

Creating Religious Terminology – A Comparative Approach to the Early Chinese Translations

Max Deeg, Cardiff University

The only “project” in the history of religions that can be compared to the huge process of translating the Buddhist texts into Chinese and later into Tibetan is certainly the translation of the Bible into different Near Eastern and European languages. While systematic philological research has been carried out in the case of the early translations of the Bible, the investigation of the early Chinese translations of the Buddhist corpus has not advanced to a similar level of systematization. This paper will try to show if and how a comparative approach, by recognizing the overall socio-religious and literary differences, may help to categorize the huge amount of Sino-Buddhist terminology in a similar manner to the categorizing that has been done for the Germanic bible translation languages. Such a categorization may help to clarify questions of chronology and the attribution of individual texts.