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On the Tangut Version of the *Abhisamayālamkāra* Series Preserved at the IOM, RAS

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Abstract: This paper introduces the Tangut version of the *Abhisamayālamkāra* Series kept at the IOM, RAS, including the original *śāstra* and its commentaries. These documents indicate that the *Abhisamayālamkāra* was very popular and several commentaries were available in the Tangut region in the 12th c. In addition to Maitreya's original text and the most famous commentary by Pandita Haribhadra, we consider two other commentaries showing that translations different from Tibetan ones may be derived from Tangut understanding and exegesis of Maitreya and Haribhadra's works.

Key words: *Abhisamayālamkāra*, Xixia, Tangut, Buddhist, sūtra.

1. Introduction

Full Sanskrit title of the *Abhisamayālamkāra* (The Ornament of Clear Realization) is *Abhisamayālamkāra nāma prajñā pāramitopade śāstra*, and in Tibetan it is entitled *shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan zhes bya ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa*. The work is regarded as an *upadeśa* (instructional treatise) and, by its nature, it is an authoritative treatise presenting the hidden meaning and doctrinal teaching of *Prajñāpāramitā*. It is believed that the work, one of the famous *Five Treatises of Maitreya*, was written by Maitreya (Byams-pa) in the fourth century. As a technical treatise, the *Abhisamayālamkāra* is divided into eight subjects, each of which is further subdivided into seventy principles. This treatise is an analysis of the entire *Prajñāpāramitā* in terms of these principles, and the *Prajñāpāramitā* mentioned here refers to the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* (25.000 verses).

The *Prajñāpāramitā* was highly valued in late Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism, and due to its later circulation in Tibet, it also gradually became part of the mainstream teachings of Tibetan Buddhism. Because this work,

translators.⁴ The author also translated all the fragments of inv. № 5130 and provided further evidence on the translators listed in the postscript.⁵ In fact, there are various documents related to the *Abhisamayālamkāra* in the IOM, RAS Tangut collection. Preservation of these documents and their identification will be further discussed in this article.

2. The Collection of the *Abhisamayālamkāra* Series Preserved at the IOM, RAS

As the authoritative commentary on the hidden meaning of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, the *Abhisamayālamkāra* is too abbreviated to be understood by reading it directly. In terms of content and structure, it consists of only 273 stanzas in ten chapters. This is the reason why various interpretations and commentaries on this work have been created since Ārya Vimuktisena. The collection of the *Abhisamayālamkāra* Series excavated in Khara-Khoto not only consists of a wide variety of manuscripts in different formats, but the content of these documents (both their original verses and later commentaries) also varies. For instance, the aforementioned inv. № 5130 is the original *śāstra*, the contents of which are all in verse. This paper presents a translation, commentary, and facts about circulation of the Tangut version of the *Abhisamayālamkāra* Series, based on the various editions of documents preserved in Russia.

Although several catalogues of Tangut documents from Khara-Khoto have been published, the existence of the *Abhisamayālamkāra* Series in Tangut translation has not yet been adequately identified, since there is no uniformity in what is included and presented in various catalogues. Regarding the collections housed in the IOM, Gorbachëva and Kychanov recorded several documents with similar names.⁶ In contrast, Kychanov's catalogue, published later in 1999, contains fewer types of documents, with only three titles and ten documents. Among them, inv. № 5130, 4722, 5179, 5164, 2888, 8329, and 6449 are recorded as the *Shenghui bi'andao yaolun jiaoxue xianliangjie zhuangyanlun xiansong* 勝慧彼岸到要論教學現量解莊嚴論顯頌,⁷ inv.№ 4585 is recorded as the *Shenghui bi'andao yaolun*

⁴ NIE 2002: 50–54.

⁵ MA 2015: 143–151.

⁶ GORBACHËVA & KYCHANOV 1963: 97. The titles recorded in the catalogue include 勝慧彼岸之廣經名, 勝慧彼岸到之明鏡, 勝慧彼岸到要文教學現前解嚴莊之注, 勝慧彼岸到文教學現前解嚴莊曰, 勝慧彼岸到之最要教禁現前解莊之廣分明鏡.

⁷ KYCHANOV 1999: 491.

jiaoxue xianliangjie zhuangyan zhushishu 勝慧彼岸到要論教學現量解莊嚴注釋疏,⁸ inv. № 4593 is recorded as the *Shenghui bi'andao zhishiming* 勝慧彼岸到之釋明.⁹ Nishida provided a more detailed classification of the *Abhisamayālamkāra* Series with titles and numbers. Normally, we can easily find equivalent titles and document numbers in both Nishida and Kychanov catalogues. However, the numbering of this series is somewhat confusing and the documents are not recorded uniformly in the three catalogues. Sūtra titles and document numbers recorded in the three catalogues are listed as follows:

Sūtra title ¹⁰	NISHIDA 1977	GORBACHĚVA & KYCHANOV 1963	KYCHANOV 1999
(i)勝慧到彼岸要論	no.143	—	№ 4584, 5130, 6449 ¹¹
(ii)勝慧到彼岸要論教學現量解莊嚴	no.144	№ 618, 877, 878, 887, 2555, 7194	—
(iii)勝慧到彼岸要論教學現量解莊嚴之注	no.145	№ 2888, 4729	№ 4722, 5179, 5164, 2888, 8329
(iv)勝慧到彼岸要論教學現量解莊嚴之廣釋明鏡疏	no.146	№ 4752, 4995, 5025, 5148, 5935, 6341	—
(v)勝慧到彼岸之明鏡疏	no.147	№ 5922	—
(vi)勝慧到彼岸之廣釋明鏡	no.148	№ 4593	№ 4593

In terms of the number of documents collected, NISHIDA 1977 and GORBACHĚVA & KYCHANOV 1963 are the most comprehensive. There are six sūtras recorded by Nishida, while at the same time, it is pointed out that the sūtras no.147 and 148 are abbreviations of no.146, and actually there should be only 4 types. GorbachĚva and Kychanov's catalogue recorded six

⁸ KYCHANOV 1999: 525.

⁹ KYCHANOV 1999: 513.

¹⁰ The titles of the sūtras in the table are arranged according to the Nishida catalogue, because it is more comprehensive in terms of Tangut characters and the documents collected.

¹¹ No.143 in the Nishida catalogue corresponds to Kychanov's Xixia collection Tang. 96, 101, and 103. Tang. 96 refers to inv. № 4584, Tang. 101 including 7 documents named 禪養 祓龍 繖 茲 窺 殼 錄 鋒 辨 毓 茲 駭 靛 燻 玃. Nishida does not indicate which document corresponds to no. 143. Judging from the content of the texts, we believe that inv. № 5130 and 6449 are *śāstra*, do not contain the commentaries, and are consistent with no. 143. Moreover, Kychanov's catalogue does not record the Tang. 103.

sūtras under a different title, corresponding to Tang. 98–103. Kychanov only recorded three sūtras, which is the fewest among all the catalogues. It is also notable that although the separate numbered documents are classified under the same sūtra by Nishida or Kychanov, the Tangut sūtra titles are more or less different, and almost no identical titles can be seen in the catalogues. For example, *Shenghui bi'andao yaolun jiaoxue xianliangjie zhuangyanlun xiansong* 勝慧彼岸到要論教學現量解莊嚴論顯頌 in Kychanov catalogue contains seven documents, each of them having a distinctive title in Tangut. The titles and Chinese translations are as follows:

- inv. № 5130: 禪養瓶瓠繼茲菴駭縵鋒辨縵茲駭駭焯焯
勝慧彼岸到要門教授現前解莊嚴論顯頌
- inv. № 4722: 禪養瓶瓠繼茲菴駭縵鋒辨縵茲駭駭縵
勝慧彼岸到要門教授現前解莊嚴之注
- inv. № 5179: 禪養瓶瓠繼縵茲菴縵駭縵鋒辨論茲駭劬縵
勝慧彼岸到之要門之教授現前解莊嚴言之注
- inv. № 5164: 禪養瓶瓠繼縵茲菴駭縵鋒辨論茲駭縵
勝慧彼岸到之要門教授現前解莊嚴注
- inv. № 2888: 禪養瓶瓠繼茲駭縵縵
勝慧彼岸到莊嚴注釋疏
- inv. № 8329: 禪養瓶瓠繼茲菴駭縵鋒辨縵茲駭縵
勝慧彼岸到要門教授現前解莊嚴注
- inv. № 6449: 禪養瓶瓠繼縵縵茲駭縵鋒辨縵茲駭劬
勝慧彼岸到之最要教授現前解莊嚴言

Analysis reveals that these are not the same work. Therefore, identification of these documents cannot be based on the titles only, but requires further interpretation and explanation of the sūtra contents.

3. A Brief Introduction of the *Abhisamayālamkāra* Texts in Tangut

Although some documents discussed above have not been published yet, ten documents collected in the Kychanov catalogue are available at present. What follows is a more detailed overview and reidentification of the *Abhisamayālamkāra* Series texts in the Khara-Khoto collection.

3.1. *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*

The *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* is the original text of the work and presents its subjects in terse verses that are often vague in meaning and difficult to understand without supporting commentaries. Since the entire text is in verse style, when this sūtra was translated into Chinese by Master *Fa Zun* 法尊 during the Republican period, the word *song* 頌 (*gatha*) was added after the title. In the Khara-Khoto collection, inv. № 5130 and inv. № 6449 are fragments of this work. According to the postscript of inv. № 5130, its translators into Tibetan were the Indian commentator Vidyākara-prabha and the famous Tibetan translator Dpal brtsegs. The revisers were Go mi 'chi med and Blo ldan shes rab. This postscript also indicates that the text is based on the commentary *Abhisamayālaṃkāra vivṛti* by Haribhadra (seng ge bzang po). Although these translators are consistent with the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, only the verse text of the work has been extracted.

inv. № 5130

The fragment is a scroll-binding manuscript sized 18×187 cm. It is composed of separate disordered fragments put together. The beginning part is torn off, but the surviving part preserves the title and postscript at the end. By comparing the contents with the Chinese translation, it becomes clear that this manuscript is composed of three separate chapters with 82 verses out of the total of 273 verses. 27 of these extant 82 verses are from the opening chapter and the first subject 'Total Omniscience', and the other 55 are from the eighth subject 'The Dharma-body'. The sūtra title is *buu² źj#¹ tji¹ rew² nj² tshji¹ ηwu¹ dzji² tshjw¹ mjo¹ ju² tsji² sjwo² tshji² lj¹ dzju¹ lja¹* 禪 養 服 瓶 織 玃 蕪 骸 織 鋒 辨 維 玃 骸 骸 燄 玃 (An Instructional Treatise and Verses on *Prajñāpāramitā* called 'The Ornament of Clear Realization').

inv. № 6449

According to KYCHANOV (1999), this fragment consists of 25 folios in total from an accordion binding work sized 27.5×10.5 cm. Having examined different block-printed patterns, we concluded that 15 folios with 15 characters per line in verse style are parts of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*. The content is drawn from the beginning to the end of the first subject 'Total Omniscience'. This work preserves the complete beginning part of the sūtra, including the sūtra title, the inscription of the writer, and the honorary title of Tangut emperor Renzong (reigned 1139–1193). The Tangut text and translations are as follows:

so the translator will not be discussed. In the Khara-Khoto collection, four documents are related to this work, as follows:

inv. № 4722 & inv. № 5179

The fragments are handwritten scrolls sized 20.5×300 cm and 21×834 cm. Beginning parts of both documents are damaged, but the titles are preserved at the end of both documents. The title of inv. № 4722 is *buu² źjir¹ tji¹ rew² nj² tshji¹ ηwu¹ dzji² tshjw¹ mjo¹ ju² tsji² sjwo² tshji² jji¹ gj²* 禰養飛甌織茲窳醜緡緡緡緡緡緡 and the inv. № 5179 has one additional character *jji¹* 禰 (belong to) in the title. However, after comparing the content of these two sūtras, it is obvious that both of them are from the first volume of the same sūtra. There are also many small characters in both texts, including Tangut annotations and Chinese numerals, and № 4722 has more annotations than № 5179.

inv. № 5164 & inv. № 8329

inv. № 5164 is a handwritten scroll sized 20.5×300 cm. The beginning of the text is torn off. The sūtra is entitled *buu² źjir¹ tji¹ rew² nj² jji¹ tshji¹ ηwu¹ dzji² tshjw¹ mjo¹ ju² tsji² sjwo² tshji² gj²* 禰養飛甌織緡茲窳醜緡緡緡緡, which is consistent with the previous two fragments, but has no annotations written in small characters. inv. № 8329 is a folio from a butterfly binding manuscript, preserving 7 lines and 22 characters. The folio is the front page of the sūtra, and the first line is the title *buu² źjir¹ tji¹ rew² nj² tshji¹ ηwu¹ dzji² tshjw¹ mjo¹ ju² tsji² sjwo² tshji² gj²* 禰養飛甌織茲窳醜緡緡緡緡. The title indicates that both texts belong to the fifth volume.

3.3. Other commentaries

There are two other documents in the IOM Khara-Khoto collection, inv. № 2888 and 4585, that can be identified as commentaries on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*. Although these two manuscripts both have *gj² kjij¹ lj¹* 緡緡緡 (explanatory comments on *vivṛti*) in the sūtra title and can be presumed to be commentaries on Haribhadra's work *Abhisamayālaṃkāra vivṛti*, the content of these Tangut texts does not indicate clearly that they correspond to these commentaries of the Tibetan tradition. According to the catalogue of the Tibetan Tripitaka, there are two commentaries on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra vivṛti*, one is *Abhisamayālaṃkāra nāma pāramitopadeśāstra vivṛti*

duravabodhāloka nama tīkā by Chos kyi grags pa dpal,¹² and the other is *Abhisamayālaṃkārikā prajñā pāramitopadeśāstraṭīkā prasphuṭapadā nāma* by Chos kyi bshes gnyen.¹³ It is not obvious, at least for the moment, whether these two works are the original texts of these Tangut commentaries or not.

inv. № 2888

This manuscript is a butterfly binding text sized 20.2×16.5 cm for each folio. It consists of 52 folios with double lines on all four sides. Compared with other documents discussed above, this one is preserved well. Only the first four pages of the lower part of the folio are damaged, but otherwise this manuscript preserves an almost complete second volume of the work. This document is well-written, and the text rarely quotes verses of the original treatise by Maitreya. The sūtra title *buu² źjɿr¹ tji¹ rew² njɿ² sjwo² tshji² gjɿ² kji¹ ljɿ¹* 禪養飛靛織效駸翹翹 is the shortest of all the works and might have been an abbreviation for *buu² źjɿr¹ tji¹ rew² njɿ² tshji¹ ηwu¹ dzji² tshjwɿ¹ mjo¹ ju² tsji² sjwo² tshji² gjɿ² kji¹ ljɿ¹* 禪養飛靛織效翹駸翹織絳辨翹織效駸翹翹.

inv. № 4584

Based on the inscription at the end of the document, this is a handwritten scroll sized 20.5×960 cm, and the beginning of the scroll has been torn off. Although the title of this manuscript is similar to that of inv. № 2888, they are clearly not the same work. The text quotes more verses from the original treatise and several names, such as *nji² mɿ²* 罷孺 (Maitreya) and *ka² tsji² mee²* 鞞囉效 (Haribhadra), appear frequently in comments after the verses, indicating that this is an explanatory work on the original Maitreya's treatise and Haribhadra's *vivṛti*. The sūtra title is *buu² źjɿr¹ tji¹ rew² njɿ² tshji¹ ηwu¹ dzji² tshjwɿ¹ mjo¹ ju² gjɿ² kji¹ ljɿ¹ ηwɿ¹ tsew²* 禪養飛靛織效翹駸織絳辨翹翹廐駸, which is apparently volume 5. In addition, the inscription at the end gives us more information about the writer and the date of this manuscript. It was written by *gjuu² rjur¹ sjow¹* 孺孺 who made a vow and copied it in the fourth year of Guangding (1214) in the reign of Tangut Emperor Shenzong.

¹² See Derge Tibetan Tripitaka no.3794.

¹³ See Derge Tibetan Tripitaka no.3796.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, we have examined several Tangut translations of the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* and its commentaries that circulated in Northwest China. Based on the investigation and analysis of the contents of related documents available in the Khara-Khoto collection housed in the IOM, we concluded that all these documents might have been translated from Tibetan texts. These documents can be divided into three groups: the original *sāstra* by Maitreya, the *vivṛti* by Haribhadra, and the commentary on the previous two groups. The colophons of these works also describe the period in which these documents were translated and written. Most of them were written during the time of Emperor Renzong or Shenzong, that is, in the middle and late stages in the history of the Tangut state.

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