

Contribution to Garo Linguistics and Ethnology.

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(Continuation.)

§ 37. Passive Voice.

Strictly speaking there is no passive voice in Garo. The passive idea however, is expressed in two ways:

a) By putting the subject of the verb in the accusative case with *-ko*;
an-ko dök-aha, I was struck.

b) By using the verb *man:a* in its various tenses and the present tense of the verb which it is desired to express passively; e. g.

ana dök-a man:-aha, I received a striking, I was struck.

§ 38. Compound Verbs.

Compound verbs are formed by the juxtaposition of two verbal stems, with the tense ending appended only to the last part. Thus *sal-krin-na*, "to tighten by drawing" is compounded of *sal-na* (*V sal-*), "to draw" and *krin-na* (*V krin-*), "to make taut", *re:-ëk-na*, "to branch off" from *re:-na* (*V re:-*), "to go" and *ëk-na* (*V ëk-*), "to separate".

A curious characteristic of the Garo language, as of other Tibeto-Burman languages such as Burmese, is the facility with which nouns and adjectives may be conjugated in the same manner as verbs proper, and verbs may be used as nouns and adjectives. The practical result of this is that no special part of speech may be ascribed to any particular word, but that a word may be declined in the same manner as a noun simply by adding the case endings, or it may be conjugated as a verb by adding the verbal terminations. If adjectives or adverbs are used as verbs, the verbal endings are added to them and no neuter verb is used as an auxiliary; such an usage expresses quality or location. Thus

ua a:ba-o-čim, he was in the field (*a:ba-o* is the dative of *a:ba*, and *-čim*, the ending of the past tense of the indicative mood).

bite nam-gën, the fruit will be good (from *nam*, good, and *-gen*, the future ending).

ia bäl dal:ba-ena, this tree is going to be large (from *dal:ba*, large, and *-ena*, present progressive ending).

In a somewhat similar manner verbs, phrases and even sentences are often used as nouns, and may be used as the subject or the object or with any postposition. E. g.

ana patia-ko man-aha, I received a blessing; I was blessed.

ua mande-ko dök-a-ko nik-aha, I saw that man struck.

dīnja-ni agana-ko ana kn-aha, I heard Dingja's remark.