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**Arakawa Shintarō 荒川慎太郎, *Seika bun Konggo kyō no kenkyū***  
(西夏文金剛經の研究, Kyōto: Shoukadoh, 2014)

Recent years have seen some important advances in Tangut studies. Despite persisting difficulties, the Tangut texts, both those translated from Chinese or Tibetan and original compositions, are now generally readable. At the same time, much of the current research continues to concentrate on issues of historical linguistics and views the Tangut language through the prism of other languages. Another aspect of Tangut studies is publication and translation of various texts, predominantly of Buddhist nature. However, the linguistic and philological-*cum*-historical approaches are rarely combined in one study. A recent publication by Arakawa Shintarō is one happy exception to this rule. This book successfully combines linguistic and philological approaches and concerns itself with issues of synchronic description, rather than with historical reconstructions.

Historical linguistics deals with the Tangut materials from its own perspective, with little or no regard to questions of reading and understanding the texts. As a consequence, as Marc Miyake once commented, we know more about proto-Tangut than we do about the language which is presented to us in the written documents. Thus, despite fundamental achievements in the study of the Tangut phonomorphology in general, the structure of the Tangut verb, Tangut verb agreement and other important matters, current scholarship still lacks a comprehensive synchronic description of the Tangut language. Considering the rise of Tangut studies worldwide, this description has to be empirically based and practically oriented, that is to say, capable of providing clues to the understanding of texts. Obviously, the brief descriptions of the Tangut language produced by Berthold Laufer as early as 1916, and by Nishida Tatsuo and Hwangcherng Gong in more recent years, are of limited value in this respect and can be properly understood only by scholars already familiar with Tangut or by linguists who use these descriptions for reference purposes.

That said, the recent publication *Seika bun Konggo kyō no kenkyū* by Arakawa Shintarō (荒川慎太郎) is a long-awaited step in the right direction. This publication

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is a valuable new contribution to the field. It is based on a meticulous analysis of an important group of texts that are connected in various ways with the Tangut version of the *Vajracchedikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*. Exceeding the promise of its title, Arakawa's book is a massive piece of work which covers issues beyond the topic specified. The publication also includes reproductions of the texts used in the research and careful transcriptions of them. Over two hundred pages of the book contain actual research which summarizes the author's longtime efforts in the study of the Tangut language; the second section of the book consists of annotated translations of the Tangut texts fundamental to the research. The texts discussed in the volume include the sūtra itself, the version of it with gāthās by Liang Fu Dashi 梁傅大士, T 2732, and the Tangut version of the so-called "collected edition" (金剛般若經疏論纂要 *Jinggang bore jing shulun zuanyao*, T1701) by the famous Tang Buddhist Master Guifeng Zongmi (780–841). From a general perspective, this book is a very important achievement in the field of Tangut linguistics and philology which should be welcomed by the scholarly community worldwide.

The translation needs to be discussed separately at length. For the moment it will suffice to say that it was made on the basis of clearly defined grammar principles formulated by the author in his research and thus the degree of guesswork and intuition, which still remains in translations from Tangut, is kept to a minimum. The author chose not to provide the Chinese originals for the Tangut texts; this impedes understanding, but is justified as it demonstrates that the author really does translate from the Tangut, and not from Chinese, afterwards disguised as the translation from Tangut. In his research the author articulates the grammar rules on which he bases his translation. This makes the translation reliable and worthy for future reference. My only objection to the translation is that in the reproduction of the actual Tangut text the author did not provide punctuation, however, this is remedied in the translation.

The research part consists of several independent chapters devoted to a range of topics, from the textual history to questions of phonology and grammar. Of these, pages 2–66 are devoted to questions of the relationship between various versions of the Tangut translation of the sūtra and the textual corpus "generated" by this fundamental text. The author provides a comprehensive list of the Chinese and Tangut versions of the text discovered in Khara-Khoto and elsewhere, and establishes the relationship between various textual traditions. Arakawa pays special attention to the relationship between the Tangut and Chinese versions of the *Jinggang jing zuan* and verses by Liang Fu dashi.

One reason for the analysis of the Tangut version of the *Vajracchedikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* is that this text is one of the main scriptures whose study was mandatory for the Tangut monks (on pp. 62–66 the author provides his translation of the famous excerpt from the *Tiansheng Law Code*, where the important texts are listed). Through studying the surviving colophons, the author established the connection between the version of the sūtra and the gāthās by Fu dashi and the

“schematic commentary” on the sūtra composed by Zongmi, whose Chinese version, as far as I am aware, has survived only within a larger commentary composed by Zixuan (子璿) during the Northern Song. The Tangut version of the text is apparently independent from the one prepared by Zixuan and is therefore indicative of the local peculiarities of Sinitic Buddhism in Xixia. Thus, the *Vajracchedikā* texts probably belong to the circle of Buddhist writings which demonstrate visible deviations of Sinitic Buddhism in Xixia from the perceived character of Northern Song Buddhism. Such works as the *Recorded Saying of Nanyang Huizhong*, Huizhong’s Commentary to the *Prajñāpāramitahr̥daya* and the works of Zongmi devoted to the *Contemplation of the Dharma realm* (法界觀) in all probability also belong to this circle, which defined the character of Sinitic Buddhism in Xixia. Following the general line of his research, the author traces the textual history of the Tangut version of the text which included the poems composed by Fu dashi (pp. 23–24). Unfortunately, the author does not specifically discuss the text known as 𐼁𐼂𐼃𐼄𐼅𐼆𐼇𐼈𐼉𐼊𐼋𐼌𐼍𐼎𐼏𐼐𐼑𐼒𐼓𐼔𐼕𐼖𐼗𐼘𐼙 (pp. 24–25). This text definitely belongs to the Tibetan dimension of Tangut Buddhist literature, while its author 𐼁𐼂𐼃𐼄 (\*Sumpa Sangs rgyas, “Sumpa Supreme in the World”) crops up in a variety of Tangut sources.

Arakawa successfully brings together almost all the available texts of the Tangut translation of the sūtra and comes to the conclusion that a textual diversity existed which encompassed several versions of the text and tries to trace the origins of this variety. Unfortunately, the system of abbreviations which the author devised to indicate the various versions of the text (VMN, VMR, VPB, VPC, etc.) is overly complicated and I personally have trouble identifying the texts being discussed. Arakawa distinguishes 7 major versions of the text altogether (judging from the arrows in the diagram on p. 57; although he identifies 14 different publications). However, it appears to me from the discussion that the author discriminates not so much between the actual versions of the texts (e.g. “early” and “late,” that is published before or after the major “editing” project initiated some time during the reign of Renxiao), as between different editions. As can be seen from the publications by Nishida Tatsuo, the actual textual history of the Tangut translations is to be found in comparison of the various renderings of the dhārāṇi and in tracing new grammar patterns which replace the older forms in successive versions of the same texts.

Although aspects of the textual history of the Tangut translations of the *Diamond sūtra* are a little vague, the reconstruction of the transmission of the “collected version” (*Jingang jing zuan*) with the poems by Fu Dashi is presented by the author with great clarity. From the perspective of Buddhist studies, the identification of the textual tradition of the *Vajracchedikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* which is traceable to the late Tang Huayan tradition represented by Zongmi and resurrected by Jinshui Jingyuan (晉水淨源) in the Northern Song is well in tenor with previous observations concerning the nature of the Sinitic part of the Tangut Buddhist system: i.e. its connection with the Huayan teaching of the Northern China during the Liao and

the Northern Song. The Buddhological part of the work concludes with the translation of the entry on Buddhist texts from the *Tiansheng Law Code*.

It might be suggested here, though, that the Dunhuang materials are less relevant for the study of Tangut Buddhism, while the Liao versions of the scriptures, especially the ones available from the Fangshan stone sūtras, might have been useful in determining the general outline of the textual evolution of the Tangut versions of the texts and in determining the hypothetical source text.

The second part of the research is obviously more important for the both the author and the reader: it contains the linguistic considerations and the results of a long-term study of Tangut phonology and grammar. One major advantage of the present publication is that unlike other scholarly works, Arakawa's is actually based on the reading of large amounts of texts, which permits a systematized set of observations. These texts belong to a homogeneous tradition, thus the validity of grammar principles identified in the study can be attested by their recurrence throughout the set of the texts used in the research. However, the examples in the research section are not limited to the *Vajracchedikā* texts, thus implying a degree of universality for the interpretations postulated. To me, this approach appears more justified than the selection of individual sentences as examples without any reference to their general context.

The first section of the second part is devoted to matters of phonology. This contains Arakawa's own reconstruction of the Tangut phonetic system; among other things the author formulates the principles behind the Tangut transcription of the Sanskrit dhārāṇi. I find Arakawa's reconstruction plausible; however, the author does not give his reasons for reconstructing the final nasal *-n* for some of the Tangut syllables, nor does he account for his reconstruction of the initial *f*-. For example, Hwangcherng Gong reconstructed the Tangut transcription for the Chinese *fan* 梵 as *xiwā*, on the basis of the sound change *f*→*x* shared by both Tangut and Northwestern Chinese. The dropping of the final nasal consonant is also established by Hwangcherng Gong as a common development for Tangut and Northwestern Chinese and it has to be accounted for if it is preserved in the reconstruction. The present review uses Hwangcherng Gong's transcription.

The most important part of the study is located on pages 125–192 of the publication and is devoted to the analysis of the Tangut grammar. One major advantage of the approach taken by the author is that he proceeds from the Tangut language itself and not from a comparative perspective. Thus the observations formulated in the study might not only be relevant (or might not be relevant at all) for general questions of Tibeto-Burman linguistics, but also useful for actual reading of the Tangut texts. Although the author lists several publications by scholars who worked on this subject before him, one should appreciate that the problems of the Tangut syntax and grammar were previously considered in relation to the study of morphology, structure of the Tangut verbs etc., whereas Arakawa attempts a systematized presentation of the subject.









postpositions which normally represent spatial relationships, such as *kha'* 𑖇, are in fact not limited to spatial meaning, but evolved further to acquire syntactic functions: (5) 𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇, 𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇 (["by] maintaining this bodhicitta, in all times they will be living as in if in a palace = Temporal; Bodhi); (6) 𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇, 𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇 (‘‘Now I am born into the family of the Buddhas, born among the disciples of the Tathāgata = Spatial); (6) 𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇, 𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇 (‘‘The Great Master Huineng, while (indicative of Huineng’s circumstances) not knowing even one character, how can he understand the truth?’’ = marks the relationship between the clauses in the sentence; JDCDL).

The examples presented above do not challenge Arakawa’s basic conclusions, quite the opposite, they tend to support the author’s idea of defining the Tangut cases on the basis of what they actually represent in the texts and not on the basis of certain assumptions. This approach originally existed in the scholarship, and has now been further developed, refined and sufficiently justified on the basis of abundant textual materials by Dr. Arakawa. By this token, we should welcome his publication as a valuable tool which enhances our understanding of the Tangut language and culture.

K. Solonin