

Some Comments on Benedict's
"Miao-Yao Enigma: the Na-e Language"

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1. Preface

Up to now we have thought that the Hmong-Mien (Miao-Yao) family comprised three branches:

Hmongic (Miao and Bunu Yao)
Ho Nte (She)
Mienic (Yao proper)

Now Benedict has presented evidence for a possible fourth branch: Na-e.

Benedict's remarks have inspired me to review the current classification schemes for Hmong-Mien. I would like to propose the following system of subgrouping:

- I. Hmongic
 - A. Eastern Guizhou (Purnell's "Eastern")
 - B. West Hunan (Purnell's "Northern")
 - C. Sichuan-Guizhou-Yunnan (Purnell's "Central" and "Western")
 - 1. Sichuan-Guizhou-Yunnan (Purnell's "West A")
 - 2. Northeast Yunnan
 - 3. Guiyang
 - 4. Huishui
 - 5. Mashan
 - 6. Luobo River
 - 7. Eastern
 - 8. Pu Nu (Tung Nu)
 - 9. Nu Nu
 - 10. Pu No
 - 11. Nao Klao
 - 12. Nu Mhou
 - D. Unclassified: nine major groups.
- II. Pa Hng (including Na-e)
- III. Hm Nai
- IV. Kiong Nai
- V. Yu Nuo
- VI. Ho Nte
- VII. Mienic
 - A. Mien-Kim
 - 1. Mien (Iu Mien)
 - 2. Mun (Kim Mun)

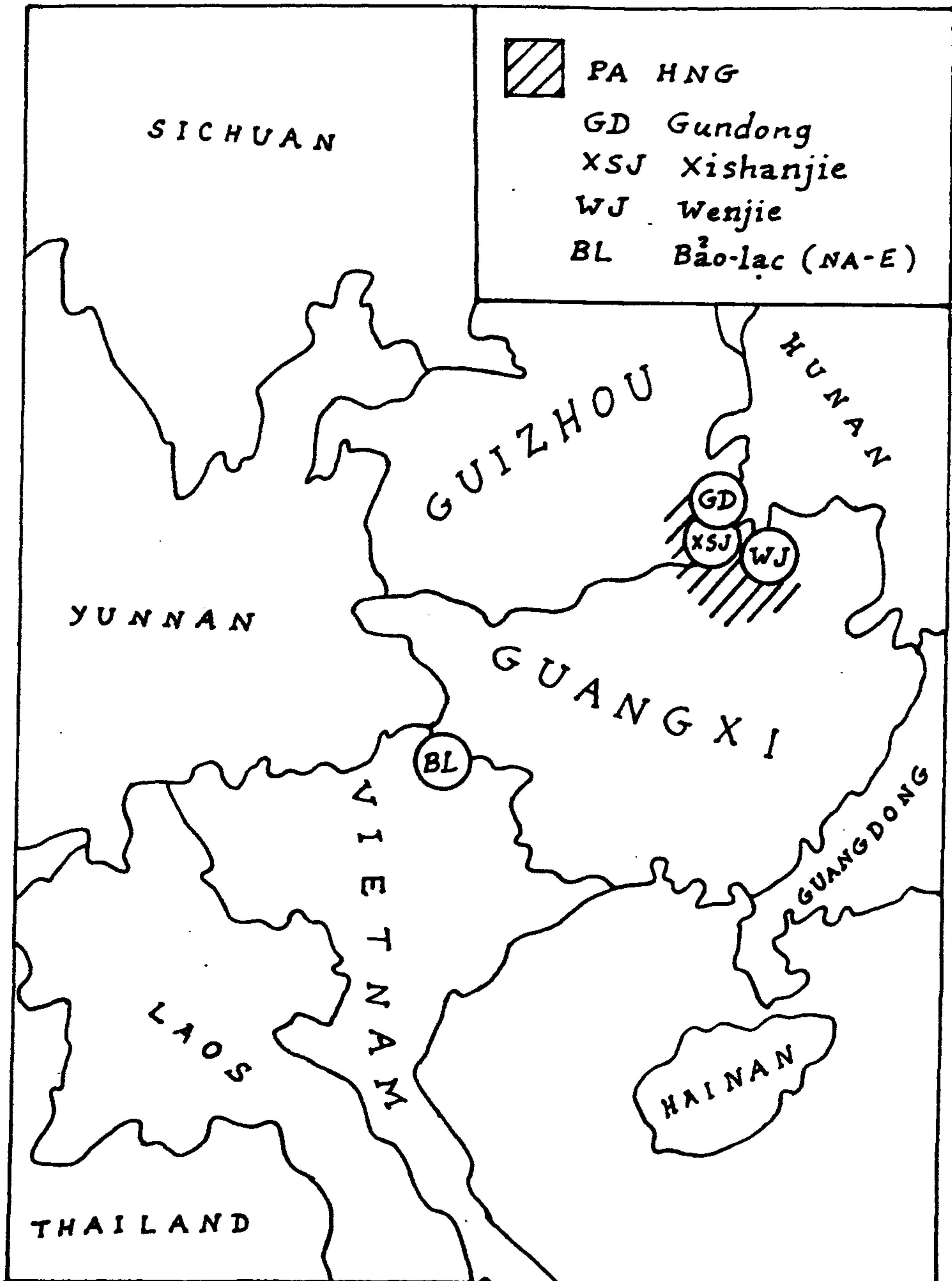
- VII. Mienic, continued.
- A. Mien-Kim, continued.
 - 3. Biao Mon
 - B. Biao-Chao
 - 1. Biao Min
 - 2. Chao Kong Meng
 - C. Dzao Min

This schema is taken directly from recent Chinese and Soviet publications except that I have split up the Punuic (Bunu Yao) subdivision of Hmongic. On the one hand, I have put Pu Nu (Tung Nu), Nu Nu, Pu No, Nao Klao, and Nu Mhou into the Sichuan-Guizhou-Yunnan branch of Hmongic, a possibility which has already been considered by such people as Kun Chang, Wang Fushi, and Martha Ratliff. On the other hand, I have provisionally elevated Pa Hng, Hm Nai, Kiong Nai, and Yu Nuo to the status of independent branches of Hmong-Mien, carrying one step further the suggestion made by Mao, Meng, and Zheng (1982:117) that these languages "have almost reached the status of separate yǔ", that is separate major subdivisions of a language family.

Na-e turns out to be simply a southern outlier of the Pa Hng group: see the map. This was first pointed out by Haudricourt (1954:564/1972:197; 1971:38, 43). See also Benedict (1975:xxi). In addition to Bonifacy's article, we have the following sources for Pa Hng:

1. Mao, Meng, and Zheng (1982:118, 121-123): dialect of Wenjie, Sanjiang County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.
2. Institute for the Study of Minority Languages (1959), cited in Moskalev (1978:15). Locality not specified, but appears to be the same dialect as that described by Mao, Meng, and Zheng, or one very close to it.
3. Chang (1947, 1953, 1972, 1976): dialect of Xishanjie, near Yongcong, in the southeastern corner of Guizhou Province. In the literature this dialect is variously known as "Yung-ts'ung", "Hsi-shan-chieh", or "Tahua Yao".
4. Chen (1984:17, dialect #13): dialect of Gundong, Liping County, Guizhou Province.

Benedict has expressed fears that Na-e may have died out since the early recording by Bonifacy. But we have reason to hope that the language may still be spoken. Nguyen (1985:2) cites a recent publication by the Institute of Ethnology in Hanoi which lists a Hmong-Mien language called Pàthén. I think this must be the same name as Bonifacy's "Pà-teh", that is, Na-e. We will need to go through Vietnamese linguistic journals such as Ngôn-ngữ and Dân-tộc-học to see



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 (purl.org/sealang/strecker1987some.pdf)

Back:mid, Text:mid :: mid-W:0.2, B-Peak:72 :: gamma:1, B:145, W:220

whether more material on Na-e has become available.

Pa Hng splits into two groups, Northern and Southern, which differ in the development of certain initials and finals:

Northern: Xishanjie, Gundong

Southern: Wenjie, Institute wordlist, Na-e

In this paper I will outline very briefly some of the evidence for Haudricourt's assignment of Na-e to the Pa Hng group and I will outline very briefly some additional evidence for Benedict's proposal that Na-e -- or, rather, the Pa Hng group -- separated from Hmongic at an early date.

2. Transcription

All forms in this paper are written in IPA, except for Na-e, for which I retain Bonifacy's transcription. Note the following equivalents:

Bonifacy	IPA
t'	[ʈ]
ɕ	[tʃ]
ɳ	[ŋ]
y	[j]
ɻ	[ʁ]

Bonifacy transcribes four tones in Na-e:

- 1: level. Occurs in all historical tone categories and appears to represent cases where Bonifacy simply failed to hear the tone.
- 2: descending, like Vietnamese huyền (low falling). Historically A2, B1, B2, C2, and D2, probably representing several different tones which Bonifacy failed to distinguish.
- 3: acute, like Vietnamese sắc (high rising). Historically C1 and D1.
- 4: interrogative, like Vietnamese hỏi (low rising). Historically A1.

3. Evidence that Na-e belongs to the Pa Hng group

Characteristics shared by Na-e and Pa Hng include the following:

(1) *r becomes yod, e.g. Na-e yò l 'stone'; Xishanjie [jō 33] 'dragon'.

(2) Velar and uvular initials merge into a single series, realized phonetically as uvular in Wenjie and the Institute wordlist and as velar in the other dialects. For

example, in Na-e, kɔ̃n 'horn' (< *k-) is homophonous with the second syllable of pin 1 kɔ̃n 1 'star' (< *q-); in Wenjie, [q̃ 1] 'warm' (< *k-) is homophonous with the second syllable of [a 6 q̃ 1] 'star' (< *q-); in Xishanjie, [kã 34] 'horn' (< *k-) has the same initial as [kai 34] 'sweet' (< *q-).

(3) *q̃l, *q̃lw, etc. become [kw], e.g. 'white', Na-e kuã 4, Xishanjie [kuo 34]; 'yellow', Na-e kuõ 1, Wenjie [khw̃ 2].

(4) Allowing for the vagaries of Bonifacy's transcription, the development of the finals is virtually identical in Na-e and Southern Pa Hng, sometimes slightly different in Northern Pa Hng. For example, corresponding to Wang's Proto-Hmongic final -5, we get [o] or [ɔ]:

	Na-e	Wenjie	Xishanjie	Gundong
house	piɕu ²	pjo ³	pjo ²²	--
ear	-biɕ ¹	-mphjo ²	mjo ³³	--
fish	biɕ ¹	--	mjo ¹¹ , mje ¹¹ (!)	njo ⁴
stone	yɔ̃ ¹	--	--	--

Corresponding to Wang's Proto-Hmongic final -6, we get [e] or [ɛ]:

	Na-e	Wenjie	Xishanjie	Gundong
female	-tiɕ ¹	--	--	--
chicken	-kɕ ¹	--	--	--
meat	gɛ ¹	Nqhɛ ²	ŋæ ³³	--
afraid	--	--	ŋe ⁵⁵	ŋhe ⁵

Corresponding to Wang's Proto-Hmongic final -23 we get [ɔ̃] or [ɔ̃ŋ] in Na-e and Southern Pa Hng versus [ã] or [aŋ] in Northern Pa Hng:

	Na-e	Wenjie	Xishanjie	Gundong
(classifier)	luã ¹	lɔ̃ ¹	--	--
star	-kɔ̃n ¹	-q̃ɔ̃ ¹	--	--
horn	kɔ̃n	--	kã ³⁴	--
son/male	tɔ̃n ¹	--	tã ³⁴	--
snow	--	--	--	maŋ ⁵

One complication is that Na-e appears to have undergone two dissimilatory changes:

1. [wo] > [wa]
2. Loss of final nasal in syllables which begin with a nasal.

Thus we have

Xishanjie [kwo 34] 'white', but Na-e *[kwo 13] > kuà 4 [kwa 13] (final -18)

Na-e *[kwɔŋ] > kuàn 1 [kwaŋ] 'black' (final -23)

Gundong *[ŋwaŋ 2] > [waŋ 2] 'sky', but Na-e *[ŋwɔŋ] > *[ŋwaŋ] > hòà 1 [ŋwa] (final -23).

(5) 'dog': Na-e yán, Xishanjie [ljã 54] (tone D1).

Compare Hm Nai [liã 6] (tone C2) (Mao and Meng 1982:78) and 18th century "Yao" of northwest Hunan liang (Lombard-Salmon 1972:316). I suspect that the "Yao" vocabulary reproduced by Lombard-Salmon belongs to the Hm Nai group rather than to the West Hunan branch of Hmongic as Benedict suggests. Benedict's Chinese etymology for these words for 'dog' is very plausible, although there is the problem of the tonal disagreement: Chinese A2 versus Hm Nai C2 versus Pa Hng D1.

(6) 'finger': Na-e tưn 1 và 1 pu 1 (pu 1 = 'hand'), Wenjie [thv 2 va 2].

Hmongic has two variants for 'finger', something like *nta B and *Nqla B (or *Nqlwa B). The latter variant is attested in Green Mong ndliv [ndli 35] (Xiong, Xiong, and Xiong 1983:480). Compare also Hm Nai [nei 1 ŋkwa 3] 'finger'.

The forms *Nqla B and *Nqlwa B would normally correspond to Na-e *guà 2 (or, perhaps, *hòà 2 [ŋwa]), Wenjie *[ŋkwa 3]. Is [va 2] a variant of this arising in weak stress position in the phrase *[thv 2 ŋkwa 3 phu 4] 'finger of the hand'?

Compare 'sky', below.

(7) 'head': Na-e pi 1 (in 'turban'), Wenjie [a 6 tɕu 5 phi 4], Institute wordlist [a 6 tɕu 5 phi 4].

Compare Dzaio Min [pɛ 24], Biao Min [pli 35], Mun [pjei 44] 'head', Mien (Chiang Rai) [pjei 452] 'leader, headman', but note the difference in tone: Mienic B1 versus Pa Hng B2.

(8) Noun prefixes:

1. Na-e à, Wenjie [a 6], Institute wordlist [a 6], e.g. 'ear', Na-e à 1 kuñ 1 bió 1, Wenjie [a 6 qhō 3 mphjo 2], Institute wordlist [a 6 qhō 4 mphio 2].

2. Na-e tà 1, tở 1, Wenjie [thv 2], Institute wordlist [thv 2], e.g. 'hand, arm', Na-e tà 1 pu 1, Institute wordlist [thv 2 phu 4]; 'tooth', Na-e tở 1 mhá 1; 'skirt', Wenjie

[thv 2 tẽ 1].

(9) 'red': Na-e tõ², Wenjie [thv 6] (tone C2). Compare possibly Hm Nai [tai 7] (tone D1), but notice the difference in tone.

(10) 'sky': Na-e -hã¹ [ɲwa] < *[ɲwan], Gundong [wan 2].

Hmongic has two variants for 'sky', perhaps something like *ndɔŋ A and *NGLwɔŋ A. The latter is suggested by Gaopo [Nqə 55] (irregular, for *[ɲkə 55]), Fuyuan [Nqwan 31], Fengxiang [Nquŋ 24] (irregular, for *[Nqwuŋ 24]), Pu Nu (Meizhu) [ta 33 ɲkuŋ 24], and probably Shibān [Nqwan A]. Compare also Huangluo [ŋo 2] (Chen 1984:17, dialect #12; probably a Yu Nuo dialect). The Pa Hng form appears to correspond to *NGLwɔŋ A.

The Mienic words for 'sky' also look as if they may correspond to the *NGLw- form: Dzaio Min [van 53], Mun [gu:ŋ 31], Mien (Dapingjiang) [luŋ 21], Mien (Chiang Rai) [luŋ 31].

Compare 'finger', above.

(11) 'two': Na-e vã¹, Wenjie [va 7] (tone D1), Xishanjie [va 34] (tone A1).

Compare Hm Nai [wa 1'] (Mao and Meng 1982:79).

This is a Proto-Hmong-Mien word, but it shows great irregularity from one language to another in initial, final, and tone. Benedict may now have found the solution to this puzzle.

(12) 'urine': Na-e vi¹, Xishanjie [ve 11].

Most Hmongic dialects have words for 'urine' reflecting a Proto-Hmongic form something like *ra B (Wang 1979, initial 67, final -3). However, in certain Hmongic dialects, in Pa Hng, and in Mienic we have a puzzling array of forms all involving some sort of labial or rounding element:

	Expected form corresponding to * <u>ra</u> B	Actual form
HMONGIC:		
Yanghao	*ɣ ^h a ¹¹	v ^ɣ a ¹¹
PA HNG:		
Na-e	*yi ²	vi ¹
Xishanjie	*ji ¹¹	ve ¹¹
MIENIC:		
Dzaio Min	*ja ⁴⁴	via ⁴⁴
Biao Min	*la ⁴²	lo ⁴²
Mun	*ga ⁵³	wa ⁵³
Mien (Dapingj.)	*la ²³¹	jwe ²³¹

Additional examples of the same phenomenon are Na-e và 1 (pà 2) 'to see' in place of the expected *yà 2 (Hmongic 'to watch') and Xishanjie [vi 34] 'vegetable' in place of the expected *[ji 34]. The corresponding Hmongic forms have *?r-.

4. Some further remarks on initials

Prenasalized stops develop in various ways in Na-e and Pa Hng. The pattern seems to be as follows:

	Na-e	Wenjie	Xishanjie	Gundong
*mph-	ph	--	ᵐ	ᵐh
*mp-	b	mp	m	m
*mb-	b	mph, mp	m	m

We see, then, that a characteristic feature of Northern Pa Hng is that prenasalized stops change to nasals, e.g.

	Na-e	Wenjie	Xishanjie	Gundong	
*mphj-	thɛ ¹	--	--	--	'ant'
*ɲtʃh-	ʃɔ ²	--	ɲɛ ²²	ɲhei ³	'blood'
*mp-	-bɛ ¹	mpe ⁵	me ⁵⁵	--	'pig'
*mp-	--	--	--	maŋ ⁵	'snow'
*nt-	dɔ ²	--	--	--	'paper'
*mbr-	-biɔ ¹	-mphjo ²	mjo ³³	--	'ear'
*mbr-	biɔ ¹	--	mjo ¹¹	njo ⁴	'fish'
*mbr-	-biɔ ¹	--	mjo ⁴⁴	--	'nose'
*NG-	gɛ ¹	Nqhɛ ²	ɲæ ³³	--	'meat'

Na-e is a Southern Pa Hng language, but in 'leaf' and 'sky' it shows what would seem to be the Northern development of the initial:

	Na-e	Wenjie	Xishanjie	Gundong	
*mbl-	mɔ ¹	--	mā ³³	--	'leaf'
*NGlw-	-hɔā ¹	--	--	waŋ ²	'sky'

If Benedict's etymology for the first syllable of Na-e nuh 1 bè 1 'pig' is correct, then this is another example of the same thing. These exceptions might be the result of some sort of borrowing or dialect mixture.

In Southern Pa Hng initials are regularly aspirated in syllables with lower register tones. In Wenjie and the Institute wordlist this occurs quite consistently with tones A2, B2, and C2, e.g. Wenjie [mhiɛ 2] 'person', [vhē 4] 'pot', [mhi 6] 'soft'. It does not occur with D2: Wenjie [-mpi 8]

'fan'. In Na-e Bonifacy usually failed to hear the aspiration but he did record it in six words:

	Na-e	Proto-Hmongic	Wang 1979 (initial)
flower	-phã ¹	*b- A2	3
person	mhɛ ¹	*n- A2	49
earth	lhɛ ¹	*ɭ- A2	74, 'paddy field'
mountain	-phã ²	*b- B2	3
horse	mhi ¹	*mɯ- B2	17
bird	mhu ¹	*n- C2	49

Benedict reanalyzes Bonifacy's mhu¹ 'bird' as [hmu] and suggests that

The initial h-, with a parallel in Yao (Biao Min hno), probably represents an earlier *s-, for the ubiquitous Sino-Tibetan 'animal prefix' *s-, ...

In this case I disagree with Benedict. I have just shown that the aspiration in Na-e is apparently regular so that we do not need to posit an *s- prefix. As for Biao Min, it appears that in this language voiced nasals regularly become voiceless in words with Entering Tone, that is words that originally ended in a stop:

	Biao Min	Mien (Dapingj.)	Middle Chinese	GSR
bird	noʔ ⁴²	noʔ ¹²	---	---
ink	moʔ ⁴²	ma:t ¹²	*mæk	904 e
socks	munʔ ⁴²	ma:t ¹²	*miwət	311 l
wheat	mɛʔ ⁴²	mɛʔ ¹²	*mwɛk	932 a-c

As it happens, most of our Biao Min examples may be loans from Chinese, but in 'bird' we see the same process affecting a native word. Again, I see no need to posit an *s- prefix.

Finally, with regard to Benedict's remarks on Na-e ku³ 'six', we may note that Na-e preserves certain distinctions that have been lost in Xishanjie, for example in the following words (ǰ = IPA [tʃ], t' = IPA [tʰ]):

	Na-e	Xishanjie	Proto-Hmongic
seven	čã ¹	tɕã ⁴⁴	*dz-
to laugh	t'a ¹	tɕæ ⁵⁴	*tɕ-
door	t'ɔ̃h ¹	tɕã ³³	o *dɕ-
the wind	t'i ³	tɕi ⁵⁵	*tɕ-
wine	--	tɕɿ ²²	*tɕ-
husband	t'ɔ̃h ²	--	*dz- 'man' (vir)
year	t'ɔ̃ ³	--	*ɕ-
six	ku ³	tɕu ⁵⁵	*tɕ-

Another word in which Na-e č reflects a retroflex initial is 'blood', Proto-Hmongic *ɲtɕh-, Na-e čɔ̃². Again this changes to a prepalatal initial in Northern Pa Hng: Xishanjie [ɲɕ²²], [ɲɕ²²], Gundong [ɲhei³].

5. Evidence for separating Pa Hng from Hmongic

The Pa Hng languages show several phonological peculiarities which suggest that they may have split off from the Hmongic stock prior to the period represented by Wang's reconstruction of Proto-Hmongic.

(1) Generally, as one would expect, Proto-Hmongic dentals correspond to Pa Hng dentals, for example:

	Proto-Hmongic	Na-e	Wenjie	Institute	Xishanjie	Gundong
son/male	*t-	tɔ̃h ¹	--	--	tã ³⁴	--
skirt	*t-	--	-tẽ ¹	--	--	--
to come	*d-	tɔ̃ ¹	--	--	tɕ ³³	--
fire	*d-	tɔ̃ ¹	--	-thɿ ⁴	tɿ ¹¹	--
snake	*ʔn-	nɔ̃n ¹	--	--	nɕ ³⁴	--
to eat	*n-	noh ¹	--	--	nã ³³	--
cloth	*nt-	--	ntɪ ¹	--	--	--
paper	*nt-	dɔ̃ ²	--	--	--	--
to weave	*nt-	--	--	--	næ ⁵⁴	na ⁷

In a number of cases, however, Pa Hng has a labial initial:

	Proto-Hmongic	Na-e	Wenjie	Institute	Xishan-jie	Gundong
hemp	*nd-	bɔ̃ ³	--	--	no ⁴⁴	--
rain	*n-	mu ¹	--	-mō ⁵	--	--
person	*n-	mhɛ ¹	mhiɛ ²	--	--	--
bird	*n-	mhu ¹	--	--	--	--

Benedict's suggestion is that these words originally began with clusters, and that these clusters merged with dentals in Hmongic after Hmongic had separated from Pa Hng. Benedict has already commented on the initials of 'rain' and 'bird'. 'Person' likewise fits very well with the Austro-Tai etymology that has been offered (Benedict 1975:336; 1985).

With regard to 'person', note that in 1975 Benedict took the Hmongic reflex to be the form *prɔŋ A (or *sɔŋ A) 'Hmong' (Wang 1979, initial 5, final -31; Wang 1983:4). But in 1985 Benedict revised his reconstruction and took the Hmongic reflex to be, rather, *nan A 'person' (Wang 1979, initial 49, final -20), which agrees much better in initial and final. Benedict now thinks that *sɔŋ A is a back loan from Chinese.

'Hemp' is like 'bird' in that it has a dental initial in both Hmongic and Mienic, with only Na-e showing a labial initial. Even Xishanjie has a dental initial in 'hemp'. I should point out that 'hemp' has a historically unexpected tone in Na-e and that 'rain' has a historically unexpected tone in the Institute wordlist. But these may be transcription errors or misprints in both cases. Wang Fushi has told me that Institute (1959) contains many misprints.

(2) Generally, Proto-Hmongic prepalatals correspond to prepalatals in Pa Hng:

	Proto-Hmongic	Na-e	Wenjie	Institute	Xishanjie
wine	*tɕ-	--	--	--	tɕ ²²
the wind	*tɕ-	t'i ³	--	-tɕi ⁵	tɕi ⁵⁵
husband	*dʒ-	t'ɔ̃h ²	--	--	--
heavy	*ɕ-	--	--	--	ɕ ²²
mushroom	*ɲtɕ-	--	--	--	ɲo ³⁴
to climb	*ɲtɕ-	--	--	--	ɲo ⁵⁵
mouth	*ɲdʒ-	--	--	--	ɲu ³³

In two words, however, Pa Hng has the velar/uvular series:

	Proto-Hmongic	Na-e	Wenjie	Institute	Xishanjie
nine	*dʒ-	kɔ ¹	--	--	ko ³³
rice bread	*ɲtɕ-	--	Nqo ³	--	ŋo ²²

Differences of this kind, including the word for 'nine', were noted by Chang (1976:173, 176), who proposed an alternation between plain and yodized velars to account for them. Thus in 'nine' we would have Pa Hng *g- versus Hmongic *gɲ- > *dʒ-.

'Nine', like 'six', has been suggested to be an early loan from Sino-Tibetan. An initial of the back series also occurs in Hm Nai [ko 2] 'nine' (contrast [-tɕi 5] 'the wind') and in Dzao Min [ku 53] 'nine' (contrast [jau 31] 'the wind'). Note that the Hmong-Mien words for 'nine' all have tone A2, whereas the Chinese form has B1.

(3) Benedict has already discussed the word for 'six' where the Na-e form appears to preserve a contrast between *tɕ- and *tr- which has been lost in Hmongic.

(4) Pa Hng appears to have preserved contrasts involving finals which have been lost in Hmongic. Thus Wang's final -lɔ corresponds to Pa Hng [a] or [æ] in some words versus [o] in others:

	Na-e	Wenjie	Xishanjie	Gundong
to see ¹	vã ¹ -	--	--	--
mouth ²	-lhã ³	--	la ⁵⁵	--
old ³	--	qa ⁵	--	--
strength	--	--	jæ ⁴⁴	--
to weave	--	--	nae ⁵⁴	na ⁷
to laugh	t'ã ¹	--	tɕæ ⁵⁴	--
duck	--	--	ɲæ ⁵⁴	--
to see	-pã ²	--	pa ³¹	--
thunder	bɔ ²	--	--	--
deep	--	--	to ³⁴	--
early	--	--	--	ŋo ³
to come	--	--	lo ¹¹	--
buffalo ⁴	-hɔ ¹	--	--	--

(1) Hmongic 'to watch'. (2) Hmongic 'mouthful'. (3) Not in Wang; see Purnell 1970, Appendix, #628; Chen and Li 1981:1⁷, 2¹, 3³. (4) Hmongic 'ox, cow'.

Similarly, Wang's final -l8 corresponds to Pa Hng [ɣ] in some words versus [o] or [ɔ] in others:

	Na-e	Institute	Xishanjie
wine	--	--	tɣ ²²
fire	tɕ ¹	-tɣ ⁴	tɣ ¹¹
correct ¹	--	--	ŋɣ ⁵⁴
white	kuã ⁴	--	kuo ³⁴
paper	dɔ ²	--	--
to open	--	--	pɔ ⁵⁴

Note the dissimilatory change [wo] > [wa] in the Na-e word for 'white'.

(5) 'fruit': The Proto-Hmong-Mien word for 'fruit' was probably something like *pjiu B or *pjeu B. Mienic languages preserve the final [-u]: Dzao Min [beu 11], Mun [pjəu 44], Mien [pjəu 452]. In Ho Nte and Hmongic the final [-u] disappears so that 'fruit' comes to rhyme with 'you':

	Hmong (Qing- yan)	Ho Nte (Boluo)	Dzao Min	Mien (Da- ping- jiang)	Mien (Chiang Rai)	Mun	Proto-Hmong- Mien
fruit	pi ¹³	pi ⁵⁵	beu ¹¹	pjou ⁵²	pjəu ⁴⁵²	pjəu ⁴⁴	*pjiu ^B
you	ɲi ⁵⁴	mpi ⁴²	mui ⁵²	mwei ²¹	mei ³¹	mvi ³¹	*mwi ^A

In Pa Hng the word for 'fruit' is Xishanjie [pjɛ 22], Na-e pɔ̃¹. The rounded vowel of the Na-e form is intriguing. Is the rounding a remnant of the final [-u]? If it is, this would be another feature preserved in Pa Hng but lost in Hmongic. But it is difficult to be certain. The rounding might also be conditioned by the initial labial.

If the Na-e word for 'you' does not rhyme with the Na-e word for 'fruit', this would be evidence that Na-e has indeed preserved a distinction lost in Hmongic. Unfortunately, the Na-e form for 'you' was not included in Bonifacy's paper.

(6) 'sun/day': One of the characteristics which appears to have set Proto-Hmongic apart from its sister dialects is that the word for 'sun' or 'day' was something like *ɲoŋ A, ending in a nasal, whereas in the other dialects it seems to have been something like *ɲoi A. Thus in Hmongic languages

¹Not in Wang; see Chang 1947:108.

'sun' rhymes with such words as 'son' and 'horn', whereas in other branches of Hmong-Mien it does not. In Pa Hng, 'sun' does not rhyme with 'son', 'horn', etc.:

	Hmong (Qing- yan)	Na-e	Xi- shan- jie	Hm Nai	Ho Nte (Boluo)	Ho Nte (Zeng- cheng)	Mien (Chiang Rai)
give/	--	--	pā ³⁴	paŋ ¹	paŋ ³³	--	puŋ ⁴⁴
share							
son/ male ¹ (clf.)	tɔŋ ⁵⁵	-tɔŋ ¹	tā ³⁴	taŋ ¹	taŋ ³³	taŋ ²²	ton ⁴⁴
steam (vb.)	təuŋ ⁵⁵	--	--	--	tjaŋ ³³	tjaŋ ²²	tɕa:ŋ ⁴⁴
hot	--	--	--	--	khaŋ ³³	--	com ⁴⁴
young plant	zɔŋ ⁵⁵	--	jä ³⁴	--	--	jaŋ ²²	ja:ŋ ⁴⁴
horn	kuŋ ⁵⁵	kɔŋ ¹	kā ³⁴	--	--	kjaŋ ²²	coŋ ⁴⁴
star	quŋ ⁵⁵	-kɔŋ ¹	--	--	--	--	(lhei ²⁵)
black	?luŋ ⁵⁵	kuəŋ ¹	--	--	--	kjaŋ ²²	cia ²⁵
sky	ntuŋ ⁵⁴	hɔŋ ¹	--	--	--	--	luŋ ³¹
full	puŋ ¹³	--	pā ²²	paŋ ³	paŋ ⁵⁵	--	pwəŋ ⁴⁵²
body	tuŋ ¹³	--	--	ntaŋ ³	taŋ ⁵⁵	taŋ ⁵⁵	tam ⁴⁵²
louse							
short	luŋ ¹³	--	lā ²²	laŋ ³	ntaŋ ⁵⁵	--	naŋ ⁴⁵²
(clf.)	thɔŋ ³²	--	--	n ⁴ (!)	thaŋ ⁵⁴	thaŋ ⁵³	(tau ³¹)
snow	mpuŋ ⁴³	--	--	mpaŋ ⁵	--	paŋ ³³	(2)
break	tuŋ ⁴³	--	tā ⁵⁵	taŋ ⁵	taŋ ²¹	taŋ ³³	taŋ ²⁵
sun/ day	ɔŋ ⁵⁵	-nhɛ ¹	ne ³⁴	-nhe ¹	ntɔ ³³	no ²²	nhɔi ⁴⁴

In Na-e, 'black' and 'sky' have undergone dissimilatory changes as explained earlier, so that we have [kwaŋ] and [ŋwa] instead of *[kwɔŋ] and *[ŋwɔŋ]. Although 'sky' loses its final nasal, the vowel of 'sky' remains quite different from that of 'sun'. Please note also that in the case of the Na-e word for 'sun' I have assumed that Bonifacy's an l hɛ l is actually a false division for ã l nhɛ l.

¹Hm Nai classifier for people.

²Dapingjiang Mien [bwan²⁴].

6. Mienic versus non-Mienic

The various non-Mienic branches of Hmong-Mien share certain characteristics that set them apart from Mienic, for example:

1. Distinctive lexical items. e.g. 'pig': non-Mienic *mpai C versus Mienic *duŋ B.
2. Distinctive forms of particular lexical items, e.g. 'black': non-Mienic final *-ŋ versus Mienic final *-ʔ.
3. In the Mienic languages *-ʔ after *voiceless initials remains distinct from tone C whereas in the non-Mienic languages it merges with tone C.

Pa Hng has non-Mienic characteristics, for example:

1. 'pig': Na-e -bè 1, Wenjie [mpe 5], Xishanjie [me 55].

Compare Hmong (Qingyan) [mpo 43], Hm Nai [mpe 5], Kiong Nai [mpei 5], Yu Nuo (Liutian) [mɛi 4], Ho Nte (Boluo) [pui 21], Ho Nte (Zengcheng) [pi 33]. Contrast Dzao Min [tiŋ 44], Biao Min [twəʔ 42], Mien [tuŋ 231], Mun [tuŋʔ 53].

But Na-e also has nuŋ 1 -, which Benedict suggests may be a loan from Mienic.

2. 'black': Na-e kuəŋ 1. Compare Hmong (Qingyan) [ʔluŋ 55], Ho Nte (Zengcheng) [kjaŋ 22]. Contrast Dzao Min [kia 44] < *[kjaʔ], Biao Min [kjaʔ 54], Mien (Dapingjiang) [tɕeʔ 55], Mien (Chiang Rai) [ciaʔ 55], Mun [kja 4232] < *[kjaʔ].

3. Final glottal stop merges with tone C:

	Xishan- jie	Hmong (Xian- jin)	Ho Nte (Bo- luo)	Dzao Min	Mien (Chiang Rai)	Mun
sleep (C1)	pai ⁵⁵	pu ⁴⁴	pɔ ²¹	bui ⁴¹	pwei ²⁵	fvi ²⁴
six (*-ʔ)	tɕu ⁵⁵	tɕou ⁴⁴	ko ²¹	tɔ ⁴⁴	cu ^{ʔ55}	kjo ⁴²³²
hundred (*-ʔ)	pɛ ⁵⁵	po ⁴⁴	pa ²¹	ba ⁴⁴	pɛ ^{ʔ55}	pɛ ⁴²³²
laugh (D1)	tɕæ ⁵⁴	tɕo ³³	ku ³³⁵	tut ⁴⁴	cet ⁵⁵	kjet ²²

Did Proto-Hmong-Mien begin by splitting into Proto-Mienic and Proto-non-Mienic? Were the non-Mienic characteristics innovations in Proto-non-Mienic? 'Pig' and 'black' perhaps are not. Benedict has presented evidence that both 'pig' and the nasal-final variant of 'black' go back to Proto-Austro-Tai (Benedict 1975:354, 266). Benedict's theory that Hmong-Mien

is a branch of Austro-Tai is controversial; see especially Wang (1985b). But if Benedict's etymologies for 'pig' and the nasal-final variant of 'black' are correct, then these forms already existed in Proto-Hmong-Mien and their presence in Hmongic, Pa Hng, Ho Nte, and so on, is simply a shared inheritance from Proto-Hmong-Mien and does not imply any special relationship among these groups.

With regard to the merger of final glottal stop with tone C, Sagart (1984, 1985) has presented evidence that both tone B and tone C were glottalized in Chinese, Tai, and Hmong-Mien. If this is correct, then the merger of final glottal stop with tone C may turn out to be a very natural sound change which could easily have occurred independently in the different groups. Indeed even in Mienic, we find that in many dialects final glottal stop merges with tone C after *voiced initials, although remaining distinct after *voiceless initials. For example, in the Houei Sai dialect of Mun, [θu 21] 'chisel' (*-?) differs only in initial from [du 21] 'hemp' (C2).

On the other hand, one area which I think does hold a lot of promise for elucidating subgroups of Hmong-Mien is the development of the finals. The old idea that "Miao" preserves initials and "Yao" preserves finals is too simple, as David Solnit has pointed out (1984:2). But a step by step investigation of each Proto-Hmong-Mien final may turn up cases of shared innovation which genuinely reflect common ancestry. We have already seen two possible examples. One was the merger of *iu and *i shared by Ho Nte and Hmongic which I discussed in connection with the word for 'fruit'. The other was the array of forms which I cited in connection with the word for 'sun'. Mien shows several different finals in these forms: -am, -om; -on, -un; -aŋ, -a:ŋ, -oŋ, -uŋ. Even in Biao Min, which is noted for its greatly reduced system of finals, we have different finals in [jɔ 44] 'young plant' versus [taŋ 24] 'to break'. But in Ho Nte, Hm Nai, Pa Hng, and Hmongic all these finals appear to have merged.

7. Conclusions

(1) Both Na-e and "Tahua Yao" (Xishanjie) appear to belong to the Pa Hng subgroup of Hmong-Mien.

(2) Pa Hng may have split off from the Hmongic stock prior to the period represented by Wang's reconstruction of Proto-Hmongic.

(3) Hm Nai, Yu Nuo, and Kiong Nai may also have split off from Hmongic at an early date. These languages deserve more research.

(4) There may be some special connection between Pa Hng and Hm Nai: see 'dog', 'finger', 'red', 'two', 'nine'.

(5) The earliest split in the Hmong-Mien family may have

been between Mienic and everything else but the evidence for this is not yet conclusive.

Benedict suggests, rather, that the earliest split might have been between Na-e (read "Pa Hng") and everything else. He bases this suggestion on the labial initial in the Na-e form for 'bird'. To this evidence we may now be able to add the labial initial in the Na-e form for 'hemp'. On the other hand, as Benedict admits, the change from *mr to [n] could have occurred independently in different languages rather than being a shared innovation implying any special connection among the non-Pa Hng languages. Indeed a similar change to a dental initial would seem to have occurred even within Pa Hng in the Xishanjie form for 'hemp'. I agree with Benedict, however, that more data on the Pa Hng languages are needed before questions such as these can be resolved.

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APPENDIX: Sources

- Proto-Hmongic: Initials and tones from Wang (1979). Reconstructions of finals are my own. (Wang assigns the finals numbers but does not reconstruct the actual pronunciations.) See also Chang (1947, 1953, 1972, 1976) and Funnell (1970).
- Hmongic:
- Green Mong of Laos: Xiong, Xiong, and Xiong (1983).
 - Shiban: Chen (1984:15, dialect #7). Dialect of Shibanzhai, Kaili county, southeastern Guizhou.
 - Fu Nu: Mao, Meng, and Zheng (1982). Dialect of Meizhu, Du'an county, central Guangxi.
 - Other: Wang (1979).
 - Na-e: Bonifacy (1905). Dialect of Báo-lạc, northern Vietnam.
 - Wenjie: Mao, Meng, and Zheng (1982:118, 121-123). Dialect of Wenjie, Sanjiang county, northeastern Guangxi.
 - Institute wordlist: Institute for the Study of Minority Languages (1959), cited in Moskalev (1978:15).
 - Xishanjie: Chang (1947, 1953, 1972, 1976). Dialect of Xishan-

- jie, near Yongcong, southeastern Guizhou.
- Gundong: Chen (1984:17, dialect #13). Dialect of Gundong, Liping county, southeastern Guizhou.
- Hm Nai: Institute for the Study of Minority Languages (1959); Mao, Meng, and Zheng (1982:119, 121-123); Mao and Meng (1982:77-80). Hm Nai is spoken in western Hunan.
- Kiong Nai: Institute for the Study of Minority Languages (1959); Mao, Meng, and Zheng (1982:119, 121-123); Mao and Meng (1982:77-80). Kiong Nai is spoken in Jinxiu county, eastern Guangxi.
- Yu Nuo:
- (1) Mao, Meng, and Zheng (1982:120-123): dialect of Liutian, Longsheng county, northeast Guangxi.
 - (2) Chen (1984:17, dialect #12): dialect of Huangluo, Longsheng county, northeast Guangxi.
 - (3) Institute for the Study of Minority Languages (1959): Longsheng county, northeast Guangxi, exact locality not specified.
- Ho Nte (Boluo): Mao and Meng (1982). Dialect of Boluo county, southeast Guangdong (near Hong Kong).
- Ho Nte (Zengcheng): Chen (1982; 1984:18, dialect #15). Dialect of Xiashui, Zengcheng county, southeast Guangdong (near Hong Kong).
- Mien (Chiang Rai): Funnell (1970); Lombard (1968). Dialect of Chiang Rai province, northern Thailand.
- Mien (Dapingjiang): Mao, Meng, and Zheng (1982). Dialect of Dapingjiang, Jiangdi commune, Longsheng county, northeastern Guangxi.
- Mun: author's fieldnotes. Dialect of Ban Nam Yong, Houei Sai district, Houa Khong province, northwest Laos.
- Biao Min: Solnit (1984); Mao, Meng, and Zheng (1982:63-69). Dialect of Quanzhou county, northeast Guangxi.
- Dzao Min: Wong (1939); Yu and Chao (1984). Dialect of Youling, Liannan county, northwest Guangdong.

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