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Front cover:

Fragment of one of the Qur’ānic folios kept in Katta Langar (photo by the author, December, 1999).

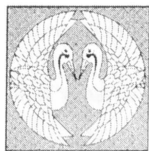
Back cover:

Plate 1. The *mazār* in Katta Langar (photo by the author, December, 1999).

Plate 2. Reliquary of the *mazār* in Katta Langar (photo by the author, December, 1999).

Plate 3. Guard at the gates of the *mazār* in Katta Langar (photo by the author, December, 1999).

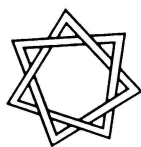
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Katalog tangutskikh buddiiskikh pamiatnikov Instituta vostokovedeniia Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk. Sostavitel' E. I. Kychanov, Vstupitel'naia stat'ia Tatsuo Nisida, izdanie podgotovleno S. Arakawa. Kioto: Universitet Kioto, 1999, XLIX, 742 str., ill.

Catalogue of Tangut Buddhist Texts at the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Oriental Studies. Compiled by E. I. Kychanov, introductory article by Nisida Tatsuo, edition prepared by S. Arakawa. Kyoto: University of Kyoto, 1999, XLIX, 742 pp., ill.

With more than 8,000 items, the collection of Tangut manuscripts and xylographs at the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies is the largest in the world. It is also the only collection of Tangut texts which come from the Xi Xia state (928—1227). Other collections of Tangut texts contain either xylographs published in China, after Chingis Khan's conquering Xi Xia and the state's subsequent collapse, or scattered individual fragments of manuscripts and xylographs. The collection was acquired by the Asiatic Museum (today the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies) in 1910 after the expedition of P. K. Kozlov (1863—1935) to the South Gobi in 1908—1909, where a famous *suburgan* on the outskirts of the dead city of Khara Khoto was discovered and excavated.

The history of how the texts found there were studied and described is both interesting and dramatic. They were first examined by A. I. Ivanov (1878—1937) and A. N. Nevsky (1892—1937), who were, through no fault of their own, unable to complete their work: the Tangut language in which the books discovered in Khara Khoto were written was unknown to scholars. Deciphering the original writing system of the Tanguts was A. N. Nevsky's paramount achievement, and it was he who began to draw up an inventory of the collection. The tragic death of the scholar who fell a victim to the Stalinist regime interrupted the work so brilliantly started.

After Nevsky's death, various people at various times undertook the examination, inventory, description, and re-assembly of Tangut manuscript fragments and xylographs in more favourable conditions, though the task was not at all easy. In 1963, a catalogue of Tangut manuscripts and xylographs, compiled by Z. I. Gorbacheva and E. I. Kychanov, came to light on the seventieth anniversary of A. N. Nevsky. It contains 405 titles, of which 60 are detailed, annotated descriptions of secular works (translations from Chinese, dictionaries, works of Tangut literature, calendars, incantations, and medical texts). The remainder is a list of Buddhist works — 334 titles in all with references, where possible, to original Sanskrit titles (the number 334 is the result of reassembling fragments into more complete texts).

After 1963, work on a detailed description of the Buddhist works, which make up the bulk of the collection, was continued, and a second part of the catalogue was planned. Unfortunately, those plans have remained unrealised until recently. A paradoxical situation emerged: Tangut studies had already taken shape as a branch of international Oriental studies, while there was still no catalogue describing and attributing the basic texts broadly employed by scholars.

It is the current head of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, E. I. Kychanov, who, working practically alone since the end of the 1960s, has completed

an enormous project on Tangut Buddhist texts' cataloguing. He checked all previously described material, made translation of colophons and identification of the texts and reassembled numerous fragments. The result is the remarkable "Catalogue of Tangut Buddhist Texts of the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Oriental Studies", which is part of a large international project. The edition, initiated by the well-known Japanese scholar Prof. Nisida Tatsuo, received financial support from the Japanese Ministry of Education. The scholarly staff and postgraduate students of the Chair of General Linguistics on the Philological Faculty of the University of Kyoto were of great assistance in the actual preparation of the volume.

Prof. Nisida who was invited by Prof. Kychanov to write the introductory article to the Catalogue is a leading authority on Buddhist texts. It would be impossible to attribute Tangut texts without using the catalogues of which he is the author. His introductory article, entitled "Problems in drawing up a catalogue of Tangut Buddhist texts", is accompanied by an abstract in Russian. No one is more familiar with these problems than Prof. Nisida himself. His dissection of 37 examples, illustrating the issues which face anyone who undertakes a description of Tangut Buddhist texts, is fascinating and constitutes one of the adornments of the volume. Unfortunately, a galling typographical error crept into the text: on page XXII (example 17), we find the title 施水食放順要論, whereas the actual title is 水食施放順要論 (p. 440). This alteration of the first character greatly complicates the search for the given example in the Catalogue itself.

The introduction by E. I. Kychanov discusses in brief the discovery and description of the collection from Khara Khoto the history of which was presented by the author in detail in the 1963 catalogue. The principles employed to organise the descriptions of Tangut Buddhist manuscripts and xylographs are also explained. The author summarises his experience of working with Tangut Buddhist texts, which provokes him to pose the question whether such a phenomenon as Tangut Buddhism ever existed, and if so, what its features precisely were. No doubt, answers to these questions may emerge from scrutinising the texts whose descriptions are presented in the Catalogue.

The Catalogue comprises nearly 800 pages, including numerous illustrations, and makes use of Chinese and Tangut script. It opens with a "List of the texts' contents": works which are part of the Taisyo *Tripitaka* (324 titles) and apocrypha; texts which are part of the "Full Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon" (31 titles) and non-canonical Buddhist works arranged by genre, as well as commentaries (338 titles). It should be noted that a rather extensive descriptive scheme is employed: numbers, call numbers, inventory numbers, references to the Nisida Tatsuo catalogue, titles in all possible languages in Russian transcription, source language of translations, information about the book (manuscript or xylograph), type of book and binding method, cover, dimensions, number of folios, completeness of the text, number of lines and characters per line, handwriting, ruling, margins, mention of a foreword or heading, information which follows the heading, information about authors, editors, translators, information about afterwords and colophons, print and marginalia, traces of native restoration, condition, and finally, type of paper. Manuscripts always precede xylographs in descriptions.

Thus, we find here a remarkably systematised and full description, executed in strict accordance with a well thought-through conception and encompassing an enormous number of extremely difficult texts.

The reference apparatus is worthy of special attention. The appendices and indices make it easy to extract rich historical material contained in the Tangut texts, namely calendar chronology, descriptions of rule in both Chinese and Tangut writing, dated books, original names, official positions, place-names, monastic titles, etc. The indices are drawn up in such fashion as to allow one to find a work by Tangut, Sanskrit (in Latin transcription), or Chinese title either in original form or Russian transcription. One can state that in working on his reference apparatus, E. I. Kychanov took into account all questions which might arise before readers.

The introductory article by Prof. Nisida, as well as E. I. Kychanov's extremely informative indices, make this edition more than a mere catalogue; it is also a fine reference guide to Tangut studies. Undoubtedly, the Catalogue will quickly establish itself as a constant reserve for all interested in the field.

It is however rather disappointing to encounter a very large quantity of misprints in the Russian part of the text. Only an insignificant number of them, affecting the meaning of the text, was caught and corrected in the Errata. Perhaps the abundance of misprints is an inevitable disadvantage of such joint ventures in general, but we consider it necessary to draw attention to this flaw, hoping that corrections will be forthcoming in future publications.

T. Vinogradova
