

THE WHITE MEO.

A paper written by Luang Boriphandh Dhuraratsadorn, District Officer of San Mahapon, in the Province of Chieng Mai, at the request of His Serene Highness Prince Bovaradej, Viceroy of the Northwestern Circle, in reply to the questionnaire of the Siam Society, and translated

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A. Anthropology.

General physical characteristics of the White Meo.

1. Their outward appearance, as far as height is concerned, is very similar to that of the ordinary Chinese, namely about 1.50m on the average.

2. They are of a strong, compact build; many of them are inclined to fat, but occasionally thin individuals are also encountered.

3. Their faces are flat and bony, and when looked at in profile, they appear like half a lime. Seen 'en face,' their noses appear to be broken, while in profile the nose is scarcely seen at all, with the exception of the tip.

4. The lips are rather thick and pale, and the mouth broad.

5. The Meo men are generally beardless. With the few who possess any beard at all, it grows sparsely (i. e. the moustache on the upper lip) and the individual hairs are long. If a beard is grown, it resembles that of a goat. Both moustache and beard generally grow sparsely (rarely thickly) whether with young or old, while the colour of the beard is reddish, like the red tobacco which is smoked by nearly all Chinese. The hair is thick, lank and coarse. Both sexes generally wear it long, pushed back from the centre of the skull, the forepart of which is shaved exactly like the Chinese, when the latter wore pigtails. The men wear the hair to a length of 0.25m and the women to a length of 0.50m, in which they resemble the Tāt or Hō (of Yunnan). The shaved portion of

N. B. All remarks in brackets are those of the translator. The San Mahapon lies to the north of the town of Chiengmai.

the skull is usually less in women than in men. The colour of the hair itself is deep black, but the ends are sometimes yellowish. The hair on the body of all individuals is soft, and there is no difference in this regard between young and aged people.

6. The colour of the eyes is black, mixed with yellow.

7. The axial line of the eyes is not horizontal, the internal corner of the eye being lower than the external. The white of the eye in the external corner is level with the white in the central part of the eye.

8. The skin of the covered parts of the body is of a whitish-yellow, while the uncovered parts exposed to the sun and weather are of a darker brownish hue. New-born children all have a black or blue-black spot, i.e. a birthmark, on the lower part of the back (i.e. in the sacro-lumbar region). This birthmark remains until they reach the age of 5 years, when it disappears entirely.

Peculiar features with regard to the body of the White Meo are as follows:—

(A) As regards the skull, there is considerable diversity of shape. Some are unusually large: some are misshapen, bulging out both in front and at the back of the head, and are not round or smooth in the middle. Others protrude in front like that of an elephant, but these deformities are only found in a comparatively small number of individuals. A good many are marked with scars on the skull occasioned by boils during childhood (ผีตก ผีทวาง), which cause them to go bald-headed for life.

(B) Of deformities of the face, nose, ears, jaw, lips, and tongue, there are many. Some of the Meo people appear to have a very broad and high forehead, the reason for this peculiarity (the writer explains) being that they shave their heads so often that the hair begins rather high on the skull. Others have long faces and pointed chins, and others again have unusually small eyes. Some people have noses which look as though they were broken in the centre, giving them an appearance resembling Khun Kok (ขุน กอก), while some again have quite flat noses with long, protruding tips. With regard to the ears and jaws, there does not appear to be much

difference (from the Thai), and all girls pierce their ear-lobes in a similar manner to the Thai, for the purpose of wearing ear-pendants. Some have broad, distorted mouths, and in others the upper lip protrudes so much that, when they shut their mouths, the middle portion of the upper lip still protrudes (and overhangs the lower lip). With regard to the tongue, there are not many peculiarities to be found, except that some people have too short an uvula, making their speech an unintelligible oh! ah!

(C) There do not appear to be any deformities in their teeth.

(D) With regard to unusual customs connected with the body, there are many to be recorded, and these will be dealt with under two groups; the one comprising those which are caused by habits of dress, and the other those which are congenital or inherited.

(a) The white Meo, men as well as women, like to wear a neck-collar, or if we call it a “ พวง มาลัย เงิน ” we shall not be wrong, because the silver ring which they wear resembles the neck-collar (พวง) worn by prisoners except that the collar worn by the Meo has an opening in front, to which a small silver chain is attached at one side). When the collar is put on, this chain is fastened on to the other side of the opening, which is provided with a hook in the shape of a fish or a bird. This silver collar is worn continually. Even during sleep, or when bathing, it is not discarded and the constant wearing causes a white circular mark round the neck.

The women have, in addition, two other curious customs, one of which consists in the wearing of a silver plate round each wrist. These plates which are engraved with different designs, are kept in place by a kind of buckle resembling a “ ranat ” (ระนาด, bamboo-harmonika), by which they are fastened tightly to the wrist. The skin of the wrist, where it is covered by the plate, becomes quite white. The other custom consists in wearing a metal anklet made of silver, brass or sometimes even of lead, on one foot, preferably on the left, where it causes a white circular mark to appear. The use of finger rings or of any kind of shoe or other tight fitting articles is not known.

(b) With regard to congenital deformities, it is a remarkable fact that most adult married women suffer as a rule from goitre or a swelling in the throat, but that this affliction is unknown among unmarried adult women, and among men or children of either sex. The reason for this, in spite of diligent research, has not yet been discovered. (The reason is possibly to be found in the use of drinking water containing lime, though why, in this case, the males should be immune from the affliction must still, it is admitted, remain an unexplained fact).*

Another physical peculiarity, in which the Meo women differ from their Thai sisters, is the shortness of their legs, though their body is long. When they walk it is noticeable what a short people they are, walking stealthily as if on tiptoe. There are no other peculiarities worth mentioning, either in the men or women; but if there are any less noticeable, they are sure to be those of the Hō or ordinary Chinese.

(E) With regard to the male genital organs, there are no known peculiarities; nor are any practices followed or ceremonies known in this connection.

(F) The custom of painting or tattooing the body is not usually practised; the few who do tattoo their arms and legs have borrowed this practice from the Thai, as the custom is unknown among the Meo themselves.

B. Ethnography.

(1) *Origin and History.* Before entering upon a description of the habitat, the customs and the manners of the White Meo, I propose to give a short summary of their origin, sufficient to enable the reader to make comparisons and to facilitate his understanding of what follows.

* N. B. One of the results of the growth of the child (in the womb) is the increased activity of the thyroid gland in the neck, which considerably increases in size. (Dr. Marie Stopes in "Radiant Motherhood").

As far as my investigations go, it seems clear, that the original home of the White Meo or 'Meo Ptiak' was not in Siam but in the Hō country (Yunnan) in China. In that Province (Yunnan) there were to be found 4 tribes living side by side namely.

- (a) Khē Luang, who are the Hō.
- (b) The Khē Mēo Khāo, who are the 'Mēo Ptiak' or White Meo.
- (c) The Khē Mēo Lai (probably the flowery Meo) and
- (d) The Khē Yao, who are the Yao.

These four tribes live quite separate from each other. The Khē Luang (or Hō) prefer to dwell on the plains, while the Meo Ptiak, the Meo Lai, and the Yao choose rather to live on the tops of high hills, all three latter tribes demanding plenty of air, wind, and water as conditions necessary for their habitations. Moreover the surface of the hills, on which these people live, must of course be composed more of earth than of rock, to enable them to make a livelihood. All these three groups may be described as nomadic, as they have no fixed habitation, everything depending upon the nature of the soil. If this has been exhausted and no longer gives good harvests, they wander off, family and all, to seek new and fresh pastures. Many years ago, how many decades or centuries I cannot discover, there were disturbances (in Yunnan) which forced the 'Meo Ptiak,' the 'Meo Lai' and the Yao to emigrate in large numbers from the Hō country. The reasons for this wholesale emigration were twofold: first, the arable land had become exhausted or too densely occupied; secondly, some of their chiefs wished to maintain their power and increase their wealth; so they led their clans out to oppress and attack the weaker communities, just as the Angyees (Secret Societies) do. The weaker communities naturally could not resist the stronger and, as there was not sufficient agricultural land for both, they finally emigrated southwards. This exodus which took place was not sudden and simultaneous but gradual and continuous. Some of the emigrants entered the Shan States and Burma, others the French Lao States, while others again came into Siamese territory.

The customs and manners of the Khē Mēo Khāo are on the whole similar to those of the Khē Luang, i. e., the Hō or Chinese. Observation of the customs and manners of the latter will show that in China they are much alike, with the exception of a few minor differences. In the following I shall therefore describe the dwellings and customs of the 'Meo Pūak' (White Meo) who have entered and are living in Siamese territory.

2. *Houses.* This tribe likes to build its houses on the tops of the hills, or among the winding passes, placing their houses in the hollows of the highest parts. To find them, one has first to climb to the summit, from which one may descry them. Also the houses of the Meo are always situated near the sources of streams which have plenty of water throughout the year. The boundaries of the villages are often vague, the individual houses being built wherever arable land is found.

The Meo must be considered as being a rather stupid race. They call themselves "Khē Mēo Khāo", but the neighbouring people call them "Mēo Pūak"*. Their manners are rather rough and uncouth, not unlike those of the Chinese.

As already mentioned, their villages are built on the slopes of hills near streams; the reason being that the ground available for building is often not very large or level, and so the Meo have to build on the ground sloping down towards the streams. Their houses have no enclosures at all (the house-walls serving in this capacity) and resemble cattle stables or what the British call "bungalows". (The author is here, as else-where, not always happy in his choice of comparisons). The walls are fashioned of unplanned planks, the plane being unknown to the Meo. They are cut out of the tree-trunks by means of the axe and knife, and made as smooth and straight as if they had been planed, the Meo being very skilled carpenters.

* Pūak is literally 'albino' as in 'Chang Pūak' white Elephant or 'Kwai Pūak' white Buffalo'

When the necessary number of planks have been brought together, they are put in place by fixing the lower ends firmly in the ground, the upper ends being fastened by means of "Mai Khanab" and thereafter tied to the joists. Nails are never used. The height of the house is, from the ground to the joist, about 5 Sok (2.5m) or just the length of the planks used; from the joist to the tie-beam of the roof, another 3 Sok (1.5m). The floor is made simply of earth. The interior is divided into two parts, one third of the whole space being used as a bedroom, separated from the rest by a partition of boards and provided with a raised wooden floor, while the other two thirds form a single open room, which has no partitions of any kind and is used for cooking purposes. Here are also kept the various cooking utensils, of which there are not many to be found in Meo houses, with the exception of those absolutely necessary, concerning which I shall speak more particularly later on. With regard to cleanliness, the less said the better; it is hard to describe, but in this regard a Meo house can best be compared to a mouse-hole or a hen-coop.

3. *Clothing.* The men all wear the same kind of dress, consisting of a pair of Chinese trousers which at the waist, however, are narrower than those worn by the Chinese themselves, so, that, when they are worn, a belt or a string is not necessary. The coat is of a Chinese pattern, too, but with a few minor differences. For instance, the buttons are placed on the side instead of in the middle of the coat; the sleeves are long, reaching to the fingertips; and the coat is short, stopping at the navel. Both coat and trousers are of a uniform dark or indigo-blue. The garments thus described are those used for work and every day wear: on feast-days, and at marriage festivals, the men wear the same trousers, but a different kind of coat. In the main this is still of a Chinese pattern, but with this difference that at the edge of the neck, and of the sleeves as well, as well as along the row of buttons, there is sewn red and white silk embroidery, about half an inch wide (1.3 cm). Furthermore, the men wear two pieces of cloth, embroidered with red and white silk about 0.1m wide and 2 sok (1m) long, which are sewn together at one end, the other two ends being adorned with red silken tassels; this kind of scarf is wrapped round

the body just below the ordinary waistcloth, with its tasseled ends hanging down dangling on the thighs. Of head-gear they have two different kinds; the one is a round black cloth cap similar to those worn by Indians, except that on the top, just in the middle is a red tassel like on the caps worn by the Hō, the other kind consists of a black, or black and white, striped cloth wrapped round the head (i. e. a sort of turban). Both kinds of head-gear are used indiscriminately as well on ordinary as on feast-days. Headmen and well-to-do folk also wear shoes and stockings on feast-days, the stockings of common white cloth and the shoes of black cloth with thick paper soles similar to those in use among the Chinese.

The women have two kinds of dress worn by married women, young girls and children alike, one kind for daily use and the other for feast-days. The garb for daily use and when working consists of a pair of Chinese trousers coming down to just below the knee, and a coat with sleeves which stop just above the wrists, both garments coloured indigo-blue. The coat is cut to the shape of a "sua krabok" (blouse) without buttons, open at the neck like a sailor's blouse, and the border of this opening is embroidered with red and white silk or cotton thread. When worn, the front of the blouse is arranged in two crosswise folds which are pulled tightly downwards to the waist; the trousers, the upper part of which is worn outside the blouse, are then donned, and finally a black and white striped scarf is wrapped tightly round the waist giving the women an appearance of being very slin-waisted. The blouse or coat, when worn in this way, only covers the stomach (and shoulders), leaving a portion of the chest visible. Sometimes, in addition, the women wear two pieces of indigo-coloured cloth, 12 inches (0.25m) wide and just reaching down to the lower rim of the trousers. Both pieces are fastened at the waist, one falling down in front and the other behind (a kind of front and back apron).

On suitable occasions and on feast-days another kind of dress is worn, consisting of two garments. (One of these is woven of white flax and sewn with frills similar to the "pa chib" worn in olden times by the Thai, and to-day still used for the make-up of "Lakhon" and "Khon" actresses). This is tied round the waist

and covers the posterior, but, in front, only part of the thighs; to cover the nude parts, a second piece of cloth (resembling an apron), about 20 inches (45 cm) wide and of the same length as the first piece, is fastened to the "pa chib", falling down in front and giving the whole the appearance of a European skirt, except that it only reaches down to just below the knee. The second garment is generally of plain indigo-blue cloth, but is sometimes embroidered with red or white silk or cotton thread with a flowered pattern. The blouse worn with this dress is of the same kind as that described above; only the sleeves are adorned with flowered embroideries round the ends. It is worn in the same manner, with the front arranged crosswise, and fastened tightly at the waist by means of the "pa chib".

The women have also two kinds of head-gear. One consists of a large piece of black and white striped cloth wrapped round the head (like a turban): this is for daily use and when working. On feast-days another kind, consisting of eleven strips, is worn, each strip being about 2 inches (5 cm) wide, and long enough to go round the head. The strips are folded crosswise over the "chignon", eventually forming a tall (turban-like) head dress, the ends being tucked away and concealed beneath it. Having arranged the head-dress to their satisfaction, the women finally wind strings of big blue and red beads, or seeds of "Job's tears" around it. The (Meo) males and females arrange their hair differently. The men wear it like the Tāt or Hō in the shape of a Kala So-u (the sound-board of a "Thai violin"): they do not plait it into a pigtail, but let it fall loosely down over their shoulders.

The women wear their hair long, but at the edge of the roots they shave off a belt of hair 2 inches (4 cm) wide right round the head, in order to facilitate the folding of the eleven strips of cloth mentioned above. The hair is arranged in a "chignon" on the top of the skull, similar to the top-knot of the children in Siam and the turban is fitted on to it.

With regard to ornaments worn by the White Meo, these have already been described in a previous section, but it may be

mentioned that the women wear ear-hooks in addition. I call these ornaments "ear-hooks," because in fact they resemble hooks more than rings. They are made of silver and correspond in size and shape to the hook by which a mosquito-curtain is kept in place (when open). These hooks, which are broad at the hook end and gradually get thinner towards the other end, are only worn in conjunction with the turban on festival days, and are not worn like earrings, but behind the ears projecting in front, with the upper ends fixed to the turban, and the lower ends to the ears themselves.

4. *Food.* Their ordinary food consists of white rice, maize (Indian corn), and salt. The reason why maize is cultivated is that they cannot grow sufficient rice, and therefore have to supplement this article of food with maize. At meal times they never in fact eat rice exclusively, but always maize in addition. They store the corncobs, after having pulled off the leaves enveloping the cobs, in small storerooms adjoining their houses. The rice is not stored in granaries—there is generally too little of it—but in large wickerwork vessels kept in the dwelling-room. When preparing a meal, they first of all grind some maize into flour and then boil it together with some rice. Their meals are simple and consist ordinarily of a kind of porridge, made as described, flavoured with salt. This is sometimes, on feast-days for instance, relieved by a little pork, or chicken or goat-flesh: or, if the men have been lucky enough to shoot some game, this is naturally added to their ordinary frugal fare. The Meo not only use maize for their own food but also give it as fodder to their ponies, pigs, dogs, and fowls. Indeed their horses live solely on maize and do not go out to pasture at all; notwithstanding which, they grow strong and fat. The reason is, of course, that there is practically no grazing to be found on the mountain sides. Both men and women indulge at times in the habit of drinking strong liquor, and smoking tobacco as well as opium. The liquor is made from Indian corn, but drinking is only indulged in on feast-days and not at ordinary times. The tobacco is not rolled into cigars, but smoked in water-pipes similar to those used for hemp smoking (*kancha*) in Siam. When they wish to smoke opium, they boil just sufficient for

one smoke; only if they are going on a long journey do they boil a larger quantity to smoke on the way. The Meo do not chew betel or any substitutes for betel.

As regards cooking utensils, they have only one kind, i.e. a sort of big frying-pan, in which they cook or fry all food, both for themselves and for their domestic animals, over a hearth made of clay. This pan is also used for boiling their clothes in, when these require washing. Of other utensils they possess only a trough, or tray of wood, and a dried gourd divided in two halves, in one of which they place the food to be eaten (rice or whatever it may be), while the other is used for taking the food out of the pan and putting it on the tray. When eating, the members of the household (sit down round the tray and the gourds and) pick up their food out of these. When the meal is over, they use the same gourds for drinking purposes. Finally, they have a copper vessel which is used exclusively for boiling opium: after use, this vessel is carefully cleaned and put away; it is never used for other kinds of cooking.

For bedding they have either woollen blankets, which come from Yunnan, or what are called "chien" (𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆) (that which is cut evenly). A "chien" consists of two pieces, one used as mattress, and the other as a blanket. The whole family, no matter how many members are included, lie on the same piece and use the same blanket to wrap themselves up in. Sleeping mats, mattresses, pillows and mosquito-curtains are unknown. They do not sleep in an orderly circle, but just lie down as they please. During the cold season, not having enough warm clothing, they kindle fires to protect themselves against the cold.

They have no lamps, but use a kind of pinewood-torch instead: actually no light is lit in the evening unless it is strictly necessary. Besides the articles already mentioned, they possess a few others, for instance, pack-saddles for bullocks and ponies, varying according to the number they possess; looms for weaving, and baskets for holding things. These baskets, and also the "klooï" (baskets for carrying on the back), are made differently from those

used by the surrounding population (i. e. the Thai). They are made of rattan, but have flat, not rounded, sides, while the mouth is large and the base small. The reason for using such baskets is that the Meo of both sexes do not understand how to carry loads* (i. e. loads slung over a pole and carried on the shoulders of one or two men in the Shan and the Lao fashion): instead they carry the loads on their backs. These baskets are provided with two leather straps fastened on at the top and bottom, with an intervening space corresponding to the breadth of the carrier's shoulders. When a Meo has loaded his basket and wishes to pull it on to his back, he inserts his arms in the leather straps and pulls them over his shoulders, thereby bringing the basket close up on to his back. When walking with the basket he is naturally, therefore, inclined to stoop.

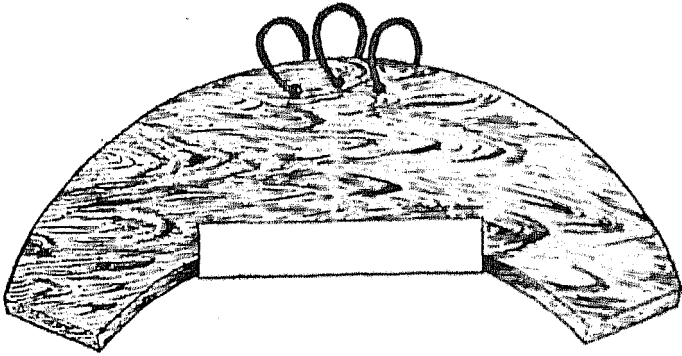
5. *Hunting and Fishing.* The Meo are the keenest of hunters, but poor fishers: this latter is quite natural, since the hilly nature of the regions they inhabit is not favourable for fishing. They possess two kinds of weapons for shooting game, namely guns and crossbows: snares and traps are not used. They shoot every kind of animal that lives in their jungles, such as barking deer, sambhur, sladang (Bison), deer, tiger, bear, and wild bear, using guns for the purpose; while for birds, gibbons, black and other kinds of monkeys, they use the crossbow and arrow. They are expert shoots with the latter weapon, as sure as any rifle shot.

6. *Means of Transport.* The Meo use neither carts nor boats since they are not suitable for hilly country: for transporting goods they use pack-ponies and bullocks. They are good horsemen and can both gallop and trot in the mountains as well as we Thai can in the plains. They do not use ordinary saddles, but sit astride on the frame of the pack-saddle.

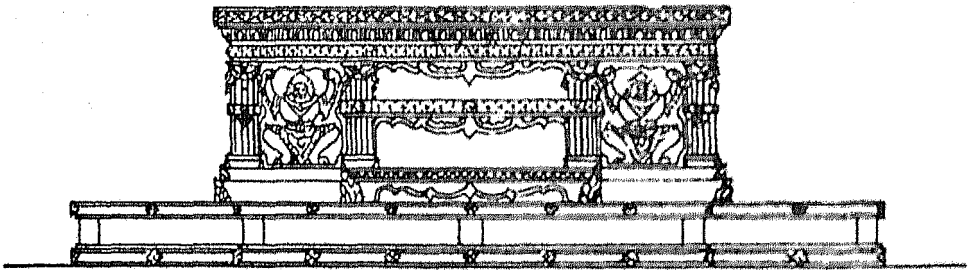
7. *Agriculture.* The Meo do not know how to till the fields or to make plantations. They have only mastered the sowing of hill-crops, the nature of the land preventing them in fact from

* *Hab hām, in Siamese.*





The "wō" or Mēo scythe.



Phra Thèn Manang Sila.

doing any anything else. The hill-crops they raise are such food-stuffs as they require, namely "Kao Chao" (white rice), Indian corn, melons, pumpkins, gourds, sweet potatoes, turnips, coriander and opium. Opium and Indian corn are the principal plants cultivated, since Indian corn is the most important food, both for themselves and for their domestic animals; while opium is largely used as an article of barter. Their agricultural implements consist of long shafted wooden axes of the kind called "Kwan Yon", large knives, different from those use by the "Thai", the blade long and the point curved; and mattocks. Of scythes they have two kinds: the one like that commonly used for cutting paddy-stalks; the other called "Wo" and made of a flat piece of wood about 4 inches (8 cm) long, shaped like a half-moon, to the centre of which is fixed a sharp iron blade about 2 inches (4 cm) long. On the outer edge (see sketch) are two or three loops of string for inserting the fingers (of the reaper) when cutting the paddy. They do not use animals for ploughing, but when the corn has been reaped they use their pack animals to transport the harvest to their villages, which are generally situated at a great distance from the "rais", as the fields are called. Their domestic animals include goats, pigs, and fowls, but they do not keep silkworms or bees.

8. *Trade and Barter.* The Meo have neither markets nor shops. Their only article of commerce is opium, but sometimes they sell dogs as well (Meo dogs being well-known as good, but rather savage watch dogs). But they never wander round the country-side, hawking their opium or dogs, and if one wishes to buy from them, one has to climb the hills and seek them in their own villages. The Meo use Chinese scales for weighing, and for money the local currency; for instance, in the Chieng Mai district they use Ticals (or rupees) and satangs.

9. *Industries and Crafts.* The Meo are skilled workmen in a number of crafts, such as the ironsmith's and the silversmith's, also at embroidery and plaiting, and at dyeing and paper-making; but most of the things they make are only for home use and not for sale, and even if they occasionally make some article for trade

purposes, the quantity is very small. All their iron implements, and even their guns, they make themselves, but of course they have to buy the iron from some district where iron is obtainable. Most of the cloth used they weave themselves, and they also cut out and sew their own clothes. The cloth is mostly woven from flax or from the fibre of the wild banana tree, which they consider very strong and durable.

10. *War.* The Meo possess two kinds of weapons, viz: the gun and the crossbow, as already mentioned under "hunting", but a more detailed description of these weapons will now be given below.

Their guns are flint-locks, but different from ordinary flint-locks in shape and appearance. They are very long, with a short butt-end like that of a Mauser pistol, about a hand's breadth in length. The barrel is not round, but angular, sometimes hexagonal, sometimes octagonal. The bullets are also not round, but cast in an oblong shape about two and a half inches long (5 cm). When the Meo shoot, they do not put the butt-end to the shoulder, but to the right cheek; the right hand grasps the gun firmly, serving at the same time as support and the trigger is pulled with the left hand. Aim is thus taken with the right eye. Folk who are not accustomed to this type of gun find it difficult to use, and may easily get a severe bruise on their cheek! The Meo themselves are expert shots who have been taught from childhood to use their guns, for the children have special smaller guns provided for them.

For their crossbows they use either bolts or arrows. The arrows are made of bamboo with a leaden tip which, when shooting gibbons, black or other monkeys, they generally smear with a sort of poison made from a tree-gum*. An animal hit by such an arrow speedily dies, one shot being quite sufficient; while human beings will also die if an antidote is not used at once. But an antidote is fortunately easily found in the field-crab which is crushed

* *Yāng nong*: a Lao word for a kind of poisonous tree gum, perhaps of the same nature as the *Upas*, or *Ipoh* poison, used by the wild tribes of the Malay peninsula.

into pulp and then applied to the wound. This will extract the poison and heal the wound. (During a conversation, some years ago, with His Excellency Lt. General Chao Phraya Surisak Montri, this gentleman informed the translator that exactly the same kind of antidote was used by the Siamese soldiers for healing wounds inflicted by poisonous arrows during the fighting in the Luang Phrabang district in 1885-87)

11. *Social Organization.* The Meo follow the Chinese and Hõ customs with regard to good manners and government (of the family), and look upon the family or clan as the highest social unit (here follows a sentence which, in view of the author's further statements, is contradictory, and is therefore omitted).

With regard to the rearing of children, they follow the Chinese custom, i. e. the male child is destined to continue the family or clan. Female children are left to care for themselves as best they can; if they are fortunate, they grow up to adolescence; if not, they die when still young.

This holds good, even if the females are attacked by sickness, that is, the same callous indifference is shown towards them.

Meo parents have three ways of adopting children: (a) If they already have male children, they are not permitted to ask for, or buy other people's children. (b) If they have no male children but daughters only, and they wish to continue their family or clan, they must go and buy a male child, belonging to another family; who will be brought up by, and ultimately married to the daughter of his adoptive parents. In such a case the child is bought for good and all, and is considered to belong to the buyer's family and clan. (c) If they have no children at all, they may go and ask for a child, from other people, but it must be a male, and must be obtained from their relatives; they must not ask it from strangers. If they cannot obtain a male child from their relatives, then the wife must find a concubine for her husband with whom to continue the family.

The parents do not separate from their sons after the latter marry, even if the son should turn out badly, as they are afraid of

severing the family ties; but when a daughter marries and leaves her parents' home, she is at once considered as separated from her parents, and must from that time regard her parents-in-law as her own parents.

As regards the arrangement of marriages, the father or the guardian of the suitor must first go and ask the father of the bride-elect for her hand, and if an agreement is concluded, all preparations for the wedding will be made by the girl's parents.

On the wedding day, the father (or guardian) of the bride takes her to the bridegroom's house and, when the spirits of the ancestors have been duly worshipped and all the relations on both sides have been feasted, then the wedding is at an end. But before the agreement is concluded, the parents of the bride will demand 'เงิน สิน สอด'—ngön sin sot—(the money to be paid for the marriage ceremonies) from the bridegroom, according to their requirements and his status, with a minimum of about 150 Ticals. The Meo call this "the wife-purchase money." When the parents of the girl have given their consent, and have fixed on the amount of "ngön sin sot" to be demanded, the bridegroom must agree to pay; but the amount does not as a rule exceed his means, and even if the bridegroom cannot produce the full amount demanded at once, still the parents of the girl will trust him to pay the balance later on, when the couple have lived together for some time and have saved up sufficient money to do so.

With regard to courtship between young unmarried folk, the Meo have a peculiar custom. For instance, if it is known that a young man is in love with a certain girl, he must not go and court her in anybody's house, as it is believed that the house-spirits do not approve of such habits. Such an act would be what is called (in Lao) "phit phi rüan" (an offence against the house-spirits). If any one offends in this way, the village elders will punish the transgressor with a fine, called "sin mai" (court fee) which is handed over to the owner of the house, in which the offence was committed. If two lovers desire to court one another, they must arrange for a meeting somewhere in the jungle.

The authority of the parents over their children is divided in the following manner. In the case of a son it continues until he dies, but in the case of a daughter it ceases as soon as she marries; even if a married daughter should commit an offence, her parents are not allowed to punish her, nor are they responsible in any way for her acts.

With regard to inheritance, if there are several sons and daughters, only the eldest son inherits the property left, as the successor or the family; girls receive nothing unless the deceased has only daughters, and those unmarried. If the deceased has only married daughters who have all left the paternal roof, the latter do not inherit at all, and the property passes to the nearest male relative. The reason for this is that the married woman is supposed to inherit through her husband. An exception is made in the case of a wife, whose husband lives with her parents and is what is called, a "purchased husband" (See under adoption clause b.), in which case she inherits on equal terms with a son. The man, however, in the above mentioned position, cannot inherit from his own parents, as he has severed all ties with his own family.

Concerning the (sexual) liberty of young unmarried girls, it has not been possible to obtain reliable answers to my question.

With regard to divorce, if the man wishes to divorce his wife for reasons of bad conduct on her part, adultery, for instance, he must consult her first, and if she consents, then he may divorce her; but if she is not willing then he must continue to live with her. The woman cannot ask for a divorce under any circumstances, the reason being that, if a woman has been divorced from her husband, she has to live alone and maintain herself, as she is debarred from returning to the house of her parents or family; and, living alone, it is only with the greatest difficulty that she can support herself. It has therefore been laid down that a man shall have no power to divorce his wife of his own free will.

The Meo do not possess any criminal code, but they have their own civil law, as well as customs. A man may take as many wives as he

wishes, but before doing so he must obtain the consent of the principal wife. The concubines must work for their husband and the latter like ordinary servants. Their civil law consists of a system of fines, which are inflicted for all kinds of offences including theft, but these people show a singular trait in their character by abstaining from petty thefts; if they wish to steal at all, then it must be on a grand scale. The would-be robbers unite in gangs or societies and do not stop at murder, if necessary, just as though they were fighting for the overlordship (of the clan). As soon as one side gives way and surrenders, the other side without delay robs them of all their possessions; but on the other hand, within the same community, the members usually live at peace with each other. Rights of property are very unstable, since the Meo have no written documents to serve as proofs: their memory is their only safeguard. With regard to legal procedure and the calling of witnesses, they have also a peculiar custom, whereby it is taken for granted that all witnesses speak the truth, and that nobody will or can bear false witness. When a crime occurs, the Meo seldom call witnesses. If a complainant makes a charge against some other person, the latter will either plead guilty and, in such case, be fined; or he will deny his guilt, in which case he will be declared innocent and the accuser fined, to the advantage of the defendant. This procedure is explained and justified by the fact that, should it afterwards appear that the accused had lied and that the accuser was right, then the guilty party cannot remain in the clan, but must leave the village at once; if he refused, he would lose his life.

As regards the manner in which a criminal is executed, it has not been possible to discover this; one is only told that he disappears quietly! No one will associate, trade or have communication with his wife and children, and even the other children will not play with the children of a criminal, for the Meo hold that they (the family of the criminal) must be people of the very vilest sort. On the other hand, the form of exile or outlawry mentioned above is not put into force in the case of a man who falsely accuses another, since, when the accused has denied the charge brought

against him, the accuser is at once punished with a fine and thereby atones for his offence.

Murder and violent crime in the same clan are almost unknown; such violent crimes as occur are, as detailed above, committed by people who do not belong to the same village or clan, and take the form of attacks combined with robbery ("plon"). Such an attack may occur, if the would-be robbers have ascertained that somebody has sold a quantity of opium for a large sum of money; but crimes of this kind are very rare, and are so far unknown in this district (San Mahāpon). One reason for this is that the would-be robbers do not know where the money is kept, for the Meo never keep money on their persons or in their houses, but hide it elsewhere in secret places.

12. *Art.* The Meo have no knowledge of drawing or painting. As regards sculpture and carving, these arts are understood and practised by a few. Their musical instruments and manner of playing are similar to those of the Chinese. They possess the large Chinese cymbals, small cymbals, and flutes. The flute is made of wood and has at its lower end a knot in which are inserted five hollow cylinders of bamboo protruding some 2 inches (4 cm).

These hollow cylinders are used as stops, producing high or low tones according as the fingers of the player close or open them. Music is only used on the occasion of funerals and not at other ceremonies. At funerals the Meo dance and sing; the song is usually accompanied by music, and they dance in a peculiar manner, holding branches in their hands and beating them against their legs as they keep time with the cymbals. They have no games, except that at their New Year they play a sort of game like "chuang chai" (a ball game, similar to the "len saba" of the Mon at "Trut Songkran"). The young men form one side and the girls the other, and the play consists in throwing a ball made of cloth or some other material from one side to the other. As soon as one of the players fails to catch the ball, that side is declared to have lost.

The Meo have no script of their own, and those few among them, who know how to read and write, use the Chinese characters;

but they have a means of communication of their own, for which they use pieces of wood in which cuts are made to represent writing. For instance, A owes money to B, but A goes to live at a distance, (from B) before he has paid his debt. Before A leaves the village, B produces a smooth piece of wood about one khüb (25 cm) long and, in A's presence, makes a cut. He then divides the piece of wood into two, giving one half to A and keeping the other half himself. When the time comes for B to claim his debt from A, if he is not able to go himself, he will hand his piece of wood to some other person, whom he employs to go and receive the money from A. When A sees the piece of wood, he will take and compare it with his own piece and, if the two correspond, he will acknowledge the bearer as B's agent and, if he is prepared to pay, will return his piece of wood together with the money to show B. that he has paid in full. On the other hand if he does not pay his debt or makes only partial payment he will retain his piece of wood until the debt is fully discharged.

The Meo do not care about or believe in any tales or stories whatever, nor have they much liking for songs or poetry. ?

13. *Science.* They use the Chinese era and calendar, celebrating New Year at the same time as the Chinese. They possess no medical knowledge and use mostly Hõ medicine; in cases of fever, the Meo now use quinine as a remedy, and even their animals, such as ponies and dogs, are treated with this medicine.

14. *Religion.* The Meo are not Buddhists, nor do they worship any Gods. They worship and sacrifice to the spirits, of whom there are two kinds. The spirits of the sky and the spirits of their ancestors who are worshipped in the same manner as the Chinese. The spirits of the sky, to whom they offer propitiatory gifts, are believed to be the motive force of the world and the cause of man's birth and death. The spirits' relations with mankind are such as govern the happiness, prosperity and misfortunes of the latter. They make no images of the spirits, but only stick gold leaf (on wood) to represent them. Temples, preaching halls, "chedis", or "stupas" are all unknown. The Meo worship in their

own houses, and a kind of altar is found in every house; it is made like a cupboard fastened to the wall, in front of which a piece of rice-paper is suspended like a curtain, thus resembling a Chinese altar. The inside is covered with gold leaf, and in some may be seen earthen vases (for incense-sticks?); that is all. They have no priests for officiating at their worship.

When a baby is born, there is usually a ceremony of handing it over to the spirits of the sky, i.e. when the newborn child is from 3 to 7 days old, they (the parents) lay it down on the earth in the open air outside the house, and a temporary altar is built, on which is placed liquor, rice, fowls, ducks, or a pig. Then they burn paper as offering and chant the while, begging the spirits of the sky to take care of their child and to bring it good luck in its coming life.

There are no ceremonies for the young people when they attain the age of puberty.

At death takes place the ceremony, at which offerings are made of "speeding the parting spirit." Funeral rites are performed with much clashing of cymbals and playing of flutes; after which the corpse is brought out of the house for burial.

Cremation is unknown, but there are three kinds of burial. For the first, the corpse is placed in a coffin and buried in the ordinary manner; for the second, after the actual burial has been carried out, a tall "cairn" of stones is built up over the grave. The third kind is called "fang loi" (a floating burial) and is performed in the following manner. Two entire tree-trunks are tied tightly to the corpse, one on either side, and bearers then carry the corpse out to the burial-place in the jungle, and place it on the top of a platform specially constructed for this purpose. No particular care is bestowed on the burial place, nor has the latter any particular form: it is just like any other place in the jungle.

Recitation of prayers, and rites for offerings, even for the worship of the local genii, are not practised: nor do the Meo appear to have any rites in connection with rice-cultivation, fishing or the building of a new house. The manner in which they worship the "phi sang" (the malevolent spirits) is mingled with the form used

by the Chinese. The Meo do not practise any cult of trees, streams or animals, and do not recognize any kind of animal as the origin of their ancestors. They do not seem to have ever done so.

As regards the remaining questions (in the Siam Society's questionnaire), it has not been possible to obtain the information desired, as the people (the Meo) who immigrated into Siamese territory are of a low type, and entirely ignorant of the world and ancient usages and customs. If, therefore, in the foregoing some questions have not been answered, it is because no replies were forthcoming, and I would beg to be excused if the information given is somewhat defective.

C. Language.

Before I tabulate a vocabulary of the Meo language, it will be of interest to give a brief explanation regarding the sounds used by the people in speaking, in order to make the written words more intelligible to the reader. Shortly it is as follows. The Meo, when speaking, utter sounds like those used for commanding elephants (or by people changing their tone of voice) that is, rather low tones. The sounds come from the throat or the back of the tongue, and are short and broad, very similar to those of the French language (Sic!). I have endeavoured to write down their language as phonetically as possible, using the "saras" (vowels) and "byanjanas" (consonants) as near as possible to the Meo's manner of speaking. Whenever a short or broad sound occurs, I have put the figure 8* (2) over the letter to give the correct sound. Notwithstanding all the precautions I have taken, I cannot guarantee that all words appearing in this vocabulary are correct or in strict accord with the manner in which the Meo speak. Some of the words noted should perhaps be pronounced in a high tone (where I have indicated a low) and vice versa, the reason for these defects being that there is no written language to assist the inquirer. Moreover the sounds of the Meo language are admittedly very hard to pronounce, and the task of rendering them into correct Siamese becomes thereby the more difficult.

N. B. The character used for shortening vowel sounds in Siamese.

คำ ทาม

คำ แปล

| ไทย | English | แม่ | M̄eo |
|------------------|---------------|-------------|------------|
| สวรรค์, ฟ้า | Heaven, sky | โต๊ะ, เาะ | Tò, sò |
| พระอาทิตย์ | Sun | นู่ | Nu |
| แดด | Sunshine | ซันตู่ | Sāntu |
| พระจันทร์, เดือน | Moon | กั๊ | Kri |
| ดาว | Star | นู่กู่ | Nukku |
| พระอาทิตย์ขึ้น | The sun rises | นู่แฉ๊ะ | Nuchè |
| พระอาทิตย์ตก | The sun sets | นู่ปง | Nupong |
| เมฆ | Cloud | ฟัว | Fuà |
| ฝน | Rain | ร่านี้ะ | Raonà |
| ลม | Wind | จ้อ | Chò |
| ฟ้าร้อง | } Thunder | เซะกั๊ | Sokua |
| เสียงฟ้าร้อง | | เซะกั๊นเจ้า | Sokuanachò |
| ฟ้าแลบ | Lightning | เส๊ะไล่ | Solai |
| รุ้งกินน้ำ | Rainbow | อั้งเซะ | U'ngsà |
| ทิศตะวันออก | East | นู่ต้ว | Nutua |
| ทิศตะวันตก | West | นู่ไ้ | Nukai |
| ทิศเหนือ | North | เปต้อ | Petò |
| ทิศใต้ | South | คำโต้ว | Khàtow |
| ดิน, แผ่นดิน | Earth | ดิน, อาเปติ | Din, àpeti |
| ทุ่ง | Plain | เจ๊ะระ | Chià |
| ภูเขา | Mountain | เปสั่ง | Pechong |
| ถ้ำ | Cave | เขาตู่ | Khaotu |
| หนทาง, ทาง | Path | ห่ากั๊, กั๊ | Hākì, kī |
| น้ำ | Water | เต๊ะ | Dè |
| ห้วย | Stream | หะเต๊ะ | Hàdè |

คำ ถาม

คำ แปล

| ไทย | English | แม่ | Mèo |
|--------------------------|---------------------|------------|-------------|
| แม่น้ำ | River | น้ำเยะเต๊ะ | Niàdè |
| หนอง, บึง | Lake, swamp | บึงเยะ | Bàyà |
| โคลน | Mud | เค็ยะ | Chià |
| ฝุ่น, ผง, คลี, ลอยของ | Dust | โหลิงจิวะ | Khōlingchuà |
| ทราย | Sand | โอะยิ | Soyi |
| หิน, ก้อนหิน | Stone | โอะยิ | Boyi |
| ทอง, ทองคำ | Gold | กิว | Ku |
| เงิน | Silver | เยยะ | Yià |
| เหล็ก | Iron | โล้ว | Low |
| ทองเหลือง | Brass | ตุ้หนะ | Tunà |
| ตะกั่ว | Lead | ชิว | Chua |
| ไฟ | Fire | โละเต๊ะ | Lotò |
| ควัน | Smoke | เต๋อ | To' |
| เถ้า, ขี้เถ้า | Ashes | เซี | Sè |
| ถ่าน ถ่านไม้ | Charcoal | ลันจี้ | Lànchai |
| จุดไฟ | To light the fire | ปานตวี | Pàndaow |
| ดับไฟ | To put out the fire | ลดเต๊ะตัว | Lòdt'ua |
| ป่า | Forest | ฮาลง | Hàlong |
| ต้นไม้ | Tree | ฮือตัง | U'tong |
| ราก, รากต้นไม้ | Root | ฮิว | Oà |
| ต้น, ลำต้น ของ ต้นไม้ | Trunk | โตะตี | Todh |
| กิ่ง | Branch | จิงโต้ง | Chingtōng |
| เปลือก | Bark | เต็งตัง | To'ngtong |

คำ ทาม

คำ แปล

| ไทย | English | แม่ฉว | Mèo |
|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| ตมไปไม้แขวน | Bud | เจ็ดตั้งไปตั้งปั้ง | Pàntong |
| ดอกไม้ | Flower | ปานตั้ง | Chaotong bai tong prong |
| ลูกไม้ | Fruit | จั่งตั้ง | Ching tong |
| หญ้า | Grass | หมอยคเข้า | Mòtsao |
| ต้น มะพร้าว | Coco palm | ลิให้แก้ว | Sihòkua |
| ลูก มะพร้าว | Coconut | จี้ | Chī |
| ต้นหมาก | Areca tree | ลิปละ | Siple |
| ลูกหมาก | Areca nut | จี้ | Chī |
| พลู | Betel | เป ล๊ะ | Penglà |
| ต้นกล้วย | Banana tree | โจ้ว | Chōw |
| กล้วย | Banana | จี้ โจ้ว | Chī chōw |
| ต้นส้ม | Orange tree | ส้มแก้ว | Sikaow |
| ส้ม | Orange | จี้ ส้มแก้ว | Chisī kaow |
| ต้น มะนาว | Lime tree | ลิ ลู โจ้ว | Silūsōng |
| ลูก มะนาว | Lime | จี้ ลู โจ้ว | Chilūsōng |
| ต้น มะม่วง | Mango tree | ไต้ | Sai |
| ลูก มะม่วง | Mango | ลิ ไต้ | Sisai |
| ต้น ขนุน | Jack fruit tree | ลิประอชู้ | Sipràyū |
| อ้อย, ลำอ้อย, ต้น อ้อย | Sugar cane | กะอู้ | Kàkhī |
| ต้น พริกไทย | Pepper vine | กวัดเข้าซิ่ง | Kuadsaochong |
| ยาเส้น, ยาสูบ | Tobacco | เล้ายั้ง | Laoying |
| ชา, น้ำชา | Tea | คี่ | Khī |
| ข้าวโพด | Maize | บ่อกก็อ | Bokkū |

คำ ถาม

คำ แปล

| ไทย | English | แม่ริ้ว | Mĕo |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| ถั่ว | Bean | ต๋อต๋อ | T'òtu' |
| หัวหอม | Onion | คี่อะจี่ | Khòchà |
| กะเทียม | Garlic | ติะ | Di |
| มัน | Sweet potato | คี่อะ | Kò |
| พริก | Pimento | กวีตชีอะ | Kuadso' |
| ข้าวเปลือก | Paddy | เปะ | Pre |
| ข้าวสาร | Husked rice | ซู | Sū |
| ข้าวเหนียว | Glutinous rice | ซูบเปริ้ว | Subprao |
| หว่านข้าว, ปลูกข้าว | To sow rice, to plant rice | จ๋วมเปริ้ว | Chuampre |
| เกี่ยวข้าว | To cut rice | ไโลเปริ้ว | Laipre |
| รวมต้นข้าว เป็นพ่อน | To bind rice in sheaves | เปริ้วเปริ้ว | Pro'mpre |
| ต้มข้าว หุงข้าว | To boil rice | อ่วมีก | Oamò |
| ครก ตำข้าว | Mortar | เทจี่ | Thēchwe |
| สาก ตำข้าว | Pestle | ตีกจ้อ | Dokchò |
| หม้อข้าว | Ricepot | นู้ดเก๊า | Nudkao |
| ไร่ | Rai (Hill rice- field) | ติ | Ti |
| ควาย, กระบือ | Buffalo | ต๋อะ | Tu'à |
| วัว, โคตัวผู้ | Ox, bullock | ยู่สียู่ | Yusiyu |
| วัวกระทิง, วัวป่า | Sladang (Bison) | ยู่โก | Yukò |
| วัวตัวเมีย | Cow | แม่ยู่ | Mēyu |
| แพะ | Goat | ชิ | Chi |
| แมว | Cat | มี | Mi |
| หมา | Dog | ติ | Ti |

คำ ตาม

คำ แปล

| ไทย | English | แม่ | Mĕo |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| เห่า | To bark | ตอะ | Tò |
| กัด | To bite | โจ๊ะ | Chòà |
| หมู | Pig | อึ๊ปัว | U'pua |
| กวาง | Sambhur (Deer) | ม้อลือ | Mòl'u' |
| กระรอก | Squirrel | น่านเจือรฟานกั๊ | Nāncho'r fānkua |
| หนู | Rat | จิว | Chua |
| หมูป่า | Wild boar | ม้อดตี | Mòdtī |
| ลิง | Monkey | ยะ | Yà |
| เสือดำ | Leopard | จือใจ | Chòchai |
| เสือ | Tiger | จือ | Chò |
| หมี | Bear | ตาย | Dāy |
| ม้า | Horse | เหหนึ่ง | Hneng |
| ช้าง | Elephant | เจือะ | So' |
| เขาควาง | Buffalo horn | โห๊ะโปะกั๊ | Hoboku |
| เขี้ยวหมูป่า | Wild boar's tusk | แนหมูตี | Nēmūtī |
| ตัวผู้ | Male | ตอกั๊วะ | Tòkuà |
| ตัวเมีย | Female | ตุนี๊ว | Tuniaò |
| นก | Bird | เนา | Naow |
| ไก่ตัวผู้ | Cock | หุ้เจ๊ไก | Tulaokai |
| ไก่ตัวเมีย | Hen | ตูป้อไก | Tupòkai |
| เป็ด | Duck | ฮั๊ว | Àw |
| อีกร | Crow | อ๊ะ | Oà |
| นกเขา | Turtle-dove | หุ๊ว | Hūwà |
| ปากนก | Beak | ก้องอ้วเจ๊าะ | Kōngu'wchò |

คำ ถาม

คำ แปล

| ไทย | English | แม่ | Məo |
|------------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| ปีกนก | Wing | จิวัด | Chuati |
| ขนนก | Feather | ไ้เระ | Bōrà |
| รัง, รังนก | Nest | ตื้อ | Tū' |
| ไข่ | Egg | เกะ | Ke |
| ออกไข่ | To lay eggs | เต็กเกะ | Tekke |
| บิน | To fly | ยามู | Yāmū |
| ปลา | Fish | อั้ง | U'chē |
| หอย | Shell | จันนี่ | Chinnà |
| หูกปลา | Fin | เต๊ะไฮจ๊ะ | Tòhōcheyà |
| ปู | Crab | เต๋าจ๊ะ | Taochī |
| เต่าบก | Land tortoise | วักกี | Wòkki |
| เต่าน้ำจืด | River tortoise | วักกีเต๊ะ | Wòkkide |
| งู | Serpent | น๊ะ | Nà |
| จิ้งจก, จิ้งเหลน | Lizard | นัดจ๊ะ | Nàdchià |
| กบ | Frog | กัม | Kāng |
| กึ่งคก (คางคก) | Toad | น๊ะกิด | Nàkòdī |
| แมลงวัน | Fly | หยิง | Yong |
| ยุง | Mosquito | หยงไก | Yongkai |
| ผีเสื้อ | Butterfly | ปุมไข่ | Pumpai |
| หนอน | Caterpillar | ก๊ะ | Kà |
| มด | Ant | เจ้า | Chao |
| แมลงมุม | Spider | ก้าหลูจ๊ะ | Kālūsà |
| ผึ้ง, ตัวผึ้ง | Bee | ต๊ะ | Tà |
| น้ำผึ้ง | Honey | หน่านต๊ะ | Hnāntà |
| ขี้ผึ้ง | Wax | หตจ๊ะ | Hòdchià |

คำ ตาม

คำ แปล

| ไทย | English | มั่ว | Mao |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| เปนนมนุษย์, มนุษย์ ชาติ | Human being | ต้อ | Tū' |
| คนผู้ ชาย | Man | สิเน็ง | Sineng |
| คนผู้หญิง | Woman | เอ็นไช | Enchai |
| เด็กผู้ชาย | Boy | สิเน็งเปาเน็ | Sineng paonē |
| เด็กผู้หญิง | Girl | สิเน็งเอ็นไช | Sineng enchai |
| เด็กเล็ก ๆ | Child | บิงย้าว | Bingyaow |
| คนแก่ | Old man | เยื่อละเอะ | Yo'lo' |
| ผัว | Husband | จั้งเน็ง | Chineng |
| เมีย | Wife | ตุนีเย | Tunià |
| พ่อ | Father | ชี | Chī |
| แม่ | Mother | เนียะ | Nià |
| ลูกชาย | Son | เยื่อต๊ะ | Yu'atu |
| ลูกสาว | Daughter | ลวงเก๊า | Luangkao |
| หลานชาย ชั้นหนึ่ง | Grandson | ตุนต้อ | Tuntū' |
| หลานสาว ชั้นหนึ่ง | Granddaughter | ไสก้อ | Saikū' |
| พี่ชาย | Elder brother | กุดต๊ะ | Kudtu |
| พี่สาว | Elder sister | เนตตี | Nēti' |
| น้องชาย | Younger brother | ก้อ | Kū' |
| น้องสาว | Younger sister | กะเม๊ะ | Kumò |
| ตัว, ร่างกาย | Body | กุดลิจ | Kuluchi |
| หัว, ศรีษะ | Head | อูตตะโห้ | Udtāhō |
| ผม | Hair | กูปปะโห้ | Kubprāhō |
| หน้า | Face | จันจ้อ | Chānchū' |
| หน้าผาก | Forehead | โห้ปะรีย | Hoprià |

คำ ตาม

คำ แปล

| ไทย | English | แม่ | M̄eo |
|-------------------|------------|------------------|----------------|
| ตา, ลูกตา | Eye | เทมวี่, เจ๊ะมวี่ | Themua, chemua |
| แก้ม | Cheek | พลู่ | Phlū |
| หู | Ear | อ้อเจ๊ะ | Ū'che |
| จะหมูก, ตะหมูก | Nose | สีเต๋มย้อ | Sitaoyū' |
| ปาก | Mouth | หารโจ๊ะ | Hārcho |
| ฟัน | Tooth | เนย | Nià |
| ลิ้น | Tongue | อึ้นลาย | U'nlây |
| ขากรรไกร, ขาตะไกร | Jaw | สีปะโจ | Sàpàchai |
| หนวดที่คาง | Beard | ฟู้จี้ | Fūchu' |
| คอ | Neck | จ๊ะตี๋ | Chàdā |
| บ่า | Shoulder | สิบ้อ | Sibū' |
| รักแร้ | Armpit | เขาเจ๊ะ | Khaochò |
| แขน | Arm | เจ๊ะปะ | Chòbà |
| มือ | Hand | ติดเต๊ะ | Tidte |
| มือขวา | Right hand | ซ๊ะลี้ | Sàsī |
| มือซ้าย | Left hand | ซ๊ะเลา | Sàlao |
| นิ้ว | Finger | ตี๋สง | Disung |
| เล็บ | Nail | โจ๊ะเต๊ะ | Chote |
| อก, หัวอก | Chest | เพ็ยะเฉ็ยะ | Phià chià |
| นม | Breasts | หมี | Hmi |
| ท้อง | Belly | ปล๊ะ | Plà |
| สะดือ | Navel | อ้อ เต๋ยว | Ū'to'w |
| สันหลัง | Back | อ้อเต๊ะเกา | Ū'tàkao |
| ขาอ่อน | Thigh | เจ๊กกะ | Chekkà |
| เข่า หัวเข่า | Knee | เหนาโจ๊ะ | Naocho |

คำ ถาม

คำ แปล

| ไทย | English | แม่ | Māo |
|---------------|-----------------------|------------|------------|
| ขา | Leg | จ๊ะโด้: | Chàlo |
| ต้น, เท้า | Foot | เต็อ | Tò' |
| หัวแม่ต้น | Toe | ติเต็อโด้: | Dito'so |
| หนัง | Skin | เติงไก่อ | To'ngkai |
| เนื้อ | Flesh | อ้อไก่อ | Ū'kai |
| ขน | Hair (on the body) | โปล๊ะ: | Pòlà (plo) |
| กระดูก | Bone | ป๋ะ: | Pàsà |
| เลือด | Blood | เล็ง | Leng |
| น้ำตา | Tear | ไก่อมม๊ะ | Kòmmuà |
| เหงื่อ, เหือด | Sweat | ผ็อ | Phū' |
| น้ำนม | Milk | ก้อมิ | Komi |
| น้ำปัสสาวะ | Urine | เจ้ายี่ | Chaoyi |
| คนจีน, แจก | Chinaman | ชิวติ | Chuadi |
| คนไทย, ไทย | Siamese (thai) | กู๋โหล้ง | Kūlōng |
| กินข้าว | To eat rice | น:เหม๊ะ: | Nàmò |
| กินน้ำ | To drink | หกเต๊ะ: | Hòkte |
| กินเหล้า | To drink spirits | เห่าเจอะ: | Haocho' |
| เมา | To be drunk | เก่าจาว | Kaochaow |
| เกลือ | Salt | จี้ | Chi |
| น้ำตาล | Sugar | เป่ทีะ | Pethà |
| น้ำมัน | Oil fat | เจ๊ะ: | Chò |
| เสื้อ | Coat | เซอะ | Chò |
| กางเกง | Trousers | จี้ | Chi |
| ผ้าปู | Loin cloth | ทู่ทง | Thuthong |
| เข็มขัด | Girdle | เตอเวทอิ | Tò'sēsī |

คำ ถาม

คำ แปล

| ไทย | English | แม่ | Měo |
|----------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| ผ้าโพกหัว | Turban | ผ้า | Phwà |
| กระดุม | Button | ข้อเคา | Yū'khaow |
| เกือก | Shoes | เคา | Khao |
| แหวน | Ring | อีพลัย | U'phlay |
| หมวก | Hat | โก่หมาะ | Kōmò |
| ต่างหู | Earring | กอนยู | Kōnyī |
| กำไลมือ | Bracelet | ตัมปะ | Tumpà |
| กำไลต้น | Anklet | สุกะเต๊ะ | Sukàto' |
| สร้อยคอ | Necklace | โต๊ะนะ | Tonà |
| ผ้าสำลี | Cotton cloth | อีเต้า | U'tao |
| ผ้าแพร | Silk cloth | ตัมปัว | Tompua |
| เย็บ | To sew | เซ็ย | So'r |
| ถอดเสื้อผ้า | To undress | มัวจ๊ะระถด | Muachàràthod |
| นิคม, หมู่บ้าน | Village | อีเอยะ | Iəyà |
| ฟาง | Straw | โคมปรี | Khōmprī |
| บ้านเรือน | House | ฉี่ | Chī |
| ประตู | Door | เขาตุ้ตี๊ะ | Khaotutà |
| หลังคา | Roof | เข้าฉี่ | Chaochī |
| ไม้กระดาน | Timber | เจ็ยะ | Chià |
| ไม้ไผ่ | Bamboo | ซิ่ง | Sung |
| หวาย | Rattan | ก๊ะทัง | Kathing |
| เสื่อ | Mat | เล | Lē |
| ตะเกียง | Lamp | ติง | Ting |
| เตาไฟ | Hearth | ฉื่อเต๊ะ | Chū'to' |
| ฟืน | Fuel | จันเต๊ะ | Chānto' |

คำ ถาม

คำ แปล

| ไทย | English | แม่ | Mèo |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|---------------|
| ไม้กวาด | Broom | เท็ดัว | Thētua |
| กระดาษ | Paper | อึดอว | U'tō'w |
| น้ำหมึก | Ink | เมีะ | Me |
| เขียน | To write | ซ่มเตอว | Sumtō'w |
| อ่าน | To read | เอยิ่นเตอว | Eyontō'w |
| หนังสือ | Letters | ปิ่นเตอว | Pintō'w |
| เกียน, เกวียน, กระเทียม | Cart | คู้ | Si |
| กระสุน, เกาทัณฑ์ | Bow | ฟือ | Fò |
| ลูกศร | Arrow | เหิน | Hneng |
| มีด | Knife | มิยวเตียะ | Miyuatià |
| เลื่อย | Saw | เดือว | Du'ow |
| ขวาน | Axe | เต้า | Tao |
| ค้อน | Hammer | กิลลา | Ku'là |
| เสียม | Spade | ซิ่ง | Song |
| ไถ | Plough | วังจิ่งดี | Wong chēng tí |
| วัน | Day | นูนะ | Nunò |
| คืน | Night | มอนอะ | Mōno' |
| เวลาใกล้รุ่ง | Dawn | ไก้กะวะ | Kaikuà |
| เช้า | Morning | เหมจเฉา | Chēmchao |
| เที่ยง | Noon | นุ้จ | Nuchē |
| บ่าย | Afternoon | นุ้ไก้ | Nukai |
| เย็น | Evening | นุ้ไย่ปะง | Nuyopong |
| เดือน | Month | ลินา | Lìnà |
| ปี | Year | ซุงนา | Sungnā |
| ปีกลาย | Last year | ซงตาเลือะ | Sungtāl'u'à |

คำ ถาม

คำ แปล

| ไทย | English | มอวี | Məo |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| ปีหน้า | Next year | ดี้อหลุเซียง | Tòlusiang |
| เมื่อวานนี้ | Yesterday | นูนา | Nunà |
| เมื่อวันก่อนนี้ | The day before yesterday | เต๊ะกั | Teki |
| วันนี้ | To day | ก้านตุ | Kāntu |
| พรุ่งนี้ | To morrow | นูนาตะกั | Nunàtākī |
| มวันนี้ | The day after to morrow | เบอลี่นู | Bō'lū'nu |
| ฤดู | Season | โปลี่โน้อู | Bosīno-u |
| ฤดูหนาว | The cold season | กู ๆ เล๊ะ | Kukule |
| ฤดูฝน | The rainy season | มะติละนะ | Màtilànà |
| ไป | To go | โม | Mō |
| มา | To come | พา | Là |
| ขี่ม้า | To ride | เจ๊ะเน็ง | Cheneng |
| เดิน | To walk | มูก๊ะเตาลี | Mūkàtaoli |
| วิ่ง | To run | เต่านิกเทีย | Taonikthià |
| ลุกขึ้น | To rise | เซื่อห่มู | Sō'lmū |
| ยืน | To stand | เหยา | Yao |
| นั่ง | To sit down | เหยาไฮโล | Yaohailō |
| นอน | To lie down | บ้อ | Bū' |
| นอนหลับ | To sleep | บ้อจោอะ | Bū'chao-ayà |
| ตื่น | To wake | เซ้าลา | Saolā |
| ปลุก | To awaken | เซอละมละ | Sō'lālè |
| เห็น หา | To see, look for | อ้อ เจ้ย | U'chià |
| ได้ยิน | To hear | เลอหู่กุนนอ | Lo'hūkunnō |
| เสียงดัง | Noise | หูด่อนตลือ | Hūdōntlō |
| ดม | To smell | เนียง | Nià |

คำ ถาม

คำ แปล

| ไทย | English | แม่ | Mɛo |
|------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| กลิ่นหอม | To smell sweet | เนียบกกระเด็ยะ | Niakkàdià |
| กลิ่นเหม็น | To stink | จี้จี้ | Chuchu li |
| พูด | To speak | บัก้าอช | Bikãosi |
| หัวเราะ | To laugh | กุกหลนคนตลือ | Kulondontlò |
| ร้องไห้ | To weep | มิยอแก้ว | Miyò kua |
| ร้องตะโกน | To shout | กลัดคนตลือ | Klu'khontlò |
| ไอ | To cough | หนง | Hnong |
| ถ่มน้ำลาย | To spit | เตะโกนโจ | Tòkõnchõ |
| หาว | To yawn | ตัวลย | Tualò |
| หิว | To be hungry | ใช้หมอใช้ติ | Chaimò chaidi |
| หิวน้ำ, ออยากน้ำ | To be thirsty | ไค่ๆ เต | Khai khai dè |
| ดูด | To suck | โห่ยงกา | Hõyingkã |
| อาบน้ำ | To bathe | กู่ตีะเมต | Kudàdè |
| ล้างหน้า ล้างมือ | To wash (face, hands) | ใช้มัวโจะเต | Sõmuachotè |
| หวีผม | To comb | ฮือเต้าซา | U'taochao |
| หวี | Comb | ยัว | Yua |
| โกน | To shave | กือเต้าซา | Kũ'taochao |
| เจ็บ, ป่วย | Ill, sick | เป๊ะๆ เฮงๆ | Bò bò hēng hēng |
| ไข้ | Fever | เม้าเบิง | Maobõ'ng |
| ลงท้องร่วง | Diarrhoea | เหือกแก้ว | Hoekua |
| ไปถ่ายอุจจาระ | To stool | เจ๊กแก้ว | Chaokua |
| ไปถ่ายปัสสาวะ | To urinate | มู้อ่า | Musã |
| ยา | Medicine | ชิว | Chua |
| หูหนวก | Deaf | ลานเจี | Lãnce |

คำ ตาม

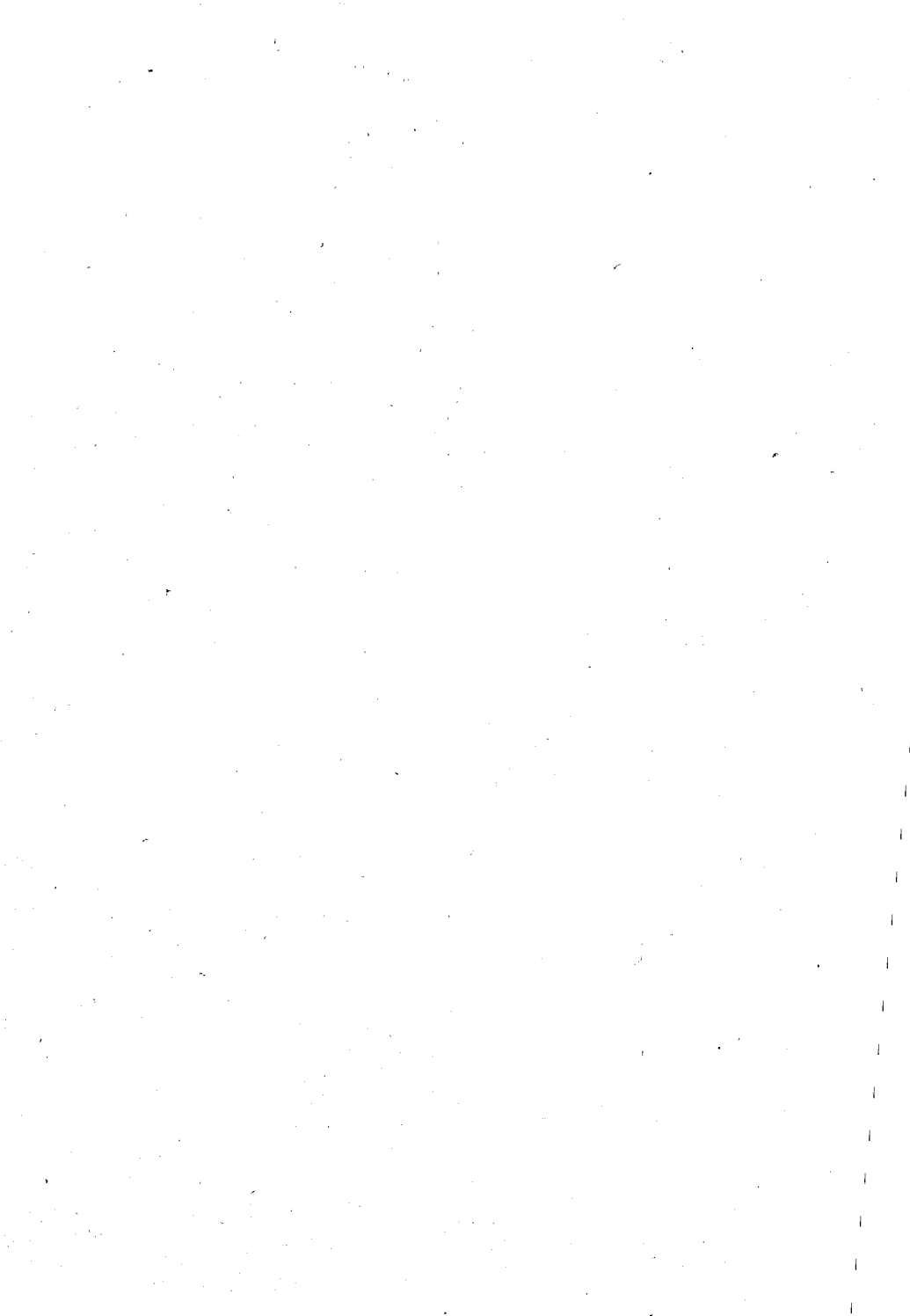
คำ แปล

| ไทย | English | แม่ริ้ว | Mèo |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| ขาเสีย, ขากระเผลก | Lame | จี้เตอว | Chīto'w |
| หลังโก่ง | Hunchback. | เหล้าโก่งๆเต | Laokōng kōngde |
| เกิด | To be born | อญมิ่งยัว | Yūmingyua |
| ตาย | To die | ต้ว | Tua |
| ฉัน, แก่ฉัน | I, me | จี้มือพอ | Chāmū'lō |
| บิดาของฉัน | My father | กุดจี้ | Kudchī |
| ลูกของเรา | Our child | กุดตุ้ | Kudtu |
| ต้นไม้สูง | A high tree | โหดั่งเส้ล | Hōtongsēlē |
| ใครมา | Who goes there | ต้อต้ว | Tū'tuà |
| ท่านว่าอะไร | What are you saying ? | กะหริจี้ | Kāhārichā |
| หนึ่ง | One | อึ | ī |
| สอง | Two | อ้อ | ò |
| สาม | Three | บลี้ | Bli |
| สี่ | Four | โบลี้ | Blō |
| ห้า | Five | จิว | Chiu |
| หก | Six | ซา | Sā |
| เจ็ด | Seven | เตลา | Tlao |
| แปด | Eight | อयी | Ayī |
| เก้า | Nine | จิวะ | Chuà |
| สิบ | Ten | เก้ | Kao |
| สามสิบ | Thirty | ปี้เจ้า (บลีเจ้า) | Bichao (blichao) |
| สี่สิบ | Forty | โบลีเจ้า | Blōchao |
| ห้าสิบ | Fifty | จิวเจ้า | Chiuchao |
| หกสิบ | Sixty | ซาเจ้า | Sāchao |

คำ ตาม

คำ แปล

| ไทย | English | แม่ | Mèo |
|------------|-------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| เจ็ดสิบ | Seventy | เตลาเจ้า | Tlao chao |
| แปดสิบ | Eighty | อयीเจ้า | Ayichao |
| เก้าสิบ | Ninety | จิวะเจ้า | Chua chao |
| ร้อยหนึ่ง | One hundred | ฮี้ป้อ | Ipō |
| สองร้อย | Two hundred | ฮ้อป้อ | Opō |
| สามร้อย | Three hundred | ฮี้ป้อ | Bipō |
| สี่ร้อย | Four hundred | เปล้าป้อ | Plaopō |
| ห้าร้อย | Five hundred | เจ้าป้อ | Chaopō |
| พันหนึ่ง | One thousand | ฮี้เซ็ง | Icheng |
| หมื่นหนึ่ง | Ten thousand | นึ่งฮ้อป้อ | Nu'ngōpō |
| แสนหนึ่ง | One hundred thousand | เก้าเซ็ง | Kaoseng |
| ล้านหนึ่ง | One million | หนึ่งเก้าเซ็ง | Nu'ngkaoseng |



Translator's Note.

The foregoing paper on the "White Meo" has been written, as will be seen from the translation, by Luang Boriphandh Dhuratsadorn, District Officer of San Mahāpon in the Province of Chieng Mai, Circle of Bayab, at the request of the former Viceroy, Lieutenant General His Serene Highness Prince Bovaradej. His Serene Highness, as soon as he was approached by the Siam Society with regard to obtaining information about the non-Thai population living in the two Circles under his rule, whole-heartedly took up the work, with the praiseworthy result that six papers have so far been contributed. It is to be hoped sincerely that his good example will be followed by other Viceroys who, in doing so, would be instrumental in increasing our knowledge of the races living under their charge to a hitherto unknown extent, and who would thereby greatly facilitate all comparative studies of anthropology, ethnography, and philology, as well as make a rational classification of all these tribes possible.

The paper now under review has been written in a very painstaking and elaborate manner, and is, so far, the best received from Siamese contributors. The author might have referred to the Meo in somewhat less disparaging terms, but in most other respects the paper deserves high praise, and shows keen powers of observation on his part.

The Meo are, of course, not indigenous to Siam but immigrants of a very recent date, as they also are in the French Lao States and Tonkin. Readers, who desire more knowledge about the Meo than is given in this paper are recommended to read the works of Major Davies (1), the Rev. Clarke (2), Vicomte d'Ollone (3), Mr. Graham (4), and last, but not least, Father Savina's excel-

(1) Major H. R. Davies, "Yunnan, the link between India and Yangtze", 1909.

(2) Rev. Samuel Clarke, "Among the tribes of South West China", 1911.

(3) Vicomte d'Ollone, "In Forbidden China", 1912.

(4) W. A. Graham, "Siam", 1912.

lent 'Miao-tseu' dictionary (1), (mentioned under "Language" at the end of this note). The above-mentioned books give, in the aggregate, a considerable amount of information about the Meo, though it seems as if the standard work dealing with the history, manners, customs, and geographical distribution of this remarkable people had yet to be written. Interesting information about the Meo living in the hills to the East and North-East of Luang Phrabang is also given by Lieutenant General Chao Phraya Surisak Montri, published in "สถิติ ธรรมชาติ ต่างๆ ภาค ที่ ๕ ว่า ด้วย ชาวป่า ชาติ ต่างๆ" published by the National Library.

Personally I have only met with Meo on one occasion, and that was in the Dansai district in 1909. About 150 Meo had settled on the ridge of a range of hills called Khao Hin Songga, and as their favorite crop was clearly seen to be opium, I had several times to send gendarmerie patrols to compel them to root up the opium plants. Not long afterwards they left our territory and returned to Luang Phrabang in the French Lao States. I cannot therefore give much personal information about the Meo and, in the notes which follow, I have borrowed freely from the authors already mentioned, as well as from certain French publications on the French Lao States, as for instance Raquez(2), but especially from Lunet de Lajonquière's excellent ethnographical study of the tribes of Tonkin(3).

According to Archibald Little(4), whose work on the vast empire of China also gives some information about the Meo, the latter represent the original tribes who came from the West via

(1) Father F. M. Savina, "Dictionnaire Miaotseu-Français" in "Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient", Vol. 16.

(2) Raquez, "Feuilles Laotiemés"; also his interesting "Collection" of photographs of most of the different tribes found in French Indo-China, which can be bought as postcards in Saigon.

(3) Commandant Lunet de Lajonquière, "Ethnographie du Tonkin septentrional", 1906.

(4) Archibald Little, "The Far East", 1904.

Turkestan to the valley of the Hoang Ho several thousand years B. C. This hypothesis is strongly supported by the Rev. Clarke from the philological point of view (see end of this note). The tradition of the Meo themselves (who are called "Miao-tseu"⁽²⁾ by the Chinese) says that they came from the province of Kiangsi to their present homes in the province of Kweichow and, as traces of the Meo language are still found in certain dialects of Kiangsi, this tradition may be correct. The word Miao (which has become Meo in Siamese) is not the name used by the people to describe themselves; their proper name is 'M'peo' or 'Mong.' The history of the Meo is that of an incessant, bitter struggle with the ever-encroaching Chinese, who slowly but surely absorbed them; the Thai, the Yao and the Lolo all undergoing the same treatment as well. According to the ancient chronicles, this struggle began 4000 years ago and is still going on, but of the many independent (until recent times) rulers of the Meo tribes, none are now left; all have been brought under the Chinese rule of squeeze and tyranny. Many of the Meo clans, unwilling to endure Chinese oppression, have emigrated from Chinese territory and settled within the French and Siamese boundaries, where they are treated well. In Siam they are found only in the two Circles of Phak Bayab, but in French Indo-China their settlements occur in large numbers both in Tonkin and in the Lao States. In the French Lao States the Meo live particularly in the "commisariats" of Hoa Phan, Luang Phrabang, Chieng Kwang, Wiengchan, Cammon and Mu'ang Sing. According to the census published in 1920 they numbered altogether about 25,000 souls. In Tonkin there were about 40,000⁽³⁾ while, according to a letter just received from Luang Boriphandh, the Meo living in his district num-

(2) The suffix "tseu-chi" or "chia" is a term of contempt given to the Meo, as to all other non-Chinese, by the Chinese, signifying "barbarian".

(3) Both the figures for the Lao States as well as for Tonkin must be taken as approximate, as in the French "Annuaire" the Meo are often numbered together with other tribes.

ber altogether 364 persons. He adds that his Meo do not live in actual villages, but in groups of 4 or 5 houses. Figures for the other Meo, who live in Siam, have not been obtainable.

In China the principal home of these people is in the Province of Kweichow, a high-lying labyrinth of hills and valleys mostly void of tree-vegetation. Of the surface of this country barely one fifth is cultivated or even arable. Some very large fresh-water lakes are also found there, like the Weining Lake which is 50 miles long and in some places 20 miles broad. The population of Kweichow is, according to the Rev. Clarke, between 7 and 10 millions, say 8 millions, of whom about one half are Chinese (mostly emigrants from Szechwan or an older stock consisting of Chinese soldier-colonists originally married to Meo or Thai wives), while the other half is made up of Meo, Chung chia (Thai), and I-Chia. As the Chung chia are as numerous as the Meo and I-chia together, and the Meo again are much more numerous than the I-chia, we may assume, as fairly correct, the figure of two millions for the Thai, one and a half million for the Meo and half a million for the I-chia. But to the above must be added the Meo living in the provinces of Yunnan, Hunan and Kwangsi, in which last province, according to Arch. Little, they number one half of the population, or about four millions. (I am inclined to think that Mr. Little is not correct here, but that most of the so-called Meo in Kwangsi are Thai). On the above basis we should thus arrive at a figure exceeding 8 millions for the whole Meo race. The Chinese census is, however, manifestly unreliable, and I do not think that any further calculations would be profitable; suffice it to say that the Meo are still very numerous, and that their disappearance is as yet far off.

Authorities on the Meo race are not as yet agreed about its place in the human family. Anthropologically speaking, there can be hardly any doubt that the Meo belong to the Mongol race. The Rev. Clarke, whose study of the Meo (of whom, in 1912, more than 50,000 had been converted to Christianity) extends over more than 30 years,

maintains that their language appears to be more like Mandarin Chinese than those spoken by the Chungchia, I-chia or Keh-Lao, and that this point to a common origin with the Chinese. Father Savina wisely refrains from any speculations with regard to their origin; not so, however, Major Davies, who boldly places the Meo (and Yao) language among those of the Mon-Khmer people, and gives a comparative list of "capital" words by which he tries to prove his theory. But is he as sure of his anthropological data? There are admittedly many similarities between the languages of the Mon-Khmer group and that of the Meo, but these similarities may be due to borrowings from Mon-Khmer people, who formerly occupied the land now held by the Meo. The Meo admit readily that the province of Kweichow was inhabited by a people called Keh-Lao (who, by the way, are *not* connected with the Lao of Siam or French territory), before they entered and conquered it, but state that, at that time, they almost exterminated the Keh-Lao, of whom only 200,000 families and numerous "tumuli" (known as the tombs of the Keh-Lao) now form the sad remnants. The Rev. Clarke says that the Keh-Lao resemble the Meo physically, but that their language is very different from the Meo and other languages spoken in the province of Kwei-Chow. They may represent a branch of the Mon-Khmer people, but those elements in the Meo language, which resemble Mon-Khmer certainly did not come from the latter, as the Rev. Clarke's vocabulary shows, but from some other source.

With regard to the history of the Meo, we have chiefly to rely on Chinese documents which are anything but reliable; but it may be noted that the present General Vicomte d'Ollone, during his great expedition to the interior and partly unknown regions of China from 1906 to 1909, claimed to have discovered, among other things, that *the Meo do possess a written language and records of their own*. The fact has been stoutly denied by all other authors, who at the utmost will only admit that the Meo have a tradition that they once possessed characters of their own, but that these have been lost. The

details of d'Ollone's discovery have probably been published in the scientific edition of his narrative, to which I regret to say I have not had access.

Luang Boriphandh says, with regard to the religious beliefs of the Meo, that they do not worship any God or gods, and have no priests or temples (1); still the Meo do have traditions about a heavenly king, the creation, and a deluge. They are undoubtedly animists, as are all the non-Buddhist people of Eastern Asia, but they believe in a soul and a future existence. The Rev. Clarke complains in his book about the sexual immorality of the Meo which, as far as can be gathered, is a special feature of their annual festivals. Their festivals are celebrated with much dancing, music, revelry, and "promenades" of the young people. I think that at least one of these festivals, that celebrated at springtime, must be the same as the spring-festival of the Tho (Thai) in Tonkin, which is still celebrated every year, and is associated with much merriment and sexual intercourse between the young folk. (Lt. Colonel Bonifacy has written a very interesting article on the festival in the B. E. F. E. O.(2)). The same subject has also been treated by Granet(3) in his description of the ancient festivals and songs of China, of which a masterly review by Profeseor H. Maspero appears in the B. E. F. E. O.(4). These festivals, both at spring and autumn, had and still have a religious meaning; the sacrifice to the earth god, the dancing,

(1) With regard to temples, Dr. C. Hosseus, a German botanist, who travelled in Siam during the years 1904-1906, mentions, however, that he saw a temple built by Meo at the foot of Doi Sudeb, near Chieng Mai (See C. C. Hosseus, "Durch König Tschulalongkorns Reich", p. 81.).

(2) See Lt. Colonel A. L. M. Bonifacy, "La fête Tay du Hô-Bo" in Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, vol XV, part 3., p. 17--23.

(3) Granet, "Fêtes et chansons anciennes de la Chine", 1919.

(4) B. E. F. E. O., vol. XIX, part 5. pp. 65--75.

the playing of games, and finally the sexual union of the young people were all viewed as necessary to propagate agriculture and the whole well-being of the community. It is now generally accepted that the Chinese had just the same customs and festivals in ancient times, and that these were later abolished when ideas of morality became more strict, but they still exist and linger among the more primitive communities, as among the Thai in Tonkin and our Meo. As Lt. Colonel Bonifacy says, these customs take us back to the earlier days of Western Civilisation in Syria and Babylonia, to the rites and cult of Adonis and Mylitta, and represent perhaps a common stage of human evolution. As for the Meo, who live in Siam, I do not think they can be considered a valuable asset to the country, so long as they destroy the forests by their crude hill-cultivation and continue to be such obstinate opium smokers, for it has now been proved that a great deal of the illicit opium consumed in this country comes from the hill-people in the North.

The Rev. Clarke also says that the Meo are easy to govern; they may be so perhaps in Siam, but not always in French territory, since in 1915 a small campaign had to be conducted against a Meo tribe in Mu'ang Sing, who, instigated by German agents from China, rebelled and killed a French Commissioner. Whether they are easy to govern or not, the Meo are said to be good fighters and to have opposed large Chinese armies bravely and stubbornly in former times.

Although the Meo language has already been mentioned in connection with the origins of this people, a few words about its construction will not be out of place here. The vocabulary contributed by Luang Boriphandh has been translated according to the rules laid down in the "Questionnaire" of the Siam Society, and each individual word compared with the corresponding word in the vocabularies of Major Davies and the Rev. Clarke, but by far the greatest help has been obtained from the learned Rev. Father Savina's Miao-French, and French-Miao dictionary, which has already been referred to in this note. Father Savina is, as far as I am

aware, the first and only scholar to have taken up seriously the study of this interesting but highly difficult language. One would have thought that the Missionaries of the China Inland Mission, who have worked among the Meo in the Province of Kweichow and Yunnan for more than 40 years, would have contributed something to our knowledge of their tongue, but such does not seem to be the case. The remarks which follow are, therefore, mainly taken from Father Savina's dictionary.

The Meo language is monosyllabic and tonic, wholly different as well from Chinese, Lolo and Annamite, as from Tho and Yao(1), but has, like all the other languages mentioned, borrowed a great number of words from Chinese. The Meo speak a number of somewhat different dialects, one of the chief differences between them being that the final vowel 'A' in the dialect of the White Meo becomes 'Ang' in the dialect of the black and green Meo. There are five tones in the Meo language, and each syllable is always pronounced with an extremely short and compressed sound. The surrounding Thai people say that the Meo do not speak, but whistle, and that they whistle through the nose at that! Few alphabets are so overburdened with nasal tones as that of the Meo who, in addition, speak very quickly, at the same time swallowing their words and thereby making themselves still more unintelligible.

The nouns have no inflections of gender, number and case, the verbs are also invariable, there being neither tense, mood, nor number. In phrasing, the construction is very simple; as a rule the subject is placed before the verb, and the object after the verb; the adjective after the noun, and the adverb after the verb which it modifies (as in Siamese). By comparing the 328 words (numbers excluded) contained in the vocabulary of Luang Boriphandh, with the vocabularies of Major Davies and the Rev. Clarke (as far as comparison can be made, since both the latter vocabularies are rather

(1) I do not think that many will agree with Father Savina with regard to this theory.

short and incomplete), it was found that 49 words differed. By comparing these same words with Father Savina's dictionary, with which a better comparison can be made, it was seen that 106 words differed, either entirely or in part, while 37 of the words given by Luang Boriphandh are not mentioned at all. This leaves us 185 words common to both vocabularies (or about two-thirds only), which goes to show that the dialect spoken in Tonkin and in the North of Siam are somewhat different. It may be added that the dialect spoken in Tonkin more closely resembles those spoken in Kweichow and Yunnan; on the other hand, many of the differences met with in Luang Boriphandh's vocabulary may be due to an untrained ear having misunderstood the replies given by the Meo to the questioner. As will be seen from the translation, Luang Boriphandh does not claim to be infallible, but modestly admits the difficulty of his task. Finally a word about the physical features of the Meo; in the beginning of his paper Luang Boriphandh says that the height of these people is only 1.5m which of course is quite absurd as that would be the height of pigmies and not of ordinary human beings. I regret, however, having been unable to find any exact figures in all the works consulted, but Major Davis says that they are of medium height, so we may take it at that.

