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GEOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE REPORT

THE BURMA-CHINA BORDER

CIA/RR-GR-53

July 1954

DOCUMENT NO. 6
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐
☐ DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C 1981
NEXT REVIEW DATE:
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE: 9.17.91 REVIEWER: 372044

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THE BURMA-CHINA BORDER

Summary

The Burma-China border is one segment of the long frontier that separates the free nations of South Asia from Communist China. The area is one of rugged mountains and dissected plateaus inhabited by a number of ethnic minorities who traditionally have been isolated and nominally independent. Historically, the Burma-China frontier has functioned as a buffer zone. Events of the past decade, however, have resulted in a drastic realignment of power; a strong and powerful China now faces a weak and politically unstable Burma. This situation has once again centered attention on the undefined and undemarcated sections of the boundary and on the long-standing Chinese territorial claims in the frontier region. The distinctive characteristics of the region -- physical setting, distribution of peoples and their modes of living, systems of frontier administration, and history of boundary disputes and current claims -- are discussed in this report. The current status of transborder transportation, trade and smuggling activities, and efforts of the Chinese Communists to penetrate the frontier are included.

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Two frontier regions are delimited on the basis of physical characteristics and distribution of ethnic groups. The Northern Border Region, extending north from the 25th parallel, is characterized by high north-south trending mountains, deeply entrenched rivers and streams, and a minimum of level land. East-west movement is difficult, and high mountain passes -- generally blocked in winter by snow -- must be traversed in order to cross between China and Burma. The population is sparse and, except for a few concentrations in small valley areas, most of the people live on hill or mountain slopes. Agriculture, largely of a primitive shifting type, is the major economic activity. The hill-dwelling peoples are in general not self-sufficient and depend upon valley towns and itinerant traders to supply their needs. The Kachins are the major ethnic group, and there are smaller numbers of Lisu, Lu-tzu, and Tibetan peoples. Some of the southern Kachin and Lisu groups have been influenced and dominated by the Chinese; to the north there is a pronounced Tibetan influence; and some groups have remained isolated and relatively independent from Chinese, Burmese, or other outside control.

The Southern Border Region includes the part of the Burma-China frontier south of the 25th parallel. The area is highly

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dissected plateau country, difficult to cross. A few small intermontane basins and elongated river valleys are inhabited by Tai people, the dominant ethnic group of the region. The Tai are primarily sedentary agriculturists who grow rice under irrigation in the basins and valleys. A number of fragmented ethnic groups inhabiting the surrounding hills practice a type of shifting agriculture. Although some groups have been dominated by the Chinese and to a lesser extent by Burmese, British, and Tai, a number of minority groups have retained considerable autonomy in the absence of outside administration. Local trade between hill people and valley dwellers is important, and Chinese and Shan traders ply their wares in this region.

The systems of administration applied by Chinese, British, and Burmese allowed the frontier peoples a limited amount of administrative control through appointment of advisors or assistants to the tribal rulers. The Chinese Communists have instituted a far-reaching program designed to win support of border tribes by a variety of superficially lenient policies and to control these groups by fragmenting them into small, easily manipulated "autonomous" administrative units. By selecting and training pro-Communist leaders and young people to implement their program

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the Chinese Communists present a façade of local rule, with Chinese cadres* remaining discreetly in the background in the role of "advisors."

The Burma-China boundary had never been delineated prior to the British occupation of Upper Burma in 1886. A series of Sino-British boundary agreements followed, resulting in the demarcation of much of the boundary by 1900. The boundary north of 25°35'N, however, was left undefined because agreement could not be reached as to its alignment. By 1914 the British established a de facto frontier, which except for one short section followed the Salween-Irrawaddy watershed. The Chinese protested this definition of the northern border and continued to claim, and to show on their maps, varying amounts of territory west of the watershed as belonging to China. A 200-mile section of the boundary in the wild and unexplored Wa States area was left undefined until 1941, when a Sino-British agreement delimited this section. The coming of World War II, however, prevented formal demarcation on the ground. The Chinese Communists, continuing ancient Chinese claims, show on their maps the boundary north of 25°35'N as

*As used by the Chinese Communists, the term "cadre" means any politically dependable individual who performs certain tasks calculated to further the aims of the Chinese Communist Party.

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undetermined and considerable territory west of the Salween-Irrawaddy watershed as part of China. The boundary in the Wa States section is also shown as undetermined, and territory west to the Salween River is shown as Chinese. It is possible that Chinese claims to Kokang, Namwan, and Keng Tung may be revived.

Road repair and construction is a major Chinese Communist objective in the frontier. Although there was a considerable amount of smuggling from Burma to China during 1950-51, smuggling activities at present are limited. Legitimate trade between Burma and China is negligible. Chinese efforts to penetrate the Burmese frontier areas have thus far been limited to small-scale border forays and reported infiltration of agents among the tribes in Burma.

The buffer function of the Burma-China frontier is disappearing as the Chinese Communists (1) extend political control over the frontier peoples, and (2) open once-isolated frontier areas through improvements in the transportation system. The end result of the many-sided Chinese program for minorities will probably be to hasten the process of cultural assimilation of frontier peoples. The undefined status of a part of the international boundary, lack of

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Burmese administrative control in the frontier, and activities of Chinese Nationalist guerrilla units provide opportunities for Chinese Communist intervention. Thus far, however, the Chinese Communists have not fully exploited the situation, nor have they utilized their "autonomous" governments to promote dissident activities among adjoining minority elements in Burma.

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I. Orientation

The 900-mile boundary between Burma and China is part of the frontier that separates the free nations of the Indian Subcontinent, including Burma, from the totalitarian colossus of Red China. The border trends along the Himalayan highland mass, some of the highest and most difficult mountain terrain in the world, which has functioned as a barrier separating China and Tibet to the north from India and Burma to the south. Great segments of the border have never been demarcated, and there are conflicting territorial claims in some areas. Before 1939 the disputed segments of the frontier and the undemarcated status of much of the boundary were of little international concern, since the power balance of Asia was maintained by a strong though benign Great Britain, confronting to the north and east a weak, war-torn China that for generations had exercised almost no control over its outer frontiers. The kaleidoscopic events of the past 15 years have completely reversed this traditional balance of power. The newly born, weak nations of Burma, India, and Pakistan to the south are now confronted by a new but powerful China, which is gradually tightening and strengthening control over its frontier lands.

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The Burma-China frontier is similar physically to other sections of the southwestern frontier of China.* The mountains and highly dissected plateau lands of this region have tended to restrict communications and major population movements. The region is sparsely inhabited, with a complex and intricate pattern of cultural distribution. Ethnic groups are scattered in a number of small, separate areas (see accompanying map No. 13087). The cultural level of some groups is primitive, whereas others are similar culturally to the Burmese and Chinese. Most of the ethnic groups of the frontier region are indigenous to central China, their present location and fragmentation having resulted from the pressures of an agressive, expanding Chinese people operating over many centuries. None of the ethnic groups are culturally homogeneous. Some elements of each group have intermingled and intermarried with the Chinese, losing nearly all tribal identity, whereas others have retreated to inaccessible areas and resisted any form of Chinese domination.

During most of the history of this frontier region, the border groups have been nominally independent. The chiefs or princes of the tribes and petty states often paid tribute to Yünnanese or Burmese

*See CIA/RR-G-8, The Southwestern Frontiers of China, which covers the boundary with Kashmīr and India from Afghanistan to Nepal.

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representatives, but little if any direct administrative control was exercised by either nation. Until the present century, there was no clear delineation of the limits between Burmese and Chinese authority, and the lack of an official boundary was of no concern to either nation. The British occupation of Burma led eventually to a series of boundary agreements that resulted in the demarcation of a segment of the Burma-China boundary but left a northern portion undefined and a smaller section to the south undemarcated.

The Chinese Communist occupation of Yünnan Province in 1950 came at a time when the newly formed Government of Burma was being seriously threatened from within by various insurgent groups. To complicate the situation, remnants of Chinese Nationalist armies fled in 1949 to the Burma border area, where they operated as semibandit and guerrilla forces, harassing the local people and providing the Chinese Communists with an excuse for active intervention. For the most part, however, the Chinese Communists have moved slowly in the frontier area, concentrating their efforts on gaining the support of traditionally suspicious and hostile groups. Initial Chinese Communist goals appear to be (1) complete pacification of the border tribes, with pro-Communist native leaders and Communist-trained native cadres providing a

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façade for Chinese administration and control, and (2) the improvement of communications in the border area in order to facilitate actual control and also to improve military capabilities.

For the purposes of this report, the Burma-China frontier is divided into two regions on the basis of physical and ethnic characteristics: (1) the Northern Border Region of parallel, north-south trending mountains and deeply entrenched rivers, inhabited primarily by somewhat primitive hill-dwelling Kachin groups; and (2) the Southern Border Region of highly dissected plateau lands, with a larger population in which valley-dwelling Tai peoples predominate. The physical setting of each region, comprising terrain, hydrography, vegetation, and climate, is examined with reference to the pattern of settlement and as a barrier to communication. The various ethnic groups are discussed on the basis of distribution, numbers, mode of living, and contacts with other groups. Former types of frontier administration are mentioned, but primary emphasis is on current systems of administration, particularly the Chinese Communist type of administrative control. The history of boundary negotiations and the current status of territorial claims are examined. Current intelligence data on Chinese Communist activities, the status of the transborder transportation net, and transborder trade and smuggling

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activities are included. Although reference is made to the insurgent activity in Burma, including the problem of the Chinese Nationalist troops, a detailed analysis of this complex situation is not attempted. Possible Chinese Communist moves in the frontier region are discussed, but this study does not purport to evaluate or predict the success or failure of such actions.

II. The Northern Border Region

A. Physical Setting

The Northern Border Region is an extension or subregion of the great Himalayan mountain system, which stretches eastward from western Kashmīr for over 3,000 miles. The region is characterized by a series of parallel mountain ranges trending north-south and cut by river valleys, in which the Nmai Hka (the eastern headwater stream of the Irrawaddy), the Salween, the Mekong, and (in part of the area) the Yangtze flow in narrow, steep-walled gorges (Figures 1, 2, 8, and 20). These great rivers converge in this region and all four flow southward within an area about 65 miles wide, beyond which they separate and eventually enter the ocean thousands of miles apart (see accompanying map No. 13127). In the northern part of the region, some of the peaks reach elevations of almost 20,000 feet and are festooned with perpetual snow, with

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Figure 1. The Salween River at 26°10'N, looking north. Both terraces and "fire-fields" of the Lisu are perched high on the slopes. Prominent in the upper right is the Salween-Mekong divide.

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Figure 2. The deeply entrenched Salween River at about 26°N, with scattered taungya patches and terraces on the slopes.

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glacial tongues reaching down into the craggy alpine valleys. To the south, the elevations decline to between 8,000 and 10,000 feet. The entire region is one of rugged mountains and gorges in which level land is at a premium (Figures 1-3).

At about 27°40'N, two streams, the Nam Tamai and the Taron, join to form the Nmai Hka. Within the triangle formed by these rivers is the northern tip of Burma, an area of mountain ridges dissected by numerous tributary streams and known as the Tamai-Taron Massif. In the southern section of the massif, crestlines of the ridges maintain 11,000- to 12,000-foot elevations. To the north, elevations increase to 15,000 to 17,000 feet, and a cluster of peaks in the northwest, along the Sikang-Burma border, tower up to 19,000 feet.

The Salween-Irrawaddy Divide (Figure 3) is a very prominent range that extends over 200 miles in this area; for a considerable distance its crest forms the de facto Burma-China border. South of 26°N, a western offshoot of the range forms the watershed between the Irrawaddy and Shweli, which for a short distance is followed by the international boundary. The crestline of the Salween-Irrawaddy Divide is only about 10 to 15 miles from the Salween, whereas the distance to the Nmai Hka is 25 to 30 miles. On the

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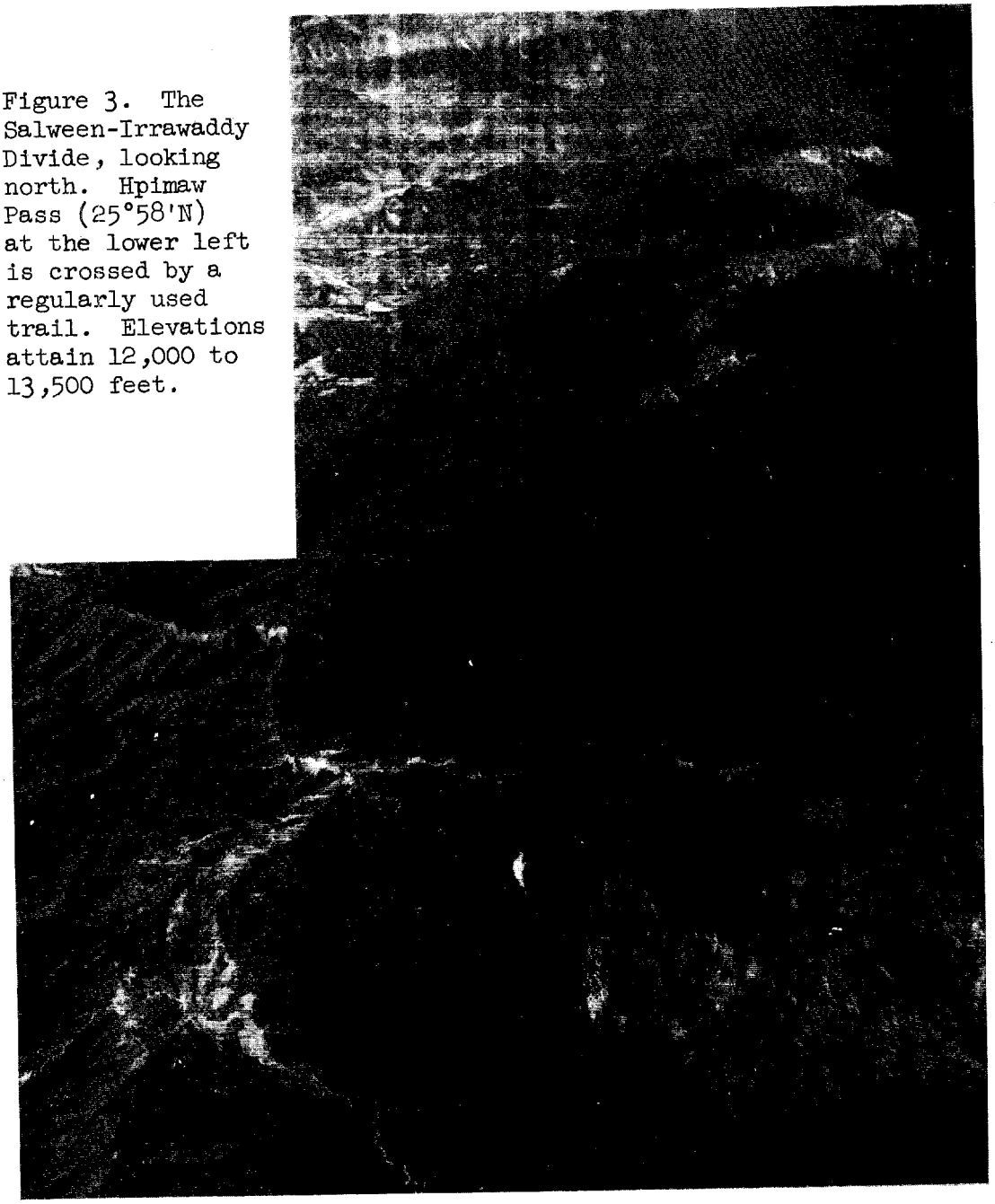

Figure 3. The Salween-Irrawaddy Divide, looking north. Hpimaw Pass (25°58'N) at the lower left is crossed by a regularly used trail. Elevations attain 12,000 to 13,500 feet.

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Nmai side of the divide, sizable tributary streams separate a series of lesser parallel ranges that increase in altitude from the main river to the main divide. A distinctive feature of these tributary streams is that for about 75 percent of their course they flow south, parallel to the Nmai, then turn west and enter the main river. This abrupt turn is generally characteristic of the larger tributary streams of the region, particularly in the north. The comparatively open north-south valleys through which many of these secondary streams flow are utilized as transportation routes and for cultivation in preference to the narrow, rock-strewn main river valleys. With the exception of the Putao Plain and some small basins near T'eng-ch'ung and Pao-shan at the southern border, the only sizable area of level land in the region where sedentary agriculture is possible is the middle valley of the Ngawchang, a tributary of the Nmai Hka.

To the east of the Salween River is the high, narrow divide separating the Mekong and the Salween. The distance between these two major rivers averages only 20 miles or less for over 200 miles. Elevations along the Mekong-Salween Divide average somewhat higher than those of the Salween-Irrawaddy Divide. Peaks of 14,000 feet are found as far south as 26°N. Because of the extreme

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narrowness and consequent steepness of this range, east-west communications along great stretches are nearly impossible (Figure 1).

The climate of the Northern Border Region is dominated by the southwestern and northeastern monsoons and is also influenced by elevation. Precipitation is greatest during the period of the southwestern monsoon, which lasts from June through September. The north-south trend of the terrain tends to deflect the winds, which change from southwesterly to southerly and sweep northward up the great river valleys. In the deepest parts of the gorges north of 28°N, beyond the reach of the moisture-bearing winds, there is an abrupt transition from humid to arid conditions. The lofty Salween-Mekong Divide shields the Mekong Valley from the full force of the monsoon winds, and consequently that valley receives less precipitation than the neighboring Salween Valley at corresponding latitudes. The driest months of the year are December through February, although this is less true at elevations above 9,000 feet, where considerable snow falls during the winter. Most of the passes across the Irrawaddy-Salween Divide are blocked by snow for periods of various lengths from late December through April. Generally the permanent snowline is at

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about 16,000 feet, and peaks of 17,000 feet or higher have small glaciers, at least on their northern sides.

Climatic conditions in this region can be summarized as follows: The lower valleys are moist and warm to hot, with the exception of the deepest parts of the river gorges north of 28°N, where dry, hot conditions prevail; the middle levels are moist and warm to cool, with frost first occurring at about 5,000 feet; and the higher levels above 9,000 feet are moist, with a less pronounced seasonal variation of precipitation and temperatures ranging from cool to cold.

Vegetation in the Northern Border Region is stratified according to elevation. South of 28°N, the tropical rain-forest vegetation common below 2,500 feet merges into temperate evergreen forest consisting of oak, chestnut, birch, rhododendron, laurel, and other temperate-zone trees at elevations up to 10,000 feet. From 10,000 to 12,000 feet, stands of large coniferous trees, mainly silver fir, predominate, with a dense undergrowth of rhododendron. Above 12,000 feet, subalpine scrub vegetation merges into alpine turf at 14,000 and 15,000 feet. On the lower slopes and in the southern parts of the region, open nonforested patches occur, primarily on warmer southern and western slopes, as a result of the shifting-cultivation practices of the hill tribes (Figures 1 and 2).

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B. Peoples: Settlement, Economic Activities, and Contacts

The Northern Border Region is sparsely inhabited. The greatest concentrations of people are along the major river valleys and in the southern section of the region. The hill tribes in this mountainous area include the Kachins (or Chingpaw), the most numerous group; the related but less numerous Lisu; and, in the far northern section, Lu-tzu and Tibetans. The economy of the hill tribes is based on shifting agriculture. The upland tribes are generally not self-sufficient and depend upon itinerant traders (usually Chinese) and lowland villages to provide additional food, clothing, implements, and ornaments. The two commodities at highest premium in the entire area are salt and cloth.

The valley-dwelling people in the Northern Border Region include the Shan and other Tai groups, Burmese, Chinese, and Indians. They live almost exclusively in the river valleys, plains, and cities adjacent to the Southern Border Region. For this reason, details concerning these groups are given in the section dealing with the Southern Border Region.

1. Kachins (Chingpaw)

The Kachins are the most numerous and widespread ethnic group of the Northern Border Region. "Kachin" is a

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generic racial name for several linguistic or family groups or divisions and is widely used in the literature on this area, although the term is disliked by the people themselves and its use is considered an insult. The home area of the Kachins extends from 29°N to 23°N, westward across northern Burma and into Assam, and eastward into China as far as the Salween (see map No. 13087, attached). The most cohesive and largest groups live north of 25°N and west of the Irrawaddy-Salween watershed. The principal concentration of Kachins in Yünnan is between 24°N and 25°N.

The most numerous and important Kachin group is the Chingpaw, which is divided into several subgroups, including the Lahtaw of the Nmai Hka country; the Lepai, who inhabit the southern part of the "Triangle" (the mountainous area between the Mali and the Nmai Hka, headwater streams of the Irrawaddy); and several subdivisions located primarily west of the Irrawaddy. The Chingpaw tongue is the lingua franca of all the Kachin groups. Besides the Chingpaw, under the term "Kachin" are included (1) the Maru of the hill lands of the Nmai Hka and its tributaries, who unlike other Kachin groups eat dog meat and cremate their dead; (2) the Lashi, who are concentrated along the Ngawchang River; and (3) the less culturally advanced Nung, who live in and around the Taron Valley in far northern

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Burma. It is estimated that the total Kachin population of the Northern Border Region west to the Indian frontier is about 160,000; in addition, there are 120,000 Kachins in the Bhamo District and the Northern Shan States, and possibly 100,000 in China.

The Kachins are classified as a Tibeto-Burman people. It is believed that their original home was in the eastern part of the Tibetan Plateau. They entered Burma from the north about the 16th century and have pushed slowly but persistently south. The dominant group, the Chingpaw, are culturally agressive and have been able to absorb some of the weaker groups with which they have come in contact. Although the Kachin groups are united by common modes of living and broad linguistic similarities, they have never been politically unified. There have been numerous feuds between villages and even between families.

Most Kachin villages are situated on commanding hill crests or mountain spurs and consist of 10 to possibly 100 houses located fairly close together for defensive purposes. Historically, sites were carefully chosen for their possibilities for defense and for concealment from enemies, but the pacification of Kachin areas by the British has reduced the importance of these considerations.

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The most distinctive feature of a Kachin house is its length; houses 100 to 200 feet long are not uncommon. The houses are raised 3 or 4 feet off the ground on poles. Split bamboo is used for flooring and siding, and the roofs are heavily thatched (Figures 4 and 5). Building a house is a major undertaking. To complete one of the larger houses, even with the help of friends and relatives, may take several months. Each house is divided into a number of apartments, or "fireplaces." The rear entrance is reserved for family use; strangers enter by the front door. Front entrances are distinguished by projecting roofs, under which the pigs and poultry are fed, the buffalo (if one is owned) is stalled, the rice pounded, and weaving done. In the longer houses, small doors -- actually windows -- in the walls admit light and act as convenient entrances to individual apartments. Strangers should not enter by these side entrances. According to Kachin custom, hospitality is extended to all, and a guest who conforms to the customs of the family and village may remain for an indefinite period.

The basic Kachin economy, like that of nearly all hill tribes of the border region, is taungya (taung, mountain, and ya, field), often more descriptively termed "fire-field" or "slash-and-burn" agriculture. The taungya process consists of first burning

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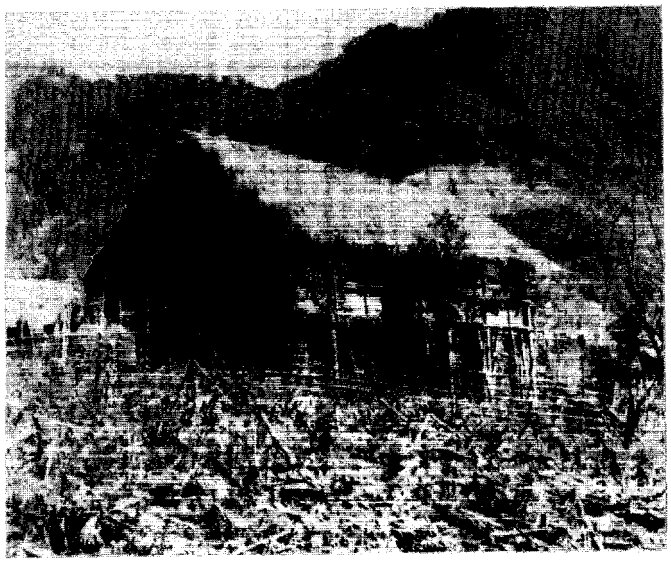

Figure 4. Kachin thatch and bamboo house.

Figure 5. A relatively permanent Kachin settlement, as evidenced by the terraced fields. The semi-barren slopes in the background are typical of the region.

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the standing timber and undergrowth on a patch of forest land at the beginning of the dry season (about November). When the rains begin in May or June, the ash is worked into the soil and the ground is prepared for planting a crop. Since mountain fields rapidly lose their fertility, the plot is abandoned in 2 or 3 years and a new one is burned out of the forest. Eventually the forests within a reasonable distance of the settlement are exhausted (taungyas are rarely used again), the village site is abandoned, new forests are sought, and the wasteful, destructive cycle is repeated. Old abandoned taungya fields generally revert in time to dense scrub-jungle, or ponzo, often composed of pure, almost impenetrable stands of bamboo. Kachin and other hill villages seldom remain at the same site for more than 10 years.

In some areas the Kachins practice a more permanent type of agriculture (Figure 5), similar to that of the Burmese, Shan, and Chinese. The major area of permanent agriculture is the middle Ngawchang Valley, where Lashi groups have learned the art of irrigated rice cultivation. Rice terraces are found on the alluvial fans and on the gentler slopes at elevations up to 6,000 feet.

Whether grown on patches of taungya or on irrigated terraces, rice is the major Kachin crop. Maize, millet, sesame, yams, and

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beans are also grown, as well as a little cotton, tea, tobacco, and sugarcane. Fishing and hunting are engaged in, and each household usually has its quota of poultry and pigs. Some groups raise the opium poppy as a cash crop, and some Kachins are addicted to its use. Although Chinese and Burmese officials have discouraged poppy planting, unknown quantities are raised in the remote hills. Traders obtain the opium, which by a long and circuitous route reaches the outside world.

Among the few nonagricultural economic activities of the Kachins are a little desultory gold panning (primarily in the Ahkyang Valley), teak cutting, occasional road building, and service as porters and guides. Because of the excellent fighting qualities of the Kachins, some of the physically best qualified young men have been pressed into military service by the British or Burmese.

The ubiquitous trader -- generally Chinese -- is an integral part of the Kachin way of life. The trader is important to all the Northern Border Region tribes, particularly in the more remote areas farthest removed from communication with Burmese and Shan. Chinese traders supply the Kachins with such necessities as salt, cloth and clothing, ornaments, and utensils in exchange for gold dust, animal skins, musk, medicinal roots and herbs, beeswax,

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and planks from a relatively rare tree, which the Chinese prize for making coffins.

About 90 percent of the Kachins are animists who worship spirits, or nats, whom they constantly propitiate to ward off evil. Each village has its tumsa (nat priest), who officiates at all ceremonies and acts that require sacrifices or offerings to the multitude of nats. Village entrances are marked by small groves where bamboo shrines to the nats are erected and sacrifices are offered. Along village paths and in the village itself may be seen these offerings, many of them some kind of meat, since most nats seem to be confirmed meat-eaters. Prayer posts about 4 feet high, with the bark removed from the top 15 inches, are found along the trails, and bamboo stringers with bamboo stars attached are commonly hung across roads and trails. Needless to say, it is considered a serious offense for an outsider to damage or molest the shrines, sacrifices, or religious symbols. The waste of food and other goods used as sacrifices no doubt contributes to the poverty prevalent in Kachin areas. Most of the Kachins who are not animists are Christians who have been converted by missionaries in northern Burma, and there are a few Buddhists as a result of Shan influence.

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Kachin dress is subject to considerable variation, but in general the men wear baggy black trousers, a black or white jacket, and a turban, which is often ragged and dirty. Kachin males do not consider their costume complete without a sword, or dah, which they use for a variety of purposes. The women wear jackets or blouses of somber hue, but their skirts are often woven in colors and zigzag motifs resembling those of Central American Indians. Shell ornaments, necklaces, and earrings are popular, and a cane basket is often carried (Figure 6).

Kachin villages are governed by a hereditary chief, the duwa, who rules with the help of the village elders. A duwa ordinarily controls several villages, and in rare cases may have jurisdiction over several dozen. Generally, the functions and powers of the duwa have been acknowledged by both the British and the Burmese. Prior to the British administration, it was customary for powerful duwas to demand and receive tribute from non-Kachin lowland villages as insurance against attacks and slave raids by the warlike Kachins. Also, tribute (usually salt, guns, or goods rather than money) was levied upon passing traders and caravans that passed through a duwa's domain. Powerful Kachin villages possessed

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Figure 6. A Lashi girl in native costume. The Lashi are a Kachin group.

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slaves until 1925-29, when practically all of the Kachin-held slaves were released by the British.

Relationships and contacts between Burmese and Kachins have never been overly friendly; each group considers itself superior to the other. Kachin-Shan relationships are likewise said to be unfriendly (although this is not always the case), and a Kachin couplet often quoted is: "Thoughtlessly you fire a jungle; as thoughtlessly kill a Shan." Despite occasional conflicts with the British, who have imposed restrictions upon the warlike ways of the Kachins, relations between the two are good, as evidenced by the Kachins' loyalty to the British during World War II. Most Kachins are anti-Chinese, and the depredations of Chinese troops during World War II did nothing to allay this feeling. For their part, the Chinese maintain their traditionally superior attitude toward the Kachins, as toward all people of other cultures. The Chinese have both a "polite" name (Shan-t'ou -- men of the large hills) and a "rude" name (Ye-jen -- wild men) for the Kachins, as they do for other border tribes.

The pacification and administration of Kachin areas by the British and the contacts with other cultures, including western civilization, are resulting in a very gradual cultural and social

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disintegration of traditional Kachin ways of living. Christian proselytizing among the Kachins, though not extensive, has contributed to their social disorganization. Since Christian Kachins refuse to accept the duwa as a religious leader, they sometimes ignore also the civic duties required by him. (No doubt some Kachins have become Christians in order to avoid their civic responsibilities.) The refusal of Christian Kachins to respect tribal taboos not unnaturally creates tension and misunderstanding, with the result that after conversion some Kachins leave the ancestral village. Since the Kachins are no longer able to obtain slaves and have been prevented from levying toll on passing caravans, poverty in Kachin areas has increased. As a result there has been a gradual movement to the lowland valleys, where agricultural possibilities are greater and opportunities for nonagricultural employment are better. This movement, if continued, may result eventually in adoption by the Kachins of various cultural aspects of the valley-dwelling Burmese, Shan, and Chinese.

2. Lesser Ethnic Groups: Lisu, Lu-tzu, and Tibetans

The lesser ethnic groups of the Northern Border Region are culturally influenced by the Chinese in the south and by the Tibetans in the northern part of their territory. As a result, various

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Figure 7. A Lisu hunter armed with crossbow and short sword or dah.

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elements of a single ethnic group may differ considerably in their economy, religion, language, and attitudes.

The mountain-dwelling Lisu are concentrated chiefly in the Salween Valley between 25°N and 28°N. Their territory has been slowly extending westward to the Nmai Hka and recently has reached as far west as Putao. A very few Lisu settlements are located in northern Laos, in Thailand, and in the Shan State. The Lisu in Burma numbered approximately 30,000 in 1931, and as a result of natural increase plus the gradual westward migration the current figure would probably be larger by several thousand. No accurate Chinese statistics are available, but judging from recent press releases announcing plans for a so-called autonomous Lisu area, the Lisu population in China is possibly double that in Burma. There has been some confusion as to the relationships between the Lisu and other ethnic groups; some authorities have included them within the Kachin family. The Lisu speak a Yi-chia, or Lolo, dialect.

Several Lisu groups are differentiated, the most important being the "Black" or "Independent" Lisu.* The Black Lisu are concentrated in the three Salween Valley districts of Lu-shui, Pi-chiang,

* "Black" generally designates the more conservative of two elements of the same ethnic group. The Blacks are usually more primitive and belligerent, live in isolated and remote areas, and

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and Fu-kung, which until 1949 had retained their native administration and had not been organized into Chinese-administered hsien (counties). The Black Lisu have a reputation of robbing and sometimes killing Chinese traders who pass through their territory.

In the altitudinal arrangement of ethnic groups along the Burma-China frontier, the Lisu are usually found at the highest elevations, with their settlements 5,000 to 10,000 feet above sea level. Many Lisu settlements are perched high on the mountains, several thousand feet above the village fields in the valley (Figures 1 and 2). Modes of living among the Lisu vary considerably, depending on the amount of contact with valley dwellers, primarily the Chinese. The more primitive Lisu practice taungya, eking out a meager existence by raising maize, rice, millet, buckwheat, and barley on steep mountain slopes. The Black Lisu are known to cultivate the opium poppy. Some sheep are raised, and pigs and poultry are kept in the villages. The more culturally advanced, generally the southern Lisu, have irrigated rice terraces and use draft animals and farming implements. The Lisu are reported to be very proficient hunters, although some of them still use the ancient crossbow as their primary weapon (Figure 7).

have little contact with more culturally advanced peoples. "White," on the other hand, would designate elements that are in the process of cultural assimilation by the more civilized groups.

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For a number of years, there has been an annual fall migration of Lisu from China into northeastern Burma to pan for gold in the streams. Most of these Lisu return to Yünnan in time for spring planting, but each year a few remain behind in Burma. Although the Chinese Communists apparently permit the Lisu men to cross the passes into Burma, to assure their return in the spring they forbid them to take their families.

Like most of the hill tribes the Lisu are animists, with an admixture of ancestor worship as a result of Chinese influence. Missionaries have operated in some Lisu areas in both Burma and China, and it was through missionary instigation that some 2,000 Lisu fled into Burma in 1949 as the Chinese Communists entered Yünnan.

The dress of the Lisu varies, but in many areas it resembles that of the Chinese in being almost invariably indigo blue in color. Men may wear wide bamboo hats and tight-fitting trousers, the women tunics and long pantaloons.

Many Lisu in the southern part of their territory have been greatly influenced by the Chinese. Contacts with the more civilized lowland dwellers combined with the efforts of missionaries have resulted in a gradual braking away from the traditional Lisu

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patterns of living. The movement of Lisu to valley sites, the adoption of Chinese clothing, language, customs, and sedentary agricultural practices, and increased employment in nonagricultural activities are evidences of this trend.

The Lu-tzu inhabit the upper part of the Taron Valley and adjoining areas of the Salween Valley. They are a transitional and buffer group between the Tibetans to the north and the Lisu and other tribes to the south and east. Estimates of the Lu-tzu population range between 5,000 and 17,000. Unlike the fairly large and compact villages of the Chingpaw, Lu-tzu villages are small, with only a few scattered huts of a crude log-cabin style, situated on mountain spurs and often out of sight of one another. The Lu-tzu practice shifting agriculture, growing maize as the principal crop, and some buckwheat and rice. Most families own 2 or 3 head of cattle, and some raise sheep, pigs, and ponies also. Chinese and Tibetan traders penetrate this area, bringing salt, cloth, tobacco, alcohol, and various utensils, which they exchange for hides, medicinal roots, and gold dust. Except for the traders, the Lu-tzu have had little contact with the Chinese. In the more northerly part of their territory, however, where they have been

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in contact with the Tibetans, the Lu-tzu have taken on various aspects of Tibetan culture.

The Tibetan lands are associated with the wildest, most rugged terrain of the entire border region. The deep gorges of the Salween, Mekong, and other rivers present very serious obstacles to east-west communication, and in many places the only means of crossing is by a flimsy rope bridge (Figure 8). The number of Tibetans in the Northern Border Region is unknown. In the sparsely inhabited Irrawaddy headwater area, there are probably only a few hundred; on the China side of the border, the number is somewhat larger.

Contrasts between the Tibetans and the other tribes of this area are many. The Tibetans are sedentary agriculturists who clear plots on the steep slopes of the main gorges or on level land in the high tributary alpine valleys. Although Tibetan settlements are usually above 10,000 feet, some in the northern Burma-China area are at elevations as low as 7,000 feet. Tibetan houses are well-built, flat-roofed wooden or earthern structures, which contrast sharply with the bamboo and thatch huts of the southern non-Tibetan tribes, The main Tibetan cereal crops are barley -- the principal ingredient of the national dish, tsamba (parched barley

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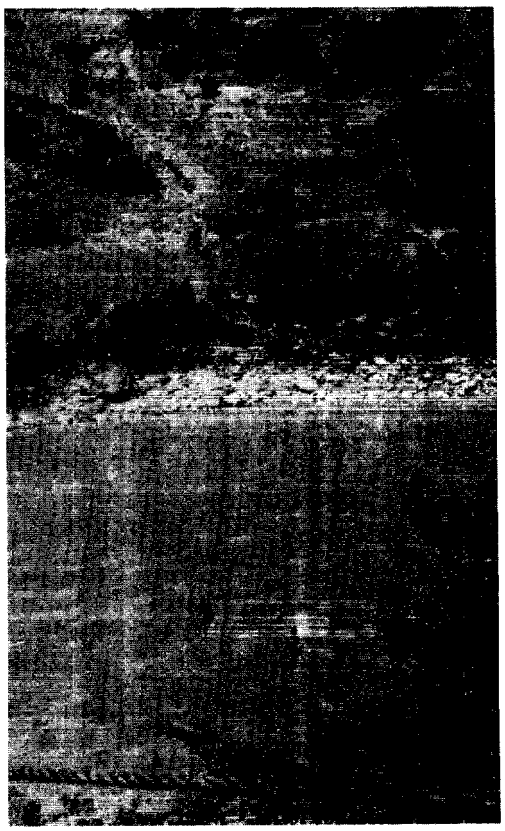

Figure 8. The turbulent Mekong in the Tibetan lands of northern Yünnan. Note men using a rope bridge, the only way of crossing many stretches of the rivers in the Northern Border Region.

Figure 9. Tibetans in typical dress of northern Burma near the Sikang frontier. The yaks are used for plowing.

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flour moistened with tea and yak butter) -- buckwheat, rye, and maize. Cattle, sheep, yaks, mules, and ponies are raised and utilized as draft animals, as sources of food and clothing, for transportation, and as a source of income (Figure 9). Their Buddhist religion and complex and elaborate systems of religious and secular organization set the Tibetans apart from the Kachin, Lisu, and Lu-tzu peoples.

Tibetan clothing is markedly different from that of the various hill tribes of the region. A loose coat worn by both men and women is tied at the waist so that the garment forms a voluminous blouse in which a great number and variety of objects can be carried (Figure 9). Knee-height boots are worn.

The zone of contact between the Tibetans and the Lisu, Lu-tzu, and Kachins in the Northern Border Region is roughly at 28°N. To the traveler in the area, the first indication that he is nearing Tibetan territory is the presence of mani (prayer) pyramids -- piles of stone slabs each inscribed with the Buddhist invocation -- and prayer-flags along the trail. As of 1943, a lamasery was located at Wei-hsi (27°12'N-99°14'E), the most southerly outpost of Tibetan Buddhism in the area. Southeast of Te-chin (Azuntze) on the Salween-Mekong Divide is a high

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snow-covered peak that is a sacred mountain to the Tibetans and each year draws thousands of pilgrims. The usual pilgrimage consists of a circuit of the mountain by the pilgrims twirling their prayer wheels.

The major trade route from Yünnan to Lhasa begins at Li-chiang and passes through the Northern Border Region via Wei-hsi and Azuntze. Caravans, which may consist of several hundred mules or ponies, take such Yünnanese products as tea, sugar, and cloth into Tibetan country, where they exchange them for musk, animal skins, herbs, and other Tibetan products. The two Sino-Tibetan frontier towns of Wei-hsi and Li-chiang are the most important trade centers in this area for supply and exchange of goods among local traders and inhabitants.

Sporadic clashes between Tibetans and Chinese have punctuated the history of the area. The Chinese have never been able to exercise much control over the Tibetan borderlands. Until British forces were stationed at Putao in northern Burma, Tibetan raiders frequently crossed the high passes from Sikang to plunder and pillage the Irrawaddy headwater area and to take slaves.

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III. The Southern Border Region

There are both contrasts and similarities between the Northern and Southern Border Regions. Each region is sparsely populated by non-Burmese and non-Chinese ethnic groups who engage in similar types of economic activities. Through a combination of factors, both regions have functioned in the past as buffer areas separating Chinese and Burmese zones of influence. Elevations are lower in the Southern Border Region than in the Northern, mountain and hill alignments are more broken and complex, and river basins and plains provide some areas of level land (Figure 10). Kachins and Tai are found in both regions, but the Tai are the dominant ethnic group of the Southern Border Region as the Kachins are of the Northern.

In the Northern Border Region very little land is suitable for additional settlement, but in the Southern Region are a number of small basins and plains that are relatively sparsely inhabited. According to a fairly recent study, the Tai-inhabited basins in southernmost Yünnan have a population density of only 15 persons per square kilometer, as contrasted with population densities of about 1,000 per square kilometer in some of the rice basins of

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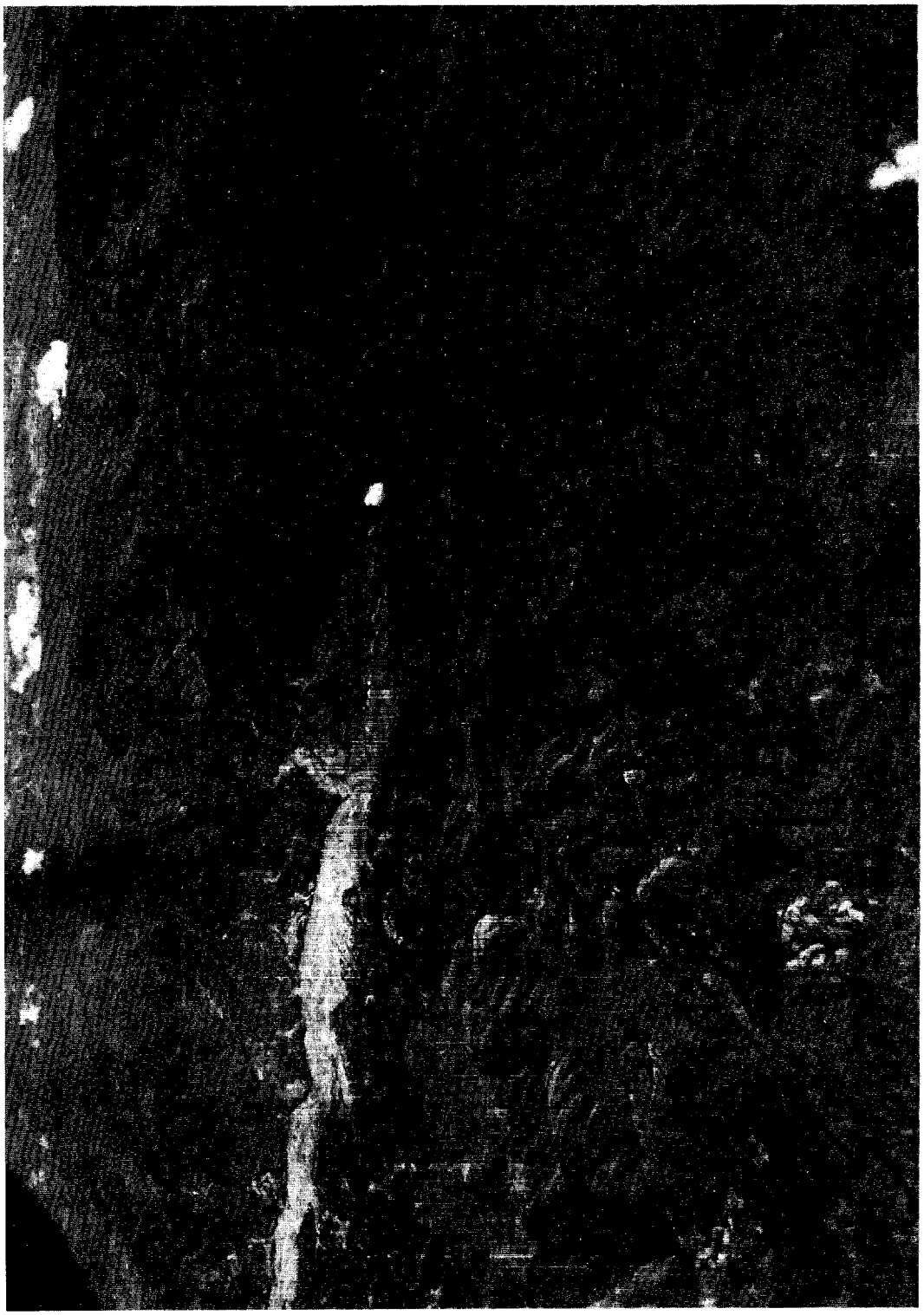

Figure 10. A small elongated river basin surrounded by hills that are partially to completely devoid of forest. The landscape is characteristic of much of the Southern Border Region. View is towards the southeast.

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Kwangsi and Kwangtung Provinces. 1/* These comparatively empty lands of the Southern Border Region would appear to offer opportunities for Chinese colonization.

A. Physical Setting

The Southern Border Region is physically part of the great Yünnan-Indochina highland block, which includes the Shan Plateau in Burma and similar plateau lands in adjoining Yünnan Province. Although the region is physiographically described as a plateau, the landforms are hardly uniform. The comparatively level areas of open undulating country and intermontane basins are intersected by mountain blocks and belts of highly dissected country (Figure 10). Average elevations are between 3,000 and 4,000 feet, and all but a few of the highest summits are below 9,000 feet. The ridges are not as long or as uniform in direction as those in the Northern Border Region. The Salween and Mekong are the two major rivers. The Salween, after swinging to a southwesterly direction for a short distance at about 24°N, turns and cuts a deep, narrow trench (not a gorge, as in the north) across the Shan State from north to south. The river valley is in most places not more than 2 or 3 miles in width, and the surrounding hills rise sharply to elevations

*Arabic numbers refer to the list of sources in Appendix D.

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of 2,000 to 4,000 feet above the river level. The trough of the Salween River has tended to isolate the easternmost Shan States, notably Kokang and the Wa States. Although precise information is lacking for the Mekong, its characteristics are similar to those of the Salween. Furthermore, southern Yünnan west of the Mekong has similarly been somewhat isolated from the remainder of the province.

Several subareas can be differentiated in the Southern Border Region. A northern area extending from 25°N to Kunlong, Burma, where the Nan-ting River joins the Salween, is characterized by ridges and streams that trend northeast-southwest. The importance of three of these streams -- the Taping, Shweli, and Nanting -- is that they provide corridors through the mountainous border country. The Taping Valley, for example, was long an important caravan route between Bhamo and T'eng-ch'ung. Where the Shweli River forms the international boundary for a short distance, it is a braided, meandering stream flowing in a level valley 4 to 6 miles wide. Most of the other streams of the area, on the other hand, are characteristically entrenched into the plateau surface. A number of small hill basins (Figure 11) and long narrow stretches of river-valley land support sizable numbers of people. The ridges are highly dissected and are interspersed

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Figure 11. A narrow gulch opening into a small, flat-bottomed valley, with scrub vegetation on the surrounding hills. The location is about 65 miles north of Lashio.

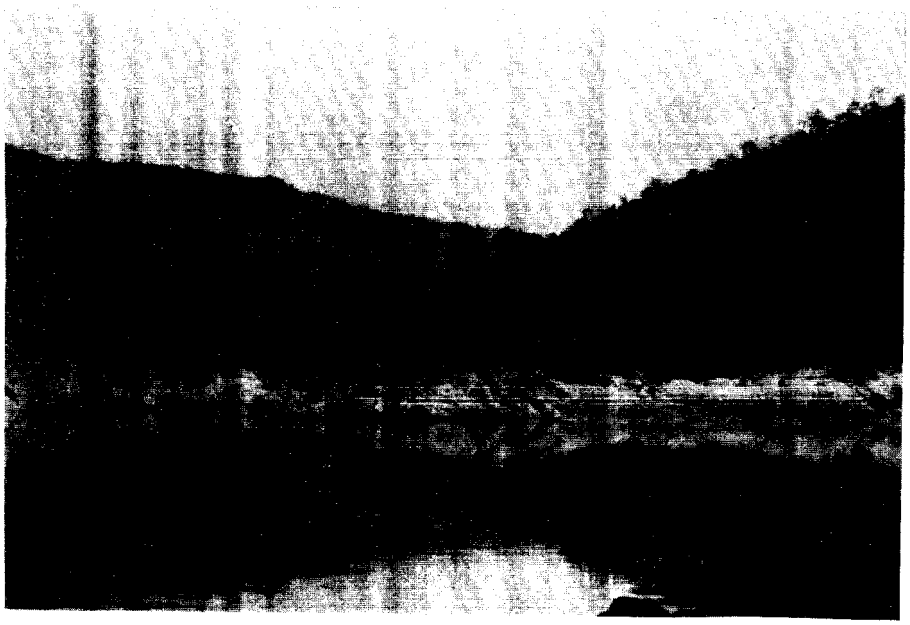

Figure 12. The Mekong River near Ch'e-li.

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with undulating limestone areas. Ridge elevations reach 7,000 feet near the Salween, increasing to 9,000 feet in Yünnan.

A second area, which extends from the Nan-ting River south to about 22°N and from the 100th meridian on the east to the Salween River on the west, consists of a homogeneous block of highly dissected mountains, whose summits average 6,000 to 8,000 feet in the Wa States and reach 10,000 feet in Yünnan. A few of the river valleys widen in places to form elongated basins 2 to 4 miles wide (Figure 10), and these are the only areas of level land. No major routes penetrate this wild and remote area; the few native footpaths generally follow the ridge crests.

The third, or southern, area is similar to the second except that the degree of dissection is not so great, elevations of the ridge summits are lower (6,000 to 8,000 feet), and there are more intermontane basins and elongated river valleys. Many of the main ridges trend north-south and are connected by spurs, saddles, and secondary ridges running in various directions. The plateau thus presents a confused pattern of isolated plains and valleys, with encircling and intersecting ridges. The largest basin (approximately 8 to 10 miles wide and 18 to 20 miles long) is centered at Keng Tung. A number of smaller basins occur in

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both Burma and Yünnan. Basin floors are generally at elevations of 2,000 to 3,000 feet. The major stream of the area, the Mekong, is entrenched at elevations of 1,200 to 1,600 feet, and the surrounding hills rise 2,000 to 3,000 feet above the river surface (Figure 12)

The pattern of vegetation in the Southern Border Region is complex. Most areas are forested. Dense tropical rain-forest vegetation at the lower elevations is succeeded by deciduous forests at 2,000 to 4,000 feet. Above 4,000 feet the deciduous forest is replaced by evergreen or by semievergreen oak-chestnut forest; above 6,000 feet are evergreen forests of laurels, magnolias, and rhododendrons. Bamboo forms a dense undergrowth in some of the deciduous and evergreen forests. The predominant vegetative type on the undulating limestone plateau lands and in the basins is grass with scattered clumps of shrubs and trees. Below 5,000 feet, however, great areas of hill land are in second-growth scrub and grass as a result of taungya agriculture. Some hills, particularly those near the Shweli River in the vicinity of the Burma-China border, have been completely deforested and have only a light cover of grass (Figure 10).

The climate in this region is controlled by the southwest and northeast monsoons. Rainfall is heavy, averaging between 50 and

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100 inches annually; most of it occurs between May and October, during the southwest monsoon. The driest and coolest months are December through March. Temperatures seldom fall below 40°F, and frost is unknown except on the higher mountains. The hottest months are April and May, preceding the summer monsoonal rains.

B. Peoples: Settlement, Economic Activities, and Contacts

Both the number of people and the population density are somewhat greater in the Southern Border Region than in the Northern Border Region. Although the Southern Region is primarily a land of steep slopes and rugged, dissected highlands, there are enough areas of level land suitable for agriculture in the river valleys, intermontane basins, and scattered plains (Figure 13) to support a larger population. The most numerous and important groups live in relatively permanent settlements in the valleys and basins and practice sedentary agriculture. In the intervening highland areas, scattered hill dwellers cultivate the slopes by the taungya method.

1. The Tai People

The Tai are the most widespread and important ethnic group of the Southern Border Region. "Tai" is a generic term applied to several peoples united by common cultural characteristics and a common language, including the Siamese (or Thai), the Laotian

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Figure 13. The city of T'eng-ch'ung and surrounding paddy fields. This is the westernmost Chinese city of any considerable size in this area.

Figure 14. A small lowland village (probably Shan) a few miles west of Kunlong. Highly dissected hills rise to the north and east.

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Tai of Laos, and several Tai tribes of northern Vietnam, the Shan of Burma, and various Tai groups in the Chinese Provinces of Yünnan, Kwangsi, Kweichow, and Kwangtung. In all, there are roughly 25,000,000 Tai-speaking people in Southeast Asia (including China), of whom some 14,000,000 are in Thailand. It is believed that the Tai were originally indigenous to central and southeastern China and through the centuries were pushed southwest by the more aggressive Chinese. An important Tai kingdom existed in western Yünnan for several hundred years until it was subjugated by Kublai Khan in the 13th century. Subsequent Tai migrations to northeastern Burma, Thailand, and Laos provided the nucleus for the present-day distribution of Tai peoples. Despite the wide geographic distribution of Tai-speaking peoples and the isolation of one group from another, Tai dialects are mutually intelligible and communication is possible at a "basic" Tai level.

The Tai who inhabit the Southern Border Region include the Burmese Tai, or Shan, and various Tai groups of Yünnan, the most important and cohesive of which are the Tai Lu of the Mekong River country in southern Yünnan.* Burmese and Yünnanese Tai are

*The Tai Lu are described in greater detail in section IV.

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divided into several subgroups between which there is little essential difference. The more important areas of Tai settlement are the major river valleys of the border region (the Mekong, Salween, Shweli, Taping, and Nan-ting), elongated basins of the smaller streams, and small plains and hill basins. The general distribution of Tai people is shown on map 13087. No population statistics are available for the border region, but there are about 700,000 Shan in the entire Shan State and an additional 35,000 in the Bhamo District, which is included in the region. Other Shan-speaking tribes have been partially assimilated, and some Burmese-speaking Shan who are enumerated as Burmese on census rolls consider themselves Shan. If these are included, the total Shan population of Burma would possibly be doubled. Chinese population statistics are very unreliable, but it has been estimated that 1,000,000 Tai people live in western Yünnan.

Tai villages are mostly situated in the plains and valleys, with a few on the lower slopes adjacent to the valley lands. A wall of bamboo or banyan trees may separate a village from the surrounding fields. Villages are usually small, consisting of a dozen or so houses (Figure 14); some of the larger market towns, however, may contain 300 to 400 houses. As is common in the border area, houses

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are of simple bamboo and thatch construction; usually they are raised on poles and animals are stabled in the space underneath. A few houses may be of more permanent wood or earthern construction, with tile roofs. The Buddhist temple and the residence of the tribal ruler, although not found in all villages, are the largest and most ornate structures.

Nearly all Tai groups are sedentary agriculturists, with rice the principal subsistence crop. All low-lying land is utilized for paddies, and nearby slopes that lend themselves to irrigation are terraced (Figure 15). Since the land of the basins and valleys may be somewhat undulating, terracing is necessary in many such areas also. In addition to the staple crop of rice, a great variety of other cereals and vegetables are cultivated, including maize, millet, beans, sugarcane, potatoes, and peanuts. The more important varieties of fruits grown are bananas, pineapples, oranges, and mangoes. Cattle raising is of some importance, and, where there is regular contact with the Chinese, pigs are raised for the Chinese market. Buffalo are used for plowing the fields and threshing grain. Villages have the usual complement of scraggy poultry. Important cash crops include tea (particularly in southern

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Figure 15. Paddy fields along the Burma Road west of Lung-ling. The inhabitants of the area are Tai or a mixture of Chinese and Tai.

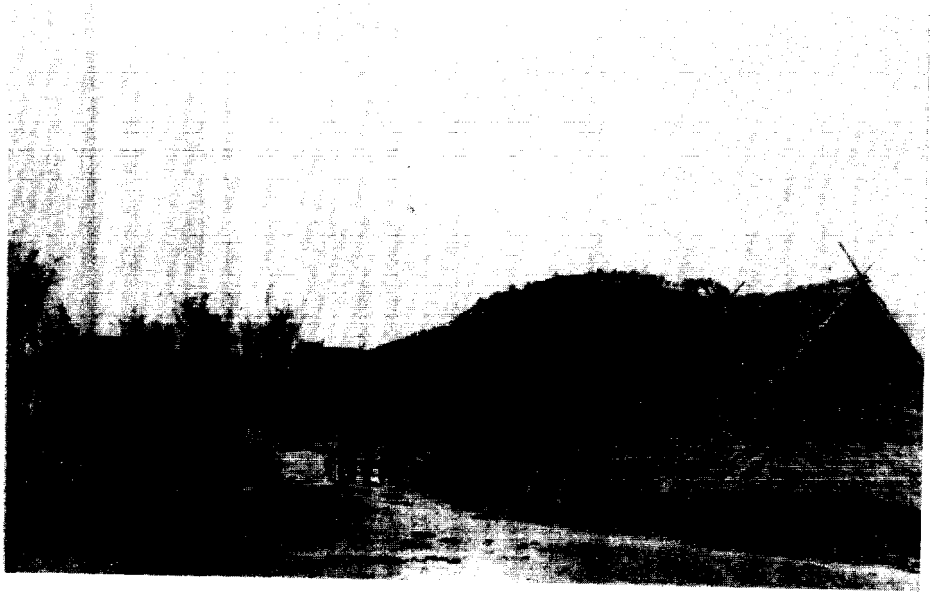

Figure 16. An Akha (Kaw) village near Keng Tung, characteristically situated on a ridge crest. Clumps of bamboo are commonly grown in or near villages.

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Yünnan), cotton, tobacco, and lac.* Of the nonagricultural pursuits, the most important are mining, forestry, and petty trading. Some form of domestic handicraft is carried on in each village, including bamboo craft, metal work, hand-loom weaving of cotton, and the making of lacquerware.

An integral part of the economy of the border region is the village market, where itinerant traders, tribespeople from the hills, and the villagers gather to buy and sell. Markets are held every fifth day, unless a Holy Day intervenes, and generally there is a rotation between several villages. As in the Northern Border Region, the Chinese are very active traders. Formerly it was customary for Chinese caravans to cross the border during the dry season to sell or exchange their wares at the Burmese market towns. The Shan also engage in trading, but on a relatively small scale as compared with the Chinese.

Contacts and relationships between the Tai and other groups vary according to area and accessibility of non-Tai peoples. The degree of Chinese influence on the Yünnan Tai varies, but in general

*Lac is a resinous substance secreted by a species of insect and deposited on trees, from which it is gathered. After processing, it forms the basis for shellac.

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a very gradual assimilation of the Tai is taking place. The process is most rapid in the larger towns and in areas near Chinese settlements, where intermarriage and adoption of Chinese clothing and customs are most prevalent. The Tai Lu, who live in the basins west of the Mekong in southernmost Yünnan, have been least influenced by the Chinese. Chinese is spoken as a secondary language by many of the Yünnan Tai, and a smaller number can read and write simple Chinese. Chinese influence has been strongest on the Shan in the Bhamo area, where most Shan speak Chinese and usually Burmese as well. There are various Shan-Chinese admixtures, and the term Shan-tayok is applied to Shan-speaking Shan who have adopted Chinese customs. The Shan retain a certain amount of distrust of the Burmese, although there has been considerable intermixing in the western areas of the Shan State. The relationship between Kachin and Tai groups has already been mentioned (see p. 29); contact between the groups has resulted from the Kachin tendency to migrate south as a consequence of their destructive agricultural practices. Relations between the Tai and other hill groups, some of whom have adopted certain aspects of Tai culture, are said to be friendly. Contact between these groups has been primarily for trading purposes.

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The religion of nearly all Tai is Hinayana (Southern) Buddhism, with various degrees of animistic beliefs retained by different Tai groups. The Tai east of the Salween especially still attach great importance to the worship of the spirits. The village courtyard that contains the Buddhist temple and associated buildings serves as a social as well as a religious center.

Shan men usually wear broad-brimmed, Chinese-type hats, wide baggy black or white trousers, and black slippers. The Shan do not favor bright clothing. Many of the men tattoo the lower part of their legs. Shan women also wear wide-brimmed hats, with long black skirts and white blouses. It is common for both men and women to carry burdens on their shoulders by means of a bamboo pole with a basket suspended from each end. The dress of the Yünnan Tai resembles that of the Chinese, described previously.

The Chinese are the only other important valley-dwelling group of the frontier. Most of the Chinese are either itinerant traders or merchants settled in villages and cities. The Chinese commonly dominate the commercial activities of the larger towns. The only sizable numbers of Chinese engaged in agriculture in this region are in the North Hsenwi substate of Kokang; a few small, scattered Chinese agricultural settlements occur in other sections of the

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northern Shan States. The basins of T'eng-ch'ung, Pao-shan, Ning-erh, and Ssu-mao, peripheral to the border area, are important Chinese-inhabited agricultural settlements (Figure 13). Historically, the Chinese have avoided the low valleys and basins of western and southern Yünnan because of the prevalence of malaria there.

There are also a few Panthay, or Chinese Muslims, in the frontier region. The Panthay are the famous muleteers of Burma, who own most of the mule caravans that cross the frontier. Many of the Burmese Panthay are descendants of those who fled Yünnan during the great Muslim rebellion of the latter half of the 19th century.

2. The Hill Tribes: General Characteristics

The Southern Border Region hill tribes include the Wa, Lahu, Lolo, Akha or Kaw, and small numbers of others such as Palaung, Miao, and Yao. In the northern part of this region live some Kachin and Lisu groups. With the exception of the Wa, there is little difference between the various hill tribes as to modes of living and contacts with outsiders.

The hill peoples do not differ significantly in culture and economy from their counterparts of the Northern Border Region. The taungya system of agriculture is widely practiced, with dry-field rice the principal subsistence crop, although some slopes are

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terraced and irrigated for rice growing. Fields may be at considerable distances from the villages, as much as 2,000 or 3,000 feet up or down the mountainside. Small quantities of cereals other than rice are grown, some garden crops are raised, and domestic animals are kept. Cotton is grown for local use. As in the Northern Region, opium-poppy growing has not been eradicated, and opium represents an important cash crop to some hill groups.

Village sites are commonly on hill crests or protected slopes. Although there are minor tribal variations in size and design of houses, those of all hill groups are of bamboo, plank, and thatch construction and are essentially similar in style (Figure 16). In all the frontier lands, bamboo is widely used -- for houses, drinking vessels, mats, flumes, and many other things. Clumps of bamboo are usually cultivated in or near each village.

Although Chinese and Shan traders penetrate into the hills, the market held every fifth day in the lowland villages and towns provides the major opportunity for contact between the hill people and the lowland dwellers. During the dry season, some tribesmen from the hills migrate to the lowland towns in search of employment. Current reports from Yünnan tell of hill tribesmen being pressed into service in the extensive road-repairing and road-building

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operations of the Chinese Communists. Some hill tribes in Yünnan are vassals of more powerful Tai groups. As is true of nearly all the border peoples, some elements are culturally in a stage of transition between traditional tribal culture and the more sophisticated and civilized ways of the Tai and Chinese. The vast majority of the hill tribes are primitive animists, and shrines, altars, and sacrifices are common sights along village paths and near village entrances (Figure 17). Only a few hill people have been converted to Buddhism or Christianity.

3. The Wa

Probably the most numerous and cohesive and certainly the most primitive hill tribe of the Southern Border Region is the Wa. The Wa live in a compact block of territory south of Nan-ting River to about 21°N and east of the Salween (see map 13127), administratively designated in Burma as the Wa States. The Wa in Yünnan are found south of the Nan-ting in the area adjoining the Burma border (see map 13087). A recent estimate (probably too high) gives a total of 400,000 Wa, about 80 percent in Burma. The Wa are classified into two large categories: (1) "Tame" Wa, who live in the southern part of the Wa territory and have been partially assimilated by neighboring groups; and (2) "Wild" Wa, who collect

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Figure 17. Many of the frontier groups are animists who erect shrines of this type to their various spirits. The shrines are commonly located in groves at or near the village entrance.

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human heads and, not unnaturally, have remained very much isolated in the northern and central part of the Wa area. The gathering of heads is a religious custom connected with offerings to a harvest spirit for the purpose of insuring a good crop. To what extent this primitive practice is still observed is unknown; mere knowledge of the custom has been sufficient to discourage field investigators. The presence of the Wild Wa was the major reason that the international boundary was left undefined and the area was unadministered for so long.

The Wa differ from other tribes in several ways. Although they practice shifting agriculture, the Wa use their mountain fields for longer periods because they apply animal fertilizers to the soil. Also, they terrace some slopes for growing wet-field rice. Wa villages tend toward permanency, as reflected in larger houses of more solid construction and larger villages, often of several hundred houses (Figure 18). In the Wild Wa country, village sites are chosen for defensive purposes and inaccessibility, and entrances to the villages may be by means of long tunnels. The Wa are very independent, and each village tends to be autonomous. Where some powerful chief controls several villages, the organization is regarded as a confederation rather than as representing centralized rule.

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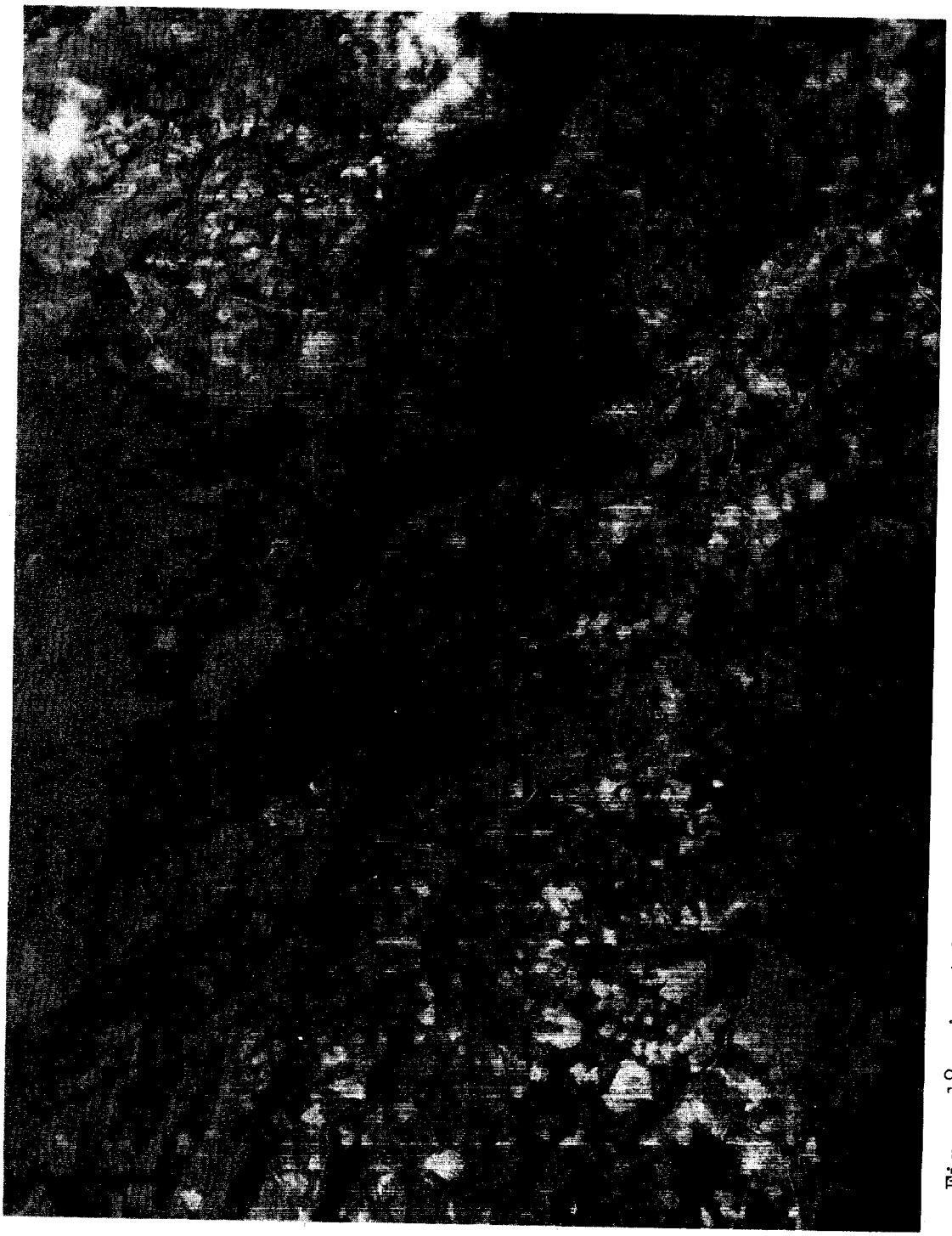

Figure 18. A patchwork of mountain fields in the Wa States near the Yünnan frontier. Note the three sizable villages in the lower part of the photograph.

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Many of the Tame Wa are nominally Buddhists, but they have retained a smattering of animistic observances; a few Wa have been converted to Christianity. The Wa speak a Mon-Khmer language, whereas other hill tribes belong linguistically to the Tibeto-Burman family. As a result of the isolation of the Wa within their own territory, numerous dialects have developed.

4. Lesser Tribes

The Akha, also called Kaw, inhabit the hills east of Keng Tung. They number 40,000 in Burma, and a few scattered groups are also reported in adjoining areas of Yünnan west of the Mekong. The Akha construct excellent paths along the ridge crests, which a traveler may follow for miles without descending into the valley. Chinese-Akha relations are said to be friendly, and the Akha have absorbed many Chinese customs. In the past the Akha have avoided all unnecessary contact with the Shan and the British.

The Lahu inhabit a narrow band of territory extending from 23°30'N to about 20°N. They number 66,000 in Burma and perhaps 50,000 or so in Yünnan. They are said to be excellent hunters, and their alternate name, "Musso," means "hunter."

The Lolo are a large group whose primary habitat is in southeastern Sikang and adjoining areas of Szechwan and Yünnan. They

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are widely represented in southern Yünnan, with an unknown number in the border region. Although the Lolo of southeastern Sikang are noted for their independence and aloofness from Chinese administration, those of southern Yünnan have intermingled with both the Chinese and the Tai.

A very few Miao, Yao, and Palaung are found in the border area. The main domain of the Palaung is in the northwestern part of the Shan State; the Miao and Yao have migrated southwestward from their ancestral homes in Kweichow Province.

IV. Frontier Policies and Systems of Tribal Administration, Past and Present

The Governments of Burma and China have adopted various policies and systems of tribal organization to control the tribes inhabiting their common frontier. Present practices and policies, together with their historical antecedents, will be examined, with emphasis on Chinese policies, particularly since the accession of the Communists to power in 1949.

A. British and Burmese Administration of Frontier Tribal Areas

Until the British annexation of Burma in 1886, traditional Burmese policy torward the frontier tribes was one of noninterference in the internal administration of the particular tribal territory. The

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Burmese court was content to accept occasional presents, tribute, or service in the Burmese army as tokens of suzerainty over outlying tribal areas. Historically, Burmese relations were much closer with the Shan than with the Kachins and related tribes of North Burma. Many young Shan princes and princesses were trained at the Burmese court, and Shan princesses sometimes became Burmese queens.

1. British Administration, 1886-1942

The British conquest of Burma, completed in 1886 with the annexation of Upper Burma, did not basically alter the traditional relationship between outlying tribal territories and the Central Government. The British objective in the frontier areas was to create stable buffer zones to prevent encroachment on Burma proper by the French (who were then active in Indochina), the Chinese, and the Siamese.

In the Shan States, the British persuaded the Sawbwas (hereditary chiefs or princes) to accept orders of appointment, or sanads, which basically left with them the civil, criminal, and fiscal administration. The sanads did provide, however, for "superintendents" to advise the Sawbwas; one assistant superintendent was assigned to each of the larger of the 33 Shan States, and one to two or even three of the smaller states.

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The extension of British control in North Burma proceeded slowly, owing to the difficulty of pacifying the Kachins and administering their mountainous country. Administration was similar to that in the Shan States; the Kachin Duwas (tribal chiefs) were given local administrative powers in accordance with custom. Until relatively recent times, large areas of North Burma remained outside any form of British administration, and it was not until 1934 that the last large unadministered block of territory, the Triangle, was brought under British jurisdiction. British administration in most Kachin areas was confined to the suppression of slavery and punitive expeditions against warring Kachin villages.

The 1935 Government of Burma Act provided for the direct administration by the Governor of Burma of the frontier territories, which were called "Excluded Areas" and were without representation in the national legislature. These areas included the Federated Shan States, the Kachin areas of North Burma, and others predominantly inhabited by tribal peoples.

2. Postwar Developments

The Japanese occupation, 1942-45, served to quicken Burmese independence aspirations, which, however, were less developed in Shan, Kachin, and other tribal territories. Postwar negotiations

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between the British and the Burmese culminated in the establishment of an independent Union of Burma on 4 January 1948.

Independence did not at first radically change the administrative relationships between the Shan States and the Central Government. The system of advisors to the Sawbwas was maintained, although the advisors -- now called residents instead of superintendents -- were Shan civil-service officials instead of British. The powers of the Sawbwas, although curtailed and reduced, still remained basically intact. Changes included the creation of a Shan State, similar to the old Federated Shan States but with additional prerogatives, including representation in the Union Parliament. (The Shan State has 25 seats in the Chamber of Nationalities.) Additional powers acquired by the Union Government were primarily concerned with the collection of revenue (all revenues not specifically earmarked in the constitution for the states belong to the Union Goverment) and with judicial matters.

Developments since 1952 have considerably increased the powers of the Government of Burma in the administration of the Shan State. On 23 September 1952, a state of emergency was declared in the Shan

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State with provisions for the imposition of martial law.* In areas so designated, the Commander-in-Chief of the Union Armed Forces is granted supreme executive and judicial authority. Imposition of martial law would obviously facilitate military measures against insurgent groups. Closely following, on 25 October 1952, was an announcement from the Sawbwas Association that the Sawbwas were surrendering their judicial prerogatives, relinquishing their executive powers, and retaining only their legislative rights. Both of these actions were designed to aid the Burmese Government's military ventures against insurgent groups and to strengthen Burmese administration in the strategic and vulnerable border area.

In the Kachin areas of North Burma, a Kachin State was created that includes adjoining lowland areas inhabited primarily by Shan-Burmese ** The establishment of this multinational state necessitated certain safeguards to allay the fears of each group that it would

*On 1 December 1952 the southwestern quarter of the Shan State was declared to be under martial law, and the 21 substates comprising the area were consolidated into three districts. This arrangement may be permanent.

**Total population of the Kachin State is estimated at 400,000, including about 205,000 Kachins and 120,000 Shan, Shan-Burmese, and Burmese.

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be dominated by one of the others. For example, the 12 seats allocated to the Kachin State in the Chamber of Nationalities are divided between Kachins and non-Kachins. As in the Shan State, several "assistant residents" are in charge of the hill districts, where customary law, as contrasted with Burmese law, is usually applied. The general freedom of action accorded local chieftains and headmen under British rule has been continued.

Union Government policies in the Kachin State have been to keep rather close control above the local or tribal level, apparently discouraging any significant delegation of power to Kachin State officials. Many Kachin leaders and Kachins in general mistrust and dislike the Burmese, particularly since the recent political and economic ascendancy of the Burmese living in the Kachin State.

B. Chinese Control of Frontier Tribes Prior to 1949: The T'u-ssu System

The historical Chinese method of controlling non-Chinese frontier tribes was to confirm or appoint native chieftains or trusted Chinese officers as rulers of tribal territories and make them responsible for their domains as vassals of the Central Government. This was known as the t'u-ssu system -- t'u-ssu meaning literally tribal chief or sultan. The system became firmly established with

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a definite hierarchy of ranks and rulers during the Ming Dynasty (1364-1644). Although the actual tribal chiefs were often appointed t'u-ssu, army officers and the chiefs of other tribes who had allied themselves with the Chinese were frequently rewarded by such appointments.* Normally the t'u-ssu could be assisted by a Chinese civil-service aid or "secretary," who often wielded, if unobtrusively, considerable influence in the administration of the t'u-ssu domain. The t'u-ssu system thus was a compromise that allowed nominal Chinese control while basically preserving traditional tribal organization. The topography of the frontier lands combined with the Chinese attitude toward the petty border tribes contributed to this indirect and largely nominal method of control. The mountainous terrain and lack of transportation routes connecting with the main centers of Chinese administration effectively isolated the frontier region and made penetration difficult. Furthermore, the relatively sparse population and a lack of surplus food hampered the bringing in of sufficient military and administrative personnel to support direct administration. The Chinese regarded the tribespeople

*A 1944 Chinese study of the t'u-ssu system stated that one-third of the t'u-ssu were of Chinese origin and another third of a tribal origin different from that of the people they governed. If the tribesmen under the jurisdiction of a native t'u-ssu revolted, a Chinese was usually appointed after the revolt was quelled. 1/

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as culturally inferior "barbarians," without social or political status, and therefore of little consequence so long as they acknowledged the suzerainty of Imperial China, paid annual tribute, and did not actively oppose the Chinese or ally themselves with the enemies of China.

During the latter years of the Manchu Dynasty (1644-1911), the powers of many t'u-ssu were reduced and some t'u-ssu domains were abolished.* This trend continued after the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912, although the ensuing war-lord rule made impossible any effective national policy until after 1928, when the Nationalist Government began to consolidate its control. Although the Nationalists pursued the policy of organizing Chinese-ruled administrative units, de facto powers often remained in the hands of the t'u-ssu. The continued strength of the t'u-ssu system in spite of Chinese efforts to uproot it was largely due to the basic distrust of the Chinese by the tribespeople. This distrust and dislike resulted not only from the traditionally superior attitude of the Chinese but also from long association with Chinese merchants and peddlers who were not averse to swindling the primitive tribesmen. Chinese officials were often

*The t'u-ssu domains abolished were primarily in the interior provinces; those in the frontier areas were comparatively untouched, since Chinese officials apparently wished to retain frontier t'u-ssu domains as buffer states. 1/

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oppressive and overbearing; most of them were underpaid and frequently engaged in petty graft and smuggling to augment their stipends. Resentment was also occasioned by encroaching Chinese agricultural settlers who usurped the traditional agricultural lands of the tribespeople. Such attitudes and actions are, of course, not unique to southwestern China; similar conditions have prevailed in the development of most of the frontier areas of the world.

It is interesting to compare the solution of the t'u-ssu problem as envisaged by Chinese scholars and officals in the 1930's and 1940's with Chinese Communist policy toward frontier peoples and problems. The scholars stressed five major points as leading to a solution: (1) a strong central government, (2) improvement in the class of frontier officials, (3) improved communications, including highways and telegraph and telephone systems, (4) immigration of Chinese in large numbers to the frontier areas, and (5) education for tribespeople as well as Chinese, with the schools providing Chinese political and cultural indoctrination. 1/

C. Chinese Communist Minority Policies

Chinese Communist policies toward minority groups differ significantly from those of the Chinese Nationalists. Basic objectives have remained uncnanged, however. They are assimilation

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and Sinification of non-Chinese peoples, and political control by fragmenting the minority peoples into small, easily managed units. In contrast to previous regimes, however, the Chinese Communists have sought to attain their objectives in a much more systematic manner and through a much broader program implemented with greater care.

Military control has been the first prerequisite to carrying out the Chinese Communist minority program. Chinese Communist troops garrison the major cities and towns and control the communications network, such as it is., in the Burma-China border area. The direct control exercised by the Communists in the more remote minority-inhabited areas is probably slight, but pro-Communist political workers who are trained and sent to outlying districts have undoubtedly spread indirect Chinese control. Perhaps profiting from past experiences, the Chinese Communists appear to have used military force with greater care in non-Chinese areas than in Chinese areas. Also, to allay traditional minority distrust of Chinese methods and motives, the Communists have given lip service to minority customs and cultural traits, promoted the growth of public education and health programs, and subsidized Chinese-minority trade relations. Moreover, basic Communist programs such as land reform, the

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marriage law, and other reforms distasteful to minority peoples either have been postponed or have been put into effect at a much slower rate than in other parts of China.

As the culmination of their policies, the Chinese Communists have capitalized on minority desires for self-government by granting them the right to establish so-called "autonomous governments." The steps necessary for establishing an "autonomous" government are carefully directed and guided by Chinese Communist cadres. By selecting and training local non-Chinese who have pro-Communist sympathies or are susceptible to Communist influence -- many of them idealistic young people -- to represent and administer minority-inhabited areas, a fiction of non-Chinese control of the autonomous areas is maintained. Actually, all decisions of an autonomous government must be approved by the next higher Chinese government agency, and each autonomous government is firmly welded within the Chinese administrative framework. The result of establishing these so-called autonomous governments is that minority groups have been fragmented into small, easily manipulated administrative units, following traditional Chinese "divide and rule" tactics.

Apart from any direct military opposition encountered by the Chinese Communists in pacifying non-Chinese areas, other obstacles

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have hindered consolidation of control. Some of these obstacles are mentioned in a series of reports from the Third Expanded Conference of the Nationalities Affairs Commission of the Central People's Government, held in Peking in June 1953, which were released to the Chinese Communist press in September 1953. Although the reports are general and represent summaries of conditions existing throughout all of China, presumably the points cited would apply to the Burma-China border area as well as to other minority-inhabited areas of China.

The lack of non-Chinese cadres or political workers to provide the façade of native administration in each autonomous government was cited as a serious obstacle to the regional autonomy program. According to the report, "further fostering" of "patriotic elements, activists, and leaders who have ties with the masses," is needed to accomplish "reconstruction tasks." 2/ Another problem mentioned is lack of cooperation between Han Chinese* cadres and non-Chinese cadres; the report indicated that some Han Chinese cadres tended to "monopolize all tasks." The crimes of "Pan-Hanism" and "ultra-nationalism," according to the report, constitute another obstacle

* "Han Chinese" are Chinese by culture and language, as differentiated from the non-Chinese peoples of China.

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to improving Chinese-minority relationships. Chinese press releases have admitted that a "few" of the non-Chinese tribes viewed the creation of local autonomous governments as synonymous with ridding the area of Han Chinese. 3, 4/

From reports in the Communist press and comments of persons who have recently left China, it appears that the traditional hostility between Han Chinese and non-Chinese is still strong and has not been dissolved overnight by Communist gestures of friendship, brotherhood, and promised equality of treatment. In the relatively short time that the Chinese Communists have been in power, they have not yet been able to adequately train the cadres needed to insure political control. A considerable gap often exists between the policies promulgated at the national level and the actual implementation of those policies at the local level. Friction between Chinese and non-Chinese becomes most evident at the local level, and traditional attitudes and beliefs may often counteract the implementation of top-level directives. That some of the tribal chiefs and other leaders have not been beguiled by the Communist program is confirmed by a Chinese Communist press release indicating that where "unity of national minorities" was undermined, it was because "certain higher-level personages among the nationalities . . . were tricked by the enemy plot." 5/

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D. Autonomous Governments in the Burma-China Border Area*

Three autonomous governments were established in 1953 along the Burma-China border, and a fourth is in the preliminary stages of organization. These autonomous governments represent only a small percentage of the total number that have been established throughout China. Possibly 50 or so now exist at the hsien or higher administrative levels, and perhaps several hundred have been organized at sub-hsien administrative levels.** Although approximate areas and boundaries have been announced and are shown on map 13087, it is probable that these autonomous areas initially exist only nominally, with a small nucleus of Communist and pro-Communist cadres to symbolize the new order. The most important of these recently created autonomous areas is the Tai Autonomous District of southern Yünnan.

1. The Tai (Thai) Autonomous District

The creation of the Hsi-shuang-pan-na (Sibsong Panna) Tai Autonomous District in early 1953 was viewed with considerable alarm in Southeast Asia, primarily in Thailand. This alarm resulted

*Details as to area, population, ethnic composition, and similar factors are contained in Appendix A.

**See CIA/RR-G-7, Autonomous Governments in Minority-Inhabited Areas of Communist China, for a list of autonomous governments as of June 1953.

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from (1) the strategic location of the Tai Autonomous District adjoining Burma and Laos, and (2) the ethnic affinity of its people with those in neighboring countries.

The name "Sibsong Panna," variously spelled and sometimes hyphenated, is a regional-political term long used to designate a definite Tai-inhabited area of southern Yünnan Province. The name originally designated a union of 12 Tai tribes, each having its own definite territory; the term later came to mean 12 valleys (panna) or groups of valleys, or sometimes the "land of 12,000 ricefields." Apparently no official boundaries were established for ancient Sibsong Panna, so that it is impossible to determine whether the area of the Tai Autonomous District coincides with it. For practical purposes, there is sufficient similarity to consider the two areas as synonymous. The area of the Tai Autonomous District has been variously reported as 20,000 to 25,000 square kilometers (approximately 10,000 square miles), with the larger figure most commonly quoted. This area compares with that of the State of Maryland (10,577 square miles). The physical setting of the Tai Autonomous District has already been described.

The particular Tai group in Sibsong Panna is the Tai Lu. Other members of this group are found in the Keng Tung area of Burma, in

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northern Thailand, and in Laos. Total population of the Tai Lu is estimated at 400,000, of whom about 100,000 to 140,000 inhabit the Tai Autonomous District. As mentioned previously, Tai dialects are mutually understandable and the Tai of Sibsong Panna are able to communicate with Tai peoples living in other areas at a basic Tai level. The Tai Lus are Buddhists with a strong mixture of animism. Reportedly, there are 2,000 Buddhist wats (temples) in Sibsong Panna, of which about 10 are in Ch'e-li, the administrative center of the area. 6/

The Tai Lu live in small villages in the low-lying river basins. Their houses are of simple bamboo construction, built on poles with space underneath for animals. Wet-field rice is the major crop, although some dry-field rice is grown on slopes difficult to irrigate. Garden crops (peas, maize, onions, beans, and sugarcane) and tropical fruits (bananas, pineapples, and mangoes) are also grown. In contrast to the custom in Thailand of raising vegetables and fruits in small garden patches, the Tai Lu plant their crops in outlying fields. Poultry and pigs are raised for local consumption. The major cash crops of Sibsong Panna are tea, camphor, cotton, and opium. Tea has long been the most important export item, and the

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Fo-hai district is the most important producing area. Salt is mined and exported to neighboring areas.

The mountain-dwelling tribes -- the Akha (Kaw), Lolo, Lahu, and Yao -- who inhabit the Tai Autonomous District probably number about 50,000. Their way of life has been described previously.

The historical unity of Sibsong Panna dates back several centures; although tribute was occasionally paid to the stronger Chinese emperors, its status remained relatively autonomous. During the latter years of the Manchu Dynasty, Chinese influence and administration encroached upon the area of Sibsong Panna east and north of the Mekong, while the western area remained isolated and independent. The semiautonomous status of Sibsong Panna as a buffer state between British and French areas of influence was recognized in the 1894 Sino-British boundary convention. In 1941, during the regime of the Chinese Nationalists, Chinese administration was extended to all of Sibsong Panna with the creation of the five Chinese-administered hsien of Ch'e-li, Fo-hai, Liu-shun, Nan-chiao, and Ning-chiang. Although a superficial Chinese administrative organization existed and the hereditary tribal chieftains -- Chao Fah -- were under the nominal supervision of Chinese officials, actually the chieftains retained much of the real authority and power.

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Initial Chinese Communist goals in establishing the Tai Autonomous District apparently were domestic and defensive in nature, in keeping with Communist minority policies. At the ceremony marking the inauguration of the Tai Autonomous District, members of the "people's government" pledged --

> to learn from and follow the example of Han Chinese cadres and people so as to lead the Tai people and people of other nationalities in Sibsong Panna to carry out regional autonomy; to smash sabotage activities of American imperialists and agents of Chiang K'ai-Shek; and to strengthen defense of the fatherland and construct a new Sibsong Panna under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, Chairman Mao, and the Central People's Government. 7/

That political control over the many minority groups in Sibsong Panna is not yet complete is indicated by the lag in organizing local people's governments in accordance with the "historic development and historic relations among the nationalities." In June 1953 the Chinese Communists stated that by the end of the year some 12 "panna" governments would be established in Sibsong Panna, plus other lesser types of administrative units. Recent reports indicate, however, that a number of areas are as yet unorganized. 8/ The customary Communist efforts have been made to foster agricultural production, promote education and public health, and encourage trade among the tribespeople.

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Of greater significance is the recent press announcement from K'un-ming that the K'un-ming--Ch'e-li highway had been completed as of 31 December 1953. The Communists have also announced plans for improving the abandoned World War II route linking Ch'e-li with the Burma border. Improvement of caravan trails in Sibsong Panna to "speed up the exchange of goods" has frequently been mentioned in the Chinese press. One of the most important factors in the isolation and relative independence of Sibsong Panna, and other border areas as well, has been the lack of roads from Chinese centers of administration and commerce to these non-Chinese areas. Improved communications will obviously facilitate the economic and political integration of the Tai Autonomous District with Yünnan Province and the rest of China, and the extension of a road network to the Burma-Laos border will also improve Chinese Communist military capabilities in Southeast Asia.

The ultimate object of the Chinese Communists in establishing the Tai Autonomous District cannot be foreseen. Until the Communists feel that they have complete control and domination in Sibsong Panna, it is unlikely that their announced objectives will change. A Pan-Thai movement developed in Thailand about 1940 whereby, under Japanese sponsorship, Thailand gained some territory (returned in

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1946) at the expense of Cambodia and Laos. There is no evidence at present to indicate that the Chinese Communists have instigated a similar movement to unite the various Tai areas in conjunction with their activities in Sibsong Panna. Nevertheless, the strategic location of the Tai Autonomous District, the ethnic affinity with Tai groups in neighboring countries, and the continued development of roads into the area do offer long-range opportunities for Chinese Communist designs on their neighbors to the south.

2. Other Autonomous Units

After the establishment of the Tai Autonomous District in Sibsong Panna it was announced in April 1953 that a Lan-ts'ang Lahu autonomous unit had been organized. Its boundaries have not been specifically delineated, but apparently this unit also adjoins the Burma border (see map 13087). According to Chinese press releases, Lahu tribesmen comprise nearly half the total population of 200,000; the remainder are Wa, Lolo, Akha, and members of other tribes. At the inaugural ceremony, particular stress was laid on strengthening the "unity of nationalities" and consolidating the national defense of the fatherland. Specifically excluded from this Lahu autonomous unit was the mountainous Wa-inhabited area near

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the Burma border. Announcement of a Communist-inspired "autonomous" Wa state may be expected in the future.

In July 1953 an autonomous government for Tai and Kachin tribes was organized, with boundaries coinciding on the west with the Burma frontier -- roughly from 24°N to 25°N. The chairman of this autonomous unit reportedly is a former Tai Sawbwa whose prestige is being used by the Chinese Communists to give the appearance of genuine autonomy and independence. At the inaugural ceremony it was announced that one of the central tasks was the development of agricultural production. This area contains about 10 major river basins, suitable for rice growing, which in the past have been by Chinese standards comparatively underpopulated and underdeveloped. The general area included within this autonomous unit is known as the "Chinese Shan States." By the terms of the boundary conventions of 1894 and 1897, parts of these petty Shan States were divided between China and Burma. The Tai inhabiting this area have been influenced to a greater extent by the Chinese than have the Tai Lu of Sibsong Panna.

The most recent autonomous unit in the immediate Burma-China border area is the Nu Chiang (Chinese for Salween River) Lisu autonomous unit, which in October 1953 was in the preparatory stages

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of organization. Parts of the area had already been organized into smaller autonomous units at lower levels of administration. The usual goals have been announced for this new autonomous unit -- development of agricultural production, trade, education, health, national unity, and defense of the fatherland.

V. History of the Boundary and Areas Currently in Dispute

Prior to the Sino-British boundary agreement of 1894, the boundary separating Burma from China had never been officially delineated. Instead, the border area was a transitional zone where Burmese and Chinese authority met and occasionally overlapped. Many of the tribal groups inhabiting the border region were organized into petty states that paid nominal tribute to Burmese or Chinese authorities and, in some cases, to both. After the acquisition of Upper Burma in 1886, British administrators wanted to know the limits to which their authority extended. Accordingly, the United Kingdom and China in a convention of 1886 provided for a delimitation commission to mark the frontier.

A. The 1894 and 1897 Boundary Conventions

Negotiations between the British and Chinese first bore fruit with the signing of a boundary convention on 1 March 1894. The southern section of the boundary presented no serious problems; the

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criterion commonly used in determining the boundary in this sector was whether in the past the particular petty state had paid tribute to China or to Burma. Some of the trans-Salween Shan States had paid tribute to both Burma and China, but it was generally possible to determine to which country tribute had been most regularly paid. North of 25°35'N, however, the boundary area was unexplored, and since the negotiators could not agree upon a frontier delimitation, this sector was left undefined.

The 1894 Convention embodied some concessions by the British in both the Bhamo and the Shan States areas, and these concessions later came to be severely criticized, particularly from the military point of view. An opportunity soon arose to modify the 1894 Convention, a provision of which had prohibited the Chinese from ceding any part of the State of Kiang Hung (including much of the area now included in the Tai Autonomous District) to a third power. Since a portion of Kiang Hung was ceded to the French in 1895, the British seized upon this as grounds for a revision of the 1894 Convention.

A new boundary agreement reached on 4 February 1897 realigned the frontier, returning a minor state -- Kokang -- and the strategic frontier post of Sima to Burma. The Leased Tract of Namwan, a territory of about 60 square miles lying astride the route between

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Bhamo and Namkham, was now placed under the direct administration and control of the British. Although Chinese sovereignty over Namwan was recognized, Article 2 stated that "in the whole of the area China shall not exercise any jurisdiction or authority whatsoever," and that the British Government "will hold it on a perpetual lease from China, paying rent for it, the amount of which shall be fixed hereafter." 9/ Article 4 in the 1894 Convention was identical with Article 4 in that of 1897 relative to the northern section of the boundary, leaving "the settlement and delimitation of that portion of the frontier which lies to the north of latitude 25°35' north" for "a future understanding between the contracting parties when the features and condition of the country are more accurately known." 9/

Both conventions had provided for a joint boundary commission to demarcate the frontier, and operations were carried out between 1897 and 1900. Boundary markers were set up for all of the boundary south of 25°35'N except a 200-mile stretch of wild and unexplored country in the Wa States area about which the boundary commissioners were unable to agree.

B. The Undefined Northern Boundary

The defining of the northern section of the Burma-China boundary presented numerous obstacles. Foremost was the inaccessibility

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and lack of topographic knowledge of the area. The hill-dwelling Kachin tribes of the area were given to raiding lowland villages, which made administration difficult and costly. Furthermore, there was a dearth of knowledge concerning the history of administration in the area. Although it was known that Burmese authority prior to 1886 had reached north only as far as Myitkyina, the British lacked information concerning the degree, if any, of Chinese influence in the area. In the discussions preceding the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1886, the Chinese had claimed the northern reaches of the Irrawaddy River so as to allocate the river port of Bhamo to China. The British did not recognize this claim but let the matter rest until the beginning of negotiations leading to the 1894 Convention. In the interval the British explored a small section of North Burma and came to the conclusion that the Irrawaddy-Salween watershed should be proposed as the common frontier. This proposal was not accepted by the Chinese, and after some fruitless negotiations the Chinese Minister in 1893 agreed that the boundary north of 25°35'N should be left undetermined until more information was obtained.

The 1895-1914 period was marked by increased Chinese and British activity in Burma north of 25°35'N. Several skirmishes

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occurred between British and Chinese survey parties and some bloodshed resulted. After further rejections by the Chinese of the Irrawaddy-Salween watershed as a frontier, the British informed the Chinese Government in 1906 that they intended to regard the frontier as following the watershed and to administer up to that limit. Chinese counterproposals were not acceptable to the British, and infiltration of northern Burma by both nations continued. The British pursued their policy of recognizing the Irrawaddy-Salween watershed as a de facto frontier and by 1914 had erected frontier posts, to which the Chinese objected, as far north as the Chemeli Pass at approximately 26°11'N.

The only alteration in the British version of the frontier occurred as a result of British surveys in the extreme north of Burma. It was discovered that Chinese influence existed in the valley of the Taron, a tributary of the Irrawaddy, and the boundary was altered on British survey maps after 1914 to show the upper Taron Valley as belonging to China. This concession did not satisfy Chinese officials, who continued to assert that large areas of North Burma were properly part of China.

From 1914 until the late 1920's, the situation along the northern frontier remained relatively quiet. In this interval the British slowly

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strengthened their administration, particularly in the late 1920's when expeditions were despatched to suppress slavery in the Kachin-inhabited Triangle area. This activity by the British stimulated Chinese interest anew, but an exchange of correspondence from 1929 to 1934 failed to bring about an agreement in principle as to the delimitation of the frontier. At about that time, Chinese maps, such as the Chinese Postal Atlas and various school atlases, began showing the maximum Chinese claim by a roughly east-west boundary at about 25°35'N; this included all of North Burma within China.

C. The Undemarcated Wa States Boundary

The fact that the 200-mile section of the boundary extending from approximately 22°10'N to 23°30'N was left undemarcated by the 1897-1900 joint boundary commission apparently caused little concern for the next 30 years. The fierce Wa headhunters inhabiting parts of the area effectively discouraged exploration and attempts at administration. In the early 1930's, however, a resurgence of Chinese nationalism led to considerable agitation to reassert former Chinese frontier claims. At this time the Wa area assumed economic importance because it was believed to contain rich mineral deposits. Having sent an armed prospecting party into the area against Chinese protests, the British felt that they should maintain some form of

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administration there, which necessitated demarcation of the boundary. They reached an agreement with the Chinese in April 1935 that provided for a joint boundary commission. A Swiss officer, Colonel Iselin, was selected by the President of the Council of the League of Nations as a neutral chairman to head the joint commission, which surveyed the area from December 1935 to April 1937. As before, no agreement was reached. One benefit that resulted, however, was a fairly detailed topographic survey of the area.

The impasse over delimiting the boundary might have continued indefinitely had it not been for the seizure of east coast Chinese ports by the Japanese, which caused the Chinese Government to plan the construction of a Burma-Yünnan railroad from Lashio to K'un-ming. The proposed alignment of the railroad was very near the undemarcated section, and the British intimated that their cooperation in the venture was dependent upon a definitive boundary agreement. After lengthy discussion the boundary was finally delimited by an exchange of notes dated 18 June 1941. The Iselin Commission Report was used as a basis for settlement, although both sides made concessions before final agreement was reached. The Lu-fang area, where mineral deposits reportedly existed, was included in Burma; it was agreed, however, that Chinese capital might participate up to 49 percent in

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British concerns working the eastern slope of Lu-fang Ridge. Normally, formal demarcation with the erection of boundary pillars would have followed, but the Japanese invasion of Burma in early 1942 prevented any demarcation activities.

D. Border Incidents and Claims, 1942-48

Chinese Nationalist forces operated in many parts of Burma during World War II and in several instances attempted to occupy Burmese border areas. The Chinese were particularly active in the Hpimaw area and the Ahkyang Valley of North Burma. During 1945, incidents occurred in Keng Tung in the southern Shan States and in the Kokang, Namwan, and Myitikyina areas. Most of the incidents consisted of Chinese troops occupying an area and proclaiming to the natives that the area was now part of China. Strong representations by the British Government of Burma to the Chinese Government and sometimes the use of force were needed to dislodge the Chinese. Although some of these incidents were precipitated by bands of Chinese deserters and border bandits, it was apparent that Chinese officials took advantage of the war situation to advance territorial claims.

Another series of Chinese actions in late 1947 and in 1948 was apparently designed to reassert Chinese territorial claims. A report from the Chinese Ministry of the Interior in October 1947 announced

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that a survey team was then leaving for the Yünnan-Burma border to replace missing boundary markers. Significantly, no mention was made of Burmese cooperation in the venture. Supposedly the survey team completed its mission in August 1948 when some 135 boundary markers reportedly had been placed, although no further details as to the location of these markers were forthcoming. Of more concern was the announcement in November 1948 by an official of the Chinese Ministry of the Interior that an area of 77,000 square miles of North Burma was properly part of China. The much-repeated figure of 77,000 square miles is greatly exaggerated; an area of about 22,000 square miles is more nearly correct. The line defined by the Chinese official was very similar to the one shown on the previously mentioned Chinese maps. In early 1948 the Chinese also began to press for a review of the status of the Namwan Leased Tract. Reportedly, the Chinese Nationalist Government informally questioned the status of the tract and the Burmese reply pleaded preoccupation with internal affairs to prevent it from giving full attention to the matter. 10/ According to another report, 11/ the Chinese Nationalists refused to accept payment from Burma. Before any of these Chinese Nationalist claims could be further advanced, however, the Chinese Communists seized control of mainland China.

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E. Chinese Communist Territorial Claims

The present policies of the Chinese Communists concerning the disputed boundary area do not significantly differ from those of their predecessors. Chinese Communist maps, like Chinese Nationalist maps, continue to show the northern portion of Burma as part of Yünnan Province and the Burma-China boundary north of 25°35'N as "undetermined." The most recent Chinese Communist atlas (December 1953), however, now shows the boundary as striking west from 25°35'N to the divide between the Mali and Chindwin Rivers, from which point it trends almost due north, following the watershed to the Burma-India border (see map 13187). The area of northern Burma now claimed by China is thus reduced by roughly 50 percent from previous claims. In the Wa States, the territory now claimed has been enlarged somewhat. The reasons for these changes in cartographic policy are unknown.

The Chinese Communists differ from the Nationalists also in their portrayal of the undemarcated boundary in the Wa States area between 22°10'N and 23°30'N. The Chinese Nationalist Government signed a treaty with Great Britain in 1941 delimiting this section of the boundary, which apparently settled the issue between British Burma and China. At first it appeared that the Chinese Communists had

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accepted the 1941 agreement, but since 1952 Chinese Communist maps have shown the boundary pushed far west to the Salween and marked "undetermined."

Other areas of potential dispute include Namwan and Kokang. Under the British, the territory of Namwan was acknowledged to be Chinese territory, leased in perpetuity to the British Government of Burma for the payment of the nominal rental of Rs. 1,000 annually. Since Burma became an independent nation in 1948, the Burmese have apparently not made the annual payment to establish their position of successor to the British as lessee. As can be seen from the accompanying map, No. 13127, the strategic location of the Namwan Assigned Tract is important to road communications between the northern Shan States and North Burma. The status of Kokang, a small substate of the Shan State of North Hsenwi, is similar to that of the Namwan Assigned Tract. Kokang was recognized as Chinese territory (the majority of its inhabitants being Chinese) by the 1894 boundary convention, but it was assigned to Burma by terms of the 1897 agreement. Remarks made by the Chinese Acting Foreign Minister in 1945 indicated that the Chinese were not satisfied with the status of Kokang.

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There is no information at present to suggest that the Chinese Communist Government is considering opening negotiations with the Burmese Government regarding any of these disputed areas. If such negotiations are broached, however, the Chinese Communist position would be much stronger than that of previous Chinese Governments because of the reversal of the power balance.

The validity of Chinese claims is somewhat difficult to evaluate and varies with the areas in dispute. The northern undefined boundary appears to give the Chinese the greatest opportunity for making good at least a part of their claims. This is a de facto boundary, and there is no legal basis for the British and Burmese delineation of the frontier other than occupa ion of the area in the face of Chinese protests. Since the British and Burmese have administered the area for more than 50 years, it is probable that the indigenous inhabitants do not desire a change, especially in view of their general animosity toward the Chinese as a race, which was increased by the behavior of Chinese Nationalist troops in northern Burma in World War II. Chinese Communist exploitation of traditional Kachin dislike of the Burmese, however, and discriminatory actions by the Burmese Government against the Kachins and other tribes of northern Burma could conceivably cause a change in sentiment.

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There seems to be no reliable historic or ethnic basis for the extreme Chinese claim of all of northern Burma as shown on Communist maps; but Chinese Irredentism might make out a case, and final demarcation of the boundary might result in territorial gains for Communist China. Specifically, in the history of early negotiations, the British Deputy Commissioner for the Bhamo District investigated areas claimed by China. He concluded that there were valid Chinese claims to a few mountain villages west of the Salween-Irrawaddy watershed near the Ngawchang River. These claims were based on the tributary status (through exchange of presents) of these villages to certain village headmen in China, although it was apparent that the headmen did not actually control the mountain villages nor did the Chinese in turn exercise direct control over the headmen. 11/

Chinese Communist claims along the southern section of the Burma-China border have less validity. With regard to the undemarcated boundary (23°30'N to 22°10'N) in the Wa States area, the protracted negotiations and the recommendations made by a neutral chairman culminating in the 1941 Sino-British boundary agreement seemingly would settle the question of boundary alignment, despite the fact that the boundary was not formally demarcated on the

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ground. Repudiation of the 1941 agreement would appear to be the only method whereby the Chinese Communists would have an official basis to seek readjustment of the boundary. The question of the ownership of Namwan and Kokang also might be reopened on the basis that the 1897 agreement was an "unequal treaty" made at a time when China was oppressed by foreign nations. The Chinese Communists thus could demand a revision of the boundary in these areas on the grounds of "equity" and "justice."

VI. The Current Border Situation

A. Transportation

Overland communication between Burma and China is difficult. The Burma Road is the only route that could support large-scale movement of materiel and troops by motor transport. There are a very few dry-weather motorable routes, including jeepable tracks, which could support limited movements of men and materiel, but all of these routes would become impassable for vehicles and difficult even for mules during the wet season, April through September. Even on the Burma Road, landslides, washouts, and swollen streams may halt traffic for days during the rainy months (Figure 19). In the Northern Border Region, transborder communication routes are limited to mule-caravan tracks and coolie paths via difficult mountain

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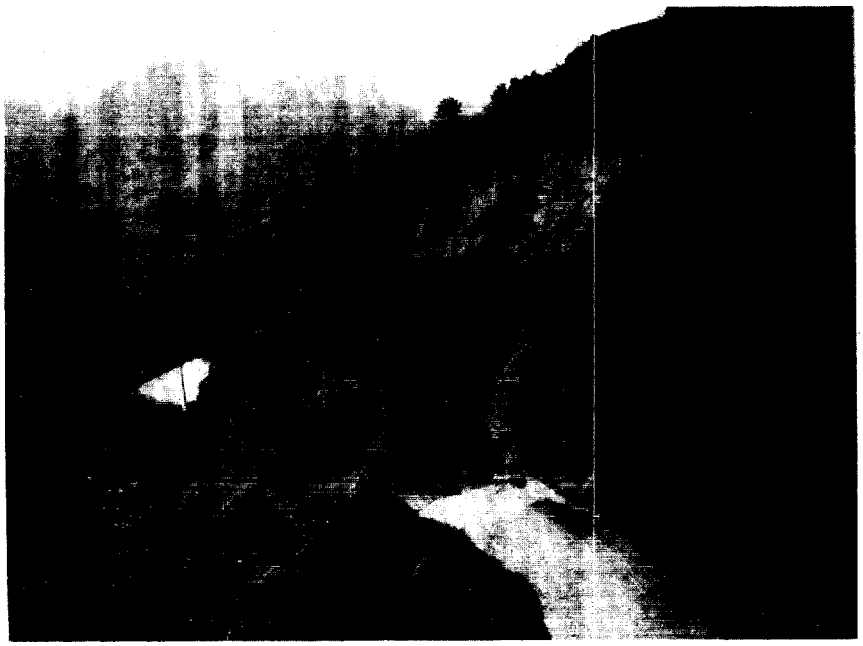

Figure 19. A landslide blocks traffic on the Burma Road near Lung-ling.

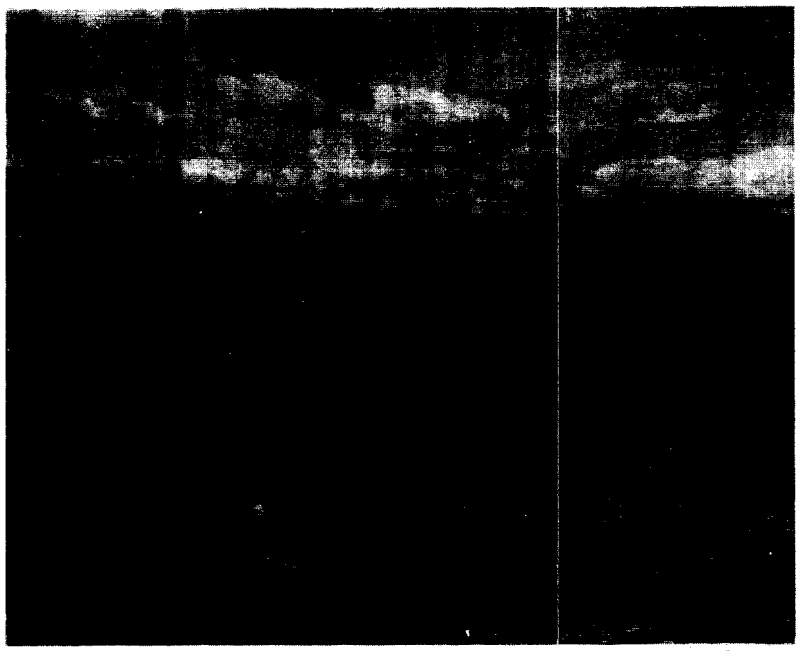

Figure 20. The Burma Road at the Salween crossing. Old and new fields checkerboard the steep slopes. Difference in elevation between river surface and ridge crest is 2,500 to 3,000 feet. View towards the southwest.

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passes (Figure 3), most of which are blocked by snow during the winter (late December to April).* No railroads link Burma to China; the nearest railheads are at Lashio and Myitkyina in Burma and at K'un-ming in China.

In addition to the Burma Road (Figure 20), there are two minor routes in the Myitkyina--Bhamo--T'eng-ch'ung area (see map 13127). Until World War II, an all-weather track usable by mule caravans connected T'eng-ch'ung with Myitkyina via the relatively low Kauliang Pass (8,870 feet elevation). This track, which connects at Lung-ling with the Burma Road, was made motorable in 1944, but its condition rapidly deteriorated after World War II. A number of recent reports indicate that the Chinese Communists may be improving this route to make it motorable from T'eng-ch'ung to the Kauliang Pass. It has also been reported that the Chinese Communists may be improving a track that leads from T'eng-ch'ung westward to Bhamo.

South of the Burma Road is a route in various stages of completion that roughly parallels the Burma Road, connecting Yun-hsien with Meng-ting (see map 13127). Parts of this route follow

*A number of the more important passes are located, named, and described in Appendix B.

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the proposed alignment of a once-projected Lashio-K'un-ming railroad. If completed, this route would connect with a dry-weather road leading from the Burma Road to the ferry crossing of the Salween at Kunlong, whence a trail leads eastward to the frontier. The 200-mile segment of the frontier in the Wa States area is practically inaccessible; no routes except native footpaths lead to this area from either Burma or China.

Several routes cross the border in the southernmost part of the frontier area, many of which are reportedly being improved by the Chinese. For over 2 years, the Chinese Communists have been constructing a motorable road linking K'un-ming with Ch'e-li, the administrative center of the Tai Autonomous District. This route is reported to have been completed in late 1953; it is probably a single-lane dry-weather road. From Ch'e-li, the Chinese are clearing and improving an ancient pack trail that leads west via Fo-hai to the Burma border, and late reports indicate that this route may have been completed. Construction and improvement of a road leading south from Ch'e-li to the Burma frontier and the improvement of other trails leading to Laos are other Chinese objectives in the region. A trail somewhat to the north, leading from Ssu-mao through Lants'ang and Meng-mao to the Burma border, was reported to be

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under construction in 1951-52, although there are indications that work was suspended in favor of construction in the Ch'e-li area.

The only major Chinese construction in the Northern Border Region is the building of a motorable road that eventually will link Yünnan with Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. Its alignment follows in general the ancient caravan trail from Yünnan to Tibet (see map 13127). This route is now motorable to about 27°30'N.

B. Transborder Trade

Overland trade between Burma and China, except for short periods of expansion caused by war conditions, has been on a comparatively small scale. There are three types of overland trade: (1) legitimate, (2) clandestine, and (3) the traditional limited amount of barter trade between Chinese peddlers and traders and the various border tribes. During the period 1946-48, legitimate overland exports to China amounted to only about 6 percent of Burma's total export trade, and the percentage of imports from China was even smaller, representing only 2 or 3 percent of the total.

The commodities exported from Burma to China in the years immediately preceding the Chinese Communist assumption of power in 1949 were rice and raw cotton; imports from China consisted almost entirely of textiles, principally cotton yarn. Legitimate trade

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declined sharply after the defeat of the Chinese Nationalists, partially as a result of Burma's efforts to control trade so as to insure supplies for domestic use, plus pressure by the United States to reduce trade with Soviet-bloc nations. Several restrictive measures were taken by the Government of Burma in 1950-51 to curtail the flow of strategic materials to China. These included the prohibition of the reexport of petroleum products and imported manufactured goods in short supply in Burma, and restrictions on the issuance of transit licenses, designed to limit transshipments to China. Actually, the amount of legal trade since 1950 has been negligible.

During the first year of the Communist occupation of Yünnan, widespread smuggling took place quite openly via the Burma Road. In great demand in China during 1950 were tires, vehicles, petroleum and petroleum products, and automotive parts. It has been said that during 1950 a truck could be purchased in Burma and transported to K'un-ming, where its value doubled or even tripled. The comparatively easy flow of smuggled goods in and out of Burma was due to some extent to the lack of custom officials and check points, but the most important factor was the widespread bribery of custom and police officials. Since 1951, however, smuggling has declined considerably, because the Burma Government increased the number of

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check points, reshuffled border officials, moved elements of the Burmese Army into the frontier area, and imposed harsher penalties for bribe taking. Illicit goods can no longer move openly across the border via the Burma Road but must be transported on the numerous trails that crisscross the border. Large-scale smuggling operations have thus been stopped, and the type and amount of goods that can be exchanged is limited. At the present time the major products smuggled from Burma into Yünnan include raw cotton, cotton yarn, medicines, scrap metal, and petroleum products. In exchange, although a much smaller amount of goods passes from Yünnan to Burma than in the opposite direction, Yünnanese products offered are chinaware, rice, vermicelli, and other locally produced goods.

Opium smuggling, scarecely a new enterprise in the border area, continues to flourish, with traders smuggling their product to Rangoon and Bangkok after paying toll to various bandits, insurgent groups, and officials. The Chinese Nationalist guerrilla units operating in the border area reportedly are engaged in the opium traffic.

Very little information is available concerning Chinese Communist trade policies. It appears, however, that smuggling has been encouraged and that petty traders have been allowed to continue their operations among the border tribes. The old Yünnan silver coins,

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long the medium of exchange among the border tribes in Yünnan, are being replaced by Chinese paper currency.

C. Chinese Communist Penetration

Little information is available concerning attempts of the Chinese Communists to penetrate and infiltrate the border areas. Primary efforts appear to be directed toward the border tribes and their subversion by propaganda appeals to tribal "unity." This campaign is part of the extensive Chinese program now being carried on in minority-inhabited areas of western Yünnan, which has resulted in the establishment of several so-called autonomous administrative units (see section IV). From time to time there are reports that Communist agents are working among the tribes in Burma, although their efforts thus far have not been on a large scale. Communist indoctrination of traders who cross and recross the border has also been reported, and this method has probably been of some importance in disseminating Communist propaganda. There have been reports that agents disguised as traders have infiltrated into Burma.

Since 1950 several small groups of Chinese Communist military forces have been reported entering Burma. An incident of this nature occurred in July 1953 in the northern Wa States area,

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and a more recent Chinese Communist foray into Kokang has been reported. None of these incursions has been of long duration or in great strength, and no subsequent demands by the Chinese for boundary rectifications have followed, as might logically be the case if these invasions were part of an overall plan to force the disputed border issue. The Burmese Government, not wishing to antagonize its great neighbor to the northeast, has not publicly protested these border forays. The combination of difficult terrain and lack of communications in the frontier region lends itself to forays by small groups. Except at established points of crossing, for most of the length of the border it is possible for small groups to infiltrate without detection.

A potential threat to the political stability of the Kachin areas of northern Burma has been the presence of the renegade Kachin leader, Naw Seng, in the border area. Naw Seng, a Kachin chief who in 1949 led a mutiny of Kachin elements in the Burmese Army and later fled to Yünnan, reportedly has been receiving training and indoctrination from the Chinese Communists. He apparently controls a force of several hundred to perhaps 2,000 men. Since his base of operations shifts frequently, little accurate information is available as to his present location and intentions. In any attempt to renew Chinese

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claims to northern Burma, such as organization of a Kachin state embracing both Burmese and Chinese Kachin groups, the Chinese Communists would most likely use Naw Seng and his followers. The organization and training of militia forces composed primarily of tribesmen in the several autonomous areas along the border is a potential threat to the security of the border region. The Communist method of attaining their objectives through the use of puppet leaders and forces is well established.

The presence of Chinese Nationalist forces and guerrilla bands along the Burma frontier has been frequently cited as a possible excuse for Chinese Communist intervention to "protect" the border inhabitants from Nationalist exploitation. Thus far, the Chinese Communists have chosen not to force this issue, and the removal of some Chinese guerrilla troops in recent months may somewhat alleviate the tense situation.*

*After Burma submitted the Chinese Nationalist problem to the UN in April 1953, a joint committee was formed composed of Thailand, Nationalist China, and the United States to arrange for the withdrawal of the Chinese Nationalist forces. Evacuation began in late 1953, and by March 1954 some 5,000 troops had been removed; efforts are continuing to bring about the withdrawal of additional troops.

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VII. Conclusions

The traditional buffer function of the Burma-China frontier region is coming to an end. This is being accomplished by the expansion of Chinese Communist political control, which, coupled with the extension of modern transportation routes into the frontier lands, is ending the quasi-independent status and physical isolation of the border peoples.

The Chinese Communists have pursued the traditional Chinese political policy of fragmenting the frontier peoples into small, easily manipulated administrative units. In implementing this policy, however, they have differed from previous Chinese regimes. Superficially, the Peking regime has followed the admonition of Imperial administrators of the early dynasties to "cherish the feudal princes, win the distant peoples with kindness and restraint." 1/ In contrast to past practices, however, the Communists have used military forces with great discretion in the process of securing control. Furthermore, through the establishment of so-called autonomous governments, respect shown for minority customs, subsidization of Chinese-minority trade relations, promotion of public education and public health programs, and the widespread use of pro-Communist native leaders and young people to implement their program, the

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Chinese Communists have been able to control the border peoples politically with apparently little active opposition. The net result of this subtle and systematic campaign probably will be to hasten the process of Chinese cultural assimilation of non-Chinese peoples.

Although the barriers of mountains, river gorges, and dissected plateau lands have in the past hindered major east-west movements, penetration of the frontier lands by small groups and trading caravans has always been possible. The road construction and repair promoted by the Chinese Communists will facilitate political control of the frontier and enhance Chinese military capabilities against Southeast Asian countries.

The boundary claims of Communist China are not new but represent a continuation of past Chinese claims. The most serious Chinese boundary claim is north of 25°35'N. This segment of the boundary has never been defined and is at present a de facto boundary only. No Chinese government, past or present, has recognized any definition of this boundary or relinquished claims to territory west of the present line. If a formal agreement as to the delineation of this boundary segment is reached, the territorial readjustments may be disadvantageous to Burma. Although the British and Burmese have loosely administered northern Burma for a number

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of years, a possible case can be made for China west of the Salween-Irrawaddy watershed. Other areas to which China may lay claim include the Wa States, Kokang, Namwan, and the Shan State of Keng Tung. It is doubtful that there is much justification for most of these Chinese claims, but the balance of power is such that China's bargaining power would be great if negotiations were opened.

The unsettled conditions and lack of administration prevailing in much of Burma's frontier area, particularly the presence and activities of Chinese Nationalist guerrilla forces, have presented opportunities for Chinese Communist exploitation and intervention. Thus far the Chinese Communists have not fully exploited the situation but have contented themselves with occasional small-scale border forays and the infiltration of agents among the tribespeople in Burma. There have been reports that Chinese agents have talked of "tribal unity" to minority groups in Burma, but apparently these propaganda efforts have been on a limited scale.

Despite the somewhat strained relations between the Government of Burma and leaders in the Kachin and Shan States and the general distrust and dislike between these groups and the Burmese, there is a counterbalancing factor of active dislike of the Chinese on the part of most tribespeople and their leaders. At the time when Burmese

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prestige and power was lowest (1949-51), the Kachins and Shans for the most part did not defect to the various insurgent groups.

So far the Chinese Communists have devoted most of ther energies to consolidation of control over their western Yünnan frontier areas, but an expanded and concentrated Chinese campaign to attract the loyalities of tribal groups in Burma could prove effective, particularly in view of the failure of the Burmese to ameliorate Burmese-minority relationships.

Initial Chinese Communist objectives in establishing "autonomous" governments appear to be limited to securing complete control of tribal territories, and little has been made of the ethnic affinity of these groups with those across the border in Burma. Future moves by the Chinese, however, to win over the tribes in Burma would presumably use these minority peoples' governments as examples of "benevolent" Chinese minority policies and their territory as bases for training cadres and agents.

By Chinese and Southeast Asian standards, the frontier lands are sparsely inhabited and undoubtedly could support a much larger population. Many of the valleys are now malarial, but the Chinese public health and land utilization programs may make possible an influx of Chinese settlers into these comparatively empty basin and valley lands.

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APPENDIX A

LIST OF AUTONOMOUS UNITS*

1. Name: Hsi-shuang-pan-na (Sibson Panna) Tai Autonomous District

   Date Established: January 1953

   Administrative Capital: Ch'e-li (21°59'N-100°49'E)

   Area: 25,000 sq. km.

   Population: 200,000, consisting of "47 nationalities" or tribes of which 140,000 are Tai, with lesser numbers of Akha, Lahu, Lolo, and Yao

   Administrative Officials: Chairman Chao Khun Sin, a Tai (variants of the name include Chao Ts'un-hsin and Chao Chun Tsin); 5 Vice Chairmen, including 3 Tai, 2 Chinese, and 1 Akha

2. Name: Te-hung Tai-Kachin Autonomous District

   Date Established: July 1953

   Administrative Capital: Meng-shih (24°27'N-98°36'E)

   Area: 13,000 sq. km. (estimate)

   Population: About 400,000, of which 175,000 are Tai and 97,000 are Kachins

   Administrative Officials: Chairman Tiao Ching-pan, a Tai (also given as Tao Pin-han, presumably a former sawbwa of Pao-shan); 7 Vice Chairmen, including 3 Tai, 3 Kachins, and 1 Chinese

*Data largely obtained from Chinese Communist press releases. The accuracy of area and population statistics is questionable.

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3. Name: Lan-ts'ang Lahu Autonomous Hsien

Date Established: April 1953

Administrative Capital: Lan-ts'ang (approximately 22°55'N-100°04'E)

Area: 10,000 sq. km.

Population: About 203,000, of which 93,000 are Lahus, with lesser numbers of Wa, Akha, and Tai

Administrative Officials: Chairman Li Kuang-hua, a Lahu, and 6 Vice Chairmen including 2 Lahu, and one each Chinese, Wa, Akha, and unidentified

4. Name: Nu Chiang Lisu Autonomous District

Date Established: Preparatory announcement made in October 1953; normally several months elapse prior to formal establishment

Administrative Capital: Not announced

Area: 8,000 sq. km. (estimate)

Population: About 100,000; no information as to percentage of Lisu

Administrative Officials: Chairman of the preparatory committee is P'ei Ah-chien, a Lahu; 4 Vice Chairmen, including 2 Lisu and 2 Na-khi

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APPENDIX B

IMPORTANT YÜNNAN-BURMA MOUNTAIN PASSES*

1. Namni L'ka (28°21'N-97°48'E); elevation 15,297 feet

   A very high pass leading from northern Burma into Sikang. Closed by snow December-April.

2. Yuragan Pass (27°47'N-98°26'E); 12,489 feet

   The most important pass in this area that connects the Upper Salween Valley with the Taron River Valley; it can be crossed by mule caravans. Closed by snow January-April.

3. Maguchi Pass (27°21'N-98°44'E); 11,540 feet

   The quickest route from the Salween to the Ahkyang Valley. The trail is poor but is used by traders. Closed by snow January-April.

4. Hg'amu Pass (27°13'N-98°43'E); 12,800 feet

   Reportedly a route by which cattle and horses are taken from the Salween Valley to Burma. Approach is said to be easy from the China side, more difficult from the Burma side. Closed by snow January-April.

5. Gigi Pass (27°04'N-98°45'E); 8,882 feet

   At a considerably lower elevation than the passes farther north and usable throughout the year, but comparatively difficult to cross. Crossing from China to Burma, the Simi Pass (9,833

*Only the more important passes are described here and shown on the accompanying map, No. 13127. There are a number of other passes, but they are in general difficult to traverse and are little used. The passes described were selected on the basis of World War II studies, supplemented by recent intelligence reports.

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f feet) must be traversed before trails to the the Ahkyang and Nmai Hka Valleys are reached. Access to the Ahkyang Valley can be had via Wachet Pass (10,464 feet), which, however, is blocked by winter snows.

6. Hpimaw Pass (25°58'N-98°42'E); 10,998 feet (Figure 3)

Regularly used by Chinese mule caravans from the Salween Valley; a trail leads to the comparatively well populated Ngawchang Valley in Burma. Closed by snow January-February.

7. Pa Wa Pass (26°36'N-98°23'N); 7,665 feet

A mule pack track from T'eng-ch'ung to the Nmai Hka Valley and eventually to Myitkyina crosses through this pass, one of the easiest to traverse and open throughout the year.

8. Kauliang Pass (25°25'N-98°09'E); 8,870 feet

A good all-weather mule track, made motorable during World War II, from T'eng-ch'ung to Myitkyina crosses the border by this pass, which is open throughout the year.

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APPENDIX C

GAPS IN INTELLIGENCE

Basic studies of this region, particularly the western Yünnan frontier areas, are lacking. Although a number of westerners, primarily British, have traveled in and explored various parts of the frontier, the reports are generally of a reconnaissance nature. Detailed and comprehensive studies of small areas are almost entirely lacking. Reports on ethnic groups are usually generalized and often reflect conditions of 15 to 40 years ago; very little information is available concerning the effect of World War II and post-war developments on the culture and economy of the frontier peoples. There is little reliable current intelligence concerning Chinese Communist activites in the frontier.

Topographic map coverage of Burmese frontier areas is fair to good, although the cultural data on most sheets are out of date. Topographic map coverage is lacking for most Chinese frontier areas, and the surveys used for compiling the available coverage are old and unreliable.

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APPENDIX D

SOURCES AND EVALUATION OF SOURCES

1. Evaluation of Sources

Information for this report has been obtained from a variety of sources, which fall in the following general categories: accounts by explorers, scholars, missionaries, or officials; special studies compiled during World War II; official documents; topographic and special-subject maps; and press releases from Communist China. The writings of the botanist-explorer F. Kingdon Ward, which deal principally with the Northern Border Region, provide useful terrain, climatic, vegetation, and ethnic data. Reports and maps published by the British Inter-Service Topographic Department during World War II contain general information about the physical setting, people, and economy of the Burmese frontier lands. Of considerable use was the gazetteer Ethnic Groups of Northern Southeast Asia, with its accompanying map, published under the auspices of Yale University.

The recent study by Wiens 1/ contains useful information on the historical migration of ethnic groups into South Asia and on Chinese systems of administration in frontier areas. This source

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is particularly valuable in that it makes wide use of Chinese-language source materials. [redacted]

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2. Sources*

1. Herold J. Wiens, China's March into the Tropics, Office of Naval Research, Washington, D.C., 1952. U.

2. American Consulate General, Hong Kong, Current Background, No. 264, 5 October 1953, p. 19. U. Eval. C-2.

3. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report, Far East, 17 September 1953, AAA-6. Official Use Only. Eval. F-2.

*Evaluations following the classification entry and designated "Eval." have the following significance:

A - Completely reliable	1 - Confirmed by other sources
B - Usually reliable	2 - Probably true
C - Fairly reliable	3 - Possibly true
D - Not usually reliable	4 - Doubtful
E - Not reliable	5 - Probably false
F - Cannot be judged	6 - Cannot be judged

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[redacted]

5. FBIS, Daily Report, 17 September 1953, AAA-21. Official Use Only. Eval. F-3.

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7. American Consulate General, Hong Kong, Survey of China Mainland Press, No. 505, 3 February 1953, p. 23. U. Eval. F-2.

8. FBIS, Daily Report, Far East, 27 January 1954, AAA-6. Official Use Only. Eval. F-3.

9. British and Foreign State Papers, 1896-1897, Vol. 89, London. U.

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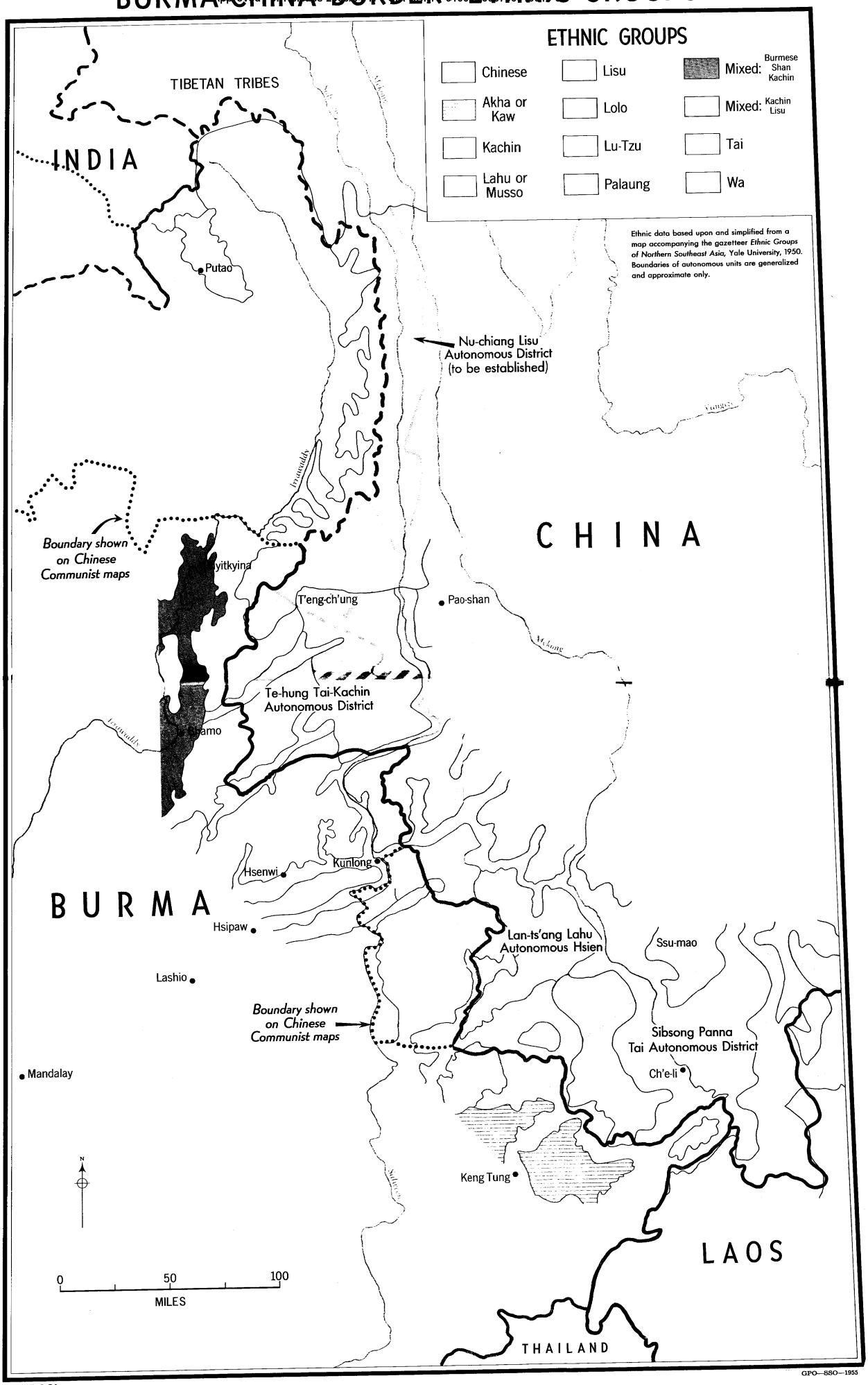
BURMA-CHINA BORDER: ETHNIC GROUPS



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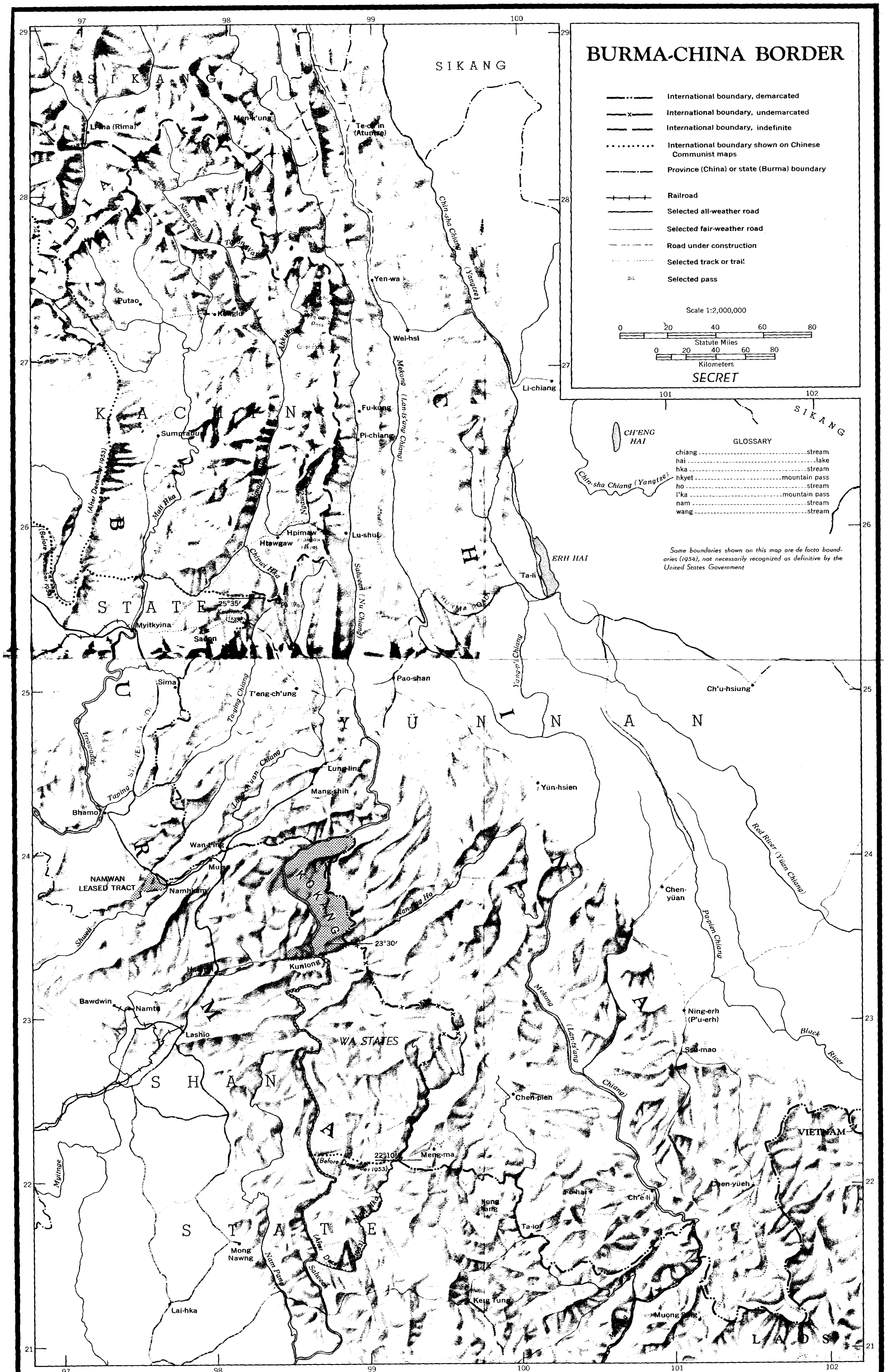

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