

Chapter 2

Historical, Religious and Genetic Context of Tangwang

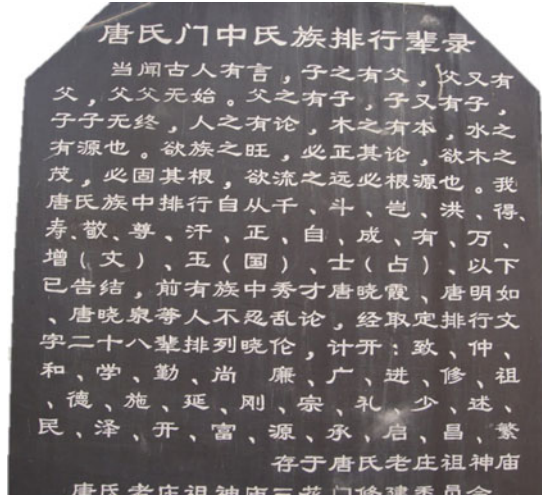
2.1 Historical Documents on Tangwang

Before analyzing the Tangwang linguistic data, we must introduce its ethnical context. Tangwang is composed of two major families, Tang and Wang, which make up around 73% of the total population of the township (15,093).¹ The Zhang, Yang and Zhao clans along with a few other families together account for 26%. Tang Hanqing's *Memoirs*, [manuscript] (1987), and the *Zhāngjiā cūnzhi* [Chronicles of the Zhang Family] 2004, inform us that the Yang and Zhao families were the earliest inhabitants of Tangwang. Genetic investigations have confirmed this popular idea (see details in Sect. 2.3). But today, these oldest families only make up less than 4% of the population in this location. According to oral legends and historical documents, the Tang family settled in this region around the late Yuan dynasty and the Wang clan arrived after the Tang family (no later than the early Ming dynasty). The legend says that the Tang family had three brothers and one of them converted to Islam. Those who did not adopt Islam stayed in Xiachuan (which is also called Sanhe), while the converts gathered in Shangchuan, which is considered the center of Tangwang (where the township government is located).

According to many different documents, including Qing Dynasty archives from the 18th century, during the repression of Muslims by the Qing government in 1781, the Wang family helped some children of the Tang family to escape from being massacred by the Qing soldiers who killed male insurgents and sent women and children into exile. Since that event, the two families have formed an alliance and have led a friendly coexistence into the present day. In the official documents of the Qing government, this region was called Tangjia Chuan 'Plain of the Tang family' (see 钦定兰州纪略 *Qīndìng Lánzhōu jì lüè* [Imperial record of putting down the Lanzhou rebellion] published by Agui et al. in 1784). In fact, during the 1781 rebellion, the name of this location had already been changed. In a ballad

¹Cf. Xu (2014: 39).

Photo 2.1 Temple of the Tang family in memory of ancestors (photo by Xu in 2010)



noted in the Dongxiang Autonomous County Overview (东乡族自治县概况 *Dōngxiāngzú zìzhìxiàn gài kuàng*, 1986), by 1781 the rebels had already changed the name of this place from “Tangjia Chuan” to “Tangwang”.

Tang Hanqing notes in his *Memoirs* (1987) that the common ancestor of the Tang family was a Mongolian general who retired from the Mongolian army and settled in Tangwang. A genetic test has confirmed this legend (see details in Sect. 2.3). The Tang family, which rapidly Sinicized and mixed with Han people, was later divided into two parts: one part converted to Islam and the other part remains Han (unconverted). My personal hypothesis is that in the 13th century AD, the Tang family had still not split over their religious beliefs. This can be proved from material evidence. In 1260 the Tang family constructed a temple named 老庄祖神庙 *Lǎozhuāng zǔshén miào* [Temple of the old village in memory of the ancestors] which was later reconstructed in 1986. In Han culture, a family genealogy is recorded, noting the generation name (a single character) of each generation. In front of this temple stands a monument engraved with each generation’s character: (Photo 2.1).

The earliest generation names recorded are 千 *qiān*, 斗 *dǒu*, 岂 *qǐ*, 洪 *hóng*, 得 *dé*, 寿 *shòu*, 敬 *jìng*, 尊 *zūn*, 汗 *hàn*, 正 *zhèng*, 自 *zì*, 成 *chéng*, 有 *yǒu*, 万 *wàn*, 增 *zēng* (文 *wén*), 玉 *yù* (国 *guó*), 士 *shì* (占 *zhàn*), continuing into the present. Based on this genealogy, some scholars (Ma and Tang 2000; Tang 2011; Xu 2014) have unsuccessfully tried to calculate the date of arrival of the Tang family in Tangwang. The problem is that there is a significant gap² between the Mongolian general who is the ancestor of the Tang family and the first generation 千 *qiān* attested on the stele. In this case, genetic research, supplemented by historic documents, can

²Tang (2011) thinks that the gap was at least around 150 years.



Photo 2.2 The remaining genealogy of Wang Zuohu's family (photo by Xu in 2010)

provide us with a reliable estimation of the date of the Tang family's migration (see details in Sect. 2.3). The name of this temple is also interesting. The word *miao* has a special connotation in Chinese: it is usually used for Buddhist temples, while Muslim mosques are instead called *sì*. We can guess then that at least in 1260, the Tang family had not yet converted to Islam, and then in the 15th century, converts built the most imposing mosque in Tangwang, named the Great Mosque of the Tang Family (see Xu 2014). It is amazing that all members of the Tang family who we interviewed told us that this Mongolian army official was Han (Chinese) and came from Sichuan, but no one doubts that his origin was Mongolian. This suggests perhaps that the Tang family have been sinicized for so long that their descendants no longer know the truth of their origin.

Unlike the Tang family, I found no written record of the collective genealogy of the Wang family in my fieldwork. I only recorded oral legends of their history. The characters for each generation of the Wang family³ are: 天 *tiān*, 福 *fú*, 启 *qǐ*, 万 *wàn*, 义 *yì*, 玉 *yù*, 佐 *zuǒ*, 生 *shēng*, 光 *guāng*, 瑞 *ruì*, 宗 *zōng*, 昭 *zhāo*, 德 *dé*, 贤 *xián*, 吉 *jí*. With the help of Wang Xiaoshan and her family, I passed over the Tao River, which separates the Wang people who are Muslim converts from those who remain Han on the other side of the river. In Manping village, Hongqi county, Lintao district, Gansu, I found Wang Zuohu who has carefully preserved a genealogy of his family (Photo 2.2):

The date of this genealogy is clearly noted on the fabric pictured above. It was written on July 18, 1895. In the preface, it is written that the forefather of Mr. Wang Zuohu came from Tangwang to Manping (which was and remains a Han

³This list was provided in 2010 by Wang Zuofeng, a retired professor living in Tangwang.

settlement) in 1765 (30th year of the Qianlong reign, Qing Dynasty). It is possible that this family, like other members of the Wang family who did not convert to Islam, moved out of Tangwang to migrate to the other side of the Tao River. The Wang family in Tangwang must have converted to Islam no later than the 17th century since they constructed the Great Mosque of the Wang family in 1682 and rebuilt it in 1982 (see Xu 2014). These historical monuments provide us with precious material evidence for studying the migration of different populations in Tangwang.

In the Tang family, like in the Wang family, both converts to Islam and Han people have used a generation character in their given names for every generation. What is special is that converts are given a Muslim name by their mosque's imam. Thus converts have two given names. In official contexts, they use their Han (Chinese) name, but in religious rites, they use their religious name. Converts and non-converts befriend each other and self-identify as descendants of common Han ancestors.

As we have said, before the arrival of the Tang and Wang families, the first inhabitants were Zhao and Yang. Authentic historical materials such as monuments in Tangwang give us hints for reconstructing their history. The Tibetan Buddhist temple 红塔寺 *Hóngtǎ sì* [Red Pagoda Temple] was built in 1118 and rebuilt in 2003 in Tangwang. According to inscriptions on a stele erected in front of this temple, it was first built by Chinese Buddhists, and later on it became a Tibetan Buddhist temple. This historical monument indicates that before the reign of the Mongols by Genghis Khan and his descendant tribes, this area was Tibetan. Otherwise it would be difficult to explain why such an important temple, which is famous among Buddhists around the Gansu-Qinghai border, was constructed in Tangwang. In the 7th century AD, after the collapse of the Tuyuhun Kingdom situated between Qinghai, Gansu and Sichuan, the Tibetans (called 吐蕃 *Tǔbō* in Chinese, and *bod chen po* [Tibet-great, 'Great Tibet'] in Tibetan) became the rulers of this region including our target zone. Historical documents tell us that a Tibetan clan headed by the 唃廝囉 *Gūsīluō* (rgyal sras) family governed this region in Northwestern China. During the 8th century, Tibetan power and influence were prominent in this region; moreover it was in the border area between Tibetan and Han cultures and religions. According to Qi's (2010) study, Gusiluo's family became subjects first of the Song Dynasty (960–1279), then of the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368). The Song Dynasty's ruler had bestowed the Chinese name "Zhao" on this Tibetan clan, and therefore Gusiluo's clan under the Chinese name "Zhao" has been integrated into the Chinese populace. Different branches have been scattered across the Lintao area, and one of the branches has settled in the region which today is called Tangwang. Qi (2010: 188) indicates that in Tangwang, located in Dongxiang Autonomous County, there are over one thousand members of the Zhao branch. This number may contain people living outside Tangwang, because the actual number in the Zhao family only accounts for 288 people (information given by Chen (Ibrahim) in 2015, the first author of the article on Tangwang). These

words correspond to the *Memoirs* of Tang Hanqing, which says that the Zhao family earlier inhabited this region.⁴ We can speculate that the descendants of one branch of the Zhao family have been completely Sinicized and integrated into the Han population. Genetic analysis of this family will provide new information on stories which have never been called into question. The analysis shows that a significant portion of the populations of these two oldest clans came from Tibetans. The Yang family presents 33% of a paternal lineage commonly found in Tibetans while the Zhao family has about 25% (see Sect. 2.3). One portion of their ancestors was Sinicized, according to studies by historians, and others might have migrated to other sites outside of Tangwang. Today the Yang family makes up about 2% of the population of Tangwang, while Zhao only makes up 1.9%.

The Dongxiang people who came here from Central Asia must have settled after the period of Tibetan rule in this region. The Tibetans underwent a gradual decline first due to Chinese domination during the Tang (618–907) and Song (960–1279) Dynasties then to the rise of the Mongolians in the 13th century. As we have confirmed in Chap. 1, historians think that the Dongxiang people formed during the 14th century AD. This dating coincides with an event which profoundly influenced the Dongxiang people. Historical records indicate that in 1340, a missionary named 哈木则 *Hāmùzé* came from Central Asia to Dongxiang in order to preach Islam. Apparently the Dongxiang people adopted this religion which also attracted the Tang family. Remember that the Great Tang Family Mosque in Tangwang was built in 1465 (and rebuilt in 1980 after the economic reform). It is not a coincidence that these dates are so close to one another. Because they follow the same religion, the Dongxiang populations and converts to Islam (Hui people) from the Tang and Wang families have remained in harmony and intermarriages are frequent (only between converts and Dongxiang, but never with those who are not converts). Based on different statistics, it is seen that the distribution of Muslim and Han people varies from year to year. In 2010, the Dongxiang population attained 45.2%, while the Hui (converts to Islam) people were about 12.8%, and together they account for 58%. Did the Dongxiang population increase due to an overwhelming birthrate over a few decades? Did they move en masse into Tangwang due to marriages? My own investigations show that neither of these is the case.

In fact there was no rapid growth of the Dongxiang population. A significant number of Hui (Muslims) declared themselves to belong to the Dongxiang nationality. Tang Zhi (2011: 19), a native of Dongxiang, reveals that people declare their nationality however they want; it sometimes happens that brothers or sisters in the same family have different ethnic identities, one Hui and the other Dongxiang. They change their nationality to Dongxiang in order to get advantages such as the right to have more children and other benefits awarded to minorities by the Chinese

⁴In the *Memoirs* of Tang, it is noted that the wife of the Mongolian general was a girl from the Zhao family in Tangwang.

Chart 2.1 Population growth

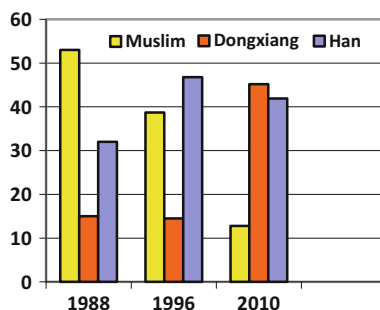
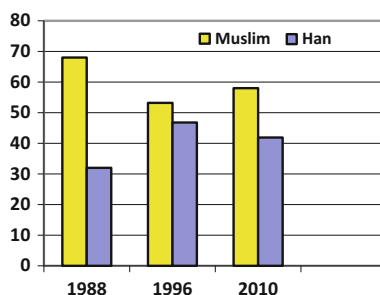


Chart 2.2 Comparison of Muslim and Han populations



government.⁵ Let us observe the following charts based on different statistics from three different years.

In Chart 2.1, the proportion of Hui (Muslim) to Dongxiang reversed between 1996 and 2010. But if we consider the Dongxiang and Hui as one group as presented in Chart 2.2, we will see that the statistics are consistent and stable. This means that the change was not due to a sudden population boom in Dongxiang but to a change of identity in the Hui populations of Tangwang. One potential misconception should be corrected: the Dongxiang people of Tangwang did not necessarily originate from Dongxiang people. We know now that the original Dongxiang people came from Central Asia. We will see in Sect. 2.3 that genetic tests clearly show that Tangwang people did not come from Central Asia, while Dongxiang people did come from there or even from Western Asia. I will use the terms Muslim or Hui to designate converts among the Tangwang people. The term “Dongxiang people” is only applied to people originating from Central Asia but not to converts in Tangwang. Local elders unanimously recognize that their forefathers were Han, not Muslim, and converts to Islam also recognize this fact. This specific historical factor prevents ethnic or religious conflicts among the people of Tangwang.

The historical scenario is now becoming clearer and clearer. If we combine the written records with the historical monuments’ dates of construction, in addition to

⁵China’s one-child policy began in the 1980s. It does not apply to minorities.

Table 2.1 Spread of religion in Tangwang populations

Time period (starting date)	Families/persons	Dominant religion	Evidence
8–9th centuries	Yang, Zhao	First Chinese Buddhism then Tibetan Buddhism	<i>Hóngtǎ sì</i> [Red Pagoda] built in 1118
10–11th centuries	<i>Gǔsīluō</i> (rgyal sras) clan	Tibetan Buddhism>Confucianism	Sinicized after being granted the Chinese name “Zhao”
13th century	Tang	Buddhism (not yet converts to Islam)	<i>Lǎozhuāng zǔshén miào</i> [Temple of the old village in memory of ancestry] built in 1260
14th century	<i>Hāmùzé</i>	Islam	Missionary who came from Central Asia to preach Islam in Dongxiang
15th century	Tang	Islam (part of the Tang family)	唐家大寺 <i>Tángjiā dàsì</i> [Great Temple of the Tang family] built in 1465
17th century	Wang	Islam	汪家大寺 <i>Wāngjiā dàsì</i> [Great Temple of the Wang family] built in 1682

the different times when changes of religion occurred, we can revisit the migration history of the Tangwang people (Table 2.1).

This table shows that the history of Tangwang was shaped by demographic expansion. The spread of religion unified different ethnicities and populations. Islam conquered Tangwang over other religions, i.e., Chinese Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism. It is difficult to date historical events, but with construction dates of monuments, along with written historical records and oral legends, the historical scenario becomes more coherent. The first dominant religion was Chinese Buddhism, then Tibetan Buddhism. After the Sinicization of *Gǔsīluō* (rgyal sras), the leading clan, its influence decreased. When Han people and their neighbors the Dongxiang people arrived in this region, Han people had not yet converted to Islam. But under the influence of the Dongxiang who had adopted Islam through the efforts of one missionary (followed by his disciples), part of the Han population began to convert. Today, the people of Tangwang are not only in harmonious relationships between converts and non-converts, but also with Dongxiang people. They are proud to be Dongxiang, and especially to be the “Tangwang people”.

2.2 Linguistic Situation in Tangwang

Since detailed studies will be treated in Chaps. 3, 4 and 5, here a succinct general linguistic situation in Tangwang will be presented, followed by lexical case studies in order to trace the origin of the Tangwang language and people. In Xu (2014), I

proposed that the Tangwang language should be classified within the Hezhou subgroup. In other words, the Tangwang language is not a mixed language but is a Sinitic variety. The geographical range of the Hezhou subgroup includes several districts and cities west of the Tao River in Gansu: Linxia district and Linxia city, Hezheng, Guanghe, Yongjing, and some locations in Qinghai such as Ledu, Minhe, Xunhua and Tongren. The Tangwang language is separated from Chinese dialects by the Tao River to the east and surrounded by the Dongxiang (Santa) language. As has been mentioned earlier, a river is sufficient to keep languages separate. It will be shown that the sound changes found in Tangwang are regular and parallel to phonological changes attested in other Northern Sinitic languages (see Chap. 3).

2.2.1 General Situation

The Tangwang phonological system contains eight basic vowels: i, y, u, e, ə, ε, ɔ, a and 23 consonants: p, ph, t, th, k, kh, m, n (ŋ), f, v (ʋ), s, ʂ, z, ʑ, x (χ), ts, tsh, tʂ, tʂh, tɕ, tɕh, l, j (ʒ). The symbols in parentheses are allophones and are not counted as distinct phonemes (see details in Xu 2014). Several phonetic characteristics are salient. (1) The frication of fricatives is stronger than in Standard Mandarin. This phenomenon is parallel to other Gansu dialects. The alveolars ‘t, th’ in Standard Mandarin are systematically converted into affricates ‘tɕ, tɕh’ when they are followed by close front vowels. When ‘t’ or ‘th’ precedes other vowels (non-front and non-close vowels), it remains ‘t’ or ‘th’ in Tangwang. (2) Diphthongs ai, ao, ei in Standard Mandarin become ε, e, ɔ in Tangwang. This phenomenon is widely attested in Chinese dialects in Gansu and Qinghai provinces (see Ma 1988 for Linxia dialect; Zhang 2006 for Qinghai dialects among others). (3) Nasal consonants do not occur at the end of a word, since nasalization takes place in the vowel if at all. (4) Due to influence from the Dongxiang language, tone is lost in Muslim speakers when reading single words, while in the Han population the tone system is simplified (see Chen 1999; Zhang 2009; Xu 2014). The simplification of the tone system occurs not only in Tangwang but also in other languages in this zone.

At the morphological and syntactic levels, the Tangwang language possesses case markers (accusative/dative, ablative, instrumental/comitative). The adoption of case marking makes the language “morphological”. Some morphological suffixes which are typically found in Mongolian languages are attested in Tangwang among the Hui (Muslim) population and have not yet been adopted by Han settlers. The word order has changed from SVO to SOV, which has become the dominant order without excluding the VO order, which is still found especially in frequently used compound words. The syntax is similar to Mongolic languages as OV order and converbs are used to link two sentences. The syntax has begun to be affected by Dongxiang with some co-existing syntactic doublets (Chinese and non-Chinese). The vocabulary is definitely Chinese scattered with a few words from Arabic, Persian and Turkic sources, especially words used in Muslim religious contexts. Apparently these words have entered through the Dongxiang language during

religious activities. What has happened in Tangwang can also be found in other Sinitic languages to varying degrees. Scholars understand that the impacts are not a one-way process; both the Sinitic language and non-Han languages are undergoing profound changes in this region (Li 1983; Chen (Ibrahim) 1985; Dwyer 1992; Janhunen 2004; Janhunen et al. 2008; Xu 2011a among others).

Based on my own field research, I believe that the Tangwang language has not yet completed the mixing process, although some grammatical means such as case markers, and some suffixes which are alien to Chinese languages and dialects, are well-attested in Tangwang.

2.2.2 *Body Parts, Birds and Insects*

Words for body parts belong to basic vocabulary in all languages. Here we present some examples which are similar to other northern dialects. Some ancestral groups in Tangwang must have come from Northern China. Their vocabulary reflects this hypothesis.

1. Knee [puə²²luə²⁴ke⁴²]

Iwata et al. (2009) have already observed that many Chinese dialects do not use the word 膝盖 *xīgài* ‘knee’, a term used in Standard Mandarin. They employ 波棱盖 *bōlenggài* to express “knee”. The pattern p-l-k is concentrated in the North (Iwata et al. 2009: 220). Their research results correspond closely to those of Chinese scholars (Li et al. 1995; Chen and Li et al. 1996) who show that the p-l-k pattern is mainly found in Northern dialects. Among 93 sites they have investigated, 39 take the form p-l-k, within which 20 also use other forms to indicate “knee”. Among the 19 dialects which have a single form to express “knee” in the p-l-k pattern, 16 are located in the North or Northwest while 3 are found in the South.⁶ For example in Beijing speech, two terms are used: 磕膝盖儿 *kēxīgàir* and 波棱盖儿 *bōlenggàir*. It is interesting to note that in Wutun, a language which is more mixed than Tangwang, this word is pronounced “polo-gaize” (Janhunen et al. 2008: 121). All these facts suggest that [puə²²luə²⁴ke⁴²] in Tangwang is not an isolated case and probably has the same source as other dialects and Chinese varieties. But the problem has not been solved: where does this term come from? The earliest example I found in a non-Han language is in the 清文指要 *Qīngwén zhǐyào* [Outline of the Manchu language] annotated by Zhang and Liu in 2013. The earliest version in which 膊洛盖儿 *bóluògàir* ‘knee’ is attested dates to 1809. But we cannot confidently assume that this word was loaned from the Manchu language in Northern China and expanded to many dialects. In several Manchu dictionaries (Norman 1978; Hu et al. 1994), it is noted that the word “knee” is *tobgiya* or *buhi*. Phonetically these words have nothing to do with the widespread p-l-k pattern in

⁶These three sites are Liping (Guizhou), Mengzi (Yunnan) and Liuzhou (Guangxi).

Chinese varieties. Did Manchu borrow this word from Chinese? Further investigations are needed to find the origin of this word. For now we only know that this word in Tangwang is a common word widespread in Northern Chinese dialects.

2. Forehead [mr²⁴liẽ⁴²] and [pə²²ləu⁴⁴]

This word in Tangwang has two different sources, one from Altaic languages and the other from Chinese dialects. [mr²⁴liẽ⁴²] is found in Linxia dialect as [mi²⁴³liɑŋ]⁴², and in Jishishan (Linxia) as [mi³¹liɛŋ]³⁴. In fact these pronunciations are parallel to Mongolic languages such as [maŋli] in Eastern Yugur, [manlɔi] in Tu (Monguor), [manləu] in Dongxiang (Santa) and [mangil] in Dagur. It is also attested in Turkic languages such as [maŋlaɟ] in Uyghur and Tatar, [maŋleɟ] in Uzbek. All of these variant forms mean ‘forehead’. It is difficult to imagine that this is an accident. It would seem that this is a common word in Altaic languages and has been borrowed by Han people. It is possible that its route was from Altaic languages then through Linxia dialect to Tangwang, if we take account of the similar pronunciation between contemporary Linxia dialect and Tangwang. In other words, this word in Tangwang was not necessarily loaned directly from Dongxiang.

The second pronunciation corresponds to 崩楼/崩颅 *bēng lóu/bēng lú* in Baiyin, Yuzhong, Jingyuan (Gansu province), as well as in Linfen (Shanxi province) and Linhe (Inner Mongolia), to 奔楼 *bēn lóu* in many dialects of Hebei province, and to 镑拉 *bēn la* in Beijing, 绷楼 *bēng lóu* in Lanzhou, and 崩楼 *bēng lóu* in Xinjiang. The characters used to transcribe them are different but they are nevertheless phonetically similar (see Zhong 2007; Li et al. 1995; Chen 1985; Zhang and Mo 2009, Zhou 1995 among others). According to Iwata et al. (2012: 49), 奔楼 *bēn lóu* is mainly distributed in Gansu, Shaanxi and Sichuan.

3. Buttocks [kəu²²ɿ⁴⁴]

This Tangwang word is similar to [kou²⁴³ɿ] in Linxia, 沟子 *gōuzi* in Hebei, Yinchuan (Ningxia), Lanzhou, Dunhuang (Gansu), Xining (Qinghai), Urumqi (Xinjiang), Chongqing, Chengdu (Sichuan), and also to 屁沟子 *pìgōuzi* in Taiyuan (Shanxi). These locations are concentrated in Northern China. (see the authors mentioned above including Shen 1994 and Chen et al. 1996 among others). In Cao (ed. 2008), the word is found to be distributed in Shaanxi, Gansu and Sichuan and it is not seen in other locations. The sites investigated were different from scholar to scholar, but the locations of this word are mainly concentrated in Northwestern China.

4. Thorax [khə²²ɿ⁴⁴]

This word is [khaŋ⁴³ɿ] in Linxia, Xining and Lanzhou. It may come from 腔子 which is pronounced *qiāngzi* in Beijing speech (see Cheng et al. 1997: 301) and *kāngzi* in other dialects, also indicating thorax. Palatalization occurred in some dialects such as in Beijing and not in other dialects as seen above.

Now let us look at some words for birds and insects.

5. Ant [ma²²ːẽ²² tʂhũ⁴⁴]

In Minxian, Lintan in Gansu, “ant” is 蚂蚁 *mǎyǐ* or 蚂蚁虫 *mǎyǐ chóng*. 贺登松 He Dengsong (Grootaers)’s (2003) investigations in the 1940s show that many dialects from the south of Ganjiakou in Hebei call “ant” [ma³ iær]. It is [majaŋ] in Wutun (Chen 1982). This word is borrowed into Tu as [majer]. It is clear that the origin is Han (Chinese).

6. Spider [tʂəu²²tʂəu⁴²]

In the Dongxiang language, a spider is called [dzəudzəu]. Actually, Dongxiang has borrowed this word from Han people. In other words, Tangwang has kept this Chinese word which is widespread in the North and concentrated in Hebei, Shanxi and Shaanxi (see Iwata et al. 2012: 79). In Hebei province and Xining city, this word is 蛛蛛 *zhūzhu*. In Gansu province, the variant forms 邹邹 *zōu zōu* and 周周 *zhōu zhōu* are also attested (see *Gansu Fangyan gaikuang* 1960). The word “spider” is attested in the 吕氏春秋 *Lǚshì chūnqiū* (3rd BC) with the monosyllabic form 蛛 *zhū* and in the 论衡 *Lùnhéng* (1st century AD) with dissyllabic form 蜘蛛 *zhīzhū*.⁷ In conclusion, the borrowing direction is from Han to non-Han and this word in the Tangwang language was inherited from their ancestral language.

7. Woodpecker [tuə²⁴mu⁴⁴ŋiə⁴²]

This word also seems to be a native word in Dongxiang with the phonetic form [dumutʂi], but it was actually borrowed from Chinese. Bao’an has also this Chinese loanword and it is pronounced [tuomutʂi]. In Tangwang the pronunciation is quite similar to Dongxiang. The only difference is that in Dongxiang the nominal head is the Chinese word <-tɕi ‘chicken’>tʂi and in Tangwang the nominal head is the Chinese word <-niao ‘bird’>ŋiə. In Standard Mandarin, a woodpecker is called 啄木鸟 *zhuómùniǎo* (peck-wood-bird). Evidently, a sound change has occurred. The sound [tʂ] in contemporary Chinese, which evolved from *tr- as reconstructed by Li (1980). Since the Dongxiang language formed around the 14th century, this suggests that *tr- had not yet changed into [tʂ] in some dialects.⁸ This means that the Dongxiang people borrowed this word from dialects in which the sound change had not occurred. Indeed, even today, this sound change has not occurred in Southern dialects, nor in Xining, a Northwestern dialect. Here are examples of “woodpecker” taken from 现代方言大词典 *Xiàndài fāngyán dà cídiǎn*

⁷See details in Xu (2014).

⁸The *Zhōngyuán yīnyùn* (rhyme dictionary in 14th century by Zhou indicates that this sound change happened in the North. Gong (2004: 280) points out that in the 12th century, this change had occurred in Northwestern dialects.

Table 2.2 ‘Woodpecker’ in various dialects

Yangzhou	tɔʔ mɔʔ liɔ	Nanjing	tuʔ muʔ liɔo
Hangzhou	toʔ moʔ niɔ	Nanchang	tɔʔ muʔ ɲiɛu
Meixian	tok muk tiau	Nanning Pinghua	tok møk niu
Dongwan	tək mok niu	Suzhou	tɔʔ moʔ tiæ
Xining	tuo mu tʂhuǎ	Haikou	ʔduak møk tsiau

[Comprehensive dictionary of contemporary dialects] (Li ed. 2002: 3743) (Table 2.2):

In Baxter’s reconstruction (1992), 啄 *zhuó* and 木 *mù* are presented as follows:
啄 *zhuó*<træwk<*trok; 木 *mù*<muwk<*mok

The star indicates a reconstructed pronunciation in Old Chinese, and the notation between Old Chinese and 拼音 *pīnyīn* (contemporary Chinese) gives a pronunciation in Middle Chinese based on the 切韵 *Qièyùn* (7th century AD) system. In Middle Chinese the entering tone is -k which has disappeared in the North but remains in some Southern dialects. The glottal stop ʔ in the table above reflects a trace of this entering tone, but in Meixian, Dongwan (both located in Guangdong province) and Nanning (in Guangxi province) this entering tone is still completely maintained. Regular sound change in Mandarin and the facts attested in some dialects confirm that this Tangwang word is Chinese in origin and in Dongxiang and Bao’an it has been borrowed from Chinese.

Even though there are no written records of the Tangwang language, these body parts and words for birds and insects clearly suggest that these words in Tangwang are colored by Northern and Northwestern languages (including one word borrowed from Altaic languages). The geographic distribution of the above words lies in Hebei and Henan provinces, Yinchuan (Ningxia), Taiyuan (Shanxi), Linxia, Lanzhou, Dunhuang (Gansu province), Xining (Qinghai province), Urumqi (Xinjiang), Chengdu (Sichuan), etc. The southernmost border is the midline of Sichuan province if we do not take into account the three scattered locations of the

Fig. 2.1 The main locations which use the seven words



Fig. 2.2 Geographic distribution of Han (*N-Han* Northern Han, *C-Han* Central Han, *S-Han* Southern Han) peoples (from Xu et al. 2009)



word for “knee” in the South. Linhe (Inner Mongolia), Xining, Urumqi, Chengdu and Chongqing are represented by dots in Fig. 2.1 while the shaded provinces indicate the locations where these words are more highly concentrated. These facts give us a hint about the ancestral populations of Tangwang. We will see in Sect. 2.3 that the core part of the Tangwang population was made up of Han people. The concrete examples given here suggest that a significant portion of them might have come from Northern and Northwestern China. Genetic work provides us with a global landscape of the north-south distribution of the Han. The map in Fig. 2.2 on the location of the Han people corresponds to Fig. 2.1 indicating that the users of these words came from the North rather than from the South. However, this cannot be taken as absolute. Some words have their source in Southern dialects. Note that this is common in speakers who have migrated from one place to a second, third, or further places, and the population formed from multiple origins.

2.2.3 *Loanwords from Different Sources*

Due to the complex religious situation in Tangwang, language contact between Tangwang and Dongxiang is frequent. It is worth noting that there are 24 religious sites (Muslim, Tibetan and Buddhist temples) within 46 Km² in Tangwang, and people have close relationships with one another. Hui who converted to Islam are influenced by the Dongxiang language, and Han people who did not convert to Islam are influenced by Hui people. The various Tangwang people self-identify as having common ancestral sources in the past. Loanwords from Arabic, Persian and Turkic were introduced via the Dongxiang language and through preaching in

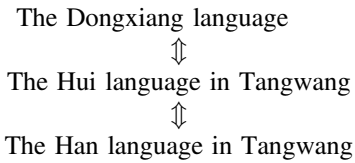
Table 2.3 Loan words from Dongxiang

Dongxiang->Tangwang	Meaning	Sources
nā ²² ka ⁴⁴²	Han	[naŋga] Ma and Chen (Ibrahim) 2001
və ²² lie ²² tʂhə ⁴⁴²	orphan	[oliətʂin] Ma and Chen 2001
sɿ ²² pa ²² la ²⁴² , pa ²² ve ²⁴	extremely	[bawi] Ma and Chen 2001
vu ²² pa ²⁴ li ⁴²	pitiful	[ubali] Ma and Chen ^a 2001
tʂhəu ⁴ tʂhəu ⁴⁴²	pocket	[tʂəutʂəu] Ma and Chen 2001
ə ² tə ⁴⁴²	now	[ədə] Ma and Chen 2001
tsa ²² .ja ⁴⁴²	to maltreat	[dzajala] Ma and Chen 2001
χa ⁴⁴ su ⁴²	method	[ʼχaʂu] Ma and Chen 2001
le ²⁴ pa ⁴⁴ xa ⁴²	frog	[baxa] Zhong 2007
tʂua ²⁴ le ⁴²	to believe	[dzualəŋ giə] Ma and Chen 2001
tha ²² ka ²² li ⁴⁴	uvula	[tanghalei] ‘palate’ Ma and Chen 2001
tʂɛ ²² lie ²⁴²	friend	[dzənliən] Ma and Chen 2001

^aThese authors indicate that Dongxiang borrowed this word from Arabic

Muslim temples. The proportion of these words is not significant (about 1.24%⁹) based on the dictionary by Ma and Chen (2001).

Contact between Dongxiang, Hui and Han languages can be presented as follows:



The double arrow symbol means that influences are bidirectional rather than unidirectional. This also suggests that the Han people borrow words from Dongxiang through the Hui people, the latter playing the role of a bridge between Dongxiang and Han. Here are some examples of loanwords in Tangwang (Tables 2.3 and 2.4).

It is easy to see that loanwords from Dongxiang generally concern everyday life, while loanwords from Turkic, Persian and Arabic are related to religious items or rites. Despite these loan words, the basic vocabulary (a list of 200 words) is 100% Chinese and this percentage remains at 98.86% for 2964 words (see analysis in Chap. 6).

⁹See details in Xu (2014).

Table 2.4 Loan words from other languages

Loan words	Meaning	Sources
vo ²⁴ jɛ ⁴²	harmony	[ej], [eje] in Mongolic languages, Sun (ed.) 1990
thə ²² ka ²² lɪ ⁴⁴	uvula	[taŋgalai] ‘palate’ in Mongolic languages, Sun (ed.) 1990
a ²² na ²⁴²	mother	[ana] Turkic, Ma and Chen 2001
kuo ²² kuo ⁴⁴²	breast	[gogo] Turkic ^a , Ma and Chen 2012
mɛ ²² tsa ²⁴²	tomb	[maidza] Persian, Ma and Chen 2001
xu ²² ta ⁴⁴²	God	[χuda] Persian, Ma Guozhong and Chen Yuanlong 2001
asmanɪ	sky	[asiman] Persian, Ma and Chen 2001
zɪ ⁴⁴ pu ²² lɪ ²⁴ sɪ ⁴²	demons	[ibi’lisi] Arabic, Ma and Chen 2001
tχos ²² pr ²⁴²	beads	[təsi’biha] Arabic, Ma and Chen 2001
tu ²² va ⁴⁴²	to pray	[duwa] Arabic, Ma and Chen 2001
tu ²² ja ⁴⁴²	world	[duja] Arabic, Ma and Chen 2001
mɛ ²² tʃi ⁴²	corpse	[maitchi] Arabic, Ma and Chen 2001
pɛ ²² lia ⁴⁴²	disaster	[bəlia] Arabic, Ma and Chen 2001
a ²² kɛ ²² lɪ ²⁴	sly	[‘ɑguli] Arabic, Ma and Chen 2001
vu ²² pa ²⁴ lɪ ⁴²	pitiful	Arabic, Jianping 2001
mɛla	mosque student	Arabic Jianping Wang 2001
jislɛ	Islam	Arabic Jianping Wang 2001
axu	imam	Arabic Jianping Wang 2001
kɛpe	saint’s tomb	Arabic Jianping Wang 2001
tsuma	cults on friday	Arabic Jianping Wang 2001
tuəstəŋɪ	religious friends	unknown
khəu ²² xuɛ ⁴⁴²	testament	Arabic, Liu 1989
jimamu	imam	Arabic Jianping Wang 2001

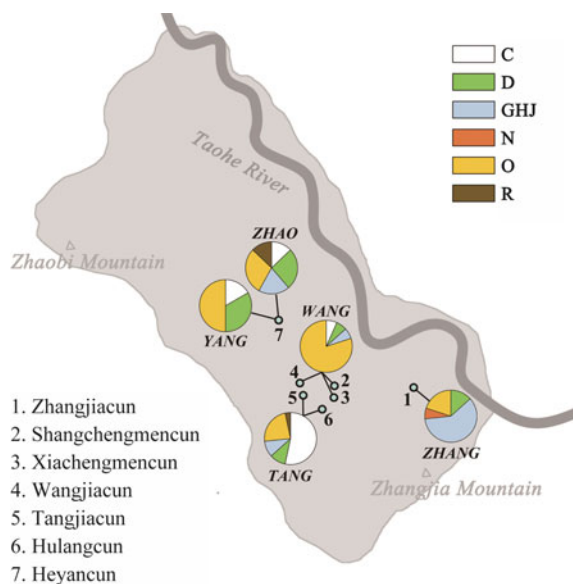
^aMa and Liu (1988: 29), Bao (1988: 89) think that this word is a Middle Mongolian word

2.3 The Genetic History and Analysis of the Tangwang Population¹⁰

Now we will attempt to trace the origins of Tangwang people using interdisciplinary approaches including the work of geneticists. The focus is certainly on the Tang and Wang families, but the other groups will be taken as references. The total population in Tangwang is 15,093 (cf. Xu 2014: 39). The Tang family has 6732

¹⁰With the help of Wang Hua, a teacher from Tangwang, Wen Shaoqing and Yao Hongbing have collected these samples based on signed agreements of local people. This investigation was approved by the Ethnic Committee of the School of Life Sciences, Fudan University. The genetic map (Fig. 2.3) is provided by Wen Shaoqing.

Fig. 2.3 Sample collection in Tangwang



people,¹¹ and the Wang family has 4327. The Zhang clan is comprised of 1228 members, the Yang family has 308, and finally only 288 persons have been recorded in the Zhao family. Since the Tangwang language is represented by the two families Tang and Wang, it is necessary to look closer at the concerned data. Our DNA analysis has focused on people living in locations of Shangchuan, the center of Tangwang where populations who have converted to Islam are concentrated.

In this study, the geneticists first collected saliva samples from 151 males belonging to five family clans in the town of Tangwang to trace the origin and demographic history of the Tangwang people. In a biological test, a minimum of 30 samples are required for each clan even though the Yang, Zhao and Zhang families are much less numerous than the Tang and Wang groups. The sample collection locations are indicated in Fig. 2.3. Five families are distributed across seven villages.¹² It is clear that the most significant groups of Muslim converts are gathered in Tangjiacun (Tang Village) and Wangjiacun (Wang Village). Given the historical documents and oral legends of local populations, the situation is clear: some Chinese people in Tangwang became Muslim (or Dongxiang), and some non-Han people in Tangwang were Sinicized. In this way *their declared nationality does not necessarily correspond to their authentic ethnic origin*. Biological research helps us

¹¹The number of Tang and Wang clans came from Tang (2011), the number of Zhang, Yang and Zhao families was provided by Chen (personal communication).

¹²Tangwang has a total of 12 villages. The representative villages are shown in Fig. 2.3. Baizui, Zhaobishan and Tashigou consist of families which have not converted to Islam. They are not included in the map.

to understand in detail the origins of the Tangwang peoples' ancestors who came from Han (Chinese) as well as from other ethnic groups.

Based on genetic statistics and analysis done by Wen Shaoqing, we obtained the following results. Y-chromosome haplogroup C (C3) is frequent among Mongolic and Altaic populations. Haplogroup C was one of the first groups to arrive in East Asia. It is mainly found in the Tang family (53%). Its proportions in Zhao, Yang and Wang are different, and it is not seen at all in the Zhang family. As displayed in Fig. 2.3, more than half of the Tang family is composed of people whose ancestors were Mongols. We have just seen that 53% of the Tang family's forefathers were Mongolian speakers who have been sinicized for centuries.

It is perhaps necessary to summarize the main haplogroups attested in the world which are the most frequent in Tangwang people. In Sect. 1.2 we presented the distribution of 20 Y-chromosome haplogroups from Africa to America and explained why geneticists prefer Y-chromosome haplogroups (HG hereafter) to trace back human language origins. We now know the approximate times of arrival of these HG thanks to the continuing work of geneticists.

Three main subgroups are found in the distribution of Y-chromosome HG C. C3 is undoubtedly concentrated in North Asia. It is frequent in Mongolian, Manchu and Kazakh populations. It characterizes the Tang family (53%) and thus the legend about their ancestor who was a Mongolian general is confirmed. HG O origin occupies almost a quarter (23%) and the rest is shared by other sources. The Yang family also contains a significant portion of C3 which attains almost 17%. O-M175 is mainly identified in East Asia among Sino-Tibetan populations. Chinese people mainly bear Y-chromosome O-M175 and present its most significant population on the globe. O-M175 is one of the most important HG in East Asia. Its proportion in Chinese people is 3/4. Subgroup O3 is attested in four out of five groups in Tangwang with different proportions: the Wang family provides the largest proportion with 76.6% O3 and 3.3% O2. Actually, each ethnic group chosen randomly from a region is always composed of one dominant Y-chromosome together with other different Y-chromosomes. In the Yang family, the O lineage presents 50% (30% of O3 and 20% of O2), in the Zhao family, 29% (O3), in the Zhang family,¹³ 20% (O2), and in the Tang group, 23% (16.6% of O2 and 6.6% of O3). Other minor elements are G which is mostly found in Caucasians, N which is rather common in Sino-Tibetan and Uralic populations, J borne by Middle Eastern and Central Asian populations and R, recurrent in "West Eurasian" people (Wang and Li 2013). Since these minor elements are insignificant in Tangwang, they are not treated separately in the figure.

The Zhang family is complex. Apart from the Tibetan branch found in written documents, its other origins have not previously been mentioned: 60% of its ancestral population should have come from India since H is mainly found there. The ancestors of this group or these groups might have migrated from India to Tangwang, Gansu for unknown reasons. The Zhang family has fewer members than

¹³The samples from the Zhang family are from 31 unrelated persons.

the Tangs and Wangs. However, only the Zhangs have published a chronicle of their history: 张家村志 *Zhāngjiā cūnzhi* [Chronicles of the Zhang Family] in 2004. According to the authors of this book, the Zhang family had different branches and some of them settled in Tangwang 500 or 600 years ago. This dating surprisingly corresponds to the genetic tests which show that their earliest ancestors came together around (at least) more than 696 years ago. This proves again that their oral legends have to be taken seriously. One branch of the Zhang clan came from Shandong, however other branches left behind no trace in historical documents. The authors of the Annals clearly indicated that they followed Buddhism or Daoism, but some members of the Zhang family changed their religion, converting to Islam. As has been mentioned, descendants of the Tang family who did not convert to Islam are concentrated in Xiachuan. Zhangjiacun (Zhang Family Village) has become completely surrounded by the Muslims of Shangchuan, where Tang and Wang Muslims make up the absolute majority of residents. Despite their special location, the phonological system of Zhang is quite similar to that of the Han populations in Xiachuan, keeping the same evolution of tone patterns except for some details (the evolution of departing tone is different in Zhang, cf. Xu 2014).

The Yang and Zhao families' origins merit attention. Ma (a native of Dongxiang 1999: 53) suggests that these two clans had settled in this region before the arrival of the Tang family. The hypothesis that these two groups were probably Tibetan people is based on historic documents. It is interesting to observe that all five families contain haplogroup D (D3a-P47). Today it is known that HG D is one of the oldest HG and often attested among Tibeto-Burman populations. The bearers of D were the first inhabitants of East Asia. The genetic analysis shows that the Yang family is the clan with the largest proportion of HG D at 33%.

Genetic experiments made by Wen Shaoqing suggest that the common ancestor bearing HG D in the Zhao clan lived at least 2200 years ago. Other ethnicities may have later joined this clan. The Yang clan forefather with HG D was as old as Zhao, and an important contribution from HG O later mixed with the Yang family. Archeological research based on carbon-14 dating provides a reliable timeline of human activities in the Dongxiang region; these dates were later adjusted using tree rings. It is now known that the Majiayao Culture covers the Dongxiang/Tangwang zone. A Neolithic community lived in Dongxiang from about 3369–2504 (Xie 2002: 251). It is reasonable to imagine that the ancestors of the Yang and Zhao families might have consisted of the oldest inhabitants in this region.

All the details mentioned above were unknown before this recent genetic analysis. In the book published in 2014 I assumed that the Tangwang language is a Chinese variety influenced by non-Han languages, but not a non-Han language affected by the Chinese language. At the time I wrote the book, this genetic analysis was not yet available. Now the genetic analysis has confirmed my hypothesis. Today we can revisit this history with more confidence based on the vast landscape described by genetic studies. The conclusion is clear: the Tangwang language developed among Han people and some Sinicized Mongolian people (in the Tang family), but not among Dongxiang (Santa) people who learned the Chinese language as a second language. In other words, some scholars have confused the

Dongxiang population with those who have self-declared their Dongxiang identity in Tangwang. Our studies clearly show that the Tangwang people and the Dongxiang population do not share the same Y-chromosome haplogroups. During my own fieldwork there, I have actually met some Dongxiang women who came to Tangwang through intermarriage. Now with Y-chromosome analysis we know that most Dongxiang males in Tangwang are those who “became” Dongxiang at different periods, including those who have recently (over the past few decades) declared themselves to be Dongxiang.

In our previous studies (Xu et al. 2013), we have already indicated that “The Central Asian group had the largest contribution to the Dongxiang population”. From the statistics by Wen Shaoqing in the Laboratory of Contemporary Anthropology at Fudan University (unpublished), it is known that the Central Asian proportion is 56% with a much smaller contribution from Mongolian (6.5%); Han accounts for 24.35% and Tibetan for 4.7%. In other words, the Dongxiang’s ancestors mainly came from Central Asia (and some from Eurasia), while among the males in Tangwang, the Central Asian contribution is not substantial. In the Tang family, 53% come from HG C which is mainly found in Mongolic populations and 13.3% from HG J and R considered representative of Central Asia. As for the Wang family, another core population in Tangwang, around 80% is attested from HG O frequently seen in Han people while only 6.6% comes from HG J and R. It is therefore difficult to believe that the population of Tangwang is from Central Asia; at least the small proportion from Central Asia is not representative in these populations. These statistics show that the ancestral origins of the people of Tangwang and Dongxiang are quite different.

Ethnic environment is crucial in language contact studies. It is important to know which is the mother tongue and which is the second language acquired from neighbors. In the following chapters, the phonology, morphology and syntax of Tangwang will be examined. Readers will not be surprised to find out that the Tangwang language remains a Sinitic language, even though it has been influenced by the Dongxiang language due to religion. At least, it remains so for now.

The Tangwang Language

An Interdisciplinary Case Study in Northwest China

Xu, D.

2017, XIX, 184 p. 36 illus., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-59228-2