

How to make a useful Chinese-Sanskrit Dictionary.

I: The existing material

The problem of a Chinese-Sanskrit dictionary of sufficient utility to enable scholars to reconstruct the lost Sanskrit originals from their Chinese translations is today of very actual interest. Different people throughout the world have made numerous attempts to collect reliable material. One can arrange the whole bulk in three different parts.

1. The editions of the ancient dictionaries used by Chinese and Tibetan translators; works relying on these.
 - a) C. de Harlez, vocabulaire bouddhique sanskrit-chinois.
 - b) Eitel, handbook for the student of Chinese bouddhisme.
 - c) F. Weller, der chinesische charmasamgraha.
 - d) the different editions of the Mahavyutpatti.
 - e) the reprints of almost all the ancient dictionaries in the Taisho edition of the Chinese Tripitaka.
 - f) the dictionary of Prof. Hsu-ti-schan, collecting all the material, as far as I know
2. Sanskrit-equivalents gained by comparative study of the different versions of the same work.
 - a) scattered notes in books and articles. Particularly precious are the notes of de La-Vallee-Poussin in the "Abhidharmakosa" and the "Vijnaptimatratasiddhi", the incomplete index of Suzuki in his translation of the Lankavatara-sutra, B. Tucci's notes in his translation of the satasastra, the articles of G. Hamilton AOS. 51 and 53 etc.
 - b) complete indices.

Rhader, index to the Dasabhumika-sastra (Sanskrit-Chinese, the Chinese-Sanskrit part is outstanding)

In the same category is the index to the Kasyapaparivarta still in the process of publication.

- 3.a) the Japanese dictionaries, containing the bulk of terminological explanations and definitions obtained from the most important works of the Tripitaka, but - with the exception of the phonetic transcriptions having no Sanskrit translation.
- b) The ta-fo-tzu-tien of Ting (a translation from the Japanese)
- c) the phonetical material collected by Rosenberg in his dictionary of buddhist names.
- d) the "Hobogirin" now being completed, relying on the Japanese dictionaries as well.
- e) the dictionary of Soothill and Hodous using, as far as I know, the same sources.

II. Criticism and proposition.

The above named efforts are not sufficient, because

1. the ancient dictionaries are incomplete and often not reliable.
2. the scattered notes and existing indices are not sufficient.
3. the Japanese dictionaries serve another purpose.

To meet the needs of the historian of philosophy, wishing to reconstruct the lost Sanskrit texts, we want a dictionary giving the equivalent Sanskrit term for all the Chinese words - not only the technical ones - occurring in the translated literature as far as available. Reliable material can only be collected by indexing the most important texts, of which both the Sanskrit originals and the Chinese translations are preserved. These cases are not very frequent. The existing material could be worked up without spending too much time. A dictionary composed of the lexicographical material collected by indexing the following works together with the material of Prof. Hsu would be sufficient for every kind of work.

1. the Abhidharmakosa of Vasubandhu, the Karikas and the commentary (the big thesaurus terminorum of the Hinayana).
2. the two Vijnanamatra - texts (Vimsatika and Trimsika)
3. the Mulamadhyamakakarikas of Nagarjuna, with the commentary Akutobhaya.
4. the two important logical texts; Nyayamukha and Nyayapravesa.
5. the Lankavatarasutra.
6. the Astasahasrikaprajnaparamita.

The existing indices have to be used.

III. Details of the proceeding.

The index of Rhader and the index to the Kasyapaparivarta point the way. But it is not necessary for our purpose to mark the pages or chapters as done in the Kasyapaparivarta. The advantage of indicing the places in the Chinese translations is very small compared to the labor involved. It is also unnecessary to register the non-coinciding passages. The grammatical signs should be collected apart, because their registration requires special systematical considerations. Definitions and particularly interesting occurrences of technical words should be collected in a dictionary arranged according to Sanskrit-terms (The dictionary of Soothill - Hodous seems to serve this purpose). The Sanskrit texts in the above named cases are already restored. Where manuscripts are used, the text has to be restored before comparing it. In any event the task should be strictly confined to the searching of Sanskrit-equivalents. No definitions, no classifications! No competition with the above named works of the third category! So confined, the task would be specially suited for accomplishment in China, because here we have competent men to read the translations quickly, and because here the life and hence the wages are relatively cheap.