THE TIBETAN UNDERSTANDING OF KARMAN:
SOME PROBLEMS OF TIBETAN CASE MARKING

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For western scholars, who speak accusative languages, it has always
been a matter of fact that the Sanskrit term karman for the ‘second
case’ has to be understood as the ‘accusative’ case marker or as a
case-relation corresponding to the syntactic category of Direct Object.
The application of the term karman in its Tibetan translation as las,
byabah yul, or kassu bya ba to the directional case marker ka (and its
equivalents), used for RECIPIENTS, GOALS, and LOCATIONS, thus
seems to be a gross error on the part of the Tibetan grammarians, due to
their blind imitation of a prestigious model that can by no means be ap-
plied to an ergative language (Tournadre 1990: 192, 195, 1996: 347),
except so as to create a new artificial language, which has not much to
do with the “primitive” language spoken by “nomadic barbarians” (Bacot
1928: I-IV, 11, 1946: 7), in any case a futile attempt “to make Tibetan
fit the Procrustean bed of Sanskrit” (Tillemans 1991: 319).

This would imply, however, (a) that learned Tibetan scholars were
acting like apes or parrots without any linguistic insight into their own
language, or at least (b) that they did not understand the essentials of
the Indian grammatical tradition, but also (c) that their teachers were
not able or not willing to teach them these essentials. These are three
assumptions which I am not ready to accept.1 Even more, terminologi-
cal misuse, i.e. the employment of terms with a narrow definition for
only distantly related phenomena, is so common in modern linguistics,
that we were hardly allowed to blame the Tibetan scholars for an ap-
parent terminological confusion or shift in meaning.

Would it not make more sense to look at the problem with the eyes
of a native Tibetan speaker, for whom the syntactic categories Subject
and Direct Object do not exist (or only in a very weak form)? Looking
for similarities between his language and the Sanskrit model, the
grammarian might be tempted to take secondary functions of a par-

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1 Verhagen (2000: 322–337) notes various points where the Tibetan grammarians
did not follow the Indic grammatical model but drew upon more philosophical con-
cepts, developing these further and introducing new elements—certainly a case of
“enculturation” (p. 336), although not always successful.
ticular Sanskrit kāraka-relation to be the main functions, or at least as being more prominent than they are from our point of view. This, of course, might still be considered to be an ‘error’, but one that is more plausible and even permissible, given the worldwide lack of theories on accusative and ergative languages in premodern times.

In fact, the functions of karman are multiple, and we cannot a priori presume that the Tibetan understanding of karman has something to do with the syntactic category Direct Object or with its prototypical logical-semantic instantiation PATIENT, because the Sanskrit kāraka-relation karman itself is neither a syntactic category nor does it correspond solely to the semantic role PATIENT.

Furthermore, the second complement of a small group of Tibetan verbs receives a directional marker, while in Sanskrit and other Indo-European languages, and even in Mongolian (Kaschewsky 1978: 173f.), it would be in the accusative case and would thus fall under the syntactic category of Direct Object, despite its inherent directional semantics. There is also some evidence that in earlier stages of the Tibetan language directional markers could be used for the PATIENT in order to emphasize its identity or in contrast to other entities (defocusing use).

1. PROLEGOMENA: THE DIFFERENT MEANINGS OF LAS IN THE SUMCUPA AND THE RTAGSKYI HJUGPA

It may be noted, right from the beginning, that the grammatical term las, like its Sanskrit equivalent karman, first of all means ‘deed’ or ‘work/activity’, e.g. the activity of going as well as the process of growing, or a complex ‘work’ and its result such as cutting wood or being in pieces (cf. Pangzhen Norbu Bsamgrub 1993: 102f., 200). Besides this common denotation, two distinct technical usages are found in the commentary literature on the two root texts Sumcupa (=SCP) and Rtagskyi hjugpa (=RKH).

1. In the context of the ‘kāraka section’ of SCP stanzas 8c–11a and 14b/c,² the original term las is typically replaced by byabahi

² Counting each stanza as having four verses, starting always after the initial verses of praise, with yi ge döl käl in SCP and with pho yi ge in RKH. 1 follow the text as given in Situ Panchen 1744 (ed. 1993: 1–5) and Dnyulchü Dhammacāda 1806 (ed. 1993: 2–5) for the SCP, and Dnyulchü Dhammacāda (pp. 5–8) for RKH (the text given in Situ Panchen, pp. 6–10 has one verse inserted between 7d and 8a). There is some disagreement among Western scholars upon how to refer to the texts. Tillemans
yul ‘location/direction of the activity’ or lassu byaba ‘activity towards/for a work’. Contemporary authors usually avoid the term las, even in the common sense, or feel compelled to explicitly gloss this (e.g., Panggung Norbu Bsamgrub 1993: 102ff).

2. By contrast, in the bka’gigion section of RKH stanzas 10d–11d,2 las is not used as an expression of a kārakā-relation, but rather in its common sense: ‘the work/activity to be done’ byabahi las, ‘the work/activity of the actor’ byedpahi las. This general meaning may be narrowed so that las denotes the ‘essence of the sphere of the action to be accomplished by the actor’ byedpappos bsgrubpar byabahi yulgyi dpöspa, as the ‘essence of the work’ laskiy dpöspa, the ‘essence of the reason for acting’ lasrgyi dpöspa, or the ‘essence of the sphere of activity’ byabahi yulgyi dpöspa (Panggung Norbu Bsamgrub 1993: 199).3 This “essential” entity can be understood as the PATIENT or TARGET, in both cases as an inseparable part of the work itself.

Panggung Norbu Bsamgrub (1993: 209) thus distinguishes between (a) the ‘principal’ (gtsobor) meaning of las in the SCP, namely ‘the place of the insertion of the seven individual ladon particles’4 ladon

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2 (1989 and 1991) quotes stanza 11a–d of RKH as “verse twelve”, including the introductory verse 10d (Tillemans 1991: 322), while Verhagen (2000: 236 and passim following Miller) refers to the single verses in question as “TK 11–15”, which means that the preceding 39 (or 42) verses must have been grouped into units of variable size. Miller (1991: 372), while blaming Tillemans for having “consistently miscited” these verses, refers to them as “sl. 11–15”, thus as metrical units (slokas or ‘stanzas’) so that one could have expected that the grouping should have been four by four. Miller and Verhagen, however, follow the edition of Bacot (1928) where “sloka” is apparently used in the sense of stitra (a logical unit). Tillemans’ argument for counting the four verses in question as one unit is based on the fact that they are commented upon all together by Dzulchok Dharmabhadra. As the discussion shows, the segmentation in Tibetan commentaries might not always be the same, and it might thus be more convenient to follow the simple principle of counting four verses (or lines) as one stanza (sloka). I do not see any reason for deviating from this principle, particularly as the Tibetan editions usually do not show any structuring of the text into logical units to which one could refer unambiguously.

3 The term byaba byul is likewise employed in quite different ways in the SCP and RKH (cf. Mudenrab Hodgson 1996: 165).

4 The seven ladon particles consist of three groups, namely the locative marker na, the dative-locative marker ka, and the five allomorphs of the locative-purposive marker nhuwa-rwa (also known as ‘terminative’ in the sense of what is now called ‘allative’). Based on Samgupsa 8c/d, Tibetan grammarians traditionally treat them as being functionally more or less equivalent and interchangeable. Only with respect to the function deñid, most commentators would deny the applicability of na and la. Rather exceptionally, one of the earlier texts, the Akhargopho khargyan assigns the three groups to three different functions: {nl} for the ‘second’, {la for the ‘fourth’, and na for the ‘seventh case’ (verses 122, 130, 140, Thupten Kunga Chashab [2000: 203–210]), a distinction that comes quite close to the facts in Old and Classical Tibetan, each of the three markers has one or more particular functions not (or rather infre-
rnampa bdun gyi phrad hjug pa'i yul and (b), in the context of the RKH, an ‘entity las in terms of the activity to be accomplished’ bsogs par bya ba'i laski dpuspo, that is ‘las in terms of the three [entities] to-be-done, doing, and work’ bya byed las gsung gyi las to which ‘generally’ spyir gta byasna or ‘in most cases’ man cbea las abangis ‘the ladon particles do not apply’ ladongyi phrad mhjuggo. A somewhat different approach is presented in section 4. below. For Tibetan grammarians the difference in meaning must have been obvious and unproblematic, as it is hardly ever expressed explicitly. Perhaps for this reason, the terminological incongruence has not been taken sufficiently into account in the Western literature.\(^5\)

The RKH also contains a ‘kāraka section’, 21b–24d, which is however only cursorily treated by Situ Paṇchen or other commentators. The case names and the kāraka-relations are merely listed and the

\(^5\) The vagueness of the term las is noted, but the translation as “object (of the act)” (Tillemaans 1989: 7, note 13) or even “direct object” (Verhagen 2000: 218, note 31) is apparently solely derived from its use in RKH.
functions are not further commented. The kāraka-relation of the ‘second case’ is again termed las in the technical sense.

2. THE INDIAN KĀRAKA-RELATIONS

At first sight, kāraka-relations appear as purely semantic relations between an event and the participants in the event, independent of the morphological realisation. The employment of case morphemes is only one of several possibilities to express kāraka-relations. First of all, the central relations kartr and karman are expressed by the person-related verb endings of the verb (in combination with its diathesis) and are only indicated by a morphological case when not already expressed by a person ending. In the active sentence, the relation kartr ‘actor’, i.e. the prototypical AGENT, is expressed by a personal ending but, in fact, not by the nominative or ‘first case’ (as this might be also used for the PATIENT in the passive sentence). In the passive sentence, the relation kartr is not expressed by a person ending, but by the instrumental or ‘third case’. By contrast, the relation karman is not expressed in the active sentence by a personal ending, but by the accusative or ‘second case’, whereas in the passive sentence the relation is expressed by a personal ending, but not by the ‘first case’. Kāraka-relations are also expressed by other means, such as compounds, deverbal derivations, or infinitive constructions (Butzenberger 2000: 118, 130f., Verhagen 2000: 279, 282f.).

Presuming that the kāraka-relation karman is identical with and only with the semantic role PATIENT in the strict sense (transformed by an AGENT) or at least with a comparable role (e.g. created by an AGENT), Indian case grammar should not have provided any problems for the Tibetan grammarians, and it should not have been necessary to associate the relation karman/las with any of the Tibetan case particles, especially not with the group of directional particles, which are subsumed under the heading ladön ‘having the meaning/function of la’. But unfortunately, the kāraka-relation karman cannot be identified with the semantic role PATIENT alone.

Although the number of kāraka-relations (6) is less than the number of case morphemes (8), the definition of the kāraka-relations is de facto based on the employment of the case morphemes, and a semantic or functional distinction is given only with respect to the instrumental or ‘third case’ in terms of kartr ‘actor’ and karaya ‘instrument or medium’. The whole range of semantic roles is, in fact, not re-
lected by the small number of kāraka-relations. E.g., the kāraka-
relation karṭṛ does not account for the differences in valency or con-
trol (e.g. AGENT vs. UNDERGOER or EXPERIENCER), and the kāraka-
relation karman is used indifferently for whatever takes an accusative
marking in an active sentence (which is, in fact, the only thing that the
various complements discussed in section 3. below have in common).6

If the kāraka-relations were, thus, merely syntactic or formal cate-
gories, more or less abstract mathematical signs without any meaning
(Butzenberger 2000: 120f.), they could be transferred freely and it
would not really matter that the Tibetans have made ā—for our
taste—wrong association. We would only have to exchange the em-
barassing terminology for a neutral one. However, despite all tenden-
cies of abstraction in the Pāñinian grammar, the terminology used for
the kāraka-relations is loaded with meaning, and the Tibetan gram-
marians, following the somewhat more semantically oriented Buddhist
schools of their time, have based their own terminology on that very
semantic content and do not treat the kāraka-relations as empty ele-
ments in a rather arbitrary syntactic calculus.

They also take up the possibility of making functional distinctions
like that between karṭṛ und karapa7 and set up a three- (RKH) or five-
fold (SCP) distinction of the functions of the ladon particles, namely
(a) dynamic, oriented or located: las (Skr. karman, alternatively āpya
or kriyāpya ‘desired (as action)’), which is later replaced by hyababhi
yul ‘location/direction of activity’ or lassu byaba ‘activity towards a
work’, (b) static location: rtengnas (SCP) or gnas (RKH) ‘location’,
later also gnaṣgzi ‘local base’ (Skr. adhikaraṇa or ādhāra, the ‘sev-
enth case’), (c) purposive or benefactive:8 ched ‘aim, goal’ (SCP) or
shyin ‘charity’ (RKH; Skr. (tād)arthya ‘purpose’ or sampradāna ‘reci-

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6 E.g., not all entities classified as karman could form a compound of the type
PATIENT-AGENT; e.g., PATIENT-AGENT, e.g. there is no *tatiyakarṣa ‘sun-seer’
(Cerdona 1976: 254-256). See also note 11 below.

7 Originally, this particular distinction is not realised; there is only one term: ‘ac-
tor’, byedpapa (SCP) or byedpa (RKH). The commentary literature distinguishes, ter-
minologically not very convincingly, between byedpapa ‘actor’ vs. byedpa ‘in-
strument’ or byedpapa gsobob ‘primary actor’ vs. byedpapa phulba ‘secondary actor’.

8 In relation to these two terms there must have been, right from the beginning, a
discussion about who is the real BENEFICIARY, the RECIPIENT to which an object is
transferred, e.g. the tree to which the water is drawn, or the AGENT who draws benefit
from the prospering of the tree. The author of the 9th century treatise Gnas bryad
chenpo ‘Eight [linguistic] topics, in great detail’, Lee Khyiṣhrug, obviously belonging
to the ched ‘faction’, opts for the second solution, thus although the RECIPIENT
is marked by a ladon particle, the meaning (don) is that the AGENT has the profit (Ver-
lagen 2000: 287f.).
pient', the 'fourth case'), (d) abstract correlation: deśīd 'identity' (only SCP),\(^9\) and (e) temporal correlation: tsheskabs (Skr. kāla; only SCP).\(^10\)

Verhagen (2000: 291f.) argues that the Tibetan grammarians have conflated the semantic level with the kāraka level, which he describes in accordance with Cardona (1976: 218–222, 340, note 279) as "an intermediate level between the morphological and the semantic levels" (Verhagen 2000: 279), "allowing for bilateral mapping in (and from) both the semantic and morphological levels" (Verhagen 2000: 292). This is true only in part. If one does not want to have an incautious number of semantic roles along with each and every verb, but a limited set of prototypical roles, this cannot be achieved on a purely semantic level but solely on an intermediate level so that the semantic prototypes are defined at least partly according to their syntactic behaviour, e.g. with respect to morphological case marking. The Sanskrit kāraka-relation kārman thus categorises "participants [...] that would semantically be eligible for different classification" (Cardona 1976: 222) according to their syntactic behaviour,\(^11\) and so does the Tibetan kāraka-relation las. But the Tibetan kāraka-relation las actually forms a subclass of kārman, containing only those elements that have a directional component, as indicated by a directional marker. Syntactic behaviour overrides the inherent semantic notions of the

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\(^9\) Possibly this was intended to account for complex expressions of the type ūmm-su-len ‘to take to heart, memorise, learn’ and more particularly for cognate constructions of the type mera-ḥbar ‘to burn’ where the meaning of the verb is inherent in the complement and vice versa (cf. Yamaguchi 1990: 251–257). Many authors, however, also include the identity of substance (in the case of an outward transformation, particularly auxiliary constructions with adverbials of the type become/change into x or make/transform into x) or identity of class membership. In face of the manifold grammatical traditions in Tibet, it does not seem to be very useful to classify this plurality of concepts as "confusion" (p. 251) and to sort it into "correct usages" and "misunderstandings" (p. 256), even less so as it is not entirely clear whether deśīd was meant as a distinct category in the SCP. Some Tibetan grammarians have argued that it is used in a non-technical sense, de khaṇa ḍīd, which according to Miller (1989: 199) would simply mean that tsheskabs 'time' is the same or a subclass of 'location'. One might perhaps counter that this objection has been raised merely to level off the apparent discrepancy between SCP and RKH.


\(^11\) E.g., a participant of a verb that shows different case frames with and without preverbs is assigned a kāraka-relation that corresponds to the particular case frame and not to its semantic role, which remains identical. E.g., the mountain where somebody dwells takes the ‘seventh case’ as a LOCATION with the plain verb parvate ḍeṭe ‘is seated on the mountain’; it is still a LOCATION when the verb is used with a pre-verb, parvataṃ adhyātate ‘is seated on the mountain’; but it takes the ‘second case’ and thus becomes a kārman (cf. Cardona 1976: 216). A similar reclassification may happen to an INSTRUMENT spoken of as ‘actor’ karti (Cardona 1976: 219).
constituents in question as well as the seemingly descriptive meaning (and the etymology) of the designation itself. We will see that a merely semantic approach to distinguish the functions of the \textit{ladon} particles with respect to the ‘fourth case’ and the ‘seventh case’ remains unsatisfactory, particularly as the descriptive terms are open to interpretation.

3. \textbf{SECONDARY FUNCTIONS OF THE SANSKRIT ‘SECOND CASE’}

The Sanskrit ‘second case’ indicates not only the typical Direct Object of transitive verbs—\textit{vikriyātmaka} (PATIENT in a strict sense, i.e. the thing transformed), \textit{nirvṛtta} (PATIENT in a wider sense, i.e. the thing created)—but inherently directional complements such as the GOAL of a movement or the content of a sensual perception (\textit{prāpya}, the thing reached), the focus or TARGET of attention (\textit{viṣayabhūta}), the focus or TARGET of affections (\textit{vyāpya}, the thing enjoyed or detested), and the RESULT of transformation (\textit{vikāra}), to use a Jainist distinction (Butzenberger 1995: 44–49). In fact, the alternative localistic designation \textit{bhābāśī yūl} ‘location of the action’ corresponds fairly well to the secondary directional function of the Sanskrit ‘second case’ as in the sentence \textit{grāmaṁ gacchati}, ‘s/he goes to/into the village’. The Sanskrit ‘second case’ is also employed for the RECIPIENT or the SOURCE in double ‘accusative’ constructions.

Tibetan and other Tibeto-Burman languages have quite a few agentic and inagentine verbs, the second complement of which receives a directional marker—typically the dative-locative marker \textit{la}—but would be treated as a Direct Object in Sanskrit or in other Indo-European languages, such as \textit{accuse, beat, observe [+ctr]} or \textit{like, fear [-CTR]} (see also section 6.2 below). Many of the secondary functions of the Sanskrit ‘second case’ can be related to these Tibetan TARGETS:

3.1. \textit{prāpya} (\textit{attainment of goal})

\begin{tabular}{ll}
SKR & \textit{grāmaṁ gacchati} \\
CT & \textit{grojla'cha hyrobya'nu} \\
    & ‘is going to the village’ \\
SKR & \textit{ādityaṁ paśyati} \\
    & ‘sees the sun’ \\
CT & -
\end{tabular}
Movement verbs are classified as *thamidadpa* by the Tibetan grammarians, but figure prominently in the examples for the ‘second case’, while directional activity verbs, such as *look at* or *for*, classified as *thadadpa*, are considerably less frequent. The main reason to associate

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12 Tibetan *thadadpa* is commonly translated as ‘transitive’, *thamidadpa* as ‘intransitive’, but the Tibetan opposition does not correspond to the traditional European syntactic distinction based on the valency of the verb and the presence of a direct object. The exact translation is ‘being with difference’ or ‘being without difference’, which means that actor and action can or cannot be conceptually separated. The definition implies that there is or is not an entity as part of the action that is different or ‘other’ *gzan* from an actor (*Agent* or *Experiencer*, both receiving the ergative marker). The terms *thadadpa*/*thamidadpa* were coined only recently, but I will use them as a convenient abbreviation for otherwise very clumsy phrases.

Traditionally, the category corresponding to *thadadpa* comprises all verbs the first complement of which receives an ergative marker, including therefore [+control] two-place verbs. This inclusion hardly ever becomes explicit. But [+control] two-place verbs, such as *skyad* [bskyad ‘to forget’, *rgyas* [brgyag] *brgyag* ‘to be satisfied’, etc. (classified as *thamidadpa* in the BR, see below) appear among [+control] verbs in the list of Sūt Panchen (1744: 153ff. ad RKh 11a) for the past tense forms taking the *b*-prefix. The list is introduced by an explanation that I am only able to interpret in the sense that all the verbs listed should be ‘essentially related to a differing actor having accomplished a past action’ byedpapo gzhannay dpomsu lhrébdal bhyab byaszin bskas brgyudpar phrteney dpomsu bskyad gzhannay lha dpams dge gzhannay dpomsu lhrébdal bhyab bskas dpams bskyad ph-yir lhungs nyamo.

The 18th/19th century author Akyr Yöntshogzin Dbyanggsang Dpalzhugs (ed. 1989: 50, fo 440.5) classifies the ‘see’ *mthongpo* as ‘own’, which means that there must also be ‘other’, since ‘own and other or actor and work [are defined] relatively to each other so that if one exists, the other one must also exist with certainty’ bskyad gzhannay byedpamo las gzhans phanthun bsngag brgyudpar phrteney dpams, rgyud par ph-yir lhungs nyamo (Mkhyenrab Hodrub Rtagskyi lhungsnyi dbangrgya mchod rgyud par ph-yir lhungs nyamo ‘Lamp for the essentials of the commentaries on the difficult points of the Rtagskyi lhungsnyi’, Chengdu: Sichuan minzu chubanshe, 1979: 25f., as cited by Tillemans 1991: 316f.). Similarly, the 19th/20th century author Gsetang sku phreng mnga Bltan Rtsunlhar Khyungsho chooses just the [+control] verb *thor* ‘hear’ as illustration of the ‘third case’, the actor (*Experiencer*) of hearing being different from the perpection and its content (Bodkyi brisgspa mnga Rtagskyi lhungsnyi mchog rgyud par ph-yir lhungs nyamo ‘Abridged notes on Tibetan grammar, Sumpa and Rtagskyi lhungsnyi, called the magic key for wonderful speech’, 1957, Kanshuu Midmang Dpechhenkan, as cited by Tournadre 1996: 349f.).

In Western linguistics, there have been attempts to define ‘transitivity’ as a matter of degrees according to semantic or pragmatic parameters, following the approach of Hopper and Thompson (1980). Perhaps enhanced by similar discussions in modern Chinese linguistics, the term *thadadpa* is restricted in BR to [+control] two-place verbs and uses *thamidadpa* for the rest (i.e. [+control] 1-place and [+control] two-place verbs). This view, although not shared by all Tibetan authors, seems to have become quite authoritative and might be mistaken as the traditional one (cf. Tournadre 1996: 348, 350, who fails to give the necessary evidence).

Many commentaries are silent about [+control] two-place verbs. Tibetan Zabdrung (1988: 236) mentions metog *rhed* among a group of otherwise [+control] one-place verbs, *rhed*, however, belongs to a very limited set of verbs that takes theative-locative marker for the *Experiencer* in Modern Tibetan (DeLancey 1985: 61); this might have been the reason for listing it in this group.
movement verbs with the ‘second case’ and not with the ‘seventh case’ is that they constitute an action (bya'ba) while the verb of existence does not. One distinguishes thus between a dynamic spatial relation of direction, the movement towards a GOAL (allative), and a static spatial relation of LOCATION (locative). For the same reason, directional activity verbs, such as ḥbyug ‘to anoint, besmear’ or rdug ‘to fill’ are associated with the ‘second case’ (cf. Dmudge Bsamtang 1990: 49ff).

The idea of dynamicity is so strong that most Tibetan authors also subsume the school where one teaches, the wood where one fells trees, the factory in which machines are rotating, or the battlefield where one kills the enemy under the ‘second case’ (Skalbhazang Hgyurmmed 1981: 47, 1992: 29; Dmudge Bsamtang 1990: 51, 53). This distinction is somewhat against our intuitions, and apparently it is not based on Indic grammatical theories (Klaus Butzenberger, p.c.). It is also somewhat against the distribution of the directional markers, particularly the non-dynamic connotation of na, which indicates a distinction in terms of dynamicity with respect to the spatial relation itself (i.e. between an orientation towards something and a location at a cer-

On the other hand, Dmudge Bsamtang (1990: 60) discusses the verb pair mithuy ‘to see’ and lia ‘to look at’ on the same level as the verb pair ḫjom ‘to subdue’ and rgol ‘to fight’. In this connection, the eye that sees is treated as ‘instrument’ byedra, thus belonging to the sphere of bdekg, and since the eye is not claimed to be identical with the ‘form’ gzed, which is part of the ‘activity’ bya'ba and thus belongs to the sphere of gn, one could expect that mithuy would be classified as thadadpa. Dmudge Bsamtang (p. 63) also treats nādikis gheug ‘stricken by illness’ as an instance of the ‘entity instrument’ byedpa dphos, whereas this verb is classified as thamidadpa in BR.

Notions of volitionality may well be related to the Indian conceptisation of a prototypical karman as the thing ‘most desired’ pha'rirama by the ‘actor’ karr, which implies that a prototypical karr acts intentionally (I owe this reasoning to Mirella Lingorska, Universität Tübingen). Yet, the explicit terminological distinction between events that are ‘self-controlled’ rgyaldaycan and those that are ‘controlled by something other’ gzanddaycan has been introduced only recently (Tillemans 1989: 27f.; N. Tournadre in Skalbhazang Hgyurmmed 1992: 250). For Skalbhazang Hgyurmmed, this distinction crosses the classification in terms of thadadpa and thamidadpa, yielding a four-fold pattern (Skalbhazang Hgyurmmed 1981: 364ff., 1992: 250ff.). mithuy would thus be classified as thamadpa and gzanddaycan.

13 Cf., e.g., Situ Panchen (1744; 50 ad Sume: 6c–8d): movement verbs: sar-pphyogs bu ḫjo 'will go to the eastern direction', mthdru bhiyvyol 'arrived at the end', rgyasagan ḫgyo 'will go to India', rgyabu phyogs 'tumed back', phuoklu phyin 'went on the other side', mthana ḫgon 'moved near'; directional activities gzungla bu 'will look at the form'; with additional location complement: rdobar gzung-brtan byed 'will paint an image on the stone'. In the edition of Sarth Chandu Dus (1915, II: 12) one can additionally find: kamsed ḫugs 'entered upon the road', yuldu phyin 'came/ went to the country(side)', tha'čdu ḫgro 'will become happy (lit. will go into happiness)'; positioning verbs: siegdu ḫbra 'put it above'; kgsu ḫbra 'hold it in the hand'.
tain place). Nevertheless, there seem to have been Tibetan voices closer to our intuitions, since Dmudge Bsangtan (p. 49) criticises the view that the relation between an activity and a location could be expressed by the ‘seventh case’. For his own position see section 4. below.

3.2. višayabhūta (focus of attention)

SKR himavantaṃ śrāpti
‘hears about the Himalaya’

CT – but cf. also

CT gaṇapilaḥ bītas
‘observed/looked at the glaciers’

CT slobdponla țan
‘listened to/obeyed the master of studies’

SKR jainendram adhīte
‘studies the Jainendra (grammar)’

CT choslaśu lḥdpeṣin
‘studies/exercises with respect to religion’ (cf. JĀK s.v. ḫbad)


(1) a. dpebzangla slobshyop-byedkgo
   example good-DL study. PRES-DES
   ‘It is necessary to learn about/from the good examples/to focus
   on the good examples.’ [byabahä ylabel or byaba lḥgviyl]

b. tshaarig-g slobshyop-byedkgo
   science-ABS study. PRES-DES
   ‘It is necessary to study/acquire science.’ [byabahä lṭsh byarγyuhi
   laskal]

Ces deux phrases comportent le même verbe: ‘faire des études’, mais
dans la première, ‘dpe bzang’ est le point d’incidence de l’action. Il
admet par conséquent la marque oblique. En revanche, dans la deuxième,
‘la science’ étant l’objet des études à accomplir, on ne doit pas em-
ployer la marque oblique (mais l’absolutif) (1992: 25; emphasis added).

According to this interpretation, the use of the ladon particle with verbs
where it is not obligatory may convey a sort of partitive, atelic or un-
bound reading of the verb, while its non-application conveys a notion

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14 See also notes 18 and 27 below.
of completion, telicity or boundedness; cf. German *lernen* as unbound activity vs. *erlernen* as accomplishment.\(^\text{15}\)

3.3. vyāpya (*affection*)

*āpsita* (*desired*, i.e. positive affection or action with positive outcome)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Tibetan</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SKR</td>
<td>gaudyam bhakṣayati</td>
<td>bdebaṅ ba skyidpaṅ longs-spyod paṅ</td>
<td>enjoys a piece of sugar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*āntāpsita* (*undesired*, i.e. negative affection or action with negative outcome)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Tibetan</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SKR</td>
<td>kaṇṭakān mṛdhāti</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>steps on thorns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>khyila hīggs</td>
<td>gyi bhang dgraw dpad gzhig</td>
<td>fears the dog</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cf. Skalbyān Ḥgyurmed (1981: 40, 1992: 24) for affections in general. Dmudge Bṣamgtan (1990: 50), by contrast, defines emotions or inclinations as being non-dynamic or non-action words (*by artisans min*) and thus associates them with the ‘seventh case’, ‘although [other authors] have established the *ladon* particle as second [case] for positive affections, such as «to like the back (side)» *rgyab bu spro* *zenpa* *ladon ghis par bza gzod mod*. Generally, Tibetan authors seem to have been more inclined to treat negative affections like states (cf. Tshethen Žabs-draṅ 1988: 120f).

3.4. vikriyātāmaka (*transformation by essence*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Tibetan</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SKR</td>
<td>kāśtham bhasma karoti</td>
<td>pagspa  sogs byed</td>
<td>makes wood into ashes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^\text{15}\) Cf. Kaschewsky (1978: 177). But this does not seem to be *opinio communis*. According to Dmudge Bṣamgtan (1990: 62), some scholars alternatively take the absolute version as ‘abbreviation’ *tshig cu yod ba dups* or ‘condensation’ of two separate units of an activity ‘into one single activity’ *tshig hrilho byas tshig*. But generally the use or non-use of the *ladon* particle cannot be predicted consistently (*mtha ḥ gcig ba khyab pa nges pavi*). A contemporary native Tibetan speaker would not find any difference in meaning; in particular, the participial reading is not excluded by using the absolute (*Thupchen Kunga Chushab*, p.c.).
Cf. Situ Panchen (1744: 224 ad RKH 24a–d for beudrtsir bsgyur ‘transformed into nectar’). The resulting state may also be subsumed under dgosched ‘purpose’ (Prati Rinchen Dongrub, ed. 1992: 24 for rgyangdu gser brdugs ‘hammered gold for/into an ornament’), obviously because the resulting state is the aim of the activity, or under the abstract relation deñid, ‘identity’, because the thing transformed, i.e. the substance changing its outer form, remains the same (Skalhazh Nyurmed 1981: 68, 1992: 35 for Rgyugig Bodvigdub bsgyur ‘converted Chinese script into Tibetan script’; cf. also Dmudge Bsangtan 1990: 51 for beudrtsir bsgrub ‘transformed into nectar’). For some scholars, again, deñid is merely a ‘special case of the second caseʼ rnamdbye gtiḥspaṭi byed brag deñidkyi sgra (Dgelchu Dharmañadhara 1806: 26, ad SCP 9a/b).16

3.5. Double ‘accusative’ constructions

RECIPIENT:

| SKR   | māṇavakam dhamrṇa brūte/aniśāsti |
| CT    | bula chos stonpayin/slobpayin       |

*explains/teaches the religion to the boy*18

| SKR   | aćāryam dharman prcchāti            |
| CT    | slobdpona chos žuhayin               |

*asks the teacher about religion*19

SOURCE:

| SKR   | gām dogḏi payah                      |
| CT    | ‘milk/milk from the cow’             |

16 Similarly Pangču Norbu Bsangrup (1993: 105) for bebdrtṣr mibsgrub ‘is not to be accomplished as nectar’, although his previous definition rather stands for a relation of identity or synonymity between the verb and the complement as in meru bhar ‘burn’ where it is the nature of fire to be burning (p. 104).

17 Based on Situ Panchen’s (1744: 48, ad Suncupa 6c–8d) statement that deñid is ‘in general the expression of las, the difference being the identity of las and action’ spyir bsan lams tsa yanpalas dbang gnyer lasṅ pa bsu tha mchādupa. (This statement, however, risks running into a fallacy, if it turns out that it is exactly the non-identity between las and action that triggers the ldkon particles; cf. section 4. below.)

18 Note that with slob the construction may also convey the opposite meaning: blonpo Thonmi des pa gtiḥa Lhanags Songdwa sgraḥsams kṣetram “Minister Thonmi studied all the treatises from the pundit Lhanags Songdwa” (Bsdows Lhanags Nyurmen: Gyurbras gyalbaṅ ma lung ‘The mirror clarifying the royal genealogy’, Vogel 1981: 17). This pattern would correspond to the next examples.

19 The act of asking might be seen as directed towards an addressee, like any other speech act. But the addressee might be also conceptualized as the SOURCE (of the answer or knowledge) as in Mongolian, where it triggers ablative case marking.
But cf. the replacement of the ablative by the dative-locative case marker in some fixed expressions:

CT  
   *rtalaḥ ḍhab*  
   ‘alights from the horse’ (cf. JĀK sub ḍhab and la IV)

3.6. Adverbs

| SKR | sarvakālam, triyākālam, pūrvaṃ, cīram          |
| CT  | dus kundu, lan gsundu, spär, yun rīngu       |
|     | ‘all times’, ‘three times’, ‘earlier’, ‘long time’ (Kaschewsky 1978: 182) |

| SKR | evān eva samāśrītya                           |
| CT  | ḍhīdāg niḍaḥ brīrṇas                         |
|     | ‘based on just these’ (Kaschewsky 1978: 183)   |

| SKR | prayekām, sputām, avīṣārām                               |
| CT  | sosor, gsalbar, miṭẖadpap                               |
|     | ‘individually’, ‘clearly’, ‘uninterrupted’ (Kaschewsky 1978: 184) |

Since all these ‘accusative’ complements in the Sanskrit sentences belong to the kāraka-relation karmāṇa, the ladon particles in the Tibetan counterparts are, in fact, used for this very relation. Thus, in at least some cases, the Tibetan dative-locative or locative-purposive markers do correspond to the Sanskrit ‘second case’. One may recall that at the time of the first contact with Sanskrit grammar, passive sentences, particularly past passive participle constructions were dominant in Buddhist Sanskrit (cf. Miller 1991: 378), and the vernaculars were already developing ergative patterns. The non-prototypical types of karmāṇa might thus have appeared as the more natural ones.

The frequency is quite low, however. According to a rough guess (Kaschewsky 1978: 179ff.), only 11% of the ladon particles in translations correspond to an original Sanskrit ‘second case’. By far most of them concern the GOAL of a movement, followed by the RESULT of transformation (deḥid, ‘second case’ or ‘fourth case’) and expressions of time/duration (tsheskasbs) and other adverbs. Kaschewsky further mentions the auxiliary construction: verbal noun + -r + ḍyped, which may translate a Sanskrit derived verb construction, and complex verb constructions with the cognate complements (again deḥid). Directional activity verbs, the TARGET of which would correspond to a Direct Object in Sanskrit, apparently form the smallest group.

As we have seen above, not all Tibetan authors are ready to identify all such usages as ‘second case’, as there is in general a certain variation in the classification of the cases and their semantic correlations.
In the end, all these distinctions turn out to be somewhat over-sophisticated but at the same time quite harmless since they are not related to the functional distribution of the directional markers.  

In this connection, it is quite striking that the traditional approaches remain silent about the fact that the prototypical \textit{karman}, i.e. the \textsc{patient}, does not receive one of the \textit{ladon} particles, but remains unmarked. This lacuna has its counterpart in the Indian \textit{kāraka} theory. The \textit{karman} of the passive sentence does not receive a \textit{kāraka}-relevant case, as it is already expressed by the combination of diathesis and person-related verb endings. It seems that the theory of \textit{bdag} and \textit{gzan}, concerning the prefixes of the verb, was developed in analogy in order to fill the gap. But again, this is never explicitly stated, and the prototypical \textit{karman} disappears in a terminological \textit{ nirvāṇa}.

4. THE FUSED CONCEPT OF LAS: A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH

While traditional commentaries keep the different concepts of \textit{las} (and \textit{byabahi yul}) as applied in the \textit{kāraka} and \textit{bdag gzan} sections separate, D mundane Bsamgtan (1990: 53ff) fuses both concepts in his discussion of the \textit{ladon} particles. His \textit{las} (obviously used in the everyday sense ‘work’) is either ‘essentially identical’ \textit{yobo geignu} with the ‘activity’ \textit{byabha} and ‘essentially different’ \textit{yobo thadadpa} from the ‘place (of the activity)’ \textit{(byabahi) yul}, in which case it does not receive a \textit{ladon} parti-

\footnote{E.g., as Thupten Kunga Chashab kindly pointed out to me, if one gives sweets to a child, this might actually not be very beneficial for the child (or his/her teeth). In particular, if the intention is to spoil the child’s character, it would call for the ‘second case’. But does such insight really matter for the application of the case marker, which according to the Tibetan theory is the same in both instances?}

\footnote{Cf. Verhagen (2000: 29ff.), who also points out the fact that Situ Pangchen describes the Sanskrit active/passive diathesis with the terminology of \textit{bdag} and \textit{gzan} (Situ Pangchen 1744: 233ff. ad \textit{RKH} 225–276). Ultimately, this attempt was bound to fail, as Tibetan verb morphology is far too complex and irregular, and, of course, the prefixes do not indicate diathesis. Thus if \textit{las} would be expressed by the verbal morphology, classified as \textit{gzan}, it would show up only in particular tenses, depending on the particular class of verb. But following the principle of the Indian \textit{kāraka} theory, only a \textit{kāraka}-relation that is not expressed by the verb can be expressed by a relational case, thus the nominal belonging to the class of \textit{las}, whether corresponding to a \textsc{patient} or to a \textsc{target} or \textsc{goal}, should not obtain a directional marker in tenses classified as \textit{gzan}, and, correspondingly, in tenses classified as \textit{bdag}, all nominals belonging to the class of \textit{las}, \textsc{targets} or \textsc{goals} and \textsc{patients} alike, should obtain a directional marker. This is certainly not the case. While the theory of \textit{bdag} and \textit{gzan} draws upon an obvious orientation of transitive verbal nouns as referring to either the \textsc{agent} or the \textsc{patient} or \textsc{target}, its general application to the verb phrase does not lead to an adequate description of the Tibetan sentence.}
cle, or it differs from the activity, in which case a *ladon* particle has to be applied. This allows him first of all to solve a problem that arises from the synonymous use of *las* and *byabaḥi yul.* If there is a PATIENT as well as a place mentioned in one clause, e.g., *saw the form in the mirror,* which of the two nominal phrases is the grammatical yul that receives the *ladon* particle (cf. Thupten Kunga Chashab [2002: 27])?

According to Dmudge Bsamgtan (p. 53), ‘the mirror is the place of the activity, and the seeing of the form is the activity, thus activity and work have become virtually identical, while work and place are expressed as [being] different’ melon byabahi yuldeŋ gzugs mthongba byaba yinpa bya las nyobo geiggi tshukdu soŋ yan | lasdeŋ yul thadad-du brjoddo | In the case of a directional activity, such as looking at a form, ‘place and work have become identical, while activity and work are virtually different’ yuldeŋ las nyobo geigdu gyurciŋ bya las nyobo thadadpaḥi tshukdu yoddo |

So far, the concept of a *las* that is either identical with *byaba* or with *yul* seems to be superfluous, but it allows to further distinguish between a static and a dynamic relation between activity and location or, in Dmudge Bsamgtan’s own words, between a ‘location where one performs the activity’ byaba byedsahi yul and a ‘location towards which one faces’ kha gtsasahi yul (p. 54f.). In the first case, *las* and *yul* are identical; in the second case, *las* and *yul* are different (and in both cases, *las* and *yul* are not identical with the activity).

The prototypical *karmān,* the PATIENT, thus can be defined as a *las* which is part of, or identical with, the activity. The TARGET and the GOAL can be defined as a *las* towards which one faces and which is different from, or not a part of, the activity. The *byabaḥi yul,* thus, is no longer used synonymously with *las,* but solely describes the place where an activity takes place. Theoretically, the differentiation between *byaba* byedsahi yul and kha gtsasahi yul could also be applied to the clause melon/(gi) namdu gzugska bltas ‘observed the form in the mirror’, such that ‘form’ is the TARGET, *las,* which is neither *byaba* nor *yul,* and ‘mirror’ is the place of the activity. Unfortunately no such examples are discussed. As a certainly undesired outcome, the *yul* delimited in such a way comes very close to the (riten)gnas or gnasgzi the ‘local base’ of a state, and the upholding of the distinction seems to be motivated mainly by faith in tradition.

What Dmudge Bsamgtan cannot solve (and so far Western theories also cannot) is the problem of why the AGENT of going to the village is treated differently from the AGENT of looking at the village, the first
remaining in the absolutive, the second receiving the ergative marker. If the GOAL or las of the activity of going is not part of the activity and the activity is thus deprived of any entity different from the actor, so that the actor of going and the act of going can be identical (tham-idadpa), what kind of entity remains in the activity of looking that could be different from the actor (thadadpa), if the TARGET or las is likewise not a part of the activity? Or is it? (Perhaps failure to mention looking at the form in the mirror is part of the strategy?)

The traditional approach 'solves' the problem by discussing the kāraka-s and the theory of bdag gzan separately. Thus, while the first theory teaches the appropriate assignment of cases in relation to various semantic roles, the second theory identifies one particular semantic role, namely that of the differing actor or instrument, which is going to receive the ergative marker, and excludes possible competing actor roles, which, as a matter of fact, do not receive the ergative marker. The strategy in this context is to keep silent about the GOAL of a movement verb, and to redefine las in a manner that makes it compatible with two quite different semantic roles: the PATIENT and the TARGET. This appears as a clever stratagem in face of the facts of language, even if it is not the intellectually most satisfying solution.

5. LANGUAGE SHIFT AND THE LADON PARTICLES

In rare cases, and seemingly more often in Old Tibetan than in Classical Tibetan, the PATIENT is marked with the dative-locative marker. A quite striking case is found in a paradigmatic text on the "paradise tree", exemplifying the eight Sanskrit cases. Here, the directional case marking corresponds to the Direct Object marking in the underlying Sanskrit active sentence:

(2)  jompa sngla (mi) rtag bskyod
paradise-GEN tree-DIL (TOP) wind-ERG move.PAST

'As for this very tree of paradise, the wind shook [it].'<sup>22</sup>

We may safely assume that the famous 9th century translator Chosgrub, alias Fa Cheng, knew what he was doing, and that perhaps he had seen this construction as the only possible equivalent for an active sentence. One may recall once again the passive and ergative tenden-

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<sup>22</sup> Chosgrub alias Fa Cheng (9th century) Hpınpa lpal bkyod bstan ba thig lelhur bya ba 'Versatile teaching of the eight sounds [morphemes] that are applicable' (Verlag 1992: 840).
cies in Buddhist Sanskrit and in the vernaculars. It is not unlikely then (but still has to be proven) that active sentences with a prototypical karman were informationally or pragmatically marked, at least in the past tense, and thus they might have been, in the eye of a competent Tibetan speaker, comparable to the defocusing employment of the directional marker for the PATIENT in Tibetan.

That the Tibetan grammarians were not just blindly copying the Sanskrit model is shown in other versions of the “paradise tree” given by the slightly earlier Lee Khyilbrug and the much later Saska Pa了一遍. Here, the non-directional transitive verb skyod ‘to move’, (regularly with an absolutive PATIENT), is replaced by the directional activity verbs hbad ‘care for’ and lha ‘to look at’ (regularly with a directional marker for the TARGET). In a contemporary textbook, it is even replaced by the three-place verb hphe ‘to throw’:

\[(2\prime) \]  šinla hbadde khyöd÷kys bltabar-gyis (bltabar-gyi) treak=D.L take care-CC you-ERG look-do IMP

‘You have to care for and look after the tree!’ \[23\]

\[(2\prime\prime) \]  šin dela bltabam hjogpa treak/wood that=D.L look,PRS-VN-Q put down ~carve,PRS-VN

‘looking after or putting [something] down at that tree’

\[(2\prime\prime\prime) \]  šin dela mchog bltabam hjogpa treak=D.L arrow-ABS shoot,FUT

‘An arrow will be/is to be shot at the tree!’ \[25\]

Typically, the dative-locative marker leads either to a partitive reading ‘of, from’ (replacing the ablative marker las) \[27\] or to a definite or em-


\[24\] The present stem hjog is ambiguous. It belongs to the verb hjog [b¿ag] [g¿ag] [z¿ag ‘put down, place’; which takes a directional marker for the LOCATION argument, as well as to the verb hjog [b¿gas] [g¿as] [z¿as] ‘cut, hew (in pieces), carve, chip’ and ‘strain, filter’. A directional marker might be in place for the LOCATION argument of the reading ‘carve into’, and a possible RESULT argument of ‘cut into pieces’). Because of the conjunction ‘or’ we would expect the second verb to have a similar behaviour as the first one. Given that a tree or wood is more likely to be associated with carving than with putting something into it, the reading ‘carving into the wood/tree’ might be preferable.


\[27\] Quite obviously the ablative markers las and nas are derived from the (dative)-locative markers la and na, which might have been unspecific directional markers (Delancey 1984: 62). The original ablative function of la is preserved in a few fixed
phatic (identifying or contrasting, thus defocusing) reading ‘that very’. Note the topic position of the Patient in (2) and the additional employment of a topic marker in one version of the text. Most often, the verb is related to consumption, and in such cases, both readings are possible. Kaschewsky (1978: 187) found four cases of apparent directional Patient marking in the Tibetan version of Śāntideva’s Bodhicaryāvatāra, two times with the verb za (bzah) ‘to eat’, one time with the verb reg ‘to burn’, and one with the verb gso ’to kill’. However, two of these examples can be ruled out. In V 85e ranpa-tsamdu(haṣ) bzah-hya the first element is merely an adverbial ranpar ‘modestly’ enlarged by an indefinite quantifier tsam ‘as much as’ (3). In VI 4d the phrase gso ’par ‘in order to kill’ is embedded, and the main verb rgol ‘to fight with/against, stand up, rebel against’ regularly takes the directional marker for the Target (4). In IV 25b the directional marker conveys a partitive connotation of non-completedness: the fire is burning for eternities, inflicting pain on the body, without consuming it (5), and similarly in VI 54c the grief is gnawing at the self without eating it up (6).

(3) | logpar lzung du ngom med khot | wrongly fall PAST-COM protectorless-COM
| hrtuṅ gsar ba bsnyi | ascetic practice ABS adhere-D.L divide-do FUT-CC
| ranpa-tsamdu bzah-byaste | modest-as much eat-do FUT-CC
| chos gsum mag kogspa skyin | religion dress three-ABS except give.PRS
‘Distributing [one’s belongings] among the pious and the protectorless who fell on the wrong side and eating only modestly [one] should give away [everything] except the three garments [prescribed by] the religion.’

expressions, such as rdag bsnyi, “alights from the horse”, bragla mchog(s), “jumps down from the rock”, gnāma khaba bsnyi, “snow falls from the sky” (JĀK 13 la IV). Note that this function has not been observed for na. JĀK also gives btsa khrog bsnyi, “draws blood from the body”, but as this passage is from the story of The hungry Tigress, the interpretation ‘makes blood appear on the body’ might be more adequate here (Abel Zadoks, p.c.).

(4) | gun dag norden bkar stis | who-pl-abs wealth-com honour-erg/ins
| drin byin dela brten-gyurpa | favour-abs give past that-dt. depend-become past-vn
| dedag kyan ni sdeyIdanpal | that-pl-abs also top wrath/hate-abs possess-vn-gen
| riedkon dela gsdpar rgyol | lord that-dt. kill-prs-vn-cc fight prs

‘Even those who had been dependent on the [lord who] bestowed [upon them] favour through wealth and honour—if he is] wrathful, [they] will fight against that (very) lord in order to kill [him].’

(5) | dmyalme bzoedkbas yunrin du | hell-fire-abs endure-difficult-erg time long
| bdegg pad sreg-gyurpa | 1-gen body-dt. burn-become past-cc
| hgvyodpa mizad me hbarbas | remorse ceaseless fire-abs burn-[ctr]-vn-instr
| ][ sens gelug-hgyurba gelon miza | mind-abs suffer-become prs-vn doubt-abs ng-eat prs

‘When the hell’s fire, difficult to endure, burns and burns (on) my body for an endless time, the mind will suffer, without doubt, from the burning fire of ceaseless remorse.’

(6) | gtsan dag bdagla midgabha | other-pl-abs I-dt. ng-like prs-vn
| des ni tshe ltsham tshe gtsanla | that-erg top life this-q life other-dt.
| bdagla zabar-mshedra | I-dt. eat-ng-de prs-cc
| bdag ni cipyir de midhod | I-abs top that-abs ng-desire prs
| riedpali barched byedpali phyir | gain prs-vn-gen hindrance-abs do prs-vn-gen because

‘[Given that] other people are unfavourable towards me, would this fact not grow upon/into me in this or another life? As for me, I would detest them, [just] because they built up hindrances to [my] gaining.’

29 Fol. 114f. (Sanskrit: pūjavyat arhamāṇair yān ye ’pi caināṇaṃ samārīitaḥ te ’py evam hantum ikchanti svāmināṃ dvayeṣaḥbhagam).
30 Fol. 64 (Sanskrit: ciram dhakṣyati me kāyam nārakāṅginiḥ sudhīḥ sahā pascatā-pānālas citam ciram dhakṣyate asiṣṭam).
31 Fol. 132 (Sanskrit: mava aprasādo yo ’neyōṃ sa mām kim bhakṣyaṣyaṇī iha janmāṇare vāpi yenāsaṃ me ’nabhiptiṣṭhai VI 55 ab ladhāmaraṇākārāś tu yady asau)
Such examples are not restricted to translations from Sanskrit; they appear in autochthonous Old Tibetan and Classical Tibetan grammatical and literary texts. Particularly, the partitive type is quite common.

(7) ...ri dbang ri bskyal zla’i
mountain white-GEN grass-D/L eat-CC

srilši gnag’g [1] bul [1] ltbu’gyi-mchisna’ah
dark mountain black-GEN water-D/L drink-CC-stay-CC

‘...when [the horse] was eating from the grass of the white [sunny?] mountain (side) and drinking from the water of the black study mountain (side) ...’

(8) rgya’gcala zo
shit-D/L eat IMP

‘Eat that very shit/from the shit!’

(9) skomna smingrwa’th chula ltbu’
be thirsty-CC reflection-GEN water-D/L drink, PRS

‘When I am thirsty I drink even the very water/from the water of the Fata Morgana.’

(10) ’pho lmodpa
tree-D/L cut PRS-VN

‘to cut a/that very tree (?) / cut off parts of a/the tree (?)’

(11) shal zla’i bgran la ltbu’pa
meat-D/L eatPRS-CC blood-D/L drink PRS-VN

‘to eat that very flesh and to drink that very blood / to eat from the flesh and to drink from the blood’

(12) ’ned spre’lu slobdpa’ naspla yan’

we monkey live, PRS-VN-GEN forest-D/L also

me ‘nabhiptaka).”

32 Old Tibetan funeral text, PT 1136, line 36 (Imaeda et al. 2001: 47).
35 Anonymous (late 18th/early 19th century), Sumtrags gnangcan legshaid nor-bu’hi phyre’pa ‘Garland of aphoristic jewels: Sumtrags, the basic rules and the commentary’ (Bacot 1948: 114: “Couper un arbre” given without context and source, 1957: 23: “Couper le bois”). This example as well as šingštreamona good ‘cut (at) the top of the tree’ can also be found in the 11th century Smanrso (Bstanlhgyur [Peking], vol. Le., fol. 295b, L5 and 298b, L5; cited after Thupten Kun’ga Chushub [2000: 28]) as an example for las or the ‘second case’.
36 “Dévorent les chairs et buvant le sang” (Bacot 1948: 114), without context and source.
Skalbzang Hgyurmed (1981: 46 and 1992: 25) claims that the _ladon_ particles cannot be used for the **PATIENT** of verbs such as _za ‘to eat’_ and _gcod ‘to cut’_, overlooking the possible partitive reading of the last example, which he gives in order to exemplify the use of the comitative marker _dan_.

Il arrive parfois que l’on confonde, dans l’analyse, l’objet marqué (objet cible) et l’objet non-marqué. Dans les deux exemples suivants: _Sh a za, Manger de la viande, s’ta res shing gcod, Couper le bois avec une hache_, il ne s’agit que de l’objet non-marqué (‘objet direct’). On ne peut employer _la_ dans ces exemples _s’ta la za, ‘Shing la gcod, car ‘la viande’ et ‘le bois’ sont respectivement la ‘close’ à ‘manger’ et à ‘couper’. Par conséquent, leur fonction n’est pas différente de celle d’un simple objet [éducation du patient] (Skalbzang Hgyurmed 1992: 25, addition by Tournadre).

In earlier times, some Tibetan speakers were reluctant to use a _ladon_ particle with non-directional transitive verbs, while others apparently were not. This could be a regional feature, but it could also be an indicator that in the stage of Old Tibetan or somewhat earlier, the case system of the language was in the process of changing. The possibility of emphatically marking a **PATIENT**, perhaps inherited from Proto-Tibeto-Burman (see also section 6.3.1 below), apparently vanished in

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38 Similarly, Bstanpa Rgyamsho (1964) as cited by Kaschewsky (1978: 171), he adds the ungrammatical examples _lugla bshag_ [‘bshag ‘slaughter(ed) *on a sheep’ and _sda rdo ‘dig into the earth’. Dnugge Bsanglan (1990: 52f.) mentions _dgal bshad_ [‘bogcarla bshug’ | _khorloba bsakar_ ‘killed *on the enemy (some of the enemies?)’, installed *in* on a factory, turned *on the wheel as being ungrammatical. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the authors refer to real utterances.
Classical Tibetan and survived only in some fixed expressions and some applications with pronouns, cf. Old and Classical Tibetan: 
khona (< kho ‘s/he’ + LOC) ‘exactly, the very, only’; possibly only Old 
Tibetan: dekana (< de ‘that’ + NOMINALISE + LOC) ‘that very 
(spot)’ (with additional directional marker -r in the example) in (13); 
likewise Central Ladakhi: /dinavo/ and /denaivo/ (< ḫdi/de + LOC + 
DEFINITENESS MARKER) and Lower Ladakhi (Sham): /dia/ and /dea/ 
(< ḫdi/de + DL) (14), (15), and (16). The fixed expression ‘this very’ 
or ‘that very’ is, of course, not restricted to the PATIENT role (13) and 
(17). Note the topic position of the PATIENT in (14).

(13) rgyalpo yang myi chad | rta ṣal | 
king-ABS again man-ABS be exhausted; horse-ABS be tired 
yi chad | ga mug | 
mind-ABS be exhausted; joy—ABS be exhausted 
munrosla smag ḥṭḥhipsas | 
nightfall-D.L. darkness-ABS grow dark PAST-VN-CC 
dekana43 gzims || 
that very(LOC)-LAT sleep PAST

‘As for the king, on the other hand, the man was exhausted, [his] horse 
was tired, [his] mind was empty (of thoughts) and full of despair. As 
the darkness grew thick at nightfall, [he] fell asleep at that very 
spot.’44

(14) deras phrugs des śīg ḫrīthṣho-geṣig phrtses | 
then child that-ERG louse ten thousand-LO ABS take-out-CC 
aṇuṭi ḡuṅgspoṭi-kha bṭrṇspa | 
uncle-GEN body-on place PAST-VN 
aṇu dela śīggiś zoste 
uncle that very(D.L.)-ABS louse-ERG eat-CC 
smyonpa-mṭshogs sọrṣte 
lunatic-like-ABS become-CC

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39 The comparatively frequent use of the dative-locative marker la as a topicaliser in the context of predications (Beyer 1992: 278f.) may be a related feature.
40 But cf. also the West Tibetan postposition /-ka/ ‘on’.
41 A partitive reading of the dative-locative marker la is not possible in Ladakhi, 
and the locative marker na is not freely used in Central Ladakhi.
42 Cf. ga chad ‘be tired of, fed up’ (Goldstein et al. 2001). As yi is related to yid 
‘mind’ ga might be related to gadmo in the sense of ‘joy’.
43 Emenation by Francke: dekhanar.
44 Muxo Ldemdru or Mucho Sdemdru (not datable, parts of the text might date 
from the 9th or 10th century) Czermyg (Francke 1924–30, Fol. 79a, 15).
‘Then that child produced (lit. took out) some ten thousand of lice and placed them on the uncle’s body, and as that very uncle was [almost] eaten up by the lice, [he] became like a lunatic.’

(15) *dia zos&aget, gax, ya*

This very (D1)-ABS eat-VOL-PRS 1-ERG INTJ

‘This very [bail stone] I will eat, yes!’

(16) *khecaray dea zose thunse sojisk!*

you-PL that very (D1)-ABS drink-CC go.PAST-IMP.PL

‘Go away after you have eaten and drunk that very [offering]!’

(17) *deokat chara dzamlin jhos la&asok*

that very (D1) some-ABS go-CC world-ABS s/he-ERG lick-UP-FUT

‘If that very [demon] could go [free] he would destroy (lit. lick up) the world.’

6. EVIDENCE FROM Tibeto-Burman

Tibeto-Burman languages show a great variety of case marking and agreement systems. I can thus only give a summarising overview of a few Tibeto-Burman languages. Generally, case marking is governed more by pragmatic than by syntactic principles. Three main tendencies become visible:

6.1. Primary versus secondary ‘object’ marking

The agreement systems apparently all follow the “deictic active” (Blansitt 1984) pattern of primary versus secondary object marking (Dryer 1986), shortly ‘primary marking’. According to this pattern, the PATIENT/ THEME of a transitive sentence (P2) is treated like the RECIPIENT/BENEFICIARY of a bi-transitive sentence (R3). There are thus two logical possibilities: (a) Both P2 and R3 receive the same case marker and P3 (the PATIENT/THEME of the bi-transitive sentence) remains in the absolutive. (b) P2 and R3 remain in the absolutive, while P3 receives a case marker. Following pattern (a), agreement—if possible—will be typically with P2 and R3, but never with P3, e.g.

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45 A Lower Ladakhi version from the Kesar epic (Francke 1905-41: 88.5-7).
46 Kesar epic, collected 1996 in Khalti, Lower Ladakh.
47 I am grateful to Kristin Meier (University of Leiden) for looking through the relevant literature.
48 “Objects” other than speech act participants are typically not indexed. In such cases, A2/3 (the AGENT) will be indexed instead if the language shows obligatory agreement of exactly one constituent.
West Himalayan (Kinnauri, Kiranti (Yamphu and Hayu), Gyarong, Nungish (Rawang and Trung/Dulong). 49

In syntactic typology, agreement and constituent order are treated on the same level as morphological case marking on nouns (see Dixon 1994: 1, 39–69). Morphological ergativity could thus “be expressed in the case marking of nominal arguments as well as in the way such arguments are indexed in the verb” (Kepping 1994: 344). Looking at the Tibeto-Burman languages, however, I have some doubt whether agreement, constituent order, and case marking can be compared more than superficially.

Although Tibeto-Burman agreement is related to semantic roles, it is primarily concerned with the marking of speech act participants, not with the marking of particular roles. The marking of speech act participants follows the animacy hierarchy, so that a participant of the higher end might be indexed “regardless of its syntactic role,” whereas a PATIENT participant at the lower end is not indexed, as for example in Tangut, where the AGENT is indexed instead (Kepping 1994: 339). Only a very small set of roles can compete for marking, namely AGENT (including EXPERIENCER and UNDERGOER), RECIPIENT/BENEFICIARY, and PATIENT/THEME. These roles are again selected according to a hierarchy of saliency or givenness with the RECIPIENT/BENEFICIARY (prototypically human, at least animate) being higher than the PATIENT/THEME (prototypically inanimate or rather neutral). Primary marking seems to be quite natural for a system of agreement with speech act participants, as it obviously reflects the saliency hierarchy of the roles RECIPIENT/BENEFICIARY (human, animate) > PATIENT/THEME (neutral).

This hierarchy is reflected also in the constituent order so that the RECIPIENT/BENEFICIARY or Indirect Object typically precedes the PATIENT/THEME or Direct Object in many languages (e.g., German, and likewise Tibetan). Constituent ordering, again, may be affected by a NP or definiteness hierarchy or prosodic principles, so that pronouns may precede nouns, and definite terms may precede indefinite terms, possibly overriding the saliency hierarchy (e.g., in German, accusative pronouns quite naturally precede dative full nouns).

Morphological case marking, on the other hand, is triggered primarily by the semantic role, quite independently from the status of the speech act participant, although in many languages pragmatic factors

such as givenness or definiteness can interfere, as in the case of the widely attested differential object marking.

These structural differences are often blurred by a not very convincing terminology whereby the semantically clearly distinguishable roles RECIPIENT/BENEFICIARY and PATIENT/THEME are lumped together into one category on the basis of seemingly similar syntactic behaviour. Thus the ‘patient’ appears to be more a syntactic than a semantic category. But even if one admits that in ergative languages PATIENTS tend to be syntactic categories as well, it does not seem to be helpful if the two categories, which due to different semantic conceptualisations show structurally different behaviour (one taking overt markers, the other none), are not differentiated by terminology. One motivation for this approach is to rescue a sort of ‘inverted’ ergative classification\(^50\) for an agreement pattern where the “patient” (i.e. P2 and R3) and possibly the intransitive subject receive an overt marker, thus not really being “absolutive” (cf. van Driem 1991; Kepping 1994).

Quite obviously, the etymology of ‘patient’ as being something ‘affected’ or ‘suffering’ may lead to the idea that the RECIPIENT of the THEME or the BENEFICIARY (or ‘maleficiary’) of the action is more affected and thus more ‘patient’ than the thing transferred (THEME) or the thing transformed (PATIENT). But if we follow this line of argument,\(^51\) we would end up with the conclusion that TARGETS receiving a directional marker in Tibetan, e.g. the dog being hit,\(^52\) might be more ‘patient’-like than a typical PATIENT in the absolutive, e.g. the dog being killed. After all, a dead dog cannot be much ‘affected’ any more by the fact that its state has been transformed substantially. There being nothing against this kind of reasoning, we then simply need another word for what is more commonly called a PATIENT.

Particularly in the discussion of ergativity, the PATIENT is seen as something that changes its state or, more typically, as something the

\(^{50}\) LaPolla (1992) calls it “anti-ergative.”

\(^{51}\) Van Driem (pp. 528f.) combines this with a somewhat tortuous reasoning why it is, after all, not misogynous to mark the partner (if not owner) of a murdered wife as a ‘maleficiary’ of an action in a sentence like German *Die haben mir die Frau getötet* ‘They have killed me the wife’. There is no need to worry: each widow (or mother or owner of an animal) could say the same kind of sentence about a murdered husband (child, animal). In such constructions, the dative marks an additional intentional complement (not provided by the standard frame) as being involved in the event, in one way or another. Typically such expressions indicate the helplessness and emotional afflictedness of the involuntary participant.

\(^{52}\) To prevent any misunderstanding: TARGETS are not necessarily animate (e.g., one can hit (on) a table) and merely potentially affected, as in the case of an animal one aims at without shooting.
state of which is changed by external force. More specifically, a THEME is an entity that changes its place by itself or by external force (in both cases I would prefer a distinction in terms of valency, thus UNDERGOER for the sole complement of [-control] verbs). The RECIPIENT is understood as the prototypically human someone to which the PATIENT or THEME is transferred. The BENEFICIARY is the one who benefits (or as a ‘maleficiary’ possibly suffers) from the action. Following this definition, PATIENT/THEME and RECIPIENT/BENEFICIARY do not behave syntactically identically in a language with primary marking, since the former participant receives the morphological marker only when the latter is absent. The marking of the PATIENT or THEME depends upon valency, that of the RECIPIENT or BENEFICIARY does not.

I would expect that primary marking is less likely to be found in nominal case marking systems, although I do not wish to preclude that case marking may be affected by the patterns of agreement if both systems co-occur. But it is not self-evident that the pattern of primary marking is easily transferred from one system to the other, and I do not think we are allowed to assume that the system(s) of case marking in Proto-Tibeto-Burman showed the same pattern as the agreement system that might be reconstructed.

6.2. Case marking for TARGETS

Nevertheless, according to Dryer (1986: 817) the pattern of primary marking would also be found as a nominal case marking system in Magaric (Khamp). In fact, such patterns do occur, but only under specific conditions (see the next section). In his example sentences, however, the “object” marker is found with the TARGET and the RECIPIENT, not with the typical PATIENT; see examples (18) through (20). LaPolla (1992), who presents the same examples, even claims that this pattern could be found in Ladakhi and “at least fifty” other languages (p. 36), while in the case of Balti and a number of other languages “the accusative [!] is generally unmarked, but the dative or dative-locative marker is sometimes or often used for accusative [!] arguments” (p. 4). Similarly, DeLancey (1984: 70, note 3) states that

The use of allative/dative markers with definite, animate, or potentially ambiguous objects is a common phenomenon throughout the world, and occurs in a number of TB languages (e.g. Burmese, Jinghpaw, and all [!] dialects of Tibetan) [...] Moreover there is a widespread (and proba-
bly PTB) locative la [...] which serves that function in, for example, Tibetan.

As far as Ladakhi and Balti are concerned, the directional case marker la or an equivalent postposition can by no means be used for a typical PATIENT (17) (and in general, with the possible exception of differential object marking, this is also true for Old and Classical Tibetan, Lhasa Tibetan, Nagchenpa (Kham), Rebkong and Themchen (Amdo) and quite probably a great number other modern Tibetan varieties). However, the directional case marker is in fact used for the TARGET of a small set of agentive and affective verbs. The agentive set (with ergative marking for the AGENT) typically contains verbs such as beat/Hit (at) (18'), look at (19'), listen to obey, hold on, wait for, speak to and most two-place realisations of communication verbs.\(^{53}\) The af-

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\(^{53}\) The number may vary from variety to variety. For Ladakhi I was able to systematically document a set of—at present—828 verbs. 67 agentive verbs show a directional pattern obligatorily or alternatively in at least one version (cf. Zeisler 2003 with 47 verbs), while in Amdo Themchen only 12 such verbs have been observed within a set of 574 verbs (Haller, 2004: 75–134, nos. 75–646). At least 20 verbs are attested in Classical Tibetan. Unfortunately, the available dictionaries often remain silent or underspecified with respect to the argument structure of the verbs, and Hackett (2003) is of no great help either. First of all, with 688 verbs, he covers less than 60% of the Classical Tibetan verbs (1189 in Zhang 1993). Secondly, his material is drawn only from religious texts. Thirdly, his terminology is entirely based on Wilson (1992) who allegedly follows the Tibetan grammatical tradition.

However useful a traditional approach might be for a language student in a Tibetan environment, the classification of verbs into eight major or fourteen minor paradigms is Wilson’s innovation, and it is neither based on good intuitions nor on linguistic insight, as all classes describe verbs with basically two arguments. E.g., the verbs of class III are characterised in the following way: “all have nominative subjects and, sometimes optionally, objective case qualifiers” (Wilson 1992: 228). Hackett (2003) thus substances intransitive state or inchoative one-place verbs like na ‘be ill’ and keh’l si ‘die’ under class III without reflecting the difference between non-obligatory core arguments licensed by the verb meaning, such as the goal of a movement, and additional satellite arguments of location that can combine with any verb. If his classification is motivated by sentences like the enemy died on the battlefield one wonders why good [ had] | bad | sod ‘killed’ is still classified as V (the normal ergative pattern) but not as VI (the directional pattern) although there might be sentences like the king killed in the battlefield but never at home. The satellite argument of location is treated as las (Wilson’s and Hackett’s “objective”) in the Tibetan grammatical tradition. In terms of Tibetan grammatical tradition, it remains debatable whether intransitive verbs can have a las argument (similar to the rotating of an engine-wheel in a factory or to the moving towards a goal, discussed in section 3.1 above). And it is by no means self-understood that verbs like na ‘be ill’, or bokhar ‘be stuck, impeded’, bokhi | xokal ‘be old’ (class III) have to be interpreted as dynamic verbs, while skow | xosmo ‘be thirsty’, skyo ‘be sad’, skrag ‘be afraid’ (all class II, “Nominaive-Locative”) can only be interpreted as state verbs.

Out of Hackett’s 688 verbs, 30 are classified as “VI” or “Agentive-Objective” (Thanks to Nicola Westemmann for looking through the “dictionary” and listing all instances). But not all instances are accompanied by a valid example, and some turn out
fective set (with absolutive for the BEARER of Emotion) contains verbs such as like, be happy with/about, rejoice at, fear/be afraid of.

(18) nga: zhim nga-jxy-ke.
KHM 1sg house 1sg-build-PAST
   'I built a house.'

(18') pas nay rtsikspin.
LAD 1-ERG house-ABS build-PAST
   'I built a house.'

(19) no-e kax-lay poh-ke-o.
KHM 3SG-ERG dog-OBJ beat-PAST-3SG
   'He beat (on/against) the dog.'

(19') khos khia rdzugs
LAD s/he-ERG dog-D/1. beat-PAST
   'S/he beat (on/against) the dog.'

(20) no-e nga-lay cyw-na-ke-o.
KHM 3SG-ERG 1SG-OBJ watch-1SG-PAST-3SG
   'He watched/looked at me.'

(20') pas khoa jlaspin.
LAD 1-ERG s/he-D/1.watch-PAST
   'I watched/looked at him/her.'

Similar verbs are attested in many Tibeto-Burman languages. Agenitive: beat (Lhomi, Rongpo, Shixing, Prinmi, Gyarang, Rawang, Lahu), look at for (Lhomi, Rawang) and see (?) (Rongpo, Rawang).

to be three-place verbs, such as mchod 'offer', bsny | bsny 'smear, anoint', or three place collocations, such as yid rlon 'rely' or more literally 'place one's confidence upon' and dbang sgyur | bsgyur 'govern, rule' or more literally 'transform someone (as to be) under one's power' (here the verb is, of course, sgyur | bsgyur 'not dbang'). Other three-place verbs, such as ster 'give' or ston | bsyn 'show' are classified as class V or 'Agenitive-Nominative' verbs. This categorisation might reflect the traditional Tibetan distinction between las and ches sbzin and thus between the 'second case' and the 'fourth case'—although this is nowhere discussed—but the choice of either the second or the third argument as a criterion for the classification and the neglect of the fact that there is another argument is unmotivated, to say the least.

All in all, there remain 20 two-place verbs showing an agenitive-directional pattern in at least one reading, and some more might be hidden under false labels. A projection to the full vocabulary might yield about 40 such verbs. The percentage is apparently lower than in Ladakhi.

54 Elicited data from Domkhar, Lower Ladakh.
56 Dryer (1986: 817, no. 22 a); cf. Watters (1973: 54), who uses a plural TARGET.
57 The directional marker is only optionally used.
58 Probably only in contrastive use.
listen to (Dzongkha, Primi), wait for (Lhomi, Râwang), help (Thakali, Râwang, Trung/Dúlông), talk/speak/say to (Shîzîng, Trung/Dúlông), ask (Trung/Dúlông), call (Râwang), name (Thakali), abuse; scold (Trung/Dúlông, Shîzîng), intimidate (Trung/Dúlông), chase, pursue (Râwang, Trung/Dúlông), search (Trung/Dúlông), care for (Primi), rely on (Dzongkha), additionally also slaughter and shoot death (Primi), arrest and put (Râwang). Affective: love (Dzongkha, Primi, Trung/Dúlông), like (Râwang), be afraid of (Shîzîng).

The prepositional complements in the English equivalents would not be classified as Direct Objects and the sentences would be considered as intransitive. In some cases, the English equivalent might have an alternative translation with a Direct Object, e.g. observe for look at, and a few verbs might only be translated into English by transitive verbs. This does not mean, however, that these verbs are transitive in Tibetan, and that there is a Direct Object or patient that receives a directional marker by accident. In the case of Tibetan, at least, the directional marker is not a “patient” or “object” marker.

6.3. Floating case marking

In contrast to the agreement patterns, which appear to be applied quite consistently, Tibeto-Burman case marking is rather flexible or even unpredictable, as it is governed by pragmatic rather than syntactic or semantic criteria. Due to these pragmatic criteria, such as givenness and definiteness, case markers might either be omitted or used with complements that would normally not receive any case marker.

6.3.1. Case marking on definite PATIENTS (differential object marking)

According to Tournadre (1994: 645) directional marking could be used for particular emphasis on the PATIENT. He compares this to the

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61 Although one may frequently find the terms “patient marker” (Lü Lü 1984; Hûng Bûân & Rênheng Wângmû 1991) and “object” marker or case (Caughley 1982; Keping 1982. Lusteg (2002) in the literature on Tibeto-Burman languages, both terms are applicable only insofar as a recipient could be a “patient” (i.e. an affected entity) or indirect objects could be “objects”. One should perhaps avoid such underspecified terms even for primary marking. The same holds for the “accusative” noun particle or case (Matisoff 1973, Keping 1985), and particularly for the “absolutive marker” (van Driem 1991; Keping 1994. Note that this *contradictio in adjecto* has been formulated for an overt marker in contrast to the non-marker zero.
optional use of the ergative marker with intransitive verbs or with transitive verbs in present tense constructions where the ergative marker is typically omitted.

(21) a. yāː  sóc-par:
    male yak-ABS ride-PAST
    '[He] rode (/sat on) a yak.'

b. yākā sóc-par:
    male yak-DAT ride-PAST
    'It's a yak [he] rode (/sat on) [not a horse].' 62

(22) a. Lōpsan yākī: tupsn
    Lōpsan-ABS male yak-ERG hit-PAST
    "Lopsan was hit by a yak ('s horn)." [? perhaps better: 'As for Lopsang, a yak hit him. ']

b. yākīː Lōpsanla tupsn
    male yak-ERG Lōpsan-DET hit-PAST
    "It is Lopsan who was hit by the yak." [? perhaps better: 'The yak hit (against) Lopsan.'] 63

I am not sure whether this is the only possible explanation. With respect to 'riding', two alternative frames have been available in history: a transitive frame 'to ride' with an ergative AGENT and an absolutive PATIENT and an intransitive frame 'to mount/sit on a horse etc.' with an absolutive AGENT and a dative-locative or GOAL (JĀK sub žon). 64 While in Lhasa Tibetan, it is the transitive frame that has become the standard frame, it is the intransitive frame in West Tibetan. But does this necessarily mean that the other option (or the original meaning) is no longer available? Unfortunately, Tournadre presents

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62 Tournadre (1994: 645, no. 18 a/b; spelling and glosses are mine).
63 Tournadre (1994: 645, no. 19 a/b; spelling and glosses are mine).
64 Cf. khun’gds med ling ni bdag ma rda’ (fullfile ‘3, 4 when the bride rides/ride (on) a horse’ (Gerzmychân 1924–30, Fol. 87a2)), but also bsgar ma rda’ zon was ‘as when the bride rides/ride (on) a horse’ (Gerzmychân, Francke 1924–30, Fol. 14a1). As English ride vs. ride on get a ride, the two constructions might perhaps express a difference in control over the horse (thanks to Christopher Beckwith for pointing this out). Francke, actually, contrasts the two phrases in his translation as ‘mount a horse’ and ‘arrive on horse back’. Particularly in the context of a wedding, a bride might be expected not to ride a horse as she might do at other times, but to sit on it passively and let her be taken away. But the first example does not necessarily imply more than just mounting the horse. The notion of eventually getting to another place (which would be implied in the connotation of driving the horse) is typically expressed by a different motion verb. Cf. also JĀK who glosses the absolutive variant bzhon’ yonpa as ‘to mount a horse or a carriage’.
the example without an AGENT NP, so that it cannot be decided whether it is a case of alternative frames or, in fact, a case of emphatic marking.

In the case of ‘hitting’, the verb /dun/ follows the standard ergative pattern in Old and Classical Tibetan (rdug | brdugs | brdu | rdugs) and in many modern central and eastern varieties; apparently West Tibetan is the great exception, with /rdug/; rdugs/ ‘to hit, strike, beat’ following the directional pattern. But what is puzzling is that in contrast to Tournadre’s translation, Lopsan takes the topic position in the first alternative, not in the second alternative, so that one would expect that the emphasis on Lopsan is found in the first, not in the second alternative. There is a similar example in Gyalthang (Kham) Tibetan, where rather unexpectedly the verb /dun/ ‘to hit’ (CT rdug | brdugs | brdu | rdugs) shows directional marking for the second complement, while the neighbouring dialect Bathang doesn’t; see example (22). As far as I understood Hongladarom (2000), she would assume that the dative marker is triggered by the loss or neutralisation of the ergative marker for the first complement. But this is not necessarily the case, since the dative marker also appears with an ergative first complement. As the translation suggests, the verb /dun/ ‘sniff at’ is a candidate for directional marking in Tibetan.

(23) a. khonar-chin na-go daw-cun (Gyalthang)
   3P-all-o 1S-DAT hit[AUX oriented towards 1]
   ‘All of them hit me.’

b. khor na daw-cun (Bathang)
   3S-ERG 1S-O hit[AUX oriented towards 1]
   ‘He hit me.’

c. tsha-ji ne-go nan tog-nu (Gyalthang)
   dog-ERG 1S-DAT smell come[AUX oriented towards other]
   ‘The dog sniffed at me.’

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65 Other beating verbs of the directional type are CT rdeg(s) | brddeg | rddeg(s) ‘to beat, strike’, Themchen /dgar, ygor/ (‘to strike’) and /gog/ (‘to beat, thrash’) (Felix Haller, Universität Bern, p.c.).

In CT snom | bsnull | bsnu | bsnom allows an absolutive second complement as well as a dative-locative second complement depending on whether one means ‘to smell’ as a mere perception: spokhs ni dlama bim snar bsnull ‘the sweet smell of the incense was smelled in the nose’ or ‘to smell’ as a directed activity: mi rdgomp /kha-la nyan /]] za zimpok dlha snoms ‘Listen to the words (lit. mouth) of an old person and smell at the smell of the delicious food!’ (BR sub snomgr).
If the marking of what seems to be a Patient is restricted to verbs with directional connotations, and if these verbs are, in fact, attested with a directional pattern in related varieties, we should perhaps take this as an ‘inheritance’ from an earlier directional pattern, which surfaces under certain conditions. This diachronic stance can only be ruled out by examples of differential object marking with verbs that do not have a directional connotation.

While we certainly need more research into this topic with respect to the Tibetan languages, differential object marking has been observed in other Tibeto-Burman languages. E.g., in Pangti-Kinnauri (Takahashi 2002), the Patient of a transitive sentence may receive the same case marker as the Recipient in a bi-transitive sentence, under the condition that the Patient is highly specific. The case marker might thus be restricted to names, pronouns, and definite objects (in contrast to, e.g., mass nouns):

\[(24) \text{gis kīnū saček / nu mīrīn sūk} \]
\[\text{1-ERG you-DAT kill 1/2OBJ.PAST, ISUBJ / this man-DAT kill.PAST, ISUBJ} \]
\[\text{‘I killed you\textsuperscript{68} / this man’} \]

\[(25) \text{ju k\textsuperscript{8}au / ?k\textsuperscript{8}auri haes zād} \]
\[\text{this food-o / ?food-DAT who-ERG eat.PAST,3SUBJ} \]
\[\text{‘Who ate this food?’} \]

\[(26) \text{gīgis ju pen kīnū ketok} \]
\[\text{1-O/ERG this pen-o you-DAT give 1/2OBJ.FUT, ISUBJ} \]
\[\text{‘I will give you this pen\textsuperscript{69}.} \]

In Kham Magaric, an animacy hierarchy has been observed in elicitation, according to which the use of the directional marker for the Patient is restricted to human nouns, particularly names and pronouns. However, various principles interact in discourse. In narrations, proper names and human pronouns are highly specific and thus regularly receive the directional marker; the same holds for personified animals. Generally, definiteness and givenness trigger the directional marker. The directional marker is further obligatory in complement verb constructions (which formally, at least, correspond to bi-transitive constructions) and in transitive dependent clauses, when the matrix verb is intransitive (Watters 1973: 199–202).

Similarly, in Dolakha Newari, case marking for Patients is used only for animate Patients, and only if they are given and crucial to

\[\text{\textsuperscript{68}In some dialects the pronoun of the addressee remains in the absolutive: ki.} \]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{69}Takahashi (2002).} \]
the story, and for human PATIENTS if they are given or accessible (Genetti 1997: 48). Since the case marking on such PATIENTS is obligatory, bi-transitive sentences may show directional case marking on both the RECIPIENT and the PATIENT (28).

(27) époque ânta wâ hirâ-e jâ bir-ju
SPL:ERG 3SG:DAT TOP diamond GEN rice give 3SG:PST
‘They gave him rice made of diamonds’ 70

(28) âlé ânta bhâneche-ta bir-ju
then 3SG:DAT cook DAT give 3SG:PST
‘Then he gave her (in marriage) to the cook’ 71

This pattern can no longer be subsumed under primary marking. Genetti (1997: 38–39, 52, 53) thus argues that one cannot divide Dolakha objects into two separate classes based on morphosyntactic behavior. Instead […] patients and recipients together form a single syntactic category of object, and […] the assignment of case-marking in Dolakha is independent of grammatical relations. Casemarked objects in Dolakha do not fit into either a primary object, a direct object, or a split object pattern.

There are no syntactic rules in this language that distinguish between categories of objects; that is, there are no rules which make a distinction between either DO/IO or PO/SO.

Some qualification seems to be in order. Case marking or word order per se might not be sufficient to determine a syntactic category or semantic relation. It might be more fruitful to view each complement with respect to its syntactic or semantic weight (i.e. its position in the salience hierarchy) and in relation to all other complements and their natural order. There might also be further criteria. But the question of whether or not a complement allows variation in case marking appears to be related to its position or weight in the frame. Variation of case marking is syntactic behaviour as well. In the case of Dolakha Newari, there is an obvious difference between RECIPIENT and PATIENT: it is only the PATIENT that may or may not receive the directional marker, whereas the RECIPIENT never appears in the absolutive. Therefore there is, in fact, a distinction, not between primary and secondary objects, but between the syntactic categories Direct and Indirect Object.

70 Genetti (1997: 37, no. 1)
71 Genetti (1997: 41, no. 8)
6.3.2. Omission of case marking

By contrast, other languages may opt for economy, and although there are particular case frames assigned to individual verbs, the case marker is omitted in most sentences and only applied if the sentence would otherwise be ambiguous. In the modern Tibetan varieties a general tendency can be observed to omit overt case markers, although the frequency of the omission and its motivation may vary, sometimes even between close dialects, as in Gyalthang and Bathang Tibetan, mentioned above. The Gyalthang case markers are not used “when the speaker simply reports an event without highlighting the agent or the patient” (Hongladarom 2002). So far, there is plenty of evidence for the omission of the ergative marker to de-emphasise the AGENT in cases where the AGENT is evident.\footnote{This might be the case if the AGENT argument is in topic position or is the only animate complement (Che 1992: 55, 57; Agha 1993: 22–24; Tournagre 1996: 291). It has also been observed that the ergative marker might be omitted if the speaker talks about him- or herself (Takenuchi & Takahashi 1994: 653).} With respect to the omission of directional markers for TARGETS, however, the evidence is rather scanty.

In urban Lhasa Tibetan one can observe a strong tendency to omit the directional marker, cf. also Saxena 1991: 115 for optional case marking of the RECIPIENT. I encountered this feature in a language course at Lhasa University in 1994. To my questions concerning the missing marker for a LOCATION the teacher replied: “Well, you are right, theoretically it should be there, but we never use it.” I do not know whether this statement could possibly also include TARGETS, since at that time I had no sensibility for this sentence pattern. On the other hand, I did not realise any unusual case marking or non-marking of RECIPIENTS that would confirm Saxena’s observation.

For Ladakhi and Balti one might perhaps say that overt case markers can be omitted, particularly in narrations, but no regular pattern can be observed. Most frequently, it is the ergative marker that is deleted; in Balti one may also observe the omission of the genitive marker (Biemeier 1985: 142). I have not yet come across the deletion of a directional marker for the EXPERIENCER, RECIPIENT, TARGET, GOAL, or LOCATION. Thus only the second alternative (b) of (21) and (22) would be acceptable.

Due to an ongoing reorganisation of the case marking system, some verbs may have alternative verb frames, so that a particular complement may or may not receive a particular case marker. E.g., the R-
SULT of a transformation receiving the locative-purposive marker in Old and Classical Tibetan would typically not receive any marking, but the marking of the RESULT with the dative-locative would not be considered to be wrong, since the marker may depend on the accidentalness of the transformation. Marginal patterns vary between dialects or from speaker to speaker. Finally, there is some regular variation that goes along with a shift of focus (verbs of the spray/load type) or with a shift of meaning (see also Zeisler, Forthcoming). Definiteness plays a role for the constituent order, but apparently not for case marking.

CONCLUSION

Case marking in Tibeto-Burman is in general much more flexible and context sensitive than could be expected from a traditional account of case marking systems or from the classification as a nominative or ergative language. The use of case markers might always go along with a certain (weaker or stronger) connotation of emphasis or contrast and the non-application of case markers may always signal the absence of such emphasis or contrast. Standard verb frames, according to which particular case markers could be expected or not, allow a threefold gradation of emphasis. The connotation of emphasis or contrast of the case markers is strongest when applied contrary to expectation; likewise, the connotation of de-emphasis is strongest when the non-marking occurs against expectation; the application or non-application of case markers according to the basic frame has a neutral value. In Tibeto-Burman languages we can observe a pattern of primary marking at the level of verb agreement, but it does not seem to be possible to postulate a full-fledged pattern of primary marking for morphological case marking for Proto-Tibetan, particularly since case marking systems follow a different logic than agreement systems. As far as I know, none of the Tibetan varieties shows a full-fledged pattern of primary marking. The directional markers are typically restricted to directional activities and affections, and differential object marking is apparently quite rare.

But I cannot preclude the possibility that an earlier pattern of primary marking has been reorganised toward an ergative system in bi-

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73 This general principle does not rule out the possibility that speech economy may lead to a shift of the neutral value toward the general omission of case marking.
valent clauses with the marking becoming optional for PATIENTS but remaining obligatory for TARGETS. As a second step in such a hypothetical development, the contrastive marking of a PATIENT would have been lost, as we can observe in the modern varieties. Finally, even the marking of TARGETS might become optional in the future. Differential object marking, however, is not necessarily the remnant of an earlier pattern of primary marking, though it may itself lead from the standard accusative or ergative pattern to a pattern of primary marking. And perhaps this direction of development is the more natural one.

Although typical PATIENT complements appear in the Tibetan grammatical literature as examples of the kāraka-relation las or kār-
man, they cannot be treated as PATIENTS or Direct Objects in such contexts. The directional case marker, which inevitably has to be joined to a las, pushes them out of their original role and transforms them into TARGETS or LOCATIONS. The prototypical instantiation of las (byabāhi yul or lassu byaba) is the GOAL of a movement verb. Despite its origin in Sanskrit terminology, las as a kāraka-relation does not refer to a prototypical PATIENT. For contemporary Tibetan scholars, at least, it is clear that the Tibetan kāraka-relations do not match the Sanskrit kāraka-relations exactly. Therefore, in the context of case grammar and the kāraka-relations, we should no longer translate the term las and its equivalents lassu byaba and byabāhi yul as ‘object’ or even ‘direct object’, but rather as ‘GOAL’, ‘TARGET’, or, taking the most common term literally, as ‘location of activity’.

The kāraka-relation las cannot be delimited by the semantic notion of the original term karman (which itself unifies various semantic roles), but has to be defined with respect to its syntactic behaviour. In the context of the theory of bdag and gzan, the extension of las is expanded, introducing the entity to be transformed or accomplished, the ‘object’ or ‘PATIENT’, into the sphere of gzan, at the same time it is restricted, excluding the GOAL of a movement verb from the sphere of gzan. It is important to keep in mind that the kāraka section and the section on bdag gzan represent two different approaches to different grammatical questions, which are only loosely interrelated.75 One may

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74 One of the Tibetan scholars attending the 10th seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Oxford University, September 2003 made this point very clear in his comment on my presentation.

75 While the theory of bdag and gzan can be used to identify those ‘transitive’ verbs that need the ‘actor marker’ byedggra or ‘third case’, the classification of the temporal and modal verb stems and complex verb phrases as belonging to different
speculate whether or not the texts to which they primarily belong represent different epochs and/or grammatical schools. Although later commentators accept these texts as having been written by the same author, the legendary Thonmi Sambhota, the two sections are typically treated independently, and with few exceptions, the terminology adopted remains context-dependent. The partial amnesia as displayed between the sections turns out to be a stratagem allowing commentators to account for instances where the AGENT of directional activities receives an ergative marker.

ABBREVIATIONS

1. Dictionaries
   BR    Zhang 1993
   JÄK   Jäschke (1881)

2. Texts
   RKH   Rtagskyi ljug pa
   SCP   Sumycpa

3. Languages
   CT    Classical Tibetan
   KHM   Kham (Magaric)
   LAD   Ladakhi
   SKR, Skr. Sanskrit

4. Grammatical terms
   ABS   absolute (zero)
   CC    clause chaining
   [+CTR] [+control]
   COM   comitative
   ERG   ergative (Instrumental as Subject case)

spheres in terms of bdag and gzan does not say anything about the applicability of the ergative marker according to a temporal or aspectual split: the actor invariably receives the marker in the example sentences, whether the actual verb form would be classified as belonging to the sphere of bdag (present tense forms, commands, and prohibitions), as belonging to gzan (future tense forms), or as belonging to no sphere at all (past tense forms). The important thing is that all tense forms of a 'transitive' verb such as good | bead | good | chod 'to cut' are in one way or another essentially related to a differing actor in contrast to a [-control] 'intransitive' verb of result such as §hehod | chod 'to be cut' where there is no such dichotomy (Panglung Norbu Bsamgrub 1993: 201; cf. Situ Panchen 1744: 145, 151 ad RKH verse 104) or in contrast to a [+control] movement verb where actor and activity are presented as being virtually identical (Drnudge Bsamgtan 1990: 59f.; cf. Situ Panchen 1744: 145f., 151 ad RKH verse 104).
THE TIBETAN UNDERSTANDING OF KARMA

D/L
dative-locative
DES
desiderative
DEF
definiteness marker
FUT
future tense (unspecified)
GEN
genitive
INSTR
instrumental
INTJ
interjection
I/Q
limiting quantifier: ‘one’, ‘some’
LOC
locative
L/P
locative-purposive
NG
negation
PAST
past tense (unspecified)
PL
plural
PRF
present tense (unspecified)
Q
alternative question marker
TOP
topic particle
VN
nominaliser (verbal noun)

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