

NOTES ON THE T'EN (YANGHUANG) LANGUAGE

Part I: Introduction and Phonology

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The speakers of the T'en language⁽¹⁾, known to the Chinese as Yanghuang 羊黃 or 楊黃, are now found in a small number of villages in the district of Huishui 惠水 (formerly Tingfan 定番), just south of the provincial capital Kweiyang 貴陽. They live among the Northern Tai speakers, and usually know the local Tai dialect. In the Kweichow T'ung-chih 貴州通志 (1741), the Yanghuang people are said to be very numerous and to be found all over the province with many subgroups, but in the Kweiyang Fu Chih 貴陽府志 (1850), they are said to be found only in Tingfan, namely Huishui. The statement in Kweichow T'ung-chih apparently follows T'ien Wen's Chien Shu 田雯, 黔書 (1690), in which the Yanghuang people are said to be found as far northeast as in Lungch'uan 龍泉 (now called Fengkang 鳳岡), as far southeast as in Lip'ing 黎平, and also in Tuyün 都勻 and Lungli 龍里, almost in the center of the province. The interpretation of these different statements about the distribution of this group is a difficult one. To interpret them literally, we have to assume that the Yanghuang people were very numerous and inhabited a large portion of eastern Kweichow at the end of the seventeenth century to the middle of the eighteenth century. One hundred years later, the people were confined to only one district in about the center of the province, presumably replaced in the other districts by, or assimilated, to speakers of other languages such as Tai, Miao, or Chinese. The Chinese population there must have been still a minority at that time, and the rapid replacement by Chinese seems unlikely, although not impossible.

It is probable that the authors in 1690 and 1741 might have used the name Yanghuang in a wider sense to include a number of other related

(1) On the relationship of this language to Sui, Mak, and the Tai languages, see my Notes on the Mak Language 莫話記略, 1943, Monogr. 20 of this Institute, p. 1ff.

groups, such as Mak, Tung, Sui, and others, which are still found in the southeastern part of the province. Whatever the interpretation may be, it is evident that the Yanghuang people must have had a wider distribution than they have now, although they may not have been as numerous as the Ch'ien Shu or the Kweiyang Fu Chih makes them. They are now chiefly replaced by the Northern Tai speakers, I believe, or assimilated to them.

T'en is the name used in their own language to denote themselves. Its meaning is not known. Nor is the meaning clear about the Chinese name Yanghuang. It may have something to do with the fact that a number of the tribal chiefs (t'u-ssu 土司 or chang-kuan-ssu 長官司) in districts where they are said to have existed have the surname Yang 楊.

The material was collected in 1941 in a village three or four miles north of the city of Huishui where I stayed. For about two weeks I worked with an informant, Mr. Liu Yü-ch'ing 劉玉清, by walking daily to his village and back and occasionally with his son when he was busy. An attack of malaria cut short my stay there, and other research work prevented me later from visiting the place again. Thus the material is fragmentary, and consist of a few texts, a glossary, and some phrases for grammatical analysis. Because of the lack of information on this language which is apparently on the way to extinction, it seems useful to make available what there is in my collection. There will be three parts to these notes.

1. Introduction and Phonology.
2. Glossary.
3. Texts and Translations.

This paper will be Part 1 of these notes, and it is hoped that Part 2 and Part 3 will soon follow.

PHONOLOGY

The T'en language has the following consonants as initials of a syllable:

	Stops	Aspirated stops	Pre-glottalized	Nasals	Fricatives	
Labials:	p	ph	[?] b	m	f	w
Alveolars:	t	th	[?] d	n		l
Sibilants:	ts	tsh	[?] z		s	z
Velars:	k	kh		ŋ	x	ʃ
Others:	ʔ		[?] j			j

The labials, alveolars, and sibilants may be followed by /j/, thus the following clusters occur. /pj, phj, [?]bj, mj, fj, wj, tj, thj, [?]dj, nj, lj, tsj, sj, zj, and [?]zj/. Examples⁽¹⁾:—

/paa 35/ leg, /pjaak 22/ to separate, /phaa 44/ to split, /phjau 35/ to singe (hair), /[?]bee 13/ year, /[?]bjaak 31/ slippery, /mai 31/ tree, wood, /mjaak 22/ girl, /faan 22/ sweet, /fjaa 35/ pigtail, /wuu 35/ throat, neck, /wjaan 35/ garden. Note that /wj/ is phonetically [vj].

/tien 13/ foot, /tjuŋ 22/ to pound, /them 22/ sour, /thjaa 22/ to write, /[?]daa 13/ eye, /[?]djaa 44/ to rest, /naŋ 13/ nose, /njaan 13/ moon, month, /let 35/ iron, /ljuu 13/ clear.

/tsuu 53/ pair, /tsjaan 44/ cock's comb, /tshem 13/ needle, /siŋ 13/ ginger, /sjee 31/ left (side), /zaa 44/ field, /zjaa 13/ boat, /[?]zan 35/ heavy, /[?]zjaau 35/ numb.

The velars may be followed by /w/. Thus there are the following clusters: /kw, khw, ŋw, and xw/. The velars are not followed by /j/, but there is a series of palatal stops, nasal, and fricative [t, th, n, ɕ], which may be considered as clusters of velar plus /j/, and may be phonemicized as /kj, khj, nj, and xj/. Examples:—

/kaai 44/ chicken, /kjaa 13/ salt, /kwaa 13/ melon, /kheu 44/ to bark, /khjiu 44/ dry, /khwaa 35/ to collapse like a land slide, /ŋaan 22/ yellow, /ŋjaa 13/ sesame, /ŋwaa 31/ tile, /xaa 31/ to kill, /xjaak 22/ guest, /xwen 35/ rain, /ɕaaŋ 35/ steel.

Examples for /[?], [?]j, and j/ are: /[?]aa 13/ mushroom, /[?]jīn 13/ person, /jaak 22/ hungry.

There is also a high, rounded, front semivowel /y/, which is found, but rarely, after /t, th, and z/. Sometimes the two informants disagreed, in its use, the younger informant used /y/ and the older one /u/, for example: /tem 53 tyaa 44/ chestnut, /thuei 35/ or /thyei 35/ snake, /zyaan 53/ to pass on, hand over.

The consonants premitted as the final member of a syllable are /m, n, ŋ, p, t, and k/.

There are five vowel phonemes in this language. All vowels may be short or long. The long vowels are written double.

(1) After the forms, numerals and raised dots denots tones, see below.

	Front	Back
High	i	u
Mid	e	o
Low	a	

/i/ is a short, high, front, lax vowel [ɪ]. Ex. /piŋ 35/ level, /pit 35/ to close.

/ii/ is a long, high front, tense vowel [i:]. Ex. /lii 35/ plough.

/e/ is a short, mid, central vowel [ə], in unstressed open syllables, in the diphthongs /ei, eu/, or when it is followed by a consonant. Ex. /te' njaan 13/ one month, /tei 35/ to take, /keu 22/ head, /khen 13/ road, /thaam 13 ɲet 31/ march, /zem 35/ wind, /zep 31/ dark. In the diphthong /ie/, it is fronted to [e]. Ex. /piet 22/ to pluck a string, /mien 22/ mat.

/ee/ is a long, front, open vowel [ɛ:]. Ex. /mee 35/ to have, /tee 22/ under.

/a/ is a short, back vowel between [ɑ] and [ʌ]. Ex. /mai 44/ new, /man 35/ fat, oil, /maŋ 13/ deep pool, /tau 53/ bean, pea, /tap 35/ liver.

/aa/ is a long, front, low vowel [a:]. After /j/, it is raised to [æ:]. Ex. /paai 13/ to go, /taau 44/ to return, /sjaan 22/ lunch, /mjaak 22/ girl.

/u/ is a short, high, back, lax vowel [ʊ]. Ex. /thuŋ 44/ to release, /nun 35/ to sleep, /nuŋ 31/ younger sister, /let 31 zut 35/ star, /tsuk 31/ to wash.

/uu/ is a long, high, back, tense vowel [u:]. Ex. /kja' muu 53/ tomb, /tsuu 53/ pair.

/o/ is a short, mid, back rounded vowel between [o] and [ɔ]. Ex. /tok 35/ to drop. /tsoŋ 35/ layer, /kja' kon 53/ bracelet, /ʔbot 31 pei 35/ to shed skin.

/oo/ is a long, mid, back, rounded vowel [ɔ:]. Ex. /poo 31/ cattle, /zoo 53/ breath.

There is also a tongue tip vowel or syllabic /z/, which occurs in a few words after /s/ and /ts/, for example, /sz 44 wuu 44/ a kind of reed, /jii 22 tsz 44/ soap.

The diphthongs /ie, ue/ must be followed by a consonant, the diphthongs and triphthongs /ai, aai, au, aau, ei, oi, ui, iu eu, ieu, uei/ may not be followed by a consonant. In my material there are the following combinations of vowels and consonant endings.

aa	a	ee	e	ii	i	oo	o	uu	u
aai	ai	—	ei	—	—	—	oi	uei	ui
aak	ak	eek(?)	—	iek	ik	—	ok	uek	uk
aam	am	—	em	iem	im	—	om	uem	—
aan	an	—	en	ien	in	—	on	uen	un
aaŋ	aŋ	—	—	ieŋ	iŋ	—	oŋ	ueŋ	uŋ
aap	ap	—	ep	iep	ip	—	op	—	—
aat	at	eet(?)	et	iet	it	—	ot	uet	ut
aau	au	—	eu	ieu	iu	—	—	—	—

There is only one form each for -eek and -eet, i.e. /tem 53 ʔjeek 22/ grapes, and /ʔjeet 22 ʔzem 35/ to scratch (itch). From the general pattern of distribution, these two forms may be suspected to be misrecordings, perhaps of /ʔjiet/ and /ʔjiek/. The non-existence of /-ek, -eŋ/ is probably not accidental, they have probably merged with /-ak, -aŋ/. It may also be observed that the short vowels do not occur in open syllables except when they are unstressed. The distinction between the long and the short vowel is best maintained only in the low vowel /aa, a/, elsewhere the long vowel occurs normally in open syllables, and the short vowel in closed syllables or in unstressed open syllables. It may be best to treat the long vowels as clusters.

There are six tones in normally stressed syllables, and only two registers for the unstressed syllables. The six tones are.

- | | |
|------------------------------|----|
| 1. Rising from low to mid. | 13 |
| 2. Rising from mid to high. | 35 |
| 3. Mid-low level. | 22 |
| 4. Falling from mid to low. | 31 |
| 5. Mid-high level. | 44 |
| 6. Falling from high to mid. | 53 |

Some proclitic and enclitic syllables are unstressed, and sometimes with vocalic modification of the stressed forms, if the stressed forms can be elicited. The unstressed syllables may have a high register or a low register. The high register is marked by a raised dot, the low register will not be marked. Thus, /kjaa 35/ is a prefix or a numeral classifier used with many objects, utensils, and some body parts, and is often unstressed to /kja'/. Examples:

/kja' saai 13/ a sift, /kja' zaan 35/ a house, /kja' loŋ 22/ a winnowing

basket, /kja' tuei 31/ a bowl, /kja' taj 44/ a stool, /kja' tai 53/ a bag, /te' kjaa 35 them 13/ one heart. As dictionary entries, the stressed form /kjaa 35/ is generally used with a note that this syllable is often unstressed. The prefix /ne/ (low register) is often used with names of animals, but the stressed form is not known. Examples. /ne maa 13/ a dog, /ne. wei 35/ a water buffalo, /ne noo 22/ a rat, /ne mem 31/ a tiger, /ne meu 44/ a pig. /ne mem 53/ a fish, /te' too 35 ne meu 44/ one pig.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF TONES AND SYLLABIC TYPES

The syllable in T'en may be classified as a living syllable or as a dead syllable. These two terms are borrowed from Siamese grammarians. A living syllable is any syllable ending in a continuant, vowel, semivowel, or nasal, and a dead syllable is one ending in a stop consonant. The living syllable may have any of the six tones mentioned above, while the dead syllable is limited to only three tones: tone 2 for syllables with a short vowel, tone 3 for syllables with a long vowel or vowel cluster, and tone 4 for syllables with either a long vowel or vowel cluster, or a short vowel.

For example.

Living syllables

Dead syllables

/paai 13/ to go

/xaai 35/ shoes

/lai 22/ to get

/mai 31/ tree

/kaai 44/ chicken

/tai 53/ bag

/put 35/ lung

/nuek 22/ flower

/laak 31/ child

/met 31/ ant

STRESS

As far as my material is concerned, only the stressed and the unstressed syllables are marked. Among the stressed syllables, perhaps two stresses, the normal and the contrastive, need to be recognized, these are not consistently marked in my material.

Pauses are marked by commas, otherwise only intersyllabic junctures are marked by space.

REMARKS ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF T'EN TO MAK AND SUI

These are general remarks about the phonological characteristics of the T'en language in comparison with the Mak and the Sui language. No attempt

is made to go into a detailed comparison of these languages, or into their further relationship with the Tai languages. It is hoped that these remarks will be sufficient to place the T'en language in the group of languages to which it belongs.

1. T'en, like Mak, has no uvular series of consonants, which exist in Sui as a special series distinct from the velars. These two series generally merge in T'en, but occasionally still distinct in Mak. For example:

Sui	Mak	T'en	
qai 35	kaai 35	kaai 44	"chicken."
qau 35	kaau 35	kaau 44	"old."
khun 11	khun 13	khen 13	"road"
qha 11	thaa 13	khaa 13	"ear"
kăi 35	tai 35	kai 44	"egg"
khău 35	thau 35	kheu 44	"to bark"

2. T'en, like Mak, has no voiceless and preglottalized nasals, which exist in Sui together with the ordinary nasals as three distinct series. For example:

Sui	Mak	T'en	
ʔna 11	naa 24	naa 35	"thick"
no 11	—	noo 13	"cold"
nan 52	naan 51	naan 31	"meat"

3. There are in T'en preglottalized stops /ʔb/ and /ʔd/ which correspond to /b/ and /d/ of Mak and Sui, but not to their /ʔb/ and /ʔd/. For example:

Sui	Mak	T'en	
ban 11	baan 13	ʔbaan 13	"male person"
be 11	bee 13	ʔbee 13	"year"
da 11	daa 13	ʔdaa 13	"eye"

4. Sui and Mak /ʔb/ corresponds to T'en /m/, and Sui and Mak /ʔd/ corresponds normally to T'en /l/. For example

Sui	Mak	T'en	
ʔban 44	ʔbaan 44	maan 22	"village"
ʔbaŋ 11	ʔbaaŋ 24	maaŋ 13	"thin"
ʔdai 11	ʔdaai 24	laai 13	"good"
ʔdoŋ 11	ʔdoŋ 24	loŋ 13	"forest"

5. Occasionally T'en /z/ also corresponds to Sui and Mak /ʔd/, /d/, /l/, and to Sui /r, ʔr/ uvular fricatives for which Mak has /ž, j/. For example.

Sui	Mak	T'en	
ʔdak 35	ʔdook 44	zaak 22	"bone"
ʔdam 11	ʔdam 24	zam 13	"to plant rice"
din 44	din 44	zen 22	"short"
dam 35	dam 35	zam 44	"low"
lum 11	lum 13	zem 35	"wind"
le 11	lee 13	zee 35	"writing"
ran 11	žaan 13	zaan 35	"house"
ri 11	žui 13	zui 35	"trace, footprints"
ʔra 35	jaa 35	zaa 44	"rice field"
ʔrum 11	jum 44	zuem 13	"lean"

6. T'en /th/ regularly corresponds to Sui /h/ and Mak /s/ or /ž/.

Sui	Mak	T'en	
ham 11	saam 13	thaam 13	"three"
han 11	saan 13	thaan 13	"to weave"
hai 52	žaa 44	thaa 31	"intestines"
haŋ 52	žaaŋ 51	thaaŋ 31	"to feed raise"

7. T'en sometimes agrees with Mak in having /l/ where Sui shows /kh/.

Sui	Mak	T'en	
khan 11	laan 13	laan 13	"nephew"
khau 44	laau 44	laau 22	"wine"

8. T'en /p/ sometimes corresponds to Sui /q/ and Mak /k/. It is to be noted that some other Sui dialects also show /p/ in agreement with T'en.

Sui	Mak	T'en	
qa 11	kaa 24	paa 35	"leg"
qau 11	kaau 24	paau 35	"horn"

There is a tendency in T'en to neutralize vowel distinctions found in Mak and Sui, and there are many other matters which can only be taken up in a detailed comparative study. The preceding remarks show that T'en, while closely related to Mak and Sui, must be considered as a separate language by itself.