

Tom J. F. TILLEMANS and Derek D. HERFORTH, *Agents and Actions in Classical Tibetan. The Indigenous Grammarians on bdag and gzan and bya byed las gsum*. Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, Vol. 21, Vienna 1989.

It is a regrettable fact that recent developments in linguistic theory have had little influence on the intellectual backwaters of Tibetology. The present book, to which Tom J. F. Tillemans and Derek D. Herforth have each contributed important studies, makes up for this lack of theoretical interest by attempting to analyse the views of Tibetan grammarians on *bdag* and *gzan* and *bya byed las gsum* from the point of view of the linguistic concept of ergativity.

The book consists of three parts: Part I, an introduction, in which Tillemans deals with the views of the indigenous Tibetan grammarians on the concepts of *bdag* and *gzan* and their interpretation by western Tibetologists; Part II, a critical edition and annotated English translation of the *rTags kyi 'jug pa'i dka' gnas* of A kya yoñs dzin dByans can dga' ba'i blo gros (18–19th C.), followed by a critical edition and annotated English translation of an excerpt on *bdag* and *gzan* from the *mKhas pa'i mgul rgyan* of Si tu pan chen Chos kyi 'byuñ gnas (1699–1774). In Part III, “Transitivity and Voice: The Perspective from Tibet”, Herforth addresses the theoretical implications of the concept of ergativity as applied to classical Tibetan. The book contains a glossary of Tibetan technical terms and a glossary of the principal linguistic terms used, as well as an index of proper names and an index of terms.

The problem which Tillemans introduces in the first part of the book relates to a set of fairly obscure grammatical statements that occur in verse twelve of the *rTags kyi 'jug pa* ascribed to the legendary Thon mi sambhoṭa. In this verse Thon mi introduces the terms *gzan* and *bdag* in connection with assigning particular grammatical functions to the verbal prefixes *b-*, *g-*, *d-*, *'a*, and *m-*; for example, *b-* is said to be used for establishing the past and other (*gzan*), and *g-* and *d-* are used for both self (*bdag*) and other, and the present.

Thon mi's statements have generated a considerable amount of confusion among western Tibetologists. Tillemans shows that the treatment of *gzan*

and *bdag* by J. Bacot (*Grammaire du tibétain littéraire*), M. Lalou (*Manuel élémentaire de tibétain classique*), and J. A. Durr (*Deux traitsgrammaticaux tibétains*) is based upon misunderstandings of the statements of the Tibetan grammarians, and that the assumption that the Tibetan distinction between *bdag* and *gʒan* represents a Tibetan parallel to the Sanskrit grammarians' distinction between *ātmanapada* and *parasmaipada* is wrong.

Tillemans has chosen to analyse Thon mi's statements from the point of view of Si tu Paṅ chen's commentary on the *rTags kyi 'jug pa*. Si tu is no doubt one of the most influential Tibetan writers on the subject of Tibetan grammar, and it is therefore natural to concentrate on his contribution to the problem. Tillemans is, of course, well aware of the fact that historically Si tu's view of *bdag* and *gʒan* may not represent the original idea of Thon mi. On the other hand, most of the early grammatical literature is no longer available, and, if we are to believe Si tu, there was in his time a deplorable lack of consistency in the relevant literature on the concepts of *bdag* and *gʒan*. He evidently attempted to clarify them and to ascribe to them a definite theoretical value. For this reason it is reasonable to focus on his contribution. However, a thorough study on the early Tibetan grammatical literature on the subject is clearly a desideratum.

According to Si tu *bdag* is used of an act (*las*) that is explicitly (*dños su*) related to a distinct agent (*byed pa po gʒan*), while the focus (*yul*) to be established by the agent (*des bsgrub par bya ba 'i yul*) is termed other (*gʒan*). The emphasis is on the presence of an distinct agent on the sentence level. According to Tillemans this roughly corresponds to a definition of transitivity (another common way of defining transitive verbs is to characterize them as *bya byed tha dad pa*: having separate object and agent). Lacking such a distinct agent, the verb is intransitive, and thus the distinction *bdag/gʒan* does not apply.

It is true that Tibetan sentences show the distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs by the presence and absence, respectively, of case-markers—the so-called *byed sgra*: *kyis*, *gyis*, etc.—but there is no indication in the indigenous grammatical tradition that the distinction transitivity/intransitivity was ever defined with reference to the presence or absence of the *byed sgra*. This may be incidental, but according to Si tu's definition the emphasis is on the difference, on the sentence level, of the agent from the object, and not on the presence or absence of the *byed sgra*. Nor should one forget the fact that Si tu primarily addresses the function of certain verbal prefixes. It may seem odd that a verbal prefix, in addition to its serving as a time index, is taken to indicate *bdag* and *gʒan* as defined by Si tu. Tillemans does not address this problem. There is reason to believe, however, that Si tu's statements are indebted, at least to a certain extent, to Sanskrit grammar, with which he was conversant. In Pāṇinian grammar, for instance, the verbal affixes of transitive verbs are said to denote both the object and the agent (cf., e.g., *Pāṇ* III 4.69), without any explicit specification

of case-assignment. Si tu would seem to follow the Sanskrit grammarians' tradition on this point.

Although it is tempting to analyse his view of *gžan* and *bdag* in terms of ergativity, it is nonetheless questionable whether it rests on an independent typological analysis of the Tibetan. In any case, Tillemans' expert analysis and translation of the relevant indigenous literature means a considerable step forward in our understanding of one of the knotty points of indigenous Tibetan grammar. Herforth's study of transitivity and voice is an excellent introduction to the concept of ergativity as applied to the analysis of classical Tibetan sentence structure. Ergativity is a term used in typological linguistics to refer to a system of nominal case-marking where the subject of an intransitive verb has the same morphological marker as a direct object, and a different morphological marker from the subject of a transitive verb. Tibetan satisfies this criterion: it marks the agent of a transitive verb (cf. the usage of the case-markers *-s* and *kyis*, *gyis*, etc.) and does not mark the subject of an intransitive one; nor does it mark the direct object. The agent is thus said to be in the ergative case, while the subject of an intransitive verb and the direct object stands in the absolutive.

The ergative structure of Tibetan clearly proved a stumbling block to the basically philologically-oriented western Tibetologists who cannot be said to have grasped the basic facts about the language quite correctly. As claimed by Herforth, the *bdag/gžan* contrast and its description by the indigenous grammarians is no more than a +/- AGENTIVE distinction which is instantiated in both the morphology of the transitive verb and in the case-assignment pattern of the Tibetan language. There is one interesting question which Herforth does not mention: To what extent is the basically ergative structure of Tibetan compatible with the linguistic fact that a considerable portion of the so-called Tibetan verbal paradigms is composed of forms that are derived from transitive and intransitive roots, where the so-called present and future forms are constituted by an intransitive root + prefixes [suffixes] and the so-called perfect and imperative forms by a transitive root + prefixes and suffixes? In the perspective of the ergative assumption, one would assume that this interesting fact is reflected in the case-assignment. The fact that Tibetan is assumed to instantiate the structure of an ergative language would thus seem to open a new field of research.

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Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvātāra (Ma)* is considered to be one of the main works of Madhyamaka literature, and it has exerted a seminal influence on the development of Tibetan Madhyamaka. *Ma* was conceived by its author as an introduction to Nāgārjuna's philosophy, but he actually succeeds in presenting, within the framework of an introduction, a complete Madhyamaka *summa*. *Ma*—like Candrakīrti's commentary on Nāgārjuna's *Madhyamakakārikā*, the *Prasannapadā*—is written from the perspective of a *prāsaṅgika*, who rejects the possibility of reducing the basically negative dialectics (*prasaṅga*) of Nāgārjuna to regular Dignāgan type logical demonstrations (*anumāna*). As is well known, this was attempted by another important Madhyamaka master, Bhāvaviveka, who for this reason became one of the main targets of Candrakīrti's criticism. In accordance with usual Indian practice, the work is composed of verses (*kārikā*) on which Candrakīrti has written an elaborate commentary (*MaBh*).

Apart from a few Sanskrit fragments that are found in the relevant Sanskrit literature, the original version of *Ma* is no longer extant, and scholars are thus obliged to study this important work in its Tibetan versions. The history and development of Madhyamaka doctrine in Tibet, from the 11th century onwards, are largely based on the works of Candrakīrti. Thus the relevant literature is often full of quotations from or references to *Ma*. It is often a time consuming task to trace these quotations to their relevant context in *Ma*. The present index is therefore a most welcome working tool for scholars who are engaged in studying the comprehensive Tibetan Madhyamaka literature since it makes it easy to identify and thus to locate any given quotation from *Ma*.

As mentioned by the author in the preface, the textual transmission of *Ma* in Tibet is somewhat complicated. In addition to the two canonical versions of the verses ascribed to Nag tsho Tshul krims rgyal ba and Kṛṣṇapaṇḍita, and Pa tshab Ņi ma grags and Tilaka(laśa), respectively, there is reason to assume that other non-canonical versions were current. In addition the Tibetan canon contains a separate version of *MaBh*. The author has based his index on the *editio princeps* of *MaBh* by Louis de La Vallée Poussin (*Madhyamakāvātāra par Candrakīrti: Traduction Tibétain*, Bibliotheca Buddhica IX, St. Petersburg 1907–12), adding variants in brackets from all the extant versions, and including (1) Nag tsho's translation of *Ma* as quoted in dGoñs pa rab gsal by Tsoñ kha pa, (2) Nag tsho's translation of *Ma* as quoted by 'Jam dbyaṅs bžad pa'i rdo rje in *dBu ma 'jug pa'i mtha' dpyod Luh rigs gter mdzod zab don kun gsal skal bzañ 'jug rñogs*, (3) Nag tsho's translation of *Ma* as quoted by Red mda' ba gZon nu blo gros in *dBu ma la 'jug pa'i rnam bñad De kho na ñid gsal ba'i sgron me*.

The versions of *Ma* and *MaBh* were translated into Tibetan by Madhyamaka experts and the quality of their translations is therefore considerably above average Tibetan translation standard. Thus the present index shows that there are no textual discrepancies and no mutually incompatible translations in any of the extant versions: the recorded variants basically reflect different ways of translating individual verses, they do not fundamentally affect their meaning. The Tibetan *Ma* transmission would thus seem to be thoroughly consistent.

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Brief Notices

David P. JACKSON. *The Early Abbots of 'Phan-po Na-lendra: The Vicissitudes of a Great Tibetan Monastery in the 15th Century*. Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde. No. 23. Vienna 1989. pp. 79. ÖS 130.–

The landscape of medieval Tibetan sectarian history is only slowly gaining contour. Numerous centres and seminaries of advanced learning—“fragile things” that can be easily disrupted, as David P. Jackson appositely points out—were earlier (and in some cases even up to AD 1959) dotted around the rugged Tibetan landscape.

Within the confines of these small islands of advanced learning the study of the Buddhist scriptures and the indigenous, organized Tibetan, scholarship prevailed. The names of these places and the names of many illustrious savants associated with them have long been known from various sources, but apart from fragmentary knowledge or general details about the abbatial successions, etc., the specific history of these centuries-old monasteries, in particular their upheavals and vicissitudes, are often disappointingly scarce. One such place was 'Phan-po Na-lendra, a Central Tibetan Sa-skyapa institution. This Buddhist seminary was founded in AD 1436 by the famous scholar Rong-ston Shes-bya kun-rig (1367–1449).

In this little important study David P. Jackson, an expert on medieval Tibetan scholastic and sectarian literature, has been able to cast some revealing new light on the dramatic destiny of this once-famed monastery. Jackson has traced new information on this little-known institution from a small xylographic print, a ten folio long document written by a certain Nam-mkha' dpal-bzang, a Na-lendra teacher himself and a disciple of Rong-ston. The book supplies us with Nam-mkha' dpal-bzan's text in romanized transcription along with a synopsis of its contents. From this and related sources,

the author is capable of giving us a detailed survey of the first seven abbots who occupied the see, and further to furnish us with the sources available on the sudden disaster which befell Na-lendra in the years 1488–9, a destruction which apparently was an outcome of the political power vacuum that prevailed in Central Tibet during that period. With his usual sympathetic insight into matters Tibetan and with his good command of the indigenous Tibetan sources, David P. Jackson has succeeded in retelling the story of the calamities of Na-lendra in the late 15th century, and as a case history it is instrumental in illustrating how vulnerable religious institutions are in crises of disruption and turmoil. By doing so, and by trying deftly to trace the background of the conflict and the causes leading to the troubles, the author unravels more about medieval Tibetan politics with its inevitable outbursts of *odium theologicum* than just telling the story of a long-forgotten incident in a remote country.

(PKS)

Tom J. F. TILLEMANS, *Materials for the Study of Āryadeva, Dharmapāla and Candrakīrti. The Catuṣṣatuka of Āryadeva, Chapters XII and XIII, with the Commentaries of Dharmapāla and Candrakīrti: Introduction, Translation, Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese Texts, Notes*. 2 vols. Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, No. 24,2. Vienna: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien, Universität Wien, 1990. pp. xxxvi, 290; ii, 188. ÖS 520.– (for 2 vols.)

The present work is the product of studies inspired by a series of seminars on Candrakīrti given by Professor Jacques May and continued under Professor S. Katsura in Japan. It consists of translations of two chapters of Āryadeva's *Catuṣṣataka* along with the commentaries by Candrakīrti (the *Catuṣṣatakavṛtti*) and Dharmapāla. The latter's commentary is only extant in the Chinese translation of Xuanzang. As such, and because it deals only with the last eight chapters of Āryadeva's text, it has largely been ignored in previous treatments of the *Catuṣṣataka*. The marked differences in the respective standpoints of the Sanskrit and Tibetan sources on the one hand and the Chinese materials on the other are reflected in Tillemans' taking Candrakīrti's perspective when translating Āryadeva from the former group and Dharmapāla's interpretation in his translation of the Chinese *Catuṣṣataka* (p. 5). This becomes especially interesting when one takes into consideration the Madhyamaka bias of the former on the one hand and the Vijnanavada bias of the latter on the other.

The comprehensive introductory chapters deal with the history of research in this field along with biographical details of the three ancient authors and a few methodological remarks; the problem of scriptural authority in the Epistemological School to which these authors belong; and Candrakīrti's and

Dharmapāla's accounts of perception. The translations themselves constitute the bulk of Volume I and the volume concludes with extensive notes to these translations (pp. 203–90). The second volume contains edited versions of the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts. Tillemans takes a welcome warts-and-all approach and does not attempt to reconstruct lengthy passages of Sanskrit which doubtless never existed (cf. Vol. I, p. 3). The Chinese text is simply reproduced in reduced form (pp. 131–45), with an errata slip that lists unclearly reproduced characters. There are line and section references typed onto the reproduction to facilitate consulting it when using this study. Volume II finishes with indexes of Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese terms and of proper names (pp. 149–88).

Tillemans' study is welcome for several reasons. The following two spring most readily to mind: (i) the presentation of a co-ordinated set of original materials in a form which lends itself to concentrated study; and (ii) the fact that the work is representative of the increasing recognition of the potential contribution of East Asian Buddhism to our evaluation of general Buddhist (more specifically Mahāyāna) matters. Chinese materials can not only clarify matters which are difficult of access due to incomplete Indo-Tibetan primary sources but also give a distinctly different perspective on Buddhist philosophy and practice.

(IAK)

T. SKORUPSKI (ed.), *The Buddhist Heritage*. Buddhica Britannica, Series Continua II. Tring, U.K.: The Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1989. pp. xii, 276, 11 illus. £20.

The present volume is the first in the Buddhica Britannica series founded by Dr. T. Skorupski under the auspices of the named institute and with the support of the School for Oriental and African Studies, University of London. The book is the product of a symposium held at SOAS from 28th–30th November 1985 at which the scholars whose contributions comprise this first volume held a series of stimulating and varied papers. Together they cast light into many corners of Buddhist Studies, a circumstance which has been given adequate expression in the collection at hand. Even though the topics dealt with are diverse in their subject matter, geographical area, and type of treatment, the book as a whole presents itself well and satisfies a variety of demands which the critical reader may pose.

The collection opens with a comprehensive piece by David Snellgrove, "The Multiple Features of the Buddhist Heritage", in which he attempts to draw together both the unifying and the differentiating characteristics of the Buddhist tradition.

Heinz Bechert's article on "Aspects of Theravāda Buddhism in Sri Lanka and South East Asia" is a useful summary statement of signal characteristics

of Theravāda Buddhism in its historical and social context. K. R. Norman has contributed a short article on “The Pāli Language and Scriptures”, outlining the basic problems in our appraisal of the Pāli sources.

Anthony Christie’s “Anecdotal Survey of Buddhism in South East Asia” was, as one participant at the symposium remarked, the perfect after-lunch paper. In published form it reads just as easily and enjoyably, but the reader should not be deceived by this facility: Christie raises many points about the actual practice of Buddhism in South East Asia (and, by implication, elsewhere) which challenge a merely bookish approach.

John Locke’s article, “The Unique Features of Newar Buddhism”, is the product of a lengthy involvement with this little researched pocket of Buddhism in the Himalayas. This is in fact as far north as the collection goes.¹ The reader is then taken to China. Erik Zürcher’s “The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Culture in a Historical Perspective” is the first of this group of articles. The Dutch scholar presents a brief historical sketch of Buddhism in China, and draws an intriguing parallel between the bodhisattva ideal and the idea that Buddhism has offered itself, its identity, in order to enrich the culture of China. Roderick Whitfield then presents an account of recent archeological research into Chinese Buddhism in his, “Buddhist Monuments in China and Some Recent Finds”. This archeological tone is maintained by Lewis Lancaster’s article on “The Rock-Cut Canon in China: Findings at Fang Shan”, a report on the exciting work being done on the stone-hewn *sūtras* discovered at Fang Shan.

Youngsook Pak describes important features of Korean temples in her “Excavations of Buddhist Temple Sites in Korean in 1960”. The article touches on much of interest for East Asian Buddhism as a whole. Still on Korea, Hee-Sung Keel gives a historical sketch of Korean Buddhism, one of the lacunae in Buddhist Studies, in his “Word and Wordlessness: The Spirit of Korean Buddhism”.

T. Kubo’s article on “Contemporary Lay Buddhist Movements in Japan: A Comparison between the Reiyūkai and the Sōka Gakkai” is an apologetic treatment of the differences between the Reiyūkai and the Sōka Gakkai from the standpoint of the former.

A. Piatigorsky is known to many for his work on Buddhist philosophy, but here he deals with problems of a quite different order. “Buddhism in Tuva: Preliminary Observations on Religious Syncretism” is the result of fieldwork with Buddhists in the Soviet Republic of Tuva and gives an interesting cameo picture of this heir to Central Asian Buddhism.

The book concludes with two articles that cannot be placed geographically in the same manner as the other contributions. David Seyfort Ruegg’s contribution, “The Buddhist Notion of an Immanent Absolute as a Problem in

¹ The second volume in the *Buddhica Britannica* series. *Indo-Tibetan Studies*. Tring 1990, balances this situation. A full review is planned for *SCEAR* 4.

Hermeneutics”, is a highly philosophic treatment of Buddhist and Vedānta ideas of an immanent absolute and comes to the conclusion that the two systems do not lie so far from each other as is commonly assumed.

The Buddhist Heritage concludes with a survey by Russell Webb, “Contemporary European Scholarship on Buddhism”. The article gives helpful information on the history and present state of Buddhist Studies in Europe, much of which will be news to many an Englishman. As with any attempt of this kind and this length there are of course omissions, but this does not detract from the article’s general usefulness.

The collection is of a generally high standard and will prove useful for research and private study and for university teaching.

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