84000 Text Critical Guidelines for Translators

Surprisingly little is known for certain about Buddhist manuscript culture before the modern period. What we do know, however, is that Buddhist texts have undergone nearly constant change. The ongoing practices of writing, copying, editing, commenting upon, translating, and printing Buddhist scriptures—differently at different times and locations—has resulted in tremendous local variation. Indeed, to speak of a single definitive version of any Buddhist scripture is quite misleading.

The 84000 project of translating the canonical Tibetan texts in “the” Kangyur and Tengyur is thus complicated, and aided, by a number of text critical factors:

1) the presence of multiple Kangyur and Tengyur collections whose texts often include substantively different readings from one another, even as they claim in translation colophons to be the same translation of the same text;

2) evidence of a diversity of source-text languages (Sanskrit, Chinese, Khotanese…) for the Tibetan translations and centuries of Tibetan efforts to edit and standardize translations in accordance with perceived Indic norms;

3) the fact that Tibetan translation colophons and titles, especially for tantric texts, are not always entirely reliable indices for the texts they append (Skilling 1994, Davidson 2002, Almogi 2006);

4) the existence of alternative Tibetan translations or versions (Hahn 2016), evident in the citations of Tibetan scholars (Wedemeyer 2006) or textual fragments discovered in Dunhuang or elsewhere (Dotson 2015);

5) the existence of Sanskrit source material in the form of editions, manuscripts, citations, inscriptions, and textual fragments whose relationship with the source texts for the Tibetan translations is typically difficult, or perhaps impossible, to determine with any degree of certainty;

6) the existence of Chinese and other Asian language translations whose relationship with the available Sanskrit materials and Tibetan translations is also typically difficult to determine with any degree of certainty;

7) the existence of translations into modern Asian and European languages, and associated scholarship conducted on their source texts;

8) the existence of texts in the Pali Canon that, while almost never identical in content, in many cases have significant relationships, from a doctrinal or narrative perspective, with source texts in Sanskrit, Tibetan, or Chinese;

9) the dense intertextuality of Buddhist scriptures, such that certain passages or chapters—textual “modules,” otherwise called “microforms” (Mayer 2015, Sarnesi 2015)—regularly appear with

different degrees of variation throughout several different texts. Sometimes whole texts, or significant portions of texts, even appear as sections or chapters in other texts. This intertextuality is found across the division between the Sanskrit and Pali literature, and is moreover sometimes also shared with explicitly non-Buddhist texts, such as the Mahābhārata, Dharmaśāstra, Śaiva tantras, pan-Indic household ritual texts, and so forth.

This complexity is of course due in large part to the fact that the texts we currently find in the Kangyur and Tengyur collections, along with the collections themselves, underwent transformation over the course of centuries, assuming different forms at different locations. Moreover, such textual variation throughout time and space was also the case in Indian Buddhist traditions, long before, and after, the translation of texts into Chinese, Tibetan and other languages. Indeed, with the texts in the Kangyur that claim the status of Buddha speech in particular, research strongly suggests that we cannot realistically hope to access the *ur*-text, or absolute "original" of any Buddhist scripture—and, indeed, that a unitary original perhaps never existed—regardless of the current availability of a Sanskrit or Pali edition or manuscript (Silk 2015).

Nonetheless, that "the original" is forever beyond our reach and cannot realistically be reconstructed with any degree of certainty does not mean that we cannot and should not avail ourselves of extant textual materials and versions to enhance our understanding of the Tibetan translations. A responsible translator should certainly attempt to consider the full "life" of the text, from its initial annunciation to its current welter of versions and variations, even if its pristine birth as a unitary entity proves ultimately to be a fiction. Although this text-critical work cannot make pretenses to establishing a unitary original, it can nonetheless help translators make sound choices when confronted with textual variation. It might also help resolve some of the textual problems that have emerged during the transmission of Tibetan translations from their initial execution to the present.

Below are some basic text-critical guidelines to help translators navigate this difficult terrain when preparing 84000 grant applications, translations, editorial apparatuses, and introductions.

I. Initial research

i. Analyze title and colophon

When conducting research for a possible translation project be sure to first determine as much as possible about the Tibetan translation and the full range of other versions and translations of this text. Start with an analysis of the translation colophon and determine to whom the translation is attributed, from which language the translation is said to have been done (usually this is Sanskrit, but a few texts were translated from Chinese, Khotanese, or other languages), when the translators were active, what other texts these figures translated, and any other information relevant to the text and its appearance in Tibetan translation and subsequent reception in Tibet and elsewhere. Cross check the available imperial period catalogues (rnam rgyal rdo rje 2010), such as the Denkarma (*ldan/lhan dkar ma*) catalogue (Yoshimura 1950, Lalou 1953, Herrmann-Pfandt 2002 and 2009), which can be consulted directly in Tengyur canonical collections (Tōh. 4364), and the Phangthangma (*'phang thang ma*) catalogue (*dkar chag 'phang thang ma* 2003, Halkias 2004, Kawagoe 2005a and 2005b), as well as later Tibetan histories, such as *Buton's History of Buddhism* (Obermiller 1931, 1932, Nishioka 1980, 1981, 1983, and Szerb 1990) and *The Blue Annals* (Roerich 1976), for mention of your text and its translators.

ii. Locate and compare a range of Tibetan source texts

Next, use the Buddhist Digital Resource Center (https://www.tbrc.org/#!footer/about/newhome) and University of Vienna's Resources for Kanjur and Tanjur Studies (https://www.istb.univie.ac.at/kanjur/rktsneu/sub/index.php) to locate other available versions of this translation, beyond the Degé version and the others recorded in the Degé comparative edition (*dpe bsdur ma*). Where are these translations located in their respective canonical collections? Do they all have the same translation colophon, the same title, the same chapter divisions, roughly the same length? Or is there any variation in these details? Also attempt to determine if your text has any indigenous Tibetan commentaries, or if any Tibetan masters have cited your text in their own compositions by conducting a title search in BDRC using a combination of possible full, abbreviated, or alternative titles.

iii. Locate source texts in other languages

Your preliminary survey should also include whether there are any Sanskrit or Pali source materials (a complete or partial edition, unedited manuscripts, citations in other extant texts, inscriptions, fragments…), Chinese translations (how many translations, who were the translators, when, where…), translations into other Asian and European languages, including modern English language translations, partial or complete, and any relevant secondary scholarship.

The University of Vienna's Resources for Kanjur and Tanjur Studies (https://www.istb.univie.ac.at/kanjur/rktsneu/sub/index.php), the University of Oslo's Bibliotheca Polyglotta (https://www2.hf.uio.no/polyglotta/index.php), and the "research database," under the "online resources" of The American Institute of Buddhist Studies at Columbia University in the City of New York (http://aibs.columbia.edu/about.html), while not exhaustive, are great places to start conducting such preliminary research. As you conduct your survey also be aware that text titles can sometimes be deceptive markers of textual identity; texts with the same or similar title can often have different content, and variations of the same text might appear under other titles.

II. Sanskrit

i. Think historically

When there exist Sanskrit editions of your Tibetan text, it is important to consult them, but not uncritically. It might be tempting to view the Sanskrit and/or Pali textual material as privileged source material, the so-called "original" upon which the Tibetan translations were based. However, with the exception of some well-known cases, most of the extant Sanskrit Buddhist textual materials date to well after the Tibetan and Chinese translations were executed. In other words, most Tibetan translations reflect a particular stage of development of a particular Sanskrit recension that is in all likelihood much earlier than any Sanskrit manuscript available today. Moreover, even when there is earlier Sanskrit material, typically there is no demonstrable historical connection between it and whatever might have been used by the Tibetan translation team. All this is to say that the consultation of Sanskrit editions or other Sanskrit source-language material should be done with a significant degree of caution.

ii. Evaluate editions

When consulting Sanskrit editions of your text, first critically evaluate them. Determine which manuscripts formed the basis of these editions—where are they from, when do they date to, where are they currently housed, what condition are they in… Then try to determine the credentials of the editors and the methodology they followed in preparing their editions. Try to locate scholarly reviews of the editions, or consult an expert for a second or third opinion on their relative merits and potential problem areas.

iii. Exercise caution in comparing with Tibetan

Once you have assessed your Sanskrit editions and established the rough dates and condition of the manuscripts upon which they are based, you are in a better position to determine how you will use them in preparing your translation. For instance, in the case of an edition compiled from

19th century Nepalese manuscripts, you should certainly use it as a point of comparison with the Tibetan. Strictly speaking, however, it would be highly anachronistic to "correct" the Tibetan, or otherwise pass judgement on whether the Tibetan translators "omitted," "added" or "mistranslated" something based solely on its perceived disagreement with this Sanskrit edition. Hundreds of years have passed from the time of the Tibetan translation to the emergence of such Sanskrit manuscripts and we cannot know for certain how the Sanskrit text used by the Tibetan translators may have looked. The same degree of uncertainty holds true for earlier or contemporaneous Sanskrit manuscripts, that is, unless a definitive historical connection can be established. Generally speaking, the "correction" of any text in light of any other text carries with it a number of assumptions regarding the common content of the texts in question and their historical relationship (Silk 2015, 295). It is therefore vital to exercise great caution in this regard and try to always bring critical attention to the factors that might justify or problematize one's editorial choices.

iv. Use Sanskrit to clarify Tibetan

This major caveat aside, it is not uncommon for a current Sanskrit edition, or passages therein, to resemble the Tibetan translation quite closely. In such cases, it will be clear from comparison that something very similar (or perhaps identical!) to the Sanskrit at one's disposal most likely served as the basis for the Tibetan rendition. The Sanskrit can then be enormously helpful in resolving ambiguous grammatical structures, identifying and correctly parsing compounds, and so forth.

v. Emend judiciously

Moreover, not all Tibetan translations are of the same quality. Some translations are rife with unclear locutions and possible errors, resulting not only from poor translation choices, but also from misunderstandings of Sanskrit, the poor condition of Sanskrit manuscripts, scribal errors from copying the Tibetan, or other factors (Hahn 2007). In such cases where there is a clear pattern of error, or where individual divergences are noticed, and the translator feels confident that she or he can sensibly account for the reasons behind the error, the translator can feel free to emend the Tibetan and include an explanatory note.

vi. Types of divergence

Generally speaking, the divergences between the available Sanskrit and Tibetan can be divided into four categories:

1) Some divergences reflect different recensions of the Sanskrit text and/or different historical stages in its transmission history. Recall that hundreds of years have often passed between the execution of the Tibetan translation and the birth of the Sanskrit texts at our disposal. In such cases, it might be possible sometimes even to correct the Sanskrit based on the Tibetan translation.

2) Divergences might also appear due to corruptions—either intentional or accidental—that occurred during the successive copying of the Tibetan translation. In such cases, comparison with other versions of the Tibetan translation might reveal readings that have a greater affinity with the available Sanskrit, and thus lead the translator to select the Sanskrit and the Tibetan version that supports it.

3) Divergences might also result from the process of subsequent Tibetan scholars editing a translation based on another Sanskrit manuscript and/or an alternative Tibetan translation not included in the canonical collections.

4) Divergences, or rather, apparent divergences, might also be due to the conventions that the Tibetan translators used when translating from Sanskrit; recall that the Tibetan translations were performed by human beings, at different times and places, and with different levels of linguistic training. Moreover, certain specifically Sanskrit usages (e.g., *bahuvrīhi* compounds) can sometimes lose their function and application when a phrase is rendered into Tibetan. Such translated phrases might sometimes be understandable, or correctly interpretable, only with reference to Sanskrit. These can often be unraveled easily by observing patterns and considering the possibilities of what Sanskrit source phrase or term the Tibetan translation team might have been rendering.

vii. Document your work

Such work of comparison, selection, and emendation should be done strictly on a passage/word by passage/word basis, with each decision recorded in a note that includes the relevant difference between the Tibetan and the Sanskrit passage or word under consideration, the preferred reading, and the reason for the translator's preference. Moreover, the overall rationale for one's approach, whether Sanskrit variant readings are generally preferred, or only noted, for instance, the justification for this particularly approach, along with one's assessment of the Sanskrit edition(s) and how it relates to the Tibetan translation, both historically and linguistically, should be elaborated in the introduction and consistently applied in the translation. In cases when a different rationale is followed, an explanation should be provided in an attached note.

viii. Rely on Sanskrit lexical resources

Whether or not there is a reliable Sanskrit edition to work with (and for the vast majority of cases, there will not be), when there is good reason to believe that one's Tibetan text was translated from Sanskrit (as it was in the vast majority of cases), it is imperative that translators regularly consult the available Sanskrit-Tibetan and Sanskrit-English lexicons and dictionaries, such as the Negi correspondence,[1] the Edgerton Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary, the Monier-Williams dictionary, etc. If the text was translated from Sanskrit during the Tibetan imperial period, the *Mahāvyutpatti* lexicon (*bye brag tu rtogs par byed pa chen po*, Tengyur, Tōh. 4346 and Sakaki 1962) compiled in Tibet during this time might be particularly useful in considering the Sanskrit source-language terminology for the Tibetan.

ix. Beware of assumed knowledge and "false friends"

Tibetan translation-ese consists of terms that are generally in common use within indigenous Classical Tibetan compositions. However, the sense of terms in Tibetan translation is sometimes slightly different or quite distinct from indigenous Tibetan usage. Since 84000 translators are typically much stronger in Tibetan than they are in Sanskrit, it is therefore not uncommon for them to think they understand a Tibetan term or phrase when in fact it reflects a different sense that relates more closely to the Sanskritic semantic field than the indigenous Tibetan. This blind spot is particularly evident when comparing Sanskrit and Tibetan texts that are closely related. When doing this work it is not uncommon for a phrase or term in Tibetan translation to appear at first glance to be quite distant from the available Sanskrit sense, when upon closer analysis it is revealed to be a possible translation from the Sanskrit. This scenario partially accounts for the third category of apparent divergence noted above—those due to translation conventions and/or differences between source and target languages.

When there is no Sanskrit for comparison, translators should be especially attentive to particularly jarring passages or terms that simply do not seem to make sense or fit the context.

[1] Negi, although quite useful, generally suffers from the same historical uncertainties regarding the relationships between source and target texts as the comparison of any extant Sanskrit text and Tibetan translation. In addition, there are several more specific reasons that Negi should be consulted with considerable caution. For one, there are many entries that are unattested back-translations into Sanskrit from Tibetan. Translators should therefore familiarize themselves well with the introduction in Negi volume one and always consult the sigla key there to ensure that each entry consulted is in fact attested in an available Sanskrit edition. Moreover, entries often include several source-language terms, drawn from several different source texts. Translators must critically assess these possibilities in light of the passage in question, the genre of text involved, and its broader textual, doctrinal and historical context. This will help one avoid unfortunate errors of context, such as, for example, inappropriately selecting a specifically tantric sense of a term for a sutric context.

Such instances might indicate that there was a compound, a different usage, a pun, or a *double entendre* in the Sanskrit source text which was clumsily rendered into the Tibetan or simply lost in translation. When translating a Tibetan translation from Sanskrit it is therefore necessary to stay always aware of the Tibetan *as a translation*, keep one foot in the Sanskritic source-text world, and be vigilant for possible blind spots and misunderstandings. Gaining some familiarity with Tibetan imperial period guidelines for translation such as the *sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* (although it was often not rigorously followed) and connected lexicons recorded in the Tibetan *vyutpatti* tradition (Ishikawa 1990, Scherrer-Schaub 2002) can assist translators in this regard. Translators can regularly consult the *Mahāvyutpatti* (*bye brag tu rtogs par byed pa*, Tōh. 4346) and the *sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* (Tōh. 4347) directly in the Tengyur canonical collections themselves.

III. Multiple Tibetan versions

i. Consult other versions

Whether consulting Sanskrit or not, it is always helpful to consult other editions of your Tibetan translation, beyond the Degé version and those accounted for in the Degé Pedurma (*dpe bsdur ma*) comparative edition. Scholars generally agree that there are two main recensions of Kangyur collections—known commonly as the Tshalpa (*tshal pa*) and Thempangma (*them spangs ma*) lines—and, additionally, a number of "independent" Kangyur collections, such as the Phuktrak (*phug brag*) collection (Harrison 1997, Harrison and Eimer 1996, Skilling 1997, Stanley 2009). Texts in the Degé Kangyur represent a variegated hybrid of readings drawn from both the Tshalpa and Thempangma recensions; its comparative edition, the Pedurma, only records variant readings from texts in the Tshalpa line, or from those with a similar hybrid character, such as the Narthang (*snar thang*) and Lhasa (*zhol*) xylographs (Stanley 2009). When preparing one's grant application and translation, it is therefore important to consult at least one witness that is purely from the Thempangma line. The version in the easily accessible Stok Palace manuscript Kangyur could be a likely candidate, particularly with sūtras, but it is important to assess this issue on a text-by-text basis (Harrison 1992, Orofino 1994). For other potential candidates see the Kangyur groupings on the website of the University of Vienna's Resources for Kanjur and Tanjur Studies. Moreover, the Thempangma and independent Kangyur collections often circulated only in manuscript format. A manuscript Kangyur, if not copied from woodblock prints, might preserve texts that did not undergo the rigorous editorial process that their woodblock printed counterparts did. Such texts might thus contain older, or alternative readings that reflect a closer approximation to the work of the Tibetan translators. Nonetheless, the relative antiquity of manuscript versus woodblock print, and the affiliation of one's text with one or another recension, is not to be assumed, but should be determined strictly on a case-by-case basis (Harrison 1992).

ii. Triangulate with Sanskrit

When a Sanskrit edition is available for consultation, it is not uncommon for a Thempangma version or a version from an independent manuscript Kangyur to provide variant readings that resemble more closely the available Sanskrit. It is therefore important to triangulate one's consultation of the Sanskrit with consultation of a rich selection of witnesses of the Tibetan translation, ideally including one Thempangma witness and one independent witness.

iii. Document your work

Once again, when working in this way, it is important to clearly and succinctly describe one's methodology in the introduction, record in notes the variant readings and one's preferred reading, and explain why this selection was made in each individual case. One's rationale should be generally consistent with the explanation in the introduction and applied consistently throughout the translation. In cases when a different rationale is applied, an explanation as to why should be provided in an attached note.

IV. Chinese translations

i. Determine relevance

Translators might also benefit from consulting available Chinese translations of Indic materials to gain critical perspective on a particularly difficult or missing term or passage in the Tibetan. More thorough comparison will of course be necessary in cases where the Tibetan text is a translation directly from Chinese. Whatever the case may be, it is important to first determine if there is an available Chinese translation that roughly corresponds with the Tibetan in terms of title, length, chapter divisions, chapter titles, etc. Once a candidate for more detailed comparison has been selected, it is important not to uncritically assume that the Tibetan and Chinese partake of an identical source text, but to make decisions strictly on a case by case basis. For instance, it has been observed that some translations from Chinese to Tibetan executed during the Tibetan imperial period incorporate a Sino-Tibetan lexicon that is distinct in several respects from the Indo-Tibetan lexicon commonly used for translations from Sanskrit (Stein 1983). Moreover, translations from Chinese were sometimes also edited and partially standardized to accord with the conventions of the *Mahāvyutpatti* and *sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*, thus reflecting a hybrid language of Sino-Indo-Tibetan translation-ese (Ibid. and Scherrer-Schaub, 303–304). When comparing Chinese and Tibetan translations for affinities it is important to consider such factors, and leave open the possibility that there may be other reasons (historical, stylistic…) for the similarities and differences observed between translations.

ii. Triangulate with Sanskrit

If the Tibetan was not translated directly from Chinese, and when a reliable Sanskrit edition is also available, the translator might benefit from triangulating it with the Chinese and Tibetan translations to gain insights into the way a particular term or passage might have been variously understood. Here too, the simultaneous consultation of other versions of the Tibetan translation beyond the Degé and the Pedurma (such as the Stok Palace Kangyur version, for instance) can also provide an illuminating point of reference.

iii. Think historically

Much like when consulting Sanskrit, the Chinese is also to be used with considerable caution. Chinese translations, since they are often so reliably dated, are frequently used by scholars to gain insights into historical developments in Indian Buddhist traditions (Nattier 2008, 3). But like their Tibetan counterparts, Chinese translations have also changed over the centuries with each successive act of copying, editing, printing, commenting… Moreover, there are often more than one, or even several translations of a text into Chinese and these were typically executed by different individuals at different locations, decades or centuries apart from one another, sometimes from different source languages or dialects. Each Chinese translation thus reflects only a particular moment in the history of a text; each bears witness to the idiosyncratic features of how a specific version of a source-text was understood and rendered into Chinese at a specific place and time by specific individuals. Moreover, owing to the fact that there probably never was any unitary *ur*-source text to begin with, there is in theory no reason to favor any particular reading over any other, beyond how it assists us in understanding the Tibetan translation and correcting errors that may have crept in over the intervening centuries, unless a historical relationship can be established between the texts in question, such as when a particular Chinese translation served as a source text for the Tibetan translation.

iv. Compare texts and document work

When consulting the Chinese translations it is important to carefully record one's preliminary comparison with the Tibetan translation, and, when possible, to any available Sanskrit editions (including analysis of the manuscripts on which these editions were prepared), in terms of titles, dates, provenance, translators, and structural elements, such as length, number of chapters, chapter titles and so forth. This information should be included in the introduction, along with an explanation of one's overall methodology in consulting the Chinese. One should also record in notes the variant readings and one's preferred reading, and explain why this selection was made in each individual case. One's rationale for selection should be generally consistent with the explanation in the introduction and applied consistently throughout the translation. In cases when a different rationale is applied, an explanation should be provided in an attached note. In cases when the Tibetan is a translation directly from Chinese, the glossary should include Chinese terminology and notes should reflect substantive variations between source and target texts.

V. Adjudicating between variant readings

i. The principle of difficulty

In light of the practical and theoretical impossibility in most cases of establishing an original *ur*-text to serve as the basis for the translation of Kangyur and Tengyur texts, taking stock of multiple versions, sometimes in multiple languages, will often confront translators with several variant readings from which to choose. In such cases, the tendency of most translators unfamiliar with textual criticism will be to select the smoothest reading, the variant that lends itself to the easiest and most uncomplicated rendering into English. However, serious consideration of how the more difficult reading might make sense of the passage has much to recommend itself. Simply put, scribes, when copying a text, are far more likely to "correct" to an easier reading than the other way around. Although each case ought to be considered separately, the more difficult variant reading is more likely to represent a stage prior to the editorial intervention that led to the divergence in question.

ii. Consider the causes of variation

This issue of relative ease touches upon an important principle in the practice of deciding between variant readings: the translator should in all cases attempt to hypothesize the causes of textual discrepancy when deciding upon which variant reading to render and which to relegate to an annotation. There are several specific patterns in the emergence of textual variation to consider in this regard. For further details see the list below, drawn in part from the relevant discussions and lists in Martin West (1973) and R.S. Shivaganesha Murthy (1996). Generally speaking, however, the translator should try to imagine her or himself in the scriptorium, engaged in the practice of copying, with all that this might entail in terms of human judgement and error. As part of this exercise, the translator should also consider orthographic and punctuation shifts that might occur when transferring cursive script into print script, and from manuscript into woodblock.

Partial list of causes of textual variation

There are three main reasons for the emergence of textual variation in the historical transmission of a text (leaving aside its translation into another language): 1) environmental factors; 2) intentional transformations made by authors, editors, and scribes; and 3) unintentional transformations made by scribes and editors.

1) environmental factors
    - i) weather and natural disaster
    - ii) insects
    - iii) warfare
    - iii) changes in script
    - iv) changes in orthography, sense, syntax and other socio-historical linguistic factors
2) intentional human transformations
    - i) author makes changes after earlier copies are already in circulation, different stages of completion
    - ii) interpolations by others (commentary, liturgical directions…)
    - iii) simplification of archaic and other unknown terms, word order, and syntax into more common usage: from difficult to easy
    - iv) scribal emendations related to meaning and form (i.e., due to the needs of particular textual communities)
    - v) relocation of "slash" punctuation (*shad*): parsed differently
    - vi) archaicization: introduction of pseudo-archaic form by later figures
    - vii) eliding objectionable elements
    - viii) editing to sectarian preference (i.e., the *sa/bhūmi* of prophesied figures in *lung bstan/vyākaraṇa* passages), or adapting a quotation to suit one's purpose
3) unintentional human transformations
    - i) simple spelling mistakes

ii) misreading of letters and words: confusion of letters in cursive script when converting to print script and woodblock: *nga* and *da*, *ta* and *da*, *pa* and *sa*, *dha* and *ha*, *ṭa* and *ta*, etc.

iii) confusion with rare words and proper names

iv) confusion with words that are transliterations of words from other languages (i.e., Sanskrit terms in Tibetan, such as mantras)

v) the use of abbreviations and contractions (i.e., *bskungs yig* and the use of cardinal numbers)

vi) omission and addition of "dot" punctuation (*tsheg*): absent or unclear punctuation, as in some *dbu med* scripts, can cause letters to blend and be wrongly divided as copyist confuses part of one word for part of another, leading to partial assimilation (i.e., *dbug can* → *dbu gcan*, *ma na ba* → *man pa*…).

vii) domestication of Sanskrit transliteration (i.e., *shi ba*/*śiva*)

viii) omission of *sa yang 'jug*

ix) omission of *'a chung*

x) homonymic shifts (i.e., *gcod* and *spyod*; with local dialectical variation, i.e., *byi* and *khyi*)

xi) incorporation of interlinear notes or glosses into text

xii) haplography: writing once what should be written twice

xiii) dittography: writing twice what should be written once

xiv) spoonerisms (a verbal error in which the initial sounds or letters of two or more words are transposed, often to humorous effect, as in the sentence *you have hissed the mystery lectures*, accidentally spoken instead of the intended sentence *you have missed the history lectures*)[2]

xv) The movement of a letter in a word from one position to another, thereby forming a different word (i.e., *mkhas* → *khams*)

xvi) homoioteleuton (when the eye jumps from words at the end of one line or verse to the identical words at the end of another line or verse, with the resultant loss of the words in between)

xvii) omission of words or phrases

xviii) glosses or omissions wrongly re-connected

xix) incorrect emendations based on a corrupt reading, in which one corruption

[2] This example is drawn from Martin West (1973).

leads to another, with some effort of the scribe involved

xx) replacement of one word by another due to mental associations of a non-phonetic nature – due to familiarity, another term encountered earlier in a text, or a generally well-known bit of text

xxi) inaccurate memory of quotations, or the copy of a quotation from another author's use of it…(quotes tend to be more inaccurate at the end, when the memory trails off).

The goal of 84000 is not to produce full critical editions for each text in the Kangyur and Tengyur. Otherwise we would never make sufficient progress in our mission to translate the entire Tibetan Buddhist canon. The aim of this brief set of guidelines and consideration is rather to help equip translators with the bare minimum of tools necessary to take stock of textual variation and make informed and responsible choices in their work as translators.

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