'Ergative' Marking in Tibeto-Burman

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INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the first results of a comprehensive project on comparative Tibeto-Burman (TB) morpho-syntax.[1]   Data on morphological forms and typological patterns were collected from one hundred fifty-one languages and dialects in the TB family.   For this paper the data were surveyed for nominal 'ergative' or agentive case marking (postpositions), in an attempt to determine if it would be possible to reconstruct an ergative case marker to Proto-Tibeto-Burman (PTB), and in so doing learn more about the nature of grammatical organization in PTB.   Ablative, instrumental, genitive, locative, and other case forms were also surveyed for possible cognacy with ergative forms, as suggested in DeLancey 1984. The results of the survey indicate that though an ergative marker can be reconstructed to some of the lower level groupings within TB, such as Proto-Bodish, not only is there no form that cuts across the upper level groupings to the extent that it could be reconstructed to PTB, there is also no form that cuts across the lower level groupings enough to allow reconstruction to an upper level grouping, such as Bodic or Kuki-Naga.   These findings support Benedict's (1972: 95ff) view that relational morphology of this type was not part of the grammatical system of PTB.

Aside from surveying the actual form of the agentive marking used in each language that had agentive marking, the conditions on the use of the forms in each language were also surveyed.   The results point to the existence of at least two major types of 'ergative' marking in TB: systemic and non-systemic (or 'paradigmatic' and 'non-paradigmatic').   Non-systemic marking can be seen as a relatively recent development, and has the same function as 'anti-ergative' marking (LaPolla 1992a), i.e.   disambiguation of two potential agents.   It is used only when needed for this

purpose and does not pattern paradigmatically, so is unlike what is normally referred to as 'ergativity'. Because of this I will use 'agentive' rather than 'ergative' when discussing the marking we find in the various languages in the rest of this paper. Systemic ergativity is much more complex, often involving semantic and pragmatic functions beyond simple disambiguation (see for example Genetti 1988, Nagano 1987, Tournadre 1991). Though discussed as two types for expository purposes, these two types, as they are manifested in TB, are actually points on a continuum of types from completely non-systemic to fully systemic, with movement along the continuum (which is unidirectional) corresponding to degree of grammaticalization.

1. THE FORMS OF 'ERGATIVE' MARKING

In this section we will compare the individual forms language group by language group, starting with the lowest levels and working up to the PTB level.[2] For the purposes of group identification, I will generally use the genetic classifications given in Bright 1991, unless otherwise marked. For each group I will first compare the agentive forms alone, then refer to the ablative, instrumental, and genitive forms to see if these can be of use in determining the form to be reconstructed. The latter forms are compared because of the common isomorphism between each of these forms and the agentive forms.[3] The idea then is that in those languages that do not have agentive marking, or that have agentive marking that does not conform with the other languages of the group, the ablative, instrumental, or genitive form might be the proper form to consider for cognacy (cf. DeLancey 1984). In some cases the agentive form may be a combination of two or more morphemes, and reference to other case forms can alert us to this fact.

The classification of Tibeto-Burman languages given in Bright (1991) recognizes at least four upper level groupings within TB, i.e. Bodic, Baric, Burmese-Lolo, and Karenic, and recognizes Rung as a possible grouping. We will discuss each of these groupings in turn, subgroup by subgroup.

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2) I have attempted to include data from as many TB languages as possible, though my sample is not always representative, as it reflects what materials were available to me rather than being an ideal sampling or comprehensive survey of all TB languages.

3) Out of 106 languages and dialects with agentive marking, 49 have agentive-instrumental isomorphism, 18 have agentive-ablative isomorphism, and 10 have agentive-genitive isomorphism. Only six languages (Darang, Jingpo, Singpho, Thado, Gazhuo, and Sunwari) had agentive-locative isomorphism, so the locative forms were not included here. (It must be pointed out that I use the word 'isomorphism' in this paper as if a single form used to mark different semantic roles actually represents three separate entities or categories in the grammar of that language or in the minds of the speakers of the language, but as pointed out to me by Søren Egerod (p.c.), we have no evidence from these languages that the single form in fact grammatically or cognitively represents any more than a single category.)

1.1 Bodic

The Bodic group includes the Bodish and Eastern Himalayish branches, plus the Dhimal language. We will start with the Bodish branch.

1.1.1 Bodish

Within the Bodish branch we have the following five subgroups: Himalayish, Tibetan, Tsangla (Monpa), Takpa, and Gurung. The first group within Bodish we will look at is the Himalayish group. The agentive forms I have for this group are as follows:

Almora, Rangkas, Chaudangsi-Byangsi[4]	sə ~ se ~ sɛ ~ s
Almora, Rangkas, Darmiya	su
Almora, Rangkas, Johari	so ~ su ~ sic
Kanauri, Bunan, Bhaga Rwer	dzi/tsi/zi
Kanauri, Kinnauri, Lower Kinnaur	əs (is) ~ s
Kanauri, Pattani, Shansha village	zi ~ i

For this level there is no problem reconstructing a form *s (V) (where '(V)' stands for an optional unspecified vowel). Consulting further the ablative, instrumental, and genitive forms tells us that in these languages the agentive marker is usually isomorphic with the instrument marker, and in some cases is partially isomorphic with the ablative marker (e.g. Pattani *ringzi*, which is a combination of the locative plus zi), but at this point does not help us in our reconstruction of the agentive marker.

Almora, Rangkas, Chaudangsi-Byangsi	sə	(inst)
Almora, Rangkas, Darmiya	su	(inst)
Almora, Rangkas, Johari	so ~ su ~ sic	(inst)
Kanauri, Bunan, Bhaga Rwer	dang	(inst)
Kanauri, Kinnauri, Lower Kinnaur	əs	(inst)
Kanauri, Pattani, Shansha village	zi ~ i	(inst)
Almora, Rangkas, Chaudangsi-Byangsi	khəči/ caŋ	(abl)
Almora, Rangkas, Darmiya	jo/ khərju	(abl)
Almora, Rangkas, Johari	{bəṭi ~ pəṭṭi}	(abl)
Kanauri, Bunan, Bhaga Rwer	chi	(abl)
Kanauri, Kinnauri, Lower Kinnaur	kč ~ č ~ dwakč	(abl)
Kanauri, Pattani, Shansha village	rəng ~ tə̆ng/ringzi/ dorči/ beči/či	(abl)
Almora, Rangkas, Chaudangsi-Byangsi	gə ~ gE	(gen)

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4) For each language I will give the subgroup, the language name, and the dialect if available, in that order. Forms separated by a tilde are allomorphs conditioned by phonetic environment, those separated by a slash generally have slightly different meanings; 'Ø' represents a zero form and '- -' means not enough data were available to determine the form. Forms in curly brackets are loans from non-TB languages.

Almora, Rangkas, Darmiya	gu	(gen)
Almora, Rangkas, Johari	go~gu~g (k)	(gen)
Kanauri, Bunan, Bhaga Rwer	agi/ gi/ kyi/ i	(gen)
Kanauri, Kinnauri, Lower Kinnaur	n~u~Ø	(gen)
Kanauri, Pattani, Shansha village	u (o)/ tu/ zu~Ø	(gen)

Closely related to the Himalayish languages are the many Tibetan dialects:[5]

Tibetan-C, Lhomi, Chepuwa	ki
Tibetan-C, Tibetan, Lhasa	ke~ki~Ø~-ʔ [gis~s]
Tibetan-C, Tibetan, Written Tibetan	gyis~kyis~(i) s
Tibetan-E, Amdo, Ndzorge	kə
Tibetan-S, Jirel, Jiri-yarsa	ki
Tibetan-S, Sherpa, Chunakpu	ki
Tibetan-W, Balti, Baltistan	si~isi
Tibetan-W, Balti, Purki	is~-s
Tibetan-W, Ladakhi , Central (Leh)	yi~e~Ci[6]
Tibetan-W, Ladakhi, Lower	s~is

Here we see reflexes of the same *s (V) form we reconstructed for Himalayish in Western Tibetan, but also a form with a velar initial and a high front vowel in some of the languages. In some of the Written Tibetan allomorphs the velar-initial form is combined with a reflex of the *s (V) form.

Adding the ablative, instrumental, and genitive forms (see below) again shows us agentive-instrumental isomorphism and partial agentive-ablative isomorphism. Here again the ablative is often a derived form, in the case of Written Tibetan made up of the locatives *la/na* plus the -s morpheme. From this data we see, though, that the velar form is actually the genitive, and that the agentive form in Written Tibetan is made up of the genitive plus a reflex of *s (V), so the velar form does not need to be separately reconstructed for the agentive. We simply have to state that *s (V) is combined with the genitive or that the genitive is used for the agentive in some of these languages. It is possible they all originally involved genitive + *s (V) combinations, and that some of the dialects simply lost the latter part of the compound through phonological attrition. This process is clear at least in Lhasa Tibetan. By the same token we can also assume the *s (V)-only agentive forms are reduced forms of genitive + *s (V) combinations (DeLancey 1985: 59).

Tibetan-C, Lhomi, Chepuwa	ki	(inst)

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5) The letters 'C', 'E', 'S', and 'W' after 'Tibetan' refer to the Central, Eastern, Southern, and Western dialects respectively. The forms in square brackets after the Lhasa Tibetan phonetic forms are the written forms of the case markers. In the case of the Lhasa phonetic form Ø~-ʔ, the vowel of the root is fronted.

6) The capital 'C' here represents the final consonant of the previous syllable, which is copied and becomes the initial of the postposition.

Tibetan-C, Tibetan, Lhasa	ke~ki~Ø~-ʔ [gis~s]	(inst)
Tibetan-C, Tibetan, Written Tibetan	gyis~kyis~gis~(i) s	(inst)
Tibetan-E, Amdo, Ndzorge	kə	(inst)
Tibetan-S, Jirel, Jiri-yarsa	– –	(inst)
Tibetan-S, Sherpa, Chunakpu	– –	(inst)
Tibetan-W, Balti, Balltistand	i-ikhɑ	(inst)
Tibetan-W, Balti, Purki	na/ ñembo/ nañembo	(inst)
Tibetan-W, Ladakhi, Central (Leh)	nəŋ (ñəm-po)~dəŋ (ñəm-po)	(inst)
Tibetan-W, Ladakhi, Lower	is~s	(inst)
Tibetan-C, Lhomi, Chepuwa	ni	(abl)
Tibetan-C, Tibetan, Lhasa	nɛ [nas]	(abl)
Tibetan-C, Tibetan, Written Tibetan	nas/las	(abl)
Tibetan-E, Amdo, Ndzorge	ni	(abl)
Tibetan-S, Jirel, Jiri-yarsa	– –	(abl)
Tibetan-S, Sherpa, Chunakpu	me/ maa/ sur/ waa	(abl)
Tibetan-W, Balti, Balltistand	nɑ/ shida	(abl)
Tibetan-W, Balti, Purki	na/ kana/ yaŋna	(abl)
Tibetan-W, Ladakhi, Central (Leh)	ne/ nəs	(abl)
Tibetan-W, Ladakhi, Lower	nas	(abl)
Tibetan-C, Lhomi, Chepuwa	kig/ ki	(gen)
Tibetan-C, Tibetan, Lhasa	ke~ki~Ø [gi~i]	(gen)
Tibetan-C, Tibetan, Written Tibetan	gyi~kyi~gi~i	(gen)
Tibetan-E, Amdo, Ndzorge	kə	(gen)
Tibetan-S, Jirel, Jiri-yarsa	te	(gen)
Tibetan-S, Sherpa, Chunakpu	ki	(gen)
Tibetan-W, Balti, Balltistand	i~e	(gen)
Tibetan-W, Balti, Purki	i~e	(gen)
Tibetan-W, Ladakhi, Central (Leh)	yi~e~Ci	(gen)
Tibetan-W, Ladakhi, Lower	i	(gen)

Next we will consider the Gurung, Tsangla, and Takpa languages. What we see in the Tsangla dialects is the same as what we saw in some of the Tibetan dialects: a velar initial form looking very much like the Tibetan genitive used to mark the agentive, though as we will see below, the genitive forms in these languages do not have the high front vowel of the Tibetan forms. The Tamang forms, and possibly even the Gurung and Takpa forms, may be palatalized forms of the velar initial etymon we find in Tsangla and Tibetan.

Gurung, Gurung, Ghacok	d (i)
Gurung, Tamang, Bagmati Anchal	ce
Gurung, Tamang, Murmi	se/ ji/ chhe
Tsangla, Sharchhokpa-lo, Kanglung	gi
Tsangla, Central Monpa, Dirang Ke	gi
Tsangla, Menba, Motuo (Cangluo)	gi~ŋi~çi
Takpa (Cuona Menba), Mama Commune	te[31]

The *te*[31] form in Takpa seems to be a recent innovation, though may be related to the Gurung agentive form.   The first person singular pronoun in Takpa can take -*i* to mark the agentive, and this may be the original form of agentive marking.   In Muoto Menba the *ŋi* form is used only after -*ŋ* final roots, which might reflect the same -*i* plus a copy of the final consonant of the previous syllable.   It seems likely the *d* (*i*) form in Gurung is cognate to the *ce* form in Tamang, as there is a similar correspondence between the completive, definite past markers in the two languages: (Risiangku/Sahu) Tamang *ci*, Gurung *di* (see Nishi 1983: 40).

Looking at the other case forms (see below) gives us an ablative form *ki*[31] in Takpa, what we would have expected for the agentive, though the instrumental takes the same *te*[31] form used for the agentive.   In Muoto Menba the same form is used for agentive, instrumental, and ablative.

Gurung, Gurung, Ghacok	– –	(inst)
Gurung, Tamang, Bagmati Anchal	ce	(inst)
Gurung, Tamang, Murmi	se	(inst)
Tsangla, Sharchhokpa-lo, Kanglung	gi	(inst)
Tsangla, Central Monpa, Dirang Ke	gi	(inst)
Tsangla, Menba, Motuo	gi~ŋi	(inst)
Takpa (Cuona Menba), Mama commune	te[31]	(inst)
Gurung, Gurung, Ghacok	lé~ilé~lé/seró	(abl)
Gurung, Tamang, Bagmati Anchal	ce/nyehnsye	(abl)
Gurung, Tamang, Murmi	yenchhe~yenji	(abl)
Tsangla, Sharchhokpa-lo, Kanglung	gai~gi	(abl)
Tsangla, Central Monpa, Dirang Ke	gei/myakkei	(abl)
Tsangla, Menba, Motuo	gi~ŋi	(abl)
Takpa (Cuona Menba), Mama commune	ki[31]	(abl)
Gurung, Gurung, Ghacok	e/l (a)	(gen)
Gurung, Tamang, Bagmati Anchal	la	(gen)
Gurung, Tamang, Murmi	lā	(gen)
Tsangla, Sharchhokpa-lo, Kanglung	ga	(gen)
Tsangla, Central Monpa, Dirang Ke	ɑ	(gen)
Tsangla, Menba, Motuo (Cangluo)	ga~ŋa~ha	(gen)
Takpa (Cuona Menba), Mama commune	ko[31]	(gen)

For the Bodish branch we have then reconstructed two forms for the agentive marker: *s (V) and genitive + *s.[7] Most languages have reflexes or remnants of

7)   DeLancey (1985: 57) discusses this *s (V) morpheme as 'indicating an abstract Source', because of its use in both the agentive and ablative case markers.   DeLancey has suggested (1984) that this *s (V) may eventually go back to a motion verb *sa, the meaning of which involves movement away rather than towards something, though we would expect a bimorphemic case form involving the genitive, such as we find here, to have evolved from a genitive-noun combination, in this case possibly involving the noun *sa~so 'place', as suggested by Simon (1941).   Nagano (1987: 53) also says this particle 'is cognate to a locative particle *su* which is from PTB *sa (LAND)'.

one or the other of these forms, though some of the Tibetan dialects, including Written Tibetan, have reflexes of both forms in morphophonemic alternation (the genitive + *s form after consonant endings, and the sibilant after open syllables, the -i- genitive having dropped from between a vowel and -s). We can reconstruct the same distribution for Proto-Bodish, and assume that those languages that have only one or the other simply generalized the use of one of the forms.

1.1.2   East-Himalayish

The next group within Bodic we will look at is East-Himalayish, essentially the Kiranti languages broadly defined. Below are the forms for the agentive marker:[8]

Kiranti-E-Ediv, Bantawa	a ~ ya
Kiranti-E-Ediv, Chamling	wa
Kiranti-E-Ediv, Khambu (Kulung)	ā
Kiranti-E-Ediv, Limbu	le ~ re
Kiranti-E-Ediv, Yakha	ngā
Kiranti-E-Wdiv, Khaling, Solu-Khumbu	æ ~ aa
Kiranti-E-Wdiv, Sunwar, Sabra	mi ~ -m
Kiranti-E-Wdiv, Thulung	ka
Kiranti-W, Kham, Taka	e
Kiranti-W, Magar	e ~ i
Kiranti-W-VC, Chepang, Eastern	ʔi
Kiranti-W-VC, Hayu, Murajor	ha

There is some commonality within Kiranti, though the Limbu, Yakha, Sunwar, and Thulung forms do not seem to fit with the other Kiranti forms. For Proto-Kiranti we will tentatively reconstruct *a. Following are the other relevant case markers:

Kiranti-E-Ediv, Bantawa	a ~ ya	(inst)
Kiranti-E-Ediv, Chamling	– –	(inst)
Kiranti-E-Ediv, Khambu (Kulung)	ā	(inst)
Kiranti-E-Ediv, Limbu	le ~ re/nu	(inst)
Kiranti-E-Ediv, Yakha	ngā	(inst)
Kiranti-E-Wdiv, Khaling, Solu-Khumbu	æ	(inst)
Kiranti-E-Wdiv, Sunwari, Sabra	mi ~ -m	(inst)
Kiranti-E-Wdiv, Thulung	ka	(inst)
Kiranti-W, Kham, Taka	e/ni	(inst)
Kiranti-W, Magar	– –	(inst)
Kiranti-W-VC, Chepang, Eastern	ʔi	(inst)
Kiranti-W-VC, Hayu, Murajor	ha	(inst)
Kiranti-E-Ediv, Bantawa	dāngkā	(abl)
Kiranti-E-Ediv, Chamling	– –	(abl)

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8) The abbreviations here refer to Eastern vs. Western Kiranti, Eastern division vs. Western division within Eastern Kiranti, and Vayu-Chepang vs. other Western division (see Bright 1991, 'Kiranti languages').

Kiranti-E-Ediv, Khambu (Kulung)	kā/khonā	(abl)
Kiranti-E-Ediv, Limbu	nu	(abl)
Kiranti-E-Ediv, Yakha	{bandā}	(abl)
Kiranti-E-Wdiv, Khaling, Solu-Khumbu	aa	(abl)
Kiranti-E-Wdiv, Sunwari, Sabra	nga	(abl)
Kiranti-E-Wdiv, Thulung	lam	(abl)
Kiranti-W, Kham, Taka	ni/tin/kin	(abl)
Kiranti-W, Magar	ing/lāki/dekhi	(abl)
Kiranti-W-VC, Chepang, Eastern	səy/gote (temporal)	(abl)
Kiranti-W-VC, Hayu, Murajor	khen	(abl)
Kiranti-E-Ediv, Bantawa	Ø/ko	(gen)
Kiranti-E-Ediv, Chamling	– –	(gen)
Kiranti-E-Ediv, Khambu (Kulung)	mi~m	(gen)
Kiranti-E-Ediv, Limbu	le~re	(gen)
Kiranti-E-Ediv, Yakha	gā~ngā	(gen)
Kiranti-E-Wdiv, Khaling, Solu-Khumbu	po	(gen)
Kiranti-E-Wdiv, Sunwari, Sabra	ke	(gen)
Kiranti-E-Wdiv, Thulung	Ø/kam	(gen)
Kiranti-W, Kham, Taka	pronominal prefixes only	(gen)
Kiranti-W, Magar	o~u~ko	(gen)
Kiranti-W-VC, Chepang, Eastern	ko?	(gen)
Kiranti-W-VC, Hayu, Murajor	mʊ	(gen)

Once again we have widespread agentive-instrumental isomorphism, and a few cases where the ablative marker overlaps with the agentive and/or instrumental marker. In Limbu and Yakha we have three-way isomorphy of the agentive, instrumental and genitive forms. The Sunwari agentive/instrumental form is isomorphic with the locative, while the Yakha agentive/instrumental/genitive form is very similar to the ablative form in Sunwari. In Khambu the genitive form is the same as that of the Sunwari agentive/instrumental/locative form.

1.1.3 Dhimal

The last language we will consider within Bodic is Dhimal. Its place within Bodic is unclear, so we will treat it as an isolate. Here are all the relevant forms:

Dhimal	dong/sho	(agt)
Dhimal	– –	(inst)
Dhimal	sho	(abl)
Dhimal	ko	(gen)

The agentive and ablative forms do not seem to be related to any of the other forms we have considered so far, though the genitive is similar to that in Takpa. We then have within the Bodic supergroup Proto-Bodish *s(V) and genitive + *s, Proto-Kiranti *a, and Dhimal *dong/sho*. There is no evidence that the Bodic, Kiranti, and Dhimal forms are related to each other, so we have no way to reconstruct an

agentive form to Proto-Bodic.

1.2   Baric

Within Baric are the Kuki-Naga, Konyak-Bodo-Garo and Kachinic branches. The Bodo and Garo languages do not exhibit agentive marking, though we will consider the other case forms from these groups for possible cognacy.

1.2.1   Kuki-Naga

The first group we will look at within Baric is the Kuki-Naga branch, which includes the Kuki-Chin, Mikir-Meithei, Mru, and Naga sub-branches. We will examine each of these sub-branches in turn. The first of these is the Kuki-Chin sub-branch:[9]

KC-C, Lushai, Dulien	vin~in~n
KC-C, Rong (Lepcha)	nun
KC-N, Chin, Sizang (Siyin)	in
KC-N, Chin, Tiddim	Ø
KC-N, Thado	in
KC-OK, Anal	Ø
KC-OK, Rangkhols	in/ ing
KC-S, Chin, Cho (Hko)	nawh
KC-S, Khami	lah
KC-W, Chiru	nā

There seem to be reflexes of two forms within this group, *na and *in. Looking at the other case forms (below) we see that the ablative form in Khami is a combination of these two forms, so it is not likely that these two are reducible to one earlier form, unless that form is *inna. We also find the same two forms in reverse order in Singpho (see below). We see also from these other case forms that while Anal does not show an agentive marker, it has a Bodish-like *gi~ki* genitive/ablative form.

KC-C, Lushai, Dulien	in	(inst)
KC-C, Rong (Lepcha)	sɑ/nun	(inst)
KC-N, Chin, Sizang (Siyin)	tɔ	(inst)
KC-N, Chin, Tiddim	tawh	(inst)
KC-N, Thado	in	(inst)
KC-OK, Anal	wā	(inst)
KC-OK, Rangkhols	--	(inst)
KC-S, Chin, Cho (Hko)	awn/lam awn	(inst)
KC-S, Khami	--	(inst)
KC-W, Chiru	nā	(inst)
KC-C, Lushai, Dulien	hnêna	(abl)

9)   The abbreviations used refer to Central Kuki-Chin, Northern Kuki-Chin, Old Kuki, Southern Kuki-Chin, and Western Kuki-Chin respectively.

KC-C, Rong (Lepcha)	nun	(abl)
KC-N, Chin, Sizang (Siyin)	pan ~ pa	(abl)
KC-N, Chin, Tiddim	pan	(abl)
KC-N, Thado	hĕng ~ hĕnggā	(abl)
KC-OK, Anal	gi ~ ki	(abl)
KC-OK, Rangkhols	ā-tā/tāk	(abl)
KC-S, Chin, Cho (Hko)	ah-ka/ung-ka [ga ~ gah]	(abl)
KC-S, Khami	inna	(abl)
KC-W, Chiru	na/(a)-ding-ā/kā-rā	(abl)
KC-C, Lushai, Dulien	a/i	(gen)
KC-C, Rong (Lepcha)	sɑ	(gen)
KC-N, Chin, Sizang (Siyin)	pronominal prefixes only	(gen)
KC-N, Chin, Tiddim	tone change	(gen)
KC-N, Thado	Ø	(gen)
KC-OK, Anal	gi ~ ki	(gen)
KC-OK, Rangkhols	Ø	(gen)
KC-S, Chin, Cho (Hko)	ah ~ zah	(gen)
KC-S, Khami	e ~ o	(gen)
KC-W, Chiru	Ø	(gen)

The next group we will consider is the Mikir-Meithei group, and in Meithei (Manipuri) we see again a form similar to the Kuki-Chin *na reflexes plus a Bodish-like *ki* genitive. The Mikir forms do not aid us in our reconstruction. From the point of view of case marking, it seems Manipuri and Mikir are each closer to different Kuki-Chin dialects than they are to each other.

Manipuri	nə	(agt)
Mikir	Ø	(agt)
Manipuri	nə	(inst)
Mikir	pèn ~ āpèn ~ ēpèn	(inst)
Manipuri	təgi	(abl)
Mikir	pèn ~ āpèn ~ ēpèn	(abl)
Manipuri	ki	(gen)
Mikir	pronominal prefixes only	(gen)

In the Naga languages (Angami, Lotha, Rengma, Sema, Tangkhul) we do not find agentive marking in any language other than Tangkhul, which has the form *na*.[10] Looking at the other case forms we see that the Lotha and Tangkhul instrumental forms are the same as the Tangkhul agentive form. The latter is said to be used 'with transitive and intransitive verbs in all tenses', but is not used when 'the question of agency is not prominent in the speaker's mind' (Pettigrew 1979: 10). This form is similar to that in Manipuri (with which Tangkhul and Lotha are in

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10) In Angami there is a form *bú* that is used to mark a non-volitional, non-intentional, and/ or non-responsible executor or force, as opposed to a volitional agent, which is unmarked.

contact) and Newari, but is not common enough among the Naga languages to be reconstructable to Proto-Naga.

Angami, Kohima	piê/sé (dí)	(inst)
Lotha	nà	(inst)
Rengma	– –	(inst)
Sema, Zunheboto	pe	(inst)
Tangkul	eina/na	(inst)
Angami, Kohima	kínû/nûnú/gînú	(abl)
Lotha	ìnà/lònà	(abl)
Rengma	ki	(abl)
Sema, Zunheboto	lawno/lono	(abl)
Tangkul	(wui-) eina	(abl)
Angami, Kohima	Ø	(gen)
Lotha	chi	(gen)
Rengma	Ø	(gen)
Sema, Zunheboto	Ø	(gen)
Tangkul	wui	(gen)

The last language to consider in this sub-branch is the isolate Mru, which has the following forms:

Mru	ing (?)	(ag)
Mru	– –	(inst)
Mru	tuda/tadē	(abl)
Mru	kãeh/un	(gen)

The agentive form is marked with a question mark, as the author of the source (Grierson 1909) was not sure that this was in fact an agentive marker. If it is indeed an agentive marker, it would match nicely with some of those in the Kuki-Chin group, though the ablative and genitive do not.

Within Kuki-Naga, then, we have reflexes of a possible *na proto-form in Kuki-Chin and Manipuri, and of a possible *in proto-form in Kuki-Chin and Mru, though no one form that could be reconstructed for both the Naga subgroup and any other subgroup. Given this situation, we would be hard-pressed to confidently reconstruct any form for the whole of Kuki-Naga.

1.2.2   Konyak-Bodo-Garo

This group is made up of Konyak (Northern Naga, Eastern Naga), Bodo, and Garo, with the latter two forming a lower level grouping. As mentioned earlier, the Bodo and Garo groups do not show evidence of agentive markers, so the following agentive forms are from the Konyak group alone:

Ao, Chungli	i
Chang, Tuensang	e/ye

Nocte, Hawa-jap	mɑ/me
Tangsa, Jogli	ra
Tangsa, Kimsing	ra
Tangsa, Longcang	ro
Tangsa, Moklum (Muklom)	e
Tangsa, Mosang	ro/ra

Here we have three more vowel-only forms similar to those found in some Kiranti dialects, one form (*ma/me* in Nocte) that is similar to the instrumental and ablative forms of some of the Tangsa dialects,[11] and unique *ro/ra* forms in Tangsa. The other case forms, including those from Bodo-Garo, are given below:

Konyak, Ao, Chungli	– –	(inst)
Konyak, Chang, Tuensang	i	(inst)
Konyak, Nocte, Hawa-jap	mɑ/me	(inst)
Konyak, Tangsa, Jogli	ma	(inst)
Konyak, Tangsa, Kimsing	ma	(inst)
Konyak, Tangsa, Longcang	ma/mo	(inst)
Konyak, Tangsa, Moklum (Muklom)	ma/ne/e	(inst)
Konyak, Tangsa, Mosang	ma	(inst)
Konyak, Tangsa, Ronrang	– –	(inst)
Konyak, Tangsa, Tikhak (Tikak)	mo	(inst)
Konyak, Ao, Chungli	nuŋi	(abl)
Konyak, Chang, Tuensang	ka	(abl)
Konyak, Nocte, Hawa-jap	wa	(abl)
Konyak, Tangsa, Jogli	vu/ma	(abl)
Konyak, Tangsa, Kimsing	ma	(abl)
Konyak, Tangsa, Longcang	wang	(abl)
Konyak, Tangsa, Moklum (Muklom)	wang	(abl)
Konyak, Tangsa, Mosang	ma/wo/kowa	(abl)
Konyak, Tangsa, Ronrang	nama	(abl)
Konyak, Tangsa, Tikhak (Tikak)	wang/mo	(abl)
Konyak, Ao, Chungli	Ø	(gen)
Konyak, Chang, Tuensang	bu/ebu/webu	(gen)
Konyak, Nocte, Hawa-jap	Ø	(gen)
Konyak, Tangsa, Jogli	pronominal prefixes only	(gen)
Konyak, Tangsa, Kimsing	pronominal prefixes only	(gen)
Konyak, Tangsa, Longcang	pronominal prefixes only	(gen)
Konyak, Tangsa, Moklum (Muklom)	pronominal prefixes only	(gen)
Konyak, Tangsa, Mosang	Ø	(gen)
Konyak, Tangsa, Ronrang	– –	(gen)
Konyak, Tangsa, Tikhak (Tikak)	pronominal prefixes only	(gen)
BG-Bodo, Kokborok, Debbarma	bay	(inst)

11) Nocte also has the same locative form (*nang*) as some of the Tangsa dialects, so it is clear there is a close connection between these languages, though in Nocte the locative is also used for human patient/goal arguments, whereas in many of the Tangsa dialects it is the *ma* form that is also used for this type of argument.

BG-Boro, Kachari (Bara), Darrang	zang	(inst)
BG-Garo, Garo, Garo Hills-Chisak/Awe	ci	(inst)
BG-Bodo, Kokborok, Debbarma	ni/ɔ-ni	(abl)
BG-Boro, Kachari (Bara), Darrang	ni-frai	(abl)
BG-Garo, Garo, Garo Hills-Chisak/Awe	ci/o-ni/ci-ni	(abl)
BG-Bodo, Kokborok, Debbarma	ni	(gen)
BG-Boro, Kachari (Bara), Darrang	ni/há	(gen)
BG-Garo, Garo, Garo Hills-Chisak/Awe	ni	(gen)

Considering all of the forms for Konyak, we find vowel-only forms in Ao (-*i* agentive) and Chang (-*i* instrumental, -*e/ye* agentive), similar to the -*e* agentive form in Moklum, so if we ignore the Nocte and other Tangsa forms we could tentatively reconstruct an *i agentive/instrumental form for Proto-Konyak. This is not very satifying, though, given that all but one of the Tangsa dialects has *ra/ro* and not -*i/-e*, and we must leave out Nocte. It is interesting that the Ronrang Tangsa ablative form is made up of the locative/allative and what is probably the agentive/instrumental form (though I do not have data on that form), the same combination as in Classical Tibetan, though the form used for the latter morpheme is different. This shows the speakers of the two languages having the same conception of the ablative. The Bodo-Garo forms for the instrumental do not help us here, though the ablative/genitive forms with ni are similar to some forms in Qiangic (see below).

1.2.3 Kachinic
In Kachinic we have data on only Jingpo and Singpho. All the case forms are given below:

Jingpo, Enkun	e^{31}	(agt)
Singpho, Bordumsa	i/hi	(agt)
Jingpo, Enkun	hteʔ^{31}	(inst)
Singpho, Bordumsa	thɑi/i	(inst)
Jingpo, Enkun	(koʔ^{55}) n^{31} na^{55}	(abl)
Singpho, Bordumsa	nani	(abl)
Jingpo, Enkun	na^{55}/ aʔ^{31}	(gen)
Singpho, Bordumsa	nɑ	(gen)

The agentive forms are again vowel-only forms similar to those in some of the Kiranti dialects, Chang, Ao, and Moklum, while the ablative and genitive forms are similar to *na forms in Kuki-Chin, Manipuri, and Tangkhul. Here we see the *nani* form in Singpho mentioned earlier.

In the Baric group we then have somewhat widespread evidence of front-vowel-only forms (*i ~ *e), and scattered evidence of *na and *in forms, the latter two particularly in locatives and ablatives.

1.3 Mirish

The next sub-branch is the Mirish (Abor-Miri-Dafla) languages, now referred to as the 'Tani' languages (T. Sun 1993a, 1993b).[12] Among the eleven languages and dialects of Mirish proper (Tani) for which we have data, we have evidence of only one language (Smin-gling Bokar) using an agentive form. This form (*nuŋ*), which is essentially instrumental and is very rarely used for agentive marking, is somewhat similar to the Rong (Lepcha) agentive form nun.[13] Following are the other relevant forms:

Adi, Milang	(u) ki	(inst)
Adi, Padam	lok	(inst)
Apatani, Apatani plateau	lo	(inst)
Bengni, Na	gɯ	(inst)
Bokar, Smin-gling	nuɯŋ	(inst)
Dafla, Palin-Nyapu	ké~ngé	(inst)
Gallong, Kombong	é	(inst)
Miji, (Dhimmai) Nafra	na-a	(inst)
Hill Miri, Tamen/Raga	lo	(inst)
Miri, Shaiyang	lok	(inst)
Tagin, Taliha	é	(inst)
Adi, Milang	ngu-ki	(abl)
Adi, Padam	lok	(abl)
Apatani, Apatani plateau	koki/soki/hoki	(abl)
Bengni, Na	lu-gɯ:	(abl)
Bokar, Smin-gling	ga	(abl)
Dafla, Palin-Nyapu	goloké/aloké/uluké	(abl)
Gallong, Kombong	lok~lokké/ahoké/tokké	(abl)
Miji, (Dhimmai) Nafra	nuyi	(abl)
Hill Miri, Tamen/ Raga	lo-ke	(abl)
Miri, Shaiyang	kalok(ka)	(abl)
Tagin, Taliha	lok~lokké/gélo/tolokké/ bolokké/ gengé	(abl)
Adi, Milang	ki	(gen)

12) T. Sun (1993a, Ch. 5) argues convincingly that Mirish (i.e. Tani, including the languages of the Adi, Nishi, Bengni, Apatani, and Mishing peoples) does not belong to the Baric group, but constitutes a separate branch on the level of Baric. Bright 1991 has Mirish within Baric, and includes Idu, Taraon, and Kaman (Miju) in the Mirish group, though several scholars working on these languages have suggested that they form a group outside the Mirish group (Shafer 1955, H. Sun et al. 1980, Marrison 1988, T. Sun 1993a). Because of this I have dealt with the non-Tani languages in the section on 'unclassified' languages below.

13) According to Jackson Sun (T. sun 1993a: 373-379), Rong (Lepcha) shares some lexical similarities with the Eastern Tani languages, particularly Padam Adi; Bokar is a transitional language sharing traits of both Eastern and Western Tani.

Adi, Padam	ke′	(gen)
Apatani, Apatani plateau	ka/kɨ	(gen)
Bengni, Na	kɯː	(gen)
Bokar, Smin-gling	ka	(gen)
Dafla, Palin-Nyapu	Ø	(gen)
Gallong, Kombong	gé ~ ké	(gen)
Miji, (Dhimmai) Nafra	i	(gen)
Hill Miri, Tamen/Raga	ke ~ -k	(gen)
Miri, Shaiyang	ka	(gen)
Tagin, Taliha	ke ~ gé	(gen)

In Apatani and Hill Miri the locative form *lo* is used for the instrumental, while in Padam and Shaiyang Miri this form is fused with what appears to be the genitive. We find this latter form as the ablative in a number of languages as well. The genitive forms are reminiscent of some of those in Bodish.

1.4 Rung

Within the Rung branch there are only two groups, Nungish and Qiangic (including Tangut).[14] We will first consider Nungish, for which we only have the closely related dialects Dulong, Rawang, and Anong. Following are the agentive forms:

Anong, Mugujia	mi^{55}
Dulong, Hefang	$mi^{55} \sim i^{55}$
Dulong, Muliwang	me^{31}
Rawang, Mvtwàng	i^{53}

There is no difficulty here reconstructing *mi for the immediate ancestor of these dialects,[15] a form similar to Sunwar *mi* and Idu *me* (see below) and possibly Nocte *ma/me*, though at least with the former the similarity seems to be one of chance, and not due to cognacy or even contact because of the locative source of the marker in Sunwari. Following are the other relevant case forms:

Anong, Mugujia	mi^{55}/ka^{31}	(inst)
Dulong, Hefang	$mi^{55} \sim i^{55}/dɔ^{31}$	(inst)
Dulong, Muliwang	kai^{55}	(inst)
Rawang, Mvtwàng	i^{53}	(inst)

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14) This is Rung as it is discussed in Bright 1991: 448. In the original articles arguing for this branch, Thurgood (1984a, b) also included Jingpo, Lepcha, and the Luish languages, and had the Mishmi (Deng) languages under Nungish.

15) The vowel-only alternate form in Hefang Dulong warns us against trying to make too much of the vowel-only forms in the different languages we have seen (except possibly in Kiranti), as we have no way of knowing whether the form is not simply a form where the initial or the final, or both, has worn away through phonological attrition.

Anong, Mugujia	khɯŋ³¹ne⁵⁵/ne⁵⁵	(abl)
Dulong, Hefang	paŋ⁵⁵	(abl)
Dulong, Muliwang	– –	(abl)
Rawang, Mvtwàng	khɛ³¹ni⁵³	(abl)
Anong, Mugujia	kha³¹/ni⁵⁵	(gen)
Dulong, Hefang	Ø	(gen)
Dulong, Muliwang	kɯ⁵⁵/na³¹ ~ ia³¹	(gen)
Rawang, Mvtwàng	Ø	(gen)

Here we see a velar-inital instrumental form in Muliwang Dulong which we might want to compare with the Tsangla and Kaman forms. In Hefang Dulong the locative (dɔ³¹) can also be used for instrumental marking, and in Malam Khong Rawang (not listed above) a form that looks very much like that same locative form (though unattested in Rawang) forms part of the ablative (dɔmɯ/dəmɯ), the other part being the agentive/instrumental form (mɯ), again similar to the combination we saw in Tibetan and Ronrang Tangsa (Madamkhong forms based on Barnard 1934). The instrumental form (kai⁵⁵) in Muliwang Dulong is also a locative marker. The na³¹ genitive form in Muliwang Dulong is similar to that in Jingpo, a language with which Dulong has often been said to be closely related (e.g. Sun 1982, LaPolla 1987), though it seems to be actually a topic marker that is used occasionally in genitive situations. In Anong the ablative form ne⁵⁵ is similar to forms in some of the Qiangic languages.

In Qiangic we have a large number of languages and dialects. First consider the agentive forms:

Daofu, Chengguan	ɣu
Ergong, Dasang	ɯu
Ersu, Zeluo Commune	i⁵⁵ ke⁵⁵
Guiqiong, Maiben Commune	Ø
Lyusu, Su	le⁵³
Muya, Shade district	ji³³
Namuzi, Muli	ȵi⁵⁵
Pumi, Jinghua	(gue⁵⁵) iɛ¹³
Pumi, Taoba	nɛ³⁵
Qiang, Taoping	i³³
Queyu, Tuanjie	ȵi³⁵/ ji³⁵
Queyu, Xiazhan	ji¹³ ȵi⁵⁵
Shixing, Lanman	rɛ̃³³
Tangut	ndźêi-vie¹
Zhaba, Zatuo	Ø

Here we have vowel-only forms in Jinghua Pumi and Taoping Qiang, and similar forms in Ersu, Muya, and Queyu. There are also nasal + front vowel forms in Namuzi, Taoba Pumi, and Queyu (all very closely related dialects). Huang Bufan (1991: 350) has suggested that these forms may be loans from Tibetan. From its

form, distribution, and etymological transparency (meaning 'to perform an action' —Kepping 1979) it is clear the Tangut form is a late development, so is of no use in reconstructing a proto-form.   Given the fact that the two dialects of Pumi do not have cognate forms for either agentive or ablative markers, we can assume that at least one of these languages (or both) recently innovated these forms.   A check of the other case forms tells us that the agentive form in Xiazhan Queyu seems to be a combination of the genitive and the ablative forms,[16] similar to what we saw in Bodish, but the forms (at least of the ablative) are not cognate to the Bodish forms.   Namuzi (Namuyi) and Lyusu are very closely related, yet differ in terms of the form used for agentive marking.   Namuzi uses its genitive form (possibly also related to the ablative) for marking the agentive, while its instrumental is a form closer to that of the agentive/instrumental/ablative form in Lyusu.   In Ersu, which is closely related to these two dialects, we also see isomorphism or partial isomorphism between the agentive, the genitive, and the instrumental forms.

Daofu, Chengguan	qha	(inst)
Ergong, Dasang	naŋ	(inst)
Ersu, Zeluo Commune	i^{55}/$k\varepsilon^{55}$	(inst)
Guiqiong, Maiben Commune	$k\phi^{33}$ ($k\phi^{33}$ $lɔ^{33}$)/$nɔ^{33}$	(inst)
Lyusu, Su	le^{53}	(inst)
Muya, Shade district	ji^{33}	(inst)
Namuzi, Muli	la^{31}	(inst)
Pumi, Jinghua	gue^{55} $i\varepsilon^{13}$	(inst)
Pumi, Taoba	$n\varepsilon^{35}$	(inst)
Qiangic, Taoping	i^{31}/ xe^{33}	(inst)
Queyu, Tuanjie	$ȵi^{35}$/ ji^{35}	(inst)
Queyu, Xiazhan	Ø	(inst)
Shixing, Lanman	$r\tilde{e}^{33}$/ $n\tilde{o}^{55}$	(inst)
Tangut	ngu	(inst)
Zhaba, Zatuo	$kʌ^{33}$ $tʌ^{33}$	(inst)
Daofu, Chengguan	ŋε	(abl)
Ergong, Dasang	tɕe	(abl)
Ersu, Zeluo Commune	ta^{55}/$dʒo^{55}$ i^{33}	(abl)
Guiqiong, Maiben Commune	$ȵi^{33}$	(abl)
Lyusu, Su	le^{53}	(abl)
Muya, Shade district	$tsə^{33}$ $kə^{33}$	(abl)
Namuzi, Muli	$ȵi^{31}$	(abl)
Pumi, Jinghua	$n\bar{a}u^{14}$	(abl)
Pumi, Taoba	– –	(abl)
Qiangic, Taoping	ti^{33} ko^{33}	(abl)
Queyu, Tuanjie	ne^{35}	(abl)
Queyu, Xiazhan	ȵi	(abl)
Shixing, Lanman	$r\tilde{e}^{33}$/$n\tilde{o}^{55}$	(abl)
Tangut	ʔa	(abl)

16)   Tone was not marked on the Xiazhan Queyu ablative and genitive forms in the source used (Dai et al. 1991), though the segmentals match perfectly.

Zhaba, Zatuo	Ø	(abl)
Daofu, Chengguan	ji	(gen)
Ergong, Dasang	i/ je	(gen)
Ersu, Zeluo Commune	i^{55}	(gen)
Guiqiong, Maiben Commune	mɛ^{55}	(gen)
Lyusu, Su	ji^{53}/di^{53}	(gen)
Muya, Shade district	ɣæ^{33}	(gen)
Namuzi, Muli	n̩i^{55}/ji^{31}	(gen)
Pumi, Jinghua	gɑ^{55}	(gen)
Pumi, Taoba	ɣa^{35}	(gen)
Qiangic, Taoping	ʐo^{33}	(gen)
Queyu, Tuanjie	ɣa^{35}	(gen)
Queyu, Xiazhan	ji	(gen)
Shixing, Lanman	ji^{55}	(gen)
Tangut	ʔɪn	(gen)
Zhaba, Zatuo	ʐə^{33}	(gen)

If Rung is to be considered a group, then given the great differences in the forms between Nungish and Qiangic, and within Qiangic, there is no form we can reconstruct for agentive marking at that level or at the Proto-Qiangic level, though there is scattered evidence of reflexes of an agentive/ablative form *ni.

1.5 Burmese-Lolo

The last major group within Tibeto-Burman with agentive marking is comprised of the Burmish and Loloish branches, which we will consider in turn.

1.5.1 Burmish

Within Burmish we have data from a number of Northern Burmish languages, but only Rangoon Burmese representing Southern Burmish. Following are the agentive forms:[17]

Burmish-N, Achang, Longchuan	a^{31}
Burmish-N, Achang, Xiandao	a^{ʔ55}
Burmish-N, Bola, Kongjia village	jaŋ^{31}
Burmish-N, Langsu, Yunqian	Ø
Burmish-N, Zaiwa, Xishan Zaiwa	e^{ʔ31}
Burmish-S, Burmese, Rangoon	Ø

The Achang and Zaiwa forms are both vowel-only (vowel plus glottal stop) forms, but it may be more than coincidental that the Zaiwa form is very similar to that of Jingpo (e^{31}), as the Zaiwa speakers are members of the Jingpo nationality, and

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17) The 'N' or 'S' following the Burmish and some of the Loloish forms marks them as 'Northern' or 'Southern' Burmish/Loloish respectively. If no 'N' or 'S' follows, as in the case of some of the Loloish languages, I was not able to determine in which group the language belonged.

often live in the same villages as Jingpo speakers (see Dai to appear). The Longchuan Achang agentive form is the same as the genitive form in that language, and also very similar to the topic marker in Langsu, Bola and other Burmish languages.[18] Given the strong statistical correlation between agents and topicality, it would not be impossible for a topic marker to regrammaticalize into an agentive marker (this seems to be happening with the Burmese topic marker *ka*). Langsu and Bola are very similar dialects, and both have the form *jaŋ*[31] for their instrumental marker (which is also used clause-finally with the meaning 'because'), though in the source used for both languages (Dai et al. 1991) the use of this form in Bola as an agentive marker was treated as a marked construction (only one example, discussed as a 'passive'), and the possibility of using this form for agentive marking in Langsu was not discussed at all. From this it would seem the use of the instrumental to mark agentive arguments is still not well established in these dialects, and probably a very recent innovation.

Burmish-N, Achang, Longchuan	Ø	(inst)
Burmish-N, Achang, Xiandao	a$^{?55}$	(inst)
Burmish-N, Bola, Kongjia village	jaŋ^{31}	(inst)
Burmish-N, Langsu, Yunqian	jaŋ^{31}	(inst)
Burmish-N, Zaiwa, Xishan Zaiwa	e$^{?31}$/mai^{31}	(inst)
Burmish-S, Burmese, Rangoon	né	(inst)
Burmish-N, Achang, Longchuan	a$^{?31}$	(abl)
Burmish-N, Achang, Xiandao	– –	(abl)
Burmish-N, Bola, Kongjia village	mɛ̃^{55}	(abl)
Burmish-N, Langsu, Yunqian	mɛ^{55}	(abl)
Burmish-N, Zaiwa, Xishan Zaiwa	mai^{31}	(abl)
Burmish-S, Burmese, Rangoon	kɑ	(abl)
Burmish-N, Achang, Longchuan	a^{31}	(gen)
Burmish-N, Achang, Xiandao	a^{31}/tou^{31}	(gen)
Burmish-N, Bola, Kongjia village	mɛ̃^{55}/na^{31}	(gen)
Burmish-N, Langsu, Yunqian	nɔ^{31}	(gen)
Burmish-N, Zaiwa, Xishan Zaiwa	e^{55}/ma^{51}	(gen)
Burmish-S, Burmese, Rangoon	yé/ké	(gen)

For the Burmish branch, then, we also do not have an agentive form reconstructable to the proto-level.

1.5.2 Loloish

In Loloish (see below) we have vowel-only forms in Nusu and Nasu, and *n*-initial forms in Lisu, Naxi, Sani Yi, and Hani which might be related to the Burmese instrumental/commitative form *né*. These forms also look very much like the ablative forms in some of the Qiangic languages discussed above. Among the three

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18) Cf. Dulong, where the topic marker *na*[31] can also be used in place of a genitive marker in some constructions.

Yi dialects represented there is no commonality in terms of agentive marking. The two Lisu dialects also differ in terms of having or not having agentive marking, though it may be that the agentive marker ne^{33} of the Bijiang dialect is related to the topic marker nya of the Thailand dialect. The Gazhuo form looks more like a Bodish form, though Gazhuo is a relatively recent language, being that of a group of Mongols left in Yunnan at the end of the Yuan dynasty (Dai 1987), so can not be relied on in reconstructing Proto-Tibeto-Burman.

Loloish, Gazhuo, Baige	$k\varepsilon^{33}$
Loloish, Jinuo, Manka/Mandou	Ø
Loloish, Nusu , Middle Bijiang	$i^{31} \sim e^{31}$
Loloish, Rouruo, Tu-e township	Ø
Loloish-N, Lisu, Bijiang	$ne^{33} \sim le^{44}$
Loloish-N, Lisu, Thailand	Ø
Loloish-N, Naxi, Western dialect	$nɯ^{33}$
Loloish-N, Yi, Nasu	a^{31}
Loloish-N, Yi, Sani	lr^{33}
Loloish-N, Yi, Xide	Ø
Loloish-S, Akha, Chiang Rai	nɛ
Loloish-S, Hani, Dazhai	ne^{33}
Loloish-S, Lahu, Black Lahu	Ø
Loloish-S, Sangkong, Xiajie	Ø

Looking at the other relevant case markers we see that in Gazhuo, Nusu, Naxi, Yi, Hani, and Akha the agentive form is the same as the ablative/instrumental form.

Loloish, Gazhuo, Baige	$k\varepsilon^{33}$	(inst)
Loloish, Jinuo, Manka/ Mandou	la^{35}	(inst)
Loloish, Nusu , Middle Bijiang	i^{31}	(inst)
Loloish, Rouruo, Tu-e township	$çi^{31}$	(inst)
Loloish-N, Lisu, Bijiang	--	(inst)
Loloish-N, Lisu, Thailand	Ø	(inst)
Loloish-N, Naxi, Western dialect	--	(inst)
Loloish-N, Yi, Nasu	--	(inst)
Loloish-N, Yi, Sani	Ø[19]	(inst)
Loloish-N, Yi, Xide	si^{21}	(inst)
Loloish-S, Akha, Chiang Rai	nɛ	(inst)
Loloish-S, Hani, Dazhai	ne^{33}	(inst)
Loloish-S, Lahu, Black Lahu	Ø	(inst)

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19) In Sani Yi there is no postposition for the instrumental, though the verbs qe^{55} 'use' and $vɿ^{55}$ 'take' are used in serial verb constructions to introduce instruments (Ma 1951), similar to the situation in Chinese. The instrumental form si^{21} in Xide Yi is a grammaticalized form of the verb si^{21} 'pull (lead), carry along', and the ablative form ta^{33} is derived from ta^{33} 'place (v.)' (Chen et al. 1985).

Loloish-S, Sangkong, Xiajie	ha^{33}	(inst)
Loloish, Gazhuo, Baige	kɛ^{33}	(abl)
Loloish, Jinuo, Manka/Mandou	jə^{33}	(abl)
Loloish, Nusu , Middle Bijiang	do^{35}-le^{31}/ba^{31}-i^{31}/ba^{35}-le^{31}	(abl)
Loloish, Rouruo, Tu-e township	çi^{53}	(abl)
Loloish-N, Lisu, Bijiang	– –	(abl)
Loloish-N, Lisu, Thailand	tsú	(abl)
Loloish-N, Naxi, Western dialect	nɯ^{33}	(abl)
Loloish-N, Yi, Nasu	pʻa^{55}/tsʻ₁^{31}/tsɤ^{55}	(abl)
Loloish-N, Yi, Sani	lɪ^{33}	(abl)
Loloish-N, Yi, Xide	ta^{33}/ndi^{55}/çi^{33}	(abl)
Loloish-S, Akha, Chiang Rai	nɛ	(abl)
Loloish-S, Hani, Dazhai	ne^{33}/me^{33}	(abl)
Loloish-S, Lahu, Black Lahu	gɛ^{1}	(abl)
Loloish-S, Sangkong, Xiajie	me^{33}-ha^{33}	(abl)
Loloish, Gazhuo, Baige	pv^{323}	(gen)
Loloish, Jinuo, Manka/Mandou	ɛ^{55}	(gen)
Loloish, Nusu , Middle Bijiang	e^{31}	(gen)
Loloish, Rouruo, Tu-e township	ze^{55}	(gen)
Loloish-N, Lisu, Bijiang	Ø	(gen)
Loloish-N, Lisu, Thailand	Ø	(gen)
Loloish-N, Naxi, Western dialect	gə^{33}	(gen)
Loloish-N, Yi, Nasu	bɤ	(gen)
Loloish-N, Yi, Sani	ŋa^{55}	(gen)
Loloish-N, Yi, Xide	Ø	(gen)
Loloish-S, Akha, Chiang Rai	ə̀	(gen)
Loloish-S, Hani, Dazhai	ɤ^{33}/jɔ^{55}/a^{33}/ne^{33}	(gen)
Loloish-S, Lahu, Black Lahu	ve^{1}	(gen)
Loloish-S, Sangkong, Xiajie	Ø	(gen)

For the Loloish branch (and possibly even Lolo-Burmese) the best we can do is possibly reconstruct an ablative or instrumental marker *ne~*ni, which in some languages came to be used as an agentive marker, but at the Lolo-Burmese level we have no clear evidence of a reconstructable proto-form for an agentive marker.

1.6 Karen

The last group of languages we will consider is the Karen languages, which may have branched off early from the Sino-Tibetan stock (Benedict 1972), though there is a growing consensus that the Karen languages are a group within TB, possibly close to the Lolo-Burmese group. There are no agent markers in the Karen data available to me, so here I will present only non-agentive case forms:

Karen, Sgaw, Delugong	– –	(inst)
Karen, Sgaw, Moulmein	dɔ	(inst)
Karen, Kayah, Eastern	nɛ́	(inst)
Karen, Sgaw, Delugong	lə^{55}	(abl)

Karen, Sgaw, Moulmein	lə́	(abl)
Karen, Kayah, Eastern	dɤ́	(abl)
Karen, Sgaw, Delugong	a³¹	(gen)
Karen, Sgaw, Moulmein	Ø	(gen)
Karen, Kayah, Eastern	Ø	(gen)

Here we have an ablative form in Sgaw similar to those in Tujia, Nusu, and Lisu, though the form in Sgaw has a much wider use than in the Loloish languages, being basically a locative particle, so may not be cognate. A similar situation obtains vis-à-vis the instrumental in Kayah. It is not specifically an instrumental marker, and in fact does not mark any specific role, but is used simply to mark the referent of the NP as backgrounded (Solnit 1986: 291). For this reason it is probably not cognate with the true instrumentals in other languages that have similar forms.

1.7 Unclassified

A number of languages within Tibeto-Burman are either too recently discovered, or too little understood to be properly placed in one of the language groups discussed above. The conservative approach is then to consider these languages separately until we learn more about their proper place within Tibeto-Burman.

The first language we will discuss is Newari. Though relatively well studied, there is still no agreement on the subgrouping of Newari, except that most scholars agree it should be within Bodic, possibly close to Kiranti (Genetti 1990: 2). Following are all of the relevant Newari forms:

Newari, Classical	sëm ~ sën ~ san	(agt)
Newari, Dolakha	na ~ n	(agt)
Newari, Katmandu	nɔ̃/ṽ-ṽ	(agt)
Newari, Classical	-n	(inst)
Newari, Dolakha	na ~ n	(inst)
Newari, Katmandu	nɔ̃/ṽ-ṽ	(inst)
Newari, Classical	yāken	(abl)
Newari, Dolakha	lan	(abl)
Newari, Katmandu	nɔ̃/ṽ-ṽ	(abl)
Newari, Classical	yā/s	(gen)
Newari, Dolakha	e	(gen)
Newari, Katmandu	nɔ̃/ṽ-ṽ	(gen)

Katmandu Newari has three-way isomorphy of the agentive, instrumental and genitive forms. According to Genetti (1991) the form in Katmandu Newari originated as the instrumental marker and spread to the other case forms (in Classical Newari the instrumental was often used in place of the agentive—Jørgensen 1941; see also Hargreaves 1984). It is interesting that the form of the proto-Newari instrumental marker (*na) is the same as that of the Tibetan locative marker,

though we have no evidence at present that they developed from a single source. The Classical Newari agentive form seems to be unrealated to any other form we have seen in Tibeto-Burman, unless it is a combination of two or more forms (e.g. *sa + *na). From these data we can see that the Newari forms are quite different from the Kiranti forms (§ 1.1.2), though similar to some of the Kuki-Chin/Manipuri forms (§ 1.2.1). In particular a *na agentive/instrumental form is found in Manipuri and Chiru, and is part of the Khami ablative form. Cho (Hko) has *nawh* as its agentive marker.

The next two languages, rGyarung and Baima, we will deal with together, as the problems involved in their subgrouping are quite similar. Both are languages in western Sichuan which may be Tibetan dialects influenced by contact with Qiangic languages or may be Qiangic languages heavily influenced by Tibetan. Following are all of the relevant forms for both languages:

Baima, Baima Commune	i^{53}	(agt)
Baima, Baima Commune	$r\epsilon^{53}/n\mathfrak{o}^{13}$	(inst)
Baima, Baima Commune	$i\mathfrak{o}^{53}$	(abl)
Baima, Baima Commune	$ti^{53} \sim t\epsilon^{53}$	(gen)
rGyarung, Ma'erkang	$k\mathfrak{a} \sim k$	(agt)
rGyarung, Ma'erkang	$k\mathfrak{a}$	(inst)
rGyarung, Ma'erkang	$k\mathfrak{a}$	(abl)
rGyarung, Ma'erkang	i	(gen)

We can see from these data that the rGyarung forms are more like the Eastern, Central and Southern Tibetan dialects, whereas the Baima forms are more like those of some of the Qiangic languages. These data of course are not sufficient to determine the proper grouping of these languages; we must have regular lexical and phonological correspondences showing evidence of shared innovations, as these case forms may simply be due to language contact.

A number of languages that have often been grouped together with the Mirish languages include Idu, Kaman (Miju), and Taraon (Darang). As mentioned in footnote 12, Sun (1993a, b) has shown that these languages are not within Mirish proper (Tani), and also that they do not necessarily form a group themselves, though Idu and Taraon are more closely related to each other than either is to Kaman. Of these three languages, Taraon shares the largest number of cognates with the Tani languages. Following are the agentive forms:

Idu, Ceta	me
Idu, Chayu district	$n i^{55}$
Kaman (Miju), Parsuran Kund	Ø
Geman; Xiachayu district	ka^{35}
Darang; Xiachayu district	go^{31}
Taraon , Digaru	Ø

In Geman and Darang (the dialects of the Deng people within China) we have velar inital agentive forms, though the dialects of the same languages in India (Kaman and Taraon) do not have agentive marking. In both dialects that have agentive marking it is not obligatory or common, and in Geman is normally only used when an NP referring to an indirect object (a human referent) is present in the clause (H. Sun et al. 1980: 285). In Darang the agentive (and instrumental) form is iso-morphic with the locative form, and this may be its original meaning. The Ceta Idu agentive form *me* seems unrelated to the other agentive forms in this branch, though is similar to the Sunwar form *mi* and the Nocte and Tangsa *ma/me* instrumental and ablative forms. Darang also has a *ma*[55] form for the ablative (see below). The form for the ablative in Ceta Idu is *mane*, made up of the locative *ma* plus an ablative *ne* (compare the genitive *maci*), which makes it possible that *me* is a collapsed form of *mane*. The agentive form in Ceta Idu is said to be 'added to the subject when the subject has already performed or is going to perform an action' (Pulu 1978: 11), but it is only used in three sentences out of hundreds in the book (all three are on p. 11), and out of these three, one has an intransitive verb (*nga-me ba-we* 'I will go'). In the closely related Chayu dialect of Idu an unrelated form[20] is used as an agentive marker. Because of these facts, the status of the form in Ceta Idu remains unresolved.

Idu, Ceta	ci	(inst)
Idu, Chayu	tɕi[53]	(inst)
Kaman (Miju), Parsuran Kund	ké	(inst)
Geman; Xiachayu district	kɑ[35]	(inst)
Darang; Xiachayu district	go[31]	(inst)
Taraon , Digaru	– –	(inst)
Idu, Ceta	ne/gane/mane	(abl)
Idu, Chayu	ne[55] ∼ a[31] ne[55]	(abl)
Kaman (Miju), Parsuran Kund	wɑi/hai/li	(abl)
Deng, Geman; Xiachayu district	jɑu[55]kɑ[35] ∼ tɑu[55]kɑ[35]/	
	xɑi[55]kɑ[35]/li[55]kɑ[35]	(abl)
Deng, Darang; Xiachayu district	n̪u[31]/mɑ[55]	(abl)
Taraon , Digaru	nyo/kõ/gõ/theiya	(abl)
Idu, Ceta	ci/aci/maci	(gen)
Idu, Chayu	tai[55]	(gen)
Kaman (Miju), Parsuran Kund	Ø/pha	(gen)
Geman; Xiachayu district	mp'ɑ[35]	(gen)
Darang; Xiachayu district	ɑ[31]bɑ[55]	(gen)
Taraon, Digaru	Ø/ba	(gen)

20) The forms cannot be cognate, as Ceta *me* corresponds to Chayu *me*, not *n̪i*, e.g. Chayu *me*[55], Ceta *me* 'man'. The Chayu Idu form may be derived from *ŋi* or *ni*. The former seems most likely, given that this is one form of the Motuo (Cangluo) Menba agentive/instrumental/ablative marker, and that both languages are geographically close to one another.

Two languages that have defied proper classification because of heavy influence from Chinese are Bai and Tujia. Neither one has agentive or instrumental markers, so are not very relevant to this paper, though I give the ablative and genitive forms here for the sake of completeness and for comparison.

Loloish, Bai, Jianchuan	sa^{25}	(abl)
Loloish, Tujia, Northern dialect	le^{55}	(abl)
Loloish, Bai, Jianchuan	no^{33}	(gen)
Loloish, Tujia, Northern dialect	ne^{55}	(gen)

The last language in this group is the newly discovered Mo'ang language of Funing. It seems to be clearly Burmic (see Wu 1993), though it is not clear if it belongs in Loloish or in Burmish. Following are all the relevant case forms:

Mo'ang, Funing	$ze^{?13}\gamma a^{21}$	(agt)
Mo'ang, Funing	—	(inst)
Mo'ang, Funing	qa^{21}	(abl)
Mo'ang, Funing	$?e^{?21}$	(gen)

1.8   Conclusion to §1

We have seen that the forms used for agentive marking in the different languages (and sometimes for different dialects of the same language) within Tibeto-Burman vary greatly. We have reconstructed forms for some lower levels, but we have not found any form reconstructable to the higher level groupings such as Bodic, Baric, Rung, Lolo-Burmese, or even Kuki-Naga, and so it is of course not possible to reconstruct any agentive form to the Proto-Tibeto-Burman level. Bauman's (1979: 429) suggestion that there is a PTB *ka ergative form is in no way supported by the evidence.

A number of forms throuhout the family seem to be derived from a *na ~ *ni locative or ablative form. As argued by DeLancey (1984), it is more likely that the ablative developed out of a more general locative, so we might be able to reconstruct this form, possibly even *na-e > *ni, with *e being a directional verb used to differentiate the more general locative from the ablative, also as suggested by DeLancey, but this would be a locative, and not an ergative case marker, in the proto-language.[21] We have also seen scattered evidence of a locative form *ma that also came to be used (by itself or combined with other forms) as an instrumental and/or agentive marker in some languages.

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21) It may also be that this directional verb is the source of the vowel-only ablative/agentive forms in some languages as well.

2. THE NATURE OF AGENTIVE MARKING

Throughout this paper we have been treating these case forms as if they were all essentially 'the same thing', yet in terms of path of development, age, obligatoriness, function, and degree to which they are part of a regular paradigm they differ greatly. At one extreme we have forms such as in Dulong, Namuzi, Hani, Naxi, Achang, Nusu, and dialects of the Deng languages in China, where use of the form is optional, and when the form is used it functions solely to clarify which of two potential agents (human or animate referents) is the actual agent (actor). In some of these languages there is also an 'anti-ergative' marker (LaPolla 1992a) with the same purpose as well.[22] The speaker then has a choice of one or the other of these markers to distinguish an agent from a non-agent. The presence of both types of markers is particularly interesting, as it is not what we would expect from either a typical ergative language or a typical accusative language. This might lead some linguists to assume that this is some sort of split ergative system, but that is not the case. Given what we know about the path of grammaticalization and the processes that occur during the development of a grammatical form (see for example Lehmann 1985, Heine and Reh 1984, Heine, Claudi and Hünnemeyer 1991), we can say that this type of system reflects an early stage in the grammaticalization of relational morphology, where the forms have not yet developed into a full obligatory paradigm, and do not mark syntactic relations, but simply semantic roles, and only when pragmatic factors make it necessary (i.e. when the roles of the referents involved are not clear from the context).[23] In the newest systems of this type, the agentive marker simply marks an agent, while the 'anti-ergative' marker simply marks an animate or human referent as *not* the agent of the action expressed by the sentence.

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22) This is a marker that is not specific to any particular semantic role, as it may be used (in its most radical form) after a patient, a dative, a genitive, or any other role, but marks whatever it follows as not the agent of the clause. Some languages, such as Lahu, have only the 'anti-ergative' marker, and no agentive marker. In many languages this marker is not exclusively used for this purpose: as it is a metaphorical extension of a locative morpheme in some languages, it retains some of its locative uses, and its base meaning, even as an anti-ergative marker, may still be essentially locative. (I might point out here that the term 'anti-ergative' is somewhat infelicitous, as, like the term 'ergative' itself, it may cause the reader to credit these particles with more of a paradigmatic nature than I originally intended in LaPolla 1992a. Just as I have been using 'agentive' instead of 'ergative', 'non-agentive' might be a more appropriate term than 'anti-ergative'.)

23) In many of the sources the agentive marker is said to be only 'for emphasis or clarity'. Very often in the history of the grammaticalization of a form it starts out being used only for emphasis or clarity, and then later comes to be used more and more often, in more and more environments, until it is fully grammaticalized. A well known example of the full cycle of this process is the history of the development of the French negative morpheme *pas* (see for example Hopper 1991); the ergative markers in those languages where it is still used only for clarity or emphasis would be at the beginning stage of that process.

What we have found, then, is that contrary to the position of DuBois 1985, 1987, in which it is argued that the motivation for ergative marking is to distinguish 'new' from 'old' information, where the absolutive marks 'new' information, and the ergative marks 'old' information, in Tibeto-Burman it appears that ergative marking arises as a simple agent disambiguating device.[24] This is not to say there is no relationship between ergative marking and information structure in these languages. In fact there is a relationship, but not a direct cause and effect relationship. In most of the languages with young systems the unmarked word order is Agent-(Recipient)-Patient-Verb, where the agent is the topic, and the patient is in the immediately preverbal focus position. In sentences with unmarked word order, no role marking need appear if there is only an agent and a patient; the marking is necessary only when the agent is in the focal position, or, if there is a recipient (or some other human or animate referent) represented in the sentence as well, and if the recipient is not marked as such. The relationship between pragmatic status of a referent in the universe of discourse (whether 'new' or 'old'), information structure, and case marking is then indirect: it is non-canonical word order that necessitates the marking, and the non-canonical word order is the result of non-canonical information structure.[25] It is particularly significant that it is when the agent is 'new' information that it takes the agentive marker, the opposite of the situation predicted by DuBois.[26]

Further evidence that it is disambiguation and not some other factors that is involved in agentive marking in many of these languages is cases like the following in Sani Yi, where the agentive marker is used with an intransitive verb because the locative adverbial phrase includes a human referent (from Ma 1951: 91):

ŋa^{33}lɪ^{33} ŋ̩^{33} ɣɯ^{11}tsɹ̇^{55} ɣɤ^{44} ŋ̩^{33} lɪ^{33} ŋa^{33} ɣɯ^{11}tsɹ̇^{55} ɣɤ^{44} dɪ^{33} dzɤ^{33}
1sg AG 2sg front   walk 2sg AG 1sg   front   walk REL debate
Debate whether I walk in front of you (or) you walk in front of me.

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24) This phenomenon is not limited to the Tibeto-Burman side of Sino-Tibetan, but is also true for Chinese. See for example Egerod's (1982: 90) summary of Humboldt's view that 'Chinese particles do not indicate grammatical forms but serve to avoid ambiguity'.

25) This is very similar to DeLancey's (1985:51) view that 'the conditioning factor for ergative case is that the Source of the transitivity vector, i.e. the transitive agent, is not also [the] linguistic viewpoint'. That this is correct can be seen from the fact that in rGyarong the agentive marker is never used with the 1sg pronoun (Nagano 1987), the most natural viewpoint. In some of the languages discussed here the verb marking also reflects the special status of the speaker (e.g., in rGyarung the main condition on the use of 'the inverse prefix *u-* and the ergative postposition *-k* is the same: both occur when and only when the more natural viewpoint is not the starting point' (DeLancey 1981: 642-43)). There are also languages, such as Jirel (Strahm 1975), where animacy seems to be the most salient feature in terms of determining word order, though it will still interact with viewpoint (information structure) to some extent.

26) The importance of animacy in TB languages is also reflected in the fact that a large number (possibly the majority) of TB languages have independently grammaticalized an animate-inanimate distinction in their system of existential verbs (LaPolla 1992b).

At the other extreme within TB are languages such as Chepang, Newari, Kham, Sunwar, and most Tibetan dialects, that have relatively stable paradigmatic ergative systems. In these languages the use of the ergative marker is obligatory, for example in Kham, after any NP representing a third person referent or when a lexical noun is used to represent a first or second person referent in a transitive or ditransitive clause.[27] Word order, information structure, agency, and volitionality are all not relevant to the use or non-use of the marker.[28]

These two extremes within Tibeto-Burman are two points on a cross-linguistic continuum from a loose, non-paradigmatic, non-obligatory system of case marking, what I would call 'non-systemic' or 'non-paradigmatic' case marking,[29] to a stable paradigmatic obligatory system of case marking. Each point on the continuum reflects the degree of grammaticalization of a system at that point, and in turn reflects the relative age of the system, as we know that as grammaticalization progresses there is gradual loss of phonetic and semantic integrity, an increasing degree of paradigmaticity, and an increasing degree to which the use of the form is systematically constrained and obligatory (Lehmann 1985). From this we can see that many of the languages in Tibeto-Burman are at the early stages of grammaticalization, and even those that are farther along the continuum have not reached the stage that Lehmann calls 'strong grammaticalization' (Lehman 1985: 309).[30] These facts, along with our inability to find regular correspondences between the agentive forms used, leads us to the conclusion that agentive marking is a rather late phenomenon in the Tibeto-Burman family. It must have developed after the breakup of most of the major groups into branches or even sub-branches. We can even say that of the different branches within TB, Bodish was probably the first to develop agentive marking, while Burmese-Lolo was relatively late in developing agentive marking, and Bodo-Garo, Naga, Mirish, and Karen have yet to

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27) See Hale and Watters' (1973: 195-200) taxonomy of agentive marking systems in the languages of Nepal. To some extent even in some of these languages pragmatic factors, such as contrastive emphasis, can be involved in whether the agentive form is or is not used, especially with intransitives (see for example Che 1992 on Tibetan).

28) Cf. DeLancey (1985: 52): 'in Lhasa [Tibetan] and Newari and some other languages the category of volitionality or conscious control is overtly marked in the verb complex when the subject is first person, [though] volitionality per se does not affect case marking.'

29) Of course previous to this stage is a stage where there is no case marking at all.

30) Saying that a marking system is in the early stages of grammaticalization does not imply that the system must develop into a fully grammaticalized (for example) ergative system. There is also the question of at what point in the development of a system an agentive marker becomes significant to the characterization of the system of grammatical relations in a language. For example, there is an agent marker in Chinese (yóu 由) with a similar distribution to the agentive marker in many of the TB languages, yet no one, as far as I know, has suggested that this marker is an ergative marker, even in those articles that claim ergative patterns exist in Chinese. The Chinese agent marker, just as in the TB languages, derives from a more general marker of Source or Origin, and is used not only as an agentive marker, but also as a causal marker and an ablative marker.

develop such marking.

It has be suggested (Benedict 1991) that there was a PTB or even PST ergative *-s marker which was lost in all but a few languages, but I reject this view on at least three grounds. First, what evidence we have of an -s ablative/ergative is limited only to Bodish. If such a marker existed in PTB we would expect to find it in at least a few languages outside Bodish, ideally scattered geographically. Second, according to Hopper's (1991) heuristic principles for determining the degree of gram-maticalization of a particular morpheme or construction, in a functional domain where there has been recurrent grammaticalization we generally find layering of grammaticalization, as when new layers emerge they coexist and interact with the pre-existing layers. Hopper gives the example of the past tense in English, where we have at least three layers (p. 24): '(a) Periphrasis: *We have used it* (newest layer), (b) Affixation: *I admired it* (older layer), and (c) Ablaut: *They sang* (oldest layer)'. In TB we find a similar phenomenon in terms of causative marking. The vast majority of TB languages show evidence of either an *s- prefix or at least a difference in voicing/ aspiration of the initial to mark a causative verb, though in almost all of the languages this has ceased to be productive, and so an analytical causative, often formed using a verb meaning 'do', 'make', or 'cause', has developed. The older forms did not disappear, though, and can often be used together with the newer form of the causative, sometimes with variant shades of meaning. My point here is that we do not see this kind of layering in the functional domain of agentive marking, and this is one more type of evidence that this is not a functional domain that had overt marking in the proto-language. Third, there are morphemes recon-structable to PTB (aside from the causative *s- prefix I just mentioned) that are overwhelmingly present throughout TB, such as the negative *ma and the negative imperative marker *ta. If both these markers, the causative *s- prefix, and the ergative marker were all part of the PTB morphological system, why are the former two still present in 60-70% of the modern languages, while the ergative marker is limited only to Bodish?

Given that we find agentive marking in so many of these languages, yet so little cognacy of the forms used, one must ask what it is about Tibeto-Burman languages that causes so many of them to grammaticalize agentive marking. Just as with many other common features of Tibeto-Burman that must be seen to be indepen-dent but parallel innovations (see LaPolla 1992b), I would argue that ergative mark-ing is also a feature that is a manifestation of the long-term 'drift' (Sapir 1921) of Tibeto-Burman. Like many of the other manifestations of this drift in Tibeto-Burman, it reflects a semantically based system of grammatical organization rather than one based on syntactic functions such as subject and object. This is not to say Proto-Tibeto-Burman was an ergative language; quite the contrary, though distinguishing the agent from the other arguments has been a major functional motivation for the development of both ergative and anti-ergative marking in many of the languages of Tibeto-Burman, we can not assume that Proto-Tibeto-Burman was an ergative (or anti-ergative) language.[31] We have no evidence from case

marking or verb agreement (LaPolla 1992c) of ergative marking in Proto-Tibeto-Burman. Instead it seems Proto-Tibeto-Burman was morphologically a relatively simple language with at most marking of locative arguments.[32] The importance of information structure and other pragmatic factors in the organization of the grammars of most Tibeto-Burman languages also supports this analysis.

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31) By this I do not mean that it is communicative necessity that causes the development of these markers; as Bybee & Pagliuca (1985: 75) argue, 'Rather than subscribe to the idea that grammatical evolution is driven by communicative necessity, we suggest that human language users have a natural propensity for making metaphorical extensions that lead to the increased use of certain items. The metaphorical extensions are cognitively based, and are similar across languages.' This type of parallel extension is precisely what we see in the use of an ablative marker for marking agents in so many languages in TB.

32) It should be pointed out that cross-linguistically the progression of grammaticalization is from spatial marking to more abstract marking. Heine, Claudi & Hünnemeyer (1991: 156) state in their principles for establishing the relative degrees of grammaticalization within a case marking system that 'If two case functions differ from one another only in the fact that one has a spacial function whereas the other has not, then the latter is more grammaticalized'. It can be seen that the development of case marking in the TB languages is very much in concord with this generalization. As DeLancey (1984: 63) has said in talking about the development of the case markers in TB, 'it is clear from those instances where the historical process can be reconstructed that the direction of change is always from the more concrete local to the more abstract grammatical sense'.

33) Abbreviations used: LTBA = Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area; ICSTLL = International Conference of Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics. In the section following this one, the language sources are given, with the name and dialect of the language (s) sourced from each item, if not obvious from the title, listed after the item, in square brackets.

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