The Missing "Long Things" in the Thai Noun Classifier System

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This study is part of a larger study[1] which describes the grammatical and semantic position of the Standard Thai (ST) noun classifier *lêm*.[2] Here I describe a metaphorical system found in various surveys to be widespread throughout South East Asia and East Asia. In this system the three perceptually basic shape categories of "round thing", "long thing", and "flat thing" correspond to plant parts, usually the fruit, branches, and leaves, respectively. Turning to the Thai system we find in the common noun classifiers *lûuk* and *baj* obvious candidates for "round thing" and "flat thing", respectively. The classifier for "long thing", however, is missing. Surveying possible candidates for the missing classifier, I present arguments why the more likely candidates *lêm* and *tôn* are not as suitable as the less obvious candidate *an,* the general classifier in ST. This study reveals an important part of the semantic structure of the ST classifier system and provides useful implications for the historical development of such a system, as well as the psychological and metaphorical processes motivating such systems.

In studies of noun classifiers, the grammatical or syntactic relations are more often emphasized, rather than the semantic relations (cf. Haas 1942, Noss 1964, Placzek 1978, etc.). This is not unjustified, however, because classfiers do have a definite and explicit syntactic role. But classifiers are notorious as a murky and marginal zone where syntactic and semantic factors overlap. Purely semantic analyses tend to be componential in character. That is, they define relations and distinctions within a limited semantic domain in terms of those distinctive features which are necessary to distinguish each classifier from every other classifier within that domain. Studies by T'sou (1976), Plam (1972), Hiranburana (1979), Placzek (1978), and Killingley (1981) are some examples.

Although this approach tends to select those features which are distinctive within that domain (i.e. to be based upon real distinctions made by those who actually speak the language under study), still there is a large input from the

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researchers themselves. This input usually takes the form of logical categories familiar within the culture of the researcher (in most cases these are usually derived from Aristotelian traditions). These logical categories are usually assumed to be universal and atomic; that is, they form some sort of basic semantic elements which cannot be divided into smaller elements. In current semantic and psycholinguistic theory such atomic features are considered to be a dead issue (see, for example, Armstrong et al. 1983).

The viewpoint taken here is that we must be more sensitive to the distinctions and patterns to be found within a semantic system (cf. Becker 1975, for instance). If any assumptions are adopted at all (and every description must be based on some assumptions, no matter how covert), a "naive realist" view (cf. Lyons 1977: 440, 442, Placzek 1978) would more likely accord with the more basic semantic structures established in the earlier stages of language and cultural evolution and reinforced by the main mechanism of language continuity: the child's acquisition of his first language, accomplished in broad form by the age of four.

In my main study (Placzek 1984a) I have come to accept the fact that groups of nouns classified by the same classifier (e.g. knives, books, oxcarts and candles all classified by *lêm*) do *not* form categories with any psychological reality to speakers of Thai. Thus *mîit* "knife" is not a *kind of lem* (i.e. there is no taxonomic relationship), nor do knives, books, carts, etc. have any necessary conceptual or lexical unity[3].

The most important semantic realtionship, then, is that between the classifier and each noun separately, not between the nouns themselves. The latter is only a logical relationship we would expect to find, not a psychologically real conceptual and lexical relationship. This is quite commonsensical and is recognized in the Thai grammatical name for classifiers, *lagsanànaam,* literally the "characteristic" of the noun. Thus we are back to considering the distinctive features of the nouns. But again recent advances in psycholinguistics (mainly inspired by Rosch; for example Rosch 1975, 1978), in anthropological linguistics (derived from the inspiration of Berlin & Kay 1969), and in sociolinguistics (mainly inspired by Labov 1973),

2. Transcription follows Haas (1965).

3. The exception is the relatively infrequent case of a classifier which can classify itself when functioning as a noun, and can also classify other nouns, and compounds which contain it, maintaining in each case identical meaning in both noun and classifier functions. The word *khon* "person", and perhaps *khrîaŋ,* "machine, device, etc." are examples.

have taken us far beyond the Aristotelian approach still advocated by many[4].

With this very general background in mind we can take up the enquiry into the role that non-atomic features might play in a non-taxonomic structure of noun classification in Standard Thai.

What kinds of features do classifiers actually select? The most comprehensive summary has been made by Allan (1977)[5], who surveyed a large number of classifier languages, of which the "numeral classifier languages" turn out to be the paradigm type. These languages include most of the languages of East and South East Asia. Jones (1970) has suggested that the Tai language family may be the dispersion center for the Asian type. Allan found that the basic semantic categories of classifier systems accord with Locke's notion of "primary qualities of bodies": solidity, extension, motion/rest, number, and figure. These primary qualities are "utterly inseparable from the body in what state soever it be" (quoted in Allan 1977 : 298). Secondary qualities like color, taste, smell, and sound are, according to Locke, not inherent in the objects; rather they are merely powers of the objects to arouse these sensations in the observer. It is a widely reported fact that there are *no* classifiers based on color (Allan 1977 : 297-298, Clark 1976 : 459 fn. 3, Adams & Conklin 1973 : 8) or on any of the other secondary qualities. "Sound classifiers" appear to record actions or visually prominent events such as flashes of lightning (cf. the Thai classifier *wâæ p*).

Clearly the sense faculty most relied upon is the sense of sight, which conveys Locke's characteristics of extension, motion, number and figure, and to a certain extent solidity as well. The sense of sight is reinforced by the sense of touch. It is primarily these two senses which are used by humans to identify percepts as objects in a naive realist world.

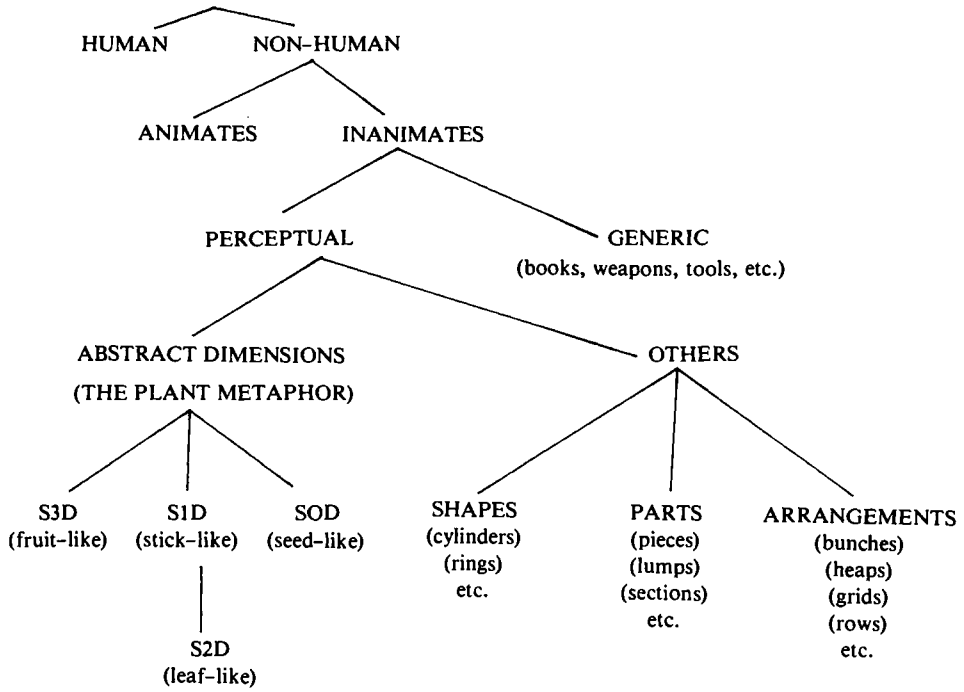
Based on reports from Allan (1977), Sanches (1977), Clark (1976), Denny (1975, 1976a, 1976b), but especially on Adams & Conklin (1973, 1974) and Adams et al. (1975), all of whom concentrated upon Asian languages, the following scheme of classification by noun classifiers (Figure 1) would seem to be most representative of the part of the ST classifier system we are focusing upon in this study; namely,

4. In Placzek (1984a) I have used word association data to build an empirically-based picture of the relations between nouns with a common classifier *through* the classifier; i.e., as a function of the relation of each noun to the classifier.

5. Drawing on work by Adams & Conklin (1973), Berlin (1968), Becker (1975), Burling (1965), Denny (1974, 1975, 1976a, 1976b), Friedrich (1970), Greenberg (1975), Haas (1942, 1965), Hla Pe (1965), Jacob (1965) and Saul (1965), among others.

the classification of concrete objects.

Figure 1. **Noun classifier categories for concrete objects in asian languages.**



Note: S3D means saliently three dimensional, roughly "round thing"; S2D means saliently two dimensional, roughly "flat thing", and S1D means saliently one dimensional, roughly "long thing". S0D means very small object of irrelevant dimensionality, roughly "tiny thing".

Other variations upon this analysis are summarized in Conklin (1981 : 10–27). The major dimensional shape categories are often subdivided by size and flexibility in real languages, but this is not represented in Figure 1. In this figure the tree structure represents an implicational hierarchy based upon frequency of occurrence and upon occurrence in minimal systems of only two or three classifiers in South Asia. I present this figure here as a summary and synthesis of the literature, and consider it generally as valid as the publications upon which it is based. Only the general outline is relevant to the purposes here.

Figure 1 separates a human[6] group off as a most basic categorial distinction. In ST the human classifiers are *khon* "person", and *oŋ* "object of reverence", with some pronouns and honorifics doing service as classifiers from time to time.

The next most basic group to be separated out is animates. In ST there are the classifiers *tua* "body shape", classifier for animals, active agents, etc., and *ton,* classifier for supernaturals.

What is referred to in Figure 1 as "Generic" criteria of classification (corresponding to Adams & Conklin's "function" criterion in their 1973 paper) might be considered a sort of "cultural kind" (cf. Lyons 1981) as opposed to the common term "natural kind", since many of the objects classified are artifacts. The Generic (capitalized to show technical sense) classifiers are based on the *kind* of thing classified, roughly, its culturally-specified kind, rather than on abstract features of shape. Note that features of shape and natural kind or cultural kind are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In fact, in another study (Placzek 1984b) I have shown how the most common classifiers for concrete objects in ST are based fundamentally on a criterion of shape, and only marginally (or exceptionally, as with *khon,* "person") on a criterion of natural or cultural kind.

In cross-language surveys it is quite clear that many of the Generic categories are language-specific and reflect cultural salience (Adams & Conklin 1973 : 7). Allan (1977 : 300) found a predominance of classifiers specifically for books and paper in Oriental languages, presumably reflecting the relatively early advent of

6. Clark (1976:451) focuses upon Adams & Conklin's statement (1973:3) that the "animateness distinction is the most basic categorization in the counting construction", and that animacy is primary. But a closer reading of Adams & Conklin shows that it is *human-ness* which is actually the most common category. The critical cases are the minimally-developed systems with only two or three classifiers (Khassi, Kharia, Kannada, Kolami, and Marathi). "In all of these languages human versus non-human is basic" (Adams & Conklin 1973:10). Furthermore, in classifying individual entities (as opposed to groups), an animate class *including* humans was found *only* in the Micronesian branch of Astronesian (Malayo-Polynesian). When groups of entities were considered, some other languages also made an animate (as opposed to a human) class. It should be understood that the paradigm case here is a consideration of individuals; beyond this it is clear that in considering groups (crowds, bunches, herds) the distinction between strictly *human* characteristics and more generally *animate* characteristics will be blurred. I attribute both Clark's and Adams & Conklin's tendency to subsume "human" under "animate" in their discussions to the influence of then current theories of distinctive features, of which [ANIMATE] was perhaps the most prominent. The fact that *khon* "person" is anomalous in the ST classifier system (see Footnote 3) and appears to be borrowed into the classifier system from the main vocabulary accords well with Adams & Conklin's (1973) finding that classifiers for humans often appear to be borrowings. This raises questions about the "basicness" of the human/nonhuman (and animate/inanimate) distinction. Certainly it was not historically basic, but Gandour et al. (1984) report animacy as primary in children's acquisition.

paper and printing in those societies, plus the social importance attached to litercy.. In the Asian languages surveyed by Adams & Conklin (1973 : 7, 8), the same emphasis was found.

In sum, we can say that Generic classifiers exhibit certain characteristics, especially in ST.. They are usually highly restricted in application and tend to be unstable over time. Many are merely nouns imported into the classifier system from the main lexicon and are irregular (like *khon,* cf. Placzek 1984b), or they are borrowings from a classical language (like ST *kan* "chapter", from Pali).

Among the Perceptual criteria of classification the abstract dimensions appear to predominate in Figure 1. Adam & Conklin emphasize that the most basic dimensional shape value is S3D or "round thing"[7]. This is contrasted with S1D or "long thing". The third basic shape, S2D or "flat thing" is often a secondary development from S1D. That is, "flat thing" usually develops from "long thing" Denny has also emphasized the secondary nature of S2D (Denny 1976a : 3-6. See also Clark 1976, Friedrich 1970, Berlin 1968, among others).

Now if we return to the Thai case and compare this basic pattern to the data we find the basic shapes corresponding to the prominent materials of the environment. Thus S3D corresponds to fruit and to the classifier *lûuk,* a classifier which applies to all fruit, and to medium-to-large round things. As an element

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7. An apparent exception to this general tendency is found in the six basic Japanese classifiers identified by Sanches (1977:58-59) as the first classifiers acquired by Japanese children. These six include-*hon* (S1D) and *-mai* (S2D). The remaining basic classifiers are for humans, animals, and for large and small objects. Usually a classifier for S3D is present in a classifier system even when no other shape classifier occurs. But in the Japanese system S3D appears not to be basic at all, according to Sanches's data. However, we may detect an anomaly when we notice that the criteria of classification "large" and "small" are usually secondary criteria, and that these values may not be the primary criteria by which the respective classifiers apply. In fact the classifier for small inanimate objects in Sanches's study (*-ko*) also means S3D, and its gloss as "small inanimate" may be an artifact of Sanches's analysis or of some coincidence of smallness and roundness in Japanese material culture. Thus the Japanese counter-example is only apparent. There may be other valid counter-examples forthcoming, but for the present study I will accept this fairly well-documented generalization of a basic S3D — S1D contrast, with a development of S2D from S1D.

The prototypical S3D object would determine the abstracted values of the S3D shape classifier. The prototypical Thai fruit may be *màak,* the areca nut, because (i) this nut is used as a mild narcotic and was extremely popular as an exchance commodity in the earliest Thai history and down through modern times, and (ii) ST names for kinds of fruit are prefixed by an unproductive form *ma-* or *maak-,* which relates to Proto-Tai **hmaak DIL* (Li 1977:75) the usual classifier for fruit in other Tai languages.

Sanches's data imply that the prototypical Japanese S3D object was rather small. Perhaps a small fruit, an egg or a nut was the most typical S3D object in traditional Japanese culture.

in a compound noun, *lûuk* means "junior member of a pair or group" (e.g. bullets, keys, chainlinks), or "offspring" in general. As a simple noun *lûuk* means "child" (but see below).

S2D corresponds to leaves and to the classifier *baj,* classifier for all leaves, for most containers, for fruit, eggs, sheets of paper, documents, pages, blades, sails, ears, faces, etc.

I am reasonably certain that these two classifiers are the best candidates for general S3D and S2D for three reasons. First of all, they fit the plant metaphor shown above to be very widespread and basic in most classifier systems in East and South East Asia. The classifier *lûuk* applies to fruit by apparently Generic criteria (but see below). the class term for fruit is *lûuk máaj* (literally *lûuk* + "wood, tree") or *phǒn (la) máaj* of the same morphological construction, but substituting the Sanskrit borrowing *phǒn* for *lûuk*. *Phǒn* also can occur alone with the sense of general "progeny, offspring, results, etc." In compounds *lûuk* combines with other words to form metaphorical offspring or junior partners, as in *lûukkuncae* (*lûuk* + "lock" = "key"); *lûukkháa* (*lûuk* + "trade" = "customers"), etc.

The classifier *baj* applies to all leaves, the class term for "leaf" being *bajmaaj* (*baj* + "wood, tree"). Names for specific kinds of leaves are also prefixed by *baj-,* as in *bajphoo* "Po leaf; leaf of *ficus religiosa*".

The second reason for selecting *lûuk* as S3D and *baj* as S2D in the basic plant metaphor is that these two classifiers are predominantly shape-based Perceptual classifiers. In the case of fruit, we have still to point out that although *lûuk* appears to apply to fruit regardless of shape, it applies best to prototypical S3D fruit, especially coconuts and areca nuts, and only marginally, if at all, to smaller soft fruit such as grapes or berries. It does apply to bananas, but with the wide range of shapes and sizes of bananas (especially in South East Asia) we cannot consider bananas to be necessarily "long things". In compounds *lûuk* applies to round S3D objects (e.g. *lûukpoon,* "ballon"), as well as metaphorical offspring. *As classifier, lûuk* has a semantic force glossable *only* as S3D, never as (human) child, as in the following examples.

mamûaŋ,	sǎam	lûuk	
mango	3	S3D	"three mangoes"
dèk	sǎam	khon	
child	3	PERSON	"three children (= immature humans)"

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* dèk	sǎam	lûuk	
child	3	S3D	unacceptable
lûuk	sǎam	khon	
offspring	3	PERSON	"three children (= sons/daughters)"
?lûuk	sǎam	lûuk	acceptable only where context supplies a second element for the first occurrence *of lûuk,* making a compound;[8] for example *lûukpooŋ, sǎam lûuk* "three balloons". In such a case the semantic value of the first occurrence of *lûuk* can *only* be S3D.

Thus it is clear that *lûuk,* despite its semantic force as "offspring" in its noun function, is still closely associated with fruit in both the literal sense and in the metaphorical sense, and as classifier applies only with a criterion of S3D, three dimensional (usually round) shape.

In the case of *baj,* the extension to containers is fairly transparent. As a compound head, *baj* refers to S2D shape, not containers. In traditional technology (still widely in practice in public markets and food stalls), leaves are the prototypical containers, expecially large sections of banana leaf used as wrapping paper for solid foods, and pinned into cups for fluids. The extension of *baj* to fruit (overlapping *lûuk*) is probably through natural containers, especially coconut shells and similar outer coverings, including eggshells. Thus it appears that we can trace the extensions with little difficulty, and they imply a base of S2D shape.

The third reason for choosing *lûuk* and *baj* to fit the plant metaphor in the S3D and S2D positions is that they are among the most common classifiers because of their general abstracted senses, and because of their wide ranges of extension. These two factors probably arise from the same semantic processes. The only classifier more common and more extended is *an,* the general classifier.

At this point the reader may have noticed an anomaly in the above argument. According to Figure 1, the basic contrast is S3D–S1D, with S2D a derivative of S1D. But the prominent shape-based classifiers in the ST data are S3D and S2D, not S1D[9]. What, then, is the ST equivalent of S1D "long thing", with expected associations to "stick", "stalk", or "stem" in the plant metaphor? In my opinion there are three possible candidates: the ST classifiers *tôn, lêm,* and *an.* I will

8. Many Thais find this example humorous, since the meaning "three testicles" often springs to mind.

9. Gandour et al. (1984) also describe this anomaly in their study of thAi children's acquisition of ST classifiers.

discuss each of these in turn below.

Other possibilities might be suggested, such as the classifiers *dâam* "handle", or *sên,* classifier for long flexible things. These classifiers, including *kâan* which refers explicitly to stems and stalks, are not serious contenders for the S1D position because they do not meet the above criteria by which *lûuk* and *baj* were selected as S3D and S2D respectively. Criterion two (primary semantic base is abstract shape), and criterion three (wide applicability and extensions) are barely met by any other classifiers, although some, such as *klɔ̂ɔŋ,* "cylinder, pipe, tube, optical instrument, etc." do have some extensions. Others, such as *kâan* satisfy the plant metaphor criterion, but not the other two.

The classifier *tôn* is so widely generalized that it is the classifier for all plants, regardless of shape (trees, bushes, vines, grass, etc.). In compounds it may mean "trunk", but here it requires a secondary criterion of verticality (as classifier it also applies to standing posts); thus its shape criterion is a complex one, not simply S1D. Even though *tôn* is so widely extended, its extensions do not go beyond plants and vertical S1D: in particular it does not apply to sticks in general, to other horizontal long things, or to any artifacts other than posts.

If we compare the Thai situation with the Chinese we find that the Chinese graph *méi* has a long history stretching back to the oracle bone inscriptions of the Shang Dynasty, as early as 1300 B.C. (E.G. Pulleyblank, p.c.). By the time of the Book of Odes (ca, 800–600 B.C. it had a S1D sense of "stem or branch of a tree", among other senses. It did not yet have classifier function, that function developing during the Han period, after 206 B.C. When *méi* is used as a classifier it is already a general classifier, widely applicable to a vast range of things. Although there is no direct evidence for it, E.G. Pulleyblank (p.c.) suspects that classifier function for *méi* may have developed through a sense of "counting stick", from the verb "to count". A connection here between *méi* the earlier noun glossed "stem, branch" and *méi* the later classifier depends on phonological continuity but is not unlikely.

On this Chinese model we might consider ST *tôn* as the best candidate, but ST *tôn,* as described above, remains too limited in its range of applicability to plants and vertical posts.

One of my main reasons for selecting *an* and *lêm* as candidates for the missing position was the fact that these two were the only classifiers in an earlier study (Placzek 1978) which were unglossable in any sense. Let us now compare

these two as candidates for the original S1D classifier.

On the face of it *lêm* is a better candidate since the closest thing to a meaning for this classifier is "long thing", as discussed in detail in Placzek 1984a. There are problems with choosing *lêm,* however. Although it is apparently generalized or abstracted, and certainly extended in sense, it does not fit the plant metaphor. On the contrary, it classifies only artifacts (except the marginal case of "tooth", acceptable in some regional dialects), and has no obvious source in the natural environment[10]. A possible alternative sense as "sharp thing" is also incompatible with the plant metaphor.

Turning to the classifier *an,* we find that it appears to be a poor candidate for S1D mainly because, as the most general classifier used in default of more specific classifiers, it seems to have no meaningful order at all in the range of nouns it classifies. Nevertheless, of a total of 300 items classified by *an* in Haas (1964), I found a concentration of items referring to wooden sticks. The breakdown was as follows (Placzek 1978 : 132, 134):

TABLE 1: FREQUENCY OF SEMANTIC GROUPS AMONG NOUNS CLASSIFIED BY *AN* IN HASS (1964)

SEMANTIC GROUPS		NOUN COMPOUND GROUPS	
nouns classifed by ST *an*	300	*máaj*-compounds	21
S1D concrete objects	119	*khrîaŋ,* - compounds	9
hand implements	83		
signs, insignia, symbols, etc.	45		
machinery, moving parts	43		
S1D wooden stick-like objects	41		

In Table 1 we see that overall the *an* group includes a relatively small

10. Although ST *lêm* is confined to man-made artifacts almost exclusively as described above and furthermore is the ST classifier for just those articles which Adams & Conklin (1973:7, 8) specify as most likely to have their own Generic classifier (i.e., the books, tools and weapons), nevertheless ST *lêm* does not qualify as a purely Generic classifier since it does have shape criteria which apply in various ways. Furthermore, Placzek 1984b shows how in ST all the apparent Generic classifiers are in fact rooted in the generalized shape characteristics of their prototype or focal members. In the case of ST *lêm* I present in Placzek (1984a) a possible historical development for this classifier from an original grouping around a bamboo slat prototype to a contemporary structure centering on a bark paper manuscript prototype (*samùt khɔ̀ɔj̀*).

number of "stick-like" items. But the group of 41 items amounts to half of all hand tools and a third of all the long things. It is unusually large for such a specific criterion. The 41 "stick-like" objects break down into a group of 21 items named by compounds beginning with *máaj* "tree, wood". These compounds refer to stick-like implements such as staves, rods, clubs, spears, etc., and by extension to some symbols of the Thai alphabet. This is the largest group of compounds with a common element in the entire list of 300 items. The remainder of the 41 stick-like items also refer to the same type of stick-like implements, but the names have a variety of morphological forms. the next largest group with a common morphological form is a group of only nine items with *khrîaŋ*, "sign, machine, ingredients, paraphernalia, equipment, etc."

The occurrence of the abstractions was accounted for in Placzek (1978) by positing explicit historical semantic extensions. The main point, however, is that among the concrete items classified by *an* is a significant group referring to sticks and to stick-like implements which are not unlikely as prototypical tools, machines or devices. As such the vast extension of the *an* group would not be unexpected, making an uncontroversial assumption of increase in the technology of the society. By comparison all members of the *lêm* group are concrete objects, are apparently much later in a scale of cultural prominence of artifact types, and exhibit no direct participation in the plant metaphor comparable with the ranges of *lûuk* (S3D) or *baj* (S2D).

Thus the classifier *an* seems, on closer inspection, to be a better candidate for the missing S1D "stick-like" classifier. *an* is the most widely generalized classifier: its semantic value is next-to-nil, and its syntactic function is prominent to the point of potentially replacing all other classifiers as a "meaningless" syntactic unit or function word. This extreme generalization fits the pattern of the other two plant-metaphoric, abstract-shape classifiers, *lûuk* and *baj*. It also fits the pattern of development of the Chinese S1D classifier.

As with the other suggested candidates for the original S1D classifier in ST, there are problems with the choice of *an* as best candidate. The first and most serious problem is that *an* has been suggested as having a source in an ancient relative pronoun (see Khanitthanan 1975, 1976). Perhaps it too is a relatively late borrowing into the classifier system from the main lexicon like the classifier *khon* (cf. Adams & Conklin 1973:10). The other problem with positing *an* as the original ST classifier for abstract S1D shape is that *an* may not have been the original classifier for S1D "long things"

at all; it may have been the S3D "round thing" classifier instead. We have already seen how the Chinese general classifier developed from early S1D classifier values, but that at least one very widely generalized Japanese classifier seems to have developed from S3D (cf. footnote 7). In line with the latter development is the possibility that etymologically ST *an* may go back to Proto-Tai **ʔdan*, attested in the Northern Branch of the Tai family (see Li 1977:107, Yu 1980, Chinese Academy 1959). Some cognates are glossed as S3D or as classifiers for cups, bowls, and other typically S3D items. Cognates with initial *(ʔ)d-* appear to occur only where the Chinese borrowing for "long thing" (something like the form *tiau*) also occurs. Cognates in other branches (and some in the Northern Branch) indicate Proto-Tai *ʔan*. Thus it is etymologically unclear at this point just what form and semantic value *an* did have in ancient Tai. The solution to this problem and to the problem of which classifier, if any, was the ancient Tai S1D classifier, lies with further concentrated study.

For the present I will close this enquiry by noting that according to the discussion above, the classifiers *lûuk* and *baj* appear to be the best candidates for ancient Tai S3D and S2D classifiers, respectively. The missing S1D classifier is not as easy to choose, but from the established paradigm we would reasonably expect that there must have been one. From the information available to me to date I have argued that the ST classifier *an* is the best candidate. In comparing the ST classifiers to this established paradigm the function of the classifiers discussed has been clarified, as has their relation to other classifiers outside this metaphorical pattern. The underlying psychological and lexical processes have not been addressed here, but see Placzek (1984a). An understanding of these processes is essential for further progress in unraveling this little mystery, as is more complete data on real classifier usage in modern Tai languages (data often neglected in earlier studies), and on usage in earlier textual forms of Standard Thai, still an untapped resource now awaiting attention by scholars.

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