

A deiparticular deictic verb in Sanskrit:zay/zi 'be lying there' in the oldest Vedic texts

Welner Knobl (Kyoto, Japan)

In my recent article "Mind-Reading the Vedic Poet. Cases of Intended Metrical Irregularity." *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 24, 2007, 105-139 --- which was based on a paper presented at the Second International Vedic Workshop held at Kyoto University, 30 October - 2 November, 1999 --- I had occasion to mention, on page 119, "the often rather markedly depreciatory sense of zay(i) 'to be lying there [in an awkward, or shameful, or downright abject kind of position]'," and to add in footnote 45: "If all the 51 RV attestations of zay(i) were to be examined in their respective context, it could be shown beyond any reasonable doubt that in the great majority of cases the meaning of the verb is in fact 'to be lying there [in a rather unpleasant state].' A detailed examination of all the RV --- and, possibly, some other Samhitā (and Brāhmaṇa) --- occurrences of this root may indeed be a worthwhile task for the future." After collecting all the material necessary for the acquittal of this task from the R̥gveda and the Atharvaveda, and finding the conclusion provisionally drawn as above even more fully confirmed than I had expected, I happened upon, in recent linguistic research by George Dunkel and Brent Vine, the fascinating suggestion that zay/zi (not *zayi/zii) < *key/'ki may be based on the deictic particle *'ke/'ki.1. George Dunkel, "Chips from an Aptotologist's Workshop I." *Verba Docenti. Studies in historical and Indo-European linguistics* presented to Jay H. Jasanoff by students, colleagues, and friends; edited by Alan J. Nussbaum. Ann Arbor / New York: Beech Stave Press, 2007, [53-61] 58: "Brent Vine has proposed (in discussion) that the athematic root-present *'key- 'lie' ... might be derived from the near-deictic particle *'ke/i, originally having meant something like *'be near/here'. I would suggest taking it as a secondary (morphologically induced) full-grade of near-deictic *'ki."2. Brent Vine, "Back to the Future: 'Yesterday' (and 'Tomorrow') in Indo-European." *Bulletin ... UCLA: 2008, [1-12] 8a*: "... as I suggest elsewhere (see for the moment the notice apud Dunkel 2007:58), PIE

*'key- 'lie' • which, in its Hittite, Vedic Sanskrit, and Homeric Greek avatars, prominently means 'is [lying] here, is located [in plain sight]' (as opposed to 'is supine') • may have its origin as a "verbalization" or "morphologization" (Dunkel's term) of the near-deictic particle *'ke/*'ki 'here [in front of the speaker]'.3. When, in January 2008, Brent Vine first presented his paper "Back to the Future" at a meeting of the "Indo-European Round Table" of the Kyoto University Department of Linguistics, I asked him whether he was sure about the near-deictic meaning of the PIE particle *'ke/*'ki, he readily admitted that no, he was not, and right away mentioned the Greek demonstrative pronoun (e)keinos 'the one there, that one' (as being opposed to 'the one here, this one') in support of an other-than-near-deictic significance.4. Cf. also Brent Vine, "An Alleged Case of "Inflectional Contamination": On the I-Stem Inflection of Latin CIVIS." *Incontri Linguistici* 29, 2006, [139-158] 148; and H. Craig Melchert, "Deictic Pronouns in Anatolian." *Proceedings of the Kyoto Conference on Indo-European Studies 2007*, ed. by Brent Vine and Kazuhiko Yoshida. Bremen: Hemen, 2009, [*1-*11] *5 fn. 7. 5. Could we perhaps say of the deictic particle *'ke/*'ki that its meaning, if indeed it did mean 'here' originally, shifted from 'here' to 'there'? And in case this is what really happened in Proto-Indo-European, then our deiparticular deictic verb zay 'be lying there' or 'daliegen' --- by shifting in accordance with its typically da-deictic character between the positions of 'relatively near' and 'comparatively far' --- would still be true to its origin, and not behave too strangely.6. Among the 51 occurrences of the verb zay in the R̥gveda and the 29 attestations of it in the Zaunaka-Sa.mhita of the Atharvaveda, I shall pay particularly careful attention to examples that seem to resist, at first blush, the suggested deictic sense of 'be lying there.' As will be seen, this meaning, if maintained throughout the oldest text-corpora, does not only

work surprisingly well in all contexts, it sometimes brings out the hidden side of a passage, which the merely stative meaning of 'be lying' would have left unrevealed.