

APPLICATIVE AND TROPATIVE DERIVATIONS IN JAPHUG RGYALRONG*

Guillaume Jacques

CNRS-CRLAO (INALCO, EHESS)

Abstract: This paper presents the morphosyntactic properties of the applicative derivation in Japhug Rgyalrong, and shows that an additional valency-increasing derivation, the tropative, is also found in this language. Although the applicative and tropative prefixes are superficially similar, their morphosyntactic properties are distinct.

Keywords: Japhug, Rgyalrong, applicative, tropative, derivational morphology, valency

1. INTRODUCTION

Unlike most Sino-Tibetan languages, Japhug and the other Rgyalrong languages have a relatively complex verbal derivation morphology (see Sun 2006, Jacques 2008, Jacques 2012a in particular). All productive derivational affixes are prefixes, and most of these prefixes influence the valency of the verb in derivations such as causative, anticausative, antipassive and applicative.

The present paper deals with the morphosyntactic functions of two valency-increasing derivational prefixes in Japhug Rgyalrong, the applicative *nur-* and the tropative *nr-*.

The term ‘tropative’ designates a derivation from an adjective or a stative verb into a transitive verb meaning ‘to consider to be ...’. This term is borrowed from Arabic linguistics, where it is applied to a particular verbal pattern in examples such as *ħasuna* ‘be good’ → *istaħsana* ‘deem to be good’ (see for instance Larche 1996; the term ‘estimative’ is also found).

Apart from Arabic, other examples of tropative are found for instance in Turkish (the suffix *-(I)msA* or *-sA*, Göksel and Kerslake 2005: 56) and in Lakhota (the suffix *-la* or *-lakA*, Ullrich 2008: 317) as in the following examples:¹

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¹ The Turkish tropative can also be applied to a pronoun in the example *ben* ‘I’ → *ben-imse-* ‘adopt, embrace (= consider to be one’s own)’, a property not found in Arabic or Japhug.

- (1) *büyük* ‘big’ → *büyük-se-* ‘to overestimate’
kötü ‘bad’ → *kötü-mse-* ‘to think ill of’
- (2) *wakḥáŋ* ‘sacred’ → *wakḥáŋ-la* ‘to consider sacred’
wašté ‘good’ → *wašté-lakA* ‘to like’

Crosslinguistically, few languages have a special derivation restricted to the tropative meaning like Turkish, Lakhota or Japhug. Common ways of expressing the same meaning include a construction with verbs such as ‘think’ or ‘consider’ and a complement clause, or use a causative derivation with a tropative meaning. These two alternative strategies are also found in Japhug, and are described in Section 2.2.

2. APPLICATIVE

The applicative is a valency-increasing derivation by means of which an oblique argument or adjunct is promoted to the O function, while the S of the original verb becomes the A of the applicative verb.² In Japhug, only intransitive verbs are subject to the applicative derivation.

In Rgyalrong languages, the existence of an applicative derivation has been mentioned in previous work (in particular Sun 2006 and Sun to appear concerning Tshobdun, and Jacques 2008 concerning Japhug), but was not clearly distinguished from the tropative.

The applicative in Japhug is marked by the prefix *nu-* / *nuɣ-* / *nɣ-* (the distribution of the three allomorphs is discussed in 2.1). It is only moderately productive; Table 1 contains all known examples of applicative in Japhug.

Following Peterson’s 2007 classification, the examples of applicative found in Japhug mainly belong to the *stimulus* applicative subtype, though we also find two examples of *comitative* applicative (‘wrestle with’, ‘play with’).

2.1. Morphophonology

The applicative has three distinct allomorphs: *nu-*, *nɣ-* and *nuɣ-*. Of these, *nu-* is homonymous with many other derivational prefixes (denominal and autobenefactive-spontaneous) and even flexional prefixes (aorist/ imperative directional ‘towards east’, 2/3 plural possessive). *nɣ-* is identical to the tropative prefix, or to one allomorph of the *nu-* denominal prefix. Even for the last allomorph *nuɣ-*, the facilitative of transitive verbs *nuɣu-* has an irregular homophonous allomorph *nuɣ-* with at least one verb.

² On the status of S, A and O see Haspelmath (2011).

basic verb		derived verb	
<i>azuwu</i>	wrestle	<i>nyzuwu</i>	wrestle with
<i>akhu</i>	shout, call	<i>nykhu</i>	shout at
<i>akhyznga</i>	shout, call	<i>nykhyznga</i>	shout at
<i>andzwt</i>	bark	<i>nyndzwt</i>	bark at
<i>amdzu</i>	sit	<i>nymdzu</i>	look after
<i>ayro</i>	play	<i>nyyro</i>	play with
<i>stu</i>	believe (vi)	<i>nystu</i>	believe (vt)
<i>mbyom</i>	be hurried	<i>numbyom</i>	look forward to, miss s.o.
<i>ŋke</i>	go on foot	<i>nuŋke</i>	look for
<i>rga</i>	like, be glad (vi)	<i>nurga</i>	like (vt)
<i>spom</i>	envy (vi)	<i>nuspom</i>	envy (vt)
<i>buɣ</i>	miss (vi)	<i>nuɣbuɣ</i>	miss (vt)
<i>mu</i>	be afraid	<i>nuymu</i>	be afraid of

Table 1. Examples of the *nuu-* applicative prefix

nuu- is obviously the most basic allomorph, and the only one to appear with a Tibetan loanword (*rga* ‘like’ from *dga*).

ny- results from the fusion of the applicative *nuu-* with the *a-* determiner of many intransitive verbs. This rule is the same as that according to which the causative *suu-* is realised as *sɣ-* with verbs of this type. *nykhu* ‘shout at’, *nymdzu* ‘look after’ and *nyzuwu* ‘wrestle with’ could therefore be rewritten as *nuu-ɣkhu*, *nuu-ɣmdzu* and *nuu-ɣzuwu*.

nuɣ- only appears with two examples that have a labial onset without cluster. The distribution of *nuu-* and *nuɣ-* might have been at an earlier stage like that of *suu-* and *suɣ-*, the latter occurring with intransitive verbs whose initial does not contain a cluster or a velar/uvular.

For most verbs, the applicative is formally difficult to distinguish from the autobenefactive-spontaneous *nuu-*; only the meaning and the fact that the former adds an argument, while the latter does not change the valency of the verb, permits the two grammatical categories to be distinguished. The two prefixes however are distinct in the case of verbs prefixed with the determiner *a-*: while the applicative (being located in slot 10 of the verbal template)³ appears *before* the *a-*, the spontaneous-autobenefactive appears after it. The difference between *nyɣkhu* ‘shout at’ and *anuɣkhu* ‘shout’ can be analysed as follows:

Position	10	11	12	15
		<i>a-</i>		<i>khu</i>
applicative	<i>nuu-</i>	<i>a-</i>		<i>khu</i>
autobenefactive		<i>a-</i>	<i>nuu-</i>	<i>khu</i>

³ See Jacques (2012b) and Jacques (2012) for a general account of the Japhug verbal template.

One counterexample however is found: the autobenefactive-spontaneous of *atuy* ‘to meet’ is *nu-xtuy* (instead of **anutuy*), with this prefix in position 10.

2.2 Compatibilities

The applicative *nu-* is compatible with the causative *su-*, with which it regularly combines as *z-nu-*:

- (3) *nu* *ku-fse* *ci* *jum*
 DEM NMLZ:S/A-be.like.that INDEF wife

ko-z-nu-ŋke-j *tɕe,* *nu-me* *nu*
 EVD:east-CAUS-APPL-walk-1PL LNK 2PL.POSS-girl TOP

u-rca *tu-ye-j*
 3SG.POSS-following PFV:up-come[III]-1PL

So (the king) sent us to look for a wife (for his son), and we followed your daughter here. (The prince, 70)

The applicative can also combine with both the deexperiencer *sɣ-* and the antipassive *sɣ-*, producing homophonous forms, such as *sɣ-nu-rga*, which can either be interpreted as ‘to be likeable’ (deexperiencer) or ‘to like people’ (antipassive).

Additionally, the applicative is compatible with the reciprocal in examples such as *anuybuybuy* ‘to miss each other’ or *anurgurga* ‘to like each other’ and with the reflexive as in *zyɣ-nɣstu* ‘to believe in oneself’.

We failed to find other combinations of prefixes with the applicative, but this might reflect the rarity of the applicative rather than a structural principle of the language.

2.3 Syntactic constructions

The applicative makes an intransitive (in some cases even stative) verb transitive. The original S becomes the A, and a new argument is promoted to O status. There are three types of added arguments.

First, in the case of the verbs *akhu* and *akhɣzŋga* ‘to shout’, the argument promoted to O status of the applicative form *nɣkhu* is a dative adjunct, as in the following example:

- (4) *azo* *a-ɕki* *ɲu-ɣkhu*
 1SG 1SG-DAT CONST-call
 He is calling me. (elicitation, Dpalcan)

Second, the case of *rga* ‘like, be glad’ is quite peculiar. Although this verb has intransitive morphology and only agrees with the experiencer (the S), it can be used with an overt stimulus, which receives no special marking, as demonstrated by *qroni* ‘red ant’ in example (5).

- (5) qronni nunuu, pri ku yuu-tu-ndze wuma zo
 red.ant DEM bear ERG CISLOC-IPFV-eat[III] really EMPH

rga

N.PST:like

The red ants, the bear likes to come to eat them very much. (The ants, 41)

Overt stimuli of the verb *rga* are syntactically adjuncts, despite having no locative or dative marker, and our corpus only includes examples with left dislocation of the noun phrase corresponding to the stimulus, as in example (5).

With the applicative derivation, the stimulus is promoted to O status, and is indexed on the verb, as in example (6), where the verb has stem 3 vowel alternation.⁴

- (6) iɕqha tɕheme nuu juu-nuu-rge-a
 the.aforementioned woman TOP IPFV-APPL-like[III]-1SG
 I like this woman. (elicited, Dpalcan)

The promoted argument can be relativized as any O argument with the *kɣ*-prefix:

- (7) thaɣtsa nuu izo kuruu tɕheme ra nunuu mɤlɤn
 coloured.belt TOP we Tibetan woman PL DEM absolutely
 zo pjuu-tu kuu-ra tɕe, stu
 EMPH 1PFV-be.there NMLZ:S/A-have.to LNK most

ji-kɣ-nuu-rga

ɕti

1PL.POSS-NMLZ:O-APPL-like N.PST:be.EMPH

Coloured belts are something we Tibetan women absolutely need to have, it is what we like most. (Coloured belts, 93)

Third, in the case of the other applicative verbs, the added O does not correspond to an adjunct used with its intransitive counterpart.

2.4. Complements

Applicative verbs can also be used with infinitive complements:

⁴ In Rgyalrong languages, stem 2 is used in non-past transitive direct third person O and singular A forms, see Sun (2000) and Jacques (2012b).

- (8) *tu-ŋga* *kɣ-χtu*
 INDEF.POSS-clothes INF-buy
- ɕ-pu-nu-ŋke-t-a*
 TRANSLOC-PFV:down-APPL-walk-PST-1SG
 I took a walk to buy clothes. (elicited, Dpalcan)

Note that motion verbs normally appear with complements using the S/A (*ku-*) participle form instead, but here the applicative of ‘to walk’ *nu-ŋke* ‘to look for’, a transitive verb (unlike other motion verbs such as *ɕe* ‘to go’, *yi* ‘to come’, *ɣɣu* ‘to run’ etc. which are intransitive), appears with a *kɣ-* infinitive complement. In this construction, The S/A of the complement verb must be coreferent with that of the A of the applicative verb.

When the S/A of the complement clause is not coreferent with the A of the applicative verb, a finite form is necessary:

- (9) *uʒo ju-nuyi* *ɲu-nu-mbyom-a*
 he IPFV-come.back CONST-APPL-be.in.a.hurry-1SG
 I am looking forward to his coming back. (elicited, Chen Zhen)

With the applicative verb *nu-mbyom* ‘to look forward to’, finite complements are always in the imperfective form, even when the verb is in the aorist:

- (10) *juwɕur* *a-ʒuɕ* *mu-pu-ye* *tɕe, lu-fsoɕ*
 yesterday 1SG.POSS-sleep NEG-PFV-come[II] LNK IPFV-be.clear
- tɣ-nu-mbyom-a*
 PFV-APPL-be.in.a.hurry-1SG
 Yesterday I could not sleep, I looked forward to the daybreak.
 (elicited, Chen Zhen)

2.5. Semantics

The applicative verbs in Japhug may be divided into three groups depending on the semantics of the original verb: experiencer verbs, action verbs and reciprocal action verbs.

For experience verbs (*rga* ‘to like’, *buy* ‘to miss’, *mu* ‘to be afraid’ etc.) the applicative adds the stimulus of the feeling.

- (11) *ɲu-ta-nuy-buy-nu*
 IPFV-1→2-APPL-miss-PL
 I miss you_p (elicited, Chen Zhen)
- (12) *ɲʒo tɕhi tu-nuy-me?*
 you what 2-APPL-N.PST:be.afraid[III]
 What are you afraid of? (Gesar, 378, Jacques and Chen 2010: 68)

Unlike most transitive verbs, applicative verbs derived from experiencer verbs can be used with non-periphrastic past imperfective *pu-* or with the non-periphrastic evidential *pjɣ-*; this property is shared with tropative verbs.⁵

- (13) *lu* *nu* *wuma* *pjɣ-nuɣ-mu-ndzi* *ɕti*
 cat TOP really EVD.IPFV-APPL-be.afraid-DU N.PST:be.EMPH
 They_d were very afraid of the cat. (The mouse and the sparrow. 15)

With the action verbs *ɲke* ‘walk’, *andzuit* ‘bark’ and *akhu* ‘shout, call’, the added argument is the goal towards which the action is directed:

- (14) *u-rkɣrkɣu* *jilco* *nu* *ra* *tu-sɲi*
 3SG.POSS-around neighbour TOP PL one-day
 ɲo-z-nɣɣak, ɲo-nu-ɣkhu
 EVD-CAUS-have.a.good.time EVD-APPL-call
 One day, she invited neighbours from all places around, she invited them. (The raven 98)

- (15) *turme* *mɣ-kɣ-nuɣse* *jɣ-ye* *tɕe* *tu-nu-ɣndzuit*
 person NEG-NMLZ:O-know AOR-come[II] LNK IPFV-APPL-bark
 When a person that it does not know comes, it barks at him. (The dogs, 9)

- (16) *a-ye* *ɣɣlpu* *ɕu-nu-ɣkhu-tɕi*
 1SG.POSS-grandson king TRANSLOC-APPL-N.PST:call-1DU
 Grandson, let us go to invite the king. (Kunbzang 342)

In the case of *amdzu* ‘sit’, whose applicative *nymdzu* means ‘take care for, look after’, the semantic derivation is less transparent, though it reminds one of idiomatic expressions such as ‘baby-sitting’:

- (17) *ki* *ɣɣɣtso* *kɣ-nu-ɣmdzi* *a-mɣ-pu-ndzɔβ*
 DEM.PROX child IMP-APPL-sit[III] IRR-NEG-PFV-ACAUS:make.fall
 Look after this child, do not let him fall. (elicited, Dpalcan)

Finally, with the intrinsically reciprocal *azuuzu* ‘wrestle’, the applicative is used as an ‘anti-reciprocal’:

⁵ Lin (2011: 64) asserted that the non-periphrastic past imperfective in the Datshang dialect of Japhug was restricted to stative verbs. One could argue that the applicative and tropative are indeed transitive stative verbs, a category that is attested in some active-stative languages, for instance Lakhota (see Boas and Deloria 1941: 77, and Ullrich 2008: 707). However, in Lakhota the tropative suffix *-la* derives active (=dynamic) verbs, not transitive stative ones, out of stative verbs (as in example 2). In any case, the non-periphrastic past imperfective does appear with dynamic verbs in conditionals (in the apodosis of counterfactuals), and with transitive verbs that have the progressive prefix *asu-*.

- (18) tʃ-wy-nu-ɣzuɣu-a
 PFV-INV-APPL-wrestle-1SG
 He wrestled with me. (elicited, Dpalcan)

The applicative however cannot be combined with reciprocal derivation in any regular way. The verb *azuɣu* itself is historically the reciprocal of a non-attested transitive verb **zu* ‘wrestle’, but is not analysable as such synchronically since the base verb is lost. One reason why the combination of applicative with reciprocal is not more common is that it would be homophonous with atelic derivation (*ɲke* ‘to walk’ → *nɲkuɲke* ‘to walk in all directions’). The reciprocal is formed by combining the reduplicated verb stem with the *a*-prefix. Adding the applicative *nu-* yields *nu-ɣ* → *nɣ-* with reduplication, which is exactly the same as the atelic form of the verb. This combination would also derive a transitive verb out of an intransitive one (through a stage as an intransitive reflexive), exactly as in atelic derivation.

We notice that neither place nor instrument can be promoted to O using the applicative in Japhug; its range of uses is quite limited.

3. TROPATIVE

The tropative *nɣ-* is a very productive derivation that can be applied to most stative verbs, having the meaning ‘to consider to be X’. This derivation was briefly reported as an example of applicative in Tshobdun (Sun 2006: 5–6). Jacques (2012a, 2012b) mentioned the existence of this derivation in Japhug, but did not provide any detail on its actual use.

In the tropative derivation, the S of the original verb becomes the O of the derived transitive verb, while the added argument (the experiencer) becomes the A of the derived verb. This resembles causative derivation (though the semantics is different), but differs from the applicative.

For instance, the stative verb *mpɕɣɣ* ‘be beautiful’ has the derived transitive verb *nɣ-mpɕɣɣ* ‘consider to be beautiful’:

- (19) u-mdoɣ maka múj-nɣsci tɕe, nu ni
 3SG.POSS-colour at.all NEG:CONST-change LNK DIST.DEM DU
- stu nu-kɣ-nɣ-mpɕɣɣ ɲu-ɲu
 most 3PL-NMLZ:O-TROPATIVE-beautiful IPFV-be
 Its colour does not change, and these two are the ones that they consider
 the most beautiful. (Coloured belts, 85)

It also derives perception verbs like *nɣ-mnɣm* ‘to smell’ and *nɣ-mɲɣm* ‘to feel pain’ derived from *mnɣm* ‘to smell (it)’ and *mɲɣm* ‘to ache (it)’.

- (20) *tuɣ* *ku-fse* *ku-tu* *nuɾa* *tu-nɣmnɣm tɕe*
 poison NMLZ:S/A-be.like NMLZ:S/A-exist DEM:PL IPFV-smell LNK
- u-ku-suɣsɣl*, *nuɾu* *u-ku-suɣpɣt* *ɲu-ɲu*
 3SG-NMLZ:S/A-recognize DEM NMLZ:S/A-perceive CONST-be
 The poisonous things, it is able to recognize them when it smells
 them. (The buzzard, 34)
- (21) *u-xtu* *ɲu-nɣ-mɲɣm*
 3SG.POSS-belly CONST-TROPATIVE-ache
 He feels pain in his belly. (elicited, Chenzhen)

The verb *nɣ-mnɣm* ‘to smell’ is only used for volitional perception. For non-volitional perception, the general perception verb *mtshɣm* ‘to hear, to smell’ is used instead. The verb *mtshɣm* can be employed to refer to all types of non-visual non-volitional perception, including audition, smell, taste, vibration of an earthquake etc., as in example (22).

- (22) *tɣ-di* *ci* *ku-mumum* *zɔ* *pu-mtsham-a*
 INDEF.POSS-smell INDEF NMLZ:S-tasty EMPH AOR-hear-1SG
 I smelled a nice smell. (The lotus, 2)

As such, the tropative *nɣ-* is clearly distinct from the applicative *nu-/nuɣ-*, which presents a different redistribution of syntactic roles: the S of the base verb becomes the A, and an adjunct is promoted to become O, as in *buɣ* ‘to miss home (it)’ vs. *nuɣ-buɣ* ‘to miss someone (vt)’. The difference between applicative, tropative and causative can be represented as follows in (23).

- (23) APPLICATIVE: S → A + O
 TROPATIVE: S → O + A (experiencer)
 CAUSATIVE: S → S + A (causer)

Table 2 shows additional examples of tropative verbs in Japhug; this list is far from exhaustive, as the tropative is a fully productive derivation which can be applied to most stative verbs.

basic verb		derived verb	
<i>wxti</i>	be big	<i>nɣ-wxti</i>	consider to be big
<i>zri</i>	be long	<i>nɣ-zri</i>	consider to be long
<i>chi</i>	be sweet	<i>nɣχ-chi</i>	consider to be sweet
<i>maɕ</i>	not be	<i>nɣɣ-maɕ</i>	consider to not to be right
<i>mbat</i>	be easy	<i>nɣɣ-mbat</i>	finish easily

Table 2. Examples of the *nɣ-* tropative prefix in Japhug

The examples show that the morphophonology and semantic derivation of this prefix is not entirely straightforward.

Aside from the regular *nɣ-* allomorph, one also finds *anɣɣ-* / *nɣx-* allomorph on a few verbs. A similar allomorphy is found with the causative prefix (which has *suɣ-* and *ɕuɣ-* allomorphs alongside *su-*) and the applicative *nu-* (which has the allomorph *nuɣ-* in a few examples). The *su-* vs. *suɣ-* allomorphy is still productive: the latter allomorph is found when the original verb is intransitive, without an initial consonant cluster and without initial velar or uvular. It is possible that a similar distribution used to exist at a former stage for the *nɣ-* / *nɣɣ-* allomorphs, but the data at hand do not permit a firm conclusion.

Moreover, the semantics of the derived verb is not always simply ‘to consider to be X’. In the case of stative verbs whose meaning is neutral (not explicitly positive like ‘beautiful’), the tropative often has the additional meaning ‘to consider to be too X’. Second, in the case of *nɣɣ-maɓ* ‘consider to not to be right’, it seems that of the original meanings of *maɓ* was ‘not to be right’, as the nominalized form *ku-maɓ* can mean ‘something which is not right’. Here the tropative preserved the original meaning of the verb, and the base verb underwent an independent semantic change.

Like some of the applicative verbs, tropative verbs can be used with non-periphrastic past imperfective, as in example (24).

- (24) *u-tu-tɕur* *nɣ-tɕhom* *tɕe*
 3SG-NMLZ:DEGREE-SOUR NEG-N.PST:be.exceedingly LNK
- pú-wɣ-nɣ-mum* *ɕti*
 PST.IPFV-INV-TROPATIVE-be.tasty N.PST:be.AFFIRM
 It is not too sour, and we used to find it tasty. (NGojom, 52)

The use of the evidential or the perfective with tropative verbs indicates a change of state. For instance, *to-nɣ-mum* (EVD-TROP-be.tasty) means ‘(he used not to find it tasty, but now) he finds it tasty’.

3.1. The tropative and other derivations

The tropative is compatible with other derivation prefixes, in particular the deexperiencer *sɣ-* (see Jacques 2012a). For instance, we observe the derivation chain:

- (25) *scit* ‘happy’ (of a person)
 Deexperiencer: *sɣ-scit* ‘funny, nice’. The literal meaning of this stative verb is in fact ‘to be such that people are happy’.
 Tropative: *nɣ-sɣ-scit* ‘to consider to be nice’

The doubly derived verb can be illustrated by the following example:

The other way to express the same meaning is to use the estimative verb *supa* ‘to consider, to regard as’ and combine it with a nominalized stative verb.

- (31) tʰkhe-pyʁtɕu nu uʒo pyʁtɕu nu ku-khe
 stupid-bird TOP he bird TOP NMLZ:S/A-stupid
- tu-supa-nu
 IPFV-consider-PL
 The *tʰkhe-pyʁtɕu* is considered to be a stupid bird (The buzzard, 13)

This construction with *supa* expresses the same meaning as the tropative derivation but with a complement clause, in particular in the case of verbs for which this derivation is not appropriate.

4. CONCLUSION

This paper has shown that apart from the causative prefixes, Japhug has two other valency-increasing derivations, the applicative and the tropative. While superficially similar, these two derivations are morphosyntactically and semantically quite distinct. Their similar shape (*nu-* for the applicative and *ny-* for the tropative) suggests a common origin. It is possible that they derive historically from the transitive denominal derivations of action nouns (see Jacques to appear).

Rgyalrong languages appear to be the only languages in the Sino-Tibetan family to present these prefixes, and it could be one of the many defining common innovations of the Rgyalrong branch. In the closely related Wobzi Lavrung language, Lai (2013: 165) proposed to interpret the *n-* prefix in the verb *n-lələm* ‘to smell’ as a potential trace of the tropative derivation in this language, but more research is needed to confirm this idea.

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Author's address:

Guillaume Jacques
INALCO CRLAO
2 Rue de Lille
75007 Paris

Email: rgyalrongskad@gmail.com

