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**ရှမ်းတံးစိးယတ်တၢ်တင်းဟာန့်ဟံးဟံးပိးနံး**

**Shan-Ni grammar  
and processes of linguistic change**

**ရှမ်းနိသဒ္ဓါကျမ်း နှင့် ဘာသာစကားပြောင်းလဲမှုဖြစ်စဉ်များ**

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May 2019

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is the first descriptive work on Shan-Ni, a Tai-Kadai language spoken in Kachin state and Sagaing region of Northern Myanmar. Being a Tai language in longterm close contact with several Tibeto-Burman languages, Shan-Ni has several features that are not common in other Tai languages, but do show similarities with Tibeto-Burman languages. The frequency of disyllabic words, the presence of different grammatical markers including TAM markers, and the variation in word order distinguishes Shan-Ni in particular. This thesis does not only describe these features, but also connects them to their presence in other languages, including both Tai-Kadai and Tibeto-Burman languages, Shan-Ni is in contact with. Some features of Shan-Ni are partially present in other Tai languages, but have developed further or in a different direction from certain points in history, which correspond with periods of migration. Through its grammar, Shan-Ni indicates relations with other Southwestern Tai languages of the Northern tier spoken both at the Myanmar-Chinese and Myanmar-Indian border. The expression of Tibeto-Burman-like constructions is made possible through the addition or different usage of grammatical markers, which nonetheless do have a Tai etymology.

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## Acknowledgements

This research would have been impossible without the help of many amazing people. Research in rural Myanmar can be difficult, but the kindness and support of the people I have met throughout my research made it a lot easier. Of course there are a few names I want to mention in particular. Each in their own way, they have helped me to make this thesis a little better. Of course any mistakes are mine.

First of all, the speakers Nan Ee Pyu, Khin Shwe Nge, Daw Nyint Yee, Daw Shwe, Ma Khaing, Daw Sin, Ayee Thida, U Chit Maung, U Than Sein, Daw Cho Me, Sayadaw Pannya Vamsa, Daw Khin Pyone Yee and Naan Nwe Ni Htun who have worked with me with a lot of patience, and this work would not have been there without them. Sometimes friends or family would come in during interviews and comment on things as well, of course I am also grateful for their contributions.

Outside Indawgyi, I would like to thank the people of the Voice of Shan-Ni newspaper, the Shan-Ni Youth Network, and the teacher trainers from Shan-Ni literacy course in Mingun and U Khin Maung Aye, for their kindness, hospitality and helpfulness.

This is the first work about Shan-Ni in English, but there are others working on Shan-Ni in Burmese and Shan-Ni itself. The authorities in this are Daw Khin Pyone Yee and Naan Nwe Ni Htun, and their willingness to sit down with me and explain things about the language has been very important in developing a deeper understanding of the language. Being able to read their work at home also enabled me to continue studying after coming home.

The idea to do research on Shan-Ni at Indawgyi came from a conversation with Stephen Traina-Dorge. He and Patrick Compton have been very supportive in my preparation and throughout my research, helping out with all the practical matters and introducing me to people in the beginning. Conversations with them, Marshall Kramer and Laur Kiik also helped me to understand more about Kachin state in general. I also thank Wyn Owen for sending me his worlists, and André Müller for helping out with the tones and sending me his questionnaires. I also thank Sarah Fairman, Diana Sabogal and Maira Kaye for proofreading parts of the thesis.

My supervisor, Mily Crevels, has always been ready to help, not only with the academic issues but also with the practical and bureaucratic matters related to fieldwork and research. Her willingness to meet frequently and be responsive to any questions both during my fieldwork as well as in the writing process has been a great support for me in this research.

A big thank you to all of you!

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## Abbreviations

### Glosses

<b>gloss</b>	<b>meaning</b>	<b>gloss</b>	<b>meaning</b>
1	first person	N	noun
2	second person	NEG	negation
3	third person	PL	plural
BM	burmese	POL	polite
CAUS	causative	PROH	prohibitive
CLF	classifier	PRT	particle
COP	copula	QP	polar question
DEF	definite	RDP	reduplication
EMPH	emphasis	Rel	relative clause
EXIST	existential	SG	singular
FUT	future	TAG	tag question
H	headnoun	V	Verb
LNK	linker	VPL	verbal plural

### Grammaticalizations

*The capitalized word represents the original word the grammaticalization derived from*

<b>gloss</b>	<b>form</b>		<b>function</b>
COME	maa <sup>4</sup>	မာ:	TAM marker
FINISHED	yaw <sup>5</sup>	ယဝ်း	TAM marker
GIVE	hau <sup>4</sup>	ဟှီး	causative
GO	kaa <sup>5</sup>	ကၢ	TAM marker
KEEP	waj <sup>5</sup>	ဝံ	TAM marker
MEET	nyaa <sup>4</sup>	ၤး	"at"
OLD	kaw <sup>1</sup>	ကဝ	TAM marker
SHOULD	kʰn <sup>4</sup>	ကိုး	TAM marker
YET	kʰn <sup>4</sup>	ကိုး	TAM marker
STAY	u <sup>1</sup>	ဟူ	TAM marker

## Preface

Shan-Ni is one of the most western languages of the Tai-Kadai language family. Whereas larger and more well-known languages like Thai, Lao and Shan Gyi are spoken in areas adjacent to each other where the speakers themselves are the majority, the Shan-Ni live in an area surrounded by speakers of Tibeto-Burman languages. Speakers of Shan-Ni have been in long-term contact with speakers of Lolo-Burmese (e.g. Lisu, Mru, Burmese), Nungish (e.g. Rawang, Anong) and Kachinic (e.g. Jinghpaw, Kadu) languages in the east and north, Naga languages in the west, and Burmese in the south. To a lesser extent, the Shan-Ni have been in contact with the Austroasiatic languages (Palaung, Wa). It is no wonder then, that Shan-Ni differs in structure from other Tai languages, and has features that might be common among its neighbours, but not among its relatives.

Lexically, Shan-Ni is conservative, with most words being of Tai origin. For these words, consonants and vowels often match, while the tones differ. But in Shan-Ni many of these words have become disyllabic, or acquired grammatical functions. This makes the innovations Shan-Ni has gone through clearly observable. I decided to focus on these innovations, because they are fundamental in understanding how the language works. I also believe these are of scientific importance. A good description of these features provides clues on language contact dynamics in the region, but can also inform literature on language contact in general.

Focussing on these innovations requires space. But despite the importance given to innovations and language contact in this thesis, it remains a descriptive work. There is no prior descriptive source, nor any source in English on Shan-Ni. Therefore, my aim remained to make this thesis as complete as possible, while still shining the light on what makes Shan-Ni special. I found a balance in this by writing some of the more descriptive pieces in a way that illustrates either the implications or the background behind which innovations have taken place.

Like other linguistic minorities in Myanmar, the Shan-Ni have only recently been able to openly organize language teaching and promotion in their own communities. Due to pressure from both the Burmese and Kachin armies, their freedom of cultural and linguistic expression has been limited for decades. Therefore, they have been absent from most linguistic and anthropological studies of the area, or are claimed to all have assimilated and shifted to Burmese (e.g. Takatani 2007). Since in 2013 and 2014 amendments in the law made it possible for schools to host extracurricular language classes, the Shan-Ni have rapidly developed materials and training to reach schools across the region. The sudden freedom to study the language means that this research comes at a time that the community itself is very active and motivated to work with the language, finding ways in which the language can be integrated into education, culture and society again. Therefore the scientific and community interest align, and I hope that this study can be complementary to the existing efforts of people I respect very much.

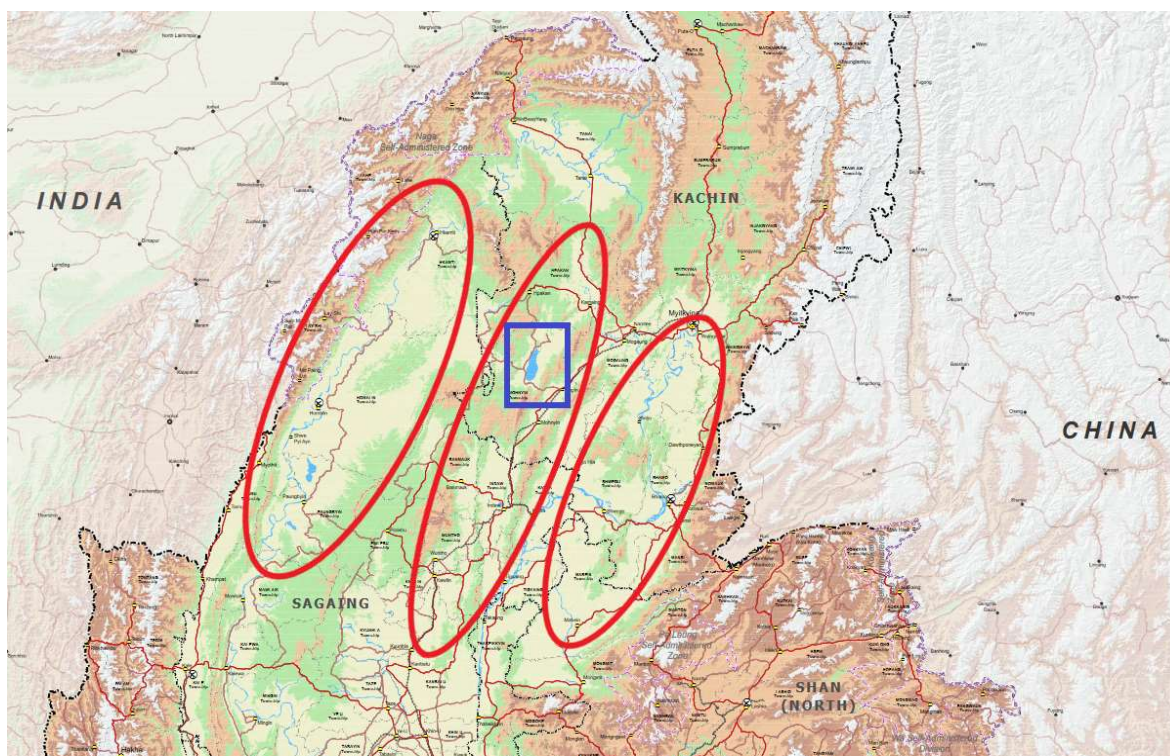
This thesis focusses on the variety of Shan-Ni spoken at the Indawgyi lake. How representative this is for other regions is not clear to me yet. Speakers consider Indawgyi Shan-Ni to be the most “central” variety, intelligible for speakers from both the west (Chindwin Valley) and the east (Irrawaddy valley).

Chapter I in this thesis describes the sociolinguistic and historical background of the Shan-Ni, the genetic affiliation, and the methods used in this research. Chapter 2 is about the phonology and orthography, and the transliteration used in this thesis. The examples used will have both the local orthography in the unique Shan-Ni script, and the transliteration in Roman script. Chapter 3 is about the shape of words. It shows how monosyllabic words have become disyllabic, by adding class terms in front of the earlier noun, which then lost their transparency making them unrecognizable as independent words. It also shows how Shan-Ni uses contractions also existing in Tai Mao for interrogatives and determiners, but added another process on top of it. It also shows how reduplication processes from Tai Mao are present in a fossilized form in Shan-Ni, and are no longer productive. Chapter 4 is about the structure of sentences. Shan-Ni distinguishes between referents that are new to the listener, referents that are known but inactive, and referents that already clear to the listener, in which case they will omit the whole argument. Because the omission of arguments is very common, and Shan-Ni has many grammatical markers that affect the structure of the sentence, the basic SVO order is hardly applicable in practice. While chapter 4 deals with the most common sentence structures, chapter 5 discusses some of the individual grammatical markers and the type of sentences in which they occur. The eight tense, aspect and mood markers and a few of their combinations are described in chapter 6. Finally, chapter 7 compares these features to the other Tai languages in the region, pointing out how the features described relate to their neighbours and which features are clear exceptions and should be traced back to another origin.

## Chapter 1: The Shan-Ni and their language

### 1.1 Sociolinguistic situation

Shan-Ni is a Tai-Kadai language spoken in Kachin state and Sagaing region in Northern Myanmar. The estimate in the Ethnologue (Eberhard et al. 2019) of 100,000 speakers is very conservative. Some speakers estimate there to be as much as two million speakers, though most agree that this would be unlikely. The red circles in Figure 1 indicate where the Shan-Ni live. They are predominantly agriculturalist and live in valleys and plains; the easternmost group lives in the valley of the Irrawaddy river in Kachin state, while the western group lives in the valleys of the Chindwin and Uru rivers. The central group lives around the Indawgyi lake and the flat stretch of land around the railroad going from Katha to Myitkyina. For this research, most data was collected in the Indawgyi region, which is indicated by the blue square.



**Figure 1** Areas where Shan-Ni is spoken (within red circles) and the Indawgyi lake (blue square)  
Map adapted by CEM from MIMU (Myanmar Information Management Unit)

The Shan-Ni call themselves *Tai Naing* or *Tai Leng*, but because of the allophones /n/ - /l/ and /ai/ - /ɛ/ many prefer the Burmese name Shan-Ni, avoiding the confusion or region-specific connotations. The use of the /n/ is associated with the western region and the /l/ with the eastern region. In the Indawgyi region people use both variants interchangeably or simply refer to the language as *khwaam*<sup>4</sup> *taaj*<sup>4</sup> 'Tai language'. The names *Tai* and *Shan* refer

to their affiliation to the larger Tai group, and *Naing/Leng/Ni* means 'red'. According to Hla Maw Maw (2017: 22), the name 'red' refers to their original settlement at the Red River (China, near frontier with Vietnam) and their traditional costumes with red waistbands. The name *Tai Lieng* is sometimes used as well, with *lieng* meaning 'red' in Tai Long or Shan Gyi, the largest Tai language spoken in Myanmar. The newspaper, youth organization and many speakers themselves use the name Shan-Ni to refer to the group as a whole, and following them, so do I in this thesis<sup>1</sup>.

The language vitality of Shan-Ni differs from place to place. In Kachin state, Shan-Ni is spoken among all generations in rural places, and to a lesser extent in the cities. This is mainly due to restrictive language policies during the military regime from 1962 onwards. Due to the conflict in Kachin state, the rigor of these policies was the strongest between 1962 and 1994. During the ceasefire in the 1990s, the Shan-Ni started to recover old manuscripts, create literacy books, and secretly teach the language in summer schools. These efforts were led by Daw Khin Pyone Yee, who in 2011 became Kachin state minister of Shan affairs. When ethnic minority language classes became legal and supported by the state in 2013, she institutionalized her material and trainings with financial support from Unicef and other donors. Currently, about 100 schools in Kachin state have Shan-Ni literacy books and teachers trained by her team, providing classes for kindergarten, grade one and two (Daw Khin Pyone Yee, pers. comm.). In some places, this provides support for children who start school as Shan-Ni monolinguals, elsewhere it provides support for bilingual children who would otherwise only study Burmese. In urban areas it is more a language revitalization program. Classes are taught by twenty-year-old teachers who study and teach the language of their grandparents, even though many parents are not fluent. Although the language is less vital in these areas, the determination of teachers and families, and the comparatively better access to resources and information provides hope for the language to have a bright future.

The return of Shan-Ni into public life is very much driven by the youth. Around the same time language lessons became legal, people began using phones, internet and electricity. Roads improved and motor bikes became popular contributing to the mobility and connectivity of Shan-Ni youth. There have been several updates to the Shan-Ni fonts to type on the computer, and mobile phone apps are being developed. The Shan-Ni organize festivals, dance competitions and pageants. Many speakers have not learned to read to script yet, but the Shan-Ni newspaper publishes three pages every edition in Shan-Ni, written by Naan Nwe Ni Htun and Sai Kyaw Lin. These two writers also published another book, that I use in this study as a source. It is called 'Basic Spoken Shan-Ni' (2017) and includes conversations, stories, and lists of specific terminology (kinship, body parts, agricultural tools) in Shan-Ni, Burmese and Shan-Ni transliterated in Burmese script. Within one year 5000 books were

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<sup>1</sup>Hla Maw Maw (2017) does use the name *Taileng* in her anthropological thesis about the cultural heritage of the group, because her study has a strong in-depth focus on the eastern group, who exclusively use this name.

sold<sup>2</sup>. For many adults who have never had literacy lessons, the Shan-Ni transliterated in Burmese and the conversational style make this book a true treasure. It allows them to practice reading and writing by themselves, and show their children elements of the language.

Traditionally, the Shan-Ni have always cultivated the lowlands, while trading with the other ethnic groups who lived in the highlands. They have been in long-term contact with Kachin<sup>3</sup> groups, Kadu, Naga and Tai Khamti that live in the region. The shared history with other Tai groups and the Burmese will be discussed under the sections ‘History’ and ‘Genetic affiliation’. Due to the conflict, in the 1960s and 1970s Kachin communities who used to live in the mountains near the Shan-Ni were forced to seek refuge in the lowlands where Shan-Ni communities lived. They built their own settlements next to the Shan-Ni villages, though they largely lead separate lives.

This research took place in the Indawgyi region, a wildlife sanctuary home to Myanmar’s largest lake, the Indawgyi lake. It is an important habitat for hundreds of species of plants, insects, reptiles, and a resting place for species of migrating birds and fish. Burmese visitors tend to come for the *Shwe Myitzu* (ရွှေစွင်လှိုင်စိမ်း), a floating pagoda which during the wet season can only be reached by boat (Figure 2). The Shan-Ni villages are built at the edges of the lake. The map below (Figure 3) shows the main villages: Nam Mun, Lone Ton and Nyaung



**Figure 2** Shwe Myitzu pagoda (photo by Victoria Milko)

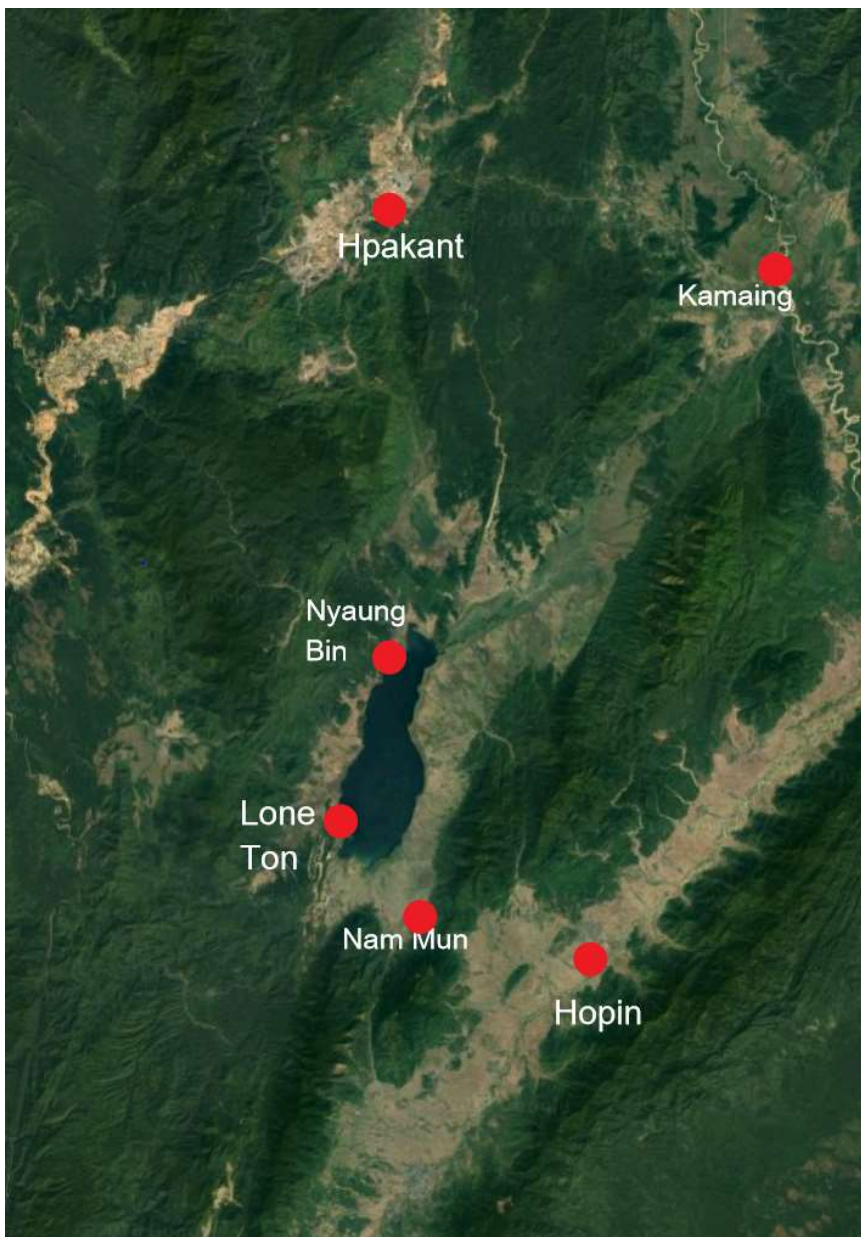
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<sup>2</sup>Since in rural Myanmar it is very normal to copy books, the reach is probably a lot bigger.

<sup>3</sup>Including Zaiwa, Lisu, Rawang, Maru, Lashi and Jinghpaw.

Bin. Lone Ton is the administrative head village, and is home to a hospital, guesthouses for visitors and a military base. Nam Mun and Nyaung Bin are the biggest villages of the area, and function as trade hubs connecting Indawgyi to the cities Hopin (Nam Mun) and Hpakant (Nyaung Bin). Most people are agriculturists or anglers, though gold, amber and jade mines also provide opportunities for both labour and trade.

The language vitality and dominance of Shan-Ni in the Indawgyi region differs on each side of the lake. This has to do with the history and current opportunities. At the north side of the lake, Shan-Ni is the dominant language. The youth is using more Burmese nowadays, but



**Figure 3** Map of Indawgyi with major villages and nearby cities (adapted from Google Maps).



many adults are more comfortable with Shan-Ni than they are with Burmese. On the westside, bilingualism is common among all generations. It is a busy road for trade and tourism, hosting important cultural and religious sites. Burmese provides economic opportunities, but Shan-Ni is maintained as the language they use among themselves. People do codeswitch often, but Shan-Ni remains the preferred language. Children and new residents in these villages learn Shan-Ni rather than getting by with Burmese. In the south people use more Burmese, and almost all Shan-Ni speakers are adults over thirty years old. This might be related to the presence of the military base and thus stricter control in the area in the past. The east side used to be a dense forest and a swamp, with only few settlements. In the 1990s, Burmese migrants from central Myanmar came to work in the logging and fishing industries, vastly outnumbering the pre-existing population. This changed the eastern side from a relatively inhabitable area to an attractive area to live with a lot of arable land. Members of earlier Shan-Ni communities married the Burmese migrants. There are still a few older speakers, but often being part of Burmese families, they rarely use Shan-Ni.

Figure 4 shows all the village names in English and Shan-Ni, with the Shan-Ni script. The names have been burmanized, but the original Shan-Ni names are still identifiable. The drawings correspond with the meaning of the village names, and have significance for the history of the lake. They are descriptive of flora and fauna of villages, functions or oral history. A selection of them are listed in Table 1. The villages *nyɔŋ<sup>2</sup>paang<sup>1</sup>* ‘Nyaung Bin’ *long<sup>4</sup>kɔŋ<sup>5</sup>* ‘Lone Kau’ refer to types of trees, and *long<sup>4</sup>tɔŋ<sup>2</sup>* ‘Lone Ton’ *long<sup>4</sup>caang<sup>4</sup>* ‘Lonsant’ and *nam<sup>5</sup>mi<sup>3</sup>long<sup>2</sup>* ‘Nam Mi Laung’ to places where humans, bears and elephants come down from the mountains and gather. *lɔj<sup>4</sup>mon<sup>2</sup>* ‘Loi Mon’ tells the origin story of the lake, which ends in a widow looking back from the mountain after the area had flooded and the lake was created.

<b>Table 1</b> Selection of Indawgyi village names and their meaning		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Shan-Ni script</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
nɔŋ <sup>3</sup> long <sup>3</sup>	စွင်လှိုင်	big lake (bm: indawgyi)
phraa <sup>1</sup> nɔŋ <sup>3</sup> long <sup>3</sup> ci <sup>1</sup> kham <sup>4</sup>	ခြောက်စွင်လှိုင်လီၤအမ်း	golden pagoda on the big lake
mɔŋ <sup>4</sup> nɔŋ <sup>3</sup>	မိုင်းစွင်	lake city
maak <sup>1</sup> mong <sup>2</sup> kaj <sup>1</sup>	မာက်မွိုင်ကံ	chicken mango (small mangos)
long <sup>4</sup> tɔŋ <sup>2</sup>	လှိုင်းတိုင်း	gathering place
long <sup>4</sup> kɔŋ <sup>5</sup>	လှိုင်းကွင့်	poisonous tree
lɔj <sup>4</sup> mon <sup>2</sup>	လွဲးမှ်	look back from the mountain
nam <sup>5</sup> mi <sup>3</sup> long <sup>2</sup>	မမိမိလှိုင်	water (place) where bears descend
nyɔŋ <sup>2</sup> paang <sup>1</sup>	ဟွိုင်ပိုင်	banyan tree
lɔj <sup>4</sup> kham <sup>4</sup>	လွဲးအမ်း	gold mountain (bm: shwe taung)
tɔŋ <sup>1</sup> caang <sup>5</sup> kham <sup>4</sup>	တိုင်လှိုင်အမ်း	gathering place of golden elephants
long <sup>4</sup> caang <sup>5</sup>	လှိုင်းလှိုင်	elephants descend
nam <sup>5</sup> mɔ <sup>1</sup> kam <sup>1</sup>	မမိမေုကမ်	brown water well
haw <sup>3</sup> paa <sup>4</sup>	ဟာဝ်ပေး	fish louse



Figure 4 Map with symbols of Indawgyi villages and their names (Face of Indawgyi<sup>4</sup>, CM)

<sup>4</sup> Illustrations by Dohee Kwon, names were collected in Ywatit and Maing Naung by Stephen Traina-Dorge and CM and later doublechecked in Pan La by Sayadaw Pannya Vamsa.

## 1.2 History

The Shan-Ni consider their history and heritage to be that of the four city states *Mong Yang* 'heron city' (Mohnyin), *Mong Kaung* 'drum city' (Mogaung), *Wun Seu* 'tiger state' (Wuntho) and *Mong Myit* 'dagger city' (Momeik). Nowadays, these territories are divided between different administrative territories. Mohnyin and Mogaung are located in Kachin state, Wuntho in Sagaing Region, and Momeik in Shan State.

Shan-Ni are believed to have been in this region for at least 2000 years (Hla Maw Maw 2017: 74). Their first important settlement, Maing Mao, no longer exists, but ancient ruins found in 2009 south of Kachin state's capital Myitkyina are thought of as being the remnants of Maing Mao. The first significant empire it was part of, was the Nan-Chao empire. During the Nan-Chao period, around 600-900 AD, Chinese sources refer to Maing Mao as *Lishiu* 'beautiful water'. The Nan-Chao empire (see Figure 5) existed out of a confederation of several Tai states centred around the old capital of Dali in Southwestern China. Mong Mao was the westernmost state, connecting Nan-Chao to India. It was the place where Nan-Chao got a large part of its gold and salt (Luce 1961: 69, 71). Nan-Chao would also send their elite criminal offenders to wash gold in Lishiu instead of giving them the death penalty (Luce: 1961 71). Figure 5 shows the capital 'Lishiu Cheng' near modern-day Myitkyina, the Ta Erh Kingdom around the Indawgyi lake, and 'An Hsi Cheng' where Mong Kaung is now.

According to the Shan-Ni chronicles, three sons of the Maing Mao king left their father's home to establish Mong Kaung (722 CE), Mong Yang (723 CE) and Mong Bann (724)<sup>5</sup>. The fourth son stayed home to rule the empire. When the ruler of Mong Kaung died, his brother Sao Sam<sup>6</sup> from Mong Bann, took over Mong Kaung. From there, he conquered many other areas, including the Hukhawn region, Katha, Assam and Manipur (Hla Maw Maw 2017: 76). After the tenth century the Nanchao empire gradually became less powerful, until it finally fell under the Mongol invasion led by Kublai Khan in 1253 (Sai Aung Tun 2009: 10). In the meantime, a tributary to Nan-Chao, Mong Mao, had grown more prosperous. Tai elites from Nan-Chao moved to Mong Mao, becoming a new center of power in the region (Sai Aung Tun 2009: 14). The Mong Mao Empire or 'Mong Mao Long', was ruled from the Shweli river valley, with its capital near the current location of the Chinese border city Ruili. While the king himself stayed in his own capital, his brothers went out and established themselves in Mong Kaung (1215) and Assam (1218). This was the start of the Ahom Empire in northeastern India. The brother who went to Mong Kaung, Sao Sam Lung Hpa, made Mong Kaung the new military capital of Mong Mao. Mong Kaung became powerful again, ruling over at least 99 *mongs* or (city)states (Sai Aung Tun 2009: 18).

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<sup>5</sup>Current location of the Indawgyi lake and the Hpakant jade mines.

<sup>6</sup>*Sao* 'leader' and *sam* 'third son' refers to Sao Sam being a king and the third son in his family, hence there are many Shan leaders with the same name.

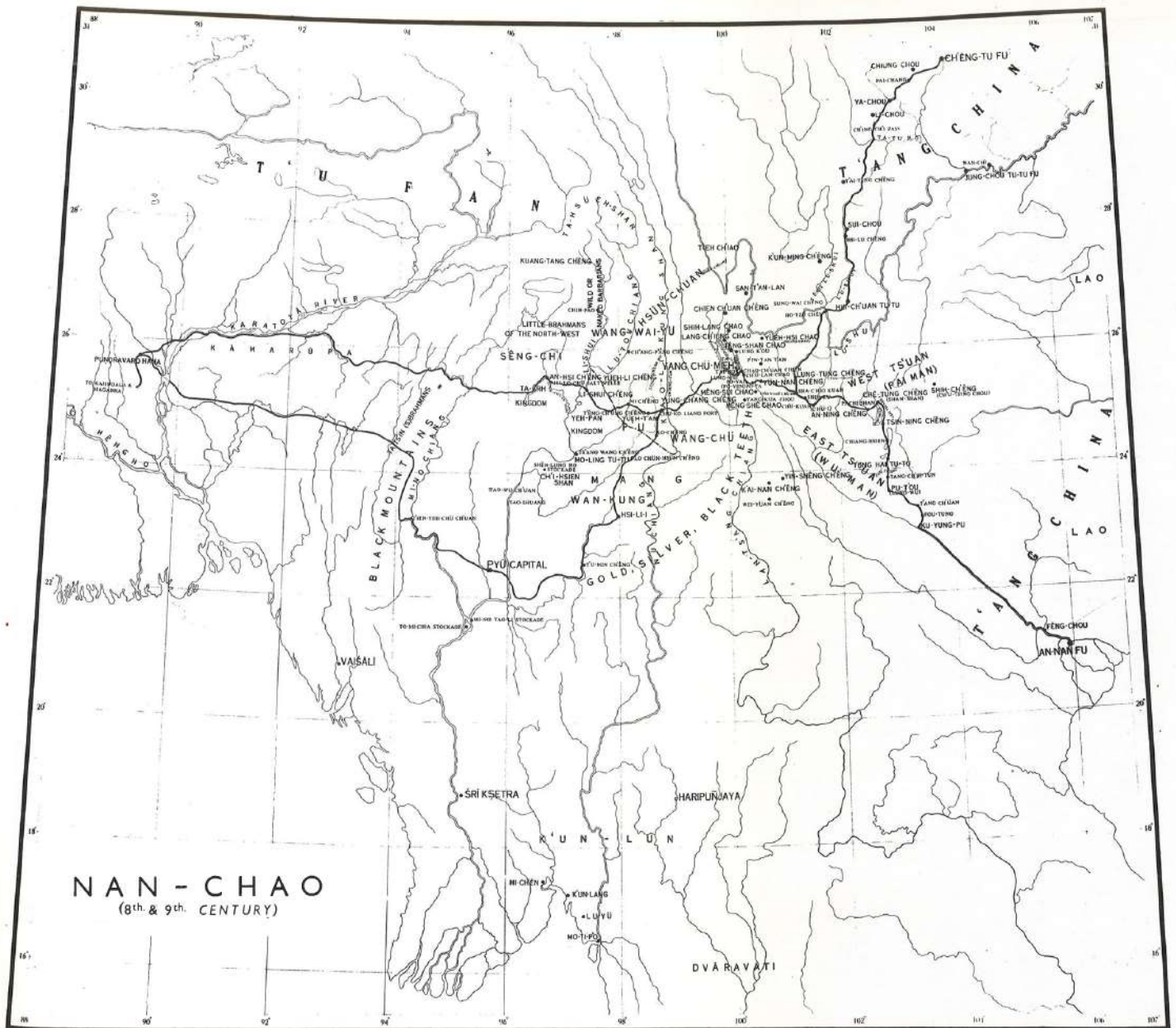


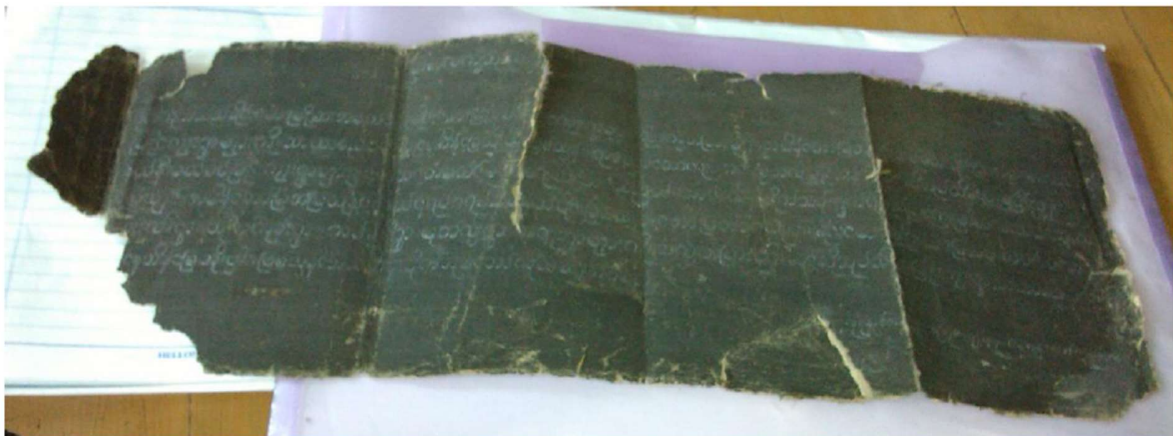
Figure 5 Map of the Nan-Chao empire in the 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> century (copied from Luce 1961)

Sao Sam Lung Hpa brought a lot of people with him into the area. According to Sai Aung Tun, the people that came with Sao Sam Lung Hpa were the Shan-Ni (Sai Aung Tun 2001: 5). They mixed with the people who were already living there, though they outnumbered them greatly (Sai Kam Mong 2004: 15). Large-scale immigration into the region by a welcome group is also discussed in this parabaik (palm leaf) inscription from 1179 AD (Figure 6), in which is written;

Notification to Mayor,  
Maing Mao Minister.

Through Royal's order the villages of Maing Mao town must be united and properly ruled and unfair ruling is strictly prohibited. There may be no disputes with neighbouring towns and villages. Peace must be ensured. Maing Mao city must be divided into 4 regions and 8 villages through royal order. Some villages such as Wakhaung, Oolauk, Moat Loi, Kazu and Kat Cho/Khat Cho in addition to Maing Mao Township are to be united through rule of law. The increased population must be properly provided for. This order was received on the 3rd waning moon day of Tagu, 541 ME.

(Palm-leaf manuscript 1179 AD, adapted from Hla Maw Maw 2017: 85)



**Figure 6** Parabaik manuscript 1179 AD (Hla Maw Maw 2017:85)

The manuscript demonstrates that (1) there was an established administration, (2) there was an increased population, causing tension and requiring one administrative unit to be split up into multiple smaller units and (3) the rulers were actively supporting the newcomers, by ordering the established community to provide for them<sup>7</sup>.

In 1526, a group of armies from different Shan states<sup>8</sup> led by a Shan-Ni prince from Mong

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<sup>7</sup>Although the years do not exactly add up, it must be taken into account that these are subject to different calendars. The Tai, Burmese, Chinese and western calendars are all different, so confusion easily arises. The point is here that different sources discuss a large migration into the area around 1200, which influences the linguistic history of the Shan-Ni.

<sup>8</sup>The Shan states were independent Shan principedoms. According to their own interest, they would unite or fight each other and neighbouring groups. Most of them were located in what is now Shan State in eastern Myanmar. The places where Shan-Ni live were part of the 'northern Shan states'.

Yang sacked the Burmese court of Ava (Fernquist 2005). The occupation did not last for very long. When the Burmese regained strength under king Bayinnaung, he took revenge and occupied the Shan states that had attacked Ava before. By 1557 all Shan-Ni territories were in Bayinnaung's hands. This merely meant local kings had to pay tribute to the Burmese crown. This changed in 1768-1769, when Mong Kaung and other Shan allies supported the Chinese in a battle against the Burmese and lost (Sai Kam Mong 2004: 33). From that moment onwards, the Burmese court would hold a tighter grip on the northern Shan states, sending their own kings and imposing harsh military rule (Sai Kam Mong 2004: 44). The then important city of Waimaw (south of Myitkyina) was destroyed by the Burmese in 1810. Gradually the Kachin also started to become more powerful, capturing Mong Kaung and devastating the Indawgyi valley in 1883 (Hunter 1908b: 137).

The British captured Mandalay and announced the annexation of Upper Burma in 1885. The ruler of Wuntho, Sao Aung Myat, refused to accept, and continued to fight the British until 1891. The final crackdown by the British was incredibly violent, leading Sao Aung Myat to flee to China and the other survivors to migrate to other parts of Myanmar (Hla Maw Maw 2017: 106, Hunter 1908a: 155). Wuntho, once was a powerful Shan state, features in the 1908 Imperial Gazetteer of India as a township under Katha district, with only villages (no cities) and a mention of the population being "almost exclusively Burmese" (Hunter 1908a: 156).

Having been defeated by the Burmese, Kachin and British, the Shan-Ni who stayed in the area became minorities in their own land. Burmese, Kachin, Indian, Nepali and other people came into the area to build the railroad, connecting the urban areas of Katha, Mohnyin, Hopin, Mogaung and Myitkyina to Mandalay. Cochrane (1915:24) reports that in this period the Shan had assimilated to Burmese customs and speech outside the house, but continued to maintain Shan customs and speech inside the house. Several people I spoke to in Hopin and Mohnyin, told me that this continued until the 1960s, when people stopped speaking Shan inside the house, out of fear to be overheard by Burmese or Kachin soldiers.

After the Second World War the Union of Burma was created, which was supposed to be a federal state in which ethnic states would have a large amount of autonomy over their own territories. The Shan-Ni agreed to support the inclusion of their land into Kachin state, which itself was promised possible independence in ten years time. These agreements were made under the Burmese general Aung San. He and his cabinet were assassinated before they could assume office. His successors decided to install more centralist policies, infuriating ethnic leaders who agreed to be part of the Union under the promise of federalism. This worsened throughout the 1950s, with a larger emphasis on Buddhism and the Burmese language, completely banning the teaching of local languages in 1962. All over the country, ethnic groups started to form their own armies, resisting the Burmese state. During British times, the majority of the army existed out of Kachin soldiers, but during the 1950s these were gradually replaced with Burmese soldiers. In 1962 the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) was formed, and the Shan-Ni got caught in a conflict between the Burmese and Kachin armies (Hla Maw Maw 2017: 105). Both the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) and the Burmese

government claimed to be the legitimate government of Kachin state, and used violence, taxes and forced recruitment accordingly. Eventually, the Burmese set up their military bases in the lowlands where the Shan-Ni lived, while the fighting continued in the surrounding hills. The Kachin villages in the hills were under constant attack in an effort to cut the KIA off from access to food, information, recruits, and other resources. As a result, many Kachin were displaced and moved into Shan-Ni villages. Around the Indawgyi lake, there are large Kachin communities in Nam Mun, Lonton and Maing Naung. During the ceasefire from 1994-2011 there was increased freedom of movement and expression. When the ceasefire ended in 2011, Myanmar was already going through a democratic transition, giving military personnel less control over people's daily life.

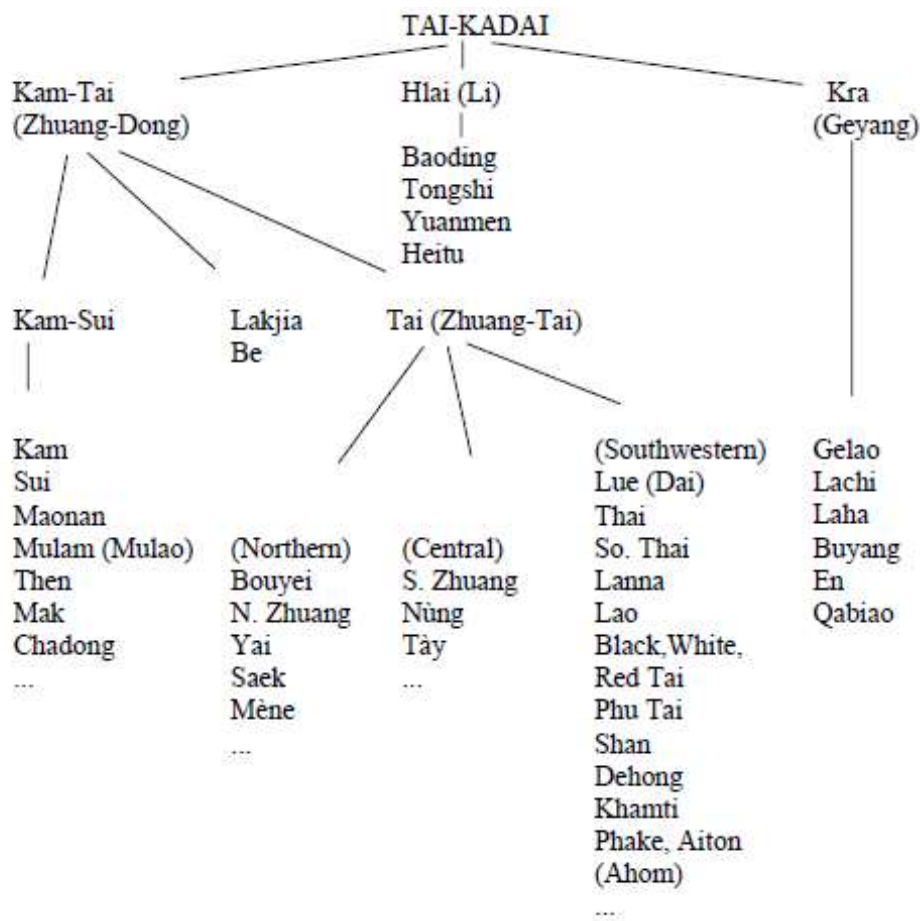
### **1.3 Genetic affiliation**

Shan-Ni is part of the southwestern branch of the Tai-Kadai language family. Figure 7 shows the Tai-Kadai family tree according to Diller et al. (2008: 7). Shan-Ni is not present in his overview, but is discussed later in the same book by Edmondson as part of the southwestern branch (Edmondson 2008: 192). It shares a large number of cognates and grammatical features with other languages in the southwestern branch, including some well-known languages such as Thai and Lao, as well as smaller Tai languages present in geographical proximity of Shan-Ni (Khamti, Phake, Aiton). The cognates Shan-Ni shares with these languages oftentimes only differ in tone but have the same consonants and vowels, and have sometimes changed their meaning or have gained different grammatical functions. The biggest Tai language of Myanmar is in this overview referred to as 'Shan'. The word Shan represents all Shan groups in Myanmar, but the language meant here is the variety spoken by the dominant Tai group living in Shan State of Myanmar, which is otherwise known as Tai Yai, Tai Long or Shan Gyi (big/major Shan in Burmese). I will refer to this language throughout this thesis as Shan Gyi. Within the southwestern branch, Shan Gyi is less related to Shan-Ni than the Tai languages spoken in the Northern Myanmar – Northeastern India – Southwestern China border region, but due to its political and cultural prominence, it does have influence on Shan-Ni.

Edmondson (2008: 203) distinguishes three groups of Shan: Southern Shan, Northern Shan and Khamti. The northern tier includes the languages of groups that had settled in Northern Myanmar before the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD (Edmondson 2008: 184). He shortly discusses the settlement history and phonology of the different groups, and places Shan-Ni in the northern group. The Shan-Ni in Kachin state themselves are familiar with four other 'Tai' groups: Tai Khamti, Tai Nua (Lue), Tai Long (Shan Gyi) and Tai Sa. Of these, they understand most of Tai Khamti, followed by Tai Nua. They consider the Khamti their closest relatives. Depending on the person, Shan-Ni and Khamti might be considered mutually intelligible, since they understand most of each other's words (including tones) but the word order and grammar differs. Some Shan-Ni see the Khamti as a representation of their own past, since the Khamti

live in more isolated areas and have preserved traditions which the Shan-Ni only know about from the stories of their grandparents. People who have had more exposure to Shan Gyi understand that as well, though people experience the language as quite distant. The Shan-Ni do not understand Tai Sa, but that is probably because it is not a Tai language but a variety of the Tibeto-Burman Ngochang. However, the Tai Sa are seen as Tai because they are culturally Tai (Edmondson 2008: 193).

Looking at the different Tai languages in the broader region, Shan-Ni shares a lot more similarities to Tai Phake than to any other language. The Tai Phake migrated from Mong Kaung to Assam around 1775 (Morey 2005a: 19), which means they were at the center of the Shan-Ni court, and their ancestors probably spoke the exact same language as the ancestors of the Shan-Ni 250 years ago. The Khamti on the other hand, have lived separately from the Shan-Ni from at least the Nan-Chao period onwards ( $\pm 1400$  years). They are included in the Nan-Chao map (Figure 5) as “little Brahmins of the north” referring to their affiliation with Tibet at the time (Sai Kam Mong 2004: 15). Throughout history, they have paid tribute to the



**Figure 7** The Tai-Kadai language family (copied from Diller et al. 2008: 7)



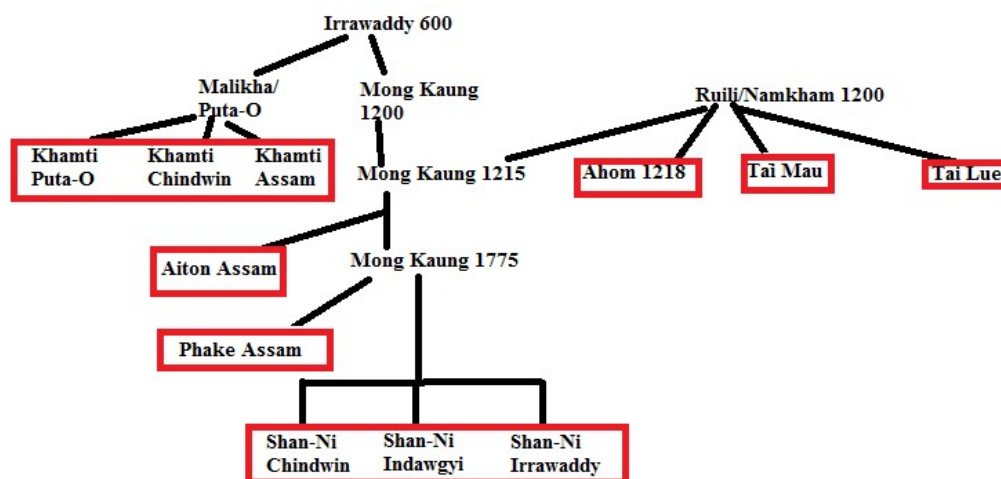
rulers of Mong Kaung, but their territory was too isolated for them to maintain intensive contact with the Shan-Ni.

In the history described above, a large group of other Tai people moved to the Mong Kaung/Myitkyina together with Sao Sam Lung Hpa around 1215 CE. These people most likely came from the Shweli river valley. Around the same time, his brother and a large group of followers started the Ahom Empire in Assam. This area is currently the border of Ruili (China) and Namkham (Myanmar). The languages spoken there are Tai Nua and Tai Mau. Tai Mau is restricted to a small area around Namkham. There is a short description of Tai Mau by Young (1985), whose book also includes various narratives and an extensive Tai Mau wordlists. Tai Lue or Tai Nua is spoken in a large area in China, Lao, Thailand and Myanmar, and has a lot of internal variety.

Chantanaraj (2007) compares the phonology of different dialects of Tai Nua, and includes Tai Mau, Tai Long and Shan-Ni as well. In her study, Shan-Ni is included under the name Tai Lai, and includes data from six different locations. Her study showed that the western dialects of Tai Nua were closer to Shan-Ni than they are to the eastern dialects of Tai Nua, with the data collected in Ruili, Zhefang and Namkham (Tai Mau) in the Shweli river valley showing the most similarity to Shan-Ni (Chantanaraj 2007: 78). This is the area where Sao Sam Lung Hpa came from around 1200, so similarities between Tai Nua spoken in that area and Shan-Ni support the theory that a large group of people migrated with Sao Sam Lung Hpa into the area. Edmondson (2008: 203) who also compared the phonology different varieties of Tai languages in the borderlands, found innovations in the Shweli river valley that he finds more likely to be the result of considerable in-migration from the east rather than innovation within the sedentary population.

Figure 8 shows the probable migration history of the different groups related to the Shan-Ni. I have added geographical references to show which groups are currently living in the same location. Based on this we can expect indeed Shan-Ni shares most features with Tai Phake, followed by Tai Aiton. A large group from Ruili/Namkham joined the pre-existing Tai group in Mong Kaung in around 1215, while at the same time a group moved to Assam (Ahom). The people that stayed behind, nowadays speak Tai Mau and Tai Lue. There may thus be features all these group share with Shan-Ni, having a shared history until 1200. The pre-existing population was related to the Tai Khamti, and maintained contact throughout the centuries, though they lived in different places. Currently, there are Khamti in the Chindwin region living alongside Shan-Ni, and Khamti in Assam alongside the Phake and Aiton. The Shan-Ni in the Indawgyi and Irrawaddy region do not live alongside a large population of another Tai group. All different Tai groups are in contact with different Tibeto-Burman speaking groups in the region, but due to the differences in agricultural and lifestyle practices, this contact is not necessarily very intense.

In terms of descriptive work on languages related to Shan-Ni, the most relevant is the work of Morey (2005a, 2005b, 2008). His description includes the Tai languages spoken in Assam, India (Phake, Aiton, Khamyang and Khamti), focusing mostly on Aiton and Phake. Earlier



**Figure 8** Migration history of Tai groups around northern Myanmar

work on the varieties spoken in India by Diller (1992) is less extensive but provides useful insights as well. Khamti is included in many 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century sources (e.g. Robinson 1849, Needham 1894, Grierson 1904). Descriptive work specifically focusing on Khamti includes a phonology and wordlist by Weidert (1977) and a PhD thesis by Inglis (2014). Rikker Dockum has also been working on Khamti in recent years and has given various conference presentations relevant to Shan-Ni, though, to my knowledge, he has not published on Khamti yet. For Tai Mau I will refer to Young (1985). Lao (Enfield 2007) is less closely related to Shan-Ni, but Enfield's work includes many theoretical considerations that are relevant for Shan-Ni as well. When comparing words from different languages, I have retrieved data from SEALang (a.o. for Lao, Shan Gyi, Ahom and Phake). The SEALang is a database of digitized dictionaries and wordlists of several Southeast Asian languages. For each entry SEALang includes the source, which is often written by the same authors I cite elsewhere (e.g. Enfield for Lao, Morey for Phake and Ahom), controlling the variation between lexical items from the database and from other sources.

## 1.4 Aims of this thesis

The absence of research on Shan-Ni means that there is a large gap in understanding the developments within the Tai language family, as well as the language contact situation in the India-Myanmar-China border region. With at least 100,000 speakers spread over a large area and a history of ruling over an even larger region, it is a missing puzzle piece in many ways. Understanding more about Shan-Ni thus goes beyond Shan-Ni itself. But before any conclusions can be drawn regarding Shan-Ni's place in the language family and contact with

other languages, Shan-Ni needs a solid description first. This thesis aims to lay a foundation for this in two ways. First by describing the main features of the language, and second, by connecting these findings to other Tai and non-Tai languages in region.

Shan-Ni is conservative in the sense that its most words do have a clear Tai origin, but innovative in way these words are used. This makes Shan-Ni unintelligible for most other Tai speakers in northern Myanmar. There are two main ways in which Shan-Ni stands out. (1) the use of disyllabic words where other Tai languages have monosyllabic words (2) the presence of grammatical markers allowing constructions not present or common in other Tai languages. This creates a unique situation in which the innovations that distinguish Shan-Ni from other Tai languages, are very overt and are fundamental in understanding how the language is structured. The presence of an extra syllable that lacks for the same word in all other Tai languages, or tense marking unique to Shan-Ni are strange phenomena that deserve their own chapters.

The structure of this thesis is centred around these innovations. These require more attention than features that are more common in Tai languages. However, having no prior descriptive work on Shan-Ni, it is important to give enough descriptive information to understand the environment in which these innovations operate. The result is that the structure differs from what one might expect from a descriptive thesis.

After the phonology, chapter 3 describes the shape of words, centred around the question of how disyllabic words are structured. While studying these different processes, the structures of nouns, pronouns, demonstratives and interrogatives are described. The structure of sentences in Shan-Ni also differs from other Tai languages, because it is often influenced by the omission of arguments and the presence of grammatical markers. Chapter 4 thus discusses the sentence structure by describing the omission of arguments, and different types of sentences. Chapter 5 describes grammatical markers, which each have their own function in the language as well. Chapter 6 is dedicated to the TAM markers, perhaps the strangest phenomenon for a Tai language. Even in closely related languages in which these markers are present is, the system is less elaborate than in Shan-Ni. Chapter 7 discussed how these innovations are represented in related languages, and what the comparisons might teach us about the position of Shan-Ni within the Tai language family and the history of the language contact.

## **1.5 Methods**

For this research I spent five months in Myanmar from April – August 2018. Most of that time I spent at the Indawgyi lake, and I also interviewed people in Myitkyina, Hopin, Mogaung, Mohnyin, and Mandalay and attended a teacher training in Mingon. I also followed an intensive Burmese course in Yangon for two weeks in the beginning of my fieldwork. The people I worked with were bilingual in Shan-Ni and Burmese, and did not speak English. In the first few weeks before my course an English-Burmese interpreter joined me, who

normally worked for Face of Indawgyi. Stephen and Patrick from Face of Indawgyi also introduced me to several people in the community, which helped me to get started with my research. Other people I met in the train, or cafés, or through other friends. After the Burmese course, I conducted my research independently in Burmese and Shan-Ni. I collected six types of data:

1. word lists (Swadesh)
2. narratives – traditional stories people choose to tell
3. narratives based on stimuli (Frog story, Hunting story, Pear story)
4. elicitation based on questionnaires (lists with sentences in Burmese)
5. elicitation (questions I asked)
6. The Basic Spoken Shan-Ni book (to be discussed)

I asked people to choose whether they would like to tell a traditional story, a personal story or a story based on stimuli. Most people preferred traditional stories, especially the women, who are very skilled and passionate storytellers. I planned to use the stimuli as a back-up, but since most people had (traditional) stories to tell, I ended up using the stimuli only on a few occasions. In the beginning I used the Frog story as a stimulus, because I was less familiar with both Shan-Ni and Burmese, and knowing what kind of words to expect made it easier to start with. Later I asked specifically for narratives based on stimuli, because the usage of certain grammatical features such as TAM markers is different for traditional stories (events in the past, citing conversations, etc.) or more dynamic stimuli (talking about what is going on the present). The Hunting story (created by Marine Vuillermet) is specifically designed to elicit motion events.

Before recording narratives, I always asked for verbal consent. I asked speakers if they agreed to being recorded, and I explained them that if at any point they did not want to continue or start again, or if at a later moment after the recording they would change their minds and preferred not to participate, that this would be no problem. I also asked them whether they would like their names to be mentioned or whether they would prefer to be anonymous, and all wanted their names to be included. I always let them listen to the recording afterwards, and asked them if they were happy with the recording, if they wanted me to send it to their phone (if possible), and if they wanted to continue to write out this version. One person got insecure before the recording and decided not to participate. Another person stopped halfway and wanted to start again. Another person was initially very enthusiastic about the recording, but a family member came in and criticized her language use, after which she did not want to continue. In those cases, I did not use the recordings they did not want me to use.

An issue that I encountered was that for some stories, there was not enough time to write out a full narrative. I tried to prevent this by asking people to tell me a story of around three minutes, which usually would end up to be at least five minutes. But some people would continue speaking for longer anyway, and I did not cut them off. I chose to accept this, because

I wanted people to tell stories they enjoyed telling in the way they themselves preferred. With a story of five minutes, I could start writing out the story directly after the recording, and make one more appointment to continue, and then finish. If it was longer, it could happen that it was either not possible to meet more times, or the person got bored of the old story and suggested to tell a better story. Because my Burmese as meta language was developing over time, writing out stories went slower and it was harder for me to control the situation. As a consequence, I have several stories of which I have only written out the first part.

The Burmese elicitation questionnaires have been designed by André Müller, who uses them to compare several languages in northern Myanmar. They contain sentences aimed to elicit different ways of expressing emphasis, causation, and new situations. The questionnaires allowed me to elicit more complex sentences that I would not have been able to formulate as clearly and accurately myself in Burmese. The disadvantage here is the influence of Burmese, which especially in long sentences may affect the word order and the use of grammatical markers. This made the ‘emphasis’ list most effective, because the sentences were shorter and included more things people say in daily life. I elicited the emphasis list in three villages (Nammilaung, Ywatit and Pan La), all lists in Nammilaung, and parts of the other lists in Ywatit and Pan La. Asking the same sentence in multiple villages helped me to confirm whether variation was local, free or dependent on the context. For example, *ang*<sup>1</sup> ‘for’ and *caa*<sup>4</sup> ‘for’ are always used in the same sentences, but preference differs per village/person. There is no distinction in meaning between the different pronunciations of the linker *si*<sup>3</sup>/*yi*<sup>3</sup>/*i*<sup>3</sup>/*ni*<sup>3</sup>, but the presence of either of them is obligatory. Without having compared these lists, these findings would have been a lot harder to uncover. An overview of all the people I worked with and the meaning of codes that are used with the examples in this thesis can be found in Table 2. In the examples, numbers refer to the sentence in the story, except for the elicitation and fieldnote items (DS\_LT and MK\_LT), where numbers refer to the month it was written down.

The Basic Spoken Shanni book (2017) was a very valuable source I used to fill gaps in my own data when I had already returned to the Netherlands. Especially when I had few instances of a certain phenomenon in my own data of which I did not fully understand what the function was, I could search for it in the Basic Spoken Shan-Ni book. This makes this thesis considerably more substantive than it would otherwise be. The book is written by Naan Nwe Ni Htun and Sai Kyaw Lin. Both write Shan-Ni language content for the newspaper ‘The Voice of Shan-Ni’. I recorded a few stories with Naan Nwe, and I have had many discussions about the language with her as well. She is from Ailithu, a small village north of Indawgyi lake. She grew up speaking Shan-Ni, and learned Burmese later in school. The book contains 130 pages of dialogues, narratives and wordlists from specific domains. It is called ‘Basic Spoken Shan-Ni’ because it contains examples of the spoken language people use in their daily lives. Whenever I use this book as a source, the reference is (BSS\_page number). It is popular among adults and children alike, as it features a Burmese translation and transliteration,

<b>Table 2</b> Speakers and types of contributions			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Village (birth village)</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Ee Phyu	Le Pon Lay (Nyaung Bin)	EP_LPL	Story 'Na Upin'
Ma Khaing	Lonton	MK_IH	Story 'Indawgyi History'
		MK_LT	Elicitation and fieldnotes
Daw Shwe Zin	Lonton (Nyaung Bin)	DS_LT	Elicitation and fieldnotes
Ayee Thida	Lonton (Nyaung Bin)	AT_PS	Pear Story
Daw Nyint Yee	Nammilaung	NY_NSIT	Elicitation questionnaire
Khin Shwe Nge	Nammilaung	KSN_FS	Frog story
		KSN_EMP	Elicitation questionnaire
Naan Nwe Ni Htun	Mandalay (Ailithu)	NN_TH	Story 'Tai history'
		NN_ITL	Story 'I Top La'
U Than Sein	Maing Naung	TS_HS	Hunting story
Sayadaw Pannya Vamsa (+others)	Pan La	PV_CAUS	Elicitation questionnaire
		PV_EMP	Elicitation questionnaire
		PV_NSIT	Elicitation questionnaire
Daw Cho May (+others)	Ywathit	CM_EMP	Elicitation questionnaire
Daw Cho May	Ywathit	CM_ML	Story 'Me Loom Me On'

making it accessible for adults who are fluent but have never learned how to read in Shan-Ni, and for children who are studying the language in school. To avoid misinterpretations because of the Burmese translation, I have cross-checked most Shan-Ni terms I used from the book with speakers in person, and when that was not possible I checked their Phake and Shan Gyi cognates in the online SEAlang database, to come as close to the original meaning as possible.

The examples of other data I collected follow the orthography of the Basic Spoken Shanni book as much as possible. This is possible due to the completeness of the book. I also used it to check the tones. When I could not find a word in the book, I tried to check the spelling and tone with Naan Nwe. The tones were very difficult for me, because I had never worked with tones before, I was not sure how many tones there were, and most people I worked with were not very aware of which tone they used in which word either. Eventually I learned how to use Gedney's box (see section 2.3), figured out which tones there were, and learned to recognize them. Since the writers already had a system and mark tones in the script, I could easily check the book or with writers or teachers which tone was used, not to rely only on my own hearing.

For each section, I tried as much as possible to use a mix of examples from both spoken data and the book. This was not always possible, because even if grammatical particles were used by speakers, I could not verify this with them when I had already returned to the Netherlands.

Due to phonological reduction, grammatical particles may sound similar, it is not always clear which particle was meant by speakers. For example, the TAM markers *kaa*<sup>5</sup> and *kən*<sup>4</sup> and the verbal plural particle *kan*<sup>4</sup> can all be pronounced as /yə(n)/ in fast speech, especially when followed by a word starting with a nasal. Because these are quite complex grammatical functions, when I asked people about it during the interviews, they would often say it was just a sound.

There are no secondary sources in English on Shan-Ni itself, but there are sources on related languages I cite in my work. These include many cognates that have retained a very similar shape to Shan-Ni. Although the comparison is important, I have decided not to adapt the transliterations chosen by the original authors. This is because the Tai languages discussed have a large vowel and tone inventory, making the transliteration very precise work. Tai languages in the region have four, five or six tones, which may partially correspond with each other, but never match exactly. Vowels merge and split; sometimes there might be two different vowels in another language representing one vowel in Shan-Ni or the other way around. Hence, a tone represented in Shan-Ni as < <sup>5</sup> > corresponds with tone < <sup>4</sup> > in Phake (Morey 2002), though Shan-Ni tone < <sup>2</sup> > in Phake can be either < <sup>3</sup> > or < <sup>5</sup> >. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, where in the first part the phonology of the different Tai languages will be compared.

## Chapter 2: Phonology and Orthography

Shan-Ni is written in its own variety of *lik tai* or ‘tai script’. It shares most similarities with the scripts of Tai Khamti and the Tai languages of Assam in northeastern India<sup>9</sup>. The script is syllabic; vowels are attached to consonant graphemes. In the 1990s, the Shan-Ni added tones to their script. Many of the consonants correspond with the Burmese script, and those that do not correspond in form often do not have an exact Burmese equivalent. Some of these differences with Burmese are shared with Tai Yai or Shan Gyi, the main Shan language in Myanmar, though there are more similarities with the script of the Tai languages of Northeastern India. Since the script itself is the best fit for the phonology of Shan-Ni, I will include the script in my discussion of the phonology and throughout my thesis. The phonology and orthography of Shan-Ni are also discussed in a powerpoint by Wyn Owen (2013) based on wordlists from Myitkyina, northeast of where my data was collected. With a few exceptions, there are quite some similarities between his analysis and mine in the vowels and consonants, though it differs with regards to the tones. He also uses slightly different graphemes for the consonants. In some cases that can be attributed to the font used, with some graphemes belonging to Shan Gyi rather than Shan-Ni. The font I am using is the newest available edition of the same font used by the newspaper and the Basic Spoken Shan-Ni book, the 2018 version of the Shan-Ni font developed by the *Mandalay Art House*.

### 2.1 Consonants

The consonant inventory of Shan-Ni exists of 19 consonants. There is no distinction between voiced and voiceless consonants, though there is an alveolar voiced stop /d/ which is an allophone of the nasal /n/ and the lateral approximant /l/. Many words in Shan-Ni which start with the lateral /l/ in the eastern region, are pronounced with the nasal /n/ in the west. In the Indawgyi region where my data was collected, words of both varieties are accepted and used interchangeably, sometimes even within the same sentence. I thus treat these as

**Table 3** Shan-Ni consonant inventory

	Labial	Alveolar	Velar	Palatal	Glottal
<b>Plosive</b>	p    ɸ	t    ʈ	k [ɣ]    ʁ		ʔ    ʕ
<b>Plosive (asp.)</b>	p <sup>h</sup> ɸ <sup>h</sup>	t <sup>h</sup> ʈ <sup>h</sup>	k <sup>h</sup> [x]    ʁ <sup>h</sup>		
<b>Nasal</b>	m    ɱ	n [l,d,r]    ɳ	ŋ    ɳ	ɲ    ɲ	
<b>Tap</b>		r			
<b>Affricate</b>		ts    ʈ			
<b>Fricative</b>	f    ɸ	s    ʂ			h    ɸ
<b>Approximant</b>			w    ɔ	j    ɰ	
<b>Lateral Aprx.</b>		l [n,d,r]    ʎ			

<sup>9</sup> For more on the Tai scripts of Assam, see Morey 2005a (179-205). For the development and history of Shan scripts in general, see Sai Kam Mong (2004)



allophones of each other, though since they are of equal status so they both get a place in the consonant inventory. They both are occasionally pronounced as a voiced alveolar stop /d/ or an alveolar tap /r/. The alveolar tap is marked in cursive, because as a phoneme by itself the /r/ only occurs in Buddhist terminology, borrowed from Pali<sup>10</sup>. The velar stop /k/ is often pronounced a voiced velar fricative /ɣ/ and the aspirated velar stop /k<sup>h</sup>/ is often pronounced as the voiceless velar fricative /x/. The affricate /ts/ is a sharp sound, contrasting with the alveolar fricative /s/ which may sometimes be slightly aspirated. The labial fricative /f/ and the aspirated labial stop /p<sup>h</sup>/ are treated as a single phoneme by some speakers, though there are enough minimal pairs to recognise the distinction, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4** Minimal pairs distinguishing /p<sup>h</sup>/ and /f/

ခဲ	p <sup>h</sup> aa <sup>3</sup>	bamboo wall	နဲ	faa <sup>3</sup>	fragrance
ခဲ	p <sup>h</sup> aa <sup>5</sup>	sky	နဲ	faa <sup>5</sup>	knife
ခဲး	p <sup>h</sup> aj <sup>4</sup>	to braid	နဲး	faj <sup>4</sup>	fire
ခဲး	p <sup>h</sup> aa <sup>4</sup>	monster	နဲး	faaj <sup>4</sup>	to row, to paddle

The transliteration of the consonants in this study is straightforward. Aspirated plosives are represented by the relevant plosive followed by an <h>, the affricate /ts/ is represented by a <c>. The palatal approximant /j/ is represented by a <y>, and the palatal nasal /ɲ/ as <ny>.

**Table 5** Consonant inventory and transliteration for this study

IPA	Orthography	Transliteration	IPA	Orthography	Transliteration
k	က	k	p	ပ	p
k <sup>h</sup>	ခ	kh	p <sup>h</sup>	ဖ	ph
ŋ	င	ng	f	ဖ	f
ts	စ	ts	m	မ	m
s	ဆ	s	j	ယ	y
ɲ	ဗ	ny	r	ရ	r
t	တ	t	l	လ	l
t <sup>h</sup>	ထ	th	w	ဝ	w
n	န	n	h	ဟ	h
			ʔ	ခ	-

<sup>10</sup> See Owen (2013) for a complete overview of Shan-Ni graphemes of Pali consonants. I have included only the /r/, since this consonant is present in commonly used terminology, such as ရာဇဂြဟစတီယံ ra<sup>4</sup>haan<sup>4</sup> ‘monk’.

### 2.1.1 Consonant clusters

The first consonant is followed by either a vowel or an approximant, in that case forming a consonant cluster. The velar approximant /w/ can follow the velar stops /k/ and /k<sup>h</sup>/, and the palatal /j/ can follow the stops /k, k<sup>h</sup>, t, t<sup>h</sup>, p, p<sup>h</sup>/ and the labial nasal /m/. In clusters where the palatal /j/ follows the velar /k/ or /k<sup>h</sup>/, it modifies the sound of the cluster to an alveolar palatal /tɕ/ or /tɕ<sup>h</sup>/. The palatal approximant is represented in the transliteration by a <y>, hence for example /pj/ is represented as <py>. The velar approximant /w/ is represented by a <w>, hence /kw/ is represented as <kw>.

These consonant clusters occur in both native words and Burmese loans. If they are native words, they have been through a sound change unique to Tai varieties of northern Myanmar (see section 7.1). The palatal approximant /j/ in native words occurs between consonants and the vowels /e/, /i/ and /ɛ/. Similarly, the clusters <kw> and <khw> are always followed by an /a/ or /a:/. Since most cognates in Tai languages have retained the same vowels and consonants, the addition of approximants in Shan-Ni stands out. In other Tai languages, these consonant clusters only exist in loan words.

The alveolar tap /r/ is also as second part of the cluster only used for religious terms of Pali origin. As part of the cluster many speakers tend to pronounce as a lateral approximant with an epenthetic vowel preceding it, making the pronunciation of *phraa*<sup>4</sup> more like *phə<sup>1</sup>laa*<sup>4</sup>.

Table 6 Consonant clusters					
Cluster	Orthography	Transliteration	Example		
kw	ကွ	kw	ကျ	kwaa <sup>1</sup>	'go'
k <sup>h</sup> w	ကွ	khw	ကွမ်း	khwam <sup>4</sup>	'language'
tɕ	ကျ	ky	ကျိန်း	kyin <sup>4</sup>	'eat'
tɕ <sup>h</sup>	ကျ	khy	ကျိမ်	khyem <sup>3</sup>	'needle'
pj	ပျ	py	ပျိတ်	pyet <sup>1</sup>	'duck'
p <sup>h</sup> j	ပျ	phy	ပျိတ်	phyit <sup>1</sup>	'to quarrel'
mj	မျ	my	မျိတ်	myit <sup>5</sup>	'to slice'
p <sup>h</sup> r	ဖြ	phr	ဖြး	phraa <sup>4</sup>	'temple'
tr	တြ	tra	တြး	traa <sup>4</sup>	'Buddhist law'

### 2.1.2 Final consonants

Syllables can either be open (ending in a vowel) or closed (ending in a consonant). When syllables are closed, vowels can be followed by any unaspirated plosive, nasal or approximant. Below is an overview of all different possibilities in combination with an initial consonant /k/ [ɔ̃], the unmarked vowel /a/ and unmarked tone /<sup>1</sup>/. In the script they are represented

with their regular grapheme with a little crescent on top, marking the difference between an initial consonant /k/ [က] and a final consonant /k/ [ကံ]. The pronunciation of the final consonant can be more or less explicit, with stops sometimes being quite silent, approaching a glottal. The approximant /j/ is represented in the script in two ways, depending on the vowel preceding it. Following the vowels /a/, /a:/ and /ɔ/ it is represented by a high comma, illustrated the table 7 by *kaj*<sup>1</sup> ‘chicken’ [ကံ]. With the vowels /u/ and /o/ the symbol for <ny> is used, illustrated the table 7 by *koj*<sup>2</sup> banana [ကျာ်]. The final [ာ်] is sometimes aspirated.

IPA	Orthography	Transliteration		IPA	Orthography	Transliteration	
<b>kap</b>	ကံ	kap <sup>1</sup>	‘communicate’	<b>kam</b>	ကမ်	kam <sup>1</sup>	‘brown’
<b>kat</b>	ကတ်	kat <sup>1</sup>	‘cold’	<b>kàn</b>	ကမ်	kan <sup>2</sup>	‘starve’
<b>kak</b>	ကတ်	kak <sup>1</sup>	‘stutter’	<b>kàŋ</b>	ကင်	kang <sup>2</sup>	‘cover’
<b>kaw</b>	ကဝ်	kaw <sup>1</sup>	‘old’	<b>kaj</b>	ကံ	kaj <sup>1</sup>	‘chicken’
				<b>kùj</b>	ကျာ်	koj <sup>2</sup>	‘banana’

## 2.2 Vowels

Shan-Ni has an elaborate vowel system, with an especially large group of back vowels, including diphthongs. An overview is given in Table 8. There is distinction in vowel length between /a/ and /a:/, but this does not apply for other vowels. In speech, vowels are sometimes reduced to an /ɤ/ or /ə/, but while /ɤ/ is also a phoneme by itself, /ə/ is not, although it is common to be used in a non-stressed position instead of /a/, especially in disyllabic words.

	Front unrounded	Central unrounded	Back unrounded	Back Rounded
<b>Close</b>	i		u	u
<b>Close-Mid</b>	e	(ə)	ɤ	o
<b>Open-Mid</b>	ɛ			ɔ
<b>Open</b>		a a:		

Since Shan-Ni has many vowels, I use a few IPA vowel symbols in my transliteration, with the exception of /a:/, which is represented as <aa>. Some vowels are represented differently in the orthography when they are followed by a consonant, so both variants are included in table 8. The independent symbols include the symbol for the “inherent vowel”, the /a/. The

inherent vowel does not have a diacritic in this script, hence any consonant without diacritic or crescent (closing a syllable), is automatically followed by an /a/. Often the /a/ is not stressed and has a level tone. In that case, it is often pronounced as a /ə/. Hence the symbol for /m/ < မ > in the Table below representing *ma*<sup>1</sup> ‘NEG’, and the the symbol for /k/ < က > in *ကတ်* in *kat*<sup>1</sup> ‘cold’ represents the sound *ka*.

vowel	Independent symbol	Diacritics in open syllables			Diacritics in closed syllables		
/a/	က	ma <sup>1</sup>	မ	‘NEG’	kat <sup>1</sup>	ကတ်	‘cold’
/a:/	ကျ	waa <sup>2</sup>	ဂျ	‘speak’	maan <sup>2</sup>	မျာန်	‘village’
/i/	ကီ	si <sup>1</sup>	သီ	‘four’	sip <sup>1</sup>	သိပ်	‘ten’
/e/	ကော	me <sup>4</sup>	မေး	‘wife’	het <sup>1</sup>	ဟဲတ်	‘do’
/ɛ/	ကော်	tɛ <sup>1</sup>	တော်	‘build’	ten <sup>1</sup>	တိန်	‘hit’
/ɔ/	ကျော	mɔ <sup>2</sup>	မ္ဗျော	‘pot’	nɔn <sup>4</sup>	နွန်း	‘sleep’
/u/	ကျူ	ngu <sup>4</sup>	ငူး	‘snake’	put <sup>1</sup>	ပုတ်	‘open’
/o/	ကျွပ်	ngo <sup>4</sup>	ငွမ်း	‘cow’	tok <sup>1</sup>	တုတ်	‘fall’
/ɯ/	ကျိပ်	mu <sup>4</sup>	မိပ်	‘hand’	suut <sup>5</sup>	ကိုတ်	‘push’
/ɤ/	ကျိပ်	mɤ <sup>2</sup>	မိပ်	‘time’	lɤt <sup>5</sup>	လိုတ်	‘blood’

In open syllables the vowels end the syllable, in closed syllables they are followed by a consonant, which can be an approximant /j/ or /w/. When they are followed by an approximant, this modifies the vowel itself. I consider the modified sounds that emerge diphthongs, as they are pronounced as a single phoneme. They cannot be followed by a consonant, which full vowels would. The vowel ကျိ can be pronounced as either /au/ or /ɛu/. Some words can be pronounced in both ways, while others are more likely be pronounced as either /au/ or /ɛu/<sup>11</sup>. The example ကျီး ‘1SG’ can be pronounced as either *kau*<sup>4</sup> or *kɛu*<sup>4</sup>, but the interrogatives are always pronounced with /ɛu/ (လျီး *lɛu*<sup>4</sup> ‘which’) and the word for ‘new’ နို့ as *maw*<sup>1</sup>. In the transliteration I will use the variant that corresponds with the utterance. The /ɔj/ is sometimes pronounced as *ɔaj* making for example ကျွံ *ɔaj*<sup>1</sup> ‘glasspot’ sound like /sɔaj/ and ကျွံး *tɔj*<sup>4</sup> ‘look’ sound like /tɔaj/. This variant also exists in a few other Tai languages (Edmondson 2008: 198).

<b>kaj</b> <sup>1</sup>	ကံ	‘chicken’	<b>kuj</b> <sup>1</sup>	ကျုတ်	‘cotton’
<b>paaj</b> <sup>2</sup>	ပျံ	‘run’	<b>koj</b> <sup>2</sup>	ကျုတ်	‘banana’
<b>saj</b> <sup>1</sup>	ကျွံ	‘glass pot’	<b>kaw</b> <sup>4</sup> / <b>kɛu</b> <sup>4</sup>	ကျီး	‘1SG’

<sup>11</sup> Looking at the languages in the region, this might be an ongoing sound change in Shan-Ni. Cognates in different languages have sounds similar to either /au/ or /ɛu/. However, this variety does not seem to be common within languages (as least this is not described).

## 2.3 Tone

For tone there is a slight distinction between the Myitkyina (eastern) variant of Shan-Ni and the Indawgyi (central) variant of Shan-Ni. The Myitkyina variant is used in literacy books for school children across the region, and was also the variant Wyn Owen (2013) based his phonological overview on. In that variant, there are six tones. My data is from the Indawgyi region, and has five tones. However, sometimes the sixth tone is represented in the written language for words that are written very frequently, for example the word for ‘year’ *pi*<sup>6</sup>, which is included in documents with a date and posters and merchandise for new year celebrations. Therefore, I have included this tone in the overview as a symbol, but not as a phoneme. An overview of the tones is given in Table (11). The tones differ in pitch and contour, and can have additional features such as creakiness or a ‘longer’ tone. The order of the numbers corresponds with the order they are presented in in Shan-Ni literature and teacher trainings. Tone 1 is the unmarked level tone, Tone 2 the low dash representing the low falling creaky tone, Tone 3 the high dash representing the high level tone, Tone 4 the colon representing the midfalling ‘long tone’ and Tone 5 the low dot the high falling creaky tone. Words that have the the sixth tone in Myitkyina, at Indawgyi either have the second (low falling) or fourth (mid slightly falling) tone. This development will be discussion further in Chapter 3.

Pitch	Description	Additional features	Orthography	Example		
ka <sup>33</sup>	midlevel	-	<i>(unmarked)</i>	ho <sup>3</sup> ma <sup>1</sup>	တိုဝ်းမ	‘shoulder’
ka <sup>217</sup>	low falling	glottalized/creaky	-	maa <sup>2</sup>	မ	‘mad’
ka <sup>35</sup>	high rising	-	-	maa <sup>3</sup>	မဲ	‘dog’
ka <sup>442</sup>	mid falling	‘long’ tone	⋮	maa <sup>4</sup>	မး	‘come’
ka <sup>417</sup>	high falling	glottalized/creaky	.	maa <sup>5</sup>	မ့	‘horse’
<i>Same as tone 2 or tone 4</i>			-	pi <sup>6</sup>	ပိ-	‘year’

The development of tones in Tai languages is very systematic, and can be studied through ‘Gedney’s box’ (Gedney 1989). Depending on the original phonology of the words, they can be categorized in a “boxes” (Table 12). The vertical axis categorizes words based on the original consonant in Proto-Tai, and the horizontal axis categorizes words based on whether they ended in a certain tone or a long or short dead syllable. Hence, all words that in Proto-Tai would have a voiced consonant and “Tone A” are together in one box (A4). Though currently tones differ among the Tai languages, all words that belong to a certain box (for example A4) are likely to have the same tone. Based on this, Gedney compiled a word list, connecting sets of words to each box. When studying a Tai language, this can be used to check

**Table 12** Gedney’s box (adapted from Gedney (1989: 2002))

	Tone A	Tone B	Tone C	D-long	D-short
Voiceless friction sounds *s, hm, ph, etc.	A1	B1	C1	DL1	DS1
Voiceless unaspirated stops *p, t, k etc.	A2	B2	C2	DL2	DS2
Glottal *ʔ, ʔb etc.	A3	B3	C3	DL3	DS3
Voiced *b, m, l, z, etc.	A4	B4	C4	DL4	DS4

the tonal categories. Usually words belonging to the same box will have the same tone, and based on that different boxes with the same tones can be grouped together. For Shan-Ni this works very well, most words belonging to the same box indeed share the same tone. When grouping boxes with the same tones together, this results in the overview shown in Table 10. I have given one example in each box, and gave them a colour to illustrate which boxes share the same tone. In this overview, the mid- level tone 1=B123-DS123-DL123, low falling (creaky) tone 2 = B4-C123, high rising tone 3=A1, mid falling (long) tone 4=A234 and high falling (creaky) tone 5=C4-DS4-DL4. This system is designed for monosyllabic Tai languages, but in Shan-Ni disyllabic words are common. As this method is based on of proto-Tai, it thus applies to the syllables which are cognates to the old proto-Tai lexemes targeted. In box B3, *ma*<sup>1</sup> derives from proto-Tai, while the modern Shan-Ni word for ‘shoulder’ is *ho*<sup>3</sup>*ma*<sup>1</sup>. In box DL3, *mək*<sup>1</sup> derives from proto-Tai while *mək*<sup>1</sup>*ya*<sup>2</sup> is the Shan-Ni word for ‘flower’. The syllables of disyllabic words in the table that correspond with the targeted Proto-Tai cognates are therefore underlined.

**Table 13** Gedney’s box with Shan-Ni tonal categories and samples in each box

	A	B	C	DS	DL
1	<b>3 high rising</b> <i>hu</i> <sup>3</sup> ငှူ ‘ear’	<b>1 mid level</b> <i>khaj</i> <sup>1</sup> ခံ ‘egg’	<b>2 low falling (creaky)</b> <i>mə</i> <sup>2</sup> မျေ ‘pot’	<b>1 mid level</b> <i>phak</i> <sup>1</sup> နက် ‘vegetable’	<b>1 mid level</b> <i>khat</i> <sup>1</sup> နတ် ‘broken’
2	<b>4 mid falling (long)</b> <i>kyin</i> <sup>4</sup> ကျိန်း ‘eat’	<i>kaj</i> <sup>1</sup> ကံ ‘chicken’	<i>kaw</i> <sup>2</sup> ကဝံ ‘nine’	<i>khyet</i> <sup>1</sup> ကျိတ် ‘frog’	<i>pət</i> <sup>1</sup> ပတ် ‘lungs’
3	<i>lin</i> <sup>4</sup> လိန်း ‘earth’	<i>ho</i> <sup>3</sup> <u><i>ma</i></u> <sup>1</sup> ငှူဝံမု ‘shoulder’	<i>maan</i> <sup>2</sup> မာန် ‘village’	<i>naa</i> <sup>2</sup> <u><i>ək</i></u> <sup>1</sup> ဗျာလွက် ‘chest’	<u><i>mək</i></u> <sup>1</sup> <i>ya</i> <sup>2</sup> မွက်ယု ‘flower’
4	<i>mu</i> <sup>4</sup> မိုင်း ‘hand’	<b>2 low falling (creaky)</b> <i>pə</i> <sup>2</sup> ပေ ‘father’	<i>nam</i> <sup>5</sup> နမ် ‘water’	<b>5 high falling (creaky)</b> <i>nok</i> <sup>5</sup> နုတ် ‘bird’	
					<i>lɪt</i> <sup>5</sup> လိုတ် ‘blood’

The word *pi* <sup>၆</sup> - ‘year’ belongs to box A2, hence at Indawgyi is pronounced as *pi* <sup>၄</sup>. Table 14 shows the tone box for Myitkyina Shan-Ni (adapted from Wyn Owen 2013). The sixth tone in Myitkyina is used in words that fall under the boxes A2, A3 and B4. In Indawgyi Shan-Ni A2 and A3 are categorized as Tone 4 (mid falling long), while B4 is categorized as Tone 2 (low falling creaky). In Myitkyina Shan-Ni both Tone 4 (mid long) and Tone six (mid falling) are similar to Tone 4 (mid long falling) at Indawgyi, but the distinction is significant in that variety, and Tone 6 is also used for box B4 which in Shan-Ni is Tone 2 (low falling creaky), which is quite distant.

**Table 14** Tones in Myitkyina Shan-Ni (adapted from Wyn Owen 2013)

	A	B	C	DS	DL
1	3 high rising	1 mid level	2 low creaky		1 mid level
2	6 mid falling				
3					
4	4 mid long	6 mid falling	5 high falling creaky		

## 2.4 Syllables

A Shan-Ni syllable exists of at least a consonant, a vowel, and a tone. If the initial consonant is a plosive, it can form a cluster with an approximant. The syllable can be open or closed in by a consonant. If the syllable is closed, the vowel can be followed by a nasal or a stop. These can be alveolar, velar or palatal. In summary, the structure can thus be displayed as C(A)V(C)T, hence allowing the following variations;

Table 15 Syllable structures						
CVT	si <sup>1</sup>	လီ	‘four’	mu <sup>2</sup>	မူ	‘pig’
CAVT	kwaa <sup>1</sup>	ကျ	‘go’	pyaa <sup>4</sup>	ပျး	‘show’
CVCT	nam <sup>5</sup>	နံ	‘water’	phak <sup>1</sup>	ဖက်	‘vegetable’
CAVCT	myit <sup>4</sup>	မျိတ်	‘knife’	kyin <sup>4</sup>	ကျိန်း	‘eat’

The majority of Shan-Ni words are monosyllabic, although in comparison with other Tai languages it has a relatively large disyllabic group in its lexicon. Some of these are compounds of two monosyllabic words, which both exist in their separate forms in Shan-Ni as well. I have not found any phonological differences between the same word in isolation and as part of a

compound yet<sup>12</sup>.

A full syllable cannot have a <Cə<sup>1</sup>> structure with an /ə/ and a level tone /<sup>1</sup>/. There are two types of syllables that can have a <Cə<sup>1</sup>> structure: prefixes and initial syllables of disyllabic words. In both cases, this is probably the result of these syllables being unstressed, and have gradually developed a reduced phonology. The prefixes are listed in Table 16, with *ma*<sup>1</sup> being the negator, *te*<sup>1</sup> the future marker, and *kha*<sup>1</sup> the desiderative. Though *te*<sup>1</sup> is not represented by a lone consonant like the others, the pronunciation is the same.

<b>ma</b> <sup>1</sup>	မ	NEG
<b>te</b> <sup>1</sup>	တေ	FUT
<b>kha</b> <sup>1</sup>	ခ	DES, full form <i>khai</i> <sup>2</sup> နှိ

Within disyllabic words the <Cə<sup>1</sup>> only occurs in initial syllables (Table 17). These are reduced forms of previously meaningful initial syllables of compounds, which can be shown by a number of words in transition that accept two forms, one that is phonologically reduced and one that is not. In their reduced forms they are not transparent. Because full syllables cannot have the syllable structures these reduced variants have, they are referred to as minor syllables, and words that start with a minor syllable as *sesquisyllables* or ‘one-and-half syllables’. This is described in more detail in Chapter 3. For the phonology, it matters that a <Cə<sup>1</sup>> is never independent, but dependent on the the word following it.

ma <sup>1</sup> su <sup>3</sup>	မဟ်သူ	‘they’
a <sup>1</sup> sang <sup>4</sup>	ကလောင်း	‘now’ / HESIT
a <sup>1</sup> saak <sup>5</sup>	ကလေးကံ	‘age’
na <sup>1</sup> hu <sup>4</sup>	ကလေး	‘how’
pha <sup>1</sup> lo <sup>3</sup>	ဖလေ	‘onion’
kha <sup>1</sup> ləu <sup>4</sup>	ခလွဲ	‘how much’

## 2.5 Allophones and phonological variation

A few sounds discussed in the sections above are allophones and allow variation. These are listed in Table 18. Sometimes this depends on the position of the phoneme within the word, sometimes this differs per word, sometimes on the function of the lexeme. The phonemes /k/, /k<sup>h</sup>/, /a/, /a:/ are often pronounced in their alternative pronunciation, though this might be considered less polite. The /a/ is usually pronounced as /ə/ when it is unstressed and/or not followed by a coda. The /a:/ is usually pronounced as /ə/ when it is a grammaticalized

<sup>12</sup> This might be something to look into for future research, especially since the reduction to a sesquisyllable does change both the vowel and the tone, one may expect to find this as at a less advanced stage in compounds as well.



TAM marker. For example *maa*<sup>4</sup> ‘come’ is pronounced as /ma:/ when it is the regular verb ‘come’, but is often reduced to /mə/ when it is used as TAM marker. The /l/ and /n/ are equal in status, and usually allow variation between each other and sometimes to /d/ and /r/, though this is less common. There are some words that are usually pronounced with either /l/ or /n/, but in most words both varieties are acceptable. The only clear exception is the word for ‘sister’ *naang*<sup>4</sup>, which people agree should not be pronounced as \**laang*<sup>4</sup>. This is the same for /aʷ/ and /ɛʷ/, which usually can be used in both ways. They are represented by the same symbol < ၵ >. The linker *si*<sup>3</sup> allows variation to *yi*<sup>3</sup> and *i*<sup>3</sup>. I think this is free variation, but because I am not sure yet, I always include the original pronunciation in the transliteration.

<b>Table 18</b> Overview of allophones and phonological variation				
Phoneme	Alternative pronunciation	Symbol	Transliteration	Variation
/k/	/x/		k	word initial often /x/
/k <sup>h</sup> /	/ɣ/		kh	word initial often /ɣ/
/l/	/n/, /d/, /r/		l, n, d, r	usually both /l/ and /n/ accepted, /d/and/r/ rare
/n/	/l/, /d/, /r/		n, l, d, r	usually both /n/ and /l/ accepted, /d/and/r/ rare
/s/	/j/, /ø/		s, y, ø	free variation in linker <i>si</i> <sup>3</sup>
/a/	/ə/		a	Unstressed or without coda often ə
/a:/	/ə/		aa	unstressed ə in TAM markers
/aʷ/, /ɛʷ/	/ɛʷ/, /aʷ/		aʷ, ɛʷ	Word specific, either both or one of them accepted

## Chapter 3: The shape of words

With the exception of a few Burmese and perhaps Pali loans, the large majority of words in Shan-Ni have a clear Tai origin. Yet, the shape of Shan-Ni words distinguishes Shan-Ni from other Tai languages. Nouns are often disyllabic, words have shifted to another word class and gained grammatical functions, and otherwise independent words have contracted into new lexemes. These processes are often connected; a lexeme may become part of new disyllabic noun, while its old shape becomes a grammatical marker. While specific grammatical functions will mostly be discussed in other chapters (4, 5 and 6), this chapter is concerned with the development of the shape of words, and the different processes involved in shaping particular domains in the Shan-Ni lexicon.

A recurrent theme in this respect are the “layered” innovations. Certain innovations in Tai Mau described by Young (1985), appear to be the foundation on which Shan-Ni has built further. This concerns, for example, the determiners and interrogatives, which in Tai Mau have been ‘contracted’. Shan-Ni integrates these same contracted forms in its own innovations. The same goes for reduplication. Young (1985) describes a productive process for reduplication, and Shan-Ni is using fossilized elements of the same system, complemented by words from other word classes. Through these innovations, the shape of words in Shan-Ni in comparison to other Tai languages can reveal details about historical developments in the language and the broader language family.

This chapter will start by discussing the dynamics of compounding processes, followed by an analysis of the transition from compounds to *sesquisyllables* (1,5 syllables), disyllabic words of which the the first syllable is reduced and non-transparent. This is followed by an illustration of the same process in pronouns, demonstratives and interrogatives. Demonstratives and interrogatives include the same contractions described by Young (1985) for Tai Mau, but have expanded beyond these forms. The final section (3.3) shows how parts of an old system of reduplication are still present in Shan-Ni, though no longer productive. All these different developments together show layers of innovations, developments that have been interrupted at some point in history, and continued in another direction.

### 3.1 Compounding

Most words in Shan-Ni are monosyllabic; among nouns, however, the share of disyllabic words is a lot larger. Some of these disyllabic words are transparent compounds, with two items that can both be traced back to two separate lexemes. Other disyllabic words are not transparent; when the two syllables are split, the meaning of at least one of them cannot be traced back to an earlier monosyllabic form. The presence of non-reduced compounds allows us to understand the way compounds are put together, the presence of words in transition allows us to study the process of how words lose their transparency.

Compound nouns in Shan-Ni are formed through a regular process, in which the first word refers to a ‘type’ of concept. In Lao there is a similar process, which Enfield refers to as *class*

terms, following the typology of Grinevald (2000). This is a specific group of words, which can form the initial part of a compound with a more general meaning, while also occurring as independent words. These initial parts categorize the whole compound (not only the element they are attached to) and are phonologically dependent and lexically specified. For Lao, Enfield (2007:147) describes a partial overlap with numeral classifiers, with class terms having a broader lexicon. In Shan-Ni there are class terms that also exist as classifiers, though I cannot say whether all classifiers can be used as class terms. In Shan-Ni class terms are lexically specific and obligatory elements which become part of a word, so they cannot be freely attached to words. While classifiers are used to count objects, class terms become part of the compound itself. I think it is likely that transparent classifiers qualify as a possible source for class terms, and that these can become obligatory class terms when used frequently by speakers. Morey (2005a: 229) refers to the equivalent of class terms in Phake and Aiton as *noun class markers*, but he does not enter too much in detail and it does not seem to be as common as in Shan-Ni.

What Enfield describes for class terms in Lao also applies to Shan-Ni, though the usage in Shan-Ni is more extensive, and, as will be shown, has advanced to the stage of phonological reduction and loosing transparency. A major difference is that while in Lao this only applies to objects and people (Enfield 2007:147), in Shan-Ni it is also applied for ‘intangible’ nouns referring to e.g. time, feelings and colours (see Table 19).

In both Lao and Shan-Ni, the same class term could be followed by a subcategory of the object the class term refers to, or it could be followed by a description of the object. For Lao, Enfield (2007: 146) gives the example of *paa*<sup>3</sup> ‘fish’. The usage of *paa*<sup>3</sup> is regardless of whether the class term *paa*<sup>3</sup> ‘fish’ is followed by the name of a species (e.g. mackerel) or a description which needs *paa*<sup>3</sup> ‘fish’ to form this particular meaning (e.g. ‘ink’ to form ‘inkfish’ or ‘gold’ to form ‘goldfish’).

While a compound with the name of a species (e.g. mackerel) might be classified as *exocentric*, and a compound with a descriptive feature (e.g. goldfish) as *endocentric*, what

<b>Table 19</b> Examples of compounds		
Class term	Second syllable	Compound
<i>mɔ̃</i> <sup>2</sup> ‘time’	<i>maj</i> <sup>2</sup> ‘hot’ <i>phok</i> <sup>5</sup> ‘tomorrow’ <i>naj</i> <sup>5</sup> ‘this’	<i>mɔ̃</i> <sup>2</sup> <i>maj</i> <sup>2</sup> ‘hot season’ <i>mɔ̃</i> <sup>2</sup> <i>phok</i> <sup>5</sup> ‘tomorrow’ <i>mɔ̃</i> <sup>2</sup> <i>naj</i> <sup>5</sup> ‘now’
<i>phaa</i> <sup>2</sup> ‘cloth’	<i>sɔ̃</i> <sup>1</sup> ‘spread’ <i>ho</i> <sup>3</sup> ‘head’ <i>taj</i> <sup>4</sup> ‘tai/shan’	<i>phaa</i> <sup>2</sup> <i>sɔ̃</i> <sup>1</sup> ‘bedsheet’ <i>phaa</i> <sup>2</sup> <i>ho</i> <sup>3</sup> ‘turban’ <i>phaa</i> <sup>2</sup> <i>taj</i> <sup>4</sup> ‘traditional clothes’
<i>si</i> <sup>1</sup> ‘colour’	<i>khew</i> <sup>3</sup> ‘green’ <i>lɔ̃ng</i> <sup>3</sup> ‘yellow’ <i>neng</i> <sup>4</sup> ‘red’	<i>si</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>khew</i> <sup>3</sup> ‘green’ <i>si</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>lɔ̃ng</i> <sup>3</sup> ‘yellow’ <i>si</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>neng</i> <sup>4</sup> ‘red’
<i>cau</i> <sup>4</sup> ‘heart’	<i>maj</i> <sup>2</sup> ‘hot’ <i>yau</i> <sup>1</sup> ‘big’ <i>un</i> <sup>2</sup> ‘happy’	<i>cau</i> <sup>4</sup> <i>maj</i> <sup>2</sup> ‘worried’ <i>cau</i> <sup>4</sup> <i>yau</i> <sup>1</sup> ‘angry’ <i>cau</i> <sup>4</sup> <i>on</i> <sup>2</sup> ‘happy’

matters in Lao (and Shan-Ni) is that all fall within the category fish, and therefore start with *paa*<sup>3</sup>. The same process applies to the formation of compounds in Shan-Ni. The first word is a more categorical term, which could be considered a class term. Table 19 illustrates how these class terms work in Shan-Ni, by showing different class terms as part of different compounds. For example, the class term *phaa*<sup>2</sup> ‘cloth’, can refer to all kinds of cloths, and can take different kinds of word (classes) to form new words. In combination with the verb *sɔ*<sup>1</sup> ‘spread’, it creates the concept ‘bedsheet’. With the word *ho*<sup>3</sup> ‘head’, *phaa*<sup>2</sup> *ho*<sup>3</sup> ‘turban’ is formed. With *taj*<sup>4</sup>, the Tai/Shan autonym, the new meaning *phaa*<sup>2</sup> *taj*<sup>4</sup> ‘traditional clothes’ is created.

Adding *mɔ*<sup>2</sup> ‘time’ to *phok*<sup>5</sup> ‘tomorrow’ or *caw*<sup>4</sup> ‘heart’ to *on*<sup>2</sup> ‘happy’ merely categorizes them as types of periods and feelings. However, adding *mɔ*<sup>2</sup> ‘time’ or *caw*<sup>4</sup> ‘heart’ to *maj*<sup>2</sup> ‘hot’, both create new meanings; *mɔ*<sup>2</sup> *maj*<sup>2</sup> becomes ‘hot season’ and *caw*<sup>4</sup> *maj*<sup>2</sup> becomes ‘worried’. The result is that regardless of whether the second syllable has a different meaning on its own, all types of feelings start with *caw*<sup>4</sup>, and all types of temporal references start with *mɔ*<sup>2</sup>. In Shan-Ni the first component is not necessarily phonologically reduced, and hence can be seen as a type of compound.

For colour terms, the class term *si*<sup>1</sup> ‘colour’ marks a difference in word class. As a noun, *si*<sup>1</sup> is an obligatory element of the colour terms. When the colour term functions as an adjective, it comes behind the noun, without *si*<sup>1</sup>. For example, in (1), a ‘red turban’ is *phaa*<sup>2</sup> *ho*<sup>3</sup> *nɛng*<sup>4</sup>, without *si*<sup>1</sup>. This reflects the Burmese usage of colour terms, which as adjectives are also ‘bare’ colour terms, but as nouns are placed between the nominalizer *ə-* and *-jaun* ‘colour’.

- (1) a. **သီ**      **နီင်း**                      b. **ဖျါ**    **ဟုံဝ်**    **နီင်း**  
       *si*<sup>1</sup>      *nɛng*<sup>4</sup>                              *phaa*<sup>2</sup> *ho*<sup>3</sup>    *nɛng*<sup>4</sup>  
       colour red                              cloth head red  
       ‘red’                                      ‘red turban’

[Burmese]

- a. **အနီရောင်**                      b. **ခေါင်းပေါင်းနီ**  
       *ə-ni-jaun*                              *khaung-paung-ni*  
       NMLZ-red-colour                      head-wrap-red  
       ‘red’                                      ‘red turban’

(BSS\_47,55)

In Lao, there is a distinction between ‘basic’ colour terms and derived colour terms (e.g. sky for blue, lotus for purple), with the second category sometimes being obligatory marked with *sii3*, while this is not obligatory for the category of basic colour terms (Enfield 2007: 148). In Shan-Ni there is no distinction between types of colours, only between colours in different word classes.

### 3.1.1 The formation of class terms

The formation or addition of class terms and hence the transition from monosyllabic words to disyllabic compounds, can be studied by looking at body parts. A number of body parts are listed in Table 20. Most body parts in Shan-Ni are disyllabic, and contain one syllable that corresponds with other Tai languages. Usually this is the second syllable (not the class term), though this is not always the case. To illustrate this, I compare Shan-Ni body parts with their Shan Gyi counterparts<sup>13</sup>. Shan Gyi has a few compounds in body parts, but is predominantly monosyllabic. For example, the word ‘eye’ in Shan Gyi is *taa*<sup>4</sup>, which in Shan-Ni is the second part of word for *hoj*<sup>1</sup>*taa*<sup>4</sup> ‘eye’. The class term *hoj*<sup>1</sup> is also a classifier for round objects, referring here to the shape of the eye.

Class terms being more general, means that they are often used to refer to the shape or

Body part	Compound	Etmology	Shan Gyi (SEALang)
knee	ဟိုဝ်ခါင်	ho <sup>3</sup> khaw <sup>2</sup>	head + knee /k <sup>h</sup> aw <sup>2</sup> /
shoulder	ဟိုဝ်မါ	ho <sup>3</sup> maa <sup>1</sup>	head + shoulder /maa <sup>2</sup> /
hair	ဟိုဝ်ဟိုဝ်	khun <sup>3</sup> ho <sup>3</sup>	hair + head /k <sup>h</sup> on <sup>1</sup> /
eyebrows	ဟိုဝ်တူး	khun <sup>3</sup> taa <sup>4</sup>	hair + eye /k <sup>h</sup> on <sup>1</sup> taa <sup>1</sup> /
heart	မာတ်ဟိုဝ်လိး	maak <sup>1</sup> ho <sup>3</sup> cεu <sup>4</sup>	fruit + head + feeling /ho <sup>1</sup> tsaw <sup>1</sup> /
shin	ဟူအိုင်	naa <sup>2</sup> khyeng <sup>2</sup>	shin (including face) /naa <sup>3</sup> k <sup>h</sup> εŋ <sup>3</sup> /
chest (m)	ဟူဟူတ်	naa <sup>2</sup> ok <sup>1</sup>	face + chest /ʔuk <sup>4</sup> /
chest (f)	ဟူလိး	naa <sup>2</sup> cεu <sup>4</sup>	face + feeling /ʔok <sup>4</sup> /
eye	ဟိုဟိုတ်တူး	hoj <sup>1</sup> taa <sup>4</sup>	round + eye /taa <sup>1</sup> /
hand palm	ဖျေဝ်း	phaa <sup>1</sup> mu <sup>4</sup>	palm/sole + hand /p <sup>h</sup> aa <sup>2</sup> mu <sup>4</sup> /
cheek	ဖျေဝ်းခါင်	phaa <sup>1</sup> kyem <sup>2</sup>	palm/sole + cheek /kεm <sup>3</sup> /
neck	ခါင်	khɔ <sup>4</sup>	neck/throat /k <sup>h</sup> ɔ <sup>4</sup> /
throat	ခါင်ခါင်	kɔng <sup>2</sup> khɔ <sup>4</sup>	hole + neck/throat /k <sup>h</sup> ɔ <sup>4</sup> /
mouth	ဟိုဝ်	sop <sup>1</sup>	mouth/lips /s <sup>h</sup> op <sup>4</sup> /
lips	ပိင်ဟိုဝ်	ping <sup>1</sup> sop <sup>1</sup>	edge + lips /s <sup>h</sup> op <sup>4</sup> /
moustache	ဟိုဝ်ဟိုဝ်	mɔj <sup>3</sup> sop <sup>1</sup>	short body hair + mouth /not <sup>2</sup> /
waist	ဟိုဝ်ဟိုဝ်	hεng <sup>5</sup> εng <sup>2</sup>	shape + waist /ʔεŋ <sup>3</sup> /
brain	ဟိုဝ်ဟိုဝ်	ɔk <sup>1</sup> εk <sup>1</sup>	brain/marrow + yoke /ʔɔk/

<sup>13</sup> I have chosen Shan Gyi (or Tai Long) because it is the most spoken Shan language of Myanmar, and therefore has a useful and extensive database on the SEALang website allowing me to find cognates. It also has not gone through any of the processes described in this chapter, unlike some other Tai languages (to be discussed in Chapter 4).

structure of the object, while the second part of the compound is more specific. Hence depending on the position within the compound, the same lexeme can have a different function. The word *ho*<sup>3</sup> ‘head’, for instance, can be added both as class term (first syllable) and as a second syllable, but the function is not the same. The class term *ho*<sup>3</sup> ‘head’ is used for body parts that are ‘on top’ or ‘point to the outside’, like *ho*<sup>3</sup>*khaw*<sup>2</sup> ‘knee’ and *ho*<sup>3</sup>*maa*<sup>1</sup> ‘shoulder’. When *ho*<sup>3</sup> is added as a second syllable, it refers to something literally located on the head, for example *khon*<sup>3</sup>*ho*<sup>3</sup> ‘hair’. In *khon*<sup>3</sup>*ho*<sup>3</sup> ‘hair (on the head)’ *khon*<sup>3</sup> ‘hair’ is the class term, which is used in Shan-Ni for other types of hair as well, such as *khon*<sup>3</sup>*taa*<sup>4</sup> ‘eyebrows’ which is also a compound in Shan Gyi. Shan-Ni also uses *ho*<sup>3</sup> in *maak*<sup>1</sup>*ho*<sup>3</sup>*cew*<sup>4</sup> ‘heart’. The word Shan Gyi uses for heart, *ho*<sup>1</sup>*tsau*<sup>1</sup>, also exists in Shan-Ni, but refers exclusively to the heart in the emotional sense. To refer to the physical heart, it needs to add *maak*<sup>1</sup> ‘fruit’, a distinction Shan Gyi does not make.

Shan-Ni also has a tendency to eliminate ambiguities. The word *khɔ*<sup>4</sup> in Shan-Ni exclusively refers to ‘neck’, whereas the Shan Gyi cognates refers to both ‘neck’ and ‘throat’. To distinguish between ‘neck’ and ‘throat’, Shan-Ni includes *kɔŋ*<sup>4</sup> ‘hole’ in the compound *kɔŋ*<sup>4</sup>*khɔ*<sup>4</sup> ‘throat’. The same goes for *s<sup>h</sup>op*<sup>4</sup> which can mean both ‘mouth’ and ‘lips’ in Shan Gyi. In Shan-Ni, *sop*<sup>4</sup> is only ‘mouth’, whereas *ping*<sup>1</sup>*sop*<sup>1</sup>, literally ‘the edge of the mouth’, refers to lips. In that same way, *sop*<sup>4</sup> is used in *mɔj*<sup>3</sup>*sop*<sup>1</sup> ‘moustache’, with *mɔj*<sup>3</sup> referring to ‘short body hair’. In these compounds, Shan Gyi uses a different monosyllabic word.

Another process is the grammaticalization of parts of compounds into class terms. For example, *phaa*<sup>1</sup> ‘sole/palm’ is used in other Tai languages in combination with ‘hand’ for ‘palm’ *phaa*<sup>1</sup>*mu*<sup>4</sup> and with ‘foot’ *phaa*<sup>1</sup>*tin*<sup>4</sup>. Shan-Ni extends the usage to ‘cheek’, adding it to the Shan Gyi cognate *kyem*<sup>2</sup>, forming disyllabic *phaa*<sup>1</sup>*kyem*<sup>2</sup>. The same goes for *naa*<sup>2</sup> ‘face/front’ which is part of the word for ‘shin’ *naa*<sup>2</sup>*khyeng*<sup>2</sup>, which is the front part of the leg. Shan-Ni goes beyond this and adds *naa*<sup>2</sup> also to other words, such as the male and female varieties of ‘chest’. But while the other part of the compound for ‘male chest’ is the same in Shan Gyi, for ‘female chest’ Shan-Ni uses *naa*<sup>2</sup>*cew*<sup>4</sup> literally ‘the face of feeling’. This probably refers to the chest being in front of the heart, connecting it to (*maak*<sup>1</sup>)*ho*<sup>3</sup>*cew*<sup>4</sup> ‘heart’ described above.

Through different processes, Shan-Ni is moving towards more disyllabic nouns. This allows the language to be more specific with concepts, eliminating ambiguities and describing features of the object referred to. For some words, this looks like a classifier function. However, the typical features marked by the initial syllable do affect the meaning, determining information about the concept as a whole, not just providing a category like classifiers do. They are not used for counting, like classifiers are. They become part of a new word, which sometimes in meaning may be similar to the older, monosyllabic variant, although there is often a slight semantic change, or a more specific distinction (e.g. *kɔŋ*<sup>4</sup>*khɔ*<sup>4</sup> ‘throat’ rather than only *khɔ*<sup>4</sup> ‘neck/throat’). At the stage discussed above, both parts of the compound are still transparent and can be traced back to two meaningful lexical items. The

next section will specify how they merge towards disyllabic words with less transparent initial syllables.

### 3.1.2 Two words becoming one

The addition of class terms to form compounds is a first step in a process that for some words is already at a more advanced stage. At this more advanced stage, the class terms have reduced their shape to the initial consonant +/ə/ and a level tone, represented as <a<sup>1</sup>>. This type of unstressed vowel <a<sup>1</sup>> exclusively occurs in prefixes and the first syllable of disyllabic words. In both cases, they are unstressed and followed by a full, stressed syllable. This is an areal feature, present in many Austroasiatic and Tibeto-Burman languages in the region, including Burmese, Jinghpaw and Palaung. Because these syllables are reduced to a shape that regular, full syllables never have, they are referred to as *minor syllables* or parts of *sesquisyllables* ‘one and a half syllables’ (Butler 2014: 11). The term *sesquisyllables* was first proposed by Matisoff (1973) for Austroasiatic. Butler (2014) dedicated her thesis to deconstructing the Southeast Asian sesquisyllable by studying it in Burmese, Khmer and Bunong<sup>14</sup>. She lists the following properties for sesquisyllables (Butler 2014: 11):

- a. Prosodic prominence is word-final
- b. Non-final syllables are phonologically reduced
  - Non-final syllables have a reduced segmental inventory
  - Non-final syllables have a reduced syllable shape
  - Non-final syllables are light
    - o Non-final syllables do not constitute well-formed prosodic words on their own.

These properties are also part of the sesquisyllables in Shan-Ni. The prosodic prominence is word-final, and the non-final syllables are phonologically reduced, limited to a /ə/ or /ʌ/. Their shape is reduced to a form which full words never have, and the non-final syllables are never well-formed prosodic words on their own. In Shan-Ni this phonological reduction is an active process. Several words are still in transition, and thus have two acceptable forms. A few of them are listed in Table 21.

<b>Table 21</b> Words in transition from a disyllabic to a sesquisyllabic shape			
concept	Disyllabic shape	Sesquisyllabic shape	Phonological reduction
lips	<i>luk<sup>5</sup>ɔn<sup>1</sup></i> (lit: offspring small)	<i>la<sup>1</sup>ɔn<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>luk<sup>5</sup> → la<sup>1</sup></i>
mango	<i>ping<sup>1</sup>sop<sup>1</sup></i> (lit: edge mouth)	<i>pa<sup>1</sup>sop<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>ping<sup>1</sup> → pa<sup>1</sup></i>
child	<i>maak<sup>1</sup>mong<sup>2</sup></i> (lit: fruit mango)	<i>ma<sup>1</sup>mong<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>maak<sup>1</sup> → ma<sup>1</sup></i>

<sup>14</sup> Burmese is a Tibeto-Burman language, Khmer and Bunong are Austroasiatic languages.

While in their reduced form the minor syllables are not transparent, in their shape as constituents of full compounds they are clearly class terms. The word ‘lips’ presented in Section 3.1.2 in its complete form *ping<sup>1</sup>sop<sup>1</sup>* is often pronounced as *pa<sup>1</sup>sop<sup>1</sup>*. The fruit species ‘mango’ can be referred to as both *ma<sup>1</sup>mong<sup>2</sup>* and *maak<sup>1</sup>mong<sup>2</sup>*, showing clearly that *ma<sup>1</sup>* is a reduced form of *maak<sup>1</sup>* ‘fruit’. The word *luk<sup>5</sup>ɔn<sup>1</sup>* ‘child’ is in transition to *la<sup>1</sup>ɔn<sup>1</sup>*. Although *luk<sup>5</sup>* is clearly the word for ‘offspring’ and *ping<sup>1</sup>* for edge, in their alternative forms *la<sup>1</sup>* and *pa<sup>1</sup>* they are not recognizable as such. The words in Table 22 are words that have already been through the process. Their first syllables have lost their transparency, and can no longer be traced back to an independent morpheme. For people, *pa<sup>1</sup>* is a common prefix, explaining the *pa<sup>1</sup>* in *pa<sup>1</sup>ying<sup>4</sup>* ‘girl’. However, *pa<sup>1</sup>* is also part of *pa<sup>1</sup>laa<sup>3</sup>* ‘almost’, where this would not fit. The words *pha<sup>1</sup>lo<sup>3</sup>* ‘onion’ and *pha<sup>1</sup>maaw<sup>1</sup>* ‘bachelor’ have the same initial syllable, but are also unlikely to have derived from the same source. It is thus impossible to derive the origin from the shape of the initial syllable itself.

<b>Table 22</b> Words with unmarked consonant as initial syllable		
la <sup>1</sup> ling <sup>4</sup>	လလိင်း	‘monkey’
a <sup>1</sup> saak <sup>5</sup>	ကကောင့်	‘age’
pa <sup>1</sup> ying <sup>4</sup>	ပယိင်း	‘girl’
pha <sup>1</sup> lo <sup>3</sup>	ဖလေ့	‘onion’
pha <sup>1</sup> maaw <sup>1</sup>	ဖမာင်	‘bachelor’
pa <sup>1</sup> laa <sup>3</sup>	ပလဲ	‘almost’

### 3.1.3 Personal pronouns

The formation of disyllabic nouns on the one hand, and the grammaticalization of the monosyllabic variants of the same origin on the other can be illustrated by looking at the personal and possessive pronouns. The second and third person personal pronouns have become disyllabic, while the monosyllabic variants are still used as possessive pronouns. The third person plural possessive *khaw<sup>3</sup>* also has acquired a few other function, which will be discussed in this section as well.

<b>Table 23</b> Personal and possessive pronouns		
	<b>Personal pronouns</b>	<b>Possessive pronouns</b>
1SG	kaw <sup>4</sup>	kaw <sup>4</sup>
2SG	mɛu <sup>4</sup>	mɛu <sup>4</sup>
3SG	mun <sup>4</sup> /man <sup>4</sup>	mun <sup>4</sup> /man <sup>4</sup>
1PL	haw <sup>4</sup>	haw <sup>4</sup>
2PL	ma <sup>1</sup> su <sup>3</sup>	su <sup>3</sup>
3PL	ma <sup>1</sup> haw <sup>3</sup>	khaw <sup>3</sup>



Table 23 shows the personal and possessive pronouns in Shan-Ni. The personal and possessive pronouns for the first, second and third person singular and the first person plural are identical, while for the second and third person plural the personal and possessive pronouns differ. When a personal pronoun follows a noun, it is a possessive pronoun. For the singular pronouns and first person plural *haw*<sup>4</sup> the same pronoun is used, hence the interlocutor has to interpret from the position of a pronoun whether it is meant to be possessive or not. In the example below, *kaw*<sup>4</sup> ‘1SG’ follows the noun *luk*<sup>5</sup> ‘son’, hence it is a possessive forming the clause ‘my son’. This is followed by a new clause, starting with *mɛu*<sup>4</sup> ‘2SG’ without a noun preceding it, hence it refers to the personal pronoun ‘you’.

- (2) လုက္ခိး နှီး ဟလံာ် ဟင်း  
 luk<sup>5</sup> kaw<sup>4</sup> mɛu<sup>4</sup> kha<sup>1</sup> laaj<sup>2</sup> sang<sup>4</sup>  
 child1SG 2SG DES get what  
 ‘My son, what do you want?’

(BSS\_29)

For the second and third person plural, there is a difference between the possessive and non-possessive personal pronouns. The possessive pronouns are the same as the personal pronouns of other Tai languages in the region, but the personal pronouns have developed into disyllabic lexemes. They have both acquired the prefix *ma*<sup>1</sup>, which may have been derived from any word starting with the consonant /m/. It is likely that this /m/ has been taken from the second and third person singular, *mɛu*<sup>4</sup> and *mun*<sup>4</sup> respectively. In addition, the initial consonant /kh/ of *khaw*<sup>3</sup> is reduced to /h/ becoming *ma*<sup>1</sup>*haw*<sup>3</sup>. I have encountered *ma*<sup>1</sup>*khaw*<sup>3</sup> as well in the newspaper, but not in spoken language. Since the tone is the same, it is likely that *ma*<sup>1</sup>*haw*<sup>3</sup> derived from *khaw*<sup>3</sup>. That both forms are used by the same speakers in different positions to express different functions, is illustrated in the examples below. Both sentences (3) and (4) are part of the same story, uttered by the same character (stepmother) addressing the same two daughters (Yee and Ee). In (3) *ma*<sup>1</sup>*su*<sup>3</sup> ‘2PL’ is used as a personal pronoun, while in (4) the possessive pronoun *su*<sup>3</sup> ‘2PL’ follows *pɔ*<sup>2</sup> ‘father’, forming the nominal phrase ‘your father’.

- (3) မဟူ ပိစွင့် လွင် ဟာန် ကိး လိး ဝံ ဟ  
 ma<sup>1</sup>su<sup>3</sup> pi<sup>2</sup>nɔng<sup>5</sup> lɔng<sup>2</sup> an<sup>2</sup> kaw<sup>4</sup> cau<sup>4</sup> waj<sup>5</sup> naa<sup>5</sup>  
 2PL sisters work thing 1SG order KEEP TAG  
 ‘You sisters, the work I ordered you...’

(BSS\_210)

- (4) ပေု ဟူ ပွက္ခိး မး မ မွက်  
 pɔ<sup>2</sup> su<sup>3</sup> pɔk<sup>5</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> mɔk<sup>1</sup>  
 father 2PL return COME NEG announce  
 ‘Your father has returned unannounced.’

(BSS\_216)

*khaw*<sup>3</sup> has gained a range of functions. In example (5) it functions as a conjunction connecting ‘Yee’ and ‘Ee’. In (6) and (7) it is a type of plural marker, which following two nouns denotes a category of people, for example ‘biological parents’ (6) or grandparents (7). If this literally refers to two people, it requires to be followed by the classifier construction *song*<sup>3</sup> *ko*<sup>5</sup>. As a plural marker, *khaw*<sup>3</sup> can only be used for humans. Plurality is discussed in more detail Chapter 5.

(5) ယေ ဘဝ် ဟီ  
 ye<sup>2</sup> khaw<sup>3</sup> i<sup>1</sup>  
 yee 3PL ee  
 ‘Yee and Ee’ (first and second daughter)

(BSS\_126)

(6) ပျ လိင် မိ လိင် ဘဝ်  
 po<sup>2</sup> leng<sup>5</sup> me<sup>2</sup> leng<sup>5</sup> khaw<sup>3</sup>  
 father give.birth mother give.birth 3PL  
 ‘biological parents’

(BSS\_80)

(7) ဟပူ ဟယျ ဘဝ်  
 a<sup>1</sup> pu<sup>1</sup> a<sup>1</sup> yaa<sup>2</sup> khaw<sup>3</sup>  
 for grandfather for grandmother 3PL  
 ‘for grandparents/elderly people’

(BSS\_78)

(8) ပူတယျ ဟွိုင် ကျ ယင်း ဟ  
 pu<sup>1</sup> ta<sup>1</sup> yaa<sup>2</sup> song<sup>3</sup> ko<sup>5</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> a<sup>1</sup>  
 grandfather and grandmother two CLF.people EXIST PRT  
 ‘There were a grandfather and a grandmother.’

(NN\_ITL\_3)

### 3.2 Contractions

Besides nouns, determiners and interrogatives can also be disyllabic in Shan-Ni. In these words, the shape of the second part often corresponds with monosyllabic determiners and interrogatives in Tai Mau, but not necessarily with other Tai languages. According to Young (1985), these determiners and interrogatives have derived from two different morphemes themselves, and have contracted together into a new (usually monosyllabic) shape. Disyllabic determiners and interrogatives in Shan-Ni thus have gone through two processes. The first process (shared with Tai Mau) resulted in contraction, and the second process (exclusively in Shan-Ni) formed disyllabic determiners and interrogatives. Both processes will be discussed in this section.

Young (1985:24) lists a number of Tai Mau words<sup>15</sup> that emerged from contractions of two words that were still present in the language, but merged together to create a new meaning. For example, the words *ti* ‘place’ and *nâi* ‘this’ have merged together to form *thài* ‘here’. The same *ti* ‘place’ also merged with *lai* ‘which’, forming the new word *thài* ‘where’. Some of the words she includes in her list are also present in Shan-Ni<sup>16</sup>, though for most of them Shan-Ni is going a step further. I have summarized the contractions she discusses for Tai Mau and their innovations in Shan-Ni in Table 24. I assume that part of this is a shared development between Shan-Ni and Tai Mau, which at a later stage has developed into two different ways for both languages. The Tai Mau contractions listed below, are present in different forms in Shan-Ni. The interrogatives *thɛu*<sup>4</sup> ‘where’ and *phɛu*<sup>4</sup> ‘who’ are the same in both languages; The Tai Mau determiners *thài* and *thàn* are preceded by an extra word in Shan-Ni, resulting in *ti*<sup>2</sup>*thai*<sup>2</sup> ‘here’ and *ti*<sup>2</sup>/*pun*<sup>4</sup> *than*<sup>2</sup> ‘(over) there’, respectively. The interrogative *kha*<sup>1</sup>*lɛu*<sup>4</sup> ‘how much’ is a reduced form of the Tai Mau *khai* ‘how much’ with an additional *lɛu*<sup>4</sup> ‘which’. In addition, there are also other processes within Shan-Ni that have affected the shape of determiners and interrogatives. The following subsections will discuss the processes in these two domains.

Table 24 Contractions in Tai Mau (Young 1985) represented in Shan-Ni			
Original morphemes in Tai Mau		Contraction in Tai Mau	Innovation in Shan-Ni
ti ‘place’	+ nâi ‘this’	thài ‘here’	ti <sup>2</sup> thai <sup>2</sup> ‘here’
ti ‘place’	+ nân ‘that’	thàn ‘there’	ti <sup>2</sup> than <sup>2</sup> ‘there’ pun <sup>4</sup> than <sup>2</sup> ‘over there’
ti ‘place’	+ lai ‘which’	thài ‘where’	thɛu <sup>4</sup> ‘where’
phù ‘person’	+ lai ‘which’	phăi ‘who’	phɛu <sup>4</sup> ‘who’
kaa ‘price’	+ hǎ ‘or not’	khai ‘how much’	kha <sup>1</sup> lɛu <sup>4</sup> ‘how much’

### 3.2.1 Determiners

While *ti*<sup>2</sup> ‘place’ is already included in the contractions *thai*<sup>2</sup> and *than*<sup>2</sup> (see Table 24), Shan-Ni requires an extra *ti*<sup>2</sup> to form *ti*<sup>2</sup>*thai*<sup>2</sup> ‘here’ and *ti*<sup>2</sup>*than*<sup>2</sup> ‘there’. In addition, *pun*<sup>4</sup> ‘yonder’ can be used instead of *ti*<sup>2</sup> in *pun*<sup>4</sup>*than*<sup>2</sup> ‘over there’ to mark a difference between something which is relatively near (*ti*<sup>2</sup> *than*<sup>2</sup>) and something that is further away (*pun*<sup>4</sup>*than*<sup>2</sup>).

- (9) a. တို့ထုံ  
ti<sup>2</sup> thai<sup>2</sup>  
‘here’
- b. တို့ထန်  
ti<sup>2</sup>than<sup>2</sup>  
‘there’ (near)
- c. ပိုင်းထန်  
pun<sup>4</sup>than<sup>2</sup>  
‘over there’ (distant)

(DS\_LT\_08)

<sup>15</sup> *phăi* ‘who’ is not included in that list, but is used throughout Young (1985).

<sup>16</sup> I do not exclude the possibility of other words from her list also having a presence in Shan-Ni, but in that case they have been through phonological processes and need more evidence than I can provide at this stage.

The words for ‘this’ and ‘that’ are also not expressed by a single syllable anymore. Though the cognates of *nâi* ‘this’ and *nân* ‘that’ in Tai Mau are present in Shan-Ni, they have developed additional functions. For the demonstrative ‘that’, Shan-Ni uses the same *pun*<sup>4</sup> ‘yonder’ used in *pun*<sup>4</sup>*than*<sup>2</sup> ‘over there’ to form *pun*<sup>4</sup>*nan*<sup>5</sup> ‘that (thing over there)’. *pun*<sup>4</sup>*nan*<sup>5</sup> always refers to an object in the distance, either unspecified without noun (10a), or preceded by a noun (10b).

- |                                                 |                         |                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| (10) a. ပိုင်းကန်                               | b. ငှိုင်း              | ပိုင်းကန်                                       |
| <i>pun</i> <sup>4</sup> <i>nan</i> <sup>5</sup> | <i>hɔn</i> <sup>4</sup> | <i>pun</i> <sup>4</sup> <i>nan</i> <sup>5</sup> |
| that                                            | house                   | that                                            |
| ‘that (thing over there)’                       | ‘that house’            |                                                 |

(DS\_LT\_08)

For nearby objects, Shan-Ni has added *nang*<sup>1</sup> to *nɛ*<sup>2</sup>/*naj*<sup>5</sup>, creating demonstrative *nang*<sup>1</sup>*nɛ*<sup>2</sup>. As described above for *pun*<sup>4</sup>*nan*<sup>5</sup> ‘that (thing over there)’, *nang*<sup>1</sup>*nɛ*<sup>2</sup> can be used by itself (11a) or behind a noun (11b). When only *nɛ*<sup>2</sup>/*naj*<sup>5</sup> is used behind a noun, it is a definite marker (11c) rather than a demonstrative.

- |                                                 |                                                                          |                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| (11) a. ကင်စွဲ                                  | b. ဝါန် ကင်စွဲ                                                           | c. ဝါန် စွဲ                                     |
| <i>nang</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>nɛ</i> <sup>2</sup> | <i>waan</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>nang</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>nɛ</i> <sup>2</sup> | <i>waan</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>nɛ</i> <sup>2</sup> |
| this                                            | cup this                                                                 | cup DEF                                         |
| ‘this’                                          | ‘this cup’                                                               | ‘the cup’                                       |

(DS\_LT\_08)

By itself, *nɛ*<sup>2</sup>/*naj*<sup>5</sup> has a range of functions, of which the most common can be analyzed as a definite marker or a topicalizer. The difference between using *nɛ*<sup>2</sup> and *nang*<sup>1</sup>*nɛ*<sup>2</sup> is illustrated below. With only *nɛ*<sup>2</sup> the speaker makes clear s/he is referring to ‘the water’ mentioned earlier in the story (12). When using *nang*<sup>1</sup>*nɛ*<sup>2</sup> the speaker implies there are perhaps multiple waterbodies, but only this specific one is getting big (13).

- (12) ကပ် စွဲ ယ့် မး  
*nam*<sup>2</sup> *nɛ*<sup>2</sup> *yau*<sup>1</sup> *maa*<sup>4</sup>  
 water DEF big COME  
 ‘The water got big’

(MK\_IH\_17)

- (13) ကပ် ကင်စွဲ ယ့် မး  
*nam*<sup>2</sup> *nang*<sup>1</sup>*nɛ*<sup>2</sup> *yau*<sup>1</sup> *maa*<sup>4</sup>  
 water this big COME  
 ‘This water got big’

(MK\_LT\_08)

### 3.3.1 Interrogatives

Table 25 Interrogatives (and indefinite pronouns)				
Interrogatives			Contractions	Compounds
လှီး	leu <sup>4</sup>	‘which’	-	-
ထိုး	theu <sup>4</sup>	‘where’	ti ‘place’+ lai ‘which’	-
ဇိုး	phau <sup>4</sup>	‘who’	phù ‘person’+ lai ‘which’	-
မိုဝ်လှီး ။ မိုဝ်ထိုး	mu <sup>2</sup> leu <sup>4</sup> mu <sup>2</sup> theu <sup>4</sup>	‘when’	-	mu <sup>2</sup> ‘time’ + leu <sup>4</sup> ‘which’ /theu <sup>4</sup> ‘where’
အလှီး	kha <sup>1</sup> leu <sup>4</sup>	‘how much’	kaa ‘price’ + hǎ ‘or not’	khai + leu <sup>4</sup> ‘which’
အလှီး	kha <sup>1</sup> leu <sup>4</sup> +CLF	‘how many’	kaa ‘price’ + hǎ ‘or not’	khai + leu <sup>4</sup> ‘which’
နဟိုဝ်	na <sup>1</sup> hu <sup>4</sup>	‘how’	-	nang <sup>1</sup> ‘this’ + hu <sup>4</sup> ‘how’
ကွပ်အင်း	kɔp <sup>5</sup> sang <sup>4</sup>	‘why’	-	kɔp <sup>5</sup> ‘reason’ + sang <sup>4</sup> ‘what’
အင်း	sang <sup>4</sup>	‘what’	-	-
လေး ။ လေ့	le <sup>4</sup> /le <sup>2</sup>	‘yes or no?’	-	-

Shan-Ni uses the same interrogatives for ‘where’ and ‘who’ mentioned by Young (1985) as contractions in Tai Mau, but has applied its own processes to the interrogatives as well. In the overview given in Table 25, the ‘contractions’ refer to processes also present in Tai Mau, and ‘compounds’ refer to processes specific to Shan-Ni. Using the word *mu<sup>2</sup>* ‘time’ in combination with either *leu<sup>4</sup>* ‘which’ or *theu<sup>4</sup>* ‘where’ forms the interrogative ‘when’. While the other interrogatives have joined two words into a new shape, *mu<sup>2</sup> leu<sup>4</sup>* and *mu<sup>2</sup> theu<sup>4</sup>* have not gone through such a process, and in both cases *mu<sup>2</sup>* ‘time’ is still very much a separate lexeme from *leu<sup>4</sup>* ‘which’ or *theu<sup>4</sup>* ‘where’. The interrogative *hu<sup>4</sup>* follows *nang<sup>1</sup>* ‘this’ in Shan-Ni, though this is often reduced to *na<sup>1</sup>hu<sup>4</sup>*. The interrogative *kha<sup>1</sup>leu<sup>4</sup>* ‘how much’ underwent both the contracting and the compounding process. First it became a contraction described for Tai Mau as existing of *kaa* ‘price’ and *hǎ* ‘or not’ with *khai* as a result. In Shan-Ni, *leu<sup>4</sup>* ‘which’ was added and *khai* was reduced to *kha<sup>1</sup>* through the process initial syllables undergo, described earlier in this chapter. Shan-Ni uses *kha<sup>1</sup>leu<sup>4</sup>* both for ‘how much’ and ‘how many’, with ‘how many’ requiring an extra word specifying the type of thing asked about. This is described in more detail in section 4.4.

### 3.3 Reduplication

Shan-Ni reduplicates adjectives, adverbs and verbs. Reduplicated adjectives modify nouns they follow, and reduplicated adverbs modify verbs they follow. This form of reduplication is obligatory; a non-reduplicated adjective functions as a verb in an intransitive predicate, and many adverbs simply do not exist in a non-reduplicated form. The difference between the absence and presence of reduplication is shown in the following sentences, which each start with a disyllabic body part noun. Behind *kɔŋ<sup>2</sup>kaang<sup>4</sup>* ‘chin’, *yaaw<sup>4</sup>* ‘long’ is only used once (14), hence it functions as a verb, forming the phrase ‘the chin is long’. When *yaaw<sup>4</sup>* is reduplicated, it becomes an adjective, hence with *khon<sup>3</sup>ho<sup>3</sup>* ‘hair’, *yaaw<sup>4</sup> yaaw<sup>4</sup>* ‘long.RDP’ forms the phrase ‘long hair’ (15).

- (14) ကွင့်ကင်း ယာဝ်း  
*kɔŋ<sup>2</sup>kaang<sup>4</sup> yaaw<sup>4</sup>*  
 chin long  
 ‘[The] chin is long.’

(BSS\_87)

- (15) နှစ်ရှည် ယာဝ်းယာဝ်း  
*khon<sup>3</sup>ho<sup>3</sup> yaaw<sup>4</sup>yaaw<sup>4</sup>*  
 hair long.RDP  
 ‘long hair’

(BSS\_87)

- (16) ကုန်း တိန်း ယာဝ်း  
*kon<sup>4</sup> tin<sup>4</sup> yaaw<sup>4</sup>*  
 person leg long  
 ‘a long-legged person’

(Lit: ‘(S)he is a person of whom the legs are long’)

(BSS\_87)

In (16) it might seem like long-legged is an adjective modifying ‘person’, but actually these are two verb phrases built into each other. *tin<sup>4</sup> yaaw<sup>4</sup>* means ‘the legs are long’, which together functions as a verb in relation to *kon<sup>4</sup>* ‘person’. This is outlined below.

- |                                                   |                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (17) a. [ တိန်း ] [ ယာဝ်း ]                       | b. [ ကုန်း ] [ တိန်းယာဝ်း ]                                        |
| [tin <sup>4</sup> ] [yaaw <sup>4</sup> ]          | [kon <sup>4</sup> ] [tin <sup>4</sup> yaaw <sup>4</sup> ]          |
| N V                                               | N V                                                                |
| ‘N (tin <sup>4</sup> ) is V (yaaw <sup>4</sup> )’ | ‘N (kon <sup>4</sup> ) is V (tin <sup>4</sup> yaaw <sup>4</sup> )’ |

The constructions above are not part of the same process described in section 3.1, used to form disyllabic nouns. In nominal compounds the class term specifying the category comes first, followed by a specifying item. Adjectives and verbs follow the noun. Hence, when as in

(18a) *huj*<sup>1</sup> ‘round’ precedes *taa*<sup>4</sup>, it is a class term part of the nominal compound. When *pəm*<sup>2</sup> ‘round’ comes behind *laa*<sup>2</sup> ‘face’, it is a separate word, in this case a verb, creating the phrase ‘[the] face is round’.

- |         |                                                                                   |    |                                                                                                                        |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (18) a. | ဖူဟ် တၢး<br><i>huj</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>taa</i> <sup>4</sup><br>round eye<br>‘eye’ | b. | လၢ ပွမ်<br><i>laa</i> <sup>2</sup> <i>pəm</i> <sup>2</sup><br>face round<br>‘round face’ (Lit. ‘[the] face is round’). |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Reduplicated adverbs modify the verbs they follow, in the same way adjectives modify the nouns they follow. In (19) the reduplication *kyaang*<sup>1</sup>*kyaang*<sup>1</sup> ‘fast’ modifies *kwaa*<sup>1</sup> ‘go’, in (20) *cəng*<sup>3</sup>*cəng*<sup>3</sup> ‘a little’ modifies *sən*<sup>3</sup> ‘study’, in (21) *ləj*<sup>4</sup>*ləj*<sup>4</sup> ‘slow’ modifies *kwaa*<sup>1</sup> ‘go’ and in (22) *nam*<sup>3</sup>*nam*<sup>3</sup> ‘many’ modifies *taan*<sup>2</sup> *khwaam*<sup>4</sup> ‘talk’. The adverbs in the examples below are not used without reduplication, unless they are preceded by the intensifier *aaj*<sup>4</sup> ‘very’.

- (19) ကျၢ ကျၢင်ကျၢင် တၢင်း တေကျၢ တံး  
*kwaa*<sup>1</sup> *kyaang*<sup>1</sup>*kyaang*<sup>1</sup> *taang*<sup>4</sup> *te*<sup>1</sup> *kaa*<sup>5</sup> *taaj*<sup>4</sup>  
 go fast.RDP manner FUT go die  
 ‘If you go too fast, you’ll die.’ (Lit: ‘Going fast is the way to die’)

(MK\_LT\_07)

- (20) ကျၢမ်း တံး လွင်လွင် တေကျၢန် နေ  
*khwaam*<sup>4</sup> *tai*<sup>4</sup> *cəng*<sup>3</sup>*cəng*<sup>3</sup> *te*<sup>1</sup> *sən*<sup>3</sup> *ne*<sup>2</sup>  
 language shan little.RDP FUTstudy DEF  
 ‘[We] will study a little bit more Shan.’

(MK\_LT\_08)

- (21) ကျၢ လွံးလွံး  
*kwaa*<sup>1</sup> *ləj*<sup>4</sup>*ləj*<sup>4</sup>  
 go slow.RDP  
 ‘Take it easy/drive carefully.’

(MK\_LT\_07)

- (22) ပီ တၢန် ကျၢမ်း နမ်နမ်  
*pi*<sup>1</sup> *taan*<sup>2</sup> *khwaam*<sup>4</sup> *nam*<sup>3</sup>*nam*<sup>3</sup>  
 PROH talk language many.RDP  
 ‘Don’t talk a lot.’

(BSS\_65)

### 3.3.1 Remnants of an old system

Adjectives and certain intransitive verbs can be modified by reduplicated dummy words that have no meaning by themselves. Young (1985:19) calls this “affective reduplication” and describes how in Tai Mau there are pairs of these “nonsense items” with good and bad

connotations. These pairs usually exist of the same consonants, but have different vowels. Items with a good connotation use the vowels /ɔ, ɛ, i, e/ and items with a bad connotation use the vowels /u, o, a:/. For example, to change *ʔūn* ‘warm’ to ‘very warm’, *ʔūn tôt-tôt* would indicate that it’s a pleasant kind of warmth, while *ʔūn tût-tût* would be the unpleasant variety. Similarly, *kēn kĕk kĕk* ‘very solid’ might refer to a solid construction that won’t fall apart anytime soon, *kēn kăak kăak* ‘very solid’ might refer to something that is supposed to be more smooth or flexible (Young 1985:21).

	<b>good connotation</b>	<b>bad connotation</b>
<b>‘warm’</b> <i>ʔūn</i>	<i>ʔūn tôt-tôt</i>	<i>ʔūn tût-tût</i>
<b>‘solid’</b> <i>kēn</i>	<i>kēn kĕk kĕk</i>	<i>kēn kăak kăak</i>

(Young 1985: 20, 21)

This system is not productive in Shan-Ni, but remnants of this system are present. Several items listed by Young (1985) also feature in the Basic Spoken Shan-Ni book (Table 25).

<b>Table 25</b> Shan-Ni reduplication matching examples of affective reduplication in Young (1985: 19)		
<b>concept</b>	<b>reduplicated form</b>	<b>Connotation</b>
‘cold’ <i>kat</i> <sup>1</sup>	ကတ်လိတ်လိတ်	good
	<i>kat</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>cit</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>cit</i> <sup>1</sup>	
‘hot’ <i>maj</i> <sup>2</sup>	မံ့တတ်တတ်	bad
	<i>maj</i> <sup>2</sup> <i>waat</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>waat</i> <sup>1</sup>	
‘red’ <i>neng</i> <sup>4</sup>	နင်းနိုင်းနိုင်း	good
	<i>neng</i> <sup>4</sup> <i>khying</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>khying</i> <sup>1</sup>	
‘stiff’ <i>khyeng</i> <sup>3</sup>	နိုင်းကွင်းကွင်း	good
	<i>khyeng</i> <sup>3</sup> <i>khong</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>khong</i> <sup>1</sup>	
‘sweet’ <i>waan</i> <sup>3</sup>	ဝါန်တလိမ့်လိမ့်	bad
	<i>waan</i> <sup>3</sup> <i>ta</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>lɔm</i> <sup>2</sup> <i>lɔm</i> <sup>2</sup>	

However, there is only one variant of each in Shan-Ni, hence the distinction between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ cannot be verified for Shan-Ni. In Table 26 I give an overview of the pairs I found in both the Basic Spoken Shanni book and in Young (1985), and the connotation they should have according to her. Of the other examples I found, the first three (*hɛng*<sup>2</sup> ‘dry’, *lɛt*<sup>1</sup> ‘sunny’ and *yɔm*<sup>3</sup> ‘thin’) are concepts that are not in Young’s list but fit the pattern she describes. Others are partially included, but do not match completely. For example *un*<sup>1</sup> ‘warm’ is included in Young’s list, but not with *mun*<sup>2</sup>*mun*<sup>2</sup>. Instead it is included as *un tôt tôt* (positive) – *un tût tût* (negative) (Young 1985: 21).

Tai Mau uses *yɔt tsŭk tsŭk* for ‘to trickle down’, of which the last part corresponds with *yuk*<sup>5</sup>*cuk*<sup>5</sup>*cuk*<sup>5</sup>, which Shan-Ni uses for ‘wet’. Both are used when talking about rain, but not in the same way. The other variant Shan-Ni uses for ‘wet’, *yam*<sup>4</sup>, does have two variants, but they



do not necessarily represent a pair with a good and bad connotation, and start with another consonant. For ‘mushy’ Shan-Ni uses  $\varepsilon^2paap^5paap^5$  while Tai Mau uses *yaam ?êt ?êt – yaam ?âat ?âat*.

**Table 26** Adjectives with affective reduplication in Shan-Ni fitting Young’s typology

‘dry’ <i>hɛng</i> <sup>2</sup>	ငှ်င်္ဂါၣ်ၣ်	‘warm’ <i>un</i> <sup>1</sup>	ၣ်မုၣ်မုၣ်
	<i>hɛng</i> <sup>2</sup> <i>khaap</i> <sup>5</sup> <i>khaap</i> <sup>5</sup>		<i>un</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>mun</i> <sup>2</sup> <i>mun</i> <sup>2</sup>
‘sunny’ <i>lɛt</i> <sup>1</sup>	လိတ်တၢင်တၢင်	‘wet’ <i>yuk</i> <sup>5</sup>	ယိုက်ယိုက်ယိုက်
	<i>lɛt</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>taang</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>taang</i> <sup>1</sup>		<i>yuk</i> <sup>5</sup> <i>cuik</i> <sup>5</sup> <i>cuik</i> <sup>5</sup>
‘thin’ <i>yɔm</i> <sup>3</sup>	ယွမ်ၣ်ၣ်	‘wet’ <i>yam</i> <sup>4</sup>	ယမ်းပုၣ်ပုၣ်
	<i>yɔm</i> <sup>3</sup> <i>khyɛng</i> <sup>2</sup> <i>khyɛng</i> <sup>2</sup>		<i>yam</i> <sup>4</sup> <i>pup</i> <sup>5</sup> <i>pup</i> <sup>5</sup>
‘mushy’ $\varepsilon$ <sup>2</sup>	ဟေၣ်ၣ်ဟေၣ်ၣ်		ယမ်းလၢးလွၣ်လွၣ်
	$\varepsilon^2paap^5paap^5si^3$		<i>yam</i> <sup>4</sup> <i>laaj</i> <sup>4</sup> <i>cɔp</i> <sup>5</sup> <i>cɔp</i> <sup>5</sup>

In addition to the ones listed in tables 25 and 26, there are quite a lot of different reduplication patterns that resemble the system as described by Young, though they do not seem to follow the same rules. In view of the absence of the good/bad connotation, I expect that affective reduplication is no longer a productive process in Shan-Ni, but that the fossilized forms are present in the language. Shan-Ni takes in new words that are either verbs, adverbs or adjectives themselves. Besides the structure described above with a single item followed by two of the same items (XYY), another common pattern is two times two words (XXYY). These are more common patterns in Burmese as well, and might be gradually replacing affective reduplication in Shan-Ni.

- (23) မိုၣ် ဟိုၣ်      စံ    ကျေ့ဖျိန်    တုက်လွၣ်လွၣ်    လီ    ယိက်ယိက်    လိုက်လိုက်  
*mɔ*<sup>2</sup> *hr*<sup>2</sup>      *naj*<sup>5</sup> *kw*<sup>5</sup> *phun*<sup>3</sup> *tuk*<sup>1</sup> *sɔk*<sup>5</sup>*sɔk*<sup>5</sup>    *si*<sup>3</sup>    *yik*<sup>5</sup>*yik*<sup>5</sup>    *cɔk*<sup>5</sup>*cɔk*<sup>5</sup>  
time monsoon DEF PRT rain fall trickle.RDP LNK moist.RDP trickle.RDP  
‘In the monsoon season it rains a lot.’

(BSS\_109)

In the example above (23), *sɔk*<sup>5</sup>*sɔk*<sup>5</sup> and *cɔk*<sup>5</sup>*cɔk*<sup>5</sup> are connected to ‘trickle’ in Tai Mau (*yɔt tsɔk tsɔk* (good), *yɔt tsúk tsúk* (bad)), though they are used together in a way that they complement each other rather than being opposites expressing good and bad connotations. They are used together with *yik*<sup>5</sup>*yik*<sup>5</sup>, which refers to ‘moist’, a related concept connected to rain, though not a “nonsense item” or synonym to *cɔk*<sup>5</sup>*cɔk*<sup>5</sup>.

### 3.4 Summary

The shape of words in Shan-Ni illustrate the different innovation processes words have been through, sometimes in combination with each other. Shan-Ni shares parts of these developments with other languages, but other parts not. Class terms and similar phenomena exist in other Tai languages, but they do not complement the majority of nouns like they do

in Shan-Ni. The next step in the process, reducing the first syllable/constituent of the compound and turning the class terms into a minor syllable without a meaning of its own, is a process common in non-Tai languages in the area. The old monosyllabic form, is no longer a regular noun but gains a grammatical function. A good example to demonstrate this process are the personal pronouns. While in their monosyllabic shape the former personal pronouns are still used as possessive pronouns, the second and third person plural personal pronouns have acquired class terms.

The shape of the question words and determiners also reveal participation in two different processes. First the contractions, similar to Tai Mau, and second, the addition of class terms. Through the combination of these processes, Shan-Ni has developed complex forms to ask questions and talk about space, that do not correspond exactly with any other language in the region. This process of layering innovations is applied in a similar way to reduplication. Shan-Ni is using fossilized parts of what is a productive system in Tai Mau. Shan-Ni only uses one half of pairs, lacking the good and bad connotation distinction, and is also uses reduplication without the “nonsense items”.

The sesquisyllables, interrogatives and determiners will be compared in more depth to other Tai languages in Chapter 7, alongside other features that will be discussed in the coming chapters. The unique contribution the shape of words have to this, is that they illustrate the layeredness of developments, which might be less clear in other features, though it certainly affects the way these other features should be looked at.

## Chapter 4: Sentence structure and types of sentences

In a sentence with an overt subject, object and verb without TAM or other grammatical markers, Shan-Ni has a subject-verb-object order, as in the sentences below. In (24) the dog scares a child, and in (25) someone calls a frog.

(24) မဲၵ်း    ၵျၢၢ်    လုၵ်းၵွၢ်  
maa<sup>3</sup> khyauk<sup>5</sup> luk<sup>5</sup>ၵn<sup>1</sup>  
dog scare.BM child  
'The dog scares the child.'

(PV\_CAUS\_2)

(25) မၢ်း    ၵွၢ်    တံး    ၵျိတ်  
man<sup>4</sup> hɔng<sup>5</sup> taaj<sup>4</sup> khyet<sup>1</sup>  
3SG call scream frog  
'He calls the frog.'

(KSN\_FS\_11)

Sentences like the ones above are rare. Most sentences do not have an overt subject, object and verb without TAM or other grammatical markers. The subject, and sometimes the object, may be omitted through *ellipsis*. Grammatical markers are present in almost every sentence, influencing the word order and sentence structure. To understand how sentences work in Shan-Ni, this chapter will thus focus on different types of sentences and the grammatical processes that govern them. First information structure and ellipsis will be discussed, the expression of arguments within the sentence. Then different types of sentences with copula, existentials, questions and passives will be discussed. The other frequent grammatical markers that are not present in these constructions will be explained in chapter 5, and the usage of TAM markers in chapter 6.

### 4.1 Representing and omitting referents

The way referents are included in sentences in Shan-Ni depends on the information required in order for the speaker to convey the intended message. In order to make an accessible message with the least amount of processing effort, different types of coding are employed (Van Valin & La Polla 1997: 201). New referents need an introduction, inactive referents need to be activated, and active referent can be left out. When it is already clear to the listener who the referent is, the referent is 'active'. In sentences with active referents, Shan-Ni omits the referent. This process is called ellipsis. To introduce a new referent an indefinite NP is used, and to activate an accessible but inactive referent a definite NP is used (Van Valin & La Polla 1997: 201).

#### 4.1.1 Ellipsis

Ellipsis in Shan-Ni can apply to one or more noun phrases that are omitted, because the speaker does not consider it necessary to mention them. This is either because they are clear within the context or because the speaker already mentioned them before. For example, sentences like (26),(27), and (28) are completely normal:

(26) ပိး ငှာန် ဟာဝ်း ပွန် မး ကိုန်း  
pi<sup>4</sup> han<sup>3</sup> aw<sup>4</sup> pɔk<sup>5</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> kɔn<sup>4</sup>  
if see take returncome SHOULD  
'If [you] see [it], [you] should bring it back.'

(BSS\_23)

(27) ကျ ကျ တား ဝံ  
kwaa<sup>1</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup> taa<sup>4</sup> waj<sup>5</sup>  
go GO die KEEP  
'[he] went [into the fire] and died'

(EP\_LPL\_38)

(28) ကိန် တုက် ကိ တေ ကျ  
en<sup>2</sup> tok<sup>1</sup> ji<sup>3</sup> te<sup>1</sup> kwaa<sup>1</sup>  
play fall LNK FUT go  
'[he] falls and goes [down to the water]'

(KSN\_FS\_43)

Sentence (26) does not specify 1) who should be returning something 2) what is supposed to be returned. Similarly, (27) does not specify 1) who went (and died) and 2) where he went. (27) and (28) almost exclusively contain verbs and TAM markers. Hence, in a regular conversation between two people about themselves and their daily activities, a large component of their conversation may consist almost exclusively of verbs and TAM markers, because they can drop all noun phrases referring to themselves and everything obvious to themselves. This means that, for example, a verb like *khaaj*<sup>3</sup> 'sell' which is clearly (di)transitive because it is used to refer to selling 'something', often is not accompanied by an argument specifying what is being sold, because everybody knows what is being sold.

The usage of ellipsis thus requires an alternative way to study sentence structures and transitivity. For Lao, Enfield (2008: 88) suggests that the best way to look at transitivity is to distinguish between phrases where the argument is present but ellipsed, and those in which there is no argument at all. In practice, this means that it is often impossible to verify the distinction. Rather than classifying verbs as 'transitive', 'intransitive' or 'ambitransitive', he suggests looking at a variety of argument structure constructions and the accessibility of verbs to those constructions. When looking into different argument structure constructions in Shan-Ni, the difference in word order seems to depend on the presence of certain

grammatical markers. Therefore, throughout this chapter and the next, sentence structure will be discussed in relation to the different grammatical markers.

#### 4.1.2 Activating referents with *naj*<sup>5</sup>/*nε*<sup>2</sup>

The definite marker *naj*<sup>5</sup> (often reduced to *nε*<sup>2</sup>) originally derived from the meaning ‘this’. The most common usage of *naj*<sup>5</sup> is as a definite marker, marking inactive or accessible referents. These are referents that either been mentioned before or are present in the context, though not active at the moment of speech yet. It is common for definite markers to assume this role (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 201). Because ellipsis in Shan-Ni is very common, active referents that are already the topic of conversation are usually left out. The usage of *naj*<sup>5</sup> allows the speaker to switch between different referents present within the context. In (29) this is illustrated by marking both ‘father’ and ‘mother’. The preceding conversation is about family, and now we learn where the parents live; the father lives in Hpakant, and the mother lives in Yangon. In (30), the story is about two women, Me Long and Me On, hence *nε*<sup>2</sup> is used to clarify that this part is about what Me Long does. In (31) the speaker is talking about the age she will have. In (32) *nε*<sup>2</sup> marks a longer argument ‘last month’.

(29) ပေ နံ ဟူ တီ ဖေ ကာန် ဖေ နံ ဟူ တီ တၢကူင်  
 po<sup>2</sup> naj<sup>5</sup> u<sup>1</sup> ti<sup>2</sup> phaa<sup>3</sup> kaan<sup>5</sup> mε<sup>2</sup> naj<sup>5</sup> u<sup>1</sup> ti<sup>2</sup> taa<sup>1</sup>koong<sup>1</sup>  
 father<sup>DEF</sup> stay place stone.plates break.off mother <sup>DEF</sup> stay place yangon  
 ‘Father stays in Hpakant, mother stays in Yangon.’

(BSS\_30)

(30) မေး လှိုင် ဖေ် ဟုကံ့ ကျ ကမ်း  
 mε<sup>4</sup> long<sup>3</sup> nε<sup>2</sup> suk<sup>5</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup> kan<sup>4</sup>  
 wifebig <sup>DEF</sup> rinse GO VPL  
 ‘Me Long rinsed [the vegetables].’

(CM\_ML\_8)

(31) ကိး နံ ဟံမ် ဟပ် တေ ထုန် ယင့်  
 kew<sup>4</sup> naj<sup>5</sup> saam<sup>3</sup> sip<sup>1</sup> te<sup>1</sup> thon<sup>2</sup> yaw<sup>5</sup>  
 1SG <sup>DEF</sup> three ten FUT reach FINISHED  
 ‘I will be thirty years old then.’

(BSS\_32)

(32) ပွန် မိုင်း မိုင်း လိုင်း ဖေ် ဟိုင့် ဝံ  
 pon<sup>5</sup> mɔ<sup>2</sup> mɔ<sup>2</sup> lɔn<sup>4</sup> nε<sup>2</sup> su<sup>5</sup> waj<sup>5</sup>  
 last time time month <sup>DEF</sup> buy KEEP  
 ‘It was bought last month.’

(NY\_NMLe\_17)

In conversations and spoken narratives *man*<sup>4</sup> ‘3SG’ is often used in combination with *naj*<sup>5</sup>. This would be the equivalent of English ‘as for X ...’. It is the same as shown above in (29), where the mother and father are both marked in their own clause to inform where each of

them lives. In the following examples, U Than Sein is describing a family scene from a picture. Since there are multiple people on the picture, he points out the activities of different participants in the scene. For example, in (33) with *pho<sup>3</sup>long<sup>3</sup> man<sup>4</sup> naj<sup>5</sup>* ‘as for the husband’ followed by a description of his activity *het<sup>1</sup> long<sup>2</sup>* ‘does work’. After describing the other things happening in the picture, the ‘husband’ is reintroduced as ‘father’ with *pa<sup>2</sup> man<sup>4</sup> naj<sup>5</sup>* ‘as for the father’ followed by what he is about to do; *te<sup>1</sup> kwaa<sup>1</sup> lau<sup>4</sup> tɔn<sup>2</sup>* ‘will go into the forest’ (34). The father is alone in the forest, and he remains the active referent in the story. Because it is clear that the referent is the father, the argument is dropped from that moment onwards (35).

(33) ငိုဝ်လှိုင် မန်း နံ ငှိတ်လွင်  
*pho<sup>3</sup>long<sup>3</sup> man<sup>4</sup> naj<sup>5</sup> het<sup>1</sup> long<sup>2</sup>*  
 husband 3SG DEF do work  
 ‘The husband is working.’

(TS\_HS\_01)

(34) ပေ မန်း နံ တေ ကျ လှီး တိုက်  
*pa<sup>2</sup> man<sup>4</sup> naj<sup>5</sup> te<sup>1</sup> kwaa<sup>1</sup> lau<sup>4</sup> tɔn<sup>2</sup>*  
 father 3SG DEF FUT go in forest  
 ‘The father will go into the forest.’

(TS\_HS\_04)

(35) တေ ကျ တိုက် တေ ကျ ငှိတ်လွင်  
*te<sup>1</sup> kwaa<sup>1</sup> tɔn<sup>2</sup> te<sup>1</sup> kwaa<sup>1</sup> het<sup>1</sup> long<sup>2</sup>*  
 FUT go forest FUT go do work  
 ‘He is going into the forest, he is going to work.’

(TS\_HS\_05)

General concepts such as money or rice, are directly understood by all interlocutors and require no introduction. Therefore, they are already treated as accessible referents (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 200). In (36) *ngun<sup>4</sup>* ‘money’ is marked by *ne<sup>2</sup>* in the general statement ‘money doesn’t make people happy’.

(36) ငိုင်း နေ် ထု ကုန်း မ ငှီး လှမ်း လှီး  
*ngun<sup>4</sup> ne<sup>2</sup> caa<sup>4</sup> kon<sup>4</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> hau<sup>4</sup> com<sup>4</sup> cau<sup>4</sup>*  
 money DEF for person NEG give happy heart  
 ‘Money doesn’t make people happy.’  
 Lit: Money does not give people a happy heart

(PV\_CAUS\_8)

#### 4.1.3 Indefinite referents and classifier constructions

Indefinite constructions can be used to introduce new referents into the context (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 201). In (37) the classifier constructions fulfil that role. First classifier

constructions introduce a boy (*la<sup>1</sup>ɔn<sup>1</sup> kɔ<sup>5</sup> nɔng<sup>2</sup>*) and a dog (*maa<sup>3</sup> to<sup>4</sup> nɔng<sup>2</sup>*) who are new to the hearer. Besides these two referents there is also a frog (introduced with the classifier construction *khyet<sup>1</sup>to<sup>4</sup>nɔng<sup>2</sup>*) which was caught by ‘the boy’. Because this referent has already been introduced, *la<sup>1</sup>ɔn<sup>1</sup> nɛ<sup>2</sup>* ‘the boy’ has a definite marker.

(37) လကွက်ကျေ      နိုင်    မျ    တုင်း      နိုင်    ယျ    နွံ    နီတ်    တုင်း  
*la<sup>1</sup>ɔn<sup>1</sup> kɔ<sup>5</sup>      nɔng<sup>2</sup> maa<sup>3</sup> to<sup>4</sup>      nɔng<sup>2</sup> yaa<sup>1</sup> soj<sup>1</sup> khyet<sup>1</sup>to<sup>4</sup>*  
 child CLF.human one    dog    CLF.animal one    place pot frog    CLF.animal  
 နိုင်    ဧ်    ယင်း    ကန်    နံ    လကွက်    ဧ်    ဝမ်    ကျံ  
*nɔng<sup>2</sup> nɛ<sup>2</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> an<sup>2</sup>    naj<sup>5</sup> la<sup>1</sup>ɔn<sup>1</sup> nɛ<sup>2</sup> waam<sup>5</sup> aaj<sup>5</sup>*  
 one    DEF EXIST thing DEF child    DEFcatch    PRT  
 ‘There are a boy and a dog, and a frog, which was caught by the boy.’

(KSN\_FS\_01)

When using nouns in combination with numerals, Shan-Ni uses numeral classifiers, with both the classifier and numeral following the noun. In case of a single object, the numeral *nɔng<sup>2</sup>* ‘one’ follows the classifier (38a), while with two or more objects the numeral precedes the classifier (38b). When following a classifier, the first consonant of *nɔng<sup>2</sup>* ‘one’ is often pronounced differently depending on what precedes it, making it sound like *ɣnɔng<sup>2</sup>* or *ʔnɔng<sup>2</sup>*.

(38) a. ငှက် တုင်းလိုင်      b. ငှက်    နွင်    တုင်း  
*ngo<sup>4</sup> to<sup>4</sup> nɔng<sup>2</sup>      ngo<sup>4</sup> song<sup>3</sup> to<sup>4</sup>*  
 cow CLF.animal-one      cow two    CLF.animal  
 ‘one cow’      ‘two cows’

In a sentence, a classifier construction functions as a normal noun phrase. In (39) the person referred to has one shirt, expressed by *sɔ<sup>2</sup> phuun<sup>3</sup> nɔng<sup>2</sup>* with *phuun<sup>3</sup>* ‘cloth’ referring to the material of the shirt, and *nɔng<sup>2</sup>* ‘one’ to in the number of shirts. In (40) the speaker has three oranges, expressed by *maak<sup>1</sup> cɔk<sup>1</sup> saam<sup>3</sup> hoj<sup>1</sup>* with *saam<sup>3</sup>* referring to the number ‘three’, and *hoj<sup>1</sup>* to the shape ‘round’. The classifier *hoj<sup>1</sup>* is also used for fruits that are not necessarily round<sup>17</sup>, for example bananas. In (41) two different arguments that are classified with *hoj<sup>1</sup>* are listed by the speaker. The two classifier constructions remain separate with *hoj<sup>1</sup>* marking each of them individually, but they do follow each other without any linking particle.

(39) ယျ မိုက်း    နှိုင်    ငိုက်      နိုင်    ယင်း    ကျ  
*ya<sup>1</sup>muun<sup>4</sup> sɔ<sup>2</sup>    phuun<sup>3</sup> nɔng<sup>2</sup>    yang<sup>4</sup> u<sup>1</sup>*  
 at 3SG shirt CLF.cloth one EXISTSTAY  
 ‘She has one shirt.’

(BSS\_18)

<sup>17</sup> And other objects that are not necessarily round, e.g. stones.

(40) ယျ ကျီး မာက်း ထွက် လာမ် ဟူဟ် ယင်း ဟူ  
 ya<sup>1</sup> kaw<sup>4</sup> maak<sup>1</sup> cək<sup>1</sup> saam<sup>3</sup> hoj<sup>1</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> u<sup>1</sup>  
 place 1SG fruit orange 3 CLF.round EXIST STAY  
 'I have three oranges.'

(BSS\_18)

(41) ကဝ် မုဏ် လာဏ် တာန် ထေး ဟ်တံ လာင် မဟ်ဝ် ဟူဟ် လွင် ဟူဟ်  
 khaw<sup>2</sup> mun<sup>2</sup> an<sup>2</sup> waan<sup>3</sup> caa<sup>4</sup> het<sup>1</sup> ang<sup>1</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> haw<sup>3</sup> khuj<sup>2</sup> song<sup>3</sup> hoj<sup>1</sup>  
 food cake thing sweet for make for 3PL banana two CLF.round

မာက်ဟ်ဂ်ဟူဟ် စိုဏ် ဟ်း မး  
 maak<sup>1</sup> un<sup>3</sup> hoj<sup>1</sup> ɲng<sup>2</sup> hau<sup>4</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 coconut CLF.round one give COME  
 'I gave them two bananas and a coconut to make sweets.'

(KSN\_CAUS\_21)

Table 27 Numeral classifiers in Shan-Ni		
Classifier		Used for
လာဏ်	an <sup>2</sup>	general
ကျော	kw <sup>5</sup>	persons
တူင်း	to <sup>4</sup>	animals
ဟူဟ်	hoj <sup>1</sup>	round, solid objects, e.g. stones, oranges
အိုဏ်	khyep <sup>1</sup>	flat, hard objects
တာန်	waan <sup>1</sup>	round, open objects, e.g. bowls, cups
ဇိုဏ်	phun <sup>3</sup>	flat, flexible objects, e.g. blankets or leaves
ထိုဏ်	thun <sup>3</sup>	bags
ဟူး	hu <sup>4</sup>	holes, drops, dots
မွက်	mək <sup>1</sup>	flowers
ကွက်	kək <sup>1</sup>	cups
ဟုပုံ	op <sup>5</sup>	books
လီဏ်	lem <sup>2</sup>	long, slender objects, e.g. boats, pencils, fans
စိုး	mau <sup>4</sup>	spoons
တိုဏ်	tau <sup>2</sup>	bottles
ကူ	ku <sup>2</sup>	pairs, e.g. shoes
ထိုဏ်	thɲng <sup>2</sup>	trees, plants
ဗျ	paa <sup>2</sup>	side



An overview of the classifiers in Shan-Ni is given in Table 27, though this overview is far from complete. Other Tai languages such as Shan Gyi, Aiton or Phake have around 50 classifiers, and the same can be expected for Shan-Ni. It might also be an open word class, accepting new members. For example *mɔk*<sup>1</sup> the classifier for flower, exists as the noun ‘flower’ in other Tai languages, but not as a classifier. The noun ‘flower’ itself in Shan-Ni is the disyllabic noun *mɔk<sup>1</sup>yaa<sup>2</sup>*. This process may be influenced by the possibility in Shan-Ni to classify nouns with *an*<sup>1</sup> ‘thing’, or the noun itself. For example, the noun *hɔn*<sup>4</sup> ‘house’ can be classified in three ways (42). In (a) *hɔn*<sup>4</sup> ‘house’ is classified by *hɔn*<sup>4</sup> itself, in (b) by the general classifier *an*<sup>2</sup> ‘thing’ and in (c) by *lɛm*<sup>2</sup>, the classifier for long objects. To my knowledge, there is no pragmatic difference between these three variations.

- (42) a. ငှိုက်: ငှိုက်: ဝိုင်  
*hɔn*<sup>4</sup> *hɔn*<sup>4</sup> *nɔng*<sup>2</sup>  
house CLF.house one  
‘one house’
- b. ငှိုက်: ဘၣ် ဝိုင်  
*hɔn*<sup>4</sup> *an*<sup>2</sup> *nɔng*<sup>2</sup>  
house CLF.thing one  
‘one house’
- c. ငှိုက်: လိမ် ဝိုင်  
*hɔn*<sup>4</sup> *lɛm*<sup>2</sup> *nɔng*<sup>2</sup>  
house CLF.long one  
‘one house’

(MK\_LT\_08)

## 4.2 Copula

Like other Tai languages, Shan-Ni has a copula *pen*<sup>4</sup>/*pyin*<sup>4</sup>/*pyen*<sup>4</sup>, but its usage is quite limited. It is used in specific constructions like the superlative (see the section 5.1 on *an*<sup>2</sup>) and otherwise as the verb ‘happen’. Cognates of *pen*<sup>4</sup> in other Tai languages usually mean ‘be/become’ and are used for equation and proper inclusion. In this kind of sentences Shan-Ni omits the copula and the subject is juxtaposed with it predicate. For example in (43), the personal pronoun *kau*<sup>4</sup> ‘1SG’ and the name ‘Sai Aik’ suffice to make the phrase ‘I’m Sai Aik’. In (44) *kɔng<sup>2</sup>kaang<sup>4</sup>* ‘chin’ and *yaaw*<sup>4</sup>, ‘long’ are also juxtaposed without a copula, with *yaaw*<sup>4</sup> functioning as an attributive verb. In (45) *yaaw<sup>4</sup>yaaw<sup>4</sup>* ‘long’ is reduplicated, and functions as an adjective instead. The distinction between *yaaw*<sup>4</sup> ‘long’ as an attributive verb and *yaaw<sup>4</sup>yaaw<sup>4</sup>* is thus made by republication, and does not require a copula.

- (43) ကို: လံး ကံ  
*kau*<sup>4</sup> *caai*<sup>4</sup>*aai*<sup>2</sup>  
1SG sai aik  
‘I’m Sai Aik’ (first-born son)

(BSS\_14)

(44) ကွင့်ကင်း ယာင်း  
 kɔŋg<sup>2</sup>kaang<sup>4</sup> yaaw<sup>4</sup>  
 chin long  
 '[The] chin is long.'

(BSS\_87)

(45) နှစ်ရှည် ယာင်းယာင်း  
 khon<sup>3</sup>ho<sup>3</sup> yaaw<sup>4</sup>yaaw<sup>4</sup>  
 hair long.RDP  
 'long hair'

(BSS\_87)

When talking about someone's occupation, Shan-Ni uses the phrase *het<sup>1</sup> lɔŋg<sup>2</sup> X* 'do work X'. Both (46) and (47) are answers to the same question *meu<sup>4</sup> hit<sup>1</sup> lɔŋg<sup>2</sup> sang<sup>4</sup>* 'what kind of work do you do?'. Though normally *het<sup>1</sup>* 'do' is a verb, and *lɔŋg<sup>2</sup>* 'work' is a noun, in this construction we could say *het<sup>1</sup> lɔŋg<sup>2</sup>* 'do work' works as a single verb. In (46) it is followed by another verb *tɔ<sup>4</sup>* 'weave' and a noun *huk<sup>1</sup>* 'loom', making the sentence literally 'I do work weave loom'. (47) omits the subject, and includes two jobs: farmer and driver. For the farmwork, only *naa<sup>4</sup>* 'land' is placed behind *het<sup>1</sup> lɔŋg<sup>2</sup>*. In the second part of the sentence the noun *kaa<sup>4</sup>* 'car' is marked by *ka<sup>5</sup>* 'also', thus in this case the verb *ha<sup>2</sup>* 'drive' comes behind the noun.

(46) ကွီး နှိတ်လွင် တေး နှက်  
 kau<sup>4</sup> het<sup>1</sup> lɔŋg<sup>2</sup> tɔ<sup>4</sup> huk<sup>1</sup>  
 1SG do work weave loom  
 'I'm a weaver.'

(BSS\_31)

(47) နှိတ်လွင် ရး ကး ကျေ နှေ့  
 het<sup>1</sup> lɔŋg<sup>2</sup> naa<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>4</sup> ka<sup>5</sup> ha<sup>2</sup>  
 do work land car also drive  
 '[I] work on the farm, and I also drive a car.'

(BSS\_31)

In some contexts, the copula *pen<sup>4</sup>* is still used. In (48) *pen<sup>4</sup>* is used to say that the water got very high. This is what Me Mai sees at the end of the story, when she looks back from the mountain of Lwemon. It is used in combination with the TAM markers *kaa<sup>5</sup>* and *waj<sup>5</sup>*, with *kaa<sup>5</sup>* marking that the action is finished, and *waj<sup>5</sup>* marking that this is something that was set in motion, hence the water had finished getting very high. Earlier in the story, (49) shows that *pen<sup>4</sup>* is not used when the water is still rising. To express the concept 'become' Shan-Ni uses the TAM marker *maa<sup>4</sup>*, which is explained in Chapter 6.

(48) နမ် ပီးပီး ပိန်း ကျ ဝံ  
 nam<sup>5</sup> pi<sup>4</sup>pi<sup>4</sup> pen<sup>4</sup>kaa<sup>5</sup> waj<sup>5</sup>  
 water very.big COP GO KEEP  
 'The water had gotten VERY big.'

(MK\_IH\_30)

(49) နမ် ဇော် ယှိ မး  
 nam<sup>2</sup> ne<sup>2</sup> yaw<sup>1</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 water DEF big COME  
 'The water got big.'

(MK\_IH\_17)

Below are three sentences with *pyin*<sup>4</sup>, which follow each other as part of the origin story of how the Shan-Ni came to their current homeland. In (50), *pyin*<sup>4</sup> is used as 'happen', with the literal translation of the sentence being 'fever happened'. The following two sentences (51) and (52) start with *pyin*<sup>4</sup> *sang*<sup>4</sup> (*waj*<sup>5</sup>) *yi*<sup>3</sup> 'what happened was that...', introducing an explanation into the story. When *sang*<sup>4</sup> follows a verb, the sentence turns into a question, hence *pyin*<sup>4</sup> *sang*<sup>4</sup> means 'what happened?'. When the linker *si*<sup>3</sup>/*yi*<sup>3</sup> 'that because' follows *pyin*<sup>4</sup> *sang*<sup>4</sup>, this becomes 'what happened was that...'

(50) ကံ နှိ ပျိန်း မး ကျ  
 khaj<sup>2</sup> nau<sup>3</sup> pyin<sup>4</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>  
 sick cold COP COME GO  
 '[He] got a fever'

(NN\_TH\_15)

(51) ပျိန်း ဟင်း ဝံ ဟိ ကျန် မး တျ မး တျ  
 pyin<sup>4</sup> sang<sup>4</sup> waj<sup>5</sup> yi<sup>3</sup> on<sup>2</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> taa<sup>2</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> taa<sup>2</sup>  
 happen what KEEP LNK weak COME PRT COME PRT  
 'What happened was that he got weaker and weaker.'

(NN\_TH\_16)

(52) ပျိန်း ဟင်း ဟိ ကျး လဝ် ပုင်ကျး  
 pyin<sup>4</sup> sang<sup>4</sup> si<sup>3</sup> nyaa<sup>4</sup> caw<sup>2</sup> pung<sup>1</sup>naa<sup>4</sup>  
 happen what LNK meet leader brahmin  
 'What happened was that he met an astrologer.'

(NN\_TH\_17)

The combination with *sang*<sup>4</sup> 'what' is by far the most common usage of *pen*<sup>4</sup> in Shan-Ni. By itself, it is a question *pen*<sup>4</sup> *sang*<sup>4</sup> 'what happened?' which could be answered by *sang*<sup>4</sup> *ma*<sup>1</sup> *pen*<sup>4</sup> 'nothing happened'. As shown above, followed by *si*<sup>3</sup> 'LNK', the phrase can be used in a declarative sense, following an explanation of what happened. In some constructions, *si*<sup>3</sup> is not necessary, for example when followed by a negated clause initiated by *ma*<sup>1</sup>. In (53) this

is illustrated with the sentence ‘I cannot say what happened to his slipper’. In (54) a husband comes home, finds his wife’s blood on the floor, which makes him wonder what could have happened. Here *pyen<sup>4</sup> sang<sup>4</sup>* is preceded by *te<sup>1</sup> laj<sup>2</sup>*, resulting in the question ‘what could have happened’.

(53) ယျာ ကျောတိန်းမိုင်း ပိန်း ယင်း မျ ဝှ ဝေ့  
 yaa<sup>1</sup> kho<sup>2</sup>tin<sup>4</sup>mun<sup>4</sup> pen<sup>4</sup> sang<sup>4</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> waa<sup>2</sup> pe<sup>5</sup>  
 place slipper 3SG COP what NEG say able  
 ‘[I] cannot say what happened to his slipper.’

(BSS\_90)

(54) လှိတ် ဝယိင်း ကိုး တေ လံ ပျိုရီး ယင်း ဟီ  
 lɔt<sup>5</sup> pa<sup>1</sup>ying<sup>4</sup> keu<sup>4</sup> te<sup>1</sup> laj<sup>2</sup> pyen<sup>4</sup> sang<sup>4</sup> i<sup>3</sup>  
 blood wife 1SG FUT GET COP what LNK  
 ‘[That’s] my wife’s blood – what could have happened?’

(EP\_NU\_31)

### 4.3 Existential and possessive predicates with *yang<sup>4</sup>*

The existential verb in Shan-Ni is *yang<sup>4</sup>*. As an existential verb, it functions as a normal verb, and does not require any specific particles. It can be used to refer to things that are physically present in a place, like jade inside a mountain (55), or to say that there were a grandmother a grandfather (56), or that the situation referred to was a long time ago (57). All TAM markers can be used with *yang<sup>4</sup>*.

(55) ဟိုင် ဟိုင် နံ ယင်း ဟိုင် ဟိုင် နံ ဟျ  
 seng<sup>3</sup> khew<sup>3</sup>naj<sup>5</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> seng<sup>3</sup> khew<sup>3</sup>naj<sup>5</sup> khaa<sup>3</sup>  
 gem green DEF EXIST gem green DEF search  
 ‘There is jade, search for the jade.’

(NN\_TH\_20)

(56) ပူ တ ယျာ ဟွိုင် ကျော ယင်း ဟ  
 pu<sup>1</sup> ta<sup>1</sup> yaa<sup>2</sup> song<sup>3</sup> ko<sup>5</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> a<sup>1</sup>  
 grandfather and grandmother two CLF.people EXIST PRT  
 ‘There were a grandfather and a grandmother.’

(NN\_ITL\_3)

(57) မိုဝ် ဟွန်းတောင်းတောင်း နင်တေ့တေ့ ယင်း မျး  
 mɔ<sup>2</sup> ɔn<sup>4</sup>taang<sup>4</sup>taang<sup>4</sup> nang<sup>1</sup>te<sup>5</sup>te<sup>5</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 time long.ago really EXIST COME  
 ‘A really long time ago...’

(NN\_TH\_01)

An existential predicate can be initiated with *yaa<sup>1</sup> ti<sup>2</sup> X* ‘at place X’ to refer the place where the subject ‘exists’. The same construction can also be used to express possession. In the two

sentences below the same construction is used, but in (58) *yaa<sup>1</sup> ti<sup>2</sup>...yang<sup>4</sup>* is used to describe the existence of a tree at a house, and in (59) *yaa<sup>1</sup> ti<sup>2</sup>...yang<sup>4</sup>* is used to refer to the teacher having two flowers.

(58) ယာ တီ ငှိုင်း တုၣ် မကျိုင်း ယင်း ဟူ ကော့း  
*yaa<sup>1</sup> ti<sup>2</sup> hɔn<sup>4</sup> ton<sup>2</sup> ma<sup>1</sup>kyɛng<sup>4</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> khaa<sup>2</sup> ɔ<sup>4</sup>*  
 at place house tree tamarind EXIST POL PRT  
 ‘At home there’s a tamarind tree.’

(BSS\_18)

(59) ယာ တီ မေၣ်ဟွံၣ် မွတ်ယုၣ် ဟွံၣ် မွက ယင်း ဟူ  
*yaa<sup>1</sup> ti<sup>2</sup> mɔ<sup>3</sup>sɔn<sup>3</sup>mɔk<sup>1</sup>yaa<sup>2</sup>sɔng<sup>3</sup> mɔk yang<sup>4</sup> u<sup>1</sup>*  
 at place teacher flower two CLF.flower EXIST STAY  
 ‘The teacher has two flowers’

(BSS\_18)

Instead of *yaa<sup>1</sup> ti<sup>2</sup>*, the predicate can also start with only *ti<sup>2</sup>* ‘place’ (60), only *yaa<sup>1</sup>* ‘at’ (61), (62) or *nyaa<sup>4</sup>* ‘MEET’ (63), which all have the same function in this position. These variants are used interchangeably depending on personal preference, but villages or cities are usually preceded by *nyaa<sup>4</sup>*. This usage of *nyaa<sup>4</sup>* ‘MEET’ is striking because it is used as ‘place’ but it is a verb, and verbs are strange in this position. It does not have a similar function in other Tai languages. In Burmese ‘place’ is *neya*, which is pronounced in a similar way. This might be influencing the usage of the *nyaa<sup>4</sup>* in this position in Shan-Ni. Whenever *nyaa<sup>4</sup>* is used to refer to a place rather than used as a verb, it will be glossed in small caps.

(60) တီ မဟို ပူတယုၣ် ဟွံၣ် ကော့. လိုး လုက်ဟံၣ် ဟံၣ် ကော့. ယင်း နံ  
*ti<sup>2</sup> məhɔ<sup>3</sup>pu<sup>1</sup>ta<sup>1</sup>ya<sup>2</sup> sɔng<sup>3</sup> kɔ<sup>5</sup> lɛu<sup>4</sup> luk<sup>5</sup>sao<sup>3</sup> sip<sup>1</sup> kɔ<sup>5</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> nɛ<sup>2</sup>*  
 at 3PL grandparents two CLF.people at child.F seven CLF.person EXIST DEF  
 ‘The grandparents had seven daughters.’

(NN\_ITL\_4)

(61) ယာ မိုင်း ဟွံၣ် ငိုၣ် နှိုင်း ယင်း ဟူ  
*yaa<sup>1</sup> mun<sup>4</sup> sɔ<sup>2</sup> phun<sup>3</sup> nɔng<sup>2</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> u<sup>1</sup>*  
 at 3SG shirt CLF.cloth one EXIST STAY  
 ‘She has one shirt.’

(BSS\_18)

(62) ယာ ကိုး မာ်း လွက် ဟံၣ် ငှုဟ် ယင်း ဟူ  
*yaa<sup>1</sup> kaw<sup>4</sup> maak<sup>1</sup>cɔk<sup>1</sup> saam<sup>3</sup>hoj<sup>1</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> u<sup>1</sup>*  
 at 1SG fruit orange 3 CLF.round EXIST STAY  
 ‘I have three oranges.’

(BSS\_18)

(63) ၵျၢ ကွဲး မိုဝ် မိုဝ်း ဟံမ် ပက် ယင်း ၵာလင် နံ ဌၢ ဌိုင်း ယင်း  
 nyaa<sup>4</sup> kaw<sup>4</sup> mɔ<sup>2</sup> mɔ<sup>2</sup> ngaa<sup>4</sup> saam<sup>3</sup> pak<sup>1</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> acang de haa<sup>2</sup> heng<sup>3</sup> yang<sup>4</sup>  
 MEET 1SG time yesterday three hundred EXIST now DEF five thousand EXIST  
 'I had 300 yesterday, now I have 5000.'

(NY\_NSIT\_26)

For Phake, Morey (2005a: 310) describes only the option of having *ti*<sup>2</sup>...*yang*<sup>4</sup> or only *yang*<sup>4</sup> by itself. According to him, the difference in Phake is that *ti*<sup>2</sup> 'place' is used for alienable possession, while in predicates with inalienable possession *ti*<sup>2</sup> is not used. For Shan-Ni that does not work, because in (60) *ti*<sup>2</sup> does occur in front of the grandparents who have seven daughters, but in (63) only the first part of the sentence is between *nyaa*<sup>4</sup>... *yang*<sup>4</sup>, the while second predicate has *yang*<sup>4</sup> without *ti*<sup>2</sup>/*nyaa*<sup>4</sup>/*yaa*<sup>1</sup>/*yaa*<sup>1</sup> *ti*<sup>2</sup>. The difference is not alienability, but whether the subject (possessor) is dropped or not. Since *ti*<sup>2</sup>/*nyaa*<sup>4</sup>/*yaa*<sup>1</sup>/*yaa*<sup>1</sup> *ti*<sup>2</sup> precedes a subject, it will not be there either when there is no subject.

(64) လုကံးလံး ကျေ နိုင်း ယင်း ၵျၢ ကျေး  
 luk<sup>5</sup> caai<sup>4</sup> ko<sup>5</sup> nɔng<sup>2</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> khaa<sup>2</sup> ɔ<sup>4</sup>  
 son CLF.human one EXIST POL EMPH  
 '[She] has one son.'

(BSS\_36)

(65) ပီစွင့် ယင်း ဟံမ် ကျေ  
 pi<sup>2</sup> nɔng<sup>5</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> saam<sup>3</sup> ko<sup>5</sup>  
 siblings EXIST three CLF.human  
 '[I] have three sisters.'

(BSS\_30)

(66) ကမံ လိုမ်း ဟံမ် လီမ် ယင်း  
 kam<sup>2</sup> cum<sup>4</sup> saam<sup>3</sup> lem<sup>2</sup> yang<sup>4</sup>  
 ball.pen three CLF.thin.long EXIST  
 '[I] have three ball pens.'

(BSS\_60)

For things that are not there, *yang*<sup>4</sup> is used in combination with *ma*<sup>1</sup> 'NEG'. In (67) it refers to the lack of money, in (68) the frog not being there anymore, in (69) there not being any food, and in (70) it is used within the construction *mɔ*<sup>2</sup> *mɛ*<sup>2</sup> *ma*<sup>1</sup> *yang*<sup>4</sup> *kaa*<sup>5</sup> *naj*<sup>5</sup> 'when the mother is not there anymore'.

(67) လျး မန်း တွံ လှို ဝိုင်း မ ယင်း ဟီ ဝု ဟီ ကျး မှီ လီမ်  
 caa<sup>4</sup> man<sup>4</sup> tɔj<sup>4</sup> lu<sup>3</sup> ngu<sup>4</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> si<sup>3</sup> waa<sup>2</sup> yi<sup>3</sup> kaa<sup>4</sup> mau<sup>1</sup> lem<sup>2</sup>  
 for 3SG look PRT money NEG EXIST LNK say LNK car new CLF.vehicle

ရှိ၍ နှစ် နှစ် နှစ် မှား  
 nʰng<sup>2</sup> su<sup>5</sup> mau<sup>1</sup> hʰn<sup>3</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 one buy new again COME

'Look at him, he said he has no money but he bought a new car again.'

(PV\_EMP\_18)

(68) နေ့ လင်း မှား ကျ မှား လုကွဲ မှား ကျ တွံ နှိတ် မ ယင်း ကျ  
 pha<sup>5</sup> læng<sup>4</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup> man<sup>4</sup> luk<sup>5</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> kwaa<sup>1</sup> tɔj<sup>4</sup> khyet<sup>1</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>  
 sky shine COME GO 3SG get.up come go see frog NEG EXIST GO  
 'When the sun is up he gets up and checks, the frog is not there anymore.'

(KSN\_FS\_07)

(69) ထား ကျိုး ထား ယဉ် ကျေ မ ယင်း ကျ ယဉ် မှား  
 caa<sup>4</sup> kyin<sup>4</sup> caa<sup>4</sup> yam<sup>5</sup> ko<sup>5</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup> yaap<sup>1</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 for eat for chew PRT NEG EXIST GO difficult COME

'There was nothing to eat or to chew anymore, it became difficult.'

(NN\_ITL\_11)

(70) မိမိ မှား မ ယင်း ကျ နံ ပျဲ နံ မှား ကျေ ရှိ၍ ယဉ်  
 mʰ<sup>2</sup> mɛ<sup>2</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup> naj<sup>5</sup> pɔ<sup>2</sup> naj<sup>5</sup> mɛ<sup>2</sup> ko<sup>5</sup> nʰng<sup>2</sup> jaw<sup>5</sup>  
 time mother NEG EXIST GO DEF father DEF mother CLF.human one FINISH

'When there is no mother anymore, the father is already a mother.'

(BSS\_78)

In most of these examples *yang<sup>4</sup>* is followed by the TAM marker *kaa<sup>5</sup>* 'go'. When this TAM marker is used the meaning becomes 'not anymore', hence referring to things that have been there, but are gone now. The difference is illustrated by the pair below (71). Without *kaa<sup>5</sup>*, the phrase *sang<sup>4</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> yang<sup>4</sup>* means 'there's nothing'. With *kaa<sup>5</sup>*, the phrase *sang<sup>4</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>* means 'there isn't anything anymore', which is used for example when a restaurant runs out of a favorite dish at the end of the day.

(71) a. နှင်း မ ယင်း	b. နှင်း မ ယင်း ကျ
sang <sup>4</sup> ma <sup>1</sup> yang <sup>4</sup>	sang <sup>4</sup> ma <sup>1</sup> yang <sup>4</sup> kaa <sup>5</sup>
what NEG EXIST	what NEG EXIST GO
'There's nothing.'	'There isn't anything anymore.'

(MK\_LT\_08)

#### 4.4 Questions and indefinite pronouns

Question words used in content questions and indefinite pronouns are expressed with the same words in different positions. Content questions are formed by placing the question word at the end of the sentence, possibly followed by a TAM marker. These same words at the beginning of a predicate function as indefinite pronouns. Table (28) provides an overview of all the question words and indefinite pronouns in Shan-Ni.

Table 28 Question words and indefinite pronouns				
Shan-Ni word		Question word	Indefinite pronoun	Indefinite pron. +NEG <i>ma</i> <sup>1</sup>
လေး ။ လေ့	le <sup>4</sup> /le <sup>2</sup>	'yes or no?'	-	-
သင်း	sang <sup>4</sup>	'what'	'something'	'nothing'
ဇွဲး	phew <sup>4</sup>	'who'	'whoever'	'nobody'
ထွဲး	thew <sup>4</sup>	'where'	'anywhere'	'nowhere'
မိင်လွဲး ။ မိင်ထွဲး	mɔ̃ <sup>2</sup> leu <sup>4</sup> mɔ̃ <sup>2</sup> thew <sup>4</sup>	'when'	'whenever'	'never'
နဟိုင်း	nahu <sup>4</sup>	'how'	-	-
ကွပ်သင်း	kɔp <sup>5</sup> sang <sup>4</sup>	'why'	-	-
ခလွဲး	kha <sup>1</sup> leu <sup>4</sup>	'how much'	-	-
လွဲး	leu <sup>4</sup>	'which'	-	-

The question words *sang*<sup>4</sup>, *phew*<sup>4</sup> and *thew*<sup>4</sup> always come at the end of the question. In (72) the question *phun*<sup>3</sup>*lik*<sup>5</sup> *phew*<sup>4</sup> 'whose book?' only exists of the word *phun*<sup>3</sup>*lik*<sup>5</sup> 'book' and the question word *phew*<sup>4</sup> 'who'. In (73) *thew*<sup>4</sup> 'where' follows the serial verb construction *kwaa*<sup>1</sup> *laj*<sup>2</sup> *khaa*<sup>3</sup> 'go get search' with preverbal TAM marking *te*<sup>1</sup>. In (74) the noun *phak*<sup>1</sup> 'curry' precedes *sang*<sup>4</sup> 'what' to ask about the type of curry that will be cooked.

(72) နှိုက်လိက် ဇွဲး  
 phun<sup>3</sup>lik<sup>5</sup> phew<sup>4</sup>  
 book who  
 'Whose book is that?'

(BSS\_63)

(73) တေ ကျ လံ ချီ ထွဲး  
 te<sup>1</sup> kwaa<sup>1</sup>laj<sup>2</sup> khaa<sup>3</sup> thew<sup>4</sup>  
 WILL go get searchwhere  
 'Where can [I] go look for it?'

(BSS\_34)

(74) မွဲး တေ တင် နက် သင်း  
 mɛu<sup>4</sup> te<sup>1</sup> tang<sup>2</sup> phak<sup>1</sup> sang<sup>4</sup>  
 2SG FUT cook curry what  
 'What curry will you cook?'

(BSS\_116)

When these same words are used at the beginning of the sentence, they are indefinite pronouns. In (75), *phew*<sup>4</sup> at the beginning of the sentence refers to 'anybody', and in (76) *thew*<sup>4</sup> refers to 'anywhere', which at the end of the sentence would be 'who' and 'where' respectively. Sometimes instead of *sang*<sup>4</sup> 'something', *ka*<sup>1</sup>*sang*<sup>4</sup> (77) is used, though *sang*<sup>4</sup>



itself is also used (78). In all these sentences, the indefinite pronoun comes at the beginning of the sentence, usually followed by the particle *ka<sup>5</sup>*. Usually, whether *ka<sup>5</sup>* is included or not makes no difference because the location already clarifies the meaning of the indefinite pronoun versus the interrogative. For *mɔ<sup>2</sup> leu<sup>4</sup>* ‘anytime’ it does matter whether *ka<sup>5</sup>* is included, because *mɔ<sup>2</sup> leu<sup>4</sup>* ‘when’ can also be an interrogative at the beginning of the sentence, and *ka<sup>5</sup>* removes this ambiguity. In (79) *mɔ<sup>2</sup> leu<sup>4</sup>* with *ka<sup>5</sup>* thus refers to ‘anytime’, while later in (82) *mɔ<sup>2</sup> leu<sup>4</sup>* appears without *ka<sup>5</sup>* at the beginning of the sentence, meaning ‘when’.

(75) ငြီး ကျေမ ငှိတ်လိဟ်  
 pheu<sup>4</sup> ka<sup>5</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> het<sup>1</sup> leh<sup>1</sup>  
 anybody PRT NEG do also.BM  
 ‘Nobody cares.’

(MK\_IH\_14)

(76) ထွီး မ ကျ  
 theu<sup>4</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> kwaa<sup>1</sup>  
 anywhere NEG go  
 ‘I’m not going anywhere.’

(MK\_LT\_08)

(77) ကဆင်း ကျေမ ကူင်း  
 ka<sup>1</sup>sang<sup>4</sup> ka<sup>5</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> ko<sup>4</sup>  
 anything PRT NEG afraid  
 ‘not afraid at all’

(PV\_EMP\_12)

(78) ဆင်း မ ယင်း ကျ  
 sang<sup>4</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>  
 anything NEG EXIST GO  
 ‘There isn’t anything anymore.’

(MK\_LT\_08)

(79) မိုင်း လွီး ကျေ ပိ မျး  
 mɔ<sup>4</sup> leu<sup>4</sup> ka<sup>5</sup> pi<sup>1</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 time INDF PRT PROH come  
 ‘Never come.’

(BSS\_24)

The post-verbal TAM markers *kaa<sup>5</sup>* and *maa<sup>4</sup>* both come after the question word. (80) and (81) contain almost the same questions, only in (80) *maa<sup>4</sup>* indicates that somebody started to cook something in the past and *kaa<sup>5</sup>* that somebody finished cooking in the past. For further discussion on *kaa<sup>5</sup>* and *maa<sup>4</sup>* Chapter 6.

(80) မိုး တင့် နော် နင်း မး  
 mɛu<sup>4</sup> tang<sup>2</sup> phak<sup>1</sup> sang<sup>4</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 2SG cook curry what COME  
 ‘What curry did you cook?’

(BSS\_116)

(81) တင့် နော် နင်း ကျ  
 tang<sup>2</sup> phak<sup>1</sup> sang<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>  
 cook curry what GO  
 ‘What curry did [you] cook?’

(BSS\_96)

The question words *kha<sup>1</sup>leu<sup>4</sup>* ‘how much’ and *mɔ<sup>2</sup> thew<sup>4</sup>/ leu<sup>4</sup>* ‘when’ do not need to come at the end of a sentence. In this case *leu<sup>4</sup>* already follows what it modifies, for example *mɔ<sup>2</sup>* ‘time’, making *mɔ<sup>2</sup> leu<sup>4</sup>* literally ‘which time’. In (82) *mɔ<sup>2</sup> leu<sup>4</sup>* comes at the beginning of the sentence, while in (83) it comes at the end. In both cases the other way around would be acceptable as well, the emphasis would just be different. In (84) the verb *thɔng<sup>3</sup>* ‘arrive’ and the TAM marker *maa<sup>4</sup>* follow the question word *mɔ<sup>2</sup> thew<sup>4</sup>*, because the TAM marker *maa<sup>4</sup>* should come at the end, and this way the verb and the TAM marker do not have to be split up.

(82) မိုဝ်လ်း တေ မး မို  
 mɔ<sup>2</sup> leu<sup>4</sup> te<sup>1</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> mau<sup>1</sup>  
 time which FUT come new  
 ‘When will [you] come again?’

(BSS\_33)

(83) ကျး ကွက် မိုဝ်လ်း  
 kaa<sup>4</sup> ɔk<sup>1</sup> mɔ<sup>2</sup> leu<sup>4</sup>  
 car leave time which  
 ‘When does the (bus)car leave?’

(BSS\_49)

(84) ပေ ဟ်း မိုဝ် ထ်း ထိုင် မး  
 pɔ<sup>2</sup> hɛu<sup>4</sup> mɔ<sup>2</sup> thew<sup>4</sup> thɔng<sup>3</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 father 1PL time when arrive COME  
 ‘What time did our father arrive?’

(NY\_NS\_01)

A similar situation in which *leu<sup>4</sup>* already modifies what it follows applies to *kha<sup>1</sup>leu<sup>4</sup>* ‘how much’. The syllable *kha<sup>1</sup>* is already fossilized and attached to *leu<sup>4</sup>* ‘which’ in *kha<sup>1</sup>leu<sup>4</sup>*, but from Tai Mau (Young 1985: 27) we can learn that originally *kha<sup>1</sup>* is a reduction from *khai* (‘how much’ in Tai Mau). This is the result of a contraction in Tai Mau is merger from *kaa*

'price' and *hɿ* 'or not', making *kha<sup>1</sup>lɛu<sup>4</sup>* 'which price'. For *kha<sup>1</sup>lɛu<sup>4</sup>* 'how much' it is to have a verb such as *yang<sup>4</sup>* 'have' (85) or *laj<sup>2</sup>* 'get' (86) following it.

(85) ဘာသာကို မှီး ဘလှီး ယင်း ဟဲ့  
 a<sup>1</sup>saak<sup>5</sup> məw<sup>4</sup> kha<sup>1</sup>lɛu<sup>4</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> khaa<sup>5</sup>  
 age 2SG how.much have POL  
 'How old are you?'  
 (BSS\_32)

(86) ကျ မန်း ဘလှီး လုံ  
 kaa<sup>2</sup> man<sup>4</sup> kha<sup>1</sup>lɛu<sup>4</sup> laj<sup>2</sup>  
 salary 3SG how.much get  
 'How much salary does he get?'  
 (BSS\_31)

Shan-Ni uses *kha<sup>1</sup>lɛu<sup>4</sup>* both for 'how much' and 'how many', with 'how many' requiring an extra word specifying the type of thing asked about. In Khamti, Phake and Aiton only the interrogative for 'how much' is similar to Shan-Ni's *kha<sup>1</sup>lɛu<sup>4</sup>*, for 'how many' they use a word similar to *kii*. In Shan-Ni, when the referent itself is included in the question, the word to specify the type of object asked about is often a classifier, such as *ka<sup>5</sup>* 'CLF.human' (87) or *hu<sup>4</sup>* 'CLF.hole' (89) in the examples below. But in (88), the question is not about *khun<sup>2</sup>* 'attend' or the dropped subject 'school', but about the time, hence *mɔŋg<sup>4</sup>* 'hour' is used. If instead of *mɔŋg<sup>4</sup>* a classifier for school would be used, the question would be 'how many schools attend? (e.g. in a sports tournament)'. In the same way, in (89) the question is not about the quantity of stairs, it is about the quantity of places for stairs. This reflects the fact that stairs are not necessarily fixed, so the quantity of 'stairs' and 'places for stairs' do not have to be the same.

(87) ပီစွင့် ယင်း ဘလှီး ကျေ  
 pi<sup>2</sup>nɔŋg<sup>5</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> kha<sup>1</sup>lɛu<sup>4</sup> ka<sup>5</sup>  
 siblings EXIST how.many people  
 'How many siblings do you have?'  
 (BSS\_30)

(88) ဟုန် ဘလှီး မွင်း  
 khun<sup>2</sup> kha<sup>1</sup>lɛu<sup>4</sup> mɔŋg<sup>4</sup>  
 attend how.much hour  
 'What time does [school] start?'  
 (BSS\_64)

(89) ဟူင်းအလံာံ ဘလှီး တီ ယင်း  
 hung<sup>4</sup>kha<sup>1</sup>laaj<sup>3</sup> kha<sup>1</sup>lɛu<sup>4</sup> ti<sup>2</sup> yang<sup>4</sup>  
 stairs how.much place EXIST  
 'How many stairs (places) are there?'  
 (BSS\_61)

- (90) ငှား လာပ်ပတူး ကလီး ငှား ယင်း  
 hu<sup>4</sup> sap<sup>1</sup>pa<sup>1</sup>tu<sup>4</sup> kha<sup>1</sup>leu<sup>4</sup> hu<sup>4</sup> yang<sup>4</sup>  
 hole window how.many hole EXIST  
 ‘How many window (holes) are there?’

(BSS\_61)

For polar questions, Shan-Ni uses the interrogative particle **လေး** *le<sup>4</sup>* (or **လေ်** *le<sup>2</sup>*) at the end of the phrase. It is unique to Shan-Ni, and does not seem to have an equivalent cognate in other Tai languages. It is possible that it is cognate with the question word *nai<sup>1</sup>* in Khamti, though in Khamti it is also used in combination with content questions (Inglis 2014: 112). It would not be strange, since /n/ and /l/ are allophones in Shan-Ni for words that often have an initial /n/ in Khamti. In these questions the speaker aims at finding out whether something is true or not, for example in (91) whether the interlocutor is free tomorrow, or in (92) whether the item is bought already or in (93) whether the interlocutor would like to drink sweet tea.

- (91) မိုင့် ဖွက် လာပ် လေး  
 mɔ̃<sup>2</sup> phɔk<sup>5</sup> laap<sup>5</sup> le<sup>4</sup>  
 time tomorrow free QP  
 ‘Are you free tomorrow?’

(BSS\_69)

- (92) ကိုယ့် ယဝ် လေ်  
 su<sup>5</sup> yaw<sup>5</sup> le<sup>2</sup>  
 buy FINISHED QP  
 ‘Did you buy it already?’

(BSS\_34)

- (93) ကမ် လိင်္ဂ် ဝါန် တေ ကူတုံ လေး  
 nam<sup>5</sup> leng<sup>2</sup> waan<sup>3</sup> te<sup>1</sup> sot<sup>5</sup> le<sup>4</sup>  
 water tea sweet FUT drink QP  
 ‘Would you like some (sweet) tea?’

(BSS\_97)

Alternatively, *le<sup>4</sup>* or *le<sup>2</sup>* can be replaced by *နာ<sup>3</sup>* or *နာာ<sup>3</sup>* when the answer is already implied. This is the same in Aiton and Phake (Morey 2005a: 350). *နာ<sup>3</sup>* (95) and *နာာ<sup>5</sup>* (96) are tag questions, meaning something similar to ‘isn’t it?’ or ‘right?’. They might be (old) borrowings, both based on the frequently used Burmese particle *နာ* ‘isn’t it’.

- (94) ငှာပ်း တေ ကျီ ငှိုင့် မိန်း က  
 haw<sup>4</sup> te<sup>1</sup> khyi<sup>1</sup> hɔ̃<sup>5</sup> men<sup>4</sup> naa<sup>5</sup>  
 1PL FUT ride boat fly TAG  
 ‘We’re going by airplane, isn’t it?’

(BSS\_70)

(95) လိုက်: လျ တေ မး ထုပ် ဧ် တေ တုပ် တေ က်းယု  
 lɿn<sup>4</sup> laa<sup>2</sup> te<sup>1</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> thop<sup>1</sup> nɔ<sup>3</sup> te<sup>1</sup> thop<sup>1</sup> tɔ<sup>1</sup> kan<sup>4</sup> yu<sup>1</sup>  
 month face FUT come meet TAG FUT meet talk VPL STAY  
 ‘Next month you will come meet [me] right? [We] will speak to each other.’

(BSS\_98)

#### 4.5 Passive

Shan-Ni can make passive-like sentences with *laj<sup>2</sup> khaam<sup>2</sup>* ‘get crossed’, literally indicating that a subject got “crossed” by some outside force. In (96) the subject was bitten by a dog, and in (97) a daughter was expelled from school. Verbs made passive in these constructions are nominalized by *an<sup>2</sup>* ‘thing’. For example, in (96) *kaap<sup>5</sup>* ‘bite’ (verb) is nominalized to *an<sup>2</sup>kaap<sup>5</sup>* ‘bite’ (noun), and then followed by *laj<sup>2</sup> khaam<sup>2</sup>* ‘got crossed’, meaning that the subject ‘got crossed’ by a bite. In (97) *an<sup>2</sup>* nominalizes *ha<sup>4</sup> ɔk<sup>1</sup>* ‘made to exit’ becoming *an<sup>2</sup> ha<sup>4</sup> ɔk<sup>1</sup>* ‘expulsion’, hence in this phrase, the daughter ‘got crossed’ by expulsion. This construction does not exist in any other Tai or Tibeto-Burman language in the region.

(96) ကိုး မဲ ဟန် ကာပုံ လံ အမ် ကျ  
 kau<sup>4</sup> maa<sup>3</sup> an<sup>2</sup> kaap<sup>5</sup> laj<sup>2</sup> khaam<sup>2</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>  
 1SG dog thing bite GET CROSS GO  
 ‘I was bitten by a dog.’

(PV\_NS\_2)

(97) လုက့်အာဝ် မန်း ထေး ဟုင့်ဟိုန်း ဟန် ဟူး ကွက် လံ အမ်  
 luk<sup>5</sup> saaw<sup>3</sup> man<sup>4</sup> caa<sup>4</sup> hung<sup>5</sup> hen<sup>4</sup> an<sup>2</sup> ha<sup>4</sup> ɔk<sup>1</sup> laj<sup>2</sup> khaam<sup>2</sup>  
 daughter 3SG for school thing CAUS exit GET CROSS  
 ‘His daughter was expelled from school.’

(PV\_NS\_9)

#### 4.6 Conditional

Conditional sentences in Shan-Ni can be made by with *sang<sup>3</sup> pi<sup>4</sup>*, *pi<sup>4</sup>* or *(sang<sup>4</sup>) pu<sup>4</sup>*. I did not find any distinctions in their usage, though *sang<sup>3</sup> pi<sup>4</sup>* seems to be the most common variant in spoken language. The conditional is followed by a verb, such as *tang<sup>2</sup>* ‘cook’ in (98) or *han<sup>3</sup>* ‘see’ in (100). In both of these sentences the subject is omitted, but when this is not the case, as in (99) with *nam<sup>5</sup>* ‘water’ and in (101) with *lom<sup>4</sup>* ‘wind’, the subject precedes the conditional marker *sang<sup>4</sup> pu<sup>4</sup>*. In (102) the adverb later also precedes the conditional *pu<sup>4</sup>*.

(98)  $\text{sa}^2\text{ng}^3\text{pi}^4$   $\text{ta}^2\text{ng}^2$   $\text{khaw}^2$   $\text{nam}^5$   $\text{pi}^4$   $\text{hau}^4$   $\text{nam}^3$   
 if cook rice water PROH give much  
 'If [you] cook rice, don't put too much water.'  
 (BSS\_117)

(99)  $\text{nam}^5$   $\text{sa}^2\text{ng}^3\text{pi}^4$   $\text{nam}^3$   $\text{e}^2\text{paap}^5\text{paap}^5$   $\text{si}^3$   $\text{ma}^1\text{kyin}^4$   $\text{li}^4$   
 water if many soft.RDP LNK NEG eatgood  
 'If [you add] too much water it will be soft and not tasty.'  
 (BSS\_177)

(100)  $\text{pi}^4$   $\text{han}^3\text{aw}^4$   $\text{pɔk}^5$   $\text{maa}^4$   $\text{kɔn}^4$   
 if see take returncome SHOULD  
 'If [you] see [it], [you] should bring it back.'  
 (BSS\_23)

(101)  $\text{lom}^4$   $\text{sa}^2\text{ng}^4\text{pu}^4$   $\text{heng}^4$   $\text{sa}^2\text{phaa}^2$   $\text{sing}^4$   $\text{waj}^5$   $\text{ni}^4\text{ni}^4$   $\text{naa}^5$   $\text{caang}^2$   
 wind if strong shirtcloth tighten keep good.RDP TAG know  
  
 $\text{pɛw}^4$   $\text{lom}^4\text{kwa}^1$   
 decrease wind go  
 'If the wind is strong tighten your clothes well, if the wind decreases [you] can go.'  
 (BSS\_110)

(102)  $\text{kha}^1\text{nang}^3$   $\text{pu}^4$   $\text{thop}^1$   $\text{ko}^5$   $\text{hɔng}^5$   $\text{khaa}^2$   $\text{naa}^3$   
 later if meet PRT call POL isn't.it  
 'If [you] find it back later, please call me'  
 (BSS\_33)

#### 4.7 Dependent clauses with $an^2$ 'thing', $mɔ^2$ 'time' and $ti^2$ 'place'

Dependent clauses are usually initiated by  $an^2$  [the thing that...],  $ti^2$  [the place that] or  $mɔ^2$  [the time that] and are closed by the definite marker  $naj^5/nɛ^2$ . Sentences with  $an^2$  'thing' might be analyzed as relative clauses, while this would be less suitable for sentences with  $mɔ^2$  'time' and  $ti^2$  'place'. Because the usage and structure of these sentences in Shan-Ni is identical, I will discuss them together.  $an^2$  may or may not be preceded by a head noun specifying the 'thing' that is talked about. (103) includes the head noun  $kaa^4$  'car', specifying that the thing the interlocuter had talked about was a car. In (104)  $lɔng^2$  'work'

precedes *an*<sup>2</sup>, specifying that the thing that was ordered was work. These sentences would still be correct when removing the headnoun.

(103) ကျား ကာန် ဇိုး ဝု နံ ဟိုဝ် ကျ လေး  
*kaa*<sup>4</sup>*an*<sup>2</sup> *mɛu*<sup>4</sup> *waa*<sup>2</sup> *naj*<sup>5</sup> *su*<sup>5</sup> *kaa*<sup>5</sup> *de*<sup>4</sup>  
*car thing 2SG say DEF buy GO Q*  
 [H] [ DC ]  
 ‘Did you buy the car you were talking about?’

(NY\_NS\_18)

(104) မဟူ ပီဝ်ဝ် လွင် ကာန် ကိုး ဇိုး ဝံ ကျ  
*ma*<sup>1</sup>*su*<sup>3</sup> *pi*<sup>2</sup>*nɔŋ*<sup>5</sup> *long*<sup>2</sup> *an*<sup>2</sup> *kaw*<sup>4</sup> *cau*<sup>4</sup>*waj*<sup>5</sup> *naa*<sup>5</sup>  
*2PL sisters work thing 1SG order KEEP PRT*  
 [H] [ DC ]  
 ‘You sisters, the work I ordered you...’

(BSS\_210)

Without a head noun, not much changes in the sentence, it is just that the type of thing is not specified by a noun preceding it, like above with ‘car’ and ‘work’. In (105) the relative clause is ‘the thing we wanted to do’ and in (106) ‘thing(s) that give strength’. In (105) the preceding sentences are about gold mining, so it is clear from the context that the ‘thing’ referred to is the activity gold mining. In (106) the interlocutor is advised to eat ‘things that give strength’, so it is clear this refers to food. Similar to the ellipsis discussed at the beginning of this chapter where already obvious subjects are omitted, obvious head nouns can also be omitted.

(105) ကာန် နံ ဟိုဝ် နံ တင်းလိုင် ဟိုဝ်လီ လံ  
*an*<sup>2</sup> *khaj*<sup>2</sup> *het*<sup>1</sup> *naj*<sup>5</sup> *tang*<sup>4</sup>*long*<sup>3</sup> *het*<sup>1</sup> *si*<sup>3</sup> *laj*<sup>2</sup>  
*thing want do DEF everyone do LKN GET*  
 [ DC ]  
 ‘the thing [we] wanted to do, everybody can do.’

(BSS\_39)

(106) ကာန် တေ ယင်း ဟိုင်း နံ ကျိန်း  
*an*<sup>2</sup> *te*<sup>1</sup> *yang*<sup>4</sup> *heng*<sup>4</sup> *naj*<sup>5</sup> *kyin*<sup>4</sup>  
*thing FUT EXIST strength DEF eat*  
 [ DC ]  
 ‘Eat things that give strenght.’

(BSS\_72)

This could be seen as posthead (102, 103) and internally headed relative clauses (104, 105), but that would suggest two different types of relative clauses. Since this is again about information structure in which a known and active argument is omitted, it should not be read that way. The head noun is there, either literally, or in the understanding of the speaker and

listener. If it is there, it precedes the relative clause. If it would be seen as and internally headed relative clause, the headnoun would be *an*<sup>2</sup>. Since *an*<sup>2</sup> is included regardless of the presence of an external headnoun, that analysis does not work for Shan-Ni.

Temporal dependent clauses start with *mɔ*<sup>2</sup> ‘time’ and end in the definite marker *naj*<sup>5</sup>, similar to relative clauses with *an*<sup>2</sup> ‘thing’. In (106) *mɔ*<sup>2</sup> *mɛu*<sup>4</sup> *thɔng*<sup>3</sup> *naj*<sup>5</sup> refers to ‘the time you arrived’, and is followed a direct question about what happened in the recent past. (107) can be read in a more conditional way, with *mɔ*<sup>2</sup> *mɛ*<sup>2</sup> *ma*<sup>1</sup> *yang*<sup>4</sup> *kaa*<sup>5</sup> *naj*<sup>5</sup> ‘the time mother isn’t there anymore’ referring to any situation in which the mother is not present anymore.

- (107) မိုဝ် မွဲး ထိုင် နံ ပိတံး မွဲး ထိုင် ကျ လေး  
*mɔ*<sup>2</sup> *mɛu*<sup>4</sup> *thɔng*<sup>3</sup> *naj*<sup>5</sup> pi<sup>2</sup>caai<sup>4</sup> mɛu<sup>4</sup> thɔng<sup>3</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup> de<sup>4</sup>  
*time* 2SG arrive DEF brother 2SG arrive GO QP  
 [ DC ]  
 ‘When you arrived, had your brother arrived already?’

- (108) မိုဝ် မွဲး မ ယင်း ကျ နံ ပျေ နံ မွဲး ကျေ မိုဝ် ယဝ် (NY\_NS\_20)  
*mɔ*<sup>2</sup> *mɛ*<sup>2</sup> *ma*<sup>1</sup> *yang*<sup>4</sup> *kaa*<sup>5</sup> *naj*<sup>5</sup> pɔ<sup>2</sup> naj<sup>5</sup> mɛ<sup>2</sup> kɔ<sup>5</sup> nɔng<sup>2</sup> jaw<sup>5</sup>  
*time* mother NEG EXIST GO DEF father DEF mother CLF.human one FINISH  
 [ DC ]  
 ‘When there is no mother anymore, the father is already a mother.’  
 (BSS\_78)

Any noun, noun phrase or clause about physical places (including ‘at’ people) starts with *ti*<sup>2</sup>, *yaa*<sup>1</sup>, *nyaa*<sup>4</sup> or *yaa*<sup>1</sup> *ti*<sup>2</sup>. Similar to *an*<sup>2</sup> and *mɔ*<sup>2</sup>, spatial referents can head relative clauses. In (109) it is used in front of a classifier structure, ending with the demonstrative *lɛu*<sup>4</sup> ‘at’ rather than *naj*<sup>5</sup>. In (110) *naj*<sup>5</sup> is also not used, but it is clear that *nyaa*<sup>4</sup> *law*<sup>4</sup> *hɔn*<sup>4</sup> *haw*<sup>4</sup> ‘in our household’ is a relative clause because otherwise the personal pronoun *kau*<sup>4</sup> ‘1SG’ would have to be a possessive pronoun instead.

- (109) တီ မဟို ပူတယျာ ၵွင်ကျေ လွဲး လုက်ယာဝ်ယပ် ကျေ ယင်း နံ  
*ti*<sup>2</sup> mɔhɔ<sup>3</sup>pu<sup>1</sup>ta<sup>1</sup>ya<sup>2</sup> sɔng<sup>3</sup>kɔ<sup>5</sup> lɛu<sup>4</sup> luk<sup>5</sup>sao<sup>3</sup> sip<sup>1</sup> kɔ<sup>5</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> nɛ<sup>2</sup>  
*place* 3PL grandparents two CLF.people at child.F 7 CLF.person EXIST DEF  
 [ DC ]  
 ‘The grandparents had seven daughters.’  
 (NN\_ITL\_4)

- (110) ဟျး လွဲး ဖှိုန်း ဖှပ်း ကွဲး ကာန် ယို ယီ ပိန်း  
*nyaa*<sup>4</sup> *law*<sup>4</sup> *hɔn*<sup>4</sup> *haw*<sup>4</sup> *kau*<sup>4</sup> *an*<sup>2</sup> *jaw*<sup>1</sup> *ji*<sup>3</sup> *pen*<sup>4</sup>  
*MEET* inside house 1PL 1SG thing big LNK be  
 [ DC ]  
 ‘In our household I’m the oldest.’  
 (MK\_LT\_08)



## Chapter 5: Grammatical markers

Apart from the different types of sentences discussed in Chapter 4, there are also a number of words that have developed into grammatical markers, each with their own unique function. Some of these have developed from regular words, whereas others also exist as grammatical markers in other Tai languages but often are slightly different or have additional functions in Shan-Ni. Some of these markers may have quite different functions depending on their context, and in general this relates to two patterns. Firstly, they all have some relation to the meaning of the word they derived from, and secondly, they often mirror Tibeto-Burman grammatical markers in different ways. To illustrate this, I will point out the correspondences these markers have with Burmese. Nevertheless, as elsewhere, it has to be taken into account that Shan-Ni is and has for a long time been in contact with a large number of other neighbouring Tibeto-Burman languages, hence similarities may also be due to contact between Shan-Ni and these languages. Of course the fact that interviews went through Burmese facilitates this connection, but all these markers are common in daily oral communication and non-elicited texts as well. It is striking that each of these markers facilitates Shan-Ni/ Burmese bilinguals to communicate the same nuances through the different languages in their repertoire, though none of them are direct lexical borrowings, nor translations of the Burmese equivalents.

### 5.1 The nominalizer *an*<sup>2</sup> ‘thing’

Noun phrases are often headed by *an*<sup>2</sup> ‘thing’, referring to ‘something that is X’. It can precede words from a variety of word classes, modifying them to into a noun (phrase). Followed by only a verb, *an*<sup>2</sup> can form a new noun. The nouns for ‘food’, ‘death’, ‘love’ and ‘dance’ (111) are formed that way. This way of forming new nouns is quite productive, for example with *an*<sup>2</sup>*kaap*<sup>5</sup> ‘bite’ (112) derived from the verb ‘bite’ and *an*<sup>2</sup>*haaj*<sup>2</sup> ‘cry’ (113) derived from the verb ‘cry’.

- |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (111) a. ကာၼ်ကျိၼ်း               | b. ကာၼ်တၢ်း                       | c. ကာၼ်ဟ့ၼ်                      | d. ကာၼ်ကျၢ                       |
| an <sup>2</sup> kyin <sup>4</sup> | an <sup>2</sup> taaj <sup>4</sup> | an <sup>2</sup> hak <sup>5</sup> | an <sup>2</sup> kaa <sup>2</sup> |
| thing eat                         | thing die                         | thing love                       | thing dance                      |
| ‘food’                            | ‘death’                           | ‘love’                           | ‘dance’                          |

(MK\_LT\_08)

- (112) ကျိး မဲၢ် ကာၼ် ကာၼ် လံၣ် ကာၼ် ကျၢ  
 kau<sup>4</sup> maa<sup>3</sup> an<sup>2</sup> kaap<sup>5</sup> laj<sup>2</sup> khaam<sup>2</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>  
 1SG dog thing bite get CROSS GO  
 ‘I was bitten by a dog.’

(PV\_NS\_2)

(113) ဘဏ် ငှာ ကျေယိန် ကမ်းကျ ယဝ်  
 an<sup>2</sup> haaj<sup>2</sup> ko<sup>5</sup> yin<sup>5</sup> kan<sup>4</sup> kwaa<sup>1</sup> yaw<sup>5</sup>  
 thing cry PRT hear VPL go FINISHED  
 'you hear the cry [slowly] ceasing'

(BSS\_129)

*an*<sup>2</sup> can also be used with attributive verbs followed by the linker *si*<sup>3</sup> and the verb *pen*<sup>4</sup> 'be' to make superlative constructions. For example, to speak about the oldest (115), the smallest (116) or the most most beautiful (117).

(114) ဟူး လှီး ငှိုင်း ဖှင်း ကိုး ဘဏ် ယို လီ ပိန်း  
 nyaa<sup>4</sup> lau<sup>4</sup> hxn<sup>4</sup> haw<sup>4</sup> kau<sup>4</sup> an<sup>2</sup> jau<sup>1</sup> ji<sup>3</sup> pen<sup>4</sup>  
 MEET inside house 1PL 1SG thing big LNK be  
 'I'm the oldest in our house.'

(MK\_LT\_08)

(115) နင် ဧ် ဘဏ် ကွန် လီ ပိန်း  
 nang<sup>1</sup> ne<sup>2</sup> an<sup>2</sup> ɔn<sup>1</sup> ji<sup>3</sup> pen<sup>4</sup>  
 this DEF thing small LNK be  
 'This is the smallest.'

(MK\_LT\_08)

(116) ဘဏ် ဘာန်း လီ ပိန်း  
 an<sup>2</sup> saan<sup>4</sup> ni<sup>3</sup> pen<sup>4</sup>  
 thing beautiful LNK be  
 'the most beautiful'

(MK\_LT\_08)

With demonstratives *an*<sup>2</sup> can refer to objects specifying the distance, as in 'that/this thing (over there)'. This construction may or may not include the definite particle *naj*<sup>5</sup>/*ne*<sup>2</sup>/*naa*<sup>5</sup>, which is obligatory when *an*<sup>2</sup> introduces a full noun phrase. In (118) *an*<sup>2</sup> and *nang*<sup>1</sup>*ne*<sup>2</sup> 'this' together form 'this thing', in (119) *an*<sup>2</sup> and *pun*<sup>4</sup> *naj*<sup>5</sup> together form 'that thing' and in (120) *an*<sup>2</sup> and *pun*<sup>4</sup>*than*<sup>2</sup> refers to 'that thing over there'.

(117) ဘဏ် နင်ဧ် ကျ ဘားတေကျေ မေ့ဟွန်  
 an<sup>2</sup> nang<sup>1</sup>ne<sup>2</sup> kaa<sup>2</sup> aaj<sup>4</sup>te<sup>4</sup>ko<sup>5</sup> ma<sup>3</sup>son<sup>3</sup>  
 thing this car friend teacher  
 'This is my friend's teacher's car.'  
 Lit. This thing is my friend's teacher's car

(PV\_EMP\_16)

(118) တာၣ် ပိုၣ်း နံ ဂှ် မ လှို လေး  
 an<sup>2</sup> puun<sup>4</sup> nai<sup>5</sup> hu<sup>5</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> cau<sup>2</sup> le<sup>4</sup>  
 thing there this know NEG true QP  
 ‘You know that thing, right?’

(BSS\_96)

(119) တာၣ် ပိုၣ်းထၣ် တာၣ်း မး ဖျၢၣ်ဖျၢၣ်  
 an<sup>2</sup> puun<sup>4</sup>than<sup>2</sup> aw<sup>4</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> kyaang<sup>1</sup>kyaang<sup>1</sup>  
 thing over.there take come fast.RDP  
 ‘Bring that thing over there quickly.’

(BSS\_26)

Nouns can precede *an*<sup>2</sup> in this construction, specifying the type of ‘thing’ *an*<sup>2</sup> refers to. Hence in (121) *an*<sup>2</sup> *naj*<sup>5</sup> ‘this thing’ is specified by *lx*<sup>5</sup> ‘meat’ making it ‘this meat (thing)’. In (122) the noun *long*<sup>2</sup> comes before *an*<sup>2</sup> making it ‘work thing’, but here instead of *naa*<sup>5</sup> following *an*<sup>2</sup> directly, there is a whole sentence in between *an*<sup>2</sup> and *naa*<sup>5</sup>.

(120) လှိုၣ် တာၣ် နံ ကိုး ကျ် ဖျိုၣ် မး နံ နှး ဂီး ယု လေး  
 lx<sup>5</sup> an<sup>2</sup> naj<sup>5</sup> kau<sup>4</sup> kwaa<sup>1</sup>su<sup>5</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> nan<sup>5</sup>na<sup>1</sup>hu<sup>4</sup> ni<sup>4</sup> yu<sup>1</sup> le<sup>4</sup>  
 meat thing this 1SG go buy COME that how good STAY QP  
 ‘How good is this meat I bought?’

(BSS\_96)

(121) မယု ပီၣ်စွဲ လွဲ တာၣ် ကိုး လှိုး ဝံ ကျ်  
 ma<sup>1</sup>su<sup>3</sup> pi<sup>2</sup>nong<sup>5</sup> long<sup>2</sup> an<sup>2</sup> kau<sup>4</sup> cau<sup>4</sup> waj<sup>5</sup> naa<sup>5</sup>  
 2PL sisters work thing 1SG order KEEP PRT  
 ‘You (sisters), the work I ordered you...’

(BSS\_210)

When *an*<sup>2</sup> modifies a more complex noun phrase, the noun phrase needs to be closed with the particle *naj*<sup>5</sup>/*ne*<sup>2</sup> to mark what is included in the noun phrase. Whereas above *an*<sup>2</sup> nominalizes verbs, in the examples below this is not the case. For example, *an*<sup>2</sup> *khaj*<sup>2</sup> *het*<sup>1</sup> *naj*<sup>5</sup> is ‘the thing [we] wanted to do’ (122) and *an*<sup>2</sup> *te*<sup>1</sup> *yang*<sup>4</sup> *heng*<sup>4</sup> *naj*<sup>5</sup> ‘the thing that gives strength’ (123).

(122) တာၣ် နံ ဖျိုတ် နံ  
 an<sup>2</sup> khaj<sup>2</sup> het<sup>1</sup> nai<sup>5</sup>  
 thing want do DEF  
 ‘the thing [we] wanted to do.’

(BSS\_39)

(123) ကာန် တေ ယင်း ဖှိင်း နံ ကျိန်း  
 an<sup>2</sup> te<sup>1</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> heng<sup>4</sup> nai<sup>5</sup> kyin<sup>4</sup>  
 thing FUT EXIST strength DEF eat  
 ‘Eat [food] that gives strenght.’

(BSS\_72)

## 5.2 The verbal plural marker *kan*<sup>4</sup>

The verbal plural marker *kan*<sup>4</sup> is used in Shan-Ni to refer to things that are done by multiple people, either reciprocally or simultaneously. The reciprocal function of *kan*<sup>4</sup> is common in other Tai languages, while the simultaneous function is not. In the examples below *kan*<sup>4</sup> is used reciprocally. In (124) *kan*<sup>4</sup> is used to show that this couple will continue quarrelling with each other their whole lives. Similarly, in (125) *kan*<sup>4</sup> is used in the second part to show that [we] will speak to each other.

(124) ဖှိတ်တမေး ဟွိုင် ကျေ လူ့တူ ထူးထူး ဟူ ကန်း တေ့ လှိုင်  
 pho<sup>3</sup>ta<sup>1</sup> me<sup>4</sup> song<sup>3</sup> ko<sup>5</sup> caa<sup>5</sup>caa<sup>5</sup> thaa<sup>4</sup>thaa<sup>4</sup> u<sup>1</sup> kan<sup>4</sup>to<sup>1</sup> co<sup>2</sup>  
 husband.wife two CLF.human angry.RDP swear.RDP STAY VPL until life  
 ‘That couple will keep quarrelling their whole lives.’

(BSS\_80)

(125) လှိုင်း လူ တေ မး ထိုင် နေ တေ တိုင် တေ့ ကန်း ယူ  
 ln<sup>4</sup> laa<sup>2</sup> te<sup>1</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> thop<sup>1</sup> no<sup>3</sup> te<sup>1</sup> thop<sup>1</sup> to<sup>1</sup> kan<sup>4</sup>yu<sup>1</sup>  
 month face FUT come meet isn't.it FUT meet talk VPL STAY  
 ‘Next month you will come meet [me] right? [We] will speak to each other.’

(BSS\_98)

In most contexts, *kan*<sup>4</sup> is used to refer to situations in which actions are done by multiple persons at the same time. Though this has overlap with reciprocity, it is broader than that. Simultaneous actions only require the participation of multiple persons, but it does not require people to do a certain action ‘to each other’. Both the speakers I worked with and the book *Basic Spoken Shan-Ni* consistently translate *kan*<sup>4</sup> as *kya* [ကြ], which in Burmese is used as a plural marker for verbs. Okell and Allott (2001:16) describe Burmese *kya* as a marker which “emphasizes (a) the mutuality of the action, or (b) the fact that several actors were engaged separately, severally or (c) (confusingly) that all actors acted together”. The description “(a) the mutuality of the action” fits the reciprocal examples discussed above, but the examples below indeed fit the last two parts of the description better. In (126) two sisters are pounding rice the whole day, which is not reciprocal, but is a joint action. In (128) the parents are both worried about their child, not about each other, so also here it is simultaneous rather than reciprocal.

(126) တင်း ဝါး ငှိတ်ကင်း ယူ  
 tang<sup>4</sup> waan<sup>4</sup> het<sup>1</sup> kan<sup>4</sup> yu<sup>1</sup>  
 with day do VPL STAY  
 '[They] are doing it [pounding rice] the whole day.'

(BSS\_121)

(127) ဟင်း ကျိန်း ကင်း လွမ်း  
 haw<sup>4</sup> kyin<sup>4</sup> kan<sup>4</sup> cəm<sup>4</sup>  
 PL eat VPL follow  
 'We eat together.'

(MK\_LT\_08)

(128) ပေ့ မိ ဖာဝ် ကျေ့လှီး မံ ကင်း ယူ  
 pə<sup>2</sup> mɛ<sup>2</sup> khaw<sup>3</sup>ka<sup>5</sup> cau<sup>4</sup> maj<sup>2</sup> kan<sup>4</sup> yu<sup>1</sup>  
 father mother 3PL also heart hot VPL STAY  
 '[The parents] are also worried.'

(BSS\_14)

### 5.3 The particle *ka<sup>5</sup>*

The particle *ka<sup>5</sup>* 'also' is a homonym of the human classifier *ka<sup>5</sup>*. They are easily confused, but their functions are quite different. Both words also occur as separate lexemes in Phake (Morey 2005a: 145). In most sentences *ka<sup>5</sup>* can be translated directly as 'also' after a verb (129) or noun (130). In (129) someone is offered a ride because the driver goes into the same direction, and (130) is a common phrase hosts say about their own food when they have guests.

(129) တင်း ကျး နျီ ကျေ့လံ  
 tang<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>4</sup> khyi<sup>1</sup> ka<sup>5</sup> laj<sup>2</sup>  
 with car ride PRT GET  
 '[You] can also drive along with the car.'

(BSS\_48)

(130) ဖက် ကျေ့မ လီး  
 phak<sup>1</sup> ka<sup>5</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> li<sup>4</sup>  
 curry PRT not good  
 'The curry is also not good.'

(BSS\_45)

Sometimes when *ka<sup>5</sup>* is used, it cannot be directly translated as 'also', nor does it really have a translation. Often *ka<sup>5</sup>* follows a clause, like in the examples below (131, 132, 133). Except for closing a clause it does not seem to have a specific function in this context. In Phake this

would mark a topicalized phrase, indicating that the core sentence is following (Morey 2005a: 248). This analysis does not entirely work for Shan-Ni, as in (133) it does follow a conditional clause but it is not necessarily topicalized.

(131) **ၤနင် ပိုင် ထိုင် ကျေ ဖွင့် ဖျါ နါ**  
 kha<sup>1</sup>nang<sup>3</sup> pu<sup>4</sup> thop<sup>1</sup> ko<sup>5</sup> hɔng<sup>5</sup> khaa<sup>2</sup> naa<sup>3</sup>  
 later if meet PRT call POL isn't.it  
 'If you find it back later, please call me'  
 (BSS\_33)

(132) **ၤနံ မန်း ဖေါ် နေ် ကျေ လှး ပယိုင် မန်း ၤလံ နေ် မ လံ**  
 an<sup>2</sup> man<sup>4</sup> pha<sup>3</sup> ne<sup>2</sup> ko<sup>5</sup> caa<sup>4</sup> pa<sup>1</sup>ying<sup>4</sup>man<sup>4</sup> kha<sup>1</sup>laj<sup>2</sup> ne<sup>2</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> laj<sup>2</sup>  
 thing 3SG poor DEF PRT for girl 3SG want DEF NEG GET  
  
**ထိုင် ဖျါ နေ်**  
 thop<sup>1</sup> nyaa<sup>4</sup> pe<sup>5</sup>  
 encounter meet can  
 'Because of his poverty he cannot marry the girl he wants.'

(133) **မိုင် ဖျိုင် နံ ကျေ ဖုန် တူတ် ၤကွတ် ၤကွတ် ၤနီ ယိတ် ယိတ် လိုတ် လိုတ်**  
 mɔ<sup>2</sup> hɔ<sup>2</sup> nai<sup>5</sup> ko<sup>5</sup> phun<sup>3</sup> tok<sup>1</sup> sɔk<sup>5</sup>sɔk<sup>5</sup> si<sup>3</sup> yik<sup>5</sup>yik<sup>5</sup> cɔk<sup>5</sup>cɔk<sup>5</sup>  
 time monsoon DEF PRT rain fall trickle.RDP LNK moist.RDP trickle.RDP  
 'In the monsoon season it rains a lot.'  
 (PV\_CAUS\_7)  
 (BSS\_109)

Another function of *ko<sup>5</sup>* is as an indefinite in combination with an interrogative, together forming an indefinite pronoun. In this construction the indefinite pronoun is at the beginning of the phrase, whereas when used for question it would usually come at the end. The examples below are all negated. For example, in (134) as *ka<sup>1</sup>sang<sup>4</sup> ko<sup>5</sup>* refers to 'nothing', in (135) *mɔ<sup>2</sup> leu<sup>4</sup> ko<sup>5</sup>* to 'never' and in (136) *phɛu<sup>3</sup> ko<sup>5</sup>* to 'nobody'.

(134) **ကလင်း ကျေ မ ကုင်း**  
 ka<sup>1</sup>sang<sup>4</sup> ko<sup>5</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> ko<sup>4</sup>  
 what PRT NEG afraid  
 'not afraid at all'  
 (PV\_EMP\_12)

(135) **မိုင် လှီး ကျေ ပီ မး**  
 mɔ<sup>2</sup> leu<sup>4</sup> ko<sup>5</sup> pi<sup>1</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 time which PRT PROH come  
 'never come.'  
 (BSS\_24)

(136) တင်း နှိး ကျေမ တို့ ကမ်း

tang<sup>4</sup> phɛu<sup>4</sup>ka<sup>5</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> kau<sup>2</sup> kan<sup>4</sup>

with who PRT NEG near VPL

'with nobody near'

(BSS\_120)

This function is not limited to interrogatives either; Shan-Ni can also use *ka<sup>5</sup>* as an indefinite marker after a noun, for example below in (137) *kaa<sup>2</sup>ka<sup>5</sup>* 'any dance'. In (138) *ka<sup>5</sup>* follows *caa<sup>4</sup>kyin<sup>4</sup>caa<sup>4</sup>yam<sup>5</sup>* 'for eating, for chewing', meaning that there was nothing to eat or to chew.

(137) မ တာင် ကျ ကျေကျ

ma<sup>1</sup> taang<sup>2</sup>kaa<sup>2</sup> ka<sup>5</sup> kaa<sup>2</sup>

NEG way dance PRT dance

'I also don't know any dance.'

(BSS\_33)

(138) လှီး ကျိမ်း လှီး ယမ် ကျေ မ ယင်း ကျ ယပ် မး

caa<sup>4</sup> kyin<sup>4</sup> caa<sup>4</sup> yam<sup>5</sup> ka<sup>5</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup> yaap<sup>1</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>

for eat for chew PRT NEG EXIST GO difficult COME

'There was nothing to eat or to chew, it became difficult.'

(NN\_ITL\_11)

### 5.4 The linker *si<sup>3</sup>*

The particle *si<sup>3</sup>* is a linker used to connect two phrases. It can occur as *si<sup>3</sup>*, *ni<sup>3</sup>*, *yi<sup>3</sup>* or *i<sup>3</sup>*. It has several functions, most of which have some overlap with Burmese *lo* [လို့]. Depending on the context it could be translated as 'that', 'and' or 'because', or remain untranslated. The most basic usage of *si<sup>3</sup>* is to link two verbs that are separate actions, rather than part of the same serial verb construction contributing to the same action. In (139) *hɔng<sup>5</sup>* 'call' and *taaj<sup>4</sup>* 'shout' are part of the same action, but simultaneously the children are also sitting, hence *si<sup>3</sup>* is used to connect *nang<sup>2</sup>* 'sit' to *hɔng<sup>5</sup>taaj<sup>4</sup>* '(call) shout'. In (140) the boy is 'faring a tree' *tɔn<sup>2</sup>maj<sup>5</sup>khɪ<sup>1</sup>* and 'climbing (going upstream) back' *khun<sup>2</sup>pɔk<sup>5</sup>maa<sup>4</sup>* to where he came from. The two actions connected by *yi<sup>3</sup>* show that he is doing both things simultaneously, though they still remain described as two different things. At the same time, *khun<sup>2</sup>* 'climb' and *pɔk<sup>5</sup>* 'return' are not separated by another *yi<sup>3</sup>*, since they contribute to the same action.

(139) လုက့်ဟွန် နင် နီ ဖွင့် တံး ဟူ ဟူ

luk<sup>5</sup>ɔn<sup>1</sup> nang<sup>2</sup> si<sup>3</sup> hɔng<sup>5</sup> taaj<sup>4</sup> su<sup>1</sup> u<sup>1</sup>

child sit LNK call shout towards STAY

'The children are sitting and shouting at each other.'

(DS\_LT\_08)

(140) ဘၣ် ဟး တိုၣ်ပံၣ် ဟီၣ် ဘီၣ် တေ ဟီၣ် ပွၣ် မး  
 an<sup>2</sup> nyaa<sup>4</sup> tɔn<sup>2</sup>maj<sup>5</sup> khyi<sup>1</sup> yi<sup>3</sup> te<sup>1</sup> khun<sup>2</sup>pɔk<sup>5</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 thing MEET tree ride LNK FUT climb returnCOME  
 ‘On the tree he fares back.’

(KSN\_FS\_46)

When it links two verbs, *si*<sup>3</sup> can follow both verbs to show multiple things happened in a certain time frame. In (141) *wa*<sup>2</sup> *yi*<sup>3</sup> ‘talk’ *kap*<sup>1</sup> *yi*<sup>3</sup> ‘communicate’ are both connected to *te*<sup>1</sup> *pɔk*<sup>4</sup> *maa*<sup>4</sup> *kaa*<sup>5</sup> ‘was going back’ because the subject did both when he was going back. In (142) the astrologer explains the king that (a) he will get rid of the illness and (b) he will become better, which are both followed by *si*<sup>3</sup>, linking them both to *waa*<sup>2</sup> ‘say’.

(141) ဝု ဘီၣ် ကပ် ဘီၣ် တေ ပွၣ် မး ကု လိုၣ် ပိုၣ်ပိုၣ်  
 wa<sup>2</sup> yi<sup>3</sup> kap<sup>1</sup> yi<sup>3</sup> te<sup>1</sup> pɔk<sup>4</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup> lɔt<sup>5</sup> pɔ<sup>4</sup>pɔ<sup>4</sup>  
 talk LNK communicate LNK FUT return COME GO blood all.over  
 ‘Talking and discussing [with his mother] he was going back, and the blood was all over.’

(EP\_LP\_30)

(142) ယေၣ်ကျ တေ ငှါ ဘီၣ် တေ လီး မး ဘီၣ် ဝု  
 yo<sup>1</sup>ga<sup>1</sup> te<sup>1</sup> haaj<sup>3</sup> si<sup>3</sup> te<sup>1</sup> li<sup>4</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> si<sup>3</sup> waa<sup>2</sup>  
 illness.BM FUT loose LNK FUT good come LNK say  
 ‘You will get rid of the illness and get better, he said.’

(NN\_TH\_21)

When *si*<sup>3</sup> is used to link two actions the most common verb to be part of such a combination is *kwa*<sup>1</sup> ‘go’. This thus means somebody did something and left. In (143) the frog ran out and went away. In (144) a man is coming towards the speaker with a goat and leaves again. In (145) *si*<sup>3</sup> *kwa*<sup>1</sup> is used in a slightly different way, to emphasize that the person has eaten completely everything. A similar construction with just *tang*<sup>4</sup> *long*<sup>3</sup> *kyin*<sup>4</sup> ‘eat everything’ would be enough to express that everything was eaten, but *si*<sup>3</sup> *kwa*<sup>1</sup> is used to add extra emphasis.

(143) ဟီၣ်တံ တုၣ်း ဝိုၣ် ဟံ ဟာၣ်း ဘီၣ် ကု  
 khyet<sup>1</sup>to<sup>4</sup> nɔng<sup>2</sup> paaj<sup>2</sup> aw<sup>4</sup> yi<sup>3</sup> kwaa<sup>1</sup>  
 frog CLF.animal one run take LNK go  
 ‘The frog ran out.’

(KSN\_FS\_06)

(144) တင် ဘီၣ် မး ဘီၣ် ကု  
 tang<sup>1</sup> seik<sup>1</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> si<sup>3</sup> kwaa<sup>1</sup>  
 with goat.BM come LNK go  
 ‘With the goat he comes and goes.’

(AT\_LT\_30)



(145) မန်း တင်းလှိုင် ကျန်း နီ ကျ ယဝ်  
 man<sup>4</sup> tang<sup>4</sup>long<sup>3</sup> kyin<sup>4</sup> si<sup>3</sup> kwaa<sup>1</sup> yaw<sup>5</sup>  
 3SG everything eat LNK go FINISHED  
 'He ate everything.'

(CM\_EMP\_5)

A very common expression with *si*<sup>3</sup> is *si*<sup>3</sup>*ma*<sup>1</sup>*laj*<sup>2</sup>, the equivalent of 'cannot'. It is used in combination with any verb, telling the interlocutor something cannot be done. For example in (147), the interlocutor is told (s)he cannot go to the pagoda festival today. This does not imply that the speaker is the one putting on the restriction, or that the interlocutor is not allowed to go. If the interlocutor would not be allowed to go, this would be expressed with *ma*<sup>1</sup>*hau*<sup>4</sup>*kwaa*<sup>1</sup>, as shown in (148). This construction also works without the negator *ma*<sup>1</sup>, as shown in (149) with *khaw*<sup>2</sup>*si*<sup>3</sup>*laj*<sup>2</sup>*yaw*<sup>5</sup> 'can enter already'.

(146) ဝန်မလုံ မိုး ပွဲ မြေး ကျ နီ မ လုံ  
 wan<sup>1</sup>ma<sup>1</sup>laj<sup>5</sup> meu<sup>4</sup> pɔj<sup>4</sup> phraa<sup>4</sup> kwaa<sup>1</sup>ji<sup>3</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> laj<sup>2</sup>  
 today 2SG fair pagoda go LNK NEG GET  
 'You cannot go to the pagoda festival today.'

(PV\_CAUS\_25)

(147) မိုင့်ဖုတ် ပွဲ မ မှီး ကျ  
 mɔ<sup>2</sup>phok<sup>5</sup> pɔj<sup>4</sup> phraa<sup>4</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> hau<sup>4</sup> kwaa<sup>1</sup>  
 tomorrow fair pagoda NEG GIVE go  
 'You are not allowed to go to the temple fair tomorrow.'

(PV\_CAUS\_01)

(148) ကဝ် နီ လုံ ယဝ် ကပ်တူး ပုတ် ဝယ့်  
 khaw<sup>2</sup>si<sup>3</sup> laj<sup>2</sup> jaw<sup>5</sup> sap<sup>1</sup>pa<sup>1</sup>tu<sup>4</sup> put<sup>1</sup> jaw<sup>5</sup>  
 enter LNK get FINISHED door open FINISHED  
 'You can come in already, the door is already open.'

(NY\_NS\_38)

The linker *si*<sup>3</sup> is also part of the construction *si*<sup>3</sup>*u*<sup>1</sup> with the TAM marker *u*<sup>1</sup> 'STAY'. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

(149) လူကွဲဟွန် ဧက နီင် နီ ကျ  
 luk<sup>5</sup>ɔn<sup>1</sup> ne<sup>1</sup> eng<sup>2</sup> si<sup>3</sup> u<sup>1</sup>  
 child PL play LNK STAY  
 'The children are playing.'

(CM\_EMP\_3)

## 5.5 The prohibitive *pi*<sup>1</sup>

The prohibitive *pi*<sup>1</sup> ‘prohibits’ the action indicated by the verb it precedes. In (150) it precedes *taan*<sup>2</sup> *khwaam*<sup>4</sup> ‘talk’, in (151) *u*<sup>1</sup> ‘stay’, and in (152) *maa*<sup>4</sup> ‘come’. As it is about actions the speaker prohibits the listener to do, there is no TAM marking, and since it is usually part of a conversation where the referent is clear, there will not be any subject expressed.

(150) ပီ တာန် ကျမ်း ကမ်ကမ်  
 pi<sup>1</sup> taan<sup>2</sup> khwaam<sup>4</sup> nam<sup>3</sup>nam<sup>3</sup>  
 PROH talk language a.lot.RDP  
 ‘Don’t talk a lot.’

(BSS\_65)

(151) ဟူး ထံ ပီ ဟူ ဟူး နမ် နွင် လှိုင်  
 nyaa<sup>4</sup> thaj<sup>2</sup> pi<sup>1</sup> u<sup>1</sup> nyaa<sup>4</sup> nam<sup>5</sup> nong<sup>3</sup> long<sup>3</sup>  
 MEET here PROH stay MEET water lake big  
 ‘Don’t stay here, at Indawgi.’

(MK\_IH\_07)

(152) မိုင်း လွီး ကျေ ပီ မူး  
 mɔ̃<sup>4</sup> lɛu<sup>4</sup> kɔ̃<sup>5</sup> pi<sup>1</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 time INDF PRT PROH come  
 ‘Never come.’

(BSS\_24)

(153) ပီ ကာန် ကာန် လိက်  
 pi<sup>1</sup> khaan<sup>5</sup> aan<sup>1</sup> lik<sup>5</sup>  
 PROH lazy count write  
 ‘Don’t be lazy to study.’

(BSS\_65)

(154) နင်နံ့ ပီ နှိတ် နင်နံ့ နှိတ်  
 nang<sup>1</sup>nan<sup>5</sup> pi<sup>1</sup> het<sup>1</sup> nang<sup>1</sup>ne<sup>2</sup> het<sup>1</sup>  
 that PROH do this do  
 ‘Don’t do that, do this.’

(BSS\_23)

## 5.6 Plurality

As already briefly mentioned in section 3.1.3, one of the grammatical functions of the no longer used personal pronoun *khaw*<sup>3</sup> ‘3PL’ is that of a plurality marker for humans. To indicate plurality, it is placed behind two important participants of the group it applies to, for example in (156) *pa*<sup>2</sup> *leng*<sup>5</sup> ‘biological father’ and *me*<sup>2</sup> *leng*<sup>5</sup> ‘biological mother’ are followed

by *khaw*<sup>3</sup> to refer to the concept ‘biological parents’. The combination of *pu*<sup>1</sup> ‘grandfather’ and *yaa*<sup>2</sup> ‘grandmother’ refers to old people in general. Any prepositions or morphology can be marked on both elements of the pair, like the reduced *a*<sup>1</sup> (from *ang*<sup>1</sup> ‘for’) preceding both *pu*<sup>1</sup> ‘grandfather’ and *yaa*<sup>2</sup> ‘grandmother’ in (156). When it is specifically about the two people mentioned, for example grandfather and grandmother in (157), *sɔŋ*<sup>3</sup> *kɔ*<sup>5</sup> ‘two people’ is used instead of *khaw*<sup>3</sup>.

(155) ပေု လီၣ် နီၣ် လီၣ် နီၣ် နာ်  
 pɔ<sup>2</sup> lɛŋg<sup>5</sup> mɛ<sup>2</sup> lɛŋg<sup>5</sup> khaw<sup>3</sup>  
 father give.birth mother give.birth 3PL  
 ‘biological parents’

(BSS\_80)

(156) နာပူ နာယု နာ်  
 a<sup>1</sup> pu<sup>1</sup> a<sup>1</sup> yaa<sup>2</sup> khaw<sup>3</sup>  
 for grandfather for grandmother 3PL  
 ‘for grandparents/elderly people’

(BSS\_78)

(157) ပူတယု နာ် နေၣ် ကေု ယင်း နာ  
 pu<sup>1</sup> ta<sup>1</sup> yaa<sup>2</sup> sɔŋg<sup>3</sup> kɔ<sup>5</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> a<sup>1</sup>  
 grandfather and grandmother two CLF.people EXIST PRT  
 ‘There were a grandfather and a grandmother.’

(NN\_ITL\_3)

The same process with *khaw*<sup>3</sup> as a plural marker also exists in Khamti, sometimes in combination with *nai*<sup>1</sup> ‘this’ as *nai*<sup>1</sup>*khaw*<sup>5</sup> (Inglis 2014: 40). However, Khamti uses *khaw*<sup>3</sup> as a general plural marker, whereas Shan-Ni restricts the usage of *khaw*<sup>3</sup> to people. Plural objects or animals in Shan-Ni can be marked with the marker *ne*<sup>1</sup>/*le*<sup>1</sup>, which is probably derived from the definite marker *naj*<sup>5</sup>/*ne*<sup>2</sup>. It specifies the difference between the indefinite concept which may or may not involve plurality and a concept that is definitely plural. Hence in example (158), *tin*<sup>4</sup> *man*<sup>4</sup> *mu*<sup>4</sup> *man*<sup>4</sup> is unmarked hence denotes the concept of ‘his limb(s)’ without specifying whether this is plural or not. If we want to specify whether the limbs are plural or not, we can say *mu*<sup>4</sup> *man*<sup>4</sup> *tin*<sup>4</sup> *man*<sup>4</sup> *ne*<sup>1</sup> for ‘his limbs’ or *tin*<sup>4</sup> *man*<sup>4</sup> *paa*<sup>2</sup> *nɔŋg*<sup>2</sup> or e.g. ‘his foot (one side)’. Unmarked by anything this works the same; in (161) the dishes are referred to as ‘flat plate round plate’ without a definite marker, leaving it open what type of dishes there actually are and whether it is plural or not.

(158) တိၣ်း မၢ်း ဝိုၣ်း မၢ်း  
 tin<sup>4</sup>man<sup>4</sup> mu<sup>4</sup>man<sup>4</sup>  
 foot 3SG hand 3SG  
 ‘his limb(s)’

(BSS\_126)

(159) မိုဝ်း မန်း တိန်းမန်း ဧ  
 mu<sup>4</sup> man<sup>4</sup> tin<sup>4</sup> man<sup>4</sup> ne<sup>1</sup>  
 hand 3SG foot 3SG PL  
 'his limbs'

(BSS\_126)

(160) တိန်းမန်း ဗျ ဝိုင်  
 tin<sup>4</sup> man<sup>4</sup> paa<sup>2</sup> nɔng<sup>2</sup>  
 foot 3SG side one  
 'his leg'

(BSS\_126)

(161) ကျိန်း ယဝ့် လာင့် ဘရ် ဝစ်  
 kyin<sup>4</sup> yau<sup>5</sup> laang<sup>5</sup> paan<sup>5</sup> wan<sup>1</sup>  
 eat FINISHED wash plate.flat plate.round  
 'After eating wash the dishes.'

(BSS\_72)

Although in some sentences *ne*<sup>1</sup> could be seen as a definite marker, there are sentences in which this does not seem to be the case. This is also the only function in which the definite marker can be pronounced with an /l/. Though it is common for *naj*<sup>5</sup> to be reduced to *ne*<sup>2</sup> or maybe even *ne*<sup>1</sup>, *le*<sup>1</sup> is only used as a plural marker. Still, it is not used for people. The examples below are almost identical in structure, though in (162) *ngo*<sup>4</sup> 'cows' is marked by *le*<sup>1</sup> while in (163) *kɔn*<sup>4</sup> 'people' remains unmarked.

(162) ယျ မရ် ဝိုဝ်း လေ ဟံး ဧေး ဟူ  
 yaa<sup>1</sup> maan<sup>2</sup> ngo<sup>4</sup> le<sup>1</sup> aaj<sup>4</sup> phɔ<sup>4</sup> u<sup>1</sup>  
 at villagecow PL very enough stay  
 'In the village there are many cows.'

(BSS\_19)

(163) ယျ တီ ဝိုဝ်း ကုန်း ဟံး ဝမ် ဟူ  
 yaa<sup>1</sup> ti<sup>2</sup> mɔng<sup>4</sup> kɔn<sup>4</sup> aaj<sup>4</sup> nam<sup>3</sup> u<sup>1</sup>  
 at place city people very many stay  
 'In the city there are many people.'

(BSS\_18)

## 5.7 Summary

The grammatical markers discussed in this chapter are all very common in Shan-Ni daily speech. Most of them do not exist or do not have the exact same function in other Tai languages, though they do have a Burmese equivalent. This is most evident with the verbal plural *kan*<sup>4</sup> and the linker *si*<sup>3</sup>. *kan*<sup>4</sup> exists as a reciprocal marker in other Tai languages, but in

Shan-Ni it is commonly used for simultaneous actions or actions done by multiple participants, similar to Burmese *cha. si*<sup>3</sup> in other Tai languages is mostly used between verbs, but in Shan-Ni is also used as a linker, similar to the usage of the Burmese *lo*, often meaning ‘because’ or ‘that’.

The word for ‘thing’ *an*<sup>2</sup> in Shan-Ni is used as a nominalizer, identical to the Burmese prefix *a-*. Similar to Burmese it can also be part of superlative structures. The difference is that Shan-Ni also uses it before demonstratives, which does not happen in Burmese. The only other Tai language in which a cognate of *an*<sup>2</sup> has similar functions is Khamti, which Inglis (2014) describes in detail in his dissertation.

The markers *ka*<sup>5</sup>, *pi*<sup>1</sup> and *ne*<sup>1</sup>/*le*<sup>1</sup> also allow direct translation to and from Burmese. Though they may have additional functions, they allow for bilinguals to express common Burmese expressions through Shan-Ni, in ways that do not always exist in other Tai languages. The plural marker *ne*<sup>1</sup>/*le*<sup>1</sup> is unique to Shan-Ni and like the Burmese *twe* not obligatory, but used for emphasis. The difference is that Shan-Ni does not use this plural marker for people, but uses *khaw*<sup>3</sup> instead. In Khamti, *khaw*<sup>5</sup> is used as a plural marker for both people and objects.

Shan-Ni	Function	Burmese equivalent	Other Tai languages	Comment
<i>an</i> <sup>2</sup> ဘၢ်	Nominalizer	အ- [a-]	Only in Khamti	Not for demonstratives in Burmese
<i>kan</i> <sup>4</sup> တၢ်း	Verbal plural	ကြ [cha]	Only reciprocal	In Shan-Ni reciprocal and multiple participants/ simultaneous, like Burmese
<i>ka</i> <sup>5</sup> ကျေ	‘also’	လည်း [leeh]	Common	
	Clausefinal particle	-	Topicalization in Phake	
<i>si</i> <sup>3</sup> ဟီ	Linker	လံ [lo]	Between verbs	Between verbs and as ‘because’ or ‘that’
<i>pi</i> <sup>1</sup> ပီ	Prohibitive	မ..နဲ [mə.. nɛ]		
<i>ne</i> <sup>1</sup> / <i>le</i> <sup>1</sup> ဝေ   လေ	Plural	တွေ [twe]	Absent, <i>khaw</i> <sup>5</sup> in Khamti	Both non-obligatory

## Chapter 6: Tense, Aspect, Mood (TAM) markers

Shan-Ni has nine tense, aspect and mood markers. Individually or in combination with each other, they place events in time. The TAM markers have grammaticalized from words that still exist in their original function in the language. To a certain extent, they correspond with the TAM markers in Phake and Aiton described by Morey (2005a, 2008). Because of the extensive description Morey has given on the TAM markers, I will discuss the TAM markers in Shan-Ni mostly in comparison to his work.

The TAM markers derived from words (mostly verbs), having to different degrees retained transparency to the original words they derived from. For example *waj*<sup>5</sup> 'keep' has retained the same form as both regular verb and TAM marker, while the TAM marker *kaa*<sup>5</sup> 'go' is derived from the same origin as the verb *kwa*<sup>1</sup> 'go'. Some of these markers have a reduced vowel (/ə/ or /ɤ/) in comparison to the word they derived from. In those cases the script has often retained the vowel of the source word. Morey (2005a: 321) categorizes these markers

Shan-Ni	Tai Aiton (Morey 2008)	Derived from	Description Morey (2008)	Usage in Shan-Ni
kaa <sup>5</sup>	kaa <sup>5</sup>	GO	Marker of past time	Similar
maa <sup>4</sup>	maa <sup>2</sup>	COME	Marker of past time, used when the scope of the process indicated by the verb is in some way towards the speaker	Similar
waj <sup>5</sup>	wai <sup>3</sup>	KEEP	Marker of past time, used when the process indicated by the verb had or has some continuation	Similar
yaw <sup>5</sup>	zau <sup>3</sup>	FINISHED	Indicates that the process of the verb is complete, or that a section of the text has been completed	Similar
te <sup>1</sup>	tak <sup>1</sup> /ta <sup>1</sup> /ti <sup>1</sup>	-	Marker of future action, or action which should be undertaken	Similar
u <sup>1</sup>	uu <sup>1</sup>	STAY	Emphatic, continuous/ progressive in other sources	Similar to other sources, not to Morey
kɔn <sup>1</sup>	-	SHOULD/ YET	-	Something expected to occur in the future, but has not occurred yet
kaw <sup>1</sup>	-	OLD	-	Something the speaker has already experienced at some point in the past
laj <sup>2</sup>	dai <sup>3</sup> /nai <sup>3</sup>	GET	In preverbal position, indicates that the process has been or will be accomplished	Same, possibly more complex

in three different groups: those that precede the verb, those that can either follow the verb directly or come at the end of the core sentence, and those that can only come at the end of the core sentence. An overview of the TAM markers in Shan-Ni and a comparison with their description in Morey (2005a, 2008) is provided below.

Five TAM markers in Shan-Ni look similar to the ones described by Morey for Phake and Aiton. However, their functions and usages in Shan-Ni are not completely identical. Two Shan-Ni TAM markers are not included in Morey's description for the Tai languages of Assam. One of these is *kɔn*<sup>1</sup>, which in the Tai languages of Assam does mean 'should', but is not used as a TAM marker. In Shan-Ni it is frequently used as a TAM marker, especially in combination with the negator *ma*<sup>1</sup>, referring to things that have not happened yet. The other marker is *kaw*<sup>1</sup>, which in other Tai languages simply means 'old'. In Shan-Ni, *kaw*<sup>1</sup> marks whether events have already been experienced in the past. The grammaticalization of verbs into TAM markers is thus an active process, with markers existing in both varieties, having slightly different functions and Shan-Ni introducing new TAM markers. This does not only provide insights into the different functions Shan-Ni can express, but also into the historical processes behind these developments.

Most Shan-Ni's TAM markers refer to the past when used alone, but have a different function in combination with one or two other TAM markers. They do not all fit nicely into the categories tense, aspect and mood, and have other features distinguishing them from one another. For that reason, I follow Morey's glosses referring to the original verbs they derived from, writing them in small caps to mark that they are grammaticalized. Hence, the lexical gloss 'go' refers to the regular verb 'go' whereas 'GO' refers to the TAM marker which is a grammaticalization of the verb 'go'. Following this system, I have given the Shan-Ni specific TAM markers *kaw*<sup>1</sup> and *kɔn*<sup>1</sup> the glosses OLD and SHOULD/YET, referring to their original meanings. For the future marker *te*<sup>1</sup> I gloss FUT, because Morey's gloss WILL does not match the origin nor function of the marker in Shan-Ni.

In this overview, *laj*<sup>2</sup> 'GET' is only discussed in preverbal position in combination with the future marker *te*<sup>1</sup>. Although it is possible for *laj*<sup>2</sup> to be a TAM marker postverbally as well (as it is in other Tai languages), the sound changes and additional functions TAM markers acquire in Shan-Ni make that many particles could be interpreted as having derived from *laj*<sup>2</sup>. At this point, I cannot say anything conclusive about the post verbal developments of *laj*<sup>2</sup>. Touching upon that level of complexity goes beyond the scope of this thesis and should be left for future research.

TAM marking in Shan-Ni is not obligatory, nor exclusive. A sentence can have zero, one, two or more TAM markers. There is no combination I have found to be impossible, though I will only discuss the combinations that are most common and are influencing the way the Shan-Ni speak about time.

## 6.1 Phrases with TAM markers

Shan-Ni marks tense, aspect and mood either before the verb or at the end of the clause. The examples below illustrate three ways to express time, and will later be elaborated on in their own sections. In (a), *kaa*<sup>1</sup> ‘GO’ is used because father and mother left in a particular moment in the past. In (b), *yau*<sup>5</sup> ‘FINISHED’ is used, expressing that three days have come to an end. In (c) *kʰn*<sup>1</sup> ‘YET’ is used to express the parents have not returned yet.

a) ပေၤ ဝေၣ် ၵာ် ၵာ် တၢင်း ၵျဲ ၵျဲ  
 po<sup>2</sup> mɛ<sup>2</sup> khaw<sup>3</sup>ɔk<sup>1</sup> taang<sup>4</sup>kwa<sup>1</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>  
 father mother PL leave path go GO  
 ‘Father and mother went travelling...’

b) ၵာ် ၵာ် ၵာ် ၵာ် ၵာ်  
 saam<sup>3</sup>wan<sup>4</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> yau<sup>5</sup>  
 three day have FINISHED  
 ‘...three days have passed already...’

c) မ ထိုင် ပွတ် မး ကိုက်  
 ma<sup>1</sup> thɔng<sup>3</sup> pɔk<sup>4</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> kʰn<sup>1</sup>  
 NEG arrive return come YET  
 ‘...they haven’t return yet.’

(BSS\_78)

The same set of TAM markers can be used to refer to the current state of the sun, using, *kaa*<sup>1</sup> for the time after sunrise, *yau*<sup>5</sup> FINISHED for daytime, when they sky has shown “its face” already and *kʰn*<sup>1</sup> for the sun not having risen yet.

a) နှၢ လိင်း ကျဲ  
 phaa<sup>5</sup> leng<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>1</sup>  
 sky bright GO  
 ‘after sunrise’

b) နှၢ လျဲ ၵာ်  
 phaa<sup>5</sup> laa<sup>2</sup> yaw<sup>5</sup>  
 sky face FINISHED  
 ‘daytime’

c) နှၢ မ လိင်း ကိုက်  
 phaa<sup>5</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> leng<sup>4</sup> kʰn<sup>1</sup>  
 sky NEG bright YET  
 ‘before sunrise’

(BSS\_66, 67)



## 6.2 The terminative aspect marker *kaa*<sup>5</sup> ‘GO’

The marker *kaa*<sup>5</sup> [ကျ] is derived from *kwa*<sup>1</sup> [ကျ] ‘go’. It is used post-verbally to describe an event that happened in the past, without specifying the moment it happened. It corresponds with the Tai Aiton equivalent described by Morey (2005a: 326) as “the simple past time, indicating that the action of the verb is ‘gone’ “. In this way, it is a terminative aspect marker, in contrast with the inchoative aspect marker *maa*<sup>4</sup>. It is used as the most general past marker, with *maa*<sup>4</sup>, *yau*<sup>5</sup> and *kau*<sup>1</sup> being used in more specified contexts. While the TAM marker *kaa*<sup>1</sup> in Shan-Ni differs from the verb it derived from, *kwa*<sup>1</sup> ‘to go’, it does correspond with both the TAM marker and the regular verb in the Tai languages of Assam, both being *kaa*<sup>1</sup>. In (164), one of the examples also given in the introduction, *kaa*<sup>5</sup> is used to say the parents went travelling, in (165) to say that the boy slept and in (166) that his returned. All of these actions were completed at a particular moment in the past<sup>18</sup>.

- (164) ဇေယျ ဇေယျိ ဘဝ် ကွတ် တာင်း ကျ ကျ  
 po<sup>2</sup> me<sup>2</sup> khaw<sup>3</sup>ɔk<sup>1</sup> taang<sup>4</sup>kwa<sup>1</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>  
 father mother PL leave path go GO  
 ‘Father and mother went travelling...’

(BSS\_77)

- (165) မှိုင် မန်း လုက္ခိယုဂ် လွန်း ကျ  
 mɔ̃<sup>2</sup> man<sup>4</sup> lə<sup>5</sup>ɔn<sup>1</sup> lɔn<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>  
 time 3SG child sleep GO  
 ‘When he was asleep...’

(KSN\_FS\_5)

- (166) ပယိင်း မှီး ပွက္ခိယု ကျ  
 pa<sup>1</sup>ying<sup>4</sup> mɛu<sup>4</sup> pɔk<sup>5</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>  
 wife 2SG return GO  
 ‘Your wife has returned.’

(EP\_LP\_28)

Similar to the function of *kaa*<sup>1</sup> in Tai Aiton (Morey 2005a: 326), *kaa*<sup>5</sup> in Shan-Ni can mark multiple verbs in the same construction. In Shan-Ni this is a strategy often used in narratives to describe a sequence of actions, usually repetitive. In the examples below, the main character is running away from home because her mother-in-law put glass in the rice pot, so her daughter-in-law would cut herself. In (167), she is running down the stairs while blood is falling on the stairs. In (168), she arrived in the banana forest and is trying to clean her wounds while continuing to run.

<sup>18</sup> The verb *lɔn*<sup>4</sup> ‘sleep’ also means ‘laying down’, hence *kaa*<sup>5</sup> is used because he already laid down.

(167) ယု ဟူင်းဟလံ လိုတ် တွေး ဟူး တူကို ကျ မး ကျ  
 yaa<sup>1</sup> hung<sup>4</sup>kha<sup>1</sup>laaj<sup>3</sup> lɔt<sup>5</sup> thwe<sup>4</sup> ho<sup>4</sup> tuk<sup>1</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>maa<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>  
 at stairs blood blood.BM stairs fall GO come GO  
 ‘The blood fell onto the ladder.’

(EP\_LP\_13)

(168) ဟူး တိုန် ဟူဟ် ဟူကို ကျ မး ကျ  
 nyaa<sup>4</sup> tɔn<sup>2</sup> khuy<sup>2</sup> suk<sup>5</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>maa<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>  
 MEET tree banana clean GO come GO  
 ‘Around the banana trees she was cleaning and going.’

(EP\_LP\_17)

*kaa*<sup>1</sup> is also always used to talk about death, things that have finished and are already not there anymore, although they once were (169). The expression *yaw*<sup>5</sup> *kaa*<sup>5</sup> (170) is used to express a sequence, like ‘and then’ in English. In Tai Aiton and Phake this expression occurs as *yau*<sup>3</sup> *maa*<sup>2</sup>, hence using COME instead of GO (Morey 2005a: 329). Example (171) shows the difference between a sentence without *kaa*<sup>5</sup> ‘there’s nothing’ and with *kaa*<sup>5</sup> ‘there’s nothing anymore (but there was something)’. In this context *kaa*<sup>5</sup> in combination with the negator means ‘not anymore’.

(169) လူ ယိုင်း ကျ ဟပ် ကျ တံး ကျ  
 lu<sup>3</sup> ju<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>sap<sup>1</sup> kwaa<sup>1</sup> taaj<sup>4</sup>kaa<sup>5</sup>  
 mouse shoot GO strike go die GO  
 ‘He shot the mouse and the mouse died.’

(TS\_HS\_25)

(170) ကျ နမိလွင် ယတ် ကျ တေ ကျ မိုင်းစွင်  
 kwaa<sup>1</sup> nam<sup>5</sup>mi<sup>3</sup>long<sup>2</sup> yaw<sup>5</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup> te<sup>1</sup> kwaa<sup>1</sup> mɔng<sup>4</sup>nɔng<sup>3</sup>  
 go water.bear.descend FINISHED GO FUT go lake.city  
 ‘After going to Nammilaung, go to Maing Naung.’<sup>19</sup>

(MK\_LT\_08)

(171) a. ဟင်း မ ယင်း                      b. ဟင်း မ ယင်း ကျ  
 sang<sup>4</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> yang<sup>4</sup>                      sang<sup>4</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>  
 thing NEG EXIST                      thing NEG EXIST GO  
 ‘There’s nothing.’                      ‘There isn’t anything anymore’

(MK\_LT\_08)

<sup>19</sup> Village names were changed to sound Burmese, but the original names are Shan-Ni. Therefore ‘Maing Naung’ is actually *mɔng<sup>4</sup>nɔng<sup>3</sup>* ‘lake city’ and ‘Nammilaung’ *nam<sup>5</sup>mi<sup>3</sup>long<sup>2</sup>* the place where bears come down to the water.

### 6.3 The inchoative aspect marker *maa<sup>4</sup>* ‘COME’

The inchoative aspect marker *maa<sup>4</sup>* ‘COME’ is grammaticalized from the verb *maa<sup>4</sup>* ‘come’. It marks the addition of an initial boundary to an action (Ljungqvist 2003: 22). It recognizes the initial phase as a separate state, distinguished from the other state(s) occurring or imagined in the background. It may be interpreted as a single point in time, or it can refer to an intermittent state varying in length. (Zanned 2011: 195). In other words; it marks the beginning of a verb, without specifying any details on the final boundary or the duration of the verb. When *maa<sup>4</sup>* is the only TAM marker, it is used for past events. In many cases, *maa<sup>4</sup>* and *kaa<sup>5</sup>* can be used in similar contexts, like in (172) and (173). With *kaa<sup>5</sup>* in (173), it is clear that the interlocutor is already done cooking, while in (172) with *maa<sup>4</sup>* it is only specified that the interlocutor started cooking. (S)he might be finished, but she might also still be cooking.

(172) မွီး တင့် ဖော် နင်း မး  
 mɛw<sup>4</sup> tang<sup>2</sup> phak<sup>1</sup> sang<sup>4</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 2SG cook curry what COME  
 ‘What curry did you (start) cook(ing)?’

(BSS\_116)

(173) တင့် ဖော် နင်း ကျ  
 tang<sup>2</sup> phak<sup>1</sup> sang<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>  
 cook curry what GO  
 ‘What curry did [you] cook?’

(BSS\_96)

In (175) and (176) *maa<sup>4</sup>* initiates a narrative; something has happened and it is not known yet how it ended. In (175) the widow had a dream, and the sentences after that specify what happened in that dream. In (176) we learn that the frog escaped, started a narrative in which the boy and the dog search for the escaped frog.

(174) မွီး မှာ ဖော် ဖှော် မး  
 mɛ<sup>2</sup> maai<sup>2</sup> phan<sup>3</sup> han<sup>3</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 lady widow dreamsee COME  
 ‘The widow had a dream.’

(MK\_IH\_4)

(175) မဲ တီ လွတ် မး  
 maa<sup>3</sup> ti<sup>2</sup> lot<sup>5</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 dog place escape COME  
 ‘[The frog] escaped from the dog’s place.’

(KSN\_FS\_16)

In (176) and (177) the verbs ‘give’ and ‘jump’ do not allow for a long duration, so it is clear that these (past) actions have already been completed. In these sentences, *maa*<sup>4</sup> is used because it marks the initial phase of something different than that what was happening in the background.

(176) မာတ်ဟိုက်ဂှဟိုက်      နိုင် ဖှီး မး  
 maak<sup>1</sup>un<sup>3</sup>huj<sup>1</sup>      ʃng<sup>2</sup>hau<sup>4</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 coconut CLF.round one give COME  
 ‘I gave them two bananas and a coconut to make sweets.’

(KSN\_CAUS\_21)

(177) ထး ဟီ လိုင်း ဖှိုင်း ဝိန် တူက် မး  
 caa<sup>4</sup> si<sup>3</sup> lɔ<sup>4</sup> hɔn<sup>4</sup> wɛn<sup>3</sup> tuk<sup>1</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 for LNK on house jump fall COME  
 ‘[He] jumped down from the house.’

(BSS\_20)

With stative verbs, *maa*<sup>4</sup> refers to things that “became” something. It can refer to the state of a person, for example in (178) where someone became rich, or other physical things, such as rising water (179), or to situations, like in (180) where the lack of food made life difficult.

(178) မး နံ ထး မိုဝ် လှီး မီး မး  
 man<sup>4</sup> nai<sup>5</sup> caa<sup>4</sup> mɔ<sup>2</sup> leu<sup>4</sup> mi<sup>4</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 3SG PRT for time which rich COME  
 ‘When did he become rich?’

(BSS\_37)

(179) နမ့် ဇော် ယှိ မး  
 nam<sup>5</sup> nɛ<sup>1</sup> yaw<sup>1</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 water DEF big COME  
 ‘The water became big.’

(MK\_IH\_17)

(180) ထး ကျိုင်း ထး ယမ့် ကျေမ ယင်း ကျ ယပ် မး  
 caa<sup>4</sup> kyin<sup>4</sup> caa<sup>4</sup> yam<sup>5</sup> kɔ<sup>5</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup> yaap<sup>1</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 for eat for chew PRT NEG EXIST GO difficult COME  
 ‘There was nothing to eat or to chew, it became difficult.’

(NN\_ITL\_11)

For Tai Aiton and Phake, Morey (2002: 328) describes *maa*<sup>2</sup> as “...marker of past time [...] in the specific context of the action referring towards the speaker or place where the speaker is.” This definition could work for (174), where a dream came towards the widow, or (177) where someone jumped down from a house. It does not work for sentences like (175), where the frog escaped (to an unknown place), or in other sentences where the direction does not seem to be specified by *maa*<sup>4</sup>. Rather, it marks the initial phase of an action, without specifying a final boundary. It is also not exclusively used for the past; in combination with

the future marker *te*<sup>1</sup> it can also be used as ‘become’, as in (181) where the water will rise (become big) in seven days.

- (181) လီတ် ဝန်း ပေး ဝု ဟမ် တေ ယ့် မု  
 cet<sup>1</sup> wan<sup>4</sup> pɔ<sup>4</sup> waa<sup>2</sup> nam<sup>5</sup> te<sup>1</sup> yau<sup>4</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 seven day enough say water FUT big COME  
 ‘In seven days the water will rise.’

(MK\_IH\_13)

### 6.3.1 Combining [ မုး ] *maa*<sup>4</sup> and [ ကု ] *kaa*<sup>5</sup>

In the previous sections we have seen that the inchoative *maa*<sup>4</sup> is used in sentences where the speaker refers to actions that were initiated in the past (regardless of their ending), while the terminative *kaa*<sup>5</sup> is used to talk about actions that were finished in the past (regardless of their beginning). The combination of the two markers, *maa*<sup>4</sup> *kaa*<sup>5</sup>, is used for events that were both initiated and finished in the past. In the examples below, the narrator describes the moment the subject had already arrived on the mountain (182), the water had risen already (183), and the subject had returned already (184). Within the Indawgyi History narrative, example (183) actually follows (179), discussed above for *maa*<sup>4</sup>. The sentences only differ in the usage of *maa*<sup>4</sup> versus *maa*<sup>4</sup> *kaa*<sup>5</sup>, describing a sequence saying ‘The water got big’ (it started, but we do not know whether it ended) ‘The water got big already’ (it started and finished, that’s where we are now). This repetition with a change from *maa*<sup>4</sup> to *maa*<sup>4</sup> *kaa*<sup>5</sup> is common in storytelling.

- (182) ဟုး လိုင် လုံး ထိုင် မုး ကု  
 nyaa<sup>4</sup> lɔ<sup>3</sup> lɔj<sup>4</sup> thɔng<sup>3</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>  
 MEET on mountain arrive come GO  
 ‘They had arrived on the mountain’

(MK\_IH\_23)

- (183) ဟမ် ဧ် ယ့် မုး ကု  
 nam<sup>5</sup> ne<sup>1</sup> yeu<sup>1</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>  
 water DEF big COME GO  
 ‘The water got big already.’

(MK\_IH\_18)

- (184) ပွက့် မုး ကု ဖှင် လိုင် မန်း ပွက့် မုး ကု  
 pɔk<sup>5</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup> pho<sup>3</sup> lung<sup>3</sup> man<sup>4</sup> pɔk<sup>5</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>  
 return COME GO husband 3SG return COME GO  
 ‘When she came back her husband also had come back.’

(EP\_LP\_26)

## 6.4 The past marker *waj*<sup>5</sup> ‘KEEP’

The past marker *waj*<sup>5</sup> derived from the verb ‘keep’ and is used to mark the initiation of an action, with the intention of having a lasting result. Morey (2005a: 331) describes the function of the Tai Phake equivalent *waj*<sup>3</sup> to be an action with the intention to have a lasting result, though there is no mention of the action being deliberately initiated by the subject. When speaking about *waj*<sup>5</sup> in Shan-Ni, speakers tend to explain *waj*<sup>5</sup> by translating it literally to the Burmese particle [ထား] *htaa*, derived from the verb [ထား] *htaa* ‘put’. Okell & Allot (2001: 142) describe the function of *htaa* as “V permanently, V and leave, V so that there is some lasting result”<sup>20</sup>. The most important factor for Shan-Ni however remains that it is something deliberately initiated. In (185) *waj*<sup>5</sup> is used show that the speaker gave the book to the hearer, and in (186) to show that the item was bought last month. In both cases the actions were deliberate, and initiated a new situation. In (187) *waj*<sup>5</sup> is used to refer the work the speakers ordered the sisters, emphasizing that she ordered them to work, and they are still obliged to complete it. In (188) *waj*<sup>5</sup> follows *leng*<sup>5</sup> ‘bare’, referring to a pig giving birth, hence also marking an action indicating a new state.

- (185) ဖြိုက်လိက် ကိုး ဖှိုး ဝံ ကျ မှိုး ပတ် ယဝ် လေး  
 phun<sup>3</sup>lik<sup>5</sup> kau<sup>4</sup> hau<sup>4</sup> waj<sup>5</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup> mɛu<sup>4</sup> pat<sup>1</sup> jaw<sup>5</sup> le<sup>4</sup>  
 book 1SG give KEEP GO 2SG read FINISHED QP  
 ‘Did you read the book I gave you?’

(PV\_NS\_3)

- (186) ပွန် မိုဝ် မိုဝ် လိုက် ဧဟ် ကိုဝ် ဝံ  
 pon<sup>1</sup> mɔ<sup>2</sup> mɔ<sup>2</sup> loŋ<sup>4</sup> ne<sup>5</sup> su<sup>5</sup> waj<sup>5</sup>  
 last time time month DEF buy KEEP  
 ‘It was bought last month.’

(NY\_NMLE\_17)

- (187) မယျာ ပီစွင့် လွင် ကာန် ကိုး လှိုး ဝံ ကျ  
 ma<sup>1</sup>su<sup>3</sup> pi<sup>2</sup>nɔŋ<sup>5</sup> loŋ<sup>2</sup> an<sup>2</sup> kau<sup>4</sup> cau<sup>4</sup> waj<sup>5</sup> naa<sup>5</sup>  
 2PL sisters work thing 1SG order KEEP PRT  
 ‘You sisters, the work I ordered you...’

(BSS\_210)

- (188) မူ တုဝ်း ရှိုင် လိုင် ဝံ နံ တွံး တွမ်း ကိုက်  
 mu<sup>3</sup> to<sup>4</sup> nɔŋ<sup>2</sup> leng<sup>5</sup> waj<sup>5</sup> nai<sup>5</sup> toj<sup>4</sup> cɔm<sup>4</sup> kɔn<sup>1</sup>  
 pig CLF.animal one give.birth KEEP DEF look follow SHOULD  
 ‘A pig just gave birth come take a look.’

(BSS\_12)

<sup>20</sup> Okell & Allot (2001) use V here to refer to ‘verb’, and can be replaced with a verb of choice

Another usage of *waj*<sup>5</sup> is as an imperative, telling someone to do something. For example in (189) where the speaker asks the interlocutor to clean the plates after using them, or in (190) where the speaker urges the interlocutor to pick the fruit carefully.

(189) ကျိန်း ယဝ့် လာဏ် ပွက် ဝံ  
 kyin<sup>4</sup> yau<sup>5</sup> laang<sup>5</sup> pɔk<sup>5</sup> waj<sup>5</sup>  
 eat FINISHED clean returnKEEP  
 ‘After eating clean [the plates] again.’  
 (BSS\_45)

(190) မက် ဝံ လွှား နှိုင် တိမ်း တိမ်း ကျိပ် ဝံ  
 mak<sup>1</sup> maj<sup>5</sup> sɔng<sup>4</sup> nɯng<sup>2</sup> tim<sup>4</sup> tim<sup>4</sup> kyip<sup>1</sup> waj<sup>5</sup>  
 fruit yellow CLF.fruit one slow slow pick KEEP  
 ‘Pick the fruit carefully.’  
 (BSS\_13)

### 6.5 The perfective marker *yaw*<sup>5</sup> ‘FINISHED’

The verb *yau*<sup>5</sup> ‘finish’ is grammaticalized from the verb ‘finish’ to a past marker describing actions that have been completed. In most contexts, it can be translated literally to English as ‘already’. They describe actions with some duration, whereas *kaa*<sup>5</sup> and *maa*<sup>4</sup> are used for actions with a shorter time span. Similar to the English word ‘already’, there is an emphasis on the action being completed, perhaps against the expectation of the interlocutor. In the examples below, *yaw*<sup>5</sup> is used to describe a situation where three days have passed already, someone has eaten ‘everything’ emphasizing duration and completeness of the action.

(191) လာမ် ဝန်း ယင်း ယဝ့်  
 saam<sup>3</sup> wan<sup>4</sup> yang<sup>4</sup> yaw<sup>5</sup>  
 three day have FINISHED  
 ‘...three days have passed already...’  
 (BSS\_78)

(192) မန်း တင်းလှိုင် ကျန်း လီ ကျ ယဝ့်  
 man<sup>4</sup> tang<sup>4</sup>long<sup>3</sup> kyin<sup>4</sup> si<sup>3</sup> kwaa<sup>1</sup> yaw<sup>5</sup>  
 3SG everything eat LNK go FINISHED  
 ‘He ate everything.’  
 (CM\_EMP\_5)

(193) လို့ ယဝ့် လော်  
 su<sup>5</sup> yaw<sup>5</sup> le<sup>2</sup>  
 buy FINISHED Q.POL  
 ‘Did you buy it already?’  
 (BSS\_34)

According to Morey (2005a: 337) *yau*<sup>4</sup> in Phake is a perfective aspect marker, because it can also be used to speak about the future. In Shan-Ni this is also possible, though in those cases *yaw*<sup>5</sup> has to be combined with the future marker *te*<sup>1</sup>. It can be used to speak about things that will be completed in the future, for example an age that will be reached at the moment referred to (194). It is also used in combination with *te*<sup>1</sup> to speak about things that are happening already, for example when people are coming back already (195).

(194) ကိုး နံ့ လာမ် လပ် တေ ထုန် ယဝ်  
 kaw<sup>4</sup> nai<sup>5</sup> saam<sup>3</sup> sip<sup>1</sup> te<sup>1</sup> thon<sup>2</sup> yaw<sup>5</sup>  
 1SG DEF three ten FUT reach FINISHED  
 'I will be thirty years old then.'

(BSS\_32)

(195) တေ ပွန် ယဝ်  
 te<sup>1</sup> pək<sup>5</sup> yaw<sup>5</sup>  
 FUT return FINISHED  
 'Coming back already.'

(BSS\_33)

## 6.6 The past marker *kaw*<sup>1</sup> 'OLD'

The past marker *kaw*<sup>1</sup> is used to refer to actions that have already happened, that already have been experienced. It is derived from the verb ကဝ် *kaw*<sup>1</sup> 'be old', hence referring to something that is part of the past. It is similar to the usage of the Burmese particle [ ဖူး ] *hpuu* which also denotes something that has already happened or the speaker has already experienced. This TAM marker is not included in Morey's (2005a, 2008) descriptions. In Inglis (2014) I only found *kaw*<sup>3</sup> as the verb 'be old'. It is thus possible that this is a development limited to Shan-Ni, which considering the presence of a particle with a similar function in Burmese, might be result of Burmese influence. The Burmese particle *hpuu* itself does not have a connection with the concept of being old, it is more likely to be a grammaticalization of the verb *hpuu*, which means 'to visit'. It is used in questions and sentences where English would use 'ever' or 'never' (in combination with negation), as in examples (196) and (197). It can also be used to declare how many times something has already happened or has already been experienced, as in (198).

(196) ကိုး လှ မန်း မ ဖှန် ကဝ်  
 kɛu<sup>4</sup> caa<sup>5</sup> man<sup>4</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> han<sup>3</sup> kaw<sup>1</sup>  
 1SG for 3SG NEG see OLD  
 'I have never seen her before.'

(CM\_YT\_EMP)



(197) ဟူး ယာန်ကုင် ထိုင် ကပ် လေး  
 nyaa<sup>4</sup> yaan<sup>1</sup>kong<sup>1</sup> thɔng<sup>3</sup> kaw<sup>1</sup>de<sup>4</sup>  
 MEET yangon arrive OLD Q.POL  
 ‘Have you ever been to Yangon?’

(NY\_NS\_23)

(198) ဟူး ဟွိုင် ဟု ထိုင် ကပ်  
 ʃ<sup>4</sup> sɔng<sup>3</sup> ha<sup>1</sup> thɔng<sup>3</sup> kaw<sup>1</sup>  
 EMP two CLF.times arrive OLD  
 ‘Yes, I have been there twice.’

(NY\_NS\_24)

## 6.8 The progressive marker *u*<sup>1</sup> ‘STAY’

The progressive marker *u*<sup>1</sup> derives from the verb ‘stay’. As a regular verb, it is used for both someone’s living place as well as to talk about someone’s state of being, for examples in the phrase *u*<sup>1</sup> *ni*<sup>4</sup> *le*<sup>4</sup> ‘how are you?’. As a TAM marker it is a progressive marker, used to describe actions that are going on at the moment referred to, usually in combination with the linker *si*<sup>3</sup>. Diller (1992: 24) describes it as a progressive-continuative marker, marking progressive aspect. Morey (2005a: 334) only found *u*<sup>1</sup> with emphatic meaning, often used in combination with adjectives. I did also not really find *u*<sup>1</sup> by itself, only in combination with the linker *si*<sup>3</sup>. However, it is included in the Basic Spoken Shan-Ni book, and a possible explanation might be that because TAM markers are usually phonologically reduced, the pronunciation of *u*<sup>1</sup> could be very subtle. Therefore, I do include the examples from the book here, but I would like to emphasize that its usage without *si*<sup>3</sup> needs further research. Written Shan-Ni allows variation between [ ဟူး ] *u*<sup>1</sup> and [ ယူး ] *yu*<sup>1</sup>, though *yu*<sup>1</sup> never comes up in spontaneous speech or elicitation.

(199) ဇူး မန်း ကိုး ဟုတ် ယူး  
 caa<sup>5</sup> man<sup>4</sup> kaw<sup>4</sup> hak<sup>5</sup> yu<sup>1</sup>  
 to 3SG 1SG love STAY  
 ‘I love her.’

(BSS\_19)

(200) ကျိန်း ဝါန် ဟူး လေး  
 kyin<sup>4</sup> waan<sup>3</sup> u<sup>1</sup> le<sup>4</sup>  
 eat sweet STAY Q.POL  
 ‘Is the food good?’

(BSS\_45)

Often *u*<sup>1</sup> is preceded by the linker *si*<sup>3</sup>, meaning that something is happening or someone is doing something; for example, children who are playing or a person who is eating a lot. When preceded by an adjective, it refers to a temporary state, for example being hungry. In example (34), *si*<sup>3</sup> *u*<sup>1</sup> is combined with *yaw*<sup>5</sup> to emphasize ‘we’ are hungry already.

(201) လူကု်ဟွန် ဖေ ဟိင်္ဂ် ဟီ ဟူ  
 luk<sup>5</sup>ɔn<sup>1</sup> ne<sup>1</sup> eng<sup>2</sup> si<sup>3</sup> u<sup>1</sup>  
 child PL play LNK STAY  
 ‘The children are playing.’

(CM\_EMP\_3)

(202) ဟံ ပိုန်ကု် ဟလိး ကျိန်း ဟီ ဟူ တွံး ကျ လူး  
 ai<sup>2</sup> pɯn<sup>2</sup>nan<sup>5</sup> kha<sup>1</sup>lɔw<sup>4</sup> kyin<sup>4</sup> si<sup>3</sup> u<sup>1</sup> tɔj<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup> lu<sup>4</sup>  
 guy over.there how.much eat LNK STAY look COME PRT  
 ‘Look at how much that guy over there is eating.’

(CM\_EMP\_5)

(203) ဟုမ်း ဟျ တွင်္ဂ် မံ ဟီ ဟူ ယဝ်  
 haw<sup>4</sup> khaa<sup>2</sup> tɔng<sup>5</sup> maj<sup>5</sup> si<sup>3</sup> u<sup>1</sup> yaw<sup>5</sup>  
 1PL POL belly hot LNK STAY FINISHED  
 ‘We are hungry already.’

(CM\_EMP\_15)

## 6.8 The marker *kɔn*<sup>1</sup> ‘SHOULD’ OR ‘YET’

*kɔn*<sup>1</sup> is used to describe situations that should happen or did not occur yet. It can either express a request of the speaker for the interlocutor, or in combination with the negator, to speak about things the speaker did not do yet or things that did not happen yet. It is not mentioned by Morey (2005a) or Inglis (2014) as having any meaning beyond ‘should’, but is used very frequently in Shan-Ni, especially in combination with the negator *ma*<sup>1</sup>. When not negated, *kɔn*<sup>1</sup> can be used to mark a request. This usage of *kɔn*<sup>1</sup> is closer to the original meaning of the lexeme ‘should’. In (204) *kɔn*<sup>1</sup> is used to invite someone to take a look at newborn piglets, and in (205) it is used for a request in a conditional phrase.

(204) မူ တူဝ်း နိုင် လိင်္ဂ် ဝံ နံ တွံး တွမ်း ကျိန်း  
 mu<sup>3</sup> to<sup>4</sup> nɔng<sup>2</sup> leng<sup>5</sup> wai<sup>5</sup> nai<sup>5</sup> tɔj<sup>4</sup> cɔm<sup>4</sup> kɔn<sup>1</sup>  
 pig CLF.animal one give.birth KEEP DEF look follow SHOULD  
 ‘A pig just gave birth, come take a look.’

(BSS\_12)

(205) ဟိင် ပီး ဟိတ် မး မွက် ကျိန်း  
 sang<sup>3</sup> pi<sup>4</sup> het<sup>1</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> mɔk<sup>1</sup> kɔn<sup>1</sup>  
 thing if do come inform SHOULD  
 ‘If you do it let me know.’

(BSS\_23)

The usage of *kən*<sup>1</sup> in combination with the negator is identical to the Burmese particle [ ဝေး ] *tee*. Since this usage is unique to Shan-Ni and not found in other Tai languages, it is very likely to be Burmese influence. Similar to *kaw*<sup>1</sup> it appears to be a Shan-Ni word which gained the function of a common Burmese particle, probably as a result of widespread Burmese/Shan-Ni bilingualism among the Shan-Ni.

(206) ကျ ထို့ မ ဂှ် ကိုန်  
 kwaa<sup>1</sup> thɛu<sup>4</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> hu<sup>5</sup> kən<sup>1</sup>  
 go where NEG know YET  
 'I'm not sure where I'm going yet.'

(MK\_LT\_07)

(207) မ လံ ကပ် ကိုန်  
 ma<sup>1</sup> lai<sup>2</sup> yap<sup>5</sup> kən<sup>1</sup>  
 NEG GET SOW YET  
 '[I] didn't get it sowed yet.'

(BSS\_33)

(208) မ ထိုင် ပွတ် မး ကိုန်  
 ma<sup>1</sup> thɔng<sup>3</sup> pɔk<sup>4</sup> ma<sup>4</sup> kən<sup>1</sup>  
 NEG arrive returnCOME YET  
 '...they didn't return yet.'

(BSS\_78)

## 6.9 The future marker *te*<sup>1</sup>

The future marker *te*<sup>1</sup> is the only TAM particle that occurs preverbally. The most basic usage of *te*<sup>1</sup> is to refer to events that will happen in the future. In (209) it is used for an illness that will be cured, and in (210) to talk about what is going to happen next months. For all events happening in the future, *te*<sup>1</sup> is an obligatory marker.

(209) ယေကျ တေ ငှါ  
 ya<sup>1</sup>ga<sup>1</sup> te<sup>1</sup> haaj<sup>3</sup>  
 illness.BM FUT loose  
 'The illness will be cured.'

(NN\_TH\_22)

(210) လိုက် လျ တေ မး ထုပ် ရှေ တေ တုပ် တေ ကန်း ယူ  
 lɔn<sup>4</sup> laa<sup>2</sup> te<sup>1</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> thop<sup>1</sup> nɔ<sup>3</sup> te<sup>1</sup> thop<sup>1</sup> tɔ<sup>1</sup> kan<sup>4</sup> yu<sup>1</sup>  
 month face FUT come meet TAG FUT meet talk SIM STAY  
 'Next month you will come meet [me] right? [We] will speak to each other.'

(BSS\_98)

*te*<sup>1</sup> is also used for things that are about to start. In (211) it is used to announce the speaker is going to tell a story, and in (212) it is used to say that the father goes into the forest. When

combined with *kwa*<sup>1</sup> ‘go’ it might be that someone is already on their way, for example in (212) where the father is already walking into the forest.

(211) ဘာလင် တေ နံ ပျး ပုမ် ဣ  
 a<sup>1</sup>cang<sup>1</sup> te<sup>1</sup> khaj<sup>2</sup>pyaa<sup>4</sup> pom<sup>1</sup> ne<sup>2</sup>  
 now FUT tell show story DEF  
 ‘Now I’m going to tell a story.’

(NN\_ITL\_1)

(212) ပေ့ မန်း တေ ကျ လှီး တိုဏ်  
 pa<sup>2</sup> man<sup>4</sup> te<sup>1</sup> kwa<sup>1</sup>lɛu<sup>4</sup> tɔn<sup>2</sup>  
 father 3SG FUT go inside forest  
 ‘The father goes into the forest.’

(TS\_HS\_4)

To express uncertainty, things that the speaker assumes to be true but is not entirely sure of, or things that the speaker proposes to the interlocutor, *te*<sup>1</sup> is used in combination with *laj*<sup>2</sup> ‘GET’. In (213), the main character of the story is wondering whether the blood he sees is his wife’s blood. In (214), the speaker tells her fellow villagers that they could run before the flood. (215) is a typical market situation, where the speaker is asking the how much (s)he should give, asking the vendor to tell reveal the price.

(213) လိုတ် ပယိင်း ကီး တေ လံ ပျိး ဘင်း ဘီ  
 lɔt<sup>5</sup> pa<sup>1</sup>ying<sup>4</sup> ke<sup>w</sup>4 te<sup>1</sup> laj<sup>2</sup> pjen<sup>4</sup> sang<sup>4</sup> i<sup>3</sup>  
 blood wife 1SG FUT GET be what LNK  
 ‘Maybe that’s my wife’s blood’

(EP\_NU\_31)

(214) လိတ် ဝန်း ပေး ဝှ နမ် တေ ယို မှ နှမ်း တေ လံ ပျံ  
 cet<sup>1</sup> wan<sup>4</sup> pa<sup>4</sup> waa<sup>2</sup> nam<sup>5</sup> te<sup>1</sup> jaw<sup>1</sup>maa<sup>4</sup> haw<sup>4</sup> te<sup>1</sup> laj<sup>2</sup> paaj<sup>2</sup>  
 seven day enough say water FUT big COME 1PL FUT GET run  
 ‘In seven days the water will rise, we could run.’

(MK\_IH\_13)

(215) နှမ်း ဘလှီး တေ လံ ပျို  
 haw<sup>4</sup> kha<sup>1</sup>lɛu<sup>4</sup> te<sup>1</sup> laj<sup>2</sup> hau<sup>2</sup>  
 1PL how.much FUT GET give  
 ‘How much should I give?’

(KSN\_CAS\_23)

Diller (1992) and Morey (2005a) include the function of expression of volition or intention to the marker *te*<sup>1</sup> for the languages of Assam. For an irrealis this would make sense; the future spoken about is of course the one expected or desired to happen. However, in Shan-Ni *te*<sup>1</sup> distinguishes itself from *kɔn*<sup>1</sup>: whereas *kɔn*<sup>1</sup> expresses volition in relation to the

interlocutor's actions, *te*<sup>1</sup> simply refers to the expected future, which can include one's own actions. In order to explicitly express volition, Shan-Ni can use the auxiliary verb *khaj*<sup>2</sup> 'want', shortened in speech in front of a verb to *kə*<sup>2</sup>.

(216) မ    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>  
 ma<sup>1</sup> khaj<sup>2</sup> nɔn<sup>4</sup>  
 NEG want sleep  
 'I don't want to sleep.'

(MK\_LT\_07)

(217) <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>  
 khaj<sup>2</sup> kyin<sup>4</sup> sang<sup>4</sup>  
 want eat what  
 'What do you want to eat?'

(MK\_LT\_07)

In combination with other TAM markers, it may be used to talk about the past as well as the future. When *te*<sup>1</sup> is combined with *kaa*<sup>5</sup> or *maa*<sup>4</sup> *kaa*<sup>5</sup> it refers to something someone was going to do. In that context it can be interpreted as being about volition. In combination with *yaw*<sup>5</sup> or *maa*<sup>4</sup>, it refers to things that will be completed in the future. This distinction shows that while these are all past markers, in combination with *te*<sup>1</sup> they may refer to very different points in time. In (218) *te*<sup>1</sup> *pɔk*<sup>4</sup> *maa*<sup>4</sup> *kaa*<sup>5</sup> is used to say that someone was about to go back, and in (219) *te*<sup>1</sup> *sɔt*<sup>1</sup> *phaj*<sup>4</sup> *kaa*<sup>5</sup> they were already about to light the fire. These events both refer to things that were about to happen in the past. In contrast, in (220) *te*<sup>1</sup> *thon*<sup>2</sup> *yaw*<sup>5</sup> is about the age the speaker will reach in future, and (221) *te*<sup>1</sup> *yau*<sup>4</sup> *maa*<sup>4</sup> is about something that will become big.

(218) ဝု    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>  
 wa<sup>2</sup> ji<sup>3</sup> kap<sup>1</sup>            ji<sup>3</sup> te<sup>1</sup> pɔk<sup>4</sup>    maa<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>    lɔt<sup>5</sup>    pɔ<sup>4</sup>pɔ<sup>4</sup>  
 talk LNK communicate LNK FUT return COME GO    blood all.over  
 'After discussing, he was going back and there was blood all over.'

(EP\_LP\_30)

(219) တေ    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>  
 te<sup>1</sup> sɔt<sup>1</sup> phaj<sup>4</sup> kaa<sup>5</sup>  
 FUT alight fire GO  
 'When they were going to light the fire....'

(EP\_LP\_34)

(220) ကွီး    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>    <sup>၂</sup>  
 kaw<sup>4</sup> nai<sup>5</sup> saam<sup>3</sup> sip<sup>1</sup> te<sup>1</sup> thon<sup>2</sup> yaw<sup>5</sup>  
 1SG DEF three ten FUT reach FINISHED  
 'I will be thirty years old then.'

(BSS\_32)

(221) လိတ် ဝန်း ဝေး ဝှ ကမ်း တေ ယ့် မှ  
 cet<sup>1</sup> wan<sup>4</sup> pɔ<sup>4</sup> waa<sup>2</sup> nam<sup>5</sup> te<sup>1</sup> jaw<sup>1</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 seven day enough say water FUT big COME  
 'In seven days the water will rise.'

(MK\_IH\_13)

## 6.10 Summary

Table 31 summarizes the functions of Shan-Ni TAM markers and how they relate to verbs. Shan-Ni has at least five past markers, and more when including the possible combinations and the negation of *kɔn*<sup>1</sup> for things that have not happened yet. All of these markers are of Tai etymology, though their functions as TAM markers are likely to have developed under influence of Burmese and other neighbouring languages. Shan-Ni TAM markers illustrate two types of developments: changes in form, and changes in meaning. Changes in form are phonological changes that TAM markers have gone through, resulting in a difference between

Form	Marker	English	Function
maa <sup>4</sup>	မး	COME	V started in the past moment referred to
kaa <sup>5</sup>	ကျ	GO	V finished in the past moment referred to
maa <sup>4</sup> kaa <sup>5</sup>	မး ကျ	COME GO	V started and finished in the past moment referred to
waj <sup>5</sup>	ဝံ	KEEP	V was deliberately started, often with the intention to have a lasting result
jaw <sup>5</sup>	ယဝ်	FINISHED	V is already finished
kaw <sup>1</sup>	ကဝ်	OLD	V has been experienced
u <sup>1</sup>	ဟူ	STAY	V happens right now
si <sup>3</sup> u <sup>1</sup>	ဆီ ဟူ	LNK STAY	V is happening right now
kɔn <sup>1</sup>	ကိုန်	SHOULD	V should happen
ma <sup>1</sup> ...kɔn <sup>1</sup>	မ ကိုန်	NEG YET	V hasn't happened yet
te <sup>1</sup>	တေ	FUT	V will happen
te <sup>1</sup> ... yaw <sup>5</sup>	တေ ။ ယဝ်	FUT FINISHED	V will be completed
te <sup>1</sup> ... maa <sup>4</sup>	တေ ။ မး	FUT COME	will become V
te <sup>1</sup> ... (maa <sup>4</sup> ) kaa <sup>5</sup>	တေ ။ ။ (မး) ကျ	FUT COME GO	(when) V was going to happen

the word it derived from and the grammaticalized TAM marker. In some cases, they can be observed from a difference between Shan-Ni and other Tai languages, or because the Shan-Ni writing system still retains the old form. The clearest example of this is *kaa*<sup>5</sup> 'GO' which has developed from *kwa*<sup>1</sup> 'go'. In pronunciation however, both *kaa*<sup>5</sup> and *maa*<sup>4</sup> often get a /ə/ or /ɤ/. The progressive *u*<sup>1</sup> can be written as both *u*<sup>1</sup> and *yu*<sup>1</sup> though *yu*<sup>1</sup> is rarely used in spoken Shan-Ni.

The other development is the acquisition of new functions. The usages of *kɔn*<sup>1</sup> and *kaw*<sup>1</sup> are unique to Shan-Ni. While the other TAM markers have developed from verbs, especially *kaw*<sup>1</sup> 'OLD' is an odd one out. They are however not odd, when considering Burmese, which has particles with the same function that are used very frequently. The past marker *waj*<sup>5</sup> 'KEEP' does exist in other Tai languages, although the function in Shan-Ni appears to have additional features not present in other Tai languages. In other Tai languages this marker refers to actions which are intended to have a long-lasting result, in Shan-Ni they are actions that have been initiated deliberately by the speaker. This is identical to the function of the Burmese marker [ ဝာ့ ] *htaa*, a particle derived from the verb 'put'.

Other TAM markers share small differences with the TAM markers of the Tai languages of Assam, and do not show any clear signs of influence from other languages. Combinations of TAM markers allow Shan-Ni speakers to express themselves about time in even more ways. The past marker *yaw*<sup>5</sup> and (*maa*<sup>4</sup>) *kaa*<sup>5</sup> differ slightly from each other when used individually, though they could be interpreted in the same way depending on the context. In combination with the future marker *te*<sup>1</sup>, the usage diverges: *te*<sup>1</sup>...*yaw*<sup>5</sup> is used for something that will be completed, while *te*<sup>1</sup>...( *maa*<sup>4</sup> ) *kaa*<sup>5</sup> means something was going to happen.

## Chapter 7:

### Shan-Ni and other languages: Genetic affiliations and contact

The different features of Shan-Ni discussed in the preceding chapters, provide clues about its position within the Tai language family. This chapter is dedicated to a more extensive discussion on the relation between Shan-Ni and the other Tai languages of the region, going deeper into the processes described in earlier chapters. It also looks into the extent to which diverging features in Shan-Ni correspond with Burmese, indicating where these could be a result of contact. Burmese is the language with which Shan-Ni speakers have had most contact in the last few centuries. The other languages spoken in the region are mostly also Tibeto-Burman languages, and share features with Burmese, hence similarities may be the result of older contact between Shan-Ni and these languages as well. This chapter will highlight a few features that stand out, and for which there is sufficient data available for the languages in the comparison. The phonology, including consonant clusters and tones, the interrogatives, demonstratives and TAM markers are relatively well described for the other Tai languages. The formation of disyllabic nouns and its reduction to sesquisyllabic structures (introduced in Chapter 3) will be included shortly as well, as a special feature within Shan-Ni. As discussed in section 1.5, there are historical accounts suggesting different instances of migration of the Tai groups in Northern Myanmar. This chapter will conclude by looking at the extent to which the connections between Shan-Ni and different Tai groups fit with the possible migration patterns suggested in Chapter 1. Based on this I will suggest a preliminary genetic affiliation for Shan-Ni, which is meant to set the foundation for more extensive genetic research in the future.

#### 7.1 Phonology

Both Edmondson (2008) and Chantanaroj (2007) compare different varieties of Southwestern Tai languages based on the phonology. Edmondson's conclusion is that the phonology shows influence of migration from the east into the Shweli river valley, and Chantanaroj's analysis shows a great number of correspondences between the Tai varieties of the Shweli river valley and the different Shan-Ni locations included in her study. Edmondson recorded a number of sound changes in Shan-Ni and Tai languages in the region which are enlisted in Table 32, alongside their pronunciation in Shan-Ni, and the places in

<b>Table 32</b> Consonant sound changes in Shan-Ni and other Tai-speaking groups		
<b>Proto Tai phoneme</b>	<b>Shan-Ni pronunciation</b>	<b>Locations with same pronunciation (Edmondson 2008)</b>
*kh	/x/	Dehong (China), Bhamo, Puta-O
*f	/p <sup>h</sup> /	Kachin state
*k(h)w	/kw/	Dehong and Kachin
*k	/tɕ/	Outside Shan state



which the pronunciation of these consonants corresponds with Shan-Ni. Overall, this shows that Shan-Ni shares most phonological features with other locations within Kachin state and the Dehong region in China. According to Edmondson, the shift from \*k → /tɕ/ is very common in the region, but this shift is not included in any of the language descriptions of Tai languages in the region (e.g. Inglis 2014, Morey 2005, Young 1985). The consonant clusters are the most interesting part of Edmondson’s comparison, and will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

### 7.1.1 Consonant clusters

Shan-Ni		English	Phake	Tai Mau	Shan Gyi	Lao
<b>kwaa<sup>1</sup>/kaa<sup>5</sup></b>	ကျ၊ ကျ	‘go’	kā <sup>1</sup>	kāa	kwaa <sup>2</sup>	kà:y
<b>khwam<sup>4</sup></b>	ကျမ်း	‘language’	khām <sup>2</sup>	k(w)áam	kwaam <sup>4</sup>	k <sup>h</sup> wá:m
<b>khwaa<sup>4</sup></b>	ကျား	‘buffalo’	khāi <sup>2</sup>	k(w)áai	kwaa <sup>4</sup>	k <sup>h</sup> wá:y
<b>kyin<sup>4</sup></b>	ကျိမ်း	‘eat’	kin <sup>2</sup>	kin	kin <sup>1</sup>	kin
<b>kyep<sup>1</sup></b>	ကျိပ်	‘pick up’	kep <sup>1</sup>	kěp	kep <sup>4</sup>	k <sup>h</sup> i:p
<b>khyem<sup>3</sup></b>	ကျိမ်	‘needle’	khem <sup>6</sup>	khěm	k <sup>h</sup> em <sup>1</sup>	k <sup>h</sup> ěm
<b>khyek<sup>1</sup></b>	ကျိတ်	‘guest’	khaik <sup>1</sup>	khək	k <sup>h</sup> ek <sup>2</sup>	k <sup>h</sup> è:k
<b>khyet<sup>1</sup></b>	ကျိတ်	‘frog’	khēt <sup>1</sup>	khēt	k <sup>h</sup> et <sup>2</sup>	k <sup>h</sup> iat
<b>pyet<sup>1</sup></b>	ပျိတ်	‘duck’	pet <sup>1</sup>	pět	pet <sup>4</sup>	pét
<b>pyet<sup>1</sup></b>	ပျိတ်	‘eight’	pet <sup>1</sup>	pēt	pet <sup>2</sup>	*
<b>pyin<sup>4</sup>/pin<sup>4</sup></b>	ပျိမ်း	‘happen’/COP	pen <sup>2</sup>	pen	pen <sup>1</sup>	pen
<b>maak<sup>1</sup>phyit<sup>1</sup></b>	မာတ်ဖျိတ်	‘chillies’	(ma <sup>1</sup> )phit <sup>4</sup>	phît	p <sup>h</sup> it <sup>5</sup>	*
<b>pyet<sup>5</sup></b>	ပျိတ်	‘quarrel’	phit <sup>1</sup>	phît	p <sup>h</sup> it <sup>4</sup>	p <sup>h</sup> it
<b>myit<sup>5</sup></b>	မျိတ်	‘knife’	mit <sup>4</sup>	*	mit <sup>5</sup>	mî:t
<b>myet<sup>1</sup></b>	မျိတ်	‘fishing hook’	met <sup>1</sup>	mět	met <sup>4</sup>	bét
<b>myin<sup>5</sup></b>	မျိတ်	‘turmeric’	khau <sup>3</sup> min <sup>4</sup>	*	min <sup>5</sup>	k <sup>h</sup> á mìn

Both consonant clusters /kw/ and /tɕ/ <ky> included in Edmondson (2008) are common in Shan-Ni. The cluster /kw/ is retained from proto-Tai, but has reduced to a /k/ in many Tai varieties. The Tai varieties in Kachin state (including Shan-Ni) and the Dehong region in China have retained the old form. In Tai Mau (Young 1985) many words allow variation in

<sup>21</sup> Sources: Morey 2005a (Phake), Young 1985 (Tai Mau), SEALang Database (Shan Gyi), Enfield 2007 (Lao).

k~kw and kh ~ khw. The /k/ itself did change in many words to a /tɕ/, represented as <ky>. Edmondson does not discuss the other consonant clusters or palatalizations common in Shan-Ni. Edmondson mentions palatalization as a possible next stage in loss of consonant clusters, but he did not find this in his own data (Edmondson 2008: 201).

In Shan-Ni palatalization occurs between the consonants /k, p, ph, m/ and vowels /e, i, ε/. Table 33 shows the consonant clusters in Shan-Ni and their cognates in other Tai languages. Palatalization of the consonants /k, kh, p, ph, m/ is part of many Shan-Ni words with Tai origin. It is most common in combination with the velar stops /k, kh/, which correspond with Edmondson's findings for other Shan varieties. There are also many palatalizations with the labial stops /p, ph/, and less with the labial nasal /m/. I would need more data to confirm this, but I did not find any instances of any of these consonants followed by /-et, -et, -it/ without palatization. In combination with other final consonants and the vowels /e, i, ε/, palatization of the initial consonants /k, kh, p, ph, m/ in combination with is possible but not obligatory.

Shan-Ni shares the cluster /kw/ with Shan Gyi and Lao. In Tai Mau /k/ and /kw/ are allophones, and may be both used within the same words. In Shan-Ni the word *kwaɑ<sup>1</sup>* is the verb 'go' and *kaa<sup>5</sup>* is a TAM marker grammaticalized from the verb go. Hence both these variants are present, though they have different meanings. The interesting thing is that in Phake this same TAM marker exists in this form, but it is identical to the ungrammaticalized verb 'go' in Phake. This supports the narrative that there might have been a pre-existing Tai group in the Mogaung area, and that migrants came in together with the ruler of Mong Mao around 1200. In that scenario the reduction to *kaa<sup>5</sup>* and its grammaticalization to a TAM marker could be a development in the sedentary Tai group, which merged with the incoming Tai language of migrants that had retained the cluster /kw/. The variant with /kw/ could then be used for the verb 'go' but not for the TAM marker, because it was not present in the variety that had retained /kw/. The problem with that theory is that it would not explain why Phake does have *kā<sup>1</sup>* both as the verb 'go' and as the TAM marker.

### 7.1.2 Tone

Figure 9 shows all the Tai tone boxes of the region. Note that the numbers indicate how the tones are grouped together within individual languages, not how they compare across languages. The colours give an indication of how the tones are grouped together across different languages. They might have developed different contours and pitch levels, but the splits are indicators of more salient changes, and therefore provide more reliable information about the historical relations between these different languages. I have tried to take the most recent, reliable tone boxes available, but this does not take away from the fact that regional and individual nuances do effect the tone boxes. My Indawgyi tone box does not correspond with the tone box recorded by Wyn Owen for Shan-Ni as spoken in Myitkyina, which is a regional difference speakers are also aware of. For Khamti there are many different tone boxes, though most of them are from very old sources and the region unspecified. I have taken

**Figure 9** Tone boxes of different Tai languages of the Southwestern Tai language family



the tone box by Dockum (2014), which is a recent one of the Chindwin region, where Shan-Ni is spoken as well. For Phake and Khamyang I use the tone boxes by Morey (2005a, 2005b), and for Aiton I use the work of Diller (1992). Chantanaroj's (2007) thesis is on Tai Nua, but she also includes an overview of the tone boxes of different languages including Tai Mao<sup>22</sup>.

The Indawgyi Shan-Ni tone box corresponds most with Khamti (Chindwin) and Tai Phake. The only difference with Khamti is that it distinguishes B4-C123 (blue) from C4-DS4-DL4 (orange), which in Khamti is the same tone. In Phake B4-C123 is split up further between C123 (blue) and B4 (red). In Myitkyina Shan-Ni and Khamyang B4 is also different, but grouped together with A23 (red). This A23-B4 group also exists in Tai Mao and Tai Nua, though in these languages it also includes DS4 and for Tai Nua DL4. Tai Mao and Tai Nua furthermore group DL123 with A1, which is not the case in any of the other languages. Aiton is also interesting, because it groups A234 together like Indawgyi Shan-Ni, Khamti and Tai Phake do, but follows the exact same pattern of Tai Nua in row 4 (B4-C4-DS4-DL4). The different correspondences between these tonal splits are summarized in Table 34.

<b>Table 34</b> Tone splits in Shan-Ni and other Tai languages (based on Figure 9)						
	A23	B4	C4	DS4	DL4	DL123
Khamti (Chindwin)	x	x				x
<b>Shan-Ni (Indawgyi)</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>
Phake	x		x	x	x	x
Aiton	x		x			x
Shan-Ni (Myitkyina)			x	x	x	x
Khamyang			x	x	x	x
Tai Mao			x		x	
Tai Nua			x			

The developments shown in Table 34 do not show a gradual move from one tonal pattern to the other. Rather, my assumption is that it shows the different ways migrants (related to the Tai Nua) and the sedentary population (related to the Tai Khamti) have adapted their tones to each other at different times, places and probably in different proportions of population groups. Myitkyina Shan-Ni tonal splits are identical to Khamyang, which would suggest that they might be closely related. Although little is known about the Khamyang, no sources suggest they might originate near Myitkyina<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> She cites Robinson (1994) and Gedney (1973), but she does not specify per language which source she uses. Since I compare Shan-Ni with Tai Mao elsewhere I wanted to include it, but if new work on Tai Mao is published this part should be revised.

<sup>23</sup> Morey (2005a: 20) is unsure about the history of the Khamyang, writing that he only found one pamphlet without sources mentioned saying the Khamyang had lived in Sagaing near the Indian border for 500 years before they moved to Assam in 1780 (Morey 2005a:20). However, they also use the initial /l/ like speakers of Myitkyina Shan-Ni do, in words that in Sagaing and India always are pronounced with an /n/. This connection should be further investigated.

Tai Nua and Tai Mao are distinct from all others by grouping DL123 with A1, while all the other languages group DL123 with B123 and DS123 together. Geographically, the other groups are all northwest of where Tai Nua and Tai Mao are spoken, and they share a history under the rulers of Mogaung, while the Tai Nua and Tai Mao do not. However, around 1200 Mogaung was under Mong Mao in the Shweli region, where Tai Mao is spoken today. The parabaik manuscript<sup>24</sup> included in the thesis of Hla Maw Maw (2017: 85) describes a royal order to the mayor of Maing Mao (near Myitkyina) to ensure peace, accommodate and provide for the increased population and divide the township into four new regions. Edmondson (2008: 203) refers to a large scale migration around that same time from the Tai Nua area into the Shweli area, where the Tai Mao live. It is very likely that the same wave of migration from the east came to both the Shweli valley as well as the Myitkyina region. The significantly stronger similarity between Tai Nua and Tai Mao may point to a stronger influence of Tai Nua on Tai Mao than on the other languages. There are three possible reasons for this: (a) the proportion of migrants might have been bigger in the Shweli valley; (b) the sedentary population in the Shweli valley may have spoken a language which was already more similar to Tai Nua prior to the arrival of the migrants; (c) the migrants may have first gone to the Shweli valley and later gone up to Mogaung/Maing Mao. The last theory supports that they came along with the new king Sam Long Hpa who was a brother of the king of Mong Mao, and that the migrants had a royal endorsement, as mentioned in the parabaik manuscript.

Aiton, Phake, Indawgyi Shan-Ni and Khamti group A234 are together, while Myitkyina Shan-Ni, Khamyang, Tai Mao and Tai Nua have a split between A23 and A4. This might show a stronger influence of Tai Nua/Tai Mao migrants in Myitkyina in comparison to the other areas. Myitkyina Shan-Ni and Khamyang also group A23 together with B4, like Tai Mao and Tai Nue do as well. In Indawgyi Shan-Ni and Khamti B4 is grouped together with C123. All groups except for the Khamti distinguish C4-DS4-DL4 from C123. This is a development all groups have gone through, except the Khamti who remained more isolated in the north.

The Aiton split DS4-DL4 off from C4 in the same way Tai Nua does. The Aiton presumably left Mogaung earlier than the Phake, though it is not exactly sure when. Morey (2005a) assumes that the Tai Aiton have been in Assam from at least 1500 onwards. This would explain their retention of the Tai Nua DS4-DL4 tones. The Phake left Mogaung in 1775 for Assam, joining the Aiton who had come earlier. The A23 and B4 distinction Phake and Aiton have in common, might be a result of their renewed contact.

Both tonal developments and historical events need more research, but the fact is clear that migration of large population groups has affected tonal developments in Tai languages of northern Myanmar and the surrounding borderlands.

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<sup>24</sup> Discussed earlier in section 1.5.

## 7.2 The shape of words

### 7.2.1 Class terms and sesquisyllables

The formation of sesquisyllables is an active process in Shan-Ni (section 3.1.1), and can be found to a limited extent in other Tai languages, but nowhere as frequent as in Shan-Ni. It is connected to the process of forming compounds by adding class terms, followed by a reduction of the first syllable. However, it also used to expand the number of demonstratives (discussed separately in section 7.3.3) and distinguish between personal and possessive pronouns.

In Lao (Enfield 2007: 147) class terms apply to objects, and are not phonologically reduced to sesquisyllables. They are also very much still transparent and separable compounds, of which each syllable also has a meaning when used individually. The process to get there however, is identical to the formation of class terms in Shan-Ni. The class terms are the first part of the compound, indicating the category (e.g. ‘fish’) and the second part can be either a name of a specific thing within that category (e.g. ‘mackerel’) or a descriptive term, forming in a new meaning together with the class term (e.g. ‘gold’ to form ‘goldfish’).

The application of class terms and sesquisyllables to personal pronouns is especially interesting, because in Khamti and Phake all personal and possessive pronouns are the same, with their position specifying whether they are personal (preceding the noun) or possessive (following the noun). In Shan-Ni this is also the case, though the second and third person plural<sup>25</sup> are prefixed by *mə*<sup>1</sup>, probably derived from the pronouns for second and third person singular, *mɛu*<sup>4</sup> ‘2SG’ and *man*<sup>4</sup> ‘3SG’.

Phake and Aiton have what Morey (2002: 229) refers to as “noun class markers”. In his description most of these are already intransparent, and do not have a full-form equivalent like some nouns in transition in Shan-Ni have. Due to this lack of transparency, he also does not link their semantics to full lexemes, though he does describe their functions. The forms and their descriptions correspond with Shan-Ni. The two noun class markers that are not phonologically reduced in Phake he does consider to be full nouns, but he does not discuss a possible transition.

The partial presence of this process in Phake and Aiton, shows that the phonological reduction probably already took place in a time when the Phake and Shan-Ni were still living alongside each other, but that Shan-Ni expanded the use of class terms significantly, creating more disyllabic nouns than any other Tai language. The description of the formation of class terms in Lao facilitates the understanding of this process in Shan-Ni, which works exactly as Enfield describes, though it is more extensive.

The way these compounds are reduced phonologically, meets all the requirements listed by Butler (2014: 11) for sesquisyllables. The prosodic prominence is word final, the non-final syllables are reduced phonologically through a reduced segmental inventory; reduced

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<sup>25</sup> *mə*<sup>1</sup>*su*<sup>3</sup> ‘2PL’ and *mə*<sup>1</sup>*haw*<sup>3</sup> ‘3PL’ while the possessive pronouns are *su*<sup>3</sup> ‘2PL.POS’ and *khaw*<sup>3</sup> ‘3PL.POS’, corresponding to Phake and Khamti personal and possessive pronouns.

syllable shape and the non-final syllables do not constitute well-formed prosodic words on their own. The development of this as a very dominant feature in the language should be seen in relation to other languages in the area that also have sesquisyllables. These are all Tibeto-Burman and Austroasiatic languages, and in order to understand how this process has come into Shan-Ni more information and further research is required into the exact correspondence between these features and the contact history.

### 7.2.1 Interrogatives

Tai interrogatives usually correspond with the indefinite pronouns, with their function depending on their place within the syntax. All Tai languages in Table 35 have cognates of Shan-Ni *leu*<sup>4</sup> ‘which’, *pheu*<sup>4</sup> ‘who’ and *mɔ*<sup>2</sup> *leu*<sup>4</sup> ‘when’/‘which time’, but the rest of the interrogatives vary.

English	Shan-Ni	Phake <sup>27</sup> (+Aiton)	Khamti	Tai Mau	Shan Gyi	Lao <sup>28</sup>
<b>polar Q</b>	le <sup>4</sup> /le <sup>2</sup>	-/nɔ <sup>6</sup>	nai <sup>5</sup>	hâa	nɔ	bòò <sup>3</sup>
<b>what</b>	sang <sup>4</sup>	ka <sup>3</sup> səŋ <sup>6</sup>	ksang <sup>5</sup> -nai <sup>5</sup>	săŋ	s <sup>h</sup> əŋ	nang <sup>3</sup>
<b>which</b>	leu <sup>4</sup>	naü <sup>6</sup>	an <sup>3</sup> laeu <sup>5</sup> -nai <sup>5</sup>	lai	lau	N-daj <sup>3</sup>
<b>who</b>	pheu <sup>4</sup>	phaü <sup>6</sup>	phaeu <sup>5</sup> -nai <sup>5</sup>	phăi	p <sup>h</sup> au	phaj <sup>3</sup>
<b>where</b>	theu <sup>4</sup>	thaü	amai <sup>5</sup> -nai <sup>5</sup>	thài	ti; lau	saj <sup>3</sup>
<b>how</b>	nang <sup>1</sup> hu <sup>4</sup>	nüŋ <sup>1</sup> hũ <sup>6</sup>	heu <sup>5</sup> leu <sup>5</sup> sii <sup>5</sup>	hǎ	hu	-
<b>when</b>	mɔ <sup>2</sup> leu <sup>4</sup>	mə <sup>5</sup> naü <sup>6</sup>	meeu <sup>3</sup> laeu <sup>5</sup> -nai <sup>5</sup>	mə lai	mə: leu	mù <sup>1</sup> daj <sup>3</sup>
<b>how much</b>	kha <sup>1</sup> leu <sup>4</sup>	kha <sup>1</sup> läü <sup>1</sup>	khaeu <sup>5</sup> laeu <sup>5</sup> -nai <sup>5</sup>	khai	-	-
<b>how many</b>	kha <sup>1</sup> leu <sup>4</sup> + CLF	kī <sup>1</sup>	kii <sup>5</sup>	-	laaj (+)	cak <sup>2</sup> (+CLF)

The innovation *theu*<sup>4</sup> ‘where’ is described by Young (1984: 27) as a contraction of *ti*<sup>2</sup> ‘place’ and *leu*<sup>4</sup> ‘which’. This innovation is present in Tai Mau, Shan-Ni and Phake, but not in Khamti, Shan Gyi and Lao. In Shan Gyi *ti; lau* ‘which place’ is the uncontracted form of what Young suggests to be the source of *theu*<sup>4</sup> ‘where’ its cognates, while Khamti and Lao interrogatives have been through different developments. In Khamti, *amai*<sup>5</sup>-*nai*<sup>5</sup> ‘where’ is a compound of *an*<sup>3</sup> ‘thing’, *mai*<sup>3</sup> ‘here’ and *nai*<sup>5</sup> ‘Q’. The Khamti word for ‘here’ *mai*<sup>3</sup> does not exist in the other Tai languages in the table.

<sup>26</sup> Sources: Morey 2005a; (Phake), Inglis 2014 (Khamti), Young 1985 (Tai Mau), Glick & Sao Tern Moeng 1991 (Shan Gyi), Enfield 2007 (Lao).

<sup>27</sup> Aiton is not included in the table. In Morey (2005a: 222) all Aiton interrogatives are cognates of the Phake interrogatives, the only differences are minor, regular phonological distinctions between Phake and Aiton.

<sup>28</sup> This table does not do justice to the complexity of interrogatives in Shan Gyi and Lao. They are used here in comparison to Shan-Ni, but for a comprehensive overview see Enfield (2007) and Glick & Sao Tern Moeng (1991).

Most Shan-Ni interrogatives correspond with Phake, with the exception of ‘how many’ and the polar question particle  $le^4/le^2$ . Cognates of the Phake word  $kī^1$  also exist in Khamti and Aiton. In Shan-Ni  $kha^1leu^4$  is used for both ‘how much’ and ‘how many’, though ‘how many’ requires a classifier or other word indicating the entity asked about. Lao and Shan Gyi also require a word indicating the type of entity for their own varieties of ‘how many’, though I could not find whether they had a separate interrogative for ‘how much’. For ‘how’, Shan-Ni, Phake and Aiton each use a variation of  $nang^1hu^4$ , while in the other languages only use the second syllable of that compound (e.g.  $hu$  in Shan Gyi) fealing out  $nang^1$  ‘that’.

For polar questions, all Tai languages have a different strategy. In all languages mentioned except for Shan-Ni and Khamti it is also possible to ask questions without a questions particle; however, how common this is and in which situations this is acceptable differs and is not comparable. Despite this possibility, all languages do have a polar question particle. Shan Gyi, Phake and Aiton use a variety of  $no$  for polar questions, which may have derived from Burmese tag question  $၎်နံ no$  ‘isn’t it’. In Shan-Ni this is only used as a tag question, while polar questions obligatorily end in  $le^4/le^2$ . The Lao particle  $bòð^3$  is the most neutral of several polar question particles (Enfield 2007: 43). In Khamti the polar question particle is  $nai^5$ , which is also obligatory marked behind every other question word, except for  $kii^5$  ‘how many’ and  $heu^5leu^5sii^5$  ‘how’. Looking at the interrogatives, the relation between Shan-Ni, Phake and Aiton is clear. Innovations from Tai Mau are also found or developed further in these three languages, but not in Khamti. Shan Gyi and Lao are clearly more distant.

### 7.3.3 Demonstratives

Demonstratives in Shan-Ni have gone through two processes. Like the interrogatives, they show a few contractions, and like the nouns, they have become disyllabic. In some cases, both processes implied the addition of the same lexeme  $ti^2$  ‘place’, for example in  $ti^2thai^2$ , in which  $thai^2$  itself is a contraction between  $ti^2$  ‘place’ and  $nai^5$  ‘this’. The combination of these different processes allows Shan-Ni to be more specific in the way space is discussed. The contractions are described by Young (1985) for Tai Mao, and are also present in Phake, though none of these languages use disyllabic demonstratives.

Shan-Ni	gloss	Tai Mau	gloss	Phake	gloss	Khamti	gloss
$ti^2thai^2$	here	$thài$	here	$than^3$	there	$an^3-nai^1$	here.SG
$ti^2than^2$	there (near)	$thàn$	there	$thai^3$	here	$a-meau^4-nai^1$	there.SG
$pun^4than^2$	there (far)	$nâi$	this	$nan^4$	that	$an^3-pun^2-nai^1$	distant.SG
$nang^1ne^2$	this	$nân$	that	$nai^4$	this	$an^3-nai^1-khau^5$	here.PL
$pun^4nan^5$	that			$lan^4$	that	$a-meau^4-nai^1khau^5$	there.PL
$an^2nai^1$	this thing			$lai^4$	this	$an^3-pun^3-nai^1-khau^5$	distant.PL



Phake uses the words *thai*<sup>3</sup> ‘here’ and *than*<sup>3</sup> ‘there’ similar to Shan-Ni, but does not combine them with *ti*<sup>2</sup> or *pun*<sup>4</sup>. In Morey (2005a) *pa*<sup>1</sup>*lan*<sup>3</sup> ‘that side’ and *ti*<sup>2</sup> *nan*<sup>5</sup> ‘that place’ do occur, though monosyllabic determiners are more common in his Phake data and combinations with *than*<sup>3</sup> ‘there’ or *thai*<sup>3</sup> do not occur. Similarly, Phake uses the monosyllabic words *nai*<sup>4</sup> and *lai*<sup>4</sup> for ‘this’ and *nan*<sup>4</sup> and *lan*<sup>4</sup> for ‘that’, while these are disyllabic in Shan-Ni. Morey does not mention word-initial /n/ and /l/ to be allophones in Phake, while they certainly are in most words in Indawgyi Shan-ni. The acceptance of both variants in Phake for the demonstratives is interesting, and they might be revealing a connection at an earlier stage where /n/-/l/ allophony was less extensive than it is now in Indawgyi Shan-Ni.

Khamti has developed a totally different system and includes *an*<sup>3</sup> ‘thing’ in all demonstratives, and also marks number by adding *khau*<sup>5</sup> ‘they’ for plural objects. Clearly, Shan-Ni has extended the Tai Mau system with the formation of disyllabic terms. However, the distinction Shan-Ni makes between ‘here’, ‘there (near)’ and ‘there (distant)’ is shared with Khamti, though it uses different terms to express that. However, Shan-Ni does not mark plurality with demonstratives like Khamti does.

### 7.3 TAM markers

TAM markation in Tai languages is rare. Table 37 shows an overview of the different TAM markers across Tai languages. The extensive TAM markation present in Shan-Ni is the result of a long-term development, which to different extents can be found in other Tai languages. In chapter 6, TAM markers were discussed in relation to Phake and Aiton, as described by Morey (2005a, 2008). Some of these TAM markers are also present in Khamti, Tai Mau and Shan Gyi. As these are grammaticalized words also exist in their ungrammaticalized form in Shan-Ni and other Tai languages, we can also expect these developments to at different stages in different languages.

Most sentences in Shan Gyi and Tai Mau do not have TAM markation, hence tense, aspect and mood can then be filled in by the interpretation of the listener. They do use the words for ‘already’ and ‘will’ in similar ways Shan-Ni uses them. I also found the words for ‘keep’ and ‘stay’ in dictionaries as ‘verbal particles’. In some texts<sup>29</sup> they do occur in ways that could be interpreted as having similar functions to the TAM markers in Shan-Ni, though these could also be interpreted as parts of serial verb constructions. I did not find evidence convincing enough to call them TAM markers, not in the last place because these are rare. Of course, their function within a serial verb construction could be the first step to further grammaticalization into a TAM marker, but they clearly did not reach that state yet.

The markers *maa*<sup>4</sup> and *kaa*<sup>5</sup> in Shan-Ni as inchoative and terminative aspect markers, mostly used for events in the past. In Phake and Khamti these are also present as past markers. Inglis (2014) glosses *kaa*<sup>5</sup> refers to distant time and *maa*<sup>4</sup> to the perfective. Unfortunately, he does not elaborate on it and does not include enough examples to see how

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<sup>29</sup> Narratives in Young (1985) and Glick & Sao Tern Moeng (1991)

the usage of these markers in Khamti corresponds with the usage of TAM markers in Shan-Ni.

The shape of these TAM markers is also interesting, since these in Shan-Ni these differ from the verbs they derived from. The TAM markers themselves share the same shape as they have in Khamti and Phake, but in these languages they also exist as normal verbs for ‘go’ and ‘come’. These verbs in Shan-Ni have different shapes, corresponding with Tai Mao.

**Table 37** The presence of Shan-Ni TAM markers in other languages

	<b>Shan-Ni</b>	<b>Phake</b>	<b>Khamti</b>	<b>Tai Mau</b>	<b>Shan Gyi</b>
marker gloss	yaw <sup>5</sup> FINISHED	yau <sup>4</sup> FINISHED	yau <sup>4</sup> FINISH/ALREADY	yâu already	jaw <sup>5</sup> perfective
marker gloss	u <sup>1</sup> STAY	ū STAY	uu <sup>1</sup> IMPERFECTIVE	-	ju <sup>2</sup> progressive
marker gloss	waj <sup>5</sup> KEEP	wai <sup>4</sup> KEEP	wai <sup>1</sup> DURATIVE	wâi keep	waj <sup>5</sup> keep
marker gloss	te <sup>1</sup> FUT	ta <sup>1</sup> WILL	tii <sup>5</sup> IRREALIS	tǐ will	te <sup>1</sup> will
marker gloss	kaa <sup>5</sup> GO	kā <sup>1</sup> GO	kaa <sup>5</sup> DISTANT TIME	-	-
marker gloss	maa <sup>4</sup> COME	mā <sup>2</sup> COME	maa <sup>4</sup> PERFECTIVE	-	-
marker gloss	kaw <sup>1</sup> OLD	-	-	-	-
marker gloss	kɔ̃n <sup>4</sup> SHOULD/YET	-	-	-	-

### 7.3.1 *kaw*<sup>1</sup> ‘OLD’ and *kɔ̃n*<sup>1</sup> ‘SHOULD’/‘YET’

The grammaticalisation of two TAM markers, *kaw*<sup>1</sup> ‘OLD’ and *kɔ̃n*<sup>1</sup> ‘SHOULD’/‘YET’ seems to be unique to Shan-Ni. They occur only marginally as lexical, ungrammaticalized items in other Tai languages. In Morey (2005a), both are mentioned as lexical items in lists cited from Banchob (1987), but they do not occur in any of Morey’s own examples. They are also not found in Khamti (Inglis 2014). They do both have Burmese equivalents that are frequently used in colloquial speech. Although these do not correspond entirely with Shan-Ni and have grammaticalized from different words than their Shan-Ni equivalents, the fact that Shan-Ni speakers feel the need to have a TAM marker in the same situations may indicate that this a result of widespread Shan-Ni/Burmese bilingualism. Of these two markers, *kɔ̃n*<sup>1</sup> ‘SHOULD’/‘YET’ is used the most frequently. It is used in two ways, with and without negator. Without negator it is used for request from the speaker to the interlocutor. With negator it is used for events that have not happened yet or things that the subject did not do yet. The usage with negator is the most frequent and corresponds with the Burmese particle [ ၵဝး ] *thee*. The examples below are shown together with their Burmese translations in the Basic Spoken

Shanni book. In (222) and (223) it is about things that the speaker did not do yet, and (224) refers to the time before sunrise, which is described as ‘the sky is not bright yet’. The usage of *ma<sup>1</sup>..kɔn<sup>1</sup>* ‘not yet’ corresponds the Burmese *ma...thee buu* ‘not yet’ in all instances I found, both in spoken and written examples given by bilinguals. The function of *kɔn<sup>1</sup>* without negation in Shan-Ni does not correspond with a specific Burmese particle, so it is not entirely the same, but the *ma<sup>1</sup>..kɔn<sup>1</sup>* construction does allow Shan-Ni speakers a express a very frequently used particle in Burmese.

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                         |                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <p>(222) a. [SHAN-NI]<br/>         မ လံ ကံ့ ကိုန်<br/>         ma<sup>1</sup> lai<sup>2</sup> yap<sup>5</sup> kɔn<sup>1</sup><br/>         NEG GET sow YET<br/>         ‘[I] didn’t get it sowed yet.’</p> | <p>b. [BURMESE]<br/>         မ ချုပ် သေးဘူး<br/>         ma khyup thee buu<br/>         NEG sow YET NEG<br/>         ‘[I] didn’t get it sowed yet.’</p> | <p>(BSS_33)</p> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                       |                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <p>(223) a. [SHAN-NI]<br/>         မ လံ သိုဝ် ကိုန်<br/>         ma<sup>1</sup> laj<sup>2</sup> su<sup>5</sup> kɔn<sup>1</sup><br/>         NEG get buy YET<br/>         ‘[I] didn’t buy it yet.’</p> | <p>b. [BURMESE]<br/>         မ ဝယ် ရ သေးဘူး<br/>         ma we ya thee buu<br/>         NEG buy get YET NEG<br/>         ‘[I] didn’t buy it yet.’</p> | <p>(BSS_74)</p> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <p>(224) a. [SHAN-NI]<br/>         ဖှါ မ လိင်း ကိုန်<br/>         phaa<sup>5</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> leng<sup>4</sup> kɔn<sup>1</sup><br/>         sky NEG light YET<br/>         ‘before sunrise’<br/>         Lit: The sky is not bright yet.</p> | <p>b. [BURMESE]<br/>         မိုး မ လင် သေးဘူး<br/>         moe ma leng thee buu<br/>         sky NEG bright YET NEG<br/>         ‘before sunrise’<br/>         Lit: The sky is not bright yet.</p> | <p>(BSS_66)</p> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|

For Phake *küŋ<sup>1</sup>* ‘should’ (cognate of *kɔn<sup>1</sup>* ‘SHOULD’ in Shan-Ni) is listed as an auxiliary verb in Morey (2005a: 234) citing Banchob (1987). His work does not feature examples of the usage of *küŋ<sup>1</sup>* in Phake. For ‘not yet’, there is one example by Morey (2005a: 350) with the word *paj<sup>1</sup>*. As far as I know this word does not exist in Shan-Ni. Later Morey (2005a: 259) does mention “pai1/pi1/pa1 ‘don’t’, ‘not yet’”. If this is indeed the same lexeme, it only exists as the prohibitive *pi<sup>1</sup>* in Shan-Ni.

The TAM marker *kaw<sup>1</sup>* ‘OLD’ is used in sentences that in English would include ‘ever’, ‘X times’ or ‘never’, but searching on these terms through the work of Morey (2005a) and Inglis (2014) did not yield any results, hence I do not know how Khamti, Phake and Aiton express these kind of constructions. *kaw<sup>1</sup>* ‘OLD’ does correspond with the Burmese marker *hpuu* [ ဖူး ], itself a grammaticalization of the verb ‘visit’. Below are the Shan-Ni sentences from the

section on *kaw*<sup>1</sup> in Chapter 6 and their Burmese equivalents. In (225) *ma*<sup>1</sup>..*kaw*<sup>1</sup> is used as ‘never’, in (226) *kaw*<sup>1</sup> is used for ‘ever’ and in (227) *song*<sup>3</sup> *ha*<sup>1</sup>..*kaw*<sup>1</sup> is used for ‘two times’.

(225) a. [SHAN-NI]

ကျီး လှ မန်း မ ငှာန် ကပ်  
 keu<sup>4</sup> caa<sup>5</sup> man<sup>4</sup> ma<sup>1</sup> han<sup>3</sup> kaw<sup>1</sup>  
 1SG for 3SG NEG see OLD  
 ‘I have never seen her before.’

(CM\_EMP\_13)

b. [BURMESE]

ကျွန်တော့် သူ ကို မ မြင် ဖူး ဘူး  
 chendo tu go ma mjen hpuu buu  
 1SG.M 3SG OBJ NEG see EVER NEG  
 ‘I have never seen her before.’

(EMP\_13)

(226) a. [SHAN-NI]

ကျား ယာန်ကုင် ထိုင် ကပ် လေး  
 nyaa<sup>4</sup> yaan<sup>1</sup> kong<sup>1</sup> thɔng<sup>3</sup> kaw<sup>1</sup> de<sup>4</sup>  
 MEET yangon arrive OLD Q.POL  
 ‘Have you ever been to Yangon?’

(NY\_NS\_23a)

b. [BURMESE]

ရန်ကုန် ရောက် ဖူး လား  
 yangon jauk hpuu laa  
 yangon arrive EVER Q  
 ‘Have you ever been to Yangon?’

(NS\_23a)

(227) a. [SHAN-NI]

ကျီး ကွင် ငှာ ထိုင် ကပ်  
 ɣ<sup>4</sup> song<sup>3</sup> ha<sup>1</sup> thɔng<sup>3</sup> kaw<sup>1</sup>  
 EMP two CLF.times arrive OLD  
 ‘Yes, I have been there twice.’

(NY\_NS\_23b)

b.[BURMESE]

ဟုတ်၊ နှစ် ခါ ရောက် ဖူး တယ်  
 ho hni khaa jauk hpuu de  
 yes two time arrive EVER REAL  
 ‘Yes, I have been there twice.’

(NS\_23b)

The lack of these frequently used TAM marker in Phake and other Tai languages means innovation must have taken place after the migration of the Phake in 1775. From that moment onwards the Burmese administration has been very influential in the Shan-Ni areas, hence this is very likely a result of bilingualism.

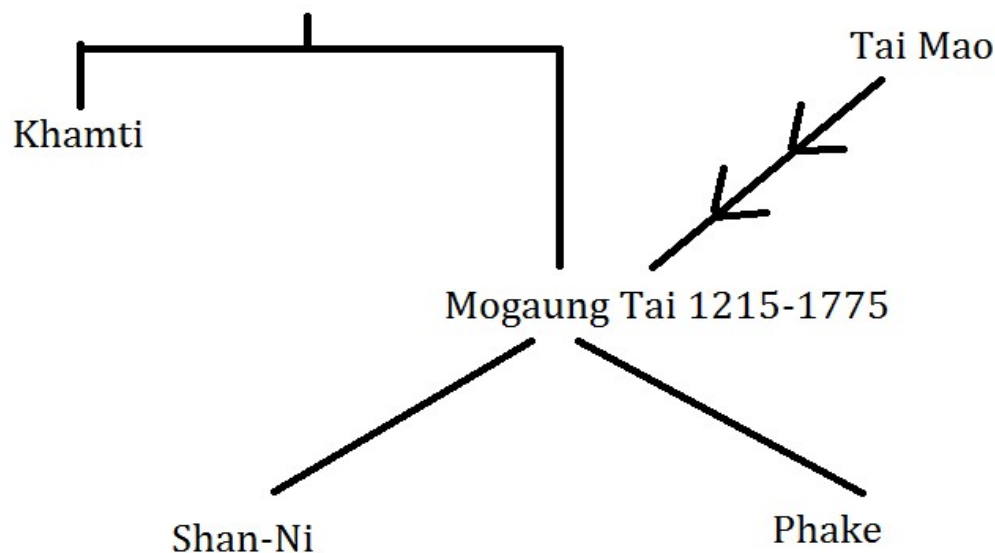
## 7.4 Summary

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Shan-Ni</b>	<b>Similar in</b>	<b>Different in</b>
<b>Consonant cluster /kw/</b>	yes	Tai Mao, Tai Nua, Lao	Phake, Khamti, Aiton
<b>Consonant clusters with /-j/</b>	yes	-	All other Tai languages
<b>Tones</b>	See Figure 9	Khamti, Phake	Tai Mao, Tai Nua
<b>Interrogatives</b>	Monosyllabic constructions	Tai Mao, Phake, Aiton	Khamti, Lao, Shan Gyi
<b>Class terms</b>	Almost all nouns	Applies to objects and people in Lao	Nowhere as frequent as in Shan-Ni
<b>Sesquisyllabic structure</b>	Applies to disyllabic with class terms	Marginally present in Phake	All other Tai languages
<b>Demonstratives</b>	Contractions+ disyllabic	Contractions like Tai Mao and Phake, near-far distinction like Khamti	All
<b>TAM markers</b>	8 different ones	Phake (6), Khamti (6)	Tai Mao, Shan Gyi
<b>Shape TAM markers</b>	Different shape as verbs they derive from	TAM markers same in Phake and Khamti	Original verbs same as Tai Mao
<b>Pronouns</b>	2PL+3PL different for personal and possessive	Possessives same as other Tai languages	2PL+3PL personal pronouns unique distinction

Shan-Ni shares features with the Tai languages to the northwest (e.g. Khamti, Phake and Aiton), as well as with the Tai languages to the southeast (e.g. Tai Nua and Tai Mao). While the presence of TAM markers is clearly shared with the northwestern languages, the interrogatives are similar to Tai Mao, as well as the retention of the cluster word initial clusters /kw/ and /khw/. Class terms are present in other languages, though never as common as they are in Shan-Ni. The addition of class terms is responsible for a large chunk of Shan-Ni's disyllabic vocabulary. But the major application of the formation of disyllabic terms can be found in grammatical features. Shan-Ni favours the inclusion of all innovations, both those shared with the northwestern languages, and those shared with the southeast.

This is well represented in the demonstratives, which include the contractions present in Tai Mao and Phake, but through which disyllabic terms can also distinguish between different degrees of proximity like Tai Khamti does. This tendency to create disyllabic terms also allows Shan-Ni to distinguish between personal and possessive pronouns for the second and third person plural, which are the same in Khamti and Tai Phake. Similarly, the TAM markers *kaa<sup>5</sup>* 'GO' and *maa<sup>4</sup>* 'COME' are identical to the verbs they derived from in Khamti and Tai Phake, but have different shapes in Shan-Ni. These features together show how Shan-Ni has a strong tendency to make distinctions in the language, that go beyond the incorporation of features also present in other different Tai languages.

Though data on some of the languages mentioned above is lacking, Phake, Khamti and Tai Mao show clear relationships to Shan-Ni in different ways. A similar set of innovations from Tai Mao are present in both Shan-Ni and Tai Phake. However, features absent in Tai Mao but present in Tai Khamti are as well. This supports the theory that a large group of migrants from the Tai Nue/Tai Mao region integrated into the sedentary Tai group living in the area of Mogaung, who are related to the Khamti. The Tai Phake, who probably left Mogaung around 1775, share a lot of features with Shan-Ni, although the formation of disyllabic words is not that frequently presented in Tai Phake. The relationship between Shan-Ni, Khamti, Phake and Tai Mao is demonstrated in Figure 10.



**Figure 10** Shan-Ni's relationship with Khamti, Phake and Tai Mao

## Conclusions

Shan-Ni as spoken at the Indawagyi lake shares features with the Tai languages spoken in India, the Chinese-Burmese border, and Khamti further in the north of Myanmar. It also has some very unique features, which in other Tai languages are either absent or only marginally present. Though all the languages spoken in India and northern Myanmar have distinct features that may be read as Tibeto-Burman influence, Shan-Ni seems to have a few more recent developments that are more explicitly Burmese influence. In addition, it has taken some processes that exist in other Tai languages and built new processes on top of that. These developments point to several moments in history where groups merged or split off. Since their movements have been all either towards or from Mogaung, where the Shan-Ni live, knowledge of Shan-Ni is crucial in understanding the developments within the Southwestern Tai language family.

The phonology of Shan-Ni is similar to other Tai languages, with aspirated and non-aspirated voiceless stops, no voiced stops, a variety of nasals, fricatives and approximants, and a large vowel inventory. It has retained the initial consonant cluster /kw/, and palatalized the consonants /k, kh, p, ph, m/ when followed by the vowels /ε, i, e/, in which did not happen in other Tai varieties in the region is likely to be a relatively new innovation.

Shan-Ni is actively making nouns disyllabic through the addition of class terms. These are words that provide categories to a noun, for example 'round' or 'time' or 'fruit'. These then form compounds, often with the old form, and then gradually reduce the phonology of the class term, making it a sesquisyllabic word of which the meaning of the first syllable is no longer transparent. A similar process is applied to determiners, but here different class terms added to the same word allows Shan-Ni to make additional distinction when talking about place. Several word classes, including determiners, question words and adjectives, incorporate shapes of words that have been formed through processes active in Tai Mao, but have developed further or fossilized in Shan-Ni.

The sentence structure in Shan-Ni is affected by ellipsis, the omission of arguments, and the presence of grammatical markers, including TAM markers. Ellipsis happens when the referent is active and clear, hence does not need to be mentioned anymore. New referents are often introduced with a classifier construction, and inactive referents are marked by the definite marker *naj*<sup>5</sup>. Possession can be expressed either through predicates with the existential verb *yang*<sup>4</sup> or by putting the personal pronoun referring to the possessor behind the possessed. Similarly, the same words that are indefinite pronouns at the beginning of a phrase, are question words when placed at the end. Grammatical markers include a linker, a verbal plural marker, a prohibitive and others that each in their own way modify the sentence structure.

The TAM markers mostly correspond with the Tai Phake and Khamti, though the functions slightly differ and Shan-Ni has two additional TAM markers that are not found in any other Tai language, (*mə*<sup>1</sup>...) *kɔn*<sup>4</sup> 'should/not yet' and *kaw*<sup>1</sup> 'has been experienced in the past. These do correspond to the function of the particle *tee* and *hpui* in Burmese, hence it looks like a

recent innovation.

When looking at the representation of these features in other Tai languages, it seems very likely that the Shan-Ni are descendents of two Tai groups that merged around 1200 around Mogaung. The sedentary population probably spoke a language similar to Khamti, while a large group of migrants coming in spoke a language similar to Tai Mao and Tai Nua. The language most similar to Shan-Ni is Tai Phake, who left Mogaung in 1775 to Assam. The differences between Shan-Ni and Phake are thus developments that have occurred in the last 250 years. These include the extension of some pre-existing phenomena, but also some things are very clearly Burmese influence, which makes sense because from that time onwards the Burmese became dominant in previously Shan-Ni strongholds.

Some innovations in Shan-Ni still allow variation in certain items, making language change processes more transparent. Other innovations are regional, hence these too ask for a deeper study into language change. What this study has pointed out, is that Shan-Ni is a crucial link to understand the connections between Tai languages in northern Myanmar, northeast India, and southwestern China. This is not a linear relation, but rather one of various periods of migration causing populations to meet and separate. Since they were also at the center of a larger kingdom, which included different Tibeto-Burman peoples, a description of Shan-Ni allows us to study how these languages have been influenced by Shan-Ni and vice-versa. Tibeto-Burman studies that include comparison with “Shan” up to now only had Khamti and Shan Gyi to look at, which are both quite distinct from Shan-Ni grammatically.

This thesis only scratched the surface of Shan-Ni grammar and its possible contributions to understanding language change in the region. Future research can go both broader and deeper into what has been introduced here. Broader with the inclusion of Shan-Ni dialects spoken in other regions, deeper with in-depth research on individual features discussed here.



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## Appendix

### Wordlist

#### က - k

ကကျီးဟ်ဉ်	ka <sup>1</sup> kyi <sup>4</sup> eng <sup>2</sup>	armpit
ကျ	kaa <sup>2</sup>	dance
ကျး	kaa <sup>4</sup>	car
ကျ	kaa <sup>5</sup>	GO (TAM)
ကာ်	kaan <sup>5</sup>	break off
ကပံ	kaap <sup>5</sup>	bite
ကံ	kaj <sup>1</sup>	chicken
ကက်	kak <sup>1</sup>	stutter
ကမ်	kam <sup>1</sup>	brown
ကမံလိမ်း	kam <sup>2</sup> cuum <sup>4</sup>	ball pen
ကွီး	kau <sup>4</sup> /kɛu <sup>4</sup>	1SG
ကဉ်	kan <sup>2</sup>	starve
ကဟ် <sup>4</sup>	kan <sup>4</sup>	verbal plural (VPL)
ကဉ်	kang <sup>2</sup>	cover
ကပ်	kap <sup>1</sup>	communicate
ကတ်	kat <sup>1</sup>	cold
ကပ်	kaw <sup>1</sup>	old
ကျေ	ka <sup>5</sup>	CLF for humans
ကျေ	ka <sup>5</sup>	also
ကွက်	ka <sup>1</sup> k	classifier for cups
ကွဉ်ကင်း	ka <sup>2</sup> kaang <sup>4</sup>	chin
ကွဉ်ခေး	ka <sup>2</sup> khə <sup>4</sup>	throat
ကွပ်ယင်း	ka <sup>5</sup> sang <sup>4</sup>	why
ကိုး	ka <sup>1</sup> n	SHOULD/ YET
ကိုး	ka <sup>4</sup>	afraid

ကိုး	koj <sup>2</sup>	banana
ကိုး	kon <sup>2</sup>	buttocks
ကိုး	kon <sup>4</sup>	person
ကိုး	ku <sup>2</sup>	classifier for pairs
ကိုး	kuj <sup>1</sup>	cotton
ကိုး	kwaa <sup>1</sup>	go
ကိုး	kwak <sup>1</sup>	cup
ကိုး	kyaang <sup>1</sup>	fast
ကိုး	kyep <sup>1</sup>	pick up
ကိုး	kyin <sup>4</sup>	eat

### ခ - kh

ခါး	kha <sup>1</sup> laaj <sup>2</sup>	want	
ခါး	kha <sup>1</sup> ləu <sup>4</sup>	how much, how many	
ခါး	kha <sup>1</sup> nang <sup>3</sup>	later	
ခါး	khaa <sup>2</sup>	politeness marker	
ခါး	khaa <sup>3</sup>	search	
ခါး	khaa <sup>3</sup>	upper leg	
ခါး	khaam <sup>2</sup>	cross (verb)	
ခါး	khaan <sup>5</sup>	lazy	
ခါး	khaj <sup>1</sup>	egg	
ခါး	khaj <sup>2</sup>	want	
ခါး	khat <sup>1</sup>	broken	
ခါး	khaw <sup>2</sup>	enter	
ခါး	khaw <sup>2</sup>	rice	
ခါး	khaw <sup>3</sup>	3PL .POS, their	
ခါး	khə <sup>2</sup> mu <sup>4</sup>	wrist	lit: useful hand
ခါး	khə <sup>2</sup> tin <sup>4</sup>	ankle	lit: useful foot
ခါး	khə <sup>2</sup> tin <sup>4</sup>	slipper	

ခေ့း	khə <sup>4</sup>	neck	
ဟံး	khəj <sup>4</sup>	male genitals	
ဟိဝ်	khew <sup>3</sup>	green	
ဟိ	khi <sup>3</sup>	female genitals	
ဟုၣ်	khun <sup>2</sup>	attend	
ဟိုၣ်	khun <sup>2</sup>	climb	
ဟူၣ်	khuj <sup>2</sup>	banana	
ဟုၣ်ဟူၣ်	khun <sup>3</sup> ho <sup>3</sup>	hair	lit: hair head
ဟုၣ်မိုဝ်း	khun <sup>3</sup> mu <sup>4</sup>	hair on the hand	lit: hair hand
ဟုၣ်ပိင်တၢး	khun <sup>3</sup> ping <sup>1</sup> taa <sup>4</sup>	eyelashes	lit: hair edge eye
ဟုၣ်တၢး	khun <sup>3</sup> taa <sup>4</sup>	eyebrows	lit: hair eye
ဟုၣ်တိၣ်း	khun <sup>3</sup> tin <sup>4</sup>	hair on the foot	lit: hair foot
ဟွံး	khwaaj <sup>4</sup>	buffalo	
ဟွမ်း	khwam <sup>4</sup>	language	
ဟျိမ်	khyem <sup>3</sup>	needle	
ဟျိတ	khyet <sup>1</sup>	frog	
ဟျိၣ်	khyew <sup>2</sup>	teeth	
ဟျိၣ်မိုဝ်း	khyen <sup>3</sup> mu <sup>4</sup>	forearm	
ဟျိၣ်	khyeng <sup>3</sup>	stiff	
ဟျိၣ်	khyep <sup>1</sup>	classifier for classifier for flat, hard objects	
ဟျိ	khyi <sup>1</sup>	ride, drive	
ဟျိဟူၣ်	khyi <sup>2</sup> hu <sup>3</sup>	ear wax	lit: shit ear
ဟျိဟျိၣ်	khyi <sup>2</sup> khyew <sup>2</sup>	teeth impurities	lit: shit teeth
ဟျိမုတ်	khyi <sup>2</sup> muk <sup>5</sup>	snot	lit: shit snot
ဟျိတၢး	khyi <sup>2</sup> taa <sup>2</sup>	eye boogers	lit: shit eye

**c - ng**

ငိုၣ်း	ngun <sup>4</sup>	money	
ငိုဝ်း	ngo <sup>4</sup>	cow	

ငှား                    ngu<sup>4</sup>                    snake

**င - C**

ငှား                    caa<sup>4</sup>                    for

ငှား                    caa<sup>5</sup>                    angry

ငှား                    cau<sup>4</sup>                    order

ငှား                    cau<sup>4</sup>                    heart

ငှားမုံ                    cau<sup>4</sup> maj<sup>2</sup>                    worried

ငှားဟူန်                    cau<sup>4</sup> on<sup>2</sup>                    happy

ငှားယို                    cau<sup>4</sup> yau<sup>1</sup>                    angry

ငှား                    cam<sup>4</sup>                    follow

ငှား                    cong<sup>3</sup>                    little

ငှား                    cet<sup>1</sup>                    seven

ငှားပူးလီ                    cum<sup>1</sup>pu<sup>4</sup>li<sup>4</sup>                    navel

lit: sink count navel

**ဆ - S**

ဆံ့                    saaj<sup>2</sup>                    intestines

ဆံ့ဟူန်                    saaj<sup>2</sup>on<sup>1</sup>                    small intestine                    Lit: intestine small

ဆံ့                    saaj<sup>2</sup>king<sup>2</sup>                    appendix                    Lit: intestine branch

ဆံ့                    saaj<sup>2</sup>long<sup>3</sup>                    large intestine                    Lit: intestine big

ဆံ့တပ်                    saaj<sup>2</sup>tap<sup>1</sup>                    inner organs                    Lit: intestines liver

ဆံ့                    saam<sup>3</sup>                    three

ဆံ့                    saan<sup>3</sup>                    inside

ဆံ့                    saan<sup>4</sup>                    beautiful

ဆံ့                    sang<sup>4</sup>                    what, something

ဆံ့                    sap<sup>1</sup>                    strike

ဆံ့ပတူး                    sap<sup>1</sup>pa<sup>1</sup>tu<sup>4</sup>                    window

ဆံ့ပတူး                    sap<sup>1</sup>pa<sup>1</sup>tu<sup>4</sup>                    door

ဆံ့                    saj<sup>1</sup>                    glass pot

လွှက်မိုင်း	sɔk <sup>1</sup> mu <sup>4</sup>	elbow	lit: elbow hand
လွှက်	sɔn <sup>3</sup>	study	
လွှင်	sɔng <sup>3</sup>	two	
လတ်	sɔt <sup>1</sup>	alight, burn	
လွတ်	sɔt <sup>5</sup>	drink	
လှိုင်	sɛng <sup>3</sup>	gem	
လှိုင်အိတ်	sɛng <sup>3</sup> khew <sup>3</sup>	jade	
လှိုင်	sɔ <sup>2</sup>	shirt	
လီ	si <sup>1</sup>	four	
လီ	si <sup>1</sup>	colour	
လီအိတ်	si <sup>1</sup> khew <sup>3</sup>	green	
လီလှိုင်	si <sup>1</sup> lɔng <sup>3</sup>	yellow	
လီလှိုင်	si <sup>1</sup> nɛng <sup>4</sup>	red	
လီ	si <sup>3</sup>	LINKER, because, that, and	
လိပ်	sip <sup>1</sup>	ten	
လိပ်	siw <sup>3</sup>	pimple	
လှိုင်	su <sup>5</sup>	buy	
ကိုတ်	sut <sup>5</sup>	push	
လှိုင်တိမ်း	son <sup>2</sup> tin <sup>4</sup>	heel	lit: heel foot
လှိုင်	sop <sup>1</sup>	mouth	
လှိုင်	su <sup>3</sup>	2PL .POS, your	
လှိုင်	suk <sup>5</sup>	rinse	

**ရာ - ny**

ရား	nyaa <sup>4</sup>	meet, at	
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**တ - t**

တရကောင်	taa <sup>1</sup> koong <sup>1</sup>	Yangon (city)	
တရးတိမ်း	taa <sup>4</sup> tin <sup>4</sup>	bowl of the ankle	lit: eye foot



တံး	taaj <sup>4</sup>	shout	
တံး	taaj <sup>4</sup>	die	
တၢ်	taan <sup>2</sup>	talk	
တၢ်း	taang <sup>4</sup>	way, manner	
တၢ်ကူၢ်	taap <sup>1</sup> kon <sup>2</sup>	hips	lit: flat side buttocks
တၢ်	tau <sup>2</sup>	classifier for bottles	
တၢ်	tang <sup>2</sup>	cook	
တၢ်း	tang <sup>4</sup>	with	
တၢ်းလူၢ်	tang <sup>4</sup> long <sup>3</sup>	everything	
တၢ်	tap <sup>1</sup>	liver	
တၢ်ဖျိက်	tap <sup>1</sup> phɜk <sup>1</sup>	spleen	Liver
တၢ်	ta <sup>1</sup>	talk	
တၢ်	ta <sup>1</sup>	until	
တၢ်	taj <sup>4</sup>	look	
တၢ်	te <sup>1</sup>	FUTURE (TAM), will	
တၢ်ကျၢ	te <sup>4</sup> ka <sup>5</sup>	friend	
တၢ်	te <sup>1</sup>	build	
တၢ်	ten <sup>1</sup>	hit	
တၢ်	tern <sup>2</sup>	forest	
တၢ်မံ	tern <sup>2</sup> maj <sup>5</sup>	tree	
တၢ်	ti <sup>2</sup>	place	
တၢ်ထံ	ti <sup>2</sup> thai <sup>2</sup>	here	
တၢ်ထံ	ti <sup>2</sup> than <sup>2</sup>	there	
တၢ်	tin <sup>4</sup>	foot	
တၢ်	to <sup>4</sup>	classifier for animals	
တၢ်	to <sup>4</sup>	body	
တၢ်	tok <sup>1</sup>	fall	
တၢ်	traa <sup>4</sup>	Buddhist law	
တၢ်	tuk <sup>1</sup>	fall	

## ∞ - th

ထူး	thaa <sup>4</sup>	swear
ထိုး	thεu <sup>4</sup>	where
ထိုင်	thɯng <sup>2</sup>	classifier for trees, plants
ထူး	thon <sup>2</sup>	arrive
ထူး	thop <sup>1</sup>	encounter, meet
ထူး	thun <sup>3</sup>	classifier for bags
ထူး	thung <sup>3</sup>	bag

## ၈ - n

နာယိုး	na <sup>1</sup> hu <sup>4</sup>	how	
နာယိုး	naa <sup>2</sup> cau <sup>4</sup>	chest (female)	lit: face feeling
နာယိုး	naa <sup>2</sup> khyεng <sup>2</sup>	shin	
နာယိုး	naa <sup>2</sup> ok <sup>1</sup>	chest (male)	lit: face chest
နာယိုး	naa <sup>2</sup> phaak <sup>1</sup>	forehead	
နာ	naa <sup>5</sup>	TAG, isn't it?	
နမ်	nam <sup>3</sup>	many	
နမ်	nam <sup>5</sup>	water	
နမ်လိင်ဝါး	nam <sup>5</sup> leng <sup>2</sup> waan <sup>3</sup>	tea (sweet)	
နမ်နား	nam <sup>5</sup> naaj <sup>4</sup>	spit	lit: water saliva
နမ်နားဟိုမ်	nam <sup>5</sup> naaj <sup>4</sup> khum <sup>3</sup>	saliva	lit: water saliva ?
နမ်တူး	nam <sup>5</sup> taa <sup>4</sup>	tears	lit: water eye
နင်ယိုး	nang <sup>1</sup> hu <sup>4</sup>	how	
နင်စွဲ	nang <sup>1</sup> nε <sup>2</sup>	this	
နင်	nang <sup>2</sup>	sit	
နင်	nang <sup>3</sup>	back	
နွမ်း	nɔn <sup>4</sup>	sleep	
နွင်	nɔng <sup>3</sup>	lake	

နေ ne<sup>1</sup> plural

ဝ - ပ

ပလံး	pa <sup>1</sup> laa <sup>3</sup>	almost	
ပယိင်း	pa <sup>1</sup> ying <sup>4</sup>	girl	
ပျ	paa <sup>2</sup>	side	
ပျံ	paaj <sup>2</sup>	run	
ပံးပိုင်	paaj <sup>4</sup> mu <sup>4</sup>	top of the hand	lit: top hand
ပံးတိန်း	paaj <sup>4</sup> tin <sup>4</sup>	top of the foot	lit: top foot
ပာက်	paak <sup>1</sup>	mouth	
ပာဏ်	paan <sup>5</sup>	plate (flat)	
ပက်	pak <sup>1</sup>	hundred	
ပေ	pa <sup>2</sup>	father	
ပွဲ	pa <sup>4</sup>	fair	
ပွတ်	pa <sup>5</sup>	return	
ပွမ်	pa <sup>m</sup>	round	
ပွင်ကောင့်	pa <sup>ng</sup> kaaw <sup>2</sup>	calf (of leg)	lit: joint calf (of leg)
ပွတ်	pa <sup>t</sup>	lungs	
ပိန်း	pa <sup>n</sup>	COPULA, happen, be	
ပေ	pa <sup>e</sup>	can	
ပီ	pa <sup>i</sup>	PROHIBITIVE, don't	
ပီခွင့်	pa <sup>i</sup> na <sup>ng</sup>	sisters	
ပီ-	pa <sup>i</sup>	year	
ပိန်း	pa <sup>n</sup>	COPULA, happen, be	
ပိင်လွပ်	pa <sup>n</sup> so <sup>p</sup>	lips	
ပိုင်း	pa <sup>u</sup>	if	
ပိုန်းကန်	pa <sup>u</sup> na <sup>n</sup>	that	
ပိုန်းထက်	pa <sup>u</sup> tha <sup>n</sup>	over there	
ပုမ်	pa <sup>m</sup>	story	

ပုဂံ	pon <sup>5</sup>	last, previous
ပု	pu <sup>1</sup>	grandfather
ပုတယျ	pu <sup>1</sup> ta <sup>1</sup> ya <sup>2</sup>	grandparents
ပုတ်	put <sup>1</sup>	open
ပျး	pyaa <sup>4</sup>	show
ပျ်း	pyen <sup>4</sup>	COPULA, happen, be
ပျိတ်	pyet <sup>1</sup>	duck
ပျိတ်	pyet <sup>1</sup>	eight

### ဖ - ph

ဖေလျ	pha <sup>1</sup> lo <sup>3</sup>	onion	
ဖေမာ်	pha <sup>1</sup> maaw <sup>1</sup>	bachelor	
ဖေကျိမ်	phaa <sup>1</sup> kyem <sup>2</sup>	cheek	lit: palm/sole hand
ဖေမိုင်း	phaa <sup>1</sup> mu <sup>4</sup>	hand palm	lit: sole/palm cheek
ဖေတိန်း	phaa <sup>1</sup> tin <sup>4</sup>	sole	lit: palm/sole foot
ဖေ	phaa <sup>2</sup>	cloth	
ဖေဟုံ	phaa <sup>2</sup> ho <sup>3</sup>	turban	
ဖေဟိုင်း	phaa <sup>2</sup> sɔ <sup>1</sup>	bedsheet	
ဖေတံး	phaa <sup>2</sup> taj <sup>4</sup>	traditional clothes	
ဖေ	phaa <sup>3</sup>	stone plates	
ဖေကာန်	phaa <sup>3</sup> kaan <sup>5</sup>	Hpakant (city), stone plates break off	
ဖေ	phaa <sup>5</sup>	sky	
ဖေလိင်း	phaa <sup>5</sup> leng <sup>4</sup>	daylight, sunshine	
ဖေန်	phaan <sup>3</sup>	poor	
ဖေး	phaj <sup>4</sup>	fire	
ဖေက်	phak <sup>1</sup>	dish next to rice	
ဖေန်	phan <sup>3</sup>	dream	
ဖေ့း	phɛu <sup>4</sup>	who	
ဖေိုင်	phɔng <sup>2</sup>	bee	

နိုက်	phun <sup>3</sup>	classifier for flat, flexible objects
နိုက်လိုင်	pho <sup>3</sup> long <sup>3</sup>	husband
နိုက်တမေး	pho <sup>3</sup> ta <sup>1</sup> me <sup>4</sup>	couple (husband and wife)
နြး	phraa <sup>4</sup>	temple
နြး	phraa <sup>4</sup>	pagoda
နိုက်	phun <sup>3</sup>	rain
နိုတ်	phyit <sup>1</sup>	to quarrel

**မ - m**

မ	ma <sup>1</sup>	NEG
မာတ်	ma <sup>1</sup> haw <sup>3</sup>	3PL, they
မမိုင်	ma <sup>1</sup> mong <sup>2</sup>	mango
မာတ်	ma <sup>1</sup> su <sup>3</sup>	3PL
မာ	maa <sup>2</sup>	mad
မာ	maa <sup>3</sup>	dog
မား	maa <sup>4</sup>	come
မာ	maa <sup>5</sup>	horse
မာ	maai <sup>2</sup>	widow
မာတ်း	maak <sup>1</sup>	fruit
မာတ်းနိုတ်	maak <sup>1</sup> phyit <sup>1</sup>	chillies
မာတ်းလွတ်	maak <sup>1</sup> cɔk <sup>1</sup>	orange
မာတ်းဟိုတ်လို့	maak <sup>1</sup> ho <sup>3</sup> cɛu <sup>4</sup>	heart
မာတ်းလမ်း	maak <sup>1</sup> lan <sup>4</sup>	kidneys
မာတ်းဟိုတ်	maak <sup>1</sup> un <sup>3</sup>	coconut
မာတ်	maan <sup>2</sup>	village
မာ	mau <sup>1</sup>	new
မား	mau <sup>4</sup>	classifier for spoons
မာတ်း	man <sup>4</sup>	3SG (POS), he/she
မာ	mɔ <sup>2</sup>	pot

မုံ့ဟွင်	mɔŋ <sup>3</sup> sop <sup>1</sup>	moustache	lit: (short facial) hair mouth
မွက်	mɔk <sup>1</sup>	inform	
မွက်	mɔk <sup>1</sup>	classifier for flowers	
မွက်ယျ	mɔk <sup>1</sup> ya <sup>2</sup>	flower	
မွင်း	mɔng <sup>4</sup>	hour	
မေး	me <sup>4</sup>	wife	
မိန်း	men <sup>4</sup>	fly	
မိမိ	mɛ <sup>2</sup>	mother	
မိမိ	mɛ <sup>2</sup>	lady	
မေး	mɛ <sup>4</sup>	wife	
မိုး	mɛu <sup>4</sup>	2SG, you	
မိုင်း	mɔ <sup>2</sup>	time	
မိုင်းမံ	mɔ <sup>2</sup> maj <sup>2</sup>	hot season	
မိုင်းနံ	mɔ <sup>2</sup> naj <sup>5</sup>	now	
မိုင်းဟူတုံ	mɔ <sup>2</sup> phok <sup>5</sup>	tomorrow	
မိုင်းမိုင်းငါး	mɔ <sup>2</sup> mɔ <sup>2</sup> ngaa <sup>4</sup>	yesterday	
မီး	mi <sup>4</sup>	rich	
မိုင်းလွီး	mu <sup>2</sup> lɛu <sup>4</sup>	when	
မိုင်းထွီး	mu <sup>2</sup> theu <sup>4</sup>	when	
မိုင်း	mu <sup>4</sup>	hand	
မိုင်း	mun <sup>4</sup>	3SG (POS), he/she, his/hers	
မူ	mu <sup>2</sup>	pig	
မျိတ်	myet <sup>1</sup>	fishing hook	
မျိတ်	myin <sup>5</sup>	turmeric	
မျိတ်	myit <sup>5</sup>	knife, slice (verb)	

**ဝ - y**

ယျ	yaa <sup>1</sup>	at, place
ယျ	yaa <sup>2</sup>	grandmother

သာပ်	yaap <sup>1</sup>	difficult
သာဝ်း	yaaw <sup>4</sup>	long
ယမ်း	yam <sup>4</sup>	wet
ယမ့်	yam <sup>5</sup>	chew
ယင်း	yang <sup>4</sup>	EXIST, have
ယဝ့်	yau <sup>5</sup>	finish, FINISHED (TAM)
ယိဝ့်	yew <sup>2</sup>	urine
ယိုက္ခံ	yuk <sup>5</sup>	wet
ယူ	yu <sup>1</sup>	stay
ယွံ	yau <sup>1</sup>	big
ယိုဝ်း	yu <sup>4</sup>	shoot
ယေကျာ်	yo <sup>1</sup> ga <sup>1</sup>	illness

### လ - l

လကွက်	la <sup>1</sup> ɔn <sup>1</sup>	child	
လလိင်း	la <sup>1</sup> ling <sup>4</sup>	monkey	
လျာ	laa <sup>2</sup>	face	
လာဉ်	laang <sup>5</sup>	wash	
လာဝ့်	laap <sup>5</sup>	free	
လံ	laj <sup>2</sup>	GET	
လွီး	lau <sup>4</sup>	in	
လင်မိုဝ်း	lang <sup>3</sup> mu <sup>4</sup>	back of the hand	lit: back hand
လင်တိုက်	lang <sup>3</sup> tin <sup>4</sup>	back of the foot	lit: back foot
လွံး	lɔj <sup>4</sup>	slow	
လွံး	lɔj <sup>4</sup>	mountain	
လွင်	long <sup>2</sup>	work	
လွတ်လွမ်း	lot <sup>1</sup> lom <sup>4</sup>	trachea	lit: pipe wind
လွတ်ယိုဝ့်	lot <sup>1</sup> yo <sup>2</sup>	esophagus	lit: pipe food
လွတ်	lot <sup>5</sup>	escape	

လိပ်တိန်း	lep <sup>5</sup> tin <sup>4</sup>	toenail	lit: nail foot
လိမ့်	lem <sup>2</sup>	classifier for long, slender objects	
လွီး	leu <sup>4</sup>	which	
လင်း	leng <sup>4</sup>	bright	
လိင်္ဂ	leng <sup>5</sup>	give birth	
လိပ်မိုင်း	lep <sup>5</sup> mu <sup>4</sup>	fingernail	lit: nail hand
လှိုင်	lɔ <sup>5</sup>	meat	
လှိုင်း	lɔn <sup>4</sup>	month	
လှိုတ်	lɔt <sup>5</sup>	blood	
လီး	li <sup>4</sup>	good	
လိက္ခ	lik <sup>5</sup>	write	
လိန်း	lin <sup>4</sup>	earth	lit: finger hand
လိင်္ဂ	ling <sup>5</sup>	tongue	lit: finger foot
လိပ်မိုင်း	liw <sup>5</sup> mu <sup>4</sup>	finger	
လိပ်တိန်း	liw <sup>5</sup> tin <sup>4</sup>	toe	
လှိုင်	long <sup>3</sup>	big	
၎	lu <sup>3</sup>	particle implying plea	
လှူ	lu <sup>3</sup>	mouse	
လှိုက်	luk <sup>5</sup>	daughter, son	
လှိုက်	luk <sup>5</sup>	get up, stand up	
လှိုက်ထံး	luk <sup>5</sup> caai <sup>4</sup>	son	
လှိုက်ကွန်	luk <sup>5</sup> ɔn <sup>1</sup>	child	
လှိုက်ဆာင်	luk <sup>5</sup> sao <sup>3</sup>	daughter	

○ - W

၎	waa <sup>2</sup>	speak, talk	
ဝါမ့်	waam <sup>5</sup>	catch	
ဝါန်	waan <sup>1</sup>	classifier for round, open objects	
ဝါန်	waan <sup>3</sup>	sweet	



ဝါး	waan <sup>4</sup>	day
ဝံ	waj <sup>5</sup>	keep, KEEP (TAM)
ဝန်	wan <sup>1</sup>	plate (round)
ဝန်မလုံ	wan <sup>1</sup> ma <sup>1</sup> laj <sup>5</sup>	today

## ဟ - h

ဟ	haa <sup>2</sup>	five	
ဟံ	haaj <sup>2</sup>	cry	
ဟံ	haaj <sup>3</sup>	loose	
ဟကံ	hak <sup>5</sup>	love	
ဟိုး	hau <sup>4</sup>	give	
ဟန်	han <sup>3</sup>	see	
ဟင်း	haw <sup>4</sup>	1PL (POS), we, our	
ဟင့်	hɔng <sup>5</sup>	call	
ဟိုင်	heng <sup>3</sup>	thousand	
ဟိတ်	het <sup>1</sup>	do, make	lit: shape waist
ဟိုင်	hɛng <sup>2</sup>	dry	
ဟိုင်း	hɛng <sup>4</sup>	strength	
ဟိုင်ဟိုင်	hɛng <sup>5</sup> ɛng <sup>2</sup>	waist	
ဟိုဝ်	hɔ <sup>1</sup>	sweat	
ဟိုဝ်	hɔ <sup>5</sup>	boat	
ဟိုင်မိန်း	hɔ <sup>5</sup> men <sup>4</sup>	airplane	lit: head knee
ဟိုန်း	hɔn <sup>4</sup>	house	
ဟိုဝ်	ho <sup>3</sup>	head	lit: spacious.place rice
ဟိုဝ်အဝ်	ho <sup>3</sup> khaw <sup>1</sup>	knee	
ဟိုဝ်မာ	ho <sup>3</sup> maa <sup>1</sup>	shoulder	includes ear
ဟိုင်အဝ်	hong <sup>4</sup> khaw <sup>2</sup>	stomach	
ဟို	hu <sup>3</sup>	ear	
ဟို	hu <sup>3</sup> nang <sup>4</sup>	nose	lit: hole buttocks
ဟိုး	hu <sup>4</sup>	classifier for holes, drops, dots	

ငှူး	hu <sup>4</sup>	hole
ငှူးကွန်	hu <sup>4</sup> kon <sup>2</sup>	anus
ငှူးဟ်	huj <sup>1</sup>	classifier for round, solid objects
ငှူးဟ်တုး	huj <sup>1</sup> taa <sup>4</sup>	eye
ငှူးအလံာ်	hung <sup>4</sup> kha <sup>1</sup> laaj <sup>3</sup>	stairs, ladder
ငှူးဟ်ဟ်	hung <sup>5</sup> hen	school

### ဟ - a (vowels)

ဟဟဟဟ်	a <sup>1</sup> saak <sup>5</sup>	age
ဟဟဟ်	a <sup>1</sup> sang <sup>4</sup>	now
ဟဟ်	aa <sup>4</sup>	very
ဟဟ်တေကျေ	aa <sup>4</sup> te <sup>4</sup> ka <sup>5</sup>	best friend
ဟဟ	aan <sup>1</sup>	count
ဟဟ်	an <sup>2</sup>	thing
ဟဟ်ဟဟ်	an <sup>2</sup> hak <sup>5</sup>	love
ဟဟ်ကျိန်	an <sup>2</sup> kyin <sup>4</sup>	food
ဟဟ်တဟ်	an <sup>2</sup> taaj <sup>4</sup>	death
ဟဟ်	ang <sup>1</sup>	for
ဟဟ်	aw <sup>4</sup>	take
ဟဟ်	ɔk <sup>1</sup>	leave
ဟဟ်ဟဟ်	ɔk <sup>1</sup> ɛk <sup>1</sup>	brain
ဟဟ်	ɛ <sup>2</sup>	mushy
ဟဟ်	u <sup>1</sup>	stay, STAY (TAM)
ဟဟ်	un <sup>1</sup>	warm
ဟဟ်	up <sup>5</sup>	classifier for books