Rethinking Kachin Wealth Ownership

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PART THREE

THE KACHIN SUBGROUPS

RETHINKING KACHIN WEALTH OWNERSHIP*

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This chapter examines Kachin wealth ownership in order to offer an alternative to Leach's "oscillation" model of social change for Kachin communities across a wide expanse of upland Burma, as set out in his *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (1954). Although my account benefits from both Leach and his critics, it differs in three important respects. First, it introduces primary sources that provide wider coverage of Jingpo in Yunnan for the time immediately before and just after Leach's own fieldwork.[1] Second, my own ongoing fieldwork, which began late

* The writing of this chapter benefited from discussions of the original draft at two occasions: the workshop of "Rethinking Boundaries" held at the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, Taiwan, 18 August 2004; and the panel of "Reconsidering *Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure*—Comparative Approaches 50 years on from E. R. Leach" at EUROSEAS (4th Conference of the European Association of Southeast Asian Studies), Paris, 1–4 September. At the workshop I benefited from exchanges with and comments by Yang Shu-yuan, Chiang Bien, Guido Sprenger. For the panel, I especially thank the panel organizers, Mandy Sadan and François Robinne, including the former for her efforts during the editing process and the latter for his continuous kindness and support in inviting me to join this group of scholars. I additionally thank Robert Anderson, Stéphane Gros, and the panel reviewer F. K. Lehman for their interest in and comments on my original draft. Finally, I am very grateful to my husband James Wilkerson for numerous discussions about the initial writing and subsequent revision of the various versions of this chapter. Any remaining shortcomings are solely my responsibility.

[1] My first hand material from the Jingpo in China includes data from Jinghpaw speakers and Zaiwa speakers in Dehong Prefecture in the People's Republic of China. The research on the Jingpo includes eighteen-months of dissertation research between 1988 and 1991 through funding from the United States Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China and an exchange program between the University of Virginia and the Yunnan Nationalities Institute. Between 1995 and 2005, I carried out eight brief research trips funded by "Exchange, Life-cycle Rites and Personhood: Regional Research on the Chinese Southwest Nationalities" project under the Thematic Research Program of "Highland and Lowland Societies and Cultures of Monsoon Asia", Academia Sinica, and personal annual research projects of the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, Republic of China. In this paper, where appropriate for reasons of context, I continue the earlier practice of using the term Kachin, I use Jingpo to refer to all the Jingpo nationality under the Chinese classification of nationality, including Jinghpaw, Zaiwa, and Langvo speakers. Hanson's (1954 [1906]) romanization is used for Jinghpaw language terms (indicated by [j]; the Dehong Language Committee's romanization is used for Zaiwa terms (indicated by [z]); and, Pinyin romanization is used for Chinese terms (indicated by [c]).

in the 1980s on Jinghpaw and Zaiwa speakers of Jingpo nationality across the border from Burma in Yunnan, makes it possible to focus afresh on the cultural classifications of property in general and wealth objects in particular that are so much at the heart of Leach's oscillation model. Third, in aggregate, these additional descriptive materials provide a fresh documentary standard against which to measure Leach's oscillation model and the alternate formulations of his critics from the perspective of recent relevant debates within anthropology.

Briefly, the perspective I have arrived at is that Kachin social change between the 1850s and 1950s revolved around monetized markets whose histories predate the arrival of British colonialists, and a major shift in those monetized markets in association with the imposition of British colonial rule. Nevertheless, the Kachin were not simply passive witnesses to their own history. Rather, they brought, and are still bringing, cultural understandings of wealth objects to engagements with their new circumstances. Thus, in contrast to Leach's oscillation model and similar to his critics, the conclusion I reach is that external events triggered fundamental changes in Kachin society that undermined the *gumsa* hierarchical social order. Nonetheless, like Leach's oscillation model, and different from his critics, my alternative interpretation still includes a central role for Kachin culture in Kachin social change, including especially cultural classifications of wealth objects.

Leach's Oscillation Model and its Critics

Edmund Leach's *Political Systems of Highland Burma* has long served as a touchstone for research in upland Southeast Asia (Woodward 1989: 121). Furthermore, Leach's monograph has long been influential even more widely for the study of social change elsewhere around the world (see, for example, Kuper 1983 [1973]: Chapter Six).

Leach's oscillation model asserts that people in upland Burma had a range of possible social orders from which to choose, including: the hierarchical *gumsa*, the egalitarian *gumlao*, and the monarchical Shan. No single community completely adhered to any one of these social orders, instead tracking relatively closer to one or the other, and adhering to any one of the social orders for only a limited stretch of time before turning in the direction of another social order. Leach's oscillation model further asserts that, although external forces encouraged Kachin *gumsa* to move toward monarchical Shan hierarchy, internal

cultural factors encouraged *gumlao* equality. More specifically, the motive behind a swing in the direction of a monarchical Shan hierarchy was "imitating Shan." In contrast, the motive for a swing in the direction of an egalitarian *gumlao* social order arose from ambitious seekers of power who exploited the paradoxes and contradictions lodged in affinal relations and ultimogeniture (1977 [1954]: 262), and where justification for their actions was located in myths that recounted and legitimized egalitarian *gumlao* revolts (ibid.: 263).

Criticisms of Leach's oscillation model break down into two kinds. One sort emphasizes factors Leach saw as essential to social change, the other emphasizes factors Leach did not see as essential to social change. Criticisms of the former sort turn on Leach's "imitating Shan" account of the motivations toward a hierarchical social order. One attraction of Leach's argument about "imitating Shan" is that it foregrounds "human desire" as a motive for human action. Unfortunately, in seeing "human desire" as more-or-less innate and divorced from culture and political economy, Leach frees himself from the obligation to give an account of the specifically Kachin culturally-situated desire to imitate the hierarchical Shan, a criticism that has already been widely made (see Kirsch 1973, Lehman 1977, 1989, Woodward 1989, and Woodward and Russell 1989).[2] Likewise, one attraction of Leach's argument about myths as social contracts is, indeed, that it introduces a culturally situated desire for a particular social order. Be this as it may, human desire might account for why Kachin social change moved in one direction; it could not account for social change in both directions.

Nevertheless, the bulk of the criticism levelled against Leach's oscillation model concentrates on possible external factors that alternately encouraged *gumsa* hierarchy and *gumlao* equality. Three events from the period beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century and ending

[2] For instance, Kirsch agrees with Leach's thesis on the manipulation of individuals, but moves beyond that position. He argued that the "motivational basis of the dynamism found in these upland Southeast Asian Societies" is that "the individuals within these groups are seeking 'ritual efficacy,' 'potency,' 'enhanced ritual status,' or some such religiously defined goal, not seeking simply to possess 'political power'" (Kirsch 1973: 3). Kirsch shifts Leach's emphasis on the individual's "political" motivation to that of "religion," because he wants to "highlight more general internal systemic consistencies than Leach would allow" (Kirsch 1973: 3). I provide elsewhere (Ho 1997: 53–66) a more detailed review and critique of my own and other scholars' understandings of Leach's views about culture.

in the middle of the twentieth century have been emphasized. Two of these external events were decidedly political (reviewed in Giersch 2001 and Atwill 2003 on Muslim rebellion especially). First, beginning in the middle of the 1850s, Yunnan entered into a long period of political instability in association with wider crises besetting China's Qing dynasty. Second, in 1885, the British imposed colonial rule upon northern Burma. One important shared feature of these two events was that the classic kingdoms of Burma and China had by then lost their previous ability to influence politics in upper Burma. An additional, third economic event took place in close conjunction with the above two political events. That event was the florescence in the production, trade, and consumption of opium. This event provided the Kachin with a major new source of cash income (Renard 1996, Bello 2003, Trocci 1999, Zhang 1990, Qing 1998, 2005), which probably resulted in a period of increased Kachin wealth.

Leach referred to all three of these events in *Political Systems of Highland Burma*. Still, since Leach did not see any of these events as essential to his oscillation model, his descriptions of these external events were correspondingly brief and fragmented. Furthermore, even years after the publication of the first edition of the monograph, Leached continued to reject vigorously suggestions by his critics that external events, and especially the introduction of opium, might be relevant for an evaluation of his oscillation model (1977, 1983: 195–197, 788). Tellingly, a central rationale Leach explicitly cited for spurning the importance of the above three external events in modelling Kachin social change was the importance he gave to providing a 'cultural" account for social change.

David Nugent (1982) and Jonathan Friedman (1987), two of Leach's most prominent critics, concentrated on the importance of these wider events in the history of upland Burma and argued for a lineal history of Kachin social change as being most importantly organized around the above three external events. In so doing, they identified the introduction of opium as the single most important event for the century that began in the middle of the nineteenth century and lasted until the middle of the twentieth century.

Nugent's argument includes three steps. First, the presence of the *gumsa* social order up to the middle of the 1850s was a consequence of the introduction of opium. Second, after the 1850s, the political instability across the border in Yunnan and the imposition of British colonial rule in upland Burma precipitated *gumlao* revolutions at the

end of the nineteenth century. Third, Nugent goes on ultimately to relate the introduction of opium to wider global forces.

Friedman gives a much different account of the consequences that arose from the introduction of opium. First, instead of linking the introduction of opium with the presence of the *gumsa* social order, Friedman attributes the *gumsa* social order to the longstanding "predatory structure" of the Kachin. Specifically, the organization of the *gumsa* social order was around a strategy of "exploiting the flow of wealth in the larger system by extortion" (1979: 13). Second, the role of the introduction of opium only became pivotal early in the twentieth century. Consequently, the introduction of opium was "associated in fact with the spread of *gumlao* organization" (1987: 17).

There is special merit to Friedman's account. First, Friedman's criticisms of Nugent is that the latter's attribution of the *gumsa* social order to the introduction of opium leaves no role for the obvious historical importance of trade in upper Burma long before both the imposition of British colonial rule and the introduction of opium. Additionally, though certainly present, the importance of the opium trade prior to the 1850s relative to trade in other products is to misconstrue the historical sources.

These comparative merits to Friedman's account notwithstanding, his attribution of the presence of the *gumsa* regime to the predatory relationship between the Kachin and pre-British regional trade is arguably itself overly narrow in its concentration upon predation. First, Kachin interactions with regional markets were not limited to predation alone, but also importantly included production for trade, trade proper, and wage labour in association with that production and trade. Second, trade in this part of the world had a long history of using money and money substitutes, including Burmese and Chinese currencies and specie. Finally, although of great importance, the introduction of opium was not the only impact that the imposition of British colonial rule had upon Kachin market activities. In sum, it is not easy to dismiss *a priori* the possible broader relevance of monetized markets and their relationship to wider state formations in the historical continuities and discontinuities behind Kachin social change.

The Kachin economy is historically, and still remains, agrarian. Nonetheless, there is still solid evidence that markets and monetization played a wider role than heretofore realized in Kachin social change. Chinese and English sources both describe vigorous and widespread Jingpo in Yunnan and Kachin efforts to "look for money" (YNSBJZ

1985a, 1985b; Chen 1941, Enriquez 1920, 1923, 1933; Renard 1996, Qing 1998, Kuang and Yang 1986, Leach 1977, Webster 2003). There are reports that Kachin in eastern Bhamo collected tolls from caravan traders (Huang 1976: 85, Leach 1977 [1954], YNSBJZ 1985a: 129). As early as 1871, in addition to producing rice and pigs for trade, Kachin were already producing opium for sale, whose income was then used to buy salt, dry fish, needles, buttons, cloth and clothing (Anderson 1871: 221, 261). Some decades later, shortly after the institution of the Nationalist Chinese Government in 1911, the Chinese state began to impose a tax in the Zhidan mountain, to be paid in opium, which each annually taxed two *liang* of opium for a total of about 800 *liang* of opium (YNSBJZ 1986a: 10).[3] Opium had been an important cash income, but not the sole cash income for the Jingpo since the late nineteenth century. They also mortgaged and sold their land to the Han.[4]

Since the latter half of the nineteenth century, this area of northern Burma and the China border has always been in flux politically. The massive Han immigration to Yunnan since the mid-nineteenth century, voluntarily or under government encouragement, caused the series of rebellions, revolts and unsettlement (Atwill 2003, Lee 1982, Giersch 2001), as well as other chances to make money. My Jingpo "uncle" in Dehong in his early 70s talked about how the powerful Gudong headman made his wealth from the geopolitical space the Jingpo occupied at the state's peripheral.

> One does not know how many head of cattle the Gudong chief had. We are not directly under his ruling. But, in our village, one family was tending some of his cattle. In our village only, he had at least 40 to 50 heads of cattle. He earned his wealth from being the leader mediating between the Han and the Jingpo, the tribute money, rice, opium or cattle by the villages (including many Han villages) under his ruling. After every successful mediation of conflict, the Han gave the chief several heads of cattle, guns etc in return. He also grew opium, but not much.

In his recollection, people with skill making iron tools and utensils, woodwork or jewellery, and those who grew opium and raised cattle,

[3] *One liang* ("Chinese ounce") equals 37.7 grams.

[4] Land sale or mortgage was considered an important source of cash for the Chinese Jingpo by Chinese literature on Jingpo in the 1950s (YNSBJZ 1985a, 1985b, 1986a). Lead by social evolutionary theory, this research holds the argument that the development of private property ownership in different areas or villages is the most important criteria in developing into "landlord feudalism." The typical explanation for this landlord feudalism holds that the penetration of Han Chinese into the Jingpo area causes mortgage and the sale of land.

could all find money. There were other kinds of wage labour, too. Early reports additionally indicate that men sold their labour in various odd jobs, such as herding for lowlanders, transporting salt across the border, hiring out as "braves," carriers, guides, and construction workers, as well as serving as military police and soldiers. Their employers were diverse. Early on, they worked for the lowland Shan and Chinese, the Dai local chiefdom (*tusi* [c]) government,[5] for the British during the colonial era,[6] for the American army in World War Two,[7] and for the Nationalist Chinese government for surveying land and building roads. While women did not usually sell their labour to the British or Americans, women sold firewood and other mountain products to lowlanders. Outsiders also hired Kachin women as short distance carriers, including serving the lowland Dai inside the China border as short distance carriers between market towns (YNSBJZ 1985a: 127). In the 1950s, Kachin men and women also worked outside their communities in the agricultural slack season that occurred annually just before harvest to earn cash. Communities short of agricultural land were particularly dependent on cash income earned from lowland markets through trade, labour, and forest products. In short, whether the medium of exchange was money, or opium as a money substitute (see Leach 1977 [1954]: 151, 1983: 195), a trail of evidence documents the presence and importance of monetized markets in the Kachin Hills before, during, and after the arrival of the British.

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[5] Pictures taken in 1937 show Jingpo soldiers serving the *Dai* local chiefdom government (Jiang and Jiang 2003: 107, 109).

[6] Kachin began joining the Upper Burma Military Police Battalion at Bhamo in 1896–1897 (Dautremer 1916: 183–4, Dawson 1912: 66–68, Scott 1921 [1906]: 351, Enriquez 1923: 40). In 1917, they became part of the Eighty-fifth Burma Rifles and formally enrolled in the regular British Indian Army. Kachin soldiers fought for the British in Mesopotamia between 1917 and 1919 (Enriquez 1920: 46).

[7] Beginning in 1942, Kachin involvement in Burma in World War Two, as levies and guerrilla soldiers in fighting against the Japanese, was significant (Fellowes-Gordon 1957). That involvement included as British North Kachin Levies (NKL), who earned a reputation as expert at laying ambushes (Webster 2003: 49–56). Beginning in 1943, Kachin assisted the American Detachment 101 in guerrilla fighting as guides, escorts, and instructors in assassination techniques (pp. 158–162). As a unit within Detachment 101, under the command of Captain William C. Wilkinson, the Kachin won even greater acclaim for their "fearlessness, far-ranging surveillance skills, and fluency in the jungle" (p. 162) Prior to the end of 1943, Detachment 101 had conscripted "thousands" of Kachin (pp. 162–163). Kachin recruits joined the "Kachin V force" to "act as a regular army version of Detachment 101," in support of General Stilwell's X Force re-invasion back into central Burma for creating diversions and gathering intelligence (p. 164).

Money and Culture

My emphasis upon the importance of the monetized market as a possible organizing force in social change is certainly not novel. To skip quickly forward to the more recent anthropological literature on the subject, the widely influential Bloch and Parry edited volume *Money and the Morality of Exchange* (1989a), including especially their introduction (1989b), offers an obvious point of departure. Although there is no mention of Leach or the Kachin in this volume, it is important to note the continuation of Leach's emphasis upon cultural accounts of economic phenomena. Their penultimate cross-cultural conclusion is negative insofar as the meaning of money is wholly dependent upon cultural context rather than attributable to features of cultural meaning that consistently arose cross-culturally. This even holds under colonial and other exploitative circumstances, though the cultural accounts turn in important ways to reflect upon those colonial and otherwise exploitative realities. Bloch and Parry conclude that accounts that attribute cross-cultural meaning to money are reading such meanings from Western thought into ethnographic accounts.

Robbins and Akin propose in their "An Introduction to Melanesian Currencies: Agency, Identity, and Social Reproduction" for their edited volume *Money and Modernity: State and Local Currencies in Melanesia* (1999) a two-pronged response to Bloch and Parry. Behind this response is the overall argument that, contrary to Bloch and Parry, money has unique cross-cultural features, despite the acknowledged presence of contrasting cultural responses to money, and despite the past problem of injecting Euro-American cultural notions into social science debates.

One prong of Robbins and Akin's response is that they find unexpected similarities between local Melanesian currencies and globalized money. Sometimes such local currencies (the Kaliai studied by David and Dorthy Courts [1970 and 1977] are an important instance) can serve as "general purpose money" (Robbins and Akin 1999: 6, 11–12) insofar as such local currencies approach Simmel's depiction of globalized money as "pure exchangeability." This finding both calls into question Bloch and Parry's conclusion that the meaning of money is culturally specific, as well as their related conclusion that accounts about the cross-cultural meanings for money are exclusive to Western thought. The underlying point is that accounts of social change cannot assume *a priori* that the introduction of money in and of itself will result in social change. The

corollary is, however, that some communities have the cultural means for controlling the flow of "pure exchangeability."

For this reason, and although currencies in general and money in particular commonly possess other features ("liquidity," "divisibility," "transportability," and "concealability"), Robbins and Akin explore at greatest length the similarities and differences between local currencies and money and other objects of exchange. Robbins and Akin combine the works of Roy Wagner, Paul Bohannon, and Marshall Sahlins to come up with a new take on the notion of "exchange spheres." Communities control "pure exchangeability" by keeping exchange spheres discrete. The cultural point is that exchange spheres contrast one another in terms of their organization out of discrete combinations of social relationships, classes of objects, and modalities of exchange. First, exchange in general is important in the society because it breaks up the flow of general human relatedness to create specific categories of social relatedness (Wagner 1977). Second, there is a relationship between the objects exchanged in terms of their cultural classification and the valuation of the exchange of one object for another in moral terms (Bohannon 1955, 1959). On the one hand, there can be an exchange of objects from within the same cultural class, in which case the moral weighting of the exchange will be either neutral or positive to all parties (conveyance). On the other hand, there can be an exchange of objects from across different cultural classes, in which case the moral weighting of the exchange is negative or otherwise adverse to one or more of the parties (conversion). Thirdly, in every exchange there must additionally be agreement between a particular mode of exchange (including, in Robbins and Akin's usage, sharing, buying, delayed-return and exchange of exact equivalent (1999: 9) and a particular (pre-existing or expected) category of social relationships (Sahlins 1965).

In the case of Melanesia, Robbins and Akin go on to observe that "pure exchangeability" can co-exist with exchange spheres by walling off such exchanges into enclaves, which are special sorts of exchange spheres that include the use of a local currency or money as a medium for value. This brings up the other prong in Robbins and Akin's introduction: the shared features of globalized money and localized currencies that give them the ability to share features cross-culturally.

Normally, there will be barriers erected between an enclave and other exchange spheres through one or more crucial distinctions in terms of social relationships, classes of objects, or modalities of exchange other than trade. Apparently, these barriers assume cultural arguments

intended to give a moral weight to conventional community-wide attitudes toward "pure exchangeability." The idea is that attitudes toward currencies and money will never be neutral, lurching between anxiety and desire concerning the importance associated with such barriers. Briefly, currencies and money provoke anxiety because of their ability to run riot through a social order; alternately, they arouse desire because of this same power of "pure exchangeability", regardless of situation. Finally, feelings towards money and other currencies involving "pure exchangeability" as a special class of objects can be ambivalent, because both share an intrinsic linkage between two dimensions: currencies "cannot be consumed" and instead "act most importantly as a means of exchange" (ibid.: 4). That is

> The movement of currencies tends, in fact, to be impeded by fewer barriers than that of other kinds of objects (Crump 1990: 92). This is so precisely because people are compelled to circulate them and because their use as a general medium of exchange makes them widely desirable. (ibid.: 5)

In sum, in terms of social change, money thus possesses in only comparatively extreme form the threat common to all currencies, since "the flow of currencies always threatens to exceed the controlling boundaries set up through these same social relationships" (ibid.). The formal definition that Robbins and Akin offer is: "What makes the role of money unique is that money can move against anything *in any kind of exchange between people who stand in any kind of relationship to each other*" (ibid.: original emphasis).

Money in particular and currencies in general are associated with the two additional features of substitution and display that Robbins and Akin note in greater or lesser detail. In each case, these two secondary features of money are important in enclaving. In both instances, attention shifts from their primary role as a means of exchange, whose unique value is in their exchangeability, and to secondary roles of money or currency.

Robbins and Akin pay comparatively greater attention to display. Following Graeber (1996), Robbins and Akin argue that "Items of display index (or, in Graeber's term "reflect") powerful actions completed in the past, and they make a claim on those who see them to treat their bearer as the kind of person who has wielded such power" (ibid.: 28). In other words, objects displayed are statements about persons and their relationships such that they express the potential power for future collective action in terms of past collective actions. In the special case

of the display of money, the power to display money or other objects that the power of money makes available have the further feature of being selectively conspicuous; that is, "…money is quintessentially a hidden thing and as such it comes to represent all of the unseen, internal capacities of persons" (ibid.: 28). There is, thus, the latent implication that, in its ability to be concealed, "money represents and enhances agency, an actor's personal ability to get things done" (ibid.: 28).

Other displays have their own respective powers and potentialities. Robbins and Akin place their emphasis upon adornment, although much of what they say is applicable to similar phenomena. With adornment, there need not be a backdrop, as with money, of a capacity for concealing individual abilities and powers. Leach makes this very point when he observes that, for the Kachin, ownership of movable property is not about "capital for investment"; rather it is "an adornment to the person" (Leach 1997 [1954]: 142). We will see, however, that Leach's point is misplaced in one crucial respect, namely that "adornment to the person" can refer to past success in adventures, where money and other currency-like commodities are hidden or otherwise implicit elements in display.

That is, if movable property is in this sense an adornment, potentially many other phenomena can likewise count as adornment. I would only add to the list negotiations—an often-important, spoken, performative portion of exchange—that are just as much a part of a transaction as the handing over of objects. Like money and, indeed, like other similar objects, negotiations are displayable as a form of adornment that, in certain performative situations including religious ones, evinces the power and potentiality of money and other phenomena affiliated with its uses in exchange outside of that particular performative context. In thus paralleling money as display, negotiating in, say, a ritual context, displays the results of success in past market transactions. Additionally, adornments, implying the interjection of an object's biography into performative contexts, mean that objects that move between exchange spheres in general, and between enclaves and other non-monetized exchange spheres, bring with them the powers associated with their "pure exchangeability."

I will now look into Kachin social changes brought on by colonialism in general and opium in particular. On the one hand, extensive research across upland Southeast Asia repeatedly documents that opium was once and sometimes still is pivotal to social grouping (see, for instance, Jösson 1998, 2001, Durrenberger 1989, Miles 1990). On the other hand, there is ample reason to question whether the opium

economy or other related changes in monetized economies only acted on social change mechanically.

Outsiders and outside wealth are indispensable to cosmology, and cultural understandings of exchange are central in constructions of personhood and sociality for the Jingpo in Yunnan along the border with Burma (Ho 1997, 1999, 2004). Early in the twentieth century, new concepts of individual ownership and new notions of personal display matched Kachin use of colonial money and opium in trade. The introduction of colonialism did not result in an inside-versus-outside contrast, such as found for "biznes" and "kustom" in Melanesia. Rather, it created a new sense of property, which legitimized the toppling of the previous rank order.

With the above discussion in mind, I begin with photographs taken in the decades just before Leach's fieldwork, especially relevant for discussions of adornment-as-display. I next turn to Chinese language materials heretofore un-utilized in critiques of Leach's *Political Systems of Highland Burma*.[8] Review of these sources includes first, a more-or-less anecdotal description of the role that money and marketing played in the life of Muiho Mulat, a young woman who lived in the upland zone during the early 1950s. At the same time that she was aggressively involved in the pursuit of personal accumulation of private wealth, Muiho Mulat showed a culturally nuanced concern for the purchase of family goods and items of personal adornment. This coverage of the Chinese language social surveys from the early 1950s then moves on to an account of household conditions at the same time as Muiho Mulat's trading adventures. This discussion establishes that Muiho

[8] Beginning in the early 1950s, the People's Republic of China regime initiated a series of social surveys for deciding policies of class struggle in frontier minority areas. Research in Yunnan on the Jingpo first began in 1952, under the leadership of the Frontier Work Committee organized by the Yunnan Provincial Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the Nationalities Affairs Committee of Yunnan Province. The purpose was to classify the nationalities according to their class relations of production. A rough, standardized social survey of production was used in each hamlet and village they went to, following their idea of the Marxist approach. For instance, the survey is done over a forty-day period in forty-one hamlets, 973 households, ranging in size from five or six households to 80 or 90 households each hamlet in Luxi County (YNSBJZ 1985a: 1). The results of this survey are of three kinds. The first kind is to describe certain households, hamlets, villages or areas, their means of production, modes of production, class relations in terms of production, and to count their household property, earning and expenditure. The second kind of writing is a survey of their customs and social structure. The third kind of writing is on history. This chapter use papers publishing the results of the surveys of the first kind only.

Mulat's trading was not unusual in being driven by cultural concerns about Kachin concepts of wealth, but rather that the same cultural concern was a pervasive motive across Kachin households even in the early years of rule in the People's Republic of China.

Photographs, Muiho Mulat's adventures, and household surveys from the decades just before and after Leach's own fieldwork all provide a foil against which a critical re-reading of Leach's account of Kachin wealth becomes possible. The Kachin obviously acted upon cultural assumptions about wealth objects in particular and property relations, the significance of which Leach under appreciated. For this reason, and based upon my own ethnographic fieldwork beginning late in the 1980s, I turn to a reconsideration of Jingpo cultural classifications of wealth objects and property, and a comparison of these cultural classifications with Zaiwa classifications, hoping to show the cultural principles missing from Leach's account. Finally, I return to my initial query about the history of Kachin social change with which this chapter began, giving my own account of the organization of exchange spheres and their growing engagement with enclaves. In my conclusion, I suggest that a different pattern of consumption based on a new concept of ownership emerged by at least the early twentieth century.

In sum, then, the remainder of this chapter describes how Leach's famous theory of Kachin social oscillation derives from his ethnographic understandings of wealth objects and property in general, as described in *Political Systems of Highland Burma*. I then give my own version of Kachin history, buttressed with a wider view of Kachin wealth objects and property more generally as situated within the British colonial era economy.

Personal Adornment in James Henry Green's Photographs

James Henry Green's photographs from the 1920s and 1930s document Kachin personal adornment. These photographs are useful for establishing the importance and extent of wealth for personal adornment.[9]

[9] James Green began his service in the Eighty-Fifth Burmese Rifles in 1918, appointed as commander of the Kachin Regiment in 1920, and served as Recruiting officer for "Hill Tribes of Burma" between 1922 and 1927 (Dell 2000b: 182). What he wrote about the Kachin and the pictures of the Kachin are from his witness of them from 1918 to the mid-30s (Dell 2000a). For interested readers, other photographs on the ethnic groups at the border of China and Burma taken in the mid-30s

In Green's picture numbered 0742, it shows the family of the chief of Namhkyek—the "most powerful chief in Kachin territory," considered by Green—dressed and seated on a beautifully patterned mat (Sadan 2000b: 71).[10] There are five adults and two babies in the picture. Both men (chief and his brother) wore Shan style outfits, with white turban and shoes. The three women all wore bracelets, rings, the velvet top decorated with many silver buttons and layers of necklaces, and leggings. The older women wore large-sized headbands, obviously using a large amount of cloth. The two younger women wore full-patterned, hand-woven skirts. Two women were holding one baby each on their lap. The babies were all dressed in good clothing. One baby wore a fancily decorated hat. These are all costly wealth objects.

These costly wealth objects are worn not only by the powerful chief's family posing for picture taking, but also by commoners, girls and ladies in the *manau* celebration and the market. The two Atsi (Zaiwa) ladies in photograph 0357 (Dell 2000b: 127), wear handsomely the hand-woven wool skirt with yarn woven patterns, long waistband and big turban made of market bought cloth, different kinds of necklaces and big earrings. The ladies in picture 0250 (Sadan 2000b: 72) were displaying their best, too, through their headdresses. Green gave a fantastic caption for this image "Two Old Kachin ladies dressed in the latest fashions at the Namhkyek manao." *Manau* is the most important community occasion for personal display besides funerals. One woman's headdress is made of beautifully patterned cloth styled in a turban that was about two and half times the size of her face. The accompanying description records:

> Everyone would wear their best clothes to dance at the first day of a manau. These ladies are wearing Palaung headdresses, revealing that they were in vogue amongst Kachin women at this time. (Sadan 2000b: 72)

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for the purpose of national boundary survey are also available. In 1935 and 1936, the Chinese anthropologist Rui Yifu, along with the photographer Yong Shiheng, left valuable pictures of the area. These pictures are now being digitalized by the National Digital Archival Program in Taiwan at the following website: http://ethno.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/. The Chinese historian and anthropologist Jiang Ying-liang's photographs on the Chinese southwest nationalities in 1937 have now been compiled and published by his son (Jiang and Jiang 2003).

[10] As pointed out by Sadan, when she showed the pictures to the Kachin people recently, they "initially point out that he is wearing shoes." Sadan very correctly interprets that wearing shoes was "a politicized act in both India and Burma, and, in this case, a sign of close contact with the British and evidence of some political aspiration." (2000b: 72). However, I want to direct the attention to another viewpoint of the display of the wealth and social distinction here.

If the above photographs were all taken at the celebratory occasion, or posed for picture taking, this explains the strong characteristic of display; photographs 0293 (Dell 2000b: 107) of "Kachin girls selling spirit" shows another occasion for display: the market. Three girls are all in their best attire for their age, with necklace, earrings, bracelets and silver buttons decorating their clothes and bodies.

Muiho Mulat goes to Market

One early People's Republic of China (1949–present) source (YNSBJZ 1985a: 90–91) gives a detailed account of the marketing activities of a woman named Muiho Mulat for the period beginning in February 1951 and ending early in 1952. Muiho Mulat first sold two *liang* of her family's opium to lowland Dai, from which she received in return a basket (*luo*) of peas.[11] She then sold the basket of peas at the highland market town of Liangzi on the Chinese side of the border for 10 *wen* in *bankai* silver currency.[12] Muiho Mulat finally used the 10 *wen* to buy 100 chicken eggs, which she then sold in the market town of Jiugu on the Burmese side of the border, and then used the resulting 20 *wen* to buy 10 *zhuei* of salt,[13] 20 bars of soap, and one cotton blanket, and to pay for tax and transportation expenses.

Muiho Mulat made nine more cross-border trips between the Liangzi highland market and the Jiugu lowland market, continuing to trade in the same commodities. During these trips, she bought opium, chicken eggs, and mountain-grown *luzi* (betel nut) in upland markets and sold them for salt, soap, and blankets in lowland markets. When the Jiugu market was destroyed during fighting on the Burmese side of the border, she switched to trade exclusively on the Chinese side of the border, selling *luzi* in the lowland markets of Mangshi and Zhefang, and selling

[11] *Luo* was the weight counter for things contained in baskets, such as peas or rice. Before PRC standardization, each *luo* of grain equaled to 30 *jin* (catty) in the mountain and 25 *jin* in the lowland.

[12] 1,000 *wen* equalled one *liang* of silver. Introduction of *Bankai* Yunnan's official currency took place in the Qing dynasty in 1887. The *Bankai* was recognized by the Republic of China (1911–1949) central government as Yunnan's *de facto* official currency by 1914 and was fully recognized as the official currency by governor Long Yun in 1927. In April 1950, the People's Republic of China officially banned the circulation of *Bankai* and replaced it with *rmb*.

[13] *Zhuei* was the weight counter used in Yunnan. Before PRC standardization, each *zhuei* equalled three *jin* (catty) in the lowland and four *jin* in the highlands.

Table One: Items Mulat Bought at Market

Items Purchased	*wen*
12 *liang* of yarn	5
Four sets of market bought clothes	24
One female velvet top	12
Yellow thread	1
One silver bracelet	8
Three sets of earrings	2
Lacquer waistband	1
Five beads for necklace	6
Hair oil	0.5
Two sets of red string	3
Two sets of silver buttons	1
Two pairs of straw sandals	0.5
One piece of cloth for father	8
One set of market bought clothes for a younger brother	3
Total	75

salt and sugar in the highland market at Liangzi (YNSBJZ 1985a: 91). Muiho Mulat's trading earned her a net profit of 125 *wen* and she used 50 *wen* to pay a fine levied against her elder brother (YNSBJZ 1985a: 90–91). She used the remaining 75 *wen* for 14 purchases. These 14 purchases included seven for personal adornment, three for weaving patterns for hand-woven skirts, and four for sets of clothes or cloth for herself and her family (see Table One).

Muiho Mulat's marketing was initially funded, importantly, with homegrown opium. In the end, except for the fine, the vast bulk of the other purchases were heavily tilted in favour of personal adornment for herself and her other family members.

Early Era PRC Social Surveys

Chinese language social survey accounts from the early 1950s for several communities in what is now the Dehong Jingpo and Dai Autonomous Region, just across the border from Burma, document household economic conditions for that time. In one "average" household in Nanjingli village cluster and one "wealthy" household in Huyu village cluster, both in Ruili County right on the Burmese border, it is possible to see the high degree of investment in "wealth objects," and especially so for wealthy households (see Table Two).

Table Two: Chinese Language Social Surveys on Household Wealth in Zaiwa Communities in Ruili County from the Early 1950s

Wealth Category	"Average" Household in Nanjingli Village Cluster	"Wealthy" Household in Huyu Village Cluster
Domesticated Animals	Three head of cattle One pig Four dogs Four chickens One cat	Twenty head of buffalo Fifty-five head of cattle Thirteen pigs (raised jointly with other households) Fifty chickens Two dogs Two cats
Tools and Utensils (Agricultural Tools and others)	Five ploughs (in bad shape) Three hoes Two chopping knives Three flat long knives Four sickles (three in bad shape)	Two ploughs Two hoes Two chopping knives Two long knives Two shovels One hatchet Fifteen carrying saddles
(Household Utensils)	Two tripods (for woks) Two iron woks Two pots One steamer Three earthen jars Seven bowls One water container One copper spoon One teapot and tea cup Four glass jars Two lamps Bamboo baskets of various size for storage and for carriage Two sets of mortar and pestle	Nine iron woks of various sizes Two tripods One copper tea kettle One antimony tea kettle Two antimony bowls for food Five antimony plates for food Three enamel bowls Ten bowls of various size Ten big earthen jars Twenty three small earthen jars Two antimony spoons Bamboo baskets of various size for storage and for carriage

Table Two (*cont.*)

Wealth Category	"Average" Household in Nanjingli Village Cluster	"Wealthy" Household in Huyu Village Cluster
Cloth and Clothing	Three cotton blankets Three shoulder bags Eight sets of purchased clothing One hand-woven skirt Two headbands One bamboo mat Four bamboo hats	Fifteen hemp bedrolls Eight cotton and wool coverlets Eight wool bedrolls One wool coverlet Three comforters Three umbrellas Five hand-woven skirts Three headbands One woollen hat Three sets each of purchased clothing for every household member
Ritual Wealth Objects	One gun Two diggers One long spear	Three large gongs One ceremonial knife with silver handle Four different kinds of gun
Furniture	One bamboo table Four bamboo stools	One large wooden cabinet Two wooden chests One wooden coffin
Cash and Jewellery	Four silver bracelets	400 *dun* in British Burmese coins Jewellery valued at 300 *dun*

Sources: For Nanjingli village cluster, see YNSBJZ 1985a: 140; for Huyu village cluster, see YNSBJZ 1985a: 153.

One major difference between the "average" and "wealthy" households that is relevant but can only be noted in this chapter, is that the latter owned sufficient agricultural land to rent some, while the former owned at most only enough land to work themselves. From their household wealth, it is also obvious that the "wealthy household" owned considerably more domestic animals, as well as every kind of object bought

from markets. This included more tools and utensils (iron woks and tripods of various sizes, tea kettles, pots, bowls, and baskets), furniture, cloth and clothing, ritual wealth objects (gongs and so forth), jewellery and money.

Annual income and expenditure is presented for several "typical households" in Xishan Township in Luxi County (1985a: 83–101).[14] First, cash income came from growing opium, selling wage labour, hand-woven cloth shoulder bags and bamboo baskets. Second, additional cash income also came from trade between lowland and highland markets, as well as in cross-border markets in Burma, in such commodities as: domestic animals, opium, salt, cotton, soap, blankets, clothes, and yarn. Third, daily cash expenditures were primarily for salt, soap, opium, cotton, clothing, tools, and kitchenware. Fourth, there were "occasional expenditures" on "ritual wealth objects" for households with a wedding or funeral, and items of personal adornment—in the form of gongs, knives, guns, silk clothes, yarn, and jewellery.

One obvious observation is that the line between "average" and "wealthy" was not only drawn in terms of ownership of the means of production, but included also the ownership of wealth objects that are or can be commodities. From the income and expenditure survey, the expenses for these wealth objects accounted for a significant portion of consumption, especially for households with wedding and funeral expenses.

In a case of one "exemplary household with wedding and funeral expenses," the wedding expenses for a son were 94.71 percent of that year's income, without counting the debt still owed the affines, or 138.1 percent of that year's income when counting the debt still owed the affines.[15] For a similar case surveyed in 1957, wedding expenditures

[14] Not all reports do so. Among the four volumes of Socio-historical Survey of the Jingpo Nationality, volumes three and four provide no quantitative details on incomes or expenditures.

[15] The report was done with the purpose of evaluating statistically whether people are wasteful or what kind of expenditure is wasteful. Considering the fact these expenses were counted with only their market value when weddings and funerals had taken place, without understanding the relationship or the mode of exchange behind the different objects used and the varied spheres of exchange involved, the figures are totally meaningless for our understanding of value. The reason I am still using these materials, contrary to the research in the 1950s, is to show the significance of weddings and funerals to Jingpo life. I show the proportion of these expenses in their annual income rather than expenditure, as in their reports.

still accounted for 105 percent of income (based on data of YNSBJZ 1985b: 15–16). Funeral expenses for the household of the deceased mother, who hosted the funeral, took up 62 percent of income (based on data of YNSBJZ 1985a: 83–84).

Expenses used in weddings were mostly of three kinds for the man's household. One kind was for the "wealth objects" used as bridewealth, an other was for food and drink to be consumed at feasts, and the third kind of expense (in money or the equivalent of money) was for ritual specialists. Bridewealth for a 1952 wedding of an ordinary family in Luxi County included: two heads of cattle, one large gong, two *zhang* (丈) of cloth,[16] two sets of clothing (both purchased at local markets), and two kinds of bedrolls. For the wedding banquet, six pigs were slaughtered, two hundred bowls of liquor brewed, and seventy chicken eggs were consumed. In addition, uncertain quantities of the following objects were used: rice, glutinous rice, salt, *luzi* (betel nut). The above, moreover, included for the bride's family one hind leg of a pig, thirty bowls of liquor, and 21 eggs. Finally, the ritual specialists were paid with five *liang* of opium (YNSBJZ 1985a: 87–88). Expenses for the "wealth objects" for the wife-givers, discounting food used in the feast, took up 53.8% of the total expenditure. The "wealth objects" used in a more wealthy household in the same county included five head of cattle, three *pi* (匹) of cloth purchased from a market, three *kang* (亢) of money, one large gong (YNSBJZ 1985a: 84).[17] The expenses for these wealth objects accounted for 75.9% of the total expenditure on the wedding.

Rare but important information on the relationship and the mode of exchange involved in wealth objects and food used in weddings is unexpectedly available. In the just cited case of the wedding for an ordinary household (YNSBJZ 1985a: 87–88), the husband of the sister of the groom provided the cattle and the gong portions of the bride-wealth. Additionally, the market-bought cloth came from an unspecified "cousin."[18] These affinal contributions count for 91% of the expenses

[16] *Zhang* is a Chinese unit of measurement in length. One *zhang* equals 10 *chi* (尺) or 100 *cun* (寸). Each *cun* is equal to 1.23 inches or 3.1242 centimetres.

[17] *Pi* is a Chinese counter for clothes, though what qualifies as a *pi* in terms of width and length, varies from place to place. Wu Cheng-ming cites one *pi* of cloth as having a width between 0.9 and 1.15 *chi* and the length between 16 to 32 *chi*. Between 0.9 and 1.15 *chi* is equal to about 27 to 34.5 cm; 16 to .32 *chi* is equivalent to about 480–960 cm.

[18] Since the source cited is in Chinese, the Chinese kinship term used does not specify

on "wealth objects" used in the wedding. Finally, agnatically related households and the households of village neighbours provided the rice for the wedding banquet. At the marriage for the wealthy household (YNSBJZ 1985a: 84), the groom's household turned over only five of the stipulated nine head of cattle for the bridewealth, with the remaining four head of cattle still owed. For reasons not stipulated in the report, the groom's household only "planned to give" three of the four head of cattle still owed. People did not own certain wealth objects as "possession" for sure, but rather owned the debt of the wealth, as Leach said (see section below on "Wealth in Upper Burma"). However, some other kinds of wealth objects, such as opium, market-bought clothes, and personal adornments, were different.

For some households, opium smoking was the greatest expense. In 1954, opium consumption for one wealthy household in Huyu village cluster in Ruili County took up 46.7 percent of the yearly household expenses. (There were no expenses for weddings or funerals that year) (based on data in YNSBJZ 1985a: 153). In one household in Luxi County, only the host took opium. His opium consumption took 6.9 percent of the whole household expenditure in 1953 (YNSBJZ 1985a: 93). In a 1957 survey in Xishan Township, Luxi County, one hamlet as a whole used 12 percent of their expenditure that year in opium smoking (YNSBJZ 1985b: 15). In the 1957 survey in a hamlet in Longchuan County, 9.3 percent of their yearly expenditure was used in opium smoking (YNSBJZ 1985b: 35).

Generally, men in Xishan Township in Luxi County wore clothing purchased from markets.[19] Men usually wore the same set of clothing regardless of season, for at least a whole year. Men normally only purchased a new set of clothing after the old set was completely worn out, with only a wealthy man purchasing two sets of clothes in a single year. Women made their tops out of cloth purchased from a market, with some adding decorations of copper or silver buttons. In Xishan at

whether the "cousin" is a patrilateral cross cousin, or either a matrilateral cross or parallel cousin. It does make clear, however, that the "cousin" was *not* a patrilateral parallel cousin. In Jingpo kinship, these distinctions would be clearly drawn by the terms. My own reading of the passage is that the "cousin" referred to was most likely a patrilateral cross cousin, because market bought cloth is culturally a wife-takers' prestation in the Jingpo classification of things (see below the section on "Wealth in Yunnan").

[19] The report also provides information on how the Han Chinese living next to the Jingpo with sewing skills will sell their labor to make clothing for the Jingpo (YNSBJZ 1985a).

that time, women wove the cloth for their own skirts (YNSBJZ 1985a: 61), or purchased the cloth in Ruili near the Burma border (YNSBJZ 1985a: 117). The women wove skirts using cotton with wool thread or yarn. People normally slept without covers, though some households had blankets woven from hemp and others could even afford blankets woven from "cotton from India" (YNSBJZ 1985a: 117) or bedrolls, as mentioned earlier (YNSBJZ 1985a: 87). The wool and yarn used in the hand-woven skirts, according to my research, were bought from markets (Ho 2000). When the weather turned cold, people wore woven shawls (YNSBJZ 1985a: 61, 117). The better off also wore velvet tops with decorative buttons, leggings, hand-woven cotton and wool shoulder bags decorated with silver dollars, coins, or copper buttons (ibid.: 117). A large headband took up more cloth than a small one. The survey describes the cloth headband of a middle-aged woman, which was 1.5 *zhang* long or 468 centimetres in length. The large headband and the hand-woven wool skirts with patterns made of yarn were to some extent indicative of a household's wealth (see below).

The issues raised in the social surveys of the early era of the People's Republic of China are multiple and suggestive of a variety of interesting tangents. Overall, the Chinese language sources show for the mid-twentieth century that "wealth objects" differentiated between those who were wealthy and those who were poor. Aside from the regular living expenses, a significant outlay of expenditures went, when possible, on the purchase of "wealth objects," and especially those used for affinal exchanges. However, if we take into consideration the typical domestic economy, the wealthy owned a significant number of "wealth objects", beyond that needed for affinal exchanges. Those bridewealth objects that were for use as affinal exchanges, were circulated rather than accumulated, such as cattle and cloth given by the wife-takers but actually used and owned in bridewealth for the household of the wife-givers. Negotiation and delay-exchange were also possible for such bridewealth as cattle, gongs and clothing. That is, accumulation of a large portion of the "wealth objects" that the wealthy owned was for purposes other than affinal exchanges. The wealthy were instead accumulating "wealth objects," household and personal wealth objects, for self-distinction, status competition and fame. These "wealth objects" include extra head of cattle, various kinds of wood furniture, additional items of personal adornment (such as jewellery, clothes and clothing, cotton and wool blankets) and consumption (such as opium), ceremonial knives, guns and money.

In sum, Muiho Mulat's trading activities were something to which almost every Jingpo aspired. That desire was the pursuit of money, with its ultimate aim the distinction it brought through acquiring wealth objects. For Muiho Mulat, a girl, the self-distinction is further clearly made through personal adornment. However, it is also worth noting that she shares her money with the family generously. Aside from clothing bought for the family, forty percent of her profit is used to pay for her brother's fine to the unspecified authority.

Wealth in Upper Burma

In *Political Systems of Highland Burma*, Leach devoted a lengthy passage in Chapter Four, "The Structural Categories of Kachin Gumsa Society", to a section entitled "Concepts of Property and Ownership" (Leach 1997 [1954]: 141–154). In so doing, Leach attributed a role in social change to the cultural classification of property and ownership. This is because the cultural classification of property and ownership was an important grounding for action in rituals, associated exchanges, and their cumulative consequences for social change. Thus, "before we can understand the ritual implications of '*owning* a *debt* of five *wealth* objects,' we must comprehend something about the practical application, in the Kachin context, of *ownership, debt* and *wealth*" (ibid.: 104, original emphasis).

Ownership. Ownership takes two major forms (ibid.: 141–142). First, *madu ai* ("to own") is like "sovereignty" ("the rights of a ruler"), which is a kind of ownership "in the sense of 'having rights over something or some person.'" Second, *lu* ("to eat") or *sha* ("to drink") is like "usufruct," a kind of ownership "in the sense of 'having, and therefore being able to enjoy for the time being'" (ibid.: 142). Two further points about Leach's discussion of Kachin ownership deserve special emphasis. First, whatever the occasion, a recipient of an exchange has the rights and duties of *lu* or *sha* over the objects, while the giver retains the rights and duties of *madu* over those objects (ibid.). Second, these two major categories of ownership are as common to the Shans and Burmese as they are to the Kachin (ibid.).

Debt. Leach grants the Marxist point that power relations revolve, in the final analysis, around "the control of real goods and the primary sources of production." However, Leach hastens to add: "The way in which particular goods and services are evaluated one against the other is a cultural phenomenon which cannot be deduced from first principles"

(ibid.: 141). Thus, at another level, the meaning of the Jingpho term *hka* ("debt") comes quite close in Leach's view to what anthropologists mean by the terms "sociological relation" and "social structure" (ibid.:). Interestingly, however, what Leach talks about when discussing *hka* is how it varies across what he calls "occasions."

One occasion for *hka* was trade. In Kachin trade, there was the use of currency or currency-like media (bullion, opium), where market transactions could convert any available sort of goods or services into other sorts of goods or services. Trade need not result in *hka* when the agreed upon price for and transfer of goods or services was completed at the same time. *Hka* was apparently present only when the final transfer of goods or services remained incomplete. The handling of *hka* in trade could take on a local Kachin colouring. That is, in remote areas, there still persisted the practice for *hka* in trade to be calculated and certified using bamboo tally sticks as contracts. First, a length of bamboo was slashed crosswise, equivalent to the number of *hpaga* (see below) owed. Each slash potentially represented a different discrete category of wealth objects, where each slash represented an object of a specific category for which the debtor party owed repayment. Second, split lengthwise, each of the two identical halves of the length of bamboo preserved its record of half of each of the original crosscutting slashes. Each party to the trade then had their respective copy of what was a contract certifying the outstanding *hka*, although what the actual objects referred to for each slash had to be committed to memory. The important point is that there was no reduction of the repayment to a common index of monetary value.

In addition to trade, Leach named five other "occasions" involving *hka*. *Hka* of the sort relating to at least these five occasions was generally set within relations between lineages (ibid.: 153). The five "occasions" were:

> (a) marriages, (b) funerals, (c) in payment of ritual services by priests or agents, (d) on the occasion of a transfer of residence or the building of a new house, (e) as judicial compensation in settlement of any kind of dispute or crime. (ibid.: 147)

Hka involving judicial compensation seems to have been an especially wide-ranging occasion. Leach says,

> For the Kachin, legal claims and commercial claims are alike *hka* (debt). The only difference is that with commercial claims the items may be anything, depending on the circumstances of trade, while, with legal claims, the items are stereotyped according to the traditional pattern. (ibid.: 146)

And, more generally,

> Kachin tradition and ritual lays down what are the proper relations between individuals, that is to say, it specifies what obligations A has towards B and B towards A. Debts come into existence whenever anyone feels that these formal obligations have not been adequately fulfilled. (ibid.: 154)

Three further points about *hka* as it relates to judicial compensation with regard to debt merit brief mention here, though I will return to these points again later when discussing the cultural classification of wealth objects. First, feuds resulted from a failure to meet *hka* claims for judicial compensation. Indeed, feud and debt were also both referred to as *hka* (ibid.: 153). Second, negotiations for actual settlements of claims for *hka* judicial compensation took place within the framework of the class system:

> If the two parties in a debt relationship came within the jurisdiction of a single chief, then it is up to the chief to see that they come to some agreement about the terms of compensation. . . .
>
> Settlement when it is achieved is always the result of negotiations by third parties (*kasa*) who are usually persons superior in social standing to the principals. When two chiefs are in dispute, it may be difficult to find anyone senior enough to act as *kasa*, and it is cases of this kind that are most likely to degenerate into feud. (ibid.)

Third, *hka* were only "scaled according to class" as formal principle, since: "In practice the payment depends on the economic standing of the defaulter not on his class status by birth" (ibid.: 148–149). Thus, a strategic choice between class and economic interests confronted a violator: whether to defend his economic interests by hardnosed bargaining, or to "validate" his class standing by paying what his class standing required. That is, "the validation of class status depends more than anything else on an ability to fulfil correctly the gift-giving obligations that are proper to a member of that class" (ibid.: 149). Although haggling presented the holder of a status with an alternative means for meeting obligations, there was a loss of face and a risk of a lowered status. Leach concludes: "Paradoxically therefore it is often true, especially of the more enterprising individuals, that they pay as much as they can afford rather than as little as they can haggle for" (ibid.).

Wealth. Leach classifies wealth into the two categories, *sut* ("moveable wealth") and "land." (A discussion of land is beyond the scope of this chapter.) Leach further identifies three sub-categories of *sut*: (a)

shahpa ("ordinary perishable foodstuffs") and forest products, which can be traded; (b) livestock, including especially *nga* (cattle); and, (c) *hpaga* ("goods and objects used in ritual exchange other than livestock"). However, in looking more closely into *hpaga*, Leach finds the above three sub-categories of *sut* were subject to other cultural considerations:

> …the notion of *hpaga*, in the sense of 'ritual wealth object', includes, not only all the items in category *c* [*hpaga*], but also the water buffalo in category *b* [*nga*] and certain items (such as opium, slaves and bullion) which in the past were extensively traded on the open market under category *a* [*shahpa*]. It is not true therefore to assert that ritual wealth objects have no ordinary commercial value. What is true is that some types of ritual wealth object have no ordinary commercial value, and that the value of a wealth object used in ritual exchanges is not in any case wholly determined by its ordinary commercial value in the open market. (ibid.: 144).

In fact, Leach sees that: "The relationship between *hpaga* the material fact, and *hka* the immaterial debt is rather similar" (ibid.). *Hpaga* thus included "the double sense of 'trade' and 'ritual wealth object'" (ibid.). On the one hand, then, "In one sense *hpaga* simply means trade" (ibid.: 146). Yet, on the other hand, there were additionally ways in which the handling of *hpaga* on other occasions than trade pointed, as with *hka*, toward other heretofore unconsidered senses of *hpaga*.

How Leach specifically described the cultural means through which *hpaga* unites this "double sense" of trade and ritual revolves around three general points. First, he discusses *hpaga* as a verbal concept preserved in "poetic stanzas" with their own "poetic titles" that evoked the social rationale for the giving of the items named (ibid.: 148). Stated in general, these and other verbal concepts gave expression to and singled out for attention the stylized cultural classification of wealth objects and their relationship to the formal statuses and classes of the idealized social system (see also ibid.: 10–17).

Second, though he also notes that there are some regional differences (ibid.: 147, note 62), Leach provided a more-or-less conventional Kachin list of *hpaga*, as well as several concrete instances of how they were suited to particular variants of the five different occasions.[20] The

[20] Leach cites (1977: 147) J. L. Leyden's note given in Kawlu Ma Nawng's *The History of the Kachins of the Hukawng Valley* (1942: iv, 68) for a long list of traditional orthodox *hpaga*. That list is: "(1) a buffalo, (2) a gong (of several different types), (3) silver bullion, (4) a slave, (5) a cooking tripod, (6) *n'ba* (several types of shaped cloth which serve as male skirts, blankets and shawls), (7) an iron cooking pot, (8) sword (usually a dummy blunt edged one), (9) a spear (also usually a dummy), (10) a sheepskin coat, (11) a silver

value of the *hpaga* of this list had a radically different configuration from that for trade objects. For instance, the guns and pistols were often rusty or broken, and the spears and swords were not even genuine weapons but rather "blunt-edged models of no practical utility" (ibid.: 143). Although there is enough qualification (see ibid.: 144) in Leach's account to allow for some trade in ritual objects, wealth objects divide into those for trade and which could serve as substitutes, and those for ritual (the other five "occasions") that were not traded. Alternately, the sense of "ritual objects" refers to certain *hpaga* as ritual objects, exchanged during the five "occasions" other than trade.

Third, all ritual *hpaga* could nevertheless have substitutes in one of apparently two ways. To begin with, there was a limited range of items where substitutions occurred, possibly in name, when *hpaga* of the proper category became unavailable. Specifically, "ordinary cash frequently appears as a *hpaga* in a settlement but it is always a substitute for some items which circumstances make unobtainable, e.g. a slave, bullion, opium" (ibid.: 147). Alternately, it was possible to substitute in kind but, where it is explicit, the substitution was not in name. For instance, pigs substituted for water buffalo. The point is that:

> …Although the theoretical form of each *hpaga* is meticulously detailed, greater stress is laid on the number and title of the *hpaga* than on its outward form. The real payment is always a matter for agreement between the parties and here the principle of substitution (*sang ai*) is all important. (ibid.: 148)

Leach asserts more generally that:

> What is of especial importance here is the flexibility of the system. By manipulating the principle of substitution to its limits a poor man owning only a few pigs and chickens, and a rich man owning many buffalos can both appear to conform to the same formal code of gift giving. Although they do not in fact contribute goods of the same economic value, they do, by a fiction, contribute the same *hpaga*. (ibid.)

Ritual Implications. Other than trade and judicial compensation, marriage is the only other "occasion" that Leach discussed at length in relation to

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pipe, (12) opium, (13) a Chinese embroidered silk coat, (14) bead necklaces of a special type." In judicial compensation, for instance, specific prescriptions about what objects to use and the order of their transfer were made to overcome thematically and processually the social rift (an example of the thematic and processual features of restitution for "cattle of a buffalo" is given on Leach 1977 [1954]: 147–8).

the cultural meanings of *hpaga*. His discussion of marriage led him into further exploration of the relationship between ritual and its associated exchanges, with their consequences for social change.

The difference between judicial compensation as a wide-ranging practice and marriage as a more specific practice turns, again, on the balancing of class and status interests, though with two important twists. First, whereas in principle the woman's class status determined the debts incurred in a marriage, in practice the man's status determined the agreed upon amount of such payments. Leach observed about the latent significance of this for social change:

> The importance of this fact is considerable. We have seen that a crucial element in the structure of *gumsa* society is that when an individual marries out of his or her own social class it is normally the man who marries up and the woman who marries down. If bride price in such cases were fixed according to the status of the bride, the system would break down, for the men of junior status would seldom be able to raise the necessary quality of cattle and *hpaga*. Nevertheless, despite what happens in practice, Kachin formal theory is that bride price is adjusted to the standing of the *bride*. It is a theory which permits a powerful chief to pick and choose among potential suitors for his daughters and to use their marriage as direct instruments of political alliance. (ibid.: 151, original emphasis)

And, most generally,

> …The concept of *hpaga* is of great significance, for it permits structural rules which have all the appearance of rigidity to be interpreted very freely, thus opening the way for social mobility in a system which purports to be a caste-like hierarchy. (ibid.: 152)

Second, although *hka* claims could be met over a long drawn out process in either judicial compensation or marriage, there were markedly different attitudes toward these two occasions when the terms of the *hka* claims came to be negotiated and obligations met:

> It is especially debts between strangers that must be settled quickly otherwise the owner of the debt has a legitimate excuse for resorting to violence; in contrast, debts between relatives, especially affinal relatives, are not urgent matters. Indeed as between *mayu* and *dama* some debts are always left outstanding almost as a matter of principle; the debt is a kind of credit account which ensures the continuity of the relationship. There is thus a kind of paradox that the existence of a debt may signify not only a state of hostility but also a state of dependence and friendship. To the Kachin way of thinking co-operation and hostility are not very different. (ibid.: 153)

And, most generally,

> ....*Hpaga* are a kind of device for manipulating social status and they are used in a game which proceeds according to set rules....In the theoretical system the value of any particular *hpaga* is ritualistic and symbolic; in real life the actual *hpaga* are only substitutes for the traditional objects. The real *hpaga* have both ritual and economic significance at one and the same time. (ibid.: 154)

Finally, earlier in this same chapter is an important ethnographic insight about the relationship between movable property and personal distinction:

> Kachins do not look upon movable property as capital for investment, they regard it rather as an adornment to the person. The word *sut* which is used to denote riches can also be used adjectivally to mean 'smart' in the sense of 'a smart coat'. Wealth objects other than ordinary perishable foodstuffs have value primarily as items of display. *The best way to acquire notoriety as the owner (ruler) of an object is publicly to give possession of it to someone else. The recipient, it is true, then has the object, but you retain sovereignty over it since you make yourselves the owner* (madu) *of a debt.* (ibid.: 142, my emphasis)

It is useful to relate the above overview of Leach's discussion of the cultural classification of Kachin ownership and movable property back to the earlier summary of money, enclaves, and exchange spheres. Leach's data appears to describe at least three exchange spheres, one of trade, another a marriage related exchange sphere, and the third one of judicial punishment. In the enclave of trade, the items of exchange are potentially unlimited, though ritual wealth objects are seldom included, and the social relationship is unlimited. In the enclave of marriage exchange for women, the items of exchange are of two kinds: one is the ideal exchange, both theoretically and in name, in which they exchange "ritual wealth objects" *hpaga*; the other kind is the trade objects *hpaga*, which are often used as substitutes for the ritual wealth objects. The mode of exchange is often delayed exchange. The exchange sphere of judicial punishment requires "ritual wealth objects" *hpaga*, both theoretically and verbally, but, in practice, they are always substituted for the trade objects *hpaga*. Their mode of exchange is more immediate than for marriage exchange, even though some room for time extension is still possible in comparison with trade sales.

Wealth in Yunnan and Its Display

My own recent fieldwork in Yunnan provides supplementary understandings about the cultural classification of wealth objects not explored in Leach's *Political Systems of Highland Burma.* Consideration of the cultural classifications of wealth, and the ownership concept behind this wealth, for the Yunnan Jinghpaw and Zaiwa suggest four linked conclusions. First, from the cultural classification of their wealth, it shows that understanding the nature of *hpaga* is not sufficient for an understanding of their wealth ownership. Second, from a closer look at what and how things are exchanged, and the relationship created in the different sub-sphere of marriage exchange among the Jinghpaw and Zaiwa in Yunnan, I find Leach overlooked the intricacy of Kachin concepts of wealth. Two reasons caused this ignorance: one was his "object-center model" of *hpaga* research; the other was his *a priori* assumption that trade objects *hpaga* equated with "pure exchangeability."[21] Third, lead by his oscillation model for social change and the assumption that trade objects *hpaga* was "all purpose money", Leach reduced Kachin wealth objects to a dualism of ideal/ritual wealth objects vs. real/trade objects in substitution. Finally, by failing to explore more deeply how different kinds of substitution and varied strategies of display were involved in marriage exchange, Leach failed to see the difference between owning something relationally and owning possessively in Kachin society.

In this section, I begin my discussion with a description of the Yunnan Jinghpaw, and then turn to a description of the Yunnan Zaiwa cultural classification of wealth (see Diagram One and Table Three). Afterwards, I describe in more detail the different sub-spheres in Yunnan Jingpo marriage exchange from objects exchanged, mode of exchange, and the relationship of exchange each sub-sphere builds. In order to engage my discussion with Leach, special attention is given to how substitution takes place and how people use different strategies of display in establishing their ownership. Finally, I will present my own idea about Yunnan Jingpo wealth ownership and its relation to understanding social change.

The cover term in Yunnan Jinghpaw for wealth, which is common to the term described by Leach for Burma, is *sut gan*, which subdivides

[21] "Object-center model" is used by Robbins and Akin in criticizing Bohannan's model of exchange sphere (1999: 10).

Diagram One: Jingpo and Zaiwa Cultural Classification of Wealth

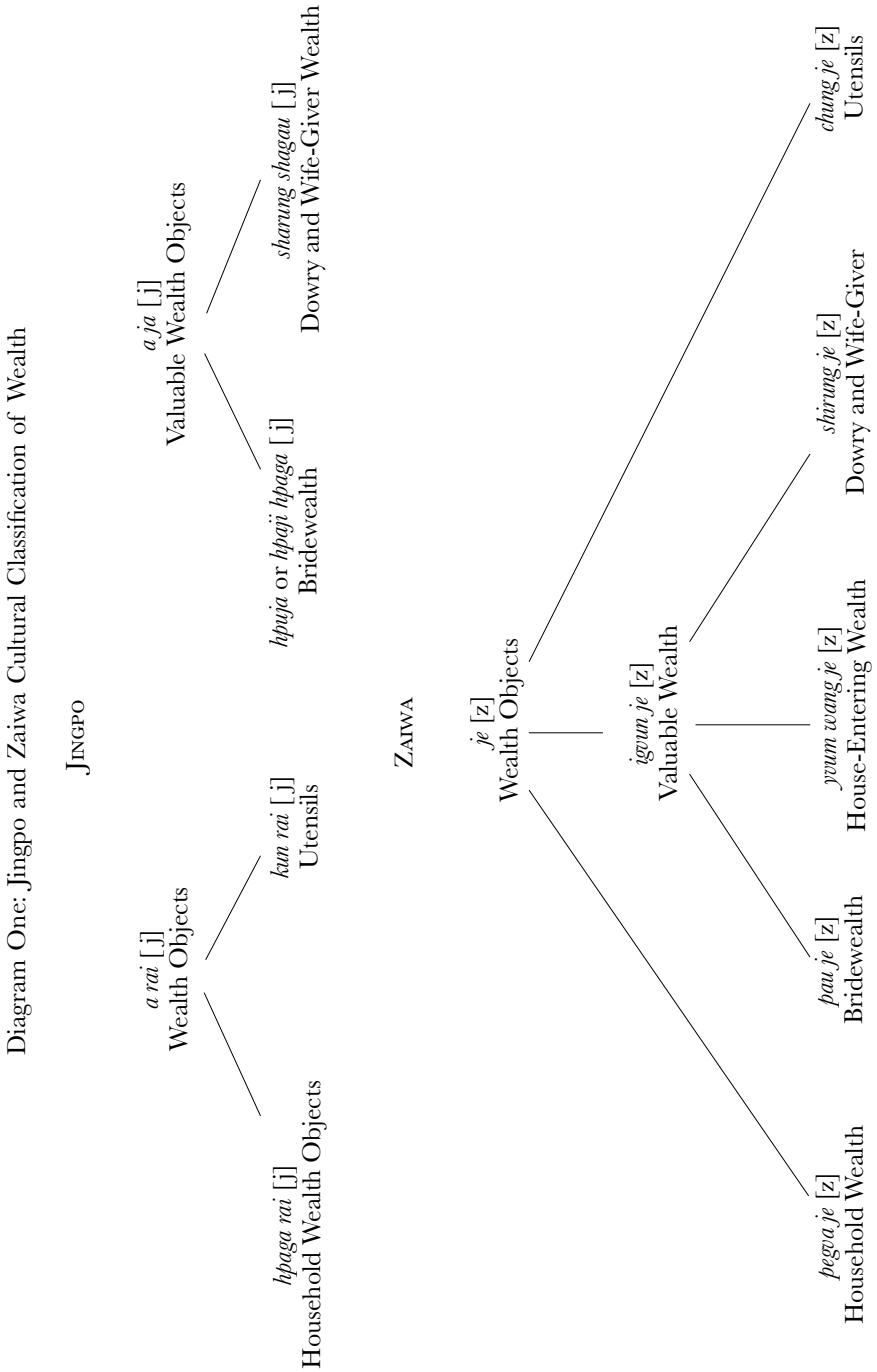

Table Three: Wealth Terms for Yunnan Jinghpaw and Zaiwa Speakers

Jinghpaw	Zaiwa	Translation	Items
a rai [j]	*je* [z]	Wealth Objects	For Jinghpaw-speakers, "wealth objects" refers to one of the two major subcategories of wealth. (The other category is "Valuable Wealth Objects" [*sharung shagau* (j)]). "Wealth Objects" (*a rai* [j]) subdivide into: (1) "Household Wealth Objects" (*hpaga rai* [j]) and (2) "Tools and Utensils" (*kun rai* [j]). For Zaiwa speakers, separate term (*je* [ze]) that includes (1) "Household Wealth Objects" (*pegva je* [z]), (2) "Valuable Wealth Objects" (*igvun je* [z]), and (3) "Tools and Utensils" (*chung je* [z]).
a ja [j]	*igvun je* [z]	Valuable Wealth Objects	For Jinghpaw speakers, the term for one of the two major categories of wealth (the other category is "Wealth Objects" (*a rai* [j]). "Valuable Wealth Objects" (*a ja*) subdivide into (1) "Bridewealth" (*hpuja* or *hpaji hpaga* [j]) and (2) "Dowry and Wife-Giver Wealth" (*sharung shagau* [j]). For Zaiwa speakers, the term for one of three subcategories of "Wealth Objects." "Valuable Wealth Objects" (*igvun je* [z]) subdivide into (1) "House-Entering Wealth" (*yvum wang je* [z]), (2) "Bridewealth" (*pau je* [z]), and (3) "Dowry including Wife-Giver Wealth" (*shirung je* [z]).

Table Three (*cont.*)

Jinghpaw	Zaiwa	Translation	Items
hpaga rai [j]	*pegva je* [z]	Household Wealth Objects	"Household wealth objects" includes all market-purchased items used for all rituals, feasts, and festivals as well as opium, cattle, tea, jewellery, clothing, guns, ceremonial knives and any other commodities.
kun rai [j]	*chung je* [z]	Tools and Utensils	Tools and utensils include water tubes, woks, bowls, ploughs, hoes, knives, and stools.
-----	*yvum wang je* [z]	House-Entering Wealth Objects	Zaiwa term for "House-Entering Wealth Objects" typically includes tripods and woks.
hpu ja or *hpaji hpaga* [j]	*pau je* [z]	Bridewealth	"Bridewealth" includes such items as cattle, money, gongs, liquor, purchased cloth, clothing, coats, blankets, and jewellery.
sharung shagau [j]	*shirung je* [z]	Dowry including Wife-giver Wealth	"Dowry including Wife-Giver Wealth" includes such items as two wife-givers' baskets containing ritual grain seeds, ritual knife and spear, and hand-woven skirt, tripods, woks (Zaiwa name tripod and wok prestation separately as House-Entering Wealth), guns, ceremonial knives.

into: *shapa* (ordinary perishable foodstuffs; alternately called *wunji sahka*), *yam nga* ("livestock"), and *hpaga* (for Leach, "goods and objects used in ritual exchange other than livestock"). So far, the correspondences between Burma Jinghpaw and Yunnan Jinghpaw, and including the material in Ola Hanson's dictionary (1906), are in accordance with one another.

However, there are two anomalies. First, there are two other terms

not covered by Leach, but whose presence in Burma is confirmed by Ola Hanson's dictionary. One of the two terms is *a rai* (wealth objects), and the other of the two terms is *a ja* (valuable wealth objects). Second, the term *hpaga* occurs alternately as wealth objects in the term *hpaga rai* (household wealth objects) and in the term *hpu ja* (bridewealth; alternately *hpaji hpaga*). All household wealth objects are purchased through trade and from bridewealth prestations. That is, in daily usage they are *hpaga rai*, but as bridewealth they are *hpu ja* (alternately *hpaji hpaga*). The latter are included with further enclaves of the prescribed, the negotiable and the optional mode of exchange (see Table Four). These two terms are complemented by additional terms where the term *hpaga* is not used, including, for wealth objects, the sub-category of *kun rai* (utensils), and for valuable wealth objects the sub-category of *sharung shagau* (dowry). Except for the house-entering prestations (the tripod and wok), dowry includes neither household wealth objects nor wealth objects.

The cover term in Yunnan Zaiwa for wealth is *isut*, which subdivides into *howa* (ordinary perishable foodstuffs), *gau ngvui* (livestock), and *pegva je* (Leach's "goods and objects used in ritual exchange other than livestock"). For the Yunnan Zaiwa, the details are more complex. First, there is a single cover term for wealth objects (*je*). Second, the category for wealth objects subdivides into *pegva* (household wealth objects), *igvun je* (valuable wealth objects), and *chung je* (utensils), and the sub-category for valuable wealth objects (*igvun je*) subdivides further into *yvum wang je* (house entering wealth), *pau je* (bridewealth), and *shijung je* (dowry). Again, like Yunnan Jinghpaw, except for including household wealth objects (*pegva je*) as gifts in bridewealth of various modes of exchange, and including house-entering ritual objects (the tripod and wok of house-entering rituals) as dowry, the Zaiwa cognate of the Jinghpaw *hpaga* never refers to either bridewealth (*pau je*) or dowry (*shirung je*).

In sum, for Yunnan Jinghpaw and Zaiwa, trade objects in the form of *hpaga* for the Jinghpaw or *pegva je* for the Zaiwa make up an important component in bridewealth prestations of every mode of exchange. But, except for house-entering rituals, trade objects are not a component in prescriptive dowry prestations. Their classification is as "valuable wealth objects". The point is that for the Jinghpaw and the Zaiwa in Yunnan, the sphere of marriage exchange involves "valuable wealth objects."[22] Through the exchange of the prescribed bridewealth and

[22] I hasten to add that agreement on the classification of wealth for either the Yunnan Jinghpaw or Zaiwa is not, however, total. This is especially so for the general

Table Four: Classification of Household Wealth Objects *versus* Valuable Wealth Objects

Household Wealth Objects (including personal wealth objects)	Valuable Wealth Objects				
	Bridewealth			Dowry	
	Prescriptive	Negotiable	Optional	Optional	Prescriptive
• Cattle • Purchased cloth, clothing • Gongs • Money • Liquor • Full-patterned hand-woven skirts • Furniture • Guns • Ceremonial knives • Jewellery • Opium • Tea(?) • All other commodities	• Cattle • Gongs • Pig's hindquarters • Purchased cloth (silk) and clothing, including felt cushions • Beer • Liquor • Money	• Cattle • Gongs (size) • Money • Liquor	• Cattle • Guns • Jewellery • Cloth and clothing • Opium • All other commodities, such as threshers, televisions, tractors	• Jewellery • Cloth and clothing • Guns • Ceremonial Knives • Other Commodities, such as sewing machines, bed-quilts	• Wife-givers' basket containing ritual grain seed and ritual knife and spears • Wife-givers' basket containing hand-woven skirts • Weaving Tools • Tripod and Wok (Zaiwa house-entering wealth)

dowry, the negotiable bridewealth, and the optional bridewealth and dowry, marriage exchange makes the androgynous person in its social reproduction and the social distinction of the person and their house (Ho 1997: Chapter Five, 2004). Whether *hpaga* or *pegva* in their marriage exchange is a category of ritual wealth objects or trade objects or both, is insufficient or even irrelevant to our understanding of wealth ownership. It is actually more important to explore first in detail the different enclaves of marriage exchange.

Yunnan Jinghpaw and Zaiwa marriage exchange divides further into three enclaves. First, under the prescribed exchange of bridewealth and dowry, both household wealth objects and non-trade objects are enclaved. This first enclave constructs the "body" part of the androgynous house person throughout the couple's life-long exchanges (Ho 1997: 436–461, 482–498; Ho 2004). Theoretically, the last head of the prescribed bridewealth cattle is offered after the death of the married-in woman. In practice, this last head of bridewealth cattle can be delayed for generations.[23] The second enclave of exchange of negotiable bridewealth uses household wealth objects only. This second enclave consolidates his and her house, constructs the metaphysical person—the soul component—and makes the social reproduction of the house person possible (Ho 1997: Chapter Five). After negotiation, the wife-takers can delay only certain parts of this debt, but return the rest of the debt in an agreed upon time; or they can choose to repay the debt whenever they have means before the agreed upon time to gain name. In the Luxi case in the early 1950s mentioned earlier (see above), the sister's husband paid his bridewealth debt at his wife's brother's wedding.[24] The third enclave of exchange uses household

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category of "valuable wealth objects." First, some Jinghpaw assert that "valuable wealth objects" (*a ja* [j]) only includes bridewealth; others consider that "valuable wealth objects" additionally includes "dowry and wife-giver wealth." Second, other Zaiwa assert "valuable wealth objects" (*igvun ze*) is a more inclusive category that additionally includes all "household wealth objects." In other words, inconsistencies in the usage of "valuable wealth objects" show Jinghpaw usage as more restrictive, while Zaiwa are more willing to cross the line between "valuable wealth objects" and "household wealth objects."

[23] This last head of bridewealth cattle is called "the funerary bridewealth cattle" in Jinghpaw (*mayang ja* [j]), "cattle for the firewood" in Zaiwa (*myithe no* [z]) (Ho 1997: 457, 460–462). The complexities, the varied ways of sending this last head of cattle and a discussion of its significance as a temporal strategy in constructing sociality, please see Ho 2004: 283, footnote 17, 308–314).

[24] One of the head of cattle might be the prescribed bridewealth cattle of "cattle for constructing the house for the dead" (*kario baw nga*[j], *shimao no*[z]or *zangmo mau* [z]),

wealth objects such as cattle, utensils such as threshers, and personal wealth objects such as jewellery and guns that are personally owned (see Table Four).[25] This third enclave of exchange makes for the distinction, identification and fame of the households of the wife-givers and wife-takers, the bride and the groom. Only in this exchange sphere can the wealth objects given be household and personally owned. Jewellery coming with the woman can be sold or given to whomever she likes depending on one's wealth. My Jingpo "aunt" has two strings of silver necklaces. She has two daughters and one daughter-in-law. Years ago, she remade the two necklaces into four. Each daughter and daughter-in-law was given one. Last year, she gave me the last of her necklaces. A gun or ceremonial knife given to a man is his own property too. An old uncle had a gun many of his descendants desired. After his death, his son looked for his father's gun, but could not find it. It turned out that, before the old uncle died, he had already given it to one of his friend's sons who had taken care of him a lot. This is just like Muiho Mulat in the early 1950s Chinese sources, whose profit out of the two *liang* of opium was all her own; she could do whatever she liked with the money.

In these three sub-spheres of marriage exchange of Yunnan Jinghpaw and Zaiwa, substitution also occurs as Leach tells us. However, the substitution does not necessarily follow the direction of trade objects *hpaga*, substituting the ritual objects *hpaga* like Leach suggests, nor does it appear that all ritual wealth *hpaga* can be substituted by the trade objects *hpaga*, as Leach implied in explaining Kachin social change.

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which is required from the wife-takers. It can be from one of the married out daughter's family or can be jointly given by more than one married out daughter depending on the original deal at marriage and the economic situation of the wife-takers (Ho 1977: 268–274, 2004: 289–293).

[25] Culturally, a gun makes a very special kind of wealth object by its power in obviating and ending the wife-givers and wife-takers' relationship. It is an "optional" bridewealth object from the wife-takers to reverse the direction of the flow of women, changing the original wife-givers' position into the wife-takers among the Zaiwa. The occasion a gun is used in this way is called "to reverse the ladder going into the house" (Ho 1999: 201–203). On the other hand, it can also be a "prescribed" dowry object from the wife-givers to identify the wife-takers' debt being finished. It is used as return prestation when the "funerary bridewealth cattle" or "cattle for the firewood" is sent by the wife-takers after the funeral (Ho 2004: 312–313). Even though it is the kind of prestation that is, by definition, a return "female" gift to a certain initiation of "male" gift, it is optional because the last "funerary bridewealth cattle" or "cattle for the firewood" can be delayed for generations or forever delayed. The power of guns in closing or nullifying the long term marital relationship in Zaiwa sociality obviously has a lot to do with its being the most desired wealth object historically in the Jingpo Hills.

First, in the prescribed exchange sphere, when picking up the bride and the two dowry baskets of wife-givers' wealth, at each step of the trip, the wife-givers create as many obstacles as possible before giving their consent to give away their woman and the wife-givers' wealth baskets. Each obstacle requires liquor, "money" or a money substitute—purchased cloth—to buy the 'let-go' consent from the wife-givers (see also Levi-Strauss 1969: 265–268). No matter if it was money, liquor or cloth, the market value is always very small. Throughout the life-span of the woman, till her death, at every critical juncture of the couple's life cycle—when she needs to be "purified" at the wedding in order to take the ladder going up to her husband's house, when she finally has to move into her husband's house to live, and when she or her husband dies—money or its substitute cloth is used in "purchasing" her detachment from the wife-givers. At each stage, either the woman or the representation of the composite partial person (in Strathern 1988 usage of "partible person"), in the style of partial "human figurines"—the "bride ladder" with breast carvings on top (Ho 1997: 96–97, 2004: 266–268, 281–287, 300–303), the "beer and liquor basket" with two legs (*hkyingting lan* [j], *tandving byap* [z]) (Ho 1997: 483–487, 2004: 268–271, 281–289, 300–305) and "the honorific dead person figurine" (*lup grawng* [j], *guprong* [z]) (Ho 1997: 489–498, 2004: 271–275, 289–293, 305–306)—is "bought." What is most crucial in these "purchases" is that it is always done in a ridiculing, comic style with lots of laughter and the hustling and bustling atmosphere, like in a market. They make a scene of "buying and selling" in order to separate, step by step, the physical relatedness of the woman and the wife-givers' wealth in baskets from the wife-givers, and finally to become part of the wife-takers' wealth.

In other words, not all the trade objects assumed to equate with pure exchangeability are used as substitutes—the poor can use the less expensive objects, such as pigs, to substitute for buffaloes, the rich can use ten heads of cattle to manipulate their status—as Leach suggested (see above). These household wealth objects of cloth, money and liquor are culturally specific wife-takers' things in the prescribed marriage exchange. They cannot be used as wife-givers' things at this stage of personhood construction. Furthermore, in focusing on the object only, Leach overlooks the significance of this "buying and selling" drama as a strategy of display. Through this display, a new composite of relations in making the androgynous person is constructed.

Second, in the negotiable exchange sphere, what is exchanged ritually, verbally or ideally is, indeed, different from what is actually exchanged

in practice, as Leach's argument of "flexible" society emphasizes. But, Yunnan Jinghpaw and Zaiwa negotiate exchange in a kind of entangled style that is reflexive between what is ritually and verbally announced and what is actually given. In a stylized fashion, they bargain ferociously. The wife-givers inflate their superiority by asking for an astronomical number of head of cattle, huge-sized gongs or enormous amounts of money; the wife-takers bargain back and forth in public, as hard as they can. The bargaining and the negotiation used to take days, or several trips, before the bridewealth was finalized. Bargaining was also a required stage before any real negotiation could begin.

These phenomena are actually very structural, as pointed out by both Lévi-Strauss (1969: Chapter 14) and Valeri (1994). Societies with generalized exchange of women either as an ideal or ideological construct "negotiate" between wife-givers and wife-takers "as if" wives were "purchased." Valeri thinks this means that particular cultural meanings attributed to "purchase" include an important role for ideals and ideologies of exchange in the processes of social reproduction.[26] Negotiations are always over the bridewealth, and these negotiations honour or distinguish the wife-givers and their mutual rank order, but can also challenge the wife-givers. The result of the negotiations is a sliding index of asymmetric exchange. The more debt negotiated, the more certain the marital relationship; the more debt cancelled after the negotiation, the more unstable the direction of the marriages.

My fieldwork establishes the presence of two qualifications to negotiation that are each, in their own way, of special interest. On the one hand, when one is capable of changing the modality of exchange from delayed to immediate, when an outrageous request from the wife-givers is raised and met by the wife-takers, the "bargaining" no longer exists and the relationship changes. The exchange is no longer part of the sphere of negotiable exchange; it is in the sphere of optional exchange. Among the Zaiwa, the most famous stories about how wife-

[26] Lévi-Strauss did not distinguish these two steps of negotiation of staged ritualized bargaining and negotiation. Valeri raises the important theoretical issue in the significance of understanding the indigenous meaning of purchase from the case of Huaulu in Eastern Indonesia. Different from Huaulu's purchase expressed in the bargaining between wife-givers and wife-takers over the wife-givers' things and the wife-takers' things, Yunnan Jingpo and Zaiwa purchase is expressed as putting out a staged purchase of verbal bargaining as if they were making a deal in the market between strangers. I suggest this staged purchase should be understood as a strategy of display that mirrors reflexively the construction of person through the exchanged objects (Ho 2004: 322–323).

giver and wife-taker relationships became reversed relate exactly to this mechanism (Ho 2004: 312–315). The stories have the following pattern: name-group A and name-group B were wife-givers and wife-takers to each other for generations. One day, a boy from group A wanted to marry a girl from group B. At the marriage negotiations, B requested the astronomical figure of thirty three head of cattle for bridewealth. Named group A not only agreed, but also fulfilled. There was neither bargain, nor delay. Starting from then, the path between the wife-givers and the wife-takers, between A and B, got reversed, the old relationship was nullified, and the new relationship was created by fulfilling the bridewealth in display.

On the other hand, in its promotion of "civilization" (*wenming* 文明), the Chinese government and Communist Party label the Jingpo custom of "negotiating" marital prestations in general, and bridewealth in particular, as backward. Urban Jingpo additionally shy from customary "negotiations" and attempt to replace the practice with heavily toned-down versions of "negotiations." Nonetheless, customary "negotiations," with their emphasis on creating obstacles to the completion of the "negotiations," continue throughout the countryside.

In other words, for the Jingpo in Yunnan, ritual bargaining, or the staged purchase, is as real as final negotiation in practice, and both are indispensable in constructing the metaphysical part of the androgynous person. Again, what is crucial in this ritual bargaining is not the use of the wealth objects for manipulating status, it is rather the strategy of display for the staged "purchase" through outrageous verbal bargaining, as if they were buying and selling commodities between strangers in markets. Without this display to de-familiarize the exchange parties, no real negotiation can begin. Unlike Leach's thesis of a flexible system that assumes the duality between ritual/ideal social orders vs. trade/real life, the real life negotiation of wealth objects in the marriage exchange of Jingpo in Yunnan depends on the staged purchase performance as its context.

Third, for the optional exchange, the households of the wife-givers and the wife-takers give whatever household and personal wealth objects they like, depending on the bridewealth money they have finalized and how well-off and how competitive the two families are. Unlike in the prescribed bridewealth exchange, there is no "buying or selling" drama. Unlike in the negotiable bridewealth exchange, there is also no staged "bargaining" in public, only the display of the items of exchange. The bridewealth objects of big furniture, machines or tractors, dowry such as sewing machines, cabinets, bedding, clothing etc., are displayed in

a procession on the way to pick up the bride and subsequently sending her off. Only in this optional exchange sphere do people exchange objects as objects themselves, rather than "relational objects" in the prescribed and negotiable exchange sphere.

In sum, we can see that household wealth objects used in marriage exchange appear to be in both the prescribed and the negotiable spheres indispensable among the Jingpo in Yunnan in their construction of personhood and sociality. They are "relational objects" that make the composition of the person and the social grouping. They require purchasing drama and bargaining ritual to make the exchange appear 'as if' they were commodities with "pure exchangeability" (Wagner 1977, Strathern 1988). They are not "possession" owned by any one person, any household or named house group, and cannot expect to be accumulated (Damon 1993). Their importance in marriage exchange is not their assumed money-like value in overturning the ideal moral order of kinship, as Leach assumed about Kachin *hpaga* from the perspective of his oscillation theory. Only wealth objects exchanged as optional have the "property-like" quality (Damon 1993) of money, defined by Robbins and Akin as being able to "…move against anything *in any kind of exchange between people who stand in any kind of relationship to each other*" (1999: 12, original emphasis). People gain these wealth objects either from money income or from bridewealth, which can be gained by high ranking wife-givers, or most interestingly, from the savings they make as a wife-taking family not owing much debt to their wife-givers. This is how my Dehong Jingpo "uncle" in his early 70s described such occurrences:

I asked my Jingpo uncle how his family began to have any money, he said:

> Grandfather was a great ritual chanter. We had meat to eat.[27] The only reason I can figure that we had some wealth was due to the fact that great-grandfather did not owe much bridewealth. Great-grandfather's first wife died before she had any children, hence he did not have to give any bridewealth cattle. Then he married a refugee Dai woman with a daughter already that cost no bridewealth. They gave birth to six daughters and only one son. The six daughters bring in bridewealth, but only one son needs to give bridewealth.

[27] The payment to ritual specialists—the chanter, sacrificer, and the receptionist—is in two forms. One form is money, which is usually in a small sum, the other form is the sacrificial meat used in rituals.

Their family did not start growing opium till the late 1940s. If there was any wealth at home, it was because they did not owe debt from bridewealth.

From the angle of consumption, the wealth objects exchanged as optional bridewealth for Yunnan Jingpo are still of two kinds. One kind is the household wealth objects and utensils; the other is the personal wealth objects.[28] The wealthy household shown in the early 1950s Chinese Jingpo survey data (see Table Two) owns not only many more livestock than the average household, but the gap between the two households in their ownership of wealth objects of utensils, furniture and money, and personal wealth objects of jewellery, cloth and clothing, is especially obvious. Many household wealth objects are to share among households, such as utensils, and are consumed in different feasts or *nat* spirit worship occasions. Families with tractors and threshers charge villagers going to markets, but at a very reasonable price. When I began doing fieldwork among the Jingpo in late 1989, houses with tiled roofs were not at all common. Those houses with tiled roofs were considered well off. Among the Zaiwa, a family moving into a new tiled-roof house without feasting or carrying out certain rites to appease the spirits of gossip or curses will suffer from illness. The cure for it is usually to make proper sacrifices to the particular *nat* spirits and, hence, an occasion for feasting. From the perspective of consumption, the nature of the ownership of the household wealth objects and utensils is still quite relational. On the other hand, personal wealth objects like adornments, cloth and clothing, such as Muiho Mulat bought and the ladies in the photographs taken by Green wore, are much more personally owned and consumed as well. Those who have personal wealth objects do lend to those who do not, without any hesitation, whenever occasions require. The fame built on the accumulation of personal wealth objects does attract gossip and attacks by jealous spirits. However, because of the fact that these kinds of personal wealth objects are traditionally often earned and owned by the owner, there is no obligation to share. Both the prevalence and the accumulation of this kind of wealth suggests a different and probably competitive kind of individuality and sociality, as Robbins and Akin suggest that globalized money brings.

[28] It is interesting to see that all bought utensils, except woks and tripods, are used as optional marriage exchange items.

From a close look into the marriage exchange sphere of the Jinghpaw and Zaiwa in Yunnan, we can see the presence and importance of monetized markets, and the cultural means for controlling the flow of money. They enclave money into two kinds, one as relational objects in constructing personhood and rank order between houses, the other as possessive property in building the fame of individuals and houses in display and competition, or in reversing the rank order, bringing social change, such as *gumlao* revolt.[29] While the desire for household wealth objects is built on the social agency of display, the display of personal wealth objects for personal consumption or fashion was probably new, having developed since the late nineteenth century, and might have brought anxiety to the collective in social reproduction. With the two *liang* of homegrown opium, Muiho Mulat was able to create a "new" role for herself under the politico-economic environment of the region then. I suggest here that the basis for building up this new role was the rise of a new concept of property that was not relational, but possessive.

Three questions we still need to address include: what was the politico-economic context making the prevalence of possessive ownership possible? Was this politico-economic context the same before, during and after the British arrival in the Kachin Hills of Burma or close to the Jingpo Hills of Yunnan? How related is the opium economy to the emergence of the possessive ownership of wealth?

Conclusion

The power process historically involved in the value conversion of wealth objects before colonial contact was different from that which took place during and after colonial contact. For years, the Jingpo have enclaved money to the social agency of display in making distinctions between persons and households before money became more available

[29] It is important to note that not all Jingpo in Yunnan with possessive ownership of wealth had experienced *gumlao* revolution. The *gumlao* revolution only swept through most of the Jinghpaw speakers villages in the bordering county of Yingjiang (YNSBJZ 1986a, Gong 1988: 56, 147–9, 152–4). There is no recall of any kind of revolution occurring among the Zaiwa or Langvo speaker communities. I offered an explanation for this variation from the perspective of different personhood and sociality between the Jinghpaw and the Zaiwa in my dissertation (Ho 1997) and different strategies of time in grouping elsewhere (1999).

to the masses. When opium became an important cash income, a different kind of "personal wealth object", which built its value on personal consumption for individual distinction, began to emerge.

Despite the strict prohibition against opium in China as a whole and southwest China in particular both before and after the opium war (1839–1842), research on opium indicates that the peripheral area of Yunnan ruled by local chiefs continued to grow, trade, and smuggle opium (Bello 2003, Kuang and Yang 1986, Lin 1980, Zhang 1990, Qing 2005). Research done in the late 1950s on the Jingpo area, shows that, on average, the income from opium growing amounted to 20% of the total household income (Qing 2005: 93–94). Partly due to the limited state power at the Chinese periphery, partly due to the Yunnan government's attitude in seeing opium as a good revenue source for Yunnan finance, not only could the prohibition not be carried out in practice, attempts to do so were also often lax for reasons obviously related to these complicated local interests.

The situation on the Burma side of the border under British colonial rule was little different. The British government had always had different policies towards opium for the lowland Buddhist Burman population and the highlanders before the annexation of Upper Burma in 1886. They strictly monopolized opium production in British India, and prohibited opium consumption in lowland Burma, but were lax on opium growing and consumption by the uplanders. Despite the issue of opium orders in the Shan State in 1923 and in the Kachin Hills in 1937, the area across the Salween was always conveniently outside jurisdiction, and continued to produce, smuggle and trade opium (Renard 1996). After independence in 1948, the Mienma [Myanmar/Burmese] government control over the northern Wa and Shan states was limited. Yunnan caravan traders and the Chinese Kuomintang armies had, since the 1950s, continuously made the opium grown and transportated in this area available to the whole world (Hill 1998, Litner 1997, Renard 1996).

From the last half of the nineteenth century until the middle of the twentieth century, opium-related prosperity made for an unprecedented politico-economic context in areas where the Kachin and Jingpo resided. The Kachin and Jingpo were provided with a new source of cash income arising from this historical contingency. This new source of cash, arising precisely because the Kachin and Jingpo resided at the periphery of the periphery of the world system when opium had global value, made a difference to their everyday lives.

Earlier I raised the following question: could the motivation for *gumlao* revolution in the Kachin area have been elicited by a new vision of sociality and of individuals with a new concept of ownership? I suggest that the answer can only be revealed after more detailed research has been conducted into the dynamics of the various political regimes, the introduction of the new currency—opium—at this time, and the social agency of display behind the indigenous meaning of wealth ownership. This chapter begins to give some answers to the last topic.

I argue in this chapter that the indigenous meaning of wealth ownership among the Kachin in making their social agency of display is key to understanding Kachin social change. From a re-analysis of Jingpo wealth objects, I argue that the competition between the desire for possessive wealth and relational wealth is an underlying reason for the "flowering of *gumlao*" social order in the Kachin Hills, at least in the early half of the twentieth century (Friedman 1979, Maran 1967). In different regions of the Kachin/Jingpo area, what wealth means to the people, and how that meaning is brought into being to motivate social change, are important questions that need to be asked. This is true, whether or not it was because elites willingly gave up the chief's token privilege in "thigh-eating" (Maran 1967), or because regional inflationary pressures for hosting chiefly *manau* rites were too high to support the hierarchical social order (Lehman 1989).

Leach defines Kachin ownership as being to "own the debt" and it is "to be noted that with few exceptions debts are deemed to exist between lineages rather than between individuals" (Leach 1977: 153). In other words, wealth can only be owned through display for the consumption of the related, and cannot be owned for personal consumption. The tension between household wealth and personal wealth intensified as more people were able to own and desired to accumulate and consume personal wealth items for display. This new concept of wealth ownership, based on individual possession, was in conflict with the old agency of display for public consumption, especially when objects were purchased at the expense of cattle, the most important wealth objects. Mulat's personal behaviour of consumption is not an exception in this area at this time, when a new vision of the individual began to emerge. A different reading of *gumlao* revolt as being caused by the tension between relational wealth ownership and possessive personal wealth ownership is, therefore, suggested.