Xixia Language Studies and the Lotus Sutra (II)

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1. The Birth and Death of the Xixia Language—Its Life

Immediately after he had established the Xixia state in 1032, its first emperor Li Yuanhao ordered the creation of a new written language and a writing system for properly recording it, one that would replace the Tibetan and Chinese scripts that had been used till then. He intended, internationally, to enhance the prestige of his empire and, domestically, to strengthen the unity of its constituent tribes and to promote vernacular culture. The language and its ideographs are called the Xixia language and Xixia characters, respectively. The project was quickly and superbly executed and in 1036 the fruits of the endeavor—the language and the characters—were promulgated throughout the country. As a result, a new culture area was formed in the northwestern corner of the Chinese civilization sphere, as Xixia characters replaced the use of Chinese characters. The creation of the Xixia characters also represented the birth of a unique type of ideograph.

Most of the tribes which composed the Xixia state, such as the Mi and the Minyak, spoke their own dialects, derivative of a common parent language (i.e., they were dialects of Dangxiang yu). Though these dialects are considered to have shared common features, they must have been fairly different from each other in terms of phonology, grammar and vocabulary formation. For example, these differences between the expressions of their own designations in the Mi and Minyak dialects can be noted:

Mi (鄰) Minyak (鄰語)

緋 mì (rising 10) 緋 mi (rising 28) 紅 nǐā (rising 18)

黒 nǐā (level 21) “black” Mi ← “black”

Regarding the self-names in Xixia, the Mi tribe pronounced it as rising tone 10th rhym mì, and the Minyak tribe as rising tone 28th rhym mì. Regarding the word for “black,” both had it as nǐā, the Mi pronounced it with level tone, and the Minyak with rising tone.
It is very probable that the second syllable, mię (level 11), of ㄫwמי (level 11) meaning “imperial family” was one of the corresponding cases of the Mi. Its meaning might have been the Mi of Wei.

From the time of its promulgation in 1036, the Xixia language improved and developed in its power of expression through the process of translation of Buddhist canons, official documents and Chinese classics, and through the creation of the nation’s own vernacular literary works. The language reached the apex of its development during the reigns of Hui Zong (1069–1086), Chong Zong (1086–1139) and Ren Zong (1139–1194). Then, as the state declined, the Xixia language was brought to the verge of extinction. It appeared to have ended its life after the destruction of the Xixia state by Mongolian troops, who invaded from the north in 1227. However, the Xixia language received a new lease of life thanks to the Yuan dynasty’s preferential treatment of the language. This invigoration came about through the publication of The Yuan Version of the Xixia Tripitaka.

The homeland of Xixia (Tangut) was, like Tibet, under the rule of the Office of Administrative Control (later, the Office of Benevolent Administration), and the Tangut were given preferential treatment as the semu ren (persons with special status). Shi Zu (Kublai Khan), who saw in the promotion of Buddhism a means of exerting control over the populace, ordered the production of a set of printing blocks of the Xixia Tripitaka in Dadu, the capital of the Yuan empire. The project was suspended in 1294 when Cheng Zong ascended the throne, but it was soon resumed and continued at Wanshou Temple in Hangzhou. It seems that by 1302, more than 3,620 volumes of Xixia scriptures, called the Hexi Tripitaka, were completed and donated to temples in the Tangut homeland. By this time, more than 70 years had passed since the fall of the Xixia state.

The completion of the project is an almost certain fact, judging from colophons attached to Da Zong di xuanwen benlun in the collection of Zenpukuji temple in Japan, as well as preface texts for Xixia scriptures obtained by Paul Pelliot, and fragments in the collection of the Tenri Central Library.

In 1970, I found extant portions of the original Xixia tripitaka at the Swedish National Museum in Stockholm, as confirmed by the “Bai-shang Daguo Xinyi Sancang shengjiao xu” (Preface to the Principal, Great and Superior [i.e., Xixia] State’s New Translation of the Three-Basket Sacred Teaching) that was attached to these
scriptures. Six sutras remained: the *Foshuo Yueguang Pusa jing* (Buddha-delivered Moonlight Bodhisattva Sutra), the *Foshuo Liaoyi Bore boluomi jing* (Buddha-delivered, Meaning-clearly-determined Perfection of Wisdom Sutra), an unidentified sutra—only the latter part of which remains, without the beginning and ending portions—along with three other fragments (A, B and C). As the preface refers to itself as “New Translation” 新譯, the scriptures must belong to what I have termed the second period of the Xixia Tripitaka translation. Though it is not possible to determine how many of the volumes of the tripitaka (sutra, vinaya and abhidharma) were actually included, one may assume that it was a compilation of newly-translated Buddhist scriptures and a reprint of the tripitaka completed during the reign of Ren Zong 仁宗 (1139–94).

The fact that the translation project was completed suggests that the Xixia language was still widely used—and that knowledge of its characters had been retained—among people in the middle of the 14th century. On the inner wall of Guojieta 過街塔 (Crossing Street Tower) at the Juyong-guan 嘉峪關 (Common Dwelling Pass), which is on the way from Beijing to the Western Regions, there are inscriptions of dharani texts and the account of building the tower in six languages and scripts. One of these inscriptions is in Xixia language and characters. The inscriptions were made in 1345, thirty-three years after the completion of the Hexi Tripitaka. It is possible that the Xixia script was included because the Xixia people remained an influential ethnic group even 118 years after the fall of their state. Although the Xixia texts in these inscriptions has lost the B-stems of verbs, and the use of view sentences is not as frequent as in earlier times, the script still appears to fully preserve the basic grammatical structure of the Xixia language, to the extent that it uses both of the two series of prefixes.

Regarding Xixia texts after the Juyong-guan inscription, there is a paper that introduces the extant text of “Gao Wang Guanshiyin jing Gan De xu” 高 王 観 世 音 證 德 序 (Preface by Gan De to the Gaowang Bodhisattva Perceiver of the World’s Sounds Sutra) (29 lines) dated the fifth year of Hongwu 洪武 (1372) of the Ming dynasty. This text is preserved at the Palace Museum 故宮博物院 in Beijing. The text in the preface still frequently uses the prefix series B.

The approaching end of the Xixia language is evident in the text on an octagonal stone pillar, Xiangsheng chuang 相 勝 輪, unearthed in Hanzhuang 韓庄, Baoding 保定, 130 kilometers southwest of Beijing. It was probably built by descendants of the Xixia people who had been relocated to Dadu. As the date of the pillar’s completion is considered to
be the 15th year of Hongzhi 鴻禧 (1502), by that time 275 years had passed since the fall of the Xixia state. In the Xixia text on this pillar, the prefix series A appears, but the text does not include the B-stems of verbs. In this regard, no view sentences appear at all. The Xixia characters are used to enumerate proper nouns such as the names of offices and people. One gets the impression that the characters are now little more than the empty hulls of the language. It is also possible that the characters had been handed down while the language had fallen out of use and been almost forgotten by then. In any case, it appears that the complete demise of the Xixia language was then imminent. The written language is considered to have lived for a little more than 450 years following its birth in 1036.10

I believe the extinction of a written language and that of a natural, spoken language should be treated as different matters.

2. Analysis of the Character System and the Restoration of the Linguistic System

Since I began studying the Xixia language and Xixia characters in the 1950s, I have always taken heed of treating the two tasks of (1) analyzing the character system and (2) restoring the linguistic system on different levels, and giving consideration to a balance between these two concerns. It is a cardinal rule that level of development of the characters and that of the language itself should not be confused when one carries out linguistic studies. It is, however, true that development in the understanding of one area accelerates development in the other. Since one can explore the Xixia language only through Xixia characters, the two, in particular, are closely connected and limitlessly intertwined. A difference in one character reflects a certain morphological difference in the language.11

The concepts of twin characters and double twin characters that I conceived has had a substantial effect in this field of discipline.12 Pairs of twin characters with similar forms represent various correspondence and contrast on the morphological level. I do not however, discuss this further herein.

Difference in character form reflects a difference of meaning unit, i.e., phonological difference. To put it simply, when one reads a character form, there arises the question of which of the meaning units the character form refers to. In this regard, the research on the difference of character form is closely connected with the restoration of the phonological system of the Xixia language and, consequently, it is deeply concerned
with the genealogical study of this language.

At an early stage of my study in the 1960s, I attempted to restore the phonological system mainly based on the system from the lexicon Tongyin «同音»13. In the 1980s I published a revised version of my ideas after a major reexamination. For this I made reference to systems formulated in the rhyme table Wuyin qieyun «五音切韵», and the rhyme lexicons Wenhai (Baoyun) «文海 (寶韻)» and Wenhai zalei «文海雜類»14. Since then, I have continued to revise this version for my personal use, but there remain a fair number of matters that require further examination. The main points among them are: (1) To consider the correspondence between the subgroup of level tones 平聲韻小類 and the subgroup of rising tones 上声韻小類; this is concerned with the restoration of rising-tone initial consonants 上声韻声母. (2) To reconsider initial consonants 声母 and rhymes 韻母 from the perspective of morphology; e.g., the reconstruction of vowels based on contrasts between (a) the voiced sounds of intransitive verbs and the voiceless unaspirated sounds of transitive verbs, and (b) between relaxed vowels of non-causative verbs and tightened vowels of causative verbs.15 I hope to extensively discuss these problems in articles in the near future. Here I will consider some basic points concerning the meanings of each particular characters, making reference to the Lotus Sutra and related texts. Books like Sancai zazi «三才雜字», Tongyi yilei «同義一類» and Fanhanyu yaoji «翻漢語要集», which are works the Xixia people at the time left as the products of their studies,16 are, needless to say, very important material for analyzing the meanings of Xixia characters. However, I put these works out of my consideration here.

3. The Analysis of Meanings

Lexicons, vocabulary books and phonological works all help provide important evidence in verifying the meanings of Xixia words.17 However, the final determination is made through a correspondence between the Xixia word and its counterpart from a known language, such as Chinese or Tibetan. Let us take the basic example of verifying the meaning of the word “Buddha” 佛.

The meaning 佛 as “Buddha” is one of several characters known at the very beginning stage of early 20th century semantic research on the ideographs, when M. G. Morisse made public his studies.18 It wouldn’t be accurate to say that Morisse deciphered the meaning; the Chinese character had been written by an anonymous Chinese beside the original text in the Xixia Lotus Sutra that Morisse obtained.
At the present time, I can say the following about this character: It belongs to the 17th rhym (yun) in Wenhai (Baoyun) and is pronounced thɑ/hhooktop. It was originally used as the two-syllable word fʰʰi thɑ. Later thɑ by itself came to represent “Buddha.” It is not an original Xixia word but a loanword. The word fʰʰi thɑ is a Xixia transliteration of the Chinese word Fotuo 佛陀, which, in turn, is a Chinese transliteration of the Sanskrit “Buddha.” I assume that, while the first syllable of the Chinese Fo 佛 (copying “bud”) came to represent the meaning of “Buddha” in Chinese, the second syllable dha (copying “dha”) was used to represent “Buddha” in Xixia.¹⁹

Translators of the Xixia Buddhist scriptures were able to rely on the Buddhist terms established in Chinese and Tibetan. They did not translate directly from Sanskrit but created many transliterated Xixia words from the equivalents in Chinese. Some terms in the original were accepted as established, commonly-used Buddhist terms. That is to say, they were foreign words phonetically copied with vernacular characters.

Besides the examples of transliteration such as thon lɔ/hhooktop and thɑ/hhooktop mɔ/hhooktop, there are many words which were created through semantic translation.²⁰ The correspondence of names of things, in particular, can be made with relative ease. Among familiar examples are the Seven Treasures (七宝). In chapter 18 (The Benefits of Responding with Joy), juan 6:

In chapter 11 (The Emergence of the Treasure Tower), juan 4, 真珠 (pearl) and 玫瑰 (carnelian) appear in place of 珍珠 (coral) and 琥珀 (amber), respectively. In chapter 1 (Introduction), the transliterated words 摩尼 (mani jewels) and 颜料 (crystal) are used follows:

The Lotus Sutra, of course, contains a wealth of Buddhist terms. Most of them are semantic translations from Chinese words. The following is the example of the six pāramitās (六波羅蜜):
On the other hand, the word pāramitā itself takes a fixed form in Xixia, pɔ/hhooktop lɔ/hhooktop m/hhooktop, a transliteration of the Chinese term.

Rulai 如来 (Thus Come One, tathāgata) is always rendered 纅烎 m/iundotted˘or (L90) ी (L61), which may be literally translated into Chinese as shilai 實來 (Truly Come One). The Xixia word is thought to have been translated not from Chinese but from Tibetan yang-dag-par gshegs-pa, which is assumed to be an older translated term.

Shizun 世尊 (World-Honored One, bhagavat) is rendered in various ways including with the compound of 純烎 riur (L76) ी (L59), meaning “world” and “respect”; 纈烎 布出 (缘), meaning “[one] triumph[ed over] possessing and passed [over],” a replacement of Tibetan bcom-ldan-˙das; and 純烎 phɔ/hhooktop khɑ/hhooktop x/wsuperscript an and 纈烎 mbɑ/hhooktop ɑ/hhooktop mbɑ/hhooktop, replacements of bojiafan 薔加梵, a Chinese transliteration of Sanskrit bhagavat. The latter transliteration, mbɑ/hhooktop ɑ/hhooktop mbɑ/hhooktop, which is found in Molitianmu zongchi 摩利支天經, is assumed to be a new term closer to the Sanskrit original.

The term 純烎  tšiḥu (R23) tšiḥu (R2) is used for translating zhongsheng 衆生 (living beings, sattva) throughout each volume of the Lotus Sutra. This form is equivalent to youqing 有情, the term adopted by Xuanzang 玄奘, meaning “[those] having sentience.” Some Buddhist scriptures adopt 純烎 sefi (R33) ndiufi (L3) (qing-you 情・有, sentience-having). This is similar to the manner of translating pusa 菩薩 (bodhisattva) 純烎 tšiḥu-tsefi (R33) “those perceiving sentience.” (Cf. WrT. sens-can, byang-chub sens-dpah.)

These Buddhist terms were used in translating Chinese classics. For example, the passage from the second chapter, Yingxu 聊德 “prohibiting evil and falsehood by moral standards…” is rendered in Xixia as “如意誦誦口中念誦” (以直直心摧伏邪偽, breaking and subduing evil and falsehood by honest and upright intent).

Zhishi 質直, xiewei 邪僞 and cuifu 擊伏 are terms used in the Lotus Sutra: 純烎 tšiḥa (R16) tř (L58), 純烎 ndzɔw (R38) lø (L94), 純烎 kwin (L32) ři(w (R41). In Zhenshi miao jing 鍮押妙經, zhensya 鍮押 is equivalent to cuifu 擊伏.

The terms in Liutao appear to have been devised in a fairly elaborate
manner. Three different equivalents are allocated to the character shou 守 in liushou 六守, shoutu 守土 and shouguo 守国, respectively:

六守 俸畿 tšiew (L46) 俸畿 (L39) (six kinds of shou 守: ren 仁, yi 義, zhong 忠, xin 信, yong 勇, mou 護)
守土 俸畿 lu (R1) 俸畿 (L34) 国土防衛 (defense of the national territory)
守国 俸畿 hle (R?) 俸畿 (R47) 国家保持 (maintenance of the state)

Though one can understand that these three characters, 俸畿, 俸畿, 俸畿, i.e., equivalents for shou 守, are interrelated, it is difficult to concretely determine the differences among them. In the Lotus Sutra appear examples such as 俸畿 受持 and 俸畿 俸畿 (L61) 立著.

4. The Systematic Classification of the Xixia Vocabulary

The task of systematically classifying Xixia vocabulary has not yet been completed. There are several major issues to resolve. The Xixia poems, Yueyue leshi 月月樂詩 and Dashi 大詩 contain two conspicuous layers of vocabulary. This reflects the heterogeneous composition of Xixia society—the royal family, the nobility, and the Mi and the Minyak ethnic groups. At present, I classify the two layers as layers I and II. The vocabulary of layer I, which is assumed to be the layer of the elegant vocabulary, cannot be identified yet. Layer II is that vocabulary usually regarded as the Xixia language.

This layer consists of Buddhist terminology as well as vocabulary in day-to-day use, as represented by the words from Fanhan heshi zhangzhong zhu 奄漢和時掌中珠, a collection of Xixia-Chinese words and phrase examples.

Loanwords (transliterated words) from Chinese and Tibetan are easy to distinguish. Numerals and pronouns are also distinguishable, as is the terminology of sets such as shi gan 十干 (the ten calendar signs), shi'er zhi 十二支 (the twelve zodiac signs), shi'er zhi 十二支 (twelve fortune signs), shi'er yuansheng 十二緣生 (the twelve-linked chain of dependent arising), shi'er xinggong 十二星宮 (the twelve constellation signs) and ershi ba xiu 二十八宿 (the twenty-eight constellations).

The identification of these sets of words requires meticulous comparison between various documents. From an investigation of several Buddhist scriptures, including Shi'er yuansheng xiangru jing 十二緣生祥瑞經 (Twelve-linked Chain of Dependent Arising Good Omen Sutra), shi'er yuansheng appears as:22
I have been able to extract the set *shi’erzhi* 十二直 (twelve fortune signs) from *Xinyi Tongren zhenjiu dian* «新譯銅人鍼灸典» (A New Translation of the Bronze Figure Standard for Acupuncture and Moxibustion). It has proved more difficult than expected to find examples of numerals. Numbers greater than one hundred million rarely appear. Unfortunately, neither ¹ advisory (one hundred billion) 鬥 ¹ (R68)⁴ nor a special synonymous form of one thousand, ¹ (L80) - ¹ (R19),⁵ is found in the Xixia Lotus Sutra. However, fractional numbers appear in chapter 15 (Emerging from the Earth),juan 5, as follows:⁶

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fractional Numbers</th>
<th>Xixia Characters</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¹ of four separated portions</td>
<td>ḥiⁿ m₄=aw kh₇ ¹ ḥiⁿ m₄=aw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¹ of yi (100,000,000) wan (10,000) portions</td>
<td>ṛiⁿ khi m₄=aw kh₇ law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¹ quarter (1/4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¹ trillionth (1/1,000,000,000)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The combination and ordering of the cardinal directions (east, west, north, south) is a topic of interest. 鬍聞聞 鬍 wi (R61) le (? ¹) ⁷ ¹ ³ (L86) l₁ (L64) in the Xixia Lotus Sutra are literal translations from the Chinese counterparts, and the order follows that of the Chinese text. The proper order of directions in Xixia is thought to have been clockwise starting from east as in ³ *Fanhan heshi zhangzhong jhu* ¹ ³ ( replaces the axis of east and west. Incidentally, *Huayan jing* ¹ (Avatamsakasūtra) adopts a literal translation from the Chinese based on the axis of east and west.⁸

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Xixia Characters</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¹</td>
<td>³</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>East (east-south)</th>
<th>West (west-south)</th>
<th>Northwest (west-north)</th>
<th>Northeast (east-north)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Although many personal pronouns appear in the Lotus Sutra, including the first person 乃是 (R14), 眾 (R44), it is difficult to determine how mutual level relationships among them are really set up by examining the usages in text. However, I note the following:

乃是 (R17) “to me”
乃是-mī (R10) “we two” and 眾 (R28) -mī “we two”
乃是 (R17) “you” and 眾-mī “you two”

It should be said that these above-mentioned forms are specific examples, rarely found in texts other than the Lotus Sutra, as are the following examples of the personal pronoun, genitive, first person: 蕃 乃是 (R25) “my,” 眾 “my son” and 眾 “my stature.”

Not a few examples of such specific grammatical features appear in the Xixia Lotus Sutra.

Inserted Notes in Buddhist Scriptures

A small fragment titled... 尼觀門 Nianguan men (the beginning portion is lost) is included among the Khara-Khoto documents in the Aurel Stein collection. In the text the word tīsa (L19) dzu (R5) appears with an inserted note explaining that it means “to put the left leg on the right leg.” It is equivalent to the Chinese, jiezuo 結坐, jiejiu fuzuo “cross-legged sitting,” probably meaning ban jiezuo 半結坐 “half-cross-legged sitting” (jixiang zuo 吉祥坐 “auspicious sitting”). Such explanations in inserted notes are not rare, enabling the readers to understand the text’s meaning correctly.

Explanations of extant phonological works

Explanations in the rhyme lexicon Wenhai (Baoyun) 文海 (寶雲) provide many suggestions for verifying the meaning of the words. For example, 蛋 taw “egg” belonging to level-tone rhyme 43 is given the following explanation:
It says that ṭəw means ḏân, and if an egg hatches, it becomes a chick. The word ḏân is probably a loanword from the Chinese  lvăn “egg,” and a ŋůfiḥī means “egg’s child,” namely “chick.” The word ŋůfi shares a same origin with the Tibetan sgo-nga.  ḏân and ŋůfi are Xixia-Chinese twin characters.

There are examples “[those] born from the egg” in the Lotus Sutra and Jingang jing 《金剛經》(Vajracchedikāprajñāpāramitā).

5. Collation of the Chinese and Tangut Buddhist Scriptures

One reliable way to analyze the meanings of Xixia characters is to collate translated Xixia Buddhist scriptures with their Chinese originals on a text-by-text basis as mentioned above. Collation is one of the most basic and effective ways to produce sets of bilingual texts and many scholars have yielded good results. Nevertheless, if experts rely solely on this method of comparison, they will encounter unexpected pitfalls.

The Xixia Lotus Sutra is a particularly difficult text and one must abandon the expectation of being able to clarify the meaning of Xixia characters by simply collating the texts with its Chinese counterparts. Xixia translators rendered the texts nonliterally or with discretionary interpretation and some portions of text are not easily understood. As such, there are plentiful possibilities for misunderstanding and mistranslation.

A. Examples of Simple Collation

How were Chinese texts translated into the Xixia language? I would like to discuss here the practicalities of this process citing examples from the Lotus Sutra in a larger context. First, I will consider examples of simple collation.

I. Reverse Expressions of the Same Meaning

(1) Chinese  ① 餘時 ② 弟勒菩薩 ③ 從座而起 ④ 偏袒右肩 ⑤ 合掌向仏……
(At that time the bodhisattva Maitreya rose from his seat, bared [only] his right shoulder and, pressing his palms together and facing the Buddha,…) Watson 235
This passage often appears in Buddhist scriptures. The Xixia text is rendered in 18 characters which accords with the number of characters in the Chinese original. There is a good concordance in the way in which the four four-character phrases follow ershi (at that time) and present no problems. Mile is transliterated in Xixia as mifī (L11) -ī (R7); and pusa is translated nonliterally as “(one who) realizes sentiment.” The literal meaning of Xixia is “rising (from) his seat.” The prefix ʔa- “upward” is attached to the verb wɔr (L89), and at the same time it indicates the action has been perfected. Xixia means “facing the Buddha, to press [his] palms together,” which is not very much different from the Chinese. Xixia, however, reveals a complexity. This seems to be a faithful translation of the Chinese text. In actuality, the Xixia text includes neither you (right) nor tan (to bare). Instead, it has the expressions “left” and “to wear.” The Xixia text renders the phrase as “wore one side [only] his left shoulder” vis-à-vis the Chinese “bared [only] his right shoulder.” phā (L17) means “one side” and ŋ/i/hhooktop (R10) “to wear.” If one did not know the correct meanings of these Xixia characters, one might misunderstand them in completely opposite senses: “left” as “right” and “to wear” as “to bare.”

II. Nonliteral and Free Translation

It is not rare to find examples where Xixia translators have rendered the text according to their own discretion, re-expressing the meaning of the original text. In translations of Chinese classical literature, for example, there are examples of translators giving plainer expression in Xixia to abstruse passages.

For instance, a passage from Liutao «六韜», juan 1, Wentao, reads “卒見太公坐茅以漁” (Finally, [King Wen of Zhou] sees Tai Gong himself sit in a thatched cottage and fishing). In the Xixia version, it rendered as “卒見太公坐茅以漁, 下 [a line with] fishhook and catch fish” (At the time Taigong himself 3 beside a thatched cottage 4 throw [a line with] fishhook and catch fish). The Xixia version describes the action of King Wen of Zhou who views Tai Gong, clearly recognizing that the position of Tai Gong, who holds a line and is fishing, is “beside a thatched cottage.”
To cite another example, *Huangshi Gong Sanlüe* «黃石公三略» reads, “聖王御世，觀盛衰度得失，而為之訓” ([When] sagacious emperors control the world, [they] observe [its] rise [and] fall, [and] consider [its] advantages [and] disadvantages, thus making its rules). The Xixia version renders this portion as ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ (sagacious emperors ② to observe rise and fall ③ to consider its advantages and disadvantages ④ namely ⑤ is emperors’ duties = ① [For] sagacious emperors, ② to observe rise and fall, ③ to consider advantages and disadvantages, ④ namely, ⑤ are emperor’s duties). The Xixia version appears to be more readily comprehensible than the original.29

B. Examination of Chapter 16, “Life Span of the Thus Come One”

Next, let me examine passages from chapter 16, “Life Span of the Thus Come One,” that have varying degrees of complication.

(2) Chinese 我説燃燈佛等 又復言其 入於涅槃 (I have spoken about the Buddha Burning Torch and others, and described how they entered nirvana.) Watson 226

Xixia 嘗做燃梵或鞍 善善善善善 善善善善善 I consider that the Buddha Burning Torch and others entered nirvana, too.

The two sentences (14 characters) in Chinese are translated into one sentence (10 characters) in Xixia, which makes the meaning rather more obscure. It is certain that the subject of the verb /glottalstop/sì “consider” (the last character), is “I” (the first character). The words, tefi (L36) nǐ (R61) thuñ (L17) (the Buddha Burning Torch 燃燈佛 Dipamkara tathāgata) and nīefi (R35) -pun (L24) (nirvāṇa 涅槃), are fixed terms.

(3) Chinese 如是皆以 方便分別 (All this I employed as an expedient means to make distinctions.) Watson 226

Xixia 嘗做箇軒後箇箇箇箇箇 I am who have preached all in accordance with an expedient means.

This is an example of translation of a Chinese verbal sentence into a Xixia nominal sentence, utilizing the equational type of sentence: “…箇箇箇箇箇箇箇” (…is …). The Xixia version has no verb corresponding to the main verb fenbie 分別 in the Chinese original. tefi (R10) means “all,” “everything.” In Xixia the verb rir²-tshitefi “to preach” with prefix A
attached is used. The translation of *fangbian* 方便 *tšêr* (rising tone form of L78) -ʔyū (R2), is a fixed term.

(4) Chinese 若有衆生 来至我所 我以佛眼 觀其信等 諸根利鈍
隨所應度 去處自說 名字不同 年紀大小 亦復現言
當入涅槃

(If there are living beings who come to me, I employ my Buddha eye to observe their faith and to see if their other faculties are keen or dull, and then depending upon how receptive they are to salvation, I appear in different places and preach to them under different names, and describe the length of time during which my teachings will be effective. Sometimes when I make my appearance I say that I am about to enter nirvana.…) Watson 226

Xixia 刻現 靠現 頭頭相相 相相相相 相相相相 相相相相 相相相相 相相相相 相相相相 相相相相 相相相相

(If living beings appear in my place, I employ my Buddha eye to observe their faith and to see if their other faculties are keen or dull, and liberate them [from suffering] appropriately responding [to their receptivity]. I [appear] in different places and preach [them] different names, and describe the length of the teachings’ time span (身歲 小大). Afterward, I sometimes say that I am about to enter nirvana.)

In general, the Xixia version appears to be a verbatim translation from the Chinese, using four-character phrases (with the exception of one six-character phrase). Closely examined, however, in Xixia there is no equivalent for *xian* 現 of 亦復現言 當入涅槃 (sometimes when I make my appearance I say that I am about to enter nirvana). As the verb “to enter” has a correspondent form with first pronoun, one can understand that this sentence is an agent’s view sentence. Its pronoun ŋɑ/hhooktop “I” corresponds with the subject (agent) ŋɑ/hhooktop, which appears earlier as the fifth character (both of ŋɑ/hhooktop are underlined).

The order of arrangement is standard: verbal stem, pronoun and future tense postposition. The equivalents of 名字不同 (under different names) and 年紀 (身歲 大小 小大) (the length of time) have the same meanings in both versions. But 隨所應度 (depending upon how receptive they are) is translated in Xixia as “liberate them [from suffering] appropriately responding [to their receptivity].” 衆生 (living beings) is a fixed term. Both 度脱 (liberate ~ [from suffering]) and 演説 (preach) are listed in Tongyin «同音».
(5) Chinese

(The Thus Come One observes how among living beings there are those who delight in a little Law, meager in virtue and heavy with defilement. For such persons I describe how in my youth I left my household and attained anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. But in truth the time since I attained Buddhahood is extremely long, as I have told you.) Watson 226

Xixia

(The Thus Come One observes how among living beings there are those who love and enjoy a little Law, meager in virtue and heavy with defilement. For this reason, I said, I immediately left my household and attained anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, but in truth since I attained Buddhahood, I have spent these [long] times.)

In the Xixia version, one finds no nominative and accusative indications, and hardly any case postpositions with the exception of the locative-ablative postposition, ˱qı (R14), in “since I attained Buddhahood.”

The Xixia version has no equivalent of the Chinese 少 (in my youth) of 我少出家 (in my youth I left my household). Instead of it, the version reads mi (L30) -rur (L75) (for this reason … immediately), which is a word with a note for mutual use in Tongyin «同音», and is annotated as “means ‘newly,’ ‘immediately,’ ‘from this’” in Wenhai «文海». This word is fairly often used in the Lotus Sutra. The phrase mi-ndefi (R33) means “though ~, nevertheless.” 樂於小法 (delight in a little Law) is translated as “new (dzu (L1)) -ŋwı (L8) (love and enjoy) a little Law.”

The last phrase 久遠若斯 (… is extremely long, as I have told you) is translated as “I have spent these [long] times.” The equivalent of “these” is rendered here not as 雖殫 (thafi-nı but as 雖殫 thafi-ŋwıar (R78). The Xixia ŋwıar “number” shares the same etymology with written Tibetan grangs “number” and written Burmese plural suffix -кра. ŋwıar <ŋgıar

(6) The portion concerning the parable of the skilled physician is rendered as follows:

Chinese 諸子於後 欽他毒藥 業發悶乱 宍轉于地

(After he has gone, the children drink some kind of poison that makes them distraught with pain and they fall writhing to the ground.) Watson 228
Xixia 被毒 被兇媚僵 被藥魅勝 並藥毒見
(The children drank poison. The poison worked to make them distraught with pain and they fell writhing to the ground.)

The Chinese 於後 (after [he has gone]) and 他 (some) of 他毒藥 (some kind of poison) are omitted in the Xixia version. 毒發 the poison makes) is rendered as “the poison worked” in Xixia. The Xixia word ndɔ(hooktop “poison” has two kind of tones, i.e., level and rising tones. Though it is not clear what kind of actual difference exists between the two, the latter is used here.

ndɔ (R42) poisonous herb (food poison) composed of a left hand radical “grass”

ndɔ (L49) snake venom; to concern

In any case, the word shares the same etymology with Chinese du 毒 (poison), written in Tibetan as dug (poison) and in Burmese a-tɔk (poison).

The syllable tɔ of ndɔ-tɔ (poisonous matter) (L67) means “food.” In addition, I refer to 貌 ndɔn (R63) “to give poison” (Xiaozizhuan «孝子傳»). The word mufi (R25) -miefi (L39) (糜亂 distraught with pain) is listed in Tongyin. The Xixia characters mufi (糜) and hliﬁ (麤) appear to be similar, but they are different characters, respectively.

mufi (R25) “to be distraught” (2B7)
hliﬁ (R10) “to bury” (47A2)

mufi (R?) -ædʒ’e (31) “to fall writhing to the ground” is also registered as an entry in Tongyin.

(7) Chinese 是時其父 還來歸家 諸子飲毒 或失本心 或不失者

(At that time the father returns to his home and finds that his children have drunk poison. Some are completely out of their minds, while others are not. Seeing their father from far off, all are overjoyed and kneel down and entreat him, saying: “How fine that you have returned safely. We were stupid and by mistake drank some poison. We beg you to cure us and let us live out our lives!”) Watson 228

Xixia 朝殺 餓鯤鯤賦 餓鯤鯤賦 餓鯤鯤賦 餓鯤鯤賦 餓鯤鯤賦 餓鯤鯤賦 餓鯤鯤賦 餓鯤鯤賦 餓鯤鯤賦 餓鯤鯤賦 餓鯤鯤賦
At that time the father returned and came to his home. His children had drunk poison. For this reason, some had lost their sanity, while others had not lost their sanity. Seeing their father from far off and being overjoyed, all kneeled down with respect and asked him, saying: “You have safely returned, haven’t you? Because of stupidity, we have drunk poison.” When they said: “We only hope that you will help and cure us, letting us be bestowed our lives,…"

Most of this part of the Xixia version is rendered in four-character phrases with the exception of the portions equivalent to shishi 是時, zhushi 諸子, huo or tššio (L57) and huo or. The verbs loh (L48) 與 “to return,” lč (R54) 來 “to come,” thlǐ (L11) 飲 “to drink,” zût (R52) 失 “to lose” and kžiɔ (R5) 赐 “to bestow” have prefix A, and are expressed in the perfect aspect. Nominatives and accusatives are not accompanied by postpositions. Only the locative is concomitant with the postposition ndɔ (R42). The morpheme kw of kw (L69) mbɪʊf (L7) “to kneel down with respect” is probably a loanword from Chinese gui 跪. The portion “You have safely nɔ (R42) -ndɛ (R30) 安居 returned, haven’t you?” is an agent’s view sentence, but the subject expressed by a noun (i.e., “the father”) corresponding to “you” of “haven’t you” doesn’t exist nearby.

The first syllable ləw 唯 “only” of the portion ləw (L43) -ti (L67) 唯唯 “only hope” has the same form as ləw “one”; they probably share the same morpheme. The syllable nŋʊf (R6) 要 “to cure” is a loanword from Chinese jiu 救. It is similar to the Xixia equivalent of jing 敬 “to respect,” but it has a different form.

ḵər (R6) “to save” (from Chinese 救, etc.) [above says ‘cure’]

rɛ (R66) “to respect” (cf. WrT. zhe-sa “honorific,” “salute”; WrB. ʁou “to respect”)

The verb kžiɔ (R5) 赐 “to bestow” takes causative form as kžiɔ -wi.

(8) Chinese 父見子等 苦患如是 依諸経方 求好藥草 色香美味
皆悉具足 擇師和合 與子令服
(“The father, seeing his children suffering like this, follows various prescriptions. Gathering fine medicinal herbs that meet all the requirements of color, fragrance and flavor, he grinds, sifts and mixes them together. Giving a dose of these to his children,…"

Watson 228
The father saw his children undergoing suffering like this. Then, following various prescriptions, he gathered fine medicinal herbs that meet all the requirements of good color, fragrance and flavor, and ground, sifted and mixed them together, giving a dose to his children.

In these Xixia sentences, nominative and accusative are not accompanied by postpositions, but only the last phrase includes the dative postposition יֵיֵנֲיָ.

The portion וְהָלֶה(?) -וְהָלֶה (R33) “undergoing suffering” expresses the progressive aspect, cf. WrB. -וֹ-נֵי; תְּשִׁיע (L68) רֹא “medicine” cf. Lolo (馬努); (馬努) סֵּנ (武定) סֵּנ; ל (R9) סְט “fragrance”; וִי (L67) סְט “flavor” loanword from Chinese וּס; רֹג (R56) סְט “fine” cf. WrB: כְּנָג-, Naxi (納西語): כְּנָג, Qiang (羌): כְּנָג. Each form enables the supposition of etymological derivatives or loanwords.

The word תָּדוּו (R42) -תָּדוּו (R10) כְּנָג “all” is probably a derivative sharing a common etymological origin with WrT. תָּדָה-כְּנָג. The verb תָּדו (L47) -תָּדו “to pound,” “to grind” is a loanword from Chinese וּדַו. The verbs תָּדו (L1) תָּדו “to sift” and חָלֶה (L58) חָלֶה “to mix” exhibit a causative form by tightened vowel, as well as תָּדו (L67) “to dose.” The verb תָּדו “to sift” is probably a derivative sharing a common etymological origin with WrB. תָּדו “to sift.”

確認 תָּדו (L67) “to cause to drink” “to dose.” חָלֶה (L58) 합 “to mix” חָלֶה (L1) 합 “to drink” 합 (L1) 합 “to be mixed together”

C. Examination of Chapter 8, “Prophecy of Enlightenment for Five Hundred Disciples”

Let me continue examining slightly longer passages from the parable of the jewel sewn in the poor man’s robe, which is related in chapter 8, “Prophecy of Enlightenment for Five Hundred Disciples.”

(9) Chinese ①我等 ②応得③如来 ④智慧⑤而便 ⑥自以 ⑦小智 ⑧為足
(Although we were capable of attaining the wisdom of the Thus Come One, we were willing to content ourselves with petty wisdom.) Watson 150
Xixia

For us of the Thus Come One the wisdom to obtain was reasonable. And also, ourselves petty wisdom by obtaining substitutable for the great [wisdom] regarded [it] as =

For us, to obtain the wisdom of the Thus Come One was reasonable. And also, ourselves by obtaining petty wisdom [we] regarded [it] as substitutable for the great [wisdom].)

Though the Chinese and Xixia versions convey almost the same content, their styles of expression are fairly different from each other. While ①“我等,” ②如来 and ③知識 are unproblematic, ④應得 is translated in Xixia as “to obtain [was] reasonable”. ⑤而等, ⑥自己 and ⑦小智 are translated in Xixia as “⑤ And also, ⑥ ourselves ⑦ by obtaining ⑧ petty wisdom.”

“Obtain” in these two instances is described in twin characters containing the same morpheme. These are written as 求 rir (L79) and 求 rir (R72), level-tone and rising-tone characters, respectively. This may be an alteration caused by the situation. (L/R-R/ → R/L-L/) The Xixia character rir “to obtain,” originally a level tone, changed into a rising tone under the situation of L-L. The altered-tone form is written with a rising tone character. (See additional note 1.)

⑩為足 of the Chinese version is translated as “⑩[we] regarded [it] as ⑪substitutable for the great [wisdom]” in Xixia. 為 nǐ/hooktop (R10) is a terminal postposition whose function is not yet fully understood. In Xixia, there are examples of the usage of 而 nǐ/hooktop-tu/glottalstop-superior (L58) “instead of,” a derivative from 而 nǐ (L4) “to substitute”; Combined with 唱 se (L33) “to count,” it changes into nǐ-še (L58), which is equivalent to 以為 “to consider” in Chinese. This usage often appears in scriptures, including Chang ahan jing 長阿含經.

The next portion is written as follows:

(10) Chinese ①世尊, ②如如 ③人 ④至親友家 ⑤醉酒而臥

(World-Honored One, it was like the case of a man who went to the house of a close friend and, having become drunk on wine, lay down to sleep.) Watson 150

Xixia ①佛anic, ②如如 ③若 ④到 ⑤醉酒臥 ⑥親友家 ⑦臥

(World-Honored One, ② [it was] like ③ [the case of] a man ④ at the house of a close friend ⑤ became drunk and lay down to sleep.) Watson 150
4. 来至朋友家，醉酒而卧 of the Chinese version is translated in Xixia as 

5. “it was like [the case of] a man [who] became drunk at the house of a close friend and lay down to sleep” without equivalents of 至 “went to” and 酒 “[on] wine.” In Xixia the portion 酒而卧 is rendered as “became drunk and lay down”; both 酒 and 卧 take perfect aspect prefixes without taking adverbial form of the verb 酒.

6. ndəfi (R42) indicates location. ndə/hhooktop (R17) and na/hhooktop (L20) are verb prefixes A.

(11) Chinese ①是時 ②親友 ③官事 ④當行

(At that time the friend had to go out on official business.) Watson 150

7. Xixia: ①來至 ②親友 ③官事 ④當行

(At that time ② the close friend ③ on official business ④ to other place ⑤ desired to go … and set out / when = At that time when the close friend desired to go to other place on official business and set out.)

8. nefi (R33) -wį (L67) “close friend”; ③ kon (R47) -ną (R56) “official business”; ④ ndzefi (R33) -lię (R68) “other place”; ⑤ šči (L29) -kię (R53) “to desire to go”; kię is an auxiliary verb of desire. Cf. WrB. - khyang.

Both ①與 ndzefi (R42) and ⑤ 留 mbefi (R33) are used with little distinction for denoting “time.” In this portion, 8 Chinese characters are translated into 13 Xixia characters.

(12) Chinese ①以無價 ②寶珠 ③繫其衣裳與之 ④而去

(He took a priceless jewel, sewed it in the lining of the man’s robe, and left it with him when he went out.) Watson 150

9. Xixia ①來去 ②寶珠 ③繫其衣裳與之 ④而去

(①priceless ② one piece of jewel ③ the drunk man’s ④ in … pocket ⑤ [he] made … be kept = [He] made a priceless jewel be held in the drunk man’s pocket.)

10. pi lararası (L59) -mefi (L36) “priceless”; ② biźi (L69) -źi (R60) “jewel”; ③ tągi (R28) “one certain,” unmarked accusative; ④ thafi (L20) “that,” la (R15) -męić (R68) “drunk man”; ⑤ ye (L36) “‘s” is a genitive postposition; ⑥ phon (L54) “pocket” ʔu (R1) “in”; ⑦ tši (L2) -wi (L10) “to make ~ hold [or be held],” “to make ~ be had [or have]”; -wi is a causative postposition. The portion in Chinese “繫 … 与” is rendered in Xixia as “to make ~ hold,” and the place of holding is “in the pocket.”
The Xixia word equivalent to the Chinese “而去” does not exist in the translation. The Chinese portion with 13 characters is rendered in Xixia with 14 characters.

(13) Chinese ①其人醉卧 ②都不覺知③起已 ④遊行 ⑤到於⑥他國
(The man was asleep drunk and knew nothing about it. When he got up, he set out on a journey to other countries.) Watson 150–151
Xixia ① PROC ② PROC ③ PROC ④ PROC ⑤ PROC ⑥ PROC
(1) The drunken man ② knew nothing. ③ [He] got up ④ afterward, various countries ⑤ traveled, [and] = The drunk man knew nothing. [He] got up, [and] afterward, traveled various countries, [and])

\(1\) la (R15) -\(dz\)i\(f\)i (R44) “drunk man”; \(2\) mi (L30) -\(dz\)a\(ŋ\) (L27) “to know nothing”; \(3\) \(\text{f}\)a\(fi\) (R?) -\(mi\) (R7) -\(ti\) (R60) “get up and”; \(4\) ni\(o\) (L57) “afterward,” ri\(ur\) (L76) hle\(fi\) (R?) “various countries” (unmarked); \(5\) thu\(w\) (R19) -\(dz\)e\(f\)i (L35) “travel”

(14) Chinese ②為①衣食故④動力求索⑥甚大⑤艱難
(In order to provide himself with food and clothing he had to search with all his energy and diligence, encountering very great hardship) Watson 151
Xixia ① PROC ② PROC ③ PROC ④ PROC ⑤ PROC ⑥ PROC
(1) food and clothing ② because of looking for ③ in various places ④ extended efforts ⑤ very great ⑥ hardship ⑦ endured, [and] = because of looking for food and clothing, [he] extended efforts in various places and endured very great hardship, [and])

\(1\) \(dz\)f\(i\) (R10) -\(ng\)w\(i\) (R10) “food and clothing”; \(2\) \(ri\)\(u\) (R2) “to look for,” ni\(o\) (L57) “therefore,” “for”; \(3\) \(ri\)\(ur\) (L76) - \(ri\)\(ur\) “various”; cf. WrT. re-re; \(4\) n\(te\) (L9) tsr\(a\) (L77) “to sell ability,” “to be employed and work,” “to lend power” (Xiaozi chuan «孝子傳»); \(5\) \(n\)\(te\) (L9) -\(xi\)\(e\) (L74) “difficult undertaking”; \(6\) \(dz\)e\(f\)i (L35) “very great”; \(7\) la (R15) “to endure.”

(15) Chinese ①若少②有所得③便以為足
(making do with what little he could come by.) Watson 151
Xixia ① PROC ② PROC ③ PROC
(1) a very little ② [he] obtained fortune ③ regarded it as enough = [he] obtained a very small amount of fortune and regarded it as enough.)
(16) Chinese ①於後①親友③會遇見之⑤而作是言
(Later, the close friend happened to meet him by chance. The
friend said.) Watson 151
Xixia ①脗熒②脗熒脗熒③脗熒④脗熒⑤脗熒
(1) Later ② with the close friend ③ [he] met ～ by chance ④ [the
friend] scolded and ⑤ said, = Later, [he] met with the close friend
by chance. [The friend] scolded and ⑤ said.)

(17) Chinese 嗨哉①丈夫③何為 ④衣食乃至 ⑤如是
(How absurd, old fellow! Why should you have to do all this for
the sake of food and clothing?) Watson 151
Xixia ①娀②娀③娀娀④娀娀娀娀⑤娀娀⑥娀娀⑦娀娀
(1) You ② now ③ why, ④ for seeking after food and clothing ⑤
such ⑥ hardships ⑦ suffer, —you = Now, why do you suffer such
hardships, for seeking after food and clothing? Do you?)

(18) Chinese ①我②昔④欲令 ③汝得安樂 ⑤欲 ⑥自恣
(In the past I wanted to make certain you would be able to live in
ease and satisfy the five desires, and so) Watson 151
Xixia ①娀 ②娀 ③娀 ④娀 ⑤娀 ⑥娀 ⑦娀
(1) I ② in the past ③ [hoped to] make you live in ease and ④
the five desires ⑤ freely ⑥ [I] wished you would enjoy ⑦ and so = In
the past I hoped to make you live in ease, and I wished you would
enjoy freely the five desires, and so)
(19) Chinese  
(19) Chinese  
(on such-and-such a day and month and year I took a priceless jewel and sewed it in the lining of your robe.) Watson 151

Xixia  
(1) such-and-such a month and year  
(2) at such-and-such a day’s daytime one piece of priceless jewel / made [you] hold inside of your pocket / —to you = at such-and-such a day’s daytime [in] such-and-such a month and year, [I] made [you] hold one piece of priceless jewel inside of your pocket. To you.)

(20) Chinese  
(20) Chinese  
(It must still be there now. But you did not know about it, and fretted and wore yourself out trying to provide a living for yourself. What nonsense!) Watson 151

Xixia  
(1) such-and-such a month and year  
(2) at such-and-such a day’s daytime one piece of priceless jewel / made [you] hold inside of your pocket / —to you = at such-and-such a day’s daytime [in] such-and-such a month and year, [I] made [you] hold one piece of priceless jewel inside of your pocket. To you.)
seek for back and throat (food and clothing). You are truly foolish — you [are].

① thi (R28) -wifi (R27) “from now,” “just now”; ② mi or2 (L90) “presently,” “actually” [there is]; ③ see p. 74, Portion 13 item ②; ④ tį (L67) -žį (L67) “pain” ⑤ wi or2 (L90) -n=efi2 (L36) “back and throat,” equivalent to Chinese 自活 (to live for oneself); this is a peculiar expression in Xixia indicating “clothing and food” (= food and clothing): ⑥ kū (L59) -yi=c̣̃ (R44) “to seek for”; ⑦ yi=c̣̃ is a B-stem of ɣi yiuu (R2); nafī is the affix pronoun of an agent’s view sentence corresponding with the subject; ⑧ ta (L20) is a postposition representing nominative or indicating the topic; ⑨ žufi (R25) “foolish,” ɣi e (L34) “truly”; ⑩ mi/hhooktop (L11) -me/hhooktop (L36) “there is no lacking”; The portion of 18 Chinese characters are translated into the equivalent of 17 Xixia characters.

6. Conclusion

As clarified in the above examples, the Xixia version of the Lotus Sutra has a fairly established writing form. It is surmised that the Xixia text of
the sutra represents a writing style that had developed beyond the formative stage of the written Xixia language, having improved remarkably through the process of translating a great amount of Buddhist scriptures. There are clear and frequent examples in this sutra of the agent’s (subject) view sentence and the patient-beneficiary’s (object) view sentence, which are determined by the alternative use of two (A and B) stems of verbs. There are also many clear examples of variance. I regard the Xixia version of the Lotus Sutra as a material with morphological characteristics—reflecting aspects of tribal dialects—representing the written Xixia language in the golden age of the Tangut dynasty.

Notes

1 In the 11th century, many languages belonging to the Tibetan group 藏語系 and the Yi-Burmese group 彝語系 were distributed in the Xixia state and its neighboring areas, but the major tribal groups including Qiang 羌族, Jiarong 嘉戎族 and Pumi 普米族 did not create their own written languages. It was probably because the influence of the Tibetan language that had been sustained by the Tufan 吐番 dynasties since the 7th century was so strong. The same is true of the writing system. The Xixia state built by Li Yuanhao 李元昊 withdrew from the Tibetan influence and created the Xixia language, i.e., their unique written language. The Dangxiang (or Tangut) dialects 党項語 (spoken languages of Dangxiang (or Tangut) Qiang tribes 党項羌族) provided a grand basis for the creation of the Xixia language.

Since at least the 8th century, perhaps long before that, the Xixia area had been a multilingual region where Chinese (Northwestern dialects), Tibetan, and other languages were distributed. It is thought that the Xixia people spoke either Amdo or Khams Tibetan dialect in addition to Chinese.

2 There is no ethnic group called the Xixia. The Xixia people called themselves 西夏人 or [Western] Xia people. Just as all China’s nationalities and ethnic groups are today called “the Chinese” 中国人 (literally Central Nation people), the Xixia 夏人 referred comprehensively to all the constituent ethnic groups of their state including the Mi and Minyak tribes as the “Xiaren” 西夏人, Xia people. Such correspondence of the self-name, or term of national identity, in these two cases shows a characteristic of tribal languages [vis-à-vis the common national language], and has a significant meaning for research into the structure of the Xixia language itself.

3 Besides them, 髳 hli (R10) were also used. Both of them have a left radical derived from the Chinese character 夏, probably because they might have belonged to the dialects of some other influential tribes.


5 Nishida, 「西夏の仏教について」(On the Buddhism in Xixia.)『南都仏教』(Buddhism in the Southern Capital, Todaiji, Nara), 1969; 「西夏王国の言語と文化」(The Lan-
According to the *Yuanshi* (History of the Yuan Dynasty), the Hexi Dazangjing (Hexi Tripitaka) was published five times from the sixth year of Dade 太德 to the first year of Huangqing 黄慶 of the ruler Ren Zong 仁宗 (*Cheng Zong ji* 成宗紀).

6 See Nishida, [*The Hsi-Hsia Avatamsaka sûtra*] (II, Faculty of Letters, Kyoto University, postscript, miscellaneous notes on the Xixia translation of scriptures, 1976.

7 Nishida, *Xixia Inscriptions in the Large Script* and *Xixia Inscriptions in the Small Script* (*Juyong-guan*), edited by Jiro Murata, Faculty of Engineering, Kyoto University, 1958.


9 See note 8.

10 Regarding the life of the Xixia language, I hope to explain in detail at another opportunity. It will be an onerous job, especially because careful examination of various documents is required in order to describe the history of the Xixia state during the Hexi period up to the 13th century. Roughly speaking, there were two lineages in the style of the Xixia language.

(1) Simple style: Prefixes of the two series (二系列) are used frequently. Each verb consists of one stem; there is no postpositional pronoun. We do not find the two kinds of view sentences whose corresponding relations are different from each other.

(2) Complex style: Prefixes of the two series are used. Many verbs consist of two stems. There are two kinds of view sentences whose corresponding relations are different, corresponding to their postpositional personal pronouns.

The former is the pseudo-Chinese style, which developed as a well-refined written language. It was used for inscriptions and official documents and commonly employed for the translation of Buddhist texts. The latter is considered to have been used for the translation of Buddhist texts, as a writing style that reflects features of tribal languages.

11 In the Xixia language, there are not a few cases where meanings are distinguished by the difference between two characters which are phonetically identical. For example:

- 老人 old man 耄 mafi (L 20) 푹 (R51)
- 耄 aged animal 耄 mafi (L 20) 푹 (R51)

The same morpheme 푹 is written in different ways according to the meaning, i.e., “human being” and “animal.” Both mafi and 푹 mean “aged.” (Cf. WrB. профессионалом “to become aged”)

12 I first proposed this concept in the 1997 article *A New Concept of Xixia Characters*. In 1998, I put forward a new term “twin characters” 双生字 the article *Characteristics of Xixia Characters* (湛幽論文 shen yang article), which was included in Nishida, *Xixia Language and Characters* (*New Theory in Xixia Language Studies* Kyoto, 1998.


15 The existence of repeated forms in the subgroup of level tones 平声調小類の重出調
becomes a problem. The reason I mention the morphological perspective here is that from examples such as the correspondence between \( \text{mbe}/\text{hooktop} (\text{R33}) \) “high” and \( \text{mbε}/\text{underdot} (\text{L61}) \) “heighten,” I once thought that the latter should be revised as \( \text{mbe}/\text{underdot} \). Later, however, I found that there are the same kind examples of exchange of \(-e/h\text{hooktop}\) and \(-ε/h\text{hooktop}\) between prefix series \( \text{A} \) and \( \text{B} \), and concluded that in the Xixia language \(-e\) and \(-ε\) were able to exchange optionally under certain conditions. I am now reconsidering the revision of the first idea of converting \( \text{mbe}/\text{hooktop} \) to \( \text{mbε} \).

There also remains another research subject of examining the possibility that the system of \( \text{Wenhai} (\text{Baoyun}) \) “文海 (寶雲)” may have integrated the grammatical systems of the Xixia tribal languages. Cf. Nishida, 竹田（西夏語文法新探）(A New Research of the Grammar of the Xixia Language), 漢藏語言研究；鸞鶴城先生七秩壽慶論文集 “Studies on Sino-Tibetan Languages, Papers in Honor of Professor Hwang-Cherng Gong on his Seventieth Birthday,” Taipei, 2004.

There are cases of inconsistency between explanations in \( \text{Wenhai} (\text{Baoyun}) \) “文海 (寶雲)” and actual usages in the documents. For example, \( \text{hl}/\text{superscript/iundotted˘u} \) is used with the meaning of “ten days” in \( \text{Liutao} (\text{六韬}) \) and other literatures, but the entry (L59) in the \( \text{Wenhai} \) has no explanation about it. See Nishida, 竹田（西夏語語法通冊と撰製書）(The Sixty-four Hexagrams and Manuals on Acupuncture and Moxibustion in Hsi-Hsia Translation). "三交宮殿下米壽記念講義集” “Collected Articles and Essays in Honour of His Imperial Highness Prince Mikasa on the Occasion of His Eighty-Eighth Birthday,” Tokyo, 2004.

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The expression with five Xixia characters is adopted as it appears in a five-character verse portion. In ordinary prose expressions, the term would be written with two characters 非難. See additional note 2.

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27 See Nishida, 「西夏文書屬性」 (The Hsi-Hsia Avatamsaka Sûtra) I, II, and III, Faculty of Letters, Kyoto University, 1975–77.

28 In 「金剛經密誦威德品」 (A Story of Expiation by Penance on the Diamond[-like Perfection of Wisdom] Sutra), there are examples in which these two words are used as singular.

29 All the text of the Xixia version of 「金剛經密誦威德品」 (Three Strategies of Huang Shigong) is a nonliteral translation, so that there are portions that don’t exhibit character-to-character correspondence. The meanings of these are not easy to grasp.

30 In 「千手千眼觀音菩薩說陀羅尼經」 (Thousand-armed and Thousand-eyed Bodhisattva Perceiver of the World’s Sounds Dharm) Sutra), “the poison of snakes and insects” is written with the level-tone character 亀 (L49); and “the poison of poisonous weeds” with the rising-tone character 色 (R42), thus there is distinction between them. In 「七佛八菩薩說陀羅尼經」 (Seven Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas Dharm Sutra), there are several instances of “the poison,” all of which are level-tone characters.

31 The character form of this font is wrong. The radical is not 非 of radical 153, 門 section, but the radical of 色 section (the same radical with 色 “seek”). It is included in 「同音 Tongyin, old edition, 19B5, and new edition, 20A6.

32 See Nishida, 「言中とどけ」 「西夏王国の言語と文化」 ("Back and Throat," The Language and Culture of the Kingdom of Xixia), p. 278ff.

Additional Notes

1. As tone change occurred regularly in the Xixia colloquialism, the Xixia people created particular characters denoting tone-change forms. Besides the above-mentioned instance, 根 (level-tone character) and 色 (rising-tone character), there is an example of 部 (low "class," which was originally a compound of consecutive level-tone characters, but changed to another compound of a level-tone character and a rising-tone character; thus the variant form was in many cases denoted with the variant form, 既. An example of this kind of tone-change in colloquialism is 根 簡 "dzzi zhambifi mbëe sefi" 人有高下 “human beings have classes” in Zhangzhong zhu «掌中珠» and another in the Lotus Sutra, “In that saha-world, there are [difference between] high and low and [people are] not equal.” “High and low” in this sentence is described not with 簡, but with 根 (level-tone character and rising-tone character). This is exactly a reflection of colloquialism.

By means of distinctions in the characters, the Xixia people devised their own way to describe some linguistic phenomena that the Chinese characters do not. They identified the contrast between tones, the tone change, the difference of parts of speech, and conjugations by character forms. This could be said to be a significant revolution in a family of ideography that had been developed under the influence the Chinese characters, which was comparable to the creation of Japanese syllabaries, hiragana and katakana.

2. The above-mentioned Xixia fractional numbers (referred to in 4. The Systematic Classification of the Xixia Vocabulary) do not accord with the Tibetan counterparts. The way of expressing “numeral Y per numeral X” appears to be close to the following examples from dialects of 羌語 Qiangyu (桃坪 Taoping), 普米語 Pumiyu, 阿僑語 Anongyu, 傈僳語 Lisuyu and 鎮那門巴語 Cuona Menbayu:

Qiangyu ɗy15 xdʒo33 ɗə11 xdʒo33 one quarter

Pumiyu ɓy35 ɗƏ15 ɗu11 ɓy35 one-third

Anongyu som33 ɗu113 kha31 ɗu113 thu55 one-third

Lisuyu ɗ31 shvi44 ɗu31 ɗuə31 ɗu31 five-twentieth

Cuona Menbayu sum33 ko11 ɗən33 ɗki11 the ɗ753 one-third

In the fragments of a scripture related to the large hand mudras (the name of which is unidentified) collected by Aurel Stein, there are the expressions of “one-third” and “two-thirds.” These expressions using the verb phə˘e (R18) “to open,” “to solve” are thought to be fractional numbers. They may be translations from Tibetan.

Written Tibetan ɡsum cha cig 三分之一 one-third

Maqu Amdo colloquialism bsəm tɕi thi 三分之二 two-thirds

Cf. Haniyu sə35 bɨ35 tɕi31 bɨ35 one-third

Jinuoyu ɕə44 pə44 thɨ44 pə44 one-third

3. Juan 5 [of the Xixia Lotus Sutra published in 2005] was probably printed with movable type xylography since several characters in the text are upside down. It is also very probable that juan 7 was printed with movable type, as big and small characters are mixed and the surface of the print has been corrected in places.

Bibliographical Note

The Chinese text of the Lotus Sutra is based on 塩本幸雄 (Yukio Sakamoto) and 岩本 祥 (Yutaka Iwamoto),『法華経』上, 中, 下 (The Lotus Sutra, vols. 1, 2 and 3) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1968); the Xixia text on Tatsuo Nishida (西田龍雄), ed., Xixia Version of the Lotus Sutra from the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of...

The examples of modern Tibetan-Burmese dialects referred to in the notes are cited from Sun Hongkai, «Qiangyu jianzhi» (Qiangyu jianzhi; A Brief Survey on the Qiang Language) and Gezhong yuyan jianzhi (Brief Surveys on Various Languages) (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe), and Huang Bufan, «Zang Meng yuzu yuyan cihui» (A Tibeto-Burman Lexicon) (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu xueyuan chubanshe, 1992). The examples of the Anong language and the Maqu dialect of the Tibetan language are cited from Liu Guangkun, «A Study of the Anong language» (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2005) and Zhou Maocao, «A Study of the Maqu Dialect of the Tibetan Language» (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2003), respectively.