

Some Notes on ‘Gold’ and ‘Road’ in Zhangzhung and Tamangic

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1. Introduction

It has been suggested (e.g., Thomas 1933, Haahr 1968, Matisoff 2001, van Driem 2001a, 2001b) that the closest neighbor of the language of Zhangzhung is probably the West Himalayish group of the Tibeto-Burman family; yet possible links of Zhangzhung to other language and language groups, such as rGyalrong, Qiangic, and Tamangic, have also been suspected.

The main purpose of this paper is to quest for a link between Zhangzhung and Tamangic, and if there exists any historical relation between them, to examine what sort of relation it is. In fact, indications of a link between Zhangzhung and Tamangic are scarce, but two lexical similarities in ‘gold’ and ‘road, path’ between Zhangzhung and Tamangic have received attention. Nishi and Nagano (2001: 11) states:¹⁾

Special attention should be paid to the words for ‘gold’ and ‘road’, because the corresponding words in Zhangzhung, Gyarong, and the proto-Tamang could have evolved from the same origin.

This paper will therefore investigate, mainly, these two etymons and examine what the lexical similarities found in them can tell us about the histories of Zhangzhung, Tamangic and other Himalayan languages.

2. Earlier Classifications of Tamangic

Tamangic is a language group belonging to the Tibeto-Burman family. In Shafer (1955), this language group is called the Gurung Branch, and three languages, Gurung, Murmi, and Thaksya, the latter two being now more commonly known as Tamang and Thakali, are included in the group. Later in his *Introduction to Sino-Tibetan*, Shafer defended his view by positing thirty-five lexical similarities shared by Gurung, Murmi, and Thaksya (1967: 126–7). Since then, the unity of the group has been widely accepted. It has generally been agreed that we should add to the group, at least, the languages known as Manangba, Nar-Phu, Seke, and Chantyal (Mazaudon 1978, 1996; van Driem 2001a).

The similarity between Gurung and Tamang was already recognized in Brandreth (1878) and Grierson (1909). In Grierson (1909: 180), Sten Konow further suggests that they are closely related to the Tibetan dialects. Shafer (1955) follows Konow by classifying the Tamangic group (i.e., his Gurung branch) into his Bodish Section, together with the Tibetan dialects and others, such as Takpa, Tsangla (i.e., Tshangla) and Gyarong. To date the proposition that Tamangic languages are close relatives of Tibetan has rarely been questioned. Martine Mazaudon (2005: 79–80), for instance, states, ‘No claim is made here concerning the higher level classification of the family [that is, the Bodish branch] but many dialects of Tibetan and Tamangish [i.e., Tamangic] are definitely closely related.’

Table 1 Shafer’s (1955, 1966) classification

- Bodic Division
 - Bodish Section
 - Bodish Branch
 - West Bodish [Balti, Purik, Ladakhi ...]
 - Central Bodish [most Tibetan dialects including Amdo, Kham]
 - South Bodish [Sikkimese, Tromowa, Dandzongka]
 - East Bodish [Dwags (Takpa)]
 - Tsangla
 - Rgyarong Branch
 - Gurung Branch [Tamangic]
 - West Himalayish Section
 - West Central Himalayish Section [Hayu, Chepang, Magar]
 - East Himalayish Section [Kiranti]

Shafer’s Dwags (cf. Shafer 1954), or Takpa, is based on vocabulary listed in Hodgson (1853) and Campbell (1874), and, as many authors noted, his recognition of this language as a Tibetan dialect is an error. Shafer probably confused Hodgson’s Dakpa data with the Tibetan district and dialect of Dakpo, spoken in an area south of the Tsangpo and west of the Kongpo. According to van Driem (2001a), and Michailovsky and Mazaudon (1994), Hodgson’s Dakpo is a language spoken in Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh and Tshona in Southern Tibet, and in neighboring areas of Bhutan. Nevertheless, Shafer correctly identified the distinct status of Dakpa and put it in a distinct language group called ‘East Bodish’. The term ‘East Bodish’ is now widely used to refer to a language group covering a number of languages, mainly spoken in Bhutan, and Dakpa is one of them, although van Driem (2001a: 916) states, ‘Dakpa appears to be the most aberrant member of East Bodish or, at least, to constitute a group on its own within East Bodish.’²⁾

Table 2 van Driem's (1994, 1995) East Bodish

- Bodish	- West	
	- Central	
	- East	
	- Archaic East Bodish	
	- Black Mountain Mönpa	- Western ('Olekha)
		- Eastern
	- Mainstream East Bodish	
	- Mangde	
	- Greater Bumthang (Bumthang, Kurtöp, Kheng)	
	- Chali	
	- Dzala	
	- Dakpa	

Inclusion of rGyalrong into the Bodish Section has been questioned by many scholars (e.g., Michailovsky and Mazaudon 1994). Meanwhile, the position of Tshangla is still not totally clear, but many scholars seem to accept Shafer's classification.

Other languages that have been considered to belong to Bodish include Ghale and Kaike. It is my view that the closest neighbor of Ghale and Kaike is the Tamangic group (Honda 2008; also refer to Nishi 1991). It is certain that Ghale is very close to the Tamangic group, and the relation between Kaike and Tamangic appears to be much distant.

3. A Possible Link Between Tamangic and Zhangzhung

3.1 Background

There has been speculation that speakers of Tamangic languages are descendants of the *Se* tribe, one of four major tribes considered to have once existed in the Tibetan Plateau, while another tribe called *'Mu* is related to Zhangzhung, or more generally, speakers of West Himalayish languages. Van Driem (2001a: 832), for instance, states:

According to old Tibetan historical lore which has been studied by Frederik William Thomas (1948) and Rolf Alfred Stein (1959b), there used to be a dozen original tribes on the Tibetan Plateau. Four of these are given great prominence in the old sources. The *Se* were an ancient tribe who were probably of Tamangic linguistic stock. The *'Mu* were ancestral to the Zhangzhung and therefore perhaps to peoples of West Himalayish linguistic stock. The *Dön* and *Tön* appear to have inhabited much of central, northern and eastern Tibet and were probably more directly ancestral to the Tibetan.

The term *se* is found in many old Tibetan historical documents, and its relation to the Tamangic speaking people has been speculated about because of the existence of possible cognates of the term *se* found in Tamangic languages and also in other nearby languages. For instance, we find the element *se* in the word *Se-rib*, the name of a political entity that is considered to have existed around the border between Tibet and Nepal, where the languages of Seke, Thakali, Manangba, and the Tibetan dialects, Lopa and Baragaonle, are now spoken. The earliest references to *Se-rib* are found in the Dunhuang Annals of the 8th century (Jackson 1978: 198; Ramble 2008: 38), and according to them, during the reign of the king Srong-

btsan-sgam-po, Zhangzhung and other parts of the western frontier, including Lo and Se-rib, were conquered. In 709, its king was captured and again Se-rib came under Tibetan rule (Bacot *et al.* 1940–46; cited in Jackson 1978: 199). The exact location and its boundary are unknown to us, but Richardson (1977: 16) relates it to the Mustang region of Nepal. Jackson (1978: 200, 207) is more specific, locating Se-rib in the Kali Gandaki valley south of Lo. Meanwhile, the Se-rib mentioned in the Dunhuang Annals has been identified with Si-li (or Hsi-li) 悉立 in early Chinese sources (Stein 1972: 60; Bacot *et al.* 1940–46: 42, fn. 3, cited in Jackson 1978: 199, fn. 8). Ramble (2008: 502–3) supports this view quite convincingly by showing that some of the characteristics that the Chinese documents describe about the location and the inhabitants of Si-li quite accurately correspond to those found in the Mustang region (e.g., topknots worn by men). Although the exact location of Zhangzhung is not totally clear, it is most likely that Se-rib and Zhangzhung had had regular contact, before the expansion of the Yarlung dynasty of Tibetan speaking people to the west.

Jackson (1978) also relates Se-rib to *seke* (TIB *se-skad*), a Tibetan word to designate non-Tibetan dialects spoken in the Upper Thak Kola region, which is used by neighboring Tibetan speakers. This word has come to be used and understood to designate, more specifically and exclusively, dialects spoken in an area known as Shöyul, which encompasses five villages, Tangbe, Chuksang, Tetang, Chaile, and Gyakar in the Upper Mustang (Ramble and Seeber 1995: 107; Vinding 1998: 27, fn. 65), and that is why I myself started using this term in this way when I presented a paper titled ‘A Sketch of Tangbe’ in the 5th Himalayan Languages Symposium held in 1999 in Kathmandu (Honda 2003).³ According to Ramble (1993: 299), however, the Tibetan word *seke* designates not only ‘the language spoken by the inhabitants of Panchgaon, the Thak Kholā’, but also ‘Nyeshang [i.e., Manang], as well as the Tamangs and Gurungs.’⁴

There are several indications that the word *se* has been used to designate not only the people who speak the Seke language, but also those who speak one of the other Tamangic dialects, or, more broadly, one of the other cis-Himalayish languages. First, according to Strickland (1987: 72, fn. 11), Gurung is self-designated as *se* in local narratives called *pe* ‘old story, legend’ (cf. WT *dpe* ‘pattern, model, symmetry, harmony, book’) recited by a Gurung shaman. Second, the word *se* might be related to the second syllable of *thakse* (or *thākse*), a word designating the inhabitants of Thāk, currently known in the Nepali language as Thaksatsae, an area where Tamang Thakali resides (Höfer 2004 [1979]: 125, fn. 55).⁵ According to Vinding (1998: 20, fn. 33), the word *thakse* appears in a Nepali official document from 1811, while the word *thakali* appears in a document from 1855.⁶ It seems quite likely that the word *thakse* has variants such as *thagsi* that is used to refer to Thakali people in Hamilton (1819) (cf. Vinding 1998: 20, fn. 33), and *thak’sya* that appears in Hodgson (1857) (cf. *thāksya* in Grierson 1909: 399–407).

To date, no survival of the word *se* has been reported or suggested in the Nyeshang nor the Nar-Phu region, but, according to Ramble (1997: 505), there are Gunthang Chronicles suggesting that the eastern boundary of Se-rib extends ‘well beyond Mustang as far as Kyirong in Tibet and Mount Manaslu (dPung-rgyan) in the Kutang-Nubri area of Nepal.’ Ramble (*ibid.* 505; 498, fn. 10) then calls our attention to several toponyms such as Serang along the Sringsi Valley in Kutang (cf. Aris 1975: 58–9), Panc Sai Kola in Lantang, which is generally under-

stood as Nepali words *pāc sai* ‘five hundred’, i.e., ‘Valley of the five hundred’, and Sailung, a name to designate an area recognized by the Eastern Tamang speakers as their original habitat, which is situated at the junction of three districts, Dolakha, Kabre Palanchok, and Ramechhap (Tautscher 1996). Ramble (*ibid.*) suggests a possibility that all of these toponyms might derive from a word based on the ethnonym *se*.

What has been paid more attention to by a number of authors is Newar *sē* or *sem* (Toffin 1978: 118, cited in Höfer 1981: 6; Ramble 1997: 497). The word is glossed in the above mentioned literature as referring to the Tamang people, but it must be identical to either or both of *sam̐y* ‘a Tibetan’, which must directly be related to the Classical Newar *samja* ‘Tibetan, related to Tibet, Tibetan-origin’ (Malla and Kansakar 2000: 474) and *sām* ‘older form, now obsolete’ for Tibet proper, two entries found in Manandhar’s (1986) Newari Dictionary of modern Kathmandu Newar, and also to the form *sen* found in the following passage from Hodgson (1874 [1991], Part II: 30, fn.); ‘The Nēwārs of Nēpāl Proper call the cis-nivean Bhótias, Pálu Sén, and the trans-nivean, Thá Sén.’

It is also conceivable, as Holmberg (1989: 17) suggests, that the Newar words are related to *Sain*, one of the ethnonyms for Tamang which appear in earlier Western literature (e.g., Risley 1891: 110). It seems more certain, as Turin (2002: 258) suggests, that the Newar words are cognate with Thangmi *sem* (in the Sindhupālcok dialect) and *semni* (in the Dolakhā dialect), both of which are ethnonyms for the Tamang people.⁷ Turin (2002: 259) further suggests that they may well be cognate with *-sim* in Dumī, a Kiranti language (van Driem 1993). This element is found in a couple of ethnonyms such as *naksim* ‘Gurung’, *neksim* ‘Newari’, *saksim* ‘Tamangs, Sherpa, cis-Himalayan Tibetan’, and *suksim* ‘Sunwar’. If that is the case, the term *se* is connected, not only to Tamang, Gurung, Sherpa, and cis-Himalayan Tibetan tribes, but also to Sunwar and Newar.

Although a number of dictionaries have been published in recent decades on languages spoken in Nepal, it is often the case that words designating an ethnic group are not included, and thus I cannot find any other possible words connected to the term *se*, with one exception being Chepang *syam?* ‘Tamang, Lamaistic Buddhist’ (Caughley 2000: 466). It might be the case that we will find more words, ethnonyms and toponyms, etc., which may have a link to the word *se* in a number of nearby languages and dialects.

3.2 ‘Gold’ and ‘Road, Path’⁸)

As I mentioned above, in the context of searching for a possible link between Zhangzhung and Tamangic, two lexical similarities found in the words for ‘gold’ and ‘road, path’ in Zhangzhung and Tamangic have been given special attention. In what follows, I will discuss them in detail.

3.2.1 ‘Gold’

In Zhangzhung, the word for ‘gold’ is *mar*, and Tamangic has the same segmental string with tone 4, i.e., ⁴*mar*, except in Seke where it is ^H*ser*, a borrowing from a nearby Tibetan dialect. Clear cognates of ⁴*mar* are found in Ghale and Kaike, but, to the best of my knowledge, nowhere else; not in West Himalayish, such as Manchad, Kinnaur, neither in Tibetan, nor in East Bodish.

[1] gold ZH *mar* cf. *mar-saŋ*, *ma-saŋ* ‘yellow’

PTAM **mar^B* (RI *⁴mar*; cf. TA *^Hser* < SM *sēr*); KE *mar*; GL *mǎr*
 cf. WT *gser* (cf. *ser-po* ‘yellow’; *dmar-po* ‘red’); PTB **tsyak* = **tsák*
 MC *za ~ zaŋ*; KS *zaŋ*; KN *zaŋ*; BU *#ser*; TH *zəŋ*; R *džās*

Matisoff (2001: 162–3) suggests a possible link of the Zhangzhung form *mar* ‘gold’ to *mar-sang* or *ma-sang* ‘yellow’ in the same language. Benedict (1939: 222–3) points out that there is a connection of the word for ‘gold’ to the word for ‘yellow’ in many TB languages, including Tibetan, and elsewhere, and also to the word for ‘red’, and in rare cases, even to the word for ‘silver’. Benedict (1939: 222) states, ‘In some instances, words for metals have been derived from roots signifying colors.’ Matisoff (2001) suggests the opposite; that is, both in Zhangzhung and Tibetan, the word for ‘yellow’ derives from the word for ‘gold’.

Matisoff also points out the semantic connection between the word for ‘yellow’ and the word for ‘butter’ in Mandarin Chinese and implies that the Zhangzhung word for ‘gold’ might have a link to Written Tibetan *mar* ‘butter’ and to Kinnaur *mar* ‘ghee’.

[2] butter, ghee

RI *³mar*; WT *mar* ‘butter’; KN (M) *mǎr* ‘ghee’; G *mar* ‘butter’, *smar* ‘yellow’;
 KE *mār* ‘butter, ghee’

The same suggestion was made in Nishi (1991), which also calls our attention to Written Tibetan *dmar-po* ‘red’. Meanwhile, Nishi and Nagano (2001) compares Zhangzhung *mar* ‘gold’ to Gyarong *mar* ‘butter’ and to *smar* ‘yellow’.

However, as Matisoff states, throughout the Tamangic group, cognates of the Risiangku Tamang *⁴mar* have the meaning of ‘gold’, but not ‘yellow’ nor ‘butter’, and there is no confusion with the word for ‘butter, ghee’, which has a distinct tone, tone 3 (cf. Table 1 in Appendix). Therefore, even if there is any connection between the word for ‘gold’ and the word for ‘butter, ghee’ in Tamangic, the relation must be only a historical one, which most likely predates the Proto-Tamangic stage, because **⁴mar* ‘gold’ and **³mar* ‘butter, ghee’ are both reconstructable at the Proto-Tamangic stage. According to Mazaudon (1976, 1978), tone 3 and tone 1 derive from proto-tone A (tone 1 is from the voiceless initial series, whereas tone 3 is from voiced initials) while tone 4 and tone 2 derive from proto-tone B (tone 2 is from voiceless initials, whereas tone 4 is from voiced initials), but we do not know yet the origins of those two proto tones.

It should also be noted that in Kaike the word for ‘gold’ and the word for ‘butter, ghee’ are distinct, but only with their vowel quality. In my preliminary study of Kaike tone, the language has three distinct tones, and both ‘gold’ and ‘butter, ghee’ are tone 1, the highest tone. This clearly indicates that Kaike *mār* ‘butter, ghee’ is not a recent borrowing from a modern Central Tibetan dialect, such as Tichyurongba, a neighboring Tibetan dialect, where the word for ‘butter, ghee’ has low tone.

3.2.2 ‘Road, Path’

In a number of TB languages, the word for ‘road, path’ has a plain lateral initial, as in Written Tibetan *lam* and in **lam*, the form reconstructed for Proto-TB (Benedict 1972; Matisoff 2003), and the existence of the velar in this etymon in Zhangzhung and Tamangic appears to be unique within TB. That is why a special link between Zhangzhung and Tamangic has been suspected.

[3] road, path⁹⁾ ZH *lgyum, lgyu*

PTAM **gyam*^B (RI ⁴*kyam*); KE *lam*; GL *lam*
 KT, BT ^L*yam*; M ^L*lam*; MM *lem*¹³; TS ¹³*lam*
 WT *lam*; SM *lam*; G *ča-la*; PTB **lam*
 MC *əm*; TI *amtsh*; KN *əm*; BU *amtsi*; TH *om ~ am*; R *amtša*

It should be noted that in some Tamangic dialects, there is another form for ‘road, path’. According to Nishi (1991), which is based on Yasuhiko Nagano’s field notes, there is a word *gualam* ‘road, path’ in the dialect of Nar. Nishi then suspects that the first syllable of this word might be related to the hypothesized prefix **g-* in the proto-language.

[3.1.] road, path Nar *gualam* (Nishi 1991); TA, CH, TE ^L*kyalam*
 WT *rgya-lam* ‘high-road, high-way’; SM *calam* ‘Straße, Hauptstraße, (breiter) Weg’
 WT *rgya* ‘extent, width, size’ (cf. *rgya-gar* ‘India’); SM *ca* ‘Indien’
 TA, CH, TE ^L*kyā* ‘India’ (cf. TA ^L*kyā-^Hten* ‘Indian people’; ^L*kyahap* ‘big needle’ < SM *ca* + *khap* ‘needle’)

However, this word is clearly a borrowing from a neighboring Tibetan dialect. Clear cognates of Nar *gualam* are found in all of the Seke dialects; that is, ^L*kyalam*, is a borrowing from a Tibetan dialect of Southern Mustang. Its first element means ‘India’ in Seke and also in Southern Mustang (Kretschmar 1995) and *calam* (^L*kyalam* in my notation) means ‘big road, highway’ in Southern Mustang. Therefore, this etymon is irrelevant to our discussion here.

Now the question is whether or not the apparent similarity between the Zhangzhung and Tamangic forms suggest their special link. Although I cannot provide any strong evidence for either side, there has been a suggestion that the initial *gl-* cluster can be reconstructed for the Bodish group. The suggestion was made in Michailovsky and Mazaudon (1994) on the basis of a sound correspondence found between Written Tibetan, East Bodish, and Tamangic, which is shown in Table 2 of the Appendix. As can be seen, in three words ‘road’, ‘sheep’ and ‘work’, the Written Tibetan initial /l/ corresponds to the Kurtoep and Choekhor-Bumthang initial low tone glide /^Ly/ and also to the Tamangic tone 4 /⁴ky/ cluster. Based on this correspondence, Michailovsky and Mazaudon (1994) suggests an old **gl-* cluster; they state ‘... some of the not infrequent correspondences Bumthang ^Lj- ~ WT l- reflect an old **gl-*.’¹⁰⁾ Please recall that in Martine Mazaudon’s theory of tonogenetics, tone 3 and tone 4

are considered to have developed from the voiced initial series; therefore, in the case of words in Table 2, the proto-form must have an initial /*g-/.

The correspondence between the Kurtoep and Bumthang low tone glide initial and Written Tibetan // is also found in the etymon ‘five’, where the WT prefix corresponds to a Bumthang syllable (note that in the word for ‘five’ Tamangic has tone 4, as in the case of ‘road’, ‘sheep’ and ‘work’). This kind of correspondence is also found in the word for ‘nine’.

There are, however, some problems for the reconstruction of a *gl cluster at the Proto-Bodish stage. As far as is known, the correspondence between the Bumthang low tone glide /^ly/, Written Tibetan //, and the Tamangic /^hky-/ cluster is attested in only three words, ‘road’, ‘sheep’ and ‘work’, and Bumthang /^ly/ shows two other different correspondences to WT and Tamangic. One is shown in Table 3 where Bumthang /^ly/ corresponds to the WT /y/ initial. This correspondence may possibly represent relatively recent borrowings from a modern Central Tibetan dialect to Bumthang and Kurtoep since the WT plain initial regularly corresponds to the low tone initial in modern Central Tibetan dialects. The other correspondence is shown in Table 4 where Bumthang /^ly/ corresponds to the Written Tibetan plain initial //, the same as in Table 2, but, in this case, to the Tamangic high tone glide /^hy/ initial, instead of the correspondence to /^hky/ as shown in Table 2. For this set, Michailovsky and Mazaudon (1994) state:

The high-register tone in Tamang suggests the presence of an old prefix. The incorporation of the prefix in the preceding set (leading to Tam. kj- initials) blocked the tone-raising effect.

This seems quite plausible, but we still cannot preclude the possibility that the velar element of the words ‘road’, ‘sheep’ and ‘work’ is a development unique to the Tamangic group.

There are, however, some indications that the inclusion of the velar in the etymon ‘road’ may have much wider distribution. One such indication comes from Watters (2004), which also reconstructs an initial *gl- cluster for ‘road, path’ at the Proto-TB stage. This reconstruction appears to be heavily influenced by the Tamangic form, but there is another point of evidence for that. According to Watters (2003), ‘*gl- > y is a regular reflex in Kham’, as shown in the word for ‘door’ (KMC *s-glam > KH *yahm*), although I find no other examples of this correspondence in his dictionary. Interestingly, the word for ‘work’ in Kham also has a /y/ initial (KH *yehn*; cf. CP *wanʔ*), just as in East Bodish.

[3.2.] road, path KH ^hyem (Proto-Kham *yem); MG *lam*; CP *lyam*
PTB *glam (Watters 2004)

Another indication that the etymon ‘road’ may have had an initial *gl- cluster, or, at least, // with some kind of preradical, comes from Opgenort (2005: 380), which reconstructs /*ʔl-/ for the Proto-Kiranti ‘road, path’.

[3.3.] road, path Proto-Kiranti /*ʔl-/

Opgenort (2005: 33) states:

The Proto-Kranti preglottalised lateral /*ʎl-/ is found in the words ‘arm, hand’, ‘leg, foot’, ‘lie, act of lying’, ‘liver’, ‘red’, ‘road, path’, ‘silence, quietness’, ‘stone’, ‘sell, exchange’, which regularly have initial /l-/ in the modern Kiranti languages except Jero and Wambule, which have /*ʎl/ instead in one or more of their dialects.

The question concerning words for ‘road, path’ in West Himalayish languages is another issue to be explored. The forms without an initial /l/, such as Manchad *əm*, puzzled Robert Shafer (1967: 141). Since there are many examples of the preservation of initial /l/ in West Himalayish, such as the words for ‘tongue’ (e.g., MC *lhe*, KN *le:*, TH *le*; PTB *m-lay ~ *s-lay), the disappearance of /l/ should be explained to relate the West Himalayish words to PTB *lam.

3.3 Other Etymons

There are other etymons where a possible link of Zhangzhung to Tamangic, and, more generally, to other Himalayan languages, can be explored. In this section I will examine only some of those that Matisoff (2001) and Nishi and Nagano (2001) do not mention.

[4] old woman ZH *yog-ze, yo-se*

TA, CH ^H*khuyuk*; TE ^H*khuyu(k)*; MA (G) ²*khuyu*; SA ¹*khuyu*; RI ¹*khui* (all mean ‘old woman’)

KE *jyu:jā*

MC, TI *yüi*; BU *yui*; R (SRS) *yu:d; yu:də*; BY *yi:dε* (all mean ‘old’)

cf. WT *rgad-mo*; SM *kemo*

If the West Himalayish forms with initial /y/ are related to the Zhangzhung form, it seems most likely that the Tamangic forms are also related. There is no doubt that the Tamangic forms are historically compounds, and the first syllable is related to the word for ‘old man’ (e.g., TA ²*kheppa*; TE ^H*khewa*; MA ²*khepa*; RI ¹*kheppa*) and to the word for ‘grandfather, forefather’ (e.g., TA ¹*khe*; CH, TE ^H*khe*; GH ¹*khe*; RI ¹*akhe*).

The Kaike form *jyu:jā* does not appear at first glance to be related, but it should be noted that a correspondence between Kaike *jyu-* (with an initial affricate) and Tamangic ^H*yu-* is found in, at least three other etymons, ‘to fall, rain’ (KE *jyu-*; SA ²*yu-*), ‘handle’ (KE *jyu*; RI ¹*yu:*), and ‘to be enough’ (KE *jyo-*; TU ²*yo-*).

[5] woman ZH *tsa-med*

KS *tšime*; KN *tšimed*; BU *tsemed*; R *tša:ma*

TA, TE, SY ^H*chame*; CH ^H*cheme*; GH ²*chamĩ, 2chami*; Eastern Tamang ^H*chame* (all mean ‘young woman (app. 15–17 to 30 years old)’; vs Seke ^L*pen*; RI ⁴*pyon* ‘young man’)

KE *cyimicā* ‘woman’

Within Tamangic, this etymon is found in Seke, Thakali, Gurung, and also in Eastern Tamang (from my field notebooks). It should be noted that this is an entry distinct from the word for ‘daughter’ (e.g., RI ⁴*came*).

[6] finger ZH *sran*

RI ²*primci* ‘finger’ (cf. TA ^H*pamca*; CH ^H*pramca*; TE ^H*pramci*; all mean ‘small finger’)

KT, BT *primaŋ*; MM *la*⁵³ *priu*⁵³; W *briu*³⁵*ma*⁵⁵; TS *pur*¹³*ma*¹³

Jero *bremciam*; Wamble *bryamci*; Bahing *brepcho*; Sunwar *brepso*; Thulung *brepco*; Khaling *’brepco* (all from Opgenort 2005)

CP *bre*, *brəyh*

MC *bremza*; TI *brentsa*; KN *prats*; TH *braŋ*; R *bəntša*

cf. SY, MA ^{Hya-H}*Ri*; MA (G) ²*Ri*; TU ²*ya-Re*; MN (Hi) ¹*ya-3Ti*; GH ¹*yori*, ¹*ri*

The etymon with the initial *pr-* cluster is widespread. It is found in Tamangic, East Bodish, Tshangla, Kiranti, Chepang, and West Himalayish. Within Tamangic, this is found only in Eastern Tamang and Seke although the Seke words mean ‘small finger’. In Zhangzhung there appear to be two distinct sounds represented by orthographic *hr* and *sr*, but it is not clear exactly what these symbols represent. It is unlikely that Zhangzhung *sr* represents /pt/; nevertheless it might be suspected that the radical *r* in the Zhangzhung form and in forms listed here in other Himalayan languages are somehow related.

In some other Tamangic dialects, there is another entry with an initial voiceless liquid /R/, such as ^{Hya-H}*Ri* in Syang and Marpha (the first element with the initial glide in Thakali and Manangba means ‘hand’). The correspondence between /^HR/ in Seke and Thakali, /^Hr/ in Gurung, and the retroflex stop /^HT/ in Manangba, which is found in ‘finger’, is also found in ‘thread’, ‘to swell’ and ‘sweat’ (Table 5, Appendix).¹¹ In Honda (2008), I suggest that those sounds in the correspondence are reflexes of an older *kr- cluster because this seems to be the most likely candidate to explain both /^HR/ and /^HT/. As far as the word for ‘thread’ is concerned, this reconstruction is supported by Bumthang *kronman* ‘thread’, a form with an initial *kr-* cluster, as shown in Table 6. It should be noted, however, that the reconstruction cannot be for Proto-Tamangic because there is another correspondence shown in Table 7, which has a much wider distribution, and there is little doubt that it is a reflex of Proto-Tamangic. It is not clear whether forms such as ^{Hya-H}*Ri* in Syang and Marpha have any relation to the Zhangzhung form, and we have a problem regarding the difference in the final, too.

[7] intestine ZH *hri-tsum*

SA, RI ³*kruŋ*; MN (Hi) *kùruŋ*; SY ^L*kum*; MA ³*kum*

cf. WT *rgyu-ma*

This etymon was also discussed in Matisoff (2001), but the Tamangic forms are not mentioned. In other Tamangic dialects, East Bodish, and in West Himalayish, we find clear cognates of the WT form. The relation between the Tamangic forms and WT *rgyu-ma* is not clear because the correspondence is irregular.

4. Analysis and Conclusion

Although we cannot draw any decisive conclusion as to the nature of the lexical similarities found in the words for ‘gold’ and ‘road, path’ in Zhangzhung and Tamangic, I am inclined to consider that, as far as ‘gold’ is concerned, it is more likely to be due to contact, rather than due to genetic inheritance, for the following reasons.

First of all, this etymon is found only in Zhangzhung, Tamangic, Ghale and Kaike, and we do not find any similar forms in other TB languages. Second, there is no other etymon suggesting a special link among Zhangzhung, Tamangic, Ghale and Kaike. Third, those languages are spoken or considered to have been spoken in adjacent areas. Fourth, it seems that etymons like ‘gold’ are prime targets of borrowing. It is a substance which must have been transferred from one community to another. Take, for instance, Written Tibetan *gser* ‘gold’, which, according to Jäschke (1881), is a borrowing from Persian *zar* ‘gold’. Furthermore, Zhangzhung has been associated with the production or source of gold, and it is thus quite conceivable that trade of gold had been active in and around this political entity. Please refer to the following passage in Tucci (1956: 92–3):

... I am inclined to think that *Žaṅ žuṅ* corresponds to *Suvarṇabhūmi*, *Svarṇabhūmi*, *Suvarṇagotra* of the Sanskrit source ... “The country is bounded on the north by the great Snowy Mountains in the midst of which is the land called *Su-fa-la-na-kū-ta-lo* (*Suvarṇagotra*). From this country comes a superior sort of gold, and hence the name. It extends from East to West, and contracts from north to south. It is the same as the country of the “Eastern women”...

The exact location of Zhangzhung is not entirely clear, but now most specialists, linguists and anthropologists alike, argue that it existed in Western Tibet, more specifically, around the headwaters of the Indus and northwest of Mount Kailash. In this area there is a place called *Mar-yul*, and its first element *mar* has been considered to be the Zhangzhung word *mar* ‘gold’ (e.g., Hummel 2000).

There has also been a theory that what is referred to as ‘Eastern women’ (東女國) in the above passage existed in Eastern Tibet, more specifically, in an area where rGyalrong and Qiangic languages are now spoken. In any case, this kingdom too is known as having been rich in gold. Nishi and Nagano (2001: 10) summarizes this point as follows:

It is widely known that Gyarong has been a shelter of the Bon religion since ancient times and still serves as a major religious center. Historically, the kingdom of Zhangzhung (called 東女國 in the Chinese historical records) moved eastward to the Gyarong region and established 東女國 ... *Gyim-shod* (金川 in Chinese) which was the center of 東女國 (Gyarong), corresponds to the Sanskrit word *suvarṇagotra*, ‘golden country’, specifying 女國. ...

The suggestion that the lexical correspondence found in the word for ‘gold’ in Zhangzhung and Tamangic (and also in Ghale and Kaike) is not due to genetic inheritance must be proved on the basis of more solid historical records, and a number of questions still remain to be answered. What we can say at this point is that if indeed it is due to contact, it is most likely that this particular contact must have occurred before the Proto-Tamangic language split into each language or into sub-groups.

On the other hand, the lexical correspondence found in ‘road, path’ does not seem to point to any special link between Zhangzhung and Tamangic; instead, it seems more likely that it indicates a much older, and thus profound relation between Zhangzhung, Tamangic and other Himalayan languages.

Abbreviations and source of the data

In this paper, the following abbreviations for languages/dialects (locations) and language groups are used (sources of information are also indicated); BT: Bumthang or Bumthap (Michailovsky and Mazaudon 1994); BU: Bunan (Nishi 1991; Nishi and Nagano 2001); BY: Byangsi (S.R. Sharma 2001b); CH: Chuksang (Seke; my own data); CK: Choekhor or Chogor (Bumthang or Bumthap; Michailovsky and Mazaudon 1994); CM: Chume (Bumthang or Bumthap; Michailovsky and Mazaudon 1994); CP: Chepang (Caughley 2000); CT: Central Tibetan; DK: Dakpa (Michailovsky and Mazaudon 1994); DZ: Dzala (van Driem 2007); EB: East Bodish; G: rGyalrong (Nishi and Nagano 2001); GH: Ghachok (Gurung; Glover *et al.* 1977); GL: Ghale (Nishi 1982; 1983); KE: Kaike (my own data); KH: Kham (Watters 2004); KMC: Kham-Magar-Chepang (Watters 2004); KN: Kinnaur (Nishi and Nagano 2001; M: Matisoff 2001); KS: Kanash (Nishi 1991; Nishi and Nagano 2001); KT: Kurtoep (Michailovsky and Mazaudon 1994); KY: Kyirong Tibetan (Huber 2002); M: Mangdep (or ‘Nyenka; Michailovsky and Mazaudon 1994); MA: Marpha (Mawatan Thakali; my own data; G: Georg 1996; M: Mazaudon 1978); MC: Manchad (Nishi 1991; Nishi and Nagano 2001); MG: Magar (Watters 2004); MM: Mama (Dzala or Dakpa?; Lu 1986); MN: Manangba (Hi: Hildebrandt 2004; Ho: Hoshi 1984; M: Mazaudon 1978); PTAM: Proto-Tamangic (Mazaudon 1978); PTB: Proto-Tibeto-Burman (Benedict 1972; M: Matisoff 2003); R: Rangpa (Nishi 1991; Nishi and Nagano 2001; SRS: S. R. Sharma 2001a); RI: Risiangku (Eastern Tamang; Mazaudon 1973); SA: Sahu (Western Tamang; Hale 1973); SM: Southern Mustang Tibetan (Kretschmar 1995); SY: Syang (Yhulkasom Thakali; my own data; M: Mazaudon 1978); TA: Tangbe (Seke; my own data; M: Mazaudon 1996); TAM: Tamangic; TB: Tibeto-Burman; TE: Tetang (Seke; my own data); TH: Thebor (Nishi 1991; Nishi and Nagano 2001); TI: Tinan (Nishi 1991; Nishi and Nagano 2001); TS: Tshangla (Zhang 1986); TU: Tukche (Tamang Thakali; Hale 1973; M: Mazaudon 1978); W: Wenlang (Tshangla or Dakpa?; Lu 1986); WT: Written Tibetan (Jäschke 1881); ZH: Zhangzhung (Haarh 1968).

Notes

- 1) Also refer to Nishi (1991: 79).
- 2) Lu (1986) describes two varieties of ‘Cuona Monpa,’ i.e., Mama, a southern dialect, and Wenlang,

a northern dialect. The Mama dialect is referred to as ‘Dakpa’ in Michailovsky and Mazaudon (1994: 555, fn. 2), which also notes that the Wenlang dialect described by Lu is somewhat closer to Hodgson’s (1853) ‘Takpa’ [i.e., Dakpa] data. Van Driem (2001a: 915; 2007: 72), on the other hand, states that what Lu calls the southern dialect is ‘most certainly Dzala,’ while the northern dialect ‘is not Dzala, but a variety of Tshangla.’ In the current paper, Lu’s ‘Mama’ and ‘Wenlang’ are referred to just as *Mama* (MM) and *Wenlang* (W).

- 3) It is quite conceivable that non-Tibetan dialects which are most likely identical or quite similar to those currently spoken in Shöyul, i.e., the language of Seke, were once spoken in a much wider area including other Baragaon settlements, too (Ramble and Vinding 1987: 8; Vinding 1988: 172; Ramble 1997: 505; Ramble 2008: 39). In fact, one of my Chuksang informants remembers that about 50 years ago when she visited Khingar and Phalyak, adjoining villages where a Tibetan dialect is now spoken, she found several old people speaking a non-Tibetan dialect identical or similar to her speech.
- 4) For more about Se-rib and Seke, please refer to Ramble and Vinding (1987: 7–8), Vinding (1988: 171–2; 1998: 54), Ramble and Seeber (1995: 107–8), and Honda (2002).
- 5) The origin of the word *thak* (or *thāk*) is not totally clear, but Vinding (1998: 9, fn. 1; 63) provides two possible etymologies for it; that is, 1) TIB *mtha* ‘end, border, border-country,’ and, less dubiously, 2) TIB *thag* ‘distance, distant (land)’. Jackson (1978: 196, fn. 2) notes, ‘The name of Thak is perhaps very old, but I have not noticed it in the oldest sources.’ The earliest record of the word that he mentioned is a Tibetan document cited in Tucci (1956: 13), which Jackson (1978: 196, fn. 2) estimates ‘cannot date before the late 1600’s or early 1700’s ...’ In this document, the word appears in a phrase *thak phyogs* ‘Thak district’. The word *thak* also appears in Cimang bem-chag, the village record of the Cimang village, which Ramble and Vinding (1987: 6) surmises was written during the 18th century. Note that in the Cimang bem-chag there also appears the word *thakgubtsen* (or *thakhubtsen*), which Ramble and Vinding (*ibid*: 20, fn. 3) glosses ‘the people of Thag’, but later Vinding (1988: 177, fn. 56) states ‘The meaning of Thagkubcan is not known.’
- 6) Vinding (1998: 183, fn. 82), therefore, concludes that the word *thakali* ‘seems therefore to have originated in the first half of the 19th century.’ It should be noted that in a document written in 1811 the word *thak* appears to be used to designate only an area known as *thāsāng*, the area of the present Kobang VDC, excluding Lete and Tukche (Vinding 1988: 183, fn. 821; cf. 182, fn. 78).
- 7) Turin (2002) suggests that *ni*, the second syllable of the latter, might be cognate with Zhangzhung *ni* ‘man, people’ (cf. Haarh 1968) and also with *ni* found in the Thangmi word *thani* used for designating themselves, i.e., ‘Thangmi people’. It should be noted, however, that words for ‘man, people’ with initial *n* abound in TB languages (cf. Matisoff 2001: 159) and therefore this particular example, by itself, does not necessarily indicate a special link between Thangmi and Zhangzhung.
- 8) In this paper, the following symbols will be used: T: voiceless retroflex (i.e., ʈ); D: voiced retroflex (i.e., ɖ); R: voiceless liquid (i.e., hr); L: voiceless lateral (i.e., ʈ̥); y: glide (i.e., j).
- 9) D.D. Sharma (1988: 13) lists ZH *gyum*, a form without initial /l/. The source of this is not provided. It should also be noted that in Haarh (1968) there are two different entries, *lgyum*, which is glossed as ‘road’, and *lgyu*, which is glossed as 1) ‘road, and method’ and 2) ‘nose.’ Hoffmann (1972) argues that while the former is indeed the word for ‘road’, the latter means only ‘nose’ but not ‘road.’ This point will not be discussed here, and the current paper will deal only with issues

concerning the initial, not the vowel mutation nor the final *m*.

- 10) The reconstruction of a *gl- cluster for the three Tamangic words, ‘road’, ‘sheep’ and ‘work’, was also suggested in Nishi (1991).
- 11) The Manangba form ¹ya-³Ti in Hildebrandt (2004), which has tone 3 in the second element, may be an error. I suspect that this results from the fact that voiceless stops usually get voiced after a voiced segment (note that, in Manangba and elsewhere in Tamangic, initial stops and affricates are usually realized as voiced under tone 3, and, in many dialects, under tone 4 as well). In my own study of Manangba, the second element *Ti* is clearly under high tone, either tone 1 or tone 2; cf. ¹Ti (Hoshi 1984; in Hoshi’s notation, tone 3); ²ya:²Ti: (Nagano 1984; in Nagano’s notation tone 1).

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Appendix

Table 1

	TA	CH	TE	SY	MA	TU	MN	GH	SA	RI	PTAM	WT	SM
gold	^h ser	^h ser	^h ser	⁴ mar (M)	⁴ mar (M)	⁴ mar	⁴ mar (Hi)	⁴ ma:ra	⁴ mar	⁴ mar	*mar ^B		
cf.													
butter	^l mar	^l mar	^l mar	³ mar	³ mar	³ mar	³ mar (Hi)	(^l ma:khan)	³ mar	³ mar		mar	mar
road, path	^l kyam ^l kyalam	^l kyam ^l kyalam	^l kyam ^l kyalam	⁴ kyam	⁴ kyam	⁴ kyam	⁴ khyē (Hi)	⁴ gyā:	⁴ kyam	⁴ kyam	*gyam ^B	rgya-lam 'high-road, high-way'	čalam

Table 2 EB /^ly/ ~ WT /l/ ~ TAM /^hky/ (From Michailovsky and Mazaudon 1994, except forms inside a bracket)

	KT	BT (CK)	M	DK	WT	TAM (RI)	PTB
road	^l yam	^l yam	^l lam	lem ¹³	lam	⁴ kyam	*lam
sheep	^l yo:ʔ	^l yok	^l lo:ʔ	yeŋ ¹³	lug	⁴ kyu	(*luk) (M) (*yaŋ ≠ *g-yak 'sheep/yak') (M)
work	^l ya:ʔ	^l yat		pleʔ ¹³ ya ¹³	las	⁴ kyat	
cf.							
five	^l yaŋa	^l yaŋa	^l ləŋ	le ³¹ ŋe ⁵³	ŋa	⁴ ŋa:	(*l-ŋa ~ *b-ŋa)
nine	dogo	dogo	dok	tu ³¹ ku ⁵³	dgu	(² ku:)	(*d-kuw = *d-kəw ~ d-gaw)
cf.		WT	SM	TAM	W	PTB	
ravine, valley		luŋ-pa		^l kyuŋ (TA, CH, SY) kyuŋ (MN: Hi)	luŋ ⁵⁵ tehu ⁵⁵ 'river'	*klu:(:ŋ); *klyoŋ (M)	
cf.		kluŋ 'river'	luŋ >	^l luŋ (TA, CH)			

Table 3 EB /^hy/ ~ WT /y/ (From Michailovsky and Mazaudon 1994, except forms inside a bracket)

	KT	BT	M	DK	WT	TAM (RI)	PTB
odd one	^l ya	^l ya (CM)			ya		*l)tak = *l-tak
above	^l ya	^l yawo (CK)			ya		
handle	^l yu	^l yu (CM)			yu-ba	^l yu:	
cf.							
right	^h ye:ʔ	^h ye:ba		je: ⁵⁵ pa ⁵³	g-yas	^l ket (² ke:) (TA)	

Table 4 EB /^hy/ ~ WT /l/ ~ TAM /^hy/ (From Michailovsky and Mazaudon 1994)

	KT	BT	M	DK	WT	TAM (RI)	PTB
hand	^l ya:ʔ	^l yak (CK)	^l la:	laʔ ⁵³	lags	^l ya:	*lak = *g-lak
ankle	^l yəŋkor	tegoŋ (CM)			loŋ-bu		
manure	^l yot	^l yot (CK)		ləŋ ⁵⁵	lud		
to get	^l yuŋ-				len-/loŋ-bu	^l yaŋ-	
stand	^l yaŋ-	^l yaŋ- (CK)	^l lɔ:	laŋ ¹³	ldaŋ		
to rain	^l yöʔ	^l yoi	^l yö	(nəm ¹³)		² yu-	

Table 5 Tamangic correspondence 1: /R/ (TA, CH, TE, SY, MA, TU) ~ /r/ (GH) ~ /T/ (MN, SA, RI)

	TA	CH	TE	SY	MA	TU	MN	GH	SA	RI	WT	CT (SM)	PTB
finger				^h ya- ^h Ri	² Ri (G) ^h ya- ^h Ri	² ya-Re	^l Ti (Ho) cf. ^l ya- ³ Ti (Hi)	^l yori, 'ri					
thread	^h Rup	^h Rup	^h Rup	² Ru (M)	² Ru (M)	^h Rup (M)	² Tu (M)	² ru	^l Tup	² Tup	skud-pa	küpa	*krəw/*kriŋ
to swell	^h Raŋ-	^h Raŋ-	^h Raŋ-	^h Raŋ-	² Raŋ-	² Raŋ-	² Taŋ- (Ho)	² rö-	² Taŋ-	² Taŋ-	skraŋ-	Raŋ-	
sweat	^h Ruk-		^h Ruk-	² Ru	² Ru		² Tu (Ho)		² Tu:	² Tu:	(ŋul)		

Table 6 Bumthang /kr/ cluster (From Michailovsky and Mazaudon 1994)

	KT	BT (CK)	BT (CM)	M	DK	WT
hair	^h ra	kra	^h ra	^h ra	khra ⁵³	skra
thread	^h rotman	kronman	^h rotman	^h rɔp		rgyud
nit	^h rikar	kriwit	^h riwis	^h riula		sro-ma
village	Toŋ	kroŋ	^h roŋ		tsoŋ ¹³ sep ⁵³	grong
dirt	Tekpa	krepa	^h rekpa	Dekpeʔ		dreg-pa

Table 7 Tamangic correspondence 2: /kr/ ((TA), CH, TE, MN, GH, SA, RI) ~ /ky/ (or /k/ before /e/, /u/) (SY, MA) ~ /T/ (TU)

	TA	CH	TE	SY	MA	TU	MN	GH	SA	RI	WT	CT	PTB
head/hair	^l ka [⁴³ kra] (M)	^h kara	^h kra	² kyā (M)	² kyā	^h Ta	² kry (M)	^l kra	^l kra	^l kra	skra	^h Ra (SM) ^h Ta (KY)	*s-kra
to cry, weep	^l k(r)ā:-	^h krā-	^h krā-	^h kyā-	^l kyā- (G)	² Tā-	^l kra- (Hi)	^l kro-	^l kra:-	^l kra:-	² grag(s)-	Thu (SM)	*krap-
cubit	^l ku	^h kuru		^l ku (M)	^l ku (M)	^h yā- ^h Tu	^l kru (M)	^l kru	² kru ² naŋ	^l kru	khru		
waist	² ke(:)	^h kere	^h kre	^l kae (M)	^l kae (M)	^h Te	^l kre (M)	^l kre	(^l keppa)	(^l ke:)	rked-pa	kyēpa (SM)	
to climb	² k(r)e:-	^h kre:-	^h kre-	^h kai-	^h kai-	² Te-	^l kre- (Hi)	^l kre-	^l kret-	^l krat-			
to burn		^h kro-	^h kro-			^l To-	^l kro- (Hi)	^l kro-	^l kro-	^l kro-			
cf.													
nit	^h na ^h khi	^h nirik	^h na ^h khi	^h nari	^h ne ^h ki	² neTi		² niri	(^l na:sut)	(² na:sur)	sro-ma	Roma (SM)	