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A Descriptive Analysis of the Boro Language by Pramod Chandra Bhattacharya

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are taken there officially, and even how temple functionaries may receive tips. The position of the *Daładā Māligāva* is now such as to provoke exhibitions of political or social rivalry in such matters as electing a *diya vadāna nilāme* (the principal lay functionary of the temple, hitherto always a Kandyan aristocrat), the use of temple property for civil functions, and even in the sphere of unacknowledged rivalry between sects within the *saṅgha*—though this last case involved political rivalry as well. The question of temple property and the effects of the Paddy Lands Act of 1956, which has not yet been applied to temple property, is also one which will have to be dealt with before long.

The book is excellently produced and well written; misprints are not numerous. It would be of interest to have had some further explanation of some of the technical words quoted, e.g. *khaṭasānāyā* (p. 60), which appears to represent *kaṭhasānāyā*, *rāmasarābharaṇāyā* (p. 84), *riṭṭāge* (p. 92). The time-scale is occasionally obscure, for instance the reference to the 'contemporary' kingdom of Jaffna (p. 114); 'non-hatefulness' (p. 97) is an ambiguous term; the epithet 'hated Tamils' (p. 96) is doubtfully applicable to the period in question; I do not understand the word 'thrushes' (p. 162). Though the customary objection to the word 'feudal' is made on p. 179, the word is in fact used in the text, e.g. p. 159. On one small but perhaps significant point, of the representation of 'folk religion' in the *perahāra* in 1816, Seneviratne writes 'quite appropriately this section was placed at the end of the one representing the provinces, being from the point of view of the center a peripheral matter'. If this remark does refer to the 'images covered with cloth', it would be equally possible to say that the representation of the 'folk religion' stood first of all in the religious section of the procession, preceding even the representatives of the Temple of the Tooth. At all events, it seems an unexpected position for the 'bamboos' in question.

C. H. B. REYNOLDS

PRAMOD CHANDRA BHATTACHARYA: *A descriptive analysis of the Boro language*. 23, 380 pp., 2 maps. Gauhati: Dept. of Publication, Gauhati University, 1977. Rs. 30.

In his 'Selected bibliography' (pp. 369-71) Dr. Bhattacharya refers to some 30 earlier publications dealing with the Boro, Boḍo, Bārā, or Kachari language, from Hodgson's *Essay the first; on the Koch, Bodo and Dhimal tribes* (Calcutta, 1847) to the present time; but he is the first to subject such a large corpus of Boro material to the techniques of analysis of modern descriptive linguistics (though I was surprised not to see D. N. S. Bhat's *Boro vocabulary (with a grammatical sketch)*, Poona, 1968, pp. 176, in this bibliography). Since the Boro language is spoken by as many as 170,000 people, and since P. K.

Benedict has recognized 'Bodo-Garo (Barish)', the group to which Boro belongs, as one of the seven 'primary divisions or nuclei' of Tibeto-Burman, comparable in significance to 'Tibetan-Kanauri' and 'Burmese-Lolo (Burmish)', the author can fairly claim to have put Sino-Tibetan comparatists in his debt, especially in the introduction, ch. i, 'Phonology and phonetics', and ch. vii, 'Boro-English vocabulary'.

It is the American school of phonemics of the 30's, 40's, and early 50's that the author has mainly chosen to follow; and the influence of this period can be seen in his wide use of the zero concept, in ch. ii ('Morphophonemics') and ch. iv ('Morphology: word-grammar'), in which, for example, a zero morph, symbolized as 'ø', is attributed to all three personal-pronoun prefix morphemes: '{²a- ~ ²am- ~ ø-}' as first personal pronominal prefix-morpheme, '{²nōn- ~ ²nōm- ~ ²nō- ~ ø-}' as second personal pronominal prefix morpheme and '{²bi- ~ ²bi²ma- ~ ⁰phi- ~ ø-}' as third personal pronominal prefix morpheme' (p. 79), together with zero morphs for case and number suffix(al) morphemes and a number of other morphemes. It is not always clear, however, whether these zeros are grammatical elements, of equal status with the overt morphs of the morphemes to which they are attributed, or merely nothing; on p. 108, for example, 'particles' are described as 'incapable of taking any affix', but, on the following page, a particle is described as 'Word with Base plus Zero affix (morpheme)'. In ch. v, 'Syntax: sentence grammar', however, and in sentence examples generally, these zero morphs seem to be ignored, and are not symbolized even when it would be useful to do this, as, for example, in the following passage: 'ø (zero) as general accusative case indicating suffix is assumed to be present in all nominal bases (except pronouns) that constitute a direct object to the verbal formation.

²añ ²na ²mōnbay ↘ "I have got a fish" (p. 148). Symbolizing the accusative form as ²naø in this example would serve to distinguish it from the nominal form ²añ; for, though there is also 'ø (zero) as general nominative case indicating suffix' (p. 148), the examples of its use suggest that the author would not apply it to the nominal form ²añ in a transitive sentence such as this.

Bhattacharya's account of the variation in tone commonly undergone by tone-0, tone-1, and tone-3 (but not tone-2) morphemes shows Boro to be typologically remarkable as a tone language, and well worth a more detailed study than the twelve pages that are all that he has space for ('Tones', pp. 50-4; 'Junctures', pp. 54-65, 67-70). Thus tone 1 alternates with tone 2 for the same lexical item in '/¹nōn/' 'you' (singular and non-honorific)' as against '/²nōn¹thañ/' 'you' (singular and honorific)'. Since certain vowel-quality differences are associated with the differences between tones one, two, and three, this presumably means that the vowel quality must alternate too; for /ō/ is realized in tone-1 words, for example, as an 'unrounded almost close back vowel' but in tone-2 words as a

'less close and nearer to central unrounded vowel' (p. 49).

There is a further reason for subjecting the tonal aspect of the language to a more detailed study: D. N. S. Bhat's *Boro vocabulary* distinguishes only two tones, though it may well be that this major difference between the two analyses is due to a difference in dialect, between the Kamrup dialect that he studied and the North Goalpara spoken by Bhattacharya's main informant.

Dr. Bhattacharya completes his study with 21 pp. of sample texts (ch. vi) in various styles, including traditional narrative, love songs, Bible passages, and hymns, and 92 pp. of Boro-English vocabulary (ch. vii).

R. K. SPRIGG

STEPHEN OWEN: *The poetry of the early T'ang*. xv, 455 pp. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977. £14.40.

Stephen Owen has written an ambitious book on the poetry of the early T'ang. He sets out the poetry of about a dozen relatively little-known poets from the seventh to the eighth centuries, reproducing in full the text of some of their poems, with translation. He also shows the importance of court poetry, which he sees as more than just the erotic 'palace style' usually associated with the courts of the Southern Dynasties, embracing huge numbers of poems written to attend at social gatherings, occasional poems, and those taking up the same rhyme or title of an emperor or patron; a dominant poetic activity of the era.

The early T'ang period in poetry is hard to characterize, coming as it does after the innovations of the earlier period which in prosody brought tonal values into prominence that were to culminate in the *lü-shih* of the high T'ang, and discovering in the language a new sensuality with a delight in periphrasis that surfeits our more austere taste. By the sixth century all this had been explored, and the poetry of the unified early T'ang seems to us to be lacking in the excitement and freshness that had infused much of what had gone before without aspiring to the expressiveness that was to come later. These poets were slightly uncomfortable pacers between one burst of activity and another, like the English Georgian poets at the beginning of this century, in the shadow of the great Victorians, teetering on the edge of modernism.

Poetry had by then become a commonplace activity amongst men of the upper class, and skill at composition to order was a prerequisite of the successful man. Worldly success and poetry-making were allied in a special way; perhaps it is no accident that the poets whose works have been preserved were all notable men at court. Poetry that performed such a function had quite a clear system of rules in both subject-matter and language; it had to be short, it had to be impersonal, and it was public; naturally much was formulaic.

These poets seemed to spend an inordinate amount of time travelling about the country, being demoted from the capital, or being recalled, sometimes in several stages. At least at such times they were given a holiday from the prescribed texts and did write with more feeling that still speaks to us through the ages. Yet why they were demoted, and the ins and outs of the imperial order that caused such traumas, are naturally never so much as hinted at in their poetry, as it would have been too dangerous. In other ways too, their poetry was a peculiar form of self-expression, almost tailored to reveal to the public as little of the self as possible; intensity of feeling was allowed to surface, like patches of lightness and shade on a monochrome, but no details of the subject. So from their poetry, unlike that of later poets like Tu Fu, we can derive very little about the lives and the convictions of these men. Without resorting to other sources, we see them shift about like figures on a Chinese lantern, distinguished by a hat here, or a horse there, or some such feature. We would wish that Stephen Owen had explored the other sources more thoroughly for us, enabling us to feel the tenor of the time more clearly.

TAO TAO SANDERS

CHRISTIAN F. MURCK (ed.): *Artists and traditions: uses of the past in Chinese culture*. xxii, 230 pp. Princeton, N.J.: Art Museum, Princeton University, [c1976]. (Distributed by Princeton University Press.) £26.10.

Artists and Traditions is the record of a colloquium held at Princeton on 17 May 1969, at the opening of the exhibition of Chinese paintings from the collection of Irene and Earl Morse. This exhibition, entitled *In Pursuit of Antiquity*, and indeed the Morse collection itself, was formed to explore the painting career of Wang Hui (1632-1717), the most successful and prolific of the orthodox painters of the early Ch'ing dynasty. With Wang Hui's paintings close at hand to provide actual examples of one artist's study and re-creation of the past, the participants examined the problems of the importance of past models for the Chinese, in the arts generally as well as in painting.

It is a measure of the complexity of the subject that the rewriting and publication of these papers, edited and with an introduction by Christian Murck, has taken seven years. The frequent citation of points made by fellow contributors, the index and excellent glossary giving the Chinese characters for all names and critical terms, are clues to the reasons for this long gestation. Only occasionally is it possible to add a new item of information: for instance, Ch'ien Hsüan's handscroll painting of *Dwelling on Floating Jade Mountain*, whose whereabouts was then uncertain, is now known to be in the collection of the Shanghai Museum, and was on exhibition there in 1976.