

# Political Systems of Highland Burma

## Inhalt

## Autor

## Zitate

Edmund Leach: Political Systems of Highland Burma. A Study of Kachin Social Structure.

- "When anthropological societies are lifted out of time and space in this way the interpretation that is given to the material is necessarily an equilibrium analysis, for if it were not so, it would certainly appear to the reader that the analyses was incomplete." (Leach, Edmund R. (1954): Political Systems of Highland Burma; London: The Athlone Press. S.7)
- "It is not uncommon to meet an ambitious Kachin who assumes the names and titles of a Shan prince in order to justify his claim to aristocracy, but who simultaneously appeals to gumlao principles of equality in order to escape the liability of paying feudal dues to his own traditional chief." (Leach, Edmund: Political Systems of Highland Burma. A Study of Kachin Social Structure. University of London, London 1954, S. 8.)
- „When the anthropologist attempts to describe a social system he necessarily describes only a model of the social reality." (Leach, Edmund (1954): Political Systems of Highland Burma. G. Bell and Sons, London. S. 8)
- Esteem is a cultural product. What is admired in one society may be deplored in another. (Leach, Edmund Ronald 1970: Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure. Athlone Press University of London. S. 10)
- „However abstract my representations, my concern is always with the material world of observable human behaviour, never with metaphysics or systems of ideas as such." (Leach, E. R.: Political Systems of Highland Burma – a study of Kachin social structure, London 1954, S.14.)
- „Ritual performances have this function for the participating group as a whole; they momentarily make explicit what is otherwise a fiction." ( Leach, E. R. 1970 (1954): Political Systems of Highland Burma. A Study of Kachin Social Structure, 3. Auflage, London : Athlone Press, S. 16.)
- "Differences of culture are, I admit, structurally significant, but the mere fact that two groups of people are of different culture does not necessarily imply – as has nearly always been assumed – that they belong to two quite different social systems." ( Leach, Edmund R. 1997 (1954): Political Systems of Highland Burma. A Study of Kachin Social Structure. Reprint. London: Athlone Press (Monographs on social anthropology, 44). p. 17)
- „As I have indicated it has usually been accepted as dogma that those who speak a particular language form a unique definable unit, and that this unit group of people has always had a particular culture and a particular history." (Leach, E. R.: Political Systems of Highland Burma. A study of Kachin social structure, London 1954, S.48.)
- „My own interest in the Kachin Hills language distribution map is not primarily in its value as evidence for history, but in the seeming paradox that while in some cases Kachins seem to be excessively conservative about language- so that small groups living as close neighbours and attending the same Shan market yet continue to speak totally different languages - others seem almost as willing to change their language as a man might change a suit of clothes." (Leach, Edmund R. (1991): Political Systems of Highland Burma. The London School of Economics and Political Science, 1. Veröffentlichung 1954. S.49, letzter Absatz)
- „Unlike most ethnographers and social anthropologists I assume that the system of variation as we now observe it has no stability through time. What can be observed now is just a momentary configuration of a totality in a state of flux." (Leach, Edmund 1954: Political Systems of Highland Burma. London: The Athlone Press. S.63.)
- „Although political factionalism inside the community was often intense, the populace usually presented a solid front to outsiders such as the Shans of Lweje or representatives of the Administration;..... Down in the market all inhabitants of Hpalang were treated as one group,..., no distinction was made between Atsi and Jinghpaw, Nmwe or Gumjye. ...The Hpalang people then dropped their differences and all told the same lies for the common good. ( Leach, Edmund R.; Political systems of highland Burma, A study of Kachin social structure; printed in Great Britain by Butler and Tanner Ltd., Frome and London, 1954; S. 70)
- „In a formal sense the interrelationships between the constituent villages of a village cluster are analogous to the interrelationships between the constituent lineage (htingaw) groups of a village." (Leach 1954, S. 82)
- „Many anthropologists have tended to write of myth as being 'a sanction for socially approved behaviour'; the sort of myth with which we are now concerned is perhaps better described as 'a language in which to maintain social controversy'." (Leach, Edmund: Political Systems of Highland Burma. A Study of Kachin Social Structure. London 1954. S. 85)
- „Obviously each lineage head tells a version which puts himself and his group in the most favourable possible light and I have already pointed out some of the more obvious instances of this. But while the different versions stress quite different elements, they are not actually contradictory. They could all be equally right or equally false. Indeed I never found that the rival story-tellers would deny the truth of an opponent's version, they merely said that it was unimportant or disorientated. It was as if each version was the property of one particular group and that there was a tacit recognition that rival groups were entitled to own other stories." (Leach, Edmund: Political Systems of Highland Burma. A Study of Kachin Social Structure. With a Foreword by Raymond Firth. London: G. Bell and Sons, 1954, S. 98 f.)
- „[...]The Kachins of Hplang understood one another's arguments very well; the language in which they expressed these arguments was the language of ritual and of mythology.[...]" (Edmund Leach (Hg.): „The structural categories of Kachin Gumsa society" in: Political systems of highland Burma. A study of Kachin social structure. London: Butler and Tanner Ltd., 1954. S. 101)
- „If one attempts to interpret a social structure by means of analytical categories which are more precise than those which the people use themselves, one injects into the system a specious rigidity and symmetry which may be lacking in the real life situation." (Leach, Edmund: Political Systems of Highland Burma. A Study of Kachin Social Structure. London 1954. S.106)
- "If then my categories seem very imprecise in such dimensions as numerical scale, physical size and geographical concentration, this imprecision is intended. It is just this imprecision which makes real Kachin society very flexible in form despite the fact that the ideal structure of society is both elaborate and rigid." (Leach, Edmund R. 1997 (1954): Political Systems of Highland Burma. A Study of

Kachin Social Structure. Reprint. London: Athlone Press (Monographs on social anthropology, 44). p. 106)

- „But in ordinary way stonework of any kind is remarkable for its absence. ... a sociological explanation might be that perhaps stone is altogether too permanent a substance to be used for the expression of status symbol in a society as flexible as that of the Kachin.“ (S. 121)
- „The typical bawmung is a village headman (salang) who is a commoner by birth and cannot therefore claim the title chief (duwa) but who, through force of personality or other circumstance, actually dominates his legitimate overlord.“ (Leach, Edmund R.; Political systems of highland Burma, A study of Kachin social structure; printed in Great Britain by Butler and Tanner Ltd., Frome and London, 1954; S. 124)
- „Hpaga are a device for manipulating social status and they are used in a game which proceeds according to a set of rule; but as with poker, a mere understanding of the rules gives very little idea of how the game is really played!“ (Leach, Edmund – 1954: Political Systems of Highland Burma. A Study of Kachin Social Structure. The Athlone Press London, S. 154.)
- To be frank, Kachin gumsa theory about class differences is almost totally inconsistent with Kachin practice.“ (Leach, Edmund (1954): Political Systems of Highland Burma. G. Bell and Sons, London. S. 159)
- „Even Stalin at times seemed very like the Little Father who was Tzar of all the Russians. In other words, the contrast between monarchy and republicanism is essentially one of theory; in their practical application the two systems may sometimes look very much alike.“ (LEACH, Edmund Ronald (1954): Political Systems of Highland Burma. London: The Athlone Press, Seite: 197.)
- „[...] Of two lineages of the same clan one may be gumsa and another gumlao; gumsa and gumlao speak the same languages; both in mythological and historical time gumsa communities have been converted into gumlao communities and vice versa. The opposition of ideas latent in these two concepts is used as a symbol of hostility. [...]“ (Edmund Leach (Hg.): „Structural variability: Gumlao and Gumsa“ in: Political systems of highland Burma. A study of Kachin social structure. London: Butler and Tanner Ltd., 1954. S. 198)
- "The balance of a genuine Shan state depends upon the fact that the political alliance represented by the saohpa's numerous wives is stronger than any dissident faction likely to arise among the saohpa's own immediate kinsmen.“ (Leach, Edmund: Political Systems of Highland Burma. A Study of Kachin Social Structure. University of London, London 1954, S. 223 )
- „If, however, we regard Kachin mythology as expressing a system of idea instead of a system of rules or a set of historical events, the need for internal consistency in the various traditions disappears.“ (Leach, Edmund – 1954: Political Systems of Highland Burma. A Study of Kachin Social Structure. The Athlone Press London, S. 268.)
- „Myth and ritual is a language of signs in terms of which claims to rights and status are expressed, but it is a language of argument, not a chorus of harmony.“ (Leach 1954, S. 278)