The opening sentence of the foreword, "the manuscript of this book was originally drafted over a quarter of a century ago", can hardly fail to raise serious doubts as to the value of Sino-Tibetan: A Compendium to Sino-Tibetan by William C. Benedict. The author has not only rearranged some of the material of the 1942-3 manuscript, and added minor emendations, but has "extensively annotated the whole, with emphasis on the Chinese and Sino-Tibetan sections", while Matsuo has contributed notes on Lolo language material, and has brought the bibliography up to date. The result is rather like having two books between one set of covers, the original manuscript occupying at least part of 197 pages, with 133 footnotes, and the latter work occupying much of the lower part of many of those pages, in the form of 36 additional footnotes, distinguished from those of the original study by italic figures. It is through these later footnotes that Professors Benedict and Matsuo bring the original text up to date from subsequent research, some of it their own, and the rest acknowledged to "Haudricourt (Karens reconstruction), Forrest (Lepcha analysis), B. R. Jones (Karens)", and others. Not a few of the later set of footnotes, especially in the Chinese sections (39-48), take up more of the page than the original text, occasionally forcing it into a mere three lines, and running, in the case of footnote 404, over four successive pages. Many and sizable stretches of the book are, consequently, by no means easy to read continuously; and the reader has to be his own editor from time to time, modernizing the original text from the footnotes, as on pp. 37-8, for example, where the original text contains forty-four "correspondent clusters" (hr, gl, tw, dy, etc.), but the footnotes 121-2 instruct him to add six or, perhaps, seven more, "tr", "zd", etc., and to convert four of the clusters in the original table (ty, sy, ey, dy) into unit phonemes (t, s, f, z, s, t, and e, with corresponding changes in the table of "Tibeto-Burnman initial consonants") on pp. 17-18. In fact, in order to see Benedict's current scheme at a glance one really needs to make new tables for one's self, and keep them with the book; in later editions the author might perhaps consider including revised tables in a folder.

Though the title of the book is "Sino-Tibetan", the greater part of it (pp. 4-125, 159-228) is given over to Tibet-Burman, only a fraction over a quarter of the book to Chinese (pp. 122-98), and about an eighth to Karen (pp. 127-51). This balance, cluted in favor of Tibet-Burman, possibly reflects the author's original conclusion (p. 134) that "the relationship between Tibet-Burman and Chinese is a remote one"; and the minor position of Chinese in the book must have seemed still less significant in the original text, before the massive influx of sixty footnotes had expanded the Chinese section to the forty-seven pages noted above. Footnote 417 contradicts the statement just quoted with: "this is hardly an accurate statement; the term 'remote' should be applied to our state of knowledge at that time (early 1940s) rather than to the relationship between TB and Chinese. It is now clear that the great bulk of the core St vocabulary is shared by these two language groups."

The author uses "Tibeto-Burman" (TB) for his reconstructed Tibet-Burman forms as well as for forms in languages classified as Tibet-Burman; it sometimes, therefore, becomes necessary to examine the context rather carefully, to determine whether "Tibeto-Burman" refers to forms contained in the many contemporary languages classified as Tibet-Burman, or to the putative Tibet-Burman, or common Tibet-Burman, reconstructed forms. The "Tibeto-Burman languages...over one hundred of which have been recorded, make up the linguistic center of gravity of the Sino-Tibetan stock" (p. 4) illustrates the former, or language-group use, "some 15 consonant phonemes can be postulated for Tibet-Burman" (p. 13) illustrates the latter, or common Tibet-Burman, use; and so do references to Tibet-Burman roots such as "the TB root for 'pig'". The use of "Chinese", too, is apt to be confusing: one needs constantly to remind one's self that "the forms cited below accordingly are those of A. Ch., often along with the later Anc. Ch. forms, all as given in the Grammatika Sericu of Karlgren" (p. 153).

Judged by the standards of Indo-European reconstruction Benedict has indeed been remarkably successful in the number of his Tibet-Burman forms in its latter sense of the term. W. S. Allen has drawn attention to the restricted inventory of Indo-Aryan verbal items with the words: "it is hard to see how we can go beyond...a rather limited selection of lexical items..." the latter indeed led one critic to suggest that IE Comparative Linguistics rested on a hundred odd words, and always the same roots ("hundred", "horse", "carry", "liver", etc.) in "[M. Duvall, ap. Vendryes, Bull. Soc. Lang. XLVII. p. 4; Trubetskov goes even further (Acta Lingu. I. 2, p. 83. 'Es gibt wohl fast kein einziges Wort, das in allen indogermanischen Sprachen vorkommen würde.')"") (Transactions Phil. Soc. 1953, p. 78). Benedict's list of "Tibeto-Burman roots" (Appendix I, pp. 199-209) comprises some 750 items. By no means all of these entries, however, can claim to have reflexes in each of his seven primary divisions or nuclei of Tibet-Burman, "Tibetan-Kanauri (Bodish-Himalayish), "Bahng-Yuu (Kiranti)" "Abor-Miit-Dalla (Mishir), "Kachin", "Burnmese-Lolo (Burnmese), "Bodo-Garo (Barish), "Kuki-Naga (Kuki)"; consequently, difficult to determine what principles have guided Benedict in accentuating the status of "Tibeto-Burman root" for some of them. Where a reflex can be cited from at least one language from each of his seven "divisions", no doubt the reconstructed form, or rather, the possibility of reconstructing a form, will readily find acceptance. Such is item "saw" "TB *sā-wa-m, eye", with cognates cited from seventeen languages, all seven "divisions" being represented, among others, by such lexical items as (Bodish-Himalayish) Tibetan sa, (Kiranti) Bahung mi-ti, (Mishir) Miri smik, (Lushai) Kachin smi, (Burnmese) burnmese sów, (Barish) Bao smik, and (Kuki) Lushai smik. This seven-fold representation is, in fact, approached by item "saw *hān, road", where five of the seven divisions, a majority, are represented, only the Mirish and Kanauri being absent from the list: Tibetan lam, Kachin lam, Burmese lam (in Benedict's phonemic and tonemic transcription), Baro ram-a, and Lushai lam. Others of the 780 or so items, on the other hand, exhibit reflexes in only a minority of the seven divisions: e.g., item "saw *hān, "circular": Kachin sawm, Burmese saw, Lushai saw; and, at the other extreme, item "saw *hān, "below", is represented in two divisions only, Bodish-Himalayish, by Tibetan "saw" (Benedict's romanization), and Burmish, by Burmese saw (Benedict's phonemic transcription). Indeed, if one accepts the author's tentative classification of Nung as Burmish (p. 5), it is only in one of the seven divisions that item "saw", "saw", "chh", "throttle", "throttle", is represented, by Nung "hk" and by Burmese "zay" (as in the Epigraphia Birmanica system). In such circumstances one wonders whether Benedict has not been too generous in conferring reconstructed Tibet-Burman status on forms that are not well supported in terms of "divisions". Since the Tibet-Burman language group owes its title more to prestige in literature than to the polarity of Burmese and Tibet within the group, it would be unjust to try and insist that no reconstructed form should be admitted to TB status unless the reflexes supporting it included both Burmese and Tibetan languages that may ultimately turn out not to represent the two extremes of the Tibet-Burman group; but, even so, it does come as something of a shock to find Benedict giving unqualified TB status to reconstructed items supported by only a single "division", such as the "hk (Burmish only) mentioned above, to "hk (Bodish-Himalayish and Burmish),
Further, a more morpho-phonemic approach would have opened up to Benedict the possibility of analysing syllable-final consonants independently of syllable-initial consonants. While it is true that "final" consonants are dealt with in a separate chapter (7; pp. 13-17) from "initial" consonants (chap. 8; pp. 17-37) and from "consonant clusters" (chap. 9; pp. 37-51) too, a single overall phonemic inventory is stated to apply to all the above contexts: "some 16 consonant phonemes can be postulated for Tibet-Burman, as follows:"

**Vocal:** gh y h

**Dental:** d n z r l

**Ligature:** m

**Semi-vowels:** w v.

Let us first examine the development of these consonants in root-final position. All except the sonants g, d, b, and a, also the aspirate h, appear in this position (p. 13). In other words only eleven consonant units are distinguished in syllable-final position; consequently, the power of contrast, or the distinguishing role, of Benedict's syllable-final k, for example, which contrasts with his g, r, t, n, s, ɹ, t, p, m, w, and y, is very different from that of his syllable-initial k, which contrasts with all the other fifteen. So great is this difference in contrastive power, or distinctive function, that the eleven syllable-final units have, I should think, a strong claim to be considered as separate from, and independent of, any of the syllable-initial units. The case for a syllable-final k is particularly strong for his syllable-final k, t, p, and s, since there is no contrast, for each of these, with, respectively, g, d, b, and a. It is not, therefore, surprising that both voice and voicelessness can characterize the Lhasa-Tibetan reflexes of Benedict's *k*, *t*, and *p* in syllable-final position, according to context and tempo, e.g. (from my own observation) [-k/g] in [-lag'a] "hard" lag-pa, slow-tempo [-lagpa], [-s/ya] in [-lag'ya] "glove" lag-thubs, slow-tempo [-lag-thubs], [-s] in [-lag] "brawl" lag-lung, [-s] in [-lag] "palu" lag-mthu, and it is by no means unlike that this current contrast determined and tempo-determined variation in voicing in one of the modern dialects might reflect a like variation in earlier *aits de languet*. Not is it only the voicing that fluctuates, but fluctuates there are examples of mense also show a fluctuation in striction between maximum stricture ([k/-g]/) and intermediate stricture ([x/-y]/) and, indeed, in word-final position, the minimum degree of stricture to be observed is in the [x] of [-a:la] "food" shal-lag, and a fluctuation in nasality, between non-nasality ([k/-g]/) and nasality ([x]-). It seems not unreasonable to regard this wide degree of contextual variation in such features as voicing, striction, and nasality, not shared by the Lhasa-Tibetan reflexes of Benedict's syllable-initial *k*, as reflecting a corresponding variation for Proto-Tibetan, and, possibly, *TB*. At all events, evidence suggests a more flexible form of statement than Benedict's in Classical Tibetean these final stops [t, e, Tibeto-Burman sonants g, d, b] are written as sonants [t, d, b], and it has generally been supposed that they were originally syllable stops that have become unvoiced in modern Tibetan dialects. In view of the evidence from other TB languages, however, one must conclude that these stops were weakly articulated imbolden la 'sound . . . . . " (p. 13). The reading-style pronunciation, however, in which Classical Tibetean texts are read, approaches the degree of variation illustrated above from Lhasa Tibetan for its phonological units corresponding to Classical Tibetan -g and -b (the pronunciation of -d in both dialects is now purely vocalic: the length feature of [e: a: y:/] id, ad, ad, ad, ed, for example, the frontness feature of the last three, and the relative closeness of the first two as compared with such other finals as [p, g, -b]) is not generally specified. Consequently, whether the are "sonant" or "surd" is not specified. The sonant should be consistently specified. Such features depend on the phonetic context in which each is pronounced: and a in the syllable-final, in the absence of any contrast with a or a k in that context, may well have exploited to the full the degree of voicing variation and striction variation that is then open to these syllable-final units during a whole succession of *aits de langue*.

Benedict's attitude towards his reconstructed TB phonemes is one of extreme realism. It will have been observed that in the passages cited in the last two paragraphs he does not hesitate to specify phonetic features for his reconstructed phonemes; g, h, k,
and b are termed "velar," for example, and d, b, and a are termed "sonant." Again, while discussing his reconstructed phonemes in initial position, he writes: "It is not unlikely that TB sonant stops were somewhat aspirated in initial position and unaspirated after prefixes" (p. 21); and again: "the final velar (k, g) tend to disappear much more readily than the final dentals and labials" (p. 14). His approach is, therefore, at the opposite extreme to that of the more formalistic approach to be seen in the following passage from J. R. Firth: "the highest abstractions [in the comparative study of the Indo-European languages] are the so-called reconstructed or * (starred) forms, which are hypothetical summaries of sets of relations bringing comparable cognate words within one typological system, e.g.: *velar */sper/. They have morphological value only. Such formalisms have not in themselves any actual pronunciations, nor do they refer to any recognizable animal, or eard, portal or port" (J. R. Firth, *Papers in Linguistics* 1934–1951, London, 1957, p. 78).

For Benedict, though, the connection between the TB unit and units in current TB languages is so close that in some passages they almost seem to merge. One such passage is: "the root for 'leech' (text) does not appear to have a Chinese cognate, but Karen has prefixed *-*. Since his *-* is a theoretical unit, of Benedict's own devising, it is difficult to see how Karen can have prefixed it. Indeed, how is it possible for a current language to have a 'stared form'? The concept of such a 'stared form' is astonishing in its implications. It is not possible to apply the phonological forms that he ascribes to a current language such as Karen are devised; but an attempt at their application is possible. The idea here is to say that there has been no loss of a particular unit in the language, but that it has changed into something else. The idea is that the TB unit is present in the language, but that it has been replaced by a new unit. This is the idea of the "stared form." Though the concept is not directly applicable to the TB unit, it is possible to apply it to the Karen language. The idea is that the Karen language has a unit that is equivalent to the TB unit, but that it has been replaced by a new unit.

The "stared form" concept would, therefore, seem to be a useful addition to Benedict's linguistic armoury: it allows quite diverse sounds, and even features of sounds, and sequences of sounds, to be treated as current representatives of asterisked units, provided that the units compared are drawn from cognates, and provided that there are enough examples of them to establish a systematic relationship. (The term "stared form" does indeed appear in Sino-Tibetan, but, if I am not mistaken, only in the footnotes belonging to the revision, and to those parts which have been contributed by Matossi.) I could speak, however, from experience, because I have myself exploited the flexibility that this concept gives to one state sets of initial cluster features as reflexes of the same asterisked form despite the phonetic differences: (1) the phonological g-cluster initial *(gw)* of Balti Tibetan (gwad) "silver," (2) the phonological n-cluster initial *(gn)* of Golok Tibetan (gnang) "silver," (3) the phonological r-cluster combination *(gr)* of Lhasa Tibetan (gru) "silver," (2) the [n]- of Lhasa-Tibetan *(n)* "single" dollar, all three, *gn-*, *gr-*, and *n-*, as phonological reflexes of a member of a Proto-Tibetan *r*-cluster syllable-initial, *r*-i, though only in certain types of syllable (BSOAS, XXXV, 3, pp. 378–90); and these sequences of sounds and combinations of features *(gn-*, *(gr-*, *(n-*) are at least as different from each other in appearance as Benedict's *-gw* and *-gn*.

I should not wish to go to the same extreme as Firth, and banish phonetic speculation entirely from linguistic reconstruction; but it would seem to be a useful precaution to treat specifically phonetic speculation as an entirely different footnoting from the phonological and morphological, and differentiate it by combining the asterisk symbol, denoting a common, or reconstructed form, with square brackets, the accepted symbol for the phonetic level. Thus, one might speculate that my *gr-* has phonological reflexes *gr-*, *gr-*, and *n-*, in Balti, Golok, and Lhasa dialects respectively, might have been expected to be pronounced *(gr-)*. Such an attitude would be intermediate between the two extreme positions, Benedict's and Firth's, illustrated earlier. It would allow one to speculate that Golok had, in *(gr-)*, conceivably "maintained," or preserved, a Proto-Tibetan *(gr-)*, the phonetic exponent of a phonological *(gr-)*.

A possible reason for Benedict's highly phonetic approach to reconstructions may lie in the largely phonetic nature of the data that he has had to draw on: his "Section 6. Tibeto-Burman primary sources" (pp. 12–13) and "Appendix III, Primary Tibeto-Burman sources" (pp. 21–8) reveal a preponderance of early, and pre-phonemic, works, from Caoma de Körös (1934) and Hodgson (1847) onwards. Benedict claims to be making an "attempt to systematize these results [i.e. earlier phonemic generalizations by Shafer and himself] along phonemic and morphophonemic lines," but it would
clearly have been an impossible task to phonemicize all these nineteenth-century and
early twentieth-century sources; and he has not attempted it. Even so, he does appear
to accept the symbols of these orthographies as though they had phonemic status or
something like it. Consequently, one has the uneasy feeling that, with many of the less-
known languages, he is not dealing with systems and terms in systems but with letters
chosen more from phonetic than from phonemic or phonological considerations. *Sino-
Tibetan* gives no clue to the contrastive power, or range of contrast, of, for example,
Lushei -t (p. 14): whether it is phonemically distinct from -j, and whether there is a/k/
in contrast with it in syllable-final position in some environments or in none. Ultimately,
the only secure basis for TB comparison must be a systematic statement of all contrast-
ive units, in terms of an accredited phonological theory, whether distinctive-feature,
phonemic, or prosodic, for every language from which evidence is cited.

In the mean time it is not difficult to sympathize with Benedict’s urge to look be-
Yond all such particularities, and produce a model of what *TB* and *ST* might be
expected to look like. His introductory sections provide a stimulating panorama of
Sino-Tibetan comparative studies; and the book as a whole undoubtedly justifies
Matisoff’s comment “since 1942, nothing in my opinion has surpassed this *Conspectus*
as the best general overview of the entire subject.”

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