

# Collect, Protect, Connect:

## *Voices of Vanishing Worlds*

Mark Turin

Wednesday, 15 June, 2011

Barnard's Inn Hall, Gresham College, London  
Symposium: Rare and Endangered Languages



collect

protect

connect

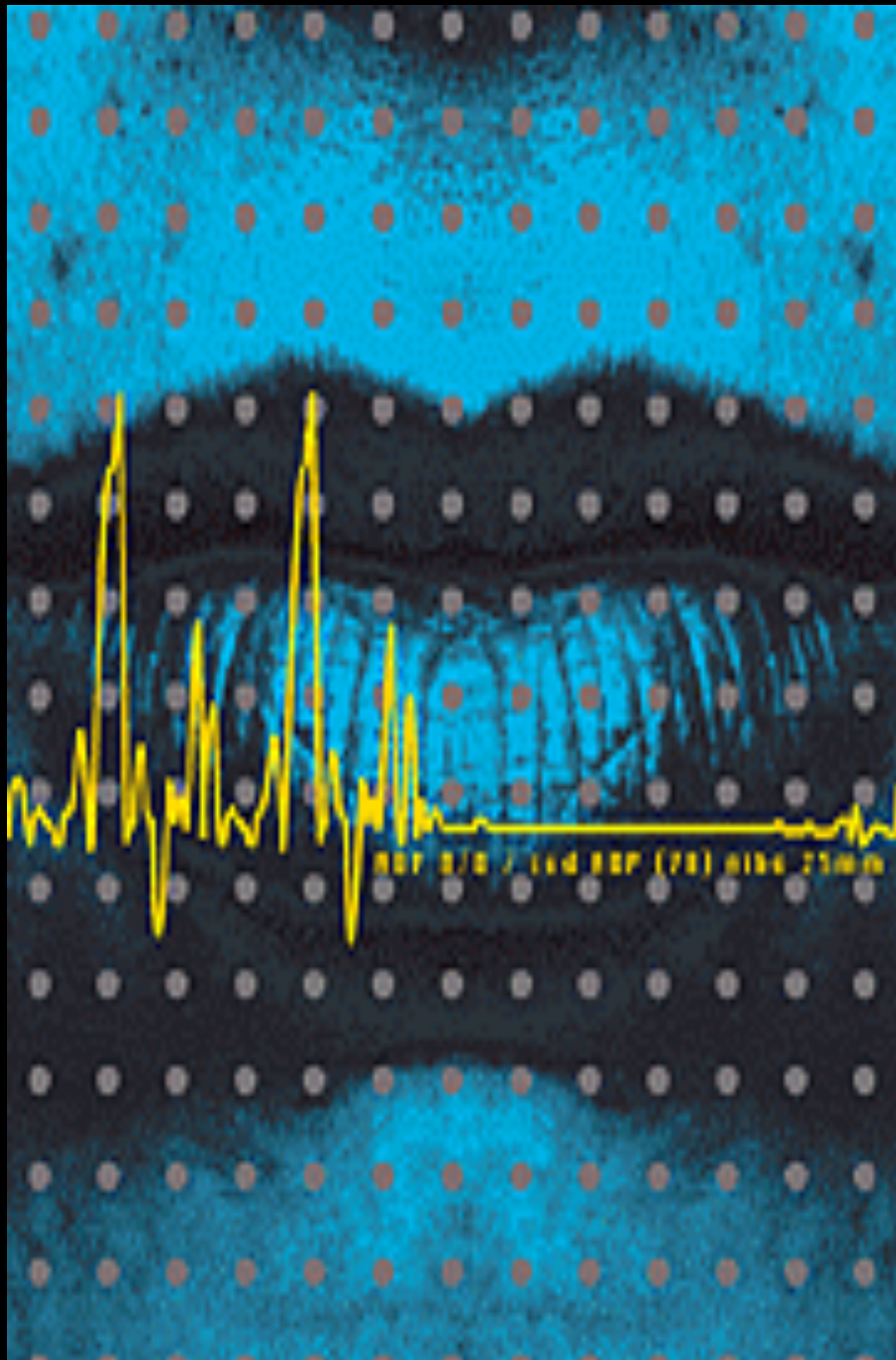
‘if you lose your money, you’ve lost something; if you lose your house and property, you have lost something very important; if you lose your country, you will have suffered a great loss... but if you lose your culture and language, then you have lost everything’

*Karen saying*

*About 97% of the world's people speak about 4% of the world's languages; and conversely, about 96% of the world's languages are spoken by about 3% of the world's people.*

*Most of the world's linguistic diversity, then, is under the stewardship of a very small number of people; at least 50% of the world's nearly six thousand languages are losing speakers.*

*About 90% of the world's 6,500 languages may be replaced by dominant languages by the end of the 21st century.*



✎ ✎ ✎  
 Ελληνική *Español* עִבְרִית  
 اللغة العربية *Русский* Neοελληνικά  
*Français* زبان فارسی  
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 Türkçe

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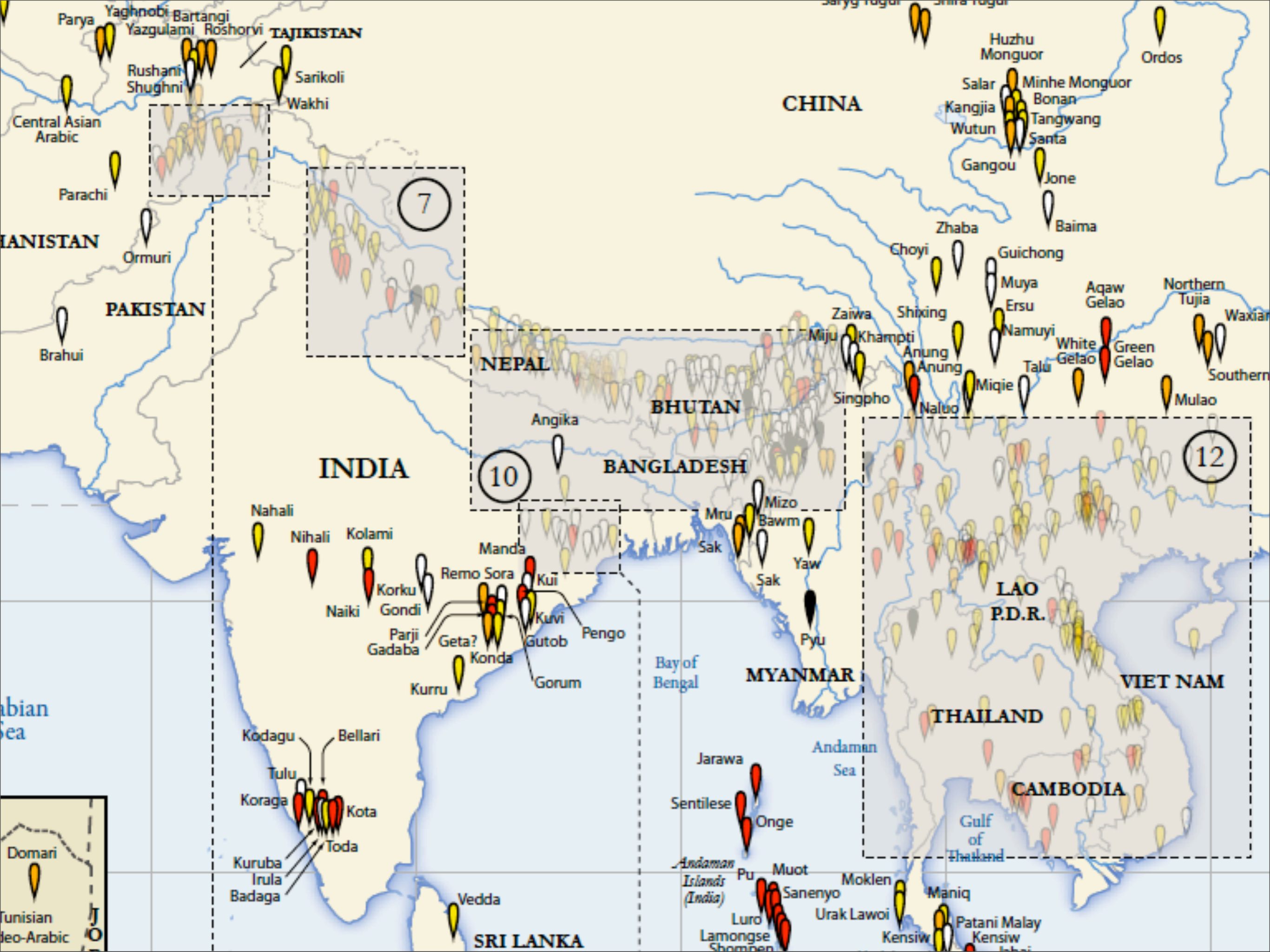
# What are linguists doing?

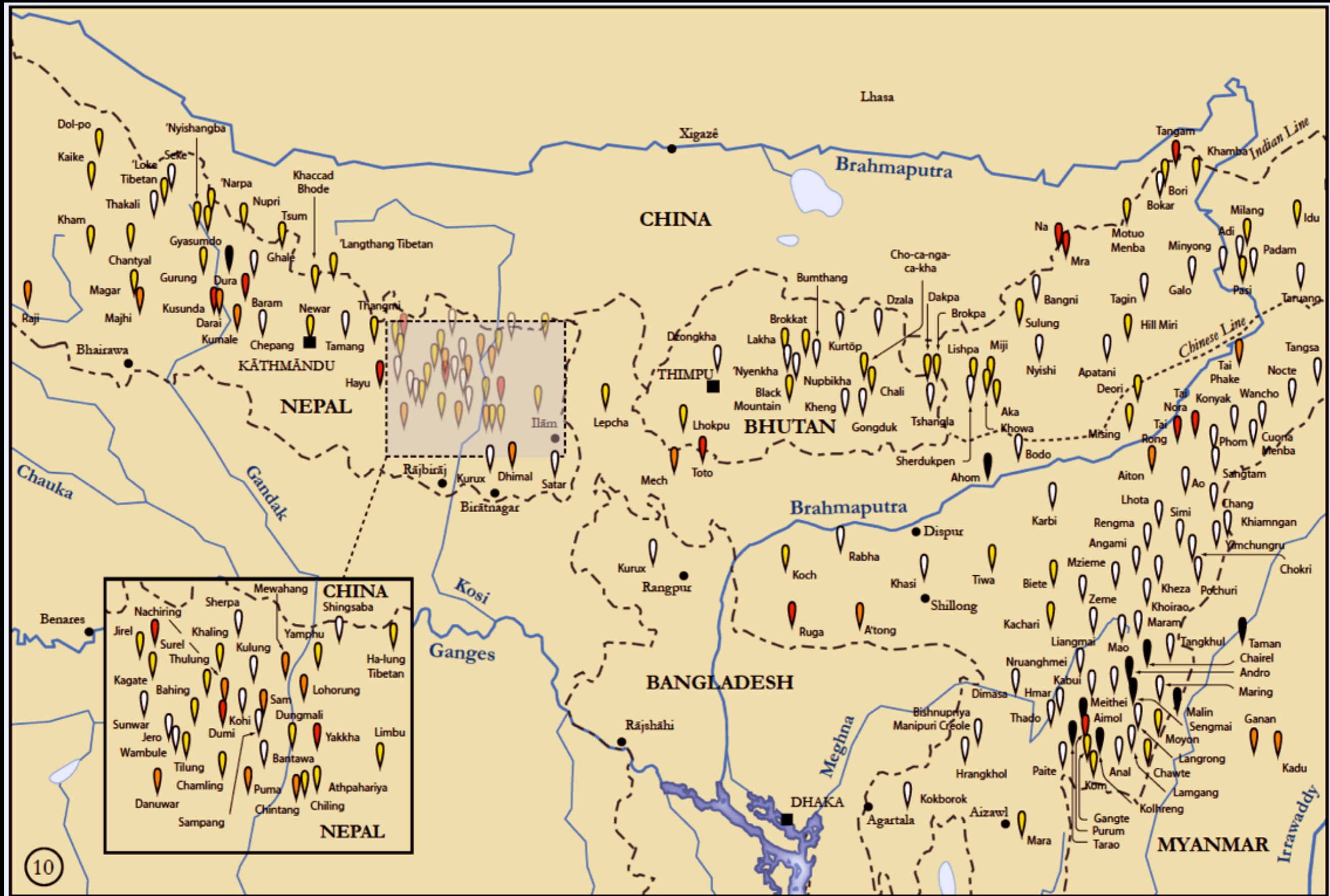


# ...and the anthropologists?









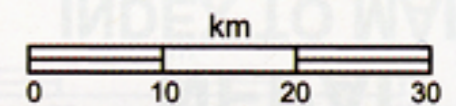


# EASTERN NEPAL

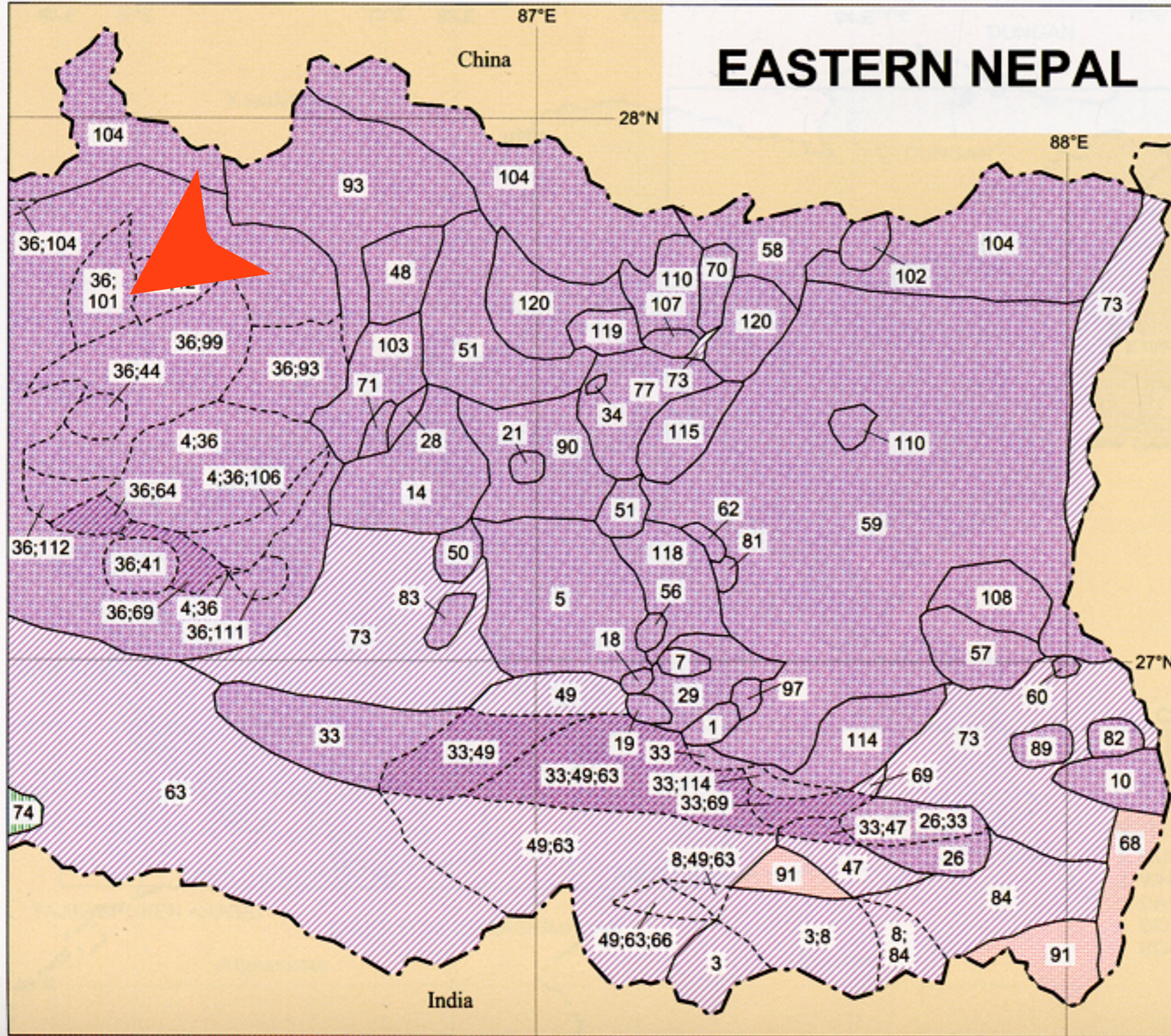
## LANGUAGE FAMILIES



- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 ATHPARIYA            | 66 MARWARI            |
| 3 BAGHELI (2)          | 68 MUNDARI            |
| 4 BAHING (3)           | 69 MUSASA (3)         |
| 5 BANTAWA              | 70 NAABA              |
| 7 BELHARIYA            | 71 NACHERING          |
| 8 BENGALI (3)          | 73 NEPALI (4)         |
| 10 BODO                | 74 NEPALI KURUX       |
| 14 CAMLING             | 77 NORTHERN LORUNG    |
| 18 CHHINTANGE          | 81 PHANGDUWALI        |
| 19 CHHULUNG            | 82 PONGYONG           |
| 21 CHUKWA              | 83 PUMA               |
| 26 DHIMAL (2)          | 84 RAJBANSHI (2)      |
| 28 DUMI                | 89 SAAM               |
| 29 DUNGMALI            | 90 SAMPANG            |
| 33 EASTERN MAGAR (8)   | 91 SANTALI (2)        |
| 34 EASTERN MEOHANG     | 93 SHERPA (2)         |
| 36 EASTERN TAMANG (15) | 97 SOUTHERN LORUNG    |
| 41 JERUNG              | 99 SUNWAR             |
| 42 JIREL               | 101 THANGMI           |
| 44 KAGATE              | 102 THUDAM            |
| 47 KAYORT (2)          | 103 THULUNG           |
| 48 KHALING             | 104 TIBETAN (4)       |
| 49 KOCHILA THARU (6)   | 106 TILUNG            |
| 50 KOI                 | 107 TOMYANG           |
| 51 KULUNG (2)          | 108 TSEKU             |
| 56 LAMBICHHONG         | 110 WALUNGGE (2)      |
| 57 LEPCHA              | 111 WAMBULE           |
| 58 LHOMI               | 112 WAYU              |
| 59 LIMBU               | 114 WESTERN MAGAR (2) |
| 60 LINGKHIM            | 115 WESTERN MEOHANG   |
| 62 LUMBA-YAKKHA        | 118 YAKHA             |
| 63 MAITHILI (5)        | 119 YAMPHE            |
| 64 MAJHI               | 120 YAMPHU (2)        |



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40,000 farmers, porters and carpenters,  
shamans are religious & medical professionals

abject poverty, high levels of debt,  
low education, minimal access to healthcare

Thami is an endangered Tibeto-Burman  
language which has no script of its own

extremely complex grammar, but a  
vocabulary of only around 3,000 words

elevation and relative distance all marked,  
flora and fauna lexicon very elaborate

a ritual language used by shamans is  
even more endangered than the vernacular



**A Grammar of the Thangmi Language**  
with an ethnolinguistic introduction to the  
speakers and their culture by Mark Turin

**A Grammar of the Thangmi Language**

Mark Turin

4797

*Mark Turin* is a linguistic anthropologist who has been working on the Thami language for six years. He received his BA in Social Anthropology from the University of Cambridge, while his doctoral research was conducted in descriptive linguistics through the Himalayan Languages Project at Leiden University. He is currently Director of the Digital Himalaya Project based at Cambridge and Cornell Universities, and he divides his time between the United Kingdom, the United States and Nepal.

*Bir Bahadur 'Lile' Thami* is from Dolakha district and has been studying and documenting his mother tongue for over five years. He has written articles in Nepali on Thami culture, with a particular focus on death rituals.

NEPALI · THAMI · ENGLISH DICTIONARY

Mark Turin with Bir Bahadur Thami

# Nepali · Thami · English Dictionary

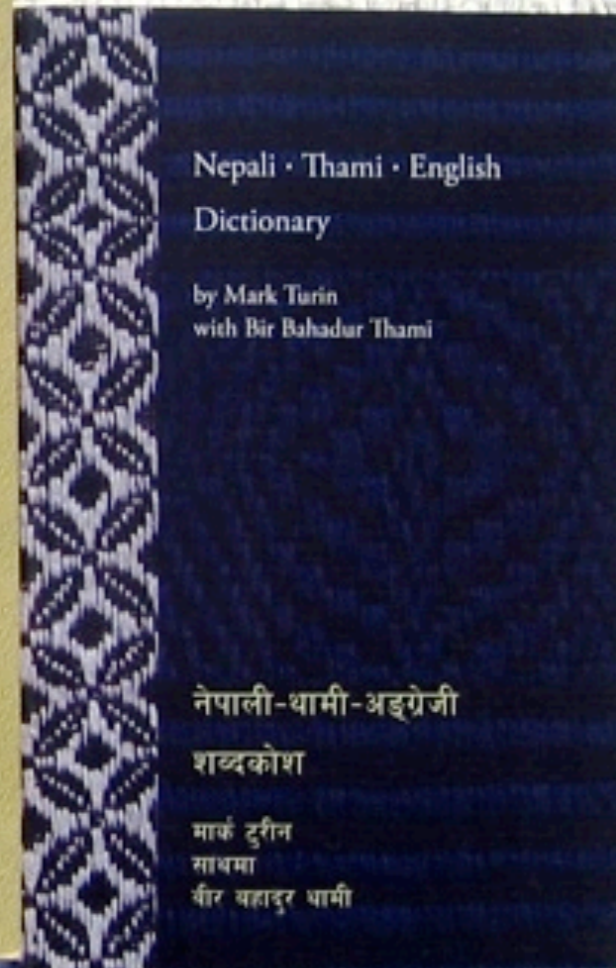
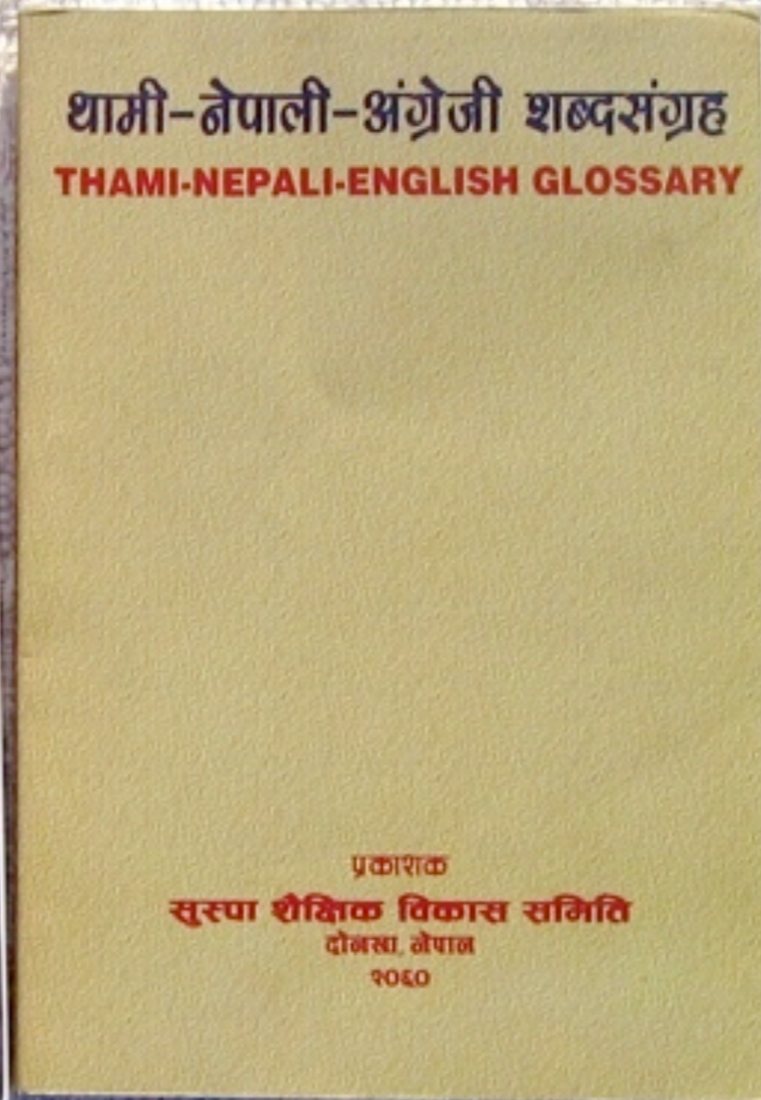
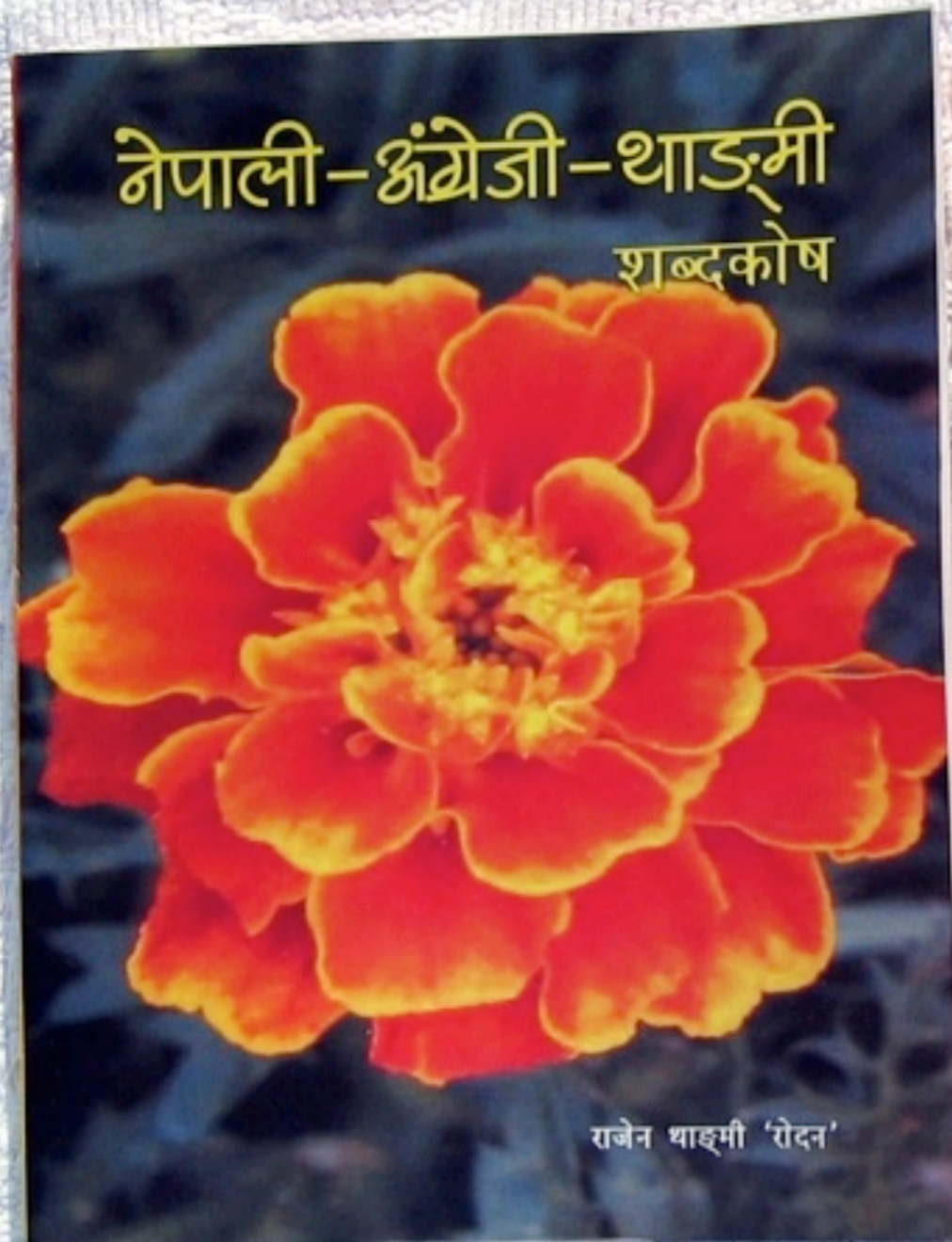
by Mark Turin  
with Bir Bahadur Thami

नेपाली-थामी-अङ्ग्रेजी  
शब्दकोश

मार्क टुरिन  
साथमा  
बिर बहादुर थामी



नेपाली	थामी	English
काट्नु	कोटेसा	to cut small things
काट्नु	पालसा	to chop (such as wood), cut big things, prune
काठ	सेङ्	timber, firewood, wood
काठको थाल	कापाणे	traditional plate made from wood or clay
काठको बोटुको	टोके	a kind of small wooden bowl or pot
काठको बोटुको	फुरु	small wooden bowl with handle
कात्रु	चारोक्सा	to spin thread
कान	कुल्ना, कुन्ला, कुल्ला	ear
कान फुट्नु	फोक्सा	to damage an ear, go deaf
कानसुत्लो	कुल्ना काटाप्	a particular kind of very thin centipede which is known to reproduce in the ear and cause discomfort
कानेगुजी	कुल्ना कुटु	earwax
कान्छा जुवाइँ	उच्या डामारी	younger sister's husband's younger brother
कान्छा भिनाजु	उच्या जार्फु	elder sister's husband's younger brother
कान्छा ससुरा	उच्या छुकु	husband's father's younger brother
कान्छी सासू	उच्या आजी	husband's father's younger brother's wife
कान्छो ससुरो	उच्या छुकु	husband's mother's younger sister's husband



## मातृभाषा पिपल पुस्तकको बारेमा

यो ग्रन्थमाला भाषानुभव विधिबाट तयार गरिएको हो। यस विधिमा लेखकले आफ्नो अनुभवको कथालाई आफ्नै मातृभाषामा तयार पार्दछ।

यस किसिमका कथाहरू सत्य घटनामा आधारित हुनुका साथै गाउँका मानिसहरूको अनुभवसँग मेल खाने र आफ्नै मातृभाषामा लेखिएको हुनाले उनीहरूले यसमा बढी चासो लिन्छन्। वास्तविक अनुभवको घटनाबाट बनेका यस्ता कथाहरू पढ्दा नव साक्षरहरूले पछि आउने घटनाको अड्कल पहिले नै पाउँछन् जसबाट उनीहरूको आत्म विश्वास र वाचन प्रवाह बढ्दै जानुको साथसाथै आफ्नो मातृभाषा संरक्षण र संवर्धन हुने हुनाले यसको छुट्टै महत्व रहेको छ।

यो ग्रन्थमालाले नव साक्षर पाठकहरूलाई बोली-चालीको भाषाबाट कुशलतापूर्वक किताबी भाषामा लैजान चाहन्छ। जब उनीहरूमा पढ्ने बानी बस्दै जान्छ, परिष्कृत शैलीका नयाँ नयाँ लेखहरू पनि पढ्न सक्ने हुन्छन्।

प्रत्येक शीर्षक छुट्टा छुट्टै भएतापनि यस ग्रन्थमालामा प्रयोग भएका भाषाका विभिन्न रूप, शैली र संरचनाको माध्यमबाट नव साक्षर पाठकहरूले आफ्नो भाषाको विकास गर्न सक्दछन् भन्ने विश्वास गरिएको छ।



प्रकाशक: मातृभाषा पिपल पुस्तक परियोजना - २०६३



# राफिलको सिरान

## मातृभाषा पिपल पुस्तकको बारेमा

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प्रकाशक: मातृभाषा पिपल पुस्तक परियोजना - २०६३



पिपल पुस्तक

# लिपेम युदु स्याङ



# गाईको थाड्मी खाम



कक्षा दी

पाठ: दिचीपसुम

## जेत

चित्र योतोले डानो



तोसा, चाबुसा, पाल्ला, पढाईसीसा, णेसा, खेम्सा,

फरक छुटाईनो डा डानो



पाठ: दिचीपवाल्डा

## लु



नासायो डा डानो

चामेकको लु थादु,  
निको आपाये लु ताकुदु।  
लुते साडा चाबुसा जादु,  
निनीये लुते जाकछ्रो कुमुदु ॥

नासायो डा डानो

र पा था नी  
लु, बुसिकासी, लु





# World Oral Literature Project

An urgent global initiative to document and make accessible endangered oral literatures before they disappear without record

*launched in January 2009*

# Why oral literature?

...ritual texts, curative chants, epic poems, musical genres, folk tales, creation tales, songs, myths, spells, legends, proverbs, riddles, tongue-twisters, word games, recitations, life histories or and form of verbal art

# Why now?



# Our programme

supplemental grants

digital archiving of heritage collections

workshops, lectures & publications

database & scoping exercise



# Supplemental Grants

ease of access: no application form, no deadlines

focus on documentation not theory

indigenous researchers and community cultural organisations encouraged to apply

90 expressions of interest, 30 proposals submitted  
18 projects already funded, 4 others under review



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# Pitt Rivers

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ANTHROPOLOGY AND WORLD ARCHAEOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

### MAIN MENU

This searchable database is a publicly accessible version of the Pitt Rivers Museum's working collections catalogue. As such, records are constantly being added and improvements made as time and resources allow. This online version allows users to conduct their own research queries, both simple and more complex, within the documentation of one of the world's foremost collections of ethnography.

To search the database, access the Search Menu for either the Objects Database or the Photos Database by clicking on the appropriate button on the right.

Please note that many of the records in the databases include notes copied directly from the museum's historical records, and may contain terminology that some people find inappropriate, for which we apologise.

For details of events and exhibitions at the Pitt Rivers Museum, please view the museum's main website (<http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk>). The website also contains further research tools, and details of the numerous research projects undertaken by the staff at the museum.

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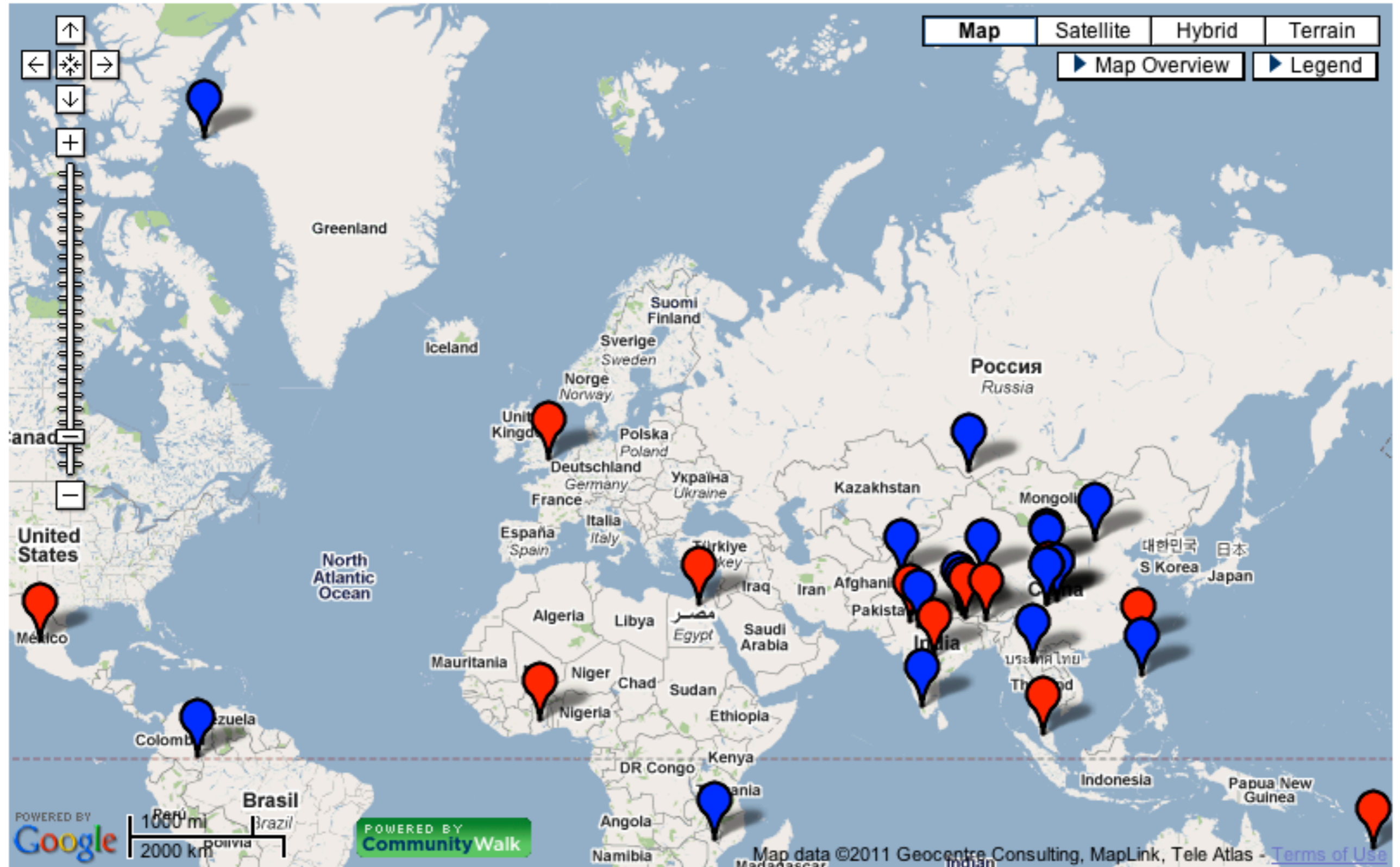
The following map shows the locations of World Oral Literature Project collections and collaborations:



Projects funded by the World Oral Literature Project



Non-funded partnerships







World Oral Literature Project  
voices of vanishing worlds  
Occasional Paper 1



Faroese skjaldur  
An endangered oral tradition of the North Atlantic  
Stephen Pax Leonard

World Oral Literature Project  
voices of vanishing worlds  
Occasional Paper 2



The Sabah Oral Literature Project  
George N. Appell, Ph.D.

World Oral Literature Project  
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Occasional Paper 3



The Epic of Pabuji ki par in performance  
Elizabeth Wickett

World Oral Literature Project  
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Occasional Paper 4



From oral literature to technauriture  
What's in a name?  
Russell H. Kaschula & Andre Mostert

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# World Oral Literature Project

voices of vanishing worlds

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An urgent global initiative to document and make accessible endangered oral literatures before they disappear without record

For many communities around the world, the transmission of oral literature from one generation to the next lies at the heart of cultural practice. Performances of creative works of verbal art - which include ritual texts, curative chants, epic poems, musical genres, folk tales, creation tales, songs, myths, legends, word games, life histories or historical narratives - are increasingly endangered. Globalisation and rapid socio-economic change exert complex pressures on smaller communities, often eroding expressive diversity and transforming culture through assimilation to more dominant ways of life. As vehicles for the transmission of unique cultural knowledge, local languages encode oral traditions that become threatened when elders die and livelihoods are disrupted. > [more](#)



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## Events

Poet and printmaker **Nancy Campbell** will give a lecture on 16 June entitled *How to say 'I love you' in Greenlandic: An Arctic Alphabet*.

On 23 March, performer and writer **Dr Vayu Naidu** demonstrated her unique storytelling techniques based on the Indic oral tradition.

This year's project **workshop**, entitled 'Archiving Orality and Connecting with Communities' and hosted at **CRASSH** was held on 10 and 11 December 2010.

## News

**June 2011:** Project team interviewed on [BBC Three Counties Radio](#).

**March 2011:** Project featured on RTÉ Radio 1's [Mooney Show](#), and covered in the [Calcutta Telegraph](#) and [Liaison Magazine](#).

**February 2011:** Project covered in the [Guardian Education](#).

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collect

protect

connect

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