

A Phonological Description of Nor Lae Palaung

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this investigation is an attempt to describe the phonological system of Red Palaung, or *da ra-ʔaŋre:ŋ* as they call themselves, at Nor Lae village in Fang district of Chiang Mai province, Thailand. These Palaungs migrated from Burma in 1984 and settled in this border village under the supervision of the Royal Project. The data were collected in 2005 during a series of visits as an on-going project for Palaung Encyclopedia and again on March 5-12, 2006 with three key informants aged 67, 52 and 48.

Preliminary findings reveal that there are 32 consonantal phonemes, all of which can occur syllable-initially: /p t c k ʔ ph th ch kh b d ɟ g f v s h m n ɲ ŋ hm hn hp hŋ l r hl hr w j hj/. Those occurring in the position of the syllable coda are /p t c k ʔ h m n ɲ ŋ w j/. There are 11 monophthongs /i e ε a a: ʌ ə u ɔ o u/ and six diphthongs /ia ai au əi əu ua/. Except /a a:/, vowel length is a phonetic feature occurring in specific environments.

The findings are relatively different from those of Herman Janzen (1980), David Thomas and Gwaw Too (1978) and Gwaw Too (1982), all of which were conducted with Palaungs in Burma.