

REVIEW ARTICLE

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Stories and Language of the Mantauran

ZEITOUN, Elizabeth, and LEEVE KADALAE. *We Should Not Forget the Stories of The Mantauran: Memories of Our Past*. Language and Linguistics Monograph Series No. A4. Taipei: Institute of Linguistics (Preparatory Office), Academia Sinica. 2003. NT\$1,000/US\$35; ISBN 957-01-5587-6.

Asian Folklore Studies, Volume 64, 2005: 147-154

THIS HEFTY VOLUME (558 pages) provides linguistic and ethnographic data about the village of Mantauran/Oponuhu in Kaohsiung County, Maolin Township, Wanshan (Chinese name, Taiwan). It is a most welcome addition to the field because this is an ethnic group about whom very little is known. Mantauran and two other villages, Maga and Tona, were collectively called “the lower three villages.” These were classified by Japanese researchers together with other Rukai and north-western Paiwan subgroups, Butsul and Raval, as Tsarisen (a Paiwan word meaning steep slope/precipice), a term which was used as though it were an ethnic denomination. The Rukai exceed the framework of Butsul and Raval, but acculturation to Paiwan makes the delineation against the Paiwan difficult. The appellation K’tsarisian was loosely used by plains peoples to denote groups of peoples who live in the mountains and are characterized by cultural affinities (MABUCHI 1953, 7). In recent years Kasahara Masaharu has in two extensive papers (KASAHARA 1997; 1999) sought to disentangle this thorny question of ethnic and cultural identity and classification.

The reviewer is fully aware of the fact that this is primarily a linguistic volume and that for this reason, it is probably unrealistic to expect researchers recording linguistic texts to ask probing questions of the informant who cooperated on this volume, in order to preserve her language and with it, her traditional culture. Nevertheless, as a cultural anthropologist, one would have wished for some elaboration and explanation in several contexts.

If we reflect on the traditional knowledge of ethnic origins and migrations contained in previous studies, we note that the three lower villages already appear in the Dutch censuses of 1647 and 1650 in the general area where they are found at present. Oponuhu has several chiefly houses and their origin myths mention origin from the earth, although at different locations, within the former village, or in areas they occupied previously. It would appear that a dispute over hunting territory between the Sa’arua and Mantauran developed in She-pu-nuk 内本鹿 and that the mighty Mantauran later ceded the area to the Bunun when they expanded into the area. The move from She-pu-nuk on the upper reaches of the Pasigao Creek occurred five generations before 1932, which would

be in accord with the Bunun expansion date of 1875. They do not have traditions regarding extensive migrations and lack a feeling of solidarity with other Rukai because, in the words of the informant, they did not know they were Rukai until the Japanese informed them on linguistic grounds. Conspicuous inter-village feuds resulted in a confined sphere of geographical knowledge, and a lack of enduring super-village leagues contributed to an identity consciousness limited to one's own village. There were two chiefly houses (great chief) and 3 small/vice-chieftains' houses in Mantaوران in 1932. Their names still exist.

According to earlier sources (UTSURIKAWA et al., 1935, 260–62; MABUCHI 1974, 348–54, 511), the Mantaوران originally settled in She-pu-nuk where they were attacked, moved to the area of the present Bunun village Varisan, and then settled in the location they left when they relocated to the present-day villages. They had amicable relations with the Is-bukun group of the Bunun, intermarried with them, and understood the Bunun language. During colonial times, they allied themselves with the Is-bukun and resisted government attempts to sequester their guns. They had not pledged allegiance to the Japanese at the time, 1920, when Kojima published his report (KOJIMA et al. 1920). Their language appears to be Rukai with an admixture of Is-bukun according to KOJIMA (1920, 7–8, 45–46, 50).

In her tale, the informant only confirms the origin myth and the last two migrations and very skillfully compares life in traditional and modern times. She tells of the river in their former village being traditionally partitioned into many sections, each with a different function (map, page 91), and that since they moved, they do no longer know the river or have a specific part of the river as location for their rituals which they have ceased to perform.

There is an interesting entry about house names, mistakenly termed “family names” in the English version, but alas, there is no explanation of the method employed in choosing a house name when each brother establishes his own branch house (71). The gloss “clan” for these house names (73) creates serious misunderstandings about their kinship system.

What the informant says about the conditions of a commoner marrying a girl from a noble house in order to “buy a name” and thus be able to chose a noble name for their baby corresponds to what we know from other Rukai. The distinctions between juvenile names, adult names, and names used when scolded are intriguing, but there again, no guidance is offered as to the underlying principle. The informant's observations about the tasks the Japanese village policeman had to perform and the extent and limits of education given to the Rukai by the colonial authorities are astute.

The section “Our way of life” is of interest, although it does not impart any specific new knowledge. The informant has a keen eye for the advantages and

drawbacks of traditional and modern life which she contrasts in different contexts.

The third part “Our customs” raises expectations and could have done with additional explanations to the somewhat laconic texts. For instance, one would surely like to know more about the person called a “custodian” (in the English translation), who would cook the meals, sweep the floor, and tidy the house for a young girl and help her in the fields. The girl would make embroidered clothes and head ornaments for him to show her appreciation, but regardless of their feelings for each other, they could not get married (179). Many important and unanswered questions are contained in this text.

The reviewer was most interested in sections dealing with rites of passage and especially the death ritual, but here again, some pertinent questions might have elicited more profound details from the informant. Finally, the authors appear to have some difficulties with English terminology. It takes some time to figure out that “clipped drawings” (542) is meant to denote decorative applique as sewn on ceremonial clothes. The *lovərə* is not a harmonica, or even a mouth harmonica, but a jew’s harp, and other minor carpings. This volume is, no doubt, a very impressive and important contribution to Austronesian linguistics containing beautiful photographs. However, even though that may not be its primary purpose, as a source of ethnographic knowledge this volume leaves something to be desired.

Erika KANEKO

THIS VOLUME is a large text collection of a Rukai (an Austronesian language) dialect spoken in Mantauran, i.e. Wanshan, Maolin County, Kaohsiung Province. The book consists of four parts. The first part (1–41) contains a brief description of Mantauran grammar in Chinese and English. The second part (44–199) records Mantauran texts with Chinese and English free translations. The third part (201–498) consists of interlinear and free translations of the texts in the second part into Chinese and English. The fourth part is a trilingual vocabulary index of about 660 lexical items (499–558). The volume also contains many photographs and a folded map.

Rukai is the most aberrant language among the languages of the indigenous peoples of Taiwan or, rather, among the Austronesian language family as such. It was considered on grammatical grounds to be the first split from the proto-language of the indigenous peoples by STAROSTA (1995, 691). Within Rukai the Mantauran dialect is widely different and incomprehensible even to speakers of closely related Maga and Tona dialects.

Thanks to more than ten years of efforts by the authors, particularly Elizabeth Zeitoun, the grammar of this aberrant language is gradually becoming clear.

However, in order to grasp the grammar of a language, the existence of a great number of texts is necessary and indispensable. For students of folk tales and ethnogenesis and migration history these texts are valuable source material. The texts assembled in this volume, mostly comprising one informant's life history, are in this sense of little assistance. However, in respect to the traditional life of the indigenous people of Taiwan, their clothes, houses and food, naming system, love affairs, marriage, and childbirth and death rituals, they are invaluable sources, and for linguists who can make use of all kinds of texts, this collection will be greatly appreciated. I was informed by the author that a collection of folk tales is in the offing, for which I have great expectations. In the following I will list a few points I noticed, which may be of help in further studies and publications:

- 1) The phonological features of this language are recorded on p. 22. The consonant *c* is described as palatal affricate, but this may lead to misunderstandings, because palatal affricate taken literally, may lead people to mistakenly assume the pronunciation [cç]. Although before /i/ it becomes the alveopalatal affricate [tʃ], elsewhere it is the alveolar affricate [ts]. *ʎ* is described as retroflex lateral, but it is actually an alveolar flap.
- 2) It is probably the intent of the authors to record the original pronunciations in a phonetically correct manner so that research reports of not only Mantaaran but Tsou, Bunun, and other languages employ phonetic symbols. This may be fine for linguists, but what about ordinary readers? Could phonetics not be represented by ordinary letters found on the keyboard? In the present volume, dental fricative *ð*, retroflex lateral *ʎ* (actually alveolar flap), glottal stop *ʔ*, velar nasal *ŋ*, and schwa *ə* are used, but are they really necessary? Since [ð] and [d] are not distinguished in this language, *d* should suffice, and the same is true for *L* for *ʎ* (if a capital letter needs to be reserved for personal/place names, *r* can be used instead, but then *rr* for their *r*), an apostrophe ' for *ʔ*, and *e* for *ə* (I adopt these representations hereafter). All those cumbersome phonetic signs make no difference to readers who are neither linguists, nor phoneticians, and for the indigenous people, the use of specific symbols may be too complicated and simply confusing.
- 3) Footnote 3 on the same page contains an interesting remark:

In the speech of younger speakers (> 60 years old), /r/ has mostly become /h/ (e. g. *ðakərhələ* “river” > *ðakəhalə*), less frequently /ʎ/ (e.g. *raharə* “above” > *ʎhaʎə*) or even *∅* (e. g. *ritahə* “boy’s name” > *itahə*).

I studied Mantaaran with the same informant in 1970. Looking at my field notes, I find that in many cases infant names are different from adult names and there are sets of rules for the formation of infant names. One of them

eliminates the /r/ (*ritah—itahe*; *ʼaroai* (female name)—*ʼaoai*). It is noted that the Maga and Mantauran dialects of Rukai and the three Tsouic languages have a vocabulary of nursery words, or motherese. The above rule applies also to the formation of nursery words. Thus, in Mantauran *karadoro* (egg) in adult language turns into *kaatoho* in motherese, *tarokoko* (chicken) into *takoko*; *mairange* (sweet potato) into *maia*, and so on. This phenomenon seems to give us some hints. The pronunciation used by young people as observed in this volume is very likely the result of retaining nursery word habits into adulthood. This volume also contains a detailed record of adult names and infant names in tables on pages 76 and 77. According to this table the adult name *ritahe* becomes *taaè*, which is different from my record of *itahe*, but *taaè* is probably another newly-formed infant name based on *itahe*. This would suggest that changes in pronunciation and vocabulary in a language in danger of extinction may well result from the pronunciation of nursery words.

- 4) On pages 78–85 (and correspondingly pages 281–99) the harshness of education under Japanese colonial government is recorded. Since this was also true for conditions in Japan, it is noted with deep emotion that it also happened in the mountains of Taiwan, but there are passages which are astounding. I quote:

(pp. 83 and 290) 50 When we did not understand what the teachers told us, we would be daydreaming and they would scold us and kick us one by one.

(pp. 83 and 293) 52 If the teacher saw him, he would go to him and kick him.

Even if school discipline was harsh, I do not think that a teacher would kick his pupils. If one looks at the Chinese translation, it is not “kick,” but “hit.” The corresponding Mantauran word in the original texts is *pakeLakeLange*. I looked at the index in the back of the book, where Mantauran *keLakeLange* is glossed as “kick” in both Chinese and English. I wondered which one is correct, “kick” or “hit.” When I looked at my field notes, I found several words for “hit/beat,” but *pakeLakeLange* was “hit with a stick,” not “kick.” I recorded “kick” as *okivase*. That is to say, the translation “kick” is a mistranslation and one wonders how this could have happened. A reader who does not read Chinese would no doubt be left with the impression of harsh maltreatment by the Japanese. If it is an intentional mistranslation to give the impression that Japanese times were miserable, but that everything became better under Chinese domination, it cannot be helped, but I know the authors personally and I want to believe that that cannot be the case. One may think that hitting is bad enough, but in pre-war Japan that was a normal practice. (One would

get a whack with a thin stick used for pointing at the blackboard, just as one would get hit during the practice of Zen. I understand that a teacher who would hit a pupil is punished at present.) It is inevitable that, once one mistake like this is found, one begins to be apprehensive that there may be other similar mistakes.

- 5) On p. 170, photograph No 90 has the caption *ali'i-ni vavoi* in Mantauran, which is translated into Chinese as 山猪牙 and in English “boar teeth.” Actually it represents boars’ lower jawbones. Not only the people of Mantauran, but all indigenous peoples of Taiwan proudly display the number and size of the wild boars they hunted by hanging their lower jawbones in their houses. That is what this photograph represents. However, the lower jawbone is not called *ali'i* “tooth.” Would it not be called *vasingi*? Or does this possibly demonstrate that this word is no longer known to young people? If so, this may be an indication of what kind of words are easily lost in a dying language.

As I mentioned before, I also studied Mantauran with the same informant, but while I did not yet have an opportunity to put my results in order, the informant Lü Yu-zhi has left this world. I feel really guilty about that. When I look at the photograph of the aged lady I knew thirty-five years ago as the young and beautiful Kimiko, her Japanese name, I feel quite discouraged because I do not think I will have enough time to put my notes in order and publish them. I would like to give a copy of my notes to the authors and would beg them to put to use whatever is usable in the study of the language of Mantauran.

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