SIZANG (SIYIN) CHIN TEXTS

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The following texts were collected in the Northern Chin Hills of Burma in 1954 and, together with collateral linguistic notes, form the major basis for the article, "A Provisional Sketch of Sizang (Siyin) Chin", ASIA MAJOR, n.s., X:2 (1963), pp. 222-278. Two of the texts, the first and last of those that follow, were submitted with the grammar but could not be included. That I present them now I owe to the encouragement of my colleague, Dr. Scott DeLancey.

I have departed from the orthography of the grammar in two respects. Tones, which there preceded the syllable, here are noted on the first vowel, thus: 1) low level, unmarked; 3) high, level, /ã/; 2) rising, /ã/; 4) falling /ã/. Secondly, I have omitted the mora following final continuants (see discussion in the grammar, p. 228f.). The terminology of the grammar, although outdated, has been retained for purposes of consistency.

Tone sandhi, which is complex in Sizang, accounts for what seems at first a bewildering variation in the tone upon a given lexeme.

For the reader who does not consult the grammar, let me say that these texts are the product of ten days' work with Lian Kham, a Sizang from Buan Man Village, in the Tiddim Subdivision, who was then official interpreter in the administrative town of Tiddim. They were gathered in the course of a brief linguistic survey I undertook as a member of a party sponsored by the University of Rangoon, to which I was then attached as a Fulbright research fellow. I express my gratitude to the University, to the government of the Union of Burma, and to the Fulbright Foundation for the opportunity provided me. Methods of research are sufficiently set forth in the grammar and need not be repeated here.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in the texts. References are given here to the section of the grammatical sketch where the morphemes are treated.

ADV adverbial
AG agentive (ergative) 2.0a
ALT altruistic 3.43.9
ALTER alterocentric (benefactive/malefactive) 3.42.22
ASS associative 3.42.1
CAUS causative 3.42.21
CLASS numerical classifier 2.5
COMP comparative 3.47.1
COND condition
DEIC deictic 3.41.12
EMPH emphatic particle
IMP imperative 3.44.2, 4.31.4
INTR intransitive
INTER interrogative 4.31.3
LOC locative 2.0b
NOM nominalizer 2.22.3, 2.23
PL plural 2.0e
REC reciprocal 3.41.2
SUP superlative 3.47.2
TEMP temporal partial 4.33.1
VPF verb particle, final 4.31
VPNPF verb particle, non-final 4.32, 4.33
On the Elephant Celebration

Formerly, when our forefathers were alive, when someone shot an elephant, they carried its head a-shoulder (on a frame), announcing it from the village shrine with the firing of very many guns, and they celebrated his elephant. At the place where the celebration was held, both men and women beat the drum and played both mithan horn and gong-set, and day and night they danced. On the day on which they celebrated his elephant, he danced first of all (of them) at the village shrine. Four persons bore the elephant head itself, atop which they had the man sit who celebrated the elephant. From their village shrine up to his house, they bore him a-shoulder, dancing as they came. At the place where he celebrated the elephant, he sacrificed mithans and cattle.

When he died, as a record of his elephant celebration (they) hung up a white streamer. Those who had celebrated a mithan hung up a black one. Those who had celebrated a tiger hung up a red one. After that celebrant was dead, the members of his household could no longer hang up that streamer.
Notes

1. cf. tú'a la'i 'there'

2. mual, lit. 'mountain'. The village shrine is located at the entrance to the village; here are located memorial markers commemorating the dead.

3. mual să'ak 'to give public notice, announce'.

4. The mithan horn, held upright by the tip, is beaten with a stick; the gong-set consists of three small gongs of graduated size.

5. Alternatively, one may say: a sa'i a á i ni in.

6. The elephant head is borne by the four men on a bamboo frame. The verb can also be used of a group lifting and carrying a table without the use of such a frame.

7. Almost certainly, this associative particle is related to (and perhaps identical with) the relational, pûi 'with'.

The order of the final part of the sentence on line 10 may be rearranged thus:

inh dôg lap pûi a pûa hj.

8. Kî-tèp, lit. 'to press (between hands), to pinch (between boards)'. The term is here translated as 'record'. The memorial post is placed at the grave of the deceased.

B. mi. háu pã lê mi. zonq pã tãg thu.
person rich man and person poor man old story.

1) tãg la'i-in háu să'1 khát lê a-zonq mi hig khát dûi suq ancient when-TEMP rich ( ) one and a poor person one jungle in

2) să sîa khám hj. a zonq pã in lei a sîa a, animals set snare together VPF the poor man AG field in set snare VPNF

3) a háu pã in thîg kûg tûg a sf a hj. mi háu pã in the rich man AG tree standing in he-set snare VPF person rich man AG

4) a-sa sîa-na. mi zonq pã he'k gôl in vil kû hj. his-deer set snare-NOM person poor man know not AG watch secretly VPF

5) ta bâg a a-vîl tiân-a lê'i a a zonq pã sa that resemble VPNF he-watch when-TEMP field in the poor man deer

6) sîa-na suq a sá-khi. khát òk a mi háu pã set snare-NOM in-LOC barking deer one snare VPNF person rich man

7) sîa-na thîg tûg a bâg mà. òk gôl hj. ta tiân-in, set snare-NOM tree in-LOC thing not(INTENS) snare not VPF that when-TEMP

8) mi háu pã in mi zonq pã sa sîa-na suq a òk person rich man AG person poor man deer set snare-NOM in-LOC snare

9) sá-khi sîa sût a á ma sf a-na thîg kûg tûg a barking deer the very untie VPNF his set snare-NOM tree standing on-LOC

10) òk sak a, tf a kijk hj. in a-thêt tiân-in, mi snare CAUS VPNF return home again VPF house he-arrive when-TEMP person

11) háu pã in mi zonq pã môn a, "tf sa sîa vil kà-toq", rich man AG person poor man to-LOC we deer set snare look at we-let us

12) tf a pã hj. ta tiân-a a nî in a-sa sîa-na say VPNF invite VPF that when-TEMP the two AG their-deer set snare-NOM
13) a-pа́i kха̱м hф. a-thét tіа̱q-in, mі. hа́u pа́ in mі. zо̱ng they-together VPF they-arrive when-TEMP person rich man AG person poor

14) pа́ mун-a:, "на̱g sа̱ sі-a-na̱ sуг-a bа̱q mа̱̊ ș-k bo̱. man to-LOC your deer set snare-NOM in-LOC thing not(INTENS) snare not

15) ke̱i sі-a-na̱ sуг-a sә̱-khi̱̊ kха̱t ș-k hі̊." ті̋ i̋n 3 a-u hі̋. my set snare-NOM in-LOC barking deer one snare VPF say VPNF shout VPF

16) ta̱tіа̱q-in, mі. zо̱ng pа́ in, "Om gә̱l fin!" that when-TEMP person poor man AG believe not IMP

17) a-mа̱tе̱ nі̋ kі̋-hа̱n у a̱, kхua̱ hа̱u sа̱ pа̱ тu̱q-a̱. he PL two REC-querrel VPNF village rich ( ) man to-LOC

18) kі̋-kхі̋a a̱, hа̱u sа̱ pа̱ in á̱-thu̱ sә̱n sа̱k a̱, mі. hа̱у REC-complain VPNF rich ( ) man AG matter examine CAUS VPNF person rich

19) pа̱ in zо̱ sа̱k a̱, mі. zо̱ng pа̱ in lә̱l sа̱k hі̋. ta̱tіа̱q-in, man AG win CAUS VPNF person poor man AG lose CAUS VPNF that when-TEMP

20) mі. zо̱ng pа̱ lu̱g kim gә̱l a̱, "bі̋l-pі̋ ma̱ng pа̱ in person poor man mind content not VPNF ear-big (rabbit) chief man AG

21) tі̋-khen sа̱k tү̋ hф.," ті̋ hф.. we-decide CAUS will VPF say VPF

22) khua̱ hа̱u sа̱ pа̱ in, "ту̱-a lә̱ bі̋l-pі̋ ma̱ng 4 vа̱ sә̱m тә̱ vун," village rich ( ) man AG go(?) and rabbit chief go summon IMP

23) ті̋ a̱, bі̋l-pі̋ mа̱ng sә̱m тu̱-in, mі. zо̱ng pа̱i̋ a̱, bі̋l-pі̋. say VPNF rabbit chief summon will-TEMP person poor man go VPNF rabbit

24) mа̱ng pа̱ sә̱m hі̋. bі̋l-pі̋ mа̱ng pа̱ in, "kо̱g паi̋ 5 tү̋ hі̋. chief man summon VPNF rabbit chief man AG I to you go will VPF

25) kо̱g thеt mа̱-te̱ ná̱ gә̱k vун," ті̋ a̱ vә̱i thә̱ hф.. I to you arrive until you wait IMP say VPNF word send VPF

26) тu̱-a zо̱k nі̋ thum nі̋ tіа̱q-in, bі̋l-pі̋ mа̱ng pа̱ khua̱ hа̱u sа̱ that after day three day when-TEMP rabbit chief man village rich ( )

27) pа̱ kуг theг phе̱ng hі̋. a-thét tіа̱q-in, khua̱ hа̱u sа̱ pа̱ in man place arrive late VPF he-arrive when-TEMP village rich ( ) man AG

28) bі̋l-pі̋ mа̱ng pа̱ mун-a:,"bа̱q hо̱g hа̱i̋ 7 nі̋ zі̋-ә̱m," ті̋ i̋n тә̱i̋ hі̋. rabbit chief man to-LOC why hither tardy you INTER say VPNF abuse VPF

29) bі̋l-pі̋ mа̱ng pа̱ in, "kо̱g паi̋-nа̱ lә̱m-pі̋ a̱ gun val sә̱n rabbit chief man AG I(DEIC) go-NOM path big on river bank gravel

30) a̱ kа̱ng a̱, ka-phе̱l na tү̋, hа̱n bо̱m tә̱ тu̱і̋ tса̱i̋ a̱, on burn(INTR) VPNF I-prevent in order man's basket with water carry VPNF

31) ka-phе̱l-na̱-и̋n kо̱g ha̱i̋ hф.," ті̋ hф.. I-prevent-NOM-because I(DEIC) tardy VPF say VPF

32) ta̱tіа̱q-in, khua̱ hа̱u sа̱ pа̱ in, "gun val sә̱n kа̱ng that when-TEMP village rich ( ) man AG river bank gravel burn(INTR)

33) qе̱и̋ gә̱l hф.. hа̱n bо̱m тә̱ tү̋ tса̱i̋ lә̱ om qе̱и̋ 8 gә̱l hф.." ті̋ hф.. ever not VPF man's basket with water carry also be ever not VPF say VPF

34) ta̱tіа̱q, bі̋l-pі̋ mа̱ng pа̱ in, "hі̋ pе̱u hф. gun val sә̱n that when rabbit chief man AG affirmative VPF river bank gravel
The Old Story of the Rich Man and the Poor Man

Long ago, a rich man and a poor man set deer snares together in the jungle. The poor man set his snare in the field, while the rich man set his in a tree. The rich man secretly watched the snare-setting (of the poor man) without the poor man's knowledge. While he watched in that manner, in the snare of the poor man in the field, a barking deer was caught; (however) in the rich man's snare in the tree not a thing was caught. Thereupon, the rich man untied that barking deer caught in the poor man's snare and placed it in his own snare in the tree, and returned home once more. When he reached his house, the rich man said to the poor man, "Let us inspect our snares." Thereupon, the two of them went together to their snares. When they reached them, the rich man shouted to the poor man, "There's nothing at all in your snare, but in mine there's a barking deer!" To which the poor man responded, "Don't believe it!"

Then the two, quarreling with each other, and complaining about each other to the village headman, the headman examined the matter and decided in favor of the rich man and against the poor man. Then the poor man, his mind not content, said, "The rabbit chief should decide the matter for us."

The village headman said, "Go and summon the rabbit chief!", (and) the poor man went to summon the rabbit chief and did so. The rabbit chief sent word, "I shall come to you. Wait until I get there."

On the third day, the rabbit chief arrived tardily at the village headman's place. When he arrived, the headman scolded the rabbit chief, saying, "Why have you come late?"

The rabbit chief said, "As I was coming on the path, the riverbank gravel was burning; to put it out, I carried water in a man's basket; because I was putting it out, I'm late getting here."

Then the village headman said, "Riverbank gravel never burns. Also one cannot carry water in a man's basket."

Thereupon, the rabbit chief replied, "Yes, indeed, riverbank gravel never burns. It's also impossible to carry water in a man's basket. Also, barking deer never climb trees." And so, the poor man through him won back (his deer).

Notes
1. Although sä• is rendered 'person' in the text, an all-too-cryptic note provides the contrast, à la•m pâ• 'dancer' and à la•m sä• 'one who has danced'.

2. khôm might be used for to•ŋ.

3. As against ti• a• 'saying', informant claims that ti• in means 'having said'. Further analysis has not confirmed this.

4. ma•ŋ (☎Bu. maŋ: 'ruler, governor'), here equated with Laizao Chin boi pa• 'chief'. ma•ŋ is applied more generally to persons exempted from house tax; British officials were ma•ŋ ka•ŋ 'White officials'.

5. The hoŋ series preverbal morphemes indicate motion toward first or second person (see the Grammar, sec. 3.41.12, and p. 265).
6. Since ma-teq 'until' appears only once in my materials, it is impossible to analyze it further. However, in the final -q there may be the first person plural enclitic particle.

7. pheq 'arrive late', ha'i 'be delayed'.

8. Cf. túi-kí tsa·i thê·i hr· 'water can be carried'.

9. While the man's basket is an open weave, no woman's basket that I've seen in C.in villages is even remotely water-tight.

10. Literally, the translation for this sentence runs, "Also, it never (gei-gol) occurs (om 'exist') that one carries (t̄a·i) water with a man's basket."

C. bíl-pí· lé· tô-pí· thũ· rabbit and lion affair

ni· dǎq la·i-in1 tô-pí· ma·q khát in qan2 hiq nãm tĩn day differ when-TEMP lion chief one AG animal individual tribe all

2) ma·q tê· tũq-a· si·a kã·i a·, qan hiq nãm kháq tũq3 chief PL above-LOC tax collect VPFN animal individual tribe one above

3) pan ni· khát-in khát vê·u pe· sak a-né· hĩ·. qan hiq nãm from day one-TEMP each give CAUS he-eat VPF animal individual tribe

4) tĩn a-né·k siet zãk tĩq-in, bíl-pí· nãm a-né·k tũ hũn tug all he-eat completely finish when-TEMP rabbit tribe he-eat will time on

5) hĩ· na-pí·, ni· thũm dǒq-in á-pai· bu·a hĩ· be although day three until-TEMP he-come not(INTENS) VPF

6) bíl-pí· a-pái· gãl ni· thũm sug-in, túi· tim a·, á-tuí· rabbit he-come not day three in-TEMP water dam up VPFN his-water

7) tĩm-na4 tũq-a· lè·i khát dã.5 hr· a-le·i dã· dam up-NOM tax-LOC chief one AG dam up-NOM bridge one put across VPF his-bridge put across

8) a-mán tĩq-in, bíl-pí· ma·q pã.6 tô-pí· ma·q pã· kũq a· pai· hĩ·. he-finish when-TEMP rabbit chief man lion chief man place to come VPF

9) tô-pí· ma·q pã· in, "ka-sí·a bãq ha·q hõg puak gãl nĩ· zã·âm? lion chief man AG my-tax what reason you(DEIC) send not you INTER

10) nag-mã· koq nẽ· tô· hr·," tî· hr·. you I(DEIC) eat will VPF say VPF

11) bíl-pí· ma·q pã· in, "na-sí·a koq puak a·, koq pài· sak rabbit chief man AG your-tax I(DEIC) send VPFN I(DEIC) come CAUS

12) hĩ· a hĩ·a há·q-in lâm-pí· a· naq-mã· bãq khát in a-né· a·, VPF this reason-TEMP path big on you resemble one AG he-eat VPFN

13) nag-mã· koq sã· hĩ·," a tî· hĩ·. you I(DEIC) think VPF he say VPF

14) tô-pí· ma·q pã· in, "ke·i sî·a nẽ· sî·a a-kú·a7 zã·âm? hog lion chief man AG my tax eat the very who INTER you(DEIC)

15) hĩl tãn· ka-pét lôm tô· hr·," tî· hr·. show IMP I-bite lie down will VPF say VPF

16) bíl-pí· ma·q pã· in, "koq hĩl tô· hr·," tî· a·, pãi-pdí.8 a rabbit chief man AG I(DEIC) show will VPF say VPFN come-ASS VPFN

17) a-le·i dã·nâ· tũq a-thêt tĩq-in, bíl-pí· ma·q pã· in, his-bridge put across-NOM to they-arrive when-TEMP rabbit chief man AG
The Story of Rabbit and Lion

Long ago, a lion chief had the chiefs of all the tribes of animals collecting taxes, giving him to eat one animal from each tribe every day. When he had finished eating all the tribes of animals, although it was time to eat (of) the rabbit tribe, three days passed without one coming.

In the three days he did not come, the rabbit (chief) dammed up water and at his dam erected a bridge. When he had finished erecting the bridge, the rabbit chief came to the lion chief's place.

The lion chief asked, "Why didn't you send me my tax? I'm going to eat you!"

The rabbit chief replied, "I did send your tax on to you. However, on the way (someone) ate it; I thought he was you."

The lion chief said, "Who is it that eats my tax? Show him to me! I'll bite him to death!"

The rabbit chief replied, "I'll show (him) to you," (and) going with him, when they reached the place (where) he had built the bridge, the rabbit chief spoke, saying, "That's the very one that ate your tax." (and) showed the very reflection of the lion that was there below him in the water.

The lion chief, not recognizing the reflection of himself, roared, then sprang down and, falling into the water, drowned.

Therefore, to this day, lions never collect taxes.

Notes

1. This particle, termed verb-subordinating in the grammar, marks adverbial clauses.

2. ɲən 'quadruped'; cf. ʍi̍-hnəq 'humans'.

3. tʊŋ-ə 'on, to'; cf. ɬ  tʊŋ 'above us, atop us'.

4. Note tonal complementation in this phrase, in contrast to the preceding one.

5. Cf. ɬəm 'to build'.

6. Here the agentive in might have been predicted. Lian Kham omitted it both in dictation and in the text he had written out beforehand in a romanized script, inserting a comma at this point.

7. Note the proclitic element.

8. Note tone; cf. a-ma  tə  pəi  hʌən ɬən  'Go with him!'.

9. ɲɛ́ 'to eat': In the grammar, this verb, on the basis of tonal behavior in the two stems, was assigned to Class c, implying that both stems were in the high tone. On review, it seems rather to belong in Class d, thus Stem I ɲɛ́, Stem II ɲɛ́k.

10. In the grammar, a distinction is made between the homophones, sək, a causa-
tive particle with verbs in Stem I and an alterocentric (benefactive/male-factive) with verbs in Stem II.

11. This construction, hi'. hún lâm was not further analyzed; a usage paralleling that in the text was given, thus: ka hi'. hún lâm 'myself'.

D. khán ha·m kî-dèm-na· thu·
generation ripe REC-contest-NOM story

1) khát vê·i la·i-in sa-zûk khát lê· zoq khát tã· hú-he·1 khát vom once when-TEMP sambhur one and monkey one with cuckoo one bear

2) lu· gam2 tã·m suq-a· po· moq kûq3 khát núe-i-a· kî-st.4 hi·.
head region jungle in-LOC grow pipal tree one beneath-LOC REC-meet VPF

3) tu·a ni· a-kî-pân5 a-má· tê· thum lõ·m a-kî-kâ·i6 a·, "gal f·
that day from he,she,it PL three friend they-REC-unite VPNF fo we

4) tã·k lê·, kî-huq tê·k tû· hî·. dà·-na· nôp-na· a-ôm
encounter if REC-help together will VPF sad-NOM happy-NOM they-exist

5) zôq-in kî-nûam mä·7 tû· hî·." tî· in, tu·a moq kûq bê·1
whether REC-formal may not will VPF say VPNF that pipal tree use as shelter

6) in á-tê·q hî·. a-kûm vê·i8 tîaq-in, a-má· tê· kî-mâ·i ná·p9
VPNF they-dwell VPF year after when-TEMP s/he PL REC-mind confident

7) a· a-kî-zâ·k-tâ· a-kî-kî-tê· tû· om nô·n gôl in, kî-zo·q sák
VPNF they-REC-respect they-REC-fear exist ever not VPNF REC-insult ALTER

8) hî·. ta bâg a· a-kî-lêm gôl tîaq-in, "hî· bâg f· ôm
VPF thus like VPNF they-REC-peaceable not when-TEMP this like we exist

9) thôq lê·, f· kî-khên tháp kul tû·," a hî· tîaq-in10
uselessly if we REC-part individually need will therefore

10) a-kî-zâ·k-tâ· tû· mä·11, "f· kî-zâ·-tê·k na·-tû·-in, a-kû·
they-REC-respect will ready to we REC-respect in order who

11) u ha·m bêl hi·12 zî·am? hî· moq kûq pf·en-dâ·n tê·
elder brother ripe SUP (copula) INTER this pipal tree appearance with

12) f·-khân tê·k13 son to·q. a-khán ha·m bêl si·a
we-recite biography together tell us his-biography ripe SUP the very

13) thû· kî-ni· tû· hî·." tî· in, áp ha·t ni· ni· tîaq-in
command REC-obey will VPF say VPNF anniversary two day when-TEMP

14) vâ·i ho·m hi·.
arrange VPF

15) a-phît bêl-in , sa-zûk in, "kê·i ka-pûm-pî· sî·a no·
before SUP-TEMP sambhur AG I my-stomach-big the very you

16) gê·l sâ·n zoq lien zô· pài· hî·. khî· la·q bem-bom zôq nê·i khî·
both than even big exceed go VPF antler diverge branch also have I

17) hî·. moq kûq hî· sî·a lêl sî·a ka-nô· la·i-in hî·
VPF pipal tree this the very modest the very my-child when-TEMP this here

18) la·i-a· ka-vâ· tîaq, a-dôn in ká-la·i hoq bán va·sîp phê·q
when-TEMP I-travel when its-tip AG my-navel hither brush merely small enough

19) hî·. tu·a a hî· tîaq kê·i khûq ták bêl khî· hî·." tî· hî·.
VPF that therefore when I old definitely SUP I VPF say VPNF
The Story of the Dispute over Seniority

Once upon a time, a Sambhur, a Monkey and a Cuckoo met together under a pipal tree growing in the jungle in the Bear's Head region. From that day, the three were friends, uniting together. "If we meet an enemy we shall help one another. Even though there be sorrow and happiness, we shall not stand on ceremony," so saying, they dwelt under that pipal tree. After a year, neither respecting one another in their minds nor fearing one another, they insulted one another. When they were thus not peaceable with one another, they said, "If we are like this without any purpose, we must need to separate; when they (we?) are ready to respect one another, in order to gain that respect (we must find) which is the eldest. Let us compare our life stories with this pipal tree; the one whose life is longest, his command we shall obey." So saying, on the day after two anniversaries, they made ready.

First to speak, the Sambhur said, "My body itself has become larger than both of you. I also have spreading branches (for) antlers. This very pipal tree here during my childhood was so small that when I passed by its tip was so short as merely to brush my navel. Thus I am indeed the eldest."

Next spoke the Monkey. "My tail is longer than both of you. If we make comparison with this pipal tree, in my infancy and childhood, I ate here and
roamed here with my mother; when I sat here my sitting height was equal to it; when I sat, I broke off its tip. Therefore, I am the eldest."

Finally, Cuckoo spoke. "I have wings. Not only are my colors harmoniously green but my call is also pleasant to hear. Besides, I can fly to the sky, a place to which you cannot go. As for this very pipal tree which you speak of as tall and small, when I ate the ripe nuts of a pipal tree growing in another place, this pipal later grew from within my dung. Therefore, I see myself as first of our group.

From the morning following their agreement, Sambhur and Monkey obeyed the will of Cuckoo.

Notes
1. ḥū-hē The name is onomatopoetic, the specific identification uncertain.
2. The Bear's Head region denotes a mountain in the Nat Chaung region of Kālēmyo, where the forefathers of the Sizang are said to have hunted.
3. kū-n a standing tree.
4. kī-sī 'meet each other'. Cf. kā-sī hī 'I come across him'; ka-kī-sī hī 'we meet each other'. (Cf. E, note 3.)
5. a-kī-pān 'from' appears in temporal sense; cf. pān 'from' (locative relational).
6. kī-kā-j 'unite'. Cf. kā-j 'to pull'.
7. má 'may not'; cf. kā-pái má hī 'I am not permitted to go'; ka-pái má bō hī 'I am permitted to go'.
8. vē-i 'after'; cf. a-kūm nī vē-i 'after two years'.
9. kā nā-p hī 'I have no fear'; cf. kā nā-p bō 'I am fearful'.
10. a hī-tīāq-in 'therefore'; can also use tu'a a hī tīāq-in.
11. má 'be ready to'; cf. ā pāi tū má ōm hī 'he is ready to go'. (ōm 'be, exist').
12. hī. Note the appearance here of the equational verb 'to be', homophonous with the verb-final particle, hī. It is often omitted. (Cf. section 4.31.11-21 of the grammar).
13. lē-k. Cf. kōq pāi khām tū hī 'We (two persons) will come hither', kōq pāi tē-k tū hī 'We (three persons or more) will come hither'.
14. in Cf. hī in hī-a sāq in liēn zō. This house (hī· in) that one (hī· a) be big (liēn) than (sāq).
15. This is an example of the postposed first person enclitic -iŋ (sec. 3.44.12).
16. tā-u lit. 'groan'; 'song' for other birds, hām.
17. ē-k 'dung' cf. kā ē hī 'I defecate'.

E. lá-i
letter
1) na-lá-i hōq thā-k kā-ğā a, kōq thūk kī-k lá-lē-u your-letter hither send I-receive VPF I to you reply again once more
2) hī-. kā-hē-k-nā lē ka-mi 2 ka-gā-i-sūt-nā tē thé-m-pō a-kī-khē VPF my-know-NOM and I-see my-consider-NOM PL all it-REC-remain
3) ơm qôl đợq-in kôg son sìet tò. hì-tú. nì. ka-păi-na. exist not until-TEMP I to you tell completed will VPNF this day my-go-NOM
4) lâm kím a. ka-kì-sêk-pài.3 pa. mún-a. "nâ-khua. In bág zâ. path half on I-REC-encounter-ASS man to-LOC your-village house how u..." 5) phà. nù. zì-am? tì. a.. ka-dôk sì-a, "mèi. nò. â-ki-khût lê. tè.-já. number you (INTER) say VPNF I-ask the very female widow one and or-hăn.
6) khât tô. a-vêk-pí.6 kî-gô.m7 son lê-g tam mà. phâ. one with they-all together-big REC-gather say if we much very number
7) tê-i t. vê.8 âq, a hà-u tám qôl a. a. zôg ơm khû. hî-tu. suprisingly we we are rich many not VPNF poor exist we VPNF hither say VPNF suprisingly different I-think one the very that
9) khua. tê.10 nù-mêì: khât lê. pâ-sal khât kí-i-t a. tê-g si-a village PL woman one and man one REC-love VPNF marry the very
10) tà.11nêì thôq hî-tu. á-khua. suq sì-a thiaq thô.12 qôl a. son have naturally VPNF their-village in that very clean ( ) not VPNF
11) á-tùi. nêì phâ. qôl sì-tô. á-tôl bô-k ví.-vê. tâm a. their-water drink good not moreover their-throat goitre almost all much VPNF
12) á-mêì phâ. zôg Ơm hì-tu. a. mô.-mô. khât in hoq núi. sâàn their-complexion good also exist VPNF idiot one AG he(DEIC) laugh at
13) a.. kâ-mâì zum mà.-mà. hî-tu. a-mâ in-a.14 á-In nêu-i-a. vòk pui. VPNF my-face pointed very VPNF he AG his-house under-INC pig female
14) khât tô. a pà. khât tô. á-no. nì. tô. khoa-i a., tô.-na. si.-pû. one both a male one and their-baby two and bring up VPNF ride-NOM pony
15) zôq nêì hî-tu. "tù-a nì. zà-n ta-m in," hoq tê. a.. ni. tà-k án also have VPNF this day night stay IMP he(DEIC)say VPNF evening meal
16) a-k sá. hoq hú-an a.. lim mà.-mà. ka-sà. hî-tu. á-zâ-n thiaq fowl flesh he(DEIC)cook VPNF hungry very I-feel VPNF night when
17) á-ìn dôl túq nùq a.15 hoq lûm sák a., pu-ă-n nêì qôl his-house storey above COMP on he(DEIC) sleep CAUS VPNF blanket have not
18) a. kâ-khua. sêk a.16 zí-ş qôq sáq a-k khoán thía ká-thô. pài VPNF I-(condition) cold VPNF tomorrow morning fowl crow when I-arise early
19) a. nì. sôa thiaq kâ-khua. hông lûm hì-tu.17 ká-zí. q. án nêì VPNF sun emerge when I-(condition)it(DEIC)warm VPNF I-tomorrow food eat
20) zôk nì. vâ.i18 hún thiaq, ka-tía kî-k a. ka-tôn-pôi. finish sun work in taungya time when I-return again VPNF my-companion-ASS
21) tô. a-ôm bua. a., kê-i qu-ak mà. ka-tía lá-le.au a. kâ-tì. will he-exist not VPNF I alone very I-return again VPNF my-color
22) na. a., lâm kâ-pai. zô. bua. a., kâ-tô.i mà-mà. hî-tu. sick VPNF path I-go can not VPNF I-tired very VPNF
23) nì. dâq thiaq lá.i kí-thâ.-thâ.k19 tô. hî-tu. day different when letter REC-send repeatedly will VPNF

Letter

Having received the letter you sent me, I'm replying once more. I'll tell
you completely all my knowledge, what I've seen, and my considerations, until nothing remains. Today, to a man I met along the way, I spoke, asking, "How many houses are there in your village?" "If we count all together, including one widow and one orphan, strange to say, we humble ones are very numerous. The rich are not many, (for) we are poor," he told me. One thing that surprised me, when a woman and a man of those villagers love each other and marry, they have a son! In that village of theirs, it is not clean; moreover their water isn’t good to drink; there are quite a number of throat goiters—their complexion is also good. An idiot laughed at me (for) my very sharp-pointed face. Beneath his house he raised both a sow and a boar along with their two young; he also had a riding pony. "Stay tonight," he told me and cooked a supper of chicken for me; I felt very hungry. At night, he had me sleep on his upper floor; having no blanket, I felt cold; the next morning I got up at cock's crow; when the sun came up I felt warm. After I had eaten breakfast, at taungya—working time, I returned home again, with no one for a companion, completely alone I returned, my color sickly, unable to make my way, exhausted.

In the future, we'll write each other many letters.

Notes

1. Asked to provide an informal text, Lian Kham drew upon his experience as interpreter and the visits to gather data on population and village conditions that he sometimes made for this amusing letter.

2. ka mu': It would seem that na', the nominalizing particle, is to be understood.


4. baăg zâ phâ: Cf. lài dal baăg zâ phâ zî'am? 'How many sheets of paper are there?', baăg zâ qît zî'am? 'How much does he weigh?'.

5. mîi gô q: Cf. nu-mîi: 'woman', mîi gô pâ: 'widower'.

6. a vék-pî: Cf. ka vék-pî uq: 'We all', equivalent to ko té'm pô:.

7. kî-gô m: Cf. ka gô m hî: 'I gather things together'.

8. fî vé uq: Cf. pai fî vé uq 'We (deprecatory) have been gone', pai khî vé: 'I (deprecatory) have been gone'.

9. tûm dâng ka sâ khât: Cf. ka sâ hî: 'I think'.

10. khua té' literally 'villages', it is glossed both here and in line 30 of (D) 'The Story of the Dispute over Seniority' as 'villagers'.

11. tâ: 'baby, son'; cf. ta-nîu: 'daughter'.

12. thiaq tho': Cf. tui thiaq 'clean water', but puân tiân tho': 'clean blanket', ka tiâq hî: 'I clean'.

13. tui sâm: Cf. kà nui hî: 'I laugh', but kà nui sâm hî: 'I laugh at him'.

14. ma in-å: So I interpret what I recorded as a mà'n ná. If my deduction is correct, Lian Kham, who habitually employs the simple agentive in here uses the orger form found regularly in L.B. Naylor's Practical Handbook of the Chin Language (Siyin Dialect). See Grammar, section 3.42.23.

15. tûng nû: Cf. a nuôi nûng 'the lower' and a nuôi bêl 'the lowest'.

16. kà khua sîk a: 'I feeling cold', but tui vôt 'cold water'. However, see also below kà khua hóng lum hî: 'I felt warm', and tui lum 'warm water'. 
17. Of the two text examples cited in the preceding note, observe that one can also replace them respectively by ká khua r hōg sīk a r and ká khua r lum hī r.

18. vā i : Cf. vā i tī a 'return from the taungya' and vā i k̄uān 'go to work the taungya'. The term in question does not denote the field itself.

19. thā-thāk: Cf. kā thāk hī r 'I send'. For other reduplicated verbs, see the grammar, p. 252.

kf-pā u pūi na 1
REC-speak with NOM

1 (Boy) kōi suq kuan tū nī?
where at go to work will you

2 (Girl) lō kā-huq tū.
field I-watch will

3 (Boy) nāq-mā qu ak kuan lē tē r ki-ta gōl tū nī?
you alone go to work if you(SG) afraid not will you

4 (Girl) bāq mā əm buan 2 tē r
nothing exist not (belief)

5 (Boy) nā lo kūān-na lām kā-a qu l kual thè i vē r.
you field go to work-NOM path fork-LOC snake coil can sometimes

6 (Girl) qu l sa qu l-tī ki-tā zō 2 a
snake than centipede fear more-I

7 (Boy) thī thā 3 na-mū qiē lē r
die spirit you-see ever INTER

8 (Girl) á-tīq bo qu kḥāt mū qiē khī r.
a spine stoop one see ever I

9 (Boy) na lō mōk 4 dūi suq qua phuq suq-a thè lēi sí-en 5
your field side woods in bamboo copse in-LOC squirrel the very(AG)

10 bāq vō t zī a?
what do INTER

11 (Girl) qua kui tūq a to kī sī a ēn qa 6 a-mīt sī a
bamboo bend upon-LOC sit sparrow the very look at VPF its-eye the very

12 sīm bū mīt bāq dēk tā k hī r.
owl eye resemble nearly VPF

13 (Boy) bāq hun mú qiē nī?
what time see ever you

14 (Girl) tei tān tūq pa ka-ēt la i mū khī r.
platform on from I-look at when see I

15 (Boy) a-mīt zō 1 zī am mo bē m zī a?
its-eye squint INTER or round INTER

16 (Girl) bē m vīl-vēl.
round almost

17 (Boy) sūn sī a bāq kēg nī?
daytime meal what have on person you

18 (Girl) kā i thūm hō khē gāl kēg khī r.
sweet potato skin peel not have on person I
19 (Boy) vā·i hūn tiān na-tī·a tū· lē·? 
work in taungya time when you-return will INTER

20 (Girl) vā·tīm kap9 tiān, ka-tī·a tū·. 
bird desert when I-return will

21 (Boy) na-nū· tēn9 tiā· pal a· hōg sol qāl zī·a? 
your-mother(PL + AG) return early VPNF they(DEIC) order not INTER

22 (Girl) tī·a pal lēq9a hōg tē·i tū·. 
return early if-1st they(DEIC) scold will

23 (Boy) hōg sā·t thē·10 lē·? 
they(DEIC) beat ever INTER

24 (Girl) khua· sīk mūl11 su·ak thē·i; hōg sā·t lē·, kā·pe·g tāl12 
feel cold body hair emerge can it(DEIC) beat if my-leg break(INTR)

25 dōg kā-tā·i13 tū·. hōg dēl lē·, phā· zo· buan tē· hōg 
untill I-flee well they(DEIC) pursue if-3rd catch can not(belief) they(DEIC)

26 phā· 'ē·, ka-bū· tū·. ka-tā·i-na· a·, vā·tīm bu· khāt mū· khī.14 
overtake if I-hide(INTR) will I-flee-NOM in bird nest one see I

27 (Boy) ā·tui· tāq bāq zā· phā· zī·a? 
its-egg CLASS what how many number INTER

28 (Girl) ā·nō· kēu· zō;15 ā·mūl po· ba-la·i. 
its-young hatch finish its-feather grow not yet

29 (Boy) na-dē·i lē·? 
you-want INTER

30 (Girl) kī·tā· a·, ka-tā·i-na· a· thīq luanq pāl a·, lī·k khī. 
afraid VPNF I-flee-NOM in tree log trip over VPNF fall down I

31 vē·. 
foolishly

32 (Boy) a· thīq luanq sī·a lūm16 suq·a· hual sū·k lē·. tē·? thīq luanq 
the tree log the very brook in-LOC roll down INTER you tree log

33 bāq a-ki-zāq16a zī·a? 
what it-REC-use INTER

34 (G:1) pi·a17 wā·t·na· ki-zāq thē·i. 
deadfall make-NOM REC-use can

35 (Boy) bāq ō·k zī·a? 
what snare INTER

36 (Girl) sā· sī·a thiam qāl a·, bāq mā· qā· bo·. 
animal trap skilled not VPNF nothing get not

37 (Boy) tō·p kā to·q. 
end conversation we let us

Conversation

(Boy) Where are you going to work?
(Girl) I'm going to guard a field.
(Boy) If you go to work alone, won't you be afraid?
(Girl) I don't believe there's anything.
(Boy) On your way to the field, at the fork of the path, a snake can sometimes coil.
(Girl) I'm more afraid of a centipede than of a snake.
(Boy) Did you ever see a ghost?
(Girl) I've seen a stoop-back (i.e. old man) before!
(Boy) In the woods at the side of your field, what's the squirrel doing in the bamboo clump?
(Girl) He's looking at the sparrow sitting on the bamboo's bend. Its eyes are nearly like an owl's eyes.
(Boy) When did you ever see it?
(Girl) When I look from the platform (of the field hut), I see it.
(Boy) Are its eyes squinting or round?
(Girl) Almost round.
(Boy) What lunch do you have?
(Girl) I've got unpeeled sweet potatoes.
(Boy) When it's taungya-working time, will you go home?
(Girl) When the birds have all left, I'll return.
(Boy) Didn't your parents tell you to come home early?
(Girl) If I come home early, they'll scold me.
(Boy) Do they ever beat you?
(Girl) The hair of my body stands up in fright; if they beat me, I'll run till my legs break. If they chase me, I don't think they'll be able to catch me. If they overtake me, I'll hide. In my running (or: the place where I ran), I saw a bird's nest.
(Boy) How many of its eggs were there?
(Girl) Its young had finished hatching; their feathers hadn't yet grown in.
(Boy) Did you want them?
(Girl) Being afraid, in my flight (or: the place where I fled), I tripped over a log and fell down.
(Boy) Why don't you roll that log down into the brook? Of what use is a log?
(Girl) It can be used in making deadfalls.
(Boy) What do you trap?
(Girl) Not being skilled in trapping animals, I get nothing.
(Boy) Let's end our conversation.

Notes

1. This dialogue between a boy and a girl bound for the field-hut to guard the maturing crop is Lian Kham's example of colloquial speech.

2. buan: Cf. a ńm bua' hî. 'It isn't there', ńm bo' 'There isn't', ńm buan tê 'I believe there's nothing', pai' buan tê 'I believe he's not going'.

2a. Here we have the postposed personal enclitic series.

3. thi' tha': The spirit is fed at the grave about six months, after which it goes to mi' thi' khua' 'the village of the dead'.

4. lô' mok: The field is likened to a body, the uphill side being lô' lu' (lu' 'head'), the lower margin lô' tô' (tô' 'buttock').

5. sí' en: Contraction of sí'a in.

6. qâ: With a mid-level tone that is often the consequence of a rising tone altered by sentence-final intonation, this particle occurs but once in the texts and paradigms. It is the colloquial equivalent of hî'.

7. sû'n sí'a: In Tiddim Chin (Kamhau), sû'n án. án appears twice in the preceding text, 'Letter', at lines 15 and 19 and in Naylor under the vocabulary entry 'food'. Food kept for the spirit of the dead during the first three months is denoted by a term combining both items, an sí'a.
8. káp; Cf. a kám hî. 'they (a crowd) leave entirely!' The place is deserted after a hustle and bustle.

9. nú· tén. 'As in note 5, the agentive in has undergone sandhi with the preceding vowel. While nú· té· refers literally to the women of the household, as against the men, pâ· tê· here it is said to apply to all persons in the household. Incidentally, residence is jurally virilocal, with a rule of ultimogeniture, by contrast with the Kamhau, where the eldest son inherits the house and cares for his ageing parents.

9a. Here we have another example of the postposed first person enclitic (sec. 3.44.12).

10. thê· i: pê· i might be used instead.

11. mül: 'body hair, feathers' is distinguished from sâm 'head hair'.

12. tál: Cf. á pê· pê· tál sâm hî· 'I break his leg'.

13. ta· i: Cf. kî-tá· i tê· hî· 'they race'.

14. khî· : One may replace this with the personal noun, ké·i at the beginning of the clause or retain both terms.

15. zô·: Cf. ka zô· hî· 'I finished', ka zô· zô· hî· 'I finish (repeatedly)', ka zô· na· 'my finishing', ka zô· zô· tian· 'when I had finished it'.

16. lũam: Cf. 'stream' lûi·, 'river' gun.

16a. The reciprocal kî- here and in line 34 indicates stative voice of the verb.

17. pî· al 'deadfall'; cf. ŝ· k 'snare', hu· m 'pitfall', sî· a na· 'cage trap'.