

with “ཅ” For example, in Tsongkhapa’s *Essence of Eloquence*, there is a passage illustrating these last two constructions with both utilizing different tenses of the verb རྟོག. It reads:

རྟོག་པ་ལ་རྟོག་བྱེད་སྒྲི་དང་བརྟོག་བྱ་དོན་སྒྲི་སྤང་བ་ནི་ཀུན་བརྟགས་ཀྱི་མིག

Appearances to a conceptual consciousness of sound-generalities—which are the means of verbalization—and meaning-generalities—which are the objects of verbalization—[are] the imputational eye.

In the above passage, both of these forms are clearly nouns. However, morphologically they are similar to the optative and causative verbal constructions, especially when the latter occurs in verse. Consequently, careful attention must be exercised when they are encountered.

GERUNDS AND OTHER CONTINUATIVES

Similar to its function in Sanskrit—in which it is used to indicate an action performed by the same subject/agent of the main verb but temporally prior to the activity of that main verb—the gerund construction in Tibetan is formed with the non-case use of the fifth-case (the “originative” or “ablative” case) particles to form a gerund or gerund phrase (also called an “ablative absolute”). It is one of the most common syntactic structures for creating complex sentences. Such phrases are typically translated into English by the use of the expression “having been/done X ...”

The form of such phrases appears as “*verb* + ཅས་” and thus is often easy to recognize. It is also worth noting that the other fifth-case particle (ལས་) can also be used to form a gerund, although such is typically found only in “Old Tibetan” (pre-tenth century) writings and translations as well as in literature that attempts to mimic it (i.e., intentional anachronisms). In addition, the use of ལས་ as a gerund marker carries a very specific connotation: that of thematic disjunction—that is, its use indicates that what follows is somehow unexpected or different in some aspect from the preceding activity. It can be translated as “although having been ...”

Other than gerunds, the other common indicator of continuation in narrative text is the use of one of the rhetorical continuative particles: ཞི, ཉི, or རི. A common usage of these particles is in the formation of a syllogism, in which they remain untranslated; in other instances where they serve as sentence continuatives (as opposed to functioning as apposition markers in śāstric commentary), they are translated in a manner similar to gerunds.