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

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INTRODUCTION

This paper presents a preliminary analysis of two Mizo (Lushai) texts collected during an extemporaneous session in 1975 with Siamkima 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 *¹tsuaan ¹in* subordination for some noun phrases, and the *¹a ³ni? ³hii¹* 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 *³hii* has two phonetic variants: a long [iː] and a short [i] followed by a glottal stop, [i?].

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

Abbreviation	Meaning
ABS	absolutive
ADJVZR	adjectivizer
CAUS	causative
COP	copula
CS	change of state post-verbal particle
DEIX	deictic pre-verbal clitic morpheme often lexicalized in cases such as ^2low and ^2in
DET	demonstrative adjective
DET-ERG	NP delimiter: demonstrative + ergative
DET-OBLQ	NP delimiter: demonstrative + oblique
DET-PN	demonstrative pronoun
DIM	diminutive
ERG	ergative
EXCL	exclamatory morpheme
FUT	future
FVP	final verb-particle
IMP	imperative
INT	intensive, intensivizer
LOC	locative
NEG	negation

NFP	non-final clause-particle
NLZ	nominalizer
OBLQ	oblique, instrumental
PL	plural
PN	independent pronoun
RECIP	reciprocal
1ACC	first person accusative
2ACC	second person accusative
1Nom	first person verbal prefix
2Nom	second person verbal prefix
3Nom	third person verbal prefix
??	translation unclear or not possible

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. $-^3a$? '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), ^1tsuu 'old information' and ^1hii 'new information', with the subordinating morpheme $-^1in$. The resulting forms are ^1tsuaan and ^1hiaan. A similar fusion of ^1tsuu and ^1hii 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 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 $^3ni?$ ^3hii 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 (-?) 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 deictic terms (1986:162):

a.	hei^3 hi^1	'this (near speaker)'
b.	$khaa^3$ kha^1	'that (near addressee)'
c.	$khii^3$ khi^1	'that (up there)'
d.	$khuu^3$ khu^1	'that (down there)'
e.	soo^3 so^1	'that (far)'
f.	cuu^3 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, kha^1 and cu^1, are anaphoric, where kha^1 refers to something that the speaker has heard or seen but that the addressee has maybe only heard of; and 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 kha^1 and cu^1 can follow any of the other first determiners ..."

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

"*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."

"*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."

^1a $^3ni?$ ^3hii: 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 (^1tsuu, ^1khaa, ^1hii) or these particles occur in combination with a copula in Stem II (^1a ^3ni).

In the same section of her thesis Chhangte adds,

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

(132) hei^3 hi^1 cu^1
       this   this   that   'Not this one' "

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

The Stem II copula in the ^1a $^3ni?$ ^3hii constructions in the texts convey the meaning "contrary to expectation" for a preceding statement. In Chhangte's example ^1tsuu conveys the meaning "not" for a preceding statement. Both ^1hii and ^1tsuu 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, X ^1a ^3nii 'It is X,' is not followed. What occurs instead looks like,

^1nhay ^2reeng ^1a- ^4tshuak ^1tam ^1aa
pus   really   3Nom   emerge   be much   NFP

^1a- ^3trap $^3po?$ ^1baang ^3om ^2reeng ^1a- ^3nii
3Nom   cry   also   be there   very   3Nom   COP

"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 ^{1}tsuaan ^{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 -^{3}in. The absolutive marker is -ø for third person participants, ^{1}tse for second person and ^{1}mi(n) for first person. I regard ^{1}tsuu and ^{1}hii as absolutive markers for definite non-complex NPs. Ergative -^{3}in and absolutive -ø 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, ^{1}tsuaan, ^{1}hiaan, incorporating the oblique (OBLQ) suffix -^{1}in, or ^{4}tsuaan, ^{4}hiaan, incorporating the ergative (ERG) suffix -^{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, ^{1}tse and ^{1}mi(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 ^{1}tsuaan, ^{1}hiaan, ^{4}tsuaan, and ^{4}hiaan: ^{1}tsuaan and ^{1}hiaan incorporate preceding definite adjunctive information into a statement; ^{4}tsuaan and ^{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, ^{1}tsuaan is the delimiter; if the modified nominal is new information, ^{1}hiaan is the delimiter.

What then do we make of the construction ^{1}tsuaan ^{1}in, which occurs extensively in these texts? Chhangte's explanation, which is acceptable at first pass, is that ^{1}tsuaan ^{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 ^{1}tsuaan ^{1}in subordination occurs 10 times. (By comparison, ^{1}tsuaan ~ ^{1}hiaan occurs 18 times.) In 7 of these 10 occurrences, ^{1}tsuaan ^{1}in incorporates adjunctive information that has been introduced before. Only in Fontanel [lines 34 and 37] (where there are a total of three occurrences) does ^{1}tsuaan ^{1}in occur where the anaphoric reference is unclear. By comparison, in Whistle [line 5] ^{1}a ^{3}hoon ^{4}kong ^{3}a? 'while he was on the road' repeats information in line 2, ^{1}kho ^{3}pa^{3}khat ^{4}taa a-^{1}zin-^{3}na-a? ^{1}hiaan 'while he was on a journey out of the village.' Likewise, ^{1}tsuaan ^{1}in in 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 *¹tsuaan ¹in* 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 *¹tsuaan ¹in*.

Table 1 summarizes the occurrences of the two constructions under investigation,[2] while Table 2 summarizes the proposed rule governing the distribution of *¹tsuaan ¹in*.

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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 *¹tsuaan ¹in* construction. The number on the right side of "=>" refers to the adjunctive or predicative situation in a previous sentence which is anaphoric for the *¹tsuaan ¹in* construction.

Table 1 **OCCURRENCES**

^1a $^3ni?$ ^3hii	
Whistle 13	**Fontanel** 14 15 26 28

^1tsuaan ^1in	
Whistle 5 => 2 11 => (9) + 6 15 => 14a	**Fontanel** 8 => 7 + 6 11 => 10 20 => 18 34 (x2) => ?? 37 => 34 37 => ??

Table 2 **DISTRIBUTION OF** ^1tsuaan ^1in						
	NOMINAL			ADJUNCTIVE		
	Indef	Definite Old Info	Definite New Info	Nom Old	Nom New	Adjct Old
ABS	ø	^1tsuu	^1hii	--	--	--
ERG	$-^3in$	^4tsuaan	^4hiaan	--	--	--
OBLQ	$-^1in$	--	--	^1tsuaan	^1hiaan	$^1tsuaan^1in$

TEXTS and TRANSLATIONS

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

^{1}tuɯn $^{-3}$aʔ ^{1}tsuɯ^{3}ra ^{4}thon ^{2}thuɯ ^{3}ka ^{2}low ^{3}hril? ^{2}ang ^{1}tse ^{1}u | **1**
present LOC   Chura   stories   1Nom DEIX tell   FUT 2ACC PL

^{1}hmaan ^{1}laay ^{1}hiaan ^{1}tsuɯ^{3}ra ^{1}hii
Once upon a time   Chura   DET

^{1}kho ^{3}pa ^{3}khat ^{4}taa   a-^{1}zin-^{3}na-^{3}aʔ ^{1}hiaan
village   one   CS   on a journey   DET-OBLQ

^{1}faay-^{2}fuɯk ^{1}hii ^{3}a- ^{1}tshaa-^{1}raa | **2**
whistle   DET   3Nom come across

^{3}tuɯ ^{1}te ^{3}in ^{4}em ^{1}o
person PL ERG EMPH EMPH
  = others

^{2}an- ^{2}low ^{3}zir ^{1}tiir ^{1}a- ^{1}faay-^{2}fuɯk ^{1}hii
2p   DEIX teach   3Nom   whistle   DET

^{3}a- ^{1}rhe ^{3}ve ^{1}aa | **3**
3Nom know   NFP

^{1}a- ^{3}duʔ ^{3}khop ^{1}may ^{1}aa | **4**
3Nom^3 want   very   CS   NFP

^{1}a- ^{3}hoon ^{4}kong $^{-3}$aʔ ^{1}tsuaan $^{-1}$in
3Nom return road   LOC DET-OBLQ OBLQ
      home/II

^{3}a- ^{1}faay-^{2}fuɯk ^{1}tlher? ^{1}tlher? ^{1}may ^{1}aa | **5**
3Nom whistle   merrily   CS   NFP

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^{3} The two third person verbal prefix forms, ^{1}a- and ^{3}a-, reflect a tonal complementarity phenomenon: when the prefix is followed by a high level or low rising tone (Tones 1 or 2) ^{3}a- occurs; when the prefix is followed by a low level or high falling tone (Tones 3 or 4) ^{1}a- 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.

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^{1}a-$^{3}maʔ$-^{1}e-$^{3}roʔ$-$^{1}tsuu$ $^{3}hmun$ $^{1}then$ $^{1}khaat$
However, place be separate be far apart

$^{4}kong$ -$^{3}aʔ$ $^{4}hmun$ $^{2}naal$ $^{4}dewʔ$ ^{3}tak
road LOC place slippery very ADJVZR

^{1}a- $^{3}tlheng$ -$^{3}aʔ$ $^{3}taʔ$ $^{1}tsuaan$ ^{1}a- $^{3}tolʔ$ $^{3}tlhuun$ ^{1}aa | **5a**
3Nom trough LOC DET-OBLQ 3Nom slip tie up NFP

^{3}a- $^{1}faay$-$^{2}fuuk$ $^{1}tsuu$ ^{1}a- ^{3}the $^{3}hngil$ ^{4}taa | **5b**
3Nom whistle DET 3NOM disappear(?) CS

$^{1}faay$-$^{2}fuuk$ $^{1}tsuu$ ^{3}a- $^{1}zong$ ^{3}a- $^{1}zong$ ^{4}taa ^{1}may ^{1}aa | **6**
whistle DET 3Nom search for 1Nom search for CS CS NFP

^{1}a- ^{3}om -^{1}na ^{3}a- ^{1}rhe ^{1}sii ^{3}low ^{1}vaa | **7**
3Nom be in a place NLZ 3Nom know alas(?) NEG NFP

^{1}eng $^{4}ngey$ ^{1}a- ^{3}nii $^{1}poʔ$ ^{3}a- ^{1}rhe ^{1}sii ^{3}low ^{1}vaa $^{1}tsuu$ | **8**
whatever 3Nom COP also 3Nom know alas (?) NEG NFP DET

^{3}ti -^{1}a ^{1}a- ^{4}zon $^{1}laay$ $^{1}tsuaan$
do, say OBLQ 3Nom 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}nii ^{3}zon
3Nom come OBLQ whatever 3Nom COP search/II

^{1}ti -^{1}a ^{1}a- ^{3}zot $^{1}tsuaan$ $^{3}sooy$ $engay$ -^{1}na
say OBLQ 3Nom ask DET-OBLQ say what NLZ

^{3}a- ^{1}rhe ^{1}sii ^{3}low ^{1}vaa | **9**
3Nom know NEG NFP

^{3}na-^{4}kin -$^{3}aʔ$ $^{1}tsuaan$ $^{1}pooy$ ^{3}te $^{4}tsuaan$
presently DET-OBLQ Chin DET-ERG

^{1}a- ^{3}zon ^{1}puy ^{3}vee ^{1}aa | **10**
3Nom search/II help rather, a bit NFP

¹a-   ³zon   ¹puy   ¹laay   ¹tsuaan   ¹in   ¹pooy ³te   ¹tsuu
3Nom   search/II   help/II period   DET-OBLQ   OBLQ   Chin   DET

³a-   ¹faay-²fuuk   ⁴taa   ¹lhar ⁴lhar   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   ²nang ³ma?   ³in   ¹a-   ³ni?   ³hii ⁴hey | 13
Hmm...   2S-PN   ERG   3Nom   be   FVP

³ka-   ¹faay-²fuuk   ³lho? ¹tsuu
1Nom   whistle   DET

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

¹ti   -¹in   ¹pooy ³te   ¹tsuu
do, say OBLQ   Chin   DET

³han   ²aang ³te?   ³a-   ¹tii 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-²fuuk   ³lhow?   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).[4]

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^{1}*voy* ^{3}*khat* ^{3}*le?* ^{1}*tsuu*
instance one   another DET

^{1}*tsuu*^{3}*ra* ^{1}*hii* ^{1}*a-* ^{3}*thian-*^{4}*nuu* ^{3}*in* | **1**
Chura   DET 3Nom wife   ERG

^{3}*voy*^{1}*in* ^{1}*tsuu* ^{1}*naaw* ^{2}*low*^{3}*om* ^{3}*ve* ^{3}*te?* ^{4}*khay* | **1a**
today   DET child remain   DIM Polite-IMP

^{1}*ka-* ^{4}*va* ^{3}*fe?* ^{4}*taa* ^{2}*ang* ^{4}*ee* ^{1}*a-* ^{3}*tii* ^{1}*aa* | **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 ^{1}*daang-*^{3}*moon* 'uvula', which is "palate-clitoris". See J. Matisoff (1978) *Variational Semantics in Tibeto-Burman*, p. 67. [Ed.]

^{1}tsuu^{3}ra ^{4}tsuaan ^{1}naaw ^{1}tsuu ^{1}a- ^{3}om ^{4}taa ^{1}aa | 3
Chura DET-ERG child DET 3Nom stay with, CS NFP
                                       remain

^{3}na ^{4}kin -^{3}aʔ ^{1}tsuaan
presently   DET-OBLQ

^{3}a- ^{2}low ^{3}rey ^{4}dewʔ ^{4}nhu ^{1}tsuaan
3Nom DEIX be long rather after DET-OBLQ

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

^{3}a- ^{2}tley ^{3}they ^{4}taa ^{1}hawʔ ^{3}low ^{1}may ^{1}aa | 5
3Nom be quiet be able CS at all NEG CS NFP

^{1}tsuu^{3}ra ^{4}tsuaan ^{3}nhu-^{1}te ^{3}han ^{4}per ^{3}tuur ^{1}laʔ ^{1}tsuu
Chura DET-ERG breast DEIX give for/to moreover DET

^{1}a- ^{3}ney ^{1}bok ^{1}sii ^{3}low ^{1}vaa | 6
3Nom have also alas NEG NFP

^{2}an- ^{3}trhen ^{3}om ^{1}te ^{3}nhu-^{3}te
3p neighbor PL breast

^{3}han ^{3}tshim ^{3}tuur ^{1}laʔ ^{1}tsuu
DEIX share breast for/to moreover DET
       of another mother

^{3}a- ^{1}rhe ^{1}bok ^{1}sii ^{3}low | 7
3Nom know also alas NEG

^{3}ti ^{1}tsuaan ^{1}in ^{1}a- ^{2}mang ^{3}ang ^{3}khop ^{1}may ^{1}aa | 8
do/say DET-OBLQ OBLQ 3Nom be perplexed FUT quite CS NFP

^{1}a- ^{4}faa ^{1}tsuu ^{1}a- ^{3}han ^{1}tsuul ^{3}veel ^{1}aa | 9
3Nom son DET 3Nom DEIX caress encircle NFP

^{1}na ^{4}kin -^{3}aʔ ^{1}tsuaan ^{1}a- ^{1}lu-^{4}diip ^{1}tsuu ^{1}a- ^{3}kut ^{1}tsuaan
in a while DET-OBLQ 3Nom fontanel DET 3Nom hand DET-OBLQ

^{3}a- ^{2}han ^{3}khoyʔ ^{4}taa ^{1}aa | 10
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?* *⁴liak* *¹may* *¹aa* | **11**
3Nom DEIX be soft rather quite CS NFP

¹tsuu³ra *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-⁴diip* *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	

$^1tsuu^3ra$	^4tsuaan	^3nii	^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-	^3nii	22
3Nom	cry	also	stop	be there	be proper	3Nom	COP	

^3tii	^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	

^1thii	^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	^3vey	^3le	^4hey	25
2Nom	over there	DEIX	be mad	really-really		also	also	EXCL	

^1i-	^2low	^3ti-^4lhum	^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

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^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	

$^1tsuu^3ra$	^4tsuaan	^1i	^2key	$^3po?$	^4hey	30
Chura	DET-ERG	EXCL	1Nom-PN	also	EXCL	

^3ka-	^1thii	^1a-	^3nii	^2ang	31
1Nom	be dead	3Nom	COP	FUT	

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

^1a-	^3vot	^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-know/II		CS	since	

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

^4mi	^1thi	^2an-	$^1da?$	^3na	^4mhun	$-^3a?$	^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	^1pi-^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	

^1pi-^1tar-^3te	^4tsuaan	^1tsuu-^4mii	^4mhun	$[-^3a?]$	^1tsuu
little old woman	DET-ERG	DET	place	[LOC]	DET

¹a-   ³vun ³tlo?   ¹tuum ¹aa ¹tshuum ¹te ¹thii
3Nom ??   pay a visit want NFP relative PL dead

³ron ⁴en ¹tum ¹a-   ³nii ³om   ¹aa | 36
DEIX look/II try 3Nom COP probably NFP

¹a-¹ma?-³ro?-¹tsuu ¹tsuu³ra ²thoom ¹a-   ⁴rhiat ¹tsuaan ¹in
however   Chura   noises 3Nom hear/II DET-OBLQ OBLQ

¹pi-¹tar-³te   ¹tsuu ²lhaaw-³lhop ⁴zee   ¹[t]in
little old woman DET   fear   be much OBLQ

²in   ²lam   ⁴pan ¹tsuaan   ¹in
home -ward⁵ flee DET-OBLQ OBLQ

¹a-   ²tlaan ³le? ⁴taa ¹a-   ³nii ¹an-   ³tii | 37
3Nom ran   also CS   3Nom COP 3Nom say

TRANSLATION of "Fontanel"

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) *¹tsuaan* **versus** *¹tsuaan ¹in*

It is possible to conclude that *¹tsuaan* is a now morphologized combination of the definite article (for old or known nominal material) with the Oblique morpheme, *-¹in*. The sequence *¹tsuaan ¹in* appears to be nothing more than an iterative combination of this fused morpheme with a second occurrence of Oblique *-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 *-¹in* to subordinate complex nominal information. She cites examples such as

> *¹aar-³laak-¹mhang*   *¹in*   *¹a*   *³om*
> chicken-take/II-habit   OBLQ   3Nom   exist
> 'It was in the habit of stealing chickens.'

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

> *sa-¹aar-³laak-¹mhang*   *¹a*   *³nii*
> animal-chicken-take-habit   3Nom   be
> '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 ^{1}*tsuaan* ^{1}*in* conveys added emphasis as compared to ^{1}*tsuaan* 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 ^{1}*tsuaan* ^{1}*in* construction with him. I have in my notes the following two examples:

U of I ^3a? classroom ^3a? ^{1}tsuaan ^{1}in ^{3}mey^{4}zuuk ^{3}an ^{1}phal ^{3}low
LOC   LOC   smoking 3Nom allow NEG
'(Generally) In the classrooms at U(niversity) of I(llinois) they don't allow smoking.'

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

Compare, in the case of the latter,

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

where the expected ^{1}*tsuaan* (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 ^{1}*tsuaan* ^{1}*in*, 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 ^{1}*tsuaan* ^{1}*in* is the mechanism for doing so. Rather than the straightforward locative with ^{1}*tsuaan*, which indicates only that an action happens not to be possible at the given location at a given time, the fuller expression ^{1}*tsuaan* ^{1}*in* defines an entire class of events as not being possible at that location.

(2) ^1a ^3ni? ^3hii

From dialogue in my notebooks,

^3i ^{1}low na ^{4}em ^1a ^3ni? ^3hii
2Nom DEIX be sick very 3Nom COP/II
'Ah, you really are sick.'

¹a ³ni? ³hii marks the preceding predicate or entire clause as contrary to expectation.

(3) Complex copulas

¹nhay	*²reeng*	*¹a-*	*⁴tshuak*	*¹tam*	*¹aa*
pus	really	3Nom	emerge	be much	NFP

¹a-	*³trap*	*³po?*	*¹baang*	*³om*	*²reeng*	*¹a-*	*³nii*
3Nom	cry	also		be there	very	3Nom	COP

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

Compare,

Mary	*¹tsuu*	*a*	*mhel*	*²reeng*	*a*	*trhaa*	*¹aa*
	DET	3Nom	be pretty	really	3Nom	be good	NFP

pa sal	*trhat*	*¹a*	*³ney*	*³om*	*²reeng*	*¹a*	*³nii*
husband	good/II	3Nom	have	be there	really	3Nom	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.

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