

Abstract No 51

A Linguistic Classification of Buddhist Sanskrit Lexical Borrowings in Chinese

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Sanskrit and Chinese are two genetically unrelated languages from two different language families. Sanskrit is an Indo-Aryan language whereas Chinese is a Sino-Tibetan language. These two languages came into strong contact with the introduction of Buddhism and the translation of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese. Accordingly, a number of Sanskrit words used in Buddhist domains entered the Chinese lexicon. These Buddhist Sanskrit borrowings are of two types. One type of these words refers to spiritual practices, or abstract ideas which are not native to China. The other type refers to material or concrete things which are not found in the Chinese culture. This study was conducted to perform a full-fledged linguistic classification of these Buddhist Sanskrit borrowings. Data for the study were collected from Guoyu Ribao's *Loanwords Dictionary* (1985) which contains 112 Sanskrit loanwords found in Chinese. The loanword classification criteria proposed by Einor Haugen (1950) and C. F. Hockett (1958) have been employed for the data analysis. Thus, four major categories of borrowings have been recognised as: (1). Foreign Words/ Adopted Borrowings - e.g.: शरीर > 舍利子, (2). Loan Words/ Adapted Borrowings - e.g.: भिक्षु > 必刍, (3). Loan Blends/ Semi-adopted Borrowings - e.g.: बोधिदम > 菩提树, and (4). Calques/ Semantic Borrowings - e.g.: लोकधातु > 世界. Several conclusions were drawn from this classification. Most of the Buddhist Sanskrit borrowings in Chinese are Loan Words, i.e., Sanskrit words induced into Chinese with various formal alterations to assure compliance with Chinese phonology. The second largest category of borrowings is Calques, i.e. literary translations of Sanskrit words into Chinese. Foreign Words and Loan Blends are relatively fewer in number and less frequent in occurrence.

Keywords: *Buddhist Sanskrit, Buddhist scriptures, Chinese, language contact, lexical borrowing*