ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF RITUALS AND CEREMONIES
OF ZAIWA (AZI) NATIONAL, WAINGMAW TOWNSHIP IN
KACHIN STATE

PhD DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

People of Myanmar, like all other people in the world, celebrate special occasions and function according to the races and traditions they belong to. The traditions and customs that come through the generations are of much importance in those occasions and functions. Zaiwa (Azi) national also usually celebrates the seasonal festivals which follow presently practiced customs of their national. The title of this thesis is “Role and Functions of Rituals and Ceremonies of Zaiwa (Azi) National, Waingmaw Township in Kachin State.” The main purposes of this thesis is to explore the roles and functions of rituals and ceremonies, especially in their socio-economic life of Zaiwa (Azi) national. The specific objectives are to describe traditional ceremonies of Zaiwa (Azi) national, to elicit the significances of process in rituals and ceremonies and to explore the interrelationships between socio-economic life and rituals and ceremonies. The study was conducted with qualitative methods. The study site is Warshaung village and Waingmaw (ward-3), Waingmaw Township in Kachin State. Key informant interview, direct observation, indirected observation, focus group discussion, and informal interview were conduct to collect data. A total of 121 informants involved in this study. Zaiwa (Azi) national annually celebrate traditional ceremony, among them, Manau festival is the largest and the most magnificent one. Study on their traditional ceremonies show that they are important events for Zaiwa (Azi) national’s socio-economic life, socio-cultural life and socio-political life. Therefore, it can be said that Manau festival, despite of being a religious functions, are important for the people’s socio-economic life and socio-political life. In conclusion, spirit (nat) worship practice remains in the past while Christianity has taken its place. This makes some changes in Zaiwa (Azi) national’s culture, customs, belief, value standard, and ethnicity. Therefore, it is important that the heritage of generations of Zaiwa (Azi) national should be maintained.

Key words: role, functions, ritual, ceremony