

Na (Mosuo) – English – Chinese dictionary

In southwestern China, straddling the border between Yunnan and Sichuan, there lives a famous ethnic group, the Na (a.k.a. Mosuo) people. While their customs have become renowned throughout the world, their language has not received comparable attention. This dictionary is designed not only as a tool for academic study but also as a gateway to explore Na culture and language on a solid linguistic basis. It is intended as a resource for the preservation and transmission of this endangered Tibeto-Burman language. The dictionary is suitable for linguists, ethnologists/anthropologists, and readers interested in Tibeto-Burman and minority languages of China. Drawing on years of field research, the authors aim to present the phonology and semantics of Na words, along with some cultural context, in as detailed and meticulous a manner as possible.

Three editions are available : the present one, tailored for English-speaking readers; another designed for Chinese-speaking readers; and a third one for French-speaking readers. The dictionary is part of a broader language documentation and description initiative that encompasses speech materials (including Na narratives, complete with audio recordings, transcriptions, and translations), all available online in open access.

Lexica collection

The guiding principles of the *Lexica* dictionary collection are rooted in the design of its underlying software, *Lexika*. The *Lexika* tool was developed with the core objective of embracing the full diversity of languages and linguists in shaping each dictionary’s design. Customization is the cornerstone of both the collection and the software, allowing each dictionary to evolve with its own unique structure, design, and layout, fully adapted to the specific features of the language and the vision of its lexicographers.

With the goal of achieving the highest standards of technical quality, every effort is made to ensure a precisely crafted layout through a flexible, dynamic processing chain. Improvements made during work on each new language are integrated into the “Lexika” software, benefiting the entire “Lexica” collection. As the lexicographic databases grow, new versions of the dictionaries can be generated swiftly, enabling continuous content updates.

Particular attention is given to ensuring that each dictionary is a stand-alone, printable digital work, designed for easy consultation with minimal reliance on IT resources.

The “Lexica” collection thereby contributes to preserving and celebrating linguistic diversity and heritage, while advancing the field of electronic lexicography.

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