

**HANDBOOK OF THE KACHIN OR
CHINGPAW LANGUAGE: CONTAINING
THE GRAMMATICAL
PRINCIPLES AND PECULIARITIES OF THE
LANGUAGE, COLLOQUIAL EXERCISES,
AND A VOCABULARY**

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Handbook of the Kachin Or Chingpaw Language: Containing the Grammatical Principles and Peculiarities of the Language, Colloquial Exercises, and a Vocabulary by H. F. Hertz

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The Grammatical principles and peculiarities of the Language, Colloquial Exercises,
and a Vocabulary.

BY

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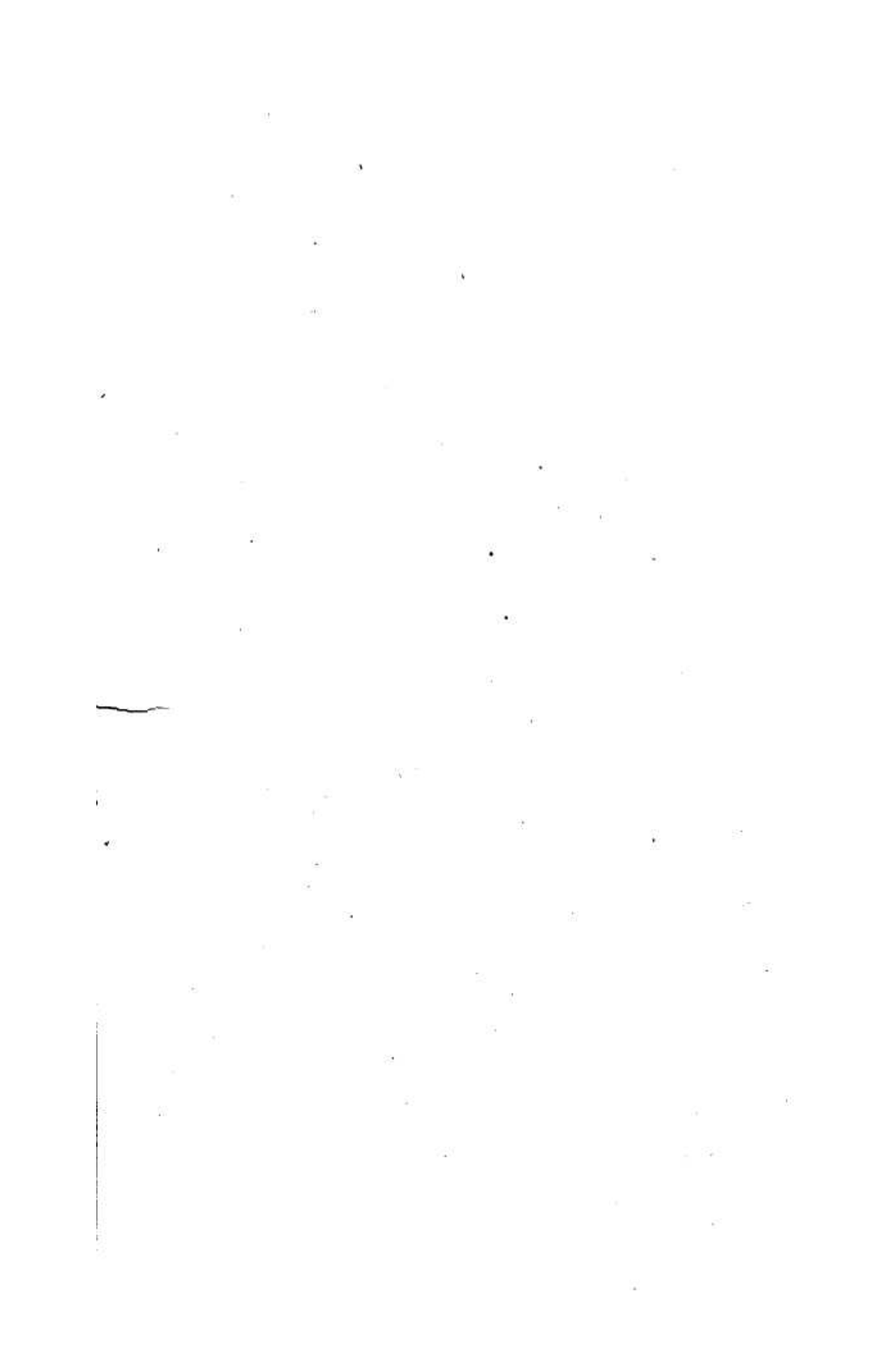
1895.

PREFACE.

OUR yearly increasing intercourse with the Kachins in the north of Burma makes the want of a practical handbook of the Kachin or Chingpaw language keenly felt. This book is designed to supply that want. The first part of the book explains the grammatical principles and peculiarities of the language, the second part consists of colloquial exercises exemplifying Kachin idioms, and the third part of a vocabulary. The system of orthography followed in this book is one that has been arranged by Mr. George, Deputy Commissioner, in consultation with the missionaries at Bhamo and accepted by the local Government for the spelling of Kachin words in Roman characters.

There is great diversity of opinion among students of the language as to whether certain words should be spelt with 'g' or 'k,' 'b' or 'p,' 'd' or 't.' The fact is that there is a slight difference in the pronunciation of certain words in different localities, and as there is no Kachin literature to guide us in the matter, I think the letters given above might be considered interchangeable. The language of the Kachins is very meagre, and the need of a larger vocabulary in their intercourse with Shans, Burmese, and Chinese has led to the introduction of many foreign words into the language. It is by no means difficult to learn, but an accurate pronunciation is only to be arrived at by colloquial practice.

H. F. HERTZ.



SYSTEM FOR SPELLING AND WRITING KACHIN.

	<i>Powers of Vowels.</i>	<i>Examples.</i>
1	<i>ä</i> Represents an almost suppressed vowel sound ...	Kälaw = to do.
2	<i>a</i> The sound of <i>a</i> as in father ...	La = to take.
3	<i>e</i> Short sound of <i>e</i> as in ten, met ...	Rem = to keep, tend.
4	<i>ä</i> Sound of <i>ai</i> in fair ...	Bè bè = in vain.
5	<i>ë</i> Sound of <i>ay</i> in pray ...	Gädë = how many?
6	<i>i</i> (i) Sound of <i>i</i> as in machine or <i>ee</i> in meet, when standing alone or at the end of a word or syllable.	Kälaw nga i? = Are you doing? Myi = eye; Mi Wa (niwa) = Chinaman.
	(ii) As initial or in the middle of a syllable it takes the short sound of <i>i</i> as in tin; but to this rule there are a few exceptions.	Ing = to overflow. K a n i n g = how.
7	<i>o</i> Nearly the long sound of <i>o</i> as in old ...	Wora = that, there.
8	<i>ö</i> Its nearest equivalent is the German <i>ö</i> in schön. It is used only in words derived from alien languages.	Móng country.
9	<i>u</i> (i) About the same sound as <i>oo</i> in wool or <i>u</i> in bull when in the middle of a syllable.	Numsha = woman
	(ii) As initial, by itself, or at the end of a word or syllable like <i>oo</i> in moon.	Uri = a pheasant; u = bird; lu = to have (or eat).
10	<i>ü</i> U as in tub, plum ...	Güwut = to blow.
11	<i>ai</i> Long sound of <i>i</i> as in ice ...	Mai = good; rai = thing.
12	<i>aw</i> Sound of <i>ow</i> as in cow ...	Kau = to throw away.
13	<i>aw</i> Sound of <i>aw</i> as in law ... NOTE.—There is a long <i>aw</i> and a short <i>aw</i> , but the distinction between them is so slight that it does not seem worth while to distinguish them by symbols. Practice alone will decide when one or the other should be used. As a rule <i>aw</i> is long when at the end of a syllable or word and short elsewhere, having then sometimes much the sound of <i>o</i> in "long."	Baw = the head.
14	<i>oi</i> Sound of <i>oi</i> as in oil ...	Roi = to decide.

Powers of Consonants.

1	<i>b</i> As in English ...	Ba = to be tired.
2	<i>chy</i> No equivalent in English ...	Chya = to paint.
3	<i>ch</i> As in child ...	Chè = to save.
4	<i>d</i> As in English ...	Du = the neck.
5	<i>g</i> Always hard, as in give, go ...	Ga = the earth.
6	<i>gy</i> A combination of the <i>g</i> and <i>y</i> sounds ...	Gyit = to tie.
7	<i>h</i> As in English ...	Haw = to preach.
8	<i>j</i> As in English ...	Jum = salt.
9	<i>k</i> As initial almost like <i>gk</i> ; when final it is like <i>k</i> in English.	Ka = to write.

SYSTEM FOR SPELLING AND WRITING KACHIN—concluded.

		<i>Powers of Consonants—concluded.</i>	<i>Examples.</i>
10	<i>ky</i>	A combination of the <i>k</i> and <i>y</i> sounds	... Kyem = to put aside.
11	<i>hk</i>	Aspirated <i>k</i>	... Hka = a river.
12	<i>kh</i>	A harsh guttural sound, stronger than the German <i>ch</i> in <i>machen</i> Makhawn = a maiden.
13	<i>hky</i>	A combination of <i>h</i> , <i>k</i> , and <i>y</i>	... Hkyet = a valley.
14	<i>l</i>	As in English	... Lam = road.
15	<i>m</i>	(i) Sound of <i>m</i> as in English	... Ma = child.
		(ii) Before consonants it takes its pure consonantal sound.	... Mba = a cover, blanket.
16	<i>n</i>	(i) Sound of <i>n</i> as in English when preceding a vowel.	... Nam = a jungle.
		(ii) When standing alone or immediately preceding another consonant it takes its pure consonantal sound.	... N kälaw = not to do; Nta = house.
NOTE.—When <i>n</i> precedes <i>g</i> in the same word a hyphen will be inserted when the <i>n</i> and the <i>g</i> are meant to be sounded separately and distinctly, as <i>n-gam</i> = precipice; otherwise they will have the sound of final <i>ng</i> as in English (<i>see</i> No. 17).			
17	<i>ng</i>	As <i>ng</i> in king or tongue	... Ngai = I; Nga = fish.
18	<i>ny</i>	No equivalent in English; like the <i>ñ</i> in the Spanish <i>Señor</i> Nyet = to deny.
19	<i>p</i>	Almost a <i>bp</i> sound	... Pat = to obstruct.
20	<i>hp</i>	Aspirated <i>p</i>	... Hpai = to carry.
21	<i>pf</i>	A blending of <i>p</i> and <i>f</i>	... Pfun = wood (also pronounced hpun).
22	<i>r</i>	As in English	... Ri = rattan.
23	<i>s</i>	As in English	... Sa = to go.
24	<i>sh</i>	As in English	... Sha = to eat.
25	<i>t</i>	Almost a <i>dt</i> sound	... Tai = to become.
26	<i>ts</i>	A blending of <i>t</i> and <i>s</i>	... Teun = to say.
27	<i>ht</i>	Aspirated <i>t</i>	... Htu = to dig.
28	<i>v</i>	As in English	... Vi = a paddy-field (also pronounced yi).
29	<i>w</i>	As in English	... Wa = to return.
30	<i>y</i>	As in English	... Ya = now.
31	<i>z</i>	As in English	... Zap = to congregate.

General Remarks.

- (a) *N* standing alone is always the sign of the negative: Ngai n sana = I will not go.
- (b) All particles are written separately: Ngai gaw sa na = I will go. Ngai pe jaw rit = Give to me.

HANDBOOK

OF THE

KACHIN LANGUAGE.

PART I.

THE SUBJECT AND OBJECT OF THE VERB.

The Subject and Object both precede the Verb.

1. The subject usually precedes the object which the verb follows.

Examples.

Ngai shat sha-ai	= I eat rice.
Ngai	= I (subject).
Shat	= Rice (object).
Sha-ai	= Eat (verb).
Chi kumhpraw ra-ai	= He wants money.
Chi	= He (subject).
Kumhpraw	= Money (object).
Ra-ai	= Wants (verb).

2. When the object is to be emphasized, it is generally placed before the subject with *ndai* (this) or *wora* (that) before it, as—

Ndai pälawng ngai mári-ai	= I bought this coat.
Ndai	= This (demonstrative pronoun).
Pälawng	= Coat (object).
Ngai	= I (subject).
Mári-ai	= Bought (verb).

3. The indirect object with a dative particle *de* after it generally precedes the direct object.

Example.

Sānat de pála bang mu = Put a bullet in the gun.

FORMING THE PLURAL.

1. A general plural is formed by adding *ni* to the noun.

