

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This thesis looks at four “Central Karenic Languages”- Kayah¹, Monumanaw, Kayaw and Yintale. In order to limit the scope of the thesis, only four varieties were chosen. They are found primarily in Kayah State, Burma. Kayah State is located in the eastern part of Burma. It borders Shan State to the northeast, Karen State to the southwest and Thailand to the east. It is one of the smallest states in Burma. (See Figure 1).

Previous phonological studies have been done on one of the languages in this thesis: Kayah, although the other three languages discussed in this thesis-Kayaw, Monumanaw, and Yintale have never been analyzed.

Kayah has been taken as the basis to which the other three languages are compared for four reasons: 1) most linguistic research has focused on Kayah; 2) Kayah has the largest population, 3) Kayah is the most dominant politically, and 4) the author of this thesis is a native speaker of Kayah.

The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of Kayah, Kayaw, Monumanaw and Yintale, as well as a discussion of previous research, external and internal classification of Karen, the purpose of this thesis and the methodology used.

¹ In this thesis I use the term “Kayah” to refer to Kayah spoken in Kebogyi.

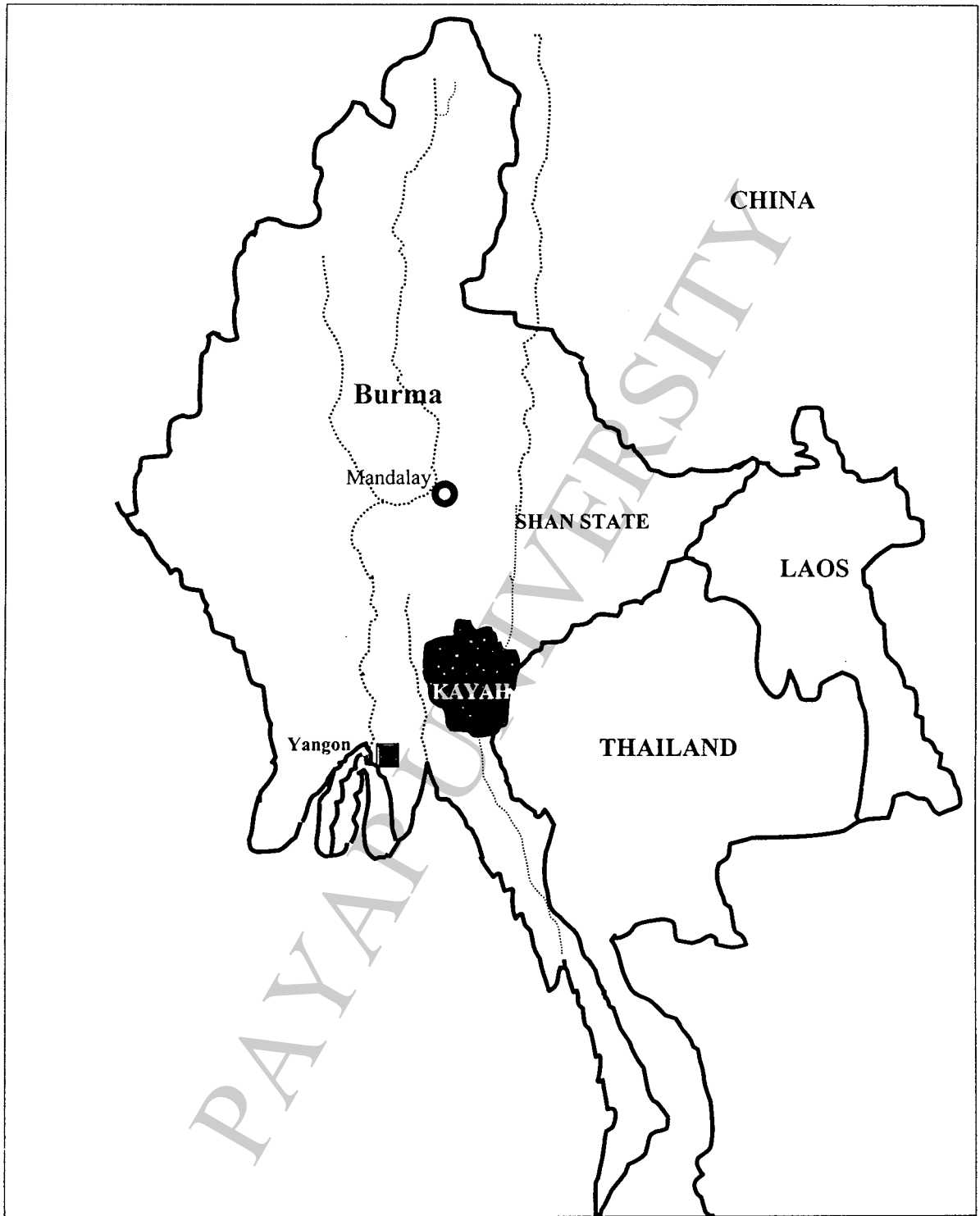


Figure 1. Map of Burma and Location of Kayah State

1.1 Background

The residents of Kayah State speak many languages. They are generally referred to as “Kayah” by others living outside of Kayah State. “Kayah” (or sometimes Karenii) is often used as a general name for all the Karenic groups residing in Kayah State. When other people living outside of Kayah State say, “Kayah” it includes Kayah Ljakja (Kebogyi), Kayah Mathe (Eastern Kayah), Kayah Shitja (Northern Kayah), Kayah Panu (Monumanaw), Kayah Phjatare (Kayaw), Kayah Talja (Yintale), Ljakhje Du (Kayan), Ljakhje Phu (Yinbaw), Geba, Gekho, and Bwe. But people living in Kayah State have to identify themselves specifically. When they identify themselves as Kayah they include all Red Karen (Eastern Kayah, Western Kayah, Northern Kayah, Dawtama, Dawsobi, Dawnyikhu and Bawlakhe Kayah). They do not include Kayaw (Bre), Kayan (Padaung), Kayan Kanga (Yinbaw), Latha, Yintale, Monumanaw, Bwe, Gekho or Geba. Some subgroups names include terms like “Upstream”, “Downstream”, or “terms that refer to the color of the women’s clothing.” For example, “Big Upstream People” are the Kayan, “Small Upstream People” are the Yinbaw, and both of them are called “Black People”. Kebogyi Kayah are “Downstream People”, Monumanaw are the “Western People,” Eastern Kayah the “Green People” or “Kayah Mathe” which means “Eastern People”. Furthermore, the Northern, Southern and Eastern varieties of Kayah are called “Red People” or “Kayah Li”.

Since each group is called different names by different groups (and even by researchers) I will use the following four names, Kayah, Kayaw, Monumanaw and Yintale to refer to each group, (see section 1.2 for further details).

The Kayah people are spread all over Kayah State but the Kayan and Yinbaw live mostly in Demawso township, and also in Phekhon township, Shan State. Monumanaw and Kayaw people can be found in Phruso township. There is only one Yintale village in Phasaung township and one quarter in Bawlake township.

The following sections will present a historical background of Kayah State, geographic and demographic information, the socio-cultural and religious setting, communication, and an overview of each group.

1.1.1 Historical

Kayah State was initially called Karenii State. According to the constitution of the Union of Burma, Article 180 (1a), the word *Karenii* was eliminated and replaced with Kayah under the amendment made on 9th February 1950. The name of Karenii State was renamed as Kayah State on 5th October 1951 by the legislature.

LaPolla (1999:237) states that the Karen arrived in Burma from northern China some time before the eighth century (in fact they arrived before the Burmese). Because of insufficiency of food caused by irregular rainfall, increasing population size and warfare in China, the Karen (and other groups) moved southward looking for new lands until they finally entered what is present-day Burma.

1.1.2 Geography & Demography

Kayah State is one of seven states in the Union of Burma. It lies between latitude north 18.30 and 20 degrees and between longitude east 97 and 97.55 degrees. The state borders Shan State to the northwest, Karen State to southwest and Thailand to the east. (Figure 1).

The area of Kayah State is 4506 square miles BERG (2000) or 11,731.5 square kilometers making it the smallest state in Burma with a total population of 207,357 Bamforth (2000:11). It is composed of two districts: Loikaw and Bawlakhe. Under Loikaw district, there are four townships: Loikaw, Demawso, Phruso and Shadaw, but under Bawlakhe district, there are three townships: Bawlakhe, Phasaung and Meseh. Loikaw is also the state capital.

Kayah State, even though it lies within the tropics, is not unreasonably hot as it is located on a plateau. The average temperature of the capital city, Loikaw, is 22° C. Kayah State has a moderate rainfall with an annual total rainfall between 100-130 cm. The capital Loikaw receives between 124-150 cm of rain annually. Generally, Kayah State is mountainous. Some plains exist, but only along the valleys of the Bilu river, the Salween River and Nam Pon rivers. Loikaw is situated 790 meters above sea level. It is on a plateau big enough to produce enough rice for all the people living in Kayah State. In general, the western part of the state is higher than the east. The average height of the west mountain range varies from 1200 to 1700 meters. The highest peak of the Loi Ho Hta range which runs north to south, Loilong, is 1684 meters high, Si Hso 1563 meters, and Hso Kli Hso 1570 meters. In the eastern part of the state the average altitude of the ranges is only 900 to 1200 meters. The Salween River flows from north to south through the eastern part of Kayah State (BERG 2000).

In 1941 (Hobbs 1956) the entire population of the state was about 71,000 of which over 50,000 were Kayah, and some 21,000 were about equally divided between two other Karen groups, Padaung and Yinbaw. Government estimates in 1961 showed little change with 71,500 people (Lehman 1963).

According to a 1983 census the population composition of Kayah State was Kayah 89,287 (56.12%), Burmese 27,975 (17.58%); Shan 26,515 (16.66%), Karen 10,272 (6.45%), and others 5,546 (3.19%). The total population of Kayah State according to UNICEF (1998) is 207, 357.

The number of Kayah Li people is estimated to be at around 280,000 (Grimes 2000), of which roughly 60% speak Kayah Li. Of the 280,000 Kayah people, it was estimated that in 1983 over one quarter of them were living in Thailand (Grimes 2000). Personal discussions with informants estimate the population of Yintale to be around 1,000, for Monumanaw approximately 4,000, for Kayaw 10,000.

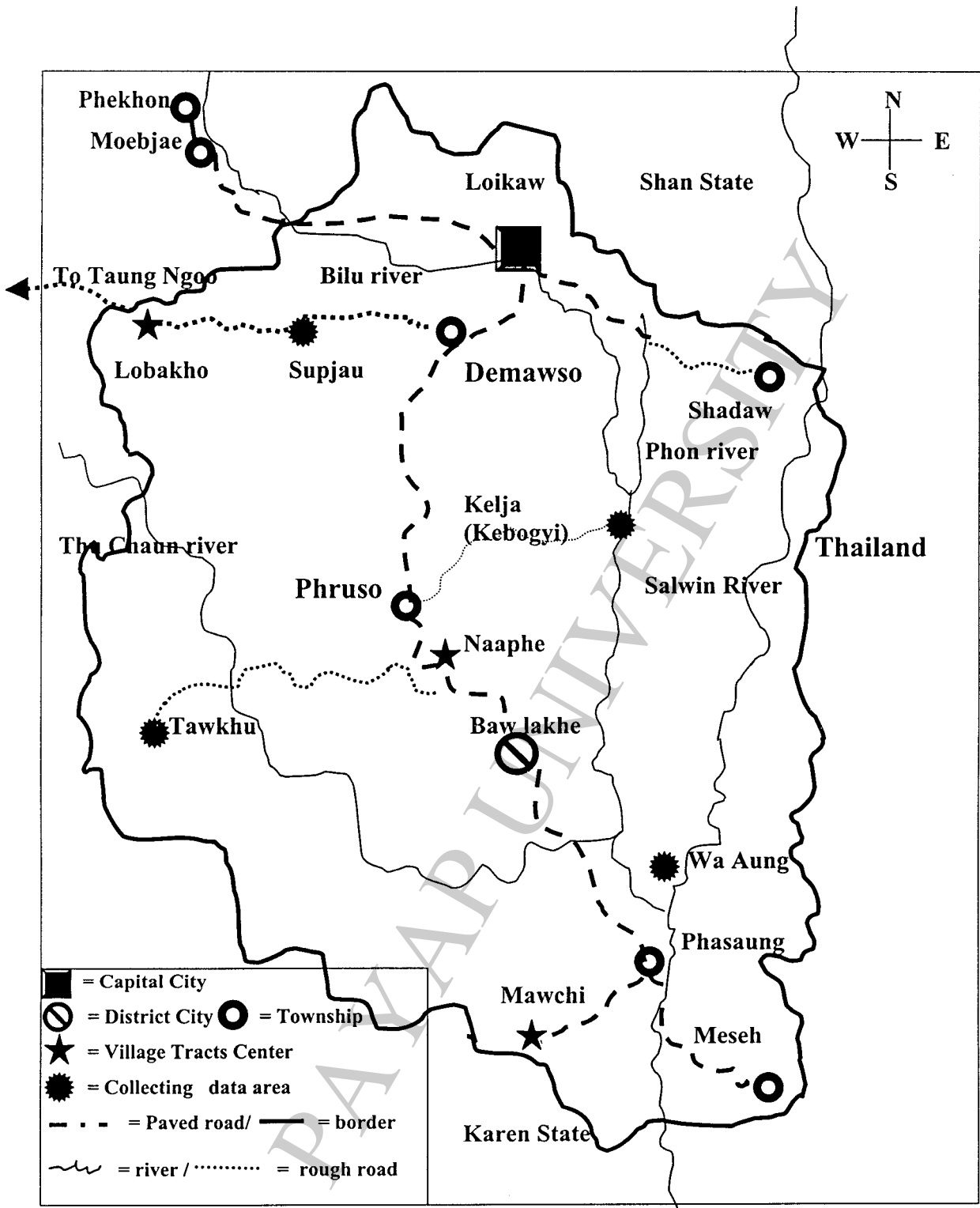


Figure 2. Map of Seven Townships and Village-tracts Centers

1.1.3 Socio-cultural & Religious Setting

Formerly, the people of Kayah had their own King (Sawbwa). The most famous was “Kephodu”². The Burmese version of this name is “*Kebogyi*”. Socially, it is customary for Kayah to give respect to a king, the village chief, a teacher and a religious leader called “Ke Bja Dse” and “Katjo Bja Dse”, who represent the people to the spirits. Although at present there is no king, giving a respect to a leader is still widely practiced in many villages. If a village chief gives a command to do something, the whole community totally follows his command, even if they are displeased with the decision. To work together is very common in Kayah.

“The Kayah people are very hard working and have very little free time. They wake at three o’clock in the morning, cook their meal and eat it and then leave to go the fields.” (BERG 2000). If one family builds or repairs their house, at least one person in each family has to come to help. In the case of funerals, all the villagers come and some bring food, rice, drinks or money as they can afford.

The women and men do different work. Men do the main task such as cutting bamboo, wood, erecting posts, ploughing, carrying heavy things and butchering animals. The women do the cooking, weaving and doing all the domestic work in the home. Most Kayah work is cooperative, especially cultivating, ploughing, harrowing and harvesting.

Traditionally the **Kayah** believed in many kinds of spirits such as the guardians of the forest, mountains and the trees. Around 1890, a missionary came into Kephodu, a place where the Kayah’s king lived, but the Kayah did not accept him. Around forty – five years later (1935), an Baptist American missionary came to a Kayah village named Lamaw Daw in South Shan State and built a church there but almost all the believers died in epidemics during World War II. Later on, the Karen Baptist Association came to Kayah State and has been working since. Today, Christianity

² The word “Ke” means “Country”, “pho” means “Blossom” and “du” means “Big”

composes 30% of the Kayah population. The remainders of them are Buddhists and animists. Those who are animist celebrate the Kutjobo festival, celebrating the powerful spirit that can bring rain every year.

The **Monumanaw** used to be afraid of the spirits Kay Day, Gaboh and Thaw Baw. They would make sacrifices to Gaboh with pork meat and to Kay Day with dog or goat meat. Thaw Baw was believed to emanate from people who had suffered violent deaths (BERG 2000). In 1890, a Catholic missionary named Father Bo Sha Nu came to the Monu. The Baptists first came to the Muso area, Phruso township, southwest Kayah State. The village named Tsjelakwa accepted the Baptism but they were not allowed to drink the traditional wine, and so they became Roman Catholics. All Monu Manaw are Christians.

Formerly, the **Kayaw** were animists, but now all Kayaw are Christians. Most of them are Roman Catholic believers. 10% are Baptists. Around 1900, a Baptist group came to the Hoya area and they became Baptists, but later on they turned to Catholicism. In Kayaw society it is usually the man who initiates a divorce. No man can keep two women in one house, and so if he wishes to have a second wife, he must first leave the first one.

Nearly all **Yintale** are Buddhists and animists. Around five or six people are Christians. According to BERG (2000), Yintale has a similar culture to the other Kayah races. Boys go to court girls at their house in the evenings. They may even stay talking until dawn reciting poems and telling riddles. In such a way a boy may visit three or four girls and then make this choice from among them. Likewise a girl may be courted by more than one boy and make her choice from among them. Both girls and boys enjoy limitless freedom in seeing each other. They have no 'bachelor clubs' as do other Kayah races; they have full access to see the opposite sex though they never indulge in sexual relationships before marriage. They are honest and sincere in their relationships with each other. According to Lehman (1963), their dress is like the Shan and Burmese dress. They are chiefly located in the Bawlakhe

District, whose traditional ruling family is supposed to be largely of Yangtalai origins, as is most of the population. Their agriculture is much like that of the Kayah, but they grow a great deal of sesame, the oil of which is sold to Shan.

1.1.4 Communication

There are two major trade routes into the Kayah State. One via a road from Taungngoo, Magwe division to Loikaw, and the other road is from Taunggyi to Loikaw. In the south there is a road from Loikaw to Meseh. Meseh is located on the Thai-Burma border. There is a railway from Loikaw to Aung Ban Shan State (and then onto Yangon). In Loikaw there is a domestic airport. Within the state there is only one paved road running north to south from Loikaw to Bawlakhe, Pasaung and Mawchi. In the south, there is one paved road running east to west between Meseh and Mawchi. (See figure 2).

1.2 Overview of each group

Most people in Burma call all the Karen groups living in Kayah State Kayah. They generally do not know who is being referred to when terms like Kayaw, Monumanaw and Yintale are used. But in Kayah State, people are more specific. If one says "Kayah", it refers to the Kayah Li does not include the Kayan, Kayaw, Yintale, Monumanaw, Yinbaw, Gekho, Geba, Latha and Bwe. Officially, the Burmese government calls them all Kayah. All Central Karenic groups are allowed to broadcast on the radio service only in Western Kayah Li, which the author will refer to as Kayah.

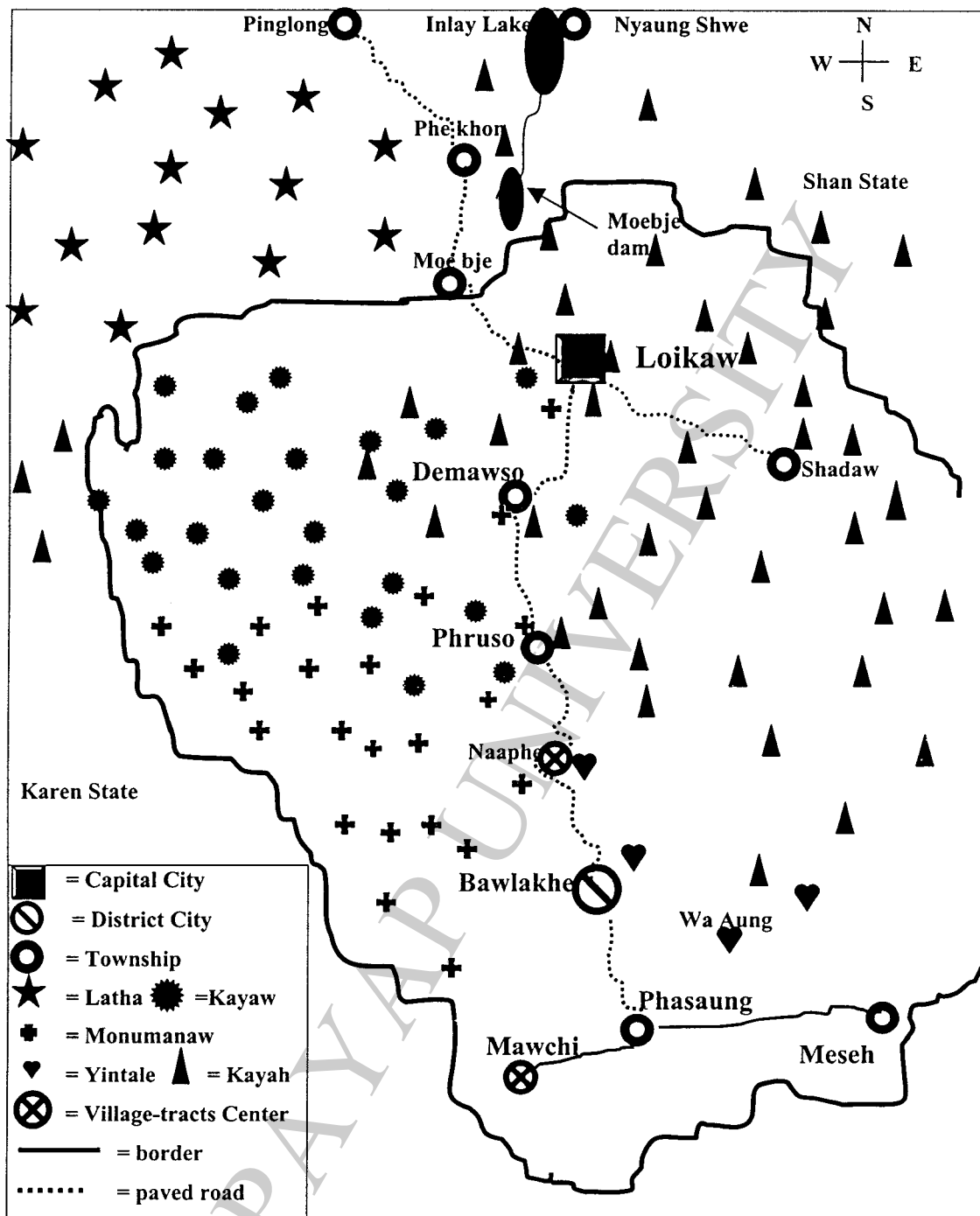


Figure 3. The Distribution of Karenic Languages in Kayah State of Burma

1.2.1 Kayah

Kayah can be found mostly to the east of the Phekone-Loikaw-Bawlakhe main road. They are not found in Meseh and Phasaung townships. They are mainly found in Loikaw and Shjadaw townships, also in Demawso and Phruso townships. In Bawlakhe township, they live only in the mountains to the east of Bawlakhe.

Researchers generally agree that there are two major divisions of Kayah with the Salween River being the dividing line between the two “dialects” (Lehman 1963, Solnit 1997). In fact, there are three main speech varieties spoken. There is “North Kayah”, those who live to the north Loikaw, Kayah State and Moby, Pehkon, Pilog, and Nyaung Shwe townships in Shan State. “South Kayah”, refers to the Kayah living in South of Loikaw, Phruso and South Demawso. Scholars have called them “Western Kayah”. Those who live in the east of Phon river and Salween river, in Maehongson Province, Thailand and Shadaw township, Kayah State, Burma, are called Eastern Kayah.

The dialect situation within Kayah is very complex and requires further study. In fact there are a lot of Kayah varieties that cannot understand each other. For example, Dawtama and Dawnjekhu dialects are harder than Eastern Kayah dialect for West and North Kayah to understand even though they live much closer to Western Kayah. The writer saw four villages approximately 12 miles east of Bawlakhe town and 4 miles north west of the Salween (Phasaung town) that are very different from Kayah (North, South and East), though they call themselves “Kayah”. Their dialect is harder than Dawtama and Dawnyikhu to understand. The name of the villages are Soung Log, Chi Kwe, Nan Nok and Wan Cheh.

A more accurate estimate, based on statistical information from local officials, is around 150,000. However Bradley states:

“Officially Kayah Li has over 140,000 speakers in Burma, but this is underenumerated (and probably includes Manu, Yintale and perhaps some other

Karen languages within Kayah State). Including Thailand, there are probably a quarter of a million speakers”.

1.2.2 Kayaw

The Kayaw are known by many different names. Bradley (1997:48) states “known to its speakers as [brɛʔ] and hence Bre or Brek, this Central Karen group now prefers the autonym Kayaw [kəjɔ]”. People call them Paret, and they are reported as preferring this name (BERG 2000). Kayah call them [phjatəɛ].

The Kayaw people live west of Phruso, west of Dimawso and Southwest of Phekone townships and two quarters in Loikaw. A few people live in Thai-Burma border.

In fact, my informants said that people living in Gegaw village-tracts, west of Phruso, are called [brɛʔ], but those who living in west of Demawso and Southwest of Phekone townships are called [kəjɔ] “Kayaw”. The term [brɛʔ] is totally different from the language called ‘Eastern Bwe and Western Bwe’. Even though all researchers considered the Bre [brɛʔ] and Kayaw to be the same, they cannot understand each other. But they are considered by many people to be one language differing only in accents.

The population of Kayaw is approximately 10,000, according to one informant. “Kayaw probably totals about 25,000 speakers (Bradley 1997). According to the divisional supervisory committee, on the 18 Union Day, 1965, the population of Kayaw was estimated to be 7,000. As they mostly live in mountainous areas, they primarily cultivate dry rice on the hillsides. They raise cattle, pigs and chickens. They cultivate and trade several beans, chilies, various yams, sweet potatoes, potatoes, and cucumbers. Traditional woven clothes are found in Kayaw as well. The bags woven by Kayaw are well known for their skill in handicrafts. Kayaw have almost forgot their traditional festivals because nearly all of them have become Roman Catholics or Baptists. Therefore today there are no traditional celebrations in Kayaw. Most Kayaw

speak three or four languages. For example, those who live to the west of Phruso it is Sgaw Karen (neighborhood language and religious language for Baptists), Geba (religious language for Roman Catholics), and Burmese (national language). My informant said, 90% of them are Roman Catholic believers and 10% of them are Baptists. There are no Buddhists or animists. Figure 4 shows where Kayaw villages are located.

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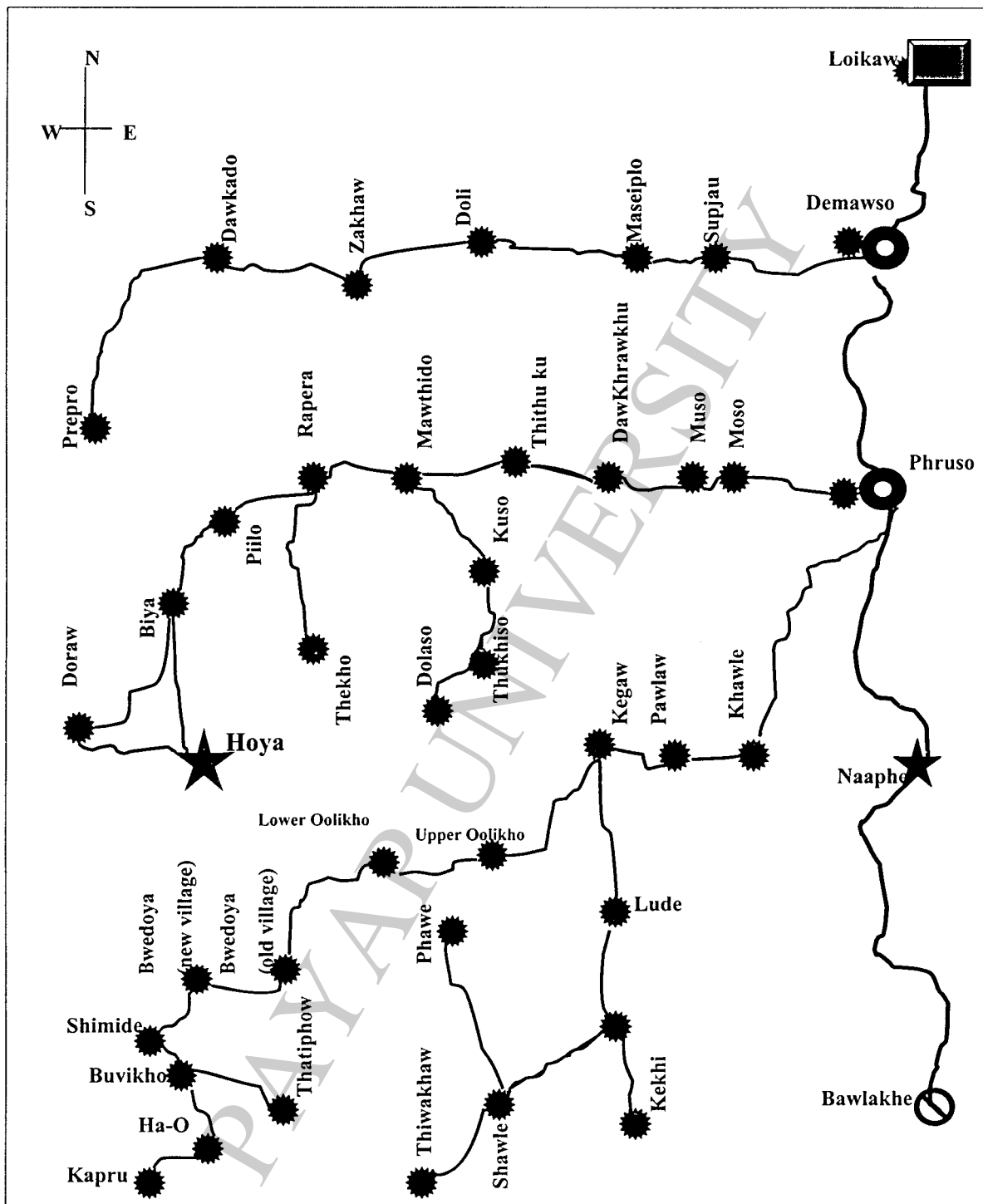


Figure 4. The Map of Kayaw Villages Area

1.2.3 Monumanaw

The Monumanaw includes two dialects- Monu and Manaw. Monu is the northern dialect and Manaw the Southern. They appear to be two separate languages because those who are Baptists live in the Manaw part, and those who are Roman Catholic live in the Monu part. They are not only different in the name of their locations and accents but they are also different in religious beliefs so they appear to outsiders to be two different languages. However they consider themselves to be the same. I will refer to both of them as Monumanaw.

Formerly they had a big clash due to the difference of religions. Some extremists still want to say that they are not the same language. Leaders in both sections have made peace recently. So they do not like anyone to say they are different. Actually, they are one language as they can understand and communicate with each other very well, as the author saw both Monu and Manaw informants talking with each other with no apparent difficulties.

Monumanaw can be found in the west of Bawlakhe and Phruso townships. They are one quarter of Loikaw, one quarter of Phruso and one quarter of Demawso. But, primarily, they are also found in Naaphe village-tracts, Bawlakhe township. There are a total of 21 villages and three town quarters. 70% are Baptists and 30% are Roman Catholic. The population of Monumanaw is estimated to be between 3,000 – 5,000 BERG (2000), however, a more accurate estimate, based on statistical information from local officials, is around 1,000. For the small western subgroup Manu, the Burmese name is Manumanaw, the Kayah name is [punn̩]. This means “western” (dialect of Kayah); it may have 10,000 or more speakers. There were very large differences in the estimated population of Manumanaw given by the four people. For example; The estimate of an informant, he is an emigration officer, is around 50,000, the estimate of the population by the divisional supervisory committee (1965) was

over 3,000, and another one of my informants estimated around 10,000). But to the best of the researcher's estimate is around 10,000, too.

Cultivation is the main task of the Monumanaw people. Most of the work clearing the fields and harvesting is done by the whole village working cooperatively. They sell their goods in Phruso township. The main goods for sale are betel nuts and betel leaf; after this in order of importance are beans, plantain, and oranges. These are all sold in exchange for rice. The Monumanaw have had significant contact with other languages, including Sgaw, Kayah and Burmese. In the west of Bawlakhe, the Sgaw language is important to them to communicate with the neighboring Sgaw and use in the religious meeting. In Phruso township, Kayah and Burmese are very important languages of communication.

1.2.4 Yintale

Yintale is also called Yintalaing or Yantalaing BERG (2000:6). *Talai* is said to come from *Talaing*, which is the Burmese term for the people of Lower Burma, but c.f. the Kayah term. Tribal synonymy is as follows: “*talja*” (Kayah term, “southern”). *Yangtalai* is the Shan term, *Yintale* in its Burmese form, sometimes given a folk etymology deriving it, erroneously in all likelihood, from Kayin Talaing, “Mon (country) Karen,” a term denoting the Pwo Karen (Lehman 1963:68). The author disagrees that the term “*Talai*” came from “*Talaing*”. To the best of my knowledge, the Mon were formerly called [tɔ̃lɔ̃] by Sgaw Karen. The Burmese formerly called a kind of Karen living in some areas of the lower Burma in “*Talaing Kayin*” which means “*Talaing Karen*”, but it did not refer to the Yintale living in Kayah State. Nowadays even Burmese do not know what kind of people they called “*Talaing Kayin*.” It appears its usage is dying out. The Yintale are called “Tah-liah” by Kayah. Some Kayah say that because “Tah”, which means ‘go down’ and “liah” which means “south” in Kayah that therefore the whole meaning may be “South people”.

The Yintale are chiefly located in the Bawlakhe township, whose traditional ruling family is supposed to be largely of Yangtalai origins, as is most of the population (Lehman 1963:68). But nowadays, there are only four places where Yintale are found. Only one village with only Yintale is known, Wa Aung, which is located to the northeast of Phasaung town on the bank of the Salween (See Figure 2). There are two Yintale quarters in the towns of Bawlakhe and Naaphe. The fourth village is made up of both Shan and Yintale. It is Supha village located northeast of Wa Aung on the bank of the Salween river. There are only seven Yintale families there and they have intermarried with other groups.

The Yintale have a similar culture to the other Karenii. The choice of marriage partner and other important matters have to be decided by the parents. Their

agriculture is much like that of the Kayah, but they grow a great deal of sesame. The language differs from Kayah (Lehman 1963). My Yintale informant estimated the total population of Yintale to be around 1000. But based on the number of houses in each village, it is estimated that there are around 600. According to the chart was produced by the divisional supervisory committee, on the 18 Union Day, 1965, the population of Yintale is given as 500. The name of the subgroup Yintale has been folk-etymologized into the Burmese term Yin-Talaing or Mon Karen. It is a south-western group of Kayah, with perhaps 10,000 speakers (Bradley 1997:48). The author disagrees with this population estimate because of the area having only four small villages.

1.3 Previous Research

This section discusses the classification of the Karen languages within Sino-Tibetan, the internal classification of the languages and the phonological studies that have been done.

1.3.1 Classification of Karen

The Karen languages have always been considered part of Sino-Tibetan, but the exact position has changed over the years.

Shafer (1955:107-108) said that although the Karen group of languages is usually placed within the Sino-Tibetan branch, its position has remained in doubt.

Benedict (1972) places Karen as a sister to the Tibeto-Burman branch. He split Karen off from the Tibeto-Burman languages because of Karen's SVO word order and divergent morphological processes, see figure 6.

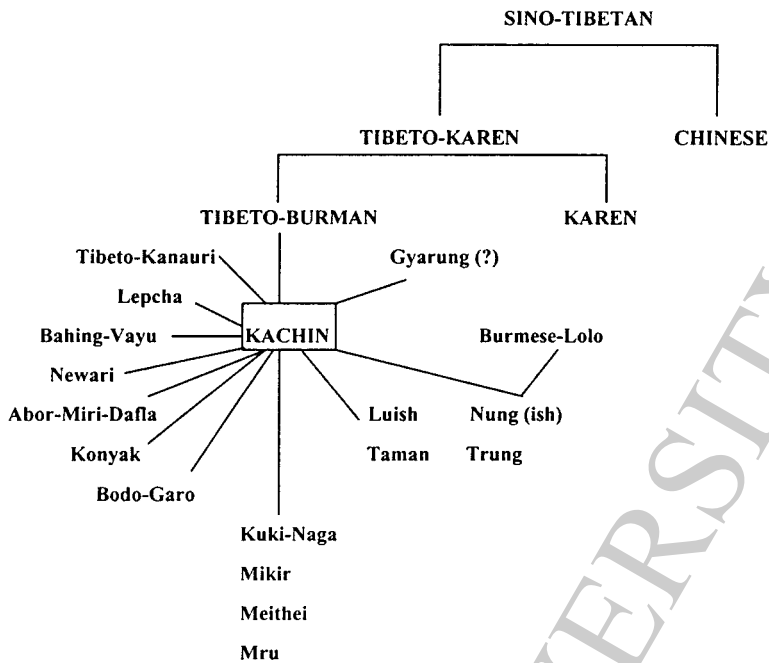


Figure 6. Classification of Sino-Tibetan (Benedict 1972:6)

Egerod (1973:796-7) states that he is uncertain whether the Karen languages are truly part of Sino-Tibetan, implying that they have as close a relationship to Tibeto-Burman as the Tai and Miao-Yao languages. He further considers that if Karen is to be included in Sino-Tibetan then it must be set up as an independent member of a Tibeto-Karen group that includes Tibeto-Burman and Karen. The special affinities between Chinese and Karen (especially in syntax) are secondary.

Matisoff (1978) following Benedict (1972) places Karen in the Tibeto-Karen branch of the Sino-Tibetan linguistic stock. However Matisoff's (1993) most recent thinking on the topic would place Karen as just another branch of Tibeto-Burman, see

Figure 7.

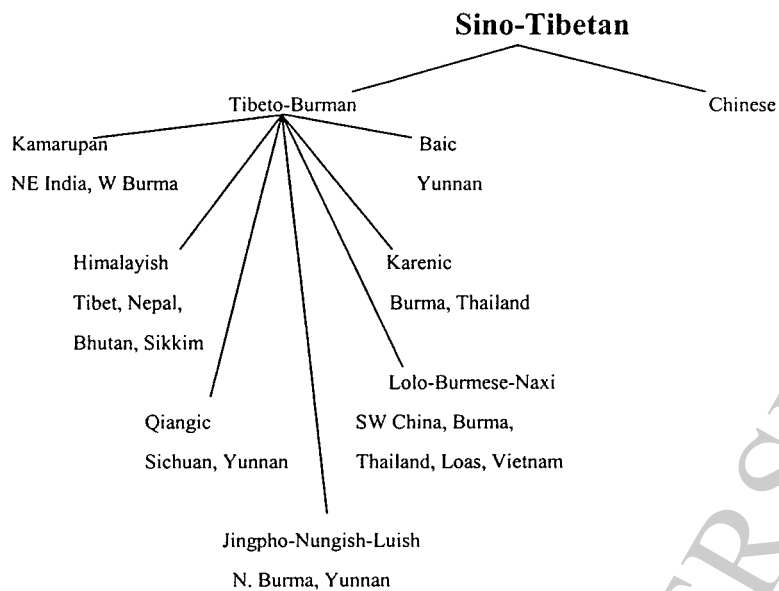


Figure 7. STEDT (2004) Classification of Sino-Tibetan

Bradley (1997) considers the Karen languages to be part of Tibeto-Burman, as does other Tibeto-Burma scholars including Van Driem (2002), DeLancey (2003), and Solnit (1997).

The normal sentence structure of Tibeto-Burman is SOV, whereas all Karen languages are SVO. Solnit (1997) disagrees with how Benedict (1972) separates the Karenic group from Tibeto-Burman. His view is that neither the cognates with Chinese nor the typological divergence is sufficient evidence for such a separation. Young (1962:69) notes that it is generally accepted that Karen is a branch of Tibeto-Burman, and its peculiar features, which are different from other Tibeto-Burman subgroups, are a result of Mon-Khmer language influences.

1.3.2 Internal Classification

The first modern analysis of the internal relationships of Karenic languages was done by Jones (1961). Jones compared four Karen languages, and showed that Taungthu

(Pa-O) is more closely related to Pho Karen than Sgaw Karen. His work did not include any language spoken in Kayah State, see Figure 8.

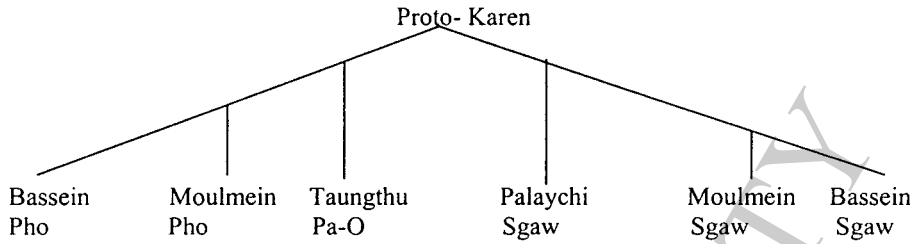


Figure 8. Karenic Language Relationships (Jones 1961:83)

According to Kauffman (1993), Karen is composed of three main branches (North, South, and Central) with Central Karen further classified as three groups and an unclassified. Kayah is classified as an East Central language, while Kayaw, Monumanaw and Yintale are unclassified, see figure 9.

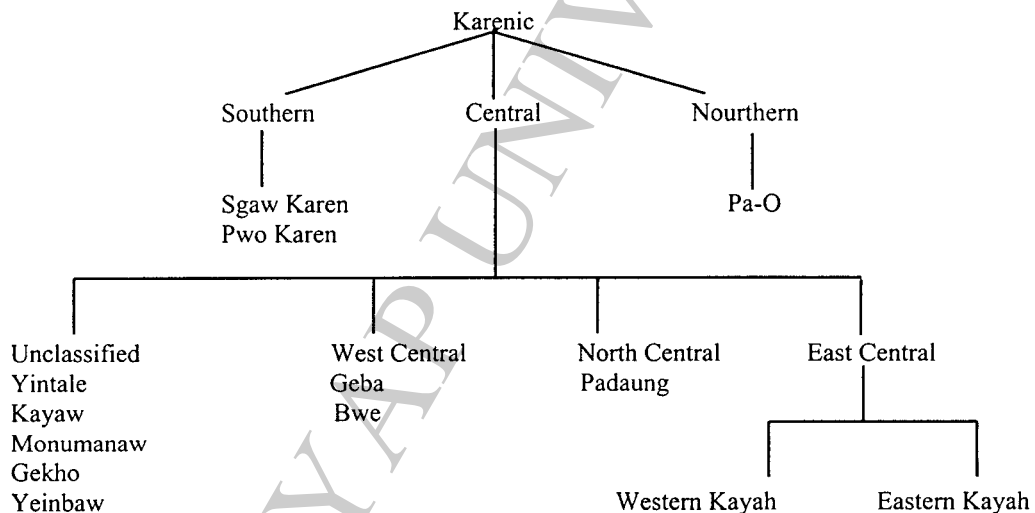


Figure 9. Classification of Karen (Kauffman 1993:5)

Bradley's classification (1997) is based on personal communication with Lehmann, Burling and Solnit, three Karen language researchers. Bradley presents three main groups of Karenic- Northern, Central/Bwe and Southern. Under these three groups, he

sub-classifies. Pa-O (Taungthu), and Padaung (Kayan (Yingbaw/Ka-ngan, Zayein/Latha and Gekhu) as the Northern group; Eastern Kayah (Kayah, Monu and Yintale) and Western Kayah (Blimaw, Bre and Geba) as the Central Karenic group; and (Mopwa, Palaychi, Paku, Wewaw, Monnepwa), Pho/Pwo/Phlong and Lekhe are put under the Southern Karenic group. Figure 10 shows the current thinking on the internal classification of Karen languages.

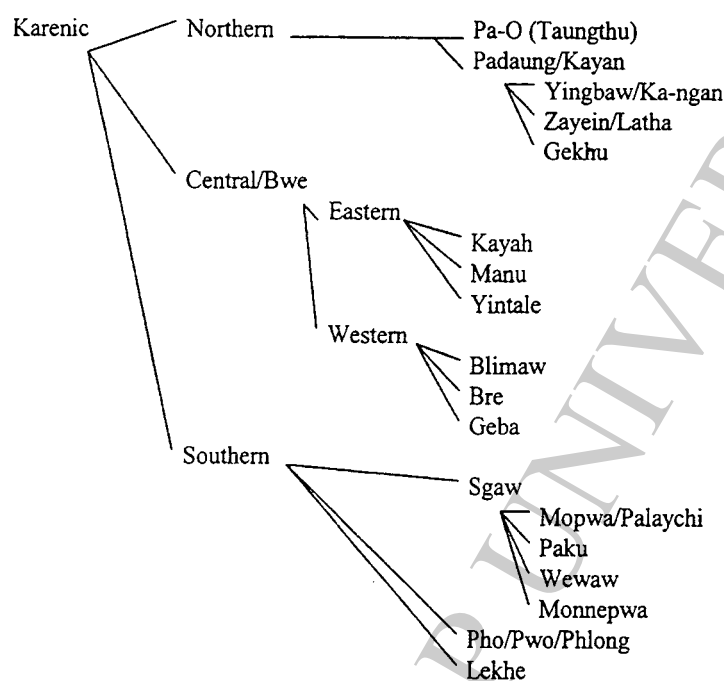


Figure 10. Classification of Karenic (Bradley 1997:47)

Manson (2002) analyzed over 20 Karenic languages and presented a diagram of relationships based on phonological similarity. He considers Karen to be composed of seven clusters – Sgaw/Paku; Pwo: Pa-O; Monu/Kayaw; Yeinbaw/Geker/Padaung; Bwe/Geba; and Kayah, with Bwe/Geba-Kayah being more different to the other Karenic languages. (Figure 11).

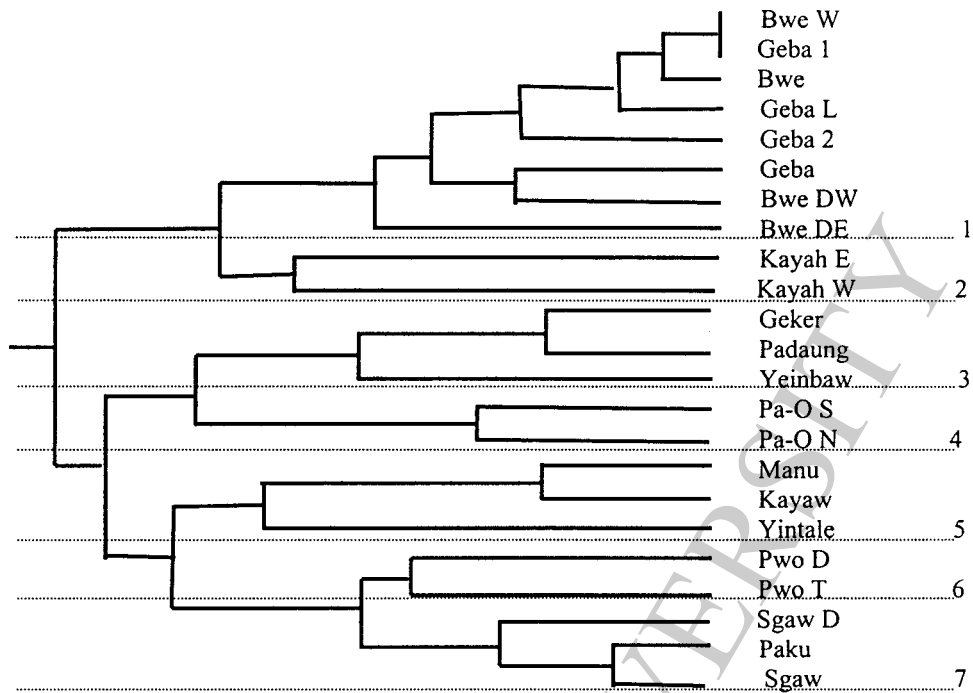


Figure 11. Karen Language Relationships (Manson 2002)

1.3.3 Phonological Studies

Phonological studies have been done on Kayah (Bennett, Bryant, Kauffman, Lar Baa, Solnit). Also, Henderson has analysed Blimaw Bwe. But apart from this research no studies have been presented for Kayaw, Monumanaw or Yintale³.

³ A recent MA Thesis on Kayaw phonology (Watchariya Bumrung Kiri. 2003. The phonological Study of Kayaw Language. Bangkok; Mahidol University: MA Thesis) come to my attention too late to be included in this thesis. It would be interesting to consider this thesis as well, but that will have to wait for a later publication.

1.3.3.1 Kayah (Western)

Bennett (1991) presents the following phonological inventories for Kayah.

dɔ tɛ má Kayah dialect

dɔ shò piá Kayah dialect

		Lab	Alv	Pal	Vel	Glo
Plo-sive	vl	p	t	c	k	ʔ
	vl asp	p ^h	t ^h		k ^h	
	vd	d	d			
Fricative	vl		s			h
	vl asp		ch			
	vd	v				
Nasal		m	n		ŋ	
Trill		r				
Lat			l			
Appr	vd	w				

		Lab	Alv	Pal	Vel	Glo
Plo-sive	vl	p	t	c	k	ʔ
	vl asp	p ^h	t ^h		k ^h	
	vd	d	d			
Fricative	vl			ç		h
	vl asp		s ^h			
	vd	v			ʃ	
Nasal		m	n		ŋ	
Trill		r				
Lat			l			
Appr	vd	w				

Table 1. dɔtɛmá and dɔshòpiá Kayah dialect consonants (Bennett 1991)

dɔ tɛ má dialect

dɔ shò piá dialect

	Front	Central	Back
	ɪ	ʏ	ʊ
close	i		ɯ
close mid	e	ə	o
mid	ɛ	a	ɔ

	Front	Central	Back
close	i		
close mid	e	ə ʏ	ɯv o
	ɛ	a	ɔ

Table 2. dɔtɛmá and dɔshòpiá Vowels (Bennett 1991)

The author agrees with Bennett's description that /j/ is often realized as the palatal approximant [ɟ]. Often the same informant will give you a different pronunciation at a different time. Furthermore though they are the same dialect or village, different informants will have different pronunciation. And as Bennett said, he has not heard the sound [θ] in the *dɔ tɛ ma* dialect. That is because those who are influenced by Burmese express the sounds /s/ or /ç/ as [θ]. The author heard the consonant /s/ or

/ɕ/ described by Bennett as /s/, not as /s/ or /ɕ/. It is often changed in speakers influenced by Burmese. Both Bennett and the author agree on the types and number of consonants and clusters although Bennett analyses /j/ and /w/ in clusters as vocalic elements rather than consonantal. For example while the author transcribes ‘name’ [mwi] Bennett transcribes it [mui], also for ‘spear’, the author uses [bjɑ] while Bennett uses [bia].

The reason the author interprets /j/ and /w/ as consonants and not vowels is because there are no unambiguous VV sequences. The author agrees with Bennett (1997) description that Kayah syllables are always open, without any coda. Vowels may also occur with no initial consonant.

Bryant et. al. (1993) shows that Kayah has 22 phonemic consonants, 9 vowels and 4 tones. Each chart can be seen as followings.

Manners of Articulation	Points of Articulation	Bilabial	Interdental	Alveolar	Post-Alveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosives	vl. Unasp	p		t				k	
	vl. Asp	p ^h		t ^h				k ^h	
	vd.	b		d					
Fricatives	vl		θ		ʃ	ʂ			h
	vl Asp			s ^h					
	voiced	v		z			ɟ		
Affricate	vl				tʃ				
Nasals	vd	m		n				ŋ	
Trill				r					
Approx.		w					j		
Lateral				l					

Table 3. Kayah Phonemic Consonants (Bryant et. al. 1993)

	Front	Central	Back	
Close	i		ɯ	u
Half-Close	e	ə		o
Half-Open	ɛ			ɔ
Open		a		

Table 4. Kayah Vowels (Bryant et. al. 1993)

CCV	i	e	ɛ	a	ɯ	u	o	ɔ	ɯə
kl	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
kr	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+
pr	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-
pl	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

Table 5. Kayah CCV Clusters with Vowels (Bryant et. al. 1992)

CCCV	klj	krj	prj	plj	klw	krw	prw	plw
e	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
a	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
i	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-
o	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+

Table 6. Kayah CCCV Clusters with Plain and Semi-vowels (Bryant et. al. 1992)

High	Mid-High	Mid	Low
ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ

Table 7. Kayah Tones (Bryant et. al. 1992)

Bryant et. al. (1993) analysis of palatalization is slightly different from this author's data. This may be a result of different sources. Even from the same family, village, and dialect, different pronunciations occur. Therefore the rule stating that [ʃ] only occurs before [+ high] vowels, and [s^h] never does, is not consistent with this analysis, but it could be as Bryant analyzed because some speakers do not make clear between [ʃ] and [s^h]. In this data number (9) [s^hiɰliɰboɰ] "lightning" and (56) [t^hjeɰs^hiɰpreɰ] "liquor", the word [s^hi] occurs before [+ high] vowels. In this analysis, the breathy vowels and non-breathy vowels do not make any difference in

meaning, it depends on the tone. When a native speaker consciously speaks two words that are the same pronunciation, he/she tries to pronounce them differently but when he speaks unconsciously, they are the same. In fact, many words in Kayah have breathiness mostly with the high-mid tone. According to my interpretation, the chart of the contrast between breathy and non-breathy vowels shown by Bryant et. al. (1993:6), some of them are not so determined by breathiness as by context. Some are different due to tones rather than breathiness. For example, according to the chart, [neɿ] “ghost” and [nɛɿ] “body” but they should be [nɛɿ] “ghost” and [neɿ] “body”. Another example is [puɿ] “square can” and [pɯɿ] “cow”, which should be [puɿ] “square can” and [puɿ]. The author agrees with what he said (1993:9) that in most cases [ɲ] only occurs before [-back] vowels and [ŋ] never does. This agrees with the author’s phonological analysis of the data. The writer of this thesis agrees with the tones analyzed because it is the same as the author did in this thesis. This article on Kayah phonology is very helpful and useful, though we differ on some analysis.

Kauffman (1993) shows that Western Kayah has 20 phonemic consonants, 8 plain vowels and 3 tones. Each chart can be seen as followings.

Manners of Articulation	Points of Articulation	Bilabial	Dental	Alveopalatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosives	vl. Unasp	p	t	c	k	(ʔ)
	vl. Asp	p ^h	t ^h	ch	k ^h	
	vd.	b	d			
Fricatives	vl		s ^h			h
	vd			z		
Nasals		m	n		ŋ	
Trill			r			
Approximant		w	l	j		

Table 8. Western Kayah Li Phonemic Consonants (Kauffman 1993)

	Front	Central	Back	
Close	i		ɯ	u
Half-Close	e			o
Half-Open	ɛ			ɔ
Open		a		

Table 9. Western Kayah Vowels (Kauffman 1993)

High	Mid	Low
ɿʔ	ɨ	ɿʔ

Table 10. Western Kayah Li Tones (Kauffman 1993)

Kauffman states that Western Kayah has 10 diphthong vowels. The author does not agree with these vowels he analyzed, because the author finds only one diphthongs /ɯə/ in my data. It is very rare to hear diphthong vowels in Karen except in Pwo, Padaung, Latha and Yintale. The author agrees with his Eastern and Western Kayah consonants and Eastern vowels. The author does not agree with the Western Kayah Li vowels and Eastern tones, the Western Kayah vowels are very complicated with diphthongs and the Eastern Kayah tones show a great deal of falling with glottal. The author does not hear the falling tones. The Western and Eastern phonological inventory charts can be seen as followings.

Eastern Kayah Li

Kauffman (1993) shows that Eastern Kayah has 19 phonemic consonants, 10 vowels and 5 tones. Each chart can be seen as follows.

Manners of Articulation	Points of Articulation	Bilabial	Dental	Alveopalatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosives	vl. Unasp	p	t	c	k	
	vl. Asp	p ^h	t ^h	ch	k ^h	
	vd.	b	d			
Fricatives	vl Asp		s			h
Nasals		m	n		ŋ	
Trill			r			
Approximant		w	l	j		

Table 11. Eastern Kayah Li Phonemic Consonants (Kauffman 1993)

	Front	Central	Back	
Close	i		ɯ	u
Half-Close	e		(ɤ)	o
Half-Open	ɛ	ə		ɔ
Open		a		

Table 12. Eastern Kayah Vowels (Kauffman 1993)

High falling	High level	Low falling	Low level	Mid
ʏʔ	ɿʔ	ɤʔ	ɿʔ	ɿ

Table 13. Eastern Kayah Li Tones (Solnit 1997)

Lar Baa (2001) states that Kayah has 24 consonants 9 vowels. (See Tables 14 and 15). He also states that Kayah has the consonant cluster [d̥ʒr̥w] and four diphthong vowels /ie/, /io/, /ia/, /wə/ and /ɛa/, but the author does not agree with his analysis, the author does not find the cluster [d̥ʒ + r̥] in the words he lists as having them except for diphthongs /wə/. And the author analyzes /ie/ /ia/ and /io/ as /je/, /ja/ and /jo/, respectively. The way the author hears the diphthong vowel /ɛa/ is the same as /ia/. For example, even though the wordlist number 85 and 270 are the same pronunciation with numbers 22, 24, 39, 49, 62, 92, 108, 115, 117, 179, 220, 319, 366, 408, 434, and so on, Lar Baa interpreted 85 and 270 as /ɛa/ but the rest of the

numbers were interpreted as /ia/. The numbers 153, 389 and 427 must be /ia/ but they were interpreted as /ea/ according to his wordlists. He did not express the diphthong /ea/ in the Kayah diphthong vowels though the diphthongs /ea/ was shown in his wordlist. The consonants that he demonstrated are almost the same as the writer of this thesis except /t̚/ and /sʲ/ which the author has not observed. He described five tones, mid-high, mid, mid-low, high-falling and low falling. The way he heard the tones was slightly different from the author because high-falling and low falling tones were not seen in my elicitations. The high and mid-high tones have different meanings but mid-high and high-falling do not result in different meanings, nor do mid-low and low falling tones result in different meanings.

		lab	den	alv	post alv	vel	glo
Plosive	fortis vl asp	p ^h	t̚	t ^h		k ^h	
	fortis vl	p		t		k	ʔ
	lenis vd	b		d			
Affricate	fortis vl				tʃ		
	lenis vl				dʃ		
Fricative	fortis vl			(s) s ^h	s ^ʲ	(x)	h
	lenis vd	v		z			
Nasal		m		n		ŋ	
Trill				r			
App		w		l	j		

Table 14. Kayah Consonants (Lar Baa 2001)

	Front	Central	Back
High	i		u u
High mid	e	ə	o
mid	ɛ		ɔ
low		a	

Table 15. Kayah Vowels (Lar Baa 2001)

Manners of Articulation	Points of Articulation	Bilabial	Dental	Alveo-palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosives	vl. Unasp	p	t	c	k	(ʔ)
	vl. Asp	p ^h	t ^h	ch	k ^h	
	vd.	b	d			
Fricatives	vl					h
	vl Asp		s	(j)		
Nasals		m	n		ŋ	
Trill			r			
Vd. Continuant		w	l	(j)		

Table 16. Eastern Kayah Li Phonemic Consonants (Solnit 1992)

	Front	Central	Back	
Close	i		ɯ	u
Half-Close	e		ɤ	o
Half-Open	ɛ	ʌ		ɔ
Open		a		

Table 17. Eastern Kayah Vowels (Solnit 1997)

High falling	High	Low falling	Low level	Mid
ʋʔ	ɿʔ	ɹʔ	ɿʔ	ɿ

Table 18. Eastern Kayah Li Tones (Solnit 1997)

Solnit (1997) studied the Eastern variety of Kayah living in Mae Hong Son Province in northwest Thailand. The author agrees with what he mentions about complementary distribution in consonant clusters between aspiration and the l-r contrast; that is, the aspirated stop is only followed by /r/ and the unaspirated stop is only followed by /l/. The author agrees also with the vowels he described. But the author disagrees with the tones he presented. To the best of the researcher's knowledge of the Eastern Kayah, they do not have glottal constriction occurring only with the falling tone. Glottal constriction /ʔ/ is observed with the high, mid-low and low tones.

1.3.3.2 Kayaw

Henderson (1997) shows that Blimaw Bwe has 27 consonants and 9 vowels as can be seen in Table 1 and Table 2. Blimaw Bwe has three tones – High level, Mid level and Low level.

		Lab	Alv	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	Voiced	b	d	j	g	
	Voiceless	p	t	c	k	
	Aspirated	p ^h	t ^h	c ^h	k ^h	
	Glottalised	β	d̥			
Nasal		m	n			
Fricatives			θ	ʃ	x	h
Semivowels	Plain	w		y	ʀ	
	Glottalised	ʔw		ʔy		
Liquids			l			
			r			

Table 19. Blimaw Bwe Consonants (Henderson 1997)

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i		u
Near-Close	ɪ		ʊ
Close-mid	e		o
Open-mid	ɛ		ɔ
Open		a	

Table 20. Blimaw Bwe Vowels (Henderson 1997)

Consonant clusters include the following:

	p	p ^h	b	β	m	t	t ^h	d	d̥	n	θ	l	ʃ	k	k ^h	g
w	+	+	+	+	+		+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
r	+	+	+			+		+			+			+	+	+
l	+	+	+											+	+	+

Table 21. Blimaw Bwe Consonant Clusters (Henderson 1997)

1.4 Purpose of this Thesis

Previously, since speakers of Kayah, Kayaw, Monumanaw, and Yintale could not understand each other (including the researcher's own experience), it was assumed that the languages were completely different. No scholarly research had been done comparing these particular languages. Since little is known about those languages, the researcher's desire is to clarify the language situation. The purpose of this thesis, therefore, is to describe and compare four languages of Kayah State (Kayah, Kayaw, Monumnaw and Yintale), with regard to (a) lexicon (b) synchronic phonology, and (c) phonological correspondences.

1.5 Methodology

In the summer of 2002, word lists were transcribed and recorded from the Southeast Asia 436 word list for each language. At the time four informants of each language were chosen. These four informants were different in two were male and two were female and age. After collecting, the word lists different pronunciations came up even in the same word, making it very difficult to choose which pronunciation was right. Then in the summer of 2003, the writer of this thesis rechecked the data collected the previous year.

This time the author chose only one person, between 35 and 55 years old. The reason why the author chose my informants between the age of 35 and 55 years old was that they had known their languages for quite a while. Consideration was also given to make sure these informants still had enough teeth to speak clearly. The first summer, some informants were too young – and didn't know their languages well enough and some over 60 years old did not have enough air and or teeth to pronounce words clearly.

When collecting word lists, a tape recorder, and notebook were used. Before recording the data, each word is asked and the author tried to imitate the word till the

speaker agreed. Then the author transcribed it into my data book. The author did that for around 20 words, and then recorded those twenty words from the informant. Then the author rewound the tape and rechecked it to be sure. The author used this method until the wordlist was finished. The writers of this thesis spent at least one week during the two periods researching each language (summer 2002 and 2003).

The author traveled to a Yintale village named Wa Aung in Phasoung Township. No road is available to go there travel is by motorboat. It is located in the northeast of Phasoung town. Though the author does not know any one in the village, my hostess was known for her hospitality. The Yintale data collection went smoothly. The Yintale language teacher was a man born in the village. He was about 38 years old, and a teacher in his village. He spoke Burmese and Yintale only.

The Kayah data in this thesis is from the dialect spoken in Kebogyi. He was 51 years old. He was born in Keylia (Kebogyi) and grew up in the village but he moved to Phruso town a few years ago. According to native residents of the Kebogyi area, the Kebogyi dialect is the standard one. It is the dialect used on the radio.

The method used to collect data was the same used for Yintale. The author spent at least one week during two periods researching each language (summer 2002 and 2003). In 2002, the author chose four informants, a young man 19 years old, a man 38 years old, a girl 18 years old and a woman 38 years old. The writer of this thesis divided the list into four parts and the author recorded around 100 words from each of them. The author did all four languages like this. In 2003, my adviser suggested that the author should choose only one informant who is between forty and fifty-five years old. Therefore the author chose a man 38 years old and rechecked last year data in detail.

The Kayaw word list the author uses in this thesis is from the dialect spoken in Supjau, Demawso Township. He was about 40 years old. He was an officer literate in

Burmese. In 2002, the author traveled to their place to collect the data but in 2003, the author invited him to come to his hometown for elicitation.

The Monumanaw data in this study is from the dialect spoken in Dolaso, Phruso Township. He was 42 years old. He is a supervisor of the immigration office in Phruso. He speaks Kayah, Geba and English. His wife was also Monu, and they are enthusiastic to speak to their children in Monu though they live in town. Before investigating this language, it was considered to be two languages. During the first summers the author collected both Monu and Monaw data, but after initial analysis it was obvious that these two varieties are very close, and so the author chose Monu as the referent variety.