

## A Reappraisal of M. Alexander Castrén's Forest Nenets Records

Tapani Salminen

Among the first of the many highlights of M. Alexander Castrén's great Siberian expedition (1845-1849) was his scientific discovery of the Forest Nenets people and language in the summer of 1845. It turned out to have significant consequences for Castrén's thinking of comparative linguistics and Siberian ethnohistory, and his records of the language continue to be of utmost importance to Samoyedological studies. More exactly, Castrén's material shows the existence of two distinct varieties of Forest Nenets, and the bulk of this article is devoted to determining the nature of their differences and their background.

The progress of Castrén's expedition is accounted in detail in Castrén (1856), and his encounters with the Forest Nenets are described in the section titled «Reise von Samarowa nach Surgut», which includes a travel account (pp. 62-88) as well as two letters, one to Castrén's supervisor, Councillor of State A. J. Sjögren (pp. 88-90), and the other to his friend, Assessor F. J. Rabbe (pp. 90-92). In the summer of 1845, Castrén was mainly engaged in Khanty studies, but he was even more intrigued about the possibility of contacting Forest Nenets people, known at the time as Kondinsk or Kazym Samoyeds, who he had heard about on his first expedition. He finally succeeded in meeting and, albeit briefly, working with a few Forest Nenets after he had left Samarova at the beginning of July and, for a month, travelled along the waterways of the Ob to various directions between Samarova and Silyarskoy.

Silyarskoy was a small village on the upper Ob, and when leaving Samarova, Castrén's idea was to make a trip to the local annual market, reportedly frequented by Forest Nenets. He decided, however, to give up this plan because the turnout was going to be very low due to famine caused by exceptional flooding in that summer. Instead, Castrén made by river the 70 verst journey to the village of Toropkova, also called Skripunova, which is situated slightly off the road between Samarova and Silyarskoy. In Toropkova he met six Forest Nenets belonging to the *Jîw°syi* («Jewschi») family, and he wrote to Sjögren soon after his arrival on the 4th (16th) of July, 1845, as follows: «the matter is namely that I have here, at the mouth of the upper Ob, made an unexpected discovery of a peculiar small Samoyed tribe, which has a dialect that differs greatly from those of other Samoyeds» (Castrén 1856: 89). From the data available to him, Castrén inferred, correctly as we can now tell, that the

Samoyeds of the Kazym and Agan river basins belong to the same people, and succeeded thus in defining the north-western and south-eastern boundaries of the Forest Nenets language area.

Castrén did not stay in Toropkova for long but made an excursion to the Khanty village of Chebakova on the upper Ob, where he stayed for a couple of weeks. From there he returned to Toropkova to focus on Forest Nenets, but the actual time he could devote to intensive fieldwork was quite short, perhaps less than a week, as he also made a trip to Silyarskoy, and from there a 10 verst journey to the nearby Baly yurts, already located in Surgut division of Tobolsk gouvernement. In Baly, he met two Forest Nenets of the *Nyetyu* («Nitschu») family from Lyamin Sor region. There again, the time he had for work with informants was shorter than he would have desired. In his letter to Sjögren, Castrén expressly stated that Forest Nenets required an in-depth study, but because of his commission to Khanty he had much less time than was necessary for that purpose.

In his letter to Rabbe, dated in Chebakova on the 25th of July (6th of August), Castrén focuses on the significance of Forest Nenets to comparative linguistics, saying that «I am, however, now happy and satisfied, when I see various theories of mine being confirmed», namely because «through a small previously unknown Samoyed tribe», it is now possible to establish «a practically unbroken chain of Samoyed peoples from Archangel and Mezen to the Baykal region» (Castrén 1856: 91). Furthermore, Castrén (1856: 67) points out that beyond the Samoyed context, Forest Nenets «serves the purpose of highlighting the affinity between the Samoyed and Finnish languages to the greatest extent», and his article on the topic published next year (Castrén 1846; in German: Castrén 1856: 68-77) was only made possible through the impetus provided by his experience with Forest Nenets. This article, while concise and restricted to lexical material, is the first treatment demonstrating the close connection between Samoyed, Finnish and other languages already known to be related to Finnish, and hence the existence of the Uralic language family, employing a methodology that is still valid today, and presenting many ingenious etymologies that constitute the cornerstone of comparative Uralic studies. Castrén also recognized that «the language of the recently discovered Samoyeds conveys, through a number of letter [= sound] changes and other features found in it, such a close affinity between Finnish and Samoyed, that the latter language, even if it cannot be regarded as a member of the Finnic language family, will pass at least for the next-closely related tribe» (Castrén 1856: 91). He concludes that a common linguistic origin is the only plausible explanation.

Alongside his comparisons within Uralic, Castrén noted various similarities to Turkic, Mongolic and Tungusic, and concluded that the original home of all these language families was in the Altay region. It must be kept in mind, though, that Castrén never claimed to have shown

the relatedness of Uralic and the so-called Altaic languages in the same manner as he demonstrated the membership of the Samoyed branch in the Uralic family.

As Castrén's more general achievements will be duly discussed in a forthcoming scholarly biography, the rest of this article deals with the factual Forest Nenets material collected by him in the course of his fieldwork at the two localities mentioned above, Toropkova and Baly. Castrén's Forest Nenets records comprise 700 basic words, of which only 50 or so were included in the Samoyed vocabulary edited by Schiefner (Castrén 1855). Besides vocabulary, Castrén only wrote down a small number of paradigms, and it is therefore understandable why so few grammatical features typical of Forest Nenets are attested in the Samoyed grammar (Castrén 1854).

As Lehtisalo points out in his introduction to the publication of Castrén's Forest Nenets records (Castrén 1960), the Baly material is practically identical with his (Lehtisalo's) and other fieldworkers' later records of Forest Nenets. By contrast, there are striking discrepancies between the Toropkova material and what is otherwise known of Forest Nenets, and Lehtisalo consequently assumed that the western dialect of Forest Nenets spoken in the Toropkova region had changed substantially in the course of the 69 years that had elapsed between Castrén's visit to the area in 1845 and his own, much more extensive fieldwork in 1914 (Castrén 1960: 263).

Notably, all of the peculiar features of the variety of Forest Nenets that Castrén first encountered in Toropkova are such that they make it more similar to the closely related, yet clearly distinct Tundra Nenets language. In theory, there are three possible scenarios about the origin of such a variety. Firstly, we might be dealing with a phenomenon with ancient roots, more exactly, the people in Toropkova would have spoken a remnant idiom that had preserved features common with Tundra Nenets that were replaced by innovations in (other) varieties of Forest Nenets. Secondly, the Toropkova dialect could represent a genuine variety of Forest Nenets that had, however, undergone significant Tundra Nenets influence, in other words, it would have emerged through later areal connections. Thirdly, given Castrén's fluency in Tundra Nenets deriving from his first great expedition, it would have been possible that the Forest Nenets speakers he met in Toropkova tried to accommodate their speech accordingly, creating on the spot a variety that differed from their native dialect exactly in those features that now appear so perplexing.

The first scenario of an original intermediate variety can be easily rejected, as the peculiarities of the Toropkova material reflect reasonably late Tundra Nenets innovations that were, consequently, absent in Common Nenets. The Toropkova material also contains examples of all distinctively Forest Nenets phonological and morphological develop-

ments. The second scenario of a contact-induced dialect is much more plausible, and we may think that it is the one implicitly supported by Lehtisalo. There is, however, little historical foundation for assuming Tundra Nenets influence in the Toropkova region, and, more to the point, the factual material exhibits an untypical pattern of variation concerning exactly those word-forms that display Tundra Nenets characteristics, including anomalous or hypercorrect formations. It appears therefore that the third scenario involving essentially a kind of «foreigners' talk» is the best explanation. In what follows, an attempt is made to explain the specific features recorded by Castrén in Toropkova as a restricted set of phonological and morphological substitutions carried out by speakers who in all other contexts would have used a Forest Nenets dialect basically lacking such features.

At first sight, the number of «Tundraisms» in Toropkova material is impressive, as seen in the following table contrasting selected word-forms from modern Tundra Nenets (in phonological transcription), Castrén's data (marked by underlining) from Toropkova and Baly, and the currently spoken Pur dialect of Forest Nenets (again in phonological transcription; *â â î û* represent short vowels contrasting with long *a ä i u*, and *j* rather than *y* denotes the palatal glide; otherwise the system is similar to the Tundra Nenets one):

| gloss             | Tundra Nenets                             | Toropkova          | Baly               | Pur  |
|-------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------|--|
| 'bridge'          | <i>pul</i> <sup>o</sup>                   | <u>pul</u>         | <u>pur</u>         | <i>pûlh</i> <sup>o</sup>                   |
| 'five'            | <i>sømp<sup>o</sup>lyangk<sup>o</sup></i> | <u>sambljang</u>   | <u>hamprjang</u>   | <i>xâmp<sup>o</sup>lhyangk<sup>o</sup></i> |
| 'giant'           | <i>syud<sup>o</sup>bya</i>                | <u>šudobeä</u> *   | <u>šutpeä</u>      | <i>syût<sup>o</sup>pya</i>                 |
| 'I will help him' | <i>nyadangkuw<sup>o</sup></i>             | <u>njadanguu</u> * | <u>njadanangam</u> | <i>nyatanângam<sup>o</sup></i>             |
| 'I tore it'       | <i>ngød<sup>o</sup>qngaw<sup>o</sup></i>  | <u>~adangau</u>    | <u>~atngam</u>     | <i>ngât<sup>o</sup>qngam<sup>o</sup></i>   |

The items marked by an asterisk in the Baly column are unattested but reconstructed on the basis of comparable data to facilitate comparison. A recent sound change *lh < r* has occurred in the Pur dialect, which means that, disregarding the trivial differences in transcription, the Baly forms differ from the Pur forms only by the presence of a voiced consonant in the stem for 'to help', which, as explained below, can be an allophonic feature not warranting a connection with Tundra Nenets. Consequently, the Baly material is almost entirely consistent with what has later been recorded from Forest Nenets dialects, and it will be touched only marginally below. The material quoted below belongs therefore to the Toropkova corpus, unless otherwise noted. Besides the eastern Pur dialect, a slightly archaic variety of the western Lyamin dialect illustrates the Forest Nenets language as recorded after Castrén.

The weakening, involving voicing, of intervocalic obstruents is a regular feature of Tundra Nenets (TN), and a similar phenomenon is

widely attested in the Toropkova material but is generally absent in modern Forest Nenets, e.g. ooba ~ Pur *ngopa* ~ TN *ngoba* 'mitten', wadá ~ Pur *wata* ~ TN *wada* 'word', kooba ~ Pur *kopa* ~ TN *xoba* 'fur'. Unlike in Tundra Nenets, however, the Toropkova material shows no signs of phonological contrast between strong and weak obstruents, which makes the voicing a purely phonetic phenomenon. Similar examples can be found sporadically in the Baly material as well, mainly when the consonant follows a stressed long vowel, e.g. koodornjat ~ Lyamin *koturngat*<sup>o</sup> ~ TN *xodorngad*<sup>o</sup>m 'I am coughing', nadú ~ Pur *natu* ~ TN *nado* 'younger brother of the spouse', but more often Castrén transcribes a voiceless obstruent from Baly as opposed to a voiced one from Toropkova, e.g. Toropkova naadam ~ Baly naatam ~ Pur *natâm* ~ TN *nad*<sup>o</sup>m 'mucus of the nose, snot'. Since voicing is marginally possible in the above-mentioned context in modern Forest Nenets, it is only the extent of this allophonic rule as reflected by the Toropkova material that is genuinely reminiscent of Tundra Nenets. In the case of obstruents following a nasal consonant, a similar obstruent weakening occurs, but it is allophonic both in the Toropkova material and in Tundra Nenets, e.g. amzá ~ Pur *ngâmsa* ~ TN *ngømca* (where the consonant cluster is often phonetically [mz]) 'meat'. This phenomenon is also found in words lacking an exact cognate in Tundra Nenets, e.g. koondeu ~ Lyamin *kontâw*<sup>o</sup> 'ptarmigan'. Crucially, though, there are counterexamples to this, that is, variation in all types of obstruent weakening. For instance, transcriptions such as amsá 'meat' and oopa 'mitten' are present in the Toropkova material alongside those quoted above. This variation is entirely random, and it is therefore a pure coincidence that the nominative singular of 'hand' is transcribed as ute while the genitive singular is given as ude, but such pairs may have triggered rumours about the existence of consonant gradation in Forest Nenets.

Another inconsistency in Castrén's notation, although a highly trivial one, is that he occasionally and inadvertently leaves out the symbol for the initial velar nasal (expressed by Castrén as ]), yielding a variation like ute ~ ute = *ngûta* 'hand'.

By contrast, it is tempting to regard the rare instances of r instead of expected t (or d) as hypercorrect formations that have emerged when the Forest Nenets have tried to approach the native Tundra Nenets pronunciation of *d* as a fricative. Two word families exemplify this possible development, namely jarangau ~ Baly jatangam ~ Pur *jâtangam*<sup>o</sup> 'I shot it' : durative jarambiu ~ Pur *jâtapyim*<sup>o</sup> 'I am shooting it' (but future jadanguu 'I will shoot it') ~ TN *yøda-* 'to shoot', and taaribeä ~ taasibeä → [= corrected to] taadibeä ~ Baly tatsibeä ~ Pur *tatyipyä* ~ TN *tadyebyä* 'shaman'. A possible third instance is found in the 3rd person plural personal suffix of the objective conjugation attached to the verb *tana-* 'to drive (animals)', transcribed as -rú, while elsewhere the suffix is

given as -du (~ Lyamin *-tu* ~ Pur *-tung* ~ TN *-doh*). Whatever the background of this notation is, we can be sure that there is no connection to any ancient *d ~ r* variation, as suggested by Lehtisalo in Castrén (1960: 264) in the context of the word for ‘shaman’.

Another apparent Tundra Nenets feature in the Toropkova material is the replacement of initial *\*k*, otherwise fully preserved in Forest Nenets, with h. This phenomenon is, however, much more sparsely attested than the weakening of obstruents, and in practically all cases, Castrén has added a k on top of the h that he had originally transcribed, e.g. haeu → kaeu ~ Pur *käw*<sup>o</sup> ‘side’. It may be concluded that no regular sound change like the one known from the history of Tundra Nenets had occurred in Toropkova. This is corroborated by a comparison with a genuine sound change in Forest Nenets dialects, namely the change of initial *\*s* to *x*, which was still in progress both in Toropkova and Baly at the time of Castrén’s visit, as is evident from Castrén (1960: 289-291) showing initial s and h in free variation, but without any confusion of this h with the one appearing in stead of *\*k*. Notably, *\*s* is reflected as s more often in Toropkova, while the Baly data mostly contains h, which may reflect the fact that in Tundra Nenets initial *\*s* is preserved. Variation is particularly common though, e.g. sangat ~ hangat ~ Pur *xâqngat*<sup>o</sup> ‘I want’, and many common words appear only with h, e.g. haem ~ Pur *xäm*<sup>o</sup> ‘eye’.

As noted below, the most conspicuous «Tundraisms» appear in word-forms where an expected *\*m* is replaced with u (= *w*) in verbal personal and nominal possessive suffixes, in which *w* also occurs in Tundra Nenets as the regular outcome of intervocalic *\*m*. There are numerous examples showing that the preservation of intervocalic *\*m* was the rule in Toropkova in the same way as in all Forest Nenets dialects, for instance, in the forms corresponding to Pur *ngâmolph-* ‘eat’, *ngâmâlh*<sup>o</sup> ‘food’, *ngamat*<sup>o</sup> ‘waist’, *pyemaq* ‘boots’, *xâma* ‘hat’, the Tundra Nenets cognates of which show an equally regular *w*. Besides the inflectional forms treated separately below, an unexpected u is only found in a couple of prosecutive case forms, e.g. jideuana ~ Pur *jetimâna* ~ TN *yedey*<sup>o</sup>*wøna* ‘new’ (but japtamana ~ Pur *japtamâna* ~ TN *yabtaw*<sup>o</sup>*na* ‘thin’), and in two isolated nouns, kaasauwa ~ Pur *kasama* ~ TN *xasawa* ‘man’, and kaewa ~ Pur *kâma* ~ TN *xæwa* ‘bone marrow’. Surprisingly, on page 287 of Castrén (mscr.) there are both kaeuwa and kaema apparently recorded from Baly, but more probably the one with w belongs to Castrén’s secondary remarks referring to Tundra Nenets, as on page 243 of the manuscript there is only Baly kaema.

The distribution of liquid consonants is strikingly different in Forest Nenets in comparison with Tundra Nenets, which in this respect is archaic. Essentially, *\*l* and *\*r* merged in early Forest Nenets yielding *r*, which then changed back to *l* in a small number of environments, which

have not been worked out exactly as yet. As a result, all possible correspondences between Tundra Nenets and Forest Nenets liquids occur. A subsequent change that has by now reached all Forest Nenets dialects is *lh* (fricollateral) < *r* (vibrant; still recorded in older material from Lyamin), reflected in the following Pur material. In the Toropkova material, as seen in Castrén (1960: 277-278), initial  $\underline{l}$  ~  $\underline{r}$  occur in free variation, and the diacritic marking employed by Castrén in a few instances (but ignored here) seems to indicate that the Toropkova  $\underline{l}$  is often, if not generally, to be read as *lh*; this is also the case of the word pul 'bridge' quoted in the table above. In other positions, there is also variation in the marking of *r* (> *lh*), but, crucially, the reflexes are consistent with the distribution of liquids in Forest Nenets, e.g. (a) FN *lh* ~ TN *l*: dative  $\underline{r}$  ~ Pur *ngîlh*<sup>o</sup> ~ TN *ngîl*<sup>o</sup>*h* : locative  $\underline{r}$ na ~ Pur *ngîlh*<sup>o</sup>*na* ~ TN *ngîl*<sup>o</sup>*na* 'under'; (b) FN *lh* ~ TN *r*: juoléä ~ Pur *jolhya* ~ TN *yorya* 'deep', saljú ~ Pur *xalhyu* ~ TN *saryo* 'rain', peänšel ~ Pur *pyensyâlh* ~ TN *pyency*<sup>o</sup>*r* 'drum'; (c) FN *l* ~ TN *l*: juolš (also in Baly) ~ Pur *jolsy*<sup>o</sup> ~ TN *yolcy*<sup>o</sup>*h* 'measure, time'; (d) FN *l* ~ TN *r*: salmik ~ Baly helmik ~ Pur *xîlmyiq*<sup>o</sup> 'sable' ~ TN (dial.) *sørm*yik<sup>o</sup> 'animal'.

Another sound change creating complex correspondence patterns between the Nenets languages is the development of intervocalic \**ny* (palatal nasal) to *j* (palatal glide) in Forest Nenets, Castrén's records showing, again, exclusively Forest Nenets reflexes, e.g.  $\tilde{a}$ i ~ Pur *ngaj*<sup>o</sup> ~ TN *ngany*<sup>o</sup>*h* 'but', tjäjú ~ Pur *tyaju* ~ TN *tyanyo* 'little', wijäku ~ Pur *wyjaqku* ~ TN *yinyako* 'strap'. The same goes with the other sound changes that characterize Forest Nenets, notably (\**lt* >) \**ll* > *nr* > *nlh*, e.g. pilnju ~ Baly pimju (the apparent metathesis in these records seems a notational technicality of Castrén's) ~ Pur *pyînlhyu* ~ TN *pyilyo* 'gadfly', and \**yæ* > *ye*, e.g. wiäk ~ wièk ~ Pur *wyeqk*<sup>o</sup> ~ TN *yík*<sup>o</sup> 'neck', nien ~ Pur *nyen*<sup>o</sup> ~ TN *nyîn*<sup>o</sup> 'my friends', niešä ~ niešeä ~ Pur *nyesya* ~ TN *nyísyä* 'father', še'u ~ Pur *syeqw*<sup>o</sup> ~ TN *syíqw*<sup>o</sup> 'seven'. Forest Nenets retentions such as the preservation of final \**ng*, e.g. wüing ~ Lyamin *wing*<sup>o</sup> ~ TN *wîh* 'tundra', tang ~ Pur *tâng* ~ TN *tøh* 'summer', or the preservation of initial \**wy*, e.g. weab ~ weap ~ Pur *wyap*<sup>o</sup> ~ TN *yab*<sup>o</sup> 'luck' are invariably reflected in Castrén's material.

While Tundra Nenets has largely preserved Proto-Nenets vowels, the Forest Nenets vowel system has gone through a major restructuring, after which there are now six long (full, tense) and four short (reduced, lax) vowels in stressed syllables. In monosyllabic word-forms the contrast in vowel quantity is neutralized in favour of the shorter vowels, and this is also shown by Castrén's records, which differ from the Tundra Nenets forms that would also be identical with the respective Proto-Nenets ones:  $\tilde{u}$  ~ Pur *ngû* ~ TN *ngo* 'paint, dye',  $\tilde{u}$  ~ Pur *ngû* ~ TN *ngo* 'island' (cf.  $\tilde{u}$  ~ Pur *ngû* ~ TN *ngu* 'pole'), mu ~ Pur *mû* ~ TN *mo* 'twig', pu ~ Pur *pû* ~ TN *po* 'year'. Also unstressed vowels were restructured in Forest Nenets,

and this is quite consistently reflected in the Toropkova material, though the relevant examples are not diagnostic because of similar phonetic tendencies in eastern Tundra Nenets dialects.

In addition to the replacement of the vibrant *r* with the fricolateral *lh*, and the change of initial *s* to *x*, discussed above, every known phonological feature that has resulted from a recent sound change or analogy in western Forest Nenets, represented by the Lyamin dialect, can be seen in the Toropkova material. They include, firstly, the loss of syllable-final nasals in non-initial syllables, e.g. arkkaboi ~ Lyamin *ngarkapoj*<sup>o</sup> ~ Pur *ngalhkampo*<sup>j</sup><sup>o</sup> ~ TN *ngarkampoy*<sup>o</sup> ‘rather big’, niejak ~ Lyamin *nye*jak<sup>o</sup> ~ Pur *nye*jangk<sup>o</sup> ~ TN *nyenyangk*<sup>o</sup> ‘mosquito’, ude ~ Lyamin *ng*ûta ~ Pur *ng*ûtang ~ TN *ngudah* ‘hand’ (genitive). Secondly, the conjugation of the so-called alteration stem verbs may follow the pattern of vowel-stem verbs, e.g. xeamčungat (*x* is an odd symbol for *ng*) ~ Lyamin *ngamtyungat*<sup>o</sup> ~ Pur *ngimti*<sup>o</sup> ~ TN *ngamtid*<sup>o</sup>m ‘I sit’, maijibiungat ~ Lyamin *m*âj<sup>o</sup>pyongat<sup>o</sup> ~ Pur *m*âj<sup>o</sup>pyit<sup>o</sup> ~ TN *m*ôy<sup>o</sup>mpyid<sup>o</sup>m ‘I rejoice’. The third dialectal phenomenon is the generalization of secondary vowel stems in the nominative singulars of consonant-stem nouns, e.g. koot ~ Lyamin *kot*<sup>o</sup> ~ Pur *k*ûq ~ TN *xoq* ‘cough’, njem ~ Lyamin *ny*îm<sup>o</sup> ~ Pur *ny*îm ~ TN *nyim* ‘name’, ~ut ~ Lyamin *ng*ût<sup>o</sup> ~ Pur *ng*ûq ~ TN *nguq* ‘trace’, tjamdât ~ Lyamin *tyam*tât<sup>o</sup> ~ Pur *tyam*tiq ~ TN *tyam*teq ‘frog’, wiâktat ~ Lyamin *wyeqk*<sup>o</sup>tât<sup>o</sup> ~ Pur *wyeqk*ât<sup>o</sup>q ~ TN *yik*ôd<sup>o</sup>q ‘collar’, (reflexive marker:) tjijet ~ Lyamin *tyij*ât<sup>o</sup> ~ Pur *tyij*<sup>o</sup>q ~ TN *tyîy*<sup>o</sup>q ‘it flew away’.

There are also two phonetic phenomena characteristic of Forest Nenets dialects, and they are well represented in Castrén’s records, namely the lowering of short high vowels before a syllable with a schwa, e.g. njem = *ny*îm<sup>o</sup> ‘name’, ~ên = *ng*în<sup>o</sup> ‘bow’, tjem = *ty*îm<sup>o</sup> ‘tooth’, tjen = *ty*în<sup>o</sup> ‘granary’, and the affrication of the palatal stop *ty*, e.g. piče ~ pitje ~ pitjeä = *py*îtya ‘nest’.

There is in fact only one major sound change that has generally taken place in Forest Nenets but seems to be less advanced or partially absent in the Toropkova as well as Baly material, namely metaphony. This term refers to a regular change of stressed non-high vowels to high vowels when followed by a syllable with a high vowel in it, for instance, Forest Nenets *nyingu* ‘chin’ derives from a form that is still preserved as its Tundra Nenets cognate *nyangu* id. Castrén’s records of this particular word are niengu ~ njengu, and they indeed seem to indicate at least a shift from the original low vowel, but many other examples show the low vowel remaining intact, among them amdit ~ Pur *ngimti*<sup>o</sup> ‘I sit’, kapui ~ Pur *k*îpuj<sup>o</sup> ‘lungs’, kasúj ~ Pur *kisuj*<sup>o</sup> ~ TN *xasuy*<sup>o</sup> ‘dry’, sabú ~ Pur *x*îpu ~ TN *s*ôbu ‘bladder’. There are, however, also many words exhibiting variation, e.g. ~ači ~ ~etsi ~ Pur *ng*îtyi ~ TN *ng*ôdyi ‘it is visible’, xa’njúi ~ xenjuj ~ sanjuj ~ Pur *x*îqnyuj<sup>o</sup> ~ TN *s*ôqnyuy<sup>o</sup> ‘wet’, hartji ~ kerše ~ Baly



karši ~ Pur *kîrsyi* ~ TN *xørcyi* 'buttocks', the metaphonic vowel being marked by a symbol for a mid vowel, which is also the case for several words without variation, including 'chin' quoted above as well as helík ~ Pur *xîlyiqk°* ~ TN *sølyik°* 'elbow', and tèti ~ Pur *tiqti* ~ TN *tati* 'younger wife'. To complete the confusing picture, there are word-forms with a high vowel recorded by Castrén, e.g. p̄ritje ~ p̄litje ~ Pur *pîlhyitye-* ~ TN *pøryidy-* '[to be] black', piliku ~ Pur *pîlhyiqku* ~ TN *pøryiko* 'black'. Lehtisalo's comment on the status of metaphony in Castrén (1960: 265) is simply that metaphonic forms are not as common as nowadays. A slightly more analytic standpoint may be reached when certain other records are taken into account. There happen to be a large number of forms with an original high vowel in the first syllable, retained by all varieties of both Nenets languages, but nevertheless transcribed with a low vowel by Castrén, e.g. kaetje ~ Baly kačëä ~ Pur *kîtya* ~ TN *xidya* 'cup', witngari ~ Pur *wyû° ngîlhi* 'beaver' (cf. TN *yid°h ngîli°* 'underwater'), parietsjä xaruat ~ Pur *Pîlhyiqtyiq kalhwât°* ~ TN *Piryityiq xarød°* 'Surgut', the first word being derived from p̄rijéä ~ Pur *pîlhya* ~ TN *pirya* 'pike'. These examples show that Castrén's notation of certain vowels varies in a way that makes the correct interpretation of metaphony more difficult. Tentatively it may be assumed that the dialects recorded by Castrén did not differ markedly from other attested varieties of Forest Nenets, in which metaphony is a regular feature.

Turning to morphology, it must be noted that Castrén recorded verbs mainly in their 1st person singular forms, and it is in the respective personal suffixes that the most striking parallelisms of the Toropkova material with Tundra Nenets can be found. Starting with the objective conjugation, there are examples such as ~amau ~ Pur *ngâmam°* ~ TN *ngømaw°* 'I ate it', waaptangau ~ Pur *waptangam°* ~ TN *wabtaøw°* 'I turned it over' (the lack of *ng* in the Tundra Nenets word-form is due to a relatively recent sound change, and in Tundra Nenets folklore archaic forms such *wabtangaw°* are marginally possible), laadangau ~ Baly raatngam ~ Pur *lhat°ngam°* ~ TN *lad°øw°* 'I hit it'. Common are also records with apparent variation in the suffix, e.g. njadangau → -m [= m written on top of u] ~ Pur *nyatangam°* ~ TN *nyadaøw°* 'I helped him, I added it', tangau ~ tangam ~ Pur *tangam°* ~ TN *taøw°* 'I brought it, I gave it', teamdangau → -m ~ Pur *temtangam°* ~ TN *temtaøw°* 'I bought it', haptangau ~ kaptangam ~ Pur *kâptangam°* ~ TN *xøbtaøw°* 'I extinguished it (the fire)', while forms with only m are less common, e.g. jihelangam ~ Pur *jexalhangam°* ~ TN *yexaraøw°* 'I do not know it', pilingam ~ Pur *pyîlhyingam°* ~ TN *pyiryøw°* 'I cooked it up'. Occasionally, the suffix variant -u is stroked through and -m written in its place by Castrén, e.g. haamlangau ~ kaamlangam ~ Pur *kaqm°lhangam°* ~ TN *xaqw°raøw°* 'I fell it'. As can be seen from the relevant examples, the placement of m besides or instead of u may occur concomitantly with the addition of

initial k in stead of h. Both of these corrections seem make the material more like the actual dialect spoken in Toropkova, in other words, the 1st person singular forms in the objective conjugation with -m can be regarded as representative records of the Toropkova dialect, which then accords with the other Forest Nenets dialects.

The 1st person singular possessive suffix of nouns is formally and historically identical with the 1st person singular personal suffix of the objective conjugation of verbs, but in modern Forest Nenets, the old suffix -m° has been largely replaced by an innovative suffix -j°. In Castrén's material, which includes a list of 1st person singular possessive forms, perhaps collected rather mechanically, the predominant suffix variant is notably u, reminiscent of Tundra Nenets -w° attached to vowel stem nouns. Were it not for one instance of the current Forest Nenets suffix, namely lambáu ~ lambai ~ Pur lhâmpaj° ~ TN lømpaw° 'my ski', as well as one anomalous record, jilepšem → -u ~ Pur jîlhyipsyâj° ~ TN yilyebcyøm° 'my wild reindeer', with the variant u attached to a consonant stem noun, the records would indeed give an impression that the possessive forms derived basically from Tundra Nenets. Given the presence of the normal Forest Nenets form and the error in the application of the Tundra Nenets suffix, it is yet plausible to assume that the actual Toropkova dialect employed a system of possessive declension which differed little from mainstream Forest Nenets.

In the subjective conjugation of the verbal inflection, the modern suffix of the 1st person singular in Forest Nenets is -t° while in Tundra Nenets it is -d°m. In Forest Nenets, however, the suffix -t° derives through a recent sound change from -t°m, and judging from Castrén's records, this archaic variant still existed both in Toropkova and Baly at the time. When we see examples such as aarmadm ~ Pur ngalh°mat° ~ TN ngar°mad°m 'I grew', the similarity of -dm to the Tundra Nenets suffix is probably basically coincidental, involving the voicing tendency discussed above and an older rather than a Tundra Nenets-influenced variant of the suffix. There is a lot of variation in the Toropkova data, cf. e.g. aarmadm ~ aarmat 'I grew', jungat (t stroked through) → -dm ~ Pur jûngat° ~ TN yuød°m 'I warmed up', pišengat ~ Pur pyisy°ngat° ~ TN pyisy°ngad°m 'I am laughing', and in Baly the archaic variant seems to predominate, e.g. jiringatm ~ Pur jîlhyingat° ~ TN yilyeød°m 'I live', or witjengat → -tm ~ Pur wyîtyingat° 'I drink water', although the number of examples is not large.

There are other examples of the retention of a final nasal after the schwa, e.g. laemang = Lâm°ng ~ Pur Lâm° 'Lyamin', confirming that the loss of the consonant in this environment was an on-going process at Castrén's time, as it still was in the early 20th century. In the verbal suffix, the final m was for a while supported by the respective preterite forms from which it has later disappeared through analogy, e.g. Baly

maatm = *mat*<sup>o</sup>*m* ~ Pur *mat*<sup>o</sup> 'I said' : preterite maatamš = *matâmsy*<sup>o</sup> ~ Pur *matâsy*<sup>o</sup> 'I said (earlier)'.  
 There is an alternative way of forming the 1st person singular of the subjective conjugation that is only found in Forest Nenets. Uncharacteristically of the conjugation system, the personal suffix *-m*<sup>o</sup>*q* is attached directly to the verb stem, e.g. *pyinâm*<sup>o</sup>*q* 'I am afraid', cf. *pyin<sup>o</sup>ngat*<sup>o</sup> id. Exactly this form is also recorded by Castrén as piinam, but there are also instances of a suffix variant u, e.g. mueu ~ Pur *mem*<sup>o</sup>*q* 'I am', as well as variation, e.g. jakham → -u ~ Pur *jaqkâm*<sup>o</sup>*q* 'I itch'. Since there are no Tundra Nenets forms of the type *\*pyin<sup>o</sup>øw*<sup>o</sup>*q*, the only way of explaining the records with u is that they represent a simple, albeit inconsistently applied substitution process.

Among the subjective-conjugation 1st person singular forms there are also genuinely anomalous formations. For instance, there are four records meaning 'I am in a hurry', namely teatam ~ teätau ~ teätangam → -dm, of which the two first represent the shorter variant described in the preceding paragraphy (~ Pur *teqtâm*<sup>o</sup>*q*) and the added suffix variant -dm creates a word-form that corresponds regularly to Pur *teqt<sup>o</sup>ngat*<sup>o</sup>, but the more original record with a suffix variant -m is both unattested in later material and fully unexpected as well as rare, hence anomalous, even within Castrén's corpus. Other examples would be wadjungam → -dm ~ Lyamin *watyungat*<sup>o</sup> 'I grew up', corrected in the same manner, jilingat → -u → -m ~ Pur *yilhyingat*<sup>o</sup> 'I live', with two mistaken «corrections» from the original correct form as it happens, jušiliengam ~ jušiljengat → -m ~ Pur *jûnsyilhyengat*<sup>o</sup> 'I listen', with one uncorrected and one miscon-structed form, koonjungam ~ ?koonjungadam ~ Lyamin *konyungat*<sup>o</sup> 'I sleep', exhibiting simple variation with the correct form preceded by a question mark, and jaadelnau ~ Lyamin *jatirngat*<sup>o</sup> 'I walk', with the anomalous form only. There are a few such cases in the Baly material as well, suggesting that there was a certain confusion between Castrén and his informants when 1st person forms were collected.

In the reflexive conjugation, there are many examples of a suffix variant u in the 1st person singular forms where only *-m*<sup>o</sup> is known from Forest Nenets otherwise, e.g. haamjeu ~ kaamjeu ~ Pur *kaqm<sup>o</sup>jâm*<sup>o</sup> ~ TN *xaqmi<sup>o</sup>øw*<sup>o</sup>*q* 'I fell', but again, variation exists, e.g. ãamdjeu ~ xãamdjom (where ã is stroked through and eä and ea are written in its place; x is an odd symbol for *ng*) ~ Pur *ngamt<sup>o</sup>jâm*<sup>o</sup> ~ TN *ngamti<sup>o</sup>øw*<sup>o</sup>*q* 'I sat down', and there are instances of only -m, e.g. tjiijem ~ Pur *tyijâm*<sup>o</sup> ~ TN *tyty<sup>o</sup>øw*<sup>o</sup>*q* 'I flew away'. It is not difficult to conclude that the attestations with -m reflect the every-day language spoken in Toropkova, while those with -u derive from a substitution of the native suffix with the one known from Tundra Nenets.

Besides the 1st person singular, there is another morphological feature that is recorded in large numbers in Castrén's material, namely the

future tense, the formation of which is partly different in the Nenets languages. In Tundra Nenets, there are two independent suffixes, *-tø-* attached to consonant stems, and *-ngko-* attached to vowel stems, while in Forest Nenets, the suffix variant *-tâ-* parallels both formally and functionally with TN *-tø-*, but for vowel stems, a distinct variant *-nâ-* is used. In the Toropkova material, we notice that both *-ngu-* and *-na-* are attested as future markers in vowel-stem verbs, but the Tundra Nenets type, as exemplified by the form for 'I will help him' in the above table, is admittedly more common. Crucially, there are also plenty of examples of the normal Forest Nenets type, e.g. *jillanangau* ~ Pur *jilh°nângam°* ~ TN *yil°ngkuw°* 'I will lift it', *jurnangam* ~ *jurnangau* ~ Pur *jûlh°nângam°* ~ TN *yur°ngkuw°* 'I will forget it', *jurknajeu* ~ Pur *jûlhk°nâjâm°* ~ TN *yurk°ngkuw°q* 'I will get up'. In the case of intransitive verbs, a surprising but fitting state of affairs is revealed: all of the recorded forms are anomalous in the above-defined sense as they employ a suffix variant *-u* (= *\*-w°*) in the subjective conjugation, e.g. *nunguu* ~ Pur *nun°ngat°* ~ TN *núød°m* 'I will stand' (while *nungadm* → *-t̥* ~ Pur *nungat°* 'I am standing' shows the expected non-future form), or *njohanangam* ~ Pur *nyoxanângat°* ~ TN *nyoxangkud°m* 'I will sweat', for which the correct form was noted at Baly by adding *t̥* on top of the *m* of the Toropkova record. As an example of another kind of anomaly in the future formation in the Toropkova material, the variant *-ngu-* may be attached to consonant stems, at least when the verb appears to end in a vowel in Castrén's records because of the absence of a symbol for the glottal stop: *adanguu* ~ Pur *ngât°qtângam°* ~ TN *ngød°tøøw°* 'I will tear it'. The only possible conclusion seems to be that Castrén recorded future forms too mechanically, without paying respect to the factual forms used by the informants, and that the native future formation in Toropkova followed the regular Forest Nenets pattern.

Finally, it is the lexicon found in the Toropkova material that provides the binding evidence that it can only derive from a genuine Forest Nenets dialect with few actual influences from Tundra Nenets. The number of lexical differences between the Nenets languages is large, and at least the following exclusively Forest Nenets words are present in the Toropkova corpus: *jajâqk°* 'hazel grouse', *jamp° âpi* 'snake', *jetuqku* 'dace (a species of fish)', *kûpiqsya* 'spoon' (where Castrén has a misprint with initial *l*), *kûpta-* 'far' (cf. TN *nga-* id.), *mani* 'sack', *nîpta-* 'rest' (cf. TN *nila-* id.), *nyalu* 'flame' (cf. TN *leyo* id.), *ngan°* 'louse' (cf. TN *pøncyeq°* id.), *paqlh°pta-* (> Pur *paqlh°ta-*) 'deceive' (cf. TN *temp°ra-* id.), *pûns°lhi* (~ *pûs°lhi*) 'old' (cf. TN *nyew°xi°* id.), *pyî* 'aspen' (cf. TN *nyurka* id.), *syat°* 'coal' (cf. TN *yataqma* id.), *syēju* 'soul, breath' (cf. TN *yînt°q* 'breath'), *syî* 'tongue' (cf. TN *nya°myu* id.), *tâlhyalh-* 'cry, shout', *tasy°* 'merchandise', *tonlh°* 'grass', *tyanyu* 'broad', *xalaqku* 'animal, bird' (cf. TN *sarmyik°* id.), *xîlmyiqk°* 'sable' (cf. TN *tos°* id.), *wapt°q* 'cover,

lid'. There are obvious archaisms among them; for instance, Forest Nenets 'tongue' derives from Proto-Uralic, while 'louse' has a wide distribution among Samoyed languages, but from the point of view of the current topic, only the isoglosses matter. The Toropkova material also contains Forest Nenets neologisms such as *wyît° ngîlhi* 'beaver' (literally 'underwater'; cf. TN *lyidyangk°* 'beaver'), *jûlhk°nu* (> Pur *jûlh°nu*) 'morning', derived from *jûlhkâ-* 'to get up' (cf. TN *xúwi°* 'morning'), or *ngûta wyax°* 'finger' (literally 'streak of the hand'; cf. TN *ngudah tarka* 'finger'), and of course Khanty loanwords not known in Tundra Nenets, notably *jâlhnas°* 'shirt', *jangkâlh* 'mouse', *jelim* 'shame', *ngas°ni* 'sheep', *wântâlh°* 'otter', *wîsya* 'hello', *xilhnyi* 'gold'.

Semantic differences, largely representing Forest Nenets innovations, also keep the Toropkova material firmly apart from Tundra Nenets: *munuqngat°* 'I speak' (cf. TN *múnoqngad°m* 'I make noises'), *myûj°* 'malitsa' (cf. TN *myuy°* 'inner'), *nyampa* 'forehead' (cf. TN *peya* id., *nyampa* 'crown of the head'), *ngâmâtât°* [a species of grass] (cf. TN *ngômîtiq* 'flower'), *syûn°* 'steam; tobacco' (cf. TN *syun°* 'steam'), *wiqnyu* 'spring (season)' (cf. TN *weqnyuy°* 'first fish in the spring'), *xøq-* 'to want, to be strong' (cf. TN *søq-* 'to be strong', *xørwa-* 'to want'), *xât°* 'oven (indoors)' (cf. TN *sæd°* 'clay').

A wide range of irregular morphological and phonological correspondences can be detected between Forest Nenets and Tundra Nenets, and again, what Castrén recorded in Toropkova is in full accordance with other Forest Nenets data. Representative words include *jîlhyu* 'friend' (cf. TN *yuryo* id.), *kontäw°* 'ptarmigan' (cf. TN *xontyeq°* id.), *kûj°qku* 'birch' (cf. TN *xo* id.), *kûsye°* 'how' (cf. TN *xøn-cyer°q* id.), *nyîlhyi* 'grandfather' (cf. TN *yiryi* id.), *pyelhyimyâtya* 'young woman' (cf. TN *pyîryibtya* id.), *tyîm°* 'tooth' (cf. TN *tyibya* id.), *wat°* (< *wat°ng*) 'corral' (cf. TN *waq* id.), *xoju* 'calf' (cf. TN *súyu* id.).

As opposed to the overwhelming presence of typically Forest Nenets features in its lexicon, there remain a handful of words in the Toropkova material that actually bear resemblance to Tundra Nenets in a way unparalleled by any other attested Forest Nenets variety. Firstly, two words for 'blood' are recorded, namely the commonly known *kem°* as well as *weja*, which is identical with Tundra Nenets *weya*. We may be dealing with an archaism of the Toropkova dialect, as *weya* also has cognates in Enets, and the common Forest Nenets *wiji* 'broth' can be understood as a derivation of the otherwise unattested *weja*. A second word in the Toropkova material with a cognate only in Tundra Nenets is *juna* 'horse' ~ TN *yuna*, an ancient Turkic loanword in Samoyed, which must have been more widely used in Forest Nenets before the adoption of the more recent Khanty loanword *law°* id., which appears in the Baly material. A third word that could be a Common Nenets item only preserved in Toropkova is *tiuko* 'lungs', the root of which derives from

Proto-Uralic. A related derivative *tyiwak*<sup>o</sup> is attested in Tundra Nenets in the same meaning, while the normal Forest Nenets word for 'lungs' is *kîpuj*<sup>o</sup>, found in the Toropkova and Baly corpora as well. Further, the normal Forest Nenets word for 'spruce' is *kâq ~ kat*<sup>o</sup>, both variants being recorded from Baly, while the Toropkova material contains *kaady ~ kaadi*, apparently close to and possibly borrowed from Tundra Nenets *xadi* id. Lastly, and most conspicuously, we find the word *šibeku* 'mummy' (i.e. 'mother') with an unexpected internal consonant as well as a vague meaning, as the usual Forest Nenets word is *syîmyaqku* 'female parent bird' ~ TN *syibyako* id. Since the Tundra Nenets *by* is the result of a recent sound change, this may indeed be a loanword from Tundra Nenets in the Toropkova dialect.

Loans from Tundra Nenets are known to exist in Forest Nenets dialects, although they appear to be limited to a couple of words, notably *jawi* 'polar bear' < TN *yawi*<sup>o</sup> id. and (Lyamin) *paryingota* 'czar' < TN (dial.) *paryengoda* id. Although many «Tundraisms» were detected in the morphological data collected by Castrén, the Toropkova dialect possesses likewise very few Tundra Nenets loanwords. The logical conclusion of this discrepancy is that the morphological aberrance of the Toropkova material, itself subject to unwarranted variation, does not reflect the actual spoken dialect of the area, but the informants made a conscious effort to modify their performance following the model provided by the Tundra Nenets speaking Castrén himself, and their own, presumably rather meagre knowledge of Tundra Nenets. While few if any individuals in Toropkova were fluent in Tundra Nenets, they must have been acquainted with Tundra Nenets folklore, which continues to be popular far beyond the Tundra Nenets language area.

Castrén obviously noticed the unusual presence of variants in his data, but given the short period of time he could spend with Forest Nenets speakers and the small number of informants, even a scholar of his stature had no chance of retrieving the exact information. However, with the provisory Tundra Nenets elements now singled out from the Toropkova corpus, it is possible to reassess the significance of the actual Toropkova dialect for Forest Nenets studies.

## References

- Castrén 1846 = Anteckningar om Samojediskans förvandtskap med de Finska Språken, af M. A. Castrén. *Suomi, Tidskrift i fosterländska ämnen*. 1845. Femte årgången. Utgifven på Finska Litteratur-Sällskapets förlag. Helsingfors, J. Simelii Arfvingar, 1846. 177-186.
- Castrén 1854 = M. Alexander Castrén's *Grammatik der samojedischen Sprachen*. Im Auftrage der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften herausgegeben von Anton Schiefner. *Nordische Reisen und Forschungen von Dr. M. Alexander Castrén* [7]; St. Petersburg 1854.

- Castrén 1855 = M. Alexander Castrén's *Wörterverzeichnisse aus den samojedischen Sprachen*. Im Auftrage der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften bearbeitet von Anton Schiefner. Nordische Reisen und Forschungen von Dr. M. Alexander Castrén [8]; St. Petersburg 1855.
- Castrén 1856 = M. Alexander Castrén's *Reiseberichte und Briefe aus den Jahren 1845-1849*. Im Auftrage der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften herausgegeben von Anton Schiefner. Nordische Reisen und Forschungen von Dr. M. Alexander Castrén [2]; St. Petersburg 1856.
- Castrén 1960 = Castréns Aufzeichnungen über das Waldjurakische. *Samojedische Sprachmaterialien*. Gesammelt von M. A. Castrén und T. Lehtisalo. Herausgegeben von T. Lehtisalo. Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne 122; Helsinki 1960. 262-316.
- Castrén mscr. = Anmärkningar öfver den Kondinska dialecten af Samojediskan, gjorda i byn Toropkowa wid Obfloden 1845 om sommaren. Manuscripta Castreniana XI, Samoiedica 5, Jurak-Samoiedica 4: 219-294.

