LINGUISTICS OF THE TIBETO-BURMAN AREA
VOLUME 10:2 - FALL 1987

Some Comments on Benedict's "Miao-Yao Enigma": Addendum

David Strecker

I ended my paper with the words "I agree with Benedict, however, that more data on the Pa Hng languages are needed before questions such as these can be resolved." Some of these additional data have now become available. On the very day that I mailed my paper off to be considered for publication I received from Wang Fushi a comparative wordlist including 80 words in the dialect of Pa Hng spoken in Wenjie. 57 of these are new words, not given in either Mao, Meng, and Zheng or the Institute wordlist. The kindness and generosity of Professor Wang now make it possible for me to fill in some gaps and correct some mistakes in my treatment of Wenjie.

In addition, Dr. Benedict has sent me several pages of detailed comments and corrections on my paper. Discussing these will require a separate paper, but I will mention a few of Benedict's most important corrections below.

1. Preface

With regard to my schema of Hmong-Mien subgroups, Wang agrees with me that on purely linguistic grounds Pu Nu would be considered a subgroup of the Sichuan-Guizhou-Yunnan branch of Hmongic. He goes on to explain, however (in his letter accompanying the comparative wordlist), that Chinese writers base their classifications on non-linguistic criteria as well: "The policy of our country holds that the speech of each national minority is named according to the official name of the national minority." Thus Chinese writers divide Hmongic into Miáo yǔ, namely those languages whose speakers are culturally as well as linguistically Hmong, and Bùnǔ yǔ, namely those languages whose speakers are linguistically Hmong but culturally Yao. I think it is important to understand that we are not dealing here with any disagreement about the histories of the languages but merely with different types of classification, based on different criteria and fulfilling different purposes.

Wang disagrees with Benedict's and my idea that Pa Hng should be a separate branch: "the materials show the close relation between pa 31(3) ŋ 35(1) and pu 54(3') nu 24(2')." Thus Wang would retain Pa Hng within Hmongic.

Benedict rightly questions my raising Hm Nai, Kiong Nai, and Yu Nuo to the status of separate branches without giving any evidence for this. Let me therefore rephrase my suggestion thus:

Hm Nai, Kiong Nai, and Yu Nuo have been considered to be branches of Hmongic. I know of no evidence to the

Strecker, D. 1987, "Some comments on Benedict's *Miao-Yao Enigma: the Na-e language* addendum", in *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 43-53. (purl.org/sealang/strecker1987some-addendum.pdf)

contrary, but it is difficult to be certain because not very much has been written about these languages. Mao, Meng, and Zheng, while grouping them with Pu Nu, do point out that they are rather distinctive. Thus I hope very much that someone will do a systematic historical-comparative study of these languages along the lines of Wang (1979).

So let me give a more conservative schema of subgroupings:

I. Hmongic
  A. Eastern Guizhou (Purnell's "Eastern") [HM]
  B. West Hunan (Purnell's "Northern") [HM]
  C. Sichuan-Guizhou-Yunnan (Purnell's "Central" and "Western")
    1. Sichuan-Guizhou-Yunnan (Purnell's "West A") [HM]
    2. Northeast Yunnan [HM]
    3. Guiyang [HM]
    4. Huishui [HM]
    5. Mashan [HM]
    6. Luobo River [HM]
    7. Eastern or Chong'an River [HM, Gedou]
    8. Pu Nu (Tung Nu) [BN]
    9. Nu Nu [BN]
    10. Pu No [BN]
    11. Nao Klao [BN]
    12. Nu Mhou [BN]
  D. Probably Hmongic but exact classification uncertain:
    1. Hm Nai [BN]
    2. Kiong Nai [BN]
    3. Yu Nuo [BN]
    4 - 12. Nine additional major groups [HM]: see Wang (1983:1).
II. Ho Nte
III. Mienic
  A. Mien-Kim: Mien (Iu Mien), Mun (Kim Mun), Biao Mon
  B. Biao-Chao: Biao Min, Chao Kong Meng
  C. Dzao Min
IV. Classification uncertain: Pa Hng [BN], Na-e

Within the Hmongic group, languages marked HM are spoken by people who are culturally Hmong and are called "Miao" by Chinese writers, and languages marked BN are spoken by people who are culturally Yao and are called "Bunu" by Chinese writers. Speakers of the Chong'an River dialect group call themselves [mhoŋ 33 (1)] in their own language , and are included under "Miao" by Chinese linguists, but they themselves, when speaking Chinese, say that they are Gédōu

Strecker, D. 1987, "Some comments on Benedict's *Miao-Yao Enigma: the Na-e language* addendum", in *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 43-53. (purl.org/sealang/strecker1987some-addendum.pdf)

people rather than Miao people (Wang 1979, pp. 27-28).

2. Transcription

Mao, Meng, and Zheng give only the etymological values of the Wenjie tones, following the usual convention: 1 = A1, 2 = A2, etc. Wang gives the pitch contours as well, using the usual five point scale with 1 the lowest pitch and 5 the highest: 55 = high level, 54 = falling from high to mid high, etc. This makes it possible to compare the pitch contours of Na-e, Wenjie, and Xishanjie:

	Na-e	Wenjie	Xishanjie
A1	interrogative	35	34
A2	descending	33	33
B1	descending	31	22
B2	descending	31	11
C1	acute	55	55
C2	descending	44	44
D1	acute	53	54
D2	descending	32	31

In Wenjie and probably in Na-e syllables with lower register tones, A2, B2, C2, D2, are pronounced with whispery voice. In Wenjie the whispery voice serves to distinguish B2 from B1, which has the same pitch contour. (See section 4.)

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

(1) *r and *ʔr become yod: Wenjie [jo 35(1)] 'stone'.

(2) Velar and uvular initials merge into a single series, realized phonetically as uvular in Wenjie. But in some words Wenjie has a velar initial. I have no explanation for this.

	Proto-Hm. Prepalatal	Proto-Hm. Velar	Proto-Hm. Uvular
Wenjie uvular	Nqo 35(1) 'mushroom' Nqo 3 'rice bread'	qɔ̃ 35(1) 'horn' qɔ̃ 1 'warm' qɤ 35(1) 'insect' qo 3 'road'	qɔ̃ 35(1) 'star' qa 31(3)'excrement' qo 55(5) 'old' qhɔ̃ 31(3) 'hole' Nqo 35(1)'pigeon' Nqɦɛ 33(2)'meat'
Wenjie velar	kho 33(2) 'nine' ŋɦ 33(2) 'cow'	kɔ̃ 35(1) 'needle' khu 32(8)'ten' ŋkhɤ 32(8) 'pair'	

Strecker, D. 1987, "Some comments on Benedict's *Miao-Yao Enigma: the Na-e language* addendum", in *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 43-53. (purl.org/sealang/strecker1987some-addendum.pdf)

(4) Proto-Hmongic final -5: Wenjie [mpjo 31(4)] 'fish', [jo 35(1)] 'stone'.

Proto-Hmongic final -6: Wenjie [phe 53(7)] 'daughter' (compare Na-e pié 1 ~~d~~èn 1 'younger sister'), [Nqɦɛ 33(2)] 'meat'.

Proto-Hmongic final -23: Wenjie [tɔ̃ 35(1)] 'son', [tɔ̃ 55(5)] 'to snap, break', [lɔ̃ 35(1)] (classifier), [qɔ̃ 35(1)] 'horn', [qɔ̃ 35(1)] 'star'.

(11) 'two': Wang gives Wenjie [va 35(1)] with the historically expected tone, A1. *The form in Mao, Meng, and Zheng with tone D1 is perhaps a misprint.*

3a. Additional characteristics shared by the Pa Hng languages

(1) The ethnoynm [ɦŋ], with tone A1: Wenjie [pa 31(3) ɦŋ 35(1)] 'Pa Hng', Xishanjie [hŋ 34(1)] 'people'. (It is not clear from Chang whether the Xishanjie form means people in general or specifically Pa Hng people.) Is [pa 31(3) ɦŋ 35(1)] related to the Vietnamese name Pàthén? And what is the source of the name Nà-é?

(2) The word for 'thousand' has tone C1 instead of the historically expected tone A1: Wenjie [ɒɛ̃ 55(5)], Xishanjie [ɒo 55(5)]. For Na-e Bonifacy writes ~~d~~e 1 [ðe] with tone 1. Unfortunately Bonifacy's tone 1 seems to represent cases where he simply failed to hear the tone.

(3) Wang's Proto-Hmongic final -15 generally corresponds to Pa Hng [u], [ʉ], or [ɯ]:

	Na-e	Wenjie	Xishanjie
bean	---	---	tɯ 31(8)
iron	~~d~~ɯ^3 [ðɯ]	~~t~~ɯ 55(5)	~~t~~ɯ 55(5)
six	ku^3	tɒʉ 55(5)	tɒɯ 55(5)
mouth	---	ɳtɒɦu 33(2)	ɳɯ 33(2)
ten	ku^1	kɦu 32(8)	ku 31(8)
blind*	ku^1	---	---

But 'to drink' has [ɔ]:

	Na-e	Wenjie	Xishanjie
drink	hɒ^3	hɔ 53(7)	hɔ 54(7)

This word may be a recent loan from Chinese. Compare Cantonese [hɔ:t 33(7)].

*Not in Wang (1979). See the Layiping and Yanghao forms in Wang (1985a:170) -- the vowel in the Dananshan form is irregular.

Strecker, D. 1987, "Some comments on Benedict's *Miao-Yao Enigma: the Na-e language* addendum", in *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 43-53. (purl.org/sealang/strecker1987some-addendum.pdf)

4. Some further remarks on initials

The pattern of development of prenasalized stops in Wenjie appears to be as follows:

*mph- > ph-: [phe 53(7)] 'daughter'. But [ntɕe 31(3)] 'blood'!

*mp- > mp-: [mpe 55(5)] 'pig', [mpjo 35(1)] 'green', [nte 31(3)] 'to wash (hands)', [ntɕo 31(3)] 'early', [ntI 35(1)] 'cloth', [nta 53(7)] 'to weave', [Nqo 35(1)] 'mushroom', [Nqo 3] 'rice bread', [Nqo 35(1)] 'pigeon'.

*mb- > mpɦ-: [-mphjo 2] 'ear' (sc. [mpɦ-]: see below), [mpɦjɔ 44(6)] 'nose', [mpɦI 32(8)] 'peppery', [mpɦjo 33(2)] 'leaf', [ntɕɦu 33(2)] 'mouth', [ŋkɦɤ 32(8)] 'pair', [Nqɦɛ 33(2)] 'meat'.

The forms [mpjo 31(4)] 'fish' (Wang) and [-mpi 8] 'fan' (Mao, Meng, and Zheng) are perhaps typographic errors for forms with [-ɦ-]: see below.

Wenjie does not share with Na-e the Northern-Pa-Hng-like development in mə̀ 1 'leaf'. Wenjie has [mpɦjo 33(2)]. But Wenjie does show a Northern-like development in [nɦo 33(2)] 'boat' and [nɦɛ 31(4)] 'lazy', both from *ŋg-. Note also Wenjie [lɦja 31(4)] 'to flow', from *NGl-.

I also said that in Southern Pa Hng initials are regularly aspirated in syllables with lower register tones. I used the word "aspiration" loosely to refer to both true aspiration, that is, delay of voice onset, and "voiced aspiration", that is, whispery voice, because I was not certain which type of aspiration Mao, Meng, and Zheng meant to represent by the symbol [h]. Wang's list clearly shows whispery voice, [ɦ], in all lower register tones, including D2:

A2: [pɦɤ 33(2)] 'flower', [mpɦjo 33(2)] 'leaf', [nɦɔ 33(2)] 'eat', [tɕɦɔ̃ 33(2)] 'door', [lɦĩ 33(2)] 'farmland', [kɦo 33(2)] 'nine', [ŋɦ 33(2)] 'cow', [ntɕɦu 33(2)] 'mouth', [nɦo 33(2)] 'boat, ship', [Nqɦɛ́ 33(2)] 'flesh', [kwɦɤ 33(2)] 'yellow'.

B2: [mɦI 31(4)] 'horse', [vɦɛ̃ 31(4)] 'boiler', [tɦɤ 31(4)] 'fire', [nɦu 31(4)] 'he, she, it', [nɦɛ 31(4)] 'lazy', [lɦja 31(4)] 'flow'.

C2: [mɦi 44(6)] 'sell', [mpɦjɔ 44(6)] 'nose', [tɦe 44(6)] 'die', [tɕɦã 44(6)] 'seven'.

D2: [vɦɛ 32(8)] 'ten thousand' (D2 in Pa Hng and some Hmongic languages; generally C2), [mpɦI 32(8)] 'peppery', [jɦi 32(8)] 'eight', [kɦu 32(8)] 'ten', [ŋkɦɤ 32(8)] 'pair', [jɦu 32(8)] 'one' (compare Mien [jet 12(8)]).

The Institute wordlist, as reproduced by Moskalev, likewise shows whispery voice:

Strecker, D. 1987, "Some comments on Benedict's *Miao-Yao Enigma: the Na-e language* addendum", in *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 43-53. (purl.org/sealang/strecker1987some-addendum.pdf)

A2: [-mpɦio 2] 'ear'
B2: [-pɦu 4] 'hand; arm', [-tɦɤ 4] 'fire', [-pɦi 4] 'head'
C2: [-mɦi 6] 'eye'
D2: no examples.

There are three exceptions, which may be typographic errors:

Wang [mpjo 31(4)] 'fish', with unaspirated initial.

Mao, Meng, and Zheng [-mpi 8] 'fan', with unaspirated initial.

Institute wordlist (in Moskalev) [-mphjo 6] 'nose', with [h] instead of [ɦ].

Thus I interpret Bonifacy's mhu 1 'bird' as [mɦu] and assert that the [ɦ] is a predictable correlate of the tone and does not imply any sort of prefix. This interpretation is better for Benedict's overall argument since it makes for a more straightforward development from Proto-Austro-Tai *mrok to Na-e mhu 1. I am happy to report that Benedict and I are now in agreement on this interpretation of Bonifacy's form.

Finally, Wenjie agrees with Xishanjie and disagrees with Na-e in having prepalatal initials in 'seven', 'blood', and 'six':

	Proto-Hmongic	Wenjie
seven	*dʐ-	tɕɦɑ̃ 44(6)
blood	*ɳ̊tʂh-	ɳtɕe 31(3)
door	*dl̥-	tɕɦɔ̃ 33(2)
fir	*tɕ-	tɕi̋ 35(1)
thrush	*tɕ-	tɕɔ̃ 35(1)
wine	*tɕ-	tɕɤ 31(3)
mouth	*ɳdʐ-	ɳtɕɦu 33(2)
six	*tl̥-	tɕɯ 55(5)

5. Evidence for separating Pa Hng from Hmongic

(1) Proto-Hmongic dentals = Pa Hng dentals: Wenjie [tɤ 35(1)] 'earth', [tẽ 35(1)] 'skirt', [tɔ̃ 35(1)] 'son', [tɦɤ 31(4)] 'fire', [tɦe 44(6)] 'die', [nẽ 35(1)] 'snake', [nɔ̃ 55(5)] 'cold', [ɳ̊e 35(1)] 'sun, day', [ɳ̊e 35(1)] 'ear of

Strecker, D. 1987, "Some comments on Benedict's *Miao-Yao Enigma: the Na-e language* addendum", in *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 43-53. (purl.org/sealang/strecker1987some-addendum.pdf)

grain', [nɦu 31(4)] 'he, she, it', [nɦɔ 33(2)] 'eat', [ntI 35(1)] 'cloth', [nta 53(7)] 'weave', [lɔ̃ 35(1)] (classifier), [ɬa 55(5)] 'moon', [ɬu 55(5)] 'iron'

Proto-Hmongic dentals = Pa Hng labials: no examples in Wang's list.

I may have been mistaken in including 'hemp' among the examples of Proto-Hmongic dentals corresponding to Pa Hng labials. Benedict has reminded me that Proto-Hmongic *ndo C 'hemp' may be related to Archaic Chinese 紵 *dɦio B (a kind of hemp)(GSR 84e; see also Chen and Li 1981, 1°7). If we accept the view of Chinese linguists that Hmong-Mien is genetically related to Chinese, then 'hemp' may have had some sort of cluster in Proto-Sino-Tibetan which became labial in Na-e and which became dental in other Hmong-Mien languages and in Chinese. If we accept Benedict's view that Hmong-Mien is a branch of Austro-Tai, then the lexical resemblances between Hmong-Mien and Chinese are due to borrowing. Then we have two possibilities:

(1) Benedict's view is that the Proto-Hmong-Mien word was borrowed from some dialect of Archaic Chinese and therefore always had a dental initial in Hmong-Mien. Na-e bó 3 is completely unrelated to Proto-Hmongic *ndo C.

(2) Conversely, the Chinese word may have been borrowed from a Hmong-Mien language. In that case, it is still possible that the Proto-Hmong-Mien word had some sort of cluster which became labial in Na-e and dental everywhere else. The Chinese form would simply have been borrowed from a language other than Na-e after the change to a dental initial had already taken place.

I am not prepared at the present time to enter the controversy over whether Chinese borrowed words from Hmong-Mien (Wang 1985b:30-31); I am merely raising this as a theoretical possibility. I do not know whether this is relevant or not, but I learn from The Times Atlas of China (1974 edition, page 81) that hemp fiber is an important crop in the region of Guangxi where Pa Hng is spoken.

(2) Proto-Hmongic prepalatals = Pa Hng prepalatals: Wenjie [tɕi 35(1)] 'fir', [tɕɔ̃ 35(1)] 'thrush', [tɕɤ 31(3)] 'wine', [ɲI 35(1)] 'wife', [ɲtɕhu 33(2)] 'mouth', [jɦi 32(8)] 'eight'.

Proto-Hmongic prepalatals = Pa Hng velars or uvulars:

Velar: Wenjie [kɦo 33(2)] 'nine', [ŋɦ 33(2)] 'cow'.

Uvular: Wenjie [Nqo 35(1)] 'mushroom', [Nqo 3] 'rice bread'.

Notice that 'mushroom' has a uvular initial in Wenjie versus a prepalatal initial in Xishanjie.

Strecker, D. 1987, "Some comments on Benedict's *Miao-Yao Enigma: the Na-e language* addendum", in *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 43-53. (purl.org/sealang/strecker1987some-addendum.pdf)

(3) Na-e stands alone as our sole witness for a velar initial in ku 3 'six'. Both Wenjie and Xishanjie have a prepalatal initial: Wenjie [tɕu 55(5)], Xishanjie [tɕu 55(5)].

(4) Wang's final -13:

	Na-e	Wenjie	Xishanjie	Gundong
to see	và^{1}-	---	---	---
mouth	-lhà^{3}	---	la 55(5)	---
strength	---	---	jæ 44(6)	---
to weave	---	nta 53(7)	næ 54(7)	na^{7}
to laugh	t'à^{1}	---	tɕæ 54(7)	---
duck	---	---	ʔæ 54(7)	---
to see	-pà^{2}	---	pa 31(8)	---
thunder	bð^{2}	---	---	---
deep	---	---	to 34(1)	---
big	---	ȶjo 35(1)	---	---
early	---	ɳtɕo 31(3)	---	ɳo^{3}
to come	---	---	lo 11(4)	---
buffalo	-hð^{1}	---	---	---

I made a mistake in including the word for 'old' as an example of final -13. I believe it should be final -12. Wang gives the Wenjie form of this word as [qo 55(5)], with [o] rather than [a]. Wang's form agrees with other examples of final -12: Wenjie [mpjo 35(1)] 'green', [so 1] 'on', [kɦo 33(2)] 'nine', [Nqo 3] 'rice bread', [Nqo 35(1)] 'pigeon'. Therefore the form [qa 5] in Mao, Meng, and Zheng may be a misprint.

Wang's final -18:

Strecker, D. 1987, "Some comments on Benedict's *Miao-Yao Enigma: the Na-e language* addendum", in *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 43-53. (purl.org/sealang/strecker1987some-addendum.pdf)

	Na-e	Wenjie	Xishanjie
wine	---	tɕɤ 31(3)	tɕɤ 22(3)
fire	tʊ^{1}	thɤ 31(4)	tɤ 11(4)
correct	---	---	ŋɤ 54(7)
pair	---	ŋkhɤ 32(8)	---
white	kuà^{4}	---	kuo 34(1)
paper	dó^{2}	---	---
to open	---	---	pɔ 54(7)

(6) 'sun/day' does not rhyme with 'son', 'horn', etc.: Wenjie [tɔ̃ 35(1)] 'son', [lɔ̃ 35(1)] (classifier), [qɔ̃ 35(1)] 'horn', [qɔ̃ 35(1)] 'star', [tɔ̃ 55(5)] 'break' versus [ne$_{o}$ 35(1)] 'sun, day'.

6. Mienic versus non-Mienic

Final glottal stop merges with tone C:

	Wenjie	Mien (Chiang Rai)
sleep (C1)	pɤ 55	pwei 25
six (*-ʔ)	tɕu 55	cuʔ 55
hundred (*-ʔ)	pe 55	pɛʔ 55
weave (D1)	nta 53	dat 55

I said that if Benedict's Austro-Tai etymology for *mpai C 'pig' was correct, then this form already existed in Proto-Hmong-Mien and did not imply any special relationship among Hmongic, Pa Hng, Ho Nte, and so on. Unfortunately, I had forgotten that Benedict himself now rejects an Austro-Tai etymology for *mpai C. Both Benedict (1985:8) and Wang (1985b:34) have now suggested that the word may be related to Archaic Chinese 豕 *pa^{oA} 'sow, pig' (GSR 39d).

If this etymology is correct, and if we accept the view of Chinese linguists that Hmong-Mien is genetically related to Chinese, then the original argument holds: *mpai C goes back to Proto-Sino-Tibetan, therefore, a fortiori, it goes back to Proto-Hmong-Mien, therefore it is a shared inheritance in the non-Mienic branches, not a shared innovation.

On the other hand, if we accept Benedict's view that the Hmong-Mien words which have Chinese cognates are loans,

Strecker, D. 1987, "Some comments on Benedict's *Miao-Yao Enigma: the Na-e language* addendum", in *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 43-53. (purl.org/sealang/strecker1987some-addendum.pdf)

then the loan *mpai C is a shared innovation uniting the non-Mienic branches.

In this connection I should mention that Benedict has also suggested a possible external source for Mienic *duŋ B 'pig'. He says that there are similar looking forms in the Karenic languages (Benedict 1985:8).

7. Conclusions

In some respects the new Wenjie material provided by Wang corroborates the testimony of the old material, particularly in the development of the finals. It even adds some new evidence, such as the C1 tone in 'thousand', shared by Wenjie and Xishanjie. In other respects the new material introduces complications which may require changing my conclusions:

(1) The split between velar and uvular initials in Wenjie has no parallel in Xishanjie or Na-e.

(2) The word for the numeral 'one' is quite different in Wenjie and Na-e: Wenjie [ɲu 32(8)], Na-e i 1.

(3) Wenjie has a prepalatal initial in [tɕu 55(5)] 'six'. It does not share the distinctive velar initial of Na-e ku 3.

(4) 'Mushroom' has a uvular initial in Wenjie versus a prepalatal initial in Xishanjie. If the variation between prepalatal and uvular/velar initials occurs even within Pa Hng, I may have been wrong to use it as an argument for separating Pa Hng from Hmongic.

The descrepancies between Na-e and Wenjie (e.g. 'six') or between Na-e and Xishanjie (e.g. 'fruit') have at least three possible explanations:

(1) They are errors in Bonifacy. We should forget about Na-e until more accurately recorded material becomes available.

(2) Na-e is a member of the Pa Hng group that has undergone some aberrant local developments that are of no significance for the overall classification and subgrouping of Hmong-Mien. For example, the velar initial of 'six' might have an explanation purely internal to Na-e, such as analogy or avoidance of homophony.

(3) Benedict is right that the first split in the Hmong-Mien family was between Na-e and everything else. Subsequently, however, Na-e came into intensive contact with Pa Hng, borrowed many words from it, and shared some areal phonological developments with it.

In other words, I am suggesting as a third possibility that Na-e may not really be a member of the Pa Hng group

Strecker, D. 1987, "Some comments on Benedict's *Miao-Yao Enigma: the Na-e language* addendum", in *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 43-53. (purl.org/sealang/strecker1987some-addendum.pdf)

after all. If Benedict is right that Na-e is something very distinctive within the Hmong-Mien family, then the position of Na-e in Hmong-Mien might be analogous to the position of Saek in Tai.

Saek is a Tai language spoken in a small area in Thailand and Laos. It is generally considered to be a geographically displaced member of the Northern branch of Tai (the rest of the Northern branch is found in China and a few places along the northern border of Vietnam), but it has certain peculiarities that suggest that Saek may originally have been a wholly separate subdivision of Tai which later came into intensive contact with Northern Tai.

The difference is that for Saek we have thousands of words recorded with meticulous accuracy by William J. Gedney, whereas for Na-e we have 150 words recorded with highly dubious accuracy by Bonifacy. So we are back where we started: "in urgent need of more data on the language".

Strecker, D. 1987, "Some comments on Benedict's *Miao-Yao Enigma: the Na-e language* addendum", in *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 43-53. (purl.org/sealang/strecker1987some-addendum.pdf)