

The Choyo language is known in Mandarin as Quèyù and has been classified within the Qiāngic branch of Tibeto-Burman. Exciting work is currently being conducted by Chinese scholars to shed light on the internal phylogeny of Qiāngic, a catch-all grouping which in its most expansive interpretation also includes Qiāng, the rGyal-rong dialects, Ěrgōng, Guìqióng, Zhābā, Mi-ñag (‘Mùyǎ’), the Ěrsū dialects, Nàmùyì, Shǐxīng and Prinmi (‘Pǔmǐ’). Choyo is spoken by about seven thousand people in a remote linguistic enclave within the Kham Tibetan speaking of eastern Tibet. Since the redrawing of the map by the Chinese administration, however, the area in question has formed part of the Tibetan Ethnic Autonomous Prefecture of Gānzī in Sìchuān province. The speakers of the Choyo language are classified as ethnic ‘Tibetans’.

Hitherto little was known about the Quèyù language except for survey reports by Wáng Tiānxí . The present author aims at compiling a comprehensive reference grammar of Quèyù, comprising an introduction, an account of the phonology, nominal morphology and verbal morphology and including texts and a lexicon. Quèyù is spoken by approximately 7,000 members of the Tibetan nationality. The speakers of the Quèyù language live at borders of Xīnlóng, Yájiāng and Lǐtáng counties, Gānzē Tibetan Autonomous Region, in the western part of Sìchuān province. There are 7,000 speakers of this language, and they are members of the Tibetan nationality. The Quèyù language apparently exhibits certain grammatical features reminiscent of the Qiangic languages.

The data for this study were collected during my field trip amongst the cheerful Quèyù people in Róngbà county in Lǐtáng, this paper deals with the organisation of the sound system of Quèyù.

In the wider Tibeto-Burman context, the phonological system of Quèyù is rather complex. Quèyù has a large number of consonants. There are 50 simple initial consonants and 145 initial clusters in the Lǐtáng dialect. The vowel system is discussed in Section 1, the consonant system in Section 2, the syllable canon in Section 3 and tone and intonation patterns in Sections 4 and 5 respectively. Finally, the phonology of loan words will be explained in Section 6.

Name: Fuminobu NISHIDA

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Affiliation: International Exchange Center, Akita University, Japan

E-mail:fnishida@gipc.akita-u.ac.jp

Contact information: International Exchange Center, Akita University, 1-1,
Gakuenmachi, Tegata, Akita, 010-8502, Japan

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