

# An Ethnolinguistic Remark on the *fēiyī* 飛衣

Simon Hürlimann

Universität Bern, Schweiz

**Abstract** This paper inquires the relationship between two Trans-Himalayan languages, namely Lohorong (Eastern Kiranti) and Old Chinese (Sinitic) by comparing their ‘soul’-related vocabulary. Several identified etymological cognates and rather unexpected parallels between the Lohorong *maŋsu?* ‘household shrine’ and the *fēiyī* 飛衣 ‘flying garment’ (i.e. T-shaped silk banner) excavated at the Mǎwángduī 馬王堆 site may in turn just add another perspective in understanding the function and meaning of this controversially discussed archaeological find.

**Keywords** Mǎwángduī. T-shaped Silk Banner. Kiranti. Old Chinese. Etymological cognates. Maŋsu?.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 *Lawa*. – 3 *Saya*. – 4 *Nùŋwa*. – 5 *Same*.



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## 1 Introduction

Ever since its excavation in mid-January 1972, the discovery of ‘Marquise of Dài 軼’, buried in Western Hàn (2nd century BCE) tomb no. 1 at Mǎwángdūi 馬王堆 near Chángshā 長沙 (Húnán 湖南, China), has continuously sparked the fields of Archaeology, East Asian Art History and Sinology. And certainly, the findings at Mǎwángdūi were equally extraordinary, spectacular and unique to mention but a few of the more frequently encountered superlatives in the relevant literature. Among the myriad of studies one object has particularly enjoyed the focus of scholarly attention while remaining a controversial issue, namely the function and meaning of the so called *fēiyī* 飛衣 ‘flying garment’, i.e. the sophisticated T-shaped silk banner found on top of the innermost coffin of its female tomb occupant. Various interpretations (from luminaries such as Yü Ying-shih, Michael Loewe etc.) were heavily based upon the *textus receptus*, and early on Silbergeld has drawn a cautionary note calling this practice into question:

Can we really believe that a painting so carefully crafted and integrally conceived was based on literary sources so widely scattered, one figure drawn from this text, another figure from that? Were its sources necessarily literary at all, or exclusively literary, without *the contribution of oral traditions and unwritten practices*, artistic convention and inspiration? (Silbergeld 1982-83, 83; italics added)

Silbergeld also observes that “much of this literature was prescriptive rather than descriptive” (1982-83, 86) which suggests a big question mark concerning the nature of Old Chinese [OC] texts (cf. 1982-83, 92 fn. 55) let alone their role as sources of e.g. art historical interpretation. Yet, Silbergeld 1982-83 had hardly any lasting effect. Perhaps representative in this regard is Wu’s seminal paper challenging his predecessors in a (to this day) highly influential alternative reading, of course, based on early written material, ironically acknowledging and at the same time essentially ignoring Silbergeld 1982-83 (cf. Wu 1992).<sup>1</sup> Without going into this any further, Guo in retrospect refers to the two camps as the dominant ‘journey model’ seriously challenged by the ‘tomb model’ (cf. 2011, 88, 107 fn. 28) both based

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I am grateful to George van Driem for equally critical and helpful comments as well as to two anonymous reviewers whose diametrically opposed evaluations gave me reasons for clarifying certain points.

<sup>1</sup> At least Wang 2011, 77 fn. 7 and Waring 2019, 38 fn. 107, 472 incl. fn. 1140 both do mention Silbergeld 1982-83 and its core message. Conversely, a professor emeritus (from Peking University) basically presents the narrative of Wu 1992 in a vacuum (cf. Gāo 2019), completely disregarding any non-Chinese source (incl. Wu 1992).

on received Old Chinese texts. Only a decade before Guo or rather after Wu, Kern initiates the (self-admittedly) overdue “discussion of the nexus between the oral and the written” (2002, 164 fn. 27) and thereby perhaps echoing Silbergeld 1982-83 puts a deeply ingrained bundle of preconceptions back on the map:

The Chinese tradition [...], and with it the modern scholarly exploration of Chinese antiquity, has always privileged text [...] as the primary medium of early Chinese cultural self-expression and self-representation. [...] No doubt, the newly available manuscripts confirm the [...] prestige of texts in early China; yet at the same time, they allow us to ask some fundamental questions about the ancient textual culture that have barely been considered: What exactly is a text in early China? [...] What are the specific functions of the written text? How should we imagine *the relation and balance between oral and written textual practices*? What are the social contexts of texts? Such questions do (...) alert us to a host of problematic assumptions about [...] what has mostly been taken for granted as a more or less secure corpus of writings and ideas. (Kern 2005, VIII-IX; italics added)

Unlike Silbergeld’s *vox clamantis in deserto*, Kern has marked a turning point on the modality of how to explore and ultimately think about early China. Thinking along the same lines as those two and many others (cf. e.g. Sanft 2019; Waring 2019), it seems obvious enough to consider *living* artifacts as well. Through the lens of – *mirabile dictu* – today’s Lohorong,<sup>2</sup> the unearthed centerpiece of the Mǎwángduī complex together with the relevant literature might appear in a new light:

After one’s death, there is no *lawa*, just as a man casts no more shadow after his death. At a Lohorong burial, the participants cry *Lawa empoke!* ‘Soul, return!’ at the moment of interment, but the Lohorong say that this utterance merely gives voice to an idle hope. There is no *lawa* after death, nor has one ever been observed to return. (van Driem, unpublished; italics in original)

Of course this immediately recalls *Zhāo hún* 招魂 ‘Summoning the soul’ (i.e. a chapter of the *Chǔ cí* 楚辭 [Verses of Chǔ], cf. Wu 1992, 112-13). Yet, except for some *prima facie* accidental or (depending on the vantage point) maybe even expected cultural similarities, what would a small Kiranti tribe in Eastern Nepal have in common with

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<sup>2</sup> The envisaged *A grammar of Lohorong* (cf. van Driem, unpublished) based on field work in the late 1980s remains to be completed and is quoted here from the latest circulating draft manuscript (February 21st, 2017).

great pre-Hàn China or rather and more specifically the state of Chǔ 楚? Well, first and foremost it is widely accepted that their languages, namely Lohorong (Eastern Kiranti) and Old Chinese (Sinitic), both belong to the same Trans-Himalayan language family:

<p>(1) <i>lawə em-pok-ε!</i> soul return-ASP-IMP  'Soul, return!' (van Driem, unpublished)</p>	<p>(2) 魂兮 歸來 *q<sup>wf</sup>ən-gə *k<sup>wj</sup>-r<sup>ək</sup> soul-SFP return-come  'O soul, come back!' (Yü 1987, 363)</p>	<p>(3) εn- -ta:- khar-ε! return- come- go-IMP  'Return quickly / hurry back!'</p>
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Although this is hardly evidence in favor of the occasionally suggested age-old linkage between the Kirātas (i.e. Kiranti) and the Chinese (cf. e.g. Chatterji 1974, 32; Northey, Morris 1928, 214),<sup>3</sup> Lohorong *lawə* 'soul, spirit' clearly corresponds to OC \**m.q<sup>wf</sup>ən* 魂 'spiritual soul'.<sup>4</sup> And a slightly modified reconstruction<sup>5</sup> suggesting a loose preinitial for OC \**mə.q<sup>wf</sup>ən* 魂 not only made the Old Chinese form virtually disyllabic (or rather sesquisyllabic), but also looked deceptively similar to *maʔla* 'spirit' in Jero (Western Kiranti) where the syllable final glottal stop (as a pendant to uvular initial <q-> in OC) remained (cf. Opgenort 2005, 64-5 and the there suggested link to Wambule implosives). Suppose that such a correspondence at some point existed in all of Kiranti which would then still be signified, for instance, by the lengthened vowel in Dumi (Western Kiranti) *la:wo* 'spirit, soul' as well as the hiatus glottal stop between vowels in Lohorong (cf. van Driem, unpublished) indicating hiatus-filling approximants elsewhere, e.g. *lawə* (< \**laʔa*), this all of a sudden gave us perhaps unexpected food for thought.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, these shared features by Kirantis and Early Chinese (up to here), i.e. shamanism in general and the soul-summoning ritual in particular, are certainly not specific enough to convinc-

**3** There is, for instance, reason to believe that OC \**r<sup>ək</sup>* 來 in (2) Lohorong or rather -*ta:* in (3) and -*pok* in (1) do have a quite similar aspectivising [ASP] function (cf. van Driem, unpublished; Wiedenhof 2015, 228).

**4** Note that the Lohorong term *lawə* equally means 'shadow, silhouette' (cf. van Driem, unpublished) and corroborates the suggested cognacy OC \**m.q<sup>wf</sup>ən* 魂 = \**g<sup>w</sup>ən* 雲 'cloud' by Schuessler (cf. 2007, 290). In short, contrary to Williams (cf. 2020, 163 fn. 86), "Schuessler's etymological speculations" (see also below fn. 19) are actually quite unproblematic.

**5** Following Baxter, Sagart 2014 in general including their working assumption that any etymon has up to three different forms (cf. 2014, 43, but see Hill 2019, 126), minor deviations due to e.g. alternative Middle Chinese [MC] reconstructions remain possible.

**6** The reality is slightly more complex (see below table 1), yet the recently challenged sound change from Proto-Kiranti \**kw* > Proto-Western Kiranti \**ʔw* (cf. Gerber, Grollmann 2018, 109-12) perhaps merits another look.

ingly connecting the dots.<sup>7</sup> And, yet, the regarding Lohorung ritual involves a *yaṭappa* ‘household priest’ mediating between the spiritual and the human world (cf. Hardman 2000, 50) which has duties similar to its (exclusively in the *Chǔ cí* occurring) Old Chinese compound cognate *\*kə.taŋʔ-məŋ* 掌夢 ‘master of dreams’ (cf. Wang 2011, 42).<sup>8</sup> Against this background, it is hardly surprising that the *yaṭappa* does acquire knowledge directly from his ancestors, namely through *səmmaŋ* ‘dream’ (cf. van Driem, unpublished) and this again brings another Old Chinese text (i.e. *Liè zǐ* 列子 [Master Liè], cf. Ho 1996, 18)<sup>9</sup> into focus:

夢有六候。[...] 奚謂六候? 一曰正夢, 二曰噩夢, 三曰思夢, 四曰寤夢, 五曰喜夢, 六曰懼夢。

Dreams have six settings. [...] How are the six settings named? The first is called *teŋ-məŋ* [ordinary dream], the second *ŋʰak-məŋ* [shock dream], the third *sə-məŋ* [longing dream], the fourth *ŋʰa-məŋ* [waking dream], the fifth *qʰəʔ-məŋ* [happy dream] and the sixth is called *gʷak-məŋ* [anxiety dream]. (Author’s translation)<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Cf. van Driem 2001, 605; Hardman 2000, 187 incl. fn. 22; Major 1999, 135 f.; Wu 1992, 114 incl. fn. 9.

<sup>8</sup> The cognacy between the *yaṭappa* and the *\*kə.taŋʔ-məŋ* 掌夢 ‘being in charge of dreams’ (cf. Loewe 1993, 24-5) becomes evident with regards to Pāñcthare Limbu *maŋde:mba* respectively *maŋ-kede:mba* ~ *maŋ-kede:mba* ‘shaman’ (cf. Weidert, Subba 1985, 286-7). Furthermore, Mewahang *selemi* ‘special category of shaman’ (cf. Gaenszle 1999, 49) as well as Dumi *selemi* ‘shaman’ (cf. Rai 2017, 245) correspond to OC *\*sə.lən-ma* 神巫 ‘spirit magician’. Conversely, in the Māwángduì text *Shí wèn* 十問 [Ten questions] we do find the unidentified spirit-being *\*ma-dəŋ-daw* 巫成招 (cf. Harper 1998, 125) for which, for instance, Limbu *pʰe:daŋma* ‘priest, wizard, reduced man, shaman’ (cf. van Driem 1987: 496) offers a feasible equivalent, whereas reduced by the gender suffix *-ma* Limbu *pʰe:daŋ* is plausibly cognate with OC *\*paŋ-dzrəʔ* 方士 ‘ritual specialist’ (cf. Puett 2002, 242-5, 304-7). An overview of the current state of research on the controversial issue ‘Shamanism in early China’ among others shows that the pros and cons do essentially rely on a specific (and actually ambiguous) passage in the *Guó yǔ* 國語 (Discourses of the states) (cf. Michael 2015, 674-5. incl. notes 54-7, 679, 682-4 incl. fn. 71) and thereby on an intra-Chinese perspective. From a more inclusive vantage point (e.g. Sidky 2010; Williams 2020), Michael’s plaidoyer in favour was arguably beyond reasonable doubt.

<sup>9</sup> The dating of the *Liè zǐ* is controversial, however, particularly the parallel in the *x Lǐ jì* 禮記 (Records of Ritual) (with a clear link to the *Chǔ cí*, cf. Schmitt, unpublished, 90v, 105v) of the following passage suggest pre-Hàn origin (cf. Loewe 1993, 29).

<sup>10</sup> Screening at least half a dozen translations, except for a surprisingly accurate German version obviously attempting to translate the ‘modifier + modified collocations’ as compounds, for instance rendering *\*sə-məŋ* as ‘Sehnsuchtstraum’ and *\*ŋʰa-məŋ* as ‘Wachtraum’ (cf. Wilhelm 1911, 32), the most feasible account of this passage I am aware of is in French (cf. Mathieu 2012, 159). A.C. Graham, author of the “best translation into a Western language” (cf. Loewe 1993, 307), although exemplifying a “language-sensitive approach to translation” (Li 2015, 115) considers five out of six *categories* (i.e. the concerning asyndetic noun clusters) consisting each of a first noun being causally (of what actually is no more than attributively) subordinated to a second noun as if we

Beyond the correspondence between *semmaŋ* ~ *semmaŋ* ‘dream’ (< \**si-* ‘to think/wish’ + \**maŋ* ‘dream’) and \**sə-məŋ* 思夢 ‘longing dream’, Lohorung has a corresponding form to \**ŋ<sup>f</sup>a-məŋ* 寤夢 ‘waking dream’, namely *lemmaŋ* ‘waking state’ (< *le-* ‘to know’ + *maŋ* ‘dream’, cf. van Driem, unpublished) as well.<sup>11</sup> Both *semmaŋ* and *lemmaŋ* are not only integral parts but also contrastive entities in Lohorung culture, the latter pointing at ordinary reality being perceivable while consciously awake and the former pointing to the extraordinary reality being accessible only (during spiritual journeys) in dreams and/or trance (cf. Hardman 2000, xii, xiv, 110, 176). And in the very next paragraph (only a few lines below, cf. Ho 1996, 18) we find the following passage:

西極之南隅有國焉，不知境界之所接，名古莽之國。陰陽之氣所不交，故寒暑亡辨；日月之光所不照，故晝夜亡辨。其民不食不衣而多眠。五旬一覺，以夢中所為者實，覺之所見者妄。

At the South corner of the far West there is a country, I do not know where its frontiers lie: it is named the country of Ku-mang. The Yin and Yang breaths do not meet there, so there is no distinction between cold and heat. The light of the sun and moon does not shine there, so there is no distinction between day and night. Its people do not eat or wear clothes and sleep most of the time, waking once in fifty days. *They think that what they do in dreams is real, and what they see waking is unreal.* (Graham 1960, 67; italics added; cf. Mathieu 2012, 161)

This quotation, on the one hand, reads (in part) as if it was penned by Hardman in her ethnographic study describing the Lohorung:

One *yatangpa* explained that the power of ‘seeing’ lies deep in the belly, *bok*. [...] What we can see when awake – in waking vision (*lemmaŋ*) is limited. In another vision (*semmaŋ*) restrictions of time and space and the divisions of the world disappear. It is explored, I was told, by everyone in their dreams and by *mangpa* and *yatangpa* who have been chosen to ‘see’ that aspect of the world. Other human beings have lost this ability to ‘see’ and talk to this world. They were not talking about *another* reality, *another* world, since the realms are understood as co-existing and bringing each

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were rather dealing with dream *causes* here (e.g. \**sə-məŋ* as ‘dreams due to thinking’, cf. Graham 1960, 66) and thereby hampers any comparative linguistic account per se.

**11** Dumi offers a third correspondence (cf. van Driem 1993, 391), namely *lemmaŋ* ‘day-dream, imagination’ (< \**len-* ‘day’ + \**maŋ* ‘dream’) to OC \**teŋ-məŋ* 正夢 ‘everyday/ordinary dream’, whereas Bahing (Western Kiranti) even suggests a fourth correspondence (cf. Hodgson 1857, 487; Opgenort 2005, 356, 360), to wit, *gná'mo* ~ *gnámung* ‘dream’ (< \*(*g*)*nima* ‘fear’ + \**maŋ* ‘dream’) to \**g<sup>w</sup>ak-məŋ* 懼夢 ‘anxiety dream’.

other problems. The ability to ‘see’ is accepted as a valuable and authoritative way of knowing the world. (Hardman 2000, 50; italics in original)

On the other hand, the *Liè zǐ* passage to all appearances pictures a land of ascetics (such as meditating monks), so one might feel the urge to investigate Ku-mang’s whereabouts. Needless to say, the Lohorung apparently drop out from the very outset since they do know the “conceptual division into male and female areas” (Hardman 2000, 140). However, according to Mathieu: “This region is [...] obviously not localized [and] thus fictional” (2012, 161 fn. 55). Regardless, Mathieu tries to narrow down the choices by (in view of its Chinese reference) coming up with the verbatim rendering “ancient immensity” (2012, 161 fn. 56) and subsequently (with regards to content) conjecturing a “possible allusion to the almost undressed populations of the southernmost part of Asia” (2012, 161 fn. 58). In a more serious attempt, Sāng relying on local chronicles identifies the region in question as ancient Diān 滇 territory and more specifically has in mind a living Khmer speaking ethnicity (i.e. in nowadays Yúnnán 雲南 Province, China) (cf. 2006, 85). From an entirely different (and mere linguistic) angle again, namely based on the simple observation that 古莽 was also in use as a *fǎnqiē* 反切 gloss for \**kʰaŋʔ* 航 ‘border[land]’ (i.e. MC *k-* 古 + MC *-aŋX* 莽 = MC *kangX* 航, cf. Chén et al. n.d., 6 [v. 3, seq. 55]), there is reason to believe that we actually are dealing with a lento form \**kʰaʔ-mʰaŋʔ* here which in allegro speech obviously might designate *khams* མམས་ [kʰam] (in modern-day Chinese still pronounced *kāng* 康 (< \**kʰaŋ*), in other words, Tibetan territory (slightly overlapping with Yúnnán). With regards to our context Kham ought to fit well, could bridge the *Night Train to Lisbon* distance between the Lohorung and Chángshā and would confirm the first Kirantologist *avant la lettre*, British orientalist B.H. Hodgson (1800-1894) who was convinced “that the Kirantis came from Eastern Tibet or Kham” (cf. van Driem 2001, 602).

Picking up our ‘soul’ related beginnings again, we are confronted with a complex scenario according to which in Kiranti languages exist various terms for ‘soul’ (that essentially amount to a concept of personhood), in fact virtually a handful in each language (at times intermingled with Nepali) thus constituting a nearly inextricable soul-knot which makes the comparison of this shamanistic / semireligious vocabulary challenging within Kiranti itself and even more demanding beyond. However, thanks to the meticulous ethnographic studies by Gaenszle (1991; 1999; 2002; 2021) and Hardman (1996; 2000; 2002; 2004) alongside some painstaking descriptive grammars it is feasible to get these constituents of personhood disentangled and, nota bene, to find plausible Old Chinese cognates for all of them focusing (the Upper Aruṇ branch of) Eastern Kiranti (cf. van Driem 2001, 617).

## 2 Lawa

We have already come across this term: *lawa* is prevalent beyond Eastern Kiranti and evidently cognate to the sesquisyllabic OC *\*m.q<sup>wf</sup>ən* 魂 ‘spiritual soul’ – at least in part. Actually, disyllabic *maʔla* ‘spirit’ in Jero and even more so the metathetic *wala* ‘ghost, spirit’ in Sunwar (Western Kiranti) strongly suggest disyllabic Old Chinese correspondences.<sup>12</sup> And in view of another apparent metathesis, namely Sunwar *yabre* ‘ancestor spirit’ (also *yābre* ‘god, creator’, cf. Rapacha 2022, 393), we have reason to assume that the corresponding Jero *maʔla* at some point had medial *-r-* (< *\*mraʔla*) which gives us the following situation: *lawa* (= OC *\*r<sup>f</sup>əŋ-q<sup>wf</sup>ən* 靈魂) versus *wala* (= OC *\*q<sup>wf</sup>ən-r<sup>f</sup>əŋ* 魂靈) and either still *maʔla* (= OC *\*m.r<sup>f</sup>əŋ-q<sup>wf</sup>ən* 靈魂) or already *maʔla* (= OC *\*mə.q<sup>wf</sup>ən* 魂). Among others the scope in Dumi [table 1] clarifies that we are not dealing with either/or (i.e. monosyllabic vs. disyllabic) but with both/and in Kiranti as well (cf. van Driem 1993, 391, 395; Opgenort 2005, 384). And again, all of this presents itself as an illustrative example for the *monosyllabification* process in Old Chinese suggested below (see fn. 19).

**Table 1** *Lawa*

E→UA	Lohorung	<i>lawa</i>	soul; shadow	van Driem, unpublished;
	Mewahang	<i>lawa</i>	free-soul	Gaenszle 2002, 130;
	Yamphu	<i>lawa</i>	spirit, soul; shadow	Rutgers 1998, 552
E→GY	Chulwŋ	<i>rawa</i>	soul	Rai 2019, text 64;
	Yakkha	<i>lawa</i>	spirit, soul	Schackow 2015, 278
W→CH	Jero	<i>maʔla</i>	spirit	Opgenort 2005, 250
W→N	Sunwar	<i>wala</i> <i>yabre</i>	ghost, spirit ancestor spirit	Bieri, Schulze 1971, 11; Borchers 2008, 309
W→UD	Dumi	<i>lu: ~ la:so ~ la:wo</i> <i>lwā ~ lawa ~ so</i>	awareness, mind, soul, spirit (presence of) soul, spirit	van Driem 1993, 39; Rai 2017, 213, 216, 245
	Old Chinese	魂 <i>*m.q<sup>wf</sup>ən</i>	spiritual soul	<i>passim</i>
		靈 <i>*m.r<sup>f</sup>əŋ</i>	spirit	<i>passim</i>
		靈魂 <i>*r<sup>f</sup>əŋ-q<sup>wf</sup>ən</i>	soul	Bender 2019, 15
		魂靈 <i>*q<sup>wf</sup>ən-r<sup>f</sup>əŋ</i>	soul	Brashier 1996, 150-1

The Mewahang perceive *lawa* very similar to the Lohorung (and perhaps the Kirantis in general) as a life-force and consciousness giving small substance. The potentially free-moving *lawa* leaves the body for various causes (e.g. dream, fright, shock, surprise, illness, death etc.), in others words, although *lawa* leaving the body keeps the involved

<sup>12</sup> The OC equivalent for Jero *maʔla* is expected to be different from the one for Sunwar *wala*, as the latter’s supposed earlier forms *gɪwəʔ* ‘soul’ (cf. Rapacha 2022, 332) and/or Chepang *gwa.lam?* ‘spirit’ (cf. Caughley 2000, 453) suggest.



individual in an equally vulnerable and dangerous state, it does not imply death. In case of death though, the *lawa* wanders around as *ca:p* ‘spirit’ [table 2].

**Table 2** *Cap?*

E→UA	Lohorong	<i>cap?</i>	disincarnate spirit	van Driem, unpublished;
	Mewahang	<i>ca:p</i>	(roaming) spirit, ghost	Gaenzle 2002, 131;
	Yamphu	<i>cap</i>	spirit of an ancestor	Rutgers 1998, 529
E→GY	Athpahariya	<i>cyarj</i>	soul of dead person	Ebert 1997, 240
	Yakkha	<i>cyarj</i>	spirit, soul	Schackow 2015, 30
C→KH	Kulung	<i>cap</i>	ghost, spirit of deceased	Tolsma 2006, 232
	Old Chinese 精	* <i>tseŋ</i>	(refined) essence	Sterckx 2002, 213

Yet, and this cannot be overemphasised, even the roaming *ca:p* or rather the ultimate leaving of the *lawa* is (supposed to be) temporary in nature “until it is properly integrated into the ancestral shrine” (Gaenzle 2002, 131). Everything just said (cf. van Driem 1993, 44; Gaenzle 2002, 130-1; Hardman 2000, XII, 52, 73) essentially applies to early China as well (cf. Brashier 1996, 138-46; Guo 2011, 90; Puett 2002, ch. 1; Yü 1987, 373-5).

### 3 *Saya*

Mewahang *saya* ‘head-soul’ is well established all over Kiranti [table 3].

**Table 3** *Saya*

-	Limbu	<i>sam</i>	consciousness, spirit	van Driem 1987, 505
E→UA	Lohorong	<i>saya</i>	ancestral power, vital soul	Hardman 2004, 329;
	Mewahang	<i>saya</i>	head-soul, life-force	Gaenzle 2002, 130
E→GY	Yakkha	<i>saya</i>	head-soul	Schackow 2015, 270
C→KH	Kulung	<i>so:m</i>	breath, steam, eternal soul	Tolsma 2006, 270
W→N	Sunwar	<i>sāyā</i>	dead soul	Rapacha 2022, 417
W→UD	Dumi	<i>sa:yɨ</i>	life force, vital force, spirit	van Driem 1993, 416; Rai
		<i>sai ~ sayi ~ saya</i>	(presence of) soul	2017, 233, 237;
		<i>sam</i>	spirit, soul, mood	van Driem 1993, 414
-	Old Chinese 心力	* <i>səm-rək</i>	heart spirit	Liu 2020, 496

Unlike *lawa*, the invisible *saya* has special significance to prosperity (i.e. personal strength, well-being etc.) and is in close association with *toɸu* ‘long life’ (= OC \**tu?* 壽 ‘longevity’), *rùrù* ~ *riri* ‘life-soul’ (= OC \**k-r̥ʰu?* 考 ‘long life’ ~ OC \**m-riŋ-s* 命 ‘life, fate’) and the Mewahang ritual language term *ŋalùŋ* ‘prestige, honour’ (= OC \**r.ŋʰar-s.rək*

顏色 ‘dignity, honour’ < \**r.ŋʳar* 顏 ‘face, forehead’ + \**s.rək* 色 ‘color; countenance’).<sup>13</sup> Depending on the ancestral satisfaction *saya* can be accumulated: it can be ‘high’ (i.e. accordance with one’s ancestors) and has to be ritually raised (*saya po:kma*) to increase or preserve its status quo. Otherwise *saya* can deteriorate and ultimately be ‘low’ (i.e. negligence of one’s ancestral obligations).<sup>14</sup> Conceptually, *saya* reveals a high degree of similarity with (but is not limited to) OC \**tseŋ-s.lən* 精神 ‘essential spirit’ which “makes a human being into a human being” (Sterckx 2002, 73), namely by the possession of intellectual awareness or rather consciousness (cf. Porkert 1974, 193-6; Roth 1991, 643-6). Anyhow, *saya* is cognate to OC \**səm-rək* 心力 ‘heart spirit’ which is (covering a cognitive as well as a bodily component typically rendered ‘mind and body’, cf. Knoblock 1994, 180) again corresponding and structurally similar to Dumi *sa:yi* ‘life/vital force, spirit’ (< ‘life, body’ + ‘force’). Moreover, *saya* goes hand in hand not only with OC \**səm-ʔək-s* 心意 ‘bosom’ (< ‘heart’ + ‘thought’) structurally similar to Dumi *sa:go*: ‘body; mind’ (> ‘life, body’ + ‘thought’) but also with OC \**səm-ǵʷəjʔ* 心氣 ‘heart qi’ (< ‘heart’ + ‘vapors’) which is well reflected in both Dumi *sikla* ‘the spirit of ancestors’ and Limbu *sango*: ‘life force’ and presumably linked to Limbu *səkma*, Yamphu *so:ʔma*, Athpahariya *səkma*, Chintang (Central Kiranti) *sa:kma:*, Bantawa (Central Kiranti) *sakma* ‘breath; life, soul’ as well as Lohorung *səkma* ‘breath’ (= OC \**sək* 息 ‘breathe; breathing’), *sa:ma*, *sa:ʔe* ‘to breath’ (= OC \**sə.qʰəp* 吸 ‘inhale’) and so forth.<sup>15</sup>

**13** OC \**r.ŋʳar* 顏 (vs. \**C.ŋʳar*, cf. Baxter, Sagart 2014, 370) follows Zhang, Jacques, Lai (2019) who reconstruct preinitial \**r-* instead of medial \**r-* in cases with comparative evidence from Gyalrongic (cf. 2019, 77). This cognacy, well reflected in Bantawa *ŋaliŋ* ‘face, forehead’ (cf. Doornenbal 2009, 452) and most definitely in Limbu *nara* ‘face, countenance, visage’ (< *na* ‘face’ + *raŋ* ‘colour’, van Driem 1987, 473, 475, 503), provides evidence that the (repeatedly rejected) sound change from Proto-Trans-Himalayan \**sr* to *s* in non-Sinitic languages (i.e. Handel’s suggested innovation, cf. Hill 2019, 198-200; Jacques 2015, 219) actually cannot be confirmed for Proto-Kiranti either (but see Jacques 2015, 220).

**14** See Gaenszle 2002, 132-5; Hardman 1996, 1-2; 2000, e.g. 15 f., 141, 214, 255-60; 2002, 105-6; 2004, 336; and Schackow 2015, 30, 270 fn. 4, 278 fn. 12.

**15** Cf. Doornenbal 2009, 459; van Driem 1987, 506, 514; 1993, 415; van Driem n.d.; Ebert 1997, 257; Rai et al. 2011, 150; Rai 2017, 235; Rutgers 1998, 579; Unschuld, Tesenow 2011, 94 (bosom), *passim* (heart qi). By the way, \**səm* 心 arguably more often than not represents soul-related vocabulary in early China (but see Williams 2020, 158) and thereby hampers the so called ‘soul duality’ and any arguments relying on it (e.g. Williams 2020, 161-3).

## 4 Nùŋwa

Mewahang *nùŋwa* ‘ego-soul’, ‘mind’ or rather Lohorong *niŋwa* ‘mind, spirit’ is deep-rooted in Greater Eastern Kiranti [table 4].

**Table 4** *Niŋwa*

-	Limbu	<i>niŋwa</i>	mind, memory, desire, satisfaction, intent	van Driem 1987, 480
E→UA	Lohorong	<i>niŋwa ~ nĩwa</i>	mind, spirit	van Driem n.d.
	Mewahang	<i>nùŋwa</i>	ego-soul, mind	Gaenzle 2002, 135
	Yamphu	<i>niŋa</i>	mind, heart, faculty of (...) feeling	Rutgers 1998, 552
E→GY	Athpahariya	<i>niŋwa ~ niŋgwa</i>	mind	Ebert 1997, 251
	Yakkha	<i>niŋwa</i>	mind	Schackow 2015, 281
C→KH	Kulung	<i>niwa</i>	mind	Tolsma 2006, 260
W→UD	Dumi	<i>nugo</i>	mind	Rai 2017, 431
-	Old Chinese	血氣 *ŋ <sup>ʰ</sup> ik-ɣ <sup>w</sup> əjʔ	configurational energy	<i>passim</i>

The Lohorong stress the importance of *niŋwa* development in early childhood nourishing their children to become social beings and “fully acceptable as members of the community” (Hardman 2000, 16, 183-4). Conversely, *niŋwa* serves as source of knowledge (van Driem 2001, 694) and that beyond cognition: The expression *niŋwa yamu?* (lit. the mind speaks) refers to one’s inner voice (cf. van Driem n.d.) or rather one’s gut feeling (see above for the power to ‘see’ lying in the *bək* ‘belly’), so *niŋwa* moreover constitutes a bundle of emotions and accounts for its self-control (cf. Hardman 2000, 81, 187, 211 etc.). Likewise, the corresponding Mewahang *nùŋwa* is tantamount to “the mental and emotional aspect of an individual” and responsible for a person’s “character and self-control” (Gaenzle 2002, 135-6). The concept in question shares a striking resemblance (see *niŋgwa* in Athpahariya still being nearly homophonous) to its Old Chinese cognate \*ŋ<sup>ʰ</sup>ik-ɣ<sup>w</sup>əjʔ 血氣 (lit. ‘blood + vapors’) which is clearly to be considered a noun-noun compound most likely depicting an approximation of ‘configurational energy’ (cf. Harper 1998, 77 fn. 2; Porkert 1974, 186; Sterckx 2002, 73-4). Since the latter is characteristic of animated beings in general, what makes all the difference is the (e.g. animalistic, human) conduct or rather the ability to regulate/control one’s \*ŋ<sup>ʰ</sup>ik-ɣ<sup>w</sup>əjʔ. Accordingly \*ŋ<sup>ʰ</sup>ik-ɣ<sup>w</sup>əjʔ has great significance to sacrificial practice/religion and apart from providing the “seat of one’s *jin-gshen*” (see ‘3 saya’ above) also functions as “seat of emotions” (cf. Sterckx 2002, 73-6). Speaking of emotions, Lohorong has

no abstract word for ‘love’ or the Nepali *maya*. [...] Within the Lohorong’s own indigenous concepts all the terms near to our notion

‘love’ have components of ‘compassion’, ‘pity’, and ‘affection’ or ‘nostalgia’ rather than the sexual attachment and passion that the terms ‘love’ and *maya* evoke. (Hardman 2000, 251; italics in original)<sup>16</sup>

Instead, Lohorung does (just as other Kiranti languages do) frequently express emotions periphrastically and/or metaphorically using idiomatic expressions including the liver, lung etc. (cf. Hardman 2000, 251) and this apparent preference for embodied emotions (cf. Hardman 2004, 327, 342, 345) might be a general trait in (significant parts of) the Trans-Himalayan language family. Given that my finding with regards to OC *\*q'əp-s* 愛 still holds and perhaps was instrumental (cf. Riegel 2015, 39 fn. 6, 42 fn. 15), Behr’s tantalising glimpses in search of its elusive etymology elaborating on connections to *\*q'həp-s* 氣 ‘breath, vapors’, *\*niŋ* 仁 ‘to show affection for others’ and *\*səm* 心 ‘heart’ (cf. 2016) fit in neatly here, a fortiori in view of several Kiranti languages showing a strikingly similar interlock: e.g. Limbu *luŋma* ‘liver, heart’, Lohorung / Yakkha *luŋma* ‘liver’ = OC *\*lraŋ* 腸 ‘intestines’, Bantawa *som* ‘lung’, Dumi *so:m ~ somu*, Kulung *so:m* (Central Kiranti), Sunwar *soŋ* ‘breath’ = OC *\*səm* 心 ‘heart’, Limbu *bhəkso*: ‘lungs’ = OC *\*p'ot-səm* 肺心 ‘lung heart’,<sup>17</sup> Lohorung *samluŋma* ‘heart’ = OC *\*səm-lraŋ* 心腸 ‘heart+intestines’<sup>18</sup> and many more:

亟、憐、憊、惓、愛也。東齊海岱之間曰亟，自關而西秦晉之間凡相敬愛謂之亟，陳楚江淮之間曰憐，宋衛邠陶之間曰憊，或曰惓。

*jí, lián, wǔ* and *yān* all mean *ài* ‘to care about’. In Eastern Qí and the Hǎi-Dài regions, they say *jí*. In the Qín and Jìn regions west of the Pass, *jí* generally means ‘to mutually respect and care’. In (...) Chén-Chǔ and Jiāng-Huái, they say *lián*. In Sòng, Wèi, Bīn and Táo, they say *wǔ*, sometimes also *yān*. (Park 2017, 146-7)

Whereas these regional variants in its modern-day Mandarin Chinese pronunciation have hardly anything in common, their OC reconstructions paint a more insightful picture: the word field in question is cognate either with a vital substance, namely *\*q'əp-s* 愛 / *\*k'hək-s* 亟 = *\*q'həp-s* 氣 ‘breath, vapors’ or with internal organs, i.e. *\*m.r'ij* 憐

**16** Evidence in the same vein was provided for OC *\*q'əp-s* 愛 ‘have / show / inspire sympathy’ (oscillating between empathy and partiality) in my MA thesis (2012). For its proof of existence, I am much obliged to Wolfgang Behr (cf. 2015, 215 fn. 57). See also Jackson et al. 2019 where Austronesian probably comes rather close to Trans-Himalayan.

**17** As for Limbu *bhəkso*: ‘lungs’ and its structurally similar OC compound cognate *\*p'ot-səm* 肺心 ‘heart [associated with the] lung’ (Unschuld 2016, 296), consider also Nep. *p'ok-so* फोकसो ‘lungs’ (Skt. *klóman-* < PIE *\*pleu-mon-* ‘lung(s)’, cf. Kölligan 2018, 2232, 2266).

**18** Cf. Doornenbal 2009, 462; van Driem 1987, 350; 1993, 419; Rai 2017, 361; Rapacha 2022, 423; Schackow 2015, 13; Tolsma 2006, 270.

/ \**mraʔ* 樵 ~ \**mroʔ* (>MC *mjuX*) / \**?romʔ* 惓 (> MC *'jemX*) = \**lraŋ* 腸 'intestines'.<sup>19</sup> Although both unmentioned here, \**mru* 牟 (> MC *mjuw*) and, more importantly, \**nij* 仁 belong to the latter category. With regards to the archaic forms of 仁, (the probably largely homophonous) 懸, 忞 and even 忞 inherently suggest to be somehow embodied (see also Behr 2015, 207 fn. 28) and thus it is more than sheer speculation to consider \**nij* 仁 being cognate to \**ŋ<sup>h</sup>ik* 血. To all appearances, we are (in the middle of a transition period?) dealing with a lexical / regional split or rather (confirming Behr's conjecture, i.e. the substitution of \**nij* 仁 with \**q<sup>h</sup>əp-s* 愛, cf. 2015, 215) with the semantic shift and eventually extension from a body based, concrete, specific (intrafamily) to a substance based, abstract, nonspecific (interfamily) concept.<sup>20</sup>

19 OC \**p<sup>h</sup>rak* 魄 'bodily soul' (that is the counterpart to \**m.q<sup>w</sup>ən* 魂) = \**p<sup>h</sup>rak* 霸 'new moon' = \**b<sup>h</sup>rak* 白 'white' was to be located here, corresponding to metathetic *la:b* 'moon' and *p<sup>h</sup>ɔ* 'white' in Limbu (cf. van Driem 1987, 453, 500; Schuessler 2007, 417). With regards to our context (i.e. \**C.q<sup>w</sup>əp-s* 氣 = \**m.q<sup>w</sup>ən* 魂), it suggests itself to consider \**p<sup>h</sup>rak* 魄 = \**ŋ<sup>h</sup>ik* 血 being cognate (see also Lai 2015, 44-5; Porkert 1974, 186), all the more so in view of their homorganic initials. Circumstantial evidence from Kiranti supports this: Limbu *ma:k<sup>h</sup>i* ~ *makk<sup>h</sup>i* 'blood' (cf. van Driem 1987, 464; Weidert, Subba 1985, 285) = \**ŋ<sup>h</sup>ik-q<sup>h</sup>əp-s* 血氣 most likely underwent semantic narrowing and - considering the most frequent form in Central Kiranti as well as parts of Western Kiranti (i.e. Upper Dudhkosi) being *hi* ~ *hi*: ~ *hū* ~ *hi* 'blood' - if not semantic shifting (i.e. \**ŋ<sup>h</sup>ik* 血 (> MC *xwet*) = \**q<sup>h</sup>əp-s* 氣) then - according to the most common rime books - phonetic contraction (i.e. \**ɕwfit* 血 (> MC *hwet*)), a fortiori since e.g. in Dumi *hi*: [hi:] 'blood' the voiced glottal fricative [ɦ] is articulated virtually the same as a voiced aspirated velar stop [g<sup>h</sup>] (cf. van Driem 1993, 55 fn. 16). Conversely, perhaps something quite similar happened from the opposite direction: The apparent metatheses in Chintang *miciniŋ* 'mind, thought, attention' (presumably revealing a preserved loose preinitial) as well as Chintang *ha:li*, Yamphu *hali*, Athpahariya *helik*, Yakkha *hali*, Lohorong *hali* 'blood' and its derivative *hara:pa* 'red' (cf. van Driem n.d.; Ebert 1997, 243; Rai et al. 2011, 118, 163; Rutgers 1998, 536; Schackow 2015, *passim*) perhaps went through even more straightforward developments since their Old Chinese compound cognate \**mə.q<sup>h</sup>əps-ŋ<sup>h</sup>ik* 氣血 is also (though less frequently) attested in the *textus receptus*. These scenarios perhaps both indicate an Old Chinese transition from disyllabic \**ŋ<sup>h</sup>ik-q<sup>h</sup>əp-s* 血氣 to sesquyllabic \**mə.q<sup>h</sup>əp-s* 氣 and ultimately monosyllabic \**q<sup>h</sup>əp-s* 氣 while leading to co-existing variants: Tilung (Central Kiranti) still preserves both *hi* and *rək<sup>h</sup>ti* 'blood' (cf. Opgenort 2014, 381, 387). By consequence, while the proposed (voiceless bilabial) nasal initial for \**ŋ<sup>h</sup>ik* 血 (> MC *xwet*) proves to be correct (cf. Sagart 1999, 173), the comparative data from Kiranti made the reconstruction of a medial -r- plausible (thereby corroborating the suggested cognacy OC \**ŋ<sup>h</sup>ik* 血 'blood' = \**C.m<sup>h</sup>rik* 脈 'vein' by Sagart, cf. 1999, 178 fn. 5) as well as an initial n- conceivable.

20 Was the well-known attack in *Mèng zǐ* 孟子 3B9 against two other schools of thought (cf. Riegel 2015, 53) ultimately a fierce polemic against the unstoppable language (and culture) change by an equally foxy and conservative politician?

## 5 Same

Last, but not least, the fourth constituent *same* is widespread all over Eastern Kiranti territory and beyond [table 5].

**Table 5** *Same*

	Limbu	<i>sammaŋ</i>	household deity	van Driem 1987, 506
E→UA	Lohorung	<i>same?</i>	clan	van Driem n.d.
	Mewahang	<i>same</i>	ancestral identity	Gaenzsle 2002, 136-7
	Yamphu	<i>samet</i>	together with	Rutgers 1998, 529
E→GY	Athpahariya	<i>sammaŋ</i>	ancestor deity	Ebert 1997, 129
	Yakkha	<i>sametliŋ</i>	spiritual clan	Schackow 2015, 30
		<i>sameʔc<sup>h</sup>oŋ</i>	proto-clan	Schackow 2015, 61
W→CH	Jero	<i>sama<sub>m</sub></i>	deity, god, supernatural being	Opgenort 2005, 265
W→UD	Dumi	<i>sa:me</i>	clan	van Driem 1993, 415
		<i>same(t)</i>	lineages	Rai 2017, ii
	Old Chinese 先民	*s <sup>ʰ</sup> ər-miŋ	ancestors	<i>passim</i>

The inevitably gender-specific *same* ‘ancestral identity’ collectivizes the members of a certain kinship group and provides them an all-around social identity (implying a proto-clan) which is even retained in case of a clan split and the communication with the ancestors (cf. Gaenzsle 2002, 136-7; Hardman 2000, 121-5). *Same* is cognate with *s<sup>ʰ</sup>ər-miŋ* 先民 ‘ancestors’ and conceptually linked to \*k<sup>h</sup><sub>uŋ</sub>-dz<sup>ʰ</sup>ok 宗族 (> MC *khowng-dzuwk*) ‘ancestral clan’ (< ‘lineage’ + ‘sib’), perhaps best preserved in Limbu *hɔŋsa* ‘spirit of the deceased’ and Dumi *hoŋsa* ‘immortal soul’ (cf. van Driem 1987, 426; 1993, 380). In some Kiranti languages the concept underwent semantic bleaching, extension or even shift to the point of being virtually no longer recognizable: for instance, Yamphu *samet* ‘together with’ very likely is an outgrowth of \**samet* ‘spiritual clan’ or similar, possibly owing to the Nepali loan *ja:t* जात ‘caste, tribe’.

It goes without saying that what we have seen so far is actually just the tip of the iceberg,<sup>21</sup> providing the necessary context in order to briefly zoom in on the gist of this paper which manifests itself most clearly in the Upper Arun branch and is in evidence in (at least to some degree mutually intelligible) Lohorung and Yamphu (cf. van Driem 2001, 689 ff.), namely the *maŋsu?* ‘household shrine’:<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> The coherence among ‘Kiranti’ languages has been challenged from ‘within’ recently (cf. Gerber, Grollmann 2018), to do so from ‘without’ (by reconsidering Old Chinese) arguably is a desideratum and was part of my MA thesis (2022).

<sup>22</sup> Whereas the possibly related Korean *mansin* 萬神 ‘shaman’ (cf. Kendall 1984, 216) apparently is of post-Hàn origin, interestingly enough, Old Chinese \**mraŋ-s.lən* 明神 ‘ancestral spirits’ is virtually homophonous to the both rarely attested OC \**mraŋ-tseŋ* 明旌 ‘ancestral banner’ (see Wu 1992, 116-17 fn. 23; 121 fn. 29) also known as \**m<sup>ʰ</sup>eŋ-tseŋ*

**Table 6** *Maŋsu?*

E→UA	Lohorung	<i>maŋsu?</i>	household shrine/deities	van Driem n.d.
	Mewahan	<i>maŋsewa</i>	<i>maŋsewa</i> -deity	Gaenzle 1991, 299
	Yamphu	<i>maŋsuk</i>	ancestor shrine	Rutgers 1998, 555, <i>passim</i>
	Old Chinese 明神	* <i>mraŋ-s.ləŋ</i>	ancestral spirits	<i>passim</i>

This particular shrine is (just as its Mewahang equivalent, cf. Gaenzle 2002, 120) not only situated in the “most sacred section of domestic space”, i.e. in the inner chamber (*bεŋto?wa*) of a Lohorung house, but also “regarded as the seat of the ancestors”, unsurprisingly then, *maŋsu?* may also refer to the ibidem worshipped household deities (cf. van Driem n.d.). Considering how the term *maŋsu?* is composed (namely of *maŋ* ‘spirit’ and *su:ʔma* ‘shinny up (a tree or pole)’, cf. van Driem, unpublished) Hardman suggests the gloss ‘soul ladder’ which “is related to the idea that the *lawa* [...] of a dead person climbs the *mangasuk* and from there ascends to the residence of dead ancestors” (2000, 141-2). Thus, the *maŋsu?* plays a significant part in defining a Lohorung house or rather its inhabitants’ identity as well as in acknowledging the bond with one’s ancestors. Accordingly, the description of constructing a *maŋsu?* chimes in perfectly with building a house (cf. 2000, 143). And yet:

the shrine is more than just a structural *replica of the house*. In performance both the shrine and the house clearly become *microcosms* of the universe, both of them independently representing the *three cosmic zones*, the subterranean world, the world of the living (the earth), and the sky. (Hardman 2000, 145; italics added)

Naming all the key words (see above in italics)<sup>23</sup> apart from its (ladder rungs) bamboo fronds and, most notably, its T-shape (cf. Hardman 2000, 142 ff.), one might actually take the *maŋsu?* (not only linguistically but also visually) for the T-shaped silk banner from Mǎwángdūi with its “remains of a bamboo frame” (Hay 1973, 98) [figs 1-2].<sup>24</sup>

According to Hardman (cf. 1990, 236 fig. 3; 2000, 94-6, 144-6, 168) the upper section of the *maŋsu?* is divided into three compartments, namely in the following order (from left to right).

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銘旌 ‘name banner’, as well as OC \**mraŋ-s.ləŋ* 明祀 ‘ancestral sacrifices/shrine’ and the latter’s even structurally similar pendant in Sunwar *mul laga*: ‘main shrine’ also known as *yabre laga*: ‘ancestor shrine’ (< ‘ancestor’ + ‘shrine’) indicates a prevalent Kiranti phenomenon (cf. Borchers 2008, 289, 309; Egli 2014, 195 incl. fn. 1).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Guo 2011, 93; Wu 1992, 138; Wang 2011, 38 (house setting), 57-8 (microcosm); Wu 1992, 125; Hay 1973, 98; Wu 1992, 124-5 (three cosmic zones).

<sup>24</sup> Figures 1 and 2 are reproduced with kind permission of Dr. Charlotte E. Hardman (Durham University) and Prof. Dr. Eugene Y. Wang (Harvard University), respectively.



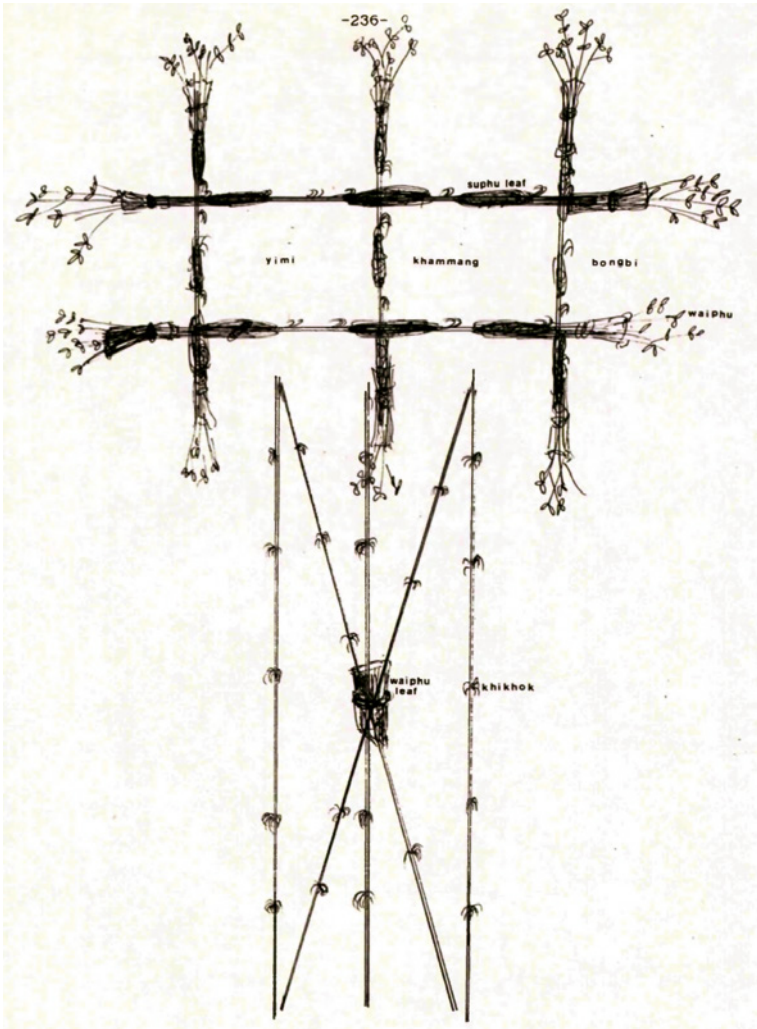


Figure 1 Sketch of a Lohorong *magsu*? (cf. Hardman 1990, 236 fig. 3)





**Figure 2** T-shaped banner from Mǎwángdūi (cf. Wang 2011, 40 fig. 3)

**Table 7.1** *Yimi*

	Limbu	<i>yuma</i>	household goddess	van Driem 1987, 548
E→UA	Lohorung	<i>yimi ~ yi-/yumaŋ</i>	house ancestor	Hardman 2001, 140
W→UD	Dumi	<i>ya'ri:</i>	devine oracle, prophecy	van Driem 1993, 30, 189
	Old Chinese	神明 <i>*s.lən-mraŋ</i>	spiritual illumination	Wang 2011, 54, 61

**Table 7.2** *k<sup>h</sup>am(m)aŋ*

	Limbu	<i>k<sup>h</sup>amma</i>	dwelling place in the hereafter	van Driem 1987, 548
E→UA	Lohorung	<i>k<sup>h</sup>ammaŋ</i>	house ancestor	Hardman 2001, 140
	Mewahang	<i>k<sup>h</sup>amaŋ</i>	household shrine/deity	Gaenzle 2002, 55, 120
	Old Chinese	祖廟 <i>*k<sup>h</sup>aŋ-mraw-s</i>	ancestral shrine/temple	passim

**Table 7.3** *Boŋbi*

E→UA	Lohorung	<i>boŋbi</i> <i>baŋbi</i>	water serpents; primeval snake ancestors	Hardman 2001, 140 van Driem n.d.
	Old Chinese	雄虺 <i>*ɣ<sup>w</sup>əŋ-ŋəiʔ</i> 王虺 <i>*ɣ<sup>w</sup>aŋ-ŋəiʔ</i>	great (nine-headed) serpent python	Hawkes 1985, 128, 224 Hawkes 1985, 233

The Old Chinese pendants do consider that Lohorung *yimi* and *k<sup>h</sup>ammaŋ* “are almost entirely represented in abstract terms, with few human characteristics” (Hardman 2000, 94). Speaking of the latter, the Mewahang *khaman* ‘household deity/shrine’ itself remarkably similar to the *maŋsu?* in function (cf. Gaenzle 2002, 120-1, 237) yet rather different in appearance (cf. 2002, 238, fig. 10) and wording, eventually turned out to be a core element within the *maŋsu?*. Conversely, the Lohorung *boŋbi* ‘primeval snake’ (aka *nāgi* in Mewahang) in an outer compartment of the *maŋsu?* is “considered to be very significant in the creation of the world” (Hardman 2000, 134). Whether the half-human, half-serpent figure placed top-center in the T-shaped silk banner, arguably right above the (in Kiranti nomenclature) *k<sup>h</sup>am(m)aŋ* actually depicts *\*nra-graj* 女岐 ‘Mother Star’ (cf. Wang 2011, 58) or *\*nra-k<sup>w</sup>ra* 女媧 ‘Mother goddess’ (cf. Silbergeld 1982-83, 81) is linguistically speaking all the same since in any case the link to the pan-Kiranti *na:ɡ<sup>h</sup>i* ‘ceremony, rituals; rainbow’ (cf. van Driem 1993, 41) is a given. By the way, whereas the preference for among others snakes in Chǔ religious iconography is well known (cf. Major 1999, 129), all three of these half-serpent figures are referred to in the same chapter of the *Verses of Chu* (cf. Hawkes 1985, 127 [Mother Star], 128 [great (nine-headed) serpent], 130 [Nü wa]), not to mention that the creation myths in Kiranti and early China do significantly overlap each other (cf. Gaenzle 1991, 252-7; 2002, 51-2; Hardman 2000, 171 fn. 7).

Moreover, the *maŋsu?* is attached to the wall (cf. Hardman 2000, 142-3 including fig. 10) whereas the T-shaped silk banner’s “stick hanger at the top” indicates that it “had been lofted or hung somewhere” (Wang 2011, 45). In short, we have reasonable cause to dwell a little bit more on this in terms of a *Gedankenexperiment* (i.e. thought experiment): given that the structural similarity between the *maŋsu?* and the T-shaped silk banner from Mǎwángduī ties (concepts of or rather practices for the otherworld of) Upper Aruñ Kiranti and early Chǔ Chinese undeniably together, and following Guo’s conclusion (neatly summarising the state of research) according to which in the light of coexisting multilayered beliefs during Hàn China, the scholarly suggested (prima facie contradicting) narratives are not mutually exclusive (cf. 2011, 95; see also Wu 1992, 142), we might highlight the add-on that this unexpectedly holds even within essentially one and the same otherworldly belief system. In other words, from a less black-or-white or rather a more syncretistic perspective, (many of) the suggested outlines for or in conjunction with the *\*pəj-ʔrəj* 非衣 (aka *\*pər-ʔrəj* 飛衣) ‘flying garment’ did – mutatis mutandis – provide valuable pieces en route to complete the complex jigsaw puzzle: What if the T-shaped silk banner is not either-or,<sup>25</sup> but both a “name banner” (Wu 1992, 116-17 fn. 23; 121 fn. 29) and a “soul-summoning garment” (Wang 2011, 45)<sup>26</sup> perhaps while symbolically evoking the idea of a “burial shroud” (Yü 1987, 368; cf. Wang 2011, 78 fn. 18) symbolising a portable *maŋsuk* ‘ancestor shrine’ (Rutgers 1998, 555)? What if the Mǎwángduī tomb was indeed aimed at being the suggested “happy home” (Wu 1992, 125, 138-9), however, due to its nonpermanent nature in fact functioning as a “waystation” (Lai 2005, 33 fn. 120, 42; 2015, 1, 76, 186),<sup>27</sup> the very first in the supposed bureaucracy machinery (cf. Guo 2011, 90-1, 96-8, 101-3) or so to speak the

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**25** Likewise, Chǔ 楚 culture might be (in part) distinctly southern and still essentially Chinese (but see Hunter 2019, 114-15), considering that the former shows population intermingling (cf. Flad, Chen 2013, 277; Peters 1999, 108-9) and the latter is an amalgam (cf. van Driem 2021, 81) that hardly meets the *Reinheitsgebot* (i.e. purity order) of a German beer. See also Williams 2020, 148 (incl. fn. 2) for a similar train of thought in favour of “Chu’s dual identity”.

**26** Comparing *\*pəj-ʔrəj* 非衣 and *\*m’eŋ-tseŋ* 銘旌, the initials/finals of the involved syllables are all (nearly) homorganic. The name banner was perhaps intended less for the identification of the deceased by others (cf. Wu 1992, 117) but rather in lieu of a *place card* for the wandering *lawa* aka *cap?*. Note that the evidence contra the *fēiyī* 飛衣 [...], for instance, suggested by Wu (reading Silbergeld 1982-83 against the grain) in favor of his own commentary-based interpretation is razor thin (cf. 1992, 116 fn. 18, 117-18) and elsewhere virtually nonexistent (see Gāo 2019, 65-6).

**27** Conversely, Lai questions the “happy home” scenario per se (cf. 2005, 4-5). Regardless, the deceased actually resembles a ‘tourist’ (sociotype), i.e. a traveler who (as a local at heart) hopes for the familiar in the distance (cf. Merz-Benz, Wagner 2002, 20-1, 35).

only legal access point to the final destinations?<sup>28</sup> And so on and so forth. A showcase in this respect was, for instance, Gerhard Schmitt (1933-2017), erudite scholar and aficionado of the *Chǔ cí* 楚辭 (cf. Behr 2018, 18-19) who in his curiosity-driven research already decades ago left no doubt that the T-shaped silk banner from Mǎwángdūi is to be seen in the soul summoning context functioning as an attractant to lure the *\*m.q<sup>wf</sup>ən* 魂, to beckon it by presenting its cloth (i.e. *\*pər-ʔrəj* 飛衣) and to protect it (by means of the *\*pəj-ʔrəj* 非衣 deceiving the demons) mediating its returning home (cf. Schmitt, unpublished, e.g. 4r-v, 14r, 17v, 117r) and ultimately becoming a “good ancestor” supporting the bereaved (cf. Gaenszle 1999, 50-1; Lai 2015, 165; Puett 2011, 226, 246).<sup>29</sup> Schmitt’s magic touch to anticipate much of the regarding discussion to this day was thinking outside the box (cf. Behr 2018, 18). Yet, current trends (if at all) casually draw comparisons between accounts of religious characteristics in Hàn China and contemporary Taiwan (cf. Brashier 1996, 135 fn. 42; Guo 2011, 102), and although any possible insight out of that:

derives from studies of modern Chinese religious practices, it might also be relevant to our discussion of their forerunner in the Han. (Guo 2011, 102)

Granted that *that* or even the tempting Sino-Iranian hypothesis (cf. Williams 2020, 161-3) is not comparing incommensurables, the culturally and linguistically less remote Kiranti heartland should be qualified to search for and eventually find some missing links, *nota bene* not to give (more convincing) new answers, but (considering the more plausible old one’s) to facilitate better questions.<sup>30</sup>

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**28** In Eastern Kiranti (Upper Aruṅ) these are associated with “heaven” (Gaenszle 2021, 451-2; Hardmann 2000, 142-3) which is eligible for early China as well (cf. Lai 2015, 165) or rather cannot be ruled out for being “a dangerous place” (Guo 2011, 94; Wu 1992, 125) since all the dangers (mentioned in the regarding *Chǔ cí* 楚辭 passage) are not lurking in but merely *on the way* to heaven (cf. Schmitt, unpublished, 189r).

**29** Arguably that and not the lifesaving attempt is the primary goal (see Puett 2011, 226; Wang 2011, 42, 45). Yet, this core function of the soul-summoning ritual remains largely unidentified (cf. Hunter 2019, 136; Williams 2020, 159; Wu 1992, 114-15)

**30** Given the “absolute absence of ethnographic possibility” (Michael 2015, 656 fn. 14) to study early China, this paper attempts to approach a blind spot by, on the one hand, connecting independently operating fields of study (as a *Prospektion* [i.e. field survey] towards a further stage of research) and, on the other hand, initiating the proper revisit of Sino-Kiranti (i.e. the ‘default’ structure of Trans-Himalayan as such). Both goals or rather pillars of the ladder do lead to an intrinsically tied ethnolinguistic view.

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