

## SIZANG (SIYIN) CHIN TEXTS

Theodore Stern  
University of Oregon

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, /ā/; 2) rising, /ǎ/; 4) falling /â/. 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 The terminology of the grammar, although outdated, has been retained for purposes of consistency.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 partical 4.33.1
VPF	verb particle, final 4.31
VPNF	verb particle, non-final 4.32, 4.33

A. sa·i      â·i-na·      thũ·  
elephant celebrate-NOM affair

- 1) ni· dǎng      la·i<sup>1</sup>-in ,      ká·pu·      ká·pǎ·      té· nún tá·k  
day differ during-TEMP my-father's father my-father PL      alive
- 2) la·i-in ,      sa·i      a-ká·      táng-in ,      á·lu·      pǔa·      a· ,  
during-TEMP elephant he-shoot when-TEMP its-head carry a-shoulder VPNF
- 3) khua·      mual<sup>2</sup>      pân mual      sú·ak<sup>3</sup> a· ,      thǎ·u tǎm      má·mǎ·      kǎ·p a· ,  
village shrine from shrine emerge VPNF gun      many      very      shoot VPNF
- 4) á·sa·i      a-á·i      hĩ· .      tu·a a-â·i-na·      a· ,      nũ·      tǎ·  
his-elephant they-celebrate VPF      that he-celebrate-NOM at      woman both
- 5) pǎ· tǎ·      khuag tũm a· ,      siel      ki·      tǎ·      da·k tal tǎ·      thũ·a-in,      sũ·n tǎ·  
man and drum      beat VPNF mithan horn<sup>4</sup>      both gong set and play-TEMP day      both
- 6) zǎ·n tǎ·      á·la·m      hĩ· .      a-sa·i      á·i<sup>5</sup>      ni·-in      khua·      mual a·  
night and they-dance VPF      his-elephant celebrate day-TEMP village shrine at
- 7) á·la·m      phót hĩ· .      á·sa·i      lu·      sĩ·a      mí·      hiq li·-in zǎq  
he-dance first VPF      his-elephant head itself person four-AG carry on pole<sup>6</sup>
- 8) a·      á·sa·i      â·i      pǎ· sa·i      lu·      tũq-a·      to·      sǎ·k hĩ· .  
VPNF his-elephant celebrate man elephant head on-LOC sit CAUS VPF
- 9) á·khua·      mual      pân in ỉn      dóq      púa·      a· ,      lǎp      pũi·<sup>7</sup>  
he-village shrine from AG house up to carry a-shoulder VPNF dancing ASS
- 10) hĩ· .      tu·a      á·sa·i      â·i-na·      in siel      khốq      khũ·i·      khốq  
VPF      that(place) his-elephant celebrate-NOM at mithan PL      cow      PL
- 11) qô·      hĩ· .      a-thĩ·      táng-in      á·sa·i      â·i  
slay sacrificially VPF      he-die      when-TEMP his-elephant celebrate
- 12) a-kí·tép<sup>8</sup>      tē·      na·-in      diel      ka·q      kha·i      hĩ· .      siel      á·i      te·  
his-memorial PL      NOM-LOC streamer white hang up VPF      mithan celebrate PL
- 13) in á·vom      kha·i      hĩ· .      sǎ·ha·q      á·i      te·      in á·san      kha·i      hĩ· .      tu·a  
AG black      hang up VPF      tiger celebrate PL      AG red      hang up VPF      that
- 14) a-â·i      pǎ·      thĩ·      zǎ·k      táng-in,      á·ỉn      kúan-pũi·      te·      in tu·a  
he-celebrate man die      finish when-TEMP his-house work-ASS      PL      AG that
- 15) diel      kha·i      thē·i      nũ·n qũl hĩ· .  
streamer hang up can      EMPH not VPF

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 sū·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, pūi· 'with'.

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

ĭn dóŋ lap pūi· a púa· hí·.

8. kī·tēp, 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· há·u pǎ· lé· mí· zō·ŋ pǎ· táŋ thū·  
 person rich man and person poor man old story

- 1) táŋ la·i-in há·u sá·<sup>1</sup> khát lê· á-zō·ŋ mí· híŋ khát dūi· suŋ  
 ancient when-TEMP rich ( ) one and a poor person one jungle in
- 2) sǎ· sí·a khō·m hí·. á - zō·ŋ pǎ· ín lé·i a· sí·a a· ,  
 animals set snare together VPF the poor man AG field in set snare VPINF
- 3) a - há·u pǎ· ín thǐŋ kú·ŋ túŋ a-sí·a hí·. mi· há·u pǎ· ín  
 the rich man AG tree standing in he-set snare VPF person rich man AG
- 4) a-sa· sí·a-na· mí· zō·ŋ pǎ· hé·k qól in vil kú· hí·.  
 his-deer set snare-NOM person poor man know not AG watch secretly VPF
- 5) ta· bǎŋ a· a-víl tiáŋ-a· lé·i a· á - zō·ŋ pǎ· sa·  
 that resemble VPINF he-watch when-TEMP field in the poor man deer
- 6) sí·a-na· suŋ-a· sǎ·khi· khát ǒ·k a· mi· há·u pǎ·  
 set snare-NOM in-LOC barking deer one snare VPINF person rich man
- 7) sí·a-na· thǐŋ túŋ-a· bǎŋ mã· ǒ·k qól hí·. ta· tiáŋ-in ,  
 set snare-NOM tree in-LOC thing not(INTENS) snare not VPF that when-TEMP
- 8) mí· há·u pǎ· ín mí· zō·ŋ pǎ· sa· sí·a-na· suŋ-a· ǒ·k  
 person rich man AG person poor man deer set snare-NOM in-LOC snare
- 9) sǎ·khi· sí·a sū·t a· á·-ma· sí·a-na· thǐŋ kú·ŋ túŋ-a·  
 barking deer the very untie VPINF his set snare-NOM tree standing on-LOC
- 10) ǒ·k sák a· , tí·a kǐ·k hí·. ĭn a-thét tiáŋ-in, mi·  
 snare CAUS VPINF return home again VPF house he-arrive when-TEMP person
- 11) há·u pǎ· ín mí· zō·ŋ pǎ· mún-a· , "tí· sa· sí·a víl ká-tō·ŋ<sup>2</sup> ,"  
 rich man AG person poor man to-LOC we deer set snare look at we-let us
- 12) tí· a· pǎ· hí·. ta· tiáŋ-a· a ní· in a-sa· sí·a-na·  
 say VPINF invite VPF that when-TEMP the two AG their-deer set snare-NOM

- 13) a-pa·i khâm hī·. a-thét tíaq-in, mi· há·u pǎ· in mí· zɔ·ŋ  
they-go together VPF they-arrive when-TEMP person rich man AG person poor
- 14) pǎ· mún-a·, "nǎq sa· si·a-na· suq-a· bǎq mã· ǒ·k bo·.  
man to-LOC your deer set snare-NOM in-LOC thing not(INTENS) snare not
- 15) ke·i sí·a-na· suq-a· sǎ·khi· khât ǒ·k hí·," tī· in<sup>3</sup> a·u hī·.  
my set snare-NOM in-LOC barking deer one snare VPF say VPNF shout VPF
- 16) ta· tían-in, mí· zɔ·ŋ pǎ· in, "ôm qǎl in!"  
that when-TEMP person poor man AG believe not IMP
- 17) a-má·tế· ní· kí·ha·u a·, khu· há·u sǎ· pǎ· túq-a·  
he PL two REC-quarrel VPNF village rich ( ) man to-LOC
- 18) kí·khi·a a·, há·u sǎ· pǎ· in á - thũ· sôn sǎk a·, mi· há·u  
REC-complain VPNF rich ( ) man AG matter examine CAUS VPNF person rich
- 19) pǎ· in zǒ· sǎk a·, mí· zɔ·ŋ pǎ· in lēl sǎk hī·. ta· tíaq-in,  
man AG win CAUS VPNF person poor man AG lose CAUS VPF that when-TEMP
- 20) mí· zɔ·ŋ pǎ· luq kim qǎl a·, "bíl-pí· ma·ŋ pǎ· in  
person poor man mind content not VPNF ear-big (rabbit) chief man AG
- 21) î·-khen sǎk tũ· hī·," tī· hī·.  
we-decide CAUS will VPF say VPF
- 22) khu· há·u sǎ· pǎ· in, "tú·a lê· bíl-pí· ma·ŋ<sup>4</sup> vá· sǎm tá· vún·,"  
village rich ( ) man AG go(?) and rabbit chief go summon IMP
- 23) tī· a·, bíl-pí· ma·ŋ sǎm tũ·-in, mí· zɔ·ŋ pǎ· pai· a·, bíl-pí·  
say VPNF rabbit chief summon will-TEMP person poor man go VPNF rabbit
- 24) ma·ŋ pǎ· sǎm hī·. bíl-pí· ma·ŋ pǎ· in, "kóng pai·<sup>5</sup> tũ· hī·.  
chief man summon VPF rabbit chief man AG I to you go will VPF
- 25) koq thét ma·-ten<sup>6</sup>, ná qǎ·k vún·," tī· a· vá·i thǎ· hī·.  
I to you arrive until you wait IMP say VPNF word send VPF
- 26) tu·a zǒ·k ní· thum ní· tíaq-in, bíl-pí· ma·ŋ pǎ· khu· há·u sǎ·  
that after day three day when-TEMP rabbit chief man village rich ( )
- 27) pǎ· kúq theq phe·ŋ hī·. a-thét tíaq-in, khu· há·u sǎ· pǎ· in  
man place arrive late VPF he-arrive when-TEMP village rich ( ) man AG
- 28) bíl-pí· ma·ŋ pǎ· mún-a·, "bǎq hóng há·i<sup>7</sup> ní· zǐ·am," tī· in tēi· hī·.  
rabbit chief man to-LOC why hither tardy you INTER say VPNF abuse VPF
- 29) bíl-pí· ma·ŋ pǎ· in, "koq pái·-na· lám-pí· a· qun val sēn  
rabbit chief man AG I (DEIC) go-NOM path big on river bank gravel
- 30) a· kǎ·ŋ a·, ka-phél na tũ·, hǎ·n bɔ·m tũ· túi· toa·i a·,  
on burn(INTR) VPNF I-prevent in order man's basket with water carry VPNF
- 31) ka-phél-na·-in koq ha·i hī·," tī· hī·.  
I-prevent-NOM-because I(DEIC) tardy VPF say VPF
- 32) ta· tíaq-in, khu· há·u sǎ· pǎ· in, "qun val sēn kǎ·ŋ  
that when-TEMP village rich ( ) man AG river bank gravel burn(INTR)
- 33) gěi· qǎl hī·. hǎ·n bɔ·m tũ· túi· toa·i lâ· ǒm gěi·<sup>8</sup> qǎl hī·," tī· hī·.  
ever not VPF man's basket with water carry also be ever not VPF say VPF
- 34) ta· tíaq, bíl-pí· ma·ŋ pǎ· in, "hī· pē·u hī· qun val sēn  
that when rabbit chief man AG affirmative VPF river bank gravel

- 35) kâ·ŋ      ǵěi· ǵǎl hǵ·.    hǵ·n bǵ·m<sup>9</sup>    tǵ·    túi·    tǵa·i lǵ·    ǵm ǵěi· ǵǎl  
burn(INTR) ever not VPF    man's basket with water carry also be ever not
- 36) hǵ·.<sup>10</sup>    sǵ·khi·      lǵ·    thǵǵ túŋ-a· kǵ·    ǵěi· ǵǎl hǵ·,"    tǵ· a·,    hǵ  
VPF    barking deer also tree on-LOC climb ever not VPF    say VPNF this
- 37) háŋ-in,    mǵ·      zǵ·ŋ pǵ· in a-zǵ·    sǵk kǵ·k hǵ·.  
so      person poor man AG he-win CAUS again VPF

# 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 sǵ· is rendered 'person' in the text, an all-too-cryptic note provides the contrast, ǵ la·m pǵ· 'dancer' and ǵ la·m sǵ· 'one who has danced'.
2. khǵm might be used for tǵ·ŋ.
3. As against tǵ· a· 'saying', informant claims that tǵ· 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. phe·q 'arrive late', há·i 'be delayed'.

8. Cf. túi· kí tóa·i thē·i hí· '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· qol) occurs (om 'exist') that one carries (tóa·i) water with a man's basket."

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

- 1) ni· dǎq la·i-in<sup>1</sup> tó·-pí· ma·q khāt in qan<sup>2</sup> hiq nǎm tín  
day differ when-TEMP lion chief one AG animal individual tribe all
- 2) ma·q té· túq·a· sí·a kǎ·i a·, qan hiq nǎm khāt túq<sup>3</sup>  
chief PL above-LOC tax collect VPINF animal individual tribe one above
- 3) pan ni· khāt-in khāt vé·u pe· sǎk a-né· hí·. qan hiq nǎm  
from day one-TEMP one each give CAUS he-eat VPF animal individual tribe
- 4) tín a-ně·k siet zǎk táq-in, bíl·pí· nǎm a-ně·k tũ hũn túq  
all he-eat completely finish when-TEMP rabbit tribe he-eat will time on
- 5) hí· na·pí·, ni· thum dǒq-in á·pai· bu·a hí·.  
be although day three until-TEMP he-come not(INTENS) VPF
- 6) bíl·pí· a·pái· qǎl ni· thum suq-in, túi· tim a·, á·tui·  
rabbit he-come not day three in-TEMP water dam up VPINF his-water
- 7) tím-na·<sup>4</sup> túq·a· lê·i khāt dǎ·<sup>5</sup> hí· a-lé·i dǎ·  
dam up-NOM at-LOC bridge one put across VPF his-bridge put across
- 8) a·mán táq-in, bíl·pí· ma·q pǎ·<sup>6</sup> tó·-pí· ma·q pǎ· kúq a· pai· hí·.  
he-finish when-TEMP rabbit chief man lion chief man place to come VPF
- 9) tó·-pí· ma·q pǎ· in, "ka·sí·a bǎq ha·q hóq púak qǎl ní· zǐ·am?  
lion chief man AG my-tax what reason you(DEIC) send not you INTER
- 10) naq·má· koq né· tũ· hí·," tí· hí·.  
you I(DEIC) eat will VPF say VPF
- 11) bíl·pí· ma·q pǎ· in, "na·sí·a kóq púak a·, kóq pai· sǎk  
rabbit chief man AG your-tax I(DEIC) send VPINF I(DEIC) come CAUS
- 12) hí·. a hí·a há·q-in lǎm·pí· a· naq·má· bǎq khāt in a-né· a·,  
VPF this reason-TEMP path big on you resemble one AG he-eat VPINF
- 13) naq·má· koq sǎ· hí·," a tí· hí·.  
you I(DEIC) think VPF he say VPF
- 14) tó·-pí· ma·q pǎ· in, "ke·i sí·a né· sí·a a·kú·a<sup>7</sup> zǐ·am? hóq  
lion chief man AG my tax eat the very who INTER you(DEIC)
- 15) híl tǎn! ka·pét lǎm tũ· hí·," tí· hí·.  
show IMP I-bite lie down will VPF say VPF
- 16) bíl·pí· ma·q pǎ· in, "koq híl tũ· hí·," tí· a·, pái·-pú·i·<sup>8</sup> a·  
rabbit chief man AG I(DEIC) show will VPF say VPINF come-ASS VPINF
- 17) a-lé·i dǎ·-na· túq a-thét táq-in, bíl·pí· ma·q pǎ· in,  
his-bridge put across-NOM to they-arrive when-TEMP rabbit chief man AG

- 18) "na-sí·a hóq ně·k<sup>9</sup> sák<sup>10</sup> sǐ·a zia· sǐ·a hí·," tǐ· in, 'a-núe·i  
your-tax he(DEIC) eat ALTER the very that the very VPF say VPNF him-below
- 19) túi· suq-a·, ' tó·-pí· lím ǒm sí·a lá·k hí·.  
water in-LOC lion reflection be the very show VPF
- 20) tó·-pí· ma·q pǎ· in a-lím a-hí· hún lám<sup>11</sup> he· qǎl in, thú·m  
lion chief man AG his-reflection him self know not VPNF roar
- 21) a· a-lím a-bē·q suk táq-in túi· suq-a· ta·k a· thǐ· hí·.  
VPNF his-reflection he-spring down when-TEMP water in-LOC fall VPNF die VPF
- 22) tu·a a hí· mǎn in, tó·-pí· in tu·a dóq sǐ·a kǎ·i nǒn qǎl hí·.  
this ADV lion AG this up to tax collect ever not VPF

### 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) like you 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. qan 'quadruped'; cf. mí·-hiq 'humans'.
3. túq-a· 'on, to'; cf. í· túq 'above us, atop us'.
4. Note tonal complementation in this phrase, in contrast to the preceding one.
5. Cf. lǎm '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-má· tǎ· pai· khǎm ín 'Go with him!'.
9. né· '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 né·, Stem II né·k.
10. In the grammar, a distinction is made between the homophones, sák, a causa-

tive particle with verbs in Stem I and an alterocentric (benefactive/male-factive) with verbs in Stem II,

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

D. khăn ha·m kf·dēm-na· thũ.  
generation ripe REC-contest-NOM story

- 1) khăt vê·i la·i-in sa-zúk khăt lê· zong khăt tở· hú·he·<sup>1</sup> khăt vom  
once when-TEMP sambhur one and monkey one with cuckoo one bear
- 2) lu· gam<sup>2</sup> tấ·m suq·a· po· mọng kũ·g<sup>3</sup> khăt nũ·i-a· kf·sf·<sup>4</sup> hí·.  
head region jungle in-LOC grow pipal tree one beneath-LOC REC-meet VPF
- 3) tu·a ni· a-kf·pân<sup>5</sup> a-má· tấ· thum lố·m a-kf·kả·i<sup>6</sup> a·, "qal f·  
that day from he,she,it PL three friend they-REC-unite VPF foe we
- 4) tở·k lê·, kf·huq tấ·k tở· hí·. dấ·-na· nốp-na· á-ôm  
encounter if REC-help together will VPF sad-NOM happy-NOM they-exist
- 5) zong-in kf·nũam mỗ·<sup>7</sup> tở· hí·, "tỉ· in, tu·a mọng kũ·g bẽ·l  
whether REC-formal may not will VPF say VPF that pipal tree use as shelter
- 6) in á-tế·q hí·. a-kúm vê·i<sup>8</sup> tiq·in, a-má· tấ· kf·mả·i ná·p<sup>9</sup>  
VPNF they-dwell VPF year after when-TEMP s/he PL REC-mind confident
- 7) a· a-kf·zả·k-tả· a-kf·kf·-tả· ô·m nỏ·n qỏl in, kf·zỏ·q sắ·k  
VPNF they-REC-respect they-REC-fear exist ever not VPF REC-insult ALTER
- 8) hí·. ta bắ·q a· a-kf·lêm qỏl tiq·in, "hí· bắ·q f· ô·m  
VPF thus like VPF they-REC-peaceable not when-TEMP this like we exist
- 9) thỏ·q lê·, f· kf·khên thắ·p kul tở·, "a hí· tiq·in<sup>10</sup>  
uselessly if we REC-part individually need will therefore
- 10) a-kf·zả·k-tả· tở· mả·<sup>11</sup> "f· kf·zả·-tả·k na·-tở·-in, a-kủ·a·  
they-REC-respect will ready to we REC-respect in order who
- 11) u ha·m bẽl hí·<sup>12</sup> zỉ·am? hí· mọng kũ·g pỉ·en-dấ·n tở·  
elder brother ripe SUP (copula) INTER this pipal tree appearance with
- 12) f·-khân tấ·k<sup>13</sup> son to·q. a-khân ha·m bẽl sí·a  
we-recite biography together tell let us his-biography ripe SUP the very
- 13) thũ· kf·ni· tở· hí·, "tỉ· in, á pha·t nỉ· ni· tiq·in  
command REC-obey will VPF say VPF anniversary two day when-TEMP
- 14) vắ·i hỏ·m hí·.  
arrange VPF
- 15) a-phít bẽl-in, sa-zúk in, "kế·i ka-púm-pỉ·. sĩ·a no·  
before SUP-TEMP sambhur AG I my-stomach-big the very you
- 16) qế·l sắ·n zong lĩen zỏ· pắi· hí·. khỉ· la·q bẽm-bom zỏ·q nễ·i khỉ·  
both than even big exceed go VPF antler diverge branch also have I
- 17) hí·. mọng kũ·g hí· sĩ·a lẻl sĩ·a ka-nỏ· la·i-in hí·  
VPF pipal tree this the very modest the very my-child when-TEMP this here
- 18) la·i-a· ka-vắ· tiq·, a-dỏ·n in kả·la·i hỏ·q bá·n va·-síp phễ·q  
when-TEMP I-travel when its-tip AG my-navel hither brush merely small enough
- 19) hí·.tu·a a hí· tiq· kễ·i kha·q tắ·k bẽl khỉ· hí·, "tỉ· hí·.  
VPF that therefore when I old definitely SUP I VPF say VPF



- 20) á-zom-in, zɔŋ ín, "nó. té. gél sǎŋ in<sup>14</sup> ká-méi. sǎu zó. hí. hí.  
secondly monkey AG you PL both than my-tail long ALT VPF this
- 21) mɔŋ kǔŋ tó. tē-gát tū. tī. lēŋ,<sup>15</sup> ka sén ka móm la-i-a.  
pipal tree with compare will say if(1st) my infancy my childhood when-TEMP
- 22) ká nu. tó. hí. la-i-a. ăn né. a. ka tát ũ. la-i,  
my mother with this here when-TEMP food eat VPINF we wander we(?) when
- 23) ké-i-ma. tō. tō. kím a. ka tó. lăm-a. a dón sǐk tǎn khí hí.  
I sit with equal VPINF my sitting in-LOC its tip pluck break I VPF
- 24) tu-a a hí. tiaŋ, ké-i u. ha-m bēl khí. hí.," tī. hí.  
therefore I eldest brother ripe SUP I VPF say VPF
- 25) a-khá-k bēl in, hú--hé. in, "ké-i thā. nē-i khí. hí. ká tǐ. zóŋ  
last SUP VPINF cuckoo AG I wing have I VPF my color also
- 26) hiŋ gǐ--gél i a., ka tá-u<sup>16</sup> zóŋ zǎk nōp hue-i hí. tu-a (ŋ  
green harmoniously VPINF my song also hear willing good VPF that besides
- 27) gǎl in, nō. pái. thē-i gǎl na. vān a. le-ŋ thē-i khí. hí. mɔŋ kǔŋ hí.  
not VPINF you go can not NOM sky to fly can I VPF pipal tree this
- 28) sǐ-a sǎn lē. nī-am na pá-u lǎp ũ. sǐ-a lě-i dǎŋ a. á-po. mɔŋ  
very tall and small you talk PL the very field different on it grow pipal
- 29) gā. min tē. né. a. hí. suŋ-a. ká ě-k<sup>17</sup> si-a suŋ pān hí. mɔŋ kǔŋ  
nut ripe PL eat VPINF this in-LOC my dung very within from this pipal tree
- 30) po. phē-ŋ hí. tu-a a hí. tiaŋ-in, khuā. té. mú. má--sá. phít  
grow later VPINF that therefore this while-TEMP village PL see first ahead
- 31) bēl ké-i khí. hí.," tī. hí.  
SUP I I VPF say VPF
- 32) a-va-i hóm khuā. vak ni. a-kí-pan sa-zúk lē. zɔŋ in hú--hé.  
they-agree divide light day from sambhur and monkey AG cuckoo
- 33) thǔ. qa-i hí.  
command obey VPF

#### 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. hú'-hé' The name is onomatopoeitic, the specific identification uncertain.
2. The Bear's Head region denotes a mountain in the Nat Chaung region of Kalembo, where the forefathers of the Sizang are said to have hunted.
3. kũ·ŋ a standing tree.
4. kî-sî· 'meet each other'. Cf. ká-sí· hî· 'I come across him'; ka-kî-sî· hî· 'we meet each other'. (Cf. E, note 3.)
5. a-kî-pân 'from' appears in temporal sense; cf. pân 'from' (locative relational).
6. kî-kâ·i 'unite'. Cf. kâ·i 'to pull'.
7. mô· 'may not'; cf. ká pai· mô· hî· 'I am not permitted to go'; ka pái· mô· bô· hî· 'I am permitted to go'.
8. vê·i 'after'; cf. a-kúm nî· vê·i 'after two years'.
9. ká nă·p hî· 'I have no fear'; cf. ká nă·p bô·q 'I am fearful'.
10. a hí·tíaq-in 'therefore'; can also use tu·a a hí· tíaq-in.
11. mâ· 'be ready to'; cf. á pai· tû· mâ· ăm hî· 'he is ready to go'. (ăm 'be, exist').
12. hî·. Note the appearance here of the equational verb 'to be', homophonous with the verb-final particle, hî·. It is often omitted. (Cf. section 4.31.11-21 of the grammar).
13. tě·k: Cf. kóq pai· khôm tû· hî· 'We (two persons) will come hither', kóq pai· tẻ·k tû· hî· 'We (three persons or more) will come hither'.
14. in Cf. hí in hi·a sá·q in lfen zǎ. This house (hí in) that one (hi·a) be big (lfen) than (sá·q).
15. This is an example of the postposed first person enclitic -iq (sec. 3.44.12).
16. tá·u lit. 'groan'; 'song' for other birds, hăm.
17. ě·k 'dung' cf. ká ẻ· hî· 'I defecate'.

#### E. lá·i<sup>1</sup> letter

- 1) na-lá·i hǒq thá·k ka-gá· a·, koq thúk kí·k lâ-lê·u  
your-letter hither send I-receive VPNF I to you reply again once more
- 2) hî·. ká-hẻ·k-na· lê· ka-mú·<sup>2</sup>ka-gá·i-sút-na· té· thẻ·m-pô· a-kí-khẻ·  
VPF my-know-NOM and I-see my-consider-NOM PL all it-REC-remain

- 3) ỏm ỏl dóq-in kỏg son sítet tủ. hí. tú. ni. ka-pá-i-na.  
exist not until-TEMP I to you tell completed will VPF this day my-go-NOM
- 4) lỏm kỏm a. ka-kỏ-sỏk-pủi.<sup>3</sup> pa. mủn-a, "nỏ-khủa. ỉn bỏg zỏ.  
path half on I-REC-encounter-ASS man to-LOC your-village house how
- 5) phỏ. nú. zỏ'am?" tỏ. a., ka-dỏk sỏ'a, "mẻi. ỏỏỏ<sup>5</sup> khỏt lẻ. ta-jỏ.  
number you (INTER) say VPNF I-ask the very female widow one and or:han
- 6) khỏt tỏ. a-vẻk-pỏ.<sup>6</sup> kỏ-ỏỏ-m<sup>7</sup> son lẻ.ỏ tam má. phỏ.  
one with they-all together-big REC-gather say if wẻ much very number
- 7) tẻ.i f. vẻ.<sup>8</sup> ỏỏ, a há.u tám ỏỏl a. á zỏ.ỏ ỏm khỏ. hí.,  
suprisingly we we are rich many not VPNF poor exist we VPF
- 8) ỏỏ tỏ. hí. tỏm dỏỏ ka-sỏk<sup>9</sup> khỏt sỏ'a tu.a  
hither say VPF suprisingly different I-think one the very that
- 9) khủa. tẻ.<sup>10</sup> nú-mẻi: khỏt lẻ. pá-sỏ khỏt kỏ-ỉ.t a. tẻ.ỏ sỏ'a  
village PL woman one and man one REC-love VPNF marry the very
- 10) tỏ.<sup>11</sup> nẻ.i thỏỏ hí. á-khủa. suỏ sỏ'a thỉỏỏ tho.<sup>12</sup> ỏỏl a.  
son have naturally VPF their-village in that very clean ( ) not VPNF
- 11) á-tủi. nẻ.k phỏ. ỏỏl si.-tỏ. á-tỏl bỏk ví.-ẻ. tám a.  
their-water drink good not moreover their-throat goitre almost all much VPNF
- 12) á-me.l phỏ. zỏỏ ỏm hí. a mỏ-mỏ. khỏt in ỏỏ núi. sỏn<sup>13</sup>  
their-complexion good also exist VPF idiot one AG he(DEIC) laugh at
- 13) a., kỏ-mỏ.i zum má.-mỏ. hí. a-mỏ in-ỏ.<sup>14</sup> á-ỉn núe.i-a. vỏk pủi.  
VPNF face pointed very VPF he AG his-house under-LOC pig female
- 14) khỏt tỏ. a pá. khỏt tỏ. á-no. nỏ. tỏ. khoa.i a., tỏ-na. sỏ-pủ.  
one both a male one and their-baby two and bring up VPNF ride-NOM pony
- 15) zỏỏ nẻ.i hí. "tủ.a nỏ. zỏ.n ta.m ỉn," ỏỏ tỏ. a., ni. tá.k ỏn  
also have VPF this day night stay IMP he(DEIC)say VPNF evening meal
- 16) a.k sỏ. ỏỏ hú.a nỏ., lỏm má-mỏ. ka-sỏ. hí. á zỏ.n tiỏỏ  
fowl flesh he(DEIC)cook VPNF hungry very I-feel VPF night when
- 17) á-ỉn dỏl túỏ nú<sup>15</sup> a. ỏỏ lủm sỏk a., pủ.a nẻ.i ỏỏl  
his-house storey above COMP on he(DEIC) sleep CAUS VPNF blanket have not
- 18) a. kỏ-khủa. sỏk a.<sup>16</sup> zỏ.ỏ sỏỏ a.k khỏn tiỏỏ kỏ-thỏ. pá.i  
VPNF I-(condition) cold VPNF tomorrow morning fowl crow when I-arise early
- 19) a. nỏ. sỏ.a tiỏỏ kỏ-khủa. ỏỏỏ lum hí.<sup>17</sup> kỏ-zỏ.ỏ ỏn nẻ.k  
VPNF sun emerge when I-(condition)it(DEIC)warm VPF I-tomorrow food eat
- 20) zỏk nỏ. vỏ.i<sup>18</sup> hủn tiỏỏ, ka-tỏ kỏ.k a. ka-tỏn-pủi.  
finish sun work in taungya time when I-return again VPNF my-companion-ASS
- 21) tủ. a-ỏm bủa. a., kẻ.i ỏỏ.k má. ka-tỏ lỏ-le.ỏu a. kỏ-tỏ.  
will he-exist not VPNF I alone very I-return again VPNF my-color
- 22) nỏ. a., lỏm kỏ-pỏi. zỏ. bủa. a., kỏ-tỏ.i má-mỏ. hí.  
sick VPNF path I-go can not VPNF I-tired very VPF
- 23) ni. dỏỏ tiỏỏ lá.i kỏ-thỏ.-thỏ.k<sup>19</sup> tủ. hí.  
day different when letter REC-send repeatedly will VPF

## 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 mú: It would seem that na, the nominalizing particle, is to be understood.
3. ka-kí-sík-púi: 'I encounter'. Cf. ka kí-sí· hí 'I meet him', ka sí· hí 'I come across him'.
4. báq zā· phá·: Cf. lâ·i dal báq zā· phá· zí·am? 'How many sheets of paper are there?', báq zā· qít zí·am? 'How much does he weigh?'.
5. mêi· qǒ·ŋ: Cf. nu-mêi· 'woman', mêi· qǒ·ŋ pá· 'widower'.
6. a vék-pi·: Cf. ka vék-pí· uŋ: 'We all', equivalent to kó· té·m pô·.
7. kí·qǒ·m: Cf. ka qǒ·m hí 'I gather things together'.
8. î· vê· ũŋ: Cf. pai· î· vê· ũŋ 'We (deprecatory) have been gone', pai· khí· vê· 'I (deprecatory) have been gone'.
9. túm dǎŋ ka sák khât: Cf. ka sá· hí '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. tǎ· 'baby, son'; cf. ta-nú· 'daughter'.
12. thiaŋ tho·: Cf. túi· thiaŋ 'clean water', but púan tiaŋ tho· 'clean blanket', kā tiaŋ hí 'I clean'.
13. núi· sân: Cf. ká nui· hí 'I laugh', but ka nui· sân hí 'I laugh at him'.
14. a má in-á·: So I interpret what I recorded as a má·n ná·. If my deduction is correct, Liam Kham, who habitually employs the simple agentive in here uses the longer form found regularly in L.B. Naylor's Practical Handbook of the Chin Language (Siyin Dialect). See Grammar, section 3.42.23.
15. túq núq: Cf. a núe·i nuŋ 'the lower' and a nue·i béi 'the lowest'.
16. ká khua· sík a· 'I feeling cold', but tui vót 'cold water'. However, see also below kā khua· hōŋ lum hí 'I felt warm', and túi· 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 hóng sít a and ká khua lúm hí.
18. vă·i : Cf. vă·i tí·a 'return from the taungya' and vă·i kúan 'go to work the taungya'. The term in question does not denote the field itself.
19. thá·-thá·k: Cf. ká thă·k hí 'I send'. For other reduplicated verbs, see the grammar, p. 252.

kí·pâ·u púi· na.<sup>1</sup>  
REC-speak with NOM

- 1 (Boy) kói· suq kuan tũ· ní·?  
where at go to work will you
- 2 (Girl) lõ· ká·hug tũ·.  
field I-watch will
- 3 (Boy) naq·má· qu·ak kuan lê· tê·, ki·ta· qól tú· ní·?  
you alone go to work if you(SG) afraid not will you
- 4 (Girl) bân mã· ỏm buan<sup>2</sup> tê·.  
nothing exist not (belief)
- 5 (Boy) ná· lo· kúan·na· lăm ká·a· qu·l kual thê·i vê·.  
you field go to work-NOM path fork-LOC snake coil can sometimes
- 6 (Girl) qu·l sa·q qu·l-ti· kí·tă· zỏq.<sup>2a</sup>  
snake than centipede fear more-I
- 7 (Boy) thí· tha·<sup>3</sup> na·mú· gẻi· lê·?  
die spirit you-see ever INTER
- 8 (Girl) á·tiq bỏ·q khắt mủ· gẻi· khỉ·.  
a spine stoop one see ever I
- 9 (Boy) na lõ· mỏk<sup>4</sup> dũi· suq qua· phug suq·a· thê· lẻi· sỉ·en<sup>5</sup>  
your field side woods in bamboo copse in-LOC squirrel the very(AG)
- 10 bắq vỏ·t zỉ·a?  
what do INTER
- 11 (Girl) qua· kui· tũq·a· to· kỉ· sí·a ẻn ủa·<sup>6</sup> a·mít sỉ·a  
bamboo bend upon-LOC sit sparrow the very look at VPF its-eye the very
- 12 sỉm·bủ· mít bắq đêk tắk hí·.  
owl eye resemble nearly VPF
- 13 (Boy) bắq hun mú· gẻi· ní·?  
what time see ever you
- 14 (Girl) tei· tâ·n tũq pa· ka·ét la·i, mủ· khỉ·.  
platform on from I-look at when see I
- 15 (Boy) a·mít zỏ·l zỉ·am mỏ· bẻ·m zỉ·a?  
its-eye squint INTER or round INTER
- 16 (Girl) bẻ·m víl·vẻl·.  
round almost
- 17 (Boy) sủ·n sỉ·a<sup>7</sup> bắq keg ní·?  
daytime meal what have on person you
- 18 (Girl) kả·i thum hỏ· khẻ· qỏl keg khỉ·.  
sweet potato skin peel not have on person I

- 19 (Boy) vǎ·i hún tiǎŋ na-tí·a tǔ· lê·?  
work in taungya time when you-return will INTER
- 20 (Girl) vá·-tím káp<sup>8</sup> tiǎŋ, ka-tí·a tǔ·.  
bird desert when I-return will
- 21 (Boy) na-nu· tén<sup>9</sup> tí·a pal a· hóŋ sǎl ǵǎl zǐ·a?  
your-mother(PL + AG) return early VPNF they(DEIC) order not INTER
- 22 (Girl) tí·a pal léŋ<sup>9a</sup> hoŋ té·i tǔ·.  
return early if-1st they(DEIC) scold will
- 23 (Boy) hoŋ sǎ·t thē·i<sup>10</sup> lê·?  
they(DEIC) beat ever INTER
- 24 (Girl) khuā· sǐk mǔl<sup>11</sup> su·ak thē·i; hoŋ sǎ·t lé·, ká-pe·ŋ tǎl<sup>12</sup>  
feel cold body hair emerge can it(DEIC) beat if my-leg break(INTR)
- 25 dǒŋ ká-ta·i<sup>13</sup> tǔ·. hoŋ dél lê·, phá· zo· buan tē· hoŋ  
until I-flee will they(DEIC) pursue if-3rd catch can not(belief) they(DEIC)
- 26 phá· lé·, ka-bú· tǔ·. ka-tá·i-na· a·, vá·-tím bú· khǎt mǔ· khǐ·.<sup>14</sup>  
overtake if I-hide(INTR) will I-flee-NOM in bird nest one see I
- 27 (Boy) á-tui· tǎŋ bǎŋ zǎ· phá· zǐ·a?  
its-egg CLASS what how many number INTER
- 28 (Girl) á-nǒ· kēu· zǒ·<sup>15</sup> á-mǔl pǒ· ba-la·i.  
its-young hatch finish its-feather grow not yet
- 29 (Boy) na-dé·i lê·?  
you-want INTER
- 30 (Girl) kǐ-tā· a·, ka-tá·i-na· a· thǐŋ luǎŋ pǎl a·, li·k khǐ·  
afraid VPNF I-flee-NOM in tree log trip over VPNF fall down I
- 31 vē·.  
foolishly
- 32 (Boy) a thǐŋ luǎŋ sǐ·a lǔam<sup>16</sup> suŋ-a· hual sǔ·k lê· té·? thǐŋ luǎŋ  
the tree log the very brook in-LOC roll down INTER you tree log
- 33 bǎŋ a-kǐ-zǎŋ<sup>16a</sup> zǐ·a?  
what it-REC-use INTER
- 34 (Girl) pi·al<sup>17</sup> vǎ·t-na· kǐ-zǎŋ thē·i.  
deadfall make-NOM REC-use can
- 35 (Boy) bǎŋ ó·k zǐ·a?  
what snare INTER
- 36 (Girl) sa· sí·a thiam ǵǎl a·, bǎŋ má· ǵǎ· bǒ·.  
animal trap skilled not VPNF nothing get not
- 37 (Boy) tǒ·p ká to·ŋ.  
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 ǒm bua hī 'It isn't there', ǒm bo 'There isn't', ǒm buan tē 'I believe there's nothing', pai buan tē 'I believe he's not going'.
- 2a. Here again we have the postposed personal enclitic series.
3. thī tha: The spirit is fed at the grave about six months, after which it goes to mī thi khua 'the village of the dead'.
4. lǒ mək: The field is likened to a body, the uphill side being lǒ lu (lu 'head'), the lower margin lǒ tǒ (tǒ 'buttock').
5. sí'en: Contraction of sǐ'a in.
6. ga: 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 hī.
7. sǔ'n sǐ'a: In Tiddim Chin (Kamhau), sǔ'n ǎn. ǎn 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 sǐ'a.

8. káp; Cf. a kám hf '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· tē refers literally to the women of the household, as against the men, pā· té 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. thē·i: gē·i might be used instead.

11. múl: 'body hair, feathers' is distinguished from sām 'head hair'.

12. tál: Cf. á pē·ŋ tál sāk hf '(I) break his leg'.

13. ta·i: Cf. kf-tā·i tē· hf 'they race'.

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

15. zō·: Cf. ka zō· hf 'I finished', ka zō· zó· hf 'I finish (repeatedly)', ka zō· na· 'my finishing', ka zó· zōk tiaŋ 'when I had finished it'.

16. lūam: Cf. 'stream' lūi·, 'river' qun.

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

17. ŋi·al 'deadfall'; cf. ō·k 'snare', hu·m 'pitfall', sī·a na· 'cage trap'.