

「書く人」のマインドセットであるならば、「いいから黙って見ていてくれ」。それが、今わたしの胸中だ。

引用文献

橋本 治. 2001. 『「わからない」という方法』集英社.

Identity, Language and Education under Conflict Situations: A Glimpse into the Lives of Kokang People in Myanmar-China Border

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I. Kokang Ethnic Conflict

Kokang people are ancient continental Chinese immigrants to the Northern Shan States of Myanmar from Yunnan province of China. They now live in the Kokang Self-Administered Zone, speak Yunnan official mandarin Chinese, and are now regarded as survivors of the Ming Empire in Mainland China. In the current legal system of Myanmar country, the Kokang is considered as an ethnic minority group under the lineage of the Shan. Unlike Hokkian and Cantonese Chinese immigrants, they are not naturalized citizens of Myanmar. Kokang people have experienced separatism and intended to acquire their autonomy from Myanmar. Nevertheless, there is no detailed anthropological study on the history

or modern-day situation related to Kokang people, particularly with regard to issues that are emerging in the time of ethnic conflict. In this essay, based on a fieldwork conducted in the Northern Shan States of Myanmar from February to March 2017, I will first describe how conflict situation is lived by the normal Kokang people, and then will touch upon the recent development of Kokang ethnic/cultural education in the region.

When I visited S township, Northern Shan State in February 2017, a Kokang girl Y had come back to her hometown to celebrate traditional Kokang Lunar New-Year with her family. She introduced me to her grandmother and explained about the activities that characterized their celebration of the New Year. For the rest of the year, Y told me,

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1) Hereby, I refer to younger people as those who were born after the 90s' signification of a peace agreement between the Kokang local government and Myanmar's central government.

she works away from her home, and stays in the border zone. Later, I was astounded to learn that just like Y, a considerable number of younger people¹⁾ from the Kokang ethnic community preferred to work and save money instead of pursuing higher education. Most of these younger people aspired for conducting business in the border zones, such as L-town or M-town located in Myanmar side.

The reason for such career path was gradually made clear to me. Kokang people had a convenient geographical access to the border zone, where there was a potential economic benefit from trans-border trading, including jade mining, logistics, gambling, and hospitality services. As Y had told me, “Many junior middle school graduates who learnt Kokang language and Chinese give up their opportunity for attending higher educational institutes in order to earn more money to enrich their poor extended families as soon as possible.”

As Y's narrative suggests, behind the livelihood pattern of younger people lied the ethnic conflict between the Kokang ethnic group and the Myanmar central government. Since the Independence of Myanmar as a nation state in 1948, Kokang ethnic group has been negotiating politically with the Myanmar central government for the recognition of ethnic autonomous right of the Kokang district. As the negotiation gradually failed to work from 2008, the Kokang local ethnic military force

has had several military conflicts with the army of the Myanmar central government.

The most recent ethnic conflict between the government military force and the local Kokang army started in February and continued until March of 2017, during which I was conducting my fieldwork. Through refugee centers in S Township, tens of thousands of refugees evacuated to different places throughout the country of Myanmar. Some of these centers were located in Shan ethnic (the biggest minority ethnic group inhabiting the Shan States) temples, bus stations, and street markets. I was lucky to have had an opportunity to visit a refugee camp in one Shan temple. I presented myself to the reception counter of the camp with the assistance of food-supplement volunteers, and as a result, I was allowed to have conversation with some of the refugees from the Kokang area. Also, I had a dialogue with one of the parliamentary members of the Shan States and a leader of the Shan community.

According to our conversations, refugee evacuation process have caused some severe problems for the Township. For example, there were serious transportation delays which forced the temple to turn into a refugee reception camp, and at there the refugees still had to wait to enter for two to three days. One representative of the National League of Democracy of Myanmar in the Shan States told me about the poor living condition and



Picture 1. A Shan Temple Used as a Refugee Evacuation Center

In front are the refugees who fled from the Kokang region and are boarding trucks to travel to their hometown in Myanmar.

other security issues related to the ongoing ethnic conflicts in the border-zone. During my three visits to the refugee camp, I was exposed to the refugees' desperate desire to go back to their normal lives, which was shocking. Ethnic conflict, which was a political struggle to gain autonomous rights of the people, was surely causing a lot of difficulties to the lives of ordinary people.

II. Kokang Ethnic Language Education

Political struggle of the Kokang community in recent times seems to be casting shadow on the lives of the ordinary people. On the other hand, development of local and ethnic education seems to me to be implying possibilities of Kokang identity in the future.

Beginning towards the end of 2016, Kokang ethnic language school education in S Township and the surrounding areas was



Picture 2. Refugees Leaving the Shan Temple where They Had Evacuated for Two or Three Days

These trucks are sending refugees back to other, safer centers or to their hometowns.



Picture 3. Celebrating Fiftieth Anniversary of a Kokang Language School in S Township

gradually permitted by the Myanmar central government. This was significant, because the region has been recognized as a gateway to the Myanmar-China border. Since S township was a home to the area's oldest Kokang language school, its recent affirmation by the central government validated its function as an education site for the preservation of Kokang ethnic culture.

Still, there are problems in the schooling system, which resulted in chaotic phenomenon during the school year and following the graduation. For instance, younger Kokang people still hesitate when deciding whether to study their own culture and literature or the official school education in Myanmar, although many (over 135 categories have been enumerated) Kokang language schools have been established. Some reasons for this might be: 1) Inadequate qualification of teachers; 2) An unbalanced ratio of schools and students who intend to pursue studies at the senior high school level; 3) Fundamental structural problems induced by the rough application of Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese versions of textbooks, without considerable reflection and adaptation to the local environment. (e.g., trans-border business, history of frontier formation, etc.)

While schools in Kokang community are not without obstacles, I am interested to know whether they can come up with a new



Picture 4. Kokang Traditional Dance-singing (da-ge) in a Kokang Ethnic Language School
The label 'Kokang' is displayed on the stage.

approach in education that would reflect the unique geographical, historical, socio-cultural context of its own. Such an approach will not be a simple copy of education in schools of other parts of Myanmar or China. This reminded me of a pedagogical consideration for 'borderland humanities' [Giroux 1997]. In this regard, representation of 'Kokang' in schools in S township has an interesting aspect. On the one hand, they put emphasis on 'Kokang-ness,' that they are different from 'others.' For example, knowledge learned in school appeared to exist under a protective label, the 'Kokang,' which problematized their relationship with cultural symbols of the Burmese people as well as with Chinese overseas immigrants (picture 4). But on the other hand, the label has become a political shelter for other newer Chinese immigrants, including the Hokkian and Cantonese in Northern Shan States. Continuous application of this sheltering service have been gradually assimilating these people into the Kokang and the Yunnanese community in the Shan States. I think it worth considering what could be a new possibility for the border education that can be provided to the younger generations of Kokang community in the future.

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Reference

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ダーラーヴィーセ ーディーワリーはダーラーヴィーからー

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「ダーラーヴィーセ (दरारी से).」セはヒンディー語で「～から」を意味する。つまりこれは、「ダーラーヴィーから」という意味だ。この言葉は調査地のひとつであるダーラーヴィーで活動している企業家のスレッシュ・アグワネが、インド最大のお祭りのひとつであるディーワリーでのセールに合わせて考案したネーミングである。そしてこれは、ダーラーヴィーにある彼の小売店で販売される製品につけられた「ブランド名」でもある。

ダーラーヴィーは映画『スラムドッグ\$ミリオネア』の舞台であり、既知の人も多いかもしれないが、そこがいったいどういう場所なのかを少し説明しておこう。マハーラシュトラ州の州都ムンバイーの人にダーラーヴィーで調査を行なっていると、顔をしかめられたり、ダーラーヴィー

なんかに行っているのか、と驚かれたりする。それもそのはず、ダーラーヴィーとはムンバイーの中心に位置するアジア最大のスラムのひとつなのである。2.16 km²に60万人が暮らしているといわれている [城所・鳥海 2013: 1051]。

一般的なスラムとは違い、ダーラーヴィーの面白い所はモノづくりの集積地でもある点である。ダーラーヴィーには革製品、壺、アパレル製品、刺繍、プラスチック再生業



写真1 ダーラーヴィーの光景

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