

## **Lepcha and its next of kin**

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The question about the phylogenetic position of Lepcha within Tibeto-Burman has been addressed several times. It has been suggested that Lepcha is most closely related to Bodic, Kiranti, Magar, Ao Naga and certain other languages or subgroups, even to Austroasiatic. The precise position of Lepcha within Tibeto-Burman remains puzzling, although a recent grammar of Lepcha, the ongoing study of old Lepcha manuscript collections and a new critical edition, currently under preparation, of an unpublished 600-page late nineteenth-century Lepcha dictionary have all begun to shed more light on this question. The present paper makes some phonological observations and points to several difficulties with the older sources upon which most existing comparative work rests.