

BOOK REVIEW

Yoshida Yutaka 吉田豊 2022. *Sogudogo bunpō kōgi* ソグド語文法講義 [Lectures on Sogdian Grammar]. Kyoto: Rinsen. iv, 500 pp.
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Yoshida Yutaka's recently published *Lectures on Sogdian Grammar* is intended as a 'handbook' (p. 500) written in Japanese to introduce students step-by-step to the fundamentals of the Sogdian language. But this publication is so much more than a simple handbook. Compiled and refined over a period of nearly twenty years of teaching Sogdian to students, this book by one of the world's leading Sogdian specialists is a state-of-the-art compendium of our current knowledge about this sparsely attested language. In addition to unique features such as a detailed introduction to the Sogdians and their language and history, a Swadesh list, a Sogdian–Japanese and Japanese–Sogdian glossary, and separate appendices on ideograms, the Sogdian calendar, names for weights and measures, and loanwords, the various chapters on different aspects of Sogdian grammar are interwoven with citations of the research literature and details about recent advances in our understanding. In numerous places the author also points to gaps in our knowledge, suggesting areas of research for future generations of scholars. Each of the twenty-three chapters of the book is followed by exercises extracted from actual Sogdian texts, and the author often provides Chinese parallels where available and extensive commentary about the contents of the texts. Particularly useful to self-taught students are the author's suggested solutions to the exercises at the end of the book. For further reading practice, the *Parable of the Pearl-borer* is included along with facsimiles of the original manuscripts.

On p. 26, the author writes that at least the following four things are essential when learning a language like Sogdian: (1) an introductory grammar with exercises, (2) a comprehensive reference grammar, (3) a dictionary, and (4) a chrestomathy. With regard to (1), there is Prods Oktor Skjærvø's *An Introduction to Manichean Sogdian* (published online), though, as the title

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suggests, this introductory grammar is limited to Manichean Sogdian. As for (2), there are Ilya Gershevitch's *A Grammar of Manichean Sogdian* (1954, Oxford: Blackwell), Nicholas Sims-Williams' chapter on Sogdian in the *Compendium Linguarum Iranicarum* (ed. Rüdiger Schmitt, 1989, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 173–192), and Yutaka Yoshida's chapter on Sogdian in *The Iranian Languages* (ed. Gernot Windfuhr, 2009, London: Routledge, 279–335), though perhaps none of these qualify as a truly comprehensive reference grammar. For (3), B. Gharib's *Sogdian Dictionary* (1995, Tehran: Farhangian)—though Yoshida points out that this must be used with caution (p. 27)—, Nicholas Sims-Williams and Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst's *Dictionary of Manichaean Sogdian and Bactrian* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), and Nicholas Sims-Williams' *A Dictionary: Christian Sogdian, Syriac and English* (2nd ed., Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2021) are available. The author points out (p. 28) that unfortunately no dictionary has yet been published for the Sogdian Buddhist texts, the Mugh documents, and the Ancient Letters. Finally, with regard to (4), there is no substantial chrestomathy for Sogdian. With Yoshida's new publication, we can now say that the lacunae for (1) and (2) have been more than adequately filled. Furthermore, due to the book's extensive glossary—the author states (p. 27) that the glossary was modeled after D. N. MacKenzie's *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971)—and the fact that the exercises throughout the book are taken from actual texts, this book to some extent also fulfills the role of (3) and (4).

The book begins with a detailed article on the history of the Sogdians and their language, culture, religion, and role as traders along the Silk Road. The second half of the introductory chapter provides information on resources for learning Sogdian and an overview of the available documents and their characteristics. Chapter 1 discusses the phonemic inventory of Sogdian, stress and the rhythmic law, and introduces the various scripts employed in the Sogdian texts. There are sections outlining general principles to follow when transliterating and transcribing texts, and the chapter ends with a detailed article on the historical background of the Sogdian and Uyghur scripts. The exercises for this chapter are accompanied by a facsimile of a manuscript of the *Vessantara Jātaka*. Chapter 2 introduces the nominal declension categories of Sogdian and articles. Chapter 3 covers connective particles, word order, and adpositions. Chapters 4 and 5 are on nominal declension and introduce the distinction between light and heavy stems. Chapter 6 overviews the different types of verb formations and discusses the present stem. Chapter 7 is on personal pronouns. Chapter 8 covers the imperfect and infinitives. Chapter 9 introduces the preterite, the imperative, past participles, and interrogatives. Chapter 10 covers demonstratives, the reflexive use of *γryw* 'body', and reciprocal constructions. Chapter 11 is on demonstratives in *-yδ*, indefinite pronouns, compounds, and negation of the imperfect. Chapter 12 overviews the moods of Sogdian and introduces the subjunctive, optative, and injunctive. There are also sections on idioms, compound verbs, and hendiadys expressions. Chapter 13 introduces the numerals and the potentialis. Chapter 14 discusses relative clauses and the formation of the comparative and elative. Chapter 15 is on the optative and its functions and the irrealis. There is also a section on the impersonal construction with *s'ct* 'is fitting'. Chapter 16 introduces the periphrastic perfect and passive. It also includes sections on derivational suffixes and adverbs. Chapter 17 is on the middle voice and contains sections on prefixes, derivational suffixes, and constructions involving the past infinitive. Chapter 18 discusses the characteristics of later-attested texts and problems surrounding orthographical variation, historical spellings, and sound changes; there is also a section in this chapter on verbal nouns and infinitives and their distribution among different text types. Chapter 19 is on the present participle, the future passive participle, the gerundive, the



āz-imperfect, and enclitic elements. Chapter 20 overviews interjections, changes for the particles *skwn* and *k'm* observed in later texts, details surrounding the use of particles to introduce clauses, and coordinate and subordinate conjunctions. There are also interesting sections on the use of the subordinate conjunction *qt* ‘that’ in Christian texts and the distribution of ideogram variants for conjunctions. Chapter 21 covers the irrealis/hypothetical particle *-n* and its relatively recent discovery, the injunctive and its various uses, adpositions, and the uses of negating and prohibitive particles. Chapter 22 provides an interesting overview of honorific expressions in Sogdian and the linguistic features of the Ancient Letters, Turco-Sogdian, and other later texts. Chapter 23 discusses possessive expressions, the formation of interrogative sentences, and has a comprehensive list of numerals and their orthographic representations.

The twenty-three chapters above are followed by a number of invaluable sections. First, for further reading practice the *Parable of the Pearl-borer* is included along with facsimiles of the original manuscripts. This is followed by a Sogdian–Japanese and Japanese–Sogdian glossary with entries given in transliterated Sogdian script along with corresponding forms in transliterated Manichean and Syriac script. The author writes (p. 330) that all of the words that appear in the main text of the grammar are included in the glossary along with other frequently used or interesting words. The glossary alone is almost one-hundred pages in length. Next follow four important appendices: (A) a list of ideograms updated with recent findings from the inscriptions from Kultobe, (B) the various calendars used by the Sogdians along with the Sogdian names for the signs of the zodiac and the days and months, (C) a list of weights and measures along with their Sogdian names and Chinese equivalents, (D) a Swadesh list for Sogdian arranged beside a similar list for Yaghnobi and Avestan; this list is followed by a discussion of loanwords into Sogdian from other Iranian languages, Indo-Aryan, and further languages. Pages 469–480 give a concise overview of the topics covered in the grammar and show the paradigms for various nominal and verbal categories. This is followed on pp. 481–496 with example answers by the author for all of the problems at the end of each chapter. The book closes with a four-page postscript in which the author outlines his career as a scholar of Sogdian and states the motivation for publishing this grammar: to produce a handbook for students that will inspire future research on Sogdian.

Yoshida Yutaka’s new publication is an invaluable contribution in that it combines step-by-step instruction, exercises, a reference grammar, a dictionary, a reader, and a bibliography of research into a single volume. One can only hope for an English version of this book so that it can reach a wider audience.

