

Abstracts

This volume contains the full texts of the papers of the conference *The Eastern Thought in the Estonian Language: Translations and Interpretations*, held in Tartu on 27–28 April 2012. It starts with the foreword by Märt Läänemets, President of the Estonian Oriental Society, entitled “Oriental Studies as the Art of Translation and Interpretation“. The foreword focuses on the importance of translation of source texts as the very basis of research in classical Oriental studies. In Estonia, the field formed fairly recently, in the 1960–1970s, when the first translations from original classical languages (Sanskrit, Pali, Classical Chinese, Persian) were completed and published by Linnart Mäll (1938–2010) and Haljand Udam (1936–2005). By now, the circle of translations and languages translated has significantly widened and a new generation of translators has grown up.

History of Oriental Thought in Estonia: Translations and Interpretations. Conference of the XXIV Days of Oriental Studies, Tartu 27–28 April 2012 Summaries of conference presentations

TARMO KULMAR. On Linnart Mäll’s early translations

Linnart Mäll is primarily remembered for his major translations into Estonian — of *Dhammapada*, *Bhagavadgītā*, *Bodhitšarjāvatāra*, *Šukasaptati*, *Daodejingi* and *Lunyu*. His first translations were published as early as in 1969.

Spring 1969 saw the publication of *The Twenty-five Tales of the Vampire*, an early medieval Indian frame story, translated in cooperation with Uku Masing (prose by L. Mäll, verses by U. Masing). This was the first extensive work translated directly from a classical Indian language into Estonian and a grand overture to Mäll’s further translations of Oriental classics. The translator’s thoroughgoing commentary provides valuable additions for understanding the book and ample information on Indian Hinduist culture, thus being an encyclopaedic overview of the history of Indian literature and religion, which was new for the Estonian reader in those times.

A few months later, in autumn 1969, the second book translated by Linnart Mäll came out — *The World is Tired to Hate*, a selection of quotes from Mahatma Gandhi. The rendering of the thoughts of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the

leader of the Indian non-violent independence movement, became possible in the conditions of totalitarian ideological pressure largely due to the friendly relations between the Soviet Union and India at that time. Mäll also wrote a foreword for the brochure where he summarises Gandhi's biography, describes Gandhi's understanding of god, being human, obligations and ethic. He explains Gandhi's methods of struggle — *ahimsā* or nonviolent struggle and *satyāgraha* or the insistence on truth, the application of which by Gandhi as the leader of India's independence movement finally led to independence of India in 1947.

These translations by Linnar Mäll brought about an explosion of "unhealthy interest" (in the Soviet phraseology) in Oriental studies among the independently thinking Estonian intellectuals, particularly the students of Tartu, which, in its turn, caused great headache for the Soviet authorities.

URMAS NÕMMIK. **Bible and myth, translation and interpretation**

The translating of biblical texts is always a challenging undertaking. This article advocates a possible alternative translation of the Bible which, in contrast to and in discussion with the standard translations, takes into account the religious historical background of several notions, names and expressions. Offering translations for passages from Genesis 6:1–4; 19:15, 23–26; 28:11–13, 16–22; 32:25–27, 30–32; Numbers 24:15–16; Job 5:17–18; 7:11–12; 38:12–13, 16–17, and Isaiah 14:9, 12–14; 27:1; 28:18, religious historical coordinates and ways of translating for following notions are given: *ēlohīm* "God / gods", *yhwh* "Yahweh", *ēlōah* "Eloah", *šaddaj* "Shadday / the Almighty", *ēl* "El / God", *šahar* "Shahar / dawn / god of the dawn", *šemeš* "Shemesh / sun / the sun-god", *šə'ōl* "Sheol / underworld / god of the underworld", *mōt* "Mot / god of death", and *yam* "Yam / the sea god". Alternative translations as well as inescapable commentaries on mythological motifs and sometimes rigorous word-plays in the Bible should be made accessible to a broader audience in Estonia and elsewhere.

VLADIMIR SAZONOV. **King Tukulti-Ninurta I: The Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta and some remarks concerning the royal ideology and propaganda of the Middle-Assyrian Kingdom**

The Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta is not such a well-known literary text as, for example, *the Epic of Gilgamesh* or *Enūma eliš*, but it is a very important literary text, especially for those who are dealing with the Middle-Assyrian period. *The Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta* is one of the most important poems that help us understand better the religious and ideological aspects of the Assyrian kingship.

The poem deals with military conflicts between the Kassite kings, who ruled Babylonia, and the Middle-Assyrian kings. It concentrates mostly on the heroic deeds of the Middle Assyrian king Tukulti-Ninurta I and his successful military

campaigns against the Kassites. Being full of Assyrian propaganda, the epic is a very important source for understanding the development of Assyrian geopolitical tendencies and state ideology. The text is partly difficult to understand because we do not have enough sources from the Middle-Assyrian period and the text corpus is very limited.

In the epic the deification and personality cult of King Tukulti-Ninurta I are quite well presented and accentuated. The poem correlates quite well with royal inscriptions from the same period, as the same events are mentioned and the same ideological elements are represented. The style and rhetoric of *The Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta* are very similar to the style of Middle-Assyrian royal inscriptions.

There are many problems and difficulties with this epic.

Firstly, *The Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta* helps us reconstruct quite complicated Assyrian-Babylonian relations and wars between the rising Middle-Assyrian Kingdom and the weakened Kassite Babylonian Kingdom for hegemony over the Near Eastern regions during the 14th–13th centuries BCE.

Secondly, we should not forget that the poem is a very propagandistic text the purpose of which was to glorify the successful Assyrian army and their King Tukulti-Ninurta I and to disparage the Kassites. Therefore, the poem cannot be seen as an adequate historical source. Nevertheless, it is a supportive text for the reconstruction of historical events that took place in this period, because some events mentioned in the royal inscriptions are also presented in the epic.

The third problem is that the epic has survived fragmentarily — many pieces of the text are completely or partly destroyed and, therefore, it is quite difficult to reconstruct the content of the text.

TEET TOOME. Avalokita — saviour or observer?: About bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara's name

The meaning of bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara's name is an ambiguous matter. It has been so from the very beginning of the first texts translated into Chinese and Tibetan where the name was mentioned. It is quite possible that there have been different interpretations of his name since the very beginning of emergence of the mythological figure of Avalokiteśvara. Thus, the name of Avalokiteśvara was there first, and then the text was created according to different interpretations of the name. Quite likely, there were many texts or oral versions explaining his name and the text is a compilation of these explanations.

The paper takes into consideration Alexander von Staël-Holstein's opinion that Avalokita's name (*iśvara* is a mere epithet) can be explained, on the one hand, as 'protector' or 'saviour', on the other hand as 'seeing'. This is followed by the analysis of the 24th chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Being one of the first sources on Avalokiteśvara, the *Lotus Sūtra* presents all this confusion around the

meaning of Avalokiteśvara's name. The sutra describes Avalokiteśvara focussing on two functions of him: his ability to save sentient beings from different troubles and his ability to see or hear the sufferings of sentient beings.

KADRI RAUDSEPP. Reflections on translating the fundamental Buddhist expression *śaraṇaṃ gacchāmi* or *skyabs su mchi* into Estonian

The aim of this article is to rehabilitate the status of 'refuge' ('varjupaik') as a translation equivalent for *śaraṇa* instead of 'protection' ('kaitse') in Estonian. I tried to give evidence that it is not translated so only because of the influence of the English language, as stated in several recent books on Buddhism in Estonia. While analyzing the uses of *śaraṇa* in Sanskrit and Tibetan (very shortly in Chinese and in Japanese), it becomes obvious that *śaraṇa* has aspects related to refuge in the original languages. It should not be taken literally; it is a symbolical use of the language, and the profound meaning of it is that one, after having developed deep faith in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, relies on them completely and having them as support, one can reach the ultimate goal. Both terms — 'varjupaik' and 'kaitse' are passive terms and do not fully express the actual, active meaning of *śaraṇa*. However, taking into account that in the original languages the external meaning is passive, a 'passive' form could be used. Analyzing the uses of 'varjupaik' and 'kaitse' in Estonian, we can see that both words are used often as synonyms in different contexts. Even if 'varjupaik' is used to indicate a place of "lower" origin (like 'shelter for the homeless', etc), it should be noted that in Estonian popular religion, 'varjupaik' has been used to indicate the highest and holiest places, such as groves, where one could find refuge during dangerous times. Noble uses are present in Christian liturgy as well. As in Tibetan there are several words which could be better rendered into Estonian with the word 'protection' and its different forms (such as *mgon po* or *srung ma*; 'chos skyong' is already translated as 'Dharma protector'), I suggest that it is better to adhere to 'refuge' ('varjupaik') for a translation equivalent for the Sanskrit *śaraṇa* or the Tibetan *skyabs*.

MART TŠERNJUK. Zhuangzi: A historiographical overview

Zhuāng Zhōu 莊周 (369–286 BC) was a Chinese philosopher who lived during the Warring States Period (475–221 BC). He is credited as the author of *Zhuāngzi*, a work carrying his own name. This book is considered one of the main texts of philosophical Daoism (the other would be *Dàodéjīng*). *Zhuāngzi* has not been written by one author; it is a compilation of works by different authors rather.

The modern version of the book was compiled into one book by the neo-Daoist philosopher Guō Xiàng 郭象 (252–312 AD) during the Jin 晉 dynasty. This

work, consisting of 33 chapters, is divided into three parts: 1) Inner Chapters (1.–7.); 2) Outer Chapters (8.–22.); 3) Mixed Chapters (23.–33.).

Zhuāngzi has been translated into many languages, but because of its complexity and volume, it is still less known than e.g. the *Dàodéjīng*. Most of the available translations are in English, but it can also be read in Russian, German, French and Spanish.

In Estonia, the research on *Zhuāngzi* is only in its first phase. The first three chapters of the original text have been translated by Jaan Kaplinski (1989) and some important fragments have been published by Märt Läänemets (2001). A complete translation was published in 2006, but it cannot be considered adequate, given that it is an indirect translation via an old German-language publication (R. Wilhelm, 1912).

The main aim of this article is to give a historiographical overview of the *Zhuāngzi*. Some more in-depth analysis is given to the Estonian translations.

GAO JINGYI. On the etymology of the ethnonym China

The present study researches the etymology of the most widespread ethnonym of China (*China* ~ *Sinae* ~ *cīna*). The best-known Qin hypothesis is not totally credible. The ethnonym of China begins with a voiceless affricate in Sanskrit and Persian, but Qin [秦^(Qin/Tân)] should begin with a voiced affricate. (Nevertheless, the Qin hypothesis cannot be totally rejected because there is a possibility that the etymology involved an intermediary language which had neither a voiced affricate nor an aspirated voiceless affricate; in this case, after the intermediary language the term Qin could also begin with an unaspirated voiceless affricate.) Another ethnonym of Old China, Jin [晉^(Jin/Tán)], has become the best candidate, because it begins with an unaspirated voiceless affricate and is phonologically closest to the Sanskrit equivalent *cīna* and the Persian equivalent *čīn* or *čēn*.

Other studies

OTT KURS. Pent Nurmekund and Turkology

Pent Nurmekund (1906–1996) was the greatest Estonian polyglot of all times. He was also engaged in learning and research of Turkic and Mongolic languages. Nurmekund started learning Oriental languages before World War II in Tartu and continued his studies in six European universities, but returned to Estonia when the war broke out. Being imprisoned in Russia at the end of the war (1945–1946), he began to learn new languages and dialects, including Azeri and Uzbek, in difficult conditions. Before returning to Estonia, he went to Tatarstan in 1949 to learn the Volga Tatar language. Having studied Turkish independently

meanwhile, he established, despite great difficulties, the Centre for Orientalistics at the University of Tartu in 1955. He was active there until the autumn of 1983 when Centre was reorganised into the Study Room of Oriental Languages. Among other languages, he taught Turkish from 1958–1976 and Mongolian from 1972–1981. The conferences organised by Nurmekund in Tartu in 1965 and 1965 explored very versatile themes; the second one of them was entitled *Finno-Ugric Peoples and the Orient* and also treated the Finno-Ugrians' contacts with Turks and Mongols. As a listener and presenter, he participated in seven conferences of Turkology held at the then Leningrad University from 1967–1975. Having first visited Kazakhstan in 1958, Nurmekund established close relations with the universities and research centres of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in the early 1960s. In the 1960s, several students of Nurmekund continued their education at Tashkent University, a few also at the Oriental Faculty of Azerbaijan University. To study the Tungan language and its relations with the surrounding Turkic languages, he went on several expeditions, the last of them in autumn 1983, to the Turkic republics of Central Asia. Nurmekund was the editor of six issues (total of seven volumes) of *Oriental Studies* from 1968–1981 and the volume *Studia orientalia et antiqua* (1977) in the Transactions of the University of Tartu.

ANDREAS JOHANDI. **The second column of the Behistun inscription**

The article presents the commented translation of the second column of the Behistun inscription of the Persian King Darius I and describes briefly its historical background. The second column of the inscription continues the descriptions begun in the first column about the uprisings in several parts of the empire and the following punitive expeditions and punishing of the rebel leaders. The wording is repetitive; only the scene of the action and the names of the characters have been changed. Even the punishments are identical — mutilation of the rebel leaders and their later impalement. Obviously, such descriptions have been added mostly for propagandist reasons in order to warn the potential rebels and to glorify Darius as a powerful and legitimate king whose power is steadfast and just. The text also hints that during Darius' reign both his father Hystaspes and grandfather Arsames were still alive, which makes his claim to legitimate power dubious. In its content and form, the text follows the tradition of Mesopotamian royal inscriptions which had its beginning in Sumer of the Early Dynastic Period (ca 2900/2800–2344 BCE); one of their central themes is the mutual intimate relations of the ruler with the highest deity of the Pantheon, who, for the Achae-menids, was Ahumramazda.

