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Combinatory Sound Alternations  
in Proto-, Pre-, and Real Tibetan:  
The Case of the Word Family \*Mra(o)  
'Speak,' 'Speaker,' 'Human,' 'Lord'

by  
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Combinatory Sound Alternations in Proto-, Pre-, and Real Tibetan:  
The Case of the Word Family \*Mra(o) ‘Speak,’ ‘Speaker,’ ‘Human,’ ‘Lord’

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**Abstract:** At least four sound alternations apply in Tibetan and its predecessor(s): regressive metathesis, alternation between nasals and oral stops, jotization, and vowel alternations. All except the first are attested widely among the Tibeto-Burman languages, without there being sound laws in the strict sense. This is a threat for any reconstruction of the proto-language. The first sound alternation also shows that reconstructions based on the complex Tibetan syllable structure are misleading, as this complexity is of only a secondary nature. In combination, the four sound alternations may yield large word families. A particular case is the word family centering on the words for speaking and human beings. It will be argued that these words ultimately go back to a loan from Eastern Iranian.

**Keywords:** sound alternations, loan words, Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman

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COMBINATORY SOUND ALTERNATIONS  
IN PROTO-, PRE-, AND REAL TIBETAN

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tibetan is, apart from underdescribed Pyu, the oldest documented so-called Tibeto-Burman (or Sino-Tibetan<sup>1</sup>) language with an originally fully phonemic script; at the same time, Tibetan is the language that shows the most complex syllable structure in its script, with up to four consonants clustering at the syllable onset: ((C) C) C (C) V (C (C)).

It is therefore often silently assumed that the spellings of Classical Tibetan reflect an old stage of Tibeto-Burman, cf. Matisoff's (2003: 12) suggestion for the proto-Tibeto-Burman syllable structure, which differs only in the possible lengthening of the vowel slot: (P<sub>2</sub>) (P<sub>1</sub>) C<sub>i</sub> (G) V (: ) (C<sub>f</sub>) (s). Matisoff (2000: 350) similarly states that Tibetan "faithfully preserves all the prefixes set up for PTB, as well as the medials \*/ -r- -l- -y- / (but not \* -w-), and the full array of final consonants imputed to the proto-language, \*/ -p -t -k -m -n -ŋ -l -r -s /." This is not very surprising, and in fact is rather circular, as the proto-language has been "reconstructed" after the model of Written Tibetan. However, the combinatory restrictions in Old and Classical Tibetan alike (see § 1.1) and the first sound alternation to be described below (§ 2.1) indicate that the maximally complex syllable of Old Tibetan can only be of a secondary nature.

Careful diachronic and synchronic comparison of related words in Tibetan allows us to establish at least four major sound alternations in the development of Old Tibetan or its ancestor(s). These are: 1. regressive metathesis (§ 2.1), 2. alternation between oral stops and homorganic nasals (§ 2.2), 3. jotization (§ 2.3), and 4. vowel alternations (§ 2.4). The latter three sound alternations are also quite common across the Tibeto-Burman languages, but they are far from being regular, not to speak of being exceptionless. Thus they are far from being sound laws or sound changes in the strict sense. They never fully affected Tibetan, nor, as it seems, any other Tibeto-Burman language. Moreover, their

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<sup>1</sup> I do not want to enter into a futile discussion about which terminology might be more appropriate for what reason. Both terms stand for an areal group of languages, the internal subgrouping of which is problematic, to say the least. In both cases, the two name elements describe border areas, and are thus sufficient to hint at the areal distribution of the languages in question, whatever other motivations may have underlain their invention. In both names, Tibetan, the western-most "branch," features prominently, giving the impression that we deal with a core member of the "family," which is perhaps part of the problem. I do not think, however, that the term "Trans-Himalayan," which is coming into vogue, is a viable alternative, not least because of its impreciseness and the apparent exclusion of the Cis-Himalayan languages.

direction or non-reversibility cannot be established. Nor can the relative chronological order of the four changes be established.

The structure of this article is as follows. In § 1.1, the restrictions on consonant clusters in Old and Classical Tibetan are introduced. § 1.2 serves as an overview of the “combinatory fury,” i.e., the outcome of the four sound changes working alone or in combination within a single word family. § 1.3 contains some methodological considerations. Section 2 deals with the formal side: the description of the four sound alternations mentioned above. § 2.1, on regressive metathesis, is the largest section, containing several sub-sections: for the various steps involved in the metathesis process: (§§ 2.1.1 and 2.1.2), for the data itself (§ 2.1.3), for possible, but less apparent cases (§ 2.1.4), possible examples of progressive metathesis (§ 2.1.5), and a discussion of the data (§ 2.1.6). § 2.2 deals with the homorganic alternation between nasals and oral stops, § 2.3 with the alternation of post-initial glides, and § 2.4 with vowel alternations.

The semantic side of the word family will be discussed in section 3, with these four topics: the relationship between humans and simians (§ 3.1), human speakers, particularly rulers and priests (*phya(o)*, § 3.2), men, women, and children (*bya, byi*, § 3.3), and the *verbum dicendi bya* ‘to be called,’ *byas* ‘said’ (§ 3.4). In section 4, I shall list the full set of words that can be derived by the above said sound laws and belong to the semantic fields of *verba dicendi* and speech-act-related nouns (§ 4.1), of person-related words (§ 4.2), of clan, tribal, and ethnically related place names (§ 4.3), plus the few words related to monkeys (§ 4.4).

In section 5, I shall discuss the repercussions for the reconstruction of the proto-language, focusing first on the inconsistencies in, and the variability of, the reconstructed forms (§ 5.1). I shall then discuss the possible origin of the word family ‘speak,’ ‘speaker,’ ‘human,’ ‘lord’ (§ 5.2) together with the possible origin of the velar suffix, which is common with these words (§ 5.3). This will lead to the suggestion of an Iranosphere (as an area of cultural and linguistic influence on Tibetan) and a Tibetosphere (as an area of cultural and linguistic influence and a source of borrowings from Tibetan, § 5.4). Some additional remarks on the role of speakers, offering a perspective, rather than a conclusion, follow in § 6.

Appendix I contains examples of metathesis of the cluster labial plus alveolar trill in the modern Shamma dialects of Lower Ladakh plus additional examples from Amdo dialects. Appendix II contains



an annotated list of semantically related word pairs and multiples resulting from the alternation between oral stops and homorganic nasals, which are often reinterpreted in terms of a social bias. Appendix III deals with the attestation of the word *bya* in two Old Tibetan texts, where the meaning ‘meek man’ and/ or ‘woman,’ to my understanding, makes more sense than the meaning ‘bird.’ The text passages in question are far from being easily understood and need some elaboration. Appendix IV, finally, deals with three verb doublets, among them the verb stems *bya* ‘to be called,’ *byas* ‘said,’ and the full verb *byed, byas, bya, byos* ‘do, act, make,’ where the meaning ‘do’ was arguably derived from the meaning ‘speak, say.’

### 1.1 RESTRICTIONS ON CONSONANT CLUSTERS IN OLD AND CLASSICAL TIBETAN

While the basic syllable consists of a consonant followed by a vowel: CV, the maximally complex syllable of Old and Classical Tibetan, as reflected in the Tibetan orthography, consists of seven slots, five of which are optional:

$$((C) C) C (C) V (C (C)) \text{ or} \\ ((P_2) P_1) C_R (G) V (F_1 (F_2)).^2$$

The indexed form  $C_R$ , functionally identical to Matisoff’s (2003: 12)  $C_i$ , stands for the root consonant or *radical*, which can be filled with any of the consonants represented by the thirty letters of the Tibetan alphabet, plus the non-aspirated  $\text{ʃ}$  represented by the digraph *lh*. The oral stops and affricates display a triple opposition of [–voice –aspiration] : [–voice +aspiration] : [+voice –aspiration].  $C_i/C_R$  is not really an initial, since it can be preceded by one or two elements, which may be derivational or grammatical prefixes or simply lexical(ized) elements. The outermost pre-radical slot ( $P_2$ ) can be filled only with *b*. The inner pre-radical slot ( $P_1$ ) can be filled with any of eight consonants: *g, d, b, m, h, r, l*, or *s*. The post-radical slot ( $G$ ) can be filled with the four glides or semivowels *y, r, l*, or, rather infrequently, *ν*. The first

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<sup>2</sup> Two words show the syllable structure  $C_R G G V$  or perhaps  $C_R G V V$ : *grva* ‘corner’ and onomatopoetic *phrva-phrva* for the sound of rain. The tribal names *phyva* and *myva* possibly contain a triphthong, see also further below. Here and in the following, a capital letter C stands for any consonant, N for nasals, O for oral stops, V for vowels, G for a (post-radical) glide. Small letters refer to concrete phonemes.

final slot (F<sub>1</sub>) can be filled with nine consonants: *g, ŋ, d, n, b, m, r, l, s*, plus *h*, the second final slot (F<sub>2</sub>) only with *d* or *s*, the distribution of which is phonetically conditioned. In Classical Tibetan, *h* in slot F<sub>1</sub> merely serves some orthographic purposes, but in Old Tibetan, it seems to reflect an original voiced aspirate or, as in the initial position, a voiced velar or uvular fricative.

However, in the initial binary and triple clusters, there are several restrictions for slot P<sub>1</sub> and even more for P<sub>2</sub>. The rules will be given here as R<sub>1</sub> to R<sub>8</sub>:

- R<sub>1</sub>: Dental C<sub>R</sub> does not commonly combine with G. With dental C<sub>R</sub>, written post-radical *ν* is an orthographical device to avoid ambiguity in the combination *dgs*, as in *la.dvags*, which could otherwise be read as *-dgas*. G *y* is not attested at all with dental C<sub>R</sub>. Most probably all original combinations of dentals with G *y* turned into palatal stops or affricates. G *r* appears typically only with the voiced dental. The very few items with unvoiced dentals appear to be loans. There has been a certain tendency to represent foreign retroflexes with the cluster velar and G *r*.
- R<sub>2</sub>: Only the homorganic nasals (written as either *m* or *h* – the latter originally a voiced velar or laryngeal [γ] or [ɦ]) – can combine with C<sub>R</sub> [-voice +aspiration]; by contrast, they cannot combine with C<sub>R</sub> [-voice -aspiration] and with nasals and laterals. They may, however, combine with C<sub>R</sub> [+voice -aspiration]. All other pre-radicals (*g, d, b, r, l, and s*) can only combine with C<sub>R</sub> [±voice -aspiration].
- R<sub>3</sub>: P<sub>1</sub> cannot have the same articulatory position as C<sub>R</sub>, except when P<sub>1</sub> is *r, l, or s* and C<sub>R</sub> is not identical with P<sub>1</sub>.
- R<sub>4</sub>: P<sub>1</sub> and G cannot be filled with the same consonant (hence no \*rCr or \*lCl).
- R<sub>5</sub>: If there is a glide G, P<sub>1</sub> can typically only be filled with *r* or *s*, while G is typically *y* or *r* – G *ν* and P<sub>1</sub> *l* do not regularly appear in triple clusters; only one combination each is attested: *rtsva* (cf. Shamskat /r̥tsoa/) ‘grass’ and *lgyam.tshva* for a special type of salt (a loan or a dialectal variant?).
- R<sub>6</sub>: P<sub>1</sub> *b* cannot immediately precede a nasal (in such cases, one can find P<sub>1</sub> *m* before *ŋ, ñ, and n*, most probably resulting from assimilation). However, *b* may appear in position P<sub>2</sub> before a nasal radical if position P<sub>1</sub> is filled.

R7:  $P_2$  can only be filled with *b* as a grammatical prefix. More particularly, if the positions  $P_1$  and  $P_2$  are filled,  $C_R$  can only be a velar [ $\pm$ voice –aspiration].

R8:  $P_2$  cannot be filled when  $C_R$  is a labial.

There are thus only six possible combinations for the maximally complex onset, one of which appears to be secondary: *brky*, *bsky*, *bskr*, (*brgy* < *\*b-ry*),<sup>3</sup> *bsgy*, *bsgr*. Clusters of four consonants are thus extremely restricted and cannot, therefore, be taken as a model for the reconstruction of the proto-language.

## 1.2 THE COMBINATORY FURY: OVERVIEW

In Tibetan, all four sound alternations can combine. Together with dialectal variation or repeated borrowing from different Tibeto-Burman and non-Tibeto-Burman languages or from different stages of one or more Tibeto-Burman languages, this may lead to practically uncontrollable variation, virtually preventing any reconstruction that deserves the name.

One of the most interesting cases is a word root of, as I should like to suggest, ultimately Eastern Iranian origin, relating to the act of speaking and thus characteristic for human beings (and their simian relatives) and particularly for rulers: *\*mra(o)*. It must have been borrowed into several Tibeto-Burman languages, as we find various ‘cognates’ for various related meanings across the Tibeto-Burman languages. This word or word family must have entered Tibetan at a very early stage or must have been borrowed repeatedly, as one can find all sorts of derivations, see Table 1, the full word forms with their meanings will be listed towards the end of the article in § 4, p. 92.

In Table 1, grey-shaded cells refer to hypothetical combinations, not attested in Tibetan or not attested with a meaning relevant for the discussion. † marks obsolete forms. The numbers added in brackets refer to the semantic groups of *verba dicendi* (1), human beings or family terms (2), clan and tribal names (3), and simian beings (4). The members of these semantic groups will be presented in detail in § 4 in this order.

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<sup>3</sup> It seems that the velar in this cluster is merely epenthetic, cf. Schuessler (2007: 97 and passim, pp. 26, 83, 152 for OT/CT *bryad* < *\*bryat* ‘eight’).

**Table 1** Overview: combined sound alternations for the root \*mra(o)

		Vowel alternations (not morphologically triggered)					
			*smyo > sño- (1)	*smya > sñā- (1)			
Alteration of homorganic nasals and oral stops	nasal base form	metathesis← →jotization	(mye-) <sup>a</sup>	myog (2)	Mya/v (3)	(myi) <sup>a</sup>	–
			↑		↑	↑	
			*mre	*mro	†Mra (3)	*mri-	*mru
			↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
			smre (1)	*smro	smra (1/2)	*smri	*smru
			sme- (1)	smo- (1/2)	Sma (3)	smi- (2)	Smu (3)
			rme- (1)	rmo- (1/2)	rma- (1/2/3)	rmi (2)	Rmu (3)
			dme ? (1)	dmo (1)	dma- (2)	dmi- (2)	Dmu (3)
			m(y)e- (2)	mo (1/2)	ma (2/3)	m(y)i- (2/4)	Mu (3)
			secondarily voiced	metathesis← →jotization	–	–	(†)bya (1/2)
		↑			↑		
bro (1)		Bra ? (3)			*bri-		
↓		↓			↓		
*sbro		Sbra ? (3)			*sbri		
*sbo		*sba			/-zbi-/ (2)		
*rbo		*rba			*rbi>/-lbi-/ (2)		
dbo-		Dbra ? (3)			–		
bo- (1)		–	–				
secondarily unvoiced	metathesis← →jotization		spyo (1)	dpyas ? (1)			
		–	–	p(h)ya- (1/2/3)	-phyi (2)	–	
		↑	↑	↑	↑		
		*p(h)re-	p(h)ro- ? (1/2)	p(h)ra- (1)	p(h)ri- (1)	phru- (2)	
		↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	
		*spre	*spro	spra- (4)	*spri	spru- (2)	
		/spe-/? (1)	spo- (2/?3)	Spa ? (3)	Sp(y)i ? (3)	spu- (2/?3)	
		*rpe	*rpo	*rpa	*rpi	(rpu-) (2)	
		dpe ? (1)	dpo- ? (2)	dpa- ? (1/2)	–	–	
–	p(h)o (2)	–	–	/pū-/ (2)			

<sup>a</sup>In the case of the Old Tibetan forms *mye-* and *myi* for human beings, it is not fully clear whether the palatal glide reflects an original palatal, such as in the forms *bya* or *phya*, or whether it is merely conditioned by the palatal vowels *e* or *i* as in other cases of Old Tibetan orthography (cf., e.g., the negation marker *myi*, Classical Tibetan *mī*). The two forms are thus given here in brackets, and their non-jotitized equivalents are also found in the last line of the box for nasal radicals.

As Table 1 shows, the combination of the four sound alternations yields more than forty different attested combinations for even more semantically related words, all of which are possibly derived from the word root \*mra(o) ‘speak’ > ‘speaker, human, lord.’ Some of them are to be found only in the most archaic layer, some of them are attested in the western-most, but certainly not most archaic dialects of Baltistan and Purik. A few more combinations seem to be reflected in clan, tribal, and regional names. This would not be surprising, because ethnical self-designations often are intended to mean nothing other than ‘human being’ or ‘people of the same language.’ But since such names could always have had a different origin, their formal similarity might be merely accidental. The tribal names are thus all associated with a question mark. A question mark also follows those forms, where the etymological relationship is unclear or where the semantic relationship with speech acts or humanity is least obvious.

### 1.3 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I observed this combinatory fury while trying to trace the origin of certain Tibetan tribal names, particularly the names Rma and Rmu/Dmu. This attempt is embedded in a larger linguistic and historical context. While the linguistic and historical arguments, quite embarrassingly, tend to circularly depend on each other, the four sound alternations in question were, fortunately enough, also observed by other scholars – much earlier and independent of considerations for Tibetan prehistory.

The methodology applied here is that of textual and historical philology. Both types of philological studies formed the main foundation for the establishment of the Indo-European language family, the reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European, and the sub-classification of the daughter languages – and similarly for the Semitic and, to a certain extent, for the Dravidian language families.

Philology not only implies the careful comparison of the lexical items, morphological systems, and syntax of languages, but also, or more importantly, the close reading of ancient documents. This allows the establishing of meanings and meaning shifts through detailed detective work and the interpretation of words, phrases, or syntactical constructions in their own contexts. It also allows us to (partly) reconstruct the historical and sociolinguistic background of language development. Unlike most modern technically oriented linguistic approaches, traditional philology aims at a language in its entirety, including the level of idiosyncratic *parole*, and it does not restrict itself to a subset of genres or, as in the extreme case of lexicostatistics, to an extremely reduced subset of the lexicon. However, such

detective work and interpretation, informed as they may be, are prone to subjectivity; they belong to the arts, which include history and philosophy, not to science in the strict sense.<sup>4</sup>

The art of textual interpretation is based on experience in reading difficult texts as much as on common sense. As in comparative philology, difficult or occult passages may be decoded by comparing parallel attestations in the same or similar texts or contexts (sometimes also on the base of translations into other languages). In interpreting any given utterance, we may assume that its author is a rational person and uses exactly the communicative means necessary for making him- or herself understood, following largely the Gricean principles. That is, the communicative contribution is as informative as required, it does not contradict the author’s beliefs (at least, if the author does not signal anything to the contrary, as in fiction), it is relevant, ambiguities are avoided, and the statement is not artificially obscured (Grice 1975: 45f.).

It is true that these principles may not fully hold in esoteric traditions, such as Indian or Tibetan tantrism. Tibetan scholars, therefore, often claim that the difficulty of Old Tibetan texts is the result of the ancient authors’ predilection for speaking in riddles. Most of the oldest Tibetan documents, however, were written for administrative purposes. Some of them were political propaganda, intended to legitimize the ruling family or to construct the fiction of a “nation” (see Zeisler 2011b, 2016b: 486–488). If, at the time of their composition, these texts were as enigmatic as they are now, they would have failed to serve their exoteric, political purpose. Therefore, if we are able, by means of careful internal analysis and cross-linguistic comparison, to establish a different meaning of a word, which, much better than the conventional dictionary meaning, fits into the particular context, we should not miss the chance to reconstruct a little piece of evidence from the ancient language.

Similarities between languages may always be due to mere chance or borrowing. To exclude such possibilities, Indo-European comparative or historical philology, particularly the Neogrammarian school, has set up very strict standards, by which sound changes must be regular (or regularly

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<sup>4</sup> I do, by no means, intend to insinuate that linguistics in general, and historical linguistics in particular, is a science or can rely only on scientific or merely outwardly scientific-appearing methods. Nor do I want to insinuate that the *art* of reasoning is inferior to running algorithms. Rather to the contrary, without the *art* of reasoning you might only perform what is also known as *garbage in/garbage out*: “faulty assumptions do not merely simplify complex patterns and processes [of linguistic history] to the point of caricature, but actually distort reality into unrecognizable forms” (Pereltsvaig & Levis 2015: 54).

conditioned) and exceptionless. Apparent irregularities that seem to contradict the axiom of regularity can often be explained through additional conditional factors, cf., e.g., the amendments of Grimm's Law (in the Germanic languages PIE voiceless stops > voiceless fricative; PIE voiced stops > voiceless stops; PIE voiced aspirates > voiced stops or fricatives), by Lottner's Law (PIE voiceless stops do not shift after a voiceless fricative), and by Verner's Law (Proto-Germanic fricatives > voiced only, if they are not initial, if they occur between voiced elements, and if the original PIE accent is not on the immediately preceding syllable). For a good introduction into this matter, see Hock and Joseph (2009: 114–122).

Exceptions to the axiom of regularity can be accepted, if they are obviously based on analogies or if one has good evidence that the progress of change was interrupted or left unaccomplished at some point. Otherwise, such exceptions or irregularities would rather point to borrowings. Borrowing can be quite substantial and may, as in the extreme case of Brahui, affect more than 80 percent of the vocabulary (Elfenbein 1989). Several dialects of the Bai language have up to 75 percent of their lexicon borrowed from Chinese (cf. Matisoff 2000: 357, n. 3). But even English has borrowed between 65 and 75 percent of its vocabulary from various languages, mostly Indo-European (Hock and Joseph 2009: 272). Borrowing is not restricted to lexical items; morphemes and certain syntactical structures can be borrowed as well, albeit with relatively low frequency. What is not borrowed are the coherent sets of declensional and conjugational paradigms. These constitute, so to speak, the DNA of a language.

In discussing sound changes, one must keep in mind that they often happen in specific phonetic contexts or, more precisely, under specific phonetic conditions. These specific conditions may lead to a different onset or a different speed, and thus also to the different spread of a particular change. Within the Tibetic family and even more narrowly within West Tibetan, one can, e.g., observe that the spirantization process affecting labial radicals followed by palatal glides<sup>5</sup> was more accelerated before back vowels than before front vowels, and so the palatal before front vowels could escape the process in the western peripheral areas, where it eventually became neutralized. We thus find BAL, PUR, and

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<sup>5</sup> It is commonly understood as a process of palatalization of the whole cluster. However, it was actually a process of spirantization or fricativization of the glide with subsequent loss of the labial, e.g., *bya(-po, -mo)* 'hen, cock' > Golok /fɕ<sup>h</sup>a/, Sogpho /<sup>h</sup>tso/, Dzongkha /ptɕam/, cf. the data in Róna-Tas (2014: [117]–[120], [178]–[183], [303], n. 60, [365] with n. 30), Suzuki (2011: 68), and the CDTD; cf. also the brief discussion in Zeisler (2015b: 4). The nasal combination shows a similar development *my* > /mɲ/ > /ɲ/, cf. also below p. 23, n. 19 (end).

WSHM (of Lower Ladakh) *bja* ‘cock’ < wrT *bya* ‘bird,’ which in the Kenhat dialects of Leh, Upper Ladakh and Zanskar takes the form *tʃa* (or low tone *tʃ̣a*), wrT *hphyar* with the meaning ‘hang up,’ WSHM *phjar*, KNH *tʃhar*, but wrT *phyed* ‘half,’ which in all dialects of Ladakh and Baltistan becomes *phet* (with neutralization of the palatal glide before the front vowels *i* and *e*).

Some objections have been raised that the Neogrammarian position is too strict, and that there are sometimes “spontaneous mutations” of single words, cf. also Matisoff (2000: 344) and more recently (2015: 375), where he speaks of a “neo-philological’ assault on fieldwork-based historical research” – as if the philological approach itself and not the mishandling of its principles was the crime. But most anomalies can be explained according to the Neogrammarians’ principles based on established sociolinguistic circumstances, such as influences from related varieties or repeated borrowings of related words from a dominant language, cf. Spanish *dueño* ‘lord, owner,’ inherited from Latin *dominum* (-*min-* > -*mn-* > *ñ*), *nombre* ‘name,’ an early borrowing of a vernacularized form of *nom(i)nem* (-*mn-* > -*mr-* > -*mbr-*), and *nominar* ‘name, nominate,’ a late borrowing of Latin *nomināre*; see Hock and Joseph (2009: 330). Such explanations, however, require a certain amount of acquaintance with the historical methods and the willingness to leave one’s linguistic backyard. If the sociolinguistic circumstances cannot be established, it is safer to exclude the irregular forms from the set of inherited words. One should, in any case, always bear in mind that if such exceptions grow (too) numerous or even threaten to outnumber the regularities, there is certainly something wrong with the assumption of genetic relatedness.

If individual irregularities show some kind of regularity, it might be possible to establish a more sophisticated sound law, such as the Grimm’s or Verner’s Laws, or to establish a particular phonetic feature, as in the case of the laryngeal theory of early Indo-European, but this sound law should then again apply regularly and be exceptionless, and it should not at all have the air of an *ad hoc* solution for individual words or morphemes in individual languages.

Indo-European comparative philology and similar approaches in other language families never restricted themselves to the comparison of lexical items. In fact, the earliest theories on the relationship of Indo-European languages were based on the eye-catching similarity – and stability – of early Indo-European morphology, the focus on regular sound change followed suit, cf. Poser & Campbell (1992: 218) and Harrison (2013: 24). It is a common view that “[t]he grammar represents the inherited component,



and the lexicon, or a portion thereof, is the borrowed component” (van Driem 1993: 50), hence Voegelin and Voegelin (1985: 609) state

Demonstration of genetic relationship by the comparative method requires that whole systems (in the sense of sets of contrasts) be reconstructed in a comparative grammar, rather than isolated grammatical features or lexical items (however numerous). (On lexical items Hamp [1979: 1005] reminds us that “grammatical equations coupled with phonetics are the core of a genetic demonstration, and lexical comparisons persuade only in so far as they englobe such elements.”)

By contrast, most of the comparative or reconstructive work for proto-Tibeto-Burman is primarily based on more or less reliable wordlists, most of them without much historical depth, and most of them rather questionable, as the exact word meanings depend on their context, which is typically not supplied in the lists. Since meaning shifts or extensions are always possible, some scholars take great license in comparing items only distantly related, without ever demonstrating how the meanings developed within each of the languages adduced.

So far, Tibeto-Burman reconstructions have never really met the standards of Indo-European or Semitic comparative philology, not even in a more modest version, which would allow a limited number of exceptions, and not even with respect to the lexicon alone. There is little hope that this situation may change. One reason is certainly that Tibeto-Burmanists lack the set of obviously related ancient languages that Indo-Europeanists could draw upon. If the oldest Indo-European languages, Hittite, Old Indo-Aryan, Avestan, Ancient Greek, then Latin, Gothic and Old Church Slavonic, had not been documented or only in a non-phonetic rendering, it would be impossible to demonstrate the genetic relatedness between, say, English or French, on the one hand, and Nepali or Dakhini Urdu, on the other.

The main problem with all Tibeto-Burman or Sino-Tibetan comparisons and with the data presented below is that there is only one ancient language attested from a time (long) before the Common Era – although not in a phonologically transparent form. The second oldest attested language is inscriptional Pyu, documented between the second and sixth centuries CE. However, until now, it is still poorly understood and so far not adduced for comparisons. Old Tibetan is documented since the

mid seventh century CE. The first texts are the *Old Tibetan Annals*, which started to be written shortly after 650, but survived only in an abbreviated later copy. The classical variant sets in around the eleventh century. Tangut and Old Burmese are attested from the eleventh and twelfth century respectively, Classical Newari follows in the fourteenth century, Yi in the sixteenth century. Most other languages, including the modern Tibetic languages, are documented only from the mid nineteenth century onwards, if not from the beginning of the twenty-first century.

What is called “Old” (also “Archaic”) Chinese covers an epoch of roughly 1500 years, from around 1250 BCE to about the second or third century CE, cf. the periodization in Schuessler (2007: 1). Sagart (1999: 7) would even shift the beginning of the oracle bone inscriptions to ca. 1400 BCE, which would then yield a period of 1650 years. It is highly unlikely that the reconstructed forms remained stable during this period, but it is never specified whether all reconstructions of “Old Chinese” really aim at the beginning of this epoch or at any definable century within that epoch (and then, which one).

Needless to say, there have been various different attempts at reconstruction. Furthermore, it has been argued that elements reconstructed as “Old Chinese” do not reflect a real language, but “are backward philological projections of the Qieyun system [...] recast on the basis of xieshēng characters and early rimed texts. [...] The xieshēng and rime evidence come to us by way of the Eastern Hàn philological tradition, chiefly the so-called Old Text School” (Norman and Coblin 2018: 41). Adding to this is the enormous temporal dimension of character formation, including the formation and even replacement of characters for the phonetic series, which is the only source for the reconstruction of “Old Chinese” initials and initial consonant clusters:

[C]haracters including phonetic elements were created continually over a period of a millenium, between the Shang and Qin periods [... and] large numbers of the new xiesheng characters were created in the Zhan Guo and Qin periods, often replacing earlier graphs. It is quite likely, then, that such late characters have found their way into Zhan Guo-, Qin-, or Han-period copies of earlier texts, and from there into the received texts. (Sagart 1999: 6)

“Old Chinese” is thus not really a safe base for reconstructions of the presumed proto-language, especially if Old Tibetan consonant clusters are taken as a prime model for the presumed syllable structure.

Tibeto-Burman comparisons in the narrow sense, that is, with the exclusion of the Sinitic branch, are more often than not based on what is called “WT” or “Written Tibetan,” that is, in the best case, words culled from Jäschke (1881), here JÄK, albeit without regard to where the word comes from, and at times also words culled from modern dialect descriptions. The entries in JÄK are mostly derived from classical texts written between the eleventh and the nineteenth century. A few of these texts, like the *Mdzangs.blun*, go back to Old Tibetan sources, but this is not always evident. Some words cited as “WT” are glossed by Jäschke as “C,” that is, they are Central Tibetan dialect words, and the spellings may be unreliable. We also find forms cited as “WT,” which Jäschke classifies as “Ld.,” i.e., “Ladak, province,” that is, nineteenth-century data.<sup>6</sup> The Old Tibetan material has hardly been touched upon, for lack of lexical resources, on the one hand, and lack of philological competence, on the other.

Assuming that it is, in fact, the beginning of the said epoch that is aimed at with the designation “Old Chinese,” there is a gap of almost two millennia between that beginning and the first Old Tibetan texts and an even larger gap between “Old Chinese” and the so-called “Written Tibetan.” The relationship between “Old Chinese” (henceforth without quote marks) word forms and the postulated Sino-Tibetan protoform is not always transparent, nor is the relationship between this protoform and Tibeto-Burman in the narrow sense or “Written Tibetan” always transparent. There are, nevertheless, many striking look-alikes, but, in fact, given the time dimension, these might be the most problematic cases.

Apart from the lack of sufficient ancient languages, an important reason for the difficulties in Tibeto-Burman linguistics could be that the languages in question developed and spread in a manner

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<sup>6</sup> As an example, see 冢 OC \*tjɯŋ (GSRm 1218h, HPTB: 310) ‘tomb mound,’ \*[t]ronŋ? (or \*[t]<r>onŋ? ?) (B&S: 144), 冢, 塚 mOC \*tronŋ? ‘mound, peak; be great’ (EDOC: 622), for which Matisoff (HPTB: 310) suggests a PF \*m/r-duŋ ‘mountain, hillock’; and which Matisoff (HPTB: 285) and with him Schuessler (EDOC: 622) compare to “WT” *rduŋ* ‘small mound, hillock,’ although the entry in JÄK (285b) is characterized with “Ld.” as being a word only found in Ladakh. The word doesn’t seem to be common in present-day Ladakhi. Hence the word cannot be taken as another example of the metathesis of Cr > rC (→ sound alternation 1).

quite different from that of the Indo-European languages, that is, instead of radiating out over great distances, the languages stayed in contact and under mutual influence for the longer part of their histories. Nevertheless, the main reason could ultimately be that (some of) the languages or branches in question are not genetically related, but that their apparent similarities are the result of areal convergence.

One should in any case bear in mind that genetic relationship is certainly not the only possible link between two languages, and there is no need to press all known languages into family trees. Languages of different origin may converge and form what is known as *Sprachbund* or *linguistic area* through areal diffusion of various features in longer periods of relatively undisturbed coexistence (Dixon 1997: 15–27 and passim). A language in contact with other languages may become “mixed” in the sense that it may retain (most of) its inherited grammatical structure, while replacing most of its inherited vocabulary by imports from related languages (as in the case of English) or from unrelated languages (as in the case of Brahui), and, as it seems, quite typically from more than one language.

The grammatical backbone, which constitutes something like the DNA of a language, is not lost easily, except under very extreme and limited conditions, such as near extinction or limited use in specialized trade pidgins. Radical loss of morphology should not be opted for to explain the different morphological setup of the Tibeto-Burman languages, if one cannot demonstrate for any language in question when and how this loss should have occurred. The mere suggestion that such loss has happened or only might have happened in another language cannot replace the concrete evidence for the language in question. To put it extremely simply: the fact that umbrellas tend to be lost easily is no proof that a particular person without an umbrella necessarily had one originally (see here also the discussion in Zeisler 2015a: 37, 55f. with n. 34).

It has been observed that the basic syntactic system and the inflectional systems (as well as the phonological system) are acquired very early in a child’s development and are subsequently quite resistant to change (Ringe et al. 2002: 61 with further references). Borrowing of morphology and syntactic patterns may happen, but it is much less common than the borrowing of words, and it has been observed that syntactic patterns are less likely to be borrowed than inflectional morphology, which again is less likely to be borrowed than derivational morphology (cf., e.g., Pereltsvaig and Lewis 2015: 62 with further references). According to Meillet (1914, reprinted in Meillet 1982: 84), pronunciation and

grammar form closed systems in which each element is tightly connected with the others, and all are, therefore, less likely to be affected by borrowing, whereas the lexical entities do not form a system and can easily be replaced. For this reason, “[g]rammatical agreement” can be considered to be “a far more certain indication (than is vocabulary) of relationship or original unity” (Rask 1818: 35, English translation in Lehmann 1967: 31), and “morphology and phonology provide better information about linguistic descent [...] than lexical evidence” (Ringe et al. 2002: 65) alone.

Precisely because lexical elements are so easily borrowed, one cannot relax the requirement of exceptionless sound changes.

## 2. THE FORMAL SIDE: NOT-SO-REGULAR SOUND ALTERNATIONS IN TIBETAN AND ITS ANCESTORS

### 2.1 REGRESSIVE METATHESIS

The greater part of Matisoff’s proto-Tibeto-Burman or rather Classical Tibetan complex “P<sub>1</sub> Ci G,” namely the Classical Tibetan triple cluster CCr, goes back to an earlier binary complex \*Ci G (\*Cr), implying a regressive (or backward) metathesis of G. The main exceptions are causative-factitive verbs derived from intransitive verb roots with the help of an s-prefix and verbs derived from nouns with the help of an s-prefix plus nouns derived from such verbs. The metathesis must have progressed with different speed in different phonetic environments. Nasals seem to have been affected more radically than oral stops. Ongoing metathesis is observed in the Baltipa dialects with respect to the unvoiced velar cluster, while in Shamskat it is the labial cluster, voiced and unvoiced, that is affected (see Appendix I).

Simon (1929, 1949, 1975) has already established a rule of regressive metathesis by which all Classical Tibetan combinations rC and lC result from an earlier \*Cr and \*Cl (he remains silent, however, about the combination CT *rl*). The claim that the metathesis applied exceptionless would certainly be too strong, but it is quite conspicuous that among the words with nasal radical hardly any cluster Cr is found in Tibetan. The most prominent exception is *smra* ‘speak’ and the related *smre* ‘lament.’<sup>7</sup> Simon remains silent about the remaining clusters Cr and Cl in Old and Classical Tibetan, which did not undergo metathesis.

Not all Tibeto-Burmanists would accept Simon’s hypothesis. Guillaume Jacques, e.g., would hold that all nasal clusters Nr necessarily developed into a prenasalized voiced oral cluster <sup>n</sup>Or, such as /<sup>n</sup>gr/ or /<sup>m</sup>br/, written as mCr or ḥCr (p.c., summer 2013). If this were true, this would at least corroborate the second sound law to be discussed. It is, however, possible that quite a few words escaped the accelerated process of metathesis of nasal clusters by first changing into the oral counterpart, and that this is the main reason why only one nasal item is left. Matisoff’s reconstructions in HPTB and STEDT are likewise not inspired by Simon’s hypothesis.

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<sup>7</sup> Simon (1975: 246) points to the cluster *snr* in the names of the lunar mansions *snron* (the eighteenth) and *snrubs* (the nineteenth), and the compound *snrel.gži* ‘out of order, slant, oblique.’ None of these seem to be common, and the names for the lunar mansions might be artificial or borrowed (and mishandled).

However, one would not be able to explain the existence of the word pair *smra* ‘speak’ and *rma* ‘ask, inquire,’ both originally used for speech acts of persons of higher or official status, where the semantic relation cannot be disputed, and where the *r* quite obviously changed its position. In this case, there is no corresponding oral <sup>n</sup>Cr equivalent available, such as *\*ḥbra* or *\*mbra*, the closest form being the noun *bro* ‘oath’ without prenasalization.

Furthermore, in the case of the proto-Tibetan word for ‘snake,’ no. (16) below, the expected Tibetan form would be *\*mbrul* or *\*ḥbrul*, not *sbrul*, in the case of the word for ‘monkey’ (or ‘human’), no. (18) below, the expected form would be *\*mbrug* or *\*ḥbrug*, and neither *sbrug* ‘human offspring’ nor *spra* or *sprehu* ‘monkey’ could be derived. Such words would then have to be omitted from the list of inherited words and included in the list of possibly borrowed words or chance similarities.

One possibility to save the argument would be to postulate a somewhat weird *s-* prefix that infected the Tibetan words, replacing the expected prenasalization in the case of Jacques’ hypothesis or the expected *r-* pre-radical in the case of Simon (1975: 246). For Matisoff this *s-* prefix would be an additional Tibeto-Burman derivative element *\*sya* with the meaning “animal / flesh / body” which would be “pronounced with an epenthetic schwa vowel before certain stop initials” (HPTB: 102), hence *\*[səbrul]* for ‘snake’ (ibid. p. 151). This assumption is based on findings in a few modern languages, such as Lushai, a Kuki-Chin language, where such a prefix apparently exists. It is, however, quite conspicuous that in Tibetan, this element often appears where the reconstructed protoform has the structure Cr. Moreover, the *s-* pre-radical also appears with quite different words referring to emotions (‘fear’) or abstract concepts (‘sound’ or ‘word’), and particularly also with verbs, such as ‘stir,’ ‘swell,’ ‘fight,’ and ‘speak’ – where it is easily mistaken for a causative prefix.

### 2.1.1 *The first step (\*Cr > sCr)*

What Simon, and with him all others, apparently overlook, is that, during the process of metathesis, a cluster *\*Cr* often, if not regularly, develops a weak reflex of the alveolar trill on the ‘left,’ or better: anterior, side of the cluster, hence *\*Cr > sCr* (step 1). The doubling of the *r* in the process of metathesis can be observed even today. In the dialect of Domkhar in Ladakh, the CT cluster *br* is typically realized as /ɾb/, but individual speakers might occasionally pronounce it as [r̥br] or [rb̥r], with a not very distinct

pronunciation on either side of the labial.<sup>8</sup> This might be because they heard both the true dialectal form /rb/ and the more canonical form of the written language, which some speakers might use, as well.

The doubling of the *r* or a similar consonant is not just a peculiar feature of Tibetan: it has also been observed in the Nuristani language of Nisheygram, cf., as an extreme case, the word for ‘aiming stone’ (*Zielstein*) *görmā* (VrC), which alternates with *gřomā* (rVC), *gřörmā* (rVrC), *gřomřā* [=gřömrā?] (rVCr; Degener 1998: 28). The instability of an *r*-like consonant with movements in both directions is notorious also in the northern Prakrits, in the early Aśoka inscriptions, and in the Dardic languages. For the progressive metathesis rC > Cr cf. Skr. *sarva* ‘all’ > *savra* (besides *savva*),<sup>9</sup> Skr. *kīrti* ‘report, fame, glory’ > *kiṭri*,<sup>10</sup> Skr. *kr̥ta-* > *kiṭra* ‘done’ and Skr. *svargaḥ* ‘heaven’ > *spagra-*. The last two examples are from Morgenstierne (1947: 145) who, however, warns that these cases may not actually represent a metathesis but rather simply an orthographic variant (p. 146).

This would be different in the case of the regressive metathesis VrC > rVC. Morgenstierne (1947: 145) mentions three items: Skr. *karman* ‘work, deed’ > *kra(m)ma*,<sup>11</sup> Skr. *dharma* > *dhra(m)ma*<sup>12</sup> with *dhramika* ‘righteous,’ and Skr. *pūrva* ‘earlier, ancient, first’ > *pruva*.<sup>13</sup> A further example is: Skr. *garbha* ‘embryo’ > *grabha*.<sup>14</sup> Among the modern dialects one finds Skr. *karman* > Shina of Gures, Astor, and Dras *krom*,<sup>15</sup> Palula (“Phalūra”) *kram*,<sup>16</sup> Skr. *tāmra* ‘copper’ > Gures *tráam*, Kashmiri *tra:m*,<sup>17</sup> similarly Skr.

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8 The cluster might be simplified again to [rb] after an open syllable, leading to ‘leftward’ consonant migration: [ṣa ʔbraksein] ~ [ṣar\_baksein], ‘have shaved the hair’ (DOM, August 2012).

9 Aśoka inscriptions: Burrow (1937: 14, § 39); Gāndhārī: Salomon (2002: 132).

10 Aśoka inscriptions: von Hinüber (1986: 28).

11 See also for the Aśoka inscriptions: Burrow (1937: 14, § 39).

12 See also for the Aśoka inscriptions: Burrow (1937: 14, § 39), von Hinüber (1986: 28); for the Gāndhārī: Salomon (2002: 132).

13 See also for the Aśoka inscriptions: Burrow (1937: 14, § 39).

14 Aśoka inscriptions: von Hinüber (1986: 28).

15 Schmidt (2004: 239), cf. also von Hinüber (1986: 28).

16 Von Hinüber (1986: 28).

17 Grierson (1931: 356), Schmidt (2004: 240).



*bhēḍa* ~ *bhēḍra* ‘sheep’ > Western Pahari (Cameālī) *bhēḍḍū* or *bhraḍḍ* and finally Skr. *babhrū* > Western Pahari (Pangī) *bhrabbū*.<sup>18</sup>

According to von Hinüber (1986: 28), the attested spellings suggest a development VrC > rVrC > rVCC, that is, again, a doubling of the *r*, as in the case of Skr. *dīrgha* ‘long’ > \**drīrgha* > *dhriggha* with Sindhī *ḍrigho* and Lahndā *drigghā* (the doubling of the initial consonant of the second syllable would be the result of assimilation within a consonant cluster, here rC > CC; however, double consonants are not written in the Aśoka inscriptions; they are only inferred from the shortening of the vowel [Rainer Kimmig, p.c., spring 2015]). The phenomenon of doubling the *r* on either side of the vowel also appears in inscriptions of the “Upper” Indus valley in Pakistan: *devadhrarma* (Talpan), *vryāghra* < Skr. *vyāghra* ‘tiger’ (Chilas), and *rudraśrarma* < Skr. *śarman* ‘bliss’ (Chilas) and in the colophons of the Gilgit manuscripts: *dhrarmendramati* (von Hinüber 1986: 28).

An interesting modern case of doubling in a Tibetic language, although not of the *-r-* glide, is found in the Purikpa dialect of Kargil *bž* > *ʒbʒ* before front vowels, as in *ʒbʒi* ‘four,’ cf. Zemp (2018: 6).

In a few cases, the Tibetan reflex of the *r* seems to have taken the form of a velar or uvular fricative [ɣ] or [ʁ] in combination with voiced radicals and of a palatal fricative [ç] in combination with unvoiced radicals in triple clusters. Both cases are represented in Old and Classical Tibetan by a *written d-* pre-radical<sup>19</sup> (step 1b); cf. *dbre* ‘be impure’ < \**bre* as related to *rme* ‘be impure’ < \**mre* and example (7) below with CT *dgra*.

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<sup>18</sup> Grierson (1931: 360).

<sup>19</sup> Unlike all other prefixes, the *d-* prefix does not seem to have any linguistic reality, at least not as a dental fricative or stop. All attested reflexes only point to a velar or uvular fricative [ɣ] or [ʁ] in voiced clusters. In some cases, the dialects also show an alveodental [r] or [ɹ]. The different spelling of the pre-radical of unvoiced triple clusters as *dky*, *dkr*, and *rky* is reflected as a palatal fricative [ç] for *d-* and an unvoiced alveolar, often represented as retroflex fricative [ʂ] for *r-*. The dialect data so far does not show any difference in the realization of *dk* and *rk*; both pre-radicals seem to correspond to an unvoiced alveolar or retroflex fricative.

One can often observe alternative Tibetan spellings with a *d-* or *r-* pre-radical. In particular, one might find an Old Tibetan spelling rC where the classical orthography has dC, e.g., in the case of *rgu* vs. *dgu* ‘nine.’ This variation may also be reflected in the dialectal data, without, however, always matching the written forms. Spellings with *d-* are, however, already common in Old Tibetan. It seems to me that the spelling with a *d-* pre-radical is due to a misinterpretation of an Old Tibetan

In Eastern Tibetan, the development must also have involved a palatalization of the velar cluster after the first step:  $sCr > sCy$  (step 1a). Due to the palatalization, the restriction against an  $r$ -pre-radical (cf. restriction R3 in § 1.1) no longer held, so that in a further step (1c) the cluster takes the form  $rCy$  (in the phonetically conservative Amdo dialects, *rgy* corresponds to /rdz/ or /rj/; *rky-* to /ṛtɕe-/ or in the notation of the CDTD to /ṣtɕe-/, see the examples below). A further development (step 1d) would then yield the cluster  $dCy$  (in some of the phonetically conservative Amdo dialects, written *dgy* corresponds to /ɣj/ or /ɣdz/ (cf. Rkangtsha /ɣji/ ‘happy’, Rngaba /ɣdziwæ/ ‘joy’ < CT *dgyes.pa*), CDTD; the unvoiced cluster *dky* corresponds to /çtɕe-/ or /çc-/, cf. Themchen, Labrang, Rngaba /çtɕi/, Mkharmar, Rkangtsha, Chabcha /çci/ ‘center’ < CT *dkyil*, CDTD). Step 1d could, of course, also follow step 1b ( $sCr > sCy$ ) immediately.

### 2.1.2 Steps 2 to 4 ( $sCr > sC$ ), ( $sC > rC$ ), and ( $sC/rC > C$ )

The cluster  $sCr$  may then further develop via  $sC$  (step 2) to  $rC$  (step 3) and to a cluster with fricative pre-radicals represented in Old and Classical Tibetan by *written*  $dC$  (step 3b). Except for the nasals, the metathesis process did not fully affect all Old or Classical Tibetan words with a cluster  $Cr$ . Many words with an oral initial still show a cluster  $Cr$  or only the first step with an additional  $s$ - or  $d$ -pre-radical. But the process apparently continued in several modern varieties, such as the dialects of Baltistan and

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writing style where the superscripts are not precisely above the radical but further to the left. In the case of the  $r$ -superscript this may possibly be misread as a  $d$ -pre-radical.

One possible exception has been mentioned: OT *dmyig* ‘eye.’ According to Wang Yao (1983: 450), Rgyalthag, a Kham dialect spoken in Yunnan would show the form /d<sup>ə</sup>mpnik/. This, however, is most likely only a reading pronunciation. It is not corroborated by Wang Xiaosong (1996) and Hongladarom (1996), who both present Rgyalthag as a variety without initial clusters, except prenasalization (see explicitly Hongladarom 1996: 71). In all other dialects, the pre-radical leads to a devoicing of the nasal and finally high tone in many varieties in Western Tibet, Central Tibet, and in the tonal varieties of Kham: /mīk/, /mīʔ/, or /mì:/ . Nangchenpa shows pre-glottalization: /ʔm ε ik/ ~ /ʔn ε ik/, most Amdo varieties show again a non-dental initial /ɣ-/: /ɣnɕ/ (Themchen, Mkharmar, Chabcha, Labrang, Rngaba, Arik), Sertha has either /ɣə-/ or /ʁə-/ with an epenthetic schwa: /ɣəpɪg/ ~ /ʁəpɪg/, Shando has retained only the schwa: /əpɪke/, Ndzorge shows pre-aspiration: /<sup>h</sup>ɣɣg/, while Rmastod and Mdzorganrabar apparently lost the pre-radical: /mək/ and /mpɪɕ/ (CDTD for all varieties). The latter form does not contain a pre-radical, but is the intermediate result of the palatalization or spirantization process mentioned for the oral clusters of labial plus  $y$ , cf. on p. 13, n. 5 above:  $my > /mp/ > /ɲ/$ , cf. also Rkangtsha and Sertha /mpɪɲ/ (CDTD) < OT *myiŋ*, CT *miŋ* ‘name.’

Amdo; see the examples below, or in the dialect of Domkhar in Ladakh where the cluster *br-* regularly became /rb-/ (see Appendix I).

Note, however, that after a bound morpheme such as the negation marker *ma*, the metathesis is blocked, hence DOM /rbi/ ‘get less’ vs. /mam'bri/ ‘did not get less.’ The overgeneralization of (homorganic) prenasalization after negation markers (*ma + (h)bri > ma.ħbri*) is a special development in the Shamskat dialects. The appearance of the homorganic nasal is primarily due to the ‘dorje effect’ or ‘leftward migration’ of consonants in clusters after open syllables (cf. *rdo* ‘stone’ + *rje* ‘lord’ > /dor'je/ ‘diamond, thunderbolt,’ ‘*vajra*,’ also a common name for men). After negation, the nasal is not restricted to verbs that have a *ħ-* prefix but appears with all voiced initials (see also Zeisler 2009). Since the metathesis is blocked in negation, it should be a later development than the overgeneralized nasalization and the migration effect. This again indicates that the Shamskat metathesis is of a comparatively recent date.

The Shamskat metathesis is now in the process of being cancelled due to the influence of the dominant dialect of Leh. Reversal of sound changes is also known in other languages,<sup>20</sup> and one can thus expect that reversals of one or the other step of the metathesis (or of other sound alternations) have taken place in other Tibetan varieties and other Tibeto-Burman languages at various times, yet another complication leading to unreliable reconstructions.

In a final development (step 4), the secondary prefix may be lost along with the primary prefixes, leaving a trace in the case of non-aspirated high-tone initials. See, e.g., Lhasa Tibetan /pūku/ ‘human offspring, child’ < \*r/spug.gu < CT *sprug.gu* and Mkharmar /waŋma/, Rmastod /baŋma/ ‘fly’ < \*r/zbaŋ.ma < CT *sbraŋ.ma*. The feature has also been observed in the dialect of Lingshed in Ladakh, where, e.g., *brag* ‘rock’ had become /bak/ via \*rbak, and *phruḡu* ‘child’ had become /phugu/, although, due to the increasing influence of the dialect of Leh, these forms have become obsolete and are replaced by the retroflex variants, such as /ɖak/ and /tħugu/. That a metathesis had taken place in this dialect is demonstrated by the triple clusters, with *sbr* > /rb/ or /zb/ and *spr* > /rp/, see Appendix I.

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<sup>20</sup> For example, initial /k/ of Latin loans became /χ/ in Old High German. While the High Alemannic dialects preserved this change, it was cancelled in Middle High German, cf. Latin *culina*, Vulgar Latin *coquīna* ‘kitchen,’ Old High German *chūchūna*, Middle High German *kuchin*, Modern High German *Küche* /kyçə/ (see <http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB?lemma=kueche>, last accessed 17 February 2023), and Swiss German /χʊχ:iχæftli/ ‘kitchen board.’

### 2.1.3 *The data*

Typically, only two or three steps are attested for each affected word in Tibetan across all varieties. Only the verbs for speaking and related nouns show most of the steps, and this within the classical vocabulary alone. Interestingly, while the Domkharpa dialect of Western Sham shows the completion of the metathesis with labial clusters, the Baltipa dialects show a strong tendency to complete the metathesis of velar clusters, while the Purikpa dialects, which take an intermediate position between the Baltipa and the Western Shamma dialects have preserved most of the triple clusters found in Classical Tibetan.

Table 2 summarizes the various steps found in the examples listed subsequently. Reconstructions by Coblin (HST) are marked by (C), those by Matisoff (HPTB or STEDT – the inhomogeneous rendering of forms is kept unchanged) are marked by (M), and those by Simon are marked by (S). All other reconstructions, or rather suggestions for reconstructions, are mine. A tilde is used for approximate or summarizing translations. The term “protoform,” abbreviated as “PF,” will be used to indicate my non-commitment towards the status of the relationship. All words derived from this protoform may be either inherited or borrowed.

In my suggestions for reconstructed forms, I follow two general principles, namely a) that nasal forms are most probably older than their oral equivalents, at least in Tibetan (see also p. 101 below, where this is argued for on the base of a semantic drift), and b) that rhotacized forms are most probably older than palatalized forms. The written Tibetan forms will be given here in italics, the spoken forms between slashes. All forms listed in Table 2 will be explained.

I have elsewhere (Zeisler 2016a: 238) criticized the lack of knowledge with respect to the sound laws of retroflexization and spirantization that apply within the development of the modern Tibetic languages. One can usually find these sound laws in the studies of individual Tibetic languages, but we seem to lack a publication that lists them systematically for all varieties. Conversely, I must admit that I have no idea what kind of sound laws may have led to the forms cited here, and it may well be possible that some of the quoted similarities may, in fact, be chance similarities, particularly when they have not yet found the approval of Matisoff or others. However, all my suggestions follow the same kind of “reasoning” that underlies Matisoff’s suggestions: a strong similarity in form, allowing only for the sound alternations discussed here, combined with a strong similarity, if not full identity in meaning. I am aware that I might have been an easy prey of the *Sirene des Gleichklangs* (the Siren of phonetic

similarity),<sup>21</sup> but my point is not that the words in question are necessarily shared inheritances. To the contrary, I hold that much of the obvious similarity found among the vocabulary of the Tibeto-Burman languages may well be the result of repeated borrowings among and beyond the Tibeto-Burman languages. If the similarities cited below were even merely due to chance, this would also hold for most of Matisoff's etymologies.

At the same time, I might have overlooked not-so-apparent relationships that are due to genetic inheritance. This is, of course, partly because we still lack a systematic overview of the various sound laws being productive in the various Tibeto-Burman languages, and partly to the lack of historical depth for most of the languages in question. I would think, however, that the main argument of this section is not affected, even if not all examples given here have a valid counterpart. At least two of the words listed here, (21) *rma.bya* 'peacock' and (22) *rmanj* 'horse,' are undisputedly of non-Tibeto-Burman origin. These words and the Tibetan examples in (1)–(5), (7), (8), (11), (12), (14), (16), and (20) clearly demonstrate a metathesis being at work within Tibetan, if only from sCr to rC, but effectively from Cr or even C...r to rC in the case of (21) *rma.bya* 'peacock' and (22) *rmanj* 'horse.' Whichever way the following items became part of the Tibetan lexicon, be it by inheritance or borrowing, the metathesis rule applies within Tibetan.

One of the reviewers has criticized my reliance on Matisoff's STEDT for the comparative data. It is true that the material is not always reliable, as I myself could observe with respect to the Tibetan data. However, STEDT is unfortunately the only source that puts together material from all putative branches – albeit sometimes from rather strange sources (again observed for Tibetan). Following a suggestion by the reviewer, I have additionally consulted Schuessler's (2007) EDOC. The latter, however, relies even more especially on "Written Tibetan," which is typically data from JÄK, hence Classical Tibetan, while for other Tibeto-Burman data, Schuessler typically relies on work by Matisoff. See above § 1.3 for the general problems in the current reconstructions. With respect to the Chinese data, Matisoff

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<sup>21</sup> For this often repeated metaphor see Hofer (1839: 26). Matisoff (2000: 335) himself points to the fact that "[o]ften forms which look very much alike are not true cognates at all," while "true cognates which are perfectly regular reflexes of rigorously storable 'rules of sound-change' may have no superficial phonological resemblance to each other at all." However, most of his etymologies only contain similar forms, and where, as in the case of Chinese, blatantly dissimilar forms are given, no 'rigorously storable' sound law and no chain of such sound laws is formulated that would link these forms.

relies on Karlgreen’s *Grammata Serica Recensa* (GSR), which many scholars now think is outdated. I have nevertheless added the references to GSR wherever possible. I will also draw upon Coblin’s (1986) reconstructions, as they often yield more complex forms. The reconstructions by Baxter and Sagart (2011, abbreviated as “B&S”), which are also more complex than the GSR forms, are given, where available.

The reviewer also complained that I didn’t use the Tangut script for the Tangut data, nor the Chinese script for the Chinese data, remaining silent about the Tibetan script for the Tibetan data, which is the main topic. One could possibly also have made a point for Written Burmese. It would certainly have been much more important to present the Old and Classical Tibetan data in Tibetan script, but as this could not have been done without an additional transliteration, and thus a doubling of the data, I decided to give only the transliteration. I understand, however, the necessity to disambiguate reconstructed Old Chinese forms with the help of Chinese characters and thus have now included them.

**Table 2** Overview: Step sequence of metathesis Cr > rC in Tibetan

item	*Cr reconstructed protoform (PF)	rough gloss	step 0 = Cr (~ Cy)	step 1 > sCr 1a > sCy 1b > dCr 1c > rCy 1d > dCy	step 2 > sC	step 3 > rC  3b > dC
(1)	*kra	‘hair’	—	skra	/ska/	/ṛka-/
(2)	*krâk (M)	‘fear’	(? <i>khrag</i> )	<i>skrag</i> 1c: /ṛteax/	—	—
(3)	*krakw (C)	‘stir’	—	<i>skrog</i> 1b: <i>dkrug</i>	—	/ṛkok/, /ṛkuk/
(4)	*kraj	‘swell’	—	<i>skrajs</i> 1c: /ṛteaj/	—	/ṛkaɲs/
(5)	*k/g-rim	‘twist’	/tʃim/ (<*bkrim)	/skrim/, <i>sgrim</i>	—	/ṛkim/
(6)	*kret/n (M)	~‘waist’	—	— (1a: <i>skyed</i> )	<i>sked-</i>	<i>rked-</i>
(7)	*gra (M)/ *gljay (C)	~‘enemy’	/gra/, /ṭa/	/zgra/ 1b: <i>dgra</i> 1d: /ṣja-/	—	/rga/

item	*Cr reconstructed protoform (PF)	rough gloss	step 0 = Cr (~ Cy)	step 1 > sCr 1a > sCy 1b > dCr 1c > rCy 1d > dCy	step 2 > sC	step 3 > rC  3b > dC
(8)	*gran	~'fight'	<i>b-grad</i>	/zgrat/ 1c: /rdzal/	—	/rgat/
(9)	*grwas (M)	~'word'	<i>gros</i>	<i>sgra</i> 1b: /ɣdza/	—	—
(10)	*nra (S)	'ear'	—	—	—	<i>rna</i>
(11)	*pr(w)uk / *py(w)ak (M)	~'sweep, shake'	<i>phyag.ma</i>	<i>sprug</i>	—	/ɣpuk/
(12)	*pral	'forehead'	—	/spralba/ 1b: <i>dpral.ba</i>	/spalba/	/ɣpalba/
(13)	*p/brV(m)	'fat, thick'	/brombo/	*sbrom-	<i>sbom.po</i>	/rbombo/
(14)	*bra(ŋ)	'bee, fly'	—	<i>sbraŋ.ma</i> 1c: /zbjaŋ-/	/zbaŋbu/	/rbaŋma/
(15)	*m/praj	'wild, wolf'	—	1a: <i>spyaj.ku</i> 1c: /ɣteaj-/	—	—
(16)	*m/brul	'snake'	—	<i>sbrul</i>	—	/rbul/ 3b: /ɣbul/
(17)	*m/prV ~ *m/pyV	'mood' 1.→positive 2.→negative	<i>myoj</i>  <i>bro</i>	<i>spro1</i> , 1a: <i>spyod?</i> <i>spro2</i>	<i>smon</i>  /spa/	  /ɣpo2/
(18)	*m/praw-k	'of human'	<i>phru(.gu)</i>	<i>spru(.gu)</i>	<i>smos</i> <i>spu-, Spu-?</i>	—
(19)	*mrVŋ/k (C)	'people'	—	—	/smaq/	<i>rmaŋs</i> <i>dmaŋs, dmag</i>
(20)	*mra(o)	'speak'	<i>myog?</i>  <i>hphya</i> <i>p(h)ra, bro</i>	<i>smra, spra</i>  1a: <i>spyo</i> 1d: <i>dpyas?</i>	<i>smo-, sma-</i>	<i>rma</i> 3b: <i>dmo; dpe?</i>
(21)	*m(a)ra(k)	'peacock'	—	—	—	<i>rma.bya</i>
(22)	*mraŋ	'horse'	—	—	—	<i>rmaŋ</i>

## (1) PF \*kra ‘(head) hair’

Compare Angami Naga /kra/; Jingpho /kara/ (and variants); Western Himalayish /kra/ or /krà/; Bodish: Tshona /k<sup>h</sup>ra<sup>55</sup>/ ~ /khrA<sup>53</sup>/; Lepcha /(u)kró/; Tamangish: Gurung, /kra/ (with variation in the supra-segmental features), Manang /gra<sup>2</sup>/ ~ /<sup>1</sup>krɣ/ ~ /<sup>2</sup>krɣ/ ~ /<sup>3</sup>krə/, Tamang /kra/ (with variation in the supra-segmental features), Taglung /<sup>h</sup>hwa/, with palatalization (→ sound alternation 3): Thakali /<sup>2</sup>kja/ (or /<sup>2</sup>kjΛ/) besides /<sup>h</sup>ʈΛ/ (STEDT-β2 #367;<sup>22</sup> here and in HPTB 102 the protoform is given as \*s-kra, but the s- ‘prefix’ is attested only in Tibetan). Cf. also Honda (2014: 142, table 3) for Tamangish and Hyslop (2014: 162, table 4) for East Bodish: /kra/ ~ /ʈa/ ~ /rá/.

1 > sCr CT *skra*, PUR /skra/ ‘hair,’ LAD /ʂa/ (CDTD)

1a > sCy PUR /skjagar/ ‘white hair’ (CDTD)

2 > sC BAL /skayar/ ‘white hair’ (CDTD)

3 > rC BAL /r̥kalo/ ‘plait’ (Sprigg 2002: 140 with spelling *rka-lo*; according to the CDTD with /ʂ/ for /r̥/, the word is obsolete and used only in songs), /r̥kazat/ ‘woman whose hair has started to fall out’ (Sprigg 2002: 140, spelling *rkazat*)

## (2) PF \*krok ~ \*krâk or \*grok ~ \*grâk ‘fear, frighten’ (STEDT-β1) ~ \*s/d-krawak (STEDT-β2 #2249)

A *d-* or *s-* prefix is clearly attested only for Tibetan, while a \*sə- prefix is merely assumed for Loloish, a nasal prefix \*N- is assumed for proto-Northern Loloish and higher up Lolo-Burmese; the protoform is given as \*khlak in HST: 77; compare Tangut /kja/ ~ /tśja/ ‘fear, dread’; Trung /a<sup>31</sup> kra<sup>255</sup>/ ‘fear, frighten’; and especially Burmish: Written Burmese *k(h)rauk* ~ *krok* ‘fear,’ *khrok* ‘afraid, frighten,’ Arakanese /hkrau/ ‘frighten,’ Bola /kjau<sup>255</sup>/, Intha /hklo/ ‘frighten,’ Luxi

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22 When working on the first drafts of this article, I thought it impossible to always cite the exact access date for every entry cited, except for more particular information. I still think that the article would have become illegible if I had done so. In the meantime (since November 2015), however, I noticed some changes in the data, e.g., some of the earlier data have been removed. I shall thus refer to the data retrieved between 2012 and 2014 as STEDT-β1 and the data retrieved or rechecked in November and December 2015 as STEDT-β2, referring to the earlier and the more recent beta versions respectively.



(Langsu) /kjauk<sup>55</sup>/ ~ (Leqi) /kju:k<sup>55</sup>/ (STEDT-β<sub>2</sub>); cf. 赫 mOC \*hrâk 1. 'glowing red (of face), brilliant,' which might be related to OT/CT *khrag* 'blood,' and, perhaps as semantic extension: 2. 'awe-inspiring, majestic, imposing' < 'be scaring' (EDOC: 276).

(o Cr ? CT *khrag* 'blood' – if the relationship between blood or being blood-red and fear also holds for Tibetan)

1 > sCr CT *skrag* 'fear (n.),' 'be terrified'

1c > rCy AT: Themchen, Shando /ɾtɕaɯ/, Arik /ɾtɕak/ 'be terrified' (CDTD with /ʂ/ for /ɾ/)  
< \*rkyag < \*skyag < *skrag*

(3) PF \*krakw 'stir, rouse' (HST: 127); most probably related to the foregoing

1 > sCr CT *skrog* (BRGY) 'stir,' PUR /skrok/ > LAD /ʂok/ (CDTD) 'churn'; PUR /skruk/ > LAD /ʂuk/ (CDTD) \**skrug* 'stir,' PUR /skrak/ (CDTD), > LAD Shamskat /ʂak/ \**skrag* 'knead properly'

1b > dCr CT *dkrog* (JÄK) 'to stir, churn; rouse, scare up,' AT: Sertha /xtɪɔk/ 'to stir'; *dkrug* 'to stir, stir up, agitate; to trouble, disturb, confound,' AT: Themchen, Mkharmar, Rkangtsha, Chabcha, Labrang /ɕtʂəɕ/ (CDTD)

3 > rC BAL /ɾkok/ 'shake (in a bottle)'<sup>23</sup> (SPR, spelling *rkok*), 'churn' (CDTD /ʂkok/); /ɾkak/ 'knead' (SPR, spelling *rkak*)

(4) PF \*kr(w)aj 'swell'

Compare Tamangish: Thakali (Marpha) /hraŋ-ba/, Thakali (Syang) /ɕ<sup>h</sup>jaŋ-ba/; Mikir /kàŋ/; Written Burmese *krwa'* ~ *kô* 'rise, arise, swell up,' causative *khwa'* 'cause to rise, swell up' (STEDT-β<sub>2</sub>).

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<sup>23</sup> This is often done to milk to make butter, so the meaning might be 'churn.'

- 1 > sCr CT *skraŋs* ‘swell,’ PUR /skraŋs/, LAD /ʂaŋ(s)/ (CDTD)
- 1c > rCy AT: Themchen, Chabcha /ɽtɕaŋ/, Arik /rtɕaŋ/ (CDTD with /ʂ/ for /ɽ/) < \**rkyaŋs* < \**skyaŋs* < *skraŋs*
- 3 > rC BAL /ɽkaŋs/ (CDTD with /ʂ/ for /ɽ/)
- (5) Proto-Himalayish \*krem ~ \*krim ~ \*grim ‘twist (between palms; thread, rope)’
- Compare Bodic: Cuona Memba /klem<sup>35</sup>/, Tshona /grim<sup>35</sup>/; Tamangish: Tamang /khrem-pa/; Kham-Magar-Chepeng-Sunwar: Chepeng /krimh/ ~ /krun/, Kiranti: Thulung /khrep/ ~ /rim/, Kulung /ripp/, Dumi /ri:p-/, Bantawa /rip/ (→ sound alternation 2 for the final); cf. also Written Burmese *lim* ~ *twân*; Tangkhulic: Atong /sakrem-/ ‘twist’ (STEDT-β2).<sup>24</sup>
- o Cr WSHM /tʃim/ ‘twist, roll between the hands (dough)’ < \*√*grim* or \*√*khrim* (via stem II \**bkrim*(s))<sup>25</sup>
- 1 > sCr PUR (Kargil, Tshangra, Ciktan) /skrim/ ‘mix,’ NBR /ʂim/ ‘roll a dough’ (CDTD sub \**skrim*), CT *sgrim*; PUR (Tshangra) /zgrim/ ‘mix’ (CDTD sub *sgrim*)
- 3 > rC BAL /ɽkim/ ‘mix, instigate’ (CDTD sub \**skrim*; with /ʂ/ for /ɽ/, SPR with /r/)

<sup>24</sup> <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt/cgi/rootcanal.pl/gnis?t=twist>, last accessed 10 April 2019. Several Chinese words might be distantly related, even if the final does not match: 1. 繆 mOC \*kiu ‘twist’ (EDOC: 320) 2. 綸 OC \*liwan ‘woof, twist a cord’ (GSR 470e), \*g-rjun (STEDT-β2), \*k.run {\*k.ru[n]} ‘woof; twist a cord’ (B&S: 71), mOC \*run ‘cord, twist’ (EDOC: 370) 3. PF \*krəw 紉 OC \*kiōg ‘twist, plait; unite’ with WB *krûi* ‘thread, string, chain’ (HPTB: 199), 𠵹 / 𠵹 \*kiōg (GSR 1064a/b), \*kriw ‘twist’ / \*k<r>iw?, ‘plait, unite’ (B&S: 64), 𠵹 mOC \*kiu? (EDOC: 320); 4. 繆 \*kliōg ‘down curving, twist’ (GSR 1069h), \*k-riw ‘twist’ (B&S: 64) 5. 絞 \*kōg (GSR 1166k), \*k-r<sup>ɕ</sup>iw? {\*k-r<sup>ɕ</sup>[i]w?} ‘twist, strangle’ (B&S: 56), mOC \*kriâu? ~ \*krâu? ‘twist, strangle, entangle; pressing, intense’ (EDOC: 309).

<sup>25</sup> Note that *skr* becomes /ʂ/ and *sgr* becomes /r/ in these dialects.

- (6) PF \*kret ~ \*kren ‘waist, loins’ (STEDT-β1) ~ \*krya(t/n) (STEDT-β2 #217), with palatalization \*kyet (→ sound alternation 3)

Compare among others: Tani: Apatani /k<sup>h</sup>rju-po/ ‘waist’; Naga: Lotha Naga /khang khen/ ‘hip,’ Liangmei /cha khen/ ‘waist’; Bodo /kit lánj ta ri/ ‘hip, hip bone’; Western Himalayish: Bunan /kyet pa/ ‘waist,’ Kanauri /re(:)/ ‘waist’; Bodic: Tshona (Wenlang) /khret/, (Mama) /khren/ ‘waist’; Tamangish: Gurung /<sup>h</sup>kre/, Manang (Gyaru) /grɛː<sup>h</sup>/, (Prakaa) /<sup>h</sup>kre/ ~ /<sup>3</sup>kre/; Tamang (Risiangku) /<sup>h</sup>ke:/, (Sahu) /<sup>h</sup>kep/ ~ /<sup>h</sup>kep pa/ ‘waist,’ Thakali (Marpha, Syang) /<sup>h</sup>kʌe/, Thakali (Tukche) /<sup>h</sup>tɛ/ ~ /tɛ/ ‘waist’; Tangut /stshǐě/ ‘groin’; Karenic: Pwo /khèn/ ‘buttocks, anus, rear’ (STEDT-β2). EDOC (pp. 312, 313) associates 𑄎 mOC \*kêt, \*gêt ‘put around and measure’ and 𑄎 mOC \*khêt, \*gêt ‘belt’ with a PF \*ket ‘waist.’

Honda (2014: 142, table 3) assumes a proto-Tamangic form \*kre(t)<sup>A</sup>. Cf. also East Bodish: Dakpa /khret/, Dzala /t̪het/, Kurtöp and Bumthap /khrat/, Khengka /t̪hat/, while Chali has a Tibetic loan /ketpa/ (Hyslop 2014: 162, table 4).

- 1a > sCy \**skyed.pa* (this spelling seems to be occasionally attested, cf. JÄK, p. 30a and Mkhas.grub.rje’s list of non-standard spellings as represented in Kuijp 1986: 37/44, where it is listed with the meaning ‘calf of the leg’) or
- 1c > rCy \**rkyed.pa*, cf. Spiti /cē<sup>h</sup>pa/, Nako, Namgya /cētpa/, Nubri, Southern Mustang, Western Drokpa /cēpa/, Shigatse /cēpa/ ‘waist’ < (r/s)*kyed.pa*<sup>26</sup>
- 2 > sC CT *sked.pa*,<sup>27</sup> BAL (Skardo, Hardas), PUR (Tshangra, Parkachik, Hanu), LAD (Sñemo/Nimu, LEH) /sketpa/ (CDTD)

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26 While the 2008 version of the CDTD I used to consult still lists PUR (Ciktan, Mulbekh) and SHM (Wanla) /ɣkjetpa/ (CDTD with /ɣ-/ for /ɣ̥-/), the newest edition, 2014, of which I obtained a copy as a consultant for the imminent publication of the noun volume, has correctly deleted the glide. With the exception of some Kenhat dialects where the original glide before vowels *e* and *i* is phonemic in contrast to secondarily derived vowels (cf. -as, -os > /-e/ ([-e] or perhaps [ɛ̥]) ~ [-ɛ]) vs. -ye > /-e/ (slightly higher, thus [-e] or perhaps [-ɛ̥]) and -us > /-i/ vs. -yi > /-i/), the palatal glide of written Tibetan is neutralized in the Baltipa and Ladakhi dialects on the phonemic level, but may still appear on the phonetic level.

- 3 > rC OT, CT *rked.pa*,<sup>27</sup> BAL (Turtuk), PUR (Kargil, Thuwina, Sapi, Shargol), SHM (KHAL, NUR), and NBR (Panamik) /r̥ketpa/ (CDTD with /ɣ/ for /r̥/)
- (7) PF \*gra, 旅 OC \*gliŋ (HPTB: 173, 591; cf. HST: 72: \*gljay, OC \*gljagx > *ljwo*; but EDOC: 367 mOC \*raʔ) ‘stranger’ > ‘guest’ or ‘enemy’; Matisoff STEDT-β2 #5531 assumes a root \*d-gra ‘stranger, enemy,’ but acknowledges that the “Qiangic / rGyalrongic forms are probably borrowings from Tibetan.” Note here especially Caodeng /ɣgrɛ(-jɛ)/ with an *r*-like reflex. Matisoff further thinks that the “root is undoubtedly allofamically related to #2596 PTB” \*g-ra:l ~ \*g-ran ~ \*ray with the meanings ‘enemy, fight, quarrel, strife, sword, war,’ notably with no sign of a *d*- prefix, see also the following case no. (8); EDOC (334) relates the Tibetan word *dgra* to another Old Chinese form: 客 mOC \*khrâk ‘guest, visitor, stranger’ and ‘opponent, enemy’
- o Cr \*gra ‘enmity’ > ‘accusation, fine,’ PUR /gra/ ‘fine’ (CDTD), GYS /t̪a/ < *gra* ‘fine, accusation’ (in the expression /t̪a kâl/ ‘fine, impose a penalty, claim compensation, accuse’);<sup>28</sup> perhaps also CT *hgras* ‘hate, bear ill will’ (cf. HST: 72)
- 1 > sCr PUR (Kargil) *zgra* (زگرا) ‘enemy’ (cf. Khan 2014: 100, no. 65)
- 1b > dCr CT *dgra* ‘enemy,’ SHM, LEH /d̪ao/ < *dgra.bo* ‘enemy’ (CDTD), SHM /d̪a/ < *dgra* ‘fine, accusation’ (in the expression /d̪a kal/), GYS /d̪a/ ‘enmity’ (in the

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<sup>27</sup> The forms *sked.pa* or *rked.pa* are somewhat odd, as one could have expected a palatalization of the velar before the high vowel. The forms appear thus to be due to a subsequent neutralization (as in the western dialects, see n. 26). Alternatively, these spellings might indicate a rather late borrowing.

<sup>28</sup> Voiced CT root consonants not preceded by any pre-radical tend to become unvoiced in most Ladakhi dialects, while those that were preceded by a pre-radical in classical orthography typically remain voiced. This is not an exceptionless rule: classical spellings can be based on some misinterpretation of linguistic facts at the time of codification, while local forms may be due to a particular local development. But by and large this rule can be used to reconstruct alternative pronunciations from alternative spellings.

expressions /d̪a laŋ/ ‘behave aggressively towards somebody, get a problem’ and /d̪a l̪aŋ/ ‘provoke a fight’),<sup>28</sup> AT: Themchen /ɣd̪z̪a/ ‘enemy’ (CDTD)

- 1d > dCy AT: Labrang /ɣja-/ (CDTD) < \**dgya* < *dgra*
- 3 > rC BAL /rga/, ‘enemy’ (CDTD)
- (8) PF \**gran* ‘push, fight against’ or with → sound alternation 2 for the final: \**grad* ‘spread wide apart, open’<sup>29</sup>

Compare HPTB (p. 516) with \**g-ra:l* ~ \**g-ran* ~ \**ray* ‘war,’ ‘strife.’

- o Cr CT *hgran* ‘vie, contend with, strife’; *bgrad* ‘open wide (eyes, legs)’ with a possible related form *hgrad* ‘spread, enter’ (JÄK, based on Csoma de Kőrös, TETT, but not listed in BRGY); the *b-* pre-radical could perhaps reflect some kind of fricative echo of the post-radical (step 1b)
- 1 > sCr PUR /zgran/ ‘provoke, fight, mess around’ (CDTD sub \**sgran*); CT *bsgrad* ‘spread wide apart, spread apart, open wide (legs); put sideways’ (TETT), PUR /zgrat/ ‘stem against, lift’
- 1c > rCy AT: Themchen /rdzal/ (CDTD) < \**rgyad* < \**sgyad* < (*b*)*sgrad*
- 3 > rC BAL /rgat/ ‘face an enemy, push (with the body)’ (SPR), ‘stem against, to lean against, resist, fight’ (CDTD)

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<sup>29</sup> The Ladakhi form /rat/ < *sgrad* conveys the meaning: ‘open wide,’ in combination with /kampa/ ‘leg’ > ‘sit down squarely, take up too much room, straddle, sprawl,’ with /lakpa/ ‘hand, arm’ > ‘push, press, keep sth. against sth.’

- (9) PF \*grwas, གྲོ་: OC \*g'wad 'speak, word' (GSR 3020; HPTB: 437) or \*g<sup>w</sup>rat--s {[g]<sup>w</sup>rat--s} (B&S: 51); EDOC (p. 283): \*gwrâ(t)s or \*grô(t)s<sup>30</sup>
- o Cr CT *gros* 'council, advice, speech' (cf. also HPTB: 437); perhaps also  $\sqrt{grags}$  (I: *hgrags*, II: *grags*) 'sound, cry, shout'
  - 1 > sCr CT *sgra* 'sound, noise, voice, word, language'
  - 1b > dCr AT: Themchen, Mkharmar, Rkangtsha, Chabcha, Labrang /ɣdʒa/, Rngaba, Arik /ɣdʒæ/ 'sound' (CDTD) < \**dgra*
- (10) PF \*nra 'ear' (Simon 1972: 219, n. 15, 1975: 248), with palatalization (→ sound alternation 3): \*nja [ɲa]; STEDT-β2, however, gives the possible roots \*r/g-na (#811, cf. also HPTB p. 134, 162 and passim), \*myanɿ (#2084), and provisionally \*ña-runɿ (#6487); a pre-radical *r-* is attested only in Tibetan and Rgyalrongic. Otherwise, the word is mainly attested with a plain dental nasal, in some instances also with a plain velar nasal (which may or may not be the reflex of a velar pre-radical. The palatal(ized) nasal often goes along with a front vowel, but since it also combines with back vowels, it does not seem to be merely the result of conditioning.

For the palatal realizations compare STEDT-β2 with Tani /ña-runɿ/; Tangut /nr̥i(u)/ ( /nr̥i(u) / ~ /n̥ju/ ( /n̥ju<sup>1</sup> /); Padam-Mishing /nyé-rung/ ~ /nyo-rung/ ~ /ye-rung/, Bengni /ñu-rung/, Hill Miri /ɲiru/, Tagin /ɲarung/; Naga: Angami (Khonoma) /nie/, Angami (Kohima) / (u) nyie/. Chokri / (u) nyi<sup>33</sup> /; Lepcha /a-nyor/; Tamangish: Manang (Gyaru) /na<sup>1</sup>/ or /nya<sup>1</sup>-/, (Prakaa) /<sup>3</sup>nɾ/ or /<sup>2</sup>ɲe/; Qiangic: Muya /ŋ̥yi<sup>35</sup>/ ~ /ŋ̥uə<sup>24</sup>/, Qiang (Longxi) /ŋ̥i ká/, (Yadu) /ŋ̥uk/, Queyu /rŋ̥i<sup>55</sup>/, Zhaba /ŋ̥<sup>Λ</sup><sup>33</sup> zə<sup>55</sup>/;<sup>31</sup> Rgyalrongic: Northern Ergong /ɲə<sup>53</sup>/, Daofu /ŋ̥ə/, Rgyalrong mostly /... rna/, but palatal(ized) forms are also attested: Rgyalrong /rŋ̥a .../, Lixian Putou and Jinchuan /'tə mje/, Lixian Jiabi and Lixian Guergou /tə' rŋ̥e/; Bai (Dali) /nio<sup>3</sup>-/ ~ /ŋ̥v<sup>33</sup>-/, (Jianchuan) /jũ<sup>33</sup> tu<sup>21</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Shafer (1940: 308, 318) adduces also Burmese *krà* 'hear' (in the first case, both forms are subsumed under the meaning 'hear', in the second case, under the meaning 'sound').

<sup>31</sup> The non-IPA symbol  $\eta$  refers to an alveolo-palatal nasal (=  $\eta^j$  or  $\eta^p$ ).

kuã<sup>55</sup>/ ~ /ɲi<sup>33</sup> tiã<sup>42</sup> kuã<sup>55</sup>/; 耳 OC \*ńjəg (HPTB: 176) or \*ńjəgx (HST: 69), mOC \*nəʔ (EDOC: 225).

In view of this data, the Classical Tibetan verb *ñan* 'listen' seems to be related, as well.

3 > rC CT *rna* 'ear'

- (11) PF \*pr(w)uk (?) 'shake (off)' ~ \*py(w)ak 'sweep, broom' (HPTB) ~ \*k/p-y(w)ak (STEDT-β2 #2587) (→ sound alternation 3)

Compare Tani: Tani /pək/ 'sweep,' Apatani /(dī) p<sup>h</sup>rjuʔ/ 'shake (one's head)' vs. /pu/ 'sweep' and /u-puiʔ/ 'clean,' Bengni /puək/, Bokar, Padam-Mishing /pək/, Galo /pek-/ ~ /pəg-/ ~ /pen-/ ~ /pep-/, Tagin /pɤk-/ 'sweep,' Milang /pek/; Darang: /(h)a: pag/ 'sweep, wipe'; Kuki-Chin: Lai Hakha /phiak-I, phiaʔ-II/ 'sweep'; Angami-Pochuri: Chokri /phak hwü/ 'broom'; Zeme: Liangmei, Rongmei /-phiak/, Zeme /piag/ 'broom' (noun or verb); Mikir /-phek/ 'broom' (noun); Bodic: Tsangla /phak/ 'sweep, broom,' CT *hphyag* 'sweep, clean,' *phyagma* 'broom'; Lepcha /phyok/ 'sweep,' Tamangish: Gurung /p<sup>h</sup>yoq/ ~ /<sup>2</sup>p<sup>h</sup>jo-/ 'sweep,' Manang /<sup>1</sup>p<sup>h</sup>ya:/ ~ /<sup>2</sup>p<sup>h</sup>ja:/ 'wipe,' Tamang (Sahu) /<sup>1</sup>p<sup>h</sup>ya:/ (/<sup>2</sup>p<sup>h</sup>ja:/); Kiranti: Atpare /phek/, Bantawa /bUk/, Hayu /pek/ 'sweep,' Chepang /phek/ 'broom'; grass for a broom, sweep; Qiangic: Lyuzu /ŋe<sup>33</sup> phzæ<sup>55</sup>/ 'sweep'; Rgyalrong: /se pjək/ 'broom'; Written Burmese, *phjak*<sup>4</sup> Langsu: /lau<sup>31</sup> phjɔʔ<sup>55</sup>/ 'wipe away, erase' (STEDT-β2). CT *spyug* 'expel, drive out' is perhaps likewise related.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. also the verb \*pruk 'scratch' (STEDT-β2 #1459) with Garo /brik/, CT *hphrug*, Thulung /phrək-/ ~ /phrap-/, Written Burmese *phrok* ~ *phyok*, Loloish \*m-prak<sup>h</sup>, Mpi /phjoʔ/, Hani /pja<sup>33</sup>/ 'scratch (os., sb.)'. The meanings 'sweep' and 'shake off' are not necessarily causative counterparts to the meaning 'scratch,' which itself can be both transitive and reflexive. Particularly CT *sprug* for 'shake o.'s body, feathers, etc.,' besides 'shake out,' is not necessarily a causative derivation of *hphrug* 'scratch (os.)'. All three verbs could be different instantiations of a more general meaning 'clean, get rid of dirt or insects' with a transitive and reflexive application.

One might perhaps also connect the Western Shamma collocation /oma spik/ 'push milk,' i.e., 'push the udder in order to get milk' (both actions of humans and animals) < \*sprig or < \*spyig with a transitive meaning 'scratch.' For related verbs with the meaning 'push,' cf. also Tsangla (Motuo) /brek/ ~ /prek<sup>13</sup>/ 'push' (STEDT) and 排 OC \*b'er (GSR 579x), \*/brij/ ~ \*/b<sup>s</sup>rəj/ (STEDT), \*b<sup>s</sup>rəj {\*[b]<sup>s</sup>rəj} (B&S: 11). Cf. <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt/cgi/rootcanal.pl/gnis?t=push>, accessed 01.03.2017).

- 1 > sCr *sprug* ‘shake (off, out), beat out, stir up,’ PUR /spruk/ (CDTD)
- 3 > rC BAL, SHM /ɽpuk/, AT (Themchen) /ɽpəç/ ‘shake off, out’ (CDTD with /ɽ/ for /ɽ/)³³
- (12) proto-Tibeto-Kinnauri \*pra(l) ~ \*pja(l) ‘forehead’ (→ sound alternation 3)
- HPTB (p. 405f.) and STEDT-β2 #384 give PF \*d-(p)ral, but the *d-* pre-radical is found only in Tibetan, and apart from the Kinnauri form /phya/ there do not seem to exist obvious cognates.
- 1 > sCr PUR (Kargil, Tshangra, Sapi) /spralba/ (CDTD)
- 1b > dCr CT *dpral*
- 2 > sC BAL, LEH, and NBR (Panamik) /spalba/ (CDTD)
- 3 > rC PUR (Ciktan, Mulbekh), SHM (Wanla, KHAL, NUR) /ɽpalba/ (CDTD with /ɽ/ for /ɽ/)
- (13) 1. PF \*prəw (STEDT-β2 #1452) ~ \*mrV (→ sound alternation 2) ~ \*pjaw (→ sound alternation 3) ‘fat’; 2. PF \*bwam (\*s-bwam) (HPTB) ~ \*s-b<sup>w</sup>a(m/p) ~ pLB \*pwap ‘plump, swollen’ (STEDT-β2 #163); 3. PF \*p<sup>w</sup>am ‘womb, belly’ (STEDT-β2 #137 #674); 4. PF \*brum (\*s-brum) ‘pregnant’ (HPTB)

It is not clear whether the “w” in the second root is merely vocalic (*o*, *au*) or a glide that might interchange with other glides, corresponding to sound alternation 3. The fourth root might point to the latter alternative. The Tibetan forms below could only be explained by a root \*brom (cf. now also Tournadre 2014: 116) or a merger of all three roots. One might thus reconstruct a root \*p/brVm ~ \*mrVm. The *s-* prefix assumed by Matisoff would only be attested in Tibetan

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33 Cf. also the semantically related verbs PUR /sprul/ ‘rub off, crumble off,’ BAL /ɽpul/ ‘shake’ (CDTD with /ɽ/ for /ɽ/), SHM /ɽpul/ ‘shake off’ < \*dprul or \*sprul. The form with final *-l*, which does not have a classical counterpart, may perhaps be related to the forms in final *-t*, attested in some of the Kuki-Chin languages, such as Paite /phiat/ ‘sweep,’ Tiddim /phiat<sup>l</sup>/ ‘sweep, wash face’ (STEDT-β2).



and in Rgyalrongic languages, where the corresponding words might be loans. Compare for 1–3: STEDT-β2:

1. for the meaning ‘fat’: Tamangish: Manang (Gyaru) /mrE<sup>3</sup> ba/ ~ Manang (Prakaa) /<sup>4</sup>mre pə/; Western Himalayish: Pattani /phrəi/; Burmish: Written Burmese *phrûi* ~ *phyûi*; Achang (Longchuan, Xiando) /pʒau<sup>31</sup>/, Achang (Luxi) /pʒau<sup>51</sup>/, Achang (Lianghe) /pʒau<sup>31</sup>/;

2. for the meaning ‘plump, swollen’ and ‘fat’: Central Chin: Lushai /púam/ ‘fat’ ~ /puam/ ‘swollen, swell’; Central Naga: Lotha /pəm<sup>1</sup>-/ ~ /püm a/ ‘swell, be swollen,’ /<sup>1</sup>bum/ ‘fat’; Yimchungrü /<sup>2</sup>bum/ ‘fat’; Zeme: Liangmei /pūam/, Rongmai /pūam/ ‘fat’; Meithei /pom bæ/ ‘swell, be swollen’; Jingpho /bom/ ‘swell,’ /phum<sup>33</sup>/ ‘fat’; Burmish: Written Burmese *phwam* ‘fat, plump’; Lashi /po:ŋ<sup>33</sup>/, Maru /pauŋ<sup>35</sup>/ ‘swell, be swollen’;

3. for the meaning ‘belly,’ etc.: Konyak /hwum/ ‘belly’; Jingpho /pù-pham/ ‘stomach’; Newar /pwa:/ ‘stomach’; Written Burmese *wâm* ‘belly’;

4. for the meaning ‘pregnant’: CT *rum* ‘womb,’ CT *sbrum* ‘pregnant.’

○ > Cr PUR (Mulbekh, Sapi, Shargol, Ciktan, Tshangra, Parkachik, Hanu), /brombo/, Kargil /brumpo/ (CDTD); DOM (as typically used by younger male speakers) /brombo/ ‘fat, stout’

1 > sCr \*sbrom- > /rom-/,<sup>34</sup> cf. LAD: LEH, ESHM (KHAL, NUR), NBR (Panamik) /rompo/ (CDTD), GYS /rombo/ ‘fat, stout’

2 > sC CT *sbom.po* ‘thick, stout’

3 > rC DOM (as typically used by younger female speakers) /rbombo/ ‘fat, stout’;<sup>35</sup> AT: Labrang /rwonpo/, Rngaba /rwompo/ ‘thick’ (CDTD)

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. also the CDTD. *sgr*, *sbr* > /r/ are common, although not regular, Ladakhi sound changes.

<sup>35</sup> See also Appendix I for the Domkhar metathesis *br* > *rb*.

- 4 > C BAL (Skardu, Turtuk) /bombo/ ‘fat, stout’; AT: Rmastod, Mdzorganrabar /bompo/ ‘thick’ (CDTD)
- (14) PF \*bra(ŋ) ~ \*bya(ŋ) ~ \*b(r)(y)wa(ŋ) ‘bee, fly, insect’ (→ sound alternation 3)
- Compare 𑄁 mOC \*mr̄aŋ (EDOC: 380) and Lepcha /sum-bryoŋ/ ‘fly’ (HPTB: 304, n. g). HPTB (pp. 68, 641) and STEDT-β<sub>1</sub> give the protoform as \*bya ~ \*bra ‘bee,’ ‘bird,’ HPTB (p. 302; cf. STEDT-β<sub>2</sub> #2187) on the base of the Tibetan word also as \*s-braŋ (cf. also STEDT-β<sub>2</sub> #2788 \*s-b-(r/y)aŋ ‘fly (n.), bee’).
- An alternative form seems to be PF \*plyum ‘bee, wasp’ with Thulung /plium/, Nusu /pɿə<sup>53</sup>/, Proto-Karen \*p̄rīum<sup>A1</sup> > Pa-O /phr̄um/, Kayah Li /pl̄iu/, Kayaw /phr̄y/, Blimaw /phl̄ú/, Pho /phl̄ə̃n/, Sgaw /phl̄ə/, 鋒, 蜂: OC \*p̄īung/\*p̄īwong, MC \*phjowng; (STEDT-β<sub>2</sub> #302, while HPTB: 531 has OC \*p̄īung, MC \*p̄īwong; GSR 1197s); alternatively OC p<sup>h</sup>oŋ {p<sup>h</sup>(r)oŋ} (B&S:119) or mOC \*phoŋ, MC \*p<sup>h</sup>joŋ (EDOC 238). CT *buj.ba* ‘bee’ and *boŋ.nag* ‘dung-beetle’ appear to be related to this second form (see also STEDT #302 PTB \*plyum BEE / WASP).<sup>36</sup>
- o > Cr with palatalization (→ sound alternation 3) Cy:  
BAL /bjaŋbu/ ‘fly, flying insect, bee,’ Dzongkha /bdz̄aŋ/ ‘honey,’ /bdz̄a:m/ ‘flying insects, bee’ (CDTD) < \*(s)byaŋ.(ma)
- 1 > sCr CT *sbraŋ* ‘honey,’ *sbraŋ.ma* ‘bee,’ *sbraŋ.bu* ‘fly, honey,’ PUR: dialects of Kargil, Tshangra, Thuwina /zbraŋzbu/, Darket, Sapi, Mulbekh, Hanu /zbraŋbu/,<sup>37</sup> LEH /raŋu/ ‘bee, flying insect’ (CDTD)
- 1b > sCy PUR (Ciktan) /zbraŋbu/ ‘bee,’ BAL /zbraŋtsher/ ~ /braŋtsher/ ~ /braŋser/ ‘sting-fly, bee’ (CDTD)
- 2 > sC LAD Shamskat /zbraŋbu/ ‘fly, flying insect’

<sup>36</sup> <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt-cgi/rootcanal.pl/etymon/302> last accessed 1 April 2019.

<sup>37</sup> The 2008 version of the CDTD erroneously also listed KHAL /zbraŋbu/. This has been now corrected (version 2014).

- 3 > rC AT: Chabcha /rbaŋma/, Labrang /rwaŋma/, Rngaba /rwaŋmæ/ (CDTD)
- 4 > C AT: Mkharmar /waŋma/, Rmastod /baŋma/ 'fly' (CDTD)

(15) PF \*mra(ŋ) ~ \*mja(ŋ) (→ sound alternation 3), with oral stop variants (→ sound alternation 2): \*pra(ŋ) ~ \*pja(ŋ) 'wild (animal)' or perhaps 'howling (animal)' & \*k<sup>w</sup>əy 'dog' > 'wild dog, wolf'; STEDT-β<sub>2</sub> lists \*m-par ~ \*pra 'wild dog, wolf' (#6043) and \*s-pjaŋ 'wild dog' (#6051). The s- prefix, which in the latter form clearly belongs only to Tibetan, may or may not be reflected in a syllabic element in Tani, where it may or may not be an independent element or may or may not be borrowed from Tibetan, as is clearly the case in Rgyalrongic. For the final velar nasal as a possible derivative suffix, indicating a collective entity, or the belonging to a group, see the discussion in § 5.3 below.

Compare for Burmish: Bola /mjaŋ<sup>55</sup>/ 'howl (wolf),' /mjaŋ<sup>55</sup> khui<sup>35</sup>/, Langsu /mjaŋ<sup>31</sup> kha<sup>35</sup>/, Atsi /mjɪŋ<sup>51</sup> khui<sup>21</sup>/, Achang /pju<sup>31</sup>/; Qiangic: Zhaba /piɛ<sup>55</sup> nkhu<sup>55</sup>/, Queyu (Yajiang) /phra<sup>53</sup>/; Pumi: /po<sup>55</sup> phzə̃<sup>55</sup>/; Bodic: Tsangla, Menba /phara/ 'wolf,' CT *phar.ba* 'wild dog'; Tani: Tani /pjaŋ/ 'wild dog,' Apatani /sui-pja/ Bengni /ši-ča:/, Padam-Mishing /si-pjaŋ/, Damu /ci-pia/; other: Darang /ta<sup>31</sup> pɹu<sup>35</sup>/ 'wolf, fox'; Atong /pheru/ 'fox'; Sak /məliŋ kvu/, 'wolf'; perhaps Kayan /plân/ 'wild, disorderly, scattered' (STEDT-β<sub>2</sub>), perhaps also 𑜄𑜂𑜆 OC/MC \*m̥iog, \*m̥jäu, \*m̥ög, or \*mau 'wild cat' (so STEDT-β<sub>2</sub>) and 𑜄𑜂𑜆 OC \*b'jər or \*b'ji 'animal (wild, possibly some kind of panther or leo)' (STEDT-β<sub>1</sub>; STEDT-β<sub>2</sub> gives the forms /bij/ and /bjij/ for 'tiger-like animal' instead of \*b'jər or \*b'ji; EDOC: 412 reconstructs it only as mOC \*bi).

Compare also the inverted compound /khipfaŋ/ 'wild, ferocious dog' in Ladakhi (< khi+p-faŋ < -\*p-stfaŋ < -\*sp̥tfaŋ < *spyay*, involving yet another metathesis sp > ps with s + t̥ > ʃ).<sup>38</sup>

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38 The palatalization of the clusters labial plus palatal glide and the retroflexivization of clusters with an alveolar trill, apparently affected first the post-radical alone, changing it into a palatal fricative or a retroflex stop or fricative and leaving the radical unchanged. Only in a second step was the radical lost. The first or intermediate stage can be observed in several Amdo and Kham dialects word-initially, cf. Róna-Tas (1966: 179–182). More recently, this feature has been observed in Sogpho

- 1a > sCy CT *spyaj.ku*, °-*ki* ‘wolf’, BAL /spjaŋku/, LAD /faŋku/ ‘wolf’, /khipfaŋ/ < \*khyipstfaŋ < \*khyisptfaŋ < \*khyi.spyaŋ ‘wild, ferocious dog’
- 1c > rCy AT: Chabcha /ɽteaŋkə/, Labrang, Shando /ɽteaŋkhə/ Mkharmar /ɽcaŋkhə/, Sertha /ɽfaŋ(kə)/ (CDTD; with /ɣ/ for /ɽ/) < \*ɽpyaŋ.k(h)u < *spyaj.k(h)u*
- (16) PF \*mrul, with oral stop variant (→ sound alternation 2): \*brul ‘snake’
- Compare pLB \*m-rəy<sup>1</sup> or \*m-r-wey<sup>1</sup> (HPTB: 43, 83), WrB *mrwe* (Simon 1975: 250, HPTB: 80, 83), possibly 𑄎 OC \*mljaj or \*mlyar (HPTB: 81); but EDOC has 虫, 虺 mOC \*hmui? ‘snake’ (p. 287) and 蟒 mOC \*mâŋ? < \*mlâŋ? ‘king snake, python’ (p. 375). HPTB (43 and passim) gives the protoform as \*s-b-ru:l, STEDT-β2 #2623 as \*s-b/m-ru:l, but the *s-* pre-radical is attested only in Tibetan.
- 1 > sCr OT/CT *sbrul*, PUR /zbrul/ (CDTD)
- 2 > sC LING /zbul/ (CDTD)
- 3 > rC AT: Mkharmar, Arik /rbu/, Labrang /rwu/, Sertha /rβi:/ ~ /rvi:/, SHM /rbul/ (CDTD) (in fast speech, the latter may also be realised as /rwul/)
- 3b > dC BAL /ɣbul/ ‘snake’ (CDTD)
- (17) PF \*mrV ~ \*prV (→ sound alternation 2), with palatalization (→ sound alternation 3): \*myV ~ \*pyV ‘mood, temper’ (?), possibly good or bad, with a dual development towards 1. ‘good,’ ‘be pleased,’ ‘desire’ and 2. ‘bad temper, anger’

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Tibetan with /p̄tʃ/ ‘cloud’ < *sprin*, Sogpho /<sup>h</sup>tso/, Lhagang /<sup>h</sup>ca/, Rangakha /<sup>h</sup>tca/ ‘cock’ < *bya(po)* (Suzuki 2011: 63, 68). Elsewhere, this stage can be observed only at the morpheme boundary of compounds, cf. Lhasa Tibetan /tchüptɛ̄l ‘water bird’ *chu.bya*, /tchapt̚u/ ‘baby chicken’ *bya.phrug* (Shefts & Chang 1967: 519 no. 7, 521 no. 26) and LAD /ribdza/ ~ /ribza/ *ri.bya* ‘mountain fowl’, LAD Shamskat /turo zgopt̚huks/, LAD Kenhat /tund̚o gopt̚fuk/ *dud.gro sgo.phyuks* ‘domestic cattle’, LAD Kenhat /zobd̚aŋ/, ~ /zopt̚aŋ/ *žo.hbraŋ* ~ *žo.phraŋ* (CT *žo.hbreŋ*) ‘leather or silk strap for churning the curd.’

For the first meaning, compare \*ma:y ‘good’ (STEDT-β1) ~ \*mway ‘beautiful, perfectly, well’ (STEDT-β2, #2457) with Lushai Mizo /maih/ ‘in good condition,’ /moi/ ~ /máwi/ ‘beautiful’; Naga /mai/ (/mɔy<sup>55</sup>/ ~ /mei/); Mikir /me/ ‘good’; Bodo /may/ ‘beautiful’; Jingpho /māi/ ~ /mai/ ‘good, pleasing’; Nungic /me/; Yi /me<sup>21</sup>/ (~ /mɛ<sup>21</sup>/) ‘good, beautiful’; Akkha /mỳ/, Hani /mu<sup>1</sup>/ ‘good, well’ (STEDT-β2), but also the Žaŋ.žuu form *smar* ‘good’ (ZhNN, ZhDM). Compare also \*pra ‘good’ (STEDT-β2 #2567) with Deng: Darang /pra:/, Digaro /pra/, Idu/ Yidu /pɪa<sup>55</sup>/; Thangmi /ə pra/; Tusom /kə-p<sup>h</sup>ri/ ‘beautiful’ – all other synchronic forms actually lack the trill, cf. Sizang /a hpā/, Tado /ə pha/ (among other forms given), Asho /p’oi/, Ukhrul /pha/.

Compare further \*p(r/y)aw ‘delight, happy, enjoy’ (STEDT-β2, #2572) with Tani: Apatani /-prjo/, Bengni /-pu:/, Bokar /-po/ ‘good,’ Milang /lu-pyu/ ‘easily,’ Apatami /du-prjo/ ‘tasty,’ /hem-pjo ~ -pjo/ ‘happy’; Darang /ta:-we-pra:/ ‘enjoy’; Jingpho /pro/ ~ /pyo/ ‘pleased, enjoy oneself.’ Jacques (2009: 141) mentions a reconstructed form \*phriw, Burmese *phyau*,<sup>2</sup> and the Tibetan inagentive verb *spro* for the meaning ‘be pleased.’ For this meaning complex, we actually find both nasal and oral forms, and among the latter also palatal forms in a few branches of Tibeto-Burman: Burmish: WɪB *mrin* ~ *mrui*’ ~ *mwe*’ vs. *pyau*, Northern Hpun /pyə̀(ŋ)/; the above-mentioned Jingpho *pro* ~ *pyo*; Mahakiranti: Chepang /mro/ vs. /prup/ and /ra-/, the latter form with the meaning ‘be eager, prepared, pleased to do, wish to do or have something’ (STEDT-β2).

For the second meaning, compare Classical Tibetan *spro thuŋ* ‘short temper(ed)’ (JÄK) in contrast to *dgaḥ spro* ‘happiness’ (JÄK, BRGY, TETT), i.e., ‘happy mood,’ *spro laŋs* ‘become angry’ and *spro ži* ‘have one’s anger subside’ (GShS), and the data below.

Compare further Written Burmese *myak* ‘angry’ and *prâŋ* ‘(be) violent, loud, virulent’; Anong /a<sup>31</sup> p<sup>h</sup>ɪaŋ<sup>55</sup>/ ~ /a<sup>31</sup> mɪaŋ<sup>55</sup>/, Nung: /a<sup>31</sup> mɪaŋ<sup>55</sup>/ ‘angry’; Achang /phzəŋ<sup>55</sup>/ ‘fierce, ferocious,’ Tamang /pāhng ce/ ‘violent (human),’ and perhaps Daofu /spju pa/ ‘temper’ (but exactly which sense of the English word?) (STEDT 31.01.2017 with the searches for ‘anger,’ ‘angry,’ ‘temper,’ and ‘ferocious’; some of these words may equally well be related to (15) ~ ‘wild’)

- o > Cr with palatalization Cy:  
*myoŋ* ‘taste, enjoy’ > ‘experience’
- 1a > sCy (*my* > *ñ*):<sup>39</sup> *sñog* / *bsñog* ‘wish earnestly, crave for’
- 1d > dCy > gCy: *gñog* ‘desire’
- 3 > sC CT *smon* ‘wish, desire,’ *smon.lam* ‘prayer’

With oral stop variants:

- o > Cr CT *bro* 1. ‘taste, smell, enjoy,’ 2. ‘desire, wish’ and the corresponding nouns *bro* ‘taste, flavor,’ *brod* ‘taste,’ and *brod.pa* ‘joyfulness, readiness, willingness’ (cf. *hchi.brod* ‘ready, readiness to die’)
- 1 > sCr CT *sprod* ‘be happy, rejoice, like, be enthusiastic for, wish, long for, etc.’ (JÄK, TETT); CT *spro*<sub>1</sub> ‘happiness,’ AT /((ϕ)tʂo/ ‘(be) happy’ (CDTD); CT *spro*<sub>2</sub> *thuŋ* > PUR /spro/<sub>2</sub> (CDTD), KNH /ʂo/<sub>2</sub> ‘anger’ (CDTD and own data)
- 1a > sCy CT *spyod* with the meaning ‘enjoy’
- 2 > sC BAL and PUR /spa/ ‘taste, tastiness,’ in BAL also ‘sexual enjoyment’ (CDTD);<sup>40</sup> /ϕo<sub>2</sub> laŋ/ < \**spro*<sub>2</sub> ‘get angry’ in AT (Zeku)<sup>41</sup>

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39 Compare spelling alternations, such as *smyug-* ~ *sñug-* ‘reed,’ *smyo* ~ *sño* ‘be mad’ (JÄK, TETT) and the general realization of the cluster *my* as /ɲ/ in the modern varieties. This corresponds to the palatalization of the cluster labial oral stop plus a palatal glide *py* > /tʃ/, *phy* > /tʃh/, *by* > /dʒ/ observed in many, but not all, modern dialects.

40 Both SPR and CDTD relate BAL /spa/ to CT *dpañ.ba*, for which, however, only JÄK gives the secondary meaning ‘beauty, beautiful.’ The latter meaning could be derived from the main meaning ‘heroic, brave.’ While there is certainly a relationship with *goodness*, the adjective and the corresponding noun *dpañ.bo* ‘hero, watchman’ may be of a different origin (cf. also p. 98 and n. 119).

41 Jackson Tianshin Sun. 1985. Amdo Tibetan. M.A. Thesis. ms. Accessed via STEDT database <<http://stedt.berkeley.edu/search/>> on 2017-03-01.

3 > rC BAL, SHM /ṛpo/₂ (CDTD with /ṣ/ for /ṛ/ and own data), AT (Themchen, Chabcha) /ṛpo/₂ (CDTD with /ṣ/ for /ṛ/)

Cf. also with a metathesis of the labial: AT: Mkharmar /ϕtṣo/₁ < \*b-spro, Themchen /ϕso₁-mu/, Rkangtsha /ϕso₁-mo/ '(be) happy' < \*spo₁ or rather \*bso (for /\*pso/)<sup>42</sup> (CDTD)

(18) PF (EIr) \*mraw 'human being,' \*mraw-k '(belonging to, offspring of) human being' ~ 'monkey, simian offspring'

Compare HPTB: \*myo-k (p. 67) ~ \*mru-k (pp. 39, 145), STEDT-β₂ #2462 \*m(y/r)uk with the meaning 'monkey,' and the many forms listed there, but see the discussion below in § 3.1. Given WrB *myauk* (HPTB: 80), the o- forms in Intha: /mrok/ ~ /mlok/, Lahu: /mɔ²¹/ ~ /mòʔ/ ~ /mɔ⁵/, Akkha /mjòq/, and Bahing and Sunwar: /moro/, and the a- form in Lotha Naga /yak so/ and CT *spra* 'monkey,' one should possibly reconstruct a diphthong \*au, \*ao, or \*aw.

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<sup>42</sup> The Themchen realization of CT *sp*- is highly irregular, with the attested forms /ṣp/, /ϕs/, /ϕ/, or /χw/ (Haller 2004: 38, 381). The first form: /ṣp/ entails an underlying \*rp; the last form, /χw/ corresponds to the regular reflex of *dp* (ibid.). The form /ϕ/ could be expected as a possible realization of *sp*. The form /ϕs/, however, could only be explained by either an additional sibilant (or a sibilant in the process of metathesis) \*sp-s or as the result of the metathesis of the labial *sp* > /ps/, which would correspond to a written form *bs*. For the realization *bs* > /ϕs/ cf. Haller (2004: 45, 396). That the *b*- prefix must have been inherently unvoiced is indicated by its overall devoicing result in the verbal paradigms of Old and Classical Tibetan. The Tibetan grammarians seem to have been aware of this inherent value, classifying it as *pho* 'male,' a designation otherwise used for the unvoiced, non-aspirated radicals.

- o > Cr with palatalization (→ sound alternation 3) Cy:  
  
OT *myog* ‘child’ (BRGY, TETT),<sup>43</sup> CT also *ñog* ‘child’ (TETT)<sup>44</sup> as well as CT *myog chuŋ* lit. ‘small human being’ > ‘human offspring, child’ (BRGY)
- 2 > sC *smad* ‘child(en),’ with vowel alternation (→ sound alternation 4) *smin* ‘sibling,’ *smos* ‘(a collective of?) female(s)’<sup>45</sup>

With oral stop variants (→ sound alternation 2) \*praw, \*praw-k

- o Cr CT *phrug* ~ *phru.gu*, DOM /phruɡu/, TYA /tʰuɡu/ ‘child, human offspring’; possibly also \**phro* > WSHM /phro/, ESHM and elsewhere /tʰo/ ‘crowd,’ commonly as postposition ‘among,’ likewise WSHM /phropa/, ESHM and elsewhere /tʰopa/ ‘companion’ (all expressions based on *phro* are without an Old or Classical Tibetan counterpart) (?)
- 1 > sCr CT *sprug* (~ *spru.gu*), GYS /tʰuɡu/ ‘child, human offspring’ (the non-aspirated form indicates an original pre-radical), *spra*, *sprehu* ‘monkey’
- 2 > sC *spad* ‘child(ren),’ *spun* ‘child(ren), sibling(s)’; possibly also the OT clan names *Spu*, *Spug*, *Spuj*<sup>46</sup>

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43 While this word would extremely well fit the reconstructed Tibeto-Burman form, there is no attestation of this in the Old Tibetan documents published online.

44 For the alternation *my-* ~ *ñ-* see note (17) above. The form *ñog.po* with the meaning ‘childish’ is found in the ‘Potiphar’-section of the *Gzer.myig* (Francke 1924–1930), a Bonpo text, linguistically still Old Tibetan, and its versified Buddhist replica, the *Btsun.mo bkaḥi than.yig* (Laufer 1911).

45 Pt 960, l. 111 *dge.ḥdun.pho.smos.gñis.ka* ‘the assemblies of ordinates, male and female’ (cf. Lishuang 2013: 43). It is possible that the final -s denotes a collective (cf. Uebach & Zeisler 2008).

46 Cf. also annotation f, p. 133, Appendix II.



- 4 > C Lhasa /pūkū/ ‘child’ (CDTD; note the modern spellings *pu.gu* and *spu.gu*)
- (19) PF \*mrVŋ ~ \*mrang (HST: 116) ‘people, population’; with an oral stop ending (→ sound alternation 2) PF \*mrVk ~ \*dmjak ‘martial war’ (HST: 107) ~ \*d-mak ‘soldier’ (HPTB: 99, 318); through vowel alternation (→ sound alternation 4) both word roots are possibly related to the preceding no. (18).<sup>47</sup>

Compare 𠬞 OC \*mrang > *meng* (HST: 116), \*mäng (GSR 742u), \*m<sup>r</sup>riŋ {\*m<sup>r</sup>[i]ŋ} (B&S: 90), mOC \*mrâŋ ~ mrêŋ (EDOC: 380) ‘population, people’; 𠬞 OC \*mjagx > *mju:* (HST: 107), \*m<sup>j</sup>wo (GSR 104a), \*ma? {\*m(r)a?} (B&S: 94), mOC \*ma? (EDOC: 519) ‘martial, military,’ PLB \*mak ‘soldier, war,’ Written Burmese *mak*, Lahu *mà?* (HPTB: 99, 318)

- 2 > sC BAL *smaq* ‘army, people’ (CDTD, SPR with spelling ‘smak’ for Skardu)
- 3 > rC OT *rmaŋs* ‘people, commoner,’ BAL (Khapalu) /ṛmaq/ ‘crowd, army, troop’ (SPR with spelling ‘rmak’), PUR /ṛmaq/ ‘army, crowd, people’ (CDTD with /ṣ/ for /ṛ/), SHM /ṛmak/ ‘army’
- 3b > dC OT/CT *dmaŋs* ‘people, commoner,’ *dmag* ‘soldier(s), army’
- 4 > C perhaps OT/CT *ḥbaŋs* ‘subject(s)’ (cf. HST: 116, EDOC: 380)
- (20) EIr *mrao-* ‘speak(er), command(er), rule(r)’

A presumed PF root for the meaning ‘speak’ is given as \*smraγ by (Simon 1929) and as \*br(w)ak ~ \*(s)br(w)aŋ by Matisoff (HPTB: 523, 585), cf. also STEDT-β2 #1753 with \*s-br(w)a(ŋ/k), where the initial sibilant would only be corroborated by the Tibetan forms; ultimately, the word seems

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<sup>47</sup> STEDT-β relates the meaning ‘people, population’ to #1002 PPC \*r-mi(y)-n PERSON / MAN, which in my opinion would belong to the same word family. The word could possibly also be related to a PF \*rma ‘much, many’ (cf. HPTB: 80, 169). But cf. also #257 PTB \*d-mak WAR / SOLDIER <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt/cgi/rootcanal.pl/etymon/257> last accessed 1 April 2019.

to be of Eastern Iranian origin; see also further below. Among the forms that appear to be immediately related are WrB *ə-mrwak* ‘speech,’ with oral stop variants (→ sound alternation 2): WrB *pro* (different renderings) ~ *prwak* ~ *mrwak*; Western Himalayish (Pattani): /prài/ or /prài/; with palatalization (→ sound alternation 3): Central Loloish (Jinuo): /pja<sup>31</sup>/ ~ /pje<sup>31</sup>/ ~ /pjə<sup>42</sup>/ ~ /pja<sup>42</sup>/; and Central Chin (Lushai): /bia/ ~ /biã/ ‘speak,’ /biak/ ~ /biãk/ ‘worship,’ Northern Chin (Tiddim): /bia<sup>3</sup>/, /biãk<sup>3</sup>/ ‘worship.’<sup>48</sup> Given the negative connotations the word may develop, one could possibly add 罵 \*mã ‘revile, curse’ (GSR 40), \*C.m<sup>r</sup>ra-s ‘scold, revile’ (B&S: 88), mOC \*mrâ?/h? ‘scold’ (EDOC: 373) and/ or 侮 mOC \*mo? ‘offend, insult, maltreat.’<sup>49</sup>

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48 <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt/cgi/rootcanal.pl/etymon/1753>, re-accessed 12.06.2018, 21:07.

49 In fact, Schuessler (EDOC: 373 and 519) alternatively relates each of these words to CT *dmod* ‘curse,’ which belongs to the same Tibetan word family. While Schuessler associates CT *dmod* with the meaning ‘low,’ as also found in CT *dmad* and *smad*, the meanings 2-4, given below, clearly show that we deal with a *verbum dicendi*, even if the notion of ‘be low, base’ > ‘make low’ may have interfered or merged in the first meaning. STEDT #461 suggests a PF \*mwa-t CURSE / REVILE (<http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt/cgi/rootcanal.pl/etymon/461>, accessed 11.03.2019), but only Tibetan *dmod* and Chinese (罵) are mentioned.

Under the entry ‘speech,’ Shafer (1940: 331, table no. 4, with note 4) mentions Lushai \*pao, with Thado /pao/; Chinese 報 pâu ‘report, inform, declare; information, news, journal, gazette’ (664), and Siamese (Lao) /pāw/ ‘divulge, announce, publish.’ Karlgreen (GSR 1058a) gives \*pôg ‘respond, recompense; return, repay, avenge; announce,’ cf. B&S (111): \*p<sup>r</sup>uk-s ‘repay,’ mOC \*pûh ‘announce, report; repay, requite, reward, respond’ (EDOC: 158). The latter meaning seems to be derived from a motion verb ‘return,’ cf. 復 mOC \*buk ‘come back, return, restore, reply, report’ (EDOC: 246) and 復 OC b’iôk ‘return; report; reply; repay; recall; restore;’ \*b’iôg ‘repeat, again’ (GSR 1034d-e), \*N-pruk-s {\*[N]-pruk-s} (B&S), mOC \*bukh ‘repeatedly, again’ (EDOC: 246). For the causative counterpart 覆 OC \*p’iôk (GSR 1034m), \*p<sup>h</sup>uk {\*p<sup>h</sup>(r)uk} (B&S: 120), mOC \*phuk, Schuessler suggests a relationship with CT *spub* ‘turn over’ (EDOC: 246), for which there is also a Kenhat counterpart /fûk/ < \*spug ‘set up (tent, roof).’ It must remain open whether two independent meanings have merged in Old Chinese, with the utterance meaning belonging to the same word family as the root given above, or whether the utterance meaning is derived via the notion ‘answer, reply’ from the meaning ‘return.’

- o Cr Archaic Tibetan *-mra* as attested in several non-canonical spellings of tribal or personal names; possibly also in the mountain name *Rma.chen Spom.ra* < \**Spo.mra* (?)<sup>50</sup>
- 1 > sCr OT/CT *smra* ‘speak,’ *smre* ‘lament,’ *smraj* ‘ritual narrative, proclamation’
- 1a > sCy (→ sound alternation 3; *my* > *ñ*; cf. p. 44, n. 39)
- CT *sñad/ sñod* ‘relate, report,’ *sñad* accusation, *sñan.pa* ‘renown,’ ‘praise,’ *sñon* ‘assert falsely, deny, disavow dishonestly’
- 2 > sC CT *sme* (~ *rme*) ‘ask,’ *smo* ‘say, name’; √*smad* (I/IV: *smod*, II/III: *smad*) ‘slander, blame, abuse, curse, etc.’; PUR /*smaŋ*/ (~ /*ṛmaŋ*/) (CDTD; /*ṣ*-/ for /*ṛ*-/) < *smaŋ* ‘lawsuit’, BAL (dialect of Tyaksi, Ladakh) /*ṛmaŋ*/ ‘topic’
- 3 > rC OT/CT *rma* ‘inquire, ask,’ CT *rme* (~ *sme*) ‘ask’; BAL /*ṛmaŋsa*/, PUR /*ṛmaŋ*/ (~ /*smaŋ*/) (CDTD with /*ṣ*/ for /*ṛ*/) < *rmaŋ* ‘lawsuit,’ and possibly *rmu* ‘communicate with heaven,’ as suggested by JÄK (sub *rmu.ba*)
- 3b > dC CT *dmod* 1. ‘curse, execrate,’ 2. ‘swear, confirm by oath’; 3. ‘pronounce a prayer, conjure (a deity),’ 4. ‘affirm’
- 4 > C CT *mo* ‘oracle’

With oral stop variant (→ sound alternation 2): \**p(h)ra(o)*, \**bra(o)*; with alternation of glide (→ sound alternation 3): \**p(h)ya(o)*, \**bya*

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50 One of the most important mountain ranges in Tibet and the most important one in Amdo. *spo* and *mra* could have been tribal designations, but both of them or at least the second could also have had the meaning ‘speaker, human’ or ‘commander, king,’ and the compound would possibly yield a ‘ruler of the Spo,’ a ‘ruler of the people,’ an ‘overlord’ or a ‘king of kings, emperor.’ The original meaning of *rma.chen* would be ‘great commander’ or ‘great king, emperor,’ possibly as a translation or interpretation of the second part of the name, when its components became obsolete. In the case of the modern spelling *Spom.ra*, we most probably deal with an instance of consonant migration in compounds. In such cases, an

- o Cr CT: *pra(-mo)* ‘ritual, prognostic,’ *pra.chal* (~ *spra.chal*) ‘joke, jest,’ *phra.ma* ‘calumny, slander,’ *phra.men* ‘sorcery, witchcraft,’ *bro* ‘oath’; perhaps also \**phros* > WSHM /*phros*/, ESHM and LEH /*tʰos*/, KNH /*tʰe*/ ‘mention, utterance, topic’ (in the collocations /*phros thuk*/ ‘touch upon a topic, mention casually’ and /*phros phiŋ*/ ‘start a conversation, introduce a new topic’)
- Cy OT *phya*(*ν*) ‘speaker, oracle, lot,’ *bya* ‘speak,’ *byad* ‘curse’
- 1 > sCr *spra.chal* (~ *pra.chal*) ‘joke, jest’
- 1a > sCy CT *spyo* ‘blame, scold’
- 1d > dCy perhaps CT *dpyas* ‘offence, fault, blame’ (?); cf. also the Western Tibetan form *spyas* ‘blame’<sup>51</sup>
- 2 > sC perhaps LAD /*spera*/ (~ /*fera*/ ~ /*pera*/) ‘speech, language’ (typically analysed or written as *dpe.sgra*) (?; see below); perhaps also CT *sme* ‘(negative) mark, uncleanliness’ (??)<sup>52</sup>

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earlier pre-radical of the following syllable gets relocated to the coda position of an open first syllable, where it may survive the process of cluster reduction, cf. the case of *rdo*, modern Tibetan /<sup>(n)</sup>do/ (or /*tɔ*/) ‘stone’ plus *rje*, modern Tibetan /<sup>(n)</sup>dʒe/ (or /*tʃe*/) ‘lord’ > *rdorje*, modern Tibetan /<sup>(n)</sup>dor.dʒe/ (or /*tɔr.tʃe*/) ‘diamond, thunderbolt, *vajra*,’ or the case of the numerals, where, e.g. *bcu*, modern Tibetan /*tɕū*/ ‘ten’ and *bži*, modern Tibetan /*ʃi*/ ‘four’ may yield the pronunciations /*tɕūpʃi*/ ‘fourteen’ and /*ʃiptɕu*/ ‘forty’ respectively. P. M. Miller (1951) seems to have been the first western scholar to discuss this feature as a linguistic problem, although it is often mentioned *en passant* in earlier descriptions of Tibetan, e.g. Csoma de Kőrös (1834: 7–8 and 10) and Schmidt (1839: 16f. and 19f.). More recently, the feature has been discussed by Shirai (1999) and Zeisler (2009, with examples from Ladakhi).

<sup>51</sup> This spelling appears in the twelfth-century Matho (Mašro) manuscript EN36, which describes the life of Ḥod.lde (N. Martin 2017: 206): *yabs.mes bzaj.poḥi žabs.rjes ma.sleb.na myis spyas.kyis dogs.pa* ‘Fearing the blame by the people if [he] would not follow the steps of [his] good ancestors’ (fol. 14v.10). The spelling *sp* corresponds to a western pronunciation of the cluster *dp*.

<sup>52</sup> OT *smye* in PT 1285 clearly refers to some kind of pollution that can be washed off.

- 3a/b > r/dC perhaps CT *dpe* ‘example’ (?), cf. SHM /ṛpe/;<sup>53</sup> perhaps also *dpaj.po* ‘witness’ (?),<sup>54</sup> cf. also LEH /spaŋpo/, SHM /ṛpaŋpo/ and the collocation /spaŋ ~ ṛpaŋ phut/ ‘threaten, warn’ (i.e., send a spokesperson)<sup>55</sup>
- 4 > C CT √*bo* (I: *ḥbod*, II/IV: *bos*) ‘call invite,’ OT *bon* ‘announce, declare,’<sup>56</sup> *lan.bon* ‘answer’ (= *lan.ḥdebs*, cf. BDGM), *bon.po* ‘reciter, invoker’ (cf. Simon 1955); CT I/III: *bya*, II *byas* ‘speak’ (see also § 3.4)
- (21) Austroasiatic \*m(a)ra(k) > pre-Tibetan \*mra ‘peacock’

Jäschke (1881: 424) and Laufer (1916: 464, no. 66) relate the Tibetan word *rma.bya* to Sanskrit *mayūra*. This is, in principle, followed by Matisoff (STEDT #6698 IA \*mayūra PEACOCK) for some modern Tibetic dialects, such as “Balti,” that is Purikpa, /mañja/,<sup>57</sup> Batang /mau<sup>55</sup> za<sup>53</sup>/,<sup>58</sup> but not for the classical word *rma.bya* itself and its more evident derivatives.<sup>59</sup> This etymology would likewise imply a metathesis from a contracted form \*mra < *mayūra*. The Sanskrit word itself is a loan either of Dravidian (Krishnamurti 2003: 37 with further references) or Austroasiatic, where we find in the modern languages, among others, Santali /marak’/, Čam /amrak/, Črau /brak/, Mon /mrā/, etc. (Przyluski 1929: 131). The Austroasiatic word seems to

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53 Note the compound CT *dpe.cha* ‘book’ and the usage as ‘example, saying’ in Kyirong, Western Drokpa, and South Mustang and as ‘story, tale, model’ in Ndzorge (CDTD).

54 This implies a human being as much as a speech act.

55 Most informants do not know what the meaning of /spaŋ/ ~ /ṛpaŋ/ ~ /pāŋ/ in this collocation could be, but the informant from Teya states that one would send a relative to the person in question, who then conveys the warning. The relative thus acts as a spokesperson and/ or witness.

56 Compare the verbal forms in Pt 1287, l. 158 *bon.nas*, ll. 184, 185, 186 *bon.to*, l. 301 *bon.te*.

57 See Rangan (1975: 32, 40). The Baltipa name is, in fact /majur/ from Urdu, see Sprigg (2000: 112).

58 <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt/cgi/rootcanal.pl/etymon/6698>, accessed 16.05.2014, 14:45.

59 <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt/cgi/rootcanal.pl/gnis?t=peacock>, accessed 16.05.2014, 14:45. Cf. now <https://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt/cgi/rootcanal.pl/etymon/6698>, accessed 23.11.2015, 14:57.

refer to the call of the bird (*ibid.*), and it could well be possible that the element *bya* in the Tibetan compound was originally not so much used in the sense ‘bird’ as an explanation for the foreign name, but as a *verbum dicendi* in the sense of ‘(the one who) cries *mra*’ (see § 3.4 below). Matisoff (STEDT #7418 PKar \*(tho<sup>B</sup>)braʔ<sup>D</sup> PEACOCK) also suggests a Tibeto-Burman etymon \*(tho<sup>B</sup>)braʔ<sup>D</sup>, based on forms such as Karenic Kayah /phre<sup>33</sup>/, Kayan /praʔ<sup>21</sup>/, Kayaw /prɔ<sup>33</sup>/ and Sgaw /bɣaʔ<sup>21</sup>/ ~ /phɣaʔ<sup>21</sup>/,<sup>60</sup> which would lead us again to the Austroasiatic form.

3 > rC OT/CT *rma.bya* ‘peacock,’ AT: Arik /rɱæwɕæ/, Western Tibetan /māptɕa/<sup>61</sup> (CDTD)

4 > C DOM /mabja/, ESHM and KNH /mabza/ or /mabʒa/ (cf. also CDTD).<sup>61</sup>

(22) PIE \*mark(o) ‘mare’ (?) > \*mraŋ ‘horse’

Cf. Burmic \*mraŋ<sup>2</sup>, Qiangic \*mbro, Proto-Sinitic \*m<sup>h</sup>raʔ (Bradley, to appear, with the character 𠂔) or PF \*s/m-ra-ŋ (HPTB:177), 馬 mOC \*mrâʔ ‘horse,’ 馮 mOC \*mrâh ‘a kind of horse sacrifice’ (EDOC: 373). This is thought to be a loan from either Proto-Indo-European \*mark(o) ‘mare’ or from Mongolic \*mori(n) (Bradley, to appear: 18), implying a first metathesis CVr > CrV. While a form \*mark(o) is certainly more promising, Bradley points to the fact that no corresponding form is attested in Iranian or Tocharian.

3 > rC Old Tibetan *rmaŋ* ‘horse’ (of rare occurrence).

#### 2.1.4 Possible, but less apparent parallels

A few words in the above section involved also palatalized secondary forms in Tibetan (nos. (11), (14), (15), and (17); → sound alternation 3). In the following I shall give a few additional forms that could be related only if one assumes a palatalization step and some sort of semantic extension. In a few other cases, there are only Chinese comparanda available. All these examples are certainly quite problematic.

<sup>60</sup> <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt/cgi/rootcanal.pl/etymon/7418>, accessed 16.05.2014, 14:45.

<sup>61</sup> High tone realization of nasals signals a pre-radical, low tone realization signals the absence of it.

**Table 3** More candidates for regressive metathesis

item	*Cr reconstructed protoform (PF)	rough gloss	step 0 = Cr (~ Cy)	step 1 > sCr 1a > sCy 1b > dCr 1c > rCy 1d > dCy	step 2 > sC	step 3 > rC 3b > dC
(23)	*krV (?)	'steal'	—	—	—	<i>rku</i>
(24)	*grəy (M)	'copper'	( <i>gri</i> , <i>gyt</i> )	1c: <i>rgya</i>	—	—
(25)	*g-G-aŋ/ *kwa(ŋ/k) (M)	~ 'wall'	<i>gyaŋ</i>	1c: /rgjaŋ/	—	—
(26)	*grwat (M)	~ 'stomach'	<i>grod-</i>	1c: <i>rgyu</i>	—	—
(27)	*ŋram	'height'	—	—	—	<i>rjam(s)</i>
(28)	*druŋ	'beat'	—	—	—	<i>rduŋ</i>
(30)	*m(y)uk (M)	~ 'nail'	—	—	/smik-/	<i>rmig</i>
(31)	*mrVg	'brown'	—	<i>smrig</i>	<i>smug</i>	/r̥muk/

## (23) PF \*krV (?)

Compare 元送: OC \*k'u (GSR 111a-b), \*k<sup>h</sup>o-s {\*[k]<sup>h</sup>(r)o-s} (B&S: 77), mOC \*khôh 'rob, robber; invader, bandit' (EDOC: 336); STEDT-β2 #2365 suggests a PF \*r-kəw or \*hu, but an *r-* 'prefix' is clearly found only in Tibetan. Prefixes are also attested in some of the Qiangic languages, such as Namuyi /ŋkhu<sup>33</sup>/ ~ /nkhu<sup>31</sup>/, Pumi /skiuu<sup>55</sup>/, Qiang (Mawo) /ʂkuə(χ)/ ~ (Taoping) /χkə<sup>55</sup>/, Queyu /ʂku<sup>55</sup> vi<sup>55</sup>/ 'steal,' Zhaba /ʂku<sup>55</sup> ma<sup>55</sup>/ 'thief,' and in Rgyalrongic: Daofu /ʂkə/. These forms may well be loans from Tibetan. A seemingly independent form is found in Angami Naga with /<sup>2</sup>ruu<sup>1</sup>gu/ 'steal.'<sup>62</sup> Jingpho would further yield an *l-* prefix (?) as in /lă<sup>31</sup>ku<sup>55</sup>/ ~ /lă<sup>1</sup>ku<sup>55</sup>/ 'steal,' /lă<sup>1</sup>gut/ ~ /lă<sup>31</sup>kut<sup>31</sup>/ 'thief.'

62 A possible parallel is Lushai /ruk/ (Schuessler 2007: 26). Schuessler (ibid.) thinks that such forms result from a sesquisyllabic prefix where this preinitial vowel becomes the main vowel, subsequently leading to the loss of the original root

3 > rC CT *rku* ‘steal’

(24) PF \*grəy ‘copper’ (STEDT-β2 #2247), with palatalization kyV (→ sound alternation 3)

Compare Jinghpo /ma gri/ ~ /mä<sup>1</sup> ki<sup>33</sup>/ ~ /mä<sup>31</sup> kzi<sup>33</sup>/ ‘copper’; Written Burmese *krê*, inscriptional *kriy*, Luxi (Bola) /kji<sup>31</sup>/, (Leqi) /kjei<sup>33</sup>/, (Langsu) /kjik<sup>55</sup>/, Atsi /kji<sup>21</sup>/, Nusu /gri<sup>35</sup>/ (STEDT-β2); cf. also Karen /gwê/ ‘clarion, trumpet’ (HPTB 26)

o Cr CT *gri* ‘knife’ (relationship according to Matisoff);

with palatalization (→ sound alternation 3)

Cy OT also *gyi* as in *ral-gyi* ‘sword,’ BAL: Skardo /ragi/; DOM /rayi/, LEH /rai/ ‘sword’ < \**ra-gyi*, AT: Sertha /kjə/ ‘knife,’ Themchen, Shando /tɕə/, Mkhamar, Rkangtsha, Chabcha, Labrang /cə/ < \**gyi* ‘knife’ (CDTD and own data)

1c > rCy OT/CT *rgya* ‘metal, brass’ in compounds such as *brgya.loŋ* ~ *rgya.loŋ* ‘mirror,’<sup>63</sup> *rgya.glij* ‘oboe,’ *rgya.sta*, an ‘axe’ used in certain rituals (Helga Uebach, p.c.), *rgya.rdo* ‘metal weight,’ *rgya.ma* ‘steelyard, weight’

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vowel. Such forms would then superficially look like cases of metathesis CCV > CVC (or actually C<sub>2</sub>C<sub>1</sub>VC<sub>F</sub> > C<sub>2</sub>VC<sub>1</sub> with loss not only of the vowel but also of the final consonant). This leads to some questions. Would the vowel of the sequisyllable always reflect the lexeme vowel? Would the sequisyllable then necessarily reflect a derivational prefix, or could it not also result from a metathesis, with an epenthetic vocalic filler, such as \**kru* (or perhaps even \**k<sup>u</sup>ru*) > \**rku* > \**r<sup>u</sup>ku* (allowing also intervocalic voicing: \**r<sup>u</sup>gu*)? It would then not be so surprising that a subsequent shift of accentuation (back to the first syllable) would lead to a strengthening of the epenthetic vowel to a full vowel with subsequent loss of the final vowel (\**r<sup>u</sup>ku* (~ \**r<sup>u</sup>gu*) > \**ruk<sup>u</sup>* (~ \**rug<sup>u</sup>*) > \**ruk*). Of course, this must remain speculative, like the analysis of *r-* as a prefix.

63 Ñaŋ.rał Ñi.ma Ḥod.zer *Me.tog sñiŋ.po*, cf. Linnenborn (2004: 204, n. 298).



- (25) PF \*gGaŋ (G = y, r, or w) or perhaps \*grVy/w, with palatalization (→ sound alternation 3): \*gyVw, cf. STEDT-β2 #6077 \*kwa(n/k) ‘fence, enclosure, circle, ring’

Compare Rawang /aŋ<sup>31</sup> khwaŋ<sup>33</sup> (i<sup>53</sup> we<sup>33</sup>)/ ‘circle, circular’; Written Burmese *kwâŋ* ‘bend into ring; go round,’ ə-*kwâŋ* ‘circle, ring, loop’; Karenic \*gwaŋ ~ \*khwàŋ ‘circle, ring’ (STEDT-β2 #6077). STEDT-β2 (#2060) suggests 院,瑗 OC \*gĭwan/jĭwân ‘wall around courtyard’ for a root \*wal ‘round, circular,’ but EDOC (593) gives mOC \*wens (?); EDOC (185) suggests 成,盛,城 mOC \*geŋ ? ‘complete, achieve, build; put in a receptacle; load, pack; a vessel full’ > ‘city wall’ (of stamped earth), which would better suit CT √gaŋ ~ √kheŋ ‘get full’ with the transitive-causative verbs *hgeŋs*, *bkaŋ*, *dgaŋ*, *khon* ‘fill’ and *skoŋ*, *bskaŋs*, *bskaŋ*, *skoŋ* ‘fulfill.’ How this root relates to *gyaŋ* or *rgyaŋ* is not explained.

It is quite possible that the Baltipa form *rgyaŋ* is due to a conflation with the verb *rgyaŋ* ‘stuff,’ but otherwise the initial *r-* can only be explained by an alternation of initial \*gy and \*gr similar to that in the preceding entry (24).

o Cy CT *gyaŋ* ‘wall, fence’

1c > rCy BAL (Skardo) /rgjaŋ/ ‘wall, fence,’ PUR (Kargil) /rgjaŋ/ ‘stone wall’ (CDTD)

- (26) PF \*grwat; cf. STEDT-β2 #2112 \*(g/b)rwat ‘belly, stomach, intestines’ and #2125 \*kri ‘stomach’

Compare: Apatani /xrju-ǰã(~ ro)/ or /<sup>l</sup>xryu <sup>2</sup>džaŋ/ ‘intestines’; Burmish: Lashi, Leqi /khjei<sup>55</sup> pham<sup>55</sup>/, Atsi /khji<sup>21</sup> pham<sup>21</sup>/ (STEDT-β2 #2125, where the second element is related to another root \*p<sup>w</sup>am #137 ‘belly, stomach, waist’); cf. proto-Tamangish \*gruŋ: Sahu, Risiangku /<sup>3</sup>kruŋ/, Manangba /kuruŋ/, vs. Syang /<sup>l</sup>kum/, Mawatan /<sup>3</sup>kum/, Tangbe /<sup>l</sup>kyumo/, Chuksang /<sup>l</sup>kyumu/, Tetang /<sup>l</sup>kyuma/ ‘intestine’ (Honda 2009: 108, 2014: 142, table 3), the last three forms are possibly loans from Tibetan. Matisoff (HPTB: 334) suggests 胃 OC \*gĭwəd ‘belly, stomach,’ which Schuessler (EDOC: 513) rather reconstructs as mOC \*wəts ?, adding that the “OC initial is difficult to reconcile with WT *grod* ‘belly, stomach.’”

o Cr CT *grod-pa* ‘belly, stomach’

1c > rCy CT *rgyu-ma* ‘intestine’

(27) PF \*ŋram ‘height’

Compare 巖 OC \*ngam (GSR 607l), \*ŋ<sup>ʕ</sup>ram {\*[ŋ]<sup>ʕ</sup>r[a]m} (< uvular?) (B&S: 99), mOC \*ŋrâm ‘be high, lofty (of mountains), precipitous, dangerous,’ 巖 OC \*ngiām (GSR 607h), \*ŋram (B&S: 101), mOC \*ŋjam ‘majestic, stern, grave,’ 巖 OC \*ngiām (GSR 607k), \*ŋram? (B&S: 101), mOC \*ŋam? ‘dignified,’ possibly also 巖 OC \*ngiān (GSR 252h), \*ŋar {\*[ŋ(r)ar?]} (B&S: 102), mOC \*ŋran (?) ‘hilltop’; with perhaps also WrB *ŋram*<sup>B</sup> ‘scaffold, gallows,’ see EDOC (p. 554). The parallel between topographic height and social height, that is, majesty, that we also find in Tibetan is particularly convincing.

3 > rC CT *rjams-su* ‘in height,’ which, however, seems to be of rare occurrence; CT *rnam-pa* (~ *rjom-pa* ~ *djom-pa*)<sup>64</sup> ‘splendour, magnificence, majesty,’ *rjom-brjid* ‘splendour, stateliness, majesty’

(28) PF \*d/truk/ŋ ‘beat, hit, strike’

There are apparently several related Old Chinese verbs. EDOC (193, table C-1) gives the following possible protoforms: (a) \*trok ~ truk/ŋ with 𣪠 mOC \*trôk ‘strike,’ (b) 築 mOC \*truk ‘beat, stamp earth’ > build, and (c) 撞 mOC \*drôŋ(h) ‘strike.’ For (b) 築, cf. GSR (1019d): \*t̪îôk ‘pound, beat (sc. earth into hard walls), build; beat, strike; earth up (trees);’ B&S (p. 145): \*truk ‘pound earth, build,’ Baxter (1992: 198, no. 250) \*trjuk ‘pound, beat (sth hard into a wall, build),’ this is also the base for STEDT-β #2709. For (c) 撞 cf. HST (p. 40): \*drung(h) > \*d̪āng, GSR (1188f): \*d̪üŋg, B&S (p. 24): \*N-t̪<r>oŋ-s ‘strike.’ It is possible that several verb roots with similar

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64 These forms probably have a different origin. Especially *djom.pa* seems to be related only to brightness. The association of the phonologically identical *rjom.pa* with *rjam.pa* might thus be due to a semantic merger in Tibetan or an excusable error by JÄK (cf. pp. 131a, 134a, 135a).

meanings got conflated, cf. EDOC (193, table C-1) for more possibly related verbs without medial *r*. Based only on Tibetan, HST, HPTB (309 with OC \*d'ũŋ), and STEDT-β #296 opt for a protoform \*rdung or \*r-duŋ.

3 > rC CT *rduy* 'beat, strike (on),' most probably also *rdeg* 'beat strike'<sup>65</sup>

- (29) PF \*drVl 'dust'; HST (68), suggests a PF \*\*rdjiul, HPTB (415)/ STEDT-β #2203 a PF \*r-dul or \*r-tul, the suggested PF reconstructions seem to be based on Tibetan alone

Compare 塵 OC \*drjin (HST: 68), \*d'iĕn (GSR 374a), \*drən {[d]rə[n]} (B&S 25), mOC \*drən 'dust' (EDOC: 184)

3 > rC CT *rdul* 'dust'

- (30) PF \*m(y)uk ~ \*r-mi-k 'nail, claw, hoof' (STEDT-β2 #416), the presumed *r-* 'prefix' would be attested only in Tibetan and Rgyalrongic (where it could be a loan)

Compare: Tamang /myuk pā/ ~ /<sup>h</sup>mjuk pa/; Ergong /rŋək<sup>33</sup> pa<sup>53</sup>/, Daofu /rŋu pa/ 'hoof'; Mikir /chi mī/ '(finger) nail, talon, claw, hoof.'

2 > sC BAL (Skardo) /smikpa/ besides /ŋmikpa/ 'horseshoe' (CDTD with /s/ for /r/)

3 > rC CT *rmig* 'hoof'

4 > C LEH, Panamik /mikpa/ 'horseshoe' (CDTD)

- (31) \*mrVg '(reddish) brown.' It is not clear whether there is a suitable Tibeto-Burman counterpart

Schuessler (2007: 521) thinks that CT *smug.po* 'dark bay, cherry-brown, purple-brown' is related to CT *rmugs.pa* or *smug(s).pa* 'dense fog; inert(ness), languid, sluggish' (JĀK), also 'sloth,

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65 HBTB (363) and EDOC (193, table C-1) add *rdug* 'strike against,' but the entry in JĀK runs as "2. to strike against, stumble at, C," that is, a modern Central Tibetan word with an inagentive meaning that may thus not be related.

dullness, depressed, gloomy’ (TETT).<sup>66</sup> For the latter meaning, cf. Matisoff (STEDT #2465 PTB \*mu:ŋ ~ \*r/s-mu:k FOGGY / DARK / SULLEN / MENACING / THUNDER), where the protoform \*mu:ŋ ~ \*r/s-mu:k is again clearly based on the Tibetan form.<sup>67</sup> Coblin (HST: 82f.) gives the protoform as \*mruk/mrjuŋ, suggesting also a proto-Tibetan form \*mrug. Cf. 霧 OC ‘mjugh (HST), \*m̄jug (GSR 1109t, STEDT<sup>68</sup>), \*kə.mok-s {kə.m(r)[o]k-s} (B&S: 95), mOC \*moh (EDOC: 521) ‘fog, mist.’ Matisoff further refers to Rgyalrong /ta-rmok/ ‘thunder, dragon,’ which immediately calls into mind CT *hbrug* ‘thunder’ (→ sound alternation 1 and → sound alternation 2).

If one allows for vowel alternation (→ sound alternation 4), an alternative protoform could be \*smək ‘black, dark’ (HSLC:45) or \*s-ma(ŋ/k) ‘black; ink; deep’ (STEDT #6130). Cf. 黑 OC \*xmək (GSR 904a, STEDT), \*m̄ʰək (B&S: 173), mOC \*hmək (EDOC: 277) ‘black,’ which is related to 墨 OC \*mək (GSR 904c, STEDT) or \*C.m̄ʰək (B&S: 95), mOC \*m̄ək (EDOC: 277) ‘ink,’ and which can also be compared with CT *smag* ‘dark, darkness.’<sup>69</sup>

There is, however, also a possible IE etymology. Cf. Indo-Iranian *mṛgá-* ‘wild animal, beast,’ Skr. also ‘deer, antelope,’ Iranian mostly ‘bird,’ e.g., Younger Avestan *mərəya*, Parthian *mwrğ*, Khotan-Saka *mura-*, Middle Persian *murw*, New Persian *mury*, Ossetic *marǰ*, *māmuryrɣ*, or *mālq* ‘bird,’ but Waxī *mery* or *marg* ‘female ibex’ (Mayrhofer 1996: 370f., H.W. Bailey 1985: 69), Pahlawi *mwlw* /*murw*/, Manichean *mrwr*, New Persian *murg* ‘bird’ (MacKenzie 1971: 57), Khotanese Saka *mura* ‘bird’ (Bailey 1979: 336a). According to Bailey (1979: 337a), this word would also be related to the color term \**mura* ‘reddish brown, purple, red,’ as in Ossete *mora* ~ *morá* ‘brown’ or Georgian *mura* ‘dark brown’ < pIE \**mau-ro-* ‘dark, weak.’ Mayrhofer (1963: 669) likewise points

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66 For the semantic relationship between smoke or clouds and a dark or brown color and further mental dullness, cf. Mayrhofer (1992: 795f.): *dhūmáḥ* ‘smoke’ and the derived *dhūmráḥ* ‘grey, red, reddish brown’ or ‘grey, smoke-colored; dim (having a dim intellect)’ as defined in Mayrhofer (1963: 190).

67 <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt-cgi/rootcanal.pl/etymon/2465>, last accessed 1 April 2019.

68 <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt-cgi/rootcanal.pl/gnis?t=fog>, last accessed 10 April 2019.

69 <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt-cgi/rootcanal.pl/etymon/6130>, last accessed 1 April 2019.

to an origin of *\*mrg-á-* from a color term, comparing it with Lithuanian *márgas* ‘colorful’ and Old English *mirce* ‘dark.’

- 1 > sCr with vowel alternation triggered by the labial consonant (→ sound alternation 4):  
OT *smrig* ‘a dye for clothes’ (*gos tshos.ma*; BDGM, BRGY), in all likelihood yielding an orange or maroon color; also *ɲur-smrig* ‘saffron color’ (JÄK) or ‘orange’ (*mdog dmar.ser*), the color of the yellow goose (*bya ɲur.paʰi mdog*, BRGY)<sup>70</sup>
- 2 > sC CT *smug-po* ‘(reddish) brown,’ SHM /smukpo/ (RSK)
- 3 > rC NBR /ɽmukpo/ ‘dark brown’ (CTD with /ɽ/ for /ɽ/)

Some kind of infrequent metathesis seems to apply also across Tibeto-Burman languages, at least in the case of velars. As stated in STEDT,<sup>71</sup>

there are some proposed cognates in which PTB prefixal *\*r-* before velars appears to correspond to medial *\*-r-* in OC, for example PTB *\*r-kang* ‘shin’: OC 脰行 *\*grangs* ‘shinbone’ [...]. Whether this indicates that metathesis has taken place in one or both languages, or that additional variants of the root existed, is not clear.

This remark is found in connection with the words for ‘leather,’ ‘skin,’ ‘bark,’ and ‘rind.’ According to STEDT-β2 (#586), the protoform for CT *rko.ba* ‘leather’ – actually *ko.ba* in all dictionaries – and *skog.pa* ‘bark’ would be *\*s/r-kwak* or *\*s/r-kawk*. More probably, the protoform is without any prefix (cf. also HST: 134 with *\*khwak* and HPTB: 378 with *\*kok* as protoform, while the corresponding note c states that several attested forms point to an original *\*kwak*). The Old Chinese counterpart 革 ‘hide, skin’ is reconstructed by Karlgren (GSR 931a-b) as *\*kək*, by Li (1971; not in STEDT’s bibliography) as *\*krək*, and by Baxter (1992: 475) as *\*krik*, > Mandarin *gé* ‘leather’ (STEDT-β2 #586 with references); note also B&S

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<sup>70</sup> This might be a translational compound, since *ɲur* is also associated with yellow or red colors, cf. *ɲur.ka* ‘fiery red’ (JÄK), *ɲur.kha(m)* ‘the color of the yellow goose’ (BRGY). According to the WTS 15 (p. 21a), *ɲur.pa* ‘yellow goose’ is also found with the meanings ‘orange’ and ‘red lotus’ in native dictionaries.

<sup>71</sup> <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt/cgi/rootcanal.pl/etymon/586>, re-accessed 23.11.2015, 21:38.

(p. 59) \*k<sup>ʰ</sup>rək; cf. also pLB \*m-k-rəy<sup>1</sup> ‘skin, outer covering’ (HPTB: 189). Most probably related is 鞞, 鞞 OC \*k’wâk (GSR: 774h-i) ‘leather,’ 鞞 \*khwak mOC \*khwâk ‘leather’ (EDOC: 341). For the variant 鞞, Matisoff (HPTB: 328) gives a PF \*r-kwa(:)k ‘outer covering,’ where the r-prefix is most likely based on the hypothetical Tibetan word, while HST (p. 134) has PF and OC \*khwak. One cannot preclude a possible relationship between the Žaṅžun word *rko* ‘body’ and the word(s) for leather (cf. Martin 2010: 40b). One could think thus of a development \*krwa-k ~ \*kro-k > \*skro-k > *sko-g* > (?*rko-* > *ko*) for the Tibetan words.

### 2.1.5 Possible cases of progressive metathesis

A few cases can be observed in which a cluster CrV apparently turns into CVr, cf. rather recently DOM *phrugu* > /phurgu/ among some of the younger people. The EDOC mentions three Tibetan-Chinese pairs that, if related, had undergone metathesis in one or the other direction: 家 mOC \*krâ ‘house, household, family,’ which Schuessler relates to OT *mkhar* ‘castle’ (p. 300), 假 mOC \*krâ? ‘borrow, simulate, deception,’ which he relates to a written Tibetan form *kar-skyin* ‘loan,’ while another homophonous word, 假, 假 mOC \*krâ? ‘be great, abundance’ would be related to CT *rgya* ‘wide, broad’ (p. 301).<sup>72</sup>

This progressive metathesis may apparently also happen after the first step sketched above, so that CrV > sCrV > sCVr.

Compare PF \*pr(j)aw ‘claw’ (STEDT-β<sub>1</sub>),<sup>73</sup> Jino /phɿɿ<sup>44</sup> sɿ<sup>44</sup>/, Northern Rgyalrong /pri ndzuru/ ‘claw,’ and perhaps also the Dimasa verb /džə brau/ ‘maul, claw, scratch.’<sup>74</sup> The element /brau/ is associated with a root \*(m/b)rak ‘cut, tear, maul, lacerate’ (STEDT-β<sub>2</sub> #2459), where all seemingly related

<sup>72</sup> Schuessler (EDOC 313) has no objection, however, to the suggestion that the corresponding CT verb form (stem II) *rgyas* ‘increase’ is related to another Old Chinese word 介, 价 mOC “\*krê(t)s ?,” adding that “OC \*e is the equivalent of foreign \*ya/\*ja.” Should that not also be true for CT *rgya* ‘wide, broad’?

<sup>73</sup> This protoform has been eliminated ever since, <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt/cgi/rootcanal.pl/gnis?t=claw> re-accessed 1 April 2019. STEDT, however, still lists OC \*b’iəg and \*b’ji- for the meaning ‘claw,’ but this meaning seems to be derived from 葡, 備 OC \*[b]rək-s {\*[b]rək-s} (B&S: 11); mOC \*brə(k)h ? (EDOC: 159) ‘ready, complete, perfect; prepare, provide,’ via an apparently well-prepared ‘defensive, long weapon,’ cf. GSR (984d-e).

<sup>74</sup> <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt/cgi/rootcanal.pl/gnis?t=hair>, accessed 27.12.2015.

words, except the Dimasa word show a nasal initial *mr* or *mj*. This root may instead be related to (30) \*m(y)uk (~ \*r-mi-k) ‘nail, claw, hoof.’

Accordingly, one could possibly relate CT *spar.ba*, *spar.mo* ‘grasping hand, paw, claw,’ PUR /sparba/, NBR (Panamik), LEH /spara/ ‘handful’ (for ‘taking with a single hand’: PUR (Ciktan), LEH, or ‘with both hands together’: NBR (Panamik); see CDTD), GYS /para/ ‘handful (single handed)’ vs. /bara/ ‘handful (double handed)’. The development could thus have been \*pr(j)aw > \*pra > \*spra > *spar*.

A further, and most probably better, example is OT *khri* ‘star’,<sup>75</sup> PF \*gray, Written Burmese *krai* ~ *kray* (HPTB: 23, cf. now STEDT-β2 #3574) developing via \*skra into *skar*, yielding CT *skar.ma*. Cf. also the Amdo Tibetan forms /ṣkarma/ in Mkharmar, Rkangtsha, and Chabcha or /ṣkarmæ/ in Rngaba and Arik, which indicate a development from \*kra > \*skra > \*rkra > *rkar*. That the word for ‘star’ underwent a metathesis of the type described is also corroborated by Daofu /zgre/ and Ergong /zgze/, Rgyalrong (Ganzi Danba Dasang) /sgɽi/ or Mawo (Qiang) /ɸdzɽə/, Zhaba /ṣtṣə<sup>55</sup>/ (STEDT-β2 #3574 \*g(r/l)ary); cf. also Situ-Rgyalrong/ Chuchen-shar /tsə ʔgri/ ‘star’ (Suzuki 2009: 74).<sup>76</sup>

Finally, in the GYA dialect of Ladakh, the ordinary word for ‘monkey’ is /ṣiu/ < *sprehu*, but with respect to the twelve-year cycle the form /pērlo/ ‘monkey year’ is used. Rebecca Norman (p.c.) has also heard the use of /sperlo/ in the phonetically conservative dialects. This indicates another progressive metathesis form \*pra > *spra* ~ *spre-* > /sper/ > /pēr/.

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75 For this meaning, cf. Zeisler (2015d).

76 Of course, STEDT-β2 #2300 proposes another etymology, \*s-kar, much closer to Tibetan. As usual, an *s-* prefix is attested clearly only for Tibetan and the almost identical words in Qiangic and Rgyalrongic. The Zeme group of Kuki-Chin seems to testify for a sibilant element \*sə, as in Khoirao /səgan/ ‘star,’ but not only does this first syllable appear in various other forms: *tse-*, *ca-*, *cha-*, and *ka-*, which makes the identity with the Tibetan *s-* pre-radical rather unlikely, even more so as the second syllable also involves quite a different final. The latter observation also holds for the Konyak form /ṣan-ha/ and the Jingpho word, rendered as /shakan/, /ṣəgān/, /səgan/, /ṣā<sup>33</sup>kan<sup>33</sup>/, or /ṣəgan/. The Kiranti variants /sanɽen/ ~ /saNɽen/ ~ /sanɽem/ ~ /soŋɽer/ ~ /sānggār/ ~ /sanɽi/ might show that in some languages, final nasal and *r* could interchange, but in that case, the first syllable is much too ‘heavy’ to correlate with a prefix, otherwise taken to be a sequisyllable.

The inverse development: CVr > CrV can be observed in the case of the Classical Tibetan name *Drugu* (alternative spelling *Grugu*, sometimes also *Brugu*) for the Turks.<sup>77</sup>

### 2.1.6 Discussion

As example (18) with the Classical Tibetan variant *sprug* for *phrug* demonstrates particularly well, there is, at least in the case of an original cluster Cr, no need for an ad hoc s- prefix or a derivative element \*sya as postulated by Matisoff (see p. 21 above).

The fact that Old or Classical Tibetan attestations may be linked with different stages of the development would suggest that the words in question were borrowed at different times or along different routes in a time slot where the metathesis rule was productive. Words like CT *rku* ‘steal,’ *rma* ‘ear,’ *rma.bya* ‘peacock,’ and *rma.j* ‘horse’ may thus be early borrowings into the ancestor language, undergoing the full development, whereas words such as *bgrad* ‘fight’ or any other word retaining the cluster Cr appear to be late borrowings. Words that take the shape sCr would have been borrowed at an intermediate period. As will be shown in § 3.3 below, it appears that the more innovative forms could replace the less developed forms, and such innovative forms may well have been borrowed from more advanced dialects within Tibetan or from non-Tibetan varieties.

Quite apparently, many scholars in the field of Tibeto-Burman linguistics view the development differently. They would hold that an opposite metathesis of prefix + C, as attested by Tibetan, became C + C in some languages. However, this process at best appears to be sporadic. DeLancey (1989) gives some examples for Nungish, which mostly concern other consonant combinations, but also gives the example for ‘to plow’ “Tarong, A. mrâ, WT rmo,” which corresponds to the data presented above. Given that we find hardly any other related form in the other languages, one may wonder whether the Tarong form simply reflects the original word form shared by both Tarong and Tibetan before the metathesis happened or whether either Tarong or Tibetan borrowed that original form from the other language, before the Tibetan word underwent the metathesis.

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<sup>77</sup> This metathesis might even happen now: in the radio news about Modi’s visit in Turkmenistan in 2015, one speaker talked about /túrkménistan/, but another speaker clearly said /túgmenístan/ (so I inevitably understood ‘six ministers’). It is, however, possible that her pronunciation was triggered by a corresponding written form \**drug.me.ni.stan*.



Matisoff similarly opts for a metathesis  $rC > Cr$ . With respect to the etymon for ‘waist’ \*kret ~ \*kren (6), he states: “Written Tibetan has both an  $r$ - and an  $s$ - prefix, with the former apparently metathesized to a glide in other languages (Apatani, Tshona, Tamang).”<sup>78</sup> Similarly, Schuessler (2007: 55) suggests that “[ $v$ ]oicelessness corresponds in some CH words to PTB \* $r$ - which can also show up as OC medial \* $r$ -,” adding that “OC medial \* $r$ - often derives from an earlier prefix or pre-initial \* $r$ -, not from an ‘infix’ \* $r$ - which is typologically unlikely in TB languages and therefore probably also unlikely in OC,” cf. also Schuessler (2007: 84). The prefixes, however, are usually only attested in Tibetan.

If this Sinologist viewpoint were correct, it would imply that the development generally went from  $rC$  via  $sCr$  to  $Cr$  or  $Cy$ . This would further imply that either the Baltipa dialects (with respect to the velar clusters) or Western Shamskat Ladakhi (with respect to the labial clusters) represent the oldest stage not only of Tibetan, but even of Tibeto-Burman. However, this result would be quite strange in view of the historical facts:

Žaŋ.žun, which either comprised Upper Ladakh or lay between Ladakh and Tibet, was conquered by the Tibetans only in the mid seventh century CE (in 644 according to the *Old Tibetan Annals*, OTA l. 13 or in 649 according to the *Taiping huanyu ji*, see Pelliot 1963: 708; see also the discussion in Zeisler 2010: 403f.). Baltistan might have been conquered in the course of the conquest of Greater and Lesser Bolor (Gilgit and Hunza). Attacks of the latter regions had already started in perhaps the middle of the seventh century (Beckwith 1987: 30), but a final conquest is more likely at the end of the first quarter of the eighth century. A registration of the male population (*pha.los*) in 719 (cf. OTA, l. 213/161) might have served the preparation of one of these attacks. Around 730, the pilgrim Hyecho describes Greater Bolor as being already under the suzerainty of Tibet (Fuchs 1938: 443, Petech 1977: 10). The western parts of Ladakh most probably were not conquered much earlier.<sup>79</sup> While a non-Tibetan Tibeto-Burman language might have been among the languages spoken in Žaŋ.žun (cf. Hummel 1986,

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78 <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt/cgi/rootcanal.pl/etymon/217>, accessed 13.05.2014.

79 If they were conquered at all. As Quentin Devers (p.c., summer 2015) explained to me, the imperial army might have reached Baltistan via Nubra or even via a mountain trail between the Karakoram and the Kunlun. It remains thus unclear whether Central Ladakh was ever garrisoned. The Alchi rock inscriptions have earlier been taken as a witness for the presence of a Tibetan army (Denwood 1980: 163), but Takeuchi (2012: 55) suggests that they may belong to the post-imperial period.

Nagano 2009),<sup>80</sup> perhaps mainly in the northeastern part, it can be assumed that Indo-Aryan, that is, (proto-) Dardic and/or a Northwestern Prakrit, Iranian, and possibly also (proto-) Burushaski were spoken to the west and northwest. There is no evidence available that Tibetan or any other Tibeto-Burman language had been spoken in Baltistan or Lower Ladakh before the Tibetan conquest, whereas inscriptional evidence points to the use of Indo-Aryan (see Francke 1907: 592–596; 1914: 115–117 for Ladakh; Dani 1991: 217 for Baltistan). It should be noted also that a conquest or the establishing of garrisons or even a colonialization does not necessarily lead to an immediate language shift (see, however, Bialek 2018a for a different view). It is not impossible that the Baltipa dialects and Western Shamskat Ladakhi preserved some individual features of the most archaic dialect spoken by some of the invading troops, members of which have subsequently settled in the area, but, given the other rather modern features of these varieties, particularly also in the verbal system, it does not seem very likely that they preserved an original cluster rC.

From a linguistic point of view, it also does not seem very likely that a single language, Tibetan, should show various steps in a convergent development of three different clusters dC, rC, sC > rCy, sCy, sCr > Cr, Cy, while all other Tibeto-Burman languages would have reached the endpoint of the development: Cr or Cy with no intermediate stages. An opposite development, positing a single language (or a limited set of dialects) undergoing metathesis, a fixed starting point, and different end

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<sup>80</sup> It remains unclear which and how many languages were spoken in an area, the extent of which cannot be defined. It is evident, however, that one region, Ḥolmo Luṅriṅ, taken to be the central part of Žaṅ.žun, lay in the Pamiran borderlands (see Martin 1995). Early Tibetan texts allow an identification with the settlements of the Darada, that is, Gilgit and the “Upper Indus Valley” in Pakistan (Zeisler 2015c). The Bonpo tradition speaks of several languages (cf. Martin 2013: 187 for one such list) and even of several scripts used in Žaṅ.žun.

If this tradition were to be taken seriously, the scripts referred to could not but be the Brāhmī and the Kharoṣṭhī, and the languages written would have been Indo-Aryan or Iranian. Note, however, that all specimens presented by Bonpo scholars are derivations from the Tibetan script and appear to be late re-inventions; according to Blezer et al. (2013: 104, 120), Bonpo narratives concerning an original Žaṅ.žun script typically date from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with one narrative from the late seventeenth century. It is not known whether the so-called Žaṅ.žun language, of which only some late fragments survived, was an official language and where exactly it was spoken. It seems to have been basically Tibeto-Burman, but it shows a massive influence from Indo-Aryan, with quite a few words starting with a *media aspirata*. While this language shows a few clusters of the Tibetan type, it does not give any evidence for a development rC > Cr.

points, as triggered by different time points and routes of borrowing, as suggested here, seems to be more likely.<sup>81</sup>

In contrast to the above-mentioned position, Schuessler (2009: 16) states that “[i]n languages throughout the world the sequence C+r is typical, it is ‘unmarked,’ normal and natural, while the switch of the two would be highly marked, unusual, and requires special pleading. An exceptional (!) language is Written Tibetan (WT) with words like *rta* ‘horse.’” Under this typological perspective, it is again more likely that an ancestor of Tibetan (and not just of its written form), possibly under the influence of some substrate, initiated the metathetical process, rather than that the proto-language started with an atypical cluster, and all languages except Tibetan amended this.

Note that Schuessler (2007: 86) also suggests a general regressive metathesis in Old Chinese for \*CVr > \*CrV, that is, an inversion with respect to the suggested progressive metathesis \*r-C > Cr. One might argue that these are different processes triggered by, or affecting, two different positions, leading to the same result, hence r-CV > CrV and CVr > CrV, but I do not find this very convincing.

The situation in Tibetan is in several ways clearly different. There may have been also a secondary progressive metathesis CrV > CVr, even sCrV > sCVr, but the main development concerns cases of CrV alternating with rCV via sCrV. The cases of *rma.bya* ‘peacock-bird’ (21), whether a loan from Sanskrit or from an Austroasiatic language, and of Old Tibetan *rman* ‘horse’ (22), whether a loan from Proto-Indo-European or from a Mongolic language, clearly show that at least in these two instances, the development must have been from C(V)r to rC and not the other way round. It would be quite surprising if the development in the two borrowed words would go in the opposite direction of all other words in question (whether inherited or borrowed). If this possibility were to be generally accepted, we would be forced to give up all attempts at reconstruction.

## 2.2 HOMORGANIC ALTERNATION BETWEEN NASALS AND ORAL STOPS

This second sound alternation was likewise first mentioned by Simon (1929: 195–197, 1949: 14 n. 2, 1975). In the case of clusters with a nasal radical, the change would have been triggered, according to him, by

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<sup>81</sup> It is this kind of likelihood that underlies also the reconstructions of Indo-European, cf., e.g., Fortson (2006: 3). Exceptions to this likelihood are certainly possible, but their postulation has to be based on solid knowledge about why they occurred. The mere assumption that a language may retain older features or that exceptions do occur is certainly not enough.

a homorganic intrusive oral consonant and a subsequent loss of the nasal (Simon 1929: 187, 195), but this does not explain the alternation of plain radicals or of the finals. Finals seem to be especially prone to this alternation, as also observed by Shafer (1940: 311) across and within individual languages, the alternation often being triggered by suffixes. For variation in the finals, cf. also LaPolla (1994).

In Old and Classical Tibetan, homorganic alternation between nasals and oral stops can be likewise observed in the finals, where it might partly be due to assimilation processes to following morphemes, such as *-po* vs. *-mo*. But cf. also the case of *rga-n-po* ~ *rga-d-po* ‘old man,’ *rga-n-mo* ~ *rga-d-mo* ‘old woman,’ where both suffixes combine with both finals. Cf. also the CT verb *ḥthems* ‘be complete, full, sufficient’ with the modern Ladakhi counterparts /*thems*/ ‘be, have enough (of food)’ and /*theps*/ ‘be long enough,’ where the alternation is not conditioned by a following morpheme. The alternation is much less frequent with initials, so that most Tibetologists are not aware of it. In extremely rare cases, the alternation could affect both the initial and the final consonant, as shown in (32). Initial alternation, however, is quite common across Tibeto-Burman languages as Matisoff’s (HBTB and STEDT) countless allofams indicate.

- (32) CT *ḥaḥ-* ~ *gag-*, cf. the various designations for water birds, such as ducks or water fowls, *ḥaḥ.pa*, *gag.tse*, *bya.gag*. The last bird (a swan, according to the definition of BDGM) takes the place of the bird element in the Tibetan calendar in some Old Tibetan documents (Pt 1084, Pt 1096, Pt 1288, ITJ 750, Or 8212.187, for all these documents see <https://otdo.aa-ken.jp/search>).
- (33) CT *Smra*, epithet of *Žaṅ.žun* in Western Tibet (cf. Ladvags Rgyalrabs, ed. Francke 1926) vs. *Spra* or *Sbra*, epithet of *Žaṅ.žun* in Eastern Tibet (cf. Stein 1961: 27, 28, 51, 54).
- (34) CT *(ma)-sma-d* ‘(mother with) child(ren)’ vs. *(pha)-spa-d* ‘(father with) child(ren).’

- (35) CT *smi-n* vs. *spu-n* (with vowel change → sound alternation 4) ‘sibling.’<sup>82</sup>
- (36) PF \**mrul* ‘snake,’ (see above no. (16)) > \**brul* > OT/CT *sbrul*.
- (37) PF \**mraw* ‘human (or simian),’ \**mraw-k* ‘human (or simian) offspring’ > \**praw-k* (see above no.(18)) > CT *phrug(u) ~ sprug(u)* ‘child, human offspring,’ with vowel change (→ sound alternation 4) > OT/CT *spra, sprehu* ‘monkey.’

One could perhaps add the topic marker *nij* as listed in JÄK, which is still pronounced as /niŋ/ by the older speakers of the dialect of Domkhar in Ladakh and is known that way by the people of other dialect areas; nevertheless, all younger speakers of the dialect of Domkhar insist that it should be /nik/.

It remains unclear which direction the development takes, and whether the alternation is unidirectional or reversible. Matisoff apparently prefers a development from oral to nasal, mostly, but not always, based on the Tibetan form. By contrast, Simon seems to suppose a unidirectional development from nasals to oral stops from Tibeto-Burman to Classical Tibetan for the initial alternation. However, dialectal variants, re-borrowings, hyper-correct forms, intentional archaisms, word plays, or later reinterpretations may lead to apparent anachronisms like OT *dbuḥ.hbreŋ* vs. CT *dmu.thag*, the magical cord or thread of the *Dmu* attached to the head (*dbu*), by which the defunct king ascends to heaven.

On the other hand, one can well observe that in some cases, the Tibetan word has an oral stop in contrast to other Tibeto-Burman languages, e.g., the word for ‘snake’ CT *sbrul* vs. pLB \**m-rəy*<sup>1</sup> or \**m-r-wey*<sup>1</sup> (HPTB: 43, 83), WrB *mrwe* (Simon 1975: 250, HPTB: 80, 83), etc., while in other cases, Tibetan has a nasal where other Tibeto-Burman languages have an oral stop, e.g., the verb ‘speak, say’ CT *smra* < \**mra(o)*, WrB *mrwak ~ prwak* (HPTB: 523), Pattani /*prəi/* or /*prài/*, Hani /*pɛ̃*<sup>33</sup>/ ~ /*mi*<sup>31</sup>/ (STEDT-β<sub>1</sub>), etc. Again, due to the preferences of individual scholars, both an oral and a nasal reconstruction have been suggested:

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<sup>82</sup> Most probably, the forms *smad* and *smi*n and correspondingly *spad* and *spun*, each denoting a collective of offspring, are related as well. Final *-n* and *-d* seem to be mere variants of one and the same collective suffix, see § 5.3 and Appendix II with annotation notes m to s.

(38) PF \*smraγ (Simon 1929); \*br(w)ak ~ \*(s)br(w)aj (HPTB: 523, 585) ‘speak’:

with nasal (→ sound alternation 1): \*mra

OT/CT *smra* ‘speak,’ *rma* ‘ask, inquire’

with oral stop: \*pr(h)a/ \*pr(h)o/ \*bro

CT *pra.(mo)* ‘ritual, prognostic,’ (*s*)*pra.chal* ‘joke, jest,’ *phra.ma* ‘calumny, slander,’ *phra.men* ‘sorcery, witchcraft,’ (*h*)*phrin* ‘message, *bro* ‘oath’; perhaps also \**phros* > WSHM /phros/, ESHM and LEH /tʰos/, KNH /tʰe/ ‘mention, utterance, topic’ (in the collocations /phros thuk/ ‘touch upon a topic, mention casually’ and /phros phiŋ/ ‘start a conversation, introduce a new topic’)

From the perspective of Tibetan, the oral forms in this word family are secondary nominal derivations. If the nasal forms are, indeed, the older ones, then the relationship to Eastern Iranian is more than obvious:

(39) PIE \*mleuH, pII \*mlauH ‘speak,’ Avestan *mrao-*, Sanskrit *brav-* (\*brao), Khotan-Saka \*mrav or \*mru ‘declare, order,’ cf. *mura* ‘speech, word’; \*mrautar > \*mrautā > Saka *murta* ‘lord ruler’; \*mravaka > Khotan-Saka *rūkyā* ‘commander, lord’; \*mravant > Sanskrit *Saka-muruṇḍa* ‘Saka kings, royal Saka,’ Khotan-Saka *rrund* ‘possessing power, lord, king’ (Mayrhofer 1996, Lubotsky & Beekes n.d., Bailey 1979, 1985, Harmatta 1994: 9)

One would generally expect that nasals alternate only with their homorganic voiced counterpart, as in the case of the word for snake (\*mrul vs. \*brul > *sbrul*). However, the words for ‘monkey,’ ‘human being,’ or ‘offspring, child’ show an alternation between nasal and voiceless stop (\*mraw-k vs. *phrug* > *sprug*, *spra*). Words related to the semantic field of ‘speaking’ show both types of oral onsets. It does not seem possible to indicate which type, the voiced or the voiceless, is the earlier in Tibetan, nor is it possible to define the conditioning factors.

One indication that nasal forms are older, at least in Tibetan, comes from the general tendency of Tibetan to use the opportunity of a sound change for meaning differentiation. In the case of the nasal-oral alternation, nasal initials tend to denote the inferior (female) gender or, more generally, lowness, oral initials the prestigious (male) gender or, more generally, highness (see Appendix II). Most likely, it

is the old word form which develops negative connotations, while the new form is introduced for the more prestigious counterpart, rather than the other way round.

### 2.3 JOTIZATION OR ALTERNATION OF POST-INITIAL GLIDES

Alternations among the post-initial glides (y [j], r, l, w, and  $\phi$  – or a corresponding vowel i, e for j and u, o for w) seem to be common, but unpredictable, across Tibeto-Burman languages, cf., e.g., the word for ‘measure (for grain)’ corresponding to CT *bre*: BAL: Skardo /ble/<sup>83</sup> (CDTD), Khapalu /bre/ (SPR), PUR, SHM /bre/ (CDTD), DOM /rbe/ (own data), Jingpho /byē/, Tangut /biej/; Tsangla /bre/, Kinnauri, /brē/, Tshona /bre<sup>35</sup>/; Bwe /ble/; and corresponding to CT *bo* (? < *bwa*): Tshona /bo<sup>35</sup>/, Bokar /bo/, Hani, Karen /bo<sup>31</sup>/, Lahu, Cuona Menba /bo<sup>35</sup>/, Tshona /bo<sup>13</sup>/; in Bwe the meaning has changed to ‘span’; in Tangut the word is used as classifier and general measure word (STEDT<sup>84</sup>). See also Shafer (1940: 334) for an alternation Burmese *wè* ~ Tibetan *yi*, e.g., in the case of *khwè* ~ *khyi* ‘dog’ (cf. also the ‘East Bodish’ Kurtöp form *kh<sup>wi</sup>*, Hyslop 2017: 17, Table 1). See also Matisoff (1978: 344f) for the [j] ~ [r] alternation in Lolo-Burmese and Simon (1929: 209f.) for Chinese-Tibetan pairings.<sup>85</sup>

A regular alternation can be observed in Tibetan, but only in the case of the Classical Tibetan clusters velar plus alveolar trill and their palatal realization in Amdo Tibetan (cf., e.g., Roerich 1958: 21–23), going back to a cluster of velar plus palatal glide. The latter is occasionally attested in Old Tibetan: *ra.l.gyi* for CT *ra.gri* ‘sword’ and the names *Ša.khyi* and *Ña.khyi* for CT *Ša.khri* and *Ña.khri*. In a few cases, these forms are also attested in the western-most dialects, cf. BAL and DOM /rai/ or /rayi/ for *ra(l).gri* ‘sword,’ BAL /khit/ < \*(h)khyid for *ħkħrid* ‘lead along,’ and PUR /skjajar/ for *skra.dkar* ‘white hair.’ An interesting case is also the classical doublet: *ħgram* ‘riverbank’ ~ *ħgyam* ‘side, edge, bank’ (cf. TETT).

Exceptionally, the alternation is also attested in Tibetan with a preceding labial, cf. CT *sbraj-* ‘bee,’ ‘honey,’ BAL /-(z)bjaj-/ , PUR (Ciktan) /zbjaj-/ , Dzongkha /bdzaj-/ ,<sup>86</sup> see (11) above. Another case

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83 /br/ > /bl/ is a secondary development in several western Baltipa dialects.

84 <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt/cgi/rootcanal.pl/gnis?t=measure>, last accessed 21.07.2016.

85 Even initial glides may be affected, as in the case of Kurtöp *yam* (Hyslop 2017: 111, ex. 85) vs. Tibetan *lam* ‘path, road,’ Kurtöp *yas* (Hyslop 2017: 127, ex. 259) vs. Tibetan *las-* ‘work.’

86 See note 38, p. 41, above.

is CT *phrag.pa* ‘shoulder, arm’ with PUR /phjaqpa/ (CTD) and WSHM /phjakpa/ (RSK). In § 3.3 I shall give evidence for Archaic Tibetan *bya* ‘human,’ as derived from \*bra- or \*mra-.

One could expect, therefore, also an alternation between dental & *r* and dental & *j* among the Tibeto-Burman languages. The combination of dentals with palatal glides would have developed into palatal affricates in Tibetan (this might be one of the reasons why the clusters *tr* and *thr* are not found in Tibetan, except in loans). However, I have not yet come across suitable word pairs.

#### 2.4 VOWEL ALTERNATIONS THAT ARE NOT MORPHOLOGICALLY CONDITIONED

Old and Classical Tibetan show certain morphologically conditioned vowel alternations, such as the notorious verbal *ablaut* patterns (only partially preserved in the eastern varieties) or the change of final *-a* & diminutive suffix *hu* > *ehu* (generally preserved in the modern varieties). Apart from these, one can find in Tibetan written texts as well as in the spoken languages a few word pairs or triplets that differ only with respect to the vowels (*y*)*i*, *u*, and *a*. The ‘instability’ of these vowels may reflect various processes of phonetic change being productive in different dialects or the adaptation to a totally differing vowel system in a donor language, such as, e.g., the Turkic or Mongolic type with centralized vowels.

In some cases, the interchange of (*y*)*i*, *u* (and *a*) appears to be triggered by a preceding labial – a feature that may perhaps have a Turkic or Mongolic background; but Matisoff (2000: 345f.) likewise mentions “[v]ariation of the high vowels -i- and -u- in closed syllables, especially in the environment of syllable-initial or -final labials.” Shafer (1940: 319) notes a “labializing influence” in Chinese that leads to an epenthetic labial vowel before a following *â*. Schuessler (2007: 109), following Matisoff, takes it as a general Sino-Tibetan / Tibeto-Burman feature after labial initial, but also points to a similar alternation in Austroasiatic-Mon. The alternations between *i* and *u* may thus develop independently in the various languages due to natural processes.

In other cases, the Tibetan alternation seems to be related to a preceding (or perhaps also to a following) alveolar trill, which might point to an original semi-vocalic character of the *r*. Other instances might be due to a centralized character of the original vowels ([ɨ], [ʉ]) and/or due to an early neutralization process, like the one attested in Amdo Tibetan (cf. Haller 2004: 46, 48 for Themchen).



Examples with a preceding labial are found in the verbs *hbig(s) ~ hbug(s)* ‘pierce’ and CT *hphur ~ hphir* ‘fly’<sup>87</sup> and in the nouns *dbyig.pa ~ dbyug.pa* ‘stick’ and *byi.ru ~ byu.ru* ‘coral’ (here and in the case of the verb *fly* with the possible interference of a following *-r*);<sup>88</sup> examples for a preceding alveolar trill are found in the tribal names Rma and Rmu and the older reconstructable forms for ‘man’ *rmi*, *rme* and *rma*<sup>89</sup> (here the *r*-element combines with a labial). A further example might perhaps be found in the semantically related verbs 1. CT *sgrig* (<\*g-rik or perhaps \*rik plus prefixes \*g- and \*b-) ‘put in order, arrange, etc.’, LAD: /rik/ ‘arrange, pay for,’ GYS /-(b)-rik/ ‘x rows (of turquoise)’; 2. CT *sgrug* (<\*g-ruk or perhaps \*ruk plus prefixes \*g- and \*b-), LAD /ruk/ ‘collect, gather (nuts, wood),’ GYS, DOM /-(b)ruk/ ‘little pieces of’; 3. CT *sbrag* (<\*b-rak or perhaps \*rak plus prefixes \*g- and \*b-) ‘lay, put one thing above another,’ DOM /rak/ ~ /rbak/ (~ /brak/), TYA /rak/ ~ /lbak/, GYS /rak/ ‘join together, attach, add,’ GYS /-(b)rak/, DOM /-rbak/ ~ /-brak/ ‘x-fold lining’ (Zeisler 2011a: 266f.), where the two ‘radicals’ *g*- and *b*- might be secondary developments. An example of an apparently unconditioned vowel alternation is the verb CT *lus ~ las* ‘remain behind, be left behind’ (JÄK), with dialectal attestations in Southern Mustang, Western Drokpa, Dingri, Shigatse, and Lhasa for the less common form *las* (CDTD).

Examples from the Ladakhi dialects show that the vowel of a following syllable may also play a role, leading either to assimilation (*i-u/o > u-u/o*) or to dissimilation (*u-u/o > i-u/o*): DOM /rugu/ for LAD /rigu/ ‘kid,’ CT *ri.gu* (here, the Shamskat form might have been motivated as an echo form to /lugu/

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87 Vowel *i* is found in some of the more western dialects, such as Nubri, Western Drokpa, Ngaro Tshochen, Dingri, Shigatse, and Lhasa (CDTD).

88 In the case of the two verbs, the *i* vowel is clearly secondary, as it did not lead to a palatalization of the initial (\**hbig(s)* would become \**hbyig(s)*, but *hbug(s)* does not become \**hbyug(s)*). Conversely, in the case of the two nouns, the *i* vowel seems to have been original, as it led to a palatalization of the initial, which was retained in the form with *u* vowel (\**dbig > dbyig > dbyug*).

89 In connection with the tribal names of eastern Tibet and the neighboring areas, taking the form *rmV* or simply *mV*, Stein (1951: 253, n. 6) speaks of an ‘imprecise’ vowel, the Tibetan transcriptions of which would alternate between *e* and *i* and *o* and *u* respectively. An example is the tribal or geographical name Miñag, rendered alternatively as *Meñag* and *Moñag* in Tibetan documents. Stein further mentions the alternations /mu/ (*r*)*mu* and /ni/ (*r*)*nyi* for CT *mi* ‘man’ in certain Amdo dialects. In the *Rgyalpo bkahi thanyig*, the Dgahldan edition has *Rma*, where the Sledge edition has *Rme* for what should have been *Rmu* (ibid.). Another interesting spelling alternation for obviously one and the same ethnical group is *Smaza* for *Muzu* or *Muzi* (ibid., p. 254 with n. 5).

‘lamb’); Shamskat /puksmo/, KNH /pik(s)mo/ ‘knee,’ CT *pus.mo*; LAD /dzugu/ ~ /dziyu/ ‘finger,’ CT *mdzug.mo*; DOM /zurmo/ ~ /zirmo/ (own data, CDTD, RSK), LEH /zumo/ ~ /zimo/ (CDTD, RSK), but PUR /zermo/ ~ /zirmo/ ‘pain, illness’ (CDTD), CT *gzug, gzer*; WSHM (DOM, Takmacik) /ritfo/ for ESHM (KHAL, NUR) and LEH /rutfo/ *ru.co* ‘horn.’ These alternations could be due to a genuine Tibetan vowel assimilation (or dissimilation) process, which might have been unidirectional in principle, but affected different words in different varieties at different times.

Alternations between vowels *e* and *o* appear to be less common but are attested as spelling variants in OT *rjo.bo* for CT *rje.bo* ‘lord’<sup>90</sup> (in this case, the first form might be the result of an assimilation process) and *ro.ro* for CT *re.re* ‘each.’<sup>91</sup> Similarly one can find a few dialectal variations, such as BAL, PUR /tʃhoyo/ (CDTD), DOM /tʃhopo/ vs. LEH /tʃhenmo/ ‘big,’ and also verbs relating to a form *\*sdeg* (Shamskat /zd<sup>ə</sup>ak/, Jirel /dek/, Shigatse /tɕa/) besides the more common *sdog* for the meaning ‘prepare.’ The reason for this alternation is usually not obvious.

The variation between *a*, *u*, and *o*, as we see in the case of *spru-g* ‘(human) offspring’ vs. *spra* ‘monkey’ and many words related to speaking (*smra*, *rma* vs. *smo-*, *dmo-*), is most probably due to an underlying original diphthong *\*au/ \*ao/ \*aw* or *\*ua/ \*oa/ \*wa*. One word without an apparent trigger is CT *sja(n) ~ sjon* ‘early, earlier, first’ with the Ladakhi realizations DOM /sjonla/, ‘before,’ /sjonma/ ~ /sjanma/ ‘before, earlier’ and GYS /ɲāna/ ‘before’ /ɲānma/ ~ /ɲūnma/ ‘earlier’ (cf. CDTD for similar variation in or between other dialects).

Under the keyword ‘vowel gradation’ Simon (1949: 7–10) gives some examples for alternations between, as he thinks, semantically related words, such as *lcug.pa* ‘flexible, pliant, thin’ and *lcug.ma* ‘osier stake, rod, thin branch’ vs. *lcag* ‘rod, switch, stick, whip,’ where the semantic relationship is quite obvious, and cases such as  $\sqrt{bub}$  ‘get turned over’ vs.  $\sqrt{bab}$  ‘descend, fall down’ or *grabs* ‘preparation, arrangement’ vs.  $\sqrt{grub}$  ‘get accomplished,’ where the relationship is not so obvious and would need some corroboration from texts or other Tibeto-Burman languages. Simon does not mention any conditioning factor, but in the last two cases, we have again examples for a preceding labial and a preceding alveolar trill as possible triggers.

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<sup>90</sup> Pt 1084, Pt 1283, Pt 1286, Pt 1287, and ITJ 1375. For these documents see <https://otdo.aa-ken.jp/search>.

<sup>91</sup> Only Pt 1287.

Vowel alternations can also be found across the Tibeto-Burman languages. Matisoff (2008: xxxvii) mentions the following common variations:  $u \sim i$ ,  $ya \sim i$ , and  $wa \sim u$ , all occurring in closed syllables. Among the etyma, he discusses, the variations may, in extreme cases, comprise almost all possible vowels, cf.

– \*s-riŋ ~ \*s-r(y)aŋ ‘live, alive, give birth, green, raw,’ showing the vowels:

i, ī, ɪ, u, uu, a, ɐ, ɒ, ɑ, æ, e, ə, ε, o, “ö” (ø or œ) (Matisoff 2008: 52–55).

– \*m/s-la(:)y ‘navel, center, self,’ showing the vowels:

a, ai, aī, ay, əi, iə, iε, ε, e, i, wi, u, uo, o, ɵ, ʁi (p. 58–61).

Similarly, Simon (1949: 9f.) adduces a Tibetan word family around the notions ‘round, circular’ and ‘bend,’ which implies, besides an alternation in articulation manner, all five Tibetan vowels. Among others, one would find *gar* ‘dance,’ *sgar* ‘camp (enclosure),’ *mkhar* ‘castle’ (likewise an enclosure), *gor.mo* ‘round,’ *khor-* ‘circle,’ *skor* ‘encircle,’ *kyir.kyir* ‘round,’ *ħkhyir* ‘turn around, rotate,’ less convincingly *dgur.ba* ‘bent, twisted,’ and *sgur* ‘bend, bow (head),’ and finally *ħkhyer* ‘carry away,’ which he relates to *ħkhur* ‘carry,’ implying that this is necessarily done by bending one’s back. Note, however, that *ħkhur* describes a manner of carrying, whereas *ħkher* describes a transfer away from the speaker or narrative reference point. Cf. also Simon (1942: 962f., 1980: 135f.) for other more or less convincing examples.

Shafer (1940: 312f.) posits a process of vowel gradation in the proto-language, similar to that in Sanskrit, with low grade  $i$  and  $u$ , *guṇa*  $e$  and  $o$ , *vṛiddhi*  $ai$  and  $au$  or  $ao$ , and *samprasāraṇa*  $ya$  and  $wa$ , although he has to admit that this process is nowhere attested and only assumed. He cannot even say whether “ST had originally only the low-grade vowels  $a$ ,  $i$ ,  $u$ , and developed later the gradations in the various groups independently” (p. 332). The problem with this is that we do not seem to have a fixed point from which to start, and so the assignment of levelling or gradation appears to be rather arbitrary. E.g., in the case of ‘aunt,’ Luśei *ni* would represent the low grade, while CT *ne* (in *a.ne*) would be *guṇa*. Similarly, in the case of ‘near,’ CT *ñe.ba* would be *guṇa* and Luśei *nai* would be *vṛiddhi*. But in the case of ‘mother,’ the relationship appears to be inverted, at least on the surface, with “low grade”  $\check{a}$ -*me* < \*-*mi*,

guṇa *ǎ-mi* < *\*-me*, vridhhi *ǎ-may*” (p. 313). In such cases it remains unclear why there is an apparently opposite development *e* > *i* vs. *i* > *e*, and further how the different realizations of the same word in different languages could possibly parallel the derivational *ablaut* system of Sanskrit.

Shafer (p. 313) additionally assumes a process of vowel levelling or neutralization of *i* and *u* vowels as *a*. Levelling would take place in the Tibetan verb paradigms, so that “where a guṇa vowel *e* or *o* occurs in the present tense, it is replaced in the perfect by *a*” (p. 313), but at least the *e* vowel of stem I (Shafer’s “present tense”) is most probably secondarily triggered by the suffix *d/s* of stem I.

There would be still other processes or irregularities, as Shafer (p. 332) has to concede with respect to the verb ‘steal,’ where he compares Dimasa *k’ao* with Chinese 拷 *\*k’âu* (p. 331, Table 7, no. 5), and the Tibetan root  $\sqrt{rku}$  with Burmese *k’ui* and Chinese 寇 *k’u* (p. 328, Table 6, no. 24). Similarly, he cannot fit in an assumed PF *\*-ā* with the Chinese reflexes *-â*, *-uo*, and *i<sup>w</sup>o*, while Chinese *-uo* would also correspond to an assumed PF *\*-o* (p. 323). Vowel instability or, more precisely, the ‘brightening’ of the vowel *a* into fronted high vowels (rounded or unrounded), has happened at least in the Qiangic branch as recently shown by Matisoff (2019).

In any case, such variability makes comparison rather difficult if not arbitrary. So far, it does not seem possible to establish a general direction for any of these alternations, not to speak of conditioning factors, except the ones mentioned above.

Even at the lowest levels, such as the Tibetan languages, it is often not possible to establish exceptionless sound laws. In a few cases, we have, fortunately enough, some historical evidence that allows explaining features such as the sporadic change of Cr to Cy in the Baltipa dialects as being due to borrowings from Eastern Tibetan. For the time being, however, we do not have any explanation for the fact that the sound change is regular in Eastern Tibetan in the case of velar clusters, but rather sporadic in the case of labial clusters. The further we go back in time or the broader the assumed genealogical relationship becomes, the less it seems possible to establish regular sound changes. Tibeto-Burman comparative linguistics simply does not meet the philological standards mentioned above. That this field is still in an initial stage, is not really an excuse, as the standards have been set up (and followed) in the very early beginnings of Indo-European studies:

I beg leave, as a philologer, to enter my protest [...] against the licentiousness of etymologists in transposing and inserting letters, in substituting, at pleasure, any consonant for another of the same order, and in totally disregarding the vowels [...] I contend, that almost any word or nation, might be derived from any other, if such licenses as I am opposing, were permitted in etymological histories. (Jones 1799: 431)<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> This does not mean that the early scholars, and among them particularly Jones, got everything right, cf. Campbell (2006).

### 3. THE SEMANTIC SIDE: THE WORD FAMILY \*mra(o) ‘SPEAK,’ ‘SPEAKER,’ ‘HUMAN,’ ‘LORD’

#### 3.1 HUMAN SIMIANS, SIMIAN HUMANS

Monkeys seem to have been substitutes for human sacrifices; at least, we know that monkeys were offered by Tibetans, as well as by the inhabitants of the so-called Women’s Dominion (Pelliot 1963: 695). Monkeys have played an essential role representing a kind of ancestral deity among the recent Qiang (Stein 1957: 7–9). According to the Chinese annals, some Qiang tribes called themselves ‘monkey’ (ibid. p. 5) – if that is not a mistake for ‘human’ – and similarly, the Tibetans claim to be simian offspring: *mihu* (often translated as ‘little men’ or ‘dwarfs’), having a (*bodhisattva*) monkey as father. Yet, according to some other Qiang legends, the etymologically related self-designation *Rma ~ Rme ~ Rmi* signifies, among other faculties, the faculty of being able to speak, in contrast to a just conquered ‘primitive’ tribe (Stein 1957: 4). This should be enough to show the ambivalent relationship between humans and simians, at least among Tibeto-Burman people. The Tibetan word *phrug(u)* ‘(human) offspring’ is certainly the closest equivalent to the alleged proto-Tibeto-Burman word for ‘monkey’ \*mraw-k (\*myok ~ \*mruk).

The Tibetan expressions for ‘monkey,’ however, form the smallest part of the derivations under discussion, and it seems that, at least in Tibetan, this meaning is a secondary extension from a more basic meaning ‘human being.’ One knows from other cultures that the concept of humanity may be extended to animals able to rise on the hind legs and to walk a few steps, such as bears, apes, and monkeys, cf. e.g., the Orang Utan, which is, literally, a *forest man*.

In the light of the semantic shift that other words of the word family ‘human’ undergo, namely the shift to inferior categories: women, children, and morally bad persons (see § 3.3 below), I would further think that the meaning shift from ‘human’ to ‘monkey’ follows a similar tendency, the above-mentioned religious motivations notwithstanding.

#### 3.2 HUMAN SPEAKERS, SPEAKING RULERS (AND PRIESTS): THE PHIAO (*PHYA/V*)

Except for metathesis, all sound alternations described above are attested across Tibeto-Burman languages for the two words for ‘speaking’ and ‘human being.’ As ‘speaking’ is the activity that

differentiates humans from animals, and since speaking the same language is an important factor for establishing ethnical identity (and thus for the self-assurance as ‘human’ and the disqualification of others as ‘non-human’), I would argue that the formally quite similar words for speaking and humanity are actually related, the latter being derived from the former. In the following, I shall give a few examples from STEDT for the meaning *speak*<sup>93</sup> and for the meaning *man, human*.<sup>94</sup> These meanings are implied, unless a special meaning is indicated. The most relevant forms for the following discussion are underlined:

- ‘speak’: WrB: mrwak ~ prwak or pro ~ prô (/prɔ<sup>3</sup>/), Rangoon /pjɔ<sup>55</sup>/, Jinuo /pjɑ<sup>42</sup>/ or /pjɛ<sup>31</sup>/, Lotha Naga /phyo/, /me<sup>3</sup> rə<sup>3</sup>/ ‘speak ill,’ Sunwar /bwa:k-/ , Lushai /bia-k/ (bìa-I, bîak-II), Pattani /prəi/ or /prài/, Saker (Luish), now called Sak (Asakian) /pri/, Tiddim /pa:u<sup>2</sup>/, Lisu, /bæ<sup>33</sup>/ ‘speak, tell, discuss, scold,’ Chokri (Naga) /po/ or /po<sup>35</sup>/, Angami, Mikir /pu/, Athpare /pik-/ , Sema (Sumi) /pi/, Gurung /põq ba/, Lalo, Yi /bɪ<sup>33</sup>/, Hani (Caiyuan) /mi<sup>31</sup>/, Sani, Ahi, Yi /be<sup>33</sup>/ or /be<sup>44</sup>/
- ‘man, human, male’: Darang /me<sup>35</sup>/, /mowa:/ ~ /mau-a:/, /myai/, plus /bri/ classifier for human beings, Dimasa /miya/, Tangsa (Moshang) /miva/, Tamang (Risiangku) /<sup>3</sup>mi/ ‘man,’ /<sup>4</sup>pjon/ ‘young man, youth,’ Manang /<sup>2</sup>pjũ/, Thakali /pyung/ (/pjuŋ/), Old Chinese /piwo/ or /piu/ ‘man, husband,’ /pa/ {p(r)a}, Middle Chinese /pju/; Kayan (Pekon) /prà-/ , Guiqiong /mũ<sup>35</sup>/, Luxi (Langsu, Lequi) /pju<sup>31</sup>/, Apatani /mju/ < /mi-ju/; and specifically for female human beings: Pa-O /mu/ ~ /mú/, Northern Lisu /mɿ<sup>21</sup>/, Pwo, Sgaw /mỳ/ ~ /mýʔ/.

One may further add the Karen classifier for human beings: Pa-O /phra<sup>53</sup>/ or /phra<sup>33</sup>/, Kayan /phra<sup>33</sup>/, E. Kayah /phre<sup>11</sup>/ < proto-Karen \*bra<sup>A</sup> ‘human being’ (Theraphan Luangthongkum 2011: 12; according to

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93 <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt/cgi/rootcanal.pl/gnis?t=speak>, last accessed 21.07.2016. In the earlier version STEDT-β1, one would also find Lisu /bá<sup>3</sup>/, Gurung /biq-m/, Lalo /biq/, and Lakher /bi/ for the meaning ‘speak’

94 <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt/cgi/rootcanal.pl/gnis?t=man> and

<http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt/cgi/rootcanal.pl/gnis?t=human>, last accessed 21.07.2016.

the author, p.c., the medial glide /-r-/ changes to /-j-/ or /-l-/ in some modern Karen languages). A form closer to Tibetan is found in Jyarung *tə-rmi* (Stein 1951: 253, n. 6 with further reference).

Note, in this connection, the tribal names Pyu/ Piao and Miao. It would appear that at least the former people considered themselves speakers and/or human beings (or even ‘nobles,’ that is, ‘commanders’). Whether the Miao did so depends on how this name can be reconstructed. Apart from the ethnical designations Rme ~ Me, Rmi ~ Mi, etc., in the eastern border area of Tibet, there are many other Tibeto-Burman tribal names that could equally be associated with this word root and these notions. But I restrict myself to the first mentioned forms, because they appear in Old Tibetan sources.

In the case of the Mya/v (𑄎, usually transcribed as *Myva* or *Myava*), it is quite apparent that the Old Tibetan documents refer to the Nanzhao kingdom, and thus to the people commonly known as Miáo, who do not belong to the Sino-Tibetan or Tibeto-Burman speaking people. The Phya/v (𑄎, usually transcribed as *Phyva* or *Phyava*)<sup>95</sup> should then correspond to the Pyu/Piao of Myanmar, but the Phya/v or Phiao of the Old Tibetan documents are located on the upper course of the Brahmaputra in Rtsaŋ (Western Central Tibet; cf. Pt 0126, l. 116: Lower Rtsaŋ, Pt 1060, l. 74: Upper Rtsaŋ)<sup>96</sup> and seem to have an Eastern Iranian (Scythian) affiliation.

In Pt 1286, l. 8, and Pt 1290, r04, v05, the ruler of Rtsaŋ is described in a somewhat opaque although common formula as *rje Rtsaŋ.rjeḥi Thod.kar* ‘the lord, Tochar(ian) of/ among/ for the Rtsaŋ lords.’<sup>97</sup> In ITJ 0734 this ruler appears also as *Rtsaŋ.rje Phva.ḥa* (7r294) or *Pva.ḥa* (7r293, 7r298). The association of the Rtsaŋ lord(s) with a Tocharian affiliation indicates that the particular Phiao tribe or clan was perceived as being of Indo-European origin.

It is commonly accepted that the Tocharians of the Greek are identical with, or at least related to, the Yuezhi of the Chinese and the later Kuṣāṇa. It is less clear which language they originally spoke.

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95 My transcription with “/v” reflects the assumption that the vowel sequence was, in fact, intended to be /-iao/ or /-yaw/ according to the sequence in the attested names, but that the final labial semivowel was written merely conventionally below the palatal semivowel, possibly to save space or for some phonological reasons. I do not think that my argument gets invalid if the Tibetans had intended to represent an inverted order /-ioa/ or /-iwa/.

96 These and the following Old Tibetan documents can be found online under <https://otdo.aa-ken.jp/search>.

97 The genitive construction may perhaps imply a partitive notion. The formula is used for the respective rulers and deities of a given region. Typically, only one exemplary representative of a lineage or group is mentioned in this formula.



After the Yuezhi entered and overtook Baktria, they began to use the Greek script and the Baktrian language. Given the name similarity, many people think that the Tocharians/Yuezhi were identical with those who lived in the northern Tarim Oases Agni/Qarashahr, Kucha, and Turfan and spoke the so-called “Tocharian” languages. However, according to the still generally accepted view among Indo-Europeanists (see among others Fortson 2006: 400), the people known as Tocharians by the Greek and as Yuezhi by the Chinese were in all likelihood not speaking one of the so-called “Tocharian” languages, but rather a language that belonged to the East Iranian or Scythian branch. It might be possible, though, that the dominant group of Yuezhi/Tocharians included a minority group of speakers of “Tocharian.” The designation “Tocharian” for the language of the people who called themselves *Ārsi* or *Kuśiññe* after their settlements is an unfortunate misnomer, as noted by Henning (1949); see also more recently Pinault (1992: 23–25). Note, however, the comparatively modern Tibetan identification of Turfan as part of the “Tocharian” land: *Tho.dkar.gyi yul Thur.phan.na yod.paḥi tsha.mtsho* “the salt lake that lies in [the region of] Turfan, the land of the Tocharians” (Blama Btsanpo, *Ḥdzam.gliḥ rgyas.bśad*, ed. Wylie 1962: 6).

Given the location of the settlements of the Rtsaḥ “Tocharians” far to the south, along the upper Brahmaputra River, it is highly improbable that the group had anything to do with the people of the northern Tarim oases. However, their alleged “Tocharian” affiliation as well as their location may indicate some kind of relationship with the Scythians/Saka of Khotan, at least according to the local traditions.

Like other real or imagined ancestral tribes, the Phiao were deified, and the Tibetan emperors seem to have attempted to style themselves as the descendants of these (deified) Phiao. It is quite likely that some aristocratic lineages descended from, or had marital relations with, these Phiao-Tocharians. The mother of the first emperor, Sroḥ.brtsan Sgampo, although belonging to the Tshe.spoḥ clan, bears the element *Thod.dkar* (var. *Thod.kar*) in her name: *Tshe.spoḥ.bzaḥ Ḥbri.ma* or *Ḥbri.za Thod.dkar* (cf. Haarh 1969: 52).

The Old Tibetan document Pt 1038, treating the descent of the Tibetan kings, refers to the legendary first king as a “ruler over all [three] existential spheres” (*srid.pa kun.la mḥaḥ mdzad.paḥi*) and as a *phyva/vḥi yaḥ phyva/v*. In the given context, the latter phrase cannot simply mean “the Phyva of the Phyva gods” (Samten Gyaltzen Karmay 1998: 286) or “a Phyva ancestor of the Phyva” (Macdonald 1971: 216) as the previous translations have it, neglecting the focus marker *yaḥ/kyan* ‘even.’ The only

meaningful interpretation, accounting also for the use of the focus marker, is ‘commander even of the commanders’ or ‘ruler even of rulers,’ an adaptation of the prestigious Persian title *xšāyaθiya xšāyaθiyānām* or *šāhān šāh*, a suitable title for one who pretends to control the whole universe, or all the worlds. This title would also correspond well to the already mentioned Saka and Khotan-Saka words for ‘commander, ruler, king’: *murta* and *rūkyā* ‘commander, lord’ or *rrund* ‘possessing power, lord, king’ from the root \**mrav* or \**mru* ‘declare, order.’ The development in Tibetan (and Tibeto-Burman) could have been as follows:

\**mrava-ka* ‘commander, lord’ > \**mrao-k(a)* ~ \**mrau-k(a)* ~ \**mru-k(a)* >

via → sound alternation 3 & → sound alternation 2

or via → sound alternation 2 & → sound alternation 3

> \**myao-(k)* / \**phrao-(k)* > *phya/v* ‘speaker, commander, lord’

The word *phya/v* or simply *phya* and the (diminutive?) derivations with vowel *i* may also refer to more ordinary human beings: OT *phyi* and CT *phyi.mo* or *a.phyi* refers to an ‘ancestral lady’ or simply ‘grandmother’ or simply to an ‘old person’ as defined by the BDGM, cf. here PF \**pyid* (HST: 88) or \**-pəy* (HPTB: 191) ‘grandmother’ (妣). Gshen.rab Mi.bo, the legendary Bonpo teacher’s mother, is called *mi.phyi lha.phyi yo.phyi* ‘lady/mother/grandmother of men, gods (i.e., kings?), and women’<sup>98</sup> (Kalsang

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98 For the Žaŋ.žuw element *yo-* /*jo-*/ ‘woman’ or ‘female’ cf. *yog.ze* ~ *yo.ze* ~ *yo.se* ~ *yos.se* ‘woman, girl’ (ZhNN), ‘old woman’ (ZhEH, ZhDM). Cf. perhaps also the East Tibetan forms Gtsangtsa (spoken in Jiuzhaigou) /ʔa jo:/, Melung (spoken in Zhangza, Yongchun, Weixi) /ʔa ja:/, and Budy (spoken in Badi, Weixi) /ʔa je:/ ~ /ʔa jʃ/ ‘grandmother’ (Suzuki 2009: 78).

According to Honda (2009: 107), however, the meaning ‘old woman’ is based on an adjective ‘old’ for which he finds a parallel in the West Himalayish languages Manchad, Tinan /*yüi*/, Bunan /*yui*/, Rangpa /*yu:d(ə)*/, and Byangsi /*yi:d* ε / ‘old.’

This does not preclude the possibility that the meaning ‘old’ first became projected as a honorific title onto high ranking women and then became generalized to refer to women in general. Being an ‘elder’ person is associated with higher status in the Tibetan culture, cf. the classical epithet ‘virtuous eld(er)’ *dge.rgan* for the ‘teacher.’ Cf. AT (Themchen) /*rganmu*/ lit. ‘old lady’ for ‘wife’ and similarly in the Hor dialect /*gepo*/ ‘old (person) and /*gepo*/ ‘husband’ (CDTD). In Amdo Tibetan, the adjective *rgan* ‘old’ appears even with pronouns, cf. Themchen /*khərge*/ (*kho.rgan*) ‘he, it’ /*mərge*/ (*mo.rgan*) ‘she’ (Haller

Gurung 2011: 9f). In *Ñaṅ.ral Ñi.ma Ḥo.dzer's Me.tog sñiṅ.po*, a *Phyis.mi* or also a *Phyiḥi rgad.po*, an 'old Phyi man,' and a *Phyaḥi rgan.mo*, an 'old Phya woman,' invoke the deities to send a suitable ruler to the earth. Apparently, some of the Phiao functioned as priests and/or as media for the communication between the deities and ordinary human beings. This role qualifies them as 'speakers' or 'invokers.' In this context, cf. also PF \*mjay,  $\overline{\text{m}}\overline{\text{j}}$  OC \*mjag > *mju* 'magician, sorcerer, shaman' (HST: 107) or \*C.mo {\*C.m(r)[o]} (B&S: 94), mOC \*ma (EDOC: 516).

In a related development, the word *phya(/v)* is also commonly used in the sense of 'oracle' or 'lot.' Such prognostics are, of course, announced by a 'speaker.' Cf. also the words *pra(.mo)* 'ritual, prognostic' and *phra.men* 'sorcery, witchcraft' and (*h*)*phrin* 'message,' which likewise refer to a more abstract concept of the speech act. The forms in *p(h)ra-* or *phri-* and those in *phya-* or *phyi-* are semantically and formally related. The former belong to an earlier stage of the development, the latter underwent jotization (→ sound alternation 3).

In a recent article, Dotson (2012: 162) cites an interesting passage from the sixteenth-century historian Dpaḥ.bo Gtsug.lag Phreṅ.ba, where a certain figure, Bran.ka Dpal.gyi Yon.tan, is described as being responsible for the revolt of the nobility after the breakdown of the Tibetan empire in the mid ninth century. as well as for the reconciliation of the local lords. He is described with the words:

*kheṅ.log byed.paḥi phya\v.mkhan mes.po-ni | Bran.ka Dpal.gyi Yon.tan kho.yis byas ||.*

Dotson renders the phrase *kheṅ.log byed.paḥi phya\v.mkhan* as 'the architect of the revolt.' However, the phrase already contains *byed.pa* 'doer, actor,' the *kheṅ.log byed.pa* are thus 'the rebels.' Therefore, the person in question must necessarily be a noteworthy or outstanding member of the rebels, a leader, most probably thus a commander, spokesman, or instigator, the latter term, of course, also implying

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2004: 50). Outside the Tibetan culture, one could even point to the German use of *mein Alter/Oller* 'my father, husband' vs. *meine Alte/Olle* 'my wife.'

On the other hand, while Martin (ZhDM sub *yog.se*) points to Honda's analysis, he also suggests that the form *yo.se* might be borrowed from "a Sanskrit word for young girl, or females in general, *yoṣit*" (sub *yo.se*) or "[s]urely connected with Skt. *yoṣit*" (sub *yo.se*). In any case, in the above Tibetan phrase, the parallelism with the two preceding elements does not suggest a reading 'old.'

some speech-related activity. Since the narrative reports a reconciliation during some kind of council, I should thus translate the sentence as:

‘As for the elder (*mes.po*) spokesman (*phyā\y.mkhan*) of the rebels, it was him, Bran.ka Dpal.gyi Yon.tan, who spoke [for them].’

For the translation of *byas* as ‘spoke’ see also § 3.4 below.

### 3.3 MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN: *BYA*, *BYI*

The first chapter of the Old Tibetan Chronicle shows some applications of the word *bya* that do not really fit the CT meaning ‘bird,’ but it seems that at the time of the redaction of this chronicle the original meaning ‘human being’ had already become obsolete (cf. Zeisler 2011b: 145, 150f., 185), and in later times, a whole mythology was created about bird-like rulers and deities. Most notably, the metaphorical pairing of men and birds in the passage OTC, ll.28–29 seems to be not well motivated.

*myi gaŋ bya gaŋ.la rjo.bo yod.na ŋa.ħi rjo.bo ga.re | myi gaŋ bya gaŋ.la | pha yod.na ŋa.ħi  
pha ga.re žes zer.to |*

‘If every man and every ‘bird’ has a lord, where is my lord? If every man and every ‘bird’ has a father, where is my father? thus [he] said.’

I still do not think that *bya* could be used to indicate just *any living being*. As it is far from evident that every bird has an overlord, one could have expected some truly social animal to serve for this simile. It is more likely that a translational compound *mi-bya* ‘man-homo’ was split up in accordance with common Old Tibetan poetic conventions.

There are two Old Tibetan documents that testify to the meaning ‘human being.’ In one passage, *bya* apparently refers to ‘women.’ The diminutive *byeħu* is used in the sense of ‘child.’ In another passage, the word *bya* seems to have a somewhat negative or at least humble connotation as ‘meek man,’

referring to the subject of a lord. Since the translation of these passages is rather problematic, they will be discussed in Appendix III.

The element *bya* or its derivations appear also in several place names, e.g., *Bya.pu* in *Yar.kluṅs* (OTC, ll. 444, 462, 466, 471, 478), further, according to Hazod's (2009) maps and lists: *Rma.bya* (map 6.1a, p. 201; cf. also *Rma.bya.tsal* p. 218, which we should not take for an original 'Peacock Grove' unless there is good evidence for the keeping of peacocks at that place), *Bya.yul* with *Bya.stod* and *Bya.smad* (map 6.1c, p. 203), *Bya.tsal* of *Sgregs* (p. 215), *Byaḥug* in *Šaṅs* (p. 193; map 7.5, p. 221) and *Byaḥug Sa.tshigs* (p. 193), possibly also *Byar* in *Lho.ka* (map 7.1, p. 213) and in *Skyid* (p. 215, cf. also *Sa.byar*, p. 218), as well as all place names in *bya-ŋ*, such as the quite southern *Byaṅ.thaṅ* at *Lake Phu.ma*, south of the *Yar.ḥbrog* (map 6.1c, p. 202), where *byaṅ* cannot mean 'north.' In all likelihood, then, this place name element refers to human settlements, not to avian habitats. One may further note the existence of an old clan in *Phyogs.bcu* with the name *Bya.rigs* (Bellezza 2008: 268). A *Byaḥi rigs* is also mentioned in *Bya.sa* of *Yar.kluṅs* in the *Deb.ther syon.po* (Haarh 1969: 211). Quite understandably, the *Bya* of *Yar.kluṅs* claim a descent from the king of the birds, *Gšog.bzaṅ* (Fairfeather), and from his wife *Ḥdab.bzaṅ* (Fairwinged; cf. Tucci 1949: 647). Nevertheless, we are certainly dealing with lineages of real humans.

Pt 1136 refers to a certain *Bya.gšen Ḥjon.mo*, a *gšen* (priest) of or for the *Bya* clan or tribe (Bellezza 2010: 40f.). According to Bellezza (ibid. n. 25), the name of the priest would correspond to CT *hjol.mo* 'nightingale' (or another kind of song bird; but see also below, Appendix III, annotation note g), and the person would accordingly be a divine but avian protector. This seems to be corroborated by a depiction of *Bya.gšen Ḥjon.mo* as a little bird in the function of a protector for the dead in a ca. thirteenth-century manuscript. It turns out, however, that the ritual is concerned with a funerary rite for – women (Bellezza, ibid.). Reading thus *bya* as 'woman,' the *bya.gšen* may have been a priest especially for women, quite likely even a priestess, as the ending of the name (*-mo*) might suggest. In all likelihood, the word for 'woman' (and 'human' in general) *bya* or *byi* and *byeḥu* for 'woman' or 'child' had become obsolete long before this thirteenth-century manuscript was illustrated.

The above-mentioned lord of *Rtsaṅ* of the *Phiao* clan (cf. p. 78 above) has a deity called *Byeḥu* (cf. Pt 1060, l. 74f. *lha Rtsaṅ.la[=lha]ḥi Byeḥu* 'the deity, *Byeḥu* of/among the deities of *Rtsaṅ*'). In *Mkhas.pa Ldeḥu*'s version of the *Gsaṅ.ba Bon.lugs*, this deity has a spouse from the *Bya* tribe, *Bya.za Mthoṅ.sman*, and the deity is further said to be a descendant of *Ḥo.(l)de Guṅ.rgyal* (*Mkhaspa Ldeḥu* ed.

1987: 230). 𑄀𑄆𑄂(1)de Guṅ.rgyal, however, is also the name of the first Spu.rgyal king or the legendary ancestor of the dynastic lineage.

Linnenborn (2004: 251) mentions a further myth of descent, according to which the primordial ancestor, Yab.lha Bdal.drug, bears the title *bya.rje*. In the context of legitimizing rulership through a heavenly genealogy, we are most probably not dealing with a mere ‘ruler of birds,’ but with a ‘ruler of men’ or even a ‘ruler over spokesmen.’ In fact, the Bonpo texts dealing with this ancestral deity do not contain hints at possible avian features.

Finally, we find the names or titles *bya Rma.byaḥi Rma.li* and *byeḥu Rma.byeḥu.gi Thiṅ.tshun* (ITJ 0731, l. 67). We might read the phrases as a formal analogy to the phrases *rje Rtsaṅ.rjeḥi Thod.kar* or *lha Rtsaṅ.l[h]aḥi Byeḥu*, mentioned above (p. 78). Hence, *bya Rma.bya* can be read as ‘woman of Rma’ and *byeḥu Rma.byeḥu* as ‘little woman or child of Rma.’ The full sequences can then be read as ‘the spouse Rma.li of/among the Rma spouses’ and ‘the younger spouse (or daughter?) Thiṅ.tshun of/among the younger spouses (or daughters).’ It would not make much sense to talk about a *bya Rma.bya* in the sense of ‘the bird of the Rma birds,’ not to speak of peacocks.

In the document, these names and titles are said to be of the Nam language, and the meaning in the language of Spu.rgyal Bod (i.e., the language of (Western) Tibet or perhaps even Žaṅ.žun) would be, according to the text, *khab yo.byaḥi Ḥdab.khra*; that is, the ‘wife Ḥdab.khra of/among the women’ (with a translational compound consisting of Žaṅ.žun-ian *yo-* for *yo(g).ze ~ yo(s).se* ‘woman, girl,’ see n. 98, and *bya*).<sup>99</sup> Of course, the names evoke the notions of ‘birds’ (*bya*), ‘peacocks’ (*rma.bya*), and ‘swallows’ or birds having ‘variegated feathers’ (*ḥdab.khra*), but the ‘translation’ *khab* ‘spouse’ and the apparent Žaṅ.žun-ian equivalent *yo(ze/se)* reveal that we possibly deal with an obsolete play on words or a later reinterpretation, when *bya* and *byeḥu* could only be understood as ‘bird’ and ‘chicken.’

Traces of this obsolete Old Tibetan word are clearly preserved in CT *byis.pa* ‘child,’ which can be analyzed as *byi* plus collective suffix *-s* (see Denwood 1986 and Uebach & Zeisler 2008) plus individuating

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<sup>99</sup> An alternative reading could be ‘among all wives’ (cf. BDGM, TETT for *yo* ‘all’). That we deal with a *yoze* ‘woman’ might perhaps be indicated by the name Thiṅ.tshun. The element *thiṅ* appears in the name of a consort of the Žaṅ.žun king Lig Myi.rhya, called Šud.ke Za.stsal Thiṅ.šags (ZhDM). *tshun*, on the other hand, appears to be an equivalent for *btsun* ‘noble.’

*-pa*.<sup>100</sup> The form *byi* might either be a development from *byeḥu* ~ *byiḥu* ‘child’,<sup>101</sup> or it might be due to vowel alternation (possibly triggered by the initial labial or by the palatal or by both). The alternation *bya* ~ *byi* mirrors that of *phya* (/v) ~ *phyi*.

It appears as if the forms with *i* were by preference used for females, the forms with *a* by preference for males. This would corroborate a diminutive derivation. Cf. also HPTB (pp. 38, 187) PF \*mi > pLB \*mi<sup>2/3</sup> ‘female, girl,’ with Lahu /yâ-mî/ ‘girl, daughter,’ /mî-yâ/ ‘wife and children,’ Maru /mji<sup>35</sup>/ ‘wife,’ /mji<sup>35</sup> ɣɛ<sup>35</sup>/ ‘daughter,’ and Bisu /bì/ ‘female, girl.’<sup>102</sup> But if one looks at all the forms across Tibeto-Burman, it also seems that these words were originally gender-neutral – something that could be expected if the word referred to a specific human faculty, such as speaking – but were either filling gender-specific gaps when borrowed or got gender-specific negative values when new, more prestigious items were introduced for the higher-ranking gender, after which the original forms eventually became obsolete. Interestingly, in Tibetan, the newly introduced forms, such as *mi* for ‘man’ and *mo* for ‘woman’ are taken from the pool of etymologically related words and constitute further developments of the original word.

A further reflex of *bya* ~ *byi* is found in BAL /balbis/ ‘child’ (CDTD sub *byis*), which in Turtuk clearly has a negative connotation: ‘naughty child’ (own data), and PUR /bazbis/ ‘wife’ (CDTD sub *byis*). I should think that at least the second element /-lbis/ or /-zbis/ can be explained as being due to a metathesis from an original \**bri-s* > \**blis* (or \**rbis*) > \**lbis*<sup>103</sup> and \**bris* > \**sbris* > *sbis* as the older

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<sup>100</sup> A parallel is found in *bus.pa* ‘small child, infant’ (BRGY, TETT; cf. *bu* ‘child, son’).

<sup>101</sup> For the underlying vowel assimilation rule: *a + u > eu ~ iu*, see Zeisler (2015: 46f., table 3).

<sup>102</sup> Perhaps also PF \**pwi*(y) ‘female’ with 𑖑 OC \**b’iəŋ* ~ \**b’iər* ‘female of animals’ and Lushai /-pui/ ‘feminine affix’ (HPTB: 197, 201, 448, cf. GSR 566i), mOC \**bi*(n)? (EDOC: 415); B&S (p. 13) give the reconstruction as \**bir*? {\*[b]iʀ?} with a dialectal variant \**bij*? {\*[b]ij?}. HPTB (p. 449 note n) indicates that the usage is most probably ‘general, regardless of species; femaledom’ and the index entries on pp. 608 and 650 indicate usage for both humans and animals. It is quite possible that a word for female human beings becomes applied also to animals due to bleaching of the original meaning (this happened also with the affix *-mo* in Tibetan) or when the original meaning acquires some negative connotation.

<sup>103</sup> /lb-/ for /rb-/ is occasionally attested in the Shamskat dialects, cf. TYA /lbak/ vs. DOM /rbak/ for CT *sbrag* ‘arrange’ and PUR, SHM /lbos/ vs. LEH, Nubri /rbos/, BAL /ɣbos/ ‘swell’ (CDTD). Note also the regular change of /br-/ > /bl-/ in the Skardu dialect of Baltistan (Read 1934: 3).

(rhotacized) counterpart of *byis*. The first element /ba-/ might likewise be etymologically related: it could have developed from *\*bra* or *\*bya* with loss of the post-radical.<sup>104</sup> In that case, the first element /ba/ might have designated humanity as a more general or abstract concept.

Finally, another reflex is found in LAD KNH /abi/ < *\*a.byi* vs. SHM /api/ < *a.phyi* ‘old woman grandmother.’ One might want to argue that the first form results from intervocalic voicing. However, in other family terms, an intervocalic unvoiced consonant does not get voiced in any of the Ladakhi dialects, hence LAD /atfo/ < CT *a.jo* ‘elder brother,’ LAD KNH /atfe/ ~ /atfi/, WSHM /atfhe/ ~ /afe/ < CT *a.c(h)e* ‘elder sister.’ Intervocalic voicing is thus a possible but not the only possible explanation for the form /abi/. Both the voiced and the non-voiced form seem to have counterparts in Old Chinese. On the one hand, there is a PF \*ʔ-pəy (HPTB: 191) or \*pyid, 妣 OC \*pjidx, -h > pji: ‘ancestress’ corresponding to OT/CT *phyi* (HST: 88) or \*pijʔ, \*pijʔ-s ‘deceased mother’ (S&B: 114), mOC \*piʔ, \*pih (EDOC: 162). On the other hand, there seems to be also a PF \*bwar (HST: 114) or \*p<sup>w</sup>a ~ \*b<sup>w</sup>a (HPTB: 174), yielding 婆, late OC \*bar > buâ ‘old woman,’ pLB \*bwa ‘grandmother’ (HST: 114) or \*b<sup>w</sup>â ‘old woman, grandmother’ (HPTB: 174), which can be related to pLB \*bwa, Written Burmese ə-b<sup>h</sup>wa<sup>B</sup> ~ ə-p<sup>h</sup>wa<sup>B</sup> ‘grandmother’ (EDOC: 416).

The pejorative connotations, which may be acquired by words denoting women as the politically less important or even despised part of the society, yielded also a group of words centering around the word *byi* ‘promiscuity, adultery, rape,’<sup>105</sup> cf. also ITJ 0734 *The age of decline* 1r28f, where, among other bad deeds that will be performed in the future, it is prophesied that *myi pha.log.pohi*

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<sup>104</sup> Sprigg (2002: 25) suggests analyzing the Baltipa word as a translational compound based on Urdu بچہ *bāl* ‘child’ and Tibetan *byis*. This analysis would not account for the quite similar Purikpa word, where the assumed final of the first syllable takes quite a different shape and where we no longer deal with mere children. HPTB (p. 420, n. b) cites Kinnauri /ba-khör/ ‘female goat,’ where the same element /ba/ appears to denote female sex.

<sup>105</sup> This can be compared to other developments, such as New High German *Dirne* ‘whore’ < Old High German *thiorna* ‘maiden,’ where the originally positive meaning is still retained in northern dialects as *Deern* or Austrian *Deandl/Dirndl* ‘lass’ or in the Bavarian dress for maidens: *Deandl/Dirndl*, cf. also the negatively connoted usages of *mistress* and *madam* in English; see Hock and Joseph (2009: 230–232) for these and further examples of pejoration of expressions for the weaker sections of society. As they state (p. 232): “Developments of this type show a rather unpleasant side of the human character, which glorifies strength and power and holds in contempt the weak, the gentle, and the female” – not only in Tibetan society.



*chuj.ma.la byi.ba byas* ‘the having performed adultery to the wife of [another] fatherly man.’<sup>106</sup> Finally, one may perhaps also add: *byi.po*, which, apart from a ‘lecher, adulterer,’ also refers to the ‘bosom’ (JÄK, TETT), perhaps basically of female beings?

#### 3.4 OLD AND CLASSICAL TIBETAN *BYA* ‘TO BE CALLED,’ *BYAS* ‘SAID’

The OT/CT verb root  $\sqrt{bya}$  (I: *byed*, II: *byas*, III: *bya*, IV: *byos*) has the meaning ‘do, make, perform.’ Stem II and III, however, are often used in the sense ‘said’ (stem II) or ‘to be called’ (stem III). The verb is commonly used for names and quotations. One might be tempted to derive this meaning from the basic notion ‘do’ (in fact, this is what I was taught). Accordingly, Schuessler (2007: 27–28) suggests that

verbs with the meanings ‘to think, to say’ or other abstractions are apparently semantic extensions of verbs ‘to be, to do, to act, to go.’

Hence,

WT *byed-pa, byas* ‘to make, fabricate, do’ > *žes byas-pa* ‘thus said, so called (i.e., marks direct discourse); WT *mčhi-ba* ‘to come, go’ > ‘to say’ (marks direct discourse); Lushei *ti<sup>l</sup> / ti<sup>l</sup> < tii<sup>?</sup> / ti<sup>?</sup>* ‘to do, perform, act, work; act towards; say; to think, consider, feel, wish’; Mandarin Chinese → *wéi<sub>3</sub>* 為 ‘do act’ in the phrase *yǐwéi* 以為 ‘to consider ..., to think’ (lit. ‘take something to be, take something for’).

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<sup>106</sup> The meaning of *log.po* is unclear. According to BRGY, TETT it may imply ‘something extra’ or a ‘selector, chooser.’ Under the first reading, the term may perhaps refer to the father’s younger brothers, who, in a polyandrous marriage system, are considered to be ‘younger fathers’ of the children, even if any of them has a wife of his own. BDGM sub *byi.pho* describes the situation as *gžan.gyi chuj.mar log.g.yem spyod.pa* ‘perpetrator of adultery to another’s wife.’ BDGM also mentions a word *byo.bo* for a person who associates himself with another’s wife’ (*gžan.gyi bud.med.dan grogs.pa*). The form *byo* might result from a contraction of *byi.bo*.

I cannot say anything about the relationship between the three ‘elegant’<sup>107</sup> meanings of *mchi*, *mchis*: 1. ‘exist’ as a synonym of *yod*, 2. ‘come, go; appear’ and as light verb ‘go, put so. under (protection, power),’ and 3. ‘say, call (by name).’ With respect to the root  $\sqrt{\text{bya}}$ , however, Felix Haller (p.c., April 2004) suggests, we might be dealing with two different verbs, and that the second verb with the stems I/III: *bya*, II: *byas* means ‘speak.’

The verb *byed* has a synonym CT I: *bgyid*, II: *bgyis*, III: *bgyi*, IV: *gyis* (OT also with infix -*r*-, e.g., Pt 1038 *brgyi* and *brgyis*), which has exactly the same meaning: ‘do, perform’ and, with stems II and III, ‘said’ and ‘to be called.’ In this case, we do not have any evidence that there were two independent verbs  $\sqrt{\text{(r)gyi}}$  of different meaning. Another ‘do’ – ‘speak’ doublet is found in Kurtöp. Here, the word *ḡak* is used with both meanings. Three such doublets plus the cases mentioned by Schuessler cannot be coincidence, but against Schuessler it can be argued that the meaning ‘do’ developed out of the extended use of the *verbum dicendi* as a conjunction. Such a development appears to be quite common typologically, whereas the opposite development does not seem to have been observed across the languages of the world (cf. Heine & Kuteva 2002: 117–120, 261–269), except very rarely. See Appendix IV for more details.

In the *Mi.la.ras.paḡi rnam.thar*, there are at least two instances where the nominalized form *bya.ba* refers to the content of a letter. In one case, the verb is embedded under a more specific utterance verb, namely *ḡbri*, *bris* ‘write’ (40). This corresponds exactly to the usage of two *verba dicendi*, namely of Baltipa and Ladakhi *zer(d)e* and Kurtöp *ḡaksi* ‘having said’, both used as a conjunction for embedded propositions. This will be described in more detail in Appendix IV.

(40) *Mi.la.ras.paḡi rnam.thar*

<i>a.ma+s</i>	<i>ḡa+s</i>	<i>bskur-ba-ltar</i>	<i>byas-pa-ḡi</i>	<i>ḡi.ge</i>	«...»
mother+ERG	I-ERG	send-NLS-like	do.PA-NLS+GEN	letter	
<i>bya-ba-ḡig</i>	<i>bris-nas</i>	<i>rgya</i>	<i>byas-te</i>		
say-NLS-LQ	write-ABL	seal	do-LB		

<sup>107</sup> This term, used by Jäschke (1881), is nowhere defined, but Jäschke seems to refer to a more formal or polite usage. Such forms are found with all persons and seem to be slightly humilific (or, rather, arrogant?) when referring to the speaker, slightly honorific when referring to other persons or items of typically higher status.

‘[My] mother wrote a letter, made as if I had sent it, saying «...», sealed [it], and ... (Rus.paḥi Rgyan.can, ed. 1989: 42.16–43.3)

(41) Mi.la.ras.paḥi rnam.thar

<i>yi.ge</i>	<i>sprad-pa</i>	<i>zur-žig-tu</i>	<i>bklags-pa+s</i>			
letter	deliver.PA-NLS	side-LQ-LOC	read.PA-NLS+INSTR			
«...»	<i>bya-ba-žig</i>	<i>ḥdug-pa+s</i>	<i>yi.ge+ḥi</i>	<i>don-ni</i>	<i>ma-go</i>	
	say-NLS-LQ	exis-NLS+INSTR	letter+GEN	sense-TOP	NG-understand	

‘When [I] read the letter given [to me] aside, it was one saying «...»; [but] I did not understand the letter’s sense.’ (Rus.paḥi Rgyan.can, ed., 1989: 43.11–44.3)

In both cases the reading ‘saying’ from stem I of the verb *bya*, *byas* ‘say, speak’ fits much better than the reading ‘to be done’ that would follow from stem III of the verb *byed*, *byas*, *bya*, *byos* ‘do.’

In the *Mi.la.ras.paḥi rnam.thar*, one can further observe a person-related distribution of five *verba dicendi*: *gsunj*, *gsunjs* ‘hon. speak’ is used for narrated speakers of high status, *žu*, *žus* ‘request’ is used for narrated speakers addressing persons of higher status, *zer* ‘say’ is used for narrated speakers of equal or lower status than the main narrator, *gyis* ‘tell!’ is used as command form, while *byas* ‘said’, ‘told’ is used for the main narrator’s (i.e., *Mi.la.ras.pa*’s) speech, for a narrated speaker referring to his/her own speech (the teacher *Mar.pa*), and, in the case of two narrated speakers of equal or lower status, for the person more closely associated with the main narrator (i.e., *Mi.la*’s sister in a conversation with their aunt), see Zeisler (in press, examples 2–6). This distribution shows that for the author of the text, *bya*, *byas* was still an ordinary *verbum dicendi*.

Even though we have little internal evidence from the modern Tibetic languages, my analysis of *√bya* as originally being a *verbum dicendi* is further corroborated by the Kurtöp verb *bja* with the meaning ‘invite, call, summon’ (Hyslop 2017: 37, Table 8; 191, exx. 287–289; for other related forms see no. (20), p. 47 above) and a few compounds in Classical Tibetan.

The Classical Tibetan compound *bslab.bya* ‘teaching’ could possibly be analyzed either as what has to be taught or studied with stem III of *slob* ‘teach, study’ and stem III of *byed* ‘do,’ but also as ‘utterance, teaching of the doctrine’ with stem I *bya* ‘speak.’ Likewise, the word *bya.ma.rta* ‘courier,

estafet’ may be related to the main activity of a messenger: ‘to speak,’ and it may thus juxtapose either a ‘man’ and a ‘horse’ or a ‘speaker’ and a ‘horse.’ BDGM and GSSh list the compound *bya.gtoŋ* (lit. ‘bya-giving’) with the meanings *hphrin.gtoŋ* (lit. ‘message-giving’) ‘communication’ and *gsaŋ.brda* ‘secret password,’ where *bya* can only mean ‘speak’ or ‘speech.’ This expression also appears in the *Mi.la.ras.paḥi rnam.thar*, though not as a compound, but as a free combination of a noun *bya* and the verb *gtoŋ*, *btan*, *gtaŋ*, *thoŋ* ‘send, give,’ cf. *ces bya btan* ‘thus [she] gave the information’ or ‘warning’ (Rus.paḥi Rgyan.can, ed. 1989: 41). GSSh additionally lists two interesting compounds *bya.de* ‘sb. who tells secrets’ with *bya.de skyel* ‘to tell a secret (slang)’ and *bya.shor* ‘to have a secret leak out’. These compounds and nominal derivations indicate that the speech-act-related meaning is the (more) original one.

Finally, in the case of Kurtöp *ŋak* and CT *ŋag* ‘speech,’ *ŋag(s)* ‘praise,’ the etymological relationship with a set of non-ambiguous Chinese *verba dicendi*, namely 語 mOC \*ŋa? ‘speak,’ 言 mOC \*ŋan ‘speak, speech, talk,’ and the possibly related 言, 諺 mOC \*ŋans ‘console’ (言); ‘saying, proverb’ (諺) (EDOC: 588) makes it clear that the speech-act-related meaning is primary. In this case, at least, the meaning extension passes from ‘speak, say’ to ‘behave, do,’ and it is more than likely that the same direction applies for the verb *bya*, *byas* ‘say’ vs. *byed*, *byas*, *bya*, *byos* ‘do,’ as well. The fact that the meaning ‘say’ has been lost in the modern varieties, while the meaning ‘do’ survives, strongly suggests an earlier origin as *verbum dicendi*, since a temporary meaning shift or a temporary meaning extension from ‘do’ to ‘say’ (or to ‘do’ and ‘say’) and then back to exclusively ‘do’ is extremely unlikely. The verb *bya*, *byas*, then, shows again a direct relationship between speaking and humanity.

## 4. THE FULL SET OF POSSIBLY RELATED WORDS

In the following, I shall list the words related to (1) speaking, (2) humanity, (3) clan and tribal names, and (4) monkeys that can be derived from the root \*mra(o) through any of the above described sound alternations and any combination thereof; see again Table 1, which is repeated here as Table 4 for convenience. A few words seem to be only distantly related and may thus be merely accidental look-alikes. I have included them for the sake of completeness, but they are always followed by a question mark.

Note that final *-d* (alternating with *-s* after non-dental and non-alveolar consonants) is a derivational suffix for verb stem I, which typically leads to vowel change *a > e*; final *-s* (alternating with *-d* after dental and alveolar consonants) is a derivational suffix for verb stem II. Both suffixes may get lexicalized. Final *-n*, alternating with *-d*, is a common deverbalizing derivational suffix, it often has a collectivizing meaning, like the nominal *-s* suffix. Similarly, final *-ŋ*, alternating with *-g*, is an old nominal derivative suffix, possibly with the meaning ‘belonging to’ (see also § 5.3 below). The *a-* prefix of family terms has an individualizing function, like the suffixes *-po/ -pa* and *-mo/ -ma* (cf., e.g., OT *phyi.mo* and modern *a.phyi* ‘grandmother’). Furthermore, as stated above, the *written* Tibetan *d-* pre-radical does not represent a dental or alveodental consonant, but possibly a voiced velar or uvular fricative and an unvoiced retroflex or a palatal fricative. For a better understanding, all derivational or compositional elements that do not belong to the word root in question will be separated from the root by hyphens.

**Table 4** Overview: combined sound alternations for the root \*mra(o) – repeated

		Vowel alternations (not morphologically triggered)					
			*smyo > sño- (1)	*smya > sña- (1)			
Alteration of homorganic nasals and oral stops	nasal base form	metathesis+ →jotization	(mye-)	myog (2)	Mya/v (3)	(myi)	–
			↑		↑	↑	
			*mre	*mro	†Mra (3)	*mri-	*mru
			↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
			smre (1)	*smro	smra (1/2)	*smri	*smru
			sme- (1)	smo- (1/2)	Sma (3)	smi- (2)	Smu (3)
			rme- (1)	rmo- (1/2)	rma- (1/2/3)	rmi (2)	Rmu (3)
			dme ? (1)	dmo (1)	dma- (2)	dmi- (2)	Dmu (3)
			m(y)e- (2)	mo (1/2)	ma (2/3)	m(y)i- (2/4)	Mu (3)
	secondarily voiced	metathesis+ →jotization	–	–	(†)bya (1/2)	†byi (2)	
					↑	↑	
			bro (1)		Bra ? (3)	*bri-	
			↓		↓	↓	
			*sbro		Sbra ? (3)	*sbri	
			*sbo		*sba	/-zbi-/ (2)	
			*rbo		*rba	*rbi>/-lbi-/ (2)	
			dbo-		Dbra ? (3)	–	
	bo- (1)		–	–			
secondarily unvoiced	metathesis+ →jotization		spyo (1)	dpyas ? (1)			
		–	–	p(h)ya- (1/2/3)	-phyi (2)	–	
		↑		↑	↑		
		*p(h)re-	p(h)ro- ? (1/2)	p(h)ra- (1)	p(h)ri- (1)	phru- (2)	
		↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	
		*spre	*spro	spra- (4)	*spri	spru- (2)	
		/spe-/? (1)	spo- (2/?3)	Spa ? (3)	Sp(y)i ? (3)	spu- (2/?3)	
		*rpe	*rpo	*rpa	*rpi	(rpu-) (2)	
		dpe ? (1)	dpo- ? (2)	dpa- ? (1/2)	–	–	
–	p(h)o (2)	–	–	/pū-/ (2)			

## 4.1 VERBA DICENDI AND WORDS RELATED TO SPEECH ACTS

- *smr* (step 1): OT/CT *smra* ‘speak,’ *smra-ŋ* ‘speech, recitation’; *smre* ‘lament’
- *smy* (step 1a; → sound alternation 3) > *sñ*: CT *sña-d/ sño-d* ‘relate, report,’ *sña-d* accusation, *sña-n-pa* ‘renown,’ ‘praise,’ *sño-n* ‘assert falsely, deny, disavow dishonestly’
- *sm* (step 2): OT/CT *smo* ‘say, name’;  $\sqrt{sma-d}$  (I/IV: *smo-d*, II/III: *sma-d*) ‘slander, blame, abuse, curse, etc.’; perhaps also *sme* in the sense of ‘mark’ (??)
- *rm* (step 3): OT/CT  $\sqrt{rme} \sim sme$  (I: *rme-d* ~ *sme-d*, II: *rme-s*) ‘ask’; *rma* ‘inquire, ask,’ BAL / $\text{r̥ma-ŋ-sa}$ / ‘court of justice’ (SPR), PUR / $\text{r̥ma-ŋ}$ / ~ / $\text{sma-ŋ}$ / (CDTD with  $\text{ɣ}$  for  $\text{r̥}$ ) ‘lawsuit’; CT *rmo-d-sŋags* ‘charms for causing mischief to others’ (TETT)
- *dm* (step 3b): CT *dmo-d* 1. ‘curse, execrate,’ 2. ‘swear, confirm by oath’; 3. ‘pronounce a prayer, conjure (a deity),’ 4. ‘affirm’; perhaps also *dme* (~ *rme*) ‘impurity’ (??), if it were related to the above-mentioned *sme* ‘mark’ (??) and/or *dpe* ‘example’ below, but cf. also the entries for person-related words
- *m* (step 4): OT/CT *mo* ‘oracle’
- *br* (→ sound alternation 2, voiced): OT/CT *bro* ‘oath’
- *by* (→ sound alternation 3): OT/CT  $\sqrt{bya}$  ‘speak,’ *bya-gtoŋ* ‘communication, password,’ (*lta-*)*bya-d* ‘curse’
- *b* (→ sound alternation 3, possibly via \*b<sup>w</sup>a): OT/CT  $\sqrt{bo}$  (I: *h-bo-d*, II/IV: *bo-s*) ‘call invite,’ OT *bo-n* ‘announce, declare,’ *bo-n-po* ‘reciter, invoker’; *h-baḥ-po/-mo* ‘magician, sorcerer, conjurer’

(EDOC: 516,  $\overline{mOC}$  \*ma, speaks of a ‘spirit medium, shaman’), LAD /bapo, bamo/ ‘spirit of envy’<sup>108</sup>

- *pr* (→ sound alternation 2, unvoiced): OT/CT *pra*-(*mo*) ‘ritual, prognostic,’ CT *pra-chal* (~ *spra-chal*) ‘joke, jest,’ OT/CT *phra-ma* ‘calumny, slander,’ CT *phra-men* ‘sorcery, witchcraft’; OT/CT (*h*)-*phri-n* ‘news, tidings,’ perhaps also \**phro-s* > WSHM /phro-s/, ESHM and LEH /t̥ho-s/, KNH /t̥he/ ‘mention, utterance, topic’ (in the collocations /phro-s thuk/ ‘touch upon a topic, mention casually’ and /phro-s phiŋ/ ‘start a conversation, introduce a new topic’)
- *py* (→ sound alternation 3): OT *phya/v* ‘invoker, commander,’ OT/CT *phya(/v)* ‘lot, prognostics,’ with a negative connotation: CT *h-phya* ‘blame, censure, chide, deride,’ LEH /cha-s-ka/, WSHM /phya-s-kat/ < *phya-s-skad* ‘teasing’ (Rebecca Norman, p.c.), WSHM /phya-s/ (Rebecca Norman, p.c.) or /phya-s-miŋ/ (DOM) ‘nickname,’ /phya-s taktʃas/ (DOM) < (*h*)*phya-s hdogs* ‘make fun,’ cf. also CT *phya-r-ka*, *h-phya-(r)-ka* ‘ridicule, derision, mockery, insult, blame, affront’
- *spr* (step 1): CT *spra-chal* (~ *pra-chal*) ‘joke, jest’
- *spy* (step 1a): OT/CT *spyo* ‘blame, scold’
- *sp* (step 2): LAD /spe-ra/ ~ /fe-ra/ ~ /pe-ra/ ‘speech, language’ ? < *dpe-sgra* (?)

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<sup>108</sup> The Ladakhi word is usually translated with the problematic term ‘witch.’ In Ladakh, the *bamo* is the female personification of envy, who associates herself with a rather innocent woman of the village or among the kinfolk, and from this base possesses her female victim. One could also say that the victim projects her own bad conscience or her fear of being envied upon the *bamo*. The victim usually speaks with the voice of the *bamo*, that is, that particular woman. The *bamo*, or rather the associated woman, can thus be ‘identified.’ While not treated like a witch as in Europe, the person is met with suspicion and blamed for minor technical problems, such as, in my case, a broken microphone. There are also cases of *bapo* possessions, and of men being possessed, but this happens much less frequently (see Kaplanian 2000/2001 for a detailed description).



- *rp/dp* (step 3/3b): perhaps OT/CT *dpa-ŋ-po* ‘witness (act, person),’ cf. also LEH /spa-ŋ-po/, SHM /ṣpa-ŋ-po/ and the collocation /spa-ŋ ~ ṣpa-ŋ phut/ ‘threaten, warn’ (?; cf. ns. 54 and 55, p. 51); perhaps also *dpe* ‘example,’ SHM /ṣpe/ (?; cf. n. 53, p. 51)
- *dpy* (step 3b): perhaps OT/CT *dpya-s* ‘offence, fault, blame’ (?); cf. also KNH /tṣā-blan/ < \*(d/s)pya-blan ‘speech imitation (in order to tease sb),’ which may equally well belong to step 1a

#### 4.2 PERSON-RELATED WORDS

- *my* (→ sound alternation 3): OT *myo-g*, CT *ño-g* ‘child’
- *smr* (step 1): OT *smra* a term used in older texts for proto-human, priestly, or even divine beings, on a par with the *gšen* (a class of priests) and the *lha* ‘deities’
- *sm* (step 2): OT/CT *smi-n* ‘sibling’ (cf. *smi-n-drug* ‘Six Sisters,’ the Pleiades and *smi-n-bdun* ‘Seven Brothers,’ the Great Bear), *smo-s* ‘(a collective of?) female(s)’<sup>109</sup>
- *rm* (step 3):<sup>110</sup> Nangchen /ṣmi/, Dartsedo /mā/, Dzongkha /mī/, < *rmi* (*dmiḥ*), Batang /mē/ < *rme*, Derge /ṣṣē/ < \**rmye*, Kardze, Lithang /ṣṣē/, Cone /ṣṣḥ/ < \**rmyi* ‘man’ (CDTD and Jacques 2014: 281f., 328, 347, 363 for Cone);<sup>111</sup> CT *rmo-mo* > CtrT /mō:/, ‘old woman,’ Southern Mustang /mō-

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<sup>109</sup> See n. 45 above.

<sup>110</sup> Realized as high tone in tonal dialects.

<sup>111</sup> The written Tibetan spellings *Rmi*, *Dmiḥ*, and *Rme* are, in fact, found for ethnical designations of Eastern Tibet (see § 4.3 below).

- mo/ ‘(maternal) aunt,’<sup>112</sup> Western Drokpa /mō-ŋ/ ‘grandmother’ (CDTD); possibly OT *rma-ŋ-s* (~ OT/CT *dma-ŋ-s*) ‘people, commoner’
- *dm* (step 3b):<sup>110</sup> possibly OT/CT *dma-ŋ-s* (~ OT *rma-ŋ-s*) ‘people, commoner,’ *dma-g* ‘soldier(s), army,’ Cone /ma<sup>H</sup>/ ‘soldier’ (Jacques 2014: 272, 367), Cone /mæq<sup>H</sup>-qæ<sup>H</sup>/ ‘husband’ (Jacques 2014: 281, 361), KNH /mā-k-pa/ < *dma-g-pa* ‘son-in-law’; BAL /smaq/ ‘army, crowd’ (CDTD), /ṙmaq/ ‘crowd’ (Read 1934: 93), PUR /ṙmaq/ ‘army, people, crowd’ (CDTD) – for possible alternative cognates, cf. (19) above; perhaps *dme* (~*rme*) ‘impurity’ via its relationship to homicide<sup>113</sup> (?)
  - *my* (→ sound alternation 3 or step 4):<sup>114</sup> OT *mye-s-po*, AT /aŋe/ < *a-mye-s*, ‘old man, grandfather, ancestor’; OT *myi*, AT /ji/ ‘man, person’
  - *m* (step 4): OT/CT *mi* ‘man, person,’ OT/CT *mo* feminine gender marker, dialectal *mo* ‘woman’ or 3P pronoun ‘she’; CT *me-s-po*, LAD /me-me/ ‘old man, grandfather, ancestor,’ /me-s-po/ or GYS /me-t-po/ as an honorific title, cf. /metpo Gandi/ ‘venerable old man Gandhi’ for Mahātma Gandhi
  - *br* (→ sound alternation 2, voiced): —
  - *db* (step 3b): OT/CT *dbo-n* ‘nephew, grandson’<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> On November 2, 2015, on a flight from Leh to Delhi, I heard an exile Tibetan speaker referring to me several times as ‘momo’ (tone uncertain), in the sense of either ‘aunty’ or, more likely, ‘granny.’

<sup>113</sup> The ‘impurity’ is caused by murder, especially the murder of a member of the same clan or family (TETT).

<sup>114</sup> As mentioned initially (see note a to Table 1, p. 10), the palatal glide may be either the result of the sound alternation 3 (Cr > Cy) or the result of an Old and Eastern Tibetan development in which labials became palatalized before palatal vowels.

<sup>115</sup> From an anthropological perspective, grandchildren and nephews and nieces share the property of being ‘offspring’ with

- *by* (→ sound alternation 2 plus → sound alternation 3): OT †*bya* ‘man, woman,’ †*bye-ɦu* (= *bya+ɦu*) ‘child,’ †*byi* ‘woman, child,’ cf. KNH /a-bi/ < *a-byi* ‘grandmother,’ OT *byi-s-ba*, CT *byi-s-pa*, BAL /ba-lbi-s/ < \**ba-rbi-s* < \**ba-bri-s* or < \**ba-bli-s* < *ba-bri-s* ‘child,’ PUR /ba-zbi-s/ < \**ba-rbi-s* < \**ba-bri-s* ‘woman,’ Purang /p̄i-ṭṣ̄iŋ/ ‘son’ < *byi-(s)-sriŋ* (CDTD); BAL /biz-ba/ ‘servant’ (Read 1934: 103b, SPR) seems to be related to OT *byis-ba* ‘child,’ perhaps the ‘servant’ is seen as a ‘junior’; cf. further CT *bya-n-po* ‘married man’ (JÄK, TETT), with pejorative usage also ‘divorced man’ (JÄK), CT *bya-n-mo* ‘married woman’ (JÄK, BRGY, TETT), with pejorative usage also ‘divorced woman’ (JÄK, TETT) or even ‘whore’ (JÄK); perhaps also OT/CT *nay-bya-n* ‘servant’ (lit. ‘person for internal affairs’<sup>116</sup>); pejorative usage is found especially with CT *byi* ‘adultery’ (TETT), cf. *byi byas* ‘commit adultery (a man with another man’s wife)’ (BRGY), *byi byed* ‘commit adultery (man to woman), rape’ (JÄK), *byi-po*, *byi-bo* ‘lewd man, adulterer’ (BRGY, TETT), *byi-mo* ‘lewd woman, adulteress’ and ‘bald woman’<sup>117</sup> (BRGY, TETT), cf. also Tabo /p̄imō/ ‘woman with bad character’ (CDTD), CT *byi-phrug* ‘illegitimate child, bastard’<sup>118</sup>

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a distance of two steps from ‘ego,’ the reference person. In the case of grandchildren these two steps lead directly vertically along the genealogical line, in the case of nephew/niece, the first step is horizontal to the sibling and then again vertically to his/her offspring. Hence, one often finds the same designation or obviously related forms for both groups. The protoform is given in STEDT as \*b-liy, \*b-ləy, or \*b/m-ləy (#2410 PTB \*b/m-ləy GRANDCHILD / NEPHEW / NIECE <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt-cgi/rootcanal.pl/etymon/2410> last accessed 31.03.2017). One can find forms such as Karen /pho<sup>55</sup> dɔ<sup>31</sup>/ and Kayan /p<sup>h</sup>òdɔ́/ ‘niece, nephew [lit. child-big],’ which shows the relationship to the words for ‘(human) offspring,’ and Northern Hpun /ám̄yì/ ‘nephew, niece; grandchild,’ Tangut /mo/ ‘nephew, mother,’ which show the relationship to words for women or mothers or more generally to humanity. Cf. also WrB mrè ‘grandchild,’ Achang /mi<sup>31</sup>/ or /mi<sup>31</sup> tsɔ<sup>31</sup>/ ‘grandson,’ Nusu /bia<sup>33</sup> za<sup>55</sup>/ ‘grandson,’ /bia<sup>31</sup> za<sup>55</sup> mi<sup>31</sup> a<sup>31</sup>/ ‘granddaughter,’ Caodeng /p<sup>h</sup>ji tɛ-mdu/ ‘nephew, niece (maternal)’ and Rangoon /mje<sup>55</sup> (mji<sup>55</sup>)/ see

<http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt-cgi/rootcanal.pl/gnis?t=grandson%2C+grandchild%2C+nephew>, last accessed 31.03.2017.

<sup>116</sup> The parallelism with *nay.blon* ‘minister of internal affairs’ and *phyi.blon* ‘minister of external affairs’ (with *blo-n-po* ultimately related to *blo* ‘mind, reasoning’) is obvious, but I do not want to preclude the possibility that the element *bya* refers to the faculty of doing rather than to that of speaking, even though I would have expected a form such as \**nay.byed* for the ‘actor’ meaning.

<sup>117</sup> The latter meaning is possibly related to the verb *ɦbyi* ‘get wiped off, fall of (hair).’

<sup>118</sup> In this connection, one may perhaps also mention the pejorative verb *ɦ-bah-ba* ‘commit adultery’ (JÄK).

- *phr* (→ sound alternation 2, unvoiced): CT *phru-g(u)* ‘child’; perhaps also \**phro* > WSHM /*phro*/ ‘crowd’ and as postposition ‘among,’ /*phro-pa*/ ‘companion, friend,’ elsewhere /*tho*/ and /*tho-pa*/ (?)
- *spr* (step 1): CT *spru-g(u)* ‘child, offspring,’ GYS /*tūgu*/
- *sp* (step 2): OT/CT *spu-n* ‘brothers’; perhaps also Cone /æ<sup>l</sup>-pɔ<sup>h</sup>/ *a-?spo* ‘baby’ (?; Jacques 2014: 354)
- *rp/dp* (step 3/3b): perhaps OT/CT *dpo-n-po*, Shamskat /ṛpo-n-bo/ ‘master, overseer, lord’ (?); perhaps also *dpaḥ-bo*, Shamskat /ṛpao/ ‘hero, watchmen’ (?)<sup>119</sup>
- *p(h)* (step 4): Lhasa /*pū-kū*/ ‘(human) child, offspring’; OT/CT *pho* ‘man,’ dialectal *a-p(h)o* ‘grandfather,’ *po-po* ~ *po-bo* ~ *spo-bo*, CtrT /*pō-po*/ or contracted /*pō:*/ ‘old man’ (cf. CDTD)
- *phy* (→ sound alternation 3): OT *phyi*, CT *a-phyi*, *phyi-mo* ‘old woman, grandmother, ancestress,’ cf. LAD Shamskat /*a-pi*/

#### 4.3 CLAN, TRIBAL, AND ETHNICALLY RELATED PLACE NAMES

- *Phya/v* (Phiao); *Mya/v* (Miao) ??

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<sup>119</sup> In the *Rnyog.chos* section of the *Bkaḥ.gdams glegs.bam* (compiled 1302), a *dpaḥ.bo* (as a model for those who meditate) is described not so much as a fighter, but as one who ‘acts as a guard, watchman, sentry, or spy’ (Herrmann 1983, fol. 265r.5). It is thus possible that the word is related to another Iranian word, referring to the army, soldiers, and watchmen: Pahlavi *spah* ‘army’ (MacKenzie 1971), Parthian *spāda* > Gāndhārī *śpala*, Khotan-Saka *spātā* ‘army’ (possibly < \**spāda-pati*); Saka *spasa* ‘observer, servant’ (as appearing in several compounds), cf. Harmatta (1994: 410–412), and Niya Prakrit *śpaśa* ‘sentry, watch’ (Burrow 1934: 512).

- *Sma-za* (~ *Mu-za* ~ *Mu-zi*, cf. Stein 1951: 254 with n. 5), *Smu* ~ *Rmu* ~ *Dmu* ~ *Mu*; *Rmi* ~ *Dmiḥ* ~ *Mi*, *Rme* ~ *Me*, *Mo* (these designations are used for Qiang tribes in Eastern Tibet, particularly for the *Mi*- ~ *Me*- ~ *Mo*-ñag, cf. Stein 1951: 253, n. 6, 1957: 5), *Rma* ~ *Ma*, *Rme-ru* (= *rma+ru*; the vowel *e* seems to be conditioned by the second syllable, as in the case of the diminutive suffix; cf. also *Mīru* < *Rmeru*, a place in Ladakh with further vertical vowel assimilation), *A-myes Rma-chen* a.k.a. *Rma-chen* or *Rma-rgyal Spom.ra* (= *spo+mra*)
- perhaps also *Bra* ~ *Spra* ~ *Sbra* ~ *Dbra* (?)
- Possibly *Spa*, *Spu* (with *Spu-s* and *Spu-rgyal*), *Spu-g* ~ *Spu-ŋ* (?); *Spo-bo*, *Spo-(ŋ)-roŋ* (?); perhaps also *Spyi-ti* (??)

#### 4.4 MONKEYS

- CT *spra*, OT/CT *spreḥu* (= *spra+ḥu*) ‘monkey,’ (CT origin myth: *mi-ḥu*, originally a ‘simian offspring,’ but reinterpreted as ‘little man, dwarf’)

## 5. REPERCUSSIONS FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF PROTO-TIBETO-BURMAN

The sound alternations discussed in § 2 and, more particularly, the word family discussed in §§ 3 and 4 dramatically illuminate the various problems encountered in Tibeto-Burman reconstructions.

First of all, the attested instances of metathesis of Cr > rC with an intermediate *s-* or *d-* pre-radical pose a challenge for previous reconstructions with triple clusters or 'prefixes,' which apparently were biased towards the Tibetan form. With the exception of causative verbs and denominative derivations, the triple clusters sCr and sCy, possibly most of the clusters dCr and dCy, and the binary clusters sC, rC, dC are the result of a secondary development. Old or Classical Tibetan words with these clusters, therefore, cannot be taken as a witness, neither for a complex syllable structure in proto-Tibeto-Burman nor for certain derivative morphemes, such as the 'body-part' *cum* 'animal' prefix \*sya (cf. p. 21 above), even if such morphemes are attested in, or can be postulated for, other Tibeto-Burman languages.

From the historical background, it is rather evident that the dialects of Baltistan, Purik, or Western Sham cannot represent the oldest stratum of Tibetan, as these areas were originally inhabited by people speaking an Indo-Aryan language, perhaps also an Iranian language or even Burushaski. The areas were conquered in the mid seventh century CE, but that does not mean that the people changed their language immediately. Most probably, the shift from Tibetan as foreign language to Tibetan as the mother tongue took place much later, perhaps only from the eleventh century onwards.

### 5.1 INCONSISTENCIES IN RECONSTRUCTION AND THE GREAT VARIABILITY OF RECONSTRUCTED PROTOFORMS

As can be observed from the examples in § 2.1, previous reconstructions were not fully consistent in assigning either a nasal or an oral protoform. In one case, HPTB and STEDT provide an oral form, apparently based on the Tibetan attestation ('snake,' no. (16)), in the other case, a nasal form is given, possibly because the corresponding Tibetan form was not recognized ('human/ monkey,' no. (18)), and in yet another case, an oral form is given, despite the fact that the corresponding word in Tibetan has a nasal, and the Written Burmese form shows both a nasal and an oral variant (the verb 'speak,' no. (20)).

It is absolutely necessary to establish some general sound laws and to describe the direction of the development in general and for the individual branches.

Either the oral variants or the nasal variants should represent the earlier form. If we look at Tibetan and the fact that nasals may correspond to voiced as well as to unvoiced oral stops, one might think that the feature [ $\pm$ voice] was neutralized in the development towards a nasal stop. But one might equally argue that an emerging [ $\pm$ voice] distinction during or after the development from nasal to oral stops was the result of dialectal variation or the borrowing of words via different routes or at different times, possibly involving some varieties where the [ $\pm$ voice] distinction did not exist or was neutralized. Without being able to give proof, I should thus assume on semantic grounds (the drift to negative or less prestigious meanings of nasal forms) that, at least in Tibetan, the development was from nasal to oral and not the other way round, at least in the case of the radicals. Since the nasal variants are also found in other branches, particularly among the Burmish languages, it is then quite probable that the shift from nasals to oral stops was an innovation that affected some branches but not others, and in some branches, some words but not others. The last alternative, however, would point to mutual influences or borrowings.

The supposed development from nasal to oral would not have prevented the reborrowing of nasal forms, as perhaps in the case of *mi* ~ *rmi* 'human, man' or a certain stability in some cases, as in the case of *smra* 'speak' and *rma* 'ask.' As noted above, p. 20, the metathesis Cr > sCr, > rC might have been faster in the case of nasals than in the case of oral stops, and the new prefix, whether *s-* or *r-*, might have prevented the development into an oral initial.

Alternatively, one could also argue that most of the nasal words with a syllable structure Cr turned into their oral stop counterparts before the metathesis process set in. Given, however, the quite balanced distribution between nasal and oral stop initials (except for the cluster Cr), this development appears to be less likely. Of course, such considerations only add to the complexity of the problem.

On the other hand, when looking at the alternations among the glides *w*, *y* [*j*], and *r*, it seems more likely that an alveolar and labial glide merged with a palatal glide, than that a palatal glide became sometimes a labial and sometimes an alveolar glide. Particularly the development *y* > *r* seems to be

rather unlikely.<sup>120</sup> Furthermore, the variability of the word forms in individual word families within Tibetan and across Tibeto-Burman languages poses a great problem for the reconstruction of the assumed proto-language. Even more annoying is the fact that in most cases, apart from not being able to indicate the direction of the change, we are also not able to indicate the relative chronological order of these changes. As a result, one may find different reconstructed etyma for quite obviously related words, as in the case of 1. \*bwar or \*p<sup>w</sup>a ~ \*b<sup>w</sup>a > 婆 late OC \*bar > *buá* or \*b<sup>w</sup>â ‘old woman, grandmother’ (HST: 114, HPTB: 174), corresponding to OT †*bya* ~ †*byi*, KNH /abi/, BAL /balbis/, PUR /bazbis/ vs. 2. \*pyid or \*-pəy, > 妣 OC \*pjidx, -h > pji: or \*pij?, \*pij?-s ‘grandmother, ancestress, deceased mother,’ mOC \*pi?, \*pih (HST: 88, HPTB: 191, B&S: 114, EDOC: 162), corresponding to OT *phyi*, CT *phyi.mo* or *a.phyi*, Shamskat /api/. A similar case might be the above-mentioned derivation \*mra- > *rma* ‘man’ > *rmaŋs* ~ *dmaŋs* ‘commoner,’ *dmag* ‘soldier(s), army’ and the supposed roots 𠬞 OC \*mrâŋ ~ \*mrâŋ ~ \*m<sup>r</sup>iŋ { \*m<sup>r</sup>[i]ŋ } for the former and 武 OC \*ma? { \*m(r)a? } for the latter.

As mentioned initially, it is not always clear how old an Old Chinese word actually is. The available comparative lists do not specify the first (or last) attestation of a word. The term Old Chinese is used for the language of the earliest oracle bone inscriptions (ca. 1250–1050 BCE), the Western Zhou bronze inscriptions (ca. 1050–770 BCE), and the pre-classical texts (until the early third century CE), cf. Schuessler (2007: 1); Sagart (1999: 7) shifts the beginning of the oracle bone inscriptions to ca. 1400 BCE. Whatever the exact dating, by the time of the oracle bone inscriptions, nomadic Indo-European (or Caucasian) tribes were already settling in Eastern Turkestan. Archaeological evidence points to an arrival in Gansu around the early second millennium BCE. It is an open question who these tribes were and what kind of language they spoke. Benjamin (2007: 1–36 and 43f.), who gives a fairly good overview of the early history of the Yuezhi, favors the “Tocharian” hypothesis – like most scholars outside the field of Indo-European historical linguistics – while the majority of Indo-Europeanists still favor the Eastern Iranian (Scythian) hypothesis. In any case, there must have been sufficient opportunity for the Chinese

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<sup>120</sup> Compare, however, the words for *dog*, the protoform of which is assumed to have a labial glide. Tibetan (as do many other languages) has a palatal glide; some Kiranti languages show a lateral, while a few languages must have secondarily developed an alveolar glide, as indicated by a retroflex stop in Ersu, Pumi, Namuyi, and Guiqiong, and by a retroflex affricate in Laze and Rgyalrong, cf. <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/~stedt/cgi/rootcanal.pl/etymon/1764>, accessed 24.07.2016. Compare also the unexpected alternation *spyin* ~ *sprin* ‘glue,’ Appendix I, p. 115.



to interact and trade with these nomads, and with this interaction words could be borrowed in either direction.

In the case of the word 氓 \*mrâŋ, I have been told (Thomas Preiswerk p.c. ca. 2008) that it already had appeared in the Book of Songs (or Book of Odes, *Shijing*), which is dated to the tenth to seventh centuries BCE. Its final edition, however, was made by Confucius (551–478 BCE).<sup>121</sup> Given the time frame, one cannot preclude any instance of borrowing. Unfortunately, I am not in a position to find out in which context the word 氓 \*mrâŋ appears, whether it could be associated with the Central Asian nomadic tribes or not, or whether a borrowing could be motivated for other reasons or not. As Schuessler (EDOC: 380) notes, at least some “commentators have suggested that *meng* [氓] refers to ‘settlers from the outside.’”

## 5.2 THE POSSIBLE ORIGIN OF THE WORD FAMILY ‘SPEAK,’ ‘SPEAKER,’ ‘HUMAN,’ ‘LORD’

I do not want to preclude the possibility that some originally independent words might have got fused in Tibeto-Burman, or more particularly in Tibetan, as had happened in the early period with the nouns OT *bya*<sub>1</sub> ‘human being’ and OT/CT *bya*<sub>2</sub> ‘bird.’ But the assumption that all the forty-odd combinations of Table 1 (and Table 4), which lead to an even greater number of semantically related words, are merely the result of accidental convergence, requires a bit too much of coincidence. From the perspective of Tibetan, at least, all forms can be derived from a single verb root. Identical forms and variations are attested for the meanings ‘speak’ and ‘human being’ (including the terms for various family members) across the Tibeto-Burman languages and in part also within Tibetan, but one can hardly observe any parallel development of the two meanings. In my opinion, this certainly speaks against an early accidental merger of two independent words within Tibeto-Burman, but also against an independent borrowing of two individual words of a coincidentally similar shape.

All the words with a labial initial or root consonant and the meaning ‘speak,’ ‘human being,’ or ‘monkey’ that I have discussed here seem to be deeply rooted in the Tibeto-Burman languages and are

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<sup>121</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_of\\_Songs\\_\(Chinese\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Songs_(Chinese)), accessed 29.02.2012.

particularly associated with many tribal names. One would not expect such core vocabulary items to be borrowed, even less could one expect the borrowing of a core verb as verb.<sup>122</sup>

Nevertheless, the Tibetan verbs *smra* ‘speak,’ *rma* ‘inquire,’  $\sqrt{sma-d}$  (I/IV: *smod*, II/III: *smad*) ‘slander, blame, abuse, curse, etc.,’ and *dmo-d* ‘swear, curse,’ as well as their reconstructable forms \**mra-*, \**mro-*, or perhaps rather \**mraw*, have a very close equivalent, in the Eastern Iranian verb *mrao-*. The vowel alternation in the attested Tibetan (and Tibeto-Burman) forms points to an original diphthong, and at least one of the related words even shows the Avestan diphthong: *Phya/v* (Phiao), perhaps also the tribal designation *Mya/v* (Miao). What is more, even within Indo-Iranian, the word shows quite similar sound changes and even a similar derivative morphology: the rather uncommon shift, for Indo-Iranian languages, from nasal to oral stop (\**brao* in Indo-Aryan), the proto-Indo-Iranian shift of medial glide, here *l > r* (cf. again pIE \**mleuH*, pII \**mlauH* ‘speak,’ Avestan *mrao-*), plus the progressive metathesis in the Saka dialects (cf. \**mrautar* > \**mrautā* > *murta* and \**mrvant* > *murunḍa* ‘lord’), variation in the vowels, particularly reduction of diphthong *ao* to *u*, and the presence of a velar derivational suffix

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122 Note, however, that verbs can be borrowed, not only in their nominalized forms and in combination with light verbs, but also indirectly (with derivational affixes) or directly as verbs (cf. Wohlgemuth 2009: 88–101). In the latter case, it is quite common, but not really necessary that an infinitive or any other kind of nominal form is borrowed. In our case, it would also be possible that a verb was borrowed with its nominal morpheme, but that the latter got contracted or lost in the course of time. A rather obvious case of mere verb stem borrowing into Tibetan is CT *hgrul* ‘walk,’ which, despite its spelling, is nowhere attested with a velar cluster, particularly not in the dialects of Baltistan or Purik, where the clusters of velar plus alveolar trill are preserved in all other cases. The orthography is artificial, and the word is borrowed from an Indian language, cf. Hindi *ḍulnā* ‘move’ and Kumaoni *ḍulḥo* ‘wander’ (Bielmeier 1985: 171). A much more recent loan is LEH /ur/ ‘fly’ < Hindi or Urdu *urnā*, instead of the more common Ladakhi form /phur/ *hphur*. Other possible candidates are CT *hphel* ‘increase in number,’ cf. Hindi, Urdu *phailnā* ‘increase in size’; CT I: *hphen* (< *hphay-d*), II: *hphays*, III: *hphay*, IV: *hphoy* ~ *hphays* ‘throw, cast, fling; discard; shoot, fire off’; cf. Hindi, Urdu *phenknā* ‘throw, hurl, cast; discard; fire off; etc.’; CT *htham*, *hthams* ‘seize, grasp’ and perhaps also CT *hthems* with the meaning ‘shut,’ cf. the first and fourth meaning of Hindi, Urdu *thamnā* 1. ‘stand still, stop; be still, quiet’; 2. ‘cease’; 3. ‘be restrained, checked (emotions)’; 4. ‘be held, kept in the hand’; 5. ‘be supported, rest, recover oneself (after stumbling)’ and the first and second meaning of *thāmnā* (< *stambhate*) 1. ‘stop, check, restrain’; 2. ‘clutch, seize’; 3. ‘prop, support, maintain, assist’; 4. ‘undertake, assume (task, burden),’ and finally perhaps also CT *hkhohol* ‘boil’ in BAL and AT, also ‘be ill’ or ‘ache, hurt’ (CDTD), in LAD also used for mental irritations, cf. Hindi, Urdu *khaulnā* ‘boil (intr.); *khaulānā* ‘boil (tr.)’ nowadays used only for mental states, a connotation that has carried over to West Tibetan.

(\*mrava-ka, cf. p. 80), which, incidentally, has a semantics quite similar to the Tibetan or, perhaps, Tibeto-Burman velar derivational suffix *-g* or *-ŋ*.

### 5.3 THE VELAR SUFFIX *-G* OR *-Ŋ*

Some of the words discussed above show a final nasal or oral velar in some of the Tibeto-Burman varieties but not in others. The question, then, is whether this final originally belongs to the word root, as suggested in many reconstructions, or whether it might not simply be a derivational suffix. E.g., in the case of the verb ‘speak,’ Simon proposes the form \*smray, Matisoff the form \*br(w)ak or \*(s)br(w)aŋ, whereas Tibetan has only *smra*.

It seems odd to postulate that Tibetan lost the final velar, since velar finals are quite common in Tibetan, take, e.g., the corresponding noun *smray* ‘ritual narrative, proclamation.’ Simon (1929: 162) assumes, that the ‘lost’ finals in Tibetan were originally voiceless or fricatives. But this is not very convincing. The voice opposition is neutralized in the final position of Tibetan words, where the consonant may appear as an unreleased or delayed stop (cf. Bielmeier 1985: 66 for the Baltipa dialect of Khaplu).<sup>123</sup> We have no means to establish the original voiced or voiceless character of the finals. Final nasals are generally assumed to have been voiced. Thus, where the final is reconstructed as a nasal, there is absolutely no evidence for a phonetic condition that could trigger its loss in some cases, but not in others.

Moreover, verbal morphology apart, in case of alternations between finals and open syllables in Tibetan, the open syllable often corresponds to a verb root (including adjectivals), less frequently to a noun, while the form with a final corresponds to a nominal derivation.

Deverbal derivations are mainly found with the *-d/-n* suffix. This derivation often concerns adjectivals and may yield both (abstract) nouns and derived adjectives, cf. CT I: *rga*, II: *rga-s* ‘get old,’

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<sup>123</sup> This might be a more generally valid fact, as Matisoff (2001: 177, n. 8) notes:

In Zhangzhung, as in W[ritten] T[ibetan] and the transcription of other Himalayish languages, the final (voiceless) unreleased stops are conventionally written with the voiced symbols “-b -d -g.” There is never a real contrast in voicing of stops in final position.

*rga-n-po* ~ *rga-d-po* 'old man,' *rga-n-mo* ~ *rga-d-mo* 'old woman'; *dro*, *dro-s* 'be warm,' *dro-d* 'heat,' *dro-n-mo* 'warm'; *lci* ~ *lji* 'be heavy,' *lci-d* ~ *lji-d* 'heaviness, weight,' LAD *lci-n-te* 'heavy'; CT *na* 'be ill,' *na-d* 'illness,' *na-d-pa* 'ill, sick person'; etc. For active verbs, cf. CT I: *rku*, II: *b-rku-s*, III: *b-rku*, IV: *rku-s* 'steal,' *rku-n-ma* 'theft, thief'; CT I: *hgro* 'go,' *hgro-n-po* 'guest' possibly < 'traveler'; CT I: *lta*, II: *b-lta-s*, III: *b-lta*, IV: *lto-s* 'look at, observe,' *lta-d-mo* or *lta-n-mo* 'spectacle, show'; CT I: *za*, II: *zos/ bzas*, III: *bzah*, IV: *zo* 'eat,' *za-ma* 'food, victuals,' *za-n* 'food,' especially 'porridge'; 'fodder'; *-za-n* 'x eater,' with an additional denominal derivation *g-za-n* 'eat, devour, gnaw; wear out.' See Simon (1977) for a full list.

The *-g/-ŋ* suffix appears for deverbal and denominal formations. Deverbal usage is found in the case of *smra* 'speak, say' and *smra-ŋ* 'ritual narrative, proclamation' or perhaps simply 'speech.' Denominal usage is frequently found with tribal and geographical names, such as *Spu* and *Spu-ŋ*, *Spu-g*, or *Spu-gu*; *Rma* and *Rma-ŋ*. The suffix may also have a connotation of family relations, cf. *mi* 'man' > *mi-ŋ-bo* 'brother,' \**sri* ~ \**sru* 'woman' (cf. *sru* 'aunt') > *sri-ŋ-mo* 'sister.'

The suffix seems to express also the notion of a 'collective, belonging to X.' Therefore, the geographical and ethnical designations *Bya* and *Bya-ŋ* appear to be related, as well. There are quite a few place names with *Bya*, *Byaŋ*, and related forms in Tibet. It is rather evident that *byaŋ* cannot always have meant 'north,' particularly when it refers to places in the *south*. A meaning such as 'belonging to the Bya-tribe' or 'Bya-clan' would be more likely. In the case of the *Byaŋ.thaŋ*, the 'Changthang' of Ladakh and northern Tibet, and particularly in the case of the southern place of the same name at Lake Phu.ma, south of the Yar.hbrog, this could mean a 'plain of those who belong to the humans,' or 'the plain of our folk.' In so far as the word *bya* had acquired the connotation of 'female human beings,' this could have given rise to the notion of a Women's Dominion in parts of, or all over, the *Byaŋ.thaŋ*, without there ever being such an extraordinary political entity. Cf. in this connection the name of the unfortunate lady in Pt 1136, *lcam Lho.rgyal-(gyi) Byaŋ.mo.tsun*, who is most probably not at the same time a member of a *southern* royal family (*lho.rgyal*) and a 'northerner' (*byaŋ-mo*), but a 'lady-dame-princess' or a '*donna-dame-frouwe*' with *byaŋ*, *mo*, and *tsun* (*btsun*) forming a compound of three different titles or of the same designation in three different languages.

The Indo-Iranian *-ka* suffix that we meet in the word \**mrava-ka* and in the corresponding Saka form *rau-k* 'speaker, lord' has the following functions in Sanskrit:

a) derivation of diminutives,

- b) formation of adjectives of nouns that express the relationship to a place,
  - c) the possession of an item,
  - d) the occupation with something,
  - e) the consistence or value, and
  - f) infrequently, a relationship with another person, possibly of descent
- (Wackernagel & Debrunner 1954: 519–529).

The *-ka* suffix is likewise used in Iranian languages, where, due to its high frequency, it became semantically quite bleached (ibid. p. 539).

Function a) is expressed in Tibetan typically by the suffixes *-bu* and *-gu/ -ŋu/ -ɦu* (with assimilating forms), which seem to have a different origin, but apparently merge with the velar suffix in non-syllabic forms. Functions b), c) and f), however, seem to correspond largely to the function of the velar suffix in Tibetan, and one might possibly also identify function d) in Old Tibetan derivations. It would be possible, therefore, that the Tibetan non-syllabic velar suffix *-g/-ŋ*, and perhaps also the syllabic suffix *-ka* of a similar function had been borrowed from Indo-Iranian.<sup>124</sup>

#### 5.4 IRANOSPHERE AND TIBETOSPHERE

All in all, the similarities between the Eastern Iranian *verbum dicendi* and its derivatives, on the one hand, and the various Tibetan words related to the act of speaking, on the other, is at least as strong as the similarity of these words across the Tibeto-Burman languages. And while the multiplicity of derivations and the lack of strict sound laws within the Tibeto-Burman languages speak against a genetic relationship with respect to this particular word family, the situation is exactly what is to be expected when we deal with borrowings.

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<sup>124</sup> As an example, for morpheme borrowing within and across language families, I would like to point to the instrumental-ablative morpheme *\*sV* that was borrowed into Tibetan, possibly via a Tamangic language, to combine with the relational marker *{kyi}* to form an ergative marker *{kyis}* and with the locational markers *na* and *la* to form the ablative markers *nas* and *las*. The syllabic form of the ergative marker, which is preserved in some Western Tibetan varieties, such as the dialects of Baltistan and Nubra, was further borrowed into several Dardic languages for the present tense constructions where there was a functional gap (as is well known, the modern Indo-Aryan languages typically display split-ergativity), see also Zeisler (2011a: 281–290 with further references).

What Tibetan shares with Khotan-Saka, but not with Tibeto-Burman, is the notion of royalty associated with the faculty of speaking, that is, in this case, commanding. This is perhaps the strongest indicator that the word family *speak, speaker, human, lord* has been borrowed into Tibetan from Eastern Iranian. But if that is the case, the apparently cognate forms for ‘speak’ and ‘human,’ ‘(old) man,’ ‘(old) woman,’ or certain kinship terms, such as ‘child,’ ‘nephew,’ etc. observed in the most widely different Tibeto-Burman languages must have come from the same source.

The elitist connotation of royalty or at least noble status may well be the reason why an apparent item of core vocabulary, namely the self-designation as ‘speaker,’ could be borrowed from one tribe to another, ending up with the Pyu and perhaps also the Miao far in the south.

One should perhaps remember that many of the present Tibeto-Burman tribes and nations originally came through, or from, an area that was dominated by ‘royal’ *speakers*, namely the Royal Scythians (*Sakaraukai, Saraucae, Sakamurunda*) or the equally powerful Yuezhi of equal Eastern Iranian (Scythian) affiliation, that is, they came from or via the Ordos region and seem to have squeezed through the so-called ethnic corridors of Gansu and Yunnan,<sup>125</sup> where they interacted with those who might have come from a different direction.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Driem (1993: 53) objects to the idea that such an “ethnic corridor,” as originally defined by Sūn and Fēi, would allow larger migrations. For Driem as well as Sūn and Fēi, an “ethnic corridor” “is an area which retains older linguistic strata” (Driem 1993: 53 with further references). “Conduits for mass migrations” would be “plains, steppes, desert[!],” rather than “dense jungles or mountains” (Driem 1993: 53 with further reference). He overlooks the fact that, in earlier times, people did not migrate in masses, but rather in smaller groups, and that mountains, and to a certain extent “dense jungles” have always been navigable. Even if, as Driem claims, the Tibeto-Burman “expansion has been predominantly out of and away from this area” (Driem 1993: 53), the ancestors of the Tibetan peoples must have crossed mountains, from whichever side they would have entered.

<sup>126</sup> Of course, we do not actually know much about the early migrations. While LaPolla (2001: 236) argues for major migration waves from northwest China down the corridors, van Driem (2011) proposes an original homeland near the Bay of Bengal. The latter hypothesis refers to a time frame of perhaps 6000 to 8000 years BP and does not preclude LaPolla’s scenario of much later times. At least in the case of the Pyu and the Burmese, it seems possible to trace their migrations from the north (LaPolla 2001: 236f.), and in the case of the Tibetans, or rather their ancestors, even van Driem (1998: 67–102; 1999: 53; 2001: 411–433) argued for an origin in northwest China, although the proposed migration route via Central Asia and Kashmir (!), at a time when ox carts were the only means of transport, is as fanciful as the proposed relationship between the crude Burzahom pottery and the exquisite Majiayao artefacts.

Could Tibeto-Burman, therefore, be a warrior's pidgin? And could it thus be the case that even more of the core vocabulary has been exchanged between the languages of this area? It has been observed that in the northern and western borderlands of China the "ethnic and linguistic composition of the peoples [...] was *always* fluid: Whole tribes either voluntarily joined the dominant tribe or were placed under their leadership by force or persuasion" (Franke & Twitchett 1994: 12, emphasis added). Enslaved or dependent tribes could become independent and enslavers or conquerors themselves. The Di, e.g., were first mercenary slaves of the Xiongnu, but when they became independent under Fu Jian, the latter conquered the Xianbi kingdoms Muru and Tuoba and established the dynasty of the Earlier/Former Qin (Eberhard 1980: 153–155). Under such circumstances a lot of borrowing, not only of war-related items, but particularly also of core vocabulary, could be expected.

Matisoff (1990: 113 with n. 17, 2000: 333f.) speaks of the Sino- and the Indosphere, that is, areas of possible linguistic and/or cultural influence. According to him, Tibetan would have fallen into the Indosphere. However, Tibetan history as well as the prehistory of Central Asia indicate that we should also reckon with an Irano- or Scythosphere, which possibly had a large impact on the ethnogenesis of the Tibetan people, at least the ruling elites, and on their social organization (cf. also Zeisler 2021). This study shows that there must have been also some kind of direct or indirect linguistic impact.

Finally, one should be aware that there also has been, at least from the seventh century CE onwards, a Tibetosphere (see also Tournadre 2014: 108 for this term). That is, while the ancestor(s) of the Tibetan speakers may have borrowed much of their lexicon from other Tibeto-Burman languages, one should not underestimate the influence that the Old Tibetan *lingua franca* as an administrative and commercial prestige language and later Classical Tibetan as a religious prestige language exerted on other Tibeto-Burman languages (and non-Tibeto-Burman languages, such as, e.g., Monguor), turning Tibetan from a receiving language into a donor language.

Ethnic groups speaking non-Tibetic languages persist even now in claiming Tibetan ethnicity (Tournadre 2014: 108, n. 12). Such identification may imply the slow adaptation not only of the most prestigious religious terminology, but also of more and more so-called "core" vocabulary. The case of Monguor shows that out-marrying women may export core vocabulary relating to the family or at least the women's sphere, cf. Róna-Tas (2014: [218]). The old Tibetan social organization with polyandric families must have favored a large-scale exodus of otherwise unmarriageable "surplus" women

throughout Tibetan history. Finally, LaPolla (2009: 246) points to the fact that the Tibetan influence on Baima has resulted in a situation where "it is unclear if the language is a dialect of Tibetan or a distinct language."

As a result, words that have been borrowed into Old Tibetan or its precursor(s) may have been lent out again towards the east, the southeast, the south, and the northeast. Under such circumstances, it may never be possible to establish a genetic relationship between the various "branches" of the Tibeto-Burman patchwork family. The only chance to do so is by meticulously sorting out all possible borrowings, whether from outside, as in the case presented here, or from within the language group. This can only be done by strictly adhering to the Neogrammarian principles.



## 6. ADDITIONAL REMARKS

The action of calling or convoking people ... is characteristic of someone endowed with authority over others: a teacher, head of the house, king, prince, Buddha as head of the community, etc. (Pinault 2002: 266 for the relationship between Tocharian A *kāk-* ‘invoke’ and *kākmārtik* ‘ruler, chief, master’).

More modestly, one could argue that a person who is well-versed in rhetoric as well as in poetry may naturally become, or may be selected as, a spokesman of the community. One may think of song and riddle competitions, an important component of Tibetan culture, still preserved in traditional marriage customs.

Rhetorical competence was an important factor at the court of the early Tibetan empire or its initial stages. This is attested at several points in the Old Tibetan Chronicle. The most remarkable passage is found in ll. 221–229, where one of the vassals, Khyuṅ.po Spuṅ.sad Zu.tse actually challenges the ruler Gnam.ri Slon.mtshan (the father of the first emperor) with a song, in which he asks for the royal insignia. Gnam.ri Slon.mtshan remains speechless, and so do his closest vassals. Only one man, a more distant vassal, comes forward to reject Zu.tse’s claim, with his own song – and, not surprisingly, becomes the emperor’s favorite (cf. Zeisler 2011b: 119).

Another important function of speech that may lead to an association with rulership is psychological warfare. Challenging enemies with abusive language to dishearten them and to encourage or incite one’s own troops, possibly also with the additional function of talking oneself into a rage, was certainly an important element before the fight (cf. Bailey 1985: 136). It is thus not very surprising that *verba dicendi* or verbs relating to auditory perception appear in Old Tibetan nicknames or appellations of honor, such as ‘Voice of X’ (*X-sgra*) or ‘Fame, Glory of X’ (*X-sñan*, *-gzigs*) and, accordingly, ‘Speaker, Spokesman, Leader, or Commander of X’ (*X-(r)ma*), cf. Richardson (1998 [1967]) for such appellations.



## APPENDIX I: METATHESIS OF THE CLUSTER LABIAL PLUS ALVEOLAR TRILL

The Old or Classical Tibetan cluster *(s)br* undergoes regular metathesis in the dialects of Skyurbuchan (Rebecca Norman, p.c.) and Domkhar,<sup>127</sup> less regularly also in other dialects of Sham, cf.

- CT *brag* ‘rock’ > DOM /rbak/
- CT *ḥbreg* ‘shave, cut (hair)’ > DOM /rbak/
- CT *bray.sa* ‘resting place’ > DOM /rbaŋsa/
- CT *bras* ‘rice’ > DOM /rbas/
- CT *ḥbri* ‘write’ > DOM /rbi/
- CT *bri* ‘get less’ > DOM /rbi/
- CT *bru* ‘dig’ > DOM /rbu/
- CT *brug* ‘thunder’ and ‘flow down’ > DOM /rbuk/
- CT *bre* ‘shy away’ > DOM /rbet/
- CT *bres* ‘manger’ > DOM /rbes/
- CT *bro* ‘taste of’ > DOM /rbo/
- CT *Brog.pa* ‘Dardic person’ > DOM /Rbokpa/
- CT *sbrel* ‘join’ > DOM, TYA /rbel/

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<sup>127</sup> These forms are becoming obsolete under the pressure of the dialect of Leh, on the one hand, and written forms, on the other. There is an interesting gender split: among the younger informants, women tend to use the forms with metathesis consistently, while men seem to prefer forms without metathesis (RSK and own observations).

- CT *sbrid* ‘get numb’ > DOM, TYA /rbit/
- CT *sbrul* ‘snake’ > DOM /rbul/

In several cases, speakers have been switching between the original form and the innovative form, which has occasionally resulted in a doubling of the *-r-* on both sides of the main consonant: *khos fik rbraps* ‘s/he scratched off lice,’ cf. the discussion on p. 22 above.

Less frequently, the clusters *dpr* and *spr* may undergo metathesis in the dialects of Sham and elsewhere, cf.

- CT *dpral.ba* ‘forehead’ > PUR (Kargil, Tshangra, Sapi) /spralba/, BAL, LEH, and NBR (Panamik) /spalba/, PUR (Ciktan, Mulbekh), SHM (Wanla, KHAL, and NUR) /ɽpalba/ (CTDT with /ɣ/ for /ɽ/)
- CT *sprin* ‘cloud’ > DOM /ɽpin/
- CT *sprug* ‘shake off’ > DOM, KHAL /ɽpuk/

Loss of the post-radical *via* metathesis has been observed in the dialect of Lingshed in Ladakh. While the CTDT gives the form /ɖak/ for *brag* ‘rock,’ I obtained the following words from a speaker of the Lingshed dialect, testifying to an (earlier) sound law *br* > \**rb* > /b/, *phr* > /ph/:

- CT *brag* ‘rock’ > LING /bagbu/ ‘rocky mountain’ < \**rbag.bu*
- CT *ɸbreg* ‘shear’ > LING /bak/ ‘shear’ (animals) < \**rbak*
- CT *bred* ‘shy away’ LING /bet/ < \**rbet*
- CT *brog* > LING /Bokpa/ ~ /Drokpa/ ‘Dardic people’
- CT *phru.gu* ‘child’ > LING /phugu/ (obsolete, only used by old people, now commonly /tɰugu/)
- CT *ɸphrey.ba* ‘rosary’ > LING /phaŋa/

That the loss is, in fact, due to an earlier metathesis, may be indicated by the development of the triple clusters. The triple cluster *sbr* changed (via \**rz*b [?]) to either /*rb*/ or /*zb*/ and the triple cluster *spr* changed to /*ɽp*/:

- CT *sbrel* ‘join’ > LING /*rbel*/ (~ /*brel*/)
- CT *sbrid* ‘sneeze’ > LING /*rbit*/
- CT *sbray.bu* ‘fly, bee’ > LING /*zbaŋu*/ ‘fly’ (cf. also CDTDn)
- CT *sbray.rtsi* ‘honey’ > LING /*zbaŋɽtsi*/
- CT *sbrul* ‘snake’ > LING /*zbul*/ (CDTDn)
- CT *sprin* ‘cloud’ > LING /*ɽpin*/ (cf. also CDTDn)
- CT *sprug* ‘shake off’ > LING /*ɽpuk*/<sup>128</sup>

The Amdo varieties show quite irregular correspondences for the CT cluster *spr*, in some cases, the reflexes correspond to the stage of final metathesis *rp*- (/ɽɸ-/ , /ɽf-/ , /ɽf-/ , /ɽp-/ , /ɽp-/ , /ɽp-/), but in other cases they correspond to the initial stage *pr*- (/ɸɽ-/ , /ɸr-/ , /wɽ-/ ) or to a somewhat more developed stage *ps*- (/ɸs-/), note, e.g.,

- CT *spro* ‘glad, joyful’ > Mkharmar /ɸɽso/ ‘happy’ and Themchen /ɸsoɸsaŋ/ *spro.bzay* ‘picnic’ (CDTD)

An interesting case is WSHM /*ɽpin*/, PUR /*sprin*/ with Western Drokpa /*t̪iŋ*/ and Shigatse /*t̪ɕiŋ*/ (CDTD) for CT *spyin* ‘glue’ (with modern realizations from an alternative form *spyij*, cf. also GShS). This points to an ultimately pre-Tibetan form \**sprin*(g) < \**prin*(g), but there does not seem to be a corresponding Tibeto-Burman etymon.

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<sup>128</sup> One may possibly add /*ɽpalba*/ ‘forehead < *dpral*, but the speaker was not sure.

Metathesis of CT *sbr* > *rb* besides apparent loss of post-radical *-r-* can be observed not only among the above-mentioned Shamskat dialects, but also among several Amdo varieties, cf.

- CT *sbra* ‘(big) tent’ > Gergye /np̄a/, Lhasa /p̄a/, Gertse, Hor Nakchu, Hor Amdo /ba/, Nangchen /ba/, Rngaba /rwæ/, Sertha /rβa/, Ndzorge /<sup>h</sup>wæ/ – note also Skardo /rba/ (CDTD)
- CT *sbray.ma* ‘fly, bee’ > Hor Nakchu /baŋma/, Hor Amdo /bɔŋma/, Lithang /mbā: d̄zō:ma/, Mkharmar /waŋma/, Chabcha /rbaŋma/, Labrang /rwaŋma/, Rngaba /rwaŋmæ/, Ndzorge /<sup>h</sup>waŋmæ/, Rmastod /baŋma/ (CDTD)

According to Roland Bielmeier (p.c., many years ago), many words with an Old or Classical Tibetan cluster labial plus post-radical *-r-* show the loss of the post-radical in Lhasa and in the Hor dialects spoken north of Lhasa.<sup>129</sup> In a few cases, such forms have spread also to western Tibet and to Khams. It is not always clear whether the post-radical simply got lost or underwent metathesis. The reflexes of CT (*h*)*phr* might be interpreted as simple loss as long as the aspiration is preserved, cf. Gergye, Hor Bachen /phīŋma/, Nangchen /mp<sup>h</sup>iŋma/ (which appears to be due to palatalization of the glide, hence <\*((*h*)*phyiy.ma*) ~ /n<sup>h</sup>iŋma/ (*h*)*phriy.ma*) for CT *phreŋ.ba*, (*h*)*phreŋ.ma* ‘rosary’ (CDTDn).

In the case of the word for ‘child,’ however, the loss of aspiration in GYS /t̄ūgu/ and similarly in Tabo, Nako, Namgya /t̄ū:/, Nesang /t̄ūgu/, Southern Mustang, Western Drokpa, and Dingri /t̄ūku/ (plus variant or contracted forms), Ruthok, Gar, Gergye, Purang, Tshochen /t̄šūku/, and Sertha /pt̄šugu/ (CDTDn), can only be explained via an intermediate form /sprugu/ *spru(g).gu* with regular loss of aspiration after *s-* pre-radical. After all, a form *Bod.gyi sprug* with the meaning ‘Tibetan offspring’ is attested in Classical Tibetan (TVP fol.265v1, cf. also BDGM with *sprug* and *spru.gu*). The Lhasa Tibetan form /pūku/ as well as Hor Nakchu and Hor Amdo /pūgu/ must then be derived via final metathesis \*/rpugu/ or the intermediate form \*/spugu/ and subsequent cluster reduction. Note the Modern Tibetan spellings *pu.gu* ~ *spu.gu* as attested in C. Simon (2011: 44, 131, 139; cf. also TETT *pu.gu* and *spu.gu*, and GShS *spu.gu*). Cf. also Lhasa /pāŋpo/ ‘beggar’ (Chang & Chang 1984: 615) < CT *spraŋ.po*.

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<sup>129</sup> Tournadre (2005: 30) notes the recent replacement of such forms by a standardized reading style: the Lhasa word for rice, now pronounced as /d̄zɛ:/, still had the pronunciation /bɛ:/ in the 1950s.

Another interesting example of a possible case of metathesis is BAL /p<sup>h</sup>sor/, AT: Themchen /ɸsor/ ~ /s<sup>h</sup>or/, Arik /wsor/ ‘change (place, garments, life)’ (CDTDv) < \*spor, for which BRGY gives an Old Tibetan form *spor*, *spar* as synonym to *spo* (but cf. also *gsor*, *bsar* and JÄK *sor*).

Medial metathesis at the morpheme boundary has also been observed for CT *phu(g).ron* ‘pigeon’ > Shamskat and LEH /phurgon/. It is possible, however, that in this case the verb *hphur* ‘fly’ has interfered.

## APPENDIX II: DIVINE FATHERS, DISGRACED MOTHERS: THE ALTERNATION BETWEEN ORAL STOPS AND HOMORGANIC NASALS, REINTERPRETED IN TERMS OF A SOCIAL BIAS

Stein (1941: 226–230) points to an interesting pairing of words with an oral or nasal labial root consonant, reflecting, as he says, the differences between *pha* ‘father’ and *pho* ‘male,’ on the one hand, and *ma* ‘mother’ and *mo* ‘female,’ on the other. Unsurprisingly in a patriarchal society, the ‘female’ terms tend to be associated with the notion of lowliness and even malignity, the ‘male’ terms with that of height and glory.

Most probably, this kind of “gender” distinction was only secondarily derived when the homorganic alternation between nasals and oral stops led to a doubling of words with oral and nasal root consonants. The following table will list quite a few doublets, which are for the greater part related to the oppositions of male and female, high and low, and distinctions between divine, simian, and human beings.

With only a few exceptions, I will not include words with a voiced labial radical, as they would lead into a much larger semantic field (but I hope to be able to return to this question). One could have added also several words related to darkness, based on *mu* (*dmu* ~ *rmu*). Similarly, one could have added more *verba dicendi* and related nouns that display the same kind of doubling, but while they seem to be related, most of them do not show the same kind of positive or negative bias.

Words already mentioned by Stein (1941) are underlined. The notes to the entries appear below the table. The variable “Δ” is used for all instances of a dental consonant independent of its articulation manner (thus *d*, *r*, *s*, and theoretically also *l*), the variable “V” for all vowels. “T” is used for all velars and postvelars. The symbol  $\emptyset$  is used for unfilled slots of the maximally complex syllable structure.

Many of the words and names can be understood only within the context of the early Tibetan history and its legends as transmitted in the imperial period. I can only hint at such connotations in the annotation of these words, which follows Table 5, because a detailed discussion of these terms is simply impossible.



**Table 5** Gender and (social) position of divine, simian, and human beings (annotations follow)

'female' and/ or 'low' (- m -)		'male' and/ or 'high' (- p -)	
$\emptyset$ -m- $\emptyset$ -V- $\emptyset$		$\emptyset$ -p- $\emptyset$ -V- $\emptyset$	
<i>ma</i>	female parent	<i>pha</i>	male parent
<i>mo</i>	female gender	<i>pho</i>	male gender
<i>mi</i>	human/ monkey		
<i>mihu</i>	(simian) offspring		
<i>ma</i>	down, low	<i>phu</i>	upper valley
m- $\emptyset$ -V- $\Delta$		(?)-p- $\emptyset$ -V- $\Delta$	
( <i>Mar, Mard, Mar.yul</i> )	(place names) <sup>a</sup>	<i>hphar, hphur</i>	jump, fly up
<i>mal</i>	place near ground		
* $\emptyset$ -m- $\Delta$ -V- $\emptyset$ / $\Gamma$		$\emptyset$ -p- $\Delta$ -V- $\emptyset$ / $\Gamma$ / l	
*mra- (> smra, rma)	speak, recite	<i>pra</i>	ritual, prognostic <sup>b</sup>
-mra	part of place names <sup>c</sup>	<i>phrul</i>	magic (power)
*mrūk < *mravaka	commander, lord	<i>Pru.bo</i> (~ <i>Hphrul</i> )	royal title <sup>d</sup>
*mrūk < *mraw-k	monkey (?)	<i>phru.gu</i> ~ <i>phrug</i>	(male) offspring <sup>e</sup>
$\Delta$ -m- $\emptyset$ -V- $\emptyset$		$\Delta$ -p- $\emptyset$ -V- $\emptyset$	
<i>rma/ rmi/ rme</i>	monkey, human	<i>Spu</i>	ancestor deity
<i>Rmu/ Dmu</i>	deity, heaven	<i>Spu(r).rgyal</i>	dynastic name
<i>Rma/ Rmu/ Dmu</i>	clan name	<i>Spa, Spu</i>	clan, language name <sup>f</sup>
<i>Mīru</i> (?< <i>Rma.ru</i> )	place in Upper Ladakh <sup>g</sup>	<i>Spu-, Spo-, Spyi-</i>	place names <sup>f</sup>
<i>Rme.ru</i>	mountain in East Tibet	<i>spo, spyi</i>	(mountain) summit
<i>rmo-mo</i>	old woman, grandmother	<i>spo.bo</i>	old man, grandfather
<i>rmu/ dmu, sma</i>	low, brute, evil	<i>spa</i>	hero, force
		<i>spa; spu</i>	plant; hair, feather <sup>h</sup>
*rmehu (?> rmi)	*(simian) offspring	<i>spehu, spihu</i>	turret
<i>sma.ma</i>	?(mother's) gift <sup>i</sup>	<i>spo.ma</i>	?(father's) gift <sup>i</sup>
<i>dme-/ rme-/ sme-</i>	(negative) mark, speck <sup>j</sup>	<i>dpe</i>	(positive) example <sup>j</sup>

‘female’ and/ or ‘low’ (– m –)		‘male’ and/ or ‘high’ (– p –)	
Δ-m-ø-V-Δ		Δ-p-ø-V-Δ	
( <i>Smar</i> )	(epithet of Žaŋ.žuy language or script) <sup>a</sup>	<i>spar/ spor, spur</i>	lift, scare, send up <sup>k</sup>
<i>Smin.drug</i>	Six Sisters <sup>m n</sup>	<i>Spus</i>	clan name <sup>l</sup>
<i>dman, dmad, sman</i>	female, low <sup>o</sup>	<i>spun</i>	brothers <sup>n</sup>
( <i>ma</i> )- <i>smad</i>	mother and child <sup>p q</sup>	<i>span-(spun)</i>	brothers <sup>n</sup>
( <i>bu</i> )- <i>smad</i>	wife (?) and child <sup>o</sup>	( <i>pha</i> )- <i>spad</i>	father and child <sup>p q</sup>
		<i>spad, spud</i>	son (?sons) <sup>q</sup>
		<i>spad.spun</i>	male relatives <sup>n q s</sup>
<i>rmad</i>	magic, <sup>t</sup> marvel	<i>dpal</i>	splendor, glory
		<i>dpon</i>	master, chief
Δ-m-ø-V-Γ		Δ-p-ø-V-Γ	
<i>Rmaŋ</i>	a clan name <sup>u</sup>	<i>Spug, Spuj</i>	clan names <sup>w</sup>
<i>rmajs</i>	(common) people <sup>v</sup>		
<i>rmaj/ rmiŋ</i>	ground, foundation	<i>spug, spuj</i>	heap
<i>dmaŋs</i>	common, vulgar	<i>dpajs</i>	height
<i>dmaḥ</i>	low	<i>dpah</i>	brave <sup>y</sup>
<i>dmag.(pa)</i>	son-in-law, warrior <sup>x</sup>	<i>dpah.(bo)</i>	hero, warrior <sup>y</sup>
Δ-m-Δ-V-ø		Δ-p-Δ-V-ø/ -l	
<i>Smra</i>	epithet of Žaŋ.žuy in West Tibet (LDRR) <sup>a</sup>	<i>Spra, Sbra</i>	epithet of Žaŋ.žuy in East Tibet <sup>z</sup>
<i>smra</i>	deity, priestly lineage <sup>aa</sup>	<i>spra, *spru</i>	monkey
		<i>spreḥu</i>	simian offspring, monkey
		<i>sprug (&lt; spru.gu)<sup>bb</sup></i>	human offspring
		<i>sprul</i>	magic, incarnation

## Annotations for Table 5

a *mar, smar*: In these place names, *mar(d)* is commonly taken to signify ‘below, low.’ It seems, however, that the element *mar(d)* rather refers to ‘gold,’ cf. ZhNN *mar* ‘gold,’ *smar* ‘good,’ but *smar gu.ge rgyud* ‘golden script,’ ZhDM *ma.la* ‘gold,’ *ma(r).saj* ‘yellow,’ *mar* ‘gold,’ *smar* ‘good.’ For the notions of a ‘gold land’ cf. Zeisler (2010: 436–449). The form *smra* is also attested.

b *pra*: See Tucci (1970: 224). The word *pra.rten* ‘*pra*-support’ for the ‘medium’ or oracle indicates that *pra* is not only the ritual, but also a kind of spirit or deity that descends upon a human medium. The relationship between magic rituals, the spell, and reciting or ordering suggests itself.

c *-mra*: Cf. the name of the mountain Rma.chen Spom.ra (Amnye Machen) < \**Spo-mra* (most probably involving consonant migration). My analysis is corroborated by another mountain name *Sbom.h̄bor* ~ *Spo.h̄bor*, a well-known spur among the six spurs of Khams (Stein 1959: 184). In the first name again the nasal prefix of the second element /<sup>m</sup>bor/ has migrated to the coda position of the first element.

d *Pru.bo*: Name of the legendary seventeenth king; the form Lde Pru.bo Gnam.ḡžuj.(b)rtsan occurs only in OTC, l. 63; he is otherwise mainly known as Lde.h̄phrul Gnam.ḡžuj.brtsan (Haarh 1969: 48 and LDRR p. 30, l. 10; the form Lde.phrug Gnam.ḡžuj.btsan, cited by Haarh as °ḡžui°, is an artefact of Francke’s translation).

e *phru.gu* ~ *phrug*: The use only for male offspring is found, e.g., in the Baltipa dialects.

f *Spa, Spu-, Spo-, Spyi-*: *Spa* is found as clan name in Bonpo sources. It also occurs as the name of a language among the Mi.ñag of Tson̄.kha (Stein 1951: 230f. with note 6, 1961: 69). *Spu.gu* is a Žaj.žuj-ian form, describing either a frontier province of Žaj.žuj or a neighboring country (*mthah̄.yul*, translated as ‘frontier land’ in ZhNN, but as ‘foreign country’ in GShS, and ‘a country not one’s own’ in TETT) or a place (*glij*) within Žaj.žuj (ZhNN). Given the varying extensions of the political entity Žaj.žuj, *Spu.gu* might be identical with *Spo.bo* as a neighboring state of Žaj.žuj Proper as well as with Spiti (Spyi.ti) as a province belonging to Žaj.žuj Proper (Ngari or Guge and Purang) or even as a province neighboring Local-Žaj.žuj (a small province within Ngari – for these definitions see Zeisler 2010: 389). Mention is made of a *Spo.bo Brag.thog* as well as a *Spu.ho Brag*, which the legendary ‘mad’ king Dri.gum is said to have made his capital (Haarh: 1969: 228, 302, with further references). A place called Porong (*Spo(y).roj*) can be located in western Central Tibet, near Dingri. Bacot & Toussaint (1940: 135, and note 2), translating the Old Tibetan dynastic name Spu.rgyal as “roi de Spu,” interpret *Spu* as “nom d’une ancienne capitale.” The apparently less realistic *Spu.yul* of several cosmogonies appears as a heavenly abode to Stein (1961: 57), but as a realm of the dead to Haarh (1969: 18, 230 and passim).

Other place names bearing the element *Spu* or /Pu/ can still be located in West Tibet: Pooh (in Tibetan documents written as *Spu*; the village name is said to be pronounced locally as /spuwa/, see <http://hpkinnaur.nic.in/PofInterest.htm>, accessed IV/2012) and Purang (in Tibetan documents also written as *Spu.hray*, possibly from \**Spu.(b)ray*, the ‘Spu lineage’). In Upper Kinnaur, near Nako, one can find a divine Mt Purgyul or reo Purgyal (*ri.bo Spu.rgyal*, Hein 2007: 238; 2008), the local deity who provides water to irrigate the fields. Other variants are *Phu* for *Spu (-rgyal)*, *Pho* for *Spo (-yul)*. The semantic relationship between

*phu* and *spu* has already been observed by Tucci (1949: 733). A vanishing *s*- pre-radical may lead to pre-aspiration and further aspiration of the radical.

g *Mīru*: A place name in Upper Ladakh. The high tone realization of nasals typically results from some kind of pre-radical. It is quite possible that the original name was \**Rme.ru* or even \**Rma.ru* and that the vowel of the first syllable got heightened due to the common vowel assimilation process, triggered by the high vowel of the second syllable (cf. note 101).

h *spa, spu*: Referring to things standing or growing up or out. *spa* alone might designate a ‘cane’ or ‘reed,’ but it also appears in *spa.ma*, a kind of juniper tree, and possibly in other derivations for plant names. The diminutive *spehu* ~ *spihu* below also indicates a word \**spa* ‘tower.’ *spa* with the meaning ‘hero, proud’ (BRGY) may refer to an ‘outstanding’ person, if it is not a loan. There are many words with the voiced variant *db-*, sharing the basic meaning of a central point of a convex item, as, e.g., *dbu* ‘head.’

i *smo.ma, spo.ma* (+ *ñe.du*): two unknown Old Tibetan funerary termini. Bellezza (2008: 503 with note 495, 513, and p. 510, n. 524) interprets the *spo.ma* of Pt 1134 as referring to the funerary animals that transport the dead person, as a gift of the relatives, and the *smo.ma* Pt 1194 as the “quality of the vulture wings, related to their presentation by relatives of the deceased.” The word *spo.ma* is apparently much more common than the word *smo.ma*, but the latter also occurs in combination with livestock (*pyugs* for *phyugs*) in Pt 1136, l. 25 (Imaeda et al. 2001). According to the supposed gender bias, one might interpret the *smo.ma* as gift of the relatives from the mother’s side, and *spo.ma* as a gift from the father’s side. But there might be also a relationship with the *verbum dicendi smra* (\**mra-*). In that case, the items in question would not only be gifts, but proclaimed gifts.

One could perhaps add the pair of Pt 1194, l. 37f. *pha smo[s].na* ‘talking about/naming the father,’ *ma spos.na* ‘talking about/naming the mother.’ But the form *spos* might be a scribal error and the second element should possibly have been *smos* in both cases, cf. Pt. 1134, l. 11–12 *pa.dang yab smos.na Mgon.tshun Pya/vh* | *ma.dang yum smos.na* | *Ta.ŋa Njur.ma.taj* ‘talking about the honorable father, [he is called] Mgontshun Phiao, talking about the honorable mother, [she is called] Taja Njurmataj.’ Nevertheless, I would not be surprised if actually two forms existed, as in the case of *ma.smad* ‘mother and child(ren)’ vs. *pha.spad* ‘father and child(ren),’ see annotation p, below. Interestingly, the two elements are inverted: *pha.smos* vs. *ma.spos*, as if it were a play of words.

j *dme.ba, rme.ba, sme.ba* ‘spot, speck, mark, mole, uncleanliness,’ OT *smye* ‘defile, uncleanliness’ vs. *dpe* ‘pattern, model, example; symmetry, harmony; book.’ These words may not belong to the semantics of speech acts and human beings, but the possible negative connotations of the nasal form and the neutral or even positive connotations of the oral stop form fits the pattern.

k *spur* ‘corpse’ is something that has ‘to be sent up’ (gerundive function of verb stem III and causative of (*h*)*phur* ‘fly (up)’) to heaven with the help of fire or any appropriate rite.

l *Spus*: A clan name, cf. OTC, ll. 28, 30, 34, 38.

m *Smin.drug*: the Pleiades. While the number of the stars in question may be subject to change, the expression *Smin.bdun* is also found for the Seven Brothers, forming the asterism of the Plough or Great Dipper as part of the constellation Great Bear, more typically called the *byaj.gyi skar.ma Spun.bdun* ‘the Seven Brothers, stars of the north’ (cf. also Zeisler 2015d).

n *smi-n, spu-n*: See above p. 95. The word *smi* might have had the same vowel as the word *spun*, hence *\*smun*, for possible vowel alternations (→ sound alternation 4). The final *-n* seems to be a collective suffix here. *spu* and *\*smu* could then go back via *spru(g)* (and perhaps *\*smru(g)*) to an original *phru(gu)* or *\*mru(gu)* ‘child.’

o *dman, dmad, sman*: Cf. *skye.dman* ‘female or low person,’ *bud-med* (< *bu-dmad*) ‘female or low child.’ The element *sman* is extremely common in the names of the early queens between the ninth and the twenty-sixth “generations” (cf. Haahr 1969: 45–60). In view of the parallel *smi* (*\*smun*, note n above), one could also think of the meaning ‘sister, female sibling.’

p (*ma*)-*smad*: A child or children in relation to their mother; cf. TVP 47.268r4 *mas-mad* ‘mother and son’ (the spelling shows consonant migration); the *Mi.la.ras.paḥi rnam.thar* block print (Otani University, Zogai no. 11854; Tibetan Works Research Project 2006) passim also has *mas-smad* ~ *mas-mad* ‘mother and [two] children’ with (partial) consonant migration. It seems that the gender of the parent is the important factor, not the gender of the child(ren). Correspondingly, (*pha*)-*spad*: A child or children in relation to their father. S. Nagano (1994) wants to derive these words accordingly from the words for father and mother, without, however, explaining the meaning of the *s-* prefix in his *s-pa-d* and *s-ma-d* derivations.

q *sma-d, spa-d, spu-d*: Like the final *-n* in *smi* and *spun* (note n above), final *-d* seems to have had a collective function. In the case of *ma.sma-d* and *pha.spa-d*, it refers to a pair or a small collective. Whether there was thus, originally or secondarily, an opposition between the marking of a pair or small collective (*-d*) and the marking of larger collectives (*-n*) has to remain open. I would think that the two different suffixes are simply the result of the alternation between oral and nasal stops.

It seems that individuals could be derived again via the (in part gender-related) morphemes *-po* and *-mo* from such collective nouns. Thus the Tibetan royal attribute *btsan.po* or *btsad.po* ‘(legitimate) scion, heir’ and its female counterpart *btsan.mo* ‘legitimate daughter’ refer to one each, out of the collective of children *\*btsa-n* (of the heir-bearing queen; for the derivation of *btsan.po* or *btsad.po* from the verb *btsaḥ* ‘give birth,’ cf. also Zeisler 2011b; 109f., n. 1). A *rgad.po* ~ *rgan.po* or a *rgad.mo* ~ *rgan.mo* could equally be an individual man or woman out of the collective of old people *rga-d* ~ *rga-n*.

r *bu-smad*: ‘family, mother and child(ren),’ cf. JÄK and Stein (1941: 227f), according to whom *smad* would mean ‘mother.’ In the *Mi.la.ras.paḥi rnam.thar*, there are three occurrences of *bu-smad*. In at least two of these cases, three members are implied, namely Mila, his mother, and his sister: Mila’s dying father decides to entrust his *bu-smad* and wealth to his sister and her husband and then speaks of *ḥaḥi bu-smad gsum* (Rus.paḥi gyan.can, ed., 1981). In all three cases, *bu* seems to stand for *bu.mo* ‘woman,’ hence ‘my wife and children, the three.’ Otherwise, *smad* would imply all female family members: the mother and the sister, and the translation would thus be ‘my son and the womenfolk, the three.’ In a male-centric society, it may well be the case that a mother is thought to be ‘lower’ than a son. But such an interpretation is contradicted by the case of *ma-smad*, where *smad* is used for the children independent of their sex. That is, even a son is thought to be ‘lower’ than the mother.

s *spad.spun*, OTC, l. 288, Pt 1073, l. 13, 28, Pt 1297 2, l. 5. Gñah.gorj Dkon.mchog Tshes.brtaṅ (1995: 50, n. 13), defines this as *bu.spun.daj pha.spun*, that is, ‘brothers of the son(s) and brothers of the father(s).’ Cf. also OTC, ll. 250, 273, 278 *spad.mtshan* ‘male relatives’ (Gñah.gorj Dkon.mchog Tshes.brtaṅ *ibid.* p. 49, n. 2) or ‘father and son’ (BDGM). Cf. also notes n and q above.

t *rmad*: *Gzer.myig*, Francke (1924–30: 504.81a5f.) *rmad btaṅ.bas* ‘having applied magic, magically.’ Cf. the oral stop counterpart *pra*, note b above.

u *Rmaj*: The name element appears several times in OTC. Ll. 165, 166, and 172 mention a person named Spug or Spuṅ Gyim.taṅ Rmaṅ.bu, who is involved in the conspiracy against the ruler Ziṅ.po.rje; ll. 402, 403, 405, 406, 424 mention a person named Spug Gyim.brtsan Rmaṅ.cuṅ as Sroṅ.brtsan Sgam.po’s messenger to Sad.mar.kar. *Rmaj.ba* also appears as a tribal name or clan designation in l. 471, where the Mgar family and their entourage are described as belonging to the Rmaṅ (*Mgar.khol ni Rmaj.ba*) in opposition to the Lho and Rjyegs, described as belonging to the Ḥphan (*Lho-Rjyegs ni Ḥphan.ba*). The secondary derivation with the nominaliser {-pa} may imply a play of words (as suggested by Macdonald 1971: 245): the Mgar could be depicted as people who merely talk or demand, or they may be despised as ‘commoners,’ while the Lho and Rjyegs are depicted as being really helpful.

v *rmajs*: The term appears in the *G.yuṅ.druṅ Bon* l. 22.7 (Linnenborn 2004: 191): *rmajs phal.pa* ‘common people.’ Apparently an older spelling for *dmajs*.

w *Spug*, *Spuṅ*: *Spug*, most probably derived from *Spu-gu*, ‘offspring, man of the Spu clan’ is a less common clan name, mentioned briefly in OTC, l. 416, and appearing in the name of the aforementioned Spug/ Spuṅ Gyim.taṅ Rmaṅ.bu and Spug Gyim.brtsan Rmaṅ.cuṅ. Given the possible interchange of oral and nasal stops, the forms *spug* and *spuṅ* are merely variants. Cf. also the Žaṅ.žuy-ian title *spuys.so* ‘teacher, master’ as well as the element *spuṅ(s)* or *sbuṅ* in some Žaṅ.žuy-ian names, e.g. Spuṅ(s).sad Zu.tse (Sbuṅ in Pt 1047, l. 20), but also Spuṅ(s) Rye.ryug (var. -rgyug, -ryuṅ, cf. Stein 1971: 249f.), Smon.to.re Sbuṅ.brtsan OTC, l. 68 and Ḥbri.t(h)o.re Sbuṅ.brtsan OTC, ll. 256, 258, names of ministers, and Khri.sgra Dpuṅ(s) ~ Spuṅ(s) ~ Sbuṅ(s).brtsan, the twenty-sixth king in the Tibetan genealogy (Haarh 1969: 50).

x *dmag.pa*: The spelling for ‘son-in-law’ as given by JÄK is corroborated by the Kenhat pronunciation with high tone /mākpa/. The final velar consonant might have been merely an allophone to a fricative velar, guttural, or laryngeal final as represented by the consonant *h*, which seems to have persisted as a kind of very soft aspirate and a lengthening of the vowel in early Old Tibetan. Variation between the two finals and a zero final occurs in very ancient names, such as *Gñah.khri* ~ *Mñah.khri* ~ *Ña.khri* ~ *Ñag.khri* for the legendary first king (Haarh 1969: 45). Alternatively, the final *-g* might represent a contraction from an original \**dmah-gu*, an ‘offspring of the low, that is, female lineage’ (cf. *phrug* < *phru-gu*, *sprug* < *spru-gu*, § 5.3).

The not-so-obvious (on first sight) relationship between in-laws (*dmag.pa*) and warriors (*dmag.mi*) could be explained by the fact that the *brtsan.po*’s power depended to a great extent on his marriage alliances. The army was thus, at least in part, an assembly of ‘in-laws’ or descendants of the families of the imperial spouses, and among whom the Dmu ~ Rmu and Rma might have figured prominently. In this connection, it is perhaps not without relevance that the legendary first king Gñah.khri is claimed

to have descended from the Dmu clan on the mother's side (Haarh, *ibid.* p. 268f.). For the variation in the vowel in the clan names Dmu ~ Rmu and Rma (as well as *Spu-* and *Spa-*), see sound alternation 4, § 2.4. More generally, a large percentage of the warriors might have been descendants of the Dmu or Rma clans of Žarj.žuj. Walter and Beckwith (1997: 1051) suggest an alternative derivation < PIE \*magh 'have power; warrior,' etc., which, however, leaves the *d-* (or rather *r-*) pre-radical unexplained.

y *dpaḥ.(bo)*: While this word has been mentioned by Stein as a 'male' counterpart to *dmaḥ* 'low,' hence with the possible connotation of 'exaltedness,' it is more probably a loan from an Iranian word, referring to the army, soldiers, and watchmen, cf. p. 98, n. 119 above.

z *Spra, Sbra*: A clan name. According to Stein (1961: 27, 28, 51, 54), the form *Sbra* is found in the *A.mdo chos.ḥbyuj*, a form *Pra* is also found in the *ms. Hermanns*.

aa *smra*: A certain group of priests (cf. Bellezza 2008: 350, 351, 355, 379, 381, 399, 469), described as 'divine proto-human beings.' They appear in a triple enumeration with men and *gšen*, another type of priests. They replace the *lha* 'deities or celestial beings' in similar enumerations and may represent an intermediate category. The *smra* may appear as human proto-types for whom prototypical rituals are performed, cf. Bellezza (*ibid.* p. 469ff. and 2010).

bb *sprug* (< *spru.gu*): derived from *phrug* ~ *phru.gu* via metathesis (→ sound alternation 1).

One can see that, although the "gender" distinction does not always hold, the elements are often semantically related, not only with respect to the *m~p* alternation in the horizontal lines, but also vertically (*spu* vs. *spru-*, *rmad* and the *verba dicendi*), and sometimes even diagonally (*miḥu* vs. *spreḥu*). The forms do not only show the alternation of homorganic nasal and oral stop, but also a certain variation in the vowels, *i*, *u*, *a*, apparently triggered by the labial initial and/or the post-radical *-r-* (→ sound alternation 4). They also demonstrate the different stages of the metathesis Cr > sCr > sC > rC > dC (→ sound alternation 1). The semantic relationship between, e.g., *smi*n (\**smun*) and *sman*, *smad*, as opposed to *spun*, *spud*, *span*, *spad* or between *phrug*u ~ *phrug* and *sprug* cannot be overlooked. Nor that between *miḥu* (< *rmi-* ~ *rma-* < \**mri-* ~ \**mru-* ~ \**mra-*) '(simian) offspring' and *spreḥu* (< *spra-* < \**pra*) 'small monkey, simian offspring' > 'monkey.' Accordingly, the formal similarity between *spra* 'monkey' < PF \**mraw-k* (\**mruk* ~ \**myok*) and *sprug*, *phrug* 'human offspring, child' < \**praw-k* (~ \**pruk*) < \**mraw-k* (\**mruk* ~ \**myok*) is not mere coincidence, but is based on a semantic relationship between humans and simians.

APPENDIX III: *BYA* ‘WOMAN, MEEK MAN’

As mentioned above (§ 3.3), the word *bya* appears in two Old Tibetan texts with the most likely meaning ‘woman’ or ‘meek man.’ The diminutive form *byeḥu* is used for ‘child(ren).’ The first of the two texts, Pt 1052, a *mo* divination text, contains an extremely negative forecast in ll. 1131–1134:

*thor gcig ni mkhar.dan pral | gyur.bu ni skam.la bton | bya.ban ni than.la las byeḥu.chun  
ni nu.dan bral || bu gcig ni dva.ru lu[s] mo ḥdi.ji.la btab.gyan ḥan rab.bo ||*

‘For an individual: [he] will be separated (forcefully) from [his] castle. For the whole [clan]:<sup>a</sup> they will be expelled into the desert (lit: dry land). The fearful<sup>b</sup> women will be left [back/ alone] on the plain. (Alternatively: The man’s/ the wife’s body will be left spread out/ cut up in pieces.<sup>c</sup>) The small children will be separated from the[ir mother’s] (feeding) breasts. A sole son will be left as orphan. This *mo*, thrown for which purpose ever, is extremely bad.’

## Annotations to the translation

a For *gyur.bu* cf. BDGM: *ma.tshay.ba med.par* ‘exceptionless, completely.’ This phrase, quite apparently, stands in opposition to *thor gcig*, which seems to refer to an individual person (cf. also JĀK *thor.bu* ‘single, separate’).

b For *ban* cf. *bag* ‘be afraid’ and *bag.med* ‘careless, unscrupulous’ (JĀK, TETT), hence *ban*- ‘fear’ could well be an older form of *bag*- (→ sound alternation 2). Given the possible destructive connotations of *than.la* or *than.ma* (see the following note), one could perhaps also think of a compound containing as second element the first part of the word *ban.so* ‘grave.’ This would then be a grave of a human being or perhaps a grave of a woman, and perhaps a plurality of such graves. On the other hand, the element *ban* in *ban.khan*, *ban.ba*, *ban.mdzod* ‘storehouse, granary, etc.’ and in *ban.so* ‘grave’ simply means container. The *bya.ban* could thus be the house or, metaphorically, the body of a human (or female) being.

c *than.la* is listed as an archaism for *bkram(.pa)* ‘spread out, scattered, distributed’ in BRGY and TETT, but since *than.la* can hardly be a (Tibetan) verb or participle, this seems to be merely an attempt to interpret this passage. At best, one could think that ‘be left on the plain or flat ground’ has a metaphorical application, meaning ‘be spread.’ *las* is an alternative form for *lus* ‘be left.’ Note also the expression *bde.moḥi than.la las.su ban.ḥgros gñis.la rtse tshe* ‘when we both run a race in the pleasant plain’ as found in the *Chos.rje Ḥbrug.pa Kun.legs.kyi nam.par thar.pa rgyas.pa lhoḥi bskor*, 13r (Kretschmar 1981: 30/ 91).



BDGM gives *thaj.ma*, with the same interpretation, that is, as an archaism for *bkram.pa*. Handwritten ཁྲ་ *ma* and ཁྲ་ *la* could be confounded, especially in the headless *dbu.med* script. However, a form *thaj.ma* cannot be a verb either, and the examples given in BDGM are clearly nouns *mi.rohi thaj.ma* | *phrag.gi* [! read *khrag.gi*] *hdo.ba chu.bran.tsam.du hdug.pa.la* ‘the *thaj.ma* of a human corpse, a stream of blood (*khrag.gi hdo.ba* as cited from the same text under *hdo.ba*), that is, as much as a little river’ and *sems.can gay.dag yod.pa de.dag thams.cad hkhor.lohi mthaḥ spu.gri.las byas.pas kun.tu gcod.par-byed* | *kun.tu dral.nas šaḥi thaj.ma gcig.tu byed* | ‘whatever animals are there, they are all, after drawing the rim of a circle with (lit. from) the sharp knife, fully cut, fully torn apart, and then the *thaj.ma* of the flesh is put together.’

The *thaj.ma* in question seems to be a large number of pieces of flesh, spread out, in the second case apparently as the result of some offering, in the first case possibly as the result of cutting up the corpse for a sky burial.

The literal classical meaning of *bya.baj* is ‘race of birds,’ but according to BDGM, it designates a ‘(big) raven.’ The meanings ‘breast of a bird’ or ‘(human) barrel chest’ as given by GShS as an alternative to *bya.braj* can be excluded. Corresponding to the spelling *bya.waj* (cf. Laufer 1898/1899: 108 for the interchangeability of *ba* and *wa* in syllables with a labial fricative initial), the word might also refer to a ‘caprimulgus’ a.k.a. ‘nighthawk,’ ‘nightjar,’ or ‘goatsucker’ (JÄK, TETT, and Bacot et al. 1940: 160) and perhaps also to a ‘bat’ (JÄK), more typically attested as *pha.waj*. With respect to the attestation of this word in the Old Tibetan Chronicle, see further below. Ḥbri.guṅ Skyabs.mgon Che.tshaṅ (2011: 233, n. 329) suggests the meaning ‘big bird’ for *bya.baj*. The translated version (Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang 2015: 190) renders the line with the *bya.baj* as “The great bird falls to the plain.”<sup>130</sup> According to Ḥbri.guṅ Skyabs.mgon Che.tshaṅ’s original description, the ‘big bird’ would almost look like an ostrich: ‘a big bird that runs on its legs and cannot fly’ *bya.chen.po rkaṅ.hgros byed.pa.las hphur-mi.thub.pa.laḥo*. He might perhaps think of a partridge, *srag.pa*, but then why doesn’t he say so? Partridges are also not particularly big (compared to eagles, vultures, owls, cranes, geese, and ravens), and they are able to fly, albeit only short distances.

The question, however, is: why would it be such a bad omen if birds (or bats) were scattered on a plain? Why would that be a problem? They could easily fly up and gather again. What kind of bad omen would it be if a ‘great bird, let it be a partridge, falls on to the plain’? If it cannot fly (high), from

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<sup>130</sup> The phrase *thaj.la las* appears in OTC as *thaj.la thas*, see below. Apparently not aware of this latter passage, Ḥbri.guṅ Skyabs.mgon Che.tshaṅ (2011: 233, n. 330) suggests the paraphrase *thaj.la gyar.ba* for *thang.la las*, with *gyar.ba* meaning (among other, unrelated things) ‘be lost’ or ‘scatter’ (TETT), but not ‘fall.’

where would it fall? One might perhaps think of crows or vultures hovering over, or sharply descending upon, corpses, but again neither movement fits the notion of being left or scattered on the plain.

The prediction would be completely different if it referred to helpless women (without provisions or riding beasts). And if the alternative interpretation holds, and a dead body or even several dead bodies are spread out and/or cut into pieces, then it would be a really bad omen, the worst of all.

Only bats, but not birds – except, perhaps, mythological creatures – could have (feeding) breasts or an udder (*nu* or *nu.ma*). The *byeḥu* in the line below, however, which are deprived of these breasts, if taken literally, would be ‘little birds’ not ‘little bats.’ Even if the forced interpretation ‘little bats’ were possible, the image of little bats or of mythical nestlings being deprived of their mother’s (feeding) breasts does not seem to have a common attestation in Tibet or in other cultures of the world.

Furthermore, the phrase concerning the *bya.bañ* and the following phrase concerning the *byeḥu* appear after the description of the fate of a lord and his clan and before the description of the fate of the sole remaining offspring. One could well expect a wife, a mother, or a plurality of wives and some other, unspecified children to appear in the middle.

The line concerning the *bya.bañ* reappears in the Old Tibetan Chronicle (OTC ll. 440–443) and a parallel passage, ll. 272 (given here in brackets), referring to a request for an oath of allegiance between the ruler and the Mgar clan. The phrase is apparently copied from another document, and the copyist clearly misread the word *las* ལས་ as *thas* ཐས་ (a meaningless form; the letters ལ་ *la* and ཐ་ *tha* might be confounded in bad *dbu.can* handwriting). This shows that certain expressions had become commonplace and were recycled rather mechanically wherever they might have fit. The classical meaning of *bya.bañ* (~*bya.wañ*) ‘nighthawk,’ ‘raven,’ ‘flight of bird,’ or even ‘big bird’ does not make sense in either document, nor any other interpretation based on the meaning ‘bird.’ Similarly, several other difficult words in the OTC passage cannot be understood by their later meanings, and so some lengthy discussions have had to be added in the annotations.

It should be noted that the reading *bya* ‘(meek man)’ in the first part of the passage quoted below is somewhat problematic. It depends on an assumed antagonism between ruler and subject corresponding to the antagonism of ruler and subject in the second part. If one reads the second line of the song as a parallelism to the first one, a different interpretation, implying birds, might be more feasible, but the interpretation then hinges on the equally problematic word *la(n).p(h)yi*. I shall first

give the text and its translation. This will be followed by a discussion of the word *la(n).p(h)yi* and an annotation of the other difficult words.

*mgur.gyi lan || blon Stoṅ.rtsang.yis gsol.pa |*  
 «*rje.ḥis ni bkaḥ stsal.pa gžaḥ.pyi ni yun.kyi srid |*  
 (/ *rje.ḥis ni bkaḥ stsal.na gžaḥ.ma ni yun.kyi srid ||*)  
*bya.ḥis ni žu pub.pa<sup>d</sup> | la.pyi ni gdaṅ.su dro ||*  
 (/ *bya.ḥis ni žu pub.na<sup>d</sup> la.pyi ni gdaṅs.su dro ||*)  
 ...  
*rje.ḥis ni ḥbaṅs ma.gtaṅ || rje.ḥis ni ḥbaṅs btaṅ.na | bya.baṅ ni thaṅ.la thas [=las] |*  
*ḥbaṅs.kyis ni rje ma.gtaṅ | ḥbaṅs.kyis ni rje btaṅ.na || ḥjon.mo ni šij.ka rebs || ...»*

'As a song in reply, the minister Stoṅ.rtsan pleaded:

«The lord having given an order, the trustworthy/ gladdening (*gžaḥ*) word (*pyi*)  
 (*alternatively*: the confidence/ the helmet, *gžaḥ.ma/we*) will last.<sup>c</sup>

The (meek) man having posed a request, the answer/ word of gratitude (? *la.pyi*)<sup>f</sup> will  
 be like the sun (lit. will be warm) on the forehead.<sup>g</sup>

...

May the lord never abandon [his] subject(s). If the lord abandoned [his] subject(s), the  
fearful women (or effeminate men) would be left [back/ alone] on the plain.  
 (*Alternatively*: The human/ the women's bodies will be left spread out/ cut up in pieces.)  
 May the subjects never abandon [their] lord. If the subject(s) abandoned [their] lord,  
 the autumn tree (*ḥjon.mo šij.ka*)<sup>h</sup>/ the paradise tree (if *ljon.šij* is intended) would dry up  
 (*rebs*)<sup>i</sup> completely. ... »'

Since Haarh, like all other translators after him, could not understand *bya* other than in its classical meaning, 'bird,' he came to the conclusion that the Yar.kluṅs dynasty of the Tibetan emperors had a bird totem (1969: 17f., 212). According to him, this would also be reflected in the bird-like eyes, opening from below, which characterize both the legendary 'first king' Gñāḥ.khri btsan.po and the child offered as ransom for the corpse of the 'mad king' Dri.gum (we may add: the bird-like face of the great translator

Rin.chen Bzaṅ.po, cf. Snellgrove & Skorupski 1980: 86). I have elsewhere shown, however, that the supernatural and partly avian features of the legendary ‘first king’ correspond to the signs of a *mahāpuruṣa* and are inherited from the iconography of the Buddha (Zeisler 2011b: 150f., n. 43.)

Because of his belief in a bird totem, Haarh (1969: 211) interprets the *bya* in the second line of the song as corresponding to the ruler. He translates the first two lines as “When *rje* issues a command, ([i]t is like) the moment when the rainbow extends. When *Bya* ‘extends’ a request, [t]he surface of (the glacier) *La-pyi* is warmed.” He, however, overlooks the fact that the *bya*, if not a real bird, but an equivalent for the ruler, is associated with the humilific expression *žu* ‘request,’ typically used for subaltern persons speaking to persons of higher status, whereas the lord (*rje*) is associated with the honorific expression *bkaḥ stsal* ‘order.’ These phrases should thus express an asymmetry of power between the *rje* and the *bya*. Haarh’s rather forceful reinterpretation of *bya.bañ ni thaṅ.la thas (las)* as *\*bya ni bañ.[soḥi] thaṅ.la thas* “Bya shall end (?) in the Plain of Tombs!” does not need further discussion.

Dotson (2013: 204 with n. 8 on p. 205) follows a suggestion by Don.grub Rgyal (1997 [1984]: 593–93, nn. 105, 106, cited after Dotson) that *žu* stands for *gžu* ‘bow,’ and that it would describe the arching of birds’ wings, while *la.phyi* means ‘baby bird.’ The latter meaning would also be offered by Huang and Ma (2000: 223, n. 20, cited after Dotson). Dotson (2013: 204) thus offers the following translation (the Tibetan phrases are added in square brackets): “The lord [*rje.ḥis ni*] – when he gives an order./ [*bkaḥ stsal.pa*] Always [*gžaḥ.pyi ni*] – an eternal realm./ [*yun.kyi srid*] The bird [*bya.ḥis ni*], when it shelters in its wings,/ [*žu pub.pa*] The chicks [*la.pyi ni*] – they are radiantly warm. [*gdaṅ.su dro*]”

The meaning ‘baby bird, chicken’ for *la.p(h)yi*, however, is nowhere attested, and it is anything but clear what the first part *la-* has to do with birds or chickens. The voiceless rendering of a word for ‘bird,’ baby or not (*phyi* instead of *bya* or *bjeḥu*), is also in need of some explanation. The translation thus implies several emendations. I fear the interpretations on the part of modern Tibetan speakers are triggered by the (understandable) preconceptions that *bya* can only mean ‘bird’ and nothing else.

Ḥbri.guṅ Skyabs.mgon Che.tshaṅ (2011), on the other hand, does not speak about baby birds, when he comments on the earlier parallel phrasing in OTC, ll. 272. He does read *žu* as *gžu* ‘bow,’ and he refers to water birds spreading their wings to be warmed by the sun: *chu.byas gšog.pa brgyaṅs.nas ṅi.ma bsro.baḥi don* (p. 218, n. 294). For *la.phyi* he has only the traditional explanation that it is the name of a mountain or the name of a resting place after a pass: *ri.žig.gi miṅ.ṅam yaṅ.na | la.rgyab sdod.gnas.kyi*

*mij* (ibid., n. 295). For *gdajs*, he offers ‘the birds’ perch, where birds are landing’ *bya bab.saḥi bya.gday* (ibid., n. 296). If that is true, I am not able to make sense of this sentence: ‘When the [water] bird spreads its wings, the mountain La.phyi is warm on the bird perch’ or perhaps ‘at Mount La.phyi it is warm on a bird perch’? Dotson quotes the English version (Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang 2011: 194 [=2015: 190]): “Like the bird spreading the arc of its wings,/ The sun in [read: is] warm on the roost across the pass.”<sup>131</sup> Can one really find bird perches or roosts just behind a pass? How could the spreading of the wings be equated with the sun on the roost? And what does this simile ascribe to the lord, if it is a simile for the lord?

Similar difficulties are met with in the parallel adduced by Dotson: *byaḥis khab sgob.na lan.phyi gtandu droste* (ITJ 740), l. 25, translated as “when the bird shelters in its breast, the chicks (*lan phyi*) are always warm,” where “*khab* [is taken] to be a noun derived from the verb *sgab*, meaning a place of shelter.” But *khab*, which by no means can be derived from *sgab* (the opposite might perhaps be possible), is, in fact, a honorific word for ‘castle, court, princely residence, mansion, house, place’ (*pho.bran.dan khyim.gyi že.sa/... rgyal.poḥi khab*, TETT); additionally it refers to a ‘bride’ or ‘wife’ (ibid.: *bag.maḥam chuḥ.ma*). Given its honorific register, the word is most probably not applicable to a bird’s nest, still less to a bird’s breast, except in the most abstract notion of a ‘shelter,’ which should, however, be a ‘(princely) shelter.’ Furthermore, *sgob* is not just ‘a form of the verb *sgab*’ (p. 205, n. 8), but the ‘imperative’ or rather *potentialis* form (expressing both the possibility of being acted upon and the ability to act) of the verb *sgab* ‘cover, protect, guard.’

In non-bound speech, a caseless noun could not be a location, and therefore the translation of *khab sgob* should be ‘be able to shelter the (princely) shelter, be able to protect the (royal) house,’ and not \*‘shelter sth/sb in a shelter’ (or ‘under the breast’), for which a locational marker would be necessary: *khab.la* or *khab.du*. It is true that case markers can be dropped in bound speech. The first part of the line, however, has only five syllables as opposed to the six-syllable meter, which Dotson takes to be typical for this type of exalted literature (Dotson 2013: 203, 206–208) and which is found at least in the second part of this line. The meter of only five syllables could easily have been filled with the help of

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<sup>131</sup> The translation of the second version on p. 199 is slightly different: “As the bird spreads its winged arch,/ The roost across the pass is sunny and warm.”

the locational markers *la* or *du*, but was not. The shortage in the meter thus indicates that no case marker was dropped.

The first part of the simile could equally well (or badly) be translated as, ‘If a man is able to guard/protect his house/wife’ and the second part perhaps as ‘the answer [of gratitude?] is always warm’ or ‘happy’ (cf. *dro.po*). Note that this interesting parallel leads to a further emendation from *la-pyi* to *lan.phyi*.

The use of *bya* instead of *ḥbays* ‘subject’ or ordinary *myi* ‘man’ in the context of an oath between ruler and subject could certainly have been motivated by a play on words: the fearful men being like a flock of frightened birds. As an obsolete word, *bya* might have acquired a sense of meekness and lowliness, hence also the application for ‘women’ and ‘children.’ Macdonald (1971: 269) has well observed that the occurrence of *bya* in the second line (*bya.ḥis ni žu pub.pa/ na*) might have the sense of (a lord’s) ‘subject.’ The contrast between ruler and *bya* would correspond to the contrast between ruler and *bays* in the last two lines of the oath formula presented here.

As mentioned above, the similes and formulae were obviously recycled rather mechanically, and, as the case of *thas* instead of *las* shows, the writers and copyists, most of them not native speakers of Tibetan, did not worry much about the concrete meaning of individual words and the coherence of the elements. If they were worried about an obsolete expression, they may have tried to adjust it to what they thought to be intended. In doing so, they might have further distorted or obscured the original expression.

Further annotations to the text and the translation:

d *žu pub-*: This could be an erroneous form for *žu pud.pa* (*phud.pa*) and *žu pud.na* (*phud.na*), cf. Pt 126, l. 111 *rje-ni zhu phud.nas* ‘asking [for] a lord.’ The letters *ba* and *da* have a quite similar outline, *ba* being closed on the right side, *da* being open, and the right stroke longer. This could perhaps lead to a misreading, if the original was blurred, and it might likewise lead to an unnoticed slip of the pen. But cf. the above discussion for an alternative interpretation in accordance with the interpretation of *bya* as ‘bird.’ One might think, however, also of an intentional change of the phrase towards a bird-compatible meaning, if the scribe was unaware of the possible meaning ‘human being’ of *bya*, even if that change would have clashed with the second part.

e *gža.pyi, gžaḥ.ma*: Haarh (1969: 211) renders both words as ‘rainbow,’ but the classical word for ‘rainbow’ is *ḥjaḥ.tshon*, based on an earlier *gžaḥ.tshon* (JÄK), possibly analyzable as ‘gay-colored,’ cf. *gžaḥ*, ‘sport, joke, play, sing.’ The reading ‘*mgu.ba*: rejoice, be joyful, satisfied; satisfy, gladden’ offered by TETT is based on this latter meaning. Here, most probably the second meaning of

*gžah*<sub>2</sub> ‘believe, trust, confide’ is intended, cf. also Bacot et al. (1940: 159) and Macdonald (1971: 269). The third meaning of *gžah*<sub>3</sub> ‘hide os; hide sth’ (TETT) can be disregarded.

Jim Valby in TETT offers the interesting interpretation ‘a kind of helmet’ for *gžah.ma*. The expression could thus perhaps also be a paraphrase for the common epithet of power: the helmet being high *dbu.rmog mtho*. Dotson (2013: 205, n. 8) points to the possibility that *gžah* “may be related to the term *zha / zhar* found often in oaths, e.g., *nam nam zha zhar* (‘always and forever’).” This does not explain, however, the combination with *pyi*.

Ḥbri.guñ Skyabs.mgon Che.tshan (2011: 218, n. 293), referring to the BDGM, suggests that both *gžah.ma* and *gžah.phyi* are expressions for a small thing and the speaker or first person (‘I’): *phran.day ŋa.ray žes.paḥi don*. Here, it would be the first person plural pronoun *ray.re žes.paḥi don*. The translation might then be “The lord having given an order, we will last.”

As shown above (p. 81), *phyi* can have the meaning ‘human being’ or ‘man.’ Since *gžah* is also the name of a border country (TETT), one might read this in the sense of ‘I/We the humble man/ men from the frontiers.’ In that case, the obvious counterpart *la.phyi* might perhaps rather be a *bla*. or *lha.phyi*, a person from the godly realm, but that does not really fit the notion of being warm.

f *la.pyi*: One could expect that *la.pyi* is a counterpart to *gžah.phyi*. Reading it as an expression for a communicative act, *la* probably corresponds to *lan*, cf. the compound *la.yogs* ‘retribution.’ *lan.p(h)yi* is found Pt 1047, l. 212f. most probably in the sense of ‘answer’ *nad.pha.la btab.na phya // ñams.phaḥi ŋo || bon byas.naḥi gdon lan.pyir ltas.te myi.phan.no* ‘if applied for a patient, the lot/ the proclamation [is]: a sign of decay. [Even] if a *bon* [ritual] is performed, looking at the answer to be uttered, it will not help/ there is no benefit.’ One could expect that the ‘return-word’ is the response of the lord. But it may equally refer to the word of gratitude after the request is fulfilled, cf. also *lan.med* ‘ungrateful’ (TETT).

If *gdays*, with the meaning ‘forehead,’ is an honorific word, as JÄK indicates, the ‘return-word’ should be beneficial to the lord and should thus be a ‘word of gratitude’ by the subject. This would also correspond well to the intended parallelism of the lines in the upper and the lower part.

This is all very conjectural, but on the other hand, reading this word as the name of a mountain chain: *La.phyi*, does not lead to a very convincing simile: ‘Mt Laphyi will heat up until radiation,’ cf. Bacot et al. (1940: 145, 160): ‘Quand c’est l’oiseau qui demande / [Le glacier] La-pyi finirait par fondre,’ similarly Haahr (1969: 211): ‘The surface of (the glacier) *La-pyi* is warmed.’ Why should a glacier or, in this case, a whole mountain chain, melt or radiate, just because of the request of a bird or a meek man?

As for Dotson’s interpretation of *la.pyi* as ‘chicken,’ see the discussion above.

g *gday(s)*: There are several possible readings. Based on the -s-less form, Ḥbri.guñ Skyabs.mgon Che.tshan (2011: 218, n. 296) suggests the interpretation ‘rack/ rail on which a bird can descend’ *bya bab.saḥi bya.gday.laḥo*. This yields the meaning ‘roost,’ discussed above. For the form *gdays*, JÄK gives the meanings 1. ‘music, harmony, melody’ and 2. ‘resp. for *dpral-ba* forehead.’ *gdays.pa* yields the meaning ‘hon. convalescent.’ A further possibility is to read it as a colloquial form of *gdey* ‘confidence, assurance, cheerfulness.’ Taking *gdays* as a word for the forehead, a further possible interpretation could be that the word refers to a gesture of deep gratitude that one can still observe among elderly people in Ladakh. The grateful person takes the hand of

his/her beneficiary and puts it with the outside (*phyi*) on his/her forehead. This would imply that *gdays* is, or originally was, a non-honorific word.

h *hjon.mo šij.ka*: ‘copper-red tree,’ i.e., a tree in autumn. An alternative reading could perhaps be ‘the Copper-Colored (*Hjon.mo*), that is, the [royal] branch (*šij.ka*).’ Note, however, the codified use of *ljon.pa* ‘tree’ in the Mahāvīyutpatti, with additional derivations, such as *ljon.šij* ‘tree’ (WTS 21: 428a/b). Accordingly, the WTS 21 (p. 398b) takes *hjon.mo* as a mere spelling variant. Cf. a phrase from the Old Tibetan Ramayana, A250: *lo.ḥdab lhags-pas gduys-pa-ḥi hjon-šij bžin* || ‘like a tree afflicted by a cool wind on its leaves’ (de Jong 1989: 33: translation, 124: text). One may, however, wonder whether a tree affected by cold wind is not a copper-colored tree. When reading *hjon.mo* as ‘tree,’ we most likely deal with a translational compound: *hjon.mo-šij.ka* ‘tree-tree,’ separated by the topic marker *ni*. Macdonald (1971: 270) takes *hjon.mo* to be the name of a bird. She is possibly thinking of *hjol.mo*, a kind of blackbird or nightingale. One could well think of an assimilation of the syllable-final *-l* to the following nasal. The topic marker *ni* would be better motivated as setting apart the subject, and the structural parallel with the preceding line would be preserved. However, Macdonald does not indicate what the bird might do or suffer. The term *hjon.mo* is, in fact, explained by Ḥbri.guṅ Skyabs.mgon Che.tshaj (2011: 233, n. 331) as ‘an [alternative] designation of the nightingale’ *bya hjol.mo.la zer.ba.yin*. See also below, i, for his interpretation of *rebs*.

That it is something to be avoided by the lord or the subjects is evident from the context. Cf. also OTC, ll. 51–53 and 59–60, where the absence of a good patriarch leads to the flight of the herdsmen and, as far as the lord is likened to the rain, his absence would lead to the decay of grain and insects. His presence, of course, has the opposite effect (cf. Zeisler 2011b: 108, 109 with n. 68 on pp. 173–177; somewhat differently Bialek 2018b: 141f.). For that reason, one could perhaps think that the last part of the formula has something to do with the absence of water: if the subjects rebel against their lord, this would be like rebelling against the so badly needed rain: they would simply starve. Cf. also Bacot et al. (1940: 160), who similarly translate “Le bel arbre vert [*ljon.šij*] jaunirait [*rebs*]” (‘The beautiful green tree turns yellow’). Haahr (1969: 212) renders this as “*Hdzon-mo* [!], the Forest, shall wither!”

If *hjon.mo* referred to a bird, *k(h)a* should be interpreted as a shortened postposition with the meaning ‘on.’ However, it seems that birds would typically not sit *on* top of a tree, but rather *in* a tree, *between* the branches or *on* a *branch* (cf. also the example in TETT: *byiḥu šij.khar sdod.pa* ‘a little bird sitting on a branch’ with the locative-purposive *-r*). While there might be specific contexts allowing for the relationship ‘on’ a tree, the context of a starving bird would probably not. One could also expect that the postposition *-kha* would be avoided in cases where there are nominal derivatives with *-kha*.

On the other hand, the suffix *-kha* or *-ka*, as related to *kha(g)* ‘part’ (cf. Hahn 1996, 5,7 for *-ka*), may be used to single out a particular item from a collective, such as /rikha/ for a ‘single mountain’ in contrast to /ri/ in the sense of ‘mountain range’ as used in Zanskar, Khamak, and Spiti (Rebecca Normann, p.c., and own observation). In this sense, *šij.ka* could refer to a single branch. Given the relationship between the single lord and the many bondsmen in our simile, the single branch would most probably refer to the emperor or the royal lineage, and the whole passage would contain a not very subtle warning to the lord that he is nothing without his bondsmen. *Hjon.mo* might thus be the name of a clan, based either on the color term ‘copper-red’ or on an adjectival with the meaning ‘be capable,’ (*hjon.po*). One could possibly relate the color to the royal lineage and their claimed ancestors, the Dmu, and/ or to the *Gdoṅ.dmar*, not so much Red Faces, but the *red moiety* of the Gdoṅ clan or tribe. Both, the



Dmu and the Gdoŋ (in the latter case, apparently only one half) are associated with the color *smug.po* ‘brown, maroon, purple’ (cf. Stein 1959, index, p. 598, for the white and brown Gdoŋ, Ldoŋ, or Ḥdoŋ).

If *Hjon.mo* is only an assimilated form of *hjol.mo*, it should be noted that the latter word originally need not have referred to a specific kind of bird but may instead have been an attribute that became the name of a bird only later. I have come across the use of /dʒolmo/ as an attribute for the peacock in the dialect of Gya-Sasoma in Ladakh. The attribute is most likely related to the verb *hjol* ‘hang down,’ but in this case, it most probably refers to the fluttering rather than ‘hanging’ feathers of its tail. RSK gives the meaning also as ‘swishing, luxuriant.’ Hence, *hjon.mo* as an attribute could alternatively have referred to thin hanging and fluttering twigs or just to the beauty of a tree, perhaps in flower.

Adjectives typically follow the modified noun; in order to precede the modified noun, the latter should have a relational (genitive) marker. Case markers, however, can be dropped before the topic marker *ni*. One may object that an interpretation along this line would distort the formal parallelism with the other lines. But semantically, this reading might be the best, as it precisely fits the context of an oath of mutuality: if the lord abandons the bondsmen, they will scatter like unattended cattle, but if the bondsmen run away, the lord is deprived of his income and power.

The question that remains is whether the notion of trees and branches could be used metaphorically for families and their lineages. The idea does not seem to be completely unknown. At least after the *phyi.dar*, one can find the symbol of a tree and its branches for different countries or different tribes in the context of a cosmogonic narrative in the *Go.zlum das.chad* (Bsod.nams Tshe.brtaṅ Yo.seb Dge.rgan 1976: 8f.; cf. Vitali 2003c: 43f.). One could think that in the latter context, the tree in question is a mythological world tree, a paradise tree (*ljon.šij*). The compound could thus have been derived from an original *\*ljon.mo šij.ka*, and the spelling *hjon.mo* (for *ljon.mo*?) in OTC l. 443 could then also involve a word play.

All in all, the parallel attestation of *hjon.šij* in the Old Tibetan Ramayana makes the reading of a dying ‘autumn tree’ much more likely than the reading of a dying bird. Whether the simile then refers to the bondsmen or to the king or perhaps to both together (if the main trunk corresponds to the king and the branches to the bondsmen) must remain an open question.

i *rebs*: Possibly related to *srebs*, an honorific word for ‘being hungry,’ if we allow for a sound change as in modern West Tibetan, where in most dialects all clusters *sgr-* and *sbr-* have turned into /r/. In this case, the surviving Western Tibetan forms are /rims/ < *\*sbrims* and Nubri /rip/ < *\*sbribs* (CDTD). Note, however, Kyirong /rem/ < *\*srebs* ‘to be hungry (used as a joke)’ (CDTD). For *rebs* Ḥbri.guṅ Skyabs.mgon Che.tshaṅ (2011: 233, n. 332) quotes the BDGM, which gives the meaning ‘dry up, wither’ *skam rñid.du gyur.pa*, but he goes on to explain that the whole line (?) about ‘the little bird nightingale freezing on top of a tree in the winter’ is ‘applied here as an exaggerated example’ *hdir dgun byihu hjol.mo šij.rtser khyags.ši theb.par dpe mdzad.do*. One would, however, like to know, for what the example stands and why *rebs* ‘dry up’ can also mean ‘frozen to death.’

## APPENDIX IV: VERBS OF SPEAKING DEVELOPING INTO VERBS OF DOING

As mentioned in § 3.4, the OT/CT verb root  $\sqrt{bya}$  (I: *byed*, II: *byas*, III: *bya*, IV: *byos*) has the meaning ‘do, make, perform.’ Stems II and III, however, are often used in the sense ‘said’ (stem II) or ‘to be called’ (stem III). The verb is commonly used for names and quotations. Felix Haller (p.c., April 2004) suggests that we might be dealing with two different verbs, and that the second verb with the stems I/III: *bya*, II: *bya* means ‘speak.’ The CT verb I: *bgyid*, II: *bgyis*, III: *bgyi*, IV: *gyis* (OT also with infix -r-, e.g., Pt 1038 *brgyi* and *brgyis*) has exactly the same meaning: ‘do, perform’ and, with stems II and III, ‘said’ and ‘to be called.’ Another ‘do’ – ‘speak’ doublet is found in Kurtöp, namely the verb *ḡak*.

*ḡag*, alternatively *dnags*, is actually found in Tibetan as a noun with the meaning ‘speech, talk, word.’ A verb is derived via an *s*- prefix: *snag(s)*, *bsnags*, *bsḡag*, *snog* ‘praise, (re-)commend, extol,’ yielding another noun, *snags* ‘incantation, magic formula.’ The verb *mḡag*, *mḡags* ‘commission, charge, delegate, send’ might likewise be related, as these acts are necessarily associated with speech acts. The nominal base as well as the nominal derivations indicate that the speech-act-related meaning is most probably the (more) original one. As already mentioned, these nouns and verbs can be related to a set of Chinese *verba dicendi*, which corroborates the speech-act-related meaning as the basic one.

For many scholars, the use as a *verbum dicendi* appears to be a mere extension of the meaning ‘do,’ as shown by the citation from Schuessler (2007: 27–28), which is partially repeated here for convenience: “[V]erbs with the meanings ‘to think, to say’ or other abstractions are apparently semantic extensions of verbs ‘to be, to do, to act, to go.’” Hence “WT *byed-pa*, *byas* ‘to make, fabricate, do’ > *ḡes byas-pa* ‘thus said, so called (i.e., marks direct discourse).”

Similarly, Hyslop (2017: 79), who is apparently not aware of the Tibetan cognates, suggests that the use as a *verbum dicendi* and a quotative is a mere ‘extension’ from the basic meaning ‘do,’ and further (p. 237), that the ‘main verb *ḡak* ‘do’ still retains its *original meaning* in some contexts but is *also used* as a verb ‘say’ (emphasis added). One reason for this judgement could be that *ḡak* as a quote marker typically (although not necessarily always) takes the form *ḡaksi*, where *-si* can be described as a conjunctive or adverbial participle, corresponding to the Tibetan *lhag.bcas* morpheme (or semi-final particle) *ste* (with allomorphs).

Saxena (1988) has shown for several Tibeto-Burman languages that the verb ‘say’ may develop many functions, some of which are seemingly unrelated to the notion of speaking. Among the related functions she mentions:

- a) naming or labeling,
- b) ‘quotative’ and ‘evidentiality,’ that is, marking of personalized and impersonal or unspecific hearsay information,
- c) onomatopoeic expressions,
- d) the causal conjunction ‘if you say why’ for reasons or causation, and
- e) question word complementizer.

The first four functions a)–d) are attested in Ladakhi and more generally in the Tibetic languages. The first three are also attested in Kurtöp (see Hyslop 2017: 119, ex. 110 and 129, ex. 138 for naming, chapter 11.5.9 for the quotative, 85, ex. 54 and 338, ex. 630 for onomatopoeic expressions).

Among the seemingly less related functions, Saxena mentions:

- a) embedded questions,
- b) purpose conjunction,
- c) conditional conjunction,
- d) marking of deliberate acting, and
- e) expletive.

See Saxena (1988: 377f.) for a summary of all functions and again pp. 378–383 for the examples).

Function f), “embedded questions,” might better be described as the marking of embedded or rather extracted propositions. In such cases, Ladakhi speakers clearly prefer a “direct” quote closed with the formal equivalent to Kurtöp *ŋaksi*, namely *zer-e* or *zer-de* (say-LB) to embedded nominal constructions, cf. examples (42) with embedding and (43) with the *zer(d)e*-construction. The non-finite form *zer(d)e* may also be used to extract mere thoughts (44). Cf. also Zemp (2018: 526–530) for similar usages in the Purikpa dialect of Kargil. In that dialect, not only the adverbial form *zere* occurs, but also the nominalized form *zerba* and its genitive form *zerbi* with the same functions. Saxena (1988: 383) gives a similar example for what she calls “Ladakhi,” but which is a Baltipa dialect. She further gives an

example for the use of *zere* with a purposive function in the same “Ladakhi,” that is, Baltipa, dialect, a function that I have not yet observed in the Ladakhi dialects. The example may, however, be treated like an extracted proposition, cf. (45).<sup>132</sup>

(42) Ladakhi, dialect of Teya (Shamskat)

<i>gergan-is</i>	<i>thugu-un-la</i>	<i>ma-sil-khan-ifia</i>		<i>jat</i>	<i>şoks.</i>
teacher-ERG	child-PL-ALL	NG-study-NLS-PPOS		memory	frighten.PA

‘The teacher scolded the children harshly for not having studied.’ (Possible, but not common.)

(43) Ladakhi, dialect of Teya (Shamskat)

<i>gergan-is</i>	<i>thugu-un-la,</i>	« <i>sil-ma-sil-ba!</i> »	<i>zer-e,</i>	<i>jat</i>	<i>şoks.</i>
teacher-ERG	child-PL-ALL	study-NG-study-emph	say-LB	memory	frighten.PA

‘The teacher scolded the children harshly, saying: «[You] did not study at all!» (Preferred construction.)

(44) Ladakhi, dialect of Domkhar (Shamskat)

<i>dañtfik</i>	<i>ŋ+i</i>	<i>gađi</i>	<i>rku-se-kher-tsok.</i>		
some.days.ago	I+GEN	car	steal-LB-take.away-PA-INF		
« <i>su-s</i>	<i>khers</i> »	<i>zer-e</i>	<i>samba</i>	<i>t<sup>e</sup>aj-tsana,</i>	...
who-ERG	take.away.PA	say-LB	thought	give.PRS-when	

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132 In the examples below, the following abbreviations will be used: ABL: ablative; AES: aesthetic (experiencer marking); ALL: allative; ANT: anterior; COM: comitative; COND: conditional; CONJ: conjunction; CT: co-temporal; DF: definiteness marker; DEM: demonstrative; DM: discourse marker; emph: emphatic; ERG: ergative; FOC: focus; FUT: future; GEN: genitive; GRD: gerundive; hum: humilific; IMP: imperative; INDEF: indefinite; INF: inferential; INSTR: instrumental; LB: *lhag.bcas* morpheme *ste* (used among other functions for sequential clause chaining and circumstantial/ modifying subordination); LOC: locative; LPO: limited personal observation; LQ: limited quantifier (‘a, some’); NF: non-finite (the Kurtöp form in question seems to be cognate with the *lhag.bcas* morpheme); NG: negation; NLS: nominalizer; PA: past; PL: plural; POST: posterior; PPOS: postposition; PROB: probability marker; PRS: present; QM: question marker; REP: reportative; SEQ: sequential; SIM: simultaneous, TOP: topicalizer. The small plus sign “+” is used for morphemes that cannot be properly segmented (or that are not syllabic in the written examples). A dot “.” is used for inherent functions.

'Some days ago, my car was stolen. When I thought about who [could] have stolen [it], ...' Lit.:  
When I thought about [it], saying [to myself]: «Who [could] have stolen [it]», ...'

(45) Baltipa, dialect of Khaplu

<i>kho-la</i>	<i>lam-la</i>	<i>tʃaːŋ</i>	<i>kif-kif</i>	<i>mi-go</i>	<i>zer-e,</i>
he-AES	road-ALL	what+FM	problem	NG-need	say-LB
<i>ŋa-si</i>	<i>ŋi</i>	<i>bizb+o</i>	<i>jambo</i>	<i>tanʃ.</i>	
I-ERG	I+GEN	servant+DF	together	give.PA	

'In order that he might have no trouble on the road, I sent my servant with him.' (Adapted from Read 1934: 67, cf. Saxena 1988: 383). Alternative translations could be 'Saying: «there is no need for you<sup>133</sup> to have trouble on the way»,/ Thinking [i.e., saying to myself]: «he does not need to have trouble», I sent a servant with him.'

A closer look at the Kurtöp data reveals a similarly complex picture. First of all, *ŋak* as a lexical verb unrelated to speaking does not simply mean 'do.' Several of Hyslop's examples point to a broader meaning 'happen, be the case,' even 'exist (at a place)':

(46) Kurtöp

<i>dasum</i>	<i>ɛaː</i>	<i>ŋak</i>	<i>wɔ</i>	<i>ŋak-si</i>
today	what	<i>ŋak</i>	QM	<i>ŋak-NF</i>

'What happened today [she] said.' (Excerpt, adapted<sup>134</sup> from Hyslop 2017: 309, ex. 561.)

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133 Note that pronouns are usually shifted in quotations and propositions as if they were indirect speech, whereas verb forms are given as in direct speech.

134 I shall reproduce here only the analytical lines. In connected speech, many elements assimilate or get shortened. The example text is reconverted into IPA (except for aspiration, which is kept as an ordinary *h*, and the labial glide, which is kept as an ordinary *w*). Note that only the sonorants and the palatal fricative *ç* show a true tonal contrast, while high and low tone are a concomitant feature of unvoiced [ $\pm$ aspirated] and voiced consonants, respectively. Only first syllables may show tonal

(47) Kurtöp

*ɕaːjaŋ ma-ŋak-na*

what-also NG-ŋak-PA/ANT.LPO

‘Nothing happened at all.’ (Adapted from Hyslop 2017: 79 ex. 35.)

(48) Kurtöp

*woksoso ŋak-pala*

this.much ŋak-NLS

‘It will be this much.’ (Adapted from Hyslop 2017: 289, ex. 516.)

(49) Kurtöp

*khako ŋak-nani tsama gor-ta*

uphill ŋak-COND some take.time-PRS/SIM.LPO

‘If it is (located) uphill, it takes a while.’ (Adapted from Hyslop 2017: 144, ex. 169.)

(50) Kurtöp

*mau chötshok ŋak-si deŋhoni naŋ-na*

down religious.office ŋak-NF immediately receive-PA.LPO

‘As their religious office is/was (located) down there, [we] got [it] immediately.’ (Adapted from Hyslop 2017: 351, ex. 652.)

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contrast, as in the tonal Tibetic languages. Glossing is changed and simplified as I do not subscribe to Hyslop’s loose terminology of aspect (I shall use the notions of tense and relative tense instead). I am likewise rather skeptical with respect to her use of ‘mirative’ (and will gloss it as ‘limited personal observation’), cf. n. 132 for abbreviations. Translations may be altered, as well, according to my understanding of the intended meaning or the underlying analysis.

(51) Kurtöp

*khwe thamca rō=na ηak*

water all valley=LOC ηak

‘All water being (located) in the valley...’ (Adapted from Hyslop 2017: 141, ex. 160.)

Like *zer(d)e* in Ladakhi (or similar expressions in other Tibetan languages, see Zeisler 2004: 916–919), it is very common in Kurtöp to use *ηaksi* as an unspecific (and bleached) *verbum dicendi* before more specific *verba dicendi* or other speech-related verbs, such as insist, persuade, etc.

(52) Kurtöp

*ηai kwa ηak-si lap-male*

I.ERG tooth ηak-NF tell-NLS

‘I will utter, saying: «tooth».’ ≈ ‘I will utter the word [for] «tooth».’ (Adapted from Hyslop 2017: 237, ex. 391.)

(53) Kurtöp

*ciηku=gi gaη=na nāmlo ηak-si çu-male*

small=GEN time=LOC year ηak-NF hum.say-NLS

‘To tell, saying: «at the time, the year, when [we] were small»’ (Adapted from Hyslop 2017: 236, ex. 390.)

(54) Kurtöp

*khit pra jur-lu ηak-si mōlam tap-si*

s/he monkey become-IMP ηak-NF prayer do-NF

‘uttered a prayer, saying: «turn into a monkey!», and...’ ≈ ‘prayed that she should become a monkey, and ...’ (Adapted from Hyslop 2017: 372, ex. 705.)

(55) Kurtöp

*tshe daruŋ boi phi-je-ni ŋak ūr-si*  
 DM again they.ERG open-IMP-ABL/COM *ŋak* pressurise-NF

*tshe naŋ=gi ko=jaŋ phi-si ŋak-mo*  
 DM inside=GEN door=also open-NF do-CT

*tshe tshe əākhwī mu: ŋak lap-si*  
 DM DM hunting.dog NG.exist *ŋak* say-NF

*tshe wo=nij naŋ=i nōrbu me-go ŋak boi jiku thuŋ-si*  
 DM DEM=ABL inside=GEN jewel NG-want *ŋak* they.ERG deception do-NF

‘And again they [the king’s assistants] insisted, saying: «open the door», and then, when the inside door was opened, and then, then [the couple] told [them], saying: «there is no hunting dog» and then they [the king’s assistants] deceived [the couple], saying «[we] don’t want your jewel inside» and ...’ (Excerpt, adapted from Hyslop 2017: 347f., ex. 646.)

Related to this, and corresponding to Saxena’s function e), is the likewise very common use of *ŋaksi* or *ŋak* alone to close up propositions that are embedded under mental verbs as if they were direct thoughts spoken aloud (cf. also example (44) from Ladakhi and (45) above from Baltipa). Especially, examples (57) and (58) can be similarly understood as expressing the idea of ‘thinking, by saying [to myself/yourself]’. The proposition is indicated here with angled brackets.

(56) Kurtöp

*tshewaŋ=gi <karma=gi khit=na ga> ŋak bran-ta*  
 Tshewang=ERG <Karma=ERG s/he=LOC like> *ŋak* know-PRS/SIM.LPO

‘Tshewang knows that <Karma loves him>.’ (Adapted from Hyslop 2017: 95, ex. 61.)

(57) Kurtöp

*<ŋara=ko=ja[ŋ] nēn go-ikina> ŋak sam-si*  
 <I.self=LOC=also marriage need-FUT/POST> *ŋak* think-NF

‘Thinking, that <I also need a marriage>...’ (Adapted from Hyslop 2017: 187, ex. 274.)



(58) Kurtöp

*da ro ɲak-mo tshe*

now corpse ɲak-CT DM

*da <nor-gi aaa mahe=gi the wen-ta> ɲak nōksam thuy*

now &lt;cow-GEN umm water.buffalo=GEN INDEF be-LPO ɲak thought do

‘Now when (we) say «corpse», now (we) should think of it as <a cow’s ... umm ... a water buffalo’s corpse>.’ (Adapted from Hyslop 2017: 220, ex. 343.)

Finally, *ɲak* may also follow other verbs, without apparently adding (much) to the meaning of the foregoing verb. Depending on what affix follows, *ɲak* may function as a temporal coordinating conjunction, (55), line 2, and (59) to (61), but it may also indicate a more abstract causal relationship or reason (62). The coordinating conjunction may be compared to the use of Lhasa Tibetan /tɛ̃ː/ (< *byas*) for subordination or rather clause chaining (see DeLancey 1991, 2004: 1592b) and also to Saxena’s causal conjunction (g), if we take ‘causal’ more widely as temporal-causal or sequential.

(59) Kurtöp

*bas=gi su=ko ge ɲak-si dot ni-pala*

bus=GEN below=LOC go do-NF sleep stay-NLS

‘[I] went under the bus and slept there.’ (Adapted from Hyslop 2017: 112, ex. 88.)

(60) Kurtöp

*tshe tshoɲ=na ge ɲak-si tshe lok ra-taki wen-ta*

DM business=LOC go do-NF DM return come-PRS/SIM be-LPO

‘[He] had gone for business and was coming back.’ (Adapted from Hyslop 2017: 350, ex. 651.)

(61) Kurtöp

*chorten-the kora thuy ɲak-mo mi-the ra-ta=ri*

chorten-INDEF circling do do-CT man-INDEF come-PRS/SIM-LPO=REP

‘Reportedly, a man came, while [she] was circumambulating the chorten.’ (Adapted from Hyslop 2017: 290, ex. 522.)

(62) Kurtöp

<i>da</i>	<i>net</i>	<i>daru</i>	<i>naṭpa</i>	<i>ta-ro</i>	<i>ge-taki</i>	<i>ŋa-kini</i>
now	we	now	sick.person	see-GRD	go-PRS/SIM	do-SEQ
<i>da</i>	<i>choma</i>	<i>wo</i>	<i>gapo</i>	<i>nāmisami</i>	<i>khor-male</i>	<i>mû</i>
now	gift	this	PL.FOC	very	take-NLS	NG.exist

‘Now, because we were going to see a sick person, we didn’t take many gifts.’ (Adapted from Hyslop 2017: 339, ex. 634.)

Hyslop (2017: 167) further mentions that “‘why,’ [...] is composed of *zhâ* [=ɛa:] ‘what’ and *ngaksi* ‘do-NF,’ perhaps analogous to English ‘how come’” (cf. also her example 229 on p. 168). I would not think of an analogy with English, and I would also think that a phrase like ‘what saying’ for ‘what thinking’ might be closer to the notion of justification that is behind the question ‘why’ than the phrase ‘what doing.’ The phrase is certainly also related to the causal conjunction ‘if you say why’ for reasons or causation, function d) above.

It should be noted, however, that the questions ‘how’ and ‘why’ as well as the notion of thinking are commonly rendered with the verb for ‘doing’ in the core Indo-Aryan languages, cf. Sanskrit *kim kṛtvā* ‘how done’ > ‘how, why’ besides *kim iti* ‘how quote’ > ‘why,’ Hindi/Urdu *khyon kar* ‘how done’ > ‘how.’ In Sanskrit, one can further find phrases like *iti kṛtvā* ‘quote done’ > ‘having so considered’ or ‘thinking that’ in contrast to *ityuktā* ‘quote-said’ > ‘having said that’ (I thank Rainer Kimmig, University of Tübingen and previously also University of Heidelberg, for drawing my attention to these facts).

In Western Shamskat Ladakhi the question ‘why’ is expressed by the word (or phrase) *fiba* from *fli* ‘what’ and *ba*, the latter synchronically meaning ‘do,’ related to Classical Tibetan *byed* etc. ‘do.’ It may be the case that the Shamskat Ladakhi construction may betray an original meaning ‘say.’

For Standard Spoken Tibetan, Tournadre and Sangda Dorje (2003) describe three derived usages of the verb *byas* /tɕhɛ̃ː/: 1. *byas* is used to derive adverbs, such as *skyid.po* ‘pleasant’ > *skyid.po byas* ‘pleasantly’ (p. 237). This can be related to the meaning ‘do,’ and one finds similar usages in the dialects

of Ladakh with the verb /tʃo/ ~ /tʃē/ ‘do’. 2. *byas* is used to chain items in enumerations, see (63), where the meaning ‘do’ is less appropriate than a notion of thinking or saying. 3. *byas* is used as a clause-chaining conjunction, indicating sequentiality, and as connector for the durative construction with *bsdad* ‘stay’, see (64). Here, the lexical meaning has bleached out completely, comparable to examples (59) to (62) from Kurtöp. The function as a mere conjunction appears to be not just the result of the bleaching of the meaning ‘do’, but appears to be the bridge for the meaning shift from ‘speak’ to ‘do’.

(63) Standard Spoken Tibetan) Tournadre and Sangda Dorje 2003: 264, adapted)

<i>spags</i>		<i>byas,</i>	<i>lug.ša</i>	<i>bcos.pa</i>	<i>byas,</i>
kneaded.tsampa		done/said	mutton.meat	boiled	done/said
<i>de.nas</i>	žo	<i>byuñ-na,</i>	<i>hgrig-gi.min-gro.</i>		
then	curd	appear-COND	be.ok-NG.FUT-PROB		

‘Kneaded tsampa, boiled mutton; then if [we] get some yogurt, that should be enough.’

(64) Standard Spoken Tibetan) Tournadre and Sangda Dorje 2003: 345, adapted)

<i>kha.lag</i>	<i>rgyas.po</i>	<i>že.drags</i>	<i>bzas-byas,</i>		
food	extensive	very	eat.PA-CONJ		
<i>gžas.rnam.thar</i>		<i>btan-byas-bstad-kyi.red.</i>			
opera.song		give-CONJ-stay-FUT			

‘When they’ve eaten well, they sit and sing songs from the Tibetan opera.’

While there does not seem to be evidence available for the derivation of clause-chaining *byas* from a *verbum dicendi*, I would think that the clause-chaining usage of an earlier *verbum dicendi* could well have been derived from its use as an extractor of embedded indirect propositions, including mere thoughts. From the clause-chaining function, the meaning could then possibly get extended to a more general and abstract notion ‘be the case.’ This would further allow an extension towards the notion ‘behave as’ and then ‘(unspecifically) do.’ In Old and Classical Tibetan, *byed* is common for ‘acting,’ e.g., as a king, and in such cases, one could also think of an originally underlying speech-act-related meaning, such as ‘declare’ oneself or ‘being declared’ king etc.

Saxena (1988: 384) thinks that the development of a *verbum dicendi* into a mere conjunction is due to the influence from Indo-Aryan languages, but apart from Nepali, she doesn't give any examples for such usages. Saxena apparently overlooks the opposite directionality of the meaning extension from 'do' to 'say' in the other Indo-Aryan languages, mentioned above. While Nepali and other Indo-Aryan languages, such as Bengali, on the northeastern border, may be influenced by Tibeto-Burman and other adstrates, the grammaticalization of 'say' into a complementizer and further to a subordinator seems to be a rather common process world-wide (see Heine & Kuteva 2002: 261–269 in general, Miller 2000 for two Arabic-based Creoles). This process is psychologically well motivated. The development of 'do' into a conjunction and subordinator, by contrast, does not seem to be common, at least it is not mentioned among other shifts in Heine & Kuteva (2002: 117–120), and the meaning shift from 'do' to 'say' as a quote marker (and conjunction) seems likewise uncommon if not unknown.

A quite comparable development can be observed in Turkic languages. Here, a quotation concerning a statement of the primary speaker about his/her future acts 's/he said s/he will do X,' developed into an expression of intention 's/he wants to do X' and then further into a grammaticalized proximative construction 's/he is about to do X' (Simon 2019: 278 with further references and examples from Salar and, under the latter's influence, from Amdo Tibetan). Again, the grammaticalization path leads over a rendering of thoughts and intentions as if they were direct speech.

What further speaks against an Indo-Aryan influence on Tibetan, even in the form of a mere enhancement of the meaning shift from 'say' to 'do,' is the fact that – if my analysis is correct – the meaning shift from 'speak' to 'do' for the root  $\sqrt{bya}$  must have taken place a long time before the documented stage of Old Tibetan, so that one could possibly rule out any Indic influence through Buddhism. The supposed intermediate step, the use of  $\sqrt{bya}$  as a conjunction for propositions, is apparently completely lost, with only the clause-chaining conjunction in Lhasa Tibetan possibly bearing witness for the suggested development. After the meaning 'do' became firmly established, it seems that the original communicative meaning became restricted to the stems II and III. At least this seems to be more likely than to assume that the meaning shift occurred before stem I *byed* and stem IV *byos* developed.

## ABBREVIATIONS

1. Languages and dialects<sup>135</sup>

Tibetan/ Tibetic	SHM	dialects of Sham (LAD Shamskat)
AT Amdo Tibetan	TYA	dialect of Teya (LAD, Shamskat)
BAL Baltipa dialects	WSHM	dialects of western Sham (LAD Shamskat)
CT Classical Tibetan		
CtrT Central Tibetan		
DOM dialect of Domkhar (LAD, Shamskat)		
ESHM dialects of eastern Sham (LAD Shamskat)		
GYS dialect of Gya-Sasoma (LAD, Kenhat)		
KHAL dialect of Khalatse (LAD, Shamskat)		
KNH Kenhat dialects (LAD)		
LAD Ladakhi		
LEH dialect of Leh (LAD, Kenhat)		
LING dialect of Lingshed (LAD Shamskat)		
NBR dialects of “Nubra” (i.e., Ldumra; LAD Shamskat)		
NUR dialect of Nurla (LAD Shamskat)		
OT Old Tibetan		
PUR Purikpa dialects (LAD)		
		Other languages
	EIr	Eastern Iranian
	MC	Middle Chinese
	mOC	‘Minimal’ Old Chinese, Schuessler’s (2007) view of what is minimally reconstructable. It does not preclude the possibility of more elements.
	OC	Old Chinese
	PF	reconstructable protoform (insensitive to borrowing or inheritance)
	pIE	proto-Indo-European
	pII	proto-Indo-Iranian
	pLB	proto-Lolo-Burmese
	WrB	Written Burmese

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<sup>135</sup> I have followed here for the greater part the convention of naming a dialect by the name of the place where it is spoken. However, since one does not speak of the England, France, China, or Tibet language, and since one neither speaks of the Paris or München dialect (at least not in French or German), I think one should use derivations, either of one’s own language or of the language described. For the Ladakhi dialects I thus use the common Tibetan and Ladakhi derivation in *-pa*, infrequently in *-ma* or refer to a *dialect of* a certain place or region.

## 2. Dictionaries and texts

- B&S *Baxter-Sagart Old Chinese reconstruction*, Baxter and Sagart (2011)
- BDGM *Brda.dkrol gser.gyi me.lon*, Btsan.lha N̄ag.dbarj Tshul.khrims (1997)
- BRGY *Bod-Rgya tshig.mdzod chen.mo*, Zhang et al. (1993)
- CDTD *Comparative Dictionary of Tibetan Dialects*, Biemeier et al. (Vol. 1 in preparation, Vol. 2, 2018)
- EDOC *ABC Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese*, Schuessler (2007)
- GShS Goldstein, Shelling, and Surkhang (2001)
- GSR *Grammata Serica Recensa*, Karlgren (1964)
- HPTB *Handbook of Proto-Tibeto-Burman*, Matisoff (2003)
- HST *A Sinologist's Handlist of Sino-Tibetan Lexical Comparisons*, Coblin (1986)
- ITJ (IOL Tib J) manuscripts of the Indian Office Library, now British Museum, London
- JÄK *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*, Jäschke (1881)
- LDRR *La.dvags rgyal.rabs*, Francke (1926)
- OTC *The Old Tibetan Chronicle*, Pt 1287, Imaeda et al. (2007)
- Pt manuscripts of the Fonds Pelliot tibétain, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
- RSK *Rang-skat, A Ladakhi-English Dictionary*, Norman (2019)
- SPR *Balti-English English-Balti Dictionary*, Sprigg (2002)
- STEDT *Sino-Tibetan Etymological Dictionary and Thesaurus*, Beta version Matisoff (2011–2016), -β1: data retrieved between 2012 and 2014, -β2: data retrieved or rechecked in November and December 2015
- TETT *Tibetan to English Translation Tool*, Pelligrini (2006–2009)
- TVP *Die Tibetische Version des Papageienbuches*, S. Herrmann (1983)
- WTS *Wörterbuch der tibetischen Schriftsprache*, Hartmann and Höllmann (2011/2013)
- ZhDM *Zhang zhung Dictionary*, Martin (2010)
- ZhNN *Zhang-zhung Tibetan English Dictionary*, Dagkar Namgyal Nyima (2003)

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