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Review

The Tibetan dialect of Lende (Kyirong)

By Brigitte Huber

(Beiträge zu tibetischen Erzählforschung herausgegeben von Dieter Schuh 15.)

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The Lende valley is situated in Kyirong county in the western part of the Tibetan Autonomous Region on the border to Nepal. Its dialect shows an interesting mixture of Central Tibetan and West and Western Tibetan features. One of its peculiarities is the partial preservation of the Old Tibetan clusters labial plus palatal glide or alveolar trill.

The book is organised in ten sections with further subsections. Section 1, 'Introduction' is followed by the description of 'Phonetics and Phonology' from a synchronic point of view (section 2), while section 3, 'Diachronic Phonology' describes the relation between the orthography of 'Written Tibetan' and the realisation in Lende separately for word-initial onsets, syllable-initial onsets, and the rhymes. Section 4 deals with the 'Noun Phrase', starting with nouns, but passing to number, definite 'article', and case, before describing the other constituents of a noun phrase: pronouns, numerals, and adjectives. Section 5 covers the 'Verb Phrase', starting with the feature of control, a discussion of valency, the verb stems, evidentiality, followed by a description of the copulas, tense-aspect categories, negation, directive illocutionary acts, "other auxiliaries", interrogatives, miscellaneous verb suffixes, and serial verbs. Section 6 deals with 'Other Word Classes', that is, mainly adverbs and relator nouns (postpositions). Section 7, 'The sentence' discusses clause types and sentence final particles. Textual evidence is given in section 8, in form of a single, interlinearised narrative (253 numbered, mostly single, lines). Section 9 contains the glossaries: (a) Kyirong – English – Written Tibetan (plus index with page references), (b) English – Kyirong – Written Tibetan, and (c) Written Tibetan – Kyirong – English. Section 10 contains the bibliography.

Each larger descriptive unit is followed by a historical annotation. This signals a special interest in diachrony, but one should not expect to get more than 'Written Tibetan' equivalents. While written Tibetan has a documented history of about twelve hundred years, the term 'Written Tibetan' merely reflects the standardised orthographic conventions of the 19th century Classical Tibetan dictionaries. Without further specification, 'Written Tibetan' does not open up a very deep historical horizon. Moreover, the standardised language of the classical texts can only indirectly give diachronic evidence, insofar it preserves features of Old Tibetan. The modern dialects are certainly not descendants of Classical Tibetan and also not always descendants of the kind of Old Tibetan that we find in the early documents.

The author (henceforth H.) apparently lacks first hand knowledge of Classical Tibetan (not to speak of Old Tibetan), and thus relies on the available dictionaries and grammatical descriptions.

This leads at times to rather misleading, in the worst case, even wrong statements. E.g., H. states that “[c]omparisons are made with the particles *las* [...] or *pas* [!] and the unchanged positive form of the adjective” (p. 82). No reference is given, but this must be taken from Beyer (1992: 201), who starts with two nominal adjective derivations, H.’s “positive form”, before giving examples with the verbal adjectival. The use of nominals in expressions of comparison, if not Beyer’s invention, is certainly not the standard pattern, except in adverbial usage (because it is always the modified verb that enters into the comparison: *khyilas rta (mgyogspor rgyuggo)* ‘in relation to a dog a horse (runs quickly)’, Hahn 1985: 97). Normally, property verbs, either tensed or nominalised, are used, cf. *ibid.*: *rtalas khyi chungba yin* ‘in relation to a horse a dog is (a) small-ing (one)’. Cf. also *ibid.* p. 185 for the second relational morpheme, which is *-bas*, not **-pas*. H. apparently misread Beyer’s “*-pas*”, used to indicate allomorphic variation, although only *-bas* is found with comparative expressions. For a tensed form cf. Skalbzañ Hgyurmed (1992: 46): *khruñkhrunlas rmabya gzugs mdzes* ‘in relation to a crane the peacock, as to its body, beaut-ies/-ied’.

Lende follows the general pattern, that is, most often the verbal noun and a copula is used (pp. 79, no. 36, 80, no. 38). Alternatively, a tensed form can be used, which takes a future inferential marker (p. 80, no. 37). Unaware of the inherently verbal character of Tibetan property ascriptions, H. eventually misses the point: “The construction in example 37) looks very much like a verbal construction. The suffix *-be*: can, however, be attached to each adjective stem, not only to those which also have verbal function in K[yirong]T[ibetan]” (p. 89) In a footnote she adds: “Although it is homophonous with the verbal morpheme expressing “future inference” [...], its function does not seem to be related.” H. can be assured: Ladakhi shows a similar construction, where the future inferential marker (*/-ak/*, */-ok/*, or */-bok/*) expresses a kind of reticence: */zgoe riñbobasañ Tsheriñ riñok./* ‘With respect to the length of the door Tshering might tall / seems to tall.’ This is not the only possible tensed form in Ladakhi, and it would thus be interesting to know whether not other tensed forms can be used in Lende alike.

Needless to say that neither the common construction (verbal noun plus copula) nor the tensed form can be described as an instance of ‘degree’ in terms of Latin grammar.

The task of finding Written Tibetan forms for a given spoken word is certainly not always an easy one,¹ nevertheless, cases, such as */d̥ø:m-bi: jy:/ hbyonpañi yul* ‘the land where [she] has gone (h)’, p. 203, n. 179, with */d̥ø:m-/* glossed as “go?” without etymology and totally lacking in the glossaries, */nāgrī:/ nagrim* ‘black magic’ (from *nagpo* ‘black’ & *rim(h)gro* ‘homage, offering’; cf. also the honorific form *skurim* ‘offering’), p. 195, glossed as “nag ?”, or */t̥abi:/* ‘drinking bowl (h)’, CT *jañbiñ* ‘tea pot, kettle’,² p. 202, glossed as “?” should not have posed that much problems. On the other hand, we are confronted with a ‘Written Tibetan’ etymology “char ?” for the loan */t̥hātiri:/* ‘umbrella’, although not for the obviously related */t̥hātā/* id. (only the latter is classified as New-

¹ E.g. in the case of */khāblē:/* < *kha* & *blas* ‘talking, flirting’, lit. ‘mouth-work’, it is not evident that the classical word *las* ‘work’ originally had the form *blas*. For Old Tibetan *blas* ‘work’, cf. Uebach & Zeisler (2008: 310-314). The reviewer should like to take the opportunity and add *dkañblas* ‘hard work’ as found in various Ladakhi dialects: Tia, Domkhar */rhkab-las/* ‘difficulties’ (own data); cf. also Balti: Kapalu */rhkaphlas/* (Read 1934: 21), Skardu */rhkafas/* (Sprigg 2002), */škaphlas/* (*Comparative Dictionary of Tibetan Dialects*, Bielmeier et al., in preparation, hereafter CDTD), Purik: Ciktan */skablas/*, Kargil */kablas/*; Nubra (Panamik) */skabla/*, Western Tibet: Spiti (Tabo), Ngari (Ruthok, Gar) */kāblē/*; Amdo (Chabcha, Labrang, Rngaba) */škapli/*, */čkable/*, */škabli/* (all CDTD sub *dka’ las*).

² One could have expected the realisation */t̥ambi:/*. The word is a loan from Chinese, the second element *ping* (*bing) ‘jar, jug, pot’ being borrowed into Tibetan at different times (Laufer 1916: 505f.). At least the element *ja* ‘tea’, likewise a loan from Chinese, should have been recognised.

Indoaryan loan in the glossaries and in the short section on loans, p. 10). Umbrellas are not only protecting against rain, and thus we also find the loan /tʰatiri/ in Ladakh, particularly for a big tent-like construction used for parties. In none of the Ladakhi dialects could the first element of *charpa* ‘rain’ turn into a mere /tʰa(:)-/. Ultimately, the word is from Persian *čāder*, and one may come across a Written Tibetan rendering, although not in the dictionaries, as *phyather* ‘tent’ (Laufer 1916: 483).

The Lende verb shows at most three different stem forms. According to H., stem I³ is, “in some cases [...] clearly related to the W[ritten] T[ibetan] future stem, and not to the present stem” (p. 92). This is quite misleading, but behind this statement lurks an assumption gaining ground in Tibetan linguistics: since all spoken varieties show at most only three different stem forms, the written Tibetan system of up to four stem forms was an artificial invention of some grammarians. According to this reasoning, stem III would have been the true original ‘imperfective’ stem, stem I would have been a suppletive form, peculiar to East Tibetan (Bielmeier 2004: 400f.).

Like West Tibetan and in contrast to some of the Western and Central Tibetan dialects, Lende apparently does not show any trace of the Old Tibetan complex prefix and *ablaut* systems in verb stem formation.⁴ Stem forms have been levelled out, typically towards the original stem II, but not infrequently also towards stem I (more often than this is the case in West Tibetan). Most of the Old Tibetan stems II and III vary only with respect to the presence or absence of a past tense suffix *-s*, so that assimilation towards stem II does, in fact, automatically include assimilation towards stem III. With the further overgeneralisation of the past tense suffix in stem II,⁵ the new stem I is a derivation of stem II minus this suffix. This becomes evident from a small group of about 50 Old Tibetan verbs where stem II and III differ not only with respect to the prefixes but also with respect to the voicedness of the radical. In all 14 instances of such verbs found in the glossaries, the Lende form unmistakably corresponds to the unvoiced stem II and not to the voiced stem III. This corresponds fairly well to the situation in West Tibetan and, most probably, all other modern Tibetan varieties.

The glossaries, however, would indicate an important exception: the Old and Classical Tibetan verb I: *hgegs* ~ *hgog*, II: *bkag*, III: *dgag*, IV: *khog* ‘hinder, stop, lock up’ is linked – correctly – with its high tone counterpart I/II: /kà:/, IV: /kò:/ ‘stop’, derived from stem II: *bkag*, but also with the low tone form I/II: /kà^h:/, IV: /kò^h:/ ‘lock up, lock in’, which might look like a derivation from stem III: *dgag*. This alleged double realisation is nowhere commented upon. The only problem with H.’s implicit analysis is that there are two more related verbs in Old and Classical Tibetan: I: *sgag* ~ *sgog* II: *bsgags*, III: *bsgag*, IV: *sgogs* ‘bind, tie’, also as collocation ‘make so. swear an oath’, and I/III:

³ Stem I is traditionally called ‘present’, stem II ‘past’ or ‘perfect’, stem III ‘future’, stem IV ‘imperative’. While none of these labels resists closer scrutiny, the alternative use of ‘imperfective’ for stem I and ‘perfective’ for stem II, subscribed to by H., is likewise inappropriate.

⁴ Since there are only about 240 verbs in the glossary, this statement might perhaps be somewhat premature.

⁵ Like in West Tibetan, this must have accompanied the process of simplification. But since final consonant clusters are not preserved in Lende, this suffix is only found where the verb root shows an open syllable. In such cases, the suffix, represented by an *umlaut* is predictably found with agentive verbs, but likewise also quite frequently with inagentive verbs. While this is fairly in accordance with the observable traces of a similar trend in the dialects of Upper Ladakh, it may well be the case that another feature, peculiar to Lende and some Central Tibetan dialects, namely the contraction of stem I plus genitive morpheme, has enhanced, if not triggered this process for the inagentive verbs (cf. p. 94).

bgag,⁶ II: *bgags*, IV: *bgogs* ‘block’. Both could have yielded the Lende low tone form. Cf. also Lower Ladakhi /*zgak*, *zgaks*, *zgok*/ ‘stop sth., so., hinder (from running away)’ besides (and in contrast to) /*kak*, *kaks*, *kok*/ ‘block, stuff (in order to block); lock up, pen up’. The present version of the CDTD (II/2008, cf. n. 1) lists the low tone form of the Kyirong verb together with Spiti (Tabo) /*ga*(k), *ga*ː, *go*ː/ and Upper Ladakhi (Man Merak) /*gaq*/ accordingly under *sgag*. An earlier version dating from 1997 (H. used the 1998 version) lists only Tabo /*gak* ~ *ga*ː/, still under the entry *bgag*, which is now dropped, and not under *sgag*, where, nonetheless, the Ladakhi and Balti forms could have been found.

Given the possible theoretical impact, this misinterpretation is all but trivial. The representation of Old Tibetan I: *ston*, II: *bstan*(*d*), III: *bstan*, IV: *ston*(*d*) not only with the correct meaning ‘show, teach’, but also with the meaning ‘take out’, which belongs to I: *hdon*, II: *bton*, III: *gdon*, IV: *thon*, appears to be less momentous. Both verbs have become homophonous in many Central Tibetan dialects (/t̥ɔ̃n/ in Lende). The first shows assimilation towards stem I, the second towards stem II and clearly not towards stem III.

In the historical annotations, H. also frequently discusses synchronic similarities with Central Tibetan varieties, but unfortunately she hardly ever compares her data with the Western or West Tibetan varieties. Of the three morphemes shared with West Tibetan, the nominaliser {-kē̃} (< *mkhan*), also used in particular evidential constructions in the hitherto undescribed Upper Ladakhi dialects, the nominaliser /-t̥ɛ̃ː/ *cas*, and the citation marker /lo/ *lo*, only the second one is related to the West Tibetan varieties, although all three forms are mentioned in Bielmeier (1985) for Balti. No notice is taken of other work on West Tibetan, such as, e.g., Koshal (1979) for Ladakhi, who apparently gave the first description of the citation marker *lo*.

Arguably, a good synchronic description does not depend on the correct understanding of the earlier stages of the language, and the sympathetic reviewer would have been ready to overlook the above mentioned calamities, had they not been deliberately exposed to the critical eye by means of the special ‘historical annotations’ – and were there not, throughout the whole book, too many other traces of, well, carelessness. Some concern comparatively trivial issues, such as the obvious restructuring of the book without always adjusting the references,⁷ the deviation from the traditional order of the Tibetan alphabet in the Written Tibetan glossary for the cluster *dby-* (not found after *dbo-*, but after *g.yo-*), the loss of all entries with initial /ʃ/ (< *lh*) in the Kyirong glossary, the incomplete and misleading glossing of classical verbs as (in)transitive, “vt” or “vi” in the glossaries,⁸ a missing rule for the morphemes {-ba} and {-bɛː} after final /-j/ (< *-l*) in the description of the nominalisers and the inferential future morpheme on p. 147, or the misclassification of the form /mēː-nuː-lo/ *smrashdug lo* as “say-IPFV.SENS-QUOT” (p. 182 and in all glosses of the narration)

⁶ The noun *bgegs* ~ *gegs* ‘hindrance’ indicates that stem I might have had the form *bgegs* originally.

⁷ On p. 45 we are referred to 5.10.2.3 for the feature of “*k*-insertion” (better: *k*-retention), where we are referred back to 5.6.1, while the crucial information is actually found in 5.10.3. A subsection concerning the sentence final morpheme /-naː/ is referred to as 4.9.4 on p. 146, but is eventually found in 7.2.4. Similarly, the historical annotation, p. 157 comments upon the serial verb /t̥ɔ̃^h(*d*)-/ *sdod* ‘sit’, which is no longer found in the preceding descriptive sections.

⁸ Apparently derived from the Tibetan terms *thadadpa* ‘with difference [from an agent]’ and *thamidadpa* ‘without difference’. In the dominant Tibetan grammatical school, these terms are not referring to syntactic transitivity: inagentive transitive ergative verbs like *mthoj* ‘see’ are classified as *thamidadpa* because they lack a semantic agent. In such cases, H. has “vi” without further comment.

– the verb stem in question is ‘perfective’ (stem II of /mā, mē, mō:/ *smra, smras, smros* ‘speak’), and the construction thus corresponds to a present perfect (described pp. 116-119).

Quite surprising is the second part of a statement on p. 143, here in italics: “The modal particle *to* is described for most other Central Tibetan dialects (Tournadre 1996a, 253 for SST [Standard Spoken Tibetan, = Tournadre 1996], Kretschmar 1995, 161 for Southern Mustang, and Haller 2000, 97 for Shigatse). *In none of these descriptions, however, is a suggestion as for its origin given.*” Except for Kretschmar, this is simply not true. It is generally accepted that this morpheme is related to *hgro* ‘go’, which already in Old Tibetan is used as a future tense auxiliary, albeit without the modern modal connotation. Tournadre (1996) does not give any phonetic form but only the transliterated classical orthography, Haller (2000) cites the classical form in his glossary.

More serious objections concern the unreflected use of terminology (‘comparative’, ‘relative clause’, etc.), which is never defined but more or less applied according to how certain expressions are translated into English. An extreme case is found on p. 174, concerning the morpheme {-patā} *padan*: “When added to the serial verb *sin* [Classical Tibetan *zin*] ‘to be finished’ expressing accomplished aspect, the temporal relationship of the clauses is posterior [read: is one of posteriority].” The temporal relationship between two clauses can only be that of either simultaneity or non-simultaneity. If one of the two clauses expresses posteriority with respect to the other, the latter necessarily expresses anteriority with respect to the former. Interestingly enough, H. defines that clause as expressing posteriority, the event of which is located *earlier on the time line* and vice versa. Her reason seems to be that verbs marked as being earlier on the time line can be translated into English with relational expressions, such as *since X* and *after X* (cf. also p. 176), seemingly indicating posteriority (*afterness*), while verbs marked as being *later* can be translated as *before X* and *until X* (cf. also p. 175), seemingly indicating anteriority (*before-ness*). But *since* and *after* are usually treated as expressions of anteriority, *before* and *until* as expressions of posteriority, possibly because relational expressions, like verbal morphemes, inversely posit the event X in relation to a (yet to be established) reference point (the next mentioned event), but cannot *refer* to the next mentioned event Y in order to relate this latter event back to X.

Among the serial verbs, H. describes the vector verb /oŋ/ *hoŋ* ‘come’, which follows directly stem II or the converb form in {-te} of a motion verb, yielding the notion ‘move hither’ (p. 156). Its counterpart /to/ *hgro* ‘go (away)’ is not mentioned. /oŋ/ is also used for a purposive construction, where it follows directly stem I of the verb of the purposive clause (p. 156). The latter can be combined not only with motion verbs but with any verb that allows a purposive complement. In the narration we additionally find the verbs ‘go’, ‘arrive’, and two different verbs of sending. It is quite strange to see this usage described as a serial verb construction, where, according to the definition, the final verb should be semantically bleached (p. 151).

In Tibetan linguistics it has become quite fashionable to treat the verbal morphology in terms of *aspect* rather than of *tense*. The notion of *aspect*, however, is appropriated uncritically and typically without a further understanding of its implications. H. is no exception. Neither does she attempt a definition of this highly ambiguous terminology, nor does she waste a single word on the question why it accounts for the verbal morphology in Lende. Examples for the incidence scheme (X happened while Y was going on) are lacking as are those for the interaction of ‘aspectual’ verb forms with event structure. These would have been the most crucial tests for the existence of grammatical aspect. One will also search in vain for an explanation how ‘perfective aspect’ is related to an additional “accomplished aspect” or why a marker for “accomplished aspect” must follow an

‘imperfective’ stem.⁹ No notice is taken of the fact that the above-mentioned two usages of /oŋ/ contradict the ‘aspect’ of the stems: in a purposive clause the ‘imperfective’ stem I represents the action as such (holistic, perfective view), while the ‘perfective’ stem II followed by vector verbs represents the action as ongoing.

To a certain extent, these shortcomings are compensated by the data itself and, in some parts, remarkably in-depth descriptions. This holds especially for the well-informed treatment of phonology, case marking, and the discussion of the evidential markers.

One of the most remarkable phonological traits of Lende is its system of tones. Unlike most Central Tibetan varieties or the tonal West(ern) Tibetan varieties, the Lende dialect does not show a binary tone distinction (high vs. low), but a ternary distinction (high, medium, low). Medium tone corresponds to originally voiced root consonants of Old Tibetan not preceded by any affix, low tone to originally voiced root consonants preceded by oral or nasal affixes. Reflexes of both types of affixes are preserved, so that oral affixes lead to breathy voice, while nasal affixes lead to prenasalisation, which H. takes as a merely concomitant feature of voicedness: “Initial voiced stops and affricates are realised with a strong prenasalization, which is not phonemically contrastive. It is exclusively used to reinforce the voiced character of the stops and affricates. The voiced consonant can be almost devoiced after the prenasalization” (p. 15). One wonders then, whether voice is not a concomitant feature of prenasalisation, and low tone not a concomitant feature of some kind of voice (breathy or prenasalised). In any case, this kind of distinction between former nasal and oral affixes is not found in most other tonal varieties. Further more, the description clearly shows that voice and/or low tone constitute a bundle of features, and it is interesting to observe that the more prominent the remnants of voice are, the lower the tonal realisation. Incidentally, we find similar features in the tonal dialects of Upper Ladakh, where the informants classify the still voiced consonants as being perceptibly lower than the devoiced consonants (only the latter enter into a phonemic tonal opposition with the voiceless non-aspirated consonants).

Another peculiarity of the Kyirong variety is that, despite the overall reduction of the syllable structure, very much in accordance with the Central Tibetan dialects, it has preserved the clusters labial plus palatal glide before back vowels and the clusters labial plus alveolar trill. These are features shared only with the westernmost West Tibetan dialects, Balti, Purik, and western Sham, as well as with two exceptionally conservative Khams dialects, Sprosnang and Melung, described only recently (Suzuki 2009). But in two instances, the Lende dialect also shows the replacement of an apparently palatalised labial (palatalised because followed by a palatal vowel *i* or *e*) with the cluster labial plus alveolar trill. The first instance is /prek̄ā/ ‘walking stick’ instead of expected /pek̄ā/ for *berka*, interpreted as metathesis (p. 57), the second is /priwā:/ ‘violon’ for *piwaŋ* ‘lute’, not being commented upon (*piwaŋ* is apparently a loan word, the donor of which remains unknown, cf. Laufer 1916: 512f.).¹⁰

⁹ The diachronic reason is that the complementiser *zin* ‘be able to get finished’ originally followed a gerundive (stem III ± locative-purposive case marker), but in this function, stem III was already getting obsolete and replaced by stem I in Old Tibetan.

¹⁰ A third case, likewise not commented upon, would have been the alternation between /phjā, phjê:, phjø:/ and /phrā, phrê:, phrø:/ ‘blame’ for *hphya* as found in the glossaries. However, as the reviewer came to know through Roland Bielmeier (email communication, 19.01.2009), H. now thinks that the second form was given by the consultant only in order to do her a ‘favour’.

The functional description of the evidential markers is likewise very detailed and accurate, although the chosen terminology is somewhat strained. In contrast to Central Tibetan, but in accordance with West(ern) Tibetan, Lende does not have an experiential/ non-volitional counterpart for the copula and auxiliary *yin*, such as Central Tibetan *red*. The evidential system thus shows some interesting variation on the general theme, e.g. with the use of the ‘generic’ marker {-kē:} to be discussed in the following. This marker is not only shared with Western Tibetan varieties, but was originally also shared with the Upper Ladakhi dialects, where it is, however, only marginally preserved.

A literal understanding of the term ‘generic’ implies that an item belongs to a class (*genus*) of like items, in the case of events, that it happens repeatedly or always, in the case of states, that it holds always. It is already somewhat questionable whether the term ‘generic’ can be used for specific historical events if they are *generally known* by all members of the speech community. It is even more problematic if the ‘general’ knowledge should be found only with the speaker.

The reviewer thus does not find it very intuitive that the morpheme {-te}, commonly used in narrations for single events, should express genericness: “To express that some action or event is part of the old, general knowledge of the speaker, he can use the morpheme *-te* with both controllable and non-controllable verbs. In such a case he is sure about what he is saying, without necessarily having witnessed it and without knowing details of it. He has simply been aware of the fact for a long time” (p. 119). While this form resembles a shortened present perfect in Ladakhi, H. states in note 137 that it functionally corresponds to the disjunct simple past /-parè:/ in Standard Spoken Tibetan, which is given a neutral ‘assertif’ value by Tournadre & Sangda Dorje (1998: 106). Tournadre (1996: 245) calls it ‘assertif/gnomique’, but also points to the fact that it is characteristic for narrations (p. 247f.). Narrated events are typically singular, and even if the narration itself might be well known, the events are not narrated as well-known and thus somewhat boring facts, but as something quite unique and surprising.

Similarly the reviewer does not really understand how future acts of the speaker can be subsumed under ‘old generic knowledge’. The ‘generic’ morpheme in question: {-kē:} (< *mkhan*) is described for the ‘imperfective’ or present tense constructions quite convincingly in the following manner: “The morpheme *-kē:* is used for generic statements about habitual actions or states which the speaker has not necessarily perceived directly or experienced personally. They are part of his old, convinced knowledge; the way of acquiring the information is not important” (p. 110), whereas the description of its use for future events, leaves it open, what the generic aspects are: “The auxiliary *-kē(ji:)* is used whenever the speaker is absolutely certain about an action or an event that will take place in the future. For himself, this means that he has known for some time already that he will perform a certain action, which does not necessarily be of his own will” (p. 124). Quite apparently, the planned event is a single one, not a matter of fact, and not generally known by the speech community.

The above citations show that, despite the terminological looseness, H. has developed a precise understanding of the often quite subtle pragmatic functions of the evidential markers. Similarly, her criteria for differentiating between the homophonous ergative and instrumental cases turn out to be well-reasoned and helpful: ergative marking is used primarily with animate nouns, instrumental marking with non-animate nouns; only the ergative but not the instrumental marker can be replaced by absolutive marking, ergative marking is used mainly with contrastive or emphatic function (pp. 60-63). The same holds for her elaboration of when ergative marking is

used (pp. 61-63) and the specification of the rules for the use of plural marking: only definite referents are marked, and mostly they must be animate (p. 57).

The overall evaluation remains ambivalent. Typologists who do not attach too great importance to terminological preciseness will certainly be able to retrieve what they are looking for. Readers with a good command of Old and Classical Tibetan and some foundation in the Tibetan dialect studies will appreciate the many highly interesting features in the Lende dialect of Kyirong.

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