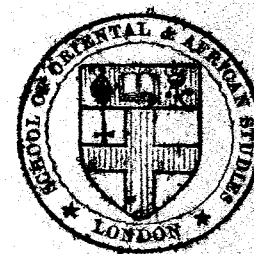


*J. M. George* Dec 1888

62998

ELEMENTARY HANDBOOK  
OF THE  
SHAN LANGUAGE,

BY



REV. J. N. CUSHING, D. D.

---

RANGOON:  
AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSION PRESS.  
F. D. PHINNEY, SUPT.  
1888.

## PREFACE.

The present edition of the Hand Book has been carefully revised and considerably enlarged. The object of this book is to aid the beginner in the acquisition of a knowledge of the Shan language in its *colloquial* form. Part I. exemplifies the grammatical principles which govern the language. Part II. embraces a variety of sentences pertaining to practical life. Part III. contains some Shan stories in an easy colloquial style. Only one specimen of the book language (Lesson XVII.) has been introduced, because the style of the book language is metrical and is so involved and different from any thing in ordinary use as to be of no assistance to the beginner.

No Shan and English vocabulary has been appended to this book as the Shan and English Dictionary will meet this need. An English and Shan Vocabulary, containing the most common and important words in use, has been added.

J. N. CUSHING.

*Rangoon, August, 1888.*

## INTRODUCTION.

---

The Burmese Shan branch of the Tai family of languages, which is treated of in this book, is spoken from Karenni northward beyond Theinni and from the mountains east of the great Burman plain to the Cambodia river. In this area there are some dialectic differences, but they are of slight importance. The standard of usage followed is the language of Monè and the adjacent principalities. It should be added, that in the distant principality of Kaingtung, a modified form of the Laos alphabet is quite as extensively used as the alphabet employed in this book which is the only one used by the Western Shans.

The grammatical structure of the Shan is exceedingly simple. Like the other languages of Farther India, it is tonal. No one can speak it accurately without mastering the tones. This would be a matter of comparative ease, were the tones properly indicated by tonal signs as in the Sgau Karen, which has one of the most perfect systems of phonetic representation in the world. There is however a remarkable paucity of orthographic forms. Not only are tones not indicated by any signs, but the vowels in many syllabic combinations may have two, and in some combinations, even three different quantities. In this fact lies the chief difficulty of acquiring the language. The tone of *every* word, and in *many* words, the quantity of the vowel

must be learned by practice. The student cannot be too careful in the beginning to learn correctly the proper pronunciation of each new word.

There are five tones which have been described in the Grammar § 32.

Of these tones there are three series, viz. closed (c. s.), mediate (m. s.), and open (o. s.). The first and last series only are noticed by native scholars. By reference to the following tables it will be seen that some vowels can have only one quantity. I have always classed these under the closed series. Thus in ㄅ, *kā*, *price*, the vowel *a* can have only one quantity.

Other vowels allow of two series of tones only. Thus ㄅ, *kūn*, to protrude, and ㄅ, *kōn*, *man*, have precisely the same spelling and tone in Shan, but *ū* belongs to the closed series of tones and *ō* to the open series. Sometimes in writing, the Shans place the sign (c) by the side of the vowel sign beneath the consonant to indicate the closed series, but it is an infrequent practice and has never been introduced into the font of type.

Closed syllables with the vowel *o* allow of three series of tones. Thus in ㄅ, *kīn*, to eat, ㄅ, *kin*, to roll up, ㄅ, *ken*, to suspend, the *i* belongs to the closed series, *i* to the mediate series, and *e* to the open series. The quantity of the vowel in the mediate series may be *ē* or short *i* according to the final consonant. With ㄅ and ㄅ, it is *ē*, but in all other cases it is *i*. In ㄅ, therefore, we have ㄅ, *kīng*, to roll over and over, ㄅ,

*kēng*, to be entirely used up, and ㄅ, *keng*, to pretend inability to do.

It will therefore be seen that when the meaning of a word is learned, great care in acquiring the proper tone and vowel of the word is indispensable.

The following tables show the powers of the consonants and vowels.

### Consonants.

ㄅ k, ㄅ kh, ㄅ ng, ㄅ s, ㄅ hs, ㄅ ny, ㄅ t, ㄅ ht, ㄅ n, ㄅ p, ㄅ hp, ㄅ m, ㄅ y, ㄅ r, ㄅ l, ㄅ w, ㄅ h, ㄅ a.

### Vowels.

Power when standing alone.

ㄅ a short, as a in quota.

ㄅ ā long, as a in father.

ㄅ i short.

ㄅ ī long, as i in polite.

ㄅ u short, as oo in good.

Power followed by a consonant.

c. s. a, a rather obtuse sound.

o. s. ā, a broad sound, as a in lard.

c. s. ī, as ee in leek.

m. s. i short, as i in lip; or ē, as in lay.

o. s. e short, as e in met.

c. s. ū, as oo in loot.

o. s. ō, as o in hope.

Exceptions: When followed by ㄅ, the c.

s. vowel sound is modified to uī or wī, and the o. s. vowel sound to ne or we, as ကုန် c. s. k-wī and ကုန်, o. s. k-we. The semi-vowel tone, which appears in this combination is indicated by a hyphen, as တုန်, t-we, to look.

ကူ ú long, as oo in too.

ကေ c. s. e, as ay, in may.

o. s. è, as in the French fève.  
or e in the English eh!

ကေ' c. s. ai, as ai in aisle.

o. s. a'i, the same sound with a broader pronunciation.

ကော aw short, as o in often.

ကော' a'w long, as aw in awful.

The three vowel sounds of ကိ in a closed syllable, the second vowel sound of ကု in a closed syllable, and the two vowel sounds of ကေ, when combined with a consonant, often have a semi-vowel tone associated with them, which is nearly equal to short y with ကိ and ကေ, and to short o with ကု. Thus ငမိ, 4c, wife, is pronounced m-e instead of me. In မိ, mè, 3o, mother,

the semi-vowel tone is hardly distinguishable. The presence or absence of this semi-vowel tone in combinations where it is found, must be learned by careful observation.

### Diphthongs.

ကဝ c. s. au, as ow in how.

o. s. a'u, the same sound with a broader pronunciation.

ကိဝ c. s. i-û.

m. s. i-ô, as io in punctilio.

o. s. i-au.

ကဝ် ò long, as o in mote.

ကိဝ c. s. ü, as in the German, Glück.

o. s. ö, as in the German, Löwe.

ကွ' oi, as oi in choice.

### Triphthong.

ကွိ äü, nearly like u in lull.

### Compound Consonants.

ကယ ä-ya.

ကရ ä-ra.

ကွ ä-wa; when followed by a final consonant, aw, as aw in lawn.

ကွါ ä-wā.

ကွ ä-wa; when followed by a final consonant, c. s. ä-wa, o. s. äwā.

ကွါ ä-wā.

ကွ' ä-wai.



## Combination with ㄠ.

ㄠ	ka 5c.	ㄠㄣ	c. s. kak.	ㄠㄥ	c. s. kang.
ㄠ	c. s. kâ.		o. s. kāk.		o. s. kâng.
ㄠ	ki 5c.	ㄠㄣ	c. s. kīk.	ㄠㄥ	c. s. kīng.
ㄠ	c. s. kī.		m. s. kēk.		m. s. kēng.
ㄠ	ku 5c.		o. s. kek.		o. s. keng.
ㄠ	c. s. kû.	ㄠㄣ	c. s. kûk.	ㄠㄥ	c. s. kûng.
ㄠ	c. s. ke or k-e.		o. s. kōk.		o. s. kōng.
	o. s. kè or k-è.	ㄠㄣ	c. s. kaw.	ㄠㄥ	c. s. kawng.
ㄠ	c. s. kai.	ㄠㄣ	c. s. kûk.	ㄠㄥ	c. s. kûng.
	o. s. ka'i.		o. s. kōk.		o. s. kōng.
ㄠ	kaw, 5c.				
ㄠ	c. s. ka'w.				

ㄠ		ㄠㄣ	c. s. kat.	ㄠㄥ	c. s. kan.
			o. s. kât.		o. s. kân.
ㄠ	c. s.	ㄠㄣ	c. s. kit.	ㄠㄥ	c. s. kīn.
	m. s. kin.		m. s. kit.		m. s. kin.
	o. s. ken.		o. s. ket or k-et		o. s. ken.
ㄠ	c. s. k-wī	ㄠㄣ	c. s. kût.	ㄠㄥ	c. s. kûn.
	o. s. k-we.		o. s. kōt		o. s. kōn.
		ㄠㄣ	c. s. kawt.	ㄠㄥ	c. s. kaw.
		ㄠㄥ	c. s. kût.	ㄠㄥ	c. s. kûn.
			o. s. kōt.		o. s. kōn.

ㄠ	c. s. kap.	ㄠ	ㄠ	c. s. kam.
	o. s. kâp.			o. s. kām.
ㄠ	c. s. kīp.	ㄠ	ㄠ	c. s. kīm.
	m. s. kip.			m. s. kim.
	o. s. kep.			o. s. kem.
ㄠ	c. s. kûp.	ㄠ	ㄠ	c. s. kûm.
	o. s. kōp.			o. s. kōm.
ㄠ	c. s. kawp.	ㄠ	ㄠ	c. s. kawm.
ㄠ	c. s. kûp.	ㄠ	ㄠ	c. s. kûm.
	o. s. kōp.			o. s. kōm.
ㄠ	c. s. kau.	ㄠ	ㄠ	c. s. koi.
	o. s. ka'u.			o. s. ko'i.
ㄠ	c. s. kī-û.	ㄠ	ㄠ	c. s. kau.
	m. s. kī-ō.			c. s. kyā.
	o. s. kī-au.	ㄠ	ㄠ	c. s. kyō.
ㄠ	c. s. kō.	ㄠ	ㄠ	c. s. krā.
ㄠ	c. s. kû.	ㄠ	ㄠ	5c. kwa.
	o. s. kō.			c. s. kwā.
		ㄠ	ㄠ	c. s. kwā.
		ㄠ	ㄠ	c. s. k-wai.
				o. s. k-wa'i.
		ㄠ	ㄠ	c. s. kyawng.

## Abbreviations.

ㄠ, ㄠ, ㄠ and ㄠ are really the fifth tone of ㄠ, ㄠ, ㄠ, and ㄠ, and are marked 5c, for the sake of uniformity. Several forms can take only one series of tones like ㄠ, ㄠ, etc., and they are always marked c.s.

HAND BOOK  
OF THE  
SHAN LANGUAGE,  
PART FIRST.

LESSON I.

Subject and Object of the Verb.

ကဝ် kōn, 4o, a man.	နမ် nam, 5c, water.
ခံင် khau, 3c, boiled rice.	နဲ' nai, 5c, this.
နီင် khō, 4c, goods, clothing.	ပိင် pin, 1m, to be, to exist.
ခ' kha'i, 1o, to sell.	မ ma, 5c, a pony.
ပိင် ngün, 4c, silver, money.	မိ mi, 4c, to be, to have.
လိင် sip, 4m, to be sore.	မ' mai, 3c, to be hot.
ဟိင် hsü, 5c, to buy.	လိ li, 1c, to be good.
တင် tawng 5c, the belly, howels.	လဲ' lai, 3c, to get, obtain.
နဲင် nan, 5c, that.	ပိင် hū, 4c, a direct interrogative affix.

1. The following paradigm will give the simplest tense forms of the verb:—

*Present.*

မိင်ခါင်မိင်, I see.	ပိင်ခါင်မိင်, We see.
မိင်ခါင်မိင်, Thou seest.	သုင်ခါင်မိင်, You see.
မိင်ခါင်မိင်, He sees.	ခိင်ခါင်မိင်, They see.