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MONGOLIAN TRANSLATIONS OF TIBETAN TEXTS: A STUDY OF LOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL TERMINOLOGY

Following the initial codification of Buddhist lexical signs by the Mongols, numerous dictionaries have been compiled – not only in Tibetan and Mongolian, but also in conjunction with other languages or with a focus on specific domains. In doing so, most technical terms in Buddhist philosophy and logic have been preserved in accordance with their original formulation in the The Source Lexical Sage (Merged γarqu-yin oron, tib. *Dag yig mkhas pa'i 'byung gnas*), a tradition that continues to be maintained. Dictionaries serve as essential guides to accurate translation. However, within the traditional renderings of Buddhist logic and epistemology into Mongolian, there are numerous terms prone to misinterpretation and confusion. Moreover, existing dictionaries often lack comprehensive entries for many of these terms. Therefore, revising ambiguous or inadequate terms through the lens of contemporary scientific terminology is crucial. This forms a foundational step for further academic work in the field of Mongolian Buddhist studies. Based on this need, the present article analyzes the Tibetan version of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇaviniścaya* and its traditional Mongolian translation in the *Mongolian Tanjur*, comparing them with both lexicographical sources, explanatory commentaries, and recent scholarly translations as tertiary references. The aim is to identify accurate and stylistically appropriate renderings of key terminology in Buddhist logic and epistemology in contemporary Mongolian.

Keywords: classical translation conventions, Tibetan literature, Buddhist philosophy, logical treatises, principles of stylistic consistency and accuracy, Buddhist logic, epistemology, terminology, equivalence in translation.

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ПЕРЕВОДЫ ТИБЕТСКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ НА МОНГОЛЬСКИЙ ЯЗЫК: ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ЛОГИЧЕСКОЙ И ЭПИСТЕМОЛОГИЧЕСКОЙ ТЕРМИНОЛОГИИ

Начиная с первых упорядоченных переводов буддийской гносеологической и логической литературы, монголы составили многочисленные словари, охватывающие не только тибетский и монгольский языки, но и сочетания с другими языками, а также специализированные отраслевые словари. При этом большинство философских и логических терминов буддизма сохранялось в том виде, в каком они впервые были зафиксированы в Merged γarqu-yin oron *(Dag yig mkhas pa'i byung gnas)*, и это наследие дошло до наших дней. Словарь является важнейшим ориентиром для переводческой практики. Однако в монгольской традиции встречается немало терминов, которые вызывают двусмысленное понимание и могут порождать различные интерпретационные трудности. Кроме того, в составленных словарях не все термины получили полное отражение. В связи с этим становится актуальной задача переосмысления и унификации спорных или неудачных терминов в соответствии с современной

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научной терминологией, что является важной предпосылкой для дальнейшего развития буддологических исследований в Монголии. В данной статье рассматриваются тибетский перевод трактата Дхармакирти *Pramāṇaviniścaya* и его монгольская версия из Данджура в сопоставлении с различными словарями, комментариями и современными переводами и исследованиями (tertiary sources). На основе этого анализа демонстрируются корректные и стилистически приемлемые варианты передачи буддийских логико-эпистемологических терминов на современном монгольском языке.

Ключевые слова: классическая переводческая традиция, тибетская литература, буддийская философия, логические трактаты, принципы ритма и точности, буддийская логика, эпистемология, терминология, унификация терминов.

The Mongolian Translation Tradition and Its Methodology

Mongolians possess a long-standing tradition of translating a wide range of literary and scholarly works from various languages. Some scholars trace the origins of Mongolian translation practices back approximately 1,500 years, coinciding with the earliest appearance of writing systems among the Mongols. However, research indicates that the large-scale translation of Tibetan literary texts began relatively later, primarily from the 13th century onwards. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that the classical methods and stylistic conventions of translating from Tibetan into Mongolian were established and formalized during this period and have since been preserved as part of the Mongolian translation tradition.

Scholars have extensively examined how the Mongols were first introduced to Buddhism and its associated culture through Turkic-speaking states (see also: [Roerich 1936; Bira 2001; Foltz 2010; Atwood 2004; Wilkens 2024]). Research shows that, during the early phases of translating Buddhist literature into Mongolian, translations rendered in Sogdian and Uighur languages were predominant. Documentary evidence indicates that during this period, translations were focused primarily on religious texts, and as thus, the technical terminology of Buddhist philosophy had not yet been fully integrated into the Mongolian lexicon. Moreover, when Mongolian translators later engaged with Tibetan sources, they often retained many Sanskrit terms in their original form, without Mongolization – adhering to conventions established in earlier Sogdian and Uighur translations. These prior experiences and methodologies significantly influenced both the vocabulary development and the translation practices of Tibetan texts. As a result, Mongolian translators systematized and refined three principal methods of translation from Tibetan: literal translation, interpretative (semantic) translation, and imitative composition (see also: [Khurelbaatar 1995: 158]). This indicates that Mongolian translators did not solely rely on Sanskrit models in their work with Tibetan texts but also integrated translation conventions derived from the Sogdian and Uighur traditions, which held considerable influence at the time. This hybrid translation methodology continues to be preserved and employed even today.

An analysis of traditional Mongolian translations of philosophical texts reveals two predominant approaches: the literal translations that closely follow the syntactic structure of the source (often referred to as “sutra-style”), and figurative or interpretative translations, which prioritize expressive and poetic rephrasing. In particular, when dealing with verse compositions, many texts were rendered relatively freely, often in accordance with the stylistic norms of Mongolian poetry. This trend can be partly attributed to the long-

standing Mongolian tradition of translating ethical, religious, historical and political texts – often composed in poetic or metrical form – from a variety of source languages. As a result, Mongolian translators accumulated significant experience and developed specific conventions for translating poetic literature. These established methods, in turn, had a direct influence on how verse-based philosophical texts were translated, shaping the dominant styles and techniques of Mongolian philosophical translation.

In addition to their work as translators, Mongols composed a substantial corpus of original works in the Tibetan language. When writing in Tibetan, Mongolian authors frequently employed poetic forms with notable skill and fluency. This mode of expressive articulation was not limited to verse, but was also commonly used in prose compositions. The blending of poetic and prosaic styles became a distinctive characteristic of Buddhist literary production, reflecting an integrated approach to expression. This stylistic convention likely had a direct influence on the translation of philosophical verse texts, especially in cases where interpretative or meaning-based methods were employed. The long-standing tradition of combining poetic and discursive modes of writing thus played a significant role in shaping both original compositions and translated works within the broader framework of Buddhist literary culture.

In some cases, verse compositions were translated into prose using a literal, word for word approach. A notable example of this is the traditional Mongolian translation of *Dharma-dharmatā-vibhaṇga (Differentiation of Phenonema and the Nature of Phenomena)* by Maitreya, which was rendered in prose form. This translation has been preserved in the 132nd volume of the Mongolian edition of the *Tanjur* (tib. *bsTan 'gyur*).

In general, traditional Mongolian translations of verse literature exhibit two classical models of translation that are particularly evident: the literal approach, characteristic of the sūtra style, and the interpretative or meaning – based approach. While the latter is often more appropriate for poetic works, verse compositions in Buddhist philosophy present unique challenges due to their use of established terminology, standardized expressions, and tightly structured logical formulations, often requiring a more literal rendering in translation. For instance, Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* was translated using a literal, word for word method. In contrast, *The Twelve Compositions of the Buddha* by Choyjj Odser (Chos rje 'od zer), a Mongolian author, was rendered through an interpretative approach that adhered to the principles of Mongolian poetic conventions such as alliteration, metrical balance, line by line rearrangement, and semantic adaptation [Khurelbaatar 1995: 12–44]. A comparison of these two translation methods suggests that the interpretative approach was more suitable when translating Tibetan verse compositions authored by Mongols themselves. Although literal translation dominated the 14th century, these examples reveal a crucial distinction: texts composed by Indian authors were translated literally, whereas those authored by Mongols – albeit in Tibetan – were rendered more freely and poetically in Mongolian. This divergence is not merely a matter of translation technique but may also reflect deeper differences in narrative style, lexical choices, and modes of expression. Even when written in Tibetan, the text composed by Mongolian thinker arguably conveyed a Mongolian worldview, reasoning, and imagination making its adaptation to the expressive potential and poetic traditions of the Mongolian language potentially more appropriate. This observation prompts a critical inquiry in translation studies: whether there exists a principled distinction between the Mongolian translations of Tibetan-language texts au-

thored by Mongols and those composed by Indian or Tibetan masters. Exploring this question constitutes a significant avenue of scholarly inquiry within the field of Mongolian translation studies.

In the case of prose philosophical works, Mongolian translators have predominantly employed a literal, sutra-style translation method. This approach entails strict adherence to the syntactic structure of the Tibetan original, maintaining fidelity to word order and grammatical construction without restructuring the text. Such fidelity to the source has held a central place in the traditional Mongolian translation paradigm. One reason for this may lie in the relatively late introduction of systematic translations of Buddhist philosophical and logical treatises into Mongolian. Available evidence suggests that such specialized works were not widely translated into Mongolian until the 18th century. As a result, translators approached these texts with heightened attention to accuracy and formality, favoring literalism to preserve the integrity of complex philosophical arguments.

By the 1740s, a relatively systematic and codified body of Buddhist philosophical terminology had been developed in the Mongolian language. This advancement facilitated the translation, compilation, and wider dissemination of philosophical texts. The translation methods employed at that time adhered strictly to the newly established lexicon, which was applied consistently across works of Buddhist philosophy and logic to this day. However, the traditional methods of translation, grounded in the principles of canonical fidelity, have at times proven inadequate for conveying the nuanced and evolving concepts of contemporary philosophical and scientific discourse. The rigidity of classical translation conventions can limit interpretive flexibility and semantic precision when rendering modern ideas into Mongolian. As a result, there is a growing need to critically reassess the traditional terminology used in the translation of philosophical and logical texts. From the perspective of modern academic language and conceptual clarity, it has become necessary to refine, update, or in some cases replace traditional terms with alternatives that better capture the intended meaning and ensure greater accessibility and accuracy in contemporary contexts.

Traditional Mongolian translations of Tibetan-language literature employed a diverse range of techniques, including: literal translation, lexical transformation, syntactic and grammatical adaptation, interpretation of explicit or proper nouns in metaphorical or symbolic terms, dual rendering of Tibetan and Sanskrit equivalents, restoration of original Sanskrit terminology in place of Tibetan neologisms, Mongolization of Sanskrit-derived terms, and poetic techniques such as alliteration and metrical balancing in verse translation. These methods were applied flexibly depending on the genre and purpose of the text, and many of them remain in use today. In the translation of philosophical and logical texts, the dominant practices include lexical substitution, grammatical restructuring, and syntactic adjustment to preserve both accuracy and readability. Some translators now combine the restoration of Sanskrit equivalents with the principle of semantic localization, seeking a balance between faithfulness to the original and clarity in the target language. For example, in philosophical and logical texts, there is a tendency to retain established Sanskrit terms to align with international academic conventions and ensure terminological consistency. In contrast, translations related to social, ethical, or civic discourse typically favor Mongolianized renderings to enhance accessibility for a broader audience. Moreover, proper names and explicit designations are frequently translated with attention to their implied meanings,

often accompanied by explanatory notes or glosses. Increasingly, translators avoid verbatim literalism, recognizing that while it may allow for partial synonym substitution, it imposes constraints on syntactic freedom and requires the original grammatical structure of the source text to remain intact. Thus, contemporary Mongolian translation practice builds upon traditional methods while adapting them to meet the semantic, disciplinary, and audience-specific demands of the present day.

Issues in Mongolian Translation: Preventing Semantic Ambiguity

When translating Buddhist logical and epistemological texts, emphasis is placed on adapting content to contemporary Mongolian language while ensuring clarity, conciseness and terminological accuracy. The following points highlight some of the key principles currently observed to avoid misunderstanding and ensure terminological precision:

1. Fundamental principle. In applying lexical transformations, translators adhere to the principles of facticity and accuracy, ensuring the rendition is both correct and faithful to the source and conciseness and clarity in style. To preserve the original text's form and meaning, care is taken not to exaggerate, dilute, or obscure the content by unnecessary embellishment. Accordingly, the addition of conjunctions, particles, or ornamental words is generally avoided, as such elements are more suitable for literary translations where stylistic nuance is emphasized. Furthermore, redundant or synonymous expressions are omitted to maintain rhythmic balance and logical coherence in the target language. For example, the Tibetan particle *de*, often translated into Mongolian as *tere* (that), frequently appears together with the referent noun in Tibetan sentences. Phrases such as *rjes gzung de ni | dayan bariysan tere ni* (the following one that), *bsgrubs pa de ni | bütügekü tere ni* (the one creating that), and *cung zad de ni | öčüken tere ni* (the slight one that) demonstrate this characteristic of Tibetan syntax. In Mongolian, however, the syntactic structure does not accommodate simultaneous repetition of the demonstrative pronoun and the noun it refers to. Thus, it is preferable to omit the demonstrative and render the phrase succinctly as *bütügekü ni* or *öčüken ni*.

Similarly, Tibetan frequently employs the auxiliary verb *pyed ba*, which functions both as a main verb and as a verbal intensifier or causative marker. This term is typically translated into Mongolian as *üiledkü* (to do or to perform), connoting actions such as *to make* or *to create*. When *rpyed ba* serves to reinforce the verbal meaning, the phrase is translated by omitting a literal rendering of the auxiliary and instead using the core verb in a refined form. For instance, *'gog par byed* (to perform prohibition) is rendered as *qoriqu* (to cease; refute), *dran par byed* as *duradqu* (to mention), *rtogs par byed* as *onuqu* (to realize; cognize), and *skyed par byed* as *egüskekü* (to create). This practice enhances syntactic cohesion and preserves fluency in the Mongolian translation.

2. Terminological Equivalence. A key technique in lexical transformation involves expressing a concept using synonymous terms or creating neologisms to replace original words. However, given the historical development of human cognition, the foundational sciences of logic and epistemology have established a stable core of fundamental concepts and terminology. Therefore, when translating technical terms from Tibetan, it is relatively uncommon to coin entirely new Mongolian terms for concepts that already have internationally recognized equivalents. Instead, adopting terminology consistent with widely accepted international standards has become the preferred and more appropriate approach.

In recent years, our focus has increasingly centered on the translation and study of Buddhist logic and epistemology, with particular attention to terminological issues. During this process, it became evident that the traditional lexicon, standardized in the 18th century, is both incomplete and limited. Furthermore, some terms are overly general, representing multiple concepts with a single word while others are evidently imprecise or inadequate. This necessitated the reexamination and reformulation of certain key terms, especially regarding terminology related to logical expressions, theory of argumentation, epistemological classifications, and processes. Our approach in revising terminology emphasizes several core criteria: whether the term aligns with the original Buddhist definitions, whether its meaning fits appropriately within different contexts, and whether it coherently corresponds with related sub-concepts without semantic conflict. For example, the Tibetan words *rtags* and *phyir* have traditionally both been translated as *učir* (reason or cause) in Mongolian. However, *rtags* denotes a foundational concept in logical inference and argumentation theory, whereas *phyir* functions as a logical connective or particle. These terms often appear together, even consecutively, within sentences. Translating both as the same word risks confusion and undermines the validity of logical conclusions. Therefore, we have adopted the translation of *rtags* as *ündüsülel* (basis or reason), and *phyir* as *učir-ača* or *tula* (because, therefore), thereby preserving their conceptual distinctions. Such precise terminological usage not only enhances semantic clarity but also faithfully reflects logical structure and conceptual differentiation, significantly improving translation quality. Below are representative examples illustrating some of the key terms and their comparative renderings.

Table

Comparison between Traditional and Revised Translations of Buddhist Logical Terminology

Tibetan Term (Tib.)	Sanskrit Term	Traditional Mongolian Translation	Revised Mongolian Translation
Rtags	**liṅga**	**učir**	**reason/evidence**
rtags yang dag	–	üneker učir	correct reason
rtags ltar snang	–	jasadaγ učir	pseudo reason
rtags ma grub	–	učir ese bütükü	unestablished reason
ta snyad sgrub kyi rtags	–	nereyidkel bütükü učir	reason proving a convention
sgrub byed	**sādhaka**	**bütügegči**	**Proof**
sgrub bya	–	bütügegdekün	probandum (that which is to be proven)
sgrub bya'i chos	–	bütügegdekün nom	the thing of the probandum
sgrub ngag	–	bütügekü üge/kele	phrases of proof/proving expressions
tal 'gyur	**prasaṅga**	**ketüregülül**	**consequence/logical consequence**
tal ngag	–	ketüregülkü üge/kele	consequential expression/ phrase indicating consequence
tal 'gyur du bkod pa	–	ketüregülel ǰokiyaqu	to establish consequence/to formulate consequence
tal ba 'phen pa	–	ketüregülel sedkikü	to conceive a consequence/to derive consequence

3. Philosophical Foundations of Terminology. Some scholars have traditionally translated the Tibetan terms *rtags yang dag* and *rtags ltar snang* as *good reason* and *bad reason*, respectively [Jam yang shay ba 2019: 286]. The qualifiers *yang dag* (skt. samyak) and *ltar snang* (skt. ābhāsa) are technical modifiers used in Buddhist logic alongside fundamental terms such as *liṅga* and *prasaṅga* to more precisely differentiate meanings. Classical translations generally rendered these terms as *truly* and *correcting*, whereas modern interpretations have revised them to *good* and *bad.* This revision draws on contemporary Western research in Buddhist logic as well as the polysemous nature of these terms in Mongolian notation systems. *Samyak* broadly means *correct* or *proper*, while *ābhāsa* carries philosophical connotations such as *illusory phenomenon* or *reflection*. In the logical thought of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, these terms are employed with the senses of *true/valid* and *false/fallacious*. When scholars like Richard Hayes, John Dunne, Matthew Kapstein, Tom Tillemans, and Hugon Pascal reconstructed Buddhist logic and epistemology in terms compatible with contemporary philosophy and logic, they have employed the terms *good* and *bad* to render these concepts succinctly and clearly within the epistemological logic of Buddhism. However, this does not refer to notions of moral good and bad, but rather to functional formulations indicating quality and reliability in terms of logic and epistemology. For example, Tillemans, citing Dharmakīrti's *Nyāyabindu*, explains that a good reasoning (tib. *rtags yang dag*) satisfies the three characteristics (skt. *trairūpya*) of being relevant in the subject under discussion, co-occurring in similar cases, and absent in opposing cases, concluding that these criteria serve as tests confirming the validity and soundness of a reason [Tillemans 2022: 9]. Tillemans also equates *gtan tshigs yang dag* and *rtags yang dag* with the Sanskrit *saddhetu* – a logically valid and conclusive reason – and labels corresponding invalid reasons (tib. *gtan tshigs ltar snang*) as *hetvābhāsa* or *bad reasons* [Ibid.: 13] While the precise philosophical distinctions and logical criteria behind these terms are complex and merit independent scholarly inquiry, the present discussion focuses on how to render the simplified analytic philosophy terms *good/bad reason* into Mongolian translation, respecting principles of accuracy and style. From this perspective, directly translating the English *good* and *bad* as the Mongolian *sayin* and *maɣu* risks introducing subjective ethical judgments. Instead, it is preferable to choose terms that better reflect their logical and epistemological sense, such as *valid/invalid, true/false,* or *sound/fallacious*. This approach minimizes potential misunderstandings and reduces the need for additional explanatory notes.

4. Appropriateness of Auxiliary Words. In the translation of Buddhist Tibetan texts, the use of auxiliary and connective words plays a crucial role. Although these words do not independently carry semantic meaning, they assist in linking ideas, clarifying expressions, establishing coherence between sentences, and structuring the overall composition. However, due to inherent structural differences between Tibetan and Mongolian sentence constructions, translators often face linguistic challenges when adapting auxiliary words. Traditional translations frequently render these auxiliaries literally and individually, which can make their usage appear semantically disconnected, inappropriate, or stylistically awkward. Such literalness may be perceived as syntactic or stylistic errors, but it actually reflects the unique characteristics of classical Tibetan writing and the prevalent literal translation methods of the period. Moreover, some auxiliary words have been omitted altogether in certain translations. This omission often improves clarity by allowing sentence struc-

tures to be modified, and by enabling sentences to be linked or separated more naturally, thereby enhancing overall readability and comprehension. Such adjustments not only clarify meaning but also contribute significantly to improving translation quality.

In traditional translations, auxiliary words were rendered either by direct literal transcription or omitted to better fit the syntactic structure of Mongolian sentences. Both approaches were used interchangeably without a fixed rule, reflecting the translators' individual preferences and methods. Due to this variability, it is difficult – if not impossible – to generalize or systematically assess the criteria for when such words were translated or omitted based on just one translator's work or a single text. Therefore, I will mention how frequently occurring auxiliary words in classical Tibetan writings were rendered in classical translations, and current methods and possibilities for expressing these elements. In this regard, particular reference is made to bLo ldan shes rab's (Lodansheirav) Tibetan translation of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇaviniścaya* (*Ascertainment of Valid Cognition*) and its traditional Mongolian rendition preserved in the Mongolian *Kanjur*. For clarity, selected citation examples are compared, with the Mongolian text provided in classical script font to facilitate understanding.

Example [1]: Tibetan particle *dan;* Mongolian equivalents *ba, böged, kiged* (*and, as well as, together with*).

This conjunction functions as a connective particle that enumerates two or more coordinate elements within a sentence. Additionally, it can be used in the form of instrumental case and sometimes in dative-locative case (such as *luγ-a*), corresponding to modern Mongolian suffixes *-tai* (with), *-d, -t* (to, in/at). Mixing or confusing these forms often leads to semantic inaccuracies.

For example, in a passage listing types of valid cognition:

Original Tibetan [D. PV, 97–614]: [Dharmakirti: эл. ресурс]
*Yang dag p'i shes pa de ni rnam pa gnyis te. Mngon sum **dan** ni rjes su dpag /*
Traditional Mongolian translation [D. AVC, 76]: [Dharmakirti 2002]
*Üneker medel tere ni qoyar jüil bölüge. Iledte **luγ-a** dayan baylayči...*
Revised version:
*Valid cognition is of two kinds: direct perception **and** inference.*

Using a conjunction to *and* clearly separate coordinate elements in the enumeration improves clarity and accurately conveys the meaning.

Example [2]: Tibetan particle *gzhan;* Mongolian equivalents *busud, öger-e* (other, another).

In traditional translations, *gzhan* is mainly rendered as *busu,* besides the less common *busučir.* It is important to note that *busu* in Mongolian can mean both *other, different* and *not, no* (a negation). In contemporary usage, the negation sense of *busu* is more frequently emphasized and used. Moreover, when *gzhan* is used together with the negation particle *ma yin* (meaning *not* or *no*), the combined phrase can express a meaning distinct from each particle individually. However, the similarity in wording between these can cause confusion in translation and interpretation, especially for those unfamiliar with Tibetan grammar or relying solely on a single translation version. Therefore, to avoid ambiguity and improve clarity, auxiliary words should be translated consistently with one clear, contextually appropriate modern equivalent. For instance, in classical translations, the Tibetan word root

gzhan is often joined with both the dative-locative suffix *-du* and the verbal suffix *-na*. In written Mongolian, these are usually represented together by the suffix *-aa*, resulting in renderings such as *busučir-a*, which roughly corresponding to the modern Mongolian phrase *öger-e-ber kelebel* (meaning *in other words*). This can be elegantly rendered in classical style as *öger-e-ber bolbasu*. Additionally, the frequent collocation of *gzhan* and the particle *yang* is traditionally translated as *busu basa*, which today conveys the meaning *tegünčilen, tegün eče yadan-a* (i.e., *furthermore, in addition*).

Example from Tibetan original [D. PV, 97–619]:
*de'i stobs kyis skyes p'i rnam par shes pa yang don **gzhan** gyi rjes su 'brang ba ma yin te /*
Traditional Mongolian translation [D. AVC, 79]:
*Tegün-ü küčü-iyer törügsen teyin medeküi či **busu** udq-a-yig dayan odqu busu bölüge*
Revised version:
*A cognition arising through its causal efficacy does not apprehend any **other** meanings.*

Example [3]: Tibetan particle *kho na;* Mongolian *equivalents ǰöbken, yay, čuqum, imayta* (only, exactly, precisely, always).

The word *ǰöbken* (exclusively, only) indicates exclusivity or distinction of one or several items from others. *Yay* (exactly) and *üneker* (indeed) emphasize appropriateness or suitability of a thing, while *čuqum* (precisely) stresses the genuine, true, or essential nature of something, often serving as an emphasis or confirmation. However, traditionally *kho na* has often been rendered simply as *imayta* (always), which does not fully cover the range of meanings. The word *imayta* primarily expresses an uninterrupted, continuous duration of time or a habitual, constant, or inseparable nature, but cannot convey other nuances effectively. Moreover, these words in Mongolian typically co-occur with other words in a sentence to extend or specify their meaning, but do not function as independent grammatical members with inflectional variants. This causes semantic and syntactic mismatches in certain contexts.

Example from Tibetan original [D. PV, 97–615]:
*...tshad ma yin na ni 'di gnyis **kho nar** 'dus p'i phyir / tshad ma rnam ghyis **kho na** ste /*
Traditional Mongolian translation [D. AVC, 76]:
*... silyaday mön bögeüs **imayta-yin** qoyar-tur quraysan-u tula, silyaday **imayta** qoyar ǰüil böged*
Revised version:
*If cognition is valid, it is **precisely** reducible to two elements. A valid cognition apprehends **only** these two constituents.*

Example [4]: Tibetan connective *'on kyang;* Mongolian equivalents *qebeču, teyin atal-a* (however, nevertheless).

This particle has often been translated as *bolbaču* (meaning *although, though*). However, in some translations, *'on kyang* appears at the beginning of a sentence, and the words it connects sometimes create semantic mismatches or incoherence. In Tibetan grammar, *kyang* by itself functions as a conjunctive particle connecting the preceding word with the following, similar to *yang* or *'ng*. For example, expressions like *med kyang* (although it does not exist), *yod kyang* (although it exists) are common and appropriate renderings. When *'on kyang* occurs at the beginning or end of a sentence, its role is to clarify the causal or concessive relationship between the previous and next clauses. From this functional perspective, it can be translated with various expressions such as *gekü degen* (meaning *but,*

however), *kedüi teyimü čü* (meaning *even so*), *gesün kedüi čü* (meaning *nevertheless*), *kedüi-ber* (meaning *although*), *qarin* (meaning *whereas, on the other hand*) to capture the nuanced concessive meaning.

Example from Tibetan original [D. PV, 97–625]:

Don shes pa ni blo'i ***rtags*** *ma yin gyi* ***'on kyang*** *dbang po dang don dag yin no zhe na / mi 'khrul nag tan tshigs yin no /*

Traditional Mongolian translation [D. AVC, 82]:

Udq-a medekü ni oyun-u ***učir*** *busu buyu ǰa* ***bolbaču*** *erketen luγ-a udq-a-ud mön bolai kemebesü, endegürel ügei bögeüs notalalta mön bolai.*

Revised version:

Mere apprehension of an external referent does not constitute a cognitive ***reason****.* ***However,*** *if the sense faculty and the external referent are indeed identical, then – being free from error – it constitutes a valid means of cognition.*

Example [5]: Tibetan phrase *ji skad;* Mongolian equivalent *...-un dayayu* (according to, as established by).

In traditional translations, *ji skad* has often been translated as *kiri kemen* (to what extent, in what manner) Here, the particle *ji*, meaning (which, what, how) is represented by the word *kiri* (how), and *skad pa* is literally translated as *kemekü* (so called). When these two combined forms are used together with a verbal predicate, they clarify the nature or quality of the action expressed. Therefore, it is more appropriate to translate *ji skad* syntactically as *...-un dayayu* (according to) or similar, depending on context. For instance: *ji skad bstan pa – ǰiyaqsan-u dayayu* (according to what is taught), *ji skad smras pa – kelegsen-u dayayu* (according to what is said), *ji skad grub pa – toγtayaqsan-u dayayu* (according to what is established). Similarly, other related phrases such as *ji ltar, ji zhig, re zhig, de ltar, 'di skad, nyid* can be interpreted and syntactically adapted to contemporary Mongolian expressions for clarity and natural flow.

Example from Tibetan original [D. PV, 97–621]:

ji skad bshad pa mi 'dzin pas de ltar rtogs pa mi rigs p'i phyir ro /

Traditional Mongolian translation [D. AVC, 80]:

Kiri kemen nomlaqsan-yig *ülü bariqu-bar tere metü onuqu ǰokis busu-yin tula bolai.*

Revised version:

Since it does not conform to what ***is established by*** *scripture, such a claim is improper reasoning.*

There exists significant potential to appropriately revise and newly designate auxiliary words in a manner that is more accessible and relevant to contemporary Mongolian language usage. The traditional method of translating auxiliary and conjunction words from Tibetan into Mongolian by literal, one-to-one transcription has been a primary cause of semantic loss and ambiguity. Therefore, to improve the quality of translation, it is essential to conduct a detailed linguistic analysis of the syntactic roles, functions, and meanings of auxiliary words, and to adapt them appropriately within the syntactic framework of modern Mongolian. A systematic study and analysis of the translation of auxiliary words is not only crucial from a linguistic standpoint but also plays a vital role in the in-depth study of Buddhist textual heritage in contemporary Mongolian.

Conclusion

A systematic study of translation issues in Tibetan language sources and the development of new methodologies play a crucial role not only in linguistic research but also in the profound study of Buddhist textual heritage in contemporary Mongolian. Traditional translations have often failed to fully capture the polysemy and semantic distinctions of logical and epistemological terminology, resulting in ambiguity and conceptual uncertainty. Therefore, source text translations should focus on precisely differentiating terminological meanings, recognizing theoretical logical coherence, and enhancing the ability to fully express logical structure and regularities. This process is primarily guided by the principles of accuracy and economy of expression. Within this framework, we employ lexical substitution strategies by aligning traditional terminology with established scientific nomenclature, selecting variants closer to the syntactic and stylistic norms of modern Mongolian, and alternating their use as appropriate. Furthermore, classic syntactic and grammatical transformation techniques – such as sentence segmentation, conjunction, restructuring, and replacement – are widely utilized to improve clarity and coherence. The revised terminological designations are expected to broaden the scope for interdisciplinary understanding and problem-solving within Mongolian Buddhist studies, deepen research perspectives, and facilitate the development of novel theoretical approaches and integrated methodologies.

Nevertheless, it is equally important to preserve the distinctive features and canonical style of scriptural language to an appropriate degree. For example, the method of procedural inference (tib. *'gro*) is widely employed in Buddhist philosophical and logical texts. Procedural inference not only exhibits a precise syntactic structure, but also utilizes established expressions for constructing premises to support or refute arguments and for tracing the course of reasoning. Therefore, translating with a precise understanding of the composition of premises (tib. *rtags kyi sbyor ba*), the semantic distinctions of procedural expressions (tib. *thal ngag*), and the underlying logical structures is crucial. In this regard, maintaining established expressions that convey very subtle distinctions of meaning, as well as the canonical structures of procedural inference, constitutes an important consideration in translating Buddhist philosophy. Moreover, terminal words within sentences in Buddhist texts reflect the distinctive stylistic features of scriptural language, which should also be taken into account.

On the other hand, the literal translation approach employed in classical translations preserves the original linguistic structure and usage of the texts, rendering these versions valuable primary sources for contemporary teaching and research. Moreover, traditional translations have been meticulously cross-examined and compared with original texts in other languages, as well as their commentaries. Today, it remains essential to systematically apply and cultivate this rigorous methodology and attitude in the translation of Buddhist literature, including its philosophical sources.

Thus, the Mongolian translation tradition has continued uninterrupted for several centuries, maintaining its core principles while simultaneously evolving new methods and approaches in response to the development of the contemporary language.

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