A SHORT UPDATE ON RAWANG PHONOLOGY

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Rawang has been classified as a Tibeto-Burman language. It is often referred to as Nung or Nungish in the literature, and in different classifications of Sino-Tibetan and Tibeto-Burman, and is assigned to either the Kachin or separately to the Burmic (Assam-Burmese) branch of the Tibeto-Burman family (R. Morse, 1962:14). Nomenclature has long been a problem with the many tribes that inhabit the valleys and mountains of Southeast Asia and the Himalayan mountain ranges. This problem has been especially acute for the Rawang tribes and Robert Morse (1962, 1965) has made some extensive studies to clear up the confusion. The name Nung confuses the situation in that there actually is a Rawang tribe who call themselves Anùng (also called Kwinpàng, Kuhpàng, Kwinsàng, Fùch'yè, Nóphà; see R. Morse, 1962). According to Morse, the name Nung came from the Jinghpaws who "borrowed the Shan name for the Rawangs (Hkanung, meaning slave Nung), and confusing them with an actual tribe of Nung, called the Rawangs Nung as well. This (Jinghpaw) name for the Rawangs in turn had been picked up by the British administration and perpetuated in the literature, to the extent that their genuine, self-designated name of Rawang is practically unheard of." (R. Morse, 1962:15-16; Barnard, 1934:vii).

One can easily sympathize with the many linguists and anthropologists (Schmidt, 1926; Grierson, 1927; Barnard, 1934 (who was the first to use the name Nung in his study of Rawang); MacDougald, 1943; Shafer, 1955; and Voegelin and Voegelin, 1977) who have attempted to describe and classify the hundreds of languages and dialects of Sino-Tibetan. For example, even for as small a tribe as the Rawang (not more than 100,000 according to recent estimates), a partial count of the Rawang dialects has yielded a figure of over seventy-two, with an indication that there may be well over one hundred different dialects (S. Morse, 1976:2; R. and B. Morse, 1966:200). To give an example of how different these dialects can be, R. and B. Morse give a partial list of words meaning 'corn' (1966:200):

Mɔtwàng:	ngaqlóng	Mɔyɵt:	lɔngú
Waqdɵmkong:	hɑ̄mɵq	Mɔsháng:	shɔngū
Kwinsàng:	hɑ̀muq	Jerwàng:	tɑmbōng
Aguq:	puqgí	Rɔshɵm:	lɔgōng
Róza:	waqrí	T'rung:	mɔbō
Sɔrep:	dɔchá	Waqkwe:	shɔmūng, sɔmū
Kízi:	lɔchá	Dɔngraq:	ɔmboq
Pɑngring:	lɔngū		

According to R. and B. Morse:
>"Approximately five main branches of Rawang may be distinguished, by general names which tend to be differentia of the variations of culture and social structure: Ganøng, Nung, Tangsar(r), Rawang, and Longmi. These variations, which at one time were distinctive, are today becoming less and less evident as they now intermingle freely. Another set of names, subordinate to the above cultural names, seem to be differentiations for general locations or areas. Naturally these would tend to be the most divergent names in this set, and these names used to describe an ethnic group are not at all reliable.
>Subordinate to this and the cultural name, finally would be the dialect names, which are sometimes no more than a clan name, or a combination of clan names, or a lesser locality name - in any case describing the locale or clans speaking a particular dialect." (1966:200).

There has been recent speculation as to the legitimacy of including Nung and Tangsar as branches of the Rawang language. A brief glance at a word list should dispel any thoughts that Anung and Tangsar are not related Rawang languages (see forthcoming paper)[2].

Though the Rawang nation today occupies the mountains and valleys that serve as the watershed of three great rivers of north Burma, the Nam Tamai (N'mai), the Mali (Maliq), and the Chindwin, they have not always lived there. Robert and Betty Morse (1966) have unraveled ancient religious chants and traditions sufficiently to trace Rawang migration routes back to the Tibetan Plateau and beyond (R. and B. Morse, 1966; Lapai, 1975). As comparatively recent arrivals in northern Burma (compared to the other Burmese tribes), the Rawang were surrounded on the north by the Tibetans, on the east by the Lisu, Nung and Naxi, on the southeast by the Maru, Lashi, and Achang (who call themselves Ngoqchang), on the south by the Jinghpaw, on the southwest by the Khamti Shan, and on the west by the Mishmi. Except for the clans directly in contact with these other groups, there was actually very little intercourse with the outside world for the main body of Rawang people. A great aid to their comparative isolation was the fact that in the unending, universal search for a homeland of the future, the late-coming Rawang nation got stuck with the only parcel of real estate still unoccupied. This was the heart of the notorious "Hump," where the turbulent mountain streams, formidably high ranges, and dangerously infested jungles all combined to develop the Rawang into an unbelievably strong, virile race of people, thoroughly adapted to such rugged terrain. As the people scattered and settled, they tended to become increasingly isolated, so that their language soon developed into many varying dialects, some of them even becoming mutually unintelligible.

Some clans living near other tribes which were more dominant due to prior claims and better holdings seem to have been slowly

absorbed, whether due to a chattel-type slavery, or to intermarriage and re-identification. Such has become the fate of clans such as the Bishit, the Talong, the Taloq, and the Abør, and other clans who entered the Mishmi orbit. It would be extremely interesting to compare dialect differences between modern speakers of Rawang (Konglang) living on the Putao plains of north Burma with the dialect spoken in a group of villages over in northeast India. During the India-Burma Border Commission's excursions in isolated areas of the Walong subdivision of the Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh on the Indo-Burma border, several Rawang members of the Burmese side of the Border Commission found that there was a very high degree of mutual intelligibility between their speech and that of these supposedly Mishmi villages. Further investigation revealed the fact that these "Mishmi" villagers were descendants of people who had migrated into the Mishmi area in ancient times, from the Rawang tribe. There are also the now-extinct Bangsarr, Longgwing, N'tit, and Nokmung tribes, who lived and worked with the Khamti Shan of Putao over 900 years ago (R. and B. Morse, 1966:27). Even today, due to the independence movement in Kachin State, many of the Rawang clans in the Hkranghku and Mashang areas that have been isolated from their own people due to war, are said to be in the process of being absorbed into the Tuleng or northern Jinghpaw, in the area known as the Triangle, east of Sumprabum in Kachin State.

1.0   A Brief Survey of the Rawang Phonemic System

Rawang is said to have more agglutinating than isolating tendencies and though the syllable most often occurs as the minimal word unit, it is also found occurring as a component element in the structure of "syllable clusters" (see R. Morse, 1962:62). The minimal syllable has a nucleus plus a tone, and the maximal syllable may have an initial consonant or consonant cluster. Vowels are observed to occur only in the nucleus class. Every sequence of vowels, each with its own inherent tone, represents a sequence of minimal syllables. A lengthened vowel or diphthong has only one inherent tone.

Though syllabic consonants have not been observed in previous analyses of Rawang it seems quite possible that the negative prefix /mə-/ may be analyzed as a syllabic nasal when used in certain contexts. Jinghpaw, a neighboring language, has a whole series of syllabic nasals that are vocalized homorganically before the appropriate stop (Hanson, 1917:3, 5) and it may be that some of the dialects of Rawang that are near the Jinghpaw have similar usages of syllabic nasals (N'tit - an extinct Rawang tribe?). The following examples illustrate the use of the Rawang negative prefix /mə-/ described by R. Morse (1966:361) as "an optional adverbial second order prefix of the verb," which also "occurs in adverbial tagmemes without tagmemic postpositions as /ma-/ 'without, un-' prefixed to verbs in infinitive form, with several patterns."

1) ngà màdí shaq   'without my going'
2) ngà màdáng nòng nā   'if I don't go'
3) nà màdī nìnā   'if you don't go'
4) ngà mà:ál shaq   'without my being'
5) nāngmaq vēyáng màa:lì 'we don't live there'
5a) nangmaq vēyáng m-à:lì 'we don't live there'
6) ngà vēyáng mà-āl   'I don't live there'
6a) ngà vēyáng m-āl   'I don't live there'

The negative in example 3 is phonetically determined and may be described as /mə + è/ -> /mè/, a deletion-assimilation rule where /è/ is a second-person marker that always occurs before the main verb. In examples 5 - 6a we show two different forms of the negative prefix, in which 5a and 6a show it as syllabic nasals. Thus Rawang may be developing syllabic nasals via vowel contraction processes.

1.1 Initial Consonants

Stops: Voiceless aspirated	p	t	(ts)	ch	k
Voiced (sometimes prenasalized)	b	d	dz	j	g
Fricatives (voiceless)			s	sh	h
Nasals	m	n			ng
Liquids		l	r		
Glides		w		y	

Examples:

pā 'side'	tā 'be obedient'	(tsā) 'bird'	chā 'show off'	kā 'chicken'
bā 'step over'	dà 'be amazed'	dzā 'be sick'	jā 'to fall'	gā 'to write'
		sā 'to wait'	shā 'animal'	há 'basket'
mā 'to hide'	nā 'to feed'			ngā 'fish'
	lā 'to drop'	rā 'to confer'		
vā 'say'			yā 'cliff bee'	

1.11 Brief Description of Initial Consonants

The release feature of the primary constriction distinguishes the affricates from the plosives: the plosives /p, b, t, d, k, g/ are produced with an abrupt release; on the other hand the two sets of affricates /ts, dz, ch, j/ are produced with a delayed release.

The "voiced" stop and affricate series shows considerable variation. Some speakers (myself included) often have prenasalization; some speakers often have voiceless unaspirated realizations. In general, it seems that voicelessness and lack of prenasalization is more frequent for back places of articulation. All three forms occur for each; thus /b/ may be [p], [b], or [mb].[3]

The standard Mətwang dialect has no aspirated alveolar affricate, but such a segment is found in most other dialects. In the standard dialect /ts/ is merged with the alveolar fricative /s/, so /tsa/ 'bird' becomes homophonous with /sa/ 'to wait.' The orthography uses the digraph "ng" to represent the velar nasal /ŋ/, and the digraph "sh" to represent the palatoalveolar fricative /š/; in my broad transcription I follow the orthography. Similarly, "ch" represents /č/, and "j" represents /ǰ/. The /h/ phoneme in Rawang, unlike the Lisu and Lahu languages with differentiation of a velar and a backer series, with substantial friction of the latter, has only simple cavity friction with a minimum of friction and a tendency to be palatalized. /y/ is the voiced counterpart of /sh/; this tends to have substantial friction. The Rawang /r/ is a voiced alveolar fricativized retroflexed flap with allophonic variation due to distributional constraints. /w/ is a voiced bilabial continuant and has two possible allophones [w] and [v] similar to Lisu (see Burling, 1967:23). The labiodental fricative [v] variably occurs only initially whereas the allophone [w] may occur initially, finally, or as a second member of an initial consonant cluster. When [w] occurs as a second member in an initial consonant cluster it occurs only with back consonants /k, g, ng, h/.

Some examples of back consonants forming a cluster with [w]:

kwá	gwá	nòngngwà	hwā
'bee'	'wear'	'cow'	'to swing'

Although Mətwang Rawang, the dialect under study in this paper, does not exhibit any consonant clusters other than with [w] as already described above, there appear to be at least three other consonants /r, l, y/ which also occur as a second consonant in an initial consonant cluster in some of the other dialects of Rawang (S. Morse, 1976:5). It is interesting to note that all of these initial cluster-forming consonants belong to the second voiced series composed of the liquids and glides in the consonant chart above. The two glides /w, y/ and the two liquids /l, r/ are a natural class which share the feature sonorant. Examples of consonant clusters from some other Rawang dialects include:

bróng - 'full'   Nəbóq
bling - 'full'   Koduq
gyà - 'to eat until full'   Nəbóq
gyóng - 'bag'   Tàngsài
dəgláyq - 'to jump out of'   Tàngsài

Of the many Rawang dialects, Mətwang from the Rawang branch is the only one to have received any appreciable attention from modern linguists. More complete accounts of the phonology are given by R. Morse in his M.A. thesis (1962), and some grammatical information is provided by R. Morse (1965). Barnard, a British Frontier officer working as an untrained linguist, gave some initial insights into the morphosyntax in a handbook (Barnard, 1934) purporting to describe the Mətwang Rawang dialect of the Nung language, but which actually is a very good record of the Waqdəmkong dialect.

The transcription used in this study is, with minor changes, like that used by R. Morse in his *Hierarchical Levels of Rawang Phonology* (1962) and in the now-established Rawang orthography. A difference that may be noted is in the analysis of the two affricates /ts, dz/. Morse does not list /ts/ for the simple reason that it is not a sound that occurs in the Mətwang dialect. He has also listed as a fricative the phoneme /z/, with two allophones in free variation [dz] and [dʒ], which I have listed here as an affricate /dz/. He describes the latter of the two allophones as a voiced alveopalatal affricate which is similar to my /j/.

The phonemic glottal stop does not occur initially and is the only stop not found in the initial consonant cluster. There is, though, a nondistinctive glottal stop onset that is apparent before vowel initial syllables. There is a contrastive glottal stop that occurs in the final position and is written as /q/ in the Rawang orthography, and to preserve and promote Rawang orthography I have adopted its use in this paper as well.

About the glottal stop R. Morse observes:

"The occurrence of a non-phonemic vowel onset initial glottal stop is common to most Asiatic languages. In languages in which no phonemic glottal stop occurs, there is no problem, and the initial occurrence can be ignored. In some cases where it does occur finally, it has been considered a feature of the tonal system, and phonemi-cized as a prosodic phoneme. For many of the Sino-Tibetan languages, and especially for the Miao-Yao, Daic branches as well as the Lolo-Moso group of the Burmic language, though the phone may not exhibit phonemic contrast at present, historically it can be shown to have had like phonemic status with other voiceless stops. The picture is slightly different for Rawang, where no correlation can be demonstrated between initial consonants and tones. No phonemic contrast is exhibited by the glottal stop syllable initially." (1962:66).

Thus we have a total inventory of twenty-one consonants for Mətwang Rawang (or twenty-two if the /ts/ of other dialects is included), of which only the glottal stop does not appear in the initial position of the syllable.

1.2 The Nucleus

Rawang can be described as having a total of seven simple vowels that contrast with each other in identical environments. They can be displayed as follows. Following the orthography, ø represents /ɨ/ and v represents /ə/.[4]

1.21 Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
High	i	ɔ	u
Mid	e	ə ("v")	o
Low		a	

Examples:

kī	kɨ̄	kū
'spoon'	'steal'	'that'

kē	kə-	kō
'bite'	'prefix'	'report'

kā
'be bitter'

1.22 Brief Description of the Vowels

The front and central vowels are unrounded whereas the two back vowels are rounded. The two pairs of front and back vowels exhibit peculiar behavior when followed by the voiceless stops in a syllable. Robert Morse makes the following observation:

"It is of interest to note that although minimal contrast may be exhibited between almost any pair of phonemes in an open-final syllable or with /ʔ/, the high and mid levels of the front and back vowels /i + e, u + o/ do not exhibit minimal pairs or contrastive sets when occurring before any of the final consonants. In such occurrences, where non-contrastive, high and midvowels may be said to be in free variation, although the Ganung dialects tend to use the mid vowels for phonemic contrast in closed syllables, while the Rawang use the high vowels" (1962:78).

A diphthong is formed by adding the semivowels /w, y/. Morse states that such diphthongs occur "only in foreign loan words and are limited to a very small group" (1962:75), although this does not seem to hold true for all the dialects of Rawang (see S. Morse, 1976). Inasmuch as diphthongs, where occurring, always function as part of one syllable, with one syllabic-pulse, one co-occurring tone, and the second member of the vowel sequence always the non-syllabic vocoid [y] or [w], it is easier to interpret these diphthongs as a sequence of vowel plus semivowel. Since even sequences of long strings of vowels are quite common in the language, to transcribe these rare diphthongs in any other way (such as a vowel sequence) would be confusing (/èíāē/, /íàòē/, /èíāíē/, etc.). Thus, for example, /shāy/, meaning 'different,' a loan word from Jinghpaw, could easily get mixed up with /shâì/, meaning 'we know,' in Rawang if final /y/ and the additional syllable /ì/ (which happens to be a first person plural marker) were not distinguished. The latter example demonstrates the agglutinating tendencies of Rawang, which often adds on vowel suffixes to form syllable clusters or clauses; thus it is mandatory to have the tones to help mark syllable boundaries.

Vowel lengthening is a feature in Rawang which requires some clarification. R. Morse considers it to be contrastive and states:

> "Only action from first or second to third person, or between two third parties, is expressed as transitive action. This is also redundantly manifested by the morphological use of the phoneme of length, /-:-/ 'transitive action,' a proceme which usually occurs with the antepenult or penultimate syllable-medial vowel of the verb. (1965:349)."

For example:

ngài àng sàng røtnòē	'I am asking him'
à:ngí àng sàng rø̄:tnòē	'he is asking him'
nài àng sàng è rø̄:tnòē	'you are asking him'
nài ngà sàng è røtnàē	'you are asking me'
à:ngí ngà sàng è røtnē	'he is asking me'

The phoneme of length, we find, occurs predictably with consonants and is unmarked, and with vowels as a morphological feature as well as a predictable phonological process. If it only occurred as the latter, it wouldn't need to be included in the phonemic inventory. However, its occurrence as a morphosyntactic feature changes the picture, and so we take note of it as merely a proceme of vowel length.

Length may be predicted when any syllable is followed by the final suffix /-ì/ 'let's' or /-ì/ 'relational suffix of cause, means' (R. Morse, 1962:79-80).

ə̄m	'to eat'	á:mì	'let's eat'
àng	'he'	à:ngí	'he (actor)'
təp	'to catch'	tā:pmì	'let's catch'
shǿng	'wood'	shǿ:ngí	'with wood'
ərùl	'to wrestle'	ərù:lì	'let's wrestle'

Thus we might interpret or describe the Rawang vowel inventory of seven as enlarged by a prosodic phoneme of length which combines with all seven vowels. However, we note this practical restriction: even though vowel length co-occurs with all syllables, on a practical level its implementation with open (CV) syllables is less prominent. It is clearly distinguished only when a vowel is followed by a stop, liquid, or nasal final. According to R. Morse:

> "The mid central vowel phoneme /ə/ exhibits two allophonic variants conditioned by the presence of contrastive and non-contrastive tones. Contrastive tone is observed to occur only in closed syllables. This phoneme is not observed to occur with /q/, e.g.: mə́rrì 'faces'; mərìò 'he carries not'; dəmán 'creature'; dəmmá 'scar'; dətí 'levels'; dətbōng 'photo'; dəp 'camp'; dət 'to break off'; bək 'just right'; də̀n 'full'; də̀rəiq 'cane'; də́i 'dumb'." (1962:78-79).

1.3 Brief Description of Final Consonants

There are many fewer final consonants and consonant clusters in Rawang than there are initials. The glottal stop is the only member unique to this group, which can all be listed as /-p, -t, -k, -q, -m, -n, -ng, -r, -l/. The three stops occurring finally are voiceless unreleased, here analyzed as allophones of the voiceless initial stops, which are of course aspirated.

Final consonant clusters are formed with a nasal and its homorganic stop /mp, nt/. Although I have not observed an /ŋk/ final cluster in my data it seems possible for such a cluster to exist. The other final cluster which occurs is velar nasal plus glottal stop, /ŋʔ/, represented in the orthography by ngq.

mə̀nǿklá	'too much'	/mə̀nǿngklá or mənǿngqláíē/
shəngǿt	'to teach'	/shəngōntnòē/
ə̀nəp	'to be pretty'	/ə̀nəmpmē/

2.1 Provisional description of Rawang tones

What is a tone language? Pike (1948:3) defines as tonal any language "having significant, contrastive, but relative pitch on each syllable." Note the following example of a Mətwang Rawang minimal triplet:

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high:   [rú]   'to be struck or bitten, as by a snake'
mid:    [rū]   'to write'
low:    [rù]   'to be poisoned'
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Matwang has a phonemic contrast between high tone, mid tone, and low tone on any non-stop final syllables; and a fourth neutral or non-contrastive tone which apparently occurs on nonfinal syllables using the vowel [ə]. The four tonemic distinctions occurring in Matwang involve three pitch registers and are described as follows by Morse (1962:71).

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Tone 1.  /´/  [55]   high level register
Tone 2.  /⁻/  [33]   mid level register
Tone 3.  /`/  [11]   low level register
Tone 4.  / /  [00]   neutral, non-contrastive tone,
                     unmarked
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It must be noted that contrastive tone does not occur when any of the seven vowels /i, e, ø, ə, a, o, u/ is followed by the three stops /p, t, k/.

From the above description it becomes clear that Rawang is a pure register tone language as compared to Mandarin or Lisu which are contour tone languages (see Pike, 1948:5; Hyman, 1975:214; Roop, 1970:23). There is a phenomenon which has been observed in regard to tones, however, which has caused linguists investigating other languages such as Lisu (Roop, 1970:23) or Lahu (Matisoff, 1967) to make mistaken interpretations, and interpret tonal sequences as unit tone contours[5]. There is also the danger of misreading the extremely complex feature of intonational overlay as part of the tonal system.

Rawang is also open to such misinterpretation, so we wish to clarify this point at the outset. What seem to be contour tones are observable and indeed will be part of any textual data collected, producing apparent falling tones or high-low tones which may be due to tonal assimilation (or spreading). Actually this apparent contour tone is the result of two syllabic vowels (separate morphemes) coming together:

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à:ngímôē          'He is wearing (it, hat)'
nøngmaq íē        'It is we'
à:ngí wâ ôē       'He is making (it) for (them)'
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In the above examples the verb of the first phrase /mó/ 'to wear as a hat' with a high tone combines with the form /-ò/ transitive active suffix with a low tone to give /mó + ò/ /mô/. In the second example the verb 'to be' /í/ with a high tone becomes combined with the first person plural actor suffix /-ì/ with a low tone to give the contour tone /î/. In the third example /wá/ 'to make or do' with a high tone is

combined with the benefactive voice suffix /-ā/ with a mid tone to produce an apparent contour tone /vâ/. In all examples the falling tones are more correctly analyzed as a stem vowel with high tone followed by a homophonous vowel with low or mid tone, which coalesce across a morpheme boundary. And in fact if the length of the vowels is carefully measured it will be found (even though there is some erosion so that a casual listener will hear it as just one vowel) that it is indeed longer, and may thus be analyzed as a sequence of two identical vowels with different co-occurring tones.

The fact that we are dealing with the tones of two separate morphemes in the above three examples is clearly seen in different environments, for stems with nonidentical vowels or final consonants, as in the following examples using the same suffixes.

àːngí ríòē	'he is carrying (it)'
àːngí shòmàːngòē	'he loses (it)'
nə̄ngmaqí kʉ́lē	'we are stealing (it)'
nə̄ngmaqí kʉ́ːmlē	'we are burying (it)'

In the above examples it can also be observed that when the vowel of the verb is different from the vowel of the suffix even in the CV V type construction there is no tonal assimilation.

It isn't long before we notice that in many of the tonal languages there occur syllables that are "different." Whether in Mandarin Chinese, or Lisu or Rawang or Burmese, we find syllables which various writers describe as "atonal" or "neutral."

In reality these syllables are not atonal but merely non-contrastive. Non-contrastive tonal variation may occur on these syllables, as influenced or assimilated by co-occurring tones of the environment. Rawang exhibits two classes of tonally non-contrastive syllables:

    a)   prefixal open syllables of CV-pattern in which the V is [-ə].

    b)   closed syllables of (C)VC pattern in which the final C is a stop. With no contrast distinctions observable, it becomes well-nigh impossible to assign these to any particular tone, especially when there also seems to occur some phonetic variability due to environmental assimilation.

Notes

[1]Stephen A. Morse is now resident in Chiang Mai, Thailand, but wrote this paper in substantially its present form while at Indiana University in 1977. We have substituted schwa [ə] for Morse's orthographic symbol "v". [Ed.]

[2]A careful comparative study has yet to be made of these two dialects (or languages), to determine their phylogenetic grouping. This is where the common use of the term Nung can be confused with a technical reference to the Rawang tribe as a whole, and become really misleading. As a child a nanny of mine was a Kwinsang of the Nung people (see R. Morse, 1965:199). I remember that we always

addressed her as Fuchye Acha, her Lisu name, instead of the Rawang equivalent of Kwinsang Chang which should have come naturally, since we not only lived in a Rawang village but also grew up speaking Rawang as a first language. I always used to marvel at their ability to switch from Rawang to Lisu with no problems. The one family of Kwinsang who lived in our village would often wear Lisu clothes, and I remember asking one of the sons who was my age and who was one of my close friends why his father wore Lisu clothing. His reply was, "We Kwinsang are half Lisu and half Rawang." On another occasion he pointed out to me that his dialect Kwinsang shared many words with both the Rawang and the Lisu with some unique words of its own. I picked up a few words and phrases in Kwinsang but that was the extent of my excursion into the language. It is still a difficult language for me, though I am a native speaker of both the Rawang and the Lisu languages.

It may be significant that this friend, Kwinsang Søn, who is now grown up and working with the mission in Thailand, was able to learn Lahu and Akha within a few weeks of arrival in their area, whereas Lisu from Burma and also Rawang who visit Thailand cannot learn these languages so easily. Suzan Lapai (1975:63-73) shows conclusively the trail that the Rawang migrated down from Tibet into Burma. Upon thorough investigation, using her unique technique of tracing through folklore and linguistics together, we might possibly find a genetic connection between the Kwinsang and Akha. In any case, the Kwinsang, or Fuchye, or "Nung," continue to remain an anomaly, and no Lisu or Rawang ever tries to learn their language. They give it up as being "outside" their own pattern of linguistic structure and phonology, and therefore "too difficult."

[3]The Rawang speaker has an almost proverbial inability to pronounce the voiceless unaspirated stops that occur in some of the neighboring languages such as Jinghpaw and Lisu. Though I spoke Lisu as a child, when my parents moved to a Rawang village I quickly lost my ability to pronounce the voiceless unaspirated stop and soon acquired a distinct 'Rawang accent' in all the languages that I learned to speak afterwards. For example, a Lisu would say 'kagɨ ɪɐ cwɐ tɨ gio' 'the gibbon fled down thataway,' whereas the Rawang saying the same thing in Lisu would say 'gagɨ ɪɐ jwɐ dɨ gio.' As can be seen the Rawang speaker does not distinguish between the unaspirated voiced and voiceless stops and pronounces them all the same. This inherent inability to discriminate between the voiced and voiceless unaspirated stops has been the bane of the Rawang people, and has been the theme of many an ethnic joke told around campfires. I myself have been the target of some of these jokes and have been referred to as "the little white kid with a Rawang accent." And not until I learned the reason for their pointed humor and corrected my pronunciation was I accepted as a native speaker of Lisu again.

[4]We have ventured to change the y "back" to "ə" in the interests of clarity, but hope this will not have an adverse effect on the Rawang orthographical tradition (see Note 2). [Ed.]

[5]I am not sure what passage in my dissertation Morse is referring to here. For a discussion of tonal fusions in successive Lahu syllables, see *The Grammar of Lahu*, pp. 16-18, and my article "Echo-vowel adverbialization in Lahu: the mora the merrier" (1982, still unpublished). [Ed.]

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