

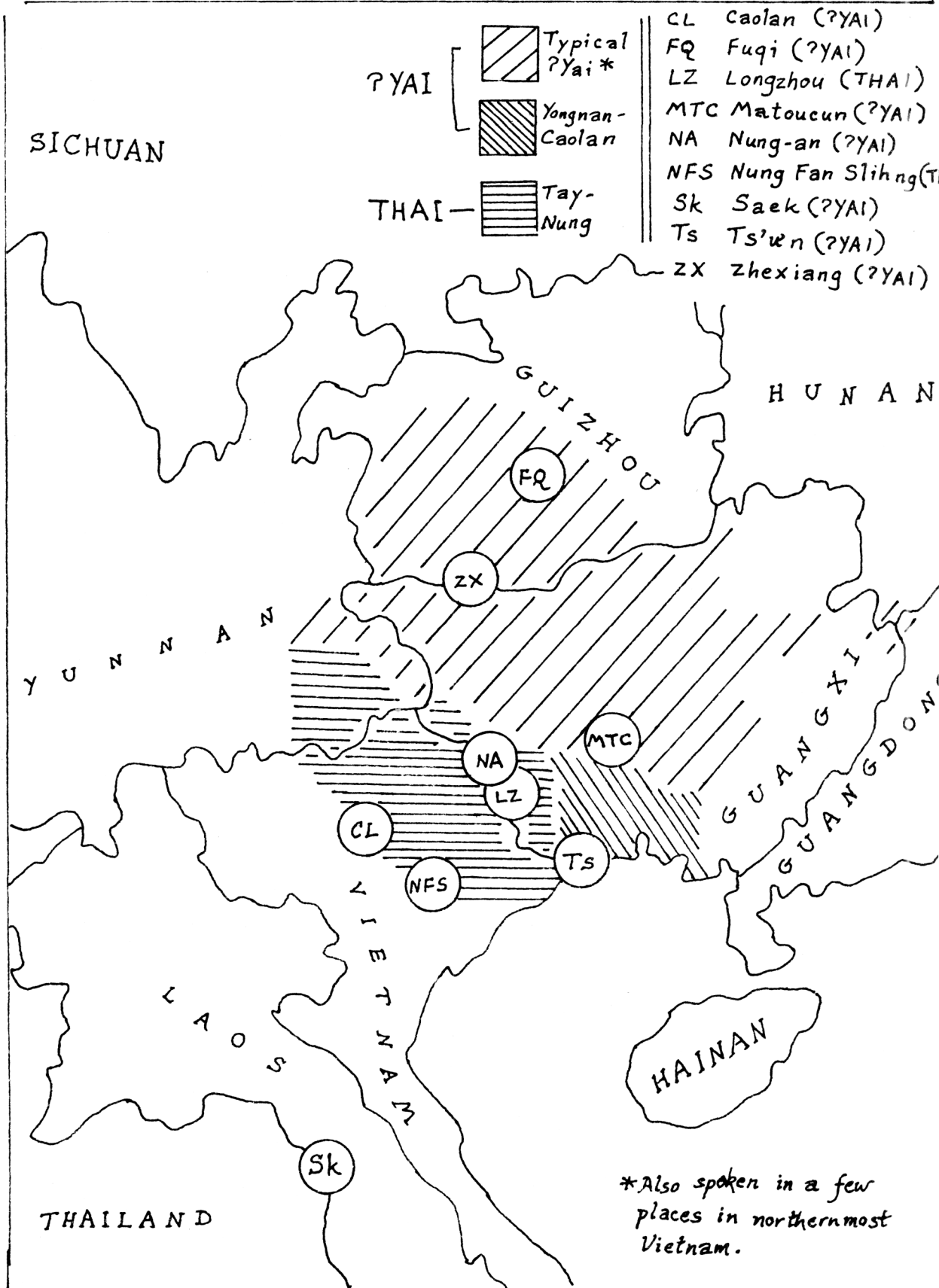
## THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE CAOLAN LANGUAGES

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Those of us who study Tai languages are indebted to André Haudricourt for key insights on classification and phonological development which always seem to be confirmed as fuller information on the languages in question becomes available. It was Professor Haudricourt, for example, who first pointed out that Saek, although spoken in Thailand and Laos in the heart of Thai proper (Li Fang Kuei's Central and Southwestern Tai), actually belongs to the ?Yai group (Li Fang Kuei's Northern Tai). When William Gedney, inspired in part by Haudricourt's suggestion, made an intensive field study of Saek, he found that Haudricourt was exactly right.

Less dramatic but equally important is the way in which Professor Haudricourt has brought to our attention unusual dialects which we would otherwise be unaware of, either because the material on them is unpublished or because it appears in books or journals of limited circulation.

Professor Haudricourt gives us both insights on historical phonology and information on little known dialects in his article "Note sur les dialectes de la région de Moncay" (Haudricourt 1960).



In this paper I will discuss three particularly interesting dialects which Haudricourt discusses in this article: Ts'ŭn,<sup>1</sup> Caolan, and Nung-an, all spoken in northeast Vietnam. At first glance these dialects appear to fit into neither ?Yai nor Thai proper, but I will argue that they are in fact ?Yai and that, as a consequence, Li Fang Kuei's use of the development of Proto-Tai clusters as an identifying criterion for the Tay-Nung (Central Tai) subgroup of Thai proper (Li 1960) is incorrect: the development of the clusters is areal rather than genetic.

Haudricourt shows that Ts'ŭn, Caolan, and Nung-an exhibit a mixture of ?Yai and Tay-Nung traits. As an example of the former we may mention the word for 'tiger', Ts'ŭn dialect #1 kŏk<sup>4</sup>, dialect #2 kok<sub>4</sub>, Caolan kŏk, Nung-an kuk (Haudricourt 1960, section 27). This is a typical ?Yai word, not found in Thai proper, which uses a different word (\*smə<sup>A</sup>) (cf. Li 1959:18).

Another example is the word for 'rice'. In ?Yai this word has the tone which developed from tone C after voiced initial consonants (\*ɣaw<sup>C</sup>) whereas in Thai proper this word has the tone which developed from tone C after voiceless aspirates and fricatives (\*khaw<sup>C</sup>) (Li 1957:319 and see Gedney 1979:23).

For Nung-an Haudricourt omits tones, but Ts'ŭn-wa and Caolan have the ?Yai form, that is 'rice' has the same tone as 'maternal aunt' and 'horse' (which have the C-voiced tone in all Tai dialects) and a different tone from 'in front of' and 'mountain stream' (which have the C-voiceless tone in all Tai dialects):

	Section in Haudri- court	Ts'ŭn #1	Ts'ŭn #2	Caolan
in front of	26	na <sup>1</sup>	na <sup>1</sup>	ná
mountain stream	31	yoy <sup>1</sup>	loy <sup>1</sup>	láy
rice	27	hou <sup>3</sup>	hao <sup>3</sup>	hu
maternal aunt	35	ne <sup>3</sup>	---	no
horse	35	mo <sup>3</sup>	ma <sup>3</sup>	mo

What sets these dialects apart from typical ?Yai dialects is the development of certain Proto-Tai clusters, for example those which Li Fang Kuei reconstructs as \*tr- (Table 1) and \*dl- (Table 2). In the ?Yai dialects \*tr- generally falls together with \*t- so that 'eye' and 'to die' have the same initial as