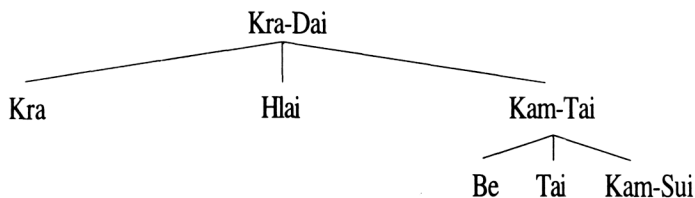


## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES.

This study presents a phonological comparison and reconstruction of the Kra language group, which includes the following six languages and their varieties: Gelao, Lachi, Laha, Paha, Buyang, and Pubiao. The Kra language group constitutes a branch of the Kra-Dai stock, and is related to the other more well-known language groups such as Tai, Kam-Sui, and Hlai. (For discussions of the terms *Kra* and *Kra-Dai*, see 1.4 and 1.5). Figure 1 shows the rough scheme of Kra-Dai family, which should be taken as provisional. Detailed discussions of the subgroupings of Kra-Dai languages as a whole are beyond the scope of this study.



*Figure 1: Rough scheme of the Kra-Dai family*

Following this Introductory Chapter, we will propose in Chapter 2 the internal subgrouping of the Kra languages, including discussions of their varieties. In Chapter 3, the Proto-Kra tonal system and its reflexes in each daughter language will be laid out, and the relation between this tonal system and that of other Kra-Dai languages will be demonstrated. Chapter 4 to Chapter 6 present the reconstruction of Proto-Kra initials and rimes as well as their development from the proto-stage to modern dialects. Chapter 7 sums up the study and is followed by a selected list of over three hundred Kra etyma. The result of the study is expected to constitute a basis for the historical and comparative studies of Proto Kra-Dai.

## 1.2. KRA AS KRA-DAI LANGUAGES.

Three Kra languages, Gelao, Lachi and Laqua (=Pubiao), plus the Hlai language of Hainan were grouped together as a linguistic stock called Kadai by Benedict (1942), who proposed them to be related to the Tai language. (The Laha language was later included in Benedict (1975) as a Laqua dialect). Of these, only the Hlai language has been reported in great quantity and with reliable quality (e.g. Wang and Qian 1951, Ouyang and Zheng 1983). Few scholars have doubted the relation of Hlai to Tai, though phonological correspondences between them have yet to be worked out. (According to our present knowledge, however, this Hlai language has to be considered a separate branch from the other three. Cf. also Figure 3 for evidence that Hlai does not belong to our Kra language group). The relation between Benedict's other Kadai languages and Tai, however, has remained dubious to many students of comparative Tai, partly due to the meager data available on the former languages and to a number of doubtful etyma proposed by Benedict based on limited and low-quality material. Recently, Chinese and Vietnamese scholars have gathered more data on these lesser known languages, including some other related languages hitherto unknown (e.g. Buyang in China). But none has yet presented rigorous evidence than just a random list of a few forms to bind the whole family together.

We are offering in Figure 2 a list of 40 selected Kra-Dai etyma (including seventeen items from the Swadesh 100 basic word-list) to demonstrate that the Kra languages and the other Kra-Dai languages belong to the same linguistic stock. The list is not intended to be exhaustive, yet just browsing through its first fourteen body part etyma will probably leave little doubt as to the genetic relationship among these languages. On the other hand, Figure 2 is not a mere list of raw material or look-alikes, but the inclusion of already well-analysed data. In other words, we consider them as valid cognates provable by their regular phonological correspondences established in the following chapters of this study. Readers will see, for example, that all tones of the Kra languages are indicated according to the proto tone classes (i.e. proto-tones \*A, \*B, \*C and \*D), similar to what has been known in such languages as Tai and Kam-Sui. Chapter 3 of this study is referred to for an extensive treatment of the Proto Kra-Dai tonal system. Similarly, the initial and rime correspondences are also considered regular according to the systems proposed from Chapter 4 to Chapter 6 of this study.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Irregular reflexes with respect to tones, initials, vowels or finals in any given language will be flagged with the following symbols after the forms: -t (irregular tone), -i (irregular initial), -v (irregular vowel) and -f (irregular final).

These selected etyma are also offered as a handlist for determining whether a certain language belongs to the Kra-Dai family. They cover examples of all four possible proto tones, and thus are also intended to serve as a tonal checklist for fieldworkers to figure out the tonal system of a certain Kra language in a historical and comparative context. The problem of tonal correspondence among the Kra languages, and between them and other Kra-Dai languages, is a key factor which has held up progress in this comparative field for several years (cf. Liang 1990: 52, who stated that, “There is no obvious [tonal] correspondence between Ge-Yang (= “Kra”) and Kam-Tai. Even within the Geyang group there is no [tonal] correspondence among the languages”).

The representative varieties of the languages in Table 1 are as follows: Wanzi (Gelao), Jinchang (Lachi), Nong Lay (Laha), Yanglian (Paha), E-Cun (Buyang), Pufeng (Pubiao), Baoding (Hlai), Sanchong (Sui), and Siamese (Tai). When the related forms are unavailable in the representative dialects, forms from other varieties may be cited. These are indicated by parenthesized abbreviations as follows: (Qs) = Qiaoshang dialect of Gelao, (Lz) = Laozhai dialect of Gelao, (Tm) = Ta Mit dialect of Laha, (Lj) = Langjia dialect of Buyang, (L) = Lao dialect of Tai. Material on Wanzi dialect of Gelao is from He (1983); Nong Lay Laha from Solntseva and Hoang (1986), Ta Mit Laha from Dang et al (1972), Hoang and Vu (1992), and Gregerson and Edmondson (1997); Hlai dialects from Ouyang and Zheng (1983); and Sanchong Sui dialects from Zhang (1982). Material on the rest are from my own fieldwork. The numbers 1 and 2 following proto tones (\*A, \*B, \*C and \*D) indicate respectively early voiceless and voiced onsets in the respective languages. (For details, see Chapter 3).

Figure 2: Selected Kra-Dai etyma

	<i>1. blood</i>	<i>2. bone</i>	<i>3. ear</i>	<i>4. eye</i>
Gelao	<b>plɔ</b> D1	<b>taŋ</b> D2	<b>zau</b> A2	<b>tau</b> A
Lachi	<b>pjo</b> D1	<b>tfjɲ</b> D2	<b>lu</b> A2	<b>tju</b> A1
Laha	<b>plaat</b> D1	<b>dak</b> D2	<b>khlaa</b> A2	<b>taa</b> A1
Paha	<b>pɛɛ</b> D1 -f	—	<b>kaa</b> A1	<b>?daa</b> A1
Buyang	—	—	<b>ɕaa</b> A2	<b>taa</b> A1

Pubiao	—	ʔdak D1	rɕia A2	tee A1
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Hlai	ʔaat D	vuuuk D	(zai A)t	shaa A
Sui	phjaat D1	laak D1	qhaa A1	ndaa A1
Tai	luat D2	duuk D1	huu A1	taa A1

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*5. excrement    6. fart            7. fingernail    8. hand*

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Gelao	qo C1	tæ D1 (Lz)	kle D1	mpau A2
Lachi	kɑ C1	tɛ D1	lɛ D1	ɱ A2
Laha	kai C1	—	kləp D1	maa A2
Paha	qεε B1 -t	ɕat D1	yap D1	—
Buyang	—	tut D1	lip D2	—
Pubiao	—	tət D1	(kan A1)	ɱii B1 -it

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Hlai	haai C	thuut D	liip D	meu A
Sui	qee C2	tət D1	ljap D1	mjaa A1/2
Tai	khii C1/2	tot D1	lep D2	muu A2

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*9. intestine    10. knee            11. leg            12. liver*

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Gelao	sai C1	qo B1 (Lz)	qau A1	tæ D1 (Lz)
Lachi	çi C1	kwe B1	ku A1	tja D1
Laha	si C1	—	kaa A1	tap D1
Paha	ɕhii B1 -t	ko B1	yaa A1	tap D1
Buyang	—	huu B2	ʔaa A1	tap D1