LINGUISTICS OF THE TIBETO-BURMAN AREA
VOLUME 18:1 — SPRING 1995

PTB/PST pronominal *-i suffix

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As indicated in earlier papers (1991, 1994) relating to morphosyntax and a verbal agreement (VA) system, reconstructions at the Proto-Sino-Tibetan (PST) level exhibit marked dyschronicity on the Chinese side. One of two key evidentiary items for PST ergative ***-s**, along with the key item for PST topic-marker ***ka/ga**, involve the early (Archaic Chinese: AC) promotion of this element to a 1st person pronoun: 余 **sgi̯o/i̯wo** 'I', from ***sga** < ***na-s-ga**, with typical syllabic reduction. The key evidence for a PST-level VA system involves the early substitution of the 2nd person VA form for the 2nd person pronoun ***na(·)n**: 汝 **ńi̯o/ńźi̯wo:** (loan use), from ***na**, with typical palatalization. As indicated in these papers, there are Tibeto-Burman (TB)/Karen parallels for these developments, including the similar ***-s + ga** fusion in Written Burmese (WB): topic-marker ***ká** < ***s-ga** (regular development; cf. **ká** 'saddle', Written Tibetan [WT] **sga**). The very early level evidenced by the AC items came as a surprise, however, at least to the writer. It led to a review of the AC evidence for other PST-level functors, including the following for a pronominal ***-i** suffix; here the crucial evidence is supplied by Min.

In addition to the widespread PTB ***ŋa** 'I', the *Conspectus* (*STC*: Benedict 1972) also reconstructs ***ŋay**[1], based on WT **ŋed** (with suffixed **-d** 'I, we (elegant)', Jinghpaw **ŋai** 'I' and Lushai **-ŋei** 'self (used with pronominals)'. In fn. 270 of *STC*, mention is made of A.H. Francke's assignment of the -d in the WT form to an old dual, but no attempt is made to link this root with ***ŋa**. In a later paper (1983), however, on TB/ST deictics (—> pronominals), involving the reconstruction of a PTB-level deictic triangle (***i** 'this' ~ ***u** 'that' ~ ***a** 'yonder'), the writer does suggest a linkage here via a pronominal ***-i** suffix. The indicated PTB ***ŋa-i** is greatly strengthened in this presentation by the addition of Mikir (Kuki-Naga affiliation) **ne**, Phom (Chang-Tangsa = Konyak [STC] = 'Northern Naga' [French]) **ŋei** 'I', both regularly from ***ŋay**; the latter significantly differs from

[1] For the tonal assignments of these pronominals, see Benedict 1992a under *TB/TK tone-class effects*. PST tone *A has been assigned to PST ***ŋa**^{A} 'I' on the basis of tonal reflexes in Burmese-Yipho, Trung (Nungish) and Tujia, along with the non-glottal reflex in Chepang (vs. glottal < *B) and the ***-a** > **-o** shift in Chang (vs. ***-a** > **-au** with tone *B; see French 1983), together with the Chinese pingshéng: 吾 **ŋo/ŋuo**; see also Benedict 1992b. In the case of ***ŋay** < ***ŋa-i**, the Jinghpaw mid tone and the Mikir low tone both reflect PTB tone *A, while the low tone in Lushai is indeterminate (typically < prefixed **s-**).

all other Chang-Tangsa languages, which reflect simply ***ŋa*** (French 1983); note also Tengsa (under Naga II) ***ŋai*** 'I' (Thurgood 1985).

The above indicates both that a pronominal ***-i*** suffix was highly productive at an early period in Tibeto-Burman, and that it was closely associated with 1st rather than 2nd or 3rd person. The lone exception that has been uncovered here is Maring (Tangkhul-Kuki group) ***naŋ*** ~ ***nai*** 'thou' Marrison 1967), the latter apparently an ***-i*** suffixed derivative of the PTB-level ***na*** VA form for 2nd person,[2] see below for the matching Maring ***kai*** 'I'. Both features of this suffix are attested by its appearance in a pair of entirely different pronominal developments of secondary type, viz.

1. Prefixed ***?a-***, apparently related to a 3rd person pronominal ***?a-*** (*STC*: 121) < 'yonder (one)' (see deictic triangle, above), gave rise to 1st person forms based on ***?a-ŋa*** in Kiranti, the Tamang group and Bodo-Garo. The various Kiranti languages exhibit a veritable kaleidoscope of pronominal/VA forms involving ***?a-*** and/or the topic-marker ***ka/ga***, the latter either prefixed or suffixed, generally for the 1st but also at times for the 2nd person, e.g. Lohorong ***ka*** < ***ga*** 'I', ***ana*** 'thou'; Sangpang ***kaŋa*** < ***ga-ŋa*** 'I', ***ana*** 'thou'; Waling ***aŋka*** < ***aŋga*** < ***a-ŋa-ga*** 'I'; Dungmali ***aŋ?ka*** < ***aŋ?ga*** < ***?a-ŋa-ga*** 'I', reflecting the glottalization that is typical for vocalic anlaut in Tibeto Burman (*STC*: 36); Limbu ***aŋga?*** < ***?aŋ-ga*** < ***?a-ŋa-ga***.[3] P-Tamang has ***?ŋa***^{B} < ***?a-ŋa***^{A} 'I' (contra the analysis in Benedict 1991), with tonal shift (see fn. 1) after glottalization. Shifting of the /?/ to medial position, as in Dungmali: ***?a-ŋa*** < ***aŋ-?a***, followed by typical TB syllabic reduction, yielded Bodo-Garo ***aŋ*** 'I' (following initial stress) as well as ***a*** (following final stress), the latter then giving rise to Meitei ***ai***[4] < ***a-i*** through ***-i*** suffixation.

2. A promoted focus-marker ***ka/ga*** yielded (Thurgood, 1985 reconstructions) Proto-Kanauri-Almora ***gai*** 'I' along with the matching VA form: ***-ga***, closely paralleled by the Proto-Kuki-Chin 1st person forms: ***kai*** and (VA form) ***ka-***; Maring ***kai***, listed by Thurgood under Southwest Naga, is described as "intriguing but unexplainable" but surely this is simply from ***ka-i***, matching ***nai*** < ***na-i*** 'thou' (above). The early date indicated here for the ***-i*** suffixation as well as for the ***ka/ga*** promotion is further supported by WT ***khyed*** 'thou, you (elegant)', a ***-d*** suffixed form matching ***ŋed*** 'I, we

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[2] Another such "exception" is the Bisu 2nd person dual pronoun ***naj*** (Matisoff 1993:129). For much further discussion see Matisoff 1995. [Ed.]

[3] Thurgood (1985) reconstructs initial ***k-*** as well as ***g-*** root forms for Kiranti groupings but ***g-*** is indicated at the Proto-Kiranti level, with the voiced stop maintained in the Bahing subtype but regularly unvoiced in the Khambu subtype; see *STC*: 5, 21.

[4] As regards the tone of Meitei ***ai***, Shiro Yabu (p.c. 10/92) describes it as high-falling [< *B] when used independently but high [< *A] in I. Singh 1975.

(elegant)', cited above, from ***khai** (regular shifts) < ***ka-i**; the promotion to 2nd rather than 1st person is paralleled in the Almora branch of Kanauri-Almora (Thurgood) by Rangkas **ga**, Darmiya **gai** < ***ga-i** 'thou'.

As can be seen from the above, a pronominal ***-i** suffix, usually associated with 1st person, is widely witnessed in Tibeto-Burman.[5] On the Sinitic side, however, similar evidence is hard to come by, with both the phonology as well as the precise etymology presenting problems. As might have been anticipated on the basis of Tibeto-Burman, the 1st person is involved: 我 **ŋâ/ŋâ:** 'I, me, we, us, my, our' (Dobson 1959 glosses also 'themselves, ourselves'), apparently from an earlier ***ŋây** < ***ŋâ-i** on the basis of Min evidence (Bodman 1977), with typical loss of ***-y** after the vocalic length associated with phonemic juncture (-).[6] Along with 余 **sgi̯o/i̯wo**, a topic-marker derivative (< ***s-ga** above), this was a replacement in the early AC period for the PST-level ***ŋa** 'I', represented by 吾 **ŋuo/ŋo** (regular ***-a** < **-o** after velars), in common use in the later period. The basic **ŋâ** here also appears in 卬 **ŋâŋ/ŋâŋ** 'I, we', from ***ŋâŋa** < ***ŋâ-ga**, incorporating the topic-marker ***ka/ga**, as indicated by the contrastive force of this pronominal: 'I, we, apparently used when contrasted with another person and therefore stressed; I, we, we however, I on my part, we on our part' (Schuessler 1987). The indicated PST-level proto-form here is ***ŋâ**, with ***-â** regularly yielding WT ***-o** (*STC*:187), pointing to the cognate here: WT **ŋo** 'face; self, the thing itself; the self, the I', **ŋos** < ***ŋâ-s** 'a thing itself; I, we'; **dŋos** < ***d-ŋâ-s** 'reality, real; proper, true, genuine; I'. The core glosses here are 'self' (cf. the Dobson glosses of 我) and 'face', the latter represented in AC by the suffixed ***-n** derivative: 顏 **ŋan/ŋan** 'face, countenance', with regular **-an** < **ân**; for the phonology here, cf. 鵝 **ŋâ/ŋâ** 'goose', 雁 **ŋan/ŋan-** 'wild goose', from ***ŋâ-n**, with collective plural ***-n** ('geese in flocks') (*STC*:157).

The Chinese evidence for pronominal ***-i**, involving an element (**ŋâ**) distinct from the ***ŋa** and ***ka/ga** of Tibeto-Burman, further attests to the productivity of this functor at an early level in Sino-Tibetan. Two problems are to be addressed on the Tibeto-Burman side. The first involves the odd 2nd person pronominal pair: Takpa (Cuona Monpa **?i**, Central Chin A (Thurgood) ***i-** (VA form), apparently from ***na-?i** (PTB ***na** is VA form for 'thou'), with syllabic reduction; cf. Meitei **ai** 'I', from ***aŋ?a-i** (above). The

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[5]Cf. the ***ŋa ~ *ŋay ~ *ŋaŋ** for 1st person included in the "quasi-paradigm" described as "tempting to set up" in a recent paper (1993, 1994) by J.A. Matisoff.

[6]It is equally likely, perhaps, that AC differed from its cousin, Proto-Min, in lacking the ***-i** suffix. In the line of reconstruction adopted by Schuessler (1987) and Baxter (1992), this character is read as **ŋaj/** rather than **ŋâ/**, with a possible derivation from PST ***ŋa** at a Proto-Chinese level. This in no way, of course, militates against the ***-i** suffix analysis but it does serve to exclude the possibility of any AC vs. Min distinction here.

second is concerned with a possible, even likely relationship to the ***i** of the deictic triangle (above) as well as to the genitive ***-i** found in WB (**?-í**) and Tamang: Salu Tamang **-i** cited by Y. Nishi (1982), who also cites Risiangku Tamang **-i**, found only with **ŋa**[1] 'I' and described as 'ergative, agentive; instrumental; source'. In this connection, note Meitei **ai** 'I', **ipá** 'my father', etc.

The basic question remains: what role is to be assigned to ***-i**? Hardly that of an ordinary topic-marker, which has been filled by ***ka/ga**. A clue here is provided by the Mikir ***-i** derivative of this functor: **-ke < *-gay** (regular shifts) < ***ga-i** 'suffix indicating emphasis, introducing the topic', as in **reco-ke** 'the king [reco] and not somebody else'. If one now assigns this emphatic role to ***-i**, the lineup of PST-level functors is the following:

Ergative	***-s**
Topic-marker	***ka/ga**
Emphatic topic-marker	***-i**

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