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ON THE COVER:

A page from the newly discovered Tangut xylograph *Essential Selection of Mixed Homonyms Often-Transmitted*. Private collection.

Meng Xia,
Natalia Tsareva

E.I. Kychanov’s Translation of the “Revised and Newly Approved Code of the Heavenly Prosperity Reign” in the Context of the Development of Modern Translation Studies

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Abstract: E.I. Kychanov was well known in Chinese academic circles since 1980s, and his translations of ancient Tangut manuscripts into Russian are often used by Chinese scholars as reference material. This article focuses on the scholar’s translation of the Tangut “Revised and Newly Approved Code of the Heavenly Prosperity Reign (1149–1168)” and analyzes some features of his translation work, his chosen strategies and methods, and also comments on the Chinese specialists’ attitude to E.I. Kychanov’s translation of the Tangut legal text.

Key words: E.I. Kychanov, translation activities, translation strategies and methods, ancient Tangut manuscripts

Introduction

Among Russian Tangut scholars, Evgeny Ivanovich Kychanov (1932–2013) is undoubtedly an important personality. The scholar became well known in Chinese academic circles in the 1980s. His translated texts of ancient Tangut manuscripts into Russian have been used since 1980s and are still being used now as reference materials by Chinese experts in the field.

In the first place we draw attention to the fact that, judging by the areas of research pursued by Professor E.I. Kychanov, a significant part of his scholarly professional life was devoted to translation work, in particular, to translation of Tangut manuscripts. For this reason, without belittling the great merits of the scholar in other fields of humanities, we consider him not so much as a Tangut history scholar, but rather as a wonderful translator, and use as a convincing example his Russian translation of the Tangut legal text,

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the “Revised and Newly Approved Code of the Heavenly Prosperity Reign (1149–1168)” (*ngwə lię kwi ln sjeu ndje kē ndzja* 敕散筵義擬撰綴敕; known in Chinese academic literature by the translated name of the Tangut title as “Tiansheng gaijiu xinding lüling” 天盛改舊新定律令) (Kychanov 1987–1989).¹

We will also conduct a comparative analysis of the translations of this ancient document made by E.I. Kychanov and Chinese specialists in order to deeper understand their value characteristics from the point of view of scientific rigour, based on the theory of translational interpretation and taking into account semantic expression, style correspondence and targeting.

The pioneer translator of the “Revised and Newly Approved Code of the Heavenly Prosperity Reign”

It is known that Tangut studies were of great interest to E.I. Kychanov from his youth and throughout his life. His doctoral dissertation, along with questions of ethnic origin of the Tanguts, their economic development, and the role and spread of Buddhism in the Tangut state, was also devoted to the study of their writing.

However, E.I. Kychanov at that time was not yet fluent in Tangut, so in his materials required for his thesis he referred to Chinese sources, because as a graduate of the Oriental Faculty of the Leningrad State University he was proficient in the Chinese language.

It should be mentioned that in his study of Tangut, E.I. Kychanov was helped, on the one hand, by his experience of mastering Tibetan, and, on the other hand, by his examination and classification of the Tangut collection when he was working in the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences (now the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences).

It should also be noted that, due to the presence of the Tangut manuscript collection, formation of Tangut studies in Russia began in the early twentieth century, in 1909. From the point of view of content, this scientific field went through the full process of development from textological to historical and cultural research. It involved both careful examination and cataloguing of documents and their subsequent in-depth study and translation. Being

¹ In this article we cite the transcription of Tangut characters in the phonetic reconstruction of M.V. Sofronov, as it is given in the Tangut dictionary by E.I. KYCHANOV 2006.

involved in this process, E.I. Kychanov created the first Russian translation of the “Revised and Newly Approved Code of the Heavenly Prosperity Reign”.

The scholar knew that the key to deciphering Tangut manuscripts of the Western Xia was their writing. Its signs, one might say, remained a mystery to researchers, but mysteries always entice and attract scholars with inquisitive minds and wide imagination. One such was E.I. Kychanov, who starting from 1969 over the course of twenty years worked steadily and consistently on solving the most difficult tasks.² With his previous translation experience and keen research vision, he chose the Western Xia legal code as his object of research and translation.

In translating the text of the “Revised and Newly Approved Code of the Heavenly Prosperity Reign”, the scholar was guided by the twofold aim of combining translation with scholarly historical research.

This work of the scholar is considered unique both in its volume and content, for it includes 1460 articles (20 chapters) of the original, translated by E.I. Kychanov into Russian. All his research findings and texts of translations were included in the 4-volume edition, in which the largest part (3 volumes) is taken up by the translations.³

The publication of Professor E.I. Kychanov’s translation and the facsimile of the “Revised and Newly Approved Code of the Heavenly Prosperity Reign” has received considerable attention from Chinese scholars.

For four years, starting in 1987, scholars Shi Jinbo (史金波), Nie Hongying (聶鴻音) and Bai Bin (白濱) translated the Code from Tangut into Chinese. In 1994 their work was published as “Xixia Tiansheng lüling”.⁴ In 2000, this book was published under a different title, “Tiansheng gaijiu xinding lüling”.⁵

A new translation of the Tangut Code into Chinese, to be published soon, has now been completed by Han Xiaomang (韓小忙), a Tangut scholar and professor at Shaanxi Pedagogical University (Xi’an), with support from the National Social Science Foundation of China project.

In addition, it should be noted that as early as 1988 Li Zhongsan (李仲三), a researcher at the Academy of Social Sciences of Ningxia-Hui Autonomous Region, translated into Chinese the second volume of the E.I. Kychanov’s Russian translation of the Tangut Code.⁶ This translation practice deserves

² POPOVA 2013: 217.

³ KYCHANOV 1987–1989.

⁴ SHI JINBO et al. 1994.

⁵ SHI JINBO et al. 2000.

⁶ LI ZHONGSAN 1988.

special attention, because if the other three volumes will be translated, the true significance of E.I. Kychanov's work will become known in Chinese scholarly circles.

It should be acknowledged that in the last two decades, Chinese experts have comprehensively studied the text of the "Revised and Newly Approved Code of the Heavenly Prosperity Reign". However, we should note that their research in this field would not have been so effective and scientifically convincing if it had not been for the work of the outstanding Russian scholar E.I. Kychanov.

The features of the contents of the "Revised and Newly Approved Code of the Heavenly Prosperity Reign" and the difficulties of translation

If we ask ourselves why it took E.I. Kychanov 20 years to translate the Western Xia Code into Russian, the reasons are, firstly, high complexity of the texts, and, secondly, the need to reinterpret the original work taking into account its comprehension by Russian-speaking readers.

It is known that the text of the "Revised and Newly Approved Code of the Heavenly Prosperity Reign" is a state legal code that was compiled by the most educated people well-versed in both Chinese and Tangut writing systems. It was adopted and promulgated during the reign of Emperor Renzong of the Western Xia Dynasty (1149–1169), some 800 years before E.I. Kychanov started translating it.

Fortunately, the ancient Tangut manuscript was not lost to time, although time has not spared the Western Xia state itself. Having conquered it, the Mongols destroyed almost all of its written monuments and cultural relics. For this reason, the Tangut script was considered almost lost, and there was an extremely limited amount of reference material, which made its decipherment difficult for Russian researchers, including E.I. Kychanov.

To give a brief summary of the contents of the Code, it was extremely extensive, covering criminal, civil, administrative, economic, military and procedural law. Chapter 1 defined the "five penalties" and the "ten evils"; Chapter 2 provided general principles of criminal law; Chapter 3 was devoted to criminal and procedural rights; Chapters 4, 5 and 6 mainly dealt with military law; Chapters 10, 11, 12 and 13 presented administrative law, which dealt with the ranks of administrative bodies at all levels, the staffing of officials, the selection of officials and their terms of office, the

administrative procedures and the system of using seals; Chapters 15, 16, 17 and 18 dealt with economic laws, which regulated agriculture, winemaking, water management, construction and use of bridges and roads, salt production, warehousing, and foreign trade; Chapter 19 described laws dealing with livestock and pastures; and Chapter 20 contained supplementary material for preceding chapters of the Code.

Judging by the focus of the content, it is clear that translation difficulties were particularly acute when it came to interpreting numerous proper names and specific terms for particular state activities. Among these are the following thematic groups that need special attention in terms of translation.

The terms for posts and titles that were borrowed by the Tanguts from the Chinese administrative system. Comparison of these terms in Tangut and Chinese shows that these titles were not simple translations from Chinese, but, as the Chinese scholar Sun Bojun (孫伯君) pointed out in her article, they were rather free translations with a generalization of some functions.⁷

The terms for the military administration. In this respect, the Western Xia imitated the military system of China's earlier dynasties and established a strict system of military administration with many complex terms for its parts, which are described in detail in the tenth chapter of the Western Xia Code.

The terms for Chinese medicines found in the Code amount to 232 very diverse lexical items associated with a wide range of medicinal sources. Most of the original terms for traditional Chinese medicines were translated into Tangut by transliteration based on the Northwest Chinese dialect of the Song dynasty.⁸

Buddhist and Taoist terms used to describe rules concerning various aspects of Buddhism and Taoism in Western Xia. In particular, there were many articles about monks, in which their titles were indicated. In addition, the text contained many terms in quotations from Buddhist scriptures that were rare and unclear in meaning. Moreover, the drafters of the Code used two parallel sets of Buddhist terms that were adopted in the Tangut language. Therefore, their essential properties and differences could only be estimated rather than understood with certainty.

In addition to lexical difficulties in understanding the language of the original text, the translator likely faced the complex task of finding most accurate expressions, taking into account the text's comprehension by Russian-speaking readers.

⁷ SUN BOJUN 2021: 61.

⁸ NIE HONGYIN 2009: 292.

According to the generally accepted classification, the original text of the “Revised and Newly Approved Code of the Heavenly Prosperity Reign”, being a state document, is a text with legal content belonging to the official formal style. E.I. Kychanov never forgot to take this important characteristic into account in his translation, maintaining, for example, its logical clarity, avoiding the use of emotional lexical items, using the suitable terminology, and adhering to the style of standard legal expressions similar to that found in the pre-1917 Russian written language. Thus, E.I. Kychanov sought to make the translation acceptable for perception and understanding by Russian readers well-versed in humanities.

As can be seen from the above, although many factors caused seemingly insurmountable difficulties in translating the original text of the legal Code from Tangut into Russian, E.I. Kychanov succeeded in translating the untranslatable! What enabled him to achieve this goal? In answering this question, we offer the following reflections.

Firstly, E.I. Kychanov, before undertaking his full translation of the Code, mastered the larger part of the Tangut writing system in the course of his work on cataloguing ancient Tangut manuscripts, and in the process of compiling, with M.V. Sofronov, a reference book for reconstructing the phonetics of the Tangut writing that was published in 1963. In addition, Professor E.I. Kychanov accumulated knowledge as the head of the Tangut research group for nearly ten years. As a result of this work, the scholar prepared his translation of the manuscript entitled “The Newly Collected Precious Paired Sayings” that was published in 1974.

These facts tell us that, when E.I. Kychanov started to translate the Western Xia Code, he already had sufficient knowledge and skills to understand and find equivalents for the ancient Tangut text in Russian.

Secondly, it is well known that many Tangut laws were borrowed from the legal system of ancient China and were based on interpretations given in Chinese sources. Examples of this are the judicial and prison systems that existed under the Tang and Song dynasties. It was therefore justifiable that, in the absence of other relevant references, E.I. Kychanov, who had a good command of the Chinese language, relied to a large extent on the “Tang Code with Commentaries” (“Tanglü shuyi” 唐律疏議) and the “Song Penal Code” (“Song xintong” 宋刑統) as reference materials.

Thirdly, let us not forget that E.I. Kychanov studied Tangut through Chinese, so his Russian translation had to go through a thought process from Tangut to Classical Chinese and then to literary Russian. Although

this complex process was not presented in written form, it undoubtedly played a positive role in matters requiring creative effort on the part of the translator.

Fourthly, the scholar's reference to and comparison with the legal codes of the Tang and Song dynasties allowed him to naturally develop his translation experience and to gradually improve his ability to interpret the Tangut script, which generally had a positive effect on his professional skills.

Fifthly, Kychanov relied on his profound knowledge of linguistics. He was able not only to take into account the stylistic features of the Tangut text with numerous terms and fixed legal expressions that reflected the values and traditions of the Tangut state, but also to render these features accurately into Russian.

Strategies and ways of translating lacunae by E.I. Kychanov

From the above it is clear that in the “Revised and Newly Approved Code of the Heavenly Prosperity Reign” many lexical units were so-called lacunae, i.e. words with unique cultural and informational connotations, formed over many centuries, which reflected the distinctive identity of the people that was linked with various areas of life of the Tangut state.

As a translator, E.I. Kychanov creatively used known strategies, types and methods of translation in order to express the meaning of Tangut concepts in Russian.

In general, a translation strategy is understood as a translator's specific general line of conduct, a strategy of transforming, “deforming” the source text (in our case, an ancient legal document in the Tangut language) as a result of deciding what should be sacrificed.⁹

Textual analysis of the translation shows that the main strategies used by the scholar are domestication and foreignization, as well as their possible combination, i.e. a hybrid strategy.

The strategy of domestication is an ethnocentric approach emphasizing cultural values of the target language.¹⁰ In the translation of the legal Code, domestication manifested itself mainly in two aspects: first, when a certain cultural concept did not correspond to an appropriate expression in Russian

⁹ GARBOVSKIJ 2004: 508.

¹⁰ SHELESTYUK & GRITSENKO 2016: 204.

culture, it was replaced by a suitable concept, close in meaning, understood by the Russian-speaking target audience. Second, taking into account the perception of a concept by people of Russian culture, the translator provided additional interpretations in footnotes or references to explain correctly and clearly the particular linguocultural and historical information contained in the text.

As for foreignization, on the contrary, it is used to reflect the culture of the source language.¹¹ This strategy was used by E.I. Kychanov in the translation of the legal Code when concepts had special meanings, originated as a result of integration of Chinese and Tangut cultures, or reflected peculiar aspects of Tangut culture.

In addition, both strategies could certainly be combined in the translation process, as evidenced by the scholar's use of hybrid writing that combines the culture of the source language and the Russian culture.

The translation strategy represents a macro-level orientation during translation. Translation techniques, however, are manifestations of the translation strategy on specific linguistic levels. This is particularly clear in the fact that, when translating cultural lacunae, E.I. Kychanov sought to interpret the content of the original as accurately as possible, taking into account the time and space that would be acceptable for the perception and understanding of his reader.

It is clear that the translation strategies chosen by the scholar involved the use of certain translation techniques. For example, domestication was mainly based on different types of "substitutions", while foreignization relied on the use of literal translation and transcription. When combining these two strategies, the scholar joined transcription + interpretation or literal translation + addition. We have already pointed out above that great difficulties arose in finding acceptable ways of translating lacunae, such as proper names and terms adopted in different areas of Western Xia. Below we analyze in greater detail the techniques used by Kychanov in translating them.

Examination of the Code of Western Xia makes it clear that proper names and terms used in Tangut laws form two groups.

The first group consisted of names and terms that had a predominantly denotative function and had no corresponding words in Russian. They could be represented by transcription of the Tangut language, for example, *phje nga* 𐰇𐰏𐰔, *nje nin* 𐰇𐰏𐰔, *won* 𐰇. Also, E.I. Kychanov often added in brackets transcriptions of the corresponding Chinese terms: *liu* 柳 (*liang* 兩),

¹¹ SHELESTYUK & GRITSENKO 2016: 204.

šje 叢 (*sheng* 升), *ldiə* 祗 (*jin* 斤), *ndzwon* 𪛗 (*mu* 畝), *tšhiau* 𪛗 (*chi* 尺), *ndu* 𪛗 (*dou* 斗), *ndžja* 𪛗 (*hu* 斛).

We should also note that the scholar himself was skeptical about some of his reconstructed transcriptions of unknown Chinese words borrowed into the Tangut language or transcribed in the text of the Code in Tangut script. In this case he added a question mark in brackets: *bitou*(?), *jieniu*(?), *lotu*(?), *chuan-zou*(?), *hejue*(?), *shiyanzi*(?), *guxiebu*(?), *xijue*(?), *lianyangjue*(?), *muzhulan*(?), *honglu*(?), *baji*(?), *baichun*(?), *cuochun*(?).¹²

This testifies to the professional integrity of Professor E.I. Kychanov and his pursuit of scientific truth. We can see that he did not avoid questions, did not gloss over them, but left them unsolved until he could come back and find answers to them in the future.

As for the second group of translated Tangut names and terms, it consists of words with meanings reflecting the denotative function and the presence of cultural semantics. In this case, searching for translation equivalents, E.I. Kychanov often turned to free translation, free translation with transcription, or literal translation with additions. As a proof of this, below we list examples of such translations.

<p>Free translation</p>	<p>Head of the General Imperial Secretariat for Civil Affairs; having the title of head of the General Imperial Secretariat for Civil Affairs; highly esteemed and pure, enlightened, honouring his parents and respected, noble prince of the south-east; high pillar of the state (KYCHANOV 1987, Vol. 2: 10); “transferring orders” in the General Imperial Secretariat for Civil Affairs and in the General Office of Military Affairs; the chiefs and “transmitting orders” of all directorates; army commanders; city inspectors in the border and interior [areas of the country]; chiefs of all directorates in the border and interior [areas of the country] (KYCHANOV 1989, Vol. 3: 88); water supervisor; canal attendant (KYCHANOV 1989, Vol. 4: 86); [persons] with the ranks of “awarded a sovereign seal” and “not awarded a sovereign seal” or “awarded” (KYCHANOV 1987, Vol. 2: 30).</p>
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¹² KYCHANOV 1989, Vol. 4: 144–146.

Free translation + transcription ¹³	prefects (<i>cishi</i> 刺史); senior guard chiefs (<i>daban</i> 大班) ¹⁴ ; vice-prefects (<i>tongpan</i> 通判); military commissar (<i>jinglüeshi</i> 經略使), governor-generals (<i>dadudufu</i> 大都督府); finance and tax administration (<i>sansi</i> 三司); Huayan 華嚴 (<i>Da-fang-guang-fo-hua-yan-jing</i> 大方廣佛華嚴經, <i>Buddhāvataṃsaka-nāma-mahā-vaipulya-sūtra</i>), <i>Qi-xin</i> 起信 (<i>Da-sheng-qi-xin-lun</i> 大乘起信論, <i>Mahāyāna-śraddhotpāda-śāstra</i>), a shared sacred meal of monks (<i>shenyang</i> , i.e. <i>shengyang</i> 聖養?) ¹⁵ ; Taoist preacher (<i>bianda</i> 毘𪗇) ¹⁶ — a monk who “left his family” (嫫嫫毘𪗇) (KYCHANOV 1989, Vol. 3: 88, 156, 158, 161; KYCHANOV 1989, Vol. 4: 85, 164, 202).
Literal translation + addition	[The [officials] of the night prohibition(?) and iron smelting departments; the inspectors overseeing release of water into canals and catching of thieves; the young men among the ‘permanent residents’ of temples; the young men of the monastic community; young men among the ‘seekers of salvation in the law’ (KYCHANOV 1989, Vol. 3: 88, 161).

¹³ Due to technical difficulties, Chinese words in the Russian edition of the Code are given only in the Cyrillic transcription without the Chinese text, so it is not always clear whether this or that Chinese word is a hypothetical reconstruction or a confirmed decoding from its Tangut transcription (written in Tangut script), or simply a Chinese equivalent-translation of a Tangut word. A helpful hint in such cases is either a question mark after the transcription, if the Chinese word recorded in Tangut was reconstructed, but not understood (see examples above), or a Russian translation, if it was somehow identified (decoded). Here we restore the Chinese text omitted in the Russian edition and put it after the corresponding transcription.

¹⁴ Chinese researchers suppose that the Tangut word *thon phan* 𪗇𪗇, borrowed from Chinese, which E.I. Kychanov interpreted as *daban*, has the meaning *tongpan* 通判, as does the word *thun ndzje* 𪗇𪗇 (cf., for example, KYCHANOV 1987, Vol. 2: 12 and SHI JINBO et al. 2000: 108).

¹⁵ Chinese researchers suppose that the Tangut word *śje -ôn* 𪗇𪗇, which E.I. Kychanov interpreted as *shengyang* (“shared sacred meal, joint meal of the monks”), has the meaning *shengrong* 聖容 (cf., for example, KYCHANOV 1989, Vol. 3: 110, 158; 1988, Vol. 1: 414 and SHI JINBO et al. 2000: 363, 403).

¹⁶ It is not quite clear what Chinese word is meant by transcription *bianda* with the meaning “Taoist preacher” (KYCHANOV 1989, Vol. 3: 115, 161, 164; Vol. 4: 676). Perhaps, E.I. Kychanov reconstructed in this way a *hypothetical* Chinese original of the Tangut word *phje tha* 𪗇𪗇 or just wrote down in Russian its transcription (cf. KYCHANOV 1988, Vol. 1: 421). His Tangut dictionary (KYCHANOV 2006: 761, no. 5595-1) gives for this word the corrected(?) Russian meaning “банди” (“bandi”) with English and Chinese translations “Taoist teacher” and “*biandi* 辨弟” respectively (the latter usually refers to Mongolian realities; cf. *shami* 沙彌). Chinese scholars have translated this Tangut word as *bian dao* 變道 (SHI JINBO et al. 2000: 368, 405, 408). Now it is interpreted as a transcription of the Chinese *piantan* 偏袒 (e.g., in the nine-volume Han Xiaomang’s Tangut dictionary, see HAN XIAOMANG 2021, vol. 3: 429).

The attitude in China to E.I. Kychanov's translation of the "Revised and Newly Approved Code of the Heavenly Prosperity Reign"

It is known that as soon as Book 2: Facsimile, Translation and Notes (Chapters 1–7) of the "Revised and Newly Approved Code of the Heavenly Prosperity Reign" was published in 1987 (KYCHANOV 1987, Vol. 2),¹⁷ it immediately attracted the attention of the Academy of Social Sciences of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region of China, and its researcher Li Zhongsan translated the book into Chinese. E.I. Kychanov and his Chinese colleagues, Professors Wang Jingru (王靜如) and Li Fanwen (李範文), wrote their own prefaces to the edition, which was published in December 1988 by the Ningxia People's Publishing House (LI ZHONGSAN 1988).¹⁸ The facsimiles of the Code itself in Tangut and its partial translation from Russian into Chinese served, in one way or another, as direct sources for the first translation from Tangut into Chinese made in the 1990s (SHI JINBO et al. 1994; 2000).

However, in our opinion, the Chinese academic community has not yet shown sufficient interest in discussing and evaluating this translation. Perhaps the reason for this is the absence of a complete Chinese translation of the four-volume Russian edition of the Code and its study by E.I. Kychanov. Nevertheless, the work on this translation has begun and one of the four volumes has been already translated.

At the end of 1978, the Chinese scholar Huang Zhenhua (黃振華) wrote an article in which he pointed out inaccuracies in E.I. Kychanov's translation of the place names in the tenth chapter of the "Revised and Newly Approved Code of the Heavenly Prosperity Reign" (see KYCHANOV 1965) and even attributed it to the insufficiently high level of Soviet scholars' knowledge of Classical Chinese and Tangut languages (HUANG ZHENHUA 1978: 322). However, this critical remark can hardly be considered entirely objective and fair, because at that time E.I. Kychanov presented only a part of his translations of manuscripts, and the translation of the main chapters of the

¹⁷ The volumes of this translation were published non-sequentially. The first to be published was the second volume, containing a facsimile and commented translation of the first seven chapters of the Code (KYCHANOV 1987, Vol. 2), then came out the first volume, which contains the research part (KYCHANOV 1988, Vol. 1), and in 1989 the final two volumes of the translation were published (KYCHANOV 1989, Vol. 3, Vol. 4).

¹⁸ December 1988 is specified as the publication date in the book's imprint. Li Wen in his review indicates that the book was published in May 1989 (LI WEN 1990: 67).

Code was still to come. We believe that one can judge the level of linguistic competence only on the basis of examining the translation in its entirety.

However, to be fair, one must admit that comparison of the translations made by Professor E.I. Kychanov into Russian and by Professor Han Xiaomang into Chinese reveals some discrepancies. For example, let us consider the passage in Chapter 1 ([Article 1], f. 4a <6> – f. 7b <13>, § [6]).

Russian translation from Tangut by E.I. Kychanov:

Widowed mother-in-laws, uncles' wives, nephews' mothers, older and younger paternal aunts, and [the rebel's] daughters and sisters who have already been married off, or adopted by another and are in his custody, or have become nuns, are not to be included among those subject to punishment. If a sister or daughter [of the rebel] has a **master (husband)**, she is to be returned to her husband; **she is not to be given as a concubine** (KYCHANOV 1987, Vol. 2: 14).

Our translation of E.I. Kychanov's Russian translation into Chinese

谋反者守寡的岳母、舅母、姨母、大小姑母，已出嫁的，或被他人收养并生活在收养人家的，或已出家的女儿和姊妹，不必接受惩罚。如果谋反者姊妹和女儿已有主（丈夫），她们会被送回夫家，不被转为妾。

Translation of E.I. Kychanov's Russian translation into Chinese by Li Zhongsan

谋反者之守寡岳母、婶母、舅母、大小姑母及已嫁女儿、姊妹包括养女和已出家为尼者，皆属不获罪者。若（谋反，者）之姊妹和女儿已有主家（丈夫），则她们应回夫家，不沦为妾。(LI ZHONGSAN 1988: 5).

Chinese translation from Tangut by Shi Jinbo, Nie Hongyin and Bai Bin

祖母、孀母、嫂娣、姑，此等寡居，及有女妹，或已嫁，或为他人养女，或有为僧人、道士等者，莫入连坐中。女姐妹者，有主明，则当给有主，不须给嫁妆。(SHI JINBO et al. 2000: 112).

Han Xiaomang's translation from Tangut into Chinese

祖母、娣母、大小侄母、姑，此等寡，及有女、姊妹，亦或已嫁，或为他人养女，或有为僧人、道士等者，莫入连坐中。女、姊妹者，有主明，则当给有主，不须给嫁妆。

Here in the two translations we see a common understanding of the overall meaning (female relatives of the rebel... should be returned to their master), but in the last part there is a discrepancy in the details due to their interpretation. E.I. Kychanov translates the Tangut character “𐞑” as “master” and adds “*husband*” in parentheses, then gives the translation of the sentence “*she is not to be given as a concubine*”, but Han Xiaomang translates “𐞑” using the Chinese character “主”, which in Classical Chinese is a polysemantic word. One meaning is interpreted in Russian as “*master*” or more precisely “*bridegroom*” and the other as a verb, which in this context means that “*the girl is engaged to be married*”. Then follows the sentence “*no dowry is required*”. According to the clarification given by Professor Han Xiaomang and other researchers in the field, in the original Tangut language “𐞑𐞑𐞑𐞑𐞑” does have the latter meaning. We think that E.I. Kychanov's interpretation of the character “𐞑” as “master (husband)” is related to his choice to translate the following word combination “𐞑𐞑𐞑𐞑𐞑” as “*she is not to be given as a concubine*”. The word for “husband” in Russian tradition, however, could refer to any mature man.

Of course, in this case we find that translators take into account targeting and perception of details by speakers of the target language, without which the translation would lose its appeal and would be of little use to readers.

Let us consider another example of translation discrepancies from Chapter 3 ([Article 131] (f. 20a <156>).

Russian translation from Tangut by E.I. Kychanov:

If a person **drank** in the same house with thieves, but had never before participated in a conspiracy to commit theft, had not committed theft, but after the thieves brought stolen cattle, grain, property to the house, he, knowing already that [it] has been stolen, ate meat of slaughtered animals, sold stolen goods and participated in dividing stolen goods, [he] shall not be included among those punished for committing theft; only those who have actually committed the theft shall receive this punishment. If, however, [the person] has previously conspired [to commit theft] and has repeatedly

committed theft, then [such person] shall be sentenced according to the law (KYCHANOV 1987, Vol. 2: 83).

Our translation of E.I. Kychanov's Russian translation into Chinese

如果有人曾与盗贼同在一宅吃过酒，但之前从未参加过合谋盗窃，也未有过盗窃行为，但盗贼将偷来的牲畜、粮食和财产带到此宅，其明知为盗窃之物，仍食宰杀畜肉，倒卖赃物并参与瓜分，此类人不应在盗窃惩罚人之列，真正行窃者应受到惩罚。如果此人之前参与了合谋盗窃，而且不止一次实施盗窃，那么就应依法判决。

Translation of E.I. Kychanov's Russian translation into Chinese by Li Zhongsan

若某同窃贼们在一家吃过酒，但过去从未参与合谋行窃，盗窃亦未行。此后，窃贼将窃畜、谷物、赃物带回家，他已知〔此乃窃〕来之物，吃过宰杀畜肉，卖赃並参与分赃，则〔该人〕不一定列为因已行盗窃获罪者。此案获罪者只限于那些真正行窃者。若〔该人〕过去曾参与合谋〔行窃〕，且多次行窃，则〔此人〕应按律获罪。(LI ZHONGSAN 1988: 68).

Chinese translation from Tangut by Shi Jinbo, Nie Hongyin and Bai Bin

一與盜人同居，先未參與同謀盜，亦未往盜，盜人將畜、穀、物運於家處後，已知為盜物，參與屠宰、食賣肉、分用者，勿使承罪，當使實盜者承罪。若先昔同謀，及往行盜竊，則依法判斷。(SHI JINBO ET AL. 2000: 173).

Han Xiaomang's translation from Tangut into Chinese

与贼人同居，先不在议盗中，未往盗，贼人将畜、谷、物运于家之后，已知盗，在杀、食肉、买、用、分中等者，勿入承罪中，实盗当承罪。若在先前议中，人实往盗等，则依法判断。

Here in the first variant E.I. Kychanov translated the Tangut phrase “撈膾膾” as the verb form “*drank*” of the Russian verb “*to drink*”. There is no such verb in Han Xiaomang's second translation. Why? After obtaining

clarification of the meaning of the Tangut characters “𑖇𑖆𑖅𑖄”, it became clear to us that they mean “to live, to drink, to eat together”. In Russian culture “to drink, to eat at one table” means “to become related, to become a family, to live in one house”, therefore, using the strategy of domestication E.I. Kychanov translated these characters using the verb “to drink” (“*drank*”), which has a broad connotation understandable to native speakers of Russian.

In view of some discrepancies between translations, we would like to remind that authoritative translators are of the opinion that there is simply no translation without inaccuracies. Translation interpretations, linked to a translator’s personal perception and imagination, always involve a search and, therefore, a risk of failing to achieve something or not conveying it clearly.

In this sense, the work of E.I. Kychanov required a combination of creative courage and scientific thoroughness in the process of translating the ancient historical text, which combined the features of both Chinese and Tangut cultures. And even if inaccuracies and discrepancies are found in the scholar’s translation when it is compared with later translations, they are not very numerous and, in fact, they objectively confirm the difficulty of his translation work.

In his preface to the Chinese translation from Russian of the “Revised and Newly Approved Code of the Heavenly Prosperity Reign” E.I. Kychanov, discussing the translation and interpretation of ancient manuscripts, emphasized that: “Such texts cannot be translated in one fell swoop at any time. It will take one, two or three generations of scholars to translate them twice, thrice or even ten times, each time carefully studying the original text, before the translation is brought to perfection”.¹⁹

Conclusion

In summary of the above discussion, we note that it was thanks to Professor E.I. Kychanov, a remarkable historian and Sinology scholar, and his tireless research spirit manifest in both translation and scholarship, that centuries-old Tangut manuscripts, previously unknown to the world, became known to the scientific community despite all the difficulties.

I.F. Popova, director of the IOM RAS, aptly remarked that “Evgeny Ivanovich was an outstanding person with a rare innate talent for research work. Having tied his scientific life with Tangut studies, Evgeny Ivanovich

¹⁹ LI ZHONGSAN 1988, 汉译本序言: 5.

wrote one of the brightest pages in the history of this complex discipline, which is the pride of the national Oriental studies”.²⁰

Indeed, thanks to E.I. Kychanov’s translations, Russian and Chinese scholars became acquainted with the precious historical text, which enabled them to uncover, step by step, the secrets of the ancient Western Xia civilisation, to determine the extent to which the laws of ancient China affected the Tangut kingdom, and to continue making new discoveries on the path of scholarship.

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²⁰ POPOVA 2013: 219.

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