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Deictic Motion Verbs in Tangut

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In Tangut there are certain verbs of motion which are oriented with regard to the speaker or addressee (in dialog) or a fixed reference point (in narrative). These are the verbs meaning 'come' (la^1 and ldIe^2):^{1,2}

- 1) $\text{tIn}^1 \text{la}^1 \text{ku}^1 \text{kI}^1 \text{ndIe}^2 \text{nIn}^2 \text{tsai}^1 \text{mie}^1 \text{X} \text{phi}^1 \text{na}^2$
if come therefore certainly lord become CAUS 2nd
'If you will come [to me in my kingdom], then I will certainly make you a prince.' (GC)

- 2) $\text{thI}^2 \text{ku}^1 \text{na}^2 \text{ndo}^2 \text{mI}^1 \text{tShi}^1 \text{la}^1 \text{ni}^2$
this after you at not EMPHATIC come PLURAL
'After you [copy the Suvarnaprobhasa] we will come to you no more.' (GS)

- 3) $\text{sie}^1 \text{ldia}^1 \text{ndziwo}^2 \text{ldIe}^2$
first four person come
'At first there came four people [to Jang Ju-Dao].' (GS)

and 'go/leave' (ta^1 , rie^2 , and viei^1):

- 4) $\text{tShi}^1 \text{z}^1 \text{ion}^2 \text{ndziwo}^2 \text{ngI}^2 \text{lew}^2 \text{no}^2 \text{.ie}^2 \text{z}^1 \text{won} \text{lho}^1 \text{sie}^1$
then person one one piece silk take market go
'At that time a certain person set out for market with a piece of silk.' (GC)

- 5) $\text{mbie}^2 \text{ngam}^2 \text{ma}^1 \text{ta}^1 \text{mo}^2$
guest PLURAL fear go (GC)
'I fear that the guests will leave.'

The deictic motion verbs in Tangut behave grammatically like other verbs except that they do not combine with auxiliary verbs (discussed below).

Of particular interest are the combinations of deictic motion verbs with the markers of perfective aspect. In Tangut there are seven prefixes of perfective aspect which are in complementary distribution with one another. (Six of these are discussed in Kepping 1971; the entire set is described in Kepping 1979). Six of these are etymologically associated with the direction

of the action. We can arrange these oriented prefixes in pairs:

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|---|-----------------|------------------|-------------|
| 上 ¹ | a ¹ | 'up' | 下 ¹ | na ¹ | 'down' |
| 向 ¹ | ki ¹ | 'towards' | 离 ² | via ² | 'away from' |
| 于此 ² | ndI ² | 'hither' | 自此 ² | tha ² | 'hence' |
| 于此 ² | ria ² | does not indicate direction of motion and hence is not paired | | | |

Verbs with the meaning 'come' (la¹ and ldIe²) form the perfective aspect principally with the prefix ria², although the verb ldIe² can be combined with the prefix na¹, for example, in the sense of 'to fall (of rain)', and also with the prefixes ki¹ and via², as in examples 6 and 7:

- 6) tha¹ .iwan¹ šion¹ liə rie² ki¹ ldIe²
 that Yuan Shao west side PERF come
 'That Yuan Shao came from the west.' (S)
- 7) zi² ldia² .u² žie² via² ldIe²
 soldier mouth in water PERF come
 'In the mouths of all the soldiers, saliva appeared.' (GC)
 [lit. 'water came out']

The verbs meaning 'go/leave' form the perfective with the prefix tha², as in examples 8-10:

- 8) phio¹ tšhia¹ tha² šia¹ na²
 world into PERF go 2nd
 '[The Lord of Hell said to Jang Ju-Dao] go into the world.' (GS)
- 9) wen¹ kəŋ¹ tha² šia¹
 Wen Qin PERF leave
 'Wen Qin left [the battlefield without waiting for his father].' (S)
- 10) ndžiwo² kha¹ via² we² phio¹ tšhia¹ tha² ria²
 people among PERF born world into PERF go
 '[The animals which you killed] were born as people and went out into the world.' (GS)

The verb viei¹ is exceptional in forming its perfective with the prefix

riə²:

- 11) mio² nga² .In¹ riə² viei¹ lIn² mI¹ ndIn² lhio¹ ndIn²
 I army OBJECT PERF leave see NEG return PRESENT

mI¹ tshia¹ lIn²
 NEG can see

'I saw the army leave, but I will not be able to see them return.' (GC)

The verbs la¹ 'come' and viei¹ 'go' are apparently antonyms, as we can see from example 12:

- 12) nga¹ X X žie¹ ndzai¹ nia¹ la¹ viei¹ .əw² tiei¹
 army camp pitch when chariot light come go sentry post

'When the army pitches camp, the light chariots go hither and thither [lit. 'come-go'] and they post sentries.' (S)

Recall that these two verbs take the same perfective prefix, riə².

Three of the verbs of motion, la¹, ldIe², and šio¹, are homonymous with auxiliary morphemes which occur following other verbs to indicate that the active participant in the event described by the verb has set out for somewhere. In this construction la¹ and ldIe² indicate that the motion is directed toward the location of the speaker/addressee, while šio¹ indicates motion away from the location of the speaker or addressee. These morphemes are not verbal suffixes, but auxiliaries, as they can simultaneously modify two different verbs. We will refer to them as auxiliary verbs. Most commonly these auxiliary verbs are used with verbs which do not have a motional sense, as in examples 13-15:

- 13) nga² .In¹ .u² ta¹ we² wiə² .a nIwo¹ na¹ xwI¹ ni²
 I POSS head TOPIC city east gate behind PERF hang PLURAL
 .ion¹ nga¹ .u¹ .In¹ ldIe¹ la¹ žIe¹ kIn¹ lIn² nga²
 Yüe army Wu OBJECT destroy come when let see 1st

'[You pl.] hang my head on the eastern gate of the city. When the army of Yue comes to destroy [the kingdom of] Wu, let me see it!' (GC)

- 14) tshien¹ nga¹ ndzai¹ ldie¹ tsiwe¹ mi¹ tshie¹ riə¹
 Qin army fight come victory NEG can get
 'The Qin army arrived to fight, but they were not able to
 obtain victory.' (S)
- 15) .u² an¹ wə² .In¹ xia¹ ngiu² sie¹ ni²
 Wu An city OBJECT quickly save go PLURAL
 '[A warrior said] we will set out directly to save the
 city of Wu An [武安].' (S)

Following the auxiliary verb we can have a modal verb, agreement marking, the causative 𠵼 phi¹, and the future 𠵼 .In¹. When a deictic auxiliary, the causative marker, and an agreement marker all occur, the order is

Verb - Auxiliary - phi¹ - agreement

as in 16:

- 16) nga² ta¹ sə¹ thu¹ ki¹ zəw² mbu¹ riə² ldie²
 I TOPIC Si-tu PERF send because PERF come
 ni² .In¹ mie² siei¹ khwa¹ mei¹ la¹ phi¹ nga²
 you POSS govern model examine come CAUSE 1st
 'I was sent by the Si-tu (司徒) to come and check
 up on your governing.' (GC)

When the verb is also marked with the future morpheme .In¹, the order is

Verb - Auxiliary - agreement - .In¹

as in 17:

- 17) nga² ta¹ mə¹ ki¹ zəw¹ viə² ngon² twu² mbie² tsiu¹ ni²
 I TOPIC heaven PERF send Tung Hai place Mi Qu
 ni² pu² sie¹ nga² .In¹
 house burn go 1st FUT
 'I have been sent by Heaven. I intend to go and burn [lit. (GC)
 'burn go I intend'] the house of the Tung Hai Mi Qu.'

The deictic auxiliaries can occur after motion verbs, but this is rare. We have found only three examples of motion verbs in construction with deictic auxiliaries -- the verbs are 𠵼 ni² 'reach, attain'; 𠵼 ra² 'go through', and 𠵼 ndziei¹ 'wander, stroll'. With verbs of motion the deictic auxiliaries apparently specify the direction of motion with respect to the speaker/addressee, as in 18-19:

- 18) xiwe¹ we¹ nI² ldIe² mbu¹ .i¹ mbi² ndo² zu² ndzię¹
 Fei I arrive come because all official to command
 ndę² .I¹ ši¹ zəm¹ šiə¹ nI² la¹ zie¹ ni² nI²
 word say Shu send messenger arrive come when you PLURAL
 ti² vuo¹ ni²
 PROH stand PLURAL

'As Fei I had arrived, [the ruler of Wu] commanded all the officials: "When the messenger [of the kingdom of Shu] comes, do not stand up!"' (GC)

- 19) ɕia² .a¹ ndi² niwo² nI² šiə¹ ɕię¹ .ei² via² ngu²
 south gate outside reach go when sound let out by
 nga² nga² kiwə¹ ldəm²
 loudly cry should

'When you have gotten beyond the southern gate, [you] should give a loud shout.' (GC)

However, it is not always possible to understand such a construction in this way. For example, in example 20 the verbs nI² šiə¹ 'arrive go' and nI² la¹ indicate motion in the same direction, both away from the speaker:

- 20) khion¹ ta¹ šiə¹ nI² šiə¹ ndziwe ta¹ ku¹ nI² la¹
 strong TOPIC first arrive go weak TOPIC last arrive come

'The strong get there first; the weak arrive last.' (S)

It is possible for a verb in construction with a deictic auxiliary to take a perfective prefix, although we have only one such example:

- 21) ngwə¹ tshiwe² ndo² tsiwa² kI¹ ndziēi šiə¹ na²
 princess at sin PERF admit go 2nd

'Go and admit your guilt before the princess.' (GC)

Possibly the reason for this reluctance to combine the deictic auxiliary and a perfective prefix is that here two systems which indicate direction of action -- orienting action in space (the perfective prefix system) and specifying the orientation of motion (the deictic auxiliaries) -- come into conflict.

Notes

1 All examples are taken from three texts housed at the Institute Vostokovedeniya in Leningrad: The Grove of Classifications (abbreviated GC), the Tangut Sun Tzu (S), and the preface to the Golden Luster Sutra (Suvarnaprobhasa) (GS).

2 The typescript of the translation was prepared by the second translator, who is responsible for any errors in the Tangut transcription and any other errors in this version of the paper. Tangut character versions of the example sentences which were included in the original text of the paper have been omitted; they can be obtained from DeLancey at the Dept. of Linguistics, University of Oregon.

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Possibly of Interest:

Keping [=Kepping], Ksenia Borisovina. 1981. Agreement of the verb in Tangut. LTBA 6.1. 39-48.

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(also see Kwanten's bibliography in LTBA 7.1)