Program for the

Workshop on Minority Languages of the Chinese Tibetosphere:
Ancient Trends, Contemporary Developments, and Future Prospects

November 3-4, 2014
Hugo Valentin Centre, Uppsala University

Program Contents

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Background Information on the Workshop

Workshop Purpose

The Tibetosphere is a linguistic area that includes all areas influenced by the Tibetic languages. This massive region, over five times the size of Sweden, is spread across six countries: China, Burma, India, Bhutan, Nepal, and Pakistan, with the majority being in China. The Tibetosphere is home to some fifty Tibetic languages, and also nearly forty non-Tibetic languages. Perhaps the most poorly understood aspect of this diversity is the region's non-Tibetic minority languages. Among China's 6.2 million Tibetans, approximately 230,000 speak one of 25 non-Tibetan languages. Furthermore, within areas classified as Tibetan autonomous regions in China, some 23 languages are spoken by non-Tibetans. Therefore, a total of 48 non-Tibetic languages are spoken in China's Tibetan regions.

At present, almost all the minority languages of the Chinese Tibetosphere are threatened. Language shift, to both Chinese and Tibetan, is increasingly common. The consequences of declining diversity in the region are still unknown, but given the region's historical, cultural, and geopolitical significance, the ongoing language shift merits further investigation. This research initiation workshop therefore seeks to explore the diversity and vitality of the minority languages of the Chinese Tibetosphere, across three broad themes: ancient trends, contemporary developments, and future prospects. In order to do so, the workshop will employ UNESCO's nine-factor model of linguistic vitality as a framework within which to carry out our discussions of sociolinguistic trends in the Chinese Tibetosphere.

The theme ancient trends relates primarily to the UNESCO criteria of trends in existing domains. This theme addresses the issue of the historical processes that led to the creation and maintenance of an integrated Tibetosphere, including both Tibetic and non-Tibetic languages. To what extent has lexical borrowing occurred from Tibetic forms into the non-Tibetic languages of the region? What grammatical and lexical features unify the Tibetosphere? What historical events and processes accompanied and brought about this linguistic unity? Are the processes that created the Tibetosphere still ongoing?

This historical grounding will allow for a discussion of the workshop's main theme, that of contemporary developments. This theme will deal with the remaining eight of UNESCO's factors: absolute speaker numbers; relative speaker numbers; intergenerational transmission; literacy and education; quality and quantity of documentation; government policy and social attitudes regarding the languages; community attitudes to their languages; and responses to new domains.

We will also discuss the possibility of generalizing about the vitality of the Chinese Tibetosphere's minority languages as a whole. Such a broad treatment is essential given our limited knowledge of the socioloinguistic situation of most of the individual languages of the Tibetosphere. An essential aspect of such generalizing will be the creation of a typology that captures the diverse vitalities and contexts of individual languages.

Having thus arrived at a generalized understanding of the vitality of minority languages in the Chinese Tibetosphere, the final task of the workshop will be to discuss the future of these languages. Will the linguistic diversity of the area be maintained? What are the implications of sociolinguistic changes for the local environment and economy, for local identity, for social and political stability, and for the global community at large?
Current Research Situation

This research initiation project is broadly concordant with the increasing attention being paid to the global crisis in linguistic diversity. Current estimates suggest that 50-90% of the world's languages will become extinct within this century (Austen and Sallabank 2011). This declining diversity is predicted to have economic (Ginsburgh and Weber 2011) and ecological (Maffi 2005) impacts, to say nothing of impacts on identity and human rights. A recent analysis of global linguistic diversity (Axelson and Manrubia 2014) suggests that the highest linguistic diversity remains in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific, and so China's Tibetosphere provides an ideal venue for investigating global trends in linguistic diversity.

At present, attention to sociolinguistic issues in the Tibetosphere typically focuses on the Tibetan language (Robin 2014; Kunsang Gya, Snavely and Sperling 2012; Kunsang Gya, Snavely, and Tsering Shakya 2012; Kwon 2010), focusing on developments since 2008. Additionally, there is a vigorous literature dealing with Tibetan language and education (e.g., Bangsbo 2008; Postiglione 2008; Zenz 2013). All of these studies have so far ignored the linguistic diversity of the Tibetosphere, particularly the non-Tibetic languages of the region.

A large literature has also developed around China's policies towards its ethnic minorities, in particular on the state's ethnic classification project and its consequences. This literature has outlined the strained context under which this system was constructed and the subsequent project to reify it (Cooke 2008; Mackerras 2004; Mullaney 2011), the inadequacy of the system in representing ethno-linguistic diversity (Brown 2001; Harrell 1990; Yang 2004), its tendency to reify artificial categories (Wellens 1998; Gros 2004), and the general irrelevance of such ethnic labels to local people (Shih 2001). Gladney (1994), Blum (2001), and Schein (2000) have also construed China's ethnic classification project as primarily aimed at creating an Other in contrast to which a majority Han identity could be constructed. In addition to this literature on Chinese minorities and the state, a significant literature has also developed that deals specifically with China's language policies and practice towards ethnic minorities (Beckett and Postiglione 2009; Leibold and Chen 2014; Tsung 2009; Zhou 2003; Zhou and Sun 2004).

Despite this broad scholarly interest in Tibetans and their language in the context of China's treatment of minorities, no previous studies have dealt with the minority languages of the Chinese Tibetosphere as a whole. Instead, there are numerous descriptive linguistic studies on individual languages (e.g., Åkerman 2008; Fried 2010; Jacques 2004; Lidz 2010; Prins 2011; Zhang 2013), as well as a several studies dealing with localized linguistic areas within the broader Tibetosphere (Janhunen 2012; Chirkova 2010; Sun 1990). Meanwhile, sociolinguistic research undertaken outside the Chinese Tibetosphere, focusing on situations of 'double' minoritization where national minorities are also minoritized in ethnic or regional contexts (Nolan 2013; Todal 2010), is of direct relevance to our understanding of the minority languages of the Chinese Tibetosphere.

These diverse literatures suggest that the time is ripe for a research initiative that brings together these disparate prior research endeavors and synthesizes the accumulated expertise and knowledge of researchers in these fields to shed light on the significant problem of the minority languages of the Chinese Tibetosphere.
**Workshop Schedule**

Day One: November 3\textsuperscript{rd}

*Gerald will come to Hotel Akademi at 8:30 to collect everyone. This will give us time to walk to the workshop venue and to get a cup of coffee before beginning the proceedings.*

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<th>Session</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0900-1030</td>
<td>Gerald Roche</td>
<td>Minority Languages of the Chinese Tibetosphere</td>
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<td>Contemporary Situation and Future Prospects</td>
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<td>Lhundrum</td>
<td>Struggle for Acceptance: My Experience and the Fate of 'Ghost' Languages in the Greater Tibetan Region</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1100-1230</td>
<td>Jon Todal</td>
<td>The Sámi Checkerboard: The Diversity of Sámi Experiences Across Four Countries</td>
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<td>1145-1230</td>
<td>Juha Janhunen</td>
<td>Describing and Transcribing the Phonologies of the Amdo Sprachbund</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1400-1530</td>
<td>Hiroyuki Suzuki &amp; Sonam Wangmo</td>
<td>Language Evolution and Vitality of Lhagang [Tagong] Tibetan, a Tibetic Language as a Minority in Minyag Rabgang</td>
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<td>Camille Simon</td>
<td>Salar-Tibetan Contact and the Evolution of the Salar Verbal (Evidential) Categories</td>
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<td>1600-1645</td>
<td>Erika Sandman</td>
<td>Linguistic Biographies of Wutun Speakers in Qinghai</td>
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*Dinner on November 3\textsuperscript{rd} has been organized for all workshop participants. Details will be announced at the workshop.*
## Day Two: November 4th

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<td>Joakim Emwall</td>
<td>China's Minority Language Policy - Perspectives from Inner Mongolia</td>
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<td>Peng Wenbin</td>
<td>The Language of Autonomy in Kham during the Republican Period: A Derivative and Indigenized Discourse</td>
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<td>Caixiangduojie</td>
<td>Experiences of Non-Tibetan Speakers in China's Tibetan Schools: Language and Education</td>
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<td>Tenzin Jinba</td>
<td>An Insider's View of Gyalrong Languages and Identities</td>
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<td>1600-1645</td>
<td>Matyas Balogh</td>
<td>The Mongolic Idiom of Henan County</td>
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<td>Gerald Roche</td>
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Minority Languages of the Chinese Tibetosphere: Contemporary Situation and Future Prospects

Gerald Roche (Uppsala University)

The Tibetosphere is a linguistic area that includes all regions influenced by the Tibetic languages. It is over five times the size of Sweden and is spread across six countries: China, Burma, India, Bhutan, Nepal, and Pakistan. The majority of the region lies within China – this can be called the Chinese Tibetosphere. As a whole, the Tibetosphere is an area of high linguistic diversity, being home to some fifty Tibetic languages, and within the Chinese Tibetosphere, almost as many non-Tibetic languages. These non-Tibetic languages, which I refer to as the minority languages of the Chinese Tibetosphere, are almost all endangered to varying degrees. The loss of individual languages has important consequences for the communities that speak them. More broadly, the consequences of declining diversity in the region are unknown, but given the region's historical, cultural, and geopolitical significance, this situation shift merits further investigation. This presentation will look at the minority languages of the Chinese Tibetosphere through the lens of UNESCO's nine-factor model of linguistic vitality. The presentation will also address such basic issues as where and what the minority languages of the Chinese Tibetosphere are, and to what extent they can be treated as a single analytical unit.

Struggle for Acceptance: My Experience and the Fate of 'Ghost' Languages in the Greater Tibetan Region

Tunzhi Herbert (Latrobe University)

Coming from a community that speaks a language incomprehensible to neighbouring communities and the wider Tibetan population, I was nicknamed the 'Ghost-Language-Speaker' in primary school. It was a misfortune growing up speaking that language, which natives themselves could not even give a proper name to, other than 'our language'. Later, I learnt that 'our language' is also known as 'Horpa' or 'Ergong' in the academic world. Since then, my relationship with my language became personal. It felt like having a long-lost child back again. Not only had I found a name for this language, but most importantly, I found myself – my identity, my pride. Ultimately that became a contributing factor in my pursuit of academic linguistics. My lived experience and my reflection of it from an academic perspective will not only provide us first-hand information of topics pertaining to 'language and identity' and 'language acquisition' but also, most importantly, shed light on issues of language change and vitality. I will explore this issue from the perspective of a native speaker by examining the changes in social environments over the past two decades and their ramifications for the vitality of Ergong. The insights drawn from such a longitudinal approach will enable us to glimpse the future of small languages in the greater Tibetan cultural area.
The Sámi Checkerboard: The Diversity of Sámi Experiences Across Four Countries

Jon Todal (Sámi University College)

The Sámi people are the indigenous inhabitants of farthest northern Europe. They speak nine separate languages, most of which are severely endangered. The presentation is about the different situation(s) of the Sámi language(s) in Russia, Finland, Sweden and Norway. These questions will be discussed: Why are the situations for the Sámi languages so different? Do the differences create minorities within the Sámi minority? How are the future prospects for the Sámi languages? Is it possible for other minority linguistic groups to learn from the Sámi experiences?

Describing and Transcribing the Phonologies of the Amdo Sprachbund

Juha Janhunen (University of Helsinki)

The Amdo Qinghai region, or the Amdo Sprachbund, comprises languages belonging to three language families (Sino-Tibetan, Turkic, and Mongolic), three typological orientations (Sinitic, Bodic, and Altaic), and approximately 20 separate languages. Due to their mutual interaction in the context of what has been termed the Amdo Sprachbund, these languages share a large number of interference phenomena reflected at all levels of linguistic structure and substance. Within the Amdo Sprachbund several historical processes have contributed to the transformation of the original typological orientations of the participating languages. We may speak of Altaicization (of the local varieties of Chinese), Tibetanization (of the local varieties of Turkic and Mongolic and some varieties of Chinese), and Sinicization (of some of the local varieties of Mongolic). The present paper will discuss the impact of the Amdo Sprachbund on the phonological structures of the languages of the Amdo Sprachbund. The synchronic phonologies in the region may be divided into two types, Sinitic (Chinese) and Bodic (Tibetan). A separate, but related, issue concerns the challenge these systems provide for phonological notation in terms of a unified Roman transcription. The present paper will argue that for technical purposes it is convenient to use a system of Romanization based on the Pinyin system of Chinese. To some extent, the Romanization may be anchored in the practical orthographical notation already used for some of the local languages. For the purposes of literacy and native language use it is, however, also important to rely on the local cultural traditions, which means the use of the Chinese, Tibetan, and Arabic scripts.

Language Evolution and Vitality of Lhagang [Tagong] Tibetan, a Tibetic Language as a Minority in Minyag Rabgang

Hiroyuki Suzuki (National Museum of Ethnology, Japan)
Sonam Wangmo (Independent Scholar)

Lhagang Tibetan is a dialect of Khams spoken in the central Tagong [Lha sgang] Township, in the area surrounding Lha sgang Monastery in Kangding County, Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, western of Sichuan. The region where this dialect is spoken was traditionally called
Minyag Rabgang, in which Minyag, a Qiangic language, is spoken and regarded as a minority language by linguists. Previous studies have identified the Tibetic languages as its cultural superstratum. However, Lhagang Tibetan is one of the local Tibetic varieties which is least influenced by Minyag. Instead, it is in greater contact with Amdo, which is spoken by Tibetans living around Lha sgang Monastery. In this unique sociolinguistic situation, Lhagang Tibetan has become a minority language of the Minyag Rabgang area. The linguistic situation of the Tibetic languages in Minyag Rabgang is complicated, but only a few studies have dealt with this issue. In this paper, we will discuss: 1) the geographical definition of Minyag Rabgang and the distribution of languages within it 2) the current situation of the Tibetic languages spoken around Lha sgang Monastery, and 3) the ongoing language evolution and vitality of the sedentary Khams variety of Lhagang Tibetan.

Salar-Tibetan Contact and the Evolution of the Salar Verbal (evidential) Categories

Camille Simon (University of Paris III)

Spoken in the eastern part of Amdo, Salar is the mother-language of 90 000 to 100 000 people, mainly living in Xunhua Salar Autonomous County and in Hualong Hui Autonomous County, Qinghai Province (Ma 2007: 6). From a linguistic perspective, most researchers recognize that Salar belongs to the south-western (Oghuz) group of Turkic languages, which also includes Turkmen, Azeri and Turkish, but not Uighur or other Central-Asian Turkic languages (Dwyer 2007: 32-35).

Since the 14th century, Salar has been in close contact with different components of the Amdo linguistic area (Janhunen 2007), and, in particular, with the local varieties of Amdo Tibetan, thus, Salar has developed many unusual features for a Turkic language. In the first part of the talk, I will describe the past and present socio-linguist situation of the main Salar-speaking area: the degree of language endangerment (according to Ma 2007) the attitude of the speakers toward their language, and the current mutation from general Salar-Tibetan bilingualism toward Salar-Chinese bilingualism. In fact, the contact between Salar and Amdo-Tibetan has drastically reduced during the last decades, and Salar-Tibetan bilingualism is now mainly found among the older generation. However, in this respect, some differences are observed between the different valleys of the two counties, according to local sociological and economic variations.

At the same time, both historic and linguistic evidence show that intensive contact between the two populations has occurred in the past. In this respect, the verbal categories expressed on the Salar verb are a significant example of the convergence of Salar toward Tibetan. Based on parallel grammaticalisation of semantically similar elements (replication of grammaticalisation path, Heine & Kuteva 2005), Salar has developed an original set of verbal grammatical categories. Thus, in the second part of my talk, I will show that the categories expressed in the Salar verb constitute an adaptation and re-analysis of the Tibetan modal (evidential) categories. Although they are not exactly similar to the Tibetic categories, their description with the help of the categories of egophoric vs. heterophoric modalities, traditionally used to describe the Tibetic languages, is more efficient and economic than using a Turkic model of description of direct vs. indirect modalities, as proposed by Dwyer 2000 and Liu and Lin 1980. In this second part, I will thus illustrate the effects of language contact in a grammatical
domain where the Tibetic languages are known to act often as a model language with regard to their neighbouring languages (Tournadre 2014).

**Linguistic Biographies of WutunSpeakers in Qinghai**

Erika Sandman (University of Helsinki)
Cairangji (Independent Scholar)

In this talk, we will discuss the linguistic biographies of the speakers of Wutun (called by the native speakers *Ngandehua*, 'our language'), a community language spoken by ca. 4000 people in Upper Wutun, Lower Wutun and Jiacangma villages in Tongren County, Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province, China. Wutun is an aberrant variety of Northwest Mandarin, which due to language contact shows heavy phonological, lexical and structural interference from Amdo Tibetan, as well as some Mongolic features (Janhunen et al 2008). The Wutun people identify themselves as Tibetans, and follow the Gelukpa school of Tibetan Buddhism.

The dominant lingua franca in the region and the second language for almost all the Wutun speakers is the Rebgong dialect of Amdo Tibetan, while during the last decades the knowledge of other varieties of Northwest Mandarin, as well as Standard Mandarin has become increasingly common. In addition, the Mongolic language Bonan (called by its native speakers *Manikacha*, 'our language') is spoken in four neighboring villages, but Wutun-Bonan bilingualism is rare.

A linguistic biography is a life story that focuses on the languages of the speaker and discusses how the languages were acquired, how they were used, or how and why they were abandoned (Pavlenko 2007: 165). Based on the autobiographical interviews of Wutun speakers conducted by Cairangji in summer 2014, we will discuss the language situation of the Wutun-speaking community in the light of linguistic biographies. How did the multilingual speakers acquire the languages they speak and in what kind of communicative contexts are the different languages used? What kind of attitude do the people have towards the use of different languages, and how do they see the future of Wutun language?

**China's Minority Language Policy - Perspectives from Inner Mongolia**

Joakim Enwall (Uppsala University)

The purpose of this paper is to present an overview of the minority language policy of the People's Republic of China and its stages since 1949, and to discuss its effects upon the development of the Mongolian language in Inner Mongolia. Since 1949, the leadership of China has formally implemented Marxist-Leninist minority language policies, but with varying interpretations. In the 1950s, the focus was on ethnic classification and the creation of writing systems. After the Anti-rightist Campaign and the launching of the Great Leap Forward, minority policy changed drastically, and the possibility to use minority languages was greatly reduced. This was especially the case for minority languages with newly devised writing systems, but also for minority languages with a long tradition of writing, such as Mongolian and
Tibetan. After a few years of relative calm in the early 1960s, the Cultural Revolution was launched in 1966. In Inner Mongolia, massive purges of Mongolian intellectuals were carried out, and eventually the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region was dismembered. In the late 1970s, the extremist policies of the Cultural Revolution were condemned and the minority policy of the 1950s was reinstalled with initial financial backing. Subsequently, minority language policies have been decentralized and liberalized to a certain extent, but also severely underfinanced. The new economic policy of the PRC and the ever-increasing emphasis on the national standard language Putonghua, have reduced interest in minority languages. This has to some extent been countered through private initiatives in the more liberalized sphere of minority languages, but the prospects do not look bright even for relatively homogenous languages, with a large number of speakers like Mongolian.

The Language of Autonomy in Khams during the Republican Period: A Derivative and Indigenized Discourse

Peng Wenbin (Chongqing University)

The language of self-determination and autonomy have played an important role in Chinese modern nationalist politics, crafting China's relations to Western powers and to ethnic minorities on the borderland in the early 20th century. Derived from the West and from Soviet Leninist ideology, the idea of autonomy has produced a complex outcome in China's local and frontier politics, exemplified by "the Federalists Movements" in the 1920s (cf. Duara), and Inner Mongolian (cf. Bulag) and Khampa Tibetan autonomy movements in the 1930s (cf. Peng). Movements for Khams autonomy and Khampa Tibetan identity during the Republican period triggered various rebellions against the Xikang provincial warlord Liu Wenhui, who had often complained of the Central Nationalist government's support of these frontier incidents. Indigenized in the local setting, the language of autonomy and its practice sheds light on the complex relationships between the state and local society, or center and periphery. I intend to use various concepts, such as Chatterjee's "derivative discourse", Barlow's "localization of sign" and Lydia Liu's "translingual practice" to explore the autonomy discourse in Khams and its implications for building the Khampa subjectivity in a particular historical era.

Experiences of Non-Tibetan Speakers in China's Tibetan Schools: Language and Education

Caixiangduojie (Qinghai Normal University)

China's Tibet is multicultural. It is home to Tibetan, Han Chinese, Mongolian, Monguor, Hui, Salar, Naxi and other ethnic groups. Mandarin Chinese and Tibetan languages are taught and also used as the main media of instruction at schools, including universities, in China's Tibetan regions. However, other ethnic languages and dialects, and the native speakers of those languages and dialects, are generally ignored. Thus, this study identifies challenges faced by non-Tibetan speakers at schools in Tibetan areas of China, in order to address their issues. To better understand the situation of these languages, fifteen non-Tibetan speakers and Tibetan
speakers were interviewed regarding their family backgrounds and details of their experiences at Tibetan schools. In this paper, locations and histories of the respondents' homes, schools, and surrounding communities are given. Derogatory names and punishments related to identity and languages are discussed. Narratives and other interview excerpts, as well as details of related studies and policies are provided, and underlying patterns and causes are indicated. At the same time, suggestions for addressing the issues related to non-Tibetan speakers at Tibetan schools are also made.

**Thriving or Declining? Reflections on the State of Tibetan Language use in Qinghai Today**

Françoise Robin (Inalco, Paris)

Recently, two articles by famous public Tibetan figures, Zhogs ljang and Tshul khrims blo gros, have denounced the poor state of Tibetan language in today's China. Zhogs ljang is an open and daring social critic who has constantly shown since 2008 acumen in the field of today's politics and minority rights and policies. Tshul khrims blo gros is the spiritual inheritor to the famous and now deceased lama, Mkhan po 'Jigs med phun tshogs. Tshul khrims blo gros's teachings have a tremendous impact on many young adult Tibetans in some parts of Tibet and, following his master, he has taken upon himself to educate lay Tibetans by setting a secular ethics for them in this new era. Apart from vegetarianism, which he strongly promotes, he has also been instrumental in promoting the use of a pure Tibetan language (*pha skad gtsang ma*) and has been a key figure in the publication of a series of so far 3 influential dictionaries, as well as posters, which intend to set terminological standard for long needed neologisms in Tibetan language. According to the two above-mentioned articles, the current situation of Tibetan language in Tibet today is alarming and declining. This paper aims at comparing these statements with findings collected during a fieldtrip conducted in August 2014 in Qinghai, which tend to point to the opposite, i.e., to a revival and greater assertion and use of Tibetan language there among young Tibetans. This paper will try to understand why the current state of Tibetan language today in Qinghai can lead to such diverging evaluations. It will also try to provide clues to assess whether Tibetan language today is thriving or declining – or both, or neither?

**An Insider's View of Gyalrong Languages and Identities**

Tenzin Jinba (Lanzhou University)

Gyalrong is historically one of four major agricultural areas (*rong bzhi*) of Tibetan regions. In this presentation, I will offer an insider's perspective on different discourses on the classification of the native languages of Gyalrong, and reflect upon locals' ambivalent status within the Tibetan nationality. In particular, I will elaborate on how and why the Tibetanness of Gyalrong, as well as its variety of languages and dialects, became 'problematic', especially after 1950. I will delve further into how language, identity, politics, history and memory are intertwined to inform the complexity of sociopolitical changes in China's Tibetosphere.
Urbanization, Schooling, and Tibetan Dialect Standardization in Khams

Konchuk Gelek (Independent Scholar)

This paper describes Tibetan dialect standardization due to rural-urban migration and participation in formal schooling in Yul shul Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and Dkar mdzes Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. As socio-economic development of China's Tibetan regions accelerates in the twenty-first century, rural people travel and relocate to regional urban centers more frequently, and are thus exposed to a variety of dialects. Meanwhile, participation in formal state-sponsored schooling is also increasing. Both these phenomena create new sociolinguistic environments in which dialect standardization is occurring. To investigate this situation, I conducted a survey of two middle school and one associate diploma classes at three different educational institutions in Khams, in order to investigate how students' accents shift to standard regional dialects, such as Skye dgu dialect in Yul shul and Sde dge dialect in Dkar mdzes Prefecture.

The Mongolic Idiom of Henan County

BALOGH Mátyás (ELTE University)

Henan Mongol Autonomous County is located at the eastern fringe of Qinghai Province. The county is a part of Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP), and is bordered to the east by Gannan TAP in Gansu Province. The Mongols inhabiting the county belong to the western, Oirat group of Mongols and have migrated from what is currently the northern part of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Allegedly, when the Oirats first arrived, the new territory was uninhabited but exceptionally fertile and well-suited for animal husbandry. The Oirats were devout Buddhists and established the famous Labrang Monastery in what is today's Gannan in 1709. We currently know little about the disappearance of the Mongolic idiom of these Oirats, and about the merger of the Tibetan and Oirat populations in Henan during the past three centuries. What we do know is that at the beginning of the 20th century Oirat was already not widely spoken in Henan. According to a survey conducted in 1959, only two out of Henan's six townships (xiang) had Oirat speakers. From 1985 to the mid 1990s, a language revitalization project was carried out in the county, during which teachers were imported from the Mongol areas of Haixi Tibetan and Mongolian AP (Qinghai Province) and from the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region. The project was a failure; both teachers and students lost interest and gradually quit participating. Most teachers left Henan for their original homelands. Furthermore, the Mongolic varieties taught were considerably different from that spoken in Henan. In 2012, the Faculty for Mongolian and Inner-Asian Studies at ELTE University started a research project on Henan Oirat, and has carried out fieldwork twice (2012 and 2014) in the southern parts of the county. The present paper will discuss the results of this fieldwork, with special regard to the number of Henan-Oirat speakers, the possible future of the dialect, and the main characteristics of this variety in comparison to other Oirat and Mongolic varieties.
List of Suggested Reading Materials

In addition to the workshop program, you have also received a ZIP file containing twelve articles. These suggested readings may help provide some further background on the materials to be discussed during the workshop. Below is a list of readings, organized by topic.

**Saami Languages**


**Minority Languages of the Chinese Tibetosphere**


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'Double Assimilation' (linguistic minorities within an ethnic minority)


