

A Phonological Sketch of a Tibetan Kham Dialect Spoken in Mingyong Village in the Yunnan bDe chen Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

IKEDA Takumi

Abstract: This is a preliminary report on a Tibetan Kham dialect spoken in Mingyong village (明永 Míngyǒng in Chinese; མེ་ལོང་ *Me long* in Tibetan) in the Dêqên County (德钦县 Déqīn xiàn; བདེ་ཆེན་རྫོང་ *bDe chen rdzong*) under the Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (迪庆藏族自治州 Dìqīng Zàngzú Zìzhìzhōu; བདེ་ཆེན་བོད་རིགས་རང་སྐྱོང་ཁུལ་ *bDe chen Bod rigs rang skyong khul*), in the northwestern part of Yunnan province, in southwest China. This is the southeastern-most area where Tibetan Kham dialects are spoken. Several other nationalities, e.g. Naxi and Lisu, who speak Tibeto-Burman languages, also inhabit this district. Recently a Japanese Scholar SUZUKI Hiroyuki has been carrying out active research on the Kham dialects distributed from the Diqing to the Shangri-La district where is a county-level city as an administrative unit. He classifies the Kham dialects of this area into two big groups: Shanggri-La and Derong-Deqing.

The Mingyong village belongs to the dialect subgroup spoken on the west side of the Yunling mountain range (云岭山脉 Yúnlín shānmài), which is under the Derong-Deqing group, as classified by Suzuki. This subgroup shares common features, but also has quite a few differences among their speech from village to village. For example, Suzuki (2010) describes phonological features of the Chalitong dialect (查里通方言 Chálitōng fāngyán) in detail, which is one of the dialects belonging to the subgroup spoken on the west side of the Yunling mountain range.

The speakers in Mingyong village consider that they belong to the district where the Chalitong dialect is spoken, and their own speech is very similar to the Chalitong dialect. But actually there are obvious differences between Mingyong and Chalitong in their phonology, lexicon, and syntax. Although Mingyong phonology and phonological correspondences to the Written Tibetan are very close to Chalitong, some words are quite different, typically in the pronominal system. And they also have quite a few colloquial words which do not correspond to anything in Written Tibetan.

关键词：藏语，康方言，迪庆藏族自治州，云岭山脉西部次方言群，明永话

Keywords: Tibetan, Kham dialect, Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Derong-Deqing group, Mingyong speech

1 . Introduction

Mingyong (明永 Míngyǒng in Chinese; the Tibetan name has two possible etymologies: མེ་ལོང་ *me long* ‘mirror’ or མེ་སྤང་ *me slang* ‘fire pan’ in Written Tibetan) is a small village in Yunnan Province, but it is famous for its view of the Mingyong glacier, which is located at the lowest latitude and elevation of any glacier in China, at 28.5 degrees north at an elevation of 2,700 meters. The glacier is fed by snows which fall at an altitude of 6,740 m (22,107 ft.) on Mount Meili (梅里雪山 Méilǐ xuěshān), also known as Mt. Khawakap (ཁ་བ་དཀར་པོ་ *Kha ba dkar po*), which is sacred to the Tibetans and other local people. My collaborator Ms. Pema Tshomo was born in Mingyong, and is a native speaker of the Mingyong dialect. Our research was conducted during the academic year 2013 in Kyoto. Sometimes when she did not know any appropriate expression in Mingyong, she would call to her father, Mr. Trashi, who also provided us with important linguistic data.

In this report¹ we introduce the phonological features and analysis of the phonological system of the Mingyong dialect, based on their core vocabulary, in order to provide new linguistic data on the Derong-Deqing group studied by Dr. Suzuki.

2 . Initials

Minyong initials comprise four manners of articulation for obstruents: voiceless unaspirated, voiceless aspirated, voiced, and pre-nasalized voiced.

¹ The original report was presented at the 47th International Conference of Sino-Tibetan Language and Linguistics held on 17-19 Oct. 2014, at the Yunnan Normal University in Kunming, China. The presentation at the conference was made in Chinese with the collaboration of Ms. Pema Tshomo. This paper is a revised version, translated into English by the author, so I am solely responsible for its content. I would like to express my appreciation to Prof. James A. Matisoff, who read the draft of this paper and gave me quite a few indications and suggestions. And I also thank the members of the research group on the Historical Development of Tibeto-Himalayan Civilization, directed by Prof. IWAOKAZUSHI, who gave me important comments when I presented this paper at the workshop, held on November 21st. 2017 at the Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University.

There is also a contrast between voiced and voiceless nasal and liquid initials.

2.1 labials

Phone	Word	English	WrT ²	Wylie
/ p- /	pɛ ²⁴	cow	བ་	<i>ba</i>
/ ph- /	p ^h ɛɽ ⁴²	pig	ཕག་	<i>phag</i>
/ b- /	bə ⁴⁴	son	བུ་	<i>bu</i>
/ mb- /	m ^b ə ⁴⁴	insect	འབུ་	<i>'bu</i>
/ m- /	mə ⁴⁴	person	མི་	<i>mi</i>
/ hm- /	m̥ɛː ⁴⁴	medicine	མེན་	<i>sman</i>
/ w- /	wɛ ⁴⁴	fox	ཕ་	<i>wa</i>

Besides the word [mə⁴⁴] < མི་ *mi*, Minyong has another word indicating ‘person’ used freely in colloquial style: [nɛ⁴⁴] < མྱི་ *myi*.

2.2 dental affricates and fricatives

Phone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
/ ts- /	tɕɛɽ ⁴²	chop, mince	གཅོབ་	<i>gtsab</i>
/ tsh- /	ts ^h u ⁴⁴	lake	མཚོ་	<i>mtsho</i>
/ dz- /	dzə ²²	step on	རྩི་	<i>rdzi</i>
/ ndz- /	ndziː ⁴⁴	beautiful	མཛེས་པོ་	<i>mdzes po</i>
/ s- /	sɛ ⁴⁴	earth, soil	ས་	<i>sa</i>
/ z- /	zur ²³¹	leopard	གཟིག་	<i>gzig</i>

² The words in Tibetan script in this report are of two different types: One is the standard Written Tibetan corresponding to colloquial words; but colloquial words which have no corresponding form in WrT, are written in Tibetan script based on their pronunciation, with an asterisk added. If it is difficult to spell out, we left the morpheme marked with three asterisks. And we follow the Wylie system in transliterating the Tibetan script into italicized Romanization.

Mingyong does not have a distinction between aspirated and unaspirated fricative initials. A neighboring dialect, such as that of Adong village in Deqin County, does have an aspirated vs. unaspirated distinction in fricative initials, e.g. [$\text{s}^{\text{h}}\text{a}$] ས་ *sa* ‘earth’ vs. [sa] ཟ་ *za* ‘eat’. But Mingyong distinguishes them not by aspiration but by tone: [se^{44}] ‘earth’ vs. [se^{24}] ‘eat’.

2.3 Dental plosives

Phone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
/ t- /	te^{44}	horse	རྟ་	<i>rta</i>
/ th- /	$\text{t}^{\text{h}}\text{o}^{44}$	drink	འཐུང་	<i>’thung</i>
/ d- /	do^{24}	bear	དོན་	<i>dom</i>
/ nd- /	$\text{n}^{\text{d}}\text{e}^{24}$	moon	ཟླ་བ་	<i>zla ba</i>
/ hn- /	ñe^{44}	nose	སྒ་	<i>sna</i>
/ n- /	ne^{24}	wheat	< བས་	<i>nas</i> ‘highland barley’

Mingyong [ne^{24}] ‘wheat’ is derived from Written Tibetan བས་ *nas* ‘highland barley’, while the Mingyong word for ‘highland barley’ is [$\text{ge}^{22}\text{re}^{44}$], which might be derived rather from Written Tibetan གྲོ་ *gro* ‘wheat’.

2.4 Lateral

Phone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
/ hl- /	$\text{lo}^{22}\text{cu}^{42}$	south	ལྷོ་ཕྱགས་	<i>lho phyogs</i> ³
/ l- /	$\text{li}^{22}\text{ke}^{44}$	work	ལས་ཀ་	<i>las ka</i>

³ This is a written word, rarely used in colloquial.

2.5 Retroflexes

Phone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
/ tr- /	tʂe ⁴⁴	hair	སྒྲ་	<i>skra</i>
/ trh- /	tʂ ^h i ⁴⁴ tʂ ^h eʔ ⁴²	ten thousand	ཁྲི་	<i>khri phrag</i>
/ dr- /	dʒi ²² pə ⁴⁴	bell	དི་བུ་	<i>dri bu</i>
/ ndr- /	ndʒoʔ ⁴²	dragon	འབྲུག་	<i>'brug</i>
/ sr- /	ʂe ⁴⁴	who	སྤྱ་	<i>su</i> (?)
/ r- /	ʐe ²⁴ ~ ɹe ²⁴	goat	ར་	<i>ra</i>

Some words with initial / ndr- / are often pronounced with a trill [ndr-] instead of a retroflex [ndʒ-], e.g. [ndrɪʔ⁴²] (ནངས་) སྒྲིག་ (ཅིག་) (*nas*) *sgrig* (*cig*) ‘ (a) row (of wheat) ’.

2.6 Palatals

Phone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
/ ty- /	tɕə ⁴⁴	ten	བརྒྱ་	<i>bcu</i>
/ tyh- /	tɕ ^h ə ⁴⁴	water	ཆུ་	<i>chu</i>
/ dy- /	dʒe ²⁴	Han-Chinese	རྒྱ་	<i>rgya</i>
/ ndy- /	ndʒeʔ ⁴²	neighbor, side	འབྲུམ་	<i>'gram</i> (?)
/ hny- /	ɲi ⁴⁴	heart	སྙིང་	<i>snying</i>
/ ny- /	ɲe ²⁴ ~ ɹe ²⁴	fish	ཉ་	<i>nya</i>
/ sy- /	ɕe ²⁴	chicken	བྱ་	<i>bya</i>
/ zy- /	ʐeʔ ⁴²	yak	གཡག་	<i>g-yag</i>
/ hy- /	ɕe ⁴⁴ ~ ʎe ⁴⁴	god	ལྷ་	<i>lha</i>

/y-/ jɛ²⁴ mountain pass ལ་ *la*

2.7 Velars

Phone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
/k-/	kɛ ⁴⁴	pillar	ཀ་བ་	<i>ka ba</i>
/kh-/	k ^h ɛ ⁴⁴	mouth	ཁ་	<i>kha</i>
/g-/	gə ⁴⁴	nine	དགུ་	<i>dgu</i>
/ŋg-/	ŋgu ⁴⁴	head	མགོ་	<i>mgo</i>
/hŋ-/	ŋo ²² ŋō ⁴⁴	blue	ཕྱོག་པོ་	<i>sngon po</i>
/ŋ-/	ŋə ⁴⁴	silver	དུལ་	<i>ngul</i>
/h-/	xɛ ⁴⁴ ko ²²	understand	ཉ་གོ་	<i>ha go</i>

Suzuki (2012) observes that Chalitong, a neighboring dialect of Mingyong, has a pre-aspirated series (such as *[hp-]), as well as a voiceless pre-nasalized series (e.g. *[m̥ph-]), and has a distinction between aspirated vs. unaspirated series of initial fricatives, but Mingyong completely lacks these initials.

2.8 Phonetic variations and allophones

Sometimes we have observed special sounds which occur only as phonetic variants. These sounds are not phonemes but allophones in Mingyong, but they are noticeable, and have a tendency to appear with regularity in certain words. Such variants occur rather systematically with palatal initials.

Phone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
*[c-]	We have not yet found any word with this initial.			
[j-]	gi ²⁴ ~ jiō ²⁴	wear (shoes)	གོན་	<i>gon</i>
[ɲj-]	ɲju ⁴² ~ ɲu ⁴²	inhale	འཇེབ་	<i>'jib</i>

	ɲj ⁴⁴	pray	(ཕྱགས་འཇམ་ལ་) *** (to Bodhisattva) (phyags 'tshal la) ***
[ɲ-]	tɕ ^h u ²² no ⁴²	the lower reaches	ཟུ་*** chu ***

It is interesting that Written Tibetan does not distinguish the verb for ‘wear clothes’ from one meaning ‘wear shoes’, using the same word for both: གྱོན་ *gyon* or གོན་ *gon*. Mingyong has two different words for ‘wear’: [(gu²²zẽ²⁴) dʒĩ²⁴] for ‘wear (clothes)’, and [(çẽ²⁴) giĩ²⁴ ~ jiĩ²⁴] for ‘wear (shoes)’. These two words are derived from WrT verb: གྱོན་ *gyon* or གོན་ *gon* respectively. The difference in Mingyong can be traced to whether the initial had *ya-btags* (i.e. the palatalization mark) or not in WrT.

gyón-pa to put on, to wear = *gón-pa*; *lús-la gyón-pai gos* the garment that one wears *Dzl.*; *gyón-rgyu* materials for clothing *Mil.* [Jäschke 1881]

gón-pa I. vb. to put on (clothes, shoes), *mgo-la za gón-pa* to put on a cap. [Jäschke 1881]

The combination of the verb and a preceding object noun in Mingyong is as follows:

Phone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
[dʒ-]	gu ²² zẽ ²⁴ dʒĩ ²⁴	wear (clothes)	གོས་*** གྱོན་	gos *** <i>gyon</i>
[j-]	çẽ ²⁴ giĩ ²⁴ ~ jiĩ ²⁴	wear (shoes)	ལྷམ་ གོན་	<i>lham gon</i>

The voiced alveo-palatal affricate [dʒ-] is derived from the palatalized velar initial of Written Tibetan, with the palatalization evidently being marked by the Written Tibetan *ya-btags* (palatalization mark). The voiced palatal plosive initial [j-] must be considered to be an allophone of the morpheme /'gõ/. The medial semivowel [-i-] after the initial consonant developed later, caused by the front vowel [ø], and has no relation with the Written Tibetan *ya-btags*. We suppose that the latter verb lacked the *ya-btags* (palatalization) at the earlier stage, but later acquired palatalization in the collocation ‘wear shoes’.

3. Rimes

3.1 Rimes with a single vowel

Mingyong distinguishes eight simple vowels:

Phone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
/ a /	tɛ ⁴⁴	horse	ཏྱ་	<i>rta</i>
/ ə /	ɲə ⁴⁴	silver	དངུལ་	<i>ɲɲul</i>
/ e /	ne ²⁴	wheat	< ནས་ (?)	<i>nas</i> ‘highland barley’
/ i /	ts ^h i ⁴⁴ ~ ts ^h u ⁴⁴	day	ཚེས་	<i>tshes</i>
/ i /	ndzi ⁴⁴	rice	འབྲས་	<i>’bras</i>
/ ø /	t ^h ø ⁴⁴ pɛ ⁴⁴	forehead	ཐོད་པ་	<i>thod pa</i>
/ u /	du ²²	stone	རྩ་	<i>rdo</i>
/ o /	ɔ ²² ɔ ⁴²	small child	*རོ་རོ་	* <i>ro ro</i>

The Mingyong vocalic system is as follows:

i	i ~ u	u	/ i /	/ i /	/ u /
	ø			/ ø /	
e	ə	o	/ e /	/ ə /	/ o /
	ɛ			/ a /	

3.2 Rimes with final glottal stop

All the simple vowels can appear with glottal stop as staccato rimes.

Phone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
/ aʔ /	tʌʔ ⁴²	tiger	ཁྲག་	<i>stag</i>
/ əʔ /	sɿʔ ⁴²	wrinkle	< སུལ་མ་	<i>sul ma</i> (?)

/ eʔ /	bɛʔ ²³¹	blow	འབུང་	'bud
/ iʔ /	diʔ ²³¹	collapse	དིབ་	rdib
/ iʔ /	siʔ ⁴²	kill	བསང་	bsad
/ ʊʔ /	tɕ ^h u ²² ts ^h ʊʔ ⁴²	time	དུས་ཚེད་	dus tshod
/ uʔ /	tuʔ ⁴²	hungry	ལྷོགས་	ltogs
/ oʔ /	joʔ ²³¹	sheep	ལུག་	lug

There is a tendency for vowels with glottal stop to be more open than in non-glottal rimes. Nevertheless we cannot find any minimal pairs between the more vs. less open variants, so we consider the different values of the vowels to be merely allophones of the same phoneme.

3.3 Rimes with nasalized vowels

The simple vowels can appear with a nasal feature, as nasalized rimes.

Phone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
/ ã /	nẽ ⁴²	sky	གནམ་	gnam
/ ẽ /	ñẽ ⁴²	snot <	སྒྲབས་	snabs
/ ẽ /	gẽ ²⁴ pe ²²	old (age)	གན་བ་	rgan pa
/ ĩ /	tɕĩ ⁴⁴	cloud	སྒྲིན་	sprin
/ ẽ /	dʒẽ ²⁴	wear (cloth)	ཁྱོན་	gyon
/ ũ /	sũ ²⁴	nail	སེན་མོ་	sen mo
/ õ /	ŋgõ ⁴⁴	back	*འགོང་	*'gong

We have not discovered any examples of a nasalized high unrounded vowel */ ɨ̃ /, so that there is a vacant slot in the rime system. The reason is so far not clear, and should be investigated further. Sometimes the nasal final [-ŋ] occurs after a rounded high vowel, either as [-uŋ] or [-oŋ] , but this is not a stable final, and may be an indication of a merger in progress.

Phone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
/ ɔ̃ /	dõ ²⁴ ~ don ²⁴	pit	དོང་	<i>dong</i>
		bear	དོམ་	<i>dom</i>
	t ^h õ ⁴⁴ ~ t ^h on ⁴⁴	plain	ཐང་	<i>thang</i>
/ ũ /	ɐ ²² tsũ ²⁴ ~ ɐ ²² tsun ²⁴	beard	ཞལ་ཚམ་	<i>og tshom</i>

3.4 Rimes with medial semivowel

3.4.1 Palatal semivowel / -i- /

After initial palatal or velar initials, some words are pronounced with a medial semivowel [-i̥-] :

Phone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
/ -ia /	= ki̥ɐ ²²	~'s / of	***	***
		(genitive particle)		
/ -iã /	ni̥ɐ̃ ⁴²	leaf	***	***
/ -iaʔ /	ni̥ɐʔ ⁴²	bamboo	སྟུག་མ་	<i>smyug ma</i>

With the same palatal nasal initial / ny- / [n̥-] , there exists a minimal pair of rimes both with and without [-i̥-] : ni̥ɐ̃⁴² ‘leaf’ (? WrT origin) v.s. n̥ɐ̃⁴² ‘ear (of grain) ’ < སྟེ་མ་ *snye ma*.

Phone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
/ -iẽ /	dzi̥ẽ ²⁴	intestines	རྩུ་མ་	<i>rgyu ma</i>
/ -iø /	tɕ ^h u ²² k ^h i̥ø ⁴⁴			
	~ tɕ ^h u ²² k ^h i̥Y ⁴⁴	boiled water	ཁུ་འབྲུལ་	<i>chu 'khol</i>

The rimes with [-i̥-] are restricted to combinations with low central vowels and there are not many examples. Their origin and distribution remain to be studied further.

3.4.2 Labial semivowel / -w- /

Some rimes have the labial semivowel [-w-] before the principal vowel in certain words, but there are not many examples:

Phone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
/ -wa /	swΛ ²⁴ ~ su ²² wɛ ²⁴	sickle	མོ་རུ་	zo ru
/ -wã /	swã ²⁴ ~ su ²² wã ⁴⁴	wheat straw	***	***
/ -waʔ /	swΛʔ ⁴²	beard (of wheat)	***	***
/ -wə /	ts ^h ɣə ²⁴	dye (stuff)	ཚོ་ས་	tshos
/ -wẽ /	kwẽ ⁴⁴	hook	***	***
/ -wəʔ /	kwəʔ ⁴²	dig	རྩ་	rko

Some cases of rimes with [-w-] in Mingyong are derived from Written Tibetan words with *wa-zur* (subscript mark of *wa*), but the *wa-zur* in written Tibetan is not always reflected as medial / -w- / in Mingyong colloquial rimes. Most of the rimes with medial / -w- / are derived from disyllabic words with the suffix ་ *ba*, which were fused into a single syllable, as follows:

Phone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
/ -wa /	tswɛ ²⁴	grass	རྩ་	rtswa
cf.	tshɛ ²⁴	salt	ཚཱ་	tshwa
	swe ²⁴ ~ su ²² wɛ ⁴⁴	coal	སོལ་བ་	sol ba ‘charcoal’
/ -wø /	twø ⁴⁴ ~ tu ⁴⁴ wɛ ⁴⁴	navel	ཉེ་བ་	ste ba

3.5 Rimes with final semivowel

3.5.1 Secondary final semivowel / -i /

Some words have a rime with a final vowel [-i], such as [-ཡི] ~ [-ཡଁ], which varies with a presumably older rime / -øi /:

Phone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
/ -øi /	tɕ ^h øɿ ⁴⁴ ~ tɕ ^h ʏ ⁴⁴	release	ལྷོལ་	<i>sgrol</i>
	gø ²² ~ gʏ ²²	need	དགོས་	<i>dgos</i>
	ʒø ²³¹ ~ ʒʏ ²³¹	have	ཡོད་	<i>yod</i>

The rime with final [-i] is always occurs with the principal vowel / ø / , but the mechanism of its origin is not clear, and the correspondences to written Tibetan are complex, so that further research is necessary.

3.5.2 Final semivowel / -w /

Two kinds of rimes have the final semivowel / -w / [-ʊʔ] after the principal vowel, as follows:

Phone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
/ aw /	t ^h ɛʊ ⁴²	method; way	ཐབས་	<i>thabs</i>
	k ^h ɛʊ ⁴²	needle	ཁབས་	<i>khabs</i>
/ əw /	bɛ ²² ləʊ ⁴²	wave	བ་ལྷབས་	<i>rba rlabs</i>
	ɕəʊ ⁴²	study	སློབ་	<i>slob</i>

These are the only rimes with the final semivowel / -w / , and occur only with the principal vowels / a / or / ə /. Their origin is clearly to be found in words with WrT -བ་/-བས་ -*b* or -*bs* , but it is not easy to determine the reason why the final / -w / is restricted to these two rimes.

4. Pitch Accent

Mingyong has 4 kinds of pitch patterns in monosyllabic words.

	Tone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
1 .	High Level ˉ [44]	su ⁴⁴	tooth	སོ་	<i>so</i>
2 .	High Falling ˋ [42]	p ^h ɛʔ ⁴²	pig	ཕག་	<i>phag</i>
3 .	Low Rising ˊ [24]	ɕɛ ²⁴	chicken	བྱ་	<i>bya</i>
4 .	Low Rising-Falling ˆ [231]	dʒi ²³¹	forget	བརྗེད་	<i>brjed</i>

Single syllable with Low Rising-Falling pitch is often pronounced as Low level as [22] . These four tone categories can be expanded in disyllabic words, as follows:

	Tone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
1 .	High High ˉ [44] [44]	su ⁴⁴ ɕɛ ⁴⁴	gum	སོ་*ཤ་ (WrT: སོ་རྗེལ་ so rnyil)	<i>so *sha</i>
2 .	Low High ˊ [22] [44]	ɕɛ ²² pə ⁴⁴	feather	*བྱ་པུ་ (WrT: བྱ་པུ་ sgro)	<i>*bya pu</i>
3 .	Low High-Falling ˆ [22] [42]	ndzõ ²² nɿ ⁴²	fly	སྤང་ནག་	<i>sbrang nag</i>

Sometimes occurs like Low Rising Pitch pattern. This is merely a variety of LH, because Mingyong has no distinction between LH and LR.

Tone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
(Low Rising)	ṇi ²² gẽ ²⁴	old man	མྱི་གན་	<i>myi rgan</i>
' [22] [24] ~ ^ [22] [44]				

Mingyong lacks a sequence of High (Level) + (High) Falling in disyllabic words. The combination falls under the Low Falling Type.

Tone	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
High-Falling	p ^h eɿ ⁴²	pig	ཕག་	<i>phag</i>
High-Falling	tɕeɿ ⁴²	shit; dung	སྤྱག་	<i>skyag</i>
→ Low Falling	p ^h e ²² tɕeɿ ⁴²	pig dung	ཕག་སྤྱག་	<i>phag skyag</i>
(WrT: ཕག་ལུང་ <i>phag lud</i>)				
- [44] + ` [ 42 ] → ^ [ 22 ] [ 42 ] ;    ` [42] + ` [42] → ^ [22] [42]				

These two types of pitch patterns on monosyllables and disyllables can be derived from the same basic structures, perhaps as follows:

Distinctive Features	Monosyllables		Basic Structure	Disyllables
[+ H – F]	H# [44]	←	- [H H#]	→ H H# [44 44]
[+ H + F]	HF [42]	←	` [H HF]	→ lack!
[– H – F]	R# [24]	←	' [L H#]	→ L H# [22 44]
[– H + F]	RF [231]	←	^ [L HF]	→ L HF [22 42]

Phenomena:

- A mono- or di- syllabic word may start with either a High or Low tone.
- The starting pitch of the second syllable is always High.
- The second syllable becomes either Falling or Non-Falling (i.e. continuing to be High).

- Rules:**
- 1 . LH → R / mono-syllabic
 - 2 . H+F → L+F / di-syllabic

5. Basic words

5.1 Borrowings from Chinese

Mingyong has quite a few modern borrowings from Chinese, such as:

English	Word	Chinese origin	
socks	wɛ ²² tsi ⁴⁴	< 袜子 >	wàzi
vegetable	ts ^h ɛi ²⁴	< 菜 >	cài
brown sugar	ʂɛ ²² t ^h ɿ ²⁴	< 砂糖 >	shātáng
drawing	t ^h wɛ ²⁴ ~ t ^h u ²² wɛ ²⁴	< 图画 >	túhuà
Monday	ɕi ⁴⁴ tɕ ^h i ⁴⁴ ji ⁴⁴	< 星期一 >	xīngqīyī
quilt, bedcloth	p ^h u ²² kɛ ⁴⁴	< 铺盖 >	pūgài

These borrowings have been adapted to Mingyong phonology, since they are necessary for their daily life in Mingyong village.

5.2 Word prefix: / a- / for kinship (address/reference) terms

	Word	English	WrT	Wylie
add./ref.	ɛ ²² - bɛ ²⁴	dad/father	ཕ་*ཁ་	<i>a*ba</i>
	ɛ ²² - mɛ ²⁴	mom/mother	ཕ་མ་	<i>ama</i>
	ɛ ²² - wu ⁴⁴	elder brother	***	***
	ɛ ²² - bu ⁴⁴	elder sister	***	***
ref.	p ^h ɛ ²² mɛ ⁴⁴	father and mother	ཕ་མ་	<i>phama</i>
	p ^h ɛ ²² ʂɛ ⁴⁴	younger brother	***	***
	su ⁴⁴ wũ ⁴⁴ ~ sō ⁴⁴	younger sister	***	***

5.3 Personal Pronouns

	singular	dual	plural
1 st person	ŋe ²⁴	ɲe ²⁴ ɲi ²² ɲe ²²	ɲe ⁴² = tʂe ²²
2 nd person	tʂ ^h Y ⁴²	tʂ ^h e ⁴² ɲi ²² ɲe ²²	tʂ ^h e ⁴² = tʂe ²²
3 rd person	k ^h u ⁴⁴	k ^h we ⁴⁴ ɲi ²² ɲe ²²	k ^h we ⁴⁴ = tʂe ²²

The 3rd person pronouns are different from the demonstrative pronouns. There is no relationship between them, and they do not distinguish between proximal and distal.

5.4 Demonstrative Pronouns

	singular	dual	plural
proximal	e ²² dʒi ⁴⁴	e ²² dʒi ⁴⁴ = tʂe ²²	e ²² ke ⁴⁴
distal	wu ²² dʒi ⁴⁴	wu ²² dʒi ⁴⁴ = tʂe ²²	wu ²² ke ⁴⁴

The words most characteristic of Mingyong village are the demonstrative pronouns. Proximal and distal are expressed by the morphs [e²²-] and [wu²²-], respectively. This distance-indicating system is quite different from neighboring Tibetan Kham dialects. Compare with the neighboring Tibetan dialects:

[查里通] Chalitong (མཚོ་རི་ཐང་ *Tsher ri thang*) 鈴木博之 (2010)

	singular	plural	place
proximal	ʼji: ku	ʼji: ku tə	ʼji nə
distal	ʼpə taː	ʼtʰo: ku tə	ʼtʰə gə

[燕门斯嘎] Yanmen Siga (ཁ་དྭ་ཀར་ <i>Sa dkar</i>)			鈴木博之 (2012)
	singular	plural	place
proximal	ṽnə / ṽndə / ʔkʰu ʔkʰɿ ɲaː ʔə / ʔnə kʰẽ		ṽnəj ka / ʔkʰu na
distal	ʔtə kʰu / ʔnəj tɕi ʔtə kʰẽ		ʔpʰa na / ʔpʰaj na

[中甸] Zhongdian (རྒྱལ་ཐང་ <i>rGyal thang</i>)			陆 绍尊 (1990)
	singular	plural	place
proximal	ndiə ¹³	*** (no data)	ndiə ¹³ za ⁵³ / ndiə ¹³ kʰa ⁵³
distal	tiə ¹³	*** (no data)	tiə ¹³ za ⁵³ / tiə ¹³ kʰa ⁵³

The Mingyong demonstrative pronouns [ɐ²²dʒi⁴⁴] (proximal) and [wʊ²²dʒi⁴⁴] (distal) both include a morph / dʒi⁴⁴ /, which serves to indicate anything specified or referred to. This morpheme can also be used as a free particle to indicate the boundary of a modifier after a noun, as a nominalizer forming a noun phrase:

Is this small knife sharp?

ɐ²²dʒi⁴⁴ [dʒi²²tɕõ⁴⁴ kɐ²²kʰa⁴⁴] = dʒi²² || nʌ²²mʰu⁴⁴ ʔʌ²²-reʔ²³¹ ?
 this knife small = DIF sharp IRG- predicate verb

The symbol || indicates the boundary of the subject and the predicate in this sentence. The modifier (the adjective ‘small’) is put after a noun, so it is difficult to determine whether the phrase DEM + NOUN + ADJ is a modified NP (‘this small knife’) or a declarative sentence SP (this [is a] small knife). Therefore the DIF [=dʒi²²] should be added to define the phrase to be a modified NP.

5.5 Adverbial Pronouns

proximal	ɐ ²² dʒi ⁴⁴ ndzɐ ⁴² ʂə ²²	in this way
distal	wʊ ²² dʒi ⁴⁴ ndzɐ ⁴² ʂə ²²	in that way

5.6 Interrogative pronouns

Mingyong interrogative pronouns are very different from Written Tibetan words. The word to express ‘what’ [$ke^{22}t\check{c}i^{44}$] is very similar to Dzongkha, a southern Tibetan dialect, as / $gaci$ / (ག་ཅི་ $gaci$ in WrT). And Mingyong has another free word for ‘what’ [$t\check{c}^{hi44}$], which may correspond to / ci / (ཅི་ ci in WrT) in other Kham dialects, but the word in Mingyong is pronounced with aspiration. Many other Kham dialects do not have contrastive aspiration.

The origin of such colloquial words and their correspondences to Written Tibetan or other dialects all remain to be verified.

English	Colloquial Word	WrT	Wylie
who	ʒə^{44}	སུ་	<i>su</i> (?)
what	$ke^{22}t\check{c}i^{44}$	ག་ཅི་	<i>ga ci</i>
	$t\check{c}^{hi44}$	*ཆི་	* <i>chi</i>
where	$k\Lambda^{24}le^{22} \sim l\check{a}^{22}$	*གང་ལེ་	* <i>gang le</i>
	$k\Lambda^{24}ke^{22}$	*གང་ག་	* <i>gang ga</i>
when	$n\check{o}^{24}le^{22} \sim l\check{a}^{22}$	*ནང་ལེ་	* <i>nang le</i>
how	$ke^{22}leu^{42}$	*ག་ལབས་	* <i>ga labs</i>
how many/much	$ku^{44}ly^{42}$	*ག་ལྷན་	* <i>ga lud</i>

5.7 Numerals

5.7.1 From 1 to 10

	English	Numeral	WrT	Wylie
1	one	tɕi ⁴⁴	གཅིག་	<i>gcig</i>
2	two	ŋə ⁴⁴	གཉིས་	<i>gnyis</i>
3	three	sũ ⁴⁴	གསུམ་	<i>gsum</i>
4	four	zə ⁴⁴	བཞི་	<i>bzhi</i>
5	five	ŋe ⁴⁴	ལྔ་	<i>lnga</i>
6	six	tɕo ⁴²	དྲུག་	<i>drug</i>
7	seven	dẽ ⁴⁴	བདུན་	<i>bdun</i>
8	eight	dzi ²³¹	བརྒྱད་	<i>brgyad</i>
9	nine	gə ⁴⁴	དགུ་	<i>dgu</i>
10	ten	tɕə ⁴⁴	བརྒྱ་	<i>bcu</i>

5.7.2 Over 11

11	eleven	tɕə ⁴⁴ tɕi ⁴⁴	བརྒྱ་གཅིག་	<i>bcu gcig</i>
12	twelve	tɕə ²² ŋə ⁴⁴	བརྒྱ་གཉིས་	<i>bcu gnyis</i>
13	thirteen	tɕu ²² sũ ⁴⁴	བརྒྱ་གསུམ་	<i>bcu gsum</i>
14	fourteen	tɕu ²² zə ⁴⁴	བརྒྱ་བཞི་	<i>bcu bzhi</i>
15	fifteen	tɕə ²² ŋe ⁴⁴	བརྒྱ་ལྔ་	<i>bcu lnga</i>
16	sixteen	tɕu ²² dzo ⁴²	བརྒྱ་དྲུག་	<i>bcu drug</i>
17	seventeen	tɕu ²² dẽ ⁴⁴	བརྒྱ་བདུན་	<i>bcu bdun</i>
18	eighteen	tɕu ²² dzi ⁴²	བརྒྱ་བརྒྱད་	<i>bcu brgyad</i>
19	nineteen	tɕə ²² gə ⁴²	བརྒྱ་དགུ་	<i>bcu dgu</i>
20	twenty	ŋi ²² tɕə ⁴⁴	གཉིས་བརྒྱ་	<i>gnyis shu</i>

5.7.3 Double digits

	English	Numeral	WrT	Wylie
30	thirty	sō ²² ntɕə ⁴⁴	གསུམ་བར་	<i>sum bcu</i>
40	forty	zɿ ²² tɕə ⁴⁴	བཞི་བར་	<i>bzhi bcu</i>
50	fifty	ŋɛ̃ ⁴⁴ tɕə ⁴⁴	ལྔ་བར་	<i>lnga bcu</i>
60	sixty	tɕo ²² tɕə ⁴⁴	དྲུག་བར་	<i>drug bcu</i>
70	seventy	dẽ̃ ²² tɕə ⁴⁴	བདཱན་བར་	<i>bdun bcu</i>
80	eighty	dʒi ²² tɕə ⁴⁴	བརྒྱད་བར་	<i>brgyad bcu</i>
90	ninety	gu ²² tɕə ⁴⁴	དགུ་བར་	<i>dgu bcu</i>

5.7.4 Over triple digits

	English	Numeral	WrT
100	one hundred	dʒɛ ²⁴	བརྒྱ་ <i>brgya</i>
101	one hundred one	dʒɛ ⁴⁴ lə ²² tɕiɿ ⁴⁴	བརྒྱ་*ལུ་གཅིག་ <i>brgya *lu gcig</i>
1000	(one) thousand	tō ⁴⁴ tɕʰɛɿ ⁴² (tɕiɿ ⁴⁴)	སྟོང་ཕྲག་ (གཅིག་) <i>stong phrag (gcig)</i>
1001	one thousand one	tō ⁴⁴ tɕʰɛɿ ⁴² lə ²² tɕiɿ ⁴⁴	སྟོང་ཕྲག་*ལུ་གཅིག་ <i>stong phrag *lu gcig</i>
10000	ten thousand	tɕʰi ⁴⁴ tɕʰɛɿ ⁴² (tɕiɿ ⁴⁴)	ཁྲི་ཕྲག་ (གཅིག་) <i>khri phrag (gcig)</i>
10001	ten thousand one	tɕʰi ⁴⁴ tɕʰɛɿ ⁴² lə ²² tɕiɿ ⁴⁴	ཁྲི་ཕྲག་*ལུ་གཅིག་ <i>khri phrag *lu gcig</i>

5.8 Expressions of quantity

5.8.1 Amount

Mingyong puts a numeral after a noun directly to express its quantity, without using any classifier. A demonstrative pronoun can be put after the numeral if needed, yielding the structure Noun + Numeral + Demonstrative.

Noun with Number	English	WrT	Wylie
ཁེ ⁴⁴ རྒྱུ་ ⁴⁴	one person	ཁྱུ་གཅིག་	<i>myi gcig</i>
ཁེ ²⁴ ཁེ ⁴⁴	two fishes	གཉིས་	<i>nya gnyis</i>

If it is necessary to add demonstrative pronouns to express ‘these two fishes’, the demonstrative pronoun should be put after the numeral:

(these/those) two fishes

ཁེ ²⁴ ཁེ ⁴⁴	(ཐེ ²² རྒྱུ་ ⁴⁴ / འུ་ ²² རྒྱུ་ ⁴⁴)
fish two	this that

Mingyong does not have classifiers as a part of speech, so expressions like classification like ‘a crowd of sheep’ are expressed as follows:

a crowd of sheep	ར་*ཚུག་གཅིག་
ཟེ ²² སྤུ་ ⁴² རྒྱུ་ ⁴⁴	<i>ra *tshug gcig</i>
sheep crowd one	

In this case, [ts^hu⁴²] ‘crowd’ is not a classifier, but a noun. In addition, Mingyong also uses some borrowed numerals + classifiers from Chinese, especially when expressing quantities.

a pound of meat	ཤ་*ཡི་ཅིན་
ཆེ ⁴⁴ ཇི་ ²⁴ རྒྱུ་ ⁴⁴	<i>sha *yi *cin</i>
meat one jin	

one pound	ཇི་ ²⁴ རྒྱུ་ ⁴⁴	< Chin. 〈一斤〉 yì jīn
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5.8.2 Counting actions

When counting the number of times an action or behavior is executed or repeated, sometimes an action measure word is used with numerals before a verb.

go once

ku²²le⁴⁴ tɕi⁴⁴ ndzu²⁴
time (s) one go

*གུ་ལ་གཅིག་འགོ་

*gu la gcig 'gro

But this action measure word is simply a noun, just as in the case of classification of nouns. The structure for expressing the number of times for an action/behavior is [Noun + Numeral + Verb] , and the noun is the object of the verb.

go a step (forward)

kõ²²leu⁴⁴ kõ²⁴ ndzu²²
step one go

གོང་*ལུ་གང་འགོ་

gong *la'u gang 'gro

have a bite

k^he⁴⁴ kõ²⁴ ndzi?⁴²
mouth one bite

ཁ་གང་འབྲད་

kha gang 'brad

The numeral expressing 'one' [kõ²⁴] (གང་ gang) is used here with the measuring word or unit, which is different from [tɕi⁴⁴] (གཅིག gcig) 'one' or 'first'.

5.9 Nominalizer

Mingyong distinguishes two kinds of Genitive Marker/Nominalizer.

(a) =kie²² Genitive Marker/Nominalizer (general)

my book

nɿ²⁴ = kie²² zi²²gi⁴⁴
1sg =GEN book

ངའི་*ཀཡ་*བཞི་གི་

*ngi *kiya bzhi gi

one day's work

li²²ke⁵⁵ ne²² tci²⁴=kie²²
work day one =NMLZ

ལས་ཀ་གནས་གཅིག་ཀྱི་ལྟ་

*las ka gnam gcig *kiya*

The grammatical function of this particle is quite similar to the Genitive marker / =kyi / in other Tibetan dialects, but the rime is peculiar. It is quite difficult to spell out this particle in Tibetan letters, since the colloquial pronunciation of this word is different from ཀྱ་ *kya* read as [ca ~ tɕa] in WrT, neither can it be written as ཀྱི་ *ki* (a), which would be read as / ki /, so we are forced to spell it out as ཀྱི་ **ki-ya*.

Mingyong has another Genitive/Nominalizer / = ma /, which is used especially to indicate where people are gathered:

(b) = me²² 'the place to gather (people)'

Rwa (family)'s Pema

rwe²⁴ = me²² pe²²me⁴⁴
name = GEN (name)

i.e. Pema in Rwa family

*ར་མ་བད་མ་

**rwa *ma pad ma*

new house's (Pema)

li²²~ ci²² se⁴⁴ = me²² (pe²²me⁴⁴)
house new = GEN (name)

i.e. (Pema: the person who) [living] in the new house

*ལྷིང་གསར་མ་ (བད་མ་)

**lhing gsar *ma (pad ma)*

upstairs' (Pema)

go²²ti⁴⁴ = me²² (pe²²me⁴⁴)
upstairs = GEN (name)

i.e. (Pema: the person who) [living] in the upstairs

*གོ་སྒོང་མ་ (བད་མ་)

*go steng *ma (pad ma)*

The genitive marker (a) [=kie²²] in Mingyong is different from the Agentive (Ergative) marker [=gi²²]. In some Tibetan dialects such as Dégé,

these two markers have the same pronunciation.

cf. =gi²² Agentive (Ergative) Marker

He gave me a book.

k^hu⁴⁴ = gi²² ŋ^Λ²⁴ = ŋgo²² zi²² yi⁴⁴ tɕi²² ti⁴⁴ reʔ²³¹.
s/he =AGT 1sg. =DAT book one give predicate verb

ཁོ་གིས་ང་*ངོ་ཡི་གེ་ཅིག་སྟེར་རེད།

*Kho gis nga *ngo yi ge cig ster red/*

6. Concluding Remarks

This report attempted to describe the phonological features of the Tibetan Kham Dialect spoken in the Mingyong Village in the Yunnan Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. The main aim of this report is to record and analyze the Mingyong colloquial pronunciations of basic words such as nouns, pronouns, and numerals. But it is a matter for regret that the correspondences to Written Tibetan and other dialects have not yet been sufficiently verified. This report is just a first step. I hope to continue analyzing the vocabulary and syntax of Mingyong, so that it may contribute to providing good data for the study of the historical development of the Kham dialects.

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池田 巧 (いけだ たくみ)

京都大学人文科学研究所

Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University

岩尾一史・池田 巧 (編)

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