

Recommendation letter for Zuzana Vokurkova's dissertation: Epistemic modalities in Spoken Standard Tibetan (SST)

Zuzana Vokurkova, B.A. started her PhD studies in 2001. She chose a demanding subject, focusing on a linguistic comparison of Tibetan and Chinese in the frame of general linguistics. From the beginning, it was clear that she needed supervision by a specialist in the Tibetan language. That is why, as of 2002, she worked simultaneously under two scholarships (cotutelle), dividing her time between Charles University (general linguistics) and the University of Paris 8, where specialists supervised her Tibetan research.

In the course of her PhD studies she spent long periods in Tibet studying modalities in spoken Tibetan, and her visits were supported by the University of Paris 8. She successfully applied her knowledge of general linguistics (she has studied various spheres of linguistics, such as typology, semantics, formal linguistics) to the given research project. While gathering data in Tibet one of the problems she faced was the need to overcome the variability and vagueness of data presented by native speakers. She tackled the challenge well and brought back a large amount of data about spoken Tibetan which has not, to my knowledge, been published before.

The thesis contains five chapters: the first one is devoted to an explanation of the categories of tense, aspect, modality and negation, the second one contains a general overview of Tibetan, its typological properties, Tibetan "morphology" and in part Tibetan syntax.

A minute classification of epistemic expressions (suffixes, endings) in Tibetan is presented in chapter three, chapter four is devoted to the classification of epistemic verbal endings with respect to the use of various morphemes. The last chapter is devoted to the use of secondary verbs.

From my point of view the dissertation is well-researched and well-presented and should be a fine contribution to this area of study. I would say that Miss Vokurkova has made good use of her PhD studies and is ready to defend her dissertation.

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