

# NEW MATERIALS ON THE KUSUNDA LANGUAGE<sup>1</sup>

B. K. Rana

Linguistic Society of Nepal

bk\_rana@yahoo.com

**General Background:**<sup>2</sup> The Himalayan kingdom of Nepal is extremely rich and complex in cultural as well as linguistic diversity. This diversity is the result of the coexistence there of diverse ethnic groups for thousands of years, each of which has its own distinct language and culture. Kusunda is one of the ethnic groups whose language and culture are valuable to the students of ethnology.

The Kusundas of Nepal feel embarrassed at being identified as Kusunda. Therefore, they seem to have shifted their identity to other languages and cultures, apparently leaving an impression of their extinction. Their tribal name is *Myahak*, 'king of forests.' I quote here the former British Resident Representative to Nepal, Brian H. Hodgson, on the Kusundas:

They were generally supposed to be autochthones, or primitive inhabitants of the country, were near to what is usually called the state of nature as anything in human shape can well be, deemed very precious by all the real students of ethnology. Their origin, condition and character are, in truth, ethnic facts of high value, as proving how tribes may be dislocated and deteriorated during the great transitional eras of society (Hodgson 1857).

This information is brief and sketchy but it has always induced me to go into Kusunda studies. Kusunda research is not yet completely accomplished. It will take some more time, and therefore we hope that our Kusunda informants will live long enough that we will be able reasonably to finish with our studies on them. It is our sincere hope that the concerned authorities will also do something meaningful to preserve Kusundas in the Himalayas.

Kusunda has also been cited as a dead language. My research data on Kusunda do not support this claim. It is a fact that Kusunda has quite a few speakers who have shifted to other language groups, causing language attrition owing to marriage, migration and other socio-economic changes the societies have undergone. Under these circumstances it may well be surmised that Kusunda is on the verge of extinction and may die out with the death of its remaining living speakers. It is, therefore, high time to document and analyze this language before it is lost to oblivion.

**Kusunda Ethnicity and Population:** Kusundas are also called *Banarajas* 'kings of the forest', because they used to live in the forests. Kusundas called themselves *Myahak*<sup>3</sup> and they

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<sup>1</sup> Presented to the Fourth Harvard Round Table on the Ethnogenesis of South and Central Asia, Harvard University, Cambridge MA, USA. May 11 - 13, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Before presenting anything about the Kusundas, I must extend my profound gratitude to Dr. Michael Witzel, Wales Professor of Sanskrit at Harvard University, without whose constant guidance and encouragement for almost two years (*via* electronic media) my presence to this prestigious conference would have been impossible. I should also sincerely thank Professor Harold Fleming and Paul Whitehouse, whose inspiring letters prompted me to continue my research on the Kusundas. Paul Whitehouse's article in *Mother Tongue* (1997) was also something new and important to me. And his comments on my article in *Janajati* (2001) also inspired me to further work on the Kusundas.

<sup>3</sup> *Myahak* is the indigenous tribal name of the Kusundas. Note that the Gurungs have *Tamu*, the Shaukas have *Rong*, and Limbus have *Yakthung* as their indigenous tribal names.

had a kind of taxation system over the Rautes.<sup>4</sup> Kusundas were kings and Rautes were their subjects. Generally, Rautes run away if they happen to see a Kusunda from a distance. This can be noticed even today along the Raute track in the Surkhet district of Midwest Nepal. Kusundas had a foraging culture. But the case is different now; there is no Kusunda left who gathers and hunts in the wild. I have found seven Kusundas in the central and mid-western hills of Nepal whom I believe to be ethnically pure by origin, and two of them are younger females married to Chhetris,<sup>5</sup> another ethnic group in the country. There are few other Kusundas of mixed origin; including them the Kusunda population in Nepal will not exceed fifty in total.<sup>6</sup>

I believe both “Banaraja” and “Kusunda” are names given to the *Myahak* peoples (Kusundas) by other communities. Kusundas are said to be the offspring of Kusha, Rama’s second son, born from *kusha* grass in Valmiki’s Cottage. This story is well depicted in the *Ramayana*. The Chepangs<sup>7</sup> also believe they are the offspring of Sita’s first son Lohari or Lava who is also very famous in the *Ramayana*. Lohari and Kushari were two sons of Sita. The Kusundas believe that they are offspring of Kushari - Kusha. Later Lohari and Kushari became rivals. Then the Kusundas and Chepangs began to live separately. Some of the Chepang words have some similarity with those of Kusunda. Both Kusunda and Chepangs are found in the hills of Nepal.

**Kusunda Language:** Kusunda culture is now nonexistent. But their language remains, which, I believe, originated in the Sino-Tibetan area; or it could be an earlier language in this area. However, a number of eminent linguists have written to me explaining that some of the apparent Kusunda cognates with Tibeto-Burman languages may instead be borrowings. If this is to be believed, then Kusunda appears to be a ‘barren’ language without its own native words for objects such as: *ing* ‘sun’, *ngsa* ‘fish’, *uyu* ‘blood’, *gepan* ‘language’, *ung* ‘trail’, *langhai* ‘village’, *suta* ‘thread’, *mucha* ‘banana’, *kakchi* ‘crab’, *tu* ‘snake’, etc. This is a matter for thorough research. Robert Shafer (1954) was the first scholar to identify Kusunda as a language isolate. Professor H. Fleming as well as most other linguists also believe that this is a language isolate. Yet, it may also be argued that Indo-European, Tibeto-Burman as well as other languages have shared words with Kusunda. It is a matter of serious study as to what is the genesis of Kusunda language in the Himalayas. The Kusunda people, their language and culture are very important to linguists and anthropologists alike. Recently the Kusundas have undergone a drastic change in their life style, as the result of which they have completely forgotten their own culture and tradition. Still, fortunately, there is the language living at the moment. This language has not yet been well studied for we have obtained only limited data so far.

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<sup>4</sup> The Raute are another ethnic group that live in the jungles of West Nepal even today. They speak Khamchi, a Tibeto-Burman language, and they have clan names (*Shahi*, *Sen*, *Thakuri*, etc.) just as the Kusundas. Their females are not socially free (e.g., cannot speak with unrelated men or move freely) and are treated differently than in the Kusunda community, where women are socially much more free.

<sup>5</sup> *Chhetri* is cognate with Sanskrit *Kshatriya*, the warrior class of ancient India. They speak Nepali, the major Indo-Aryan language of Nepal.

<sup>6</sup> Kusundas and Rautes have been found taking *Thakuri* surnames such as Sen, Singh, Saha, Malla etc., mainly to uphold their social status. If only a few of them are “Upgraded Kusundas” then the Kusunda population would increase appreciably. The Thakuri population in the last national population census (1991) was 1.62 % of the total 18,491,097. (The Thakuris of Nepal are generally of mixed origin: Brahmin [Indo-Aryan] father + ethnic [non-Indo-Aryan] mother.) When addressed abusively Thakuris are also called ‘Kusundas’ by other peoples. The present Shah King dynasty belongs to the Thakuri community. In the coat of arms there is a picture of a hunter with a bow and arrow in his hands. The Kusundas have the word *tut* and *mui* for ‘bow’ and ‘arrow’ respectively.

<sup>7</sup> Chepangs are another ethnic group in the central hills of Nepal. Hodgson had found them ‘few degrees above the Kusundas’. Nevertheless, a few of them can still be found in caves. They are doing better in recent years.

Additionally, the SIL *Ethnologue's* citation of the death of the Kusunda language has dispirited linguists from finding other Kusunda speakers and studying the language. Under the auspices of His Majesty's Government of Nepal, I was able to go for some research and find a few Kusundas who could speak the language fluently. A month ago [as of May, 2002], I was informed that there is yet another male Kusunda who can speak the language. I hope to see him soon. Thus, there are still ample opportunities for every one of us to study the language and understand its importance.

**Hodgson - Grierson Data:** When talking of the Kusundas we happen to remember Hodgson. Having lived in Nepal for a long time in the early nineteenth century, Hodgson had been very fortunate to go into studies on languages, literatures and religions of Nepal and Tibet. He was much fascinated by the ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity of the Himalayan region. His works on these areas are always great. But as concerns the Kusundas he could not personally meet with them and has so admitted: “During a long residence in Nepal, I never could gain the least access to the Kusundas, though aided by all the authority of the Durbar” (Hodgson 1957). In those days Nepal was experiencing certain political changes – the Rana Regime had recently been installed and lasted for 104 years; under them, there were no educational nor other sorts of developments. It is therefore understandable that Hodgson’s informants were people from other communities. It is also possible that those informants were not even from the speakers’ neighbouring community and had very little knowledge of Kusunda as well as of Tibeto-Burman languages in Nepal. Needless to say, some of the Kusunda data obtained in that way now require verification.

Grierson drew on Hodgson’s vocabulary for the Linguistic Survey of India in 1909. Later scholars also have drawn from the latter's work. These data have to be independently verified again. Below is a comparative listing of the Hodgson data, drawn from the Linguistic Survey of India:

English	Kusunda (new data)	Kusunda (Hodgson data)
one	<i>kasti</i>	<i>goisang</i>
two	<i>dukhu</i>	<i>ghinga</i>
three	<i>dahat</i>	<i>daha</i>
four	<i>pigo</i>	<i>pinjang</i>
five	?	<i>pangang-jang</i>
he	<i>git/gina</i> <sup>8</sup>	<i>gida</i>
hand	<i>nabi/amokh</i>	<i>gipa</i>
tooth	<i>ouhu</i>	<i>toho</i>
eye	<i>ining</i>	<i>chining</i>
child	<i>ghichi</i>	<i>gitase/chyachi</i>
good	<i>ohin</i>	<i>waiyaki</i>
house	<i>wohi</i>	<i>bahi</i>
trail	<i>ung</i>	<i>won</i>

**Reinhard-Toba Data:** John Reinhard and Sueyoshi Toba also worked on Kusunda some 32 years ago. Their data are the primary data recorded by Reinhard from the field, which were later analyzed by Toba in Kathmandu. But the latter had not been able to see and speak with the Kusundas in person. Both of them were non-native researchers. I have found a certain

<sup>8</sup> *git* = ‘he’ (nominative); *gina* = ‘his’ (possessive).

amount of redundant data in the Reinhard-Toba lists; nevertheless, it is a scientifically accomplished work. Reinhard has honestly admitted that:

This [Kusunda analysis] unfortunately was based on very little data, is incomplete and contains several errors; significant variants obtained from different informants have been listed. Several of these terms could not be checked and therefore the list should not be considered definitive. (Reinhard 1976)

Therefore, there are also some inevitable redundancies.

**Similarities with Other Languages:** Having found some sorts of similarities with a few indigenous languages of the Tibeto-Burman family, I therefore believe that Kusunda originated in the Sino-Tibetan area. Kusunda *mahi* ‘water buffalo’ and *mai* ‘mother’ are similar to Central Magar *mahi* and *mai*, with the same meanings; cf. also Sanskrit *mahisha*. Kusunda *mai* is quite close to Sanskrit *maataa* meaning ‘mother’. Some other Tibeto-Burman linguistic communities also have *mai* for mother.<sup>9</sup> In the same manner Kusunda and Magar say *suta* for ‘thread’, and its Prakrit form is *sutta* and in Sanskrit it is *suutra*.<sup>10</sup>

I have already mentioned above that some linguists differ with my view on the origin of Kusunda. They believe that Kusunda is a language isolate – not sharing recent common origin with any languages. But my recent findings confirm that Kusunda has noticeable affinities with a number of indigenous languages spoken across the northern belt of Nepal. Therefore, it is possible that this language originated in the Sino-Tibetan area, and that other major language families also shared words with it. Below are some sample cognates.

**1. one**

KUSUNDA: *kasti* : TIBETO-BURMAN: *kat* (Central Magar)

**2. blood**

KUSUNDA: *uyu* : TIBETO-BURMAN: *chyuhui* (Baram), *uyu* (Chepang), *hayu* (Dura)

**3. trail**

KUSUNDA: *ung* : TIBETO-BURMAN: *ungma* (Baram)

**4. fish**

KUSUNDA: *ngsa* : TIBETO-BURMAN: *ngyasya* (Western Magar), *ngya* (Chepang), *dishya* (Central Magar), *dishya* (Dura)

**5. fire**

KUSUNDA: *za* : TIBETO-BURMAN: *chhawo* ‘warm/hot’ (Tibetan)

**6. language**

KUSUNDA: *gepan* : TIBETO-BURMAN: *ge+pang* (Western Magar *ge* ‘we/our’ + *pang* ‘language’), *ke-gepa* (Tibetan: ‘you cry aloud’)

**7. banana**

KUSUNDA: *mucha* : TIBETO-BURMAN: *mocha* (Central Magar); *moje* (Tamang), *muja* (Dura), *mach* (Gurung); also in Dravidian (Tulu *mote*, etc.)

**8. water buffalo**

KUSUNDA: *mahi*: TIBETO-BURMAN: *mahi* (Central Magar), *mai/maikha* (Dura), *mai*

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<sup>9</sup> Proto-Sino-Tibetan *\*maah* ‘mother’ > Tibetan and Chepang *ma*, Garo and Kanauri *ama*, etc. (Peiros & Starostin, *A Comparative Vocabulary of Five Sino-Tibetan Languages*, 1996). Of course, words of this type are found all around the world, and can be attributed to Proto-Human. [Ed.]

<sup>10</sup> This word is very clearly of Indo-Aryan (Indo-European) origin, from the root *\*syuu-* (cf. English *sew*, *seam*, etc., *suture* < Latin *suutuura*). [Ed.]

(Gurung); cf. Skt. *mahisha*

**9. village**

KUSUNDA: *langhai* : TIBETO-BURMAN: *langha* (Central Magar)

**10. sun**

KUSUNDA: *in/ing* : TIBETO-BURMAN: *nin/nim* (Nymba), *nima* (Tibetan), *nyam* (Chepang)

**11. bread**

KUSUNDA: *mangmi* : TIBETO-BURMAN: *mangmi* (Bhote)

**12. mother**

KUSUNDA: *mai* : TIBETO-BURMAN: *mai* (Central Magar/Western Magar), INDO-EUROPEAN: *maataa / maatar-* (Sanskrit)

**13. forest**

KUSUNDA: *gelang* : SINO-TIBETAN: *bling*

**14. thread**

KUSUNDA : *suta* : SINO-TIBETAN : *suta* (Central Magar) ; INDO-EUROPEAN : *sutta* (Pali/Prakrit); *suutra* (Sanskrit)

**15. crab**

KUSUNDA: *kakchi* : SINO-TIBETAN: *khakre* (Tamang)

**16. snake**

KUSUNDA: *tu* : SINO-TIBETAN: *du* (Bhote); *pu* (Kulung Rai)

**17. egg**

KUSUNDA: *gwa* : SINO-TIBETAN: *wa-kun* (Chepang); *wadi* (Kulung Rai)

**18. monkey**

KUSUNDA: *guinyau* (CN), *haku* (MWN) : SINO-TIBETAN : *laku* (Dura)

**19. nose**

KUSUNDA: *inau* : SINO-TIBETAN: *nu* (Dura)

**20. leg**

KUSUNDA: *yen/yeng* : SINO-TIBETAN: *lung* (Kulung Rai)

**21. louse**

KUSUNDA: *kee* : SINO-TIBETAN: *see* (Kulung Rai)

**22. goat**

KUSUNDA: *miza* (CN), *azaki* (MWN) : INDO-EUROPEAN: *aja* (Sanskrit)

The list above shows that Kusunda has some kind of relationship with other languages across Nepal. Therefore, this sort of relationship should not be taken as borrowings only. It is also a matter of deep study as to who borrowed from whom. Below I give some further explanation of the language:

(a) There is prominence of the nasal /-/ sound in the Kusunda language, and one of the striking characteristics of Tibeto-Burman languages is that they have nasal /-/ prominently occurring in all distributions; for example, Kusunda *ngsa* 'fish', *ngyangdi* 'woman', *dimtang* 'beer', *langhai* 'village', *ung* 'trail', *gelang* 'forest', *ing* 'sun', *mangmi* 'bread', *sijang* 'beer', etc. The Santhal language (belonging to the Austro-Asiatic Munda family has /ye-/ prominently occurring in its major word classes.

(b) For 'fish' the Kusundas say *ngsa* [-+sa], the Magars of the Karnali area say *ngya+sya*, the Chepangs *ngya* or *nga*, the Barams *nanga* and the Magars of the Gandaki area [di+sya]. These segments [-+sa], [nga+sya] and [di+sya] have the same meaning and the

formation of these words are also distinctly similar. The Kusunda [-+sa] has \**n* of *nur* or *ngr* for water and \**sa* for meat. Fish is ‘meat from water’. Therefore *ngsa* is a Tibeto-Burman word.

(c) Concerning numerals in Kusunda there is *kasti* for ‘one’ and *pigo* for ‘four’. In the Magar language of Central Nepal these are *kat* and *buli* respectively. In the Baram language ‘four’ is called *bi*. The Kusunda *pigo*, Baram *bi* and Magar *buli* have bilabial similarities in common. In Kusunda counting does not exceed ‘five’: *kasti* for 1, *dukhu* for 2, *dahat* for 3, *pigo* for 4 and *pangang-jang* for 5. The case is very similar to the Magar language: *kat* for 1, *nish* for 2, *song* for 3, *buli* for 4, *bang* for 5.

**Complex Pronominalization:** Kusunda is a grammatically complex language, one feature being pronominalization. The Hodgson-Grierson data and the Reinhard-Toba data, which most recent day linguists have utilized, must be reanalyzed. The Reinhard-Toba data seem to have been obtained more scientifically than Hodgson-Grierson’s. But the former’s data (Reinhard-Toba) have also been found to contain some flaws. My informants have sometimes given me different data. Therefore, we should also check other sources, along with these two, before we draw any conclusion. The Kusundas have a habit of answering someone’s question just in one word or two, which is a common feature in other languages of the Tibeto-Burman family. For example, in Kusunda:

<i>taman</i>	‘(I) eat’
<i>itanan</i>	‘(I) give’
<i>kamaji</i>	‘(it) bites’
<i>chii chimat</i>	‘my stomach’
<i>nii nimat</i>	‘your stomach’
<i>gidi gimat</i>	‘his stomach’

I was able to record some Kusunda sample sentences a few months ago. These sentences are collected from two female Kusunda speakers of the Rolpa and Dang districts, in mid-west Nepal. One of the speakers’ daughter, who is married to a Chettri, can also speak the language. While at home mother and daughter converse in the Kusunda language. I found Kusundas have a habit of speaking only one word or short phrases when speaking to others.

I eat rice	<i>chi kadi gaman / kadi tamdi</i> <sup>11</sup>
I go home	<i>chi woha / wohi tagai</i> <sup>12</sup>
I come home	<i>chi woha / wohi tugun</i>
He eats rice	<i>git kadi gaman</i>
You eat rice	<i>nu kadi naman</i>
(You) come here	<i>taba aaga</i>
(I) drink water	<i>tang chongdi</i>
I go along this way	<i>taun chahan</i>
I live at home	<i>wohi sahan</i>
I live in(side) the home	<i>aawa sahan</i>
It rained	<i>tang ugun (tāun)</i>
It rained yesterday	<i>pene tang ugun</i>
The sun rose	<i>ing ugi</i>

<sup>11</sup> One informant (Rajamama) says *chi kadi gaman*, while another (Puni Thakuri) says *kadi tamdi*.

<sup>12</sup> *woha* ‘house, home’ in the MW dialect, *wohi* in the C dialect.

A hard sun!

*ing haap!*

### Comparative Study of Kusunda with the Magar Language of the Karnali Area<sup>13</sup>

The Kusunda and the Magar languages of the Karnali area have distinct similarities in common. However, we can find a number of Kusunda words that are similar to words in other Tibeto-Burman languages like Shauka, Baram, Chepang, Tamang, Thaksya, Bhote, Bhujel etc. The Magars of the Karnali area call the languages of others (including Nepali, the state language of Nepal) *rangpang* and call their own language *gepang*. Kusundas call their own language *gipan/gepan* ('tongue'). Both *gepang*'s have striking syntactic similarities in common:

#### **Kusunda *gipan***

*chi kadi gaman* 'I rice eat'  
*git kadi gaman* 'he rice eats'  
*nu kadi naman* 'you rice eat'

#### **Western Magar *gepang***

*nga yai/kang jyonga* 'I rice eat'  
*wola yai/kang jyowa* 'he rice eats'  
*nanga yai/kang jyona* 'you rice eat'

In the Kusunda sentences given above there are pronominalized verbal prefixes, and in Western Magar sentences we can see pronominalized verbal suffixes. Have prefixes and suffixes different functions in the process of word formation? Below I give a few more pronominalized sentences and phrases from the Magar language of the Karnali area that resemble the Kusunda structure:

#### **Western Magar *gepang***

*nga ri ngawoje* 'I water drink'  
*nang ri nawoje* 'you water drink'  
*ge ri gewoje* 'we water drink'  
*nga ngalijjya* 'I (here) am'  
*nang nalijjya* 'you (there) are'  
*ge gelijjya* 'we (here) are'  
*nga ngado* 'I (it) do'  
*nang nado* 'you (it) do'  
*ge gedo* 'we (it) do'

The above examples indicate that Kusunda is not a language isolate. It is quite similar to the Kham Magar language of the Karnali area, which shows that Kusunda has some sort of affinity with Tibeto-Burman. Unfortunately, Hodgson-Grierson and Reinhard-Toba do not seem to have made any effort to compare Kusunda with other Tibeto-Burman languages found in Nepal. Had they been able to study the Western Magar language, they would have categorized Kusunda as having originated in the Sino-Tibetan area.

### Comparison with Kulung Rai Language

The eastern part of Nepal is primarily inhabited by the Rai and Limbu ethnic groups. These peoples speak their own languages belonging to the Tibeto-Burman family. Kulung Rai is

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<sup>13</sup> Known as the Kham Magar language.

also a pronominalized language. Below I give a few words and sentences of Kulung Rai language:

Kulung Rai words:

<i>kong</i> ‘I’	<i>pu</i> ‘snake’	<i>waas</i> ‘play’
<i>nako</i> ‘he’	<i>namchhoba</i> ‘sun’	<i>lung</i> ‘stone’
<i>keika</i> ‘we’	<i>wadi</i> ‘egg’	<i>lung</i> ‘leg’
<i>kaska</i> ‘we two’	<i>kaw</i> ‘water’	<i>seechho</i> ‘tree’

Kulung Rai counting:

<i>ibum</i> ‘one’	<i>ilpo</i> ‘one person’
<i>nichi</i> ‘two’	<i>nippo</i> ‘two persons’
<i>supchi</i> ‘three’	<i>suppo</i> ‘three persons’
<i>lich</i> ‘four’	<i>lippo</i> ‘four persons’
<i>ngachi</i> ‘five’	<i>ngapo</i> ‘five persons’

Kulung Rai sentences:

‘I eat rice’	<i>konga ja choyo</i>
‘he eats rice’	<i>nskosa ja choyo</i>
‘we eat rice’	<i>keika ja chyaeka</i>
‘we (two) eat rice’	<i>kaska nippo ja chaichuka</i>
‘we (two) play’	<i>kaska was laichika</i>
‘we (many) play’	<i>keika lai laiyaka</i>

Some linguists have attempted to categorize Tibeto-Burman languages spoken in the Himalayan belt as the “Tibeto-Himalayan” sub-branch of Sino-Tibetan, which consists of pronominalized Himalayan languages belonging to the “Other Mongoloid” and non-pronominalized Himalayan Languages belonging to the “Kirats” (Risely et al. 1931/1975). If we follow them Kusunda falls in the “Other Mongoloid” pronominalized language group. But this interpretation has not been acclaimed by all. The Santhal language belongs to the Austro-Asiatic Munda family. It also has pronominalization, but this is different from that of the Kusunda language.

### General Conclusion

One of the most powerful functions of a language is that of a repository of the culture and worldview of its speakers. Its grammar and lexicon store the shared experiences of past generations, and a language is the channel by which these images, emotions, knowledge and beliefs are transmitted to the next. A language does not just transmit messages; it decorates them aesthetically, and so facilitates their reception and retention.

In the preceding paragraphs I have explained how important the Kusunda language is for serious studies. Kusunda appears to have external relationships with a number of indigenous peoples’ languages spoken across the world – from Alaska of North America to South and Central Africa, Europe, Asia and New Zealand. (See Appendix 2).

I believe Kusunda, as one of the ancient languages, could also be a reliable tool for understanding the prehistory of early peoples in South Asia. It is therefore high time that the

Kusunda language be preserved in an equitable manner. The Kusundas should not be deprived of their human rights. Following the declaration of the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities<sup>14</sup> His Majesty's Government of Nepal has been very keen to implement an integrated community development program for the indigenous peoples, including the Kusundas, who are living in various parts of the country.

Since the Kusundas are in a state of impoverishment, they urgently require genuine support from among governmental as well as non-governmental organizations that are working for the all-round development of the peoples of Nepal. By bringing the Kusundas together in one place and encouraging them to communicate among themselves in their own language, the Kusunda language can be stabilized. There are some other Kusundas, of mixed origin, who also wish to learn this language and seek our support. Additionally, in order to preserve other Himalayan languages we should undertake a further Linguistic Survey of Nepal, employing professionals (especially from among those of the speakers' own communities), so that we might be able fully to understand Kusunda and other languages in the Himalayas.

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### Appendix 1: Kusunda Vocabulary<sup>15</sup>

Old data	New data	English equivalent
<i>nabi</i>	<i>amokh</i> (MWN)	hand
<i>uyu</i> (CN)	<i>lapa</i> (MWN)	blood
<i>gihan</i>	<i>myau</i>	female sex organ
<i>gibhu</i>	<i>konji</i>	male sex organ
<i>gwa</i>	<i>gwa</i>	egg
-	<i>amba</i> (MWN)	meat
<i>nyu</i>	<i>nyu</i>	man/person
<i>manenu</i>	<i>manenu</i> (MWN)	many people
-	<i>kugjangnu</i> (MWN)	few people
-	<i>bai</i> (MWN)	sister
<i>ngyangdi</i>	<i>nangdighichi</i> (MWN)	woman
<i>dhukchi</i>	<i>duighihi</i>	son
<i>makche</i>	<i>makche</i>	young man
<i>oichindi</i>	<i>usindi</i> (MWN)	young woman
-	<i>dhaiya</i> (MWN)	old man
<i>ghichi</i>	<i>gheche</i> (MWN)	child
<i>gipan</i>	<i>gipan/gepan</i>	language
<b>Old data</b>	<b>New data</b>	<b>English equivalent</b>

<sup>14</sup> Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly: Resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992.

<sup>15</sup> Some of the words in the list have been recorded quite recently. Kusunda seems to have eastern (CN) and western (MWN) dialects. For example: 'blood' in Kusunda is *uyu*, and 'monkey' is *guinyau*. But recent data differ, as my informants say *lapa* and *haku* respectively. NB: CN= Central Nepal, MWN = Midwest Nepal, HG = Hodgson and Grierson, RT = Reinhard and Toba.

<i>guinyau</i> (CN)	<i>haku</i> (MWN)	monkey
<i>nikhumba</i>	<i>nongba</i> (MWN)	ox/cow
<i>miza</i>	<i>ajaki</i> (MWN),	
	<i>miza</i> (CN)	goat
<i>tapghichi</i>	<i>tapghichi</i>	chicken
-	<i>tapgimi</i>	cock
<i>ii</i>	<i>ii</i>	tree
-	<i>syangwa</i>	large tree
-	<i>gelang</i>	forest
<i>aayi</i>	<i>pai</i> (CN)	bamboo
<i>gipan</i>	<i>gipan</i>	flower
<i>gitak</i>	<i>gitak</i>	seed
-	<i>hyo</i>	mango seed
<i>itak</i>	<i>itak</i>	root
-	<i>ipan</i>	maize
-	<i>sising</i> (MWN)	paddy
-	<i>kadida</i> (CN)	rice (uncooked)
<i>kaadi</i>	<i>kaadi</i>	rice (cooked)
-	<i>paiti</i> (CN)	pulses (legumes)
-	<i>abokh</i> (CN)	yam
-	<i>abo</i>	vegetables
-	<i>abu</i>	yam
<i>mangmi</i>	<i>mangmi</i>	bread
<i>dintakanyia</i>	<i>tang</i>	wine
-	<i>dintang</i> (CN/MWN),	
	<i>sijang</i> (MWN)	beer
<i>jing</i>	<i>jing</i>	mustard oil
<i>wou</i>	<i>wou</i>	stone
<i>gali</i>	<i>gali</i>	sand
-	<i>huki</i>	salt
<i>tang</i>	<i>tang</i>	water
<i>za</i>	<i>za</i>	fire
<i>jai</i>	<i>jai</i>	ashes
<i>kai</i>	<i>kai</i>	wind
<i>bokh</i>	<i>garhu</i> (MWN)	warm
-	<i>puhut</i> (MWN)	hot
-	<i>yakkau</i> (MWN)	cool
<i>khangu</i>	<i>khangu</i> (MWN)	cold
<i>ohin</i>	<i>ohin</i>	nice <sup>16</sup>
<b>Old data</b>	<b>New data</b>	<b>English equivalent</b>

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<sup>16</sup> 'beautiful, pleasant, gentle'

<i>sara</i>	<i>sara</i>	long
<i>tut</i>	<i>tut</i>	bow
-	<i>mui</i>	arrowhead
-	<i>phuchi</i>	stool
<i>aicha</i>	<i>archa</i> (MWN)	needle
-	<i>suta</i> (CN/MWN)	thread
-	<i>bukta</i>	clothes
-	<i>gigzi</i> (CN), <i>dazzi</i> (MWN)	firewood
-	<i>pungar</i> (CN)	haystack
<i>un</i>	<i>un</i>	trail
<i>wohi</i>	<i>woha</i>	house
<i>lahang</i>	<i>langhai</i>	village

### Words for family relations:

Old data	New data	English equivalent
<i>mai</i>	<i>mai</i>	mother
<i>yehi</i>	<i>yehi</i>	father
-	<i>bai</i> (MWN)	sister
-	<i>bhaya</i> (MWN)	younger brother
-	<i>nyakham</i> (MWN)	maternal uncle
-	<i>nangbi</i> (MWN)	maternal aunt
-	<i>yangzar</i> (MWN)	great uncle
-	<i>mizarni</i> (MWN)	great aunt
-	<i>yamala</i> (MWN)	middle uncle
-	<i>yamali</i> (MWN)	middle aunt
-	<i>yaisala</i> (MWN)	younger uncle
-	<i>maisali</i> (MWN)	younger aunt
-	<i>yakanchha</i> (MWN)	youngest uncle
-	<i>makanchhi</i> (MWN)	youngest aunt

### Parts of the Body:

<i>ipi</i>	'head'
<i>ipi</i>	'hair' (CN)
<i>gee</i>	'hair' (MWN)
<i>ining</i>	'eye'
<i>inau</i>	'nose'
<i>aata</i>	'mouth'
<i>nabi</i>	'arm'
<i>amokh</i>	'hand'
<i>hanki</i>	'neck'
<i>yan/yang</i>	'foot'
<i>okchi</i>	'chest'

<i>ambu</i>	'breast'
<i>idu</i>	'liver'
<i>gepo</i>	'flesh'
<i>gu</i>	'bone'
<i>konji</i>	'male sex organ'
<i>myau</i>	'vagina' (CN)
<i>uyu</i>	'blood'
<i>imat</i>	'stomach'

### Pronouns:

<i>chi</i>	'I'	<i>nu</i>	'you (thou)'	<i>git/gina</i>	'he, she, it'
<i>chiyi</i>	'my' (HG)	<i>niyi</i>	'thy' (HG)	<i>gida</i>	'he, she, it' (HG)

### Verbs:

<i>tagai</i>	'go'	<i>chaanaan</i>	'(I) go'	<i>dagai</i>	'went'	<i>aaga</i>	'come'
<i>taman</i>	'(I) eat'	<i>itanan</i>	'give'	<i>kamaji</i>	'bite'		
<i>aganan</i>	'(he) makes'	<i>nyawan</i>	'to collect' (RT)				

### Names of mammals, birds, reptiles, insects, etc.:

<i>mayhaq</i>	'tiger'	<i>kauli</i>	'tiger'
<i>aagai</i>	'dog'	<i>mahi</i>	'water buffalo'
<i>guinyau</i>	'monkey' (CN)	<i>haku</i>	'monkey' (MWN)
<i>samtak</i>	'squirrel'	<i>nikhumba</i>	'ox/cow' (CN)
<i>nongba</i>	'ox/cow' (MWN)	<i>amba</i>	'an animal living in trees' <sup>17</sup>
<i>yangut</i>	'mongoose' (CN)	<i>tap</i>	'jungle fowl'
<i>miaa</i>	'lion' (?) (RT)	<i>tu</i>	'snake'
<i>kee</i>	'louse'	<i>pui</i>	'a kind of amphibian'

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## Appendix 2: The External Relationships of Kusunda with other Languages<sup>18</sup>

### 1. 'man'

KUSUNDA : *ñu* ~ *niyu* 'man'; Ainu *ainu*, *niyu* (person); INDO-PACIFIC :  
[Timor-Alor-Pantar] Makasai *anu*, Bunak *en* 'man'; NA-DENE: Tlingit *na* 'tribe, people';  
SUMERIAN : *na* 'person', *ni-ta*, *ni-tah* 'man'; INDO-EUROPEAN : *\*ner* 'man, male';

<sup>17</sup> A kind of primate.

<sup>18</sup> These are few of the selected examples drawn from Paul Whitehouse's work showing the external relationships of Kusunda language and its importance for studying prehistory of the South Asian peoples. I have drawn them from the writer's article in *Mother Tongue* (1997).

ALTAIC \**niarV* 'man, person'; KADU : Miri *ñuri*; NIGER-CONGO : Mande *nu*, Kpelle *ñu* 'man', Bambara *nyi*, Nalu *nyie*, Mossi *ni*, Kasele *onyi*, Adele (*e*)*ni*, Yoruba *ni*, Likpe *nii*, etc.

## 2. 'belly'

KUSUNDA : *imat*, *tamat* 'belly'; AMERIND \**mat*; TASMANIAN [W, SE] *lomati(na)*; NA-DENE: Athabaskan \**w%ot* 'belly', Eyak *w%ot* 'vomit'; BURUSHASKI -*wat* 'body, self'

## 3. 'egg'

KUSUNDA : *goa*, *gwa* 'egg'; ANDAMAN: Onge *gwagane* 'turtle egg'; SINO-TIBETAN: \**Qo(w)H* 'egg' > Tibetan *s-go--a* 'egg(s)', etc.; NA-DENE: Haida *qaw* 'bird egg'

## 4. 'water'

KUSUNDA : *tang* 'water'; NA-DENE : Haida *ta--* 'sea water', Eyak *tāh* 'waves', Galice *ta-* 'water' (in compounds), Chipewyan *tā-*, Navajo *tá-* 'water'

## 5. 'fire'

KUSUNDA : *dza*, *za* 'fire'; Sino-Tibetan \**tsha* 'hot'; SUMERIAN : *i-zi* 'fire, ALTAIC \**asa* 'to ignite'; Gilyak *t'a*; KHOISAN: Hiechware *joaa*; INDO-PACIFIC: Moni *usa* 'fire'; DENE-CAUCASIC : Basque *su*, Caucasian \**ts'ayi* 'fire'; NILO-SAHARAN: Lendu *kazz* 'fire'; NIGER CONGO : Bambara, Dyula, Mano, Vai *ta*.

## 6. 'house'

KUSUNDA : *wohi* 'house'; INDO-PACIFIC [SNG] Hiwi *aba*, Sesa *pei* 'village', Jelmek *ebi*; NIGER-CONGO: Tshi *o-fi*; *o-fi-é* 'home', Nyangbo *ke-pi* 'home, house', Bamana *pu-<sup>1</sup>e*

## 7. 'thunder, lightning'

KUSUNDA: *khila*; ANDAMAN: Bale *kuru.dĀ-ke* 'thunder'; AUSTRIC: Indonesian \**kilat* 'lightning', \**kilap* 'glitter'

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