

Du Weimin

Introducing the New *Tangut Literature Series (TLS)*

DOI: 10.55512/wmo624240

Abstract: This article introduces the first ten texts published in colour in the new *Tangut Literature Series (TLS)* started in 2021 jointly by the Ningxia University, China, and the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences. All ten works of exceptionally high research value have been thoroughly studied and were published in black and white in 1990s in the collection titled *Heishuicheng Manuscripts Collected in Russia*. Their publication in the new TLS series is important as it makes visible all the colour stamps and punctuation marks on the manuscripts and woodprints.

Key words: Tangut studies, Tangut literature, Khara-Khoto, Pyotr Kozlov, Ningxia University, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, RAS.

From their early days, Tangut studies were an international research field. The Tangut (Xixia) state was located on the territory of present-day central northern China and was deeply influenced by Chinese culture. The main part of the Xixia cultural legacy is now kept in Russia. Therefore, cooperation between scholars of both countries is of utmost importance for the academic world.

In 2021 the Ningxia University (China) and the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Russia) started a collaborative program in order to preserve Tangut written heritage contemporary with the Chinese Song dynasty (960–1279) and to pass it to future generations. The *Tangut Literature Series (TLS)* project aimed at publishing in colour the most important Tangut documents, unearthed in the dead city of Khara-Khoto located in Ejina aimag in Inner Mongolia (China) by Pyotr Kozlov's expedition in 1908 and now kept at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, RAS, in Russia. The TLS, published by Gansu Culture Press, is co-edited by Professor Du Jianlu and Professor Irina Popova, Directors of

the Sino-Russian Joint Institute of Tangut Studies. Among the ten classical works selected to be published first were the most important and informative documents, including “Sea of Meanings Established by the Saints” (*Sheng li yi hai* 聖立義海), “Three Tactics of Huangshi-gong” (*Huangshi gong san lue* 黃石公三略), “Twelve Kingdoms” (*Shi er guo* 十二國), “Forest of Categories” (*Lei lin* 類林), “Collection of Xixia proverbs: New Refined Verses in *ci* Genre” (*Xixia yanyu ji: xin jijin he ci* 西夏諺語集: 新集錦合辭), “Military Treatise of ‘Sunzi’ with Three Commentaries” (*Sunzi Bingfa san zhu* 孫子兵法三注), “Collection of Verses” (*Shi ge ji* 詩歌集), “Mixed Categories” (*Za zi* 雜字), “Mixed Symbols of Three Parts of the Universe” (*Wen hai za lei san cai za zi* 文海雜類三才雜), “Tangut-Chinese Timely Pearl in the Hand” (*Fan Han heshi zhangzhongzhu* 番漢合時掌中珠). Description of all these works follows.

(1) *Sheng li yi hai* is a Tangut classical work by unknown author. In the 13th year of Qianyou reign (1182) of Xixia, it was engraved on woodblocks by the Tangut Bureau of Lettering and then printed on hemp paper in the butterfly-binding format. Its black and white facsimile was published in *Heishuicheng Manuscripts Collected in Russia*, Volume 11. The work has the same format and structure as the Chinese “Collection of Literature Arranged by Categories” (*Yi wen leiju* 藝文類聚) and explains various categories, such as constellations, celestial phenomena, seasons, mountains and rivers, plants and trees, agricultural fields, natural resources, farm tools, products of animal husbandry, wild animals, clothing, food, royal household, the system of officials, Buddhism, military affairs, relatives and marriage. The original text was divided into 15 chapters covering 142 categories, and its total length was about 60,000 words. The extant Tangut version includes 35 categories, that is, one fourth of the entire text. Each category is explained using different words and phrases, accompanied by two lines of commentary in small characters that mostly deals with Xixia natural geography, social life, ethics and morals.

(2) *Huangshi-gong san lue* was translated from Chinese into Tangut, engraved and then printed on hemp paper in the butterfly binding. Its black and white facsimile was published in *Heishuicheng Manuscripts Collected in Russia*, Volume 11. Compared with the extant *Huangshi-gong san lue* discovered in Dunhuang in Gansu Province (China), this Tangut version has more detailed commentaries and preserves its original form, serving as an important source for the study of the Chinese version of *Huangshi-gong san lue* and ancient Chinese military thought in general.

(3) *Shi er guo* was translated into Tangut by an unknown translator from the Chinese historical didactic compilation written by Sun Yu 孫昱 of the Tang dynasty. It was printed on hemp paper in the butterfly binding. The original Chinese version of the *Shi er guo* is lost. It was a collection of stories from the Spring and Autumn Period that contained numerous citations from historical works, such as “Spring and Autumn Annals with Commentaries by Zuo Qiuming” (*Zuo zhuan* 左傳), “Historical Records” (*Shi ji* 史記), “Discourses of the States” (*Guo yu* 國語), “Strategies of the Warring States” (*Zhan guo ce* 戰國策), “Garden of Stories” (*Shuo yuan* 說苑), “Master Lü’s Spring and Autumn Annals” (*Lü shi Chun qiu* 呂氏春秋), “The Han Feizi” (*Hanfeizi* 韓非子), “The Liezi” (*Liezi* 列子). The Tangut *Shi er guo* consisted of three volumes, with the first two considerably different from those in the original Chinese version. The content of this work was identified by Nikolai Nevsky in the 1930s. In 1963, Zoia Gorbacheva and Evgenii Kychanov described its physical condition in detail.¹ In 1995, Kirill Solonin published a facsimile of *Shi er guo* with a Russian translation.² The work was published first in *Heishuicheng Manuscripts Collected in Russia*, Volume 11.

(4) *Lei lin* was translated into Tangut from the Chinese text compiled by Yu Lizheng 于立政 of the Tang dynasty, and was then engraved by the Bureau of Lettering in the 13th year of Qianyou reign (1182) of Xixia. The original Chinese version of *Lei lin* was lost and only fragments of the reduced version titled *Zengguang fenmen lei lin zashuo* 增廣分門類林雜說 by Wang Pengshou 王鵬壽 of the Jin dynasty were later found in Dunhuang. The Tangut xylograph originally had 10 chapters (*juan*), but the first two were lost. Thus, chapters 3–10 are now available only in Tangut translation. The Tangut *Lei lin* was studied by the Russian scholar Kseniia Kepping³ and by the Chinese scholars Shi Jinbo, Huang Zhenhua and Nie Hongyin.⁴ The work was published in *Heishuicheng Manuscripts Collected in Russia*, Vol. 11.

(5) *Xixia yanyu ji: xin jijin he ci* was compiled by scholar Liang Deyang 梁德養 in the 7th year of Renzong Qianyou reign (1176) of Xixia, and was later supplemented by Wang Renchi 王仁持 in the 18th year of Qianyou of Xixia (1186). It is preserved intact in two versions. The text was published in

¹ GORBACHEVA & KYCHANOV 1963: 42–43.

² SOLONIN 1995.

³ KEPPIG 1983.

⁴ SHI JINBO & HUANG ZHENHUA & NIE HONGYIN 1993.

Heishuicheng Manuscripts Collected in Russia, Volume 10. Nikolai Nevsky translated 23 couplets of proverbs, which were published as part of his fundamental *Tangut Philology* in 1960. In 1974, Professor Kychanov translated *Xin jijin he ci* into Russian and published it.⁵ In 1993, Chen Bingying 陳炳應 prepared its Chinese translation based on the black and white facsimile of the original Tangut text in Professor Kychanov's Russian book.⁶

(6) *Sunzi bingfa san jia zhu*, a Tangut version translated from the Chinese text of *The Art of War* by Sunzi, was printed on hemp paper in the butterfly binding. The Chinese text of *The Art of War* by Sunzi exists in three versions, namely the Bamboo Slip version, the Military Canonical version and the Eleven Commentaries version. The Tangut version is rather different from these three and might be considered the work's "fourth version." It is likely that the Chinese text of *Sunzi*, which served as the original for the Tangut translation, is no longer extant. This Tangut version of *Sunzi* sheds light on the textual development of the *Sunzi* treatise under the Tang and Song dynasties, and for this reason it is highly valuable for research.⁷

(7) Tangut *Shi ge ji* was engraved by the Bureau of Lettering in the 16th year of Qianyou reign (1185) of Xixia and then printed on hemp paper in the butterfly binding. It includes verses "The Truth" (*Daoli* 道理), "Clever" (*Congyi* 聰穎), "Poetic Essay" (*Fu shi* 賦詩), "Great Poem" (*Da shi* 大詩), "Melody of the Moon" (*Yue yue yue shi* 月月樂詩), etc. In *Heishuicheng Manuscripts Collected in Russia*, its black and white facsimile was published under the name "A Collection of Palace Poems" (*Gongting shi ji* 宮廷詩集).

(8) *Za zi*, a textbook of Chinese characters for beginners, is one of the few preserved among Chinese non-Buddhist works of Xixia. Published on hemp paper in the butterfly binding, Xixia Chinese *Za zi* encompasses words, which were in common use at that time, and covers all aspects of Tangut life including family names, daily necessities, physical hygiene, production activities, cultural and political life, etc. This work was published in *Heishuicheng Manuscripts Collected in Russia*, Vol. 6.

(9) *San cai za zi*, a textbook of Tangut characters for beginners, survives intact in many versions. The extant woodblock version was engraved in the 18th year of Qianyou reign (1188) of Xixia and the manuscript one is dated to the 2nd year of Qianding (1224). *San cai za zi* is divided into three chapters under the headings: *Heaven*, *Earth*, and *Man*, with a number of

⁵ KYCHANOV 1974.

⁶ CHEN BINGYING 1993.

⁷ KEPPING 1979.

categories in each chapter, and numerous words listed under each category. For example, the first chapter *Heaven* includes the following categories: sky, sun, stars, lightning, thunder, clouds, hail, frost, dew, wind, and the Milky Way. The second chapter *Earth* includes the categories: earth, mountains, rivers and seas, treasures, silk, men's and women's clothes, trees, vegetables, plants, grains, horses, camels, cows, goats, birds, beasts, reptiles and insects. The third chapter *Man* contains surnames of ethnic minorities (*Fan* people), surnames of the Chinese-*Han* people, words related to family members, body, house, food and drink utensils. The colour facsimile in the TLS presents an enhanced and reassembled version of *San cai za zi* which is much more complete than the black and white version found in *Heishuicheng Manuscripts Collected in Russia*.

(10) *Fan Han heshi zhangzhong zhu*, the earliest known bilingual dictionary in China, was compiled to facilitate learning each other's languages for the Chinese-*Han* and Tangut people. The text was first engraved on woodblocks and then printed on hemp paper in the butterfly binding. In *Heishuicheng Manuscripts Collected in Russia* it was reassembled into three parts. The content of the whole dictionary is divided into the categories of *Heaven*, *Earth*, and *Man* and includes words such as the sun, the moon, stars, wind and rain, thunder and clouds, the four seasons and the five elements, the heavenly stems and earthly branches, year, eight directions, rivers and seas and mountains, treasures and mineral resources, fruits and vegetables, grains and cereals, birds, flowers, fish and insects, poultry and beasts, human organs, and the system of officials. Among them, the third volume containing the category *Man* (*Renshixia* 人事下) takes up almost half of the entire work. It includes words concerning human life, such as birth, studies, official promotion, trial, banquet, marriage, etc. In addition to words, it also contains phrases. This dictionary is an important text for research on Tangut language and characters, Xixia social history, culture and customs.

All ten works described above are exceptionally valuable for research. They were studied thoroughly and were published in black and white in the 1990s in the collection *Heishuicheng Manuscripts Collected in Russia*. Importantly, this new publication in the TLS series makes visible all the colour stamps and punctuation marks in full detail. The TLS series paves the way for a new stage in research on Tangut texts making it possible, in particular, to study them from the codicological point of view.

References

- Chen Bingying (tr.) 1993: 陳炳應譯: 西夏諺語集—新集錦合辭. Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe 太原: 山西人民出版社, 1993.
- GORBACHEVA, Zoia I. & KYCHANOV, Evgenii I. 1963: Tangutskie rukopisi i ksilografiy. Spisok otozhdestvlenykh i opredelennykh tangutskikh rukopisei i ksilografov kollektssii Instituta narodov Azii AN SSSR [Tangut Manuscripts and Woodblock Prints. Inventory of the identified and specified Tangut Manuscripts and Woodblock Prints in the Collection of the Institute of Peoples of Asia of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR]. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo vostochnoi literatury, 1963.
- KEPPING, Kseniia B. 1979: Sun Tsy v tangutskom perevode, Faksimile ksilografa, izdanie teksta, perevod, vvvedenie, kommentarii, grammaticheskii ocherk, slovar' i prilozhenie K.B. Kepping. [Sunzi in Tangut Translation. Facsimile of the Woodblock Print, Publication of the Text, Translation, Introduction, Commentaries, Grammar Sketch, Vocabulary and Supplement by K.B. Kepping]. Moscow: Nauka, GRVL, 1970.
- KEPPING, Kseniia B. 1983: Les kategorii. Utrachennaia kitaiskaia leishu v tangutskom perevode, Faksimile ksilografa. Izdanie teksta, vstupitel'naia stat'ia, perevod, kommentarii i ukazateli K.B. Kepping. [The Forest of Categories. A Lost Chinese leishu in Tangut Translation. Facsimile of the Woodblock Print. Publication of the Text, Introduction, Translation, Commentaries and Indices by K.B. Kepping]. Moscow: Nauka, GRVL, 1983.
- KYCHANOV, Evgenii I. 1974: Vnov' sobrannye dragotsennye parnye izrecheniia. Izdanie teksta, perevod s tangutskogo, vstupitel'naia stat'ia i kommentarii E.I. Kychanova [Newly Collected Precious Binary Sayings. Publication of the Text, Translation from Tangut, Introduction and Commentaries by E.I. Kychanov]. Moscow: Nauka, GRVL, 1974.
- SHI Jinbo 史金波 & HUANG Zhenhua 黃振華 & NIE Hongyin 聶鴻音 1993: A Study of Leilin 類林研究. Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin Chubanshe 銀川, 寧夏人民出版社, 1993.
- SOLONIN, Kirill Yu. 1995: Dvenadtsat' tsarstv. Faksimile rukopisi. Izdanie teksta, issledovanie, perevod s tangutskogo, kommentarii, tablitsy i ukazatel' K.Yu. Solonina. [Twelve States. Facsimile of the Manuscript. Publication of the Text, a Study, a Translation from Tangut, Commentaries, Tables and Index by K.Yu. Solonin]. St. Petersburg: Peterburgskoe Vostokovedenie, 1995.
-