

## **Ancient Tangut manuscripts rediscovered**

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### **1. Original Tangut manuscripts rediscovered**

It is a cause for great joy that, since the appearance of the article by van Driem and Kepping (1991), the original Tangut manuscripts bearing interlinear Tibetan transcriptions, which had been lost for decades, have now been found and returned to the Institute of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg. These ancient manuscripts of inestimable scholarly value were returned to the Institute of Oriental Studies in October, 1991, after the unsuccessful coup attempt of August 19-21, 1991, and the subsequent preventive expurgation of KGB files by its own agents.

The St. Petersburg collection of Tangut manuscripts was originally discovered in 1908 by an expedition of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society led by Pětr Kuz'mič Kozlov concealed inside a *stūpa* (Russian *sūburgan* < Mongolian *sūburyan* 'sepulchre, tomb pyramid for the relics of deified persons' < Sogdian *\*zmrγān* 'sepulchre, tomb') in the ruins of a Tangut city at Khara Khoto in Inner Mongolia. After this hidden Tangut library had been unearthed, the manuscripts were transported to St. Petersburg and taken to the building of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society. Thence they were transferred to the Asiatic Museum. The erstwhile Asiatic Museum and the present-day Institute of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg are one and the same entity.

The manuscript department of the 'Asiatic Museum', as it was called from 1818 to 1929, was housed on the sixth floor<sup>1</sup> of the Library of the Academy of Sciences at Birževaja Linija 1. In 1930 the Asiatic Museum was

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<sup>1</sup> Sixth floor is used here in the Russian and American sense. In Britain and on the Continent outside of Russia, we refer to this as the fifth floor.

incorporated into the newly established 'Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR'. In keeping with the Soviet governmental policy of increasing centralisation, it was decided to move the Institute to Moscow in 1950 in order to physically unite it with its sister institute there. The Pacific Institute was simultaneously dissolved and its personnel transferred to the newly unified Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow. Because it proved unfeasible to transfer the voluminous collections kept in St. Petersburg to Moscow along with the scholarly personnel, the manuscript department remained in Leningrad, as the city was then called, under the name 'Sector of Oriental Manuscripts of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR'. In the wake of the historic 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February, 1956, it was decided to re-establish the Institute in Leningrad in the former palace of Grand Duke Mixail Romanov and Grand Duchess Ol'ga Romanova at Dvorcovaja Naberežnaja 18 near the Czar's former Winter Palace, under the new name 'Leningrad Division (Russian: *Otdelenie*) of the Institute of the Peoples of Asia of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR'. In 1968 the Institute was renamed the 'Leningrad Division of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR', in 1990 as the 'Leningrad Branch (Russian: *Filial*) of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR', and again in 1991 as the 'St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences'.

Previously I recounted that a number of priceless Tangut documents were lost sometime after the eminent Russian Tangut scholar Nikolaj Aleksandrovič Nevskij (born March 3, 1892)<sup>2</sup> and his wife were tragically taken away and murdered by the communists and before 1956 when the Institute of Oriental Studies moved to its present location (van Driem 1991). It is widely held that, at the time of his abduction, Nevskij held a number of Tangut documents in his care for research purposes and for entry into the catalogue of

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<sup>2</sup> The date of Nevskij's birth is given in the Gregorian calendar currently in use. Until February 14, 1918, however, the Julian calendar was used in Russia, and Nevskij's date of birth was recorded as February 19, 1892.

the manuscript department of the Institute, and that these documents disappeared after his arrest in 1937. Nevskij catalogued a total of 955 items in the register of the Institute's manuscript department (Kyčanov 1972:181), but, as I was told by the Institute's Head of Archives and Manuscripts, Eduard Naumovič Těmkin (personal communication, St. Petersburg, July 6, 1992), Nevskij at the time of his arrest had not yet had occasion to catalogue the now rediscovered documents. On the basis of Nevskij's posthumously published materials (Nevskij 1960) and his own work and research notes kept at the archives of the Institute in St. Petersburg, it can be established, within reasonable doubt, that the Tangut documents in Nevskij's possession at the time of his arrest included the Tangut manuscripts with interlinear Tibetan transcriptions as well as the 𐰇𐰏𐰢𐰣 𐰇𐰏𐰢𐰣<sup>3</sup> ʔi wə<sup>2</sup> ŋôn<sup>2</sup> ldiə<sup>1</sup> mbu<sup>1</sup> 'Precious Rimes of the Sea of Ideograms' (Russian: *Dragocennnye Rifmy Morja Načertanij*), mentioned by Nevskij (1960, I:129), and a unique recension of the 𐰇𐰏 𐰇𐰏 ʔəi<sup>2</sup> lew<sup>2</sup> 'Homophones', both of which have now been returned to the Institute together with the Tangut fragments with interlinear Tibetan transcriptions. After their return to the Institute in late 1991, the latter two were catalogued as items No. 8364 and No. 8365 in the Institute's manuscript department.

Based on investigations of the journalist Grjaznevič (1992), in the night of October 4, 1937, agents of the NKVD, later to be known as the KGB<sup>5</sup>, came into Nevskij's residence in the Ulica Bloxina in the Petrogradskij Rajon of St. Petersburg, instructed him not to touch any of the materials he was working on, and left only to return two hours later and take him away. Four days later

<sup>3</sup> Sofronov's reconstructed pronunciations are given for Tangut forms, using Sofronov's (1968:I, 138-44) original inventory of Roman phonemic symbols. Superscript 1 indicates the level tone. Superscript 2 indicates the rising tone. Sofronov's reconstruction for the first ideogram 𐰇 is given incorrectly by van Driem and Kepping (1991:123) and by van Driem (1991:521) as ʔwə<sup>2</sup> and should be ʔi wə<sup>2</sup>, as cited here.

<sup>4</sup> Sofronov's reconstruction for 𐰇 appears incorrectly as ʔəi<sup>2</sup> in Van Driem (1991:520-1) and should read ʔəi<sup>2</sup>, as given here.

<sup>5</sup> The *Narodnyj Komissariat Vnutrennix Del* 'The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs' and the *Komitet Gosudarstvennoj Bezopasnosti* 'Committee for State Security' respectively.

they returned yet a second time to arrest Nevskij's Japanese wife Isoko Mantani. The following is an extensive quote from Grjaznevič's article.

*[Nevskij's] daughter began searching for her parents immediately after the war. For a long time her inquiries went unanswered. Afterwards she was told that her father had died of cardiac failure and her mother of kidney disease. Both were said to have died in 1945. She continued her search. Unexpectedly, she was invited to the Big House [i.e. the KGB Headquarters on Litejnyj Prospekt No. 4 in Leningrad] last Spring [i.e. Spring 1991, before the unsuccessful putsch]. In a room specially set aside for this purpose, she read and re-read the thin files on the 'case' of her parents, who had been rehabilitated in the 1950s. There were just the reports of two brief interrogations of her mother and three interrogations of her father, and the sentence of capital punishment.*

*On the sheets of her father's first interrogation, her father's signature was in lucid handwriting, whereas on the second and third the signature had been reduced to a scribble. Could he not have been the one who signed [these interrogation reports]? Was he in a state in which he could no longer be held accountable for his actions? The files also contained the depositions of the agents of the NKVD to the effect that there was no evidence for Nevskij's involvement in activities of espionage. Nevskij was subjected to 'stojki' [i.e. made to stand at attention until he collapsed of exhaustion only to be beaten into standing upright again] and incessant interrogation. [The interrogators] exceeded their authority.*

*[Her] mother did not sign one interrogation or admit to anything. Such was the strength of her love! Or was it the peculiarly Japanese steadfastness of this 35-year-old woman that enabled her—as the Japanese proverb goes—to fall down seven times and to rise again eight times?*

*They were killed on the 24th of November 1937 (on the same day as seven other orientologists were executed by the firing squad). To the last page of the bill of indictment was glued a dark blue envelope in which*

*there was a torn-off sheet of wrinkled wrapping paper. Elena Nevskaja's heart literally skipped a beat when she read the words 'I, commandant of the directorate of the NKVD of the Leningrad District, senior lieutenant of State Security, A.R. Polikarpov, have executed the sentence of Nikolaj Aleksandrovič Nevskij. The aforementioned convicted has been shot dead.'* (translation GvD)

The Institute's indologist Vasil'kov (1990b:98) reports that Nevskij was 'arrested on October 4, 1937, "on suspicion of having committed a crime" in accordance with Article 58-1a. By resolution of a commission of the NKVD of the USSR and the Public Procurator of the USSR [he] was sentenced to death on November 19, 1937. He was shot to death by firing squad in Leningrad on November 24, 1937'.

Approximately one hundred orientalist scholars were executed by the communists in St. Petersburg alone, about forty of whom were killed in the same year as Nevskij. Research by Vasil'kov and other members of the organization *Memorial* has established that a total of over 600 orientalist scholars were either executed or subjected to long-term imprisonment during the communist repressions from the 1920s through the 1950s (personal communication, Jaroslav Vladimirovič Vasil'kov, St. Petersburg, July 6, 1992). Detailed, though by no means exhaustive lists of these victims can be found in Vasil'kov *et al.* (1990a, 1990b, forthcoming).

When Isoko Mantani Nevskaja was arrested on October 8, 1937, the japanologist Nikolaj Iosifovič Konrad and his wife, who resided in the same building as Nevskij, took Nevskij's nine-year old daughter Elena Nikolaevna Nevskaja into their care for a number of months until they too were arrested and imprisoned on July 29th, 1938.<sup>6</sup> In the following years Elena lived with four different foster families in different cities. Although Nevskij was shot to death by the KGB on November 24, 1937, for years after his death the KGB

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<sup>6</sup> Konrad (born in March 1891) was imprisoned but not executed. He was released from imprisonment on September 6, 1941, and was made a Member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in 1958. He died on September 30, 1970.

continued to maintain that Nevskij died of illness in 1945, including in the official death certificate which was issued to Nevskij's daughter Elena only after his rehabilitation following the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956. In fact, official Soviet publications continued to uphold this false date for Nevskij's death even after his rehabilitation. Goregljad (1972:189) lists '1945', Miliband (1975:390) lists '14 February 1945', and as recently as in 1978, Gromkovskaja & Kyčanov (1978:frontispiece) also list '1945'. However, in Nevskij's posthumous *Tangutskaĵa Filologija* (1960, I:3, 9), although published years earlier, the year of death is given as '1938', which was somewhat closer to the truth.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. Saving Face

The most recent recension of the official version of how these manuscripts were restored to the possession of the Institute of Oriental Studies, as upheld by Tëmkin, Vorob'ëva-Desjatovskaja, Goregljad and Bulacev in July 1992, is as follows: Sergej Xazbievič Bulacev is a graduate student (Russian: *aspirant*) of the Institute's japanologist Vladislav Nikanorovič Goregljad and works in the collection 'Literature in the Languages of the Countries of Asia and Africa' of the Library of the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg. In October, 1991, Bulacev was inspecting the personal library of the retired japanologist Ol'ga Petrovna Petrova at her former residence to check whether her collection contained any items which could be acquired by the library. Amongst Petrova's books he discovered several files containing the lost Tangut manuscripts with the interlinear Tibetan transcriptions, the lost 衮祿𑖇𑖆𑖅𑖄  $ʔi wə^2 \eta \hat{o} n^2$   $l d i \hat{e}^1 m b u^1$  'Precious Rimes of the Sea of Ideograms', and an unknown recension of the 龍龍  $ʔ \hat{e} i^2 l e w^2$  'Homophones'. The official version alleges that these manuscripts were in Petrova's possession and that her husband, a chemist, had taken these priceless manuscripts home with him to

<sup>7</sup> For his posthumously published notes, *Tangutskaĵa Filologija*, Nevskij in 1962 was the first and only orientalist ever to be individually awarded the *Leninskaja Premija*, one of the highest Soviet distinctions.

be restored. Bulacev told me that he then took these files back with him to the Library of the Academy of Sciences and, on the basis of what was written on the files concerning their contents, he concluded that they must belong to the Institute of Oriental Studies. He subsequently took them over to the Institute, rang the bell of the manuscript department on the first floor (American English or Russian: second floor), handed the files over to the curator Nadežda Ivanovna Nosova and left without further ado.

The items were entered in the Institute's catalogue of Tangut manuscripts on November 11, 1991, as items Nos. 8363, 8364 and 8365. Added to the new file No. 8363, containing the Tangut manuscripts with interlinear Tibetan transcriptions, I saw the following explanatory note in Kyčanov's handwriting: 'возвращено в С-Пб Филиал Ин-та Востоковедения АН СССР неизвестным лицом в октябре 1991г.' (i.e., returned to the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR by an unknown person in October, 1991).

The veracity of the official version is moot, however, as a number of facts militate against it.

First of all, in November 1991 at an informal gathering at the Institute to commemorate the Great October Revolution, Evgenij Ivanovič Kyčanov told Dr. Kepping of the mysterious return to the Institute of the lost Tangut manuscripts with interlinear Tibetan transcriptions. These manuscripts had not yet been shown to Kepping, even though it was known throughout the institute that they constituted the prime materials for her and my research on Tangut phonology. When Kepping went to the manuscript department to inquire about the newly returned manuscripts, Tëmkin told her that the manuscripts were in the restoration department for disinfection and recounted to her the official version outlined above, with the added detail that the Institute's japanologist Vladislav Nikanorovič Goregljad had sent one of his graduate students to Petrova's residence to recover the lost manuscripts. Kepping, who had been on close terms with Ol'ga Petrovna Petrova and knew that Petrova's husband was not a chemist and also unqualified to restore manuscripts, immediately countered that the KGB had probably returned these

manuscripts and that the story must be a cover-up. Kepping went to Goregljad to question him on the matter, and he indicated that the whole story was new to him (Kepping, personal communication, St. Petersburg, June 1992). Apparently, Goregljad had not yet been briefed on the official version, for later he did subscribe to the current official version when questioned by the author.

Secondly, Tëmkin, Goregljad, Bulacev and the Institute's Curator of Manuscripts Margarita Iosifovna Vorob'ëva-Desjatovskaja have all separately maintained that the manuscripts were in Petrova's possession so that her husband, allegedly a chemist, could restore them. This contention is somewhat odd in view of the fact that the Institute of Oriental Studies has had its own restoration department since the 1950s. When I questioned this, pointing out that Petrova's former husband was not a chemist, but a palaeontologist who conducted spore analysis, those involved began to maintain that the manuscripts had been taken home by Petrova so that her husband could conduct spore analysis on them. Later, it was maintained by the same individuals that no one actually knew how these manuscripts had ever come into Petrova's possession.

Thirdly, for a number of reasons it is highly unlikely that the manuscripts ever were in Petrova's possession:

The japanologist Ol'ga Petrovna Petrova, at whose house these lost manuscripts were reportedly found, was born in July 1900. She became a student of the japanologist Konrad and later worked at the Institute of Oriental Studies. Petrova has been paralysed and bed-ridden since she suffered a serious fall on May 2, 1965. She is currently elderly and reportedly unable to recognize people.

During the blockade of Leningrad by the Germans, which lasted from September, 1941, to January, 1944, Petrova distinguished herself by her valiant efforts to protect the manuscript and book collections of the Institute for Oriental Studies as well as the private collections of orientologists from the ravages of German bombings and artillery fire. In addition to her work on Japanese military and naval terminology and related topics, Petrova wrote a descriptive catalogue of the Institute's Korean collection from 1950 to 1954,



and from 1956 until her accident she was part of a team which worked on a descriptive catalogue of the Institute's collection of Japanese manuscripts, wood-block prints and books. Petrova met her husband, the palaeontologist, during the blockade years, i.e. after September 1941, and he died in the 1950s, so that Petrova's husband could never have had access to any Tangut manuscripts before the war, if indeed he ever had access to Tangut manuscripts at all. During the blockade years in Leningrad, Petrova and other scholars lived in a house behind the building which presently houses the administration of the Russian Academy of Sciences at Universitetskaja Naberežnaja 21. Her husband was one of the other scholars who lived in this house, and this is where they met.

After Nevskij's arrest in 1937, the room which Nevskij and his family inhabited in the flat of his former teacher, the sinologist and Academician Vasilij Mixailovič Alekseev, was sealed off, and according to investigations by members of the organization *Memorial*, the only person who had access to this sealed room was Aleksandr Aleksandrovič Xolodovič, who had just become a staff member of the Institute of Oriental Studies at a time when many of the Institute's orientologists were being imprisoned and executed (Eliseev & Nikitina 1972:203-4). Simultaneously, the Tangut collection of the Institute was also sealed off, and Aleksandr Aleksandrovič Dragunov, who, like Nevskij, had worked on the Tangut materials in the 1930s, was the only one to occasionally consult these materials in the period between 1947 and 1949 (Kyčánov 1972:183, and personal communication by Sergej Evgenievič Jaxontov, Paris, 17 September 1992). Elena Nevskaja reports that Xolodovič handed out her father's work left and right. For example, in the 1960s Elena Nevskaja was told by a Moscow japanologist that Xolodovič had given her a copy of Nevskij's Russian translation 'Kop'enosec Gonza' (i.e. 'The Lance-Bearer Gonza') of a Japanese work. Ol'ga Petrovna Petrova, on the other hand, never had access to the Tangut collection, which had been placed out of bounds, even during the war years. After 1950 Zoja Ivanovna Gorbačëva began to study the Tangut collection and Nevskij's materials. Only in 1959, when Nevskij had been rehabilitated and Zoja Ivanovna Gorbačëva had prepared Nevskij's notes and

uncompleted work for publication in two volumes entitled *Tangutskaja Filologija*, did the materials of the Russian Tangut collection become accessible to other orientalist scholars.

Even in the unlikely event that the lost Tangut manuscripts had somehow fallen into Petrova's hands, all those who know her well assert that she would have returned them to the Institute, if not forthwith, then most certainly after Nevskij's posthumous rehabilitation in the late 1950s and the subsequent publication of his notes and unpublished articles in 1960. Ol'ga Petrovna Petrova's present condition does not allow that she be consulted on the matter herself. She would thus provide a convenient set-up for somebody to plant the manuscripts in her personal library, assuming that this is indeed the place where they were rediscovered.

Fourthly, puzzled by the disinterest shown by the Institute's manuscript department in the mysterious return of the Tangut manuscripts, I arranged my first appointment with Bulacev to find out how these ancient manuscripts, which had been lost for decades, had been recovered. Furthermore, two small Tangut fragments with interlinear Tibetan transcriptions recorded on the original photonegatives (fragment 105 and an un-numbered fragment, both on photonegative No. 4, kept in the Nevskij Archive under number фонд 69, опись 1, №181) were not amongst the Tangut manuscripts returned to the Institute, and it seemed plausible that these and other still missing Tangut manuscripts might still be lying at the place Bulacev reportedly made his find. When I called Bulacev at the Library of the Academy of Sciences, one of his librarian colleagues answered the telephone. When she went off to fetch Bulacev, the line was broken, and a stolid female voice warned 'Оставьте всю эту историю' (i.e., 'Give up this whole matter'), after which the connexion with the library was restored. The call was made on June 23rd, 1992, from Dr. Kepping's residence.

Fifthly, the original 'five to seven' files (Russian: папки) in which Bulacev found the lost Tangut materials, reportedly ascertaining the nature of the contents on the basis of what was written on them, are now nowhere to be found, although Bulacev returned the manuscripts to the Institute in these

original files. Kepping (personal communication, St. Petersburg, June 1992) saw the original files herself in late November 1991 when Tëmkin finally granted Kepping permission to view the newly returned Tangut manuscripts in the restoration department.

Sixthly, the present caretakers of Petrova's personal library at her former residence in St. Petersburg (7ая Линия Васильевского острова, д. 2, кв. 12) are reported to be Petrova's nephew Aleksandr Ivanovič Troxačev, his wife Marina Leonidovna and their now middle-aged daughter Oksana Aleksandrovna. Petrova is reported to have expressed the desire that her books be donated to the Library of the Academy of Sciences, oddly enough not to the library of the Institute of Oriental Studies where she worked for so many years. Petrova's desire, although not committed to writing, was executed by her relatives, and Bulacev was allowed to come and go freely and select from Petrova's personal library any books which were suitable additions to the library's collection. Subsequently, when Bulacev, at my request, attempted to arrange that he and I view Petrova's library together, Oksana Aleksandrovna Troxačeva is reported to have suddenly refused all further access to Petrova's library on the grounds that the library constituted Petrova's 'intellectual property' (ИНТЕЛЛЕКТУАЛЬНАЯ СОБСТВЕННОСТЬ), which could only be consulted in the presence of a lawyer or if royalties were to be paid.

Seventhly, assuming the veracity of the official version, I insisted that Bulacev discuss the matter with Tëmkin, the Institute's Head of Archives and Manuscripts, and the Institute's Curator of Manuscripts Margarita Iosifovna Vorob'ëva-Desjatovskaja in order that steps might be taken which could lead to the recovery of other lost Tangut fragments and manuscripts. When Bulacev came to the Institute to discuss the matter on July 6, 1992, Tëmkin claimed not to have ever made Bulacev's acquaintance previously, acted as if this was indeed their first meeting and inquired as to how Bulacev had discovered the manuscripts. The encounter gave the impression of a rehearsed *jeu de théâtre* especially for my benefit. I inquired as to whether the Institute would take legal action to recover any Tangut materials which might still be located at Petrova's former residence, but Tëmkin explained that present Russian

legislation might not make accommodation for this in view of the fact that Ol'ga Petrovna Petrova is still alive. After the meeting, I told Tëmkin that I felt compelled to give as full as possible an account of how these valuable manuscripts had been rediscovered, particularly in view of the fact that Kepping and I had previously reported to the international scholarly community that these documents were missing and had even ventured some speculations as to their possible whereabouts (van Driem & Kepping 1991; see next section). Tëmkin admitted that the details of events as they had been presented to me did not tally, but suggested that I not write on the matter, ironically arguing that it could put either Nevskij or Petrova in a bad light. It is my conviction, however, that the facts clearly vindicate both Nevskij and Petrova, both of whose reputations remain impeccable.

Eighthly, as pointed out above, it can clearly be inferred from the references in *Tangutskaja Filologija* and Nevskij's own notes kept in the archives of the Institute for Oriental Studies that Nevskij, at the time of his arrest, was working on the lost Tangut manuscripts which have now been recovered. This would also explain why these items were not included in Nevskij's own catalogue of Tangut manuscripts and wood-block prints, for, as Kyčanov (1972: 181) points out, Nevskij only entered Tangut items in the catalogue after meticulous study. As Nevskij's daughter Elena recalls, the agents who came to arrest her father also ordered that the manuscripts not be touched. After Nevskij and his wife were arrested, their room was sealed, and it is highly probable that the materials in Nevskij's possession at the time were then confiscated by the NKVD, later to end up in the archives of the NKVD. The fact that the missing Tangut manuscripts with interlinear Tibetan transcriptions suddenly appeared shortly after the unsuccessful August 1991 putsch and the ensuing bowdlerization of KGB files by its own agents may only be a coincidence, for, as we have seen, the Nevskij case had already been re-opened in the Spring of 1991 when Elena Nevskaja was allowed to see the KGB files concerning her father's murder.

It seems like a godsend that these manuscripts were returned to the institute precisely after Dr. Kepping and I had started working on the photo-

negatives of the originals kept in the Nevskij archive, but whether one chooses to attribute this coincidence to Providence (перст Божий “finger of God”) or to the doings of the Committee for State Security (перст КГБ “finger of the KGB”), at least the existence of the latter is not a matter of controversy. In pointing out the inconsistencies of the official version of how the manuscripts were returned to the Institute and of how the official version was presented, the author does not presume to pass judgement on the motives of the individuals involved. Any additional information which may bring us closer to the truth from any knowledgeable individuals, whether they have been mentioned in this article or not, would be of potential interest to the international scholarly community.

### 3. Tangut manuscripts still missing: corrigenda

The article by van Driem and Kepping (1991) mentions reports by Western scholars to the effect that Tangut manuscripts bearing the stamp of the Asiatic Museum in St. Petersburg are to be found in the Peking State Library. This gave the authors hope to suppose that the originals of the Tangut manuscripts with interlinear Tibetan transcriptions as well as the lost Tangut dictionary entitled 貴群教韻  $\text{?i w}^2 \text{ } \eta \hat{o} n^2 \text{ } l d i \text{ } \text{?}^1 \text{ } m b u^1$  ‘Precious Rimes of the Sea of Ideograms’, mentioned by Nevskij (1960:I, 129) might have survived in China. The source of these reports was, as the original manuscript of the article states, a ‘personal communication by E.I. Kyčanov to one of the authors, Leningrad, 30 May 1990’. However, this reference was altered by the editors to a ‘personal communication by E.I. Kyčanov to K.B. Kepping, Leningrad, 30 May 1990’, which is contrary to fact.<sup>8</sup> In the original Russian version

<sup>8</sup> The editors also changed the word *ideogrammatic* in the authors’ phrase ‘the syllabic ideogrammatic script of the Chinese transcriptions’ to *logographic*, which is at variance with the authors’ interpretation of the Chinese writing system, in which a character—with few exceptions—represents a morpheme, not a word. The article furthermore ascribed to Dr. Kepping an affiliation with the University of St. Petersburg where she has never held a position. Dr. Kepping is a leading research fellow (ведущий научный сотрудник) at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, where she has worked



#### 4. Tangut manuscripts with Tibetan transcriptions in London

In February 1992, Dr. K.B. Kepping and I visited the Oriental and India Office Collections of the British Library at 197 Blackfriars Road in London. With the kind and generous assistance of Frances Wood and Michael O'Keefe, Dr. K.B. Kepping was able to view the entire British collection of Tangut manuscripts collected by Sir Aurel Stein at Khara Khoto in 1914. The British expedition was undertaken in the wake of the famous 1908 expedition of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society. Stein's expedition was much in keeping with the spirit of rivalry between Britain and Russia in many domains. When Nishida (1966:512) visited the British Museum in the early 1960s he reported that the 'Stein Collection materials are preserved in bags, sealed and stored away, as yet unclassified and practically in the state in which they were first excavated'. This stands in extreme contrast to the present situation. The British collection has been beautifully and meticulously preserved, even more carefully and thoroughly than the St. Petersburg collection.

Although far smaller than the Russian collection, the British collection is also extremely rich and varied. Many documents exist in what Kepping calls 'complementary distribution' between the two great collections and the lesser Tangut collections elsewhere. In fact, now that Kepping has finally had the opportunity to view the original manuscripts in London and St. Petersburg, she has determined that the nineteen Tangut fragments with interlinear Tibetan transcriptions (Texts 1-19, van Driem and Kepping 1991)—but not the wood-block print (Texts 20)—kept in St. Petersburg and the four similar manuscripts kept in Britain are probably fragments of a single document. The four Tangut manuscripts of the Stein collection with Tibetan transcriptions (Texts 21-24) are numbered in the Oriental and India Office Collection as items Or 12380 (3909), Or 12380 (3910), Or 12380 (3911) and Or 12380 (1842), with the latter rolled up as a scroll in the box labelled 'assorted'.

Both the Institute of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg and the British Library in London have granted Kepping and myself permission to publish in

our forthcoming monograph the Tangut manuscripts with interlinear Tibetan transcriptions from their respective collections.

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<sup>9</sup> The Russian orientalist journal *Vostok* is the same periodical as *Narody Azii i Afriki*, but now under a new name.



PHOTOGRAPH 1

Nikolaj Aleksandrovič Nevskij with his wife Isoko Mantani



PHOTOGRAPH 2

Nikolaj Aleksandrovič Nevskij and Isoko Mantani,  
here severed from each other as the result of  
a previous attempt to censor the past.