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8 Kanashi and West Himalayish: genealogy, language contact, prehistoric migrations

Abstract: In this chapter, the findings from the loanword adaptation studies presented in previous chapters are combined with data on other linguistic features, socio-cultural phenomena, population genetics, and geography, in order to draw some conclusions about the genealogical and areal relationships of Kanashi to other languages of the region, about the internal classification of West Himalayish and Sino-Tibetan, and about the prehistoric migrations by which Kanashi and other West Himalayish languages arrived at their present locations.

Keywords: Kanashi, Kinnauri, Sino-Tibetan, West Himalayish, comparative linguistics, language contact

Chapter overview:

1 Introduction — 237	2.3.2 Diwali – one month later — 243
2 Some pieces of the Kanashi puzzle — 239	2.3.3 Communal dancing style — 244
2.1 Loanword adaptation mechanisms — 239	2.3.4 Summary — 245
2.2 Lexical and morphosyntactic features — 240	2.4 Population genetics — 245
2.3 Socio-cultural phenomena — 241	2.5 Geography — 246
2.3.1 Local architecture — 241	3 Summary and conclusion — 251

1 Introduction

The main purpose of this volume is to present some of the results of our work in an extensive Kanashi documentation project (Chapters 1–5 and 9). This documentation effort has been pursued in parallel with a broad investigation of (micro-) areality in South Asia in general and in the Himalayas in particular (Borin et al. 2021), and in this context our attention was drawn to some characteristic linguistic features of Kanashi: it shares specific loanword adaptation mechanisms – suffixes which we refer to as “adaptive markers” here – with its close relative Kinnauri, a language that Saxena has studied for decades (e.g. Saxena 1995; 2000; 2004; 2008; 2011; 2017; 2022). Looking for possible origins of these mechanisms, we found identical or very similar phenomena in several other Sino-Tibetan (ST) languages of the region, with a distribution among the languages which crosses ST subgroup boundaries. Thus, the investigation presented in Chapter 6 produced

the surprising result that within ST, at least one of the noun adaptation strategies is not confined to West Himalayish (WH) as standardly defined (e.g. by Widmer 2017) (see Figure 1). Identifying the origins of the adaptive markers has also turned out to be surprisingly difficult.

ST				
	West Himalayish	Western	Kinnauric	Chhitkuli Kinnauri Kanashi Shumcho
			Lahaulic	Pattani Tinani
		Eastern	Central	Bunan Sunnam Rongpo Zhangzhung(t)
			Pithauragarh	Chaudangsi Byangsi Darma Rangkas(t?)

Figure 1: The West Himalayish subgroup of Sino-Tibetan (internal subgrouping according to Widmer 2017)

As far as we can tell, the shared loanword adaptation strategies described in Chapters 6 and 7 have not been discussed as a crosslinguistic phenomenon in the literature on ST or WH.¹ They do serve to illustrate the complex linguistic ecology of the Himalayan region, which presents itself as a condensed version of the South Asian linguistic area, complete with the same major language families (although in different proportions), and some isolate languages in addition.

Our focus in this chapter is on throwing as much light as we can on the pre-history of Kanashi against this background: what is its position in the WH family tree and how did it end up in its present location, as a geographically isolated ST (WH) language completely surrounded by Indo-Aryan (IA) languages, and whose closest linguistic relatives are far away in Kinnaur?

The conclusions and hypotheses put forth in this chapter will by necessity be preliminary, even speculative and some conjectures made here may be mutually contradictory in their assumptions regarding e.g. phonological and semantic change. We hope that our planned further investigation will allow us to elimi-

¹ The most widespread of the investigated adaptive markers (and presumably the oldest), $-(V)\eta$, has been noted as such by authors of individual language descriptions (using terms such as “nativizing suffix”, etc.); see Chapter 6.

nate these contradictions. The discussion draws on diverse kinds of information, treated in more detail in the subsections of Section 2 below:

- the loanword adaptation mechanisms described in Chapters 6 and 7 (Section 2.1);
- other linguistic (lexical and morphosyntactic) features (Section 2.2);
- some socio-cultural phenomena (Section 2.3);
- population genetics (Section 2.4);
- geography (Section 2.5).

2 Some pieces of the Kanashi puzzle

2.1 Loanword adaptation mechanisms

The loanword adaptation devices that have been described in Chapters 6 and 7 provide clues to the classification of Kanashi and Kinnauri, as well as to the internal structure of West Himalayish and its place in the Sino-Tibetan family tree. The similar or identical mechanisms used for adapting Indo-Aryan loanwords in some of these languages are arguably common traits that constitute innovations vis-à-vis the protolanguage (although they may be the result of contact in some cases), since they are used *only* for this purpose – as far as we can tell, the adaptive markers are not used with inherited vocabulary items – and since contact between ST and IA is assumed to be of considerably more recent date than the breakup of Proto-Sino-Tibetan. As mentioned in Chapter 6, the shape of the adapted IA loanwords reflects the New Indo-Aryan stage, indicating that they are at most approximately a millennium old.²

In Chapters 6 and 7 we investigated the distribution of four adaptive markers across the languages of the region:

1. *-(V)η* – used on loan nouns and adjectives;
2. *-(V)s* – used on loan nouns and adjectives;
3. *-ja-* – used to form transitive or causative verbs from borrowed IA items;
4. *-e(d)* – used to form intransitive verbs from borrowed IA items.

Only three languages – all (Kinnauric Western) WH (see Figure 1) – exhibit all four features: Kanashi, Kinnauri and Shumcho. In fact, the wider distribution referred

² A very clear demonstration that these items are New Indo-Aryan in origin is furnished by the Kinnauri verbs *qubja:mu* / *qubennu* ‘to drown (TR / INTR)’, etymology (Turner 1966): “5561 **qubb* ‘sink’. [...] [Metath. of MIA. *buḍḍai* < **buḍḍyati*.”

to above primarily applies to one of the adaptive markers – $-(V)\eta$ – which is found in many languages from Kinnaur in the west, through Uttarakhand, into western Nepal. It is not confined to ST languages, and hence is at least partly an areal phenomenon. Apart from Kanashi, it is not found to the west or north of Kinnaur.

A small number of languages exhibit adaptive markers in the verbal domain which may be related to $-ja$:. Notably, in Chhitkuli, another WH language of Kinnaur for which we have relevant data, $-ea$ is used to render (transitive/causative) $-a$: in Hindi loan verbs (Martinez 2021: 553). Relevant in this connection is that the Kinnauri suffix $-ja$: is written $-\tilde{e}a$ in the Kinnauri vocabulary by Bailey (1911), where $\tilde{e}$ is described in the corresponding grammar sketch as “very short [...] rather like e in *pet*” (Bailey 1909: 662). Chhitkuli shows no trace of $-(V)s$ or $-e(d)$. We are thus faced with a situation where Kinnauri and Shumcho are more similar to geographically distant Kanashi than they are to geographically close Chhitkuli. In our estimation, this is more likely to reflect a situation where the three languages Kanashi, Kinnauri and Shumcho should be classified together in a sub-group within Kinnauric, than one where Chhitkuli has lost two of the four features after split-up of a protolanguage common to all of Kinnauric Western WH.

Summing up, based on the distribution of the adaptive markers,

- Kanashi, Kinnauri and Shumcho may possibly form a separate subgroup within Kinnauric Western WH;
- Kinnauric Western WH shares unique linguistic features – through genealogy or contact or both – with languages now located to the east of it (in Uttarakhand and western Nepal).

2.2 Lexical and morphosyntactic features

The loanword adaptation mechanisms studied in Chapters 6 and 7 are only some of the linguistic features which must be investigated in order to be able to say more about the genealogy of Kanashi and Kinnauri within ST. Phonology, morphosyntax and basic vocabulary must all be considered in this connection, as well as sociocultural features and geography.

Currently suggested classifications of WH rely primarily on lexical comparison (Saxena & Borin 2011; 2013; Widmer 2017; 2018; 2021), where furthermore cognates and borrowed items are not distinguished, as a rule. Obviously, it is desirable to add other kinds of linguistic features to the data used for the comparison, e.g., specific sound changes and morphosyntactic features (such as characteristic affixes and irregular paradigms). The adaptive markers described in Chapters 6 and 7 are of this latter kind. They thus add important information allowing us to approach the question of classification of Kanashi and WH. Of course, we will

also need to carry out a more thorough study involving a whole range of additional linguistic features, such as the reduplicated perfective found in some of these languages, verb indexing for affected SAP verb arguments, transitivity classes, case markers, and other features. Also, since almost all these languages are severely underdescribed, we do not necessarily have comparable data coverage for all of them even with respect to the loanword adaptation mechanisms forming the basis for our discussion here. Hence, a more thorough study of the genealogical and areal connections of WH has been initiated and will be reported on in future publications.

So far, we have relevant comparable data on three of the five recognized WH languages of Kinnaur, viz. Kinnauri, Chhitkuli and Shumcho, while we unfortunately lack data on the other two languages, Jangrami and Sunnami.³

2.3 Socio-cultural phenomena

The same general area in Uttarakhand where we find the adaptive markers discussed above is characterized by the presence of some socio-cultural traditions which are also found in Lower/Middle Kinnaur and along the migration routes between Lower Kinnaur and Kullu (Malana where Kanashi is spoken, is located in the Kullu region).

2.3.1 Local architecture

In the area of interest we find a traditional architectural style, in which the foundation platform of a building is made of stones and the structure on this platform is built with alternating layers of logs and masonry. This architectural style is known as *Kath-Kuni* in Himachal Pradesh and as *Koti Banal* in Uttarakhand. The map provided by Rautela & Joshi (2008)⁴ shows that this construction style is found in southern Uttarakhand (Uttarkashi) and parts of Himachal Pradesh, including Kinnaur. This construction style is traditionally used to build family homes, temples and the structures commonly referred to as *kila* 'fort' in Kinnaur. These are compact, square, tall, multi-storeyed tower-like structures, standing alone, i.e., not sharing any walls with other buildings. Figure 2 shows a typical specimen, *Kamru kila* of Kinnaur.

³ There are also two Tibetic languages spoken in (Upper) Kinnaur.

⁴ Similar observations are also made by Kumar et al. (2016), according to which the Kath-Kuni construction style is predominantly found in the Kullu and Shimla regions in Himachal Pradesh.

Figure 2: Kamru kila (Kamru village, Kinnaur): https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kamru_fort.jpg; copyright status: Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International)

Both the exterior of these tower-like structures and their interior (e.g., organization of the various floors) seem to be similar in Uttarakhand and Kinnaur. In all the villages where they are found in Uttarakhand and Kinnaur, according to local oral tradition they were built to protect the villages from the enemy, and the enemy in each case, again according to the legends, are Gorkhas (people from Nepal). Further, each of these buildings is described against the contextual background of Hindu mythology. Nowadays some of these tower-like structures in Kinnaur (and elsewhere in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, see below) are Hindu temples or used as storage rooms of temples. In each of these instances the locals describe this structure as the oldest structure in the region.⁵

In Kinnaur there are five such structures (Labrang kila, Kamru kila, Sapni kila, Morang kila and *Chitkul ka kila* ‘the fort of Chitkul’), while in the rest of Himachal Pradesh outside Kinnaur, we find only a few such tower-like structures, e.g. some temples in the Kullu district, and possibly the tower-like structure which

⁵ To describe the antiquity of the Kamru kila, locals say that this kila has been ruled by 122 kings.

now forms part of the temple in Sarahan (Pachhad tehsil, Sirmaur district), and the village temple in the Dodra village on the border with Uttarakhand.⁶

In Malana, too, traditional houses are made using the Kath-Kuni construction style. However, there is no tower-like structure in Malana today. Malana has had a number of large-scale fires, the latest in 2008 which destroyed a large part of the village, including the Kanashi community's most revered structure, the Jamlu temple.

In some parts of present-day Uttarakhand too, there are a few old tower-like structures whose architecture and original functionality are similar to the tower-like structures of Himachal Pradesh, as described above. The Panchpura bhawan in the Doni village is built in the Koti Banal style. It is said to be about 400 years old. Similarly, the old Shani dham temple in Kharsali village (Uttarkashi district), too, has a tower-like structure. The temple in Sewa town in Uttarakhand has a tower-like structure, very similar to that of the Kamru fort in Kinnaur. Interestingly, the Sewa temple is also known as the "Kinnauri temple". Radiocarbon dating of the samples of wood used in the Panchpura bhawan puts the age of the structure to about 900 years, i.e., it was erected in the 12th century CE (Rautela & Joshi 2008: 480).

To summarize, the tower-like structures built in the Kath-Kuni/Koti Banal style are found in the earlier Tehri region in Uttarakhand (present-day Uttarkashi and Tehri Garhwal districts, southern Uttarakhand) and in parts of Himachal Pradesh. They are found either along the route between present-day Lower and Middle Kinnaur (Labrang, Chitkul, Kamru) and Malana (Sarahan, Banjar, Sainj), or between southern Uttarakhand and Lower/Middle Kinnaur. This coincides with the region in Uttarakhand where we have observed in Chapters 6 and 7 some linguistic similarities with Kinnauri and Kanashi.

2.3.2 Diwali – one month later

Diwali is one of the most important festivals, celebrated by Hindus, Jains, Sikhs and Newar Buddhists. It falls on the 15th day of the Kartik month (following the Hindu calendar system) which is also a new moon (*amavasja*). This festival is celebrated on this very date in large parts of India and Nepal, in both of which it is also celebrated as a national festival.

⁶ Villages like Kwar and Dodra are situated along the trail from Sangla village in Kinnaur via Rupin pass to Uttarakhand.

In Lower and Middle Kinnaur and in a few villages outside Kinnaur in Himachal Pradesh a Diwali-like festival is celebrated exactly one month after the national Diwali festival. As in the national Diwali festival, in this festival, too, fire is an important part of the celebration. The name of this festival in these villages is also similar to the name of the national festival. In the Sangla region in Kinnaur this festival is called (*teg*) *deva:l* [(big) diwali].⁷ In the Kalpa sub-tehsil in Kinnaur it is known as *deya:li*.

Outside Kinnaur in Himachal Pradesh *budhi dewaal* is celebrated one month after the national festival Diwali in the following villages: Ani and Nirmand (Kullu district), Chopal (Shimla district), Transgiri (Sirmaur district), Karsog (Mandi district) and Rajgarh (Sirmaur district). In Rajgarh this festival is called *Diyali*. B. R. Sharma (1976: 185–187) describes some striking similarities between *deva:l* as celebrated in Sangla (Kinnaur) and the way it is celebrated in Nirmand (Kullu).

In Malana Diwali (either the national festival or the Budhi diwali) does not seem to play a role in the community.

As in Himachal Pradesh, in most of Uttarakhand and Nepal Diwali is celebrated on the same date as the national festival Diwali in India. In Nepal it is called *Tihar*. Among the non-Hindus, Diwali is celebrated among Newars, who call it *Swanti*, and among the Rautes (Fortier 2019).

However, one-month late Diwali is celebrated in the following villages in Uttarakhand: in the Jaunsar Bawar region,⁸ in Chakrata, K(h)alsi and Damta in the Dehradun district, Jaunpur (Tehri Garhwal district), Dharasu, Barkot and Mugsayer village and some other parts of Uttarkashi. This festival is known as (*Budhi*) *Diyai*.

In short, broadly speaking the one-month late Diwali is attested in the same region in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh where the Koti Banal/Kath-Kuni architectural style is found.

2.3.3 Communal dancing style

In both Himachal Pradesh and in Uttarakhand a form of communal ring dancing (called *nati* in Himachal Pradesh) is an integral part of local cultures. There are some slightly different regional varieties – known, for example, as *Kinnauri nati*, *Gaddi nati*, *Sirmauri nati*, *Kullu nati*. They differ both in the attire worn and in the dancing steps. However, the *nati* steps of the Uttarkashi region in Uttarakhand are

⁷ In Kinnauri the national Diwali festival is called *gaṭo deva:l* [small diwali].

⁸ Jaunsar-Bawar in Uttarakhand borders Himachal Pradesh.

very similar to those of Lower/Middle Kinnaur. For example, in both Uttarkhand and Lower/Middle Kinnaur people hold each other's hands in front (of the body), while in the Kullu nati, the steps are different and hands are held in the back, and not in the front. According to our Kinnauri consultants the Uttarkashi nati steps (and attire) are almost completely identical to those of the Sangla nati. Further, in Uttarkashi the traditional men's attire (including the cap) is exactly the same as that of Lower/Middle Kinnaur, which is different from that of the traditional men's attire (including the cap) in Himachal Pradesh outside Kinnaur.

2.3.4 Summary

To summarize, the socio-cultural phenomena discussed in this section are found in Lower/Middle Kinnaur, in a restricted area in Uttarakhand (Uttarkashi) and in some villages in Himachal Pradesh which either are situated close to the Uttarkashi region in Uttarakhand, or on the route between Lower Kinnaur and Malana. Note that it is also (approximately) the region in Uttarakhand where the ST languages show linguistic similarities with Kinnauri and Kanashi as seen in Chapters 6 and 7.

2.4 Population genetics

The results of an examination of a range of genetic variables among three groups of IA population, one group of ST population (from Uttarkashi, Chamoli district, Pithauragarh district), presented by Chahal et al. (2008), show that the ST groups in Uttarakhand show similarities with the ST population of Kinnaur⁹ rather than with the IA populations of Uttarakhand or with other parts of Himachal Pradesh.¹⁰

Papiha et al. (1984) examined five sub-groups of the population of Kinnaur: Kalpa, Sangla, Nichar, Poo and the Indo-Aryan population ("koli" in Papiha et al. 1984), where the first four are ST speech communities. Kalpa, Sangla and Nichar represent the Lower and Middle Kinnaur regions while Poo represents the Upper Kinnaur region. They examined 23 variables in these five groups to examine how homogeneous or heterogeneous the population of Kinnaur is. Interestingly their results show that the ST community in Kinnaur shows heterogeneity, where the Poo group is very different from the remaining ST groups. Among the Kalpa,

⁹ Unfortunately the article does not mention the exact place in Kinnaur which was included in this study.

¹⁰ Twenty population groups of Himachal Pradesh were included in this examination.

Sangla and Nichar ST groups differences are relatively minor. The genetic make-up of the Poo population is more similar to the Tibetan population. This is consistent with the fact that the language of the latter belongs to the Tibetic sub-group of ST, while the former groups speak WH varieties.

P. Sharma & Bhalla (1987) examined 23 anthropometric variables (e.g. body dimensions) among members of four communities (all endogamous): 232 Kulluvis of the Parvati valley, 198 Lahaulis, 136 Malanese and 219 Kinnauris of the Kalpa tehsil (Lower/Middle Kinnaur). In total, 785 male individuals aged 20–50 years were examined. The results of their study suggest that Kanashi speakers show more similarities to Kulluvi and Kinnauri speakers/languages than to Lahuli speakers. According to them, probably the first group of Kanashi speakers were traders from Kinnaur and that the later groups arriving in Malana were from the more nearby Kullu region.

In summary, the WH-speaking groups of (Lower/Middle) Kinnaur are genetically linked both to ST communities of Uttarakhand and to the Kanashi community, and they are genetically distinct from the Tibetic-speaking communities of Upper Kinnaur.

2.5 Geography

The distribution and the spread of the linguistic features examined in Chapters 6 and 7 as well as the socio-cultural similarities described above seem to suggest a closer historical connection between ST languages and communities in southern Uttarakhand (the older Tehri/Terai region) and the Kinnauric Western WH languages and communities of Lower and Middle Kinnaur. LaPolla (2013) suggests that the present-day ST populations of the western Himalayas have arrived in their present locations from the postulated ST homeland in China via two different routes, either from the north, along the northern flank of the Himalayas, and through Tibet, or from the east, along the southern slopes of the Himalayas through present-day Nepal and Uttarakhand. We would suggest that the WH communities probably formed the vanguard of the latter migration, i.e. that their ancestral languages were at some point spoken somewhere around the Tehri/Tarai region (present-day Tehri Garhwal district and most of Uttarkashi district). This hypothesis is in line with some local legends. For example, according to one such folk legend (Verma 2002), ST-speaking Kinnauri people originally came from Garhwal. Similarly, according to Chatak (1966),¹¹ the indigenous communities

¹¹ Govind Chatak is a leading scholar of Garhwali language and literature.

of Kinnaur are historically residents of Gahrwal (part of the older Tehri/Terai region).

There are several mountain passes which link present-day Himachal Pradesh to Uttarakhand and/or southern Nepal. Some of these mountain passes (e.g. Rupin Pass, Borasu Pass, Mana Pass) have been used actively for at least the past 500 years by traders, pilgrims and shepherds. Based on original documents from that time, Wessels (1992) describes the journey which the Jesuit priest Antonio de Andrade undertook in 1624 from Agra via Haridwar through the Mana Pass to the Tibet kingdom. The description also states that this was a much-frequented path which pilgrims and traders used going to/from Tibet (Wessels 1992).

Figure 3: Mountain passes and key settlements in the region

Of these mountain passes, Borasu Pass, Lamkhang Pass, Rupin Pass and Nalgan Pass link southern Uttarakhand to the Sangla region in Kinnaur. When coming from Uttarakhand via Rupin Pass or Nalgan Pass the first region in Kinnaur is the Sangla village (before one reaches Chitkul).

The Borasu Pass connects Uttarakhand and Sangla valley, reaching Chitkul before one arrives in the Sangla village. The Lamkhang Pass, too, connects Chitkul in Kinnaur with Harsil in Uttarakhand. See Figure 3.

Present-day Kinnaur, too, has been a part of historic trade routes from the mountainous regions of Garhwal, Kashmir, Leh, Tibet to the plains of Bushahr

(on the route between present-day Kinnaur and Malana). Cunningham (1854) reports that at least since the beginning of the 18th century Kinnaur formed part of a heavily used trade route with Tibet, Kashmir and Leh, where in November traders (and shepherds) from Leh/Tibet/Kinnaur used to come to Rampur (Bushahr) with wool, tea etc. Similarly traders from the plains (e.g. Bushahr) used to go to Tibet via Kinnaur.

Since the more northerly situated (Tibetic) ST languages (Jad, Navakat, Ladakhi, Spiti and Tibetan) do not exhibit the linguistic features discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, while the (WH) ST languages of Lower/Middle Kinnaur exhibit these features to varying degrees, it is plausible that the ancestors of the latter earlier resided somewhere in the Tehri region (southern Uttarakhand in India or southern Nepal), and that they entered Kinnaur, most likely, through Rupin Pass and/or Nalgan Pass.

Several of the WH communities practice, or have until recently practiced, *transhumance*, an annual migratory cycle where part of the community migrates to tend to livestock moved between higher-altitude pastures in the summer and grazing grounds in the Himalayan foothills during the winter season. Widmer (2021) notes that the Jangrami community of Kinnaur in earlier times would spend the summers in the Kullu valley, not far from Malana, the village of the Kanashi community. Even today Kanashi shepherds practice transhumance between high-altitude summer pastures and winter pastures in lower Himachal (e.g. Solan). Similarly, even today there is regular movement/contact (e.g. shepherds) between Uttarakhand and Kinnaur.

Widmer suggests that this seasonal migratory pattern may reflect an earlier stage where ST languages were spoken over a larger part of the Himalayas, including in the more fertile lowlands. Widmer (2021: 281f) explains the isolated location of Kanashi in basically the same way as his hypothesis about Central Eastern WH (Bunan, Sunnami, and Rongpo), namely as a remnant of such a postulated earlier wider distribution of WH languages, which have subsequently been pushed higher up into the Himalayas by encroaching populations speaking other languages (IA in the case of Kanashi and Western WH, and Tibetic in the case of Eastern WH). The case of Central Eastern WH is strengthened by historical evidence, placing Zhangzhung in the approximate right place and right time for it to be part of a postulated earlier wider distribution of Eastern WH languages, as well as by the unexpected presence of Eastern WH loanwords in the Western WH languages of Upper Kinnaur. This is basically the scenario posited to underlie what has been referred to in the literature as a “Burushaski distribution”, where closely related linguistic varieties are scattered discontinuously over higher-altitude locations in mountainous regions, with other languages occupying the intervening lowland areas (see Urban 2020).

However, nothing similar is available to support the hypothesis about Kanashi in relation to the Western WH languages of Kinnaur. First, Malana is located at an altitude of approximately 3,000 meters, more or less the same as many of the WH-speaking villages in Lower Kinnaur. Second, there is an old methodological rule of thumb in historical linguistics, originally proposed by Sapir (1916) and elaborated by Dyen (1956), stating that the origin of past language migrations should preferably be sought in the location with greatest linguistic diversity in the present, since this requires the fewest assumed movements. In the case at hand this is Kinnaur, with its (at least) four Kinnauric Western WH languages against Malana, with only Kanashi.

However, there is some evidence to support an “intermediate” hypothesis, viz. that Common Kinnauric Western WH at some point in the past was spoken in lower Himachal Pradesh (e.g. in the Kullu Valley), and that Kanashi and the rest of Kinnauric Western WH were subsequently pushed uphill in different directions by IA-speaking groups.

Among the Kanashi speaking community some clan names seem to show their relation or connection to a village/region in lower Himachal Pradesh. This could also possibly provide clues as to where their ancestors came from and on the migratory pathway of the ancient and the “newer” Kanashi speakers. The names of the various clans of the Kanashi speakers are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Malana clan names (Source: P. Sharma & Bhalla 1987: 338) and corresponding village names (Source: Ibbetson 1883; MacLagan 1892) (*Dhara/Sara Behr* ‘upper/lower part of Malana’)

<i>Dhara Behr</i>	Village name	<i>Sara Behr</i>	Village name
Dharaning	Dhara in Kais Kothi (Parvati and Kullu valley, Kullu district) (also mentioned by Rose 1914)	Nagwaning	Nagauni in Nagar Kothi (Kullu district) (also mentioned by Rose 1914; Tobdan 2011)
Puchaning	Pos in Kanawar Kothi (Parvati valley, Kullu district)	Tochbahru	Tosh, near Kasol (Parvati valley, Kullu district)
Shillu	Shilla in Kanawar Kothi (Parvati valley, Kullu district)		
Themaning	Thale in Baragarch Kothi (also mentioned by Rose 1914)		

Rose (1914) collected information from some Kanashi families about their ancestry. According to this information the “Nagwaning” family came originally from Nagauni in Nagar Kothi. The village god of Nagauni, too, has a kinship relationship with the Jamlu devta of Malana.

Similar stories of more recent waves of migration into Lower/Middle Kinnaur are also known from Kinnaur. In some cases the members of some clans are still known today by the names of villages in lower Himachal – possibly because they originally came from that village/area. For example, Ancestors of the *tsuarets-pan* in Sangla are claimed to have come from the Chhwara block in the Shimla district. Similarly, the *bungras-pan* claim that they originally came from the Bhangra village (Solan district) in the lower Himachal hills.

A close connection between Kanashi and Kinnauri has been noted in several older publications (Bailey 1909; Diack 1896; Hutchison & Vogel 1933; Jäschke 1865; Konow 1909; Ibbetson 1883; MacLagan 1892; Punjab district 1918; Tribe 1884; Gore 1895; Harcourt 1871). As we saw in Section 2.3, there are similarities in some socio-cultural aspects between some villages in the Kullu district and Lower/Middle Kinnaur (e.g. tower-like structures, one month “late” Diwali celebration). Howell (1918) discussed the relationship of the Kanashi people with those of Kullu, Kinnaur and Lahaul-Spiti in medieval periods, noting that:

the whole of the Upper Parbati Valley is known to this day as Kothi Kanaur, while its inhabitants, though they have forgotten their language and are rapidly becoming assimilated to the Kulu people, are still regarded as “foreigners” and often show markedly Mongolian features. Probably they are Kanauris who gave up trade for farming generations before the road was abandoned. But they still know the road [...] from Phulga to Rampur. (Howell 1918: 70)

In the same vein, Hutchison & Vogel (1933) suggest that traders from Kinnaur, a long time ago, used to enter Parvati valley through the Pin Parvati ranges which lie to the east of this valley.

In this connection it is noteworthy that there are several villages (“kothis”) in lower Himachal Pradesh outside Kinnaur which have the name Kanauri/Kanawari (all of them, however, without the adaptive marker *-(V)ŋ*) in their name. For example,

1. Kanauri village > Shimla rural tehsil, Shimla district, Himachal Pradesh
2. Kanauri village > Theog tehsil/block, Shimla district, Himachal Pradesh
3. Kanauri village > Kandaghat tehsil, Solan district, Himachal Pradesh
4. Kothi Kanawar > Bhuntar tehsil, Kullu district, Himachal Pradesh

All of these villages are in regions which, broadly speaking, lie geographically between Kinnaur and Malana. It is plausible that the shared place names may reflect the historic connection between Kinnaur and present-day Malana.

3 Summary and conclusion

The evidence – linguistic and extralinguistic – investigated so far points to a historical scenario like the following.

1. The future WH protolanguage enters the western Himalayas from the east via the southerly migration route (LaPolla 2013: 464).
2. Proto-WH spreads towards the west in several waves, with Central Eastern WH (predecessors of Zhangzhung, Bunan, Rongpo, and Sunnami) in the first wave.
3. The Kinnauric branch of Western WH enters Kinnaur, possibly via an intermediate location in lower Himachal Pradesh, and possibly also in several waves.
4. Future Kanashi speakers migrate further, to Kullu and Malana.

This sketchy account does not explain the distribution of the loan noun/adjective adaptive markers (see Chapter 6), where $-(V)\eta$ is found in Kinnauric Western WH and in some Eastern WH languages, but also in Raji-Raute and in unrelated Kusunda (isolate), while $-(V)s$ appears in Kinnauric, in Jad (Bodish) and Newar (Himalayish), as well as possibly in unrelated Kurukh (Dravidian). In particular, the large number of loanwords in $-(V)\eta$ in Raji-Raute may indicate a closer genealogical relationship to WH or point to a long period in prehistory of very close contact. Further research is needed.

To conclude, if the preliminary observations made here hold true against a larger database and more in-depth studies, then one plausible conclusion could be that ancestors of common-Kinnauri-Kanashi moved to present-day Lower/Middle Kinnaur from the present-day southern Uttarakhand/Terai region in southern Nepal. Later on, some common-Kinnauri-Kanashi speakers moved towards the present-day Malana, where Kanashi continued developing – now in closer contact with geographically closer languages (ST and Kullu Pahari) and their socio-cultural traditions.

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