

NAMES AND SUB-GROUPS OF THE PALAUNG: A PRELIMINARY FIELD SURVEY IN YUNNAN AND KENGTUNG

Sujaritlak Deepadung¹

Abstract

In this paper, names that other groups of people, as outsiders, have given to the Palaung and names that they use to call themselves are discussed based on the written records available and field surveys in the areas. The Palaung in China now are officially referred to as De'ang² (Ta-ang). From surveys in Dehong Dai-Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan, China, the De'ang nationality consists of 5 sub-groups of people—the Liang (Ta-ang), the Pu-le(Ka-ang), the Rumai (Ru-mai), the Raokot (La-ang) and the Raojin (Na-ang). The classification of these 5 sub-groups is based on their autonyms and on names they use when they refer to other groups of Palaung. Based on the SEA word list, there are 3 dialects of the Palaung language in China: Raojin, Rumai-Raokot and Pu-le-Liang. In Myanmar, according to various written works by Western scholars, they are called Palaung or Pale and have at least three sub-groups: Darang (Scott and Hardiman 1900), Ta-ang (Milne 1924, 1931; Shorto 1960) and Rumai (Davies 1909; Milne 1924, 1931; Diffloth 1991). From surveys in Kengtung, Shan State, Myanmar, all the Palaung in

¹ Associate Professor of Linguistics at Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University

² Following the Pinyin scripts, the written form De'ang is used throughout this paper.

Kengtung identify themselves as Dara-ang. In Thailand, Dara-ang is the name this ethnic group uses to refer to itself and Thai people call them Palaung (Kasisopa 2003; Deepadung and Patpong 2010). Although, based on their names, the Dara-ang and Raojin are different sub-groups, linguistically, they speak the same dialect.

Keywords: Palaung, Dara-ang, De'ang, Ta-ang, autonyms, ethnic names

Introduction

After a short time, anyone working on Austroasiatic languages, faces the problem of names for particular ethnic groups, especially those groups residing in Thailand, such as the Lawa and Lua (Rattanakul 1984), the Tin/Mal/Prai of Nan Province (Filbeck 1987), and the Khmu, Lua, Tin and Mrabri (Premsrirat 1991, 1992). The author is no exception. When she started working on the Palaung, who belong to the Palaungic branch of the Mon-Khmer sub-family in the Austroasiatic language family, the library survey caused much confusion. Different articles/books used different names for the Palaung varieties for both the Palaung in China and in Myanmar. Detailed investigation of the issue of names and/or sub-group names had to be conducted. Moreover, works on the Palaung in China are very scarce and are written in Chinese, which makes it almost impossible for those who do not know Chinese. Concerning the Palaung in Myanmar, almost all of the previous studies were done in the early 1920's by British colonial officers and Christian missionaries, which make them a treasure house for those who are interested in the Palaung people and languages.

A few later studies done later on the classification of Palaung languages also

made use of these earlier recorded studies. The names used in all these works vary, so the two survey books which people always refer to when they work on the languages of Southeast Asia provide numerous synonyms for “Palaung”. For example, Lebar, Hickey and Musgrave (1964: 121-126) list synonyms for Palaung as follows: Da-ang, Humai, Kunloi, La-eng, Palong, Ra-ang, Rumai and Ta-ang. Grimes (2003: 686) has three main entries for the Palaung with various names for the sub-group: “Palaung, Pale (Di-ang, Ngwe Palaung, Silver Palaung, Pale, Palay), Palaung, Rumai (Rumai) and Palaung, Shwe (Ta-ang Palaung, Golden Palaung, Shwe).” In addition, a preliminary survey of the Palaung people in China reveals that there are many different sub-group names which they use to identify themselves. Furthermore, there are also many names that are given to them by outsiders.

The primary objective of this paper is to investigate the sub-group names used for the Palaung throughout this literature plus some newly acquired works and field surveys in Kengtung³, Shan State, Myanmar and in Dehong, Yunnan, China. The Southeast Asian word list of 285 items (Mahidol University-revised 1990) has been used for the language survey. Moreover, the author would like to point out that these various names, especially those that are current among the Palaung in Dehong, China can be used to classify the sub-groups of the Palaung people. From a linguistic point of view, these subgroups may speak the same or different dialects. Firstly, this paper gives a brief overview of the Palaung people and their

³ There are many written forms for Kengtung, such as Kyaington, Jengtung, Kengtong, KengTung, etc. Kengtung is used throughout the paper.

language. In the next section, the author defines the term “Palaung” and briefly reviews the Palaungic classification. Then, Palaung names in China, Myanmar and Thailand are respectively examined.

The terms “Palaung” and “Palaungic”

The name “Palaung” is a Burmese name for the group of Palaung speakers living in Shan State and southern Kachin State in Myanmar. Groups of Palaung speaking people also live scattered in and around Yunnan Province in southwestern China and in northern Thailand. Additionally, the name “Palaung” is also used as the name of the group of sub-dialects/sub-languages spoken by the Palaung people. Linguistically, Palaung belongs to the Palaungic branch of the Mon-Khmer family in the Austro-Asiatic language family (Thomas and Headley 1970; Diffloth 1974; Diffloth and Zide 2003; Sidwell 2009)⁴. This branch was formerly known as Palaung-Wa. Schmidt (1904) first proposed a classification as follows: 1) Palaung, 2) Angku, 3) Wa, 4) Riang and 5) Danaw. Shafer (1952) revised Schmidt’s classification by moving Riang close to Palaung, thus: 1) Riang, 2) Palaung, 3) Angku, 4) Wa, and 5) Danaw. Based on Shafer’s (1952) classification, Pinnow (1959) added Lawa as the sixth member, then Ferlus (1974) maintained Shafer’s five divisions and added three more marginal groups, yielding 1) Rumai (Palaung), 2) Riang, 3) Danaw, 4) Wa, 5) Lamet: West (Angku) and East Lamet, 6) P’uman, 7) P’ou-ma, and 8) Khao.

Major contributions to Palaungic study are Mitani’s 1977, 1978, 1979 works. Mitani (1977) based his classification on the

⁴ see detailed classification in Sidwell (2009)

phonological development of similarity and dissimilarity and proposed five groups of Palaung-Riang which include 1) Central group, 2) Northern group, 3) Southern group, 4) Omachawn, 5) Unclassified. In his 1978 paper, presented at the second International Conference on Austroasiatic Linguistics, entitled "Problems in the classification of Palaungic", he conducted a lexicostatistic study of Palaungic using a wordlist from the material available – Scott and Hardiman's GUB (1900), Milne (1931) and his note on Khamet and Lawa. He divided Palaungic into two branches, explaining that:

Except for Danaw, the Palaungic proper is divided into two branches: 'Western branch' which comprises Palaung and Rieng, and 'Eastern branch' which comprises Wa, Angku and Lamet. The division is apparently the Salween. The present distribution of the former is mainly in Shan State of Burma and parts of Yunnan to the west side of Salween, though Palaung extends also to the east side of the river, while the distribution of the latter is almost confined to the area in the eastern side of the Salween. In the latter area, Wa is distributed widely in the area between the Salween and the Mekong with southward extension in northern Thailand, while ...

Diffloth (1974) set out a straightforward classification of Austro-Asiatic languages⁵. Within the Palaungic branch, there are: 1) Palaung, 2) Wa, 3) Rieng-Lang,

⁵ Those interested in a detailed history and state of the art of Austro-Asiatic language classification are referred to Sidwell (2009).

4) Danaw, 5) Lawa, 6) Kawa, 7) (?) Khamet, 8) (?) Mang, 9) Bulan, and 10) Angku. Later, Diffloth and Zide (2003) divided the Palaungic branch into the Eastern sub-branch which consists of several Palaung languages, the Rieng dialects and Danaw and the Western sub-branch which consists of the Waic, Angkuic and Lametic language groups⁶.

However, it should be noted here that there are some slight discrepancies between Mitani's (1978) classification of the Palaungic and that of Diffloth and Zide (2003). Wa, Angku and Lamet belong to Mitani's Eastern branch whereas they are in Diffloth and Zide's Western sub-branch, while Palaung and Rieng belong to Mitani's Western branch and are in Diffloth and Zide's Eastern sub-branch. With this noted, the one final point to emphasize here is that this study is based on data gathered from field work with Palaung speakers namely, Mitani's (1978) Western branch and Diffloth and Zide's (2003) Eastern sub-branch. In other words, it covers only one half of the Palaungic branch – the Palaung sub-branch, not the Wa⁷.

At the same time, during a review of previous studies, one had to pay special attention to terms which are used differently by different scholars—in this case the Eastern sub-branch and the Western sub-branch of the Palaungic

⁶ Based on glottochronological methods, the major sub-family of the Austro-Asiatic language classifications are Munda sub-family, the Nicobarese sub-family and the Mon-Khmer sub-family. Within Mon-Khmer, there are 12 branches: Khasi, Palaungic, Monic, Khmuic, Viet-Muong, Katuic, Bahnaric, Pearic, Khmer, Jahaic, Senoic, and Semelaic branches.

⁷ See detailed classification of Waic dialects in Diffloth (1980).

branch. Mitani (1978) uses a term which roughly coincides with the geographical location of various groups of ethnic people on both sides of the Salween, which runs from the north to the south of the Shan State. Most of the Palaung groups are on the west side of the Salween, in the western part of Shan State and part of Yunnan. The Wa groups are mainly on the eastern side of the Salween, in areas in the eastern part of the Shan State, extending eastwards to the Mekong river. While Mitani (1978) offers the above explanation, Diffloth and Zide (2003) provide no reason as to why they put the Palaung languages in the so-named “Eastern sub-branch” and the Wa in the “Western sub-branch”. However, in terms of the classification of language groups within the Palaungic sub-branch, both studies clearly confirm the same results in spite of the fact that there is some minor discrepancy in naming.

Palaung in China

Previous Studies

As mentioned above, all studies on the Palaung people and culture in China so far have been conducted and reported in the Chinese language. It was not until 1997 that an article by Dai Qingxia and Liu Yan on the tones in the Guangka sub-dialect of De’ang was translated into English by Jonathan Evans and in 1998 a review by Robert Bauer of the book *China’s Mon-Khmer languages and the Austroasiatic language family* (Yan and Zhou 1995) became available. Yan and Zhou (1995) state that:

The Chinese have called the De’ang (德昂) Benglong and this

term dates from Qing⁸ dynasty records. However, this name which has been regarded as pejorative was not accepted by the De’ang and was officially replaced in 1985 with the group’s preferred autonym of De’ang. In Burma the corresponding term Palaung is used.

(Bauer 1998: 178-179)

They also explain that De’ang consists of three dialects, namely, Na-ang [na ʔaŋ], Pu-le [pu le] and Ro-mai [ro mai]. For Chinese linguists, the term “dialect” is generally used when they refer to either different dialects which are closely related, or different languages which sometimes are mutually incomprehensible, provided that they belong to the same official nationality. In Yan and Zhou’s words (1995) as reviewed by Bauer (1998: 178) “...the De’ang dialects are characterized by relatively large internal differences and the circumstances of those dialects are relatively complex.” Concerning the three Palaung dialects mentioned above, Sang Yaohua (1999: 1) also states that the Ruma dialect is very different from the first two dialects.

In addition, Sang Yaohua (1999: 1) reports that the De’ang nationality was formerly called “Benglong” according to Qing dynasty records, and was changed to “De’ang” on the 21st of September 1985 because of the pejorative sense of the name “Benglong”. According to the year 2000 population census, De’ang languages were spoken by 17,804 speakers (Xiu Dingben 2008)⁹. There are many autonyms

⁸ The Qing dynasty ruled from 1644-1912 C.E.

⁹ Xiu Dingben (2008: 5) also records the following De’ang population survey statistics:

or names that the Palaung in China use to designate themselves, such as Na-ang, Da-ang, Ta-ang, La-ang, etc.

In southwest Yunnan, about 70% of those with De'ang nationality live in the Dehong Dai-Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, i.e., in the Santaishan area of Luxi county, and in the Junnong Township of Zhenkang county in Lincang Prefecture. The other 30% are scattered throughout the cities and counties of Lianghe, Longchuan, Yingjiang, Ruili, Wanding, Baoshan, Gengma, etc. (Dai and Liu 1997: 91; Sang 1999: 1).

One final point which needs to be elaborated comes from the title of Dai Qingxia and Liu Yan's paper (1997: 91) which analyzes the tones in the Guangka sub-dialect of De'ang. They describe Gǔangkǎ as "...a sub-dialect of the Rumai dialect of the De'ang, spoken by the De'ang nationals in Guangka village, Mengxiu township, Ruili municipality." That is to say, a sub-dialect is a variety of

language which is classified in accordance with the place name of its speakers, i.e., a village name "Guangka" in this case.

In concluding this examination of the sub-group names of the Palaung in China, it should be noted that "De'ang" is the official ethnic nationality of the Palaung speakers in China. It is composed of three dialects, i.e., Liang, Pu-le and Rumai. For the total population of 17,804, 40% are Pu-le, 35% are Liang and 25% are Rumai. Each dialect has sub-dialects which may be referenced according to the speaker's village name. Furthermore, "De'ang" is one of the Palaung autonyms among various others, such as Na-ang, Ka-ang, La-ang, etc.

Field surveys in Yunnan

From the author's surveys of the area in Dehong Dai-Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture¹⁰ in Yunnan, China, based on names, there are 5 sub-groups which belong to the De'ang nationality—1) Pu-le 2) Raojin 3) Liang 4) Rumai and

	Year	Numbers of population	Remarks
1	1953		No Report No official ethnic nationality records yet
2	1964	7,252	
3	1982	12,274	
4	1990	15,397	
5	2000	17,804	

In my opinion, since 1982, the number of people with De'ang nationality seems to have grown rapidly which may be due to the Chinese government's change of policy towards minority people; they are allowed to have up to two children per couple while the Han or "Chinese proper" are allowed only one.

¹⁰ In general, Administrative divisions in the People's Republic of China are as follows:

1. Province
2. Prefecture/Autonomous Prefecture
3. County
4. District
5. Township
6. Village compounds
7. Village

Dehong Dai-Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture governs 5 counties and 1 township as follows:

1. Luxi county
2. Yingjiang county
3. Lianghe county
4. Longchuan county
5. Wanding county
6. Ruili township

5) Raokot. One reason why the autonym “De’ang”, phonetically transcribed as [tə-ʔaan] is chosen may be because the Ta-ang dialect is a dialect that is spoken by the Palaung in Namhsan, Shan State, Myanmar, and is considered the standard prestige dialect of the Palaung groups. Milne (1924: 3) recorded that “During the dry seasons of 1907 and 1908, which I spent at Namhkam, I met Palaungs of several clans, They all seemed to think that the dialect of Namhsan, the capital of the State of Tawnpeng, was the best form of their speech.” The other reason, according to one informant, is that the name “Benglong” is related to a historic narrative of being defeated and having to run away and therefore has a pejorative meaning. In Chinese characters, the official ethnic nationality “De’ang” is 德昂, which is pronounced according to the following international phonetic symbols [tə-ʔaan]. In the Pinyin writing system, it is Dè’áng. The word “-ang” means “cliff” or “cave” which reminds the Palaung of the origins of their ancestors. Details about each group are as follows:

1. Pu-le. The sub-group name that the people who speak Pu-le use to designate themselves is “Ka-ang”. Sometimes they are referred to by the Chinese as “Hong De’ang – red De’ang”. Most Pu-le speakers are found in Luxi county – in the numerous villages of Santaishan district, such as Meng Dan Cun village, Hu Dong Na village.

2. Raojin. The Raojin speakers refer to themselves as “Na-ang”. The Chinese also call them “Hong De’ang – red De’ang”. The De’ang people who speak Raojin are in Mangshi municipal areas of Luxi county – in Xiang Cai Tang (Huapa), Gongka and Manlong Shan villages.

According to Liu Yan (2006: 23), Raojin is a dialect of Pu-le, that is, the Pu-le group has two sub-dialects 1) Pu-le and 2) Raojin.

3. Liang. The people who speak Liang use the sub-group name “Ta-ang” to refer to themselves. They are known to the Chinese as “Hua De’ang – Flowery De’ang”. Liang speakers can be found in Lianghe, the Linjiang counties and in some villages of the Santaishan district of Luxi county, i.e., in Chu Dong Gua village.

4. Rumai. The autonym that the Rumai people use to call themselves is “Rumai”. The Chinese refer to them as “Hei De’ang – black De’ang”. The Rumai people live mostly in Ruili county, such as in Nan Sang Cun Shang Zhai village and Hu Nong Fei Gang village in Longchuan county.

5. Raokot. The De’ang people who speak Raokot refer to themselves as “La-ang”. The name by which they are known to the Chinese is “Hei De’ang– black De’ang”. They live in a few villages in Luxi county, such as Chu Tong Gua in Santaishan district and Cha Ye Qing village in the Mangshi municipality. Liu Yan (2006: 23) states that Raokot is a dialect of Rumai, i.e., there are two dialects of Rumai: 1) Rumai and 2) Raokot.

From the details above, the sub-group names of the Palaung in China can be divided into 3 types: names they use to refer to other groups; autonyms; and names that Chinese people use to refer to the Palaung, as shown in the table below:

Table 1: Names of the Palaung in China

Referring to other groups	Autonyms	Called by the Chinese
Pu-le	Ka-ang	Red De'ang
Raojin	Na-ang	Red De'ang
Liang	Ta-ang	Flowery De'ang
Rumai	Rumai	Black De'ang
Raokot	La-ang	Black De'ang

In the table, the 5 Palaung groups in China are based on the sub-group names they use when they refer to other groups of Palaung – Pu-le, Raojin, Liang, Rumai, Raokot. Furthermore, they also use different names to refer to themselves within their own sub-group, i.e., an autonym – Ka-ang, Na-ang, Ta-ang, Rumai, La-ang. Four of the autonyms end with –ang, except Rumai. According to the interview, “-ang” means ‘cliff’ or ‘cave’, which reminds the Palaung of their ancestors. They believe that their ancestors used to live in caves or near cliffs.

As for the autonym “Rumai”, this sub-group name may derive from clan names. Milne (1924: 2), describing her trip in the northern part of the Shan State writes:

I went, in the autumn of 1907, to Namhkam, a Shan town not many miles from the Chinese frontier. Here I met another branch of the Palaungs, the Rumai, a large and important clan scattered through various States, both of the British and Chinese Empires.

Howard (2005: 25-26), referring to Scott and Hardiman’s *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States* (1900, part I volume I.), states that “there appear to be about fifteen Palaung clans”, and that:

Scott and Hardiman mention a clan named Pato Ru or “tribe at the centre”, which they say lays claim to be “the Rumai proper” (1900, 1: 486). They live in a village south of Namhsan that is said to be the oldest Palaung village in the state. At one time the clan was comprised of relatives of the rulers of Tawnpeng.

In Scott and Hardiman’s own words (1900, 1: 486), they conclude that “Apparently, the Pato Ru claimed at one time a variety of privileges and distinctions. They alone of the Rumai men wore colours, all the other clans were restricted to plain black and white.” And this may be the reason why the Rumai group retains the name “Rumai” as their autonym and why the other groups of Palaung also refer to them as “Rumai”.

The Chinese people call the Palaung by sub-group names based mostly on dress, in particular the Palaung women’s tube skirts; the Palaung who wear black or red tube skirts are called black or red Palaung, the Palaung who wear skirts with colorful patterns are called flowery Palaung.

To sum up, firstly, this study found that there are five sub-groups of Palaung speaking people in China. They are: 1) the Liang group who call themselves “Ta-

ang”, 2) the Pu-le group who call themselves “Ka-ang”, 3) the Rumai group who call themselves “Ru-mai”, 4) the Raokot group who call themselves “La-ang”, and 5) the Raojin group who call themselves “Na-ang”. Secondly, De’ang is the official name for the nationality of the Palaung in China and most of them live in Dehong Dai-Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan.

However, based on the 285 words collected during the survey the 5 sub-groups can be classified into 3 dialects. From the wordlist below, Raojin, Raokot and Rumai share common words from (1) to (21), which differ from Pu-le and Liang. Nevertheless, from (22) to (28), Rumai and Raokot form their own sub-group which differs from Raojin. Conversely, Raojin shares the words in (22) to (28) with Pu-le and Liang. At this point, it seems likely to say that Pu-le and Liang form one dialect and Rumai and Raokot form another dialect. The problem is whether Raojin should be grouped with Pu-le-Liang or with Rumai-Raokot.

No.	Gloss	Raojin	Raokot	Rumai	Pu-le	Liang
1	egg	<i>pən</i>	<i>bən</i>	<i>bən</i>	<i>gləw</i>	<i>graw</i>
2	monkey	<i>fə</i>	<i>mafə</i>	<i>fə</i>	<i>ṅam</i>	<i>ṅam</i>
3	shoulder	<i>ja□</i>	<i>ɕaʔ</i>	<i>jaʔ</i>	<i>kəbləŋ</i>	<i>səbləŋ</i>
4	come	<i>tǎx</i>	<i>dəh</i>	<i>dəh</i>	<i>rət</i>	<i>rət</i>
5	push	<i>ɕun</i>	<i>tɕun</i>	<i>tɕun</i>	<i>thuj</i>	<i>thuj</i>
6	many	<i>kin</i>	<i>gin</i>	<i>kin</i>	<i>bram</i>	<i>bram</i>
7	white	<i>luj</i>	<i>liʃ</i>	<i>luj</i>	<i>pləʔ</i>	<i>bləʔ</i>
8	bad	<i>mək</i>	<i>mik</i>	<i>timik</i>	<i>ʔəman</i>	<i>ʔəmen</i>
9	fly	<i>bən</i>	<i>baj</i>	<i>pi</i>	<i>phru</i>	<i>phru</i>
10	chest	<i>baŋnəx</i>	<i>baŋnəh</i>	<i>kanəh</i>	<i>baŋʔəʔ</i>	<i>baŋʔəʔ</i>
11	sing	<i>təh ka□ə</i>	<i>dəh ʃew</i>	<i>dah ɲə</i>	<i>bjaj</i>	<i>bjaj</i>
12	arrow	<i>blej</i>	<i>bən</i>	<i>bla</i>	<i>raj</i>	<i>raj</i>
13	pestle	<i>ŋkrej</i>	<i>nɕəj</i>	<i>ŋgɕj</i>	<i>gləŋ</i>	<i>gləŋ</i>
14	short (height)	<i>tiam</i>	<i>ɕem</i>	<i>ɕəm</i>	<i>ʔəm</i>	<i>ʔəm</i>
15	back	<i>katu□</i>	<i>kaŋəh</i>	<i>kaduʔ</i>	<i>kləŋ</i>	<i>kləŋ</i>
16	intestines	<i>vac</i>	---	<i>sənvat</i>	<i>rən</i>	<i>rən</i>
17	hear	<i>naŋaw</i>	<i>ləŋaw</i>	<i>taŋaw</i>	<i>ɕi</i>	<i>ji</i>
18	suck	<i>ɲəʔ</i>	<i>ɲəʃʔ</i>	<i>ɲik</i>	<i>khrit</i>	<i>khrit</i>
19	throw	<i>vin</i>	<i>fət</i>	<i>vən</i>	<i>bək</i>	<i>bək</i>
20	tie	<i>pak</i>	---	<i>bak</i>	<i>duʔ</i>	<i>duʔ</i>
21	dig	<i>gəx</i>	----	<i>kəh</i>	<i>ləʔ</i>	<i>ləʔ</i>
22	star	<i>səməŋ</i>	law	law	<i>kəman</i>	<i>səməŋ</i>
23	hit	<i>mǎx</i>	ŋəh	ŋəh	<i>məh</i>	<i>məh</i>
24	house	<i>kaŋ</i>	khlep	khlep	<i>kiaŋ</i>	<i>gaŋ</i>
25	shoot	<i>baŋ</i>	ɕi	ɕiŋ	<i>bən</i>	<i>bən</i>
26	crossbow	<i>ʔaʔ</i>	kaŋbun	kaŋpun	<i>ʔəʔ</i>	<i>ʔaʔ</i>
27	older brother	<i>vɛ</i>	fi	pi	<i>vaj</i>	<i>vaj</i>
28	spider	<i>mapjuŋpjen</i>	mavem	ʔawem	<i>mɛpɛŋ</i>	<i>ʔabɛŋ</i>

According to the following wordlist, from (29) to (33), this study suggests that Raojin should be treated as a dialect on its own. That is to say there are 3 dialects of Palaung spoken by the De'ang nationality in China. It should also be noted that

Rumai and Raokot, based on 285 words, do not have words in common with Pu-le and Liang but they do share some words with Raojin, which indicates that Rumai and Raokot are closer to Raojin than they are to Pu-le and Liang.

No.	Gloss	Raojin	Raokot	Rumai	Pu-le	Liang
29	sit	kɔj	ʔak	ʔak	ŋoj	ŋoj
30	play	nalaw	kanok	kanok	katɕɔʔ	kadɕɔʔ
31	drum	grɪŋ	kabən	kabən	klɔŋ	klɔŋ
32	clothing	gro	kabjok	kabjok	kado	sado
33	forest	naŋ	loŋhɔj	loŋhɔj	zɪŋ	zɪŋ

Palaung in Myanmar

Previous Studies

Most of the previous studies on the Palaung in Myanmar were carried out by British officials or Christian missionaries during the early 1900s. In all of these written reports and ethnographic surveys of Upper Burma, there are just a few small sections about the Palaung (Symes 1820; Yule 1858; Scott and Hardiman 1900; Lowis 1906; Davies 1909; Cameron 1912). All of them report on the Rumai or Palaung of the northwestern Shan State but almost none mention the Palaung in the southern and eastern parts¹¹, except for Scott and Hardiman (1900), who made notes about the Palaung of Kengtung in the southeastern part of the Shan State. The only professional and serious anthropological works on the Palaung are by Milne (1910, 1921, 1924). These are also about the Ta-ang Palaung in Namhsan and Rumai – in the northwestern part of the Shan State. However, she makes some

references to the division of the Palaung into Palaung and Pale by the Burmese. Milne's works are on Ta-ang grammar (1921) and a dictionary (1921) with a small wordlist of the Rumai Palaung within the dictionary.

Several decades later, Howard and Wattanapun (2001) and Howard (2005) divided the Palaung into three main sub-groups: 1) the Ta-ang or Shwe Palaung, ("shwe" in Burmese means 'gold') 2) the Pale or Di'ang or Ngwe Palaung ("ngwe" in Burmese means 'silver') and 3) the Rumai. Howard (2005: 25) states that "Ta-ang and Di-ang are the sub-group names that the Golden Palaung and Silver Palaung use to refer to themselves." It should be noted that the De'ang people in China do not know anything about the sub-group names "Golden Palaung" and "Silver Palaung."

Estimating the population of the Palaung in Myanmar is very difficult since no official census and no anthropological research has been conducted in Myanmar since 1931. Based on the 1931 Burma census and some other sources, Howard

¹¹ See detailed summaries in Howard and Wattanapun (2001: 5-14)

(2005: 25) estimates that there are about 600,000 Palaung in Myanmar, but there is no way to verify this number.

Most of the linguistic studies on the classification of the Palaung languages have collected data from the works mentioned above (Schmidt 1906; Sebeok 1942; Shafer 1952; Pinnow 1965; Shorto 1960; Luce 1965; Thomas and Headley 1970; Diffloth 1974; Mitani 1978). Among these, Shorto (1960) himself did field-work on Ta-ang Palaung of Namhsan in 1957; and Luce (1965) gathered his data on the Rumai speakers of Panku village in the Kodaung Tract in the China-Myanmar border area between 1959-1960¹². Luce (1965: 102) noted that “rǎ\ʔaŋ² or rǎ\ʔoŋ² is still the sub-group name by which these Palaung call themselves.” Finally, Janzen and Janzen (1972), Janzen (1978), and Janzen (1991a, b) collected their data from Pale speakers in Kalaw city in southern Shan State – they call them “the southern Palaung people”. At present, Buakaw (2012) is conducting research for his Ph.D dissertation on the Palaung spoken in Kalaw city. Palaung speakers in Ngaung Gone village and Taungni village around Kalaw city call themselves “Da-ang”.

To summarize, almost all of the studies previously done on the Palaung in Myanmar are on the Ta-ang Palaung and the Rumai Palaung in northwestern Shan State. There are only a few works on the Palaung in the southern part of the State – the Pale people. That is to say, there is very limited information on the Palaung in Myanmar. Additionally, there is no written published work on the Palaung living in Kengtung.

¹² He recorded his data in Rangoon, though. His informant was a soldier in the Burmese Army.

Field Surveys in Kengtung

In Kengtung¹³, the Palaung live in widely scattered villages, mostly in remote mountainous areas. However, there are some villages near Kengtung downtown with a few Palaung households which can be reached by car. Most of the Palaung in these villages live side by side with the Shan. Their dress and practices, especially language, have been influenced by the Shan. Still, there is one Palaung village, Ban Paaw (Paw village)¹⁴, 8 kilometers northwest of Kengtung, with 64 households of which about 40 are Tai Shan and the rest are Palaung. In this village, the Shan and the Palaung live along side each other in separate quarters – Ban Paaw was originally a Shan village.

¹³ There are 7 states and 7 divisions in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar as follows:

States	Divisions
1. Chin	1. Irrawady
2. Kachin	2. Pegu
3. Kayah	3. Magwe
4. Kayin	4. Mandalay
5. Mon	5. Sagiang
6. Rakhine	6. Tanassarim
7. Shan	7. Yangon

States and Divisions consist of districts, towns/townships, wards/quarters and villages. Kengtung is one of the 11 districts of the Shan state. There are five townships in Kengtung: Kengtung, Mong Yang, Mong Khet, Mong La and Mat Man. Kengtung township is the largest.

¹⁴ Ban Paaw was chosen as a research site because it has the largest numbers of Palaung speakers and because the language is still used in everyday life. The other significant reason is a security reason – the strict regulations of Myanmar local government, such as tourists being forbidden to stay overnight in villages; a tour guide of a particular tourist group has to report the group’s itinerary each day and register the time in and out of the central Kengtung downtown to the local authority, etc.

When the Palaung first moved there from Pa min¹⁵ about 50 years ago, there were a lot of coconut trees in the village and the word “paaw” means ‘coconut’. Nowadays, however, coconut trees can be found only around the monastery.

Based on the 285 collected words, Kengtung Palaung is similar to the Raojin dialect in China. Concerning the sub-group names of the Palaung in Kentung, those who live in Ban Paaw identify themselves as Dara-ang. In addition, Dara-ang is also an autonym which the Palaung in Kentung normally use when referring to themselves. “Palaung” is also the name the Burmese and the Shan people use to refer to Palaung people in Myanmar. Other names that are used by the Burmese and the Shan to refer to the Palaung are “Kun Loi¹⁶” and Tai-Loi. “Kun-Loi” meaning people who live on the mountains and “Tai Loi” meaning people who live on the mountains and follow the Tai way of life, especially in the way in which they practise Buddhism and follow the Tai Shan system of community rulers.

Palaung in Thailand

The Palaung from the southern Shan State in Myanmar migrated to settle in Chiang

Mai in northern Thailand¹⁷ between 1982 and 1984 to take refuge from an uprising and violence in their homeland. As a result, there are no publications about the group available prior to 1984. The first short introductory report about the Palaung is an article by Sarapi Sila (1933). Then come works by Howard and Wattanapun (2001) on the Palaung in northern Thailand; Kasisopa (2003) on the phonology of Dara-ang spoken in No-Lae village, Chiangmai; Buakaw (2009: 31-46) on the final nasal consonants in No-Lae Palaung; and Deepadung (2009: 7-29) on the ethnicity of the Dara-ang in Thailand. The group of Palaung who came to live in Thailand first settled at No-Lae village, Fang district, Chiang Mai, Thailand. At present, there are about 5,000 – 7,000 Dara-ang speakers in Chiang Mai province (Fang, Chiang Dao and Mae Ai districts) and Chiang Rai province (Ban Pong Nue, Mae Sai district).

According to Deepadung (2009: 18), the Palaung in Thailand designate themselves as “Dara-ang”¹⁸ or “Dara-ang ren – Red Dara-ang”. The word “ang” means ‘cliff’, which reminds them of their ancestors who used to live high up in the mountains. The word “ren” means ‘red’ which is the traditional color of Palaung women’s tubskirts. The prefix da- means ‘people of a particular ethnic group’, such as /dasiam/ ‘Tai (Shan) people’, /dakhe/ ‘Chinese people’, /dathai/ ‘Thai people’. However, since there is no pejorative meaning attached to the word “Palaung”, there is no resentment towards the name Palaung

¹⁵ Howards (2005: 29), referring to Scott and Hardiman’s (1901) information, states that “...Pa Min, which is located at an altitude of 5,150 ft. on a plateau on the road half way between Ta-kaw and Kengtung town.... Pa Min is described as a small Palaung village between Mōng Hsen and Mōng Pu Awn...”

¹⁶ According to Howard (2005: 29), referring to Scott and Hardiman who stated that “...while people in the hill country, referred to as Kodaung by the Burmese and Kun Loi by the Shan were ‘almost entirely Palaungs’ (1901, (1): 224)”.

¹⁷ See details in Deepadung (2009: 7-29).

¹⁸ Thai spellings for the word “Dara-ang” are “ดาระอาง” (Deepadung and Thongkumchum 2005) and “ดาระอั้ง” (Sila 1993).

among the Dara-ang Palaung speakers in Thailand.

In the official records of the Thai local government, there are two Thai written scripts for the name Palaung¹⁹, i.e., ปะหล่อง [pa-ròŋ] and ปะหลอง [pa-lòŋ]. The former, “ร [r]”, is incorrect and may be the result of local officials mishearing; the latter, “ล” is the correct spelling for the [l] in the name “Palaung”. The correct Thai spelling for the name “Palaung” is “ปะหลอง”

It appears, then, that the Palaung are the most recent ethnic group to settle in the Fang district of Chiang Mai, Thailand. According to the collected words, Noe-Lae Palaung is similar to Kengtung Palaung. This is in agreement with the oral history of the group’s movement, i.e. the Palaung of Noe-Lae migrated from their villages in Kengtung to Thailand between 1982 and 1984. That is to say Noe-Lae Palaung is close to Kengtung Palaung and to the Raojin sub-group in China.

Conclusion

The Palaung language belongs to the Palaungic branch of the Mon-Khmer sub-family of the Austroasiatic language family. It consists of several dialects which are spoken by Palaung people in China, Myanmar and Thailand. In China, Palaung speakers are referred to as De’ang [tə-ʔaŋ]. The name De’ang is an official ethnic nationality name and consists of five sub-groups of Palaung: Pu-le (autonym “Ka-ang”); Raojin (autonym “Na-ang”); Liang (autonym “Ta-ang”); Rumai (autonym “Rumai”); and Raokot

(autonym “La-ang”). Most of them are found in Santaishan in Luxi county in the De’hong Dai-Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture and Junnong in Zhenkang county in Lincang Prefecture, Yunnan. They usually live together with the Jingpos, the Hans and the Shans (Tais).

In Myanmar, the Palaung people live in Shan State and most of the Palaung of the northern Shan State refer to themselves as Ta-ang. They live in and around the Namhsan and Namkham areas. The other sub-group of Palaung, who live north of Namhsan, refer to themselves as Rumai. The Palaung who live in widely scattered villages and towns in the southern Shan State, especially in Kengtung, call themselves “Dara-ang”. Sometimes, they are called “Pale” by the Burmese. Generally, Palaung speakers are known to the Shan (Tai) people and the Burmese as “Palaung”.

The Palaung in Thailand migrated to Chiang Mai province, northern Thailand, between 1982-1984. They moved from the southern Shan State, Myanmar, to settle in No-Lae village in Doi Ang Khang in Fang district, Chiang Mai. They identify themselves as “Dara-ang”. At present, there are Palaung villages in the Fang, Chiang Dao and Mae Ai districts of Chiang Mai province and in the Mae Sai district of Chiang Rai province. Thai people call them “Palaung – ปะหลอง”.

The Palaung residing in China, Myanmar and even in Thailand, have been referred to by different sub-group names by locals and the governments of those particular countries. With regard to the use of the name “Palaung”, on the one hand it can be

¹⁹ The ethnic name “Palaung” is usually mixed up with the ethnic name ‘Padaung – the long-neck Karen – by Thai people.

generally used to refer to all Palaung speakers and dialects and, on the other, it can also be used to identify a specific Palaung speaking group. As if that were not complicated enough, the Palaung themselves have their own ethnic names or autonyms for their own sub-groups as well. Except for the Rumai, the autonym of each sub-group or dialect ends with the word “-ang” which means “cliff or cave”. Identifying the Palaung ethnic group is easy because of the distinctive traditional attire of Palaung women.

Based on the females’ tube skirts and the names they designate themselves with, there are 5 sub-groups of De’ang in China. Linguistically, there are 3 dialects of Palaung spoken by the De’ang nationality, i.e. Raojin (Na-ang), Pu-le-Liang and Rumai-Raokot. Even though this study is based on a short word list of 285 items elicited during the surveys, the result confirms what had been observed by Bauer (1998: 178) that De’ang consists of three dialects, i.e. Na-ang, Pu-le and Rumai. Roughly, we can say that one of the three dialects – Raojin – is close to Kengtung Palaung and Noe-Lae Palaung. However, this study is based on only 285 words, so more genetic classification using other criteria needs to be done in order to shed light on their relationship, especially in China and in Myanmar.

Acknowledgements

This paper is part of the on-going project entitled “A Preliminary ethnolinguistic study of the Palaung people in Kengtung, Myanmar and in Yunnan, China”. The author would like to thank the Thailand Research Fund and Mahidol University for the joint support grant (BRG-5380001). I wish to thank Professor Yang Guangyuan, Miss Sha Xiao Rong, Yunnan

Nationalities University, Phra Pong Sunanta, Khongkhanimit Temple, and speakers of the Palaung in China, and in Myanmar for their assistance and language data. My special thanks is due to Professor Somsong Burusphat, Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University, for her very kind help and suggestions. Lastly but not least, I wish to acknowledge the invaluable comments of the anonymous reviewers.

References

- Bauer, Robert S. 1998. Review of the Book *China’s Mon-Khmer Languages and the Austroasiatic Language Family*. *MKS* 28: 168-182.
- Buakaw, Supakit. 2009. The Final Nasal Consonants in No-Lae Palaung. *Journal of Language and Culture* 28.1: 31-46.
- Buakaw, Supakit. 2012. *A Phonological Study of Palaung Dialects Spoken in Thailand and Myanmar, with Focuses on Vowels and Final Nasals*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Mahidol University.
- Cameron, Alan A. 1912. *A Note on the Palaungs of the Kodaung Hill Tracts of Mong Mit State*. Appendix A in *Census of India, 1911, 9, Pt. 1: i-xiii*. Rangoon: Superintendent of Government Printing and Stationery.
- Dai Qingxia, and Liu Yan. 1997. Analysis of the Tones in the Guangka Subdialect of De’ang. *MKS* 27: 91-108.
- Davies, Henry R. 1909. *Yun-nan: the Link between India and the Yangtze*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Deepadung, Sujaritlak. 2009. Ethnicity of the Dara-ang in Thailand. *Journal of Language and Culture* 28.1: 7-29.
- Deepadung, Sujaritlak, and Piyanan Thongkhamchum. 2005. Encyclopedia of Ethnic Group in Thailand (Palaung) (สารานุกรมกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ในประเทศไทย : คาระอง (ปะหล่อง)). Bangkok: Akepimthai Co, Ltd. [In Thai]
- Deepadung, Sujaritlak, and Pattama Patpong. 2010. *Dara-ang: Language, Culture and Ethnic Identity Maintenance at the Thai-Myanmar Border* (คาระอง : ภาษา วัฒนธรรม และการธำรงชาติพันธุ์ในหมู่บ้านขอบชายแดนไทย-พม่า). Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University. [In Thai]
- Diffloth, Gérard. 1974. Austro-Asiatic Languages. *Encyclopedia Britannica* 2. (15th ed.). 480-484.
- Diffloth, Gérard. 1991. Palaungic Vowels in Mon-Khmer Perspective. In *Austroasiatic Languages: Essays in Honour of H.L. Shorto*, edited by Jeremy H. C. S. Davidson, pp. 13-27. London: School of Oriental and African Studies.
- Diffloth, Gérard and Zide, Norman. 2003. Austroasiatic Languages. In *International Encyclopedia of Linguistics (Vol. 1)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ferlus, Michel. 1974. Les langues du groupe austroasiatiques-nord. *Asie du Sud-Est et Monde Insulindien* 5.1: 39-68.
- Filbeck, David. 1987. New Ethnic Names for the Tin of Nan Province. *Journal of the Siam Society* 75: 129-139.
- Grimes, Barbara. 2003. Northern Mon Khmer Languages. In *International Encyclopedia of Linguistics (Vol.3)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Howard, Michael C., and Wattana Wattanapun. 2001. *The Palaung in Northern Thailand*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.
- Howard, Michael C. 2005. *Textiles of the Highland Peoples of Burma, Volume II: The Northern Mon-Khmer, Rawang, Upland Burmish, Lolo, Karen, Tai, and Hmong-Mien-speaking Groups*. Bangkok: White Lotus.
- Janzen, Hermann. 1978. A Phonological Description of Pale in Comparison with Gold- and Rumai- Palaung. *Paper presented at 2nd International Conference on Austroasiatic Linguistics*, 19-21 December 1978. Mysore, India.
- Janzen, Margarete. 1991a. *English-Pale Dictionary*. Unpublished.
- Janzen, Margarete. 1991b. *Pale-English-Burmese Dictionary*. Unpublished.
- Janzen, Hermann, and Margarete Janzen. 1972. Grammar Analysis of Pale Clauses and Phrases. *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, LVidii, 47-99.

- Kasisopa, Benjawan. 2003. *Phonological Study and Genetic Classification of Dara-ang (Palaung) Spoken at Nawlae Village, Fang District, Chiang Mai Province* (การศึกษาระบบเสียงและการจัดกลุ่มทางเชื้อสายของภาษาดาระอั้ง (ปะหล่อง) บ้านนอแล อำเภอฝาง จังหวัดเชียงใหม่). M.A. Thesis, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. [In Thai]
- Lebar, Frank M., Gerald C. Hicky, and John K. Musgrave. 1964. *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia*. New Haven, Conn.: Human Relations Area Files.
- Liu Yan. 2006. *Meng Gaomianyu Shengdiao Yanjiu* [A Study of Tones in Mon-Khmer]. Beijing: University of Central Minorities Press. [in Chinese]
- Lowis, Cecil C. 1906. *A Note on the Palaung of Hsipaw and Tawngpeng*. Ethnographical Survey of India, Burma, Number 1. Rangoon: Superintendent of Government Printing and Stationary.
- Luce, Gordon H. 1965. Danaw, a Dying Austroasiatic Language. *Lingua* 14: 98-129.
- Milne, Leslie. 1910. *Shans at Home*. London: John Murray, Albermarle Street; Reprinted 2001, Bangkok: White Lotus.
- Milne, Leslie. 1921. *An Elementary Palaung Grammar*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Milne, Leslie. 1924. *Home of an Eastern Clan: A Study of the Palaungs of the Shan States*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Reprinted 2004, Bangkok: White Lotus.
- Milne, Leslie. 1931. *A Dictionary of English-Palaung and Palaung-English*. Rangoon: Superintendent, Government Printing and Stationary.
- Mitani, Yasuyuki. 1977. Palaung Dialects: A Preliminary Comparison. *South East Asian Studies* 15.2 : 193-212.
- Mitani, Yasuyuki. 1978. Problems in the Classification of Palaungic. *Paper presented at 2nd International Conference on Austroasiatic Linguistics*, 19-21 December 1978. Mysore, India.
- Mitani, Yasuyuki. 1979. Vowel Correspondences between Riang and Palaung. In *Studies in Tai and Mon Khmer Phonetics and Phonology in Honour of Eugenie J.A. Henderson*, edited by Theeraphan. L. Thongkum, et al., pp. 142-150). Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press.
- Pinnow, Heinz-Jürgen. 1959. *Versuch einer historischen Lautlehre der Kharia-Sprache*: Wiesbaden Otto Harrassowitz.
- Premrirat, Suwilai. 1991. Observation about a Problem Study and Calling Names of Ethnic Groups in Thailand (ข้อสังเกตเกี่ยวกับปัญหาในการศึกษาและการเรียกชื่อกลุ่มชนชาติต่าง ๆ ในประเทศไทย). *Journal of Language-Inscription* (ภาษาจารึก) 3:124-133. [In Thai]
- Premrirat, Suwilai. 1994. Khmu, Lua/thin, and Mlabri in Nan Province and a Problem of Calling Names (ขมุ ลัวะ/ ถิ่น และมลาบริ (ผิดองเหลือง) ในจังหวัดน่านและปัญหาในการเรียกชื่อ). *Journal of Language and Culture* (ภาษาและวัฒนธรรม) 13.1:108-118. [In Thai]

- Rattanakun, Suriya. 1984. Lawa and Lua (ละว้า และ ลัวะ). *Journal of Language and Culture* (ภาษาและวัฒนธรรม) 4.1: 56-78. [In Thai]
- Sang Yaohua. 1999. *De'angzu Wenhua Dagan* [An Overlook of De'ang Culture]. Kunming: Yunnan Minorities Press. [In Chinese]
- Sang Yaohua. 2004. *De'angzu* [The De'ang Ethnic Group]. Beijing: Minorities Press. [In Chinese]
- Schmidt, Pater Wilhelm. 1904. Grundzuge einer Lautlehre Khasi-Sprache in ihren Beziehungen zu derjenigen der Mon Khmer-Sprachen. Mit einem Anhang: die Palaung-Wa-, und Rieng-Sprachen des mittleren Salwin. *Abh. Bayrischen Akademie der Wissenschaft* 1 (22.3): 677-810.
- Schmidt, Pater W. 1906. Die Mon-Khmer Völker, ein Bindeglied zwischen Völkern Zentralasiens und Australasiens. Braunschweig: *Archiv für Anthropologie* 5: 59-109.
- Scott, James G., and John P. Hardiman. 1900. *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States*, Part I, Volume 1. Rangoon: Superintendent of Government Printing and Stationary.
- Sebeok, Thomas A. 1942. An Examination of the Austroasiatic Language Family. *Language* 18: 206-17.
- Shafer, Robert. 1952. Etudes sur l'Austroasiens. *Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris* 48:111-158.
- Shorto, Henry L. 1960. Word and Syllable Patterns in Palaung. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 23: 544-557.
- Sidwell, Paul. 2009. *Classifying the Austroasiatic Languages: History and State of the Art*. Muenchen: LINCOM.
- Sila, Sarapi. 1993. Palaung (ปะหล่อง). *TRI Quarterly* (ข่าวสารสถาบันวิจัยชาวเขา) 17.3-4: 26-39. [In Thai]
- Symes, Michael. 1820. *An Account of an Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava Sent by the Governor-General of India in the Year 1795*. London: Nicol and Wright.
- Thomas, David D., and Robert K. Headley. 1970. More on Mon-Khmer Sub-Groupings. *Lingua* 25: 398-418.
- Xiu Dingben. 2008. *De'angzu Jianshi* [A Brief History of De'ang Ethnic Group]. Beijing: Minorities Press. [In Chinese]
- Yan Qixiang and Zhou Zhizhi. 1995. *China's Mon-Khmer Languages and the Austroasiatic Language Family*. Beijing: Central Nationalities University Press. [In Chinese]
- Yule, Henry. 1858. *A Narrative of the Mission Sent by the Governor-General of India to the Court of Ava in 1855, with Notices of the Country, Government, and People*. London: Smith, Elder & Co.