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YAY, A NORTHERN TAI LANGUAGE IN NORTH VIETNAM

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The language here called Yay[1]) is spoken in a number of relatively small areas in the extreme North of North Vietnam, adjoining or near the Chinese border. It is the language referred to on linguistic maps and in the literature as Nhang or Nyang, from the Vietnamese term for it, or as Yang, from the pronunciation of the Vietnamese name in some of the Tai languages of the area, or as Giay, which like our Yay is the word (*yay*^{6} in the transcription explained below) used by the speakers themselves for the language and the people.

My data, obtained from refugees in South Vietnam and in Laos, come partially from the town of Cha Pa (*sa*^{1} *pa*^{2} in Yay), but mainly from Muong Hum (*miaŋ*^{4} *hum*^{1}), both in the province of Phong Tho, until 1947 part of the province of Lao Kay.[2])

The aims of this brief sketch will be first, to describe the phonological structure of Yay, including illustrative examples which will make it immediately apparent to students of the Tai languages that Yay is a member of the Tai family; second, to demonstrate that, by the criteria set up by Fang-Kuei Li, Yay is a member of the Northern group of Tai

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[1]) My research in Yay is part of a year of field work in Tai languages (1964–1965) sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies and by the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies and the Center for Southern Asian Studies of the University of Michigan.

The Cha Pa data were provided by Lu a Phang (*lu*^{5} *ʔa*^{1} *faaŋ*^{1}) at Tung Nghia, South Vietnam, in July, 1964. Arrangements for me and my wife to stay and work at Tung Nghia were made by Miss Jean Donaldson of the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

The Muong Hum data were provided by Nung To Phang (*nuŋ*^{5} *to*^{5} *faaŋ*^{1}) at Vientiane, Laos, in September, 1964. His employer, Mr J.E. Mast, principal of the American School there, made it possible to work during regular daytime hours.

Fang-Kuei Li's Wu-Ming glossary is accessible to me through the kindness of Professor Frederick W. Mote and his wife, who translated all the Chinese glosses into English for me.

[2]) Cf. *Carte ethnolinguistique de l'Indochine*, École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1949.

languages; and third, to examine the position of Yay with respect to some of the other Northern Tai languages on which information exists in the literature.

As with other Tai languages, the phonological pattern of Yay is based on the syllable, in which we find distinctions of tone, initial (consonant or consonant cluster), nucleus (vowel or diphthong), and optional final consonant.

On free syllables (those with final vowel, semivowel, or nasal), Yay has six tones:

1 – level, slightly lower than mid: *hun*^{1} 'rain';
2 – low level: *hun*^{2} 'a tracing, copy';
3 – rising: *hun*^{3} 'hardened, solidified';
4 – high, with a slight rise and fall toward the end: *hun*^{4} 'person, human being';
5 – falling: *hun*^{5} 'to seek, search';
6 – higher than mid, with a slight rise toward the end: *hun*^{6} 'very hungry'.

The above numerical order is arbitrary, suggested by the order sometimes used in numbering the etymologically most frequently equivalent tones in other Tai languages of the area. There is no native ordering (and no native orthography). My Muong Hum informant, when we began running each syllable through the six tones to see which ones actually occur, fell into the habit of using an order 1 4 6 5 2 3, based on his habitual way of writing Yay in Vietnamese orthography.

On checked syllables (those with final *p t k*), tones occur which may be identified on the basis of phonetic similarity with tones 1 2 3 5 of free syllables: *rok*^{1} 'bird', *rok*^{2} 'a loom', *rok*^{3} 'six', *rok*^{5} 'outside'. Very infrequent on checked syllables are tones 4 and 6: *ʔaap*^{4} *ʔaap*^{4} or *ʔaap*^{2} *ʔaap*^{2} (sound of a duck quacking), *ʔaat*^{4} *ʔaat*^{4} (sound of a gander honking), *fik*^{6} or *fik*^{3} 'vacuum bottle', *fuk*^{6} (a man's name).

Initial consonants are:

Voiceless unaspirated stops. p t c k ʔ: *po*^{5} 'father', *ta*^{1} 'eye', *caaŋ*^{6} 'elephant', *ka*^{5} 'price', *ʔa*^{1} 'a crow'.

Voiceless aspirated stops. ph th ch kh: *pha*^{5} 'to mate (of animals)', *thi*^{1} 'aluminium', *cha*^{5} 'to inspect', *khi*^{1} 'to look down on, despise'. These sounds, though not rare, are noticeably less frequent than other consonants, and in many cases the speakers identify forms containing them as loanwords. Sometimes variant forms occur with and without

aspiration: *phaaw*^{5} or *paaw*^{5} 'to plane (wood)', *thiaw*^{5} *kin*^{1} or *tiaw*^{5} *kin*^{1} 'a spoon for eating'.

Voiced stops. b d: *ba*^{2} 'shoulder', *da*^{2} 'to revile, scold'. So extremely rare as to be considered marginal to the system is: *g* ([g] or [ɣ]): *gek*^{3} 'to draw or scratch a line'.

Nasals. m n ñ ŋ: *ma*^{1} 'dog; to come', *na*^{4} 'ricefield', *ña*^{1} 'grass', *ŋa*^{4} 'sesame; elephant's tusk'.

Sonorants. y v r l: *ya*^{5} 'paternal grandmother; wife; woman', *vaay*^{4} 'water buffalo', *ra*^{1} 'to seek', *liŋ*^{4} 'monkey'. For the *r* of Muong Hum, Cha Pa has [ð]. For *y*, speakers from both places often have [z] or [ž] when pronouncing words very distinctly in isolation; this appears to be due to Vietnamese education, resulting in Vietnamese-like 'teaching' pronunciation which disappears in normal speech. The same phenomenon occurs among educated speakers of many other Tai languages of North Vietnam.

Voiceless spirants. f θ s h: *fi*^{4} 'fire; drunk', *θi*^{2} 'four', *sa*^{6} 'knife', *ha*^{3} 'five'.

Initial clusters occur of consonant followed by [w] and [y]. Those with [w] are *ʔw kw ŋw yw hw*: *ʔwan*^{1} 'a thorn', *kwa*^{2} 'to pass', *ŋwaak*^{5} 'to turn the head', *ywaay*^{5} or *ywaay*^{5} *ywe*^{4} or *ywuay*^{5} 'soft and rotten', *hwa*^{2} 'to melt (gold, silver)'. For the phonemecist this [w] and also the final semivowel of certain diphthongs are clearly to be united with the initial labiodental *v*, but for comparative purposes I prefer to limit myself to identifying the contrasts in each of the syllable positions, recognizing that a valid phonemic analysis would require a much more thorough investigation, including stress and other features of connected speech, than is needed for comparative Tai studies. I therefore write *v* for the initial labiodental but *w* for the second element in these clusters and for the similar final semivowel.

Clusters with *y* are *by py my*: *bya*^{6} 'coarsely woven (of cloth)', *pya*^{1} 'fish', *mya*^{4} 'to spread (plaster, cement)'.

There are six vowels, three high: *i ɨ* (high back unrounded) *u*, and three low: *e* [æ^] *a o* [ɔ^], and three centering diphthongs transcribed: *ia ɨa ua*. A seventh vowel, mid central *ə*, is not infrequent when final, but extremely rare with final consonant. Examples:

mi^4 to have	*ki*^{2} to saw
nu^1 rat, mouse	*pe*^{4} a raft
ma^6 horse	*mo*^{2} new

ria^{4} to lick	*ria*^{4} ear
rua^{4} boat	*chə*^{1} car

Only the vowel *a* shows a distinction in length, and only before a final consonant: *ʔay*^{1} 'to cough', *ʔaay*^{1} 'goiter', *taŋ*^{2} 'chair', *taaŋ*^{2} 'to differ'. Otherwise all vowels are phonetically long when final, and of indeterminate and varying duration when medial.

Final nasals are *m n ŋ*: *ram*^{6} 'water', *ran*^{1} 'to see; road', *piaŋ*^{4} 'a country'.

Various diphthongs occur which are analyzed as consisting of vocalic nucleus followed by final *w* or *y*. Those with final *w* are *iw iaw ew aw aaw*: *kiw*^{3} 'mother's younger brother', *liaw*^{5} 'to play', *hew*^{1} 'green', *ʔaw*^{1} 'to take', *haaw*^{1} 'white'. Those with final *y* are *ɨay uy uay ay aay oy*: *kɨay*^{4} 'son-in-law', *vuy*^{2} 'because', *luay*^{5} 'to strike', *may*^{6} 'wood', *kaay*^{1} 'to sell', *ʔoy*^{6} 'sugarcane'. In addition there is a diphthong transcribed *aÿ*, in which *ÿ* represents the semivowel corresponding to high back unrounded *ɨ*: *baÿ*^{1} 'leaf', *ŋaÿ*^{5} 'sweet'.

Final voiceless stops of checked syllables are *p t k*: *ʔaap*^{2} 'to bathe', *mit*^{1} 'sharp-pointed knife', *saak*^{5} 'rope, cord'.

I am well aware that the day has long since passed when one might respectably impose such an elementary phonological description as the foregoing upon a conference like this, but as Tai scholars know, one of our chief handicaps in comparative Tai linguistics is the lack of such basic information for many languages. It is needed, in particular, for the investigation of the matters which we will now look into.

Yay clearly belongs to the Northern group of Tai languages, for which Fang-Kuei Li has established various lexical and phonological distinguishing criteria, in his two papers on classification by vocabulary, in which he finds lexical and phonological criteria for dividing the Tai family of languages into three groups, and in his paper on 'The Jui dialect of Po-ai and the Northern Tai', in which distinctive phonological characteristics of languages of the Northern group are listed.[3]) Wulff and Haudricourt have also discussed these matters, but for our purposes it seems simplest to concentrate on Li's very clear and explicit criteria.

First as regards vocabulary, Li finds that certain words occur in

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[3]) F.-K.Li, 'The Jui dialect of Po-ai and the Northern Tai', *Academia Sinica, Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology*, 29, 1957; 'The Jui dialect of Po-ai: phonology', ibid., 28, 1957; 'Classification by vocabulary: Tai dialects', *Anthropological Linguistics*, 1/2, 1959; 'A tentative classification of Tai dialects' in: *Culture in History, Essays in honor of Paul Radin*, ed. S.Diamond, New York, 1960.

languages of his Central group or his Southwestern group, or both, but not in the Northern group. These include certain words for 'to count', 'cold', 'cloudy', 'mother's brother', 'sky', 'pungent hot', 'blind', and 'below'. For all of these except one, Yay agrees with the Northern group in having a different word; the exception is *bot*^{2} 'blind', where Yay has a word otherwise not found in languages of the Northern Tai group.

For 'tiger' and 'lazy', Yay has the words which are exclusively Northern Tai: *kuk*^{3} 'tiger', *cik*^{3} 'lazy'. Yay conforms again in the case of four items which Li finds in the Northern and Central groups but not in the Southwestern: *mum*^{5} 'beard', *laaw*^{1} 'to fear', *paak*^{5} 'mad, crazy', *taw*^{2} 'to hunt'.

Of Li's four words found in the Southwestern and Northern groups but not in the Central, Yay has *ran*^{1} 'road' and (with the wrong tone) *tian*^{2} 'to warn', but does not have Li's words for 'we' or 'to challenge', both of which show spotty occurrence among the languages he treats.

For 'classifier for animals' Yay conforms in having *tua*^{4}, with the tone (Li's A2 category) characteristic of syllables with original voiced initial (cf. Yay *mi*^{4} 'to have'). For 'wing' Yay has *fiat*^{5}, a word characteristic of the Northern group.

For 'maternal grandmother' Yay has *taay*^{2}, and for 'body' *daaŋ*^{1}, both items common to the Central and Northern groups; *taay*^{2} has the tone equivalent to Li's category B1, as do five out of seven of the Northern Tai languages he cites. Yay *pan*^{4} 'to be, become' and *tak*^{1} 'male (animal)' have the tone characteristic of these words in the Central and Northern languages as distinguished from the Southwestern.

Finally, Li lists eight words in which the forms in the Central languages differ strikingly in initial consonant from the forms in languages of one or both of the other two groups. The Yay forms all fit neatly into Li's lists of Northern forms: *ta*^{1} 'eye', *taay*^{1} 'to die', *taak*^{2} 'to expose to the sun', *tek*^{2} 'to break', *ra*^{2} 'shower', *rok*^{3} 'six', *riaŋ*^{1} 'tail', *raw*^{1} 'headlouse'.

Having satisfied ourselves that Yay conforms to the criteria for Northern Tai languages set forth in Li's two articles on classification by vocabulary, we turn to the phonological criteria given in his paper 'The Jui dialect of Po-ai and the Northern Tai'.

There he finds first that Northern Tai has unaspirated consonants for original aspirated ones. Yay, as expected, has unaspirated consonants in *kaat*^{2} 'broken, torn', and *pa*^{2} 'to split', but has *thaan*^{2} 'charcoal' with an aspirated initial. This may be a loanword from Vietnamese or from a Tai language of one of the other groups. The Tai languages with which

Yay is in closest geographical association are Nung (of the Central group) and, to the South West, languages of the Southwestern group. That we should expect some borrowing is suggested by the expressions *ran*^{1} *na*^{3} 'to see the face', meaning 'to give birth to a child', and *pay*^{1} *rok*^{5} 'to go outside', meaning 'to go to the toilet'. Both of these idioms are literal translations of expressions found, for example, in the White Tai of Lai Chau. In other examples Yay has *t* where Tai languages of the Central and Southwestern groups have *th*: *ti*^{5} 'closely spaced', *tiay*^{6} 'rice bowl', *tik*^{1} 'cheap', *tua*^{5} 'bean', *taak*^{2} 'land leech', *tak*^{1} 'male (animal)', *taŋ*^{4} 'to arrive', *tot*^{2} 'to take off, remove', with which are to be compared Siamese *thii*^{2}, *thuay*^{3}, *thuuk*^{2}, *thua*^{2}, *thaak*^{2}, *thik*^{2}, *thiŋ*^{5}, and *thɔɔt*^{2} respectively.

Next, Li finds that in the Northern Tai languages proto-Tai *x* and *γ* are distinguished from proto-Tai *kh* and *g*. In Yay *kh* and *g* become *k*, *x* and *γ* become *h*: Yay *ka*^{3} 'to kill', *haam*^{3} 'to go across', *ku*^{5} 'a pair', *ha*^{4} 'thatch grass'.

The initials which Li reconstructs as proto-Tai *nr*, *lr*, *thr*, *xr*, and *tl* all become *r* in Yay, just as they do in Wu-ming: *ram*^{6} 'water', *rok*^{5} 'outside', *raay*^{4} 'a mark, stripe', *raak*^{5} 'to drag', *ram*^{3} 'to cut, chop', *ra*^{1} 'to seek', *roŋ*^{1} 'banana leaf', *rim*^{1} 'full'.

Yay *ta*^{1} 'eye' and *tuk*^{3} 'bamboo strip' agree in initial with the majority of Northern Tai dialects, among which Li finds Wu-ming divergent.

Yay agrees with the other Northern Tai languages in having a sibilant initial in *say*^{1} 'to plough', *saam*^{1} 'to ask', *sa*^{6} 'knife', *saw*^{4} 'evening meal'.

Li next takes up a complicated matter for which I believe my Yay material suggests a systematic solution. This big subject must, however, await presentation at a later time, and meanwhile let us examine the Yay data in terms of Li's formulation, which is that 'the Northern group often shows an original voiced consonant while the other groups of Tai dialects ... show a voiceless one'. His first example, which equates cognates in Northern Tai languages of Yay *pia*^{5} 'shirt' with Siamese *phaa*^{3} 'cloth', seems to me to be a doubtful etymology; the meaning is wrong (Yay *pia*^{5} 'shirt' is used exactly like Siamese *sia*^{3} 'shirt', not like Siamese *phaa*^{3}), and there is more wrong with the tone than can be explained by an original voiced initial. But for the same consonant other examples are available: Yay *pu*^{6} 'person' has the tone (Li's category C2) which normally indicates an original voiced initial (cf. Yay *ma*^{6} 'horse') as contrasted with its Siamese cognate *phuu*^{3}, which reflects an original voiceless initial (Li's category C1).

Li's second example, which equates Northern cognates of Yay *ti*^{4} 'to

wear, hold', with Siamese *thii*^{5} 'to hold' (misprinted with a diphthong in Li's article) also seems uncertain to me; forms agreeing in tone with Yay *ti*^{4} are found in a great many Tai languages of all three groups, and the meaning is usually 'to wear (jewellery, or a hat, or the like)'. Siamese *thii*^{5} 'to hold, carry (in the hands)' appears divergent in both meaning and tone, and may be totally unrelated, or may be borrowed from another Tai dialect. But again Yay provides us with other examples: some of the forms cited earlier for Yay *t* versus Siamese *th* also show the tone which normally reflects an original voiced initial: *tua*^{5} 'bean', *tiay*^{6} 'rice bowl', *tay*^{4} 'to arrive'.

For Li's other examples Yay provides verification: *kum*^{4} 'a depression in the ground or in rock', *haw*^{6} 'rice', and *sip*^{1} 'ten' all seem to reflect original voiced initials as compared with the original voiceless initials indicated by their Siamese cognates: *khum*^{5} 'a hole', *khaw*^{3} 'rice', *sip*^{2} 'ten'.

Li next cites Northern forms showing special developments in vowels and diphthongs. The Yay examples clearly put this language in the Northern group: *ya*^{5} 'paternal grandmother; wife, woman', but *yia*^{1} 'medicine' and *yiak*^{2} 'hungry'; *liat*^{5} 'blood', but *daat*^{2} 'hot' and *raan*^{4} 'house'; *mu*^{1} 'pig' but *ria*^{4} 'ear' (Li's tone-category A2) and *lik*^{1} 'child'.

Finally, Li cites a few lexical items characteristic of Northern Tai (an approach which he developed further in his two articles on classification by vocabulary which we examined above); for all his examples, Yay has the characteristic Northern form: *bun*^{1} 'sky', *pa*^{4} 'wife', *bik*^{3} 'girl', *pi*^{6} 'older sibling', *haan*^{5} 'sweat'.

Having demonstrated that by all Li's criteria Yay is clearly a member of the Northern Tai group, we turn elsewhere in the literature for more precise identification.

The name Yay is clearly the same word as the Giay treated in Haudricourt's article on the dialects of the Moncay region,[4]) and the Dioi of the old Esquirol and Williatte dictionary.[5]) Li has discussed the various forms of this name on p. 315 of his article on 'The Jui dialect of Po-ai and the Northern Tai'.

Haudricourt's paper is based on word lists collected by others. He

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[4]) A.G.Haudricourt, 'Note sur les dialectes de la région de Moncay', *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, 50, 1960, esp. 166–173.

[5]) J.Esquirol and G.Williatte, *Essai de dictionnaire Dioi-Français*, Hong Kong, 1908.

describes one Giay word list from Ha-giang, from 'a Tho who knows Giay', and two Nhang word lists from Muong Khuong and Chapa. Chapa is our *sa*[1] *pa*[2]. Muong Khuong, where Nung is the prevailing language, has also speakers of Yay; so I am informed by Nung-giung-Sy, former hereditary chief of Muong Khuong. At Ha-giang a variety of Tai or Tho (a dialect of Li's Central group) is the prevalent speech, but my Yay informants confirm that Yay, in a dialect which they claim to be indistinguishable from their own, also occurs; the ethnolinguistic map of Indochina also shows Nyang in all these areas. The dialects represented by these three word lists cited by Haudricourt are presumably all Yay, and it is not clear why he quotes from only the first one, called Giay, as he apparently does; perhaps the other two were less usable, but we shall see in a moment that the fact that the man who provided the Giay forms was not a native speaker seems to have had unfortunate consequences.

In his discussion Haudricourt cites some dozens of Giay forms. These agree in almost all instances with our Yay data, in so far as one can make out the inaccurate transcription. Differences are minor. His list has no indication of tones. Presumably this was the fault of the original interrogator; for some of the other languages cited tones are indicated, though surprisingly not for Wu-ming, which is quoted from Li's glossary where tones are marked.

The Giay forms show a distinction between *o* and *ô*; no such difference exists in Yay, and one suspects a mere impressionistic spelling.

Perhaps most important, Yay *θ* and *s* are both represented by Giay *s*. It is possible that the Giay list is from a dialect lacking this distinction, but I doubt it. What seems to me more likely is that the 'Tho knowing Giay' who provided the responses could not make the distinction. I have had a bad experience myself with confusion between Yay *θ* and *s* in the speech of a man who I later learnt was actually a native speaker of Vietnamese, though fluent in Yay since childhood.

At the risk of wasting space, and in response to the appeal of Uhlenbeck for 'the re-statement ... of some of the older material' made at the 1961 conference which preceded this one[6]) I list now the Yay forms for all the items in Haudricourt's Giay list:[7])

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[6]) Quoted in Professor Henderson's Introduction to the collected papers, *Linguistic Comparison in South East Asia and the Pacific*, ed. H.L.Shorto, London, 1963, 6.

[7]) Pp. 168–173 of his article, cited above.

yia[1] medicine
ruak[5] to vomit
paak[2] mouth
rok[2] a loom
raan[4] house
no[5] meat
kua[1] salt
ran[1] to sift
kiay[5] to ride
hay[6] excrement
sia[4] ox
bin[6] grass mat
bik[3] girl
taw[5] ashes
pi[6] older sibling
kwa[4] right (hand)
tiaŋ[1] melon, cucumber
rin[1] stone
ruŋ[1] to cook, boil
riaw[1] to laugh
θiay[6] left (hand)
rok[1] bird
rit[1] fingernail([iii])
may[6] wood, tree
faaŋ[4] spirit
θi[2] four
tu[1] door
ku[1] I
ro[6] to know

yiak[2] hungry
raak[5] root
na[3] face
sok[5] tomorrow
ŋia[4] snake
θo[5] straight
rua[4] boat([i])
(*caw*[3]) *ho*[2] knee
haw[6] rice
tua[5] bean
caw[3] head
kin[4] on, above
kuk[3] tiger
kua[5] to do, make ([ii])
pia[5] shirt
ta[1] eye
ran[1] to see
riaŋ[1] tail
rok[3] six
cay[2] egg
si[6] to buy
ram[6] water
ria[4] to lick
fiŋ[4] hand
fiat[5] wing
mu[1] pig
fi[4] fire
ku[3] nine
sa[6] knife([v])
ma[6] horse

nia[3] crossbow
na[4] ricefield
dok[2] bone
lik[1] child
saak[5] rope
so[5] name
liat[5] blood
roŋ[4] nest
hap[1] to bite
ria[4] ear
tay[3] to weep
pun[1] body hair, fur, feathers
tuŋ[6] stomach, belly
po[5] father
pi[4] fat
taay[1] to die
ram[3] to cut, wound
ram[1] testicles
ran[1] road
θian[1] garden
ri[5] dry field
rum[4] wind
roŋ[4] to go down
fa[4] iron
ŋi[5] two([iv])
nu[1] rat, mouse
lua[6] silk cloth
diŋ[1] red
na[6] mother's younger sibling

([i]) Wrong vowel on p. 168, right one on p. 171.
([ii]) The Giay form has a final *k*; Yay (more rarely) also has *kuak*[5], and Li's Wu-ming glossary on p. 242, has both forms, the one without final *k* in rapid speech.[8])
([iii]) With final *t*, as in some other Tai dialects, rather than *p*, though Nung, the Tai dialect with which Yay is in closest geographical contact, has final *p*, as in Siamese *lep*[4].
([iv]) In 'twelve' etc.
([v]) General term.

Our Yay data provide the following forms missing in the Giay list:

ma[1] to come
tiay[6] rice bowl
ria[1] you (pl.)
ti[5] place
raap[2] to carry ([vi])
ruk[1] bedroom
ti[5] chopsticks
vi[3] a mountain stream
raw[4] we([vii])

([vi]) Carry on the two ends of a shoulder pole.
([vii]) We (including you).

Haudricourt is of the opinion, following Wulff, that certain Tai languages (those corresponding to Li's Northern group) show such

[8]) F.K.Li, *The Tai dialect of Wu-ming*, (Academia Sinica, Institute of History and Philology, Monographs, series A, 19), Taipei, 1956.

divergence from other Tai languages (those of Li's Central and Southwestern groups) that they constitute a separate group as opposed to what he calls 'langues thai proprement dites'. This preliminary treatment of Yay can hardly hope to contribute to a solution of the debate between these two views (though work now in progress on Yay will lead to my having something to say on this subject later).

We need not examine Haudricourt's discussion so laboriously as we did Li's; many of his points coincide rather closely with those already examined, and others have to do with special features of certain other dialects within the Northern group. First Haudricourt presents an array of forms showing how the Northern languages share vocalic features distinguishing them from other Tai laguages; interested Tai scholars have our corrected Yay wordlist above to use in studying this matter. He then has a set of words in which the tone indicates an original voiced initial rather than the expected voiceless one; his examples, mostly different from Li's on the same subject, prove nothing as regards Giay because the Giay forms do not mark the tone, but the tones on our Yay forms for all the words confirm the point. He cites the word for 'to come' in other Northern languages as an example of the opposite phenomenon, a reflex of a voiceless initial instead of the expected voiced one; his Giay list lacks the word, but our Yay form *ma*^{1}, homonymous with *ma*^{1} 'dog', proves his point for this language.

Haudricourt's list of vocabulary items peculiar to the Northern group is again confirmed as to Yay by our data. The same is true for the next few lists, where he is dealing primarily with peculiarities of other dialects within the Northern group which do not concern us here. In the list on p. 171, top, our Yay form *vi*^{3}, 'a mountain stream', cognate with Siamese *huay*^{3}, suggests that this item should not be included as an example of the sound correspondence which he is describing. And Yay *caw*^{3} 'head' (p. 171) is mistakenly grouped with *cay*^{2} 'egg'; *caw*^{3} is cognate with Siamese *klaw*^{3} (nowadays pronounced *klaaw*^{3}) 'hair knot'; Haudricourt was correct on p. 169 in bracketing this Giay word as not cognate with his words for 'head' in other Northern dialects.

Whether our correction of Giay *s* to *θ* in Yay *θian*^{1} 'garden' disturbs the sound correspondence set up by Haudricourt is impossible to know, since he has only one example of this 'intermediate case'. His next list of three words for which he reconstructs an initial *dr* is disturbed by *θ* in our Yay *θo*^{5} 'straight' and *θiay*^{6} 'left (hand)' versus *s* in *si*^{6} 'to buy'.

In Haudricourt's next two lists the Yay data confirm the Giay forms.

Next he has a list of words in which Northern languages sometimes or always have *f* corresponding to *m* in other Tai languages. He is clearly onto something important here. I suggest that the following Yay forms may be additional examples of the same correspondence: *fi*^{6} 'a meal' (Siamese *mii*^{4}), *faak*^{5} (clf. for tools) (with initial *m* in the White Tai and Black Tai cognates), *foŋ*^{4} 'to roof (a house)' (Siamese *muŋ*^{1}).

In Haudricourt's remaining lists, our Yay forms again merely confirm the Giay forms.

If Yay, as we have shown, is clearly a member of Li's Northern Tai group, and is identical with Haudricourt's Giay, can we determine more specifically its place within this group?

In spite of the apparent identity of name, it is not identical with the Dioi of Esquirol and Williatte; there are many differences, whose importance or age we cannot yet determine, in vowels and consonants, and the tones of Dioi, as murkily represented in the dictionary, require special study. The two best described languages of the Northern group are Po-ai and Wu-ming. Readers who have followed through our detailed examination of Li's articles will have noticed that now Yay agrees with Wu-ming in initial consonant, and now with Po-ai in vowel. It is clear that we are not yet in sufficient mastery of the historical and comparative phonology of the dialects of Northern Tai to assign relative age and significance to the various sound changes reflected. Any attempt, therefore, to align Yay within the group on the basis of consonant and vowel correspondences would seem futile at this stage.

We are in a position, however, to check to see whether Yay has the same tone system, from the historical point of view, as any other language of the Northern group. In Li's well known article on 'Consonant Clusters in Tai',[9]) he provides a table (p. 370) showing the historical development of tones in a number of Tai languages, including from the Northern group Wu-ming, Po-ai, and T'ien-chow. Because I have always found that this table, in its astonishing brevity, puzzles students, I will run through the facts in detail. For Po-ai tones I use the numbers given on p. 561 of Li's article on Po-ai phonology.

Examining first the free syllables, in Li's tone category A (reflecting the first tone of proto-Tai) with original voiceless initial, Yay has first tone, Wu-ming mid level, T'ien-chow low rising. Po-ai differs from all the rest in having sixth tone on words with original initial *ʔ*, *ʔb*, *ʔd*,

[9]) F.K.Li, 'Consonant clusters in Tai', *Language*, 30, 1954.

or *ʔy*; otherwise Po-ai has first tone. Yay agrees with the majority in not making the Po-ai distinction. Yay examples: *mu*^{1} 'pig', *tu*^{1} 'door', *diŋ*^{1} 'red'.

In the same tone category but with original voiced initial, Yay has fourth tone, Wu-ming low falling, Po-ai second tone, T'ien-chow low falling; there is thus no dialect showing a different structure from the others. Yay examples: *pi*^{4} 'fat', *rua*^{4} 'boat', *fi*^{4} 'fire'.

In tone category B (the second tone of proto-Tai) with original voiceless initial, Yay has second tone, Wu-ming high rising, Po-ai fifth tone, T'ien-chow high rising; again, all dialects have the same structure. Yay examples: *θi*^{2} 'four', *kay*^{2} 'chicken', *ba*^{2} 'shoulder'.

With original voiced initial, Yay has fifth tone, Wu-ming low rising, Po-ai sixth tone, T'ien-chow mid level. Here again all dialects agree in structure, except that in Po-ai words of category A with original initial *ʔ*, *ʔb*, *ʔd*, or *ʔy* have fallen together with this tone, as indicated above. Yay examples: *po*^{5} 'father', *naŋ*^{5} 'to sit', *ta*^{5} 'river'.

In tone category C (the third tone of the parent language), in syllables with original voiceless initial Wu-ming has high level, Po-ai third tone. T'ien-chow and Yay agree in making a tonal distinction in this category: in T'ien-chow syllables with original initial *ʔ*, *ʔb*, *ʔd*, or *ʔy* (which Li tells us are preserved phonetically in this dialect) have high falling, and in Yay sixth tone; in both these dialects words of this kind have fallen together in tone with the group to be described in the next paragraph below, that is, they have behaved as if they had original voiced initials. In T'ien-chow the syllables with other initials have high level, and in Yay third tone. Yay examples: *baan*^{6} 'village', *ʔum*^{6} 'to carry in the arms', *ʔa*^{6} 'to open'; *ku*^{3} 'nine', *ha*^{3} 'five', *na*^{3} 'face'.

In syllables with original voiced initial Yay has sixth tone, Wu-ming high falling, Po-ai fourth tone, T'ien-chow high falling. Yay examples: *saaŋ*^{6} 'elephant', *ram*^{6} 'water', *may*^{6} 'wood, tree'.

Turning to checked syllables (Li's category D), where the parent language had only one tone, or perhaps toneless syllables, we find a four-way split; tones have diverged not only on the basis of the voiced or voiceless quality of the original initial, but also on the basis of vowel length. Li says (p. 370, fn. 13) that this is vowel length in the modern dialects. This is not correct for Yay; even in vowels where there is now no distinction in vowel length, there is a tonal distinction reflecting an earlier distinction in vowel length: *dok*^{2} corresponds to both Siamese *-duuk*^{2} 'bone' and *dɔɔk*^{2} 'flower', where Siamese preserves the long

vowels, but *tok*[3] 'to fall' corresponds to Siamese *tok*[2] 'to fall'. Other Tai languages such as White Tai and Black Tai which have no distinction in vowel length except in the case of the vowel *a* show similar tonal phenomena. Li's statement appears to be due to the fact that if one used these tonal distinctions to reconstruct long and short vowels in the parent language he would find many inconsistencies, as certain words show reflexes of long vowel in some dialects but short vowel in others. Perhaps our safest course is to say that these tonal distinctions reflect earlier distinctions in length, which in some cases may be ascribable to the parent language but in others to an intermediate stage.

In checked syllables with earlier short vowels and original voiceless initials, Yay has third tone, Wu-ming high rising, T'ien-chow high rising. In Po-ai, syllables with an original preglottalized stop have third tone, and others second. Yay examples: *tap*[3] 'liver', (*ram*[6]) *bok*[3] 'shallow (water)', *tat*[3] 'to cut'.

In checked syllables with earlier short vowels and original voiced initials, Yay has first tone, Wu-ming low rising, Po-ai third tone, T'ien-chow mid level. Yay examples: *rok*[1] 'bird', *cok*[1] 'mortar', *mat*[1] 'ant'.

In checked syllables with earlier long vowels and original voiceless initials, Yay has second tone, Po-ai fifth, and the other languages have the same tones as in syllables with earlier short vowels. Yay examples: *dok*[2] 'bone; flower', *paak*[2] 'mouth', *tek*[2] 'to break'.

In checked syllables with earlier long vowels and original voiced initials, Yay has fifth tone, T'ien-chow mid level, and the other languages have the same tones as in syllables with earlier short vowels. Yay examples: *liat*[5] 'blood', *raak*[5] 'root', *rok*[5] 'outside'.

Does all this tonal analysis enable us to place Yay within the Northern group? Reviewing our findings, we see that Yay turns out to behave exactly like T'ien-chow in the free syllables, making a tonal distinction for syllables with original preglottalized stops in exactly the same place that T'ien-chow does. In checked syllables, however, Yay makes a full four-way split depending on original initial and on earlier vowel length; here Yay agrees partially only with Po-ai, which also makes such a four-way split but makes a further modification not found in Yay, in syllables with an original preglottalized initial. It seems safe, then, to say that on the basis of present information Yay is closer in tonal structure to T'ien-chow and Po-ai than to other languages of the Northern Tai group. This is not astonishing news, as Po-ai and T'ien-chow are closer geographically to Yay than are the others.

But this is not the whole story on tonal correspondences. Yay agrees with other Tai languages of the Northern group, as we have seen earlier, in showing exceptional instances in which syllables believed to have had original voiceless initials have the tones that would normally reflect original voiced initials, and vice versa. There are far more of these 'exceptions' not only in Yay but also in other Northern languages on which we have information, e.g. Wu-ming as represented in Li's excellent glossary, than our discussion has suggested. Moreover, Dioi, even in the admittedly troublesome transcription of the Esquirol and Williatte dictionary, shows some tonal mysteries, as recognized long ago by Maspéro.[10]) And some dialects of eastern Nung (not the western variety of Nung spoken in the same area as Yay), on both sides of the border, in the Cao Bang area of North Vietnam and the Lungchow area of Kwangsi, and including the Nung of the old Savina dictionary, exhibit tonal features which the current views on comparative Tai tonal correspondences cannot handle, but which throw light on this whole matter. It is because all of these sources hold great promise of providing us with a unified systematic explanation of tonal problems previously unsolvable that I find Yay such an important and interesting language, and so have offered this preliminary sketch of its structure and affinities.

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[10]) H. Maspéro, 'Contribution à l'étude du système phonétique des langues thai', *BEFEO*, 11, 1911.