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The Tibetan transcriptions of Tangut (Hsi-hsia) ideograms[1]

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§1. The Tibetan transcriptions as a source for the reconstruction of Tangut phonology

The importance of reconstructing the phonology of the Tangut language is beyond question. Not only is a sound reconstruction of Tangut phonology vital to the solution of practical problems in Tangut studies, but it is also of major interest for the historical-comparative study of Tibeto-Burman. Various sources exist for the reconstruction of Tangut phonology, both external and internal. The external sources comprise the Chinese, Tibetan and Sanskrit transcriptions of Tangut ideograms (Sofronov 1968:1, 69-70).

The significance of the internal sources for the reconstruction of Tangut phonology is evident, since they enable scholars to establish the *system* of Tangut initials and rimes. The limitations of the internal sources, however, lie in the fact that the abstract system thus obtained lacks phonetic substance; i.e. by relying on the internal sources only, it is impossible to determine the actual *pronunciation* of these initials and rimes.

As for the external sources, we have chosen to work with the Tibetan transcriptions, which, in our view, are of crucial importance to the reconstruction of Tangut phonology because they constitute an attempt to represent Tangut speech sounds by means of an alphabetic script. Each

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[1] This article is an English version, translated by one of the authors, of «Тибетские транскрипции тангутских иероглифов» (Юрий Юрьевич ван Дрим и Ксения Борисовна Кепинг), which will be published simultaneously in Russia in *Письменные Памятники и Проблемы Истории Культуры Народов Востока*, выпуск XXV, Москва: Издательство «Наука».

element of the Tibetan script in these transcriptions denotes a concrete phonetic feature of the Tangut syllable as it was perceived by those who transcribed the Tangut text. Herein lies the superiority of an alphabetic script, and therefore of the Tibetan transcriptions, to the syllabic logographic script of the Chinese transcriptions. The Chinese could only compare the pronunciation of an entire syllable in their own language with the pronunciation of a syllable in another language, but were unable to compare the pronunciation of individual speech sounds, which is why any Chinese ideogram used in transcribing Tangut can only approximately reflect the pronunciation of a Tangut syllable. It must also be kept in mind that various reconstructions have recently begun to appear of Chinese dialects of that period, none of which can with any degree of certainty be connected with the northwestern dialect apparently used in the transcriptions or with the XIIth century. As a result, we have no way of ascertaining the exact pronunciation of a particular Chinese character used to transcribe a given Tangut ideogram. We have left the Sanskrit transcriptions out of consideration, first of all because of their small number and, secondly, because the Tangut ideograms which they transcribe were especially created for the sole purpose of rendering Sanskrit terms directly into Tangut.

A number of phonetic reconstructions of Tangut are currently available (Nishida 1966, Sofronov 1968, Li 1986), but these reconstructions do not concur. For example, the absolutive/possessive postposition 不乔 is read as ʔyeɦ according to Nishida's reconstruction, as ʔɪn[1] according to Sofronov's reconstruction and as jẽ according to Li's reconstruction. In the Tibetan transcriptions, this ideogram is transcribed sixty-three times as ཡེ ye, five times as གཡེ gye, twice as ཡི yi and once as གཡེར gyeh.

In this article, we shall examine one of the external sources for the reconstruction of Tangut phonology, viz. the Tibetan transcriptions of Tangut ideograms. We have studied twenty-four fragments of Tangut texts with Tibetan transcriptions, from which we have compiled an exhaustive catalogue of all extant Tibetan transcriptions. These fragments constitute

portions of Buddhist writings in Tangut translation where the Tangut ideograms, which are arranged in vertical columns, are accompanied by their transcriptions in Tibetan cursive script on their right, with the single exception of Text 20, where the transcriptions are to the left of the ideogram they transcribe. It seems reasonable to assume that these Tibetan transcriptions were added, perhaps for didactic purposes, by Tibetan lamas who did not know Tangut script.

§2. *The Material*

The twenty-four fragments we have used consist of: (1) nineteen photographic plates in negative image kept in the Nevskij Archive of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, where they are catalogued as фонд 69, опись 1, №181; these constitute texts 1 to 19; (2) a fragment of a wood-block print kept in the Manuscript Department of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Leningrad; this wood-block print constitutes text 20; (3) a photograph and three photocopies of four manuscript fragments kept in the Aurel Stein collection of the British Museum in London; these constitute texts 21 to 24.

(1) *Texts 1 to 19*: Nineteen photographs in negative image, 19 x 24 cm in size, of manuscript fragments of Buddhist works in Tangut translation. Some of the photographs include several fragments. The photographs are numbered on the back in pencil from 1 to 19. On a number of photographs, the manuscript fragments themselves are numbered. The fact that these fragments are labelled with three-digit numbers is a source of some amazement. It is unclear whether these numbers indicate that there were more than one hundred such fragments or whether they have some other significance.

Table I shows the correspondence between the numbers of the photographic plates and the numbered manuscript fragments. As can be seen from Table I, not all fragments on the photographic plates are numbered.

The manuscript fragments on plates 10, 12-17 and 19 are unnumbered. Moreover, not all fragments are numbered on the remaining plates. For example, only two of the three fragments on plate 8 are numbered. Furthermore, one and the same fragment may occur on more than one photograph. For example, fragments 101n and 102 on plate 5 are repeated on photographs 7 and 8 respectively.

Text 1: six lines of 10 to 24 ideograms, with gaps.

Text 2: six lines of 7 to 23 ideograms, with gaps.

Text 3: six lines of 7 to 23 ideograms, with gaps.

Text 4: six lines of 19 to 24 ideograms, with gaps.

Text 5: Fragment 101n contains fifteen lines of 8 to 14 ideograms, with gaps. Fragment 102 contains six lines of 5 to 14 ideograms.

Text 6: Fragment 104 contains nine lines of 23 ideograms each. Fragment 105 contains two lines of 2 and of 3 ideograms.

Text 7: fifteen lines of 18 to 24 ideograms, with gaps.

Text 8: Fragment 102 is the same fragment as that which appears in Text 5. The unnumbered fragment on this plate consists of six lines of 9 to 14 ideograms. Fragment 109 consists of nineteen lines of 3 to 8 ideograms.

Text 9 (= Fragment 112): One fragment consists of five lines of 14 ideograms each. Another fragment consists of six lines of 2 to 6 ideograms. Yet another fragment consists of two lines of 3 and of 4 ideograms.

Text 10: five lines of 23 ideograms each.

Text 11: the same as Text 2.

Text 12: six lines of 21 to 24 ideograms.

Text 13: six lines of 23 ideograms each.

Text 14: eight lines of 12 to 23 ideograms.

Text 15: ten lines of 23 ideograms each, with gaps.

Text 16: nine lines of 3 to 23 ideograms, with gaps.

Text 17: ten lines of 15 to 23 ideograms, with gaps.

Text 18: nine lines of 23 ideograms.

Text 19: One fragment is the same as the fragment in Text 1. Another fragment contains six lines of 6 to 23 ideograms.

Table I

Numbering of the photographs	Numbering of the fragments	Number of fragments on each photograph
1	103	1
2	106	1
3	107e, 107f	1
4	108f	1
5	101n, 102	2
6	104, 105	2
7	101n	1
8	102, 109	3
9	112	3
10	-	1
11	106	1
12	-	1
13	-	1
14	-	1
15	-	1
16	-	1
17	-	1
18	104	1
19	-	2

(2) Text 20: This is a fragment of a wood-block print and is the only original Tangut text with Tibetan transcriptions which we have at our disposal, i.e. neither a photograph nor a photocopy. This text appears not to

have been known to previous scholars.[2] This wood-block print fragment is a page of a wrapped-back bound volume (Chinese: bāobèi zhuāng), 8 x 19.5 cm in size, with upper and lower margins of 1 cm, consisting of six lines of twelve ideograms each. The paper has yellowed. The text is printed in black ink, as is usual for such wood-block prints, whereas the Tibetan transcriptions are in red, written in cinnabar.

(3) *Texts 21-24*: These are four texts kept in the Stein collection of the British Museum, one of which is a photograph of a manuscript fragment with Tibetan transcription and three of which are photocopies of such fragments. The photograph and photocopies are kept in the Nevskij Archive of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Leningrad where they are catalogued as фонд 69, опись 1, № 198.

The photograph bears the following caption: FRAGMENT OF HSI-HSIA (TANGUT) MS. ROLL, K.K. II. 0234.k, WITH INTERLINEAR TRANSLI-TERATION FROM KHARA-KHOTO. The text on the photograph, which is 17 x 26.5 cm in size, contains fourteen lines of 9 to 24 ideograms, with gaps. In our numbering, this photograph is Text 21.

The three photocopies of manuscript fragments are numbered in pencil on the back from 1 to 3, and correspond to Texts 22 to 24 by our numbering.

Text 22: four lines of 17 to 22 of ideograms, with gaps; the fragment on the photocopy is 11 x 23 cm in size.

Text 23: six lines of 17 to 22 of ideograms, with gaps; the fragment on the photocopy is 18 x 24 cm in size.

Text 24: four lines of 14 to 20 of ideograms, with gaps; the fragment on the photocopy is 12 x 20 cm in size.

§3. *History of the Tibetan transcriptions*

Texts 1 through 19 were first discovered by Władysław Kotwicz in the binding of a Tangut book, during the sorting of the Tangut materials which had been unearthed at Khara-Khoto in 1908-1909 and taken back to Saint Petersburg by an expedition of the Imperial Russian Geographic Society led by colonel Pëtr Kuz'mič Kozlov. Later these texts were taken to Peking by Aleksej Ivanovič Ivanov who in 1922 took up service as senior dragoman[3] at the Soviet embassy in China. In the summer of 1925 these texts must still have been in Ivanov's possession, because at this time he allowed Nikolaj Aleksandrovič Nevskij to make photographs of them which Nevskij took back with him to Ōsaka. These very photographs, currently kept in the Nevskij Archive in Leningrad, constitute the main body of our material. The whereabouts of the originals is unknown. However, we have received reassuring reports that the originals of these texts, as well as the lost Tangut dictionary entitled 狹 犻 鯲 瀶 ʔvẹ[2] ŋôn[2] 1dịẹ[1] mbu[1] 'Precious Rimes of the Sea of Ideograms' mentioned by Nevskij (1960:1, 129), might presently be kept in the Peking State Library where, according to reports of Western scholars, texts are to be found bearing the stamp of the Asiatic Museum in Saint Petersburg (personal communication by E.I. Kyčanov to K. B. Kepping, Leningrad, 30 May 1990). Just one year after taking the photographs, Nevskij (1926) published a description and list of 334 Tangut ideograms with their Tibetan transcriptions. It should be kept in mind that this was Nevskij's first encounter with the Tangut script, so it is no more than natural that he did not succeed in cataloguing all of the Tangut ideograms in these texts, particularly in view of the difficulty of reading the Tangut cursive script in these manuscripts. In this early work, Nevskij also did not register all the various Tibetan transcriptions of every Tangut ideogram. Afterwards, however, during the compilation of his Tangut

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[2] The authors wish to express their gratitude to Evgenij Ivanovič Kyčanov for drawing their attention to the existence of this text.

[3] In contrast to English "dragoman", which means something like 'interpreter or guide in countries where Arabic, Turkish, or Persian is spoken', the Russian term драгоман used here denotes a post at a diplomatic mission, particularly in the Far East.

dictionary. Nevskij (1960) undertook to catalogue all the Tibetan transcriptions of each Tangut ideogram. However, his untimely death in 1937 prevented the completion of this work.

It should be stressed that at the time of his death Nevskij was on the verge of completing a thorough reconstruction of Tangut phonology. This assertion is based on two hefty notebooks of 196 and 186 pages respectively, in which Nevskij noted down in beautiful calligraphic script the results of his life's work on the systematisation of the Chinese and Tibetan transcriptions of Tangut ideograms. Presently these two notebooks are kept in the Nevskij Archive of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Soviet Academy of Sciences where they are catalogued as фонд 69, опись 1, № 10-11.

We have exhaustively catalogued the Tibetan transcriptions from all currently known Tangut texts containing them, and as a result our card file contains 563 Tangut ideograms with their various Tibetan transcriptions. Initially Nevskij (1926) listed 334 Tangut ideograms with Tibetan transcriptions, but afterwards, in the two aforementioned notebooks, Nevskij notes Tibetan transcriptions which do not occur in our material. Perhaps still other Tangut texts with Tibetan transcriptions were known to Nevskij. In this connexion, the three-digit numbering of the fragments recorded on the photographic plates may be of some relevance (vide supra). On the other hand, we have also recorded Tibetan transcriptions of Tangut ideograms which are not listed in Nevskij's works.

It should be noted that Nevskij, in laying the foundation for the study of the Tibetan transcriptions, was the first to posit that the combinations of letters ꍔ- ld- and ꍖ- zl- represent one and the same initial in the Tibetan dialect by means of which the Tangut pronunciation was recorded (Nevskij 1926:xxv).

The renowned Tibeto-Burman scholar, Stuart Wolfenden devoted two elaborate articles to problems of the Tibetan transcriptions (Wolfenden 1931, 1934), in which he addresses the issue of how the Tibetan script was used to render the pronunciation of Tangut ideograms.

Nishida Tatsuo based his reconstruction of Tangut phonology on the Chinese, Tibetan, and Sanskrit transcriptions of Tangut ideograms, but it was the Chinese transcriptions which served as his main material. Nevskij's early work on the Tibetan transcriptions (Nevskij 1926) as well as the posthumously published draft of his dictionary (Nevskij 1960) were available to Nishida. In addition, Nishida (1966:512, 525) mentions the Tangut fragments with Tibetan transcriptions kept in the British Museum.

Sofronov (1968: I, 74) refers to twenty-three Tangut fragments with Tibetan transcriptions, which is to say that he used the same materials as we have, with the exception of text 20. En passant, in one of his footnotes, Sofronov (1968: I, 24, footnote 4) mentions the two notebooks discussed above which belonged to Nikolaj Aleksandrovič Nevskij and are currently kept in the Nevskij Archive of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Leningrad. From this we may conclude that Sofronov was familiar with Nevskij's extensive materials for the reconstruction of Tangut phonology at the time he began working on his own Tangut reconstruction (Sofronov 1968).

Tibetan transcriptions of Tangut ideograms are also adduced by Li Fànwén (1986:137-187). Li (1986:192) indicates that these transcriptions are taken from Nevskij. We are not familiar with the article by Nevskij to which Li refers (i.e. Nevskij 1930). However, it should be pointed out that the list of transcriptions adduced by Li Fànwén does not correspond to the list of Tibetan transcriptions published by Nevskij in 1926, nor with the Tibetan transcriptions listed in Nevskij's posthumously published Tangut dictionary (Nevskij 1960).

Let us consider some particulars of the Tibetan transcriptions. The Tibetan of that period lacked tonal distinctions, and the tones of Tangut are consequently not distinguished in the Tibetan transcriptions. Furthermore, on the basis of the combinations of Tibetan letters in these transcriptions, which are sometimes not only atypical but even utterly alien to conventions of Tibetan orthography, we may conclude that the phonology of the Tibetan of that period differed in a fundamental way from the phonology of Tangut.

The difficulty confronting the Tibetans who undertook to transcribe the Tangut text is reminiscent of a situation in which someone without linguistic training would set himself the daunting task of describing the sounds of, say, Circassian, having only the Cyrillic alphabet at his disposal. This is why the material of the Tibetan transcriptions must be evaluated in the light of modern articulatory and acoustic phonetics.

When the Tibetan transcriptions of a single Tangut ideogram happen to be all the same, although they have been done by different scribes (a fact which can be established on the basis of the different handwriting of the four scribes), it is safe to conclude that the phonological composition of the Tangut syllable has in such instances been rendered more or less accurately through the Tibetan script. On the other hand, great variety is occasionally observed in the transcriptions of a given ideogram. In these cases, it appears that the transcriptions constitute an attempt to approximate the sounds of a phonology alien to that of Tibetan. For example, the ideogram 羑带 'to keep silent(?)', reconstructed by Sofronov as $m\,\mathrm{I}^2$, is transcribed six times in the Tibetan transcriptions as ꣠ *mu* and five times as ꣠ *mi*, which suggests either a non-rounded back or central high vowel, corresponding to the Russian vowel 'ы' or the Turkish 'ı', or a front rounded high vowel, corresponding to German 'ü', which, although it *does* occur in modern Central, or dBus gTsaṅ, dialects of Tibetan, did not occur in the northwestern Tibetan dialects of that period.

We have therefore begun work on a monograph, dedicated to the Tibetan transcriptions of Tangut ideograms, the main aim of which is to make this valuable material accessible to all scholars in the field. On the basis of this material we shall also attempt to draw some of our own conclusions concerning the pronunciation of Tangut, and we shall compare our results with previous reconstructions of Tangut phonology.

In this monograph we hope to include:

(1) photographic reproductions of all the Tangut texts with Tibetan transcriptions that are available to us, (2) an introduction in which we provide a description of all of the materials used along with our assessment and analysis of it, (3) a concordance of all Tangut ideograms and their various Tibetan transcriptions, where the ideograms will be arranged by rime, and the phonetic reconstructions by various authors will be given for each ideogram, (4) an index of all the Tangut ideograms based on the upper left-hand radical in accordance with the classificatory system proposed by Nishida Tatsuo (1966:305-308), (5) an index of all Tangut ideograms based on the lower right-hand radical in accordance with the system developed by Vsevolod Sergeevič Kolokolov and Evgenij Ivanovič Kyčanov (1966:21-23), and (6) an index of all attested Tibetan transcriptions with the Tangut ideograms which correspond to them.

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Tone in PaTani and Central Tibetan: parallel developments?[1]

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is generally assumed among Tibeto-Burmanists that languages of the West Himalayish subbranch[2] of the Tibeto-Burman language family are not tonal. The aim of this paper is to show that at least one language of this subbranch (PaTani) is tonal. PaTani (also referred to as Manchati) is spoken in the PaTan valley in Himachal Pradesh, India. There has been very little work done on it, and none of the published works (e.g. S. Sharma 1987, D. Sharma 1989) identify it as a tone language. To quote D. Sharma:

"The glottal fricative /h/ tends to be realized as high falling tone in a prepausal position, as in /meh/ = /mè/, /ah/ = /à/ 'mouth, beak'. In Pattani tone is, however, a non-phonemic feature." (D. Sharma 1989:31)

The phonetic facts concerning PaTani tone are very similar to those of Central Tibetan. Similarities in the tone patterns in these two languages are not because the tones are cognate. Proto-Tibetan did not have tone, suggesting that these are parallel independent developments in each language. Though there has been some work done on tonogenesis in some Bodish languages (e.g. Sedláček (1959), Sprigg (1972), and Chang and Shefts (1964) on Central Tibetan, and Mazaudon (1975) on Tamang), it is hoped that a case-study of PaTani tone will contribute towards getting a better understanding of tonogenesis in this branch of TB.

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[2] The position of West Himalayish within the TB language family is shown below (following DeLancey 1987):

Tibeto-Burman
  Bodic
    Bodish
      Tibeto-Kanauri

Tibetan:	Western, Central, Southern, Khams, Amdo, Monpa
West-Himalayish:	Kanauri-Manchati/PaTani, Bunan-Theobar, Chaudangsi-Rangkas