

A Giant's Step to Sri Lanka: ABIA's Chair Transferred

Short News >
South Asia

The 29th of November 2001, a cold winter's day in Leiden, was an important day for the ABIA Project, the international conglomerate of institutes and their specialists that together compile the online annotated databases of the *ABIA South and Southeast Asian Art and Archaeology Index*. During an intimate meeting in the reading room of the Kern Institute of Indology at the Universiteit Leiden, the coordination of the project was officially handed over to the Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology (PGIAR) of the University of Kelaniya in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Under the chairmanship of Mr S. Lakdusinghe, the director of the PGIAR, with the continuing assistance of Dr Roland Silva, and thanks to the continued financial support of the Central Cultural Fund in Colombo, the project has now embarked on its second five-year term (2002-2006).



Professor Stokhof and Mr Lakdusinghe shake hands at the transferral of the ABIA Project.

By Ellen M. Raven

During the ceremony leading up to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, Prof. Karel van Kooij of the Kern Institute, project leader during the first period, recapitulated the history of the project. It essentially started way back in 1926 with a similar enterprise by Prof. Jean Vogel, the driving force behind the renowned *Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology*. Its modern successor, the *ABIA Index* of the ABIA Project, was initiated in 1997 by Prof. Wim Stokhof of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) with financial support from the Gonda Foundation Amsterdam and the Faculty of Arts of the Universiteit Leiden. Reviving the old bibliography was like bringing an old giant back to life. The coordinating editors in this enterprise, also active from ABIA's home base in the first five-year run, were Dr Ellen Raven (for South Asia) and Dr Marijke Klokke, Dr Cynthia Chou and Helga Lasschuijt successively (for Southeast Asia).

Prof. van Kooij mentioned the Asian regional offices in the project during the past period: PGIAR backed up by the Central Cultural Fund (CCF) in Colombo, Sri Lanka and SPAFA/

SEAMEO Regional Centre for the Arts in Bangkok, Thailand. The bibliographic network also included regional co-workers in India (under the guidance of Prof. S. Settar), Bangladesh (Prof. A. Momin Chowdhury), Nepal (Dr Shaphalya Amatya), Bhutan (Ven. Mynak R. Tulku Rinpoche), Indonesia (Prof. Edi Sedyawati and Hasan Djafar), Malaysia (Dr M.K.A. Rahman) and Russia (Prof. Gregory Bongard-Levin and Dr Misha Bukharine). At annual workshops hosted by the offices or other partners, progress was discussed and policy developed against the background of the ideals cherished by the initiators, namely international cooperation, international scholarship, and international exchange.

Shortly before the transfer of the chair, it had become clear that the ABIA Project will get a new base in India at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) in New Delhi. It is hoped that similar steps will be possible with regard to Indonesia (through the help of Prof. Edi Sedyawati) and Pakistan (through Prof. Farid Khan of the Pakistan Heritage Society).

Prof. van Kooij proudly reported that, through these joint efforts, the ABIA Project now offers access to some

12,000 annotated bibliographic records on recently published academic material on the prehistory, archaeology and art history, material culture, epigraphy, and numismatics of South and Southeast Asia. These are freely accessible at www.abia.net. A selection of some 1,300 of these records were also published in 1999 in a more traditional and tangible fashion as *ABIA Index, Volume 1*, published by Kegan Paul in association with the IIAS in the series *Studies from the International Institute for Asian Studies*. The publication of *ABIA Index, Volume 2*, by E.J. Brill in Leiden, is scheduled for this year. The book will contain some 2,000 selected annotated records on publications processed for the databases between September 1998 and September 2001.

In his acceptance speech, Mr Lakdusinghe emphasized the long-standing bibliographic link between Leiden and Colombo. He indicated how the project draws inspiration from the memories and spirits of two great archaeologists: Prof. J.Ph. Vogel and Prof. S. Paranavitana. He also expressed special thanks to Dr Roland Silva, who "forms an enduring bridge between the academic worlds and archaeology" of Sri Lanka and the

Netherlands. Mr Lakdusinghe indicated that capacity building would have to be a key focus of attention in the period to come.

Speaking on behalf of the technical staff of ABIA, Dr Ellen Raven expressed her special thanks to Anton van de Repe (ARP Software), who developed software applications for editing and printing the bibliographic data, and rendering them searchable on the Internet. He made "the ABIA giant sit on every desktop when invited". She indicated that, due to financial circumstances, the Leiden office would commence the next five-year term with a reduced editorial staff (consisting of one part-time editor). The continued financial support by the Gonda Foundation at least ensured continuity of the work in Leiden. She was confident that ABIA Netherlands, covering the Western publications for the *ABIA Index* database, would help the ABIA giant stand firmly in the worldwide Ocean of Publications. <

Dr Ellen M. Raven teaches South Asian art at the Universiteit Leiden. She is a specialist in Gupta coins and is General Editor of ABIA Index, the Netherlands.

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What does the ABIA Index cover?

- Monographs
- Articles in monographs
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ABIA Index Subject Scope:

- pre- and protohistory
- historical archaeology
- ancient art history (up to 1900)
- modern art history (from 1900)
- material culture
- epigraphy and palaeography
- numismatics and sigillography

ABIA Index Regional Scope:

- South Asia
- Southeast Asia
- Culturally related adjoining regions (e.g. Afghanistan, Silk Road, South China or Melanesia) Diaspora

Who are making the ABIA Index?

The ABIA project is coordinated by the Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology (PGIAR) in Colombo, Sri Lanka (period 2002-2006). PGIAR is also the regional ABIA centre in Asia. It receives support from the Central Cultural Fund (CCF) in Colombo. The IIAS at Leiden is the regional ABIA centre for regions outside Asia. It receives support from the Gonda Foundation, Amsterdam.

ABIA Publications:

Van Kooij, Karel (gen. ed.), Ellen M. Raven & Marijke J. Klokke (eds)

ABIA Index VOLUME ONE

London & Amsterdam: Kegan Paul in assoc. with the International Institute for Asian Studies (1999).

*Please see the IIAS publications order form for order information.

The release of *ABIA Index Volume Two* is expected in 2002. It will be published by Brill, Leiden in the series *Handbuch der Orientalistik*. <

"Syntax" Update:

A Postverbal Modal in Cantonese and Mandarin

Short News >
China

The Syntax of the Languages of Southern China research programme aims to investigate several syntactic constructions in a number of languages spoken in Southern China. It concerns both Sinitic (Yue, Wu, Mandarin) and non-Sinitic languages (Zhuang-Tai, Miao, Wa) spoken in the area south of the Yangtze River.

By Rint Sybesma

One of the phenomena to be explored in the context of our project on syntactic variation in Southern China is the occurrence of a modal element (roughly meaning "can") in an atypical postverbal position, which we find in many languages in the area (and beyond).¹ We have been looking at this phenomenon in Cantonese and Mandarin. I report here (in brief and simplified terms) on our research into this issue that was conducted in collaboration with Professor L.L.-S. Cheng.² The element in question is *dak*³ in Cantonese and *dé* in Mandarin; I'll use "DAK" as a general term for both.³ Herebelow is a Cantonese sentence with *dak*³:

Example 1:
keoi⁵ haang⁴-dak³-jap⁶-heoi⁴
3S walk-DAK-in-go
's/he can go in there'

The sentence is ambiguous: it can mean "s/he is permitted to go in there" or "s/he will manage to get in there." The readings are labeled "permission" and "potential" respectively. The "permission" label is used when the focus is on the question of whether or not some-

one is allowed to (try to) do something, by an authority or by the circumstances. With the "potential", the focus is on the question of whether a certain act can be performed and completed successfully – the completion aspect is crucial; whether it can or can not be completed successfully depends on the physical (or mental) capabilities of the agent or other physical properties (one may be too fat to get through a tiny door).

The dak-construction is interesting for several reasons. Firstly, DAK is clearly a modal element. But, while all other modal elements in Cantonese and Mandarin precede the other verb in the sentence, dak follows it (as is clear from Example 1, where *dak*³ follows the verb *haang*⁴ "walk"). Secondly, despite the fact that Example 1 is ambiguous, it is not the case that all sentences with dak in Cantonese can have two readings. As the following two sentences labeled Example 2a and 2b illustrate, some sentences with *dak*³ are unambiguous: they either have the "permission" or the "potential" reading.

Example 2
a. keoi⁵ zaa¹-dak³ li³ ga³ ce¹
3S drive-DAK this CL car
's/he can drive this car' –

"permission" reading only
b. keoi⁵ lo²-dak³-hei² li³ seung¹ syu¹
3S take-DAK-up this box book
's/he can lift this box of books' –
"potential" reading only

Thirdly, although Mandarin has its own DAK, *dé*, its use is much more limited than in the case of Cantonese (to give just one example, the "permission" reading is generally missing in Mandarin *dé*-sentences).

These facts (and several others) all need to be explained: Why is dak different from the other modal elements in Cantonese and Mandarin? Why are all sentences with *dak*³ not ambiguous? Why would Mandarin be different from Cantonese?

Our answers to these questions include the following points: (1) from a diachronic point of view, the case can be argued that there are two daks, one "permission"-DAK and one "potential"-DAK.⁴ Mandarin differs from Cantonese in that it lost one, while Cantonese kept both; (2) a sentence with a result denoting part can be seen as consisting of two clauses: the main clause and the part of the sentence expressing the result; (3) "permission"-DAK, we

hypothesize, occurs in the main clause, "potential"-DAK in the result-clause. This can be schematically represented as in Example 3:

Example 3
[main clause Perm-DAK Verb
[result clause Pot-DAK]]

As a result, sentences without a result clause (like Example 2a) can not be ambiguous: the only dak they may have is "permission"-DAK in the main clause. (4) In contrast to other modal verbs, DAK is an affix. As an affix, it needs to be licensed by the other verb. In the case of "permission"-DAK in the main clause, the licensing is taken care of by raising the verb, "potential"-DAK is licensed by undergoing a phonological merger with the verb. In both cases, dak ends up in a postverbal position.

(5) Under circumstances that can be made precise, and which always involve a result denoting clause, the verb is barred from licensing "permission"-dak in the main clause. This explains why some clauses (like the one in Example 2b) is not ambiguous; a "permission"-dak in the main clause could not have been licensed.

Our next steps will involve extending our empirical base to fine-tune our analysis further. Updates of our progress in this research will be published in upcoming issues of the *IIAS Newsletter*. <

Dr Rint Sybesma is director of the programme "The Syntax of the Languages of Southern China" (1 January 2001 – 31 December 2005).

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Notes >

- 1 See: Enfield, N. *On the Polyfunctionality of 'Acquire' in Mainland Southeast Asia: A Case Study in Linguistic Epidemiology*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Melbourne (2000).
- 2 For the full paper, contact Rint Sybesma: R.P.E.Sybesma@let.leidenuniv.nl.
- 3 Cantonese is transcribed using the Romanization system developed by the Linguistic Society of Hong Kong; tones are indicated using superscripts: 1: hi level, 2: hi rising, 3: mid level, 4: lo falling, 5: low rising, 6: lo level. Mandarin is transcribed using pinyin.
- 4 See, for instance: Li, Wang, *Hànyu shi gao*. (Outline of the History of Chinese) Peking: Zhonghua Shuju (1980).
- 5 See: Hoekstra, T., "Small Clause Results" in *Lingua*, 74, (1988); pp. 101-139.