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WEDGE ISSUES*

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

When I elicited the Pumi (Prinmi) word tsó 'wedge' in Kunming (March 1996), I was struck by its resemblance to Lahu jû 'wedge'. Since the Qiangic languages are not particularly close to Loloish on the TB family tree, this apparent cognate for an item of non-core vocabulary was of interest. The first task in establishing a relationship between the Pumi and the Lahu forms was to reconstruct the PLB ancestor of Lahu jû. Then possible cognates to the Pumi form in other Qiangic languages had to be examined. Given our present rudimentary knowledge of comparative Qiangic, could parallel examples establish a Proto-Qiangic reconstruction resembling our newly reconstructed PLB form?

As it turns out, the Pumi and Lahu forms are not cognate after all. Still, this study has unearthed several new etyma for 'wedge', and clarified some Qiangic rhyme developments, especially as concerns the fate of PTB ***-am** and ***ap**. Finally, it raises some cautionary issues in comparing sets of forms across distant subgroups of the vast TB family.

2.0 THE PLB PROVENIENCE OF LAHU *jû*: PLB **N-džam²*

Lahu jû (N; Mpfx) 'wedge; shim; stake' is both a free noun (N) and a morpheme prefixable by ɳɔ- (Mpfx), occurring in collocations like:

chɛ-kɔ-**jû** (N)	'shim used in a rice-pounder'
jû dɔ̃ʔ ve (OV)	'drive in a wedge/stake'
jû šɛ ve (OV)	'insert a wedge; insert a wooden pin into a prepared hole'
ɳɔ-**jû** ka ve (OV)	'drive in a wedge/stake'

No etymology was offered for this morpheme in Matisoff 1988:163, 568. The abundant new Lolo-Burmese data provided in Sun et al, 1991 (henceforth

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* This paper was originally presented orally in Chinese (Minorities University, Beijing; June 3, 1997) with the title 用楔子撬开问题 "*Yɳong xiēzi qiɳao kāi wɳentí*" ("Using a wedge to pry open a problem"). It was then published under the same title in *Yǔyán Yánjiū* (Wuhan) 2000.1:106-27.

ZMYYC), and Dai et al, 1992 (henceforth ***TBL***), now allows us to reconstruct a PLB root with confidence.

2.1 Burmish reflexes

Achang (Longchuan)	a^{31}ɕe^{51}	ZMYYC #413, p. 783; TBL #620, p. 207
Bola	s$\tilde{ɔ}^{35}$ tʃ$\tilde{ɛ}^{31}$	TBL #620
Langsu (=Maru)[1]	saŋ^{35}tʃ$\tilde{ɛ}^{31}$	ZMYYC #413; TBL #620
Zaiwa (=Atsi)	siŋ^{21}tʃam^{21}	ZMYYC #413; TBL #620

The Burmish reflexes are crucial, pointing unmistakably to a nasal-finalled rhyme. The Zaiwa form narrows it down to ***-am**. In WB itself, the reflex of ***-am** is **-am**, but there is no apparent Burmese cognate to this set.[2] The Achang (Longchuan) form a^{31}ɕe^{51} cited above (2.01) is not cognate, since the regular Achang reflex of ***-am** is also **-am** (see sets below).

The dozen or so best-attested ***-(w)am** etyma in Lolo-Burmese, and their WB reflexes, are as follows:

	PLB	*WB*
'bear'	*d-wam^{1} ≍ ^{2}	(wak-)wam
'belly'	*p-wam^{2}	wâm
'bridge'	*dzam^{1}	tsam
'dare'	*wam^{3}	wam'
'ear/spike (grain)'	*s-nam^{1}	hnam
'fathom/cord'	*s-lam^{1} ≍ ^{2}	lam ≍ hlâm[3]
'fence/garden'	*kram^{1}	khram
'fly' (v.)	*byam^{1}	pyam
'hair (head)'	*tsam^{1}	tsham
'iron'	*syam^{1}	sam
'otter'	*syam^{1} ≍ *pyam^{1} < PTB *sram	phyam
'road'	*lam^{2} ≍ ^{3}	lam
'sesame'	*s-nam^{2}	hnâm
'smell'	*nam^{1} ≍ ^{2} ≍ ^{3}	nam, nâm, nam'

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1 The first syllables in the Langsu and Zaiwa forms apparently mean 'wood', although the free morphemes for 'wood' in Langsu and Zaiwa have final stops rather than nasals (Langsu **sak**, Zaiwa **sik**^{55}. This root shows **-ŋ ≍ -k** variation in *TB* as a whole.

2 See below 4.2 for a discussion of WB **sap** and its possible cognates.

3 The aspirated allofam means 'to stretch out the arm'; the ***s-** prefix is also reflected in Yi Mile **ʈɯ**^{33} and Jinuo **ʈɛ**^{33}.

Reflexes of these etyma in other Burmish languages are quite regular:

	Achang	*Zaiwa*	*Leqi*	*Langsu*[4]	*Bola*
'bear'	ɔm^{55}	vam^{51}	wɔm^{31}	vɛ̃^{31}	vɛ̃^{55}
'belly'	ɔm^{31} tau^{31}	vam^{21}	wɔm^{33} tou^{33}	vɛ̃^{35} tuk^{31}	vɛ^{31} tau^{31}
'bridge'	tɕam^{55}	tsam^{51}	tsam^{31}	tsɛ̃^{31}	tsɛ̃^{55}
'dare'	---	vam^{55}	wuːm^{55}	vɛ̃^{55}	vɛ̃^{35}
'fathom'	lam^{55}	lam^{51}	lam^{31}	lɛ̃^{31}	lɛ̃^{55}
'ear/spike (grain)'	tɕɔ^{55} n̥am^{55}	a^{21} na̱m^{51}	a^{55} na̱m^{33}	kauk^{31} nɛ̱^{31}	nɛ̱^{55}
'fly'	tʂam^{55}	[ta ŋ^{21}]	[taː ŋ^{33}]	[tɔ̃^{35}]	[tɔ̃^{31}]
'garden/fence'	---	khjam^{51}	khjam^{33}	khjɛ̃^{31}	khjɛ̃^{55}
'hair (of head)'	---	u^{21} tsham^{51}	tsham^{33}	tshɛ̃^{31}	tshɛ̃^{55}
'iron'	ʂam^{55}	ʃam^{51} tɔ̱ʔ^{55}	[tʃɔʔ^{31} tɔ̱ʔ^{55}]	ʃɛ̃^{31} tɔʔ^{55}	ʃɛ̃^{55} -ta̱ʔ^{55}
'otter'	sam^{55}	xam^{51}	ʃa̱m^{33}	xɛ̃^{31}	xɛ̃^{55}
'smell'	nam^{31}	nam^{51}	naːm^{31}	nɛ̃^{31}	nɛ̃^{55}
'wedge'	[a^{31} ɕe^{51}]	siŋ tʃa̱m^{21}	---	saŋ^{35} tʃɛ̱^{31}	sɔ̃^{35} tʃɛ̱^{31}

These Burmish reflexes may be tabulated as follows:

PLB	*Achang (Longchuan)*	*Zaiwa (Atsi)*	*Leqi (Lashi)*	*Langsu (Maru)*	*Bola*
*-am	-am, -ɔm	-am	-am, -ɔm, -um	-ɛ̃	-ɛ̃

2.2 Loloish reflexes for 'wedge'

Gazhuo	sɻ^{35} tsɛ^{31}	TBL #620
Hani (Lüchun)	tsha^{31} tshɔ^{31}	TBL #620
Hani (Mojiang)	tɔ^{31} tʃu^{31}	TBL #620
Hani (Shuikui)	tɔ^{31}tʃhu^{31}	ZMYYC #413
Lahu (Black)	dzɯ^{53}	ZMYYC #413
Lisu	dʒo^{31}tʃhɛ^{55}	ZMYYC #413
Lisu (Northern)	nɔ^{55}dʑɔ^{21}	DB-Lisu[5]
Naxi (Lijiang)	ʂɯ^{55}	ZMYYC #413; TBL #620
Nusu (Bijiang)	tɕɑ^{55}	ZMYYC #413
Nusu	tʂa^{55}	TBL #620
Sani	sž dʐɤ^{11}	TBL #620
Yi (Mile (Axi))	dʐi^{21}bu^{33}	ZMYYC #413
Yi (Mojiang)	ɕi^{33}dʑe^{33}	ZMYYC #413
Yi (Nanjian)	dʑy^{21}	ZMYYC #413
Yi (Nanhua)	ɕi^{33}dʐur^{21}	ZMYYC #413
Yi (Weishan)	bu^{21} dʑy^{21}	TBL #620
Yi (Wuding)	ɳtʂhe^{33}	TBL #620
Yi (Xide)	ndʐo^{33}	ZMYYC #413; TBL #620

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4 The Bola forms given in TBL (Language #32 of 50) are virtually identical to these Langsu (Maru) forms (Lg. #31 in TBL).

5 This form is not from either ZMYYC or TBL, but rather from Bradley 1994.

At first glance, some of these forms look like possible loans from Chinese 楔子 (cf. Mandarin xiēzi), especially Yi Nanhua ɕe[21] tsɿ[33] (TBL #620). On the other hand, the first syllables might be reduced forms of morphemes meaning 'wood' (< PTB *sik ≈ *siŋ). To ascertain whether, e.g. the Gazhuo, Sani, Mojiang, and Nanhua (ZMYYC) forms are loans from Chinese or not, we shall have to look at other cognate sets reflecting the rhyme *-am.

*2.3 The PLB *initial*

The voicedness of the initial in Lahu jû points unmistakably to a *prenasalized prototype.[6] The Chinese Lahu source has **dz-**, perhaps inaccurately recorded; but in any case there is no contrast in Black Lahu between dentals and palatals. The palatal phonemes /c ch j š y/ have dental allophones before -ɨ:

/c ch j š y/ ---> [ts tsh dz s z] / ———ɨ[7]

The prenasalization of the PLB initial is directly confirmed by the Yi Wuding and Yi Xide reflexes.

*2.4 The PLB *tone*

Since Lahu jû is from PLB Tone *2, we expect that its LB cognates will also reflect that tone. To check that out, all we need do is compare the tones for 'wedge' in these languages with the tones of the reflexes of an "exemplary" Tone *2 etymon. In the case of the Burmish forms we should select a non-verbal[8] etymon, e.g. PLB ***sum**[2] 'three':

	Tone of WEDGE	*Tone of THREE*	
Burmish			
Achang (Longchuan)	---	31	sum[31]
Bola	31	55	sam[55] [9]
Zaiwa (Atsi)	21	21	sum[21]
Langsu (Maru)	31	31	sam[31]
Leqi (Lashi)	---	55	sɔm[55]
WB	---	ˆ	sûm

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6 See Matisoff 1972:15-16.

7 See Matisoff 1973/1982, pp. 6-8.

8 As Burling (1968:57-8, 69) demonstrated, Atsi and Maru tonal reflexes of PLB Tone *2 are different for verbs as opposed to non-verbs.

9 I cannot explain why this form has tone 55, since many other Tone *2 etyma give Bola tone 31: 'bone' *rəw[2] > Bo. ʃă-u[31], 'four' *b-ɬəy[2] > Bo. məi[31], 'five' *ŋa[2] > Bo. ŋa[31], 'nine' *gəw[2] > Bo. kau[31]. Furthermore, other Tone *2 etyma with initial *s- develop Bola tone 35: 'blood' *swəy[2] > Bo. suĭ[35], 'meat' *sa[2] > Bo. ʃa[35]. On the other hand, numerals frequently show tonal irregularities in LB; Lahu šē? 'three' is also tonally anomalous (the 'correct' form šē only occurs with certain classifiers).