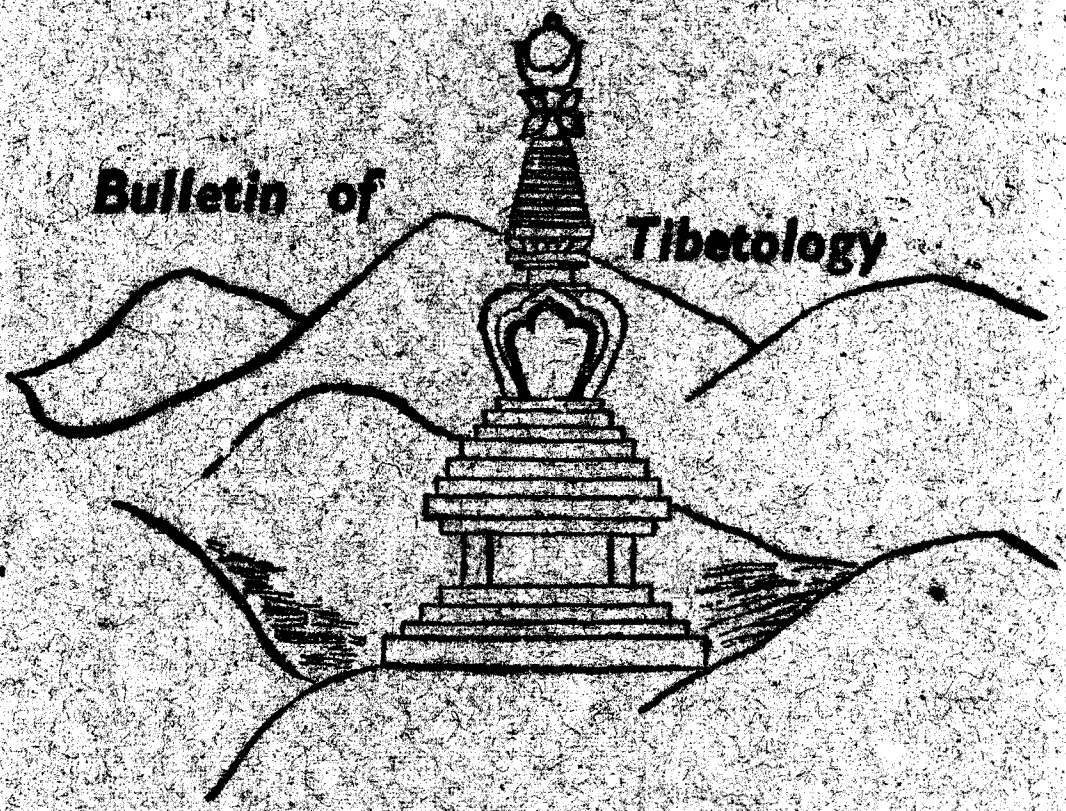
Bulletin of Tibetology



VOL. IX No. 2

14 JULY 1972

NAMGYAL INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY,
GANGTOK, SIKKIM.

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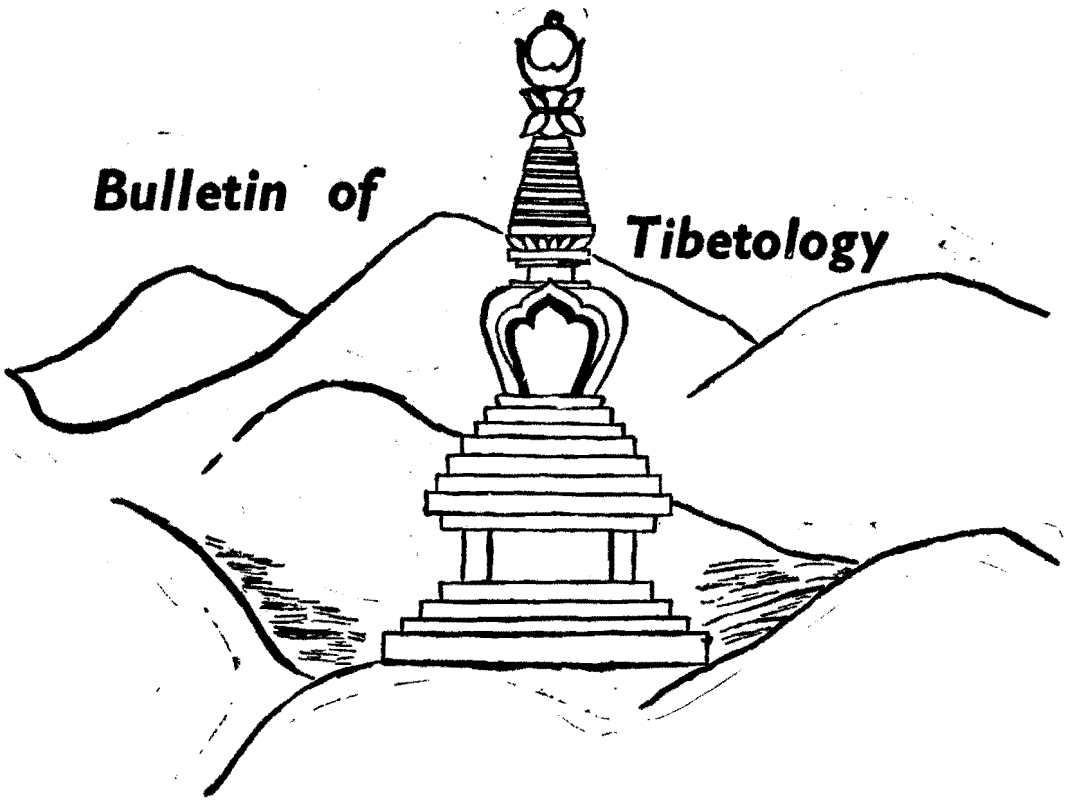

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PRINTED BY THE MANAGER, SIKKIM DARBAR PRESS
AND PUBLISHED BY THE DIRECTOR, NAMGYAL
INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY GANGTOK

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ASSIMILATION, AND THE DEFINITE NOMINAL PARTICLE IN BALTI TIBETAN

—R. K. SPRIGG

I. Introductory

A noteworthy feature of one of the nominal-phrase particles in the Balti dialect of Tibetan, the definite particle, is that it varies considerably in phonetic shape according to context, being pronounced as [po] in certain circumstances,[1] and as [o] in other circumstances, and sharing, in yet other circumstances, vowel features with the final vowel of a preceding noun, as in (i) [*limikpo*] 'the key', (*smɐnpo*) 'the medicine' (*ide-mig, sman*),[2] (ii) (hrtao) 'the horse', [kha:o] 'the snow' (*rta, kha-ba*),[3] and (iii) [hrto:] 'the horse', [mju:] 'the man' (*rta, mi*).

At the grammatical level of analysis the definite particle is a component of the nominal phrase, or, more specifically, of a sub-category of nominal phrase hence termed the 'definite' sub-category of nominal phrase. Where the definite nominal phrase contains more than one word, the definite particle is exemplified in the final word of the phrase, the order of grammatical categories in that word being (i) noun, and (ii) definite particle (and, if exemplified, (iii) the agentive particle [*si*], the dative particle [la], or some other particle); e.g. [smɐnpo], [phɐnkhjo:], [stɪappo], [bu:], [*ci*kpo*si*], [khju:*si*], [smɐnpola], as in the following sentence examples, in which the nominal phrase has been enclosed in round brackets:

i. [smɐnpo; ga:r jɔt] Where is the medicine? (*sman*)
ii. [(phɐnkhjo:) ci s̃ɔ:] What advantage came from it? (*phan-kh*) (*y*)*e*
iii. [(de stɪappo) khjõ:] Being that bridle. (*srab*)
iv. [(go-la sk*e*spi bu:) nan*in si*s] The son who was born first died last year. (*bu*)
v. [(*ci*kpo*si*) dju: zers, - - -] 'One said this, - - -' (p. 6).[4] (*gcig*)
vi. [(de khju: s*i*) khola tapfi*i*n] That dog has bitten him. (*khyi*)
vii. [(di smɐnpola)] For this medicine - - -. (*sman*)

The grammatical structure of the one-word, two-word, and three-word nominal phrases in these examples, in which word boundaries are indicated by space in the phonetic transcription, and by semi-colon in the following grammatical analysis, is:

i-ii. noun, definite particle;

iii. preposition; noun, definite particle;

iv. noun, locative particle; verb, nominalizing particle, genitive particle; noun, definite particle;

v. noun, definite particle, agentive particle;

vi. preposition; noun, definite particle, agentive particle;

vii. preposition; noun, definite particle, dative particle.

In example (iii), (vi), and (vii) the nominal phrase includes a preposition ([de], [di]; 'that', 'this'), and in (iv) a qualifying nominal phrase containing the genitive particle; in all such cases the definite particle is obligatory. In examples (i), (ii), and (v), in which there is neither a preposition nor a qualifying nominal phrase, the definite particle links the utterance containing the example with some earlier utterance. For comparison I now give a few examples of words that do not exemplify the definite particle: [khji], [phɐnkhje], [smɐni] and [str bi], as in the following sentences examples,

i. [khji *cigisi* khola sɔ taps] A dog bit him. (*khyi*)

ii. [phɔukhje cɐ: met] There is no advantage. (*phan-kh* (*v*) *e*)

iii. [smɐni bɪɔtpo xɔsa d*u*get] The taste of medicine is bitter. (*sman*)

iv. [strʌbi baxspo lɔxsɔ d*u*get] Leather for a bridle is special. (*srab*)

The grammatical structure of these four words is:

i-ii. noun; iii-iv. noun, genitive particle.

My aim, in introducing these sentences containing words that exemplify the definite nominal-phrase particle, together with contrasting examples that do not exemplify it, is not, however, primarily grammatical. It is to propose a phonological analysis that shall deal adequately with the various phonetic forms of this particle, whose diversity must now be evident from the words [smɐnpo], [phɐnkhjo:], [strʌppo], [bu:], [cikposi], [khju: si], [smɐnpola], [bɪctpo], and [baxspo], in each of which it is present, though in [phɐnkhjo:], [bu:], and [khju: si], for example, it is well disguised.

The method adopted in phonemic analysis for dealing with phonetic variation of the sort exemplified by the definite particle is first to phonemicize the variants, and then, in the subsequent stage called morphophonemics, in which each of the phonemic forms of individual morphemes are related to the others, to treat one of the variant phonemic forms, usually the most complex, as a so-called 'base form', and to derive the remaining variant forms from the 'base form' by processes of simplifica-

tion termed 'assimilation' and 'elision'. A well-known passage in Gleason, 1955, deals with the different forms of the English plural flexion [s], [z], and [*iz*], as in the noun plural forms *bits, bids,* and *fishes* ([bits], [bidz], [fisiz]): 'It is sometimes of little importance which allomorph is selected as the base form. The English noun plural morpheme [$-Z_1$] has three common allomorphs /-z ~-s ~-iz/ which are phonemically conditioned. Any one of these can be selected as the base form. If we assume /-s/ to be basic, we may say that after a voiced sound it becomes voiced, /-z/ ; after s z š ž č j / a vowel /i/ is inserted, and- - - -.

One of the commonest types of morphophonemic change is *assimilation.* This is a label for the situation where some phoneme is more nearly like its environment than is the phoneme sound in the base form. - - - The chance of /n/, an alveolar nasal, to /m/, a bilabial nasal, makes it more similar to /p/, a bilabial stop. The assimilation of /n/ is said to be conditioned by /p/' (pp. 82-3).

A more recent theory, the 'generative phonology' of Chomsky and Halle, has abandoned some of the concepts of phonemic analysis ; but the 'base form' concept has been retained, with change of name to 'underlying representation'. I cannot, unfortunately, illustrate the continuance of this concept in their work from the same material as for Gleason, the English s-plural flexion ; but the following passage makes it clear that they treat certain verb forms as 'base forms' in relation to corresponding nouns: 'from the verbs *permít, torménť,* etc., we derive the nouns *pérmit, tó rment* in the next transformational cycle by the substantive rule, the stress on the second syllable being automatically weakened to secondary' (Allen and Van Buren, 1971, p. 89).

Several years of studying the pronunciation of such Indian languages as Gujerati and Panjabi while teaching English at Government College, Lahore, in the twenties aroused the late J.R. Firth's hostility towards the assimilation concept.[5] In one of his earlier publications, 'The use and distribution of certain English sounds', in 1935, he attacked that concept in the following passage: '- - - it is of the utmost importance to investigate the distribution of phoneme alternation in various contexts, or what I have termed *contextual distribution.* If sounds are described, classified, and explained by this statistical contextual technique, most contemporary theories of elision, coalescence, and assimilation will be seen to be confusing and, what is much more to the point, entirely unnecessary' (Firth, 1957, p. 37).

Throughout my career in linguistics I have regarded Firth as my *guru* ; against the general background of his teaching I found no difficulty

in accepting his low opinion of the value to linguistics of 'assimilation', or in following him in his belief that variant phonetic forms of the same lexical item should be given equal status, each being appropriate to its particular 'context', or environment, to the exclusion of the others. When each variant is uniquely appropriate to its phonetic context, it follows that there is no room for the principle of elevating one particular form to the status of 'base torm'; on the contrary, each variant phonetic form should enjoy parity of esteem with its fellows. On the basis of these equal variant phonetic forms of a common lexical item, whether that lexical item be the plural '*s*'-flexion lexical item of English or the definite-particle lexical item of Balti Tibetan, one can then devise an abstract form, or formula, that is equally representative of each of the variant phonetic forms, and equally remote from each of them. Such an abstraction, a linguistic lowest common denominator, as it were, has come to be known in 'prosodic analysis', the phonological theory that I am applying in this article, as a 'phonological formula'. In a prosodic analysis each lexical item (or lexically separable item), e.g. the four separable items of English *cat-s*, *dog-s*, and *fish-es*, or the three balti lexical items of [cik-po-si] 'by the one', or the two Balti lexical items combined in [bu:] 'the son', has its phonological formula, and one only. The phonetic features by which a phonological formula is linked to the variant forms by which it is exemplified in utterances are termed its phonetic 'exponents'.

The 'phonological formula' concept is my reason for resisting the the temptation to refer to the Balti definite-particle lexical item as 'po' : for the phonetic form [po], as in, for example, [smɐnpo:] 'the medicine', to which 'po' would correspond, is only one of the phonetic variant shapes, a consonant-and-vowel phonetic shape, that this lexical item assumes. Whatever of tunes of the vowel of [bu:] 'the son', or of the first of the two syllabic vowels [u:] of [khju:si] 'by the dog', or of the second syllabic vowel ([o:]) of [phɐnkhjo:] 'the advantage', also represent the definite-particle lexical item act as its phonetic exponents equally with [po] ; and the only difference between them and [po] is the difficulty, or impossibility, of isolating those 'phonetic exponents from the words [bu:], [phɐnkhjo:], etc., in which they occur. That difficulty, though, is no valid reason for giving them a status inferior to the more manageable form [po], as though they were, in some sense, second-class citizens ; on the contrary, the aim should be to devise a formula, a 'phonological formula', to cover all variants on an equal footing.

II. Phonetic exponency

In order to arrive at a phonological formula I shall follow Firth's prescription, quoted above: 'it is of the utmost importance to investigate the distribution of phoneme alternation in various contexts, or what I have termed *contextual distribution*', except for the reference to 'phoneme' alternation, which Firth later abandoned; it is the relations of *sounds* to preceding and following sounds, sounds studied from the point of view of their syntagmatic relations, that I shall be concerned with, the contextual distribution not of phonemes but of sounds and the phonetic features that they are composed of.

There are two main contexts to be considered, (A) the context to which the consonant-and-vowel variant form [po] is appropriate, and (B) the context to which certain vowel features are appropriate. There is no denying that the [po] variant form is the easiest to account for; and, since I have, in any case, to account for all the phonetic forms that this particle lexical item takes, I might as well begin with the easiest one.

A. *The 'consonantal' type of piece* ([-Cpo])

The term 'consonantal' is doubly appropriate for the phonetic context, or phonetic piece of utterance, in which the variant [po] occurs, because this form of the particle matches a preceding consonant ([-C]) as the final of the noun constituent of the word in which they both occur, and also because it is only in this type of piece that the definite-particle lexical item has a consonant ([p]) among its exponential features. The span, or extent, of the piece concerned includes the final sound of the preceding noun syllable ([-n], [-p], [-k], etc.), and, for the particle, consonant and vowel:

consonat : labiality + plosion + voicelessness + non-aspiration,

half—closeness + backness + rounding [-Cpo].

More specially, the consonantal features summarized as 'consonant' ([-C]) here are (with labiality, uvularity, velarity, dentality, alveolarity, and palatalization and retroflexion abbreviated as follows: lab., uvul., vel., dent. alveol., pal., pal., voicelsns., occ., nas., fric., lat., palzn., retro.):

i.	lab.	+ voicelsns.	+ occ.	[ppo]
ii.	„	+ (voice)6	+ nas.	[mpo]
iii.	uvul.	+ voicelsns.	+ occ.	[qpo]
iv.	vel.	+ „	+ fric.	[xpo]

v.	vel.	+(voice)	+nas.		[npo]
vi.	dent.	+voicelsns.	+occ.		[tpo]
vii.	„	+(voice)	+nas.		[npo]
viii.	alveol.	+voice	+lat.	+palzn.	[lpo]
ix.	„	+ „	+roll		[rpo]
x.	„	+voicelsns.	+fric.		[spo]
xi.	pal.	+ „	+occ.	+retro.	[*t*po]

e.g.

[de strʌppo] that bride *srab* [di rgɔmpo] this box *sgam* [di hjaqpo] this yak *g.yag* [di tsɔxpo] one like this *tshogs* [de *sin*po] that wood *shing* [di snɔtpo] this pot *snod* [smɐnpo] the medicine *sman* [di bɐlpo] this wool *bal* [di kharpo] this palace *mkhar* [di bɹɐspo] this rice *'bras* [di gʌtpo] this knot.

as in such sentences as:

ii. [di rgɔ mpo *nai in*] This box is orus.
iii. [di hjaqpo swi *in*] Whose is this yak ?
iv. [di tsɔxpo khjɔ̃ :] Bring one like this.

Since [po] is the phonetic form of the definite particle that is appropriate to the 'consonantal' piece, it could usefully be distinguished from the other phonetic variants (section B) as the 'consonantal-piece' form. All the noun lexical items that are associated, or collocated, with this particle lexical item in the consonantal type of piece ([-Cpo]) could, equally be classified as 'consonantal-piece' noun lexical items: [strɔp], [rgɔm], [hjaq], etc. This type of piece draws on two syllables for its features one of which is the syllable containing final [ɔ] and the other the syllable [po].

B. *The 'vowel' type of piece* ([-ao], [-a:o] ; [-v:])

1. *In contrast with the consonantal type*

Like the consonantal type of piece, the vowel type of piece may, at least in the Skardu dialect, draw on two syllables ([-aɔ], [a:ɔ]); but commonly examples of this type of piece draw on a single syllable, though that single syllable corresponds to two lexical items, one of which is, of course, the definite-particle lexical item ; e.g.

two-syllable piece ([ao], [a:o])
[hrtao] (my) horse *rta* [khao] (this) mouth *kha*
[sna:o] (my) ear *rna-ba* [kha:o] (this) snow *kha-ba*

one-syllable piece ([u:], [ju:]; [o:],
[bu:] the son *bu* [sɔqbu:] (this book *shog-bu*
[mju:] (that) man *mi* [kursju:] (that) chair *kursī* (Urdu)
[zgo:] (this) door *sgo* [bjafo:] (this) cockerel *bya-pho*
[mjo:] (this fire *me* [phɐnkhjo:] the advantage *phan-kh* (*y*)*e*
[kho:] (her) mouth *kha* [sno:(la)] (to my) ear *rna-ba.*

Before leaving these examples there are two points to be made. Firstly for the two-syllable-piece examples there is a pitch difference between the short-vowel examples ([-ao]) and the long-vowel examples ([a:o]): the former have a fall in pitch on the first of the two syllables and the latter a rising-falling pitch. Secondly, the two-syllable examples are alternative pronunciations of some of the one-syllable examples, whence the fact that [khao] '(this) mouth' and [sna:o] '(my) ear' in the two-syllable set of examples are matched by [kho:] '(her) mouth' and [sno:] (la)" '(to my) ear' in the one-syllable set. My informant preferred the one-syllable-piece type of pronunciation, as in [kho:] and [sno:]. Some of these single-word examples are further illustrated in the following sentences :

bu	[gola skespi bu : nan*in sis*]	The son who was born first died last year.
shog-bu	[di sɔqbu: *nji*: *in*]	This book is mine.
mi	] de mju: -?c̃: set]	That man has come.
(U). *kursī*	[de kursju: ljaxmɔ met]	That chair is no good.
sgo	[di zgo: cɔt]	Shut this door.
bya-pho	[di bjafo : nji : *in*]	This cockerel is mine.
me	[di mjo:ljaxm bʌren jɔt]	This fire is burning well What advantage
phan-kh (y) e	[phɐnkhjo: ci sɔ̃ :]	came from it ?
kha	[mwe: kho: le:*gi* chɔgɔ jɔt]	Her mouth is too big.
rna-ba	(*nji*: sno:la tshet)	It is painful to my ear.

Some idea of the sort of contribution the definite-particle lexical item makes to these noun-and-particle words can be gained by comparing them with corresponding noun words, in which it is a noun lexical item that is final in the composition of each word ; so the final features of that word are those of the noun lexical item, not those of the noun lexical item in combination with those of definite-particle lexical item:

monosyllabic noun			*disyllabic noun*	
[bu] son (s)	*bu*	[*sɔ*qbu]	book	*shog-bu*
[mi] man	*mi*	[k*u*rsi]	chair	*kursī* (U.)

[zgo] door	*sgo*	[bjafo]	cockerel	*bay-pho*
[me] fire	*me*	[phɐnkhje]	advantage	*phan-kh(y)e*
[kha] mouth	*kha*	[sna :]	ear	*rna-ba.*

These examples appear in sentences as follows:

bu	[bu bzi jɔt]	There are four sons.
shog-bu	[sɔqbu cik khjɔ̃:]	Bring a book.
mi	[mi cik ? 5 : set]	A man has come.
kursī (U.)	[kursi cik khjɔ̃ :]	Bring a chair.
sgo	[zgo cik *fcɔs*]	Make a door.
bya-pho	[bjafo cik khjɔ̃:]	Bring a cockerel
me	[me spɔr]	Light a fire.
phɐn-kh (y)e	[phɐnkhjo met]	There is no advantage.
kha	[kha zdamse jɔq]	Shut your mouth'.
rna-ba	[sna : bjɔs, le :]	Hey! Pay attention!

If one compares this last set of examples noun-word examples, with the noun-and-(definite)-particle words given just before them, one can set up the following relationships between the syllable-final features of the noun words and the syllable-final features of the noun-and-particle words:

noun word:	[u	i]	[o	e	a	a:]
noun-and-particle word:	[u	ju:]	[o:	jo:	o:	o:].

The five short final vowels of the noun word correspond to long vowels in the noun-and-particle word ; and the one long final vowel so far give in a noun word also corresponds to a long vowel in the corresponding noun-and-particle word, but not the same long vowel ([a:] versus [o:]).

The long vowel [a:] is not, however, the only long vowel that can occur finally in a noun word ; there are also [u:] and [o:], and the words in which they occur are characterized by the same rising-falling pitch (or alternatively, a rising pitch) as was noted above for such noun words in [-a:] as [sna:] 'ear (*rna-ba*) and [kha:] "snow" (*kha-ba*)[7]; e.g.

[bu:] calf	*be'u*	[phru:]	child	phru [*g*]-*gu*
[co:] rajah	*jo-bo*	[tsho:]	grandson	*tsho-bo*

as in such sentence examples as:

[bu: bzi jɔt]	There are four calves.
[tsho: tsa:m jɔt]	How many grandsons are there ?

These words ending in [a:], [u:], and [o:] could, from their pitch behaviour, usefully be considered as disyllabic, and treated as having final [aa], [uu], and [oo].

The relations of these noun words ending in [uu] and [oo] with their corresponding noun-and-definite-particle words seem to show identical final features in both: a long vowel, either close ([u:]) or half-close ([o:]), together with the characteristic rising-falling or rising pitch pattern; in this respect they show a different relationship from noun words and noun-and-particle words like [snaa] and [sno:] (or [snaao]; *rna-ba*) and [khaa] and [kho:]; *kha-ba*) above.

noun word: [uu]
[oo aa]

noun-and-particle word: [u:]
[o: o:], e.g.

be'u .	[de bu: khuri m*e*n]	That calf is not his own.
phru (*g*) *-gu*	[de phru: khwe: *i*n]	That child is his.
jo-bo	[co: *s*agran*i*n *s*axs*e*t[	The Rajah has gone to the polo-ground.
tsha-bo	[khwe: tsho: *i*skul*i*n gw*e*t]	His grandson goes to school.

To summarize the position thus far, then: if the long vowels [u:], [o:], and [a]: are treated as disyllabic, i.e. as [uu], [oo], and [aa], then the final vowels of the noun type of word are the following five:

a.	i. close back rounded	(u)
	ii „ front spread	(i)
b.	i. half-close back rounded	(o)
	ii. „ front spread	(e)
	iii. open front/back neutral	(a)

(the degree of frontness and backness of the open vowel varies with palatality and non-palatality of the preceding consonant, and with nasality and non-nasality).

In order to try and arrive at vowel feature to ascribe exclusively to the definite-particle lexical item one might try to subtract the final features of noun words listed in the preceding paragraph from the final features stated earlier for the noun-and-particle word, which are, it will be recalled:

[u: ju: o: jo: o:/ao]:

but this would be far from easy. For example, since the only feature that distinguishes [bu] 'son' from [bu:] 'the son' is vowel length, only

vowel length could, in this instance, be attributed to the definite-particle lexical item; in the case of [kha] 'mouth' and [kho:] 'the mouth', the difference is, again, vowel length, and, added to this, the difference in degree of openness between openness and half-closeness; and, lastly, the difference between [buu] 'calf' and [bu:] 'the calf' appears to me to be nil. On the other hand, such a disentanglement of phonetic exponents may not be necessary: the vowel features can be attributed to the definite-particle lexical item and the final of the noun lexical item combined, without attempting to delimit boundaries. The two lexical items can have an undefined share in the available vowel features, rather as though the vowel features were a joint bank account.

In that case the features to be stated for the combination of definite particle lexical item with noun lexical item are the following vowel features, both syllabic and non-syllabic:

a.	i.	palatal non-syllab;	close	back	rounded	long	[ju:]
	ii.		„	„	„	„	[u:]
b.	i.	„ „	half-close	„	„	„	[jo:]
	ii.		„	„	„	„	[o:]
	iii.	open neutral short;	„	„	„	short	[ao:]

e.g.

		monosyllabic noun		*disyllabic noun*			
a.	i.	[mju:] (that) man *mi*	[k*u*rsju:]	(that)	chair	(U.)	*kursī*
	ii.	[bu:] the son *bu*	[sɔqbu:]	(this)	book		*shog-bu*
			[ʌbu:]	(that)	calf		*be'u*
b.	i.	[mjo:] (this) fire *me*	[phɐnkhjo:]	The advantage			*phan-kh(y)e*
	ii.	[zgo:] (this) door *sgo*	[bjafo:]	(this)	cockerel		*bya-pho*
			[ʌco:]	the	Rajah		*jo-bo*
		[kho:] (her) mouth *kha*	[ʌlaqpo:]	(my)	hand		*lag-pa*
			[ʌkho:	(this)	snow		*kha-bao*
	iii.	[khao:] („) „ „	[ʌkhaao:]	(„)	„		„

2. *A further prosodic subdivision*: *'close', 'open'*

In anticipation of a further prosodic subdivision the phonetic exponents of the vowel type of piece given in the preceding paragraph, and the examples of them, have been listed as either (a) or (b). This division reflects the difference between the vowel feature closeness (section (a); [u:] and the contrasting half closeness feature (section (b)); ([o:], [o]). One of the vowel-feature exponents in the 'vowel' type of piece, the degree-of-openness feature, alternates between closeness (section (a)) and half-closeness (section (b)), whence two sub-categories of 'vowel' piece, termed 'close' and 'open', need to be distinguished.

Correspondingly, those noun lexical items which are colligated with the definite-particle lexical in its 'closet-piece phonetic form ([u:]) can be classified as 'close'-piece lexical items, while those noun lexical items, on the other hand, which are restricted to the 'open' piece are classified, prosodically, as 'open'-piece ([o:], [ao]); e.g.

a. close-piece: [(mimju:], [soq)] **bu**, (soq) **bu** :], [(**bu**)**u**, (bu)u]

b. open-piece: i. [me, mjo:], [(bja) fo, (bja) fo:], [(co)o, (co)o]
ii. [kha, kho:/khao], [(kha)a, kho: /(kha)ao]

a. *mi, (shog)-bu, (be)-u* ;
b. i. *me, (bya)-pho, (jo)-o* ; ii. *kha, (kha)-ba.*

Every 'vowel'-piece noun lexical item can be put into one or other of these two prosidic cassifications accordingly, as 'close'-piece or as 'open'-piece lexical items ; and the degree of openness of vowel for the definite-particle lexical item is a function of the prosodic type of piece, 'close' or 'open', in which it occurs.

Within the open sub-category of piece of further division has to be drawn to account for the distinction between (i) the type of open piece that has, as its phonetic exponent, a pure vowel ([o:]) and (ii) the type of open piece that alternates a pure vowel ([o:]) with a vowel sequence ([ao]). Again, the noun lexical items that are restricted to the former type, e.g. [me]/[mjo:] *me,* [(bja)fo]/[(bja)fo:] *(bya)-pho,* [(co)o]/[(co)o] *(jo)-bo,* need to be distinguished from the latter, e.g. [kha]/[kho:]/[khao] *kha,* [(laq)pa]/[(laq)po:] *(lag)-pa,* [(kha)a]/[kho:]/[(kha)ao] *(kha)-ba.* In any case, the former type of noun lexical item has, as its phonetic exponents in the noun-word type of piece, one or other of the half-close vowels [e] and [o], while the latter has, in corresponding circumstances, the open vowel [a]. If the latter type is termed 'neutral', or, for easy symbolization, 'ə' the former type can be termed 'non-neutral', or 'non-ə'.

The definite-particle lexical item cannot, of course, be classified like its associated noun lexical items, as consonant-piece or vowel-piece, and, if the latter, as close-piece, open-piece, ə-piece or non-ə-piece; for it occurs in all four types of piece, and is not exclusive to any one type. Only its phonetic forms can be classified by type of piece:

A. 'consonantal' piece: [po]
B. 'vowel' piece; a. 'close': a share in [u:]
b. 'open': i. non-ə : „ „ „ [o:]
ii. ə : „ „ „ „ [o]

The only phonetic features common to all the phonetic forms the definite-particle lexical item are (i) lip-rounding, and (ii) a degree of openness of vowel that allows of variation between close and half-close according to type of piece. The minimum requirement for a phonological formula is a symbolization that shall cover these two common features, the rest being contributed, in each instance, by the prosodic type of piece; but it is also necessary to take account of comparable contrasting lexical items.

The definite-particle lexical item is restricted, in its relations with preceding lexical items, to intraverbal junction: it can never occupy the initial place in a word. In order to be comparable, therefore, other lexical items must be members of the particle category, and subject to this same limitation. There are seven other particle lexical items. Only one of these seven shares lip-rounding and backness with the definite particle; it is the locative particle [t*u*]/[n*u*]/[r*u*]. Its remaining vowel feature, degree of openness, is constant, being between close and half-close, with some centralization; while the definite particle, in contrast, alternates between closeness and half-closeness under the conditions that I have stated. Consequently these two will require different vowel terms U and O, the phonetic exponents of which are:
U: backness, rounding, between close and half-close, centralized
O: „ , „ half-closeness/closeness, by type of piece;

e.g. (locative particle)
[laqt*u*] to hand *lag-pa*; [d*unu*] ahead *mdun*; [th*uru*] down *thur*.

As far as the consonantal piece is concerned, the definite particle shares labiality, plosion, voicelessness, and non-aspiration with the comparative particle [patse], e.g. [smanpatse[than medicine *sman*, [*thu*ppatse] than darkness; but there the resemblance ends, for the comparative particle has those same features in the vowel piece as well, e.g. [*na*patse] than I *na*, [dju:patse] than this *'di*. These two lexical items cannot, therefore, have the same initial consonant term; and, in fact, the vowel term O proposed above for the sake of a vowel distinction is itself sufficient indication of the [p-] variant appropriate to the consonantal-piece pronunciation of the definite particle as well as of the vowel pronunciation ([o]) and the shared-feature pronunciations [o:] and [u:].

The phonological formula of the definite-particle lexical item is O.

III *Conclusion*

The phonological formula O for the definite-particle lexical item summarizes the sets of features, or the share in a set of features, stated

five paragraphs earlier in accordance with its 'contextual distribution' as proposed by Firth as long ago as 1935. Translated into a diagram it would appear as follows :

		O (definite particle)		
	consonantal piece	close piece	vowel piece	open piece
			non-ə	e
e.g.	[strʌppo	bu:	zgo:	kho:]
	[bʊlpo	(*s*ɔq bu:	co:	khao:]
	[bɹʊspo	mju:	mjo:	kho:]
	[*sin*po	(k*ur*) sju:	(ph n) khjo:	(kha)ao]

This summary of mine deals with all the variant phonetic forms of the particle lexical item O, and does it economically, through a total of four different types of piece. It does not need to have recourse to derivation, by rule, from a base form in the manner of Chomsky, or derivation, by assimilation from a base form in the manner illustrated from Gleason in section (I), through a so-called 'substitution' of phonemes.

Since there is not a study of the Balti-Tibetan definite-particle lexical item by Chomsky or any of his followers, I cannot assess the value of my form of statement against a generative-phonology statement of the same data in the light of such criteria as adequacy and economy ; but I suspect that prosodic analysis has an advantage over generative phonology as regards economy of statement in that it 'cuts its coat according to its cloth': each variant form of a lexical item is accounted for via the 'piece' of utterance that relate variant to the phonetic context in which that variant occurs. Generative phonologists, on the other hand, seem to have a weakness for over-generalizing, with the result that each such over-generalization has to be corrected by a 'deletion' rule ; and every 'deletion' rule adds, unnecessarily, to the complexity of the statement.

Further, prosodic analysis reflects the trained hearer's response to the phonetic data supplied by the speaker, and does not require the hearer to try and guess the speaker's intentions. It is not concerned, in other words, with 'what the speaker of a language knows implicity (what we may call his *competence*' (Chomsky, 1966, p. 7) ; but if it should, at some future time, become possible to relate the hearer's reaction to an utterance to the speaker's intuition concerning his utterance, I suspect that intuition may well turn out to be closer to the contextually distributed and, therefore, direct and equal relationship of the variant phonetic forms of a lexical item that result from prosodic analysis than to such 'phonological representations', in generative phonology, as result from a chain of process rules transforming a base form.[8]

NOTES

I. Phonetic transcription is indicated by square brackets; its symbols have the values laid down by the International Phonetic Association, except that [C] and [V] have been introduced to represent, respectively, any appropriate consonant and vowel, and that, in the hope of making things easier for the printer, [c] symbolizes not a voiceless palatal plosive but a voiceless palato-alveolar affricate. Also with the printer in mind the following non-IPA symbols have been introduced:

[?] = glottal plosive; [hr] = voiceless alveolar roll, commonly one-tap; [hj] = voiceless non-syllabic front spread vowel; [*i*] = somewhat centralized front spread vowel between close and half-close, as in both vowels of the English word *Hindī* and the first vowel of the Hindi word *hindí* : [*u*] = somewhat centralized back rounded vowel between close and half-close, as in English *bull*; [*e*] = half-open front spread vowel; [*n*] = voiced velar nasal; [*g*] = voiced velar fricative; [*z*] = voiced palato-alveolar fricative; [*t*] = voiceless prepalatal retroflex plosive; [*s*] = voiceless palato-alveolar fricative; [*f*] = voiceless bilabial fricative.

The Balti examples are of the Skardu dialect, as spoken by Mohammad Zakir Hussein Baltistani, a seventeen-year-old student, as part of six months' research carried out in 1964-5 in Rawalpindi. To those who may be wondering why I did the research in Rawalpindi rather than in Skardu itself, less than two hours' flying time away, I would explain that I was prevented from taking this obviously preferable course by the Pakistan Government, who denied me permission to visit Baltistan.

2. Where it seemed useful to do so, I have added Classical Tibetan forms in italic, for comparison.

3. Pronunciations of the kind illustrated at (ii) are to be heard in Skardu, the capital of Baltistan; but are probably not current in Khapalu, the other main Balti dialect area.

4. It is a pleasure to acknowledge the help that I received from A.F.C. Read, the author of *Balti Grammar*, a ready-made source of examples indicated here by inverted commas and a page reference.

5. The extent to which Firth came under the spell of Indian languages. Dravidian as well as Indo-Aryan, can be measured from the following extract from his list of publications: 'A short outline of Tamil pronunciation', appendix to A. H. Arden, *A progressive grammar of Tamil*, Madras, 1934; 'Phonological features of some Indian languages', *The procedings of the Second International Congress of Phonetic Sciences*, 1935; 'Alphabets and phonology in India and Burma', *Bulletin of School of Oriental Studies*, [8] (1936); 'A practical script for India', *Indian Listener*, 1938; 'Specimen: Kashmiri', *Maître Phonétique*, 1939; 'Alphabets for Indian languages', in D. Jones, *The problem of a national script for India*, 1942; 'Introduction' [on pronunciation and the alphabet], in

A.H. Harley, *Colloquial Hindustani,* 1944; 'Introduction' [on spelling and pronunciation), in T. Grahame Bailey, *Teach yourself Hindustani,* 1950; 'Indian languages', *Encyclopedia Britannica,* 1956; 'Hindustani language', *Encyclopedia Britannia,* 1957; 'Phonetic observations on Gujerati', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies,* 20, 1957.

When I visited Government College, in 1964, I found that Firth was still remembered there. Indeed, in an article 'Government College: some reminiscences' in the *Pakistan Times* 'looking forward to the Centenary celebrations' Abdul Majid wrote: 'Among professors of English Mr. H. Y. Langhorn and Mr. J. R. Firth held an esteemed place. The latter's contribution to the improvement of English pronunciation is part of the College tradition and still a continuing influence' (25th Oct., 1964).

6. I have enclosed 'voice' in brackets here because, unlike Burmese, voice is invariably concomitant with nasality in Balti Tibetan, and is therefore implied by it.

7. For pitch features in Balti see 'Lepcha and Balti Tibetan: tonal or non-tonal languages ? ', Sprigg, 1966.

8. Chomsky's base form, or 'underlying form', is not necessarily at as remote a degree of abstraction as a phonological formula; indeed it can even, apparently, occur in utterances. Underlying forms are said, in Chomsky, 1968, to 'appear in isolation'; and the fact that 'from the verbs *permít, tormént,* etc. We derive the nouns *pérmit, torment* ——the stress on the second syllable being automatically weakened to secondary' (Chomsky, 1963, p. 89) surely must mean that these verbs base forms are audibly stressed on the second syllable. For audible features a phonological formula, on the other hand, relies on its phonetic exponents, in an indirect relationship.

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SAKYA PANDITA'S "SUBHASITARATNANIDHI" A WORK ON ELEGANT SAYINGS

—BY BHAJAGOVINDA GHOSH.

Sakya Pandita or (Sa-pan as he is usually known among the Tibetan), flourished in 1182-1251 AD. who like his nephew, Lama 'Phagspa (1235-80 AD) played an important role in the Mongolian period. Sa-pan was not only an important abbot in the long line, and also the leader of one of the most powerful Lamaist sect but also it appears as the king of a large part of Tibet (H. Hoffmann : *Religions of Tibet*, p. 129). He was an erudite shoclar in Buddhist lore and composed many original texts on Buddhist philosophy and Tantra and Sanskrit and Tibetan poetics.

The present work under discussion, is a famous work on witty, epigrammatic, instructive and descriptive verses with their sources like Subhasita Ratna Bhaṇḍagara or gems of Sanskrit poetry (Ed. by Narayan Ram Acarya, Bombay, 1952).

The book consists of the following chapters. 1. *mkhas. pa. brtag. pa. ste. rab. tu. byed. pa. dang. Po'o*, the first ch. Analysis of scholar; 2. *ya. rabs. brtag. pa. ste. rab. tu. byed. pa. gnyis. pa'o*, the second ch. Analysis of Noble class; 3. *blun. po. brtag. po. ste. rab. tu. byed. pa. gsum.* pa'o, the third ch. Analysis of fool; 4, *spel. ma. brtag. pa. ste. rab. tu. byed. pa. bshi. pa'o*, the fourth ch. Analysis of mixed subjects; 5. *ngan. spyod. brtag. pa. ste. rab. tu. byed. pa. lnga. pa'o*, the fifth ch. Analysis of ill-manners; 6. *rang. bshin. gyi. tshul. brtag. pa. ste. rab. tu. byed. pa. drug. pa'o*, the sixth ch. Analysis of natural customs; 7. *mi. rigs. pa'i. tshul. dpyad. pa. ste. rab. tu. byed, pa, bdun, pa'o*, the seventh ch. Analysis of untoward manners; 8. *bya. ba. brtag. pa. ste. rab. tu. byed, pa, brgyad. pa'o.* the eighth ch. Analysis of actions and 9. *chos. brtag. pa. shes. bya. bd'i, rab. tu.* byed. pa, dgu. pa'o, the ninth ch. Analysis of religious norms. In the prologue of the work author shows his deep obeisance to -Ārya Mañjuśrī, the Buddha, Ācārya Nāgārjuna, sage Vyāsa (rgyas), Kavi Vālmiki (grog-makhar), Muni Akṣapāda (rKang-mig) and his Guru Sarvajña.

In the concluding portion, he himself proclaims his authoriship giving identity in the following manner, "the monk belonged to Sakya Order, Kungagyaltshanpalsagpo (Kun-dga'-rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po) composed this book with pious mind for all round

illumination, following the ancient customs of Brāhmanical as well as Buddhist faith. He has also clearly stated purpose and utility of composition. He compiled this treasure of elegant sayings (Tib.legs.bshad) following the norms of world for the fulfilment of the desires and all-round illumination of the learned. By virtue of immaculate enlightenment —the darkness that originated from ignorance in their (learned) mind will blossom like a *kumuda* flower (the white water-lily said to open at moon-rise; Nymphea alba), their knowledge being purified they will be led to the state of omniscient—the Buddhahood. And that he Kungagyaltshanpalsangpo composed this at Sa-skya monastery.

We cannot assert the point whether Sa-skya Pandita composed the text originally in Sankrit. There is, however, no doubt that he was a Sanskrit scholar and was a pupil of Khache Panchen of Kashmir, Śākyaśrī. His Tibetan Guru was Dagpagyaltshan (grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan). The Tibetan tradition emphatically says that Sa-pan composed the original text in Sanskrit. So far there is no trace, however, of the Sanskrit version. In the beginning of the text according to traditional Tibetan custom Sanskrit title has been transcribed in Tibetan. This, however, does not testify to the fact that the original composition of the text was in Sanskrit.

Sanskrit literature abounds in poetical aphorisms and anthologies of Sanskrit gnomic poetry. The most important of them Bhartrihari's *Nītiśataka* or "Century of Tranquility" by Kashmirian poet Silhana *Nītimañjari* or "cluster of blossoms of conduct". The moral maxims, which it contains are illustrated by stories; according to A. A. Macdonell these are taken from *Rgveda* (*A history of Sanskrit literature*, pp. 378-379).

The anthologies of gnomic poetries earliest rhetorician, Daṇḍin, perhaps to mention Koṣa (anthology) as a species of Kavya (*Kāvyādarśa*, 1.13 vide *Saduktikarṇāmṛta*, Suresh Chandra Banerji, Calcutta 1965). Of the anthologies available at present, the *Subhāṣita-ratna-koṣa*, previously edited by Thomas under the assumed title *Kavindra-vacana-samuccaya*, by one Vidyākara, a Bengali Buddhist of probably the 11th-12th century is the earliest (Ibid. Int. p. iii). This anthology was compiled by Vidyākara probably in the Jagaddala monastery in what is now Malda District in West Bengal. The first edition was compiled about AD. 1100, the expanded edition about AD. 1130 (The *Subhāṣita-ratna-koṣa*, ed. by D. D. Kosambi and V. V. Gokhale, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1957, preface p. vii). The next Bengali anthology of importance is the *saduktikarnāmṛta*, compiled by Sridharadasa, under the patronage of King Lakshmana Sena, in 1205 AD, (Ed. S. C. Banerji, Calcutta, Int. p. iii). S. K. De states that the compiler does not confine

himself to Bengal, but his vaishnava inclination makes him give a large number of Vaishnava stanzas (Ibid. Foreword). Daniel H. H. Ingalls, Wales Professor of Sanskrit, Harvard University, has performed a formidable task by translating the above stated anthology, consisting of 1700 Sanskrit verses scattered in 50 sections. This was published from Cambridge, Massachussetts, Harvard University Press in 1965. Vidyākara's tastes ran chiefly to courtly love poetry and to verse which described nature of mankind. The translation is in lovely and moving unrhymed verse and effectively catches the lively spirit of the original. The translations are followed by elaborate notes on the text and interpretation of individual poem.

Sa-pan also composed an auto-commentary. In the introductory remark, he states that he mastered poetics, Lexicons and Nītiśāstras. It seems Sa-pan was well-acquainted with epic story of *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata* and vast Sanskrit literature grew up on the basis of the two great Epics. This aspect may be ascertained after a close comparison and examination of the text. He has referred to some Pauranic allusion. The length of the entire xylograph is text (verses) 53 folios and Commentary 113 folios. A print from central Tibet.

It is interesting to note that there are several Mongolian versions of the text. A valuable article has been contributed in *Central Asiatic* Journal, Vol. VI, No. 2. June, 1961 (Holland) by James E. Bowson of University of Washington, Seattle; entitled "A Rediscovered xylograph Fragment from the Mongolian 'Phags-pa version of the *Subhasitaratnanidhi*" with transliteration translation, transcription and notes and a glossary of Mongol and English. This gives useful information of Mongolian 'Phags-pa version of the text. He states Erich Haenisch's second volume published in Berlin 1959, contains two rather well preserved xylograph folios of the Mongolian 'Phags-pa version. This is apparently one of the fragments from Berlin collection that were misplaced and lost during the war. T. F. Carter reproduced the left half of the first page in a publication in 1925; and this was the only part of the fragment available to Pentti Alato in 1955. In 1912 Gustav Ramstedt published a xylograph fragment written in 'Phags-pa script, which Marshal Mannerheim had found in Chinese Turkestan. And in 1952 Professor Alato reconstructed the text and identified it with "Altaistica" I. *Studia Orientalia,* VII, 7 (Helsinki, 1952, pp. 1-9). Professor Alato publisheed an article on a second 'Phags-pa fragment of the work, and a third article he added the above mentioned fragment, which had been published by Carter (Berlin, 1955) by comparing the Mannerheim fragment and fragment T III D 322: D 2 of the Berlin Turfan Collection with the Ms. published by Louis Ligeti (Le *Subhāṣitaratnanidhi* Mongol: un document du Moyen Mongol (*-Bibliotheca Orientalischa*) Hungarica, VI. (Budapest;

1948), one can approximately reconstruct the length of the 'Phags-pa edition. For more information of the Mongol 'Phags-pa script or the square script invented in 1269 and used until the collapse of the Yuan dynasty in China in 1368, one can consult Nicholas Poppe's *Grammar of written Mongolian,* weisbaden 1954.

Professor Louis Ligeti has contributed a long article on similar subject, captioned as "Les Fragments Du Subhasitaratnanidhi Mongol En E-' criture ' Phags-pa, Mongol Preclassique Et Moyen Mongol" in (*Acta Orientalia Hung.* Vol. XVII, No. 3, 1964, published by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Akademiai Kiado, Budapest), wherein he discussed three fragments of the text, along with transliteration of the 'Phags-pa version and its transcription into Mongol, with the instances of verses in Tibetan and Mongolian and extensive notes and glossary ; due to our limited knowledge of French language in which the valuable article is written, we could not state more useful points that have been discussed in it.

Anotheer Czechoslovakian scholar G. Bethlenfalvy has also contributed an article in the same journal (Vol. XVIII, No. 3, Budapest, 1965) entitled "Three *Pañcatantra* tales in an unedited commentary to the Tibetan *Subhāṣitaratnanidhi*". There he has referred the *Pañcatantra* tales contained in the version of the *Subhāṣitaratnanidhi* complete with commentary. He further states that this has been directed to him by Professor L. Ligeti, Le *Subhāṣitaratnanidhi* Mongol: un document du Moyen Mongol, Partic I re, Le manuscript Tibeto-Mongol en reproduction phototypique avec une introduction (Budapest 1948), for the bibliography of the *Subhāṣitaratnanidhi,* see the preface to this work and also L. ligeti, Les fragments du *Subhāṣitaratnanidhi* Mongol en E'criture 'Phags-pa, Le Mongol Preclassique et le Moyen Mongol ; (*Acta Orientalia, Hung.* XVII, pp. 239-292), the manuscript of the edition of Subhāṣi-*taratnanidhi,* now under preparation. It had been noted by Ph—Ed. Foucaux, A. Shiefner, W.L. Campbell that some of the stanzas of *Subhāṣitaratnanidhi* contains reference to the *Pañcatantra.*

Another point mentioned by Vladimircov was to the effect that in Leningrad Ms of the *Subhāṣitaratnanidhi* complete with commentary, there are stories still unpublished. A version of the *Subhāṣitaratnanidhi* complete with commentary has been published in Mongolian only ; Saza bandid Gungaazalcany Zochiol Erdenijn San Subasid, Cachar gevgc Luvsancultemijn orcuulga ba tajlbar ed. by C. Damdinsuren and Z. Dugerzav (Ulaanbaatar, 1958). This material has not so far been made the subject of investigation. Here we can mention that Professor C. Damdinsuren has edited the *Pañcatantra* stories. The book is entitled "Rasiyan-Dusul-un Mongol Töbed Tayilburi" or Mogolian and Tibetan stories from *Pañcatantra,* has been published from Instituti Linguae et

Litterarum Academiae Scientiarum Republicae Populi Mongoli (Ulaanbaatar 1964).

In the above mentioned article Mr G. Bethlenfalvy introduces three tales from *Subhāṣitaratnanidhi* commentary, on the basis of a photostat copy of a manuscript from Ulaanbaatar. To make the comparison easier the Tibetan text is given side by side with the Indian (Sanskrit) version, which in the author's judgement answers the purpose best. He further notes that an exact counterpart of the Tibetan version cannot be found in the Sanskrit versions. In summing up he says that none of the three tales chosen at random goes back to a single *Pañcatantra* text; known to us today. In each of the tales we find traces of more Indian versions.

The vast resources of literature on Nītisāstra and fables are preserved in Tibetan and Central Asatic languages and scripts along with other aspects of literature are being gradually uncovered and brought to light by the competent scholars of Mongolia, Russia, Denmark, Hungary Germany and United States of America in most amazing quantity is a striking feature towards the advancement of east west cultural contact. We hope and anticipate more scholars from the country of origin of Sanskrit should take enthusiastic and keen interest in comparative study of these literature now lost in original but available in different versions.

NOTE

PHALLIC SYMBOLS IN TIBET

—BY HUGH E. RICHARDSON.

Phallic symbols are by no means an obtrusive feature, in the Tibetan scene. They are not connected with a cult such as the Saivite Hindu worship of the linga but are part of ancient geomantic practices, influenced perhaps by thos of China.

Although anthropologists might see phallic undertones in the white stone set up by farmers at the centre of each cultivated field in honour of the *sa bdag*—"the lord of the land"—or in the tall pillars erected at the royal tombs, these have no such overt association in Tibetan minds but are magical "navel stones" or "earth pegs" (see R.A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization,* 1972, p. 203).

Overt phallic signs were the realistic representation of the male organs, often painted red and surrounded by a bush of yak-hair, set over the main door of some farm houses in Tibet and Bhutan. These, I was told, were intended to avert bad influences in the immediate neighbourhood. A.H. Franke saw objects of the same sort in Ladakh (*Antiquities of Indian Tibet,* Calcutta, 1914, Vol. I p. 61); and the red painted pillars in front of houses there, recorded by William Moorcroft in 1822, may have had similar associations (*Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan,* 1841).

A rather surprising example existed on the roof of the Jo-khang, the Cathedral of Lhasa. Its presence and purpose are explained by a story in several Tibetan histories including the *rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long* (14th century), the *Chos-'byung* of dPa'-bo gtsug-lag phreng-ba (16th century) and the Chronicle of the 5th Dalai Lama (17th century). It relates that when the Nepalese queen of Srong-brtsan sGam-po wanted to build the 'Phrul-snang (the Jo-khang) at Lhasa and was looking for a suitable site, she consulted Srong-brtsan's Chinese queen who had already built the Ra-mo-che. The latter had recourse to occult divination (*spor thang*) to ascertain in the geomantic auspices. It was revealed that Tibet was like a female demon lying on her back and that chapels—known as the *mtha' 'dul yang 'dul lha khang rnam s*—should be built at vital points on the extremities and the limbs of the demon in order to keep her in subjection. The 'Phrul-snang itself was to be built on the 'O-ma-thang, over the demon's heart. Eight specific topographic

features around the site harboured hostile influences that had to be countered in different ways. While some which were the haunts of *'dre, baud* and *btsan* spirits could be controlled by building a chapel or a *mchod-rten,* the evil omen emanating from a cave on a hillside to the east which resembled the private parts of the she-demon had to be opposed by setting up a phallus—*dbang-phyug chen-po* or *dbang phyug mtshan*—pointing in that direction. I was told that that sign, together with different apotropaic objects—a conch shell, a garuda image, a stone *mchod-rten* and a stone lion—prescribe to repel dangerous influences from other sources, was placed in semi-concealment under the gilded pagoda roofiet (rgya-phibs) on the east side of the Jo-khang roof.

The story of the bad omens and the magic to neutralize them is familiar to readers of Tibetan historical works but it may not be so well known that the symbols were actually placed on the Jo-khang itself and survived there until very recent times.

Following that example phallic signs were placed, unobtrusively and always on the east side, on several of the great houses of Lhasa ; and there is one of stone, rudimentary but unmistakable, on the east side of the perimeter wall of the Dalai Lama's summer palace of Norbu Lingka, built in the 19th century.

Other manifestations, perhaps of the same nature, are the strange wooden figures, some nine feet high, standing usually in pairs, one male and one female, at the entrance to some villages sPo yul and rkong-po. A photograph of one such pair can be seen in *The Riddle of the Tsang Po Gorges* by F. Kingdom Ward (1926) ; and a male figure is illustrated in *A Cultural History of Tibet* by D. Snellgrove and H. Richardson (1968). From those photographs it appears that the images were neglected and in a damaged state but it is evident that they were originally ithyphallic.

Pairs of similar crude wooden figures occur in many primitive cultures. For example, forked tree trunks shaped into male and female figures have been dug up from a bog in Sweden (*Country Life,* 19th April, 1968) ; more relevant geographically is a pair of wooden village guardians in the Nepal Terai, reduced to symbols, illustrated in *Deux Fâtes chez les Thâru de Dâng* A.W. Macdonald in *Objects et Mondes,* 1969 ; while from a part of Nepal much closer to the Himalaya D.L. Snellgrove in his *Himalayan Pilgrimage* (1961) has a photograph of a pair of wooden images on the roof of a low caste Hindu house at Tibrikot where, he states, there is a large number of such figures ; and, again, in the *Geographical Magazine* for Dec. 1956 Verrier Elwin illustrates tall figures of bamboo and straw erected in the tribal areas of Assam to avert disease.

Although in the examples from Tibet the male figure looks something like one of the fierce deities of Vajrayāna Buddhism, the resemblance is probably superficial for sPo-bo and upper rKong-po are regions where old practices were slow to die. The local name for the images is rendered phonetically by western travellers as "Tombe" or "Tembe". The Tibetan orthography does not seem to be known; but I wonder whether it may be connected with *Idem, Idem-po,* "statue, image, idol (standing upright)"—see Das' Dictionary p. 712. Tibetan scholars at the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology or elsewhere may care to throw light on that and on other matters mentioned above.

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The famous scholar Lcang-skya Khutkktu Rol-phi-rdorje (1717-1786 A.C.) contributed a commentary on BZANG-SPYOD. This is now brought out in modern format with Introduction by Dr. Lokesh Chandra; pp xvii and 61. Price: Rupees Three (India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim).

April 1963.

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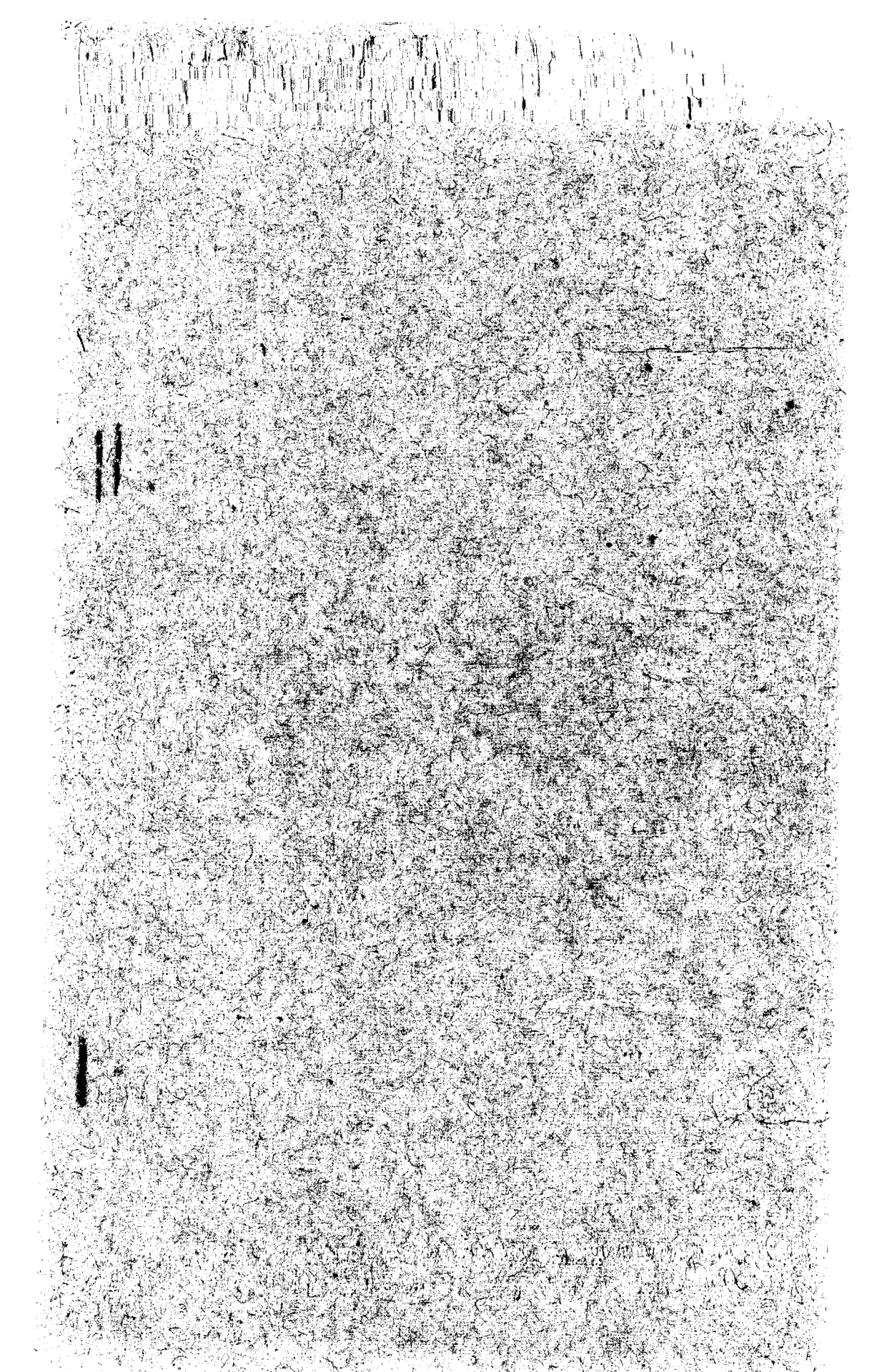
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