



Disciplinary theatrics: Public reprimand and the textual performance of affect at Sera Monastery, India

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Abstract

This article examines ‘public reprimand’ (*tshogs gtam*) at Sera Monastery, a major Tibetan Buddhist monastery of the Geluk sect in India. This disciplinary practice is shown to be of duplex textual and theatrical complexity. In this form of reprimand, the Disciplinarian seeks to (re)form the dispositions of monastic subjects by textually projecting, juxtaposing, and evaluating morally weighted voices. As the Disciplinarian stages this moral-didactic drama – this ‘serious theatre’, to borrow Foucault’s expression – he adopts a culturally prescribed stance on his own affective performance. In investigating the textuality of voice, stance, and affectivity in this form of public reprimand, this article seeks to rekindle interest in ‘penal semiotics’, a vector of inquiry that Foucault initiated.

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1. Introduction

While Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* (1979) has attracted its fair share of critics since its publication in the 1970s, it deserves renewed attention for its forays into an area that might be called, to use Foucault’s own suggestive term, ‘penal semiotics’ (p. 98). By this, he meant, of course, something quite narrow and historically specific: the program

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of the reforming jurists who, in the 18th century, sought to replace the sovereign's spectacles of public execution with a gentler, punitive art that would 'rest on a whole technology of representation' (p. 104). In place of rituals that leave 'retaliatory marks' on the malefactor's body, marks that index monarchical wrath and power, one finds 'serious theatre' (pp. 104, 113). In serious theatre, punishment is designed not to exact revenge, but to rehabilitate the subject's soul by way of signs. In Foucault's account, this was rapidly replaced by the modern technology of power, exemplified by the prison, and especially by Jeremy Bentham's infamous architectural figure, the Panopticon. Understood broadly, Foucault's entire work is, *inter alia*, an exercise in penal semiotics. As such, it recommends itself for reanalysis by those influenced by Peircian semiotics and related research programs. I do not attempt a reanalysis of his own empirical materials here. Instead, I take as my point of departure Foucault's discussion of 'serious theatre', and pursue, in particular, his proposition that disciplinary practices can be pedagogical by virtue of their semiotic properties. I do so by drawing on contemporary developments in linguistic anthropology, especially work on the textuality of 'voice' (in Bakhtin's sense), stance, and affectivity.

The empirical focus of this article is a speech practice I witnessed during fieldwork at Sera Mey monastic-college in rural south India.¹ The original Sera Monastery was founded on the outskirts of Lhasa in 1419. After the PRC's violent annexation of Tibet in 1959, the Geluk sect replicated this monastery in Byllakupe, Karnataka State, where it now boasts several thousand monks. At Sera Mey in India, Disciplinaryans (*dge skos*)² perform a speech practice termed *tshogs gtam*, which translates literally and euphemistically as 'assembly talk', but which is better glossed as 'public reprimand'.³ In this prac-

¹ While I examine a single event of reprimand in this article, I observed other examples of this practice by the same Disciplinaryian during fieldwork at Sera Mey monastic-college in 2000. I conducted interviews about this practice with this Disciplinaryian, the Venerable Geshe Losang Thardo, with his assistant, and with other monks from the college. I also consulted a prescriptive manual on *tshogs gtam* authored by Geshe Losang Thardo (2000) himself.

² I alternate in this article between orthographic and phonemic transcription. In cases where I mine stretches of discourse for their denotational content (e.g., extended quotations from interviews and citations of words and expressions), I use orthographic transcription – specifically, the Romanized Wylie (1959) transliteration system adopted by most Tibetologists. When I analyze the public reprimand itself, I use a narrower form of transcription, specifically, phonemic transcription with lexeme-by-lexeme glosses and parallel free translation (on Lhasa Tibetan phonology, see especially the classic work by Kun Chang and Betty Shefts Chang (1964)).

³ 'Assembly' (*tshogs*) 'talk' (*gtam*). I do not wish to suggest that the form of *tshogs gtam* practiced here is identical to *tshogs gtam chen mo*, a genre which Cabezón (1997) has discussed for Sera Monastery's other college, Jey. Cabezón translates *tshogs gtam chen mo* as the 'Great Exhortation'. The Great Exhortation is a fixed recitation delivered by the Disciplinaryian several times a year in a marked ritual register of Tibetan. Unlike the Great Exhortation described by Cabezón, the *tshogs gtam* practice I analyze here is highly improvisational and is not rigidly scheduled.

The motivation for glossing *tshogs gtam* as 'public reprimand' derives from transcript evidence (analyzed below), as well as from interviews. Informants at Sera often claimed that *tshogs gtam* was synonymous with 'scolding' (*bshad bshad btang*). In follow-up interviews with the Disciplinaryian who delivered this *tshogs gtam*, he too glossed this event-type as 'scolding'. Names for genres are, of course, only one type of metadiscursive instrument for casting a discursive event as a distinct, recognizable 'type'. The variability across instances or 'tokens' of this interactional genre is not an issue I address here.

tice, the Disciplinary seeks to reform the moral dispositions of monks through the textual projection, juxtaposition and evaluation of voices. Singled out for rehabilitation is the voice of the ‘derelict monk’, who shirks his monastic duties, chases after pleasure, skips religious assemblies, and neglects to take exams in Buddhist doctrine. The Disciplinary juxtaposes morally weighted voices in a manner designed to effect a transformation from derelict to dutiful. This transformation unfolds before the audience as a moral-didactic drama – a kind of serious theatre; but it is theatre that is often uncomfortably close to the skin.

Uncomfortable, because when the Disciplinary evaluates the voice of the derelict monk, he often appears markedly fierce. To counter those who would mistake his affective displays as signs of vulgar, worldly ‘anger’ (*zhe sdang*), the Disciplinary textually diagrams his subjectivity as dissimulated – as split into (external) wrathful affect and (internal) benevolent intention. This diagrammatic effect is shown to be the result of a dialectic between the global ‘text structure’ of the event (cf. Parmentier, 1997, 1993; Agha, 1996; Perrino, 2002) and local cultural ideologies of personhood and affectivity. ‘Theatrics’, then, is a terminological pivot I use to alternate between two facets of the Disciplinary’s textual performance: his textual creation of voices to carry out a disciplinary practice, that is, a practice for ‘forming or reforming moral dispositions’ (Asad, 1993, p. 130); and his textual construction of a culturally recognizable type of affect – a kind of virtuous, histrionic wrath. But before exploring public reprimand and its duplex textual and theatrical complexity, it is necessary to first consider a notion that figures prominently in the subsequent analysis, namely, the Bakhtinian notion of voice.

2. Voices as textual precipitates

‘Voice’ is Bakhtin’s celebrated term for the way in which utterances (oral or written) index recognizable social personae (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984, 1986). Following the rediscovery of Bakhtin in the late 1970s and early 1980s, many have tried their hand at operationalizing this notion (e.g., Parmentier, 1993; Wortham and Locher, 1996; Hill, 1997; Wortham, 2001; Agha, 2005) together with related concepts, from dialogue to heteroglossia to chronotope. Of special interest here are the linguistic and semiotic processes through which ‘voices’ are produced and recognized in discursive interaction. Though represented speech constructions have been recognized as the most transparent linguistic means by which interactants project voices (the locus classicus here is Vološinov, 1986), the resources available for producing voicing effects are, as Hill (1997, p. 109) notes, far more heterogeneous. Wortham and Locher (1996), for example, distinguish five categories of ‘textual devices’ frequently used to produce voicing effects in discourse (viz. reference and predication; pronouns; epistemic modalization; evaluative indexicals; and reported speech constructions). As Wortham later clarifies (2001, pp. 38–40), however, this inventory of relatively discrete ‘devices’ is best used only as a heuristic for identifying voicing effects. If the semiotic resources for voicing are many and varied, and if they are often distributed across stretches of discourse, how do they combine to yield coherent voices?

This issue is broached by Urban and Smith (1998) who see voice as a ‘virtual locus’ of personhood created by co-textual iconicity (esp., parallelism) and anaphoric co-reference

(Urban and Smith, 1998, p. 265).⁴ Voices are (at least partly) projected out of patterns of token co-occurrence and are hence ‘textual’ precipitates (on textuality, see Hanks, 1989; Silverstein and Urban, 1996; Silverstein, 1997; Agha, in press). The issue of how voices are textually produced is addressed in a more sustained fashion by Agha (2005), who identifies the textual conditions under which signs become recognizable as types of social personae. ‘Heteroglossia’ alone – the fact that language-use in a sociolinguistically diverse community ‘tastes of’, as Bakhtin put it, socially distinct identities – is not itself a sufficient condition for the recognizability of distinct voices in discursive interaction. Rather, Agha suggests that metrical contrasts in text – say, the parallelistic alternation of two lexical registers, ‘militarese’ and non-‘militarese’ – motivates the construal that contrastive figures of personhood or ‘voices’ are in play. To individuate a voice, one must juxtapose at least two text-segments whose comparability (i.e., degree and type of likeness/unlikeness) becomes the basis from which judgments about comparability of *speaker-type* are made (for details, see Agha, 2005). Such text-metrical voicing contrasts also allow interactants to identify various types of ‘dialogic’ relations between voices, that is, cases where one voice appears to be responding to or evaluating a second voice. These relations include diverse types of textually emergent stance effects or ‘footings’ (Goffman, 1981; Agha, 2005).⁵

In the performance I analyze below, the Disciplinary does not biographically individuate the voices he projects. He never identifies the derelict monks using proper names (though at times he supplies so much detail about their infractions that guilty individuals in the room must no doubt have been wriggling in their seats). In a follow-up interview, the Disciplinary praised this art of indirection, but did allow for a more forceful alternative. If the guilty parties seem oblivious to the veiled criticism, and if one intends to expel them, one is permitted to name names and point fingers –

⁴ As Urban and Smith write,

[W]e regard voice as a function of the internal iconicity and co-reference that characterize a stretch of discourse. A necessary, albeit not sufficient, condition for dialogical discourse is the presence of at least two systems of iconicity and co-reference – two ‘voices’. Each system is organized around a kind of force-field of attraction through similarity, as well as cross-clause co-reference through anaphora, including anaphora used to maintain stable reference around the use of first- and second-person pronouns. (Urban and Smith, 1998, p. 265)

In their account, the coherence of voice depends partly on referential indexicals (esp., first- and second-person pronouns) and participant-denoting anaphoric pronouns. While necessary for biographic individuation, non-biographically individuated voices are routinely produced without recourse to such devices (Agha, 2005). Classic examples include the so-called ‘quasi-direct’ and ‘free indirect’ styles of voicing found in Dickens’s *Little Dorrit*, on which Bakhtin (1981) famously drew. As Agha observes, text-metrical register-contrasts can individuate voices too (cf. Wortham and Locher (1996) on ‘evaluative indexicals’). Wortham (2001) explicitly introduces textual principles in more recent work (esp., Jakobson’s (1960) classic discussion of the ‘poetic function’), thereby expanding his earlier framework.

⁵ I do not address the distinct but related issue of how biographic individuation works; that is, how voices are indexically anchored to biographic individuals in discursive interaction (see Agha, 2005; Wortham, 2001). I would also like to note that Goffman’s notion of ‘footing’, of course, included a wide range of phenomena. It was much broader than simply propositional stance (i.e., evaluations of the propositional content expressed by utterances from the perspective of a participant role incumbent (Agha, in press)).

but this is a last resort;⁶ indirection is the preferred method. Rather than resort to the blunt instrument of biographic individuation, the Disciplinarian thus populates his discourse with morally weighted voices and invites his audience to adjudicate between them. Like Hamlet's staging of the play *Murder of Gonzago*, the Disciplinarian delivers, as we shall see, a stinging, moral-didactic drama that depends on voicing for its effectiveness.

3. Public reprimand at Sera Mey Monastic-college

At Sera Mey monastic-college the form of public reprimand termed *tshogs gtam* occurs at public assemblies and is delivered by the Disciplinarian,⁷ a high-ranking monastic official who serves a two-year term. The event analyzed here lasted for 8 min and 40 s and was recorded in Sera Mey's main assembly hall on the morning of July 15, 2000. Immediately prior to the public reprimand, the Disciplinarian announced the results of a debate examination on Buddhist philosophy. Sporting a list of names and scores, he stood before a microphone and read the results; each name, carefully enunciated; each score, exhibited before the capacity crowd. He began with the 'number one' (*ang gi dang po*) group whose test scores ranged from 90 to 100. They were invited to stand, draped with white offering scarves, and handed envelopes lined with crisp rupee notes. The monks were then ushered down the hall's most prestigious artery, the central aisle, which terminated at the foot of a throne on which the abbot emeritus sat. When they reached the throne, each monk delicately bowed to touch the crown of his head with the abbot's – a ceremonial embrace of no small distinction. After the names of the top group had been read, the Disciplinarian began a slow and methodical descent down his list, ending with the names of those who 'failed'.⁸ As he reached this category of monk, the stream of silk scarves, envelopes, and greetings with the abbot had, predictably, dried up.

And it was this category of monk – the monk who failed – that became the foil for developing the voice of the derelict monk in the public reprimand that followed.⁹ In the transcript below, subscripts are used in the free translation column to track voices that

⁶ *khyod dang khyod zer* [-s] *labs dgos red da*.

⁷ In an interview, the Disciplinarian remarked that either the abbot or Disciplinarian may deliver *tshogs gtam*, but other categories of monk may not, for that could lead to a lack of consensus. The fewer the people the more consistent the message.

⁸ Monks who fail these exams are shuttled into monastic jobs (as cooks, drivers of monastery-owned vehicles, agricultural laborers, etc). Though monastic leaders often frame such labor as invaluable acts of service, and remind monks that one can lead a virtuous life without being a scholar, these remarks often seem to ring hollow. For a monastery that prides itself on its rigorous training in Buddhist philosophy, symbolic capital accrues to those who perform well in the philosophical curriculum.

⁹ Just as Jane Hill (1997) discovered a polyphony of voices at play in the Mexicano narrative delivered by Don Gabriel, so too is there a dense traffic of voices in the Disciplinarian's speech. It is not possible here to catalog the entire voice system. I call attention only to the voices that seem central to the moral-didactic force of this disciplinary practice. Labels such as 'derelict monk' and the subscripting system I employ are not intended to imply that these voices always and everywhere possess the same degree of coherence; nor should these conventions obscure the fact that voices, *qua* textual precipitates, necessary emerge over stretches of discourse, and therefore cannot be reduced to isolated words and expressions.

are central to the moral-didactic drama [*i*' = derelict monks; *j*' = earnest monks who try but fail; see list of transcription conventions in [Appendix A](#)].¹⁰

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| 1 | ɔ̃ tā th _g -n _g ɛ̃ | | okay now |
| | oh now that-ABL | | |
| 2 | k _g acha t _g apa [1–2 syll.] t _g uuts š _g üü-p _g r _g ɛ̃ | | the [exam] scores have been presented(HON.A) in this way |
| | score monk [1–2 syll.] like.this say(HON.A)-NZR AUX.~P.FCT | | |
| 3 | āni th _g taa th _g āta ma-ph _g ɛ̃ɛ̃-n _g ɛ̃ yaŋ yɔ̃d _g rẽ | | now there are also those _i who don't come(HON) [to exams] |
| | then that and now NEG-come(HON)-AGNT also AUX.GNM | | |
| 4 | tā th _g āta t _g ɛ̃ | | now- now here |
| | now- now this-LOC | | |
| 5 | k _g acha ma-l _g ɛ̃-n _g ɛ̃ th _g taa ma-ph _g ɛ̃ɛ̃-n _g ɛ̃ c _g i-q _g i y _g ī-na | | if [one] considers those _i who fail and those _i who don't come(HON) [to exams] |
| | score NEG-pass-AGNT that and NEG-come(HON)-AGNT analyze-NZR AUX-COND | | |
| 6 | sū- sū n _g ɛ̃qha ch _g ɛ̃w _g r _g ɛ̃ | | who- who is very dangerous? |
| | who- who danger great AUX.~P.FCT | | |
| 7 | ma-ph _g ɛ̃ɛ̃-n _g ɛ̃ th _g n _g ɛ̃qha ch _g ɛ̃ r _g ɛ̃ | | those _i who don't come(HON) are very dangerous |
| | NEG-come(HON)-AGNT that danger great AUX.~P.FCT | | |

¹⁰ Subject omission and null anaphora are commonplace in Lhasa Tibetan. Omitted noun phrase arguments can be inferred through co-textual evidence, often through the categorial indexical properties of the auxiliary verbs. [Agha \(1993\)](#) shows how the six basic Lhasa Tibetan auxiliaries contrast along several dimensions of inherent content: aspect, epistemic modality, and an indexical verbal category which he labels 'participant role perspective' (PRP). They are thus highly portmanteau forms. The PRP function can help interactants resolve problems of so-called 'missing' topics, a process Agha labels 'Indexical-to-Denotational Projection' (hereafter, ID-projection). In utterances where the topic is not denoted through an antecedent noun phrase, 'ID-projection allows inferences about the 'missing' topic', and thus the 'referential ambiguity of such utterances is (partially) resolvable from the phenomenon of ID-projection itself' ([Agha, 1993, p. 156](#)). The omission of noun phrase arguments is common, as in examples (a) and (b) below:

(a) qe_gq_gɛ̃ɛ̃ y_gī
teacher AUX.P.FCT.ASR '[I] am [the] teacher'.

(b) tu-q_gi y_gī
go-NZR AUX.P.FCT.ASR '[I] am going'.

The auxiliary verb *y_gī* indexes speech act participants (hereafter labeled 'P', following Agha's notation). Specifically, *y_gī* indexes 'speaker' in assertoric mood constructions and 'addressee' in interrogative constructions. The auxiliary *r_gɛ̃*, in contrast, is 'impersonal' (or more precisely, "participant non-specific" (~P) [[Agha, 1993, p. 157](#)]; this auxiliary itself is not categorially capable of specifying either speaker or addressee. The P.AUXs are capable of indexical predication, since they can add values to values independently signaled through nominal reference.

In these initial moments of the public reprimand, the Disciplinaryarian populates his discourse with two contrastive voices denoted through paired nominal expressions: ‘those who fail’ exams and ‘those who don’t come’ to exams. Through this parallelistic juxtaposition of expressions, he invites listeners to compare these types of monks: one fails because of ability, the other because of neglect. How is the voice of the derelict monk evaluated? The Disciplinaryarian seems to begin charitably. In line 5, the incumbent of the ‘animator’ participant role (the one responsible for physically producing the message [Goffman, 1981]), in fact, pays deference to the derelict monk with the honorific variant of the verb ‘to go’, and does the same in line 6 when he asks which category of monks is more dangerous. (subscript ‘k’ = all audience members; << ... >> indicates harsh voice quality; see [Appendix A](#)).

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 8 | <<qhāšēè ciq tuù>> few a AUX.~P.IEV | there are a few [monks _i] |
| 9 | ŋöönèè thānèè really | really |
| 10 | yaa chōōra-la yēē yōō qo-qi mī-tuù up-LOC debate.courtyard-LOC also come(NH) need-NZR NEG-AUX.~P.IEV | [who say, we _i] also don’t need to come(NH) up to the debating courtyard |
| 11 | ɔɔ maa tshɔɔq thācha māŋcha-la yēē yōō qo-qi mī-tuù oh down-LOC assembly college. tea communal.tea-LOC also come(NH) need-NZR NEG-AUX.~P.IEV | oh, [who say, we _i] also don’t need to come(NH) down to assemblies, to college-wide or monastery-wide tea offerings |
| 12 | thētes thā- thapa ʌ-reè ser-na-ni like.that mon- monk DUBIT-AUX.~P.FCT say-COND-PP | if [one] asks whether [those _i who act] that way are mon-monks, |
| 13 | thacèè ciq khōō theè yōōrèè monk.robe one wear stay AUX.GNM | [they _i] are there wearing monks robes |
| 14 | ma-reè ʌp thū yēē yōōmareè NEG-AUX.~P.FCT say able also AUX.NEG.GNM | [one] can’t say that [they _i] aren’t [monks] |
| 15 | ɔɔ [?] tēè riq tithaà oh this-LOC type this-PL | oh, [as for] these _i types [of monks] here |
| 16 | ŋöönèè thānèè sōsorsōsō sāmlo ciq tāŋ-na <<yāqšōō rēè >> really individually thought one send-COND best AUX.~P.FCT | really, [it] is best if each [person _i] individually thinks a bit [about this] |
| 17 | thōōtāà kōōnèè mī-tu-qaa meaning any NEG-AUX.~P.IEV-CSQ.INT | [it] doesn’t make any sense, right? |

In lines 10–11, the Disciplinaryarian represents the speech of the derelict monk. Derelict monks allegedly feel or say that they don’t ‘need’ to attend the debating courtyard, a place where monks meet daily to hone their intellects and enhance their knowledge of Buddhist doctrine through argumentation (see [Lempert, 2005](#)); they also do not need to attend daily

religious assemblies.¹¹ When the Disciplinarian introduces the derelict monks in line 8, there is also what Jane Hill (1997) calls an ‘intonational shadow’ cast by the animator in the form of a harsh voice quality. He repeatedly keys this voice quality either directly to the voice of the derelict monk or to the ‘character zone’ (Agha, 2005), the swatch of discourse in which this voice is invoked.

With the voice of the derelict monk on display, the Disciplinarian elicits an evaluation from his audience, whom he positions as moral adjudicators. In line 12, he asks whether these derelict monks can be considered monks. Little time is left for deliberation, however. A response to his question comes from a ‘neutral observer’ voice (the impression of ‘neutrality’ derives from the LT gnomic auxiliary verb *yɔ̀ɔ̀[ma]reè* [which conveys the sense of generally-known truths [Agha, 1998]]; this is juxtaposed with the evidential auxiliary *mĩ-tuu* in preceding lines 10–11). The neutral-observer voice dutifully notes that the derelict monks do, in fact, wear monk’s robes. As they do wear ‘monk’s robes’, one can’t technically say that they aren’t monks, the voice concedes. Yet the Disciplinarian allows suspicion about the derelict monks to hang in the air, undisputed.

Lines 13 and 14 exhibit a high degree of parallelism, comprising a text-segment (*t-s*₂) comparable to lines 10 and 11 (*t-s*₁). We thus have two text-metrically contrasted voices. The first voice consists of the derelict monk’s represented speech. The second is a neutral-observer voice that appears to adopt a dialogic stance vis-à-vis the first voice. In line 16, the Disciplinarian then invites each and everyone in the hall to ‘think about’ this case – an invitation that is, in fact, a near constant refrain during the rep-ri-mand. The sequence that occurs here, and which recurs across the event, is as follows: the Disciplinarian first invokes the voice of the derelict monk; deploys a second voice to comment on it; then enjoins his audience to ‘think’ about the matter well – that is, to adjudicate between the juxtaposed voices. Any hope that the derelict monk might be acquitted is quickly quashed, however, for the Disciplinarian weighs in with his own evaluation in line 17, albeit with a token measure of dialogicality in the form of a confirmation-seeking question: ‘[It] doesn’t make any sense, right?’ The verdict, in brief, is that derelict monks aren’t genuine monks and don’t deserve to remain at the monastery.

We should note how delicately the Disciplinarian has thus far proceeded. He began with a charitable display of deference toward the derelict monk, then initiated an inquiry into this voice’s moral status. At the close of this inquiry the Disciplinarian is still somewhat removed from the verdict he reaches. He holds up the voice of the

¹¹ There is no matrix clause here to explicitly frame the discourse as represented speech or thought. As Irvine (1997, p. 147) notes, such framing material is hardly obligatory: ‘Proverbs, for example, in Wolof as in many other languages, are understood to be quotations received from ancestral generations. Recognizable by genre conventions and metaphorical content, they are not marked by any quotative construction’. Who is the implied ‘author’ here, in the sense of the agent framed as bearing responsibility for the denotational content of the reported segment (Goffman, 1974, 1981; Hill and Irvine, 1993)? If the Disciplinarian himself were the author, he would be absurdly asserting that derelict monks who fail to show up for exams – monks who were topicalized in prior discourse – do not ‘need’ to fulfill their duties. He holds, of course, the opposite view: they *do* need fulfill their duties. Also noteworthy is the shift from honorific to non-honorific verb use. It is considered a gross violation of etiquette to use honorific forms for oneself, which again suggests that he is representing an alter’s speech, albeit in a quasi-direct manner.

derelict monk for public scrutiny and invites the audience to evaluate it. He does not appear to directly confront the voice of the derelict monk, at least not yet.

The list of charges leveled at the derelict monk gets longer in subsequent lines:

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 18 | yaŋ mɛɛ-na also NEG.AUX-COND | not only that |
| 19 | ʌ- ʌ qĩtũũ-qi lɛɛcɛɛ chɛɛ tu-qaa uh- uh monk-GEN work do AUX.~P.IEV-CSQ.INT | uh- uh there is monastic service work to do, right? |
| 20 | lɛɛqacesa ciq-ʌ nɛɛtsũũ ciq tã qo rɛɛ workplace a-LOC/DAT situation a look need AUX.~P.FCT | [they _i] need to look after certain things at work |
| 21 | thɛ-nɛɛ tãtɔɔ chĩ-qi ma-rɛɛ that-ABL look.after do-NZR NEG-AUX.~P.FCT | then [they _i] don't help look after [it] |
| 22 | yaŋ mɛɛ-na also NEG.AUX-COND | not only that |
| 23 | tshɔɔq- tshɔɔq chõõra tĩmsa tee yaa phɛɛ qo rɛɛ assembly- assembly courtyard concentrate,place there-LOC up-LOC go(HON) need AUX.~P.FCT | [they _i] need to go(HON) up to religious assemblies, the debating courtyard, places to concentrate |
| 24 | thɛ-nɛɛ phɛɛ-qi ma-rɛɛ that-ABL go(HON)-NZR NEG-AUX.~P.FCT | then [they _i] don't go(HON) there |

In lines 23–24, the Disciplinaryman again pays deference to those who don't come to religious assemblies or concentrate on the courtyard. Yet this deference stops here and is soon replaced by condemnation. Approximately a minute later, the Disciplinaryman again invokes the voice of derelict monks whom he characterizes somewhat charitably as 'very odd'. He then shares a story about these monks, during the course of which, this self-declared surprise becomes shock and the shock, contempt.

In this narrative, the Disciplinaryman describes an incident on the debating courtyard. When he arrived on the courtyard one evening, he noticed that many monks were absent. Monks who miss courtyard debate must pay a 25 rupee fine (which is no small sum, especially for repeat offenders). Concerned, the Disciplinaryman approached the class-leaders on the courtyard to ask them about the absences. The class-leaders must record the names of truant monks so that fines can be assessed. To the Disciplinaryman's astonishment, the class-leaders claimed that all the monks were present and accounted for. It dawned on the Disciplinaryman that the class-leaders had, in fact, been turning a blind eye to the derelict monks to help them avoid paying the steep fines. While the class-leaders are spared criticism, criticism is heaped on the derelict monks at the close of this narrative:

- 83 << t̥t̥ee t̥p̥Λ m̥ε-na t̥o š̥aa-na t̥i-qi r̥etaa >> if [you_i] don't wish
like.this desire NEG.AUX-COND go(NH) leave-COND alright-NZR [to come], it is right if
AUX. ~P.FCT-DIR.ASR [you_i] leave [the
monastery]!
- 84 << t̥hapa t̥a k̥āŋ y̥ī-s >> [you_i say], 'we_i are
monk monk only AUX.P.FCT-QT simple monks'
- 85 << t̥hapa t̥h̥a k̥āŋ y̥ī-na š̥oq-p̥εε m̥āŋcha š̥ōo-t̥āā >> if [you_i] are simple
monk monk only be-COND morning-GEN communal.tea come(NH)-IMP monks, then come to
tea assemblies in the
morning!
- 86 << t̥hacha m̥āŋcha y̥ōō q̥o-qi y̥ōmareè >> [you_i say] there is no
monastic.tea communal.tea come(NH) need-NZR AUX.GNM-NEG need to come to
monastic and general
tea assemblies
- 87 << q̥ūp tsūm-aa >> [you_i] shut your ass!
ass close-IMP.INJ

The phrase 'simple monk' denotes a valorized category of monk, one who is unattached to material things, and who leads a virtuous lifestyle. The represented speech segment containing 'simple monk' in line 84 appears to be attributed to the derelict monk; it is what derelict monks purportedly say about themselves. According to one informant, this may be related to the fines they must pay for missing debate sessions. In this reading, though their pockets had been emptied from the steep fines, the derelict monks allegedly have the audacity to take pride in their new-found penury. They flaunt their poverty as an index of their elevated religious status— a sign of their commitment to a 'simple', non-materialistic lifestyle. What the Disciplinarian does is to therefore juxtapose a valorized type of monk, the simple monk, with the negatively valued derelict monk. If derelict monks aspire to be simple, virtuous, authentic— as they presumably claim— then the behavioral path they have chosen is wrong, argues the Disciplinarian. Here, the Disciplinarian has not just juxtaposed morally weighted voices. He has also constructed a makeshift syllogism, and has thereby begun to confront the voice of the derelict monk more directly.

In line 86, the Disciplinarian again represents the speech of derelict monks. These monks purportedly argue that 'there is no need to come to the communal tea or the monastic tea assemblies'. The Disciplinarian's evaluation of this voice is blunt: 'shut your ass' (line 87). Earlier, he had invited his audience to evaluate the voice of the derelict monk. And in the preceding lines, he confronted the derelict monks with an argument about why they should change. In line 87, however, he hurls an invective directly at them. Note that this entire evaluative sequence, which occurs immediately after the close of the narrative, is also shadowed with a harsh voice quality. This voice quality, associated by default with the animator, is again keyed to the character zone in which the voice of the derelict monk is on stage.

In the remainder of this event, the Disciplinarian's strategies for handling the voice of the derelict monk are many and varied. At times, he juxtaposes fragments of widely accepted religious doctrine with the behavior of the derelict monks. At a certain moment,

for example, he tropes on a famous stanza from Śāntideva’s revered work on the life of the bodhisattva:

As long as space abides and as long as the world abides, so long may I abide, destroying the suffering of the world (Śāntideva, 1996, p. 143).¹²

The Disciplinarian uses this stanza to chastise monks who chase petty enjoyments, abandoning the virtuous life and thereby failing to ‘abide’ in the world to serve others.

| | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 152 | ḥatsāā sēramee-pΛ ser-ya the monastic.college Sera.Mey-NZR say-NZR that | as for those from Sera Mey monastic- college, |
| 153 | cjsiī nāmqhā as long as space | if, for as long as space [exists, bodhisattvas] need to remain [in the world] |
| 154 | tj̄siī tu nēē qo-qi yō-na till then LOC/DAT remain need-NZR AUX-COND | |
| 155 | ɔʔ thēte tēē tōō šii-taa oh like.that this-LOC stay IMP-DIR.ASR | well, in that way, [you,] stay put! |

The Disciplinarian’s artful juxtaposition does more than fault the derelict monks for failing to live up to Śāntideva’s ideal. Insofar as derelict monks themselves accept the authority of Śāntideva’s classic text – and they do by default – they are, claims the Disciplinarian, living self-contradictory lives. They are not being reasonable. It is thus to the faculty of reason that the Disciplinarian again appeals.

At other moments, the Disciplinarian’s appeal to reason is more overt. Immediately prior to the sequence transcribed above, for example, he appealed to his own authority (e.g., in line 144, he says ‘I told you it is virtuous if you go to the debating courtyard a bit, right?’), but then supplies justification by listing two reasons to attend the courtyard. First, if you go to the courtyard, you won’t need to pay fines, he says. Second, you will be able to accumulate religious merit that will serve you well in this and future lives. He voices derelict monks as individuals who seek to satisfy their interests, but rely on a faulty calculus. If they wish to satisfy their desires, they have chosen the wrong means.

Late in the event, the Disciplinarian indicts the derelict monks by way of analogy. He likens the derelict monk to a class of incorporeal beings called ‘hungry ghosts’, known for their selfishness, and for the obstacles they create for earnest Buddhist practitioners. Yet shortly after he makes this damning analogy, he initiates a dramatic change in his textual performance that merits our attention. The Disciplinarian shifts topic and mentions that a new set of exams– written exams– will be administered in a few days. As he initiates this topic shift, he projects a poised and deferential voice that resembles the voice from the outset of this event (subscript ‘k’ = audience members; ‘l’ = Disciplinarian):

¹² The stanza in Tibetan reads: *ji srid nam mkha’ gnas pa dang l’gro ba ji srid gnas gyur pa l’de srid bdag ni gnas gyur nas l’gro ba’i bsngal sel bar shog* (Śāntideva, 1990, p. 234).

| | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 186 | tā thalo-nεε thikuq tāŋ-s now this.year-ABL written.exam do-QT | now, [I _i said] ‘written exams [will be] given from this year onward’ |
| 187 | tāŋ rɔ̀nāã-s šüü-pλ yüü do PRC.INJ(HON)-QT say(HON.A)-NZR AUX.P.FCT | [I _i] said(HON.A) ‘please(HON) take [these exams]’ |
| 188 | šüü-pλ šĩšàà šεεšçè nãã sōŋ say(HON.A)-NZR base.on accept(HON) do(HON) AUX.~P.PEV | [you _k] agreed(HON) [to take the exams] based on what [I _i] said(HON.A) |

Gone is the intonational shadow cast by the harsh paralinguistic voice quality. Gone are the voice of the derelict monk and the damning comparisons with depraved beings like hungry ghosts. In their place, the Disciplinaryman seems to lay out for his newly re-invited guests a sumptuous spread of honorific forms. Everyone in the room, derelict monks included, are now given a second chance – a chance to come to exams. This moment, which again occurs very late in this event, is admittedly fleeting, for shortly after this moment, there is another brief phase in which the Disciplinaryman invokes and harshly evaluates the voice of the derelict monk. Yet at the very end of the public reprimand (42 lines later in the transcript), there is a more sustained phase in which the derelict monks – the same monks who were previously reprimanded for not paying their fines – receive deference as they are asked to do what they ought to do: pay up.

| | | |
|------|--|--|
| 231 | thε-nεε chōcεε- chōcεε tu-yεε thε-tso that-ABL religious.fine- religious.fine collect-NZR that-PL | then, as for the religious fines, the collection of religious fines, |
| 232a | qhaŋqhalɔ̀ hūtapatà everyone diligently | everyone, diligently |
| 232b | °qhare ser qo rçè° WHQ say need ~P.FCT | ° how should [one] put it° |
| 232c | yaa nãã rɔ̀nãã up-LOC/DAT give(HON) PRC.INJ(HON) | please(HON) hand over(HON) [the fines] |

At the close of the earlier narrative, the derelict monk was told to shut his ass; here, he is delicately asked to pay the fines he owes. In 232c, the Disciplinaryman uses the honorific variant of the precative injunctive mood marker (rɔ̀nãã), together with the honorific variant of the verb ‘to give’ (nãã). Notice also the Disciplinaryman’s disarming remark about his own alleged disfluency in line 232b (‘how should I put it’, he adds softly). The Disciplinaryman appears to be prescriptively modeling the *transformation* of the derelict monk’s voice from derelict to dutiful. That is, he demonstrates how deference awaits the derelict monk who commits to changing his ways. This shift in deference and demeanor is maintained till the end of the event. Here are the Disciplinaryman’s closing words:

| | | |
|------|---|---|
| 237 | cɛ̀ɛna t̄a th̄ata š̄üü-pʌ n̄aŋš̄i | therefore, now- now as [I've] said(HON.A) |
| | therefore now now say(HON.A)-NZR like | |
| 238a | th̄alo k̄acha ma-l̄ō-n̄ē | those, who failed this year |
| | this.year score NEG-pass-AGEN | |
| 238b | t̄üsāā-nɛɛ k̄acha l̄ō-pʌ ciq k̄acha yāa p̄ar-ya | please(HON) think(HON) about how to increase [your] score and pass next year |
| | next.year-ABL score pass-NZR one score up-LOC increase-NZR | |
| 238c | th̄ēte-qh̄i t̄uuts qoŋ-pɛɛ naŋ š̄ɛ̀e r̄oñnā | |
| | like.that-INS like.that mind(HON)-GEN in accept(HON) PRC.INJ(HON) | |
| 239 | āni ɔɔ | then oh |
| | then oh | |
| 240 | t̄a š̄ü-ya t̄aqa ȳü | now that's all [I] have to say(HON.A) |
| | now say(HON.A)-NZR exactly AUX.P.FCT | |
| 241a | qh̄āā š̄üü-pʌ qh̄āyāā tɛp-(p)ʌ c̄ikāŋ-nɛɛ | what [I have] said(HON.A), whatever [virtue I have] created, |
| | what say(HON.A)-NZR whatever plant-NZR whatever-ABL | |
| 241b | q̄āṽi k̄ōŋ-waa š̄ṽ | may it serve to safeguard kindness(HON) |
| | kindness(HON) protect-NZR-LOC/DAT OPT .INJ | |

At the end of the transcript, the Disciplinary pays deference to both categories of monks – those who failed but tried; and those who failed because they didn't show up. He therefore ends this event much as he began, with deference and poise. And in the closing moment, he frames the entire, preceding reprimand as if it had been a virtuous act, and dedicates the merit from this act not to himself, but to others, so that kindness may proliferate in the world.

4. Global text-structure and the performance of disciplinary affect

In the preceding analysis, I described how the Disciplinary projected, juxtaposed, and evaluated distinct voices, especially the voice of the derelict monk who was singled out for reform. Yet the Disciplinary's¹³ wrathful affective displays (the harsh voice quality, the expletives, etc.), were not distributed evenly across phases of the event. They were cushioned on each side by text-segments (albeit of shorter relative duration) in which a voice of deferential poise tended to be projected. In the initial moments of the public reprimand, the Disciplinary seemed charitable (as evidenced by the presence of honorific forms and the absence of harsh voice quality), and he seemed equally charitable – if not positively benevolent – toward the close of this event. Signs that might otherwise index a morally transgressive affective state (i.e., 'anger' *zhe sdang*) are hence bracketed by contiguous but contrastive text-segments. The Disciplinary constructs, in other words, a global, tripartite text-structure in which the middle text-segment tended

¹³ To speak of the 'Disciplinary's ... displays' is, admittedly, potentially misleading, for it invites us to view the Disciplinary as a unitary, self-possessed agent – a 'speaker' in folk metapragmatic parlance. It risks obscuring the fractionation of speakerhood that is central to this article.

to be affectively non-congruent. To the extent that the Disciplinarian's behavior seems to violate standards of appropriate demeanor in the middle phase (monks aren't supposed to hurl invectives), it begs for an explanation.

How should we construe the Disciplinarian's textually performed change of affective state? As an incumbent of the role of Disciplinarian, he is expected to uphold monastic rules and occasionally mete out punishment; but we need not appeal solely to event-independent presuppositions to resolve this question. The tripartite text-structure itself serves denotationally implicit metapragmatic functions (Silverstein, 1992) in the sense that it supplies interactants with reflexive cues for regimenting the indexicals that fall within its scope. I would suggest that it invites interactants to construe this change of affective state as a diagram of the Disciplinarian's own subjectivity. Even if we were to read this as a diagram of the Disciplinarian's own subjectivity, it remains indeterminate (cf. Keane's (2003) remarks on iconicity) from an event-centered perspective, for it permits a range of construals. Has he, for example, succumbed to the so-called 'afflictive emotions' (*nyon rmongs*) – namely, vulgar 'anger' (*zhe sdang*) against which Buddhists must always be vigilant? In this reading of the tripartite text-structure, he begins placidly, loses his cool, then recovers his poise at the close of this event. Or, was the Disciplinarian's affect itself affected, a controlled detonation, as it were, designed to bring down the edifice of hardened habits? Was it, in other words, an expression of a culturally recognizable type of virtuous, 'histrionic' wrath? In this respect, we might consider the pantheon of Buddhist tantric deities said to possess an immutable core of enlightened consciousness. Though their minds are untainted by afflictive emotions, externally, they often exhibit hyperbolic and transgressive affective states, including wrath. Is the Disciplinarian, by analogy, engaging in a willful display of enlightened wrath – wrath that is culturally distinguished from vulgar aggression?¹⁴

Resolving this issue requires a methodological shift of scale. It requires that we consider the dialectic between emergent textual patterns in public reprimand and publicly available metadiscourses with which interactants regiment and typify these patterns. Prescriptive metadiscourses at Sera Monastery, in fact, lend support to the second reading proposed above. In interviews that I conducted with the Disciplinarian, in a prescriptive manual on public reprimand which he authored (Thardo, 2000), and in interviews with other monks at Sera Mey, a recurrent aphorism surfaced: 'Face, darker than a rocky mountain. Mind, whiter than a snow mountain'.¹⁵ This aphorism articulates an ethnodramaturgical ideology. It metaphorically distinguishes interior states from external signs. A virtuous consciousness must lie at the core of wrath. Wrath is to be displayed, not felt. In an interview I conducted with a young reincarnate lama at Sera Mey, he unpacked this aphorism with these words:

[As for] his [i.e., the Disciplinarian's] benevolent mind-set, [the aphorism] says that no matter what happens, purity must be maintained. Now as for the Disciplinarian's

¹⁴ In posing these questions, I assume with Beeman (2001) that affectivity is not directly indexed from discrete linguistic forms. I focus attention here on a global text structure that, as a meta-semiotic framework, reflexively re-computes the significance of the affective displays that occur within its scope (the use of invectives, the harsh voice quality, etc); yet the significance of this emergent textual framework, I suggest, is itself mediated by cultural ideologies of affect and personhood.

¹⁵ *gdong rdza ri las nag palsems gang ri las dkar ba.*

external display, ‘face, [darker] than a rocky mountain’ – rocky mountains, right? Rocky mountains are extremely dark, right? – [It] says that he needs to address [others] with a fierce expression that is even darker than that’.¹⁶

The aphorism’s term ‘face’ is glossed as ‘external display’ (*phyi logs pa’i rnam pa bstan ya*), and is counterposed to an underlying, benevolent consciousness. In subsequent remarks, this reincarnate lama suggested that this aphorism applies not only to Disciplinarians, but to those who occupy homologous roles, like challengers in philosophical debate (see Lempert, 2005) and religious teachers with their disciples. In a follow-up interview I conducted with the Disciplinarian himself, he offered a similar explanation, and even constructed an analogy between the Disciplinarian’s affective behavior in public reprimand and the wrathful displays of Buddhist protector deities.¹⁷ As principles for the construal of discursive action, the remarks cited above provide a way to interpret the tripartite text-structure laid out by the Disciplinarian in this public reprimand. In this reading, then, the middle text-segment of this global, tripartite text-structure is separated out and marked relative to the antecedent and subsequent phases of ‘normal’ calm. This text-metrical juxtaposition makes the Disciplinarian’s delivery of wrath look timed, deliberate – in a word, histrionic. It is through the textual performance of dissimulation – an effect created through the juxtaposition of affectively contrastive text-segments – that he makes manifest a culturally recognizable type of affect.

5. Conclusion

Public reprimand at Sera Mey has been shown to be of duplex textual and theatrical complexity. The Disciplinarian seeks to (re)form the dispositions of monastic subjects primarily through a kind of moral-didactic theatre in which the dramatis personae consist of textually precipitated voices. These voices were evaluated in diverse ways. At times, the evaluations came in denotatively explicit form (e.g., when the Disciplinarian asks, ‘it doesn’t make any sense, right?’). At times, they came in the form of paralinguistic accompaniments (esp., the harsh voice quality, which the Disciplinarian applied to the character zones in which the derelict monk made his appearance). Sometimes the evaluations were inferable only through the textual juxtaposition of contrastive voices. Variability existed as well in respect of the types of juxtaposition created by the Disciplinarian. At times, he crafted analogies (derelict monks: hungry ghosts), but more often he pitted representations of the (purported) speech and behaviors of the derelict monk against the very values that they, as Buddhist monks, (should) uphold; in so doing, he attempted to expose the logical inconsistencies of derelict monks in a bid to change the way they think. The Disciplinarian, in short, drew on a diverse array of rhetorical resources, all of which relied heavily on the textuality of voicing. And as he staged this public reprimand, he laid out a global text-structure that invited his

¹⁶ *kho rang gi phen pa’i bsam pa ‘di ga re nang bzhin dkar po cig ‘khyer dgos red zer [/-s/] / a ni dge skos kyi phyi logs pa’i rnam pa bstan ya ‘di / gdong rdza ri las- rdza ri yog red pa / rdza ri- nag po zhib po zhig yog red pa / ‘di las nag pa’i dpe gdong drag po byas byas / a ni kho yar skul brda byed dgos red zer.*

¹⁷ *dper na / dgon po dang chos rgyal de tsho mkhregs po zhib po zhig red pa / oh ‘di nang bzhin byed thub dgos kyi yog red.*

audience to construe his wrathful affective displays as histrionic, as being the performance of a culturally recognizable affective act.¹⁸

In exploring public reprimand at Sera Mey, I have attempted to show how a disciplinary practice can be pedagogical by way of its semiotic properties – how it can serve, in Foucault's words, as 'serious theatre'. Foucault's corpus has inspired many language-centered research traditions (e.g., critical discourse analysis). And while *Discipline and Punish* has received considerable attention (witness, for example, the spate of writers who draw on Foucault's discussion of the Panopticon, such as Devine, 1995; Kaplan, 1995; Rofel, 1992; Freeman, 1993), this work appears to have had less of an impact on those who study language-in-use. This neglect may be partly an artifact of a now familiar litany of complaints directed at Foucault. Many linguistic anthropologists, for example, fault Foucault and his followers for an (ironically) structuralist inflection of 'discourse'. They charge, for example, that 'discourse' so conceived is socially unlocatable (Agha and Farnsworth-Alvear, 1999); that, like Saussure's *la langue*, it appears virtual, seamless, and shared (on the sharedness problematic, see esp., Urban, 1991). As deserved as such criticism may be, 'punitive semiotics' – again, broadly conceived – remains a vital vector of research, which asks: What are the properties of punitive and disciplinary discourse genres, and how do they participate in larger scale processes of subject (re)formation in society?

I am reminded here of Susan Gal's (1995) thoughtful critique of James Scott's *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (1990). Though Scott presents his readers with a tantalizing array of dramaturgical terms – 'on-stage' and 'off-stage', 'performance' and 'libretto' – his dramaturgy remains rather thin (p. 414). He claimed, for example, that subordinates feel more pressure to perform; that 'off-stage' is a space where they can express emotions without fear of reprisal – emotions that are characterized as if they were raw, semiotically and culturally unmediated. In exposing such limitations, Gal simultaneously makes an appeal, a call for heightened sensitivity to the linguistic (and more broadly, semiotic) mediation of power and resistance. In her critique of Scott, Gal adds a noteworthy concession, however. She acknowledges a certain reticence toward the study of conflict in language-centered research traditions, noting how early work in the ethnography of speaking, for example, 'too easily assumed cultural consensus in the interpretation of speech' (Gal, 1995, p. 411). In a similar vein, Briggs (1997) has pointedly noted how conversational analysis (CA), which was born from hermeneutics-inspired ethnomethodology (Goodwin and Heritage, 1990), has long been preoccupied with the 'orderliness' of face-to-face conversational encounters. Given the place of disciplinary practices and punitive technologies in subject formation, and given the unavoidable semiotic complexity of such practices and technologies, it is lamentable that *Discipline and Punish* has not had the inter-disciplinary uptake that it deserves. This article is intended as a empirical contribution toward that end.

¹⁸ 'Dissimulation' is a term that must be handled delicately, of course, for it is often part of an ideology of 'sincerity', involving the normative alignment of inner states with outer signs. This norm has a genealogy in which Protestantism is central (Keane, 2002; Trilling, 1972). In a parallel paper, I explore changing views of language and discipline at Geluk monasteries in India (Lempert, unpublished manuscript).

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Appendix A. Transcription conventions

Symbols and abbreviations used

| | |
|---------|--------------------------------------|
| ACC | accusative |
| AGNT | agentive suffix |
| AUX | auxiliary verb |
| ASR | assertoric mood |
| COND | conditional |
| CSQ | confirmation-seeking question |
| DAT | dative |
| DET | determiner |
| DIR.ASR | directive assertion |
| DUBIT | dubitative mood |
| FCT | factive |
| GEN | genitive |
| (HON) | referent-focal honorific |
| (HON.A) | addressee-focal honorific |
| IEV | imperfective evidential |
| INJ | injunctive mood |
| INS | instrumental case |
| INT | interrogative mood |
| LOC | locative |
| NEG | negation marker |
| (NH) | non-honorific |
| GNM | gnomic |
| NP | noun phrase |
| NZR | nominalizer |
| P | participant-perspective indexing |
| ~P | participant-perspective non-specific |
| PEV | perfective evidential |
| PL | plural |
| PP | presentative postposition |
| PRC | precative |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| QT | quotative clitic |
| TOP | topicalizer |
| VLQ | volunteering question |
| WHQ | 'WH' question |
| YNQ | yes/no question |
| [] | brackets indicate author's interpolations |
| << ... >> | harsh voice quality |

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