Caodeng rGyalrong phonology: a first look

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1. INTRODUCTION

The variety of rGyalrong reported here is spoken at the Gaqiuli (嘎秋里 Ka-khyo-ris /qɐ-tʃʰwe-riʔ/) Village, Caodeng (草 登 Tsho-bdun /tsʰo-bdən/) Township, Sidaba District (四大壩 sTod-pa /stot-pɐ/), Ma-erkang County, Aba Prefecture, Sichuan. Caodeng belongs with Ribu (日部 rDzong-nbur) and Dawei (達維 Ta-we) to the **Sidaba** or **Northwestern** dialect of rGyalrong. Data on Caodeng were gathered at Ma-erkang in August through September 1994, mainly from Mr. 石丹羅 (/rtɐn-lo/), aged 31 in 1994, currently an instructor of mathematics at the Ma-erkang Junior Normal College. Transcription of the data is phonemic.

The Sidaba dialect of rGyalrong includes, in addition to Caodeng, a significantly divergent Ribu-Dawei subdialect, which is said to be also spoken in Southwestern Aba and Central Rangtang. All in all, Northwestern rGyalrong is spoken in four counties: (1) Ma-erkang 馬爾康: the Sidaba District with three townships: Caodeng, Ribu, and Dawei (now renamed 康山 Kangshan); (2) Aba 阿壩: in certain villages of Kesha 柯沙 and Rongan 茸安 Townships at the southwestern corner of the county abutting the Sidaba District of Ma-erkang County; (3) Rangtang 壤塘: along middle Duke 杜柯 river in Wuyi 吾依 (formerly, and locally still, known as 耿達 Gengda) Township (south of Kalong 卡龍 Village, which is Amdo-speaking) and parts of Shili 石里 Township (north of Zhongdashigou 中大石溝, Xiongla 雄抨, and Shangdashigou 上大石溝); (4) Seda 色達: south of the Seda river near the confluence of the Seda and Duke Rivers.

There are ten villages in Caodeng Township. According to our consultants, the speech of Gaqiuli, Daiji (代基 /tɐj-tsiʔ/), Zhulin (珠林 /tʃuʔ/), Zhouche (周車 /χtsəɣʔ-tsʰeʔ/), Ka-ergu (卡爾古 /mkʰɐ́r-gu/) are practically identical. Kelaji (科抨基 /qʰɔ-lɐ-kjiʔ/) and Sini (斯尼 /sɲiʔ/) differ from the above only slightly (e.g. Gaqiuli -e <-> Kelaji -ɐ). The speech of Baoyan (寶岩 /pó-ⁿgɐ/) and Shazuo (沙左 /ʁla-ʁloʔ/) shows marked influences from the Dawei subdialect, while the local dialect of Sila-erdi (斯抨爾底 /sné-rⁿdi/) Village shares affinities with the **Northern** or **Chabao** dialect.

2. PHONOLOGY

2.1. Segmental phonology

The following system of initial consonantal contrasts can be established for the Gaqiuli variety of Caodeng rGyalrong (those in parentheses are marginal or occur only in Tibetan or Chinese loans):

p	t	ts	tʂ	tʃ	k	q	
pʰ	tʰ	tsʰ	tʂʰ	tʃʰ	kʰ	qʰ	
b	d		(dʐ)	dʒ	g		
ⁿb	ⁿd	ⁿdz	ⁿdʐ	ⁿdʒ	ⁿg	ⁿG	
m	n			ɲ	ŋ		
(f)	s		(ʂ)	ʃ	x	χ	(h)
v	z			ʒ	ɣ	ʁ	
	r						
	(ɬ)						
	l						
w			j				

/p/:

    pa   'pig'
    qɐ-peʔr   'wild dog'

/pʰ/:

    pʰər-tʃu   'bowl'
    pʰo-waŋ   'boulder'

/b/:

    tə-buʔ   'roasted bun with meat filling'
    qa-jlo-beʔ   'dough'

/ⁿb/:

    kɐ-ⁿbiʔ   'give'
    ké-ⁿbət   'sand'

/m/:

    meʔ   'no!'
    ké-mɔ   'swallow st. dry'

/t/:

    kə-toʔ   'exist; have'
    ké-ta   'weave'

/tʰ/:

    tʰəl-pɐ   'cloak'
    ké-tʰi   'drink'

/d/:

du-dut   'turtledove'

rə-**d**aʔ   'animal'

/ⁿd/:

kɐ-**ⁿd**əʔs   'gather vi'

ké-**ⁿd**i   'carry; ride'

/n/:

kə-**n**ət   'burn vi'

nə-**n**əʔ   'that'

/ts/:

kɐ-**ts**omʔ   'take away'

ké-**ts**ə   'say; speak'

/tsʰ/:

kə-**tsʰ**aŋ   'complete'

tsʰet   'goat'

/ⁿdz/:

ⁿdzem   'bridge'

ké-**ⁿdz**or   'stand'

/tʂ/:

kə-**tʂ**a   'naughty'

kə-**tʂ**ot   'hot (of weather)'

/tʂʰ/:

kə-**tʂʰ**ət   'drop n'

tʂʰuʔ   'maybe'

/dʐ/:

χsol-**dʐ**ev kɐ-pe   'reward v'

/ⁿdʐ/:

tə-**ⁿdʐ**e   'photo'

ⁿdʐo-we   'guest'

/tʃ/:

tʃeʔ   'tea'

tʃo-ne   'dance'

/tʃʰ/:

kə-**tʃʰ**ət   'hold vi'

tʃʰé-mɛ   'lass'

/dʒ/:

qɐ-**dʒ**iʔ   'sheep'

kɐ-nə́-**dʒ**ev   'fall asleep'

/ⁿdʒ/:

kɐ-**ⁿdʒ**a   'swim'

tə́-**ⁿdʒ**i   'skin'

/ɲ/:

ɲɐ-pu   'lamb; kid'

/k/:

kom?	'door'	
kə-**k**o?	'this'	

/kʰ/:

kʰo	'room'
tə-**kʰ**e	'mouth'

/g/:

tɐ-**g**o?	'fool'
pʰó-**g**ɛ	'quilt'

/ⁿg/:

kə-**ⁿg**e	'wear'
rə-**ⁿg**u	'boulder'

/ŋ/:

tɐ-**ŋ**e?	'drought'
slé-**ŋ**ɐ	'moon'

/q/:

kɐ-**q**é-se	'search'
ké-**q**a	'skin; shell vt'

/qʰ/:

qʰɐl-du	'ashes'
tə-**qʰ**u	'backside'

/ⁿG/:

tə-**ⁿG**ɐr	'sputum'
kə-**ⁿG**o?	'loose'

/s/:

sé-**s**u	'lunch'
ké-**s**is	'know'

/z/:

kʰaŋ-**z**ɐr	'spoon'
zɔ?	'bovine'

/ɬ/:

skɐm-**ɬ**a? kə-pe	'(lightning) flash'
ɬe	'god'

/ʂ/:

ʂɐp	'bridle'

/ʃ/:

ʃɔ	'buckwheat'
ʃe	'flesh; meat'

/ʒ/:

ʒɐ-le	'mud for smearing on wall'
tɐ-**ʒ**e	'chieftain's wife'