

THE ANCESTRY OF HORPA: FURTHER MORPHOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

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ABSTRACT


Horpa is an understudied, internally diverse Rgyalrongic cluster (Qiangic branch, Sino-Tibetan family) spoken across six counties in two prefectures of northwestern Sichuan. As this author demonstrated in an earlier article using individual-identifying morphological evidence, Northern Horpa (Stodsde) clearly belongs under Rgyalrongic (J. Sun 2000b). The phylogenetic affinity of less conservative Horpa languages (e.g., Rta'u) is however far less obvious. This paper, drawing on extensive recent fieldwork, offers a fuller range of cross-dialect evidence in important areas of Horpa verbal morphology to vindicate the ancestry of Horpa as a Rgyalrongic subgroup. It is shown that quite banal phonological and grammatical evolutions have caused the innovating Horpa languages to cast off much of their characteristic morphology, masking their true Rgyalrongic origins.

KEYWORDS

Sino-Tibetan family Qiangic branch Rgyalrongic subgroup Linguistic

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