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Shared Words, Shared History? The Case of Thangmi and Late Classical Newar

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1. Introduction: Thangmi Ethnography and Language

Thangmi is a Tibeto-Burman language spoken by upwards of 30,000 people inhabiting the districts of Dolakhā and Sindhupālcok in central-eastern Nepal. The Nepali name for this ethnic group and their language is *Thāmī*, an Aryan-inspired term which the Thangmi themselves are eager to shake off. Just as Newar scholars have time and time again insisted that they and their language be known as Newar and not Newari, so too have culturally-active members of the Thangmi community requested that they be referred to by the term Thangmi and not Thami.

When I started working on the Thangmi language four years ago, there was little to go on. Few scholars had worked in the area, and there was a scarcity of fieldwork-based published material on the Thangmi people and their language. The most notable contributions are Father Casper J. Millers *Faith-Healers in the Himalaya* (1979), which offers some solid ethnographic observations on Thangmi shamans; Sueyoshi Toba's unpublished manuscript entitled *Thami-English Dictionary* (1990), a word list based on a few weeks of work with Thangmi speakers; and Creighton Peets PhD dissertation from Columbia University, *Migration, Culture and Community* (1978), an in-depth study of a village with a

sizeable Thangmi population. In 1970, the French linguist Geneviève Stein spent upwards of a year in remote Thangmi villages in Dolakhā (particularly Ālāmpu), but she never published her findings. Secondary materials on the Thangmi ethnic group, such as Dor Bahadur Bista's *People of Nepal* (1967), Gautam and Thapa-Magars *Tribal Ethnography of Nepal* (1994), and Marc Gaborieaus *Le Népal et ses populations* (1978) often repeat factually incorrect suppositions on the lines of: They [Thangmi] number only a few thousand and practice similar social, religious and economic customs to the Tamangs (Bista, 1967 [1996]: 55). In short, then, when I started fieldwork, there was a scarcity of published material dealing with Thangmi culture.

While anthropologists have paid little attention to the Thangmi in their ethnographic accounts of Nepal, the same should not be said for linguists. Since the birth of Tibeto-Burman linguistics, scholars have been intrigued by the genetic position of the Thangmi language. A brief account of the language, written by Sten Konow on the basis of Brain Houghton Hodgsons fieldwork of 1901, appeared in the *Linguistic Survey of India* (1909), and almost half a century later, Robert Shafer included Thangmi in his own family tree of Tibeto-Burman. In both accounts the conclusion was the same: Thangmi (then Thami) shared a special and close genetic relationship with Barām (then known as Bhrāmú), a near-extinct

language spoken in the district of Gorkhā. Despite the scanty empirical basis for this classification (nine lexical similarities shared by the two languages), it appears from more recent research (van Driem, forthcoming) that Shafers suspicions may indeed have been correct. While the Barām system of verbal agreement has all but decayed, the verbal morphology of Thangmi is complex and reminiscent of the Kiranti model. For a fuller discussion of this issue and the data involved, see Turin (1998).

After Barām, Thangmis closest genetic relatives are the Kiranti languages of eastern Nepal and most probably Newar. Whilst the link between Thangmi and Kiranti is well-attested and can be demonstrated through comparison of the pronominalised verbal agreement system, the proposed inclusion of Newar in the *Mahākirānt* or *Para-Kiranti* grouping is a contentious and much-debated point. Newar and foreign scholars alike have challenged the hypothesis, arguing that there are insufficient data to prove the point. Over the past four years, both in conference papers and publications, I have argued that Thangmi occupies a half-way house between a canonical Kiranti-style verbal agreement system and that of the less inflecting Tibeto-Burman languages. Moreover, I have shown evidence that the Thangmi language has a numeral classifier system (not a common feature of the Tibeto-Burman languages of Nepal) which is largely cognate with the numeral classifiers used in the Dolakhā dialect of Newar. From this, two key questions have arisen. First, are the Thangmi and Newar languages close genetic relatives? Second, and if not, how can one then explain the degree of shared lexical items in the two languages, and in which direction did this borrowing take place?

2. Cultural Interdependence between

Newāh Vijñāna No. 3

the Thangmi and Newar of Dolakhā

The Thangmi and Newar populations of Dolakhā district have been in close cultural contact for some time. The Thangmi origin story (see Turin, 1999b, and Shneiderman & Turin, 2000a) features a Newar king who first imprisons a Thangmi man and then later impregnates a Thangmi woman. One of the male exogamous clans within the Thangmi kinship descent structure is known as *roimi rati* or *roimi jati*, from Thangmi *roimi*, Newar and Nepali *jāt*, caste, ethnic group. The story of how the Thangmi ethnic group came to have a Newar clan has been fully described in an earlier article, so suffice it to say that the original *roimi rati* brothers are said to have royal Newar blood (see Turin & Shneiderman, in press).

The above examples demonstrate that the Thangmi have incorporated the Newar into their own socio-cultural world, as might be expected of a relatively small, low-status ethnic group faced with the dominant Newar culture of the area. There are, however, also many examples of the more surprising reverse situation in which the Newar have incorporated the Thangmi into their social paradigm. The most notable of these inclusions is the essential role the Thangmi play in a number of festivals celebrated by the Newar in the bazaar town of Dolakhā. These calendrical festivals, such as *khadgajātrā*, the Sword Festival held on the eleventh day of *Mohani* (Nep. *Dasāi*), and *matsyendranāthjātrā* are explicitly Newar and are also celebrated in other Newar-dominant areas, such as the Kathmandu valley. In Dolakhā, however, active participation in specific rituals by certain members of the surrounding Thangmi community is required. Should the Thangmi fail to perform their duties fully, or worse still, not show up at all, the Newar festival is effectively cancelled. The

Turin/Shared Words, Shared History?... 10

precise details of the Thangmi-Newar ritual relationship as outlined above are beyond the scope of the present discussion and will be published in an article by Shneiderman later this year. In brief though, the most salient features of Thangmi ritual involvement are twofold. First, ritual offerings and implements must be assembled to precise specifications by Thangmi villagers and then brought to Dolakhā. Second, Thangmi shamans and ritual practitioners are required to participate in the festivals otherwise officiated by Newars. These duties must be performed by Thangmi from specific villages: the *devikoṭ* and *khadgajātrā* duties are performed exclusively by Thangmi from the village of Dumkoṭ, while the *matsyendranāth jātrā* involves only Thangmi from the village of Lāpīlāñ. This division by village suggests that the imposition of ritual duties in Newar festivals may have originated as a form of taxation on the Thangmi by the local Newar rulers. Whether or not this hypothesis is correct, the required presence of the Thangmi has now become internalised by the Newar of Dolakhā as well, who view the Thangmi as essential to the efficacy of these rituals. Father Miller describes in detail the happenings that led to the Thangmi villagers refusal to come play their part in the *devikoṭjātrā* in 1912 AD (1997: 89-93), an event which is remembered and narrated to this day.

3. Classical Newar

Hans Jørgensens description of Classical Newar as being simply the language of the MSS. (1936: 3) has been rightly challenged. As the Newar scholar Dr. Kashinath Tamot has repeatedly stressed, Classical Newar is not one uniform language. There are, according to Tamot, at least two stages of Classical Newari (CN), namely Early and Late (2000: 1); Early *Newāh Vijñāna No. 3*

being approximately 879-1482 AD and Late being the Newar of 1482-1768 AD. As Tamot himself points out, the implications of this linguistic distinction are important: Jørgensens dictionary is now seen as covering only the Late Classical and Early Modern period of the Newar language (from 1675 AD to 1859 AD). It is likely that Jørgensen was unaware of the existence of an older form of the language, namely Early Classical Newar. It is Tamots well-reasoned assertion that Early Classical Newar exhibits pre-Aryan features which were later replaced by Sanskritic vocabulary in the Late Classical and Early Modern periods.

At the *9th Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies (IATS)* at Leiden University, in June, 2000, Kashinath Tamot presented a paper entitled *Some Characteristics of the Tibeto-Burman Stock of Early Classical Newari*. During his presentation, I was most interested to find cognates between certain Early Classical Newar words (to be replaced by Sanskritic loans in Late Classical Newar) and modern Thangmi as spoken in Dolakhā and Sindhupālcok. A day after his lecture, Sara Shneiderman presented a paper on Thangmi death rituals. In her handout, Shneiderman had listed Thangmi ritual words for body parts which are used exclusively during the death ritual. Over 80% of these words are different from those used in daily speech. After her presentation, Tamot approached both Shneiderman and myself and showed us his notations on her handout: many of the ritual words for body parts in Thangmi were cognate with Early Classical Newar. The significance of this discovery should not be underestimated. First and foremost, the discovery lends further credence to the proposed linguistic closeness of Thangmi and Newar. Whether the similarities are due to a great deal of early borrowing between the languages or point to a genetic

relationship remains, of course, the most important issue. Dr. Tamot and I are at present working on a longer article on Early Classical Newar and Thangmi cognates, which we hope to publish soon. In the remainder of this brief paper, then, I will present the evidence of cognates between Thangmi and Late Classical Newar, the former data coming from my own field notes, and the latter from Jørgensens *A Dictionary of the Classical Newāri*.

4. Thangmi and Late Classical Newar Cognates

Shared lexical items between Thangmi and Late Classical Newar (the latter being what Jørgensen refers to as *Classical Newāri*) fall into three classes. The first, and perhaps the least spectacular, are those words which are well-attested reflexes of Proto-Tibeto-Burman roots found across the genetically-related languages of Nepal and the higher Himalayas. The fact that Thangmi and Late Classical Newar share these words does nothing more than reconfirm their membership in the Tibeto-Burman language family. The second class of shared items are Sanskritic loan words which have entered both Thangmi and Late Classical Newar. Whilst many of the Tibeto-Burman languages of Nepal are considerably influenced by Indic, the Newar are the sole Tibeto-Burman people to have adopted both a Sanskrit literary tradition as well as the Indo-Aryan caste system, a result of which is a heavily Sanskritised lexicon. The same cannot be said for the Thangmi, however, whose culture continues to remain largely distinct from the socially dominant ideology of Hinduism. The most likely explanation for these shared Indic loans is that one of the two languages (most probably Newar) loaned words from Sanskrit which

were then, at a later date, borrowed by Thangmi. Another possibility is that both Thangmi and Late Classical Newar were in contact with the same Indic language, and perhaps at even roughly the same time. At any rate, as can be seen from the examples below, there are quite a number of shared Indic loans for words where one might have expected to find a non-loaned and native Tibeto-Burman form.

The third and final class of lexical items shared by Thangmi and Late Classical Newar is by far the most interesting. In this class we find numerous cognates between the languages, few of which are widely attested in other Tibeto-Burman languages. A brief disclaimer at this point would be prudent. Tibeto-Burman historical linguistics is in its infancy when compared with the wealth of comparative and historical scholarship on Indo-European languages. I have no doubt that some of the lexical items which I have for the present included in the list of those shared only by Thangmi and Late Classical Newar, may well be reflexes of Proto-Tibeto-Burman elements also found in other extant Himalayan languages. The present article is but an introductory foray into an otherwise unknown field, and I do hope that the analysis will be further honed through feedback from scholars and by comments from readers of this journal. I will present the data according to the three categories I outlined above.

First then, the Thangmi and Late Classical Newar words which are clear reflexes of well-attested Proto-Tibeto-Burman forms (the latter are taken from Benedict, 1972) or clearly cognate with other extant Tibeto-Burman languages of the Himalayas. The reflexes of common Tibeto-Burman proto-forms range from body parts, animals and food stuffs to verb roots. Reflexes of Proto-Tibeto-Burman **s-wa* 'tooth' are Thangmi *suwa* 'tooth' and Late Classical Newar *wā* 'tooth'; the reflexes of

Proto-Tibeto-Burman **kliy* ‘excrement’ are Thangmi *kili* ‘excrement’ and Late Classical Newar *khi* ‘excrements; *(g-)yak ‘armpit’ has reflexes *yakho?* ‘armpit’ in Thangmi and *yāko* ‘armpit’ in Late Classical Newar; and Proto-Tibeto-Burman **lak* ‘arm, hand’ has reflexes *la?* ‘hand, arm’ in Thangmi and *lā* ‘hand, arm’ in Late Classical Newar. Common reflexes for animal and organic words are as follows: Thangmi *naNa* ‘fish’ and Late Classical Newar *nā* fish from Proto-Tibeto-Burman **Nya* ‘fish’; Thangmi *pya* ‘pig’ and Late Classical Newar *phā* ‘hog, boar’ from Proto-Tibeto-Burman **pwak*, ‘pig’; Thangmi *sek* ‘fruit’, round organic object and Late Classical Newar *se* ‘fruit, corn, grain’ from Proto-Tibeto-Burman **sey*, ‘fruit’; and Thangmi *chya* ‘salt’ and Late Classical Newar *chi* ‘salt’ from Proto-Tibeto-Burman **tsa* ‘salt’. The one notable kinship term shared by Thangmi and Late Classical Newar, and a reflex of a clear Proto-Tibeto-Burman root is *nini* ‘husband’s father, father’s sister’ in Late Classical Newar and father’s sister in Thangmi, from Proto-Tibeto-Burman **ni(y)* ‘aunt’. Some inanimate nouns with common reflexes are Thangmi *kharou* ‘door, door-frame’ and Late Classical Newar *khā* door from Proto-Tibeto-Burman **m-ka* ‘door’; Thangmi *me* ‘fire’ and Late Classical Newar *mi* ~ *me* ‘fire’ from Proto-Tibeto-Burman **mey*, fire; Thangmi *me-thap* ‘fireplace’ and Late Classical Newar *mi-thap* chimney (culli) from the two Proto-Tibeto-Burman elements **mey* ‘fire’ and **tap* ‘fireplace’; Thangmi *kham* ‘word, tale, story’ and Late Classical Newar *kha* ‘word, tale, story’ from Proto-Tibeto-Burman **ka* ‘word, speech’; and Thangmi *ulam* path, road and Late Classical Newar *la(m)* ‘road, way, direction’ from Proto-Tibeto-Burman **lam* ‘road, direction’. Common verb cognates and other grammatical particles are Thangmi *ca* ‘small, young, diminutive’ and Late

Classical Newar *cā* ‘a young one’ (of animals) from Proto-Tibeto-Burman **tsa* ‘child, grandchild nephew/niece’; Thangmi *pisa* ‘to give (away)’ and Late Classical Newar *pi-tē* ‘to give away’ from Proto-Tibeto-Burman **biy*, ‘give’; Thangmi *lokxa* ‘to pour’ Late Classical Newar *lu-* ‘to pour’ from Proto-Tibeto-Burman *(*m*-)*lu(w)* ‘pour’; Thangmi *lupsa* ‘to sink, to be submerged’ and Late Classical Newar *lop* ‘to sink, to be submerged’ from Proto-Tibeto-Burman **lip* and/or **nup*~**nip* ‘sink’; Thangmi *saisa* ‘to know’ and Late Classical Newar *saya* ‘to know, to understand, to be conversant with’ from Proto-Tibeto-Burman **syey* ‘know’; and Thangmi *su* ‘who?’ and Late Classical Newar *su* ‘who? (of persons only)’ are cognate with modern written Tibetan *su* who? (Jäschke 1881 [1990]: 573). The final few examples are of those Thangmi and Late Classical Newar words which are also cognate with Sampang, a Kiranti language spoken in the northeastern quadrant of Khotān district. The Sampang data have been provided by René Baptist Huysmans. Thangmi *chusa* ‘to fasten’ and Late Classical Newar *chuya* ‘to fasten, to attach’ are cognate with Sampang *chuyma* ‘to fasten’; Thangmi *bok* ‘corn or rice blossom’ and Late Classical Newar *bo* ‘flower’ are cognate with Sampang *buN* flower; Thangmi *meśa* ‘buffalo’ and Late Classical Newar *mes* ‘buffalo’ are cognate with Sampang *mesi* ‘buffalo’ and Kulung *me:si* ‘water buffalo’. Whilst the above examples show only that both Thangmi and Late Classical Newar are Tibeto-Burman languages with reflexes of well-attested proto-forms as well as cognates in extant Tibeto-Burman languages of the Himalayas, the reflexes in Thangmi and Late Classical Newar are often very similar indeed.

The second set of data contains words which both Thangmi and Late Classical Newar loaned from Indo-Aryan languages and which are strikingly similar. Thangmi *aji* ‘mother-in-

law' and Late Classical Newar *ajī* grandmother (paternal and maternal)' may have been loaned from Hindi *ajī* or *ājī* 'paternal grandmother'; Thangmi *athe* 'very' and Late Classical Newar *ati* 'very', exceedingly were likely loaned from Maithili or Nepali *ati* 'very, exceedingly'; Thangmi *ṭupuri* 'hat, cap' and Late Classical Newar *tupuli* 'a sort of head-gear' from Indo-Aryan *ṭopī* 'cap'; Thangmi *dudu* 'milk, womans breast' and Late Classical Newar *dudu* 'milk, the breast of a woman' may well be loaned from Nepali (or another neighbouring Indo-Aryan language) *dud* or *dudh* 'milk, female breast, udder'; Thangmi *pataśi* 'womens traditional dress' and Late Classical Newar *patāsi* 'the lower garment' may derive from Sanskrit *paṭaḥ* 'cloth' or Nepali *pāṭ* 'flax, fibre'; and finally Thangmi *makar* 'monkey' and Late Classical Newar *markaṭ* monkey are loaned from Nepali *markaṭ* 'monkey' which in turn derives from Sanskrit *markaṭa* 'monkey'. As I mentioned above, Newar has a highly Sanskritised lexicon and thus it is not surprising that even words which would be considered part of its core lexicon, such as very, milk or breast, have been loaned from Indo-Aryan. More surprising, however, is that Thangmi too has borrowed these terms, and furthermore that the loans seem to have undergone a similar phonological shift in both languages. Examples of this shift would be the reduplicative *dudu* milk from Indo-Aryan *dud* or *dudh*, and the extra syllable added to the loan for hat or cap, Thangmi *ṭupuri* and Late Classical Newar *tupuli*, from Indo-Aryan *ṭopī*.

It is most likely that one of the two languages borrowed words from Indic which were then at a later date borrowed 'once-removed' into the second language. The order was most probably Late Classical Newar borrowing from Indo-Aryan and then Thangmi borrowing a Sanskritised form from Newar. On account of the

literacy and extensive written tradition of the Newar civilisation, loans directly from Sanskrit into Late Classical Newar were commonplace. For Thangmi, however, which remains to this day an unwritten language spoken in the middle hills far from any urban centre, direct loans from Sanskrit are distinctly unlikely. If this scenario is correct, it would support the hypothesis that the Thangmi and Newar languages (and hence their speakers) were in close contact with one another from an early date. In the absence of such early contact, one would have expected Thangmi rather to borrow from Nepali when the language was brought to Dolakhā and Sindhupālcok by Nepali-speaking Indo-Aryan settlers.

The final data set, presented in the table below, are those lexical similarities shared only by Thangmi and Late Classical Newar and not cognate with other Tibeto-Burman languages. I have opted for a tabular presentation because of the sheer volume of the data, and also to facilitate comparison. The entries follow the ordering of Jørgensens *A Dictionary of the Classical Newārī*, from which all of the Newar entries are taken. I have also chosen to preserve Jørgensens orthography for the sake of consistency, including his unsystematic use of the definite and indefinite articles, whilst the Thangmi entries are based on my phonological understanding of the language. In the final column I have included possible Proto-Tibeto-Burman forms of which the modern words may be reflexes. Since the publication of Paul King Benedicts seminal *Sino-Tibetan: A Conspectus*, from which the proto-forms are taken, there have been many advances in Tibeto-Burman historical linguistics. Although recent articles and conference papers have refined and added to Benedicts list of Tibeto-Burman reconstructions, for reasons of space I do not include them here.

Late Classical

<u>Newar</u>	<u>Gloss</u>	<u>Thangmi</u>	<u>Gloss</u>	<u>Proto-form</u>
athi-āthi	<i>a joint, articulation</i>	aṭu	<i>a joint</i>	
al-pe	<i>the spleen</i>	elepe	<i>spleen</i>	
wāsā	<i>a plough</i>	wasā	<i>to plough</i>	
karati	<i>a saw</i>	karati	<i>a sickle,</i>	
kwos	<i>a bone</i>	kośa	<i>bone</i>	
khiṅu	<i>dark, darkness</i>	ukhiṅsa N	<i>to become dark</i>	<i>ukhiṅsa</i>
gañ	<i>dry</i>	gañdu N	<i>dry</i>	<i>gañdu</i>
ṅa	<i>a horn</i>	naru	<i>horn, antler</i>	
ṅatāl	<i>a cheek</i>	nate	<i>cheek</i>	
ṅālā-pu	<i>ashamed, shame</i>	añaldu N	<i>ashamed</i>	<i>añaldu</i>
cāku	<i>sweet</i>	ṭakadu	<i>sweet</i>	
cimilī = cimī	<i>the hair (of the body)</i>	cime	<i>hair (of the head)</i>	? <PTB *tsam = tsām ~ sām
che	<i>2. s. you (used mostly in addressing superiors or equals)</i>	che	<i>pronominal honorific suffix</i>	
cho	<i>wheat</i>	jakcho	<i>wheat</i>	
choya	<i>to send, to dispatch</i>	chyo?osa	<i>to send</i>	
jak	<i>only</i>	jukun	<i>only</i>	
jake	<i>rice</i>	jake	<i>rice</i>	
tatā	<i>an elder sister</i>	tete	<i>elder sister</i>	
tuphe	<i>a broom</i>	thope	<i>broom, sweep</i>	
da	<i>a year</i>	daN	<i>year</i>	
dhu	<i>tiger</i>	du	<i>tiger, wild cat</i>	
hni	<i>a day</i>	uni	<i>day, sun</i>	
hni-pu	<i>the brain</i>	Nyi	<i>brain</i>	
pu	<i>seed</i>	puya	<i>seed</i>	
phat-si	<i>a kind of pumpkin</i>	phaṭu	<i>pumpkin</i>	
phas	<i>air, wind</i>	phaśe	<i>air, wind</i>	
bu	<i>a field</i>	pebu	<i>field</i>	
bhaṭi	<i>a cat</i>	baṭi	<i>cat</i>	
mañ-gwo	<i>swelling</i>	mañNsa	<i>to swell</i>	
mā-khā-pi-khā	<i>a spider</i>	makarpapa	<i>spider</i>	
mā-khicā	<i>a bitch</i>	ma-kucu	<i>bitch, female dog</i>	? <PTB *-ma + *kwiy = kwěy
hma	<i>a body</i>	maN	<i>body</i>	
lañ-hñe	<i>a yard, court</i>	laNga	<i>courtyard, farmyard</i>	
li	<i>thereafter</i>	li~libi	<i>after, later</i>	
sakal	<i>all</i>	sakale	<i>all</i>	? <PTB *(m-)kul
sa-cā	<i>a calf, a heifer</i>	śya-ca	<i>calf (lit. cow + son)</i>	

sā	<i>a cow</i>	śya	<i>cow, bovine</i>
sā-dudu	<i>cow-milk</i>	śya-ko dudu	<i>cow-milk</i>
si-pā	<i>the testicles</i>	papa-sek	<i>testicles</i>
se-bu	<i>leather</i>	śebi	<i>leather, skin, hide</i>
sel	<i>marrow</i>	ṭamsil	<i>marrow</i>

5. Conclusion

The above table contains 41 entries of likely cognates between Thangmi and Late Classical Newar, of which at least three may be derived from attested Proto-Tibeto-Burman roots. The number of reflexes of Tibeto-Burman proto-forms may actually be much higher, but good reconstructions are hard to come by, and I can only hope that scholars may lend a hand in weeding out those lexical items which are found elsewhere in Tibeto-Burman. However, even if half of the above proposed lexical similarities between Thangmi and Late Classical Newar turn out to be reconstructable to Proto-Tibeto-Burman, around 20 lexical similarities remain. As mentioned above, Shafers argument for Thangmi and Barâm relatedness was based on nine lexical similarities shared by the two languages, three of which may now be discounted as they are widely attested in other Tibeto-Burman languages, leaving only six words to support a link. Whilst many Tibeto-Burman languages of Nepal have some lexical cognates with *either* Thangmi *or* Late Classical Newar, there is no other language to my knowledge which shared as many lexical similarities with Thangmi or Late Classical Newar as these two languages do with one another.

Once again the question arises: can this similarity simply be put down to borrowing or does it belie a deeper genetic relationship? At the present, I am unsure how to answer. If we opt for the more cautious explanation, putting the similarities down to culture contact and *Newāh Vijñāna* No. 3

lexical borrowing, then the serious issue arises as to how the speakers of these two languages could have exchanged so much 250 years ago or more. If, on the other hand, we choose to conclude that the lexical similarities shown above are an indication of a close genetic relationship between Thangmi and Newar, then we must come up with sound historical evidence to this effect. Either way, one conclusion is beyond doubt: at a linguistic level Thangmi shares much with Late Classical Newar and at a cultural level, the Thangmi have deep socio-religious links with the Newar of Dolakhâ. This relationship is both an intriguing and important one, and will be the subject of further study.

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