SOME PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON THE HISTORY OF CHINESE TRANSLATION OF BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES

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1. Dr. Hakuju Ui's Yakkyōshi Kenkyū

In the second of Dr. Hakuju Ui's postumously published works, Yakkyōshi Kenkyū (訳経史研究 A Historical Study of the Chinese Translation of Buddhist Scriptures) there are five chapters of articles related to the translation of the Buddhist Scriptures. Though this volume also deals with such translators as Lokakṣema (支谶) and Chih-ch’ien (支謙), it is mostly concerned with An shih-kao (安世高) and his translations. The depth and devotion of Dr. Ui’s interest in An shih-kao is well seen in the chapter titled “Shinabukkyō saishō no Yakkyōgudensha-Anseikō no Kenkyū” (“A Study of An shih-kao, the 1st Great Chinese Buddhist Translator”). The greatest accomplishment of this research was the careful Japanese translation of the 19 sutras which had been ascertained to be An shih-kao’s translations. In this endeavor, Dr. Ui made very careful and detailed notes about the transliterations and the technical terms employed by An shih-kao in his translations, adding many new discoveries and insights, a result of his deep knowledge of things Indian as well as Buddhist.

There is nothing especially new in the method of Dr. Ui’s Japanese translations—the so-called ‘kambun no yomikudashi-kundoku’ (arranging the Chinese characters according to Japanese syntactical rules and supplying the necessary particles, etc.). However, precisely because of that, the task appears to have exceeded the expectations of a seasoned translator such as Dr. Ui. Indeed, as Dr. Ui stated, “Through this work I’ve come to realise that the reading of kambun is even more difficult than the reading and explication of Sanskrit.”

It is inevitable that in the translations made during the early days of Chinese Buddhism (the later Han dynasty) there were many problems associated with both the way ideas were translated and the terms used to trans-
late them. As Dr. Ui points out, in addition to the many repetitions and contradictions, there are also many instances in which the translator interpolated his own ideas directly into the body of the text. For these and other reasons, modern renditions of these problem-filled translations involves a much greater effort than that of the later translations. It is of course a great help when the original Sanskrit or another translation of the same text exists, but when we have neither of these aids there is no choice but to directly attack the text by itself. Thus it was natural that with the traditional method of re-arranging the Chinese characters to fit Japanese syntax Dr. Ui found many places which were very difficult to understand. These instances were all carefully annotated by Dr. Ui.

In any research which concerns itself with such early translations as those of An shih-kao there arises a need to utilise the results of the research into the phonetics and syntax of the Chinese of that period. Further, because many of these early translations were rendered from colloquial languages of Central Asia, one must be aware of trends of thought and work being done on the Central Asian languages, especially for the precise comparison and determination of transliteratives, etc. Thus, the full development of the study of the language of the early translations obviously requires the participation and co-operation of various scholars in all of the related fields.

As for Dr. Ui’s research, it includes the investigation of the various texts attributed to An shih-kao as well as later translations of those texts ascertained to be An shih-kao’s translations. That is, he studied the other 34 extant texts whose translation was spurious attributed to An shih-kao, both through the entries in the early sutra catalogues as well as through style and content. Through the careful examination of each text, Dr. Ui newly clarified the previously held suspicion that none of these texts are really the translations of An shih-kao, but were merely attributed to him at a later period.

II. The Three Areas of the study of the History of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Scriptures (HCTBS)

Dr. Ui’s research corresponds to that area of the HCTBS which is termed ‘the research of texts translated by the same person’ (諸譯別譯綱の研究). There are two other basic areas of the HCTBS besides this, the ‘study of the Buddhist catalogues’ and the ‘study of the different translations of a single text’. As Prof. T. Hayashiya has pointed out, these three areas all stand in complementary relations to one another. Although the last two areas were treated by Prof. Hayashiya in his books Kyōroku Kenkyū (翻訳研究) and Iyakkōryū ni no Kenkyū (異譯類的研究), there has not as yet been any comprehensive research done in the 1st area, namely the research of all the works attributed to one translator. Dr. Ui’s work on An shih-kao notwithstanding, the research in this area has not advanced very far. It is to be hoped that Dr. Ui’s work, which goes far to filling in the blanks in this area, will stimulate others to further research in this field.

Among these three areas, the study of the Buddhist catalogues concerns itself with a study of the composition, unique characteristics, and different types of catalogues of Buddhist scripture which were compiled in China. Prof. Hayashiya’s Kyōroku Kenkyū is an example of this type of research. There are more than 10 extant catalogues which were compiled before the end of the T’ang dynasty, and the 1st step in the study of the HCTBS lies in the proper critique of these catalogues and their entries. Precisely for this reason it is very important to have a grasp of the special characteristics and features of each catalogue so as to be able to make appropriate use of their contents. Thus Prof. Hayashiya’s research, in which he concretely enumerates the points which must be known in order to actually use these catalogues, is still very useful for scholars today. Today, however, with the results of the research carried out in the other two areas we must re-evaluate these catalogues and begin to correct the weak areas of past research.

The next area, ‘the study of the different translations of the same text’, is concerned with a comparative study of the instances in which one text has been translated two or more times in different periods. Based on this research, one then investigates chronological differences, special features and changes within a given textual tradition. As a method of correctly determining the original meaning of a text, this method was used long ago by Tao-an and others, and today it is often used in conjunction with the research of the original Sanskrit text. Though the results of such inquiries form one aspect of the HCTBS the focus of the concern here is in making clear the differences and uniquenesses of the chronologically different Chinese translations. Naturally, the greater number of texts available for comparison the more profitable the research will be. It is, however, usually rather dangerous to reason straight from a difference in style or vocabulary between two or more texts which have been ascertained to be different translations of
the same textual tradition to conclusions about the translator or period of translation. This is so because of the need to enter careful considerations about the possible chronological and geographical differences in the Indian or Central Asian original. Again, as famous translators such as Kumārajīva or Hsūn-tsang greatly influenced those who came after them, it often becomes difficult to find individually distinctive translations. Even in the case of the earlier translations, as it was common to refer to a still earlier translation if there was one, distinctive features of the new version are often blurred. Though this type of research has such difficulties, as a means of determining the age of a translation this research is nonetheless very valuable. It further is an indirect aid in the attempt to understand the difficult terms and translatives employed in earlier translations.

In his Yakkyōshi Kenkyū Dr. Ui has shown where some of An shih-kao's translations are conflated with his own opinions. It will be interesting to see if future research will bring to light conflations in other texts as well. Prof. Hayashiya's Iyakkyōrui no Kenkyū also contains many concrete examples of this second area.

Next, the 'study of the different translations of one translator' entails the research of all texts attributed to the same translator, and, as already mentioned, Dr. Ui's work on An shih-kao falls into this category. For this type of research, one gathers all of the information about the translators life, particularly concerning his translations, from the prefaces and after-words of the texts, biographies, etc. (much of these materials are gathered together in Tokiwa Dajo's Gokan yori Sōsei ni itaru Yakkyō Sōroku 後漢より宋齊に至る訳経総録), and attempts to clearly establish the total picture regarding his translations. Then one must examine all of the extant texts for style, vocabulary, etc. The purpose of this research is to establish the translators style and vocabulary peculiar to his translations, and then use this information to pick out any translations which may have been erroneously attributed to him. This is often a very difficult task, however, as even within one translator's work one can often see great divergences in style and word usage from period of his life to the next, as well as differences which appear due to the assistants who helped in the translations. The older the translation, generally the more distinctive are the styles and vocabularies, which thus makes it easier to find the interpolations and fabrications of later ages.

III. Lost Texts, Apocryphal Texts, and Texts of Which the Translator is Unknown

Itsu-zon-kyō (逸存譯) are those texts which, through quotes in other suttas, we know once existed but are no longer known to be extant. For example, such texts as the Shih-chia-p’u (释迦譯), the Ching-là-i-hsiang (鍾律異相), the Fa-yüan-chu-lin (法苑珠林), the Chu-ching-yao-chi (諸經要集) or the I-ch’ü-liu-tieh (義楚六帖) all contain quotes from many suttas, both those still extant and those no longer extant. This is also true with regard to the MSS. discovered at Tun-huang. Needless to say, those texts which are no longer included among the extant collections would invaluable source material for the study of the HCTBS as well as helping to ascertain which the extant testimonium had undergone.

The study of those texts of which the translator is no longer known is also very important, as there are many problems among the older suttas of this category. For example, the Yü-lan-p’ên-ching (盂蘭盆譯) was at one time considered to be one of those suttas of unknown translator (by Seng-yu, in his Ch’u-san-tsang-chi-tsi 出三藏記略) although the catalogue of the Taishō Tripitaka follows the tradition established by the Li-tai-san-pao-chi (脈代三寶紀), most likely falsely, in attributing the translation to Dhamarakṣa (竺法護). Among the texts which have been considered as belonging to this category, there are really many different types of texts, including summaries and extracts which shouldn’t be viewed as independent texts, apocryphal texts, etc. Thus these texts all deserve a second investigation.

The research of those texts labeled 'apocryphal' is also one of the subjects of the HCTBS. There are many controversies about whether these texts originated in India or China. Most of these problems remain unsolved today. A great many of these texts were discovered at Tun-huang and the results of their research continues to be published at a rapid pace. Though the study of the ideas contained in these apocryphal texts lies outside the perimeters of the HCTBS proper, the advancement of the philosophical research of these texts depends on making full use of the results of the research of the HCTBS.

IV. Research Materials

Although there are not that many books or articles which deal with the HCTBS per se, any historical research which uses the Chinese translations of the scriptures as its source has some kind of connection with the study
of the HCTBS. As such, it is common in these various studies that the date of a translation or problems concerning a translator are taken up. Thus, in a complete bibliography these materials should not be left out. However, here we will limit the works cited to those which more specifically deal with one of the areas of the HCTBS, methods of translation, transliteraton, apocryphal sutras, etc.

History of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Scriptures
The following are the basic research materials for the HCTBS:
1. Ono, Gemmyō (小野玄妙), 仏教経典総論 (An Introduction to the Buddhist Scriptures). Published as a supplement to the 仏書解説大辞典, Dai-tō Shuppansha, 1936.
2. Tokiwa, Dairō (常盤大地), 後漢より宋末に至る訳経総録 (A General Catalogue of the Translated Scriptures—from the Latter Han to the Sung-Ch‘i’), Tōhō Bunka Gakuen, Tokyo Kenkyūjo, 1938.

In addition to these works, there is the pre-war research of such scholars as Dr. Mochizuki Shinkō, Dr. Matsumoto Bunzaiburō, Dr. Shiio Benkyō, Dr. Sakáno Köyō and others. Though their research is somewhat dated by today’s standards, there is still much that is valuable in them.

5. Ui, Hakujirō (宇井伯矩), 訳経史研究 (A Historical Study of the Chinese Translation of Buddhist Scriptures), Iwanami Shoten, 1970. This is the work of Dr. Ui’s which contains his outstanding Japanese translations of An shih-kao’s works as well as his work on transliterations.
6. Ui, Hakujirō, 訳道観研究 (A Study of Shih Tao-an), Iwanami Shoten, 1955. This work contains materials on the translation of the period before Shih Tao-an as well as Japanese translations of Tao-an’s work.
7. Mizuno, Kögen (水野高元), 仏教聖典とその訳経 (The Buddhist Scriptures and their Translation), Gogaku Ronso, no.1, Kei Daigaku Gogaku Kenkyūjo, 1948. This work deals with those works translated from Pali into Chinese.

10. T‘ang Yung-t‘ung (湯用彤), 仏教思想南北朝仏敎史 (Shanghai, 1938).
11. Ōno, Hōdō (大野道道), 大果経緯の研究 (A Study of the Ta-ch‘eng Ch‘ieh-ching), Sankibō, 1954.
12. Hirakawa, Akira (平川達), 詞源の研究 (A Study of the Sinjya-piṣaka), Sankibō, 1960. In particular, the chapter titled “訳経仏典等の研究” (“Research of the Chinese translations of the Vinaya”) deals with the topic of the translated Vinaya texts very minutely.
13. Hirakawa, Akira, 初期大乗仏教の研究 (Studies in Early Mahayana Buddhism). Shunjūsha, 1968. This work is concerned with the dates of the early translations of the Chinese translations of the Mahayana scriptures.
14. Fujita, Kōtsū (藤田常通), 原始浄土思想の研究 (A Study of the Early Pure Land Buddhism). Iwanami Shoten, 1970. This work contains a re-evaluation of previous theories concerning the translator of the Chinese version of the Larger Sukhāvatīvatsa (無量寿経). This is a good example of the efficient use and critique of the results of the research of history of the Chinese canon.

Now, if one checks under the appropriate item in the following works, he will be able to find all of research and problematic of a given text, at least that which was known up to the time of publication:
17. 国訳一切経 (Kokuyaku isai kyō), Dai-tō Shuppansha, 1928–present.
18. 国訳大辞経 (Kokuyaku Daizo kyō), Kokumin Bunko Kankōkai, 1921.

Although there is little Western research on the Chinese canon, the following works are available:

The following two works are those most frequently cited by Western scholars. The second of the two contains the results of research done after
the publication of the first.
22. Japanese Alphabetical Index of Nanjō's Catalogue of the Buddhist

Translation Techniques
The following works deal with the problems and questions of translation techniques as pertaining to the Chinese canon:
心として—” (“The Translation Theories of the Chinese Buddhists—Centering on the Wu-shih san-pu-lun of Tao-an”), Nihon Chūgoku Gak-
kaihō, no. 4, 1953.
24. Ōchō, Enichī (尾取登), “中日仏教初期の翻訳論” (“On Translation
Theories in the Early Period of Chinese Buddhism”), in 山口益博士還題
記念〈印度学仏教学論〉 (Studies in Indology and Buddhism Presented in Honour of Prof. Yamaguchi Susumu), Hōōkan, 1955. This article
is also included in Prof. Ōchō's 中日仏教の研究 (Studies in Chinese Bud-
hism), Hōōkan, 1958.
25. Ōchō, Enichī, “中国仏教に於ける翻訳論” (“Theories of Translation
26. Ōchō, Enichī, “釈迦国の翻訳論” (“Tao-an's Theories of Translation”),
27. Ōchō, Enichī, “知識霊の翻訳論” (“The Translations of Kumārajīva”),
in Ōtani Gakuhō, vol. 37, no. 4, 1958. Also included in 中日仏教の研究第
The following works, based on comparisons with Sanskrit originals or
Tibetan translations, attempt to clarify some of the unique characteristics of the Chinese translations;
Chinese Translations of Buddhist sūtras”, Sino-Indian Studies, vol. 3,
no. 3, Visva Bharati, 1957.
29. Nakamura, Hajime, “クマラジーヴァ（羅什）の思想的特徴—『釈摩
訳』翻訳のしかたを通じて—” (“Special Characteristics of Kumārajīva’s
Thought—As seen through the Translation of the Vimalakīrti-sūtra”),
Kanakura Hakase Kokiten Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Ronshū, Heirakuji
Shoten, 1966.
30. Toda, Hirofumi (戸谷浩文), “釈摩訳に現われた毘婆娑那三論の思想”
(“The Philosophy of Kumārajīva as seen in his translation of the Vima-
Although not included in this limited bibliography, there are many com-
parative studies of translations, for example, comparing a text translated
by Paramārtha and Hsuan-tsang.

Transliteration, Phonetics, Central Asian Languages and Tun-huang
MSS.
In the above-mentioned A Historical Study of the Chinese Translation
of Buddhist Scriptures Dr. Ui studied all of the transliterations in the
Tao-hsing-pan-jo-ching (道行般若經) translated by Lokakṣema and from
this re-constructed the original terms. Other works by Dr. Ui dealing with
this branch of study include:
31. Ui, Hakuku (宇井伯寿), “仏・菩薩の音訳について” (“On the Trans-
32. Ui, Hakuku, “仏訳に存する音訳語の字音” (“The Phonology of the
Transliterations in the Records of Buddhistic Kingdoms”), Nagoya
Daigaku Bungaku Kenkyū Ronshū, 1954.
Both of these articles were later included in:
33. Ui, Hakuku, 大乗仏典の研究 (Studies of Mahayana Scriptures). Iwa-
nami Shoten, 1963.
34. Sadakata, Akira (定方晃), “大唐西域記の音写漢字” (“Transcribed Char-
acters in the Ta-t'ang-hsi-yü-chi”), Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū,
The basic work on transliterations must work through the phonetics of
the ancient Chinese characters. Prof. Karlsgren's work in this area (in which
he continued and developed the research of Prof. S. Julien) have become
often-referred-to classics:
35. Karlsgren, B., “Prononciation Ancienne de Caractères Chinois Figurant
dans les Transcriptions Bouddhiques”, T'oung pao, 1920.
1923.
In Japan, such scholars as Mizutani Shinjō are continuing this type of
research:
37. Mizutani, Shinjō (水谷真成), “梵語音を表す漢字における声調の機能”
this book are in both English as well as Japanese:
44. Taukamoto, Zenryû (塚本善隆), "Historical Outlines of Buddhism in Tun-huang" (敦煌仏教史概観), in both English and Japanese.
45. Yoshimura, Shûki (友村修喜), Tsuchihashi, Shûkô (土橋秀高), and Inokuchi, Taijun (井ノ口泰淳), "倉谷大学所蔵敦煌仏教現存目録" (Catalogue of the Extant MSS. from Tun-huang Preserved in the Library of Rytoku University). In Japanese only.
46. Yoshimura, Shûki, Tsuchihashi, Shûkô, and Inokuchi, Taijun, (敦煌仏教史年表) "A Chronological Table of Buddhism in Tun-huang". In Japanese only.
47. Ishihama, Junatarô, Sanada, Ariyoshi (真田有美), and Inokuchi, Taijun. "Bibliography of the Central Asiatic Studies". In English only.
49. Ch'ên Yüan (陳垣), "敦煌佚書錄 (Analytical List of the Tun-huang MSS in the National Library of Peking), 1931.
51. Wang Chung-min (王重民), 敦煌遺書総目索引 (General Index to the Tun-huang MSS.), 1962.
52. Kanoaka, Shôkô (金岡信光), 敦煌出土文学文献分類目録附解説 (Classified Catalogue of Literary and Popular Works in Tun-huang Documents), Saiiki Shutsudo Kanbun Bunrui Mokuroku (西域出土漢文文献分類目録). no. 4, Tôyô Bunko, 1971. This is a catalogue of popular literature from Tun-huang and is very useful for the study of popular Buddhism.

Apocryphal Sutras
In addition to the pioneering studies of Yabuki mentioned above, there is also the work of Prof. Mochizuki:
Since then, the study and clarification of the apocryphal texts of Tun-huang has leapt forward. In particular, the work of Prof. Makita is noteworthy:

55. Makita, Taiyō (牧田道光), "仏経研究 (Studies on Apocryphal Sutras). Kyoto, 1976. This work contains most of the articles published previously by Prof. Makita in various journals.

With regards those texts which are related to the Zen schools, there is the careful research of Prof. Mizuno:

56. Mizuno, Kogen (水野弘元), "仏経研究 (Studies on Apocryphal Sutras)", "On the Relation between Two Theories of Bodhidharma and Vajrasamādhi Sūtra", the Komazawa Daigaku Kenkyū Kiyō, no. 13, 1955.


English Summary of this article is found in Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū, vol. 9, no. 1, 1961.


This text is a translation of the first half of an article entitled "The Problematics and Methodology of the Study of HCTBS" that originally appeared in Tripitaka, No. 63, 1972. The translation was done by Jamie Hubbard, a graduate student in the doctoral program of the Department of South Asian Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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