

DICTIONARY OF MONG NJUA

A MIAO (MEO) LANGUAGE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

by

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University of Copenhagen

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This is the first Mong Njua-English dictionary ever compiled. The lexicographer who has authored this work attempts to give a complete vocabulary of Green Miao, a tribe of the Miao stock in Southeast Asia. He includes not only the basic words of the language, described according to linguistic criteria, but also terms pertaining to animals, plants, religion, agriculture, weaving, kinship, proper names, kin numeratives, clan names, and other semantic categories loan-words from Chinese and Tai are also indicated.

The Mong constitute a sub-division of the ethnic stock known as Miao which numbers over three million persons and is located in the mountainous regions of Southwest China, Northern Vietnam, Laos, the Shan States of Burma, and Northern Thailand. The Miao are divided by linguistic and cultural differences into a number of tribes whose names often derive from the color of the women's garments, e.g. White Miao, Black Miao, Striped Miao, etc. The various Miao tribes are not restricted to any definite geographical location in respect to each other. Thus, the Green Miao (Mong Njua) group may be found in any of the countries mentioned above.

Research for this dictionary was carried out in villages of Naan Province in Northern Thailand, where the author spent three years doing field-work and three additional years in collating and processing field-notes. Field-work was initially carried out using Thai as a medium of exchange; later, Mong Njua was used directly.

Anno: [REDACTED]

JANUA LINGUARUM

STUDIA MEMORIAE
NICOLAI VAN WIJK DEDICATA

edenda curat

C. H. VAN SCHOONEVELD

Indiana University

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*To my parents,
Helen Hoyt
and
W. W. Lyman*

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FOREWORD

The field-work on which this dictionary is based was made possible by an initial grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, New York City (1962) and numerous supplementary grants given by the American Council of Learned Societies, New York City (1962–1965) and the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia (1962–1965). Grateful acknowledgement is here made to these three foundations for their generous support.

This dictionary has been compiled as a companion work to *Grammar of Mong Njua (Green Miao)*: a descriptive linguistic study, and *Ethnography of the Mong Njua (Green Miao) of Northern Thailand*: a study of Miao customs and way of life. Both volumes are to be published separately at a later date.

My material on the Mong Njua was first collected in 1949 and later continued during the years 1962–1964 and 1966–1967 in Naan Province (*nāan*)¹, northern Thailand (Siam). The mountain villages where I was able to contact the Mong Njua were mainly Baan Khun Sathaan (*bāan khūn sàthāan*) and Kang Ho (*kāan hōo*). The first-named village lies on the mountain Doi Khun Sathaan close to the provincial boundary-line between Naan Province and Phrae Province (*phrēe*). The second village is situated on the Doi Phuu Wae (*dooj phuu wae*) plateau, District of Pua (*pua*), northeast of Naan City and close to the Laos border.

The Mong Njua (*món nǐjúa*) tribe is also known as the 'Green Miao' or 'Green Meo'. The name 'Miao' is derived from Chinese (*miáu*)², while the Thai, Yon, and Lao equivalent is 'Meo' (*méew*)³. The tribe itself, however, uses the ethnic name Mong (*món*) to which a descriptive term is added to designate

¹ I use the Mary R. Haas system of Thai (Siamese) romanization (Haas, 1956). For the romanization of Yon (Lanna), I follow the system worked out by Haas for the Chiang-mai dialect (Haas, 1958), 824.

² For the Chinese character, see Karlgren, 1923a, 1970, 620.

³ For this form in Thai script, see McFarland, 1944, 659.

the particular branch of the Mong group. In reference to themselves, the tribesmen used the designator *ñjúa* 'to be green, be azure'.

Henceforth in this work, the term 'Green Miao' will be employed since it has already been accepted in linguistic and sinological circles⁴.

The Mong constitute a sub-division of the ethnic group known as Miao which numbers over three million persons and inhabits the mountainous regions of southwestern China, North Vietnam, Laos, the Shan States of Burma, and northern Thailand. The Miao are divided by linguistic and cultural differences into a number of tribes whose names often derive from the color or pattern of their women's garments (*e.g.* White Miao, Black Miao, Striped Miao, *etc.*). The various Miao tribes are not restricted to any definite geographical location in respect to each other. Thus the Green Miao group may be found in any of the countries mentioned above. Inter-marriage is permitted between the various Miao tribes but, according to the information I received, it rarely occurs. Inter-marriage with persons outside the Miao ethnic stock is unknown. At the time I was first in the field, there were no roads, missions, or schools within the Green Miao areas mentioned.

The *món ñjúa* ('Green Miao') together with the *món kláw* ('White Miao') and the *món quà.mbán* ('Banded-Sleeve Miao') are the three sub-groups of Miao to be found in Thailand. Many more sub-groups are to be encountered in Laos and North Vietnam, while the vast majority of Miao live in southern China.

Population figures are here given. Miao in China : 2,511,339 (census of June 1953) ; Miao in Thailand : 45,000 (Thai Border Police, 1960) ; Miao in Burma : unknown ; Miao in North Vietnam : 500,000 (Touby Lyfong, 1963) ; Miao in Laos : 300,000 (Touby Lyfong, 1963).

The immediate neighbors of the Green Miao in Naan Province are the Yao (or Man), the T'in (or Khaa T'in), the Khamu' (or Phuteng), and the Phii Tong Liang (or Yumbri). Trade contacts are maintained with the lowland dwelling Yon (Lanna), the people of Tai stock who form the dominant population in that part of Thailand.

The majority of published works convey a biased picture of the Miao peoples, giving the impression that they are merely simple mountain folk living on a comparatively low cultural level. In reality, however, Miao culture is highly complex, since this group has great adaptability and readily assimilates foreign cultural elements depending upon the environment and surrounding ethnic contacts.

Linguistic and ethnographic analysis of my preliminary field-notes was begun at the University of Copenhagen in 1954. I am much indebted to Kaj Birkit-Smith and Museums-inspektør Jens Yde of the Ethnographical Depart-

⁴ See R. A. D. Forrest (1965), *The Chinese Language* (2nd edition), p. 99.

ment, National Museum, Copenhagen, for inspiration and advice, and to Søren Egerod of the East Asian Institute, University of Copenhagen, for his sympathetic encouragement.

I am further indebted to Ernest Heimbach and Donald Rulison of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, without whose help the initial stages of my field-work would never have been accomplished. Heartfelt appreciation is due to Garland Bare (now of the Chiangmai Medical School) for his help in the interpretation of certain difficult sections.

Fru Birthe Løvingreen (Copenhagen, Denmark) typed sections *p* to *l* and Mrs. Irene Anderson (Palos Verdes Peninsula, California) typed sections *m* to *z* of the present dictionary. I am most grateful to these two ladies for the competence and skill with which they carried out this task. Sincere thanks are extended to Miss Phonphit Aachakaan (Chiangmai, Thailand) who typed the Introduction and also assisted in the final arrangement and sequence of the revised draft.

An equally important role was played by the three Thai typists in Bangkok, Miss Sasithon Boon-Long, Miss Tyanchai Theesaphaet, and Miss Ratchanii Thudhayanukul, who typed and then filed thousands of file-cards during the intermedial stages of this project. Of especially great significance was the excellent work of Miss Elizabeth Mørch (Copenhagen) and Miss Susan Marshall (University of Chicago) who assisted in setting up the Master File, an essential tool in the compilation of any dictionary.

Special thanks are here extended to Mr. Tileston Holland Hale (Copenhagen, formerly of Carmel, California) who provided my expedition with a transportable (12 pounds) tropicalized, transistor-powered tape-recorder (Butoba, MT5) plus accessories. This tape-recorder was the 'key' in both the recording and the subsequent field-analysis of legends, conversation, personal narratives, formal speeches, religious ceremonies, songs, poetry, and proverbs.

The successful completion of field-work in Naan Province (1962–1964) would have been utterly impossible without the cooperation of Qhua Tyhao (*ghua gháo*) of Kang Ho Village. Qhua Tyhao often worked with me for weeks on end, commencing at sun-up and terminating at sun-down. I am deeply grateful for his untiring patience and good humor.

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INTRODUCTION

1. TRANSCRIPTION AND ORDER

1.1 ORTHOGRAPHY

The orthography of the Green Miao material presented in this dictionary is a compromise between phonemic and phonetic transcription. The reasons for this are purely practical. First of all, the phonemic analysis presented is provisional and will quite possibly be subject to change. Secondly, I wish to provide an easy method of comparison with the Miao vocabularies of Father Savina and other scholars in the field. Finally, my endeavor has been to use symbols which will not only be familiar to linguists but to the average reader as well. A strictly phonemic spelling, although highly desirable for certain purposes, often leads to confusion.

1.2 SEQUENCE OF ORTHOGRAPHIC SYMBOLS

Lexemes are listed according to their (initial) consonant or consonant cluster as the first criterion for arrangement; vowel or vowel cluster (including nasalized vowels) as the second criterion; and tone as the third and final criterion.

(1) *Sequence of consonants and consonant clusters:*

<i>p</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>ñ</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>c</i>	<i>kh</i>	<i>neh</i>	<i>ñčh</i>	<i>ph</i>	<i>y</i>
<i>ch</i>	<i>khl</i>	<i>nd</i>	<i>ñj</i>	<i>phl</i>	<i>ž</i>
<i>č</i>	<i>kl</i>	<i>nth</i>	<i>η</i>	<i>pl</i>	
<i>čh</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>nz</i>	<i>ηg</i>	<i>q</i>	
<i>e</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>ñ</i>	<i>ηgl</i>	<i>qh</i>	
<i>eh</i>	<i>mb</i>	<i>ñch</i>	<i>ηγ</i>	<i>s</i>	
<i>f</i>	<i>mbl</i>	<i>ñdj</i>	<i>ηkh</i>	<i>š</i>	
<i>h</i>	<i>ml</i>	<i>ñj</i>	<i>ηchl</i>	<i>t</i>	
<i>hl</i>	<i>mph</i>	<i>ñtjh</i>	<i>ηqh</i>	<i>th</i>	
<i>hs</i>	<i>mphl</i>			<i>ť</i>	
<i>hy</i>				<i>ťh</i>	

(2) *Sequence of vowels and vowel clusters:*

a, ai, aη, ao, au, aw, e, eη, i, (i), oη, u, ua, w, (wη)

(3) *Sequence of tones:*

<i>(Diacritic)</i>		<i>(Name of Tone)</i>	<i>(Example)</i>
/	=	high or high falling	(<i>páu</i>)
/	=	high rising	(<i>kǎ</i>)
/no mark/	=	middle level	(<i>ʔua</i>)
ˊ	=	lower level	(<i>hà</i>)
ˋ	=	full falling	(<i>náo</i>)
ˊˊ	=	low with voiced aspiration	(<i>lǎ</i>)
ˊˋ	=	falling-rising glottalized	(<i>tǎw</i>)

(For a complete explanation of the symbols listed above, see 7.1—7.3.)

1.3 SEQUENCE OF LEXEMES

Polysyllabic words will be listed using their initial syllables as the main lexical entry. Other criteria being equal, monosyllabic words will precede polysyllabic words. BOUND forms⁵ and loan-components when highly productive will be treated as individual lexical items. FREE forms will always precede bound forms, and bound forms will precede loan-components.

In the case of homonyms, lexemes will be arranged according to WORD-CLASS or SEMANTIC GROUP in the order given in 9 (*Order of Listing for Homonyms*). If there are several homophonous bound forms etymologically derived from the same morpheme, each bound form will be listed as a separate lexical entry followed by a numeral enclosed in parentheses, e.g. *nǎ*⁺ (1), *nǎ*⁺ (2), etc. The order in which such forms are listed is that of logical connection and must not be taken as necessarily indicative of historical relationship.

⁵ For detailed explanations of the terms *bound* and *free*, see Lien-Sheng Yang: "The Concept of 'Free' and 'Bound' in Spoken Chinese", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 12 (1949), 3/4, 462-469; and Meillet's definition in Marouzeau, *Lexique de la terminologie linguistique*, p. 149. See also what Lien-Sheng Yang adds in Footnote 6, p. 467, *op. cit.*: "It may be noted here that the results will be different if one adopts a less rigid definition for a free word. For instance, the test could be whether a character or a compound may be used by itself to perform a certain grammatical function (for example, to be a subject) or to be recognized as belonging to a certain part of speech (for example, a conjunction)." This definition of *free* is also more in keeping with that of Mary R. Haas who writes *Restricted Modifiers*, for example, as free forms (see Haas, 1946, p. 127) but defines the agentive (*chǎn*), for example, as "Bound stem meaning 'artizan, smith'." (See Haas, 1955, p. 295).

1.4 USE OF SEMICOLON AND COMMA

A semicolon will separate different meanings in translation.

e.g. *tâi* 'cup, bowl; plate, dish'.

A comma will separate different English approximations of the same meaning.

e.g. *tâi* 'cup, bowl'.

Those verbs which also function as adverbs will have their primary meanings given first and their additional adverbial meanings separated therefrom by a semicolon.

e.g. *žon* 'to be good; well, excellently'.

2. ITALICIZED WORDS IN PARENTHESES

2.1 SELECTORS

If a main lexical entry is a noun, it will always be followed by its SELECTOR (or SELECTORS) enclosed in parentheses:

e.g. *klě (tû)* 'dog'

I use the label 'Selector' (*Sl*) to designate an important word-class (part of speech) found not only in Green Miao but in many other Asiatic languages as well. Selectors are often referred to as 'Classifiers' or 'Auxiliary Nouns' in other linguistic works. ONE of the uses of the selector in Green Miao is in counting:

e.g. *ɣáo.tû klě* (or) *klě ɣáo.tû* 'two dogs'

If derivative nouns (also to be described as 'compound nouns') take different selectors from the 'head' noun which constitutes the main lexical entry, these will be indicated in the sub-entries.

e.g. *pú (lén)* female (of humans and certain animals)
pú.qá (tû) 'hen'

Otherwise, it will be understood that all derivative nouns take the same selector as the main entry.

In the case of BOUND forms, the first selector indicated for a derivative sub-entry holds for all subsequent derivatives, unless otherwise marked.

- e.g. *qù*a- (1) person, human being, the one who
*qù*a-*čhá* (*lě*ŋ) 'soldier'
*qù*a-*lâu* 'old person'
*qù*a-*qú* 'man, male person'
*qù*a-*sě*ŋ 'clansman'

(The above arrangement indicates that all sub-entries take the selector *lě*ŋ.)

In the case of nouns derived from main entries other than nouns, selectors will NOT be given, since these can easily be found by looking up the first element of the compound elsewhere in the vocabulary.

- e.g. *klân* 'to be yellow'
táu klân 'pumpkin' (< *táu* 'gourd')
klě klân 'flood-waters' (< *klě* 'water')

(To find the selectors of the two sub-entries above, one would refer to the main entries *táu* and *klě* respectively.)

Certain nouns are of the type which can be modified both by a selector (or selectors) denoting only the 'singular', e.g. *chài* 'one of a pair' (see example below), and also by an additional selector (or selectors) denoting only the 'dual', e.g. *ŋǎw* 'pair, couple'. In such instances, the selectors denoting the 'singular' will be indicated both in parentheses and in the sub-headings, while those denoting the 'dual' will be listed in the sub-headings only.

- e.g. *q̄hau* (*chài*) 'shoe'
ɳi.chài q̄hau 'one shoe'
ɳi.ŋǎw q̄hau 'a pair of shoes'

It will be understood that the selector (*lě*ŋ) following a noun designating a 'human being' will stand for both the selectors *lě*ŋ and *tú* since the latter can always be substituted for *lě*ŋ in familiar speech.

(In translating Green Miao nouns, it is to be understood that they could equally well be rendered by English plurals as by English singulars.)

- e.g. *mbua* 'pig (or) pigs'

2.2 FREE FLUCTUATION

Free fluctuation of phonemes is indicated but not free fluctuation of phonetic variants. These phonemic variants are always listed directly following lexemes, and if a selector is also indicated, the order of arrangement will be as follows: lexeme—variant—selector.

- e.g. *čhúa* (*chúa*) (*lú*) 'machine'

2.3 RESTRICTED MODIFIERS

If a main lexical entry is a verb, it will often (but not always) be followed by its RESTRICTED MODIFIER (OR MODIFIERS), abbreviation: *RM*. I use this label to designate an adverbial type of word which is only found in conjunction with one, or at the most, four or five verbs in the entire language.

e.g. *klán lî* 'to be bright yellow'

In the foregoing phrase, the form *lî* is the Restricted Modifier of *klán* 'to be yellow'.

3. CLASSIFICATORY GROUPINGS

Classificatory signs are usually given in parentheses, either directly following the main lexical entry or else directly preceding the English translation. (Capital Letter Abbreviations, in contrast, only occur following the entire English translation.) The Classificatory Signs are used to indicate, inter alia, the following groupings: Chinese loan-words (*Ch*), Tai loan-words (*T*), clan names (*C*), given names (*G*), kinship terms (*K*) [*K*], kin numeratives (*KN*), words pertaining to religion or the supernatural (*R*), weaving terms (*W*), and certain word-classes (see 9.1).

When classificatory signs directly follow lexemes they will always be placed after phonemic variants (2.2) or selectors (2.1). For example, if both a selector and a classificatory sign are given, the order of arrangement will be as follows: lexeme—selector—sign.

e.g. *máó* (*lú*) (*Ch*) 'cap, hat'

In rare cases, a selector and two classificatory signs will be given. In such instances, the sign indicating 'religion' will always precede the other sign, but both will follow the selector. The order of arrangement will then be: lexeme—selector—sign—sign.

e.g. *thán* (*lú*) (*R*) (*Ch*) 'altar'

For an explanation of the weaving terms (*W*), including an illustration of a Miao loom, see T. A. Lyman, "The Weaving Technique of the Green Miao", *Ethnos*, 27 (1962), 35—9 (The Ethnographical Museum of Sweden, Stockholm). For a discussion of the words pertaining to Supernatural Phenomena or Religion (*R*), see T. A. Lyman, "Green Miao (*Meo*) Spirit-Ceremonies", *Ethnologica*, 4 (*Neue Folge*) (1968), 1—28 (Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum für Völkerkunde, Köln).

