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## A general review of the Zhangzhung studies

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# A general review of the Zhangzhung studies

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## 1. Introduction

Zhangzhung is a Tibeto-Burman (TB, hereafter) language that was spoken in Western Tibet before the establishment of the Tibetan Empire (the first unified kingdom in Tibet). This language was gradually replaced by Tibetan as the latter became dominant, and finally died out completely around the 11th century. While Zhangzhung is often said to have been spoken by believers of the Bon religion, this is not strictly correct. In fact, Zhangzhung was the language of the *dMu* tribe in lower Zhangzhung, and this tribe believed in Bon. This is how the Bon religion came to be associated with Zhangzhung.

The kingdom of Zhangzhung existed in Western Tibet and exerted strong political influence even before the establishment of the Tibetan Empire. The existence of the kingdom of Zhangzhung has been known for many years because it played an important role in the establishment of the Tibetan Empire. However, little mention has been made of the language spoken in Zhangzhung.

There are several reasons for this. First, only few Zhangzhung texts are extant. Second, no corresponding bilingual texts have been identified. Third, the Zhangzhung language died out completely, making it impossible to identify which modern Tibeto-Burman languages can be directly compared with Zhangzhung.

Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, research on the Tibetan texts unearthed in Dunhuang has made considerable progress, and it has been found that some of these texts are written in unknown languages using Tibetan letters. F. W. Thomas assumed these languages were Zhangzhung and Nam. He analyzed the forms of the fragments of words appearing in these texts and framed the following hypothesis:

- (1) The two texts which were available at the time of the analysis and which were supposedly written in Zhangzhung deal with issues relating to herbal medicine. (A third text was analyzed later.)
- (2) The lexical forms excluding those of the Written Tibetan and Sanskrit loanwords indicate a genealogical relationship between Zhangzhung and the 'pronominalized languages' (S. Konow's terminology in his *Linguistic Survey of India* [LSI]) of Western Tibet.

2. With the advances in Sino-Tibetan and Tibeto-Burman linguistics that followed, many more texts suitable for comparative study were discovered. For example, using the same texts used by Thomas, R. Shafer described Zhangzhung as Old Almora (1957: 195 ⇒ Table 1), while Benedict classified Zhangzhung under Tibeto-Kannaur (1972: 7 ⇒ Table 2).

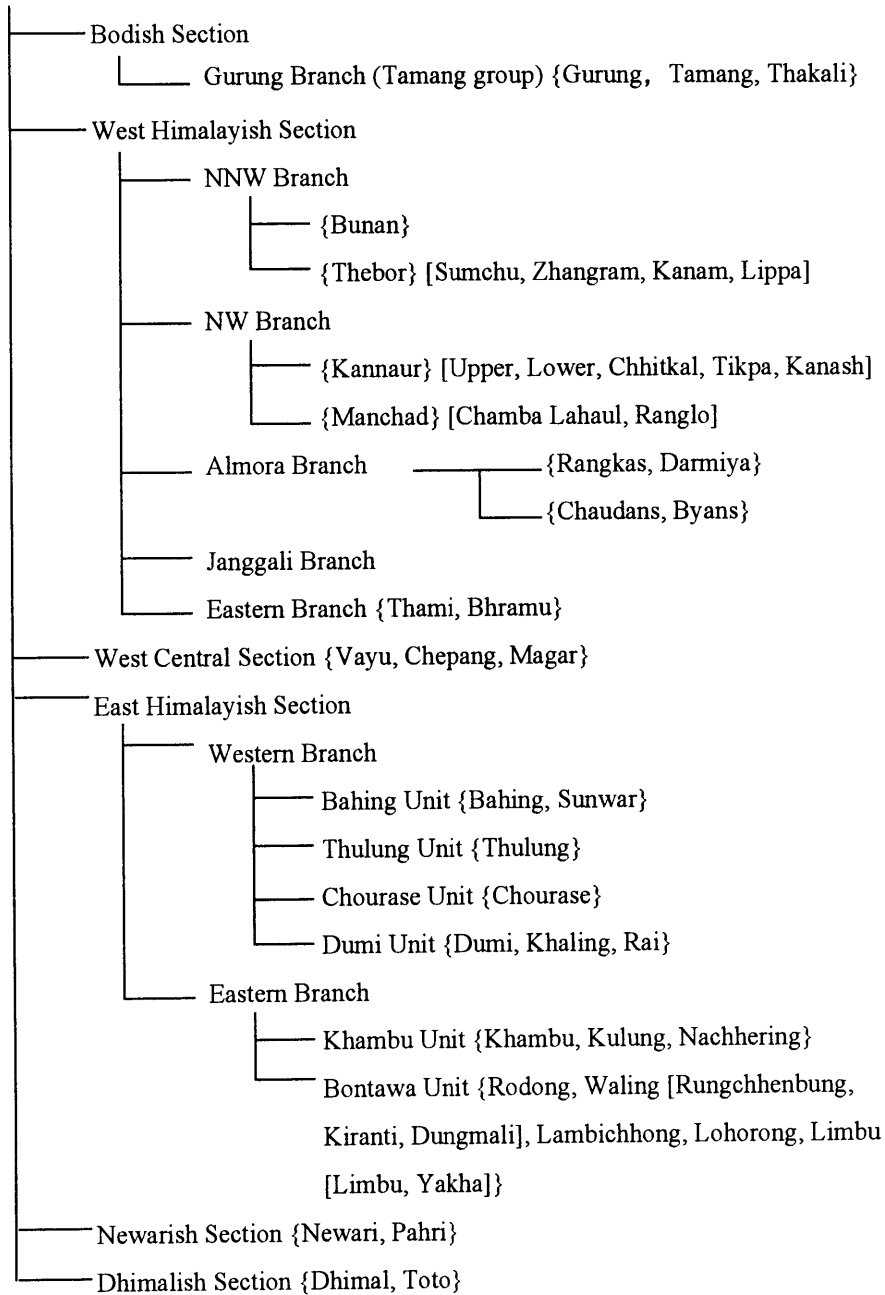
However, when Tatsuo Nishida analyzed the same texts he concluded that Zhangzhung shares some linguistic characteristics with the Tibetan sub-group. He wrote, “It is not at all impossible to construct a provisional grammar by analyzing the texts and examining the units, words, and affixes that repeatedly appear in these texts, even if the meaning or function of the individual units remains unknown... To give an easily understandable example, I will discuss some yet-to-be clarified Zhangzhung words I have been studying for years.” He then examines some words that are considered to have Tibetan correspondence, such as *dgun-kha* (Written Tibetan) and *gun-kha* (Zhangzhung) meaning winter; and *ston-thog* (Written Tibetan) and *tog-kha* (Zhangzhung) meaning harvest time. He also argues that particles appearing at the end of sentences such as *nwe'o*, *-khyiro*, and *-shido* have Tibetan correspondence, and this usage is characteristic of Tibetan (Nishida 1982:21-24). Nishida also tells us, “Nevertheless, we have yet to clear many hurdles before we are able to apply certain grammatical rules to the general relationship between Written Tibetan and Zhangzhung, because it is difficult to identify the Tibetan correspondence of many Zhangzhung words. Yet, this does not necessarily mean that all the Zhangzhung words that have Tibetan correspondence are loanwords (Nishida 1982: 24).” Indeed, the examples shown above indicate a relationship between Tibetan and Zhangzhung, but it can also be argued that all of these words are loanwords. Nishida (1987:112) classifies Zhangzhung in the Tibetan language group, positioning it closer to Written Tibetan than to the Gyarong and Himalayan pronominalized languages (⇒Table 3).

Our predecessors’ achievements provide important clues to help us identify the unknown languages used in the Dunhuang texts. However, we must not accept all these theories without question, because there is no proof that the three Dunhuang texts are written in Zhangzhung. We have only Thomas claim and there are no firm grounds for determining that these languages are Zhangzhung. Thomas wrote, “The language is clearly Tibeto-Burman, and there are many indications of close relation to the Lepcha, even if it is not an old form of that language” (1926: 506), but did not show any real evidence for this inference.

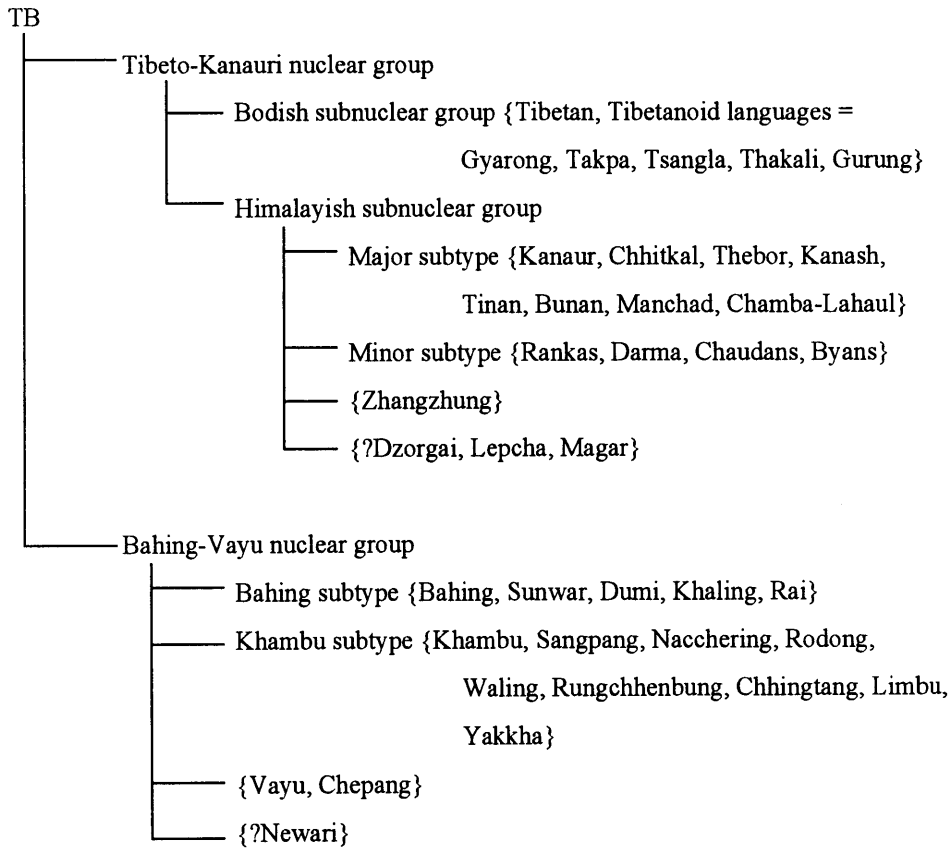
The whole picture of Thomas’ hypothesis remains obscure because he died before completing his study. However, Professor Tsuguhito Takeuchi who is involved in our project discovered Thomas’ notes containing research results on the Zhangzhung language in the British Library. We plan to edit and publish these notes in hopes that they will add to our understanding of Thomas’ study.

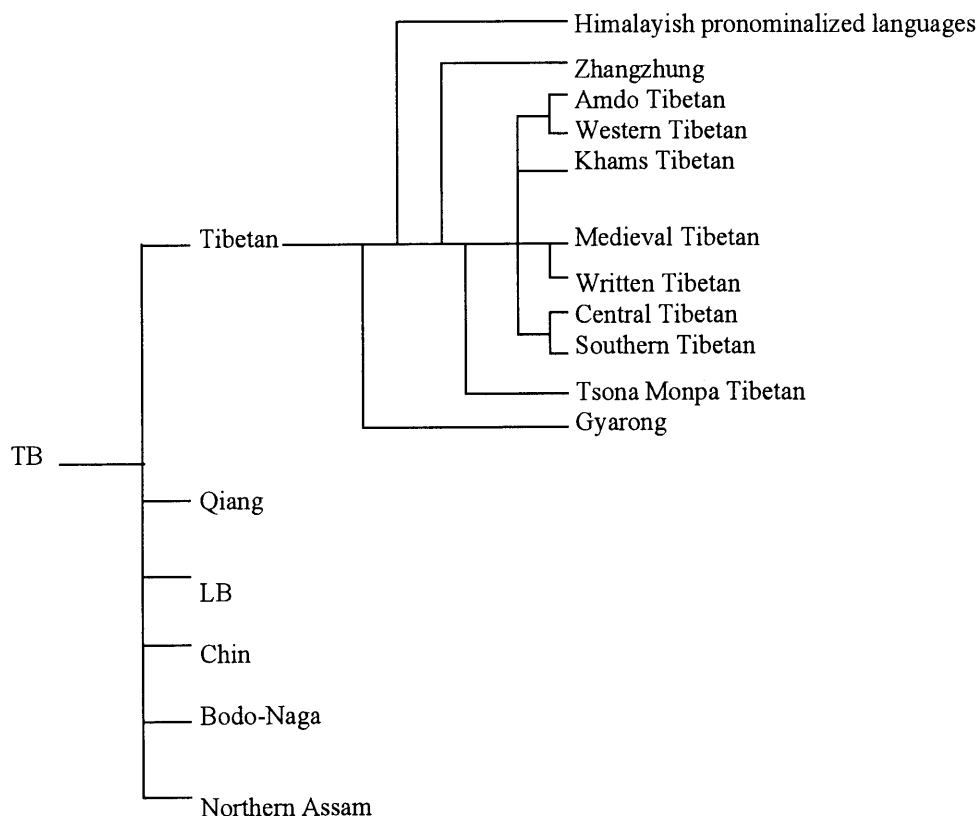
**Table 1** Shafer's classification of the TB languages in the Himalayas (Shafer 1966; reinterpreted by Nishi 1990) [N.B.:The name of language is shown in a brace while its dialects are in a square bracket.]

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**Table 2** Benedict's classification of the TB languages in the Himalayas (Benedict 1972)



**Table 3** Nishida's classification of TB languages (Nishida 1987)

Generally speaking, most of the lexical items that have Written Tibetan correspondence are Tibeto-Burman roots (= widely spread shapes among various sub-groups of Tibeto-Burman), and are not characteristic of Tibetan alone. However, not all lexical forms that have West Himalayan correspondence are Tibeto-Burman roots. Therefore, it is logical to examine Zhangzhung in light of its relationship to the West Himalayan languages.

3. In previous research, too much importance was placed on the association of lexical forms considered typical of Zhangzhung with any sub-groups of Tibeto-Burman. Of course, examining the genetic relationship is necessary, but we must first try to find what is written in the three Dunhuang texts. Lacking any bilingual texts, this work presents serious difficulties, but steady progress has been made with the help of mathematical statistics. While we have not yet made any dramatic

discoveries, examining the frequency and distribution of words in their various forms and comparing them with the syntax of the Tibeto-Burman languages has led us to believe that Zhangzhung is not characterized by the pronominalization, in spite of its possible genetic relationship with the Western Himalayan languages. However, we cannot be certain that this language has no pronominalization, because if these texts actually discuss issues relating to medicine as Thomas claimed, then first and second person pronouns are unlikely to appear. The results of this research will be shown in Takeuchi, Ueda and Nagano (pp. 45-96).

4. Another important object of research is the Tibetan-Zhangzhung Dictionary published in 1965 in Delhi. This dictionary is a compilation of Zhangzhung words and usage collected by Nyima Dakpa from Zhangzhung texts preserved in Bon monasteries, and is edited by Tenzin Namdak, presently chief priest of the Tritan Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu. Most of the examples shown in this dictionary were taken from *gZi-brjid* and *mDzod-phug*, and are believed to relate to the tradition of 'organized' Bon in its early days.

Erik Haarh who analyzed this Dictionary in detail and compared the language with Tibeto-Burman languages, concluded that:

The above few examples of word-correspondence, which are characteristic for the whole vocabulary of the dictionary, together with the evidence of the particles in the above table, indicate that the Zhangzhung language belongs to the West Tibetan languages, most probably among the Complex Pronominalized dialects of the Western group, following the terminology of the Linguistic Survey of India. This confirms the allegations of F. W. Thomas and R. Shafer with regard to the manuscript from Turkestan mentioned above (Haarh 1968: 26).

R. A. Stein (1971) and Yamaguchi (1988) focused on the vocabulary used in the teachings of Bon. They concluded that the Zhangzhung language was created by Bon believers, since most of the words are loaned from Tibetan, formed by modifying Tibetan words through metathesis, backward reading and/or back formation, or by combining Sanskrit and Written Tibetan words. Yamaguchi even disputed the authenticity of the texts themselves, saying, "Although the Zhangzhung language is known to us as the language of the dMu tribe, the origin and authenticity of this language is still open to question." (Yamaguchi 1988: 5). However, their arguments focused solely on the religious terms, and they showed little interest in examining the characteristics of the language as a whole. Bon believers tried to arrange their religious texts much later than Buddhists, and it seems plausible that they coined words based on Sanskrit and Tibetan to explain their beliefs. Moreover, word formation in various types is a widely observed practice, as is evidenced by many translations of the Buddhist texts. If Stein and Yamaguchi had directed their attention at the basic vocabulary as well, they would certainly have reached different

conclusions. In fact, Zhangzhung does make a kind of link language connecting the Himalayan languages, and there is little doubt as to the authenticity of most of the examples contained in the dictionary.

5. Next, we will examine the comparative linguistic studies of Haahr (1968) and Sharma (1988).

1. Haahr examined LSI's materials, and compared suffixes, numerals from one to ten, and words which he thought were characteristic of the Himalayan languages such as 'ear', 'iron', 'water', 'horse' and 'dog' (see Table 4). However, LSI's materials themselves were not reliable enough to be used for a comparison of suffixes. Moreover, his comparison chart contains few examples that strongly support his hypothesis. It could be inferred that, based on the comparison of 'one', 'four' and 'seven', the Zhangzhung language does not belong to the Tibetan subgroup but Haahr failed to show convincing evidence that this language is closely associated with the Himalayan languages. The Zhangzhung word *hrang* 'horse' has Written Tibetan correspondence, and even Jingpho and Burman, the languages of geographically remote areas, have words that seem to stem from the same origin. The words *ting* 'water' and *ku-ra* 'dog' are widely distributed and should be regarded as having Tibeto-Burman roots. Clearly, the word *zangs* 'iron' corresponds to the Written Tibetan word meaning 'copper', although there has been a shift in meaning. Most likely, this word is a loanword. From this, we can conclude that, among the words Haahr listed as examples, only *ra-tse* 'ear' positively demonstrates Zhangzhung's genetic relationship with the Himalayan languages.

Yet, as Nishi (1989) claims, there are many other important words than those

**Table 4** Haahr's comparison (Haahr 1968: 25-26)

	Newari		Pahri Collo- quial [20]	Tinan		Bunan		Byangsi Collo- quial [20]	Zhang- zhung
	Classi- cal [19]	Collo- quial [20]		Written [21]	Collo- quial [20]	Written [21]	Collo- quial [20]		
1	chi	chi	thi-ki	i, id		ti, ti-ki	ti-ki	tig	tig
2	ni	nasi	nisi	nyi-ji	nyizhi	nyis	nyis-king	nisi	ni
3	swom	sō	songo	srum	shrummu	sum	sumi	sum	sum
4	pi	pi	pingi	pi'i		p'i	pi	pi	bing
5	nga	nga	ngongu	nga	ngar	nga'i	ngai	nge	nga
6	khu	khu	khugu	tru'i		trug	trui	truk	drug
7	hnas	nhasa	nhagi	nyi-ji	nyid-chi	nyi-ji	nyizhi	nis	snis
8	cya	chya	chegi	gye'i		gyad	gyei	jedr	gyad
9	gu	gū	gugu	gu		gu	gu	gvi	gu-dug
10	ji	sanha	jigi	sa	sa	cu'i	chui	chi	cu



	EAR	IRON	WATER	HORSE	DOG
Zhang-zhung	ra-tse	zangs	ting	hrang	ku-ra
Kanawri			ti	rang	khui
Manchati	rhe-tra		ti	rang	khui
Chamba Lahuli			ti	rhang	khui
Tinan	re-tra		so-ti		
Bunan	re-tsi		so-ti	srangs	khyu
Rangkas	rach	chyang	ti	rhang	khvi
Darmiya	racho	nijang	ti	rang	khi
Chaudangsi	rach	najang	ti	rang	
Byangsi	rach	najag	ti	rang	

discussed by Haarh. For example, the Zhangzhung words *du* ‘cloud’, *pad* ‘skin’, *mang* ‘red’, *ting* ‘blue’, and *mu* ‘snow’ all display characteristics of the Himalayan languages. Zhangzhung’s *ma-zi* ‘gold’ and *lgyum* ‘road’ correspond to *mar*<sup>2</sup> and *gyam*<sup>2</sup>, respectively, of Proto-Tamang. Therefore, the idea that Zhangzhung could be a link language combining the Tibetan and Himalayan languages and, even more importantly, that Zhangzhung provides a link connecting all Himalayan languages is a plausible one. For the discussion concerning each examples above, see Nishi 1991: 75-79 and 123.

2. Sharma is one of the first Indian linguists to set out to research the Tibeto-Burman languages, and the only known scholar in India to have studied the Zhangzhung language. Sharma studied the languages of the Northwestern Himalayish branch as described by Shafer. His achievements deserve high praise because his studies drastically changed the conventional linguistic common sense including that of the grammar of language branches. However, his descriptive account of tones is unreliable.

The uniqueness of Sharma’s research lies in his assumption of the existence of link languages that interconnect the Northwestern, North-northwestern, and Almora branches. Specifically, he argues that the Rangpa, Kanash and Zhangzhung languages serve as such link languages. As shown in the table of word correspondence (⇒ Appendix) of the Himalayish languages, those ranging from Bunan to Byans in Shafer’s subgrouping maintain a certain continuity, and there must be some link language that interconnects these languages. Here, Sharma focused on Zhangzhung, indicating that some Kannaure and Chhitkal words are the loans from Zhangzhung. He compared those words, but, regrettably, this comparison is, for the most part, unsuitable. Nonetheless, I will examine his line of reasoning in more detail because this is helpful in highlighting the characteristics of Zhangzhung. However, it should be noted that while most of the Zhangzhung words Sharma discussed were taken from Haarh’s research materials, the sources of other words with different forms are unknown. The following points are also true of Sharma’s

comparisons:

(1) Three words are taken as vocabulary items characteristic of Zhangzhung.

<u>meaning</u>	<u>Zhangzhung</u>	<u>Kannaur</u>
skin/fur	bad	bød
stain	raŋ	raŋ
ear	ra-tse	rotš (Chhitkal)

The words meaning 'skin' and 'ear' are taken from Haarh, but the source of the word meaning 'stain' is unknown.

(2) All the following sample vocabulary items are likely to have originated from the Proto-Tibeto-Burman, and should not be considered Zhangzhung loanwords.

two	ni	niš
six	ɖuk	ʈuk
seven	sniš	štis
hundred	ra	ra
woman	tša-med	tšimed
sun	ñiri	ni (Chhitkal)
mouth	a:	a:
child	hri-tse	atše

(3) The following word is found in several languages in the subgroup, though it cannot be regarded as a Tibeto-Burman root.

horse	hraŋ	raŋ
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(4) The following words came from the same Tibetan origin.

conjunctive	daŋ	daŋ
rib	hrib	rib

(5) The following words cannot be regarded as stemming from the same origin due to the differences in their rhymes.

water	tiŋ	ti
mouth	khag	khaŋ
wind	li	lan

(6) The following words are unsuitable for comparison.

nail	kil	kilaŋ
golden	(mar-)ži	zaŋ
road	gyum	am
elders	yose	ruza
trouble	dubaŋ	dukhaŋ

The above words cannot be considered as corresponding to each other by any means. By the way, the root of the word for ‘golden’ is not *ži* but *mar-*. As mentioned above, Zhangzhung assumed two roles; linking the Tibetan and Himalayan languages and connecting all the Himalayan languages. Given the meticulousness of current descriptive linguistics, for the time being, the research will likely be carried out along the latter perspective. At any rate, it is important for us to understand more precisely the nature of Zhangzhung itself.

6. The former perspective above often emphasizes beautiful correspondences of cultural lexical stock between Zhangzhung and Written Tibetan. I believe that they are loans, and I cannot find any close relationship in other lexical categories of the two languages. Even if we are to examine Zhangzhung’s genetic relationship with Tibetan, we should first study the Gyarong language or the proto-Gyarong-Qiang for comparison, instead of directly going to the comparison of Zhangzhung with Written Tibetan. Gyarong, along with Kachin (Jinghpaw), links all the Tibeto-Burman sub-groups and it probably shares a proto-language with Qiang. Still, we cannot overlook the ultra-linguistic fact of the connection between Zhangzhung and Gyarong as mentioned below.

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 女國 in the Chinese historical records) moved eastward to the Gyarong region and established 東女國 (⇒see map). 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. *gyim* corresponds to the medieval and archaic Chinese word \**kim* (金) as shown by Baxter (1992: 768), and *shod* to a Tibetan word meaning ‘locality’. Further, Yamaguchi argues that the name of the sBrang clan who conquered the region of Gyarong can be compared to the Sanskrit word *suvarṇa* after removing the vowels. Indeed, there is a similar case where the Sanskrit word *brahma* corresponds to the Tibetan word *bram*, so we cannot absolutely deny Yamaguchi’s claim. But, so far, there are few other parallel examples which would support Yamaguchi. While we need more time to decide whether *suvarṇa* is the original form of sBrang, or not, I think we can justifiably conclude from this historical background that there were certain linguistic connections between 女國 (Zhangzhung) and 東女國 (Gyarong).

The following table shows the lexical items that Nishi pointed out as characteristic of the Himalayan languages.

	Zhangzhung	Gyarong
barley	zad	ɤju (二崗理)
ear	ra-tse	tə-ma

fat	tshas	tə-čam
heart	she	tə-šne
intestines	hri-tsum	naŋ-ča
iron	zangs	šam
		zaŋ(=copper)
gold	mar	ksər
		smar (=yellow)
		mar (=butter)
neck	khang	fqə (二崗理)
nose	lgyum-zhi	tə-šnə
skin	pad	tə-ŋji
blue	ting	
cloud	du	zdem
red	mang	
snow	mu	təmu (=weather, sky, cloud)
road	lgyum	ča-la

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. Although we cannot find any beautiful correspondence for these particular items above, a detailed comparison in the near future may possibly provide us with more positive clues.

7. This discussion has been all about the comparison of vocabulary, but textual analysis of texts is of equal importance. The literature which provided an important source for the Tibetan-Zhangzhung Dictionary, especially *mDzod-phug*, contains a wealth of Zhangzhung words and usage, and we must work harder to analyze that literature. Hoffmann (1967) was the first person to analyze these texts. More recently, Dr. Dan Martin has compiled an extensive collection of linguistic data on Zhangzhung.

To promote studies of the Zhangzhung language in the near future, we must devote ourselves to:

- (1) distinguishing clearly the historical taxonomy of Zhangzhung in the Dunhuang period and that of ‘organized’ Bon,
- (2) analyzing the textual data of these two kinds of Zhangzhung,
- (3) collecting more descriptive data of the Himalayan languages that seem to have genetic relationship to Zhangzhung, and
- (4) promoting descriptive studies of the languages of the northwestern part of Sichuan Province.

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## Appendix

Comparison of Himalayish languages, Proto-Tamang, AMD, Gyarong and ZZ

(M) : Manchad (Ti) : Tinan (Ks) : Kanash (Ku) : Kannaure  
 (B) : Bunan (Th) : Thebor (R) : Rangpa (PTam) : PTam  
 (D) : Yano-Dafla (G) : Gyarong (ZZ) : ZZ-Haarh

### one

(M) itsa (Ti) itsa (Ks) id (Ku) id (B) tiki (Th) ti (R) tig (D) akhin  
 (G) kə-rek (PTam) \*gri(k)<sup>2</sup> (ZZ) tig

### two

(M) džuta (Ti) ñidži (Ks) ñis (Ku) niš (B) ñiskiŋ (Th) niši (R) nhiis (D)  
 anyi (G) kə-ñies (PTam) \*nii<sup>2</sup> (ZZ) ni, ne

### three

(M) šumu (Ti) šumu (Ks) šum (Ku) sum (B) sumi (Th) sum (R) sum  
 (D) um (G) kə-sam (PTam) \*som<sup>2</sup> (ZZ) sum

### four

(M) pi (Ti) pi (Ks) pu (Ku) pə: (B) pi (Th) pi (R) pi (D) appi, apli  
 (G) kə-wdi (PTam) \*bli<sup>2</sup> (ZZ) bing

### five

(M) ŋa (Ti) ŋa (Ks) ŋa (Ku) ŋa (B) ŋāi (Th) ŋai (R) ŋe (D) ango  
 (G) kə-mño (PTam) \*ŋa<sup>2</sup> (ZZ) nga

### six

(M) trui (Ti) tšui (Ku) tʉg (B) trui (Th) tuki (D) akke (G) kə-ʈok  
 (PTam) \*druu<sup>2</sup> (ZZ) drug

### seven

(M) nhidži (Ti) ñitši (Ku) štš (B) ñiži (Th) nəši (D) kani (G) kə-šñes  
 (PTam) \*hnis<sup>2</sup> (ZZ) snis, snes, snel

### eight

(M) re (Ti) gyèdi (Ku) rəy (B) gyei (Th) gyai (D) plönö (G) wə-ryat  
 (PTam) \*brat<sup>2</sup> (ZZ) gyad

### nine

(M) ku (Ti) kà (Ku) sgui (B) gù (Th) gwi (D) kayo (G) kə-ŋgu (PTam) \*ku<sup>2</sup>  
 (ZZ) gu-dug

**ten**

(M) sà (Ti) sà (Ku) səy (B) tšui (Th) tšui (D) rengcheng (G) sgye  
(PTam) \*tsyuy<sup>2</sup> (ZZ) cu, cu-tse-na

**hundred**

(M) rà (Ti) rà (Ku) ra (B) gyà (Th) gya (R) gya (D) lenggo (G) pa-  
rya (ZZ) ra

**1 sg.**

(M) gye (Ti) gye (Ks) gu (Ku) gə (B) gyi (Th) gi (R) gye (D) ngo  
(G)ña (PTam) \*hŋa<sup>1</sup>

**2 sg.**

(M) kàʔ (Ti) kàʔ (Ks) ko (Ku) kə (B) han (Th) ŋan (R) gəŋ (D) no  
(G) nə-gyo

**3 sg.**

(M) du (Ti) [do] (Ks) du (Ku) do (B) [tal (LS)] (Th)əru (R) #dhe (D)  
a  
(G) wu-yo, mə

**what**

(M) tšhi (Ti) khya (Ks) tšhuge (Ku) thəd-tšhəd (B) kha (Th) kha (D)  
hogu (G) thə (PTam) \*taa<sup>2</sup> ~ \*daa<sup>4</sup>

**who**

(M) əri (Ti) ari (Ks) hate (Ku) hət ~ həd (B) #su (Th) #su (R) ghwə (D)  
hiè (G) sə

**negation**

(M) ma (Ti) [ma] (Ks) ma- (Ku) mə (B) [ma] (Th) ma (R) mha

**prohibition**

(M) tha (Ti) [tha-] (Ku) thə (B) [tha] (Th) tha (R) thə

**man**

(M) m̀i (Ti) m̀i (Ku) mi (B) m̀i (Th) mi (R) mi (D) bengni (G) te-mi  
(PTam) \*mii<sup>1</sup> (ZZ) ni

**woman**

(M) [myo] (Ks) tšime (Ku) tšimed (B) [tsemed] (Th) ešri-tšəŋ (R)  
tša:ma (D) nyèmè (G) mə-snəm (ZZ) tsa-med



**father**

(M) ba (Ks) ba (Ku) bowa [apa] (B) [awa] (Th) apa, kya (R) a:pa

**mother**

(M) ya (Ks) ya (Ku) ama (B) ama (*LSI*) (Th) əmma (R) a:ma

**son**

(M) yò (Ti) yor (Ku) tšhaŋ (B) butsa (Th) phəsli-tšəŋ

**dauther**

(M) [myo] (Ks) tšime (Ku) tšimed (B) [tsemed] (Th) ešri-tšəŋ (R) tšama

**sister**

(M) [rhing] [rhinj] (Ks) riŋz (Ku) riŋz (R) rhiŋza

**name**

(M) min (Ti) [min] (B) min (Th) min (R) mhin

**body**

(G) tə skru (ZZ) ka-ya

**side(right)**

(G) ta mam ka khyas (ZZ) ngar

**bone**

(M) #rhuspa (Ti) #rhuspa (B) #ruspa

**flesh**

(M) šà (Ti) šà (Ku) ša (B) ša (Th) ša (R) sya (G) ša skem (ZZ) mang-thun

**head**

(M) punza (Ti) bálog (Ks) bal (Ku) [ba(h)] (B) puša (Th) piša (G) ta wo (ZZ) pu, pur-lang, cog

**forehead**

(M) phyà (Ti) phetar (Ku) phya (B) phetar (Th) phya

**hand**

(M) gùra (Ti) gud (Ks) guḍ (Ku) gud (B) lag (Th) la (R) lag (D) lak (G) ta-yak (PTam) \*hyaa<sup>1</sup> (ZZ) tsa-rang

**finger**

(M) bremza (Ti) brentsa (Ku) [prats] (B) botsi (Th) braŋ (R) bəntša

(G) ta yu ndzo ndzo (ZZ) sran

### nail

(M) tin (Ti) tin (Ku) [tšin] (B) sun (Th) #šen (R) nəŋ

### foot

(M) konza (Ti) bəŋ (Ks) pile (Ku) baŋ (B) baŋ (Th) bəŋkhət (R) na:r  
(D) lecho (G) ta-me (ZZ) tshas-phru

### nose

(M) ñà (Ti) ñya (Ks) ta (Ku) stakutš (B) gyumphug (Th) nyum  
(R) nhimi (D) nyepöm (G) ta-šna (PTam) \*hna<sup>1</sup> (ZZ) lgyum-zhi

### eye

(G) tə mñak (ZZ) mig, dmig, yig

### blind

(G) kə lo kši (ZZ) u-mig, ma-lig-min

### mouth

(M) à (Ti) à (Ks) kakaŋ (Ku) khakəŋ (B) əg ~ a? (Th) a (G) tə šnes  
(ZZ) əg-sho, khag

### bread

(M) mutšha (Ti) mutšha (Ku) mutšha (B) altsham, [mutsa] (Th) mutša

### tongue

(M) lhe (Ti) lè (Ks) le (Ku) le: (B) lè (Th) le (G) tə šme (ZZ) skyel, lkyel

### ear

(M) rhetra (Ti) reṭra (Ks) rhod (B) retsi (Th) rəpəŋ (D) nyerung (G) tə-rñe  
(ZZ) ra-tse

### hair

(M) krə (Ti) bal (Ks) #kra (Ku) #kra (B) bal (Th) #kra (R) #kha (D) dömö  
(G) rñe (ZZ) spa

(M) tsəm (Ku) #spu (B) #pù (Th) #pu

### face

(M) mod (Ti) mod (Ku) sto (B) mod (Th) mami (D) nyegmā (G) tə-gye  
(PTam) \*hlii<sup>2</sup>

**cheek**

(M) tšarni (Ti) #grampa (Ku) piŋ (B) #grampa (Th) #dampa (G) tə zhu bafi  
(ZZ)'ud

**neck**

(G) tə mgu (ZZ) khang

**throat**

(G) khruñ khruñ (ZZ) sbyib

**chest**

(M) kà (Ti) kyug (B) kyuktoŋ (Th) kyu (G) ta ro (ZZ) pring-rgyud

**breast**

(M) tšutšu (Ti) tšyutšu (Ku) tšutšu (B) mama (Th) #pipi (R) apu

**hip**

(M) thaka, um (Ti) #kyetpa (Ku) re (B) #kyetpa (Th) #kedpa

**rib**

(G) ta mam ša rə (ZZ) hrib

**shoulder**

(G) ta rpak (ZZ) dar

**shoulder blade**

(G) sok pa (ZZ) tsog

**belly**

(M) khog (Ti) khog (Ks) šon (B) dan (Th) kho(k) (R) khotšə (G) tə wok ku tsu  
(ZZ) gso-byed

**arm**

(G) ta rpak (ZZ) tsa-rang

**knee**

(M) puš (Ti) puš (Ku) bušbaŋ (B) pus (Th) pušəŋ

**joint**

(M) prul (Ku) [tsig] (B) #tšhilspa ~ tshikpa (Th) tšikh

**leg**

(G) tə phut pa (ZZ) nyung-zug

**thigh**

(M) drò (Ti) ɖrò (Ku) lum (B) laša (Th) buləŋ (G) tə phut pa (ZZ) slad

**fat**

(M) tshosa (Ti) tshos (Ku) [tshos] (B) tshos (Th) tšo (R) tšhəs (G) ta ɬam  
(ZZ) tshas

**liver**

(M) tiŋña (Ti) #tšhinpa (Ku) ɬap [šin] (B) #tšhinpa (Th) #tšinba (R) #tšhinpa  
(G) tə pši (ZZ) shin-tun

**gall bladder**

(G) mji gri (ZZ) kha-bad

**kidney**

(G) bo tem (ZZ) rka-dur

**intestines**

(G) lañ ce (ZZ) hri-tsum

**penis**

(G) tə lep (ZZ) the-wer

**vagina**

(G) skyes lam (ZZ) pad-ma

**heart**

(M) šuɖza (Ti) šoɖra (Ku) -, [stiŋ (TRJ)] (B) šoša (Th) šeša (D) hâpök  
(G) tə-šme (PTam) \*tiŋ<sup>1</sup> (ZZ) tsi-ta

**lungs**

(M) lunña (Ti) #lwa (Ku) thrub (B) ?#groa (Th) #lwa (R) #lwa (G) tə-slo  
(ZZ) lung-ni

**breathe**

(M) sàg (Ti) sàʔ (Ku) dòm (B) sag (Th) dalp (G) ta soñ se (ZZ) sad, seg

**tooth**

(M) tshwă (Ti) tshà (Ks) gar (Ku) gər (B) suà (Th) swa (R) sæg  
(D) fi (G) tə-swa (ZZ) skod

**gum**

(M) #ñil (Ti) #ñil (Ku) [(s)til(h)] (B) #ñil (Th) #nil

**blood**

(M) ši (Ti) sui (Ku) polatš (B) šui (Th) šui (D) oi (G) tə-ši (PTam) \*kaa<sup>2</sup>  
(ZZ) reg-thum

**blood vessel**

(G) tə kyur (ZZ) ni-nang, snu

**skin**

(M) trapri (Ti) boṭha (Ku) bōd (B) batsi (Th) pakhpā (D) supin  
(G) tə-ṇḍu (ZZ) sad

**saliva**

(M) krati (Ti) trul (Th) trul ~ turul (R) krati

**sweat**

(M) [trug] (Ku) dusti (B) truks (Th) dusti, rabəŋ (R) tšhyadpa

**snivel**

(M) ñapti (Ti) #nak (Ku) stəmti (B) #nàg

**pus**

(M) [nhəg] (Ku) stək (R) nag

**excrement**

(M) khì (Ti) khì (Ku) khə (B) koko (R) a:ka

**urine**

(M) tšhaŋzi (Ti) tšhaŋti (Ku) skli (B) džàg (R) tšyũku

**mind**

(G) sem lo (ZZ) she, tha-yud, khri

**animal**

(G) sem cen, ku rñus (ZZ) rwang-sher

**yak**

(G) ku ṇbru (ZZ) yag-gyad

**horse**

(M) rhaŋ (Ti) rhaŋ (Ks) rhaŋ (Ku) raŋ (B) ʃaŋs (Th) ʃəŋ (R) rhās  
(D) ghora (G) nbro (ZZ) hrang

**sheep**

(G) kə gyo (ZZ) rlug

**lion**

(G) seŋ ge (ZZ) sang-go

**rabbit**

(G) ka la (ZZ) bho-la

**elephant**

(G) laŋ po che (ZZ) has-ti

**fish**

(Ti) ŋya (B) ŋyà (G) gyoʔ gyok (ZZ) tsa

**silk**

(G) ŋgok ceŋ ru (ZZ) na-nam

**wool**

(M) [tʃəm] (Ti) [tsam] (Ku) tsəm (B) [tsam] (Th) tʃam ~ tʃəm (R) tʃhəm  
(G) smok

**dog**

(M) khui (Ti) khui (Ks) kui (Ku) kui (B) khyù ~ khiyu (Th) kui (R) khwi (D)  
iki (G) khyə (PTam) \*hna khyu<sup>1</sup> (ZZ) ku-ra

**bird**

(M) pya (Ti) pya (Ks) tsarits (Ku) pya ~ pyatš (B) pyatsi (Th) pya (D) pötta  
(G) pa-cu (PTam) \*hnya Mya<sup>1/2</sup> (ZZ) du

**bear**

(M) omo (Ti) omo (Ku) rikha (B) [wampu “yellow bear”] (Th) hom  
(D) sèttöm (G) pri

**mouse**

(M) [piutsa] (Ku) pyu (B) pyutsi[b-] (Th) piu ~ pio (R) nibtša

**insect**

(M) omɖʒɑ (= snake) (Ti) om (= snake) (Ku) həŋ “worm” (B) #bu (Th) #bu  
(R) #bhu

**fly**

(M) [yənza] (Ku) yaŋ (Th) boyəŋ (R) bhudžyaŋ (D) tayeng  
(G) kulu kə-nbyam

**bee**

(M) [yəmayəŋza] (Ku) bəšyaŋ (B) bràŋsi bu (Th) -byaŋ (D) tangu  
(G) gyu-wam

**louse**

(M) rig (Ti) rig (Ku) rig (B) šiɡ (Th) šī (R) rhi:ɡ (G) kha li (PTam) \*syat<sup>2</sup>

**flea**

(Ku) [špög] (B) mutig [sm-] (Th) miti (R) mhitig

**tail**

(M) [mekuʈu] (Ku) [pöntsaniŋ] (B) #ŋama (Th) mekon

**wing**

(B) #šukpa (Th) #šokpa

**fire wood**

(M) šŋ (Ti) šŋ (Ku) [šŋ] (B) šiŋ (Th) šiŋ (R) siŋ

**grass**

(M) šàŋ (Ti) sàŋ (Ku) tši (B) tšī (Th) tši (R) tši (D) eng (G) kə-tsa

**leaf**

(M) lab (Ti) lab (B) lab

**egg**

(M) [tiglhig] (Ku) liʈ (B) khuartum (Th) tum (D) püpü (G) tə-gam  
(PTam) \*phum<sup>2</sup>

**sun**

(M) eke (Ti) ekhe (Ks) dupe (Ku) yume (B) ŋiitsi (Th) ni (R) ni (D) dányi  
(G) kə-yam, taŋi (PTam) \*dini<sup>1</sup> (ZZ) nyi-ri

**moon**

(M) latsəŋ (Ks) džošta (Ku) goltšhəŋ (B) lə (Th) gəlsəŋ (D) pālo (G) tsu-la  
(ZZ) zla-ri

**cloud**

(M) dù (Ti) dù (Ku) žu (B) dù (Th) žu (G) zdem (ZZ) du

**fire**

(M) mè (Ti) mè (Ks) mi (Ku) me (B) mè (Th) me (R) mhe (D) umè  
(G) tə mčak (ZZ) ne

**smoke**

(M) tū (Ti) tū (Ku) dueŋ (B) khù (Th) khu (R) khu

**ash**

(M) tab (Ti) tab (Ku) bospa [mepyats] (B) kyuks (Th) #tšu (R) tšha:ro

**water**

(M) ti (Ti) soti (Ks) ti (Ku) ti (B) soti (R) ti (D) ishi (G) tə-gyu  
(PTam) \*kyuy<sup>2</sup> (ZZ) ting

**wind**

(M) län (Ku) lən (B) lan (Th) lan (D) dāri (G) kha-li (ZZ) li

**stone**

(M) #rəg [rhag] (Ti) rəʔ (Ku) #rəg (B) gran [gram] (Th) #ra ~ rak (R) uŋ  
(D) elung (G) gya lək

**snow**

(M) [mug] (Ku) pom (B) [mu] (Th) əŋ (R) aŋ (D) tapum (G) təy pa  
(ZZ) mu

**nature**

(G) rañ nbyoñ kham (ZZ) du-drod

**light**

(G) ot (ZZ) khir

**dark**

(G) ku rñus (ZZ) gu-mun

**sky**



(Ti) namka (B) nam (Th) nam (G) nam khafi (ZZ) mu, mu-khyung

**darkness**

(G) ku rñus, so war (ZZ) ni-dud, gu-mun zla-ri, a-kyo-sangs, gto-bu dod-de

**daytime**

(M) ñira (Ti) ñir (Ku) lae (B) ñira ~ ñira (Th) nir (R) nir

**a day**

(M) [hrag] (Ti) [gyag] (Th) #žanma (R) gya

**night**

(B) phiro (Th) mundo, munya (R) mulyan

**star**

(G) tsu ngre (ZZ) 'dz(w)ar-wag, wer-zhi

**rainbow**

(G) njafi (ZZ) sri-zham

**rain**

(G) tə mu (ZZ) kyi-tang

**hail**

(G) tə rmok (ZZ) gra-jil

**burn**

(G) kə nber (ZZ) bar

**lake**

(G) mčew (ZZ) da-ti

**river**

(G) mñan nguñ (ZZ) ting-sho

**earth**

(G) sa cha (ZZ) slas(-zhi)

**dust**

(G) rdul (ZZ) tur

**mountain**

(G) ta nbafi (ZZ) rang

**valley**

(G) kya kha (ZZ) khud

**road**

(M) [əm] (Ti) amtsh (Ku) əm (B) amtsi (Th) om ~ am (R) amtša (D) laong  
(G) ča la (PTam) \*gyam<sup>2</sup> (ZZ) gyu, lgyum

**bridge**

(M) [tshəm] (Ku) [tshamm] (R) dzaŋpho

**field**

(M) ri (rhi) (Ti) ri (Ku) rim (B) rig (Th) ri ~ rim (R) rhigər (D) rek  
(G) sa jañ (ZZ) tig-tig

**barley**

(G) ʀjw (二崗理) (ZZ) zad

**bow**

(M) gumtsha (Ti) gumtsha (Ku) -, [gum] (B) gumtsi (Th) gum, kuman

**arrow**

(M) tšù (Ti) tšù (Ku) -, [mōh] (B) srim (Th) šim

**needle**

(M) tšab (Ku) kyep (B) khyep (Th) kep (R) khep (D) paksi (G) tə-rtšot  
(PTam) \*dap<sup>2</sup>

**house**

(M) tšuŋ (Ti) tšuŋ (Ks) kim (Ku) kim (B) kyum [gy-] (Th) kyuŋ ~ kyum  
(R) kim (D) o-gu (G) kyim (PTam) \*dim<sup>4</sup> (ZZ) se-to

**salt**

(M) tshă (Ku) tšha (B) tšhà (Th) tsa (R) tšha

**gold**

(M) za ~ zaŋ (Ks) zaŋg (Ku) zaŋ (B) #ser (LSI) (Th) zəŋ (R) džās (G) ksar  
(PTam) \*mar (ZZ) mar-ži

**silver**

(M) mul (Ti) mul (Ks) [mul] (Ku) mul (B) mul (Th) mul (R) mul (D) tengka  
(G) po ni

**iron**

(M) ñiləm [lhləm] (Ks) ron (Ku) rən (B) #tšaks (Th) #tšakh (R) #tšyag  
(D) rākderr (G) šam (ZZ) zangs

**red**

(M) šèi (Ku) suig (B) mai [maŋi] (Th) maŋni (R) maŋd (D) lengchi (ZZ) ra

**black**

(M) roki (Ku) rək (B) khai (Th) kani (R) tiŋd (D) keana (G) kə-nak  
(PTam) \*hmlaŋ<sup>2/1</sup> (ZZ) kun

**white**

(M) tshàŋsi [šule] (Ks) tšog (Ku) thog (B) ši (Th) thəŋni (D) ponglu  
(G) kə-pram (PTam) \*tar<sup>1</sup> (ZZ) shim

**blue**

(M) [tiŋi] (Ku) rag [=green] (B) fi [tiŋi] (Th) tiŋni (ZZ) ting

**yellow**

(M) [lhei] (Ku) pik (B) [lhei] (Th) lene (R) lheb (D) jèvé (ZZ) ma-sang

**heavy**

(M) lhì: (Ku) lig ~ li:g (B) li (Th) liko (R) li:d (D) ai (PTam) \*lii<sup>1</sup>

**light**

(M) lhàŋji (Ku) [lamgids] (B) yāi (Th) yanko (R) yaŋd (G) kə-yo  
(PTam) \*(n)yaŋ<sup>2</sup>

**thick**

(M) kèi (B) ŋai (R) tuŋt

**thin**

(M) tšhìte (Ku) [bagits] (B) lai?

**hot**

(M) [troŋre] (Ku) bək (B) phundži (Th) kosra (R) tšart

**cold**

(M) sòì (Ti) sòì (Ku) liš (B) sòì (Th) khətkyo

**bitter**

(M) kətegi (Ku) kak (B) khaṭai (Th) khəktəkpa (R) khətagt

**sweet**

(M) wūši (Ku) thig (B) khei (Th) nyamko (R) khyagt (G) kə-khyi

**sour**

(M) surdži (Ku) surk (B) šui [šuri] (Th) surko (D) kungsukpa (G) kə-čor

**new**

(M) kharkoi (Ku) ñug (B) nui (Th) nyuṅni (D) nittina (G) kə-šak

**old**

(M) yùì (Ti) yùì (Ku) ušk (B) yui (Th) #nyṅpa (R) yu:d (D) kutchuk

**ripe**

(M) min- (Ku) [šo šo] (B) mini (Th) šo (bəṅ)

**dry**

(M) [kar-] (Ku) [tshars] (B) [khyoï] (Th) phorka

**to do**

(M) [lha-] (Ti) [la-] (Ks) ša /oṭ- /ṅ- (Ku) lan- (B) [lig-] (Th) len- (R) lə- (D) reto (G) ka-ram

**to go**(M) [i-] (Ti) [i-] (Ks) bu /oṅ-, buko- (Ku) bi- (B) [e-] (Th) de- (R) gyə- ~ di- , yū- (D) guito (G) ka-čhe (PTam) \*ya(r)<sup>1/2</sup>**to come**(M) [ə-] (Ti) [am-] (Ks) bo/ura- (Ku) bən- (B) [ra-/goaṅ-] (Th) ra- (R) rha- (D) wāto (G) ka-we (PTam) \*kha<sup>1</sup> (ZZ) phya-nga**to walk**

(M) [zo-] (Ks) por- (Ku) yun- (Th) de-

**to fly**

(M) pham- (Ku) yab- (B) pan-

**to be seen**

(M) [taŋ-] (Ti) [taŋ-] (Ks) taŋ- (Ku) taŋ (Th) təŋ (R) taŋ- “find”

**to see**

(M) khòn (Ti) khàn (Ku) khyā- (B) kan- (Th) kan- (R) kan-

**to be heard**

(M) [re-] (Ks) tsha- (Ku) ron- (B) hen- (Th) ruŋ-, go- (R) yən-

**to hear**

(M) [tha-] (Ti) [tha-] (Ku) thəs- (B) [gyags-] (G) ka ru nafi (ZZ) zhil-zhal(N)

**to know**

(M) ŋe- (Ti) ŋye- (Ku) ne- (B) tšhaŋ- (Th) se- (R) səs-

**to say**

(M) [ku-] (Ti) [ku-] (Ks) lon- (Ku) lo- (B) [lo-] (Th) riŋ- (R) lwə- ~ lə-

**to talk**

(M) [prə-] (Ti) [pra-] (Ku) lan- (B) [phyā-] (Th) lo- ~ lok-

**to ask**

(M) [ruk-][g-] (Ks) ritši- (Ku) i- (R) rhu-

**to laugh**

(M) wà- (Ti) [wa-] (Ku) wən- (B) sed- [sred-] (Th) wot-, kaŋ- (R) rhə-  
(G) ka na ri (ZZ) ha-si-ga (N)

**to cry**

(M) kra- [-b-] (Ku) krəb- (B) tyo- (Th) twe

**to die**

(M) si- (Ti) si- (Ks) ši- (Ku) ši- (B) ši- (Th) šitš- (R) sis- (G) šu  
(ZZ) gyog, gyag, grog

**to kill**

(M) sa- (Ti) sa- (Ku) šan- (B) pur- (Th) sat- (R) sad

**to eat**

(M) za- (Ti) ze- (Ks) za- (Ku) za- (B) za- (Th) za- (R) dzə- (G) ta ndzaw  
(ZZ) drung-zad (food)

**to drink**

(M) tuŋ- (Ti) tuŋ- (Ks) tugu- (Ku) tuŋ- (B) tuŋ- (Th) tuŋ- (R) tū-

**to lick**

(M) yàk (Ku) [lem-] (B) lak- (Th) lem-

**to bite**

(M) tsik- (Ti) tshà (Ku) [tšiq-] (B) kre- [gre-] (Th) tš̄i- (R) kad-

**to smell**

(G) ka na nem (ZZ) shi-shim(N)

**to sit**

(M) bàŋ- (Ti) džo- (Ks) na- (Ku) to- (B) džod (Th) po- (R) hun-

**to sleep**(M) phete šu- [im (N)] (Ti) dus- (Ku) yəg- (B) ip- (Th) gutš- (if (N))  
(R) gutš- (i:b(N))**to dream**

(M) mǎŋ- (Ku) [maŋ-] (B) manks (N) (Th) maŋ- (R) məs (N)

**to put**

(M) kè- (Ks) pi- (Ku) [ta-] (Th) ta:- (R) ta:-

**to send**

(M) [tšər-][ts-] (Ti) [tsar-] (Ks) twat- (Ku) šen- (B) [stog-] (R) sa:-

**to catch**

(M) [tsum-] (Ku) [tsum-] (B) [tsum-]

**to strike**

(M) [teŋg-] (Ti) [teŋ-] (Ks) to- (Ku) toŋ- (B) [tib-] (R) tad-

**to break**

(M) [thag-] (Ku) ʔəg- (B) thak- (Th) kyak- (R) phag-

**to boil**

(M) šù- (Ku) pan- (B) kwad- (Th) len- (R) pun-

**to roast**

(M) ro- (B) [ro-] (Th) rot- (R) ḡ-, hḡ-

**to satisfy**

(M) [pin-] (Ti) [piŋ-] (Ks) plen- (Ku) [pöŋ-] (B) [pin-] (Th) pin- (R) pin-

**to be full/ satisfied**

(Ti) biŋ- (Ku) bæŋ- (B) biŋ- (G) kə pke (ZZ) gang

**to wash**

(M) tšàk- [tšh-] (Ku) tši- (B) kyi- (Th) ur- (R) ur-

**to give**

(M) ran- (Ti) ran- (Ks) raŋ /ŋ- ~ ke- (Ku) rən- ~ ke- (B) da- (Th) da-/khe- (R) khyǎ- (D) bhito (G) ka-màer

**to steal**

(M) #ku- (Ku) khu- (B) kù- (Th) khut-

**to buy**

(M) tsum- (Ti) [yog-] (Ks) khaŋ- (Ku) zoŋ- (B) yok- (Th) #tšəŋ- (R) tšhǎ-

**to sell**

(M) làŋ- (Ti) [təŋ-] (Ku) ren- (B) laŋ(g)- (Th) rəŋ- (R) raŋ-

**to weave**

(M) rhan- (Ku) tag- [-ŋ] (B) ran- (Th) tak- (R) rhən-

**to sew**

(M) pèn- (Ku) [pon-] (B) phan- (Th) pu-/on- (R) -phan- (D) hamto