

## SOME NOTES ON MARAA

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### 1. SOURCES

Most of what today is known about Maraa (generally written Mara, to be pronounced Maràa), a language of the Chin group of Sino-Tibetan, we owe to Reginald Arthur Lorrain. His *Grammar and Dictionary of the Lakher or Mara Language* was published posthumously in 1951 by the Government of Assam. Due to Lorrain's "Lakher Pioneer Mission", the Maraa became a literate people. Today, at least on the Indian side of the international border by which the British preferred to divide them up between India and Burma, they are managing their own affairs within the possibilities of an Autonomous District of Mizoram State.

The fact that the Maraa and their language did not share the fate of the various Southern Chin languages which are still known by name only is, however, not to be accredited to the work of Lorrain. The Maraa were a people of renown ever since the English came to know them. The first officer of the British Empire who, in 1865-66, tried to contact them, was Colonel Lewin. He had come to know of them as the "Shendu" (the Arakanese rendering of "Sam-tu" 'hair knot', a term also applied to other tribes of this area whose men wore their hair in a knot on the top of their head). Lewin was responsible for the administration of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, while the Shendu repeatedly raided villages in this area. Before, Lewin had fearlessly ventured to contact wild Lushai to arrange a kind of peace treaty, but the Shendu proved less approachable. The brave men Lewin had selected as his guides and porters deserted him once he had entered the territory of these famous warriors, and in the end he was happy to find his way back alive.

The first English officer to be accepted as a guest (in Sai-káo) was Captain Shakespear in 1892. The approach was now from the Lushai side of the country, and as a result Maraa became known by their Lushai name as *Lakher*. In the following years some Maraa (of the Tlúsàì group) accepted British government, but it was not until 1924 that all Maraa, last among all the Chin peoples, could be forced to accept it at least outwardly, that is, to give up raiding. No wonder then that Sai-káo (under Government control since 1911) became the center of colonial activity and the mission.

In 1908 F.W. Savidge from the mission station in Lungleh published the first *Grammar and Dictionary of the Lakher Language*. In 1932 N.E. Parry distinguished himself – and the Maraa – by publishing the best (and last) monograph in the series on the tribes of the Naga-Chin group. It is from the appendix to his work that we know that there are five major dialects. The data he presented remain, however, scanty. In his rendering of Maraa terms he used the transcription devised by Savidge, based on the Tlóusài dialect. Lorrain selected Sai-káo as his place of residence, and thus, though he used a somewhat different spelling, the language he recorded was again Tlóusài. Though spoken only by a minority of Maraa speakers, Tlóusài for these historical reasons had the privilege of being raised to “standard” Maraa which, nowadays, children have to learn in school. Judging from Parry’s data, another dialect might have proved less difficult to “transcribe” in Roman letters.

Unlike a century ago, the Maraa of today would welcome visitors from Western countries, but the government of India forbids entry into this frontier region. And no lengthy stay in Mizoram would have provided me with all the data which leading learned people of the Mara Autonomous District were kind enough to send me by post during the last nine years. Though our work is far from being completed, the data now available to me allow some rather sure statements about the development of Maraa.

These statements may not be very useful by themselves. But Maraa is not the only language of Sino-Tibetan which has lost all its finals, and the reconstruction of the phonological history of these other languages may be even more complicated than for Maraa, since in the latter case two of the neighboring and historically related languages are well documented. Without the testimony of these languages it would have been rather impossible to reconstruct former stages of Maraa, with all of the changes it has undergone, some of which would appear highly implausible on the mere basis of phonetics.

## 2. PHONEMES AND TONES

For the missionaries the language was a major concern, as they were, first of all, interested in translating the Bible into Maraa. But like the people themselves, their language proved to be difficult to administer with English concepts. Maraa is the most progressive of all Chin languages insofar as it has lost all of its final consonants. Lushai, written without tone marks, may still make sense when the words appear in context. Maraa however, when written *without tone marks, has many words written alike but pronounced differently*, which may result in passages hard to understand, even when reading in context. You just have to guess what this kind of “shorthand” writing is meant to say. However, both Savidge and Lorrain failed to recognize the importance of tones.

Lorrain mentions them in his *Grammar and Dictionary*, but the tones he gives in the few lines devoted to this (p. 59) are mostly wrong.

Thus, with the spread of literacy the Maraa themselves decided to mark at least one tone. The decision they took, i.e. to add a final *-h* to the syllables pronounced in a low tone, may be phonetically correct, but it makes things even more difficult for someone who is not a native speaker. To explain this statement, it may be sufficient to state that Maraa has aspirated nasals and laterals (written *hn-*, *hm-*, *hr-*, *hl-*). At the same time people write syllables which form one notion together in one word. Thus, in cases where the second syllable starts with a nasal or a lateral, only native speakers know whether the (by now medial) *-h* belongs to the first syllable as a final tone mark, or to the second syllable as a sign of initial aspiration.

Fortunately, Lorrain's use of a final *-h* as a sign for a glottal stop (as in Lushai) has been abolished. In fact, Maraa does not have final glottal stops as a distinguishing feature. You may use them, but they are a sign of "rough" (that is impolite, for instance angry) language. With very few exceptions, Lorrain used the *-h* after /a/ only, and in most cases the syllables marked in this way show the midtone. Lorrain realized that Maraa had both long and short /a/ and introduced /afl/ for the long vowel. The phonetic difference is quite apparent (the short vowel has the sound similar to the English indefinite article and could also be written [ə]), but Lorrain nevertheless failed to note most of the long /a/, and instead introduced the shortening *-h* for some of the short /a/. The result is a complete mess because his /a/ with neither circumflex nor *-h* remain undefined regarding their length. The spelling reform introduced by the Maraa corrects this. The trouble is that the heritage of the past cannot be abolished so easily. People even stick to it when it comes to their ethnonym. Officially it is still written "Mara" – and not "Marâh" as the new spelling would require. Moreover, the simple typewriters available are not provided with circumflexes, and thus even official letters continue to be written in the old spelling.

Lorrain introduced yet another vowel with circumflex, /ô/, which, this time, is not the long variant of /o/. Savidge (and following him Parry) used /ong/ and /ang/ instead. According to Lorrain's description, his /o/ (the former /ang/) is to be pronounced "like *oung* in the English word *young*, only the *ng* is a nasal half sound...", while the /ô/ (the former /ong/) is explained as "a combination of sounds, like *ar* in the English word *ark* combined with a short *aw* sound concluding with a nasal half sound *ng*...". Hence one might think that /ô/ is a nasalized version of what Lorrain writes /ao/, formerly written /o/ by Savidge. Contrary to all these statements, today at least there are no nasalized vowels or diphthongs in Maraa. Completely misleading is the statement about /ô/: it could

very well be rendered by [ou]<sup>1</sup>. Less easy to describe is the value of Lorrain's /o/. It sounds somewhat like the throaty /ar/ in English *snarl*, but with no lateral trill, and with the help of the international phonetic alphabet it might be written [ʌɔ], not too different from Lorrain's /ao/ = [ʌɔ]. The [ə] in the first case is rather indistinct, and Lushai speakers tend to replace both ʌɔ and ʌɔ with their diphthong written /au/. Still there can be no doubt about the phonetically higher second part of the diphthong. Lorrain's dictionary contains a few /ai/ instead of his /o/, and this is the value of this sound given by Parry for the "Zeuhngang" dialect ("Zyhno" in Lorrain's spelling), while for "Sabeu" (Capi) he gives "ei". Thus, on an all Maraa basis, Lorrain's use of /o/ is definitely not the best solution for this sound.

For some unknown reason neither Savidge or Lorrain recognized that they used /i/ for two different sounds. The reformed spelling differentiates them as /i/ and /ie/. The latter is peculiar insofar as it is the only diphthong in Maraa with the stress on the second vowel; a Frenchman would have written it /ié/. There is another vowel in Maraa said by Lorrain to have a French quality ("like the *eu* in the French word *feu*"). It was probably for this reason that Savidge used /eu/, with the result that he could not differentiate it from the diphthong containing the same vowel plus a bilabial offglide. Lorrain used /y/ and /yu/ instead, but there are still quite a few cases in his dictionary where he writes /y/ instead of /yu/ and vice versa. The French /eu/ value is, according to Lorrain, "like *ur* in the English words *cur*, *murmur*, but this sound must be spoken more in the throat." I heard it just the other way round, i.e. as a rather high central vowel, like French closed /eu/, but with the lips in the position of /è/, that is, unrounded. It is indeed rather near to closed /e/, while in combination with the offglide it might also be written [əu]. There is also an [əi] conventionally written /ei/. This /ei/ may indeed represent two different sounds as well, i.e. [ɛi] and [əi].

It is easy to criticize Savidge and Lorrain for their spelling system, but the five vowels of the Latin alphabet are just not sufficient for the seven plain vowels of Maraa, the less so as the nine diphthongs of Maraa are not reducible to them but use yet another series of vowel sounds that defy systematization. Using the present system we have

**a, â, i, u, e, aw, y**  
**ai, ao, ia, ie, ua, ei, yu, o, ô.**<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I have also heard, however, a plain vowel allophone, [u]. If it should win out, there would exist a rather parallel development of former **u** and **o** + nasal, i.e.  $\bar{u} > u$ ,  $\bar{o} > \text{ə}$  (see below).

<sup>2</sup> Leaving /ie/ aside and using /au/, /eu/, /oi/, /ou/ instead of Lorrain's /ao/, /yu/, /o/, /ô/, one may arrive at the following scheme (which, however, does not represent the actual pronunciation): *ia, ua, ai, au, ei, eu, oi, ou*.

For the present purposes I shall introduce the following changes:  $\hat{a} > \mathbf{aa}$ ,  $\hat{o} > \mathbf{ou}$ , and  $\mathbf{o} > \mathbf{ay}$ . Eliminating the circumflexes will allow me to mark the high and low tone (by /' and /' respectively) above the vowel, while the mid tone will be indicated by /-/ following the vowel. The word "Mara" itself by these conventions should be written Ma-ràa. Moreover, it should be noticed that /e/ in the diphthongs has quite a different quality from monophthongal /e/. The latter is in effect [ɛ]. This [ɛ] could be seen as not really constituting a letter of its own in the Maraa vowel system. Excluding loanwords, it appears in three or four syllables only, which however are used quite often: sentence final particle /e-/ (as in Lushai), imperative particle /tè/ (as in Lushai, but deep toned), demonstrative particle /hé/ (Lai /hí/), and as a contraction (from -**áéinàw**) in the plural particle /-énàw/. None of these change which I introduce is the replacement of /ch/ by simple /c/ (and hence /chh/ by /ch/). None of these changes in spelling have been approved by the Maraa themselves.

In the development of Maraa, one element proved rather stable, i.e. the tonal system. This statement would not have been possible without the contribution of Mr. Siamkhima Khawlhing who, under the mentorship of F.K. Lehman, provided us with tonal marks for the compendious Lushai dictionary of James Herbert Lorrain. For Lai, I was able to use the still unpublished dictionary of K. Lian Cung from Falam who, however, indicates no tones. But differences in Lai verbal Form II, together with my own material on Bawm (the westernmost Lai dialect which in the case of transitive verbs uses Form II only), allow me to reconstruct two tones for many words in Lai, and to infer a second tonal form also for Lushai verbs, even though Lorrain's dictionary gives only one form as long as no change was required in the spelling system without tone marks. For the present purpose, however, it will in most cases be sufficient to compare verbal Form I only.

Maraa uses, as already correctly stated by Lorrain (even though his examples lead us astray), three tones, here called low, high, and mid. Maraa low corresponds to Lushai mid-level (tone 1, called high-level by Lehman); Maraa high corresponds to both Lushai high-rising and high-falling (tones 3 and 4, called rising and falling by Lehman as well), and Maraa mid corresponds to Lushai low-falling (tone 2, called low-mid by Lehman) and Lai high. In order to make comparisons easier, in the following text I shall use the same system for Maraa, Lushai and Lai, with the following qualifications: Lai tone 1=3 will receive no tone mark, Lushai tone 4 will be marked by /' above plus /-/ after the vowel. In syllables with a final occlusive or glottal stop (conventionally written -h) the sign /-/ will be left out, since here (in Lushai, rare exceptions apart) any short syllable is in tone 2, any long syllable in tone 4. In Lai, long vowels are written with a double vowel (except for /aw/ = long /o/) and the

simple palatal is written /c/ instead of Lushai /ch/. In order not to have to write Lushai and Lai words separately when they are actually the same, I reduce the Lushai spelling to the Lai form, moreover replacing long /aw/ by /oo/, and final open or glottal-stopped /o/ by its real value /ou/. Thus both languages will be written a little more phonetically than in their own conventions. Lai missing tone 3 will be reconstructed on the Lushai evidence. When both forms are identical, I cite them as LL (=Lushai and Lai).

In my opinion, tone 1 (low level) and tone 3 (high) are the two primary tones. Unvoiced finals added (and still add) a falling element (tones 2 and 4). After sonorants these finals were lost, leaving the tone only. In the case of verbs in Form II, this lost final element should be provisionally identified as **\*-t**, though the Tibetan equivalent of this form is final **-s**. In the Chin languages, however, final **\*-s** as a rule left its trace as a final glottal stop (written **-h**), equally associated with tone 2. Since Maraa lost all final consonants the only trace left by former occlusives is tone 3 (high) in the case of a former medial long vowel, and tone 2 (mid) in the case of a former medial short vowel. In the case of the equally lost final glottal stop, Maraa (like LL) has tone 2, whether the preceding vowel was short or long or a diphthong. In the following text, in most cases I cite examples of perfect tonal correspondences only, but exceptions do occur (as also, though to a lesser extent between Lushai and Lai), in much the same way as differences in initial aspiration.

Due to the loss of final consonants vowel length was also not usually preserved in Maraa. Is there any proof that Maraa once had long and short vowels? The evidence from syllables with former final stop need not be conclusive, since one might argue that here length depended on the tone (when long, then tone 4 in Lushai, tone 3 in Maraa; when short, then tone 2 in both languages). In my opinion this argument can be shown to be faulty, but I am not going to show that here, since the evidence comes from Bawm and so will contribute nothing to the analysis of Maraa. It will be easier and more convincing to cite evidence from Maraa.

In Maraa, short medial **-a-** between consonants of the dental series changed to **-e-**, while long **-a-** in the same slot retained its value. A similar tendency is apparent in K. Lian Cung's rendering of Lai. He might easily (but not necessarily) write /ten/ for Western Lai and Lushai /tan/, but never /teen/ for /taan/. In Maraa, however, the change of short /a/ to /e/ between dentals was regular. **\*taan** became /taa/, but **\*tan** changed to /ten/ and subsequently became /tai/ - like any original **\*ten**, **\*tem**, or **\*teng** (whether long or short). These changes appeared even when the initial was not an outright dental, but a palatal, including Maraa /s-/ and Maraa /s-/ also took the place of the older **\*dz**,

with the exception of the Capi dialect which, like Lushai and Lai, shows /f-/. As a consequence a word like LL /fár/ 'sister' had to be rendered as /si/ in Lorrain's spelling of Maraa. Written more correctly this /si/ should be /sié/, and the development to be assumed is common Chin (henceforth abbreviated CC) \*dzár > Old Maraa \*fér > Modern Maraa (henceforth abbreviated MM) sié.

There are, however, several cases of Maraa **chaa** for Lushai **chan**. The easiest way to explain them is that they are later borrowings. These borrowings there are of two types: an older one in which the tones correspond to the rules stated above, and newer ones in which the Maraa tones correspond to their actual realization in Lushai, e.g., Lushai low (tone 2) = Maraa low (tone 1). I shall, however, not deal with these "loanwords" here, and concentrate instead on the original common basis. I shall also treat as "implied" my previously stated rule on short /a/ between dentals.

### 3. TOWARDS A RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD MARAA

Let me start here with the question of whether Maraa is an "offshoot" of Lai, as was first maintained by Grierson and later repeated by Parry. My impression is "no". There are, to be sure, a considerable number of words common to Lushai, Lai and Maraa. There are several correspondences between Maraa and Lai for which no cognates appear in the Lushai dictionary. Admittedly the basic Lai words mentioned in the very voluminous dictionary of K. Lian Cung are fewer in number than those listed by J. H. Lorrain in his Lushai dictionary, but this fact is in no way a proof that Lai is closer to Maraa than Lushai. Lushai and Lai are definitely closer to each other than either is to Maraa. Due to the scantiness of data on the languages of the southern neighbors of the Maraa, little can be stated about similarities in the vocabulary. The language of the Khami/Khumi group (called "Ma-tú" in Lushai and "Mátú" in Maraa) in its older strata is most probably even less related to Maraa than Lushai and Lai, although both Maraa and Khami/Khumi make ample use of prefixes otherwise lost in Lushai and Lai, and Khumi even shows some phonetic developments similar to Maraa.

From the internal evidence of Maraa, corroborated by Khumi, it seems that the whole process of transformation started with a reduction of final stops and nasals.<sup>3</sup> All final occlusives merged into a final glottal stop, all final nasals were reduced to a nasalisation of the preceding vowel which at the same time underwent a phonetic change. A similar process is well known from Burmese,

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<sup>3</sup> The development, however, differs in a fundamental point. Maraa treated medial vowels before final occlusives like open vowels and differentiated both from vowels before final nasals. Khumi, like Burmese, changed all medial vowels in a similar way, so that nasalization had to be kept alive in order not to produce a huge number of homonyms.

but whereas in Burmese final velars produced a vowel change different from that of final dentals and labials, in Maraa the development was uniform.

Probably even before this process, Maraa had experienced a vowel change of its own, in that *\*ua* whether medial or final (perhaps via /uə/) became /ii/. The later glottalization process had no effect on /i/, and thus we have CC *\*chúak* 'go out' > *\*chíik* > MM *chí*, in the same way as we have CC *\*khùà* 'village, weather' > MM *khí*. Besides *khùà* (tone 1) Lushai has a second form *khó-* (tone 4), used in close junctures. In modern Lushai the difference in pronunciation of tone 1 and tone 4 is rather small; in Maraa, however where tone 4 merged with tone 3, it is remarkable. The corresponding form in close junctures is *khí* (high instead of low tone) or, with a reduction of the vowel quality to [ə], *khá*. In nouns with primary tone 4 the juncture change is to tone 2, as for instance in Lushai *hngá-* > *hnga-*, Maraa *ngá* > *nga-* 'fish'. The Lushai contraction of /ua/ > /aw/ is clearly secondary, as shown by the Maraa vowel; it is also not reported for standard Lai. Thus, it seems that in the first instance it is not the shortening of the vowel which brings the high toned syllable with unvoiced final (tone 4) down to tone 2, but the addition of a second unvoiced element (resulting in the modern glottal stop); the shortening is secondary. Hence K. Lian Cung may be right when he insists on a long vowel in Form II, as e.g. in 'loud, painful' *faak* (I), *faa?* (II), not *fa?* as commonly used. Correspondingly we have *chúak* (I), *chua?* (II), with no contraction to /o/, not even in Lushai. (In both cases Form II is most probably to be derived from a former *\*-k+t*.) As a result, the Maraa change from *\*ua* to *\*i* need not have preceded the reduction of final occlusives; tone 4 and tone 2 *chua?* may have existed side by side. Nevertheless, we have to assume that the change took place prior to the depletion of finals, because (in the case of *ua* + final nasal) result of the nasalization process requires an older form in *\*-i-*, not *\*-ua-*. Still not all LL *\*ua* became *\*ii* in Maraa. We have for instance LL *húa*, Maraa *háó*, 'hate'; LL *húat*, Maraa *háó* 'scrape on the earth'; LL *chuap*, Maraa *cháo* 'lungs'; Lai *mua-*, Maraa *a-mao* 'indigo plant'. The easiest way to explain these exceptions is to assume that Maraa here had not *\*ua*, but *\*oo*. Alternations between /ua/ and /oo/ are also to be found between Lushai and Lai.

Let us return to the general rules. Unlike in Burmese and Khumi, all final occlusives (excluding glottal stops after laterals and nasals) were dropped in Maraa without a change in the quality of the preceding vowel. Any subsequent change of these vowels parallel those in open syllables. This statement needs a minor qualification insofar as some open *\*a* changed to MM /aw/, which medial *\*a* never did. These medial *\*a* before final stop, whether originally long or short, like the *\*a* of most open syllables, are still written /a/, but are pronounced in a slightly reduced version approximating [ə]. Length has equally disappeared



in the case of the other vowels, of which **\*i** and **\*u** have retained their value, while **\*e** changed to MM /ie/ and **\*o** to MM /ao/. Originally open vowels are to be found in the high and low tone, while (as already mentioned) originally medial vowels followed by an occlusive are in the high tone when formerly long, in the mid tone when formerly short. The mid tone is also shown by vowels originally directly followed by **\*-ʔ** (<**\*-s**) and other tone 2 words in LL.

Besides **\*ua**, the only other diphthong to appear medially was CC **\*ia**. Whether in medial or final position, these **\*ia** in all further changes were treated exactly the same way as CC **\*e**. In open finals and those closed by stops this change resulted in MM /ie/ (with the stress on a very narrow [e]). The remaining diphthongs (which appeared in open syllables only, but could take a final glottal) developed (whether originally long or short) as follows:

- \*ai** > /ia/, **\*au** > /aw/
- \*ei** > /ei/
- \*oi** > /ei/, **\*ou** > /yu/
- \*ui** > /i/.

For CC **\*eu** no reliable correlates have been found.

For the CC triphthong **uai**, correlates as a rule show MM /ei/ (<**oi**), and not (except in one case) /i/ as one might assume because of **\*ua** > /i/.

An additional note is necessary on CC **\*ou**. Here the verbal Form II changes to /-oʔ/ whenever verbal Form I has (Lushai) tone 3. In Maraa, however, this vowel change does not take place, that is, MM with complete regularity has /yu-/. And this is even the case when the Lushai form is, at first sight, not to be identified as Form II, since the dictionary states only this form and no original Form I. Otherwise, we have the regular correspondence LL /oʔ/, Maraa /ao-/. In a case like LL **\*côu** 'dig out' (Form I), **coʔ** (Form II), but MM **cao-** only, we have to reconstruct a deviant Form I for Old Maraa, probably **\*cok**.

More vowel changes resulted from the nasalization process. Least changed were **\*a** + nasal, now long plain /aa/ (to be written /â/) - the exceptions concerning short /a/ between "dentals" have been mentioned above. **\*u** + nasal became /ou/ (Lorrain's /ô/), **\*e** + nasal became /ai/, **\*o** + nasal became /y/, probably via **\*eo** (as in Khumi), written /eu/ by Savidge in 1908, but now not a diphthong but a plain vowel (for the phonetic description see above), **\*i** + nasal became /ay/ (written /o/ by Lorrain, /ang/ by Savidge, and pronounced, according to Parry, /ei/ in Capi; for a phonetic description of this peculiar sound see above). Since CC **\*ua** became **\*ii** in old Maraa, this /ay/ series also includes former CC **\*ua** + nasal.

In a very few cases, however, MM shows /ua/ for LL **\*ua** + nasal – a clear indication of later loans. In the same way we find a few cases of MM /i/ and /aw/ for LL **i** + nasal and **aw** + nasal respectively. Less easily to be explained is a case of LL /-un/, but Maraa /ay/ < **\*-in**. Few as they are, these examples include words in very common use like LL **phun** ‘tribe’, **hmun** ‘place’, **vun** ‘skin’. This change appears after all initials of the labial series, but (with one doubtful exception where Maraa has both /ô/ and /o/) never after initials of the other series. Thus, this change is to be considered regular and may perhaps be better called a “correlation”, since **\*-in** has to be reconstructed for Khumi as well.

Both the **\*i** + nasal and the **\*u** + nasal series have received additional members from syllables with open vowels or former final stop in case they had a nasal initial. This effect is limited to the high vowels **\*-i** and **\*-u**, and did not appear with **\*-a**, **\*-e**, and **\*-o**. As a consequence of this development, one might expect that there are no nasals followed by **-i** or **-u** in Maraa. But there are some, though not many, and after labials (**m-** or **hm-**) only. Examples of **-u** are extremely rare, and I have found no correlates for them in Lushai or Lai. There are more in **-i**. To explain these, we have to assume that in the case of initial **m-** and **hm-**, Maraa final **\*ui** changed to MM /i/ only after initial nasals had nasalized all following (medial or final) **\*i**. That means that the Maraa change of **\*ui** to /i/ set in rather late and cannot have taken place together with the change of **\*ua** to /ii/.

Let us turn to CC (final) **\*-r**. Following **\*e** and **\*o**, **\*-r** was dropped without leaving a trace, that is, **\*er** and **\*or**, like open **\*e** and **\*o**, > MM /ie/ and /ao/ respectively. CC **\*ur** behaved like CC **\*or**. There is a very strong tendency in Lai (except for Bawm) to pronounce short **\*-ur** like /-or/ and to adjust the spelling accordingly. **\*uur** keeps the vowel quality but tends to lose its length (see K. Lian Cung’s manuscript). In Maraa this trend must have been stronger, since we have both CC **\*ur** and **\*uur** > **\*or** > MM /ao/. CC **\*uar** probably would have had suffered the same fate had there not been the previous change of **\*ua** > **\*ii**. This **\*uar** together with **\*ir**, whether long or short, underwent a very peculiar development. In Lai (except for Bawm) short **\*ir**, (like **\*ur**, but this time throughout) lost the high quality of its vowel and was lowered to /er/. The corresponding vowel in MM, however, is not /ie/, but /ua/, that is, we have: Old Maraa (long or short) **\*ir** > MM /ua/, and similarly CC **\*uar** > **\*iir** > MM /ua/.

Admittedly, at first sight the direct development OC **\*uar** > MM /ua/ would seem much more plausible, but this would be in conflict with the sequence of all other developments. As to the development of **\*ir**, let us recall that also **\*i** + nasal did not stop at **ei** or **ai**, but moved farther down and back to reach [ʌə],

much further down than /ua/. Final **\*-r** had a lowering effect also in case it followed **\*a**, that is, we have CC **\*ar** > MM /aw/. (Let us recall that also **\*au** > /aw/.)

The development of CC (final) **\*-l** seems much more regular. It changed to **\*i** throughout. In consequence we have:

CC **\*il** ~ **iil** ~ **ual** > **\*ii** > MM /i/  
 CC **\*ul** ~ **uul** > **\*ui** > MM /i/  
 CC **\*el** ~ **eel** ~ **ial** > **\*ei** > MM /ei/  
 CC **\*ol** ~ **ool** > **\*oi** > MM /ei/  
 CC **\*al** ~ **aal** > **\*ai** > MM /ia/

The last rule is not valid for CC **\*al** after dentals, palatals, and **s-**, because here, as stated earlier, OC **\*al** > **\*el** > MM /ei/. That is, in this context, medial **\*a** became **\*-e-** before the change of final **\*l** > **\*i** (a state today exemplified by standard Lai). Moreover, there may be a few exceptions to this rule in the case of CC **\*aal**, where Maraa seems to have the “older” form /ai/. The only sure example is Maraa **vy` bai-**, Lai **vòm baal-**, Lushai **vòm bál-**, ‘black juice used for japanning’. Since Lushai /bál-/ < **\*baal?**, Maraa tones are regular in any case, so that we may exclude a modern borrowing. In one questionable case I have a form in /ai/ with the correct tone and a near doublet in /ia/, but with the wrong tone. From the few examples given by Parry for the different dialects, it appears that in what he calls “Sabeu” dialect /ai/ may still be used for **tlóusài /ia/**. We should not exclude the possibility that some words from a more “conservative” dialect have been taken over into modern standard Maraa.

There is not much to say about Maraa initials. The change of **f-** > **s-** has already been mentioned. Moreover CC **\*tr-** and **\*thr-** (written with a dotted **ʈ** in Lushai and Lai) have changed to MM /c/ and /ch/ respectively. Former **\*\*kr-** and **\*\*pr-** have merged into CC **\*tr-**. I have found two cases where the original **\*p-** was preserved in Maraa, and the medial **-r-** was dropped. These are **\*phra-** > Maraa **pha-**, LL **thra-** ‘good’, and **\*phrìm** > Maraa **phày**, Lai **thrim** ‘needle’.

The aspirated form of initial **ng-** was lost, that is, we have CC **\*hng-** > MM /ng-/. **\*hn-** and **\*hm-** were retained, but there are several irregularities when we compare LL and MM. They most probably are due to different older prefixes:

- Lai **hnà** ‘ear’, Maraa **nà** < **\*nà**, Tibetan **r-na**
- LL **hni?** ‘two’, Maraa **nay-** < **\*ni?**, Tibetan **g-nis**

- Lushai **há- hní-** ‘gums’, Lai **ha ni**, Maraa **hà pà náy** < \*ní, Tibetan **so-rñil, sñil**<sup>4</sup>
- LL **nàm** ‘smell, stink’, Maraa **pa-hnàa** < \*pa-hnàm, Tibetan **mnam**
- LL **náal** ‘smooth’, Maraa **pà hnía** < \*pà hnáal
- Lushai **hníam** ‘short, low’, Lai **niam**, Maraa **hnái** < \*hníam, Tibetan **snyan**
- Lushai **nùi** ‘to laugh’, Form II **nui?**, Lai **ni?**, Maraa **pa-hnèi** (Form II **pa-hnei-**) < \*pa-hnòi (note the irregularities throughout)
- LL **nei-** ‘have, possess’, Old Lai **ngei-**, Maraa **hnei-** < \*hnei-
- Lushai **hmaar-** ‘north’, Maraa **maw-** < \*maar-
- Lushai **hmìng** ‘name’, Lai **min**, Maraa **mày** < \*mìng, Tibetan **ming**
- LL **méi** ‘tail’, Maraa **hméi** < \*hméi
- LL **mài** ‘cucurbitacea’, Maraa **hmà** < \*hmài
- LL **mlu-** ‘round kernel’, Maraa **hmóu** < \*hmlu
- LL **mù** ‘hawk, kite’, Maraa **hmòu** < \*hmù

As is apparent, there is no predictable rule. Even the **r-** prefix need not lead to a loss of **h-** in Maraa, as can be seen by Tibetan **rma**, Lai **hma** ‘wound, sore’, Maraa **hmà**.

Since Lushai and Lai have practically no prefixes, a comparison with Maraa, which does have some, will be futile. Better results can be expected from a comparison with Khumi, but my very low standard of raw material on this language is still awaiting further treatment. The reflexive particle, which could be treated as a kind of prefix to the infinitive, shows Lushai **in-**, Eastern Lai **i-**, Western Lai **a-**, Maraa **a-**.

Let me end by providing, for the benefit of all those who would like to use Lorrain’s dictionary for Sino-Tibetan comparisons, a list of the possible reconstructions of the finals found there. I here omit apparent loanwords from Lushai (or Lai). The initials are the same as in LL, with the exceptions stated above. We may recall, however:

Maraa **s** = LL **s**, or < \*f < \*dz,

Maraa **ch** = LL **c**, or < tr; Maraa **chh** = LL **ch** or < \*thr.

<sup>4</sup> Lushai /há-/ is the close juncture form of CC **hà** (tooth) < ST \*swa > Tibetan **so**. In a first stage ST \*swa > Old Chin \*hwa > CC **ha**. Compare the interesting double development in two Khumi dialects: \*hwa > \*hva > **fa** (initial **f-** otherwise not reported for Khumi, see Löffler 1960), and \*hwa > \*hua > **hu** (my unpublished material). Khumi regularly has CC /ua/ > /u/; hence Khumi < \*Khua-mi, originally “village people”, although the actual word for “village” is /vã/ ~ /vang/. The other designation, under which those Matú are known whose language preserved the finals, i.e. Khami, is also written *Khimi*, thus with (reduced) \*ua > i, as in Maraa.

Now to the finals (in Lorrain's spelling and order). Instead of "nasal" I use N, instead of "open or +occlusive" I use °. For "/a/ after dentals, palatal, and sibilants", I use Ta. With this exception, length otherwise will be disregarded, that is, the reconstructed vowel could be long or short.

**a** < **a°** (but sometimes reduced < \***i** or \***u**; /a/ often misspelled for /â/, /ah/ = /a/

**â** < **aN** (**hâ** < **haN** or **ha°**)

**ai** < **eN**, **iaN**, **TaN**

**ao** < **o°**, **or**, **ur** (sometimes LL **ua**)

**aw** < **au**, **ar** (a few original \***a**)

**y** < **oN** (/y/ sometimes misspelled for /yu/)

**yu** < **ou** (/yu/ sometimes misspelled for /y/)

**ei** < **ei**, **el**, **Tal**, **oi**, **ol**, **uai**

**i** < **i°**, **il**, **ua°**, **ual** (all except after nasals), **ui**, **ul**; but also misspelled for /ie/

**ie** < **e°**, **ia°**, **er**, **iar**, **Tar**

**ia** < **ai**, **al**

**o** < **iN**, **uaN** (after labials \***un**- possible), **i°** after nasals

**o** < **uN**, **u°** after nasals

**u** < **u°** (except after nasals)

**ua** < **ir**, **uar**.

Let me add a note on this last diphthong. Syllables in /ua/ are more numerous than can be expected on the basis of \***ir** and \***uar**. On the evidence of LL, there should be no /rua/ in Maraa; but there are. The whole series has been expanded by quite a few expressives as well as several loans from Lushai or Lai. But there may have been other sources which, however, I am unable to identify.

As has been remarked before, the development sketched here is based on what today is standard Maraa, that is originally, but probably not exclusively Tllousài dialect. As may be seen from Parry's material, other dialects developed somewhat differently. The data basis available, however, is in no way sufficient to sketch these developments. But it is sufficient to show that even the words used for the same things are not always the same. From my own experience I know that new shifts in the standard vocabulary did take place even in the few decades after the publication of Lorrain's dictionary. There is a great readiness to accept new words. Educated people of today do not only speak standard Maraa. They not only know Lushai and some English as well, but some also maintain an ability to be able to speak all the Maraa dialects. Together with the readiness to take to new expressions, this necessarily contributes to the inclusion into the vocabulary of forms which are not covered by the rules sketched above.

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