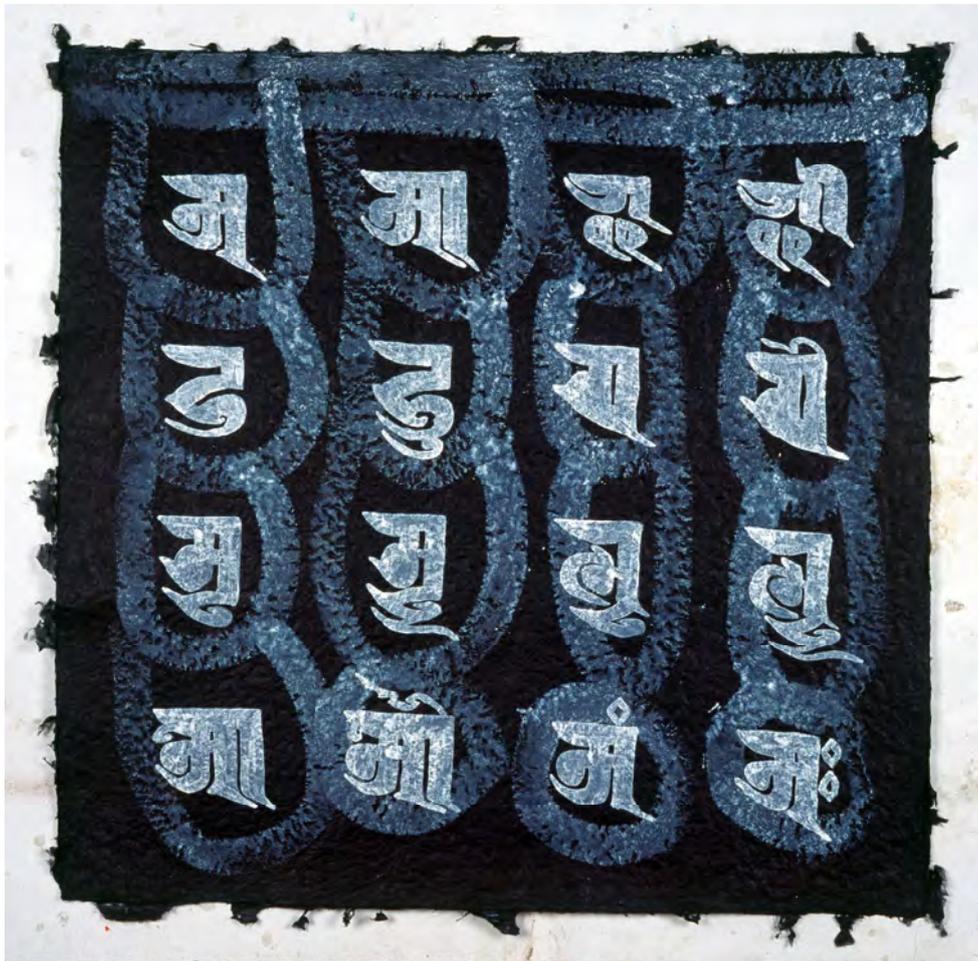


Franz-Karl Ehrhard & Petra Maurer (Hrsg.)

NEPALICA-TIBETICA
FESTGABE FOR CHRISTOPH CÜPPERS

BAND 1



2013

IITBS

International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies GmbH

Franz-Karl Ehrhard & Petra Maurer (Hrsg.)
NEPALICA-TIBETICA
FESTGABE FOR CHRISTOPH CÜPPERS
BAND 1

BEITRÄGE ZUR ZENTRALASIENFORSCHUNG
begründet von R. O. Meiszahl und Dieter Schuh
herausgegeben von Peter Schwieger
Band 28, 1

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Franz-Karl Ehrhard & Petra Maurer

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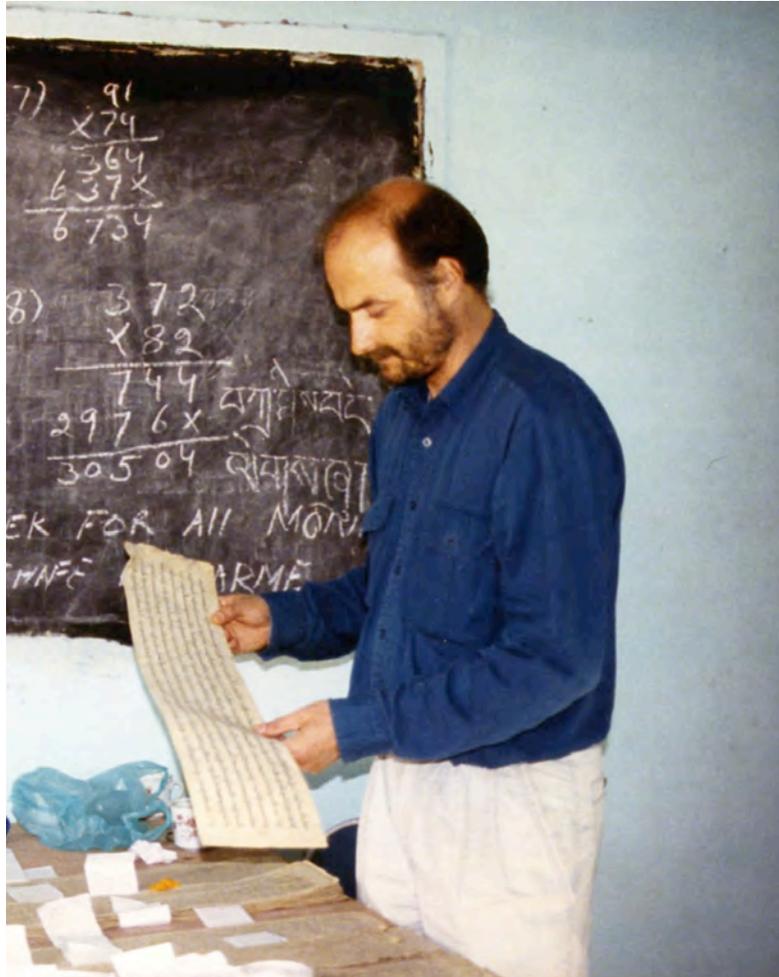
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PREFACE

A person's 65th birthday is often considered as the occasion to reflect on his or her life and achievements and to express one's thanks. This opportunity has arisen this year in the case of our friend and travelling companion Christoph Cüppers, who has dedicated his life to Tibetan and Nepalese Studies and assisted and supported many academic projects and careers in these fields.

Christoph was born into a family of lawyers from the Rhineland. His academic background is unusual as he began by studying art from 1970 to 1975 at the "Staatliche Kunstakademie Düsseldorf". He trained under artists such as Joseph Beuys and Gotthard Graubner. It was during that time that he first travelled to Asia and, on reaching Southern India, encountered Tibetan culture and its exile communities. On his return to Germany the decision was made: he changed to Oriental Studies and started to learn Tibetan, Sanskrit, Pali and Chinese at the University of Hamburg. At an Institute where the study of Tibet and its Buddhist traditions had attracted a small band of fellow students, his teachers were, to name a few, dGe-bshes dGe-'dun blo-gros, Lambert Schmithausen and Albrecht Wezler.

Fascinated by Asia he returned frequently to Southern India and Himachal Pradesh. A scholarship of the "Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes" enabled him to continue his practice on the spot: at Sera Monastery in Bylakuppe he studied Tibetan language and philosophy. With the death in 1979 of his teacher dGe-bshes dGe-'dun blo-gros, who had been a formative influence on his students, it was planned to fill the recently established chair in Tibetan Studies at the University of Hamburg with a native scholar. It was Christoph who facilitated the stay of dGe-bshes Tshul-khrims phun-tshogs at the Institute, helped in practical matters and acted as translator.

Soon afterwards, in 1983, Christoph finished his dissertation, a textual study of the ninth chapter of the *Samādhirājasūtra*. Immediately after taking his degree he was offered by Albrecht Wezler the position of Deputy Director of the Nepal-German Manuscript Project (NGMPP) and Nepal Research Centre (NRC) in Kathmandu. On his first arrival he fell in love with the country, and his feelings towards Nepal have remained constant for the last thirty years.

During his time at the NGMPP and NRC, of which he later became Director, he worked in close cooperation with the National Archives and the Department of Archaeology, collecting Tibetan manuscripts and block prints in the Kathmandu valley, and conducting expeditions to photograph manuscripts in regions of the Nepalese Himalayas such as Helambu, Southern Mustang, Jumla and Solu Khumbu. Besides his duties as Director, he supported many individual scholars in their research and assisted larger projects sponsored by the German Research Council such as the Nepal Research Programme under Bernhard Kölver. These activities continued even after his term had finished and after the establishment under Willibald Haffner and Dieter Schuh of a new programme of the German Research Council called Tibet Himalaya.

In 1989 Christoph returned together with his wife Savitri and their son Bikas to his hometown of Düsseldorf in order to work on a project at the University of Bonn. His interests had changed to politics and history: the new project was concerned with state formation in 17th-century Tibet and was based on a critical edition and annotated translation of the "Guidelines for Government officials" written by the regent Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho.

During this time he also worked on the edition and translation of a manuscript containing a Tibetan-Newari Lexicon and on a compilation of Tibetan proverbs and sayings. He also undertook a longer field trip in 1992 to Dharmasala, where he studied and collected Tibetan documents, and in 1994 he assisted the Austrian-Italian research team in Tabo in the region of Spiti.

In 1995, with the establishment by the Reiyukai of the Lumbini International Research Institute (LIRI) at Buddha's birthplace, Christoph and Savitri returned to Nepal. Their home in Sano Thimi has served since then—like the LIRI—as a centre for scholarly exchange and personal encounters between foreign researchers and native scholars. As Director, Christoph has initiated several series of publications with a growing number of titles; they are for the most part results of research projects in the fields of Buddhist, Tibetan and Nepalese Studies, supported by the LIRI and conducted on the spot. Successful seminars have also been held in Lumbini, the first of these in the year 2000 on the subject of the “Relationship between Religion and State (*chos srid zung 'brel*) in Traditional Tibet.”

Although the administrative duties are heavy, Christoph continues to travel and to cooperate with researchers, working, for example, with the International Tibetan Archives Preservation Trust (ITAPT) and the Tibetan Autonomous Regional Archives (TARA) in Lhasa, and finds the time to continue his research work.

It is therefore a great pleasure to present to Christoph this Festgabe with contributions from friends and colleagues covering the fields of his interest and documenting his influence and inspiration. We would like to thank Dieter Schuh und Nikolai Solmsdorf, who were of great help in producing this volume and bringing the individual articles into a coherent format. Special thanks go to all the authors for delivering their articles in time and making this collection a true offering.

Munich, September 2013

Franz-Karl Ehrhard & Petra Maurer

TABULA GRATULATORIA

JOHN ARDUSSI	JÖRG HEIMBEL	ALEXANDER VON ROSPATT
EBERHARD BERG	AMY HELLER	CRISTINA SCHERRER- SCHAUB
ROLAND BIELMEIER	NATHAN HILL	LAMBERT SCHMITHAUSEN
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PAUL HARRISON	BURKHARD QUESSEL	KODO YOTSUYA
JENS-UWE HARTMANN	CHARLES RAMBLE	

CONTENTS

Volume One

Publication List of Christoph Cüppers	xiii
EBERHARD BERG On the Current Revitalization of the rNying ma Tradition among the Sherpas of Nepal	1
ROLAND BIELMEIER Das Land Marutse in den Biographien des Padmasambhava	27
KATIA BUFFETRILLE The rTsig ri Pilgrimage: Merit as Collective Duty?	37
VOLKER CAUMANN Pañ chen Shākya mchog ldan's Monastic Seat Thub bstan gSer mdog can (Part I): The History of its Foundation	65
OLAF CZAJA Tibetan Medicinal Plants and Their Healing Potentials	89
HILDEGARD DIEMBERGER & MICHELA CLEMENTE Royal Kinship, Patronage and the Introduction of Printing in Gung thang: From Chos kyī sgron ma to lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal	119
FRANZ-KARL EHRHARD The Royal Print of the <i>Mañi bka' 'bum</i> : Its Catalogue and Colophon	143
KARL-HEINZ EVERDING Introduction to a Research Project on Documents Issued During the Period of the Great Mongolian Empire to Tibetan Recipients	173
JÖRG HEIMBEL The Jo gdan tshogs sde bzhi: An Investigation into the History of the Four Monastic Communities in Śākyaśrībhadrā's Vinaya Tradition	187
AMY HELLER A Sculpture of Avalokiteśvara Donated by the Ruler of Ya tse (Ya rtse mnga' bdag)	243
NATHAN W. HILL The Emergence of the <i>Pluralis majestatis</i> and the Relative Chronology of Old Tibetan Texts	249
TONI HUBER The Iconography of <i>gShen</i> Priests in the Ethnographic Context of the Extended Eastern Himalayas, and Reflections on the Development of Bon Religion	263
DAVID P. JACKSON Several Episodes in the Recent History of Lumbini	295

MATTHEW T. KAPSTEIN

A Fragment from a Previously Unknown Edition of the *Pramānavārttika*
 Commentary of Rgyal-tshab-rje Dar-ma-rin-chen (1364-1432) 315

LEONARD W.J. VAN DER KUIJP

Gu ge Paṅ chen Grags pa rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po (1415-86) on the *Nyi ma'i*
rabs (**Sūryavaṃśa*) and the Tibetan Royal Families 325

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CONTENTS

Volume Two

CHRISTIAN LUCZANITS	
The Buddha Beyond: Figuration in Gandharan Cult Imagery	1
DAN MARTIN	
Pavements Like the Sea and the Name of the Jokhang: King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba in Lhasa?	23
KLAUS-DIETER MATHES	
Clouds of Offerings to Lady g.Yang ri—A Protector Practice by the First Yol mo sprul sku Shākya bzang po (15 th /16 th Cent.)	37
PETRA MAURER	
Pferderennen und ihre Bedeutung in Tibet	57
CHARLES RAMBLE	
Both Fish and Fowl? Preliminary Reflections on Some Representations of a Tibetan Mirror-World	75
ALEXANDER VON ROSPATT	
Altering the Immutable: Textual Evidence in Support of an Architectural History of the Svayambhū Caitya of Kathmandu	91
CRISTINA SCHERRER-SCHAUB	
A Frontier Tale: Fragmented Historical Notes on Spiti Monasteries Documents Kept in the Museum of Lahore. Part I.	117
DIETER SCHUH	
Tibetischen Inschriften ins Maul geschaut: Beobachtungen zu Stein- und Felsinschriften sowie den Schriften des 7. bis 9. Jahrhunderts in Tibet	143
PETER SCHWIEGER	
A Forbidden Nepalese-Tibetan Love Affair	185
MARTA SERNESI	
Rare Prints of bKa' brgyud Texts: A Preliminary Report	191
WEIRONG SHEN	
Revitalizing Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Studies: Some Old and New Thoughts	211
PETER SKILLING	
The <i>Samādhirāja-Sūtra</i> and its Mahāsāṃghika Connections	227
PER K. SØRENSEN & FRANZ XAVER ERHARD	
Tibetan Proverbial Literature: Semantics and Metaphoricity in Context	237
MANFRED G. TREU	
Lakṣmīprasāda Devakoṭās Essay "Auf der Sitzmatte"	253

HELGA UEBACH	
The IHo-brag Cliff Inscription: An Attempt to Read it with the Help of Katia Buffetrille’s Photographs of 1988	261
ROBERTO VITALI	
From Sum ru to the Great Central Asian “Sea of Sand”: Hints on the Role of the mThong khyab in the State Organisation of Dynastic Tibet	269
MICHAEL WALTER	
‘All that Glitters Is Gold’: The Place of the Yellow Metal in the Brahmanic, Scythian, and Early Buddhist Traditions	283
ZUHIŌ YAMAGUCHI	
The Connection Between Tu-fan (吐蕃) in the First Half of the Seventh Century and Nepal	299
KODO YOTSUYA	
dGe lugs pa Interpretation of Bhāvaviveka’s Critique of Buddhapālita’s Argumentation of Non-Origination from Self	323

THE EMERGENCE OF THE *PLURALIS MAJESTATIS* AND THE RELATIVE CHRONOLOGY OF OLD TIBETAN TEXTS

Nathan W. Hill¹

While on a visit to the Lumbini International Research Institute in the early 2000s, Christoph Cüppers gifted me with a copy of Hugh Richardson’s corpus of Tibetan inscriptions (1985), beginning an interest in Tibetan epigraphy which later led to a book co-authored with Kazushi Iwao (2009). In addition to this decisive early encouragement, Christoph was also the first person to say something nice about a publication of mine (Hill 2005), drawing my attention to the compound *'dri-klog* ‘reading and writing’ as additional support for my proposal that *'dri* is the original present stem of the verb ‘to write’. Because Christoph and I share an interest in lexicography, it is my honour to here present him with a study which sums up my work on Tibetan pronouns. After arguing that the distinction captured by *nga* versus *nged* as first person pronouns and *khyod* versus *khyed* as second person pronouns is that of singular versus plural in all periods on Tibetan, I provide evidence that in early Old Tibetan *nged* and *khyed* could not be used with singular reference, but that by the end of the Old Tibetan period the *pluralis majestatis* use of the plural for the singular had emerged and that the presence or absence of this feature can be used to date the archetype of documents.

The *pluralis majestatis*

Many languages employ a grammatical plural with a singular referent as a sign of respect to the addressee, a usage known as the *pluralis majestatis*. Thus, French uses the plural ‘vous’ with singular referent as a polite equivalent of ‘tu’, and in English royalty and politicians are entitled to refer to themselves in the plural. Tibetan shows the same usage; the plurals *khyed* and *nged* function respectively as a polite second singular, like ‘vous’, and a ‘royal we’. Tibetan grammars often incorrectly treat *khyed* as the honorific equivalent of *khyod* and *nged* as an honorific equivalent of *nga* (e.g. Schmidt 1839: 90-91, Foucaux 1858: 48 §54, Cordier 1907: 45, Beyer 1992: 208) and fail to recognize a singular versus plural distinction. The observation that Tibetan *khyed* and *nged* are ‘honorific’ is a misapprehension of the *pluralis majestatis*, a pragmatic use of the plural.

If a Martian linguist hit upon the conjecture that ‘vous’ is an honorific equivalent of ‘tu’, sentences such as “Soldats, je suis content de vous” (Madelin 1939: 333), which Napoleon addressed to his troops after the battle of Austerlitz, would reveal the Martian’s error. A general, an emperor no less, holds a higher status than his common soldiers; he uses ‘vous’ not out of any consideration of status, but because he has more than one soldier. All periods of Tibetan literature offer up similar examples of superiors addressing a group of inferiors with *khyed*. Such examples demonstrate that *khyed* marks plurality and is not an ‘honorific’.

In the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* (cf. Imaeda et al. 2007: 200-229) Stag-bu Snya-gzigs, the father of the first Tibetan emperor uses *khyed* when communicating to a group of conspirators, whom he agrees to lead (OTC I. 159).

(1) *btsan-po-'i zhal-nas / nga-'i sring mo zhig kyang / Zing-po-rje-'i ga-na 'dug mod-kyi // khyed zer-ba bzhin bya-'o zhes bka' stsal-nas //* (OTC II. 157-159)

The emperor said: “Even though one of my sisters is with Zing-po-rje, I will do as **you** say.” So he decreed.

¹ I would like to thank the British Academy for support during the course of this research. I would also like to acknowledge my gratitude to the organizers and audience of the conference “Merkmals and Mirages Dating (Old) Tibetan Writing” (Kingship and Religion in Tibet, LMU Munich, 25th-26th June 2012) at which I first presented this paper.

In the *Mi-la ras pa'i rnam thar* by Gtsang smyon He ru ka Rus pa'i rgyan can (1452-1507) a lama addresses two students with *khyed* (for further examples cf. Hill 2007: 284-285). A lama would not use an honorific pronoun when speaking to juvenile acolytes; *khyed* here is employed because of the plural referent.

- (2) *khyed gnyis-la mthu'i gdams-ngag cis kyang ster-ba yin-pas* (de Jong 1959: 41, ll. 16-17)

“I will give to **you** two whatever curse instructions [I have].”

Such examples of superiors addressing groups of inferiors found both in Old Tibetan and Classical Tibetan show that *khyed* functions as a second person plural pronoun, unmarked for social status.

Sentences that switch between *khyod* and *khyed* provide even more explicit evidence that the distinction between the two pronouns is that of singular and plural. In the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, when the emperor agrees to grant his minister Dbyi-tshab an oath, he addresses Dbyi-tshab individually with *khyod* but employs *khyed* whenever someone else is included in the reference.

- (3) *snga-na nga-'i yab-kyi rñg-la // 'bring-tho-re Sbung-brtsan / -dang // Phangs-to-re Dbyi-tshab-dang khyed gnyis // chab pha-rol tshu-rol-gyi // gung blon 'tshol chig-par dgod / dgod-pa-las / 'bring-to-re Sbung-brtsan ni shi // khyod ni rgas-ste nyi ma 'der gñang-ste bzhag // Myang zhang-sñang blon-cher bskos-te bzhag-na // yab nongs-nas / Myang-gis kyang glo-ba ringste / bkyon phab-pa' / yin-no / da khyed Dba's pha chig ni // gdo' thag gnyis-su / glo-ba ma rings-pas // La-mo Chag-pa-prum-du pyag thab kyang gsol chig // dbu snyung yang gñang-ngo zhes bka' stsal-to* (OTC, ll. 256-261)

“Previously, during the reign of my father, **you** two, 'bring-tho-re Sbung-brtsan and Phangs-to-re Dbyi-tshab, were being made ministers (*gung-blon*) of the near and far sides of the river. However, 'bring-tho-re Sbung-brtsan died, and **thou** being old werst granted leave to rest in the sun. Myang zhang-sñang was appointed as prime minister. My father died. That very Myang was disloyal and was duly disgraced. Now as for **you** all, Dba's [clan] patriarchs, from beginning to end [you] have not been disloyal, and so [you] may make offerings (*pyag-thab gsol*) at La-mo Chag-pa-prum. I also grant [you] an oath.” So he decreed.

If *khyed* were honorific, it would be strange for an emperor to ever use the form, since no one holds higher status than he. All the more strange would be for the emperor to indecisively iterate between honorific and non-honorific as if unsure of his status. The explanation that *khyed* is grammatical plural is more satisfactory.

An Old Tibetan version of the Rāmāyaṇa (version A) furnishes an even more tidy contrast between singular *khyod* and plural *khyed*.

- (4) *lha-mos rmas-pa / khyed spre-'u-la khyod tsam phod-pa-du yod ches rmas-na /* (Rama A 273-274)

The queen asked: “Among **you** monkeys how many are as audacious as **thou**?”

When Sīta refers to all monkeys she uses *khyed*, but when she refers to Hanumān alone she uses *khyod*.

Examples of *khyod* as a second singular pronoun are common in both Old and Classical Tibetan (cf. Hill 2007: 285 note 11, Hill 2010: 559-561). Examples of *khyod* as a plural are almost unknown (but cf. fn. 4). Thus, *khyod* is singular and *khyed* is plural.

The context of a superior addressing inferiors is not relevant to distinguishing *nga* and *nged*. The mirror scenario, which would disprove that *nged* is an ‘honorific’, would be the use of *nga* with a singular referent in the presence of superiors; if a first person ‘honorific’ honors the addressees by debasing the speaker, *nged* rather than *nga* should occur in such contexts. However, neither *nga* or *nged* occurs in these circumstance, instead one encounters the humble pronouns *bdag* and *ngan-bu*. I have discussed *bdag* in Old Tibetan (2010: 553-554) and Classical Tibetan (Hill 2007: 282-284), but *ngan-bu* previously escaped my attention. Two examples in version A of the *Rāmāyaṇa* show that this pronoun evokes a sense of pity for the hapless speaker.

(5) *ngan-bu ni mda’s phog-ste ’gum-na* (Rama A 142-143)

I will be hit by an arrow and die.

(6) *lha-mo khroste // jo-bo myed-na // ngan-bu bsrungste cha jñ mchis ? /* (Rama A 154)

The lady grew angry: “Without a lord what is the good of protecting **me**.”

Cordier recognizes *ngan-bu* as one of several “formes d’humilité” (1907: 45) but counts *nged* separately among the “formes honorifiques” (1907: 45). This distinction between humility and honorific suggests that in his use an ‘honorific’ first person pronoun does not honor the addressee by debasing the speaker. What then is a first person honorific? Does it honor the speaker, debasing the addressee? This terminological ambiguity is perhaps what lead Lalou to abandon the description of *nged* as ‘honorific’, although she maintains it for *khyed* (1950: 41). Foucaux is one of the few authorities to clarify that *nged* is used “pour exprimer un degré de politesse de la part de celui qui parle” (1858: 48 §54). Foucaux it seems, believes that *nged* in Tibetan functions to signal that the overall discourse is formal and polite, rather than indicating honor to any particular participant in the discourse, like *kywan-tau* in Burmese or 私私 *watashi* in Japanese. Beyer appears to disagree describing *nga* as ‘neutral’, *bdag* as ‘elegant’, and *nged* as ‘honorific’ (1992: 208). For Beyer *bdag* rather than *nged* shows “un degré de politesse” and *nged* “is used when a speaker expresses himself as honored by some relationship with a superior” (1992: 208), i.e. *nged* marks humility. The prevailing agreement that *nged* is an ‘honorific’ betrays a thick fog of confusion over the term ‘honorific’ itself, when applied to the first person.

The very examples that Beyer employs to show that *nged* occurs when the speaker is “honored by some relationship with a superior” (1992: 208) instead clearly contrast *nga* as singular and *nged* as plural.

When Mila describes how he and Mar-pa’s wife carried out a deception, he switches from a first person honorific determiner as soon as he becomes the sole actor—[7] *nged gnyis-kyis gros byas-nas / ngas phye-sgye chung du-ma cig-gi khar dpe-chadang chas phran-tshegs yod-pa sbrags* [de Jong 1959: 65] “We (*nged*) counseled together and then I (*nga*) piled the few books and possessions I had on top of several small sacks of flour” (Beyer 1992: 208-209).

The narrator switches from a first person plural to first person singular as soon as the referent changes from plural to singular. The rest of Beyer’s examples of *nged* are also better explained as plurals than as honorifics.

we find Marpa's son saying [8] *nged-kyi pha-jo yod* "There is my lord father," we find the yogin Mi-la politely saying [9] *nged-kyi lad-mo khyed-kyis mi-ong* [sic] "It does not suit you to imitate me," and we find a peasant couple seeking to adopt the famous Mi-la with the words [10] *nged-kyi bu dod mdzod* "Be our foster son!". (Beyer 1992: 208)

According to Beyer, in example (7) the honored person is included in the reference of *nged*, whereas in examples (9) and (10) the addressee is honoree and in example (8) the honoree is neither included in the referent nor addressed. Such explanations are ad hoc; it is difficult to imagine how Tibetan listeners in the 15th century would ever know for whom the honor encoded by *nged* was meant. In Beyer's translations the *nged* in examples (7) and (10) are translated as plurals. The full context of (8), which Beyer abbreviates, also requires a plural interpretation.

(11) *nged-kyi pha-jo ni nged-rang-gi nor gang yod kyis gser nyos nas rgya gar la khyer 'gro / tshur khyos-ma-la po-ti phra reng-ba mang-po khyer-nas slebs yong-ba zhig yod /* (de Jong 1959: 55).

Our father, who went to Indian carrying gold bought with all the wealth **we** had possessed and came back carrying in its place many tattered books, is there.

The boy himself was not the owner of the wealth when his father left for India; by *nged* he does not mean himself but the whole family. The correct translation is not Beyer's 'my father' but rather 'our father'. Furthermore, the context is an explicit criticism of the father and thus does not suggest the 'honor' to the father that Beyer posits.²

Of Beyer's examples only (9) remains as possible counterevidence to the explanation that *nged* is plural. Unfortunately, as with example (10), I have been unable to verify the passage, but my suggestion would be that Mi-la far from being polite is using the 'royal we' to which he is entitled as a high lama addressing disciplines. Certainly his disciplines are not his superiors as Beyer's interpretation suggests. To show that *nged* is not a plural Beyer, or other proponents of *nged* as an 'honorific' could point to examples of *nga* used with a plural antecedent; I am aware of no such examples.

Contexts where the speaker is unlikely to feel "honored by some relationship with a superior" include when Mi-la's mother, Myang-tsha-dkar-rgyan, insults her son in the presence of his traveling companions.

(12) *nged-kyi bu 'di-la snying-rus ye med-do*

This **our** son has no assiduousness at all (de Jong 1959: 37, cf. Hill 2007: 278)

Mi-la's mother is unlikely to regard either her own lazy son or his traveling companions, similar to him in age, as her superiors.

Old Tibetan also provides evidence that *nged* is plural rather than 'honorific'. In the Rāmāyaṇa (version A) the eagle prince, Pada, uses *nga* when referring to himself alone and *nged* when referring to himself and his brother Sampada.

(13) *bya na-re nga-'i pha ni bya khyung-gi rgyal-po-ste // A-ga-'dza'-ya zhes bya' / de-la bu spun gnyis yod-pa-la / nga ni pho-bo Pa-da' zhes bya // nubo ni Sam-pa-da' zhes bya' // nged gnyis rgyal srid ltod-pa / las / dam bčhas-pa' Rī-rab-kyi rtse-mo-nas / 'phur-te // gang mgyogs-pas // rgyal-srid bkur-bar byas-pa-las /* (Rama A 227-229)

² One should however note that the child uses the polite *pha-jo* rather than a simple *pha*.

The bird said: “My father is the king of the eagles, Agajaya by name. He has two sons. I am the elder one, Pada by name. My younger brother is called Sampada. We both fought for the kingdom. [We] pledged that the reign should be taken away by him who was the swiftest in flying from the peak of the mount Meru.”

He and his brother are rivals, so an explanation that he is honoring his brother with *nged* is implausible. If on the other hand he was honouring his addressee by using *nged* he would stick to that pronoun rather than switching back and forth.

The examples discussed from both Old Tibetan and Classical Tibetan show that *nga* is a singular and *nged* is plural.

Relative chronology of Old Tibetan texts

The physical features of a document, such as its paper and ink, bear witness to the date of the exemplar but provide only a *terminus ante quem* for the archetype. Barring the vicissitudes of imperfect copying, for which textual criticism partly compensates, the written words testify to the archetype. Even in the absence of sufficient exemplars to fruitfully employ text critical techniques, those features of a text that a scribe is unlikely to alter belie its date of composition. Scribal alterations are not all equally likely; in particular, the grammar of a text is more stable than its spelling. A copyist is likely to tamper with spelling. For languages with fixed orthographic traditions, such as Classical Tibetan, spelling is so stagnate and unchanging that its uniformity effaces linguistic reality. A scribe facing potentially informative irregularities in his *Vorlage* will eliminate them as mistakes. Even if certain spellings are characteristic of certain epochs, as ‘to-morrow’ or ‘co-operate’ are in English, the spelling of an exemplar does not betray the date of the archetype. When a language lacks a fixed orthography, such as Old Tibetan, the scribe is emboldened to emend at will. The Old Tibetan versions of the *Rāmāyana* exhibit this orthographic mercuriality; versions B, D, and E describe in nearly verbatim terms Malyapanta’s presentation of his daughter to a seer and the seer’s subsequent displeasure.

B, l. 39: *bu-mo khrid-te ’ongs-pa-dang // lha’i drang-srong [thugs] rab-du myi dgyes-ste //*

D, l. 40: *bu-mo khrid-de ’ongs-nas pul-ba-dang // drang-srong rab-du myi dgyeste /*

E, l. 40: *bu-mo khrid-de ’ongs-pa-dang // lha-’i drang srong rab-du myi dgyes-te //*

Variation such as *dgyes-ste*, *dgyeste*, and *dgyes-te* is not meaningful; the pronunciation of all three alternatives was the same, and a scribe substituting one for the other would not have thought himself unfaithful. Whether a language has a fluid orthography, like Old Tibetan, or a fixed orthography like Classical Tibetan, spelling reports nothing about the date of the archetype.

Unlike spelling, grammar normally reflects the actual linguistic habits of an author. Spelling is self-consciously taught and learned; in contrast, grammatical systems are not consciously apprehended as systems. Even when grammar is taught, it is seldom learned. Infinite harangues to not split infinitives or say ‘I’ rather than ‘me’ lead not to correct usage but to pretentious hypercorrection such as ‘bring it to Sally and I’. The reason for such hypercorrection is that while components of a system remain constant, their interrelationship as a system varies over time.

Looking at the pronouns used for second person singular in German, the four pronouns ‘du’, ‘er’, ‘ihr’, and ‘sie’ could all be used in direct address in the 18th and 19th centuries. However, the 18th century ‘er’ suggested a higher level of formality than ‘ihr’, whereas in the 19th century the two terms of the system reversed their meanings with ‘er’ becoming less polite than ‘ihr’ (cf. Horst 1998). From Middle High German (MHG) straight through to the New High German (NHG) of today all four pronouns have existed in their basic meanings, but their use as second singulars has been in constant flux. The configuration in which, for example, ‘er’ expresses a higher degree of politeness than ‘ihr’, is characteristic of a specific historical period and could be used to attribute a document to that time.

Status	MHG	17th. cent.	18th cent.	early 19th cent.	NHG
most polite			Sie	Sie	
more polite		er	er	ihr	
polite	ihr	ihr	ihr	er	Sie
neutral	du	du	du	du	du

Table 1: German 2nd sing. pronouns (after Horst 1998: 211)

When Joseph Smith penned the *Book of Mormon* he chose to imitate the diction of the King James Bible. Archaising thou's and ye's pepper his text, but failing to apprehend the system, Smith did not realize that 'ye' was plural and 'thou' singular. Consequently, the *Book of Mormon* offers jarring unmotivated transitions from plural to singular and singular to plural: "we knew that ye were lacking in judgment; wherefore, thou canst not accomplish so great a work" (1 Nephi 17:19), "For do ye not remember the priests of thy father" (Mosiah 20:18), "O thou child of hell, why tempt ye me?" (Alma 11:23). Smith had similar trouble with verb agreement, "Thou remembereth the twelve apostles..." (1 Nephi 12:9). Despite the labors of its prophet, the book is unambiguously a 19th and not a 17th century composition.

Just as Smith fails in his efforts to make a text seem older than it is, so too an editor will fail in making a text appear younger than it is. It is easy for an editor to modernize the spelling of an archaic text, as is often seen in editions of Shakespeare, but to erase the evidence of a grammatical system is more of a feat; it requires first that he apprehends the system as such and second that he emends it systematically across the whole text. In short, updating grammar is done consciously with an exertion of will. Because, the grammar of a text hides its age with difficulty, one can assume that the grammatical system a text exhibits is the grammatical system of the language as it was spoken at the time of the archetype's composition and not at the time of the exemplar's execution.

As mentioned, the reason why many authorities have described *khyed* and *nged* as an honorific is the misapprehension of the *pluralis majestatis* use of the plural for the singular. The use of the *pluralis majestatis* emerged during the Old Tibetan period; this is seen most strikingly in the editorial history of the *Viśeṣastava* by Udbhaṭasīdhasvāmin and its commentary the *Viśeṣastavaṭīkā* by Prajñāvarman. The *Viśeṣastava* was translated into Tibetan sometime between 779 and 840 (Schneider 1993: 21), i.e. during the Old Tibetan period. Prajñāvarman penned his commentary at about the time of the the root text's translation and may indeed have written it to aid with the work of translation (Schneider 1993: 18), but the commentary only became available in Tibetan after the translation of Rin-chen bzang-po (958-1055) and Janārdhana, which on the basis of Rin-chen-bzang-po's overall translation activities Schiefner dates to the first half of the eleventh century (1993: 21). About two centuries separate the translation of the root text and the translation of the commentary. The *pluralis majestatis* function of *khyed* emerged during this period. The root text addresses the Buddha as *khyod*, since only a singular Buddha is addressed, but the commentary changes most instances to *khyed* (Schneider 1993: 29). By the eleventh century *khyod* seemed a rude way of addressing the Buddha. One example suffices to demonstrate the relationship between the two texts.

(14a) / gang slad **khyod**-kyi bstan-pa ni /
 / bde-bas bde-nyid thob bgyid-pa /
 / de slad smra-ba'i seng **khyod**-kyi /
 / gzhung lugs-la ni 'gro 'di dga' / (stanza 74)

Da deine Lehrdarlegung
 (einen) leicht das Glück erlangen läßt
 darum freut sich, o Löwe unter den Rednern,
 an deiner Lehrmeinung unsereins. (Schneider 1993: 72-73)

- (14b) ... *gang slad khyed-kyi bstan-pa ni // zhes bya-ba-la sogs-pa smos-te /...*
gang slad ces bya-ba ni ...
/ khyed-kyi bstan-pa ni zhes bya-ba ni ...
/ bde-bas zhes bya-ba ni ...
/ bde-nyid ces bya-ba ni ...
/ thob bgyid-pa zhes bya-ba ni ...
/ de slad ces bya-ba ni ...
/ smra ba'i seng ge zhes bya-ba ni bod-pa-ste / smra ba'i seng-ge khyed-kyi zhes
bya-ba'i don-to /
/ gzhung lugs zhes bya-ba ni btsan-pa-ste / de la dga' ba'o /
/ su zhig ce na / 'gro 'di zhes bya-ba smos-te / ...
/ dga' zhes bya-ba ni dang zhing mos pa-'o /

... die (Strophe) gesagt worden, die mit den folgenden Worten (beginnt): “Da deine Lehrdarlegung”.

Der Ausdruck “da” (bedeutet): ...

Der Ausdruck “deine Lehrdarlegung” (bedeutet): ...

Der Ausdruck “das Glück” [**bde nyid*] (bezeichnet): ...

Der Ausdruck “leicht” [**bde bas*] (bedeutet):

Der Ausdruck “darum” (bedeutet):

Der Ausdruck “Löwe unter den Rednern” (ist) eine Anrede; damit ist gemeint: o

Löwe unter den Rednern, (an) deiner (Lehrdarlegung)!

Der Ausdruck “Lehrmeinung” (bezeichnet) die Lehre; an dieser freuen sie sich.

Für den Fall, daß jemand fragt: “Wer (freut sich daran)?”, ist gesagt worden: “diese Wesen” ...

Der Ausdruck “sich freuen” (bedeutet): (deine Lehre) hingebungsvoll hochschätzen.
 (Schneider 1993: 264-267)

Rin-chen-bzang-po's efforts at the aggiornamento of the root text of the *Viśeṣastava* was predictably not entirely consistent. Some instances of *khyod* remain unchanged.

- (15a) / *khyod ni thugs-kyi dka' thubs-kyis /*
/mdud-pa 'jig-par bzhed-pa lags / (stanza 26)

du (aber) hast danach getrachtet,

durch die Askese des Geistes die Fesseln zu vernichten. (Schneider 1993: 58-59)

- (15b) / *khyed ni zhes bya-ba la sogs-pa-la / thugs yin-pas-na thugs-kyi zhes bya-ba'am /*
'di ni thugs-kyi yin-pas thugs-kyi dka' thub-bo // 'di skad ston-te / khyod ni thugs-kyi
dka' thub nyid-kyis mdud-pa 'jig-cing las zad-pa-dang / nyon-mongs-pa zad-par
bzhed-pa lags kyi lus-kyis ni ma yin-no /

In dem (Teil der Strophe), der mit den folgenden (Worten) beginnt: “Du (aber)”, heißt es “des Geistes”, weil (die Askese) der Geist ist; oder es (heißt) “die Askese des Geistes”, weil es (die Askese) des Geistes ist.

(Damit) wird folgendes gelehrt: Zwar hast du danach getrachtet, nur durch die Askese des Geistes die Fesseln zu vernichten, (d.h.) das Karma zu tilgen und die Befleckungen zu tilgen, nicht aber durch den Körper (Schneider 1993: 140-141)

The fact that some examples of *khyod* remained in the commentary proves the point that, just like Joseph Smith failed to completely archaize the Book of Mormon, Rin-chen bzang-po failed to completely modernize the *Viśeṣastava*.

The lack of the first person *pluralis majestatis* in early Old Tibetan is confirmed by the inscriptions. No one was of higher status than the Tibetan emperor, so if he did not use the ‘royal we’ it is probably because it was not possible to do so. The Tibetan emperor uses *nga* of himself in the inscription at Zhwa’i lha khang.

(16) *nga* / *sku chu-ngu-nas chab-srīd ma bzhes pa’i bar-du yab yum-gyī go byaste* /

From the time when I was small, during the period when I had not yet taken over the government, he took the place of my father and mother. (ll. 4-5, Li and Coblin 1987: 264, 276)

(17) *nga chab-srīd ma bzhes-pa’i skabsu kha cig phan phun-dang / gdon stson-pa dag yod-pa yang / ban-de Ting-nge-’dzin-kyis nyam drod zin-nas / dpend pa’i bka-gros gsold* /

At the time when I had not yet taken over the government, there were also some certain individuals who stirred up dissension, the monk Ting-nge-’dzin, having taken the measure of the situation gave useful advice (ll. 10-13, cf. Li and Coblin 1987: 264, 276)

(18) *nga’i chab srid-las stsogste / spyir legs-pa’i las chen-po byas-te / nga’i zha-sngar / chab-srīd ’don ’dond / snying nye nye* /

In connection with **my** government, etc. he did great good deeds for all. On my behalf he continually advanced the government and was constantly loyal. (ll. 14-16, Li and Coblin 1987: 264, 276-277)

Walter and Beckwith claim that because “the emperor consistently refers to himself with the humble first person pronoun *nga*” which “is never seen (and hardly imaginable) in any Imperial period text” (2010: 296) the inscription at Zhwa’i lha khang must be a fake. Walter and Beckwith provide no evidence that *nga* is a humble form; the evidence presented above shows that *nga* is neutral and it is *bdag* and *ngan-bu* which are humble. The fact that the emperor uses singular *nga* rather than plural *nged* suggests that the inscription at Zhwa’i lha khang is genuinely early.

As seen in the Skar-chung inscription, the emperor uses *nged* only when the antecedent is plural.

(19) *rab-du byung-ba’i rnams // nged yab sras-kyis / mchod gnas-su gnang-ba bzhiñ-du byas-ste // btsan-po’i / pho-brang-na dkon-mchog gsum-gyī rten btsugs-shing / mchod-pa yang // gu-du myi spang myi bskar-zhiñg mchod gnas-su bgyi’o //*

As for those who have entered the priesthood, **we**, father and son, having acted as to granting them [a status as] subjects of veneration, have established and honored a support for the Three Jewels in the court, and neither abandoning or putting it aside in a separate place, [we] shall treat it as an object of veneration. (ll. 43-47, cf. Li and Coblin 1987: 319-320, 327-328)

Walter and Beckwith cite this passage among a number of arguments that the Skar-chung inscription is not of genuine imperial date; they claim that “[m]ost striking of all is simply the use of the Classical Tibetan honorific pronoun *nged* ‘I, we’” (2010: 308 note 28). Walter and Beckwith do not make explicit what they mean by ‘honorific’.³ If in Walter and Beckwith’s view

³ It would indeed be strange for an emperor to use a respectful form, but one might expect the emperor to use a ‘royal we’.

both *nga* and *nged* are unacceptable in the mouth of the emperor, one wonders what first person pronoun they think the emperor would have genuinely used. The extended version of the Skar-chung inscription preserved in the *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, uses *nga* of the emperor when referring only to himself (Walter and Beckwith 2010: 296 note 12). The clear cut grammatical distinction between singular *nga* and plural *nged* in the inscription at Zhwa'i lha khang and in the Skar-chung inscription, by showing that these inscriptions pre-date the emergence of the *pluralis majestatis* argues, contra Walter and Beckwith, that these inscriptions are of genuinely early date.

Most of the documents discovered at Dunhuang date from later than 840, the *terminus ante quem* for the translation of the *Viśeṣastava*; since the library cave that held them was sealed in 1006 (Rong 1999-2000), all Dunhuang documents date from before 1055, the *terminus ante quem* of the *Viśeṣastavaṭikā*. Because the *pluralis majestatis* emerged during the period in which the documents discovered at Dunhuang were composed, the absence or presence of this feature can be used to deduce the relative chronology of Dunhuang texts.

The Tibetan emperor's use of *nga* to refer to himself in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* (cf. Hill 2010: 551) demonstrates that this document also pre-dates the emergence of the *pluralis majestatis*. Unfortunately, but unsurprisingly, the inscriptions offer no examples of *khyod* or *khyed*; the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* (OTC) furnishes only one example that can be analyzed as an inferior addressing a superior; a wife uses *khyod* with her husband (OTC I. 169)

(20) 'ung-nas khyo-mo na-re // **khyod** lto bo che-la / yī-dags ma bab-kyi // lto sbyor-du
nges-so zhes byas-so / (OTC, ll. 168-169)

Then his wife said: “**Thou** art a liar! [Thou] hast not been possessed by a spirit, but art surely planning some deceit!”

It is imaginable that spouses address each other as equals, but, by way of contrast in the *Mi la ras pa'i rnam thar*, Myang-tsha-dkar-rgyan addresses her dead husband in the *pluralis majestatis*, i.e. with *khyed*.

(21) yab Mi-la-shes-rab-rgyal-mtshan **khyed**-la bu 'di 'dra skyes-so (de Jong 1959: 36,
ll. 21-22)

“O father, Mi-la-shes-rab-rgyal-mtshan, to **you** such a son as this was born!”

The one datum in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* relevant to second person pronouns confirms this document dates from before the emergence of the *pluralis majestatis* is strongly.

In version A of the *Rāmāyaṇa* the *pluralis majestatis* is essentially limited to Brahmā. The god employs a ‘royal we’ when speaking of himself.

(22) Tshangs-pas bka' stsald-pa // srīd gsum dbang byed **nged**-las myed / (Rama A 29)

Brahmā said: “None but **us** reigns over the three worlds.”

The devaputra likewise address Brahmā in the plural.

(23) dngos-grub gsum // gtso mchog **khyed**-kyis // bdag-chag rnam-la stsol / zhes gsol-
pa-dang / (Rama A 28-29)

[The devaputras] requested: “**You** the most noble, grant to us three siddhis.”

In other contexts in version A of the *Rāmāyaṇa* where one might expect the *pluralis majestatis*, the singular prevails. In a letter of apology to King Rama, although Sugrīva writes with great

humility and employs the humble first person *bdag* (cf. Hill 2007: 282-284, 2010: 553-554) he avoids the *pluralis majestatis* and instead uses the neutral second singular *khyod*.⁴

(24) *bdag tsam-gyi tshong-la / byams-pa khyod-las myi bzhugs-pa-'i steng-du // byams-pa-'i bka'-drin mod-kyi / prin yig tsam-gyis rtag-du snyun gsol-ba-'i rigsna / (Rama A 349-350)*

Not only is there no affection for one like me except from **thee**, but also I received the favour of thine affection. I should have continually inquired by letter after thy health.

Old Tibetan texts of known antiquity, such as the imperial inscriptions and the *Viśeṣastava* fail to show the *pluralis majestatis*. The older Dunhuang documents, such as the Old Tibetan Chronicle, similar lack the use of plural pronouns with singular reference, but later documents such as version A of the *Rāmāyaṇa* begin to show evidence of the *pluralis majestatis*. Because the 11th century *Viśeṣastavaṭikā* shows regular use of the *pluralis majestatis*, it is no surprise to also find it routinely in later Classical Tibetan texts such as the *Mi la ras pa'i rnam thar*.

The honorific singular use of *khyed* is common in the *Mi la ras pa'i rnam thar*. As seen in example 21, Myang-tsha-dkar-rgyan addresses her dead husband with *khyed*. In addition, Ras-chung-pa regularly addresses his master Mi-la-ras-pa as *khyed*.

(25) ... *rje-btsun rin-po-che khyed-rang-gi gdung-dang rigs-kyi byung-khungs-dang bcas-te / rnam-par-thar-pa-dang mdzad-pa rnams gsung-du gsol zhes gsol-ba btab-pas / (de Jong 1959: 26)*

“O precious lord, I ask that **you** tell of the origin of [your] family, [your] liberation, and deeds.”

While still a student Mi-la addresses a wandering yogin with *khyed*.

(26) *khyed-rang-gi yul gang yin byas-pas / (de Jong 1959: 46)*

Where are **you** from?

Examples of *nged* functioning as a *pluralis majestatis* in the *Mi la ras pa'i rnam thar* are harder to identify. In general, the context does not preclude a simple plural interpretation. For example, when Mi-la meets with the son of the childhood teacher who had taught Mi-la to read, the son invites Mi-la to stay a while.

(27) *nged-kyis zhabs-tog ci lcogs byed-pas 'dir žag 'ga' bžugs-la (de Jong 1959: 113)*

Since **we** will serve you as much as possible, stay here a few days!

The son is primarily offering his own service to Mi-la and thus it is not a mistake to translate “Puisque je t’ai servi de mon mieux, reste ici quelques jours” (Bacot 1925: 184) or “Stay here for a few days and talk, and I will attend to your needs” (Lhalungpa 1982: 104), using the singular

⁴ The use of the *pluralis majestatis* in version E (PT 0981) is obscure. Naturally the text has many examples of *khyod* as a singular (ll. 25, 49, 114, 124, 147, 179, 199, 256) and *khyed* as a plural (l. 183). Such cases would be expected in Tibetan from any period. There are three examples of *khyed* as a singular (ll. 45, 73, 255), but this does not necessarily point to the *pluralis majestatis*. In one of the cases (l. 45) the same speaker earlier uses *khyod* with the same addressee (l. 38). The example at l. 255 may result from a miscopying of the same context in version A (see example 4 above). Finally, the text also seems to provide an aberrant example of *khyod* as a plural (l. 56). The overall impression is that of sloppy editing.

pronoun. However, immediately afterward the son addresses Mi-la with *khyed*, suggesting that the son does not see himself as higher status than Mi-la, but instead was simply using the plural to refer to the fact that his whole family would be implicated in providing hospitality to Mi-la.

Similarly, when Lama Rngog-pa countenances Mi-la's offering a gift to Mar-pa, the sociological situation of the most senior disciple addressing a recent acolyte conforms with a 'royal we' and the lama does address Mi-la with *khyod* rather than *khyed*, but lama Rngog-pa may be referring to his whole party.

(28) *khyod-kyis nged-la yang phan thogs-po rang byas-pas bla-ma Mar-pa-dang mjal-ba'i phyag rten gyis-shig* (de Jong 1959: p. 75)

"Because thou hast been useful to **us**, (I will allow you to) make a offering gift of meeting with lama Marpa."

The text does furnish a few unambiguous examples of the 'royal we' all of them in the mouth of a haughty Dge-bshes. The Dge-bshes who has prostrated to Mi-la but been insulted by not having the gesture reciprocated, addresses the lama.

(29) *khyed-rang sgom-chen rnams-kyi lugs-la de skad yin-pa srid / nged mtshan-nyid-pa'i rig-pas ded-na chos skad rnams-kyis gang-du'ang mi phyin-par 'dug / rje-btsun gang-zag bzang-po yin du re nas nged-kyis kyang phyag btsal-ba yin* (de Jong 1959: 164)

It is possible that this is said in the tradition of you meditators, but clearly if **we** pursued the matter with the logic of dialecticians (you) would not follow any of the the technical religious vocabulary. **We** prostrated because the *rje-btsun* (is said to be) a good person.

The first instance of *nged* in example 29 might be *pluralis auctoris* rather than *pluralis majestatis*, but the second instance of the pronoun in the passage must be *pluralis majestatis*; only the Dge-bshes prostrated and he is referring only this personal act of his own.

The same haughty Dge-bshes uses the *pluralis majestatis* while casting aspersions on Mi-la to his female companion whom he is trying to convince to bring the yogin poison. The Dge-bshes refers to himself in the plural, when he invokes the authority of his books, but switches to the singular when making a personal guarantee.

(30) *mi nag-pa rnams mngon-shes yod-par thag gcod-pa de / khong-tshos dpe-cha ma mthong-bar kho'i zog-gis mgo 'khor-ba yin mod / nged-kyi dpe-cha'i nang-na mngon-shes yod-pa'i mi de 'di 'dra min-pa zig yod-par bshad-pa yin / mngon-shes med-pa ngas khag theg-gis / da khyod-kyis kho-la zas 'di byin-nas don mthong byung-na / rang-re gnyis snga-nas lus-'brel rting da yang skog-pa che bzas chung bzas khyad mi 'dug-pas rang-re gnyis bza' mi byas-te / (de Jong 1959: 165)*

The laity, who are convinced that he has clairvoyance, they, having not seen books, are confused by his deception. Inside **our** books it is said that a man who has clairvoyance is not like this. He has no clairvoyance, I guarantee it. Now, if thou producest evidence of having taken this food to him, we two, who have for a long time had physical relations and even now there is not much difference between eating a little garlic (reading *sgog* for *skog*) or a lot, we two shall be married.

The *pluralis majestatis* is solidly in place in the *Mi la ras pa'i rnam thar*, and it is easy to see how the frequency of *nged* and *khyed* with singular reference in such as text has led to the misanalysis of these two pronouns as honorifics rather than plurals.

Conclusion

This investigation of the *pluralis majestatis* in Old and Classical Tibetan permits a few conclusions. Early Old Tibetan, as we seen in the inscriptions and the root text of the *Viśeṣastava*, the *pluralis majestatis* is absent, but by the advent of Classical Tibetan as exhibited by the *Viśeṣastavaṭikā* and the *Mi-la ras pa'i rnam thar* the *pluralis majestatis* was in place. The presence of the *pluralis majestatis* can be used to set up a relative chronology of Dunhuang documents, with the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* on the early end and version A of the *Rāmāyaṇa* somewhat later. Further exploration of the use of pronouns in Old Tibetan texts will doubtlessly flesh out the emergence of the *pluralis majestatis* and the relative chronology of the Old Tibetan corpus.

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