2009 the military junta attacked Kokang (KDMAA), one of the smaller ethnic cease-fire groups, for refusing to transform into the Border Guard Forces. The attack was likely a warning for other ethnic cease-fire groups that they would be next if they did not comply with the government’s request. The tension between the regime and the cease-fire groups has risen day by day. If fighting breaks out again, the head of Thailand’s National Security Council, Bhornchart Bunnag, estimated about

200,000 refugees would be fleeing into Thailand and China (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, February 18, 2010).

II. Political processes for a peaceful resolution of ethnic conflicts in Burma

Given the complexity of historical and political backgrounds of Burma, it is highly unlikely that the road map set forth by the current Burmese government will solve the political problems or lead to resolution of ethnic conflicts in Burma. This section describes four fundamental political processes which should take place for resolution of ethnic conflicts and lasting peace in Burma.

1. Countrywide cease-fire

The first step to the peace process is to achieve a nation-wide cease-fire. In other words, the Burmese military government should commence the tremendous task of reaching a nation-wide cease-fire and allow all ethnic insurgent groups to engage in the political processes. If any major ethnic group is excluded, the needs of the group would not likely be fulfilled and thus ethnic conflicts would remain unsolved. The government has already signed cease-fire agreements with many ethnic armed groups. However, some ethnic armed groups are still fighting and some cease-fire groups are on the verge of resuming fighting due to the breaking of promises by the government. A credible nation-wide cease-fire could be achieved only if the government amends its policies for fairness to all stakeholders and allows assurance mechanisms, such as an international body of relevance, to gain the trust of ethnic armed groups.

2. Political dialogue and democratization

After the nation-wide cease-fire, the government should start political dialogue with non-Burman ethnic groups and Burman-opposition groups. The “tripartite dialogue” is the most logical approach to solve Burma’s ethnic conflicts and the political stalemate. The dialogue would offer opportunities for trust-building among those groups, especially between the Burmese government and non-Burman ethnic groups. Although the Burmese military government signed cease-fire agreements with many ethnic armed groups for nearly twenty years, the trust between the government and non-Burman ethnic groups has been minimal due to the lack of political dialogue. The trust between these two groups is very important for solving the ethnic conflict.

As dialogue progresses, the parties should redraw the constitution or revise the current constitution. All the political processes must be inclusive. The exclusion of any major stakeholders would only lead to failure. In 1947, the Mon and Arakanese were excluded from the Panglong Agreement, which laid out fundamental principles of how the future Union of Burma would be established. The Mon and Arakanese started rebellions against the government right after Burma gained her independence in 1948 although the government was then democratic. In addition, accountability and transparency in political processes are indeed very important. The processes must not be dictated by the Burmese military regime like it did in the last National Convention. All representatives should be allowed to debate and express their opinions freely in drafting a new constitution. After the constitution is approved, a free and fair election should be held.

The role of international community, especially the UN, is still very important. The UN should closely monitor the dialogue and should mediate any deadlocks among the parties. The UN also should set up a time line for negotiation and completion of specific democratic processes. The current Burmese government's road map does not set any time-line and it took the regime almost fifteen years to complete a draft constitution. If the UN does not set up a time-line, the Burmese regime would prolong the democratic transformation process for its own advantage.

In addition to not including all stakeholders, the regime disregarded the opposition from the NLD and the ethnic parties and decided to move forward with its plan for holding an election on November 7, 2010. Just as it was unable to bring political dialogue in Burma over the past decade, the international community also would not be able to convince the Burmese military regime to reconsider its stand for the upcoming election. However, the international community should continue to push for "tripartite dialogue" even when the new government is formed after the regime sponsored election in order to help end the ethnic conflicts and its related human suffering in Burma.

3. Power sharing

The power sharing system is a must for settling ethnic conflict in Burma. Democratization alone cannot resolve the conflicts. As Robert Taylor (2005) pointed out, "Those who perceive their solutions as simple, and to be solved quickly by the mere introduction of democratically elected civilian rule, are in danger of deluding themselves" (p. 1). Burma was a democratic country from 1948 to 1962. But since it was lacking an inclusive ethnic policy and inadequate power sharing arrangements, ethnic conflicts were not solved during that period. Instead, the

conflict ~~had~~ weakened democratic government” (ICG, August 2009, p.2). Thus, democratization has to go with a concrete ethnic policy in order to sustain a long-term peace in Burma. Although some non-Burman ethnic groups want to fight for their independence, most of them are willing to compromise and form a federal union that guarantees equal rights to all ethnic groups. For example, one of the objectives of the NDF, an alliance of non-Burman ethnic armed groups, is to build a genuine federal union rather than fighting for independent states (NDF Bulletin, November 2009), although the previous goals of some of its members such as NMSP and KNU were to fight for independent states.

Since neither non-Burman ethnic armed groups nor the Burman-dominant government seem able to win the war or eliminate each other, the power-sharing and integration strategies are the most relevant for solving Burma's ethnic conflict. According to Arend Lijphart (1990, 2004), there are four types of power sharing: joint exercise of governmental matters (on common interest issues); autonomy of minority on matters concerning to them; proportionally in representation; and rights to a minority veto.

The first type of power sharing, joint exercise of governmental matters, is the sharing of executive power (Lijphart, 1990, pp. 494-5). Executive power can be shared by forming a cabinet from different ethnic groups. For example, in Belgium, the cabinet has to be a power-sharing body composed of equal numbers of Dutch-speakers and French speakers (Lijphart, 1990, pp. 494-5). A Parliamentary system is more suitable than the presidential system for this kind of power sharing because a parliamentary system provides a form of power sharing cabinet or ~~a~~ collegial decision-making” cabinet while the presidential system provides ~~one-person~~ executive with a purely advisory cabinet” (Lijphart, 2004, p.101). One of the disadvantages is

that it would be difficult to specify which ethnic group would be entitled to a share of cabinet power. However, in the case of South Africa, ~~power~~ power sharing was mandated in terms of political parties: Any party, ethnic or not, with a minimum of 5 percent of the seats in parliament was granted the right to participate in the cabinet on a proportional basis” (Lijphart, 2004, p.103)

The second characteristic of power sharing is ethnic autonomy. Since most of Burma's ethnic groups have clear territorial concentration, Burma should form a federal political system in order to grant ethnic minority autonomy in their regions or states. If issues are common concerns, decisions should be made jointly by the different groups or their representatives. But, decisions should be made by each separate group on all other issues (Lijphart 1990, pp. 494-5). For ethnic groups who are not geographically concentrated, the autonomy can also be arranged on a nonterritorial basis (Lijphart, 2004, p. 104). For example, if an ethnic group lives across different states and divisions, they should be granted cultural autonomy rather regional autonomy. They are free to teach their languages and establish their own language schools.

The third characteristic of power sharing is proportionality. Political representatives should be proportionately elected in the parliament in order to guarantee a fair representation of ethnic minorities. In addition to a fair representation of minority ethnic groups, proportional representation also ~~tre~~ treats all groups—ethnic, racial, religious, or even noncommunal groups—in a completely equal and evenhanded fashion” (Lijphart, 2004, p.100). Moreover, public funds should be also proportionally allocated in order to recognize a fair distribution (Lijphart, 1990, pp. 494-5).

The fourth characteristic of sharing-power is the minority veto power. This power gives the ultimate weapon to minorities in order for them to protect their vital interests. Even if the

executive power is shared between the majority and the minority, sometimes the power may be out-voted or overruled by the majority. Therefore, when only minority matters are being decided and when a minority's vital interests are at stake, the veto power provides essential protection. However, such power can be abused or overused by the minorities. This might undermine the power-sharing system. It works best when it is not used too often and only with regard to issues of fundamental importance. So the veto power should be allowed only on specific issues such as culture autonomy. For example, in the case of Belgium, the French-speaking minority has veto power with regard to issues that affect its cultural autonomy (Lijphart, 1990 pp. 494-5). In the case of Burma, non-Burman ethnic groups should have the right to use veto power if a law or legislature threatens their ethnic identities such as banning teaching ethnic languages and practicing ethnic cultures.

According to Lijphart (2004, pp.105-106) , power sharing in civil service, judiciary, and military are also important. Of these factors, military power sharing is probably the most important factor in the case of Burma. The current Burma army or Tatmadaw is dominated by the Burman ethnic group. The government often uses military power to oppress the non-Burman ethnic groups. The future Burma army should be comprised of all ethnic groups in both higher and lower ranks. It can be done through a quota basis.

After the conflict is settled and trust is built, integration policies should be followed. Cottam & Cottam (2001, p.226) offers various integration strategies to solve ethnic conflict in non-nation states. The integrating policies include the distribution of power across institutions; promotion of intra-group rather than inter-group activities; promotion of intra-group cooperation; encouragement of cross-group alignments based on interests rather than identity; and reduction

of various kinds of disparities between groups in order to reduce dissatisfaction. However, one must be careful in implementing any of the above integration policies. They must not be threatening to subgroup ethnic identity. If they do, conflict between the two groups will be provoked again.

4. Forming a new common identity

Results from the analyses in this study show that Burma's ethnic conflict is based on the identity conflict, i.e., the threats to existing identity in combination with a negative image of out-groups has led to the ethnic conflicts. While non-Burman ethnic identity was threatened by the government's national identity policy or Burmanization policy, Burma's national identity is threatened by the separation of ethnic identity. The government attempted to unify the country by assimilating non-Burman ethnic groups. For non-Burman ethnic groups, such a policy is a threat to their ethnic identity. In other words, they see Burma's national identity as being formed at the expense of the non-Burman ethnic identity. Therefore, the Burmese government has not been successful in creating a sense of national identity although it has been trying since Burma gained her independence in 1948 (Curtis, 1995, 269-270).

Since there is no common identity to represent all or most ethnic groups in Burma, non-Burmans are less likely to identify with Burma or attach to Burma. For example, according to the survey data, non-Burman ethnic groups are more proud to be part of their respective ethnics than to be citizens of Burma. Only 24% of the Mon respondents are proud to be citizen of Burma, while 96% percent of them are proud to be a Mon. Similarly, only 23% of other non-Burman ethnic respondents are proud to be citizens of Burma, while 87% of them are proud to be of their respective ethnics. When the Mon respondents were asked which elicited more pride: Mon

State wins the football championship in Burma or Burma wins the football championship in Asia. They would be more proud of the Mon State win in Burma (64%) than of Burma winning the football championship in Asia (28%). Because the Burmese military regime is promoting an assimilation policy rather than unity in diversity policy, ~~the~~ minorities thus often have little reason to feel part of the Union or owe any allegiance to it” (ICG, 2002). Therefore, unless there is a common identity that represents all ethnic groups or most ethnic groups in Burma, non-Burman ethnic groups are less likely to identify with Burma and they are more likely to see Burman as an out-group rather than an in-group.

An example of identity problems and ethnic conflicts created by having no common identity can be seen from an episode that occurred between the Mon and Burman in Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA. The city of Fort Wayne, Indiana, has the largest Burmese refugee population in the United States. It is estimated at about 6,000 and is mainly made up by Burman, Karen, and Mon (Leininger, March 13, 2010). The total Mon population in the city is about 500, and it is the largest Mon community in the US.

Since Burma does not have a common identity, the Mon who live in Fort Wayne do not strongly attach to the identity of Burma. Although the Mon and Burman came from the same country called Burma, they have been living there as totally separate groups. Both groups have their own Buddhist temples even though they practice the same Theravada Buddhism. They rarely celebrate the New Year together although the Mon and Burman share the same New Year tradition. They have their own language classes to teach their respective ethnic languages to their children. Teaching Burmese language to Mon children is out of question for most of the Mon community leaders in Fort Wayne.

Because of a lack of a common national identity in Burma, the two groups have had problems in cooperating in social, cultural, and political events and often come into conflict even when they are overseas. For example, when Burma's communities in Fort Wayne are invited to perform Burmese cultural shows or exhibitions, it is difficult for them to choose a cultural show that could represent all ethnic groups in Burma. As the Burman prefers to present their Burman culture, which they believe to be a common culture for all people of Burma, the Mon prefers to present Mon culture because Burman's culture does not represent that of Mon (Interview with Michael Mon/ Secretary General of Monland Restoration Council-Fort Wayne, 6/26/2010).

In 2004, the Mon community participated in a cultural show at the International Festival organized by the city of Fort Wayne. The festival was joined by many different nationalities from different countries around the world. The event organizers treated all people from an individual country as one group and organized them under the official flag of the respective country. But, the Mon refused to be grouped under the Burma's flag because they claimed the flag only represents the Burman, not all of the people of Burma. In addition, they explained to the committee that the Mon and Burman used to live in their independent kingdoms but the Mon's sovereign kingdom is currently under the Burman's occupation. One Burman representative was angered by that and said to a Mon representative that, 'you guy Mon are separatists'. Finally the Festival Committee allowed the Mon group to fly the Mon flag to represent the Mon people from Monland. (Note: There is no official Mon national flag as of this time but the overseas Mon have been using NMSP's flag as the Mon national flag). Since then the Mon community of Fort Wayne participates in the International Festival each year as the Mon people from Monland and using the Mon flag rather than the Burmese flag. (MRC Activities (March 12, 2004), available at <http://www.mrc-usa.org/activities04.htm>,

<http://www.mrc-usa.org/intl-festival4-05.htm/>, accessed Date 7/12/2010 and Interview with Michael Mon/ Secretary General of Monland Restoration Council-Fort Wayne, 6/26/2010).

A closer look at the problems associated with the present Burma's national identity is necessary in creating a national identity that is acceptable to all ethnic groups. The following are some major issues with the present Burma's national identity.

a. The name of the country: Burma and Myanmar

The name of the country has been discussed among Burma's scholars and political analysts whether or not it represents all ethnic groups in Burma. The Burmese military regime changed the name of the country, in English, from Burma to Myanmar in 1989 with the justification that Burma was not inclusive or only represented the Burman ethnic group. The regime stated that Myanmar is a more neutral term to bring the unity among the country's diverse ethnic groups (Steinberg, 2001).

However, the new name is still perceived by non-Burman ethnic groups as a specific reference to the Burman ethnic group (Smith, Martin, 1994, p. 18), because historically, the name "Myanmar" is also the name of the Burman ethnic group. The word "Myanma" was used in Mon stone scripts in 11th century as a word for referring to the Burman ethnic group and was spelled as "Mirma" (Name of Burma: In Wikipedia, Available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names_of_Burma , Accessed date 7/12/2010). In fact, Burma and Myanmar have the same meaning in the Burmese language. They are used interchangeably to refer to the Burman ethnic group where Bama (Burma) is used in spoken language and Myanma (Myanmar) is used in written language (Burma: Wikipedia, Available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burma>, Accessed

on 7/12/2010). Moreover, in the Mon language, the name of the country, Burma or Myanmar, is the same as the name of the Burman ethnic group. The Mon call the Burman ethnic group “Cakao Bamae” and the name of the country “Dein Bamae.” The word “Cakao” means nationality, “Dein” means country; “Bamae” means Burman, Bamar, or Myanmar. Therefore, they perceive the present official name of the country, Myanmar, as representing the country of ethnic Burman, not the country of all ethnics in the country. That is why the name indirectly implies to the Mon that they have been occupied or colonized by the Burman.

b. A Common history

The true history of Burma poses a great challenge in creating a common national identity. The presently known history of Burma is a “Bamar-centered version of history and [is] silent on the role of ethnic nationality leaders” (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, 2010, p.41). The successive Burmese governments have been promoting the idea of a common history in Burma since the country’s independence in 1948. However, the governments recognized the Burman’s history as the national history and required all schools to teach those history texts. For example, history text books treat three Burman kings, Anoratha, Bayinnaung, and Alaungpaya, who were able to unify Burma as heroes (South, 2003, p.50; Lwin, 2002). The stories of how these three kings successfully established Burman Empires are also major topics in school text books (South, 2003, p.50; Lwin, 2002). South (2003) suggested,

The Burmese state school curriculum devotes considerable attention to the heroic deeds of the great Burman warrior-kings and dynastic founders: Anawrahta, Bayinnaung and Alaungphaya. Non-Burman peoples such as the Mon, at whose expense the unification of Burma often occurred and whose

history and languages are not represented in the school system, have viewed these historical developments in a less positive light, as part of an on-going process of assimilation. Mon nationalists in particular have been keen to redress the balance, and see their people's rich history receive proper recognition (p. 50).

The current Burmese military government also greatly admires those three Burman kings as the unifiers of Burma. General Than Shwe, the SPDC chairman, claimed in his address to the University for Development of National Races that “Thanks to the unity and farsightedness of our forefathers, our country has existed as a united and firm Union and not as separate small nations for over 2,000 years” (cited in Smith, 2003, p.13). The regime leaders erected large statues of these three Burman emperors when they built the new capital of Burma, Nay Pyidaw, to embrace the Burman's nationalism (IMNA, Editorial, May 17, 2010).

However, in all three time periods, the unification of Burma was accomplished at the expense of other ethnic groups such as Mon, Arakanese and Shan. These ethnic groups lost their sovereign states to the Burman during the expansion of Burman Empires. Although the Burman ethnic group embraces those occupations for unifying Burma, non-Burman ethnic groups, especially the Mon, Arakanese, and Shan regard that as colonization of their kingdoms by the Burman. For example, Arakan Liberation Party states that “In 1784, Burmese king Bodaw U Wine, without a war declaration, invaded and occupied Arakan Mrauk-U Kingdom. Thus, Arakan has since been annexed and colonized to date” (Aung, Khaing Soe Naing, p.3, Available at <http://www.arakanalp.com/history-of-ALP/parts/english.pdf>).

Therefore, creating a common history is very challenging for the governments and historians. Professor Tun Aung Chain, a vice chair of the Myanmar Historical Research

Commission, pointed out that ~~Myanmar~~ nation-building' has been a political priority since independence...a 'type of history' had been developed in recent decades which projected modern 'political aspiration' into the past; in the process, insufficient account was taken of other 'equally valid political and cultural center', such as the Mon, Rakhine [Arakanese] and Shan' (Cited in Smith 2002, p.14). He acknowledged that Burma is very diverse in terms of ethnicity and thus 'formulation of a more sophisticated history' was still a 'challenge' to the country's historians" (Cited in Smith, Martin, 2002, p.14).

The successive Burmese governments also attempted to create a common historical memory of British rule. They argued that promoting the history of struggle against colonialism makes different ethnic groups bond together (Smith, Martin, 2003, p.13). In fact the Burman nationalist struggle against the British was ~~based~~ on 'memories' of a former Burman polity at Ava, rather than on 'a newer identity which would incorporate the diverse peoples inhabiting the modern state'" (Smith, Martin, 2002, p.14). But they ~~needed~~ to unite with other indigenous ethnic groups to restore a historic Burma or Myanmar state" (Smith, Martin, 2002, p.14). Therefore, the governments promoted anti-colonial rule to create a common historical memory between Burman and non-Burman. However, not all ethnic groups in Burma suffered from British rule. While the Mon, Arakanese, and Burman suffered from colonial rule, Karen, Chin and Kachin were benefiting from it. Thus, the history of anti-British rule also cannot create a common history and identity of Burma.

Clearly, the history of Burma has been history of rivalry among ethnic groups. Given its historical memories of mutual hostility, it is difficult for Burma to have common historical memory although successive Burmese governments have been trying since 1948.

c. Union spirit

The successive Burmese governments have markedly celebrated Union Day every year to promote the Union Spirit and to encourage unity and loyalty to the Union of Burma. Union Day marks the day on which the Panlong-Agreement was signed between the Burman and non-Burman leaders for forming a federal Union after independence. However, non-Burman ethnic groups no longer see the Union Day as a meaningful one because the agreement was nullified by the Burmese government in 1962. As Zau Awng, a member of Kachin National Congress for Democracy, based in Kachin State capital Myitkyina, said: “We don't have equal rights. We feel we don't belong to the Union. The military owns this union” (Cited in Weng, February 11, 2010). But, the current Burmese regime justifies its rule as safeguarding the Union. As Senior General Than Shwe said in 63rd Union Day, “The entire national people are duty-bound to preserve the already achieved national solidarity with Union Spirit so that the Union of Myanmar will be able to stand tall as long as the world exists” (Cited in Weng, February 11, 2010.).

All these major issues should be taken into consideration when formulating a new national identity of Burma. Burma can build a nation that belongs to all ethnic groups only if it has an inclusive common identity. A new form of national identity, namely Super-ordinate identity, should be formed to satisfy this need.

Super-ordinate identity

Burma is a non-nation state or a state without a nation (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). It is difficult to establish a national identity because in non-nation state like Burma, each ethnic group

has strong ethnic identity. They will resist any government assimilation policies. Therefore, Burma national identity or common identity cannot be formed through assimilation and Burmanization. The more government attempts to implement assimilation policy, the more resistances will come from non-Burman ethnic groups. The integration of future Union of Burma depends on how the new identity will be formed and how sub-identity groups will be protected. If the subgroup identity will still be threatened and the future Union's identity will still be dictated by the Burman ethnic group, the dream of a peaceful union will remain far from a reality.

The governments also cannot eliminate non-Burman identity through Burmanization and assimilation policies. As Hornsey and Hogg (2000) indicated, subgroup identity is very difficult to erase ~~because~~ it is generally a central component of the self-concept that is vigorously protected" (p.150). Any attempts to consolidate subgroup identity could provoke conflict between the groups because ~~people~~ are highly attuned to the perception of identity threat" (p.150). Therefore, the most effective way for building relations among subgroups is to nourish subgroup identities while at the same time promoting super-ordinate identity (Hornsey and Hogg, 2000, p.150). It is called a dual identity (Hornsey and Hogg, 2000, p.150). Such identity ~~reconfigures~~ subgroup relations so that they become relatively cooperative and harmonious; destructive conflict becomes constructive competition, and discrimination becomes differentiation"(Hornsey and Hogg, 2000, p.150).

Furthermore, according to Burton (1987, 1990), identity conflicts are ~~deep-rooted~~ conflicts" and they cannot be negotiated and compromised because in identity conflict, ~~groups~~ struggle for their basic physical and moral survival"" (cited in Rothmans,1997, p.9). In other

words, unlike resources or interest based conflicts, identity based conflicts contain elements such as culture, language, and religion which are not possible to negotiate (Korostelina, 2004). Identity conflicts can be overcome only through creating a super-ordinate identity while maintaining subgroup identity (Gaertner et al. 1999, p. 201). Therefore, a long-term solution for Burma's ethnic conflict requires the development of a new identity that does not threaten any ethnic group identity. To do so, Burma would need a new form of identity which is called a Super-ordinate identity.

According to SIT theory, super-ordinate identity allows ethnic groups to maintain their identities while it is creating a new form of national identity (Hammack, 2006, p.329). In other words, instead of eliminating subgroup identities, it forms a new national identity that belongs to all ethnic groups. Thus, none of the ethnic identities will be threatened by the new national identity. For example, if a new Burma national flag is created by eliminating all ethnic flags, then ethnic group identities are threatened. Therefore, a new national identity must be neutral. It cannot be a threat to the identity of any ethnic group including Burman. It also cannot be dominated or owned by any ethnic group or groups. The ownership of a super-ordinate identity is also very important. If any ethnic group(s) takes ownership of the super-ordinate identity, other ethnic groups will become disloyal to the identity. For example, Burma's current flag is owned by the Burman ethnic group. Since the Burman ethnic group often uses it as their ethnic flag they become owners of the flag. Thus, non-Burman ethnic groups view Burma's flag as the Burman's flag rather than an all-ethnic groups' flag. Thus, they are disloyal to the flag (e.g., the Mon community leaders in Fort Wayne viewed Burma's flag as the Burman flag rather than all ethnic groups' flag).

In fact, the super-ordinate identity can be formed only through the consequence of intergroup contacts (Hammack 2006 p.329). Unlike the international conflicts, forming a common identity and improving images between groups is not as difficult in domestic conflict because parties of conflicts can easily contact each other. In the case of Mon and Burman, they have been living side by side for many centuries. They also have many common identities such as religious and cultural traditions (e.g. celebrating Buddhist Holidays and New Year) which they have been sharing for centuries. The “tripartite dialogue” among non-ethnic groups, Burmese government and Burman opposition leaders “could create the super-ordinate task (Sherif,1958) of constructing a common identity” (Hammack 2006 p.329). Securing each ethnic group identity is very important in order to make super-ordinate identity work. According to Hornsey and Hogg (2000), “only when a person feels secure in his or her cultural identity can he or she feel generous and tolerant toward other cultures ” (p.146). Thus, if there is no secure subgroup identity, super-ordinate identity cannot be created.

If a super-ordinate identity is successfully created, it could also improve the trust and positive images between Burman and non-Burman ethnic groups because, the image would be changed if the perception of the structures of the image changes (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). According to Alexander et al. 2005, images can be changed not only through changing the structure of the perception but also through changing “motivations of the individual perceiver [which] contributed to these images, independent of structural perceptions” (p.42). As of the analyses of survey data, the social identity (motivational factor) also plays a major role in generating the barbarian image of the Burman. The higher levels of ethnic identity show higher levels of barbarian image of the Burman. This explains that people who strongly identify with their groups also hold strongly negative image of out-groups. Thus, if the super-ordinate identity

is in place and ethnic identity becomes less threatened, the image of out groups can be changed from negative to positive. Therefore, promoting a common identity or common goals is also important for improving images, which in turn will improve relations between the Burman and non-Burman ethnic groups. As the two groups are integrated under the new common identity, images between the two groups can be changed from barbarian to ally. Therefore, the forming of a super-ordinate identity that protects the individual ethnic identity would serve as the first step to improve the images between the Burman and non-Burman.

Finally, one of the most important factors to maintain a lasting peace in Burma is to minimize ethnic identity threats. Forming a true super-ordinate identity that is not owned by any particular group will minimize the threat to the identity of all ethnics. As ethnic identity is secured and super-ordinate identity is in place, negative images of non-Burman ethnic groups about the Burman would be changed to positive ones. They would become more cooperative in working toward common goals. Until that happen, all ethnic groups in Burma must be treated equally and must have equal rights, and their ethnic identities must be protected.

Conclusion

The recent attempts of the Burmese government to attain peace and transform into a democracy did not provide a solution to ethnic conflict in Burma. Due to the breaking of promises by the government, cease-fire agreements signed between the government and some ethnic armed groups could not help build trust between the two sides. Most of the ethnic political parties and cease-fire armed groups will not participate in the upcoming election because they found that the government dictated the national constitution and election processes.

Instead, cease-fire armed groups are preparing to resume fighting in order to gain their ethnic rights.

The historical and ongoing conflicts in Burma, as recognized by other scholars and confirmed by the analyses in this study, are identity-based conflicts rather than resource or interest based conflicts. If the current Burmese government has a genuine interest in solving ethnic conflicts and transforming the country into a democratic federal union, it should undertake three fundamental measures, firstly, the government needs to declare a nation-wide cease-fire; secondly, the government needs to initiate a political dialogue among conflict parties, and finally, the government needs to undertake the necessary measures to protect all ethnic identities and facilitate a common national identity or super-ordinate identity. The nation-wide cease-fire would give all ethnic armed groups an opportunity to engage in political dialogue and tripartite dialogues allow trust-building and negotiations among all stakeholders. In conformity with the history and ethnic diversity of the country, the power-sharing among all ethnic groups should be a core principle of the political dialogues. As the dialogue progresses, the democratization such as drafting a new constitution or amending the current constitution should be undertaken and a free and fair election should be held upon the concurrence of the constitution. The constitution of a future Burma must protect the identity of all ethnic groups in the country and promote a common national identity, which is not owned by any particular group(s) or threaten the identity of any individual ethnic group. The forming of a super-ordinate identity would help change the negative images of one another to positive ones. Subsequently, the cooperation among ethnic groups toward common goals will develop and minimize the potential of future conflicts. Therefore, the final element that must take place at the same time with the formulation of a new constitution is the forming of a super-ordinate identity. When the ethnic identity of each ethnic

group is securely protected and the super-ordinate identity is in place, Burma would become a nation that belongs to all ethnic groups.

CHAPTER NINE

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATION, LIMITATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

1. Discussion

Overall, the main objectives of this study are to identify the root cause of ethnic conflict in Burma by utilizing three conflict theories-- social identity, nationalism, and image theory, and to propose possible solutions to the conflict based on the results of the analyses. The analyses were conducted by testing four hypotheses.

The survey data as well as qualitative assessments in this study supported the hypothesis that ethnic conflict in Burma is caused by threatening ethnic identity (Hypothesis I). When an in-depth case study was conducted on the Mon ethnic group, the results show that losing territory and political status, downgrading identity, banning of the teaching of ethnic language and literature, restricting the celebration of ethnic culture, population transfer and internal migration, and physical annihilation and abuses are major factors explaining the threat to the Mon ethnic identity. The Mon ethnic identity forms through common historical homeland, language, culture, historical memories, and custom. In agreement with their historical and cultural background, the nationalistic values of the Mon are high. They strongly identify with their ethnic group. When the level of the Mon ethnic identity is measured, Mon respondents showed a moderate-high level of overall ethnic identity, high levels of ethnic pride and ethnic preference, moderate-high level in out-group comparison, and moderate in out-group differentiation. The Mon respondents showed a higher level of overall ethnic identity compared to all other non-Burman ethnic groups studied.

Given the moderate-high level of overall ethnic identity, the Mon are prompt to respond to cultural and physical threats. For example, as the Burmese government rejected their demand on linguistic and cultural rights in 1948, the Mon started fighting against the government politically and militarily. Although the New Mon State Party, the largest Mon political armed group reached a cease-fire agreement with the government in 1995, a few small Mon armed groups are still active in Southern part of Mon State and Tennesarim Division. At the time of the writing of this dissertation, war between the NMSP and Burmese military regime appeared imminent. The Burmese military government has been threatening to use force if ethnic cease-fire armed groups including the NMSP refuse to transform their army into “Border Guard Forces.” The NMSP takes the threat seriously and has prepared to defend against attacks by the Burmese military.

Indeed, the image of the Mon of the Burman also plays a major role in explaining conflict between the two groups (Hypothesis II). Survey data show that the Mon view the Burman as having superior capability, inferior status, and harmful intention. Thus, their image of Burman is a barbarian. These results also agree with the historical context. Historically, the military strength of the Mon was weaker compared to that of Burman although their cultural and social status were superior to the Burman. Due to their weakness in capability, their kingdoms were often invaded by the Burman. The last invasion in 1757 was the most devastating one in that it is not only resulted in the massacre of thousands of Mon but also destroyed most of the Mon culture and literature heritage. The Mon still remember those atrocities and still view the Burman as a threat with harmful intent. The ongoing human rights abuses of the Burmese army in Mon areas have also reinforced the barbaric image of the Burman.

Results of the analyses suggested that a higher level of ethnic identity results in a stronger endorsement of the barbarian image (Hypotheses III) and consequently leads to a stronger tendency for conflicts (Hypotheses IV). These results imply that the people who highly identify with their groups and strongly endorse barbarian image of the Burman are more likely to have conflicts with the Burman. When the relationships between the level of barbarian image endorsement and the action tendencies were examined, the level of barbarian image showed strong positive correlations with the forming of alliances with other non-Burman ethnic groups and with fighting against the Burman. The score on the cooperation with the Burman also suggested that the Mon are less likely to cooperate with the Burman because they believe they will not achieve their goals by cooperating with the Burman.

Among other reasons, the atrocities committed by the Burmese army against the non-Burman ethnic groups caused the distrust between the Burman and non-Burman people. Due to the disproportionate domination of the Burman in both Burmese government and military, most non-Burmans ethnics including the Mon could not separate the Burma's army or government and the ordinary Burman people. After conducting interviews with eighty seven interviewees from different ethnic groups regarding the Burma's ethnic conflict, the Center for Peace and Conflict studies reported that –Almost all of the interviewees from ethnic nationality groups mentioned they have a difficult relationship with the Bamar [Burman]. Interviewees from ethnic nationalities often synonymously used the terms ‘Bamar’, ‘government’ and ‘soldiers’, rarely distinguishing between Bamar civil society and the authorities” (The Center for peace and conflict studies, June 2010, p. 13).

Given the Mon's image of the Burman as a barbarian, it is to be expected that the Mon choose to form military and political alliances with other non-Burman ethnic groups to fight for their ethnic rights and to defend against the threats of the Burmese army. For example, the Mon have joined many other non-Burman ethnic groups or alliances (e.g., KNDO, NDF, ENC, and UNA) over the past decades. In comparison to other non-Burman groups in Burma, the Mon appears to be even less cooperative with the Burman. The other non-Burman ethnic groups have imperialist image of the Burman. They view Burman as being superior in capability and status, and having a harmful intention. However, their action tendencies are similar to that of the Mon respondents who held a barbarian image of Burman. They agreed to forming alliance with other ethnic groups and fighting against Burman to achieve their goals.

Therefore, as the results indicated, the security of ethnic identity and changes of structural perception of the Mon as well as other non-Burman ethnic groups are important to resolving the conflict. A new form of national identity that represents all ethnic groups in Burma is needed to eliminate the threats of ethnic identity. The correct approach would be to form a super-ordinate identity which protects the subgroup's identity while at the same time promotes a new national identity that belongs to every ethnic group in the nation. Otherwise, non-Burman ethnic groups are less likely to identify themselves with Burma or see the Burman as an in-group. Moreover, the power sharing system is also important for the protection of individual ethnic identity. The power sharing factor such as giving veto power for ethnic related issues would guarantee protection of ethnic identity. For example, if a legislature threatens a group identity, the group has the right to veto it. If non-Burman ethnic groups feel that their ethnic identities are secure, they are more likely to be loyal to the national identity. As they are become loyal to the national identity, they would see Burman as an in-group rather than out-

group. So their image toward the Burman would also change. As their image changes, they become more cooperative and active in participating in nation-building.

2. Implications

This study provides theoretical and policy implications. In terms of theoretical implications, the study applied the Social Identity Theory (SIT) for explaining ethnic conflicts in a real world situation. Most frequently, the SIT has been used or tested in simulated studies. This study also found that if an ethnic identity becomes threatened, ethno-nationalism is aroused. Then the conflicts follow. When people feel threatened, they become more strongly attached to their groups and are ready to sacrifice for the groups. So their responses to the threats were violent (e.g. the Mon used arms to fight for their ethnic rights). The results agree with the findings of Cottam and Cottam (2001) that when an ethnic identity is threatened, “the behavioral response can appear to be almost exclusively nationalism-associated, a response that reflects the exceptional intensity of affectivity when the fortunes of the terminal identity community are in question” (Cottam and Cottam 2010, p. 130).

By conducting an in-depth analysis on the Mon ethnic group, the study explored many factors that explain the threats to an ethnic identity; namely, the prohibiting of teaching and learning ethnic language and literature, losing territory or homeland, downgrading identity, migrations, and physical attacks or abuses. If any of these factors are present, the conflict could occur between the groups. Although the prohibiting of teaching the ethnic language is a great threat to the Mon ethnic identity, it may not be a great threat to other ethnic groups such as Chin and Kachin, who have many dialects in their groups. For those groups, the prohibiting of their common religion, Christianity, may be a greater threat to their identities because the religion

provides a common identity among different dialectic groups. In fact, “Burmese is now the common language for Chin people” for communication among different dialects (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, June 2010, p.43). Although Chin tried to create a common language and writing system among different Chin subgroups, it was not successful (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, June 2010, p.52). This explains that language may not be as important as religion in unifying the Chin people of different dialects.

This study widens the scope of the image theory. The theory is commonly used to explain inter-state conflicts, but this study shows that the image theory is also applicable in explaining the intra-state conflicts. By applying the image theory, this study identified the images of the Mon and other non-Burman ethnics over the Burman and was able to explain the conflict between the Burman and non-Burman ethnics in Burma. One element required an adjustment is that the image theory uses military factors to measure the capability of an ethnic group or a country. This proves to be very challenging and not always applicable in measuring an ethnic group capability. Unlike a state armed force, the capability of non-state armed forces is mostly unstable. For example, if the MNLA surrenders to the Burmese army or is integrated into the Burmese army, the strength of military as a measure of the capability of the Mon is no longer valid. In that case, the capability of the Mon could be measured only by political and economic factors. This study also established a connection between the social identity and image theory. The result shows that strong in-group identification leads to a strong endorsement of barbarian image or negative image of an out-group.

This study also provides policy implications for policy makers, peace makers, and constitution writers to better understand the root cause of the conflict in Burma. By analyzing

the historical and present ethnic issues of the country, the study suggested that power sharing and the forming of a super-ordinate identity are the most logical approaches for solving ethnic conflict and achieving a lasting peace in Burma. Moreover, the change in structural perception of non-Burman ethnic groups on the Burman is needed in order to change the non-Burman image of the Burman.

To do so, the government needs to reduce the military presence in non-Burman areas and minimize the human rights violations committed by the Burmese army against non-Burman ethnic groups. These actions would lead to a change in perception of the non-Burman ethnic groups from the “harmful intention and threat” to the “benign and opportunity.” In order to change the perception on relative power, the political power and economic development opportunities should be equally shared among ethnic groups in Burma. In addition, the promotion and protection of both non-Burman and Burman ethnic cultures and identities are important for changing the perception of the cultural status. As all ethnic groups’ cultures and identity are equally protected and promoted, they would view each other as equals in cultural status. The in-group identity or desires for a positive social identity also contributes to a negative image or barbarian image of the Burman. Therefore, creating a common identity or super-ordinate identity is important to change the negative image of non-Burman ethnic groups over the Burman.

The negative image and perception of the Mon over the Burman were obtained from surveys among the elite or those in leadership positions as well as the ordinary Mon people. Thus, the conflict between the Mon and the Burman will not be solved if just Mon leaders change their negative image and perception toward Burman. For example, if the NMSP leaders

change their perception and cooperate with the Burmese government and the Mon public does not, another Mon armed group would emerge. The data also show that the younger Mon generation is more nationalistic than the older generation. In combination with the higher nationalistic value of the Mon younger generations and a barbarian image over the Burman, conflict between the two groups would become more intense in the future unless there is a political solution.

3. Limitation of the study and future research

This study analyzed only the images of the non-Burman over the Burman. In order to better understand the views of the Burman ethnic group, further studies should be conducted to analyze the image of Burman over each of the non-Burman ethnic group in Burma. Although this study conducted online surveys to obtain the opinion of the Burman ethnic group in the same manner as those of non-Burman, only 30 Burman responded to the survey. This number is very small considering the number of Burman population is approximately equal to that of all non-Burman ethnic groups combined. Since the sample size was not sufficient to be a representative sample of the Burman ethnic group, it was not included in this study. The reasons for the low response rate of the Burman group could be that the Burman do not want to express either good or bad perceptions toward the non-Burman, or do not want to answer politically sensitive questions such as secession, independence, or federation. Future studies should analyze the image of Burman image over each of non-Burman ethnic groups in Burma and their actions tendencies or policies toward those individual ethnic groups.

4. Conclusion

Burma's ethnic conflict is one of the longest conflicts in the world. The conflict has caused the loss of thousands of lives and thousands more refugees and internally displaced persons. Although various factors have contributed to the conflict, the threats of identity, nationalist sentiments, and images of one another are the major factors for explaining the Burma's ethnic conflict. The study provides further understanding of decades-long ethnic conflict in Burma and possible solutions for the conflict.

Unless there is a political system that guarantees ethnic rights or rights of self-determination for non-Burman ethnic groups, ethnic conflict in Burma will likely continue for decades to come. The constitution sponsored by the current Burmese military regime does not guarantee any ethnic rights. Therefore, most of the ethnic cease-fire groups have refused to give up their arms or to join the government's proposed Border Guard Forces. This is a clear indication that the conflict could get worse before it gets better if the Burmese regime continues to follow its road map without addressing any concerns of the non-Burman ethnic representatives.

The regime's Burmanization or assimilation policy will neither solve the ethnic problem nor will it make Burma a stronger nation. To build a strong nation-state of Burma all ethnic groups should be treated equally and all ethnic groups' identities should be protected. Burma's ethnic problems could be solved by power sharing and the forming of a super-ordinate identity. This can happen only through the establishment of a genuine federal political system that guarantees autonomy to each ethnic group. Although democratization would not end Burma's ethnic conflict, it would provide a process for negotiation and reconciliation. Therefore, the

international community should continue to pressure the Burmese regime for democratization and national reconciliation in Burma.

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APPENDIX A

Status of Armed Ethnic Opposition Groups as of 2010

Main Cease-fire organizations (in order of agreement)

No.	Organizations	Abbrev	Years	Status	Region
1	Myanmmar National Democratic Alliance Army	MNDAA	1989	No to BGF, but defeated by Burmese Army in 2009	Special Region-1, Northern Shan State
2	United Wa State Army	UWSA	1989	No to BGF	Special Region-2, Shan State
3	National Democratic Alliance Army	NDAA	1989	No to BGF	Special Region-4, Eastern Shan State
4	Shan State Army-North/Shan State Progress Party	SSA	1989	Yes to BGF, 2 out of 3 of its Bridges	Special Region-3, Shan State
5	New Democratic Army (Kachin)	NDA-K	1989	Yes to BGF	Special Region-1, North-East Kachin State
6	Kachin Defense Army (KIO 4th Bridge)	KIO-4 th Bridge	1989	Yes to BGF	Special Region-5, Northern Shan State
7	PaO National Organization	PNO	1991	Yes to BGF	Special Region-6, Southern Shan State
8	Palaung State Liberation Party	PSLP	1991	Surrendered in 2005	Special Region-7, Northern Shan State
9	Kayan National Guard (Breakaway group from KNLP)	KNG	1992	Yes to BGF	Special Region-1, Kayah(Karenni) State
10	Kachin Independence Organization	KIO	1994	No to BGF	Special Region-2, Kachin State
11	Karenni State Nationalities Liberation Front	KSNLF	1994	Yes BFG	Special Region-2, Kayah(Karenni) State
12	Kayan New Land Party	KNLP	1994	No to BGF	Special Region-3, Kayah(Karenni) State
13	Shan State Nationalities Liberation Organization	SSNLO	1994	Surrendered in 2008	Southern Shan State
14	New Mon State Party	NMSP	1995	No to BGF	Mon State
15	Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (Breakaway from KNU)	DKBA	1995	Yes to BGF, 4 out of 5 of its brigades	Karen State
16	Mong Tai Army	MTA	1996	Dissolved	Shan State

	Other small cease-fire groups				
17	Mongkoe Region Defense Army (Splinter group from Kokang)	MRDA	1995	Dissolved in 2000	Shan State
18	Shan State National Army (breakaway group from MTA)	SSNA	1995	surrendered and merged with SSA-A in April 2005	Shan State
19	Karenni National Defense Army (split from KNPP)	KNDA	1996	Unknow	Karen State
20	Karen Peace Force (ex-KNU 16th Battalion)	KPF	1997	Yes to BGF	Karen State
21	Communist Party of Burma (Arakan Province)	CPB (Arakan)	1997	Unknow	Arakan State
22	Mon Mergui Army (Splinter faction from NMSP)	MMA	1997	Surrendered in 1997	Tennasarim Division
23	KNU Special Region Group (Taungoo)	KNU (Taungoo)	1997	Yes to BGF	Pegu Division
24	KNU / KNLA Peace Council (KNU 7th Battalion)	KNLA	2007	No to BGF	Karen State

Non-cease-fires groups

No.	Organizations	Abbreviation	Region
1	Arakan Liberation Party	ALP	Kayin State
2	Chin National Front	CNF	Chin State
3	Karenni National Progressive Party (1995 cease-fire broke down)	KNPP	Karenni State
4	Mergui-Tavoy United Front (ex-CPB, mainly Tavoyans)	MTUF	Tennasarim Division
5	Lahu National Organization	LNO	Shan State
6	National Socialist Council of Nagaland	NSCN	Sagaing Division
7	Arakan Rohingya National Organisation	ARNO	Arakan State
8	Wa National Organization (1997 talks broke down)	WNO	Shan State
9	Hongsawatoi Restoration Party (Splinter faction from NMSP) (2004 talks broke down).	HRP	Tenasserim Dvision
10	All Burma Students' Democratic Front (Mostly Burman)	ABSDF	Various regions
11	Karen National Union (Talks broke down)	KNU	Karen State and Tenasserim Dvision
12	National Unity Party of Arakan	NUPA	Arakan State
13	Mon National Defense Army	MNDA	Tennasarim Division

Sources: ICG, May 2003, p.27-28; Irrawaddy, January 1, 2004; Mizzima News, December 30, 2009; Mizzima News: BFG Developments; S.H.A.N October 19,2009; S.H.A.N. March 15, 2010; Saing, Nai, IMNA, November 4, 2009; San, Nan Htoo, KIC, August 11, 2010.

APPENDIX B

The SPDC's 'Seven Step Roadmap'

The Seven Step Road was announced by for General Khin Nyunt on 30 August 2003:

1. Reconvening of the National Convention that has been adjourned since 1996;
2. After the successful holding of the National Convention, step by step implementation of the process necessary for the emergence of a genuine and disciplined democratic state;
3. Drafting of a new constitution in accordance with basic principles and detailed basic principle laid down by the National Convention;
4. Adoption of the constitution through national referendum;
5. Holding of free and fair elections for Pyithu Hluttaws (Legislative bodies) according to the new constitution;
6. Convening of Hluttaws attended by Hluttaw members in accordance with the new constitution;
7. Building a modern, developed and democratic nation by the state leaders elected by the Hluttaw; and the government and other central organs formed by the Hluttaw.

Source: Kramer, 2009.

APPENDIX C

Members of Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB) as of 2010

1. Arakan Liberation Party (ALP)
2. All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF).
3. All Burma Muslim Union (ABMU)
4. All Burma Young Monks Union (ABYMU)
5. Chin National Front (CNF)
6. Committee for Restoration of Democracy Burma (CRDB)
7. Democratic Party for New Society (DPNS)
8. Democratic Party for Arakan (DPA)
9. Federation of Trade Union Burma (FTUB)
10. Karen National Union (KNU)
11. Lahu Democratic Front (LDF)
12. Muslim Liberation Organization Burma (MLOB)
13. Myeik Dawei United Front (MDUF)
14. NaGa National League for Democracy (NNLD)
15. Network for Democracy and Development (NDD)
16. Pa-laung State Liberation Front (PSLF)
17. Pa-O People Liberation Organization (PPLO)
18. Wa National Organization (WNO)
19. Oversea Burmese Liberation Front (OBLF)
20. Oversea Karen Organization (OKO)
21. People's Patriotic Party (PPP)

22. People 's Liberation Front (PLF)

23. People's Progressive Front (PPF)

24. People's Defence Force (PDF)

Source: National Council Union of Burma (NCUB) website, Retrieved July 30, 2010 from <http://www.ncub.org/MembersofNCUB.htm>

APPENDIX D

Composition of the Different Ethnic Groups under the 8 Major National Ethnic Races in Myanmar (Burma)

(A) Kachin comprises 12 different ethnic groups.

- (1) Kachin
- (2) Trone
- (3) Dalaung
- (4) Jinghpaw
- (5) Guari
- (6) Hkahku
- (7) Duleng
- (8) Maru (Lawgore)
- (9) Rawang
- (10) Lashi (La Chit)
- (11) Atsi
- (12) Lisu

(B) Kayah comprises 9 different ethnic groups.

- (13) Kayah
- (14) Zayein
- (15) Ka-Yun (Padaung)
- (16) Gheko

(17) Kebar

(18) Bre (Ka-Yaw)

(19) Manu Manaw

(20) Yin Talai

(21) Yin Baw

(C) Kayin comprises 11 different ethnic groups.

(22) Kayin

(23) Kayinpyu

(24) Pa-Le-Chi

(25) Mon Kayin (Sarpyu)

(26) Sgaw

(27) Ta-Lay-Pwa

(28) Paku

(29) Bwe

(30) Monnepwa

(31) Monpwa

(32) Shu (Pwo)

(D) Chin comprises 53 different ethnic groups.

(33) Chin

(34) Meithei (Kathe)

(35) Saline

(36) Ka-Lin-Kaw (Lushay)

- (37) Khami
- (38) Awa Khami
- (39) Khawno
- (40) Kaungso
- (41) Kaung Saing Chin
- (42) Kwelshin
- (43) Kwangli (Sim)
- (44) Gunte (Lyente)
- (45) Gwete
- (46) Ngorn
- (47) Zizan
- (48) Sentang
- (49) Saing Zan
- (50) Za-How
- (51) Zotung
- (52) Zo-Pe
- (53) Zo
- (54) Zahnyet (Zanniet)
- (55) Tapong
- (56) Tiddim (Hai-Dim)
- (57) Tay-Zan
- (58) Taishon
- (59) Thado

- (60) Torr
- (61) Dim
- (62) Dai (Yindu)
- (63) Naga
- (64) Tanghkul
- (65) Malin
- (66) Panun
- (67) Magun
- (68) Matu
- (69) Miram (Mara)
- (70) Mi-er
- (71) Mgan
- (72) Lushei (Lushay)
- (73) Laymyo
- (74) Lyente
- (75) Lawhtu
- (76) Lai
- (77) Laizao
- (78) Wakim (Mro)
- (79) Haulngo
- (80) Anu
- (81) Anun
- (82) Oo-Pu

(83) Lhinbu

(84) Asho (Plain)

(85) Rongtu

(E) Bamar comprises 9 ethnic groups.

(86) Bamar

(87) Dawei

(88) Beik

(89) Yaw

(90) Yabein

(91) Kadu

(92) Ganan

(93) Salon

(94) Hpon

(F) Mon comprises 1 ethnic group.

(95) Mon

(G) Rakhine comprises 7 ethnic groups.

(96) Rakhine

(97) Kamein

(98) Kwe Myi

(99) Daingnet

(100) Maramagyi

(101) Mro

(102) Thet

(H) Shan comprises 33 ethnic groups.

(103) Shan

(104) Yun (Lao)

(105) Kwi

(106) Pyin

(107) Yao

(108) Danaw

(109) Pale

(110) En

(111) Son

(112) Khamu

(113) Kaw (Akha-E-Kaw)

(114) Kokang

(115) Khamti Shan

(116) Hkun

(117) Taungyo

(118) Danu

(119) Palaung

(120) Man Zi

(121) Yin Kya

(122) Yin Net

(123) Shan Gale

(124) Shan Gyi

(125) Lahu

(126) Intha

(127) Eik-swair

(128) Pa-O

(129) Tai-Loi

(130) Tai-Lem

(131) Tai-Lon

(132) Tai-Lay

(133) Maingtha

(134) Maw Shan

(135) Wa

Source: Min, Hla (2000)

APPENDIX E

Some survey results

	Means	SDs	++	+	Neutral	-	--	N
Being a Mon	1.25	0.56	80%	17%	2%	1%	0%	537
Born in Monland	1.26	0.71	82%	14%	1%	1%	2%	181
Being a citizen of Burma	3.85	1.41	9%	15%	10%	14%	52%	317
The Mon are the first to arrive and settle in the present Burma	2.11	1.51	56%	13%	13%	1%	17%	169
The Mon are the first to introduce the Buddhism in Burma	1.27	0.89	89%	4%	2%	1%	4%	179
Mon used to have an independent Monland (Mon Kingdom)	1.10	0.51	94%	3%	2%	0%	1%	181
The flourish of Mon culture and literature in Burma	1.07	0.46	97%	2%	1%	0%	0%	180
Mon have rich civilization	1.07	0.46	97%	2%	1%	0%	0%	180
Mon State won football champion	2.24	1.30	40%	24%	18%	10%	8%	177
Burma won football champion in Asia	3.58	1.41	8%	20%	20%	10%	42%	175
Mon and Burman are the same ethnic group	4.65	0.96	4%	2%	6%	2%	86%	170
If any ethnic groups want to succeed or separate from Burma, they have rights to do so	1.82	1.13	55%	23%	13%	3%	6%	377
The migration of Burmans from upper Burma to Mon State poses a danger to the Mon identity	1.69	1.14	63%	22%	7%	2%	7%	530
Monland must be an independent state	1.57	0.99	66%	21%	7%	3%	3%	527
Monland must be part of the Federal Union of Burma	3.21	1.55	18%	23%	12%	14%	33%	522
Since the city of Pegu was the capital of the old Mon Kingdom, it should be part of the current Mon State	1.28	0.65	80%	14%	4%	2%	0%	531
Independence of Monland should cover from Kawthaung, Tenassarim Division to Sarak (Thayet) town (Irrawady Division)	1.92	1.16	52%	19%	16%	9%	4%	525
Some parts of Thailand where they were used to be old Mon Kingdoms or where most Mon population are settled should be included in future independent Monland	2.19	1.24	42%	20%	21%	12%	5%	423

++, Very proud (Strongly agree), +, Somewhat very proud (Agree), --, Not very proud at all (Strongly Disagree), -, Not very proud (Disagree), SDs = Standard Deviations.

APPENDIX F

Survey Questionnaires

Age: 18-20____ 21-30____ 31-40____ 41-50____ 51-60____ Over 60____

Gender: Male____ (Monk or Laymen) Female____

State Education: Secondary____ High School____ College Degree____ Advanced
Degree____

Monastic Education: Basic Level____ Middle Level____ High Level____
Dhammasariya____

Residence: Burma____ Overseas____ Thailand____

I. Some people say that the following statements are important for being a Mon. Other says they are not. How important do you think each of the following statements is?

1. Can speak Mon language
2. Can read and write in Mon
3. Born from both Mon parents
4. Have a Mon ancestor
5. Maintain Mon's culture
6. Practice Mon's custom (e.g, pay respect to a Mon's Spirit)
7. Identify him/herself as a Mon

II. As a Mon, how proud are you in each of the following statements?

1. Being a Mon
2. Born in Monland
3. Being a citizen of Burma
4. The Mon are the first to arrive and settle in the present Burma.
5. The Mon are the first to introduce the Buddhism in Burma.
6. Mon used to have an independent Monland (Mon Kingdom).
7. The flourish of Mon culture and literature in Burma.
8. Mon have rich civilization.
9. Mon State won football champion.
10. Burma won football champion in Asia.

III. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

1. I am very fortunate to be a Mon.
2. Being a Mon is so shameful.
3. I prefer to be other nationalities such as Thai, Burman, or Chinese than the Mon.
4. Mon and Burman are the same ethnic group.
5. Being a citizen of Burma is happier than being a citizen of other countries.
6. Mons should not be married to Burmans.
7. Mons should be married to other nationalities except Burmans.
8. Mons should not be married to any other nationalities.
9. I prefer Mon's songs more than Burman's songs.
10. I prefer Mon's songs more than other nationalities' songs.

11. Mon's culture is superior than the Burman's culture.
12. Mon's and Burman's cultures are equal.
13. The Mon have higher status than the Burmans.
14. The Mon and Burmans have the same status.
15. The Mon are wealthier or richer than the Burmans.
16. The Mon have more economic power than the Burmans.
17. The Burmans have more political power than the Mon.
18. Mons and Burmans are equal in terms of political power.
19. Burma army is more powerful than Mon army.
20. Mon's region is the best region in Burma.
21. Mon's region is the best region in Asia.
22. All Mon should live in Monland.
23. Non-Mon cannot live in Monland.
24. Burmans are working only for their own benefits.
25. Burmans are working hard for the benefits of all ethnic nationalities and to achieve peace in
Burma.
26. Burmese military regime is working hard for the Mons and to achieve peace in Burma.
27. In general, Burmese military and Burmans have the same attitudes toward the Mon.
28. The Burmans cannot be trusted because they always try to trick you.
29. The Burmans are violent people.
30. If Burmans have power, Mon will be danger.
31. The Burmans are arrogant. They though they are better than any other ethnic nationalities in
Burma.

32. The Burmans exploit resources in Monland and keep all the profits for themselves.
33. The Burmans use some Mons to oppress their own Mon people.
34. The migration of Burmans from upper Burma to Mon State poses a danger to the Mon identity.
35. Monland must be an independent state.
36. Monland must be part of the Federal Union of Burma.
37. Since the city of Pegu was the capital of the old Mon Kingdom, it should be part of the current Mon State.
38. Independence of Monland should cover from Kawthaung, Tenassarim Division to Thayet (Sarek) town (Irrawady Division).
39. Some parts of Thailand where they were used to be old Mon Kingdoms or where most Mon population are settled should be included in future independent Monland.
40. The Burmans will honor the agreement that they have made with us.
41. The Burmans value cooperative solution.
42. Burman's leaders have good intentions.
43. We should fight against the Burmans to gain our freedom or to get what we want.
44. We should form our own alliance for fighting against the Burmans to achieve our goals.
45. We should work with the Burmans to achieve our goals.
46. If any ethnic groups want to succeed or separate from Burma, they have rights to do so.
47. Have you ever taken this survey before? (For online version).