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Paul K. Benedict  
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**Princeton–Cambridge Studies in  
Chinese Linguistics II**

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*To the memory of*  
A. L. Kroeber

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# *Sino-Tibetan A Conspectus*

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## Foreword

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The manuscript of this book was originally drafted over a quarter of a century ago. It was a distillation of a far more extensive compilation, 'Sino-Tibetan Linguistics', on which Paul Benedict and Robert Shafer had been working for many years and which still exists as an unpublished manuscript, some twelve volumes of it, in the files of the University of California and of the authors.

The fact that the book is published now, as well as the form it takes, is in large measure due to Professor James A. Matisoff of Columbia University. Naturally enough, books which lie unpublished for years gather some dust. They age, even if the facts they contain are relatively unchanging. Other books and articles appear, the documentation comes to seem dated; and the task of bringing the whole up to date becomes an almost superhuman one. Yet Professor Matisoff, discovering that this manuscript existed, perceived that its voluminous data and its almost Copernican vision, viewing the 'Sino-centric' linguistic area from a standpoint peripheral to it, had neither been duplicated nor superseded in the years since Dr Benedict completed his work and laid it aside to turn to other things.

The problem was how to produce a book which would preserve the sweep and incorporate the information of the original, but would yet allow acknowledgment of germane work accomplished since it was drafted. To pick the original apart and reweave it, as the men of ancient Syria reweave Chinese silk for the Roman market, would have been a daunting task, one that would almost certainly have prohibited the entire enterprise; and it is questionable that such an effort would have added significantly to the value of the book, considering that its audience is composed of linguistic specialists.

In consequence, Dr Benedict undertook to update the manuscript in certain regards, where he could add information or new perspectives specifically relevant to the linguistic problems under discussion. Thus such minor bits of quaintness as the rough figure for Chinese population in Note 1 have been left untouched. We have larger figures these days, but not necessarily dependable ones; and the question of just how many hundreds of millions speak some form of Chinese hardly affects the basic issue that a great many do – so many that we can hardly close our eyes to the study of that language and of its linguistic setting.

In addition to Dr Benedict's redrafting of text and notes, Professor Matisoff supplied a number of supplementary notes derived from his own studies centered upon Lahu and related languages of that stem. There are thus two series

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*Foreword*

of notes, though they have been amalgamated into a single sequence for the readers' convenience. The old notes are indicated by roman numbers, the new ones by italic. Thus Note 12 is an old note, Note 13 new. Notes from Professor Matisoff are signed with his initials in parenthesis (JAM).

FRANK A. KIERMAN JR

*Chinese Linguistics Project*  
*Princeton University*

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## Preface

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The manuscript of this work, completed *ca.* 1942–3, was put aside until such time as further analysis could be attempted. It lay buried in the clutter of the author's library until unearthed in 1968 by Professor James Matisoff of Columbia University, who had it mimeographed to serve as a text for his pioneering course in Tibeto-Burman offered at that university. Its appearance in published form at this time is entirely the product of the enthusiasm of Professor Matisoff, who generously consented to edit this work, bringing the bibliographic data up to date and supplying modern material from his researches in the Burmese-Lolo branch of the stock.

The author prepared a new version of the original manuscript, rearranging some of the material and adding the minor emendations noted on the manuscript, then extensively annotated the whole, with emphasis on the Karen and Chinese sections. These annotations represent in part previously published findings (especially in Benedict, 1948bis), in part an intensive re-analysis of all the Sino-Tibetan materials, aided by the more recent publications in the field, notably those of Haudricourt (Karen reconstructions), Forrest (Lepcha analysis), Jones (Karen), Burling (Karen, Burmese-Lolo, Bodo-Garo and Kuki-Naga), Matisoff (Burmese-Lolo), Henderson (Tiddim Chin), Stern (Siyin), Kun Chang (Gyarung and Ch'iang) and Lo Ch'ang-p'ei (Trung).

In venturing once again into the mazes of Archaic and Ancient Chinese, the author came full circle in his scholarly peregrinations since he entered the Oriental field at Harvard University in 1935 under the critical preceptorship of Professor James R. Ware. On this return trip, however, he came much better prepared, especially with some knowledge of the early Chinese in relation to the Austro-Thai peoples, who so profoundly influenced their culture and their language. The last paragraph of the book, which has been left without emendation or annotation, adumbrates these later findings in some sense; it also illustrates the improved status of our present knowledge of Chinese (and of Sino-Tibetan generally), since the gloomy picture presented at that time is no longer applicable. We *do* now have a viable system of reconstruction for Sino-Tibetan, we *have* been able to reconstruct much of the earlier (lost) Chinese morphology (especially through tonal analysis) and we *do* now appear to have a reconstruction of the Sino-Tibetan tonal system (n. 494). We also now have a substantial body of Sino-Tibetan roots shared by Tibeto-Burman and/or Karen and Chinese, and this corpus promises to be extended rapidly as investigations in this field continue.

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The author is deeply indebted to Professor Matisoff for having brought this work to fruition, and to Professor Frank Kierman of Princeton University for having made possible this publication. He also wishes to express his gratitude to the staff of the Sino-Tibetan Philology Project at the University of California, Berkeley, in the late 1930s and early 1940s, who labored so heroically in preparing the basic materials from which the bulk of the illustrations for this work have been drawn; to Mr Donald Walters of that staff, who did such yeoman service when pressed into duty as a linguist; to Marcia Benedict, who prepared many of the basic research tools involved in the project; to Dr LaRaw Maran, who contributed the modern Kachin forms cited here; to Professor Nicholas Bodman of Cornell University, who contributed material on northern Tibeto-Burman languages; to Professor Marvin Herzog, Department of Linguistics, Columbia University, and to the staff of the Columbia University Library, who made available Sino-Tibetan source material. Finally, the author's indebtedness to the late Professor A. L. Kroeber, polymath extraordinary, who had the wisdom and courage to initiate Sino-Tibetan studies at Berkeley, is recorded in the dedication of this work.

P. K. B.

*Briarcliff Manor, New York*  
13 December 1969

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## Abbreviations

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<i>AD</i>	<i>Analytic Dictionary</i> (Karlgren)	IN	Indonesian
Anc.	Ancient	K	Kachin
Ar.	Archaic	K-N	Kuki-Naga
AT	Austro-Thai	L	Lushei
B	Burmese	PN	Polynesian
B-G	Bodo-Garo	ST	Sino-Tibetan
B-L	Burmese-Lolo	STL	'Sino-Tibetan Linguistics' (Shafer and Benedict)
Bod.	Bodish	T	Tibetan
Ch.	Chinese	TB	Tibeto-Burman
G	Garo		
<i>GS</i>	<i>Grammata Serica</i> (Karlgren)		
<i>GSR</i>	<i>Grammata Serica Recensa</i> (Karlgren)		

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## Phonetic symbols/tone marks

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### BURMESE

level tone (unmarked)  
 falling tone (ˊ)  
 'creaky voice' (ˑ)

### LAHU

all forms by JAM unless otherwise indicated; tones and other phonetic symbols as in JAM's publications on Lahu.

### KAREN

as explained on p. 150.

### CHINESE

as in Karlgren's publications; Ar. and Anc. forms separated by /, e.g.  
*səm/sâm* = Ar. *səm*, Anc. *sâm*.

Tones as described in note 494:

<i>p'ing shêng</i>	A
<i>shang shêng</i>	B
<i>ch'ü shêng</i>	C

Tibeto-Burman roots are numbered consecutively as they appear in the text.