Buddhistisch-Chinesisches Glossar (BCG) / A Buddhist Chinese Glossary

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Introduction

Buddhist Chinese – its linguistic position

Buddhist Chinese holds a middle position between Classical Chinese (fifth to third century BC) and the Middle Chinese idiom of the third to sixth century AD, the latter being based on the contemporaneous colloquial language. Buddhist Chinese, however, is not a pure and genuine Chinese idiom; rather, it is a translation language. With regard to its vocabulary, word formation and word order, Buddhist Chinese often seeks to imitate its Indian source texts. Thus, Buddhist Chinese can be described as a contact language between the Indo-European and the Sino-Tibetan language families.

Moreover, Buddhist Chinese is an instructive example of what we have called a 'religiolect'.[1] A religiolect is a kind of secret spiritual language. Buddhist Chinese developed its own idiosyncratic means of transforming Indic Buddhist terms into a formerly unknown variation of the Chinese language, which for the most part remains unintelligible to the average Chinese reader, both ancient and modern. The most important of these means include:

   • the phonetic transcription (音譯 *yīnyì* 'translation of sound'): 佛 b'i̯uət for *bud[dha]*;
   • the commenting translation: 飛行皇帝 *fēixínghuángdì*, 'emperor of all who fly and walk', for skt. *cakravartin*, a 'universal monarch';
   • the enigmatic rendering: 輪王 *lúnwáng*, the 'king of the wheel', again for skt. *cakravartin*, (*cakra* meaning 'wheel');
   • the reference to indigenous Chinese religions like Daoism and Confucianism: 道 *dào*, for the Buddhist (!) 'way' of salvation.

Accordingly, Buddhist Chinese always implies two perspectives: the Indian origin, i.e. the source language on the one hand and that of the Chinese reader and his traditional way of understanding, i.e. the target language, on the other.

Buddhist Chinese – a language of translation

Buddhist Chinese is a language of translation, created and cultivated in order to make Indian texts intelligible to a Chinese readership. Its source languages are Buddhist Sanskrit and, for many important texts, Gāndhārī, a Middle Indic language, closely related to Sanskrit. The target language was the literary Chinese used between the third and eighth centuries, an idiom of transition from late Classical Chinese to Middle Chinese. Since Sanskrit and Classical Chinese belong to different language fami-

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1   K. Meisig: *Buddhist Chinese: Religiolect and Metalanguage* 2008 (repr. 2010).

lies (Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan respectively), they are characterised by diametrically distinct features at both the word level and the sentence level.

Word level

• Whereas Sanskrit is an inflecting language, Classical Chinese and Middle Chinese have retained very few traces of ancient word inflection (for example the falling tone, a reflex of the perfect suffix *-s*) and have become isolating languages.

• Classical Sanskrit has lost the ancient Vedic, phonematically relevant, tonal – or melodic – accent; Classical and Middle Chinese, on the other hand, are tonal languages.

• In order to compensate for the loss of the former melodic accent, Sanskrit, by comparison with other world cultural languages, has cultivated, and even grammatically systematised, the art of building compounds to the extreme. Classical Chinese, on the contrary, builds compounds only by way of exception because it is able to use distinct phonematically relevant tones to differentiate meaning. In a period of transition marked by the growing spreading of homophone words as archaic prefixes and suffixes fell into disuse, emerging Middle Chinese more and more uses synonymous compounds to express semantic differentiation.

Sentence level

• The Sanskrit word order is that of a SOV language, whereas Chinese on all historical levels belongs to the SVO languages.

The new translation language, which emerged between the third and eighth centuries, and which we call 'Buddhist Translation Chinese' or simply 'Buddhist Chinese', as opposed to genuine literary Chinese (which is based on Classical Chinese and contemporaneous colloquial Chinese) therefore has to solve two fundamental problems:

• first, the structural difference between source language and target language, and

• second, the diachronic linguistic change from Classical to Middle Chinese.

The new religiolect which emerges during this process, i.e. Buddhist Chinese, is consequently characterised by striking differences from genuine Chinese. At the word level, there is the imitation of Indian compounds; at the language level, it retains the word order of the Indian source language, especially when translating formulas. It thus violates the syntactical rules of the Middle Chinese target language.

Buddhist Chinese developed into one of the great cultural languages of mankind. Its influence is still felt in Modern Chinese, Japanese, or Korean, albeit the vast majority of speakers remain unconscious of its impact. Besides Sanskrit and Classical Chinese, Buddhist Chinese is one of the most influential cultural carriers and has played a key role in the transformation of the indigenous cultures of Central and East Asia.

Towards a dictionary of Buddhist Chinese

Scientific knowledge of Buddhist Chinese, though one of the great world cultural languages, is still rudimentary. Above all, there is an urgent need for a reliable, up-to-date dictionary. Such a dictionary ought to fulfil three requirements:

- diachrony
- verifiability
- digitalisation

Diachrony means historical depth that depicts the heterogeneous strata of the Chinese Buddhist canon. *Verifiability* requires precise references with volume, page, column and line, along with elucidating text quotations. *Digitalisation* means availability and usability of the dictionary in an electronic version.

An overview of the state of lexicographic research on Buddhist Chinese reveals three different kinds of reference works:

1) general and encyclopaedic dictionaries of words, or better: (Chinese) characters, that include all historical levels of the Chinese language, but touching on Buddhist Chinese only occasionally,

2) specialised dictionaries focusing on Buddhist terms,

3) glossaries of single texts.

None of these three kinds fulfil all the three aforementioned requirements of diachrony, verifiability and digitalisation.

Ad 1): The main disadvantage of general dual-language dictionaries like Mathews (M), Rüdenberg (Rü), recently Ricci, and even Liang's *Far East Chinese English Dictionary* (Liang) (the latter a treasure trove particularly for Buddhist Chinese), is that they do not give place references. The user can only guess whether the given meanings refer to the classical language, to later literary Chinese or even to modern Mandarin. Without references, the claimed meanings are not even verifiable.

Ad 2): Dictionaries specialising in Buddhist terms, such as Soothill's *Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, Nakamura's *Bukkyōgo Daijiten* and Hirakawa's *Buddhist Chinese Sanskrit Dictionary*, do not give any place references, either. Or if they do, like Nakamura, they are very vague. Moreover, as they almost completely neglect grammatical particles (so-called 'empty words', 虛詞 *xūcí*, like, for instance, 以 *yǐ*, which marks the anteposed accusative case), they tend to let the user down with the non-technical, narrative passages of Buddhist sūtra or legendary literature. Charles Muller's on-line dictionary is a useful tool, but it is just a compilation of existing glossaries. As it is not rooted in original texts, it fails to meet the requirements of diachrony and verifiability.

Ad 3): The glossaries of single texts[2] of the Chinese Buddhist canon do give evidence of the different historical layers from which they originate; most of them even provide exact references to passages; but, as to be expected, they refer only to single texts and their isolated usage of language. Moreover, in the case of difficult text passages, it is extremely laborious and time-consuming (and usually unrewarding) to systematically consult all existing glossaries.

The Buddhist Chinese Glossary (BCG) at hand tries to avoid the aforementioned disadvantages by providing 1) a diachronic perspective, giving exact place references including text quotations in an historical array; it thus permits 2) verifiability; and it makes the material available by 3) digital technique. In its present state, the BCG is not yet a dictionary, but a glossary, containing an approximate number of presently 4,000 lemmata, prepared, however, from a representative selection of texts, preparatory to a future, more comprehensive dictionary.

Structure of the lemmata

The entries are arranged according to radical and number of strokes; compounds again according to radical and strokes.

As a rule, a series of characters is treated as one single lemma when it can be defined as a compound. For example, 未曾有 *wèicéngyǒu* (lit. 'what has not happened before', i.e.:) 'a miracle', a translation of skt. *prātihārya*, does not need to be segmented over three lemmata.

The Chinese character follows after the numbers of radical and strokes; if necessary, graphematic variants are mentioned, e.g.: 19,7 勅 (variants 勑 and 敕).

The transcription is given according to the 拼音 *Pīnyīn* system, followed by the more accurate Wade-Giles system as used by U. Unger in his *Glossar des Klassischen Chinesisch* (UGl). Unger's 'moderately historicising' transcription still takes into consideration the difference between palatals and gutturals, e.g.: 蕉 tsiao[1] 'plantain', but 澆 kiao[1] 'to consecrate'; *Pīnyīn* both *jiāo*. Or 薪 sin[1] 'fuel', but 欣 hin[1] 'delighted'; *Pīnyīn* both *xīn*. In addition, Unger's system reflects the fi-

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2   Here is just a selection: Li Wei: *Schwanfrau und Prinz*, 2010, glossary pp. 159-247. – S. Karashima: *A Glossary of Kumārajīva's Translation of the Lotus Sūtra*, 2001. – S. Karashima: *A Glossary of Dharmarakṣa's Translation of the Lotus Sūtra*, 1998. – M. Meisig: *König Śibi und die Taube*, 1995, glossary pp. 161-261. – Glossary in K. Meisig: *Das Sūtra von den vier Ständen,* 1988. – Glossary in K. Meisig: *Das Śrāmaṇyaphala-Sūtra*, 1987. – R. K. Heinemann: *Dictionary of Words and Phrases as Used in Buddhist Dhāraṇī: Chinese-Sanskrit; Sanskrit-Chinese*, 1985. – A. Hirakawa: *Index to the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, 1973-1978. – C. Willemen: *Udānavarga, Chinese-Sanskrit Glossary*, 1975. – V. Stache-Rosen: *Das Saṅgītisūtra und sein Kommentar Saṅgītiparyāya*, 1968, glossary pp. 227ff. – G. M. Nagao: *Index to the Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṅkāra*, 1961. – D. T. Suzuki: *An Index to the Lankavatara-Sutra*, [2]1934. – J. Rahder: *Glossary of the Sanskrit, Tibetan, Mongolian and Chinese Versions of the Daśabhūmika-Sūtra*, 1928. – R. Sakaki: *Mahāvyutpatti*, [3]1965 ([1]1925). – É. Chavannes: *Cinq Cents Contes,* 1911, index in Vol. 4. –

nal *-p*, *-t*, *-k* consonants of the Middle Chinese: 習 xí (sih^2 < zi̯əp) 'to practise'; 八 bā (pah^1 < pwăt) 'eight'; 足 zú (tsuh^2 < tsi̯wok) 'foot'. The more subtle differentiations of Unger's transcription will be welcomed for instance by Korean, Japanese or Cantonese speakers whose languages are, in this respect, more closely related to Middle Chinese than is modern Mandarin.

For scientific reasons, the pronunciation should, ideally and invariably, be that of Middle Chinese of the fourth to sixth century, since the majority of our texts belong to that historical era. Instead, strictly for practical reasons, we have decided to give preference to the modern pronunciation. This is given according to Taiwanese usage, which can be found, for instance, in Mathews (M), Rüdenberg (Rü), or Liang. Generally (but not always!), the different northern Chinese 漢 Hàn usage (found in dictionaries of the modern language like HDCCD or http://dict.leo.org/) are mentioned as well, for example '60,10 微 wéi (wei^2) (also: *wēi*)'.

Only if the character is used to render a phonetic transcription (音譯 *yīnyì*), is the Middle Chinese pronunciation added: 鉢 bō (poh^1) < puât, for skt. *pāt(ra)*, pā. *pat(ta)*, 'alms bowl'; or:

> 209,0   鼻波密多 Bíbōmìduō (pi^4 po^1 mih^4 to^1) < b'ji` puâ mi̯ĕt tâ. Gdh. *Vi(s)vāmitta* (the falling tone of the Middle Chinese in 鼻 b'ji` reflects an older *-s* ;) ≠ pā. *Vessāmitta* (skt. *Viśvāmitra*).

The phonetic transcriptions follow Bernhard Karlgren's GSR and Ulrich Unger's UGl, and in addition SPS (p. 382ff.) and SVS (p. 173ff). We do not use Pulleyblank's system of transcription, favoured by many because of its simplifications. At first sight, these seem convenient. However, Pulleyblank's system unnecessarily simplifies the detailed phonetic differentiations compiled by Karlgren by means of meticulous collation from Cantonese, Japanese, Korean and other East-Asian languages.

The translation is given in both German and in English. The English supplement seemed unavoidable, since experience teaches that internationally indological and buddhological publications in German are internationally rarely consulted. On the other hand, the English cannot simply replace the German without in many cases sacrificing the subtlety of meaning that German, as a medium of translation, is capable of expressing. Besides, German is still a scientific language, too, and there are more than a handful of international scholars who have a better grasp of German than English.

The German and English approaches to meaning depend on how a Chinese speaker of the fourth to sixth century would have understood the Chinese text. It is not at all a translation of the lost Indic source, and definitely not a translation of the – in parts very different – Sanskrit or Pāli parallels. Wherever possible, in addition to the literal translation of the Chinese, we quote the Sanskrit or Pāli equivalent. If there is a direct word-by-word parallel, it is tagged by an exclamation mark.

29,1   叉手向 chā shǒu xiàng (ch'a¹ shou³ hiang⁴). ehrerbietig mit gefalteten Händen begrüßen // to fold the hands towards (while greeting), to make *añjali*. DĀ 95c22! = DĀ 98b15! 叉手向佛 ≠ pā. *yena bhagavā ten' añjaliṃ paṇāmetvā*.

In order to avoid overlong headwords, single equivalents are added to the quotation as concordance text:

4,2   久遠 jiǔyuǎn (kiu³ yüan³). lange // a long time. DĀ 82c22! ≠ DĀ 98b28! 乃往過去久遠世時 ≠ pā. *bhūtapubbaṃ*.

Ideally, each meaning should be clarified by at least one (but not more than three) text quotations.

At the end of the apparatus of quotations, where applicable, cross references to parts of compounds are made:

122,14   羅 luó (lo²) < lâ. Phonetic transcription. In: 5,10 乾陀羅 (咒). 9,4 伊尼羅斯. 9,4 伊車能伽羅. 9,8 俱薩羅. 36,3 多羅. 38,8 婆羅損陀. 38,8 婆羅門. 64,10 損陀羅. 64,11 摩睺羅伽. 75,13 檀波羅蜜. 85,5 沸伽羅娑羅. 85,5 波羅㮈 . 85,5 波羅蜜. 86,6 烏鉢羅. 109,13 瞿羅. 116,2 究羅檀頭. 120,8 緊那羅. 137,4 般遮羅. 140,8 菴羅. 162,5 迦樓羅. 162,5 迦維羅越 (國). 163,6 郁伽羅. 170,5 阿修羅. 170,5 阿耨多羅三藐三菩提. 170,5 陀羅尼. 172,11 難羅尸. 181,3 須羅.

The proposed meanings have been compiled from the texts, not from other dictionaries. Nevertheless, here and there special translations are quoted from other dictionaries, which cannot (or not yet) be verified in Buddhist Chinese texts, but are suitable to clarify a meaning in Buddhist Chinese a) by its origin in Classical Chinese, b) by its parallels in contemporaneous non-Buddhist Chinese literature, and c) by its development in the literary Chinese of later centuries. In such cases, we generally quote relevant entries in UGl, M, Rü and Liang.

154,6   賊難 zéínàn (tsêh² nan⁴). Räuberei // robbery. RĀC 3.51.
●●● 賊 zéi (tsêh²). morden, meucheln, verderben; Meuchelmörder, Bandit, Verbrecher (UGl). a thief, a burglar, a robber, a bandit (Liang).

Text passages contained in the BCG

Volume, page, column and line according to T.

Sūtras/Āgamas

DĀ 1.82a7-88b7 ≠ Ambaṭṭhasutta, in parts.
DĀ 1.94a19-96c15 ≠ Soṇadaṇḍasutta, in parts.
DĀ 1.96c17-101b8 ≠ Kūṭadantasutta, complete.
DĀ 1.101b15-102c23 ≠ Kevaddhasutta, in parts.
MĀ 1.804a21-805c9 ≠ Cūḷa-Māluṅkyasutta, in parts.
SĀ 2.123c-124a ≠ Bahuvedaniyasutta, in parts.

Legends

ASC 4.203c1-204a5 (≠ Yaśomatī), complete. 4.221b14-c20 (≠ Śaśa), complete.
KSH 3.1b12-3.1c25 (=KST VI), complete; 3.44b9-46b4 = Sudhanāvadāna, complete.
KST: 4.351c6-4.352b8 (=T 202 = HYK, ~ 445 A.D.), complete.
KST II: 4.531b25-4.531c24 (= T 208, 405-417 A.D.), complete.
KST III: 3.333b10-3.334a13 (= T 160, 12th century), complete.
KST IV: 53.137c5-53.138a11 (= T 2121, 502-516 A.D.), complete.
KST V: 25.87c27-25.88c27 (= T 1509, 402-405 A.D.), complete.
KST VI: 3.1b12-3.1c25 (= KSH = T 152, 247-280 A.D.), complete.
KST VII: 4.321a26-4.323c3 (= T 201, traditionally 402-405 A.D.), complete.

Didactic and missionary literature

RĀC 32.493-510 (= T no. 1656), in parts.
FH 51.857a4-866c6 = 法顯 Fǎxiǎn (Fah³-hien³) = T 2085, few occasional excerpts.

Bibliographical references

Texts

ASC = Avadānaśataka, Chinese version, 撰集百緣經 Zhuànjíbáiyuánjīng, T no. 200 = 4.203-257; cf. M. Meisig: *Ursprünge buddhistischer Heiligenlegenden,* 2004.

ASS = Avadānaśataka, Sanskrit version: J.S. Speyer (ed.): *Avadānaśataka. A Century of Edifying Tales Belonging to the Hīnayāna* (Indo-Iranian Reprints, III). 'S-Gravenhage 1958 (St. Petersburg ¹1906-1909, Bibliotheca Buddhica, III).

CBETA → T.

Choong: *The Fundamental Teachings of Early Buddhism*, 2000.