THE ALLATIVE, LOCATIVE, AND TERMINATIVE CASES (LA-DON) IN THE OLD TIBETAN ANNALS

NATHAN W. HILL

0. INTRODUCTION

The indigenous Tibetan grammatical tradition treats the seven morphemes -r, -n, -su, -tu, -du, -na, and -la together as one category, called the la-don yi sgra (the morphemes with the same meaning as la) (Schuhert 1937: 19, 30, 45; Iasba 1989: 174; Gyurme 1992: 21-22). Isaak Jakob Schmidt follows this tradition, labeling these morphemes together “местный падеж locativeness)” (1856: 42). Philippe Edouard Foucaux puts -r, -nu, -su, -tu, -du, and -a together as the ‘datif’, but divides out -na as the ‘locatif’ (1858: 26-27). Marcelle Lalou (1950), although she discusses -r, -su, -tu, -du on page 28 and -na on page 15, labels these six morphemes with the same term “particule locative”; she calls –la a “particule ... accusative” (1950: 14), but confusingly labels one of its functions as “particule de locatif” (1950: 15). Michael Hahn classifies -r, -nu, -su, -tu, and -du together as the ‘Terminativpartikel’ (1994: 118-122) and groups -na and -la together as ‘lokativpartikel’ (1994: 91-97). Heinrich August Jäschke distinguishes here three cases: -r, -nu, -su, -tu, -du ‘terminative’, -la ‘dative’ and -na ‘locative’ (1883: 15). Among these classifications -r, -su, -tu, and -du are always grouped together; apart from this commonality all possible combinations of grouping these five with -na or -la have been put forward by someone.

In order to address the question of whether and how these morphemes ought to be divided into separate categories, one must first establish guiding principles by which to judge the merits of different arrangements. Various authors (including Lalou 1950 and Hahn 1994) have approached all Tibetan morphemes except nominal and verbal stems as ‘particles’. Such an analysis is just as inadequate as treating ‘of’, ‘-a’, ‘-ing’, and ‘however’ as particles in English. These authors group together ‘particles’ based on their meaning, i.e. based on how they would be translated into some other language. The analysis of a language according to meaning rather than form is a mistake (Bloomfield 1933: 161-162). In the end one learns only about pre-established semantic categories the author’s language or the author’s head, and nothing about the inherent structural categories which are part of the language under study. For example, a definition of ‘accusative’ in German as ‘the case of the direct object of a verb’ would lead to the inevitable
and false conclusion that both *dir* and *dich* mark the accusative, because on syntactic or semantic grounds it is not possible to distinguish *ich helfe dir* from *
ich uerstte dich*.

Distributional considerations are the correct criteria on which to describe linguistic phenomena (Harris 1951: 5-6). In Tibetan like in Japanese bound morphemes are postpositional. Such morphemes neatly divide into two categories: case morphemes are those that follow noun phrases and converbal morphemes are those that follow verbs. For Tibetan there are eighteen morphemes that occur after noun phrases: *-khi*, *-gyi*, *-gi*, *-ki*, *-gyis*, *-gyis*, *-s*, *-lu*, *-na*, *-ru*, *-su*, *-tu*, *
-la*, *-las*, *-nas*, and *-dan*. For Japanese there are twelve morphemes that occur after noun phrases: *-ga*, *-ni*, *-de*, *-to*, *-ya*, *-no*, *-wo*, *-mo*, *-we*, *-karu*, *-e*, and *-made*. A given Japanese noun phrase always ends with one of these morphemes, and can be found with all of them (waatahsi-ga, waatashi-mi, waatashi-de, etc.). In contrast, in Tibetan although all eighteen morphemes are found after noun phrases in general, only a subset of nine will be found after any particular noun phrase. For example, the word *gyi-*pos may proceed *-O, -hi, -s, -r, -la,* -lu, -las, -nas, or -dan but does not proceed *-khi, -gyi, -gi, -ki, -gyis, -gyis, -s, -su, or -su. Depending on its Auslaut, a given noun phrase selects one member from the three subclasses (1) *
-khi, -gyi, -g*, -di, (2) *-khi, -gyis, -gyi, -s*, and (3) *-ru, -su, -s, -r.* The members of these respective subclasses are allomorphs of three distinct morphemes that can be represented as *-khi, -gyis*, and *-tu*. Old Tibetan thus has nine cases (*O, *
-khi, -gyis, -la, -ru, -s, -tu, -las, -nas, or -dan*), and it is necessary to distinguish *
-la, -ru*, and *-tu* as three separate cases.

Returning the discussion from Tibetan case in general to the la-don-*gyi* grammar, the fact that *-ru, -su, -tu*, and *-du* are allomorphs of a single morpheme (*tu*), itself comparable to *na* and *-la*, is the reason why no author has subdivided the group *-ru, -su, -tu, *-du*. All authors of Tibetan are aware that a single noun phrase can be followed by *-ba, by -na, or by one of the five *-ru, -su, -tu, -du, -la*, and yet, through mistakenly allowing semantics to influence their analyses of case, most authors have failed to distinguish the three as separate cases. As mentioned above, with characteristic perspicacity Jächkhe correctly distinguished these three cases with *-ru, -su, -tu, and -du* as 'terminative', *-la* as 'dative' and *-na* as 'locative' (1983: 15). The names given to cases are conventional and arbitrary. I follow Jächkhe's terminology with the exception that I change 'dative' to 'allative' and 'terminative' to 'ablativ' (ab laterore 'towards the side'), which I have chosen to parallel 'ablative' (ab latero 'from the side') for the case marked with *-las*. One could, however, just as easily list cases 'first case', 'second case', etc., as was the practice of the ancient Sanskrit grammarians (Whitney 1890: 89 §266a). The analysis, not the terminology, is what matters.

Whether these three cases are categored in Old Tibetan, as the tendency of authors to group them together implies, is an empirical question; answering that question is the goal of this essay. If these morphologically distinguished cases do have differentiated semantics in Old Tibetan, documenting these differences is necessary not only for a correct description of Old Tibetan grammar, but would also be a boon for the philological understanding of Old Tibetan texts.

0.1 A method for describing the semantics of case

No methodology is currently available that would allow for a definitive and incontrovertible description of the uses or meanings of the cases of any given language.

In the study of Greek and Latin over time a tradition developed of distinguishing the semantics of cases in conventionalized lists of the type (i) 'dative of possession', (ii) 'dative of agency', (iii) 'ethical dative', etc. Although there is no way to draw a clear line between one use of the Latin dative and another, such lists are useful as a heuristic for students in textual analysis because such lists are familiar from the standard 19th and early 20th century school grammars, often still used in university instruction today (such as Allen and Greenough 1872 for Latin or Smyth 1916 for Greek). I use the 'school grammar approach' to refer to such heuristic listings of case use. Despite the proven utility of such an approach, some recent researchers have justly criticized it arbitrary, hair-splitting, and unscientific.

Roman Jakobson attempts to develop a theory of case semantics relying upon binary sets of semantic features (1990: 332-385). The approach of minimal feature analysis is very powerful in the domain of phonology. In phonology

---

1. How to distinguish nouns from verbs and other part of speech classes in Old Tibetan is no trivial question, and lies outside the scope of this paper. I will simply take these categories as given.

2. Upon further analysis *wo* and *no* turn out to be sentence adverbs rather than case markers in Japanese (Martin 1975: 52-60), but this is outside of the scope of this paper.

3. I use braces {} to enclose one member of a category, when it is being used to represent that category as a whole.

4. I label these nine cases thus: 1. absolute *O, 2. genitive *khi, 3. agitative *khi, 4. ablative *la, 5. locative *na, 6. terminative *ru, su, su, du, 7. ablative *las, 8. relative *ma, 9. associative *dak* (cf. Hill 2004: 79-80). Hereafter when referred to schematically I abbreviate absolute as ABS, genitive as GEN, agitative as AGT, and ablative as ABL. The other cases have one clear morphological exponent, and can be referred to directly thereby, e.g. *ma* for the locative. The Tibetan grammatical tradition's failure to distinguish the allative, locative, and terminative cases, instead collapsing the three under the rubric la-don indicates that this tradition sees *la* as in some sense primary. In Modern Standard Tibetan these three cases have coalesced into the two phonetically determined allomorphs *la* and *su* (Tournadre and Dorje 2003: 90-91 and 365-367). The traditional description may have been developed by speakers of a dialect similar on this point to Modern Standard Tibetan.
a particular feature can be linked with mechanically verifiable articulatory or acoustic properties. This is not true of the minimal semantic features which Jakobson employs. Features such as 'directness', 'scope', or 'marginality' are opaque and unverifiable. No instrumental measure will test whether a certain case is 'directed' in the way that a spectrogram can incontrovertibly show that an obstruent is voiced. The same obstacles of opacity and lack of verifiability equally plague more recent theories of case relying on 'deeps', 'semantic roles', or 'frames' (Fillmore 1968, 1976). These approaches merely leg the question, taking us further from the intuitive clarity of normal language into technical jargon.

The technical terms of science such as 'meter' and 'phoneme' are useful as shorthand for 'the distance traveled by light in free space in 1/299,792,458 of a second' and 'a distributional equivalence class of sounds, any member of which can be employed to form meaningful contrasts between utterances, and the members of which cannot be further temporally divided' to form smaller such classes'. The terms of such definitions can be further decomposed in such a way that the questions 'is this a meter?' and 'is this a phoneme?' can be answered 'yes' or 'no' through an instrumentally verifiable sensory observation. Terms such as 'agent' or 'frame element' do not have this characteristic. Such descriptions of case semantics are less useful and revealing than the lists of the school grammars.

To my knowledge the only method for describing semantics which is both verifiable and precise to a degree warranting comparison to that of minimal pairs in phonology is the natural semantic metalanguage developed by Anna Wierzbicka (e.g. 1985). Without needing to subscribe to her view that there are a finite number of universal semantic primitives in all human languages, one cannot fail to be impressed by the clarity and subtlety that her studies bring to many thorny problems. By paraphrasing the cases found using the school grammar approach in Wierzbicka's semantic metalanguage, the shared meaning of case uses can be directly perceived as a shared segment of the paraphrase.

0.2 The scope of this study

At such an early stage into the research of Tibetan case semantics, a study on the scope that would be necessary using Wierzbicka's methods does not seem possible. The attempt here is limited to listing the uses of cases following the tradition of school grammars, with only limited attention to whether the individual uses identified can be meaningfully subsumed into more basic meanings. Although this method does not correctly capture the Gesamtsbedeutung of each case, because such lists have proven useful both for language students and for the very researchers who reject such a technique, I undertake this method here in the hope that its results can serve as a basis for more sophisticated work on Tibetan case semantics.

THE ALLATIVE, LOCATIVE, AND TERMINATIVE CASES (LA-DON)

Case morphemes occur so frequently that it is sensible to restrict examination to a single text. While the use of cases in a single text may be idiosyncratic in comparison to the overall use of cases across Old Tibetan literature, restricting study to a single text will likely present a coherent case system and this system can be later compared to case use in other texts. Even if a particular text turns out to contain material produced by different hands at different moments in history, a systematic examination of a single text is more likely to yield clear and reliable results than the desultory comparison of examples from texts of diverse times and authors. This paper restricts examination of the use of the allative, locative, and terminative cases to their use in the Old Tibetan Annals (PL 1286, IOL-Tib 370).

1. The allative -la

The allative case marker occurs in two morphological forms, la and b'ab, the latter being rather rarer than the former.

1.1 The dating formula

By far the most frequent use of the allative case in the Old Tibetan Annals is in the dating formula which opens each entry, e.g., phug gis lo-la b'ab-ste ("[AD] fell on the year of the dog") (l. 19). This formula occurs in two main variants. The longer includes the verbal phrase b'ab-ste and the shorter excludes it. In line 160 an additional variant occurs which includes b'ab but omits ste (lug ste lo-la b'ab ). Unfortunately, the pattern of variants appears to mean little. The longer version is rather more frequent than the shorter until line 203 after which only the shorter variant occurs. The dating formula is a subspecies of the use of the allative with the verb b'ab 'fall'. This use of the verb b'ab is noteworthy because it has a rection that includes only the allative and no noun in the absolutive case. A noun in the

5 I would like to thank Brandon Dotson for sharing with me before publication his translation of the Old Tibetan Annals (Dotson 2009). Although not identical, my translations are very indebted to his. Translations also follow Dotson's text, with the exception that I have included together words and placed line numbers after them when they would have interrupted a single word.

6 If instances of the full scheme are represented with the letter L, the abbreviated scheme with B, and the aberrant example in line 160 as C, the following pattern obtains: L'B'AB'AC'AB'AC'AB'AC'B'. The superscript numbers indicate the number of times the pattern is used consecutively. An additional remark can be made about variation in the dating formula. The genitive -sl is occasionally omitted from the dating formula, probably for phonetic reasons. The phrase 'year of the monkey' never contains a genitive, i.e., it is always spad-lg sl rather than spad-lg sl. The genitive is also frequently omitted after the word la-'dog' (II. 17, 60, 117, 175, 234, 303) but in some cases the genitive is also present (II. 41, 94, 268). I see no pattern in the presence or absence of the genitive after the word b'ab 'dog'.
absolute or agentive case is generally considered obligatory for Tibetan verbs (Tournadre 1996: 189).

1.2 In the time of

In addition to the use of the allative in the dating formula to specify a year, once in the document the allative is used in the phrase gan-rin-'a 'in the time of' where it specifies a more vague period of time. Although this usage is found only once in our text, it is quite frequently used in other Old Tibetan texts, for example, it occurs frequently in the imperial inscriptions.

(1) btsan-po Khrü Lod-gtsug (2) rtse-gyi rin-lab
In the reign of emperor Khrü Lod-gtsug-rtsan ... (Zol inscription, South face, Li and Coblin 1987: 143).

(2) btsan-pha Khrü Sron-lde-btsan-gyi rin-lab
In the reign of emperor Khrü Sron-lde-btsan ... (Zol inscription, South face, Li and Coblin 1987: 143).

The reason for the rarity of this construction in the Amalas is that, while more specific dating is preferred it is not possible in this opening section, presumably because the text is reporting retrospectively on prehistorical time.

Then after three years, in the reign of Khrü Sron-btsan, [the emperor] defeated Llig Sla-bzang and subjugated all of Za'n-ram and possessed it.

1.3 The recipient

The recipients of gifts are marked in the allative case; the giver is in the agentive and the gift in the absolutive. The Amalas has two instances of recipients in the allative which employ the verb phul 'give'.


In the winter the council was convened by Prime Minister Khrü-gtsigs in Mo'i-ka. When Gnubs-khrü-mten died, [his] subjects [and] the great wealth were given to Khrü-zum-rje-rtsan-bzer.

An account was made concerning Minister [Dbabs] Khrü-sun-rje [Rtsang-blo]'s offering of great wealth to Za'n Khrü-mten Zsun-zun.

A further example involves a recipient, but is hardly a willing act of donation; in this example a foreign territory falls captive to a Tibetan official. This usage, like its English equivalent, seems to share both in the semantics of literally falling (falling to the ground), and of donation (being given to someone). The role of the argument in the allative, the Tibetan official, can be seen as a recipient.


1.4 Marriage

In four instances, marriages are reported, in which the Tibetan princess in the absolutive case goes to, or is sent as the bride for a foreign dignitary, this dignitary is marked in the allative. These examples also act as gifts, when the hapless young woman is the gift, and the foreign potentate the recipient.

Princess Sra-mo-stelbs went as a bride for Sra-sur Spus-rje.rgyug. So one year.

[689] (101/50) btsan.so: Khrü. bshad. Ha. za. rje. la: bag.mar. (102/51) gzi-gs
Princess Khrü-bshad went as a bride for the Ha-za (Tubzhan 吐蕃 ) lord.

Princess Hdro.mna-lod was sent as a bride for the Tügkis Qarim.

Princess Khrü-mna-lod was sent as a bride for the lord of Brus-za.

The syntactic pattern for marriage can be captured thus: princess-ABS husband-PL beg-mar-PL gzi-gs/ bstan. This syntax parallels closely the more straightforward act of giving. Although bridges are 'sent' (bstan) or 'go' (gzi-gs) rather than being 'given' (phul), their husbands are just as equally recipients as they would be of wealth, or captured cities.
1.5 On campaign

In six cases in the Old Tibetan Annals the allative case occurs in the phrase chab-srîd-la gîgs ‘go on campaign’. In the first example, no nouns occur except the emperor himself and chab-srîd.


Contextually it is clear that the emperor went on campaign against the Chinese stronghold, but the stronghold is not a syntactic element in the clause in which the allative is used. However, in other examples this construction is expanded with a destination in the terminative case, indicating the location of the campaign.

[688] (100/39) btsan. mo: Khri mo.sten: Dags: yul.du/ chab.srîd.la/ gîgs phar. lo. chig/ Princess Khri mo-sten went on campaign to the land of Dags. So one year.

[727] (242/191) yor.buh/ lo.la/ btsan. po: dbyar.d chab.srîd.la: Ha.ä. yul. du.gîgs/ [It fell] on the year of the hare. In the summer the emperor went on campaign to the land of Ha-ä.

[739] (280/229) yor.buh/ lo.la/ btsan. po: dbyar.d chab.srîd.la: Beg.du: gîgs/ It fell on the year of the hare. In the summer the emperor went on campaign to Beg.

The phrase can be further expanded with a place of departure in the elative case.

[700] (131/80) btsan. po: dbyar.d/ Môn.kar.nax: chab.srîd.la: Sa.gu.nin/ sum.khol.du/ gîgs/n/ In the summer the emperor went from Môn-kar to Sa-gu-nin-sum-khol on campaign.

One example is of particular interest because it employs two nouns in the allative case. In addition to the phrase chab-srîd, the word Mywa is also in the allative. In light of the fact that Mywa is an ethnonym, and all other instances of locations are marked with the terminative, it is best to reinterpret this as ‘go on campaign against the Mywa’ rather than ‘went on campaign to (the land of the) Mywa’.

[704] (147/96) dgu.n/ btsan. phe: chab.srîd.la: Mywa.la/ gîgs/na.la/ dgu.n/ da: gîgs/ In the winter the emperor went on campaign against the Mywa, but went to heaven.

Combining the structures attested in these various examples, the maximal syntactic structure of going on campaign can be presented schematically as follows:

(person)-sas (starting place)-nax (ethnicity)-la chab.srîd-la (ending place)-gîgs/ A person went from a starting place to an ending place on campaign against an ethnicity.

A fragmentary passage at the beginning of the text appears to also use this construction of campaign.

(6) ... btsan. po: Khri. Sron.rtsan gyis lüld: lyan. len.la/ dgon.rtsa. Mywa.du. rgi.dails: GywaALLERY: ... (17) ... (dga. lha: Ha.ä. gyis dpyar. gcads/ Emperor Khri Sron-rtsan set out on the northern road, se ... against the Ha-ä and China. Both [China] and Ha-ä paid tribute.

Since only people and not places pay tribute, it is clear here that China and Ha-ä are conceived of as personified nations or ethnic groups, and not as places. It seems rather likely that the complete phrase including the first lacuna was something like Ha-ä dais: Gywa.lek, chab.srîd-la gîgs/ ‘went on campaign against Ha-ä and China’, parallelizing the example chab.srîd.la: Mywa.la/ gîgs/na ‘went on campaign against the Mywa’ discussed above, both in the use of the allative and in the use of a place name standing metonymically for an ethnicity. A full understanding of the phrase chab.srîd-la will require comparison to other conventional uses of the allative with noun phrases, but my temptation is to tentatively interpret chab.srîd ‘campaign’ as the purpose or goal of the journey. This use can be compared with ‘on’ in English phrases such as ‘go on campaign’, ‘go on a picnic’, etc.

The use of the allative with ethnonyms in this construction envisions them as recipients. One may suggest that in the examples of receiving a bride or wealth the recipient is a beneficiary and in the examples of receiving a military campaign the recipient is a malefactor. This distinction is, however derived from context, and not inherent in the meaning of the allative case. Foreign nations may
welcome Tibetan brides with more open arms than Tibetan military campaigns but syntactically these foreigner are recipients in both cases. This similarity is particularly underlined if one interprets the campaign of princess Khri-mo-stiks to the land of Dages in 688 as a political marriage. The possibility should, however, not be dismissed that women led military campaigns in early Tibet.

1.6 Make sport with a yak

In a single example the emperor makes sport with (i.e. hunts) a yak, which is in the allative case. This example is comparable to the examples of military campaigns led against an ethnicity. A wild yak surely feels similarly about receiving the emperor’s sport as a foreign land does about an invading Tibetan army.


1.7 Disgrace

Another frequent use of the allative is with the phrasal verb bkyon bab meaning ‘to be disgraced’. Literally it can be translated as ‘disgrace fell on (him)’. This is perhaps best seen as another use, like the dating formula, of the allative with the verb bab. The disgraced party is the location on which something falls. The syntax of the dating formula and disgrace is however different. The dating formula is monovalent, with no noun in the absolutive, but in this instance bkyon is in the absolutive and bab functions bivallently.

[678] (71/19) dgu.n. stod. ldan.ma/ Gla/ (72/20) Rya.byer/ bhus/ dgu.n. smad. Mi.dan.du. btsugs/ Rsa.sans.js/ Spun.rje.ryi.ka.dan/ Klu. Khrul.tshad.dgu.n. zin.la/ bkyon. bab/ (73/21) stel/ In early winter the council was convened at Rya-bye in Gla. In late winter [it] was convened at Mi. Dan. Ra-sa-rje Spun-rje-ryi and Khu Khrul-shad.dgu.zun were disgraced.

[698] (127/76) delbi: dgu.n. Mgar.js/ bkyon. phab.ste/ bstan.po/ Phar.du. gregs.por. [la] chig/ That winter Mgar was disgraced; the emperor went to Phar. So one [year].

THE ALLATIVE, LOCATIVE, AND TERMINATIVE CASES (LA-DON) 13


[728] (248/197) Dba.pts/ Stag.sgra/ Kho.n.lod.la/ bkyon. phab.nas/ Bho/ Chun.lza/ (249/198) Hor.man/ blo.n. chen.por. bshad.stsul/ Dbals Stag-sgra Kho-lo was disgraced and Bho Chung-bzah Hor-man was proclaimed prime minister.

1.8 The allative in the rection of specific verbs

The dating formula and formula of disgrace both employ the verb bab ‘fall’. It is simplest to consider both of these uses as instances of the allative within the rection of bab ‘fall’. In addition to the verb bab ‘fall’, there is evidence in the Old Tibetan Annals for considering the allative to be within the rection of the verbs spas transfer to, rdugs reduce to, and chugs be attached to. The verb spas ‘transfer’ occurs with the allative case on one occasion.

[744] (298/247) btsan.po. bkas/ khrul. dmar.po. bsod.glog. ser.por.pal/ spas. por. lo. chig/ The emperor decreed that the red tally would be transferred to yellow paper.

So one year.

The verb spas occurs two other times in the Old Tibetan Annals, once with the terminative and once without a second argument.

[673] (564/64) bya gags khor.pas/ btsan.po/ dbyar. stod. Plo.dam.mdo.na. btsugs. lha/ dbyar. sman/ Sam chu.bor. spas/
The year of the bird. At the beginning of the summer the emperor resided at Pho-dam-mdo. Late in the summer he moved to Sun-chu-bo.


The verb rdugs ‘reduce’ is used with the allative on one occasion.


In one example, the allative is used with the noun bshad-gyi-gyi ‘allegation’ and the verb chags ‘be attached to’.


1.9 The allative in place of the ablative

The allative can be used where one would expect an ablative in Written Tibetan. One such example appears to occur in the Annals.


The Mdo-smad council was convened at Nam-pu n Rag-tag. Many gold taxes were gathered from the subjects.

7. Bshad lha tag dbon thub khrims, citing this passage defines the phrase bshad-gyi-gyi.chags as in "bshad bkra-s gsal bzhin / khrims las dbags pa sic (to be accused, taken to court)" (1997: 22)

This passage could also be read as ‘taxes were gathered for the subjects’ but this seems like an unlikely action for a government to take. This use of the allative in place of the ablative is known from other Old Tibetan texts. Here are three examples from Old Tibetan contracts.

Lho myi-lha gsal rnal-pa-hi dpar nga
A bond for the purchase of an ox from a man belonging to the Lho clan.

[101] bstan. dsal-rgya mta.gi-gi. krist-ba la gshis-ga bshad-skye
Should the borrower fail to repay by that time or if he tries to conspire [not to repay, the amount of payment] shall be doubled

[102] pro. sa. bstan. bstan. rin.chos-skyo
from Li Mar-pon of Parish Zamb-la [... of] Yar-rtsa district

1.10 Summary

Looking over all of the uses of the allative in the Annals, a few things seem clear. Most frequently the noun in the allative is a person. Yaks and ethnic groups also occur in the allative; people, yaks, and ethnic groups all share the trait of being sentient. Locations are never put in the allative case. The instances in which something other than a person is in the allative include la ‘year’, rit ‘duration’, chab-srd ‘campaign’, and bshad-gyi-gyi ‘allegation’. The allative does not appear to imply any spatial movement; in those instances in which movement is involved, it is always made explicit in a verb of motion and the destinations themselves are marked in the terminative.

The verbs that regularly take the allative are bshad ‘fall on’, phul ‘give to’, spos ‘transfer to’, rdugs ‘reduce to’, and chags ‘be attached to’. Most of these uses of the allative can be subsumed under what would normally be called a derivar, or an indirect object in a European language. The allative is also used in place of the ablative. The variation between ablative and allative in such instances deserves separate study.

2. THE LOCATIVE -NA

The locative case has only two uses in the Annals. One is in the time expression de.na gna-num-NA ‘then after number years’, and the other is with the verb dpags ‘reside’ or its somewhat less honorific equivalent mchis ‘stay’. Occasionally
the locative takes the form -nah rather than -na (ll. 8, 27, 172, 195, 244).

2.1 Locative of time

The phrase de-nas lo number-na ‘then after number years’ occurs twice in the Old Tibetan Annals. However, it probably occurred at least an additional three times (ll. 4, 6, 8) in the fragmentary opening of the text, and the -nah of one of these (l. 8) is preserved.

(13) de-nas: lo: gsum.nal
Then after three years

(15) de-nas: lo: drug.nal
Then after seven years

2.2 Reside at

The majority of entries in the Annals begin, after reporting the year, with stating the location of the emperor. The verb used in reference to the emperor is bungs ‘reside’ and the location is marked in the locative.

[654] (27) stagi lo: Ja bab stret btsan pho: Mer-khe nas. bungs Stih!
It fell on the year of the tiger, the emperor resided at Mer-khe.

Such expressions occur so frequently in the text that it would be tedious to present further examples.

In the opening of the text the whereabouts of minister Mgar Ston-rtsan are mentioned in addition to those of the emperor. However minister Mgar’s lower status is indicated by the use of the verb mchis ‘stay’, rather than bungs ‘reside’.

It fell on the year of the lamb, the emperor resided in Sa-ra in Sprags, and the Prime Minister [Mgar] Ston-rtsan stayed in the land of Ha-la. (cf. ll. 39[660], 40[661], 43[663], 44[664], 45[665])

The contrast between the verbs bungs and mchis is also made clear in the following entry.


[It fell] on the year of the snake. The emperor resided in Mer-ke and in the summer the Prime Minister [Mgar] Ston-rtsan stayed in Gye-thal-bu-gon in Stih-drun.

In addition to ‘stay’, the verb mchis can also mean ‘go’. In the latter meaning mchis takes the terminative case as opposed to the locative.


In addition to being used with the emperor, the verb bungs is also used to describe the residing of other figures. From 700 until 711 the residence of Khrim-lod, who was in effect ruler of the empire, is mentioned annually or bimannually. Shö dies is 712. From 705 to 707 she resided together with her grandson, the child emperor. In addition, the place of the court (pho-bran) of the emperor is recorded in the following years: 697, 700, 708, 709, 711, 716, 717, 721, 725-729, 733-738, 748, 742-747. As can be seen from these dates, the court becomes increasingly a focus of the text at the expense of the emperor. The only two years in the period 731-747 when the location of the court is not mentioned are years in which the emperor went on campaign; the focus of the text throughout this period is the court, and it is only when the emperor does something noteworthy that attention is drawn to him.

Only once is someone other than the emperor noted as having a court. In 708, the first year in which she resides separately from her grandson emperor, the empress dowager Khrim-la-lod is mentioned as having her own court, while the emperor resides at Sa-ra castle. Later, in the same year the court of the emperor is also mentioned, and Khrim-la-lod resides separately from it.


The political significance of this series of events is impossible to reconstruct with the available data.

One other figures in the Old Tibetan Annals are also said to ‘reside’ (bungs) somewhere. The Chinese princess Jincheng Gongzhubu (金城公主) is implicated in the term btsan-po stons diyul ‘imperial couple’ recorded immediately after her
arrival in Tibet. Her whereabouts are not mentioned thereafter.


The princess Jingcheng Gongzhue (金城公主) went to Sa-tsal in Ra-sa. In the winter the imperial couple resided at Brag-mar. The grandmother stayed at Lhas-sgon-tsal.

Finally, the location of a crown prince is mentioned immediately before his premature death.


[It fell] on the year of the hare. In the summer the emperor went on a campaign to Beg. The son, Lhas-bon, resided at Drom, but while residing [there] he died.

Aside from living emperors, the Annals also record the residence of deceased emperors. In the first three examples -sa is construed also with the verb mkhyod / mkhyod 'be interred' in addition to btags.


The corpse of the emperor grandfather, Khri Sro rtsan, was interred (rin mkhyod) and remained in the funerary chamber of Phibs-ru.


[It fell] on the year of the ox. The corpse (spur) of the emperor, the father, was interred at (mkhyod) and remained in Bla-lam.


[It fell] on the year of the tiger. The corpse (rin) of the emperor, the father, was interred at (mkhyod) and remained in Bla-lam.


The corpse (dpra) of the emperor the father, Khri Hdos-sron, resided in the funeral chamber at Merke.

In the Annals, the locative case is used in the time expression de-nas lo number -sa 'after number years', and with the verbs btags 'reside', mchis 'stay', and mkhyod / mkhyod 'be interred'. The locative is not used with verbs of motion. Only places, and never people or objects, are found in the locative.

3. The terminative case

The terminative case occurs frequently in the Old Tibetan Annals. The majority of nouns marked in the terminative are geographic locations. Such examples of geographic locations can be divided into three groups based on the nature of the accompanying verb. The first group is locations which occur with verbs of motion. The second category is locations which occur with verbs whose semantics entails some attention to place, but are not strictly speaking verbs of motion. The third category is locations which occur with verbs whose semantics appear to have no direct relationship with place. Examples of the terminative with nouns that are not places will be treated as a fourth category.

3.1 Places with verbs of motion

Verbs of motion can be divided into bivalent verbs of motion such as 'go to' or 'move to' and trivalent verbs of motion such as 'send to' or 'exile to'.

3.1.1 Bivalent verbs of motion

The bivalent verbs of motion which accompany locations marked in the terminative case include giregs 'go to', spos/phon 'move to', and phub 'set out on'.

One of the most prominent uses of the terminative case in the Old Tibetan Annals is to mark the destination of movement. The verb giregs is used to describe the movements of the emperor.

[667] (48) yost.buht. lo.la. bstan.po: Hor.man.du. giregs/

The year of the hare, The emperor went to Hor-man.

It fell on the year of the sheep. In the summer the emperor resided in Raison in Lanam, and in the winter went to Na-mams thal.


[703] (144/93) dyun, btsan-po: Hjia, yul-du, giégsi! Hjia, phah! par: lo, giegsi. In the winter the emperor went to the country of Hjiah and sacked Hjia. So one year.

[727] (242/191) yoz, bud. lo-la, btsan-po: dbyar, chab, sríld, la: Ha-ža, yul-du, giégsi! The year of the hare. In the summer the emperor went on a campaign to the land of Ha-ža.

[728] (247/196) bhrungs: lo-la, btsan-po: dbyar: Msho, bgoe: Bolg, giégsi, dren-tsa, giégsi, yul-du, giégsi. The year of the dragon. In the summer the emperor resided in Bol-gas in Msho-bgoe, but went back to the land of Tibet.

The remaining examples of the emperor going places with the verb giégs can be found in the following entries: 542-553 [672-673], 62/10 [675-676], 119/68 [695-696], 119/68 [698-699], 127/76 [700-701], and 131/80 [700-701]. By way of metaphor, when the emperor dies he 'goes to heaven' also using the verb giégs, with heaven in the terminative case.

(15) de, nas: lo, drug, nahl, btsan-po: Khri, Sron-rtsan, dgiun-du, giégsi! Then in six years, emperor Khri Sron-rtsan went to heaven.

[676] (66/14) dgiun, Tshas, bzhug-bra, mas: Khri, Mā:slon. (67/15) dgiun-du, giégsi! In the winter, from Tshas-bzhug, Khri Mā:slon went to heaven.

[704] (147/96) dgiun, btsan-po: chab, sríld-la: Myva, giégsi, pu-las: dgiun-du, giégsi! In the winter the emperor went on a campaign against the Myva, but went to heaven.

The court and princesses also 'go' with the verb giégs. However, members of the royal household other than the emperor do not die using the metaphor dgiun-du giégsi 'go to heaven' but instead with the verb mēhs (cf. Hil 2008).

[674] (58/6) dgiun, pho, brä: Šaṅcgyi, Rabk-tsal, la: giégsi, ší! In the winter the court went to Rabk-tsal in Shans.


[688] (100/49) btsan-mo: Khrim, mgo, mtses: Dags, yul-du, chab, sríld-la, giégsi, phar, lo, chig. Princess Khri-mo-stens went on a political campaign to Dags-yul. So one year.

[710] (176/125) btsan-mo: Kims, šaṅ, Khon, co: Ra-sal, Ša-tsul, du, giégsi! Princess Jincheng Gongyuzu (金城公主) went to Sotsal in Ra-sa.

In contrast to members of the royal family, ministers 'go' with the verb mēhs.


[695] (120/69) bmod, ch, Khri, bhrin, (121/70) Ha-ža, yul-du, mēhs ši! Prime Minister [Mgb] Khri-bhrin went to the land of Ha-ža.


The verb mēhs also means 'stay' in which meaning it is construed with the locative case (cf. section 2.2). In two examples, the emperor 'moves' rather than 'goes'. The different verb is used because, rather than remaining in a single location or an entire season, he changes his mid-season. Interestingly, in the first case the verb is spon and in the second lphos.
The year of the pig. The emperor’s court resided in Na-mar. They sent representatives to each [area] to decide about the pasture lands and fallow lands.

They exiled Sen-go Mon-chu to Tshahi-ban-sna.

3 Places with verbs that emphasize location without implying motion

A number of verbs are constructed with a location marked in the terminative case, where the semantics of the verb somehow draws attention to location upon completion of the verbal action. Admittedly, determining whether a location is part of a verb’s redaction is not a simple problem, and approaching it from the perspective of a priori semantic reflection is far from rigorous. This distinction does, however, provide a convenient way of classifying the large number of verbs which are attested in a clause with a noun in the terminative case.

3.2.1 Convening the council

The most frequent use of the terminative in the Old Tibetas Annals is to mark the location of the council. Starting in 655-655 this information is recorded annually, or semi-annually, and starting in 692-693 the council in Mdo-sna is recorded in addition to the main council held in central Tibet. Either a minister in the agnitive convenes the council in the absolutive at a place in the terminative with the bivalent verb bshas, or the council in the absolutive convenes at a place in the terminative with the monovalent verb bshis. Both of these expressions occur so frequently in the text, that it is necessary only to present a representative example of each verb.

Prime Minister [Mgar] Bisan-sna convened the council at Re-skam in Dzu-n-sod.

In early winter the council convened at Ruy-byin in Dlag. In late winter it convened at Mdan.

3.2.2 Military expeditions

The terminative case is used with the verb drod to indicate the destination of military campaigns.
Minister [Mgar] Bitsun-sha led a military campaign into Turkestan.

[686] (93/42) blos. Khri hbrin.gyi. » Drug. yu. dren. ! » bgsis
(94/43) bgsis. ba. last. phyi. daltsel.
Minister Khri-hbrin said, “let us lead a military campaign to Turkestan” but this was postponed.

In the winter Prime Minister Khri-hbrin led a military campaign to greater and lesser Tsong-ka and seized the great Chinese general Thug-pa-si.

In the autumn the emperor departed, and led a military campaign to Ga-chu.

[701] (134/83) Zon. cu. rnam. The chu. drenstel.
They led military campaigns to Zon-cu and Thechu-chu.

Ibon Da-gybal [Bitsun-zun] and Prime Minister [Dubs] Khri-gzigs, the two of them, led a military campaign to Hbu-śin-kun and returned. So one year.

The remaining examples of leading a military campaign to a place marked in the terminative are: 96/45 [687], 253/202-254/203 [729], and 275/224-276/225 [737]. An expression similar to ‘lead a military campaign’ (dra ma dran) is ‘battle’ (gyu-sul sprad) occurs less frequently, with only two examples in the text.

Prime Minister [Mgar] Khri-hbrin went to the country of Ha-za and battled with the Chinese general Hbu-śin at Stag-la. He killed many Chinese. So one year.

Minister [Bzal] Skyes-btsan Ldon-tsab and others went to battle at Mu-le-cu-le and massacred many Chinese.

3.2.3 Less frequently attested verbs which emphasize location without implying motion.

A number of other verbs, which semantically emphasize location, but without implying motion occur in the text. Each of these verbs occurs only once or twice, so it is convenient to treat them together. In two examples the birth place of a future emperor is marked in the terminative case.

The emperor, the son Khri Hdu-sro, was born at Lha-lha in Sregs.

It fell on the year of the dragon. In the spring Rgyal-bgs. ru-bzhag-wa was born in Kho-brn-tsa.

The verb bzhag ‘arise’ might be thought of as semantically not far from ‘be born’. A lack of clarity about the meaning of the noun rdon-myig however, makes the following example hard to analyze.

[666] (47) Zhad. mdsh. rdon. myig. bzhag. lo. gshis.
A rdon-myig (? ) arose in Zhad-mdsh. So one year.

in addition to the place where he resides and the place where he goes being marked in the terminative in one example the place where the emperor is delayed is also marked with this case.

[662] (41) kyi. lo. la. btsun. po. Rkod. g. yug. du. bsgs. mdzad. lhavi.
The year of the dog. The emperor was delayed (bgs mdzad) at Rkod-g-yug.

The location where a vassal of the emperor offers a banquet is also marked with the terminative case.

The revenue officer Lho Hbrin-po Rgyal-sum-sreg offered a banquet with libations at Nen-kar. So one year.

In one instance the location where a trial is held is marked in the terminative case.
3.3 Places with verbs whose semantics appear unrelated to place

A considerably heterogeneous group of verbs occurs with places in the terminative case for which the location seems rather incidental to the verbal action. This implies that, like -de in Japanese or ‘at’ in English, the terminative is the default case for marking the locations of actions.

The first mention of writing in the Old Tibetan Annals, and the only instance of the verb bris ‘write’ in the text, occurs in the entry for 555, only five years after dated entries begin. The place where Mgar Ston-rtsan wrote the text of the laws is marked in the terminative case.


With the new technology of writing available, the government of Tibet made use of it in making accounts of various administrative functions. The locations of such accounting (ritus) are marked in the terminative case.

[699] (130/79) Sregs.gmsi/ Byas.tsal.du/ bkyon. bbb.gyi/ nor. brtis.par. lo/ ghing/ At Byas-tsal in Sregs they made an account of the wealth of the those who had been disinherited. So one year.


Another administrative function, mchos byigs ‘carry out administration’, is the verbal expression semantically unrelated to place which occurs most frequently in the Annals with a noun in the terminative case. The Tibetan imperial government carried out the administration of a region when that territory was first incorporated into the empire and intermittently thereafter. The specific location where the administration is performed is marked by the terminative case.
which reprimands are brought down on someone (bkyon phab) is marked in the terminative case.

After that, at Glii-rits-tsul, they brought reprimands down upon Khu Ma-kun-po-rje Lha-zun.

Another passage details the deposition from the throne (rgyal-sa-nas phab) of a newly installed emperor. When emperor Khri Hdas-rong bstan died, a conflict over who should succeed him took place between the emperor’s older son Lha Bal-po, who claimed the throne for himself, and the late emperor’s politically powerful mother Khri-ma-lod, who supported the claim of the emperor’s infant son Rgyal-gsung-rje. In 705 the forces of Khri-ma-lod succeeded in overthrowing Lha Bal-po, and the location of their victory is marked in the terminative case.

At Poh Lag-rin they deposed from the throne the emperor, the elder brother Lha Bal-pho.

In the following example the emperor makes a pronouncement (b dus lha) at Sen-ka, which is marked in the terminative case. The text strongly implies that the content of this pronouncement was a death sentence for Mgar Gun-ron. The location of the preceding trial is thus different from the place where judgment was rendered.


The locations where people die or are killed are also marked in the terminative case. For the semantic differences among the verbs bsam ’kill’, btsan ’kill’, and gun ’die’, compare Hill (2008).

In Mdo-smad, Kam Khri-brtan Byel-dabe was killed by homicide (thon-mnyi), and they were avenged. So one year.

[670] (51) ji.ma.khol.du: Rgya. men.po. bsus.phar. lo. gchig/
They killed many Chinese at Ji-ma-khol. So one year.

It was necessary to prepare for this successful battle by building barracks nearby. The terminative case is also used to mark the location of the construction site.

[668] (49) ji.ma.khol.du. dgra.kzer. btsi.gs.par. lo. ci.gi/
They built a military barracks at Ji-ma-khol. So one year.

In the next example it is not where an enemy is killed, but where a prime minister dies, that is marked in the terminative case.

[667] (48) bman. che. Ston.rtsan. Rgya.par. gsum.bar. lo. gchig/
Prime Minister Ston-rtsan died at Rgya-pa. So one year.

Although the Annals takes note of the deaths of people from all walks of life, it only reports the funerals of Tibetan nobility. In those instances in which a location is specified it is the traditional burial ground of Pyin-ba, marked in the terminative case.

They performed the funeral for the emperor, the father, at Pyin-ba. So one year.

In the winter they performed the funeral for the emperor, the father, at Pyin-ba.

They performed the grandmother Khri-ma-lod’s funeral at Pyin-ba.

The locations of several other actions are similarly marked with the terminative case in the Old Tibetan Annals. At three points in the text the location at which foreign dignitaries pay their respects to the Tibetan emperor appears in the terminative.

At the place of the emperor, the Chinese emissary Likhen and emissaries of Tajik and Turgi paid homage.
In another instance it is not foreign dignitaries who appear before the emperor, but four of his own cavalry regiments, who parade before him for inspection.

When not preoccupied with affairs of state, the emperor traditionally enjoys the pastime of hunting yaks in the north. On one occasion the has some success; the text mentions the location of his exploits in the terminative case.

Although the predominate use of the terminative is to mark destinations and locations, in other instances the noun in the terminative is the state of one of the verbal arguments after the occurrence of some event. In such cases it can usually be translated as in English.

3.4.1 Political offices

When people are considered by virtue of their role, this role is put in the terminative. This construction occurs with two verbs, 'emar 'appoint' and bkah 'proclaim'.
3.4.2 As a bride (bug-mar)

Perhaps it would not be wholly out of place to also regard brides as a kind of political appointment in the Old Tibetan empire. In contrast to kings and ministers however, brides are not ‘appointed’ (bcug) or ‘proclaimed’ (bka’ha stod) but rather ‘go’ (gregs) or are ‘sent’ (byun).

[689] (102/50) btsan mo: Khris lai ston Ha-la, rje la: bug mar: (102/51) gregs/ Princess Khris-lai went as a bride to the lord of the Ha-la.


[740] (282/231) je la: Khris ma lod, Bru la, rje la: bug mar, (283/232) byun/ Princess Khris ma lod was sent as a bride to the lord of Bru-la.

3.4.3 Names

When a name is conferred on someone the name is put in the terminative case.

[685] (91/40) btsan po: Khris, (92/41) lha ba ston da, mthun, gothl/ The emperor bestowed the name Khris (lha-ston).

[712] (184/133) btsan po, mthun, Rgyal: Gsung ru lasi (185/134) Khris, lde gsung rtsen da, gothl/ The emperor’s name was changed from Rgyal Gsung ru to Khris Lde-gsung-rtsen.

3.4.4 Numbers and quantities

When the action of a verb results in a change to the number or quantity of one of the verbal arguments, the new number or quantity is put in the terminative case.

[692] (110/59) ston: btsan po, byun: Kar ma, btsan po: Byun lha, ston: btsan po, byun: Kar ma, btsan po: (111/60) drug da, bka’/ It fell on the year of the dragon. The emperor resided at Kar ma and they convened the summer council at Ston-btsan-po. They appointed the great governors to [the number of] six.

[726] (239/188) mthun, rgyad la: btsan po, byun: phag: zugs gyi, rlung, byun: (240/189) bka’/ They dispatched representatives to carry out the reduction of great governors from eight to four.

[728] (240/190) mthun, (250/199) chen po: rgyad las: btsan po, byun: phag: la, khram ba/ They made the tally of ranks reducing the great governors from eight to four.

[707] (163/112) lha, rgyad, xam ba, rje: byun/ They transformed the [heads of] five hundred into heads of little chilariaches.

3.4.5 Purpose of a journey

When a journey is undertaken for a specific reason, the purpose of the journey is marked in the terminative case. In three instances the purpose of the journey is ‘for sport’ (roltn) and in one case ‘for plunder’ (byun-yor)

[698] (126/75) btsan po: Khris, lha ba ston da, btsan po: byun, lha ba, roltn, gregs/ It fell on the year of the dog. In the summer the emperor went north for sport.

[724] (231/180) byun lha, btsan po: byun, roltn, gregs, khram ba, byun, lha ba, roltn, (232/181) byun, lha ba, roltn, khram ba/ The year of the rat. In the summer the emperor resided in Spel and went north for sport. At Klo-lie Du-ra, he made sport with wild yaks, and put wild yaks in fetters.

[744] (295/244) sprets: lha ba, btsan po: byun, roltn, gregs, khram ba, byun, lha ba, roltn, khram ba/ The year of the monkey. In the summer the emperor went north for sport, but returned. He sent the court to Ra-mthar.

[675] (64/12) lha, btsan po, byun: sprets, byun, roltn, gregs, khram ba, byun, lha ba, byun, byun, khram ba/ Minister [Mgar] Btsan-spa carried out the administration at Zan-lun at Gun in Zims. [He] went to Tarkestan for plunder.

In contrast to sport and plunder, the phrase ‘go on campaign’ (chi’d-srid-la gregs), which I analyze also as the purpose of a journey, requires the allative case.
3.4.6 Recipient of money

The following example is the only case in the Old Tibetan Annals when a beneficiary or recipient is found in the terminative.

By order of the emperor, they removed the salaries (gle:sba) of the chilnarchy, and transferred (this) to separate taxpayers.

The choice of the terminative here is presumably required by the verb spags. The taxpayers are here viewed as the destination of the transferred money. Consequently, this use of the terminative does not need to be distinguished from its use to mark the destination of motion verbs.

3.4.7 Fetters

One does not feel fully comfortable labeling 'fetters' as either the destination of a movement, the location of an action, or the capacity in which something surves.

The year of the rat. In the summer the emperor resided in Spel and went north for sport. At Kho-ts Dr-ru, he made sport with wild yaks, and put wild yaks in fetters.

The verb used here, bcugs, is also that used for appointing ministers. Perhaps the best analysis is to simply see this verb as requiring the terminative, whether it means 'put a yak in fetters' or 'appoint someone as minister'.

3.5 Adverbial uses of the terminative

There remain two examples of the terminative in the Old Tibetan Annals left unanalyzed. Both instances are obviously derived from the use of the terminative to indicate direction. But have the character of a location figee, and appear to function adverbially.

[686] (95/43) Snis: man.chen.rts. (95/44) gis.gyi, sbyin.rts; blo-bpar: le. g cig/
They levied the register of agricultural fields of the fields from Snis downward. So one year.

The year of the hare. In the summer the emperor went on a campaign to the land of Ha-za. On the way, Dubs Sum-po-skye was the subject of an accusation.

In the first example man-chad-du means 'downward' and in the second example lasdu means 'on the way'.

3.6 Conclusion: use of the terminative

The primary function of the terminative is to mark locations of action and destinations of motion. These two functions do not need to be distinguished, but rather can both be seen as instances of the terminative as the most basic case of location. In contrast, the allative is never used for locations, and the locative is used only with specific verbs that mean 'remain, stay'. Apart from its use for locations, the terminative marks the roles that people take such as king (rgyal-po), prime minister (blo.glen-pa), or bride (byug-mur). The most interesting use of the terminative is with 'go for sport' (rola.glegs) and 'go for plunder' (lha-bzang nyi-rigs) in which it seems to be in competition with the allative as it is used in the phrase 'go on a campaign' (chub-srid-ta glegs). This point deserves further research.

4. Conclusion

Uses of the allative, locative, and terminative in the Old Tibetan Annals

Although there is no sound empirical methodology to rigorously establish the overall semantic structure of an individual case, in order to demonstrate that two cases have distinct semantics it suffices to show that a listing in the tradition of the school grammars of the various uses of the one case as little or no overlap with a similar listing for the other cases. A look through the relatively fine-grained lists of uses of the allative, locative, and terminative in the Old Tibetan Annals presented here it is clear that these three cases are not as semantically similar as the choice of the Tibetan grammatical tradition to treat them as one case would suggest.

The allative case (-la) is primarily used with sentient creatures and is never used with physical locations. This case appears in specific constructions with the nouns rin 'duration', chub-srid 'campaign', and blo-gyad 'allegation', and is required in the region of the verbs bab 'fall on', phul 'give to', spro 'transfer to', rdags 'reduce to', and chugs 'be attached to'. Finally, the allative can be used in place of the ablative, in circumstances that are not yet understood. The locative
case (-na) is never used with sentient creatures but always with places; however, it never occurs with verbs of motion. The primary function of the terminative case
(r-, ru-, sa-, tu-, du) is to mark locations of action and destinations of motion. Apart from its use for locations, the terminative expresses the capacity in which another noun serves ‘as king’ (rygal-por), ‘as bride’ (dag-mar), etc. The primary uses of these three cases are quite distinct from each other. Only two situations occur where the allative and the terminative are used similarly.

Both the allative and the terminative can be used to mark the objective of a journey.

Allative


Terminative

[698] (126/75) kyi. lo.la bab.sie/ bsan.po: dbya.r. byan. ro.din. glevse/ It fell on the year of the dog. In the summer the emperor went north for sport.

Both the allative and the terminative can also be used for a recipient.

Allative

[715] (191) dgun. hdam. Mdh.kar.du: bion.chen.pho: Khri.gzigs.gyi: bdadse/ Grubs. (192) khris.dam.mna.tan. gyes. mar.gun. pa: chen.pho. bdmun: Khri.rnam.rje.rtsas.bzer.gla: phud.bar. lo. chigs/ In the winter the council was convened by Prime Minister Khri-gzigs in Møi-ka. When Grubs-khris-dam-died, [his] subjects [and] the great wealth were given to Khri-sum-rje-rtsas-bzer.

Terminative

[746] (304/253) bsan.po: bkas/ stei. adehi: gles: thogs.la khrul.pa: gud. spugse/ By order of the emperor, they removed the salarines (gleybs) of the chillarchy, and transferred [this] to separate taxpayers.

This use of the allative is typical, whereas this use of the terminative is quite marginal.

The practically minded philologist, perhaps unimpressed by methodological quibbling about how case is defined or how semantics is studied, will be most convinced of the need to separate these cases if a failure to do so would lead to a mistake in textual interpretation. Meaning ‘to stay’ with the locative and ‘to go’ with the terminative, the verb mchis elegantly provides such an instance.


[693] (114/63) blo.bce. khris.khris. Hs. yud.du. mchis.par. lo. chigs/ Prime Minister [Mgar] Khri-khris went to the land of Hs. So, one year.

References


Li Jiang and Weldon South Coblin (1987). A study of the old Tibetan inscriptions. (Special
publications 91) Taipei: Academia Sinica.
Press.
Schmidt, Isaac Jakob / Шмидт, Исаак Яков (1839), Грамматика Тибетского Языка /
Grammatik Tibetskogo Jazyka. St Petersburg: Императорская Академию
Haya / Izdannaja Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk.
Schott, Johannes (1857), Tibetische Nationalgrammatik des jami-cu-pa und Rugs-pa-yul-ba
Book Company.
Takashi, Tsugiharu (1905), Old Tibetan Contracts from Central Asia. Daio Shuppan.
Tournadre, Nicolas (1996), L’ergativité en tibétain; approche morphosyntaxique de la langue
parlée. Louvain: Peeters.
Tournadre, Nicolas and Sangda Dorje (2003), Manuel de Tibetain Standard: langue et
Whitney, William Dwight (1800), A Sanscrit grammar, including both the classical language,
and the older dialects, of Veda and Brahman. Leipzig: Brethof and Harriell.

TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE AND UNAMBIGUOUS
TRANSLITERATION SCHEME OF TIBETAN

YOSHIRO ISAKA

Since the beginning of Tibetan studies, many transliteration systems for Tibetan in
Latin script have been proposed and used. (Kitamura-Nishida 1960) Among
them, the most popular by far has been the so-called “Wylie system” which was
proposed by Turrell Wylie. (Wylie 1959) The single most salient characteristic of
this system is the complete absence of diacritical marks, which makes typing easy,
and this has been the main reason for its popularity. However, the standard Wylie
system has several limitations, and also is not comprehensive.

Therefore “in a collaborative effort to extend the Wylie system”, and “in order
to promote a standard format for information exchange dealing with Tibetan texts
and language”, the Tibet and Himalayan Library (THL) has proposed Extended
Wylie Transliteration Scheme (EWTS) “in order to provide a completely
comprehensive method for transliterating all forms of Tibetan literature using
the Latin alphabet”. With the burgeoning of digital technology in the humanities,
the EWTS (version: 2.0, Status: Working Draft, Date: 2004-01-07. This is the
version which I consulted on the web site of the THL for writing this note) is a
most welcome and necessary initiative. At the stage of “provisional proposal”,
the scheme is fairly comprehensive with several significant improvements over
the original standard Wylie system. Till now however there has been no consensus
among the authors of the EWTS “plan to systematically revise it as necessary in
coordination with critical feedback from Tibetan scholars and Tibetan computing
experts from around the world”. Under these circumstances, as I personally find
that the scheme as it is now is inconsistent in certain points and not “completely
comprehensive”, I would like to make the following four suggestions and
remarks.