RESEARCH

Tibetan Translation Key: Imperial Decrees of the *Two Volume Lexicon*

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Abstract: The new fragments of the *Two Volume Lexicon* (*sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*), also known as *Madhyavyutpatti*, or the "Middle *Vyutpatti*" (*bye brag tu rtogs byed 'bring po*) which were discovered at Tabo monastery in Spiti, Himachal Pradesh, in northern India, suggest that the *Lexicon* was very likely composed in 783 CE during the reign of King Trisong Detsen (khri srong lde btsan, r. 755–797 CE). This article attempts to provide illustrations of each dharma-translation method (*dharma bsgyur ba'i thabs*) witnessed both in the first part of the *Lexicon* (imperial decree, 783) in the Tabo version and in the version (imperial decree, 814) stored in the Tibet Museum (*bod ljongs rten rdzas bshams mdzod khang*). It will illustrate how the historical Tibetan process of translating texts from the Indian language into Tibetan can help inform the current project of translating Buddhist texts from Tibetan into English, Chinese and other languages.

Introduction

The new fragments of the *Two Volume Lexicon* (*sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*), also known as *Madhyavyutpatti*, or the "Middle *Vyutpatti*" (*bye brag tu rtogs byed 'bring po*),[1] which were discovered at Tabo monastery[2] in Spiti, Himachal Pradesh, in northern India, suggest that the *Lexicon* was very likely composed in 783 CE during the reign of King Trisong Detsen (khri srong lde btsan, r.

1. I dedicate this article to Prof. Holly Gayley. I wrote the first draft of this article when I was a visiting scholar hosted by Prof. Gayley at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Without her help and encouragement, I would never have tried to write this article in English. I would like to express my thanks to the Center for Asian Studies and Tibet Himalaya Initiative at UC Boulder. Thank you to Andrew Quintman, Kurtis Schaeffer, Tenzin Dickie, and Erin Burke at *The Journal of Tibetan Literature*. I also thank Prof. Rinchen Dorje, Dr. Tenzin Tsepak, and Gedun Rabsal. My heart-felt gratitude to all who kindly helped me with my first English-language article. Without their encouragement and unconditional help, it would have been impossible to publish this article. Lastly, this article has been supported by the National Scholarship Fund of China (本论文得到中国国家留学基金资助). *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003: 204: In the final passage of the *sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*, it is said that this *vacovyutpatti* (*skad bye brag tu bshad pa*, specific explanation) is the middle one, a commentary (*pañjikā*) in accordance with the difficult points of the *Mahāvyutpatti* and the treatises of the linguistics of *vyākaraṇa*.

2. It was founded in 996 CE by the King of western Himalayan Kingdom of Guge, Lha bla ma ye shes 'od (947–1024 CE), see Khyung bdag 2013, 79.

755–797 CE). During the period of his father, Tridé Tsuktsen (khri lde gtsug brtsan r. 705–755 CE) and forefathers (*yab myes*),[3] Indian abbots (*mkhan po*), and Tibetan translators (*lo tsā ba*) translated and finalized the *Ratnamegha* (*dkon mchog sprin*) and the *Laṅkāvatāra* (*lang kar gshegs pa*) sūtras. It is, therefore, conceivable that at least during the time of Tridé Tsuktsen, there were already abbots and translators working together to translate Buddhist texts in Tibet. Undoubtedly, the dharma translation theory given in the first part of the work entitled the *Two Volume Lexicon* (hereafter *Lexicon*)—the section containing the imperial decrees (*bkas bcad*)[4]—is a summary of the experience of Indian abbots and Tibetan translators in the practice of translating Buddhist texts from Indian language into Tibetan language during a certain period of time.

This article attempts to provide illustrations of each dharma-translation method (*dharma bsgyur ba'i thabs*) witnessed both in the first part of the *Lexicon* (imperial decree, 783) in the Tabo version[5] and in the version (imperial decree, 814) stored in the Tibet Museum (*bod ljongs rten rdzas bshams mdzod khang*).[6] This is done to illustrate how the historical Tibetan process of translating texts from Indian language into Tibetan can help inform the current project of translating Buddhist texts from Tibetan into English, Chinese, and other languages.[7] This will demonstrate how the imperial decrees transformed Tibet into a store-house of Indian civilization. It further considers how the imperial decrees may have inspired modern Sino-Tibetan translation as well.[8]

It should be noted that all translations in this article are the author's own except where indicated. Historically, although Tibetan Buddhist scriptures were mainly translated from Sanskrit originals, other Tibetan texts were translated from other non-Sanskrit Indian languages, which is why Tibetan translations begin with *rgya gar skad du* (in Indian language) instead of *legs sbyar skad du* (in Sanskrit). In view of this, when this article encounters *rgya dpe* or *rgya gar skad du*, it will use "Indian text" and "in Indian language" respectively.[9] It also should be noted that the phrases "in Chinese language" (*rgya'i skad du* or *rgya nag gi skad du*), "in Tibetan" (*bod skad du*) etc. herein are supplied by the author.

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3. *Myes* or *mes* usually refers to the King Khri srong brtsan alias Srong btsan sgam po (reign, 618–650 CE).
4. Bcom ldan ral gri (1227–1305) gave the *bkas bcad* a definition roughly translated like this: King, ministers, translators, *paṇḍitas*, and terminologists get together and make decisions like this while translating dharma: this [target] name is agreeable for this [original] name though there are various names in the different places, that's what the decree is. (chos sgyur ba na rgyal blon dang lo paṇ dang brda la mkhas pa rnams 'dus te yul tha dad na ming du ma yod kyang 'di'i ming ni 'dir 'thad do ces bcad pa ni bkas bcad de [...]) See bcom ldan ral gri 7a1–2.
5. Panglung 1994, 162.
6. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 70–73. I also referred to the critical edition, Ishikawa 1990, 1–5.
7. Raine 2011, 159.
8. It is generally believed that modern Sino-Tibetan translation began in 1950, see 降边嘉措 2018, 1.
9. Zhu chen tshul khrims rin chen's autobiography [ʒ108a3–5]; dge 'dun chos 'phel 2010, 498, 539; Peter Skilling 1993, 69–201; Ulrike Roesler 2018, 351–368.

Dharma-translation Principle (*dam pa'i chos bsgyur ba'i lugs*) and Methods Decreed during the Reign of King Trisong Detsen

Here I would like to illustrate how the dharma-translation principle and methods contained in the imperial decree (*bkas bcad*) issued during the reign of King Trisong Detsen were applied to dharma translation at that time. I will offer some specific translation examples that will provide an overview of dharma translation during this period in Tibet. Under the reign of King Trisong Detsen, we find that one dharma-translation principle and three dharma-translation methods were decreed.

The dharma-translation principle decreed during the reign of King Trisong Detsen states:

> dam pa'i chos bsgyur ba'i lugs ni don dang / myi 'gal la bod skad la bde bar bya ba dang/[10]
>
> The principle for translating the holy dharma is to translate in easy-to-read Tibetan without violating the meaning.

The first of three dharma-translation methods decreed during the reign of King Trisong Detsen addresses word order and meaning:

> rgya gar skad go rims las myi bsnor bar / don dang tshig du 'breld par byos la sgyurd cig//[11]
>
> Translate it so that it's comprehensible in both the terms and contents without rearranging the ordering of the Indian language!

I have chosen two examples from an old Tibetan translation of the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Saddharma-puṇḍarīkasūtra*) found in Khotan, dating prior to the imperial decree of 814.[12] One example illustrates the application of this method to a single word, *rab gyi tshig*, and its equivalent should be *pravacana*, a Sanskrit term for "scripture."[13] The Tibetan translation of the phrase *rab gyi tshig* can be rendered in English literally as "the best words." As is well known, *pra-*, one of twenty Sanskrit verbal prepositions (*upasarga*), was typically rendered by *rab* as the final member of a compound

10. Panglung 1994, 162.
11. Panglung 1994, 162.
12. Hahn 2016, 82.
13. Seishi Karashima 2006.

in Tibetan. For example, in a ninth-century translation of the *Lotus Sūtra*, the same Sanskrit term, *pravacana*, appears as *gsung rab*.[14] However, in the older Tibetan translation of the *Lotus Sūtra* from Khotan, the Sanskrit prefix *pra-* is rendered mechanically by *rab gyi* as the initial member of a compound, as the example given in the *Lexicon* prescribes.[15]

The following example illustrates the application of the method to an entire stanza of verse:

> In Indian language: *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*
> ye cāpi rājapuruṣāḥ
> kuryāt tehi na saṃstavam |
> caṇḍālamuṣṭikaiḥ *śauṇḍais*
> tīrthikaiś cāpi sarvaśaḥ | |[16]
>
> In Tibetan: *dam pa'i chos pu 'da' ri ka*
> rgyal po'i myi ni gang dang yang//
> de dag dang ni 'grogs myi bya//
> gdol pa dang ni khu tshur pa'//
> mur 'dug rnam pa thams cad dang//[17]
>
> The Lotus Sūtra
> Whoever belongs to the king,
> do not get together with them,
> outcastes and boxers,
> non-Buddhists in any circumstances.

The second method advises the translators on how to render titles of accomplishment and respect:

> sangs rgyas dang byang chub sems dpa' dang / nyan thos rnams la rje sa dang / rk[o ...][18] dang rim pa ni rje sa 'i tshig du bsgyur ro//gzhan la tshig 'bring po man chad tsam du bya'o//[19]

14. *Dam pa'i chos pad ma dkar po zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo* 67, 502.
15. Seishi Karashima 2006.
16. Simonsson 1957, 28.
17. Simonsson 1957, 16, 28.
18. Only *rk*[*o*?] can be deciphered.
19. Panglung 1994, 162.

> Concerning the degrees of honorific terms and non-honorific terms for Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Śravakas: for Buddhas, use honorific terms. For others, use medium-level terms and lower terms.

In Tibetan: *'phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa*,[20] the following are used: *bka' stsal* or *gsungs* is used for the speech of the *bhagavān* (the high honorific form). When bodhisattvas talk to *bhagavān*, *gsol pa* (the high honorific form is used). Between bodhisattvas, *smras pa* (the neutral form) is used. And for *bhagavān*'s own words in person, *bshad* (the neutral form) is used, etc. They all, however, usually have the same meaning: "talk."

The third method directs the translators to refer to two established translations for all other issues:

> gzhan ni yab myes kyi sku ring la / mkhan po dang lo tsha bas dar ma dkon mchog sprin dang / lang kar gshegs pa bsgyur te gtan la phab pa'i lugs bzhin du sgrurd cig //[21]
>
> As for the rest, translate according to the same principles by which dharma *Ratnamegha* and *Laṅkāvatāra* had been translated and finalized by abbots and translators at the time of the [Tsenpo] fathers and the forefathers!

Dharma-translation Principle and Methods Decreed during the Reign of King Tride Songtsen

A new decree was issued in 814 under King Tridé Songtsen after a period of dharma translation activity uncovered more questions along with methods to address them. The dharma-translation principle and dharma-translation methods decreed at that time were more sophisticated and systematic than the previous ones decreed in 783. The new decree revised the previous dharma-translation principle slightly and amended ten new translation methods that addressed the needs that arose in the intervening years.

The new dharma-translation principle states:

20. *'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa* 50, 10–824.
21. Panglung 1994, 162.

dam pa'i chos bsgyur ba'i lugs ni don dang yang mi 'gal la bod skad la yang gar bde bar gyis shig/[22]

The principle for translating the holy dharma is to not (*yang*) violate the meaning, but also (*yang*) render it in Tibetan as fluently as possible.

The content of the new principle does not differ significantly from the previous one. There is, however, additional emphasis on the instruction to render the text in Tibetan language that is readable—perhaps implying that previous translations did not produce sufficiently readable Tibetan.

Dharma-Translation Methods

The following is my English translation of the translation methods explained in the 814 decree. I provide examples drawn from a variety of texts that illustrate how translators applied each method.

The first translation method closely resembles its counterpart in the previous imperial decree:

1. dharma bsgyur ba la rgya gar gyi skad kyi go rims las mi bsnor bar bod kyi skad du bsgyur na don dang tshig tu 'brel zhing bde na ma bsnor bar sgyur cig[23]

As for translating dharma, if the syntax is kept the same [as the original] and the [target] meaning and words match smoothly, then translate without changing the [original] syntax!

Here I have chosen an example from a translation of the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* to illustrate how translators applied this method. The Sanskrit and its Tibetan translation read:

śrī-guhyasamaja-mahātantrarāja-nāma
aho hi samantabhadrasya kāyavākcittavajriṇaḥ |
anutpādaprayogeṇa utpādo 'yaṃ pragīyate | |[24]

dpal gsang ba 'dus pa zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po
e ma'o kun tu bzang po yi//
sku dang gsung thugs rdo rje can//

22. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 71.
23. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 71.
24. Francesca Fremantle 1971, 190.

skye ba med pa'i tshul gyis su//
skye ba 'di ni rab tu bsgrags//[25]

How wonderful! Of Samantabhadra,
the vajra body, speech, and mind,
in the non-arising way,
this life is thus proclaimed.

As we can see above, the equivalent of *aho hi* is *e ma'o*, and the like, *samantabhadrasya* is *kun tu bzang po yi*, *kāyavākcitta* is *sku dang gsung thugs*, *vajriṇaḥ* is *rdo rje can*, *anutpāda* is *skye ba med pa*, *prayogeṇa* is *tshul gyis su*, *utpādo 'yaṃ* is *skye ba 'di ni*, *pragīyate* is *rab tu bsgrags*. The Tibetan translation keeps the original syntax and meaning and the words match smoothly.

2. bsnor na bde zhing go ba skyed pa cig yod na/ tshigs bcad la ni rtsa ba[26] bzhi pa'am drug pa'ang rung ste/ tshigs su bcad pa gcig gi nang gar bde bar bsnor zhing sgyur cig/[27]

If changing the syntax keeps the fluency and clarity, then as for the stanza, it is fine to keep four lines (*pāda*s) or even six lines. The syntax can be changed as appropriate within one stanza!

Here I return to the example I cited above from the *Lotus Sūtra*. Here is a later translation of the same verse:

In Indian language: *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*
ye cāpi rājapuruṣāḥ
kuryāt tehi na saṃstavam |
caṇḍālamuṣṭikaiḥ śauṇḍais
tīrthikaiś cāpi sarvaśaḥ | |[28]

In Tibetan: *dam pa'i chos pad ma dkar po'i mdo*
rgyal po'i zha 'bring gang yin dang //
gdol pa dang ni zol pa dang //

25. *Dpal gsang ba 'dus pa zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po* 92, 18.
26. Here *rtsa ba* appears as synonym for *rkang pa*.
27. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 71.
28. Simonsson 1957, 28.

mu stegs can ni de dag dang //
rnam pa kun tu 'dris mi byed//[29]

Whoever belongs to the king,
outcastes and boxers,
those non-Buddhists,
never get along.

One immediately sees the differences in syntax between the Khotan manuscript I used to illustrate the translation methods under Trisong Detsen and the canonical version above. Whereas the Khotan manuscript retained the order of the original Indian language lines in order to follow the method formulated in the imperial decree of 783, the predicate *byed* (*bya* in the Khotan manuscript) is put at the end of the verse in the canonical version in accordance with the method reformulated in the imperial decree of 814.[30]

3. rkyang pa la ni don gang snyegs pa yan chad kyi tshig don gnyi ga la gar bde bar bsnor zhing sgyur cig/[31]

As for the prose, change the order of the Indian language in accordance with its meaning and translate as fluently as possible up to the words and the meaning!

We can see that translators changed the word order of the title of the *Method of Practice of the Six Syllables* in accordance with this method. The Indian title is *Ṣaḍakṣarī-sādhana-nāma*. The Tibetan translators rendered this: *Yi ge drug pa'i sgrub thabs zhes bya ba*.[32] This title inverts the order of *ṣaḍa* (Tib. *drug pa*, the six-fold one) and *kṣarī* (*yi ge*, syllables). The order of the remaining words is unchanged: *sādhana* (*sgrub thabs*, method of practice) *nāma* (*zhes bya ba*, named).

4. skad gcig las ming du mar 'dren pa ni ltag 'og dang bstun la gar snyegs pa bzhin du ming thogs shig[33]

As for deriving several terms from one word [in original Indian language], you should render the word in accordance with its meaning in the original context!

29. *Dam pa'i chos pad ma dkar po zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo* 67, 154b7–155a1.
30. *Bya* (verb) means "do" and is the future tense of *byed*. (*byed* here can be seen as the simple present tense.)
31. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 71.
32. Sman lung pa mi bskyod rdo rje 1975, 498–499.
33. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 71.

In Indian language: *anuśaya*[34]

In Tibetan: *phra rgyas* ("subtle increaser") or *bag la nyal* (dormancies)[35]

For example, in the *chos mngon pa* (*Abhidharma*), *anuśaya* is translated as *phra rgyas*, but in the *mdo sde pa* (*Sautrāntika*) school, it is translated as *bag la nyal*.[36]

> 5. gau ta ma lta bu gau'i sgra las tshig dang phyogs dang sa dang 'od dang rdo rje dang ba lang dang mtho ris la sogs pa rnam pa du mar snyegs pa dang / kau shi ka lta bu rtswa ku sha thogs pa dang / mkhas pa dang / pad ma la dga' ba dang / 'ug pa dang / mdzod ldan la sogs pa sgra'i lugs las drangs shing bsgyur na/ sna grangs mang po zhig tu snyegs la/ bsgyur ba rnams gcig gi nang du ni sna grangs de kun 'du bar yang mi btub ste/ gcig tu chad par byar yang gtan tshigs chen po med pa rnams ni mi bsgyur bar rgya gar skad so na zhog cig/[37]
>
> [Take] Gautama, for example. The syllable (morpheme) of *gau*, has several meanings such as "word" (*tshig*), "direction" (*phyogs*), "earth" (*sa*), "light" (*'od*), "vajra/diamond" (*rdo rje*), "cow" (*ba lang*) and "higher realms" (*mtho ris*), etc.; *kauśika*, for instance, if translating from the Sanskrit *vyākaraṇa* can be rendered as *rtswa kuśa thogs pa* "holding the kuśa grass," *mkhas pa* "the learned ones/intellectuals," *pad ma la dga' ba* "liking lotuses," *'ug pa* "owl" and *mdzod ldan* "treasure owner", etc.; in such cases, unless it is necessary, do not translate and leave the Sanskrit word as it is!
>
> In Indian language: *kauśika*[38]
>
> In Tibetan: *kauśika*[39]

In *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, "The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines," this translation follows the translation method above-mentioned prescribed in the imperial decree of 814.

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34. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 165.
35. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 165.
36. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 165.
37. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 71–72.
38. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 71.
39. *'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa* 50, [ཀ 40a$^{3-4}$]

6. gar yang drang du rung ba'i tshig gcig byung na phyogs gcig tu chad par mi bsgyur bar spyir snyegs su rung bar gyis shig/[40]

If there is one term which can be used in different contexts, then do not translate it as having a singular meaning, but render the term in accordance with its general meaning!

In Indian language: *brahma*[41]

In Tibetan: *tshangs pa*[42] (pure)

Brahma can be translated as any of the following: *chen po* "great/big," *bden pa* "truth," *dka' thub* "asceticism," *dbang po thub pa* "Indramunī," *'phel ba'am rgyas pa* "increasing or enriching" and *bsil bar gyur pa* "became calm." But in accordance with the meaning and following the previous convention (*sngar grags pa btsan par byas*), *brahma* has been translated as *tshangs pa*.[43]

7. yul dang sems can dang me tog dang rtsi shing la sogs pa'i ming bsgyur na yid gol zhing tshig mi bde ba dang / 'ol phyir bsgyur du rung yang don du de ltar yin nam ma yin gtol med pa rnams ni/ sgra 'o le tsam bsgyur du btub kyang don la the tshom za ba rnams/ mgo la yul zhe'am/ me tog ces pa gang la bya ba'i ming gcig bla thabs su snon la rgya gar skad so na zhog cig/[44]

If translating the names of places, sentient beings, flowers and plants, etc., makes the translation confusing, not smooth, imprecise, and doubtful, then keep the Indian word phonologically and have it be preceded by the generic name *yul* or *me tog* etc.!

In Indian language:
vārāṇasī
makara

In Tibetan:

40. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 72.
41. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 128.
42. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 128.
43. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 128.
44. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 72.

yul vārāṇasī[45] (place Vārāṇasī)
chu srin makara[46] (crocodile Makara)

Vārāṇasī was translated as *'khor mo 'jig* prior to the imperial decree of 814, and was hard to understand for those who did not know the Indian language. Then Tāranātha (1575–1634) applied this translation convention above, referring to it as *yul vārāṇasī* .[47] Likewise, *makara* is a kind of crocodile, so in order to make it easy to understand in Tibetan, the translators prefaced the translation with a single Tibetan word *chu srin* "crocodile."

> 8. grang la rgya gar gyi skad bzhin du bsgyur na dge slong brgya phrag phyed dang bcu gsum zhes 'byung ba la sogs pa ni stong nyis brgya lnga bcu zhes tha mal par bod kyi skad kyi lugs bzhin du bsgyur na/ don dang yang mi 'gal la bod kyi skad la yang bde bas/ grangs bsdom du rung ba rnams bod kyi skad kyi lugs bzhin du thogs shig/[48]
>
> If these numbers are translated in accordance with the Indian language, it would appear as *dge slong brgya phrag phyed dang bcu gsum*[49] "half of hundred plus thirteen monks," and as *stong nyis brgya lnga bcu* "one thousand two-hundred and fifty." This does not contradict the original meaning, and it's also easy to understand in the Tibetan language. The numbers, therefore, which can be added should be rendered according to the system of the Tibetan language!
>
> In Indian language: sārdham ardhatrayodaśan
> In Tibetan: stong nyis brgya lnga bcu[50] (one thousand two-hundred and fifty)

In *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā,* this translation follows the translation method above prescribed in the imperial decree of 814.

> 9. pa ri dang sam dang u pa lta bu la sogs te/ tshig gi phrad dang rgyan lta bur[51] 'byung ba rnams bsgyur na don dang mthun zhing 'byor pa rnams ni/ yongs su

45. Tā ra nā tha 2013, 9.
46. *'Phags pa dam pa'i chos dran pa nye bar gzhag pa* 68, 251.
47. Tā ra nā tha 2013, 9.
48. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 72.
49. P. t. 92.1.
50. *'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa* 50, 11.
51. Skt. *Upasarga = tshig gi phrad dang rgyan lta bu = nyer bsgyur*

zhe'am/ yang dag pa zhe'am/ nye ba zhes sgra bzhin du sgyur cig/[52]

While translating words like *pari*, *sam*, *upa* etc., i.e., such [words] that are particles (*tshig gi phrad*) or[53] have a kind of (*lta bu*) ornamental [function] (*rgyan*), the method (*thabs*) to achieve correspondence with the meaning (*don dang mthun zhing 'byor pa*) [is as follows]: One should translate literally (*sgra bzhin du*) using [adverbial expressions like] *yongs su* [=completely], *yang dag pa* [=in the right manner][54] or *nye ba* [=near to, approximately].[55]

In fact, this section talks about how to translate the twenty Sanskrit verbal prepositions (Skt. *upasarga*, Tib. *nye bar bsgyur ba*) into Tibetan:[56]

In Indian language: 1. *pra* 2. *parā* 3. *apa* 4. *sam* 5. *anu* 6. *ava* 7. *nir* 8. *dur* 9. *vi* 10. *āṅ* 11. *ni* 12. *adhi* 13. *api* 14. *ati* 15. *su* 16. *ud* 17. *abhi* 18. *prati* 19. *pari* 20. *upa*

In Tibetan: 1. *rab tu* (thoroughly) 2. *mchog tu* (supremely) 3. *lhag par* (specially) 4. *yang dag par* (correctly) 5. *rjes su* [after(wards)] 6. *phul du* (especially) 7. *bral/ bral ba* (free from) 8. *ngan pa/ngan* (bad) 9. *rnam par/rnam pa* (perfectly) 10. *legs par (properly)* 11. *nges par* (definitely) 12. *shin tu* (very)[57] 13. *slar* (again) 14. *dag pa'i/dag par* (of purity/purely) 15. *bde bar* (happily) 16. *mtho ba'i* (tall/high) 17. *mngon par* (manifestly) 18. *so sor/so so'i* (individually/of each) 19. *yongs su* (completely) 20. *nye bar/nye ba'i* (nearly or absolutely/near)

10. don lhag par snyegs pa med pa rnams ni/ tshig gi lhad kyis bsnan mi dgos kyis don bzhin du thogs shig/[58]

However, in the case of such [particles whose usage] does not add (snyegs pa) to the meaning (don lhag pa) [of the simple word] it is not necessary to enlarge [the translation] by additional words, but one should translate (thogs shig) according to the meaning (don bzhin du).[59]

52. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 72.
53. Should be "and" according to the Tibetan original.
54. "in the right manner" = "correctly"
55. "near to, approximately" = "nearly or absolutely"; Text quoted from Hahn 2008, 116.
56. Candragomin 204, 76–86; Dragomir Dimitrov 2007, V–VI.
57. *adhi* had also been rendered as *lhag pa'i* in Tibetan, see Dngos grub Tshering 2020, 220.
58. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 72.
59. Text quoted from Hahn 2008, 116.

In Indian language: vini-

In Tibetan: rnam (par) (perfectly)

A literal translation of the Sanskrit *viniścita* is *rnam par nges par* (perfectly definitely). As Shalu Lotsawa (zhwa lu lo tsā ba, 1441–1527) says:

> nyon mongs kun las rnam grol ba//zhes pa'i skad dod la/ viniryukta rnam par nges par grol ba zhes par yod kyang nges par zhes pa rgyan yin gyi don la bsnyegs pa med pa lta bu dang/[60]
>
> The equivalent in the original language for *nyon mongs kun las rnam grol ba* [perfectly liberated from all delusions] is *viniryukta*, i.e., *rnam par nges par grol ba* [perfectly definitely liberated], *nges par* [definitely], for example, however, is ornamental.

The adverb *nges par*, therefore, is omitted in its rendition as the Sanskrit prefix *ni-*, and the equivalent *rnam par* (perfectly), of the Sanskrit prefix *vi-* does add to the meaning.

> 11. rnam grangs su gtogs pa'i tshig rnams ni ma 'dom[61] na ming gang bod skad du spyir grags shing tshig tu gar bde bar gdags so// 'dom na so sor btags pa bzhin du thogs shig/[62]
>
> As for words that belong to a list of synonyms, if the word in question is not quoted together with [their synonyms], one should name an [equivalent] term that is generally widely known in Tibetan and is as fluent as possible. If it is quoted together with [its synonyms] one should name the [one Tibetan] term that designates each [of the Indian synonyms]!
>
> In Indian language:
> *rājā*
> *pakṣi śakuna*
>
> In Tibetan:

60. Zhwa lu lo tsā ba Rin chen chos skyong bzang po 2013, 70.
61. *'Dom=lhan cig* (to gather together), see sPos khang rinchen rgyal mtshan 2014, 154.
62. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 72–73.

rgyal po (king)
'dab chags bya[63] (any winged animal; bird)

The *vyutpatti* states, *sa bdag rājā dang ma 'dom na rgyal po.*[64] If *sa bdag* (lord of earth) is not quoted together with *rājā* (king), then *rājā* should be translated as *rgyal po* (king).

> 12. sangs rgyas dang byang chub sems dpa' dang nyan thos la sogs pa la zhe sa dang rko long gi tshig gi rim pa ni sangs rgyas la zhe sa'i tshig tu bsgyur/ gzhan la tshig 'bring po man chad tsam du bya ste/[65]
>
> On the degree of expressions between honorific and non-honorific (*rko long*) language in relation to the Buddha, bodhisattva, *śravaka* and so forth: for the Buddha, translate [with] honorific words! For others, translate with words of the medium and lesser levels!
>
> 13. sngon lha sras yab kyi spyan sngar/ mkhan po dang lo ts+tsha ba mkhas pa 'tshogs pas/ dar ma 'phags pa dkon mchog sprin dang / 'phags pa lang kar gshegs pa bsgyur te gtan la phab pa'i lugs bzhin du sgyur cig/[66]
>
> Translate according to the same principles as the dharma *Ratnamegha* and *Laṅkāvatāra* have been translated and finalized by the abbots and translators who assembled in the presence of the Divine Son, the Father (King Trisong Detsen) in the past!

In my opinion, even before, during, or at least after the life of the King Trisong Detsen, the royal patrons and translators made efforts to assimilate into a Tibetan cultural framework the ideology of Indian Buddhism through the medium of Tibetan *chos skad,* dharma *bhāṣā* (dharma language).[67] In order to establish the *chos skad* of Tibet, the successors of Trisong Detsen continued to systematically standardize their imported Buddhist terminology:[68]

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63. *'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa* 50, 497–498. On this translation method, see Sa paṇ kun dga' rgyal mtshan 1981, 101–102.
64. *Bye brag tu rtogs par byed pa* 204, 124.
65. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 73.
66. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 73.
67. *dharma* language, in some extent, is referred to some language which is both in accordance with the *dharma* scriptures (texts) and the principles of the linguistics of [Indian] *vyākaraṇa*.
68. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 205.

sngon lha sras yab kyi ring la ācāryabodhisatva dang / ye shes dbang po dang / zhang rgyal nyen nya bzang dang / blon khri bzher sang shi dang / lo tsā ba jñānadevakoṣa dang / lce khyi 'brug dang / bram ze ānanda la sogs pas chos kyi skad bod la ma grags pa las ming du btags pa mang dag cig mchis pa'i nang nas kha cig chos kyi gzhung dang / vyākaraṇa'i sgra'i lugs dang mi mthun te/ mi bcos su mi rung ba rnams kyang bcos/[69]

Earlier, at the time of the father (King Trisong Detsen) of the Divine Son, a number of terms from the dharma language (*chos kyi skad*) which were not known in Tibet were created by Ācārya Bodhisattva, Yeshe Wangpo (ye shes dbang po), Shang Gyalnyen (rgyal nyen nya bzang), Lön Trizer Sangshi (Blon Khri bzher sang shi), by the translators Jñānadevakoṣa, Che Kyidruk (lce khyi 'brug), the Brāhmaṇa Ānanda etc., and some of the terms were not in accordance with the dharma scriptures (texts) and the principles of the linguistics of *vyākaraṇa* (e.g., *Kātantra*),[70] and those terms which had to be revised were revised (*mi bcos su mi rung ba rnams kyang bcos*).

In fact, the passage of the 814 decree may be seen as an instance of translation criticism of the Tibetan Buddhist translations produced at the time of the King Trisong Detsen. So, we can say that Tibetan Buddhist translation critique has been ongoing from the time of that decree all the way up to the time of Gendun Chöphel (dge 'dun chos 'phel, 1903–1951). Many of the critical discussions focus on questions of dharma language. The three passages below demonstrate some of these issues in the translation of Buddhist texts during different periods of Tibetan history and are worth paying attention to.

The following is a verse taken from *The Commentary on the Nāmasaṁgīti* (*mtshan yang dag par brjod pa'i 'grel pa mtshan don gsal bar byed pa'i sgron ma*), attributed to Vimalamitra (9th c.):

chos skad byings la ma brten bod kyi mis//
go bar bde phyir rang so'i skad kyis bkrol//
de phyir mkhas pas tshig skyon brtag mi rigs//
'on kyang rgyal ba'i lung la'ang skur 'debs na//
bdag 'dra'i gzhung la ci phyir smod mi rigs//[71]

Do not make dharma language depend upon *dhātu* (verbal roots),

69. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 70; Ishikawa 1990, 1–2.
70. Penpa Dorjee 2011, XVI.
71. Vimalamitra 46, 89.

In translating in one's own language in order to make it easily understandable for Tibetans,
the learned, therefore, should not examine the verbal faults.
If one could denigrate even the discourse of the Buddha,
why should one not blame such texts like mine?

If the verse above reflects the thinking of Vimalamitra, then it at least indicates two things. On the one hand, at the time the linguistics of *vyākaraṇa* was strange to Tibetans who knew no Indian language; on the other hand, there was a strong political interest in establishing the language of Buddhism (*chos skad*) in Tibet, and at least some scholars or translators, or even the court, rejected translations which were not in accordance with [Indian] grammatical systems, including verbal forms (*dhātu*).

Pang Lodrö Tenpa (dpang[72] blo gros brtan pa, 1276–1342) deliberately made a critical assessment of the well-known treatise *The Gate of Speech* (*smra sgo*)[73] in order to push Tibetan translators to study in detail the linguistics of the *vyākaraṇa* of *Cāndra* and *Kātantra* (mentioned repeatedly in the decree of 814):

> smra sgo bod du dar phyin chad byung ba'i skad gnyis smra ba rnams kyis kyang / sgra'i gzhung che ba tsan+dra pa dang / ka lā pa dang / mngon brjod a mā ra ko ṣa la sogs pa la chos skad chags pa dang gzigs rtog tshud pa'i slob gnyer ma mdzad pas smra sgo'i mtshang ma shes par de'i tshigs bcad bde mos bslus te/ bstan bcos tshad ldan du bsams nas bsdus don dang ṭīka la sogs pa'i cha lag mdzad snang ngo //[74]

> Even bilinguals who have been born after the spread of *The Gate of Speech* in Tibet have not put in enough effort to learn the major treatises of the linguistics: *Vyākaraṇa Cāndra, Kalāpa* (*Kātantra*), and *Amārakoṣa* lexicon (*abhidhāna*), etc. They have not been familiar enough with the *chos skad* and have not mastered the major treatises above, so they failed to see the errors about *The Gate of Speech* and have been deceived by its "well-arranged" verses. They considered it as some standard treatise, then composed auxiliaries on it, such as summaries and commentaries, etc.

72. Dpang=Spang
73. A famous Sanskrit-Tibetan grammatical treatise (*Vacanamukhāyudhopama*/*sMra ba'i sgo mtshon cha lta bu*) by Indian *paṇḍita* Smṛtijñānakīrti (11th Cent.).
74. Dpang lo tsā ba blo gros brtan pa 3, 753. Some similar sentiment also can be seen Zhwa lu pa Grags pa rgyal mtshan 24, 23–24.

Drukpa Pema Karpo ('brug pa padma dkar po, 1527–1592) defends the translations of the earlier translators Ka (ska) and Chok (cog). In order to show the authenticity of those translations, he goes on at length about their authenticity, supporting his view with reasons derived from the decree of 814:

> 'ga' zhig bka' (ska) cog gi 'gyur la sgra dang mi mthun pa 'dug go zhes zer ba dang / dper na brgyad stong pa bzo sbyangs las 'phreng ba can 'gyur mang po snyam nas de la mgu ba ni phyin ci log ste bka' (ska) cog gi dus gsung rab kyi brda phal che ba bzos/ de la brda rnying pa go dka' ba rnams snyags jñā na dang zhang ye shes la sogs pas skad gsar du bcos de yang sgra gtso ba de'i gzhung lugs bzhin dang / don gtso ba bdag nyid chen po rnams kyi 'grel pa dang bstun nas 'ga' zhig bod skad la gla (bla) thabs su snon dgos bcos te zhus shing gtan la phab[...]/[75]
>
> Some people[76] said that there are factors discordant to the linguistics of *vyākaraṇa* in the [Tibetan] translation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā prajñāpāramitā* (*The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*) by translators Kawa Paltsek (ska ba dpal brtsegs) and Chokro Luyi Gyaltsen (cog ro klu'i rgyal mtshan). That is a perverted view: at the time of the two translators (Ka and Chok), most terms of the scriptures had already been created, and the old terms which were difficult to understand were correctly formed into new terms by Nyak Jñāna, Shang Yeshe (Jñānasena) and so on. That is to say, those translations which follow the basic methods with literal translation dominating were in accordance with the new terms, and those translations which follow the basic methods with free translation dominating were in accordance with the commentaries of the great beings, and some [Tibetan words] were revised and finalized.

However, since the period of early dissemination (*snga dar*), Tibetan linguists[77] have advocated for learning the linguistics of *vyākaraṇa* and dharma scriptures. The following passage mentions some basic requirements for translation as suggested by Kyoktön Lotsāwa (skyogs ston lo tsā ba, 16th century); it accurately reflects the dharma-translating-principle given in the decree:

> de yang spyir 'gyur byed pa la/ ka tsan sogs sgra mdo rnams kyi don phyin ci ma

75. 'Brug chen 04 padma dkar po 1973–1974, 409.
76. "Some people" may include Sa paṇ Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, because he once said something like that, see Sa paṇ kun dga' rgyal mtshan, 2006a, 141–142.
77. Lo tsā ba lce khyi 'brug 212, 43b; Ban de chos grub; Sa paṇ kun dga' rgyal mtshan, 2006b, 183; Bcom ldan ral gri 35a; Si tu chos kyi 'byung gnas, 2b–4a, etc.

log par blo yul du longs pa gcig dgos/ de nas skad dod rnams (rnam) grangs thug pa med pa zhig la byang ba zhig dgos/ chos gang dang gang bsgyur ba de dang de'i chos skad don dpyis phyin pa shes pa zhig dgos/ snyan ngag mngon brjod sogs kyang byang chub pa zhig dgos/ de rnams tshang ba dang dang por rgya dpe las tshogs don shes par byas/ de nas don dang yang mi 'gal la/ bod la yang gang bder bsgyur na/ 'gyur bzang 'ong ba yin/[78]

Generally, to engage in translations, it is necessary to have non-mistaken understanding about the contents of grammar treatises such as *Kātantra* and *Cāndra*, etc., and then be skilled in endless kinds of equivalent terms (i.e., the Indian language originals of Tibetan terms and the Tibetan translation equivalents of the Indian language terms) and to have full knowledge about the meaning of the *chos skad* of whatever dharma is to be translated. It is also necessary to be proficient in poetics (*kāvya*), lexicon (*abhidhāna*), and others. After that it is necessary, firstly, to fully understand the topics (*tshogs don*) of the Indian text (the Indian language originals); secondly, if the translations do not violate the meaning, but also render it in Tibetan as fluently as possible [the dharma-translation principle decreed in 814], then one is finally able to produce good translations.

Modern Sino-Tibetan Translation and the Imperial Decree

The Tibetan translation and publication of the Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (*Zhōngguó rénmín zhèngzhì xiéshāng huìyì gòngtóng gānglǐng* 中国人民政治协商会议共同纲领) in 1950 marked the beginning of modern Sino-Tibetan translation history.[79] Subsequently, in 1954, more than twenty Tibetan and Chinese experts and scholars gathered in Beijing to complete the Tibetan translation of The Constitution of the People's Republic of China *zhōnghuá rénmín gònghéguó xiànfǎ* 中华人民共和国宪法.[80] Of course, the content of modern Sino-Tibetan translations of political texts produced around 1954 is completely different from that of dharma translations undertaken around 814. However, the mode of translation consisting of the cooperation between source language experts and target language experts in the two periods are very similar, as are the principles for translating specific terminology. I think it is very likely that

78. Skyogs ston Rinchen bkra shis 2011, 436.
79. 降边嘉措 2018, 1.
80. 达哇才让 2014, 81.

modern Sino-Tibetan translators referred to the dharma-translation principles that were decreed in the imperial period. Since the basic principle, do not violate the meaning, but also render it in Tibetan as fluently as possible, decreed in 814 is relatively flexible, it can be applied to any type of translation. My concern now, therefore, is to compare the dharma translations before and after 814 with the modern Sino-Tibetan translations before and after 1954 in terms of the basic principles of terminology translation.

Source language	Target text (before 814)[81]	Target text (after 814)[82]
Buddha	*bu don*[83]	*sangs rgyas*[84]
duḥkha "suffering"	*snyon (nyon) rmongs (mongs)*[85]	*sdug bsngal*[86]
śāstram "classical"	*gtsug lag*[87]	*bstan bcos*[88]

81. *Buddhāvataṃsaka* (*sangs rgyas phal po che*), *caturagama* (*lung sde bzhi*), a few *sūtra*s (*mdo sde kha cig*) and a few *prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra*s (*sher phyin gyi mdo kha cig*) translated with the first decree (*dang por byas pa'i bkas bcad*) had not been finalized in accordance with the new-terms-decision (*skad gsar bcad*) are the first translations which done during the period of the Thon mi sam bo ra (Sambhoṭa) and King Khri srong lde btsan. (*de la thon mi sam bo ra dang btsad po khri srong lde btsan gyi dus kyi dang por byas pa'i 'gyur rnams ni dang por byas pa'i bkas bcad kyis bsgyur te sangs rgyas phal po che dang lung sde bzhi dang mdo sde kha cig dang sher phyin gyi mdo kha cig ste skad gsar bcad kyis gtan la ma phab pa rnams so/*) See bcom ldan ral gri 7a2–4.
82. The terms of this part are collected from the new-terms-decision decreed by King Tridé Songtsen in 814. Btsan po khri lde srong btsan gyi tshe skad gsar gcad [bcad] byas nas gag dang jo rob la sogs pa rnams gang dang ji ltar la sogs par bcos ste/ der ma bcos pa rnams la ni snga ma bzhin yod do// See *bka' bstan gyi dkar chag bstan pa rgyas pa rgyan gyi nyi 'od* 2, 14; As for the decree relative to the *skad gsar bcad*, the final section of the *Sgra sbyor* says, The Tibetan and Indian abbots all together in the 'on cang do palace to finalized *chos skad* and recorded [*reg zid* (*zin* or *zig*) *du mdzad pa*] after deliberation by the king and his ministers (*rje blon mol nas*), in the presence of a convention of the learned ones (*mkhas pa rnams 'tshogs te*), the new terms (*skad gsar gyi ming*), not previously spread and finalized (*sngon ma thogs pa dang gtan la ma phab pa*) were established as terms and finalized (*ming du btags shing gtan la phab ste*), then the Divine Emperor Khri lde srong btsan requested (*bskul nas*) and decreed as not to be falsified [*mi bcos bar* (*par*) *bzhag pa*]. pho brang 'on cang dor bod dang rgya gar gyi mkhan po thams cad kyis chos skad gtan la phab ste/ rje blon mol nas reg zid du mdzad pa/ skad gsar gyi ming sngon ma thogs pa dang / gtan la ma phab pa la/ mkhas pa rnams 'tshogs te ming du btags shing gtan la phab ste/ btsan po khri lde srong btsan gyis bskul nas bkas bcad de mi bcos bar bzhag pa rdzogs so//// See *sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 205.
83. According to Pad gzhung zla ba chung bdag, the term-"*budon*" dating prior to the imperial decree of 814, see Pad gzhung zla ba chung bdag 2021, 333–335; also see Pa tshab pa sangs dbang 'dus 2017, 8, 75.
84. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 73.
85. Bcom ldan ral gri 7a4.
86. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 148.
87. *'Phags pa lang kar gshegs pa'i theg pa chen po'i mdo* 71a1
88. *'Phags pa lang kar gshegs pa'i mdo las sangs rgyas thams cad kyi gsung gi snying po zhes bya ba'i le'u* 210a4

Source language	Target text (before 814)[81]	Target text (after 814)[82]
śūnyatā "emptiness"	*ye 'byam*[89]	*stong nyid*[90]
Īśvara "lord"	*che dbang*[91]	*dbang phyug*[92]
āgama "oral transmission"	*smrang*[93]	*lung*[94]
tīrthika "forder"	*mur 'dug*[95]	*mu stegs can*[96]
pañca-skandha "five aggregates"	*lnga phung*[97]	*phung po lnga*[98]
samyak "correctly"	*g.yung drung*[99]	*yang dag pa*[100]

Source text[101]	Target text[102] (1950)	Target text[103] (1950)	Target text[104] (1950)	Target text[105] (after 1954)
*zhōnghuá*中华, "Zhonghua/ China"	*dpal dkyil/krung hā*	*krung hā*	*krung hā*	*krung hwa*

89. Dbus pa blo gsal 1983, 44.
90. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 141.
91. Dbus pa blo gsal 1983, 44.
92. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 129.
93. Dbus pa blo gsal 1983, 47.
94. Dbus pa blo gsal 1983, 47.
95. Simonsson 1957, 28.
96. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 171.
97. P. t. 491.
98. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 84.
99. P. t. 491.
100. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 76.
101. 协议1951; 习近平 2018.
102. *Kun khyab rtsa tshig* 1950.
103. *spyi mnyam rtsa tshig* 1950.
104. *Gros mthun* 1951.
105. *rtsa khrims* 1954.

Source text[101]	Target text[102] (1950)	Target text[103] (1950)	Target text[104] (1950)	Target text[105] (after 1954)
*rénmín*人民, "people"	*rin mīn*	*mnga' 'bangs*	*mi dmangs*	*mi dmangs*
*guójì*国际, "international"	*phyi rgyal*	*rgyal mtshams*	*rgyal spyi*[106]	*rgyal spyi*
*kēxué*科学, "science"	*shes rig*	*tshan rig*	*sa yan si(-SCIENCE)'am rigs pa gsar pa*[107]	*tshan rig*
*gémìng*革命, "revolution"	*dga' ming*[108]	*'gas ming gi khrims lugs gsar bzo*[109]	*legs bcos*[110] (1939)	*gsar brje*[111]
Jiěfàng 解放, "liberation"	*'ching 'grol*	*'ching 'grol*	*bcings bkrol*	*bcings 'grol*
shǎoshù mínzú 少数民族, "Ethnic minorities"	*mi rigs nyung ngu*	*mi rigs grangs nyung*	*mi rigs grangs nyung*	*grangs nyung mi rigs*
dǎng 党, "Party"	*skyid sdug*[112] (1939)		*tang*	

Before 814, *snyon (nyon) rmongs (mongs)*, "delusion," was seen as the equivalent term for *duḥkha*. But after 814, *sdug bsngal*, "suffering," was finalized as the equivalent term for *duḥkha*, and *snyon (nyon) rmongs (mongs)* was finalized as the equivalent term for *kleśa*.[113] Similarly, before 1954, *phyi rgyal*, "foreign," or *rgyal mtshams*, "borders," were sometimes seen as the equivalent terms for *guójì* 国际, "international," but after 1954, *rgyal spyi* was finalized as the equivalent term for 国际, and *phyi rgyal* and *rgyal mtshams* were finalized as the equivalent terms for *wàiguó* 外国 and guójiè

106. Zhi cin phing 2019, 365.
107. dge 'dun chos 'phel 2010, 463.
108. *Tsung lis yis sbrul* 1929, 6.
109. *Sun tsung li'i zhal chem* 1930, 76.
110. *2012*年的追寻 2012, 34–38.
111. *San ming kru'u yi'i bsdus don* 1947, 2.
112. *2012*年的追寻 2012, 34–38.
113. *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 123, 126, 147.

国界, respectively.[114] The examples of the modern translations reflect the first part of the dharma translation principle decreed in 814, i.e., the translation should not violate the meaning. Examples in the two tables above also reflect the second principle's second instruction, (but also) to render it in Tibetan as fluently as possible. For example, *lnga phung* does not sound fluent in Tibetan, so the order of the original term was changed and finalized as *phung po lnga* in 814. Similarly, *mi rigs grangs nyung* does not sound fluent in Tibetan, and the order of the original words were changed and finalized as *grangs nyung mi rigs* in 1954.

As for the translation method, *tshan rig* is translated literally from Chinese: *tshan* is the Tibetan equivalent of the Chinese original *kē* 科, "subject," and *rig* is the Tibetan equivalent of the Chinese original *xué* 学, "-logy," but *sa yan si* (science) and *rigs pa gsar pa* (new reasoning) are both loaned and translated freely from English. (Just as an aside, for Gendun Chöpel, "old reasoning" meant Buddhist reasoning.) Such Tibetan terms (*rigs pa gsar pa* or *tshan rig*) were totally new for the general Tibetan readers at that time.

The Sino-Tibetan translators in the early days of the founding of PRC composed the *Chinese-Tibetan New Vocabulary* (*rgya bod ming tshig gsar pa*, *Hàn zàng xīn cíhuì*汉藏新词汇, 1–4 vols, 1954–1957)[115] and the *Chinese-Tibetan Bilingual Vocabulary* (*rgya bod shan sbyar gi tshig mdzod*, *Hàn zàng duìzhào cíhuì*汉藏对照词汇, 1976)[116] while translating and compiling Party and state policy documents, Marxist-Leninist works, and works by the major leaders of the Party and state.[117] They seem to have adopted an approach similar to the systematic procedures of composing the *vyutpatti*, (*bye brag tu rtogs par byed pa*),[118] the standard Indo-Tibetan lexicon, which were a part of the imperial decrees (*bkas bcad*).[119] The modern Sino-Tibetan translators were likely inspired by the *vyutpatti*. The *Chinese-Tibetan Bilingual Dictionary* (*rgya bod shan sbyar tshig mdzod*, *Hàn zàng duìzhào cídiǎn* 汉藏对照词典, 1991) was based on earlier Chinese-Tibetan dictionaries, including the *Chinese-Tibetan New Vocabulary* and the *Chinese-Tibetan Bilingual Vocabulary* mentioned above. Overall, the two bilingual lexicons composed in these two different periods have undoubtedly played important roles in enriching and standardizing new words and terminologies in their respective areas and developing Tibetan language in general.

The imperial decrees and the tradition they reflected would remain influential for more than a millennium after its issuance. As further evidence of this, we can find its influence in the Tibetan translation of the *Tiananmen Poems* (*tiān'ānmén shī chāo*天安门诗抄). The Tibetan translation of

114. *Rgya bod shan sbyar tshig mdzod* 2017(1991), 1236, 456.
115. *Rgya bod ming tshig gsar pa* 1954–1957.
116. *Rgya bod shan sbyar gi tshig mdzod* 1976.
117. 降边嘉措 2018, 3.
118. The *bye brag tu rtogs par byed pa* may be inspired by the first Sanskrit-Chinese lexicon known, the *Fān fàn yǔ* 翻梵语, "the Translation of Sanskrit" (T. 2130), dated 517 CE. For more details, see J. Braarvig 2018, 437–441.
119. Panglung 1994, 162; *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* 2003, 70; bcom ldan ral gri 7a1–2.

the Tiananmen poems in Chinese is considered the best model for Sino-Tibetan poetry translation since the founding of New China.[120] Here, I extract one poem from the Tibetan translation:

In Chinese language:

zhōuyóu tiānxià wèi gémìng, 周游天下为革命, (1)
ēnrú yǔlù jì rénhuán. 恩如雨露济人寰. (2)
láiqù fēnfēn lǐ guóshì, 来去纷纷理国事, (3)
tóngshì fèndòu jūn dāngxiān. 同是奋斗君当先。(4)
zhìwéi rénmín móu jiěfàng, 志为人民谋解放, (5)
qiānzǎi yīngfēng yì dāngnián. 千载英风忆当年. (6)
gǔwǎng jīnlái néng yǒujǐ, 古往今来能有几, (7)
fāngcǎo tiānyá mǎn rénjiān. 芳草天涯满人间. (8) [121]

In Tibetan:

gsar brje'i don du yangs pa'i nor 'dzin bskor/ (1)
bka' drin bdud rtsis mi yul brlan par byas/ (2)
rings pa'i tshul gyis rgyal don 'grub la 'bad/ (3)
lhan du 'thab kyang gang de mdun la bshar/ (4)
dpa' ba'i thugs kyis dmangs kyi bcings 'grol brtson/ (5)
snyan grags dri bsung tha gru kun la khyab/ (8)
sngar don dran tshe dpa' nyams lo khrir gnas/ (6)
de lta'i dpa' bo gna' deng kun na dkon/ (7) [122]

Travelling widely around the world for revolution,
kindness is like rain and dew for the world.
Coming and going to manage state affairs,
you take the lead on the battlefield.
Aiming for the liberation of the people,
you remind us of the heroic spirits of thousands of years ago.
How many can there be throughout the ages,
Fragrant grass fills the whole world.

120. Li krung lin 1980, 81.
121. 童怀周1978, 91–92.
122. Thung ho'e kro'u 1979, 155.

When translating these verses, the translators followed the methods in the imperial decree issued in 814, i.e., the order of lines six, seven, and eight of the original were changed in the Tibetan translation in order to make the Tibetan translation more intelligible for Tibetan readers. On the whole, the Tibetan translation above obviously draws on Indian *kāvya* and *abhidhāna*. For example, *nor 'dzin* is the Tibetan equivalent of the synonym *vasuṃdharā* (containing wealth) of the Sanskrit name *pṛthivī* (earth) used in the first line of these verse traditions.

The initial syllable of each line of the first seven lines can be read as *zhōu' ēnlái tóngzhì qiāngǔ* 周恩来同志千古, "Comrade Zhou Enlai through the ages," in the Chinese original. Although the Tibetan translation failed to reproduce this effect with the initial seven syllables phonologically, it follows the principle of the decree in not violating the meaning while rendering the poem as fluently as possible in Tibetan. We see the same in translations between Sanskrit and Tibetan. In a Sanskrit stanza, for example, the Sanskrit syllables *u*, *śa*, *ṭa* and *ra* must be the initial syllable of each line of the Sanskrit stanza:

umay*ā* sahito rudraḥ
*ś*aṃkara-sahito viṣṇuḥ
ṭaṃkāraḥ *śūlapāṇiśca*
rakṣantu *ś*iva sarvadā[123]

However, the Tibetan translation did not adopt the phonological equivalent of the initial syllables of the Sanskrit original:

u ma dang bcas drag po dang //
bde byed dang bcas 'jug sel te//
ṭaṃ tshul phyag na mdung thung yang //
zhi bas rtag tu bsrung bar mdzod//[124]

Umā along with Rudra, Śaṃkara along with Viṣṇu and Śūlapāṇi with his sound of the bow—let Śiva protect thee forever.[125]

In such cases, therefore, it seems preferable to adhere to the target language's own metrics. Sakya Paṇḍita Kunga Gyaltsen (sa paṇ kun dga' rgyal mtshan 1185–1251) has addressed this kind of situation:

123. Chimpa, L., and A. Chattopadhyaya 1990, 114.

124. Tā ra nā tha 2013, 77. Bcom ldan ral gri's translation goes like this, *U ma dang bcas drag po dang/ bde byed lhan cig khyab 'jug dang/ ṭaṃ tshul phyag na mdung can dang/ zhi bas kun du srung par shog*. See bcom ldan ral gri 33a[2].

125. Text quoted from Chimpa, L., and A. Chattopadhyaya 1990, 115.

me tog phreng 'dzin yi ge nyi shu rtsa gcig pa la bcu dgu par bsgyur ba la sogs pa/ rgya gar gyi sdeb sbyor dang mi mthun par bod la go bde zhing bklag sla bar bya ba'i phyir/ yi ge phri zhing bsdebs nas don tshang zhing ma nor bar bsgyur bar zad do/[126]

The twenty-one syllables of *Sragdharā*[127] is translated into Tibetan as nineteen syllables, etc., this is not in accordance with the Indian meter. But in order to make it intelligible and easy to read for Tibetan people, the *stotra* [hymn of praise] of the goddess Tārā has been reduced in syllables but its full meaning is translated.

I have chosen two examples from two Tibetan translations of *The Praise of the Goddess Tārā in Sragdharā Metre* to try to reflect Sakya Paṇḍita's address above:

In Indian language: *Sragdharāstotram*[128]

durlaṅghe duḥkhavahnau vinipatitatanur durbhagaḥ
kāndiśīkaḥ kiṃ kiṃ mūḍhaḥ karomīty asakṛd api kṛtārambhavaiyarthyakhinnaḥ |
śrutvā bhūyaḥ parebhyaḥ kṣatanayana iva vyomni candrārkalakṣmīm
ālokāśānibaddhaḥ paragatigamanas tvāṃ śraye pāpahantrīm | |2| |

[I], whose body has fallen into the fire of sorrow, which is so difficult to cross, unfortunate, without orientation, depressed by the frequent failure of everything I have undertaken, thinking: "What shall I, a fool, do?", resembling a blind person who is obsessed by the hope of seeing the beauty of sun and moon, having repeatedly heard about it from others, [yet] depending on others when walking, rely on you, destroyer of sins.[129]

1. In Tibetan: *me tog phreng 'dzin gyi bstod pa*[130]

rgal bar dka' ba'i sdug bsngal me nang lus lhung skal ngan phyogs gang zhig la

126. Sa paṇ kun dga' rgyal mtshan 2013, 548.
127. Sarvajñamitra 28, 106–15.
128. Hahn 2016, 86.
129. Text quoted from Hahn 2016, 86.
130. Sarvajñamitra 28, 106–15.

brten snyam pa//
blun zhing ci ci bgyi snyam lan cig ma lags rtsom bgyi don ma mchis pas dub pa bdag/
mig nyams gzhan gyi 'gros kyis 'gro ba snang ba re bar bcas pas nam mkha'i nyi zla yi//
'od ltar gzhan dag rnams las khums te sdig pa 'joms par mdzad pa khyod la brten par bgyid//

The colophon of this translation can be read: It had been translated by the Indian abbot Kanakavarma and the Tibetan translator Patsab Nyima Drak (pa tshab nyi ma grags, 1055–?), and the great Paṇḍita Naṇikaśrījñāna and the translator Chak Chojé Pal (chag chos rje dpal, 1197–1263/4) later corrected it a bit and cleaned it up.

2. In Tibetan: *'phags ma sgrol ma'i me tog phreng ba 'dzin pa'i bstod pa*[131]

rgal mi nus pa'i sdug bsngal me//
de la rtag tu lus lhung gnas//
skal ba ma ldan 'gro sa gang //
rmongs pa bdag gis ji ltar bya//
de ltar rtag tu smras nas ni//
don med bdag ni stobs chung song //
mkha' la nyi zla dpal ldan grags//
de ni gzhan gyi smra ba thos//
de thos long ba'i spyod pa ltar//
mthong rten 'dod kyang gzhan khrid med//
sdig pa 'joms ma khyed la ni//
bdag ni skyabs mthong 'dod lags so//

The colophon of this translation can be read: It had been self-translated (*rang 'gyur*)[132] by Paṇḍita Dawa Shonnu (zla ba gzhon nu, 11th c.).

Although seven syllables per line is usually seen as one of the standard patterns of Tibetan verses, and the Dawa Shonnu translation also follows the second method, e.g., as for the stanza, it is fine to keep four lines (*pāda*s) or even six lines, formulated in the imperial decree of 814, the

131. Thams cad mkhyen pa'i bshes gnyen [Śa. 46a2–49b6]

132. Generally speaking, *rang 'gyur* means translating without the assistance of a native speaker. It should be noted that it is different from *thugs 'gyur*/*dgongs 'gyur* "mind-translation", which means a translator, for instance, went to India and gained teachings from her/his guru, and then came back to Tibet and translated the teachings by her/his heart.

eight syllables per line of the hymn of praise of the goddess Tārā (Tibetan translation)[133] is the most popular among all the Tibetan translations of the hymns of praise of the goddess Tārā, since the eight syllable one is more practical (easier to recite or chant) than the nineteen or even seven syllable ones:

In Indian language: *Namaskāraikaviṃśatistotram*[134]

> namastāre ture vīre kṣaṇadyutinibhekṣaṇe |
> trailokyanāthavaktrābjavikasatkesarodbhave ||1||
>
> I prostrate to *Tārā*, swift and fearless,
> Whose eyes flash like lightning;
> Born from a lotus in an ocean of tears,
> Of Avalokiteśvara, Lord of the Three Worlds.[135]

In Tibetan: *phyag 'tshal nyi shu rtsa gcig gi bstod pa*[136]

> phyag 'tshal sgrol ma myur ma dpa' mo//
> spyan ni skad cig glog dang 'dra ma//
> 'jig rten gsum mgon chu skyes zhal gyi//
> ge sar bye ba las ni byung ma//

The colophon of this translation reads: It has been translated by Nyen Lotsāwa (gnyan lo tsā ba dar ma grags,11th c.), and Sakya Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen (sa skya rje btsun grags pa rgyal mtshan,1147–1216) edited it. The Nyen Lotsāwa translation perfectly follows the first method—namely, if the syntax is kept the same [as original] and the [target] meaning and words match smoothly, then translate without changing the [original] syntax!—formulated in the imperial decree of 814, since according to the tradition of Tibetan syntax, the predicate *phyag 'tshal* generally should be put at the end of the verse instead of the beginning of the verse.

In conclusion, the so-called "dharma language" (*chos skad*) must accord with the dharma texts (*chos kyi gzhung*) and with the principles of grammar of Indian *vyākaraṇa* (*byā ka ra ṇa'i sgra'i lugs*). As a novel language, *chos skad* enjoyed great success in Tibet, and this success was because of the imperial decrees (*bkas bcad*). The imperial decrees not only transformed Tibetan language,

133. Gnyan lo tsā ba dar ma grags 8, 382–90.
134. Text quoted from dngos grub 2007, 1.
135. Text quoted from dngos grub 2007, 1.
136. Gnyan lo tsā ba dar ma grags 8, 382–90.

they transformed Tibetan ideologies based in Brahmanical thought and the indigenous world of the *lha* (divine), *klu* (water spirit), and *gnyan* (mountain spirit) into the ideological world of the Buddha, the bodhisattva and the guru—at least theoretically—for around 1150 years until the middle of the twentieth century when the practice of modern Sino-Tibetan translation commenced. From that time, Tibetan ideology was transformed by modernism. Although the imperial decree is no longer applied to the spread of *chos skad* (dharma texts and Indian *vyākaraṇa*), the dharma-translation principles, translation methods, and the *vyutpatti* in the imperial decrees still inspire and inform modern Sino-Tibetan translation practices. The dharma-translation principles and dharma-translation methods in the imperial decrees and the illustrations I provide here may also serve as models for translation programs in the future, in particular for Buddhist translation projects.

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