EBERHARD KARLS
UNIVERSITÄT
TÜBINGEN

DFG Projekt
Valenzwörterbuch der ladakischen Verben
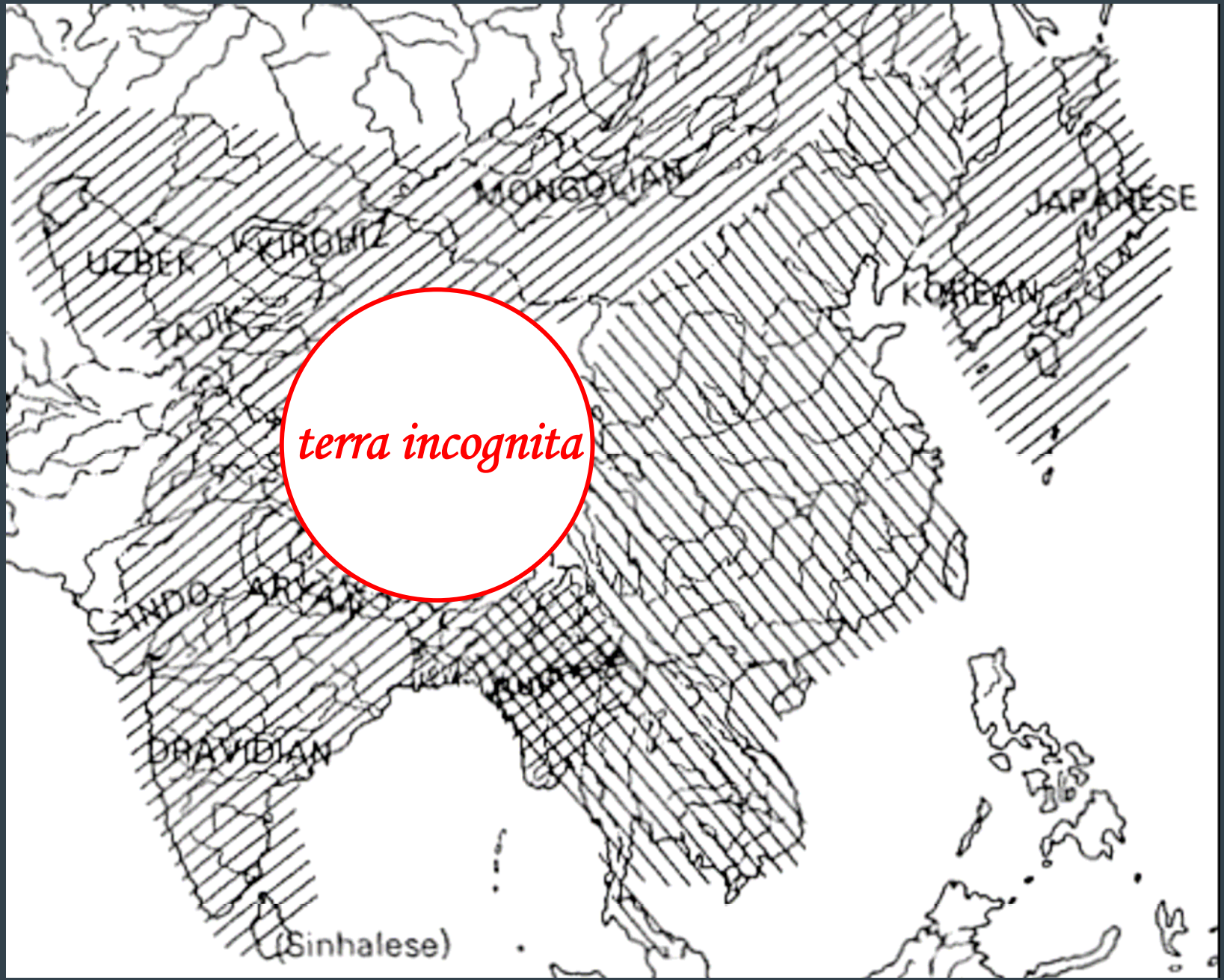A Valency Dictionary of Ladakhi Verbs

Bettina Zeisler

Verb-verb sequences in Tibetan and Ladakhi (1200 years of stable transition)

Mysteries of verb-verb complexes in Asian languages

14-15 December 2013

Tokyo

terra incognita

1. Introduction

L'AIRE LINGUISTIQUE TIBÉTAINE
བོད་ཀྱི་ཡུལ་སྐད་ས་བཀྲ

Aire linguistique tibétaine
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Tsang གཙང་ Dialecte tibétain (province historique)
SIKKIM Autre province ou État
⊡ Chengdu Capitale d'État ou de province
• Sakya Ville principale tibétaine

1 : 12 500 000
0   100   200   300   400   500 Km

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Gilgit
PAKISTAN
Skardo *Balti*   སྦལ་ཏི
Kotan
TURKESTAN CHINOIS
(XINJIANG)
MONGOLIE
INTÉRIEURE

Ladakh ལ་དྭགས
Leh
CACHEMIRE
GANSU
Dunhuang

CHINE
Golmud
Kokonor
Xining Pari
GANSU

Dharamsala
Zanskar ཟངས་དཀར
Rutok
Senge Khabap
QINGHAI
Ch'apcha
Thrika
Repkong
Lanzhou
Labrang

HIMACHAL
PRADESH
Sutlej
Tholing
Langchen Khabap
Ngari' མངའ་རིས
RÉGION AUTONOME DU TIBET
Machu (Yangtzelhang)
Amdo ཨ་མདོ
(Huanghe)

Simla
Mussoorie
UTTAR
PRADESH
Purang
Tsamapam
Kyekundo
Ngaba
Sungchu

New Delhi
Gange
NÉPAL
Dolpo དོལ་པོ
Yarlung Tsangpo
Mustang མུས་ཏང
Kyirong
Dhingri Sakya
Tsang གཙང
Shikatse
Gyantse
Namtso
Lhasa
Yartok Yumtso
Tsetang
Ü དབུས
Kyichu
Samyä
Hor ཧོར
Nakchu Gyamo Ngulchu
Dzachu (Salween)
Derge Kandze'
Ch'amto
(Mekong)
Kham ཁམས
Markam
Litang
Dhartsendo
Chengdu
SICHUAN

Yamuna
Kathmandou
Sherpa ཤརཔ
Bumthang
Arun
SIKKIM
Gangtok
Kalimpong
Darjeeling
Druk འབྲུག
Thimbu
BHOUTAN
Lhobrak ལྷོ་བྲག
Chonggyä
Lhoka ལྷོ་ཁ
Dhakpo དྭགས་པོ
Kongpo ཀོང་པོ
ARUNACHAL PRADESH
Dechen
Gyältang

INDE
Gange
Brahmapoutre
ASSAM
MEGHALAYA
INDE
MYANMAR
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N

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What I do not want to talk about:

Contextually triggered verb-verb sequences or by-chance-adjacency: an accidential by-product of the tendency to omit contextually given arguments.

(However, are the constructions I do want to talk about really different?)

Tibetic languages are, from the very beginning, very rich in verb-verb combinations that are not simply due to the omission of contextually given arguments.

These non-contextually-triggered combinations can be divided into four different groups. The first three are fully grammaticalised:

Grammatical verb + verb constructions consist of

- TMA-constructions: verb (+ x) + auxiliary

- modal constructions: verb (+ x) + modal verb

- causative constructions: verb (+ x) + causative verb

x = additional morphological material that tend to get dropped in the later stages.

Diachronically, these constructions start as comple-mentiser constructions, but end up with a syntactic restructuring based on the semantics of the first verb (TMA constructions) or of the compound expression (modal and causative constructions).

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The last and more problematic type of complex verb + verb constructions consists of

(more or less) semantically related verb pairs,

mostly type-verb + path-verb combinations,

with the first one *formally* modifying the second one.

This is the contruction I want to talk about.

2. Complex predicates consisting of semantically related verb pairs

2.1. Formal properties

There are two different construction types for these verb pairs in Tibetan:

(a) serial construction: the first verb appears in one of its bare stem forms (stem II) without additional morphemes

(b) converb construction: a clause chaining marker (*{ste}* or *nas*) is added to the first verb stem (stem I or II)

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The serial construction, type a) is found in modern Central Tibetan and some East Tibetan (Kham) varieties. It is also attested in the Ladakhi varieties in the construction of hightened intentionality (stem II + *taŋ*) and as an alternative form in the Domkhar dialect of western Sham.

The converb construction, type b) is prominent in Old and Classical Tibetan, it is the dominant form in West Tibetan (Balti and Ladakhi), and it is also found in North-East Tibetan (Amdo).

2.2. Common combinations

function	2. verb	type of 1. verb	attestation (Tib)
1. directional (in relation to speaker or narrative focus)			
directional	come : go	intr. motion	all varieties
		trans. movement	excl. Ladakhi, Balti
directional	bring : take	trans. movement	Ladakhi, Balti
directional	give:bring:take	commercial activ.	Ladakhi, Balti
beneficiary	bring		Ladakhi (?Balti)
2. intensifying			
volitional	give, throw	all types [+ctr]	Ladakhi, Balti
3. 'aspectual'			
durative, resultative	stay↔	intr. & reflex. verbs	all varieties
	put	trans. verbs	
completive	negative result	annihilation	Classical, Ladakhi
completive	non-existence	disappearance …	Ladakhi
4. other (and perhaps questionable)			
syntactic	specific vs. unspecific	*verba dicendi*	some varieties

As one can see, the Western Tibetan varieties (Balti and Ladakhi) have developed a few more specific combinations, most probably under the influence from Indoaryan languages, particularly from 'Dardic'. (Some of the combinations may perhaps be found in other Tibetic varieties as well, but if so, they have not yet been documented.)

In the following, I will concentrate on Ladakhi (which shows striking structural parallels with 'compound', 'vector', or 'light' verbs as found in Kohistani).

2.3. The basis for semantically related complex predicates: clause-chaining and embedded modifying constructions with the *lhagbcas* morpheme *{ste}*

Clause-chaining and subordination is indicated in Tibetan by adding specific morphemes to one of the verb stems. Implied or contextually given arguments are most often omitted (in certain cases, their deletion is even obligatory). Arguments shared by subsequent chained or embedded clauses are thus typically deleted from the second clause onwards, although it is also possible to omit a 'subject' argument in the first clause and present it in a following clause.

Most scholars would treat Tibetan clause-chaining constructions as instances of subordination, because the 'finite' TM markers are found only on the last element of the chain. However, as long as the chain of verbs iconically represents a chain of events along the time line, it is the first verb that triggers the case marker (absolutive vs. ergative vs. aesthetive) of the shared 'subject' (so-called backward control – if one believes in subordination), cf. (1a). In the case of purposive clauses or other modifying clauses, it is the later 'main' verb that triggers the case marker of the shared 'subject', cf. (1b).

(1) a. *ŋ-i*   *phropa-s*   *trutru*   *kik-se,*   *ʃi.*

DOM   I-GEN   friend-ERG   throat-∅   strangle-CC   die.PA

↑_____↓

'A friend of mine strangled [him/herself] and died.' Or: 'A friend of mine strangled [him/herself] to death.'

b. *ŋ-i*   *phropa-∅*   *trutru*   *kik-se,*   *ʃi.*

I-GEN   friend-∅   throat-∅   strangle-CC   die.PA

↑_____↓

'A friend of mine died by having strangled [him/herself].'

The first construction puts the emphasis on the act of strangling, the second on the result of dying. In the latter case, the first verb merely modifies the second one.

The first construction (1a) could also be understood as having a complex predicate *kikse-ʃi*, indicating the 'successful' completion of the suicide.

Needless to say, that this difference between the two types of constructions only shows up when verbs with different 'subject' marking are combined. When the verbs show the same type of 'subject' marking, it is not always obvious with which type we deal, although a narrative situation will more frequently imply a chaining of events, whereas background information will more commonly imply an embedding.

The most common morpheme used for clause chaining is the *lhagbcas* morpheme *{ste}* (in Ladakhi: *-se*, *-e*, *-ste*, *-te*, *-de*, or *-re*) or the ablative marker *nas*.

The construction corresponds roughly to a converb, a conjunct participle, or an adverbial participle, signalling a temporal relation of immediate anteriority and/or a close causal or modal correlation with the following event.

The 'subject' remains the same in most cases, but this is not a necessary condition.

The converb cannot be negated in Ladakhi, and has to be replaced by a nominal form.

In West Tibetan, the morpheme *-in* is used for a more explicit incidence relation.

Both constructions may be used for subordination and both are used for the semantically related verb pairs.

Nominalisers (± additional material) are used when the relation between the events is less immediate, particularly when the 'subject' switches. Except for the negated counterpart of the *lhagbcas* In Ladakhi, such constructions cannot be used for the semantically related verb pairs.

3. Problems in analysing the Ladakhi semantically related verb-verb constructions (SVVCs)

3.1. The translator's stance

It is clear that the two verbs form a semantic unit.

A *literal* translation of both verbs would thus give the text quite an exotic touch.

In a good *literary* translation, most of the SVVCs should be translated with a single verb (plus, if really necessary, a directional or aspectual adverb or particle).

A good translation, however, is not (and should never be) a linguistic analysis.

3.2. The linguist's stance

For the linguist, the main problem is whether the SVVCs constitute also formal units, or more precisely, whether they have to be analysed

- as semi-lexicalised or semi-grammaticalised com-plex verb expressions with a single argument frame

- as bi-clausal constructions where both verbs have their own argument frames – which simply happen to be identical, due to shared semantics, cf. (2) - (5).

Or are they perhaps hybrid constructions somewhere in between?

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(2) Frames of intransitive motion verbs:
path (or deictic) verbs: *ʧha, soŋ* 'go', *joŋ, joŋs* 'come'

type verbs, e.g. *kjok, kjoks*$_1$ 'turn round, change o's direction'

path verbs: Abs;   +Abs; +Loc; +Abl; +Abl+Loc

type verbs: Abs   +Loc; +Abl; +Abl+Loc

(3) a. *kho*   *<naŋ*   *jots>-ekana*   *soŋ.*

s/he-∅ <house-∅ be.place>-PP:ABL   go.PA

'S/he went away from the house(s).'

b. *kho*   *<naŋ*   *jots>-ekana*   *kjoks.*

s/he-∅ <house-∅ be.place>-PP:ABL   turn.round.PA

'S/he changed direction at the house(s).'

c. *kho*   *<naŋ*   *jots>-ekana*   *kjok-se-soŋ.*

s/he-∅ <house-∅ be.place>-PP:ABL   turn-(CC)-go.PA

'S/he went, having changed /by changing direction at the houses (bi-clausal embedded).'

OR: 'S/he turned away at the houses (mono-clausal).'

NOT: *'S/he turned away at the houses and went (bi-clausal chained).'

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(4) Frames of transitive movement verbs:

path (or deictic) verbs: *kher, khers* 'take away', *khjoŋ, khjoŋs* 'bring hither',

type verbs, e.g. *kjok, kjoks*$_2$ 'turn sth round',

both verbs:

Erg   +Abs; +Abs-Loc; +Abl-Abs; +Abl-Abs-Loc

(5) a. *atʃe-(:)*   *ika-ne*   *gaḷḍi*   *khers.*

sister-ERG   this-PP:ABL   car-∅   take.away.PA
     '[My] elder sister took the car away from here.'

   b. *atʃe-(:)*   *ika-ne*   *gaḷḍi*   *kjoks.*

     sister-ERG   this-PP:ABL   car-∅   turn.PA
     '[My] elder sister turned the car from here.'

   c. *atʃe-(:)*   *ika-ne*   *gaḷḍi*   *kjok-ste-khers.*

     sister-ERG   this-PP:ABL   car-∅   turn-(cc)-take.away.PA
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NOT: *'[My] elder sister turned the car and brought (it) away (bi-clausal chained).'

In the handout you can find some rough statistics on the distribution of SVVCs in a text corpus (the *Lower Ladakhi version of the Kesar epic*, collected and written down at ca. 1900, LLV, Francke 1905-41).

The difficulties of defining a single verb phrase, and the ambiguous character of the verb-verb combinations do not allow, however, to give exact numbers.

Table 1: Percentage of SVVCs

Total number of clauses / verbs (±)	8026	100%
Total number of SVVCs (±)	453	5,80%
Verbs that cannot appear in SVVCs	3662	
Existential and attributive linking verbs *yin, yod, rag, ḥdug* & *ḥdug* 'sit, stay'	1015	
Unmarked *verbum dicendi zer*	938	
Directional motion verbs (incl. LVs)[1]	979	
Directional transfer verbs (incl. LVs)[1]	709	
Remaining clauses /verbs	4364	
Percentage of VVCs		10,38%

[1] These verbs may appear infrequently in aspectual and intensifying constructions.

Table 2: Distribution of SVVCs

Total number of SVVCs (±)	453	%
directional motion verbs (intr)[2]	141	31,13
aspectual (durative, resultative)	112	24,72
intensifying (volitionality)	76	16,78
speech intro and extro	42	9,27
directional movement verbs (trans)[2]	36	7,95
give vs. take	21	4,64
aspectual (complete disappearance)	15	3,31
aspectual (complete destruction)	9	1,99
beneficiary	1[3]	0,2

---

[2] A few verb-verb combinations should possibly be reanalysed, the percentage should thus be somewhat lower.
[3] Some intensifying and give vs. take constructions should perhaps be reanalysed as beneficiary constructions.

Table 3: Motion (intr) and movement (trans) verbs

	total	SVVCs	%
all trns movement verbs	685	36	5,26
directional movement verbs	217	—	—
type movement verbs	468	36	7,69
all intr motion verbs (±)	1227	141	11,49
directional motion verbs	817	—	—
type motion verbs	410	141	34,39

3.3. Discussion of the various construction types

3.3.1   Path-motion verbs: expression of directionality

3.3.2   The use of give I: expression of

3.3.4   The use of give II: expression of hightened in-tentionality or force

3.3.5   The use of give II: ambiguous cases

3.3.6   Aspectuals: expression of duration

3.3.7   The perfect construction expressing complete disappearance

3.3.8   Communication verbs

3.3.1. Path-motion verbs: expression of directionality

As shown in the corpus data, the most common combinations in Tibetic languages are intransitive type-motion and transitive type-movement verbs, such as run, jump, carry, or steal, with the intransitive path-motion verbs go vs. come, example (3c).

In Ladakhi and some Balti dialects, however, (semantically) transitive type-movement verbs are typically combined with the transitive path-movement verbs take away vs. bring, example (5c).

From the perspective of German or English, one would say that such a combination expresses only a single semantic concept, that of a movement, directed towards or away from the speaker or narrative focus, for which German and English would use a type-movement verb plus an adverb or particle: *weg*, *hin*, and *her* or *away* and *hither*. From this perspective, the main focus would naturally lie on the movement type, and the path-motion verbs would be accidental, if not semantically bleached. (See also above: the translator's stance.)

But one could also argue that a language like Tibetan draws the distinction between type-motion and path-motion verbs not for nothing and that the path is more important for the speakers than the type. The main focus would thus lie on the movement path and the movement type would be just an accidental adornment.

The honorific counterparts of path-motion verbs are not differentiated with respect to direction, so that the direction has to be inferred from the context. Honorific path-motion verbs are nevertheless commonly used in complex verb + verb constructions, cf. the following two combinations from Old and Classical Tibetan:

ḥkhor-te-mchi 'appear-and-come' (CT)
mchoŋs-te-mchis 'jump-and-gone' (OT)

(6)	*lʒin Nurbu*	*raŋmala*	*loks-e-skjot-ʧas*	*soŋ-ʃik!*
KHAL	Dalai Lama-∅	immediately	turn-(CC)-go-NOM	go-DM

'May it happen, that the Dalai Lama can return (lit. return-and-hon.go/come) [to Tibet] immediately.' (Monologue on religious topics)

This indicates that the main focus actually lies on the path-motion verb, which is then modified by the type-verb. Otherwise, if the main function of path-verbs was to specify the direction of type-verbs, we would certainly find direction-specific honorific path-motion verbs.

Some problematic combinations:

ʒon, hon. *ʧhip* ('ride' or rather 'get onto the horse, bike bus') & directional motion verbs (intr)

(7)   *aʒaŋ   Domkhar-na Le-a   rht-eka   ʒon-e **joŋs**.*
uncle-∅ Domkhar-ABL Leh-ALL horse-PP:ALL ride-CC come.PA
'The uncle came from Domkhar to Leh, riding on a horse' or 'came riding' or 'rode hither from Domkhar to Leh' ?

(8)   *rinboʧhe   ʧhips-ika   ma-ʧhips-pa   skjot.*
chief.priest-∅ hon.horse-PP:ALL NG2-hon.ride-NOM hon.come.PA
'The chief priest came / went without riding a horse' or 'did not come / go riding' or 'did not ride (hither /away)' ?

skyon ('let ride' or rather 'let get onto …') & directional movement verbs (trans)

(9)   *ñopa-ŋun-is   bagma   rt-eka   skjon-e   khers.*

DOM   bridesmen-ERG bride-∅ horse-PP:ALL let.ride-CC take.away.PA

'The bridesmen put the bride on the horse and took her along.' or 'took the bride along on the horse' ?

Similarly in the epic:

rtamphongsla btangste ḥkhyers
'took on the hind part of the horse and took along' or
'took along on the horse back' ?

rdʒes ʧat ('follow, search'; lit. 'cut the trace') & directional motion verbs

(10)   *khoŋ ~khoŋ-is jaɣ-i   rdʒes   ʧat-e joŋs.*
         they-∅   they-ERG yak-GEN trace-∅ cut-CC come.PA
         'They followed the trace of the yak and came.' or 'came by following the trace' or 'followed the trace of the yak towards us.' ?

Or in the epic: *lam bstan* ('show the way') & directional motion verbs

lam bstante ḥkhyerte

'showed (him) the way and took (him) along' or 'led (him) along the way' ?

3.3.2. The use of give I: expression of a beneficiary

In Ladakhi and Balti, the verb *give* is frequently used to express a beneficiary or maleficiary, that is, the agent aims at the benefit or detriment of another person:

(11) *goba-s* *julpa* *sami* *tshaŋma-(:)*

DOM *goba*-ERG villager farmer all-ALL

sakjat *rere* *skal-e-tʰaŋs.*

land each-∅ allot-(cc)-give.PA

'The goba (village chief) alloted a piece of land each to all the farming villagers [ie, the individual households].'

3.3.3. Give, take, and bring: commercial transactions

In Ladakhi and Balti, the verb *give* and its directional counterpart *take* (away or hither) are also used to specify the direction of a (commercial) transaction, where the transaction verb itself is unspecific: lend/ borrow, exchange, return.

In both cases, the common construction type is with a clause chaining marker (type b), but in the Domkhar dialect, the construction type with the bare stem (type a) is also frequently found.

(12) a. *ŋa-s   kho-a   pene   maŋbo   jars-pin.*

DOM   I-ERG   s/he-ALL   money   much-∅   lend.PA-RM

/   *jar-e-tᵉaŋs-pin.*

lend-(CC)-give.PA-RM

'I lent / lent (and gave) him/her a lot of money.'

b. *ŋa-s   kho-ikana pene   maŋbo   jars-pin.*

I-ERG   s/he-PP:ALL money   much-∅   borrow.PA-RM

/   *jar-e-khjoŋs-pin.*

borrow-(cc)-take.PA-RM

'I borrowed / borrowed (and took) a lot of money from him/her.'

With *take* and *bring* verbs, the interpretation depends very much on the implicit context. Here, all three logical possibilities have been attested:

- a sequence of two events (first a contract or an agreement on the transaction type, then the actual transaction)

- modification of the second verb (contrastive usage, e.g. taking by borrowing, not by stealing)

- a compound reading (focussing on the resulting state: the money has still to be payed back)

(The interpretation by the informant may depend on how one formulates the question!)

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(The interpretation by the informant may depend on how one formulates the question!)

3.3.4. The use of give II: expression of hightened intentionality or force

In Ladakhi and Balti (occasionally also in other varieties), *give* (or *throw*) highlightens an actor's intentionality, often with a negative connotation of bad temper, destructive intentions, or performance against norms, expectations, or benevolent advice. The combination may also signal the application of force, that is, more than usual or necessary.

On a positive note, the construction is frequently used in commands, signalling that the addressee should just perform the task and not be shy.

In this function, *give* has no directional counterpart.

The common construction type for all dialects is with the bare stem II (type a). This indicates a closer unity between the two verbs, and a narrowing down, if not bleaching of the semantic content of the second verb.

Conversely, one may then say that the combinations of type (b) used to express directionality or beneficial readings of the previous section should perhaps not be viewed as complex predicates.

(13) *kha-s*　　　*laptse*　　　*lip*　　　*skon-tᵉaŋ-sok.*

DOM　snow-ERG　　sheaf-∅　　ONOM　dress-give.PA-INF

'Unexpectedly, the snow covered the sheaves completely.'

(14) *riri-o*　　　　ˌ*ltʃus-tᵉaŋs-pa,*　　　*ʒik.*

DOM　radio-DF-∅　turn.PA-give.PA-NOM　　break.down.PA

'When [I] turned the radio on and off again and again (more than necessary), [it] broke down.'

3.3.5. The use of give II: ambiguous cases

Several usages, however, allow both the reading of hightened intentionality or force and a more literal reading of the verb give, even with type (a) construc-tions.

(15)   *aba-s*   *ŋa-(:)*   *baik-ʧik*   *ɲos.*   */ ɲos-tʰaŋs.*

DOM   father-ERG   I-ALL   bike-LQ-∅   buy.PA   buy.PA-give.PA

‘Father bought a bike for me.’ / ‘Father bought a bike for me’ ~ ‘Father bought a bike and gave [it] to me.’

Compare also the following example, where the informant, despite the clause-chaining construction of type (b), at least initially did not accept the meaning 'and gave':

(16)

kho-i	*miŋbo-s*	*kho-a*	*naŋ-ʧik*	*ʧos-e-tᵉaŋs.*
DOM				
s/he-GEN	brother-ERG	s/he-ALL	house-LQ-∅	construct.PA-(CC)-give.PA

'Her brother constructed a house for her.' ~ ?'… constructed a house and gave it to her.'

3.3.6. Aspectuals: expression of duration

In Ladakhi and Balti, verbs with the meaning 'sit, stay' and 'put, keep' are used to describe an ongoing situation or ongoing resulting state.

The verb *stay* is used when the ongoing situation pertains to the subject or agent, the verb *keep* when the ongoing situation pertains to the patient.

In some of the examples the bleached character of the second element is quite evident, cf. example (19)-(21), but in others one could always opt for a full lexical meaning, cf. examples (17), (18), and (22).

In a few cases, the combination leads to a slight shift in meaning, cf. ˳*lta* 'look', but ˳*ltase-duk* 'stare'.

(17)   *kho*   *dronpo-ŋun-la* *trhel-ba,*   *ip-se-duks.*

DOM   s/he-∅ guest-PL-ALL   feel.shy-NOM hide-(CC)-stay.PA

'She felt shy before the guests and thus hid away.' ~ '…
stayed hidden.'

(18)   *Waŋgjal-is*   *ab-ekana*   *pene*   *zba-se-bors.*

DOM   Wanggyal-ERG father-PP:ABL money-∅ hide-(CC)-keep.PA

'Wanggyal hid (his) money from (his) father.' ~ 'Wang-
gyal kept (his) money away from (his) father.'

(19) … *galḍi-u* *ʒik-pa,* *ŋa-(:)*

DOM … car-DF-∅ get.destroyed-NOM I-AES

penʃin-po-aŋ *ul-e-duks.* / *ul.*

pension-DF-∅-CONJ loose-(CC)-stay.PA loose.PA

'[If I use the pension to buy a car, and] if the car gets destroyed, the pension will have been lost for me for ever.' (not: *'will have stayed lost.') / '… will have been lost.'

(20) *Gyapa co̱se* *mi̱ɦun* *nāndeboraɦokanak.*

GYA Gyapa ruler-ERG man-PL-∅ suppress-(CC)-keep-PRS-DSTM

'The lord of Gya must have suppressed the people (all the time).' / 'must have kept the people suppressed.'

The continuous/ iterative form stem I + *-in* is frequently found with the verb *stay*, less frequently also with the verb *keep*.

(21)   *phrugu-ŋun   baŋ   ᵗeaŋ-in-duk-se, …*

DOM   child-PL-∅   running-∅   give-(CONT)-stay-CC

'The children are running [on the roof] …'

(22)   *trūgu   cū:n-a,   pī-a   khap   tā-fa,*

GYA   child   small-AES   hip-ALL   injection-∅   give-NOM

      thok-te,   kh-e   am-e   lālok

      have.pain-CC   s/he-GEN   mother-ERG   flipflop-∅

      pē-:n-bor-uk.

      turn-(CONT)-keep-PRS.VIS

      'Since the small child, when given an injection into the
      hip, had some pain [in the hip], his/her mother is turning
      him/her around repeatedly.' ~ '… is keeping [him/her]
      turned around for a while.'

(23)   *khoŋ-is*   *rgun-ifia*   *gri:nhaus*

DOM   they-ERG   winter-PP   greenhouse-∅

tʃo-se-boːs.

construct-(CC)-keep.PA

'They constructed a greenhouse for the winter (and kept is so).'

With respect to the last example, the informant stated that the combination with /bor/ is used when one constructs or makes something not for immediate but for future usage or consumption.

The verb *stay* mostly follows intransitive verbs, but it may also follow a transitive verb, when the event is reflexive or subject-related in the widest sense. The choice of the case marker for the 'subject' depends on a compound or embedded reading, that is, when a compound reading is intended, the 'subject' is in the ergative:

(24) a. *kho-s*   *ŋaŋos-la*   *dun*   *stan-e-duks.*

DOM   s/he-ERG   I.direction-ALL   front-∅   show-(CC)-stay.PA

'S/he faced me/ looked in my direction for some time.'

b. *kho,*   *ŋaŋos-la*   *dun*   *stan-e,*   *duks.*

s/he-∅   I.direction-ALL   front-∅   show-CC   stay.PA

'S/he stood there, looking in my direction.'

c. *ama-s*   *non-e*   *rdoŋ-po*   *ɲima-(:)*

mother-ERG   son-GEN   face-DF-∅   sun-ALL

stan-e-bors.

show-(cc)-keep.PA

'The mother turned her little son's face into the sun.'

If the resulting state has a more negative connotation, the verb 'remain, stay behind, be left behind' is used instead of *stay*. Its occurrence is naturally less frequent.

(25) *ŋa̱-(ː)*   *ʒaktaŋ*   *trūgu-a*   *go*

GYA   I-AES   every.day   child-ALL   head-∅

khor-de-li-arak.

rotate-(CC)-be.left-PRS.AUD

'I am always getting lost in thoughts about the child.' ~ 'My mind is always wandering about [what to do for] my child.'

The combinations with the verb *stay* are formally and semantically close to the fully grammaticalised present perfect construction.

However, in the perfect construction the verb *stay* has become an evidential auxiliary, indicating visual knowledge, and does not inflect any more.

Whereas in the double verb construction, the second verb can still take all finite and non-finite morphemes, including, of course, the evidential auxiliaries of the perfect construction. (In the dialect of Gya-Miru two different verbs are used: /duk/ as (experiential) auxiliary and /dat/ as vector verb.)

3.3.7. The perfect construction expressing complete disappearance

The present perfect consists of the verb stem plus *lhagbcas* morpheme plus one of the auxiliaries *-in ~ -ɦin* 'be', *-jot ~ -ɦot* 'exist', *-duk* 'sit, stay', and *-rak ~ -nak* 'hear, feel'.

The last two auxiliaries indicate visual and non-visual, mainly auditory evidence, the second one indicates authoritative knowledge of the main speech act participant, whereas the first one is used more neutrally.

However, with verbs expressing the anihilation or dis-appearance of items, the negated auxiliaries have a double function: they may indicate either that the event did not take place or, quite in the opposite, that the event did take place and the item in question *is no longer there* or *is completely* or *already gone*. The latter usage appears to be more frequent.

The intended meaning is usually obvious from the context, but the informants admitted that they might get confused, cf. example (26).

Again, in some cases, the notion of non-existence is not yet fully bleached, cf. example (28).

(26) *kho*   *ʃi-se-met.*   *~ ʃi-se-met.*

DOM   s/he-∅   die-(CC)-not.exist=PERF.ASS   ~ die-NG.PERF.ASS

'S/he has died (and is no longer there).' ~ 'S/he has not [yet] died.'

(27) *ŋa-(:) pene*   *rdzok-se-met. / -mi-nuk. / -mi-nak.*

TYA   I-AES   money-∅   finish-(CC)-not.exist=PERF.ASS /-VIS /-AUD

'I happen to have (my) money spent (lit: finished) completely.'

(28) *bom*   *jes-tsana,*   *ŋa ʧha-tshar-e-met-pin.*

DOM   bomb-∅ explode-when   I-∅ go-end-(CC)-not.exist-PERF.ASS-RM

'When the bomb exploded, I had already gone/ left (and was no longer there).'

3.3.8. Communication verbs

The case of communication verbs is similar to that of the motion and movement verbs: there are quite a few type verbs, but only one, semantically rather empty verb suitable for the end or introduction of a quotation.

The quotation verb is adjacent to the proposition and the type verbs come on the outer periphery. That is, in speech introductions, we find the combination type verb & quotation verb. At the end of a quoted speech, we find the combination quote verb & type verb. The latter construction is commonly used in place of an indirect or embedded proposition.

When closing a quote or propositon, the second element may be of a comparatively complex nature (light verb constructions or collocations) and additional arguments or adjuncts may be inserted.

All in all, this combination seems to be the least likely candidate for univerbation. However, since the construction is used in order to avoid the incorporation of (indirect) propositions into the main sentence, it shows a certain tendency towards grammaticalisation.

(29) a.

gergan-is	*trhugu-un-la*	*ma-sil-khan-ifia*
teacher-ERG	child-PL-ALL	NG-study-NOM-PP

jat	*ʃroks.*
memory-∅	frighten.PA

'Yesterday, the teacher scolded the children badly for their not having studied.'

b.

gergan-is	*trhugu-un-la,*	*«sil-ma-sil-ba!»*
teacher-ERG	child-PL-ALL	study-NG-study-EMPH

zer-e,	*jat*	*ʃroks.*
say-CC	memory-∅	frighten.PA

'Yesterday, the teacher scolded the children badly, saying: «[You] did not study at all!»'

3.4. Criteria for defining semantically related verb-verb combinations

Lack of time forbids me to go into detail. None of the following criteria yield a reasonable result:

frequency or obligatoriness, accentuation and tonal features, conceptual unity, and scope of negation.

Only the case marking behaviour gives some clues.

But here only the resultative and/or durative construction with the intransitive verb *duk* 'sit, stay' and the intensifying construction with the transitive verb *taŋ* 'give' yield unambiguous results: case marking is always triggered by the first verb.

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In the case of combinations of a formally transitive, but semantically intransitive motion verb, such as *gom* 'step on, over', with a directional motion verb, case marking is ambiguous in type b) (converb) constructions, that is, it may be triggered either by the transitive first verb or the intransitive second verb.

However, in the Domkhar type a) (serial verb) constructions, case marking is triggered by the intransitive motion verb!

In the case of combinations of a formally transitive, but semantically intransitive motion verb, such as *gom* 'step on, over', with a directional motion verb, case marking is ambiguous in type b) (converb) constructions, that is, it may be triggered either by the transitive first verb or the intransitive second verb.

However, in the Domkhar type a) (serial verb) constructions, case marking is triggered by the intransitive motion verb!

Furthermore, in the Domkhar dialect, phonological reduction as in the serial type construction is not indicative of a closer semantic unit. The serial type construction may also be used when there is only a loose temporal relation between two events.

(30)   *rardzia   rama tʃiktʃik   ria   lus- ? -joŋsok.*

DOM   goatherd-AES goat   single-Ø mountain-ALL leave(-NF) come-INF

↑_____[−ctr]_____↓

‘The goatherd apparently happened to leave [−ctr] one goat in the mountains ***but*** came (back).’ ~~ ‘…apparently came back with one goat missing.’

(31) a. *bespa-(:)*   *dʒola*   *naŋ-p-eaŋ*   *lus- ? -soŋ-sok.*

DOM   traveller-AES   bag-Ø   house-DF-PP:LOC   leave(-NF) go.PA-INF

      bespa-(:)   *dʒola*   *naŋ-p-eaŋ*   *lus-e(na) soŋ-sok.*

↑_____[−ctr]_____↓

'The traveller apparently happened to leave [−ctr] his/her bag(s) in the house *and* went.' ~~ 'went without his bag'

    b. *bespa-s*   *dʒola*   *naŋ-p-eaŋ*   *bor- ? - soŋ-sok.*

DOM   traveller-ERG   bag-Ø   house-DF-PP:LOC   put(-NF)   go.PA-INF

      bespa-s   *dʒola*   *naŋ-p-eaŋ*   *bore(na) soŋ-sok.*

↑_____[+ctr]_____↓

'The traveller apparently left [+ctr] his/her bag(s) in the house *and* went.' ~~ 'went without his bag'

With respect to (31), the informant insisted on an embedded modification reading for both the type a) and type b) construction, roughly '~went without his bag'. Only the morphological heavier construction *lusena* or *borena* would yield a sequential reading.

The informant's interpretation certainly reflects the everyday situation of an undesired combined result: the goatherd being back although one goat is missing a traveller being gone, but the bags are still here…

However, this is against the logic of the case asignement, which emphasises the accidental or intentional leaving of the bag: in an embedded modifying construction the foregrounded motion verb would have governed absolutive case marking.

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However, this is against the logic of the case asignement, which emphasises the accidental or intentional leaving of the bag: in an embedded modifying construction the foregrounded motion verb would have governed absolutive case marking.

Hence:

a semantic unit (speaker's stance, translator's stance) may not necessarily be reflected in a syntactic unit.

And the speaker's stance may not always be helpful for the syntactic analysis.

4. Conclusion

Tibetic SVVCs are inherently ambivalent. Sometimes, they can or must be analysed as representing two sequential events (e.g., the contract situation), sometimes as representing a complex event, consisting of a path and a (contrastive) type, and sometimes even as representing a simple event, possibly associated with connotations of surprise, completion, or remaining obligations.

My approach towards these constructions has changed over the years.

Initially, I was overly enthusiastic, including verb pairs that I better had not included (e.g. *mount a horse + go/come > go/come by horse*).

Presently, however, I wonder whether we deal with complex predicates, at all.

Aikhenvald (2005) would treat adverbial or modifying serial verb constructions as semantic units.

This seems to be problematic, but could be motivated, if the serial constructions stand in contrast with converbial or other morphologically marked constructions.

In Ladakhi (and all Tibetic languages with type b constructions), such opposition does not exist, and there is no obvious formal feature, such as intonation or morphological reduction that could distinguish the semantically related verb & verb constructions from ordinary bi-clausal constructions with omitted arguments.

The most frequent verb-verb constructions, the combinations with directional vector verbs, should probably be analysed as bi-clausal embedded modifying constructions – in the process of becoming compound constructions.

However, within 1200 years of language development, the constructions show little progress in compounding or grammaticalisation.

The reason might be that both components of the pair are usually semantically well-motivated.

Only in the case of some less frequent constructions, can one observe phonological and syntactic developments that indicate a certain conceptual unity.

Frequency, therefore, cannot be taken as the sole or main indicator for semantical bleaching or grammaticalisation.

All in all it seems that most of theTibetan SVVCs are not complex predicates in a strict sense (not to speak of compound verbs). Are they at least complex predicates in a rather loose sense?

Or do we deal with by-chance adjacency, which by chance looks semantically motivated enough to be taken for a complex expression?
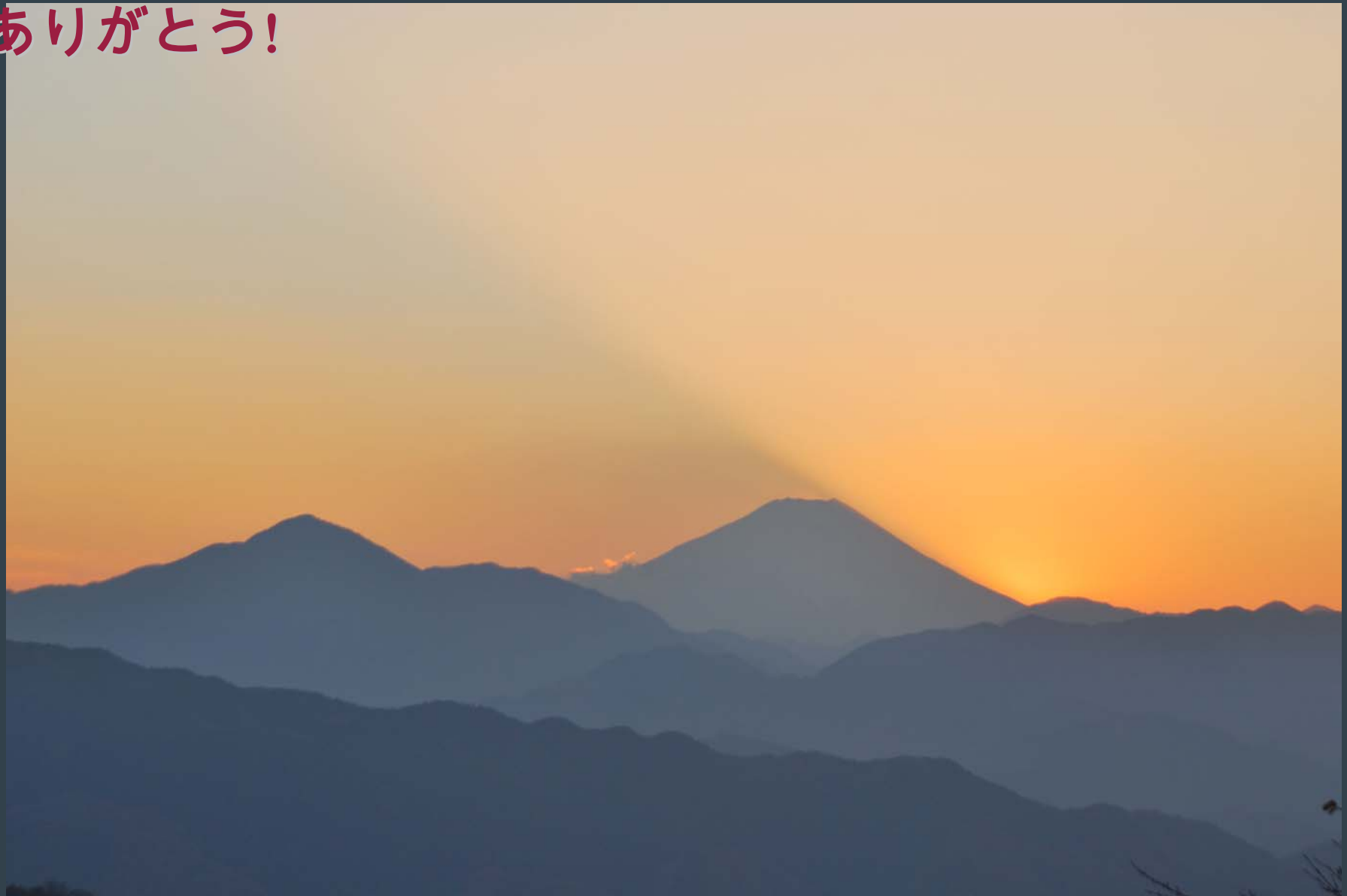
In a way, the white spot on Masica's map or at least his question mark is more than justified.
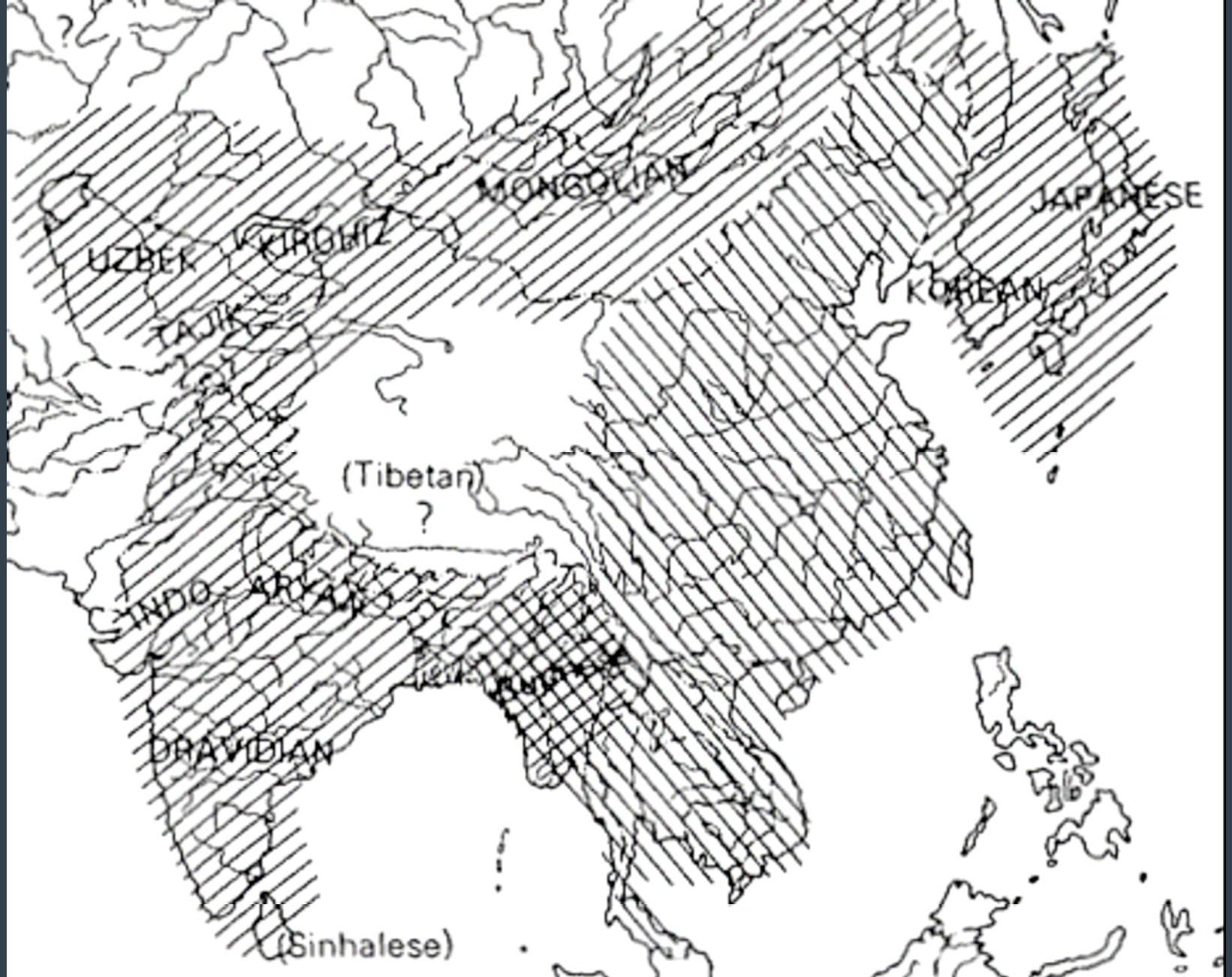
Thank you!
ありがとう!

Thank you!
ありがとう!

Many thanks also to the main informants (all deeper insight into the Ladakhi language is due to their patience with me and my stupid questions):

DOM   Domkhar (Shamskat): Tshewang Tharchin, Jigmet Ang-cuk, and others

GYA   Gya-Miru (Kenhat): Mengyur Tshomo

KHAL   Khalatse (Shamskat), narrator and interlocutor: *meme* Tondup Tshering

TYA   Tya (Shamskat): Tshering Dolkar

ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེ།

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