

TULSIDAS:

The Epic of Ram. Volume 3 (trans. Philip Lutgendorf).
(Murty Classical Library of India, 15.) xxiii, 301 pp. Cambridge, MA:
Harvard University Press, 2018.

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The Epic of Ram. Volume 4 (trans. Philip Lutgendorf).
(Murty Classical Library of India, 16.) xxiii, 329 pp. Cambridge: Harvard
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This is a brief report on the progress of Philip Lutgendorf's masterly translation of the *Rāmcaritmānas* of Tulsidas, which continues here with two volumes bearing *Ayodhyākāṇḍ*, the second of the seven books or chapters that constitute Tulsi's Awadhi Ramayana. Matters of layout and general approach having been discussed in a review of the two *Bālkāṇḍ* volumes (*BSOAS* 80/1, 2017, pp. 165–7), this new review will comment briefly on some details of the translation process, and on the choice of materials included in the short introductory sections.

The translations read exceptionally well and are highly articulate. Like most translators of Tulsi, Lutgendorf frequently "helps" the poet to a more formal diction by using predominantly Latinized verbs in a verse such as "Fate proclaimed one thing but ordained another, / conceived one plan but revealed another!" (48.1, Vol. 3, p. 85). The original here is overwhelmingly vernacular: *kā sunāi bidhi kāha sunāvā; kā dekhāi caha kāha dekhāvā*. This is not to criticize the translation choices, but rather to point up the wiry muscle of Tulsi's diction, which relies so heavily on a set of simple verbs that play a large part in making the text so widely accessible. Verbs such as *dekh-*, *dēkhā-*, *sun-*, *kah-*, *kar-* and so forth were as much his stock in trade in the late sixteenth century as they are in colloquial Hindi today.

Again in common with other translators, Lutgendorf shows surprisingly little interest in conveying the derogatory implication of perfective verbs in *-si*, a most articulate weapon in Tulsi's arsenal. This is a small detail that plays a large part in the *Ayodhyākāṇḍ* narrative. For example, at the key moment at which Manthara perverts Queen Kaikeyi's mind, Tulsi has this quatrain: *kahi kahi koṭika kapaṭa kahānī; dhīraja dharahu prabodhisi rānī. kīnhesi kaṭhina paṛhāi kupāṭhū; jīmī na navāi phiri ukāṭha kukāṭhū* (emphasis added). This is rendered, sans Tulsi's specific emphasis, as: "Then, with a million deceitful tales, / she instructed the queen to take courage. / With wicked instruction she hardened her / and made her as unbending as a dead tree trunk." (*Ayodhyākāṇḍ* 20.2, Vol. 3, pp. 36–7). The rhetorical spin of *prabodhisi* and *kīnhesi* might usefully have been relayed through the use of well-chosen adverbs; for, as noted by Baburam Saksena (*The Evolution of Awadhi*. 2nd edition. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971, p. 244), "In Tulsīdās this form of the participle always implies a contempt for its subject". Though the function of this form (for which compare the somewhat similar use of *baiṭhnā* in modern Hindi compound verbs) is thus well documented, it is rarely brought across into English.

These small points hardly detract from the overall achievement of these translations, and at every turn we find examples of felicitous expression and pellucid reflection of the original. Lutgendorf's compelling but partially overlapping introductions, which supply helpful background information and insightful analysis, attempt a compromise between general representations of Tulsi and his work (as

appropriate for a stand-alone volume), and cumulative specific contextualization of the individual volume's narrative contexts (as appropriate for each volume separately, as part of the growing set). The five-page "Note on the text and translation", however, remains standard through the four volumes published so far, and the owner of the completed set will presumably have to be content with seven iterations of this selfsame analysis (rather than, say, a cumulative discussion of the matter). When there is so much to be said on the subject, and when Lutgendorf is so clearly the person to say it, this seems a wasted opportunity.

There is some inconsistency in those two old chestnuts of transliteration from Devanagari, the showing of inherent "a" and the representation of vowel nasality (as in the belt-and-braces *kāmjī*, Vol. 4, p. 308). A discussion of the two words *byākula* and *bikala* (Vol. 3, p. xiv) has them as "two variants on a Sanskrit adjective" while they are in reality separate words reflecting Sanskrit *vyākula* and *vikala* respectively. These small nods towards editorial matters are mentioned with the eagerly awaited forthcoming volumes in mind.

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CENTRAL ASIA

LAUREN GAWNE and NATHAN W. HILL (eds):

Evidential Systems of Tibetan Languages.

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In the 1930s, the term "Bodish languages", from Tibetan *Bod* "Tibet", was coined by Robert Shafer as a linguistically more satisfactory way of referring to what Tibetologists called "Tibetan dialects". These distinct languages derive from Old Bodish or "Old Tibetan", of which Classical Tibetan is the earliest written exponent. East Bodish languages form a sibling subgroup which derives from a sister language of Old Bodish. However, Shafer also used "Bodish" in yet another sense, i.e. to denote the stage ancestral to both these branches. The obvious solution for this terminological ambiguity would be to repurpose Shafer's now defunct higher-order label "Bodic" to designate the taxon comprising both Bodish and East Bodish.

Instead, Nicolas Tournadre coined "Tibetic languages" to denote Shafer's Bodish minus East Bodish. In this volume, Lauren Gawne and Nathan Hill just write "Tibetan languages". Some Drenjongke speakers in Sikkim might not object to their language being called "Tibetic" or "Tibetan". However, applying either label to Dzongkha sits less well in Bhutan, a nation which has waged several wars against Tibet. The sole native speaker of a Bodish language contributing to this volume was nonplussed to discover after the fact that his native language had been categorized as a "Tibetan language". In English parlance, the adjective *Tibetan* is construed as pertaining to the country Tibet. Since both Sikkim, historically a Tibetan ally, and Bhutan have existed as nation states independently of Tibet, Shafer's conventional term "Bodish" remains preferable.

The volume begins with a 37½-page discussion on evidentiality by Hill and Gawne, who, quoting from the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, credit Pāṇini with being the first to observe the grammatical marking of evidentiality. Shiho Ebihara studies Tibetan *snañ* "shine, seem, appear" and its usage as a sensory evidential in Western