

Issues in the Reconstruction and Affiliation of Proto-Miao-Yao*

Weera Ostapirat

Mahidol University

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In this paper, I present a new look at the phonological reconstruction of Proto-Miao-Yao (PMY). Particular attention is devoted to the outstanding problems concerning the reconstruction of initial consonants and clusters. A reconstruction of PMY's velarized feature is proposed as a key to understanding the complex development in modern dialects. Based on the new reconstruction system, I discuss the viability of some proposed lexical items shared between Miao-Yao and Chinese. A modest goal is to place long-range comparisons on firmer ground, based on established sound correspondences.

Key words: East Asian languages, genetic relationship, Miao-Yao, phonological reconstruction, velarization

1. Introduction

The discussion in this paper focuses on my reconstruction of a Proto-Miao-Yao (PMY) velarized feature, which in turn is related to several core issues regarding initial and rime reconstructions. Velarization is characterized by the raising of the back of the tongue towards the velum that accompanies a primary articulation. It influences, and at the same time is shaped by, the surrounding consonants and vowels. A comprehensive treatment of the whole reconstruction system has to be elaborated elsewhere, but I will select a set of examples to illustrate the idea here. Comments on lexical comparisons between Miao-Yao (MY) and Chinese are made with reference to this new reconstruction system.¹

2. The reconstruction of PMY onsets

2.1 Labial onsets

2.1.1 Plain and prenasalized stop onsets

In several Yao dialects, the velarized feature is attested as -w- or -j-, depending on the vowels. We see in Table 1, for instance, that the velarized feature has induced Luoxiang (Lx) -w- and brought

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¹ The MY dialectal materials are from Wang & Mao (1995), unless otherwise indicated. White Hmong forms are from Ratliff (2010), Old Chinese forms are from Schuessler (2007), and Tibeto-Burman forms are from Matisoff (2003).

about Lanjin (Lj) spirant reflexes (f- and v-). In Jiangdi (Jd), it has become -j- when occurring with *-a-, which must have been relatively front in this dialect.

Table 1: Plain and velarized labial onsets in Yao dialects.

		Lx	Lj	Jd	
To know	A	pei	pei	pei	*p-
To dream	C	bei	bei	bei	*mp-
To sleep	C	pwei	fei	pwei	*pʷ-
To boil	C	bwei	vei	bwei	*mpʷ-
To rake	A	pa	pa	pa	*b-
Thin	D	pwa	fa	pje	*bʷ-
Father	B	pwa	fa	—	*pʷ-
To mend	B	bwa	va	bje	*mpʷ-
Chaff	D	bwa	va	bje	*mphʷ-
Step	C	bwa	va	bje	*mbʷ-

(The capital letters A, B, and C in all the tables indicate early tone classes. The letter D indicates an early checked syllable; thus the words ‘thin’ and ‘chaff’ go back to *bʷak and *mphʷak, respectively).

When occurring with the front vowel *e, the velarized feature has induced -j-. Before the high vowels *i and *u, the reflex of the velarized feature has been lost in Lx and Lj (probably through redundancy), but is attested as the expected /-j-/ or /-w-/ in Jd.

Table 2: Labial onsets with *e, *i and *u in Yao dialects

		Lx	Lj	Jd	
Satisfied	B	peu	pi:u	peu	*peu
Fruit	B	pjeu	pjou	pjou	*pʷeu
Float	A	bjeu	bjou	bjou	*mbʷeu
Bedbug	A	pi	pi	pje	*pʷi
Three	A	pu	pu	pwo	*pʷu
Burn	B	pu	pu	pw(o)	*pʷu
Name	C	bu	bu	bwo	*mpʷu
Hand	B	pu	pu	pwo	*bʷu

In some cases, Miao dialects supply further evidence for the early velarized feature. Some Western Miao dialects such as Shimen (Sm), for instance, show a sibilant reflex of the velarized labial onsets, but only when followed by the high vowel -i. Table 3 shows the corresponding forms in Jiangdi Yao, Shimen (Western Miao), and Jiwei (Northern Miao) dialects.

Table 3: PMY plain and velarized labial onsets

		Jd	Sm	Jw	
To know	A	pei	pau	—	*p-
To dream	C	bei	mpu	mpei	*mp-
To sleep	C	pwei	py	pə	*pʷ-
To boil	C	bwei	mpau	—	*mpʷ-
Father	B	—	tsi	pɑ	*pʷ-
To mend	B	bje	ntsi	mpɑ	*mpʷ-
Fruit	B	pjou	tsi	pi	*pʷ-
Bedbug	A	pje	—	—	*pʷ-
Three	A	pwo	tsi	pu	*pʷ-
Name	C	bwo	ntsi	mpu	*mpʷ-

Failing to consider various conditioning factors, Wang & Mao (1995) have reconstructed many complex labial onsets for the preceding words, basically taking all modern reflexes back to the proto stage.

Table 4: PMY labial onsets and Wang & Mao's (1995) complex labial onsets

PMY	Wang & Mao	Examples
*p-	*p-	to know
*pʷ-	*pw-	to sleep
	*pj-	bedbug
	*pts-	fruit
	*pwts-	three, father
*mp-	*mp-	to dream
*mpʷ-	*mpw-	to boil
	*mpwj-	to mend
	*mpwts-	name

2.1.2 Nasal + liquid onsets *m.l- and *m.r-

There are two sets of words that are usually put under PMY *mbl- by both Wang & Mao (1995) and Ratliff (2010). (I consider -b- as the emerging stop developing secondarily from PMY *m.l- > mbl-). These are shown in Table 5; Jiwei (Jw), Yanghao (Yh), and Zongdi (Zd) represent the Northern, Eastern, and Western Miao dialects, respectively. For *m.l-, Jiwei and Yanghao have assimilated *m.l- > /n-/, *m.lʷ-, on the other hand, has developed to Jiwei /mj-/.

Table 5: Two series of PMY *m.l- in Miao

		Jw	Yh	Zd	
Rice plant	A	nu	na	mplæ	*m.l-
Glutinous	D	nu	nə	mplu	
Tongue	D	mja	ɲi	mple	*m.lʷ-
Smooth	A	mje	—	mplein	

The distinction is also made in some Yao dialects, as shown in Table 6. Lanjin (Lj) Mun and Liangzi (Lz) Mien, for instance, show /bl-/ (< mbl-) for *m.l- but bj- (< mblɿ-) for *m.lɿ-. Dongshan (Ds) Biao Min simply reflexes both as *bl-.

Table 6: Two series of PMY *m.l- in Yao

		Lj	Lz	Ds	
Rice plant	A	blau	blau	blau	*m.l-
Glutinous	D	blut	blot	blun	
Tongue	D	bjet	bjet	blin	*m.lɿ-
Smooth	A	bjaŋ	bjaŋ	—	

PMY *m.r- and *m.rɿ- may be similarly distinguished, though here the Miao reflexes have become neutral. Evidence in Yao is found in more limited numbers of dialects than in those of *ml-/*mlɿ-. In Table 7, see the distinction between Luoxiang (Lx) Mien bl- (< *m.r-) and bj- (< *m.rɿ-). The parallel case of *pr-/*prɿ- is also provided in Table 7.

Table 7: PMY *m.r- and *pr-

		Yao			Miao			
		Lx	Lz	Ds	Jw	Yh	Zd	
Spicy	D	bla:t	bja:t	blan	mzɛi	za	mpzɿ	*m.r-
Fish	B	bjau	bjau	bla	mzɯ	zɛ	mpzɛ	*m.rɿ-
Five	A	pla	pja	pla	pzɑ	tsa	pzɿ	*pr-
House	B	pjau	pjau	pla	pzɯ	tse	pzɛ	*prɿ-

From the preceding lists, we may also find some Chinese related forms. There, it is significant to note that the corresponding Chinese onsets are usually *l or *r, never stops (namely, *b).

Table 8: PMY *m.r-/*m.l- and their corresponding Old Chinese (OC) initials

	PMY	OC
Spicy	*m.r-	辣 *rât
Fish	*m.rɿ-	鯉 *rəʔ ‘carp’
Rice plant	*m.l-	稻 *lûʔ
Tongue	*m.lɿ-	舌 *mlat

I have pointed out elsewhere (Ostapirat 2011) that the suggestion of linking the MY word for ‘fish’ to Tai *pla: (see Chen 2001; Ratliff 2010) is not supported by the corresponding sounds between these languages (*m.r- versus *pl-). There has also been a proposal that MY ‘nose’, Dongshan Biao-Min /bli/, Zongdi Miao /mpzɯ/, and Jiwei Miao /mzə/ < *m.r(ɿ)- is related to Chinese *bji(t)s (see Chen 2001). If the MY and Chinese forms really are related, it seems to indicate a borrowing since MY *m.r- would normally correspond to Chinese *r-, as shown above. It needs to be demonstrated why MY *m.r- would correspond to Chinese *b- in this case. Note also that the typical Sino-Tibetan root for ‘nose’ is *sna (Written Tibetan /sna/, Written Burmese /hna/).

2.2 Velars and postvelars

Modern Miao languages are known to have contrastive velar and uvular stop initials /k-/ and /q-/, and these are usually posited directly back to PMY. I have shown elsewhere (Ostapirat 2011) that, in most cases, Miao *k- does not correspond to Yao *k- but rather to *kr-, leaving the possibility of interpreting the correspondence between Miao *q- and Yao *k- simply as PMY *k- (which is typically retracted to q- in Miao dialects).²

Table 9: PMY *k and *kr

		<u>Yao</u>		<u>Miao</u>		
		Ds	Lj	Sm	Yh	
Horn	A	klɔ	kjɔ:ŋ	ku	ki	*kr
To cut	D	klan	kjap	—	ken	*kr
Insect	A	klɛ	kje:ŋ	kau	kaŋ	*kr
Road	B	kla	kjau	ki	ki	*kr
To crow	C	—	ka:i	qa	qa	*k
Sweet	A	kan	ka:m	qau	qaŋ	*k
Borrow	B	kɔ	ka	qe	—	*k
Old	C	ku	ku	—	qo	*k

Ratliff (2010) reconstructs *kl- in those instances where I reconstruct *kr-.³ I reconstruct *kl- for another set of words that show a straightforward *-l- in most dialects.

Table 10: PMY *kl

		<u>Yao</u>			<u>Miao</u>			
		Ds	Lj	Lz	Dn	Yh	Fy	Jw
Dog	B	klu	klu	tlo	tɕe	ɭa	qlɛi	qwu
Waist	B	kla	kla:i	tla:i	tɕua	ɭa	qla	qwa
Hawk	B	klan	kla:ŋ	tlan	tɕaŋ	ɭaŋ	—	qwei
Neck	A	klan	kla:ŋ	tlan	tɕaŋ	—	—	—

² See also Solnit (1996), who has noted this possibility.

³ The *kr- here may belong to two sets: *kr- and *krʷ-, based on the Zao Min distinctive reflexes /ts-/ and /k-/. See Zao Min /kɔu/ ‘horn’, /kɛp/ ‘cut’, but /tsaŋ/ ‘insect’, /tsu/ ‘road’. There is also an example that may point to *qr- (‘egg’) contrasting with *kr- (‘road’), as in the following pairs, where the distinction is attested in Western Miao dialects (represented by Dn and Zd).

		<u>Miao</u>			<u>Yao</u>		
		Dn	Zd	Yh	Sj	Lx	Zm
Road	B	ke	kæ	ki	klu	kjau	tsu
Egg	C	qe	hæ	ki	klu	kjau	tsu

As we see, the cluster *kl- has assimilated into /tʰl-/~/tʰl-/ in some dialects: namely, Liangzi (Lz) Yao and Dananshan (Dn) Miao. This further develops into /d-/ in White Hmong: /de³/ ‘dog’, /dua³/ ‘waist’, /da³/, ‘hawk’, and /da¹/ ‘neck’.

When *kl- is velarized, it typically develops into /kw-/ in Yao dialects. The -l- medial, however, is retained faithfully in Miao dialects such as Dananshan (Dn) and Shimen (Sm) /tʰl-/ in the way we have just noted for PMY *kl-. (See also White Hmong /di¹/ ‘cucumber’ and /da³/ ‘wide’.)

Table 11: PMY *klɻ-

		<u>Yao</u>			<u>Miao</u>			
		Ds	Lj	Lz	Dn	Yh	Fy	Jw
Cucumber	A	kwa	kwa	kwa	tʰi	fa	qwa	kwa
To cross over	C	kwa	kwa:i	kui	tʰua	fa	qwa	kwa
Wide	B	kwaŋ	kwaŋ	kwaŋ	tʰaŋ	faŋ	—	kwei

In several Miao dialects, the development *kl- > /qʰl-/ occurs, contrasting with *klɻ- > /qʰw-/ (see Fuyuan); in Yanghao (Yh), these further become /ɰ-/ and /f-/. It is worth noting that the Jiwei (Jw) dialect has kept the distinction (before PMY *a) by retaining the velar articulation for the velarized onset: /kw-/ < *klɻ-, but /qʰw-/ < *kl-. All etyma in Table 11 have the vowel *a.

Some examples of *klɻ- are obscured by the variant development conditioned by the vowels. For instance, the expected -w- is typically lost in Yao dialects when followed by rounded vowels: namely, *klɻu > /ku/ ‘far’. Before the front vowel *e, the palatal -j- instead of -w- has emerged (see ‘bear’).

Table 12: PMY *klɻ- with *u and *e

		<u>Yao</u>			<u>Miao</u>		
		Ds	Lj	Lz	Dn	Yh	Fy
Far	A	ku	ku	ko	tʰe	—	qwei
Bear	D	—	kja:p	kja:p	tʰai	ɰi	—

As usual, some Western Miao dialects such as Dananshan (Dn) come to the rescue, with their reflexes attesting *-l-. For ‘far’, see also Shimen Miao /tʰi/, White Hmong /de/; for ‘bear’, see Sanjiang Biao Min /kljɛ/, Shimen Miao /tʰai/, White Hmong /dai/. Note also Yanghao /ɰi/ ‘bear’; this Eastern Miao dialect shows variant reflexes of the cluster under similar conditions to Yao dialects. Compare the following reflexes in Lanjin (Lj) Yao and Yanghao (Yh) Miao.

	Lj	Yh	Dn
*kl-	kl-	ɰ-	tʰl-
*klɻ-	kw-	f-	tʰl-
*klɻ-/ _e	kj-	ɰ-	tʰl-

Our reconstruction here has helped set up a much simpler system than earlier proposals. Compare, for instance, our established set of *kl- and *klɻ- to those of Ratliff below. This is not to

say that the medial *-l-*, attested in several modern dialects, cannot be accounted for by reconstructed sounds such as **Kw-* or **qw-*.

PMY	Ratliff (2010)	Examples
<i>*kl-</i>	<i>*ql-</i>	dog
<i>*klɿ-</i>	<i>*Kw-</i>	cucumber
/_u	<i>*qw-</i>	far
/_e	<i>*qr-</i>	bear

The same rules apply for other velar/postvelar reflex patterns in modern dialects. Table 13 lists the parallel examples of **gl-* and **ŋ.l- > *ŋgl-*. See also Shimen Miao /dlɰa/ ‘peach’, /dlɰi/ river, and /ndɰlie/ ‘front’.

Table 13: PMY **gl-* and **ŋ.l- (> ŋgl-)*

		<u>Yao</u>		<u>Miao</u>			
		Ds	Lj	Dn	Fy		
peach	A	kla	klaʊ	tɰua	ɬlei	<i>*gl-</i>	
intestine	A	klaŋ	kla:ŋ	—	—	<i>*gl-</i>	
river	A	—	—	tɰe	ɬlei	<i>*gl-</i>	
shuttle	B	—	glou	—	—	<i>*ŋgl- < *ŋ.l-</i>	
front	B	—	—	nta	nɰlen	<i>*ŋgl- < *ŋ.l-</i>	

Our proposal also helps solve some outstanding problems in the initial reconstruction of certain roots. The word ‘sky, heaven’, for instance, has been listed under three separate initials in previous reconstructions: namely, Ratliff’s **w-*, **nd-*, and **NG-*. In our system, the disparate reflexes are in fact regular and point to PMY **ŋ.lɿ- > ŋglɿ-*.

Table 14: PMY **ŋ.lɿ- (> ŋglɿ-)* onset for ‘sky, heaven’

		<u>Yao</u>			<u>Miao</u>			
		Lj	Lz	Ds	Dn	Yh	Fy	
Sky, heaven	A	gu:ŋ	guŋ	guŋ (Lx)	nto	vɛ	nɰwaŋ	<i>*ŋ.lɿ-</i>
Front	B	—	—	—	nta	—	nɰlen	<i>*ŋ.l-</i>
Far	A	ku	ko	ku	tɰe	—	qwei	<i>*klɿ-</i>
Dog	B	klu	tlo	klu	tɰi	ɭa	qlɛi	<i>*kl-</i>

We can see a parallel case between **-l-* and **-lɿ-* in the above comparisons. Remember that Yao dialects typically lose /-w-/ < **-lɿ-* before /u/ (see ‘far’) and that Yanghao (Yh) Miao has /f-/ for **klɿ-* (e.g. /fa:/ ‘cucumber’); thus Yh /v-/ for **ŋglɿ- < *ŋ.lɿ-* is expected.

The etymon ‘yellow’ is posited under Ratliff’s **Gw-*. As in case of her **Kw-*, this does not explain the *-l-* reflex in some Miao dialects. Proto-Miao onset for this root is, rather, **glɿ-*, a voiced counterpart of **klɿ-*, as can be seen in the examples in Table 15.

Table 15: PMY *gl̥- and ‘yellow’

		<u>Yao</u>			<u>Miao</u>				
		Ds	Lj	Lz	Dn	Yh	Fy	Jw	
Yellow	B	waj	vaj	waj	t̪aj	faŋ	ɛwen	kwei	*gl̥-
Wide	B	kwaŋ	kwaŋ	kwaŋ	t̪aj	faŋ	—	kwei	*kl̥-

The expected Yao reflexes should be something like /gwaŋ/, however. Taking them at face value, we may need to posit the PMY uvular onset *gl̥, though it seems simpler to consider the Yao forms as separately borrowed from Chinese (黃 OC wâŋ > MC ywaŋ).

2.3 Palatals

There are a number of problems related to the PMY palatal series reconstructed by Ratliff (2010). Most of them are, rather, ‘palatalized’ velar and dental onsets. Instead of reconstructing a second proto feature, I regard them as reflexing the velarized feature that we establish. We have already shown that the velarized feature can be a source of -w- and -j- medials in modern MY dialects.

I reconstruct PMY *g̥- for Ratliff’s *j̥-. The velar articulation is still attested in some dialects, including the Daping (Dp) and Liangzi (Lz) dialects of Yao and a She (S) dialect in Guangdong. The change *j̥- > *g̥- would be phonetically somewhat strange.

Table 16: PMY *g̥-

		<u>Yao</u>			<u>Miao</u>		
		Zm	Lz	Jd	S	Yh	Sm
To ride	A	ki	kjei	tcei	khji	tci	dzfiu
Bridge	A	ku	kjau	tcou	khji	tcu	—
Eggplant	A	kje	—	tce	khju	tca	—
Male (human)	C	kjaŋ	kjaŋ	tcaŋ	—	tcaŋ	dzfiu

Also reconstructible with *g̥- onset, the following two etyma suggest some complex pre-initials. The word ‘nine’ may have a complex onset *d.g̥-, with metathesis in some Yao dialects (see Lz and Lx /d-/). The word may be linked to the Tibeto-Burman root for ‘nine’ (see Written Tibetan /dgu/). The etymon ‘root’ may have developed similarly. (See also Pa-hng /ko/ ‘nine’ and /kō/ ‘root’.)

Table 17: PMY *d.g̥-

		<u>Yao</u>			<u>Miao</u>		
		Zm	Lz	Lx	S	Yh	Sm
Nine	A	ku	du	du	khju	tca	dzfa
Root	A	—	duŋ	duŋ	khjuŋ	tco	dzfiu

Examples in Table 18 show PMY velarized (> palatalized) dental onsets. The She/Jiongnai dialects (S and Jn) keep the original dental initials in most cases.

Table 18: PMY velarized (> palatalized) dental onsets

		<u>Miao</u>			<u>Yao</u>			
		S	Jn	Dn	Dp	Lx	Jd	
To thread	A	thjuŋ	tʃui	tʃau	tsui	ɕwən	—	*thɣ-
Steelyard	C	thjaŋ	ntjaŋ	—	dzaŋ	dzaŋ	dzjaŋ	*nthɣ-
Bamboo strip	D	tju	ntjeu	ntʃeu	dziu	dzu	dzu	*ntɣ-
Pillow	C	njaŋ	ntjoŋ	ntʃoŋ	—	dzom	dzəm	*ntɣ-
To peck	D	tju	—	ntʃeu	—	—	dzo	*ntɣ-
Mouth	A	tjo	ntjo	ntʃeu	dzi	—	dzu:i	*ndɣ-

These onsets correspond mainly to Ratliff's palatal initials: *ch- (to thread), *ɲɕ- (bamboo strip, pillow, to peck), *ɲj- (mouth), and one example of *nthj- (steelyard).

Some etyma for which Ratliff has put the Yao forms under her PMY palatal initials (namely, *ɕ- 'girl, daughter', *ɲch- 'ant') have corresponding Miao forms with labial onsets. For these I reconstruct *(m)phɣ- (before *e), from which Yao palatalized reflexes have developed secondarily.

Table 19: PMY *(m)phɣ-

		S	Jn	Dn	Dp	Lx	Jd	
Ant	B	phui	mphai	—	dziu	ɕeu	dzjou	*mphɣ-
Girl, daughter	D	phui	phai	ntshai	sa	ɕa	sje	*(m)phɣ-

For 'girl, daughter', see also Zongdi /mpje/, Fuyuan /mʔphje/.

The preceding discussion concentrates on some outstanding problems of PMY onsets and is not exhaustive. Phonetically speaking, velarization could be considered a feature of the vowels and may influence vowel development. In Table 20, we may note that the velarized feature reconstructed for the word 'hair' is reflexed not only by the contrastive onsets /ɬ-/ versus /l-/ in Yh, but also by the different vowels /i/ versus /ei~əi/ in Jw and Ds dialects. In such a case, the velarization explains both onset and rime development in modern dialects, which in turn further substantiate the proposed reconstruction. Issues in PMY rime reconstruction will be elaborated in future studies.

Table 20: PMY *pl- and *plɣ-

		<u>Miao</u>			<u>Yao</u>		
		Yh	Jw	Zd	Ds	Lj	
four	A	ɬu	pzei	plou	pləi	pjei	*pl-
hair	A	ɬu	pi	plou	pli	pjei	*plɣ-

3. Miao-Yao and Chinese

The issue of affiliation between MY and Chinese has been debated for over a century. A typical view is to consider them as genetically related and part of the great Sino-Tibetan family, though a recent review of the issue (Gong 2006) seems to be skeptical of this scheme. Gong points out that a number of putative related forms fail to show regular correspondences, that the Miao or Yao forms often reflect Middle Chinese or later stages instead of Old Chinese (thus are likely to be loans), and that many etyma are represented by only Miao or Yao forms (indicating that the words may not go back to PMY). These points imply that some of the proposed related etyma have to be rejected (due to lack of regular correspondences), while others are better treated as borrowings from Chinese into MY.

Even so, there is much we can learn from lexical comparisons between Chinese and MY, especially from vocabulary items that belong to the older stages. For instance, the selected words in Table 20 show the correspondences between MY prenasalized stops and what Norman (1974) calls Proto-Min (the ancestral language of the Chinese Min dialects) softened stops. The list appears to support Norman's contentions that these distinct initial series have to be reconstructed for Proto-Min (and thus also for Old Chinese), and that one of their major sources could be prenasalized stops (Norman 1986).

Note that Proto-Min *-d may correspond to MY *d- or *r- when preceded by nasal onsets. See 'ramie, hemp' (PMY *nd-), 'fish, carp' (PMY *m.r-), and 'lazy' (PMY *ŋ.r-). Also, Proto-Min *-dʒ is found to correspond to PMY *m.lʃ- (see 'tongue'). (The representative dialects are Fuyuan for Miao and Luoxiang for Yao. Forms from a Chiengrai dialect of Yao (Cr), from my field notes, and Dongshan Biao Min (Ds) may be cited when the Luoxiang Yao forms are missing.)

Table 21: MY prenasalized onsets and Proto-Min softened stop initials⁴

	Miao	Yao	PMY	Proto-Min	
Collapse	—	ba:ŋ (Cr)	*mp-	-p	崩
Mend	mʔpa	bwa	*mp-	-p	補
To boil	mʔpu	bwei	*mp-	-p	沸
Daughter-in-law	—	bwəŋ	*mb-	-b	婦
Float	—	bjeu	*mb-	-b	浮
Step	—	bwa	*mb-	-b	步
Challenge	—	dou (Cr)	*nt-	-t	賭
Carry on shoulder	—	da:m	*nt-	-t	擔
Ramie	nta	do	*nd-	-d	紵
Fish, carp	mpji	bjau	*m.r-	-d	鯉
Lazy	ŋkaŋ	—	*ŋ.r-	-d	懶
Early	nʔtsu	djeu	*nts-	-ts	早

⁴ Norman represents Proto-Min softened stop initials with a preceding hyphen. For 'ramie, hemp', see also Pa-hng /mjo/, which suggests *m.d-. For 'mushroom', see also Zao Min /gu/. The word 'hold in mouth' is an exception where the Yao *ŋk- does not agree in voicing with Min *-g. Note also that a number of etyma lack corresponding forms in Miao, perhaps suggesting a more intimate contact link between the ancestors of Min and Yao.

	Miao	Yao	PMY	Proto-Min	
Name, character	—	dzaŋ (Ds)	*ndz-	-dz	字
Tongue	mple	bjet	*m.l-	-dʒ	舌
Mushroom	ŋʔka	ju	*ŋk-	-k	姑 含
Hold in mouth	—	gɔm	*ŋk-	-g	

The direction of borrowings is also a tantalizing issue. Words reconstructed with PMY *klɿ- can be taken as an illustrative case. No trace of -l- is found for these words in Chinese, which are usually reconstructed with Old Chinese initial *kʷ-. If they are loans, the borrowing must have gone from MY into Chinese rather than the other way around. The same is true for an etymon such as ‘dog’ (PMY *kl-); for this word, Chinese simply shows *k-.⁵

Table 22: PMY *kl-/ *klɿ- and OC *k-/ *kʷ-

		PMY	OC	
Cucumber	A	*klɿa	*kwra	瓜
To cross over	C	*klɿai	*kwaih	過
Wide	B	*klɿaŋ	*kwaŋ?	廣
Dog	B	*klu	*ko?	狗

Note also that Chinese has another native root for ‘dog’ (犬 Old Chinese *khwin?) that can be traced back to Sino-Tibetan (see Written Tibetan /khji/, Written Burmese /khwe/). In such a case, the possibility that Chinese has borrowed 狗 *ko? from MY is further substantiated by its lack of a Sino-Tibetan origin. The search along these lines that puts MY and Chinese lexical comparisons into a Sino-Tibetan perspective may thus help to clarify the affiliation and borrowing issues between MY and Chinese in the near future.

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⁵ See also Schuessler (2003) for some suggested MY loans in Old Chinese.

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Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia
Mahidol University at Salaya
Nakhorn Prathom 73170, Thailand
wostapirat@yahoo.com

原始苗瑤語音韻構擬與譜系關係的幾個議題

許家平

瑪希敦大學

本文呈現原始苗瑤語音韻構擬上的新觀點，重點處理古單、複聲母重建上一些棘手的問題，提議為原始苗瑤語構擬軟顎化特徵，作為闡釋現代方言複雜音韻發展的鑰匙。本文依據新構擬的音系審視若干詞例，判斷其為漢語、苗瑤語共有詞彙的可行性，期望藉由可確信的語音對應關係，將苗瑤語遠程比較建立在堅實的材料基礎之上。

關鍵詞：苗瑤語，音韻構擬，軟顎化，譜系分類，東亞地區語言