RITUAL, RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES AMONG POE KAYIN NATIONALS LIVING IN HPA-AN TOWNSHIP, KAYIN STATE

PhD DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

In Myanmar, over one hundred national ethnic groups are living nowadays. Each of the ethnic groups has their own characteristics and different cultural patterns. The main purpose of this thesis is to understand the ritual, religious beliefs and practices of a Poe Kayin ethnic group living in Hlaing Gabar Village tract in Hpa-an Township, Kayin State. The aim of this research is to find out the impact of ritual, religious beliefs and practices on their socio-economic life. The specific objectives of the research are - to find out Poe-Kayin’s religious belief and practices, to elicit how their religious belief influences on their social and economic function. The study was conducted with qualitative methods. Key informant interview (KII), In-depth interview (IDI) and Direct observation were conducted to collect data. It was found that, only Poe- Kayin national live in this region. Religious and moral values are a highly sensitive area involving beliefs and concepts about the various different kinds of Buddhist and animist beliefs are mixed by each individual. Everyone can participate in this ritual regardless of age and sex. Even people from the neighboring villages come to participate in some ritual which is held in respective village tract. They practice matrilineal descendant pattern for Poe Kayin nationalities. The traditional practice has been handed down to only women – one generation after another. Manna and taboo for marriage, pregnancy and confinement are found so there are a few cases for inheritance and divorce.

Key words: ritual, religion, belief, practice, function,