Whistle and Fontanel:  
two Mizo (Lushai) texts with commentary  
In memory of Albert Siakima Khawlhring

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Palo Alto, California

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents a preliminary analysis of two Mizo (Lushai) texts collected during an extemporaneous session in 1975 with Siakima Khawlhring and Professor F. K. Lehman at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. In my analysis, I have chosen to concentrate on two structures, the 1tsuam 1in subordination for some noun phrases, and the 1a 3nvec 3hit1 coda found in final position in some otherwise indicative-mood sentences. To be thoroughly understood, both of these constructions require investigation beyond the scope of the clause or sentence.

The paper is organized thus: a background section covers certain past work on Mizo and Chin grammatical analysis, followed by brief descriptions of some of the grammatical processes pertinent to the texts and the two areas of focus. This is followed by the texts themselves, each with interlinear glosses, followed by free translations in which I have tried to convey in carefully chosen English the subtle semantic effects of the constructions being analyzed. Finally, I include some commentary in the form of notes.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people upon whose work this discussion depends, among them most recently L. Chhangte, whose Master’s Thesis contains a most welcome grammatical sketch of Mizo. In this presentation I assume some familiarity with the grammar of Chin languages such as that provided by Chhangte (1986) or the work of Professors Eugénie J. A. Henderson, Theodore Stern or F. K. Lehman. Given the preliminary nature of this analysis, I would be happy to discuss these texts further with anyone wishing it.

My incentive at this time for preparing an analysis of some of the Mizo texts I collected in the 1970s was the need I have felt for several years to begin to give something back to the field of linguistics (which has been a rewarding one for me though I never came to rely on it to produce a living wage). Equally

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1 The vowel in 3hit has two phonetic variants: a long [i:] and a short [i] followed by a glottal stop, [iʔ].
important for me is my desire to continue working on this language in communication with an interested group of people. In the immediate sense my model for this presentation, though I have reproduced it in minimal form for the time being, was Professor Stern's publication in 1984 of the texts that underlay his grammatical sketch of Sizang Chin (1955). In my early work on Chin languages I depended heavily on the few pieces of analysis that existed in the 1970s, papers by Kris Lehman, Eugénie Henderson and Theodore Stern being foremost among these. It was truly welcome then to find Professor Stern's 1984 LTBA article which contained the actual texts from which his Sizang paper derived. Textual material, whether recited extemporaneously or as the oral reading of a written text, provides a critical means of understanding grammatical processes that extend beyond finite clauses and sentences and yet often results in clarifying our understanding of the forms within these finite structures.

I hope these two brief texts together with my comments will prove useful for others working on the descriptive analysis of languages in the Tibeto-Burman linguistic area.

ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>absolutive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADJVZR</td>
<td>adjectivizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAUS</td>
<td>causative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>copula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>change of state post-verbal particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEIX</td>
<td>deictic pre-verbal clitic morpheme often lexicalized in cases such as $2^{\text{low}}$ and $2^{\text{in}}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET</td>
<td>demonstrative adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET-ERG</td>
<td>NP delimiter: demonstrative + ergative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET-OBLQ</td>
<td>NP delimiter: demonstrative + oblique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET-PN</td>
<td>demonstrative pronoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIM</td>
<td>diminutive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERG</td>
<td>ergative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXCL</td>
<td>exclaimatory morpheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUT</td>
<td>future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FVP</td>
<td>final verb-particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMP</td>
<td>imperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT</td>
<td>intensive, intensivizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOC</td>
<td>locative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEG</td>
<td>negation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFP</td>
<td>non-final clause-particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLZ</td>
<td>nominalizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBLQ</td>
<td>oblique, instrumental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PN</td>
<td>independent pronoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECIPE</td>
<td>reciprocal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1ACC</td>
<td>first person accusative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2ACC</td>
<td>second person accusative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1Nom</td>
<td>first person verbal prefix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2Nom</td>
<td>second person verbal prefix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3Nom</td>
<td>third person verbal prefix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>??</td>
<td>translation unclear or not possible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: I follow Chhangte (1986) in labelling certain elements of predicates "NOM" and "ACC" to reflect their clause-participant roles.

CONVENTIONS

Rather than diacritics I have used superscript numbers in syllable-initial position to designate tones: '1' for high level, '2' for low rising, '3' for low level, and '4' for high falling. I use 'ng' for the velar nasal in both syllable-initial and syllable-final position, and 'tr' for the retroflex stop /ʈ/. Following Chhangte, but therefore departing from the missionary orthography for Mizo, I write all aspirated phonemes with following '-h,' e.g. 'th,' 'kh,' 'ngh,' 'rh'. I have transcribed pronominal prefixes with a following hyphen (e.g. 3a- 'third person singular prefix'), and most suffixes with a preceding hyphen (e.g. -3aʔ 'locative suffix'), mostly to render more evident the clitic nature of these morphemes.

DELIMITERS: DET-OBLQ and DET-ERG

DET-OBLQ and DET-ERG below are designations for the morphemes that apparently result from a fusion of the determiner morphemes (DET), ıtsuu 'old information' and ıhii 'new information', with the subordinating morpheme -1in. The resulting forms are ıtsuaan and ıhiaan. A similar fusion of ıtsuu and ıhii with the ergative morpheme -3in produces 4tsuaan and 4hiaan, respectively. The subordinating morpheme -1in is either the same or homophonous with the instrumental morpheme -1in. The phonological processes underlying these elisions are evidently no more productive at this time than those underlying the verb stem alternation (see below).
Chhangte (1986) uses the designators DET-OBLQ and DET-ERG for these delimiter morphemes and I have used these same abbreviations below. Foley (1976) used the term ligature for similar though certainly not identical structures in Austronesian syntax.

DISCOURSE STRUCTURE

Mizo statements can be viewed as consisting of a mandatory predicate preceded by optional nominal and/or modifying information. Following Jespersen (1929), I have found an organization of these components into Adjunctive, Participant, and Predicative to be useful tools for understanding statements, and I occasionally make reference to these terms, with Attributive and Nominal sometimes substituting for Adjunctive and Participant, respectively.

Mizo textual data manifest a greater diversity of post-predicate particles than elicited clause or sentence data. Sentences are connected to following sentences with the non-final particle (NFP) 1aa (varying with 2may 1aa where 2may means something like "rather, quite") along with most other post-verbal particles. Stories typically end with a discourse-closing 2an 3tii ‘they say’. Often the [ii] vowel of discourse-final 3tii receives a greatly lengthened intonation.

Both Whistle and Fontanel were obtained on one of the first days I worked with Siamkima, and are fresher than more carefully prepared texts which I recorded subsequently. For this reason, despite their brevity they have always struck me as potentially richer in linguistic material than many lengthier texts collected later. Whistle represents a text almost grudgingly given and only partially translatable. Siamkima was first and foremost a teacher. He truly disliked providing texts in a purely extemporaneous mode with no preparation. Every other text I obtained from him, whether read or recited from memory, involved his preparing himself for a few minutes beforehand so that he had the story clear in his memory and would not make false starts or speak in slang-like grammar. Whistle is the only one where I caught him by surprise, and got what he probably would consider a garbled text.

VERB STEM ALTERNATION

Mizo verbs manifest in abundance the verb stem alternations found in many Chin languages. This alternation results in the primary forms of all verbs ("Stem I") being paired with a secondary set of phonologically similar
verbs ("Stem II"). The primary form of a verb is typically found in simple declarative sentences, while the secondary form occurs in subordinate clauses or otherwise oblique usages, not unlike the relationship between the predicate and predicate adjective forms in English, e.g. know/known. In an earlier paper (Hillard, 1977) I noted that the stem alternation came into play as distinguishing relativization of subject NPs on the one hand from object and oblique NPs on the other, with only subject NPs relativizing with Stem I verbs. The sense that is communicated by the stem alternation in relativization is that the verbal content of sentences modifying subject NPs is somehow still primary to understanding the whole proposition, while the verbal content of sentences modifying object or oblique NPs is background information that is at best secondary to an understanding of the matrix statement.

In the interlinear glosses of this paper, Stem I forms are not specially labelled, while Stem II forms are given the Roman numeral II after a slash, e.g. "said/II." Some familiarity with the verb stem alternation is useful for understanding the discussion of the 1a 3ni? 3hit construction below.

The primary forms of verbs are always likely to have more diverse phonological composition than the secondary forms. This difference always affects the rhyme portion of the verbal syllable such that the range of tones for secondary forms is less than that for primary forms, and final stop consonants typically are fewer in range with glottal stop (ʔ) often replacing other final consonants (-p, -t, -k). While the phonological relationship of the two sets remains tantalizing, the alternation is clearly no longer productive in this Chin language. A summary discussion of the phonology and possible historical origins of the verb stem alternation, as well as a comprehensive bibliography of relevant articles and word lists can be found in Hillard 1974.

DEMONSTRATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

Information comes into a clause coded along two dimensions: a semantic/syntactic dimension which allows for designation of agentive, absolutive, or instrumental/oblique roles; and a textual reference dimension which allows for designation of definite nominal status, and anaphoric "old" versus just-introduced "new" information.

Mizo demonstrative elements reflect both the tendency to make overt the speaker-related deictic categories seen in the verb phrase and the subtle referential distinctions about the status of information with respect to any interchange. The overall distinction is one of old versus new information.
Chhangte provides a description of the distinction in purely deltic terms (1986:162):

a. \( \text{het}^3 \text{ hi}^1 \) 'this (near speaker)'

b. \( \text{khaa}^3 \text{ kha}^1 \) 'that (near addressee)'

c. \( \text{khu}^3 \text{ khi}^1 \) 'that (up there)'

d. \( \text{khuu}^3 \text{ khu}^1 \) 'that (down there)'

e. \( \text{soo}^3 \text{ so}^1 \) 'that (far)'

f. \( \text{cui}^3 \text{ cu}^1 \) 'that (out of sight)'

She continues,

"It is worth noting here that out of the above determiners, there are two that have a different meaning within the context of a discourse. These two that's, \( \text{kha}^1 \) and \( \text{cu}^1 \), are anaphoric, where \( \text{kha}^1 \) refers to something that the speaker has heard or seen but that the addressee has maybe only heard of; and \( \text{cu}^1 \) refers to something the addressee has seen or heard but the speaker has only heard of. When used in this sense (that is, to refer to something in the past) the determiners \( \text{kha}^1 \) and \( \text{cu}^1 \) can follow any of the other first determiners ..."

Lorrain and Savidge (1898:13) provide a slightly clearer explanation of this distinction.

"\( \text{Kha} \) is generally used when the antecedent is known to or has been seen by the speaker, whether it is known to or has been seen by the person addressed or not."

"\( \text{Chu} \) [Lorrain and Savidge orthography retained] is generally used when the antecedent has only been heard of by the speaker, but is known to or has been seen by the one addressed."

1\( \text{a}^3 \text{ni}^3 \text{hi}^3 \) STATEMENT-FINAL DEMONSTRATIVE PARTICLES

One focus of this commentary is the use in these texts of statement-final particles as high-level modals. As reflected in the preceding quotations, the determiner morphemes (or their homophones) can behave as evidentials, and evidentials in other languages often appear as high-level modals. These particles take the form in isolation of one of the demonstrative particles \( 1\text{tsui}, 1\text{khaa}, 1\text{hi} \) or these particles occur in combination with a copula in Stem II \( 1\text{a}^3 \text{ni}^3 \).
In the same section of her thesis Chhangte adds,

"... the determiner cu\textsuperscript{1} is the only determiner that can follow any of the other determiner pairs. When this happens, cu\textsuperscript{1} effectively negates the whole NP, as in:

\begin{equation}
(132) \begin{array}{lll}
\text{he} & \text{hi} & \text{cu} \\
\text{this} & \text{this} & \text{that} \quad \text{‘Not this one’}
\end{array}
\end{equation}

This occurrence of cu\textsuperscript{1} (my transcription is \textit{tsuu}) is related to statement-final particles found in other Chin languages, notably Sizang, where \textsuperscript{3}hi\textsuperscript{i} complements \textsuperscript{1}aa in statement-final position: \textsuperscript{3}hi\textsuperscript{i} indicates the statement is final and complete; \textsuperscript{1}aa indicates the statement will be followed by another statement, much the same as Mizo \textsuperscript{1}aa which occurs ubiquitously in the texts below. Perhaps the demonstrative morphemes are ready candidates for this role due to the demonstrative frame, e.g., \textit{hey}... \textit{N}... \textit{hi}, etc., where their final position is salient both syntactically and phonetically for the statements in which they occur.

The Stem II copula in the \textsuperscript{1}a \textsuperscript{3}n\textsuperscript{i}? \textsuperscript{3}hi\textsuperscript{i} constructions in the texts convey the meaning "contrary to expectation" for a preceding statement. In Chhangte’s example \textit{tsuu} conveys the meaning “not” for a preceding statement. Both \textit{hi} and \textit{tsuu} therefore behave as statement-final, high level modals for preceding statements.

In texts these constructions occur in conjunction with statement-final complex copular constructions. In such statements the copular form of statements, \textit{X} \textsuperscript{1}a \textsuperscript{3}n\textsuperscript{i}? ‘It is X,’ is not followed. What occurs instead looks like,

\begin{equation}
\begin{array}{lllllll}
\text{\textsuperscript{1}nhay} & \text{\textsuperscript{2}reeng} & \text{\textsuperscript{1}a-} & \text{\textsuperscript{4}tsuak} & \text{\textsuperscript{1}tam} & \text{\textsuperscript{1}aa} \\
\text{pus} & \text{really} & 3\text{Nom} & \text{emerge} & \text{be much} & \text{NFP} \\
\text{\textsuperscript{1}a-} & \text{\textsuperscript{3}trap} & \text{\textsuperscript{3}po?} & \text{\textsuperscript{1}baang} & \text{\textsuperscript{3}om} & \text{\textsuperscript{2}reeng} & \text{\textsuperscript{1}a-} & \text{\textsuperscript{3}n\textsuperscript{i}} \\
3\text{Nom} & \text{cry} & \text{also} & \text{be there very} & 3\text{Nom} & \text{COP}
\end{array}
\end{equation}

"With so much pus coming out, it is fitting that it should stop crying."

The formulaic translation for these constructions is “It is fitting that ...” Additional commentary on these constructions occurs in the Notes following the texts. The pattern again in this SOV language is for final particles or copular structures to govern large sections of preceding discourse or even unstated presupposed conditions in the sense of a statement-level modal.
SYNTACTIC AND SEMANTIC INCORPORATION: the \textit{\textsuperscript{1}tsuaan \textsuperscript{1}in} construction

Mizo is a partially ergative language. Subjects of transitive verbs are marked as distinct from objects of transitive verbs or subjects of intransitive verbs. The ergative marker is \textit{\textsuperscript{3}in}. The absolutive marker is \textit{-\textsuperscript{0}} for third person participants, \textit{\textsuperscript{1}tse} for second person and \textit{\textsuperscript{1}mi\textsuperscript{n}} for first person. I regard \textit{\textsuperscript{1}tsuu} and \textit{\textsuperscript{1}hii} as absolutive markers for definite non-complex NPs. Ergative \textit{\textsuperscript{3}in} and absolutive \textit{-\textsuperscript{0}} apply to indefinite nominals. Definite nominals whether old or new information, for which Mizo has distinctive morphemes, as well as nominals and adjunctive structures with embedded sentences (complex attributive structures) are delimited by one of the morphologically complex morphemes, \textit{\textsuperscript{1}tsuaan}, \textit{\textsuperscript{1}hiaan}, incorporating the oblique (OBLQ) suffix \textit{-\textsuperscript{1}in}, or \textit{\textsuperscript{4}tsuaan}, \textit{\textsuperscript{4}hiaan}, incorporating the ergative (ERG) suffix \textit{-\textsuperscript{3}in}. It is noteworthy that all such structures occur outside the predicate portion of any clause, while marking for the first and second person accusatives, \textit{\textsuperscript{1}tse} and \textit{\textsuperscript{1}mi\textsuperscript{n}}, occurs inside the predicate. In the following I use Chhangte's notation, 2ACC and 1ACC, for second and first person accusative cases, respectively.

A tidy distribution emerges for the complex morphemes \textit{\textsuperscript{1}tsuaan}, \textit{\textsuperscript{1}hiaan}, \textit{\textsuperscript{4}tsuaan}, and \textit{\textsuperscript{4}hiaan}: \textit{\textsuperscript{1}tsuaan} and \textit{\textsuperscript{1}hiaan} incorporate preceding definite adjunctive information into a statement; \textit{\textsuperscript{4}tsuaan} and \textit{\textsuperscript{4}hiaan} incorporate preceding definite ergative information into a statement. When incorporating adjunctive information, a further specification is made: if the nominal which the adjunct modifies is old information, \textit{\textsuperscript{1}tsuaan} is the delimiter; if the modified nominal is new information, \textit{\textsuperscript{1}hiaan} is the delimiter.

What then do we make of the construction \textit{\textsuperscript{1}tsuaan \textsuperscript{1}in}, which occurs extensively in these texts? Chhangte's explanation, which is acceptable at first pass, is that \textit{\textsuperscript{1}tsuaan \textsuperscript{1}in} is used in "emphatic contexts" (p. 77). However, I detect in the texts that follow a more explanatory pattern for this construction.

In the two texts below, the \textit{\textsuperscript{1}tsuaan \textsuperscript{1}in} subordination occurs 10 times. (By comparison, \textit{\textsuperscript{1}tsuaan - \textsuperscript{1}hiaan} occurs 18 times.) In 7 of these 10 occurrences, \textit{\textsuperscript{1}tsuaan \textsuperscript{1}in} incorporates adjunctive information that has been introduced before. Only in \textit{Fontanel} [lines 34 and 37] (where there are a total of three occurrences) does \textit{\textsuperscript{1}tsuaan \textsuperscript{1}in} occur where the anaphoric reference is unclear. By comparison, in \textit{Whistle} [line 5] \textit{\textsuperscript{1}a \textsuperscript{3}hoo\textsuperscript{n} \textsuperscript{4}kong \textsuperscript{3}a? 'while he was on the road' repeats information in line 2, \textit{\textsuperscript{1}kho \textsuperscript{3}pa\textsuperscript{3}khat \textsuperscript{4}taa a-\textsuperscript{1}zin\textsuperscript{-3}na-a? \textit{\textsuperscript{1}hiaan} 'while he was on a journey out of the village.' Likewise, \textit{\textsuperscript{1}tsuaan \textsuperscript{1}in} in \textit{Whistle} [line 11] incorporates adjunctive information 'help to search' which first occurs in line 9, 'while he was searching.' And so on.
These texts are an admittedly small sample on which to base any claim. Yet the behavior of *ɪtsuaan ɪn* in these few lines supports the conclusion that something more than emphasis is involved. If this analysis should prove to be correct, it is impressive to me that a language which distinguishes consistently between "old" and "new" nominal information should also be making such a distinction when incorporating adjunctive information. I have included in the notes following the texts some additional data which support in a general sense this description of the behavior of *ɪtsuaan ɪn*.

Table 1 summarizes the occurrences of the two constructions under investigation,\(^2\) while Table 2 summarizes the proposed rule governing the distribution of *ɪtsuaan ɪn*.

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\(^2\) In Table 1, the number on the left side of "=>" refers to the line in a text in which an adjunctive or predicative situation occurs framed by the *ɪtsuaan ɪn* construction. The number on the right side of "=>" refers to the adjunctive or predicative situation in a previous sentence which is anaphoric for the *ɪtsuaan ɪn* construction.
Table 1
OCCURRENCES

$^{1a \ 3ni? 3hii}$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whistle</th>
<th>Fontanel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>28</td>
</tr>
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$^{1tsuaan \ 1in}$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whistle</th>
<th>Fontanel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 =&gt; 2</td>
<td>8 =&gt; 7 + 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 =&gt; (9) + 6</td>
<td>11 =&gt; 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 =&gt; 14a</td>
<td>20 =&gt; 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 (x2) =&gt; ??</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 =&gt; 34</td>
<td>37 =&gt; ??</td>
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Table 2
DISTRIBUTION OF $^{1tsuaan \ 1in}$

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nominal</th>
<th>Adjunctive</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indef</td>
<td>Definite Old Info</td>
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<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>$\emptyset$</td>
<td>$^{1tsuu}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERG</td>
<td>$^{3in}$</td>
<td>$^{4tsuaan}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBLQ</td>
<td>$^{1in}$</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"Whistle Text" (recorded 6/18/75)

1tuun -3a? 1tsuu3ra 4thon 2thuu 3ka 2low 3hri? 2arg 1tse 1u | 1  
present LOC Chura stories 1Nom DEIX tell FUT 2ACC PL

1hmaan 1laay 1hiaan 1tsuu3ra 1hii  
Once upon a time Chura DET

1kho 3pa 3khat 4taa a-1zin-3na-3a? 1hiaan  
village one CS on a journey DET-OBLQ

1faay-2fuuk 1hii 3a- 1tsha-1raa | 2  
whistle DET 3Nom come across

3tuu 1te 3in 4em 1o  
person PL ERG EMPH EMPH
= others

2an- 2low 3zir 1tiir 1a- 1faay-2fuuk 1hii  
2p DEIX teach 3Nom whistle DET

3a- 1rhe 3ve 1aa | 3  
3Nom know NFP

1a- 3du? 3khop 1may 1aa | 4  
3Nom3 want very CS NFP

1a- 3hoon 4kong 3a? 1tsuan 1-1in  
3Nom return road LOC DET-OBLQ OBLQ home/II

3a- 1faay-2fuuk 1tther? 1tther? 1may 1aa | 5  
3Nom whistle merrily CS NFP

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3 The two third person verbal prefix forms, 1a- and 3a-, reflect a tonal complementarity phenomenon: when the prefix is followed by a high level or low rising tone (Tones 1 or 2) 3a- occurs; when the prefix is followed by a low level or high falling tone (Tones 3 or 4) 1a- is used [p.c. F.K. Lehman]. My own personal opinion is that tonal differences are not very significant in these unstressed syllables, and that a certain amount of variation is apparent, as can be seen by careful perusal of the texts.
1 a-3 ma-1 e-3 ro-1 tsuui 3 hun 1 then 1 khaat
   However, place be separate be far apart

4 kong 3 a? 4 hun 2 naal 4 dew? 3 tak
   road LOC place slippery very ADJ VZR

1 a- 3 theng 3 a? 3 ta? 1 tsuun 1 a- 3 tol? 3 thuun 1 aa  | 5 a
   3 Nom trough LOC DET-OBLQ 3 Nom slip tie up NFP

3 a- 1 faay-2 fuuk 1 tsuui 1 a- 3 the 3 hngil 4 taa  | 5 b
   3 Nom whistle DET 3 NOM disappear(?) CS

1 faay-2 fuuk 1 tsuui 3 a- 1 zong 3 a- 1 zong 4 taa 1 may 1 aa  | 6
   whistle DET 3 Nom search for 1 Nom search for CS CS NFP

1 a- 3 om 1 na 3 a- 1 rhe 1 si 3 low 1 vaa  | 7
   3 Nom be in a NLZ 3 Nom know alas(?) NEG NFP place

1 eng 4 ngey 1 a- 3 ni 1 po? 3 a- 1 rhe 1 si 3 low 1 vaa 1 tsuui  | 8
   whatever 3 Nom COP also 3 Nom know alas(?) NEG NFP DET

3 ti 1 a- 1 a- 4 zon 1 laay 1 tsuun
   do, say OBLQ 3 Nom search/II period DET-OBLQ

4 pooy 1 te 3 pa-3 khat 1 hii
   Chin one DET

3 a- 2 low-1 kal 1 a 1 eng-4 ngey 1 a- 3 ni 3 zon
   3 Nom come OBLQ whatever 3 Nom COP search/II

1 ti 1 a- 1 a- 3 zot 1 tsuun 3 sooy engay 1 na
   say OBLQ 3 Nom ask DET-OBLQ say what NLZ

3 a- 1 rhe 1 si 3 low 1 vaa  | 9
   3 Nom know NEG NFP

3 na-4 kin 3 a? 1 tsuun 1 pooy 3 te 4 tsuun
   presently DET-OBLQ Chin DET-ERG

1 a- 3 zon 1 puy 3 vee 1 aa  | 10
   3 Nom search/II help rather, a bit NFP
1a. 3zon 1puy 1laay 1tsuaan 1in 1pooy3te 1tsuu
3Nom search/II help/II period DET-OBLQ OBLQ Chin DET

3a. 1faay-2fiuk 4taa 1har 4har 1may 1aa | 11
3Nom whistle CS merrily, lightly CS NFP

1tsuu3ra 4tsuaan 3a- 3han- 4ban 4taa 3thu 1may 1aa | 12
Chura DET-ERG 3Nom DEIX reach out CS word CS NFP

3mm 2nang3ma? 3in 1a- 3ni? 3hit 4hey | 13
Hmm... 2S-PN ERG 3Nom be FVP

3ka- 1faay-2fiuk 3ho? 1tsuu
1Nom whistle DET

3low 1tshar 1tse 3nil | 14
find by chance, 2ACC COP discover

1ti -1in 1pooy3te 1tsuu
do, say OBLQ Chin DET

3han 2aang 3te? 3a- 1tit 1a | 14a
DEIX gape 3Nom say NFP
(open-mouthed)

1a- 3han 2aang 1aa | 14a
3Nom DEIX gape OBLQ

1a- 3han 3an 1tsuaan 1in 3a- 1nin 3a- 1daang-3moon 1tsuu
3Nom DEIX gape/II DET-OBLQ OBLQ 3Nom DET 3Nom uvula DET

1a- 3han 3mhut 1tsuu 1a- 1nin 1so 4so 1a-3ni?
3Nom DEIX see/II DET 3Nom DET up there 3Nom COP/II

2soo 1ka- 1faay-2fiuk 3how? 1tsuu | 15
DET 1Nom whistle luckily DET

1ti 1in 1a- 1daang-3moon 1tsuu
say OBLQ 3Nom uvula DET

1a- 3po? 4tshuak 3sak 4taa 4taay 1may 1aa | 16
3Nom also emerge CAUS CS ?? CS NFP
TRANSLATION of "Whistle"

Now let me tell you all some Chura stories (1). Once upon a time this Chura, off on a journey out of his village, came across this whistle (2). He knew that others had taught about this whistle (3). He wanted it a lot (4). So, while he was on the road returning home he (came to be) merrily whistling (5). However, when he came to a very slippery place on the road at a trough, he slipped head over heels (5a). The whistle disappeared (5b). He searched and searched for the whistle (6). He didn’t know, alas, where it was (7). He also didn’t know, alas, what it was (8). While he was in the midst of this searching this Chin fellow came along asking about his search (and Chura), alas, didn’t know what to say (9). Presently the Chin helped him search a bit (10). While in the midst of helping to search, the Chin began to whistle merrily (11). Chura spoke out to the Chin (12). "Hmm... So you have had it (13)! My whistle has by chance found you (14)." As this was said, the Chin gaped open mouthed (at Chura) (14a). As he was open-mouthed, his uvula (having swung into) view up there (in his mouth), (and Chura said), there’s my whistle up there (15). As he (went after it) the uvula was suddenly caused to pop out (16).

"FONTANEL TEXT" (recorded 6/18/75)

1voy 3khat 3le? 1tsuu
instance one another DET

1tsuu2ra 1hii 1a- 3thian-4nuu 3in | 1
Chura DET 3Nom wife ERG

3voy1in 1tsuu 1naaw 2low 3om 3ve 3te? 4khay | 1a
today DET child remain DIM Polite-IMP

1ka- 4va 3fe? 4taa 2ang 4ee 1a- 3tii 1aa | 2
1Nom DEIX work in fields CS FUT EXCL 3Nom say NFP

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4 An additional dimension to this story is perhaps provided by the literal meaning of 1daang-3moon ‘uvula’, which is “palate-clitoris”. See J. Matisoff (1978) Variational Semantics in Tibeto-Burman, p. 67. [Ed.]
Chura DET-ERG child DET 3Nom stay with, CS NFP

presently DET-OBLQ

3a- 2low 3rey 4dew? 4nhu 1tsuaan
3Nom DEIX be long rather after DET-OBLQ

3a- 1naaw 1tsuu 3a- 1trap 3a- 1trap 4taa 1may 1aa
3Nom child DET 3Nom cry 3Nom cry CS CS NFP

3a- 2tle 3they 4taa 1haw? 3low 1may 1aa
3Nom be quiet be able CS at all NEG CS NFP

Chura DET-ERG breast DEIX give for/to moreover DET

1a- 3ney 1bok 1sii 3low 1va
3Nom have also alas NEG NFP

2an- 3thren 3om 1te 3nhu-3te
3p neighbor PL breast

DEIX share breast for/to moreover DET

of another mother

3a- 1rhe 1bok 1sii 3low
3Nom know also alas NEG

3ti 1tsuaan 1in 1a- 2mang 3ang 3khop 1may 1aa
3 Nom do/say DET-OBLQ OBLQ 3 Nom be perplexed FUT quite CS NFP

1a- 4faa 1tsuu 1a- 3han 1tsuul 3veel 1aa
3Nom son DET 3Nom DEIX caress encircle NFP

1na 4kin-3a? 1tsuaan 1a- 1lul-4diip 1tsuu 1a- 3kut 1tsuaan
in a while DET-OBLQ 3Nom fontanel DET 3Nom hand DET-OBLQ

3a- 2han 3khoy? 4taa 1aa
3Nom DEIX touch CS NFP
1a- 2low 4laa 3khoy? 2naay 4haw? 3lo? 1a- 3ni? 1a-3vang-1in 3Nom DEIX take touch ever at all NEG/II 3Nom COP/II because

1a- 3kut 1in 1a- 3han 3khoy? 1tsuaan 1in 3Nom hand OBLQ 3Nom DEIX touch DET-OBLQ OBLQ

3a- 2low 4duup 3dew? 4tiaak 1may 1aa | 11 3Nom DEIX be soft rather quite CS NFP

1tsui3ra 4tsuaan 3eng 2tang 2soy 4taa 3low 1tsuaan | 12 Chura DET-ERG whatever say CS NEG DET-OBLQ because

3ee 3khay 4hey | 13 EXCL ?? EXCL

3a- 2low 4naa 4em 1a- 3ni? 3hii | 14 3Nom DEIX be painful very 3Nom COP/II FVP

3hey 1laay 3a? 1hiaan 1nhaay DET period LOC DET-OBLQ form pus, suppurate

3a- 2low 3laa 1a- 3ni? 3hii 3ley | 15 3Nom DEIX bring 3Nom COP/II FVP EXCL

3khoy 4ngey 4kan [3ka- 3han] 2khey 3te? 2ang 1a- 3tii 4aa | 16 touch?? ?? 1Nom DEIX prick DIM FUT 3Nom say OBLQ

1rhiaw 3a- 3la 1lowk 1aa | 17 needle 3Nom fetch presently NFP

1a- 1lu-4dip 1tsuu 1paan-3nhaay 3tak 3may 1tsuaan 3Nom fontanel DET wound-pus ADJVZR CS DET-OBLQ

1a- 1nhaay 4tan 4taa 1aa | 18 3Nom expel pus begin CS NFP

3a- 2low 1nhay 3du? 1na-1sa 3khop 1may 1aa | 19 3Nom DEIX be expelled want a lot CS NFP

1a- 3nhay 3zo? 1tsuaan 1in 3Nom expel complete/II DET-OBLQ OBLQ
3a- 4faa 1tsuu 1a- 4noy 3ta? 4mhiat 1may 1aa | 20
3Nom son DET 3Nom be quiet CS/II totally CS NFP

1tsuu3ra 4tsuaan 3niu 4khaa
Chura DET-ERG COP DET-PN

1nhay 2reeng 3a- 4tshuak 1tam 1aa | 21
pus be proper 3Nom emerge be much NFP

1a- 3trap 3po? 1baang 3om 2reeng 1a- 3niu | 22
3Nom cry also stop be there be proper 3Nom COP

3ti 1in 3a- 3soy 4mhia? 1may 1aa | 23
say OBLQ 3Nom say conclude CS NFP

4tlaay 3a? 1tsuaan 1a- 3thian-1nuu 3fe? 1tsuu
evening LOC DET-OBLQ 3Nom wife work in fields DET

1a- 2low 2hoong 1aa | 24
3Nom DEIX return home NFP

1thil 2om 3zia 1tsuu 1a- 3han 3soy? 1tsuaan
being of things DET 3Nom DEIX say DET-OBLQ

1a- 3thian-1nuu 4tsuaan
3Nom wife DET-ERG

1i- 1va 3han 2aa 1reeng 1reeng 3ve2y 3le 4hey | 25
2Nom over there DEIX be mad really-really also also EXCL

1i- 2low 3ti-4thum 3dew 1a- 3ni? 3hii | 26
2Nom DEIX kill already 3Nom COP/II FVP

1hey 1hii 1tsuu 1a- 1lu-4diip 1a- 3ni? 3hii
DET-PN DET 3Nom fontanel 3Nom COP/II FVP

1a- 1paan 1nhaay 1a- 3ni? 3lo? 3hii | 27
3Nom wound suppurate 3Nom COP/II NEG/II FVP

4hey 3a- 1beng 1te 3po?
EXCL 3Nom ear PL also
1a.  
3vo?  
1ngiay  
3hii  
1aa  
1thia  
1a-  
3ni?  
3hii  
| 28
3Nom  be cold  be pathetic  DET  NFP  be dead  3Nom  COP/II  FVP

1a  
4thian-3nu  
4tsuaan  
3a-  
3han  
3ti?  
1tsuaan  
| 29
3Nom  wife  DET-ERG  3Nom  DEIX  said/II  DET-OBLQ

Chura  DET-ERG  EXCL  1Nom-PN  also  EXCL

3ka-  
1thii  
1a-  
3ni?  
2ang  
| 31
1Nom  be dead  3Nom  COP  FUT

3ka-  
1beng  
1ka-  
3han-3khoy?  
1hiaan  
1Nom  ears  1Nom  DEIX  touch  DET-OBLQ

1a.  
3vo?  
3vey  
1in  
3ka-  
1rhe  
4tlat  
1may  
3Nom  be cold/II  also  OBLQ  1Nom  know  can't help  CS

1a.  
3ti  
4taa  
1nghey  
1nghey  
1aa  
| 32
3Nom  say  CS  furthermore  NFP

3ti  
1tsuaan  
1thi  
1a  
1a-  
3in-4rhiat  
4taak  
1a-3vaan-1tsuaan  
| 33
say  DET-OBLQ  dead  OBLQ  3Nom  RECIP-  CS  since

know/II

4puuk  
3a?  
1tsuaan  
1in  
1a-  
1va  
1kal  
1a  
cave  LOC  DET-OBLQ  OBLQ  3Nom  DEIX  go  OBLQ

4mi  
1thi  
2an-1da?  
3na  
4mhuin  
3a?  
1te  
1tsuaan  
1in  
person  dead  2p  place, put  NLZ  place  LOC  PL  DET-OBLQ  OBLQ

3rey  
1fee  
3hi?  
3a-  
3om  
1aa  
1a-  
1va  
3om  
3vee  
1aa  | 34
be long  quite  FVP  3Nom  be there  NFP  3Nom  DEIX  be there  NFP

1na-4kin  
3a?  
1tsuaan  
1pt-1tar-3te  
3pa-3khat  
1hii  
while  LOC  DET-OBLQ  little old woman  one  DET

1a-  
1va  
3mhuu  
1vey  
1aa  
| 35
3Nom  DEIX  see  also  NFP

1pt-1tar-3te  
4tsuaan  
1tsuu-4mii  
4mhuin  [-3a?]  
1tsuu  
little old woman  DET-ERG  DET  place  [LOC]  DET
Once upon another time (1), this Chura’s wife said, “Today, why don’t you remain home with the child (1a). I’ll go off to work in the fields (2).” So, Chura proceeded to babysit their child (3). After quite a while, his child began to cry and cry (4). It was unable to become quiet (5). Chura unfortunately had no breast to give to the child (6). And unfortunately he knew of no neighbor to give breast to the child (7). So he was very perplexed (8). He caressed his child all over (9).

In a while, his hand happened upon its fontanel (10). And since it was something he had never before touched, he began to touch it with his hand. It was quite soft (11). So Chura saying nothing at all ... (12) “What (13)! This is a very painful wound indeed (14). There seems to be pus around here. Yuck (15)! Let us have a try at pricking it out,” he said (16). Presently he fetched a needle (17), he began to express “pus” from the apparently suppurating wound (18). It turned out to be very expressible (19). When he completed expressing [the “pus”], his son became totally quiet (20). Chura said, “See there! It is no wonder the child stopped crying with so much pus coming out (21-22).” Thus saying, he concluded it as such (23).

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5 This abstract morpheme 2lam "-ward" is a grammaticalization of the PTB root *lam ‘road’, just like the Lahu locative noun-particle lo. [Ed.]
In the evening his wife returned from working in the fields (24). When he told her the state of things, his wife said, "You turn out to be really quite mad (25). You've already managed to kill him (26). This thing is his fontanel. It's not a wound oozing pus (27). My God! Even his ears! They're so pathetically cold! He's truly dead (28-29)!"

At which point Chura said, "Oh! So am I (30)! I must be dead (31). I can't help noticing that this ear of mine is also cold when I touch it (32)." Moreover, since he'd come to regard himself as dead (33), upon going to the cave, the place where dead people are put, he remained there quite a while (34). After a while, this old woman was looking over there (35). The old woman in that place probably wanted to pay a visit (to a grave) and was trying to look for her dead relatives (36). However, when she heard Chura's noises, the old woman fled homeward in great fear, so they say (37).

NOTES

(1) \textit{1tsaana} versus \textit{1tsaan 1in}

It is possible to conclude that \textit{1tsaana} is a now morphologized combination of the definite article (for old or known nominal material) with the Oblique morpheme, \textit{-1in}. The sequence \textit{1tsaana 1in} appears to be nothing more than an iterative combination of this fused morpheme with a second occurrence of Oblique \textit{-1in}; this fuller form is used to add further emphasis, as observed by Chhangte (1986:77).

Elsewhere under the topic Complex Attributes (Section 5.2) Chhangte comments on the use of \textit{-1in} to subordinate complex nominal information. She cites examples such as

\begin{verbatim}
1aar-3laak-1mhang 1in 1a 3om
\end{verbatim}

\begin{verbatim}
chicken-take/II-habit OBLQ 3Nom exist
\end{verbatim}

'It was in the habit of stealing chickens.'

but indicates that these constructions "sound very unnatural" and that the preferred forms would look like

\begin{verbatim}
sa-1aar-3laak-1mhang 1a 3niu
\end{verbatim}

\begin{verbatim}
animal-chicken-take-habit 3Nom be
\end{verbatim}

'The animal is one that is in the habit of stealing chickens.'

where, for the purposes of this paper, it is notable that the verb has changed from the existential to the copular form of 'to be.'
In general, I don't dispute the notion that the fuller form "1tsuan 1in" conveys added emphasis as compared to "1tsuan alone. However, I have tried to render a more detailed distinction between these two syntactic constructions. On the day these notes were taken (from a session of exclusively extemporaneous storytelling on the part of Siamkima), Professor Lehman and I discussed the use of the "1tsuan 1in" construction with him. I have in my notes the following two examples:

U of I 3a? classroom 3a? 1tsuan 1in 3mey4zuuk 3an 1phal 3low
   LOC       LOC       smoking 3Nom allow NEG
'(Generally) In the classrooms at U(iversity) of I(linois) they don't allow smoking.'

3a 1in 3a? 1tsuan 1in 1kan 3bee 3they 3low
   1Nom house LOC       1Nom speak be able NEG
'At his house we cannot speak (to him).'

Compare, in the case of the latter,

3a 1in 3a? 1tsuan 1kan 3bee 3they 3low
   1Nom house LOC       1Nom speak be able NEG
'We can't speak at his house.'

where the expected "1tsuan (from the locative phrase) together with the straightforward negative predicate leads to a straightforward translation with no parenthetical, ellipsized additions in the English. In both examples of "1tsuan 1in, the sense of the discourse is that additional information of an implicit nature is conveyed (i.e. the notion that "a general condition exists" in the first example, and the notion that "it's to him we cannot speak" in the second), and that "1tsuan 1in is the mechanism for doing so. Rather than the straightforward locative with "1tsuan, which indicates only that an action happens not to be possible at the given location at a given time, the fuller expression "1tsuan 1in defines an entire class of events as not being possible at that location.

(2) 1a 3ni? 3hii

From dialogue in my notebooks,

3i 1low na 4em 1a 3ni? 3hii
   2Nom DEIX be sick very 3Nom COP/II
'Ah, you really are sick.'
1a 3nii? 3nii marks the preceding predicate or entire clause as contrary to expectation.

(3) Complex copulas

\[1\text{nhay} \ 2\text{reeng} \ 1\text{a}- \ 4\text{tshuak} \ 1\text{tam} \ 1\text{aa} \]
\[\text{pus} \ \text{really} \ 3\text{Nom} \ \text{emerge} \ \text{be much} \ \text{NFP} \]

\[1\text{a}- \ 3\text{trap} \ 3\text{po?} \ 1\text{baang} \ 3\text{om} \ 2\text{reeng} \ 1\text{a}- \ 3\text{nii} \]
\[3\text{Nom} \ \text{cry} \ \text{also} \ \text{be there very} \ 3\text{Nom} \ \text{COP} \]

'With so much pus coming out, it is fitting that it should stop crying.'

Compare,

\[\text{Mary} \ 1\text{tsuu} \ 3\text{a} \ 3\text{mhel} \ 2\text{reeng} \ 3\text{a} \ 3\text{thaa} \ 1\text{aa} \]
\[\text{DET} \ 3\text{Nom} \ \text{be pretty} \ \text{really} \ 3\text{Nom} \ \text{be good} \ \text{NFP} \]

\[\text{pa sal} \ 3\text{thhat} \ 1\text{a} \ 2\text{ney} \ 3\text{om} \ 2\text{reeng} \ 1\text{a} \ 3\text{nii} \]
\[\text{husband good/II} \ 3\text{Nom} \ \text{have be there really} \ 3\text{Nom} \ \text{COP} \]

'With Mary being so good looking, it is fitting she has a good husband.'

It is notable that the Oblique -1in is not found in these constructions. The main clause predicate 3om 2reeng 1a 3nii, literally 'be there' + 'really' + 'copula', governs this subtle subordination.
REFERENCES


