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Contents

Original and Sophisticated Features of the Lepcha and Limbu Scripts

– **R.K. Sprigg**

Only three Himalayan languages have scripts of their own; and all three of them are Nepalese languages: Newari, Lepcha, and Limbu, though the majority of Lepcha-speakers live outside Nepal. This article is confined to four remarkable features of the Lepcha and Limbu scripts. I have 4,826 for the number of Lepcha-speakers in Nepal, mostly in the Ilam area; and the number of Limbu-speakers, according to the 1991, Survey also, is 254,288 (Kansakar 1996, 6, 8).

The Lepcha script is known these days in the form in which it appears in Mainwaring 1876 (1–18; see appendix 1); and the Limbu script is probably known only in the form in which it appears in Chemjong 2018 (1962 A.D.; 21–3; see appendix 2); but there are earlier versions of both scripts to be found in handwritten books collected in Darjeeling in the 40s of the last century by B.H. Hodgson. These earlier books give an original, and strikingly different, picture of the two scripts from the later, and better known, versions, in which the influence of the Tibetan script on the Lepcha, and the Davanagari script on the Limbu, are easy to detect.

I. The number of syllable-initial symbols

The syllable-initial symbols are customarily presented in the form of a syllabary in which a particular member of the syllabic-vowel system is symbolized jointly with an initial consonant or consonant cluster or a non-syllabic vowel (y-, w–, or h–), or, in the case of $'a$, an initial glottal-plosive consonant in free variation with the syllabic vowel as itself syllable–initial (Appendixes 1 and 2).

A. Lepcha

Mainwaring's *Grammar* gives the total number of symbols in the Lepcha syllabary, the *'á–mo* 'mother', as 35; one of the two handwritten books in the Hodgson Collection, *róng-kup sa lháp–sho bo-sho-mú gum* (vol. 79, 1–50, 1903 V.S., 1847 A.D.), now housed in the India Office Library, London, also gives the number of symbols in the syllabary as 35; but they are not quite the same as Mainwaring's symbols. For one thing the symbol *tsha* is missing from the syllabary in both of the Hodgson books, presumably through an oversight. This would, of course, reduce the syllabary's total from 35 to 34 (or 33 for Hodgson's second book, which also has *bla* missing); but they make up the total to 35 (or 34) by including *'a* in the syllabary, as the first symbol of the series: *'a, ka, ga*, etc. Mainwaring, on the other hand, has treated *'a* not as a member of the syllabary but as 'the basis of all the vowels, eight in number: *'a, 'á, 'i, 'o, 'ó, 'u, 'ú, 'e* (3). In other words the Hodgson books have treated *'a* on the model of the *a* symbol in the Tibetan syllabary, the *gsal-byed sum–cu* 'thirty radicals', in which *a* is placed thirtieth and last (Appendix 3), except that *'a* is placed first in the Lelpcha syllabary of the Hodgson books.

Mainwaring, on the other hand, appears to have treated the *'a, 'a, 'o* and *"o*, of Lepcha on the model of the sub-set of four Devanagari symbols shown at (i) below in contrast with the remaining sub-set of six symbols, making a total of ten *svara-varna* symbols (eleven if *r* is included):

i.   *'a*   *'ä*   *'o*   *'au*;

ii.   *i*   *ī*   *u*   *ū*   *e*   *ai*   (r);

but Mainwaring's scheme goes beyond these two Devanagari sets of vowels; it groups the remaining four Lepcha symbols *'i/ 'i', 'u, 'ú,* and *'e* in a single set with *'a, 'á, 'o* and *'ó*, the initial symbol *'–* combined with the eight vowel symbols *–á, –i/ –i, – u, –ú* and *e*,

on the same principle as the Tibetan script (cf. Appendix 3).

Before leaving this controversial topic it is useful to recall that while the symbols *'a, 'á, 'i/ 'i, u*, etc. have an *optional* pronunciation with a syllable–initial consonant sound, namely the glottal plosive (in addition to their pronunciation with a syllable–initial syllabic–vowel sound) mentioned at the beginning of this section (I), the glottal plosive consonant is *obligatory* in the combination *'y–*, and must be pronounced before the non-syllabic vowel for the following *y* ([?j–]), in such words as *'yok* 'work' (Tibetan *g. yog*), *'yu* 'turquoise' (Tibetan *g.yu*), and *ta –'yu* 'wife', 'female'.

B. Limbu

In Limbu too the position as regards *'a* is very much like that of *'a* in Lelpcha. In the three Hodgson–Collection books vol. 87 (*lī bu haru ko kákhahará*) *'a* has been included in the syllabary, but in the third place, after *ka* and *pa*, in a syllabary of 20 symbols, not in the first place as in Lepcha. Campbell 1855, however, has only 19 symbols in the syllabary because, like Mainwaring for Lepcha in section (A) above, he has removed *'a* from the syllabary and associated it with a vowel series : *'a, ē, ē̄, ī, ī̄, u, ō, ō̄, ai'* (210; cf. also Van Driem 1987, 548, and Appendix 4).

From the phonetic spelling in Devanagari script that has been added to each member of the syllabary in the Hodgson books it is clear that the vowel sound intended for *ka, pa, 'a*, etc. is the open back vowel [a] (Devanagari *kā, pā, 'ā*, etc.), as in reciting that Tibetan syllabary, the *gsal-byed sum – cu, ka, kha, ga, nga*, etc. (Appendix 3), not the vowel sound used in reciting the Devanagari *ka, kha, ga, gha, nga*, etc. in Nepali and Hindi.

Chemjong 1962 agrees with Campbell in removing *'a* from the syllabary and incorporating it in a vowel series, *svara varna*: *'a, 'ā, 'i, 'u, 'e, 'ai, 'o, 'au, 'a:, 'e:* (21–2; see Appendix 2); but he has

gone further, and changed the vowel quality of *'a* from the quality resembling the Tibetan, the open back quality, [a], to the Limbu vowel quality nearest to the quality used in reciting *ka, kha, ga, gha*, etc. for Nepali, a half-open back rounded vowel sound ([ɔ]).

Chemjong has gone even further in changing the character of what he calls Shirijanga *lipi* (1962, 20); he has adapted it to the needs of other Nepalese languagbes by adding eleven other symbols to the 20 given in the Hodgson Collection books. The extra symbols, '*nayā* '*akshara*', are : *ga, gha, ja, jha, da, dha, ba, bha, tra, sa*, and *gya*. The symbols *ga, ja, da*, and *ba* are not needed in a Limbu script because the sounds that they symbolize in reading the Devanagari script, voiced sounds, are, with a very few exceptions, in complementary distribution with the corresponding voiceless sounds of *ka, ca, ta*, and *pa* (Sprigg 1966, 452, n. 7); so either of these two sets of symbols could represent these voiced/voiceless pairs of sounds, the other set being superfluous. The same relationship, complementary distribution, also applies to the Devanagari, symbols *gha, jha, dha*, and *bha* as compared with *kha, cha, tha*, and *pha*. It shows remarkable acuity on the part of some linguistically minded Limbu, perhaps "Siri-jungna, called also the Dorze Lama of Yangrup' (*Gazatteer* 1894, 37; see also Sprigg 1959, 591) more than two hundred years ago, in that he had detected this phonetic relationship and taken it into account while devising the Linbus' script. Chemjong, on the other hand, wanted the Kiranti script, as he preferred to call it, to serve the phonological needs of all Kiranti languages, not merely the Limbu language.

II. Order of symbols in the syllabary

A. Lepcha

1. Mainwaring's version, on the model of Tibetan

I should guess that all those who learn the Lepcha script these days learn the syllabary in the same order as that in which it was printed in Mainwaring's *Grammar* in 1876 (cf. also, more recently, Tamsang 1982, 2–3); clearly this order is modelled on that of Tibetan, the *gsal-byed sum cu*, or thirty 'radicals': the first 18 symbols, from *ka* to *tsha*, are the same except that in Lepcha *ja* is pronounced slightly differently from Tibetan, and that Lepcha has added a symbol between *pha* and *ba*, namely *fa*, a slightly modified form of *pha*; the 24th to the 26th symbols of the Tibetan, *ya, ra*, and *la*, correspond to the 21st to the 23rd in Lepcha; and the 27th and 28th symbols of the Tibetan, *sha* and *sa*, correspond to the 26th and 27th of the Lepcha but in reverse order (see Appendixes 1 and 3). The only major difference between the two syllabaries is that Lepcha ends the series with a remarkable set of seven symbols, *kla, gla, pla, fla, bla, mla*, and *hla*, for which there is nothing comparable in Tibetan, which uses conjunct symbols, the *la-btags drug*, for *kla, gla*, *and* bla (and also for *zla, rla*, and *sla*, togetherf with *hla* from the *la-mgo* series).

2. Original Lepcha

If, however, we consult older books than the Mainwaring *Grammar*, such as the two handwritten writing books in the Hodgson Collection, which Hodgson collected in Darjeeling in the 1840s, we find that Lepcha has an order of letters of its own, quite different from the Tibetan order. These two books, which are not in the same hand, agree with each other only up to a point. To show how far the 35 symbols of book no. 1, which is dated 1903 (1847 A.D.), agree with the 34 of book no. 2, which is undated, I will plot them against each other :

no. 1:	'a ka ga pa fa ba ma ha ra kha ta tha da la kla pla
no. 2:	'a ka ga pa fa ba ma
no. 1:	fla bla gla va mla hla nga ca nya na pha tsa
no. 2:	gla mal hla nga nya pha ca na tsa
no. 1:	wa ja za ya sha sa cha

no. 2:   wa ja za ya sha cha ha ra kha ta tha da la kla pla
no. 1:
no. 2:   fla va sa.

It is not clear to my why Thikung Men Salong, or whoever it was that devised the Lepcha script, should have chosen to put the symbols in either of these two orders; but, to some extent, phonetic principles can be seen to be at work:

a. two of the symbols that have a velar-plosive initial sound, k*a* and *ga*, are grouped together, as the 2nd and 3rd members of the syllabary, in both books;

b. four of the labial-initial symbols, *pa*, fa, *ba*, and *ma*, are grouped together, as the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th symbols, in both books;

c. three of the dental-initial symbols, *ta*, *tha*, and *da*, are grouped together, as the 11th, 12th, and 13th symbols of the syllabary as it has been given in book no. 1, and as the 25th, 26th, and 27th symbols in book no. 2;

d. the lateral–initial symbol *la*, all six of the symbols that have a lateral cluster as their initial sounds, *kla*, *pla*, *fla*, *bla*, *gla* and *mla*, and the voiceless-lateral-initial symbol *hla* are grouped together as symbols 14 to 19 and 21 to 22 in book no. 1 (*va* has been inserted between *gla* and *mla* as the 20th symbol); and, in book no. 2, *gla*, *mla*, and *hla* have been grouped together as the 8th, 9th, and 10th symbols, while *la*, *kla*, *pla* and *fla* have been grouped as the 29th, 30th, 31st, and 32nd symbols, (as has already been noted above, *bla* is missing from the syllabary in the form in which it appears in book no. 2; it should have come after *fla*);

e. if the members of the syllabary are looked at from the point of view of blocks of symbols, then the seven symbols *'a* to *ma*

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form the first block in both books; from that point onward the two books diverge, because the second block in book no. 1, comprising the eleven symbols *ha* to *bla*, forms the third block in book no. 2 (with the exception of *bla*, which is missing); the third block of book no. 1, comprising the fifteen symbols *gla* to *cha* (an extra symbol, *va*, has been inserted, in book no. 1, between *gla* and *mla*) is the second block of book no. 2:

book no. 1: block 1, block 2 (+ *va*), block 3

book no. 2: block 1, block 3,   block 2;

so in book no. 2 the order of blocks 2 and 3 is the reverse of what is to be found in book no. 1.

B. Limbu

1. Chemjong's version, on the model of Devanagari

Chemjong has followed the Devanagari script by beginning with the ten s*vara-varna* '*a* to '*e:*, except that *i*, *u*, and *r* have been omitted and '*a* and '*e:* have been added; he continues with the 30 *vyanjana-varna* from *ka* to *nya*, and then from *ta* to *ha*, with *tra* and *jnya* added (see Appendix 2).

2. The earlier order, from the Hodgson books

The Hodgson books give the following order :

ka pa 'a ma ta ya tha na sha nga sa wa ha la ca pha kha ra cha nya.

There are no clear indications of a phonetic analysis in this, the earlier, order of the symbols, though there is a slight resemblance to the two earlier orders of the Lepcha script shown in (A.2) above: *ka*, *pa*, '*a*, and *ma* all occur in the first four places in the Limbu order of symbols; and the same four occur in the first four places of the Lepcha too, if we ignore the Lepcha *ga*, *fa*, and *ba* symbols, which are not found in Linbu:

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Lepcha :	'a	ka	(ga)	pa	(fa ba)	ma
Limbu:		ka		pa 'a		ma.

3. The syllable-final symbols, as a separate system
A. Lepcha; the nine *'á–kup* 'children' (see Appendix 5)

It is mysterious, and quite remarkable, that the Lepcha script should have a set of diacritics to symbolize its (eight) syllable-final consonants: *–k, –m, –l, –n, –p, –r, –t,* and *–ng* (*kâng*), this last of which comes near to being in complementary distribution with *–ang* when written with *ny i'n dó* 'sun–moon'; all of these diacritics are superscript, that is to say they are written above the 'radical' symbol (*'á–mo*), except for two, the *kâng* and the *ny i'n–dó'*, which are prescript (written before the *'á–mo*) (Tamsang 1982, 5). Diringer refers to these diacritics in his authoritative study of writing systems of the world (1948/1968) in the following terms: 'peculiar features of the Lepcha character are the vowel signs and the final marks of eight consonants (*k, ng, t, n, p, m, r, l*) which consist of dashes, dots and small circles and are placed above and before the preceding letter' (280).

These nine superscript and prescript diacritics for the eight syllable-final consonants are almost unique in the writing systems of the world. It is only in one of the Tibetan styles of writing, the cursive style (*'khyug-hig*), that I can find a parallel: in *'khyug–yig* Tibetan writing too syllable-final *m*, as in *lam* 'road', is written above the radical (*gsal–byed*), in the form of a bar and a loop.

Some of the syllable-final consonant sounds, the sounds for *–k, –p,* and *–t,* are slightly different from the consonant sounds that are used in syllable–initial position, for *k–, p–,* and *t–*: the syllable–final sounds are *stops* — they have no audible release; but the syllable–initial sounds are *plosives* – they have plosion, an audible release into a following vowel (or, on occasions, a

consonant, *l* or *r*); so, because of this phonetic difference, slight though it is, one might agree that *–k, –p,* and *–t* should be written differently from the *k–, p–,* and *t–* of, for example, *ka(–), pa(–),* and *ta(–)*; but there is no such difference between the syllable–final consonant sounds for *–ng, –m, –n, –r,* and *–l* and the syllable–initial sounds to be heard when one pronounces, for example, the syllables *nga, ma, na, ra,* and *la*. Since these five consonant sounds are pronounced the same in both these two positions in the syllable, it might seem strange that whoever it was who devised the Lepcha script should have chosen not to write them with the same symbols.

In answer to this problem some linguists at the present time would agree that it does seem strange, and would come to the conclusion that the inventor of the Lepcha script had, in the *'á–kup ka–kyót*, the nine syllable–final symbols, introduced nine unnecessary symbols into the script; but during the last sixty years another school of linguistics has come into being that would give the answer 'no' to this question, and would consider the inventor of the script to be correct in having devised a separate set of symbols for the eight final consonants.

This more recent school of linguistics, to which I myself belong, would point out that since only eight consonants are distinguished in Lepcha in syllable–final position while some 35 consonants and consonant clusters like kl– and pl– are distinguished in syllable–initial position, such as the consonant sounds at the beginning of the syllables *ka, ga, kla,* and *gla*, the distinctive value (or power of making a distinction in the meaning of words) of *–k, –ng,* etc. in a set of only eight possible consonants must be quite different from the distinctive value of the initial consonants symbolized in the syllables *ka, nga,* and all the other 33 consonants and consonant clusters that need to be distinguished in pronouncing the syllable–initial set. If I compare the Lepcha script to players in

football teams, it is as though the Lepchas had invented two different kinds of football game, one game for teams of eight players and the other game for teams of thirty–five players. The value of a member of the eight–member team to his team is quite high, one to eight, one eighth of the total; so his value is quite different from the comparatively low value of a member of the thirty–five– member team to his team, one to thrity–five **on average**, or one thirty–fifth of the total. If a member of the eight–member team is sent off by the referee, or has to leave the field because of injury, it very much reduces his team's chances of winning; but the thirty–five member team might hardly notice losing one of itgs members.

This theory that distinguishes separate sets of sound units for different places in the syllable and the word, as I have just illustrated from Lepcha through the 35 *'á–mo* in syllable–initial position and the nine *'á–kup* in syllable–final position (though the number of final consonant units is only eight because the *kâng* and the *ny i' n– dó* are both used for –ng) was first put forward in 1935, by J.lR. Firth, while writing about the Marathi language. Palmer, in his book *Prosodic Analysis* (1970), has described how 'for the nasals in Marathi he noted a two–term alternance initially, a three–term alternance finally, but, though phonetically there were eight different sounds, one "unique" homorganic nasal before medial consonants, he comments "I should not want to identify all those *n* sounds" ' (x–xi).

The term 'polysystemic approach' has been given to an analysis such as Firth's, in which there are a number of separate and independent systems; so the inventor of the Lepcha script, astonishing though it may seem, was applying the 'polysystemic approach' to devising the Lepcha script more than two hundred years, perhaps, before Firth had developed his theory and before the term 'polysystemic approach' had been introduced.

B. Limbu (Appendix 6)

The main differences between the Linbu syllable–final diacritics, eight in number, and the corresponding Lepcha symbols, at (A) above, are that (i) the Limbu symbols, –k, –t, –m, –ṁ (*anusvāra*), –ng, –n, –p, and –l are postscript, except for –t and –ng, which are subscript; (ii) the two final symbols –k and –p are **almost the same in shape** as the syllable–initial symbols k– and p–, and so, perhaps, hardly qualify to be classed as diacritics; and (iii) Limbu has clusters of syllable–final symbols, such as –m– and –k, –ng– and –k, and –k– and –t.

On the other hand the Limbu syllable–final symbols resemble the Lepcha syllable–final symbols at (A) above in forming a separate set, or system, of mutually defining units; so Limbu can also claim that its script implies that the phonological anlaysis on which it is based should be regarded as polysystemic. Such an analysis would, of course, commend itself to the followers of J.R. Firth's theory, prosodic analysis.

IV. The seven *la–thyu* as Lepcha diphonic symbols

The fourth remarkable feature of the Lepcha script, for which the credit, according to K.P. Tamsang, should be given to a Lepcha, Thikung Men Salong, is the set of seven symbols *kl–, pl–, fl–, ml– , gl–,* and *hl–* termed *la–thyu*; each symbolizes a cluster of two consonant sounds the second of which is a lateral sound, except that *hl–* symbolizes a single sound, a voiceless frictionless lateral consonant or voiceless 'l' sound (cf. Tamsang 1982, 5–6). The six members of the *la–thyu* that symbolize consonant clusters, all the *la–thyu*, that is, except hl–, can be termed diphonic because for them a single symbol is used to symbolize not one but two consonant sounds linked together in a cluster. Diphonic symbols such as these are not to be found in the Tibetan script; indeed they are rarely to be found in any other of the world's scripts. The only

other such symbols that readily come to mind are the letters *zeta*, *xi*, and *psi* of the Greek alphabet, which symbolize, respectively, the clusters of consonants [zd] (or, perhaps, [dz]), [ks], and [ps], which W.S. Allen refers to in his book *Vox Graeca* as 'consonant groups represented by single symbols' (1968, 53–7).

V. Conclusion

I think that the four original, and sophisticated, aspects of the Lepcha and Limbu scripts that I have mentioned above, in sections (I) to (IV), amply justify my claim that the scholars who are credited with devising these two scripts, Thikung Men Salong, perhaps, or Chador Namgyal, the third Chogyal of Sikkim, for the Lelpcha and, for the Limbu, Sirijunga, 'the Dorze Lama of Yangroup', were outstanding and forward–looking linguists.

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Appendix 1

1s/.—THE CONSONANTS.

ámo re, 35.

*K	Kh	G	Ng
Ch	Chh	J	Ny
	Th	D	N
T	Ph	F	B	M
Ts	Tsh	Z	
R	L	II	
S	Sh	W	
Kl	Gl	Pl	Fl
Bl	Ml	III	

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Appendix 2

स्वर-वर्ण (Vowels)

अ	आ	इ	उ	ए
ऐ	ओ	औ	अः	एः

व्यञ्जन-वर्ण (Consonents)

क	ख	ग	घ	ङ
च	छ	ज	झ	ञ
त	थ	द	ध	न
प	फ	ब	भ	म
य	र	ल	व	ह
श	ष	स	ह	ज्ञ

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Appendix 3

THE ALPHABET.

THE SIMPLE CONSONANTS

གསལ་བྱེད་སུམ་ཅུ་ནི།

SE-CHE SUM-CHU-NI
The thirty consonants

SE-CHE 'make clear'
NI   emphatic particle

ཀ	KA	ཁ	KHA	ག	KA	ང	NGA
ཅ	CHA	ཆ	CHHA	ཇ	CHA	ཉ	NYA
ཏ	TA	ཐ	THA	ད	TA	ན	NA
པ	PA	ཕ	PHA	བ	PA	མ	MA
ཙ	TSA	ཚ	TSHA	ཛ	TSA		
ཝ	WA	ཞ	SHA	ཟ	SA	འ	(A)
ཡ	YA	ར	RA	ལ	LA		
ཤ	SHA	ས	SA	ཧ	HA	ཨ	(A)

འ and ཨ are employed as bases for vowels to which no preceding consonant sound is attached.

THE VOWELS

དབྱངས་བཞི་ནི།

YANG SHI-NI
The four vowels

YANG 'voice,' or 'song'
Counting the vowel A, there are five vowels

ི	གི་གུ	KI-KU
ུ	ཞབས་ཀྱུ	SHAP-KYU 'foot-hook'
ེ	འགྲེང་བུ	DENG-BU 'stand'
ོ	ན་རོ	NA-RO

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Appendix 4

Consonants.

Ka	Ba	Ma	Ta	Ya	
ཟ	ཕ	ཟ	ཥ	ཟ	

Tha	Na	Sha	Nga	Sa	
ཟ	ཟ	ཟ	ཟ	ཟ	

Wa	Ha	La	Ja	Bha	
ཟ	ཟ	ཟ	ཟ	ཟ	

Khu	Ra	Chat	Nya
ཟ	ཟ	ཟ	ཟ

The vowels, Finals and ya & Ra are thus affixed to the Letters.

ya   Ra

Ka   Ké   Kĕ   Kī
Kĭ   Kŭ   Kō   Kŏ
Kai

Kăk   Kŏk   Kĕk
Kĭk   Kŭk   Kŏk
Kŏk   Kaik

Kăt   Kĕk   Kĕk
Kĭk   Kŭk   Kŏk
Kŏk   Kaik

Vowels.

a ĕ ē ĭ i u ŏ ŏ ai

There are also Seven

Finals

ăk āk am

Kam   Kĕm   Kĕm

Appendix 5

Finals.		Names.		Powers.
ཟ ak		ལ་ཀཏ la kát		k
ཟ am		ལ་ཉཏ la nyat		m
ཟ al		ལ་སཾ la sám		l
ཟ an		nun		n
ཟ ab or ap		བ་ཀུཔ ba kup		b or p
ཟ ar		dar		r
ཟ at		kat		
ཟ ang		kang		ng
ཟ ang		nyindó		ang

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मात्रा तथा संयुक्ताक्षर (Conjoint Letters)

(Devanagari conjoint letters chart with labels: क, ङ, त, न, प, म, य, र, ल, व, लो)
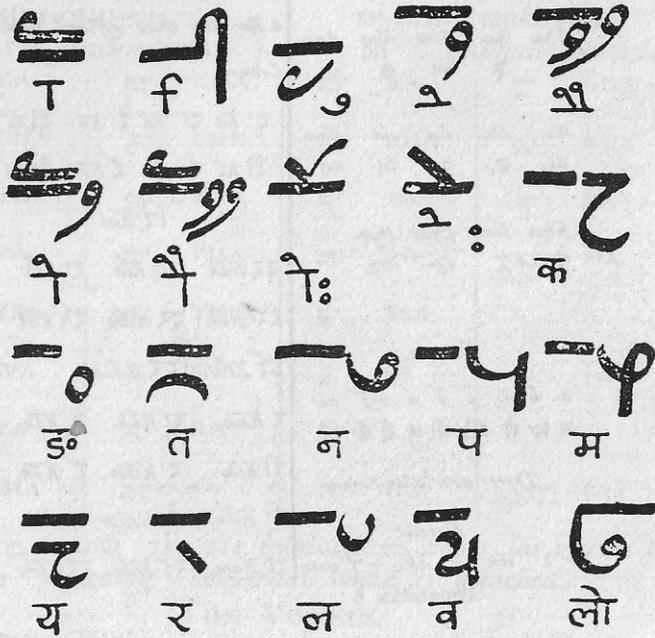
Sagaramātha : The Linguistic Conquest of Mount Everest

– Kamal P. Malla

1. The Peak XV (29029 ft), now known variously as Mount Everest, Kang–chomo–lungma, and Sagaram ā th ā , was found to be the highest peak in the world by the Trigonometric Survey of India in 1852 and it was named Mount Everest on May 11, 1857 by the Royal Geographical Society of London after Sir George Everest, the first Surveyor–General of India. The actual discoverer of its height was, however, a Bengali employee of the Survey of India, Mr Radhanatha Sikandar.

2. Brian Hodgson, who was the British Resident in the Court of Nepal for more than twenty years, wrote in protest saying that there were local names of the peak. The main one, he thought, was Devadhaung–Bhairavth ā n–Ny ā nam (Hodgson, 1874:27).

3. When the Survey of India published the first scientific map of Nepal in 1932, based on its 1/4 inch to a mile Reconnaissance Survey of 1924–1926 only Mount Everest was mentioned. In the Second Edition of the map, published in 1934, the Tibetan name (Kang)–Chomo–lungma (the sacred snow lady of the valley or earth) was also included.

4. Not finding any Nepali name for the world's highest peak on the first-ever published scientific map of the Kingdom of Nepal did not disturb anyone in power in Nepal. However, it did matter a great deal to Bbur ā m Ā ch ā rya, a committed nationalist and noted historian. He was then already 54 years old, yet only a

Khard$\bar{a}$r working in the School Administration Section of the Department of Education, toiling for more than a decade as an accountant responsible for distributing salary. As the Ran$\bar{a}$s were great friends and admirers of the British Rule in India to write anything against the British administration would mean staking one's career as well as future. As $\bar{A}$ch$\bar{a}$rya wrote nearly three decades later (March 7,1966), he was deeply aggrieved not to see a Nepali name for the world's highest peak located in Nepal.

5. This sentimental or nationalistic need was soon fulfilled by $\bar{A}$ch$\bar{a}$rya by publishing an essay entitled, "Sagaram$\bar{a}$th$\bar{a}$ or Jhy$\bar{a}$molongm$\bar{a}$" in a recently launched Nepali monthly, *Sh$\bar{a}$rad$\bar{a}$* Vol IV No 8 (Poush 1995; 1939 January), a piece later collected in an anthology of Nepali prose prescribed for secondary schools in Nepal.

6. The essay gives an etymological interpretation of the Nepali name as well as the Tibetan name of the peak. Although B$\bar{a}$bur$\bar{a}$m $\bar{A}$ch$\bar{a}$rya studied Mathematics, Dharmash$\bar{a}$stra, and Grammar for his $\bar{A}$ch$\bar{a}$rya degree in Benaras he was well-versed not only in Sanskrit, Nepali, Hindi but also in a few other New Indo-Aryan languages. However, his analysis and interpretation of the Tibetan name of the peak as "a match-making bird" clearly showed that he did not know any Tibetan or Newari, let alone any Tibeto-Burman languages spoken in the Solu-Khambu or Sunkosi area. His interpretation of the Tibetan name for the peak was disasterously conjectural.

7. As for the proposed or discovered Nepali name for the peak, S*agara-m$\bar{a}$th$\bar{a}*$, in the essay at least $\bar{A}$ch$\bar{a}$rya did not mention where exactly or how he collected that name—on the field or through second-hand or third-hand informants or from some documents. When I casually met him in person in the Royal Press Secretary's Office on Friday July 14, 1967, I asked him about the

source of his information: where or how he got the word. From the brief conversation, it become painfully clear to me that he picked up the name from a third-hand source— through his local staff in the Education Department !

8. The name S*varga-matha* or *Sarag-matha* is, of course, attested in an Indian publication, *Exploration in Tibet* written by Swami Pranavananda (Calcutta 1939). The second edition of this book was published by Calcutta University in January 1950. On page 4 of the book, the Swami writes:

> Its Tibetan name is *Kang-chomo-lungma*. The people of the Arun Kosi area in Manjh-Kirat District in Nepal call the Everest by the name of *Kumbhakaran Langur* (peak), while the people of the Dud Kosi area call it *Svarga-matha* or *Sarag-matha*. When pecuniary conditions permit, I have a mind to go to the Dud Kosi and Arun Kosi areas to ascertain its local name.

Clearly, the Swamiji too had gathered the name from the second - or third-hand sources from someone perhaps in Kathmandu. Although the $\bar{A}$ch$\bar{a}$rya's nationalist, or shall we say anti-British, feelings can be appreciated, his knowledge of the physical, human and linguistic geography of the Khambu Himal area is, at best, untrustworthy. He clearly believed that Mount Everest was visible from the roof-top of his house in the Gaucharan! (See his interview given to Dhanavajra, Tulsiram, Churamani and Basudev Tripathi in Sharma, V.S. 2029: p.36)

9. The $\bar{A}$ch$\bar{a}$rya not only discovered the local name for Mount Everest, he also proposed an etymology for it. According to him, *sagara* in Nepali is "sky" or $\bar{a}$sm$\bar{a}$n and m$\bar{a}$th$\bar{a}$ is the head or brow. So S*agaram$\bar{a}$th$\bar{a}*$ is " $\bar{a}$sam$\bar{a}$n-samma kap$\bar{a}$la pugeko"- - the brow/head reaching up to the sky. As the peak is very high this name is convincing or S*$\bar{a}$rthaka*—so goes his argument. The

Ā chā rya also propounded a questionable theory that this name or similar "sweet–sounding" Indo-Aryan names began to replace "the harsh sounding" Tibeto–Burman names of the peaks and rivers after the military conquest of the Kirat lands by the Aryan army of Bā hun and Chetris who comprised the ranks of King Mukunda Sen I of Palpa and his son Lohang Sen (A.D. 1553–1618).

10. There are two issues related to this simplistic theory. A. The historicity of the Indo–Aryan penetration of the Kirat lands and B. The classification of the Nepalese or any language in the world as harsh or sweet–sounding. The question is : is any language *per se* sweet/harsh sounding to its speakers or to the Indo-Aryan speakers ? No Bā hun–Chetri settlements of any size had grown at the foothills of the Khambu Himal even during the late 18th century. Rā mech ā p, Okhaldung ā, Diktel, or Bhojpur were only marginally settled by the Khas castes in the late 18th century following the Gorkhali military conquest of these regions.

11. In his book, A*nnapurna to Dhaulagiri* (1968) Harka Gurung has listed 48 peaks of the Himalayan range in Nepal which are higher than 23,00 ft. Out of these 48 peaks, 16 peaks have Indo-Aryan names and all of these, except one, are in the Khas ā n and Magar ā t region. For example, Dhaulagari range has 5 peaks; Annapurna range has 4 peaks; Himal Chuli has 3 peaks. Only Gauri–shankar (23442 ft) peak has an Indo–Aryan name and it is in the Rolwaling range. Like the Himalaya, Rolwaling, Mahalangura and Kumbhakarana are the names of ranges—not of the peaks. Remarkably few peaks have Indo–Aryan names as such.

12. It is a fact of Nepal's human geography that the Indo–Aryan migrants and settlers do not normally settle in higher altitudes. Mount Everest is in the Khambu glacier/Himal where even the Sherpas had migrated only in the early 16th century (See Hagen and others, 1963).

13. At least two Nepali scholars had already raised serious doubts concerning Bā bur ā m Ā ch ā rya's discovery and interpretation of the place–name, *Sagara–m ā tha*, and proposed at least alternative etymologies. Both Chittaranjan Nepali (1960 June) and Hari R ā m Joshi (1982:18–23) do not agree with Ā ch ā rya's etymology though they do not radically question the authenticity of the word itself. Chittaranja Nepali (1960:11)writes.

> There is a village on the south–west of Mount Everest which is known '*Sagara* village'. Noticing the peak standing as the head of the village, the Nepali–speaking villagers (or ancient Aryan speakers) must have named it as the Head of *Sagara* village or *Sagara–m ā th ā*. This (name) is also reasonable. (My Translation)

14. This is from the published version of a radio talk given in June 1960 when Chittaranjan Nepali alias Nar ā yan Pras ā d R ā jbhand ā ri was serving as a staff on the Nepali–China Boundary Commission. It is worth remembering that on March 11–26, 1960 when Prime Minister B.P. Koirala was in Peking the Chinese laid a claim to the peak of Mount Everest in their published maps placed before the visiting leader. Public sentiments and anti-Chinese feelings ran very high in Kathmandu during the first quarter of 1960. On 28th April 1960, Chinese Premier Chou En–lai gave a press conference in the Singha Durbar hall where he conceded that the Chinese Government accepted the maps submitted by the Nepali Government which showed the north side of the peak as a part of Chinese territory and the peak itself and the south side as a part of the Kingdom of Nepal. (*The Gorkh ā patra*, April 29, 1960).

15. Following the Royal Coup in December 1960, the late King Mahendra was in need of abiding nationalistic symbols and myths. The Government offices began to be decorated with patriotic quotations from the sayings of Prithvin ā r ā yan Sh ā h and, of

course, the poems of the ruling king, together with such national symbols as the cow and the dāphe chari. The King gladly legitimized the name *Sagara–māthā* by including it in the Section 17 of the Nepal–China Boundry Treaty signed on Thursday October 5, 1961. Following the installation of the Panchayat System in the sixties, when the administrative reorganization of kingdom took place, out of the 14 zones a whole zone was also named Sagara–māthā Zone.

16. However, some questions still remain unanswered since : what does the word mean ? Does it really mean what the Āchārya says it means ? The peak that reaches its crest/head up to the sky ? Or is it called *Sagara–māthā* because, as Chittaranjan Nepali says, it is the peak seen from the *Sagara* village ? Is the *Sagara* village then an "Aryan settlement" ? Is the village really called *Sagara* or *Sāgara* as recorded in the Survey of India Maps ? (See the East Sheet). On analyzing the distribution of place–names beginning with the prefixed element *sā*– within a given geogrpahical area (north of latitude 27.36 degree and east of longitude 86.26E degree), this area appears to have a stratum of Bahing–Sunwar settlement. It certainly is not a Bāhun–Chetri settlement.

17. The word *Sagara–māthā* is recorded as *Svaraga–matha* or *Saraga–matha* by Swami Pranavananda. It is recorded and interpreted as *Sagara–māthā* by Baburam Acharya. Chittaranjan thinks that the name has little to do with 'heaven'. Hari Rām Joshi proposes that *Sarag–math* is actually 'the path of creation'. So both the phonetic shape and the semantic meaning of the word are in great doubt. To add to this confusion, the Āchārya himself, in an interview given to Ānanda Dev Bhatta on Vaishākh 17, 2017, said that *Sagara–māthā* is actually translated as "Heaven Peak" by the Europeans and that *Cho–mo–lung–ma*, too, is a translation of the Nepali name *Sagara–māthā*. Anyone who knows a little

Tibetan will tell how absurd this claim is. In the Survey of India Maps, the form of the word recorded for this village at the foot of Mt. Everest is *Sāgar*, with long vowel, not *Sagar* with short vowel, as reported by Chittaranjan Nepali or Tukarāj Mishra (V.S. 2046:204). The village is not a Khas Bāhun Chetri settlement. In the Tibeto–Burman speaking Khumbu glacier region, *Sāgar* cannot be 'ocean' nor is it 'the sky'. So there is every reason to doubt the authenticity of the etymology as well as the form of the compound as proposed by Bāburām Achārya and uncritically recognized and popularized during the Panchayat regime by the State machinery in Nepal.

18. At exactly 11:30 am on May 23, 1953 Tenzing Norkey and Edmund Hillary, the two–man British team led by Sir John Hunt, reached the world's highest peak and physically conquered it for the first time in human history. At least one Nepali did it a little less than a century after the British named the peak as Mount Everest. However, if we go by the interpretation of our late historian–laureate Khariādār Bāburām Achārya it was long conquered linguistically by the Bāhun–Chetris in the 16th century! Although this "linguistic conquest" is vigorously propounded by the Āchārya in 1939 it got the symbolic royal seal in 1961 when the Nepal–China Boundry Treaty was formally signed by giving the highest peak in the world at best a questionable name.

19. As the linguist is not a priest, name–giving ceremony is not his ritual or secular prerogative. But if one were given the option now to re–name the peak one would unhesitatingly choose the names of the real folk who conquered it, not symbolically with the State support, but really with indomitable personal and physical stamina and moral courage—Tenzing Norkey and Ang Hlamu Sherpa Peak!

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Notes

1. The longitudes and latitudes of Mt Everest and S$\bar{a}$gar Village are

Mt Everest	86.56 East of Greenwich	27,59 North of Equator
S$\bar{a}$gar	86.26 East of Greenwich	27.36 North of Equator

2. The following are some of the other similar place–names found in the area: S$\bar{a}$di, S$\bar{a}$nam, S$\bar{a}$bra, S$\bar{a}$re, S$\bar{a}$llung, S$\bar{a}$bung, S$\bar{a}$nu River, S$\bar{a}$pra, S$\bar{a}$tang, S$\bar{a}$lp$\bar{a}$, S$\bar{a}$lleri etc.

3. The prefixed s$\bar{a}$ – in all of the above place–names has to do with topography or topographical feature as the word for earth/soil (i.e., the Item 79 in Moriss Swadesh 100–Word List) is

S$\bar{a}$ in Tibetan

S$\bar{a}$ in Gurung, Tamang, Thakali

Jh$\bar{a}$ in Magar

C$\bar{a}$ in Newari

S$\bar{a}$ in Chepang

S$\bar{a}$hiq in Jirel, and

Kh$\bar{a}$ in Sunwar (Hale, Word–List, 1973)

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Aspect System in the Tamang Language

-Pushpa Raj Moktan

1. Introduction

Aspect is related to the grammatical category of verbs along with tense and mood. Quirk and Greenbaum (1996:40) write that "Aspect concerns the manner in which the verbal action is experienced or regarded (as complete or in progress):. Bernard Comrie (1978:10) has noted, "Although both tense and aspect are concerned with time. they are concerned with time in very different ways… tense is a deictic category, i.e. locates situation in time, usually with references to the different situations. Aspect is not concerned with the temporal continuency of the way the grammar marks the duration or type of activity denoted by the verb." Frank Palmer (1990:86) defines tense as "supposedly referring to time and aspect to completion, duration and similar concepts." Doreen Taylor (1973:114) says, "Aspect refers to a kind of action and its distribution in time." John Lyons (1968:317) has noted, "Tense, mood and 'aspect' merge into one another in many other lanuage … because more distinctions have to be recognized in the semantic analysis of these languages than are overtly distinguished by the systematic morphological and syntactic contrasts which we label as 'tense', 'mood' or 'aspect'."

It is thus clear that aspect is related to the verbal expression which describes the internal manner of an action in a situation. the situation of an action can also be described in terms of time-relation syntactically and it can also be analyzed in terms of a speaker's attitude pragmatically. Aspect is distinguished from the deictic category because it does not describe the action by relating the point of time with the time of a situation but its internal activity at a certain time.

Tamang language belongs to the Gurung Branch of the Bodish section of the Bodic Division of the Tibeto Burman family (Shafer ii). This language is non–pronominalised and syllabic. Amrit Yonjan (2054:23–25) has noted that the language has both closed syllabic words and open syllabic words, and it has 9 kinds of structures of syllables in a word, e.g.

e (you) - v   *chyoI* (book) - ccvv

$\overline{a}I$ (you) - vv   *tor* (downward) - cvc

s$\overline{a}$ (earth) - cv   *ur* (yellow) - vc

kr$\overline{a}$ (hair) - ccv   *mriη* (wife) - ccvc

mui (buffalo) – ccv

Doreen Taylor (1973:82) has written that this language has 19 consonants and 5 vowels whereas the use of one syllabic word is primarily more dominant. So this language is called mono-syllabic. Even in the construction of verbs in a sentence, two or more than two root verbs play significant role in grammatical structure.

Varenkamp (1996: 100-1) has said that a central-eastern Tamang Variety (the Phulbari Variety) is most widely recognized among eastern Tamang speakers as well as Western Tamang speakers. It cannot be denied that outer eastern Tamang (The Risiankhu-Sailung Variety) is also widely recognized and it is also used in Radio Nepal to broadcast news. Even the data of this study are taken from this Tamang Variety. This language has no script of its own. Different old books are written in Sambota (Uchen) script. In 1995, the Sikkim Tamang Bauddha Sangh had organized an

international seminar about script and declared to use Sambota script with some modifications.

2. Scope of the Paper

This paper assumes that the Tamang language has its own aspect system which can be analyzed on the basis of semantics and grammatical relation. It is widely accepted that there are two distinct groups - Western Tamangs and Eastern Tamangs and both of them have different lexical system but grammatically they are mostly similar. The paper will attempt to provide morphological and semantic functions of verbs in the eastern Tamang language. Although, there are different verbal inflections which are used to express different grammatical functions, only those verbal expressions which refer to the manner and internal situation of an agent's activity or action are described in this study. The data are taken from the day to day conversation and its verbal expressions refer to the semantic aspectual situation. The syntactic combinations of some lexical items also determine the semantic aspectual characteristics. According to the model of Comrie's aspect theory, the Tamang aspect system is described here as exponents of inflectional morphology. Some compound verbs and simple verbs are variously inflected to express different manner of verbal activities and there are different views on the internal temporal constituency of a situation. However, only the clearly distinguished verbal expressions are taken here. Thus the paper deals with some morphological and semantic properties of various classes of lexical items and their interaction with aspectual oppositions, i.e. perfective and imperfective; hypothetical and unreal hypothetical; concurrent and sequential; and impendent and general. The various syntactic functions of the Tamang aspect system discussed in this paper provide a more complete perspective and insight on the grammar of the language.

3. Perfective Versus Imperfective

3.1 Perfect expresses a relation between two time points, on the one hand the time of the state resulting from a prior situation, and on the other the time of that prior situation (Comrie 1978:52). This aspect presents a situation as a single whole of short duration and indicates the continuing present relevance of a past situation. The perfective aspectivisor -b$\bar{a}$-mu-l$\bar{a}$ occurs in the non-past tense and b$\bar{a}$-mu-b$\bar{a}$ in the past tense as an augment to both transitive and intransitive verbs in sentences, e.g.

1. *Dorje-se* $\bar{a}ir\bar{a}k$ *thung-b$\bar{a}$-mu-l$\bar{a}$*

   PN-AGT   wine   drink-PRF-is-NPST

   'Dorje has drunk wine.'

2. *the yambur-ri*   *ni-b$\bar{a}$-mu-l$\bar{a}$*

   he Kathmandu-loc   go-PRF-is-NPST

   'He has gone to Kathmandu.'

3. *Palmo*   *tugyung*   *Americ$\bar{a}$-ri*   *ci-b$\bar{a}$-mu-b$\bar{a}$*

   PN   last year   America-Loc   live-PRF-is-PST

   'Palmo had lived in America last year.'

   a. Perfect of Persistent Situation: This kind of perfect '... describes a situation that started in the past but continues (persists) into the present (Comrie 1978:60). The aspectiviser - p$\bar{a}$n/b$\bar{a}$n-l$\bar{a}$-mu-l$\bar{a}$/b$\bar{a}$a is used to express such persistent situation of an action or state by inflecting both transitive and intransitive verb stem, e.g.

4. *Tigung*   *hotel-ri*   *c$\bar{a}$-b$\bar{a}$n-l$\bar{a}$-mu-l$\bar{a}$*

   PN   hotel-Loc   eat-Con-do-is-NPST

   Tigung has been eating in the hotel.

5. *Dolmo*   *kyampas-ri*   *khyā̄t-pā̄n-lā̄-mu-bā̄*

PN   campus-Loc   study-Con-do-is-PST

Dolmo had been studying in the campus.

6. *Pembā̄*   *Yā̄mbu-ri*   *ci-bā̄n-lā̄-mu-lā̄*

PN   Kathmandu-Loc   live-Con-do-is-NPST

Pemba has been living in Kathmandu.

b. Perfect of Unknown Past: This aspect indicates a situation which happened before the situation relevant to the present. The reference is unknown in the present. Such a situation is expressed by the suffix *-cim/-jim*. The following examples illustrate such a situation.

7. *the-se*   *M.A.*   *pas*   *lā̄-jim*

he-AGT   M.A.   pass   do-PST

He has passed M.A.

8. *the-se*   *mui-Dā̄*   *sā̄t-cim*

He-AGT   buffalo-Dat   kill-UPST

He has killed a buffalo.

3.2 Imperfective aspect deals with a continuous action whether it may be progressive or non-progressive. Comrie (1978:4) has said that the imperfective looks at the situation from inside, and as such is crucially concerned with the internal structure of the situation. This situation is described by inflecting the root verbs with *-ban-mu-ba/la*.

9. *ā̄le*   *mrā̄ng-ri*   *krā̄-bā̄n-mu-lā̄*

brother   field-Loc   weep-Con-is-NPST

Brother is weeping in the field.

10. *the-se*   *pore-Dā̄*   *khi-bā̄n-mu-bā̄*

PN-ÁGT   bundle-Dat   tie-Con-is-PST

Pemba was tying a bundle.

a. Habitual Aspect: The imperfective form expresses either a habitual situation or a situation viewed in its duration. The habitual aspectiviser *-bā̄/pā̄-lā̄-mu-lā̄/bā̄* is an apt and often used device to express the repetition of a situation. Both iterative and habitual situations are described. These suffixes are attached to both transitive or intransitive verb stem or the infinitive form of the verb.

11. *angā̄*   *syo-ri*   *koi-bā̄-lā̄-mu-lā̄*

sister   morning-Loc   walk-INF-do-is-NPST

Sister walks every morning.

12. *the-se*   *tā̄rngā̄ sat-pā̄-ri*   *ni-bā̄-lā̄-mu-bā̄*

he-AGT   fish   kill-INF-Pur   go-INF-do-is-PST

He used to go to fish.

The aspectiviser *-bā̄/pā̄-lā̄-mu-lā̄/bā̄* expresses habitual or a repetitive verbal activity by using -la-(do). Sometimes speakers do not use *-ba/pa* and inflect the root verbs with *la-mu-la/ba*. This device is only used to show a contracted form, e.g.

13. *ā̄gu-se*   *ā̄irā̄k*   *thung-lā̄-mu-bā̄*

uncle-AGT   wine   drink-do-is-PST

Uncle used to drink wine.

4. Hypothetical versus Unreal Hypothetical

4.1 Hypothetical aspectiviser describes a situation where an action may happen. The possible activity which is not seen to be

completed or occurred, is indicated by the suffix -$l\bar{a}$/-$t\bar{a}$-$l\bar{a}$. The second alternate suffix is used to emphasise a higher degree of possibility than the first one.

14. *MenDo*   *gumbā-ri*   *Do-tā-lā*

    PN   monastery-Loc   reach-be-Fut (Hyp)

    Mendo may arrive at the monastery.

15. *MenDo*   *gumbā-ri*   *Do-ji-tā-lā*

    PN   Monastery-Loc   reach-PST-be-Fut

    Mendo might have arrived at the monastery.

The aspectiviser -$l\bar{a}$ expresses simple or indefinite action of future time but it is also suffixed to a root verb to describe possible hypothetical activity, e.g.

16. *MenDo-se*   *rhā*   *cung-lā*

    PN-AGT   goat   sell/catch-Fut

    Mendo will sell/catch a goat.

4.2 Unreal Hypothetical aspect shows a situation which could have occurred in the past but did not take place. Such probable situations are expressed by the verbal inflection -$gel\bar{a}$, e.g.

17. *Pāsāng-se*   *gojā*   *bā-gelā*

    PN-AGT   knife   bring-UPST

    Pasang might have brought a knife.

18. *Pāsāng-se* *ngā-Dā* *bor-ji-bisām* *ngā* *ni-gelā*

    PN-AGT   I-dat   carry-PTP-coj   I   go-UPST

    If Pasang had taken me, I might have gone.

5. Concurrent versus Sequential

5.1 Concurrent aspect deals with two actions which happen at the same time. Such a situation is described by the suffix -$m\bar{a}$/$m\bar{a}m$ attached to the finite verb of the subordinate clause. The alternate suffix -$m\bar{a}m$ is used to emphasise the action itself.

19. *e-se*   *kān cā-mā,* *ngā cyā-si ci-ji*

    you-AGT   rice eat-IFT,   I   see-PTP sit-PST

    While you were eating, I sat silently.

20. *ngā-I cithi bri-ma(m), the-se*   *cā-bā-cim*

    I-AGT   letter write-IFT   he-AGT   eat-IFT-UPST

    When I write a letter, he would eat rice.

5.2 Sequential aspect is also expressed by two actions where one takes place before the next action begins. The previous action is inflected with the suffix -sin ($\bar{a}m$) followed by the latter action. This aspectiviser -$sin\,\bar{a}m$ is used to denote the completed action. This suffix is suffixed to a transitive or intransitive verb stem of the subordinate clause, e.g.

21. *ngā āgu-Dā*   *pān-sin(ām) cu-ri*   *khā-bā*

    I   uncle-DAT   say-PTP   this-Loc   come-NPST

    After telling uncle, I will come here.

22. *the kān cā-sin (ām)*   *iskul-ri*   *ni-ji*

    he   rice eat-ptp   school-Loc   go-PST

    Having eaten rice, he went to school.

6. Impendent Versus General

6.1 Impendent aspect describes an action at the point of its inception. The aspectiviser -$gedh\bar{a}mb\bar{a}$-mu-$l\bar{a}$/$b\bar{a}$ occurs as an

argument, not to a simple form, but to a transitive or intransitive verb stem to signal commencement of the action. This aspect is often used to express a preparation for the beginning or the starting point of an action, e.g.

23. *Pembā-se*   *cā-geDhāmbā-mu-lā*
    PN-AGT   eat-IMPD-is-NPST
    Pemba is about to eat.

24. *the*   *kra-geDhāmbā-mu-lā*
    he   weep-IMPD-is-NPST
    He is about to weep.

The impendent aspectiviser -*gedhāmbā* normally occurs with the auxiliary verbs -*mulā/mubā*, but it sometimes occurs only with the transitive or intransitive verb stem. But this device is used more to indicate an action on the verge of doing. The aspectiviser -*gedhām-bā/-ji* is used not in the colloquial language and not in narrative discourse.

25. *ngā*   *cithi*   *bri-geDhām-bā*
    I   letter   write-IMPD-NPST
    I am about to write a letter.

26. *the*   *crā-geDhām-ji*
    he   weep-IMPD-PST
    He would weep.

6.2 General/Simple aspect describes a general situation which may not specify any of the above categories. The suffix -*bā/pā* and -*lā* shows both general and indefinite action. This suffix -*bā/pā* is normally used to describe an action in the present time, but it is also used to describe more possible action at a future time where the suffix -*ci* is used to express this in the past tense. Tamang suffixes –*ci* and -*pa* occur with the root verbs ending with *p, k, t, t,*

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and -*ji* and -*ba* with other root verbs. Similarly the next suffix -*lā* is generally used to describe a situation in the future tense but sometimes it is used to express agreement in the present time.

27. *ngā*   *Dim-ri*   *ni-bā*
    I   home-Loc   go-NPST
    I go home.

28. *ngā*   *nangār*   *Dim-ri*   *ni-bā*
    I   tomorrow   home-Loc   go-NPST
    I will go home tomorrow.

29. *the-se*   *hinDi*   *chyoi*   *khyāt-pā*
    he-AGT   Hindi   book   read-NPST
    He reads Hindi books.

30. *the*   *Dhāte*   *cu-ri*   *Do-khā-lā*
    he   now   this-Loc   reach-come-NPST
    He will come now.

31. *the-se*   *nā-Dā*   *tāngā*   *pin-ji*
    he-AGT   I-DAT   rupee   give-PST
    He gave me money.

32. *Nimā*   *tot-si*   *pāp-ci*
    PN   strike-PTP   fall-PST
    Striking on something he fell down.

7. Conclusion

The verbal expressions discussed in this study for the Tamang aspect are meant to reflect a common use which Tamang speakers share to describe the internal manner of an action in a situation. One of the main reasons for the complexity of its aspect system is due to the different grammatical and semantic functions

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of transitive and intransitive verb roots when suffixed to other root verbs and auxiliaries . The second reason has to do with the tonal feature in the language. Sometimes the same lexical verbal word-order and inflections can express different internal aspects too. Hence this study has emphasized on the verbal morphological description, leaving more detailed discussion of the semantic and syntactic implications of the Tamang aspect system for future investigation. Further study on the Tamang aspect is thus needed to determine some of the difficult or controversial issues, e.g. the suffix -mu is sometimes used to describe a speaker's lack of response to describe an agent's action and its use is not often used in communication. Only the clear and commonly used verbal expressions have been studied syntacitically and semantically to some extent. Thus, the description of aspects in binary oppositions can contribute to a better understanding of Tamang grammar and also help to establish typological relationships among Tibeto-Burman languages.

Summary of Tamang Aspects

Aspects	Suffix
Pefective	- ba-mu-la/ba
Perfect of persistent	- ban-la-mu-la/ba
Unknown past	- jim/cim
Imperfective	- ban-mu-la/ba
Habitual	- ba-la-mu-la/ba
Hypothetical	- la/-tala
Unreal hypothetical	- gela
Concurrent	- ma/mam
Sequential	- sin/sinam
Inceptive	- gedhamba-mu-la/ba
General	- la/ba/pa/ci/ji

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Categorial Splits in the use of –le in Nepali

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1. Introduction

Grammatical, semantic and pragmatic categories split in the use of the ergative (-le) postposition in Nepali. The ergative postposition triggers the splits of embedded vs unembedded clause, obligative vs non-obligative mood, verb types (outward energy vs unmarked direction, transitive vs intransitive), and perfective vs imperfective aspects. In addition to those splits, use of - le selects different noun categories to be features of the subject like nonparticipants vs participant (pro) nouns, pronoun vs noun, human vs nonhuman, kin vs nonkin, animate vs inanimate, big vs small animals and royal vs non-royal noun classes.

Transformations show that the ergative postposition -le is replaced by nominative (∅), ablative (bata) and genitive (ko) postpositions. (See Pokharel 1995, 1996, 2053 VS, 2054 VS)

2. Splits Triggered by -le

2.1 Ergative Marker

-le is an ergative marker, therefore, it appears after the transitive subject, e.g.

1. keTa-le   keTi-lai   ãp–∅   di-yo
   boy-ERG   girl–DAT   mango-ACC   give PAST. 3SG.
   'The boy gave the girl a mango'.

2. keTo   ro–yo
   boy   cry–PAST.3SG.
   'The boy wept'.

(Nepali o-ending nouns become a-ending before postpositions, thus keT–o > keT–a le).

In this pair of examples the transitive subject (keTo) is followed by le while the intransitive subject (keTo) is left unmarked.

But transitivity alone cannot explain all the syntactic and semantic splits triggered by le in Nepali. Let us see some of those splits.

2.2 Embedded vs Unembedded Subject

In an embedded clause even the intransitive subject is followed by –le, while the unembedded intransitive subject (see 2) is left un-marked, e.g.

3. [yo keTa – le   ro – eko]   ma - le   dekh–eko chu
   this boy-ERG   weep-PERFECT   I–ERG   see-PERFECT
   'I have seen this boy's crying.'

2.3 Obligative vs Nonobligative

The intransitive subject of an obligative sentence is marked by - le while that of a nonobligative sentence (cf 2 vs 4,5) is left unmarked, e.g.

4. keTa - le   ru–nu   pΛr – yo
   boy - ERG   weep–INF   fall-PAST.3SG.
   'The boy had to cry'.

5. keTa – le   ru-nu   thi – yo
    boy - REG   weep - INF   was – PAST.3SG.
    'The boy had to cry'.

2.4 Outward Energy : Underlyingly Ergative (See Rosen 1984)

The meanings of a set of verb predicates in Nepali (like *khok* 'cough', *chad* 'vomit', *thuk* ' spit', *hʌg* 'excrete', *mut* 'urinate', etc.) presumes outward energy emission. Most of these predicates denote nonvolitional natural bodily processes. The intransitive subject of such verbs is always marked by *-le*.

6. keTa – le   khok – yo
    boy – ERG   cough – PAST.3SG
    'The boy coughed'.

2. 5 Perfective vs Imperfective

The transitive subject selects - *le* only when the verb is in perfective and perfect aspects, otherwise not, e.g.

7. ma   keTi - lai   ãp   di-n-chu.
    I   girl - DAT   mango   give-HABIT - am
    'I give the girl a mango'.

8. tʌ   keTi - lai   ãp   din-n-chʌ-s
    You, LGH girl - DAT   mango   give-HABIT -is 2SG.LGH
    'You give the girl a mango'.
    (LGH = Low Grade Honorific).

9. keTo   keTi - lai   ãp   din-n-chʌ
    boy   girl - DAT   mango   give-HABIT-is
    'The boy gives the girl a mango'.

10. mʌ keTi-lai   ãp   dī-dai   thi-ẽ.
    I   girl-DAT   mango give-PROG was-ISG.PAST.
    'I was giving the girl a mango'.

All the examples in (7–10) use the imperfective aspect of the verb. Example (10) has past tense but the subject is not marked by *-le*. However, if the aspect is perfect, the subject is marked by *-le*:

11. mʌī -le   keTi-lai   ãp   di-eko   chu
    I-ERG   girl-DAT   mango give-PERFECT am.
    'I have given the girl a mango'.

In this way perfect and perfective aspects are treated alike.

2.6 Participant vs Nonparticipant

The use of *-le* triggers the split of participant and nonparticipant subjects. If the subject is non-participant (that is, third person), the transitive verb is more likely to select *-le* irrespective of the tense-aspect distinction, but for the participant (first and second person) subjects the tense-aspect distinctions are pertinent. Thus, the more likely and natural counterpart of (9) is (12), e.g.

12. keTa-le   keTi-lai   ãp   di-n-chʌ
    boy-ERG   girl-DAT   mango   give HABIT-is
    'The boy gives the girl a mango'.

Similarly if the subject of (10) is replaced by a nonparticipant noun or pronoun, it is more likely to be followed by *-le*, eg.

13. keTa-le   keTi-lai   ãp   dī-dai.   thi-yo
    boy-ERG   girl-DAT   mango give -PROG was-PAST.3SG.
    'The boy was giving the girl a mango'.

2.7 Reflexive vs Nonreflexive

When a sentence with the first person subject is passivized, there are two possible reflexive passives (15 a and 15 b) in Nepali, eg.

14. mʌī-le   keTi-lai   ãp   di-ē
    I-ERG   girl-DAT   mango   give-1SG.PAST
    'I gave the girl a mango'.

15.(a) mʌ-baTʌ   keTi-lai   ãp   di-i-yo
       I-ABL   girl-DAT   mango   give-PASS-PAST
       'The girl was given a mango by me'.

   (b) aphu-le   keTi-lai   ãp   di-i-yo
       Self-ERG   give-DAT   mango   give-PASS-PAST.
       'The girl was given a mango by me'.

But if the subject of the passive is a reflexive anaphora (aphu) it usually selects - le, (although batʌ is also grammatical) but after other nouns and pronouns as subjects, -le is ungrammatical.

2.8 Animacy Hierarchy

INANIMATE < ANIMATE < HUMAN

The use of -le takes care of Animacy Hierarchy (Silverstein 1976) in that the noun towards the left has more tendency to be followed by -le.

16. Inanimate Subject

(a) bʌncʌra-le   (/* bʌncʌro)   rukh   dʰal-cʰʌ
    axe - ERG   tree,   fell - is
    'The axe fells the tree'.

(b) haba-le /(? haba)   luga   suk-a-chʌ
    wind-ERG   cloth   dry-CAUS-is
    'The wind dries the cloth'.

17. Animate Subject

kamila/kamilo   cini   kʰa-n-cʰʌ
ant-ERG   sugar   eat-HABIT-is
'Ant eats sugar'

18. Human Subject

manche-le/manche   cini   kʰan-Cʰʌ
man-ERG   sugar   eat-HABIT-is
'Man eats sugar'.

These examples (16–18) show that the inanimate transitive subjects obligatorily take –le, the human subject may or may not take it and the animate non–human subject more likely chooses it.

2.9 Polysemy of Agentive & Instrumental

Nepali ergative or agentive marking postposition –le is polysemous with the instrumental marking –le, e.g.

19. mʌī-le   hat–le   bʰat   kʰa–ē
    I–AGENT   hand–INST   rice   eat–ISG.PAST
    'I ate rice with (my) hand'.

2.10 Free Variation of Ergative & Dative

The ergative or agentive marker –le is in free variation with the dative marker –lai to mean 'because of/due to', etc.

20. ke   kam–le   a–i–s.
    what   work–ERG   come–PAST–2SG
    'Why did you come ?'

21. ke   kam – lai   a–i–S..
What   work–DAT   come PAST–2SG
'Why did you come ?'

2.11 Ergative vs Ablative

In the royal dialect and in agentive passive, the ergative marker
–le (as well as the nominative marker zero) is replaced by the
ablative postposition –bata, e.g.

21. keTa-baTΛ keTi-lai   ãp   di-i-yo
    boy-ABL   girl-DAT mango give-PASS-3SG.PAST
   'The girl was given the mango by the boy.'

22. Sri pãc-baTΛ keTi-lai ãp   bΛks-yo
    king-ABL   girl-DAT mango give-3SG.PAST
    'The king gave the girl a mango'.

3. Nominalization

In nominalization all the subject marking postposition (together
with their zero allomorphs) change into genitive - ko, eg.

23. keTa-ko   keTi-lai   ãp   di-ai
    boy-GEN   girl-DAT mango give-NOM
    'The boy's giving the girl a mango'.

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4. Summary of Splits (Selction of –le to the left):

```
                        –le
                       /    \
               Embedded      Unembedded
                            /         \
                    Obligative      Non–obligative
                                   /           \
                        Outward Energy       Unmarked
                                            /        \
                                  Intransitive      Transitive
                                                   /         \
                                          Perfective        Imperfective
                                                           /           \
                                                Nonparticipant        Participant
                                                                     /          \
                                                             Reflexive          Nonreflexive
                                                            /                   /          \
                                                       Human              Human          Nonhuman
                                                      /     \            /     \        /        \
                                                Non–royal   Royal                 Inanimate    Animate
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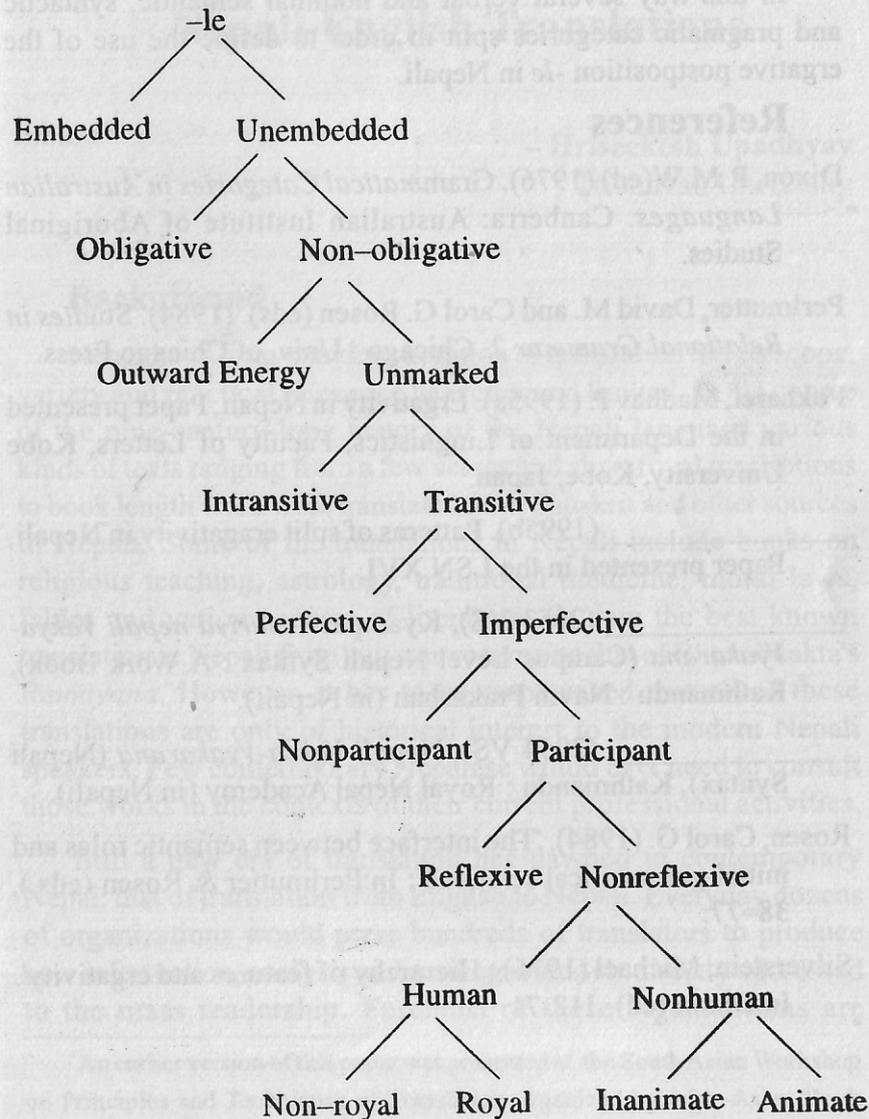
5. Conclusion

In this way several verbal and nominal semantic, syntactic and pragmatic categories split in order to define the use of the ergative postposition -le in Nepali.

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An Overview of English-Nepali Nepali-English Translations

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Background

Nepal has a long-standing tradition of translation but its scope, variety and practical relevance has remained limited. In the course of the nine-century-long history of the Nepali language various kinds of texts ranging from a few verses and short royal inscriptions to book length work were translated from Sanskrit and other sources to Nepali. Some of the translations in Nepali include books on religious teaching, astrology, traditional medicine, moral laws, fables and various genres of literature. To date the best known translation in Nepali from any source remains that of Bhanubhakta's *Ramayana*. However, it has to be emphasized that all of these translations are only of historical interest to the modern Nepali speakers. Few contemporary Nepalese would ever need to consult those works in the contexts of their current professional activities.

Still a new era of translation has dawned in contemporary Nepal: that of translation from English to Nepali. Everyday dozens of organizations would press hundreds of translators to produce new information, analysis and reading materials directly addressed to the mass readership. Foremost of these organizations are

obviously print and electronic media, news agencies and various NGOs and INGOs. Others who make regular use of translated materials are business houses and public service agencies in health, education, business, trade and tourism. Various foreign missions also commission translation works of diverse variety. Moreover, there are other international agencies working outside the boarder of Nepal who are also regularly producing translation in Nepali. Some half a dozen foreign radio stations beam daily radio broadcasts in Nepali. They invariably translate programme materials from other languages on current affairs, economic issues, political development and culture, science and sports.

Unlike the translation efforts of earlier era, these current translations are often done by groups of trained persons, often forming committed teams. The materials so produced are actively, purposefully and efficiently presented before the intended audience. Besides, the mass audience who read newspapers and magazines, who listen to the radio and view the television programmes are eager recipients of new information materials directly derived from English but served in Nepali translation. A serious newspaper and news magazine has to have foreign news, world economic briefings, cultural reviews and human interest stories, not to speak of coverage on science, technology and sports. Similarly a radio and television news bulletin and current affairs discussion will inevitably involve the use of materials first prepared in English and then translated in various ways in Nepali. The intake of translated materials in Nepali has been increasing rapidly and this trend will only intensify in future. As such it is a common experience of the Nepali speakers that our vocabulary, idioms and sentence structures are being coloured by English way of expression and representation.

Of course these modern agencies and organizations do not in the most part disseminate their information and publications as Nepali translations. For example, a Reuter's commentary on the global warming, a DPA feature article on medicinal value of tropical forest of Brazil and a Sunday Times feature on feminist backclash in USA all are presented by local media as current information essential for modern day life. Not much will be done to draw the attention of the readers and audience to the fact that the given piece was originally in English and translated for the benefit of the Nepali readers. But the fact remains that a huge body of new information and reading contents widely in use at present is derived from freshly done translations.

Current Scenario:
English–Nepali Translation

The discussion above however represents only one part of the prevailing scenario of English–Nepali translation. A lot of English Nepali translation work is going on in bits and pieces under the aegis of many institutions and occasionally important short pieces of fictional/non–fictional work is being produced, many of them reflecting topics of current interest. On the other hand there is a severe lack of organized efforts to select texts and materials that need translating in order to address specific needs of larger Nepali readership. Occasionally, individual translators complete certain texts found in English that take their fancy which need not be originally written in that language. Some international controversy and debate surrounding a text or an author inspire such translation. A recent case of this type was the Nepali translation of *Lajja*, a controversial novel by the Bangladeshi author Taslima Nusreen. Similarly one would expect to see a Nepali translation of the Starr Report on Clinton Lewinsky affairs in Washington which has also been published in neighbouring India. But this is unlikely to happen for reason of the sheer size and problems of translation.

Two important public sector publishing houses that bring out translated works in Nepal are the Royal Nepal Academy (RNA) and the Sajha Prakashan. Established in 1957, the RNA has

produced, some three dozens or so titles in translation from English. The Sajha Prakashan which came to exist in another form in the 1920s has brought out a slightly smaller number of translated titles. But there seems to be no clear thought, purpose or planning in the selection of preferred works. Some samples of translated titles in Nepali from various publishers are :

Some Foreign Works in Nepali Translation

1. Aristotle's Poetics
2. Oedipus Rex
3. Antigoni
4. Agamemnon
5. Divine Comedy
6. King Lear
7. Macbeth
8. Faustus
9. Aesop's Fables
10. Famous English Essays
11. The Hunchback of Notredam
12. Candid
13. The Communist Manifesto
14. The Poetic Principles of George Lucacs
15. The Principles of Literary Criticism
16. The Good Earth
17. The Grapes of Wrath
18. Animal Farm
19. Jean Barbara
20. The Enemy of the People
21. Man and Environment
22. Waiting for Godot
23. The Apple Cart
24. Pygmalion
25. Choose Life
26. The Bible

It is obvious that even this brief list includes a number of texts which were themselves translations into English. The classic Greek plays and criticism, French and other European works and many titles of east Asian origin translated into Nepali were based on English translation of those texts. There is an ongoing practice of making the existing English translation as a valid source material for further translation into Nepali. Sometimes a Hindi translation of international works is also used as a base for Nepali translation. A few dozen Japanese literary and social science works produced in English were translated into Nepali with Japanese financial assistance in the 1980s. A new translation of a translated work is the inevitable result of the complete lack of access to the original source language. Still the actual number of works thus translated into Nepali remains very small.

This situation underlines the poor level of translation scene in Nepal. It reveals how little there is Nepali translation of serious work from English. Then the question of practical relevance of the selected work cannot be overlooked. Almost every work listed above belongs either to the erudite side of letters or is highly topical. How much would an ancient Greek tragedy in a printed form mean to a modern Nepali reader ? What purpose would it serve to flip through the forgotten American novels of the 1940s, one about pre–revolutionary China (the example being *The Good Earth* by Pearl Buck), and the other about the American depression (i.e. *The Grapes of Wrath* by Steinbeck) ? Not even Americans would care about these titles.

A number of reasons can be cited for this situation: the most important reason of all was the poor base of mass education. It needs to be emphasized that for over a century until 1950, education for the masses was actually suppressed by the Rana rulers. Teaching of English and relations with the outside world in any meaningful sense began only at the mid 1950s after the overthrow of the Ranas. But again English served as a mere foreign language in Nepal and it never gained a wider currency among the educated Nepalese outside the formal academia. Thus Nepal has had some degree of sustained exposure to English only in the past twenty years or so and this is not a long enough time to train, educate and professionalize good number of translators who could confidently take up English texts for translation.

The three decades of Panchayat rule (1960–1990) was a period of expansion in education, mass readership and publishing venture.

But this period was also characterized by jingoistic nationalism and suppression of independent ideas. The polity laid heavy stress on national genius, indigenous system of governance and self-reliance on traditional culture, ideas and intellectual discussion. Thus the official cultural and ideological posturing discouraged the sustained and well-thought out plans for identifying important general and reference work for translation in Nepali. This limitation clearly affected the translation efforts of the public sector publishing institutions. The prevailing political culture of the time particularly affected the translation of serious works on history, philosophy, education, political thought, contemporary society and popular science and culture. Translating such works required a good deal of positive support, encouragement and financial incentive for both translators and publishers. On the contrary, the political establishment was openly hostile to supposedly subversive foreign ideas. Therefore there are no Nepali translations of Plato, Socrates, Jefferson, Bertrand Russell, Paulo Freire or Will Durant. To date the major work of modern intellectual thought to appear in Nepali translation is *Choose Life* (1976), a series of dialogue between Toynbee and Ikeda prepared under the aegis of a Japanese foundation.

Nepali–English Translation

The number of Nepali works translated into English is even smaller. For reasons explained above, very few Nepalese possess the high level of English proficiency to successfully translate serious Nepali works into English for international readers. It is a well received principle in translation that the successful translator is the native speaker of the target language with high level of proficiency in the source language. Of course, for most of the educated Nepalese, English is a foreign language and as such their command of written English is hardly adequate to deal with complex intellectual thought and analysis. Therefore translating

Nepali work into English always becomes a difficult proposition. On the one hand there are not enough number of native Nepali speakers who command native–like proficiency in English and on the other very few native English speakers have studied literary Nepali well enough to take up Nepali texts for translation. Below is a sample of Nepali works in English translation:

Some Nepali Works in English Translation

Muna Madan (narrative poem)	Basanti (a novel)
Poems of L. P. Devkota	Wake of the White Tiger (a novel)
Prahlad (a play)	Unwritten (a novel)
Blue Memosa (a novel)	Ashwatthama (a narrative poem)
Seven Poets	Voices of the Himalayas

This selective list indicates that English translation of Nepali texts is also extremely limited. So far most of the translations are confined to literary works. Sometimes certain works such as *Muna Madan* and *Prahlad* have seen at least two different English translations without much distinction. Similarly L. P. Devkota translated a number of his own short poems into English in the 1950s for the benefit of the participants of an Afro–Asian writers' conference held in Moscow. Devkota has a rare command over both Nepali and English. But his translation has not been available for the public. This October witnessed the publication of a new translation of some 70 of L. P. Devkota's short poems. But this publication hardly approaches anywhere near the excellent work of the great poet because the translator evidently lacked good enough knowledge of the literary Nepali language.

Constraints in Translation :
The Nepalese Experience

Translation in Nepal is constrained by linguistic and extra linguistic considerations. In linguistic term, modern Nepali does

not have a large body of standard work dealing with modern disciplines ranging from history, philosophy, education, law, political thought, economic analysis, psychology, social studies and cultural interpretation. The new fields of knowledge in communication, information, computer use and fast emerging technological revolution in life sciences remain out of bound for the use of Nepali language. In the absence of standard works in these fields either in original or in translation, it becomes extremely difficult to create quality literature afresh and make the new writing acceptable to the readers. The concept, vocabulary and expression specific to each field need to be presented to the readers repeatedly before they are assimilated into the familiar domain of the national language.

The modern Nepali language itself is deemed to have begun with the launch of the *Gorkhapatra*, first published as a weekly in 1901. But other media of publications and communication that had a direct bearing on mass education and awareness were strictly controlled by the state. The Rana rulers (1847–1951) took pride to keep the country in isolation from the rest of the world and to suppress the right to education for the masses. In more recent times the period lasting 1960–1990 again witnessed the political reversal resulting into the closure of intellectual nourishment from the outside world and cultural stagnation in the country. There was little of free and intellectual debate and encouragement for the pursuit of knowledge and experimentation to benefit and energize the whole nation.

If standard books were not being written in the national language in important fields of knowledge, definite steps could have been taken to have them translated from other languages. The vital ideas and seminal thoughts and critical practices shaping the modern world ought to have been introduced in the country. Existence of books in original writing or in translation conveying

new ideas enriches understanding, strengthens the vocabulary and general expression of the language, thereby making the general public better prepared to face the new situation. The world famous model of this approach was Japan of the 1870s and there about. The Meiji era Japan sent hundreds of teams to Europe to study, report and copy various ideas and practices from books and direct observations. Then Japan initiated one of the largest translation enterprises ever undertaken in the world. And the urge to get new ideas and information from outside continues till today.

Looking at the specific linguistic constraints, urgent work must be initiated to standardize technical terms and expression to meet the requirements of the multiplicity of modern disciplines. Lack of well-defined, effective and easy–to–recognize terminology often make serious translation most frustrating. In addition to terminology, some serious educational work is required to educate the Nepali readers and writers regarding how various kinds of sentences — simple and complex — sentences of short, medium and great length — as well as vocabulary of great variety, arguments and reasoning, conditionalities and embedding are required to express significant ideas and analysis. Diverse sentence structures of Nepali need to be discussed, analyzed and widely explained to the reading public. In the absence of well balanced argument, fine nuances of belief, assumption, attitude, comment, critical reasoning to effect exact references cannot be conveyed. The readers as much as the writers/translators must be aware of how complex a tool the human language is.

The language of Nepali translation is often criticized as being stilted and unnatural. This of course could be an indication that the given translation was not done thoroughly and professionally. Much of the translation in the world often invites this criticism. Another equally valid reason could be the lack of awareness among

the readers about the style purposively selected by the writer/ translator to meet the needs of the subject at hand. Many Nepali readers are yet to relish the pleasure of reading a well-written prose piece which presents complicated intellectual analysis and debate on human predicament involving intricate mixture of economic, political, legal, cultural and emotional issues. A piece of writing tightly constructed but relaxed, well articulated but capable of having more than one meaning and expressing contending viewpoints and at times even presenting contrary positions can seldom be easy and effortlessly clear as the chatter one hears on the FM radio talk show. But every piece of translation need not be difficult to approach, otherwise the whole purpose would be defeated.

Translation is not yet considered a profession on its own in Nepal. This is one reason why so much indifferent output passes around for translation. As a professional endeavour, any serious work of translation must be a team work with reviews, editing and improvement constantly being made toward the final text. The team preferably should include persons of whom the translator is the native speaker/native like competent speaker of the target language while the reviewer has a good command of both the source and target languages.

It is a truism in modern theory of translation that every translation is an interpretation of the original text. The cultural and contextual differences not only between the source and target languages but also between the taste, temperament, cultural background and experience of the original author and the translator make the task really complicated and challenging.

These constraints are familiar concerns of translators worldwide. Most Nepali translators are aware of them. But there must be a shared awareness among the institutions and literary executives who commission the translation work. Moreover, in the Nepalese context, a definite work is required from linguists, literary critics, language educators, media persons and more importantly from the reading public to standardize technical terminologies, to make sentence structure more dynamic and expressive and to realize that an important and serious content would require greater attention from the readers.

Illustrations

There is not one single translated work perhaps with the exception of the *Bible*, that has been widely used and appreciated in contemporary Nepal. A lot of translation as used in mass media is ephemeral by nature. It serves its purpose by conveying current news and information to the audience. There are not enough book length translations of serious work dealing with current issues. To illustrate English–Nepali and Nepali–English translation, a brief extract each is presented below:

English–Nepali Translation

English text from *Choose Life*, 1989 OUP

I hold that the goal of education ought to be religious, not mercenary. Education ought to be a search for an understanding of the meaning and purpose of life and for discovering the right way to live. The right spiritual way is, I believe, fundamentally identical for all human beings. The right practical way too was the same for all mankind in the age before the division of labour was made necessary by the change to complexity from the original simplicity of mankind's social organization and technology.

Goals of Learning, P. 62,
Arnold Toynbee

Nepali Translation : जीवन रोज्नुहोस्, 1995 TU, CNAS

शिक्षा धनलोलुपतामा केन्द्रित नभई धार्मिक हुनुपर्छ भन्ने म ठान्दछु । शिक्षा जीवनको अर्थ र प्रयोजनलाई बुझ्न र जीवन ज्यूने सही बाटो पहिल्याउनका निम्ति एउटा खोजका रूपमा रहनुपर्छ । म के पनि विश्वास गर्दछु भने सही आध्यात्मिक बाटो सम्पूर्ण मानवहरूका निम्ति आधारभूत रूपमा समान रूपकै हुने गर्दछ । श्रमविभाजन भन्दा पूर्वका मानव इतिहासका प्रारम्भमा त व्यावहारिक बाटो पनि सबै मानवहरूका लागि उस्तै प्रकारको थियो, तर पछि गएर मानव जातिका प्रारम्भिक सीधासादा सामाजिक संरचना र प्रविधिमा परिवर्तन भई जटिलता थपिए पछि नै श्रमविभाजनको आवश्यकता पर्न आयो ।

आर्नोल्ड टायनबी
ज्ञानार्जनका लक्ष्यहरू, पृष्ठ ७२
अनुवादक : वासुदेव त्रिपाठी

Nepali–English Translation

Nepali text from आषाढको पन्ध (an essay), 1936

नेपालमा खुशियाली छ । हृदयले नवागत पाहुनाको प्रेमपूर्वक स्वागत गरिरहेछ । क्षितिजको किनारामा पूर्वका डाँडामाथि आजको प्रभातको मनोहर मुहार देखिनासाथ टुक्रिएका बादलको छिरविरे फैलावटमा आनन्दको गुलाबी रङ्ग चढ्यो : एकै छिन पृथ्वीलाई स्वर्गको रङ्गले हलुका तवरले छायो । आजको लालीमा विशेष मोहनी थियो, आजको उदयमा हृदयको विशेष उल्लास थियो । प्रेमको अवलोकनले प्रकृतिको सौन्दर्यमा वैचित्र्य थप्दछ, भावको रङ्गले दुनियामा रङ्ग चढाउँछ, नेपालको हृदयमा आज मधुर तरङ्गहरू खेलिरहेछन् । पुकारा सुनेर स्वर्गको प्रत्युत्तर आउँदा हुने कृतज्ञता र आल्हाद आजको दिनमा छ । ईश्वरको आज्ञाले तथा सन्तान उपरको करुणाले पृथ्वीले कलिलोपन लिएकी छिन् । हामी सुनौला बालीको आशाले बीउ रोप्न जान्छौं । हातमा हरिया धानका बीउ छन्, हृदयमा आनन्द र आकांक्षा, मुटुमा हलुका लयदार स्पन्दन, गलामा उर्लदो दिलको मधुर गान । आज हामीहरू दबदब कलिला खेतमा पस्दछौं । आज नेपालमा खुशीको रोपाइ छ, आज आषाढको पन्ध हो ।

– लक्ष्मी प्रसाद देवकोटा

English Translation : The Fifteenth of [the Month of] Asadha

There is rejoicing in Nepal. The heart extends a loving welcome to the newly arrived guest. As soon as the enchanting countenance of today's dawn at the edge of the horizon over the eastern ridges became visible, the rose–red colour of blissfulness ascended to the many coloured stretch of scattered clouds, for a second the colour of heaven slightly (making) the earth reddish brown. There was a particular charm in the rosy dawn of today. A distinctive merriment of the heart was lying in today's sunrise. The look of love adds wonderment to the beauty of nature, the colour of emotion ennobles the world. Sweet waves are rolling in the heart of Nepal. Today there is that thankfulness and delight which occurs when heaven responds on hearing one's call. By the command of God and through His mercy to His children the earth has acquired youthfulness. We go to plant rice in the hope of a golden harvest; in our hands are the green rice seedlings, in minds are joyfulness and longing, in our hearts is a light rhythmic quivering, in our throats surge up the sweet songs of our hearts. Today we enter the soft, swampy fields. Today is the planting of joy in Nepal, today is the fifteenth of *Asadha*.

– Laxmi Prasad Devkota
Translation by Manfred G. Treu
Contributions to Nepalese Studies
Vol.20, No 2, 1993

A Summing up with Some Suggestions

The translation scenario presents a contradictory situation in Nepal. There is a growing use of translation to disseminate current news, opinion and products directly addressed to the large number of audience. News media, business institutions, NGOs and INGOs are engaged in producing a diverse body of information materials

designed to influence the attitude and behaviour of the masses. Series of leaflets, pamphlets, feature articles and syndicated columns are published in Nepali translation on topics such as nature conservation, global warming, preserving biodiversity, basic health care, breast–feeding and information technology. But such translations are produced from diverse sources and reflect varying degrees of quality and appropriacy in language use. In terms of sheer volume, such information materials of current interest easily outstrip the more serious and organized translation of important works on diverse disciplines. There is still a long way to cover in the latter. In recent years, individual Nepali authors are also expressing strong interest to get their works translated into English. Increasingly, it is being realized that the number of qualified translators available for serious work is extremely small and it is high time to initiate organized efforts to train, promote and encourage professional translating in the country.

Suggestions

1. Initiate debate and discussion among writers, general readers, educators, media persons and publishers about the books of reference value, general interest and practical relevance that need to be translated into Nepali from English and other sources.

2. Encourage team work in translation. Insist on review, editing and refinement by team members of the translated work.

3. Publish translated work, if necessary, through foreign language publishing houses.

4. Introduce translation studies course at the advanced level of language departments in universities.

5. Organize translation/practice workshops of useful duration.

6. Introduce awards/incentives for translation in various categories: short piece/book length; literary/technical; nonfiction/science.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

18th Annual Conference Linguistic Society of Nepal
November 26-27, 1997.

Prof. Dr. Tej R. Kansakar
President, Linguistic Society of Nepal

LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS IN NEPALESE EDUCATION

Respected Chairman, Honíble Vice Chancellor Dr. Kamal Krishna Joshi, distinguished guests, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure as well as my privilege as President of the Linguistic Society of Nepal to welcome you all to this inaugural session of the Societyís 18th Annual Conference this morning.

The few remarks I wish to make on this occasion will focus on the role of language in educational development, both in formal and non-formal contexts. There is a very real need today to define this role clearly especially in view of the declining trends in language education at the school and university levels. At the primary level there are basic problems which present a formidable challenge for literacy especially in view of the 60-70 % illiteracy that still prevails in the country. Primary education in the mother-tongue is now a constitutional right in Nepal. It is also accepted by educationists, psychologists and linguists that language is a key factor in the cognitive growth of the child and lays the foundation for learning for individual, community and national development. In a multilingual, multicultural society where most mother-tongues

or home languages are different from the school language/s, the linguistic experience that a child brings to school can contribute very effectively to growth in language competence, communication and cognition. Research has shown that language competence is cumulative and any weakness in the early childhood language experience shows up in the higher stages of education. It is also important to provide an academic strategy of transfer from the home language to the school language for those children with basic education in the mother-tongue. Since these factors are concerned with building a foundation for educational development, His Majestyí Government (HMG) ought to regard more seriously the question of basic education in the mother-tongue, bilingual education and adult literacy programmes. The constitutional provision for mother-tongue education, for example, is a welcome step but does not involve any government participation or commitment to the programme. In the present context, HMG must seek a systematic expansion and development of this programme which has been initiated by a few language communities such as the Tibetans, Newars, Magars, Limbus and Tamangs. Unfortunately, there is little understanding or incentive at the government or academic level to promote literacy among minority language speakers who remain socially and economically backward due largely to deprivation of educational opportunities. I am not however advocating the zero options of providing mother-tongue education for all or to use only Nepali for all educational purposes. The first option is clearly impractical for economic reasons, and the second option represents a mono-model language policy which is not only undemocratic but also very risky in the long-term interest of the country. If direct financial or material support is not feasible, the government should at least provide policy direction and coordination in curriculum and textbook development or development of teacher expertise. In a country with over 70 languages, each with its social and regional dialects, registers and

competing standards, the task of literacy is indeed a formidable one, but as an emerging democratic society we have the obligation to recognize the language rights of ethnic minorities and to extend all possible assistance to preserve and develop the endangered languages as a matter of priority. It is thus unfortunate that we still hear voices raised today in support of the ëone nation-one languageí policy of the Panchayat regime. Following the restorationí of democracy in 1990, the government for the first time tried to move away from the dominant language policy that had prevailed in the country since the Rana regime over 140 years ago. The democratically elected Congress government took a significant step in constituting a National Languages Policy Recommendation Commission on May 27, 1993 (Jestha 14, 2050) to compile vital information and data on the language situation in Nepal. The Commission submitted its Report to the then Minister of Education, Culture and Social Welfare on April 13, 1994 (Chaitra 31, 2050), and among the 58 recommendations, the following relate to education in the national languages :

1. To promote the languages of the country through codification and linguistic descriptions and to develop the uses of these languages in education, administration and as vehicles of mass communication.

2. To classify languages into three groups, i.e. those with established written traditions such as Nepali, Newari, Maithili, Limbu, Bhojpuri, Avadhi, Tibetan; the second with an emerging tradition of writing, e.g. Tharu, Tamang, Magar, Gurung and the Rai group of languages; and the third without any script or written literature for the purpose of imparting primary education in the mother-tongue. The third category would include a large number of minority languages including Sattar/ Santhal, Danuwar, Chepang, Thami, Majhi, Jhangadh, Dhimal, Darai, Kham, Kagate, Kaike, Kumal, Bote, Byanshi and

several languages of the Rai group.

3. To promote mono-lingual or bilingual education in the mother-tongue and/or Nepali on the basis of the ethnic composition of learners in particular areas.

4. To select the standard variety of a national language that meets the criteria for mother-tongue education and to develop script, curriculum, textbook writers and teacher training programmes with the cooperation of the govenment and the local people.

5. **His Majestyís Government to approve and support those primary schools in the mother-tongue which have been established by the local people.**

6. **All children to have the right to receive education in the mother-tongue, mother-tongue with Nepali or Nepali alone.**

7. Students at the Lower Secondary level to have the option to study their mother-tongue as a subject in place of Sanskrit.

8. To establish a separate administration unit under the Curriculum Development Centre of the Ministry of Education to develop curriculum, implement and promote mother-tongue education.

The Commission was assigned the task of understanding the language situation and the language problems that prevail in the country, but there are no firm commitments yet on whether HMG will implement the feasible aspects of the Report. One of the priorities that needs to be set is the formulation of a consistent, well organized language planning which will focus on corpus planning for codification and elaboration of individual languages, status planning to extend the uses of minority languages, and acquisition planning which seeks to increase the number of language users such as speakers, writers, listeners or readers. The newly established Central Department of Linguistics at Kirtipur

will be able to initiate and accomplish some of these tasks within the next few years given the resources and adequate manpower. Without language planning we can hardly solve the linguistic, educational or communication problems in a multilingual setting such as Nepal.

In recent years, the primary education system itself has received greater attention from educational policy makers and planners as a part of a new policy to revitalize and upgrade its curriculum, teaching materials and teacher competence. This is well and good, but the current Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP) cannot achieve dramatic results in the short term given the immense magnitude of the primary level programme and its escalating problems. The available statistics record a total of over 20 thousand primary schools in the country, a student enrollment of 30,34,710 which constitutes about 65 % of school age children, and of the 77,948 teachers 53.3 % are untrained. Language teaching at the primary, secondary and post-secondary stages at the present continues in an erratic fashion. There are several reasons for this state of affairs. Firstly, there is a lack of general awareness of the difference between a language as a subject and as a medium. Secondly, the pedagogic and practical needs for national languages and foreign languages are never clearly defined in language curricula. Thirdly, an average 60 % of the primary and secondary level teachers are untrained and do not understand the need for skill-oriented language teaching. Fourthly, the difference between home language and school language is generally ignored and this has resulted in a good deal of wastage and stagnation in the formal education system at the school level. The SLC curriculum must also recognize the needs of different categories of learners - those who will proceed to higher education or professional training and those, the majority, whose formal education will terminate with their secondary education.

At the Higher Secondary level for Classes 11 and 12 (i.e. 10+2) Nepali and English are offered both as compulsory and optional language courses, while Hindi and Maithili are prescribed as optional subjects. The compulsory courses are designed to teach language functions and communicative skills, and the optional courses are based on literary studies with emphasis on the development of critical faculties. The compulsory English papers also aim to provide a bridge between Secondary and University English at the 3-year Bachelor level. The introduction of Maithili as a major regional language and Hindi as a link language in the Terai area is a commendable step from a functional point of view, and it is to be hoped that more regional languages can be standardized in this way through extensions in social and educational uses. The Higher Educational curricula, however, are often criticized as being too general and as such do not provide a good base for specialization at the graduate or post-graduate levels. There is also a good deal of talk about phasing out the Proficiency Certificate level (PCL) at the University, but PCL is still preferred over the 10+2 programme which is currently running without adequate infrastructure in only 322 schools out of some 2309 secondary schools in the kingdom. If we also take account of the fact that there are over 56 % of untrained secondary teachers and the general unwillingness of University teachers to teach at that level, we are faced with a serious problem of whether 10+2 can provide a proper linkage to the 3-year Bachelor programme, should the University succeed in phasing out the PCL within say the next five years. The quality of language education in the Humanities, Management, Education and Science faculties will thus suffer a major setback if the 10+2 programme fails to achieve the standard that is compatible with countries of the SAARC region.

The 3-year Bachelor curricula of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences include the teaching of seven native and foreign languages, i.e. Nepali, English, Hindi, Maithili, Newari (Nepal Bhasa), Sanskrit and Urdu , of which English and Nepali offer both compulsory and major courses of study, while the rest consist of only major papers. These language courses reflect a general concern for linkage and revision (e.g. English and Nepali) and the development of advanced skills in reading, writing and literary appreciation. These are of course desirable goals but in some cases the means do not justify the end, i.e. the course content clearly lack appropriate materials to achieve the set objectives. The obvious case in point is that of courses in compulsory English and Major English. While all language courses including Nepali, Newari, Maithili, Sanskrit, Hindi and Urdu contain basic linguisitic orientations in orthography and phonology, grammar and discourse, the papers in English provide a selection of reading materials that are pedagogically difficult in the Nepalese context and inappropriate for learning the language and its communicative functions. A paper in basic linguistics was prepared at the request of the Major English Subject Committee, but this was not accepted for inclusion in the curriculum for unknown reasons. I had proposed the idea of compiling well-written materials on Nepalese languages and literature, history and culture which as textbooks could provide interesting and highly relevant contexts for teaching and learning of the English language. This proposal too was later turned down although the Committee members at the meeting had reacted favourably to the idea. We cannot assume that Nepalese students will easily comprehend and assimilate materials based on western arts and letters, philosophy and theoretical discussions relating to politics, psychology and science. We also need to abandon the common fallacy that western literature represents the best use of English and all our teaching materials must therefore be based solely on western-oriented texts. There are many recognized varieties of English worldwide, including Asian English, and Asian writings in English are used widely for teaching

in many of our neighbouring countries for the simple reason that students can relate to such materials in more meaningful ways. As teachers we have to understand that without a proper grasp of the target language, its vocabulary, grammar and meaning relations, a student cannot be expected to develop literary or critical sensibilities, nor will he be able to control the required language functions that are so vital for his communicative needs now and in the future. It was precisely with this aim in view that the Central Department of Linguistics conducted a 2-week Workshop-Seminar in linguistics during June 8-20, 1997 for PCL and Bachelor-level teachers from various campuses in the country to facilitate the teaching of language and linguistic courses at these levels. The feedback from this programme proved to be very encouraging and many teachers felt more confident to handle language courses and the use of literary texts for language teaching. We plan to organize one such orientation programme each year with focus on a particular area of teaching or on some of the pedagogical problems that are endemic to our system of education.

At the Master's level, linguistic courses in one form or other are often found within the Central Departments of English, Nepali, Sanskrit, Newari, Maithili and Hindi under the Faculty of Humanities, while the Faculty of Education offers more comprehensive courses in formal and applied linguistics at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The status of linguistics in the Humanities Departments in particular however has been ambiguous and subject to various misconceptions. As a result, the teachers of linguistics have not always been the most collegial with literature specialists. This may affect department policies on recruitment and retention, course assignments and teaching loads, tenure evaluations and promotion of staff. As I see it, misunderstandings have persisted on both sides -- linguists are often unfamiliar with even common literary works or literary movements, while many

literature specialists regard linguistics as a single abstract field with dubious practical applications. Happily, we now have the Central Department of Linguistics to provide leadership and coordination in linguisitic studies and language education ,and to demonstrate that linguistics and literature are both concerned with examining aspects of human language. The Department can in this sense be a catalyst to promote knowledge of linguistics and enhance our understanding and appreciation of literature. It can also help to analyse and solve real-world problems such as second and foreign language learning and teaching, literacy training, language policy and planning, bilingualism, biculturalism, computer applications and use of language in professions.

In conclusion, I would like to make a plea to educationists and teachers not to overlook the following three facts : one, language is a key factor in all educational development and it is highly unwise to downgrade and marginalize language and linguistic programmes at the school or University education; two, the curriculum and textbooks produced on western models and ideas may not be the most suitable or relevant to the needs of our students; and three, unless language education is given due attention right from the primary stage along with gradual increase in literacy in Nepalese languages and supplemented by a strong, practical English education, the standards of education in this country are unlikely to develop.

Thank you all.

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43. Dr. Rudra Laksmi Shrestha, Patan Campus, Patan
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99. Ms. Pramila Rai, Padma Kanya Campus, Kathmandu
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101. Dr. Tulsi, P. Bhattarai, Sajha Prakashan, Lalitpur
102. Mr. Tika P. Uprety, Devkota Memorial School, Biratnagar –2
103. Dr. Mohan Himanshu Thapa, Central Dept. of Nepali, Kirtipur
104. Ms. Anusuya Manandhar, Law Campus, Kathmandu
105. Dr. Austin Hale, Huebli 3636 Wald, Switzerland
106. Mr. Larry L. Seaward, c/o American Embassy, Kathmandu
107. Mr. Sashidhar Khanal, Trichandra Campus, Kathmandu
108. Mr. Boyd Michailovsky, LACITO/CNRS, France
109. Mr. Mazaudon Mstine, LACITO/CNRS, France

110. Mr. Tsetan Chonjore, University of Wisconsin Program in Nepal
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114. Ms. Nivedita Mishra, Padma Kanya Campus, Kathmandu
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116. Mr. Philip Pierce, Nepal Reserch Centre, New Baneshwor
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120. Mr. Bhekha Raj Shivakoti, Campus of Int'l Languages, Kathmandu
121. Ms. Siddhi Laxmi Baidya, Campus of Int'l Languages KTM
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123. Mr. Simon Gautam, Bhaktapur Campus
124. Dr. Geeta Khadka, Central Department of English, Kirtipur
125. Mr. Phanindra Upadhyay, Padma Kanya Campus, Kathmandu
126. Dr. Sundar K. Joshi, Patan Multipal Campus, Patan
127. Ms. Shushila Singh, Padma Kanya Campus, Kathmandu

This year's conference will be held at a suitable venue in Kathmandu, and is jointly sponsored by the Central Department of Linguistics, Tribhuvan University, the Royal Nepal Academy, and the Linguistic Society of Nepal. There are several flight connections to Kathmandu from Delhi, Calcutta in India, Bangkok, Osaka, Hong Kong, Dubai, Frankfurt, Paris and London. Kathmandu is pleasantly cool in September, and the temperature varies from 10° to 22°C. Some warm clothing is required. Kathmandu has a large number of hotels, including one to five–star establishments, economical guest houses and lodgings. More details regarding the venue, accommodation and travel will be sent out to the respondents of this circular.

Abstracts

Abstracts should be limited to one page, with text in a space no larger than 6 × 8 inches, including the title and the name and institution of the scholar. Accepted abstracts will be bound into a booklet and distributed at the conference. So, please adhere to the size guidelines and deadline. **The deadline for abstracts is July 31st, 1999.** Abstracts should be sent to the address below.

Contact Address

Dr. Tej R. Kansakar   Fax : 977–1–226 964; 977–1–221 175
Chairman, Organisation Committee   voice : 977–1–222 960; 522 779; 331 210
5th Himalayan Languages Symposium   email : tejk@vishnu.ccsl.com.np
P.O. Box 7045   bandhu@ccsl. com.np
Kathmandu, Nepal   yadava@yp.wlink.com.np

Response Form

Kathmandu, 10 October, 1998

Dear colleagues,

As announced at the 4th Himalayan Languages Symposium last December in Pune, India, the 5th Himalayan Languages Symposium will be hosted by the Central Department of Linguistics, Tribhuvan University, in collaboration with the Royal Nepal Academy and the Linguistic Society of Nepal. Kindly circulate this notice among other scholars who might like to attend the symposium or else kindly pass on their mailing address to us, and we shall be happy to send the required information.

With best wishes for 1999,

Dr. Tej R. Kansakar
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Please fill in and return this Response Form at your earliest convenience.

Select whichever of the following three options is applicable :

1. I plan to attend the 5th Himalayan Languages Symposium and hope to present a paper.

    Title of paper : _____

2. I shall attend the 5th Himalayan Languages Symposium but shall not present a paper.

3. I do not plan to attend the 5th Himalayan Languages Symposium, but please keep me on the mailing list.

Name and Address
(Underline surname if applicable)

E–mail:
Fax :
Registration fee :   Foreign participants US$ 50.00   Indian participants IRs. 400.00

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│   **In Memoriam**   │
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The Linguistic Society of Nepal and
its members express their deep
condolences on the sad and untimely
demise of our executive member
Mrs Sushama Regmi (1997–98).
May her soul rest in peace.

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