On Letters, Words, and Syllables

Transliteration and Romanization of the Tibetan Script

by Michael Balk

Berlin 2005

Transliteration of Tibetan is a sensitive chapter in Tibetology. Many scholars use a so-called "standard system" devised by Turrell Wylie [1] more than some forty years ago. Along this line, the Tibetan alphabet is rendered like this:

> ka kha ga nga ca cha ja nya ta tha da na pa pha ba ma
> tsa tsha dza wa zha za 'a ya ra la sha sa ha a

The advantage of this representation is that letter combinations are used instead of diacritics for distinction. There are, however, a few weak points.

The digraph used for the palatal nasal can represent both the single Tibetan letter **ny** and a combination of **n** and **y**. For example, in **nya·gru** "fishing boat" and **nya·gro·ta** "fig tree", **ny** stands for two distinct Tibetan signs [2]. One might argue at this point that **nya·gro·ta** is a loanword. In native Tibetan words, **ny** can only be the eighth letter of the alphabet because **n** with subscribed **y** is no possible combination initially. This is true, but **nya·gro·ta** has entered the Tibetan vocabulary and there should be a way to distinguish the two characters. A sign suggesting itself for this particular purpose is the apostrophe which will make **nya·gru** versus **n'ya·gro·ta**. Similarly, the apostrophe may be used for marking subscript **h** in older Tibetan orthography (e.g. **rdzogs s'ho** for classical Tibetan **rdzogs so**).

The apostrophe is also a natural device to mark the difference between initials involving **g** and **y** in such words as **g'yag** "yak" versus **gyang** "wall". Wylie suggested a full stop (**g.yag** versus **gyang**) but

this is an arbitrary choice as the period, in regular Roman writing, is either "used to mark the end of a sentence that is not a direct question or an exclamation" or "sometimes used ... in abbreviations" [3] if not used with numerals. It is certainly not a good idea to use a punctuation mark in order to distinguish Tibetan **g'y** from **gy**.

A serious complication lies in the representation of the twenty-third (**'a**) and the thirtieth letter of the alphabet (**a**). It is misleading and bound to cause trouble if a letter is represented by something which is not a letter in the Latin script. The apostrophe may be used as orthographic sign for a linguistic circumstance such as elision in English (**won't**) or it may be used for particular non-letter signs of the original script in comparable function such as the **avagraha** in Sanskrit (**te 'pi**). It may also be used for distinctive purposes as it is common with the Chinese romanization system called Hanyu Pinyin (**xi'an** versus **xian**) and other romanization systems such as the ones used for Korean (**han'guk**) or Japanese (**ken'enken**). There are many reasons, both practical and theoretical ones, that speak against using an apostrophe for the representation of a letter. Seyfort Ruegg made the beautiful remark that, as it is a consonant, it may eventually be capitalized, but "nobody has discovered a clearly distinguishable sign by which to capitalize an apostrophe" [4]. (It also looks a bit pedestrian whenever preceded by quotation marks, cf. "**'a chung**".) As outlined above, the apostrophe is essential for other purposes (**n'ya·gro·ta**, **g'yag**, **rdzogs s'ho**).

Here a convention in the People's Republic of China deserves attention where **v** is used for representing **va·chung**. There seems to be little room for doubt that this is a practical and presumably the only viable solution to the twenty-third letter of the alphabet. Its most striking advantage certainly is that it is standard in the country itself.

Most of what has been said about the use of the apostophe for **va·chung** is also true in the case of the thirtieth letter of the Tibetan alphabet. Here the situation is even worse because this particular sign finds no representation at all. Were it not for the last letter, it was possible to write out the transliteration table as **k**, **kh**, **g**, and so on

(apart from economy in the description, it would not be entirely unsuitable to do so as syllables like **bkag** are in fact not transliterated *__**bakaga**__). The fact that the thirtieth letter remains unexpressed in Wylie's system makes it necessary to present the alphabet as **ka**, **kha**, **ga**, and so on.

I can see no reason why one particular consonant letter is excluded from the general rule that all recognized members of the Tibetan alphabet are given a representation of their own by a single Latin letter or a letter combination. With **v** used for **va·chung**, there are three signs which remain of the twenty-six letters of the Latin alphabet, still "free" for the purpose: **f**, **q**, and **x**. It seems that **x** is more acceptable than the others for representing the Tibetan letter in question. It will make the transliteration table look like this:

> k kh g ng c ch j ny t th d n p ph b m ts tsh dz w zh z v y r
> l sh s h x

One may have doubts if **x** is a good choice for a letter which is not pronounced, but anyone who rejects the solution should make a better proposal. It would not be unusual that there is a difference between a **phoneme** which is a linguistic fact independent of its representation in the script and a **grapheme** which is a convention agreed upon by the writing or, in this case, the romanizing community. The one thing we should certainly not entertain is a Tibetan letter, clearly in the position of a consonant in the logic of Tibetan writing, we feel free to ignore.

Let me now turn to the second complex announced in the title of this paper, words and syllables. It is well known that the Tibetans adopted their script from India. While doing this, they have not only adopted letters and phonetic values, but also writing traditions. Among them we find that, as a matter of principle, only syllables are written. The Sanskrit term **aksara** is not entirely congruent with our own concept of syllable, but it may be taken as tantamount to it. Although pauses of speech were sometimes marked, already in Ashoka's inscriptions [5], words were generally not written as words.

It is true that, in modern usage, spacing between words became a natural thing also with Indian scripts, but this tradition developed during the end of the eighteenth century, obviously under British influence. When the Tibetans adopted their script there was no such tradition in India. Spacing between words is a characteristic of Semitic and European writing systems [6]. It seems to have been virtually non-existent in East and South Asia where descendants of the Brahmi or Chinese characters were used.

If Tibetan is transliterated from its original form into the Roman alphabet, the result is a sequence of syllables separated from each other by a blank. This is the outcome if the so-called **tsheg** or Tibetan syllable separator is represented by a space as it is common practice. At first, there is not very much one can do apart from this because there are no formal indications as to what is word in the script itself.

I take it for granted that the Tibetan language does in fact have words even if only syllables are written. The term "monosyllabic" is a little misleading if meant as a description of the language. There are, of course, numerous words which consist of only one syllable, **rdo** "stone" for example, but there is broad evidence that the language has terms which consist of more than one. Concepts are formed by a combinatorial utilization of syllables which produce habitual combinations. Examples are **sangs·rgyas** "Buddha" or **stabs·bde** "simple". It is hardly contestable that such terms are words. It is true that the script has only syllables, but this is only a writing convention.

A considerable amount of data transliterated from Tibetan is nowadays stored and processed electronically. One example among others is a library catalogue. It is one of its functions to give information about literature on a certain subject. The search is, quite commonly, effected by a search for keywords from the title of a book. If Tibetan is reproduced syllable by syllable it is evident that there will be no immediate access to words which consist of more than one. Let me illustrate this point with an example. A book published in Beijing in 1984 is about Tibetan pillar epigraphy and bell inscriptions. Its title reads:

Bod kyi rdo ring yi ge dang dril buvi kha byang

If you enter the title into a standard European library catalogue as written here, the programme will interpret each and every blank as a word separator. It will produce eleven keywords, all told, and add them to the alphabetical index. In this particular case, these index entries are produced by the programme:

(1) | bod
        | buvi
        | byang
        | dang
        | dril
        | ge
        | kha
        | kyi
        | rdo
        | ring
        | yi

This result is unsatisfying. The only entries which are expressive in themselves are "Tibet" (**bod**), "son" in the genitive case (**buvi**), "North" (**byang**), "made round" if we take **dril** as the perfect form of the verb **vdril**, "mouth" (**kha**), and "stone" (**rdo**). The other entries would only make sense in combination with some other syllable. Unfortunately, however, there is no talk about stones made round in the mouth of Northern sons, or the like.

If you are looking for literature on bells, pillars, inscriptions, or epigraphy in a database with simple search facilities, you will have to resort to a piece of Boolean algebra which combines the search for particular keywords. Nevertheless, any such operation will ignore the particular position of the syllables within the string. All this sort of algebra can tell you is if syllables are there at all. For example, it is possible to look for those titles where both **buvi** and **dril** appear as

keywords but it is not possible, along plain Boolean logic, to restrict the search to those entries where **buvi** is preceded by **dril**.

In order to avoid such unpleasant results, somewhat more sophisticated software programmes allow a search for particular terms in the proximity of, or adjacent to, other terms. However, proximity search facilities only mean that any syllable can be combined with any other situated near or next to it in the search query. The title of our book would amount to the following list of adjacent terms retrievable through a simple example of proximity search:

(2) | bod kyi
        | buvi kha
        | byang
        | dang dril
        | dril buvi
        | ge dang
        | kha byang
        | kyi rdo
        | rdo ring
        | ring yi
        | yi ge

On this basis it is indeed possible to find "Tibetan" (**bod kyi**), "bell" (**dril buvi**), "inscription" (**kha byang**), "pillar" (**rdo ring**), and "epigraphy" (**yi ge**) if the adjacent function is activated, but the indexation offers also a good deal of nonsense without any or, if any, unintended meanings in "words" such as **buvi kha**, **dang dril**, **ge dang**, **kyi rdo**, and **ring yi**. It may be useful for a catalogue in order to find something at all, as long as the user is not puzzled by other things he or she is willing to ignore, but it is certainly unsuited for more inspirational tasks such as producing a concise and comprehensive word-list from a given set of data. In a proximity search of this kind, plain syllables are being coordinated by a computer that is unable to identify which syllables form a Tibetan word.

It would, therefore, be desirable to mark those syllables which match and form a meaningful entry. In other words, the nature of Tibetan writing requires intellectual pre-combination of elements instead of mechanical post-coordination of syllables. A method often employed for this purpose is to put a mark between those which belong together. The most prominent mark is the hyphen. It would make the title appear like this:

Bod kyi rdo-ring yi-ge dang dril-buvi kha-byang

Now the indexation is dependent upon the configuration of the programme. There are three main arrangements how database software may treat the hyphen: it is either ignored, treated as a blank, or processed in both ways. If the hyphen is ignored we will get these entries:

(3) | bod
        | dang
        | drilbuvi
        | khabyang
        | kyi
        | rdoring
        | yige

This looks quite reasonable. If the hyphen is interpreted as a blank along the second option, which is the case more often than not with databases, the entries we get are not different from those produced by writing only syllables. The result is identical with the index headed under (1) we have already seen.

Standard programmes as used in libraries, however, do the following. The hyphen is treated as zero and additional entries are produced with the parts separated by the hyphen. This yields these entries:

(4) | bod
        | buvi
        | byang

```
| dang
| dril
| drilbuvi
| ge
| kha
| khabyang
| kyi
| rdo
| rdoring
| ring
| yi
| yige
```

This indexation is better than the one based on syllables (1) because the bells, pillars, and the rest of it are retrievable in a suitable way. Though less confusing than the "proximity" variant (2), the index is partially irritating because there is still no talk about "stone" (**rdo**), the "North" (**byang**), and so on, and we still have no clue as to what syllables such as **ge** and **ring** do actually mean. Most entries are unnecessary if not counterproductive (**buvi**, **byang**, **dril**, **ge**, **kha**, **rdo**, **ring**, **yi**). They inflate the index to no avail and deprive it of its inner logic and constistency. There is a rather unpleasant effect as well: if someone really looks for terms like "North" or "stone", all items will become "hits" where **byang** and **rdo** are nothing but syllabic elements in words meaning "inscription" and "pillar". As a matter of fact, many words become virtually unretrievable because there will be, quite simply, too many hits. No doubt, the only adequate form of indexation is the one headed under (3) which reduces the entries to their brief and precise content.

We may ask ourselves at this point whether it is possible to simply drop the hyphen. I am not the first to make the suggestion that Tibetan words may be written as words [7]. This would amount to a general practice of forming words when romanizing Tibetan. As a matter of fact, this is a long-established practice with Indian scripts. It is also normal with Chinese in Hanyu Pinyin or writing Japanese in what is called Romaji. It would have considerable advantages for automatic

indexation. It would make us independent of particular software configurations with regard to the hyphen, and it was a matter of economy to do without an extensive use of this mark.

If one is prepared to embark on writing words there are, of course, two problems. On the one hand, it becomes necessary to define which and how many syllables may constitute a word. On the other hand, a complication arises to the effect that it is not always apparent where exactly the syllable boundary was in the original.

Let me first come to the problem of which and how many syllables may form a word. Naturally, definitions to this end are a challenge for the Tibetans themselves. What can be observed today is that, whenever Tibetan is anglicized in a more general or popular context, words will be formed (cf. **dzogchen** for **rdzogs·chen**). Even genuine Latin spellings such as **smarrtsis shesrig spendzod** (for standard Tibetan **sman·rtsis shes·rig dpe·mdzod**) are met with in the title of a series published in Ladakh. The following remarks are based upon observations of such habits as practiced today.

There are two kinds of syllables in Tibetan: stems, or elementary syllables, and enclitics. Stems can be found at the beginning of a sentence while enclitics cannot be used initially. They are usually called particles and will always follow another syllable. A rough distinction is one between nominal and other particles. Nominal particles are used for the formation of nouns while the other particles are relevant for expressing syntactical relations of various kinds such as cases or converbs for example. With this, we arrive at three categories of syllables which I indicate by the letters A, B, and C:

A   **stems** (rdo, rgyal, bstan, etc.)
B   **nominal particles** (pa, mo, kha, can, etc.)
C   **other particles** (kyi, du, cing, dag, etc.)

A stem should only be written as a single word if it represents a one-syllable lexical entity. In other cases up to three stems may be

written as a word if they form a habitual syllable compound. This yields these types:

A   **chos** "dharma" (chos)
AA   **sangsrgyas** "buddha" (sangs·rgyas)
AAA   **bcomldanvdas** "bhagavan" (bcom·ldan·vdas)

Nominal particles should always be connected with preceding syllables as they are elements used in word formation. This comes up to these examples:

AB   **rgyalpo** "king" (rgyal·po)
AAB   **mustegspa** "heretic" (mu·stegs·pa)
AAAB   **bcomldanvdasma** "bhagavati" (bdom·ldan·vdas·ma)

Some nouns consist of stem plus nominal particle plus another stem. You would have it in:

ABA   **rinpoche** "incarnated lama" (rin·po·che)

Another possibility is a junction of more than one nominal particle as in:

ABB   **rtsompapo** "author" (rtsom·pa·po)
AABB   **lasdangpoba** "beginner" (las·dang·po·ba)

As for particles other than nominal particles, a separate spelling is recommendable. When looking for particular terms or concepts in an alphabetical index one would normally not entertain entries increased by inflectional distinctions such as cases or other purely syntactical information. There are only two cases where it seems natural to connect one of the other particles, namely case particles, with a preceding syllable as an exception to the rule. One is a number of adverbs. The other is if case particles are used within personal names:

AC   **rabtu** "very" (rab·tu)
AC   **Choskyi** "Choekyi" (Chos·kyi)

Word spelling of the **rabtu** type should be restricted to adverbs. I would write **rabtu vbyungba** "to enter asketic life" but **lag tu vjugpa** "to hand over". The spelling **Choskyi** implies that the term is part of a name (as in **Choskyi Gragspa** for example), while "sphere of religion" was **chos kyi dbyings**.

For practical purposes, types mentioned so far cover most of the eventualities one might come across with Tibetan. The question of what possible types are there is, by the way, completely independent of whether or not one is prepared to adopt word spelling for Tibetan. Even if it is prefered to use hyphens instead of zero, it is desirable to have a set of rules telling you in which case a hyphen and in which case a blank should be used.

Let me now turn to the second problem involved. In cases such as **sangsrgyas**, **bcomldanvdas**, **rinpoche**, or **rtsompapo** the rules applicable for finals and initials will leave no room for doubt regarding the question where the syllable boundary was. It is not possible to resolve **sangsrgyas** otherwise than in form of **sangs·rgyas**, and so on. These cases are comparable to English **teapot**. The word can only be read as **tea·pot** because the language has no words such as ***teap** or ***ot** which could be combined.

Even with the word for "king" (**rgyalpo**) we have in reality a case which is not ambiguous. Apart from analysing the term as **rgyal·po** there seems to be a possibility to read it as **rgya·lpo**, but this would only be a theoretical possibility because there is no syllable ***lpo** in Tibetan according to the dictionaries I have consulted. If there is no such syllable, **rgyal·po** still remains the only possible reading. In a case such as **rabtu,** both **rab·tu** and **ra·btu** seem to be viable options insofar as both interpetations are based on syllables which really exist. It resembles English **potsherd** which is usually understood as "piece of pottery" (**pot·sherd**), but could eventually be misread as "herd of pots" (**pots·herd**).

There are two points to be made in this context. One is statistical probability. As a matter of fact, unambiguous cases such as **sangsrgyas** are the overwhelming majority compared to potentially ambiguous cases such as **rabtu**. Leaving the old **dadrag** (**da·drag**) aside, Tibetan has fifteen possible finals: **g**, **gs**, **ng**, **ngs**, **d**, **n**, **b**, **bs**, **m**, **ms**, **v**, **r**, **l**, **s**, and vowel. Initials are more diverse. In the Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary already mentioned in the second footnote (**Bodrgya tshigmdzod chenmo**) one will find these 240 initials:

> k kw ky kr kl ksc dk dky dkr bk bky bkr bkl rk rky lk sk sky
> skr brk brky bsk bsky bskr kh khw khy khr mkh mkhy
> mkhr vkh vkhy vkhr g gw gy gr grw gl gh dg dgy dgr bg
> bgy bgr mg mgy mgr vg vgy vgr rg rgy lg sg sgy sgr brg
> brgy bsg bsgy bsgr ng dng mng rng lng sng brng bsng c
> gc bc lc ch mch vch j mj vj rj lj brj ny nyw gny mny rny sny
> brny bsny t tc tw tr gt bt rt lt st str brt blt bst th thr mth vth
> d dw dr drw dh gd bd md vd vdr rd ld sd brd bld bsd n n'y
> gn mn rn sn snr brn bsn p pr pl dp dpy dpr lp sp spy spr
> ph phy phyw phr vph vphy vphr b by br bl bh bhr db dby
> dbr vb vby vbr rb lb sb sby sbr m my dm dmy rm rmy sm
> smy smr ts gts bts rts rtsw sts brts bsts tsh tshw mtsh
> vtsh dz dzny dzy dzh mdz vdz rdz brdz w zh zhw gzh bzh
> z zw zl gz bz bzl v y g'y r rw rl brl l lw sh shw shr shl gsh
> bsh sc s sw sr sl gs bs bsw bsr bsl h hw hr lh x xy

Please note that **tc** and **sc** were tentatively utilized here as representations of the "reversed" letters used for the retroflexes in words borrowed from Sanskrit. Initials such as **ksc**, **gh**, **tc**, **tw**, **str**, **dh**, **n'y**, **pl**, **bh**, **bhr**, **dzny**, **dzy**, **dzh**, **shr**, **shl**, **sc**, and **sw** do not appear in native Tibetan words. Combinations with **vachung** used for expressing lengthening of a vowel in loanwords were not considered; it is not alphabetically relevant as can be seen from the sorting order **na-nva-nag**. The dictionary has no terms with the letter combination **hph** which is common for expressing the sound |f|.

If you multiply the number of possible finals by the number of possible initials you get the figure for all possible combinations that might occur

within a word or, in other words, between two vowels internally. It makes 3600 combinations. If you go through all these combinations in order to see how many are single-valued and how many are ambiguous it will appear that 83.97 percent of all possible combinations (3023 occurences) are not ambiguous, 14.61 percent are two-valued (526 occurences or 263 combinations), 1.42 percent are three-valued (51 occurences or 17 combinations). This means: if the advantage of word spelling is dispensed with on the ground of its being possibly ambiguous, one must be aware of the fact that these ambiguities make only 16 percent of all cases theoretically possible.

When we look at these remaining 16 percent a wisdom of Arthur Schopenhauer suggests itself which, simplified to some extent, has it that a whole is more than the sum of its parts [8]. If words are formed we attain an additional coordinate or source of information which comes from the fact that a word has been formed in itself. The simple conclusion is that **rgyamtsho** as a whole is a word meaning "ocean" which **implies** a Tibetan spelling **rgya·mtsho**. It is quite obvious from all observation that it is not arbitrary syllables that were combined into words. It is always conventional combinations that make a specific concept. To come back to the previous example: **ra·btu** may be a theoretical possibility but it would turn out to be quite difficult to find this particular term in a dictionary or glossary. The reality of the language will hardly allow a reading other than **rab·tu**.

An ambiguity on the level of syllables is not the same as an ambiguity on the level of words. When taking the whole word into consideration, true ambiguities are, by far, less likely than one might expect. Moreover, different readings may also occur in other languages. German has a word **Wachstube** which can be read **Wach·stube** ("guardroom") or **Wachs·tube** ("wax tube") depending on the context.

It seems that similar cases are extremely rare in Tibetan as well. I made some cursory tests through parts of the Bodrgya tshigmdzod chenmo, personal and library records during recent years only to find not more than very few ambiguous cases. There is **khamchu** which is either **kha·mchu** "dispute" or **kham·chu** "a diagram symbolizing

water". There is **khragling** which is **khrag·ling** "blood clot" or **khra·gling** "lattice". There is **lagzhas** which is **la·gzhas** "folk-song" or **lag·zhas**, instrumental of **lag·zha** "lame or crippled hand".

Ambiguities on the word level are so rare that it does not seem justified to make them a decisive element to abstain from word spelling in general. I am also not saying that writing words would be the one and only thing for all purposes. If someone prepares a "diplomatic" edition of an old manuscript, he or she should certainly use simple syllable transliteration and abstain from additional interpretations as far as the representation of the text is concerned. But there are applications where it is useful to represent Tibetan by words. Furthermore, there is a simple method by which the internal syllable boundaries can be marked in doubtful cases: capitalize the first letter of the second syllable (e.g. **khaMchu**, **khamChu**, and so on).

In the end, forming words results in a Roman convention for writing Tibetan. As writing words as words is a constituent element of Roman writing the most adequate term to describe it is "romanization".

Examples of representation

(1) of the classical language, taken from Hahn's Lehrbuch der klassischen tibetischen Schriftsprache, p. 227:

Wylie transliteration

> 'di skad bdag gis thos pa dus gcig na | bcom ldan 'das mnyan yod na rgyal bu rgyal byed kyi tshal mgon med zas sbyin gyi kun dga' ra ba na bzhugs so || de'i tshe yul de na bram ze phyin te lo shu sha zhes bya ba zhig yod de | bram ze de'i chung ma de rab tu mi sdug cing mig gnyis kyang mi mthong ste | mi mthong ba de la bu pho ni med kyi | bu mo bdun yod de | rab tu dbul phongs so |

Romanization

vdiskad bdag gis thospa dus gcig na | Bcomldanvdas
Mnyanyod na rgyalbu Rgyalbyed kyi tshal Mgonmed
Zassbyin gyi kundgav raba na bzhugs so || devi tshe yul
de na bramze Phyinteloshusha zhes byaba zhig yod de |
bramze devi chungma de rabtu mi sdug cing mig gnyis
kyang mi mthong ste | mi mthongba de la bupho ni med
kyi | bumo bdun yod de | rabtu dbulphongs so |

(2) of the modern language, taken from the preface of Tashi
Tshering's English-Tibetan-Chinese dictionary, p. 5:

Wylie transliteration

bod kyi mi rigs 'di ni yun ring po'i lo rgyus ldan la rang
nyid kyi 'od stong 'bar ba'i rig gnas yod pa'i mi rigs shig
yin par ma zad | gna' bo'i dus nas rgyal khab phyi nang
gi rig gnas kyi nying bcud kyang len par shin tu mkhas
pa'i mi rigs shig yin | bod ljongs su bcings 'grol thob rjes
gang cir 'gro lam gsar du gtod nas mdun du skyod bzhin
pa ni phyi nang skye bo kun gyi blo ngor gsal ba ltar
lags |

Romanization

Bod kyi mirigs vdi ni yunringpovi lorgyus ldan la rangnyid
kyi vodstong vbarbavi riggnas yodpavi mirigs shig yinpar
ma zad | gnavbovi dus nas rgyalkhab phyinang gi
riggnas kyi nyingbcud kyang lenpar shintu mkhaspavi
mirigs shig yin | Bodljongs su bcingsvgrol thob rjes
gangcir vgrolam gsardu gtod nas mdundu skyodbzhinpa
ni phyinang skyebo kun gyi blongor gsalba ltar lags |

Notes

[1] "A standard system of Tibetan transcription". The term **transcription**, used by Wylie, should be understood as **transliteration**. Transcription is a (more or less) free-style rendering of Tibetan, mainly along pronuntiation. Transliteration is an exact rendering of the script with no less and not more information than what is given by the original. The present Dalai Lama's name could be written along these lines: **Tenzin Gyatso** (transcription), **bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho** (transliteration).

[2] **Nya·gro·ta** is the form which is given by the most comprehensive dictionary of Tibetan, Bodrgya tshigmdzod chenmo, p. 1535. Jaeschke gives the term according to its proper Sanskrit spelling: **nya·gro·dha** (p. 308).

[3] Hornby, Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English, p. 1519.

[4] Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1989) p. 177.

[5] See: Janert, Abstaende und Schlussvokalverzeichnungen in Asoka-Inschriften.

[6] The genuine way of separating words in the Latin script was to put a dot between them. This came out of fashion after the second century when **scriptura continua** won ground. Writing words, now with the blank (spatium) as separating element, was reintroduced under Celtic and Germanic influence and became wide-spread from the twelfth century onwards. See: Bischoff, Palaeographie des roemischen Altertums und des abendlaendischen Mittelalters, p. 218-219.

[7] See for example: Beckwith, The Tibetan empire in Central Asia, p. xiii-xiv, and p. 217-218 where Beckwith responds to remarks made by Van der Kuijp in a recension of an earlier (1987) edition of his book.

[8] "Das Verhaeltniss der Theile zum Ganzen ist nicht, wie Kant will, das der Bedingung zum Bedingten; sondern beide sind nothwendig beisammen, weil sie Eines sind. Ein Ganzes kann zwar in Theile

getheilt werden, aber diese sind nicht vorher da u[nd] setzen das G[anze] zusammen". Cited after: Wagner, Schopenhauer-Register, p. 113.

Bibliography

Beckwith, Christopher I.: The Tibetan empire in Central Asia : a history of the struggle for great power ... Princeton, New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 1993

Bischoff, Bernhard: Palaeographie des roemischen Altertums und des abendlaendischen Mittelalters. Berlin : Schmidt, 1979 (Grundlagen der Germanistik ; 24)

Bod kyi rdoring yige dang drilbuvi khabyang = Tufan beike zhongge xuan / Bsodnams Skyid kyis mchanvgrel bkodpa. Pecin : Mirigs Dpeskrunkhang, 1984

Bodrgya tshigmdzod chenmo = ZangHan da cidian / Krang Dbyisun [Zhang Yisun] gyis gtsovgan bzhes nas rtsomgrig byaspa. Pecin : Mirigs Dpeskrunkhang, 1985

Hahn, Michael: Lehrbuch der klassischen tibetischen Schriftsprache. Sechste Auflage. Swisttal-Odendorf : Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 1994 (Indica et Tibetica ; 10)

Hornby, Albert Sydney: Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English. Fourth edition. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1990

Jaeschke, Heinrich August: A Tibetan-English dictionary : with special reference to the prevailing dialects. London : Kegan Paul, 1934

Janert, Klaus Ludwig: Abstaende und Schlussvokalverzeichnungen in Asoka-Inschriften. Wiesbaden : Steiner, 1972 (Studien zu den Asoka-Inschriften ; 9/10) (Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland : Supplement ; 10).

Ruegg, David Seyfort: [Review]. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1989) 172-178

Smanrtsis shesrig spendzod. Leh : Sonam W. Tashigang, 1969-

Tashi Tshering: English-Tibetan-Chinese dictionary = Dbyinbodrgya gsum shansbyar gyi tshigmdzod = Yingzanghan duizhao cidian / rtsomsgrigpa gtsobo Bkrashis Tshering. Pecin : Mirigs Dpeskrunkhang, 1988

Van der Kuijp, Leonard W. J.: "A recent contribution on the history of the Tibetan Empire". Journal of the American Oriental Society 111 (1991) 94-107

Wagner, Gustav Friedrich: Schopenhauer-Register / neu herausgegeben von Arthur Huebscher. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstadt : Frommann, 1960

Wylie, Turrell V.: "A standard system of Tibetan transcription". Harvard journal of Asiatic studies 22 (1959) 261-267