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Tense, aspect and a little bit of modality in Kinnauri (Tibeto-Burman)

(paper by Blessymol Binny and Tom Payne, presented by **Tom Payne**)

Kinnauri is spoken by about 65,000 people in the mountainous region of Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh in Northern India. Kinnauri is a Tibeto-Burman language, classified as Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Bodic, Bodish, Himalayish, but is influenced significantly by the Indo-Aryan languages spoken in the region.

In the present paper we will focus specifically on tense and aspect, with an unavoidable mention of inferential modality. We will show how the presence of auxiliaries in combination with various aspectual categories on the semantically main verb create an array of progressive and perfect aspect forms.

There are two kinds of verb complexes in Kinnauri main clauses. One is a simple verb form, which consists of a stem inflected for tense or aspect, but not both. When a simple verb is inflected for tense it also takes a subject agreement marker. When a simple verb is inflected for aspect it does not take a subject agreement marker. When both tense and aspect need to be expressed, the verb stem is followed by an auxiliary, thus creating a complex verb form. In the complex verb form, the semantically main verb inflects for aspect while the auxiliary inflects for tense and subject agreement.

There are three values for tense and four values for aspect in Kinnauri. In order to round out the description of verb-plus-auxiliary constructions, we will also describe inferential modality, though a thorough analysis of this structural category is a matter for future research.