

WHAT DID QIANGIC PEOPLES CALL THE TWELVE MONTHS?

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

The way the Decimal Cycle (*tiān-gān* 天干) and the Duodecimal Cycle (*dì-zhī* 地支) are combined and permuted to designate time is one of the most striking features in the Chinese sphere of cultural influence. Under this influence, most surrounding minorities have borrowed such terms as part of their cultural vocabulary. Xixia, for instance, is one of them; its Chinese-inspired month-names are recorded completely in *Zhǎng Zhōng Zhū* 掌中珠 'Pearl in the Palm'. However, today the Chinese commonly use the Gregorian calendar, and the twelve months are expressed by cardinal numbers in the spoken language. The old terms are used only in writing and then only occasionally. Thus by observing what minorities without independent written characters call the twelve months, we may gain insight into their speakers' indigenous conceptualizations of time, as reflected in their own languages.

This paper aims to discuss the month-names of Qiangic languages. We find that contemporary Qiangic languages have many different ways of naming the twelve months. Most of them are either borrowed from Tibetan or imitate Chinese, and such borrowing or imitation certainly has its sociolinguistic significance. In addition, the most remarkable point is that although the source language may be identical, different borrowing languages may subject the loans to different phonological and morphological modifications to conform to their own individual internal linguistic systems. These different modifications can help us understand the time depth of Qiangic languages. Moreover, such observations may help us reinterpret the complicated phonological systems of the Qiangic languages.

2.0. QIANGIC LANGUAGES AND THE MONTH-NAMES

The genetic position of the Qiangic languages has been debated over a long period of time (Liu 1989). It is reasonable to regard the Qiangic languages as an independent branch of the Tibeto-Burman family. However, we must still depend on continuing language surveys to clarify what languages should be

included in this branch, their internal relationships, and the status of this branch with respect to other languages in the Tibeto-Burman family (Matisoff 1997a, 1997b). What is observed in this paper will be helpful for us in answering these questions.

What we have called the “Qiangic languages” in this paper follows the classification of *Hànzàngyǔ Gàilùn* 漢藏語概論 (*Introduction to Sino-Tibetan*), edited by Ma Xueliang 馬學良 (1991). The linguistic data on the Qiangic languages presented in this paper, except for the materials on Muya which were collected and examined by the author, come mainly from two lexicon collections published in mainland China: *Zàngmiǎnyǔ Yǔyīn Hé Cíhuì* 藏緬語語音和詞彙 (*Phonetics and Lexicon of Tibeto-Burman Languages*; abbreviated here as ZMYYC) and *Zàngmiǎnyǔzú Yǔyán Cíhuì* 藏緬語族語言詞彙 (*A Tibeto-Burman Lexicon*; abbreviated as TBL). Other data recorded in the STEDT database have also been consulted. The literature on Xixia has been referred to as well, since Xixia is now considered to be close to the contemporary Qiangic languages.

2.1. *The Twelve Month-Names in Twelve Qiangic Languages*

The twelve Qiangic languages recorded in ZMYYC are a northern dialect of Qiang (QN), called Mawo, and a southern dialect (QS), called Taoping; two dialects of Pumi, Taoba (PT) and Qinghua (PQ); the Suomo dialect of Jiarong or rGyalrong (RG); Ergong (EG); Muya (MY); Queyu (QY) or Zhaba; Guiqiong (GQ); Ganluo Ersu (ES); Namuyi (NM); and Shixing (SX). Their twelve month-names are shown in the table on the facing page.

At first glance, differences between these twelve languages seem great, except that MY and QY have some similar phonetic forms. However, this is in fact not the case. What we need to do is to go back to a generation (some thirty years ago), when month-names were not part of the necessary vocabulary for Qiangic speakers. It is obvious that only intellectuals are able to borrow from other languages such cultural items as month-names. Thus, informants' individual understandings of the questions put to them by the eliciting linguist, as well as the particular language they borrow from, are the main sources of the surface differences. As a result, such vocabulary needs to be reanalyzed, and we can reinterpret these materials from at least two points of view: phonetic and morphological.

	January	February	March	April
QN	aʂ	ɣnəʂ	khsiʂ	gzəʂ
QS	χpe ⁵⁵ ʂi ³³	ɳi ⁵⁵ ʂi ³³	tʂhi ⁵⁵ ʂi ³³	dʒi ²⁴¹ ʂi ³³
PT	tə ⁵⁵ li ⁵⁵ mei ³⁵	nə ³⁵ li ⁵⁵ mei ³⁵	sō ³⁵ li ⁵⁵ mei ³⁵	zɛ ⁵⁵ li ⁵⁵ mei ³⁵
PQ	ɣu ¹³ ʂi ¹³ ɳi ⁵⁵	ʒō ¹³ uā ⁵⁵ ɳi ⁵⁵	sā ⁵⁵ uā ⁵⁵ ɳi ⁵⁵	la ¹³ dʒɛ ⁵⁵ iɛ ¹³
RG	zla wa ta mbo	zla wa ɳəs pə	zla wa ksəm pə	zla wa bʒi pə
EG	to mbo	ɦɛ ɳu pa	ɦɛ səm pa	ɦɛ vʒu pa
MY	dɛ ³³ wɛ ⁵⁵ tā ³⁵ bu ⁵⁵	dɛ ³³ wɛ ⁵⁵ ɳi ⁵⁵ pɛ ⁵³	dɛ ³³ wɛ ⁵⁵ sō ⁵⁵ mbe ⁵³	dɛ ³³ wɛ ⁵⁵ zɳi ³⁵ pɛ ⁵³
QY	da ³⁵ wa ⁵⁵ tā ³⁵ bu ⁵³	da ³⁵ wa ⁵⁵ ɳi ⁵⁵ pa ⁵³	da ³⁵ wa ⁵⁵ sō ⁵⁵ pa ⁵³	da ³⁵ wa ⁵⁵ zɳi ³⁵ pa ⁵³
GQ	dō ³³ bu ⁵⁵ li ⁵³	ɳi ⁵⁵ ɳpu ⁵⁵ li ⁵³	sō ⁵⁵ pu ⁵³	ʒi ³⁵ pu ⁵³
ES	tʃi ³³ i ⁵⁵ ka ³³	ri ⁵⁵ i ⁵⁵ ka ³³	sua ³³ i ⁵⁵ ka ³³	si ⁵⁵ i ⁵⁵ ka ³³
NM	tʃi ³³ ɳi ⁵⁵	ɳi ⁵⁵ ɳi ⁵⁵	sō ⁵⁵ ɳi ⁵⁵	zi ³³ ɳi ⁵⁵
SX	dʒi ³⁵ ɳu ⁵⁵	ɳɛ ³³ ɳu ⁵⁵	sɛ ⁵⁵ ɳu ⁵⁵	ʒue ³³ ɳu ⁵⁵
	May	June	July	August
QN	kuaʂ	χtʂuʂ	stəʂ	kha ¹ ʂ
QS	kua ²⁴¹ ʂo ³³	χtʂi ⁵⁵ ʂo ³³	ciŋ ³¹ ʂi ³³	tʂhe ⁵⁵ ʂi ³³
PT	ɳue ⁵⁵ li ⁵⁵ mei ³⁵	tʂhu ³⁵ li ⁵⁵ mei ³⁵	ɳə ³⁵ li ⁵⁵ mei ³⁵	ʂue ³⁵ li ⁵⁵ mei ³⁵
PQ	qa ⁵⁵ sgiu ⁵⁵ ʒi ¹³	qa ⁵⁵ xiɛ ⁵⁵ ʒi ¹³	qa ⁵⁵ ɣuā ⁵⁵ ʒi ¹³	qa ⁵⁵ sōu ¹³ ʒi ¹³
RG	sla wa ɳɛ pə	sla wa tʂək pə	sla wa bdən mbə	zla wa brjɔt pə
EG	ɦɛ ɳa pa	ɦɛ dʒu pa	ɦɛ vdem pa	ɦɛ dʒɛ pa
MY	dɛ ³³ wɛ ⁵⁵ ɳa ⁵⁵ pɛ ⁵³	dɛ ³³ wɛ ⁵⁵ tʂu ³⁵ pɛ ⁵³	dɛ ³³ wɛ ⁵⁵ dō ³⁵ mbe ⁵³	dɛ ³³ wɛ ⁵⁵ dʒɛ ³⁵ pɛ ⁵³
QY	da ³⁵ wa ⁵⁵ ɳa ⁵⁵ pa ⁵³	da ³⁵ wa ⁵⁵ tʂu ³⁵ pa ⁵³	da ³⁵ wa ⁵⁵ dē ³⁵ pa ⁵³	da ³⁵ wa ⁵⁵ dʒɛ ³⁵ pa ⁵³
GQ	ɳo ⁵³ pu ⁵³	dʒu ³⁵ pu ⁵³	dē ³⁵ pu ⁵³	dʒɛ ³⁵ pu ⁵³
ES	vu ⁵⁵ i ⁵⁵ ka ³³	ə ⁵⁵ i ⁵⁵ ka ³³	tʂhi ⁵⁵ i ⁵⁵ ka ³³	pa ⁵⁵ i ⁵⁵ ka ³³
NM	ɳa ³³ ɳi ⁵⁵	qhu ³³ ɳi ⁵⁵	ʂi ³³ ɳi ⁵⁵	ɦi ³³ ɳi ⁵⁵
SX	ɦā ⁵⁵ ɳu ³³	tʂho ⁵⁵ ɳu ³³	ʂɛ ⁵⁵ ɳu ³³	ɕyi ⁵⁵ ɳu ³³
	September	October	November	December
QN	rguəʂ	hədiuʂ	he tciʂ	ha nəʂ
QS	χguə ²⁴¹ ʂi ³³	χa ³¹ dy ²⁴ ʂi ³³	χa ³¹ tʃi ³³ ʂi ³³	χa ³¹ ɳi ³³ ʂi ³³
PT	gu ³⁵ li ⁵⁵ mei ³⁵	tʂhi ³⁵ li ⁵⁵ mei ³⁵	zu ³³ ta ³³ ɛ ⁵³	khəu ¹³ ci ⁵⁵ ɛ ⁵³
PQ	qa ⁵⁵ sti ⁵⁵ ʒi ¹³	ɳa ¹³ dʒu ¹³ ɳi ⁵⁵	tsu ⁵⁵ squa ⁵⁵ ɳi ⁵⁵	ua ¹³ dʒɛ ⁵⁵ iɛ ¹³
RG	zla wa rgu pə	zla wa ptʃəpə	zla wa ptʃə ptʃək	sla wa ptʃə ɳɳəs
EG	ɦɛ gu pa	vtci pa	vtɕə tɕu pa	vtɕə ɳi pa
MY	dɛ ³³ wɛ ⁵⁵ gu ³⁵ pɛ ⁵³	dɛ ³³ wɛ ⁵⁵ tɕyɳ ⁵³ pɛ ⁵³	dɛ ³³ wɛ ⁵⁵ tɕu ⁵⁵ tci ⁵⁵ pɛ ⁵³	dɛ ³³ wɛ ⁵⁵ tɕu ⁵⁵ ɳi ⁵⁵ pɛ ⁵³
QY	da ³⁵ wa ⁵⁵ gu ³⁵ pa ⁵³	da ³⁵ wa ⁵⁵ tci ⁵⁵ pa ⁵³	da ³⁵ wa ⁵⁵ tco ⁵⁵ tci ⁵⁵ pa ⁵³	da ³⁵ wa ⁵⁵ tco ⁵⁵ ɳi ⁵⁵ pa ⁵³
GQ	gi ³⁵ pu ⁵³	tʃi ⁵⁵ pu ⁵³	sē ⁵⁵ ndʒi ⁵⁵	bi ³³ li ⁵⁵ si ³³
ES	tɕu ⁵⁵ i ⁵⁵ ka ³³	ʂi ⁵⁵ i ⁵⁵ ka ³³	pu ³³ i ⁵⁵ ka ³³	la ⁵⁵ i ⁵⁵ ka ³³
NM	ɳgu ³³ ɳi ⁵⁵	xo ³³ ɳi ⁵⁵	xo ³³ tci ³³ ɳi ⁵⁵	xo ³³ ɳi ⁵⁵ ɳi ⁵⁵
SX	guə ³³ ɳu ⁵⁵	qɛ ⁵⁵ ɳu ³³	qɛ ⁵⁵ tɛ ⁵⁵ ɳu ³³	qɛ ⁵⁵ ɳi ⁵⁵ ɳu ³³

2.2. The phonetic forms

These languages, except ES (its details will be discussed later), seem not to borrow from Chinese directly, and in fact they do not. We can observe the languages whose forms are apparently cognate to Tibetan: the RG month-names are almost identical to Written Tibetan (WT); MY and QY are similar to Lhasa 拉薩 Tibetan (LT) and Dégé 得格 (Sde-dge) Tibetan (DT), and are probably borrowed from DT.

The morphological structure of month-names in WT is regular: *month + ordinal*, i.e., ‘month-first’, ‘month-second’, etc. The corresponding words in LT and DT have obvious phonological correspondences and parallel morphological forms. See the following data from ZMYYC:

	WT	LT	DT
January	zla ba dan po	ta ¹³ wa ¹³ than ¹³ ko ⁵³	da ¹³ wa ⁵³ tan ¹³ bo ⁵³
February	zla ba gñis pa	ta ¹³ wa ¹³ ñi ⁵⁵ pa ⁵³	da ¹³ wa ⁵³ ñi ⁵⁵ pa ⁵³
March	zla ba gsum pa	ta ¹³ wa ¹³ sum ⁵⁵ pa ⁵³	da ¹³ wa ⁵³ sun ⁵⁵ ba ⁵³
April	zla ba bzhi pa	ta ¹³ wa ¹³ çi ¹³ pa ⁵³	da ¹³ wa ⁵³ yi ³¹ ba ⁵³
May	zla ba lña pa	ta ¹³ wa ¹³ ña ⁵⁵ pa ⁵³	da ¹³ wa ⁵³ ña ⁵³ pa ⁵³
June	zla ba drug pa	ta ¹³ wa ¹³ tshu ⁷¹³ pa ⁵³	da ¹³ wa ⁵³ tshu ⁷³¹ pa ⁵³
July	zla ba dbun pa	ta ¹³ wa ¹³ t̃y ¹³ pa ⁵³	da ¹³ wa ⁵³ den ⁵⁵ pa ⁵³
August	zla ba brgyad pa	ta ¹³ wa ¹³ ce ⁷¹³ pa ⁵³	da ¹³ wa ⁵³ dze ³¹ pa ⁵³
September	zla ba dgu pa	ta ¹³ wa ¹³ ku ¹³ pa ⁵³	da ¹³ wa ⁵³ gu ³¹ ba ⁵³
October	zla ba btçu pa	ta ¹³ wa ¹³ tçu ¹³ pa ⁵³	da ¹³ wa ⁵³ tçu ⁵³ pa ⁵³
November	zla ba btçu gtçig pa	ta ¹³ wa ¹³ tçuk ⁵⁵ tçi ⁷⁵³ pa ⁵³	da ¹³ wa ⁵³ tçu ⁷⁵³ tçi ⁵³
December	zla ba btçu gñig pa	ta ¹³ wa ¹³ tçuñ ⁵⁵ ñi ⁷⁵³ pa ⁵³	da ¹³ wa ⁵³ tçuñ ⁵³ ñi ⁷³⁵

In WT, the ordinary cardinal numerals are used with the suffix **-pa** to yield the ordinals, except in ‘January’ (**dan po** means ‘first’ rather than ‘one’). The corresponding words in LT and DT are the same, but their pronunciations are slightly different. There is still no explanation for why **po** in WT is read as **ko⁵³** in LT. We do not see the shift $*p > k$ in other cognate words; thus **ko⁵³** in LT is probably not the same morpheme as **po** in WT. However, there are parallel examples illustrating the shift $*p > b$ in DT, as in **tan¹³bo⁵³** ‘first’:

WT	DT	
tçar pa	tcha ⁵³ ba ⁵³	‘rain’
khron pa	tshon ⁵⁵ ba ⁵³	‘well’
khan pa	khun ⁵⁵ ba ⁵³	‘house’

Similarly, **pa** in 'March', 'April', and 'September' in WT is recorded as **ba**⁵³ in DT also.

Thus, in these words *b-* and *p-* may not be contrastive in DT.¹ In addition, it is also confusing that **bzi** 'four' in WT is read **yi**³¹ in DT. In some numbers *z-* in DT corresponds to *ɕ-* in LT: 'four' in DT is recorded as **ze**³¹ in ZMYYC: **ze**³¹ 'four', **-ze**³¹ 'four(teen)' (*shí* 'ten' + *sì* 'four' = 'fourteen' in Chinese), **ze**³¹- 'for(ty)' (*sì* 'four' + *shí* 'ten' = 'forty' in Chinese). However, in the section "Phonetic system of Khams dialects" of ZMYYC, given as an example of consonant *ɣ-*, the word for 'four' is recorded as **yi**⁵³.² These might be due to recording or proofreading errors, so we leave this question open for the time being. As for other month-names in LT and DT, they have consistent phonological correspondences with WT, which conform to their own internal phonological rules in general.

LT and DT are dialects of Tibetan, and Qiangic languages are certainly not. But it is apparent that Qiangic speakers borrow cultural vocabulary from Tibetan dialects. Consequently, it is necessary to explain the phonological changes between WT and modern Tibetan dialects. LT is one of the Wei-Tibetan 衛藏 or Central (dbus) dialects, and it is now regarded as standard Tibetan. DT represents the current Tibetan dialect in the Kang-Ba 康巴 (Khams) area, where most Qiangic languages are located.

2.3. The three Qiangic language groups

On the basis of WT, LT, and DT, this section will carefully examine the month-names in the Qiangic languages. The twelve languages are divided into three groups, according to a cross-classification of their phonetic and morphological forms.

2.3.1. The first group

The first group focuses on RG, EG, MY, and QY (recorded in ZMYYC), and also briefly mentions Daofu (DF, another name for Ergong), Queyu (QY), Zhaba (ZB, another name for QY³), and GQ (in TBL). Combining the records in TBL and ZMYYC, we find that the phonetic and morphological forms of month-names in this group are apparently borrowed from Tibetan. However, different speakers of the same language may give different answers to the same

¹ I.e., *p-* and *b-* may be in free variation here.

² In ZMYYC there are some words with *ɣ-* in DT that corresponds to *ɕ-* in LT, such as the following (with the corresponding WT in parentheses): **?a**⁵³ **ɣuŋ**⁵⁵ (**zan** **zan**) 'uncle', **ɣu**⁵³ (**gzu**) 'bow', **ɣu**³¹ (**bzu**) 'to milk', **ɣa**⁷⁵¹ (**fjog**) 'to put', **ɣu**³¹ (**bzu**) 'to melt'. I think the phonemic contrast between *ɣ-* and *z-* in these DT words is doubtful.

³ However, QY in ZMYYC is equivalent to Queyu as recorded in TBL, rather than to ZB.

target of a questionnaire. As a result, there are considerable differences between the records in these two books. We attempt to explain these discrepancies in the following sections.

2.3.1.1. *rGyalrong (RG)*

The foregoing section has pointed out that the RG recorded in ZMYYC is almost a duplicate of WT, and its phonetic forms seem to be more conservative than those of LT or DT.⁴ A superficial examination of these forms makes it look as if RG is simply another Tibetan dialect, and a very conservative one at that! However, I consider that such neat and orderly correspondences are characteristic of loanwords rather than cognate words. The reason why we regard as LT and DT as closely related to WT is that they show obvious and consistent phonological correspondences with WT, and such correspondences can be seen in both cultural and non-cultural vocabulary. In particular, the LT and DT words for 'moon'⁵ plus the cardinals (or ordinals) are perfectly consistent with the WT forms in month-names.

It is not the same in the case of RG. On the one hand, RG has a different word *tsə la* for 'moon'. Moreover, its way of expressing ordinals is different from that of WT. As in other Qiangic languages, the roots of the cardinal numerals in RG are cognate with Sino-Tibetan (ST) generally, but they are prefixed by *kə-* when counting (except for 'eight'). However, the RG ordinal numerals are borrowed from WT, with the addition of *ʔa gə* ('order' or 'ordinal').⁶ Both the cognate cardinals with Sino-Tibetan and the borrowed ordinals from Tibetan show corresponding phonetic changes different from those in the numbers used in month-names. We can compare the following cardinals of RG and WT.⁷

⁴ In TBL, only the names of the first two months are recorded. The others are inferred by analogy. Unless specifically noted to the contrary, the forms we cite are from ZMYYC.

⁵ The single word for 'moon' also means 'month' in these languages; there is no separate word for 'month'.

⁶ *ʔa gə* is recorded as *a-ŋgə* in Lin Xiangrong 1993. This book is useful for the study of Tibetan loanwords in *rGyalrong* as well.

⁷ Ordinals in WT are formed by adding a suffix to the cardinals, except for 'first'. Ordinals of *rGyalrong* recorded in ZMYYC are 'first', 'fifth', and 'eighth' only. The remaining forms in brackets are supplied from Lin 1993. There are some differences in phonetic notation between these two books, which will not be explained in detail here. The most striking one is the word for 'eight' in 'eighth' (*dì-bā* in Chinese: *dì* is the prefix for ordinals and *bā* means 'eight'). Lin records it as *rdzət-pə*.

	RG		WT
	Cardinal	Ordinal	
'one, first'	kətEk	ʔa gə taŋ mbo	gtɕig / daŋ po
'two'	kənEs	(ʔa gə ŋəs pə)	gŋis
'three'	kəsam	(ʔa gə səm pə)	gsum
'four'	kəwdi	(ʔa gə bʒə pə)	bzi
'five'	kəmŋo	ʔa gə rŋə pə	lŋa
'six'	kətʂok	(ʔa gə tʂək pə)	drug
'seven'	kəfnəs	(ʔa gə bdən mbə)	bdun
'eight'	wərjat	ʔa gə rjjet pə)	brgjad
'nine'	kəngu	(ʔa gə rgu pə)	dgu
'ten'	ʃtʃE	(ʔa gə ptʃə ptʃək pə)	btɕu
'eleven'	ʃtʃatEk	(ʔa gə ptʃə ptʃək pə)	btɕu gtɕig
'twelve'	ʃtʃənəs	(ʔa gə ptʃəŋ ŋəs pə)	btɕu gŋis

These terms reveal that the vernacular words are different from literary cultural borrowings. On the other hand, such neat and orderly phonetic correspondences of the twelve month-names between RG and WT are not internally consistent, since the roots of the cardinals in the spoken language that are cognate with ST have different phonetic correspondences with WT. Consequently, the time depth of the month-names of RG is limited, and has nothing to do with the supposed “conservatism” of RG.

It is also worth noting that **-po** and **-pa** in the names of ‘January’ and ‘July’ in WT are found as **-mbo** and **-mbə** in RG, respectively. The voiceless stop consonant becomes a prenasalized voiced stop. I assume that this prefixed nasal is due to the extension of the nasal final of the preceding syllable, which voices the voiceless consonant of the following syllable. In other words, we can see the modifications of loanwords made by speakers to conform to their own phonological rules. Therefore, the abundant prenasalized consonants of RG recorded in ZMYYC do not necessarily all have the same historic status.⁸

As for the **-ŋŋəs** in ‘December’, it is probably a printing error, for there is no **-ŋŋ** consonant cluster in the “Phonetic System of RG” section of ZMYYC (pp. 201-9). Based on the foregoing materials about ordinals, the first segment of **ŋŋ-** should be the final of the preceding syllable. However, it is still difficult to explain why **ptʃəŋ** cognate with **btɕu** has a final **-ŋ**, but **ptʃə** in ‘October’ and ‘November’ does not.

⁸ Actually, both ZMYYC and TBL need to be used with caution.

2.3.1.2. *Muya (MY) and Queyu (QY)*

As for the twelve month-names in MY and QY, they are likely be borrowed from DT. Both languages have their own cardinals and the single word for ‘moon’. The borrowed month-names, except the modification of vowels—the half-low front vowel $-ɛ$ of MY⁹ corresponds to the front $-a$ of DT, and the MY rounded vowels $-u$, $-o$ have some differences in tongue position from DT—are almost identical with the month-names of DT. These are therefore not analyzed or explained in detail here.

The consonant cluster *mb-* in ‘March’ and ‘July’ in MY remains to be explained. After careful consideration of the data, I conclude that this prefixed nasal *m-* is also the result of extending the final nasal or the nasalized vowel of the preceding syllable. In other words, *mb-* and *b-* in the final syllable of ‘January’ are not actually contrastive phonemes.¹⁰ Thus **tã³⁵ bu⁵⁵** in ‘January’ may be recorded **ta³⁵mbu⁵⁵**. In fact, the single word for ‘first’ is **to⁵⁵mbu⁵³**.¹¹ We can see that the recorder’s practice in analyzing phonemes and dividing segments is not consistent. For this reason, the prenasalized consonants recorded for MY in ZMYYC and TBL should be reconsidered carefully.

According to TBL, Guiqiong (GQ) speakers also borrow month-names from DT. In addition, TBL also records Queyu, the distribution of which is adjacent to that of EG and QY (Zhaba/Queyu).¹² Queyu and GQ are similar in their forms for month-names, so they may have borrowed from DT also. In TBL only ‘January’ and ‘February’ are recorded:¹³

	January	February
QY (Zhaba)	ndə ⁵⁵ wə ⁵⁵ dã ⁵⁵ po ⁵⁵	ndə ⁵⁵ wə ⁵⁵ ŋi ⁵⁵ pə ⁵⁵
Queyu	nda ⁵⁵ wa ⁵⁵ toŋ ⁵⁵ pu ⁵⁵	nda ⁵⁵ wa ⁵⁵ ŋi ⁵⁵ pa ⁵⁵

Moreover, ‘January’ and ‘February’ in Daofu (DF) (the alternative name of EG in ZMYYC¹⁴ as recorded in TBL) are also certainly borrowed from WT.

⁹ It is recorded as $-æ$ in TBL. For the differences in the MY phonetic system as recorded in TBL vs. ZMYYC, see below and also Lin 1997.

¹⁰ Strictly speaking, I think *mb-* in ‘July’ is the result of the voiceless stop $*p-$ being voiced under the influence of the preceding nasal.

¹¹ The present paper does not pretend to offer a complete analysis of problematic points in the Qiangic phonological system. Therefore recent changes of vowels and differences of tones can be neglected. These two words are recorded as **ta³³mbu⁵⁵** ‘January’ and **ta³³mbu⁵³** ‘first’ in TBL.

¹² According to the explanation in TBL, Queyu in TBL is actually equivalent to QY “Zhaba” in ZMYYC. See J. Sun 1992. [Ed.]

¹³ See footnote 3. The remaining month-names can be inferred by analogy.

¹⁴ There may be some differences of subdialect in the two books.

The modified forms of DF closely resemble those of RG and differ from their corresponding spoken terms. The relevant terms recorded in TBL are as follows:¹⁵

rdza va doŋ bu 'January' : a doŋ bu 'first' : ro 'one'
rdza va ɲi pa 'February' : a ɲi pa 'second' : vnə 'two'

We can see that different informants for the same language may give different answers to the same questionnaire target because of their idiosyncratic language knowledge. Consequently, this has nothing to do with “true” or “false” information. On the contrary, the differences in the records remind us that the vocabularies of the synchronic Qiangic languages do not exist on only one linguistic level.

Incidentally, TBL also has different records for ZB (ZMYYC's alternative name for QY):

ta³³mbu⁵⁵tɛ⁵⁵ɰi⁵⁵ 'January' ɲi⁵⁵pa⁵⁵tɛ⁵⁵ɰi⁵⁵ 'February'

In TBL, tɛ⁵⁵ɰi⁵⁵ means ‘one month’ in ZB. -ɰi⁵⁵ functions as a classifier while counting, and it should be the same morpheme as the root of tɛ⁵⁵vzɛ⁵⁵ ‘moon’. As a result, the “first one month” of a year is ‘January’, the “second one month” is ‘February’, and the rest are inferred by analogy (the form of month-names in ZB is *ordinal-one-month*). It is apparent that this informant is very cautious and his language ability is excellent. For he understands that in Chinese, months are not only used for counting, but also for dividing the time units and arranging them in order. Consequently, he borrows the ordinals from Tibetan, in combination with the cardinal and the word for ‘moon’ (which means ‘month’ also) in his native language, to form the month-names.

2.3.1.3. Ergong (EG) and Guiqiong (GQ)

The month-names of EG and GQ in ZMYYC are loanwords as well. However, on the basis of the present data, the source language is not easy to identify. In addition, they do not borrow all elements, but only the words for month-order.

In EG **to mbo** ‘January’ is undoubtedly equivalent to **daŋ po** ‘first’ of WT; meanwhile **to mbo** means ‘original; beginning’ in most Qiangic languages. Therefore, if **to mbo** ‘January’ of EG is not borrowed from Tibetan or the surrounding languages directly, this means that EG speakers use

¹⁵ Because of the likely differences of subdialects, the phonetic differences between the data of TBL and ZMYYC are not discussed here.

their native word for ‘original; beginning’ to stand for the beginning month of a year.¹⁶ The morphological forms from ‘February’ to ‘September’ have a regular pattern: *fiε + cardinal + pa* (where *-pa* is an ordinal suffix). The remaining three month-names—‘October’, ‘November’, and ‘December’—delete the first syllable (*fiε*). It is not entirely clear what the EG morpheme *fiε* means. Is it simply an ordinal prefix, or does it basically mean ‘moon’ or ‘month’?

However, the independent EG word for ‘moon’ or ‘month’ recorded in ZMYYC is *ɬu* rather than *fiε*.¹⁷ The construction of *cardinal + ordinal suffix -pa* is unquestionably borrowed from WT. As a result, we find that in EG there are three sets of numerals used differently in counting, in ordinals, and in month-names. The word for the number ‘five’, for instance, is *wɲuε*; for ‘fifth’ *ti-wu*; and for ‘May’ *fiε-lɲa-pa*; and similarly for *zɲiε* ‘eight’, *ti-pa* ‘eighth’, and *fiε-dze-pa* ‘August’. Apparently the way to name ordinals is borrowed from Chinese directly.¹⁸ Certainly different languages may reflect different cognitive worlds, but in EG the ordinals in month-names borrowed from WT are more likely to be informants’ temporary borrowings in order to answer the recorders’ questions.

The month-names in GQ are more complicated. The words for ‘November’ and ‘December’ are still questionable, so they are not discussed in this paper.¹⁹ I think the form of ‘January’, *dɔ̃³³bu⁵⁵li⁵³*, consists of ‘first’ (‘beginning’ or ‘original’) plus ‘moon; month’. *li⁵³* is the vernacular word for ‘moon; month’, and *dɔ̃³³bu⁵⁵* is equivalent to *daŋ po* in WT. Similarly, the form of ‘February’, *ɲi⁵⁵npu⁵⁵li⁵³*, is ‘two’ + *ORDINAL* + ‘moon; month’. Although *ɲi⁵⁵* in ‘February’ and *ɲi³³* ‘two’ have differences in tone, this is probably due to tone sandhi; they are really the same morpheme. The *npu⁵⁵* in ‘February’ and the second syllable *pu⁵³* in ‘March’ to ‘October’ should be regarded as the

¹⁶ According to the data in TBL, the word for ‘January’ in Lüsu (LS) is *taŋ³³bo⁵³* and in SX (whose formation is identical with EG in ZMYYC) it is *to³³bu⁵⁵*

¹⁷ In TBL the DF word for ‘moon; month’ is *slə*. If *fiε-* means ‘moon’ or ‘month’ in ZMYYC, it is probably derived from Southwestern Mandarin, *fiε < ie*. If it is a prefix, it is likely equivalent to *a-*, the DF prefix for ordinals recorded in TBL. But I make this suggestion only reluctantly. Although DF is another name for EG, the differences in data are great between the two books. The method for naming ordinals in EG as recorded in ZMYYC is borrowed from Chinese, except for ‘first’. For example, ‘fifth’ is *ti-wu*, and ‘eighth’ is *ti-pa*.

¹⁸ See footnote 17. TBL has recorded the expressions of ordinals of EG, which are similar to those of RG. For instance, the words for ‘first’ and ‘second’ are *a doŋ bu* and *a ɲi pa*, respectively.

¹⁹ The name of December, *bi³³li⁵⁵si³³*, probably means ‘be going to celebrate the Chinese New Year’ for informants. The word for ‘New Year’ in GQ is *li⁵⁵si³³* (in TBL) and the phrase for ‘to celebrate the New Year’ is *li³⁵si⁵⁵bi³⁵* (the tone differences in ZMYYC and TBL can be ignored).

same morpheme as well. That is to say, **np-** and **p-** in these words are not contrastive phonemes; **pu** may be derived from the ordinal suffix **-pa** in WT. The names from 'March' to 'October' delete the morpheme for 'moon; month', and only the morpheme for 'order' is left. However, except for **sɿ⁵⁵** in 'March', which shares the same form with 'three', ordinals in 'April' to 'October' are probably borrowed from WT or a neighboring Tibetan dialect. The different methods of naming cardinals, ordinals, and month-names are compared below:

'five'	'fifth'	'May'
ŋɛ ³⁵	ti ³⁵ u ⁵³	ŋɔ ⁵³ pu ⁵³
'eight'	'eighth'	'August'
je ⁵⁵	ti ³⁵ pa ³³	dʒɛ ³⁵ pu ⁵³

As in EG, the ordinals in GQ are borrowed from Chinese.

As indicated above, I infer that the month-names in EG and GQ recorded in ZMYYC are recent borrowings from WT. This inference is made from observations of phonetic modifications and the arbitrary nature of the morphological forms of these words. In other words, even though the speakers' cognition of month-order in both languages seems different from that of the general ordinals, the time depth of such vocabulary is still limited.

2.3.2. *Qiang (QN, QS), Namuyi (NM), and Shixing (SX)*

In ZMYYC the phonetic forms of the month-names in QN, QS, NM, and SX are completely different, but their morphological structure is the same, with the cardinals preceding and modifying 'month'. Also, the phonetic forms of the vernacular cardinals and the independent word for 'month' in these four languages are almost completely consistent throughout.²⁰ Therefore, they can be regarded as a group, even though Qiang is the most northeast language in the Qiangic languages region, while SX and NM are spoken in the south. Unlike the preceding group (section 2.3.1), they do not borrow from WT or neighboring Tibetan dialects, and their morphological structure is similar to Chinese rather than Tibetan.

²⁰ In fact there are still a few differences, especially in the Qiang dialects (discussed in detail in the next section). The independent word for 'one' in SX is **dʒi³⁵**, with a nasalized vowel, but I do not think that this is a different morpheme from **dʒi³⁵** (**-ɬu⁵⁵**) in the name of 'January'.

2.3.2.1. *The southern languages: Namuyi (NM), Shixing (SX)*

We start with the southern languages NM and SX. There is no data available for NM other than ZMYYC. The month-names of SX recorded in TBL are different from those in ZMYYC. According to TBL, 'January' in SX is tō³³bu⁵⁵ and 'February' is ŋi⁵⁵pao⁵⁵. 'January' indicates 'first' (or 'beginning' or 'original') and 'February' has the same form as 'second'. Evidently the month-names for this informant are completely an issue of month-order, and the ordinals he used are borrowed from Tibetan.

However, the SX informant in ZMYYC chooses a different way to reply. He translates the twelve months of Chinese into his vernacular in the form of *cardinal-month*. It is reasonable to believe that the NM informant in ZMYYC also uses the same strategy to reply. Besides, these two languages both use classifiers while counting, and the words for 'month' used in their month-names have the same roots as their independent words for 'moon'. In addition, the general nouns and classifiers for counting are not completely divergent in these two languages. This is analogous to ZB in TBL and GQ in ZMYYC, discussed above.

2.3.2.2. *Northern Qiang (QN) and Southern Qiang (QS)*

One would assume that informants of Northern Qiang would adopt a similar strategy. But month-names might not always be special cultural terms for Qiangic speakers, as reflected in QN in particular. According to ZMYYC, it is hard to find the syllable boundary between the cardinal and ʂə 'month' when month-names are spoken. Thus it sounds as if the vowel ə in ʂə is deleted, and only the initial consonant is suffixed to the preceding cardinal. That is the reason why the first ten month-names are recorded as single syllables. Thus, e.g., aʂ in QN means 'one month', derived from a 'one' + ʂə, as can be proven by the data in TBL. The Qiangic language recorded in TBL is also the northern dialect, spoken in Ekou village of Yadu town in Mao county (茂縣雅都鄉峨口村), where 'January' is tʂɛɕ, 'February' jɛɕ, with the final -ɕ being equivalent to the -ʂ of QN.²¹ We have to point out that informants may not be conscious of any morpheme boundary, but if recorders or analysts figure out this situation, the boundary should be marked particularly. However, in *Qiāngyǔ Jiǎnzhì* (Sun Hongkai 1981), the example cited for the rhyme -aʂ in QN is aʂ 'one month'. Not only -aʂ, but -əʂ in 'February', 'April', 'July', and 'December'; -iʂ in 'March' and 'November'; -aʂ in 'May';

²¹ In TBL there is no word given for 'month' in Qiang, but the word for 'moon' is recorded as cu ʂaɣ. The numeral plus classifier '(one) month' is recorded as (a)ɕ. We can compare cy³³cya⁵⁵ for 'moon' in QS recorded in ZMYYC.

-uŋ in 'June'; -a¹ŋ in 'August'; -uəŋ in 'September'; and -iuŋ in 'October' should not be considered as rhymes in the phonological system.²² In other words, not all those hundreds of rhymes in the phonetic systems of northern Qiangic languages are reliable. It would be hard to compare the northern dialects of Qiang to other languages in the same branch if we only depended on these rhymes.

As for the southern dialect of Qiang, QS, its complicated tones have been recorded clearly, so it is unnecessary to mark syllable boundary. The only problem is that the first syllable of 'January', *xpe⁵⁵ŋi³³*, is not the cardinal 'one'. For lack of relevant data at present, this structure is still unclear.²³

2.3.3. The third group: Pumi and Ersu (ES)

Pumi and ES belong to the third group. Their word structure looks like Chinese, but is not completely consistent, and the phonetic forms of their month-names are quite peculiar. In particular, the ways of naming the months are totally different in the northern and southern dialects of Pumi.

2.3.3.1. Northern (Taoba) Pumi (PT)

If we read only the data in ZMYYC, month-names in the northern dialect of Pumi (PT) are complicated and difficult to understand, since the surface forms of words relating to month-names are totally different. See the data on PT in ZMYYC:

'month'	<i>zi³⁵</i>	'moon'	<i>ti⁵⁵</i>
'one'	<i>ti³⁵</i>	'first'	<i>tã³⁵po⁵³</i>
'two'	<i>nə³⁵</i>		
'three'	<i>sõ³⁵</i>		
'four'	<i>zɛ⁵⁵</i>		
'five'	<i>ŋue⁵⁵</i>	'fifth'	<i>ŋa⁵⁵pa⁵³</i>
'six'	<i>tʂhu³⁵</i>		
'seven'	<i>ŋĩ³⁵</i>		
'eight'	<i>ɕye⁵⁵</i>	'eighth'	<i>dze³⁵pa⁵³</i>
'nine'	<i>ɣi⁵⁵</i>		

²² Sun Hongkai 1981 (*Qiāngyǔ Jiǎnzhì*) does not consider -a¹ŋ as a rhyme, but this is another inconsistency. It is obvious that most of the gaps in the matrix of combinations of vowel plus final consonant are probably accidental. Only by collecting enough polysyllabic words could we fill in the gaps in a chart of all possible combinations of vowel plus consonant.

²³ *xpe⁵⁵ŋi³³* probably means *zhēng-yuè* (the traditional way to name January in Chinese, which means '[new] year/month'). I wonder whether all the complicated tones in the southern dialect of Qiang have contrastive function.

'ten'	ka ⁵⁵ tī ⁵⁵
'eleven'	ko ⁵⁵ ti ⁵³
'twelve'	ko ⁵⁵ ni ⁵⁵

The other ordinals may be deduced by analogy; they are all probably from neighboring Tibetan. But 'order' is not used in the month-names of PT. Moreover, on the surface, 'November' zu³³ta³³le⁵⁵ and 'December' khəu¹³ci⁵⁵le⁵³ have the same structure, in which the first two syllables apparently do not indicate numbers, and the last syllable le⁵³ should be the same morpheme as li⁵⁵ 'moon'. As for 'January' to 'October', although their structure has a regular pattern, it is different from that of 'November' and 'December'. The last two syllables li⁵⁵mei³⁵ of 'January' to 'October' have no relation with 'month' or 'moon', and the first syllable is not a cardinal number either, except in 'February', 'May', and 'June'. Fortunately we have other records for comparison. Although there is no data on PT in TBL, another northern dialect spoken in Jiulong 九龍 County is recorded. Besides, the complete month-names of PT are listed in Lu 1983 (*Pǔmǐyǔ Jiǎnzhì*). First we present the records from TBL:

'January'	tã ³⁵ po ⁵⁵	'one'	ta ¹¹ (lĩ ⁵⁵)	'first'	ta ¹¹ tshō ⁵⁵
'February'	ŋi ⁵⁵ pa ⁵⁵	'two'	nw ¹¹ (lĩ ⁵⁵)	'second'	nw ¹¹ tshō ⁵⁵

Evidently the northern dialect of Pumi recorded in TBL has its own way of forming ordinals by suffixing tshō⁵⁵ to the cardinals. But in month-names they use the ordinals from Tibetan. The cardinal affix lĩ⁵⁵ is especially noteworthy. Based on my investigation there, they seldom use the single-syllable words for the cardinals while counting, but affix a classifier. Consequently I assume the basic PT forms for 'January' to 'October' in ZMYYC are probably *cardinal + ordinal suffix + month* (from Chinese). Thus the surface form li⁵⁵mei³⁵ might actually be lĩ⁵⁵ei³⁵ underlyingly.²⁴

The data on PT in Lu Shaozun 1983 are given as follows:²⁵

'January'	tã ⁵⁵ po ⁵³ tə ³¹ zi ³⁵	'first'	tã ⁵⁵ po ⁵³
'February'	ŋi ⁵⁵ pa ⁵³ tə ³¹ zi ³⁵		
'March'	sō ⁵⁵ pa ⁵³ tə ³¹ zi ³⁵		

²⁴ See footnote 16. According to the records of the survey on Chinese dialects, *yuè* ('moon; month') is read *ie* in Kunming and Guiyang (and similarly in the west, northwest and southwest of Sichuan province).

²⁵ The cardinals recorded in *Pǔmǐyǔ Jiǎnzhì* are almost the same as the records in ZMYYC, so they are not listed separately. But the phonetic notations recorded in *Pǔmǐyǔ Jiǎnzhì* adopt a five-point scale for tones without marking the tone value. This paper rewrites them as tone values according to the explanation in *Pǔmǐyǔ Jiǎnzhì*.

'April'	zi³⁵pa⁵³tə³¹zi³⁵		
'May'	ŋa⁵⁵pa⁵³tə³¹zi³⁵	'fifth'	ŋa⁵⁵pa⁵³
'June'	tʂhu³⁵pa⁵³tə³¹zi³⁵		
'July'	d̥y³⁵pa⁵³tə³¹zi³⁵		
'August'	dʒe³⁵pa⁵³tə³¹zi³⁵	'eighth'	dʒe³⁵pa⁵³
'September'	gu³⁵pa⁵³tə³¹zi³⁵		
'October'	tɕu⁵⁵pa⁵³tə³¹zi³⁵		
'November'	tɕu⁵⁵tɕi³¹pa⁵³tə³¹zi³⁵		
'December'	tɕu⁵⁵ŋi⁵⁵pa⁵³tə³¹zi³⁵		

These month-names have the regular pattern *ordinal + one + month*. The form of the ordinals is just like Tibetan, so they must be borrowed from Tibetan. tə³¹ in 'one month' and ti³⁵ 'one' are probably the same morpheme. zi³⁵ in 'one month' exactly means 'month' as recorded in ZMYYC; it is recorded as ji³⁵ in TBL. However, in *Pǔmǐyǔ Jiǎnzhì* zi³⁵ may not be an independent morpheme but a suffix for counting only; thus it is more like -li⁵⁵ recorded in TBL. In any case, TP informants *Pǔmǐyǔ Jiǎnzhì*, like ZB informants in TBL, use the same strategy to reply to recorders' questions. Compared with the ZB speakers, the informants for ZMYYC were not so confident and easy while replying, if we are to believe the records in ZMYYC.

2.3.3.2. Southern (Qinghua) Pumi (PQ)

The records of the southern dialect of Pumi (PQ) are generally consistent in ZMYYC, TBL, and *Pǔmǐyǔ Jiǎnzhì*. Thus these data are highly reliable, even though they seem to be quite peculiar within the Qiangic languages. Generally speaking, the twelve month-names all have an affix for 'month', -li⁵⁵, -zi¹³, or -iẽ¹³. We can see without question that the last syllable li⁵⁵ in 'January', 'February', 'March', 'October', and 'November' is the root for 'moon'. The final syllable zi¹³ in 'May', 'June', 'July', 'August', and 'September' indicates 'month'; meanwhile it is also the first syllable of 'the beginning of a month' and 'the end of a month' (recorded in TBL). This syllable is equivalent to zi³⁵ or ji³⁵ of the northern dialect, PT. Only the final syllable iẽ¹³ in 'April' and 'December' could not be explained so far.²⁶ As for their root syllables, they are

²⁶ See footnotes 17 and 23. iẽ¹³ probably equals iẽ 'month; moon' in southwestern Mandarin. I am heartily grateful to Professor Matisoff for offering the suggestion that the name of December may have a relationship to coldness. The first syllable uɑ¹³ is probably derived from PTB *wa(l) ('frost; snow'), and the second syllable dʒẽ⁵⁵ may be the same morpheme as sdʒẽ⁵⁵ ('hail' in PQ).

apparently not the cardinal numerals,²⁷ nor are they like the usual word for 'month'. Since I know only a smattering of Pumi, I do not mean to make any over-inference, but it is noticeable that **ɣu¹³ʂi¹³ɿ⁵⁵** 'January' is recorded as **ɣu¹³ʂi¹³py⁵⁵** in *Pǔmǐyǔ Jiǎnzhì*, and means 'to celebrate the New Year' as well. In comparison, the word for 'New Year' in TBL is **ɣu¹³ʂi¹³**. In other words, 'January' in PQ means 'the month when celebrating the New Year', just as 'January' is also called *zhēng-yuè* ('the first month of a year') in Chinese.^{28,29} In addition, 'July' is **qa⁵⁵ɣuǎ⁵⁵zi¹³**, in which **ɣuǎ⁵⁵** is identical to the cardinal 'five'. Moreover, **qa⁵⁵ɣuǎ⁵⁵ŋi⁵⁵** in PQ means 'the fifteenth day of a month', that is, 'the middle of a month'; 'July' in PQ thus probably means 'the middle of a year' as well. According to this analogy, **qa⁵⁵sgiu⁵⁵** in 'May' possibly indicates the ordinal 'nineteenth', since **sgiu⁵⁵** and the cardinal 'nine' are isomorphic. Successively, **qa⁵⁵xiē⁵⁵** in 'June' may be 'seventeenth', perhaps; **qa⁵⁵sāu¹³** in 'August' is 'thirteenth'; and **qa⁵⁵stī⁵⁵** in 'September' is likely to be 'eleventh'.³⁰

If such an inference is correct, that means PQ speakers have a special conceptualization of the different periods of a year. Thus we have reason to believe that the linguistic depth of the month-names in PQ is different from the other Qiangic languages, where the names for the twelve months are merely borrowings. I wonder if the northern dialect of Pumi, PT, also has its own vernacular words for the months, which might show a regular phonological correspondence with those in PQ. Or are these words fading away from people's memory gradually due to the incessant pressure of foreign cultures?

2.3.3.3. *The last group: Ersu (ES)*

The last group is ES, whose month-names recorded in ZMYYC resemble those of PQ at first sight. The cardinals or ordinals are not used in ES month-names,³¹ and there seems to be no word for 'order', either. The final syllable of month-names, **ɬa³³**, is also the root for 'moon; month'. It can be regarded

²⁷ The cardinals of PQ are as follows: **ti¹³** 'one', **ni¹³** 'two', **sāu³⁵** 'three', **ʒe⁵⁵** 'four', **ɣuǎ⁵⁵** 'five', **tʂhu¹³** 'six', **xiē¹³** 'seven', **ʂue¹³** 'eight', **sgiu⁵⁵** 'nine'.

²⁸ We can compare the name of December in GQ (cf. footnote 19), and the name of January in QS (cf. footnote 22) If the name of January in PQ does mean the month when people celebrate the New Year, it is not odd for the name of December in GQ also relative to the meaning of 'to celebrate the New Year'.

²⁹ The Pumi syllables **ɣu³¹ʂi¹³** might well really mean 'first'; cf. Lahu (ʒ-)ǰŋ-ʂī 'first; before; in front of' (Matisoff 1988:201-2). [Ed.]

³⁰ However, there are still some differences between **qa⁵⁵stī⁵⁵**, **qo⁵⁵stī⁵⁵** 'eleven', and **qo⁵⁵stī⁵⁵ŋi⁵⁵** 'eleventh day of a month'.

³¹ The cardinals of ES as given in ZMYYC, like those of the other Qiangic languages, are cognate to the forms elsewhere in ST. The ordinals take the suffix **wu⁵⁵ke³³**, e.g., 'first' **tɛ³³wu⁵⁵ke³³**, 'fifth' **ŋue¹³³wu⁵⁵ke³³**, 'eighth' **zi⁵⁵wu⁵⁵ke³³**.

as the suffix of month-names. All ES months (except February) have three syllables, where the second syllable is i^{55} , which apparently means ‘one’ (probably from Chinese).

However, I do not think that ES actually has a very strong resemblance to PQ. For, based on the morphological pattern of month-names in ES, the first syllable is likely a unit, while the following two invariant syllables $i^{55}ta^{33}$ are regarded as another fixed unit. This pattern probably originated from Southwestern Mandarin nearby, because the ordinals ‘first’, ‘second’, ‘third’, etc. in Southwestern Mandarin may be expressed as ‘the first one’, ‘the second one’, ‘the third one’, etc. (Yuan 1986, Zhai 1987). In other words, I think the month-names of ES imitate the pattern of ordinals in neighboring Chinese, i.e., *cardinals + one + classifier*, where the position of the classifier is replaced by its vernacular morpheme for ‘month’, ta^{33} . In addition, it may borrow the cardinals themselves from a southwestern dialect of Chinese, since the first syllable of month-names is similar to Chinese cardinals in the southwestern area, except for ‘January’, ‘November’, and ‘December’. ‘First’ usually indicates ‘the start; the beginning’; thus, many languages (e.g., QS, PQ, EG, GQ) do not use the regular pattern in the name of ‘January’, but give it a special name. ES is no exception. Similarly, the ending of a year denotes that the circle of life starts again, so speakers may have a particular name for it as well. As a result, it is not strange that there is no Chinese-derived cardinal in ‘November’ and ‘December’ of ES. In fact, Pumi and GQ are similar in this respect.

Although LS recorded in TBL is regarded as the western dialect of ES, it has a different way of naming the twelve months from ES. ‘January’ in LS is $taŋ^{33}bo^{53}$, and $ŋi^{33}pæ^{53}$ is ‘February’ (cf. footnote 15). For LS, month-name is merely an issue of order, just like SX recorded in TBL, and its ordinals are borrowed from Tibetan. However, I consider that such a discrepancy between LS and ES is different from that between PT recorded in *Pǔmǐyǔ Jiǎnzhì* and ZB in TBL. PT and ZB were different languages originally, but the difference between LS and ES is due to distinct informants’ individual adaptations of the month-names of Chinese and Tibetan.

3.0. THE MONTH-NAMES OF XIXIA

The most common form of the month-names in Xixia literature is *cardinal + month*, with 徃 $lhji^2$ ‘month’ as the reflex of Tibeto-Burman **s-(g)la*.³² However, month-names in these literary works appear out of the need of translating Chinese classical writings, so they are inevitably under the influence

³² The alternative word for ‘month’ in Xixia is 徃徃 $lhji^2phow^1$. I think this dissyllable is the word for ‘moon’; the monosyllable should mean ‘month’.

of Chinese. In Zhǎng Zhōng Zhū, the translation of the Chinese term *zhēng-yuè* ‘the traditional name for January’ is 𠵹 𠵹 tsjow¹ lhji². Similarly, 𠵹 𠵹 rej¹ lhji² is for *là-yuè* 臘月 ‘the traditional name for December’³³ and 𠵹 𠵹 X-lhji² is for *rùn-yuè* 閏月 ‘the intercalary month’. The first syllable of these words transcribes Middle Chinese.³⁴ They reveal that the month-names of Xixia also come from speakers’ reactions when facing foreign cultures; thus it is impossible to speculate on the Xixia people’s cognition of years or months from these words.

But the posthumous work of N. A. Nevsky 1960 (translated into Chinese as Nie Lishan 聶歷山, *Xixia Yuwenxue* 西夏語文學 [*Xixia Language and Culture*]), records Xixia month-names whose forms differ from those in translations. See Table 1. The word-usage and morphology of these names are quite unique; since the author does not indicate the source, we do not yet have a satisfactory explanation. Based on the observation of month-names in Qiangic languages, however, we may try to speculate on their meanings. Although their morphological form has a regular pattern, it is not easy to explain the meaning of individual morphemes. The main reason is that, except for ‘January’ and some month-names composed directly of cardinals, others are composed of obsolete words which are uncommon in translations. In addition, it is also difficult to explain why these particular cardinals are used in those month-names. Now we may try to interpret them via the observations made in this paper on Qiangic languages.

The words of the last two syllables are entirely obsolete. The only useful information here is that the very last syllable ·o¹ in a binome 𠵹 𠵹 ·o¹ bju¹ is transliterated as 迴耀 (Mand. *huíyào*). According to the cross-references in *Tóngyīn* 同音 in addition to interpretations in *Wénhǎi* 文海, we can be sure that it has the meaning of ‘moon; month’. However, its phonetic structure and written form have no relationship with 𠵹 lhji², the independent word for ‘moon’ in Xixia, unlike *yuè-fèn* ‘month’ and *yuè-liang* ‘moon’ in Chinese, which have obvious semantic associations. Xixia is certainly different from the Tibetan and Qiangic languages discussed above, as well. In any case, this is the unique style of Xixia, which seems always to show perverse idiosyncrasies of word-usage and purposeful word-creation or neologisms. We can well believe that it does have its own peculiar words for time units.

³³ This word 臘 refers to the ancient practice of offering sacrifices to the gods in the twelfth month of the lunar year. [Ed.]

³⁴ Because of the paucity of phonological data about the word 𠵹, I could not reconstruct its pronunciation. But the Chinese phonetic symbol for it in *Pearl in the Palm* is *lu*, belonging to the ninth phonetic type (such as liquid or lateral sounds) in *Tóngyīn*. It should be the transliteration of the Middle Chinese word *rùn* without question. Besides, we observe that the written form of 𠵹 in the word for *là-yuè* has the meaning of ‘cold’.

'January'	級 倅 倅 倅	級 倅 倅 倅	kijw ¹ sjiw ¹ ka ¹ .o ¹	'New Year'
'February'	級 倅 倅 倅	級 倅 倅 倅	rjir ¹ lɔ ² ka ¹ .o ¹	'to become a pair'
'March'	級 倅 倅 倅	級 倅 倅 倅	rejr ¹ gju ² ka ¹ .o ¹	(?)
'April'	級 倅 倅 倅	級 倅 倅 倅	kwej ¹ ɲwər ¹ ka ¹ .o ¹	(?)
'May'	級 倅 倅 倅	級 倅 倅 倅	tʂjiir ² lu ² ka ¹ .o ¹	(?)
'June'	級 倅 倅 倅	級 倅 倅 倅	ʂjiw ¹ we ¹ ka ¹ .o ¹	(?)
'July'	級 倅 倅 倅	級 倅 倅 倅	ɲwər ¹ kə ¹ ka ¹ .o ¹	(?)
'August'	級 倅 倅 倅	級 倅 倅 倅	njiir ¹ ljiir ¹ ka ¹ .o ¹	(two, four ?)
'September'	級 倅 倅 倅	級 倅 倅 倅	ljiir ¹ ɲwə ¹ ka ¹ .o ¹	(four, five ?)
'October'	級 倅 倅 倅	級 倅 倅 倅	njiir ¹ ɲwə ¹ ka ¹ .o ¹	(two, five ?)
'November'	級 倅 倅 倅	級 倅 倅 倅	ɲwə ¹ tʂjiw ¹ ka ¹ .o ¹	(five, six ?)
'December'	級 倅 倅 倅	級 倅 倅 倅	dji ² kjiwr ¹ ka ¹ .o ¹	'to become cold already'

Table 1. Xixia month-names recorded in Nevsky 1960

Lin, Y.-. 1999, "What did Qiangic peoples call the twelve months?", in *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 71-95. (purl.org/sealang/lin1999what.pdf)

The first two syllables are much more unusual. Only 𑖀𑖂 𑖂𑖂 *kijw¹sjiw¹* in 'January' are commonly used words. The first morpheme means 'year; age', and the second means 'new'. Therefore in Xixia, 'Year New' is equivalent to 'New Year' in Chinese. This is similar to the Chinese traditional alternative name for 'January', *xīnzhèng* 'new year/month', but may have been formed independently, for most Qiangic speakers have a similar conceptualization of 'January'. As for 'February' and 'December', according to their word usage and morphology, I consider that they are composed of two verb phrases. For since the first words of these two month-names, *rjir²* and *dji²-*, are verbal prefixes, we can identify the following morphemes definitely as verbs, even though we do not know their meanings (Lin Ying-chin 1994). The literal meaning of the character 𑖂𑖂 *lo²* in 'February' is 'two; twin'. 𑖂𑖂 *kjiwr¹* in 'December', in combination with the materials of *Tōngyīn* and *Wénhǎi*, can be believed to have the meaning of 'cold'. Therefore, 𑖂𑖂 𑖂𑖂 *rjir²lo¹* probably means 'for the time units to become a pair', and 𑖂𑖂 𑖂𑖂 *dji²kjiwr¹* means 'it comes into winter, and becomes cold already'. These three month-names ('January', 'February', and 'December') all have no meaning connected with number, but they have the concrete meaning of time order. However, the first two syllables of 'August', 'September', 'October', and 'November' are numbers in pairs, which are multiplied to name the even months ("August" and 'October'), but added in odd months ('September' and 'November'). The reason is still unknown, but I do not think the usage of numbers is necessarily related only to counting. In fact, after our discussion of month-names in Qiangic languages, the way of naming the months in Xixia seems not to be too peculiar; as we have seen (above, section 2.3.3.2), PQ has similarly mysterious expressions, with the five months from May to September being designated by odd-numbered ordinals descending from 19th to 11th!

The Xixia morphemes in 'March', 'April', 'May', 'June', and 'July' are all obsolete items whose meanings are hard to explain. Although there are interpretations of some of them in *Wénhǎi*, it is hopeless for us to try to understand these month-names. *Tōngyīn* only shows us that the first two words in these five month-names are cross-referring pairs, and they are probably polysyllabic words. Thanks to the translations, they provide the records of the translated ordinals. 𑖂𑖂 *rejr²-* in 'March' (*sān-yuè*; *sān* means 'three' in Chinese), for example, is used to translate the first syllable of *san-jing-fa-shi* (a famous monk who knows three Buddhist scriptures) and in 'May' (*wǔ-yuè* in Chinese; *wǔ* 'five') 𑖂𑖂 *tsjiir²* is used to translate the first syllable of *wu-tai-shan* (a famous Buddhist sacred mountain). Thus their paraphrases, combined with numbers in *Wénhǎi*, are meaningful for us. However, even though such cross-referring pairs are given the meaning of

numbers, they are not necessarily related to counting or order. I think these were proper names for time units of the year for the Xixia people, and were used for translating some ordinals in Chinese because they happened to be equivalent to month-order in Chinese; they then carried an ordinal meaning. If we intend to translate the ordinals into Xixia, there is another commonly used pattern. An expression like 'the first volume' is translated by 卷一 *leu¹* ('one') + *tsew²* (ordinal suffix). Consequently the words used in month-names actually have a limited function in translations.

In short, at first there appears to be no concept of count or order in these month-names in Xixia. They may simply give individual names for different periods of a year, whose meanings are closely related to changes in the climate and Xixia cultural customs at different times of the year. However, because of our limited understanding of traditional Xixia culture, in addition to the fact that such unique cultural vocabulary is uncommon in translations, precise interpretations of such words are now beyond our grasp.

In the process of writing this section, I have had a chance to read Huang 1996, an important article on the Xixia month-names. The author focuses particularly on these obsolete words, which are discussed from the viewpoint of the great influence of Chinese culture on Xixia. His analysis is very interesting and illuminating. I admit that Chinese culture has certainly had a great influence on Xixia, and one can only sympathize with the Xixia people, who had built up their own country in the northwestern area for only a very short time, and had constantly tried to shake off their subordinate status throughout history. That is the reason why I want to consider Xixia speakers' cognitive psychology, as reflected in their month-names. Thus, my viewpoint and interpretations are different from those of Mr. Huang. I do not think my opinions are better or have more explanatory power than his. What I cannot explain is still more than what I can, and there are many puzzles that still need to be solved. However, after having worked on Xixia for a long time from the standpoint of my own Chinese experience, I feel this is a new start for me in the reconsideration and reanalysis of Xixia data from a non-Chinese viewpoint.

4.0. A NEW DISCUSSION OF MONTH-NAMES IN THE QIANGIC LANGUAGES

As I have said, I am trying to reinterpret the month-names in different languages from a different point of view. Although there are still some unsolved problems due to the paucity of data, certain meaningful conclusions can still be drawn.

(1) As far as pure linguistic significance is concerned, month-names do not help us very much in understanding the Qiangic languages. When we consider these data, in fact, we are really observing the variations in cognitive psychology between recorders and informants, which are products of complicated national history and culture. Mountain living is timeless; since most Qiangic people start working at sunrise and go to sleep at sunset, I wonder why it is necessary for them to have twelve months in a year, or three meals in a day. This has nothing to do with their indigenous culture. Turning this question around, am I supposed to feel ashamed in front of informants, since I cannot always figure out the names of various copper-made ladles used by the Muya? Treating all races equally should depend on mutual respect. Studying different languages is the same. We do indeed need to carefully preserve the lifestyles of different races, their languages, and their cultures. We must avoid using inappropriate methods of language inquiry which can lead different languages to the same result, impoverishment.

(2) Translation between different languages is not only a matter of finding grammatical equivalents. It needs the translator's good understanding of the social and cultural background underlying individual languages. Behind the various forms of month-names in Qiangic languages there exists a common psychology—learn the foreign culture!—to deal with an irreversible social revolution. Therefore, even though they lack equivalent month-names in their own languages, they borrow from WT and neighboring Tibetan, and imitate Chinese. Not only do they borrow and imitate, they may also analyze the grammatical structure of loanwords to create equivalent components that better suit their native language.

That is the reason why we have different month-names from individual records of the same language. These different data, in fact, are due to informants' individual cognitive processing of month-names in Chinese. Speculating about this phenomenon further, we might get interesting sociolinguistic results if we were to undertake a quantitative census on month-names in Qiangic languages.

(3) As we have seen, month-names have little significance in helping us know Qiangic languages, for their time depth is not great enough. Our focus is just on recording data. As a result, when we analyze the grammatical systems of Qiangic languages, the lexicon should be divided into different strata, with certain areas of the vocabulary given much less weight than others. These conceptually alien words should be regarded as exceptions, when we describe the grammatical rules of Qiangic languages. If we were to discuss these words

without noting their marginality, it would complicate the grammatical systems of Qiangic languages, and offer little help in understanding them. In other words, although these words are a part of living languages, their phonological, morphological, and syntactic rules have no value for distinguishing different languages from a synchronic point of view. Furthermore, from a diachronic point of view, they cannot be the basis for distinguishing subgroups of language families. Even so, this set of vocabulary items is excellent material for tracing diffused linguistic features in a given synchronic region. From these data, we can tell that in Qiangic languages variations occurred gradually from north to south, and because of their geographical distribution, different languages are influenced by Chinese in the east, Tibetan in the west and north, and Loloish in the south, to different degrees.

(4) From the comparison of cognate words, we know that the extinct Xixia language and the contemporary Qiangic languages share many cognate words descending from PST. Moreover, they also have similar typological features. For example, they all have abundant verb prefixes, most of which are highly correlated with the relative direction of the verbal event. They all also have grammatical agreement between verb and noun arguments; hence, forms of verbs are changed according to properties of subjects and objects (Lin Ying-chin 1994). However, the sharing of cognate reflexes of an old language cannot guarantee the closeness between two languages unless we can identify the shared phonological rules that apply to them alone. Besides, the similarity of typological features cannot prove that they definitely belong to the same language family, either. Though the sharing of linguistic features between Xixia and Qiangic languages does not belong to a universal level, they are shared by other languages in the Tibeto-Burman family (Lin Ying-chin 1996, 1997).

The reason why the month-names of Xixia are taken into account in this paper is not only that they are similar to Qinghua Pumi (PQ) in some way. To tell the truth, with respect to month-names in Xixia and Qiangic languages, I only know what they are, rather than why and how they were formed. But Xixia and Qiangic languages are close to each other indeed. And the survey of Qiangic languages may help us to better understand Xixia literature. The most important point is that we may discover convincing evidence to determine whether Xixia belongs to the Qiangic language family only by examining different linguistic levels. Otherwise, it is hard to understand whether a language has been completely isolated from other languages without contact or whether it can be shown to be a member of an established language family.

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