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Preliminary field report on dPa' ris dialect of Amdo Tibetan

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Preliminary Field Report

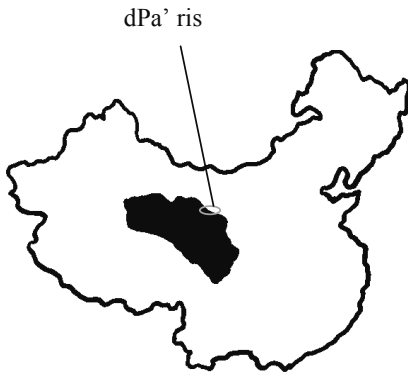
on dPa' ris¹ Dialect of Amdo Tibetan

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1. About dPa' ris

This paper aims to present characteristics of dPa' ris dialect of Amdo Tibetan. dPa' ris is situated at the north-east end of the Qinghai-Tibet highlands (near Hexi Zoulang, 河西走廊). It belongs to Amdo in traditional classification. dPa' ris is the Tibetan word which means 'brave tribe'.



Map 1: Amdo area and dPa' ris

1.1 Where is dPa' ris?

The area ranges along the course of the Datong river 大通河²: Tianzhu 天祝县, Gulang 古浪县 and Yongdeng 永登县 county (Gansu Province 甘肃省), Huzhu 互助县, Datong 大通县, Menyuan 门源县 and Ledu 乐都县 county (Qinghai Province 青海省). Even now Tibetan people there call themselves dPa' ris ba (people of dPa' ris). In the narrow definition, dPa' ris refers only to Tianzhu county³, which is the only Tibetan autonomous area in the places above.

¹ Written Tibetan (WT) transcription. This word is pronounced as [χ^wari] in this dialect.

² This river is called as ndzəlake^{wa} (WT: 'Ju lags chu) in dPa' ris dialect.

³ The first autonomous prefecture governed by ethnic minority in China.

1.2 What is special for dPa' ris?

People in dPa' ris are said to be the descendants of defense forces of the ancient Tibetan Empire Tufan 吐蕃. The name dPa' ris, 'brave tribe', is associated with this history. In dPa' ris, the women's costumes have many silver ornaments in the front and back, traditionally to keep arrows or protect them from being hit by arrows⁴, which is said to trace back to armor. Related to this history, dPa' ris has the cultural characteristics different from other Amdo area.

Although dPa' ris dialect belongs to Amdo Tibetan (North-East Tibet), this dialect differs in several ways from dialects near Qinghai lake 青海湖 (Kokonor) or South Gansu (according to sKal bzang 'Gyur med & sKal bzang dByangs can 2002, 'Brug mo 'tsho 2003, Haller 2004, Ebihara 2008, 2010). In this paper, the phonological, lexical and morphological features of dPa' ris dialect are focused. Furthermore, I will point out the relativity with Kham Tibetan (East Tibet).

The dPa' ris dialect data included in this paper are mainly from the notes of my fieldwork (March, 2011) in Waza (Badza 巴扎藏族乡) in Huzhu county, Qinghai Province. I collected the data mainly from elicitation.

1.3 Language use

Due to the location, people in dPa' ris area have been subjected to the cultural contact with Han Chinese. People living under low altitude in particular are subject to the influence of the sinosphere. Early twentieth century, Tu 土族, Hui 回族, and Menggu 蒙古族 came to dPa' ris, escaping from oppression by Muslim military faction (Ma family 馬家). As a result, many ethnics are living together. In this situation, the number of dPa' ris dialect speakers is on a declining trend.

In Waza, use of dPa' ris dialect is different from village to village. In some villages, both Chinese and Tibetan (dPa' ris dialect) are used. In some villages only Chinese is used. Almost all the Tibetan speakers are Chinese bilingual. Language use in Tianzhu county is described in Bessho & Ebihara (2007).

1.4 Education

In Huzhu county, schools are taught only in Chinese because this county is Tu autonomous area. Furthermore, generally in Haidong area 海東地区 in which Huzhu county is included, bilingual education (Chinese and Tibetan) is done but Chinese is the main language and Tibetan is the secondary (Wanma et. al. 2008: 26). As a result, most of the children in school age cannot speak dPa' ris dialect. In Waza, Rigs 'dzin sGrol' ma (a famous Tibetan singer born in Waza) started eight Tibetan schools privately during summer and winter vacations two or three years ago. However, the situation has not drastically changed because children are speaking Chinese outside the Tibetan school, and many parents do not prefer Tibetan education.

⁴ The names of the ornaments are *zəma* (*gzhi ma*) and *hteæçəp* (*skya shub*), respectively.

1.5 Previous Studies

There are some previous studies about dPa'ris dialect. Prejevalsky (1875) collected 178 words near Datong river. Most of these words correspond to the words of present dPa'ris dialect. Hermanns (1952) shows rough sketches of phonology and grammar of dPa'ris dialect. He also noted about their history that 'they [dPa'ris people] were living near Kokonor and migrated to mountains, then located at the north and south side of Datong river under the Mongolian invasion (from around 1650)' (Hermanns 1952, by the present author's translation). Hua & Ma (1992) describes phonological characteristics of this dialect (spoken in Tianzhu county) and shows the correspondence relation with Written Tibetan. Ma (1994) shows phonological and lexical characteristics of this dialect (spoken in Tianzhu county). Bessho & Ebihara (2007) explains about language use in Tianzhu county and phonological system of this dialect.

2 Special features of dPa'ris dialect

2.1 Phonology

Phonological features of dPa'ris dialect are shown in several previous studies (Hua & Ma 1992, Ma 1994 and Bessho & Ebihara 2007). Briefly speaking, dPa'ris dialect has the following features when corresponding to Written Tibetan.

WT Pronunciations in dPa'ris dialect

- cha /ɕʰa/ [ɕʰa]
chang /ɕʰaŋ/ 'alcohol', *chu* /ɕʰə/ 'water', *char* /ɕʰar/ 'rain'
- 'a /ʌ/ [ʌ]
'*o ma* /ʌma/ 'milk', '*ong* /ʌŋ/ 'come (imperfect)', '*as* /ʌi/ 'come (perfect)'
- gca, lca /hɕa/ [hɕa]
gcig /hɕək/ 'one', *lcag* /hɕak/ 'iron'
- dwa, lwa, shwa /tɕ, lɕ, ɕɕ/ [tɕ, lɕ, ɕɕ]
dwa phrug /tɕʰək/ 'orphan', *lwa* /lɕ/ 'clothes', *shwa* /ɕɕ/ 'deer'
- -al /ɔ/ [ɔ]
bal /wɔ/ 'sheep skin', *phyag mtshal* /ɕʰak mtsʰɔ/ 'to pristrate'
- -s pa (pa follows after rjes 'jug -s) /psa/ [psa]
skyes pa /hteipsa/ 'husband', *rus pa* /rəpsa/ 'bone', *ri dwags pa* /rətakpsa/ 'hunter'

• -a ba /ɔ/ [ɔ]

rna ba /rɲɔ/ ‘ear’, *zla ba* /rdzɔ/ ‘moon’

2.2 Vocabulary

dPa’ ris dialect has many characteristic words. Some of them might be derived from archaic Tibetan words (WT: brDa rnying). Some might be dPa’ ris vernacular words. Some might be Chinese loanwords. The judgment whether the words are archaic Tibetan words or not is really difficult. The definition of archaic Tibetan words is different among scholars. In this paper, the word ‘archaic Tibetan words (brDa rnying)’ is used without strict definition, and I owe the judgment to Prof. Kha sgang bKra shis Tshe ring and the dictionary of archaic Tibetan words (rNam rgyal Tshe ring ed. 2001)

2.2.1 The words corresponding to archaic Tibetan word (*brDa rnying*)

Corresponding Written Tibetan forms are put after the phonological forms only when the corresponding form is obvious.

/jəle/ (*yo lo*) ‘all’

(*yo lo*⁵, rNam rgyal Tshe ring ed. 2001: 514)

/-ɛ^haga/ (*chag*) ‘plural marker’

(used as *wol-ɛ^haga* ‘all the Tibetan people’. This word might be derived from Written Tibetan plural marker *cag* or *chag*, P.C. from Prof. Kha sgang bKra shis Tshe ring. *chag* is in rNam rgyal Tshe ring ed. 2001: 145)

/ŋeran/ (*nye ring*) ‘relatives’

(P.C. from Prof. Kha sgang bKra shis Tshe ring)

/səŋeu/ (*zangs bshos*) ‘cupper pot’

(*bshos* might mean ‘food’, P.C. from Prof. Kha sgang bKra shis Tshe ring. *bshos*⁶ is in rNam rgyal Tshe ring ed. 2001: 565)

/hnɔmɔwo/ (*rnal ma*) ‘real, genuine’

(*rnal ma*⁷, rNam rgyal Tshe ring ed. 2001: 292)

⁵ ‘thams cad phan thogs pa’am go chod pa/ 全有用, 都有用处’.

⁶ ‘zhal zas sam lha bshos dang / ming nas ’bod pa’am bzhugs pa la’ang ’jug 1.食品, 食物. 2.供神的食品’.

⁷ ‘yang dag pa’am bcos ma ma yin pa’i don/ 真正, 真实, 非偽造’.

2.2.2 dPa'ris vernacular

/jako/ (*yag po?*) 'Thank you'

/toχχo/ (*drag pa*) 'fine'

/kodzi/ (*ko brdze?*) 'clothes'

(This word might mean 'leather armor' originally, P.C. from Prof. Kha sgang bKra shis Tshe ring)

/ardə/ 'elder sister'

/e^hana/ 'scissors'

/bzət/ 'wind, wind blows'

/k^hatam/ (*kha dam*) 'wolf'

/namhtsa/ 'four seasons'

/s^hək/ (*sug*), */s^hə zək/* (*su zhig*) 'what'

/ɣoŋ/ ('ong) 'come (imperfect)'

/ɣi/ ('as) 'come (perfect)'

/kə pɛet/ (*ku byed*) 'shout (imperfect)'

2.2.3 Chinese loan word

/saŋo/ 'potato'

(loan word from Chinese *Shan 'yu* 山芋, P.C. from A lag Dor zhi and Prof. Kha sgang bKra shis Tshe ring)

/toŋts^he/ (*dong rtse*, *dong tse*) 'money'

(loan word from Chinese *Tongzi* 銅子, P.C. from Prof. Tsuguhito Takeuchi. *dong rtse*, *dong tse* mean 'ancient coin' in general Amdo Tibetan)

2.3 Other features

2.3.1 Existential verb *ŋaŋ/menaŋ*

In dPa'ris dialect, the existential verb *ŋaŋ* (and its negative form *menaŋ*) is used to express 'existence' and 'possession'. It is derived from the Written Tibetan *snang* 'appear' (and its

negative form *mi snang*). According to Suzuki (2006), Suzuki & dKon mchog Tshe ring (2009), the verb *snang*, as an existential verb, (and other grammaticalized elements) is used in the Tibetan dialects of the Ethnic Corridor of West Sichuan (Chuanxi Zoulang 川西走廊). He also mentioned that ‘*snang* might have been used widely in the Ethnic Corridor of West Sichuan’ (Suzuki 2006: 14, by the present author’s translation). The use of this verb might be the characteristic of dPa’ ris dialect since *snang* as an existential verb is not common in other Amdo Tibetan dialects. Suzuki (2006) reported three types of *snang* usage for each area of Ethnic Corridor of West Sichuan;

- i) north: state verb expressing ‘existence’ and ‘possession’
- ii) central: copulative predicative verb and emphatic marker
- iii) south: predicative verb expressing ‘existence’ and ‘possession’ (when the object is within sight), predicative verb expressing evidentiality and inference

The *snang* usage of dPa’ ris dialect is similar to i) type. The examples are as follows. *ṅaŋ*/*menaŋ* tends to express events about third person (e.g. (1) and (2)), but tends not to express events about first person (e.g. (3) and (4)).

- (1) *htandzən=na χ^{wi}ε^ha ṅaŋ.*
PSN=LOC book *ṅaŋ*
‘Tandzin has a book’
- (2) *ndə=na χ^{wi}ε^ha menaŋ.*
this=LOC book *menaŋ*
‘The book is not here’
- (3) **ŋɔ: χ^{wi}ε^ha ṅaŋ.*
1SG.DAT book *ṅaŋ*
Intended meaning: ‘I have a book’
- (4) **ŋəs^ho: toŋts^he menaŋ.*
1PL.EXCL.DAT money *menaŋ*
Intended meaning: ‘We do not have money’

When the sentence expresses the event of physiological or newly-founded phenomena, *ṅaŋ*/*menaŋ* can express events about first person, e.g. (5) and (6).

- (5) *ntʰoŋ-sʰa menaŋ.*
 drink-place *menaŋ*
 Literal translation: 'There is no place to drink [for me]'
 More natural translation: 'I cannot drink'

- (6) *ŋə ʧʷiɛʰa ndə=na ŋaŋ.*
 1SG.GEN book this=LOC *ŋaŋ*
 'My book is here!' (after searching the book)

In dPa'ris dialect, the existential verb *jol* (and its negative form *mel*) is also used. This verb is also used to express 'existence', and 'possession'. It can appear in verb final position (=Ø), sometimes accompanying the auxiliary verb =*kʰə*⁸: *jok=kʰə/mek=kʰə* (/*l* in *jol* and *mel* is assimilated to /*k*/ of =*kʰə*). *jol=Ø/mel=Ø* are used in the events where first person is relevant and questions to second person, e.g. (7) and (8). On the other hand, *jok=kʰə/mek=kʰə* are used in the same situation as *ŋaŋ/menaŋ*, e.g. (9), (10), (11) and (12). In my research, *jok=kʰə/mek=kʰə* and *ŋaŋ/menaŋ* are changeable in any example. In native speakers' intuition also these two are the same.

- (7) *ŋɔ: ʧʷiɛʰa jol=Ø.*
 1SG.DAT book *jol*
 'I have a book'

- (8) *tɛʰo: ʧʷiɛʰa ə-jol=Ø.*
 2SG.DAT book Q-*jol*
 'Do you have a book?'

- (9) *htandzən=na ʧʷiɛʰa jok=kʰə.*
 PSN=LOC book *jok=kʰə*
 'Tandzin has a book'

- (10) *ndə=na ʧʷiɛʰa jok=kʰə.*
 this=LOC book *jok=kʰə*
 'There is a book here'

- (11) *ntʰoŋ-sʰa mek=kʰə.*
 drink-place *mek=kʰə*
 Literal translation: 'There is no place to drink [for me]'
 More natural translation: 'I cannot drink'

⁸ =*kʰə* has allomorphs: =*gə* and =*ngə*. =*kʰə*/=*gə*/=*ngə* cannot follow *ŋaŋ/menaŋ* in this dialect.

- (12) *ŋə* *χ^{wi}ε^ha* *ndə=na* *jok=k^hə*.
 1SG.GEN book this=LOC *jok=k^hə*
 ‘My book is here!’ (after searching the book)

In my research, *jok=k^hə/mek=k^hə*, and *ŋaŋ/menaŋ* are interchangeable in any examples. From these facts, *jol=Ø/mel=Ø*, *jok=k^hə/mek=k^hə*, and *ŋaŋ/menaŋ* can be ordered as in Table 1.

Table 1 *jol=Ø/mel=Ø*, *jok=k^hə/mek=k^hə*, and *ŋaŋ/menaŋ*

	Affirmative	Negative
Events concerning 1 st person questions to 2 nd person	<i>jol=Ø</i>	<i>mel=Ø</i>
Events concerning 3 rd person and physiological and newly-found events of 1 st person	<i>jok=k^hə</i> <i>ŋaŋ</i>	<i>mek=k^hə</i> <i>menaŋ</i>

Some dPa’ ris speakers say *jok=k^hə/mek=k^hə* are the recent ways of saying for dPa’ ris dialect and *ŋaŋ/menaŋ* are the original for them. It is also reported that younger dPa’ ris speakers tend to use *jok=k^hə/mek=k^hə* and elder speakers tend to use *ŋaŋ/menaŋ*. Furthermore, as noted above, *snang* as an existential verb is not popular in Amdo Tibetan, but only *yod* is used. So that, it is assumable that *jok=k^hə/mek=k^hə*, which is the more popular way of expressing ‘existence’, and ‘possession’ in Amdo Tibetan, prevails in dPa’ ris and used in the same way as *ŋaŋ/menaŋ*.

The verb *ŋaŋ/menaŋ* are also used as a part of auxiliary verb (= *k^hə ŋaŋ/=k^hə menaŋ* ‘progressive’) and a second part of verb serialization⁹. Details of these usages need more research.

2.3.2 Auxiliary verbs

The auxiliary verb system in dPa’ ris dialect is almost the same as other dialects of Amdo Tibetan. Comparing with rGya ye dialect (spoken near Qinghai lake), some forms are different and the auxiliary =*a* ‘events concerning the speaker’ is absent.

⁹ The example is as follows.

- (i) *ŋa* *ŋaε^ham* *φεoŋ* *ŋaŋ*.
 1SG cold get *ŋaŋ*
 ‘I have a cold.’

Table 2 Auxiliary verbs in dPa'ris dialect and rGya ye dialect

	dPa'ris	rGya ye
Future (conjunct)	=rdzən	=jə jən/=cə jən (=ji/=ci)
Future (disjunct)	=rdzə re	=jə re/=cə re
Progressive (conjunct)	=to	=kə jot/=gə jot/=ngə jot
Progressive (disjunct)	=kʰə ŋəŋ/=gə ŋəŋ/=ngə ŋəŋ	=kə jokkə/=gə jokkə/=ngə jokkə
Explanation (conjunct)	=le jən (=le)	=nə jən (=ne)
Explanation (disjunct)	=le re	=nə re
State	=kʰə/=gə/=ngə	=kə/=gə/=ngə
Indirect evidential	=zək	=zək
Direct evidential	=tʰə	=tʰə
Events concerning the speaker ¹⁰	—	=a

() shows abbreviated forms.

2.3.3 Usage of Ablative

In dPa'ris dialect, the ablative case marker =ne (nas) is not used, instead the genitive case marker (=kə/=gə/=ngə) is used.

rGya ye

- (13) cʰo kəŋ=ne joŋ=ne?
 2SG where=ABL come=AUX
 'Where are you from?'

dPa'ris

- (14) tɕʰo kəŋ=ngə ʔi=le?
 2SG where=GEN come.PF=AUX
 'Where are you from?'

¹⁰ Events that the speaker performed, made somebody to do or is familiar with.

rGya ye

- (15) *teraŋ=ne hnaŋŋən=tʰəksʰi*
today=ABL the day after tomorrow=TER
'from today until the day after tomorrow'

dPa' ris

- (16) *teraŋ=ngə hnaŋŋən=raktə*
today=GEN the day after tomorrow=TER
'from today until the day after tomorrow'

3 Conclusion

In this paper, some characteristics of dPa' ris dialect are mentioned: phonology, vocabulary, existential verb *ŋaŋ/menaŋ* (*snaŋ/mi snaŋ*), the auxiliary verb system and the ablative =*ne* (*nas*). Some of these features seem to be close to Kham Tibetan. As Suzuki (2006) described the verb *snaŋ* is used widely in the Ethnic Corridor of West Sichuan (Kham Tibetan and Shar Tibetan). Some auxiliary verbs in dPa' ris dialect are similar to ones in some dialects of Kham Tibetan. =*le jən* (=le)/= *le re* 'explanation' in dPa' ris dialect correspond to sDe dge -*le jī*:-*le re* 'imperfective' (Häsler 1999: 166-167) etc. =*to* 'progressive (conjunct)' in dPa' ris dialect corresponds to sDe dge -*dṣ* 'visual experiential imperfective' (Häsler 1999: 178-180).

These facts might have some relations with their history. The original places they came from are not clear, but some tribes of dPa' ris¹¹ have history that they came from Kham area.

Furthermore, it requires more research on the relations between dPa' ris and the Tibetan dialect spoken in Co ne county卓尼县¹² (in South Gansu) because some dPa' ris native people pointed out the historical and language similarities between dPa' ris dialect and Co ne dialect (P. C. from Mr. Legs bshad rGyal mtshan etc.).

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¹¹ One of the groups of dPa' ris, which are called Dung nag po, is said to come from Chab mdo (Zhao 2010: 157-158).

¹² In some parts of Co ne, they use *naŋ=gi* (WT: *snaŋ gi*) and *menā* (WT: *mi snaŋ*) expressing 'existence' and 'possession'.

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Abbreviation

-	Affix boundary
=	Clitic boundary
1	First person
2	Second person
3	Third person
ABL	Ablative
AUX	Auxiliary verb
DAT	Dative

EXCL	Exclusive
GEN	Genitive
LOC	Locative
PF	Perfect
PL	Plural
PSN	Person name
Q	Question
SG	Single
TER	Terminative