

A COMPARISON OF MU'O'NG WITH SOME MON-KHMER LANGUAGES

by

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Mường is a member of the Vietnamese-Mường language group, which is sometimes classed with the Thai family, and sometimes with the Mon-Khmer family. Scholars have long disagreed regarding the language family to which this smaller language group belongs. Haudricourt refers to this disagreement stating, (1) that Henri Maspero declared that Vietnamese did not belong to the Mon-Khmer language family, but rather to the Thai family and (2) that J. Przyluski maintained that Vietnamese did belong to the Mon-Khmer family.¹ Buttinger, discussing this controversy, states "Both the Vietnamese language and the Mường dialects are based on a Mon-Khmer (Cambodian) vocabulary. The words for numbers, family relationships, and domestic animals are of Mon-Khmer origin."²

David Thomas, in his paper "Some Vietnam Linguistic Data"³ states, "What is especially interesting is the large body of Mon-Khmer words in the basic Mường list."⁴ This could lend support to the solid establishment of Vietnamese and Mường in the Mon-Khmer family as claimed by Haudricourt and others.⁵

Vietnamese has been compared with Mường;⁶ Vietnamese has also

¹ Haudricourt, André G., "L'origine des tons vietnamiens", *Journal Asiatique*, 242 (1954), 69.

² Buttinger, Joseph, *The Smaller Dragon* (New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1958), 57.

³ Unpublished.

⁴ The basic "Swadesh 200" word list collected by David D. Thomas in a Mường dialect of Hoa Binh Province.

⁵ Haudricourt, André G., "La place du vietnamien dans les langues Austroasiatiques", *Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique*, 49, 122-8, (1953). Blagden, C. O., "The Classification of the Annamese Language", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1913, 427-32.

⁶ "Le Mường et le vietnamien sont très proches par leurs vocabulaires; on peut restituer la langue mère commune, qui devait avoir 3 tons et deux séries de consonnes initiales: une série sourde qui a donné les tons băng, hoi, sác, et une série sonore qui a donné les tons huyên, nga, năng; à l'initiale il y avait deux glottalisées qui ont donné 'b, 'd, en Mường et m, n, en vietnamien. Deux séries de consonnes se sont confondues

been discussed in its relationship to the Mon-Khmer family;⁷ but Mư̄ng seems to show greater similarities to the Mon-Khmer languages than does Vietnamese.

This paper presents some correspondences between Mư̄ng and some of the southeastern Mon-Khmer languages.⁸ These correspondences help strengthen the claims of those earlier scholars who believed Vietnamese to be a member of the Mon-Khmer language group, and they may serve as source material for subsequent study and establishment of the postulated relation.

The Mon-Khmer languages considered were Bahnar (Bah), Sedang (Sed), Bōnam (Bnm), Jeh, Rōngao (Rng), Cua, Hre of the Kontum area; Mnong Gar (Gar), Mnong Biat (Biat), Chrao (Chr), Koho of the southern area of the South Vietnam highlands; Katu, Bru, Pōkoh (Pko) of the northern area of South Vietnam; Boloven (Bol), Laʔven (Lv), Alak of southern Laos; Kui of east Thailand; and Khmer (Khm) of Cambodia.

The following list contains only those words which are cognate in three or more languages. The better attested cognates are listed first in the list. This is also true within the sets of the Mon-Khmer cognates, but the sets are not exhaustive.

sous la forme de p, t, k, en Mư̄ng, mais sont restées distinctes en vietnamien. 'b, 'd, k, d'une part et v, z(d), g, d'autre part. Les finales l et ch sont conservées en Mư̄ng et sont devenues y et t en vietnamien. Pour toute étude étymologique ou historique du vietnamien, le témoignage du Mư̄ng est donc indispensable." *Ethnologie de l'Union Française (EUF)* (Paris, 1953), 2, 528-29. See also, Cuisinier, Jeanne, "Les rites, agraires", *Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient*, Hanoi, (1951).

⁷ "Il n'y a pas lieu de douter de la parenté entre le vietnamien et les langues mon-khmer, les préglottalisées du Mư̄ng se retrouvent dans les mêmes mots en Bahnar et en vieux mon ('dak eau, 'boh sel). Cette parenté explique maintenant l'origine des 3 tons, le ton hoi-nga provient de l'amuïsement d'une spirante finale: Vietnamien *rē* racine, Mon *ruh* racine; Vietnamien *mūi* nez, Mon *muh* nez, et le sac-nang provient des mots à occlusives finales, que celles-ci aient persisté: *nuróc* eau, ou se soient amuïes: *cá* poisson, *chó* chien (le Riang de Birmanie est la seule langue Mon-Khmer à avoir conservé une occlusion glottale finale dans ces derniers mots." *EUF*, 530. See also, Haudricourt, André G., "L'origine des tons vietnamiens", *Journal Asiatique*, 242 (1954), 69-82.

⁸ The basic "Swadesh 200" collected in a Mư̄ng dialect of Hoa Binh province by David Thomas and amplified by material from Cuisinier's tableaux; and Mon-Khmer word lists by R. S. Pittman, David D. Thomas, Grady Mangham, Erin Asai, R. E. Johnston, and Richard L. Phillips; and published Mon-Khmer vocabularies by Dournes, De la Bernardie, Cheon and Mougeot, Cambefort, Tandart, and Dourisboure. This paper of necessity is based on varying sorts of phonetic and phonemic data. The various transcriptions are here in a single modified Vietnamese orthography for the purpose of easier comparison: ɔ = open o; ɛ = open e; d = Vietnamese d.

<i>Muong</i>	<i>Mon-Khmer Cognates</i>	<i>English/Vietnamese</i>
k ^h on v ^h at	kon se mprem (Bah); kon tye (Sed); kon kohnem (Jeh); kong kyak (Rng)	animal/con vật
chim	chium (Biat); tyim (Sed) t ^h im (Rng); sim (Koho)	bird/chim
s ^h uong	kusieng (Sed); kurseng (Rng); s ^h eng (Hre); ksiing (Katu); ch'eng (Khm)	bone/xương
✓ d ^h u ^h o ^h k ^h on	k ^h on (Hre, Pko, Bru); kon (Chr, Biat, Koho, Bah); k ^h on (Kui)	child/trẻ con
m ^h o ^h	ham ^h ol (Bah); kam ^h ol (Kui); hm ^h ol (Bru); h ^h mol (Lv)	cloud/mây
✓ ka ^h ɤ ^h	k ^h otac (Katu); kat (Bah, Bru, Hre, Chr); chiat (Lv); siat (Koho)	cut/cắt
t ^h l ^h ay n ^h o	plii noyh (Hre); ple nuih (Bah); nuyh (Chr)	heart/tim
✓ l ^h u ^h o ^h ni	nih (Khm); ne (Bol); n'he (Chr); n ^h ey (Kui)	here/đây
pa ^h ɤ ^h ng	p ^h on pain (Alak); p ^h anh (Chr); tow b ^h anh (Khm)	hunt/săn bắn
o ^h wng	ong (Bnm); ?ong (Hre); k ^h omong (Sed)	husband/chồng
lá	la (Chr); là (Bol); laa (Rng, Lv); hla (Bah, Hre, Cua, Katu); hlaa (Kui); hala/sala (Bru)	leaf/lá
✓ l ^h om	kl ^h om (Bah, Biat); k'l ^h om (Bol); kloom (Lv, Alak)	liver/lòng, gan
chí	ch'i (Biat); chai (Lv, Alak); si (Chr); nhcee (Kui)	louse/chí
✓ m ^h e	m ^h e (Koho); me (Bah); me? mey (Chr); mee? (Katu, Alak); ?amee? (Kui)	mother/mẹ
✓ m ^h ui	mui (Katu); mu (Bol); muh (Koho, Bah, Cua, Chr); m ^h uh (Kui, Bru, Hre)	nose/mũi
m ^h ua	m ^h ua (Lv); mia (Kui, Bru); mih (Gar); mi (Bah, Chr)	rain/mưa
t ^h am	tam (Kui); otom (Pko); atom (Bru); sdam (Khm); t ^h u ^h om (Katu)	rightside/phải
re ^h ɤ ^h	hrex (Alak); r ^h ey (Kui); re (Sed); ria (Koho)	root/rễ

<i>Mường</i>	<i>Mon-Khmer Cognates</i>	<i>English/Vietnamese</i>
chuih	chuy (Chr); kōkoy (Bah); toyh (Katu); koyh (Hre)	rub/chà
mori/bói?/boei	?boi (Bru); mboh (Rng); mboh (Cua); boh (Koho, Bah); m ^w oy? (Katu); pōh (Kui)	salt/muối
✓ kǎi?	kai (Bah, Khm); k ^w ai? (Cua); kay? (Rng); ka ^v h (Katu); kar (Bru)	scratch/gãy
tłoy	trøy (Katu); trō? (Chr); trok (Gar); trō (Koho); trōk (Hre)	sky/trời
hít	hiet (Bol); het (Khm); hip (Cua); hiep (Bah); huut (Lv)	smell/ngửi
✓ ngày	ngay (Chr); ngǎy/tōngǎi (Khm); tangay (Kui); tōngai (Bol); tōngaiy (Katu)	day/ngày
chét	chet (Katu); chit (Chr); tset (Cua); kachet (Bnm); kōchit (Hre)	die/chết
chó	cho (Bol); choo (Lv); ch'ō (Biat); tyō (Katu); tyōō (Rng); sō (Chr)	dog/chó
măt	mat (Bol); mǔh măt (Chr); mǔh măt (Biat); mukh meăt (Khm)	face/mặt
măt	mat (Koho, Cua, Hre, Katu, Bah, Sed, Chr); mǎt (Kui); mat? (Lv)	eye/mắt
mỡ	lōma (Koho); rōma (Bah, Hre); ruma (Rng, Sed)	fat/mỡ
✓ ka	ka (Koho, Bah, Biat, Chr); kaa (Sed, Rng, Gar)	fish/cá
paỉ	pal (Cua); paal (Kui); par (Koho, Gar, Bru, Katu, Chr); pař (Rng)	to fly/bay
chơn	jōng (Bah, Bol, Koho); djōng (Biat); jūng (Gar)	leg/chân
pan chơn	pan tyeng (Rng); pang jōng (Bol); p ^v ang d ^v eng (Bnm)	foot/bàn chân
✓ pón	pon (Bru); poon (Alak); p ^w on (Hre, Chr); phoon (Rng); puon (Bah)	four/bốn
tłai	plai (Koho, Chr); plai (Bol); plǎi (Biat); plei (Bah)	fruit/trái
r ^w a ^y k/ruot	r ^w a ^y /rue? (Bru); ruək (Kui); rōy? (Pko); proac (Koho); proit (Gar)	intestines/ruột
✓ thák/sák	sak (Bnm); sǎk (Khm); sok (Alak);	hair/tóc