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Review of *Zangmianyu Yuyin He Cihui* "Tibeto-Burman Phonology and Lexicon" *

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China, the *Urheimat* of the great Sino-Tibetan linguistic family, boasts more than forty Tibeto-Burman languages, some of which have been identified only recently. Located mostly in remote corners of the country, these languages had never been subject to systematic investigation until the monumental Linguistic Survey of China conducted in the late fifties. Owing mainly to financial difficulties, the greater part of the enormous data collected during the survey—cabinets and cabinets of handwritten manuscripts hoarded now in the Institute of Minority Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing—have unfortunately yet to see the light of publication.[1] In the meantime, more recent field trips to Tibet, Sichuan, and Yunnan undertaken by individual linguists keep adding new members to the growing list of Tibeto-Burman languages of China. The popular *Jianzhi* (Brief Descriptions of Nationality Languages) volumes have represented the first major release of the survey data from mainland China, and all students of Tibeto-Burman recall with affectionate gratitude the tremendous value of the first-rate linguistic materials contained therein for upgrading Tibeto-Burman research in the past one and a half decades. The book under review, an information-packed phonological and lexical study of fifty-two Tibeto-Burman languages and dialects of China, represents another exciting vein of fresh data mined from the motherlode.

The book is organized into three parts. Part I (pp. 1-144) is the introduction to the book, comprising essays written by the eminent Tibeto-Burmanist Sun Hongkai[2] on various aspects of comparative Tibeto-Burman

* This review has benefited greatly from the comments and suggestions kindly supplied by Jim Matisoff, Randy LaPolla, Jonathan Evans, and Zev Handel. For transliterating Written Tibetan and Written Burmese forms, we use Wylie's standard romanization of Written Tibetan and the system proposed in the *Rhyming Dictionary of Written Burmese* (Benedict 1976).

1 Lexical and syntactic data from more than a hundred dialect locations of the Qiang language alone have been recorded (Prof. Sun Hongkai, personal communication), which amply indicates the richness of the linguistic materials resulting from that survey, as well as the surprising proportions of this data pool which remains unpublished. Efforts have started in recent years to enter the data onto computer.

2 Professor Sun Hongkai's distinguished research career is summarized in an autobiographical account published recently in *LTBA* (Sun 1987).

phonology. Part II (pp. 146-361) gives the phonemic inventories of each of the fifty-two languages and dialects covered in this volume. Part III, the bulk of the book (pp. 362-1379), consists of over a thousand pages of lexical sets. In most cases, the transcription of the data is in a phonemic notation with IPA symbols, which, together with numerical tone letters, convey a good idea of how the forms are actually pronounced. The exceptions are the three literary Tibeto-Burman languages, Written Tibetan, Written Burmese, and Xixia (Tangut). Written Tibetan and Written Burmese are transliterated from the original scripts, and hence do not imply direct pronounceability despite the use of IPA symbols.[3] As for the dead language Xixia, originally written in a Chinese-inspired logographic script, the editors of ZMYYC decided to adopt the Chinese character transcriptions found in the original Xixia-Chinese bilingual dictionaries, in order to remain noncommittal with respect to the many competing Xixia reconstruction systems currently proposed. A number of useful appendices (pp. 1380-1418) follow the main body of the book, including a written Tibetan transcription table (Appendix I), a written Burmese transcription table (Appendix II), an index of Xixia (Tangut) characters arranged by set numbers (Appendix III), and a Chinese (Pinyin) index of glosses appearing in the comparative lexicon (Appendix IV).

1. Part I: Introductory essays

The nine topics on Tibeto-Burman comparative phonology covered in Part I run as follows: (1) issues concerning Tibeto-Burman cognates, (2) simplex initials, (3) cluster initials, (4) diphthongs, (5) vowel length and tensity (laryngealization), (6) vowel nasalization and rhotacization, (7) consonantal codas, (8) tonality, and (9) reduced syllables. These essays seem to embody further explorations of issues that have engaged Professor Sun's attention for years, for, except for the sections on tonality and reduced syllables, their content partially overlaps with what has appeared in print elsewhere (see Sun 1982a, Sun 1985). A virtual synopsis of the phonological typology of the Tibeto-Burman languages of China, this portion of the book encompasses an amazingly rich body of information written with the expertise stemming from intimate familiarity with many of the languages treated. The wealth of insightful observations on many key areas in diachronic Tibeto-Burman phonology makes detailed study of this part of the book highly rewarding.

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[3] Thus, there is a strict one-to-one relation between any symbol in the Tibetan script and its IPA transliteration. The letter ར 'a-chung', for instance, clearly had different phonetic values depending on its position in the syllable (a fact well-understood by Tibetologists in China), yet it is always represented with the (deceptive) IPA symbol for the voiced glottal fricative ɦ.

2. Languages treated in ZMYYC

ZMYYC contains data on thirty-five distinct languages. For those languages which show great internal diversification, the major dialects are also represented. This amounts to a total of fifty-two varieties of Tibeto-Burman, arranged in the data sets in the following order:

1.	Written Tibetan	2.	Lhasa Tibetan
3.	Sde-dge Tibetan (Khams)	4.	Bla-brang Tibetan (Amdo)
5.	Zeku Tibetan (Amdo)	6.	Cuona Monpa (=Takpa)
7.	Motuo Monpa (=Tsangla)	8.	Mawo Qiang
9.	Taoping Qiang	10.	Taoba Pumi
11.	Jinghua Pumi	12.	rGyarong
13.	Xixia (=Tangut)	14.	Ergong
15.	Muya (=Minyak)	16.	Queyu (Yajiang)
17.	Guiqiong	18.	Ersu
19.	Namuyi	20.	Shixing
21.	Xide Yi	22.	Dafang Yi
23.	Nanjian Yi	24.	Nanhua Yi
25.	Mile Yi (=Axi)	26.	Mojiang Yi
27.	Lisu	28.	Lijiang Naxi
29.	Yongning Naxi (=Moso)	30.	Caiyuan Hani (Biyue)
31.	Dazhai Hani (Hani)	32.	Shuikui Hani (Haoni)
33.	Lahu	34.	Jinuo
35.	Dali Bai	36.	Jianchuan Bai
37.	Bijiang Bai	38.	Tujia
39.	Written Burmese	40.	Spoken Rangoon Burmese
41.	Achang	42.	Zaiwa (=Atsi)
43.	Langsu (=Maru)	44.	Anong
45.	Nusu	46.	Dulong (=Trung)
47.	Jingpo	48.	Geman (=Kaman)
49.	Darang (=Taraon)	50.	Idu
51.	Bokar Adi	52.	Sulong (=Sulung)

The inclusion of systematic lexical data on some of the more obscure Tibeto-Burman languages and dialects of China is one of the unique merits of ZMYYC. These include the Sde-dge, Bla-brang, and Zeku varieties of Tibetan, the Nanhua and Mojiang varieties of Yi,[4] as well as rGyarong, Xixia, Ergong,

[4] The Mile Yi (#25), or Axi (=Ahi), data records a different variety (Dapingdi village, Mile County) from that (Moxiangjing village, Yiliang County) on which Yuan Jiahua's excellent earlier work (Yuan 1953) was based.

Muya, Queyu, Guiqiong, Ersu, Namuyi, Shixing, Langsu, Anong, Idu, and Sulong. Of the above, the following deserve special attention:

2.1. The Qiangish languages[5]

The existence of the unique 'Sifan' (西番, i.e., west-barbarian) languages in the Sino-Tibetan borderland had been made known quite early on through the vocabularies gathered by travelers and explorers in south-western China. Treating the Sifan languages as a distinct Tibeto-Burman branch was also already proposed in Thomas 1948:99. The lack of adequate linguistic data, however, prevented this idea from being taken seriously by later scholars,[6] until, almost thirty-five years later, it was reinstated in a definitive and cogent statement by Professor Sun Hongkai (1982b).

Within this new branch of Tibeto-Burman languages, now generally known as **Qiangish**, probably only Shixing and Zhaba are strictly speaking new discoveries, as all of the others were already recorded in one form or another (often buried unrecognized amid obscure ethnographic writings). These languages are usually characterized by formidable sound systems that are difficult to correctly transcribe even for well-trained field workers, let alone amateur linguists. Hence the real contribution of ZMYYC with regard to Qiangish consists in its linguistically accurate data on languages hitherto usually known only in the form of poorly transcribed wordlists.

Thanks to the Qiangish data in ZMYYC, we can now finally unveil the linguistic identity of the following fragmentary records of 'Sifan' languages:[7]

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5 For an excellent survey and miniature comparative grammar of Qiangish, see Huang 1992: 208-369.

6 Though Shafer (1955:102) posits the various Qiang dialects (Dzorgai, Kortsè, Pingfang, 'Outer Mantse') of the early wordlists as a distinct branch (Dzorgaish) indeterminate between Bodic and Burmic, he treats rGyarong as a Bodish branch and puts such other Qiangish languages as Hor (i.e. Ergong), Hsihsia (i.e. Xixia), Manyak (i.e. Muya), and Duampu (i.e. Guiqiong) under the Burmic division instead. Likewise, Benedict (1972:7-9) considers rGyarong and Dzorgai (i.e. Qiang proper) to be closer to the Tibetan-Kanauri nucleus, but treats such Hsi-fan (i.e. Sifan) languages as Manyak (i.e. Muya), Horpa (i.e. Ergong), Davies' Menia (i.e. Namuyi), and Johnston's Muli (i.e. Pumi) as 'residual subtypes' of Lolo-Burmese.

7 A few specimens of probable Sifan languages from the old sources still defy definite identification despite the ZMYYC data, for instance, the so-called 'Pa-U-Rong 八窩龍 Hsi-Fan' of Johnston 1908.