

# Approaching the historical phonology of three highly eroded Sino-Tibetan languages: Naxi, Na and Laze.

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## Approaching the historical phonology of three highly eroded languages: Naxi, Na and Laze

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Naxi, Na and Laze are three languages whose position within Sino-Tibetan is controversial. We propose that they share a common ancestor ('Proto-Naish'). Unlike conservative languages of the family, such as Rgyalrong and Tibetan, where clusters and final consonants, Naxi, Na and Laze share a simple syllabic structure (consonant+glide+vowel+tone) and have undergone phonological erosion. This raises the issue of how the regular phonological correspondences between these three languages should be interpreted in light of potential cognates in conservative languages. This brings out numerous cases of phonetic conditioning of the place of articulation of a preceding consonant or consonant cluster. Overall, these findings warrant a relatively open approach concerning the feasibility of unraveling the phonological history of highly eroded language subgroups within Sino-Tibetan.

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