

proper work of the Institute was supposed to have been mainly linguistic research, and Fu Maoji was often the brunt of criticism on account of the literacy work that did take place. Those in administrative positions above the Institute also suffered criticism for the same reason.

But the criticism of that period, while it was heavy-handed and couched in tough language, only amounted to “mouth and pen drills” in the end. With the advent of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, one suffered not only verbal punishment and written attacks, but also soul-wrenchings and physical abuse. Of all the members of the Institute who became objects of criticism and struggle, Fu Maoji’s period of suffering was the longest and the most pitiful. In fact, a majority of people within the Institute were sympathetic toward him; the group who wanted to ostracize him were only a minority, and they were people lacking in human values. But the great power of the Cultural Revolution was in their hands.

After all this was over, a well-intentioned person once asked, “Do you regret having returned to China?” Without hesitation, Fu Maoji replied: “To this day I have no regrets!” I, on the other hand—I was the one with regrets, with remorse. Suppose I had not urged him to come back so soon; suppose he had avoided that catastrophe and had come back only afterwards! Not only would his linguistic materials, so painstakingly gathered in such remote areas, not have been destroyed, but more importantly, his most valuable years would not have been wasted. (Fu Maoji was 55 in 1966.) For twelve years, he was unable to write on linguistics, and instead was forced to account for himself by writing extorted confessions. Suppose Fu Maoji had not suffered all that stigma and persecution—he would surely have lived a few more years, perhaps another ten. His work was not finished; but though he bitterly regretted this, there was no avoiding his final departure from our midst.

It should be remarked, however, that a group of excellent and talented researchers in the field of minority languages was trained and encouraged under his guidance, and that Fu Maoji is well remembered by people of many nationalities in China as well as by fellow linguists around the world. Their expressions of sympathy and regret on his passing were many and heartfelt. Perhaps I might add, too, that the publication of this early monograph on the grammar of Yi, the work for which he received his PhD from Cambridge University so long ago, is surely testimony to his lasting contribution and reputation. My sincere thanks go to James Matisoff at Berkeley, the editor of this volume, for persevering in his vision of this project and bringing to completion a fitting tribute to the memory of my lifetime companion, Fu Maoji. And my wish for the future is that scholarly exchange between China and the United States can remain lively forever, in every season and kind of weather!

FOREWORD

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Translated by Fu Jingqi

A Descriptive Grammar of the Yi Language was a doctoral thesis written by my late husband Fu Maoji forty years ago for Cambridge University, England. As his wife, I am very grateful that Dr. Matisoff has edited it for publication in *LTBA*, and cannot think of a better way to honor his memory.

Originally, the thesis, following its successful defense, was scheduled for future publication in an Oriental Studies Monograph Series at Cambridge University. Shortly after returning to China, Fu Maoji received a letter from Dr. Joseph Needham expressing interest in publishing the thesis. However, in 1951, Fu Maoji had just completed a teaching manual for the Yi language. He had developed several new ideas and wanted to revise the thesis before its publication. He therefore did not respond to Dr. Needham immediately.

Later, unfortunately, during the Cultural Revolution, the raw material that Fu Maoji had taken so much pain to collect was in peril. Among the materials confiscated from him were included the Yi inscriptions and manuscripts he had collected at Daliangshan, some of the manuscripts being unique copies. These materials belonged not only to Fu Maoji but also to the heritage of the Yi people. If one goes to Daliangshan today, these materials can no longer be found.

After the Cultural Revolution, Fu Maoji received several requests from linguists working on Sino-Tibetan languages to quote from his thesis. He therefore decided to revise it in order to make it available to the linguistic community. In 1980, he wrote to the chair of the Cambridge Department of Oriental Languages and Literatures to obtain a copy of his thesis. In 1982, after a conference in Chengdu, Fu Maoji conducted field work with Yi teachers at the Minority Research Institute of Sichuan Province and at the Minority University. He recorded his findings in two notebooks, especially some interesting new data on tones. His plan was to complete the revision upon his retirement. There was, however, no time for it.

In 1991, Fu Maoji's good friend, Dr. James Matisoff, following a visit to Xichang and Yunnan, stopped at Beijing to pay me a special visit. He expressed interest in publishing *A Descriptive Grammar of the Yi Language*. He also informed me that according to international conventions, an author has the right to publish his thesis within 50 years of its completion. I accepted his kind offer, but also told Dr. Matisoff that Fu Maoji had wanted to make some revisions about the tones, and suggested that a note be added to that effect. In 1992, I asked a young Yi fellow researcher, Malaziwo, to read the thesis. He believed that the tonal system described was essentially correct, and that any slight revision of the analysis would not have an overall impact on the thesis. Nevertheless, I have taken note of his comments.

During Dr. Matisoff's 1997 visit to Beijing, he took a copy of the thesis with him. When I came to the U.S. to visit my daughters in early 1998, I learned that the thesis was going through the final stages of the pre-publication process, undergoing its third wave of editing. After some discussion with Dr. Matisoff, we agreed that I should add a few notes as a *Foreword*. Here they are.

•In § 21 of his thesis, in a discussion of the name of the Yi Language, Fu Maoji treats Lisu as a dialect of the Yi language. After further investigation, he concluded that Lisu is a separate language of the Yi family, on a par with Hani, Lahu and Naxi (cf. "A Survey of Chinese National Minority languages and writings," *Chinese Language*, March 1954).

•Three tones are described for the Yi language in § 68 of the thesis. In *A Teaching Manual for the Yi Language* (1951), there are four tones listed. This additional tone is indeed sometimes a sandhi tone (it is referred to as such in § 69 of the thesis), but it is also occasionally an independent tone. Phonetically it is a high mid 44 tone, intermediate between the high and mid tones. As a sandhi tone, it arises in the following contexts:

(a) First, as mentioned in the thesis, a yes-no question is formed by reduplicating the verb. If the verb has a low falling 21 tone, then the reduplicated syllable will turn into a high mid 44 tone. Thus, ³³nw ²¹sŋ ²¹sŋ "Do you know?" is realized as ³³nw ²¹sŋ ⁴⁴sŋ.

(b) An example of similar sandhi in a compound involves the morpheme ³³nɔ 'black; aristocratic', which causes a preceding mid tone (33) syllable to acquire the high mid 44 tone:¹

¹ Cf. "Some linguistic reflections of the social structure of the Yi people at Daliangshan" (1982). Paper delivered at the 15th International Conference on Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics, Paris.

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|------|----------------------|------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| (1a) | ³³ ndzŋ + | ³³ nɔ | → | ⁴⁴ ndzŋ ³³ nɔ |
| | Governor | black/aristocrat | | ruling class |
| (1b) | ³³ tchu + | ³³ nɔ | → | ⁴⁴ tchu ³³ nɔ |
| | white/white Yi | black/aristocrat | | governed class |

In *A Teaching Manual for the Yi Language* the high mid 44 tone is treated as an independent tone. This can be seen by contrasts like the following:

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|------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------|
| (2a) | ³³ nw | ⁴⁴ shw | 'look for you' | / | ³³ nw | ²¹ shw | 'you look' |
| (2b) | ⁵⁵ tshŋ | ⁴⁴ tshŋ | / | ³³ tshŋ | ²¹ tshŋ | | |
| | generation | this | | wash | one | | |

In § 161 of the thesis, it is explained that there are two adjectival prefixes, **a-** and **e-**, with the latter being an "unstressed" variant. Actually this **unstressed e-** should now be considered to be in the 44 high mid tone.

•In § 105 of the thesis, there are cited 1058 different Yi written characters, of which 559 are distinctive. These were used by the Yi People in Sikang (≡Xikang), Sichuan. In 1950, in response to a request by the Yi people of Liangshan, an alphabet-based new Yi writing system was designed; it was approved at a 1956 conference on language and writing in Sichuan. The new writing was tried out until the second half of 1958, when the Liangshan Autonomous Yi Region decided to stop promoting it. Instead Mandarin was used in an attempt to get rid of illiteracy. After this unsuccessful episode, it was decided to use the old Yi writing logographically for more than 800 standard words, with the new Yi writing serving concurrently as a phonetic alphabet. Currently the standard Yi writing is being promoted in the Liangshan autonomous region. The writing has been codified, and dictionaries and textbooks have been produced.

As pointed out by Fu Maoji in the Preface to his thesis, although the language data was analyzed with modern linguistic methods, errors cannot be avoided. Further research can only improve the results. Fu Maoji's own generation of scholars, as well as younger scholars, have since made substantial progress in Yi language studies.

I will close by citing the remarks made by the research fellow Dao Bu, the Vice President of the Research Institute of Minorities, in his essay on the life and work of Fu Maoji:

This is a well structured scientific work, representing the fruit of Fu Maoji's many years of research. At the time of its completion, the thesis was one of the best works among national minority language studies. In the introduction, Fu Maoji discusses the living conditions, the interaction between language and society, a survey of Yi texts and previous Yi language studies. In the main portion of the thesis, Fu Maoji described the phonetics, writing, vocabulary and grammar of the Yi language, both covering general grammatical principles and emphasizing the particularities of the Yi language. Especially interesting was his treatment of the syntax of the Yi language, which not only describes a variety of sentence types but also analyzes different phrases and collocations.

It is a great pleasure to see this work published at last!

Xu Lin
May, 1998

A DESCRIPTIVE GRAMMAR OF LOLO