

Voiceless Sonorant Initials in Hmong-Mien Sino-Tibetan Correspondences¹

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Voiceless sonorant initials (ʎ-, m-, n-, etc.) must be reconstructed for Proto-Hmong-Mien (PHmM), since there are a number of native etyma which have voiceless sonorant reflexes in the daughter languages and which have tones which are correlated with ancient voiceless initial consonants (belonging to the "upper register" tonal categories).² The following are merely representative of this group:³

bamboo	PHmM	*ʎo 3 (215/206) <i>hlov</i>
big, grow	PHmM	*ʎu 1 (287/225) <i>hlob</i>
tooth	PHmM	*mɰpin 3 (32.2/7) <i>hniav</i>
to hear, feel	PHmM	*nɔm 3 (212.1/193) <i>hnov</i>
cooked rice	PHmM	*nɔa:ŋ 5 (260/101) <i>hno</i>

Preglottalized sonorant initials (ʎl-, ʎm-, ʎn-, etc.) must also be reconstructed for the protolanguage, and words with these initials also have reflexes with upper register tones. In the absence of voiceless sonorant reflexes in the modern languages, these sets can often still be distinguished on the basis of languages such as Mun which have undergone a secondary tone split based on aspiration. In these languages, the *ʎC- set will pattern with the unaspirated initials and the *ʎ̥C- set will pattern with the aspirated initials:

pain, hurt	PHmM *ʎmɔn 1 (7/195) <i>mob</i>	>
	Mun mun 1a	
animal fat	PM *ʎmei 1 (8.1/37)	>
	Mun mei 1b	
	(where *unaspirated initial > 1a, *aspirated initial > 1b)	

However, not all words of this type are native Hmong-Mien. This paper is a consideration of voiceless sonorant initial etyma which have clear correspondences with etyma in Sino-Tibetan languages. My working assumption is that almost all of these words have been borrowed by Hmong-Mien speakers from Tibeto-Burman languages and from Chinese, some at a very early date. This research is part of my on-going work on a reconstruction of Proto-Hmong-Mien which attempts to separate

the huge body of loanwords from the native material, in order to arrive at a clearer picture of the native HmM sound system and lexicon. This work will reveal features of the donor languages and will contribute to an understanding of the nature of early contact (Ratliff 1998). And it is clear that only after sorting the data in this way will it be possible to address the question of the wider genetic affiliation of the HmM languages.

1. Tibeto-Burman correspondences

A very old group of such borrowings come from Tibeto-Burman. One would think, because of their antiquity, that these borrowings would be hard to discern and hard to explain. However, due to the better preservation of morphology on this side of the family, the identification and analysis of these loans is much more straightforward than the identification and analysis of the loans from Chinese, to which I will turn in the second half of this paper. All of these words seem to involve a correspondence between the TB *s- prefix and voiceless sonorants in HmM. According to Benedict, "[p]refixed *s- is the work-horse of the TB/Karen prefixial apparatus, generally directive/causative/intensive with verbal roots and playing the role of 'animal prefix' or 'body-part prefix' (< *śa 'animal, flesh') with nominal roots but appearing frequently elsewhere." (Benedict 1987b: 44).

Benedict (1987a) identified a group of Tibeto-Burman loans in Hmong-Mien, some of which fall into clear semantic sets. He attempted to give a cultural explanation for these: the numerals (four through ten), kin terms (daughter-in-law, son-in-law), and heavenly bodies (sun, moon). The sun and moon words demonstrate a clear connection between TB *s-C- and HmM *C-:

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|---------------|--|
| 1. moon/month | PHmM * _l a 5 (215/92) <i>hli</i>
TB *(s-)(g-)la 'moon/month' |
| 2. sun/day | PHmM *p̥wɔːi 1 (224/188) <i>hnub</i>
TB *nəy 'sun'; *s-nəy 'day' |

I have found one more equally old correspondence which fits into this semantic and phonological set:

3. dark/night PHmM *ɰwɛŋ 5 (20/140) *hmo*
 TB *s-mu-ŋ 'cloudy, dark'
 cf. Burmese hmuɪŋ 'very dark' (Benedict 1972:78); OC *muŋ 'darkened'

Next, three verb correspondences seem to reflect the reconstructed verbal meaning "directive/causative/ intensive" for the *s- prefix:

4. to slice PHmM *læk 7 (215/91) *hlais*⁴
 TB *s-lep 'to slice'
5. to extend tongue PHmM *lja 3/5 (not in WM) *hlev*
 TB *s-lyə:w 'to lick'
6. to sniff at PHmM *ɰjɰə:m 5 (32.2/135) *hnia*
 TB *s-nam (tr.)/*m-nam (intr.) 'to smell'

All three are transitive verbs, and 'to extend tongue' and 'to sniff at' both seem particularly "directive" and "intensive" ('to smell' is a different word in HmM, which means more generally 'to perceive passively with any of the senses'). To this group, we may also add a noun in HmM which derives from a "directive" TB verb:

7. track, footprint PHmM *ɰjɰu:n 3 (32.2/247) *hneev*
 TB *s-naŋ 'to follow; with'
 *mə-naŋ 'companion'
 cf. Lai neʔ-hnaŋ 'footprint'
 (Kenneth Van Bik, p.c.)

Note the phonological correspondence between 'to sniff at' and 'track'. The root initial in TB in both cases is a coronal nasal, but both may be prefixed within that family with either *s- or *m-. What seems to have happened is that HmM borrowed a doubly prefixed form in each case. I had thought to explain the coronal nasals that appear in West Hmongic reflexes as the natural development of *mj-, but they may actually preserve the TB root initial. In this light, Wang and Mao's reconstruction of *ɰjɰ- for initial correspondence 32.2 may be closer to the mark.

The following word has two or three source candidates in TB considering the meaning for the Mien word ㄅㄡ 3 given in Lombard 1968: 'heart; mind; center of personality;

(physiologically conceived) the canal running from the mouth through the throat and intestines to the anus'. The body-part prefix *s- would have been involved here.

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| 8. intestines;
heart, mind | PHmM * <i>ŋ</i> au 3 (404/153) <i>hnyuv</i>
TB *s-niŋ 'heart and mind'
TB *g/n-yaŋ (STEDT #2117) 'large intestine'
(or possibly TB *s-nuk 'brain', OC *nuu? ~ naaw? 'brain') |
|-------------------------------|---|

There seems to be a complex of bodypart terms and intellectual/emotional properties that cluster in the same way in the two families, with similar phonological realizations. It will be very difficult to disentangle them. Wang and Mao's reconstruction does not include a final nasal, which nonetheless does appear in six of the twenty-three Hmongic dialects in their data, providing an even better fit with the TB forms.

Finally, the following four words also seem to show a connection to TB of the same type, although it is not possible to compare protolanguages at the highest level here as in the cases above,³ and there are competing source possibilities in two cases.

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| 9. bridge | PHm * <i>l</i> p 1 (215/168)
TB *s-lay, s-leŋ 'bridge, ladder' (STEDT #3582) |
| 10. put forth
leaves,
shoots;
germinate | White Hmong <i>la</i> 3 <i>hlav</i> , Xuyong
<i>laŋ</i> 5, Shimen <i>lau</i> 3
TB *(s-)la(p) 'leaf'
OC *lap 'leaf' |

This may also be from 秀 OC *s-hlus (1095a) *xiù* 'come into flower'.

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|-------------------|---|
| 11. spirit, ghost | PM * <i>mwje:n</i> 3 (44/42)
<i>Old Tibetan</i> * <i>sman</i>
'female spirit' (Coblin 1987:167) |
|-------------------|---|

This may also be from 神 OC *mlm (385j) *shén* 'spirit'. Benedict (1976:242) also reconstructs a Proto-Kam-Sui form *hmaŋ 'spirit/demon/ghost' on the basis of Mak.

12. powder, White Hmong mɔŋ 3 *hmoov*
 flour Written Burmese ə-hmun
 Loloish *s-mun 1 'powder' (STEDT)

2. Chinese correspondences

2.1. Voiceless prefixes in Chinese

In a few cases voiceless prefixes in Chinese also seem to be responsible for voiceless sonorant initials in Hmong-Mien. That the development of *C(ə-)C- into *C̥- is a natural one for this family is evidenced by the family-internal development of lateral initials in the East Hmongic ("Hmu") dialect Yanghao. This dialect has a three-way contrast in laterals: l-, l̥- and l̥h- (Wang and Mao initial sets 216, 649, and 215, respectively). The aspirated voiceless lateral is the reflex of *l̥-, whereas the unaspirated voiceless lateral is the reflex of *l- preceded by a voiceless consonant:⁶

	PHmM	Yanghao
bamboo	*l̥o 3 (215/206)	l̥ho 3
moon, month	*l̥a 5 (215/92)	l̥ha 5
rope	*l̥a 5 (215/149)	l̥ha 5
white	*ql̥əu 1 (649/263)	l̥u 1
dog	*ql̥au 3 (649/115)	l̥a 3
hawk	*ql̥a:ŋ 3 (649/120)	l̥aŋ 3

Two of these cases involve an *s- prefix, but only in the case of 'year' below does this prefix seem to be cognate to the TB *s- prefix.

13. year PHm *ɕaŋ 5 (443/102) *xyoob*
 PM *ɲaŋ 5 (404/102)
 年 OC *niin(~~ŋ) (364a) *nián*
 (TB *(s-)ni·ŋ)

Compare 'seven', with no devoicing:

PHmM *dzjəŋ 5 (339/180) *xya*

PM *ŋjɿ 5 (573/18)

TB *snis

(𠬞 OC *s-hnit (400a) *qĩ*)

Both Benedict and Sagart believe 'year' is more likely to have been borrowed from Chinese than TB. Benedict (1987a:16) attempts to account for both the Hmongic and Mienic forms, and reconstructs an OC source *s-ni-ŋ. Sagart (1999:52) considers only the nasal initial Mienic forms which more closely resemble Chinese. He reconstructs *^anin, but believes Mienic borrowed a non-standard Chinese form with a velar final. Benedict's choice of a donor language with an *s- prefix seems the best explanation both for the voiceless nasals of Mienic and for the apparently cognate Hmongic forms which share the Mienic final and tone, but in which the prefix seems to have supplanted the nasal initial. This unusual pattern (coronal fricatives and affricates in Hmongic corresponding to nasals in Mienic), undoubtedly due to loans at different times and from different sources in the two branches of the family, is found in the borrowed word for 'seven' as well, which has been reconstructed with an initial *s in both TB and Chinese, although in this case the nasal initials in Mienic did not devoice, perhaps due to different outcomes for *s-n- as opposed to *sn- (see Benedict 1987a:13).

14. box, case

Mien ɭap 7

盒 OC *guup *hé* Cantonese hap

This word has a lateral initial only in Mien; in other Mienic languages and in Hmongic it has an h- initial and a low register tone, both reflecting the voiced initial of Middle Chinese ɣəp (Pulleyblank): another Mien form hɔ:p 8, Biao Min hən 8, Yanghao ho 8, Xuyong ho 8, and Jiwei xɔ 8. If 'box' as 'a container with joined sides' is related to 'join' *hé* 合, which Sagart (1999:56) reconstructs as *Nk-lip (with a root *lip meaning 'be together'), an explanation for the Mien voiceless lateral (and the high register tone) could come from the devoicing effect of the k- prefix, here unaffected by the preceding nasal. This could also tie in the Shimen word for 'box', which is qhoej 7.

This is one of a set of words in which OC *-ə corresponds to HmM *-ŋ (Downer 1973:21).

2.2. Voiceless sonorants initials in Chinese

All recent reconstructions of OC (Starostin 1989, Baxter 1992, Sagart 1999) include voiceless sonorant initials which are not simply the descendants of plain voiced sonorants with an *s- prefix. As Sagart explains:

"It is possible that the voiceless sonorants of Old Chinese ultimately go back to s- prefixed sonorants (or sonorants with other voiceless prefixes) at a very early date; however, in the Old Chinese period, both s- prefixed sonorants and voiceless sonorants are needed." (Sagart 1999:29)

Some of the loans to HmM can be traced back to these voiceless sonorant initials in OC. As the TB loans presented above, these are also very old loans, both because they can be reconstructed for the Hmong-Mien protolanguage and because their source is OC rather than Middle Chinese (by MC, these voiceless sonorants had become quite different, as can be glimpsed in their modern day reflexes as represented by Mandarin below).

19. iron PHmM *ɭjok 7 (311/224) *hlau*
鐵 OC *hliit ~ -k (1256b) *tiě*⁸

This word is pan-SEAsian (cf. Proto-Tai *hlek), and could have entered HmM either directly from Chinese, or indirectly from another language that had borrowed it earlier.

20. to take off PHmM *ɭu 7 (not in WM) *hle*
peel, shed 脱 OC *hloot(s) (324m) *tuō*

This is another widespread SEAsian etymon, which was the subject of a paper by Robert Bauer (1989).

21. to scald (louse) PHm *ɭeŋ 1 (215/45) *hlab*
湯 OC *hlaaŋ (720z) *tāng*

Although Wang and Mao only give Hmongic forms for this word, it exists in Mienic as well with the meaning 'to clean/dress a fowl; to scald a fowl in order to remove

feathers'. In Chinese, the modern descendant means 'hot liquid; soup' but it used to mean 'to scald' as well (Sagart, p.c.), and as Baxter (p.c.) has observed, Mandarin *tàng* 'to scald' is probably related.

22. marrow, PHm * ɭu 1 (59/8) *hlw* (Wang 1994)
 brains 髓 OC * s-hloj? (11h) *sui*
 TB * sla , *hla* 'brain/marrow'
 (STEDT #464)

The rounded vowel in Hmongic suggests a loan from Chinese rather than TB in this case.

I take it as accidental that the only good examples of this type of correspondence found so far, those given above, involve voiceless laterals. However, it may turn out that those Hmong-Mien words reconstructed with voiceless nasals which have counterparts in Chinese reflect a different conditioning feature, such as a voiceless prefix (see section 2.1 above).

2.3. Unexpected upper register tones in Chinese sonorant-initial words

Scholars of Chinese have long been aware that sonorant initial words with upper register tones pose a historical problem. In a number of cases, Starostin (1989) has reconstructed voiceless sonorant initials for OC on the basis of tonal patterning alone — either on the basis of attested upper register tonal reflexes, or on the basis of attested lower register tonal reflexes which correspond to unattested upper register tonal reflexes. McCoy (1980) has published a useful list of nasal and lateral initial words with unexpected upper register tones in Cantonese. Although there are a few words like this in Mandarin, these initial/tone "mismatches" are more widely encountered in southern dialects, especially in the Min and Yue branches.

Some words from this group correspond to Hmong-Mien words with voiceless sonorant initials. The majority of these correspondences are to Mienic languages, which have a higher proportion of Chinese loans than Hmongic languages. Whether voiceless sonorant initials should be reconstructed for these words in Chinese, as Starostin has done, or an older initial voiceless element was responsible for both the Mienic voiceless sonorants and the Chinese upper register tones (see Sagart

1999:27) is ultimately for sinologists to decide. But the Hmong-Mien correspondences are certainly relevant to the study of this problem.

A representative list of these correspondences follows, in order of depth of penetration into the HmM family. The Biao Min words with tone 4/6/8 represent the shallowest layer in HmM, since their voiceless initials do not correspond to the lower register tone category:⁹

23. crossbow PHmM ɲak 3/7 (212.1/129) *hneev*
弩 OC *naaʔ (94z) *nũ*
(Xiamen 6, Jian'ou 8)

This is yet another widespread SEAsian etymon: Proto-Tai *hn[a] 3 'bow'; Proto-Mnong *səna, Khmer snɑɑ 'crossbow'.

24. shelled rice PM *mɔi 3 (8.1/170)
米 OC *mijʔ (598a) *mĩ*
(Jian'ou tone 8)
25. face PM *mji:n 1 (32.1/6)
面 OC *mens (223a) *miàn*
(Fuzhou tone 5)
TB *s-myal STEDT #1188
26. to dredge up White Hmong ɿ 1 *hlib*, Bunu ɿau 1',
Mien la:u 1, ɿu 7
撈 Man *lāo*, Cant. lou 1 'to make profit'
27. to lift, carry PM *piŋ 5 (212.1/9)
擡 Cant. niŋ 1
28. to think of miss PM *ɲɔm 3 (212.2/174)
念 Cant. nɛm~lɛm 3
29. to burn, brand PM *ɿuk 7 (215/241)
Cant. lok 7
30. sock Biao Min mun 4/6/8
襪 wà (Hakka tone 7)

31. tree, wood Biao Min mə 4/6/8
木 mù (Hakka tone 7)
32. to scrape off Mien ɭat 7
Cant. ɭat 7
33. to rage, foam Mien mut 7 'to foam at mouth'
Cant. mut 7 'foam'
34. to nod,
 lift head Mien ɲaʔ 7, ɲat 7
Cant. ɲok 7 'raise the head'
35. to rinse Mien ɭoŋ 3
Cant. ɭoŋ 3

2.4. Voiced sonorant initials in Chinese

Finally, I list below a merely suggestive collection of correspondences between voiceless sonorants in Hmong-Mien and plain voiced sonorants in Chinese, with no segmental or tonal features in Chinese to echo the voicelessness on the HmM side. The possibility always exists that some of these words were borrowed by Chinese *from* HmM or another neighboring language at a time when a foreign-sounding voiceless sonorant would have been reinterpreted as a voiced sonorant.

36. head of grain, PHmM *ɲaŋ 1 (236/45) *hnab*
bag, pocket 囊 OC *naaŋ (7301) *náng* 'bag'

This is an especially good candidate for a loan from HmM to Chinese since it is only the metaphorical extension ('bag, sack, sheath') of the family-wide and basic meaning of the word ('head, ear of grain') that is found in Chinese.

37. vine PHmM *mpei 1 (8.2/170) *hmab*
蔓 OC *mans (266d) *màn, wàn*
'creeping vine'
38. wolf PHm *m[a] 5 *hma*
OC *mrooŋ (1201a) *máng* 'shaggy dog'

Because it is not early, Baxter (p.c.) has suggested that this may be a loanword in Chinese. See also Proto-Tai *hma A 'dog'.

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|-------------------|---|
| 39. mud, earth | PM *pi 1 (212.1/1)
泥 OC *niiǵ (563d) nǐ, Cant. nei 2 |
| 40. grass | PM *m̥wje 3 (44/130)
茅 OC *mruu (1109c) máo
'cogongrass' |
| 41. wheat | Biao Min me 4/6/8
麥 OC *mræk (932a) mài, mò |
| 42. fortune, fate | White Hmong moŋ 3 hmoov
命 OC *m-ring (762a) mìng
'fate' |
| 43. spear | White Hmong mu 3 hmuv
矛 OC *m(r)ju (1109a) máo
'lance, spear' |

Notes

¹This paper is substantially changed from the version I gave at the SEALS IX meeting, due to invaluable help I received from Jim Matisoff (and the STEDT project) at the conference and from Bill Baxter and Laurent Sagart after the conference. I am especially indebted to Baxter, who has spent many hours working with me on the project as part of a larger effort to identify Chinese borrowings in HmM. And I could not have accomplished the revision without the impressive new book by Sagart, *The Roots of Old Chinese* (1999), which takes evidence from Chinese loans to Hmong-Mien fully into account. I hope I am now somewhat nearer the truth, but I expect that the paper still contains errors of fact and/or analysis, for which I claim full responsibility.

² The upper register tones (< *voiceless initials) 1, 3, 5, 7 are paired with the lower register tones (< *voiced initials) 2, 4, 6, 8. Tones 1-2, 3-4 and 5-6 were realized on open syllables or syllables with nasal codas, whereas tone 7-8 was realized on syllables closed with a stop consonant.

³Data are given in the following form, unless otherwise noted:

1) meaning of the word in Hmong-Mien;
 2) level of the reconstruction, reconstruction from Wang and Mao 1995, initial/final correspondence set numbers from Wang and Mao 1995, and the White Hmong reflex, if any, in the RPA orthography;

3) for section 1, Tibeto-Burman (TB) reconstruction from Benedict 1972 or 1987a, unless a STEDT number is given (Sino-Tibetan Etymological Dictionary and Thesaurus project, University of California, Berkeley) ;

4) for section 2, the character, Old Chinese (OC) from William Baxter, p.c. (reflecting recent changes he has made in his 1992 reconstruction), the number of the character in Karlgren 1957, and the Mandarin reflex in *pīnyīn* orthography or the Cantonese reflex, with its meaning if different from HmM.

⁴ This form must have either a final -p (corresponding to the TB form) or a final -t, because if it were a -k, the tone would be regularly 5 rather than 7. In light of the Hainan Mun form meaning 'petal, scale slice' *liep* 7 (a semantic development for 'slice' evidenced elsewhere in the family), it more likely to be -p.

⁵ I am grateful to Jim Matisoff for drawing my attention to TB resemblances for 'bridge; ladder' and 'spirit'.

⁶ Many of these clusters in Hmong-Mien will have to be reconstructed as disyllabic forms — cf. the Pa-hng word for 'dog' which is *ta-* or *ka-ljǝ* 7 (Niederer 1997:126).

⁷ North Hmongic *Jiwei* ǵi 3 'plum' is an even more recent loan.

⁸ See also *Jiwei* ǵha 5 'tin' presumably from OC *s-(h)leek 'tin'.

⁹ Chinese words on this list come initially from Starostin 1989, McCoy 1980, and a list of sonorant initial Mandarin words with tone 1 from Baxter. Notes on tonal reflexes in various Chinese dialects which led Starostin to reconstruct voiceless sonorant initials are given in parentheses. Cantonese forms are from McCoy 1980. The various HmM dialect forms are from the Central Institute Glossary 1987 (Biao Min), Lombard 1968 (Mien), and Heimbach 1979 (White Hmong).

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Metaphorically Speaking in White Hmong

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1. Introduction

There is only one known piece of research devoted to metaphor in White Hmong (henceforth "Hmong"), Jaisser's (1990) study of psycho-collocations with *siab* 'liver' and other body parts, although Matisoff (1992) includes a brief mention of Hmong in his discussion of the widespread use of 'mother' as a morpheme indicating 'origin' or 'source'. Indeed, beyond the pioneering work of Matisoff (e.g. 1978, 1986, 1992), little research has focused on metaphor in the lexicon within Southeast Asian languages generally. The few exceptions include work on psycho-collocations in Malay by Oey (1990) and in Lai by Van-Bik (1998), and Diller's (1991) analysis of metaphors of linguistic action in Bahasa Indonesia.

Given the paucity of research on the role of metaphor within the lexicon in Hmong and other Southeast Asian languages, this paper is intended to provide an introductory overview of several sets of metaphors in White Hmong from two angles: a semantic field approach looking at the metaphorical uses to which related sets of words such as body parts, colors, and physical sensations are put, and a "metaphors the Hmong live by" approach (following Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) in which a coherent metaphor such as 'life is a string' is realized by varied lexical means. Along the latter lines, metaphors illustrating Hmong folk theories of life and death, beauty, moral rectitude, and several natural phenomena will be sketched.

The discussion does not distinguish between live and dead metaphors. No claim that present-day Hmong speakers consciously recognize all cases as metaphors is intended; rather the goal is to explore possible underlying conceptual relationships in the lexicon, either synchronic or historical.

Finally, for some of the examples examined here, it was not immediately obvious that one meaning was the more basic and another the more metaphorical, especially where historical information is unavailable. In these situations I have taken into account such properties as markedness, generality of application of the word, and abstractness, as well as the existence of similar associations in a variety of languages