

PREFACE

The Central Asian manuscript of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* of which all known fragments are edited here suffered the same fate as many of the other manuscripts of the same origin. After being excavated by local treasure hunters at the beginning of this century it was torn apart and sold to various European customers.

During a visit in the seventies to the Akademie der Wissenschaften der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Zentralinstitut für Alte Geschichte und Archäologie [now Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Turfanforschung], in Berlin, H. Bechert came across a manuscript "lump" in the Turfan collection which he could identify as part of a Sanskrit manuscript of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*. In early 1988 he finally received photographs of fragments which had been put between ten pairs of glass sheets containing several fragments of the so-called lump. Professor Bechert then handed the photographs over to my care. The script of the fragments is the South Turkestan Brāhmī. As J.-U. Hartmann had discovered another fragment of this very same manuscript, viz. the catalogue number SHT 4303, the newly restored fragments were classified under the same number. The single fragment already put between glass sheets some time ago bears the siglum T4 Chotän 7 (= fourth Turfan expedition; Khotan) indicating the place where it was found. Since the German Turfan expeditions never worked on the southern Silk Road we can thus infer that the manuscript fragments had not been found, but purchased by the fourth Turfan expedition (1913-1914). In March 1991 twenty more pairs of glass sheets with fragments as well as four unmounted pieces were returned to the library in Berlin after restoration. When revising all the Sanskrit fragments of the Turfan collection in Berlin, within the framework of the Katalogisierung der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, I found additional fragments of the same manuscript. Among these was also one which was photographed by J. Deguchi during his stay in Berlin in 1933/34 and published in 1949 as facsimile. This piece bearing the siglum T4 Chotän 8 was thought to have been lost. The Sanskrit section of the Turfan collection is now housed in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin—Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung as a deposit of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften.

A paper by R.E. Emmerick gives a survey of the Central Asian manuscript fragments belonging to the Francke/Körper collection in the Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde, Munich, which in the year 1914 were bought in Khotan. In this paper Professor Emmerick mentions his having identified some of them as belonging to the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*. This identification gave me the idea that these fragments could possibly be folios of the same manuscript as those in Berlin. In March 1994 I visited Professor Emmerick and was able on that occasion to examine his photographs of the said fragments. The examination fully confirmed my assumption. As a result,

Professor Bechert and Professor Emmerick applied to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft for financial support to edit the fragments belonging to this manuscript along with fragments belonging to other *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* manuscripts housed in German collections. The project was supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft from March 1995 until February 1997, and I was able to work part-time on it. During this time I continued to discover more fragments belonging to the same manuscript in the Stein and Hoernle collections, London, and only recently (November 1997) I received through the good offices of K. Matsuda a xerox copy of another fragment, which he had discovered in London. Since it is well-known that there are several *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* manuscript fragments in St. Petersburg as well, I seized the opportunity while visiting the Institute of Oriental Studies (St. Petersburg Branch) at the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg in August 1996 to ask the Supervisor of the Manuscript Department, Dr. M.I. Vorob'ëva-Desjatovskaja about this. But unfortunately, according to her information no fragment of this particular manuscript can be found in the various collections of the institute. Therefore the known fragments of our *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* manuscript are obviously distributed over four collections.

I would like to express my thanks for the support during my work with the originals as well as the supply of photographs and microfilms to Dr. H.-O. Feistel (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Turfansammlung, Berlin), Dr. M. O'Keefe (British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections, London) and Dr. B. Richtsfeld (Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde, München). It is my pleasure to acknowledge here the valuable help of Mr. Noriyoshi Mizufune, who is responsible for manuscript projects at The Institute of Oriental Philosophy, Tokyo, as well as that of all the members of the institute who have been associated with the final stage of this publication. I am grateful to the Soka Gakkai for including this edition in the Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series. Last but not least I thank Prof. Dr. H. Bechert who encouraged me to take on this work, Prof. Dr. R.E. Emmerick for correcting my English as well as providing me with valuable suggestions, and my wife Anne Peters for helping me to produce the final copy.

Klaus Wille
Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen
Katalogisierung der Orientalischen
Handschriften in Deutschland
-Arbeitsstelle Göttingen-

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