

Preface

All human beings make mistakes, and it is mainly for this reason that we are able to analyze textual transmissions. If copyists of manuscripts had worked without error, we would have been faced with virtually identical manuscripts today. One important principle of stemmatology established by scholars of classical philology is therefore central to our work in textual criticism: community of error implies community of origin, and if it is impossible to identify common mistakes within the extant witnesses of a text, any stemmatic analysis will fail.

It took me a long time to recognize the importance of this principle for my own study of the Tibetan text of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra*. My work began with my master's thesis on the Tibetan translation of the text submitted to Hokkaido University in 1988, in which I collated the texts of the Derge and Peking Kanjurs. I could subsequently expand my edition by adding further variants from the Tokyo and Stog Palace manuscript Kanjurs with support from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science between 1991 and 1993. For my doctoral dissertation on the Sanskrit fragments of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra* submitted to the University of Freiburg in 2005, I received valuable advice from Dr Helmut Eimer and added variants from the Cone and Narthang Kanjurs as well as the London manuscript Kanjur. To further analyze the text I extended the witnesses to include the Phug brag manuscript Kanjur and the Lithang Kanjur. Funding received from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) during 2009 and 2012 gave me the opportunity to further concentrate on my project at the University of Munich and bring it to partial completion. While I am aware of being far from fully completing the task, I have decided to make the edition available to scholars as it stands, because of the considerable importance the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra* bears for Buddhist studies.

The present work could not have been completed without the support of my teachers, colleagues, friends and family. I owe a profound debt of gratitude to my teachers Prof Kōtatsu Fujita and Prof Junkichi Imanishi who taught me at Hokkaido University, and Prof Oskar von Hinüber who guided my doctoral study in Freiburg. I am very grateful to Prof Zuihō Yamaguchi, Prof Yōichi Fukuda and Dr Helmut Eimer for offering their insightful advice on Tibetan matters. I would like to thank my colleagues Prof Masahiro Shimoda and Dr Naomi Sato for encouraging me to continue my research after

a severe disease had obstructed my work for quite some time. I am indebted to scholars and librarians at the following institutions for granting access to their collections: Tōhoku University, British Library, Tōyō Bunko, Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religion and Naritasan Institute for Buddhist Studies. I feel obliged to Mr Sadanori Ishitobi, Prof Yōichi Fukuda and Dr Alfred Lohr, who are also scholars of Indology, Tibetology and Philology respectively, for offering technical advice on text data. During my DFG project the following colleagues and students at the University of Munich gave valuable support that enabled me to finish my work: Prof Jens-Uwe Hartmann, Prof Franz-Karl Ehrhard, Dr Johannes Schneider, Mr Nikolai Solmsdorf, Dr Chanwit Tudkeao, Ms Katrin Querl and Ms Marlene Erschbamer. Furthermore I thank Mr Daiichi Honjō for valuable advice on textual criticism and Mr Ralf Kramer for improving my English. I am also indebted to the Eastern Institute in Tokyo for supporting my research and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft for subsidizing the printing of this work. Finally I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Prof David P. Jackson and Prof Franz-Karl Ehrhard for including my work in the “Contributions to Tibetan Studies” series.

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