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Tibeto-Burman "split cognates"

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The characteristic "split cognates" of Austro-Tai (ATLC:152) are the product of contrasting modes of canonical reduction [CR]: Miao-Yao on-the-right (CRR) vs. Kadai on-the-left (CRL):

	PAT *mapra 'eye' (> PAN *maCa)	
CRL		CRR
PKD *(m)pra ^Δ		PMY *may ^C
↓		
pra (Saek)		via *maya
pya (Liuzhou)		< *mapya

Japanese regularly displays CRR: me 'eye', Old Japanese mē < *mai (Benedict 1990). The monosyllabic roots of Sino-Tibetan hardly lend themselves to "splitting" of this kind, however, even though the actual forms tend to be disyllabic through prefixation.¹ This follows from the fact that the prefixes involved are weakly stressed, typically with schwa vocalism, hence can scarcely be expected to furnish a basis for a CRR "split" product of MY/Japanese style. It would appear that only a deviant ST language would behave in so unseemly a fashion and indeed this has proved to be the case.

Tujia is a TB language of some 770,000 speakers in west-central China (Hubei, Hunan, Sichuan, Guizhou), first reported (Hunan: Xiangxi dialect) in 1982 (Tian Desheng), with a later *jianzhi* on two other dialects ("Northern" and "Southern") by Tian, et al. (1986). It is a three-tone language that has undergone phonological erosion (vocalic and -n finals only) along with widespread relexification, the limited TB lexical correspondences pointing to a basic kinship with Burmese-Yipho. The CRR development is found in two forms (Xiangxi dialect) representing prefixed roots, with a contrast furnished by a third form from an unprefixated root:

	"typical" CRL shift	PTB	Tujia CRR shift
'1'	*ŋa > /ŋa/	*ŋa ^Δ	ŋa ¹³
'five'	*a-ŋa > /ŋa/	*-ŋa ^B	on ⁵⁵ < *əŋ ⁵⁵
'fish'	*s-ŋa > /hŋ(y)a/	*(s-)ŋya ^B	son ¹³ < *səŋ ¹³

¹ Still, one of the "bulgingly monosyllabic" reconstructions in STC (**tsywap* #239 LUNGS) should actually be "split" into two separate etyma, **tsi* 'lung' and **wap* 'spongy'. See Matisoff 1978:113-23. [Ed.]

Prefixed *a- in TB 'five' appears to be later than either *r/l- or *b- (STC:31); note also (contra STC:fn.435) that prefixed *s- can now be reconstructed for this numeral in Proto-Chinese (see Benedict 1988:15); for the /13/ tone for 'fish', cf. the PST tone *B > *A shift after s- found in Chinese (STC:fn.494).

A parallel to the "split cognate" for "five", similarly created through (late) *a- prefixation, is furnished by Dafla a1 'foot' <PTB *(s-)(g-)la 'foot/leg' (cf. STC:fn.108/

The Tujia /on/ and /son/ developments are weird by TB/ST standards but of conventional type for MY. The Tujia-speakers are scattered throughout the Miao homeland, hence substratal influences have perhaps played a role here.

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