

A DESCRIPTIVE GRAMMAR OF LOLO¹

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PREFACE

In the spring of 1938, with the transfer of the University of Peking to Yunnan, I came into contact with the Lolo people and became interested in their language. Since that time I have travelled in some of the other provinces bordering Yunnan in order to study other dialects of Lolo. The description which follows is based upon the dialect of Pei-shan which is situated in the Hsi-ch'ang district of Sikang, but I have endeavoured as far as I am able to compare this dialect with others which I have studied at first hand or that have been described by other scholars.

As many dialects still remain to be studied in a scientific manner and the phonetic structure of Lolo words in general has degenerated to a considerable degree, I cannot undertake an etymological study of the language in this work. Although I have tried to arrange my material according to modern phonetic and linguistic science I can lay no claim to completeness. I have no doubt that further studies will improve and correct this first sketch.

I cannot express sufficient gratitude to Professor G. Haloun under whose supervision this dissertation was written. He has read the whole work in manuscript and has offered many valuable suggestions and much acute criticism as to both arrangement of the material and the analysis of the language structure. Without his encouragement I should probably never have undertaken this task; and without his help the work would not have achieved its present form.

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ABBREVIATIONS

A.	Annam
AP	adverbial particle
B.	Burma
C.	Cambodia
c.	chüan (the Chinese term for chapter)
H.	Hê-chang (Kwei-chow)
K.	Kweichow
L.	Lu-nan (Yunnan)
Lc.	Lu-ch'üan (Yunnan)
lit.	literally
NUM	numeration
OP	object particle
PD	particle expressing duration
PP	particle expressing past tense
PRT	particle
S.	Sikang
Si.	Siam
SP	subject particle
STP	substantivizing particle
Sz.	Szechwan
T.	Ta-ting (Yunnan)
t.	tome
voc.	vocabulary
Y.	Yunnan

Underlined numbers (e.g. 169) refer to items in the Bibliography (pp. 227 *ff.*, below).



INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

NAMES FOR THE LOLO

(1) Some Common Names Used Today.

A. Lolo.

1. The term *Lolo* is generally applied by both the Chinese and Europeans to the peoples who speak a particular language found in south-western China and extending to northern and eastern Burma and Tongking. The speakers of this language, except those who call themselves *Lolop'o*, dislike this term.

For the origin of the term "Lolo", there have been four suggestions, viz., that it derives from

(a) the tribal designation *no*: P. Vial suggested in 1898 that because in some regions the Chinese confuse the *n* and *l* sounds, they have rendered *no*, which the Lolos call themselves, as *lo* and through the doubling of this syllable the term has become *Lolo* (187, p.70);

(b) a Chinese word for 'basket': C.E. Hicks maintained in 1910 that "Lolo" is a contemptuous nickname given by the Chinese because of the small basket called *lolo* in Chinese, in which the Lolos keep the bamboo tubes which symbolize their ancestral spirits (93, p.217);

(c) a name of a Lolo tribe: In 1913 A. Liétard proposed that the name of a particular tribe, the Lolo(p'o), was used by the Chinese to designate the Lolo peoples as a whole (127, p. 23);

(d) the tribal name *Lulu*: T'ien Ju-ch'êng writing in 1557 (176, p. 88) declared that "Lolo" is a corruption of *Lulu* (盧鹿) The author of the *Album of the Miaotzü* (18, p. 272), Ku Yen-wu (105, cc. 109, 111), T'an Ts'uei (167), Yan Shên (158, p. 165), F. S. A. Bourne (16, p. 88), T. de Lacouperie (109, p. 89), P. Pelliot (148, p. 137), M. A. Vissière (189, p. 178) support this idea.

Of these four suggestions, the second is the least likely because the people of one of the Lolo-speaking tribes call themselves "Lolo(p'o)"; the first is possible but unlikely because no Lolo tribes call themselves "nono"; I am inclined to combine the third and fourth and I would propose that "Lolo" is a term by which a tribe of Lolo-speaking peoples call themselves and that this same tribe was called "Lulu" in the T'ang Dynasty.

B. No-su and Ni or Gni.

2. The Lolos have, besides *Lolo(p'o)*, many other names which they have given themselves and which vary from region to region. The most widely used

is *No-su* which is pronounced *Nε-su*, *Na-su* and *Nəu-su* in different regions. The first syllable (*no*, *nε*, etc.) in all these terms means 'black', while the last is a particle used to turn the preceding verb or adjective into a substantive. The term *No-su* and its variations (*Nε-su*, *Na-su*, etc.), therefore, mean 'black ones' or 'black men'.

3. The history of the term *No-su* is rather interesting. While travelling in the Ta-lian Mountains in 1943, I procured a Lolo manuscript entitled *The Origin of the Gods* in which there is a passage running thus:

'In ancient times there were three families of white persons living on earth. But in heaven there lived three families of black persons. . .'

The manuscript goes on to relate the descent of these black persons to earth and how they married on earth and became ancestors of the Black Lolos (69:8-21).

Whether this myth was originally composed to support the superiority of the "Black" Lolos, or whether their superiority is the natural result of the myth is unclear, but in Sikang, Szechwan and some regions of Yunnan and Kweichow, the Lolos are distinguished into two main classes. The ruling class is called *no* 'black', and the lower, *tɕ'y* 'white'. It would appear that originally the term "No-su" applied only to the "Black" Lolos. But as it was customary to refer to the conquered by the name of the conqueror and in the course of time more and more White Lolos were conquered by the Black Lolos, the term "No-su" has come to include the White Lolos as well.

4. The Lolo speakers in Sikang and Szechwan also refer to themselves as *Ni* ([a] below) and those in Lu-nan (Yunnan) call themselves *Gni* ([b] below):

(a)

(b)

Ni and *Gni* are obviously of the same origin but their meaning is not known. A. Liétard suggested (127, p. 31, f.n.) in 1913 that *Ni* might mean 'browner skin' as opposed to the Lolo term for the Chinese (*ɣɔ*) which might mean 'whiter skin', but Liétard produced no better reason in support of his thesis than his own assertion that *ni* means 'impure' and *ɣɔ* denotes 'pure'. In fact, in the regions to which Liétard referred, the word for 'impure' is not *ni* but *bo-a-ɣɔ* or *ku-a-tɕɿ* and the word for 'pure' is *bo-ɣɔ* or *ɣɔ* which is different from the word for the Chinese, *ɣɔ*. The *Ni* or *Gni* is probably connected with *No* (see § 2). The former might be an older form of the latter because it is now used only in compound words or in the written language.

C. Man-tzŭ, I-jên, etc.

5. The Lolo-speaking peoples are also referred to as *Man-tzŭ*, *Man-chia*, *I-jên*, *I-chia*, *I-chiao*, *I-pien*, or sometimes *Miao-tzŭ*. In Chinese *Man* and *I* both mean 'barbarians' or 'aborigines', *tzŭ* is a substantive suffix, *jên* means