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The Present Stage of Deciphering Old Zhangzhung

メタデータ	言語: English 出版者: 公開日: 2011-01-28 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): 作成者: 武内, 紹人, 西田, 愛 メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	https://doi.org/10.15021/00002562

Senri Ethnological Studies 75: 151–165 ©2009
Issues in Tibeto-Burman Historical Linguistics
Edited by Yasuhiko Nagano

The Present Stage of Deciphering Old Zhangzhung

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

Zhangzhung is an extinct Tibeto-Burman language once spoken in the powerful kingdom of Zhangzhung in western Tibet. The kingdom was conquered and incorporated into the expanding Tibetan Empire in the seventh century A.D. Subsequently, the Zhangzhung people were gradually assimilated by the Tibetans; their language was eventually replaced by Tibetan and died out. Other than a few personal names scattered in Old Tibetan texts, the Dunhuang texts with which we are concerned are the only contemporaneous written records of Zhangzhung

which have come down to us from the time the language was still apparently alive.

However, the Zhangzhung language did not vanish completely. Its tradition seems to have been maintained for a long time by Bonpo priests, for whom it was their sacred written language. In the 1960s, Tibetan Bonpo scholars published a Tibetan-Zhangzhung dictionary, and a bilingual text in Tibetan and Zhangzhung, the *Mdzod-phug*. Although the *Mdzod-phug* is ascribed to an eighth century Bonpo scholar, the text seems to have been written later, and the language described is significantly different from that found in the Zhangzhung manuscripts from Dunhuang. We therefore call it 'New Zhangzhung' in contrast to the 'Old Zhangzhung' language of the Dunhuang texts.

A comparison of Old Zhangzhung and New Zhangzhung reveals that the difference between the two is greater than can be explained as a result of natural historical change. In other words, New Zhangzhung is likely to have developed as a result of Tibetan Bonpos combining their knowledge of Old Zhangzhung with that of Tibetan and Sanskrit (Takeuchi, Nagano, and Ueda 2001: 56–57). Thus, although New Zhangzhung provides important information for the decipherment of Old Zhangzhung, especially the identification of lexical items, we need to formally analyze the Old Zhangzhung data first.

In two consecutive research projects of Bon studies (1997–1999 and 2000–2002) headed by Professor Yasuhiko Nagano of the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, I was put in charge of the Old Zhangzhung texts. The purpose of our research is to decipher the texts—the oldest written records of which may be the Zhangzhung language—and reconstruct the linguistic forms behind them in comparison both with the Zhangzhung language corpus found in later texts as well as with other Tibeto-Burman languages. First, we entered the major texts into a database and did a preliminary analysis of its linguistic constructions, including phonological, morphological, and syntactic structures. A preliminary report on our research was presented at the international symposium, "New Horizons in Bon Studies," held in 1999 at the National Museum of Ethnology, in Osaka. I read the second report at the 9th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies held at Leiden in 2000. The two reports were combined and published in a paper (Takeuchi, Nagano, and Ueda 2001) that outlines our research and results up to 2000.

After an interval of eight years we restarted our decipherment of Old Zhangzhung. This time, Takeuchi and Ai Nishida entered all the remaining Old Zhangzhung data into the database and made further linguistic analysis. In this paper we wish to present the present stage of our knowledge of Old Zhangzhung.

1.2 Sources

Before looking at the Old Zhangzhung texts, let us briefly consider the other materials regarding Zhangzhung.

A. Modern Tibeto-Burman languages

a) Zhangzhung is considered to be a dead language, in other words, no direct descendant seems to exist. However, there may be languages closely affiliated with Zhangzhung among the modern Tibeto-Burman languages, especially of the Western Himalayan branch, such as Kanauri, Rangpa, Bunan, and Byangsi. Comparison with Eastern Tibeto-Burman languages,

such as Gyarong, Minyag, and Newari, should be considered as well.
b) Several Tibetan dialects along the Tibet-Nepal border contain many Zhangzhung loan-words according to Bstan-'dzin gnam-dag (personal communication). Also, Dzong-kha, a Tibetan dialect in Bhutan, contains several grammatical items similar to those in Old Zhangzhung (OZ) as we will see below.

B. New Zhangzhung
In the 1960s, Tibetan Bonpo scholars published a Tibetan-Zhangzhung dictionary, and a bilingual text *Mdzod-phug*. The former is studied and reproduced in Haarh (1968). A more extensive computer database was compiled by Dan Martin (1998). Namgyal Nyima also compiled a new Zhangzhung dictionary from other Bon sources. Although Mdzod-phug is ascribed to an 8th century. Bonpo scholar, the text seems to have been written later, and the Zhangzhung language described is significantly different from that found in the Old Zhangzhung manuscripts. We thus call it New Zhangzhung (NZ) here.

C. Old Zhangzhung
So far we have five OZ texts. All were found in the famous Dunhuang cave. They are written on the verso of scrolls with Chinese Buddhist texts on the recto. All of them seem to be medical texts. In spite of these common features, they are apparently different texts, namely, they are not pieces of the same text.

The basic palaeographical features and approximate size of each text are given below. OZ 1 and OZ 2 contain a similar amount of text. OZ 3 is the most extensive. OZ 4 and OZ 5 are much smaller. Although palaeographical evidence indicates that the Zhangzhung texts were written after the Chinese texts, the Zhangzhung sides are designated as recto in the following descriptions.

1) **OZ 1: VP 755** (Ch. Fragment 43)
The text is catalogued by de la Vallée Poussin under the catalogue number 755. It bears the site number Ch. (= Ch'ien-fo-tung) Fragment 43. The text is written on the back side of a scroll which has a Chinese *vinaya* 'discipline' text on the other side. It lacks the beginning due to paper damage. The remaining part measures 187 × 25 cm and contains 126 lines, where we count 578 different syllables, and in total *c*. 2,000 syllables.

2) **OZ 2: Or 8212 / 188**
This text is found among the group of texts with the requisition number Or. (= Oriental Manuscript) 8212, in which it bears the number 188 together with another totally independent manuscript. The text is written on the back of a scroll with the Chinese Buddha-nâma sûtra. It lacks both the beginning and the end. The remaining part measures 115 × 26.3 cm and contains 86 lines. Eight more lines are written on the Chinese side; probably a continuation from the recto. Thus, there are in total 94 lines, with 593 different syllables, in total *c*. 2,200 syllables.

3) **OZ 3: P 1251**
The text lacks the beginning (the top edge is torn off). The remaining part measures 285 × 25.5 cm and contains 287 lines, with a total of *c*. 6,300 syllables.

4) **OZ 4: P 1247**
The text lacks the beginning (the top edge is torn off). The remaining part measures 72 × 25.5 cm, and contains 46 lines of most probably OZ, in total *c*. 790 syllables.

5) **OZ 5: P 1252**
Written on the back of the Chinese sutra Guang-yin-jing. Although the bottom edge is torn off, the text is complete with 47 lines of most probably OZ, in total *c*. 850 syllables. Two more lines are written on the Chinese side, but their relation to the recto text is not clear.

2. Script and Palaeography

2.1 The texts are written in Tibetan script in a style peculiar to the Old Tibetan texts in the 8th to 9th century. For example, a bilabial nasal *m-* is palatalized with *-y-* when followed by the front vowel *i*, as in *myig dog ci*, but a variant form *mig* without *-y-* also exists (OZ 1: 102); *min* is usually written without *-y-*. An inverted *gi-gu* or vowel *i* sign (transcribed as *ï*) is used. The palaeography conforms to that of the Old Tibetan texts from the late 8th to early 9th century. These palaeographic features and the provenance of the manuscripts lead us to date the manuscripts to the period from the late 8th to the first half of the 9th century.

2.2 Spellings mostly conform to Tibetan orthographic rules, but some deviations exist. For example, several consonant clusters which are not used in Old Tibetan texts are found (e.g., *rngv-*, *rva-*, *ry-*, *rhy-*, *ghy-*, *ryv-*, and *-ngg*). Syllable boundaries are sometimes not explicitly marked: for example, *rhyasang*, *rhyelse*, and *khlangg* are written without *tsheg*. Consequently, it is difficult to decide whether *rhyasang* should be read *rhyasang*, *rhyasng*, or *rhysang*. Though we are relatively familiar with Old Tibetan orthography, since the language is not Tibetan, it is difficult to specify the most appropriate readings from the contexts. These leave us with many uncertainties and result in ambiguous and dubious readings. For example, *lvang* / *wang* (OZ 1: 16, 17), *rva* / *rba* (OZ 1: 31), and *khï* / *wï* (OZ 1: 79) are difficult to decide. *mna* and *mni* turned out to be variant spellings for *man* and *min*.

As we have gradually understood the syllable structures and some morphological constructions, as will be shown in the following sections, many of these dubious points have been solved. Nevertheless, the readings still need to be gradually revised as we proceed.

3. Phonology

3.1 Syllable Structure

We propose the following revised version of canonical syllable structure. Initial consonant clusters C_1 C_i, a glide R, and a vowel V, followed by a final consonant C_2 or consonant clusters C_2 C_3. Of these, C_1, R, C_2 C_3 are optional, while C_i and V are obligatory and are core constitu-

ents of the syllable structure.

C_1 C_i R V C_2 C_3 (*e.g.*, skrigs)

C_1	r- :	rng-, rny-, rb-, rc-, rk-, rky-, rg-, rl-, rm-, rn-, rp-, rt-, rth-, rts-
		note: **rh**- (rha, rhi, rho) = C_i
	s- :	sb- (sbib), sd- (sdom), sk-, sg-, sl-, sm-, sn-, sp-, sr-, st-
	g- :	gt-, gth-, gd- (gtog, gthag, gdang)
	l- :	lng- (lnga)
	’- :	’ng-, ’p- (’ngag, ’pab)

C_i	p	t	k	ˆ(= ʔ)	ts	c	s	sh	h
	(ph	th	kh)		(tsh	ch)			
	b	d	g		dz	j	z	zh	’(= ɦ)
	m	n	ny	ng	l	r	rh	w	y

Note: t / d *vs.* t / th / d ; rh (= voiceless r)

R	-r- :	pra, prog, bra, bri, tri, dra, dri, gra, khrags, sran
	-l- :	gla, glod, glum, khlog, nglas, sli
	-y- :	**ryag**, **rhye**, lyag, byi, cyul, skyi, ryum, slye, slyog
	-v-:	shve, chva, gva, khva, rngvi, gvi, rva, lvi, zva (-v-=-w-)
		yved, **gyvad**, ryvi, ryvege

V i, e, a, o, u, (ï)

C_2 b, d, g, s, l, r, m, n, ng

C_3	--s :	-bs, -gs, -ms, -ngs
		-**ns** (shans), -**ls** (rhyelse), -**rs** (tsars)
	--d :	-nd, -ld, -rd
	--b :	-**mb** (khumb, lhyumb)
	--g :	-**ngg** (khlangg, shingg)

Tone Tonal or atonal?

In C_1 or prefixal consonant position, *r*- and *s*- occur frequently. *g*- appears only before a dental stop. *l*- and ’- are found in OZ 2, but are very limited in number. The presence of pre-consonantal *r*- and *s*- is similar to Amdo and some Western archaic dialects of Tibetan. The bold-faced ***rh***- is rare in Tibetan but very common in OZ. It is unlikely to be a cluster but a single consonant, i.e., a voiceless *r*.

As for initial consonants (C_i), one major problem is whether we should propose a binary contrast (e.g., *t / d*) or a tripartite set (*t / th / d*) for stops and affricates. Alternations of voiceless non-aspirates and aspirates seem to point to a binary system without a contrast in terms of aspiration (e.g., *thum* = *tum, khyero* = *kyero*), as in Old Tibetan. There are no voiceless

nasals.

R stands for resonants, glides or semivowel type sounds in post-consonantal position. *r, v, y,* and *l* are listed. *v* may be better represented phonetically by *w*, but we use *v* to avoid confusion with *w* in initial position. Note that *ry*-, *rhy*-, and *yv*- combinations are very common in OZ.

As for vowels, besides five ordinary vowels (*i*, *e*, *a*, *o*, *u*), an inverted *i* (transliterated as *ï*) is used. However, it does not seem to reflect a different sound from *i*, as shown in variant spellings *gvï / gvi* (OZ 1: 39) and *skrïgs / skrigs* (OZ 1: 73). No long vowels or geminate vowels are found.

For C_2, we find stops (*b*, *d*, *g*), a fricative (*s*), liquids (*l* and *r*), and nasals (*m*, *n*, *ng*). The voiced stops, which accord with Tibetan orthography, are likely to reflect voiceless unreleased stops, though we still have to hold the possibility that they are voiced released stops as in Kinnauri.

--*s* and --*d* stand in C_3 position, as in Old Tibetan; but unlike Old Tibetan both --*s* and --*d* appear after -*n*, -*l*, and -*r*; thus --*s* and --*d* are not in complementary distribution. --*b* and --*g* occur after homorganic nasals.

Is the language tonal or atonal? It is no doubt monosyllabic and includes many homophonic syllables; in other words, it is a typologically tone-prone type. Nevertheless, there is no sign to indicate the tonal contrasts.

4. Grammar

4.1 Sentence final markers *-o* and *-i*

In our previous analysis of OZ 1, the sentence ending is exclusively marked by the sentence final marker -*o*, as shown in the example sentences below. The ending part of each sentence is in bold-face. $ marks a sentence boundary.

Example sentences

$ rma ^ag blan cang sku drul **sa shid-do** $ (OZ1:11)
$ mang ga ya [dï=rï] ^in sig [shvid] cho **min stung-ngo** $ (OZ1:05)
$ lang nad **ga nve'o** $ (OZ1:79)
$ ko ko yag // kar ka na // nu skyu tse // sum med tog mar kul thum **ca kyer-o** $ (OZ1:86)
$ . . . // did na gu ram ti kar ca <u>khyere</u> // yar . . . **ca rhyvis-o** $ (OZ1:15)

Each sentence ends with the vowel -*o* with sometimes the final consonant of the preceding syllable being repeated (e.g., *shid-do*, but *kyer-o* also exists). This is exactly identical with the Old Tibetan or Classical Tibetan form so that it makes us think of "Tibetanization." It is not surprising that when the Zhangzhung language was written down in Tibetan script basically following the Tibetan orthography, it also underwent certain influences of Tibetan orthography and grammar. In fact, we always have to keep in mind the possibility of "Tibetanization or Tibetanism."

OZ 2 and OZ 3, on the other hand, contain the -*i* ending form, such as *lo-di*, *lod-di*, *lodi*.

Examples mïn len ne yi lo d**i** (OZ2:56)
zhi kye na ma lod d**i** (OZ2:9)

These are no doubt the variant spellings of the verb stem *lod* + S-final marker *-i*. This *-i* is, unlike *-o*, more likely to be an original Old Zhangzhung form.

One difference between *-o* and *-i* is their distribution. Namely, *-o* occurs after any predicate (verb, adjective, and noun), but *-i* seems to appear only after a verb.

-o / V, A, N_
-i / V_

We suspect that the postverbal *-i* represents tense or aspect, e.g., past or perfect, as in Dzongkha[1)] and Burmese,[2)] but this is still hypothetical.

4.2 Auxiliary Verbs: *ni* and *ma ni*

ni is another form used at the end of a sentence. The following paragraph begins with the sentence *lings lo'o*, which is followed by several verses, and ends with the sentence *min len ge lings lo ni*. (OZ3:280–282)

lings lo '**o**
(verses)
min len ge lings lo **ni**

lo probably is a nominal form of the verb *lod* 'speak.' *lings* is part of the frequent onomatopoetic reduplication *lings-lings* (cf. also *lingg-lingg* and *gling-gling*, cf. §6). Thus, *lings-lo* probably means 'whispering or murmuring.' So the first sentence may mean: '[Here are] the murmuring.' Then come the verses consisting mainly of onomatopoeia. The phrase concludes with the sentence '[This] is the murmuring of *min-len*' (*ge* is the genitive marker, cf. §5.1). Here, *ni* seems to correspond to the S-final marker *-o* in the same way as the S-final *-i* does. But unlike *-i*, *ni* appears after a noun and may be considered as an auxiliary verb as it is preceded by the negative marker *ma* as *ma ni*.

ba mins **ni**
ba mins **ma ni**

Both *ni* and *ma ni* appear in the middle of a sentence as well.

ni lang spyel ce khyero
ma ni lang ti ce khyero

khyer may be compared to the Tibetan *khyer* 'carry,' but may better correspond to the Kinnauri *kerak* 'gave'[3)] and mean 'give.' *spyel ce* and *ti ce* probably mean 'a dose of milk' and 'a dose of water,' respectively (cf. Bunan *pel-tsi* 'mlk'). *lang* (cf. Tibetan *lang* 'come up') here seems to mean 'in case, *lit*. the situation coming up.' Consequently, the above phrases may tentatively be translated as 'In case it is (= *ni*), you give [the patient] a dose of milk. In case it is not (= *ma ni*), you give [the patient] a dose of water.'[4)]

4.3 Compound Auxiliaries: *gyin* and *min*

gyin occurs in the same environments as *ni* with minor differences.

skri pu **ni**
skri pud **gyin**

ni seems to be preceded by the noun *pu*, while *gyin* is preceded by the verb *pud* (cf. *lo* vs. *lod*). *gyin* resembles the Tibetan progressive form *kyin~gyin*, which is the compound of the genitive particle *kyi~gyi* + the auxiliary verb *yin*. As we will see in the next section (§5,1), the genitive particle of OZ is *ge~ga*. On the analogy of Tibetan we may infer the change V+ *ge~ga* + *ni* > V + *gyin* in OZ, where the verb nominalized by the genitive particle is followed by the auxiliary verb.

min appears in the same environments as *ni*.

mu ran **ni**
mu ran **min**

It is apparently a negative form similar to *ma ni*. But unlike *ma ni*, *min* occurs after a verb.

byo bya lod **min**
sa sa lod **min**

Thus, *min* may be considered the negative form of *gyin*. It may have stemmed from *ma ni*. In Tibetan script, there are cases in which *m*- is written above *n*-, which may be read as *mni, ma ni,* or *min*.

Both *gyin* and *min* have exactly the same forms in Tibetan. This leads us to suspect that the OZ forms were borrowed from Tibetan. However, the Tibetan *gyin* and *min* started to be used in 12th century, while the OZ forms date to early 9th century. In other words, the OZ forms predate the Tibetan forms. So there is a possibilty of OZ influence on Tibetan. Neverthless, We are inclined to consider them to be the results of parallel developments between OZ and Tibetan.

4.4 Sentence Final Markers: Summary

S-final Markers

-o - i	/ N , V , A__ / V___	Tibetan Zhangzhung
ni ma ni	mainly / N__	Zhangzhung
gyin min	mainly / V__	Zhangzhung

4.5 Clause Final Conjunction: *-e* and *ye*

Going back to the last example in the example sentences in §4.1, we find the underlined form *khyere*, which is apparently the same *kyer* in the S-final position, but is in this case followed by a vowel *-e* and a double *shad* (slashes). A few more similar occurrences of *-e* (e.g., *lod-d**e**, grang**e**, dad-d**e**, shingg**e***), are found, which may lead us to infer that *-e* functions as a conjunc-

tion and marks the end of the subordinate clause.

In the examples given above, the verbs end with a consonant followed by *-e*, but if the verb ends with a vowel, it is followed by *ye* (e.g., *sva ye*, *tha ye*, *rkyu ye*, *skri ye*). Thus, there are two phonologically conditioned allomorphs for a conjunction that marks the end of the subordinate clause.

-e / -C_ (post-consonant position)
ye / -V_ (post-vowel position)

As we will see in §5, they conform to the instrumental case markers *-e~ye* 'by,' which suggests that this conjunction also bears the causal meaning 'because of.'

5. Case Marking

5.1 Genitive Case: *ge~ga*

As mentioned above, there are two alternative forms for the genitive case marker, i.e., *ge* and *ga*.

ma **ge** nye lo 'o
ting **ga** nye lo 'o
rhim **ge** nve 'o
rab this **ga** nve 'o

ma ge nye lo'o may mean '[This is] the quiet speech or murmuring of the mother.' *rhim ge nve 'o* may mean '[This is] the disease of *rhim?*.' The conditioning factor of their alternation, however, is not yet clear.

5.2 Instrumental Case: *-e~ye, gye, gyis*

As mentioned above (§4.4), the two phonologically conditioned allomorphs of the instrumental marker are *-e* (after consonant-final nouns) and *ye* (after vowel-final nouns).

min ge len n**e** dun ni
min len**e** yi lo di
min len n**e** yi lod do
rhi ge rho **ye**
ting ge ru **ye**

There are, however, two particles which are also likely to function as instrumental case marker, i.e., *gyis* and *gye*.

kyil brugs brugs **gyis** slangge
gra brugs brugs **gye** slange

gyis is identical with the Tibetan form and *gye* may be its variant. If *gyis* and *gye* are borrowings from Tibetan, they coexisted with the native OZ forms (*-e~ye*) just like the Tibetan S-final *-o* coexisted with the OZ native form *-i* (cf. §4.1).

5.3 Ablative and Locative Cases: *tse* and *la*

As shown in the following examples, *tse* is the ablative case marker and *la* is the locative marker.

tshu shi ting pu **tse** kye **la** gra

tshu shi ting ti **tse** ’eg **la** gra
tshu shi ting zu **tshe** khan **la** gra
tshu shi ting mi **tse** se **la** gra

The ablative *tse* conforms to NZ and Kinnauri and is considered to be indigeneous to OZ. The locative *la* is identical with the Tibetan form and may possibly be a loan.

The words preceding *tse* may be identified as: *pu* ‘fire’, *ti* ‘water’, *zu* ‘earth’, and *mi* ‘man.’

5.4 Case Markers: Summary

Case Markers

Genitive	ge / ga	Zhangzhung
Instrumental	-e / C__ ye / V__	Zhangzhung Zhangzhung
	gye / gyis	Tibetan
Locative	la	Zhangzhung / Tibetan ?
Ablative	tse	Zhangzhung

6. Reduplication

Disyllabic reduplicated words are very numerous in OZ. They are classified into two types according to their vowels, namely, V1-V1 type and V1-a type.

V_1-V_1	a-a	i-i	u-u	e-e	o-o
	bya bya khalangg khiangg sval sval ’a ’a	lingg lingg yii yii shvin shvin gling gling	dum dum brugs brugs zhungg zhungg byus byus	khe khe ngveg ngveg tsheld tsheld myer myer	lyongg lyongg rvo rvo dog dog yol yol

V_1-a	i-a	u-a	o-a
	gling glang svimb svamb gvir gvar shvild shvald	dum dam bung bang blun blan khlumb khlamb	byo bya pyog pyag

As the two types of words occur in the same environments as shown below, there seems to be no semantic or functional differences between them.

du lug **dum dum** skri ti rkyu
du lug **dum dam** skri ti rkyu
tshang mud **dum dum** rind shel
tshang mud **dum dam** rind shel

7. Some Lexical Items[5)]

Though we have not yet done an extensive work on lexical comparisons, some lexical items appear frequently and can be firmly identified. For example, the four basic elements of the universe, i.e., fire, air, water, and earth, appear several times and can be identified as OZ: *pu, khve, ti*, and *zu*. The lower numerals from one to five are also firmly identified as OZ: *ta, nis, sum, pi*, and *nga*.

Numerals

	OZ	NZ	OT	K	R	W. H.
1	ta / tha	tig	gcig	id	tig	(Tin, M) itsa
2	nis	ni	gnyis	nish	nhi:s	
3	sum	sum	gsum	shum	sum	(Tin, M) ésum
4	pi	bing	bzhi	py / pə:	pi	(Tin, M, Bu) pi
5	nga	nga	lnga	nga	ngE	(Tin, M) nga
6	trug ?	drug	drug	trug	truk	
7	stes ?	snis	bdun	stish	nhisi	(M) nhidži
8	gyvad ?	gyad	brgyad	rai	jyad	
9	gvi ?	gu-dug	dgu	sgui	gvi	(Bu) gu, (Th) gwi
10	sa ?	cu	bcu	sa, sai		(Tin, M) sa

The OZ forms of the higher numbers (6–10) have not been firmly identified, while the lower numbers (1–5) are better attested. OZ and NZ show basic correspondences, but numbers 'one, four, seven, and ten' reveal minor differences. The NZ form *bing* for 'four' has the addition of *-ng*, which is characteristic to NZ. The OZ form for 'ten' finds cognates in W. H. languages, while the NZ form *cu* is closer to the OT form. Number 'seven' also shows plausible similarities between OZ, NZ, and W. H. languages. The items listed below with possible glosses are mostly proposed by Thomas (1933) and accepted by us. Comparable NZ (New Zhangzhung) and OT (Old Tibetan) forms are added.

OZ	NZ	OT	English
^ag	khag, ˆag-sho	ˆag-tshom	mouth
ca / ce		cha	plural, part
drung		drung	front, breast?
ga / ge	gi / ti / ni / pi	kyi, gyi, gi	genitive
gdang		gdang	recover from illness (< Tib)
gdang-togs			recovers
glang / khlang	ti-gra	grang	cold
go	pu, dbu-tsam	mgo	head

gun-kha	shi-bi	dgun-kha	winter
gvi ?	gu-dug	dgu	nine
gyung-drung			cause of a disease
gyvad ?	gyad	brgyad	eight
khe-khe		khe-khye	herpes
khlang			wipe
khve			air (Burmese *aŋwe*?)
khyer		skyel	give (K. *kerak*)
ko-ko		ko-ko, ko-sko	throat, chin
kul		khu	fluid, liquid
kun	kun	nag	black (Gyarong *kənak*)
la	khri-tse, tsa-rang	lag	hand? / dative marker
lang		lang ‘arise’	in case of
lang	li / le	rlung	wind, moist?
lig-bu-mig		lig-bu-mig	malachite
lingg		lings ‘chase, hunter’	getting rid of
lod		lod	say
lyam-tsha		lan-tshva	salt
ma		ma	mother
ma	ma	ma	not
ma ni		ma yin	is not
mar	mar	mar	gold, yellow, oil, butter
mi	ni	myi	man
min		min	is not
mu			sap, liquid
myig / mig	mig / yig	dmyig / mig	eye
nam?	nam, rngi	rnam	plural marker
nga	nga	lnga	five
ngo		ngos	face
ni			is, be
nis	ni	gnyis	two
nu		nus	force, strength
nve		na / nyes	disease
pi	bing	bzhi	four
pu	ne / bar	me / bar	fire / burn
rabs-this		rabs-	urine-disease
ran		ran	to be right, proportional
rgvil	khog-tse	grod-pa / lto-ba	stomach
rhals			combined
rhim		rims	plague
ri			bile
rma	rma	rma	wound

rmin		smin	ripe, mature
ru		rus	bone
rye			instrumental of *ri*
sa	cu	bcu	ten, pulse, blood
sa(s)		gsad, bsad	slay, kill
shid	gyag / gyog	shi	die
shvi			leprosy (Skr. *śvira*)/ blood
skams	tsa-ga	skams-pa	dry
skar			thirst
skri		dkru	dirt (K. *krî*)
skrigs			put together (Bu. *sgrig*)
skyu			leak, drip
sngal			sickness
sphangs			lack
spyel			milk (Bu. *pel-tsi*)
star-ga			walnut
stes ?	snis	bdun	seven
sum	sum	gsum	three
ta / tha	tig	gcig	one
tad			able
thal		thal	undergo, attain
thum		thum / thums	piece / spoon (K. *thom bu*)
ti	ting, ti	chu	water (K. *ti*)
ting	ting	sngo / mthing	blue (Bu. *tiŋ*)
tog			be, is, verb-substantive
tog-kha	dun-tshogs	ston-kha	autumn
trug ?	drug	drug	six
tsha		tshva / tsha	salt / hot
tsha-med	tsha-med	bud-med	woman
tshad	tsag	tshad-pa	fever
tshars			dry, dried
tse	tse		from, ablative (K. *tse*)
tsis	rtsi	rtsi	count, medicine
yag		kyag-kyog	thick, curved, crooked
zu		sa	earth

Four basic elements, namely *ti* ‘water,’ *pu* ‘fire,’ *khve* ‘air,’ and *zu* ‘earth,’ are distinctively different from the Tibetan forms.

Examples

bre nas zhig	**pu**	*'fire'*	tsa	sum
bre nas zhïg	**khve**	*'air'*	tse	sum
bre nas zhig	**ti**	*'water'*	tse	sum
bre nas zhig	**zu**	*'earth'*	tsi	myi

Some color terms, such as *gun ting* 'blue,' *gun mar* 'yellow,' *gun kun* 'black,' and *gun ra* 'red,' and the word for 'woman' *tsa-med* agree with the NZ forms. Some words, such as *mi* 'person,' *myig* 'eye,' *ru* 'one,' and *rma* 'wound,' are shared widely with languages belonging to various branches of the Tibeto-Burman family.

8. Summary

The following tentative conclusions may be drawn from the above examinations.

(1) OZ has both grammatical and lexical borrowings from Tibetan.
(2) The native grammatical and lexical items are different from Tibetan and are closer to the West Himalayan languages.
(3) No traces of pronominalization or verb agreement are attested.
(4) OZ shares some grammatical forms with Dzong-kha, which may have been the result of language contact in Western Tibet in the 9th century before the extinction of the Zhangzhung language.[6)]

Notes

1) E.g., *nga la: be-i* 'I worked.' *kho to za-i* 'He ate.' (Imaeda 2006: 21).
2) Okell and Allott 2001: 271–72.
3) Yoshiharu Takahashi (personal communication).
4) *ni* may be compared to the infinitive or present tense marker *ni* in Dzongkha (Imaeda 2006: 21–22, van Driem 1998: 239).
5) Abbreviations. OZ: Old Zhangzhung; NZ: New Zhangzhung; OT: Old Tibetan; K: Kinnauri; R: Rangpa; W. H.: Western Himalayan languages; Tin: Tinan; M: Manchad; Bu: Bunan; Th: Thebor.
6) Linguistically, Dzongkha is no doubt a dialect of Tibetan. The majority of its lexical items find their origins in Old Tibetan. However, Dzongkha shows grammatical forms *-i* and *ni*, which are not found in other Tibetan dialects and are characteristic to both Dzongkha and Zhangzhung.

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