

SQUIBS AND ETYMOLOGIES

Editors' Note: Many distinguished linguistics journals (e.g. IJAL, JAOS, Linguistic Inquiry) have long had features entitled "Brief Communications" or "Squibs" -- a section of each issue devoted to mini-articles ranging in length from a paragraph to a few pages, each dealing with a particular small but interesting point of phonology, grammar, or etymology.

With this issue, LTBA is inaugurating its own "Squibs and Etymologies" section. Contributions are solicited on any aspect of Tibeto-Burman or Southeast Asian linguistics. These "cameos" may present a single etymology, a detailed point of syntax or semantics, an interesting phonological fact -- anything that falls into the category of the "petit fait vrai."

The vast sand-castle of Truth must be built up grain by grain, before the tide comes in.

A new Lahu simplex/causative pair: "study/train"

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Much attention has been paid in recent work on TB linguistics to synchronically observable consonantal and tonal alternations that reflect an earlier morphological process of causativization (or transitivization). Many TB languages preserve at least a few pairs of verbs that bear an "allofamic" phonological relationship to each other [Matisoff 1975b], as well as the semantic relationship of stative vs. causative, or intransitive vs. transitive. In most cases the causative members of the pairs can be shown to derive from forms with the Proto Tibeto-Burman (PTB) sibilant prefix *s- [Wolfenden 1929, pp. 46-7; Benedict 1972, pp. 105-6], which became a glottal prefix *ʔ- in Proto Lolo-Burmese (PLB) [Matisoff 1968, 1970, 1972]. The stative or non-causative members of the pairs frequently reflect the old PTB nasal prefix *m- or *N- [Wolfenden 1929, pp. 26-30; Benedict 1972, pp. 117-21; Matisoff 1972, pp. 48-53].

On three occasions over the past six years I have presented a list of 13 "fossilized" simplex/causative verb-pairs in Lahu that followed regular consonantal and tonal alternational patterns [Matisoff 1970 (pp. 16-17); 1973 (p. 33); 1975a (section 1.23)]. I thought that was all there were -- but you never know! Working on the letters C- and J- in the "forthcoming" Lahu Dictionary last week, I found another pair, Number 14. Here it is:

jò 'to study, practice,
drill oneself'

cò 'to train someone; cause
someone to practice an
activity'

The simplex verb jò frequently occurs as a "post-head versatile verb" [Matisoff 1973, pp. 220 ff.], with the meaning 'practice Verb-ing' (e.g. á-thâ mǝ? jò ve 'practice blowing the jewsharp',
 $\begin{array}{cc} \text{V}_h & \text{V}_v \end{array}$)

Lāhū-khò yò jò ve 'practice speaking Lahu'). The causative verb
 $\begin{array}{cc} \text{V}_h & \text{V}_v \end{array}$

cò takes an animate causee (optionally followed by the "de-efficacy" noun-particle thà? [Matisoff 1975a]): sā-gà? =phī cò ve 'train a hunting-dog', yā-pā thà? á-thâ mǝ? cò ve 'train the boy to
 $\begin{array}{cc} \text{V}_h & \text{V}_v \end{array}$ blow the jewsharp.'

blow the jewsharp.'

Tonologically, the pair jò/cò exemplifies the "Class I" type of tonal alternation, where the simplex verb is low-falling tone /-/ , and the causative verb is mid-tone (unmarked). This alternation reflects PLB proto-tone *1. Parallel examples are dò 'drink' / tò 'give to drink'; dē 'come to rest' / tē 'put down'; mò 'see' / mò 'show,' etc.

The voicing of the initial in the simplex verb is the regular Lahu reflex of the stativizing nasal prefix *N-, as I have shown [cf. my footnote 123 in Benedict 1972, p. 38; also Matisoff 1972 (pp. 15-16); 1973 (p. 2)]. Parallel examples include dò/tò and dē/tē (just mentioned), as well as dū 'dig' / tū 'bury' (showing "Class II" tonal alternation between high-falling /-/ and very-low /-/ tones); and vò? 'wear' / fí 'dress someone', và? 'hide oneself' / fá 'hide something' (exhibiting "Class III" tonal alternation between low-checked /-?/ and high-rising /-/ tones).

Not all Lahu simplex/causative pairs have a contrastively voiced simplex, however. When the root began with a nasal or liquid there is no voicing contrast, since modern Lahu has only the lateral l- and a single series of plain (non-contrastively voiced) nasals: e.g. mò 'see' / mò 'show'; nò 'wake up' / nò 'awaken someone'; lè? 'lick' / lè 'cause to lick.' But sometime even when the initial consonant is "contrastively voiceable" in modern Lahu the simplex remains voiceless: cā 'eat' / cā 'feed'; tò? 'be burning' / tú 'set on fire.' The nasal stativizing prefix was evidently optional in pre-Lahu verb - pairs. (This "inconsistent" behavior is typical of TB prefixes, whether one likes it or not!)

What of cognates of jò/cò in other languages? A search of the Burmese dictionaries immediately turns up a related form, Written Burmese (WB) မှုန့်, kyañ (creaky tone). This verb functions both causatively (or transitively) and non-causatively (or intransitively) in Burmese, as indicated by Judson's gloss (p. 206): 'to do, perform, practice; to be habituated to; to teach, train, break in, as an ox or buffalo.' (There is also a derived

noun ṣṣṣ. ʔəkyaṽ 'a deed, a habit acquired by practice' [Judson, p. 71.]

The WB/Lahu rhyme-correspondence -aṽ/-ṽ is entirely regular, reflecting PLB *-aṽ (e.g. WB naṽ / Lh. nṽ 'you' < PLB *naṽ₁; WB thāṽ / Lh. thṽ 'pine, fir' < PLB *taṽ₂, etc.). Lahu palatal affricates /c ch j/ are the regular reflexes of PLB *velars plus -y- [Matisoff 1969].

We therefore set up the proto-Loloish forms underlying Lahu jṽ and cṽ as *N-kyāṽ₁ and *ʔ-kyāṽ₁, respectively. The WB form kyāṽ derives from an unprefixated prototype *kyāṽ. Burmese developed creaky-tone under somewhat mysterious circumstances (now being investigated by Thurgood, forthcoming), in many etyma which correspond to Loloish proto-tone *1, as in this case. It is likely that creaky tone was exploited sporadically as an alternative device for causativizing verbs in earlier stages of Burmese. (A more frequent device was the PTB *sibilant > PLB *glottal prefix, which led to aspiration of the initial consonant of the causative member in modern Burmese [see the list in Okell 1969, Vol. 1, pp. 205-8].) If this is what happened here, the creakiness could then have been generalized into non-causative or intransitive contexts as well, so that the contrast was lost, and a single creaky form had to fill both semantic roles.

We may thus symbolize this PLB etymon as follows:

<u>Prefixes</u>	<u>Root</u>	<u>Tones</u>
*N- *ʔ- }	kyāṽ	1 & 3 ,

where "3" stands for creaky tone, which for some purposes it is convenient to set up as a third PLB proto-tone ["Tone *3"]. even though it is obviously secondary compared to proto-tones *1 and *2.

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