

ALIEVA, Natalia F. – BÙI KHÁNH THÊ: *Yazyk Cham. Ustnye govory vostochnogo dialekta* (The Cham Language. Spoken Idioms of the Eastern Dialects). Sankt Peterburg, Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie 1999. 184 pp. ISBN 5-85803-082-3.

N. F. Alieva is one of the prominent scholars engaged in the study of Western Austronesian languages and has repeatedly published on Bahasa Indonesia not only at home, but also abroad. The reviewed publication is, however, the partial result of her field work in the southern part of Vietnam and undertaken together with Vietnamese partners, especially with Bùi Khánh Thê, but also with a team of Russian scholars.

The Cham language has so far been studied by too few scholars and its position among the West Austronesian languages would still deserve more attention. Its history is no doubt relevant for those who are interested in the process of decline and “death” of languages in general as well as for the study of areal linguistics.

The number of all Chams in Vietnam is estimated at 100,000 and in Cambodia at 200,000 (pp. 8-9) which is a modest relic of a once powerful empire taking up the whole southeast coast of Vietnam. Gradually the Chams have been pushed out from there by the Vietnamese and yet they have remained one of the components of the horizontally and vertically complex linguistic situation of Vietnam and the last representatives of a once so impressive Hinduist community.

The authors have undertaken to characterize the position of Cham today and turn our attention to far reaching typological changes that have modified Cham within the Indochinese linguistic league (pp. 15-16). Part and the result of the process is the strong dialectal fragmentation of the Cham territory where the eastern dialects have undergone a deep typological restructuring of the phonemic, grammatical and lexical levels.

A separate chapter deals with the questions of phonetics and phonology, including phonotactics (pp. 21-33). One of the remarkable properties of present-day Cham is the “free variation of the shape of words that manifests itself in the alternative omission of unaccented non-final syllables”. This explains the contrasting existence of full and abridged variants (disyllabic versus monosyllabic or trisyllabic versus disyllabic forms of one and the same word or morpheme, p. 21). The authors explain this contrast historically – as a rapid transition of the Cham language from one linguistic type to another. Examples of such transmutation are quite rare – one of them is obviously Rotuman that has undergone a massive influence of Polynesian. The authors distinguish 16 vocalic phonemes (with phonological quantity in closed syllables only) but the subsystem of consonants is even more complicated and includes both aspiration and voice; the initial and final positions differ as to the number of permissible consonants (pp. 22-26).

Another recently acquired phonetic feature is the existence of several phonation types. They have been ordered into the following sequence: creak – tense – voice – lax – breath. This scale is arranged so that the degree of tension is sinking from left to right (p. 27).

The lexicon of the Cham language is notable for a high degree of homonymy caused by a variety of phonetic factors (loss of presyllables, neutralization of some finals, neutralization of the contrast voiced – voiceless and the rising compensatory role of suprasegmental phenomena, cf. pp. 35) as well as by borrowing (p. 36) and functional factors (p. 36).

In Chapter Morpheme and Word (pp. 36-49) the authors again return to the competitive coexistence of long and short forms of morphemes or words and here the typological restructuring of Cham is especially conspicuous and the beginnings of the whole process of monosyllabification are obvious in the very early stages of the history of

Cham (p. 37). The variability of Cham autosemantic morphemes manifests itself not only quantitatively but also qualitatively, that is, in the alternation of phonemes within the morpheme (p. 38). Let us mention, however, that this somewhat lower instability of the morphemic shape is present in other Austronesian languages as well.

The authors have arrived at the conclusion that the ratio of full variants versus abridged variants remains relatively stable in Cham because of the influence of the literary language and of written tradition (p. 43).

Typological restructuring of Cham morphology has resulted in changes of the system of word classes. This does not mean that the word classes can only be defined via syntactic criteria – the authors underline the fact that the role of conversion in Cham is limited (p. 50). However, if the Cham language will continue to develop in the direction mentioned above, we may safely assume that the role of conversion will increase. The subclassification of nouns includes sections on numeratives (pp. 61-62) and locatives (pp. 63-64); the system of personal (inclusivity versus exclusivity) and demonstrative (trichotomy) pronouns has preserved the original Indonesian features (pp. 64-65). A separate chapter deals with verbs that are perceived as a subclass of predicatives that includes adjectives as well (pp. 68-85). The syntax of Cham is described within the theoretical linguistic framework not too different from phrase structure grammar with regard to content analysis and the authors have taken care to define their terminological apparatus (pp. 91-93, 102-113).

A considerable portion of the book is reserved to useful Appendices: Folklore material including texts with translations (pp. 119-125), a Cham-Russian vocabulary (pp. 126-134), a questionnaire for Cham informants (pp. 135-153), a comparative vocabulary of Cham with Viet-Muong, Thai, Laha, Aceh and Proto-Austronesian (154-159), a very interesting survey of diagnostic features of the Indochinese linguistic league (pp. 160-163), and personal data concerning the individual Cham informants (pp. 167-168). There is also a bibliography (pp. 169-179) and a summary in English (pp. 180-182); however, there is no index which might be of considerable help to the readers.

The joint publication by N. F. Alieva and Bùi Khánh Thế is a solid pioneering piece of work and the reviewer hopes that an English version will soon be published.

Viktor Krupa

*Songs of the SnowLion – New Writings from Tibet. Mānoa 12: 2.* Hawai'i, University of Hawai'i Press 2000. 189 pp.

BATT, Herbert J. /ed. and transl./: *Tales of Tibet. Sky Burials, Prayer Wheels, and Wind Horses.* Lanham-Boulder, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers 2001. 269 pp.

The two publications under review are devoted to modern Tibetan literature, a subject largely unknown and ignored in the West, as Tsering Shakya states (*Mānoa*, p. 28). However, in the 1990s some collections of stories written by Tibetan authors were published in German and French translations (short stories by Tibetan authors were also included in English language collections of Chinese literature). The issue of modern Tibetan literature is also considered by A. Grünfelder in her monograph *Tashi Dawa and und die neuere tibetische Literatur*, Bochum 1999 (reviewed in the AAS 2/ 2000), and so there is already some knowledge on the development of modern Tibetan literature written after 1980 in the West. Although a notion of modern Tibetan litera-