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Volume 3

Philip Denwood

Tibetan

TIBETAN

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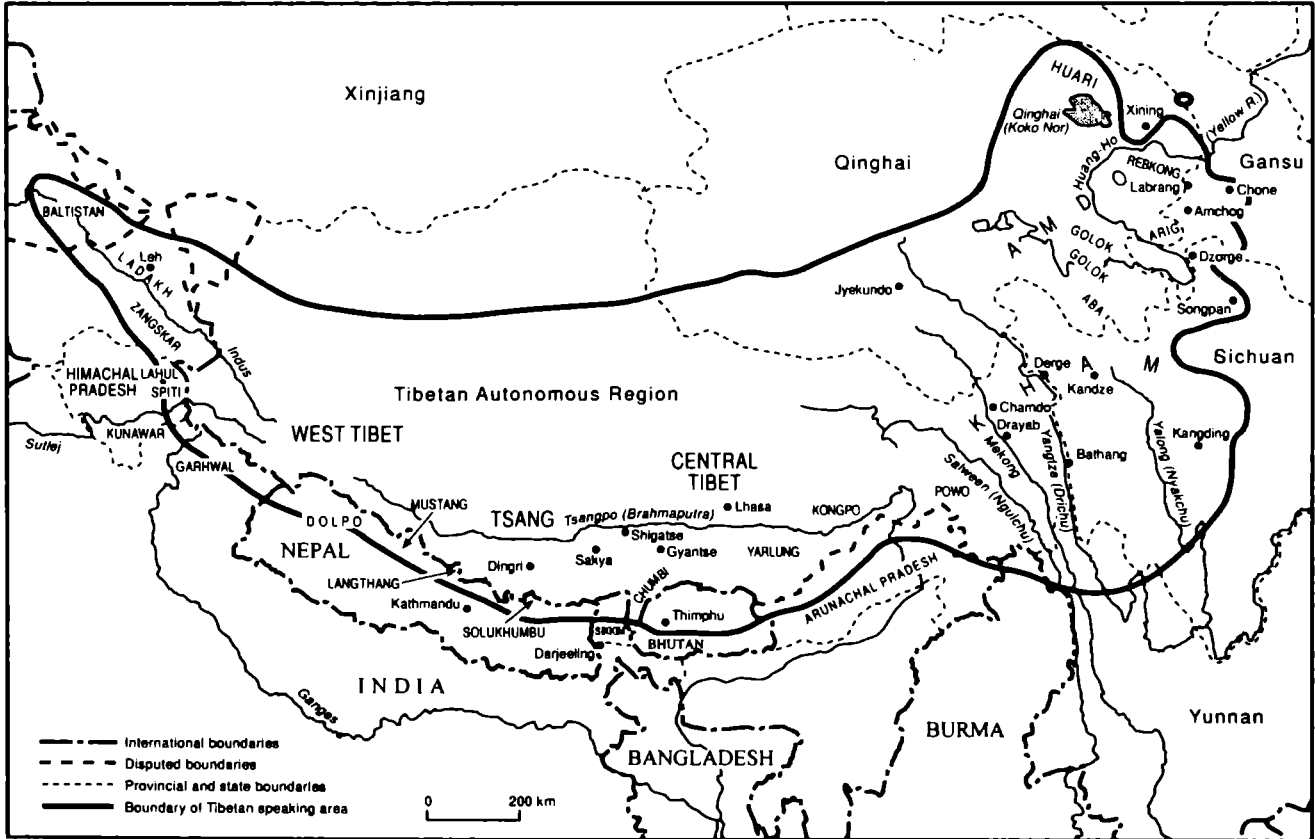
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Contents

MAP	v
PREFACE	xi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	xv
ABBREVIATIONS	xvii
TRANSCRIPTION OF TIBETAN	xix
1. GEOGRAPHY	1
The Tibetan-speaking area	1
Political divisions	1
Climate	4
Economy	5
Society	6
Religion	7
Tibetan and other languages	7
2. HISTORY	13
Tibetan origins	13
The early kingdom: 7th-9th centuries AD	14
The introduction of writing	14
The Tibetan “dark ages”: mid-9th to late 10th centuries	15
The “second spreading” of Buddhism: late 10th to mid-13th centuries	16
Mid 13th-early 20th centuries	17
The early 20th century	17
Modern developments	18
3. VARIETIES OF TIBETAN	21
Spoken dialects	21
Dialect classification	23
Geographical distribution: The northeast and east (Amdo and Kham)	27
The north	32
The west, centre and south	33
The west	

Nepal	34
Central Tibet	34
The south	35
Narrative styles	36
Reading and spelling styles	38
Written varieties	39
The hypothesis of a common origin	43
4. LEVELS OF ANALYSIS	47
4.1 Graphology	47
4.2 Phonology	47
4.3 Lexis/Grammar	48
5. GRAPHOLOGY	55
5.1 The Tibetan alphabet	55
5.2 Syllable structure	56
5.3 The initial cluster	56
5.4 Vowel signs	64
5.5 The final cluster	64
5.6 Particle sandhi	66
6. PHONOLOGY	69
Introduction	69
6.1 Monosyllables	69
6.2 Sound and script	73
6.3 Polysyllables	74
7. NOUNS AND NOUN PHRASES	87
7.1 Non-phrasal nouns	87
7.2 Phrasal nouns	92
7.3 Postpositional nouns	93
7.4 Nominalised verbs	95
7.5 Honorific nouns	95
7.6 Respectful nouns	98
7.7 Noun phrases	98
7.8 Noun phrase elements	99
8. VERBS	105
8.1 Non-phrasal verbs	105
8.2 Verb stems in written Tibetan	105
8.3 Verb stems in Lhasa Tibetan	107
8.4 Phrasal verbs	109
8.5 Honorific verbs	111
8.6 Respectful verbs	112
8.7 Honorific/respectful verbs	112
8.8 Nominalised verbs	113

9. VERB PHRASES	115
9.1 Structure of the verb phrase	115
9.2 Verbs of being	118
9.3 Lexical verbs	134
10. SERIAL VERBS	171
10.1 <i>'gro.</i> , <i>yong.</i> , <i>bsdad.</i>	171
10.2 <i>bzhag.</i> , <i>shes.</i> , <i>shor.</i>	173
10.3 <i>tshar.</i> , <i>myong.</i>	174
10.4 <i>bcug.</i> , <i>thub.</i> , <i>chog.</i> , <i>ran.</i> , <i>nus.</i> , <i>srid.</i> , <i>thag.chod.</i>	175
10.5 <i>dgos.</i>	176
11. ADJECTIVES AND ADJECTIVE PHRASES	179
11.1 Adjectival degrees	179
11.2 Nominalising particle of degree: <i>-los.</i>	185
11.3 Nominalising particle of apparentness <i>-mdog.</i>	185
11.4 Nominalising particle <i>-tsam.</i> “however much”	186
11.5 Adverbial use of adjectives	186
11.6 Phrasal adjectives	186
11.7 Honorific adjectives	188
11.8 Adjective phrases	189
12. CLAUSES	191
12.1 Ellipsis	191
12.2 Transitivity: subjects and objects	191
12.3 Adjuncts	202
12.4 Argument order	210
12.5 Given/new	211
12.6 Theme	213
12.7 Deference	215
13. SUBORDINATE AND NOMINALISED CLAUSES	219
13.1 Lexical verb stem: “and”, “and then”	220
13.2 Verb stem+subordinator	221
13.3 Verb stem (+linker) (+auxiliary)+subordinator	222
13.4 Nominalised clauses	224
13.5 Verb stem+nominaliser+adjunct marker	240
13.6 Polarisers+verb stem+adjunct marker	242
14. PRECLASSICAL AND CLASSICAL TIBETAN	243
Introduction	243
14.1 Lexis	243
14.2 Grammar	244
14.3 “Grammatical lexis”	244
14.4 Nouns and noun phrases	245
14.5 Verbs	245

14.6	Verb phrases	246
14.7	Serial verbs	257
14.8	Adjectives	263
14.9	Clauses	264
14.10	Subordinate and nominalised clauses	268
15.	TEXTS	275
15.1	Lhasa Tibetan	275
15.2	Preclassical Tibetan	283
15.3	Classical Tibetan	284
APPENDICES		
	Appendix 1. List of dialects	289
	Appendix 2. Phonology of other dialects	297
	Monosyllables: consonant initials	297
	Monosyllables: vowels	299
	Syllable finals	300
	Tone	301
	Vowel harmony	304
BIBLIOGRAPHY		307
PARTICLE INDEX		357
GENERAL INDEX		365

Preface

Why Study Tibetan?

Most people who study the Tibetan language do so in search of knowledge or experience of Tibetan culture, whether through an interest in Buddhism, anthropology, history or the arts, or simply as a result of wanting to know more about Tibetan-speaking people they have encountered. Anyone contemplating such a course is unlikely to be disappointed. For all their meagre material resources the speakers of Tibetan have created a mental and social world of great humanity, vigour and sophistication at all levels of their existence; a world from which no sincere outsider could fail to learn a lesson or two. The Tibetans have also played their part on the world stage, in one phase of their history having ruled a vast empire in Central Asia; in another, having accumulated and developed an enormous store of Buddhist learning, much of it now lost elsewhere.

Often overlooked, but surely among the Tibetans' finest achievements, are the qualities of the language itself. As an essential manifestation and vehicle of its culture, the language has developed a range of dialects, styles and registers well able to express the vicissitudes of everyday life with economy, vitality, and above all good humour; able to provide moving aesthetic experiences through oral and written literature; and able to explore the intellectually demanding terrain of Buddhist philosophy, in whose farthest reaches language itself is tested to destruction.

From the point of view of academic linguistics Tibetan has much to offer. Typologically it is an extreme example of a verb-final language. Some of its varieties are syntactically ergative, though I argue that the main dialect under consideration here - Lhasa Tibetan - is not. Thus the language is interesting from the point of view of loss (or possibly, gain) of ergativity. There is a well-developed system of evidential modality. In a rather unusual system of what I have called "viewpoint", what at first sight looks like person agreement in the verb phrase turns out to be an expression of the viewpoint which the speaker is adopting.

Phonologically, the many spoken dialects of Tibetan appear to span the whole range from non-tonal through partly tonal to fully tonal, thus offering a living laboratory wherein questions of tonogenesis and indeed the definition of tone itself have been vigorously debated. Vowel harmony too is manifested in varying degrees by different dialects. While Tibetan is far from being a "monosyllabic" language. it

more nearly approaches that state than, say, any Indo-European language, and its speakers, whether literate or not, will readily offer an etymology for most of its individual syllables.

From a sociolinguistic angle, Tibetan shows what is probably an extreme degree of social separation between spoken and written forms within the same language, manifested by an extreme reluctance of Tibetans to write what they speak. While the spoken dialects are very diverse, the written varieties are standardised to a remarkable degree considering the wide geographical and historical range of the language. Many varieties of Tibetan have interesting honorific systems, affecting mainly vocabulary.

The Tibetan writing system was based on some presumably spoken dialect or dialects of about the 7th century AD, and with few modifications it has retained the same spelling system ever since. The many spoken dialects, which are mostly known only from modern times, all seem to differ from this early 7th century variety, some more than others. The temptation to reconstruct the history of the language by devising genealogical trees of dialects or their linguistic features back to the 7th century is hard to resist. Tibetan is already the happy hunting ground of a small band of dialectologists and language historians; there is plenty of room for more.

Written forms of Tibetan in particular, aside from their aesthetic potential, are of interest in their ability to import and digest vast numbers of foreign terms in the form of loan-translations or new coinages rather than straight loanwords. This ability was spectacularly displayed between the 8th and the 13th centuries when the enormous technical terminology of Indian Buddhism was successfully absorbed into Tibetan, and even complex systems of metrics and metaphor were adapted from Sanskrit poetics. Absorption of foreign terms is again in progress as modern written styles come to grips with the vocabulary of modern life, as lived in a more secular, internationally aware community.

While adventurous attempts have been made to link Tibetan genetically to many languages of the world, from English to Sumerian, it is more conventionally held to belong to the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family, a large group of languages and dialects covering much of east and southeast Asia, and is thus related to Chinese and to Burmese, among many others. By the standards of the family Tibetan is well recorded, and the antiquity of its earliest written texts is exceeded only by those in Chinese. It is therefore of crucial importance in many aspects of comparative and historical Tibeto-Burman and Sino-Tibetan linguistic studies. It has also figured in a few interesting if speculative essays exploring links between the Sino-Tibetan and other language families, particularly Indo-European.

I should point out here that the Tibetans themselves are very far from being linguistically naïve. They have their own well-developed academic discipline of linguistics, derived in the first place from the Sanskrit grammarians of India but perforce heavily modified and adapted to fit the Tibetan language, and worthy of study in its own right. This is a highly specialised and technical subject, most of which is beyond the scope of this book, and indeed beyond the experience of most Tibetan-speakers outside the monasteries. Many of these speakers however, whether educated

or not, know that language is a fit subject for academic study, and can offer astute and imaginative observations on it. While the standpoint of this book is (or aims to be) that of linguistics as pursued in modern western universities, I have been influenced at many points in my overall approach and in many matters of detail by the Tibetan-speakers' own view of their language.

The Aims and Organisation of this Book

A comprehensive study of all varieties of Tibetan would be impossible within a single volume. In the main descriptive portion of the book (Chapters 6-13) I have therefore concentrated on a single variety, the Lhasa dialect, which I define as the present-day spoken Tibetan of Lhasa and its surroundings to a distance of some 50 kilometres. This can reasonably be regarded as a single *état de langue* with readily available informants and a history of study by linguists from various traditions, native and foreign. Outside its home territory it is widely understood, and is familiar to most of the Tibetan exiles, so that is as near as one can get to a "standard" variety of the spoken language. Lhasa Tibetan naturally incorporates its own social, regional and individual variations: what is described in this book is not the speech of a single speaker but has been generalised to cover a range of idiolects and sociolects.

My intention is to present, as far as possible within the allotted length, a general view of the linguistic features of Lhasa Tibetan for the reader who has some linguistic knowledge and interest but not necessarily any acquaintance with Tibet and its culture. In Chapters 1-3 I have tried to set the dialect in its geographical, historical and linguistic contexts.

Although not required by the original publisher's specification, in Chapter 5 I describe the main features of the Tibetan writing system, and throughout the book the examples are given in transliterated Tibetan as well as the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). In this language, where a lexical item can take a bewildering variety of phonetic shapes within a single dialect - let alone between dialects - the conventional Tibetan spellings are indispensable for maintaining full control. They are also crucial to the historical linguistics of Tibetan.

My theoretical framework is that of "Systemic Linguistics" (see Halliday 1961, 1985). A brief outline of how I apply this framework to Tibetan is given in Chapter 4. Having discussed the phonology of the Lhasa dialect in Chapter 6 and its lexis and grammar in Chapters 7-13, I try to show in Chapter 14 how an analysis based on the same framework may be applied to selected works written in Preclassical and Classical Tibetan.

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Abbreviations

3sg.	third-person singular pronominal noun
A	alveolar
<i>abl.</i>	ablative noun particle
Adj	adjunct
<i>adv.</i>	adverbial particle
<i>alt.</i>	alternative/interrogative modal verb particle
<i>app.</i>	approximative noun particle
<i>asp.</i>	aspiration
<i>aux.</i>	auxiliary verb particle
B	bilabial
C	consonant
<i>cert.</i>	certain verb particle
Cm	case marker
<i>co-ord.</i>	co-ordinating noun particle
<i>com.</i>	comitative noun particle
Comp	complement
<i>conv.</i>	convention
<i>corr.</i>	corroborative modal verb particle
CT	Classical Tibetan
<i>def.</i>	definite noun particle
D	deictic
<i>disj.</i>	disjunctive noun particle
<i>distr.</i>	distributive noun particle
DN	dental nasal
<i>dub.</i>	dubitative polar verb particle
E	epithet
<i>emph.</i>	emphatic modal verb particle
ET	event time
<i>excep.</i>	exceptive noun particle
<i>excl.</i>	exclamatory verb particle
<i>gen.</i>	genitive noun particle
H	head
h.	high pitch
hon.	honorific
<i>imp.</i>	imperative modal verb particle
<i>inst.</i>	instrumental noun particle

<i>interr.</i>	interrogative modal verb particle (Classical: also interrogative noun particle)
<i>intl.</i>	intentional (verb, clause)
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
l.	low pitch
<i>link.</i>	linking verb particle
<i>loc.</i>	dative/locative noun particle
<i>mcf.</i>	main-clause final verb particle
N	homorganic nasal consonant
<i>neg.</i>	negative polar verb particle
<i>nom.</i>	nominalising verb particle
nonasp.	non-aspiration
Num	numerator
<i>num.</i>	numerative noun particle
O	object
<i>ord.</i>	ordinary
P	predicator
<i>pol.</i>	polite noun particle
<i>poss.</i>	possible modal verb particle
PT	Preclassical Tibetan
<i>quot.</i>	quotative particle
<i>redup.</i>	reduplicative adjective nominalising particle
<i>resp.</i>	respectful
RT	reference time
S	subject
<i>ser.</i>	serial verb particle
<i>smp.</i>	subject-marking noun particle
<i>spec.</i>	speculative modal verb particle
ST	speech time
<i>sub.</i>	subordinating verb particle
<i>sugg.</i>	suggestive modal verb particle
Tm	topic marker
<i>top.</i>	topic-marking particle
U	uvular
<i>ult.</i>	ultimate adjective particle
<i>unintl.</i>	unintentional (verb, clause)
V	vowel
Vb.	verb
ϕ	nasal vowel
vls.	voicelessness
<i>vol.</i>	volunteering modal verb particle
<i>wh.int.</i>	wh-interrogative modal verb particle

Transcription of Tibetan

Two systems are used for transcribing Tibetan: a romanised transliteration and a phonetic transcription.

Transliterated Tibetan is in italics. The system used is a modification of the Wylie transliteration (Wylie 1959) which avoids diacritics. No capital letters are used, and the intersyllabic dot is represented by a full stop. The system is explained in Chapter 5. I have adhered to traditional spellings where known even when the Lhasa pronunciation diverges from them. For some Lhasa dialect particles and other constituents which have no one accepted spelling, I have invented a spelling or chosen between competing spellings. I have grouped written syllables into words (for my definition of a word, see 4.2), although Tibetans themselves do not attempt to do so.

The phonetic transcription of Lhasa Tibetan (and, in Appendix 2, of other dialects) is in bold type. It uses symbols approved by the International Phonetic Association in their revision of 1993, as explained in Pullum & Ladusaw (1996). Syllables are grouped into words (phonologically defined), which are separated by spaces. Departures from this system are as follows:

The symbol **r** is used for what is in Lhasa Tibetan typically an alveolar fricative more accurately symbolised by **ɹ**, or sometimes an alveolar flap **r**.

The symbols **ˉ** and **_** denote the tonal classification of the following word: Tone 1 and Tone 2 respectively (see Chapter 6). They are chosen because in contexts where they contrast, the first syllable of a Tone 1 word is generally pronounced on a higher pitch than that of a Tone 2 word. Pitch movement (contour) is ignored for this purpose. Where actual pitch rather than tonal classification is symbolised, **ˊ** denotes high pitch; **ˋ** denotes low pitch.

In Appendix 2, I have rendered the varying dialect transcriptions of different authors in what I take to be the IPA equivalent.

1. Geography

The Tibetan-speaking Area

Between the Indian subcontinent to the south and the deserts and steppes of East Turkestan and Mongolia to the north lies a vast area of highland: an immense plateau bordered and traversed by the world's highest mountain ranges. From west to east it stretches from eastern Afghanistan to the Chinese provinces of Sichuan and Gansu. Except for its western extremity (the Pamirs and Hindu Kush) and parts of its northern edge (the Kunlun mountains), it is the homeland of the Tibetan-speaking peoples, who occupy a block of territory somewhat larger than Scandinavia or somewhat smaller than India: an area measuring some 2,800 kilometres east to west, and at its widest 1,100 kilometres north to south. Until the 1950s, few people living inside the area spoke anything but Tibetan. Around its northeastern, eastern and southern edge, a contour line between 3,000 and 3,500 metres above sea level generally serves to separate Tibetan-speakers from the lower-altitude speakers of neighbouring languages.

Political Divisions

There has probably never been a time when all the Tibetan-speaking area, and it alone, has been ruled by a single government. At times during the royal period of the 7th-9th centuries AD, Tibetan rule extended far beyond the present Tibetan language area to include East Turkestan as far as the borders of what is now Mongolia to the north, western China as far as the then capital Chang'an (Xi'an) to the east, and the Pamirs as far as Samarkand to the west. There then followed a period of political disintegration from the 9th century until a new unification of most, though not all the area under Mongol suzerainty in the 13th century. The political ebb and flow of the subsequent centuries has left various parts of the Tibetan-speaking area under the rule of six different nation states at the time of writing: China, Burma, India, Bhutan, Nepal and Pakistan.¹

Questions of sovereignty over many of the regions occupied by Tibetan speakers and of the demarcation of their boundaries have been and continue to be something of a political minefield. In a work such as this, it is not possible to do more than describe the *de facto* situation, leaving questions of international law and of several separate territorial disputes to those better qualified to discuss them. Nor is it easy to avoid giving offence to groups of people who might be surprised to find themselves classed as "Tibetans", contrary to their own perception of themselves. Although complete

consistency is hard to maintain, I shall generally employ the word "Tibetan" in a purely linguistic sense to cover all the forms and dialects of the language irrespective of political divisions or ethnic affiliations; but the word "Tibet" I shall use to mean just the political unit of that name as it has waxed and waned over the centuries.

When dealing with census statistics and maps, it should be noted that the linguistic and the ethnic uses of the term "Tibetan" and its equivalents in other languages do not always coincide. Thus for example the 100,000 speakers of the Gyarong language along with 40,000 of the 140,000 speakers of Qiang, both in western China, are officially classified as "Tibetan" in nationality despite the fact that many or most of them do not speak Tibetan. Similarly the Rangpa people of northern Garhwal in India, though called "Bhotia" (Tibetan) by those living nearby them and in many publications, speak a non-Tibetan dialect. Conversely, the Sherpas of Nepal generally reject the epithet "Bhotia" and are often classified separately from the other Tibetan-speaking peoples of Nepal, though their language is certainly a dialect of Tibetan. The gatherers of census statistics should not be blamed for failing to distinguish linguistic categories with the precision we would like - they should rather be praised for managing to gather statistics at all in many of these wild areas. It should also be borne in mind that many Tibetan-speakers, particularly in border regions, may be bilingual or even trilingual.

China

The largest number of Tibetan-speakers, about 3.3 million according to Chinese census figures, is contained in the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China, which is a truncated version of the areas ruled by the Dalai Lamas from 1642 to 1950.² The northwestern parts of the Tibetan Autonomous Region are so sparsely inhabited, and then only by peripatetic nomads, that to fix a meaningful linguistic boundary is difficult. According to the *Language Atlas of China* the language boundary runs roughly along the 34th parallel from the border with Kashmir across the Tibetan Autonomous Region and then turns northeastwards across the Qinghai Province of China, staying south of the Tsaidam salt desert as far as and to the north of the Kokonor Lake. It encloses the southeastern half of Qinghai Province, comprising the eastern parts of the Haixi Mongol-Tibetan,³ the Yushu Tibetan and the Haibei Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures, and most or all of the Hainan, Ngolok and Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures; also parts of the Xining City area - though around Xining, the language boundary differs significantly on different maps.⁴

In Gansu Province, there is a small Tibetan-speaking outlier around the settlement of Anyuan I (Tibetan Autonomous County); otherwise the line continues from Qinghai to enclose the South Gansu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in the southwestern corner of the Province.

Tibetan-speakers inhabit the greater part of the western third of Sichuan Province - most of the Aba and Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures - and the northern tip of Yunnan Province (Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture).

The Eastern Himalayas: Burma, India

Moving now westwards along the mountain valleys to the south and north of the main Himalayan watershed, we find a rather confusing picture in the far north of Burma, the northern valleys of the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh (much of which is also claimed by China) and a small area of Tibet where the Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) river flows southwards to cross the frontier. It is difficult to sort out the ethnographic and linguistic geography of this region where most ethnic groups have several alternative names, some are only vaguely located, and many have been differently classified by different authorities.⁵ Some of the groups have been heavily influenced by Tibetan culture and no doubt language as well; others less so or not at all. The various Monpa peoples who live in both Indian and Chinese-administered areas (and who are not linguistically homogeneous) have been classified as Tibetan-speakers by some authorities, but are excluded by others. Leaving the Monpas aside, a line for the language boundary roughly following the present *de facto* international frontiers between China on one side and Burma and India on the other would probably not be far wrong, though there are a few Tibetan-speakers to the south of the frontier here and there, and some non-Tibetan speakers to the north of it, particularly around the Tsangpo river. Overlapping statistics and differing census categories from China and India make it difficult to estimate population numbers in this sector.

Bhutan and Sikkim

According to a recent government-sponsored linguistic survey,⁶ eight of Bhutan's nineteen "languages" can probably be regarded as dialects of Tibetan; they cover most of the western half of the country and small areas in the northeast. The main one, Dzongkha, is also the official language of the whole kingdom. A figure of about 140,000 speakers of all these dialects has been given by the Bhutanese Government: it is not clear whether this includes speakers of Dzongkha as a second language.

Lying between Bhutan and Nepal, the Indian state of Sikkim is the home of some 22,000 speakers of "Bhotia" (Sikkimese Tibetan) as well as some 11,000 speakers of Sherpa Tibetan.⁷

Nepal

Continuing westwards, the Tibetan language boundary includes the highest valleys along the whole northern border zone of Nepal. From east to west these include the upper valleys of the Tamur and Arun river systems (Taplejung and Sankhuwasawa Districts); the Dudh Kosi system (Solukhumbu District); upper Ramechhap and Dolakha Districts; Helambu (Sindhupalchok District) and Langthang (Nuwakot and Rasuwa Districts). Further westwards, and to the north of a line linking the Ganesh Himal, Himalchuli, Annapurna and Dhaulagiri mountain ranges, lie Tsum, Kutang and Nupri (Gorkha District); Gyasumdo, Nar and Nyeshang (Manang District); the upper Kali Gandaki valley (Mustang and Myagdi Districts); and Dolpo District. Finally in the extreme northwest of Nepal are Mugu and Humla Districts. A figure of about 83,000 can be estimated from Nepalese census data for the total Tibetan-

speaking populations of all these northern border areas.

The Western Himalayas: India, Pakistan

Further westwards still, in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, the inhabitants of the highest valleys, though called "Bhotias" (Tibetans) by those to the south, seem mostly to speak non-Tibetan languages, so that apart from a small area in the extreme northwest of the state in Uttarkashi the language boundary coincides with the international frontier. Over the state boundary in Himachal Pradesh (India), Tibetan-speakers are found in the valleys of upper Kunawar, Lahul and Spiti. Indian census data suggest a total figure of about 23,000 for speakers of the various Tibetan dialects of these areas.⁸

The most westerly Tibetan-speakers of all inhabit parts of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, disputed between India and Pakistan (and part of it also between India and China). On the Indian side of the cease-fire line which forms the *de facto* boundary with Pakistan are the districts of Ladakh (72,000 speakers of Ladakhi in 1981), and Kargil (48,000 of Purik).⁹ On the Pakistani side is the Baltistan Agency, comprising a section of the Indus and Shyok valleys, with a population figure of 132,000 given in a census of 1961, 94% of whom were Tibetan-speakers.¹⁰

The total number of Tibetan-speakers in the six countries at a very rough approximation might be put at 3.8 million. To this should be added about 100,000 exiles, most of whom left Tibet after 1959. Some of these have settled in Tibetan dialect areas of India, Nepal and Bhutan, but most live among otherwise non-Tibetan-speaking peoples in India, Nepal and other countries.

Climate

Despite its southerly location - Lhasa lies at the same latitude as Cairo and Kuwait - its high altitude gives much of the Tibetan-speaking area only short though pleasantly warm summers. The fearsomeness of the winters in the higher inhabited parts may be judged by Dr. Gerard's report, quoted in Duka (1885:82-7), of his encounter with the pioneering Hungarian Tibetologist Alexander Csoma de Körös at Kanam in Kunawar in 1828:

"I now turn to the Hungarian, who is far from the least remarkable of the many objects which have passed before me in this journey ... I found him at the village of *Kanum*, in his small but romantic hamlet, surrounded by books, and in the best health ... The cold is very intense, and all last winter he sat at his desk wrapped up in woollens from head to foot, and from morning to night, without an interval of recreation or warmth, except that of his frugal meals, which are one universal routine of greasy tea: but the winters at Kanum dwindle into insignificance compared to the severity of those at Yangla, where Mr. Csoma passed a whole year. At that spot he, the Lama, and an attendant, were circumscribed in an apartment nine feet square for three or four months; they durst not stir out, the ground being covered with snow, and the temperature below the zero [fahrenheit] of the scale. There he sat, enveloped in a sheepskin cloak, with his arms folded, and in this situation he read from morning till evening without fire, or light after dusk, the ground to sleep upon, and the bare walls

of the building for protection against the rigours of the climate ... The cold was so intense as to make it a task of severity to extricate the hands from their fleecy resort to turn over the pages ...[He] collected and arranged 40,000 words of the Tibetan language in a situation which would have driven most men to despair."

This intense cold was even held by Col.L.A.Waddell (1905:144) to affect the language itself:

"One curious result of the cold should be mentioned here, namely its effect on the speech of the people ... so full of consonants are Tibetan words that most of them could be articulated with semi-closed mouth, evidently from the enforced necessity of keeping the lips closed as far as possible against the cutting cold when speaking."

An objective study may oblige us to reject Waddell's hypothesis; but that it could seriously be proposed - and by a qualified physician and surgeon - at least lends confirmation to Dr.Gerard's graphic evocation of the Himalayan winter.

As if this were not enough, much of the area is afflicted with a serious lack of rainfall. Most of its western half is effectively desert, with less than 100 millimetres of rainfall per annum, and in some parts none at all. Only the more hospitable south-eastern fringes of the Tibetan-speaking area, from Bhutan through to northern Yunnan and southwest Sichuan could be described as anything on the wetter side of semi-arid. Here winters are less severe, and the somewhat higher rainfall and warmer summers allow the growth of woodland on the hillsides and the cultivation of wheat and even rice in the valleys.

Economy

Not surprisingly, the Tibetan-speakers are thin on the ground. The population density over most of the region, at less than 0.2 per square kilometre, is only a thousandth of that obtaining over large parts of Western Europe, India or China.

Agriculture, the main source of livelihood, is dependent on irrigation. Although the area is crossed by a network of rivers - the headwaters of the Indus, Sutlej, Brahmaputra, Salween, Mekong, Yangtse and Yellow Rivers all flow for long distances across the Tibetan plateau - their water is of little use to the inhabitants, who have no means of raising it in sufficient quantities. Instead they tap small tributary streams, fed by groundwater, and guide them through small-scale networks of channels and ponds to water small patches of terraced fields in the valley bottoms. A group of such irrigated patches in a single valley or valley-system constitutes a *yul*. or *lung.pa*. (the latter meaning also "valley"), which is normally a social, economic and administrative unit, a focus of local loyalties, and very often a dialect unit also. Here are grown the staple crops of barley, buckwheat, wheat, pulses and a little fruit and vegetables. Every household, with its farmhouse and holding of irrigated fields, will also have a number of livestock - cattle, yaks, sheep, goats - which will be pastured in the summer on the mountainsides and upland steppes, large stretches of which may separate one inhabited valley from the next.

These upland pastures are also the home of true nomads, tent-dwellers herding

yaks and sheep. Although they may be found over vast areas, particularly in the north and northeast, their total numbers are small and they have never dominated the country either economically or politically. Some authorities have proposed a fundamental distinction between the dialects of settled and nomadic groups, but all seem agreed that both are truly Tibetan. Between them, settled farmers, nomads and semi-nomadic groups contrive to achieve an integrated and largely self-sufficient regional economy by the exchange of various commodities amongst themselves. This ubiquitous network of petty trade, often combined with religious pilgrimage, acts as one of two main integrating factors tending to overcome local social and linguistic isolation - the other integrating factor being the monastic system of Tibetan Buddhism.

Society

The picture sketched out below is of Tibetan-speaking society down to say the 1950s. In many places it has changed little if at all since then, but in others there have been subsequent developments, some of which are mentioned on pages 18-19.

Traditionally, the people of Tibetan-speaking communities have been divided into four major hereditary social classes, reminiscent in broad outline though not in detail of the Indian system. While the legal basis of the traditional system has been replaced in most places since the 1950s by the institutions of the different nation states concerned, its influence often lingers on.

A class of aristocrats provided rulers, holders of agricultural estates, and government officials. Most people fell into the class of farmer, tied to a greater or lesser degree to their land holding. Outcaste groups pursued such trades as smith, musician or butcher. Finally there was a group of religious specialists, hardly distinguishable from the farmers except by a freer status, and since the rise of Buddhism, overshadowed in most places by the monasteries.

The detailed workings of the system have varied greatly from place to place, depending particularly on the degree of control by centralised government. In remote and largely self-governing districts social distinctions might in practice be slight; conversely, strong governments tended to sharpen them in the areas under their control. Nomadic groups might be integrated in various ways, or might enjoy a large degree of independence in political entities of their own. In border districts, there has often been mutual adaptation with the institutions of neighbouring peoples.

While the members of all social classes within a particular district will converse in the same local dialect, in districts with a pronounced social stratification there is usually a well-defined "honorific" register of the dialect, affecting mainly vocabulary, and used in addressing those of higher social or religious status than oneself, or to equals and strangers to whom one wishes to be especially polite. In addition to the local dialect, the more educated and those with outside contacts (particularly in the pursuit of trade or religion) will be familiar with one or more of the *lingua franca* dialects of Tibetan. Thus, for example, a farmer and part-time trader from western Ladakh might traditionally have spoken both Leh Ladakhi and Lhasa Tibetan in addition to the dialect of his own village.

Centres of administration and government have seldom been more than villages

clustered near the castles of local governors or aristocratic rulers. Towns have in most areas been few and small, their populations of shopkeepers, traders and craftsmen usually forming a negligible proportion of the total. Any business conducted in writing would normally use the standard written language common to the whole Tibetan-speaking area.

Literacy rates were generally low, particularly among women. Reading and writing were taught mainly in the Buddhist monasteries, and most monks would be literate, as would a small class of lay government officials. There were privately-run non-monastic schools in Lhasa and a few other urban centres, attended by both boys and girls, but only a small fraction of the population lived within reach of them. It is doubtful whether a literacy rate of ten percent was exceeded in many areas.

Religion

Some of the functions fulfilled elsewhere in urban settlements have until recently been performed in the many Buddhist monasteries. These have often housed a significant proportion of the male population (up to 25% in some areas, though usually probably much less). A given monastery belongs to one of five main Buddhist orders, each of which will have monasteries scattered throughout the Tibetan-speaking area. Movement of monks from one monastery to another within the same order, and even between different orders, is normal. Such intercommunication has naturally encouraged the widespread knowledge of common spoken *lingua franca* dialects as well as the common written language used for all religious purposes, alongside any more local dialect. The linguistic influence which monastic institutions with their pan-Tibetan connections have exerted within their local communities has been enhanced by the role they play in local religious life, education and the arts, and often in craft and mercantile activities and landholding. Nunneries also exist, but are far fewer.

While the majority of Tibetan-speakers are Buddhists, significant numbers in some areas follow a parallel religion known as Bon, which also has its monastic system, and functions socially very much like Buddhism. Islam is the religion of the westernmost Tibetan-speakers in Baltistan, Purik, parts of Zangskar and the western areas of Ladakh; of small trading communities in the towns of western and central Tibet; and of a few villages in the Amdo area of the northeast. Christians in Ladakh and some other parts of the Himalayan fringes formerly under British rule, though few in numbers, have not been without cultural significance in the past hundred years. Some Tibetan-speakers in parts of Nepal, while Buddhist, may be influenced by Hindu customs and beliefs. Followers of all these religions have generally integrated into them a host of customs and practices presumably derived from indigenous Tibetan folk-traditions.

Tibetan and Other Languages

The often-held view of the Tibetans as totally isolated in their mountain fastnesses from the rest of humanity is misleading in many respects, not least the linguistic. It

could well be argued that the creativity and vitality of the Tibetan language owes much to a continuing give-and-take over the centuries with other languages, numbering several dozen if all the local border languages are included. Most of these have had some influence on Tibetan, at least locally, and the various layers of Tibetan loanwords in many of them have an important part to play in reconstructing the history of Tibetan.

Neighbouring languages

The major language groups adjoining the Tibetan-speaking area are: to the west and south, Indo-European (Iranian and Indo-Aryan); to the north, Altaic (Turkic and Mongolian); and to the east, Chinese and other Sino-Tibetan languages.

To the south of the Tibetan speakers on the Indo-Gangetic plain and in the Himalayan foothills lies the civilization of northern India and Pakistan, the home of the Sanskrit language and the Indo-Aryan vernaculars, with in later centuries an increasing element derived from the Perso-Arabic tradition, particularly in the western parts. This broad area was the ultimate and often the immediate source of Tibet's major religion, Buddhism, and has for many centuries had trading as well as cultural links with Tibet.

Besides Sanskrit, which has profoundly influenced the Tibetan language on a scholarly and literary level, the main Indo-Aryan languages in contact or near-contact with Tibetan have been Urdu in the Baltistan, Purik, Ladakh and Zangskar areas; Western and Central Pahari in Himachal and Uttar Pradesh; Nepali in Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan; and Bengali and Assamese in northeast India.

In the far western parts of this southern zone, Tibetan borders on the linguistic isolate Burushaski in Hunza and on the Indo-Aryan (Dardic) languages of Shina and Kashmiri, with Tadjik (Iranian) not very distant to the northwest. In addition, from Kunawar in the west to Burma in the east along the middle ranges of the Himalayas there runs a bewildering series of local languages and dialects classified, sometimes *faute de mieux*, as Tibeto-Burman; all but two (Newari and Lepcha) traditionally unwritten, and most of them poorly studied. Their speakers have often been the target of competing cultural influences from Tibet and India respectively. An extinct and rather enigmatic language known as Shangshung is alleged to have been spoken in western and northern Tibet and perhaps Ladakh before the rise of the Tibetan empire; literary remnants of it suggest links with some of these Himalayan Tibeto-Burman languages. Their surviving representatives have traditionally been divided into firstly a "non-pronominalised" group in the central Himalayas, including Gurung, Tamang, Sunwar, Magar and Newari (all in Nepal) and Lepcha in Sikkim and western Bhutan; and secondly a "complex pronominalised group" which includes both a dozen languages in Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh (India) in the western Himalayas, and a similar number in eastern Nepal. Tibeto-Burman languages in the eastern Himalayas include Tshangla and about nine others in central and eastern Bhutan, and Monpa (sometimes classed as Tibetan) and dialects of Adi/Abor and Mishmi in Arunachal Pradesh (India).

To the southeast of the Tibetan area lies Burma; despite their linguistic affinities, in historical times Burma and Tibet have had little to do with one another. The immediate

linguistic neighbours of the Tibetans here are speakers of the Rawang or "Nungish" Tibeto-Burman dialects.

To the southeast, east and northeast of the Tibetan-speakers is China, whose cultural, economic and political relations with Tibet have been manifold for at least the last twelve hundred years. While speakers of the various neighbouring dialects of Chinese and of Mandarin have been in continuous contact with Tibetan-speakers, the linguistic border is complicated here, as in the southern sector, by the presence of speakers of many little-known local languages, presumed to be of Tibeto-Burman affiliation. The main ones are, from south to north, Trung, Lisu and Naxi in Yunnan; and Pumi, Gyarong and Qiang in Sichuan. Again, some of their speakers have been subject to strong cultural influence from Tibet, as also from China.

The northeastern sector is also linguistically complicated, and the evidence for precise language boundaries somewhat conflicting. As well as Chinese, there live, adjacent to and sometimes intermingled with Tibetans in Qinghai and Gansu, speakers of various Mongol dialects, namely Oirat, Eastern Yugur, Monguor, Dongxian and Bao'an. Since the thirteenth century the political and cultural fortunes of Tibet and Mongolia have often been intertwined, Mongols speaking both these and other dialects having often exercised political power in Tibet, and Tibetans having converted many of the Mongols to Buddhism. There are also speakers of at least two Turkic languages (Salar and Western Yugur) in this region. Before the advent of Tibetan-speakers in the 6th-7th centuries AD, these northeastern areas had successively been dominated by speakers of Tibeto-Burman Qiang languages (with remnants of Indo-European, perhaps Tocharian speakers) and by the probably Turco-Mongol Tuyuhun; in the medieval period they came under the control for a time of the Xixia (Hsi-hsia or Tangut) empire whose main language was Tibeto-Burman.

To the northwest, the linguistic neighbours of the Tibetans nowadays speak Uighur (Turkic) and Chinese, though in the first millennium AD the main languages of this area (East Turkestan, Xinjiang) were Indo-European: Iranian (Saka), Prakrit, Sanskrit and Tocharian. During part of that time most of this area was ruled by the Tibetans who came to participate in the Buddhist culture of this area (as did the Uighurs), but since the subsequent Islamicisation of East Turkestan its relations with most of the Tibetan-speaking area, apart from the Islamic western extremity, have been commercial rather than cultural.

The picture sketched out above of a homogeneous Tibetan-speaking area surrounded by non-Tibetan-speaking neighbours has to be modified by mentioning the groups of non-Tibetan-speakers who have lived in the Tibetan area as well as the use of the Tibetan language outside it, and the influence of Tibetan on other languages.

Other languages in the Tibetan-speaking area

Small numbers of non-Tibetan speakers apparently indigenous to the area are found here and there, particularly in the more wooded parts of the lower reaches of the Tsangpo river where such groups as the Monpas and Lobas (the latter speaking Tibeto-Burman dialects of Tshangla, Adi and Mishmi) have come to the notice of both Tibetan and foreign writers. Some of the Tibeto-Burman dialects of the Gyarong and Horpa areas in Sichuan, though somehow linked to Tibetan and heavily influenced by

it, seem to be best regarded as separate from it and perhaps even from each other. An area inhabited by speakers of Oirat Mongolian, the Honan Mongol Autonomous County on the right bank of the Yellow River in Qinghai, is entirely surrounded by Tibetan-speakers. Apparently non-Tibetan speakers of nomadic lifestyle are also reported from the western end of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, though they do not appear on the maps of the *Language Atlas of China*. There is an enclave of Shina (Dardic) speakers in the Indus Valley northeast of Purik. Other groups of supposedly "pre-Tibetan" origin such as the Mon and Bheda of Ladakh, on the other hand, seem to be purely Tibetan in language.

While foreigners of many nations have been recorded as residing in Tibet, groups present in sufficient numbers to have had any influence on the language were, until the 1950s, few. Lhasa and one or two other urban centres have had small communities of Chinese, Kashmiris, Uighurs, Armenians and others engaged in commercial pursuits, as well as Newars from the Kathmandu valley of Nepal who practised both trade and handicrafts. Mongols were present as monks in some of the monasteries, particularly around Lhasa.

Particularly since about 1950, a proportion of Tibetan-speakers which is often considerable, though hard to put a figure on, is competent to varying degrees in at least one other language: Chinese in Tibet, Hindi in Himachal Pradesh, Nepali in Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan, Urdu in Ladakh and Baltistan. These "second languages" are often accompanied by English, a knowledge of which may be sought after by the more educated and whose second- or third-hand influence may sometimes be suspected in modern written forms of Tibetan. Exiled Tibetan-speakers in India and Nepal are generally competent in Hindi and/or Nepali, and many of the younger generation particularly, also in English.

The influence of Tibetan on other languages

Many of the local Tibeto-Burman languages of the southern and eastern Tibetan borderlands which have been profoundly influenced by Tibetan are perhaps just the most recent examples of a centuries-old process of cultural and linguistic "Tibetanisation" which has been one of the means whereby the Tibetan cultural identity has created and extended itself. The major language group to have been most influenced by Tibetan is Mongolian. Written forms of Mongolian have been influenced by Tibetan at many levels, while dialects throughout the Mongol-speaking world incorporate Tibetan loanwords. The Mongol dialect of the Monguors of Qinghai has been heavily Tibetanised; it has been claimed that other groups in the same region such as the Arig represent almost completely Tibetanised Mongols (nor is the reverse process unknown). A handful of loanwords - yak, polo, lama, sherpa - have found their way into many of the world's major languages.

The use of Tibetan outside the area

The use of the Tibetan language outside the area goes back at least to the days of the Tibetan empire in East Turkestan, western China and the Pamirs in the 7th-9th centuries, where it was the language of government and administration. Even after

Tibetan central authority collapsed in the mid-9th century, Tibetan continued in use for a century or more in the Dunhuang and Ganzhou areas of Gansu as a chancery and diplomatic language among the Uighurs and probably in Buddhist monasteries. Tibetan was one of the languages of the Xixia (Tangut) empire of northwest China in the 12th and 13th centuries. Tibetan Buddhism along with the Classical Tibetan language enjoyed a vogue in court circles in China under some of the Manchu emperors (16th-19th centuries). From the 17th to the mid-20th centuries Buddhism and classical Tibetan became thoroughly well-established among the Monguor, Kalkha, Buriat and Kalmuck Mongols of the Chinese and Russian Empires. In the Peoples' Republic of Mongolia, after several decades of eclipse, the study of Tibetan is now staging something of a revival. Tibetan has some degree of currency as a religious language also among certain of Tibet's Himalayan neighbours, such as the Tamangs and Newars of Nepal, and speakers of non-Tibetan languages in Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh.

Teaching and research in Tibetan are pursued outside the Tibetan-speaking area in several dozen higher education institutions throughout Asia, Europe, North America, China and Japan and Australasia, and in at least as many "Dharma Centres" (Buddhist religious institutions) in the same parts of the world.

Notes

- 1 On Tibetan history and culture see Stein (1962), Snellgrove & Richardson (1968).
- 2 On Tibetan-speakers in China see the *Language Atlas of China* (1987).
- 3 The Haixi Mongol-Tibetan Prefecture, extending to the west of the Kokonor, was formerly known as the Haixi Mongol-Tibetan-Kazakh Prefecture and has a detached section in the southwest corner of the Province which seems to be virtually uninhabited.
- 4 The various maps of the *Language Atlas of China* (1987) and that in Ekvall (1939) all give different boundaries.
- 5 See the *Language Atlas of China* (1987); Grierson (1909); Marrison (1964); Das-Gupta (1968); Nishida (1989).
- 6 See van Driem (1991a).
- 7 See *Census of India 1981*, Series 19 (1987).
- 8 See *Census of India 1981*, Series 7 (1987).
- 9 See *Census of India 1981*, Series 8 (1987).
- 10 See Afridi (1988).

2. History

Tibetan Origins

The Tibetans, who have a keen sense of their own past, trace their history back to remotest antiquity in a variety of genealogies, legends and myths whose degree of historicity is not always easy to establish. To the Chinese, the Tibetans originated as a branch of the large and rather vaguely defined western group of peoples of Sichuan, Qinghai and neighbouring areas known as the Qiang (Ch'iang). Attempts have been made to connect some Chinese accounts of such peoples in the first millennium BC with the Tibetans or their forerunners. It is not until they deal with the first half of the 7th century AD, however, that Chinese sources come together with Tibetan ones to describe a Tibetan civilisation, based on the valley of the Tsangpo and its tributaries, which has had a clear and continuous historical existence from that time down to the present day. Tibetan names and words contained in these sources represent our earliest reliable evidence for the language, though it should be noted that neither the Tibetan nor the Chinese documents concerned with the early 7th century are necessarily themselves of that date.

The ethnic origins of the Tibetans are obscure. The plateau was certainly occupied in neolithic and bronze age times, surviving artefacts from those periods suggesting cultural links in various directions. Remaining groups of peoples in Sichuan still known as Qiang do indeed seem to have some cultural and linguistic affinity with the Tibetans. If the Tibeto-Burman language hypothesis has any validity, then the linguistic connections of the Tibetans should be sought to the east, southeast and south rather than to the west, northwest or north. In contrast, the semi-nomadic lifestyle of the early Tibetan aristocracy (as distinct from the peasantry) is reminiscent in some ways of the then Turkic-dominated steppelands to the north. In yet another direction, it has been observed that the agricultural patterns of peasant life, as well as the pastoral economy of Tibetan nomads, generally resemble those of the drier parts of the Middle East and Central Asia to the west. Probably the Tibetans, like most other peoples, created their culture and identity out of diverse elements over long periods of time. From the linguistic point of view, the best guess at the moment is that at least some of the ancestors of the Tibetans were among groups of speakers of Tibeto-Burman languages who moved westwards from the southwest China or southeast Asian regions along the Himalayas and the Tsangpo Valley at some time before the 7th century, doubtless conquering or mingling with whoever was there before them. To judge from the surviving historical evidence, the core of the new empire in the late 6th century would have lain along the Tsangpo from about the Powo/Kongpo area where

the river turns south to cross the Himalayas, and upstream through the Dakpo, Yarlung, Lhasa and Gyantse areas perhaps as far as Shigatse or Sakya.¹

The Early Kingdom: 7th-9th Centuries AD

At the beginning of the 7th century the Tibetan plateau must have been something of a political and cultural backwater. From the reign of King Songtsen Gampo (died 649) Tibet was first consolidated as a national entity and then launched into two centuries of remarkable military and political expansion which made it one of the major Eurasian imperial powers, standing comparison with the contemporary empires of the Abbasids in the Middle East and the Franks in Europe. From at least the early 7th to the mid-9th century, the kings of a single dynasty ruled most of the areas now occupied by Tibetan speakers, and at times much else besides. Generally allied with the Western Turks, the Tibetans as a major imperial power fought almost continuously against Chinese, Arabs, Uighurs and others in dispute of vast territories, including West and East Turkestan, the Pamirs and Hindu Kush, and large areas of western China, as well as crossing the Himalayan watershed to threaten Nepal, Kashmir and India north of the Ganges.

This period of imperial expansion, during which their kings boasted (with some exaggeration) of having conquered the four quarters of the known world, required the Tibetans to change and develop many aspects of their life and culture, while at the same time involving them in a multiplicity of foreign contacts at all points of the compass. In little more than two centuries they were transformed from illiterate tribesfolk of little significance to anyone but themselves, into citizens of a highly organised, militaristic empire, with a complex social hierarchy, a developed bureaucracy, a highly sophisticated state religion (Buddhism) and active foreign relations. No doubt some of these new modes of life did not penetrate very far down the social scale and in other ways existence may have carried on much as before - in some places it perhaps still does - but on any reckoning the range and nature of Tibetan cultural activities were transformed into those of a true civilisation.

It may also be the case that many outlying areas, particularly in the west and the northeast, first became Tibetan-speaking in the wake of imperial expansion during those two centuries, whether through immigration of Tibetans or "Tibetanisation" of the pre-existing population, or both. Language studies may have an important part to play in exploring this problem of the expansion of the Tibetan peoples. This question and that of the history of the Tibetan language itself largely turn on the relationship of the spoken dialects to each other and to the spelling of written Tibetan. The date of the introduction of writing is crucial to the argument and not free from controversy.

The Introduction of Writing

On balance it would seem that the writing of Tibetan in its own script must go back to at least the early part of the 8th century; most probably to the 650s, and quite possibly to the two decades ending in 650.

The interest which was shown by some Tibetans of the 7th-9th centuries in studying and translating the Chinese classics and Chinese Buddhist literature and in obtaining Chinese writing materials is not known to have led to any systematic attempts to write Tibetan in Chinese characters. The Tibetan script, whenever it was devised, was evidently modelled on an original of the type known as Brahmi used for writing Sanskrit and/or Prakrit.² The adoption of such a model might be expected from the early kings' apparent interest in the Buddhist religion. In fact, however, much of the earliest evidence for writing in Tibet is in the form of secular rather than religious documents.

Models for the Tibetan script have been proposed which were variously in use in north-central India, Nepal, Kashmir, Afghanistan, or Khotan and other places in East Turkestan at dates between the 5th and 10th centuries.³ Whatever the model or models, some letters were evidently invented or greatly modified by the Tibetans, and various letters have seemed to different scholars to resemble those in different Indian alphabets. Furthermore the exact phonetic values cannot always be known for either Tibetan or the relevant Indian languages in those days. The palaeographic debate over the precise origin of the Tibetan script continues, and until it is resolved we would probably be wise to agree with A.Róna-Tas (1985) that the development of the Tibetan writing system could well have been a long drawn out process with contributions from more than one Indian language area and script.

On the civil side of society, writing contributed to the development of official, bureaucratic, and literary registers of the language. Indigenous liturgical and other religious works were also written down, while on the Buddhist side the Tibetans became acquainted with the existence of a voluminous written literature in Sanskrit (and to a lesser degree, Chinese, Pali and Khotanese); the vehicle for a body of largely alien ideas. They had to create what was in many ways a new language (*chos.skad.*) in order to translate this literature into Tibetan and add their own contributions to it. In this task they had the assistance of many foreign collaborators, as well as a certain contribution from foreign linguistic theory both Indian and Chinese (though the full impact of this may not have come till later). While the foreign contribution to Buddhism in Tibet was in the long run overwhelmingly Indian, there was significant input in these early centuries from China and East Turkestan. Apart from Buddhism, there is evidence of some early interest on the part of the Tibetans in the Chinese classics, and possibly of some slight acquaintance with aspects of Iranian and even Greek writings.

The Tibetan "Dark Ages": Mid 9th-Late 10th Centuries

The reign of the allegedly anti-Buddhist king Lang Darma and his assassination in 842 is held by many later Tibetan historians to have ushered in a period of political and religious collapse, during which the state disintegrated, the outlying parts of the empire were lost, and Buddhism was almost extinguished by first persecution and then neglect. While there is undoubtedly much truth in this picture, it is certainly oversimplified and perhaps exaggerated by later partisan interests. The Tibetans held on to parts of their empire for at least fifty years, and while the country itself dissolved

into separate principalities, consciousness of its history and national identity remained very much alive. Although Buddhism suffered great setbacks and seems to have lost contact with India on an official level, some of its institutions survived under certain local rulers who were still sympathetic to it. While much of the bureaucracy must have been dismantled, the production of many types of official and religious documents discontinued, and the quantity of the remainder sharply reduced, it is quite clear from what does survive from this troubled period that wherever literacy was maintained it continued to be of a very high standard in both civil and religious circles.

The “Second Spreading” of Buddhism: Late 10th-Mid 13th Centuries

Despite a continued lack of political unity (or perhaps because of it), the period from the 10th century saw the formation and organised expansion of most of the orders of Tibetan religion, as a result of which Tibet could truly be said to have become a Buddhist country by the 13th century. The pace was set by the so-called “new orders” (Sarmapa) of Buddhism which stemmed from individual Tibetans who visited northern India (including Kashmir and Nepal) in search of developed Buddhist teachings and scriptures from the foremost Indian scholars and practitioners of the time. With the financial and political backing of local rulers and aristocrats, each order founded monasteries which were to multiply both in the order’s “home area” and far and wide across the Tibetan-speaking world, creating a complex web of monastic institutions. Most of the Buddhist literature available in northern India was translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan, usually by small teams which included both Tibetans and Indians. The culmination of this literary endeavour was the formation in the 13th and 14th centuries of the Tibetan Buddhist scriptural canon which in its various editions has remained standard down to the present day.

Parallel efforts of religious organisation and scriptural canonisation were at the same time being begun by two other groups. The first of these harked back to the days of the early kingdom and claimed to represent an authentic Buddhist tradition handed down from that time, the so-called “old order” (Nyingmapa). Undoubtedly much literature of an early type was conserved by this group, who filled in any gaps with “rediscovered works” or “terma” (a genre swiftly emulated by others). The second group, who styled themselves Bonpo, traced their origins to the western land of Tasi⁴ via a country and language known as Shangshung. Notwithstanding this rather surprising affiliation, they managed to create an organisation and a literature closely comparable to those of their Buddhist contemporaries.

The achievement of this period was the consolidation and wide dissemination of newly resurgent standard written forms of the Tibetan language. Although used overwhelmingly for religious purposes and heavily indebted to foreign, mainly Sanskrit models, they were well enough suited also to a wide variety of literary and official uses.

Mid 13th-Early 20th Centuries

During the course of these six and a half centuries there was little overall cultural change in the Tibetan-speaking area, at least in comparison with other periods in its history. Political control of Tibet itself was wielded with brief lay interregnums by one or other of the major Buddhist monastic orders and their aristocratic allies, beginning with the Sakyapas in the 13th and 14th centuries, and followed by various Kargyupa orders from the 14th to the 17th centuries and finally the Gelugpas from the mid-17th century. The ultimate guarantor of their rule was usually, whether in theory or in practice, an outside power, generally some group of Mongols before the eighteenth century, followed by the Manchu (Ch'ing) dynasty of China. The 17th and 18th centuries saw the permanent political detachment of Ladakh, Bhutan and other Tibetan-speaking parts of Nepal and India from the rule of Lhasa, while some eastern areas in Kham and Amdo became increasingly controlled by China, and others managed to retain some sort of independent status.

Whatever their political fortunes, most areas remained culturally dominated by organised Buddhism throughout this period, though Islam made some progress in the far west. The secure position of Buddhism, the lack of serious population pressure, a self-sufficient economy, isolation from many of the currents of world events and relative freedom from major armed conflict and natural disasters encouraged a high degree of social and cultural stability and conservatism - some might say fossilisation. On the literary scene a confident Buddhist clergy produced vast quantities of mainly religious writings. Much of this output took the form of the recycling of earlier material, and there was little essential linguistic change in the classical Tibetan in which it was written, though a trend towards increasing elaboration and complexity in vocabulary and syntax is detectable in some circles. While their quantity is daunting and their quality not always rewarding, the written works of this period nevertheless include many of high literary merit as well as important content.

The Early 20th Century

The first half of the 20th century, while it brought little or no difference to the daily lives of most of the population, laid the ground for a diminution of Tibet's isolation and for potentially far-reaching social and cultural change. There were military incursions into Tibet from both British India and China, and Tibet could no longer remain entirely unaffected by the often radical political, cultural and economic developments in those two countries and in other parts of the world. While the influence of the monastic establishment continued unabated, a demand was voiced in some, mainly lay quarters for changes which had cultural implications. On the linguistic front these involved questions of what written media were appropriate in modern conditions, and of the status and development of the spoken dialects: questions which had already been raised in the second half of the 19th century by Christian missionaries and others.

Modern Developments

Around the middle of the 20th century the coincident independence of India and Pakistan and the creation of the Peoples' Republic of China saw the formal and actual integration of most of the Tibetan-speaking area into one or other of those countries, all of which were imbued with a new national consciousness and a commitment to rapid economic and other development. While Nepal and Bhutan were not subject to such dramatic changes of regime, it was not to be long before they too adopted policies of modernisation.

Geographical divisions within the Tibetan-speaking world corresponding to political spheres of influence have been present since at least the 9th century AD, but during most of their history they have seldom impeded communications to any great extent. Geopolitical developments since the second world war, however, have strongly reinforced many of these divisions, often splitting the area into watertight compartments under very different regimes and ideologies for years at a time. Thus from 1959 until the late 1970s the Tibetan speaking parts of China were not only almost completely cut off from the rest of the Tibetan-speaking world (and to some extent from each other), but also subjected to ferocious experiments in social and cultural reform, particularly during the Cultural Revolution of the late sixties and early seventies.

Tibetan-speakers in India and Nepal have also been affected by what local English-speaking politicians are wont to call "socio-economic transformation", though in a much more relaxed and democratic manner than has been the case in China. The Baltis of Pakistan found their already limited contacts with the mainstream of Tibetan civilisation further attenuated. The kingdom of Bhutan has retained the greatest degree of political independence and shows a keen and sophisticated sense of its cultural heritage, but it too has instituted social and economic change with outside help, and, like Sikkim, has also seen an increase in its Nepali-speaking community.

Whatever the country and type of regime, the effects of these modern changes are in some ways quite similar, though varying greatly in intensity. Administrators, educationists, technicians and traders move in to administrative centres from outside, often accompanied by large numbers of military personnel. The local Tibetan-speakers are presented with new opportunities in education (often outside the area) and employment (often in government service). Urban centres begin to develop: although small by world standards they often represent a new type of social phenomenon. Medical advances lead to population increase, and patterns of marriage and family organisation may change, particularly near the urban centres.

Non-local languages - Chinese, Urdu, Nepali or Hindi - come into use, with English never far behind. While many, perhaps most, Tibetan speakers still live in remote villages where life continues very much in traditional style, none are likely in the long run to escape the cultural, including linguistic changes of modern times. The centrifugal tendency for Tibetan speakers to be absorbed into the life of the various and very dissimilar nation states in which they now live poses a challenge to the centripetal Tibetan cultural tradition which tends to hold them together. On the positive side, rates of literacy in Tibetan tend to increase, sometimes dramatically, in and near the main towns.

A major development since the 1950s has been the presence of some 100,000 refugees from Tibet in India, Nepal and Bhutan, with smaller groups in such diverse countries as Switzerland, Canada and Turkey. Associated with them has been a veritable renaissance of classical learning and academic endeavour which has involved non-Tibetans from many parts of the world and which is now having a significant effect within Tibet itself.

Notes

- 1 Roerich (1931:283) offers no supporting evidence for his view of the origin of the Tibetans in waves of nomad hordes sweeping in from the northeast.
- 2 The writing system was obviously very carefully adapted to the Tibetan language of the time. The importance it gives to the syllable and the lack of interest in the word could perhaps suggest that the Tibetans were familiar with that aspect of the Chinese writing system.
- 3 See Róna-Tas (1985:ch.6); Francke (1912); Hoernle (1916); Laufer (1914, 1918); Clauson & Yoshitake (1929); Thomas (1951); Uray (1955a).
- 4 A loanword from Arabic, denoting an area roughly corresponding to the Iranian cultural sphere.

3. Varieties of Tibetan

Like most other languages, Tibetan is a collection of sub-varieties: some spoken, some written, and some intermediate between the two; some confined to particular geographical areas, others more widely spread; and many of them further subdividable into different genres, styles and registers.

A threefold division into colloquial, written, and intermediate or “narrative” styles forms a useful pattern for a broad classification of varieties, provided one remembers that all such schemes are to some extent arbitrary. It groups them on three “levels” according to criteria such as: the purposes for which the varieties are used, and by whom; the degree to which they involve speech and writing respectively; and the degree to which they vary from place to place.

Spoken Dialects

General characteristics

The spoken dialects, which however one divides them up are quite numerous, are the vernaculars of daily life, spoken by people of all social groups and classes, and without any reported linguistic distinctions between the sexes. Two of their characteristics should be noted immediately:

Firstly, they differ greatly from one another, particularly in phonology but also significantly in vocabulary and in the use of grammatical particles. They also differ in the extent to which they incorporate a separate “honorific” register, which is used when conversing with one’s social or religious superiors, or with strangers and social equals to whom one wishes to be especially polite. This honorific register, to be discussed more fully later, operates mainly on the level of vocabulary, though it can also have a phonological dimension.¹

No objective measure of mutual intelligibility has been applied to Tibetan dialects, and opinions on the matter vary. Thus according to the *Linguistic Atlas of China* (Australian Academy of the Humanities 1987) Central Tibetan and the Amdo dialect (Northeast Tibetan) are “basically mutually unintelligible”. It has been observed in recent years that Central Tibetans and Amdo Tibetans often find it easiest to communicate in Chinese. Informants from Nangchen in northwest Kham are quoted by Causemann (1989) as finding little difficulty in understanding the Kham dialect of Derge some 250 kilometres southeast and that of the Goloks a similar distance northeast in the neighbouring part of Amdo, but as finding the Amdo Tibetan of 700

kilometres northeast completely unintelligible. Conversely, Hermanns was told by an Amdo lama that Kham dialects sounded like the unintelligible “twittering of birds”.

The southern dialect of the Sherpas of Nepal is said by T.Thingo (1988) to be “not readily understandable by Tibetans, in part even unintelligible.”²

Concerning the far western dialects of Balti, Purik, Ladakhi, Spiti and Lahul, spoken over an area some 450 kilometres across, S.Koshal (1990) reports a “fairly high degree of mutual intelligibility”, though this is naturally greatest between neighbouring pairs of dialects, and Lahuli and Balti situated at opposite ends of this continuum would seem from their descriptions to pose significant difficulties of communication. From the scanty evidence at our disposal, a distance of 450-500 kilometres might be postulated as the maximum for practical intelligibility between dialects.³

The question of whether the Tibetan language area is a true continuum, every village having a dialect only slightly different from its neighbours as suggested by some of the above evidence, or whether there are major lines of cleavage separating blocks of relatively homogeneous dialects as suggested in the *Linguistic Atlas of China*, cannot be answered at present. It is further complicated by the existence of nomadic groups scattered widely in some areas (particularly the east) and allegedly speaking dialects similar to each other but very different from those of nearby settled communities.

A second characteristic of the spoken dialects of Tibetan is the extreme reluctance of most of their speakers to use them in written form. The almost ubiquitous dissemination of the standardised written Tibetan language since at least the 8th century AD and its high social and religious prestige have until recently made it the automatic choice for all forms of administration and literature, both religious and secular. The fact that it no longer obviously corresponds to any particular local dialect (if it ever did) is often seen, quite logically, as an advantage, for it helps to unify the national culture without according special privilege to the speech of any one district. A disadvantage of this independence of writing and speech is that the written language exerts less influence than it might otherwise do on the spoken dialects, which are left free to drift apart from one another and become ever less mutually intelligible.

Lingua franca dialects

No doubt because of such problems of intelligibility between the spoken dialects, versions of a few of them, while still regionally based on a “home” district, have become *lingua franca* dialects, used and understood over wider areas by people who speak their own local colloquial dialect as well. The *lingua franca* dialects are officially encouraged, being important in government administration, and are also used for religious and commercial purposes. The most important of them are Lhasa Tibetan, used to varying degrees in most parts of the Tibetan-speaking world; Dzongkha, now current over most of Bhutan; Leh Ladakhi known throughout Ladakh, Purik, Zangskar and formerly Baltistan; and the Drokke of Amdo. They could be regarded as occupying a higher sub-level within the level of colloquial dialects, since they are subject to less regional variation and are somewhat less isolated from written dialects. With perhaps the partial exception of Dzongkha however, they

can really only be considered as spoken dialects, and in no way as replacements for written Tibetan. Compared with most strictly local dialects they have a large vocabulary and a well-developed honorific register.

Dialect Classification

Indigenous and foreign scholars are united in recognising a large number of spoken dialects of Tibetan. On the taxonomy of these dialects there is less agreement: inevitably so, given the fragmentary nature of the available data and the differing aims of the scholars involved in the task. As in the case of any other language, the details of a dialect classification will vary with one's definition of a "dialect". They will also vary with the relative weighting of the criteria employed - criteria both linguistic (phonology, grammar, lexis) and non-linguistic (geography, ethnography, sociology, politics); and with the fineness of the distinctions which one is prepared to make. A concern to trace genetic relationships diachronically through history may well lead to a different classification from a synchronic study of dialects at one particular point in time. Most of the schemes produced so far, when not based on simple geographical schemes, rely heavily on phonology and make little or no attempt at genealogical classification.

Classifications of the dialects of the whole Tibetan-speaking area are surprisingly few, and often lacking in detail. H.A.Jaeschke's pioneering effort in his *Dictionary* of 1881 is still frequently referred to; it was followed by two rather different classifications from G.N.Roerich (1931, 1961). T.Nishida (1970, 1987) has combined a global classification with a scheme of genealogical relationship; unfortunately this work is available only in Japanese, though some of it is summarised and adapted by A.Róna-Tas (1985:153ff) and J.Sun (1986:1-3). Schemes limited to particular regions, particularly the east and the west, are more numerous.⁴

Geographical

Not surprisingly, dialects are usually named and classified geographically according to the area in which they are spoken; or, in the case of the *lingua franca* or "official" dialects such as Lhasa Tibetan and Leh Ladakhi, their areas of origin. Dzongkha, the official language of Bhutan, takes its name from the Dzongs or fortified buildings which serve as government headquarters over a wide area of the country.

Economic-social-religious

An economic and sociological element enters some taxonomies which emphasise a cleavage between the dialects of nomadic and settled populations that cuts across geographical divisions, particularly in northeast Tibet.⁵ One of the nomadic northeastern dialects, Drokke ("steppe language") has itself served as an official dialect. As it happens, these nomadic dialects are said by some authorities to be linguistically "archaic"; a correlation which may hold true for northeast Tibet but which is certainly not valid in western areas such as Baltistan and Ladakh, where archaic-type dialects

are spoken by settled farming populations. Nor does it hold in all parts of eastern Tibet (Kham) or central and western Tibet, where some nomadic groups speak extremely non-archaic dialects. I shall discuss the question of “archaism” further below.

Particularly within nomadic populations it has often proved tempting to classify dialects according to the ethnonyms borne by their speakers; thus such names as Golok and Banak are essentially those of ethnic or kinship units whose geographical spheres are rather vaguely defined and liable to change. Even some groups not engaged in pastoral nomadism may be known by names which are not derived from their area of habitation, but are rather “ethnic”, such as the Sherpas, or economic, such as the Kagate (“paper-makers”) of Nepal and Sikkim, with their respective dialects.

A religious factor has been noted in the Ladakhi group of dialects by S.Koshal, who states (1979) that

“The Muslim variety differs from the standard [Buddhist] one in terms of phonology and lexicon. The Muslim variety shows a higher incidence of Perso-Arabic borrowings ... Muslim speakers also show a tendency of devoicing intervocalic stops in certain lexical items.”

Informants have told me of a similarly distinctive - and favourably regarded - variety of Lhasa Tibetan spoken by the city’s Muslim community.

Historico-linguistic

Some scholars, including notably A.Róna-Tas in his *Tibeto-Mongolica* (1966), following Uray (1949) and others back to Jaeschke (1865a,b,c), classify dialects along a scale of phonological conservatism moving from “archaic” through “transitional” to “non-archaic”. This at least has the merit of basing the classification of linguistic entities (dialects) on linguistic (phonological) criteria, though it also makes assumptions about the history of the language, some of which may be open to debate. The scheme has been used to greatest effect in studying the archaic dialects, and as developed so far has had little to say about the non-archaic dialects, which are probably in the great majority. Róna-Tas himself (1966:21) writes: “I use the term ‘archaic’ for those Tibetan dialects which do not have pitch [register] as a phonematic suprasegmental feature, and have preserved in a more or less complete form the preradical [initial consonant cluster] system of Old Tibetan.”

Briefly, “archaic” dialects which have a “complete preradical system” show many word-initial consonant clusters; “non-archaic” dialects show none. The most archaic dialects have clusters incorporating nasal consonants as well as clusters with only oral consonants. Somewhat less archaic dialects have only one kind; generally oral, though there are dialects with only nasal clusters. A complication is the existence of some western dialects with word-final as well as word-initial clusters. Dialects with some clusters and perhaps also incipient or partial “phonematic suprasegmental pitch” would be classified as “transitional”.

Linguistic

The terminology of Sprigg (1972b), who divides dialects along what are essentially comparable criteria to those of Róna-Tas between “cluster” and “non-cluster” dialects seems preferable to “archaic” and “non-archaic”, as it makes no assumptions as to the antiquity of any dialect or the nature of “Old Tibetan”. It also has the advantage of avoiding the possible confusion between the pronunciation of words in spoken dialects and the spelling of their written equivalents which can be introduced by the use of terms such as “preradical”.

Problems

As I have indicated, the classifications offered by different scholars are not always in agreement, and even the same scholar has sometimes changed his mind. Many classifications suffer from vagueness and/or ambiguity. Thus the lists of the dialects of the Kham region given in Hermanns (1952), Roerich (1931), Migot (1956) and Jumian (1989) are all different and all read in part like simple enumerations of well-known districts and urban centres. The “Panaka” of Rockhill (1891a,b) seems to be rather different from Roerich’s dialect of the same name. In Central Tibet there is confusion between “Lhasa Tibetan” and “Central Tibetan”, some taking the two to be synonymous, others holding them to be distinct. In the west there is disagreement over whether certain bodies of material should be classed as Balti, Purik or Ladakhi. Even purely linguistic criteria are not without problems. Thus Koshal (1990) plausibly classes Zangskar on lexical and grammatical grounds as a sub-dialect of Ladakhi, but it fails to satisfy the phonological criteria by which Ladakhi has been classified as “archaic”.

Many parts of the Tibetan-speaking area are virtual *terra incognita* from the dialect point of view. Although the extreme western dialects of Baltistan and Ladakh are fairly well served, and much work has been done on some central and southern dialects, there are large intervening areas of Western Tibet about which little is known. The same is true of most of the northern areas which though very sparsely inhabited are not totally devoid of human population. While information on eastern dialects is much more copious, it tends to relate to isolated and widely separated bodies of material, often from only one informant, leaving vast geographical gaps. Another big lacuna lies in the eastern parts of Central Tibet.

Furthermore, not a few of the “dialects” on which we do have information are represented by somewhat suspect data - often material from a vaguely identified single informant of mysterious antecedents. One often suspects that the authors concerned have not avoided the pitfalls, warned against by Sprigg and Sun, of getting their informants to read from texts or to pronounce isolated words (see below under “reading and spelling styles”). Some of the material of, for example, Wen Yu (1946) and Migot (1956) may be vulnerable to these criticisms. For the so-called Bhotia dialect of Garhwal, the material is characterised even by its presenter, Grierson (1909:100) as “untrustworthy” - and with good reason, judging by the later work of Zoller (1983:XXIXff). While one can only be grateful to all the authors who have collected and published Tibetan dialect material, one should remember that not all of

them would claim to be trained in linguistics. At the other extreme however, the field is fortunate in being able to boast of some thorough and sophisticated studies of high quality, among which I would include Jackson Sun's monograph on the Dzong dialect, S.Koshal's books on Ladakhi, and the work of Sprigg and Róna-Tas. The series of dialect monographs in German entitled *Beiträge zur tibetischen Erzählforschung* edited by D.Schuh is also most impressive, though as these works concentrate on material derived from oral literature it may be that their subject matter might be classed as narrative-style Tibetan rather than, or as well as, the colloquial language.

Conclusion: a scheme of classification

The scheme of classification I adopt for the purposes of this book follows on from those of Róna-Tas, Sprigg and others in ranging dialects along a continuum from "cluster" dialects at one extreme through "transitional" dialects to "non-cluster" dialects at the other. In cluster dialects, initial consonants both simple and cluster which may total over 100, play an important role in establishing lexical distinctions, while vowel systems are relatively simple, comprising on a phonemic-type analysis some six or so primary vowels, usually with no distinction of vowel length, nasality or tone. Most cluster dialects are relatively well-provided with simple consonant finals, and some with final consonant clusters. The best-described of the extreme cluster dialects is Amdo Khake with about 114 syllable initials, 36 of them simple and 78 cluster (see Min & Geng 1989) listed in Appendix 2. Possibly even more extreme is Huari (Hermanns 1952), and the mysterious "Khams" of Jaeschke (1881:XVIff).

As one moves through the continuum of transitional dialects, initial consonant clusters become fewer, the resulting loss of lexical distinction being compensated for by a progressive complication of the vowel system, which involves the presence of more vowel phonemes (usually including secondary vowels); also contrastive vowel length and/or nasality and tone, often confined to certain phonological types of syllable only. Final consonants become fewer.

Truly non-cluster dialects have no word-initial consonant clusters (though seemingly always some word-medial syllable-initial clusters), and a restricted inventory of less than 30 simple initials. Vowel systems are complex with a rich vowel inventory, contrastive length and nasality, and tonal distinctions applying to all types of constituent which may stand as monosyllables or word-initial syllables. Final consonants are few. The most extreme non-cluster dialect so far described is probably Dingri with 27 syllable initials, all simple, listed in Appendix 2 (Herrmann 1989).

While my scheme could well turn out to represent the diachronic development of Tibetan dialects from an original cluster-type dialect towards the present-day non-cluster dialects (in which case modern cluster dialects might indeed be "archaic"), no such assumption is built into it. In the first place I doubt whether modern Tibetan dialects have a single ancestor. In the second place, it seems to me that different dialects have probably taken different routes towards the same general goal, so that if any two dialects at the same level of the classification are compared, dialect a will be found to be the more archaic in some respects, dialect b in others. This "multi-track" picture of a variety of different dialects mostly moving in the same general direction (at

least phonologically) makes it rather pointless to try and locate each one precisely along a single continuum. As already pointed out, it says nothing about other aspects of language, including lexis and grammar.

Geographical Distribution

With this linguistic classification in mind, the Tibetan-speaking area may be roughly divided into seven broad geographical blocks for my present purpose: the northeast (Amdo); the east (Kham); the north; the west; the central Himalayas (India & Nepal); Central Tibet; and the south (eastern Himalayas). The dialects as named by the various authors are listed in Appendix 1.

The Northeast and East (Amdo and Kham)

The northeastern and eastern parts of the Tibetan-speaking area may conveniently be separated from northern and central Tibet, and divided from each other, by reference to the major river systems of the region. The northern section is known to the Tibetans as Amdo - the basin of the upper Yellow River (Tibetan Machu, Chinese Huanghe) and its tributaries extending as far north as the Nanshan mountain range and including the Kokonor Lake area. Most of it falls into the present-day Chinese province of Qinghai, but it also extends into the southwestern fringe of Gansu and the northern tip of Sichuan.

Amdo is separated from Kham (sometimes written Khams) to the south by the Bayankhara mountain range which constitutes the watershed dividing the Yellow River system to the north from the upper valleys of the Min, Dajin, Dzachu (Yalong), Drichu (Yangtse), Lachu (Mekong) and Ngulchu (Salween) rivers. These rivers flow south or southeastwards through Kham into the Yangtse system or into Southeast Asia.

Kham extends eastwards and southwards through Sichuan and northern Yunnan as far as the limits of the Tibetan language; to the northwest it extends up the Drichu (Yangtse) to include the Nangchen/Jyekundo area (Yushu district of Qinghai Province); and to the west, at least for linguistic purposes, to the Ngulchu (Salween) valley or the watershed between it and the Pochu valley in the eastern part of the Tibetan Autonomous Region

This demarcation of Amdo and Kham is the one generally accepted for geographical and cultural purposes. While most authorities also divide dialects into an Amdo group and a Kham group, there is less agreement on where the actual linguistic boundaries lie. Scholars such as Hermanns and Roerich draw them to coincide with the geographical boundaries sketched out above; the *Language Atlas of China* on the other hand shows an extension of Amdo dialect some 350 km into what is geographically Kham. Conversely, it classifies the vernaculars of Chone and Drukchu as Kham dialects although they are situated in Amdo geographically and separated from the main block of Kham dialect by some 325 km. The same work shows the western varieties of Kham dialects as stretching right across northern Tibet as far west

as a point north of Lake Manasarowar in western Tibet, in a startling extension of the toponym “Kham”.

Amdo

All the many dialects of Amdo are said by Hermanns (1952), Ekvall (1939) and Jumian (1989) to be fairly easily mutually intelligible. Three broad schemes for their classification have been proposed.

Nomadic versus sedentary. Several authors, including Hermanns (1952), Ekvall (1939) and Norbu (1983), following local usage have stressed a fundamental division between nomadic dialects (Drokpa, Drokke) and settled or “valley” dialects (Rongpa, Rongba, Rongke) within Amdo, usually indicating that the nomadic varieties are comparatively archaic. The *Language Atlas of China* uses the same terminology, adding a “neither nomadic nor settled” (or “both nomadic and settled”?) type (Rongmadrokpa). It does not however differentiate the types on linguistic grounds. From the ten phonetic/phonological characteristics it gives for Amdo dialects, probably all three types would have to be classed as archaic. Evidently non-archaic dialects in Amdo, such as Chone and Drukchu, are classified as “Kham” in the *Atlas*. There is rather little agreement on the geographical distribution of these dialects between the maps of Ekvall and the *Atlas*, though if one takes the Rongpa, Rongmadrokpa and “Kham” dialects of the *Atlas* together, they form a continuous band along the eastern side of Amdo which partly corresponds to Ekvall’s “sedentary” dialects.

The Drokpa dialect of the nomadic segment of the Huari people described by Hermanns seems to be an extremely cluster-rich dialect, though unfortunately Hermanns gives only isolated words and sounds without saying how they were elicited. The Huari are somewhat vaguely located northeast of the Kokonor, whither they are said to have migrated in the 17th century from nearer the lake itself. A.Róna-Tas (1983) has transcribed a reading by T.J.Norbu of a text written partly in “colloquial Amdowa” in what apparently purports to be a Drokpa dialect learned from a teacher from the Ongta district near the Kokonor, alternatively called “Banag” (Panaka). As transcribed, this dialect seems to be about as *non-cluster* as it could possibly be. It is in this respect also quite unlike the Panaka dialects described by Rockhill (1891a,b), Roerich (1958b) and Kara (1983).⁶ A transcription of a reading of the same text by a speaker from Southern Amchog is almost equally non-cluster except in syllables following a word ending in a vowel: an unusual phenomenon which might make the dialect “transitional”. The fact that both readings are, by definition, in the “reading style”, (see below under “reading and spelling styles”) adds further uncertainty.

The fragmentary nature of our information and the confusion in the nomenclature and location of the various nomadic groups, dialects, populations and districts found in the sources is too great to enable the problem to be explored further without extensive fieldwork. The question of nomadic versus sedentary dialects is complicated by the fact that some named population groups are divided into nomadic and settled sections, which may or may not share a common dialect. Thus for example the Huari dialect studied by Hermanns (1952) is that spoken by the nomadic

section of the group, and distinct from that of the agriculturalists who share the name of Huari. For Rebkong, by contrast, Roerich (1958b) states that this group is also divided into nomadic and settled sections, but makes no mention of any linguistic difference between the two. Although Rebkong is clearly a cluster dialect, the inhabitants of the area are stated to be sedentary by Ekvall (1939), even though he insists on the linguistic contrast between the peoples of the desert and the sown. It should also be remembered that it is in the nature of nomadic groups to shift their locations and to change their names and even the consciousness of their ethnic identity over sometimes quite short stretches of time. The Goloks of southwest Amdo, for example, have evidently been a heterogeneous and unstable grouping speaking a variety of dialects, some of them perhaps not even strictly Tibetan. They are a group or series of groups of nomads occupying a large area stretching from the Panaka territory near the Kokonor in the north, extending west of the Yellow River and then across its upper course across the Bayankhara range to the borders of Nangchen in Kham. The "Golok" of Sprigg (1972b, 1979) and of Roerich (1958b) (the latter originating largely from the northeastern part of the Golok area) are clearly dialects comparable in the richness of their clusters to Huari, but the Golok neighbouring on Nangchen to the southwest, described by Causemann's informants as "almost identical" (nahezu gleich) to their own dialect, must be something different (1989). Roerich's opinion that the Goloks are both ethnically and linguistically diverse evidently contains some truth.

Settled groups of people also can change their names, migrate elsewhere or even become nomadic.

These inconsistencies - not to say contradictions - of classification and terminology are extreme though far from isolated examples of the difficulties of using the secondary literature in Tibetan dialectology. In this particular case it would seem wisest to suspend judgement on the issue of the "nomadic" versus the "settled" dialects of Amdo until we have a much larger and more reliable corpus of properly located and identified material to work with.

Geographic/ethnic. G.N.Roerich (1958b) ignores the socio-economic division between nomadic and sedentary, and classifies the dialects along geographic and ethnic lines, distinguishing a northern and a southern group within Amdo dialect proper, to which he adds Banag to the northwest and Golok to the southwest (both essentially ethnic designations), with Chone occupying a somewhat uncertain position to the east.

Linguistic. Róna-Tas (1966) and others have classified the dialects of Amdo along the scale of phonological "archaism" alluded to above.

Cluster dialects. Material from some eighteen varieties of spoken Tibetan from Amdo itself suggests a classification as cluster dialects. Of these, ten display both oral and nasal clusters and three oral clusters only; for the remaining five there is insufficient information to decide which clusters are found.

The valuable work of Min & Geng (1989) on "colloquial Amdo" is a fully-fledged teaching primer aimed at the non-native speaker, covering the grammar and including

short texts and a glossary with Chinese translations and romanised equivalents for the vocabulary. Evidently its dialect is a form of the “standard” Amdo *lingua franca* or Drokke often referred to, for otherwise few outsiders would wish to learn it and the considerable effort of producing the book would have been pointless.

The remaining works on cluster dialects are a mixed bag ranging from travellers’ word lists (e.g. Ekvall 1939, Rockhill 1891a,b) to a lengthy dictionary with Chinese, Japanese and English translations (Go et al. 1954) and sophisticated linguistic analyses (Sprigg 1972b and Sun 1986). Jackson T.-S. Sun’s material from a Dzorge dialect is presented and analysed in an exemplary scientific fashion which puts it in an entirely different class from most other Tibetan dialect studies. Dzorge as a geographical term apparently covers the valleys of the Kachu and Mechu rivers, tributaries of the Yellow River at its “dogleg”, and according to Roerich’s map (1958b) extends northwards as far as Amchog south of Labrang.

The term “Tangut” is derived from the Mongolian word for the Tibetans of these parts: the three varieties so named were collected in different areas and show dialectal differences.

The main body of material on the Amdo dialects with oral clusters only is that from the dialect of the part-settled, part-nomadic area of Rebkong northwest of Labrang, given in Roerich’s *Le Parler de l’Amdo* (1958b): a systematic study also covering grammar. A few words from Wayen, spoken by a group of “Tibetanised Mongols” between Xining and the Yellow River, also fall into this category, as do others from a form of Panaka/Banag cited by Roerich and Kara (1983) which is evidently distinct from that of Rockhill.

A few references in Sun’s book to the dialects of Amchog (south of Labrang) and Arig (east of the Kokonor) show evidence of oral clusters, but the material is insufficient for diagnosis of nasal clusters. The same is true of Ekvall’s material (Ekvall 1939) from “Brog-skad” (Drokke) and Nishida’s from “Qinghai” (Nishida 1960), both vague designations impossible to locate precisely, and both confined to numerals, in none of which one would expect to find nasal clusters anyway.

Transitional dialects. The Amdo Sherpa dialect is the subject of a detailed phonological study by Nagano (1980).⁷ Since it is partly tonal and has nasal clusters only I have classed it as “transitional”. The South Amchog reading style is hard to classify: since it has oral and nasal word-initial clusters, but only after words ending in a vowel, so that perhaps it fits into this category better than any other.

Non-cluster dialects. Of the non-cluster Amdo dialects, only the “Tangut” of Shibata (1951) is represented by much material in any western language publication. Shibata’s informant was from the Luchu river south of old T’ao-chou, presumably near Chone.⁸ The “Gyo tzang” of Hermanns (1952), which he calls “very corrupted” (*sehr korrumpiert*) may be the same as the “Gro tshang” of Norbu (1983). Several authors have commented on the distinctiveness of the Chone dialect within Amdo, though without giving much material on it. Ekvall attributed its character to prolonged contacts between the monastic centre of Chone and Central Tibet, while the *Language Atlas of China* classifies it and the neighbouring Hbrugchu as Kham dialects. The work of Qu (1962) is not accessible to me.

*Kham*⁹

According to Gesong Jumian (1989), "Inner difference is relatively great within the Kham dialect which is represented by groups of subdialects of the South, of the North and of the Central area, and of the cattle breeders." The *Language Atlas of China* divides Kham dialects into Southern in Yunnan; Northern in Qinghai, Eastern in Sichuan and the east of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, and Western extending right across northern Tibet. It may be doubted whether the linguistic term "Kham" is much more than a convenient geographical label for a rather heterogeneous collection of dialects which range from extreme cluster dialects to transitional dialects well on the way to being non-cluster. As a whole, the land of Kham with its warmer and damper climate and more plentiful water supplies is a more agricultural area than Amdo, though the upland belts (Gang) between the deep river defiles also support groups of nomads (Jumian's "cattle breeders"), at the same time clearly separating the farmers in each valley from those of the next.

Apart from Nangchen, the nasal- and oral-cluster dialects of Kham are all in some way problematic. The "Khams" dialect of Jaeschke (1881) would appear to be perhaps the most extreme cluster dialect of all; unfortunately we are given no details on the home of this dialect nor any on the informant(s) used by Jaeschke, who was working in Lahul at least 2,000 km. from the nearest part of Kham. Grierson's material on the dialect (Grierson 1909) is derived from Jaeschke. It is possible that it is in fact an Amdo dialect, and quite likely that it is a reading style.

The remainder are all from the eastern parts of Kham. The status of Migot's Tao material (Migot 1956) and Von Rosthorn's Han-niu (Rosthorn 1894) is a little mysterious. Róna-Tas (1966) claims that Tao "shows some influence from the non-Tibetan Tao-fu language" (the *Language Atlas of China* shows dialects of Amdo type around Tao). F.W.Thomas (1948:93) regards Han-niu as a "very much Tibetanised" variety of a Gyarong (non-Tibetan) dialect. The several dialects of Gyarong complicate the picture in this area to the northeast, north and northwest of Kangding, as there has been mutual influence between the two languages, and within Gyarong it is often difficult to distinguish words cognate with Tibetan from Tibetan loanwords of various periods. Finally the Sa-stod data presented by Wen Yu (1946) is subject to the same doubts as his other material, since it contains no actual words and could be influenced by the literary language. However, the cumulative evidence of these dialects along with that of Chog-che would seem to support the existence of cluster dialects in this eastern part of Kham.

The Nangchen dialect is the subject of a detailed monograph by M.Causemann (1989). As she describes it the dialect is non-tonal, though Biemeier (1988a:17) prefers to regard her "breathy voice" (she uses the English term) as low phonemic pitch contrasting with high. This would make it the only known tonal dialect with both nasal and oral preradicals, in which case it might be better classified as transitional.

The one Kham cluster dialect showing oral clusters only is represented by Wen Yu's material from "Chog-che", otherwise known as one of the 18 states of the Gyarong area. It is limited like most of this author's other data to a list of syllable-initial sounds corresponding to the Tibetan spellings.

An interesting case is presented by the so-called Washul dialects (R.A.Stein, 1961b:22, 48, 66). Washul is the name given to a series of nomadic groups based in the upland area of Serta in northern Kham who have also fanned out southwards along parts of the tablelands between the river valleys as far south as the 30th parallel. In earlier centuries they are said to have lived among the Goloks of southern Amdo and before that in the Kokonor region, where legend ascribes to them an origin in groups of disbanded troops brought in from western Tibet in the early royal period of the 8th and 9th centuries. Whatever the truth of these traditions (which are somewhat confused though not without supporting evidence), they point to a southward extension into Kham of northerly dialects, presumably of an Amdo type, which may be reflected in the assignment of the dialects of the Tao area to the Amdo group by the *Language Atlas of China*. They also provide a useful reminder that folk-migrations, even from one end of the Tibetan-speaking world to the other, have been a normal feature of Tibetan history.

The best-recorded of the transitional Kham dialects are those of Drayab, Bathang, Kandze and Gyethang. Most of these transitional dialects appear to have tonal distinctions in many but not all types of syllable, with nasal but not oral clusters and also a series of voiceless nasal initials. The presumed non-cluster and “unspecified” Kham dialects are mostly very poorly recorded.

The North

The bleak northern zone of the Tibetan Autonomous Region is the most sparsely inhabited of the whole Tibetan-speaking area, and one whose ethnography is little known. Before the rise of the Tibetan empire in the 7th century it may have been part of the land of Shangshung. From the late 13th to at least the 16th century parts of it were occupied by groups of Mongols. Some of the nomads of the region are still known as “Hor”,¹⁰ an old Tibetan word for “Mongol”, and they may be descended from Mongols. Their dialects however, which Roerich (1931) divides into two - spoken north and south of the Thangla range respectively - appear to be Tibetan. Other inhabitants of the region and their dialects Roerich calls Changpas (“northerners”). To confuse matters, he also mentions groups of speakers of Amdo dialects in Namru region,¹¹ while the *Language Atlas of China* regards most of northern Tibet as the province of what it calls “western Khams” dialects.

Despite their desolation these northern wastes have been of strategic importance in the disposition of military forces and as corridors of communication, particularly in the early royal period and in the period of Mongol domination from the 13th-18th centuries. Traditions held by more than one group in eastern Tibet whereby they trace their origins to movements from the west across the northern zone need not be dismissed out of hand. These factors and the inherent mobility of nomadic populations may have resulted in all sorts of connections between the dialects of the north and those of other areas.

The West, Centre and South

In the present state of our knowledge the most obvious division of the dialects of this large area is into the far western cluster dialects - Balti, Purik and most varieties of Ladakhi - and the rest, which all seem to be at least partially tonal, with few or no word-initial consonant clusters.

The West

Balti, Purik, Ladakhi

The various subdialects of Balti, Purik/Purig/Purki and Ladakhi, all spoken in the interconnected valleys of the Indus system, seem to form a continuum.¹² K.Rangan's "Balti" (Rangan 1975) and his "Purki" (Rangan 1979), spoken on the Indian side of the cease-fire line, are the same dialect, the change of name being a response to local preference. The division between cluster and other dialects would seem to occur within the Ladakhi dialect, whose Zangskar, Rubshu and "Indian Changthang" subdialects appear to have no word-initial consonant clusters. Indian Changthang is said by Bielmeier (1985b) to show phonemic pitch, while Rubshu is classed as a form of "Central Tibetan" by Grierson (1909). Those two dialects are then presumably transitional or even non-cluster. However, Koshal (1990) regards all sub-dialects of Ladakhi as non-tonal, although she describes Zangskar as without initial clusters. On the face of it therefore Zangskar occupies an anomalous position - neither clusters nor tone - which would repay further investigation.

In fact it is open to debate whether even Balti and the cluster subdialects of Ladakhi are non-tonal. Sprigg has devoted an article to the question of tone in Balti,¹³ in which he draws attention to a set of disyllabic and trisyllabic nouns with lexically distinctive pitch patterns. In Leh Ladakhi, from my own experience it seems to me that words beginning with what Koshal calls a "murmured l" might alternatively be regarded as of lexically low pitch.¹⁴ However, the domain of such phenomena within the respective dialects seems to be quite restricted, and in the case of Balti the correlation of tone with other features of the language seems to be quite different from that in other tonal dialects, suggesting that tonogenesis in Balti may have proceeded along quite independent lines. Other scholars have regarded these dialects as non-tonal, and as they are certainly rich in clusters, both initial and final, it seems reasonable to classify them as cluster for the time being.

Western Tibet, Himachal Pradesh

R.Bielmeier (1985b) has classed the dialects of Lahul and Spiti on the Indian side of the border in Himachal Pradesh and the nomad dialects of western Tibet as transitional, as they seem to be without initial clusters and according to him "show distinctive pitch levels to a greater or lesser extent." The dialects of Upper Kunawar, Nyamkat and Jat, insofar as they have been described, seem to be similar in these respects. The tonal status of some of these dialects is actually rather uncertain. While

Grierson firmly classes Lahuli as non-tonal, Roerich in his monograph on the dialect (1933b) states that it has distinctive tones, though he does not describe them very clearly. Of the neighbouring dialect of Spiti, Grierson says “Tones and accents are the same as the Central Dialect”, whereas Jaeschke regards it as transitional between western and central dialects. S.R.Sharma (1979:104-5) however describes its tones using a contour-based rather than a register-based system.

The *Language Atlas of China* classifies the western dialects of the Tibetan Autonomous Region as a subgroup within the central (“Dbusgtsang”) group.

Nepal

The Tibetan dialects of Nepal are grouped together here purely for convenience. Most of them do fall within Biemeier’s “southwestern transitional dialects” and all appear to be non-cluster and at least partly tonal, though most of them also seem to be very similar to their immediate neighbours over the border in Tibet. Little apart from word lists is known about the dialects of Humla, Mugu and Dolpo in the west. Glo-skad or the dialect of Mustang has been better studied, and seems from Nagano’s description (Nagano 1982, 1985) to be partly tonal, in that pitch levels are lexically distinctive only in words beginning with “alveolar and alveopalatal” consonants (sibilants), in what the author describes as “a beautiful example of tonogenesis”.

Of the remaining Nepalese Tibetan dialects, only Sherpa, Jirel and Kagate have been more than superficially investigated. The people of Langthang north of Kathmandu, though generally known as Tamangs, speak not the Tamang language but a Tibetan dialect. The Sherpas of Solu Khumbu near Mount Everest (not to be confused with the group of the same name in Yolmo/Helambu to the southwest) have offshoots in Sikkim and other parts of the Himalayas, and according to the *Language Atlas of China* their dialect extends a short way over the border into Tibet, south of Nyalam. They are unusual in having a well-documented history, which traces their origins to two districts in Kham in eastern Tibet. There they would have presumably spoken local Kham dialects, and might also have had contact with speakers of non-Tibetan languages.¹⁵ Their ancestors left these areas around 1500 and were settled for some decades in Central Tibet before moving into allegedly virgin territory in the Himalayas where they still live. Whether their present dialect resembles those of their ancestral homelands remains to be investigated.

Central Tibet

Central Tibet corresponds to the former administrative provinces of Ü and Tsang, whose borders varied somewhat over time but which covered the valley of the Tsangpo river and its tributaries south of the Nyenchen Thangla mountain range and westwards to about halfway between Sakya and the Lake Manasarawar area. The *Language Atlas of China* divides this area into two roughly equal halves for dialect purposes: “Gtsang” (Tsang) in the west and “Dbus” (Ü) to the east.

The dialect or dialects subsumed under the terms “Central Tibetan” and/or “Lhasa

Tibetan” - also sometimes called “Tibetan koiné” (as spoken all over the Tibetan-speaking world) and, misleadingly, “Literary Tibetan” or even “Classical Tibetan” - have been the subject of numerous studies during the past century. Considerable linguistic differences are apparent from one study to another; in part these may be artefacts of the different methods of presentation, or they may reflect differences in the training, mother tongue, aims or methodology of the various authors. Much of the variation must however be attributable to real dialectal differences over what is quite a large geographical area, which also has a degree of social complexity greater than most others.¹⁶ It is a pity that many of the authors concerned do not specify very closely exactly what they mean by the names they give to their dialects.

Most of the studies have in fact concentrated on the dialect spoken by natives of the town of Lhasa and/or its immediate environs. As a metropolitan centre (by Tibetan standards) and seat of government, whose visitors for purposes of trade, government, monastic purposes and pilgrimage must run into thousands per annum in normal times, harbouring also communities from other parts of Tibet and other nationalities, the town could hardly have a uniform dialect. Some sociolectal variations have been noted in the literature, for instance by Beyer (1992:27, 87fn.). Informants from Lhasa itself and those from other parts of the Tibetan-speaking area may not always hold identical views on what constitutes Lhasa Tibetan or Central Tibetan, or indeed on its importance as a *lingua franca*.

It is perhaps the cultural and political importance of the Lhasa dialect that has led to its overshadowing of other dialects of the eastern half of central Tibet. There is practically no information on dialects of such areas as Chayul, Kongpo and Powo to the south and east of Lhasa. The case of the dialect called by Shafer (1954) “Dwags” is a peculiar one. His study of it is based on word lists collected by Hodgson (in Kathmandu?), and he states that “The area in which the dialect is spoken has not been precisely defined ...” Following Hodgson, Shafer points to the well-known district of Dakpo west of Kongpo along the Tsangpo river, but Hodgson also confuses this with the Tawang area of Arunachal Pradesh some 200 kilometres southwest. As it happens there is a dialect locally called Dakpakha and said to be of Tibetan type, spoken in a small area in eastern Bhutan and the adjacent Tawang district. The relationship between Shafer’s “Dwags”, Dakpakha, the dialect(s) of Dakpo and the Monpa dialects of the same general area needs to be cleared up by further study. From the available material, “Dwags” seems to have some of the characteristics of a cluster dialect, but also to incorporate a number of words closer to those in other Tibeto-Burman languages than to Tibetan.

The dialects of Tsang province - the western half of central Tibet as here defined - have been surprisingly poorly studied, considering the cultural, political and economic importance of the area. Herrmann’s monograph on the Dingri dialect (1989) is an important exception.

The South

Grouped under this heading are the dialects of Sikkim in India; Tromowa in Tibet; and the Tibetan dialects of Bhutan, all of which appear to be broadly similar. In Arunachal

Pradesh and southern Tibet are found speakers of the various Monpa dialects.

Sikkim

The Tibetan of Sikkim, often called “Bhotia”, was the subject of a monograph by G.Sandberg as long ago as 1888, and has more recently been treated in a polemical style with radical proposals for script reform by a local resident, K.L.Kaleon (1982). Sikkim also houses several thousand Sherpa speakers as well as Tibetan refugees.

Tromowa

Tromowa, of which two varieties are distinguished by E.H.G.Walsh (1905), is spoken in the Chumbi Valley, a tongue of Tibetan territory extending southwards, and has enjoyed close trading relations with Sikkim, Bhutan and north Bengal. Part of its population is said to be of Bhutanese origin.

Bhutan

G.van Driem (1991a) has identified eight indigenous Tibetan dialects spoken in Bhutan. The most important, Dzongkha, he describes as “a cultivated form of the native language of western Bhutan, the inhabitants of which as well as their language have traditionally been known as ... ‘Nalong.’” The latter is comprised of several subdialects. Since about the 1960s Dzongkha has been the subject of strenuous efforts to establish it as a standard spoken and also written language. As a *lingua franca*, it is spoken to some degree practically all over Bhutan.

The Tibetan dialect with the second largest number of speakers in Bhutan is Cho-ca-nga-ca-kha, spoken in a small area in the east of the country along the Kurichu river. The others are Brokpa and Dakpakha in the extreme east of the country; Layakha and Lunakha to the north of the Dzongkha area near the Tibetan border, and Lakha and Brokkat in small areas in central Bhutan. To these should be added Tibetan dialects spoken by small numbers of exiles in various parts of the country.

Narrative Styles

Narrative styles are varieties of the language used for such purposes as oral literature (songs, poetry, folktales, epic, drama, liturgy etc.) and public speaking. While firmly based on colloquial dialects, or at least strongly influenced by them, these varieties are subject to less regional variation, partly no doubt because some of their practitioners are accustomed to travel around and perform in more than one colloquial dialect area. Furthermore, texts in these dialects sometimes get written down, in which case one could argue that they are no longer truly oral. Although their performers are commonly illiterate or may not have consulted written texts, one often suspects that written versions have played a part in the transmission of the texts in question. Mutual influence vis-a-vis truly written varieties is here much greater than it is in the case of colloquial dialects. Though everyone will have some familiarity with one or more of

these intermediate varieties, they do have to be learned, and their most active users may even be professional specialists in some oral genre.

The main difference between the narrative and the colloquial dialect of a given area will be the frequent use of both verse and formulaic speech patterns in the narrative dialect, and the presence of items of vocabulary, including sometimes grammatical particles, occurring in the narrative dialects of other areas (and probably in written Tibetan also), but not in the local colloquial. The pronunciation of the narrative style will mainly be the same as the colloquial, though there may be differences induced by the vocal technique of song or chant, and even special pronunciations of certain words, reflecting either an earlier phase of the language or the pronunciation of some other area, or both.

In Ladakh, S.Koshal (1979) writes:

“Ladakhi has a rich folk literature which is handed down to people by oral tradition. The language of this oral literature is somewhat different structurally from Standard Ladakhi. It is more so in the case of folk songs.”

Many examples of such differences for the Rebkong Amdo dialect are cited by G.N.Roerich in the glossary to his *Le Parler de l'Amdo*: (Roerich 1958b): for instance on page 133:

“*ḡa-wa* - lune, mois. Tib. lit. *zla-ba* ; ... (cette forme se rencontre seulement dans les prières et chants qui conservent la prononciation de Lhasa). Dans la langue parlé de l'Amdo: *dzā*...”¹⁷

Similarly in his monograph on the dialect of Lahul, Roerich (1933b:1-2) states that he aimed

“... to collect specimens of the colloquial and literary forms of the dialect. The first is represented by numerous sentences taken from the everyday speech of the Lahuli hillmen, and the second by several New Year songs and prayers, that represent the literary form of the dialect and belong to an older strata [sic] of the language.”

He goes on to say,

“As in the case of the other Tibetan dialects, the literary form of the Lahul dialect is closely related to the literary Tibetan and is only slightly tinted with colloquialism peculiar to Lahul. It seemed expedient to let the native informants talk, and record both phonetically and in Tibetan writing whatever they had to say. Another method is to give a Tibetan text, and ask the men to read it according to local pronunciation, but in this case we have always the danger, that the informants will try to conform as much as they can with the standard Tibetan pronunciation, which is that of Central Tibet, and which is known to most of the literate. The dialects of Central Tibet still exercise a powerful influence on the dialects of Outer Tibet, and each Lahuli hillman, who has visited Central Tibet or made a stay there, represents a channel through which this influence penetrates the local language. Lahuli lamas ... make frequent trips to Bhutan and Tibet proper, and often spend many years in ... some of the great centres of learning in the country. The result is that their speech becomes strongly tinted by that of Central Tibet, and exercises a considerable influence on the everyday speech of the countrymen.”

In his use of the term “literary”, which he does not properly distinguish from “written”, Roerich may be confusing a number of phenomena which might better be kept distinct. The dialects of Central Tibet to which wandering Lahulis may be exposed are no more “literary” than is the colloquial dialect of Lahul itself. Central dialects may well have influenced colloquial Lahuli as a whole, but this process is not the same as the development of a distinct style of Lahuli, appropriate to certain genres of oral literature. It is for these reasons that I have adopted the term “narrative” rather than “literary” to designate such styles.

In mentioning the dangers of getting informants to read from written texts, Roerich also raises the question of a “reading style” which he does not clearly distinguish from these other phenomena.

Reading and Spelling Styles

Although I have emphasised the psychological separation of writing and speech, the two must of course come together when written texts are recited, quoted or chanted, or when they are read aloud, for example for pedagogic purposes or over the radio. Others besides Roerich - notably R.K.Sprigg (1991) - have noted the existence of a distinctive “reading style” pronunciation appropriate to such activities: or rather, several different reading styles corresponding to different colloquial dialect areas. Sprigg himself distinguishes one reading style common to informants from Lhasa, Tsang, Kham and Sikkim from another used by speakers of the Golok dialect; to these I would add at least a Ladakhi reading style, while Róna-Tas (1983:245ff) has drawn attention to another Amdo equivalent. Apart from their intrinsic interest, a knowledge of such styles is important for any linguistic investigator, as a passage read from a text will show significant and systematic phonological differences from the same speaker’s colloquial pronunciation. Jackson Sun (1986:184), echoing Roerich, has aptly warned:

“One of the worst methods of studying the sound system of a Tibetan dialect is to ask one’s informant to read off a list of words in Tibetan orthography; unless of course, the objective is to find out the reading pronunciation of WRITTEN Tibetan current in the community speaking that dialect.”

Similarly misleading can be yet another pronunciation pattern, the so-called “spelling style”, again investigated by Sprigg (1991) and by Róna-Tas (1983:268ff). This is used by literate speakers as part of their traditional system of spelling words out loud, and also when citing isolated words for the benefit of foreign students of the language. While very similar to the reading style, it differs from it in minor respects. Experience of it has led Sprigg to state that:

“ .. using citation forms, or one-word utterances, for phonetic and phonological analysis is an invitation to literate [Lhasa] Tibetans to use a Spelling-style pronunciation or - worse - a pronunciation that is neither L[hasa] T[ibetan] nor Spelling-style but sufficiently influenced by the latter to lie somewhere between the two.”

In my own experience, spelling-style pronunciations of isolated words can even be offered by illiterate informants, who have presumably picked them up from their literate fellow-speakers.

Written Varieties

With a few odd exceptions, written texts in Tibetan are handwritten, carved or printed in various styles of a single script, specially devised for writing Tibetan from an Indian-derived model. The exceptions include the Perso-Arabic script occasionally used in Baltistan and Ladakh, and among Muslims in Central Tibet; and a special set of characters formerly used for writing Balti Tibetan.¹⁸ There is a romanised phonetic script for Dzongkha in Bhutan which is officially sanctioned alongside the Tibetan script though little used.

There are also sporadic examples (mainly proper names or lists of words) written by non-Tibetans in such scripts as Chinese, Mongolian, Manchu, Japanese, roman and cyrillic. Since the nineteenth century, Tibetan has very commonly been written by foreigners for scholarly purposes in a variety of romanised transliteration systems. There have also been attempts at script reform and proposals for writing Tibetan in other alphabets intended for native speakers.

The most important single use of written Tibetan throughout its history has been in connection with Buddhism. While Sanskrit manuscripts have been conserved in Tibet, and familiarity with Sanskrit, always esteemed, has been enhanced by recent exiles in India, in practice the vast working corpus of Buddhist scripture and associated writings has always been maintained in Tibetan, and only a tiny minority of Tibetan-speakers has ever been able to read any other language. Other uses for writing have included purposes connected with other religions; governmental business in general; correspondence both official and personal; works of scholarship, history, biography and other “non-fiction”; and more recently education and journalism.

Detailed consideration of written styles and their linguistic features is beyond the scope of this book, but some of the main approaches and terminology may usefully be indicated. The terms “written”, “classical” and “literary” are used by different authors in different senses, sometimes interchangeably and sometimes not. Use of the term “literary” invites confusion between written and oral literature. Authors such as R.A.Miller (1972) and A.Róna-Tas (1985:93ff.) have adopted classifications by historical period and corresponding terminology such as “Early-”, “Middle-” and “Late Old Tibetan” (Preclassical); “early-” and “late middle Tibetan” (Classical); “New Tibetan” and “Modern Tibetan”. Others have emphasised differences of genre or mode of composition rather than historical period. Many authors would, with Jaeschke (1881:iv) regard Tibetan translated from Sanskrit as “classical” almost by definition. However, S.Beyer (1992), following sinological usage, specifically excludes translations from Sanskrit, along with the language of modern newspapers, and defines “Classical Tibetan” as the entire remaining corpus of writings from the 8th century to the present day, and “new Tibetan” as the modern spoken dialects.¹⁹ S.C.Das (1902:viif) regards the Tibetan documents of all periods as written in “Classical” Tibetan.

Whereas my classification of spoken dialects was primarily geographical (and within geographical areas, phonological), my classification of written varieties is primarily historical, reflecting the fact that while spoken dialects vary from place to place, the written language has been geographically standardised but has varied through time. In the modern period, however (mid-20th century on), some written varieties have also begun to diverge along partly geographical lines.

Preclassical Tibetan (see also Chapter 14)

This might alternatively be called “Early Indigenous Written Tibetan”. It covers the documents and inscriptions of the Royal period and later, down to about the mid-10th century. The type does not completely die out then, however, for examples continue to crop up in inscriptions in outlying areas such as Ladakh, and occasionally in later literature as well as in the “narrative” style of spoken Tibetan, and in quoted passages from or reproductions of old works, whether genuine or spurious. The word “indigenous” is intended to exclude translations from Sanskrit, although linguistic influences emanating from Buddhism and Sanskrit are certainly not absent from this style. A few texts may be translations or adaptations of Chinese originals. The writers of this Preclassical Tibetan would mostly have been laymen, or in some cases practitioners of non-Buddhist religious traditions. Both prose and verse survive; their literary effect is frequently direct and vital. The term “Dunhuang material” is often applied loosely to texts in the style, after Dunhuang in Xinjiang where a large cache of documents was found in the early 20th century, though much of the material comes from elsewhere.

Sanskritic Tibetan

After a false start in the 8th century, this type was officially relaunched in the early 9th, under the specific Tibetan name of *skad.gsar.bcad*. (“reformed language”: see Simonsson 1957) as a thoroughly codified and sophisticated vehicle for translating Buddhist works from (mainly) Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit: “a Middle Indo-Aryan dialect in Sanskrit garb” (Masica 1991:52f.). Thus it overlaps in time with the Preclassical type. Most of the translations were made by small collaborative teams of Tibetans and Indians. Its productive phase effectively ended in the early 13th century with the demise of Buddhism in most of the Indian Subcontinent, at which time many of the works written in it were formally accorded the canonical status which they still retain. Much of this material, though skilfully and accurately translated, can only be described as mechanical in style in the case of prose, or tortuously ingenious in the case of verse. Occasional texts are translated from Chinese originals, which however are themselves translated from Sanskrit or other Indian languages. The Sanskrit originals of some works in the style may be apocryphal.

Classical Tibetan

What might be termed “Later Indigenous Written Tibetan”, often known together with Sanskritic Tibetan as Chöke (*chos.skad*. “book-language” or “religious language”) by

Tibetan speakers; might reasonably be called "Classical Tibetan". This is close to Beyer's definition. Arising out of both the foregoing types, sometimes with a contribution from colloquial dialects, from about the 11th century this style is used mainly by Buddhist monks composing directly in Tibetan and writing on a wide range of topics, most of them having at least something to do with Buddhism. Particularly developed are liturgical, commentarial and didactic religious literature, the prose genres of biography and history, and religious verse. While its didactic content is generally prized by Tibetans above its literary qualities, high aesthetic effects are consciously striven for, particularly in verse where the Sanskrit Kavya tradition has been adapted to the Tibetan language. At their best, works in this style may rank with the foremost in world literature. At their worst, they can be overblown and practically impenetrable, at least to a foreigner.

Outside the Buddhist monastery the same style has been used by laymen in civil administration and formalised types of correspondence (an interesting sub-genre being that of love-letters).

The occurrence in Classical Tibetan of words derived from regional spoken dialects is not unknown, and dialect material may sometimes be included deliberately - in the form of direct and reported speech or technical terms of local relevance, as the object of scholarly comment, or even in an attempt to appeal to local readers. On the whole however such cases are hardly more than curiosities, scarcely detracting from Classical Tibetan's remarkable degree of standardisation over its entire geographical range. This range includes the whole Tibetan-speaking area with the exception of the Islamic districts of Baltistan and Purik in the far west. Here, although Balti is occasionally written (in Perso-Arabic script), the place of Classical Tibetan is taken by Urdu and Persian.

Notwithstanding the rise of newer types of written Tibetan to be mentioned below, Classical Tibetan as here defined is far from being a dead language: any monk or even layman writing on subjects for which it is traditionally the vehicle would normally use it automatically. This is true even in areas such as Bhutan where modern written varieties are vigorously promoted.

Modern Literary Tibetan and other regional varieties

In the 20th century several attempts have been made to develop forms of written Tibetan in response to one or both of two new social and political demands. The first demand is for a medium of expression felt to be suitable for journalism and radio broadcasting, and for material such as textbooks and pedagogic literature, works of popular scholarship, personal memoirs, political propaganda and the like aimed at the general reader in a more secular social environment. A quasi-political desire to break with the traditions of the monastic establishment may also be a factor. The second demand is for a language deliberately attuned to the needs of some regional unit rather than the Tibetan-speaking world as a whole; again, political overtones are often present. Texts read out over the radio are also written in these varieties, though since they also have a spoken form they share something with narrative styles.

Modern Literary Tibetan. The most successful of these modern regional styles is

that called by M.Goldstein (1991) “Modern Literary Tibetan”. S.Beyer (1992) has observed that the uses to which it is put are mostly far from literary. Following Sedláček & Semichov (1972), he calls it “Newspaper Tibetan”. A natural outgrowth from Classical Tibetan with influence from the Lhasa colloquial, its origins probably owe something to Tibetan-speakers during the inter-war years in India, particularly the Darjeeling-Kalimpong area of West Bengal, where a combination of British Indian cultural influence and rather greater freedom of expression than in the Tibet of the time encouraged experimentation with new forms. Its development was then boosted in Chinese-administered Tibet from the early 1950s and among the refugees in South Asia from 1959. It has now become a standard medium for modern writings in Tibet and among exiles, and for radio (and, in Tibet, television) broadcasts by the Chinese radio services and All-India Radio.

Ladakhi. Already by the early 1880s H.A.Jaeschke had translated some Christian literature into Ladakhi (as well as translating most of the New Testament into Classical Tibetan), and his successors in the Moravian Mission, both Ladakhis and foreigners, continued to produce such material, including a regular newspaper in Classical Tibetan, down to the 1930s. Similar material was produced by Moravians in Lahul and Kunawar. Such writings, some of which used reformed spelling, never caught on outside the very small Christian community, but they prepared the ground for a steady trickle of material since the 1970s in what might perhaps be termed “Modern Literary Ladakhi”, including some valuable works on local history and culture, several series of reading and writing primers and other schoolbooks, and even a few novels.²⁰ Ladakhi is regularly broadcast by All-India Radio.

Dzongkha. A similar process in Bhutan did not really get under way until the 1960s, but since then it has been pursued with much more vigour than in Ladakh. It amounts to an official attempt to create a national language, Dzongkha, out of the colloquial *lingua franca* of government which is itself based on the local Ngalong dialect of western Bhutan. Grammars, dictionaries and even a new spelling system have been produced in a determined bid to establish the language on a separate footing from modern Tibetan. Newspapers, magazines and a variety of books are available, and there are regular radio broadcasts.²¹

Other varieties. Similar moves to base a written language on Sikkimese Bhotia (accompanied by attacks of unprecedented outspokenness on the traditional monastic approaches to education and language)²² are hampered by lack of political independence and the small numbers of Tibetan-speakers in the state. Modern Literary Tibetan is also used in Sikkim.

There exists some material in Balti, both Muslim and Christian, in Perso-Arabic and occasionally roman script, dating back at least to the early 20th century. It may be that one could reasonably speak of a “Literary Balti”, though I am not sufficiently familiar with the material to be able to judge. There is a Balti service on Pakistan Radio.

The existence of transcriptions of the “official” Drokke dialect of Amdo by the 18th century Lama Gungthangpa (Norbu 1983), Róna-Tas 1983) leads to the

interesting speculation that a “modern written Amdowa” might have come into being had political events taken a different course. Such an enterprise would certainly be practicable, as is demonstrated by the textbook of colloquial Amdo recently produced by Min and Geng (1989).

In recent years Christian missionaries with local collaborators have made attempts to establish a standardised written form of Kham Tibetan (Kraft & Tsering n.d.).

Of the above varieties, Modern Literary Tibetan has clearly established itself as a going concern, with an ever-increasing output of works including recently even the beginnings of imaginative literature emulating Western or Chinese genres. It provides a medium of communication amongst all who would consider themselves politically or nationally “Tibetan”, whether in China or in exile, exemplifying their cultural resilience and national consciousness. As for the others, they were not distinguished as separate “languages” by M. Goldstein in his *Modern Literary Tibetan* of 1973. The inclusion of Dzongkha under this heading would now be strongly disputed by the Bhutanese. Time will tell to what extent Ladakhi and Sikkimese can genuinely preserve their independence from the twin magnets of Classical Tibetan, with its enormous prestige, and Modern Literary Tibetan with its well-established norms and wide currency. Dzongkha, thanks to its political backing, will no doubt continue to thrive at least in name, though it is not immune to the same pressures.

Important linguistic characteristics of these modern written varieties include, in vocabulary, the use of words shared with the local “home” colloquial dialect (Lhasa dialect for Modern Literary Tibetan, spoken Dzongkha for Dzongkha, and the Leh dialect for Ladakhi) and a host of neologisms along with a lesser number of loanwords from foreign languages. In their grammar each variety makes use of its own standard set of particles and constructions, again showing some similarity to the respective colloquial forms. This similarity is not total, however, and it should be emphasised that these Modern Literary varieties remain essentially written dialects which have not breached the fundamental psychological divide between the written and the spoken languages. Modern Literary Tibetan in particular can become very convoluted in style, with long sentences replete with complex constructions of Classical derivation and elaborate clichés, giving it an effect far removed from the colloquial.

The Hypothesis of a Common Origin

The similarities in vocabulary, phonology and grammar between all these spoken, written and intermediate varieties, together with their geographical contiguity, make it apparent that they are closely related to one another. Less obvious are the precise causes and nature of the relationship. The main alternatives - not of course mutually exclusive - are a) descent from a single common ancestor; b) mutual interaction and influence between the different forms; and c) influence from other languages. Most scholars who have considered the problem have assumed alternative a as the dominant factor, and have therefore been faced with the task of identifying or reconstructing the original proto-Tibetan or Ur-Tibetan ancestor from which all other varieties are descended.

It must be emphasised that no-one has so far produced any convincing and

substantial body of material from the supposed proto-Tibetan language. Of course, even if they had, it would be subject to the same difficulties with regard to its ontological and scientific status and value as are all other reconstructed languages from Indo-European onwards. This however has not prevented scholars from comparing "Tibetan" with other languages in order to propose wider groupings: principally "Tibeto-Burman" and "Sino-Tibetan"; the latter constituting a major independent language family on a par with Indo-European.

Notes

- 1 Jackson Sun in his study of a Dzorge (Amdo) dialect (1986:134-5), for example, distinguishes a pronunciation style which differs from both the "colloquial" and the "reading-style". It is used "chiefly in honorific or elegant speech suitable for interlocution with or between lamas or aristocrats" and is termed by Sun "literary" - perhaps confusingly, since its users need not be literate. A few words featuring this pronunciation in the same dialect "are current in spoken [Dzorge Tibetan - i.e. "colloquial"], even in the mouths of uneducated speakers." See also the remarks on "elegant breathiness" in Beyer (1992:26ff).
- 2 Thingo (1982:173).
- 3 R.Ekval's claim that "Speaking the dialect of the nomads of northeast Tibet, I have yet been able to talk with monks from Tashilumpo or pilgrims from Ladak, far off in the western corner of the land" should perhaps be taken with a pinch of salt. See Ekval (1939:10); Koshal (1990:14); Causemann (1989:22f); Hermanns (1952:154).
- 4 For Eastern areas we have Uray (1949), Hermanns (1952), Migot (1956), Norbu (1983) and Jumian (1989); for Western and Southwestern areas Francke (1904a), Miller (1956a), Bielmeier (1985b), and Koshal (1990); for the Centre, Miller (1955a); for the South, Walsh (1905); for areas under Chinese administration, the Australian Academy ... (1987:map C-11).
- 5 Hermanns (1952); Roerich (1931); Stein (1961b); Norbu (1983); Jumian (1989).
- 6 Its vowel system seems typical of Amdo: no information is given on tone.
- 7 This dialect presumably has no connection with that of the Sherpas of Nepal.
- 8 The Thochu of Hodgson (1828), though named after T'ao-chou, is clearly not Tibetan.
- 9 Kham dialects of Tibetan should not be confused with Kham, a Tibeto-Burman language of western Nepal, nor with Khambu, an old name for the Limbus of eastern Nepal. Some groups of Tibetan exiles, for instance in Solu-Khumbu, Nepal and in northeastern Bhutan, and others living a gypsy-like existence in India are called Khambas without necessarily coming from Kham.
- 10 The history of this word is a complex one. It was applied to various northern peoples before coming to designate the Mongols from the 13th century to about the 18th. Apart from the Hor of northern Tibet, the word nowadays also denotes a group of principalities in the Kanze-Tao area of Kham which were taken over by Mongol or Turco-Mongol rulers from the 13th century (possibly a factor in the departure of the ancestors of the Sherpas of Nepal). Here Tibetan coexists with a little-known language which Hodgson (1853b) calls "Horpa". He has however confused the two uses of the word Hor and located the language in northwest Tibet. G.C.Teschke (1977), conversely, regards the Horpa of Kham as Turkish. It seems however to be Tibeto-Burman.
- 11 Hor and Changpa, see Roerich 1931, 289; Amdo, see Roerich 1958b, 4.
- 12 Bielmeier 1985, 14-22 gives a useful survey of the literature on the far western dialects.
- 13 And in the non-Tibetan Lepcha: Sprigg (1966a). Bielmeier (1985a:69) regards the phenomenon in question as stress rather than tone.
- 14 Compare Bielmeier's interpretation of the "breathy voice" of the Nangchen dialect (Causemann) as phonemically low pitch.
- 15 G.C.Teschke (1977: English summary 166) claims to detect traces of such non-Tibetan strains in the Sherpas' physical anthropology.
- 16 Miller (1955a) is devoted to this question.
- 17 Roerich (1958b:133). Cf. also Causemann (1989:30): "Meine Sprachinformantin sprach den Prälabial häufiger als die Erzählerin"; and comments on Bielmeier (1985b) in Sprigg (1986:88-9).

- 18 For the Balti characters see Schuler (1978); Grierson (1909:33); Afridi (1988:28-30). According to Grierson they may have been devised around 1400 AD, but according to Schuler's informant, by the latter's own grandfather, presumably in the late 19th century. They appear to be an adaptation of the Perso-Arabic script in a devanagari-like form, written from left to right.
- 19 Beyer, chapter 3/1.
- 20 Bray 1991a, 1991b, 1994; Tsewang Tondan n.d..
- 21 Anonymous 1997, 1990; Bhutan, Royal Government of n.d.; Dorje Chödrön 1986; van Driem 1991b,c; 1992; Dzongkha Development Commission 1977, 1990a,b,c; 1993.
- 22 Kaleon 1982.

4. Levels of Analysis

In the chapters to follow, Tibetan will be analysed on the three levels of Graphology, Phonology, and Lexis/Grammar. At each level, component units are ordered in syntagmatic structures (sequences of items) and paradigmatic systems (sets of mutually exclusive choices at each point in the sequences). An indication of the principal structures and systems to be considered at each level is given below, to be expanded in the relevant chapters. Items when considered as structures and their elements are denoted in this chapter by bold type; when considered as terms or sets of terms in systems, by italics. The justification for this division into levels, apart from convention, is that each of the three levels has a certain autonomy, there being no automatic one-to-one correspondence between the units recognised at one level and those recognised at another.

4.1 Graphology (Chapter 5)

The main structural unit of graphology is the **written syllable**, easily recognisable in the Tibetan script and in my romanised transliteration by its punctuation. The demarcation by punctuation of stretches of text longer than the syllable, however, is semi-random, yielding sequences amounting typically to clause- or sentence-like length, but with little consistency. Some particle syllables by their spelling variations provide a criterion for defining a grouping of two or more syllables (5.6: Particle sandhi), but this criterion is very far from being sufficient to divide most texts systematically into words.

The written syllable is composed of *letters* and *punctuation marks*. These are positioned within one of several possible structures internal to the syllable, the commonest such structure comprising **prefix**, **head letter**, **basic letter**, **subjoined letter**, **vowel symbol**, **final letter**, **second final letter** and **syllable marker**.

Example: *ha. ma.go.ba'i*. “of not understanding”, comprises four written syllables (*ha. go.* = “understand”; *ma.* = “not”; *ba'i* = “of -ing”).

4.2 Phonology (Chapter 6)

The **spoken syllable** (6.1) has as its internal structure an **initial** (one or more

consonants), a **nucleus** (one or more *vowels*) and a **final** (one or more *consonants*). This internal structure can in most cases be brought into direct correspondence with the internal structure of the written syllable (6.2), though for most spoken varieties of Tibetan the rules for doing so are complex.

A disyllabic stretch - the (**harmonic**) **syllable-pair** - coextensive with or contained within a word has been recognised as the domain of vocalic alternations subsumed under vowel harmony (6.3.5).

The phonological **word** (6.3) may be monosyllabic (6.1) or polysyllabic (6.3), comprising from two to at least seven spoken syllables. A pause may occur before or after a word, but not within it. This feature is represented in my phonetic transcription by leaving spaces between phonological words. I have also left spaces between the graphological units corresponding to my phonological words, although Tibetans themselves do not do so.

The polysyllabic word is the domain of certain phonological patterns and restrictions pertaining particularly to syllable-initial and syllable-final consonants, and to pitch and stress.

It seems simplest to define the unit **word** at the phonological level, for if defined at the lexico-grammatical level it confuses the picture by not always corresponding to a whole number of constituents. Once defined phonologically, however, it may be used at the lexico-grammatical level, and indeed may be given a grammatical classification.

Example: **ˈha _magɔwe:** (the spoken reflex of written *ha. ma.go.ba'i.*) comprises two words: a monosyllable followed by a trisyllable.

Intonation units above the level of the word have been little investigated, though they certainly operate in most if not all dialects. The role of clause intonation in thematising predicators and echoing themes is touched upon at 12.6.

4.3 Lexis/Grammar (Chapters 7-14)

Constituents

The smallest lexico-grammatical unit is the **constituent**. Although the constituent largely corresponds to the "morpheme" of many authors, and to the "lexical item" of R.K.Sprigg, I avoid both these terms, since not every constituent has an individual semantic identity or independent existence (e.g. the *ha.* of *ha. ma.go.ba'i.*, as far as I know, is not found as an independent morpheme and can hardly be allotted a meaning¹). In some such cases it could be argued that the constituent is sub-lexico-grammatical; however it is included here for convenience.

A constituent is realised graphically and phonologically by a monosyllable or, since two constituents can sometimes combine to form a single syllable, by part of a monosyllable. Graphologically, different letters within a written monosyllable can realise different constituents. Phonologically, one of the constituents of a spoken monosyllable may be realised by features of vowel length and/or quality.

Thus the constituent does not always correspond exactly to the morpheme, the

lexical item or the written or spoken syllable: hence the reason for giving it a separate status.

Example: *ha. ma.go.ba'i. ʔha _magɔwe:* “of not understanding” comprises five constituents: in written form *ha.+ma.+go.+ba.+i.*. In spoken form, the last two constituents are fused in the single syllable *-we:*.

Parts of speech

The next highest unit is the **part of speech**, grammatically classifiable in all cases as *noun, verb* or *particle*² Adjectives are treated as a sub-category of verb (Chapter 11).

Nouns and verbs. Nouns and verbs are towards the lexical end of the lexico-grammatical spectrum. While nouns are invariable, some verbs have grammatical alternants: in the Lhasa dialect, the past, present and/or imperative stems. There are also at least two adjectives with grammatical alternants: positive and non-positive. Nouns and verbs are glossed as translations in roman type in the examples. Nouns (Chapter 8) and verbs (Chapter 9: including adjectives, Chapter 11) are phonologically classifiable into *non-phrasal* (comprising one word or less) and *phrasal* (comprising more than one word). A phrasal part of speech is again a unit not lexically reducible to the sum of its parts. However, it can sometimes be discontinuous: interrupted by another phrase. The boundary between lexicalised phrasal parts of speech and freely composed phrases is, as in most languages, a fuzzy one.

Thus the nouns *mi. _mi* “person” and *khang.pa. ʔkʰagbə* “house” and the verb *byed. _tɕe:* “do” are single-word, non-phrasal parts of speech. The noun *nang.srid. las.khung. _nɒŋsi: _le:ɣɔ:* “interior ministry” and the verb *ha. go. ʔha _kɔ* “understand” are two-word, phrasal parts of speech.

All non-phrasal verbs (including adjectives) and many non-phrasal nouns comprise a single constituent: thus the distinction between constituent and part of speech is redundant for them. Many non-phrasal nouns and a few particles, however, comprise more than one constituent (within a single word), and are lexically not simply the sum of their parts (e.g. *las.khung. _le:ɣɔ:* “office”).

As it is sometimes difficult to avoid confusing the parts of speech and the words containing them, I shall where necessary refer to the parts of speech themselves as *stems*: i.e. verb stems (including adjective stems) and noun stems.

Example: *ha. ma.go.ba'i. ʔha _magɔwe:* “of not understanding” comprises four parts of speech:

- a) a two-word phrasal verb *ha. go. ʔha _kɔ* “understand”;
 - b) a negative verb particle *ma. _ma* “not”;
 - c) a nominalising verb particle *ba-* “-ing”; and
 - d) a genitive noun particle *-i.* “of”;
- (the last two fused into a single spoken syllable *-we:*).

Although the constituent *go. _kɔ* exists as an independent part of speech meaning “hear”, as far as I am aware the constituent *ha. ʔha* has no independent existence, and so the phrasal verb *ha. go. ʔha _kɔ*, although comprising two words, cannot be

decomposed, either lexically or even etymologically.

Particles. Particles are at the grammatical end of the lexico-grammatical spectrum, being used to establish such things as the case of noun phrases, and polarity and tense/aspect of verb phrases. Particles are glossed in italic type, each particle being given a grammatical classification rather than a translation; e.g. *-smp* (“subject-marking particle”).

Unlike a noun or verb, a particle may not stand alone in a phrase: it always accompanies a noun or verb: in the case of most particles (though not all) as part of the same word as the noun or verb. Graphologically most particles follow their noun or verb, though a few verb particles precede the verb. Phonologically the genitive and subject-marking/instrumental noun particles combine with the vowel of vowel-final noun stems.

Examples:

<i>kho.</i>	<i>-k^hɔ</i>	“he”, “him”	(noun)
<i>kho'i.</i>	<i>-k^hɔ:</i>	“his”	(noun+genitive particle)
<i>khang.mig.</i>	<i>-k^hΔgmi:</i>	“room”	(noun)
<i>khang.mig.la.</i>	<i>-k^hΔgmi:lə</i>	“to the room”	(noun+dative/locative particle)
<i>nga.</i>	<i>._ga</i>	“I”, “me”	(noun)
<i>nga. dang.</i>	<i>._ga _td:</i>	“with me”	(noun+co-ordinating particle)
<i>red.</i>	<i>._re:</i>	“is”	(verb)
<i>ma.red.</i>	<i>._mare:</i>	“isn’t”	(polar particle+verb)
<i>zhu.</i>	<i>._ɕɔ</i>	“ask”	(verb)
<i>zhu.gi.yin.pas.</i>	<i>._ɕogjɿmbe:</i>	“will you ask?”	(verb+linking particle +auxiliary particle+interrogative particle)
<i>yag.</i>	<i>._ja:</i>	“good”	(adjective)
<i>yag.shos .</i>	<i>._jakɕø:</i>	“best”	(adjective+superlative particle)

Every particle is categorised as a noun particle or a verb particle, with some verb particles sub-categorised as adjective particles. Thus the particles *-’i.*, *la.*, *dang.* are found only with nouns and therefore classed as noun particles; *ma.*, *gi.*, *yin.*, *pas.* are likewise verb particles; and *shos.* is an adjective particle.

In principle a given particle is fully grammaticised in that it may accompany any item in its appropriate part of speech class or sub-class, and always with the same meaning. Thus the meaning of the combination of, e.g. noun+particle is always fully predictable from a knowledge of the meanings of the individual parts.

Summary: syllables, constituents and parts of speech

The example: *ha. ma.go.ba'i. ˈha _magɔwɛ:* “of not understanding” comprises:

- a) four written syllables *ha.+ma.+go.+ba'i.* (graphological);
- b) four spoken syllables *ˈha+_ma+gɔ+wɛ:* (phonological);
- c) two spoken words *ˈha + _magɔwɛ:* (phonological);
- d) five constituents: *ha +ma.+go.+ba- +-'i.* (lexico-grammatical);
- e) four parts of speech (lexico-grammatical);
 - i) *ha. go.* *ˈha _kɔ* phrasal verb “understand”;
 - ii) *ma. _ma* negative verb particle “not”;
 - iii) *ba.* nominalising verb particle “-ing”;
 - iv) *-'i.* genitive noun particle “of”.

Phrases

A **phrase** comprises a whole number of parts of speech, usually though not necessarily consecutive. Parts of speech may be phrasal in themselves, or words may be linked to form noun phrases by the use of the genitive particle *-kyi./gi./gyi./'i.*, or by simple juxtaposition. They may be co-ordinated with the co-ordinating particle *dang.* to form phrase-groups.

From the point of view of their functions at clause level, phrases and phrase-groups may be classified into *noun phrases* (Chapter 7) and *verb phrases* (Chapter 9), which are definable also by the parts of speech they may contain.

Noun phrases. The elements of structure of the noun phrase (7.7) are **head**, **epithet**, **deictic**, **numerator**, **case marker** and **topic marker**, typically in that order. An example of a noun phrase containing all these elements is:

<i>khang.pa.</i>	<i>chen.po.</i>	<i>gsum.</i>	<i>'di. gyad.la.yang.</i>
ˈkʰaŋpə	tʃʰembu	ˈsum	_digje:læ:
house	big-nom.	three	this-num.-loc.-top.
H	E	D	D Num Cm Tm

“and to these three large houses too”

Verb phrases. The essential element of structure of the verb phrase is a unit comprising the **verb stem**, which may typically be preceded by a **polariser** and followed by a **modal** e.g.:

<i>'dug.</i>	“It’s there.” (verb stem)
<i>_du:</i>	
exist	

<i>mi.'dug.</i>	“It isn’t there.” (polariser+verb stem)
<i>_mɪndu:</i>	
neg.-exist	

mi.'dug.gas. "Isn't it there?" (polariser+verb stem+modal)
 _**m**induge:
neg.-exist-interr.

More complex verb phrases include the elements **auxiliary** and **linking particle**, to give a number of structures discussed at 9.1, e.g.

'*gro.gi.ma.red.pas.* "Won't he go?"
 _**drugmaribe:** (verb stem+linkingparticle+polariser+auxiliary+modal)
go-link.-neg.-aux.-interr.

The following grammatical systems are regarded for present purposes as operating at verb phrase level and discussed in Chapter 9. (Technically, however, most of them can involve more than one phrase and so could be regarded as operating at clause level.)

- a) The polarity system comprises *positive*, *negative* and *dubitative* phrases (9.2.5 and Chapter 9 *passim*).
- b) The intention system comprises *intentional* and *unintentional* phrases (9.3.2).
- c) The person system comprises *first person* and *second/third person* phrases (9.3.1).
- d) The viewpoint system comprises *self-centred* and *other-centred* phrases (9.3.1).
- e) The tense/aspect system comprises *past tense*, *present tense*, *future tense*, *perfect aspect*, *recent aspect*, *progressive aspect* and *prospective aspect* phrases (9.3.3, 9.3.4, 9.3.5).
- f) The evidential modality system comprises *witnessed* and *unwitnessed* phrases (9.2.3 and Chapter 9 *passim*).
- g) The judgemental modality system comprises *apparent*, *probable*, *possible*, and *speculative* phrases (9.2.8, 9.3.6).
- h) The mood system for verbs of being and verb phrases with auxiliaries comprises *indicative*, *interrogative*, *wh-interrogative*, *emphatic* and *corroborative* phrases (9.2.6, 9.3.6.) For other verb phrases it comprises *imperative*, *suggestive* and *volunteering* phrases (9.3.7).

Clauses (Chapters 12 & 13)

The elements of **clause** structure are the three arguments **subject (S)**, **object (O)** and **adjunct (Adj)**, all realised by *noun phrases*, and **predicator (P)**, realised by a *verb phrase*. In the vast majority of clauses, the predicator is the final element of clause structure.

<i>khas.sa.</i>	<i>bsod.nams.kyis.</i>	<i>deb.</i>	<i>zla.wa.la.</i>	<i>gnang.song.</i>
ˀ kʰe:se	ˀ sonamgi:	ˀ tep	ˀ dawələ	ˀ nagsŋ
yesterday	Sonam-smp.	book	Dawa-loc.	give-aux.
Adj	S	O	Adj	P

"Yesterday Sonam gave the book to Dawa."

At the clause level there operate the systems of

- a) transitivity (12.2);
- b) given/new (12.5);
- c) theme (12.6);
- d) deference (12.7).

These systems concern the interrelations between the clause arguments subject, object and adjunct, involving their presence, absence, order, co-occurrence, composition and intonation.

- a) The transitivity system comprises *transitive, intentional intransitive, unintentional intransitive, copular and existential* clauses.
- b) The given/new system comprises clauses which are *subject-given, subject-new, object-given, object-new, adjunct-given, adjunct-new*, or some permutation of these possibilities.
- c) The theme system includes *subject-theme, object-theme, adjunct-theme, predicator-theme and echoed-theme* clauses.
- d) The deference system comprises *ordinary, ordinary/respectful, honorific, honorific/ordinary* and *honorific/respectful* clauses.

Where more than one predicator occurs in the same clause, they are regarded as being linked by serialisation (Chapter 10); whereas the linkage between predicators in different clauses within the sentence is treated as subordination (Chapter 13).

Sentences

At the sentence level there operates the subordination system, comprising *main* and *subordinate* clauses (Chapter 13). A **sentence** may be simple (consisting of a main clause only; such as the example given above under “clauses”) or complex (consisting of a main clause preceded by one or more subordinate clauses). An example of a sentence comprising a subordinate clause followed by a main clause is:

<i>bsod.nams.kyis.</i>	<i>deb. tshang.ma.</i>	<i>klog.nas. / khas.sa.</i>	<i>zla.wa.la.</i>	<i>gnang.song.</i>
ˈsonamgi:	_tɛp ˈtsʰaŋmə	ˈlɔːnɪ / ˈkʰɛːsə	_dawələ	ˈnaŋsɔ
Sonam-smp.	book all-nom.	read-sub. / yesterday	Dawa-loc.	give-aux.
S	O	P / Adj	Adj	P
Subordinate clause			Main clause	
“Having read the whole book, Sonam gave it to Dawa yesterday.”				

Notes

- 1 *ha.* meaning “breath”, “yawn” would seem to be a different constituent.
- 2 A few exclamations and the like, which can hardly be given a grammatical classification, are discussed at 12.3.

5. Graphology

Although the main concern of this work is with aspects of Tibetan other than its writing system, an outline of the graphology of the language has been thought necessary for two reasons.

The first is that in the standard Lhasa dialect (and many others), the pronunciation of the constituents realised by written syllables varies greatly according to vowel harmony and position in the word. Most of these constituents have well-established standard spellings, easily accessible in dictionaries, and while the relationship of spelling to pronunciation can be tortuously indirect, it is on the whole consistent, so that the continued use of these standard spellings has seemed preferable to inventing something new. By giving most examples in both traditional and phonetic (IPA) spellings I hope to combine the ready lexical identifiability of parts of speech with a reasonable degree of phonetic accuracy.

The second reason for retaining and using traditional spellings for our present purposes is that they facilitate comparison between different varieties of the language: such as the Lhasa dialect of Chapters 6-13 and the Preclassical and Classical Tibetan of Chapter 14. For both synchronic dialect comparison and diachronic studies of the language, a thorough familiarity with the script is essential at some stage in the research.

In what follows, the romanised transliteration of Tibetan, given in underlined form, is accompanied by an IPA rendering in bold type, appropriate to a fairly careful colloquial (speaking-style) pronunciation in the Lhasa dialect. (This IPA rendering is rather artificial at times since not all the syllables actually occur as constituents in the dialect. The actual phonology of the Lhasa dialect will be considered in Chapter 6.)

5.1 The Tibetan Alphabet

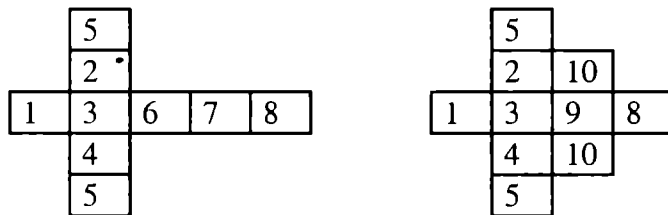
The basic Tibetan alphabet comprises 34 symbols, each of which may be thought of as potentially representing a particular combination of phonetic features. There are also several common punctuation marks, only one of which is governed by rigorous rules. A further twenty symbols are used only when writing words borrowed or thought to be borrowed from other languages, principally Sanskrit: these, together with a large number of rarer symbols, mostly non-phonetic, need not concern us.

5.2 Syllable Structure

Tibetan writing runs from left to right in lines across the page like English. Unlike English, it is articulated as a string of syllables rather than words. A written syllable consists of two or more symbols occupying up to eight positions in one of two alternative arrangements as follows:

Alternative a) (Below left; the numbers refer to the order in which the symbols are written):

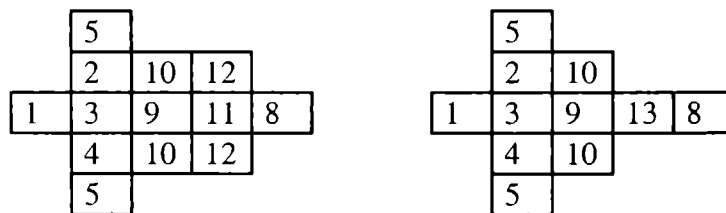
1. Prefixed letter; 2. Head letter;¹ 3. Basic letter² (obligatory); 4. Subjoined letter;³ 5. Vowel sign; 6. Final letter; 7. Second final letter; 8. Syllable marker (obligatory). The syllable may have only one of each symbol: thus only one of each of the vowel signs (nos.5 and 10) in the diagrams below may be present.



Alternative b) (See above right: no. 8 is still written last):

1-5. as above; 9. Second vowel carrier; 10. Second vowel sign; 8. Syllable marker (obligatory).

In theory, under alternative b), one can have, after the second vowel carrier, *either* 11 a third vowel carrier, and 12 a third vowel sign (see below left); *or* 13 a post-second-vowel final letter (see below right). The rather freakish appearance of such syllables may lead writers to split them up in practice.



5.3 The Initial Cluster (Symbols Nos. 1-4)

5.3.1 Basic letter (ming.gzhi.) (symbol no. 3)

The 30 basic letters (Tibetan *gsal.byed.*) in their traditional order and divided into the traditional seven groups of four and one of two (reading across) are given in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Basic letters

1 vls.nonasp. high	2 vls. asp. high	3 vls. nonasp. low	4 voice nasal low
ཀ' ka. ^ˉ ka	ཁ' kha. ^ˉ k ^h a	ག' ga. _ˉ ka	ང' nga. _ˉ ŋa
ཅ' ca. ^ˉ t _ɕ a	ཆ' cha. ^ˉ t _ɕ ^h a	ཇ' ja. _ˉ t _ɕ a	ཉ' nya. _ˉ ɲa
ཏ' ta. ^ˉ ta	ཐ' tha. ^ˉ t ^h a	ད' da. _ˉ ta	ན' na. _ˉ na
པ' pa. ^ˉ pa	ཕ' pha. ^ˉ p ^h a	བ' ba. _ˉ pa	མ' ma. _ˉ ma
ཅ' tsa. ^ˉ tsa	ཆ' tsha. ^ˉ tsh ^h a	ཇ' dza. _ˉ tsa	ཉ' wa. _ˉ wa
ཉ' zha. _ˉ ɕa	ཟ' za. _ˉ sa	འ' 'a. _ˉ a or _ˉ fi ^a	ལ' ya. _ˉ ja
ར' ra. _ˉ ra	ལ' la. _ˉ la	ཤ' sha. ^ˉ ɕa	ས' sa. ^ˉ sa
ཧ' ha. ^ˉ ha	ཨ' 'a. ^ˉ ʔa		

(N.B. Some speakers have aspiration in the first five rows of column 3.)

In Table 5.1, the transliterated *-a.* represents a syllabic vowel reckoned to be present in the absence of a vowel sign. The dot represents the syllable marker (*tsheg.*: symbol no. 8). While one could in theory write Tibetan letters without these dots (or some other punctuation mark), Tibetans seldom if ever do so. The 30 basic letters written out in this way, as they normally are for pedagogic or scholarly purposes, thus constitute a syllabary, each corresponding spoken syllable comprising a consonant or non-syllabic vowel initial followed by a syllabic vowel (CV). There is one exception: the syllable ࠠ' *a.*, whose spoken equivalent in the Lhasa dialect has for most speakers no consonant before the syllabic vowel. (Some speakers however have here the “breathy voice” or “whispery voice” arytenoidal *_fi-* of the reading-style pronunciation, while before a lip-rounded vowel, many speakers have *_w-*.)

The comments at the head of the columns refer to phonetic features of initial consonants as symbolised by the IPA: vls. = voicelessness; asp. = aspiration (delayed voice onset); nonasp. = non-aspiration; h(igh) and l(ow) refer to pitch levels. These comments apply *only to the first nineteen letters* (within the solid-outlined boxes) whose arrangement is modelled on that of alphabets used to write Sanskrit.

For ease of understanding, particularly when considering phonology, I shall consider the remaining symbols in the order 4, 2, 1, 5, 6, 7, 9+10, 11+12, 13.

Returning to the simple combination of basic letter plus syllable marker, the basic letter may be modified either by the addition of subjoined letter *-w-* *-y-* *-r-* or *-l-*; or by the addition of head letter *r-* *s-* or *l-*; or both, with certain combinatorial restrictions. No extra vowel is involved; thus we are dealing with a kind of written “consonant cluster” at the beginning of the syllable, and the additional symbols are being used alphabetically rather than syllabically. All these subjoined and head letters are drawn

from the list of 30 basic letters, though in the cases of *y*, *r* and *w* they may have a different graphical form when used as head- or subjoined letters.

5.3.2 Subjoined letters (smad.'dogs.) (symbol no. 4)

The letters *-y- -r- -l-* may be added singly below (in transliteration, written after) certain basic letters. The letter *-w-* may also be added, either alone or in combination with one of the others.

The letter *-y-* (written ཡ) may be subjoined to basic letters *k- kh- g- p- ph- b- m- h-* to give the syllables of Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Subjoined -y-

1 vls.nonasp. h.	2 vls. asp. high.	3 vls. nonasp. l.	4 v. nasal low
ཀྱ' kya. ṅkja	ཁྱ' khya. ṅkja	གྱ' gya. ṅkja	
ཕྱ' pya. ṅtṣa	ཕྱ' phya. ṅtṣ ^h a	བྱ' bya. ṅtṣa	མྱ' mya. ṅa
ཇྱ' hya. ṅja			

Table 5.3 Subjoined -r-

1 vls.nonasp. h.	2 vls. asp. high	3 vls. nonasp. l.	4 voice nasal low
ཀྲ' kra. ṅtra	ཁྲ' khra. ṅtra	གྲ' gra. ṅtra	
ཕྲ' tra. ṅtra	ཕྲ' thra. ṅtra	བྲ' dra. ṅtra	
ཕྲ' pra. ṅtra	ཕྲ' phra. ṅtra	བྲ' bra. ṅtra	མྲ' mra. ṅma
		ཇྲ' shra. ṅṣa	མྲ' sra. ṅsa / ṅtra / ṅṣa
ཇྲ' hra. ṅra / ṅra			

The letter *-r-* (written ར) may be subjoined to basic letters *k- kh- g- p- ph- b-*

m- sh- s- h- to give the syllables of Table 5.3.

The letter *-l-* may be subjoined to basic letters *k- g- b- z- r- s-* to give the syllables of Table 5.4 (all pronounced **la** except *zla.* which is pronounced **da**).

Table 5.4 Subjoined *-l-*

1 high pitch	2	3 high pitch	4
𑌒' <i>kla.</i> la		𑌒' <i>gla.</i> la	
		𑌒' <i>bla.</i> la	
	𑌒' <i>zla.</i> da		
𑌒' <i>rla.</i> la			𑌒' <i>sla.</i> la

The letter *-w-* (written ₄) may be subjoined to basic letters *k- kh- g- c- ny- t- d- ts- tsh- zh- z- r- l- sh- s- h-* to give the syllables of Table 5.5.

-w- may also be combined with subjoined *-y -r* or *-l*, to give syllables such as 𑌒' *grwa.*, 𑌒' *phywa.* etc. Pronunciations are in all cases as for the same syllables without the *-w-*.

Table 5.5 Subjoined *-w-*

1 vls.nonasp. h.	2 vls. asp. high	3 vls. nonasp. l.	4 v. nasal low
𑌒' <i>kwa.</i> ka	𑌒' <i>khwa.</i> kh^ha	𑌒' <i>gwa.</i> ka	
𑌒' <i>cwa.</i> tca			𑌒' <i>nywa.</i> na
𑌒' <i>twa.</i> ta			
𑌒' <i>tswa.</i> t^hsa	𑌒' <i>tshwa.</i> t^hsa		
𑌒' <i>zhwa.</i> ca	𑌒' <i>zwa.</i> sa		
𑌒' <i>rwa.</i> ra	𑌒' <i>lwa.</i> la	𑌒' <i>shwa.</i> ca	𑌒' <i>swa.</i> sa
𑌒' <i>hwa.</i> ha			

5.3.3 Head letters (mgo.yig.) (symbol no. 2)

The letters *r-*, *l-*, *s-* may be added singly above (in transliteration, before) certain basic letters.

The letter *r-* (without its lowest stroke) may be written above basic letters *-k-* *-g-* *-ng-* *-j-* *-ny-* *-t-* *-d-* *-n-* *-b-* *-m-* *-ts-* *-dz-* to give the syllables of Table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Head letter *r-*

1 no change	2	3 voice	4 high pitch
ཀྲ་ <i>rka.</i> ka		རྒྱ་ <i>rga.</i> _ga	རྒྱ་ <i>rnga.</i> _nga
		རྩ་ <i>rja.</i> _dza	རྩ་ <i>rnya.</i> _na
རྩ་ <i>rta.</i> ta		རྩ་ <i>rda.</i> _da	རྩ་ <i>rma.</i> na
		རྩ་ <i>rba.</i> _ba	རྩ་ <i>rma.</i> ma
རྩ་ <i>rtsa.</i> tsa		རྩ་ <i>rdza.</i> _dza	

The letter *l-* may be written above basic letters *-k-* *-g-* *-ng-* *-c-* *-j-* *-t-* *-d-* *-p-* *-b-* *-h-* to give the syllables of Table 5.7.

Table 5.7 Head letter *l-*

1 no change	2	3 voice	4 high pitch
ལྲ་ <i>lka.</i> ka		ལྲ་ <i>lga.</i> _ga	ལྲ་ <i>lnga.</i> _nga
ལྲ་ <i>lca.</i> tsa		ལྲ་ <i>lja.</i> _dza	
ལྲ་ <i>lta.</i> ta		ལྲ་ <i>lda.</i> _da	
ལྲ་ <i>lpa.</i> pa		ལྲ་ <i>lba.</i> _ba	
ལྲ་ <i>lha.</i> la			

The letter *s-* may be written above basic letters *-k-* *-g-* *-ng-* *-ny-* *-t-* *-d-* *-n-* *-p-* *-b-* *-m-* *-ts-* to give the syllables of Table 5.8.

Table 5.8 Head letter s-

1 no change	2	3 voice	4 high pitch
ཤྱི་ <i>ska.</i> ka		ཤྱི་ <i>sga.</i> _ga	ཤྱི་ <i>snga.</i> _nga
			ཤྱི་ <i>snya.</i> _nya
ཤྱི་ <i>sta.</i> ta		ཤྱི་ <i>sda.</i> _da	ཤྱི་ <i>sna.</i> na
ཤྱི་ <i>spa.</i> pa		ཤྱི་ <i>sba.</i> _ba	ཤྱི་ <i>sma.</i> ma
ཤྱི་ <i>stsa.</i> t̄sa			

The following combinations of subjoined letter (except -w-) with head letter and basic letter are recorded:

- ཤྱི་ *rkya.* **kja** ཤྱི་ *rgya.* **_gja** ཤྱི་ *rmya.* **_nja**
 ཤྱི་ *skya.* **kja** ཤྱི་ *sgya.* **_gja** ཤྱི་ *spya.* **t̄ca** ཤྱི་ *sbya.* **_dza** ཤྱི་ *smya.* **_nja**
 ཤྱི་ *skra.* **tra** ཤྱི་ *sgra.* **_dra** ཤྱི་ *spra.* **tra** ཤྱི་ *sbra.* **_dra** ཤྱི་ *smra.* **ma**

The combination *lgya.* **_gja** exists in some dictionaries but is often rejected by Tibetans.

5.3.4 Prefixed letters (sngon.'jug.) (symbol no. 1)

The next position in the syllable to be considered is that of the prefixed letter, which as its name suggests is written before the basic letter (and before the head letter, if any). Prefixed letters, like head and subjoined letters, are drawn from the 30 basic letter symbols, and are added singly without any extra vowel, thus increasing the potential complexity of the initial “consonant cluster” of the syllable.

The letters which may be prefixed are *g-*, *d-*, *m-*, *b-*, *'-*. In writing syllables of the type “prefix+basic letter+vowel -a- +syllable marker”, (e.g. *d+g+a+*), it is the practice to add a final letter འ་ -'. A useful effect of this final འ་ -' is to show which is the basic letter of the syllable. That is to say, it distinguishes syllables of type “prefix +basic letter+vowel -a- +syllable marker” (e.g. འ་ཤྱི་ *dga'*.) from those of type “basic letter+vowel -a- +final+syllable marker”, these latter being written without the final འ་ (e.g. ཤྱི་ *dag.*). If this was in fact the original reason for the practice, then the final འ་ -' is sometimes redundant, for some letters of the alphabet can be basic letters but not finals, so that there is no question of ambiguity; yet the final འ་ -' is still added. Final འ་ -' is never now added to a syllable which contains a head letter, a subjoined letter or a vowel sign (although examples of all these may be found in

Preclassical Tibetan documents).

The letter *g-* may be prefixed to basic letters *-c- -ny- -t- -d- -n- -ts- -zh- -z- -y- -sh- -s-* to give the syllables of Table 5.9 (for the final ʼ in each syllable, see above).

Table 5.9 Prefixed *g-*

1 no change	2	3 voice	4 high pitch
གཅེན་ <i>gca'</i> . ʼtɕa			གཉེན་ <i>gnya'</i> . ʼja
གཏེན་ <i>gta'</i> . ʼta		གདེན་ <i>gda'</i> . ʼda	གནེན་ <i>gna'</i> . ʼna
གཙེན་ <i>gtsa'</i> . ʼtsa			
གཞེན་ <i>gzha'</i> . ʼɕa	གཟེན་ <i>gza'</i> . ʼsa		གཡེན་ <i>g-ya'</i> .* ʼja
		གཤེན་ <i>gsha'</i> . ʼɕa	གསེན་ <i>gsa'</i> . ʼsa

* The hyphen in the transliteration of གཡེན་ *g-ya'*. ʼja is there to distinguish it from གཡེན་ *gya'*. ʼkja.

Prefixed *g-* does not combine with head letter or subjoined letter in the same syllable.

The letter *d-* may be prefixed to basic letters *-k- -g- -ng- -p- -b- -m-* to give the syllables in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10 Prefixed *d-*

1 no change	2	3 voice	4 high pitch
དཀེན་ <i>dka'</i> . ʼka		དགེན་ <i>dga'</i> . ʼga	དངེན་ <i>dnga'</i> . ʼŋa
དཔེན་ <i>dpa'</i> . ʼpa		དབེན་ <i>dba'</i> . ʼwa or ʼza	དམེན་ <i>dma'</i> . ʼma

Prefixed *d-* does not combine with head letter, but may combine with subjoined *-y-* or *-r-* in the same syllable: e.g. *dbya'*. ʼja, *dgra'*. ʼdra.

The letter *b-* may be prefixed to basic letters *-k- -g- -c- -t- -d- -ts- -zh- -z- -sh- -s-*; and to the basic letters *-ng- -ny- -dz-* when these are also combined with a head letter as follows: *mng- rj- my- m- rdz- sng- sny- sn-*, to give the syllables of

Table 5.11.

Table 5.11 Prefixed b-

1 no change	2	3 voice	4 high pitch
ବକ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>bka'</i> . ka		ବଗ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>bga'</i> . ga	ବଈଁ ବଈଁଁ <i>brnga. bsnga.</i> nga
ବଚ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>bca'</i> . tca		ବଜ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>brja.</i> dza	ବଞ୍ତାଁ ବଞ୍ତାଁଁ <i>brnya. bsnya.</i> nya
ବତ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>bta'</i> . ta		ବଦ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>bda'</i> . da	ବଞ୍ତାଁଁ ବଞ୍ତାଁଁଁ <i>brna. bsna.</i> na
ବଚ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>btsa'</i> . tza		ବଜ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>brdza.</i> dza	
ବଜ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>bzha'</i> . cha	ବଞ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>bza'</i> . sa		
		ବଞ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>bsha'</i> . cha	ବଞ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>bsa'</i> . sa

Prefixed *b-* combines freely with head letter *-r-* or *-s-* and with subjoined letter *-y-* or *-r-* in the same syllable: e.g. *brka. bsga. bkya. bkra. bskya. bskra.*

The letter *m-* may be prefixed to basic letters *-kh-* *-g-* *-ng-* *-ch-* *-j-* *-ny-* *-th-* *-d-* *-n-* *-tsh-* *-dz-* to give the syllables of Table 5.12.

Table 5.12 Prefixed m-

1	2 no change	3 voice	4 high pitch
	କ୍ଷାକ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>mkha'</i> . kha	କ୍ଷାକ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>mga'</i> . ga	କ୍ଷାକ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>mnga'</i> . nga
	କ୍ଷାକ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>mcha'</i> . tcha	କ୍ଷାକ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>mja'</i> . dza	କ୍ଷାକ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>mnya'</i> . nya
	କ୍ଷାକ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>mtha'</i> . tha	କ୍ଷାକ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>mda'</i> . da	କ୍ଷାକ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>mna'</i> . na
	କ୍ଷାକ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>mtsha'</i> . tsha	କ୍ଷାକ୍ତାଠାଁ <i>mdza'</i> . dza	

Prefixed *m-* combines with subjoined *-y-* or *-r-* on basic letters *-kh-* and *-g-*.

The letter *'* may be prefixed to basic letters *-kh-* *-g-* *-ch-* *-j-* *-th-* *-d-* *-ph-* *-b-* *-tsh-* *-dz-* to give the syllables of Table 5.13.

Prefixed *'* combines with subjoined *-y-* or *-r-* in the same syllable.

Table 5.13 Prefixed '-

1	2 no change	3 voice	4
	ཁམའ་ 'kha'. ˉk^ha	ཁགའ་ 'ga'. _ga	
	ཁཅའ་ 'cha'. ˉtṣ^ha	ཁཇའ་ 'ja'. _dza	
	ཁཐའ་ 'tha'. ˉt^ha	ཁདའ་ 'da'. _da	
	ཁཔའ་ 'pha'. ˉp^ha	ཁབའ་ 'ba'. _ba	
	ཁཅའ་ 'tsha'. ˉtsh^ha	ཁཇའ་ 'dza'. _dza	

5.4 Vowel Signs (*dbyangs.yig.*)(Symbol No. 5)

There are four syllabic vowel signs, which for purposes of pedagogy or discussion are usually written as part of a syllable over or under (in transliteration, after) basic letter ཨ 'a.; viz:

ཨི་ "i. ཨུ་ "u. ཨེ་ "e. ཨོ་ "o.

The presence of one of these symbols replaces the *-a* by the respective vowel.

Any basic letter, with or without prefixed letter, head letter and/or subjoined letter, may in principle combine with any vowel sign. In the equivalent spoken syllables the corresponding vowel sound follows the initial consonant or consonant cluster.

5.5 The Final Cluster (Symbols Nos. 6,7,9,10)

5.5.1 Final letters (*rjes.jug.*)(symbol no. 6)

One of the letters *-g -ng -d -n -b -m -' -r -l -s*, with no extra vowel, may be added as a final letter after the basic letter of a syllable (in transliteration, after the vowel letter), to give syllables such as:

ཀག་ *kag.* **ˉka:** ཀང་ *kang.* **ˉkḍ:** ཀད་ *kad.* **ˉke:**
 ཀཅ་ *kan.* **ˉkṣ:** ཀབ་ *kab.* **ˉkvp** ཀཔ་ *kam.* **ˉkam**
 ཀར་ *kar.* **ˉka:** ཀལ་ *kal.* **ˉke:** ཀས་ *kas.* **ˉke:**

The use of final འ་ '-' is restricted to syllables of the type discussed above under prefixed letters at 5.3.4.

In principle final letters combine freely with all other categories of symbol.

As may be seen from the above examples, besides final consonants, four different vowel qualities (**a**, **ɑ**, **ɛ**, **ɤ**) as well as distinctions of length and nasality are symbolised by the written finals in combination with the vowel *-a-*. The system for this and other written vowels is presented in greater detail in Chapter 6 (Table 6.2).

5.5.2 *Second final letters (yang.'jug.) (symbol no. 7)*

The letter *-s* may be added as a second final letter after one of the final letters *-g-* *-ng-* *-b-* *-m-* to give syllables such as:

ཀགས་ *kags*. ཀའ་ ཀངས་ *kangs*. ཀཐ་ ཀབས་ *kabs*. ཀཤཔ་ ཀམས་ *kams*. ཀམམ་.

In general the second final *-s* may be ignored for the purposes of pronunciation.

In older documents the letter *-d* may be found as a second final letter after one of the final letters *-n-* *-r-* *-l-* in syllables such as ཀའོད་ *kand*. This second final letter *-d* is now obsolete.

5.5.3 *Second vowel sign (symbols nos. 9,10)*

Instead of one of the final letters or combinations of final letter plus second final letter, a syllable may have a second vowel sign, whose sign is always written over or under (in transliteration, after) a letter འ -' which is functioning as a second vowel sign carrier. In practice the second vowel sign is always *-i* *-u* or *-o*. Examples are: ཀའི་ *ka'i*. ཀའེ་, ཀའུ་ *ga'u*. ཀའུམ་, ཀའོ་ *ma'o*. ཀའུམ་. Such forms may or may not correspond to diphthongs in the various spoken dialects

5.5.4 *Third vowel sign (symbols nos. 11, 12)*

After a second vowel sign it is possible to add a third vowel sign, written over a letter འ -' functioning as third vowel sign carrier. In practice the third vowel sign is always *-i*. Examples are: ཀའུའི་ *mi'u'i*. ཀའུའི་, ཀའོའི་ *ma'o'i*. ཀའུའི་. Writers may prefer to split such "syllables" into two; e.g. ཀའུའི་ *mi'u.yi*.

5.5.5 *Post-second vowel sign final letter (symbol no. 13)*

Instead of a third vowel sign, it is possible to have a post-second-vowel sign final letter *-ng* or *-s*. (In the case of *-ng*, the letter follows a letter འ -' with no vowel sign, which may be regarded as a second vowel sign carrier - its vowel being *-a-*). Examples are: ཀའོང་ *-na'ang*. ཀའོ་ (this pronunciation is idiosyncratic), ཀའུས་ *mi'us*. ཀའུམ་. Again, writers may prefer to separate these out into such forms as ཀའོང་

na.yang. and མིའུ་ཡིས་ *mi'u.yis.*, though in practice the problem seldom arises.

5.6 Particle Sandhi

Some particles vary in their choice of basic letter according to the spelling of the verb or noun syllable preceding them. In modern dialects, including the Lhasa dialect, this spelling alternation does not always correspond to phonological alternation. In the Lhasa dialect the main particles concerned are the genitive noun particle *-kyi./gi./gyi./-i.*; the linking verb particle *-kyi./gi./gyi.*; the subject-marking/instrumental noun particle *-kyis./gis./gyis./-s.*; the linking verbs particle *-pa./ba.*; and the nominalising verb particle *-pa./ba.*

Genitive particle

The genitive noun particle (after a consonant, usually pronounced **-gi**) is spelt:

ཀྱི་	after final ཅ་བ་ས་	e.g. བོད་ཀྱི་	<i>bod.kyi.</i>	_pø:gi	“Tibet’s”
གི་	after final བ་ང་	e.g. ཕྱག་གི་	<i>phyag.gi.</i>	ˉtʂʰa:gi	“hand’s”
གྱི་	after final རྣ་མ་རྩ་ལ་	e.g. སྐྱེན་གྱི་	<i>sman.gyi.</i>	ˉmɛŋgi	“medicine’s”
འི་	after final vowel sign (added to the same syllable, as a second vowel)	e.g. འི་	<i>nga'i.</i>	_ŋɛ:⁴	“my”

Note that the vowel qualities symbolised by the vowel sign of the noun syllable in combination with this second vowel sign འི་ are similar to those symbolised by vowel sign+the three consonant finals ཅ་ལ་ས་ (see 5.5 above).

Occasionally after a vowel final this particle is written as a separate syllable, for instance to make up the syllables in a line of verse, e.g.:

ང་ཡི་	<i>nga.yi.</i>	_ŋajɪ	“my”
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The linking verb particle *-kyi./gi./gyi.* follows the same spelling rules, except that the alternant *-gi.* follows a final vowel sign in the preceding syllable.

Subject-marking/instrumental particle

The subject-marking/instrumental noun particle (after a consonant, usually pronounced **-gi:**) is spelt:

ཀྱིས་	after final ད་བ་ས་	e.g. བོད་ཀྱིས་	<i>bod.kyis.</i>	_pø:gi:	“by Tibet”
གིས་	after final བ་ང་	e.g. ཕྱག་གིས་	<i>phyag.gis.</i>	ˉtɕʰagi:	“by hand”
གྱིས་	after final མ་མ་ར་ལ་	e.g. སྐྱེན་གྱིས་	<i>sman.gyis.</i>	ˉmɛŋgi:	“by medicine”
ས་	after final vowel sign (added to the same syllable, as a final letter)				
		e.g. ངས་	<i>ngas.</i>	_ŋɛ:	“I”

Occasionally after a vowel final this particle is written as a separate syllable, for instance to make up the syllables in a line of verse, e.g.:

ང་ཡིས་	<i>nga.yis.</i>	_ŋaji:	“I”
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Nominalising and linking verb particles -pa./ba.

This nominalising verb particle is spelt:

པ་	after final བ་ད་བ་མ་ས་	e.g.:		
བཞག་པ་	<i>bzhag.pa.</i>	_ca:bə/_ca:gɐ		“putting”
མཚོད་པ་	<i>mchod.pa.</i>	ˉtɕʰø:bə		“partaking”
བསྐྱབས་པ་	<i>bslebs.pa.</i>	ˉle:bə		“arrival”
བསམ་པ་	<i>bsam.pa.</i>	ˉsambə		“thinking”
བལྟས་པ་	<i>bltas.pa.</i>	ˉtɛ:bə		“seen”
བ་	after final ང་ལ་ར་	and vowel sign, e.g.:		
ལང་བ་	<i>lang.ba.</i>	_laŋbə/_laŋɐ		“rising”
མཇལ་བ་	<i>mjal.ba.</i>	_dʒɛ:bə/_dʒɛɐ		“meeting”
འབྱོར་བ་	<i>'byor.ba.</i>	_dʒɔ:bə/_dʒɔɐ		“arrival”
ཞུ་བ་	<i>zhu.ba.</i>	_çɔwə		“requesting”

The linking verb particle follows the same spelling and pronunciation rules.

Notes

- ¹. Sometimes called “superadded” or “superscribed” letter. Both these and the prefixed letters are sometimes called “preradicals”, e.g. by Róna-Tas.
- ². Also called “basic consonant” (Das), “radical” (Róna-Tas), “root letter”, and rather misleadingly, “first letter” (Jaeschke), or “initial”.
- ³. Also known as “subscribed letter”.
- ⁴. A velar nasal initial is often palatal before **ɛ** or **e**.

6. Phonology

Introduction

The phonology of the Lhasa dialect will be outlined in this chapter. Some comparative material from other dialects is given in Appendix 2.

6.1 Monosyllables

6.1.1 Segmental inventory: syllable initial

Features pertaining to the columns i-viii of Table 6.1 are:

- i) Plosion (or affrication in rows 3, 4 & 5); voicelessness (voice onset simultaneous with onset of following vowel).
- ii) Plosion (or affrication in rows 3, 4 & 5); voicelessness; aspiration (voice onset delayed beyond onset of following vowel).
- iii) Plosion (or affrication in rows 3, 4 & 5); voicing (voice onset simultaneous with release of consonant).

Table 6.1. Syllable initials

	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii	viii
1 bilabial		p-	p ^h -	b-	m-	w-		
2 dental/alveolar		t-	t ^h -	d-	n-	l-	ʃ-	s-
3 " "		ts-	ts ^h -	dz-				
4 alveolar		tr-	tr̥-	dr-		r-	ʀ-	
5 palatal		tʃ-	tʃ ^h -	dʒ-	ɲ-	j-		ç-
6 palato-velar		kj-	kj-	gj-				
7 velar		k-	k ^h -	g-	ŋ-			
8 glottal		ʔ-					h-	ɦ-

- iv) Plosion; voicing, nasality.
- v) Approximation, laterality or friction; voicing.
- vi) Friction (& laterality in row 2); voicelessness .
- vii) Friction; voicelessness.
- viii) Friction; whisper,¹ voicing.

The Lhasa dialect alveolar fricative typically corresponds to IPA ʃ -, but the symbol **r**- has been retained for simplicity's sake.

Variation within the dialect

The above initials have been generalised from a number of speakers from Lhasa and up to about 50 kilometres away. Commonly heard divergences from them include the following:

Some speakers have voiced dental fricative **z**- instead of affricate **dz**-.

Palatal plosives **c**-, **c^h**- and **ɟ**- are sometimes heard instead of **kj**-, **kj^h**- and **gj**- respectively.

Some speakers, particularly from higher social strata in Lhasa itself, lack the voiced plosive/affricate initials of column iii in Table 6.1, replacing them with the corresponding sounds in column i or ii. Some such speakers have a voiceless **m̥**- alongside voiced **m**-.

Speakers differ in their combination of pitch features with the aspirated initials of column ii (see below under "Tone").

6.1.2 Syllable nucleus

There is a system of five vowels in short open monosyllables, shown in column i of Table 6.2. The written vowel sign is given on the left. Columns ii and iii show the vowels in closed syllables; columns iv-viii those in long and/or nasalised syllables arranged so as to show typical correspondences with the written final letters indicated at the head of the columns (the correspondences in practice are not absolutely regular):

In addition to the five symbols of column i in Table 6.2, I have used eight more in monosyllables: (**ɻ** **ɑ** **i** **u** **ɥ** **ø** **o**) giving a total of thirteen not counting length and nasality. A phonemic analysis might eliminate the symbols **ɻ**, **ɑ** and **i** as allophonic variants, leaving a total of ten. However I have not attempted to group the vowels into phonemes because of the difficulty this causes when dealing with vowel harmony in polysyllabic words (see 6.3.5). The vowels **ə**, **ʌ** and **ɜ** which are not found in monosyllables are introduced below at 6.3.4 and 6.3.5.

Although the degree of regularity between spelling and pronunciation is much greater than in, say, English, in practice a fair number of lexical items are irregular and depart from the above rules in some way. Three common items may be mentioned here:

The verb *shes*. "know", "understand" is pronounced as if spelt *shen*..

The verb/particle *dgos*. "want", "need", "have to" is pronounced as if spelt *dgo*..

The verb *myong*. "experience" is pronounced as if spelt *myung*..

For these and all other irregular items, the traditional Tibetan spellings, where known, have been retained in the present work, but the IPA transcriptions represent the sounds actually heard.

6.1.3 Syllable final

The only syllable-final consonants regularly heard in connected speech of normal speed are bilabials **-p** and **-m** (see columns ii and iii of Table 6.2.). In slow speech velar **-k** may replace vowel length in column v; likewise **-ŋ**, may be heard instead of vowel length and nasality in column vi. In a few loanwords there may be a final **-ʁ** following a short vowel, (column viii); e.g. *pir.* ʔpiʁ “paintbrush”, *par.* ʔpaʁ “print”.

Table 6.2. Syllable nuclei and syllable finals

	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii	viii
	-V.	-b(s).	-m(s).	-g(s).	-ng(s).	-d/l/s.	-n.	-r.
1-a-	-a	-vp	-am	-a: -a:	-ɑ:	-ɛ:	-ɛ̃:	-a: -ɑ:
2-i-	-i	-ip	-im	-i:	-ɪ:	-i:	-ɪ:	-e:
3-u-	-u	-up	-um	-u:	-ʊ:	-y:	-ỹ:	-u: -o:
4-e-	-ɛ	-ɛp	-ɛm	-a: -ɛk -ɛ:	-ɛ̃:	-e:	-ɛ̃:	-e:
5-o-	-ɔ	-ɔp	-ɔm	-ɔ: -ɔ̃	-ɔ̃:	-ø:	-ø̃:	-ɔ:

6.1.4 Tone

Nouns and verbs. Most commentators have regarded Lhasa Tibetan as a tone language in the sense that factors of voice pitch are an essential part of lexical differences. There has been little agreement, however, on the number of tonemes or on the respective contributions of pitch level (register), pitch movement (contour) and phonation to the phenomenon of tone. One or two dissenters even refuse to acknowledge Lhasa Tibetan as a tone language at all (see Appendix 2). A complication is that the dialect is also highly intonational, and the actual pitch of a constituent may be a manifestation of phrase or sentence intonation instead of, or as well as, tone. My approach owes much to that of Sprigg (e.g. 1961), since my informants seem to manifest tonal phenomena in a similar way to his.

Every constituent which can occur as a monosyllabic word or as the first syllable of a polysyllable (except a handful of particles) has a lexical tone classification: either “Tone 1” or “Tone 2”. The classification arises from the fact that at many places within the sentence there are two potential pitch levels, one higher than the other. In a

monosyllabic word in most (though not all) positions in the sentence, a “Tone 1” constituent will have the pitch of its voiced components on the higher of the two levels; a “Tone 2” constituent on the lower. In Tables 6.3 and 6.4, actual pitch (´ and `) rather than tonal classification (ˉ and ˘) is symbolised.

Table 6.3. *Tone: minimal pairs*

Tone 1 (high pitch)			Tone 2 (low pitch)		
1.	´pʊ	<i>spu.</i> “hair”	`pʊ	<i>bu.</i> “son”	
2.	´tʃɛ:	<i>bcad.</i> “cut”	`tʃɛ:	<i>byas.</i> “did”	
3.	´ɕɔ	<i>sho.</i> “dice”	`ɕɔ	<i>zho.</i> “yoghurt”	
	´ɕɑ:	<i>gshegs.</i> “die” (hon.)	`ɕɑ:	<i>bzhag.</i> “put”	
	´sa	<i>sa.</i> “earth”	`sa	<i>gzaʼ.</i> “planet”, “epilepsy”	
4.	´ŋa	<i>lnga.</i> “five”	`ŋa	<i>nga.</i> “I”, “me”	
5.	´la	<i>bla.</i> “soul”	`la	<i>la.</i> “mountain pass”	
6.	´jʌ:	<i>g-yol.</i> “avoid”	`jʌ:	<i>yod.</i> “exist”	

The examples in Table 6.3 include constituents beginning with 1) plosive, 2) affricate, and 3) fricative initials, all of which are voiceless and unaspirated; and with 4) nasal, 5) lateral and 6) non-syllabic vowel initials, all of which are voiced. It is only in syllables of these six types that pitch is independently contrastive for my informants. In most positions in the sentence, monosyllabic words beginning with voiced plosives and voiced affricates are always Tone 2 (low pitch), while those beginning with aspirates are always Tone 1 (high pitch):

Table 6.4. *Tone and phonation*

Tone 1 (aspiration)		Tone 2 (voicing)	
´k ^h am	<i>khams.</i> “Kham” (placename)	`gam	<i>sgam.</i> “box”
´p ^h a	<i>pha.</i> “father”	`ba	<i>sbra.</i> “black tent”
´tʃ ^h a	<i>cha.</i> “pair”	`dza	<i>ʼjaʼ.</i> “rainbow”

*´k^ham, *´p^ha, *´tʃ^ha, *´gam, *´ba, *´dza are all impossible. Thus for such speakers pitch is not independently lexically contrastive for constituents with these types of initial. To account for this, one can add phonation criteria to the statement of exponents of tone:

Exclusively Tone 1 exponents:

- high pitch
- aspiration: k^h, kʃ, tʃ^h, t^h, p^h, ts^h, tʃ
- voiceless alveolar or lateral friction: ʃ, ʃ
- voiceless glottality: ʔ, h

Exclusively Tone 2 exponents:

- low pitch
- voice with non-nasal plosion or affrication: g, gj, dz, d, b, dz, dr
- voice with glottality: fi

Exponents of both tones:

h) voiceless plosion, affrication or friction: **k**, **kj**, **tʃ**, **t**, **p**, **ts**, **tr**, **s**, **ç**

i) voice with nasality, laterality, friction or approximation: **ŋ**, **ɲ**, **n**, **m**, **l**, **r**, **j**,
w

Alternatively one could regard Lhasa Tibetan as non-tonal in constituents beginning with aspirates or with voiced plosives or affricates - but one would still have to state the different pitch levels associated with these types of initials. One could think of this as the “non-contrastive” or “inherent” pitch postulated by some scholars for an early, proto-tonal stage of Tibetan (see Appendix 2).

(N.B. Some speakers not used as informants for this study have aspiration as an exponent of both tones. To relate this to the script, this means that these speakers aspirate some or all the initials in column 3 of the tables in Chapter 5, where no head letter or prefix is present in the Tibetan spelling.)

Particles. Most particles cannot occur as monosyllables or as the first syllable of a polysyllable, and are not assigned a tonal classification. The exceptions which have been noted are the co-ordinating noun particle *dang*. **tɕ**: “and”, “with”; the numerative noun particle *cig*. **tɕi**: “a”; and some uses of the negative verb particle *ma*. **ma** “not”. While these are all generally pronounced on a low pitch, this may be better treated as a manifestation of phrase or sentence intonation than one of tone, as in the case of other particles, and these items have not been assigned a tonal classification.² For negative particle *ma*. as part of a polysyllable, see 6.3.3.

6.2 Sound and Script

A study of the tables in Chapter 5 will reveal two striking facts. Firstly, relatively simple sounds may be represented by what seem unnecessarily complicated and indirect combinations of symbols. Thus whereas a syllable such as **k^ham** can be represented straightforwardly by, say, *kham.*, one such as **trø**: can be represented by something as strange as *sprod.*

Secondly, it is usually possible to spell a given spoken syllable in several, often many ways while retaining the same pronunciation. Thus the same syllable **trø**: may also be spelt *trod.*, *dkrod.*, *pros.*, *skrol.*, *dkros.* etc. While this massive redundancy within the spelling system can come in useful for distinguishing homophones (as in English), one cannot help feeling that it would be seriously overdone if the script’s only purpose were to write the Lhasa dialect.

The obvious inference is that the script was designed to write a variety of Tibetan rather different from the present-day Lhasa dialect. The fact that some outlying modern dialects - the so-called “archaic” or “cluster” dialects - seem possible candidates for such a variety (see Chapter 3 and Appendix 1) opens up the whole field of dialectology and historical linguistics. The Lhasa dialect turns out to be among the least “archaic” dialects, at least where monosyllables are concerned, though perhaps not the very least archaic.

6.3 Polysyllables

As stated previously (4.2), my definition of the word is primarily phonological. The polysyllabic word may be defined as a sequence of two or more spoken syllables between which no pause may be present, and which is the domain of certain phonological patterns and restrictions pertaining particularly to syllable-initial and syllable-final consonants, and to pitch and stress.

While these patterns apply generally to all syllables of polysyllabic words, those pertaining to consonants can be especially effectively demonstrated in polysyllabic nouns, where there are abundant examples of constituents which may be realised by either the first or the second syllable of a word. From the point of view of these noun constituents, the word is the domain within which some of their phonetic features alternate. For such constituents, one alternant per relevant feature may be appropriate to a first syllable, the other to a non-first syllable. The monosyllabic form of the constituent is in some cases the same as the first-syllable form; in other cases the same as the non-first syllable form; and in yet other cases different from both.

Five types of alternation will be exemplified below:

- a) alternation in phonetic features of syllable initials (particularly phonation);
- b) alternation between simple consonants and consonant clusters;
- c) alternation of pitch features (tone); and
- d) stress-like alternation of vowel quality.

A fifth type of alternation e) harmonic alternation of vowel quality (vowel harmony), applies to disyllabic stretches which may be shorter than the word, but insofar as these stretches must be contained within words, such vowel harmony is also relevant to word delimitation. In this type of alternation, it is not the order of the syllables but the harmonic classification of the constituents which is important.

6.3.1 Syllable-initial voicing/phonation alternation

Certain syllable-initial phonation types are found only at the beginning of words, never word-internally. These are aspiration (C^h -); plosion when combined with glottality ($ʔ$ -); and voicelessness when combined with lateral or alveolar friction (ʃ -, ʃ̥ -). For most speakers at normal conversational speed, one can add voicelessness when combined with plosion or affrication. Thus constituents whose monosyllabic or first-syllable forms have these features in their initials will have alternants with non-aspiration, non-glottality, and/or voice respectively when they are realised by non-first syllables (see Table 6.5).

For some speakers uvularity combines with voicing and friction word-internally ($-Y$ -), mainly when the second syllable is a particle. This may not strictly be alternation since the particles in question cannot be word-initial, though *dgos.* has a word-initial homograph:

<i>byed. dgos.kyi.red.</i>	“will have to do”	<i>byas.dgos.</i>	“will do”
_tʃe: _gugyre:		_tʃe:yo	

Table 6.5. Syllable-initial alternations

voicelessness & aspiration / voicing & non-aspiration: k^h-/-g-			
<i>khang.pa.</i>	ˈkʰaŋbə	“house”	<i>lha.khang.</i> ˈlʰaŋd̥: “temple”
voicelessness / voicing: p-/-b-			
<i>spang.leb.</i>	ˈpaŋlɪp	“plank”	<i>nag.spang.</i> ˌnaŋbɔ̄: “blackboard”
plosion+glottality / zero: ʔ-/-zero-			
<i>dbugs.</i>	ˈʔu:	“breath”	<i>ljags.dbugs.</i> ˌdʒʌ:u: “breath” (hon.)

6.3.2 Simple/cluster consonant alternation

Lhasa Tibetan is a good example of a Tibetan dialect with no word-initial consonant clusters,³ but with a variety of clusters word-medially. The existence of such clusters in the dialect provides another criterion for delimiting words. Historically the medial clusters may be divided into two types: those which represent sequences of first syllable final+second syllable initial (Table 6.6), and those which represent a second-syllable initial cluster (Table 6.7). In general, present day phonology seems to respect this distinction.

Second-syllable initial cluster

In this category, the first-syllable constituent has a short vowel without nasality or consonant final. The consonant cluster is usually found to correspond to a second-syllable spelling with initial prefix, head letter or subjoined letter. The alternation is therefore between first-syllable C- (Table 6.7, column 2) and non-first-syllable -V+CC- (Table 6.7, column 3). For examples see Table 6.7.

Note that this type of cluster permits the VC sequences **-an-** **-ɔŋ-** **-uŋ-** which are not found in monosyllables or in the final+initial type of cluster exemplified in Table 6.6.

The vowel alternations in Table 6.7 between first and second syllable for the same constituent are discussed at 6.3.4 below.

6.3.3 Tone: pitch alternation

Nouns

In polysyllabic nouns, both Tone 1 and Tone 2 constituents have alternating pitch features correlating partly with which syllable of the word they occupy, but also interacting with sentence intonation. Thus for disyllabic nouns, three pitch patterns have been distinguished by Sprigg (1955:147f). Their various combinations of pitch levels allow a twofold grouping of all such words in the dialect, which may be termed “Tone 1 words” and “Tone 2 words” after the lexical class of their respective first syllables.

Table 6.6. *First-syllable final + second-syllable initial*

Final -g. For some constituents spelt with final -g., monosyllabic or final-syllable -V:+zero (column 1 below) alternates with non-final syllable -Vg+C-, -Vk+C-, -Vx+C-, or -Vŷ+C- (C- representing the second-syllable initial; and + representing syllable boundary) (column 2), e.g.:

1		2	
<i>chu.lag.</i>	ṽtṣʰula:	“tributary”	<i>lag.pa.</i> _lagbə “hand”
<i>lug.</i>	_lu:	“sheep”	<i>lug.sha.</i> _lukçə/_luxçə “mutton”

Other constituents however do not show this alternation:

1			2
<i>phyag.</i>	ṽtṣʰa:	“hand”	<i>phyag.dpe.</i> ṽtṣʰabi “book”

Final -ng. Monosyllabic or final-syllable -ṽ:+zero alternates with non-final syllable -Vŋ+C-, e.g.

1			2
<i>lha.khang.</i>	_lagḍ:	“temple”	<i>khang.pa.</i> ṽkʰaŋbə “house”

Final -n. Monosyllabic or final-syllable -ṽ:+zero alternates with non-final syllable -VN+C- (N = homorganic nasal) where C is not nasal, e.g.:

1			2
<i>sman.</i>	ṽmɛ:	“medicine”	<i>sman.pa.</i> ṽmembə “doctor”
			<i>sman.khang.</i> ṽmeŋḍ: “hospital”
			<i>sman.bcos.</i> ṽmeŋdzø: “therapy”
			<i>sman.rtsis.</i> ṽmendzi: “medical science”

Table 6.7. *Second-syllable initial cluster*

1			2			3
ṽtṣʰu	“water”	_tṣa	“bird”	ṽtṣʰubdzə	“water bird”	
<i>chu.</i>		<i>bya.</i>		<i>chu.by.</i>		
_tṣa	“tea”	ṽtṣʰø:	“drink”	_tṣamdzø:	“tea libation”	
<i>ja.</i>		<i>mchod.</i>		<i>ja.mchod.</i>		
ṽtṣu	“ten”	_gu	“nine”	ṽtṣurgu ⁴	“nineteen”	
<i>bcu.</i>		<i>dgu.</i>		<i>bcu.dgu.</i>		
ṽtṣu	“ten”	ṽtṣi:	“one”	ṽtṣugdzi:	“eleven”	
<i>bcu.</i>		<i>gcig.</i>		<i>bcu.gcig.</i>		
_ta	“now”	ṽta	“like”	_tandə	“now”	
<i>da.</i>		<i>lta.</i>		<i>da.lta.</i>		

The pitch pattern appropriate to a noun occurring at the beginning of a sentence is by far the commonest. Here one essentially has two pitch possibilities (in Table 6.8, pitch levels of both syllables are indicated):

Table 6.8. Pitch patterns in disyllabic words

a) Tone 1 words: high pitch+high pitch		
<i>shing.rta.</i>	ˈʑiŋˈdə	“horse-drawn vehicle”
<i>shing.bal.</i>	ˈʑiŋˈbe:	“cotton”
b) Tone 2 words: low pitch+high pitch		
<i>zhing.kha.</i>	ˋʑiŋˈgə	“field”
<i>zhing.'brog.</i>	ˋʑiŋˈdro:	“farmers and nomads”

In all the above cases the second constituent is high in pitch regardless of whether it is classified as Tone 1 (high as monosyllable: *rta.* ˋtə, *kha.* ˋkʰə) or Tone 2. (low as monosyllable: *bal.* ˋpɛ:, *'brog.* ˋdro:).

Conversely, in non-thematised predicators and echoed themes, all constituents are low in pitch regardless of whether they are classified as Tone 1 or Tone 2. (For thematisation and echoing, see 12.7.)

Particles

Most particles are not given a tone classification because they cannot occur as monosyllables or as the first syllable of polysyllables. Their pitch is regarded as a manifestation of phrase or sentence intonation. The following are generally low in pitch:

Noun particles

particles at numerator position in the noun phrase *cig.,-tsam.* (7.7);
 subject-marking particle (12.2);
 case-marking particles (12.4);
 genitive particle (7.8).

Verb particles

linking particle *-pa./ba.* (9.3.4.1);
 auxiliaries (9.2.1);
 modal particles (9.2.6);
 echoed or non-thematised subordinating particles (Chapter 13);
 non-thematised linking particles *-kyi./gyi./gi., -rgyu., -yag., -mkhan., -grabs, -chog.* (Chapter 9);
 echoed nominalising particles (13.4) (including adjective particles Chapter 11).

Other particles

echoed topic-marking particles.

The following are generally high in pitch:

Verb particles

non-echoed nominalising particles (including adjective particles);

thematized linking particles *-kyi./gyi./gi.*, *-rgyu.*, *-yag.*, *-mkhan.*, *-grabs*, *-chog.*; thematized subordinating particles.

Other particles

non-echoed topic-marking particles.

The dubitative verb particle *"e. །ཨ/ཨ*, and the negative verb particle *ma. ma/ma* when they are word-initial may have high or low pitch, agreeing with the pitch of the following verb stem which behaves tonally as if word-initial.

6.3.4 *Stress-like vowel quality alternation*

The vowels *-a*. *-a*, *-e*. *-ɛ* and *-o*. *-ɔ* in short open initial syllables or monosyllables have “reduced” (closer, or closer and more central) alternants *-ə*, *-ɪ* and *-o/ʊ* respectively in the same constituents in non-initial syllables. The combinations *-ɛŋ* and *-ɛp* also have reduced alternants *-ɪ:* and *-ɪp*. Examples:

<i>lta.ba.</i>	<i>ˈtawə</i>	“view”	<i>da.lta.</i>	<i>_tandə</i>	“now”
<i>rtse.mo.</i>	<i>ˈtsemu</i>	“tip”	<i>rgyal.rtse.</i>	<i>_gjandzɪ</i>	“Gyantse” (place)
<i>deb.</i>	<i>_tɛp</i>	“book”	<i>phyag.deb.</i>	<i>ˈtɕʰa:dɪp</i>	“book” (hon.)
<i>'phreng.ba.</i>	<i>ˈtɕɛŋə</i>	“rosary”	<i>phyag.'phreng.</i>	<i>ˈtɕʰandɾɪ:</i>	“rosary” (hon.)
<i>mtsho.</i>	<i>ˈtsʰɔ</i>	“lake”	<i>rgya.mtsho.</i>	<i>_gjadzo</i>	“sea”
<i>blo.</i>	<i>ˈlɔ</i>	“mind”	<i>bsam.blo.</i>	<i>ˈsamlo</i>	“thought”

Certain particle syllables (particularly adjective particles) spelt with *a.*, *o.* or *e.* occur only in non-initial syllables, and with the “reduced” vowels *ə*, *ʊ* or *ɪ* respectively:

<i>tshang.ma.</i>	<i>ˈtsʰaŋmə</i>	“all”
<i>mang.po.</i>	<i>_maŋbu</i>	“many”
<i>zang.nge. zing.nge.</i>	<i>_saŋɪ _siŋɪ</i>	“jumbled”

The auxiliary *-byung.* *-dzʊ* has a short vowel: similarly the auxiliary *-song.* *e* is pronounced *-sʊ*, or sometimes *-su* or even *-s*.

At first sight these look like stress-related alternations, with high prominence or stress on the first syllable and lower prominence on the second. Such is indeed my impression from listening to the examples. However, the components of stress in the Lhasa dialect have never been satisfactorily analysed, and the accounts of the various authors who have touched on the topic⁵ are not compatible enough to be reducible to a single statement.

6.3.5 *Harmonic vowel quality alternation (vowel harmony)*

Many constituents in the dialect have vowels which vary between an open and a close

alternant:

bod. **_pø:/_py:** *skad.* **˘kje:/˘kje:**

The open alternant is found if and when the constituent occurs as a monosyllable:

bod. **_pø:** “Tibet” *skad* **˘kje:** “language”

and very often also when it occurs in the adjacent syllable to another alternating constituent, or next to a non-alternating constituent with an open vowel (always within the same word):

bod.skad. **_pø:ge:** “Tibetan (language)” (both alternants open)

The closer alternant is found only in a syllable adjacent (within the word⁶) to a constituent of a second, non-alternating class, all of which have close vowels:

gzhung. **_çö:** “government” *bod.gzhung.* **_py:çö:** “Tibetan Government”

The alternation can as well be seen in the second as in the first syllable of a pair:

rgya.bod. **_gjabø:** “sino-tibetan” *dbyin.bod.* **˘ŋimby:** “anglo-tibetan”
rgya.skad. **_gjage:** “Chinese” *dbyin.skad.* **˘ŋigge:** “English”

When two non-alternating close constituents occur together, their vowels will, by definition, both be close:

dbyin.gzhung. **˘ŋinçö:** “British Government”

The alternating group of constituents are usually spelt with one of the vowels *o*, *e*, or *a* (but not *ab.* or *abs.*). The vowel alternants are shown in Table 6.9, each open alternant accompanied by its close equivalent immediately below it:

Table 6.9. Harmonic vowel alternants

<i>o</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>e, a</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>a</i>
ɔ:	ɔ/o/ɒ	ø(:)	ɛ	ɛ:	e:	a(:)/ɑ: (open)
o:	u	y(:)	ɪ	e:	i:	ʌ(:) (close)

The non-alternating group are mostly spelt in Tibetan with the vowels *i* or *u*, or the vowel+final(s) *ab.* or *abs.*. The relevant phonetic vowels are **ɪ i: u u: y:** and **v.**

Note that there is some overlap between the possible vowels of the non-alternating and the alternating groups, though most vowels are peculiar to one or the other group (ignoring length: see Table 6.10):

A constituent which through the operation of stress and vowel harmony has three vowel alternants will always have the “unstressed” vowel rather than the open or the harmonically close alternant in a non-first syllable; e.g. *rta.* **ta/ta/-dø:**

Table 6.10.

u v i i u y	(non-alternating)
i i u y ε e ɔ o ɒ ø a ɑ ʌ	(alternating)

<i>rta.dmag.</i>	ˈtama:	“cavalry”
<i>rta.dmig.</i>	ˈtami:	“horse’s hoof”
<i>bzhon.rta.</i>	ˌçɔnda	“riding horse”
<i>shing.rta.</i>	ˌçɪŋdə	“horse-drawn vehicle”

As their spelling might suggest, however, these constituents count as harmonically alternating from the point of view of their preceding constituent: thus an alternating constituent will have its open alternant before such a syllable, (see *ˌçɔnda* above) despite the fact that the reduced syllable has phonetically a comparatively close vowel.

Noun words

The examples of polysyllables given above are all disyllabic nouns. The rules for combining constituents of nouns in this way are subject to the following exceptions:

a) constituents spelt with *-ag(s)*, *-eg(s)*, or *-ang(s)*, and having vowel alternants open *ɑ:* (monosyllable) or *ɑC+C* / close *ʌ:-* or *ʌC-* generally have their more open alternant in the second syllable of a pair, even after the close vowel of a non-alternating constituent:

<i>dmag.</i>	ˈma:	“war”	
<i>dmag.mi.</i>	ˈma:mi	“army”	
but <i>ˈjab.dmag.</i>	ˌdʒvbmɑ:	“guerilla”	not *ˌdʒvbmʌ:

b) Some constituents spelt with *i* or *u* have open alternants which are lexically specified in certain constituent-pairs where the other constituent is an *a*, *o*, *e* type:

<i>mig.</i>	ˈmi:	“eye”	
<i>mig.dpag.</i>	ˈmiŋba:	“eyelid”	
but <i>mig.shel.</i>	ˈmekçe:	“spectacles”	not *ˈmikçi:

With some nouns one will hear an open alternant from some speakers and a close one from others, or even both from the same speaker in different social registers:

<i>sku.</i>	ˈku	“body” (hon.)
<i>sku.mgron.</i>	ˈkundry: / ˈkɔndrø:	“guest” (hon.)
<i>rkub.</i>	ˈkup	“buttocks”
<i>rkub.kyag.</i>	ˈkubgja: / ˈkɔbgja:	“chair”
<i>bcu.</i>	ˈtʃu	“ten”
<i>brgyad.</i>	ˌgje:	“eight”
<i>dbu.</i>	ˈʔu	“head”
<i>dbu.med.</i>	ˈʔumε: / ˈʔɔmε:	“cursive script”

<i>bcu.brgyad.</i>	ˉtɕəbɡjɛ:	“eighteen”
<i>brgyad.bcu.</i>	ˉɡjɛ:dʒu	“eighty”

In the last pair of examples above, different combinations of the same two constituents display different vowel quality combinations: open+open and close+close respectively.

Nouns containing such alternating *i, u, ab(s)*. constituents can give the curious impression that features of their vowels have “swapped over” in a kind of vowel disharmony:

<i>sku.</i>	ˉku	“body”
<i>rtse.</i>	ˉtse	“play”
<i>sku.rtse.</i>	ˉkɔdzi	“game” (hon.)

Here the vowel sequence close+open in a pair of monosyllabic words corresponds to the sequence open+close in the same constituents in the same order in a disyllabic word. In the disyllable, the second constituent has its unstressed alternant (which happens to be the same as its harmonically close alternant), but the fact that it is an alternating constituent accounts for the openness of the vowel of the first constituent.

c) A noun particle cannot be the first constituent of a word. The vowels of the alternating *a, o, e* class of constituents always have their open alternants before noun particles with an *a, e* or *o* spelling, as one might expect. None of these particles, however, has a close vowel alternant found after a non-alternating *i, u ab(s)*. constituent:

<i>bod.nas.</i>	ˉpø:nɛ:	“from Tibet”	
<i>ri.nas.</i>	ˉrine:	“from the mountain”	not *ˉrine:
<i>nga.tsho.</i>	ˉgandzo	“we”, “us”	
<i>'di.tsho.</i>	ˉdindzo	“these”	not *ˉdindzo

Furthermore, before the particles *-kyi./gi./gyi./-i.* (genitive), *-kyis./gis./gyis./-s.* (subject-marking/instrumental) and *-ni.* (topic marker), alternating *a, o, e* constituents have their open rather than their close alternant:

<i>phyag.'bris.</i>	ˉtɕʰʌ:ri:	“letter” (hon.)	
but <i>phyag.gi</i>	ˉtɕʰʌ:gi	“of the hand”	not *ˉtɕʰʌ:gi
and <i>phyag.gis.</i>	ˉtɕʰʌ:gi:	“by hand”	not *ˉtɕʰʌ:gi:

It may be said therefore that there is no harmony between the vowels of the above noun particles and those of their preceding alternating constituents.

There is one noun particle, *-tu./du./ru./su.* (dative-locative) which, though almost obsolete in the dialect, occurs in a few expressions and is preceded by the close alternant of alternating *a, o, e* constituents:

<i>bar.la.</i>	_pa:lə	“between”
<i>bar.du.</i>	_pa:du/_pa:ru	“as far as”

Verb words

Verb stem. Since a verb word must contain one and only one (monosyllabic) verb stem but may contain more than one particle constituent, the possibilities for vowel harmony are limited to those between verb stem and adjacent particle, and those between adjacent particles.

Table 6.11. Vowel harmony between verb stem and particle

Present/future tense linking particle *-kyi./gi./gyi.* **-gi/gə/gy.** (For the alternants of this particle, see *Particle constituent: i, u, ab(s).* below.)

gnang.gi.red. **_nʌŋgəre:** “he will give”

Nominalising particle *-rtsis.* **-dzi:**

'gro.rtsis. yod. **_drudzi: _jø:** “I plan to go”

Nominalising particle *-thabs.* **-dvp**

byed.thabs. med. **ˌtɕidvp _mɛ:** “There’s no means of doing it.”

Nominalising particle *-shul.* **-ɕy:**

klog.shul. ring.kar. **ˌlokɕy: _riŋga:** “while he was reading it”

Nominalising particle *-snying.* **-ŋl:**

bsdad.snying. sdod.kyi. **_de:ŋl: _dy:gi:** “He wants to stay.”

Nominalising/prospective aspect linking particle *-rgyu.* **-gju**

za.rgyu. med. **_saŋju _mɛ:** “I’ve nothing to eat”

Progressive aspect linking particle *-mus.* **-my:**

nyo.mus.red. **_numy:re:** “He’s in the process of buying it.”

As a monosyllable and before an *a, o, e* type particle, nearly every *a, o, e* type verb stem has its open vowel alternant. It has its close vowel alternant before any of the *i, u, ab(s).* particles of Table 6.11.

The common verb of being/auxiliary *red.* **re:/rɪ** is irregular in that it has its close alternant before the alternating interrogative particle *-pas.:* **_rɪbɛ:**.

A few verb stems spelt in *-er.* have an open (and short) alternant only before the nominalising and linking particles *-pa./ba.* in fast-tempo utterance:

bster.ba.(yin.) **ˌte:bə/ˌtɛrɐ(jl:)** “giving” / “I gave.”

Particle constituent: a, e, o.. Verb particles do not show the same regularity of behaviour as verb stems. Although all *a, e, o* verb particles are, as one might expect, preceded where possible by open verb stem alternants, only a few have themselves open and close alternants: the non-first-syllable *-pas.* (interrogative) (**-bɛ:/bɛ:**,

-ge:/ge:, -ŋe:/ŋe: -re:/re:); -pas. (nominalising+instrumental) and **-pa'i.** (nominalising+genitive) (both **-be:/be:, -ge:/ge:, -ŋe:/ŋe:, -re:/re:, -we:/we:); -rogs.** (**-rɔ:/rɔ:);** and the first-syllable "e.- (**la-/la-**), **ma.-** (**ma-/ma-**).

<i>zhus.pas.</i>	_çy:be:	“by asking”
<i>yod.pas.</i>	_jɔ:bɛ:	“since there is”
<i>'gro.ba'i. don.dag.</i>	_drɔwe: _tɔnda:	“reason for going”
<i>zhu.ba'i. ring.la.</i>	_çuwe: _riŋlə	“while saying”
<i>mchod.rogs. gnang.</i>	_tɕhɔ:rɔ: ˀnd:	“please partake”
<i>bzhugs.rogs. gnang.</i>	_çu:ro: ˀnd:	“please be seated”

The combination *byung.ngas.* **_tɕuŋe:** (not ***_tɕuŋe:**) “was there?” is irregular.

Particle constituent: i, u, ab(s).. Before the linking verb particle **-gi.**, and the nominalising verb particles **-rtsis., -thabs., -shul., -snying., -rgyu., -mus.** listed in Table 6.11 above, alternating verb stems have their close alternants. Before the particles **-shig.** (imperative), **-bzhin.** (linking), and **-'dug.** and **-byung.** (auxiliary), however, they have their open alternants, as they do before **-myong.**, which despite its spelling is always pronounced with the vowel **u**.

The first-syllable particle *mi.-*, despite its spelling, has the alternants **mɛ-/mɪ-**, and (if it is the same particle), the open and lip-rounded alternant **mɔ-** before the verb *dgos.:*

<i>mi.'dug.</i>	_mɪndu:	“is not”
<i>mi.yong.</i>	ˀmɛjɔ:	“is unlikely to be”
<i>mi.dgos.</i>	_mɔgɔ	“I don't want”

Harmony of lip-rounding (and spreading) is also characteristic of the present/future tense linking particle **-kyi./gi./gyi.**, already encountered in Table 6.23, which has the alternants **-gɪ/gə/gy.** These have nothing to do with the graphological alternation of the same particle, which is purely a matter of orthography. **-gɪ** harmonises with the spread vowels **ɪ** and **i** of the adjacent verb stem; **-gy** with the lip-rounded vowels **u, ʊ, o;** and **-gə** with the neither spread nor rounded vowels **e, ʌ, ʋ:**

<i>zin.gyi.'dug.</i>	_sɪmgɪdu:	“he catches”
<i>'gro.gi.yin.</i>	_drɔgyjɪ:	“I shall go”
<i>gnang.gi.red.</i>	ˀnʌggəre:	“he will give”

Vowel harmony between particles. The auxiliaries **-yin., -red., -yod., -'dug., -byung., -song.** show harmonic relations with following particles **-pas.** and **-pa'i.** similar to those between verb stems and the same particles, exemplified as follows:

<i>gnang.gi.yin.pas.</i>	ˀnʌggəjɪmbe:	“will you give?”
<i>shes.kyi.yod.pas.</i>	ˀçɪŋgɪjɔ:bɛ:	“do you know?”

Adjective words

The positive degree particles *-pa.*, *-ma.*, *-po.*, *-mo.* though pronounced with the reduced unstressed vowel ə or u are preceded by the open alternants of *a*, *o*, *e* adjective stems, as might be expected from their spellings:

<i>gsar.pa.</i>	_sa:bə	“new”
<i>btsog.po.</i>	_tsɔgbu	“dirty”
<i>gtsang.ma.</i>	_tsaŋmə	“clean”
<i>grang.mo.</i>	_traŋmu	“cold”

The rare positive degree particle *-khu.* is preceded by the close alternant of an *a*, *o*, *e* adjective constituent:

<i>ljang.khu.</i>	_jʌŋgu	“green”
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The comparative degree particle *-ga./-nga./-pa./-ba./-ra* (when pronounced as a separate syllable) is preceded by an open verb alternant:

<i>yag.ga.</i>	_jagə	“better”
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The superlative degree particle *-shos.* has the vowel alternants **-çø:/-çy:** which harmonise with the vowel of the adjective stem as expected:

<i>yag.shos.</i>	_jakçø:	“best”
<i>zhim.shos.</i>	_çimçy:	“tastiest”

The nominalising adjective particle *-los.* has the harmonising alternants **-lø:/-ly:**

<i>mang.los.</i>	_maŋlø:	“quantity”
<i>ring.los.</i>	_riŋly:	“length”

6.3.6 *Word-final -s*

It is possible for a word to end in an **-s** which realises one of three constituents separate from that of the preceding syllable: past-tense verb particle *-song.*; quotative particle *zer.*; and adverbial particle *-se.*

Past-tense verb particle *-song.*

<i>da. nga.tsho. bslebs.song.</i>	“Now we have arrived!”
_ta _gandzo	_le:s
now I-num.	arrive-aux.

(This **-s** is a shorter alternant of **-sø** or **-su.**)

Quotative particle *-zer*.

nga. yong.gi.yin.zer. “He says he will come.”
_ŋa _jɔŋgɔjɪ:s
 I come-link.-aux.-quot.

This is a shorter alternant of verb phrases beginning with *zer.*, such as *zer.ba._sa*, *zer.ba.red._serɔre:*, or *zer.gyi.'dug._sigidu:*.

Adverbial particle *-se*.

nga. da.ga.se. bsdad.kyi.yod. “I’m just waiting here.”
_ŋa _taɣa:s _de:ɣəjɔ:
 I that-adv. stay-link.-aux.

Notes

- 1 My use of the term “whisper” is taken from Sprigg (1978a:9) to denote the posture “in which the ligamental glottis is closed or nearly so, but the cartilage glottis is open, with the bodies of the arytenoid cartilages separated”. When combined with voicing it probably corresponds to the “breathy voice” of Causemann (1989) (Nangchen dialect) and others and the “murmur” of Koshal (1979) (Ladakhi dialect).
- 2 The fact that from its spelling one might expect *cig.* to be a Tone 1 word, pronounced as a monosyllable on a high pitch, reinforces the argument that its actual low pitch is a matter of phrase intonation.
- 3 For this purpose, sound sequences such as **kj**, **tr**, **ts** are not regarded as clusters. For a justification of this, see Sprigg (1972b:547f).
- 4 The *-r-* here is flapped rather than fricative.
- 5 Meredith (1980:84-95, 126-131) offers the most systematic study. See also Roerich & Lhalungpa (1957), Odden (1979), Goldstein & Nornang (1970), Chang & Chang (1968), and Chang & Shefts (1964:46); and for other dialects Ray (1965b), Bielmanier (1985a:68f), Sprigg (1966a).
- 6 More specifically, within a disyllabic sequence or “piece” contained within a word.

7. Nouns and Noun Phrases

7.1 Non-phrasal Nouns

A non-phrasal (single-word) noun

- a) may comprise one or more constituents (most commonly one or two);
- b) is invariable in its Tibetan spelling;
- c) may co-occur in the same word with noun particles only;
- d) may occur in noun words only.

Nouns are divided into two grammatical types, *postpositional* and *non-postpositional*, defined by their behaviour within noun phrases. Either type may stand at head position in a noun phrase, but only the postpositional noun can stand at deictic position in such a phrase (see 7.7).

Monosyllabic nouns

Monosyllabic nouns are numerous, denoting particularly many of the common referents of daily conversation. All the following examples from Classical Tibetan, shown to the left in the following list, are current in the Lhasa dialect, except those which are replaced in some or all uses in the Lhasa dialect by a disyllable, shown to the right:

Pronominal nouns

(Lhasa version)

<i>nga.</i>	_ŋa	“I”	
<i>khyed.</i>	ˉkje:	“you”	<i>khyed.rang.</i> ˉkjerd:
<i>mo.</i>	_mo	“she”	
<i>kho.</i>	ˉkʰo	“he”	

Human beings

<i>mi.</i>	_mi	“person”	
<i>bu.</i>	_pu	“boy”	
<i>ma.</i>	_ma	“mother”	<i>ˈa.ma.</i> ˉʔama

Parts of the body

<i>mgo.</i>	_gɔ	“head”
<i>snying.</i>	ˉɲl:	“heart”
<i>mig.</i>	ˉmi:	“eye”
<i>so.</i>	ˉsɔ	“tooth”
<i>kha.</i>	ˉkʰa	“mouth”

Household objects

<i>sgo.</i>	_gɔ	“door”		
<i>thab.</i>	ˉtʰvp	“stove”		
<i>gos.</i>	_kø:	“clothes”	<i>dug.log.</i>	_tʊɣlɔ:
<i>lham.</i>	ˉlam	“shoes”	<i>lham.khog.</i>	ˉhaŋgɔ:

Nature and agriculture

<i>zhing.</i>	_ɕl:	“field”	<i>zhing.kha.</i>	_ɕiŋgə
<i>nas.</i>	_nɛ:	“barley”		
<i>gro.</i>	_trɔ	“wheat”		
<i>lug.</i>	_lu:	“sheep”		
<i>khyi.</i>	ˉkji	“dog”		
<i>rta.</i>	ˉta	“horse”		
<i>ri.</i>	_ri	“mountain”		
<i>mtsho.</i>	ˉtsʰɔ	“lake”		

Elements & natural materials

<i>sa.</i>	ˉsa	“earth”
<i>chu.</i>	ˉtʰɕu	“water”
<i>me.</i>	_mɛ	“fire”
<i>rlung.</i>	ˉlʊ:	“wind”
<i>gser.</i>	ˉse:	“gold”

Abstract referents

<i>tshong.</i>	ˉtsʰɕ:	“trade”		
<i>ngang.</i>	_ŋd:	“patience”		
<i>tshe.</i>	ˉtsʰɛ	“life”		
<i>blo.</i>	ˉlɔ	“mind”		
<i>ming.</i>	_mɿ:	“name”		
<i>dus.</i>	_ty:	“time”	<i>dus.tshod.</i>	_ty:dzy:

Disyllabic nouns

Disyllabic (single-word) nouns are also numerous, covering most lexical fields. It is

noticeable that in modern spoken dialects a disyllable sometimes corresponds to a monosyllable in Classical Tibetan (see the list above); and that where the Classical language has a monosyllable and a disyllable which are synonymous or nearly so, the modern spoken dialects often use only, or more commonly, the disyllable. The reverse phenomenon, a modern monosyllable corresponding to a Classical disyllable, is rare.

Many common everyday nouns are also disyllabic:

Human beings

<i>bu.mo.</i>	_pomo	“girl”
<i>khyo.ga.</i>	_kjəgə	“husband”
<i>spun.kyag.</i>	_piŋgja:	“sibling”

Parts of the body

<i>rkang.pa.</i>	_kaŋbə	“foot”
<i>lag.pa.</i>	_laŋbə	“hand”
<i>ʼa.mchog.</i>	_ʔamdzɔ:	“ear”
<i>sna.khug.</i>	_naŋu:	“nose”

Household objects

<i>sge.khung.</i>	_gjiŋɕ:	“window”
<i>rtsig.pa.</i>	_tsiŋbə	“wall”
<i>thog.kha.</i>	_tʰɔŋgə	“upstairs”
<i>ka.ba.</i>	_kawə	“pillar”

Nature & agriculture

<i>yur.ba.</i>	_ju:wə	“irrigation channel”
<i>bra.bo.</i>	_trawu	“buckwheat”
<i>bong.bu.</i>	_puŋgu	“donkey”
<i>nags.tshal.</i>	_naŋdze:	“forest”
<i>spyang.ku.</i>	_tʃaŋgu	“wolf”
<i>lcang.ma.</i>	_tʃaŋgmə	“willow”

Elements & natural materials

<i>lhag.pa.</i>	_laŋbə	“wind”
<i>bye.ma.</i>	_tʃemə	“sand”
<i>char.pa.</i>	_tʃhə:bə	“rain”
<i>kha.ba.</i>	_kʰawə	“snow”

The common second-syllable constituents *pa.*, *ba.*, *po.*, *bo.*, *ma.*, *mo.*, *ku.* in the above list (along with a few others) are etymologically probably particles in origin,

though in all cases they are now bound to the first syllable to form an indivisible lexical unit.

A large proportion of nouns in more educated registers of the language are disyllabic. This is noticeable already in Preclassical Tibetan, where many such nouns relate to administrative, military and political spheres, such as *bka'.gyod.* **ṽkagyø:** “punishment”, *rkyen.ris.* **ṽkjenri:** “estate”, *dgra.zun.* **ṽdrasy:** “enemy”, *rgyal.po.* **ṽgje:bu** “king”, *gdung.rabs.* **ṽdugrvp** “generation”, *mna'.'kha.* **ṽnagø** “oath”, *pho.brang.* **ṽpḥodra:** “court”, *blon.po.* **ṽlombu** “minister”, *gtsug.lag.* **ṽtsugla:** “statecraft”.

In the case of Sanskritic and Classical Tibetan, hundreds of disyllabic nouns were coined out of the native stock of constituents or adapted from pre-existing native terms between the 9th and 13th centuries in order to translate Sanskrit nouns relating to Buddhism: many of them technical terms, in which Buddhism abounds. Some of these nouns have filtered through into other varieties of the language, though many remain as strictly technical terms. Examples are:

<i>dka'.thub.</i>	(hardship-withstand)	skt. <i>tapas</i>	“penance”
ṽkɔdup			
<i>dkyil.'khor.</i>	(centre-perimeter)	skt. <i>maṇḍala</i>	“mandala”
ṽkjiŋgo:			
<i>ngan.song.</i>	(evil-gone)	skt. <i>apāya</i>	“hell”, “misfortune”
ṽjensu:			
<i>nyan.thos.</i>	(listen-hear)	skt. <i>śrāvaka</i>	“disciple”
ṽjendø:			
<i>bdag.med.</i>	(self-not exist)	skt. <i>anātman</i>	“selflessness”
ṽdagme:			
<i>gnas.brta.</i>	(place-firm)	skt. <i>sthavira</i>	“elder”
ṽne:dé:			
<i>byang.chub.</i>	(pure-perfect)	skt. <i>bodhi</i>	“enlightenment”
ṽtɕɔdzup			
<i>tshul.khrims.</i>	(way-rule)	skt. <i>śīla</i>	“moral discipline”
ṽtsḥy:drim			
<i>sangs.rgyas.</i>	(purify-vast)	skt. <i>buddha</i>	“Buddha”
ṽsaŋgje:			
<i>sems.can.</i>	(mind-with)	skt. <i>sattva</i>	“sentient being”.
ṽsemdzé:			

More disyllabic nouns were coined between the 13th and 20th centuries, particularly to produce terms required for the administration of government and monastic organisations, while yet more appear for the first time in modern written varieties, accompanying the accelerated pace of the technological, social and political changes of the twentieth century.

Etymologically speaking, disyllabic nouns can be analysed as deriving from a wide variety of combinations of grammatical categories: particularly the following:

noun+particle	<i>thag.pa.</i> ˈtʰaɡbə	(distance-er)	“rope”
noun+noun	<i>mar.phyur.</i> _mΛ:dzɯ:	(butter-cheese)	“dairy products”
noun+adjective	<i>stod.thung.</i> ˈty:dʄ:	(trunk-short)	“shirt”
adjective+noun	<i>dkar.rtsi.</i> ˈkΛ:dzi:	(white-resin)	“whitewash”

Less commonly:

adjective+adjective	<i>ring.thung.</i> _riŋdʄ:	(long-short)	“length”
verb+verb	<i>'gro.song.</i> _drosʄ:	(go-went)	“expenses”
verb+noun	<i>rgyugs.khyi.</i> _gjuŋji	(run-dog)	“running dog”
noun+verb	<i>ngo.sprod.</i> _ŋɔdrʄ:	(face-join)	“introduction”
adjective+verb	<i>gsang.gcod.</i> ˈsaŋdzʄ:	(secret-cut off)	“bathroom”

Sometimes however one or both of the elements are unknown as freestanding constituents.

Trisyllabic nouns

Trisyllabic (single-word) nouns are much less common and the majority of them fall into a few specific types. These include:

a) placenames, e.g.

<i>gzhis.ka.rtse.</i>	_çigədzi	(estate-peak)	“Shigatse”
<i>sa.ma.mda'.</i>	ˈsamada	(?place-not-lower valley)	“Samada”.

b) words ending in *pa./ba.* denoting origin, affiliation or occupation, e.g.

<i>lha.sa.ba.</i>	ˈlɛsa:	(god-place-er)	“native of Lhasa”
<i>dge.lugs.pa.</i>	_gilugbə	(virtue-way-er)	“belonging to the Geluk religious order”
<i>lha.bris.pa.</i>	ˈlʌbri:bə	(god-draw-er)	“artist”.

c) family names and personal titles, many of them also ending in *pa./ba.*, e.g.

<i>lha.lung.pa.</i>	ˈlʌluŋbə	(god-valley-er)	“Lhalungpa”
<i>pho.lha.nas.</i>	ˈpʰɔlɛne:	(male-god-from)	“Pholhane”.

d) constructions in *-po./bo./mo.che.* “great”, e.g.

<i>rin.po.che.</i>	_rimbudzi	(price-great)	(religious title)
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thang.po.che. **ṭhagbudzi** (plain-great) (place name)

e) constructions in *-ma-*, e.g.

sa.ma.'brog. **ṭsamadrɔ:** (land-not-steppe) “neither farmland nor steppe”

f) (for some speakers) constructions in *-khang*. “building”, e.g.

gtsug.lag.khang. **ṭsugla:gǎ:** (religion-building) “temple”

dpe.mdzod.khang. **ṭpendzø:gǎ:** (book-store-building) “library”

g) loanwords or part-loanwords, e.g.

ʼo.mu.su. **ṭʼumsu** “sock” (Mongol)

be.ren.gen. **ṭberengǎ** “bren gun” (English)

rkang.ga.ri. **ṭkangari** “bicycle” (Tibetan “foot”+Hindi “vehicle”)

be.dü.rya. **ṭpedurjə** “beryl” (Sanskrit)

Note that some of these graphical trisyllables are pronounced as disyllables in the Lhasa dialect.

7.2 Phrasal Nouns

A phrasal noun stretches over more than one (phonological) word, at least one of which will be of more than one syllable. The commonest type in non-Buddhist contexts consists of two disyllabic words. Such combinations are rather infrequent in the surviving non-Buddhist Preclassical Tibetan material, being confined mainly to proper names, e.g. *phying.ba. stag.rtse.* **ṭtʃʰiŋə ṭtagdzi** “Chingwa Taktse” (name of a castle), *khri.srong. lde.brtsan.* **ṭtʃiʃɔ: ṭdedzǎ:** “Thrisong Detsen” (name of a king), which might be deemed only marginal as lexical items.

Large numbers of phrasal nouns were created in the phase of Buddhist translation from Buddhist hybrid Sanskrit down to the 13th century. Their forms show great variety, and in some cases of purely literary expressions the word-division may be difficult to determine without checking the pronunciation with a literate informant. In practically all cases at least one of the component words is disyllabic. Many are lexicalised phrases or even clauses, incorporating grammatical particles and calqued upon elaborate one-word Sanskrit compounds.

The personal names of most Tibetans now take the form of a pair of disyllabic words, each a translation of a Buddhist Sanskrit name. The 20th century has also seen the coinage of a large number of this type of compound, particularly since the 1950s in order to translate Chinese administrative and political terms, many of which take a similar quadrisyllabic form in the original. Such terms often incorporate Chinese loanwords; many of them, however, as terms imposed from outside and liable to go out of fashion with the political trends that gave them birth, quickly fall out of use.

7.3 Postpositional Nouns

All the examples of nouns given above are of the non-postpositional variety. A minority of nouns are classified as postpositional in that they may occupy the deictic position in the noun phrase; otherwise they have no particular formal characteristic in common. In terms of their resemblance to nouns or adjectives, their behaviour within the phrase and their semantics, they are divisible into a number of subtypes, which however will not be analysed in detail here. Some of them, such as the mensurational ones, seem obvious nouns. Others resemble adjectives formally in having a final particle-like syllable or reduplication; however, this does not alternate with the full range of adjective particles in the manner of true adjectives. The postpositional nouns differ from particles in being able to stand as the head of a phrase, and in never forming part of the same word as the preceding part of speech. Examples, classified roughly according to semantic type and order of occurrence where there is more than one of them in the phrase, are as follows:

Mensurational

kha. **ˈkʰa** “square” *bre.* **_trɛ** “bushel”.

Comparative

<i>gzhan.dag.</i>	_ɕɛndə:	“other”
<i>'dra.mi.'dra.</i>	_drʌmɪndrə	“different”
<i>so.so.</i>	ˈsɔsɔ	“separate”
<i>khag.khag.</i>	ˈkʰaga:	“different”
<i>gcig.pa.</i>	ˈtɕɪgbə	“the same”, “identical”
<i>'dra.mnyam.</i>	_drʌnʌm	“similar”, “the same”
<i>rnam.pa. sna.tshogs.</i>	ˈname: ˈnadzɔ:	“all sorts”
<i>rang.</i>	_rd:	“itself”, “very”, “really”
<i>rkyang.rkyang.</i>	ˈkjaŋgɕd:	“only”

Numerative (including numerals)

<i>gcig.</i>	ˈtɕi:	“one”	<i>gnyis.</i>	ˈɲi	“two”
<i>phyed.ka.</i>	ˈtɕʰɛgə	“half”	<i>gsum.cha.</i>	ˈsumdʒə	“a third”
<i>rgya.cha.</i>	_gjadʒə	“percent”	<i>kha.shas.</i>	ˈkʰaɕɛ:	“a few”
<i>tshang.ma.</i>	ˈtʂʰaŋmə	“all”			
<i>gang.</i>	_kɕ:	“one -ful” (used with containers)			

Specific

<i>'di.</i>	_di	“this”, “the”
<i>de.</i>	_tɛ	“that”, “the”
<i>pha.gi.</i>	ˈpʰʌgi	“(the one) over there”
<i>ya.gi.</i>	_jʌgi	“(the one) up there”

<i>ma.gi.</i>	_mΛgi	“(the one) down there”
<i>skor.</i>	ˉkɔ:	“about” (after numeratives)
<i>yas.mas.</i>	_je:mɛ:	“about” (after numeratives)

(*pha.gi.*, *ya.gi.* and *ma.gi.* have alternants *pha.*, *ya.*, and *ma.* before pluraliser *tsho.*)

An example of a phrase containing all four types of postpositional noun is:

<i>ras.</i>	<i>kha.</i>	<i>gzhan.dag.</i>	<i>tshang.ma.</i>	<i>pha.tsho.</i>	“all those other squares of cotton”
_re:	ˉkʰa	_ɕendo:	ˉtsʰagmə	ˉpʰandzo	
cotton square	other	all	yonder-num.		

7.3.1 “Popular Rhyming Terms”

Probably best placed in the general category of postpositional nouns are the so-called “popular rhyming terms” of the Lhasa dialect, most serving to denote some sort of confusion, uncertainty, mobility or the like.¹ These are all four-syllabled two-word phrasal nouns, usually with identical second and fourth syllables, the written vowel *-a-* in the first syllable, and often either consonant or vowel alternation in the first and third syllables. The commonest type has vowel alternation in the first and third syllables, with the vowel *-e-* or *-i-* in the second and fourth, rather along the lines of the English “wishy-washy”, “dilly-dally”. Examples include:

<i>ka.re. ko.re.</i>	ˉkaɾɪ	ˉkoɾɪ	“dilly-dallying”
<i>zang.nge. zing.nge.</i>	_saɾɪ	_siɾɪ	“disorderly”, “turmoil”
<i>lang.nge. ling.nge.</i>	_laɾɪ	_liɾɪ	“dangling”
<i>hab.be. hob.be.</i>	ˉhaɪɪ	ˉhoɪɪ	“hurried(ly)”
<i>tshag.ge. tshig.ge.</i>	ˉtsʰaɾɪ	ˉtsʰiɾɪ	“restless(ness)”

Similar constructions which do not quite fit the above pattern include:

<i>nyin.'gyangs. zhag.'gyangs.</i>	_niŋgɟɟ:	_sha:ɟɟ:	“delay”
<i>the.gtor. dgu.thor.</i>	ˉtʰeɟɟ:	_guɟɟ:	“scattered”
<i>ther.tshal. sba.tshal.</i>	ˉtʰe:dze:	_badze:	“smashed to bits.”

7.3.2 Relative/interrogative Nouns

An important category of postpositional noun is the relative/interrogative noun, of which there are nine members in everyday use:

<i>ga.re.</i>	_kaɾɪ	“what”
<i>gang.</i>	_kɟ:	“whatever”, “all”
<i>ga.gi.</i>	_kΛɾɪ	“which”

<i>ga.par.</i>	_kaba:	“where”, “whither”
<i>ga.nas.</i>	_kane:	“whence”, “from which”
<i>ga.tshad./tshod.</i>	_kadze:/_kadzø:	“how much”
<i>ga.dus.</i>	_kady:	“when”
<i>ga.'dras.</i>	_kandre:	“like what”, “how”
<i>su.</i>	_su	“who”

(The *-r.* of *ga.par.* and the *-nas.* of *ga.nas.* may be identified with the dative-locative and ablative case-marking particles “to” and “from” respectively.)

A relative/interrogative noun, like other postpositional nouns, may occupy the deictic position in the noun phrase:

pha.yul. ga.nas. ṽpʰΔjy: _kane: “from which native place”

Unlike other postpositional nouns, however, relative/interrogative nouns enter into the mood system (in conjunction with “wh-interrogative” particles: 9.2.6).

7.4 Nominalised Verbs

A class of (verb) particles, the so-called nominalising particles, have the function of combining with a verb, and by extension any clause of which the verb stands as predicator, to form a noun or noun phrase. These particles and their resulting nouns will be discussed at 13.4.

7.5 Honorific Nouns

Many nouns, mainly denoting referents which are either human beings or physical or abstract entities which may be closely associated with human beings, effectively exist in pairs, each consisting of an “ordinary” and an “honorific” member.² A given referent, whether general or particular, may be denoted by either member of the pair, depending on that referent’s social relation to the speaker as part of the system of deference which operates at clause level (see 12.7). Formally the relationship between the two may be one of several types:

a) The two may be etymologically unrelated, e.g.:

Ordinary		Honorific	
<i>mgo.</i>	_gø	<i>dbu.</i>	ṽʅu “head”
<i>mig.</i>	ṽmi:³	<i>spyan.</i>	ṽtʃɛ: “eye”
<i>lag.pa.</i>	_lagbø	<i>phyag.</i>	ṽtʃʰa: “hand”
<i>rta.</i>	ṽta	<i>chibs.pa.</i>	ṽtʃʰibø “horse”
<i>bu.</i>	_pu	<i>sras.</i>	ṽsɛ: “son”

b) The honorific member may consist of the ordinary member or one of its

constituents, preceded in the same word by one of a few constituents which exist independently as honorific nouns; particularly *sku*. “body”, *phyag*. “hand”, *dbu*. “head”, *zhabs*. “foot”, *zhal*. “face”, *thugs*. “heart”, *bka'*. “order”, “speech”; or with kinship terms the non-independent constituent “*a*”, e.g.:

Ordinary		Honorific	
<i>gzugs.po.</i>	_sugbu	<i>sku.gzugs.</i>	~kusu: “body”
<i>par.</i>	~paɾ	<i>sku.par.</i>	~kɔbaɾ “photograph”
<i>don.dag.</i>	~tɔnda:	<i>sku.don.</i>	~kodø: “purpose”
<i>dpe.cha.</i>	~pedzə	<i>phyag.dpe.</i>	~tɕʰabi “book”
<i>las.ka.</i>	~le:ge	<i>phyag.las.</i>	~tɕʰale: “work”
<i>smyug.gu.</i>	~ɲugu	<i>phyag.smyug.</i>	~tɕʰɲu: “pen”
<i>zhva.mo.</i>	~ɕamo	<i>dbu.zhva.</i>	~ʔuɕə “hat”
<i>nyi.gdugs.</i>	~ɲidu:	<i>dbu.gdugs.</i>	~ʔudu: “umbrella”
<i>rkub.kyag.</i>	~kubgja:	<i>zhabs.kyag.</i>	~ɕvbgja: “chair”
<i>"o.mu.su.</i>	~ʔumsu	<i>zhabs.su.</i>	~ɕvbsu “sock”
<i>kha.lag.</i>	~kʰala:	<i>zhal.lag.</i>	~ɕe:lə: “meal”
<i>snying.rje.</i>	~ɲɪŋdze	<i>thugs.rje.</i>	~tʰɔdze “compassion”
<i>jo.jo.</i>	~tɕɔdzo	<i>"a.jo</i>	~ʔadzɔ “elder brother”

In some cases of this type, the second constituent of the honorific member is not present in the ordinary member:

Ordinary		Honorific	
<i>spun.kyag.</i>	~piŋgja:	<i>sku.mched.</i>	~kɔmdze: “sibling”
<i>lham.gog.</i>	~hangɔ:	<i>zhabs.cag.</i>	~ɕabdza: “footwear”
<i>skad.cha.</i>	~kjedzə	<i>bka'.mol.</i>	~kamø: “conversation”
<i>phrug.gu.</i>	~tɕugu	<i>"a.wa.</i>	~ʔawə “child”

c) A similar type uses as the honorific first constituent a verb stem, such as *gsol*. “offer”, “partake”, *mchod*. “offer”, “partake”, “worship”, *bzhes*. “receive”, “partake”, *phebs*. “come”, “go”; e.g.:

Ordinary		Honorific	
<i>ja.</i>	~tɕa	<i>gsol.ja.</i>	~sø:dzə “tea”
<i>sha.</i>	~ɕa	<i>gsol.dkrum.</i>	~sy:drum “meat”
<i>chang.</i>	~tɕʰɔ:	<i>mchod.chang.</i>	~tɕʰø:dzɔ: “beer”
<i>"a.rag</i>	~ʔara:	<i>bzhes.rag.</i>	~ɕe:ra: “spirits”
<i>lam.ka.</i>	~lagge	<i>phebs.lam.</i>	~pʰeblam “way”

The nouns corresponding to English personal pronouns have ordinary and honorific alternants as follows:

Ordinary	Honorific	
<i>nga.(rang.)</i>	<i>nged.rang.</i>	“I”, “me”
_ḡa(rḡ:)	_ḡerḡ:	
<i>khyod.(rang.)</i>	<i>khyed.rang.</i>	“you” (singular)
~kǰø:(rḡ:)	~kǰerḡ:	
<i>kho.(rang.)</i>	<i>khong.(rang)</i>	“he”, “him”
~kḥᵛ:(rḡ:)	~kḥᵛ:/~kḥᵛḡrḡ:	
<i>mo.(rang.)</i>	<i>khong.(rang.)</i>	“she”, “her”
_mᵛ(rḡ:)	~kḥᵛ:/~kḥᵛḡrḡ:	
<i>nga.(rang.)tsho.</i>	<i>nged./nga.rnams.tsho</i>	“we”, “us”
_ḡarḡ:/_ḡarḡḡdzo	_ḡenḡndzo/_ḡanḡndzo	
<i>khyod.(rang.)tsho.</i>	<i>khyed.rnams.tsho./ nga.rnams.tsho.</i>	“you” (plural)
~kǰḡndzo/~kǰø:rḡḡdzo	~kǰenḡndzo/~ḡanḡndzo	
<i>kho.(rang.)tsho.</i>	<i>khong.rnams.tsho.</i>	“they”
~kḥᵛḡrḡḡdzo/~kḥᵛḡndzo	~kḥᵛḡnḡndzo	
<i>mo.rang.tsho.</i>	<i>khong.rnams.tsho.</i>	“they” (feminine)
_mᵛḡrḡḡdzo	~kḥᵛḡnḡndzo	

(Etymology: the constituents *rang.* “self” and *tsho.* “group” are transparent to native speakers. *rnams.* is found as a noun in Preclassical Tibetan, meaning “individuals”).

d) Some nouns referring to human beings, including personal names and nouns denoting trades or professions, have an honorific equivalent: a phrasal noun formed with the constituent *lags.* Usually these refer to specific individuals.

Ordinary	Honorific	
<i>bsod.nams.</i>	<i>bsod.nams. lags.</i>	“Sonam” (personal name)
~sᵛnam	~sᵛnam _la:	

In general *lags.* can be added to any personal name, kinship term or name of trade or profession in this way:

<i>"a.ma.</i>	<i>"a.ma. lags.</i>	“mother”
~ḡamᵛ	~ḡamᵛ _la:	
<i>"a.cag.</i>	<i>"a.cag. lags.</i>	“elder sister”, “lady”
~adza:	~adza: _la:	
<i>"am.ci.</i>	<i>"am.ci. lags</i>	“doctor”
~Ḍmdzi	~Ḍmdzi _la:	

In some cases *lags.* combines with only one constituent of the ordinary noun:

<i>"a.jo.</i>	<i>jo. lags.</i>	“elder brother”
~adzo	_tḡᵛ _la:	
<i>"a.pha.</i>	<i>pha. lags.</i>	“father”
~ḡaba	~pḥa _la:	

dge.rgan. *rgan. lags.* “teacher”
 _gɛgɛ _gɛ _lɑ:

rgan. lags. is sometimes used for any educated person; similarly *dbu.mdzad. lags.*, འཇུམདེ ལཱེ: etymologically the honorific for *dbu.mdzad.* “foreman”, “leader”, may be used as honorific for any craftsman, e.g. *shing.bzo.ba.*, རྩེགས་པ་: “carpenter”.

7.6 Respectful Nouns

For a few referents, there is a “respectful” noun as well as, or instead of an honorific noun. Its selection is determined by the social relation of the “goal” or “beneficiary” of the clause to the “actor”, again as part of the system of deference discussed at 12.7.

Ordinary	Honorific	Respectful	
<i>yi.ge.</i>	<i>phyag.bris.</i>	<i>zhu.yig.</i>	“letter”
_jiŋi	_tɕʰɑri:	_ɕɯji:	

7.7 Noun Phrases

Simple noun phrases

A noun phrase (other than a nominalised clause, see 13.4) has a structure comprising the elements head (*noun*, or *adjective phrase*: see 11.8), epithet (*adjective phrase*), deictic (*postpositional noun*), numerator (*noun particle*), case marker (*argument-marking noun particle* or *genitive particle*) and topic marker (*topic-marking particle*), in that order, thus:

**head (+epithet) (+deictic(s)) (+numerator) (+case marker)
 (+topic marker)**

There is some flexibility in the number of epithets and deictics which may be present, and in their order.

Examples of the minimum noun phrase according to the above schema (head only) are:

<i>khang.pa.</i>	_kʰaŋbə (noun)	“the/a house” “(the) house(s)”
<i>chen.po.</i>	_tɕʰembu (adj.-nom.)	“big” “the/a big one” “(the) big ones”
<i>gsum.</i>	_sum (postpositional noun)	“three (of them)”
'di.	_di (postpositional noun)	“this one”

An example near the maximum in normal usage would be:

head+epithet+deictic+deictic+numerator+case marker+topic marker:

khang.pa. chen.po. gsum. 'di.gyad.la.ni.
 ˈkʰaŋbə ˈtʃʰembu ˈsum ˌdiŋje:ləni
 house big-nom. three this-num.-loc.-top.
 H E D D Num Cm Tm

“now to these three large houses ”

7.8 Noun Phrase Elements

Head and epithet

Non-postpositional nouns, which occur at head position, have been discussed above. Adjective phrases, which occur at head and epithet position, are discussed at 11.8.

Deictic

Postpositional nouns, which occur at head and deictic position, resemble adjectives syntactically in their possible attributive relation to preceding nouns. They behave morphologically as nouns, however, combining only with noun particles and not with adjective or verb particles. Many of them are polysyllabic, like other noun stems but unlike adjective stems, which are all monosyllabic.

Numerator

Singular noun particle cig. The singular noun particle *cig. tʃi:* is the equivalent of the English indefinite article, and can also mean “some” or “somewhat”. It is less frequent than its English equivalent, usually referring to a specific referent :

khor. grogs.po. cig. yog.red. “He has a friend.” (i.e. a specific one.)
 ˈkʰɔ: ˌtrɔŋbo tʃi: ˌjɔ:re:
 3sg.-loc. friend num. exist

mi.tshang. chen.po. yin.na. “In the case of an important family,”
 ˌmɪdʒd: ˈtʃʰembo ˌjɪnə (i.e. any such family)
 family big-nom. be-sub.

Approximative noun particle tsam. The noun particle *tsam.* means “just”, “about”, “just about”. It is particularly used after numeral deictics, and is sometimes followed by a second numerator *cig.*:

mi. bcu.lnga.tsam. (cig.) yog.red. “There are about fifteen people.”
 ˌmɪ ˈtʃø:ŋadzə (tʃi:) ˌjɔ:re:
 person fifteen-num. (num.) exist

Dual and plural noun particles. The nouns corresponding to English personal pronouns regularly combine with the dual particle *gnyis*. (a homograph of the numeral “two”) or the plural particle *tsho*. (honorific *mams.tsho*.) when their referents are twofold or multiple respectively.

The “specific” type of postpositional nouns (corresponding to English demonstrative pronouns) *'di*. **_dɪ** “this”, *de*. **_tɛ** “that” (not visible), *pha.gi*. **ˉpʰaŋɣɪ** “that” (visible), *ya.gi*. **_jʌŋɪ** “that up there”, *ma.gi*. **_mʌŋɪ** “that down there” likewise regularly combine with plural particle *tsho*. and/or *gyad*. when their referents are multiple. The constituent *-gi*. and sometimes *-rang*. are absent from the dual/plural forms. Examples:

<i>nga</i> .(<i>rang</i> .) “I/me” _ŋa(rɔ̃ː)	<i>nga.gnyis</i> . _ŋʌŋɪː	“We/us two”
<i>nga.tsho</i> . “we/us” _ŋandzɔ	<i>khyed.rang</i> . ˉkjerɔ̃ː	“you”
<i>khyed.gnyis</i> . “you two” ˉkjenɪː	<i>khyed.rnams.tsho</i> . ˉkjenandzɔ	“you (plural)”
<i>'di.tsho</i> . “these” _dɪndzɔ	<i>'di.gyad</i> . _dɪŋjɛː	“these”
<i>'di.gnyis</i> . “these two” _dɪŋɪː	<i>de.gyad</i> . _tɛŋjɛː	“those”
<i>pha.tsho</i> . “those” ˉpʰandzɔ	<i>ya.tsho</i> . _jandzɔ	“those up there”

Dual and plural particles, like the singular particle generally denote specific referents. After nouns with inanimate referents, some speakers do not allow a plural particle without a deictic. A noun at head position unaccompanied by deictic or plural particle can denote a single referent (specific or non-specific) or specific multiple referents:

<i>deb</i> . _tɛp	“a book”, “books” (non-specific); “the book(s)” (specific)
<i>deb. cig</i> . _tɛp tɕiː	“a book” (specific)
<i>deb. 'di./de</i> . _tɛp _dɪ/_tɛ	“the/this/that book” (specific)
<i>deb. tsho</i> . _tɛbdzɔ	“the books” (specific)
<i>deb. 'di.tsho</i> . _tɛp _dɪndzɔ	“the/these books” (specific)

With an adjective of quantity as epithet or a numeral noun as deictic, the pluraliser is absent unless a specific postpositional noun is also present:

<i>deb. mang.po.</i> _tɛp _maŋbu	“a lot of books”
<i>deb. mang.po. de.tsho.</i> _tɛp _maŋbu _tɛndzɔ	“the many books”
<i>deb. nyi.shu.</i> _tɛp _ɲiʃu	“twenty books
<i>deb. nyi.shu. 'di.gyad.</i> _tɛp _ɲiʃu _diŋje:	“these twenty books

Case marker

Those case markers which mark noun phrases as clause arguments (subject-marking particle; also instrumental, dative-locative, ablative, comparative, and adverbial particles, which are all adjunct-marking) are discussed in Chapter 12. This leaves the genitive particle, which may be found in subject, object and/or adjunct noun phrases and therefore does not distinguish these clause arguments. It also leaves the co-ordinating particle, which although not case-marking, occupies the case-marker position in the phrase.

Genitive particle

The genitive particle *-kyi./gi./gyi./-'i.* is the grammatical and semantic equivalent of the English genitive suffix “-'s”, except that it can be used on any kind of noun phrase. It is used to link adjacent noun phrases such that a preceding noun phrase becomes a modifier of the head of the following noun phrase. The process may be repeated to form a chain of several noun phrases, which from the point of view of the clause are the equivalent of a single noun phrase functioning as subject, object or adjunct of the clause.

The genitive particle may link a noun phrase which is not a nominalised clause to a following noun phrase; or it may link a nominalised clause (see 13.4) to a following noun phrase.

a) Linking two non-nominalised noun phrases. Modifying noun phrases are enclosed in square brackets:

[*nga'i.*] *lag.pa.* “my hand”
[_ɲɛ:] _lagbə
[I-*gen.*] hand

[*khang.pa. chen.po. 'di'i.*] *thog.khar.* “on the roof of the big house”
[*kʰaŋbə ʔtʰɛmbu _di:*] *ʔtʰɔŋa:*
[house big-*nom.* this-*gen.*] roof-*loc.*

[*khong.gi.*][*"a.wa'i.*] [*pheb.'gro'i.*] *tshos.gzhi.* “the colour of his son’s car”
 [ʰkʰɔŋgi] [ʔawɛ:] [pʰɛbdrø:] tshy:çɪ
 3sg.-gen. child-gen. car-gen. colour

b) Linking a nominalised clause to a following noun phrase. Here the genitive particle makes the event or state referred to by the whole nominalised clause a modifier of the head of the following noun phrase, accomplishing what is most often done in English by a relative clause. In the following example the clause *nga. yong.* (“I come”) is nominalised by *-ba.* (“-ing”). It modifies the noun *don.dag.* which is the subject of the clause:

[*nga. yong.ba'i.*] *don.dag. 'di. red.*
 [ŋa _jɔŋwɛ:] _tɔnda: _di _re:
 [I come-nom.-gen.] reason this be
 “The reason for my coming is this.”

[*kha.sang. bslebs.mkhan.gi.*] *mi. bsod nams. red.*
 [kʰasɔd: ʔle:ŋɛŋgi] _mi ʔsonam _re:
 [yesterday arrive-nom.-gen.] person Sonam be
 “The person who came yesterday was Sonam.”

Such a nominalised clause may not normally be preceded by another noun phrase with genitive particle.

c) Last word of subject or object/complement. A genitive particle is often found on the last word of the complement of a nominal copular clause (9.2.3), sometimes also on the subject:

khang.pa. de. [khong.gi.] red. “That house is his.”
 _khangbə _te [ʰkʰɔŋgi] _re: (genitive particle on complement)
 house that [he-gen.] be

[*nga'i.ni.*] *'di. red.* “Mine is this one.”
 [_ŋɛ:ni] _di _re: (genitive particle on subject)
 [I-gen.-top.] this be

Here the “missing” noun phrase after the genitive particle is recoverable from the previous discourse.

Co-ordinating particle

The co-ordinating particle *dang.* (pronounced with voiceless initial and treated as a separate word) links two noun phrases which are of the same status as clause arguments (i.e. subject, object or adjunct):

[*lcog.tse. tshang.ma. 'di.tsho.*] *dang.* [*rkub.kyag.*] *tshong.gi.yin.*
 [ʈʂɔgdzi ʈsʰaŋmə ʈdindzo] tɔ: [ʈkubjɔ:] ʈsʰɔŋgyjɪ:
 [table all this-num.] *co-ord.* [chair] sell-link.-aux.
 "I shall sell all these tables and the chairs."

Topic marker

The two topic-marking particles *ni.* and *da.*, if translated at all, can usually be rendered "as for" or the like in English. A noun phrase containing one of these may be subject, object or adjunct. The particle can reinforce the "theme" of the clause (see 12.6) or establish a secondary theme.

[*nga.ni.*] *yong.gi.man.* "For my part, I'm not coming."
 [ʈŋa ni] ʈjɔŋgyɛ:
 [I-top.] come-link.-neg.-aux.

[*'di. da.*] *'grigs.kyi.ma.red.* "Now that won't do!"
 [ʈdi ta] ʈdrigɪmare:
 [that top.] be right-link.-neg.-aux.

The constituents *yin.na.* could be regarded as copular verb of being *yin.* plus subordinating particle *na.* "if" (13.3). Regarded as having become grammaticised as a topic marker, they correspond to English expressions such as "in the case of", "if we're talking about", "regarding".

[*nga. yin.na.*] *snang.dag. med.* "In my case, there's no need to worry."
 [ʈŋa ʈjinə] ʈnaŋda: ʈme:
 [I top.] worry neg.-exist

[*bod.la. yin.na.*] *'di.'dras. yog.ma.red.*
 [ʈpø:lə ʈjinə] ʈdindre: ʈjɔ:mare:
 [Tibet-loc. top.] such exist-neg.-aux.
 "Now in Tibet, there are no such things."

The particle *yang./kyang.*, usually pronounced simply as a final *-ɛ*, in topic-marker position means either "as for", or "too", "also"; or with a negative verb sometimes "even":

[*bod.la.yang.*] *'di.'dras. yog.red.* "There are such things in Tibet too."
 [ʈpø:ləɛ] ʈdindre: ʈjɔ:re:
 [Tibet-loc.-top.] such exist

The particle *da.* is used very similarly to *ni.*, and in most people's speech seems much more frequent:

[*sgang.gā. da.*] *dmār.po. mā.red.* “Not all of them are red.”
 _*gāṅgə* *ta* *ˉmā:bu* *_māre:*
 [all *top.*] *red-nom. neg.-be*

Notes

- 1 For a list of such expressions, see Lhasawa (1980-86vol.2:173ff).
- 2 For a list of such pairs, see Tomulic (1987 vol.2, addenda:26ff).
- 3 Despite its spelling, *mig.* is a Tone 1 constituent: pronounced on a high pitch as a monosyllable.

8. Verbs

8.1 Non-phrasal Verbs

A non-phrasal verb

- a) is a single constituent (monosyllabic);
- b) may in some cases be variable in graphology, corresponding to variation between grammatical forms (“stems”);
- c) may co-occur in the same word with verb particles and noun particles;
- d) may occur in verb words and noun words.

The verb stem is the only constituent which may occur in different grammatical forms. These variations are represented graphologically, and may or may not be represented phonologically. To avoid confusion with other variants such as the different forms arising out of vowel harmony, I shall call these grammatical forms “stems”: e.g. “present stem”, “past stem”. The treatment to follow concerns in the first place written Tibetan, at least as this is codified in the standard grammars and dictionaries, both native and foreign. Written Tibetan here includes Classical Tibetan, Sanskritic Tibetan and Modern Literary Tibetan.

8.2 Verb Stems in Written Tibetan

Not all verbs have different stems: many have only one, e.g. *shes.* ་ཤེ: “know”, *mjal.* ་དེ: “visit”, *red.* ་རེ: “is”. Those which do have different stems may have two, three or four graphological stems, though in the Lhasa dialect the maximum number of phonologically distinct stems is three (present, past and imperative). The traditional English and Tibetan names for the four stems are “present” (*da.lta.ba.* ་ཐད་ལཱ་པཱ་, the normal citation form); “past” or “perfect” (*das.pa.* ་དཱེ་བཱེ “past”); “future” (*ma.'ongs.pa.* ་མའོང་ཤཱེ་བཱེ); and “imperative” (*skul.tshig.* ་ཀུལ་ཤིག་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་), suggesting a tense/mood system.

The picture is somewhat complicated for written Tibetan in some verbs which have alternative graphological forms corresponding to the same stem. Thus the verb “seize” has six written forms, corresponding to four stems:

Present	Past	Future	Imperative
' <i>dzin./zin.</i>	<i>bzung./zung.</i>	<i>gzung.</i>	<i>zung.</i>
འདྲེའི་/འདྲེའི་	འདྲེའི་	འདྲེའི་	འདྲེའི་

The graphological patterning of the written stems of the verbs may at first sight seem arbitrary. The possibilities of variation are however limited in number, and

W.S.Coblin (1976) has attempted, by tabulating their combined effects, to group 135 of the 266 four-stemmed verbs he recognises in the language into eight paradigms, within each of which the pattern of graphological (and corresponding phonological) variation is regular. Coblin's scheme postulates for each verb a "hypothetical" stem, from which a set of rules derives the appropriate paradigm. The rules are in part synchronic, but in part involve assumed diachronic developments. Some of the verbs so classified are however described as "irregular"; a further 106 are ambiguous, being assignable to more than one paradigm; and yet others cannot be fitted in at all. (And, of course, two- and three-stemmed verbs are excluded altogether.) One could be forgiven for regarding this scheme as hopelessly untidy, and for simply choosing to treat every verb as irregular, in the sense that the stems have to be learned for each verb.

A.Róna-Tas (1985) has attempted to rationalise Coblin's scheme somewhat, choosing to regard the past stem as the "basic" and ancestral form, and suggesting ways of reducing the number of paradigms.

Rather than reproduce the Coblin/Róna-Tas scheme in all its complexity or try to modify it, I shall simply give some examples to illustrate the possibilities:

	Present	Past	Future	Imperative
1 "pass over"	<i>rgal.</i>	<i>brgal.</i>	<i>brgal.</i>	<i>rgol.</i>
2 "hold"	<i>'chang.</i>	<i>bcangs.</i>	<i>bcang.</i>	<i>chongs.</i>
3 "cook"	<i>'tshod.</i>	<i>btso.</i>	<i>btso.</i>	<i>tshos.</i>
4 "do"	<i>byed.</i>	<i>byas.</i>	<i>bya.</i>	<i>byos.</i>
5 "bless"	<i>sngo.</i>	<i>bsngos.</i>	<i>bsngo.</i>	<i>sngos.</i>
6 "beat"	<i>rdung.</i>	<i>brdungs.</i>	<i>brdung.</i>	<i>dung(s).</i>
7 "take out"	<i>'byin.</i>	<i>phyung.</i>	<i>dbyung.</i>	<i>phyung(s).</i>
8 "scatter"	<i>'thor.</i>	<i>btor.</i>	<i>gtor.</i>	<i>thor.</i>
9 "cover"	<i>'gebs.</i>	<i>bkab.</i>	<i>dgab.</i>	<i>khob.</i>
10 "weep"	<i>shum.</i>	<i>(b)shum.</i>	<i>bshum.</i>	<i>(b)shum(s).</i>
11 "put in"	<i>'jug.</i>	<i>bcug(s).</i>	<i>gzhug.</i>	<i>chug.</i>

A simplified statement of the possibilities is as follows: (numbers refer to the examples above):

a) Basic letter:

The basic letter of the imperative stem is commonly the aspirated counterpart of those of the other stems (when the latter are unaspirated). (9, 11).

b) Vowel signs:

i) If the vowel sign of the past and future stems is *-a-*, then the vowel sign of the imperative stem will be *-o-* (1, 2, 4, 9). (Otherwise the vowel signs of these three stems will be the same.)

ii) If the vowel sign of the past and future stems is *-a-*, then the vowel sign of the present stem may be *-a-* or *-e-* (1, 2, 4).

iii) If the vowel sign of the past, future and imperative stems is *-u-*, then the vowel sign of the present stem may be *-u-* or *-i-* (6, 7, 10).

(N.B. The vowel signs of the past and future stems are always the same.)

c) Final/extra final letters:

- i) The imperative stem will very commonly have a final or extra final letter *-s* (where graphologically possible), whether or not any other stems do (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10).
- ii) The past stem may have a final or extra final letter *-s* (where graphologically possible), when this is absent from the present and future stems (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11).
- iii) A final letter *-d* on the present stem may be absent from the other stems (3, 4). (N.B. Only very seldom is there a final or extra final letter *-s* on the future stem.)

d) Prefixes:

- i) There will almost always be a prefixed *b-* on the past stem (where graphologically possible). This will replace any different prefix on the present stem, and the basic letter of the past stem will, where necessary to fit with the *b-* prefix, be an unaspirated or de-affricated counterpart of the basic letter of the present stem (all except 4, 7).
- ii) There will likewise almost always be a prefixed *b-* or *g-* on the future stem, with the same provisos (all except 4).

The vowel variation displayed in many of the above examples has been referred to by some scholars as “ablaut”. While E.Pulleyblank (1965) and others have postulated an early stage of “close-open ablaut” in Chinese and other Sino-Tibetan languages, and suggested either genetic or areal connections with ablaut in other language groups, Róna-Tas claims that the phenomenon can be explained diachronically entirely within Tibetan.

Two verbs, meaning respectively “go” and “come”, show a suppletive paradigm with members drawn from etymologically different verbs:

	Present	Past	Imperative
“go”	<i>'gro.</i>	<i>phyin./song.</i>	<i>song.</i>
“come”	<i>'ong.</i>	<i>'ongs.</i>	<i>shog.</i>

8.3 Verb stems in Lhasa Tibetan

Many of the above complications do not arise in Lhasa Tibetan.¹ In that dialect, only a very few verbs have more than one form for a given stem (leaving aside variants due to vowel harmony): in most such cases the alternating stem is the imperative. No verb has more than three phonologically distinct stems: present, past and imperative.² Furthermore, the only verbs which have separate past and present stems are a handful from among those whose present stem is pronounced as a short, open (non-nasalised) syllable. Their past stem is pronounced with a longer vowel of different quality:

present stem (showing harmonic variants)	ɚ/ʌ	ɔ/ʊ	ʊ	e/ɪ
past stem	ɛ:	ɔ:	y:	ɛ:

For most verbs which have separate present and past stems in written Tibetan only one of these stems survives in Lhasa Tibetan, often the written past stem. For most speakers, no verb in Lhasa Tibetan now has a separate future stem.

The commonest verbs with separate stems in Lhasa Tibetan are:

Present		Past	
<i>lta.</i>	$\bar{t}a/\bar{t}\Delta$	<i>bltas.</i>	$\bar{t}e:$ “look at”
<i>za.</i>	$_sa/_s\Delta$	<i>zas.</i>	$_se:$ “eat”
<i>bzo.</i>	$_so/_su$	<i>bzos.</i>	$_s\emptyset:$ “make”
<i>nyo.</i>	$_n\bar{o}/_n\bar{u}$	<i>nyos.</i>	$_n\emptyset:$ “buy”
<i>zhu.</i>	$_c\bar{u}$	<i>zhus.</i>	$_cy:$ “say”, “ask”
<i>byed.</i>	$_t\bar{c}e:/_t\bar{c}i$	<i>byas.</i>	$_t\bar{c}e:$ “do”

The verbs may be classified into three main types according to the number of their stems: one, two or three. Those with one or two stems may be further subclassified according to the written equivalents of their stems. For the uses of the stems, see Chapter 9.

One-stem verbs

- a) = Written one-stem verb: *shes.* $\bar{c}\bar{e}:/\bar{c}i\eta$ “know”
 b) = Written present stem: *klog.* $\bar{l}\bar{o}:/\bar{l}o:$ “read”
 c) = Written past stem: *bris.* $_tri:$ “write”

For these verbs the one form must perforce be used in all tenses, aspects and moods. The two spoken reflexes of *shes.* and of *klog.* are vowel harmony alternants, not separate stems.

Two-stem verbs

The two possible patterns are as follows:

Present/Past	Imperative
<i>btang.</i> $\bar{t}\bar{d}:/\bar{t}\bar{a}\eta/\bar{t}\bar{a}\eta$	<i>tong.</i> $\bar{t}\bar{d}:$ “send” (Written past & imperative)

Present/Imperative	Past
<i>zhu.</i> $_c\bar{u}$	<i>zhus.</i> $_cy:$ “ask” (Written present & past)

Three-stem verbs (= Written present, past & imperative)

Present	Past	Imperative
<i>lta.</i> $\bar{t}a/\bar{t}\Delta$	<i>bltas.</i> $\bar{t}e:$	<i>ltos.</i> $\bar{t}\emptyset:$ “look at”

(Written present, past & imperative)

Suppletive paradigms

Present	Past	Imperative
<i>'gro.</i> $_d\bar{r}\bar{o}/_d\bar{r}u$	<i>phyin.</i> $\bar{t}\bar{c}^{\#}i:$	<i>rgyu.</i> $_g\bar{j}u$ “go”
<i>yong.</i> $_j\bar{d}:/_j\bar{u}\eta$	<i>yong.</i> $_j\bar{d}:$	<i>shog.</i> $_c\bar{o}:$ “come”

8.4 Phrasal Verbs

A phrasal verb consists of a verb stem preceded by a separate word or words, usually a noun word, though sometimes an adjective word or another verb word. The justification for treating the syntagm as a unit is the non-predictability of its meaning from a knowledge of its component parts; also, in some cases, the compound may behave grammatically like a non-phrasal verb, with a separate subject and/or object. Sometimes it can be difficult to decide whether a given case is better regarded as a phrasal verb or simply as a non-phrasal verb stem+object or subject: the two constructions shade off into one another. Wherever one draws the line, phrasal verbs would seem greatly to outnumber non-phrasal verbs in the lexicon, no doubt because there seems to be no way of creating new verb stems in the language. The main types of phrasal verb are as follows:

a) The verb stems *rgyab*./*rgyag*. “strike” and *btang*. “send”, both also occurring independently, become virtually drained of independent meaning in a large number of phrasal verbs, usually in combination with a noun, occasionally another verb stem or adjective stem.³ Examples:

rgyab. with noun

<i>dka'.las. rgyab.</i>	(<i>dka'.las.</i> “hardship”)	“work hard”
ˈkale: _gjvp		
<i>bod.skad. rgyab.</i>	(<i>bod.skad.</i> “Tibetan”)	“speak Tibetan”
_pø:ge: _gjvp		
<i>khab. rgyab.</i>	(<i>khab.</i> “needle”)	“give an injection”
ˈkʰvp _gjvp		
<i>khang.pa. rgyab.</i>	(<i>khang.pa.</i> “house”)	“build a house”
ˈkʰagbə _gjvp		
<i>me.mda'. rgyab.</i>	(<i>me.mda'</i> “gun”)	“fire a gun”
_mendə _gjvp		
<i>par. rgyab.</i>	(<i>par.</i> “photograph”)	“take a photograph”
ˈpaɕ _gjvp		
<i>me. rgyab.</i>	(<i>me.</i> “fire”)	“set on fire”
_mɛ _gjvp		(cf. <i>me.btang.</i> below)
<i>chu. rgyab.</i>	(<i>chu.</i> “water”)	“water”
ˈtɕʰu _gjvp		(cf. <i>chu.btang.</i> below)

rgyab. with verb

<i>mchongs. rgyab.</i>	(<i>mchongs.</i> “jump”)	“jump”
ˈtɕʰɕ: _gjvp		

rgyab. with adjective

<i>gsar.pa. rgyab.</i>	(<i>gsar.pa.</i> “new”)	“renovate”
ˈsa:bə _gjvp		

btang. with noun

<i>skad. btang.</i>	(<i>skad.</i> “speech”)	“call”, “invite”
ṽkje: ṽtd:		
<i>kha.par. btang.</i>	(<i>kha.par.</i> “phone” (noun))	“telephone”
ṽkḥabaṛ ṽtd:		
<i>gangs. btang.</i>	(<i>gangs.</i> “snow” (noun))	“snow”
ṽkd: ṽtd:		
<i>tshon. btang.</i>	(<i>tshon.</i> “colour”)	“paint”
ṽtsḥḍ: ṽtd:		
<i>bsam.blo. btang.</i>	(<i>bsam.blo.</i> “thought”)	“think”
ṽsamlo ṽtd:		
<i>me. btang.</i>	(<i>me.</i> “fire”)	“light a fire”
ṽme ṽtd:		
<i>chu. btang.</i>	(<i>chu.</i> “water”)	“irrigate”
ṽtḥu ṽtd:		

b) The verb stems *byed.* “do”,⁴ *bzo.* “make”, *zhu.* “submit”, “request”, *lang.* “arise” and *shor.* “break out”, “escape” are also employed in many phrasal verbs, usually with less loss of independent meaning than in the case of *rgyab.* and *btang.*

<i>phebs.bsu. zhu.</i>	(<i>phebs.bsu.</i> “welcome” (noun))	“welcome”
ṽpḥepsu ṽcu		
<i>med.pa. bzo.</i>	(<i>med.pa.</i> “nonexistence”)	“destroy”
ṽme:bə ṽsə		
<i>rlung. lang.</i>	(<i>rlung.</i> “wind”, “temper”)	“be angry”
ṽld: ṽld:		
<i>grva.pa. byed.</i>	(<i>grva.pa.</i> “monk”)	“become a monk”
ṽtrabə ṽtḥe:		
<i>gad.mo. shor.</i>	(<i>gad.mo.</i> “laugh” (noun))	“let out a laugh”
ṽge:mu ṽcə:		

c) Various other verb stems are used only in one or a few compounds, which might in some cases better be regarded as simply idiomatic collocations of verb+noun:

<i>skyug.pa. skyug.</i>	ṽkjugbə ṽkju:	“vomit”
vomiting vomit		
<i>gnyid. sad.</i>	ṽŋi: ṽse:	“awake”
sleep (noun) rouse		

d) There are a few cases of phrasal verbs where the first element is another verb stem:

<i>'khyer. yong.</i>	ṽkji: ṽjḥ:	“bring”
carry come		
<i>'khyer. 'gro.</i>	ṽkji: ṽdro	“take”
carry go		
<i>'khrīd. 'gro.</i>	ṽtḥi: ṽdro	“lead”
lead go		

bros. 'gro. *_trø: _drø* "flee"
flee go

These examples are perhaps better regarded as cases of verb serialisation, discussed in Chapter 10.

(For honorific verbs taking the form of phrasal verbs, see 8.5.)

8.5 Honorific Verbs

Verbs take part in the system of deference, which I treat as operating at clause level (12.7).

Most verbs, the referents of whose subjects can be human beings, exist in pairs comprising an ordinary and an honorific member. Essentially, a greater degree of deference is being shown by the speaker or writer to the referent of the subject of an honorific verb, as compared with that of the corresponding ordinary verb. The main honorific types are as follows:

a) In many cases, the ordinary and honorific forms are apparently etymologically unconnected:

Ordinary		Honorific		
<i>na.</i>	<i>_na</i>	<i>bsnyun.</i>	<i>_ny:</i>	"be ill"
<i>shes.</i>	<i>_çé:</i>	<i>mkhyen.</i>	<i>_kjé:</i>	"know"
<i>bsdad.</i>	<i>_de:</i>	<i>bzhugs.</i>	<i>_çu:</i>	"stay", "dwell"

b) Some ordinary verbs may be made honorific with a syntagm consisting of the ordinary verb+the honorific verb stem *gnang*. "do", "give". This could be regarded as a phrasal verb, or better, perhaps, as a case of verb serialisation (see Chapter 10).

Ordinary		Honorific		
<i>btang.</i>	<i>_td:</i>	<i>btang. gnang.</i>	<i>_td: _nd:</i>	"send"
<i>shor.</i>	<i>_çə:</i>	<i>shor. gnang.</i>	<i>_çə: _nd:</i>	"break out"

c) Honorific phrasal verbs are formed from their ordinary equivalents by one or other or a combination of the above means. *rgyab.* is commonly replaced by *skyon.* or *skron.*; *btang.* by *btang. gnang.*; *byed.* by *gnang.*; *bzo.* by *bzo. gnang.*; *shor.* by *shor. gnang.*; *lang.* by *bzheng.*. Examples:

Ordinary		Honorific		
<i>par. rgyab.</i>		<i>sku.par. skyon.</i>		"photograph"
	<i>_pəç _gɣvp</i>		<i>_kəbəç _kjø:</i>	
<i>gling.kha. btang.</i>		<i>bzhugs.gling. btang. gnang.</i>		"picnic"
	<i>_lɣgə _td:</i>		<i>_çu:ll: _td: _nd:</i>	
<i>gra.sgrig. byed.</i>		<i>gra.sgrig. gnang.</i>		"prepare"
	<i>_tradri: _tçe:</i>		<i>_tradri: _nd:</i>	

Particularly in the case of non-phrasal verbs, the number of honorific forms is smaller than the number of ordinary forms. One honorific form may thus sometimes

have to do duty for more than one non-honorific form: thus the range of semantic distinctions expressible in the honorific register without additional means is somewhat less than that of the ordinary register:

Ordinary		Honorific		
<i>yong.</i>	_jʃ:	<i>phebs.</i>	ˉpʰe:	“come”
<i>'gro.</i>	_drɔ	<i>phebs.</i>	ˉpʰe:	“go”
<i>byed.</i>	_tɕe:	<i>gnang.</i>	ˉnd:	“do”
<i>sprad.</i>	ˉtre:	<i>gnang.</i>	ˉnd:	“give”
<i>lta.</i>	ˉta	<i>gzigs.</i>	_si:	“look at”
<i>nyo.</i>	_ɲɔ	<i>gzigs.</i>	_si:	“buy”
<i>lab.</i>	_lɤp	<i>gsung.</i>	ˉsʊ:	“speak”
<i>bshad.</i>	ˉɕe:	<i>gsung.</i>	ˉsʊ:	“talk”
<i>zer.</i>	_se:	<i>gsung.</i>	ˉsʊ:	“say”
<i>za.</i>	_sa	<i>mchod.</i>	ˉtɕʰø:	“eat”
<i>'thung.</i>	ˉtʰʊ:	<i>mchod.</i>	ˉtɕʰø:	“drink”

8.6 Respectful Verbs

The deference system also involves, besides ordinary and honorific verbs, a third category, namely respectful verbs.⁵ Their number is much smaller than that of either ordinary or honorific verbs, but it includes some very common verbs. In their case, deference is being shown to the referent not of the verb's subject but of an object or adjunct, or even a person not represented in any argument of the clause. Examples:

Ordinary		Honorific		Respectful	
<i>za.</i>	_sa	<i>mchod.</i>	ˉtɕʰø:	<i>zhu.</i>	_ɕʊ “eat”
<i>zer.</i>	_se:	<i>gsung.</i>	ˉsʊ:	<i>zhu.</i>	_ɕʊ “say”
<i>sprad.</i>	ˉtre:	<i>gnang.</i>	ˉnd:	<i>phul.</i>	ˉpʰy: “give”
<i>thug.</i>	ˉtʰu:	<i>thug. gnang.</i>	ˉtʰu: ˉnd:	<i>mjal.</i>	_dzɛ: “meet”
<i>yong.</i>	_jʃ:	<i>phebs.</i>	ˉpʰe:	<i>bcar.</i>	ˉtɕa: “come”

In the case of *zhu.* “say”, *phul.* “give” and *mjal.* “meet”, respect is shown to the person being met (who may be represented in the clause as an object), or being given something to or being spoken to (who may be represented as an adjunct). In the case of *zhu.* “eat”, respect is shown to the person whose food it is or in whose company the food is being eaten: a person who may well neither be represented in any argument of the clause, even allowing for ellipsis, nor be present during the conversation. (In this regard, the system of deference resembles the system of viewpoint: see 9.2.3.)

8.7 Honorific/respectful Verbs

It is possible also to have verbs (or sequences of verbs) which combine the honorific and respectful categories; showing deference to referents of both subject and object/adjunct:

Ordinary	Honorific	Respectful	Honorific/respectful	
<i>sprad. ̄tre:</i>	<i>gnang. ̄nd:</i>	<i>phul. ̄p^hby:</i>	<i>phul. gnang. ̄p^hby: ̄nd:</i>	“give”

For further discussion of the deference system see 12.7.

8.8 Nominalised Verbs

Many varieties of Tibetan, including the Lhasa dialect and the Preclassical and Classical language, have a substantial number of productive nominalising particles which may follow, or in a few cases, precede a verb stem to convert it to a noun. Such particles generally convert not only the verb but also the whole of any clause of which it is the predicator into a noun phrase, which may stand as subject, object or adjunct of the clause in which it is embedded. Such constructions will be discussed at 13.4.

Notes

- 1 DeLancey (1991:19fn) remarks that “the number of single-stem verbs is steadily increasing, noticeably from one generation to the next.” However, I would doubt his claim that “It is probably still the case ... that a majority of verbs distinguish perfective and imperfective stems ...”.
- 2 For some verbs, two spellings may be conventionally used for what is can phonologically be regarded as a single stem: e.g. *lta.* (present); *blta.* (future) “look”.
- 3 For lists of such phrasal verbs, see Lhasawa (1980-86 vol.2:2-16); Hu Tan et al. (1989:305ff).
- 4 See Lhasawa (1980-86 vol.2:18-22); Hu Tan et al. (1989:305ff).
- 5 Called by Tomulic (1987 vol. 2:addenda 26ff) “honorifique d’humilité”.

9. Verb Phrases

The systems operating purely at the level of the verb phrase are those of polarity, judgemental modality and part of the mood system. They are manifested in the choice of verb stem (past or present) and/or choice of verb particles.

The systems of tense/aspect, intention, person, viewpoint and evidential modality are strictly speaking manifested at clause level, since they involve other parts of the clause besides the verb phrase. In the case of mood, other clauses within the sentence may be involved. However, because the workings of these five systems are so closely interwoven, and a large part of their formal expression takes place within the verb phrase, I find it more convenient to discuss these systems in that context.

9.1 Structure of the Verb Phrase

There are two common patterns of verb phrase structure: the first is typical for verbs of being. The second, typical for lexical verbs, may be seen as an expansion of the first, wherein a lexical verb precedes a homograph of a verb of being. The homograph is in this second pattern called an auxiliary, which I classify as a type of verb particle on both grammatical and phonological grounds.

The motivation for the distinction between verbs of being and lexical verbs includes the different verb phrase structure appropriate to each, and the fact that the verbs of being have their “auxiliary” homographs. Of course, verbs of being are far from devoid of lexical content, but even when not being used in their auxiliary role they form a distinct category of verb, obligatorily participating, unlike lexical verbs, in the grammatical systems of viewpoint and evidential modality. In all their manifestations they are more grammaticised than lexical verbs.

Common patterns: a) Verbs of being: simple pattern

The essential element of structure of the verb phrase is a unit comprising the **verb stem**, which may be preceded by a **polariser** and followed by a **modal**. In such a simple unit, in a main clause which is not a response to a previous part of the discourse, the verb stem position is usually occupied by a *verb of being*, the polariser by a *negative particle*, *dubitative particle* or *zero*, (collectively, *polar particles*), and the modal by one of a number of *modal particles* (including *zero*), thus:

(polar particle+) verb of being (+modal particle)

mi.'dug.gas. “Isn’t it so?”, “Isn’t it there?”
 _**m***induge:*
neg.-be-interr.

All verbs other than verbs of being are lexical verbs. A phrase with a lexical verb stem occupying the verb stem position will typically have the expanded version of the above pattern.

b) Lexical verbs: expanded pattern

For the non-phrasal variety of lexical verb, the majority pattern is an expansion of the verb-of-being pattern, in which the **lexical verb stem**, with or without a following **linking particle** precedes the polariser position.

In this type of phrase, the position immediately following the polariser is occupied by a constituent which is homographic with a verb of being but is called an “auxiliary” because of its heavily grammaticised role and phonological behaviour

lexical verb stem (+linking particle) (+polar particle) (+auxiliary)
(+modal particle)

'gro.gi.mi.'dug.ga. “Certainly he’s not going.”
 _**drugy***m***induga**
go-link.-neg.-aux.-emph.

Note that in this pattern, polar and modal particles are adjacent to the auxiliary rather than to the lexical stem.

There is also a minority pattern found in the negative past tense, in which the polariser may precede the lexical verb:

(negative particle)+lexical verb stem (+linking particle+auxiliary)
(+modal particle)

ma.phyin.pa.red.da. “Certainly he didn’t go.”
 _**m****adz***imbər***ida**
neg.-went-link.-aux.-emph.

Linking particles. The two linking particles *-gi.* and *-pa.* exemplified above are by far the commonest. I name them from the fact that they are found only between verb stem and auxiliary or between verb stem and negative particle+auxiliary.

-gi. and *-pa.* are superficially similar to the genitive noun particle (7.8) and the nominalising verb particle (13.4) respectively, but with significant differences in phonological behaviour. *-gi.* is sometimes regarded as “imperfective”, roughly equivalent to English present participial “-ing”; and *-pa.* as “perfective”, roughly equivalent to English past participial “-ed”. However, such an analysis is difficult to carry through in the face of many counterexamples.

Five other linking particles are discussed under “prospective aspect” at 9.3.5.3:

-rgyu., *-yag.*, *-mkhan.*, *-grabs.* and *-chog.*. The first four are homographs of nominalising particles (13.4), while *-chog.* is a homograph of a serial verb (10.4).

c) Verbs of being: expanded pattern

A verb of being can also participate in the expanded patterns:

**verb of being (+linking particle) (+polar particle) +auxiliary
(+modal particle)**

yod.kyi.ma.red.pas. “Isn’t it likely to be there?”
 _jy:gymaribɛ:
 exist-link.-neg.-aux.-interr.

or:

**(polar particle)+verb of being (+linking particle) +auxiliary
(+modal particle)**

med.pa.red.da. “So it’s not there!”
 _mɛ:bərɪda
 neg.-exist-link.-emph.

In this example the polar particle and verb of being are conflated in the first syllable, both graphically and phonologically.

d) Further expansions

Phrases are sometimes encountered which are expanded by the addition of further auxiliaries, such as:

**lexical verb stem+linking particle+auxiliary+linking particle
+auxiliary+linking particle+auxiliary**

'gro.gi.yod.pa.yin.pa.'dra “So it seems he’s going.”
 _drugɪjɔbɔjɪmbɔdra
 go-link.-aux.-link.-aux.-link.-aux.

or:

**verb of being+linking particle+auxiliary+linking particle
+auxiliary**

yod.pa.yin.gyi.red. “So there probably is.”
 _jɔ:bɔjɪggire:
 be-link.-aux.-link.-aux.

I have not explored the upper limits of this expansion.

e) *Lexical verbs: contracted pattern*

Two verbs *zer.* “say”, and *dgos.* “want”, “need”, as well as participating in the expanded patterns referred to above, are also often heard in a reduced pattern. In the case of *zer.*, the reduced form pronounced **_sa(:)/s** is used in quoting direct speech, e.g.:

nga. yong.gi.yin. zer. “‘I’ll come,’ he says.”
_ga _juggyjɪ: (_s(a))
 I come-link.-aux. say

Here the *zer.* could perhaps be regarded as a “quotative” clause-final particle. However in a *wh*-interrogative clause it is clearly a verb:

ga.re. zer.ba. “What’s it called?”
_kari _sa:
 what say-*wh.interr.*

The verb *dgos.* in the reduced pattern is heard with both positive and negative polarity:

'di.'dra. cig. (mi.)dgos. “I (don’t) need one like that.”
_dindre tɕi: (_mɔ)gɔ
 such num. (neg.)-need

9.2 Verbs of Being

9.2.1 *The five principal verbs of being*

Verbs of being have the following characteristics, which distinguish them from lexical verbs:

a) Their stems commonly occur as main clause verbs (the “simple pattern” above) without the tense/aspect combinations of linking particles and/or auxiliaries (the “expanded pattern”).

b) Although the standard tense/aspect combinations of linking particles and auxiliaries (9.3.4, 9.3.5) can be added to verb stems of being, the resulting combinations denote not tense or aspect, but judgemental modality.

c) The verbs of being have homographs which occur at the auxiliary position within the predicator (verb phrase).

d) The stems of the verbs of being participate in the systems of viewpoint and evidential modality, whereas lexical verbs do so only via any auxiliaries with which they may combine.

The five principal verbs of being are all single-stemmed verbs.

Four monosyllabic constituents - *yin.*, *red.*, *yod.*, and *'dug.* - are clear cases of verbs of being.

A fifth item, pronounced *_jɔ:re:*, is also very common both as a verb of being and at auxiliary position. Many authorities both native and foreign regard it as an example of the expansion outlined above, consisting of verb+linking particle (*yod.+pa.* combined in one spoken syllable *_jɔ:*)+auxiliary (*red.*), and spell it *yod.pa.red.* This would make it formally a past tense construction (see 9.3.4.1).

In some ways, *_jɔ:re:* does behave like a verb+linking particle+auxiliary. In favour of this interpretation is the fact that the polariser comes before the *red.* in the negative *_jɔ:mare:*. “Infixes” within a constituent are otherwise unknown in Tibetan. The final constituent *red.*, found in main clauses, alternates with *yin.* in subordinate clauses as does the auxiliary *red.* in past and future tense constructions. There is a possible parallel for an equivalence of *yod.pa.* and *_jɔ:* in the wh-interrogative form (9.2.6). Also, if regarded as a single part of speech, *yog.red.* would be the only polysyllabic non-phrasal verb stem in the language. An analysis as verb+auxiliary is also implausible, as auxiliary *red.* otherwise never follows a verb without a linking particle.

However, there is a separate and often overlooked form *yod.pa.red. _jɔ:bəre:* (with negative *med.pa.red. _mɛ:bəre:*) with a different meaning, which clearly is a verb+linking particle+auxiliary. Faced with this form, one must at least devise a way of writing *_jɔ:re:* so as to distinguish it from *_jɔ:bəre:*. This uncertainty is reflected in a number of alternative spellings besides *yod.pa.red.* which native speakers have devised for this item, such as *yog.red.*, *yo'o.red.* and *yod.red.*

It looks as if *_jɔ:re:* represents a sequence of verb+linking particle+auxiliary which has moved some distance towards being fossilised as a unitary item. However one looks at it, it is somewhat anomalous. Since it clearly alternates as a unit with the four verbs of being introduced above, I treat it as a unitary item and after the example of some Tibetan writers spell it *yog.red.* to distinguish it from *yod.pa.red.*

9.2.2 Four marginal verbs of being

Four other constituents of less frequent occurrence have some but not all of the characteristics of verbs of being: *yong.*, *byung.*, *'dra.* and *song.*. (See 9.2.4.)

9.2.3 Verbs of being: viewpoint, evidential modality

I shall follow an established practice by beginning with a consideration of these constituents as verbs of being before examining their homographs' roles as auxiliaries in the systems of tense, aspect etc..

The five principal verbs of being (*yin. _jɪ:*, *red. _re:*, *yod. _jɔ:*, *'dug. _du:*, and *yog.red. _jɔ:re:*) divide lexically into two sets: *yin.* and *red.* in one; and *yod.*, *'dug.* and *yog.red.* in the other.

yin. and *red.* mean “be (something)” and are the copular variety of two-argument verb.¹ Their clauses may contain either complement or subject and complement.

One meaning of *yod.*, *'dug.* and *yog.red.* is “exist” or “be located”: in this meaning they are single-argument in that their clauses may contain a subject but not a

complement. They also express possession (i.e. “having”); the thing possessed being the referent of the subject, and the noun phrase referring to the possessor being in an adjunct containing a dative-locative particle. These existential verbs are also found, however, in clauses containing an adjectival complement, where they act as a copula like *yin.* and *red.*. The three verbs *yod.*, *'dug.* and *yog.red.* may be termed “evidential” or “attestative” in that they imply a particular degree of evidence for the statement; they are also very often “affective” in that they imply some sort of subjective judgement.

Thus one can distinguish three types of clause:

- a) nominal copular clauses (two-argument) with *yin.* or *red.* ;
- b) existential clauses (single-argument) with *yod.*, *'dug.* or *yog.red.* ;
- c) adjectival copular clauses (two-argument) with any of the five verbs.

Within these types of clause operate the two systems of *viewpoint* and *evidential modality*.

Nominal copular clauses

The verbs *yin.* and *red.* are used as copulas to identify a subject with a complement whose head is a noun other than a nominalised adjective. The clause, if indicative, represents an assertion or bald statement of fact, made regardless of supporting evidence, if any, and regardless of the speaker’s subjective attitude or judgement. Such clauses are called by some French authors “assertif”; English “assertive” or “factual” are suitable equivalent terms.

The choice between *yin.* and *red.* is often presented as one of *person*; *yin.* agreeing with first person subjects and *red.* with second/third person subjects. While for lexical verbs person is not a totally redundant category in Tibetan (see 9.3.1), in clauses of being there is no system of person in the sense of strict concord between subject and verb phrase.

It is certainly usual to find *yin.* in indicative clauses of which *nga.* “I” or *nga.tsho.* “we” is the subject, and *red.* in all other clauses. However, it is possible to reverse the combinations and have *red.* with second/third person subject, or *yin.* with first person. The key to understanding the system is to recognise that *yin.* indicates that the *speaker* is making a statement from his or her *viewpoint*, whereas *red.* implies no such indication. Concord is thus with the individual as speaker rather than as subject or as any other argument of the verb.

Statements about oneself are typically, though not necessarily, regarded as being “self-centred”, personal or subjective (English-speaking Tibetans sometimes categorise them as “intimate”). Other statements are typically regarded as being “other-centred”, impersonal or objective. The distinction is seldom made in English and to render it in translation one normally needs to resort to adverbs or other adjuncts, thus:

<i>nga. bslab.grwa.ba. yin.</i>	“(Personally) I’m a student.” (Unmarked.)
<i>_ŋa _lvbdra: _ɟl:</i>	
I student be	

nga. bslab.grwa.ba. red. “(It’s a fact that) I’m a student.” (Marked.)
 _ga ˉlvpdra: _re:
 I student be

khong. bslab.grwa.ba. red. “He’s a student.” (Neutral statement of fact:
 ˉkʰʂ: ˉlvpdra: _re:
 3sg. student be
 unmarked.)

khong. bslab.grwa.ba. yin. “He’s a student (of mine).” or
 ˉkʰʂ: ˉlvpdra: _jl:
 3sg. student be
 “He’s my fellow student.” (Marked.)

As indicated above, in the sense that *yin.* indicates positive personal viewpoint and *red.* simply lacks it, *yin.* may be regarded as the marked member of the pair. In the context of a first-person clause, however, *red.* as the less usual alternative could be regarded as marked.

Thus the verb is agreeing with the speaker, *who is not necessarily the referent of one of the arguments of the clause.*² The choices may be diagrammed as in Figure 9.1. According to the conventions of systemic linguistics one moves along from one choice to the next from left to right: it is not suggested that the speaker necessarily follows such an algorithm.

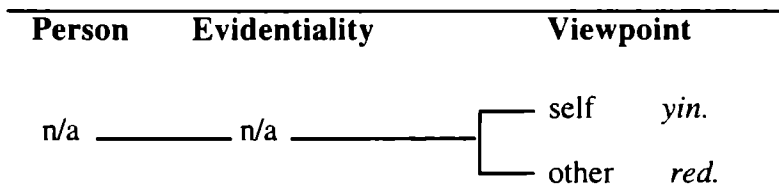


Figure 9.1: Nominal copular clauses (n/a = not applicable)

Existential clauses

In existential clauses the systems of both viewpoint and evidential modality operate. In diagrammatic form the evidential modality system may be thought of as operating first, and as dividing the possibilities between *yod.* and *'dug.* on the one hand, and *yog.red.* on the other, as in Figure 9.2.

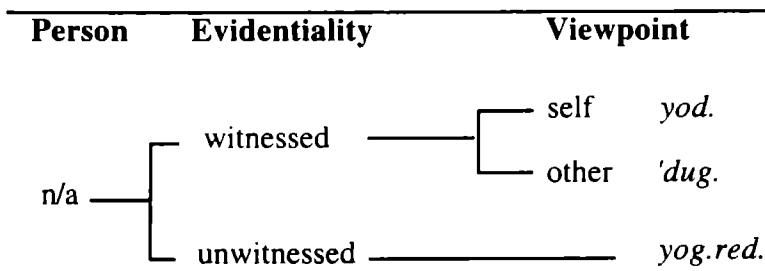


Figure 9.2: Existential clauses

yod. and *'dug.* are used of situations of which the speaker has definite knowledge arising out of first-hand *witness*, usually *eyewitness*. Some French authors label them “constatif”. They may be regarded as marked in relation to *yog.red.* which implies no such first-hand knowledge, though it does not specifically rule it out.

yog.red. is typically used where the evidence for the statement is merely hearsay, and can usually be rendered in German as “sein sollen” or in French as “serai(en)t”, though it is very much commoner than either of those expressions are in their respective languages. All three verbs may be termed “evidential” or “attestative” in that some greater or lesser degree of evidence for the statement is being implied.

Within the “witnessed” term of the evidential system, the choice between *yod.* and *'dug.* is one of viewpoint; *yod.* being self-centred, and *'dug.* other-centred.

In addition to the system of viewpoint, the choice between *yod.* and *'dug.* very often relates to what might be called *generality*. *yod.* often implies that the state of affairs in question is generally the case or has been so for a considerable period of time. *'dug.* by contrast often refers to a particular, even momentary state of affairs, and frequently conveys a sense of surprise, recency or discovery. (For a similar contrast between auxiliaries *byung.* and *song.*, see 9.3.4.1.)

The normal way of expressing possession in Tibetan is with an existential verb and an adjunct (referring to the possessor) containing a dative-locative noun particle such as *-la*. The examples below, with third-person subject *deb.* “book(s)”, are of this type. The first three illustrate very common patterns:

<i>nga.la. deb. yod.</i>	“I have some books.” (Self-centred; witnessed.)
_ṅaḷə _tep _jø:	
I-loc. book exist	

<i>kho.la. deb. 'dug.</i>	“(I see) he has some books.”/“Ah, he has some books!” (Other-centred; witnessed; discovery.)
ḱḥḷə _tep _du:	
he-loc. book exist	

<i>kho.la. deb. yog.red.</i>	“He has some books (I assume / so I am told / as is generally known).” (Other-centred; not necessarily witnessed.)
ḱḥḷə _tep _jɔ:re:	
he-loc. book exist	

The following show less usual but nevertheless perfectly acceptable patterns:

<i>nga.la. deb. yog.red.</i>	“I have some books (apparently / as is generally known).” (Other centred; not necessarily witnessed.)
_ṅaḷə _tep _jɔ:re:	
I-loc. book exist	

The above sentence can also mean “I should/must have some books” (i.e. I haven’t seen them, but they must be there), and “I seem to remember having some books”. There may thus be an element of judgemental modality in *yog.red.*, but expressed lexically rather than grammatically. (For grammatical judgemental modality, see 9.2.8.)

nga.la. deb. 'dug. “(I see) I have some books!” (Other-centred;
_ḡalə _tep _du: witnessed, recent discovery.)
 I-loc. book exist

kho la. deb. yod. “He has some books (of mine / in my house).”
ḡḡəḡəḡə _tep _jə: (Self-centred; witnessed.)
 he-loc. book exist

With first-person subject the usual verb is *yod.*, but both *'dug.* and *yog.red.* are possible; informants may claim to find the latter two rather contrived when presented with them but will in fact use them in spontaneous speech:

nga. nang.la. yod. “I was at home.” (Self-centred; witnessed.)
_ḡa _nəḡlə _jə:
 I home-loc. exist

nga. nang.la. 'dug. “There I was at home (in my dream).”
_ḡa _nəḡlə _du: (Other-centred; witnessed.)
 I home-loc. exist

nga. nang.la. yog.red. “I was at home (so they tell me).” (Other-
_ḡa _nəḡlə _jə:re: centred, not necessarily witnessed.)
 I home-loc. exist

Adjectival copular clauses

In an adjectival copular clause, the head of the complement noun phrase is a nominalised adjectival verb. All five verbs of being may be used in such clauses. The basic assertive versus evidential distinction between *yin.* and *red.* on the one hand and *yod.*, *'dug.* and *yog.red.* on the other is maintained.

yin. and *red.* may again be termed factual or assertive in that they assert purported facts without regard to evidentiality. They are particularly used when referring to qualities thought of as being innate, not liable to change and not matters of subjective judgement, thus:

nga. gzug.po. ring.po. yin. “(Personally,) I am tall.” (Self-centred.)
_ḡa _sugbu _riḡbu _jɪ:
 I tall-nom. be

kha.ba.ni. dkar.po. red. “Snow is white.” (Other-centred.)
ḡḡəwəni ḡka:bu _re:
 snow-top. white-nom. be

yod., *'dug.* and *yog.red.* are again evidential, in that they imply a greater or lesser degree of evidence for the statement being made. They are particularly used in connection with qualities which are thought of as unpredictable, liable to variation, or

matters of subjective judgement or taste. Within this group, the choice between *yod.* and *'dug.* is again one of viewpoint. Examples:

ja. 'di. zhim.po. yod. “(In general) I find this tea tasty.”
 _tɕa _di _ɕimbu _jɔ: (Self-centred; witnessed.)
 tea this tasty-nom. exist

ja. 'di. zhim.po. 'dug. “What tasty tea this is!” (Other-centred;
 _tɕa _di _ɕimbu _du: witnessed; recent discovery.)
 tea this tasty-nom. exist

ja. 'di. zhim.po. yog.red. “This tea is said to be / should be tasty.”
 _tɕa _di _ɕimbu _jɔ:re: (Other-centred; not necessarily witnessed.)
 tea this tasty-nom. exist

(Note that *yog.red.* may again have overtones of judgemental modality - “should be” - a phenomenon discussed more fully below.)

Substituting *red.* in this sentence one could have:

ja. 'di. zhim.po. red. “(It is a fact that) this is an inherently
 _tɕa _di _ɕimbu _re: tasty type of tea.” (Other-centred; assertion.)
 tea this tasty-nom. be

Somewhat unusual but possible would be the same sentence with *yin.* :

ja. 'di. zhim.po. yin. “This tea (personally selected by me) is tasty.”
 _tɕa _di _ɕimbu _jɪ: (Self-centred; assertion.)
 tea this tasty-nom. be

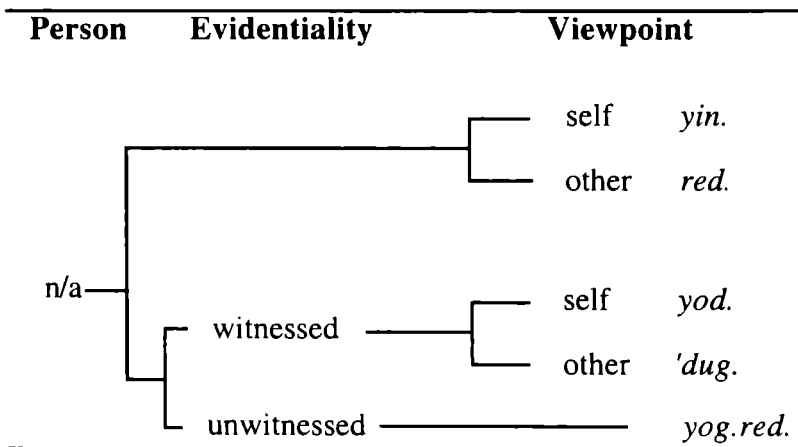


Figure 9.3: Adjectival copular clauses

The five verbs *yin.*, *red.*, *yod.*, *'dug.* and *yog.red.* as found in adjectival copular clauses may be diagrammed into a template or paradigm manifesting the distinctions of factual (*yin.*, *red.*) vs. evidential (*yod.*, *'dug.*, *yog.red.*); self-centred (*yin.*, *yod.*) vs.

other-centred (*red.*, 'dug.); and witnessed (*yod.*, 'dug.) vs. unwitnessed (*yog.red.*) as in Figure 9.3.

This basic pattern of systems, with the addition of the system of person, is applicable when the auxiliaries are used to help form the past, present and future tenses and the perfect aspect of lexical verbs.

The five verbs of being themselves may refer equally well to past, present or future time. Some of the past and future tense-forming particles may be added to them, but in the case of these five verbs the resulting forms refer to something other than time: namely, judgemental modality.³ These forms will be discussed under the headings of the appropriate tenses below.

In some cases, past or future tense equivalents of the verbs of being are available if felt necessary by using a different verb from one of the five: either *yong.*, *byung.* or *bsdad.* Of these, *yong.* and *byung.* when so used have many of the distinguishing characteristics of a verb of being, including homographs used as auxiliaries. *bsdad.*, however, behaves grammatically as a lexical verb rather than a verb of being.

9.2.4 Marginal verbs of being

The marginal verbs of being are *yong.*, *byung.*, *song.* and 'dra.. All have auxiliary homographs. While *yong.* and 'dra. have some claim as verbs of being, all four are also lexical verbs, unlike the five principal verbs of being. In their non-auxiliary manifestations none of their stems participates in the systems of viewpoint and evidential modality, again unlike the five principal verbs of being.

The verb yong. as future-stem verb of being

yong. -jɕ:/-juŋ is a common lexical verb meaning "come".

There is also a verb of being *yong.*. It can be used in an existential or adjectival copular clause as if it were the future stem⁴ of *yod./'dug./yog.red.*, sometimes referring to future time, but more often, like the future tense with lexical verbs (see below; and like the future tense in English), referring to habitual action or suppositional mode:

<i>'di.</i>	<i>'dra.</i>	<i>mang.po.</i>	<i>yong.</i>	"There will be/will have been plenty like that."
_dindre:	_magbu	_jɕ:		(Existential clause.)
such	many- <i>nom.</i>	will exist		

<i>la.dwags.la.</i>	<i>rtsam.pa.</i>	<i>yag.po.</i>	<i>yong.</i>	"The barley-meal is good in
_ladagle	tsamba	_jagbu	_jɕ:	Ladakh (in general)."
Ladakh- <i>loc.</i>	barley-meal	good- <i>nom.</i>	will exist	(Adjectival copular clause.)

<i>yong.nga.</i>	"Good idea!", "That'll be good!"
_jɕga	
will exist- <i>emph.</i>	

yong. has an auxiliary homograph used in the future tense (see 9.3.4.3).

The lexical verb *yong.* in its future tense form *yong.gi.red.* is sometimes used in adjectival copular and existential clauses as a future semantic equivalent of *yod./dug./yog.red.*, referring to future time rather than habitual action or suppositional mode:

yag.po. *yong.gi.red.* “That will be good!”
 _**jagbu** _**junggyre:**
 good-*nom.* will exist-link.-*aux.*

nga.la. zhing.kha. yong.gi.red. “I shall have some farmland.”
 _**ḡalə** _**ḡigḡə** _**junggyre:**
 I-*loc.* farmland will exist-link.-*aux.*

There is also a lexical verb *yong.* found in the future tense without a subject, meaning “will be alright”, or “will be good”.

'di. 'dras.se. byās.na. yong.gi.red. “If you do it so, it’ll be alright.”
 _**dindres** _**tḡe:nə** _**junggyre:**
 such-*adv.* did-*sub.* be ok-link.-*aux.*

lags. yong.nga. “Yes, that’ll be fine.”
 _**la:** _**jḡḡa:**
 yes be ok-*emph.*

The verb byung.

byung. as a lexical verb means “happened”, “was obtained” (note the reference to past time).

byung. is found without tense/aspect particles as a main clause verb in such sentences as

nga.la. yi.ge. cig. byung. “I received a letter.”
 _**ḡalə** _**jigḡi** **tḡi:** _**tḡḡ:**
 I-*loc.* letter *num.* was obtained

(*ngar.*) *skyid.po. zhe.drag. byung.* “That was very pleasant (for me).”
 (_**ḡa:**) ḡ**kjibu** _**ḡedra:** _**tḡḡ:**
 (I-*loc.*) pleasant-*nom.* very existed

This lack of tense/aspect particles however is limited mainly to clauses with first-person adjuncts (compare the lack of tense/aspect particles on serial verbs *myong.* and *tshar.* with first-person subjects: 10.3). It always seems to be possible to add particles even with first-person adjuncts (-*song.* in the above examples). Although it is tempting to regard *byung.* as a verb of being equivalent to a past stem of *yod.*, it is probably better classified as a lexical verb.

The verb song.

-*song*. is common as an auxiliary. Its lexical verb homograph *song*. “went” however, is not used as a semantic equivalent of a verb of being. Moreover, this lexical verb, although familiar to most speakers from Classical and/or Modern Literary Tibetan and poetic register, is of doubtful status for many speakers of the Lhasa dialect.

? <i>kho.</i>	<i>song.(ba.red.)</i>	? “He went.”
? ཀ་མོ་	སྲོག་(པའེ་)	
he	went(- <i>link.</i> - <i>aux.</i>)	

The verb 'dra.

The lexical verb *'dra.* means “resemble”:

<i>kho.tsho.</i>	<i>'dra.gi.mi.'dug.</i>	“They are not alike.”
ཀ་མོ་འཇོ་	དྲམ་གཟི་མི་དུག་	
3sg.- <i>num.</i>	resemble- <i>link.</i> - <i>neg.</i> - <i>aux.</i>	

A verb *'dra.* is sometimes used without tense/aspect particles in adjectival copular clauses and occasionally in nominal copular clauses with the meaning “seem to be”.

<i>'di.</i>	<i>yag.po.</i>	<i>'dra.</i>	“This seems good.”
དེ་	ཡག་པོ་	དྲམ་	
this	good- <i>nom.</i>	seem	

The lack of particles suggests *'dra.* is behaving either like a verb of being or as a lexical verb in the “reduced” pattern. In favour of regarding it as a verb of being is its presence in such constructions expressing judgemental modality (see 9.2.8) as:

<i>yin.pa.'dra.</i>	“It appears to be so.”
ཡིན་པའེ་དྲམ་	
be- <i>link.</i> - <i>aux.</i>	

and (with lexical verb *thad.*):

<i>khong. thad.mkhan.(yin.pa.)'dra</i>	“It appears he’s going to go.”
ཀ་མོ་འཇོ་འཇེ་ཤིང་ཡིན་པའེ་དྲམ་	
3sg	go- <i>link.</i> (- <i>aux.</i> - <i>link.</i>)- <i>aux.</i>

However, *'dra.* in this position seems to be pronounced with a greater degree of prominence or stress than other auxiliaries. Furthermore in interrogative and wh-interrogative clauses (e.g. *yin.pa.'dra.'dug.(pa.)*), *'dra.* is itself followed by an auxiliary with no linking particle. Thus while showing some of the typical features of the verbs of being/auxiliaries, it has some untypical features also.

9.2.5 Verbs of being: polarity

The polarity system operating at the polariser position immediately before the verb and within the same word comprises positive (zero particle), negative and dubitative (verb particles). With *yin.*, *red.*, *yod.* and *'dug.* the particle is in the regular position immediately before the verb, though in the negative forms of *yin.* and *yod.* particle and verb are exceptionally fused into a single syllable, both graphically and phonetically. With *yog.red.* the polariser occurs between the two syllables. In dubitative polarity, the systems of viewpoint and evidential modality do not apply; only *yin.*, *yod.* and *yong.* are available.

Table 9.1

verb		negative		dubitative	
<i>yin.</i>	_jɿ:	<i>man.</i>	_mɛ:	" <i>e.yin.</i>	_ʔajɿ:
<i>red.</i>	_re:	<i>ma.red.</i>	_mare:	" <i>e.yin.</i>	_ʔajɿ:
<i>yod.</i>	_jø:	<i>med.</i>	_mɛ:	" <i>e.yod.</i>	_ʔajø:
<i>'dug.</i>	_du:	<i>mi.'dug.</i>	_mɪndu:	" <i>e.yod.</i>	_ʔajø:
<i>yog.red.</i>	_jɔ:re:	<i>yog.ma.red.</i>	_jɔ:mare:	" <i>e.yod.</i>	_ʔajø:
<i>yong.</i>	_jɔ:	<i>mi.yong.</i>	_mɛjɔ:	" <i>e.yong.</i>	_ʔajɔ:
<i>byung.</i>	_tɕɯ:	<i>ma.byung.</i>	_mɔdɕɯ:	" <i>e.yod.</i>	_ʔajø:

Dubitative polarity when used with third-person subjects means "I doubt whether", "I don't suppose" or "I wonder whether". With second person subjects it often simply expresses a polite question; "are you?", or "have you?".

There is also a "certain" polar particle *los.* used before *yin.* and *yod.*, referring to future time.

Examples of negative, dubitative and certain polarity:

nga. bod.pa. man.

"I'm not Tibetan."

_ŋa _pø:bə _mɛ:

I Tibetan neg.-be

mang.po. yog.ma.red.

"There aren't many."

_magbu _jɔ:mare:

many exist [neg.]

gsar.'gyur. "e.yod.

"I doubt whether there's any news." or

~saggju: _ʔajø:

"I don't suppose there's any news?" or

news dub.-exist

"I wonder whether there's any news?"

khyed.rang. bod.pa. "e.yin.

"Are you Tibetan?"

~kjerɔ: _pø:bə _ʔajɿ:

you Tibetan dub.-be

'di.'dras.se. byas.na. mang.po. los.yod. "If you do so, there will be plenty."
 _dindres _tɕɛ:nə _mangbu _lɔ: _jɔ:
 thus-adv. did-sub. many-nom. cert. exist

deb. mang po. mi.yong.ngas. "I wonder if there are many books."
 _tep _mangbu _mɛjɔŋɛ: (Note positive polarity in English.)
 book many-nom. neg.-be-interr.

9.2.6 Verbs of being: mood

At the modal position in the verb phrase after a verb of being there is a system of five terms: indicative (zero particle), interrogative (-bɛ:/-be: / -gɛ:/-ge: / -ŋɛ:/-ŋe:), wh-interrogative (-ba / -ɔ: / -ɛ:), corroborative (-ba / -ga / -ŋa) and emphatic (-da / -ga / -ŋa) (Table 9.2).

The corroborative particle generally has a rising-falling pitch; the emphatic particle a falling pitch.

There are high honorific forms *yin.pa.no.* _jimbənɔ and *yod.pa.no.* _jɔ:bənɔ which serve as both interrogative and wh-interrogative forms.

There are also "alternative" forms *yin.nam.* _jina:, *yod.dam.* _jɔ:da: and '*dug.gam.* _duga: with rising pitch on the particle syllable, which for some speakers is nasalised. These forms can also be used with or without an interrogative noun to express a more tentative inquiry than the interrogative or wh-interrogative forms.

Table 9.2

indicative	interrogative	wh-interrog.	corroborative	emphatic
<i>yin.</i>	<i>yin.pas.</i>	<i>yin.(pa.)</i>	<i>yin.pa.</i>	<i>yin.da.</i>
_jɪ:	_jimbe:	_jɪ:/_jimba	_jimba:	_jinda
<i>red.</i>	<i>red.pas.</i>	<i>red.pa.</i>	<i>red.pa.</i>	<i>red.da.</i>
_re:	_ribe:	_re:	_riba:	_reda
<i>yod.</i>	<i>yod.pas.</i>	<i>yod.pa.</i>	<i>yod.pa.</i>	<i>yod.da.</i>
_jɔ:	_jɔ:be:	_jɔ:	_jɔ:ba:	_jɔ:da
' <i>dug.</i>	' <i>dug.gas.</i>	' <i>dug.pa.</i>	' <i>dug.ga.</i>	' <i>dug.ga.</i>
_du:	_dugɛ:	_dɔ:	_duga:	_duga
<i>yog.red.</i>	<i>yog.red.pas.</i>	<i>yog.red.pa.</i>	<i>yog.red.pa.</i>	<i>yog.red.da.</i>
_jɔ:re:	_jɔ:ribe:	_jɔ:re:	_jɔ:riba:	_jɔ:rida
<i>byung.</i>	<i>byung.bas.</i>	<i>byung.ba.</i>	<i>byung.nga.</i>	<i>byung.nga.</i>
_tɕɔ:	_tɕuŋɛ:	_tɕɔ:/_tɕuŋa	_tɕuŋa:	_tɕuŋa
<i>yong.</i>	<i>yong.ngas.</i>	<i>yong.ba.</i>	<i>yong.nga.</i>	<i>yong.nga.</i>
_jɔ:	_jɔŋɛ:	_jɔŋa	_jɔŋa:	_jɔŋa
<i>song</i>	<i>song.ngas.</i>	<i>song.ba.</i>	<i>song.nga.</i>	<i>song.nga.</i>
_sɔ:/-sɔ	_sɔŋɛ:/-sɔŋɛ:	_sɔ:/-sɔŋa	_sɔŋa:/-sɔŋa:	_sɔŋa/-sɔŋa

Interrogative

khong.la. phebs.'gro. yog.red.pas. "Does she have a car?"
 ཀློང་ལཱ་ རྩེ་འཇུག་ རྩེ་འཇུག་
 3sg.-loc. car exist-interr.

Wh-interrogative (with su. "who")

khong.la. rogs.pa. su. yog.red.pa. "Who was with him?"
 ཀློང་ལཱ་ རྩེ་འཇུག་ རྩེ་འཇུག་
 3sg.-loc. companion who exist-wh.interr.

Corroborative

khong.la. mang.po. yog.red.pa. "She has a lot, hasn't she?" or
 ཀློང་ལཱ་ རྩེ་འཇུག་ རྩེ་འཇུག་
 3sg.-loc. many-nom. exist-corrob.
 "She has a lot, as we know."

Emphatic

khong.la. mang.po. yog.red.da. "She certainly has a lot."
 ཀློང་ལཱ་ རྩེ་འཇུག་ རྩེ་འཇུག་
 3sg.-loc. many-nom. exist-emph.

In interrogative and wh-interrogative clauses with first or second person subjects, the questioner generally uses the verb which is expected in the answer. This is sometimes expressed by Tibetans as a "change of verbs" or "swapover" within the viewpoint system.⁵ Thus a question with a first-person subject will typically use an other-centred verb; a question with a second-person typically a self-centred verb. In questions with a third-person subject both question and expected answer will typically have an other-centred verb, so there is no reversal. The same applies to interrogatives with lexical verbs.

khyed.rang. bod.pa. yin.pas. "Are you a Tibetan?"
 ཀླེན་འཇུག་ རྩེ་འཇུག་ རྩེ་འཇུག་
 you Tibetan be-interr.
 (Expecting a reply with *yin*..)

khyed.rang. su. yin.pa. "Who are you?"
 ཀླེན་འཇུག་ རྩེ་འཇུག་ རྩེ་འཇུག་
 you who be-wh.interr.
 (Expecting a reply with *yin*..)

nga. gzhon.gzhon. red.pas. "Am I young?"
 རྩེ་འཇུག་ རྩེ་འཇུག་ རྩེ་འཇུག་
 I young be-interr.
 (Expecting a reply with *red*..)

Alternative

ga.re. yin.nam. “Why?”
 _kari _jina:
 what be-alt.

khong. su. yin.nam. ngas. ha. go.ma.byung. “I don’t know who she might be.”
 ˈkʰɔː ˈsu _jinaː _nɛː ˈha _kɔmɑdʒɔ
 she who be-alt. I-smp. know-neg.-aux.

9.2.7 *Verbs of being: polarity with mood*

Negative polarity combines with interrogative, corroborative and emphatic mood in a straightforward way:

khyed.rang.la. phyag.deb. med.pas. “Haven’t you got the book?”
 ˈkʰjɛrɑŋlɑ ˈtɕʰɑdɪp _mɛːbɛː
 you-loc. book neg.-exist-interr.

mang.po. yog.ma.red.pas. “Aren’t there many?”
 _mɑŋbu _jɔːmarɪbɛː
 many-nom. exist[neg.]-interr.

chen.po. ma.red.pas. “Isn’t it big?”
 ˈtɕʰɛmbu _marɪbɛː
 big-nom. neg.-be-interr.

chen.po. ma.red.pa. “It’s not big, is it?”
 ˈtɕʰɛmbu _marɪba
 big-nom. neg.-be-corrob.

yag.po. mi.'dug.ga. “It’s no good!”
 _jɑŋbu _mɪnduɡɑ
 good-nom. neg.-be-emph.

9.2.8 *Verbs of being: judgemental modality*

The system of judgemental modality operates by the selection of the self-centred verb *yin.* or *yod.* (thus neutralising distinctions of evidential modality) and a variety of other means. These include modal particle *-gro.* or *-gro'o.*,⁶ linking particle+auxiliary; and nominalising particle+verb of being.

This type of modality conveys the speaker’s opinion of the likelihood of the event referred to by the verb. The judgemental forms concerned may be graded along a scale of decreasing probability from apparent actuality at one end, through

doubtfulness and, via forms with negative polarity, to apparent non-actuality at the other.

Positive polarity

— “Apparent” modality

yin.pa.'dra./yod.pa.'dra. “seemingly” (with auxiliary *-dra.*)
_jimbədra/_jø:bədra (*yod.pa.'dra.* has an alternant *yod.pa.yin.pa.'dra..*)

yin.bzo.'dug./yod.bzo.'dug. “seemingly” (with nominalising particle *-bzo.*
_jinso _du:/_jø:so _du: and verb of being *'dug.*)

— “Probable” modality

yin.gyi.red./yod.kyi.red. “probably” (future tense form)
_jiggire:/_jy:gyre: (*yod.gi.red.* has an extended alternant *yod.pa.yin.gyi.red..*)

— “Possible” modality

yin.gro./yod.gro. “it could well be that”/“maybe”
_jindro/_jø:dro (with modal particle *-gro.*)

Negative polarity

— “Speculative” modality

man.gro'o./med.gro'o. “I wonder if it might (not) be the case that”
_mendro:/_medro: (With high-falling intonation on final syllable.)

— “Possible” modality

man.gro./med.gro. “it could well not be that”/“maybe not”
mendro/medro

— “Probable” modality

yin.gyi.ma.red./yod.kyi.ma.red. “probably not” (future tense)
jiggimare:/jy:gimare: (*yod.kyi.ma.red.* has an extended alternant *med.pa.yin.gyi.red..*)

— “Apparent” modality

man.pa.'dra./med.pa.'dra. “seemingly not”
_membədra/me:bədra

Examples:

khong.rnams.tsho. bod.pa. yin.pa.'dra. "They seem to be Tibetans."
 ʔkʰɔ̃nandzo _ pø:bə _jimbədra
 3sg.-num. Tibetan be-link.-aux..

'dir. *khang.pa. yod.bzo. mi.'dug.* "There don't seem to be any houses here."
 _de: ʔkʰaŋbə _jø:so _mindu:
 this-loc. house exist-nom. neg.-exist

mang.po. yod.kyi.red. "There are probably plenty."
 _maŋbu _jy:gyre:
 many-nom. exist-link.-aux.

khong. yin.gro. "Maybe it's her."
 ʔkʰɔ̃ŋ _jindro
 she be-aux.

khong.la. dngul. med.gro'o. "I wonder if he might (not) have some money?" (i.e. I rather think he might.)
 ʔkʰɔ̃ŋlə ʔgy: _medro:
 3sg.-loc. money neg.-exist-aux.

Note that with *man.gro./med.gro'o.*, formally negative polarity combined with a long final vowel with distinctive high-falling intonation corresponds to weakly positive semantics. This may be compared with the English gloss in which polarity is virtually neutralised, to the point where the "not" can be put in or left out with little or no difference in meaning. Compare the following which cannot be semantically positive:

khong.la. dngul med.gro. "He may not have any money."
 ʔkʰɔ̃ŋlə ʔgy: _medro
 3sg.-loc. money neg.-exist-aux.

"em.ci.'i. *mo.tra. yin.gyi.ma.red.* "It's probably not the doctor's car."
 ʔʌmdzi: _motrə _jɪŋgimare:
 doctor-gen. car be-link.-neg.-aux.

deb. med.pa.'dra. "The book doesn't seem to be here."
 _təp _mɛ:bədra
 book neg.-exist-aux.

The emphatic particle *-da.* can also be used in combination with a reduplicated *yin.* or *yod.* to mark "certain" modality:

chen.po. yin.da. yin. “It’s certainly big.”
 ṽṽ^hembu ṽṽinda ṽṽjɿ:
 big-nom. be-emph. be

lto.byad. mang.po. yod.da. yod. “We certainly have plenty of food.”
 ṽṽtɔbdzɛ: ṽṽmaŋbu ṽṽjɔda ṽṽjɔ:
 food much-nom. exist-emph. exist

khyed.rang.la. nus.shugs. yod.da. yog.red. “You certainly have the strength.”
 ṽṽkjeranglɔ ṽṽny:ɕu: ṽṽjɔda ṽṽjɔre:
 you-loc. strength exist-emph. exist

Note that in the last example the verb *yod.* is “reduplicated” as the other-centred unwitnessed *yog.red.*. This supports the analysis of *yog.red.* as verb (*yod.*)+linking particle+auxiliary.

Apparent and probable modality combine with both indicative and interrogative moods.

9.3 Lexical Verbs

9.3.1 Person, evidential modality and viewpoint

The tenses and aspects of lexical verbs generally take the form of expanded verb phrases of which the majority pattern is:

**lexical verb stem (+linking particle) (+polar particle)+auxiliary
 (+modal particle)**

The lexical verb stem is followed by the homograph of one of the five major verbs of being *yin.*, *red.*, *yod.*, *'dug.*, *yog.red.* or of one of the marginal verbs of being *yong.*, *byung. song.*, *'dra.* at the auxiliary position, with or without a linking particle between the two. Polarity is most commonly manifested by a polarising particle before the auxiliary; modality by a modal particle after the auxiliary.

As in the case of verbs of being, the paradigms of lexical verbs are presented in many grammar texts, by both Tibetans and others, as displaying regular concord or agreement between subject and verb phrase. In indicative clauses, subjects are divided into a) first person, and b) second/third person, each category agreeing with a different particle or set of particles in the verb phrase. However, some of the examples given elsewhere in the same texts usually contradict these rules, showing for example first person subject with second/third person particles or vice versa, usually unexplained or dealt with in an ad hoc manner.

While there is a rudimentary system of personal concord in Tibetan, in that certain combinations of subject and particle are impossible, the system interacts closely with those of evidential modality and viewpoint, as already outlined.

Although these three systems are clearly separate, the highly portmanteau nature of the forms they produce makes it easier to describe them together. The pattern behind their paradigms is a development of that outlined for verbs of being and may be diagrammed as in Figure 9.4.

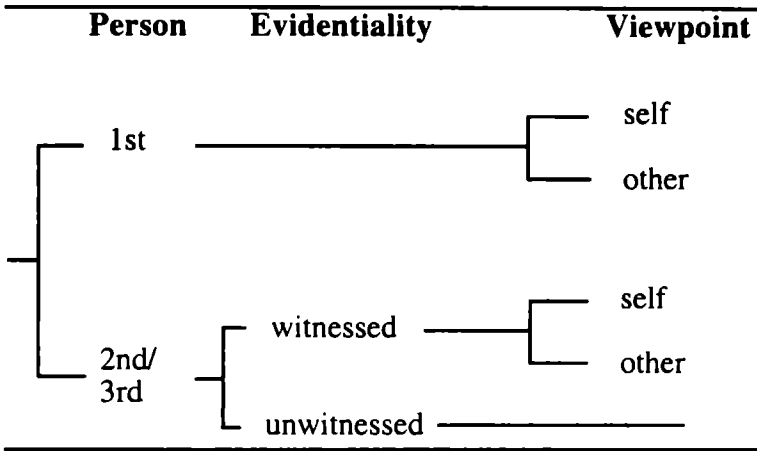


Figure 9.4: person, evidentiality and viewpoint

Person

The basic choice here is between first person on the one hand and second/third person on the other, and the formal manifestation is the choice of auxiliary and/or linking particle to agree with the subject of the clause. Although there is considerable flexibility in combining subjects and particles, some combinations are ruled out. Thus in past and future tenses (unwitnessed clauses), while the combination of first-person subject and self-centred auxiliary is possible, that of second/third-person subject and self-centred auxiliary is not:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>ngas. byed.kyi.yin.</i> | “I shall do it.” (Voluntarily.) |
| _nɛ: _tɕi:gɟl: | (1st person, self-centred.) |
| <i>I-smp. do-link.-aux.</i> | |
| <i>ngas. byed.kyi.red.</i> | “I shall do it.” (I have no option.) |
| _nɛ: _tɕi:gɪre: | (1st person, other-centred.) |
| <i>I-smp. do-link.-aux.</i> | |
| <i>khos. byed.kyi.red.</i> | “He will do it.” |
| ˀkʰɔ: _tɕi:gɪre: | (3rd person, other-centred.) |
| <i>3sg-smp. do-link.-aux.</i> | |
| <i>*khos.byed.kyi.yin.</i> | (*3rd person, self-centred.) |

Furthermore, first-person clauses do not select for evidential modality (except in future tense). The category of person, therefore, as already stated, is not redundant.⁷

Evidential modality

Past-tense, present-tense, future-tense and perfect-aspect clauses with a second- or third-person subject select within the system of evidential modality between *witnessed* (-*yod.*, -*'dug.*, -*byung.*, -*song.*) and *unwitnessed* (-*yog.red.*, -*red.*) auxiliaries. (Auxiliary -*red.* counts as unwitnessed, whereas the verb of being *red.* is indifferent to witness.) As with verbs of being, the basic criterion for selecting a witnessed form is that in the non-future tenses, the speaker has a secure knowledge of the actuality (or non-actuality) of the event through first-hand acquaintance, typically as an eyewitness.

In the future tense, where by definition the actuality of an event cannot be witnessed, the secure knowledge through first-hand acquaintance is of some specific preparation or arrangement which has been made for the event, or of other circumstances relating to the event, rather than of the event itself.

Clauses with a first-person subject do not make this selection for evidential modality except, oddly enough, in the future tense.

Viewpoint

All first-person clauses and second-/third-person witnessed clauses containing auxiliaries which are homographs of the verbs of being select for *self-centred* (-*yin.*, -*yod.*, -*byung.*) or *other-centred* (-*red.*, -*'dug.*, -*song.*) auxiliaries in their verb phrases. (Second-/third-person unwitnessed clauses do not take part in the viewpoint system.)

In present-tense and perfect-aspect intentional clauses, which use the -*yod.*, -*'dug.*, -*yog.red.* auxiliaries, viewpoint has much the same semantic correlates as with verbs of being: i.e. close association or otherwise with the speaker:

— Present tense, 1st-person subject, self-centred auxiliary.

ngas. yi.ge. cig. bris.kyi.yod. "I am writing a letter."
 ̲ne: ̲jigɪ tɕi: ̲tri:giʃø:
 I-smp. letter num. write-link.-aux.

— Present tense, 1st-person subject, other-centred auxiliary.

ngas. yi.ge. cig. bris.kyi.'dug. "I am writing a letter!"
 ̲ne: ̲jigɪ tɕi: ̲tri:giɖu:
 I-smp. letter num. write-link.-aux.
 (Said on seeing oneself in a film.)

— Present tense, 3rd-person subject, other-centred auxiliary.

khong.gis. gzhas. bslab. gnang.gi.'dug. "She is teaching songs."
 ̲kʰɔŋgi: ̲ɕe: ̲lɥp ̲nɔŋgəɖu:
 3sg.-smp. song teach do-link.-aux.

— Present tense, 3rd-person subject, self-centred auxiliary.

khong.gis. nga.la. gzhas. bslab. gnang.gi.yod. “She is teaching me songs.”
 ˉkʰɔŋgi: ˉŋaːlə ˉtɕɛ: ˉlɥp ˉnʌŋŋəjɕ:
 she-smp. I-loc. song teach do-link.-aux.

The same applies to second and third person subjects in the future tense:

— Future tense, 3rd-person subject, other-centred auxiliary.

khos. las.ka. 'di. byas.pa.'dug. “He’s sure to do the work.”
 ˉkʰɔ: ˉlɛ:ŋə ˉdɪ ˉtɕɛ:bədu: (I have reason to believe he will)
 3sg.-smp. work this did-link.-aux.

— Future tense, 3rd-person subject, self-centred auxiliary.

khos. las.ka. 'di. byas.pa.yod. “He’s sure to do the work.
 ˉkʰɔ: ˉlɛ:ŋə ˉdɪ ˉtɕɛ:bəjɕ: (I’ve personally arranged it with him).”
 3sg.-smp. work this did-link.-aux.

In past-tense and future-tense “intentional” clauses with first-person subjects, use of the other-centred auxiliary *-song*. or *-red*. instead of the more usual self-centred *-yin*. indicates that the deed was or will be in fact involuntary:

— Past tense, 1st-person subject, self-centred auxiliary.

ngas. yi.ge. klog.ba yin. “I read the letter (on purpose).”
 ˉŋɛ: ˉjɪŋɪ ˉlɔ:bəjɕ:
 I-smp. letter read-link.-aux.

— Past tense, 1st-person subject, other-centred auxiliary.

ngas. yi.ge. klog.song. “I read the letter (without meaning to).”
 ˉŋɛ: ˉjɪŋɪ ˉlɔ:sɔ
 I-smp. letter read-aux.

— Future tense, 1st-person subject, self-centred auxiliary.

sang.nyin. ngas. las.ka. 'di. byed.kyi.yin. “I shall do this work tomorrow
 ˉsʌŋɪ: ˉŋɛ: ˉlɛ:ŋə ˉdɪ ˉtɕi:ŋɪjɕ:
 tomorrow I-smp. work this do-link.-aux.
 (of my own free will).”

— Future tense, 1st-person subject, other-centred auxiliary.

sang.nyin. nga. las.ka. 'di. byed.kyi.red. “I shall be doing this work tomorrow
 ṽsʌŋi: ṽga ṽle:ge ṽdi ṽtʃi:gi:re: (whether I like it or not).”
 tomorrow I work this do-link.-aux.

(Note that the subject-marking particle is usually omitted in this type of clause: see 12.2.)

In present-tense and past-tense unintentional clauses with first-person subjects, choice of self-centred auxiliary *-yod.* or *-byung.* rather than other-centred *-dug.* or *-song.* respectively indicates a long-standing state rather than a recent or sudden occurrence:

— Unintentional clause, 1st-person subject, self-centred auxiliary.

nga. na.gi.yod. “I’m chronically sick.”
 ṽga ṽnʌgejʃø:
 I be ill-link.-aux.

— Unintentional clause, 1st-person subject, other-centred auxiliary.

nga. na.gi.'dug. “I’m sick at the moment.”
 ṽga ṽnʌgeðu:
 I be ill-link.-aux.

— Unintentional clause, 1st-person subject, self-centred auxiliary.

ngas. 'di. ha. go.byung. “I knew that (already).”
 ṽŋe: ṽdi ṽha ṽkədzø
 I-smp. that know-aux.

— Unintentional clause, 1st-person subject, other-centred auxiliary.

ngas. 'di. ha. go.song. “I’ve understood that (just now).”
 ṽŋe: ṽdi ṽha ṽkəsø
 I-smp. that know-aux.

9.3.2 Intention

The intention system applies to all three tenses and to the perfect aspect.

It distinguishes two types of clause: a) intentional and b) unintentional (see 12.2.) There are two similarly named classes of verb, each of which is found only in the appropriate type of clause. The system is manifested by the type of verb (intentional

or unintentional) and the possibilities and significance of concord between subject and auxiliary.

Intentional clauses

Intentional verbs refer to acts which, if their actors are animate, are thought to be typically voluntary and performed by deliberate intent. Intentional verbs include *lta*. “look”, “watch”, *nyan*. “listen”, *'gro*. “go”, *klog*. “read”.

In intentional clauses, a first-person subject is most commonly accompanied by a self-centred form within the system of viewpoint in the predicator: i.e. by a self-centred auxiliary *-yin*. or *-yod*. in the verb phrase. An other-centred auxiliary *-red*. or *-'dug*. or *-song*. with a first-person subject is, however, also possible (see above under “viewpoint”).

In most types of intentional clause, second- and third-person subjects are accompanied by other-centred auxiliary *-red*., *-dug*., *-yog.red*. or *-song*., or by self-centred auxiliary *-byung*..

In a present-tense clause, a second- or third-person subject accompanied by the self-centred witnessed auxiliary *-yod*. manifests a type of viewpoint “discord” and intimately associates the deed with the speaker.

Unintentional clauses

Unintentional verbs refer to acts thought to be typically involuntary: not under the control of their actors, whether animate or inanimate. Unintentional verbs include *mthong*. “see”, *go*. “hear”, *na*. “be ill”, *shi*. “die” (with animate subject-referents); *brjed*. “be forgotten”, *reg*. “be obtained” (animate or inanimate subject-referent).

In most types of unintentional clause, first- second- and third-person subjects are all accompanied by an other-centred auxiliary in the predicator: i.e. *-red*., *-'dug*., *-yog.red*. or *-song*..

In a present-tense or past-tense unintentional clause, some lexical verbs with first-person subjects may be accompanied by the self-centred auxiliary *-yod*. or *-byung*. respectively, to refer to a relatively long-standing or chronic state (see above under “viewpoint”).

Intentional/unintentional verbs

There are a few verbs which refer to deeds that are normally involuntary but can be done deliberately, such as *glo.rgyab*. “cough”.

<i>glo. rgyab.byung.</i>	“I coughed (involuntarily).”
ṽlɔ̄ _gɣvbdzɔ̄	
cough- <i>aux</i> .	

<i>glo. rgyab.pa.yin.</i>	“I coughed (deliberately).”
ṽlɔ̄ _gɣvbəjɪ:	
cough- <i>link</i> .- <i>aux</i> .	

These could either be classified as intentional verbs which in fact usually accompany other-centred auxiliaries as allowed for in the paradigm, or as verbs which can occur in both intentional and unintentional clauses.

9.3.3 *Tense/aspect*

The working of the tense/aspect system is rather complicated, its interpretation by linguists rather varied. Most works written before the present decade or so generally speak in terms of tense and ignore aspect, while a few more recent ones (e.g. Chang & Chang 1983; Agha 1993b) have swung towards the opposite extreme which would regard the distinctions in question as essentially aspectual.⁸ It is of course notoriously difficult to disentangle tense and aspect, or even to define them to complete satisfaction for many languages. In Tibetan, as in other languages, mood and modality further complicate the picture. Before offering my own analysis I shall set out some of the general principles I am following and define some of my terms.

Terminology

I use *tense*, *aspect* and *modality* to denote formal types of verb phrase; *time*, *action* and *mode* to denote the semantic categories they refer to (or may refer to). Thus tenses are forms of verb phrases referring to categories of time, aspects forms of verb phrases referring to categories of action, and modalities forms referring to categories of mode.

Definition of tense and aspect

I follow a neo-Reichenbachian definition of tense and aspect which recognises three points in time: a speech time ST, an event time ET and a reference time RT (see Binnick 1991:115).

Tense arises from the relation of speech time ST to reference time RT. For past tenses RT precedes ST, for present tenses RT coincides with ST, and for future tenses ST precedes RT. Tibetan has one of each of these three types of tense, which I call past, present and future.

Aspect arises from the relation of event time ET and reference time RT. For an action denoted by perfective aspect, ET is contained within RT. For imperfective aspect (which includes habitual and progressive aspect), RT is contained within ET. For perfect aspect, ET precedes RT. For prospective aspect, RT precedes ET.

Tibetan distinguishes neutral aspect, in which the relation of ET and RT is indifferent; progressive and habitual aspects (subtypes of imperfective); simple perfect and recent aspect (subtypes of perfect); gerundive, preparative and imminent aspect (subtypes of prospective). It does not distinguish perfective aspect as defined above.

These aspects are not all manifested in the same way: some are marked by the tense forms, some by separate aspectual forms, others by both. In addition, there is a "completive" perfect aspect and an "experiential" perfect aspect, marked by what I prefer to call serial verbs rather than by stem and/or particle variation (10.3).

Time, tense and aspect

I recognise three tenses in Tibetan: past, present and future. One does not have to listen to spoken Tibetan for very long to hear instances of these tenses referring to events at the “wrong” time - e.g. the present tense to events in past time, etc. However, this phenomenon is hardly limited to Tibetan. In English, for example, it is easy to think of examples of each of the tenses past, present and future being used to refer to events in past or present or future time.

It is helpful however to think of each tense as having a “prototypical”, “unmarked” or “default” relationship between reference time RT and speech time ST: that from which it takes its name. In a clause containing no adjunct of time, and with no other textual or pragmatic temporal cues, a given tense will normally be interpreted by a native listener as referring to its prototypical time. Most Tibetan informants who know English unhesitatingly identify the tenses they call “past” (*'das.pa.*), “present” (*da.lta.ba.*) and “future” (*ma.'ongs.pa.*) with the English tenses of the same names (simple past or preterite, simple present, and future) on the basis of isolated sentences.

When used outside its prototypical time frame, a tense may have a more limited range of meaning, perhaps referring to a restricted type of action or mode, and thus becoming a formal manifestation of aspect or modality.

Thus for example the English future auxiliary “will”, when used for present time, e.g. in: “He will read the newspaper right through every day,” has an implication of habitual action to which it is not limited when used for its prototypical time, the future. Referring to future time, “will” can be either habitual: “He will read the newspaper right through every day next week,” or non-habitual: “He will read the newspaper right through tomorrow.” English “will” when referring to present time therefore becomes a formal manifestation of habitual aspect as well as future tense.

So it is with Tibetan. When used to refer to its prototypical time, each tense is neutral in aspect, and can refer to actions which are complete, incomplete, in progress or repeated. When used outside its prototypical time, the tense refers (usually together with an adjunct or another clause) to a particular action or mode, and therefore is an aspectual or modal form, as in Table 9.3.

Table 9.3

Tense	Time	Aspect/modality
Past tense	Past time	Neutral aspect
Past tense	Present time	Habitual aspect
Past tense	Future time	Hypothetical modality
Present tense	Past time	Progressive aspect
Present tense	Present time	Neutral aspect
Present tense	Future time	Imminent aspect
Future tense	Past time	Perfect aspect/Conditional modality
Future tense	Present time	Habitual aspect/Conditional modality
Future tense	Future time	Neutral aspect

In addition there are separate aspectual forms for recent aspect (ET immediately precedes RT) and various types of prospective aspect (RT precedes ET).

9.3.4 Tense

Distinction between the three tenses is achieved partly by the distinction between past and present lexical verb stems where this exists; and partly by particles at the linking and auxiliary positions.

Past tense (reference time precedes speech time)

The past tense linking particle is *-pa./-ba.* (sometimes also written *-ga./-nga./-ra.*). It is pronounced **bə**, **gə**, **Nə** or **rə** depending on the final of the preceding verb stem and speed of utterance, and is referred to for short as *-pa.*. It is not found before auxiliaries *byung.* or *song.*. The patterns are:

**lexical past stem+linking particle *-pa.* (+polar particle)
+auxiliary *-yin./red.* (+modal particle)**

and

**lexical past stem (+polar particle)+auxiliary *-byung./song.*
(+modal particle)**

(The past stem is of course only selected for verbs which have separate past and present stems: see 8.3.)

— Intentional clauses

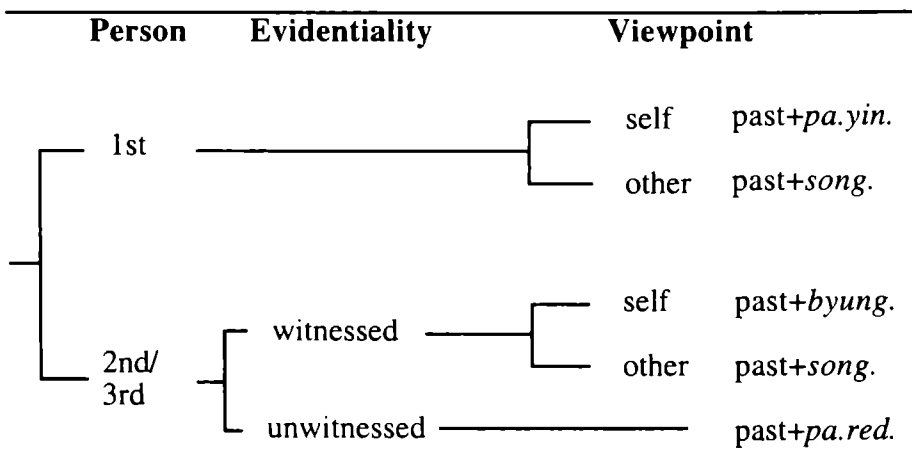


Figure 9.5: Past tense intentional clauses

The other-centred form *past+pa.red.* is said to be possible with a first-person subject and is certainly found in writing (cf. Goldstein et al. 1991, 55), but I have not heard it in spontaneous speech.

The self-centred auxiliary *-byung.* is used particularly when the speaker is the beneficiary, goal, destination or patient of the act referred to by the predicator and the subject is second- or third person. In other circumstances, the other-centred *-song.* is normal:

khong.gis. gnang.byung. "He gave it (to me)."
 ṽkʰəŋgi: ṽnaŋdzø
 3sg.-smp. give-aux.

khong.gis. gnang.song. "He gave it (to you or to someone else)."
 ṽkʰəŋgi: ṽnaŋsø
 3sg.-smp. give-aux.

kho.tshos. nyan.ma.byung. "They didn't listen (to me)."
 ṽkʰəndzø: ṽŋɛmɔdzø
 3sg.-num.-smp. listen-neg.-aux.

However, the following examples are by no means unusual:

khong.gis. nga.la. gnang.song. "He gave it to me."
 ṽkʰəŋgi: ṽŋalə ṽnaŋsø
 3sg.-smp. I-loc. give-aux.

nga.tsho'i. rtsa.la. rta.dmag. kha.shas. slebs.song.
 ṽŋandzø: ṽtsa:lə ṽtama: ṽkʰaʃe: ṽle:sø
 I-num.-gen. place-loc. cavalry several arrive-aux.
 "Several cavalrymen arrived where we were."

nga.tshor thob.song. "We got some."
 ṽŋandzə: ṽtʰəpsø
 I-num.-loc. get-aux.

The other-centred auxiliary *-song.* may be used with first-person subjects in intentional clauses instead of *-pa.yin.* to indicate that the deed was in this case accidental or involuntary

ngas. dkar.yol. bcag.pa.yin. "I broke the cup (on purpose)."
 ṽŋe: ṽka:yø: ṽtʃa:bəjl:
 I-smp. cup break-link.-aux.

ngas. yi.ge. de. klog.song. "I read the letter (without meaning to)."
 ṽŋe: ṽjiŋi ṽte ṽlɔ:sø
 I-smp. letter the read-aux.

With negative polarity, this type of clause can convey the idea that perhaps the act should have happened:

nga.tshos. sgo. rgyab.ma.song. “We didn’t close the door.”
 _**ḡandzø:** _**gɔ** _**ḡjvbməsŋ** (Perhaps we ought to have done.)
 I-num.-smp. door close-neg.-aux.

It is sometimes claimed by Tibetans that *-song.* indicates that the end part of the action has been witnessed, but not necessarily the beginning.

— Unintentional clauses

	Person	Evidentiality	Viewpoint	Generality		
1st	—	—	self	general	—	past+ <i>byung.</i>
				particular	—	past+ <i>song.</i>
			other	—	past+ <i>pa.red.</i>	
2nd/ 3rd	—	witnessed	self	—	past+ <i>song.</i>	
			other	—	past+ <i>song.</i>	
		unwitnessed	—	past+ <i>pa.red.</i>		

Figure 9.6: Past tense unintentional clauses

In unintentional clauses the first person self-centred form *-pa.yin.* is not possible. (N.B. this applies only in main clauses: in subordinate clauses the viewpoint system may be neutralised in which case *-pa.yin.* replaces *-pa.red.* in unintentional clauses: see 13.3.)

As shown in Fig. 9.6, the forms of the paradigm for the first person in unintentional clauses are the same as those for the second/third person in intentional clauses, but the semantic variables are different. Choice between *-byung./-song.* on the one hand and *-pa.red.* on the other is here a matter of viewpoint rather than evidentiality, whereas choice between *-byung.* and *-song.* is one of what I have called generality. The “general” form with *-byung.* is usually interpreted as referring to a longer and/or more remote period of time than the “particular” form with *-song.*, thus:

'di. ngas. ha. go.byung. “I knew that (already).”
 _**di** _**ḡe:** ḡ**ha:** _**kɔdʒŋ**
 that I-smp. know-aux.

'di. ngas. ha. go.song. “I have understood that (just now).”
 _**di** _**ḡe:** ḡ**ha** _**kɔsŋ**
 that I-smp. know-aux.

With some verbs, use of *-byung.* with first-person subject indicates that some effort was made to perform the act:

nga. dran.ma.byung. “I didn’t remember.” (Though I tried.)
 _**ŋa** _**trɛmɔdzɔ**
 I remember-*neg.-aux.*

nga. dran.ma.song. “It didn’t occur to me.”
 _**ŋa** _**trɛmasɔ**
 I remember-*neg.-aux.*

Many unintentional verbs are found either with *-byung.* or *-song.*, but in practice not with both.

nga. na.byung. “I was ill.”
 _**ŋa** _**nadzɔ**
 I be ill-*aux.*

??*nga.na.song.*

ngas. 'di. brjed.song. “I forgot that.”
 _**ŋe:** _**dɪ** _**dze:sɔ**
 I-*inst.* that forget-*aux.*

**ngas. 'di. brjed.byung.*

The impossibility of the last example is a clue to identifying the *ngas.* as adjunct rather than subject (see 12.3). *brjed.* means “be forgotten”, and the subject is the third-person *'di.*

— Past tense - polarity

Negative. Forms with *byung.* and *song.* follow the majority pattern, but with no linking particle:

lexical past verb stem+polar particle+auxiliary (+modal particle)

khos. yi.ge. btang.ma.song. “He didn’t send a letter.”
 _**kʰɔ:** _**jiŋi** _**taŋmasɔ**
 he-*sm.* letter send-*neg.-aux.*

Forms with *yin.* and *red.* may follow the majority pattern, but with negative polarity they more usually follow a minority pattern in which the negative polar particle precedes the lexical verb:

**negative particle+lexical verb+linking particle+auxiliary
(+modal particle)**

khong.gis. ma.gnang.pa.red. “He didn’t give it.”
 ˀkʰɔŋgi: ˀmanagbære:
 3sg.-smp. neg.-give-link.-aux.

With first person singular subjects, the full pattern (formal register) alternates with a pattern without linking particle or auxiliary (informal register):

negative particle+lexical verb

ngas. ma.sprad. “I didn’t give it.”
 ˀŋɛ: ˀmadre:
 I-smp. neg.-give

Many speakers seem to avoid this tense in the negative, using the perfect aspect instead:

ngas. sprad.med. “I didn’t give it.”
 ˀŋɛ: ˀtre:mɛ:
 I-smp. give-neg.-aux.

The perfect aspect is also used with dubitative polarity:

ngas. sprad. "e.yod. “Surely I didn’t give it?”
 ˀŋɛ: ˀtre: ˀʔajø:
 I-smp. give dub.-aux.

Sometimes the majority pattern is heard with second- or third-person subjects:

**lexical verb+linking particle+negative particle+auxiliary
(+modal particle)**

khos. sprad.pa.ma.red. “He didn’t give it.”
 ˀkʰɔ: ˀtre:bəmare:
 3sg.-smp. give-link.-neg.-aux.

Agha (1993b:118f.) points out a semantic difference between the minority and majority patterns (translations mine):

khong. las.ka. ma.byas.pa.red. “He didn’t do the work.”
 ˀkʰɔ: ˀle:gə ˀmadzɛ:bære:
 3sg. work neg.-did-link.-aux.

khong. las.ka. byas.pa.ma.red. "It's not that he did the work."
 ˈkʰɔː ˌlɛːgə ˌtɕɛːbəmərəː
 3sg. work did-link.-neg.-aux.

This rather subtle distinction needs to be tested more thoroughly than I have done to explore its full semantic and pragmatic implications.

Dubitative. Although in theory there is a form *Vb.+pa."e.yin.*, it is generally avoided in favour of the dubitative perfect aspect.

— Past tense referring to past time

When referring to past time the past tense may be translated into English variously by the aspectually indifferent simple past ("Vb.-ed"), by the past habitual ("used to Vb."), or the perfect progressive ("have/has been Vb.-ing"). Sometimes even past progressive (imperfect: "was Vb.-ing") may be appropriate, though more often the present tense will be used for this.

ngas. kha'i.sa. nyin.gang. las.ka. byas.pa.yin. "Yesterday I worked all day."
 ˌŋɛː ˈkʰɛːsə ˌŋɪŋɡɔː ˌlɛːgə ˌtɕɛːbəjɪː
 I-smp. yesterday all day work did-link.-aux.

— Past tense referring to present time

With some verbs, such as those of knowing or needing, forms in *-byung.* and *-song.* often refer idiomatically to present or even future time:

da.lta. ha. go.song. "Now I understand!"
 ˌtandə ˈhə ˌkɔsɔ
 now understand-aux.

— Past tense in conditional sentences

In subordinate clauses ending in the subordinate-clause particle *-na.* "if", the past tense may occur as protasis to refer to either a counterfactual or a possible condition in past time. It may also occur as protasis to refer to a hypothetical or sometimes a possible condition in future time. It has a shorter alternant without the *-pa.yin.*

kho. khas.sa. phyin.(ba.yin.)na.
 ˈkʰɔː ˈkʰɛːsə ˌtɕʰɪ(mbəjɪ)nə
 he yesterday went(-link.-aux.)-sub.

"If he had gone yesterday," (counterfactual) or
 "If he went yesterday," (possible).

kho. sang.nyin. phyin.(ba.yin.)na. “If he were to go tomorrow,” or “If he
 ṽkʰɔ̄ ṽsɔŋl̄: ṽtɕʰi(mbəji)nə went tomorrow,” (hypothetical), or
 he tomorrow went(-link.-aux.)-sub. “If he goes tomorrow,” (possible)

This contrasts with future tense in the protasis, which expresses a possible, likely or intended condition, and not to a counterfactual or hypothetical condition (see below: “Future tense”).

— Past tense as habitual aspect

A present verb stem followed by *-pa.red.* is sometimes used with third person subjects to refer to a habitual action, particularly one happening at regular intervals, and to present time. It could be argued that since the present rather than the past stem is found here, the form is distinct from that of the past tense as defined above. However, since most verbs lack distinct present and past stems, this form is for them identical to that of the past tense. At any rate this is a convenient point to mention it. The contrast is most strikingly demonstrated for the verb “go” with its suppletive paradigm:

'gro.pa.red. ṽ “They go (regularly).” versus:
drobərə: (or **drowərə:**) (present stem)

phyin.pa.red. “They went.”
 ṽtɕʰimbərə: (past stem)

Other examples: two-stemmed verb *byed./byas.* :

dngul. brje.len. ga.'dra.se. byed.pa.red. “How does one change money?”
 ṽgy: ṽdzələ́: ṽkandres ṽtɕe:pərə: (Roerich & Lhalungpa 1957:112)
 money change how-adv. do-link.-aux.
 (Interestingly, the reply given uses the future habitual *byed.kyi.red. ṽtɕi:giɽe:*.)

Two-stemmed verb *bzo./bzos.* :

sked.rags. kha.shas. bal.nas. bzo.ba.red. “Some sashes are made of wool.”
 ṽkjera: ṽkʰaɕe: ṽpe:nɛ: ṽsɔ:re:
 sash some wool-*abl.* make-link.-aux.

One-stemmed verb *gnang.* :

rgya.cha. lnga.re. bcog.cha. gnang.pa.red. “... they give a 5% discount.”
 ṽgjadzə ṽgarı ṽtɕogdzə ṽnagbəre: (Lhasawa 1980-86 vol.1:220)
 percent five-*distr.* discount give-link.-aux.

According to Sprigg (1954a, part 3:591) not all verbs with distinct present and past stems participate in this contrast: thus there is no **zhu.pa.red. *ṽcubərə:* “they

ask” to contrast with *zhus.pa.red. _cy:bəje*: “they asked”. He does not say whether he considers the possibility of a habitual aspect to be ruled out for those verbs which do not have distinct stems: though as shown by the example from Lhasawa above, for some speakers the form in *-pa-red.* can clearly be used for either past time or habitual aspect.

The polar particle precedes the auxiliary in this form:

'gro.ba.ma.red “They don’t go.”
_drəbəmare:

— Past tense forms with verbs of being

The forms *yin./red.*, *yod.*, and *yog.red.* have corresponding “past tense” forms as follows:

<i>yin./red.</i>	<i>yin.pa.red.</i> (negative, <i>min.pa.red.</i>)
<i>yod.</i>	<i>yod.pa.red.</i> (negative, <i>med.pa.red.</i> , with extended alternants <i>yod.pa.yin.pa.red.</i> and <i>med.pa.yin.pa.red.</i>)
<i>yog.red.</i>	<i>yog.yin.pa.red.</i> (negative, <i>yog.min.pa.red.</i>)

Note that *yod.pa.red.* is distinguished from *yog.red.* (often spelt *yod.pa.red.*) by its pronunciation, its meaning and the way it forms its negative.

Rather than referring to past time, these forms express a “deductive” type of judgemental modality.⁹ The deduction is made from some assumed fact or hypothesis, which may be information given by an interlocutor. Informants will often begin the English translation with some such phrase as “In that case ...” or “Oh, so ...” or “evidently”. The modal “must” or “will” is often appropriate, thus:

khong.gi. mtshan.la. shre.si.tha. zhu.tsang. bal.po. yin.pa.red.
ṽkʰɔŋgi ṽtʂʰɛnlə ṽçrestʰa ṽçudzɔ: ṽpɛ:bu ṽjimbəre:
 3sg.-gen. name-loc. Shrestha say-sub. Nepalese be-link.-aux.
 “As his name is Shrestha, he will be Nepalese.”

"a.las. da.lta. brtan.brtan. rang med.pa.red.
ṽʔalɛ: ṽtandə ṽtendɛ: ṽrɔ: ṽmɛ:bəje:
 oh now definite-redup. really neg.-exist-link.-aux.
 “Oh, so it’s not actually decided yet!”

The form *yog.yin.pa.red.* is sometimes used in the narrative register of folktales (see p.277).

byung. as a verb of being is commonly found in the past tense with *-pa.red.* and *-song.* (but not with auxiliary *-byung.*). Here the reference is to past time rather than to deductive mode.

Present tense (reference time equals speech time)

The present tense linking particle is *-kyi./gyi./gi.*, (pronounced **gi**, **gə** or **gy** and referred to for short as *-gi.*) The pattern is:

lexical present verb stem+linking particle -gi. (+polar particle)
+auxiliary -yod./ 'dug./yog.red. (+modal particle)

The particle combination *-gi.dug.* has a shorter alternant *-gi. -gi:* often heard in informal situations.

— Intentional clauses

Person	Evidentiality	Viewpoint	
1st		self	present+ <i>gi.yod.</i>
		other	present+ <i>gi.'dug.</i>
2nd/ 3rd	witnessed	self	present+ <i>gi.yod.</i>
		other	present+ <i>gi.'dug.</i>
	unwitnessed		present+ <i>gi.yog.red.</i>

Figure 9.7: Present tense intentional clauses

The other-centred form *present+gi.'dug.* with first-person subject is unusual, but is heard in cases where the speaker is seeing him/herself from an outside viewpoint, for instance in a film, photograph or dream.

ngas. las.ka. byed.kyi.'dug.

“I (saw that I) was working (in my dream).”

_ne: _legə _tçi:gıdu:

I-smp. work do-link.-aux.

— Unintentional clauses (Figure 9.8)

Here the available forms are the same as in intentional clauses: *-gi.yod.* and *-gi.'dug.* for first person, and the same plus *-gi.yog.red.* for second/third person; but the semantic correlates are different for the first person. In the first person, the uncommon general form in *-gi.yod.* is only available for certain verbs, including transitive *shes.* and *ha.go.* “understand”, “know”; and intransitive *na.* “be ill”, “fall ill”, “hurt”. It may be regarded as the marked variant; and denotes a habitual event or long-term state of affairs:

nga. na.gi.yod. "I'm chronically sick."
_ga _nΔgəjθ:
 I be ill-link.-aux.

nga. na.gi.'dug. "I'm sick at the moment."
_ga _nΔgədu:
 I be ill-link.-aux.

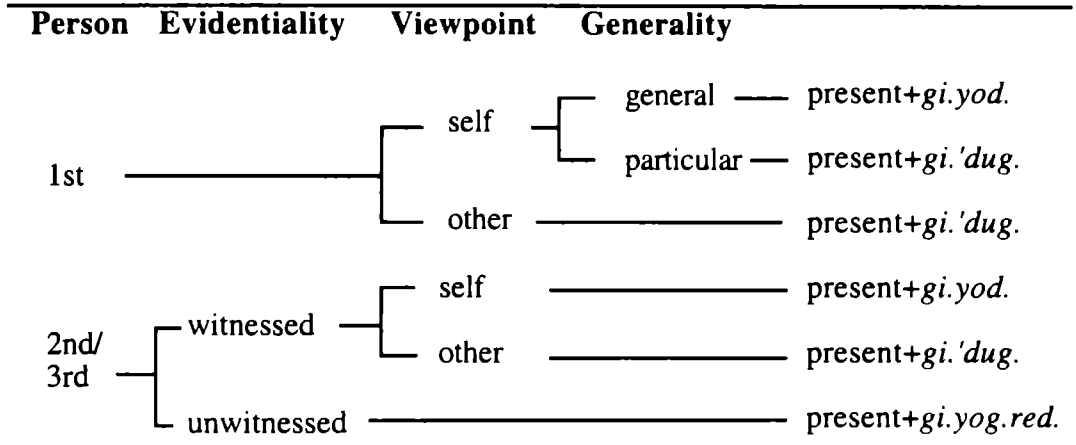


Figure 9.8: Present tense unintentional clauses

— Present tense - polarity

Present tense forms generally follow the majority pattern:

**lexical verb stem (+linking particle) (+polar particle)+auxiliary
 (+modal particle)**

Negative

khyed.rang. phebs.kyi.mi.'dug. "You're not going."
˘kjerθ: ˘pʰe:ɡimindu:
 you go-link.-neg.-aux.

Dubitative

mo.rang. slob.sbyong. byed.kyi. 'e.yod. "I don't suppose she's studying?"
_mərθ ˘ləbdzθ: ˘tʃi:ɡi ˘ʎəjθ:
 she study do-link. dub.-aux.

For second/third-person self-centred clauses with Vb.-*gi.yod.*, Tomulic (1987 vol.1:156,162,174) gives the negative (in her transliteration) Vb.-*gi-med-par yod.*, in my transliteration probably Vb.-*gi.med.pa.yod.* Vb.-**ɡimε:bəjθ:**. Informants confirm that this is possible, though I have only heard the expected Vb.-*gi.med.* in these admittedly rather rare clauses.

— Present tense referring to present time

When referring to present time the present tense may be translated into English variously by the aspectually neutral simple present (“Vb.”, “Vb.-s”) or the present progressive (“am/is/are Vb.-ing”).

— Present tense as progressive aspect

When referring to past time the present tense is similar to English past progressive (imperfect: “was/were Vb.-ing”).

— Present tense as imminent aspect

The present tense can refer to future time to denote an imminent action as in

da.lta. nga. khyed.rang.gi. rtsa.la. yong.gi.yod. “I’m coming to your place now.”
 _**tandə** _**ŋa** **ˈkjerangɪ** **ˈtsalə** **_junggyjɔ:** (spoken over the telephone)
 now I you-gen. place-loc. come-link.-aux.

Future tense (reference time follows speech time)

The patterns are:

lexical present verb stem+linking particle -gi. (+polar particle)
+auxiliary -yin./red. (+modal particle)

lexical past verb stem+linking particle -pa. (+polar particle)
+auxiliary -yod./'dug. (+modal particle)

The particle combinations *-gi.yin.* and *-pa.'dug.* have the shorter more informal alternants *-gi. -gɪ* and *-pa. -ba:/ga:/ŋa:* respectively.

— Intentional clauses (Figure 9.9)

In intentional clauses the form *-gi-red.* may be used with first-person subjects to imply a degree of lack of intention or control: a prediction rather than a statement of intent:

sang.nyin. nga. las.ka. 'di. byed.kyi.red.
ˈsɑŋɪ: **_ŋa** **_le:gə** **_dɪ** **_tɕi:gɪje:**
 tomorrow I work this do-link.-aux.
 “I shall be doing this work tomorrow (due to circumstances beyond my control).”

Person	Evidentiality	Viewpoint
1st		self present+ <i>gi.yin.</i>
		other present+ <i>gi.red.</i>
2nd/ 3rd	witnessed	self present+ <i>pa.yod.</i>
		other present+ <i>pa.'dug.</i>
	unwitnessed	present+ <i>gi.red.</i>

Figure 9.9: Future tense intentional clauses

Some speakers also allow the witnessed second/third person forms *-pa.'dug.* and *-pa.yod.* in this sense:

sang.nyin. nga. snga.po. langs.pa.yod.

ṣṗṗṗ: ṗṗ ṗṗ:bu ṗṗbṗṗṗ:
tomorrow I early-nom. rise-link.-aux.

“I’m sure to get up early tomorrow (because I’ve arranged to be woken).”

In the interrogative clauses with first person plural subjects, the usual Vb.-*gi.red.pas.* construction with “swapover” to other-centred auxiliary may be replaced by Vb.-*gi.yin.pas.* with self-centred auxiliary as an invitation to a concerted act:

nga.tshos. zhal.lag. zhu.gi.yin.pas.

“Shall we eat together?”

ṗṗṗṗṗ: ṗṗṗṗ: ṗṗṗṗṗṗṗ:

I-num.-smp. meal eat-link.-aux.-interr.

— Unintentional clauses

In unintentional clauses the first person self-centred form in *-gi.yin.* is impossible.

Person	Evidentiality	Viewpoint
1st/ 2nd/ 3rd	witnessed	self present+ <i>pa.yod.</i>
		other present+ <i>pa.'dug.</i>
	unwitnessed	present+ <i>gi.red.</i>

Figure 9.10: Future tense unintentional clauses

Here the paradigm for all persons is the same as that of the second/third person in intentional clauses.

— “Witnessed” future forms with *-pa.yod.* and *-pa.'dug.*

Although by definition the future cannot be witnessed by normal human beings, I have included the “witnessed” *-pa.'dug.* and *-pa.yod.* in the future tense because in the absence of any indication to the contrary (and in spite of the past verb stem to which they are attached), they are usually interpreted as referring to future time. In this case what has been witnessed is not the event itself but some definite evidence which strongly suggests that the event will take place. Thus in a sentence such as

kho. las.ka. byas.pa.'dug. “He’s sure to do the work.”
 ཁོ་ ལེ་གེ་ རྟེན་པའུ་
 3sg. work did-link.-aux.

the speaker must have some first-hand evidence for the statement, such as having witnessed preparations for the work or having discussed the matter with the person concerned. The event is presented as a matter of opinion rather than a gnomic prediction, for which the *-gi.red.* form would be used:

kho. las.ka. byed.kyi.red. “He’ll do the work.”
 ཁོ་ ལེ་གེ་ རྟེན་གེ་
 3sg. work do-link.-aux.

These forms are found in both intentional and unintentional clauses.

— Future with *-yong.*

There is also a future tense found in both intentional and unintentional clauses comprising

lexical past stem (+polar particle)+auxiliary *-yong.*
(+modal particle)

which when referring to future time may denote imminence, urgency or expectation:

ngas. byas.yong. “I’m going to do it (don’t you worry)!”
 རྟེན་ རྟེན་ཡོང་
 I-smp. did-aux.

khyed.rang. zags.yong. “(Look out,) you’re going to fall!”
 ཁྱེད་ སྐྱེད་
 you fall-aux.

khyed.rang.la. las.ka. rag.yong. “(I expect) you’ll find work.”
 _kjeraglə _le:ga _ra:jʃ:
 you-loc. work get-aux.

— Future tense - polarity

Future tense forms generally follow the majority pattern:

**lexical verb stem+linking particle (+polar particle)+auxiliary
 (+modal particle)**

— Negative

khyed.rang. gnang.gi.ma.red. “You won’t do it.”
 _kjerd: ˉnaggaˉmare:
 you do-link.-neg.-aux.

— Dubitative

kho. tshag.par. klog.gi. "e.yin. “I doubt if he’ll read the newspaper.”
 ˉkʰo ˉtʂʰagba: ˉlo:gy ˉʔajl:
 he newspaper read-link.-dub.-aux.

khyed.rang.la. las.ka. rag. "e.yong. “I doubt if you’ll find work.”
 ˉkjeraglə _le:ga _ra: ˉʔajʃ:
 you-loc. work get dub.-aux.

With certain polarity, the pattern resembles the minority pattern for the negative past tense:

polar particle+lexical verb

nga.tsho. lha.sar. bslebs.nas. khyed.rang. los. mjal.
 _gandzo ˉle:sa: ˉle:ni ˉkjerd: _lø: _dze:
 I-num. Lhasa-loc. arrive-sub. you cert. visit
 “When we have arrived in Lhasa, of course we shall visit you.”

— Future tense referring to future time

When referring to future time the future tense may be translated into English variously by the aspectually neutral future (“shall/will Vb.”) or the future progressive (“shall/will be Vb.-ing.”)

— Future tense as habitual aspect

The *-gi.red.* form of the future is very commonly used with first, second or third person to refer to present and sometimes past time, in which case it expresses habitual aspect.

When referring to past or present time, the form with *-yong.*, like that with *-gi.red.*, lacks any sense of imminence and denotes habitual action.

— Future tense referring to past time

The future forms with *-pa.yod.* and *-pa.'dug.* may refer to past time, with their normal implication of indirect evidence - i.e. of the circumstances of the event rather than the event itself - as in:

kho. kha.sang. las.ka. byas.ba.'dug.

ṽkʰoṽ ṽkʰasd: ṽle:ḡə ṽtʰe:bədu:

3sg. yesterday work did-link.-aux.

“He’s sure to have done the work yesterday.” (e.g. because he promised me he would, and I trust him).

Often such predicators may be translated by an English future perfect: “He will have done the work yesterday.”

— Future tense as conditional

In conditional sentences, clauses with *-gi.red.* are regularly found in the apodosis to refer to future, present and sometimes even past time, particularly with involuntary verbs and when making an assertion of purported fact:

khyed.rang. kha.lag. 'di. bzas.pa.yin.na. na.gi.red.

ṽkjerḏ: ṽkʰala: ṽdi ṽse:bəjɪnə ṽnagəre:

you food this ate-link.-aux.-sub. be ill-link.-aux.

“If you ate this food, you would be ill.”

or, “If you had eaten this food, you would have been ill.”

Clauses with *-pa.yod.* and *-pa.'dug.* are often translated by Tibetans into unidiomatic English using “would” (i.e. “If you would have eaten this food, ...”). Indeed, these forms also occur in conditional sentences in the apodosis to refer to past time, where the protasis is counterfactual, e.g.:

khas.sa. khyed.rang.gis. ngar. lab.na. ngas. 'khyer. yong.ba.yod.

ṽkʰe:sə ṽkjerangi ṽḡa: ṽlɣpnə ṽḡe: ṽkje: ṽyɔḡbəjɔ:

yesterday you-smp. I-loc. tell-sub. I-smp. carry come-link.-aux.

“If you had told me yesterday, I would have brought it.”

These forms are also used in the equivalents of some idiomatic English uses of “would”, e.g.

ja. dgos.pa.yod.pas. “Would you like some tea?”
_tʃa _gɔːjɔːbɛː
 tea want-aux.-interr.

nga. pha.gir. 'gro. nus.pa.mi.'dug. “I wouldn’t dare go there!”
_ga _phʌgeː _drɔ _nyːbəmɪnduː
 I there-loc. go dare-link.-neg.-aux.

— Future tense in conditional protasis

The future tense in the protasis of a conditional sentence refers to future time and a condition regarded as possible, likely or intended:

kho. sang.nyin. 'gro.(gi.yin.)na. (future tense) “If he goes tomorrow” or
ˈkʰɔ ˈsʌŋŋɪː _drɔgɪjɪnə/_drɔnə “If he is going tomorrow” or
 he tomorrow go(-link.-aux.)-sub.. “If he is going to go tomorrow”

The future tense here has a shorter alternant without the *-gi.yin.*.

This contrasts with a hypothetical future condition (“If he were to go tomorrow”), referred to by a past tense (see 9.3.4.1).

— Future tense forms with verbs of being

The particles *-gi.red.* may be added to verbs of being *yin.-* and *yod.-* to give the forms *yin.gi.red. _jɪŋgɪrɛː* and *yod.kyi.red. _jyːgyrɛː*. These do not refer by default to future time but express “probable” judgemental modality (see above).

The form *yin.pa.yod. _jɪmbəjɔː* again does not refer by default to future time. It is used where one has some personal experience which can be used as evidence for the statement, though not necessarily very strong evidence. The English “I think ...” or “I seem to remember ...” is often appropriate:

slob.grwa.ba'i. dbyar.kha'i. gung.sangs. gza'.'khor. bdun. yin.pa.yod.
ˈlɔbdreː ˈjaːgeː _kʊŋsdː _sagɔː _dʏː _jɪmbəjɔː
 student-gen. summer-gen. holiday week seven be-link.-aux.
 “I think (from something I remember or have been told) that the students’
 summer holidays are seven weeks long.” (Hu Tan et al. 1989:252)

According to Tomulic (vol.1,133ff.), the particles *-gi.red.* can be added to the verb *red.-* to give the future tense form *red.kyi.red. rɛːgɪrɛː*, which serves as an alternative future tense for *yin.* and *red.*, referring to future time.

yong. as a verb of being is found with future tense particles *-gi.red.*.

9.3.5 Aspect

In addition to the aspectual uses of the three tenses as described above, Tibetan has distinct aspect forms referring to events E which are completed, in progress or in prospect at reference point or frame RT, regardless of the relation between RT and the speech time ST. The template established for adjectival copular clauses (9.2.3) and the tenses applies to the perfect aspect, but only partially to the other aspects.

Perfect aspect (reference time follows event time)

— Simple perfect aspect (Figure 9.11)

The simple perfect (henceforth just called “perfect”) aspect is very common in Lhasa Tibetan and behaves similarly in intentional and unintentional clauses. Its pattern is similar to that of the intentional clause present tense, but with past verb stem rather than present, and with no linking particle:

lexical past stem (+polar particle)+auxiliary (+modal particle)

When the reference time RT is the present, the perfect may often be translated by a (British) English present perfect, and when RT is in the past, by an English pluperfect.

dkyil.la. smyug.ma. btang.yod.
 ṽkji:lə ṽnuḡmə ṽtaŋjø:
 centre-loc. bamboo fix-aux.

“I have fixed a bamboo in the centre.”

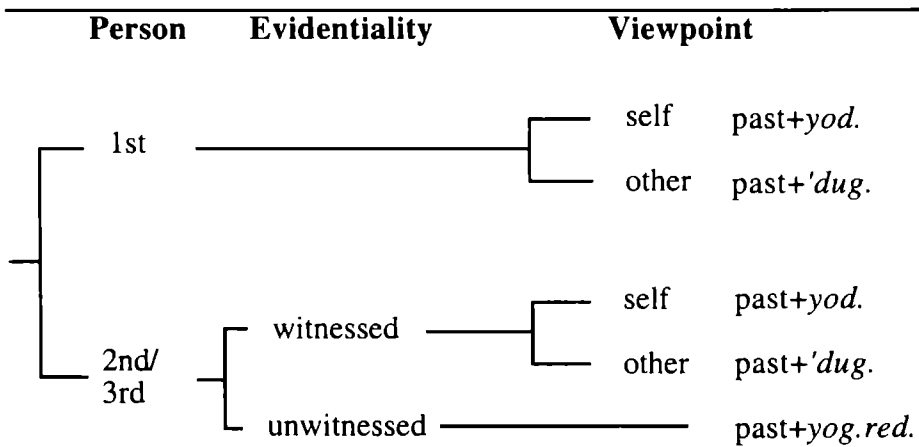


Figure 9.11: Simple perfect aspect clauses

khong. bdun.phrag. cig. na.'dug. "He had been ill for a week."
 ʔkʰɔ: ʔdyndra tɕi: ʔnadu:
 3sg. week num. be ill-aux.

With the common verb *bsdad.* and its honorifics *bzhugs.* and *bzhugs.gdan.* 'jags., meaning "stay", "dwell", "live", "be seated", "remain", "be located", the perfect is very often best translated as an English present or past (depending on the time of RT). This is no doubt because it usually carries quite a strong sense of what some linguists investigating the perfect aspect have called "extended now" or "current relevance" (Binnick, index: 531, 533).

nga'i. spun.kyag. bod.la. bsdad.yog.red. "My brothers are in Tibet."
 ʔne: ʔpɪŋgja: ʔpø:lə ʔde:jo:re:
 I-gen. brother Tibet-loc. stay-aux.

In the few examples I have with RT as the future, the perfect is translatable by an English future or future perfect:

khyed.rang. tshogs.'du.la. phyis.na. chad.yog.red.
 ʔkjerd: ʔtshuŋdula ʔtɕhi:nə ʔtɕhe:jo:re:
 you meeting-loc. be late-sub. fine-aux.
 "If you are late for the meeting, you will be fined."
 (Lhasawa 1980-86 vol.2:108)

— Perfect aspect with *-shag.*

The constituent *-shag.* (also spelt *bzhag.* or *gzha'.*) following the past verb stem at auxiliary position is extremely common in the Lhasa dialect.

-shag. is sometimes said to be interchangeable with perfect auxiliary *-'dug.*, and indeed for its polar and mood forms other than positive indicative, the corresponding forms of *-'dug.* or (mainly with first-person subjects) *yod.* have to be used. It is very close in meaning to *-'dug.*, but for most speakers differs in that some result of the act or event referred to has been witnessed, but not the act or event itself. The distinction is sometimes clear, but it can be a rather subtle one.

de.ring. char.pa. btang.'dug. "It has been raining today."
 ʔtɪrl: ʔtɕha:bə ʔtaŋdu:
 today rain fall-aux. (I saw the rain.)

de.ring. char.pa. btang.shag. "I've just realised it has been raining today."
 ʔtɪrl: ʔtɕha:bə ʔtaŋɕa (I can see the puddles, but didn't see it raining.)
 today rain fall-aux.

khong. nang.la. bzhugs.'dug. "She is at home." (I have seen her.)
 ʔkʰɔ: ʔnaglə ʔɕu:du:
 3sg. inside-loc stay-aux.

khong. nang.la. bzhugs.shag.
 ṽkʰʂ: ṽnaŋlə ṽʧu:ʧa
 3sg. inside-loc stay-aux.

“She is at home.” (Her car is here.)

nga'i . nyi.gdugs. lus.'dug.
 ṽŋe: ṽŋidu: ṽle:du:
 I-gen. umbrella leave-aux.

“I've left my umbrella behind.”
 (I remember doing so.)

nga'i. nyi.gdugs. lus.shag.
 ṽŋe: ṽŋidu: ṽle:ʧa
 I-gen. umbrella leave-aux.

“I've left my umbrella behind!”
 (I must have, as it's not here.)

khong.gi. mtshan. brjed.shag.
 ṽkʰʂŋgi ṽtsʰé: ṽdze:ʧa
 3sg.-gen. name forget-aux.

“I've forgotten his name.”
 (I must have, because I can't call it to mind.)

khyi. pha.gi. shi.shag.
 ṽkji ṽpʰagi ṽʧiʧa
 dog yonder die-aux.

“That dog has died.”
 (It must have, because it is dead.)

chu.tshod. bzhi.pa. zin.shag.
 ṽʧudzø: ṽʧibə ṽsimʧa
 hour fourth seize-aux.

“It's gone four o'clock!”
 (I'm looking at my watch.)

In the case of *-shag.* with first-person subject, the act must have been unconscious at the time it took place.

— Perfect aspect as conditional mood

The perfect aspect in *-yog.red.* is often found in the apodosis of a conditional sentence with a counterfactual protasis referring to past time, e.g.:

sman. 'di. bzas.pa.yin.na. gzugs.po. bde.po. chags. bsdad.yog.red.
 ṽmɛ: ṽdi ṽse:bəjɪnə ṽsugbu ṽdebu ṽtʰa: ṽde:jo:re:
 medicine this ate-link.-aux.-sub. body well-nom. become stay-aux.

“If I had taken this medicine, I would have got better.”

— Perfect aspect forms with verbs of being

The form *red.'dug.* may be thought of as combining the assertive nature of the verb *red.*, relating to an innate quality, with the “witnessed discovery” sense of the auxiliary particle *'dug.*. Some such English expression as “I see that ...” may often be used in translation:

khyed.rang. seng.ge. ngar.ma. zhig. red.'dug. “I see you are a strong lion.”
 _kjerd: ˘sengɣi ˘ŋa:mə tɕi: ˘re:du: (Goldstein 1991, 337: my trans.)
 you lion strong-nom. a be-aux.

The form *red.shag.* is also possible:

nga.gnyis. grong.pa. red.shag. “Evidently we are neighbours!”
 _ŋɔŋi: ˘troŋbə ˘re:ɕa
 we two neighbour be-aux.

byung. as a verb of being is found with perfect particles *-yod.*, *-'dug.*, *-yog.red.* and *-shag.*.

—Recent aspect (reference time immediately follows event time)

The recent aspect follows the pattern:

**lexical present stem+linking particle *-gro.* (+polar particle)
 +auxiliary *-yin./-red.* (+modal particle)**

nga. bslebs.gro.yin. “I had just arrived.”
 _ŋa ˘le:drojɿ:
 I arrive-link.-aux.

or;

**lexical past stem+linking particle *-pa.da.ga./-tsam.*
 (+polar particle)+auxiliary *-yin./red.* (+modal particle)**

ngas. kha.lag. bzos.pa.da.ga.yin. “I have just prepared a meal.”
 _ŋɛ: ˘kʰala: ˘sø:bədagajɿ:
 I-smp. meal made-link.-rec.-aux.

khos. las.ka. byas. tshar.tsam.red. “He’s just this moment finished work.”
 ˘kʰø: ˘le:ɣə ˘tɕɛ: ˘tsʰa:dzəre:
 3sg.-smp. work did finish-link.-aux.

Progressive Aspect (Reference Time Contained within Event Time)

Progressive action is most commonly denoted by the present tense. However when referring to present time the present tense is ambiguous between progressive, habitual and neutral aspects. Specifically progressive action may be denoted by the rather uncommon pattern:

**lexical present stem+linking particle -mus. (+polar particle)
+auxiliary -yin./ -red. (+modal particle)**

kho. da.lta. las.ka. byed.mus.red. “He is working at the moment.”
 ཁོ་ ཀླུ་ ལས་ཀླ་ བྱེད་མུས་རེད། (French: “Il est en train de travailler.”)
 3sg. now work do-nom.-aux.

According to Roerich and Lhalungpa (1957:50), the subject of such a clause may not have a subject-marking particle. This is not true for my own material; and Goldstein et al. (1991:56f.) give two literary examples with subject-marking particle.

Prospective aspect (reference time precedes event time)

The prospective aspect may be divided into four subtypes: “gerundive”, “premeditated”, “imminent” and “preparative” aspect. It is formed on the majority pattern:

**lexical present stem+linking particle (+polar particle)
+auxiliary -yin./-red. (+modal particle)**

The linking particles are *-rgyu.*, *-yag.*, *-mkhan.*, *-grabs.* and *-chog.*. (In the case of *-chog.*, the lexical past stem is sometimes found.)

— Gerundive aspect

The gerundive aspect denotes an event E which, though intended or desirable, had not, has not or will not have happened at the reference time RT.

nga. nyo.cha. nyo.rygu.yin. “I have still to do the shopping.”
 །ང་ རྟོ་ཅམ་ རྟོ་རྟུ་ཡིན།
 I shopping buy-link.-aux.

kho. 'byor.rgyu.red.shag. “Evidently he is yet to arrive.”
 ཁོ་ བྱོར་རྟུ་རེད་ཤག་།
 he arrive-link.-aux.-aux.

When a deictic constituent such as *rang.* or *de.* is interposed between *-rgyu.* And *yin.* or *red.*, I classify the *-rgyu.* as a nominalising particle with a different meaning (see 8.5.1).

Some speakers use *-rgyu.* synonymously with *-yag.* or *-mkhan.* to denote premeditated aspect:

dus.sang. nga. bod.la. 'gro.rgyu.yin. “Next year I am to go to Tibet .”
 _ty:sd: _ṅa _pø:lə _drugjuj:~
 next year I Tibet-loc. go-link.-aux.

— Premeditated aspect

The premeditated aspect with present verb stem, linking particle *-mkhan.-* and auxiliary *-yin./-red.* refers to a pending event E whose occurrence, often in the near future, has, had or will have already been planned at the reference time RT. English “going to” is often appropriate in the translation; sometimes “intend to” or even “want to” (Lhasawa 2, 139 with *-yag.*):

me. ma.dang./ ga.re. yin. zer.na. lon.dron.la. 'gro.mkhan.yin.
 _me ~madd: _karı _jl: _sena _lōndrønle _drøŋɛjl:
 fire neg.-light what be say-sub. London-loc. go-link.-aux.
 “I didn’t light a fire. This was because I was going to go to London.”

— Prospective particle *-yag.*

Use of the third prospective particle, *-yag.* (with auxiliary *-yin./-red.*) varies between speakers, as is reflected in its treatment by different authorities.

Some regard *-rgyu.* as the Modern Literary, and *-yag.* as the colloquial variant of the same particle (Lhasawa 1980-86 vol.1:193 - but see 122; Agha 1993b:228f). However, both particles may be heard from some speakers, for whom *-yag.* seems to replace *-mkhan.* as marker of premeditated aspect (Tomulic 1987 vol.2:430f, 447ff; Goldstein & Normang 1970:112f).

Yet other speakers have gerundive *-rgyu.* and premeditated *-mkhan.* without *-yag.* in this use at all. Goldstein et al. (1991:108,143) has all three, with *-yag.* equivalent to *-mkhan.*, though this is Modern Literary usage.

— Imminent aspect

The imminent aspect with the linking particle *-grabs.* and auxiliary *-yod./-'dug./-yog.red.* refers to an event E which is to happen immediately after the reference time RT.

zhi.mis. nya. zin.grabs.'dug. “The cat is about to catch a fish.”
 _çimi: _ṅa _simdro:du:
 cat-smp. fish catch-link.-aux.

— Preparative aspect

The preparative aspect with the linking particle *-chog.* or *chog.chog.* and auxiliary *-yin./-red.* (or sometimes *-yog.red.*) refers to an event E which is ready to happen at any time after reference time RT. It can usually be translated “ready to Vb.” or “could

-gi.yin.pas. (future interrogative)	alternates with -gi.pas. and -gas.
-gi.yin.(pa.) (future wh-interrogative)	" -ga.
-pa.yin.pas. (past interrogative)	" -pas.
-pa.yin.(pa.) (past wh-interrogative)	" -pa.
-pa.yin.pa.'dra. (past apparent modality)	" -pa.'dra.

Examples:

— Past tense, interrogative mood

<i>kho.tsho. bslebs.byung.ngas.</i>	“Have they arrived?”
ṽkʰəndzo ṽle:dʒuŋɛ:	
3sg.-num. arrive-aux.-interr.	

— Present tense, wh-interrogative mood (-pa.yin.pa. alternates with -pa.(-yin.))

<i>khyed.rang. ga.nas. phebs.ba.yin.pa. /phebs.pa.yin. /phebs.pa.</i>	
ṽkjerd: ṽkanɛ: ṽpʰe:bəjɪmba / ṽpʰe:bəjɪ: / ṽpʰe:ba	
you what-abl. come-link.-aux.-wh.interr.	
	“Where did you come from?”

— Future tense, wh-interrogative mood (-gi.yin.pa. alternates with -gi.yin. and -ga.)

<i>khyed.rang. ga.par. thad.kyi.yin.pa./thad kyi.yin./ thad.ga.</i>	
ṽkjerd: ṽkaba: ṽtʰe:gəjɪmba / ṽtʰe:gəjɪ: / ṽtʰe:ga	
you where-loc. go-link.-aux.-wh.interr.	
	“Where are you going?”

— Future tense, corroborative mood

<i>khos. khang.pa. cig. rgyag.gi.red.pa.</i>	“He will build a house, as we
ṽkʰø: ṽkʰaŋbə tɕi: ṽgjaŋgəriɓa	know.”
3sg.-smp. house num. build-link.-aux.-corrob.	

— Perfect aspect, emphatic mood

<i>kho.tsho. bslebs.'dug.ga.</i>	“They have arrived!”
ṽkʰəndzo ṽle:duga	
3sg.-num. arrive-aux.-emph.	

— Recent aspect, apparent modality

<i>khyed.rang. kha.lag. za.gro.yin.pa.'dra.</i>	“You seem to have just eaten.”
ṽkjerd: ṽkʰala: ṽsadrojɪmbədra	
you meal eat-link.-aux.-link.-aux.	

— Progressive aspect, probable modality

khong.gis. slob.sbyong. gnang.mus.yin.gyi.red. “She’s probably at her studies.”
ཁོ་མོ་གླིང་། ལོ་བཟུང་། འཇཉལ་འདྲི་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་།
 3sgf.-*smp.* study do-link.-aux.-link.-aux.

— Prospective aspect (premeditated), possible modality

kho. rgya.gar.la. yong.mkhan.yin.gro. “He may be going to come to India.”
ཁོ་མོ་ རྒྱ་གར་ལེ འཇཉལ་འདྲི་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་།
 3sg. India-loc. come-link.-aux.-poss.

— Present tense, speculative modality

da. 'gro. ran.gyi.med.gro'o. “Mightn’t it be time to go now?”
ད་ རྒྱ་གར་ འཇཉལ་འདྲི་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་།
 now go be time-link.-neg.-aux.-spec.

— Future tense, emphatic mood

nga. 'gro.gi.yin.da. “I’ll definitely go.”
ང་ རྒྱ་གར་ འཇཉལ་འདྲི་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་།
 I go-link.-aux.-emph.

The emphatic particle *-da.* may be added to the first member of a reduplicated verb pair to convey a meaning like that of the German “zwar”. In main clauses it means “certainly”, and in subordinate clauses in combination with the subordinating particle *-te.* it means “certainly ... but”:

nga. 'gro.da. 'gro.gi.yin. “Certainly I’ll go.”
ང་ རྒྱ་གར་ འཇཉལ་འདྲི་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་།
 I go-emph. go-link.-aux.

khong.gis. gnang.da. gnang.gi.red. de. “Certainly he’ll do it, but ...”
ཁོ་མོ་གླིང་། འཇཉལ་འདྲི་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་། ཅེ།
 he-*smp.* do-emph. do-link.-aux. sub.

9.3.7 Imperative, suggestive and volunteering moods

In these moods the verb stem is followed within the predicator either by zero, or by a modal particle.

Imperative with zero particle

The imperative verb stem, where available, is used with positive polarity. If the verb has a present and past stem but no separate imperative stem, the present stem is used.

ga.le. phebs. "Goodbye!" ("Go slowly!")
_kali **ṽphe:**
 slowly go

With negative polarity the present or present/past stem is used rather than the imperative stem,¹⁰ preceded by polar particle *ma.-*.

kha.lag. 'di. ma.za. "Don't eat this food!"
ṽkhalo: **_di** **_masa**
 food this *neg.-eat*

Idiomatic imperatives with zero particle

Polite imperative. More deferential periphrastic imperatives are formed by nominalising the present stem of the verb with nominalising particle *-rogs.* followed by the imperative verb stem *byed.* (pronounced **_tɕi:** or **_tɕi:s**) "do" or *gnang. ṽnd:* "do" (hon.). With negative polarity the polar particle precedes the nominalised verb.

bzhugs.rogs. gnang. "Please sit down."
_ɕu:ro: **ṽnd:**
 sit-*nom.* do

Optative. The hope that some event may take place may be expressed by nominalising the past verb stem with *-pa.* followed by the imperative stem *shog.* "come":

nga.tsho. phyi.po. ma.byas.pa. shog. "I hope we won't be late."
_ḡandzo **ṽtɕhibu** **_madze:bə** **ṽɕo**
I-num. late-nom. neg.-did-nom. come (imperative stem)

Imperative with shog. With verbs thought to involve some sort of movement an alternative imperative is formed with the imperative stem followed by the imperative verb *shog.* "come", sometimes followed by one of the friendly imperative particles. *shog.* is here best regarded as a serial verb (it is the suppletive imperative stem of *yong.* "come", also commonly used as a serial verb: see 10.1). Sometimes the English "go and Vb." is a good equivalent.

sang.nyin. nga'i. rtsa.la. phebs. shog. 'a. "Come to my place tomorrow!"
ṽsaŋl: **_ŋe:** **ṽtsalə** **ṽphe:** **ṽɕo** **ʔa**
 tomorrow *I-gen. place-loc. come come imp.*

khong.la. skad.cha. dris. shog. “Go and ask her (and come back).”
 ṽkʰɔŋlə ṽkjədʒə ṽtri: ṽçɔ
 3sg-loc. speech ask come

Friendly imperatives: dang., "a., cig./zhig./shig.

These particles follow the imperative stem with positive polarity, the present or present/perfect stem with negative polarity.

tog.tse. sgug. "a. “Please wait a moment.”
 ṽtɔ:dʒə ṽgu: ʔa
 a little wait *imp.*

deb. de. gnang. dang. “Would you pass me that book?”
 ṽteṽp ṽte ṽnd: ta
 book that give *imp.*

Suggestive moods

— Suggestive particle *-na*.

da.lta. zhal.lag. bzhes.na. “What if we ate now?”
 ṽtandə ṽçɛ:la: ṽçɛ:na
 now meal eat-*sugg.*

— Suggestive particle *-do*.

The particle *-do*, meaning “let’s” follows the present stem. It may be used with an honorific verb to convey respect to the referent of the other subject(s) of the verb.

mnyam.du. phebs.do. “Let’s go together!”
 ṽŋʌmdu ṽpʰe:do
 together-loc. go-*imp.*

Volunteering moods

— Imperative/volunteering particle *-dgos*.

The particle *-dgos* follows the past stem.

chang. ngas. nyos.dgos. “Let me buy the beer!”
 ṽtçd: ṽŋɛ: ṽŋø:ɣo
 beer I-*smp.* bought-*vol.*

— Volunteering particle *-chog*.

The particle *-chog* follows the past stem.

ngas. yi.ge. btang.chog. “I can easily send a letter.”/
 _ne: _jigi ˀtagdzo “Let me send a letter.”
 I-smp. letter send-vol.

— Volunteering particle *-ga*. (see also 12.2.)

The particle *-ga* follows the past stem.

ngas. kha.lag. bzos.ga. “Shall I prepare the food?”
 _ne: ˀkʰala: _sø:ga
 I-smp. food made-vol.

Notes

- 1 “Argument” here includes subject and object/complement but not adjunct.
- 2 This phenomenon of viewpoint is called by Agha “[speech act-] participant role perspective”, of which he says “this type of indexical category is a *non-referring* indexical, since it is not coded in a nominal form capable of referring. It is an indexical category of *predication*, capable of coding values independent of the values coded by the system of nominal reference, [which latter are] located within the arguments of the predication.” (Agha 1993b:156-8.) According to him, the phenomenon is “peculiar to Lhasa Tibetan and certain closely related languages” [Sherpa - actually a Tibetan dialect - and Newari.] (*Ibid.*:8, 256fn).
- 3 An exception is the form *red.gi.red.* given by Tomulic (1987 vol.1:13f.) as future tense of *red.* I have not heard this.
- 4 Although no other verb in Lhasa Tibetan has a separate future stem, these exist in written Tibetan (see 8.2).
- 5 E.g. Lhasawa (1980-86 vol.1:51).
- 6 Spelt variously *'gro.*, *grabs.*, *'dra'o.*
- 7 Thus I would disagree with the claim of Agha (1993b:91) that Lhasa Tibetan “lacks agreement marking in the verb altogether”. Compare however his statement that “the verb [*yin.*] requires that the agent argument denote the speaker” (189); and his reference to “obligatory person values” of auxiliaries (116); also the statement that volunteering constructions “require first person subjects” (243).
- 8 Agha (1993b:92f, 109f, 114, 127, 141, 147, 224, 255n). For Agha (114) Lhasa Tibetan “lacks a category of true tense, so that time reference is figured through the interaction of the aspectual values of the verb stems [a combination of lexical aspect or aktionsart and perfective/imperfective stem distinction] and the quasi-aspectual values of NZRs [linking particles].” Agha’s aspect seems a vague and fluctuating phenomenon, which is more lexico-semantic than grammatical. Thus the combination of his “perfective” verb stem *bltas.* with “completed” quasi-aspect of linking particle *pa.* can give a semantically imperfective result in *bltas.pa.red.* “he used to watch” through “aspectual variability ... due to the inherent imperfectivity of the [auxiliary]...” In fact *bltas.pa.red.* can also mean “he has been watching”, which in English is present perfect progressive, as well as “he watched”, which in English makes no aspectual distinction. I prefer to regard *bltas.pa.red.* and its commonest English equivalent “he watched” as aspectually neutral in both languages, because of the possible meanings of the whole form in context, rather than through any componential analysis of its parts.
- 9 Different authors give diverse accounts of these forms. Lhasawa (1980-86 vol.1:47, 61) gives “might” and “maybe” in his translations, and Goldstein et al. (1991:17) likewise regard *yin.pa.red.* as “less certain” than *red.* Agha on the other hand, regards *yin.pa.red.* as conveying “emphatic certainty” (1993b:232). This anomaly is reflected in the English modal “must”, which is “emphatic” while yet not based on certain knowledge.
- 10 Tomulic (1987 vol.2:530ff) gives examples of negative imperative using the imperative stem.

10. Serial Verbs

In some cases a verb stem may have another and preceding verb stem related to it by serialisation rather than subordination.

In subordination, the first verb is in the predicator of a separate subordinate clause, and may be followed by tense/aspect particles, as well as by subordinate-clause-final particle(s) and/or the possibility of a pause. The subjects of the two verbs may be different, and there may be a subject, object and/or adjunct in the second clause between the two verbs.

In serialisation, the result is best analysed as a single clause.¹ The only kind of particle which may follow the first verb is a serial particle; the subject of the two verbs must be the same (except in the case of *bcug*. “cause”); and there cannot be a subject, object or adjunct between the two verbs.

The different serialising verbs vary in their degree of grammaticisation and phonological independence, though it could be claimed that they, or their homographs, all exist independently and can be used outside the context of serialisation. I have refined and modified the classification of DeLancey (1991), to distinguish five groups representing five increasing degrees of grammaticisation. I avoid his terminology to avoid confusion (the glosses indicate the meanings of the verbs in non-serial contexts):

- a) *'gro*. “go”; *yong*. “come”; *bsdad*. “stay”.
- b) *bzhag*. “put”, “leave”; *shes*. “know”; *shor*. “escape”.
- c) *tshar*. “finish”; *myong*. “experience”.
- d) *bcug*. “cause”; *chog*. “be permitted”; *thub*. “be able”; “overcome”; *ran*. “be time”; *nus*. “dare”, “be prepared”; *srid*. “be possible”; *thag.chod*. “be definite”.
- e) *dgos*. “need”, “want”, “be obliged”.

The second elements of Agha’s class of “compound verbs” (Agha 1993b:120ff) correspond to many of these verbs.

10.1 *'gro.*, *yong.*, *bsdad.*

These three constituents are all much more common as independent verbs than as serial verbs. In their latter use they may be glossed as *'gro*. “go Vb.-ing”, *yong*. “come Vb.-ing”, and *bsdad*. “keep on Vb.-ing”. In each of the following examples (adapted from DeLancey 1991:6), the presence or absence of the serial particle *byas*. is

said by most informants to make no difference to the meaning. Sometimes one hears the serial particle *-nas*. instead of *byas*. with the same meaning:

kho. rgya.gar.la. bros.(byas.) yong.pa.red. "He fled (here) to India."
 ཁོ་ རྒྱ་གར་ལེ རྩོལ་ (པཅེ།) རྩོལ་བཤེད་ (Lit. "came-fleeing".)
 3sg. India-loc. flee (ser.) come-link-aux.

kho. la.dwags.la. bros.(byas.) phyin.pa.red. "He ran away to Ladakh."
 ཁོ་ ལ་དྭགས་ལེ རྩོལ་ (པཅེ།) རྩོལ་བཤེད་ (Lit. "went-fleeing".)
 3sg. Ladakh-loc. flee (ser.) went-link-aux.

kho. nang.la. las.ka. byas.(byas.) bsdad.pa.red. "He kept working at home."
 ཁོ་ ལྟན་ལེ ལེ་གཤམ་ པཅེ། (པཅེ།) རྩོལ་བཤེད་ (Lit. "stayed-working".)
 3sg. home-loc. work did (ser.) stay-link.-aux.

kho. rta. bzhon.nas. yong.pa.red. "He came on horseback."
 ཁོ་ ར་ཏེ རྩོལ་བཤེད་ (Lit. "came-riding".)
 3sg. horse ride-ser. come-link.-aux.

The serial particles *byas*. and *-nas*. have homographs which are respectively a serial verb and a subordinating particle (13.1; 13.2). However, as serial particles *byas*. and *-nas*. indicate simultaneity of the actions of the two verbs, the first verb qualifying the second as a sort of "adverb of manner". As serial verb or subordinating particle, *byas*. or *-nas*. may be placed between any pair of verbs to indicate that the two actions are temporally sequential. Also, as serial verb or subordinating particle, the subjects of the two clauses may differ, and a noun phrase (in the following examples, an adjunct) may be interposed between the verbs:

kho. bros. (byas.) rgya.gar.la. yong.pa.red. "He fled, and then came
 ཁོ་ རྩོལ་ (པཅེ།) རྒྱ་གར་ལེ རྩོལ་བཤེད་ to India."
 3sg. flee (did) India-loc come-link.-aux.

kho. bros. (byas.) la.dwags.la. phyin.pa.red. "He fled, and then went
 ཁོ་ རྩོལ་ (པཅེ།) ལ་དྭགས་ལེ རྩོལ་བཤེད་ to Ladakh."
 3sg. flee (did) Ladakh-loc went-link.-aux.

kho. las.ka. byas. (byas.) nang.la. bsdad.pa.red. "He worked, and then
 ཁོ་ ལེ་གཤམ་ པཅེ། (པཅེ།) ལྟན་ལེ རྩོལ་བཤེད་ stayed at home."
 3sg. work did (did) home-loc. stay-link.-aux.

In the following example with serial verb *byas*., its subject is different from that of the main clause:

kho. kha.lag. byas. byas. ngas. khor. kha.par. btang.pa.yin.
 ཁོ་ ཀ་ལག་ རྩ་ལྟེན་ རྩ་ལྟེན་ རྩ་ལྟེན་ ཁོ་ ཀ་པར་ བྲལ་པའི་ཡིན་
 3sg. work ate did I-smp. 3sg.-loc. telephone send-link.-aux..
 “When he had eaten, I telephoned him.”

10.2 *bzhag.*, *shes.*, *shor.*

These three verbs are again commoner as independent than as serial verbs; in their latter use the meaning seems more specialised than is the case with *'gro.*, *'yong.* and *bsdad.*.

Serial verb bzhag.

bzhag. (“put”, “leave”, “deposit”) as a serial verb conveys a meaning somewhat like the English “go and” in such expressions as “he has gone and bought it”, implying a decisive act leading to a lasting state of affairs, sometimes with a pejorative overtone:

khos. nyos. bzhag.'dug. “He’s gone and bought it.”
 ཁོ་ལོ་ རྩ་ལྟེན་ རྩ་ལྟེན་ རྩ་ལྟེན་
 3sg. bought put-aux.

Here serialisation contrasts clearly with subordination:

kho. nyos. byas. bzhag.'dug. “He bought it, and then left it.”
 ཁོ་ ལོ་ རྩ་ལྟེན་ རྩ་ལྟེན་ རྩ་ལྟེན་
 3sg. bought sub. put-aux.

Serial verb shes.

shes. and its honorific *mkhyen.* (“know”, “understand”) as serial verbs mean “know how to”:

khong. slob.sbyong. gnang. mkhyen.gyi.'dug. “He knows how to study.”
 ཁོ་ལོ་ ལོ་བཤམ་ལྟོག་ རྩ་ལྟེན་ རྩ་ལྟེན་ རྩ་ལྟེན་
 3sg. studying do know-link.-aux.

Here the subordinate version requires the past stem of the verb where available and has quite a different meaning:

khong. slob.sbyong. gnang. byas. mkhyen.gyi.'dug.
 ཁོ་ལོ་ ལོ་བཤམ་ལྟོག་ རྩ་ལྟེན་ རྩ་ལྟེན་ རྩ་ལྟེན་
 3sg. studying do sub. know-link.-aux.
 “Having studied it, he understands it.”

Serial verb shor.

The verb *shor.* (“escape”, “become lost”) as a serial verb means “end up Vb.-ing”:

<i>nga. khor.</i>	<i>dngul. sprad.</i>	<i>shor.song.</i>	“I ended up giving him the money.”
<i>_ḡa ḱʰɔ:</i>	<i>_ḡy: ṽre:</i>	<i>_ḡɔ:sɔ</i>	
I 3sg.-loc.	money give	lose-aux.	

10.3 *tshar., myong.*

As independent lexical verb stems, *tshar.* and *myong.* mean “finish” and “experience” respectively.

Serial verb tshar.

tshar. has more of an independent existence than *myong.*: it can be used in all tenses and aspects, usually with the appropriate particles, though in first-person past tense clauses the particles are sometimes omitted:

<i>nga. las.khung.la. phyin.</i>	<i>tshar.(pa.yin.)</i>	“I had gone to the office.”
<i>_ḡa ḱe:guglɛ</i>	<i>_ṽṽṽ: ṽsʰa:(bɛjɿ:)</i>	
I office-loc.	went finish(-link.-aux.)	

<i>khos. las.ka. byas.</i>	<i>tshar.song.</i>	“He finished doing the work.”
<i>_ḱʰø: ḱe:gə</i>	<i>_ṽṽṽ: ṽsʰa:sɔ</i>	or, “He has already done the work.”
3sg.-smp.	work did finish-aux.	

tshar. as a serial verb is used much more frequently than its equivalent “finish” in English, and seems to have become largely grammaticised as a “completive” perfect aspect marker. It can combine with perfect aspect:

<i>khong.rmams.tsho.</i>	<i>phyin. tshar.shag.</i>	“They had already left.”
<i>_ḱʰɔnandzɔ</i>	<i>_ṽṽṽ: ṽsʰa:ɕa</i>	
3sg.-pl	went finish-aux.	

Serial verb myong.

myong. “experience” is not very common as an independent verb.² As a serial verb it regularly lacks particles in first-person subject past tense clauses, and is grammaticised as an “experiential” perfect like the English “have/has/had ever Vb.-ed”:

<i>khong. lha.sa.la. phebs.</i>	<i>myong.pa.red.pas.</i>	
<i>_ḱʰɔ: ḱhe:səle</i>	<i>_pʰe: ḱugbərɿbe:</i>	
she Lhasa-loc.	go experience-link.-aux.-interr.	

“Has she ever been to Lhasa?”

khyed.rang. bod.la. 'gro. myong.ngas. "Have you ever been to Tibet?"
 ˀkjerd: ˀpø:ilə ˀdro ˀɲuŋe:
 you Tibet-loc. go experience-interr.

'gro. myong. "Yes, I have."
 ˀdro ˀɲuŋ
 go experience

khyed.rang. bod.la. thad. myong. "e.yod. "Could it be that you have
 ˀkjerd: ˀpø:ilə ˀtʰe: ˀɲuŋ ˀɲajø: been to Tibet?"
 you Tibet-loc. go experience dub.-aux.

ngas. mthong. myong.shag. "I have evidently seen it."
 ˀɲe: ˀtʰɔ: ˀɲuŋɕa
 I-smp. see experience-aux.

10.4 *bcug.*, *thub.*, *chog.*, *ran.*, *nus.*, *srid.*, *thag.chod.*

These constituents probably do not exist as totally independent verbs: when used without a preceding verb the latter is lost through ellipsis and recoverable. Examples:

ngas. kho. 'gro.(ru.) bcug.pa.yin. "I made him go."
 ˀɲe: ˀkʰɔ ˀdro(ru) ˀtɕu:bəjɿ:
 I-smp. 3sg. go(-ser.) make-link.-aux.

For many speakers the verb preceding *bcug.* is followed by the serial (causative) particle *-ru.* indicated in parentheses above. This may be compared with the comparative adjective particle *-ru.* (11.1.2).

bcug. is the only serial verb which may have a subject different from that of the preceding verb. However, it is still the case that no noun phrase is allowable between the two verbs.

khos. las.ka. byas. chog.gi.red. "He is/will be allowed to work."
 ˀkʰø: ˀle:gə ˀtɕe: ˀtɕʰo:gyre:
 he-smp. work did allow-link.-aux.

There is some variability between speakers and between verbs in the stem of the verb preceding *chog.*; in the above example the past stem is used, but one will also hear the present stem. *chog.* occurs most commonly in the future tense and in the nominalised *chog.pa.* pronounced ˀtɕɔgə in requests for permission:

nga. yong. chog.pa. byed. "May I come?"
 ˀŋa ˀjɔ: ˀtɕʰɔgə ˀtɕi:s
 I come let-nom. do

mo.trā. btang. chog.pa. gñang.rogs. gñang. “Please let me drive the car!”
 _mōtrā ˈtɔ: ˈtʃʰɔgə ˈnɑŋrɔ: ˈnɔ:
 car drive let-nom. do-nom. do

ngas. las.ka. 'di. byed. thub.kyi.'dug. “I can do this work.”
 _ŋe: ˈle:gə ˈdɪ ˈtʃe: ˈtʰubgydu:
 I-smp. work this do can-link.-aux.

da. 'gro. ran.gyi.'dug. “It’s time to go now.”
 _ta ˈdro ˈrɑŋgədu:
 now go be time-link.-aux.

'di. khos. byed. nus.pa.mi.'dug. “He wouldn’t dare do that.”
 _dɪ ˈkʰɔ: ˈtʃe: ˈny:bəmɪndu:
 that 3sg.-smp. do dare-link.-neg.-aux.

'dir. bsdad.na. las.ka. yong. srid.kyi.ma.red.
 _de: ˈde:nə ˈle:gə ˈjɔ: ˈsi:gɪmare:
 this-loc. stay-sub. work exist be possible-link.-neg.-aux.

“If you stay here, it will be impossible to get work.”

rgyal.po. de. sems. shor. thag. chod.nas.
 _ŋje:bu ˈte ˈsem ˈʃɔ: ˈtʰa: ˈtʃʰɔ:nɪ
 king that heart lose be definite-sub.

“The king having irrevocably lost his heart, ...” (Hu Tan et al. 1989: 201)

10.5 *dgos*.

The constituent *dgos* is cited by DeLancey as the only example of his most advanced stage in grammaticisation, in such sentences as:

nga. bod.la. 'gro.dgos.red. “I have to go to Tibet.”
 _ŋa ˈpø:lə ˈdrogure:
 I Tibet-loc. go-link.-aux.

In this example *dgos* is certainly best regarded as a linking particle, and therefore one of the terms in the system of linking particles discussed in Chapter 9. However, as DeLancey recognises (20 n.23), “the story of *dgos* is more complicated than this”. In fact there is an independent verb *dgos*, as well as a serial verb *dgos*, and a nominalising particle *dgos*, in addition to the linking particle *dgos*, and volunteering particle *dgos*, all in common use. Sometimes it is in fact rather difficult to classify a particular instance of *dgos*. What is more, as an independent and serial verb it is grammatically quite idiosyncratic; added to which its graphic and phonological forms are out of step: it is always pronounced as if written *dgo*, rather than *dgos*. There is also some variation in the English equivalents given by informants. It deserves a

special study for which there is no space here; a few examples of its different uses will have to suffice (ostensible tense/aspect forms are given in brackets where applicable):

Independent verb: “want”, “need”

nga. gcig. dgos. “I want/need one.”
 _**ṅa** **ṽci:** **_gɔ**
 I one want

nga. gcig. dgos.yod. (perfect aspect, or perhaps a contraction
 of *dgos.pa.yod.*, future tense)
 _**ṅa** **ṽci:** **_gɔjʃ:** “I want /would like one.”
 I one want-*aux.*

nga. gcig. dgos.kyi.yod. (present tense, self-centred) idem.
 _**ṅa** **ṽci:** **_gugyjʃ:**
 I one want-*link.-aux.*

nga. gcig. dgos.kyi.'dug. (present tense, other-centred) idem.
 _**ṅa** **ṽci:** **_gugydu:** more polite
 I one want-*link.-aux.*

nga. gcig. dgos.byung. (past tense) “I wanted/needed one.”
 _**ṅa** **ṽci:** **_gɔdzɔ**
 I one want-*aux.*

Serial verb: “should”, “must”

slob.grwa.bas. sgrig.lam. yag.po . srung. dgos.
ṽlabdre: **_driglam** **_jagbu** **ṽsɔ** **_gɔ**
 student-*smp.* conduct good-*nom.* observe should
 “Students should conduct themselves properly.”
 (Hu Tan et al. 1989:330)

nga. 'gro. mi.dgos. “I don’t want to go.”
 _**ṅa** **_dro** **_mɔgɔ**
 I go *neg.-want*

nga. 'gro. dgos.kyi.yod. (present tense) “I must go.”
 _**ṅa** **_dro** **_gugyjʃ:** (cf. Roerich & Lhalungpa 1957:56)
 I go *must-link.-aux.*

kho. 'gro. dgos.kyi.'dug. (present tense) “He wants/needs to go.”
ṽkʰɔ **_dro** **_gugydu:**
 3sg. go *want-link.-aux.*

nga. 'gro. dgos.kyi.yin. (future tense) "I shall have to go."
 _ṅa _drɔ _gugyjl: (cf. Amipa 1974:76)
 I go must-link.-aux.

khyed.rang. 'gro. dgos.kyi.red. (future tense) "You should go."
 ṅkjerḍ: _drɔ _gugyre: (cf. Amipa 1974:83)
 you go should-link.-aux.

Linking particle

nga./kho. gro.dgos.red. "I/he should/must go."
 _ṅa/ṅkḥɔ _drɔgure:
 I/3sg. go-link.-aux.

Nominalising particle.

nga. 'gro.dgos. yod. "I would like/want/need to go."
 _ṅa _drɔgo _jɕ:
 I go-nom. exist

nga. 'gro.dgos. byung. "I have to go."
 _ṅa _drɔgo _tɕɔ:
 I go-nom. Existed

nga. 'gro.dgos. byung.ba.red. "I had to go."
 _ṅa _drɔgo _tɕuṅɕere:
 I go-nom. existed-link.-aux.

nga. 'gro.dgos. byung.song. "I had to go."
 _ṅa _drɔgo _tɕuṅsɔ
 I go-nom. existed-aux.

khong. 'gro.dgos. byed.kyi.red. "She will have to go."
 ṅkḥɕ: _drɔgo _tɕigire: (cf. Roerich & Lhalungpa 1957:146)
 3sg. go-nom. do-link.-aux.

Notes

- 1 As DeLancey puts it, "the [diachronic] grammaticalization process in Tibetan will require the development of an innovative serialization construction lacking the NF [non-final clause] marker." (DeLancey 1991:5). This of course assumes that the subordinating relationship came first historically.
- 2 Lhasawa (1980-86 vol.2:101) gives a list of nouns with which it combines to form phrasal verbs. It is not clear whether his past stem *myangs*. is pronounced with an a-type vowel.

11. Adjectives and Adjective Phrases

The Tibetan adjective may be classified as an “adjectival verb” whose combinatorial possibilities differ from, but overlap, those of lexical verbs and verbs of being. An adjective may occur in the predicator of a clause.

More commonly, an adjective is nominalised by one or more nominalising particles, and occupies the position of epithet or head in the noun phrase (7.7). Such a nominalised adjective may be the head of the complement of an adjectival copular clause (with any of the five major verbs of being in the predicator). This distinguishes it from other nouns, which may be heads of complements of nominal copular clauses (with *yin.* or *red.* in the predicator), but not of adjectival copular clauses (9.2.3).

An adjective stem is always monosyllabic. Most adjectives have a single stem. Two common adjectives have a separate positive stem: *chen.* “big” and *sngon.* “blue”, “green”; in other degrees they have non-positive stems *che.* and *sngo.* respectively.

An adjective stem may coexist in a word with an adjective particle, with a reduplication of itself, with noun particles or with verb particles.

An adjectival expression may be non-phrasal or phrasal; ordinary or honorific.

11.1 Adjectival Degrees

Adjectival expressions may be considered along a scale of degree comprising positive, comparative, considerable, superlative, intensive and excessive, and ultimate.

11.1.1 Positive degree

The positive degree of an adjective is formed by adding a nominalising particle after the stem, in the form of either a reduplicated version of the stem, or one of a small number of other particles. Which of the two applies to a particular adjective stem is lexically specified for that stem; as is the choice of the other particle.

Reduplication

Adjectives which are nominalised through reduplication rather than combining with a particle often denote qualities partaking of smallness, unevenness, irregularity, looseness or fluctuation:

khang.pa. chen.po. de.tsho. gsar.pa. red. “Those large buildings are new.”
 ṽkʰaŋbə ṽtʰembu ṽtendzo ṽsu:bə ṽre:
 building large-nom. that-num. new-nom. be

11.1.2 Comparative degree

There are four ways of forming comparative adjectives:

Adjective+nominalising particle *-pa./ba.*

Adjective+verb particle *-kyi./gi./gyi.-red.*

Adjective+*-pa./ba.* with lengthened vowel at predicator position

Adjective+causative verb particle *-ru.*

Adjective -pa./ba.

Here the adjective stem combines with the nominalising particle *-pa/ba.* (pronounced *bə/gə/ŋə/rə* or with lengthened vowel in correspondence with the orthography of the adjective stem, and sometimes spelt *-ga./nga./ra.* as appropriate).

<i>btsog.pa.</i>	ṽtsogə	“dirtier”
<i>gtsang.ba.</i>	ṽtsaŋə	“cleaner”
<i>grang.ba.</i>	ṽtraŋə	“colder”
<i>ljid.pa.</i>	ṽdzi:bə	“heavier”
<i>dkon.pa.</i>	ṽkɔmbə	“rarer”
<i>rtsub.ba.</i>	ṽtsubə	“coarser”
<i>zhim.pa.</i>	ṽɕimbə	“tastier”
<i>skyur.ba.</i>	ṽkju:rə	“sourer”
<i>gsol.ba.</i>	ṽsø:rə	“fresher”
<i>mdzes.pa.</i>	ṽdze:bə	“prettier”
<i>bde.ba.</i>	ṽde:	“more easeful”
<i>che.ba.</i>	ṽtʰɕe:	“bigger”

Note that it is possible for the comparative particle to be spelt the same as the positive particle, as in *btsog.pa.*, though pronounced differently. Also, the comparative particle *-pa. -bə* after final *-s.* or *-d.* is pronounced like the positive particle *-pa.*, which is perhaps the reason why adjective stems ending in these letters avoid combining with *-pa.* in the positive degree.

This type of comparative adjective may be used attributively in the epithet position in the noun phrase:

khang.pa. gtsang.ba. cig. “a cleaner house”
 ṽkʰaŋbə ṽtsaŋə tʰci:
 house clean-nom. num.

It is also used predicatively in adjectival copular clauses as complement of the “evidential” or “attestative” verbs of being *yod.*, *'dug.* and *yog.red.* (see Chapter 9).

khang.pa. gtsang.ba. 'dug. “The house is cleaner (I find).”
 ˈkʰaŋbə ˈtsaŋə ˌduː
 house clean-nom. exist

If used predicatively with the “assertive” verb *red.* (see Chapter 9), this form does not always carry a comparative meaning. It may sometimes be translated as “a very (Adjective) thing”:

'di.'dra.se. byas.na. yag.pa. red. “It is very good to do so.”
 ˌdɪndres ˌtʃɛːnə ˌjagə ˌreː
 such-adv. done-sub. good-nom. be

The comparative form may be used before *-la.* (“a.”) to mean “what a Adj.”:

'di.'dras. ltad.mo. che.ba.la. "a. “What a tremendous show!”
 ˌdɪndreː ˌtɛmʊ ˌtʃʰɛːlə ʔa
 such show big-nom.-loc excl.

Adjective verb particle -kyi./gi./gyi.-red.

This type of comparative construction is verbal rather than nominal, usually employing the verb particles *-gi.red.* which form the future tense (see 9.3.4.3). It is used only predicatively and carries the same “assertive” or “factual” reference as the verbs of being *yin.* and *red.* (see 9.2.3). Vowel harmony is as expected for verbs.

bod.las. dbyin.ji'i. lung.pa. rgya. chung.gi.red.
 ˌpøːləː ˌʔɪŋdʒiː ˌluŋbə ˌgja ˌtʃʰuŋgyreː
 Tibet-comp. Britain extent be small-link.-aux.
 “Britain is smaller than Tibet (as a matter of fact).”

This form participates in the same range of possibilities of mood, polarity and modality as the future tense form.

The adjective stem occasionally combines with other tense/aspect particles:

stabs. yag.song. “Things are looking up!”
 ˌtvɒ ˌjaːsɔ̃
 circumstances good-aux.

Adjective -pa./ba.with lengthened vowel (-pā./bā.)

This form is similar to the comparative form with *-pa./ba.* described above: indeed for adjective stems spelt with vowel final the pronunciation is identical. However, after consonant-final stems the vowel sound of the final syllable is a long *-aː* rather than a reduced *-ə*. The use is predicative. The comparative adjective word occupies the predicator position in the clause, with no further verb. Thus the particle is best regarded as a verb particle.² The form is limited to clauses with positive polarity and indicative mood.

Some speakers seem to use this form only as a shorter alternant of the future tense form in *-pa./ba+ 'dug.*; others however use it also as an alternative to the comparative form in *-kyi./gi./gyi.red.*

chu. 'di. grang.nga. “This water is colder.”
 ˈtʃʰu ˌdɪ ˌtraŋa:
 water this cold-*nom.*

Adjective -ru.

This type of comparative adjective construction refers to an increase coming about or being brought about in the quality denoted by the adjective. Here the adjective stem is combined with the serial (causative) verb particle *-ru.* before the verb *'gro.* “become” or *btang.* “cause”. As in the case of lexical verbs (see 10.5), a harmonically alternating adjective stem does not harmonise with *-ru.*

deng.sang. nga.tsho'i. tsho.ba. tog.tsam. yag.ru. 'gro.gi.'dug.
 ˌtɛŋsɔː ˌŋandzɔː ˈtʃʰɔɔ ˈtɔːdzə ˌjagru ˌdruɡydu:
 nowadays I-*num.-gen.* living standard a little good-*ser.* become-*link.-aux.*
 “Nowadays our standard of living is improving somewhat.”

kho.tshos. khang.pa. che.ru. btang.'dug.
 ˈkʰɔndzɔː ˈkʰaŋbə ˈtʃʰɛru ˈtɔŋdu:
 3sg.-*num.-smp.* house big-*ser.* send-*aux.*
 “They’ve made the house bigger.”

11.1.3 Considerable degree

Here the adjective stem combines with the particle *-se.* to give the meaning “considerably ...”, “very ...”, or “rather (Adjective)”:

mi. mang.se. 'dug. “There are rather a lot of people.”
 ˌmɪ ˌmaŋsɪ ˌdu:
 people many-*nom.* be

11.1.4 Superlative degree

The superlative degree is formed by combining the verb stem with the particle *-shos.* Such an adjective word may be used either attributively or predicatively. *-shos.* has the harmonic alternants *-ʃɔː* and *-ʃyː*.

mo.tra. mgyogs.shos. 'di. red. “The fastest car is this one.”
 _mɔtrə _gɟɔkɕø: _dɪ _re:
 car fast-*nom.* this be

mo.tra. 'di. mgyogs.shos. red. “This car is the fastest.”
 _mɔtrə _dɪ _gɟɔkɕø: _re:
 car this fast-*nom.* be

The adjective “big” forms its superlative with the same stem *che.* as its comparative.

11.1.5 Intensive and excessive degrees

There is a phrasal (two-word) verb *thag. chod.* འཇགས་ཅོད་: འཇགས་ཅོད་: “be decided”, “be definite”. Two constructions etymologically related to it form the intensive and excessive degrees of the adjective respectively, both being used predicatively.

Intensive degree

The intensive construction is Adj.+*thag.chod.*. *thag.chod.* is here a single word, immediately following but separate from the adjective stem which stands as a word of its own. *thag.chod.* is best analysed grammatically here as a particle despite its unusual form.

khang.pa. che. thag.chod. 'dug. “The house is very big.”
 འཇགས་ཅོད་ འཇགས་ཅོད་ འཇགས་ཅོད་: _du:
 house big *nom.* be

Excessive degree

The excessive construction is Adj.+*thag+ chod.-*. Here *thag. chod.* is classified as a (phrasal) serial verb (cf. its use with non-adjectival verbs, 10.5).

khang.pa. che. thag. chod.kyi. 'dug. “The house is too big.”
 འཇགས་ཅོད་ འཇགས་ཅོད་ འཇགས་ཅོད་: འཇགས་ཅོད་ཡི་འཇགས་ཅོད་ཡི་
 house big be decided-*link.-aux.*

Excessive degree with drags.

An alternative form for the excessive degree employs the verb stem *drags.* used as a serial verb in a separate word after the adjective stem.

khang.pa. che. drags.kyi. 'dug. “The house is too big.”
 འཇགས་ཅོད་ འཇགས་ཅོད་ འཇགས་ཅོད་: འཇགས་ཅོད་ཡི་འཇགས་ཅོད་ཡི་
 house big exceed-*link.-aux.*

11.1.6 Ultimate degree

The ultimate degree is formed by reduplication of the adjective stem following the relative/interrogative noun *gang*. “whatever”, “all”. All adjective stems reduplicate in this construction, not just those which reduplicate in the positive degree.

<i>khong. mi.</i>	<i>gang.</i>	<i>yag.yag.</i>	<i>red.</i>	“He is as good a man	
ṽkʰɔː	_mɪ	_kɔː	_jagja:	_re:	as it is possible to be.”
he person whatever good-redup. be					

11.2 Nominalising Particle of Degree: *-los*.

The commonest use of an adjective nominalised with the particle *-los*. is as a wh-interrogative noun when inquiring as to the degree of the quality referred to by the adjective. *-los*. has the harmonic alternants *-lɔː* and *-lyː*.

<i>ja.</i>	'di.	<i>mngar.los.</i>	'dug.pa.	“How sweet is this tea?”
_tɕa	_dɪ	ṽŋa:lɔː	_dɔ	
tea this sweet-nom. be-wh.interr.				

<i>khyed.rang.</i>	<i>phyi.los.</i>	<i>bslebs.pa.</i>	“How late did you arrive?”
ṽkjerɔ̃	ṽtɕʰilyː	ṽle:ba	
you late-nom. arrive-wh.interr.			

An adjective nominalised with *-los*. may also be used in a non-wh-interrogative manner:

<i>khos.</i>	<i>skad.cha.</i>	<i>bde.los.</i>	<i>bod.pa.</i>	<i>nang.bzhin.</i>	<i>bshad.kyi.</i>	'dug.
ṽkʰɔː	ṽkjedzə	_dɛlɔː	_pɔːbə	_nʌŋɕi:	ṽɕe:giɖu:	
he-smp. speech fluent-nom. Tibetan like speak-link.-aux.						
						“He speaks as fluently as a Tibetan.”

11.3 Nominalising Particle of Apparentness *-mdog*.

Like other verbs, adjectival verbs can be nominalised with the particle *-mdog*. and followed by the adjective *kha.po.* to form a phrasal adjective denoting apparentness or likelihood of the adjective applying:

<i>deb.</i>	'di.	<i>yag.mdog.</i>	<i>kha.po.</i>	'dug.	“This book seems good.”
_tɕp	_dɪ	_jandɔ	ṽkʰabu	_du:	
book this good-nom. seem-nom. be					

deb. yag.mdog. kha.shos. 'di. red.
 _tep _jandə ˈkʰaʃøː _di _reː
 book good-nom. seem-nom. this be

“The book most likely to be good is this one.”

-*mdog.* does not have harmonic alternants.

11.4 Nominalising Particle *tsam*. “however much”

thag. nye.tsam. yag.gi.red. “The nearer the better.”
 ˈtʰaː _ɲedzə _jɔgəreː
 near-nom. good-link.-aux.

mgyogs.tsam. shog. “Come as quickly as possible.”
 _gjoɡdzə ˈʃo
 quick-nom. come

khyed.rang. snga.tsam. ma.phyin.na. sdod.sa. rag.ba.mi.'dug.
 _kjerdː ˈɲadzə ˈmɔdzinə _døːsə _rəːbəmɪnduː
 you early-nom. neg.-went-sub. sit-nom. get-link.-neg.-aux.
 “However early you get there, you won’t get a seat.” (Hu Tan 362.)

11.5 Adverbial Use of Adjectives

A noun phrase consisting of a nominalised adjective in positive, comparative or superlative degree may stand as the adjunct of a clause with no further modification.

khong. bod.skad. yag.po. mkhyen.gyi.'dug. “He knows Tibetan well.”
 ˈkʰɔː _pøːgɛː _jagbu ˈkjiŋɡɪduː
 3sg. Tibetan good-nom. know-link.-aux.

Alternatively the “adverbial” particle *byas.* or *byas.nas.* (see 10.1, 12.3) may follow the nominalised adjective:

khyed.rang.gis. las.ka. hur.po. byas.nas. mgo. tshugs.shag.
 ˈkjeraggiː _leːgə ˈhuːbu _tʃɛːni _gə ˈtʃʰuːʃa
 you-smp. work active-nom. did-sub. begin-aux.
 “You have evidently started the work energetically.”

11.6 Phrasal Adjectives

Particularly in modern varieties of the language, the lexical stock of adjectives has been extended by the coinage of phrasal adjectives, most of them consisting of a (non-

phrasal) noun followed by a simple adjective, the two occupying separate words, and the whole capable of qualifying another noun. The process is in fact still largely productive in the Lhasa dialect, but it has also given rise to many lexicalised compounds, e.g.:

<i>dka'.las. khag.po.</i> difficulty hard- <i>nom.</i>	ˈkaɛ: ˈkʰagbu	“difficult”
<i>las. sla.bo.</i> work easy- <i>nom.</i>	ˌɛ: ˈlabu	“easy”
<i>kha. bde.po.</i> mouth easy- <i>nom.</i>	ˈkʰa ˌdɛbu	“fluent”
<i>rgyu.ma. ring.po.</i> guts long- <i>nom.</i>	ˌgjuɹə ˌriŋbu	“lethargic”
<i>gting. zab.po.</i> depth deep- <i>nom.</i>	ˈtiŋ ˌsvɔ:u	“deep”
<i>khams. dwangs.po.</i> state clear- <i>nom.</i>	ˈkʰam ˌtaŋbu	“clean”
<i>“ang.gi. dang.po.</i> number first- <i>nom.</i>	ˈʔaŋgi ˌtaŋbu	“first class”
<i>dug.shed. chen.po.</i> poison big- <i>nom.</i>	ˌtuŋɕɛ: ˈtɕɛmbu	“poisonous”
<i>bsnyon.dri. tsha.po.</i> irritability hot- <i>nom.</i>	ˈnyndri ˈtsʰabu	“irritable”

Whereas the simple adjectives in the above phrases are all common adjectives on their own, those in some other compounds seem not to exist outside them, e.g.

<i>snying. rje.bo.</i> heart ?- <i>nom.</i>	ˈniŋ ˌdʒɛbu	“attractive”. ³
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A category of phrasal adjectives might be called “popular rhyming adjectives” after the “popular rhyming (noun) terms” of Lhasawa (1980-86 vol.2:173-8). Often though not always adjectives of colour, they comprise an adjective stem followed by a reduplicated constituent which may be lexically peculiar to that adjective or shared with others (for a useful list, see Hu Tan et al. 1989:212ff).

Examples formed using the *nag.* of *nag.po.* **ˌnagbu** “black”:

<i>nag. thing.thing.</i>	ˌna: ˈtʰiŋdɿ:	“jet black”
<i>nag. dog.dog.</i>	ˌna: ˌtɕgdɔ:	“black-spotted”
<i>nag. hu.hu.</i>	ˌna: ˈhʊhʊ	“murky”, “dark” (of space)
<i>nag. yug.yug.</i>	ˌna: ˌjuju:	“shadowy”

Of the above reduplicated adjectives, *thing.* may be etymologically related to *gting.* “depth”, and *dog.* to *rdog.* “piece”; while *yug.yug.* itself means “swaying”.

A few adjectives including *bde.po.* “easy”, *khag.po.* “difficult” and *cang. lang.po.* “liable”, “prone”, “apt”, combine with the present stem of a wide range of preceding verbs to form phrasal adjectives:

'deb. 'di. klog. bde.po. yog.red. “This book should be easy to read.”
 _teb _di _lɔ: _debu _jɔ:re:
 book this read easy-nom. exist

nga. mgo. na. cang. lang.po. yod. “I am prone to headaches.”
 _ŋa _gɔ _na _tɕd: _laŋbu _jɔ
 I head hurt prone-nom. exist

11.7 Honorific Adjectives

Honorific adjectives are of two main types:

a) There may be no etymological connection between the ordinary and the honorific members. These are few in number; examples are given in Table 11.1.

Table 11.1

Ordinary		Honorific		
<i>dga'.bo.</i>	_gab <u>u</u>	<i>mnyes.po.</i>	_ne <u>bu</u>	“pleased”
<i>zhim.po.</i>	_ɕim <u>bu</u>	<i>spro.bo.</i>	_tro <u>bu</u>	“tasty”
<i>rgan.pa.</i>	_gem <u>bə</u>	<i>bgres.po.</i>	_dre <u>bu</u>	“elderly”

b) The adjective *gnang.po.* (of which *gnang.* is homographic with the honorific verb *gnang.* “do”, “give”) may follow many bare adjectives as a separate word to form an honorific adjectival compound as in Table 11.2.

Table 11.2

Ordinary	Honorific		
<i>yag.po.</i> _jag <u>bu</u>	<i>yag. gnang.po.</i> _ja:	_nag <u>bu</u>	“good”

Table 11.3

Ordinary		Honorific		
<i>mgo. rnyog.po.</i>	_gɔ _ŋɔ <u>gbu</u>	<i>dbu. rnyog.po</i>	_ʒu _ŋɔ <u>gbu</u>	“confusing”
head turbid-nom.		head turbid-nom.		
<i>sha. skam.po.</i>	_ɕa _kam <u>bu</u>	<i>sku.sha. skam.po.</i>	_kɕə _kam <u>bu</u>	“thin”
flesh dry-nom.		body-flesh dry-nom.		
<i>lag.pa. dam.po.</i>	_lag <u>bə</u> _tam <u>bu</u>	<i>phyag. dam.po.</i>	_tɕʰa: _tam <u>bu</u>	“parsimonious”
hand tight-nom.		hand tight-nom.		

Although most non-phrasal adjectives can in theory be made honorific in this way, the construction is not much used.

Phrasal adjectives offer more scope for honorific variants, since their noun constituents may have honorific counterparts. Examples in Table 11.3.

With some adjectives applicable to the human person, a non-phrasal ordinary adjective corresponds to an honorific phrasal adjective as in Table 11.4.

Table 11.4

Ordinary		Honorific		
<i>lhod.lhod.</i>	ˈl̥ø:l̥ø:	<i>sku. lhod.lhod.</i>	ˈku ˈl̥ø:l̥ø:	“leisurely”
<i>grang.mo.</i>	ˈtraŋmu	<i>sku. bsil.po.</i>	ˈku ˈsi:bu	“cold”
<i>khag.po.</i>	ˈkhagbu	<i>sku. mnyel.po.</i>	ˈku ˈŋe:bu	“difficult”

(*sku.* = “body” (hon.))

11.8 Adjective Phrases

The adjective phrase occupies the position of head or epithet within the noun phrase. Most such adjective phrases consist simply of a nominalised adjective head (simple or phrasal), but there are also a number of items (nouns, with or without particles, and adjectives) which may take the position of modifier before or after the adjective head, within the adjective phrase. Those most commonly encountered, with their meanings a) when alone in a noun phrase and b) at modifier position in the adjective phrase, are given in Table 11.5.

Table 11.5

		alone	modifier position
<i>zhe.drag.</i>	ˈçɛdra:	“many”, “much”	“extremely”, “very”
<i>zhe.po. cig.</i>	ˈçibu tçi:	“ ” “ ”	“ ” “ ”
<i>ha.cang.</i>	ˈhadzɛ:	“ ” “ ”	“ ” “ ”
<i>gang. min.tshad.</i>	ˈkɔ: ˈmindze	“a great deal”	“exceedingly”
<i>dga'.rab.</i>	ˈgɔro	“quite a lot”	(+kyi.) “quite”
<i>"a'u.tse.</i>	ˈʔo:dzə	“not bad”, “so-so”	“fairly”, “reasonably”
<i>'dra.po. (cig.)</i>	ˈrabu (tçi:)	“similar”	“sort of”
<i>tog.tse.</i>	ˈtɔ:dzə	“a little”	“slightly”

Each may be found either before or after the adjective head, though *ha.cang.* and *tog.tse.* most commonly occur before; *"a'u.tse.* most commonly after; and *'dra.po. (cig.)* always after. When *zhe.drag.* and *dga'.rab.* precede the nominalised adjective, they may be followed by a genitive particle. Adjective phrases containing these modifiers are mostly used predicatively in adjectival copular clauses, though sometimes they may be used attributively. Examples:

zhal.lag. zhim.po. zhe.drag. byung. “The meal was really tasty.”
 _ɕɛla _ɕimbu _ɕedra: _tɕɔ:
 meal tasty-*nom.* very was

mi. mang.po. zhe.po. cig. 'dug. “There are a tremendous lot of people.”
 _mi _magbu _ɕibu tɕi: _du:
 person many-*nom.* very *num.* exist

deb. 'di. dga'.rab.kyi. yag.ga. “This book is quite a lot better.”
 _tɛp _di _gɿrogi _jaga:
 book this quite-*gen.* good-*comp.*

gzugs.po. bde.po. "a'u.tse. yod. “I’m reasonably well.”
 _sugbu _debu ʔaudzə _jɔ:
 body well-*nom.* reasonably exist

chu. tsha.po. 'dra.po. 'dug. “The water was sort of hot.”
 ʔtɕu ʔtsʰabu _rabu _du:
 water hot-*nom.* sort of be

nga.tsho. tog.tsam. phyi.po. byas.bzhag. “We’re a bit late.”
 _gandzo ʔtɔ:dzə ʔtɕʰibu _tɕɛ:ɕa
 we slightly late-*nom.* did-*aux.*

Notes

- 1 For a list of such reduplicated adjectives, see Lhasawa (1980-86 vol.2:166ff).
- 2 If written at all this particle is simply spelt *-pa/ba* (Roerich & Lhalungpa 1957:24), though in origin it is probably a contraction of more than one particle; perhaps *-pa/ba.yin.pa.* by analogy with the *wh*-interrogative past tense form.
- 3 For a list of examples with body parts as the first syllable, see Lhasawa (1980-86 vol.2:168ff).

12. Clauses

The systems operating at clause level to be considered here (transitivity, given/new, and theme) concern the presence, absence, order, co-occurrence, composition and intonation of the arguments **subject**, **object** and **adjunct**, all represented by *noun phrases*, and **predicator**, represented by a *verb phrase*.

Also considered is the system of deference, which concerns lexical concord between clause arguments.

12.1 Ellipsis

At the level of the clause, Tibetan regularly takes ellipsis to its extreme limit; or, as it sometimes seems to the foreigner, even beyond it. The clause arguments subject, object and/or adjunct are regularly omitted without being represented by any phoric or pronoun-like element, whenever the speaker or writer feels they are recoverable from the preceding text or exchange or from grammatical concord. The non-native speaker often needs to be very quick-witted to achieve the recovery. While this ellipsis complicates the statement of systems at clause level, particularly the transitivity system, the very phenomenon itself forms the basis of another system, that of “given versus new” (12.5).

The omission of an important clause element, the subject-marking particle, can also be considered as a form of ellipsis operating partly within the same parameters as ellipsis of clause arguments.

In considering our first system, that of transitivity, I shall for convenience largely ignore ellipsis of clause arguments, and return to it under the system of given/new.

12.2 Transitivity: Subjects and Objects

Clause arguments

The transitivity system concerns the *predicator*, and the two arguments *subject* and *object* (or *complement*) of a clause. (Arguments for this purpose include subjects and objects/complements, but not adjuncts:)

There are two types of clause: *two-argument* and *one-argument*, defined first of all by the possible arguments and verb type they may contain. There are two similarly named classes of verb, each of which may be found only in the appropriate type of

clause.

A two-argument lexical verb may occur in the predicator of a clause with subject, object, or neither or both of the latter. If subject and/or object/complement are absent, this is usually through ellipsis, though there is a sub-class of two-argument verbs where this may not be so. Two-argument verbs and two-argument clauses which are not copular may be called transitive.

<i>ngas</i>	<i>bod.pa'i.</i>	<i>dug.log.</i>	<i>gon.gyi.yod.</i>	“I wear Tibetan clothes.”
_ne:	_pø:be:	_tuglo:	_kyggyjø:	
<i>I-smp.</i>	<i>Tibetan-gen.</i>	<i>clothes</i>	<i>wear-link.-aux.</i>	
S	O		P	

Copular verbs of being and copular clauses are also two-argument, but by convention they will not be termed transitive, and the non-subject argument will be called a complement.

<i>kho.</i>	<i>zhing.pa.</i>	<i>ma.red.</i>	“He is not a farmer.”
ṽkḥo	_çiqbæ	_mare:	
<i>3sg.</i>	<i>farmer</i>	<i>neg.-be</i>	
S	Comp	P	

A one-argument lexical verb may occur in the predicator of a clause with or without a subject, but in all cases without an object. These verbs and clauses may be called intransitive. Again, the subject is usually recoverable.

<i>nga.tsho.</i>	<i>yong.gi.yin.</i>	“We shall come.”
_ḡandzo	_junggyjl:	
<i>I-num.</i>	<i>come-link.-aux.</i>	
S	P	

Existential verbs of being, as well as occurring in two-argument (adjectival) copular clauses, also occur as one-argument verbs in existential clauses.

<i>zhal.lag.</i>	<i>zhim.po.</i>	<i>'dug.</i>	“The food is good.”
_çela	_çimbu	_du:	(two-argument adjectival)
<i>food</i>	<i>good-nom.</i>	<i>exist</i>	
S	Comp	P	

<i>khang.pa. cig</i>	<i>'dug.</i>	“There’s a house.”
ṽkḥagbæ	tçi: _du:	(one-argument existential)
<i>house num.</i>	<i>exist</i>	
S	P	

So far, then, the types of verb and their corresponding clauses may be tabulated as follows:

	2-argument lexical (transitive)	2-argument copular	1-argument lexical (intransitive)	1-argument existential
Subject	possible	possible	possible	possible
Object/comp.	possible	possible	impossible	impossible

Subject-marking particle (smp.)

The second major determinant of the transitivity system is the behaviour of the subject-marking particle, which may occur in subjects of clauses with lexical verbs at case-marker position in the noun phrase (see 7.7) and which is often regarded as a marker of “ergative” case. (There is no object-marking particle or any other morphological means of marking objects in Tibetan.)

The subject-marking particle is written *kyis./gis./gyis.* after a consonant final on the preceding written syllable, or *-s.* after a vowel final. In the Lhasa dialect it is pronounced **-gi(:)** in the first case (e.g. *khong.gis.* $\text{ṽk}^{\text{h}}\text{ɔ}^{\text{g}}\text{gi}(\text{:})$), or as a long vowel, closer than that of the item without the particle, in the second (e.g. *khos.* $\text{ṽk}^{\text{h}}\text{ɔ}^{\text{g}}$). It can be difficult to distinguish from the genitive particle *kyi./gi./gyi./-i.* in rapid speech, but differs in that its vowel is often longer and closer and may bear falling pitch, and in that it is more likely to be followed by a pause.

Occasionally a homograph of the ablative particle *nas.* is used as a subject-marking particle, behaving in the same way as *kyis./gis./gyis.*. For examples see below, 12.3; also Hu Tan et al. (1989:327, 342).

The subject-marking particle may be added to the tabulation as follows (“*smp.*” = “subject-marking particle”). Here the intransitive lexical verb and clause type is subdivided into two: “intentional” and “unintentional” (see 9.3.2).

	2-argument lexical (transitive)	2-argument copular	1-argument lexical (intransitive)		1-argument existential
			intl.	unintl.	
Subject	possible	possible	poss.	possible	possible
Object/comp.	possible	possible	imposs.	imposs.	impossible
<i>smp.</i>	possible	impossible	poss.	imposs.	impossible

From the above it will be seen that the subject-marking particle is not found in copular or existential clauses (i.e. with verbs of being in the predicator). It is possible in transitive clauses, and in intransitive intentional clauses.

I regard the single argument of a one-argument unintentional clause as a subject rather than an object because, although like an object it can never take a subject-marking or adjunct-marking particle, like a subject there is concord of deference between it and the predicator.

Examples: (*smp.* = subject-marking particle):

Two-argument lexical (transitive): smp. possible

khos. las.ka. byas.song. "He did the work."
 ʔkʰø: _le:ɡə _tʃe:sʈ
 3sg.-smp. work did-aux.
 S O P

Two-argument copular: smp. not possible

kho. bod.pa. red. "He is Tibetan."
 ʔkʰə _pø:bə _re:
 3sg. Tibetan be
 S Comp P

One-argument lexical (intentional) (intransitive): smp. possible

khos. phyin.song. "It was he who went."
 ʔkʰø: ʔtʃʰinsʈ
 3sg.-smp. went-aux.
 S P

One-argument lexical (unintentional) (intransitive): smp. not possible

kho. na.song. "He was ill."
 ʔkʰə _nasʈ
 3sg. be ill-aux.
 S P

One-argument existential: smp. not possible

kho. yog.red. "He is there."
 ʔkʰə _jə:re:
 3sg. exist
 S P

However the actual presence or absence of the subject-marking particle in a given clause of a type where it is possible correlates with a rather complex set of lexical, grammatical, textual and pragmatic factors, including animacy, grammatical concord and the systems of given/new and theme.

The subject-marking particle in written Tibetan.

Scholars from Tibet itself have traditionally regarded the subject-marking particle as obligatory in those written Tibetan clauses which are by their definitions transitive, and impossible in intransitive clauses. Thus Kesang Gyurme: "Si le verbe est différentiatif [transitive], l'agent admet l'ergatif [subject-marking particle], et il faut

absolument l'employer. Si, en revanche, le verbe est indifférentiatif [intransitive], *il n'est pas correct* d'employer l'ergatif." (Kesang Gyurme 1992:12; my italics.)¹

Such systematic surveys of sample texts as I have been able to undertake suggest that this view is largely though not entirely correct for Preclassical, Classical and Modern Literary Tibetan (see 14.9). Intransitive clauses very rarely have subject-marking particles. The great majority of transitive clauses do have such particles, many of the exceptions being imperative clauses, which more often do not.

Thus for written Tibetan the subject-marking particle substantially has an ergative distribution, functioning to differentiate subjects of transitive clauses (morphologically marked) on the one hand from objects of transitive clauses and subjects of intransitive clauses (both unmarked) on the other.

Even in written Tibetan however, particularly the Modern Literary variety, one does come across exceptions, particularly transitive clauses without subject-marking particle. Some, as already mentioned, are in imperative clauses. Other categories are discussed at 14.9.

The subject-marking particle in Lhasa Tibetan

In the spoken Lhasa dialect the occurrence of the subject-marking particle diverges in a significant proportion of clauses from the standard "ergative" pattern which is commonly reckoned to be the norm for written Tibetan. We find not only transitive clauses without subject-marking particles, but also (though more rarely) intransitive clauses with subject-marking particles. (For the instrumental particle, which is homographic and homophonic with the subject-marking particle, see 12.3.)

Goldstein & Normang do not expressly make the transitive/intransitive distinction, though in their examples intransitive verbs very seldom combine with the subject-marking particle. For "active" (i.e. intentional) verbs, they state that the subject-marking particle is usual in past-tense clauses, optional in present-tense clauses, and only used in the future tense for giving special emphasis to the subject (Goldstein & Normang 1970:62, 100, 113). This claim reminds one of the "aspectual split" as has been established for "split-ergative" constructions in various languages, such as Hindi. DeLancey (1984:133) also claims that "ergative case is impossible in non-perfective clauses" (though this is in the context of "single-argument" or intransitive clauses).

Roerich & Lalungpa (1957:51) draw attention to what they call an "irregular" use of the subject-marking particle in the "first and second persons singular and plural" of an intransitive verb in the past tense (1957:50), and in the future tense in *-yong*. (1957:51), suggesting a possible "person split".

In clauses with verbs referring to acts which can be voluntary or involuntary, DeLancey (1984:134) claims that "the determining factor governing ergative case [i.e. use of the subject-marking particle] ... is volition".

Tomulic also does not expressly make the transitive/intransitive distinction, dividing verbs rather into those of "movement", "action", "perception" and "state" (Tomulic 1987 vol. 1:153, 159). In terms of transitivity, her statements and examples of the use of the subject-marking particle in fact amount to a claim that use of the particle is "possible, même conseillé" with transitive verbs (and present in nearly all

her examples), but “impossible” with intransitive verbs (and absent from nearly all her examples). Tense and aspect are not claimed or shown to be involved. Thus her analysis does not differ significantly from that for written Tibetan.

A more systematic study of the phenomenon by Agha (1993b) seems to fit the facts more closely than Goldstein & Nornang’s, DeLancey’s, or Tomulic’s. Agha’s conclusions are, I believe, similar to mine, allowing for differences in terminology and theoretical background. Use of the subject-marking particle is not a matter of tense/aspect or person, nor is it strictly ergative.

The use of the subject-marking particle will be considered in the context of the five types of clause defined above (which differ from the clause and verb types distinguished by Agha).

Transitive clauses

Clauses with subject, object and predicator (SOP/OSP): absence of subject-marking particle. In many clauses of this subtype, identification of the subject, with or without a subject-marking particle, is not seriously in doubt, whether through grammatical, textual, semantic or pragmatic factors or some combination of these. Some examples may illustrate the point:

<i>khong.</i>	<i>zhal.lag.</i>	<i>bzhes.kyi.</i>	<i>'dug.</i>	“He is having a meal.”
ṽkʰʂ:	ṽʂe:la:	ṽʂi:giɖu:		
3sg.	meal	take-link.-aux.		
S	O	P		

Here an animate argument preceding an inanimate argument followed by a verb normally used with animate subjects represents the unmarked, canonical SOP pattern.

<i>las.ka.ni.</i>	<i>nga.</i>	<i>byas.</i>	<i>tshar.pa.yin.</i>	“As for the work, I finished it.”
ṽle:gəni	ṽŋa	ṽtʂe:	ṽtsʰa:bəjɿ:	
work-top.	I	did	finish-link.-aux.	
O	S	P		

Here, although the object is thematised and precedes the subject, the latter can again be identified through its animacy which contrasts with the inanimacy of the other argument. Identification of the subject through animacy is reinforced by the fact that there is grammatical concord of person between the indicative past tense verb particle combination *-pa.yin.* and the noun *nga.*, “I”. (Even so, a subject-marking particle would be more usual in this type of clause.)

<i>khong.</i>	<i>nga.</i>	<i>btang.</i>	<i>gnang.pa.red.</i>	“He sent me.”
ṽkʰʂ:	ṽŋa	ṽtd:	ṽnaŋbəre:	
3sg.	I	send	do-link.-aux.	
S	O	P		

Here there is grammatical concord of deference (see 12.8) between honorific (phrasal) verb *btang.nang.* and honorific noun *khong.*, as well as concord of person (see

9.3.4.1) and the evidence of argument order (subject precedes object).

In the above examples, there is no subject-marking particle. The same sentences with subject-marking particles are not rejected by informants. Some speakers seem to omit the subject-marking particle regularly in such cases; in the speech of others presence and absence of the particle appear to be in free variation.

Presence of subject-marking particle. In transitive clauses with SOP or OSP, the presence of the subject-marking particle is obligatory or virtually so in a number of circumstances: including clauses with “volunteering” modal particles; clauses with “who?” questions or the equivalent and their responses; clauses where contrastive focus is being assigned to the subject, and clauses where both arguments are animate. In all these cases the subject is being emphasised or focussed on in some way (often the identity of the referent of the subject is the very message of the clause), or else the subject might not be so readily identifiable without the particle.

Volunteering clauses. In a clause with one of the volunteering particles *chog.*, *dgos.*, or *ga.* (see 9.3.7), contrastive focus is being applied to the referent of the subject, which is being contrasted with some other referent(s). The subject in these cases regularly combines with a subject-marking particle:

chang. ngas. nyos.dgos. “Let me buy the beer!”
 ʔtʂʰd: ɲɛ: ɲø:ʔo
 beer I-smp. bought-vol.

ngas. yi.ge. btang.chog. “I can easily send a letter.”
 ɲɛ: ɲigi ʔtaŋdʒo
 I-smp. letter send-vol.
 (“Don’t you bother.”)

ngas. kha.lag. bzos.ga. “Shall I prepare the food?”
 ɲɛ: ʔkʰala: ʔsø:ga
 I-smp. food made-vol.
 (“No-one else seems to want to.”)

“Who?” questions and their responses.

cha.lag. 'di.gyad. sus. tshong.pa.red.pa. “Who sold the things?”
 ʔtʂʰala: ʔdigje: ʔsy: ʔtʂʰoŋbøre:
 thing this-num. who-smp. sell-link.-aux.-wh.interr.

pad.mas. deb. tshong.pa.red. “It was Pema who sold the book.”
 ʔpɛ:mɛ: ʔtɛp ʔtʂʰoŋbøre:
 Pema-smp. book sell-link.-aux.

Contrastive focus on subject. Here it is the subject-marking particle itself which by its presence, often in combination with stress, indicates in the appropriate textual or pragmatic context that, although the subject is easily identifiable, its particular referent rather than some other is being singled out:

khong.gis. lde.mig. bsnams. phebs.song. “It was *he* who brought the key.”
 ཀློང་གིས་ ལེ་མིག་ བསྐྱེད་པེབ་སྐྱོང་
 3sg.-*smp.* key bring-*aux.*

Double animacy. If the referents of both arguments are animate, and there is no way of telling them apart by concord of person or deference between subject and predicator or object and predicator, then argument order alone is usually not sufficient to distinguish the subject, which is almost certain to combine with a subject-marking particle:

mos. kho. mthong.pa.red. “She saw him.”
 མོས་ ཀྱོ་ མཐོང་པའེད་
 she-*smp.* 3sg. see-link.-*aux.*
 S O P

Clauses with subject and predicator (SP). In a clause with a transitive verb but no object (usually due to ellipsis), the subject almost always combines with a subject-marking particle, even when its identification can hardly be in doubt:

ngas. bzos.pa.yin. “I made it.”
 ཉམས་ བཟོས་པའི་ཡིད་
 I-*smp.* made-link.-*aux.*
 S P

Here the particle is present despite the facts that a) the verb *bzo./bzos.* normally has an animate subject and an inanimate object; and b) there is grammatical concord of person between the subject *nga.* and the verb particles *-pa.yin.*

Absence of subject-marking particle: transitive intentional clauses with first-person subject but “other-centred” predicator. In future-tense clauses the combination of first-person actor with other-centred verb particles indicates that although the verb is of the intentional category, the action referred to being typically voluntary, in the particular case it is involuntary. In such clauses the subject-marking particle is nearly always absent:

sang.nyin. nga. las.ka. 'di. byed.kyi.red.
 སང་ཡིད་ ཉམས་ ལས་ཀའ་ འདི་ བྱེད་ཀྱི་ེད་
 tomorrow I-*smp.* work this do-link.-*aux.*
 “I shall be doing this work tomorrow (due to circumstances beyond my control).”

The Subject-marking particle and two-argument copular clauses

Clauses of this type, whether nominal or adjectival, contain in their predicator one of the verbs of being (see 9.2.3). These never contain a subject-marking particle.

The subject-marking particle in intransitive clauses

Intentional clauses. An intentional clause contains an intentional verb (see 9.3.2). While the subject-marking particle is absent from the majority of such clauses, it is certainly not impossible there. In volunteering clauses indeed (see 9.3.7), it seems to be obligatory. There is of course no question of differentiating subject and object, since by definition objects are absent from intransitive clauses. The particle rather seems to perform the function of subject emphasis similarly to the relevant transitive examples given above under “volunteering”, and “contrastive focus”.

Volunteering clauses.

ngas. *bsdad.dgos.* “Let me stay!”
 _**ne:** _**de:yo**
 I-*smp.* stay-*vol.*

ngas. *phyin.chog.* “I can easily go.”
 _**ne:** **ṭṣʰindzɔ**
 I-*smp.* went-*vol.*

ngas. *'khor.ga.* “Shall I come back?”
 _**ne:** **ṭṣʰɔ:ga**
 I-*smp.* return-*vol.*

Contrastive focus.

dge.rgan.gis. *phyin.song.* “It was the teacher who went.”
 _**gegeŋgi:** **ṭṣʰinsɔ**
 teacher-*smp.* went-*aux.*

Unintentional clauses. In intransitive clauses which are unintentional (see 9.3.2), the subject-marking particle is impossible.

khong. *zhe.drag.* *bsnyungs.song.* “He was very ill.”
ṭṣʰɔ: **_ṣedra:** **ṭṣʰuŋsɔ** (not **khong.gis. zhe.drag. bsnyungs.song.*)
 3sg. very be ill-*aux.*

Here the concord of deference between *khong.* and *bsnyungs.* (both honorific) establishes *khong.* as subject, and not an object as in the English “It ails him”.

Summary: Ergativity and the subject-marking particle

In written Tibetan the subject-marking particle has a substantially ergative distribution in the context of transitive clauses (though with some exceptions: see 14.9).

In Lhasa Tibetan it has rather the following functions:

a) In two-argument transitive clauses it serves to identify and/or emphasise the

subject. While its presence is seldom ungrammatical in such clauses, it is quite commonly absent: and normally so in transitive intentional clauses with first-person subject but “other-centred” predicator.

b) In one-argument intransitive intentional clauses it is most commonly absent, but may be used to emphasise the subject.

c) In one-argument intransitive unintentional clauses and all clauses with verbs of being (existential or copular), it is absent.

Thus the use of the subject-marking particle in Lhasa Tibetan is found in the contexts of both transitive and intentional clauses, though in both cases mainly in those clauses where for some reason attention is being drawn to the subject.

If written Tibetan represents a historically earlier state of affairs and Lhasa Tibetan a later one, then ergativity in Tibetan has undergone considerable modification.

Subject-marking particle in nominalised relative-type clauses

The Tibetan equivalent of an English relative clause is typically a clause which has been nominalised by the addition to its verb stem or auxiliary of one of the four “polyfunctional” nominalising particles *-pa./ba.*, *-mkhan.*, *-yag.* or *-rgyu.* (for a full discussion of such particles, see 13.4). In its nominalised form such a unit is, from the point of view of the sentence, not technically a clause at all, but the head of a noun phrase constituting the subject, object or adjunct of a larger clause in which it is embedded. Internally, however, the nominalised clause remains formally a clause, which may have its own subject, object and/or adjunct. The syntax of such constructions throws further light on transitivity and the subject-marking particle.

Intransitive clauses. A single non-adjunct argument (*gang.* in the following example) accompanying an intransitive verb is a subject:

<i>gang.</i>	<i>yod.pa.</i>	<i>(khong.gis. mkhyen.gyi.red.)</i>
_kd:	_jə:bə	(ˈkɔŋgi: ˈkʲiŋgɪre:)
whatever	exist-nom.	(3sg.-smp. know-link.-aux.)
S	P	“(He knows) whatever there is.”

Often in this type of clause there is an adjunct (*kha.sang.* in the following example) but no other argument:

<i>kha.sang. bslebs.pa.</i>	<i>de. (phyi.logs.la. bsdad.kyi.'dug.)</i>
ˈkʰasd:	ˈle:bə ˌtɛ (ˈtɕilo:lə ˌde:gədu:)
yesterday	arrive-nom. the (outside-nom. wait-link.-aux.)
Adj	P

“The one who arrived yesterday (is waiting outside).”

With a lexical verb the *-pa./ba.* may be replaced by *-mkhan.*. When a subject other than a relative/interrogative noun is present it usually follows the nominalised verb which bears a genitive particle; though with *-mkhan.* the genitive is often omitted:

kha.sang. bslebs.pa'i. mi. de. “the man who arrived yesterday”
 ˀkʰasd: ˀle:bɛ: ˀmɪ ˀte
 yesterday arrive-nom.-gen. man the

kha.sang. bslebs.mkhan.(gyi.) mi. de. “the man who arrived yesterday”
 ˀkʰasd: ˀle:ŋɛ/ŋɛŋɪ ˀmɪ ˀte
 yesterday arrive-nom.(-gen.) man the

Transitive clauses. In a transitive clause nominalised with *-pa./ba.*, a non-adjunct argument lacking a subject-marking particle refers to a patient:

mi. (stag.gis.) bsad.pa. cig. “a man who was killed (by a tiger)”
 ˀmɪ (ˀta:gi:) ˀsɛ:bə tɕi:
 man (tiger-smp.) kill-nom. num.
Patient (S)

An argument with subject-marking particle (in brackets above, usually following the other argument) refers to the actor.

With two arguments, both lacking subject-marking particle, the nominalised verb combines with the first argument to indicate an actor:

stag. mi. bsad.pa./mkhan. cig. “a tiger which killed a man”
 ˀta: ˀmɪ ˀsɛ:bə/ŋɛ tɕi:
 tiger man kill-nom. num.
Actor Patient

Here *-pa./ba.* may be replaced by *-mkhan.*, in which case the actor noun may be omitted:

mi. bsad.mkhan. cig. “one which killed a man”
 ˀmɪ ˀsɛ:ŋɛ tɕi:
 man kill-nom. num.
Patient

A verb nominalised with *-pa./ba.* and linked to a following argument by a genitive particle indicates a patient. An actor noun preceding the verb must carry a subject-marking particle:

(stag.gis.) bsad.pa'i. mi. cig. “a man who was killed (by a tiger)”
 (ˀta:gi:) ˀsɛ:bɛ: ˀmɪ tɕi:
 tiger-smp. kill-nom.-gen. man num.
(Actor) Patient

(*mis.*) *bsad.pa'i.* *stag. cig.* “a tiger which was killed (by a man)”
 (*_mi:*) *ˉse:be:* *ˉta: t̥ci:*
 (man-*smp.*) kill-*nom.*-*gen.* tiger *num.*
 (Actor) Patient

However, if there is an argument preceding the nominalised verb which lacks a subject-marking particle, it indicates a patient, and the noun following the genitive particle now represents an actor:

stag. *bsad.pa'i.* *mi. cig.* “a man who killed a tiger”
ˉta: *ˉse:be:* *_mɪ t̥ci:*
 tiger kill-*nom.*-*gen.* man *num.*
 Patient Actor

If the clause is nominalised by *-mkhan.*, the patient noun may be omitted and the remaining argument will still indicate an actor:

(*stag.*) *bsad.mkhan.(gyi.) mi. cig.* “a man who killed (a tiger)”
 (*ˉta:*) *ˉse:ŋɛ(ŋgi)* *_mɪ t̥ci:*
 (tiger) kill-*nom.*(-*gen.*) man *num.*
 (Patient) Actor

Clauses with object but no subject (OP)

In many OP-type clauses a subject, omitted through ellipsis, is recoverable by context or concord of person or deference and has to be represented by a pronoun in an English translation. Sometimes however there is no recoverable subject and the most convenient English translation uses a passive construction, although there is no formal distinction between active and passive in Tibetan. Thus the following example could be understood in two ways, depending on whether a subject was recoverable or not:

yi.ge. bris.shag. a) “(He/she/you/they) wrote the letter.”
_jɪŋɪ _tri:ɕa b) “The letter has been written.”
 letter wrote-*aux.*

The “passive” interpretation of such clauses can give problems of categorising other arguments where these are present: the matter will be returned to below under the instrumental particle.

12.3 Adjuncts

An adjunct is a simple or complex noun phrase, which is neither the subject nor the object of a clause. Some adjuncts are, like objects, not identified as such by any diagnostic particle. This particularly applies to many expressions relating to time. Other adjuncts are marked at case-marker position in the noun phrase by one of five

types of adjunct-marking particle: instrumental, dative-locative, ablative, disjunctive/exceptive, or adverbial.

The instrumental particle (-inst.)

Homographic and homophonic with the subject-marking particle is the adjunct-marking instrumental particle, translatable by such English expressions as “with”, “by”, “by means of”, “through”, “because of”, etc. It is most commonly found with noun phrases whose referents are inanimate, though animate referents are also possible.

Transitive clauses. In clauses with transitive verbs where this particle is present, the animate/inanimate distinction is a good rule of thumb for distinguishing subjects from instruments:

<i>khos.</i>	<i>yi.ge.</i>	<i>bris.song.</i>		“He wrote the letter.”
ṽkʰø:	_jiɣɪ	_tri:sθ		
3sg.-smp.	letter	wrote-aux.		
S	O	P		

<i>khos.</i>	<i>yi.ge.</i>	<i>smyug.gus.</i>	<i>bris.song.</i>	“He wrote the letter with a pen.”
ṽkʰø:	_jiɣɪ	_ɲuɣy:	_tri:sθ	
3sg.-smp.	letter	pen-instr.	wrote-aux.	
S	O	Adj	P	

<i>yi.ge.</i>	<i>smyug.gus.</i>	<i>bris.song.</i>	“(He/she/you/they) wrote the letter with a pen.”
_jiɣɪ	_ɲuɣy:	_tri:sθ	or, The letter was written with a pen.”
letter	pen-instr.	wrote-aux.	
O	Adj	P	

It might reasonably be objected that in the last example *smyug.gus.* is indistinguishable from a subject and that the sentence could be literally translated “A pen wrote the letter.” However, the particle could not be omitted from it, whereas it could from the *khos.*: thus *kho.yi.ge.smyug.gus.bris.song.* is possible, whereas **yi.ge.smyug.gu.bris.song.* is not. Thus non-omissibility of the particle distinguishes an instrument (adjunct) from a subject.

With first-person concord between recoverable subject and predicator, subject and instrument are clearly distinguished:

<i>yi.ge.</i>	<i>smyug.gus.</i>	<i>bris.pa.yin.</i>	“I/we wrote the letter with a pen.”
_jiɣɪ	_ɲuɣy:	_tri:bəjɪ:	
letter	pen-instr.	wrote-link.-aux.	
O	Adj	P	

Another type of clause containing an adjunct with inanimate referent and obligatory instrumental particle has no recoverable subject in Tibetan, and has to be

translated as an English passive clause, or as an English active clause with the Tibetan adjunct as English subject:

<i>khang.pa. pha.gis.</i>	<i>nyog.khra.</i>	<i>bzos.pa.red.</i>
ṽkʰaŋbə	ṽpʰʌgi:	_nɔgdɾə
house	that- <i>inst.</i>	trouble
		made-link.-aux.
Adj	O	P

“That house caused trouble.”/“Trouble was caused by that house.”
(Lhasawa 1980-86 vol.1:107)

Intransitive clauses. Clauses containing certain intransitive verbs which usually take inanimate subjects may contain adjuncts referring to animate instruments or agents:

<i>shog.bu.</i>	<i>ral.song.</i>
ṽɕuɣu	_re:sɔ
paper	get torn- <i>aux.</i>
S	P

“The paper got torn/tore.”

<i>phrug.gu.tshos.</i>	<i>shog.bu.</i>	<i>ral.song.</i>
ṽtʃu:ɣudzø:	ṽɕuɣu	_re:sɔ
child-num.- <i>instr.</i>	paper	get torn- <i>aux.</i>
Adj	S	P

“The paper got torn by the children (accidentally).”

The latter example, containing the intransitive verb *ral*. “get torn”, contrasts with the following, which contains the intentional transitive verb *hral*. “tear”:

<i>phrug.gu.tshos.</i>	<i>shog.bu.</i>	<i>hral.song.</i>
ṽtʃu:ɣudzø:	ṽɕuɣu	ṽre:sɔ
child-num.- <i>smp.</i>	paper	tear- <i>aux.</i>
S	O	P

“The children tore the paper (deliberately).”

Again, the noun phrase representing the instrument/agent must carry the instrumental particle, whereas that referring to the animate actor of the transitive clause could stand without its subject-marking particle:

**phrug.gu.tsho.shog.bu.ral.song.* is impossible, but:
phrug.gu.tsho.shog.bu.hral.song. is possible.

Note that with a first-person actor/agent, there is a three-way contrast between:

<i>ngas.</i>	<i>shog.bu.</i>	<i>ral.song.</i>
_ne:	ṽɕuɣu	_re:sɔ
I- <i>instr.</i>	paper	get torn- <i>aux.</i>
Adj	S	P

“The paper got torn by me.”

nga(s). shog.bu. hral.pa.yin. "I tore the paper (deliberately)."
 _ḡa/_ḡe: ṽḡuḡu ṽre:bəjɪ:
 I(-smp) paper tear-link.-aux.
 S O P

nga(s). shog.bu. hral.song. "I tore the paper (accidentally)."
 _ḡa/_ḡe: ṽḡuḡu ṽre:sḡ
 I(-smp) paper tear-aux.
 S O P

The dative-locative particle (-loc.)

The alternant of the dative-locative particle after syllables with a written consonant final is *-la*. *-lə*. After a written vowel final this same form is sometimes found; at other times it is written as a final *-r*, which merges with the preceding syllable to give the expected pronunciation for this spelling: a vowel which is lengthened and sometimes centralised compared with the same syllable without it (see Chapter 6, Table 6.2).

Thus one will hear *khong.la*. ṽkʰəŋlə "to her", and both *nga.la*. ḡalə and *ngar*. ḡa: "to me".

Some speakers seem to use the *-r* final form whenever possible; others, not at all.

As my name for it suggests, this particle is frequently the translation equivalent of both English "to", "for" (dative) and English "at" (locative).

khong. lha.sa.la. phebs.kyi.red. "She'll come to Lhasa."
 ṽkʰəŋ ḡe:sələ ṽpʰe:gəre:
 3sg Lhasa-loc. come-link.-aux.

khong. mgron.khang.la. bzhugs.kyi.red. "She'll stay at the guest house."
 ṽkʰəŋ ḡdrəŋgəŋlə ḡcu:gyre:
 3sg guest house-loc. stay-link.-aux.

khyed.rang.gi. don.dag.la. red. "It is for your benefit."
 ṽkjeraggi ṽtənda:lə ḡre:
 you-gen. benefit-loc. be

Often the particle is found where English would have "towards", "in", "on", "into", "onto".

The dative-locative particle can also mean "as":

khong. srid.'dzin.la. bsko.gzhag. byas.pa.red.
 ṽkʰs: ṽsi:dʒɪnlə ṽkəçə: ṽtçe:bəre:
 3sg. president-loc. appointed-link.-aux.
 "He was appointed president." or, "They appointed him president."

Extended dative-locative expressions. These are semi-grammaticised forms in which the dative-locative particle *la* is added to a noun which is either linked by a genitive particle to the preceding part of the noun phrase, or, in the case of some common such nouns, follows the latter directly.

The commonest such nouns include *nang*.(logs.) “interior”, *sgang*. “top”, *'og*. “bottom”, “space underneath”, *phyi*.(logs.) “exterior”, *khri*. “side” *dkyil*. “middle” *mdun*. “space in front”, *rgyab*. “back”, “space behind”. There are a large number of others: a useful list of some forty is given by Lhasawa (1980-86 vol.1:108f). Examples of adjuncts formed with these are:

<i>khang.pa'i. nang.la.</i>	ṽkʰagbɛ: ʔnaglɛ	“in the house”
<i>lcog.tse'i. sgang.la.</i>	ṽtɕɔgdze: ʔgaglɛ	“on the table”
<i>deb.kyi. 'og.la.</i>	ṽtebgɪ ʔwɔ:lɛ	“under the book”
<i>rdzong.gi. phyi.logs.la.</i>	ṽdzɔŋgɪ ṽtɕʰilɔ:lɛ	“outside the fort”
<i>mtsho'i. khri.la.</i>	ṽtsʰø: ṽtɕi:lɛ	“by the lake”
<i>lung.pa'i. dkyil.la.</i>	ṽluŋbɛ: ṽkji:lɛ	“in the middle of the country”
<i>lha.khang.gi. mdun.la.</i>	ṽlagangɪ ʔdynlɛ	“in front of the temple”
<i>sman.khang.gi. rgyab.la.</i>	ṽmɛŋgagɪ ʔgɪvblɛ	“behind the hospital”

With a few noun constituents in this type of construction, of which the commonest are *ched*. and *bar*., one finds the common literary dative-locative particle *du./ru*. instead of *la*. :

<i>lha.sa.la.</i>	<i>'gro.ba'i.</i>	<i>ched.du.</i>	<i>red.</i>
ṽlɛ:səlɛ	ṽdrowɛ:	ṽtɕʰedɔ	ṽre:
Lhasa-loc.	go-nom.-gen.	purpose-loc.	be
“It’s for the purpose of going to Lhasa.”			

The construction *-gen.+nang.la*. “in(side)” has the shorter alternants *-gen.+nang*. and *nang*. for some speakers, for whom there is thus a particle *nang*. “in(side)” as well as a noun *nang*. “interior”:

<i>khang.pa. nang. bsdad.kyi.yin.</i>	“I’ll stay in the house.”
ṽkʰagbɛ ʔnd: ʔde:gəjɪ:	
house loc. stay-link.-aux.	

Likewise some speakers have the alternants *sgang*. “on” and *'og*. “under” for *-gen.+sgang.la.* and *-gen.+’og.la.* respectively.

A number of examples of extended adjunct-marker combinations of noun+dative-locative particle linked to a preceding nominalised verb with a genitive particle are given in Chapter 8.

Possession. The commonest translation equivalent of English verbs of having or possessing is a construction with the noun phrase referring to the thing possessed as the subject of an existential verb, and that referring to the possessor being an adjunct with dative-locative particle:

khong.la. phebs.'gro. yog.ma.red. "He has no car."
 ṽkʰɔŋlə ṽpʰɛbdro ṽjɔ:məre:
 3sg-loc. car not exist

The ablative particle (-abl.)

The ablative particle *-nas.* (homographic with the subordinating verb particle *-nas.*) is often the translation equivalent of English "from". It may be added to most of the same nouns as the dative-locative particle to form extended adjunct-markers.

khong. bod.nas. red.pas. "Is he from Tibet?"
 ṽkʰɔŋ ṽpø:nɛ: ṽrɪbɛ:
 3sg. Tibet-abl. be-interr.

lcog.tse. 'di. shing.nas. bzos.pa.red. "This table is made of wood."
 ṽtɕɔgdzi ṽdɪ ṽɕiŋnɛ: ṽsø:bəre:
 table this wood-abl. made-link.-aux.

A homograph of the ablative particle is occasionally used as a subject-marking particle:

deb. 'di. srid.'dzin.nas. par.bskrun. byas.pa.red.
 ṽtɛp ṽdɪ ṽsi:dzɪnɛ: ṽpa:drɻ: ṽtɕɛ:bəre:
 book this president-abl. publish-link.-aux.
 "The book was published by the President."

The ablative particle-pairs *-nas. bzung.* and *-nas. byas.* mean "since" (the latter being more colloquial). They are often found after nominalised verbs:

de.nas. bzung. ngas. mthong.ma.byung. "I haven't seen it since then."
 ṽtɛŋɛ: sɔ ṽŋɛ: ṽtʰɔŋmadzɔ
 that-abl. I-smp. see-neg.-aux.

khong. slebs.pa.nas. byas. mjal.byung. "I've seen him since he arrived."
 ṽkʰɔ: ṽle:bəne: tɕɛ: ṽdze:dzɔ
 3sg. arrive-nom. abl. meet-aux.

The disjunctive and exceptive particles (-disj., excep.)

The disjunctive particle *-las.*, meaning "than", "other than" is found in conjunction with comparative adjectives (11.1.2); or with negative verbs to mean "only":

rgyal.rtse.ni. lha.sa.las. chung.gi.red. "Gyantse is smaller than Lhasa."
 ṽgɿandzɪnɪ ṽle:səle: ṽtɕʰɔŋgyre:
 Gyantse-top. Lhasa-disj. be small-link.-aux.

khang.pa. gcig.las. yog.ma.red. “There’s only one house.”
 ˈkʰaŋbə ˈtʃi:lɛ: ˌjɔ:mɑrɛ:
 house one-disj. exist-neg.

The exceptive particles *ma.gtogs.* mean “only”, “but”, “apart from” or “except”:

khyed.rang. ma.gtogs. tshang.ma. bod.pa. red.
 ˈkʰjɛrd: ˌmɑɔ: ˈtsʰaŋmə ˌpø:bə ˌrɛ:
 you excep. all Tibetan be
 “Everyone is Tibetan but you.”

The adverbial particles (byas./byas.nas.; -se.)

A nominalised adjective may be used as an adjunct with the adverbial particle *-byas.* or *-byas.nas.*, equivalent to the English adverbial suffix “-ly”. This is formally similar to the homographic subordinating verb particle, but without the latter’s falling pitch and following pause.

khyed.rang.gis. las.ka. hur.po. byas.(nas.) mgo. tshugs.shag.
 ˈkʰjɛrɑŋgi: ˌlɛ:gə ˈhu:bu ˌtʃɛ:(ni) ˌgɔ ˈtsʰu:ʃɑ
 you-smp. work active-nom. did(-sub.) begin-aux.
 “You have evidently started the work energetically.”

The particle *-se.* is unusual in two respects: it is pronounced as a syllable-final *-s*, and it only occurs as far as I am aware after the postpositional nouns *'di.dras.*, *de.dras.*, *pha.dras.*, *ya.dras.*, *ma.dras.* and *da.ga.*, and the constituent *'dug.*. The resulting adjuncts are:

<i>'di.'dras.se.</i>	“thus”	<i>de.'dras.se.</i>	“that way”
_dindres		_tendres	
<i>pha.'dras.se.</i>	“that way”	<i>ya.'dras.se.</i>	“like that up there”
_phandres		_jandres	
<i>ma.'dras.se.</i>	“like that down there”	<i>da.ga.se.</i>	“simply”
_mandres		_taga:s	
<i>'dug.se.</i>	“thus”		
_du:s/_duks			

The constituent *'dug.* is probably better regarded as an otherwise unknown noun than as the verb of being *'dug.* (its spelling is in any case conjectural).

The adverbial particles may be combined to give such adjuncts as *'di.'dras.se. byas.* “thus”, *'dug.se. byas.* “thus” etc.

Unmarked adjuncts

Nominalised adjectives are frequently used as adjuncts “adverbially” (see 11.5) without any adjunct-marking particle:

khong. bod.skad. yag.po. mkhyen.gyi.'dug. “He knows Tibetan well.”
 ṽkʰɔ: ṽpøge: ṽjagbu ṽkjɪŋgɪdu:
 3sg. Tibetan good-nom. know-link.-aux.

Many adjuncts of time and manner are simply noun phrases with no adjunct-marking particle. Some of the nouns they contain are seldom if ever found outside such adjunctive use.

da.lo. lha.sar. bsdad.kyi.yod. “This year I’m staying in Lhasa.”
 ṽtalo ṽlɛ:sa: ṽde:gəjə:
 this year Lhasa-loc. stay-link.-aux.

dngos.gnas. las.ka. yag.po. byas.song. “They really worked well.”
 ṽŋø:nɛ: ṽlɛ:gə ṽjagbu ṽtɕɛ:sɔ
 reality work good-nom. did-aux.

Conventions and exclamations

A variety of conventional expressions usually standing at the beginning of a sentence, sometimes at the end, or more often alone with no predicator, subject or object, may be classified as adjuncts since the adjunct is in effect a residual category including anything that is not a subject, object or predicator.

Polite expressions. The following expressions of assent, greeting, gratitude or pleading imply politeness towards the interlocutor (not, as in the deference system, politeness towards the referent of a subject, object or adjunct as such: compare the use of *lags*. in Preclassical and Classical Tibetan, 14.6):

thugs.rje. che. “thankyou” (your compassion is great)
 ṽtʰu:dʒɪ ṽtɕɛ/ṽtʰɔdʒɛ
 compassion be great

sku.skyid. “please”
 ṽkuci:
 body (hon.)-pleasant

dgong.dag. “sorry”, “excuse me”
 ṽgɔnda:
 pardon

lags. “Yes?” (response to being
 ṽla: addressed by name)
 be

lags. 'ong "yes", "no", "quite so"
 _1a: _ʒ: (concurrence)
 be be

bkra.shis. bde.legs. "Greetings!"
 ˉtraçi: _dele:
 good fortune happiness

Various expressions including the following mean "yes", "very well" (agreeing to do something)

lags.so. _1as
 be-mcf.

(*lags.*) *legs.so.* (_1a:) _1es
 (be) be good-mcf.

lags.'ong. legs.so. _1ḍ: _1es
 be be be good-mcf.

For the main-clause final particle, otherwise largely confined to Classical and Preclassical Tibetan, see 14.6.

Exclamations. Common exclamations include the following; the first three expressing various degrees of surprise:

"*a.las.* ˉʔa1ε:
 "*a.tsi.* ˉʔadzi:
 "*a.kha.* ˉaga:
snying.rje. ˉɲiŋdʒε "Poor thing!"
 compassion

12.4 Argument Order

In those transitive non-copular clauses where the subject is clearly distinguished from the object and adjunct by means other than the order of arguments (i.e. usually by means of the subject-marking particle), that order is free to vary, and indeed does vary so as to create the "theme" system to be described below (12.7), the predicator however nearly always remaining final.

In two-argument copular clauses, where there is neither subject- nor object-marking, argument order is crucial to the identification of subject and complement. The order of arguments in such clauses is subject-complement-predicator, with adjuncts free to take up any position before the predicator, though within the theme system:

<i>dge.rgan.</i>	<i>bod.pa.</i>	<i>red.</i>		“The teacher is a Tibetan.”
_gegé:	_pø:bə	_re:		
Teacher	Tibetan	be		
S	Comp	P		

<i>bod.pa.</i>	<i>dge.rgan.</i>	<i>red.</i>		“The Tibetan is the teacher.”
_pø:bə	_gegé:	_re:		
Tibetan.	teacher	be		
S	Comp	P		

In those transitive non-copular clauses with unmarked subject, context and lexico-semantic features such as animacy usually leave the identification of subject and object in little doubt. Nevertheless the subject-object-predicator order is by far the commonest:

<i>khong.</i>	<i>zhal.lag.</i>	<i>bzhes.kyi.</i>	<i>'dug.</i>		“He is having a meal.”
ṽkʰɿ:	_çɛ:lɑ:	_çi:gɪdu:			
3sg.	meal	take-link.-aux.			
S	O	P			

Reversal of the subject and object would normally be accompanied by a subject-marking particle on the subject:

<i>zhal.lag.</i>	<i>khong.gis.</i>	<i>bzhes.kyi.</i>	<i>'dug.</i>		“It’s he who is having a meal.”
_çɛ:lɑ:	ṽkʰɿŋgi:	_çi:gɪdu:			
meal	3sg.-smp.	take-link.-aux.			
S	O	P			

Thus it seems reasonable to regard SOP (SOV in Greenbergian terms) as the unmarked, canonical phrase order in Tibetan.

In intransitive clauses, which contain no objects, the subject always precedes the predicator and the only possibility of variation in phrase order is between the subject and adjunct(s), again within the theme system.

12.5 Given/new

The given/new system relates to arguments of the clause which are assumed by the speaker to be either “given” or “new” to the hearer, and is manifested by the *presence or absence* of these arguments.

Having outlined the transitivity system in terms of the possibility or impossibility of subject and/or object being present, we return to the question of ellipsis. The general rule, as already mentioned, is that any subject, object or adjunct may be and commonly will be omitted if the speaker or writer feels that it can reasonably be recovered by the hearer or reader, and therefore regarded as “given” information. A subject, object or adjunct which is present is therefore very often “new” information.

It may be useful to compare the situation with that in English. In English a “given” subject or object will normally be represented by an anaphoric pronoun, unless the lexical verb is omitted, in which case the object will be completely omitted as in Tibetan. Given adjuncts of time or manner tend to be omitted in both languages, those of place omitted in Tibetan but often represented by demonstrative pronouns in English.

Three likely answers to the English question “Did Tashi leave the book on the table?” (subject object and adjunct thus now being “given”) are:

- a) “Yes, he left it (there).”: anaphoric pronoun for subject and object, and possibly adjunct;
- b) “Yes, he did.”: ellipsis of object, adjunct and lexical verb;
- c) “Yes.”: ellipsis of subject, object, adjunct and verb phrase.

The corresponding question in Tibetan is:

bkra.shis.kyis. deb. lcog.tse'i. sgang.la. bzhag.ba.red.pas.

ṽraḩi:gi: ṽtep ṽḩogdzi: ṽgaḩḩe ṽḩa:bḩeḩe:

Tashi-*smp.* book table-*gen.* top-*loc.* leave-*link.*-*aux.*-*interr.*

“Did Tashi leave the book on the table?”

to which the only likely replies would be:

- a) (*lags.*) *bzhag.pa.red.* “Yes, he left it.”
(*ṽla:*) *ṽḩa:bḩe:* (ellipsis of subject, object and adjunct)
(yes) leave-*link.*-*aux.*
- b) (*lags.*) *red.* “Yes, he did.”
(*ṽla:*) *ṽre:* (ellipsis of subject, object, adjunct, verb and linking particle)
(yes) *aux.*

Thus Tibetan generally goes farther in ellipsis than English, except that it less often omits the whole verb phrase.

The possible types of clause are as follows, the ordering of the elements within square brackets being flexible:

Transitive (non-copular)	[S O Adj] P, [S O] P, [S Adj] P, S P, O P, [O Adj] P, [Adj] P, P.
Intransitive	[S Adj] P, S P, Adj P, P.
Copular	[S Comp Adj] P, [S Comp] P, Comp P, P

The different possibilities of ordering of arguments S,O and Adj in transitive clauses, of arguments S and Adj in intransitive clauses, and of arguments SComp (whose order is fixed) and Adj in copular clauses constitute the system of “theme”.

12.6 Theme

Argument order

Whereas the categories of given and new are manifested by the presence or absence of subject, object and adjunct, the categories of the theme system relating to these arguments are manifested by their *order* within the clause. As well as the main “theme” of a clause, that is, what the *speaker* decides it is “about”, one can recognise subordinate themes and an interaction with the use of the subject-marking particle, topic-marking particle and intonation, in what seems to be a complex process whose full investigation is beyond our present scope. I find it best to regard theme and its converse, “rheme”, as two ends of a continuum rather than a stark choice between opposed terms. Be that as it may, the main principles are clear enough.

In general, for any two clause elements except the predicator, the one which comes first is thematically the more prominent. Thus it follows a) that the beginning of the clause is the most “thematic” position; and b) that to reverse the relative thematic prominence of any two elements one reverses their order. The predicator does not enter into this system because it must always be final in the clause, apart from any “echo” argument (see below, under argument intonation).

The converse of the theme is the “rheme”, or the information that is being given about the theme. It further follows from the above that the last place in the clause immediately before the predicator is the most “rhematic” position, where what is in a sense the most important piece of new information can be placed for greatest effect.

Some manifestations of the system will now be considered.

Subject and object

Since the order subject-object/complement is fixed as SCompP in two-argument copular clauses, the theme system insofar as it relates to subjects and objects does not apply to these clauses. Nor does it apply to intransitive or existential clauses, as these have no objects.

In transitive clauses with a subject-marking particle the theme system relating to subject and object only applies to those clauses actually containing both: in practice often a rather small proportion of the total. The subject-theme clauses, where the subject precedes the object, are in the great majority within this proportion - typically over ninety percent in written passages which have been analysed - and may be regarded as the unmarked or neutral member. The object-theme clause is used by the speaker or writer to promote the object to the status of theme, much like the situation in English where first position, with or without passivisation, may promote the object to theme.

'di	ngas.	ha.	go.gi.mi.'dug.	“That I don’t understand.”
_di	_ne:	ˈha:	_kugymindu:	
that	I-smp.	understand-link.	-neg.-aux.	
O	S		P	

Adjuncts

In intransitive clauses adjuncts may precede or follow the subject, and in transitive clauses they may also precede or follow the object/complement.

The numerous resulting permutations of clause-element sequences, and the fact that adjuncts of time, place and manner respectively tend to behave in subtly different ways, make the thematic process in clauses with many elements rather complex. I have not succeeded in identifying a clearly unmarked or neutral overall order in clauses containing adjuncts as well as subject and/or object. Generally however it is noticeable that adjuncts of time very often precede those of place and manner, and in narrative styles, as might be expected, they very often occur at the beginning of a clause as the whole or part of its theme. Adjuncts of place most often seem to precede those of manner, and typically neither of the two precedes the subject unless as part of the theme of the clause.

The “expanded” English translations for the examples with adjuncts of time below indicate the sort of semantic distinctions which can be made within this system:

khe.sa. ngas. pad.ma. mthong.byung.

ṽkʰesə **ṽne:** **ṽpe:mə** **ṽtʰoŋdzʊ**
yesterday I-*smp.* Pema see-link.-aux.

Adj S O P

“What happened yesterday was that I saw Pema.”

ngas. khe.sa. pad.ma. mthong.byung.

ṽne: **ṽkʰesə** **ṽpe:mə** **ṽtʰoŋdzʊ**
I-*smp.* yesterday Pema see-link.-aux.

S Adj O P

“What happened was that I saw Pema yesterday.”

ngas. pad.ma. khe.sa. mthong.byung.

ṽne: **ṽpe:mə** **ṽkʰesə** **ṽtʰoŋdzʊ**
I-*smp.* Pema yesterday see-link.-aux.

S O Adj P

“It was yesterday that I saw Pema.”

Argument intonation

Predicator as theme. A predicator cannot be thematised by moving it towards the beginning of the clause, since no argument may follow the predicator (with the exception of an “echoed” argument; see below). A predicator may instead be thematised, usually when there is only one other argument in the clause, by pronouncing on a high pitch all those syllables which may bear such a pitch: namely, Tone-1 verb stems, and linking particles *kyi./gi./gyi*, *rgyu.*, *yag.*, *mkhan.*, *grabs.*, *chog.*; also subordinating particles (see Chapter 13). A non-thematised predicator will have all its syllables pronounced on a uniformly low pitch. (The examples following show the pitch of each syllable: ↓ = high-falling pitch.)

yi.ge. btang.gi.red. "He'll send *the letter*." (object theme)
 `ji`gi `taŋ`gə`re:
 letter send-link.-aux.

yi.ge. btang.gi.red. "He'll *send* the letter." (predicator theme)
 `ji`gi `taŋ`gə↓re:
 letter send-link.-aux.

Echoed theme. A subject, object or adjunct may be placed after a thematised predicator and pronounced with all its syllables on a uniformly low pitch to echo or remind the hearer of the recoverable theme of some previous clause in the conversation.

btang.gi.red. *yi.ge.* "He'll send it, the letter." (echoed theme)
 `taŋ`gə↓re: `ji`gi
 send-link.-aux. .letter

This is the only circumstance to my knowledge when any part of a clause may follow its predicator.

12.7 Deference

The deference system is a means by which speakers and writers express their social attitude along a scale of esteem a) towards other human or supernatural beings, living or dead; b) towards animate and inanimate things associated with such beings; and c) even towards some inanimate things such as buildings and religious objects in their own right.

In principle, a Tibetan speaker shows deference to those people or things he purports to regard as superior in social or religious status to himself, and to such strangers and foreigners as he is prepared to give the benefit of the doubt. The practice shows considerable variation between different spoken dialects and different social classes. In places with a more complex society such as Lhasa, the deference system is more elaborate and more strictly observed, and members of the more educated classes will use polite forms among equals. In more rural or remote districts, though the local dialect will usually have its own deference system, it may be less elaborate, fewer people will make regular use of it and some may hardly be familiar with it.

The system is manifested by choice of vocabulary within one or more of subject, object, some types of adjunct, and predicator. Many linguists would see it as simply a matter of lexis, and therefore outside grammar altogether. Alternatively it could be regarded as a form of lexical concord or prosody linking grammatically separate parts of the clause, related to the speaker's attitude to the referents of specific grammatical elements: in effect then a true grammatical system.

The domains of different parts of the system are subject+predicator and

object/adjunct+predicator, but it seems simplest to treat the whole system as operating at clause level, particularly if one takes a somewhat more semantic view of a clause than I normally do in this book. Such a view of the deference system would seem to be supported by the fact that although flexible up to a point, it is on the whole more strictly codified or grammaticised than the ways of expressing politeness in, say, English.

The basic social dichotomy involved is between “low” and “high” status of the referent of some part of the clause. (Referents regarded as “equal” must be included in either the low or the high category, depending on the circumstances, the social register and the personality and attitude of the speaker. One’s own individual status is always low.) Low status corresponds to “ordinary” vocabulary: high status to “honorific” and/or “respectful” vocabulary.

The status of the referent of the subject (prototypically representing the “actor”) relative to the *speaker*³ determines whether certain lexical items in the *subject, adjuncts and predicator* are honorific or non-honorific (see honorific nouns, 7.5; verbs, 8.5; adjectives, 11.7).

Another dimension is added by the status of someone who may be the referent of the object; or of an adjunct; or who may even not be referred to in any argument. This person is regarded as a “goal” or “beneficiary” of the act referred to by the predicator. The status of this goal or beneficiary relative to that of the *actor* determines whether certain lexical items in the *object, adjuncts and predicator* are respectful or non-respectful (see respectful nouns, 7.6; verbs, 8.6).

Of the large number of logically possible clause types resulting from the combination of different relative statuses of speaker, actor and goal, one can certainly distinguish five in practice (limiting oneself to clauses with no more than one adjunct):

a) Actor low; goal low in relation to speaker/actor (“ordinary”):

<i>ngas.</i>	<i>kho.la.</i>	<i>yig.ge.</i>	<i>btang.gi.yin.</i>	“I’ll send him a letter.”
ཀླུ:	ཀ་ཁོ་ལཱ	ལྷོ་རྟེན	བློ་བྲལ་གྱི་ཡིན།	
I-smp.	3sg.-loc.	letter	send-link.-aux.	
S (ord.)	Adj (ord.)	O (ord.)	P (ord.)	

b) Actor low; goal high in relation to speaker/actor (“ordinary/respectful”):

<i>ngas.</i>	<i>khong.la.</i>	<i>zhu.yig.</i>	<i>phul.gyi.yin.</i>	“I’ll send him a letter.”
ཀླུ:	ཀ་ཁོང་ལཱ	ཇུ་རྟེན།	ཕུལ་གྱི་ཡིན།	
I-smp.	3sg.-loc.	letter	send-link.-aux.	
S (ord.)	Adj (hon.)	O (hon.)	P (resp.)	

c) Actor high; goal low in relation to speaker and actor (“honorific/ordinary”):

<i>khong.gis.</i>	<i>nga.la.</i>	<i>phyag.bris.</i>	<i>btang.gnang.gi.red.</i>	“He’ll send me a letter.”
ཀ་ཁོང་གིས།	ངའི་ལཱ	ཕྱི་རྟེན་ལཱ།	བློ་བྲལ་གྱི་རེད།	
3sg.-smp.	I-loc.	letter	send-link.-aux.	
S (hon.)	Adj (ord.)	O (hon.)	P (hon.)	

d) Actor high; goal high in relation to speaker, low in relation to actor (“honorific”):

khong.gis. khyed.rang.la. phyag.bris. btang. gnang.gi.red.
 ʔkʰɔŋgi: ʔkjeraglɛ ʔtɕhari: ʔtɕ: ʔnaggəre:
 3sg.-*smp.* you-*loc.* letter send-*link.-aux.*
 S (hon.) Adj (hon.) O (hon.) P (hon.)

“He’ll send you a letter.”

e) Actor high; goal high in relation to both speaker and actor (“honorific/respectful”):

khong.gis. khyed.rang.la. phyag.bris. phul. gnang.gi.red.
 ʔkʰɔŋgi: ʔkjeraglɛ ʔtɕari: ʔpʰy: ʔnaggəre:
 3sg.-*smp.* you-*loc.* letter send-*link.-aux.*
 S (hon.) Adj (hon.) O (hon.) P (resp.+h)

“He’ll send you a letter.”

From the above it can be seen that subject and predicator must be either both honorific or both non-honorific, but there is no such concord between object/adjunct and predicator.

It was mentioned above that one’s own status as a speaker is by convention always low. In two circumstances a potential conflict arises between this inherently low status and the desire to render due deference to others of higher status.

The first such conflict occurs in clauses where the subject is the first person plural noun *nga.tsho.* or the like, and the person or people other than oneself represented by the subject are of high status. The principle of deference here overrides that of one’s own low status, resulting in an honorific verb in the predicator.

da. nga.tsho. phebs.do. “Let’s go now.”
 ʔta ʔgandzo ʔpʰe:do
 now I-*num.* go-*imp.*

The second conflict occurs in reporting the utterance of some other person of high status (whether the addressee or a third party) in what purports to be direct speech, that is, quotation of the actual words used. Here a clause with a first person singular subject will be given an honorific verb in the predicator, though both speaker and listeners will be perfectly aware that the “quoted” words could never have been uttered.

nga. phebs.kyi.yin. gsungs.kyi.'dug. “She says she will come.”
 ʔŋa ʔpʰiŋi: ʔsuggydu: (Lit. “She says ‘I shall come’.”)
 I come-*link.-aux.* say-*link.-aux.*

A physical object in transit from a person of low status to one of high status will usually take an honorific variant where possible. Thus in urging someone to drink a cup of tea, the tea will be honorific by association with the potential drinker, even though one may have prepared it oneself.

Notes

- 1 For Modern Literary Tibetan, Goldstein et al. (1991:46) state that “Active sentences require that their subjects be placed in what is called the instrumental case. That is to say, one of the ... instrumental particles ... is suffixed to or follows the subject.” “Active” is nearly the equivalent of my “voluntary”. However, the authors overlook the fact that the many intransitive voluntary clauses in their material consistently omit these particles.
- 2 This type of clause lends some weight to DeLancey’s claim (1984:134) that volition is a major determinant in the use of the subject-marking particle.
- 3 In this it resembles the system of viewpoint.

13. Subordinate and Nominalised Clauses

A subordinate clause is non-final in the sentence. Leaving aside polarity for the moment (in principle subordinate clauses may have positive or negative polarity), the following are the commonest patterns for the predicator of a subordinate clause:

a) lexical verb stem (+topic marker) (13.1)

b) verb stem+subordinator (+topic marker) (13.2)

c) verb stem (+linker)+(auxiliary)+subordinator (+topic marker) (13.3)

Pattern a applies only to lexical verbs. Patterns b and c apply to both lexical verbs and verbs of being. Some subordinators are found only in pattern b; others in both patterns b and c.

As can be seen from the above, the subordinator position is identical to that of the modal in a main clause. It is realised by one of a subclass of modal particles, the subordinating particles.

Patterns a and b, in which there is no linker or auxiliary, are by far the commonest. Since it is at the linker and auxiliary positions that the systems of tense/aspect, intention, person, viewpoint and evidential modality, and part of judgemental modality are expressed, subordinate clauses following patterns a and b do not participate in these systems. The verb phrases of such clauses can therefore be thought of as non-finite, in contrast to the finite verb phrases of main clauses.

Subordinate clauses following pattern c, however, participate in the system of tense/aspect, though in most cases not in the systems of judgemental modality, evidential modality, person and viewpoint. The verb phrases of such clauses may be thought of as intermediate between finite and non-finite.

The referent of the subject of a subordinate clause may be the same as or different from that of the main clause. This is one way in which subordination is distinguished from serialisation, where - except with the serial verb *bcug*. “cause to” (10.4) - the two verbs must have the same subject.

Intonation features generally involving rising or level rather than falling pitch may also distinguish a subordinate clause from a main clause, though these have not been investigated in detail. If the predicator is thematised (see 12.6), the subordinating particle is generally pronounced on a high pitch.

In addition there are two types of nominal construction involving nominalised

clauses (which are discussed at 13.4):

d) verb stem+nominaliser+adjunct marker (13.5)

e) polariser+verb stem+adjunct marker (13.6)

These are formally adjuncts, but as their function is to subordinate a nominalised clause to a following clause, they are discussed together with subordinate clauses proper.

13.1 Lexical Verb Stem (+Topic Marker): “and”, “and then”

A bare lexical verb stem with no linker, auxiliary or subordinator (“pattern a” above) marks a very weak form of subordination which in some cases might better be called co-ordination:

zhog.gas. nga.tshos. yi.ge. bris. “In the morning we wrote letters, ...”
 _**ɕɔŋɛ:** _**ŋandzø:** _**jiŋi** _**tri:**
 morning I-num.-smp. letter write

de.nas. kha.lag. bzas. “... then we had a meal, ...”
 _**tɛɛ:** **ˈkʰalɑ:** _**sɛ?**
 then meal ate

de.nas. cham.cham.la. phyin.pa.yin. “... then we went for a walk.”
 _**tɛɛ:** **ˈtɕʰamdzɑmlə** **ˈtɕʰɪmbəjɿ**
 then walk-loc. went-link.-aux.

(Cf. Hu Tan et al. 1989:90; DeLancey 1991:18 n.9). As DeLancey remarks, this construction is mostly used in referring to a sequence of more than two consecutive acts, usually though not necessarily with the same subject.)

In a subordinate clause of this sort the verb is usually pronounced with level intonation, contrasting with falling intonation in the verb word of the main clause. The subordinate clause is followed by a distinct pause, and a verb stem which is otherwise pronounced as an open syllable may have a glottal stop final: *bzas. _sɛ?*

Serial verb stem byas.

The bare verb stem *byas.* (homographic with the past stem of *byed.* “do”) is used as a serial verb in a clause with positive polarity to mean “-ing”, “having”, “after”, “and then”:

ngas. nyo.bya. rgyab. byas. “having done the shopping”/
 _**ŋɛ:** _**ŋɔbdzə** _**gɣvb** _**tɕɛ:** “when I have/had done the shopping”
 I-smp. shopping do did

With negative polarity the verb is nominalised:

ngas. nyo.bya. ma.rgyab.pa. byas.
 ̲ne: ̲noʔbdzə ̲maŋjvbə ̲tʃe:
 I-smp. shopping neg.-do-nom. did

“Without doing/having done the shopping”

(Compare 10.1, where a serial verb particle *byas.* is used before the verbs ‘*gro.*, *yong.* and *bsdad.*, but with a different meaning.)

13.2 Verb Stem+Subordinator (+Topic Marker)

The subordinators under this head have themselves a perfect, progressive or prospective aspectual reference, and stand immediately after the verb stem, with no tense-aspect particles interposed (“pattern b” above).

-nas. “having”, “after”, “and then” (with past verb stem)

The subordinating particle *-nas.* is largely interchangeable with serial verb *byas.* for most speakers to indicate that the event of the subordinate clause preceded that of the following clause. In the case of *nas.* the first event may precede the second by any length of time.

khyed.rang.gis. las.ka. byas. tshar.nas. nga. yong.gi.yin.
 ̲kjerangi: ̲le:gə ̲tʃe: ̲tʃʰa:nɪ ̲ŋa ̲jɔŋgyjɪ:
 you-smp. work did finish-sub. I come-link.-aux.

“I’ll come after you’ve finished work.”

(There is also a serial particle *-nas.*, which like serial verb *byas.* is used before serial verbs in an “adverb of manner” sense: see 10.1).

-gag. “in order to” (with present verb stem)

This is most commonly, though not exclusively, used before verbs of movement in the main clause:

nyo.bya. rgyab.gag. khrom.la. 'gro.gi.yin. “I’m going to the bazaar
 ̲noʔbdzə ̲gɔjvbgə ̲tʃɔmlə ̲drugyjl: to do some shopping.”
 shopping do-sub. bazaar-loc. go-link.-aux.

This particle should not be confused with corroborative or emphatic particle *-ga* (9.2.5), or with the future tense first-person wh-interrogative modal particle *-ga*. (9.3.6).

The combination of subordinating particle *-gag.* and serial verb *byas.* has a somewhat pejorative sense, often translatable by “(foolishly) try to”:

kha.lag. mgyogs.po. za.gag. byas. grod.khog. na.byung.

ṽkʰala: **_gjoḡbu** **_saga** **_tʃe:** **_trəḡo** **_nadzʊ**

food quick-nom. eat-sub. did stomach be ill-aux.

“By trying to eat quickly, I got a stomach ache.” (Cf. Hu Tan et al. 1989:325)

13.3 Verb stem (+Linker) (+Auxiliary) +Subordinator (+Topic Marker)

The particles under this head have no inherent aspectual reference, and may stand either immediately after the verb stem (“pattern b”), thus neutralising tense/aspect distinctions, or after an auxiliary (“pattern c”). Of the five major verbs of being/auxiliaries, the subordinators *-dus.*, *-tsang* and *-na.* are mostly used only after *yin.* and *yod.*, thus largely neutralising distinctions of viewpoint, though occasionally they are found after *'dug.* and *yog.yin.* (a “subordinate” non-finite form of *yog.red.*). The subordinator *-te.* is found after all five major verbs of being/auxiliaries, and even after auxiliary *-shag.* (e.g. Roerich & Lhalungpa 1957:130).

-dus. “when”, “while” (after present verb stem, or after auxiliary)

ngas. nyo.bya. rgyab.(kyi.yod.)dus.

_ne: **ṽnɔbdzə** **_gjvb(gəjʃ:)****dy:**

I-smp. shopping do(link.-aux.)-sub.

“When/while doing the shopping, ...” (with *-link.* & *-aux.*)

“When I do/did the shopping, ...” (without *-link.* & *-aux.*)

-tsang. “because” (after past verb stem, or after auxiliary)

kho.tsho. zhing.pa. yin.tsang.

“Because they are farmers, ...”

ṽkʰɔndzo **_tʃiḡbə** **_jindzɛ:**

3sg.-num. farmer be-sub.

(gal.srid.-) *-na.* “if” (after past or present verb stem, or after auxiliary)

The subordinating particle *-na.* means “if”. Combined with the item *gal.srid.* earlier in the clause it means “in case”, “in the event that”. It may follow the past or present verb stem, with or without linking particle and/or auxiliary. Some examples of its use with past, present and future tenses and perfect aspect, to show the expression of “hypothetical”, “possible” and “counterfactual” conditions, are as follows:

kho. bod.la. phyin.(pa.yin.)na. (past tense)

ṽkʰɔ **_pʃ:lə** **ṽtʃʰɪ(mbəji)nə**

3sg. Tibet-loc. went (-link.-aux.)-sub.

“If he went/were to go to Tibet,” (future time, hypothetical).

“If he went to Tibet,” (past time, possible).

“If he had gone to Tibet,” (past time, counterfactual).

kho. bod.la. phyin.yod.na. (perfect aspect).

ṽkḥṵ ṽpø:lə ṽtṣʰinjø:nə

3sg. Tibet-loc. went-aux.-sub.

“If he had (already) gone to Tibet,” (past time, perfect aspect, possible or counterfactual).

“If he has gone to Tibet,” (present or future time, perfect aspect, possible).

kho. bod.la. 'dro.(gi.yod.)na. (present tense)

ṽkḥṵ ṽpø:lə ṽdrugyjø:nə

3sg. Tibet-loc. go-link.-aux.-sub.

“If he is going to Tibet,” (present or future time, progressive aspect, possible).

“If he was going to Tibet,” (past time, progressive aspect, possible).

kho. bod.la. 'dro.(gi.yin.)na. (future tense).

ṽkḥṵ ṽpø:lə ṽdrugyjinə/drənə

3sg. Tibet-loc. go(-link.-aux.)-sub.

“If he is going to go to Tibet,” (future time, possible).

The use of what could be analysed as a subordinate clause ending in *yin.na.* as a topic marker is discussed at 7.8.

na./pa.ma.gtogs. “unless” (after past or present verb stem, or after auxiliary)

mgyogs.po. thad.na. ma.gtogs. rjes. zin.gyi.ma.red.

ṽgjəgbu ṽtʰə:nə mado: ṽdze: ṽsimgimare:

quick-nom. go-sub. sub. catch-link.-neg.-aux.

“Unless we go quickly, we won’t catch it.”

-na.yang. “even though” (after past or present verb stem, or after auxiliary)

khrom.la. phyin.na.yang. nyo.bya. rgyab.ma.song.

ṽtṣəmle ṽtṣʰine: ṽnəbdzə ṽgjvbməsḍ

bazaar-loc. went-sub. shopping do-neg.-aux.

“Although he went to the bazaar, he didn’t do any shopping.”

-te./de. “although”, “but”, “however” (after past or present verb stem, or auxiliary)

khong.gis. gnang.da. gnang.gi.red. de. len.gyi.man.

ṽkḥṵnggi: ṽnd: ṽta ṽnənggəre te ṽlɪŋgimɛ:

3sg.-smp. give top. give-link.-aux. sub. accept-link-neg.-aux.

“Certainly he will give it; however, I won’t accept it.”

13.4 Nominalised Clauses

Nominalised clauses are very common in the Lhasa dialect and in most other varieties of Tibetan with which I am familiar. Nominalisation involves the presence of one or more nominalising particles - a class of verb particle - after the verb stem, or sometimes after the auxiliary, within the same word.

The following examples show predicators whose verb or auxiliary is followed by a nominalising particle (-*pa.* in the sense of “-ing”). Bracketing of subject and object show that these are optional (as are adjuncts).

- a) (*ngas.*) (*deb.*) *klog.yod.* “(I) have read (the book).”
 (┌*ཤེ:*) (┌*ཅེཔ*) །*ལོ་འགྲུབ་* (perfect aspect)
 (I-*smp.*) (book) read-*aux.*
- b) (*ngas.*) (*deb.*) *klog.yod.pa.* “(my) having read (the book)”
 (┌*ཤེ:*) (┌*ཅེཔ*) །*ལོ་འགྲུབ་པཱེ* (perfect aspect)
 (I-*smp.*) (book) read-*aux.-nom.*
- c) (*ngas.*) (*deb.*) *klog.gi.yod.* “(I) am reading (the book).”
 (┌*ཤེ:*) (┌*ཅེཔ*) །*ལོ་འགྲུབ་འགྲུབ་* (present tense)
 (I-*smp.*) (book) read-*link.-aux.*
- d) (*ngas.*) (*deb.*) *klog.gi.yod.pa.* “(my) reading (the book)”
 (┌*ཤེ:*) (┌*ཅེཔ*) །*ལོ་འགྲུབ་འགྲུབ་པཱེ* (progressive/habitual aspect)
 (I-*smp.*) (book) read-*link.-aux.-nom.*
- e) (*ngas.*) (*deb.*) *klog.pa.* “(my) reading (the book)”
 (┌*ཤེ:*) (┌*ཅེཔ*) །*ལོ་པཱེ* (neutral aspect)
 (I-*smp.*) (book) read-*nom.*

Of the above examples a-e, the last, in which nominalising particle follows the verb stem with no auxiliary, is the commonest type. Example d, meaning “my being in the act of reading the book”, or “my habitual reading of the book” differentiates it grammatically from example e in a way which can only be done lexically in English.

Note that the verb remains a verb “leftwards” within any clause of which it is the predicator, which clause undergoes no change such as the genitivisation of the subject we find in the English equivalents. Thus a literal translation of e above is “I reading the book”, or “reading the book by me”.

The whole nominalised clause however, constitutes the head of a noun phrase, to which may be added the elements epithet, deictic, numerator and case marker. Within the wider clause in which it is embedded the whole noun phrase will stand as a subject, object or adjunct.

Clauses nominalised with one of the particles -*pa.*, -*mkhan.*, -*rgyu.* or -*yag.* are often followed by a genitive particle and used attributively to qualify a following noun phrase. This is a common equivalent to an English relative clause (see also 12.3):

<i>ngas.</i>	<i>klog.pa'i.</i>	<i>deb.</i>	“the book which I have read”
ཀཤེ:	ཀལཔེ:	ཀཤཔ	(lit. “the book of reading by me”)
I- <i>smp.</i>	read- <i>nom.-gen.</i>	book	

In the Lhasa dialect the productivity of many of these nominalising particles is somewhat restricted, in that they are found only with certain following verbs in the predicator (often *yod./dug./yog.red.*) or in certain set idioms.

In some cases a given particle appears to have split into one or more fully grammaticised versions and one or more productive or semi-productive versions, with clearly different meanings; sometimes also with one or more homographs among the tense and aspect particles discussed in Chapter 9.

Thus there seems to have been a general drift towards grammaticisation, which however is far from complete.

For convenience of exposition these nominalising particles may be roughly divided into four groups, with the degree of grammaticisation decreasing from a-d:

- polyfunctional particles with tense/aspect-particle homographs (*-pa/ba*, *-mkhan./nyan.*, *-yag.*, *-rgyu.*);
- particles mainly used with verbs of existing or doing (*-rtsis.*, *-'dod.*, *--khag.*, *-long.*, *-thabs.*, *-re.*, *-bzo.*, *ma-* *-ka.med.*, *ma-* *rang.-*, *-lo.ba.*);
- particles mainly used in set idioms (*-mdog.*, *-rogs.*, *-nyid/snying.*, *-grabs.*);
- particles behaving like free nouns (*-sa.*, *-stangs.*, *-srol.*).

The particles to be discussed do not form an exhaustive list but include all the commonest ones.

13.4.1 Polyfunctional nominalising particles

With this group of particles, the noun phrase referring to the actor is treated as subject of the nominalised verb and normally carries a subject-marking particle (see Chapter 12), but not a genitive particle.

Nominalising particle -pa./ba.

The nominalising particle *-pa./ba.* is extremely common in many styles of written Tibetan. For examples of slow- and fast-tempo phonological alternants of this particle in combination with various verb stems, see Chapter 5 (5.10). Potentially confusing is the fact that it can nominalise a clause to give three different meanings. Thus the nominalised clause *shing.tog. za.ba.* (fruit eat-*nom.*) in written Tibetan can be:

- a noun phrase referring to the *action* of the verb itself (English “Vb.-ing”): “the eating of the fruit”;
- a noun phrase referring to the *actor* the (English “Vb.-er”): “the eater of the fruit”, “who eats the fruit”);
- with transitive verbs, a noun phrase referring to the *patient* (English “Vb.-ed/en” etc.): “the eaten fruit”, “the fruit which is eaten”).

As their translations suggest, meanings b and c correspond to relative clauses or parts of relative clauses in English.

(There is also a linking verb particle spelt *-pa./ba.* which is not nominalising: see Chapter 9.)

The following uses of this particle apply to the Lhasa dialect:

a) *-pa./ba.* as “*Vb.-ing*” (*action*) This use is not very common outside a few specific constructions where, it might be argued, it has in effect become grammaticised as part of a subordinate clause-final construction. Usually the past verb stem is used where available, and the action referred to is in past time or is a completed action. However, if the present stem is used and followed by the particle(s) *-bzhin.* or *-gi.yod.* before the *-pa.*, present actions or actions in progress are indicated. (Actions which have no particular relation to a reference time or to completeness are usually indicated by the particle *-yag.*; future or prospective ones which have not commenced, by the particle *-yag.* or *-rgyu.*. There is an analogy here with the system of verbal aspect.) Examples:

ngas. dmag.mis. me.mda'. rgyab.pa. mthong.byung.

_ne **ˉma:mi:** **_mendə** **_gjbə** **ˉtʰɔŋdʒɔ**

I-*sm̄p.* soldier-*sm̄p.* gun fire-*nom.* see-*aux.*

“I saw the soldier fire the gun.” (Roerich & Lhalungpa 1957:63)

(i.e. “I saw the firing of the gun by the soldier.”)

da.res. nga. 'dir. yong.ba. thengs. dang.po. yin.

_tare: **_ga** **_de:** **_jɔŋwə** **ˉtʰɛ:** **_tagbu** **_jl:**

this time I this-*loc.* come-*nom.* time first be

“This is the first time I have come here.”

(Lit. “I coming here this time is the first time.”)

(See below for a synonymous sentence using *-yag.*)

In this usage *-pa./ba.* may be used after the auxiliaries *-yin.* and *-yod.* :

ngas.khyed.rnams.tshos. kha.lag. za.gi.yod.par lta.gi.yod.

_ne: **ˉkjenandzɔ:** **ˉkʰala:** **_sagəjɔba:** **ˉtagəjɔ:**

I-*sm̄p.* you-*num.-sm̄p.* meal eat-*link.-aux.-nom.-loc.* look-*link.-aux.*

“I’m watching you eating.” (Tomulic 1987 vol 2:608)

The nominalising particle may co-occur with a negative particle:

khyed.rang. nang.la. ma.phyin.pa. ga.re. yin.nam.

you home-*loc.* neg. went-*nom.* what be-*alt.*

ˉkjerɔ: **_naŋlə** **ˉmadzɪmbə** **_karɪ** **_jind**

“Why didn’t you go home?”

In the following four examples, the clause nominalised with *-pa./ba.* is in effect subordinated to a following main clause. The combinations *Vb+pa.+dang.* “on *Vb.-*

ing”; Vb+*pa.+da.kar.* “immediately on Vb.-ing”; and Vb+*pa.+ma.gtogs.* “apart from Vb.-ing” can straightforwardly be analysed as nominalised verb+noun particle, though it would alternatively seem reasonable to class these combinations of constituents following the verb as subordinating particles (see 13.2, 13.3). In the case of *ma.+Vb.+pa+ byas.*, it seems better to class the combination *pa.+byas.* as a subordinating particle, on the analogy of the subordinating particle *byas.* in clauses with positive polarity, and because outside this construction there is no noun particle *byas.*

A clause nominalised by *-pa./-ba.* may be followed by the co-ordinating particle *dang.* “with” in the sense of English “on Vb.-ing”; or *da.kar.* in the sense of “immediately on -Vb.ing”, or *ma.gtogs.* “apart from Vb.-ing”:

khos. yi.ge. btang.ba. dang. “on his sending/as soon as he sent the letter”
 ṽkʰø: ṽjigi ṽtagwə tɕ: (i.e. “with his sending the letter”)
 3sg.-smp. letter send-nom. co-ord.

kho. bod.la. bslebs.pa. da.kar. “immediately on his arrival in Tibet”
 ṽkʰə ṽpø:lə ṽle:bə taga:
 he Tibet-loc. arrive-nom. exactly-loc.

gnam. 'thibs.pa. ma.gtogs. char.pa. gtang.mdog. kha.po. ma.red.
 ṽnam ṽtʰibə madɔ: ṽtʰə:bə ṽtagdɔ: ṽkʰabu ṽmare:
 sky cloud over-nom. excep. rain fall-nom. likely.-nom. neg.-be
 “Apart from the sky clouding over, it’s not likely to rain.”

The following construction with *-pa./ba.* is only used in clauses with negative polarity. See 13.2 for the positive equivalent without the *-pa./ba.*

nang.la. ma.phyin.pa. byas. “Without having gone home, ...”
 ṽnəŋlə ṽmɔdʒimbə tʰɕ:
 home-loc. neg. went-nom. sub.

A verb may be nominalised with *-pa./ba.* and followed by the imperative *shog.* (“come”) to express the idea of hoping:

sku. tshe.ring. yong.ba. shog. “May your life be long!”
 ṽku ṽtʰɕi: ṽjɔŋə ṽɕɔ:
 long life will exist-nom. come (imperative stem)

An involuntary verb nominalised with *-pa./ba.* and followed by the imperative *byed.* “do” (honorific *gnang.*), often with the imperative particle “*a.* or *dang.*”, to express the idea of trying:

las.ka. 'di. tshar.ba. byed. "a. “Try to finish the work!”
 ṽlegə ṽdi ṽtʰə:bə ṽtʰi: ʔa
 work this finish-nom. do imp.

This could perhaps be regarded as a case of verb serialisation, though it does not follow the usual pattern (see Chapter 10).

A transitive or intransitive verb nominalised by *-pa/ba*, plus a genitive particle is found idiomatically before certain nouns including: *re.ba*. “hope”, *ched*. “purpose”, *skabs*. “occasion”, *sngas*. “previous time”, *sgang*. or *ring*. “simultaneous time”, *rjes*. or *shul*. “subsequent time”, *thog*. “top”, *zhor*. “course”, *bzo*. “appearance”:

ngas deb. 'di. klog.pa'i. re.ba. yod. “I hope to read the book.”
 གཤམ་ རེད་ དེ་ ཀློག་པའི་ རེ་བའ་ ཡོད་
I-smp. book this read-nom.gen. hope exist

ngas. deb. 'di. klog.pa'i. ched.du.
 གཤམ་ རེད་ དེ་ ཀློག་པའི་ ཇེད་དུ་
I-smp. book this read-nom.-gen. purpose-loc.
 “for the purpose of my reading the book”

The *ched.du*. in “for the purpose” in the above phrase may be replaced by *skabs.la. རྣམ་པའི་ལུགས་ཀྱི་ལའོ་* “on the occasion”; *sngas.la. རྒྱུ་ལོ་* “before”; *sgang.la. གཤམ་གྱི་ལའོ་* “during”; *rjes.la. རྗེས་ལོ་* “after”; *thog.la. རྒྱ་ལོ་* “on top”; *zhor.la. རྩོམ་གྱི་ལའོ་* “in the course”.

kha.shas. yod.pa'i. bzo. 'dug. “There seem to be a few.”
 རྣམ་པའི་ལུགས་ཀྱི་ རྩོམ་ རྩོམ་ ཡོད་
 a few exist-nom.-gen. appearance exist

A shorter alternant of this construction has the nominalising particle *-bzo*. instead of *-pa'i.bzo*. (see below and 9.2.7.). Nominalising particle *-yag*. in place of *-pa*. can also be used in this way (see below).

In these idiomatic uses, *-pa*. does not necessarily denote a completed or past action.

The nominalising particle *-pa*. is used in telling the time:

chu.tshod. dang.po. zin.par. kar.ma. bcu. 'dug. “It’s ten minutes to one.”
 ཇེད་ལའོ་ཡུན་ རྩོམ་ རྩོམ་ ཀུན་མཁའ་ རྩོམ་ ཡོད་
 hour first seize-nom.-loc. minute ten exist

-pa/ba. as “Vb.-er” (actor). With intransitive verbs, particularly when the subject is elided, the nominalised verb with *-pa/ba.*, often followed by *de*. or *'di.*, may refer to the actor:

kha.sang. bslebs.pa. de. “the one who arrived yesterday”
 རྣམ་པའི་ རེ་བའ་ རེད་
 yesterday arrive-nom. the

in this use. It is now usually pronounced **-ཉེ**, to the annoyance of some purists of the older generation, who prefer the pronunciation **-(ཉ)གེ**. Roerich & Lhalungpa (1957:63) claim that it is borrowed from the Lhokha dialect. Examples:

yi.ge. 'di. btang.mkhan. su. red.pa. "Who sent this letter?"
 _jɪŋɪ _dɪ ˌtɕe:ŋɛ: ˌsu _re
 letter this send-nom. who be-wh.int.

kho. bod.skad. bshad.mkhan. red. "He is a Tibetan-speaker."
 ˌkʰɔ ˌpø:ŋɛ: ˌtɕe:ŋɛ: _re:
 he Tibetan speak-nom. be

I distinguish this use of *-mkhan.* from the etymologically related linking verb particle *-mkhan.* which is found in the premeditated form of the prospective aspect with a following particle *-yin.* or *-red.* (9.3.5.2.). The existence of these two uses creates a potential ambiguity in clauses such as:

bkra.shis. las.ka. 'di. byed.mkhan. red.
 ˌtrʌtɕi: ˌle:ŋə _dɪ ˌtɕe:ŋɛ: _re:
 Tashi work this do-nom. be

This sentence could in theory either mean "Tashi is the one who does this work" (actor) or "Tashi is going to do this work" (prospective aspect). In such cases it seems to be the latter prospective meaning which applies. If one wants to convey the "actor" meaning, one can say

las.ka. 'di. byed.mkhan. bkra.shis. red. "The doer of this work is Tashi."
 ˌle:ŋə _dɪ ˌtɕe:ŋɛ: ˌtrʌtɕi: _re:
 work this do-nom. Tashi be

Nominalising particle -yag.

The wide use of the particle *-yag.* (attached to the present stem of the verb) may be relatively recent - there is no Classical spelling for it and according to Roerich and Lhalungpa (1957:67) it was (in 1957) "on the increase in the modern colloquial". I have distinguished these uses of *-yag.* from the prospective aspect linking verb particle *-yag.-* (see 9.3.5.3).

a) *-yag.* as "Vb.-ing". *-yag.* is often the equivalent of the English verbal noun ending in "-ing" and is frequently found with genitive or dative-locative particle. The action referred to by the nominalised verb is generally in present or future time or is timeless:

the verbs *yod.*, *'dug.*, *yog.red.*, *byung.* or *yong.*, and with the possibility of subject-marking particle on the subject of the nominalised verb, to mean “chance to”:

khos. deb. 'di. klog.yag. byung.ba.red. “He got a chance to read the book.”
 ་ཀྲུ་ ་ཅེད ་དེ ་ལོ་ལྷན་ ་ལྷན་པའེ།
 him-smp. book this read-nom. was obtained-link.-aux.

deng.sang. mjal.yag. mi.'dug. “We get no chance to meet these days!”
 ་ཅེད་ལྷན་ ་དེ་ལྷན་ ་མེད།
 these days meet-nom. neg.-exist

e) -yag+las. A nominalised verb with -yag. followed by the verb *las./lus.* “be left behind”, “remain”, means “still have to” or “forget to”:

ngas. las.ka. byed.yag. las.zhag.
 ་ཀྲུ་ ་ལེ་གེད་ ་ལྷན་ལྷན་ ་ལེ་ཤ།
 me-smp. work do-nom. leave-aux.

“There’s some work I still have to do / forgot to do.” (Tomulic 1987 vol.2:462)

Nominalising particle -rgyu.

There is some overlap between the meanings of the nominalising particles -yag. and -rgyu. (as there is between the linking particles -yag. and -rgyu.). Many speakers use the two apparently interchangeably in the senses “to be Vb.-en/ed”, “for Vb.-ing” and “chance to Vb.” (see above). For such speakers the following sentences can all be found with -yag. as well as -rgyu.:

deb. 'di. khong.la. sprad.rgyu. red. “The book is to be given to him.”
 ་ཅེད ་དེ ་ཀྲུ་གྲུ་ ་ལྷན་ལྷན་ ་ལེ།
 book this him-loc. give-nom. be

dug.log. khrus.rgyu. red.pas. “Are the clothes for washing /to be washed?”
 ་ལུག་ ་ལྷན་ལྷན་ ་ལེ།
 clothes wash-nom. be-interr.

khang.pa. rgyab.rgyu'i. sa.phag. “bricks for building houses (with)”
 ་ཀྲུ་གྲུ་ ་གྲུ་བཟུ་ ་སམ།
 house build-nom.-gen. brick

'di. kha.lag. bzo.rgyu(r). red. “This is for cooking food (with).”
 ་དེ ་ཀྲུ་ལེ་ ་སུག་ ་ལེ།
 this meal make-nom.(-loc.) be

khos. deb. 'di. klog.rgyu. byung.ba.red. “He got a chance to read the book.”
 ་ཀྲུ་ ་ཅེད ་དེ ་ལོ་གྲུ་ ་ལྷན་པའེ།
 he-smp. book this read-nom. was obtained-link.-aux.

For many speakers, *-rgyu.* seems to be preferred to *-yag.* when the action referred to is prospective or future:

gzhung.gis. kho.tshor. rogs.ram. byed.rgyur. dngul. g-yar.gyi.red.
_cunggi: kʰəndzə: rə:ram tɕigju: ŋy: ʃa:gəre:
 government-smp. 3sg.-pl .-loc. help do-nom.-loc. money lend-link.-aux.

“The government will lend money to help them.” (Goldstein et al. 1991:146)

There are also some idiomatic uses of *-rgyu.* in particular collocations:

a) *-rgyu.+byed.* Followed by the verb *byed.* “do”, a verb nominalised with *-rgyu.* means “mean to Vb.” or “undertake to Vb.”:

ngas. rgya.gar.la. yong.rgyu. byas.pa.yin. “I meant to come to India.”
_ne: ʒjago:lə ʒungju tɕe:bəjɿ:
 I-smp. India-loc. come-nom. did-link.-aux.

ngas. byed.rgyu. byas.pa.yin. “I undertook to do it”
_ne: tɕigju tɕe:bəjɿ:
 I-smp. do-nom. did-link.-aux.-sub.

b) *-rgyu.+yog.red.* or *'dug.* Followed by the verb *yog.red.* or *'dug.*, a verb nominalised by *-rgyu.* means “one should”:

las.ka. thog.la. nga.rgyal. byed.rgyu. yog.red.
_legə tʰə:lə ɲagje: tɕigju yɔ:re:
 work regard-loc. pride do-nom. exist
 “One should take pride in one’s work.”

The construction is more often heard with negative polarity:

chang. 'di. ' thung.rgyu. yog.ma.red. “One shouldn’t drink this beer.”
tɕʰɛ: dɿ tʰungju ʒɔ:məre:
 beer this drink-nom. exist[neg.]

c) *-rgyu.+rang.red.* Followed by deictic *rang.* and verb of being *red.*, a verb nominalised by *-rgyu.* means “will certainly”, usually with regard to some untoward outcome:

bzo.po. ma.byas.pa.yin.na. gzags.rgyu. rang. red.
_səbu madzɛ:bəjɿnə sa:gju rd: re:
 careful-nom. neg. done-aux.-sub. fall-nom. really be
 “If you’re not careful, it will certainly fall.” (Cf. Hu Tan 1989:330f)

d) *-rgyu.+khyer.* or *gal.* Followed by the verb *khyer.* “carry”, or *gal.* “load”, “levy”, a verb nominalised with *-rgyu.* means “be obliged/induced to Vb.”:

nga.tshos. dngul. g-yar.rgyu. khyer.song. “We had to borrow money.”
 _**ḡandzø:** _**ḡy:** _**ja:ḡju** _**kje:sḡ**
 I-num.-smp. money borrow-nom. carry-aux.

khos. cha.lag. tshong.rgyu. gal.song. “He was forced to sell the things.”
 _**kʰø:** _**tʰala:** _**tsʰḡḡju** _**ke:sḡ**
 3sg-smp thing sell-nom. load-aux.

e) -rgyu.+adj Followed by an adjective, a verb nominalised with *-rgyu.* means “at Vb.-ing”:

"a.ma. 'di. ma.byan. btang.rgyu. hur.po. 'dug.
 _**?amə** _**dɪ** _**madzɛ:** _**tḡḡju** _**hu:bu** _**du:**
 woman this cook do-nom. expert exist
 “This woman’s good at cooking.”

Like *-yag.*, *-rgyu.* is attached to the present stem of the verb.

I have treated these uses of *-rgyu.* as distinct from the prospective linking verb particle *-rgyu.-* (9.3.5.3), though there is obviously a close etymological connection.

13.4.2 Nominalising particles mainly used with verbs of existing or doing

With this group of particles, the noun phrase referring to the actor may be treated as subject of the nominalised verb, with or without a subject-marking particle, or less frequently as an adjunct (as a kind of “possessor” of the action).

Nominalising particle -rtsis. “intention”¹

A noun consisting of present verb stem+nominalising particle *-rtsis.* before verb of being *yod.*, *'dug.* or *yog.red.* means “plan to Vb.”, “intention to Vb.”.

The noun phrase representing the actor of what is planned is usually treated as subject of the verb referring to the intended action:

ngas. dus.sang. slob.sbyong. byed.rtsis. yod. “I plan to study next year.”
 _**ḡe:** _**ty:sḡ:** _**lobdzḡ:** _**tɕidzi:** _**jø:**
 I-smp. next year studying do-nom. exist

Some speakers, however, put the noun representing the actor in an adjunct with dative-locative particle:

ngar. khyed.rang.la. deb. 'di. sprad.rtsis. yod. “I mean to give you the book.”
 _**ḡa:** _**kjeranlə** _**tɛp** _**dɪ** _**tre:dzi:** _**jø:** (Tomulic 1987 vol 2:472)
 I-loc. you-loc. book the give-nom. exist
 (i.e. “I have the intention of giving you the book.”)

A verb nominalised with *-rtsis*. may form the first part of a phrasal verb with verb stem *byed*.. The actor is represented by a noun phrase as subject of the (transitive) phrasal verb:

khos. khrom.la. 'gro.rtsis. byas.pa.red. "He intended to go to the bazaar."
 ˈkʰø: ˈtʃɔmlə ˌdrudzi: ˌtʃe:bəre:
he-smp. bazaar-loc. go-nom. did-link.-aux.

Nominalising particle -'dod. "desire" ²

A noun consisting of present verb stem+nominalising particle *'dod*. means "desire to Vb.". Such a nominalised verb is usually found as the subject of *yod*., *'dug*. or *yog.red*. (or *byung*., *yong*., referring to past or future time respectively); or sometimes as the first element of a phrasal verb with *byed*. or *zer*..

The noun phrase referring to the actor is the subject of the nominalised verb.³

That the verb of being is not an auxiliary is shown by the possibility of interposing an adjunct between nominalised verb and verb of being.

ngas. khong. mjal.'dod. zhe.drag. yod. "I would very much like to meet her."
 ˌŋe: ˈkʰʂ: ˌdzendø: ˌtʃetra: ˌjø:
I-smp. 3sg. meet-nom. much exist

nga. 'gro.'dod. byed.kyi.med. "I don't want to go."
 ˌŋa ˌdrəndø: ˌtʃigime:
I go-nom. do-link.-neg.-aux.

mo.rang. 'gro.'dod. zer.mi.'dug. "She has expressed no desire to go."
 ˌmɔrd: ˌdrəndø: ˌse:mindu:
she go-nom. say-neg.-aux.

Occasionally before verbs of being (particularly in writing) the phrase referring to the actor is found in an adjunct with dative-locative particle:

tshong.pa.tshor. tshwa. tshong. rgyag.'dod. yog.red.
 ˈtʂʰɔŋbədzo: ˈtʂʰa ˈtʂʰʂ: ˌgʂandø: ˌjɔ:re
trader-num.-loc. salt sell do-nom. exist
 "The traders want to sell salt." (Goldstein et al. 1991:231)
 (i.e. "The traders have a desire to sell salt.")

Nominalising particle -khag. "pretence"

Nominalising particle *-khag*. after present stem and before the verb *byed*. "do" means "pretend to":

ngas. deb. klog.khag. byas.pa.yin. "I pretended to read a book."
 ˊne: ˊtep ˊloga: ˊtɕe:bəjɿ:
 I-smp. book read-nom. did-link.-aux.

Nominalising particle -long. "time to"

Nominalising particle *-long*. after present verb stem means "(enough) time to Vb."
 The noun phrase referring to the actor may be subject or adjunct.

nga. da.lta. za.long. med. "I've no time to eat now."
 ˊga ˊtandə ˊsalɿ: ˊme:
 I now eat-nom. neg.-exist

Nominalising particle -thabs. "chance", "possibility", "way"

Nominalising particle *-thabs*. after present verb stem and before *yod./'dug./yog.red.*
 (usually in the negative) means "way of, means of Vb.-ing":

bros.thabs. mi.'dug. "There was no way of escaping."
 ˊtry:dvp ˊmindu:
 flee-nom. neg.-exist

Before the verb *byed.* or *gnang.*, a verb nominalised with *-thabs.* means "try to Vb."

nga. khang.pa. cig. nyo.thabs. byed.kyi.yod. "I'm trying to buy a house."
 ˊga ˊkʰagbə tɕi: ˊnudvp ˊtɕigijø:
 I house num. buy-nom. do-link.-aux.

Nominalising particle -re. "hope"

Agha (1993b:124) gives a form with nominalising particle *-re*. after present stem and before *yod./'dug./yog.red.* meaning "hope to Vb."

bkra.shis. 'gro.re. 'dug. "Tashi hopes to go."
 ˊtraɕi: ˊdrɔre ˊdu:
 Tashi go-nom. exist

Nominalising particle -bzo. "appearance"

This is an alternative to nominalising particle+genitive particle+noun *-pa'i.bzo.* (see 8.5.1). As a more grammaticised form than the latter I have included it under "apparent" modality at 9.2.8.

'dir. *khang.pa. yod.bzo. mi.'dug.* "There don't seem to be any houses here."

_de: ʔkʰaŋbə ʔjə:so ʔmindu:
 this-loc. house exist-nom. neg.-exist

Nominalising particles ma- Vb-.ka.med. "no choice but"

A negative present verb stem verb followed by *ka.med.* as subject of the verb *byung.* means there is or was no choice but to do the act referred to by the verb. With the verb *red.* the construction denotes future time:

ma.'gro. ka.med. byung.song. "There is no choice but to go."
_madro ʔkame: ʔtʃuŋsʊ
 neg.-go nom. happen-aux.

bod.skad. ma.bshad. ka.med. red.
_pø:ge ʔmaʃe: ʔkame: ʔre:
 Tibetan neg.-speak nom. be

"There will be no choice but to speak Tibetan."

Nominalising particles ma- Vb.rang- Vb.

This construction is similar in meaning to the preceding one, but generally seems to use the past stem of the verb:

smān. mā.zas. rang.zas red. "I have no choice but to take medicine."
ʔmɛ: ʔmase: ʔraŋse: ʔre:
 medicine nom.-ate nom.-ate be

Nominalising particles Vb.-lo.ba. "ability"

The particles *-lo.ba.* following the present verb stem convey the sense of "fit to Vb." or "Vb-able":

kha.lag. di. za.lo.ba. mi.'dug. "This food is not fit to eat."
ʔkʰalo: ʔdi ʔsalo: ʔmindu: (Roerich & Lhalungpa 1957:24)
 food this eat-nom. neg.-exist

13.4.3 *Nominalising particles mainly used in set idioms*

Nominalising particle -mdog./-dogs. "likelihood"

Nominalising particle *-mdog.* (sometimes spelt *-dogs.*) after present verb stem and immediately before the adjective *kha.po.* means "seems likely to be going to Vb.", usually as complement of a verb of being.

zing.khrugs. lang.mdog. kha.po. red.
 _sṅdru: _laṅdo: ṽkhabu _re:
 unrest arise-nom. likely-nom. be

“It seems likely that unrest will break out.”

After perfect auxiliary *-yod*, the reference is to past time:

khos. yi.ge. btang.yod.mdog. kha.po. red.
 ṽkhaḥ: _jiḡi ṽtaḡjḥ:ndo: ṽkhabu _re:
 3sg.-smp. letter send-aux.-nom. likely-nom. be

“It seems likely that he has sent the letter.”

The constituent *-mdog* can also be used with adjectives: see 11.3.

Nominalising particle -rogs. “help” ⁴

As a nominalising particle *-rogs* is in common use for making polite requests to those higher than oneself in the deference system, and generally translated by Tibetans with the English “please”, though in idiomatic English some more oblique usage such as “would you” or “could you” is often more appropriate. It is normally used in imperative clauses whose main verb is *gnang*, if the verb to which *rogs* is attached is honorific; otherwise *byed*.; both meaning “do”.

yar. phebs.rogs. gnang. “Please come in!”
 _ja: ṽpḥercḥ: ṽnd:
 up come-nom. do

tshwa. gnang.rogs. gnang. “Would you kindly pass the salt?”
 ṽtsḥa ṽnaḡro: ṽnd:
 salt give-nom. do

khong.la. phul.rogs. gnang. “Would you kindly give it to him?”
 ṽkḥḥḡle ṽpḥy:ro: ṽnd:
 3sg-loc. give-nom. do

kho.la. sprad.rogs. byed. “Please give it to him.”
 ṽkḥḥle ṽtre:ro: ṽtḥi(s)
 he-loc. give-nom. Do

Nominalising particle -nyid./-snying. “desire”

A very similar meaning to that under *-’dod*, above (but sometimes said to refer to a stronger degree of desire) is achieved by a present verb stem nominalised with *-nyid* (sometimes written *-snying*.) as the first part of a phrasal verb of which the second is the verb stem *’dod*:

de.ring. las.ka. byed.snying. 'dod.kyi.mi.'dug. “I don’t want to work today.”
 _tɪrɪ: _lɛ:gə _tɕɪŋɪ: _dy:gymɪndu:
 today work do-nom. want-link.-neg.-aux.

Nominalising particle -grabs. “readiness”, “near miss”

The construction verb+grabs.+yod./'dug./yog.red. is analysed as lexical verb+linking particle+auxiliary and discussed under prospective (imminent) aspect in Chapter 9. A noun consisting of involuntary verb+nominalising particle *grabs.* is found before the verb *byed.* meaning “ready to Vb.” or in the past tense “almost Vb.-ed” or “just missed Vb.-ing”.

zam.pa. lug.grabs. byed.kyi.'dug. “The bridge is ready to collapse.”
 _sambə _lu:dro _tɕɪgɪdu:
 bridge collapse-nom. do-link.-aux.

zam.pa. lug.grabs. byas.pa.red. “The bridge almost collapsed.”
 _sambə _lu:dro _tɕɛ:bəre:
 bridge collapse-nom. did-link.-aux.

Nominalising particle -nyer. “on the point”

Nominalising particle *-nyer.* after present verb stem means “on the point of Vb.-ing”), “about to Vb”, and is usually found before verbs red. “be”, *thug.* “meet” or *slebs.* “reach”. Etymologically it is probably composed of *nye.* “neighbourhood” plus the dative-locative particle.

kho.tsho 'gro.nyer. thug.shag. “They are about to go.”
 ˀkʰəndzə _drəŋɛ: ˀtʰu:ɕa
 3sg.-pl go-nom. reach-aux.

Nominalising particle -ran. “time”

Nominalising particle *-ran.* after present verb stem before the verb *bsdad.* “stay”, “exist” means “be about to Vb.”:

nga. 'gro.ran. bsdad.yod. “I’m about to go.”
 _ŋa _drəŋɛ: _de:jʃ:
 I go-nom. exist-aux.

There is also a serial verb *ran.* (see 10.5), which however means “be time to Vb.”:

nga. 'gro. ran.song. “It’s time I went.”
 _ŋa _drə _rɛnsʊ
 I go be time-aux.

13.4.4 Nominalising particles behaving like free nouns

In the case of *-sa*. And *-srol.*, the agent is usually represented by the subject of the nominalised verb:

Nominalising particle -sa. "place", "chance", "occasion".

khong. bzhugs.sa. ga.par. bzhugs.kyi.'dug.pa. "Where is he staying?"
 ṽkʰʂ: ̣cu:sə ̣kaba: ̣cu:gydɔ
 3sg. stay-nom. where stay-link.-aux.-wh.int.

deng.sang. nga.tshos. bod.skad. sbyang.sa. yog.ma.red.
 ̣tɛŋsɔ: ̣gandzø: ̣pø:ge: ̣dzangsə ̣jɔ:mare:
 nowadays I-num.-smp. Tibetan practise-nom. exist [neg.]
 "Nowadays there is no occasion for us to practise Tibetan."

Nominalising particle -srol. "custom"

spyid.kar. gling.ka. btang.srol. yog.red.
 ṽtʂi:ka: ̣lɪŋgə ̣tangsø: ̣jɔ:re:
 spring picnic hold-nom. exist
 "There is the custom of picnicking in spring."

Nominalising particle -stangs. "style", "manner"

Here the agent is represented as the possessor of the nominalised verb and bears a genitive particle:

kho'i. lab.stangs.la. bltas.na. kham.pa. yin.pa.'dra.
 ṽkʰø: ̣lɔbɔ:stɛŋs:lə ̣tɛ:nə ̣kʰambə ̣jɪnbɔ:dra
 3sg.-gen. speak-nom.-loc. look-sub. Khamba be-link.-aux.
 "To judge by his accent, he is probably a Khamba."

13.5 Verb Stem+Nominaliser+Adjunct Marker

The nominalising particles *-pa.*, *-kha.* and *-shul.* enter into various constructions with adjunct-marking particles or extended adjunct-markers, whose function is to subordinate the nominalised clause.

-pa.dang. "on", "as soon as" (with past verb stem)

nga. yong.ba. dang. "On my arrival, ..."
 ̣ŋa ̣jɔŋə ̣tɔ:
 I come-nom. co-ord.

-pas. "because"

This combination of particles (nominalising+instrumental) is in general much less common in the Lhasa dialect than in Classical Tibetan, perhaps because of its homophony with the Lhasa interrogative particle:

kho. bod.rigs. yin.pas. "As he is a Tibetan, ..."
 ཀྱོ བོད་རིགས་ ཡིན་པས་ (lit. "through he being a Tibetan")
 3sg. Tibetan be-nom.-instr.

It is however often heard in the following constructions:

a) -pas.ma.tshad. "not only" (with past verb stem).

kho. bod.rigs. yin.pas. ma.tshad. "Not only is he a Tibetan, but ..."
 ཀྱོ བོད་རིགས་ ཡིན་པས་ མཚའེ་ (lit. "not only he being a Tibetan, but ...")
 3sg. Tibetan be-nom.-instr. sub.

b) -pas.ni. "although".

khong. phebs.pa.yin.pas. ni. "Although he was going, ..."
 ཀྱོ རྩེ་པའི་ཡིན་པས་ རྒྱུ་ (lit. "although he was going, ...")
 3sg. go-link.-aux.-nom.-instr. top.

-par. "with"

kho.tsho. med.par. nyin.ma. gsum. phyin.song.
 ཀྱོ མཚའེ་ བཤམ་ རྩེ་པའི་ རྩེ་པའི་ རྩེ་པའི་
 3sg.-num. neg.-exist-nom.-loc. day three went-aux.
 "Three days have gone by without their being here."

-shul.ring.la./khar. "while" (with present verb stem)

kha.sang. khyed.rang. med.shul. ring.la.
 ཀྱོ མཚའེ་ རྩེ་པའི་ རྩེ་པའི་ རྩེ་པའི་
 the other day you neg.-exist duration-loc.
 "The other day while you were not here, ..."

-kha.lha.mor. (with present verb stem) "just before"

kho. shi.kha. lha.mor. "When he was on the point of death, ..."
 ཀྱོ མཚའེ་ རྩེ་པའི་ རྩེ་པའི་
 3sg. die-nom. quick-nom.-loc.,

13.6 Polariser+Verb Stem+Adjunct Marker

These constructions involve negative particles and extended adjunct markers of time. The English equivalents use positive polarity:

ma.+Vb+gong.la. “before” (with past verb stem):

ngas. nyo.bya. ma.rgyab. gong.la. “Before I do/did the shopping, ...”
 _nɛ: _nɔbdzə _mɔgɣɣp _kɔŋlɛ
 I-*sm*p. shopping neg.-do before-loc.

ma.+Vb+bar.du. “until” (with past verb stem):

kho.tsho. ma.bslebs. bar.du. “Until they arrive(d), ...”
 ʔkʰɔndzɔ ʔmalep _pɔ:du
 3sg.-num. neg.-arrive meantime-loc.

Notes

- 1 The verb *rtsis.* means “count”, “calculate”, and the noun *rtsis.*, “accounts”, “astrology”.
- 2 The verb *'dod.* means “desire”, “wish”.
- 3 But see Roerich & Lhalungpa (1957:70), where the noun phrase referring to the actor is in an adjunct with *-la.*.
- 4 As a noun *rogs.* means “assistance” as in the phrasal verb *rogs. byed.* _rɔ: _tɕɛ: “help”; it also occurs as a constituent in disyllabic nouns such as *rogs.pa.* _rɔgbə “companion”, *las.rogs.* _lɛ:rɔ: “colleague” etc.

14. Preclassical and Classical Tibetan

Introduction

In this chapter, some comparisons will be made between Lhasa Tibetan on the one hand, taken as representative for this purpose of the modern spoken dialects, and the language of selected works of Preclassical and Classical Tibetan on the other. The comparisons will not be exhaustive but simply illustrative of the main similarities and differences. The differences between Preclassical and Classical Tibetan are clearly at least partly a matter of historical period. Lhasa Tibetan is recorded from the modern period and is therefore in some sense “later” than Classical Tibetan. Probably it is the lineal descendant not of the original Classical language itself but of some spoken contemporary of Classical Tibetan; however, Preclassical and Classical Tibetan are all we have to compare it with from an earlier era.

All the Preclassical and Classical examples in this chapter are taken from the following corpus of texts, listed in the Bibliography:

Preclassical:

Bacot, Thomas & Toussaint (1940) (“Bacot etc.”: 8th-9th century); Emmerick (1967) (c.9th century.); Li & Coblin (1987) (8th-9th century); Sba gsal snang. (attrib.) (1980) (“*Bashe*”: perhaps late 8th century, edited c.13th century); Taube (1980) (8th-9th century); Thomas (1951:Part II) (8th-9th century).

Classical:

De Jong (1959) (“*Milarepa*”, “*Milarepa’s biography*”: 15th century).

14.1 Lexis

Tibetan operates with a stock of monosyllabic or sub-monosyllabic constituents whose number has an upper limit, determined for the written language by the spelling system. Most of the recorded constituents in the language were probably in use already by the 8th century AD. Lexical change has therefore only been able to happen by one or more of four processes:

- a) by the dropping out of the language of some constituents;
- b) by the recombination of others to form new polysyllabic nouns;
- c) by the recombination of parts of speech to form phrasal nouns, phrasal verbs

or phrasal adjectives; and
d) by the adoption of loanwords from other languages.

In general, Tibetan has always been rather resistant to loanwords, but has made full use of the other three mechanisms, particularly b and c.

At a rough guess, at least 80% of the constituents of the Preclassical texts, and 90% of those in *Milarepa* are still in use in Lhasa Tibetan. Perhaps 70% and 80% respectively of the actual lexical items (parts of speech) survive, though they have by now been outnumbered by more recent coinages.

14.2 Grammar

In terms of the nature of phrase, clause and sentence elements and their ordering, the language has changed little if at all. An exception is the now obsolete use of an adjective preceding the noun within the noun phrase in Classical Tibetan. Even this, however, was a rather uncommon minority pattern.

bzang.po'i. las.thabs. “good deeds” (*Bashe* 62, line 11)
good-nom.-gen. deed

14.3 “Grammatical Lexis”

The most striking differences between the two written varieties, between them and Lhasa Tibetan, and indeed between Lhasa Tibetan and other modern spoken and written varieties, is in the realm of the identity and use of grammatical and partially grammaticised constituents: particles, auxiliaries, serial verbs and postpositional nouns.

In the cases of particles found in noun phrases, of postpositional nouns and of subordinating verb particles, the differences are lexical in the sense that one item is replaced by another with the same or very similar meaning.

In the case of other constituents found in verb phrases, particularly auxiliaries and linking and modal particles, the differences involve such important grammatical systems as those of intention, person, viewpoint, tense/aspect, evidential and judgemental modality and mood. In terms of these systems one can see a development from Preclassical to Classical Tibetan, and then a greater development from Classical to Lhasa Tibetan.

Some of this variation may be less a matter of language period than of the genre or register of the texts which are to hand. One would not necessarily expect an everyday conversation to make the same distinctions of intention, person, viewpoint etc. as a royal edict, regardless of historical period. Presumably the speakers of the ninth century were able to make just as subtle grammatical distinctions as those of today in their conversation, even though many of these distinctions are absent from their inscriptional texts. Indeed it is noticeable how personal letters of the ninth century use somewhat different grammatical resources than do the contemporary

inscriptions; and even more noticeable how in Milarepa's biography the grammar of conversational passages differs from that of their narrative frame.

A comparison between Lhasa Tibetan and other modern spoken dialects, although beyond the scope of this book, would also show great variety in the identity and use of these grammatical constituents, and consequently great variety in the workings of the grammatical systems concerned.

14.4 Nouns and Noun Phrases (Chapter 7)

Examples of lexical differences in non-postpositional nouns between Classical and Lhasa Tibetan are given at 7.1.

Several of the Preclassical and Classical "relative/interrogative" postpositional nouns are replaced in Lhasa Tibetan by disyllabic equivalents beginning with the constituent *ga.* (which in Classical Tibetan usually means "where"):

Classical		Lhasa	
<i>gang., ci.</i>	"what"	<i>ga.re.</i>	_ karɿ
<i>gang.</i>	"which"	<i>ga.gi.</i>	_ kɒɣɿ
<i>nam.</i>	"when"	<i>ga.dus.</i>	_ kɒdy:
<i>gar.</i>	"where"	<i>ga.par.</i>	_ kaba:
<i>ci.tsam.</i>	"how much"	<i>ga.tshod./tshad.</i>	_ kɒdʒe:/_kɒdʒɿ:
<i>gang.nas.</i>	"whence"	<i>ga.nas.</i>	_ kane:
<i>ci.'dra.(ba.)</i>	"how"	<i>ga.'dra.</i>	_ kandre:

The Preclassical and Classical plural numerator *rnams.* is largely replaced in Lhasa Tibetan by *tsho.*, which is of more restricted use.

14.5 Verbs (Chapter 8)

The theoretical behaviour of verb stems in Classical Tibetan and the way this differs from Lhasa Tibetan is outlined at 8.2.

In Preclassical Tibetan, the use of the future verb stem, where available, is normal to express future tense (and perhaps prospective aspect). By the time of Milarepa's biography, with one or two exceptions future stems are not used, even in cases of clearly future time reference by a verb which has an available future stem in the dictionaries. The main exception is the future stem *bya.* of the verb *byed.* "do", which is often used where appropriate.

Thus apart from this one verb, the prescribed Classical system of four verb stems does not hold for Milarepa's biography, which must surely be included in Classical Tibetan by any standard. It would be interesting to study other Classical works systematically to trace this loss of the future verb stem.

Phrasal verbs are much less common in the Preclassical and Classical language than in Lhasa Tibetan, but those that do occur behave in the same way.

14.6 Verb Phrases (Chapter 9)

14.6.1 Verbs of being

The copular verb of being *yin.* and existential verbs of being *yod.* and *'dug.* are used in Preclassical and Classical Tibetan. *'dug.* usually has strongly the sense of discovery that it retains in Lhasa Tibetan. The difference of viewpoint between *yod.* and *'dug.* however is weak if present at all, and there is no distinction of viewpoint in copular verbs of being: i.e. no equivalent of Lhasa dialect *red.*¹

There may well be a distinction of modality, provided by the uncommon forms *'dug.pa.yin.* (*Bashe*), *yod.pa.yin.* and respectful *mchis.pa.lags.*. These, formally past-tense existential verbs, would seem to be the equivalent of Lhasa *yog.red.* (which may itself be derived from a past-tense form of *yod.*, expressing unwitnessed evidential modality) or *yod.pa.red.* (expressing deductive judgemental modality).

rmi.lam.du. bstan.pa'i. sa. der. gshegs.nas. gzigs.pa. dang.
 dream-loc. show-nom.-gen. place that-loc. go-sub. look-nom. co-ord.
ci.yang. med/ 'di.na. 'dug.pa.yin.pa.la. byas.te. btsan.pos.
 what-top. neg.-exist this-loc. exist-link.aux.-nom.-loc. said-sub. king-smp.
bye.ma.la. zhabs.sug.sug. byas.te.
 sand-loc. foot jostling did-sub.

“Having gone to the place shown in the dream and looked, there was nothing.
 Saying ‘It should be here!’ the king kicked at the sand, and ...”
 (*Bashe* 43, line 2)

khyed.kyi. nor.ram. de. gang.na. yod.pa.yin.
 you-gen. wealth-interr. that where-loc. exist-link.-aux.

“Your property? Where would that be?” (*Milarepa* 34, line 1)

mtsho'i. mig.ni. da.ltar.yang/ pra.bha.sha'i. sku.gzugs. sprul.pa'i.
 lake-gen. opening-top. now-top. (proper name)-gen. image incarnation-gen.
zhabs.kyis. mnan.te. mchis.pa.lags//
 foot-instr. cover-sub. exist-link.-aux.

“Even now, the opening into the lake is supposed to exist, covered by the feet of the miraculous image of the Prabhasa shrine.” (*Emmerick* 91, line 110)

In Preclassical and Classical Tibetan, as well as the deference system (14.9) there operates a politeness system at the level of verbs of being and their corresponding auxiliaries. Traces of this may be seen in Lhasa Tibetan, where the constituent *lags.* in some of its uses expresses politeness towards one’s *addressee*, not as in the deference system towards referent of a clause argument (subject, object or adjunct) as such. (See 12.3). (There is also a noun constituent *lags.* in Lhasa Tibetan (7.5) which expresses politeness towards the referent of a subject, object or adjunct.)

In Preclassical Tibetan, a series of “polite”² verbs of being/auxiliaries and lexical/serial verbs express politeness towards the addressee (who may be the reader of the text), contrasting with non-polite verbs, as follows:

Non-polite			Polite				
present	past	future	present	past	future	imperative	
<i>yin.</i>			<i>lags.</i>			“be” (copula)	
<i>yod.</i>			<i>mchis.</i>			“exist”	
<i>'dug.</i>			<i>gda'.</i>			“exist”	
<i>byed.</i>	<i>byas.</i>	<i>bya.</i>	<i>bgyid.</i>	<i>bgyis.</i>	<i>bgyi.</i>	<i>gyis.</i>	“do”
<i>'gro.</i>	<i>phyin.</i>		<i>mchi.</i>	<i>mchis.</i>			“go”

Thus in the *Prophecy of the Li Country*, the only instance of *yod.* occurs in the speech of a king to his inferiors (Emmerick 16, line 175a3); everywhere else “exist” is rendered by *mchis.*. Likewise *lags.* and *-pa.lags.* (past tense) are universal in letters, reports to superiors and petitions, but kings addressing inferiors always use *yin.* and *-pa.yin.* (Bacot etc. 109, line 12; Li & Coblin 48 line 18; 49 lines 33, 38; 265 lines 23, 28; 272 line 41). Kings may however use *mchis.* and *lags.* when respectfully addressing prominent religious figures (*Bashe* 38, line 4 - 39 line 1).

sras. gzhan.gyi. mchid.nas// ngan.pa. khyod. rgya.rje'i. bu. ma.yin.te/ ...
 son other-gen. speech-abl. low-nom. you Emperor-gen. son neg.-be-sub.
nged. rgyal.rigs. bu. yang.dag.pa. yin.te. tha.dad. ces. mchi.na//
 we royal estate son true-nom. be-sub. various quot. say-sub.
bdag. rgya.rje'i. bu. ma.lags.par. gyur.na/ bdag. rgya.rje'i
 I Emperor-gen. son neg.-be-nom.-loc. become-sub. I Emperor-gen.
zham.'bring.na. mchis.na. ci. sman. ... zhes. gsold.pa.las//
 servant-loc. stay-sub. what benefit quot. say-nom.-abl.
rgya.rjes. kyang. 'phral.du. khyod. nga'i. bu. yang.dag.pa. yin.te. ...
 Emperor-smp.-top. immediacy-loc. you I-gen. son true-nom. be-sub.
zhes. mchi.ba.las//
quot. say-nom.-abl.

“The other sons said such things as, ‘You who are of low estate are not (*ma.yin.*) a son of the Emperor. We are (*yin.*) true sons of royal estate.’ (Sanu) said, ‘If it turns out that I am not (*ma.lags.*) the Emperor’s son, what use is it to stay (*mchis.*) as the Emperor’s servant? The Emperor said, immediately, ‘You are (*yin.*) my true son.’” (Emmerick 81, line 26)

(For another polite use of auxiliary *lags.*, see under “serial verb *rung.*” at 14.7 below.)

In Classical Tibetan, at least by the time of Milarepa’s biography, *mchis.* has dropped out of the language, but *lags.* and *gda'.* are still in normal use to express politeness towards an addressee, both as a verb and an auxiliary, as alternatives to *yin.* and *'dug.* respectively.

Of the marginal verbs of being *byung.*, *song.*, *yong.* and *'dra.*, their lexical counterparts are all found in Preclassical Tibetan. As auxiliaries, *'dra.* fairly often occurs in the Preclassical language; *byung.* very occasionally, while *song.* and *yong.* do not occur in the Preclassical texts under consideration. (*'dra.* and *yong.* occur as serial verbs.)

In *Milarepa*, *byung.*, *song.*, *yong.* and *'dra.* are all found as lexical verbs, as marginal verbs of being and auxiliaries.

pho.rgod.pa. dang. nor. che.ba. mi.yong.
 successful-nom. co-ord. wealth great-nom. neg.- exist

“There are none more successful or wealthier.” (*Milarepa* 30, line 12)

yong. may also occur as an auxiliary with an adjective occupying the verb position in the predicator:

bem.po. 'di.'dra. gyon.nas. rgyal.khams. bskor.ba'i. mi.la. skyid.yong.
 cloak such wear-sub. country tour-nom.-gen. person-loc. be nice-aux.

“It must be nice for someone touring the country wearing such a cloak.”
 (*Milarepa* 46, line 25)

Polarity of verbs of being seems essentially the same as in Lhasa Tibetan, except that the dubitative *'e.* which is found in Classical Tibetan and very occasionally in Preclassical, usually means there “whether”.

At the modal position after verbs of being/auxiliaries, the interrogative particle -*gam./dam./bam./mam./sam./ram./lam./(-)'am.* occurs in the Preclassical and Classical texts. It may be the ancestor of the “alternative/tentative enquiry” particle of Lhasa Tibetan (9.2.6). The emphatic particle -*ang.* occurs in *Milarepa*, and occasionally the wh-interrogative -*pa.*, though usually no particle is found on a verb in a wh-interrogative clause.

Of the Lhasa Tibetan degrees of judgemental modality, -*pa.'dra.* is found in the Preclassical and Classical language, as is *grang.* which may be the lineal ancestor of Lhasa *gro.*

The lexical verb *drag.* “be better” has an auxiliary homograph in *Milarepa*, e.g.

rang.re.nams.kyang. gsol.ba. btab.pa.drag.
 we-num.-top. petition make-link.-aux.

“We too had better beseech him.” (*Milarepa* 25, line 27)

14.6.2 Lexical verbs

In both Preclassical and Classical Tibetan, tense/aspect forms using auxiliaries are found. However, in most types of text, auxiliaries and linking particles are not used in the majority of verb phrases. In the Preclassical language, full use is made of past, present and future verb stems without auxiliaries to indicate tense, though of course many verbs do not have all three stems.

In many texts it is very noticeable that auxiliaries are used mainly or only when one person is addressing another or making personal statements, whether in letters (epistolary register), royal charters (epigraphical register) or in reported conversations (conversational register). In the latter two registers, auxiliaries may be strikingly absent from the verb phrases of the surrounding narrative frame (narrative register).

As with the verbs of being/auxiliaries, in neither the Preclassical nor the Classical texts is there any evidence of a formal distinction of viewpoint. Nor is there any evidence of a distinction between intentional and unintentional verbs and clauses. These facts are perhaps not surprising, since in Lhasa Tibetan it is the auxiliaries which convey these distinctions.

In both the Preclassical and Classical language one finds the main-clause final particle (*mcf.*), spelt with reduplicated last letter of the preceding syllable+vowel *-o.* ('*o.* after vowel). It is found after past, present and future verb stems; also on occasion after auxiliaries. Already in many Preclassical texts there is a tendency to use this particle more as a “paragraph-final” than a “sentence-final” particle; that is, it may be omitted from clauses which are not regarded as bringing a section of narrative or conversation to a close; other main clauses ending in a bare verb stem. Such clauses without verb particles resemble the weakly subordinated clauses in Lhasa Tibetan with bare verb stems and level intonation (13.1).

Occasionally the main clause-final particle is found directly after a noun or adjective. Here it is a shorter alternant of the combination of copular verb *yin.* or *lags.*+main clause-final particle. (The same sometimes happens before subordinate clause-final particles *te./de./ste.* and *cing./zhing./shing.*)

Copular verb absent:

yar.lha. sham.po.ni. gtsug.gi. lha'o.
(proper name)-*top.* order-*gen.* god-*mcf.*

“Yarlha Shampo is the god of order.” (Bacot etc. 81, line 25)

14.6.3 Past tense: Preclassical

— Past verb stem

nya. lha. gnyis.kyis. btsan.po'i. spur. bzung.ngo.
(proper names) two-*smp.* king-*gen.* corpse take-*mcf.*

“Nya and Lha took the corpse of the king.” (Bacot etc. 99, line 21)

— Present verb stem (no past stem available)

mkhar. phying.bar. gshegs.so.
castle (proper name)-*loc.* go-*mcf.*

“He went to the castle of Chingwa.” (Bacot etc. 99, line 25)

— Past verb stem+ *pa.yin./lags.*

sa. 'di.yang. sngon.gyi. bde.bzhin.gshegs.pas. byin.gyis. brlabs.pa.lags.te
spot this-*top.* yore-*gen.* Buddha-*smp.* grace-*instr.* bless-*link.-aux.-sub.*

“This spot was blessed by Buddhas of yore, and ...” (Emmerick 48, line 82b4)

— Past verb stem; copular auxiliary omitted

mjal.dum.gyi. gtsigs.kyi. mdo. rdo.rings.la. bris.pa'o.
 treaty-gen. edict-gen. summary pillar-loc. write-link.-mcf.

“A summary of the treaty-edict was written on this pillar.”

(Li & Coblin 38, line 10)

— Present verb stem+ *pa.yin.lags.* (no past stem available)

srung.mar. zhal.gyis. bzhes.pa.lags.te.
 protector-loc. word-instr. accept-link.-aux.-sub.

“(They) undertook to be protectors, and ...” (Emmerick 34, line 179a5)

— Past verb stem (or, if unavailable, present stem)+ *byung.*

This form of the past tense occurs once in the Bashe, where it may be a later emendation, as it does not occur in all editions:

rim.gro. ... byas.byung/
 offerings did-aux.

“(You) made offerings.” (*Bashe* 6, line 23)

14.6.4 Past Tense: Classical

In *Milarepa*, all the above Preclassical past tense forms are used, with the addition of forms in *-byung.* and *-song.*. The latter two, though not frequent, behave similarly to the corresponding forms in Lhasa Tibetan.

brgyal.ba. sangs.te. lang.byung.nas.
 faint recover-sub. rise-aux.-sub.

“Recovering from her faint and standing up...” (*Milarepa* 37, line 2)

mdang. nga'i. yon.bdag. dga'.mo. de.yang. shi.song.bas.
 yesterday I-gen. patron beloved-nom. that-top. die-aux.-sub.

“Because that beloved patron of mine died yesterday ...” (*Milarepa* 51, line 14)

mi. shi.byung.ba. kun.gyis. thos.pas. “All the bereaved having heard it, ...”
 person die-aux.-nom. all-smp. hear-sub. (*Milarepa* 43, line 20)

14.6.5 Present tense: Preclassical

— Present stem

da.dung.yang. yul. srung.zhing. byin.gyis. rlob/ mngon.rtags. dang/
 still-top. land protect-sub. grace-instr. bless manifestations co-ord.

mtshan.ma.dag.kyang. 'byung/
sign-num.-top. occur

“Even now they protect the land and bless it. Manifestations and signs occur.”
(Emmerick 14, line 174b5)

— Present stem+ *cing./zhing./shing.yod./mchis./'dug./gda'*. (progressive aspect)

Like the Lhasa Tibetan present tense, this form may be used to refer to other times (mainly past time) to denote progressive action. Unlike the Lhasa Tibetan present tense, however, it always refers to progressive action even when referring to present time. Thus it might better be regarded as an aspectual form than as a tense form.

deng.sang.du.khab.so.dpon.sna.dagis.khral.gyi.sna.'tshal.te/
nowadays-loc. official-num.-smp. tax-gen. kind seek-sub.
gtses.shing.mchis.na.
harm-link.-aux.-sub.

“Whereas the officials are harming us by seeking various taxes these days ...”
(Li & Coblin 198, line 9)

14.6.6 Present tense: Classical

In *Milarepa* both the above Preclassical present tense forms are found. However there is a further form which seems etymologically related to the Lhasa Tibetan present tense, namely present verb stem+linking particle *kyin./gin./gyin.* (sometimes spelt without the final *-n.*)+auxiliary *yod./'dug./gda'*.. In *Milarepa* this usually refers to habitual or repeated action, either in present or past time, contrasting with the progressive action of the present verb stem+*cing./zhing./shing.*+auxiliary *yod./'dug./gda'*..

nga'i.grogs.po.kun.log.'gro.grabs.byed.cing.'dug.pa.la/
I-gen. companion all return-nom. do-link.-aux.-nom.-loc.
bla.mas.dbus.phrug.gi.gos.legs.pa.re.kun.la.btsems.nas.
lama-smp. broadcloth-gen. garment fine-nom. each all-loc. sew-sub.
gnang.gin.'dug/
give-link.-aux

“For each of my companions, who were all making preparations to return, the Lama sewed and presented a fine broadcloth garment.” (*Milarepa* 39, line 10)

Sometimes, however, the form with *kyin./gin./gyin.* is used to refer to progressive action:

a.ma.nang.na.yos.rngod.kyin.yod.pas.thos.nas.
mother inside-loc. barley parch-link.-aux.-nom.-smp. hear-sub.

“My mother, who was inside parching barley, heard me, and ...”
(*Milarepa* 36, line 13)

14.6.7 Future tense: Preclassical

— Future verb stem

myi.bzung.zhing. gam. dris.te// brdzangs.nas. phyir. gtang.ngo/
neg.-seize-sub. speech ask-sub. provision-sub. back-loc. send-mcf.

“... without being apprehended, he will be questioned, and having been provisioned, will be sent back.” (Li & Coblin 39, line 34)

— Present verb stem (no future stem available)

lnga.brgya. rtag.tu. gnas.so/
five hundred always-loc. reside-mcf.

“Five hundred will always reside there.” (Emmerick 12, line 174a6)

— Present verb stem+ *pa.yin./lags.* (only with verbs which have a past stem)

sman. snga.ma. skur.ba.yin.no.
medicine before send-link.-aux.-mcf.

“The medicine will be sent in advance.” (Taube 43)

— Future verb stem+ *pa.yin./lags.*

rgyags.snod.ni. li'i. pha.tsa. gzhag.pa.lags.pas.
provision-container-top. Khotan-gen. sack leave-link.-aux.-sub.

“Regarding containers for the provisions, as Khotanese sacks will be left, ...”
 (Thomas 384)

The future stem *bya.* (of the verb *byed.* “do”) and the present/future verb stem *'gyur.* (“become”) are frequently found in the constructions:

present (or future?) verb stem+*par.byā.* or *par.'gyur.*

These are often regarded as future tense forms. However, since other stems of the same two verbs *byed.* and *'gyur.* are used in the same construction, the reference to future time seems to be made by the choice of stem rather than the construction itself, which may better be regarded as a case of verb serialisation than tense form. Accordingly it is discussed below under serial verbs.

— “Witnessed” future tense: present or past verb stem+ *par.yod./'dug./gda'.*

Of the Preclassical texts under review, this form occurs only in the *Bashe.* As often in Lhasa Tibetan, it occurs here in the apodosis of a conditional sentence:

ma.byon.na. bdag. gsod.par.yod.pas. brag.g-yang. 'di.la.
neg.-come-sub. I kill-link.-aux.-sub. gorge this-loc.

mchongs.te. 'gum.mo.
jump-sub. kill-mcf.

“If you do not come I shall be put to death,
 and so I shall jump into this gorge and die.” (*Bashe* 65, line 15)

— Future verb stem+ *-i(s)/yi(s)/gyi(s)/gi(s)*.

ngas.kyang. grogs. bya'i.

I-smp.-top. help will do-vol. “For my part, I shall help.” (*Bashe* 7, line 5)

14.6.8 Future tense: Classical

— Present or future verb stem

In *Milarepa* the only unambiguously future verb stem used is *bya.*, future of *byed*. “do”. It seems to be used only in non-nominalised main clauses. The form *sbyang*. of the verb *sbyong*. “provide” may also be a future stem, likewise occurring in a main clause. Even these two verbs, however, may use their present stems to refer to future time:

— Future verb stem

tsha.tsha. 'debs.grogs. bya'o.

figurine make-nom. will do-mcf.

“I shall help you to make the figurines.” (*Milarepa* 113, line 17)

— Present verb stem

'dir. slebs.dus. sna.len. dang. bya.dga'. bzang.po. byed.do.

here-loc. arrive-sub. welcome co-ord. present good-nom. do-mcf.

“I shall provide you with good hospitality on your return.”

(*Milarepa* 37, line 28)

— Future verb stem

ngas. mthun.rkyen.rnams. sbyang.gis.

I-smp. requisite-num. will supply-vol.

“I shall supply the requisites.”

(*Milarepa* 51, line 27)

— Present verb stem

lto.gos.kyang. nga.rang.gis. sbyong.

food+clothing-top. I self-smp. provide

“Food and clothing I shall provide.” (*Milarepa* 58, line 23)

— Present verb stem+*pa.yin./lags*. (only with verbs which have a separate past stem)
In the following example, the future stem *bya.* is used in the main clause, and the present stem of the same verb (*byed.*)+ *pa.yin.* in the nominalised clause:

da. nga. rkyen. thub.pa'i. chos. shig. byed.pa.yin.pas/
now I circumstance withstand-*nom.-gen.* religion some do-*link.-sub.*
khyod.kyis. nga'i. bu.slob.rnams. skyongs/ ngas. khyod.kyi. mtho.ris. dang.
you-*smp.* I-*gen.* pupil-*num.* look after I-*smp.* you-*gen.* heaven *co-ord.*
thar.pa'i. lam. sna.zin.pa. zhig. bya'o.
liberation-*gen.* path guide *num.* will do-*mcf.*

“Now I am going to practise some religion which will withstand all vicissitudes, so you look after my pupils. I shall be a guide on your path to heaven and liberation.” (*Milarepa* 51, line 23)

— Present stem or progressive aspect+ *yong.*

"a.khu. dang. a.ne. gnyis.kyis.kyang. ci.drag. re. ster.yong.
uncle *co-ord.* aunt two-*smp.-top.* *nom* -useful some give-*aux.*
“Even your uncle and aunt may well make some useful contribution.”
(*Milarepa* 34, line 30)

— “Witnessed” future: present or past stem+ *pa(r).yod./'dug./gda'*

This form of the future tense is commoner in *Milarepa* than in Lhasa Tibetan. It is used for predictive statements, often conveying a strong degree of emotion, rather than statements of intention on someone’s part; and is frequently found in the apodosis of conditional sentences:

bdag.gis. mthu'i. rtags. ma.thon par. yul.du. log.na/
I-*smp.* power-*gen* sign *neg.-emerge-nom.-loc.* home-*loc.* return-*sub.*
bdag.gi. mdun.du. "a.ma. lcebs.nas. 'chi.ba.yod.pas. ma.phyin.pa.lags/
I-*gen.* front-*loc.* mother jump-*sub.* die-*link.-aux.-sub.* *neg.-went-link.-aux.*

“I did not go, because if I returned home with no signs of power having emerged, my mother would dash herself to death.” (*Milarepa* 40, line 11)

— Past verb stem+ *par.byā.*

'dri.na. dri.ba.la. lan. btab.par.byā.
ask-*sub.* question-*loc.* reply give-*link.-aux.*

“Since you ask, I shall answer your question.” (*Milarepa* 26, line 19)

14.6.9 *Perfect aspect: Preclassical*

— Past stem+ 'dug./yod.

This form is rare: two examples occur in the *Bashe*.

zhang.gis. me.long.la. bltas.pas. rgas.'dug.pas/
 (proper name)-smp. mirror-loc. looked-sub. grow old-aux.-sub.

“When Zhang looked in the mirror, he (saw that he) had grown old, ...”
 (*Bashe* 17, line 19)

14.6.10 *Perfect aspect: Classical*

— Past stem+ yod./'dug./gda'.

ra.ba.na. rta. mang.po. btags.yod.par. ma.mthong.bar.
 yard-loc. horse many-nom. tied-aux.-nom.-loc. neg.-see-nom.-loc.

“Without seeing the many horses which had been tethered in the yard ...”
 (*Milarepa* 42, line 21)

14.6.11 *Prospective aspect*The only occurrence of this form in either the Preclassical or the Classical texts is in the *Bashe*:

— Present stem+ rgyu.yin.

yong.ni. sangs.rgyas.kyi. bstan.pa. gar. byung.bar.
 generally-top. buddha-gen. teaching where-loc. arise-nom.-loc.
 mu.stegs.kyi. rgol.ba'i. dgra. re. 'gran.du. 'ong.ba.yang.
 heretic-gen. oppose-nom.-gen. enemy one contend-ser. come-nom.-top.
 'byung.rgyu.yin.na/
 appear-link.-aux.-sub.

“Whereas in general wherever there is Buddhism, there will also appear some
 heretical enemy who comes to oppose it, ...” (*Bashe* 66, line 6)

14.6.12 *Imperative mood: Preclassical*

— Imperative verb stem

'di.dag.gi. phyir. brtsig.
 this-num.-gen. sake-loc. build

“Build it for their sakes!” (*Emmerick* 28, line 178a3)

— Imperative verb stem+ *cig./zhig./shig.*

yon. phul.cig.
fee offer-*imp.*

“Offer a fee!” (*Bashe* 11, line 18)

— Present verb stem+ *cig./zhig./shig.* (no imperative stem available)

zhang.blon.gyi. bu.tsha. ... thams.cad. rab.tu. 'byung.cig.
minister-*gen.* son all be ordained-*imp.*

“May all the ministers’ sons become ordained!” (*Bashe* 59, line 12)

— Future verb stem+ *par.ci./ji.+gnang.*

'di'i. skyin.par. bdag. dgum.par. ci.gnang.
this-*gen.* substitute-*loc.* I will die-*nom.-loc.* *imp.-do*

“Please allow me to die in his place.” (*Emmerick* 40, line 180b5)

— Present verb stem+ *par.ci./ji.+gnang.* (no future stem available)

yi.ge. zhib.mo. 'ga'.zhig. spring.bar. ji.gnang.
letter detail some send-*nom.-loc.* *imp.-do*

“Please send some detailed letters.” (*Taube* 51, 3 line 5r)

14.6.13 Imperative mood: Classical

In *Milarepa*, all the above imperative forms are found with the exception of those with *par.ci./ji.+gnang.*. In addition the following are found:

— Imperative verb stem+ *dang.*

khyed.rang.gi. nor.rnams. skyed.'phel.du. ci.'gro. mdzod.dang.
you-*gen.* wealth-*num.* increase-*loc.* *nom.-go* make-*imp.*

“Increase your wealth as much as possible.” (*Milarepa* 164, line 14)

— Present verb stem+ *rogs. gyis.*

nga'i. mig.gis. mi.mthong. rnga.bas. mi.thos.pa'i. yul.phyogs. shig.tu.
I-*gen.* eye-*instr.* neg.-see ear-*instr.* neg.-hear-*nom.-gen.* place one-*loc.*
'gro.rogs. gyis.
go-*nom.* do

“Please go to some place which I will never see or hear of.”
(*Milarepa* 123, line 4)

14.7 Serial Verbs (Chapter 10)

As shown in Chapter 10, the usual means of verb serialisation in Lhasa Tibetan is simple juxtaposition of verb stems, with only the causative verb *bcug*. sometimes using a serial particle *-ru*. between the verb stems. It was also remarked at 13.4 that a verb nominalised with *-pa/ba*. and followed by the imperative *byed*. “do” (in the sense of “try”) resembles verb serialisation.

In both the Preclassical and Classical texts, juxtaposition (i.e. zero particle) is sometimes used in verb serialisation:

14.7.1 Preclassical

— *'dod*. with zero particle, “wish to”

su. bde.ba.can.du. 'gro. 'dod.pa. des. mchod.rten..
 who (proper name)-loc. go wish-nom. that-smp. stupa
brgya.rtsa.brgyad.po. 'di.la. bskor.ba. gyis.
 108-def. this-loc. circumambulation do

“Whoever wishes to go to the Sukhavati heaven should circumambulate these 108 stupas.” (*Bashe* 81, line 16.)

— *tshar*. with zero particle, “finish”

de.ltar. lo. bcu.gnyis.na. lha.khang. bzhengs. tshar.ba.las /
 thus year twelve-loc. temple build finish-nom.-abl.

“Having thus finished building the temple in twelve years, ...” (*Bashe* 57, line 17)

— *nus*. with zero particle, “be able to”

chab. de. sus. len. nus.
 water that who-smp. fetch can

“Who can fetch the water?” (*Bashe* 30, line 13)

— *dgos*. with zero particle, “have to”

ri.la. 'dzeg.pa.la.yang. gom.pa. re.re.nas. 'dzeg. dgos.te.
 mountain-loc. climb-nom.-loc.-top. step individual-abl. climb must-sub.

“In climbing a mountain, one must climb step by step, ...” (*Bashe* 70, line 23.)

— *btub*. with zero particle, “be possible” to

bod.kyi. rdo.la. bzo. btub.bam. mi.btub. blta-'o.
 Tibet-gen. stone-loc. work be possible-alt. neg.-be possible will look-mcf.

“Let us see if it is possible to work in Tibetan stone or not.” (*Bashe* 27, line 10)

— *khom.* with zero particle, “be able to”

nged. blon.po. rgan.po.rnams.la. long. ma.mchis.pas. ā.tsa.ra'i. skad.
 we minister aged-num.-loc. time neg.-be-sub. teacher-gen. language
lob. mi.khom.pas.
 learn neg.-be able-sub.

“Since we aged ministers lack the time, and so will not be able to learn the teacher’s language, ...” (*Bashe* 58, line 11)

14.7.2 Classical

In *Milarepa* all the above serial verbs are found plus the following:

— *yong.* with zero particle, “come”, “be forthcoming”

mi.la.rdo.rje.seng.ge. de. sho.la. shin.tu. rtse.zhing. mkhas.pas. rgyal.
 (proper name) that dice-loc. very play-sub. be clever-sub. stake
mang.po. thob. yong.zhing.yod.pa.las/
 many-nom. win come-link.-aux.-nom.-abl.

“While Mila Dorje Senge played dice a lot and was very clever at it, so that many winnings came to him, ...” (*Milarepa* 28, line 11)

— *phyin.* (past stem of ‘gro., “go”) with zero particle

yum.la.yang. ma.zhus.par. thon. phyin.pas/
 wife-loc.-top. neg.-spoke-nom.-loc. leave went-sub.

“I left without even speaking to the wife, ...” (*Milarepa* 68, line 16)

— *shes.* with zero particle, “know how to”

khyod.kyis. klog. shes.sam.
 you-smp. read know-corrob.

“You do know how to read, don’t you?” (*Milarepa* 68, line 28)

— Phrasal serial verb *thag. chod.* with zero particle, “be definite”

thos.pa.dga'. kho. yin. thag. chod.
 (proper name) he be be definite

“It is certain that Thöpaga is he.” (*Milarepa* 48, line 20)

All the above serial verbs behave in an essentially similar way in Lhasa Tibetan; with the exception of ‘*dod.*, which is either a nominalising particle or follows a clause nominalised with *-nyid./-snying.* (13.4).

14.7.3 Serial verb particles

In both the Preclassical and Classical texts, the serial particles *-par./bar.* and *-tu./du./-r.* are more widely employed in verb serialisation, sometimes as an alternative to juxtaposition, as in the cases of *'dod.*, *'gro./phyin.*, *btub.* and *yong.* below. Generally the choice of serial particle is lexically associated with the serial verb, though occasionally the same verb is found with more than one of these alternatives, as in the cases of *'gro./phyin.* and *rung.* below.

— Serial particle *-par./bar.*

a) *'dod.* with serial particle *-bar.* “wish to”

snang.ba.mtha'.yas.kyi. zhing.khams.su. khyed. spun. 'gro.bar. 'dod.na.

(proper name)-gen. realm-loc. you brother go-ser. wish-sub.

“If you wish to go to the realm of Amitabha, brother, ...” (*Bashe* 79, line 3)

b) *zhu.* with serial particle *-bar.* “request” to”

chos. dang. gdams.ngag. gnang.bar. zhu.

teachings *co-ord.* oral instructions give-ser. request

“I request you to give the teachings and oral instructions.” (*Milarepa* 57, line 20)

c) *sems.* with serial particle *-bar.* “think of”

rgyal.po. khyod. sangs.rgyas.kyi. sku.gzugs. ci.la. bya.bar. sems.

king you Buddha-gen. image what-loc. will do-ser. think

“What are you thinking of using as an image of the Buddha, king?”

(*Bashe* 42, line 14)

— Serial particle *-tu./du./-r.*

a) *yong.* with serial particle *-du.* “come to the point of”

nga.min. gzhan. cig. yin.na. gsod.du'ang. yong.

I neg.-be other num. be-sub. kill-ser.-top. come

“Anyone else but me would come to the point of killing you!”

(*Milarepa* 58, line. 14)

b) *thub.* with serial particle *-r.* “be able to”

khron.pa. 'dom. gang. brus.kyang. chu. rdol.te. 'ong.bas. brur. mi.thub

well fathom whole dig-sub. water gush-sub. come-sub. dig-ser. neg.-can

“Though you would excavate a well a fathom deep, since the water will gush forth, you will not be able to dig.” (*Bashe* 79, line 3)

c) *btub.* with serial particle *-du*. “be possible to”, “be willing to”

kha.cig.ni. bo.dhi.sa.twa'i. slob.ma. yin.pas. hwa.shang.gi. ltar.
 part *num.-top.* Bodhisattva-*gen.* pupil be-*sub.* Hoshang-*gen.* manner
slob.du. ma.btub.ste/
 study-*ser.* neg.-be willing-*sub.*

“Some, being pupils of Bodhisattva and unwilling to study in the fashion of the
 Hoshang, ...” (*Bashe* 67, line 21)

d) *re.* with serial particle *-du*. “hope to”, “expect to”

bla.ma. rngog.pa. bla.ma. yab. yum.gyi. bsu.ba. yong.du. re.ba.mi.gda'/
 lama (proper name) lama couple-*gen.* welcome exist-*ser.* hope-*link.-neg.-aux.*
 “Lama Ngokpa does not expect a welcome from the lama and his wife.”
 (*Milarepa* 76, line 19)

e) *bcug.* with serial particle *-du*. “cause to”

dpe. gcig. 'og.dper. 'chang.du. bcug.go//
 copy one secondary copy-*loc.* hold-*ser.* cause-*mcf.*
 “One copy has been caused to be held as a secondary copy.”
 (Li & Coblin 272, line 4)

bcug. however in Preclassical Tibetan often means “begin to”, “set about”:

gris. lce. gcod.du. bcug.pa. dang.
 sword-*instr.* tongue cut-*ser.* set-*nom.* co-*ord.*
 “He set about cutting out the tongue with a sword, ...” (*Bashe* 41, line 6)

f) *cha.* with serial particle *-tu*. “begin to”

ser.ba. 'bab.tu. cha.ba. dang.
 hail fall-*ser.* begin-*nom.* co-*ord.*
 “When the hail began to fall, ...” (*Milarepa* 72, line 25)

g) *gtong.* with serial particle *-du*. “send in order to”

nga. khyod. 'bod.du'ang. gtong. dgos.
 I you summon-*ser,-top.* send must
 “I must send to summon you.” (*Milarepa* 72, line 14)

— Serial verbs used with both serial particles

a) *'gro.* with serial particle *-du*. “go in order to”

bla.ma. gzhan. 'tshol.du. 'gro. dgos.

lama other seek-ser. go must

“I must go to seek another lama.” (*Milarepa* 66, line 10)

b) *'gro.* with serial particle *-par.* “amount to”, “become”

bla.ma'i. bka'. bcag.par.yang. 'gro.zhing.

lama-gen. word break-ser.-top. go-sub.

“As well as it amounting to disobeying my lama’s orders, ...”

(*Milarepa* 72, line 22)

c) *rung.* with serial particle *-du.* “be alright to”

bka'.rgya. bkrol.nas. gnang.du. rung.lags.sam.

secret teachings revealed-sub. give-ser. be alright-aux-alt.

“Then it will be alright to reveal the secret teachings?” (*Milarepa* 77, line 34)

d) *rung.* with serial particle *-par.* “be alright to”

zhal.bzhes. 'di.rnams.kyi. sku.dpang.du. yum. bzhugs.par.

promise this-num.-gen. witness-loc. wife stand-ser..

rung.lags.sam.

be alright-aux.-corrob

“Then it will be alright for your wife to stand as witness to these promises?”

(*Milarepa* 60, line 28)

The auxiliary *lags.* in the above two examples occurs directly after the verb stem with no linking particle, and does not alternate with *yin.* Its function is to convey politeness to the addressee rather than to form a tense/aspect construction. See under “verbs of being” at 14.6 above.

— Serial verbs *byed./bgyid.* and *'gyur.* with serial particle *par./bar.*

Different stems of the verbs *byed.* (polite *bgyid.*) and *'gyur.* have been variously regarded as “auxiliaries” and/or “causatives”, “transitivisers”, “passivisers” or “makers of periphrastic perfect and future tenses” (e.g. Emmerick 113, 116). It seems simpler to regard them both as straightforward serial verbs, though it could be argued that the specialised meanings of some of the uses of *byed./bgyid.* in particular (namely 3, 5 and 6 in the table below) have moved some way towards being grammaticised as a kind of auxiliary.

Serial verbs byed./bgyid. As a lexical verb, *byed.* and its polite equivalent *bgyid.* mean “do”, generally referring to a deliberate act. As a serial verb, the meaning varies as shown in the following table. (“Subjects same” and “Subjects different” refer to the subjects of *byed.* and the preceding verb respectively.)

	Subjects same 1st person	Subjects same 2nd/3rd person	Subjects different or unrecoverable
present/past/ imperative stem	1. "proceed to", "prepare to", "try to"	2. "proceed to", "prepare to", "try to"	3. "cause to".
future stem	4. "shall proceed to".	5. "should".	6. "should".

The numbers attached to the following examples refer to the above table.

2. *lo. re.bzhin. dpyid. zla. ra.ba'i. ngo.la. mchod.par. bgyid.cing.*
 year each spring month 1st-gen. start-loc. worship-ser. do-sub.
ril.gyis. po.ta.rya'i. gtsug.lag.khang.du. mchis.te.
 all-instr. (proper name)-gen. temple-loc. went-sub.

"Annually at the beginning of the first month they all went to the Potarya temple and proceeded to worship, and ..." (Emmerick 34, line 179a5)

3. *che.long. gcig.ni. zhang.blon.rnams.la. dar.bar. byas/*
 resumé one-top. minister-num.-loc. spread-ser. caused

"A resumé was distributed among the ministers." (*Bashe* 76, line 7)

4. *gsang. dgos.med.pas. bshad.par. bya.ste.*
 secret need-neg.-aux.-sub. tell-ser. shall proceed-sub.

"Since there is no need for secrecy, I shall proceed to tell it, ..." (*Milarepa* 27, line 8)

4. *chu. ma.mchis.pas. chab. dbyung.bar. bya.*
 water neg.-exist-sub. water extract-ser. shall do

"As there is no water, I shall proceed to draw some." (*Bashe* 27, line 4)

While it is sometimes claimed that the future stem *bya* always follows a future verb stem, the form *dbyung* in the above example may be a present stem (see Jaeschke 390). There is in fact no unambiguously future stem with this construction in the texts under review. Compare the Classical examples below.

6. *skye.'gro. mtha'.dag. smin.grol.la. 'god.par. bya.ba'i. phyir.*
 being all liberation-loc. set-ser. will do-nom.-gen sake-loc.

"So that all beings should be established in liberation, ..." (*Milarepa* 26, line 14)

de rnams go.bar. gyis.la.
 that-num. understand-ser. try-sub.

"Try to understand these things, and ..." (*Milarepa* 79, line 18)

Serial verb 'gyur. As a lexical verb, this means "become", "change" (intransitive). As a serial verb, it means "become", "come to", "turn out that". In general the past stem *gyur* refers to past time. The present stem *'gyur* refers, to

present or more usually to future time, and follows the present stem of the preceding verb, even when that verb has a future stem available.

khon. dran.par. gyur.te.
grudge think-*ser.* come to-*sub.*

“He came to bear a grudge, and ...” (Emmerick 62, line 185b3)

bdag. rgya.rje'i. bu. ma.lags.par. gyur.na.
I Emperor-*gen.* son *neg.-be-ser.* turned out-*if*

“If I have turned out not to be the Emperor’s son, ...” (Emmerick 81, line 26)

'u.then.gyi. sa.mkhar. lnga.ldan.gyi. grong.khyer. chen.po.
Khotan-*gen.* fortress (proper name)-*gen.* city great-*nom.*
rtsig.par. 'gyur.ro//
build-*ser.* will become-*mcf.*

“The fortress of Khotan, the great city Ngaden, will come to be built.”
(Emmerick 12, line 74a3)

14.8 Adjectives (Chapter 11)

As in Lhasa Tibetan, an adjective has a lexically determined nominalising particle in the positive degree. The particles found in *Milarepa* are:

- po./-bo.*: *chen.po.* “big” (58, line 9); *skya.bo.* “grey” (60, line 26).
- pa./ba.*: *che.ba.* “big” (57, line 4), *'dra.ba.* “similar” and in a special class of “-e. -v ovel” adjectives (see below).
- mo.*: *dka'.mo.* “difficult” (60, line 22); *dga'.mo.* “pleasing” (61, line 16).
- pu./-bu.*: *gcig.pu.* “single”; *lta.bu.* “like”.

There are two examples of adjectives preceded by negative particles, supporting the view of an adjective as a kind of verb (see Chapter 11):

mi.'dra.ba. “different” (64, line 27)
mi.sdug. thag.gcod.pa. “definitely disagreeable” (60, line 13)

The comparative & superlative degree nominalising particles are, as in Lhasa Tibetan, *-ba.* and *-shos.* respectively. The adjective *chen.po./che.ba.* “big” uses the stem *che.* in its comparative and superlative forms, as in Lhasa Tibetan where only *chen.po.* is found in the positive degree.

The intensive degree particles as seen in *mi.sdug. thag.gcod.pa.* “definitely disagreeable” (60, line 13) resemble the Lhasa Tibetan intensive form *Adj.+thag.chod.* (11.1.5).

There is an intensive degree nominalising particle *-rab.* not found in Lhasa Tibetan:

slob.ma. dad.pa.can. mang.rab. yong.gin.yod.pa.

pupil faith-com. many-nom. come-link.-aux.-nom.

“Very many faithful pupils who come ...” (*Milarepa* 57, line 21)

A class of *-e*-vowel adjectives is not found in Lhasa Tibetan, though they share the constituent containing the *-e* vowel with the “popular rhyming terms” of that dialect (see 7.3.2.). In the following examples, the numbers refer to the pages and lines of *Milarepa*.

These adjectives are of two types. The first type is a phrasal adjective comprising noun+adjective stem+particle with reduplicated initial, vowel *-e* and no final letter:

spyan. zim.me. “with half-closed eyes” (57, line 15).

num. rug.ge. “luxuriant” (73, line 6).

The second type comprises an adjective or verb stem+particle with reduplicated initial, vowel *-e* and no final letter+*-ba*:

thol.le.ba. “wafting” (58, line 13).

gzug.ge.ba. “anguished” (64, line 23).

gtum.me.ba. “hot-tempered” (67, line 1).

ring.nge.ba. “long-lasting” (68, line 24).

Although not phrasal in themselves, the second type may be combined with a preceding constituent (in the example given, a verb) to form a phrasal adjective:

bzi. ber.re.ba. “potent” (of liquor) (63, line 10).

In Preclassical Tibetan, an adjective stem may stand as a predicator before a subordinating verb particle *cing./zhing./shing.*. Often this particle is found between two adjective stems used predicatively with reference to the same noun:

rig.pa. blun.zhing. rang.dga'.ba. mang.bas/ chos.ni.

wits dull-sub. free-thinking be great-sub. religion-top.

rtogs.pa. dka'.zhing. zab.par. gyur.pas/
 considering hard-sub. profound-nom.-loc. became-sub.

“Their wits are dull and free-thinking is prevalent, so that religion has become hard to fathom and mysterious.” (*Bashe* 75, line 23)

14.9 Clauses (Chapter 12)

Ellipsis and transitivity

Ellipsis of the clause arguments subject, object and adjunct operates in very much the same way as in Lhasa Tibetan, as does the transitivity system.

Ergativity and the subject-marking particle

By comparison with Lhasa Tibetan, a much higher proportion of the subjects of transitive clauses bear the subject marking particle in the Preclassical and Classical texts. Even there, however, as mentioned at 12.2, some such subjects are without the subject-marking particle. Nearly all of these exceptions fall into one of four categories:

a) Imperatives.

The noun in an imperative clause which refers to the actor usually lacks a subject-marking particle. It might be regarded as a vocative rather than a subject:

mthu.chen. kha.sang.gi. ngas. ma.byas.pa'i. ham.pa.
 (proper name) the other day-gen. I-smp. neg.-did-nom.-gen. lie
de.'dra. ma.byed.
 such neg.-do

“Great Magician, do not tell lies about what I never did the other day!”
 (*Milarepa* 60, line 16)

However, an imperative clause may contain a subject-marking particle when emphasis is being placed on the subject:

da. yang. khyed.rang.gis. long.la.
 now again you-smp. erect-sub.

“Now erect it again by yourself, and ...” (*Milarepa* 61, line 25)

b) “Second-person” subjects.

With a second-person pronominal noun or the name or title of a person being directly addressed, whether by a statement or a question, the subject-marking particle is sometimes omitted. Again, this is a kind of vocative usage.

yab. mi.gsan. “You aren’t listening, husband.” (*Milarepa* 61, line 9)
 husband neg.-listen

bdag.med.ma. khyed.gnyis. ci. byed.cing.yod.pa.yin.
 (proper name) you-num. what do-link.-aux.-link.-aux.

“Damema, what are you two doing?” (*Milarepa* 65, line 20)

Occasionally the subject of a nominalised or interrogative clause lacks the subject-marking particle:

c) Subjects of nominalised clauses.

yum. ba. 'jo.ba'i. 'jo.stegs.
 wife cow milk-nom.-gen. milking stand

“a milking stand for the wife to milk the cows” (*Milarepa* 66, line 9)

bla.ma. ci.gsung. sgrub.dgos.
 lama nom.-say do must

“I must do what the Lama says.” (*Milarepa* 60, line 23)

d) Subjects of interrogative clauses.

nged.kyi. mi. de. ci. byed.cing.'dug.
 we-gen. person that what do-link.-aux.

“What is that fellow of ours doing?” (*Milarepa* 75, line 6)

There remains a very small residue of instances which do not fall into the above categories.

Cases of subject-marking particles in intransitive clauses are extremely rare. An example placing contrastive focus on the subject is:

der. ngas. gzhung.gi. ri.bo. khyung.sding.du. slebs.te.
 that-loc. I-smp. (placename)-gen. mountain (proper name)-loc. arrive-sub.

“For my part I was then arriving at Khyungding Mountain in Shung, and ...”
 (*Milarepa* 71, line 8)

As in Lhasa Tibetan, the subject-marking particle seems never to be used in copular or existential clauses containing verbs of being. Included in this category of verb for *Milarepa* are the two-argument verbs *'byung*. “experience”, “undergo”; *dbang*. “possess” and *'dod*. “desire”.

Adjuncts

Instrumental particle. The instrumental particle *kyis./gis./gyis*. behaves in the same way as in the Lhasa dialect.

Dative-locative particles. The Lhasa dialect dative-locative particle *la./r.* is common in the Preclassical and Classical texts. Also frequent in the latter are the two particles *tu./du./ru./su.* and *na.*, both non-productive in Lhasa Tibetan. All seven forms of the three particles are classified together under the term *la.don.* by traditional Tibetan grammarians. There is a considerable degree of overlap between the three, and much idiomatic association between the individual particles and particular nouns. However, one can discern a tendency to use *na.* in a locative sense with nouns referring to physical locations (“at”); *la.* in an allative sense (“to”, “towards”); and *tu.* in a more metaphorical or abstract way (“for”, “as”).

btsan.po. sras. khri.srong. lde.brtsan.gyi. sku.la.ni. dard.du. nye//
 king son (proper name)-gen. person-loc.-top. harm-ser. be near

“They came close to doing harm to the person of the prince Trisong Detsen.”
(Li & Coblin 143, line 11)

'u.then.gyi. shel.chab. gong.mar. mchis.pa. dang.
Khotan-gen. river upper-loc. went-nom. co-ord.

“On going to the upper river of Khotan, ...” (Emmerick 18, line 173b5)

chos. rgya.gar.na. yod.pas.
religion India-loc. exist-sub.

“Since the religion is present in India, ...” (*Bashe* 5, line 6)

rgyal.bus. dus. rtag.tu. de. gleng.ba. zhang.blon. kun.gyis. tshor.te/
prince-smp. time always-loc. that say-nom. minister all-smp. perceive-sub.

“The ministers, perceiving that the prince always said that, ...”
(*Bashe* 5, line 21)

khal. gcig. sha.chang.ḍu. spyad/
load one meat beer-loc. use

“One load I exchanged for meat and beer.” (*Milarepa* 57, line 4)

Ablative particles. The Lhasa dialect ablative particle *nas.* is common in the Preclassical and Classical texts.

rgya.rje. kwang.peng. 'wang.yang/ keng.shi'i. mkhar.nas. byung.ste.
Emperor (proper name)-top. (proper name)-gen. city-abl. come out-sub.

“The Emperor Kuang-p'ing Wang, coming out from the city of Ching-shih, ...”
(Li & Coblin 145, line 61)

The Lhasa disjunctive particle *las.*, as well as having the disjunctive function in Preclassical and Classical Tibetan, often has an ablative meaning:

byang.chub. shing.las. 'o.ma. byung/
enlightenment-tree-abl. milk come out

“Milk came out from the tree of enlightenment.” (*Bashe* 11, line 8)

The relationship between ablative *nas.* and *las.* resembles that between dative/locative *na.* and *la.* respectively, in that *nas.* tends to refer to movement from a physical location, while *las.* tends to have a more abstract or metaphorical meaning:

rdo.rings.la. bris.pa.las. myi.dbri. myi.bcos.
pillar-loc. wrote-nom.-abl. neg.-diminish neg.-adulterate

myi.bsgyur.bar. gyis.shig.
neg.-change-ser. do-imp.

“Let it not be diminished, adulterated or changed from what is written on the pillar”. (Li & Coblin 265, line 31)

Disjunctive & exceptive particles. The disjunctive particle *las.* occurs in both the Preclassical and Classical texts; the exceptive particle *ma.gtogs.* only in the Classical. There is also a disjunctive particle *pas./bas.* :

bu. nga.bas.kyang. dad.pa. che.ba.
son I-disj.-top. faith great-nom.

“a son more faithful than I” (*Bashe* 2, line 4)

Argument order

The expression of case, theme and given/new information through argument order operate as in the Lhasa dialect.

Deference

The deference system operates very similarly in all three varieties. In two of the Preclassical texts, the king of Tibet clearly uses honorific verbs of which he is the subject, and honorific nouns :

nga'i. thugs.la. dgongs.na.
I-gen. mind(hon.)-loc. think(hon.)-sub.

“On considering it in my mind, ...” (Li & Coblin 271, line 17)

It could be that this is the “quotative” use of the honorific (see 12.7) by the drafter of the text.

14.10 Subordinate and Nominalised Clauses (Chapter 13)

Lexical verb stem

There is no basis for distinguishing a separate class of subordinate clauses ending in a lexical verb stem in Preclassical and Classical Tibetan, since main clauses also commonly end in a lexical verb stem, unlike the situation in the Lhasa dialect. I have come across no examples of clauses ending in lexical verb stem+topic marker, except in the special case of verse, which is outside the scope of this book.

Lhasa subordinating particles not found in Preclassical/Classical texts

No instances have been found in the Classical or Preclassical texts of the Lhasa dialect subordinating particles *byas.* “and then”, *ga.* “in order to” or *ma.+Vb+gong.la.* “before”.

Lhasa subordinating particles also found in Preclassical/Classical texts

a) *nas.* “having”, “after”. Subordinating particle *nas.* is common after lexical

verb stems and in the Preclassical texts is sometimes found after auxiliaries:

kun. tshar.lags.nas. rgyal.pos. yo.byad. sta.gon. mdzad.de/
all finish-*aux.-sub.* king-*smp.* requisite preparation do-*sub.*

“When everything had been finished, the king prepared the requisites, ... ”
(*Bashe* 39, line 9)

gtsug.lag.khang. brtsigs.pa.lags.nas.
temple built-*link.-aux.-sub.*

“After the temple was built, ... ” (*Emmerick* 23, line 177a4)

b) *na*. “if”, “when”. Subordinating particle *na*. sometimes means “if” (as in the Lhasa dialect), but also often “when”:

de.ltar. mchod.rten. bzhi.yang. brtsigs.lags.na.
thus stupa four-*top.* built-*aux.-sub.*

“Thus when the four stupas had been built, ... ” (*Bashe* 52, line 18)

nga. bram.ze. yin.par. gyur.na.
I priest be-*ser.* become-*sub.*

“If I should turn out to be a priest, ... ” (*Bashe* 2, line 4)

c) *na'ang*. “even though”, “as”. Subordinating particle *na'ang*. sometimes means “even though” (as in the Lhasa dialect), but also often “as”, or “whereas”:

bdag. rang.gi. phag.nor.du. gnang.ba.lags.na'ang.
I self-*gen.* private property-*loc.* give-*link.-aux.-sub.*

“As it was given as my private property, ... ” (*Milarepa* 67, line 4)

d) *te./de./ste*. “-ing”, “although”. This particle is much commoner in Preclassical and Classical Tibetan than in the Lhasa dialect:

mtha'.bzhi.'i. rgyal.po. gzhan. dang. myi.'dra.ste/
border four-*gen.* king other *co-ord.* neg.-resemble-*sub.*

“Being unlike the other kings on the four borders, ... ”
(*Li & Coblin* 229, line 17)

de. yod.de.
that exist-*sub.*

“Although you have that, ... ” (*Milarepa* 61, line 21)

Before verbs of speaking or thinking, this particle sometimes acts as a main clause “quotative” particle in *Milarepa*:

rgya.'dre'i. gzhi. cig. 'ong.ste. zhus.pas.ni.
quarrel-*gen.* ground *num.* will be-*sub.* said-*sub.-top.*

“It will be the grounds for a quarrel,” she said, and ... ” (*Milarepa* 61, line 19)

e) *ma.thag.(du.)*. “as soon as”:

bal.po'i. bzo.bos. dgung. sangs. ma.thag.du. bzo.'phro.la. phyin.pas /
 Nepal-gen. craftsman-smp. sky lighten sub. work-nom.-loc. went-sub.
 “As soon as the sky was light the Nepalese craftsmen came to continue the work,
 and ...” (*Bashe* 52, line 22)

f) *pa.dang*. “on”:

spyir. dpen.pa'i. las. chen.po. byas.pa. dang.
 general-loc. benefit-gen. work great-nom. did-nom. co-ord.
 “On his having done great works of general benefit, ...”
 (Li & Coblin 271, line 14)

g) *pas./bas*. “because”:

ji.la.yang. log.pa. gshin.p[h]yogs. nyes. dgur. byed.pas//
 what-loc.-top. perverse-nom. prosperity harm all-loc. do-sub.
yul.gyi. srid.kyang. dma's.so//
 land-gen. government-top. deteriorated-mcf.
 “Because he behaved perversely in all respects to the detriment of prosperity, the
 government of the land deteriorated.” (*Bacot* etc. 103, line 7)

Preclassical/Classical subordinating particles not found in Lhasa Tibetan

a) *tshe*. “when”. The place of subordinating particle *dus*. is taken in the Preclassical and Classical texts by *tshe*., of which one example has been found in the Preclassical texts:

shing.mkhan. dang. mgar.ba. bkug.te. snyan.du. gsol.tshe/
 carpenter co-ord. smith call-sub. ear-loc. tell-sub.
 “When they recalled the carpenters and smiths and told (the king), ...”
 (*Bashe* 53, line 1)

The same construction is found in *Milarepa*:

byed.grabs. yod.tshe. “When the preparations for doing it were under way, ...”
 do-nom. exist-sub. (*Milarepa* 65, line 14)

In the Preclassical texts, *tshe*. nearly always follows a nominalised verb with genitive particle rather than a verb stem. Here it is best regarded as a noun, standing like many nouns referring to time as an adjunct without following article:

chos. mdzad.pa'i. tshe/
 religion practise-nom.-gen. time
 “At the time of practising religion, ...” (*Bashe* 22, line 19)

A homograph of the Lhasa dialect constituent *-dus*. “when” is frequent in the Preclassical and Classical texts, but never as a subordinating particle. It appears as a straightforward noun in the *Bashe* and the Classical language:

rje.'bangs. kun. 'tshogs.pa'i. dus.su.
king subject all assemble-*nom.-gen.* time-*loc.*

“At the time when the king and all the subjects assembled, ...”
(*Bashe* 17, line 21)

There is also a nominalising particle *-dus*. “time for”

mnga'. gsol.dus. bzang.po.la. bab.pa'i. tshe/
consecrate-*nom.* good-*nom.-loc.* fall-*nom.-gen.* time

“At a good time for consecration, ..” (*Bashe* 55, line 16)

mkhar. gru. bzhi.'gram. 'dings.dus.kyi. zhal.bzhes.
building corner four wall laid-*nom.-gen.* promise

“promises from the time of laying the footings of the quadrangular building”
(*Milarepa* 65, line 5)

b) *cing./zhing./shing.* “-ing”. There is a considerable degree of overlap between this particle and *te./de./ste.*. Often the sequence *Vb+cing.* precedes the sequence *Vb+te.* in close proximity, apparently as a stylistic device for avoiding repetition of the particle:

sa. sa. mal. mal.na. bag. brkyang.ste// bde.bar. 'khod.cing.
place place site site-*loc.* precaution will relax-*sub.* peace-*loc.* dwell-*sub.*

“Relaxing precautions and dwelling in peace in all places, ...”
(Li & Coblin 39, line 54)

sangs.rgyas. shākya. thub.pas. yul.du. 'gyur.bar. lung. bstan.cing.
(proper name)-*smp.* land-*loc.* become-*nom.-loc.* prophesy-*sub.*

“Shakyamuni Buddha, prophesying that it would become a land, ...”
(Emmerick 2, line 172a1)

pha.myes. dang.po. lha. myi. ma.phye.ba. tshun.chad. bde. skyid.cing.
ancestor first-*nom.* god man neg.-separate-*nom.* since be happy-*sub.*

“From the time of the first ancestors who were not separated as gods and men,
we were happy.” (Li & Coblin 198, line 9)

Unlike *te./de./ste.*, the particle *cing./zhing./shing.* never seems to mean “although”.

c) *la.* “and”.

tsang.kun.yog.du. rta. brjes.la// stse.zhung.cheg.du. rgya. dang.
(placename)-*loc.* horse changed-*sub.* (placename)-*loc.* China co-*ord.*

phrad.pa. man.chad.ni. rgyas. phu.dud. bya.
meet-nom. below-top. China-smp. respect will do

“They shall change horses at Chiang-chün-ku, and below the entry to China at Sui-jung-cha, China shall treat them with respect.” (Li & Coblin 39, line 42)

Subordinating particle *-la.*, unlike noun particle *-la.*, does not have an alternant *-r.* after vowel finals.

d) *kyis./gis./gyis.* “whereas”, “because”. This particle is found in the Preclassical texts but not in *Milarepa*.

blon. stag.sgra.klu.khong. nang.blon. chen.po. dang.
minister (proper name) interior minister great-nom. co-ord.
yo.gal.'chos.pa. chen.por. bka'. stsald.kyis.kyang.
(title) great-nom.-loc. appoint-sub.-top.

“Whereas the minister Takdra Lukhong was appointed Chief Interior Minister and Chief Justice Minister, ...” (Li & Coblin 141, line 1)

Classical subordinating particles not found in Preclassical texts or Lhasa Tibetan

a) *phyir.* “in order to”.

bdag.la. bka'.bkyon. gngang.phyir. phyag. mi.bzhes.rung/
I-loc. rebuke give-sub. salutation neg.-accept-sub.

“Although you will not accept my salutations in order to rebuke me, ...”
(*Milarepa* 76, line 8)

b) *rung.* “although”, “if”.

yul.du. phyin.rung. chog.par.'dug.
home-loc. went-sub. be alright-link.-aux.

“It would be alright if I went home.” (*Milarepa* 68, line 12)

c) *rting.* “after”.

lo. ser.bas. brdungs.rting. nga. gang. za.
crop hail-instr. beat down-sub. I what eat

“What shall I eat after my crop is beaten down by hail?” (*Milarepa* 72, line 27)

(For the lack of a subject-marking particle in an interrogative clause, see 14.9.)

Nominalised clauses

Nominalising particles are well represented in Preclassical and Classical Tibetan. I have noted some eighteen in *Milarepa* as against twenty-six in Lhasa Tibetan, with a fair degree of overlap. The common Lhasa Tibetan nominalising particle *-yag.* is

exceptional within this group in being a constituent apparently totally absent from the Preclassical and Classical language. Otherwise, all the Lhasa items are found in the Classical language, though in some cases only as nouns or verbs, not as nominalising particles (e.g. *rtsis*. “intention”; *'dod*. “wish” (Vb.); *long*. “time”).

The nominalising particles in *Milarepa*, with references to examples, are as follows. Where the constituent also exists as a noun, a gloss is given after the reference:

- <i>skabs</i> .	“occasion of Vb.-ing”, “chance to Vb.” (79, line 21) (“occasion”)
- <i>mkhan</i> .	“one who Vb.-s” (76, line 14)
- <i>grabs</i> .	“preparations for Vb.-ing” (70, line 5) (“preparation”)
- <i>dgu</i> .	“the many which Vb.” (73, line 28) (“nine”)
- <i>rgyu</i> .	“to be Vb.-ed” (78, line 5)
<i>ci-</i>	“whatever Vb.-s/ is Vb.-ed” (74, line 18)
- <i>snying</i>	“desire to Vb.” (75, line 11) (“heart”)
- <i>stangs</i> .	“manner of Vb.-ing”, “appearance of Vb.-ing” (73, line 1)
- <i>thabs</i> .	“means of Vb.-ing” (74, line 28) (“means”)
- <i>dus</i> .	“time of Vb.-ing” (64, line 5) (“time”)
- <i>don</i> .	“reason for Vb.-ing” (61, line 6) (“meaning”)
- <i>pa/ba</i> .	“Vb.-ing”, “Vb.-er”, “that which is Vb.-ed”.
- <i>phro</i> .	“continuation of Vb.-ing” (63, line 6) (“continuation”)
- <i>tshad</i> .	“all those which Vb./ are Vb.-ed” (73, line 16) (“quantity”)
- <i>tshul</i> .	“way of Vb.-ing”, “manner of Vb.-ing” (75, line 3) (“manner”)
- <i>rin</i> .	“cost of Vb.-ing” (70, line 2) (“cost”)
- <i>lugs</i> .	“manner of Vb.-ing” (69, line 19) (“manner”)
- <i>sa</i> .	“place of Vb.-ing” (60, line 31) (“place”)

Notes

- 1 *red*. occurs in the *Bashe*, where however it is a synonym of *'gyur*. “become” and seems to have no implication of viewpoint. I have not found it in *Milarepa*, despite Das (1902:1191).
- 2 These are the “elegant” verbs of Jaeschke (1881).

15. Texts

15.1 Lhasa Tibetan

The Horpas

The following is from an unscripted taped conversation between two speakers, the first of whom had never lived in Tibet.

bod.la. dgun.kha. zhe.drag. grang.mo. yog.red.bas.//
_pø:lə _gyngə _çedra: _tragmu _jɔ:ribe:
Tibet-loc. winter very cold-nom. exist-interr.

“Are the winters very cold in Tibet?”

lags.red.// bod.la. zhe.drag. grang.mo. yog.red.// lha.sa. rang.la. 'di.ga.tsam.
_la: _re: _pø:lə _çedra: _tragmu _jɔ:re: ʔɛ:sə _raŋlə _diɣadzə
conv. be Tibet-loc. very cold-nom. exist Lhasa self-loc. so

grang.mo. yog.ma.red.// yin.na.yang. byang.phyogs.la. zla.ba. brgyad.pa.nas.
_tragmu _jɔ:mare: _jine: _tɕaŋdzɔ:lə _dawə _gje:bəne:
cold-nom. exist[neg.] but north-loc. month eighth-abl.

gangs. btang.nas./ lo.gsar. bar.du. gangs. ma.bzhus.par. sdod.kyi.red.//
_kd: ʔaŋne _lɔsa: _pa:də _kd: _maɕy:ba: _dy:gyre:
snow fall-sub. new year until-loc. snow neg.-melt-nom.-loc. stay-link.-aux.

“Yes. It’s very cold in Tibet. It’s not so cold in Lhasa itself. But in the north, from October, when snow falls it lies without melting until New Year (March).”

dgun.khar. byang.thang.la. mi. bsdad.mkhan. yog.red.pas.//
_gyngə: _tɕaŋdaŋlə _mi _de:ŋɛ: _jɔ:ribe:
winter-loc. Changthang-loc. person dwell-nom. exist-interr.

“Are there people who live in the Changthang (“northern plains”) in winter?”

hor.pa. sgang.kha. sdod.sa. byang.la. red.// khang.pa. 'di.'dra. rtsig.pa. yod.pa.
 ʰhɔ:bə ɡaŋgə dʰɔ:sə tʰaŋlə re: ʰkʰaŋbə dindre tʰsigbə jʰɔ:bə
 Horpa all dwell-nom. north-loc. be house suchlike wall exist-nom.

thog. ci.dag. yog.ma.red.// yin.na.yang. mi.tshang. chen.po. yin.na. khang.pa.
 ʰthɔ: tʰɔ:da: jɔ:mare: jine: midzɔ: tʰhembo jine ʰkʰaŋbə
 roof etc. exist[neg.] but family big-nom. be-sub. house

chung.chung. thog. yod.pa. 'di.'dra. yog.red.// mi. gzhan.pa.tshos. sbra.
 tʰʰʊŋdʒɔ: ʰthɔ: jʰɔ:bə dindre jɔ:re: mi tʰʰembaɔ: ba
 small-redup. roof exist-nom. suchlike exist person other-num.-smp. tent

rkyang.kyang. phubs.nas. bsdad.yog.red.//
 ʰkjagɟɔ: ʰpʰine de:jɔ:re:
 only pitch-sub. live-aux.

“The Horpas all live in the north. They have no houses or suchlike with walls; no roofs and so on. However, if it’s an important family they may have a small house with a roof or suchlike. Other people just pitch their tents and live in them.”

zla.ba. brgyad.pa.nas. lo.gsar. bar.du. lto.byad. ga.nas. yong.gi.red.pa.//
 dawə ɡje:bəne: lɔsa: pa:du tɔbdʒe: kane: jɟgyre:
 month eighth-abl. new year until-loc. food where-abl. come-link.-aux.-wh.int.

“Where does their food come from between October and the New Year?”

zla.ba. gsum.pa.nas. rtswa. sgang.kha.skye/ de.nas. dud.'gro. sgang.kha. dkar.chu.
 dawə sʰumbəne: tsa ɡaŋgə kje tene: tydru ɡaŋgə: ka:ɔzu
 month third-abl. grass all grow that-abl. animal all milk

yag.po. yong./ de.nas. kho.tsho. gang.kha. mar. dang. phyur.ba. sha. pags.pa.
 jagbu jɔ: tene: ʰkʰɔndzo ɡaŋgə ma: tɔ: tʰɔrə tʰa pagbə
 good-nom. exist that-abl. 3sg.-num. all butter co-ord. cheese meat hide

do.po. brgyab.nas./ lha.sa.la. tshong.gag. yong.gi.red.// de.nas. lha.sa'i.
 tɔbo ɡjɔbne ʰle:sələ tʰɔŋga jɟgyre: tene: ʰle:se:
 load make up-sub. Lhasa-loc. sell-sub. come-link.-aux. that-abl. Lhasa-gen.

mi.gis.kyang. hor.gyi. tsa.nas. mar. nyo/ pags.pa. de.'dra. nyo/ de.nas.
 migje: ʰhɔ:gi tʰsane: ma: ɲɔ pagbə tendre: ɲɔ: tene:
 person-smp.-top. Horpa-gen. place-abl. butter buy hide suchlike buy that-abl.

hor.pa.la. phar.'bru. rtsam.pa. ja. ras.cha. ci.dag. phar. sprad./ de.nas.
 ʰhɔ:bələ ʰpʰa: dru tʰsambə tʰa re:dʒə tʰɔ:da: ʰpʰa: tre: tene:
 Horpa-loc. away grain barley-meal tea cotton etc. away give that-abl.

hor.gyis.kyang. de.tsho. do.po. rgyab./ phar. byang.la. log. phyin./ de.nas.
 ḥə:gje: _tendzo _təbo _gɣvp ḥ^hə: _tɕaglə _lɔ: ṽtɕʰi: _tene:
 Horpa-*sm̄p.*-*top.* that-*num.* load make up away north-*loc.* back went that-*abl.*

lha.sa.nas. nyos.pa. de.tsho. dgun.kha. za.yag.la. bzhag.gi.red.//
 ṽɬe:səne: ṽnə:bə _tendzo _gygə _sajə:lə _ɕa:gəre:
 Lhasa-*abl.* bought-*nom.* that-*num.* winter eat-*nom.*-*loc.* keep-*link.*-*aux.*

“From May all the grass grows, and then all the animals give lots of milk. Then they all make up loads of butter, cheese, meat and hides and come to Lhasa to sell them. Then the Lhasa people buy the butter from the Horpas, and buy the hides and so on, and then they hand over grain, barley-meal, tea, cotton goods etc. to the Horpas. Then the Horpas make these up into loads and go back north. Then they keep the things they’ve bought from Lhasa to eat in the winter.”

An Agu Tomba story

The following is one of many tales current in oral tradition about Agu Tomba, a folk hero of the “wise fool” type. It is delivered in a narrative register, the chief symptom of which is the extensive replacement of the auxiliary *-red.* by its extended alternant *-yin.pa.red.*. In conversational register, this usage is uncommon and expresses “deductive” modality (9.3.4.1). Here it seems to lend a kind of narrative distance to a story which was certainly not witnessed by the narrator and comes close to being acknowledged as fiction, a genre not clearly distinguished in traditional Tibetan literature. The first sentence might literally be rendered “As for Agu Tomba, it seems he had a friend.” There are even the unusual occurrences of the constructions *-dug.pa.yin.pa.red.* and *-shag.yin.pa.red.*. (auxiliaries *-dug.* and *-shag.* are very rarely followed by a linking particle or further auxiliary in conversational register).

"a.khu. ston.pa.la. yar. grogs.po. mi. cig. yog.yin.pa.red.// grogs.po.mi.'di.la. yar.
 ṽḷagu ṽtəmbələ _jə: _trəgbo _mɪ tɕi: _jə:jimbəre: _trəgbo _mɪ _dɪlə _jə:
 Agu Tomba-*loc.* *top.* friend man *num.* exist-*link.*-*aux.* friend man this-*loc.* *top.*

kho.rang.la. skyed.dman. yog.red. bu.gu. yog.red.// grogs.po. mi.'di. nyin.ma.
 ṽk^həraglə ṽkɣimɛ: _jə:re: _pugu _jə:re: _trəgbo _mɪ _dɪ ṽni:mə
 he-*loc.* wife exist child exist friend man this day

gsum.tsam. cig. kho. tshong. rgyab.gag. phyi.logs.la. phyin.pa.yin.pa.red.//
 ṽsumdzə tɕi: ṽk^hə ṽts^hɔ: _gɣvgə: ṽtɕ^hɪlo:lə ṽtɕ^hɪmbəjimbəre:
 three-*app.* *num.* he trade do-*sub.* away-*loc.* went-*link.*-*aux.*-*link.*-*aux.*

skyed.dman. 'di. nang.la. bzhag. byas/ byas.tsang.gag. nyin.ma. cig. "a.khu.
 ṽkɣimɛ: _dɪ _naglə _ɕə: _tɕe ṽtɕe:dzangə: ṽnimə tɕi: ṽḷagu
 wife this inside-*loc.* leave *sub.* therefore day *num.* Agu

ston.pa.kho. bsdad.'dug.gas. blta.gag. phyin.pa.red. nang.la.// de.nas.kho.
 ʼtɔmbə ʼkʰɔ ʼde:duge: ʼtago: ʼtɕʰimbəre: ʼnaglə ʼtene: ʼkʰɔ
 Tomba he stay-aux.-interr. look-sub. went-link.-aux. inside-loc. that-abl. he

nyin.ma. gsum.tsam. tshong. rgyab.gag. phyin.pa.yin.tsang. nang.la.
 ʼni:mə ʼsumdzə ʼtsʰɕ: ʼgja:ga: ʼtɕʰimbəjɪndzɕ: ʼnaglə
 day three-app. trade do-sub. went-link.-aux.-sub. inside-loc.

yog.ma.red.ba.// yin.na.yang. skyed.dman. 'di. 'dir. bsdad.yog.red. nang.la./
 ʼjo:mariba ʼjine: ʼkji:mə: ʼdi ʼde: ʼde:jo:re: ʼnaglə
 exist [neg]-corr. be-sub.-top. wife the this-loc. stay-aux. inside-loc.

de.nas. "a.khu. ston.pas. nang.logs.la. yar. phyin.kho.rang.gi. skyed.dman. dang.
 ʼtene: ʼŋagʷ ʼtɔmbə: ʼnaglo:lə ʼja: ʼtɕʰi: ʼkʰɔranggi ʼkji:mɛ: ʼtɕ:
 that-abl. Agu Tomba-smp. inside-loc. up went 3sg-gen. wife co-ord.

kho.tsho'i nyal.sa'i. gdan.khri'i. 'og.la. 'dug.ga. bltas. bltas.dus. tsam.nas.
 ʼkʰɔndzø: ʼne:sɛ: ʼdendri: ʼwɔ:lə ʼdugə ʼtɛ? ʼte:dy: ʼtsane:
 3sg.-num.-gen. lie-nom.-gen. bed-gen. under-loc. exist-nom. looked looked-sub.

"a.khu. ston.pa. lug. nag.po. chen.po. shed.po. cig.gi. pags.pa. cig.
 ʼŋagʷ ʼtɔmbə ʼlu: ʼnagbo ʼtɕʰembo ʼɕibu ʼtɕigi ʼpagbə ʼɕi:
 Agu Tomba sheep black-nom. big-nom. very num.-gen. hide num.

mthong.pa.yin.pa.red.// de.nas. chang. blugs.yag.gi. dbo.blugs. chen.po. cig.
 ʼtɕʰənbəjimbəre: ʼtene: ʼtɕʰɕ: ʼlu:ja:gi ʼŋulu: ʼtɕʰembo ʼɕi:
 see-link.-aux.-link.-aux. that-abl. beer pour-nom.-gen. jug big-nom. num.

mthong.pa.yin.pa.red.// yin.na.yang. "a.khu. ston.pas. kha. gang.yang.
 ʼtɕʰənbəjimbəre: ʼjine: ʼŋagʷ ʼtɔmbə: ʼkʰa ʼke:
 see-link.-aux.-link.-aux. be-sub. top. Agu Tomba-smp. word any-top.

ma.lab.pa. byas./ de.nas. nam.sang. mar. 'don. phyin.pa.yin.pa.red.//
 ʼmalvbə ʼtɕɛ? ʼtene: ʼnamsɕ: ʼma: ʼdø: ʼtɕʰimbəjimbəre:
 neg.-speak-nom. that-abl. straight away down leave went-link.-aux.-link.-aux.

de.nas. nyin.ma. gsum. bslebs.dus./ de.nas."a.khu. nang.la. tshur. yong.dus./
 ʼtene: ʼni:mə ʼsum ʼle:dy: ʼtene: ʼŋagʷ ʼnaglə ʼtsʰu: ʼjuŋdy:
 that-abl. day three arrive-sub. that-abl. Agu inside-loc. towards-loc. come-sub.

de.nas. kho. skyed.dman. 'di'i. khyo.ga. bslebs.'dug.pa.yin.pa.red. nang.la.//
 ʼtene: ʼkʰɔ ʼkji:mɛ: ʼdi: ʼkjo:ge ʼle:dəjimbəre: ʼnaglə
 that-abl. 3sg. wife the-gen. husband arrive-aux.-link.-aux.-link.-aux. inside-loc.

de.nas. 'a.khu. ston.pa. kho'i. skyed.dman. 'di.la. rtsa.ba.nas.
 _tene: ʔʌgu ʔtombə ʔkʰø: ʔkjimɛ: ʔdilə ʔtsa:ne:
 that-abl. Agu Tonpa 3sg.-gen. wife this-loc. root-abl.

dga'.gi.med.pa.yin.pa.red.// de.nas. 'a.khu'i. bsam.pa.la. da. ngas.
 _gagəme:bəjimbəre: ʔtene: ʔʌgy: ʔsambələ ʔta ʔne:
 like-link.-neg.-aux.-link.-aux.-link.-aux. that-abl. Agu-gen. mind-loc. now I-smp.

kho.gnyis. 'phral. chog.gi.yin. bsam./ 'khrug.pa.tsam. langs.nas. 'a.khu'i.
 ʔkʰuŋi: ʔtɕe: ʔtɕʰo:gyji: ʔsam ʔtɕʊbədzə ʔlagne ʔʌgy:
 3sg.-num. part can-link.-aux. think fight-app. rise-sub. Agu-gen.

bsam.pa.la. 'di. bsam.nas./ phyin.pa.yin.pa.red.// byas.tsang.ga. de.nas. khos
 ʔsambələ ʔdi ʔsamne ʔtɕʰimbəjimbəre: ʔtɕe:dzangga ʔtene: ʔkʰø:
 mind-loc. this think-sub. went-link.-aux.-link.-aux. therefore that-abl. 3sg.-smp.

'a.khu'i. grogs.po. mi. 'dis. "a.dzi. "a.khu. yar. shog. nang.la. shog.
 ʔʌgy: ʔtrəgbo ʔmi ʔdi: ʔʌdzi ʔʌgu ʔja: ʔtɕo: ʔnəglə ʔtɕo:
 Agu-gen. friend man this-smp. hey Agu up come inside-loc. come

tog.tsam. sdod.zer. lab.pa.yin.pa.red.// de.nas. tog.tsam.bsdad./ kho.tsho.
 ʔtɕ:dzə ʔdø:s ʔlvəjimbəre: ʔtene: ʔtɕ:dzə ʔde? ʔkʰəndzo
 a bit stay say tell-link.-aux.-link.-aux. that-abl. a bit stay 3sg.-num.

skad.cha. bshad.yag. byas.dus./ de.nas. "a.khu. nam.sang. da.ga. 'o. da.
 ʔkjedzə ʔtɕe:ya: ʔtɕe:dy: ʔtene: ʔʌgu ʔnamsd: ʔtagə ʔfiə ʔta
 . talk speak-nom. did-sub. that-abl. Agu suddenly just oh now

kha.sang. khyed.rang. med.shul. ring.la. nyin.ma. cig. de.nas. gnam.
 ʔkʰasd: ʔkjerd: ʔmɪtɕy: ʔrɪglə ʔnyi:mə ʔtɕi: ʔtene: ʔnam
 yesterday you neg.-exist-nom length-loc. day num. that-abl. sky .

sngon.po. sngo.rkyang. red.de./ yin.nas. nam.sang. cig.la. sprin.pa. nag.po.
 ʔŋəmbo ʔŋəgjd: ʔre: ʔte ʔjine: ʔnamsd: ʔtɕi:lə ʔtrimbə ʔnagbo
 blue-nom. pure blue be sub. be-sub. suddenly num.-loc. cloud black-nom.

chen.po. shed.po. cig. bskor. byas./ sprin.pa. che.chung.ni. pha.gir.
 ʔtɕembo ʔtɕibo ʔtɕi: ʔkə: ʔtɕe: ʔtrimbə ʔtɕʰidzʊŋi ʔpʰəgi:
 big-nom. very num. circulated sub. cloud size-top. yonder-loc.

gdan.khri'i. 'og.la. lug. nag.po'i. pags.pa.tsam. cig. 'dug.zer./
 ʔdendri: ʔwə:lə ʔlu: ʔnagbø: ʔpagbədzə ʔtɕi: ʔdu:s
 bed-gen. under-loc. sheep black-nom.-gen hide-app. num. exist say .

da. 'di.'dra. *cig.la.nam.sang.ser.ra.cig.btang.song.zer./ser.ra'i.che.chung*
 _ta _dindre: t̥ci:lə _namsd̥: ˉserə ˉt̥ci: ˉtagsuŋs ˉserə: ˉt̥ʰidz̥:
 now such a-loc. suddenly hail num. send-aux. say hail-gen. size

'o. *da.pha.gir.gdan.khri'i.'og.la.chang.blugs.yag.dbo.blugs.chen.po.*
 _fiə _ta ˉpʰaŋi: ˉdendri: ˉwɔ:lə ˉt̥ʰɛ: ˉlu:ja: ˉʎulu: ˉt̥ʰembo
 oh now yonder-loc. bed-gen. beneath-loc. beer pour-nom. jug big-nom.

'dug.ga. 'di.tsam.'dug.zer./'di.'dra.se."a.khu.'di.'dra.lab.pa.yin.pa.red.//
 _duga _didzə _du:s _dindres ˉʎagu _dindre: ˉlvəjimbəre:
 exist-corr. this-app. exist say such-adv. Agu such tell-link.-aux.link.-aux.

byas.tsang.ga.khyo.ga.'di.'o.dzi."a.khu.ga.re.zer.gyi.yod.pa.zer./
 _t̥ɕe:dzangga ˉkʲɔgə _di _fiɔdz̥i ˉʎagu _kari ˉsiŋiɔs
 therefore husband this hey Agu what say-link.-aux.-wh-int. say

lug.gi.pags.pa.dang.de.nas.gdan.khri'i.'og.la.dbo.blugs.ci.dag.ga.re.
 _lu:gi ˉpagbə t̥d̥: ˉtene: ˉdendri: ˉwɔ:lə ˉʎulu: ˉt̥ɕida: _kari
 sheep-gen. hide co-ord. that-abl. bed under-loc. jug etc. what

zer.gyi.yod.pa.zer.// de.nas.khyo.ga.khos.mar.kug.kug.byas.
 _siŋiɔs ˉtene: ˉkʲɔgə ˉkʰø: ˉma: ˉkuku: ˉt̥ɕe?
 say-link.-aux.-wh-int. say that-abl. husband 3sg.-smp. down bent-redup. did

gdan.khri'i.'og.la.blta.s.dus./lug.nag.po.cig.bsad./kho'i.pags.pa.'di.
 _dendri: ˉwɔ:lə ˉte:dy: ˉlu: ˉnagbo t̥ci: ˉse? ˉkʰø: ˉpagbə _di
 bed-gen. under-loc. look-sub. sheep black-nom. num. kill 3sg.-gen. hide the

'di.ru.bzhag.shag.yin.pa.red.// de.nas.chang.blugs.sa.yog.yin.pa.red./
 _diru ˉɕa:ɕajimbəre: ˉtene: ˉt̥ʰɛ: ˉlu:sə ˉjɔ:jimbəre:
 this-loc. put-aux.-aux.-link.-aux. that-abl. beer pour-nom. exist-link.-aux

byas.tsang.khyo.ga.'di.yag.bsam./da.nga.nyin.ma.gsum.med.shul.
 _t̥ɕe:dz̥d̥: ˉkʲɔgə _di _ja: ˉsam ˉta ˉga ˉni:mə ˉsum ˉmiɕy:
 therefore husband the aha think now I day three neg.-exist-nom.

ring.la.skyed.dman.'di.las.ka.sdug.po.byed.kyi.yog.red.//nga.med.pa.
 _riŋlə ˉkʲimɛ: ˉdi ˉle:ge ˉdugbo ˉt̥ɕiŋiɔ:re: ˉga ˉme:bə
 length-loc. wife that work bad-nom. do-link.-aux. I neg.-exist-nom.

dang./lam.sang.lug.bsad./de.nas.chang.'thung./kho.tsho.'di.'dra.se.
 t̥d̥: ˉlamsd̥: ˉlu: ˉse? ˉtene: ˉt̥ʰɛ: ˉt̥ʰɔ: ˉkʰɔndzo ˉdindre:s
 co-ord. sudden sheep kill that-abl. beer drink 3sg.-num. such-adv.

byed.kyi.yog.red.// de.nas. kho.gnyis. 'khrug.pa. rgyab.nas./ de.nas.
 _tɕiɣjɔ:re: _tɛnɛ: ʔkʰɔɲi: ʔtɕuɣbə _gyvbnɛ _tɛnɛ:
 do-link.-aux. that-abl. 3sg.-num row have-sub. that-abl.

khag.khag. byung.ba.red.//
 ʔkʰaga: _tɕuɣɔre:
 apart-redup. happened-link.-aux.

“Agu Tomba had a friend. The friend had a wife and child. The friend went off trading for three days or so. He left his wife at home, and so one day Agu Tomba went to see if he was there - to his house. Then because he had gone trading for three days or so, of course he wasn't there. However, his wife was there, at home. Then Agu Tomba went inside, and he looked to see what was under the bed where they slept, and as soon as he looked he saw a great big black sheepskin. Then he saw a big jug for pouring beer. However Agu Tomba didn't say anything; then he went out straight away.

“Then when the three days were up, Agu came to the house again and found that he - the wife's husband - had arrived, back home. Then - Agu didn't like his (friend's) wife at all. Then Agu thought, ‘Now I'll be able to separate them: when they have a row.’ Thinking this, Agu went off.

“So then he - this friend of Agu's - spoke to him, saying ‘Hey, Agu, come round! Stay for a bit!’ So then he stayed for a bit. While they were chatting, Agu suddenly said, ‘Oh, one day while you were away, the sky was clear blue, but all of a sudden an enormous black cloud blew up: its size was about the same as that black sheepskin under the bed there. Then just as suddenly, some hail fell. The size of the hailstones - well, you see there's a big jug for pouring beer under the bed there - it was like that.’ That was how Agu put it.

“So the husband said, “Hey, what d'you say, Agu? What are you saying about a sheepskin, and then a jug under the bed and so on?” Then when the husband bent down and looked under the bed - now presumably a black sheep had been killed and its skin put there, and then there was the beer jug - so the husband thought ‘Aha! Now while I wasn't here for three days my wife was up to mischief. As soon as I was away she killed a sheep, then she drank beer: this is how they were carrying on!’ Then the two of them had a row and separated.”

Going to India

The following dialogue was invented by an informant in Nepal for the purpose of providing language teaching material.

blo.bzang. lags.// sang.nyin. nga. rgya.gar.la. thon.mkhan.yin.// nga'i. bsam.pa.la.
 ʔlɔpsd: _la: ʔsʌɲl: _ŋa _gjaɣa:lə ʔtʰɔɲɛ:ɟl: _ɲɛ: ʔsambələ
 Lopsang pol. tomorrow I India-loc. leave-link.-aux. I-gen. thought-loc.

zla.ba. gcig.tsam. cig. bsdad.dgos. bsam.gyi.// 'di'i. ring.la. nga'i. tshong.yag.
_dawə ˈtʃi:dzə tʃi: _dɛ: _go ˈsamgi: _di: _riŋlə _ne: ˈtʃʰoŋja:
 month one-app. num. stay should think-link. this-gen. time-loc. I-gen. sell-nom.'

di.gyad. phar. tshong./ de.nas. nga. dha.ram.sa.lar. yid.bzhin. nor.bu. mjal.gag.
_digje: ˈpʰa: ˈtʃʰɿ: _tɛnɛ: _ŋa _daramsala: _jiʧl: _no:bu _dze:ga:
 this-num. away-loc. sell that-abl. I Dharamsala-loc. Dalai Lama visit-sub.

'gro.gi.yin.// de.nas. rgya.gar. gting.la. gnas.'khor.la. gcig. phyin./ de.nas.
_drugyjl: _tɛnɛ: _gja:ga: ˈtiŋlə ˈne:go:lə ˈtʃi: ˈtʃʰi: ˈtɛnɛ:
 go-link.-aux. that-abl. India depth-loc. pilgrimage-loc. some went that-abl.

tshur. log. yong.gi.yin.//
tsʰu: _lo: _juŋgyjl:
 here-loc. return come-link.-aux.

“Lopsang! Tomorrow I’m going to India. I’m thinking I should stay a month or so. In that time I’ll sell off these trade goods, then I’ll go to Dharamsala to pay respects to the Dalai Lama. Then I’ll go on pilgrimage for a bit in the Indian plains, then come back here.”

'di. yag.po. shed.drag.'dug.// rang. sngas.mar. rgya.gar.la. 'gro..
_di _jagbo ˈtʃɛdra: _du: _rd: ˈne:ma: _gja:ga:lə _dro
 that good-nom. very be you previous-loc. India-loc. go

ma.myong.tsang. da.ni. shed.drag. yag.po. yong.gi.red.// rgya.gar..
_maŋʊ:dzɿ: _tanɪ ˈtʃɛdra: _jagbo _juŋgyre: _gja:ga:
 neg.-experience-sub. now-top. very good-nom. come-link.-aux. India

gnas.'khor.sa'i. sa.cha. chen.po. shed.drag.red.// byas.tsang. nor.bu. rang.
ˈne:go:se: ˈsadzə ˈtʃɛmbo ˈtʃɛdra: _re: ˈtʃɛ:dzɿ: _no:bu _rd:
 _pilgrimage-nom.-gen. place big-nom. very be therefore Norbu you

yin.cig. min.cig. gnas.'khor.la. 'gro.dgos.red.//
_jindzi: _mindzi: ˈne:go:lə _dro:go:re:
 definitely pilgrimage-loc. go-link.-aux

“That’s very good! As you’ve never been to India before, now that’ll be very good! India’s a great pilgrimage place. So you must definitely make a pilgrimage, Norbu!”

'di'i. rtsis. rang.byas.nas. nga. rgya.gar.la. 'gro. dgos.yag.gi. don.dag. 'di. yin.//
_di: ˈtʃi: _rd: ˈtʃɛ:ne: _ŋa _gja:ga:lə _dro _go:ja:gi ˈtɔnda: _di _jl:
 that account self did-sub. I India-loc. go need-nom.-gen. reason that be

“I reckoned just that, and that’s the reason I want to go to India.”

ma.phyin. gong.la. ngar. lag.btags. cig. 'khur.rgyu.yod.// 'di. rang.gis.
_mΛdzl: _kəŋlə _ŋa: _lada: tçi: _kʰu:gju _jø: _di _raggi:
 neg.- went before-loc. I-loc. present num. carry-nom. exist that you-smp.

'khyer.rogs. byed.// ljid.po. 'di.'dra. rtsa.ba.nas. med.//
ˉkje:ro: ˉtçi:s ˉdzibu ˉdindre: ˉtso:ne ˉme:
 take-nom. do heavy-nom. so root-abl. neg.-exist

“Before you go, I have a present to be carried. Would you please take it? It’s not too heavy at all.”

'di. ngas. 'khyer.gyi.yin.// khyed.rang. nang.dag. mi.dgos.// ngas. 'di.
_di _ne: ˉkji:gijl: ˉkjerd: _nagda: _məgo ˉne: _di
 that I-smp. take-link.-aux. you worry neg.-need I-smp. that

sur. sprad.dgos.red.//
ˉsu: ˉtre:gore
 who-loc. give-link.-aux.

“I’ll take it. You don’t need to worry. To whom should I give it?”

dha.ram.sa.lar. nga'i. spun.kyag. cig. yod.// kho'i. ming.la. rdo.rje.
_daramsala: _ne: ˉpingja tçi: _jø: ˉkʰø: _miŋlə _do:dze
 Dharamsala-loc. I-gen. brother num. exist 3sg.-gen. name-loc. Dorje

zer.gi.yog.red.// kho. bod.bcol.khang.la. las.ka. byed.kyi.yog.red.//
_sigjɔ:re: ˉkʰo ˉpø:dzø:gəŋlə ˉle:ge ˉtçi:gjɔ:re:
 say-link.-aux. 3sg. Tibetan home-loc. work do-loc.-aux.

“I have a brother in Dharamsala. His name is Dorje. He works at the Tibetan home.”
 s

15.2 Preclassical Tibetan

The following is an extract from an untitled work generally known as the (*Royal Chronicle*), relating events of the early kingdom (7th-9th centuries AD). It is probably of early 9th century date, though may well incorporate earlier material. The rather bare, unornamented style makes much use of the subordinating particle *-te./ste./de.* and the verb phrases lack linking particles and auxiliaries.

rgyal.po. khri.lde. gtsug.brtsan.gyi. ring.la.// rjed. gshin. chis.
 king Tride Tsugtsan -gen. time-loc. honour flourishing administration

'jam.ste.// myi.yongs.kyis. skyid.do.// blon.che. stag.sgra.khong.lod. dang.//
 smooth-sub. man all-smp. be happy-mcf. great minister Tagdra Khonglō co-ord.

rje. blon. mol.nas.// rgyal.po. zhabs.kyis. btsugs.te.// rgya.la. chab.srid.
king minister confer-sub. king foot-inst. set-sub. China-loc. campaign

mdzad.na.// rgya'i. mkhar. kwa.cu. la.stsogs.pa. phab.ste.// de.tsam.na.
do-sub. China-gen. city Kuachou etc. capture-sub. that-app.-loc.

rgya'i. srid. ches.nas.// byang.phyogs.kyi. dru.gu. kun.kyang.
China-gen. dominion be great-sub. north-gen. Turk all-top.

'dus.la.// ta.zig.la. thug.pa. man.chad. rgya'i. khams.su. gthogs.ste.//
include-sub. Persia-loc. reach-nom. down China-gen. territory-loc. attach-sub.

rgya'i. nor. mang.po. stod.phyogs.su. 'don.pa.rnams.// kwa.cu.na.
China-gen. wealth much-nom. west-loc. export-nom.-num. Kuachou-loc.

tshogs. byas.pa.las.// thams.chad. bod.kyis. phab.ste. bzhes.pas.// blar.yang.
assemble-nom.-abl. all Tibet-smp. capture-sub. take-sub. further-top.

dkor. mang.po. brnyes.// 'bangs. mgo. nag.pos.kyang.// rgya.dar.
property much-nom. got subject head black-nom.-smp.-top. China silk

bzang.po. khyab.par. thob.bo.//
good-nom. cover -nom.-loc. get-mcf.

“During the reign of king Tride Tsugtsen honour was flourishing, the administration was smooth and all the people were happy. When the great minister Tagdra Khonglō and the king having conferred, the king set forth and campaigned against China, the Chinese cities of Kuachou etc. were captured. Now at that time the dominion of China had expanded so that it included all the northern Turks, and everything as far as Persia was attached to the territory of China, and the Tibetans captured everything of the abundant Chinese goods which were being exported to the west and was assembled at Kuachou, and got much further property. Even the common people got enough silks to cover themselves with.”

15.3 Classical Tibetan

The following is an extract from the biography of the famous Buddhist Yōgin Milarepa (?1040-?1123 AD), compiled from earlier materials by Tsangnyōn Heruka probably in 1488. It is written in a confident and spontaneous style, far removed from that of much technical religious literature, and is generally reckoned to be of high literary merit. Within the narrative frame quoted conversation, presumably in some dialect of Tsang province, is frequent.

gsum.pa.ni./ yang. ras.chung.pas./ rje.btsun. lags./ rje.btsun.gyis. dang.po. las.
third-top. again Rechungpa-smp. Jetsun pol. Jetsun-smp. first deed

nag.po. mdzad. gsung.ba. ci. lta.bu. mdzad. zhus.pas./ mthu. dang.
black-nom. do say-nom. what like-nom. do asked-sub. magic co-ord.

ser.bas. sdig. bsags.pa.yin. gsung./ rje.btsun. mthu. dang. ser.ba.
hail-inst. sin accumulate-link.-aux. say Jetsun magic.co-ord. hail.

slob.pa'i. nye.bar.len.pa'i. rkyen. ci. lta.bu. byung. zhus.pas./
learn-nom.-gen. exert-nom.-gen. circumstance what like-nom. happen asked-sub.

nga. mi.thod.gad.kha.na. klog. slob.dus. rtsa'i.mda'.ru. skyid.ston.gyi. chang.sa.
I Mithö Gekha-loc. read learn-sub. Tseda-loc. feast-gen. Wedding

chen.po. zhig. byung.ba. de'i. gral.dbu.la. slob.dpon.
big-nom. num. happen-nom. that-gen. seat of honour-loc. teacher.

spyen. drangs. pa'i. phyag.phyi.la. ngas.kyang. phyin./ der. chang. mang.ba.
invited-nom.-gen. attendant-loc. I-smp.-top went that-loc. beer much-nom.

dang. slob.dpon.la. zur.nas.kyang. chang.'dren. mang.rab. byung.ba. kun.nas.
co-ord. teacher-loc. side-abl.-top. beer serving much-nom. come-nom. all-from

btungs.pas. bzi.bar. song.yod.pa.la./ slob.dpon.gyis. nga.la.
drank-sub. drunk-nom.-loc. became-aux.-nom.-loc. teacher-smp. I-loc.

khyos.ma.rnams. bskur.te. sngon.la. brdzangs.pas./ chang.gis. bzi.ba. dang/
present-num. gave-sub. ahead-loc. sent-sub. beer-smp. drunk-nom. co-ord.

de'i. nyin. glu. len.mkhan.rnams.la. sems. 'phros.nas. glu. len.snying.
that-gen. day song sing-nom.-num.-loc. enjoy-sub. song sing-nom.

'dod.pa. zhig. byung.ba.dang./ gre.ba. bde.mo. zhig. yod.pas. glu. len.cing.
desire-nom. num. happen-nom. sub. voice fine-nom. num. exist-sub. song sing-sub.

'ongs.pas. nged.rang.gi. khang.pa'i. mdun.na. yar. lam. yod.pas. sgo'i.
came-sub. we-gen. house-gen. front-loc. up road exist-sub. door-gen.

thad.du. slebs.rung. glu. blangs.pas./ a.ma. nang.na. yos.
against-loc. arrived-sub. song sang-sub. mother inside-loc. grain

rngod.kyin.yod.pas. thos.nas./ ci. zer. skad. 'di.ni. nga'i. bu'i. skad.
parch-link.-aux.-sub. hear-sub. what say sound that-top. I-gen. son-gen. sound

'dra/ nged. ma.smad.pas. sdug.pa.ni. sa.thog.na. med.pas.
resemble we mother & children-abl. suffering top. earth-loc. neg.-exist-sub.

kho.ni. glu. len. mi.thad. snyam.nas. yid. ma.ches.par. bltas.pas./
 3sg.-top. song sing neg.-be right think-sub. believe [neg.]-nom.-loc. looked-sub.

nga. yin.par. shes.nas. ha. las.te./ skam.pa. g-yas.su. bor./ yos.dkrugs.
 I be-nom.-loc. know-sub. be surprised-sub. tongs right-loc. drop grain-whisk

g-yon.du. bor./ yos. rngod.'phro. 'tshig.tu. bcug./ lag.pa. g-yas.su. yog.pa. cig.
 left-loc. drop grain parch-nom. burn-ser. cause hand right-loc. stick num.

khyer./ g-yon.du. thal.ba. spar. gang. khyer./ skas. ring.ba.la. babs./
 carry left-loc. ashes handful num. carry stairs long-nom.-loc. descend

thung.ba.la. mchongs.nas. phyir. thon.byung.ste./ thal.ba. de. gdong.la. btab./
 short-nom.-loc. jump-sub. out-loc. leave-aux.-sub. ashes the face-loc. throw

yog.pa. de. mgo.la. lan. 'ga'. brgyab.nas./ yab. mi.la. shes.rab. rgyal.mtshan.
 stick the head-loc. time several strike-sub. husband Mila Sherap Gyeltsen

khyed.la. bu. 'di.'dra. skyes.so.// khyed. rabs chad.gda'.ba./ nged.
 you-loc. son such be born-mcf. you succession be broken-aux.-nom. we

ma.smad.kyi. las.skos.la. gzigs.dang. zer. a.ma. yug. cig. brgyal.nas.
 mother & children-gen. fate-loc. look-imp. quot. mother moment num. faint-sub.

'gyel.'dug.pa'i. tshe./ sring.mo.yang. thon.byung.ste. a.jo'i. bsam.blo.la./
 fall-aux.-nom.-gen. time sister-top. leave-aux.-sub. brother-gen. thought-loc.

a.ma.la. ltos.dang. zer. ngu.zhing.'dug.pa.la./ bden. snyam.nas.
 mother-loc. look-imp. quot. weep-link.-aux.-nom.-loc. be true think-sub.

nga.rang.yang. mchi.ma. mang.po. shor./
 I-top. tear many-nom. shed

“Third (chapter). Again Rechung asked: ‘Jetsun, how did you originally perform the evil deeds which you have said you committed?’, and ‘You said you had accumulated sins by (the casting of) spells and hailstorms. What were the circumstances of your exerting yourself in the study of spells and hail?’

“When I was learning to read in Mithö Gekha, I accompanied my teacher who had been invited as guest of honour to a big wedding feast at Tseda, as his servant. The beer flowed freely, and as my teacher drank from all the extra servings he was given, he became drunk. He therefore gave me his presents and sent me on ahead.

“Being drunk (myself), and having been delighted by the singers that day, a desire to sing came over me, and as I had a good voice, I sang as I went along. The road ran right in front of our house, and even as I arrived at the door I was singing. My mother, who was parching grain indoors, heard me and said, ‘What!’ She thought, ‘That voice is like my son’s. As there’s no-one on earth who has suffered

more than us, it's not right that he should sing.' Not believing it, she looked, and realising it was me, in her astonishment she dropped the tongs to her right and the grain-whisk to her left. The parching grain was left to burn.

"Carrying a stick in her right hand and a handful of ashes in her left, she came down the long staircase, jumped over the short one and came out. She threw the ashes in my face and struck my head with the stick several times.

"Mila Sherab Gyeltsen my husband, what a son has been born to you! Just look at the fate of your widow and children now your succession is broken!' she said. My mother fainted for a moment, and while she lay fallen my sister came out.

"Have some regard for mother!', she said, and as she sat weeping I thought, 'She is right,' and I too shed many tears."

Unspecified

Arig *"a.rig*. [Roerich (1958b)]; Sun, J. T-S. (1986:153); Qu (1965).

“Northern Amchog” *"a.mchog*. Sun, J. T-S. (1986:68, 110, 126, 148-9, 153, 169, 171).

Labrang *bla.brang*. Sun, J.T-S. (1986:72, 110, 171).

'Brog-skad *'brog.skad*. Ekvall (1939:67). (Oral, but only numerals given - could be nasal also.)

“Ch'ing-hai” Nishida (1960a). (Oral, but only numerals given - could be nasal also.)

Transitional

Amdo Sherpa Nagano (1980).

“South Amchog” (?) Róna-Tas (1983).

Non-cluster

Rong-ba/Rong-skad *rong.pa./rong.skad*. Ekvall (1939:65ff); [Hermanns (1952); Norbu (1983)].

Gro tshang [Norbu (1983)]. (Perhaps = Gyo tzung.)

Gyo tzung Hermanns (1952). (Perhaps = Gro tshang.)

“Tangut” Shibata (1951).

'Brog-skad/Hbrogpa/Banag Amdo *'brog.skad./'brog.pa./sbra.nag 'a.mdo*. Norbu (1983) (includes Dzorge); [*Language Atlas of China* (1987)]; Róna-Tas (1983).

Hbrugchu *'brug.chu*. [*Language Atlas of China* (1987)].

Chone/Cone/Cho-ne *co-ne*. Qu (1962); Ekvall (1939:35); [Norbu (1983)]; Roerich (1958a):4); [*Language Atlas of China* (1987) (classified as Kham)].

Eastern (Kham)*Cluster**Nasal & oral*

Khams (perhaps from Amdo) Jaeschke (1868), (1881); Grierson (1909).

Tao/Tao fu/Rtahu *lta'o*. (Migot 1956); [*Language Atlas of China* (1987) (classified as Amdo)].

“Han-niu” Rosthorn (1897).

Sa-stod *sa.stod*. Wen Yu (1946).

Nangchen/“Northern Khams” *nang.chen*. Causemann (1989); [*Language Atlas of China* (1987)].

Oral

Chog-che Wen Yu (1946).

Transitional

- Bathang** *'ba'.thang*. Qu (1963); Gesang Jumian (1989); Ray (1965b); Rockhill (1891); [Migot (1956); Roerich (1961)].
- Drayab** *brag.g-yab*. Olson (1974); [Roerich (1961)]; Schwieger (1989).
- Kandze** *dkar.mdzes*. Ray (1965b).
- "K'ang-ting"** Migot (1956). (K'ang-ting or Kangding is the same place as Ta-ch'ien-lu).
- "Ta-ch'ien-lu"** *dar.rtse.mdo*. D'Ollone (1912) (no. 37).
- Derge** *sde.dge*. [Causemann (1989: 22-3)]; Migot (1956); Sedláček (1963a); Wen Yu (1948); [Roerich (1961)].
- Chamdo** *chab.mdo*. Jin Peng (1958); [Hermanns (1952)]; Needham (1886); [Roerich (1961)].
- "An-shun-kuan"** (Songpan) D'Ollone (1912:no. 40).
- "Chung-tien"** (N. Yunnan) Davies (1909).
- Mu-ya** (?) Qu (1963).
- "Ya-Chiang"** (?) Qu (1963).
- Gyethang/Rgyalthang** *rgyal.thang*. Hongladarom (1996b); Wang Xiaosong (1996).

Non-cluster

- Kham** *khams.skad*. Kraft & Tsering Hu Heng (n.d.).
- Khams** *khams*. Roerich (1957).
- Kandze** *dkar.mdzes*. ("Kan-tzŭ") Migot (1956).
- "Tsŭ-ku/Tse-kou"** (N. Yunnan) Desgodins (1873); Monbeig (in Liétard (1909)), D'Ollone (1912:no.36); Orléans (1898:no. 25).
- "Sung-p'an"** Gill (in Lacouperie (1888)). (Cf. An-shun-kuan above.)
- Me-li** Bonin (1903).

Unspecified

- "Eastern Khams"** [*Language Atlas of China* (1987)].
- "Southern Khams"** [*Language Atlas of China* (1987)].
- dMar-khams** *dmar.khams./smar.khams*. [Hermanns (1952); Roerich (1961)].
- Hor sde Inga** *hor.sde.Inga*. [Roerich (1961); Migot (1956)].
- Li-thang** *li.thang*. Migot (1956); Roerich (1961)].
- Nyarong (Agricultural)** *nyag.rong*. Hermanns (1952); Migot (1956)].
- Nyarong (Nomad)** *nyag.rong*. [Roerich (1931)].
- Dzarong (Agricultural)** Hermanns (1952)].
- Rgyarong (?) (Agricultural)** *rgyal.rong*. [Hermanns (1952)].
- Chala** [Migot (1956)].
- Ling-chung** [Migot (1956)].
- Tsharong** Rockhill 1891; [Roerich (1931)].
- Wa-skad** (also in NE) *wa.skad*. [Stein (1961)].

Appendix 1. List of Dialects

The following list presents the names of dialects as given by the respective authors and sources, with the Tibetan spelling (in italics) added where known. Some of these names will undoubtedly refer to more than one dialect; conversely a single dialect may sometimes be represented by more than one name. Names in inverted commas are non-Tibetan words. Sources in square brackets mention the dialect without giving any data. A question mark indicates doubt as to whether the dialect really belongs to the section in which it is placed.

Northeastern (Amdo)

Cluster

Nasal and oral

- “Colloquial Amdo”** *’a.mdo’i.kha.skad*. Min & Geng (1989).
Golok *mgo.log*. [Causemann 1989:22-3]; Ekvall (1939:64); Roerich (1931), (1958b); Sprigg (1972b), (1979); Sun (1986:149).
Huari *dpa.ri*. Hermanns (1952); Roerich (1931), (1958b).
“Tangut” (Xining/Kumbum) Széchenyi (1897).
“Tangut” (Xining/Datong) Przheval’skii (1875).
“Tangut” Potanin (1893).
“T’ung-jen” (Rong-po) Go (1954); Potanin (1893); Qu (1965).
Panaka *sbra.nag*. Rockhill (1891a).
Ndzorge (Dzorge) *mdzo.dge*. Sun (1986).
śæme sde.pa. Sun (1986).
Xvra Sun (1986).
śhitsang Sun (1986).
getśhong Sun (1986).
Wvmhkor Sun (1986).
Ngaba *rnga.pa*. Wen Yu (1946); [Sun (1986)].

Oral

- Rebkong** *re.skong*. Roerich (1958b).
Wayen Roerich (1958b); [Hermanns (1952)].
Panaka *sbra.nag*. Roerich (1931), (1958b); Kara (1983).

Unspecified

Arig "a.rig. [Roerich (1958b)]; Sun, J. T-S. (1986:153); Qu (1965).

"Northern Amchog" "a.mchog. Sun, J. T-S. (1986:68, 110, 126, 148-9, 153, 169, 171).

Labrang bla.brang. Sun, J.T-S. (1986:72, 110, 171).

'Brog-skad 'brog.skad. Ekvall (1939:67). (Oral, but only numerals given - could be nasal also.)

"Ch'ing-hai" Nishida (1960a). (Oral, but only numerals given - could be nasal also.)

Transitional

Amdo Sherpa Nagano (1980).

"South Amchog" (?) Róna-Tas (1983).

Non-cluster

Rong-ba/Rong-skad rong.pa./rong.skad. Ekvall (1939:65ff); [Hermanns (1952); Norbu (1983)].

Gro tshang [Norbu (1983)]. (Perhaps = Gyo tshang.)

Gyo tshang Hermanns (1952). (Perhaps = Gro tshang.)

"Tangut" Shibata (1951).

'Brog-skad/Hbrogpa/Banag Amdo 'brog.skad./'brog.pa./sbra.nag "a.mdo. Norbu (1983) (includes Dzorge); [*Language Atlas of China* (1987)]; Róna-Tas (1983).

Hbrugchu 'brug.chu. [*Language Atlas of China* (1987)].

Chone/Cone/Cho-ne co-ne. Qu (1962); Ekvall (1939:35); [Norbu (1983)]; Roerich (1958a):4; [*Language Atlas of China* (1987) (classified as Kham)].

Eastern (Kham)*Cluster**Nasal & oral*

Khams (perhaps from Amdo) Jaeschke (1868), (1881); Grierson (1909).

Tao/Tao fu/Rtahu Ita'o. (Migot 1956); [*Language Atlas of China* (1987) (classified as Amdo)].

"Han-niu" Rosthorn (1897).

Sa-stod sa.stod. Wen Yu (1946).

Nangchen/"Northern Khams" nang.chen. Causemann (1989); [*Language Atlas of China* (1987)].

Oral

Chog-che Wen Yu (1946).

Transitional

- Bathang** *'ba'.thang*. Qu (1963); Gesang Jumian (1989); Ray (1965b); Rockhill (1891); [Migot (1956); Roerich (1961)].
- Drayab** *brag.g-yab*. Olson (1974); [Roerich (1961)]; Schwieger (1989).
- Kandze** *dkar.mdzes*. Ray (1965b).
- "K'ang-ting"** Migot (1956). (K'ang-ting or Kangding is the same place as Ta-ch'ien-lu).
- "Ta-ch'ien-lu"** *dar.rtse.mdo*. D'Ollone (1912) (no. 37).
- Derge** *sde.dge*. [Causemann (1989: 22-3)]; Migot (1956); Sedláček (1963a); Wen Yu (1948); [Roerich (1961)].
- Chamdo** *chab.mdo*. Jin Peng (1958); [Hermanns (1952)]; Needham (1886); [Roerich (1961)].
- "An-shun-kuan"** (Songpan) D'Ollone (1912:no. 40).
- "Chung-tien"** (N. Yunnan) Davies (1909).
- Mu-ya** (?) Qu (1963).
- "Ya-Chiang"**(?) Qu (1963).
- Gyethang/Rgyalthang** *rgyal.thang*. Hongladarom (1996b); Wang Xiaosong (1996).

Non-cluster

- Kham** *khams.skad*. Kraft & Tsering Hu Heng (n.d.).
- Khams** *khams*. Roerich (1957).
- Kandze** *dkar.mdzes*. ("Kan-tzŭ") Migot (1956).
- "Tsŭ-ku/Tse-kou"** (N. Yunnan) Desgodins (1873); Monbeig (in Liétard (1909)), D'Ollone (1912:no.36); Orléans (1898:no. 25).
- "Sung-p'an"** Gill (in Lacouperie (1888)). (Cf. An-shun-kuan above.)
- Me-li** Bonin (1903).

Unspecified

- "Eastern Khams"** [*Language Atlas of China* (1987)].
- "Southern Khams"** [*Language Atlas of China* (1987)].
- dMar-khams** *dmar.khams./smar.khams*. [Hermanns (1952); Roerich (1961)].
- Hor sde lnga** *hor.sde.lnga*. [Roerich (1961); Migot (1956)].
- Li-thang** *li.thang*. Migot (1956); Roerich (1961)].
- Nyarong (Agricultural)** *nyag.rong*. Hermanns (1952); Migot (1956)].
- Nyarong (Nomad)** *nyag.rong*. [Roerich (1931)].
- Dzarong (Agricultural)** Hermanns (1952)].
- Rgyarong (?) (Agricultural)** *rgyal.rong*. [Hermanns (1952)].
- Chala** [Migot (1956)].
- Ling-chung** [Migot (1956)].
- Tsharong** Rockhill 1891; [Roerich (1931)].
- Wa-skad** (also in NE) *wa.skad*. [Stein (1961)].

“Mao-chu” D'Ollone (1912:no. 39).

Northern

“Western Khams” [*Language Atlas of China* (1987)].

Changpa *byang.pa.* [Roerich (1931)].

Horpa (north) *hor.pa.* Roerich (1931).

Horpa (south) *hor.pa.* Roerich (1931).

Western

Cluster

Balti *sbal.ti.* Austen (1866); Bielmeier (1982), (1985), (1988a,b); Francke (1904); Grierson (1909); Jaeschke (1881); Poucha (1967); Read (1934); Sprigg (1966a), (1967a), (1972a,b), (1980a,b,c); Schuler (1978); Vigne (1842).

Skardu Sprigg (1966a), (1967a), (1972a,b); Bielmeier (1985).

Khapalu Read (1934); Sprigg (1966a), (1967a), (1972a,b); Bielmeier (1985).

Purik/Purig/Purki Bailey 1915:1-45); Bielmeier (1982), (1985), (1988a); Francke (1904); Francke/Grierson (1909) (Skardu Balti?); Jaeschke (1881); Rangan (1975) (“Balti”), (1979).

Chigtan Purik Bielmeier (1988a).

Kartse Purik Bielmeier (1988a).

Ladakhi *la.dvags.* (cluster dialects) Bielmeier (1982), (1983), (1985b), (1988a); Cunningham (1884); Darroch (1984); Francke (1898), (1900), (1904a), (1905-41); Grierson (1909); Jaeschke (1881); Koshal & Misra (1979); Koshal (1982), (1987), (1990); Miller (1956a); Ramsay (1890); Ribbach & Francke (in Grierson (1909)); Roerich (1958b); Sandberg (1894:III, 215-368).

Leh sle. Grierson (1909); Koshal (1990); Bielmeier (1988a).

Sham shams. Grierson (1909); Francke (1901), (1904);

Koshal(1990); Bielmeier (1988a).

Rong rong. /Stotpa stod.pa. Grierson (1909); Koshal (1990).

Nubra nub.ra. Koshal (1990), Bielmeier (1988a).

Upper Nubra nub.ra. Koshal (1990).

Lower Nubra nub.ra. Koshal (1990).

Non-cluster

Ladakhi (non-cluster dialects) Grierson (1909).

Zangskar zangs.dkar. Hoshi & Tshering (1978); Koshal (1990).

Rubshu [Grierson (1909)].

“**Indian Changthang**”/Trangtse [Bielmeier (1988a)].

Mngahris mnga'.ris. /Tö stod. [*Language Atlas of China* (1987)].

- “Southwest Drokpa” *'brog.pa.* Kretschmar (1986).
 “Drokpa (West Tibet)” *'brog.pa.* Kretschmar (1986).
 “Lahuli” *gar.zha.* Grierson (1909); Jaeschke (1868), (1881); Roerich (1933).
 Kolong Roerich (1933).
 Koksar Roerich (1933).
 Spiti/Piti *spi.ti.* Grierson (1909); Jaeschke (1881); S.R.Sharma (1979);
 D.D.Sharma (1992).
 “Upper Kunawari” *khu.nu.* Jaeschke (1881:40).
 Nyamkat Grierson (1909); D.D.Sharma (1992).
 Jad/Jat Grierson (1909); Zoller (1983).

Nepal

- Humla.**
 Mugu *mu.gu.*
 Dolpo *dol.po.* Jest (1975).
 Glo-skad (“Mustang”) *glo.skad.* Kitamura et al. (1977); Kretschmar
 (1986); Nagano (1982), (1985).
Manangba.
 Yolmo *yol.mo.* [Bielmeier (1982)].
 Langthang *glang.thang.* [Bielmeier (1982)].
 “Kagate” Grierson (1909); Hoelig & Hari (1976).
 Jirel Maibaum & Strahm (1973); Strahm & Maibaum (1971), (1972); Strahm
 (1975).
 Sherpa *shar.pa.* Anon (1957); Fürer-Haimendorf (1964); Givón (1980);
 Gordon & Schöttelndreyer (1970); Gordon (1969), (1970); Grierson (1909);
 Hale (1968); Hodgson (1847); Hunter (1868); Schöttelndreyer & Hale (1970);
 Schöttelndreyer & Schöttelndreyer (1973), (1974); Schöttelndreyer, B.
 (1971a,b,c), (1974), (1975a,b), (1978); Schöttelndreyer, H. (1973); Sprigg
 (1972b), (1980b); Thingo (1982); [*Language Atlas of China* (1987)].
Walung.

Central

- “Central” *dbus./dbus.gtsang.* Amipa (1974); Amundsen (1903); Bell
 (1905), (1919), (1920); Dawson (1980), (1983), (1985); Gould & Richardson
 (1943a,b,c,d); Grierson (1909); Hannah (1912); Henderson (1903); Jongcay
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Appendix 2. Phonology of Other Dialects

This appendix is intended to give some indication of the range of phonological variation between Lhasa Tibetan and other dialects which have been described in the literature, and of some of the practical and theoretical problems which have been raised. I have converted other authors' transcriptions into what I take to be their IPA equivalents.

Monosyllables: consonant initials

The range of variation in number of contrastive monosyllable initials is illustrated from the dialect with the fewest known to me (Dingri: 27, all simple: Table App2.1) and that with the most (Amdo Khake: 36 simple (Table App2.2), 78 cluster, (Table App2.3) 114 in all). Lhasa Tibetan, with about 36, or about 30 for speakers without voiced plosives and affricates, all simple, is obviously quite close to the non-cluster extreme of Dingri.

Table App2.1 Dingri dialect (adapted from Herrmann 1989)

Plosives/	p-	p^h-			
Affricates:	t-	t^h-			
	ts-	ts^h-			
	tr-	tʃ-			
	tʂ-	tʂ^h-			
	c-	c^h-			
	k-	k^h-			
Fricatives:	s-	ʃ-	h-		
Nasals:	ŋ-	ɲ-	n-	m-	ɱ-
Approximants:	w-	r-	j-	l-	ʎ-

Other initial series heard in various dialects include the following:

Balti. (Items in brackets might be expected but do not occur in the material available to me) (after Sprigg & Bielmeier¹):

(pr-)	pʃ-	br-
(pj-)	pʃ-	bj-
tj-	tʃ-	dj-
trw-	tʃw-	(drw-)

k w-	k w̄-	g w-
t w-	t w̄-	(d w-)

Balti (Khapalu subdialect):

kr-	kɾ-	gr-
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Golok (after Sprigg & Roerich²⁾:

ptr-	ptɾ-	(bdr-)
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Dzongkha (after Mazaudon & Michailovsky 1989):

pɕ-	pɕ^h-	bʒ-
------------	------------------------	------------

Bathang (after Jumian 1989):

s-	s^h-	z-
x-	x^h-	ʏ-
ɕ-	ɕ^h-	ʒ-

Labial fricatives, and dental fricatives other than **s-** and **z-** are unusual. The Zangskar sub-dialect of Ladakhi appears to have **f-**, **β-** and **ð-**; Dzorge has **f-**, and I have heard **ϕ-** in Dzongkha.

Most or all dialects have simple voiced nasal initials at the places of articulation of the first four rows of the alphabetic table. Several central and southern Kham dialects (Kandze, Bathang, perhaps Drayab) have also a series of corresponding voiceless nasals; some Lhasa dialect speakers use two of these (the palatal and bilabial):

bilabial	m-	ṃ
palatal	ɲ-	ɲ̥
dental/alveolar	n-	ṅ
velar	ŋ-	ṅ̥

Table App2.2 Amdo Khake dialect (adapted from Min & Geng 1989)

Simple initials:

Plosives/ affricates:	p-	p^h-				
	t-	t^h-	d-			
	ts-	ts^h-				
	tr-	tr-	dr-			
	tɕ-	tɕ^h-	dʒ-			
	c-	ch-	ɟ-			
	k-	k^h-	g-			
Fricatives:	s-	s^h-	ɕ-	x^h-	ʏ-	ɣ- h-
Nasals:	m-	n-	ɲ-	ŋ-		
Approximants:	w-	l-	ʎ-	r-	ʕ-	j-

Table App2.3 Amdo Khake dialect (adapted from Min & Geng 1989)

Cluster initials (letters at head of columns indicate place of articulation of first element: B=bilabial, A=alveolar, U=uvular, BN=bilabial nasal, HN=homorganic nasal)

Voiceless second element					Voiced second element				
B-	A-	U-	BN-	HN-	B-	A-	U-	BN-	DN-
	ɾp-(?)			np ^h -		rb-		mb-	nb-
ɸt-	ɾt-	xt-	mt ^h -	nt ^h -	wɗ-	rd-	ɣɗ-		nd-
							xɗ-(?)		
ɸts-	ɾts-	xts-	mts ^h -	nts ^h -	wɗz-	rdz-		mdz-	ndz-
wts-(?)									
ɸtɕ-	ɾtɕ-	xtɕ			wɗr-		ɣɗr-	mdr-	ndr-
	ɾtɕ-	xɕ-	mtɕ ^h -	ntɕ ^h -	wɗz-	rdz-	ɣɗz-		ndz-
ɸc-	ɾc-			ɲc ^h -	wɲ-		ɣɲ-		ɲɲ-
wc-(?)									
ɸk-	ɾk-		mk ^h -	ɲk ^h -		rg-	ɣg-	mg-	ɲg-
wk-(?)									
		xsh-			wsh-(?)		ɣz-		
					wz-				
ɸɕ-		xɕ-(?)			wɕ-				
							ɣm		
	ɾn-					rn-	ɣn-		
	ɾɲ-				wɲ-	ɾɲ-	ɣɲ-		
	ɾŋ-					ɾŋ-			
							xw-(?)		
							ɣw-		
					wl-		ɣl-		
							ɣj-		

Monosyllables: vowels

The five vowels of the Tibetan script, transliterated "a. "i. "u. "e. "o., correspond to the phonemic vowel inventories of cluster dialects as follows:

Balti (after Bielmeier 1985a)	/a/ /i/ /u/ /ɛ/ /ɔ/
Ladakhi (after Koshal 1979)	/ə/ /i/ /u/ /e/ /o/
Amdo Khake (after Min & Geng)	a/ /ə/ /u/ /e/ /o/

In Sprigg's non-phonemic transcription of Balti,³ the total increases to at least the ten phones **a ə ʌ i u y ɛ e o ɔ**.

The Dzorge dialect, apparently marginal between cluster and transitional with 66 monosyllable initials and no contrastive tone, is given by Sun (1986) the nine vowel phonemes **i/ /e/ /ɛ/ /æ/ /u/ /ʋ/ /o/ /ɔ/ /a/**.

Transitional dialects, with about 55 monosyllable initials and some contrastive tone, are generally given from six to nine vowel phonemes, though Nangchen is given eleven by Causemann (1989), and Drayab thirteen by Olson (1974). The correlation between number of initials and number of vowels is not perfect, perhaps because there are other methods of increasing diversity, used in differing degrees by different dialects; particularly vowel quantity, vowel nasality, tone, and diphthongs. There is enormous variety in the actual quality of the seven or more vowels, and the relationships of vowels in the dialects to those in the spelling system are complex, but unlike the cluster dialects described above, most of the transitional and non-cluster dialects include among their totals the secondary vowels **y** and **ø** or similar ones.

Diphthongs are described for some dialects, but even in those dialects where they occur they usually seem to be confined to relatively few lexical items.

Probably all dialects display some degree of variability in vowel length: for instance vowels are often said to be longer before nasal finals. In cluster dialects any such variation is often regarded as purely allophonic and correlated with environment.

Contrastively long vowels are in many dialects restricted to open syllables, and in some of these (SW Drokpa, Dingri, Nangchen) to primary vowels as well. In Dzongkha, however, they can occur in closed syllables also.

Non-contrastive nasality of vowels in the neighbourhood of nasal initials or finals is mentioned for several dialects, both cluster and non-cluster. Transitional and non-cluster dialects generally have some form of contrastive vowel nasality, seemingly only in open syllables. Apparent exceptions include Nangchen, Mustang and Jirel.

Syllable finals

Cluster dialects

The western group of cluster dialects including Balti, Purik and western and central Ladakhi are the richest in consonantal finals, and the only ones to show final consonant clusters in single constituents. Balti and Ladakhi have the nine simple unreleased finals **-k -ŋ -t -n -p -m -l -r -s** corresponding to the written Tibetan **-g., -ng., -d., -n., -b., -m., -l., -r.** and **-s.** (Balti also has **-ʈ**, though probably only in a few loanwords.)

Ladakhi has in nouns, adjectives and verbs the consonant clusters **-ks -ŋs -ps -ms** which one might expect from the written **-gs. -ngs. -bs. -ms.** - sometimes even

on constituents which are not traditionally spelt with the *-s*. In verbs it has all these, but in addition also *-ts -ns -rs -ls*, whose corresponding spellings *-*ds* etc. are not even possible according to the normal rules. The total of seventeen consonantal finals is not exceeded by any other variety (see Koshal 1979).

None of the eastern cluster dialects show final consonant clusters, though they generally have a larger set of simple finals than the transitional or non-cluster dialects. Amdo Khake and probably the Golok of Roerich have finals corresponding in place of articulation to eight of the nine in Balti and Ladakhi (all but *-s*); Dzorge and Rebkong have seven (all but *-s* and *-l* and all but *-s* and *-t* respectively).⁴

Transitional and non-cluster dialects

Of the remaining dialects, none has either final consonant clusters or a final *-s*. The total number of consonantal finals ranges from nine (Mustang) to one (Bathang). In general they correspond in place of articulation to ones on the list of simple finals for Balti or Ladakhi, except that a glottal stop *-ʔ* - and in Mustang, a glottal fricative *-fi* also - is sometimes added; in Bathang the glottal stop is the only consonant final.

Tone

Of all the linguistic phenomena in Tibetan, that of tone is perhaps the hardest to capture in a general survey. The undoubtedly diverse behaviour of tone in the many varieties of the language is compounded by the wildly divergent methodologies and perceptions of the authors who have written on the subject; thus Sprigg (1993) comments on

“a disturbing lack of unanimity in the tonal analysis of Lhasa Tibetan at the phonological level and - more disconcerting still - a significant lack of agreement even at the phonetic level, on the pitch features that can be distinguished in that dialect.”

Likewise Betty Shefts Chang (quoted in Mazaudon 1977:49) complains of

“the great diversity in statements on Tibetan tones. ... This is not the healthy diversity of differing interpretations ... there should be a common ground of phonetic observation. It is not there.”

Thus the tonemes of Lhasa Tibetan, for example, have been numbered at none (Kjellin 1977, Civera 1970), two (Sprigg 1954, 1955; Duanmu 1992; Kenstowicz 1994:378-80), three (Bell 1905; Poucha 1978), four (Richter 1964; Meredith 1990), five (Hu et al. 1972), six (Roerich & Lhalungpa 1957; Dawson 1980), and seven (Hari 1977, 1979). Some authors have considered tone to be solely a matter of register (e.g. Sprigg 1993; Duanmu 1992), others solely a matter of contour (e.g. Ray 1965b); yet others, a matter of both (e.g. Jumian 1989; Chang & Shefts 1964; Hari 1979; Herrmann 1989; Meredith 1990). Even within each camp there may be little agreement in detail. The domain assigned to tone - consonant, vowel, syllable,

sequence of syllables or word - varies similarly.

Sprigg (1974b, 1981, 1991, 1993) has identified and explored one major source of these discrepancies: confusion between the speaking, reading and spelling styles of pronunciation. General theoretical discussion arising out of tone in Tibetan, and discussion of problems of measurement and transcription, may be found in Kjellin (1977), Sprigg (1966a), Dawson (1980), Sun (1986) and Duanmu (1992).

“Non-contrastive pitch”

It has often been observed in Tibetan that, at least for the plosive and affricate series when word-initial, low pitch in a syllable tends to be associated with voiced initials, high pitch with voiceless initials. For the dialect of Labrang in Amdo, Hu calls this pitch variation “habitual tone” (quoted in Sun 1986:72): this is his “non-contrastive pitch”). Similarly in Nangchen, Causemann (1989) states that pitch depends on the word initial: again, low pitch is associated with voiced plosives and affricates, high pitch with voiceless ones. Even in some of the tonal dialects which have voiced plosives and affricates (Drayab, Dzongkha, some types of Lhasa), monosyllables and word-initial syllables beginning with such phones are always associated with low pitch, and therefore pitch could be regarded as non-contrastive in such syllables.

From the point of view of the orthography, syllables spelt with simple initials from the third column of the alphabetic table (*g-, j-, d-, b-, dz-*) seem to be associated with low pitch in most dialects for which either tone or non-contrastive pitch has been claimed. Such initials are often held to have been “originally” voiced, as they now are in cluster dialects. It may be that it is their association with low pitch which has enabled them to be subsequently devoiced in some non-cluster dialects and still retain their distinctiveness.⁵

Transitional dialects: incipient tone

Presumably a dialect does not become fully tonal overnight, but gradually admits tonal distinctions into one part of the language after another. As well as the common association of low pitch with voice, there are several hints that syllable-initial nasality (or the lack of it) could be of some importance in the early stages of tonogenesis in Tibetan.

Firstly, syllables with nasal initials (other than prenasalised clusters) will vary in pitch, usually lexically, in all partially and fully tonal dialects. Of no other group of initials is this true. (The main exception is Balti, in which tonogenesis has clearly taken a different route. In Nangchen, the variation exists but is not independently lexical, being correlated with voice/voicelessness.)

Secondly, according to Nagano, in the Amdo Sherpa dialect, the nasal-initial syllables are the only group showing pitch distinctions.

Thirdly, according to Sun (1986),

“None of the Tibetan dialects that still preserve more or less traces of ... ORAL PRERADICALS [i.e. clusters which are non-prenasalised] have phonemic tones. On the other hand, dialects that have lost ... nasal preradicals [i.e. prenasalised clusters] ... may still remain non-tonal. It would seem ... that at least for Tibetan the oral

preradicals form a CRITICAL syllable position, the loss of which tended strongly to trigger tonogenesis.”

To put it another way, dialects with prenasalised initials but no other types of cluster are tonal; dialects with non-prenasalised clusters are non-tonal, whether or not they also have prenasalised clusters. If true, this also suggests that syllable-initial nasality may have something to do with tonogenesis in Tibetan.

The dialects which have been claimed by their investigators as partially tonal include Amdo Sherpa (49 initials) (Nagano 1980), Mustang (33 initials) (Nagano 1982), 1985), Balti (87 initials) (Sprigg & Bielmeier, see fn. 5), probably Nangchen (54 initials) (Causemann 1989) and Ladakhi (70 initials) (Koshal 1979). All are in some way problematical. Tone in Balti, where it is confined to disyllabic and trisyllabic nouns, seems to behave in a different way and presumably has an origin quite different from that operating in other dialects. Otherwise, these dialects are claimed in some cases to show non-contrastive pitch differences in syllables beginning with most or all initials, but in all cases contrastive, lexical tone in syllables beginning with certain initials.

Non-cluster dialects

It is only in those dialects of central and western Tibet such as Dingri, Southwest Drokpa and one variety of Lhasa, which have no voiced plosives, affricates or fricatives, that pitch is independently lexical in all types of syllable except those beginning with some types of approximant and/or glottal stop, usually a very small percentage of the total. Thus syllables beginning with voiceless alveolar ʃ- , voiceless lateral ɬ- and voiceless nasals always seem to be high.

Register and contour

So far, I have treated tone, following many of the authors concerned, in terms of a twofold distinction. In most cases this is conceived of primarily as one of two pitch levels or registers, one higher than the other. Occasionally three levels are distinguished - e.g. for fricative-initial syllables in Nangchen (Causemann 1989:29); and by traditional Tibetan accounts. However I generally agree with at least the conclusion of Dawson (1980:11); writing here about the Lhasa dialect) that

“All the evidence points in one direction. The perceptual evidence of every investigator on tone available, Kjellin’s acoustic evidence, and my own perceptions lead toward one consistent assignment of Register, which ‘splits the pitch range of the voice into two halves’ ...”

Many authors however also associate some form of pitch movement (contour), whether independently contrastive or not, with the registers. Some even conceive of tone as primarily a matter of pitch contour - for instance Nishida (1975) for the early stages of tonogenesis. S.R.Sharma (1979) distinguishes three tones for the Spiti dialect: falling-rising, level-rising, and rising-falling; though he also specifies at least two slightly differing starting levels of pitch. Ray (1965b) says of his Kham dialects

(Kandze, Bathang) that “There is a contrast between a rising tone and a falling tone ... Pitch heights are as such without significance ...” Some claim a connection between pitch contour and syllable finals, whether lost or still present, and Sun (1986:175) goes so far as to say that

“it is generally accepted by Tibetanists that as a Tibetan dialect eventually evolves significant tonemes, the relative pitch heights (or registers) will be determined by the voicing state of the original syllable onsets, while the sonorancy vs. obstruency of the syllable codae will condition the contours (i.e. rising, falling, level, etc.) of these nascent tones ...”

To say that this is “generally accepted” is perhaps an exaggeration.

Theoretical contributions to the question of contour tone include Duanmu, in whose autosegmental phonology contour tones are to be regarded as “composed of clusters of level tones” (Duanmu 1992:65), and Dawson (1980, 1983) who follows J.Goldsmith and M.J.Yip in treating register and contour as “independently autosegmental in relation to each other, as well as autosegmental in relation to the segmental level.” (Dawson 1980:88.)

Vowel harmony

Vowel harmony has been systematically investigated only for Lhasa Tibetan and Dzorge. At 6.3.5 above I largely follow what I take to be Sprigg’s approach to vowel harmony in Lhasa Tibetan.⁶ For a rather divergent treatment, see Chang & Chang (1968).

What may be a rather similar type of vowel harmony in the Dingri dialect - “regressive assimilation” or raising of a penultimate-syllable vowel before “suffixes containing /i/ and /u/ ” is briefly discussed by Herrmann (1989:27).

Dzorge

The Dzorge dialect displays a quite different and very interesting form of vowel alternation which might better be termed “vowel disharmony”. Sun (1986) claims that “vowel [dis]harmony rules in [Dzorge] are phonetically conditioned ... automatic rules that freely apply across the board to all lexical forms, including loanwords.” Like harmony in the Lhasa dialect, vowel disharmony in Dzorge applies only in sequences of two syllables, most of which are words. In words of more than two syllables, disharmony never applies unless the word incorporates an independently existing disyllable.

Sun divides the nine vowel phonemes of the dialect into three “[dis]harmony groups” which he terms “dominant”, “recessive” and “neutral” as in the following table:

i	u	ɯ	dominant (close or half close)
e	æ	o	recessive (half close, or open and front)
ɛ	a	ɔ	neutral (half open or open)

In general a recessive vowel may not precede a dominant vowel within a disyllabic word. To paraphrase Sun:

When, as a result of case inflection or nominal compounding, such a forbidden sequence is generated in the derivation, vowel [dis]harmony decrees that the [recessive] vowel be converted to a corresponding [neutral, more open] vowel (i.e. /e/→/ɛ/; /o/→/ɔ/; /æ/→/a/). The observations below can now be stated:

(I) [dominant] vowels trigger changes in [recessive] vowels without being subject to change themselves. [E.g. recessive+dominant:

dred. tʃet “brown bear” *dred.phrug. tʃetʃvy* “brown bear cub”]

(II) [recessive] vowels do not affect other vowels but must undergo change in the proper environments [example as above].

(III) [neutral] vowels neither cause nor undergo any change [with certain exceptions. E.g. neutral+dominant:

dom. tom “black bear” *dom.phrug. tomtʃvy* “black bear cub”]

The exceptions under III above are as follows:

a) The recessive vowel **o** and the neutral vowel **a** when they are followed by **-g** or **-ŋ** count as dominant.

b) The neutral vowel **-a** causes lowering of the recessive vowel **-æ**, but not of the recessive vowels **-e** and **-o**.

The dynamic language of “compounding”, “change”, “triggering” and “lowering” is essentially that used by Chang & Chang (1968), though Sun himself is prepared to countenance an alternative non-dynamic terminology:

“Vowel [dis]harmony rules in [Dzorge], thus, can be regarded either as a static phonotactic constraint against recessive vowels before tautoverbal dominant syllables, or as a dynamic process lowering recessive vowels before such syllables.”

His own preferred way of summarising the situation is by generative “rules” expressed in equation form, for which the interested reader should consult the original.

Conceived of in dynamic terms, the vertical direction of vowel change is, as Sun says, lowering as against the normal raising of the Lhasa dialect, and involving dissimilation or disharmony as against the assimilation or harmony of Lhasa. Syntagmatically the process is exclusively regressive (right-to-left).

For the sake of comparison with Sprigg’s analysis of the Lhasa dialect (Sprigg

1961) it would be interesting to restate the situation in Dzorge along prosodic lines. This might be done by distinguishing two types of piece:

- 1) "central" (identifiable by a central or recessive vowel in the first syllable);
- 2) "non-central" (all other pieces);

and three types of constituent:

- a) "close" (identifiable by its invariable close or dominant vowel), occurring only in non-central pieces;
- b) "central" (with variable vowel), occurring in central pieces with central vowel, and in non-central pieces with open (neutral) vowel;
- c) "open" (with invariable open or neutral vowel) occurring in both central and non-central pieces.

Balti

Vowel harmony in Balti is, according to Sprigg (1980a), restricted to monosyllabic combinations of vowel-final noun+definite, genitive, locative or plural particle.

Notes

- 1 Sprigg (1966a), (1967a), (1972a), (1980c); Bielmeier (1985a).
- 2 Sprigg (1972b), (1979); Roerich (1958b).
- 3 Sprigg (1966a), (1967a), (1972a), (1980c).
- 4 Sun (1986:131) regards the medial *-f-* of Dzorge *rlangs.pa. hlaŋfæ* against the expected *hlaŋwæ* as a reflex of written *-s.+p-*, comparable to initial *sp- f-* in that dialect. If he is correct, this is the only hint of any reflex of extra final *-s.* in any non-western dialect.
- 5 Against the association between low pitch and voicing are Sun's assertion (1986:171) that inherent pitch is not observable in Dzorge or North Amchog dialects, and the apparent association of *high* pitch with voicing in the Spiti dialect (Sharma, S.R. 1979).
- 6 Of course, Sprigg is not responsible for any of my misunderstandings of his work.

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Particle Index

- "a. 1. Exclamatory particle; grammar 182.
2. Imperative verb particle; grammar 168; examples 168, 227.
- 'ang. 1. Emphatic modal verb particle; grammar CT 248.
2. See *kyang*.
- ba(r)*. See *pa(r)*, *par*.
- bar.du*. Nominalising verb particles; grammar 242.
- bas*. See *pas.*, *gas*.
- bo*. See *go*.
- bu*. See *pu*.
- bya*. Auxiliary verb particle; grammar CT 254.
- byas*. 1. Serial modal verb particle; grammar 171f; PT 268; CT 268.
2. (or +*nas*.) Adverbial noun particles; grammar 208.
- byung*. Auxiliary verb particle; grammar 139, 142-9, 161; PT 247; CT 248, 250; pitch 78; examples 138, 145, 165, 177, 207, 214, 222, 226; PT 250; CT 286.
- bzo*. Nominalising verb particle; grammar 225, 236f; examples 132, 133.
- cag*. Positive degree nominalising adjective particle; grammar 180.
- can*. Comitative noun particle; examples CT 264.
- ces./zhes./shes*. Quotative particle; examples PT 247.
- chog*. 1. Linking verb particle; grammar 117, 162-4, 214; pitch 77, 78.
2. Volunteering modal verb particle; grammar 169, 197, 199.
- ci*. Nominalising verb particle; grammar CT 273; examples CT 254, 256, 266.
- ci./ji*. Imperative verb particle; grammar PT 256.
- cig./zhig./shig*. 1. Numerative noun particle; pitch 73; examples 99, 118, 126, 136, 159, 161, 192, 200, 201, 202, 229, 236, 277, 278, 282, 283, 286.
2. Imperative modal verb particle; grammar 168; PT 256; examples PT 267.
- cing./zhing./shing*. 1. Linking verb particle; grammar PT 251; CT 251, 258, 265, 266, 285, 286.
2. Subordinating modal verb particle; grammar PT 249, 271; CT 249, 271; examples PT 250, 252, 258, 262; CT 261, 264.
- da*. 1. Topic marking particle; grammar 103f.
2. See *ga*.
- da.kar*. Adjunct-marking noun particle; grammar 227f.
- dag*. Numerative noun particle; examples PT 251.
- dam*. See *gam*.
- dang*. 1. Co-ordinating noun particle; grammar 102f, 126f, 240; pitch 73; examples 50, 276, 280; PT, 246, 250, 253, 260, 267, 269, 270, 271, 283; CT 254, 259, 285.
2. Imperative verb particle; grammar 168; CT 256, 286.
- de*. See *te.*, *ge*.
- dgos*. 1. Linking verb particle; grammar 176ff, spelling 70; examples 282, 283.
2. Nominalising verb particle; grammar 176ff.
3. Volunteering modal verb particle; grammar 168, 197, 199; examples 74.
- dgu*. Nominalising verb particle; grammar CT 273.
- do*. 1. Suggestive modal verb particle; grammar 168; examples 217.
2. See *go*.

- '*dod*. Nominalising verb particle; grammar 225, 235, 242n.
- don*. Nominalising verb particle; grammar CT 273.
- '*dra*. Auxiliary verb particle; grammar 127, 132, 165, 240; PT 247; CT 248.
- drag*. Auxiliary verb particle; grammar CT 248.
- du*. See *tu*.
- '*dug*. Auxiliary verb particle; grammar 139, 150-57, 158-61, 183; PT 251, 255; CT 251, 254, 255; pronunciation 85; vowel harmony 83; examples 127, 136, 137, 138, 173, 176, 177, 184, 185, 186, 196, 200, 209, 211, 213, 217, 235, 239, 278; CT 251, 266, 272, 286.
- dus*. 1. Nominalising verb particle; grammar PT 271, 273; CT 271.
2. (or+*tsam.nas.*) Subordinating modal verb particle; grammar 222 PT 271; CT 271; examples 278, 279, 280; CT 253, 285.
- "*e*. Dubitative polar verb particle; grammar 128, 164; PT 248; CT 248; pitch 78; vowel harmony 83; examples (LT) 146, 151, 155, 174.
- ga*. Alternant of verb particles *gi.yin.(pa.)*; grammar 165.
- ga.nga/da*. Emphatic modal verb particle; grammar 129ff; examples 116, 117, 125, 126, 131, 134, 165, 166.
- ga.nga/pa*. Corroborative modal verb particle; grammar 129ff; examples 165, 278.
- ga.nga/pa/ba/ra*. 1. Comparative nominalising adjective particle; grammar 181f; vowel harmony 84; CT 248, 263; PT 263; examples 190; PT 268.
2. Nominalising verb particle; grammar 167, 175f, 225-9, 240; CT 273; spelling 67; vowel harmony 83; examples 182, 200, 201, 202, 206, 221, 223, 224, 225, 275, 276, 277, 280; PT 246, 247, 254, 255, 256, 257, 260, 267, 270, 271, 272, 284; CT 250, 251, 254, 255, 256, 258, 264, 266, 285, 286.
3. Volunteering modal verb particle; grammar 169, 197, 199.
- gag*. 1. Subordinating modal verb particle; grammar 221f; examples 277, 278, 282; PT 268; CT 268.
- gam./ngam./dam./nam.* (CT, PT also *bam./mam./ram./sam.*)
Alternative/interrogative modal verb particle; grammar 129ff; PT 248, 257; CT 248; examples 226; CT 258, 261.
- gas*. Alternant of verb particles *gi.yin.pas.*; grammar 165.
- gas./ngas./pas./bas.* Interrogative verb particle; grammar 129ff, 165; vowel harmony 83; examples 52, 116, 117, 130, 131, 175, 207, 212, 275, 278.
- gda'*. Auxiliary verb particle; grammar PT 247, 251, 255; CT 251, 254, 260, 286.
- ge./nge./de./me./re./le./se.(ba.)*
positive adjective nominalising particle; grammar CT 264.
- gi*. See *kyi*.
- gin*. See *kyin*.
- gis*. See *kyis*.
- gi(s)/gyi(s)/-i(s)/yis.* Volunteering modal verb particle (see also *gis.*); grammar PT 253; CT 253.
- gnyis*. Dual numerative noun particle; grammar 100; examples 279.
- go./ngo./do./no./bo./mo./-o./ro./lo./so.* Main clause-final particle; grammar PT 249, 257; CT 249; examples 210; PT 249, 252, 253, 260, 263, 283, 284; CT 253, 254, 286.
- gong*. Nominalising verb particle (with negative verbs); grammar 242; PT 268; CT 268; examples 283.
- grabs*. 1. Linking verb particle; grammar 117, 214; 162-4; pitch 77, 78.
2. Nominalising verb particle; grammar 225, 239, CT 273; examples CT 251, 270.
- grang*. Judgemental modal verb particle; grammar CT 248.
- gro*. 1. Judgemental modal verb particle; examples 132, 133, 166.
2. Linking verb particle; grammar 161; examples 165.
- gro'o*. Judgemental modal verb particle; grammar 131; examples 132, 166.
- grogs*. Nominalising verb particle; examples CT 253.
- gyad*. Numerative noun particle;

- grammar 100; examples 99, 101, 197, 282.
- gyi.* See *kyi.*
- gyin.* See *kyin.*
- gyis.* See *kyis.*
- i.* See *kyi.*
- ji* See *ci.*
- ka.med.* Nominalising verb particles (with negative verbs); grammar 225, 237.
- kha. lha.mor.* Nominalising verb particles; grammar 241.
- khag.* Nominalising verb particle; grammar 225, 235f.
- khu.* Positive degree nominalising adjective particle; grammar 180; vowel harmony 84.
- kyang./yang./'ang.* 1. Subordinating modal verb particle; examples PT 259.
2. Topic-marking particle; examples 51, 277; PT 246, 248, 249, 250, 251; 253, 255, 257, 260, 268, 269, 270, 272, 284; CT 250, 253, 254, 258, 259, 261, 285, 286.
- kyi./gi./gyi.* Linking verb particle (see also *kyin./gin./gyin.*); grammar 116f, 165, 183; spelling 66; pronunciation 85, 193; pitch 77; vowel harmony 82f; examples 47, 50, 116, 117, 118, 126, 127, 132, 133, 135, 136, 137, 138, 165, 166, 175, 176, 177, 182, 183, 184, 185, 192, 196, 200, 205, 206, 207, 209, 211, 212, 215, 216, 217, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 229, 232, 236, 239, 240, 275, 276, 277, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283; PT 246, 247, 249, 251, 283; CT 248, 254.
- kyi./gi./gyi./-i'./yi.* Genitive noun particle; grammar 101f, 150-57, 183, 214, 231; CT, 244; spelling, 66; pitch 77, 78; vowel harmony 81; examples 47, 50, 49, 52, 53, 74, 143, 152, 157, 158, 160, 167, 173, 177, 183, 190, 192, 201, 202, 206, 228, 229, 233, 235, 240, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283; PT 246, 249, 250, 252, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 262, 263, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 284; CT 251, 254, 256, 260, 261, 265, 266, 269, 271, 285, 286.
- kyin./gin./gyin.* Linking verb particle (see also *kyi./gi./gyi.*); grammar CT 251; examples CT 264, 285.
- kyis./gis./gyis.* Subordinating modal verb particle; grammar CT 272.
- kyis./gis./gyis./-s./yis.* Subject-marking/instrumental noun particle; grammar (subject-marking) 193-202; PT 265f; CT 265f; (instrumental) 203-5, 240; PT 266; CT 266; spelling 66f; vowel harmony 81, 83; examples 52, 135, 136, 137, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 150, 153, 154, 156, 163, 164, 166, 168, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 186, 192, 204, 205, 208, 211, 212, 213, 214, 216, 217, 220, 221, 223, 224, 225, 226, 228, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 238, 240, 241, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 283; PT 246, 249, 250, 251, 254, 255, 257, 262, 267, 269, 270, 271, 283, 284; CT 250, 251, 253, 254, 256, 258, 260, 265, 266, 272, 284, 285.
- la.* Subordinating modal verb particle; grammar PT 271f, CT 271f; examples CT 265.
- la./-r.* Dative/locative noun particle; grammar 206f; PT 266f; CT 266f; vowel harmony 82; examples 50, 51, 52, 95, 99, 122, 123, 125, 126, 130, 133, 134, 137, 143, 152, 155, 156, 158, 159, 160, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 172, 173, 174, 175, 182, 200, 205, 209, 212, 216, 217, 221, 222, 223, 226, 228, 229, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 237, 238, 240, 242, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283; PT, 246, 249, 250, 252, 255, 256, 257, 258, 262, 268, 270, 271, 272, 283, 284; CT 248, 251, 254, 255, 258, 259, 260, 272, 285, 286.
- lags.* Auxiliary verb particle; grammar PT 246f, 249f, 252, 254; CT 261; examples PT 269; CT 261.
- las.* Disjunctive/ablative noun particle; grammar 207f, PT 268; CT 268; examples 182, 208; PT 247, 257, 267, 284; CT 258.
- le.* See *ge.*
- lo.* See *go.*

- lo.ba.* Nominalising verb particle; grammar 225, 237.
- long.* Nominalising verb particle; grammar 225, 236.
- los.* Nominalising adjective particle; grammar 128f, 185; vowel harmony 84; examples 155.
- lugs.* Nominalising verb particle; grammar CT 273.
- ma.* 1. Negative verb particle; grammar 128, 167; pitch 73; vowel harmony 83; examples 47, 49, 50, 52, 116, 117, 131, 132, 145, 146, 147, 167, 176, 207, 221, 223, 240, 275, 276, 283; PT 258, 262, 263, 271; CT 255, 258, 259, 265, 286.
2. Positive degree nominalising adjective particle; grammar 180; vowel harmony 84; examples 53.
- ma.gtogs.* Subordinating modal verb particle; grammar 223, 227.
- ma.thag.du.* Subordinating modal verb particles; examples PT 270.
- man.* Auxiliary verb particle (conflation of negative *ma.* and auxiliary *yin.*); grammar 128; examples 129, 133.
- mdog.* Nominalising verb particle; grammar 185f, 225, 237f.
- me.* See *ge.*
- med.* (PT *myed.*) Auxiliary verb particle (conflation of negative *ma.* or *mi.* and auxiliary *yod.*); examples 235, 279; CT 262.
- mi.* (PT *myi.*) Negative verb particle; grammar 128f; pitch 78; vowel harmony 83; examples 51, 52, 116, 117, 127, 131, 132, 133, 176, 177, 186, 213, 235, 236, 237, 239, 283; PT 252, 258, 267, 269; CT 248, 256, 260, 263, 265, 272, 286.
- mkhan.* 1. Linking verb particle; grammar 117, 162-4, 214; CT 272; pitch 77; examples 281.
2. Nominalising verb particle; grammar 201, 202, 224, 225, 229f; examples 275.
- mo.* 1. Positive nominalising adjective particle; grammar 180; PT 263; CT 263; vowel harmony 84; examples 275; CT 250, 285.
2. See *go.*
- mus.* Linking verb particle; grammar 161f; vowel harmony 82f; examples 166.
- na.* 1. Dative/locative noun particle; grammar PT 266f; CT 266f; examples PT 246, 257, 259, 271, 284; CT 251, 255, 285.
2. Subordinating modal verb particle; grammar 222f; PT 269; CT 269; examples 99, 126, 128, 147, 148, 156, 157, 158, 160, 163, 182, 186, 229, 233, 240, 276; PT 247, 252, 263, 268, 284; CT 254, 259.
3. Suggestive modal verb particle; grammar 168.
- na.yang./na'ang.* Subordinating modal verb particles; grammar 223; examples, 276; PT 269; CT 269; examples, 275, 278.
- nam.* See *gam.*
- nas.* 1. Ablative/subject-marking noun particle; grammar 193, 207; vowel harmony 81; examples 95, 148, 165, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283; CT 285.
2. Serial modal verb particle; grammar 171f.
3. Subordinating modal verb particle; grammar 221; PT 268f; CT 268f; examples 155, 176, 186, 221, 275, 276, 279, 281, 282; PT, 246, 252, 257, 284; CT 248, 250, 251, 261, 285, 286.
- nas. byas.* Ablative noun particles; grammar 207.
- nas. bzung.* Ablative noun particles; grammar 207.
- nga.* See *ga.*
- ngam.* See *gam.*
- ngas.* See *gas.*
- nge.* See *ge.*
- ni.* Topic-marking particle; grammar 99, 103; vowel harmony 81; examples 123, 196, 207, 240, 279; PT 246, 247, 249, 252, 255, 260, 262, 264, 266, 272; CT 269, 284, 286.
- no.* 1. High honorific verb particle; grammar 129.
2. See *go.*
- nyer.* Nominalising verb particle; grammar 225, 239.
- nyid.* See *snying.*
- 'o.* See *go.*
- pa./ba.* 1. Alternant of verb particles *pa.yin.(pa.)*; grammar 165.

2. Linking verb particle (see also *pa(r)/ba(r)*); grammar 116f, 119, 142-9, 153-7, 165, 183; **PT**, 246, 252, 254; spelling, 67; pronunciation 85; pitch 77; vowel harmony 82; examples 116, 117, 127, 132, 133, 139, 160, 172, 173, 174, 175, 177, 186, 190n, 196, 197, 198, 203, 204, 205, 207, 212, 220, 222, 231, 232, 233, 235, 236, 239, 240, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281; **PT** 246, 249; **CT** 265, 285.
3. Positive nominalising adjective particle; grammar 180f; **PT** 263; **CT** 263; vowel harmony 84; examples **CT** 251, 286.
4. Wh-interrogative modal verb particle; grammar 129ff, 165; **CT** 248; examples 118, 185, 197, 230, 280.
5. See *ga*.
- pa.'dra*. Alternant of verb particles *pa.yin.pa.'dra*; grammar 165.
- pa(r)/ba(r)*. Linking verb particle; grammar **CT** 254; examples **CT** 272.
- par./bar*. Serial verb particle (conflation of nominalising *pa./ba* and locative *-r*); grammar **PT** 252, 259-63; **CT** 259-63; examples **PT** 267, 269.
- pas./bas*. 1. Alternant of verb particles *pa./ba.yin.pas*; grammar 165.
2. See *gas*.
3. Disjunctive noun particle; grammar **PT** 268; **CT** 268.
4. Subordinating verb particle (conflation of nominalising *pa./ba* and instrumental *-s*); examples **PT** 252, 254, 255, 258, 260, 262, 264, 267, 270, 284; **CT** 250, 251, 258, 262, 269, 285, 286.
- 'phro*. Nominalising verb particle; grammar **CT** 273.
- phyir*. Subordinating verb particle; grammar **CT** 272.
- po*. 1. Definite noun particle; examples **PT** 257.
2. Positive nominalising adjective particle; grammar 180; **PT** 263; **CT** 263; vowel harmony 84; examples 99, 101, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 131, 133, 134, 153, 160, 167, 177, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 192, 208, 209, 222, 223, 227, 229, 234, 238, 276, 278, 279, 280, 282, 283; **PT** 263, 270, 272; **CT** 253, 255, 258, 285, 286.
- pu./bu*. Positive degree nominalising adjective particle; grammar **PT** 263; **CT** 263, 285.
- r*. See *la*, *tu*.
- ra*. See *ga*.
- rab*. Intensive degree nominalising adjective particle; grammar **PT** 263f; **CT** 263f; examples 285.
- ram*. 1. Interrogative noun particle; **PT** 246.
2. See *gam*.
- ran*. Nominalising verb particle; grammar 225, 239.
- rang*. Nominalising verb particle; grammar 225, 237.
- re*. 1. Distributive noun particle; examples 148.
2. Nominalising verb particle; grammar 225, 236.
3. See *ge*.
- red*. Auxiliary verb particle; grammar 119, 139, 142-9, 152-7, 162-4, 183; vowel harmony 82f; examples 52, 74, 116, 117, 126, 132, 133, 135, 138, 165, 166, 172, 174, 175, 176, 177, 182, 186, 196, 197, 198, 200, 204, 205, 207, 212, 215, 216, 217, 223, 232, 233, 235, 239, 240, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281.
- rgyu*. 1. Linking verb particle; grammar 117, 162-4, 214; pitch 77, 78; vowel harmony 82; examples **PT** 255.
2. Nominalising verb particle; grammar 224, 225, 232-4, **CT** 273; vowel harmony 82f; examples 283.
- rin*. Nominalising verb particle; grammar **CT** 273.
- rkyang*. Ultimate degree nominalising adjective particle; examples 279.
- mams*. Numerative noun particle; examples **PT** 258, 262, 284; **CT** 248, 253, 254, 256, 262, 285.
- ro*. See *go*.
- rogs*. Nominalising verb particle; grammar 167, 225, 238, 242n; **CT** 256; vowel harmony 83; examples 176, 283.
- rtsis*. Nominalising verb particle; grammar 225, 234f, 242n; vowel

- harmony 82, 83.
- ru.* 1. Serial modal verb particle; grammar 175, 183.
2. See *tu*.
- rung.* Subordinating modal verb particle; grammar CT 272; examples CT 272.
- s.* See *kyis*.
- sa.* Nominalising verb particle; grammar 225, 240; CT 273; examples 186, 276, 280, 282.
- se.* 1. Adverbial particle; grammar 208; pronunciation 85, 126, 128, 148, 182; examples 280.
2. Considerable degree nominalising adjective particle; grammar 183.
3. See *ge*.
- shag.* Auxiliary verb particle; grammar 159f; examples 162, 174, 175, 186, 232, 280.
- shig.* See *cig*.
- shing.* See *cing*.
- shes.* See *ces*.
- shos.* Superlative degree nominalising adjective particle; grammar 183f, PT 263; CT 263; vowel harmony 84; examples 50.
- shul.* Nominalising verb particle; grammar 241 vowel harmony 82f; examples 279, 280.
- skabs.* Nominalising verb particle; grammar CT 273.
- snying./nyid.* Nominalising verb particle; grammar 225, 238f, 258; CT 273; vowel harmony 82f.
- so.* See *go*.
- song.* Auxiliary verb particle; grammar 139, 142-9; PT 247; CT 248, 250; pitch 78; examples 52, 53, 84, 137, 138, 145, 174, 177, 182, 194, 198, 199, 203, 204, 205, 209, 223, 234, 237, 239, 240.
- srol.* Nominalising verb particle; grammar 225, 240.
- stangs.* Nominalising verb particle; grammar 225, 240; CT 273.
- ste.* See *te*.
- su.* See *tu*.
- 269, 285, 286.
- thabs.* Nominalising verb particle; grammar 225, 236; CT 273; vowel harmony 82f.
- thag.chod.* Intensive degree nominalising adjective particle; grammar 184; PT 263; CT 263.
- tig.* Positive degree nominalising adjective particle; grammar 180.
- tsam.* 1. Approximative noun particle; examples 277, 278, 279, 282; PT 284.
2. Nominalising adjective particle; grammar 186.
3. numerative noun particle; pitch 77, 95, 99, 84, 94, 133, 143, 144, 153, 164, 165, 167, 174, 181.
- tsang.* Subordinating modal verb particle; grammar 222; examples 278, 282.
- tshad.* Nominalising verb particle; grammar CT 273.
- tshe.* Subordinating verb particle; grammar PT 270; CT 270.
- tsho.* Numerative noun particle; grammar 100; vowel harmony 81; examples 84, 94, 133, 143, 144, 153, 164, 165, 167, 174, 190, 192, 204, 217, 220, 233, 234, 239, 240, 242, 276, 277.
- tshul.* Nominalising verb particle; grammar CT 273.
- tu./du./-r.* Serial modal verb particle; grammar PT 259-61, CT 259-61; examples PT 255.
- tu./du./ru./su.* Dative/locative noun particle; grammar 206; PT 266f; CT 266f; vowel harmony 82; examples 168, 228; PT 246, 251, 252, 256, 257, 262, 267, 269, 271, 284; CT 254, 256, 266, 272, 285, 286.
- yang.* See *kyang*.
- yag.* 1. Linking verb particle; grammar 117, 162-4, 214; pitch 77, 78.
2. Nominalising verb particle; grammar 224, 225, 230-32; PT 272f; CT 272f; examples 279, 280, 282.
- yar.* Topic-marking particle; examples 277.
- yi.* See *kyi*.
- yin.* Auxiliary verb particle; grammar 139, 142-9, 152-7, 162-4, 165; PT 247, 252, 254; vowel

harmony 83; examples 50, 117, 118, 127, 135, 137, 160, 166, 173, 174, 175, 177, 190n, 192, 196, 198, 203, 205, 206, 216, 217, 220, 221, 223, 229, 233, 236, 240, 276, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283; **PT** 246, 249, 255; **CT** 265, 285.

yis. See *kyis*.

yod. Auxiliary verb particle; grammar 139, 150-57, 158-61.; **PT** 251, 255; **CT** 251, 254, 255; vowel harmony 83; examples 85, 136, 137, 138, 177, 192, 209, 222, 223, 224, 231, 236, 239, 280; **CT** 258, 264, 265, 285.

yog.red. Auxiliary verb particle; grammar 139, 149, 150-57, 158-61; examples, 276, 278, 280, 281, 283.

yong. Auxiliary verb particle; grammar 154f; **PT** 247; **CT** 248, 254; vowel harmony 83; examples **CT** 248.

zer. Quotative particle; pronunciation 85, 118; examples 279, 280.

zhig. See *cig*.

zhing. See *cing*.

zhes. See *ces*.

General Index

- ablative particle, 95, 101, 193, 203, 207, 267
active voice, 202, 204, 208
actor, 98, 198, 201-2, 204, 216-7, 225, 228, 229, 230, 234-5, 236, 241n
adjective particles, 77, 78, 179-90
adjective, 77, 78, 84, 91, 93, 98, 99, 100, 179-90, 244, 248, 249, 263-4
adjunct, 52, 53, 101, 102, 103, 112, 113, 120, 122, 141, 145, 169, 171, 172, 186, 191, 193, 200, 201, 202-9, 210-17, 220, 224, 234, 235, 236, 240, 241, 246, 264, 270
adverbial particle, 85, 203, 208
affrication, 69, 70, 72, 73, 74, 297, 298, 302, 303
Afridi, B.G., 45n
Agha, A., 140, 146, 163, 169n, 171, 196
Amchog (district, dialect), 2, 28, 30, 90
Amdo (district, dialects), 17, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28-30, 31, 32, 37, 38, 42, 44n
Amdo Khake (dialect), 26, 289, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301
Amdo Sherpa (dialect), 290, 302, 303
animacy, 100, 194, 196, 197, 198, 203, 204, 211, 215
Amipa, S.G., 177
An-shun-kuan (dialect), 291
apparent modality, 131, 132, 165, 236
approximants, 70, 303
archaic dialects, 23-26, 28 (see also consonant clusters)
- Arig (dialect), 10, 290
aspect, 116, 118, 119, 125, 126, 134, 136, 138, 140-64, 165, 166, 169, 171, 174, 177, 245, 251, 254
aspiration, 70, 69, 72-5, 106
auxiliaries, 50, 52, 77, 83, 115-19, 122, 125, 126, 127, 131-2, 134-9, 140-155, 164, 169, 219, 220, 222, 235, 238, 239, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 261, 269
- Bacot, J., 243, 247, 249, 270
Balti (dialect), Baltistan, 4, 7, 8, 10, 18, 22, 23, 25, 33, 39, 41, 42, 292, 297, 298, 300, 301-3, 306
Banag, Banak (dialect), 24, 28, 29, 30 (see also Panaka)
Bashe, 243-73
basic letter, 47, 56, 57, 61, 64, 66
Bathang (dialect), 32, 291, 298, 301, 303
Bell, C.A., 301
beneficiary, 98
Beyer, S.V., 35, 39, 41, 42, 44n, 45n
Bhotia, 2, 3, 25, 36, 42
Bhutan, 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 35, 36, 37, 39, 41, 42, 44n, 45n
Bielmeier, R., 31, 33, 34, 44n, 85n, 297, 300, 303, 306
Binnick, R.I., 140, 159
Brag-gsum (dialect), 294
Brahmi, 15
Bray, J., 45n
breathy voice, 31, 44n, 57 (see also

- whisper)
- 'Brog-skad (dialect), 290
- Brokkat (dialect), 36, 294
- Brokpa (dialect), 36, 294
- Buddhism, 6, 7-9, 11-17, 24, 39, 40, 41, 90
- Burma, 1, 3, 8
- case marking particles, 51, 77, 95, 98, 99, 101, 224
- Causemann, M, 21, 29, 31, 44n, 85n, 300, 302, 303
- certain (polarity), 128, 155; (modality), 133, 134
- Chala (dialect), 291
- Chamdo (town, dialect), 291
- Chang, B.S., & Chang, K., 85n, 140
- Chang, B.S., 301, 304, 305
- Chang, K. & Shefts, B., 85n
- Changpa (dialect), 292
- Chayul, 35
- China, Chinese, 1-11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 27, 30, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44n, 92
- Ch'ing-hai (dialect), 290
- Cho-ca-nga-ca-kha (dialect), 36, 294
- Chog-che (dialect), 31, 290
- Chone (dialect), 27, 28, 29, 30, 290
- chos.skad*, 15
- Christianity, 7, 17, 42, 43
- Chung-tien (dialect), 291
- Civera, M.B., 301
- Classical Tibetan, 11, 35, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 55, 87, 89, 90, 105, 113, 127, 195, 209, 210, 230, 240, 243-73, 284-7
- clause, 47, 48, 51, 52, 53, 95, 98, 101, 102, 103, 191-241
- Coblin, W.S., 106
- Colloquial Amdo (dialect), 289
- comparative adjectives, 84, 179-86, 207, 263
- complement, 191, 192, 210, 213, 214, 237
- concord, 120, 134, 138, 191, 193-4, 196, 198-9, 202-3, 215, 217
- conditional modality 141
- conditional clauses, 16, 147, 148, 156, 157, 160, 222, 252, 254
- considerable degree, 179, 183
- consonant clusters, 24-26, 28-35, 74, 75, 297, 299-303 (see also archaic dialects)
- constituent (definition), 48, 49, 53
- co-ordinating particle, 101, 102
- copular clauses, 102, 120, 123-5, 126, 127, 158, 179, 180, 181, 189, 192-4, 198, 200, 210-13
- corroborative particle, 129, 131, 165, 221
- Csoma de Körös, A., 4
- Dakpakha (dialect), 35, 36, 294
- Dakpo (district, dialect), 14, 35
- Das, S.C., 39, 68n, 273n
- dative-locative particles, 95, 101, 203, 205-7, 230, 231, 234, 235, 239, 266
- Dawson, W., 301, 302, 303, 304
- dbus.*, (dialect), 293
- deference, 53, 95-98, 111-13, 191, 193, 196, 198, 199, 202, 209, 215-7, 246, 268, (see also honorific, respectful)
- deictic, 51, 87, 93, 95, 98, 99, 100, 224, 233
- DeLancey, S., 113n, 171, 176, 178, 195, 196, 220
- Derge (dialect), 21, 26, 35, 291, 294, 297, 300, 303, 304
- diphthongs, 65
- disjunctive particle, 207, 267, 268
- dMar-khams (dialect), 291
- Dolpo (district, dialect), 34, 293
- Dorje Chödrön, 45n
- Drayab (dialect), 32, 291, 298, 300, 302
- Drokke (dialect), 22, 23, 28, 30, 42
- Drokpa (dialect), 293
- Drukchu (dialect), 27, 28
- dual, 100
- Duanmu, S., 301, 302, 304
- dubitative particle, 78, 115, 128, 146,

- 147, 164, 248
 Duka, T., 4
 Dwags (dialect), 35
 Dzarong (dialect), 291
 Dzongkha (dialect), 3, 22, 23, 36, 39, 42, 43, 294, 298, 300, 302
 Dzorge (dialect), 26, 30, 44n, 289, 290, 298, 300, 301, 304, 305, 306
- echoed theme, 77, 78, 215
 Ekvall, R.B., 28, 29, 30, 44n
 ellipsis, 191, 192, 198, 202, 211, 212
 Emmerick, R.E., 243-71
 emphatic, 129, 131, 133, 165, 166, 169, 221
 epithet, 224, 51
 ergativity, 191-202, 265-6
 evidential modality, 52, 115, 118, 120-25, 128, 131, 134, 135, 136, 139, 144, 153, 154, 159, 166, 181, 219, 244, 246
 exceptive particle, 207, 208
 excessive degree, 179, 184
 existential verbs, 120-22, 125, 126, 192, 193, 194, 200, 206, 213
- final cluster, 64
 final letter, 47, 56, 64, 65
 final -s, 78, 81, 84
 final, 47, 48, 50, 52
 finite, 219, 222
 focus, 266
 fricatives, 70, 72, 73, 74, 85
 future (tense, time), 119, 125, 126, 128, 132, 135, 136, 137, 140, 141, 147, 148, 152-9, 163, 165, 169, 175, 177, 178, 195, 198, 221, 222, 223, 226, 230, 233, 235, 237, 252-4
 future stem, 245, 252, 253, 256, 262, 263
- Gansu, 1, 2, 9, 11, 27
 genitive particle, 66, 77, 81, 83, 98, 101, 102, 189, 193, 200, 200-02, 206, 224, 225, 228, 230, 231, 236, 270
- Gerard, Dr., 4, 5
 gerundive aspect, 140, 162, 163
 given/new, 53, 191, 194, 211
 goal, 98
 Goldsmith, J., 304
 Goldstein, M.C., 42, 43, 85n, 143, 161, 162, 163, 169n, 195, 196, 218n, 233, 235
 Golok (people, dialect), 21, 24, 29, 38, 289, 298, 301
 grammaticisation, 115, 116, 171, 176, 225, 206, 216, 225, 226, 236, 244, 261
 Grierson, G.A., 25, 31, 33, 34, 45n
 Gro tshang (dialect), 290
 Gyantse, 14
 Gyethang, 32, 291
 Gyo tshang (dialect), see Gro tshang
- Han-niu (dialect), 31, 290
 Hari, A.M., 301
 Hbrugchu (dialect), 290, 30
 head letter, 47, 56, 60, 61, 60
 head, 51, 87, 93, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102
 Hermanns, M., 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 35, 44n, 297, 301, 304
 Herrmann, S., 26, 35, 297, 301, 304
 Himachal Pradesh, 4, 8, 10
 Hodgson, B.H., 35, 44n
 honorific, 21, 23, 44n, 95, 96, 97, 98, 100, 111, 112, 129, 168, 179, 188, 189, 268 (see also deference)
 Hor sde lnga (dialect), 291
 Horpa (dialect), 292
 Hu Tan, 113n, 157, 177, 186, 187, 193, 220, 222, 229, 233
 Huari (dialect), 26, 28, 289
 Humla (district, dialect), 34, 293
- imminent aspect, 140, 152, 162, 163
 imperative, 167, 168, 169, 195, 227, 238, 247, 256, 257, 262, 265
 India, 1-5, 8, 10, 11, 14-19, 27, 35, 39, 42, 44n
 Indian Changthang (dialect), 33, 292
 indicative, 120, 129, 134, 159

- instrumental particle, 66, 101, 195, 202, 203, 204, 266
- intensive degree, 179, 184, 263
- intention, 52, 115, 136, 137, 138-40, 142, 143, 144, 145, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 158, 193, 194, 195, 198, 199, 200, 204, 219, 234, 249
- interrogative, 48, 53, 71, 73, 75, 77, 85, 118, 119, 127, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 153, 165, 191, 221, 229, 240, 245, 248, 266, 272, 213, 214, 219, 249
- intransitive, see transitivity
- IPA, xxi, 55, 57
- Islam, 7, 24, 39
- Jaeschke, H.A., 23, 24, 26, 31, 34, 39, 42, 68n, 273n
- Jat, 33, 293
- Jirel, 293, 300
- judgemental modality, 52, 115, 118, 122, 124, 125, 127, 131, 149, 157, 164, 219, 244, 246, 248
- Jumian, G., 25, 28, 31, 44n, 194, 195, 298, 301
- Kagate (dialect), 24, 34, 293
- Kaleon, K.L., 36, 45n
- Kandze (dialect), 32, 291, 298
- K'ang-ting (dialect), 291
- Kara, G., 28, 30
- Kenstowicz, M., 301
- Kesang Gyurme, see Jumian
- Kham (district, dialects), 17, 21, 24-32, 34, 38, 43, 44n, 290, 291, 298, 290, 291, 292, 303
- Kjellin, O., 301, 302, 303
- Kokonor, 2, 11
- Kongpo (district, dialect), 35, 294
- Koshal, S., 22, 24, 25, 26, 33, 37, 44n, 55n, 300, 301, 303
- Kraft, G.C. & Tsering, H.H., 43
- Kunawar (district, dialect), 4, 8, 33, 42
- Kyirong (dialect), 294
- Labrang (monastery, dialect), 290, 302
- Ladakhi (dialect), Ladakh, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 17, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 33, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 85n, 292, 298, 300, 301, 303
- Lahuli (dialect), Lahul, 4, 22, 31, 33, 34, 37, 38, 42, 293
- Lakha (dialect), 36, 294
- Langthang (dialect), 34, 293
- Layakha (dialect), 36, 294
- Lente (dialect), 294
- lexical verb, 115, 116-7, 118, 120, 125, 126, 127, 130, 134-69, 191, 192, 193, 194, 200, 212, 215, 216, 219, 220, 239, 246, 248-73
- Lhasawa, L.T., 104n, 113n, 148, 149, 159, 163, 169n, 187, 190n, 204
- Li, F-k. & Coblin, W.S., 243, 247, 250, 251, 252, 260, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272
- Ling-chung (dialect), 291
- lingua franca, 22
- linking particles, 50, 52, 66, 67, 77, 82, 83, 116, 117, 118, 119, 127, 131, 134, 135, 142, 145, 146, 150, 151, 152, 155, 158, 161, 162, 163, 169, 176, 219, 220, 244, 248, 251, 261
- literacy, 16, 18
- Li-thang (dialect), 291
- loanwords, 92, 244
- Lunakha (dialect), 36, 294
- Manangba (dialect), 293
- marginal verbs of being, 119, 125-7, 134
- Masica, C.P., 40
- Mazaudon, M., & Michailovsky, B., 298
- Me-li, 291
- Meredith, S., 85n, 301
- Migot, A., 25, 31, 44n
- Milarepa, 243-73, 284-7, 273n
- Miller, R.A., 39, 44n
- Min, S. & Geng, X., 26, 29, 43, 298, 299, 300

- Mngahris (dialect), 292
 modal particle, 77, 115, 116, 117, 129, 131, 132, 134, 141, 142, 145, 146, 149, 150, 151, 152, 154, 155, 158, 161, 162, 164, 166, 169, 219, 221, 244, 248
 modality, 127, 140, (see also apparent, certain, conditional, evidential, judgemental, possible, probable, speculative modality)
 mode, 125, 126, 140, 141, 149
 Modern Literary Tibetan, 41-2, 43, 105, 127, 195
 Mongol, Mongolia, 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 32, 44n
 Monpa (dialect), 3, 8, 35, 36, 294
 mood, 52, 115, 131, 140, 159, 160, 164, 165, 166, 244
 Mugu (district, dialect), 34, 293
 Muslims, see Islam
 Mustang (district, dialect), 34, 293, 300, 301, 303
 Mu-ya, 291
- Nagano, Y., 30, 34, 302, 303
 names, 91, 92, 97
 Nangchen (dialect), 21, 27, 29, 31, 44n, 85n, 290, 300, 302, 303
 narrative, 21, 26, 37, 38, 40, 41, 214
 nasality, 300, 302, 303
 negative, see polarity
 Nepal, 1-4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14-19, 22, 24, 27, 34, 44n
 Ngaba (dialect), 289
 Nishida, T., 23, 303
 nominalisation, 67, 77, 82, 83, 84, 95, 113, 116, 117, 131, 132, 162, 164, 167, 176, 179, 180, 181, 185, 186, 189, 200, 219, 220, 221, 224-241, 253, 254, 257, 258, 265, 270
 non-archaic dialects, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30, 31, 33
 non-cluster, see non-archaic dialects
 non-contrastive pitch, 73, 302, 303
 Norbu, T.J., 28, 30, 42, 44n
 noun phrase, 87, 95, 101, 102, 113, 191, 203, 209
 nucleus, 48
 numerator, 51, 224
 Nyamkat (dialect), 33, 293
 Nyarong (dialect), 291
- object, 52, 53, 101, 102, 103, 109, 112, 113, 171, 191-202, 209-17, 224, 229, 231, 246, 264
 Odden, D., 85n
 Olson, R.F., 300
 ordinary, 95, 96, 97
 other-centred, see viewpoint
- Pakistan, 1, 4, 8, 18, (see also Balti)
 Panaka (dialect), 25, 28, 29, 30, 289
 (see also Banag, Banak)
 part of speech (definition), 49, 50
 particle (definition), 47, 49, 50, 51, 52
 particle sandhi, 47, 66
 past tense, time, 115, 116, 119, 125, 126, 135, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142-9, 152, 154-62, 164, 165, 167-9
 patient, 201, 202, 225, 229
 perfect aspect, 125, 136, 138, 140, 146, 147, 156, 158-61, 164, 168, 169, 174, 177, 221, 222, 223, 224, 238, 255
 Perso-Arabic, 24, 39, 41, 42, 45n
 person, 49, 52, 115, 120, 121-3, 125, 126, 128, 130, 134-9, 143, 144, 145, 146, 148, 150-54, 156, 159, 160, 169, 195, 196, 198, 200, 202, 203, 204, 216, 217, 219, 221, 244, 248, 250, 262, 265, 266, 267
 phonation, 71, 72, 74
 phonemes, 70
 phrasal (definition), 53
 phrasal adjectives, 179, 185, 186-9, 264
 phrasal nouns, 92, 94, 233
 phrasal verbs, 105, 109, 110, 111, 113, 184, 235, 238, 241, 243, 245, 264
 phrase (definition), 49, 50, 51, 52
 pitch, 24, 31, 33, 34, 44n, 48, 70-73, 74, 75, 77, 78, 85, 129, 193, 208,

- 214, 215, 219, 301-4, 306, (see also tone)
- plosion, 69, 70, 72-5, 297, 302, 303
- plural, 97, 100
- pluraliser, 94, 100
- polarity, 50, 52, 73, 78, 84, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 128-9, 131, 132, 133, 134, 142, 144, 145-7, 149, 150, 151, 152, 154, 155, 158, 159, 161, 162, 164, 167, 168, 169, 179, 181, 182, 185, 186, 219, 220, 221, 227, 233, 241, 263
- politeness, 209, 216, 246, 247, 261
- popular rhyming terms, 94, 264
- positive, see polarity
- postpositional nouns, 87, 93-4, 95, 98, 99, 100, 244, 245
- post-second-vowel sign final letter, 65
- Poucha, P., 301
- Powo (district, dialect), 35, 294
- Prakrit, 15
- Preclassical Tibetan, 39, 40, 55, 62, 90, 92, 97, 195, 209, 210, 243-273, 283-4
- predicator, 52, 53, 191, 192, 193, 196, 198, 200, 203, 209, 210, 211, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217
- prefix, 47, 56, 61, 64
- premeditated aspect, 162, 163, 166
- preparative aspect, 140, 162, 163
- present tense, time, 115, 116, 125, 136, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 147, 148, 150-52, 156, 158, 159, 161, 162, 163, 164, 167, 168, 169
- probable modality, 132, 134, 157, 166
- progressive aspect, 140, 147, 152, 155, 161, 169, 221, 223, 224, 251, 254, 82
- prospective aspect, 116, 140, 142, 162, 163, 164, 221, 226, 230, 233, 234, 239
- Pulleyblank, E.G., 107
- punctuation, 47
- Purik, 4, 7-8, 10, 22, 25, 33, 41, 292, 300
- Qinghai, 2, 9, 10, 27, 30, 31
- quotative, 84, 118, 268, 269
- Rangan, K., 33
- Ray, P.S., 85n
- reading style, 28, 30, 31, 38
- Rebkong (dialect), 29, 30, 37, 289, 301
- reduplication, 133, 134, 166, 179, 187, 190, 179, 185
- Refugee Standard Tibetan, 295
- register, 127, 146, 149, 244, 248
- relative clause, 102
- relative/interrogative, 94, 95, 185, 200
- respectful, 98, 112, 113 (see also deference)
- Rgyarong (dialect), 291
- Richter, E., 301
- Rockhill, W.W., 25, 28, 30
- Roerich, G.N. de, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 34, 37, 38, 44n, 85n, 148, 162, 177, 178, 190n, 195, 222, 226, 230, 237, 242n, 298, 301, 306
- Róna-Tas, A., 15, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31, 38, 39, 42, 68n, 106, 107
- Rong-ba, Rongba, Rongpa (dialect), 28, 290
- Rosthorn, A. von, 31
- Rubshu (dialect), 33
- Sakya, 14
- Sandberg, G., 36
- Sanskrit, 8, 9, 15, 16, 39, 40, 41, 55, 57, 90, 92
- Sanskritic Tibetan, 90, 105
- Sa-stod (dialect), 290
- Schuh, D., 26
- Schuler, S., 45n
- second final letter, 47, 56, 65
- second vowel sign, 65, 66
- self-centred, see viewpoint
- serial verbs, particles, 111, 117, 126, 140, 167, 171-8, 183, 184, 219, 220, 221, 228, 239, 244, 246, 247, 252, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262
- Shafer, R., 35

- Sharma, S.R., 34, 303
 Sherpa (dialect), Sherpas, 2, 3, 22, 24,
 30, 34, 36, 44n, 293
 Shibata, T., 30
 Shigatse, 14
 Sichuan, 1, 2, 5, 9, 13, 27, 31
 Sikkim, 3, 8, 10, 18, 24, 34, 35, 36,
 38, 42, 43, 294
skad.gsar.bcad., 40
 Southwest Drokpa (dialect), 293, 300,
 303
 speculative modality, 132
 spelling style, 38
 Spiti (district, dialect), 4, 22, 33, 293,
 303, 306
 spoken syllable, 47, 49
 Sprigg, R.K., 25, 26, 29, 30, 33, 38,
 44n, 48, 85n, 297, 298, 300, 301,
 302, 303, 304, 305, 306
 stems, 105-8, 109-11, 113, 115-19,
 125, 126, 134, 140, 142, 145, 148,
 150-52, 154, 155, 158, 159, 161-3,
 164, 166-9, 171, 173, 175, 178,
 179, 181-5, 187, 188, 219-41, 245,
 248, 249, 250-56, 257, 258, 261,
 262, 263, 264, 268, 269, 270
 stress, 48, 74, 78, 79
 subject, 50, 52, 53, 101, 102, 103,
 109, 111, 112, 113, 119, 120, 122,
 123, 126, 128, 130, 134-9, 143,
 145, 146, 150, 152, 153, 159, 160,
 162, 168, 169, 171, 172, 174, 175,
 191-217, 219, 220, 224, 225, 228,
 232, 234, 235, 236, 237, 246, 264-
 8, 271, 272
 subject-marking particle, 66, 77, 81,
 101, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198,
 200, 210, 211, 213, 265
 subjoined letter, 47, 56
 subordination, 77, 78, 103, 119, 144,
 147, 166, 171, 172, 173, 178, 207,
 208, 214, 219-23, 226, 227, 240,
 244, 264, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272
 suggestive modality, 166, 168
 Sun, J.T.-s., 23, 25, 30, 38, 44n, 300,
 302, 304, 305, 306
 Sung-p'an (dialect), 291
 superlative degree, 84, 179, 183, 184,
 186, 263
 suppletive, 107, 125, 126
 syllable marker, 47, 56, 57, 61
 Ta-ch'ien-lu (dialect), 291
 Tan, K., 220, 222, 229, 233
 Tangut (dialect), 30, 289, 290
 Tao (dialect), 31, 32, 44n, 290
 Taube, M., 243, 252, 256
 tense, 50, 52, 115, 116, 118, 119, 125,
 126, 127, 132, 134-9, 140-57, 158,
 161, 164, 165, 166, 169, 182, 219,
 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 239, 244,
 245, 246, 247, 248, 249-55, 261,
 (see also past, present, future tense)
 theme, 53, 77, 103, 191, 194, 210,
 211, 212, 213, 214, 215
 Thingo, T.T., 22, 44n
 third vowel sign, 56, 65
 Thomas, F.W., 31, 243, 252
 Tibeto-Burman, 8, 9, 10, 13
 Tomulic, R., 104n, 113n, 151, 157,
 163, 169n, 195, 196, 226, 232, 234
 tone, 70-77, 85, 104, 300-04 (see also
 pitch)
 topic marker, 51, 81, 98, 103, 213,
 219, 223, 268
 transitivity, 53, 191-202, 203, 204,
 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 225, 228,
 229, 235, 262, 264, 266
 transliteration, 47, 55, 58, 60, 62, 64,
 65
 Tromowa (dialect), 35, 36, 294
 Tsang, 34, 35, 38, 294
 Tsewang Tondan, 45n
 Tsü-ku (dialect), 291
 Ü, 34
 ultimate degree, 179, 185
 unintentional, 138, 139, 140, 144, 145,
 151, 153, 154, 158, 193, 194, 199,
 200, 249
 Uray, G., 24, 44n
 Uttar Pradesh, 4, 8

- van Driem, G., 36, 45n
 verb phrases, 115-169, 191, 212
 verbs of being, 115-20, 122-3, 125-7,
 129, 131, 132, 134-6, 141, 149,
 157, 160, 161, 164, 219, 222, 224,
 229, 233-5, 237, 240, 246-9, 252,
 260-62, 265, 266, 273
 viewpoint, 52, 115, 118, 120, 121,
 122, 124, 125, 128, 130, 134, 135,
 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 143, 144,
 150, 153, 169, 198, 200, 219, 222,
 244, 246, 249, 273
 vocative, 265
 voicelessness, 69, 70, 72, 73, 74, 75
 voicing, 69, 70, 72, 73, 74, 75, 85
 volunteering clauses, 166, 168, 169,
 176
 vowel harmony, 48, 70, 74, 79, 81, 82,
 83, 105, 107, 108, 180, 183, 185,
 186, 304-6
 vowel sign, 47, 56, 56, 64
 vowels, 70, 78, 79, 81, 83
- Waddell, L.A., 5
 Walsh, E.H.C., 36, 44n
 Walung (dialect), 293
 Washul (dialect), 32
 Wayen (dialect), 30, 289
 Wen Yu, 25, 31
 wh-interrogative, 127, 129, 130, 127,
 129, 130, 185, 190, 248
 whisper, whispery voice, 57, 70, 85
 witness, see evidential modality
 word, 48, 49, 50, 71, 74, 75, 78, 79,
 81, 82, 84, 85
 written syllable, 47, 48
 Wylie, T.V., xxi
- Ya-Chiang (dialect), 291
 Yarlung, 14
 Yatte (dialect), 294
 Yip, M.J., 304
 Yolmo (dialect), 293
 Yunnan, 2, 5, 9, 27, 31
- Zangskar (district, dialect), 7, 8, 22,

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The Tibetan language comprises a wide range of spoken and written varieties whose known history dates from the 7th century AD to the present day. Its speakers inhabit a vast area in Central Asia and the Himalayas extending into seven modern nation states, while its abundant literature includes much of vital importance to the study of Buddhism. After surveying all the known varieties of Tibetan, including their geographical and historical background, this book concentrates on a phonological and grammatical

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