

*Buddhist Manuscripts from Central Asia*  
*The St. Petersburg Sanskrit Fragments*

Vol. I

**Buddhist Manuscripts from Central Asia**  
**The St. Petersburg Sanskrit Fragments**

Volume I

Editors-in-chief:

**SEISHI KARASHIMA and**  
**MARGARITA I. VOROBYOVA-DESYATOVSKAYA**

The Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences  
The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology  
Soka University  
Tokyo 2015

Published by

The Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences (= IOM RAS) and  
The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology (= IRIAB), Soka University:

1-236 Tangi, Hachioji, Tokyo 192-8577, Japan

〒192-8577 東京都八王子市丹木町1-236

創価大学・国際仏教学高等研究所

Phone: (+ 81-42) 691-2695

Fax: (+ 81-42) 691-4814

E-mail: [iriab@soka.ac.jp](mailto:iriab@soka.ac.jp)

First published 2015

*Printed in Japan by Meiwa Printing Company, Tokyo*

© The Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences and Seishi Karashima

*All rights reserved.*

*Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review, no part of this book may be reproduced, translated or utilised in any form, either by print, photoprint, microform, multimedia or any other means, now known or hereafter invented, without written permission of the copyright holders and publisher. Enquiries should be made to the publisher.*

ISBN 978-4-904234-11-2

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>FOREWORD</b>	Irina F. POPOVA	vii
<b>PREFACE</b>	Margarita I. VOROBYOVA-DESYATOVSKAYA	ix
<b>RESEARCH ARTICLES</b>		
The <i>Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna</i> from Central Asia		
	Tensho MIYAZAKI, Jundo NAGASHIMA, Tatsushi TAMAI and ZHOU Liqun	1
The <i>Ajitasenavyākaraṇa</i> Manuscripts from Central Asia and Gilgit		
	Jiro HIRABAYASHI, William B. RASMUSSEN and Safarali SHOMAKHMADOV	85
The <i>Avadāna</i> Anthology from Merv, Turkmenistan		
	Seishi KARASHIMA and Margarita I. VOROBYOVA-DESYATOVSKAYA	145
The <i>Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra</i> Fragments in the Petrovsky Collection (1)		
	Hiromi HABATA	525
<b>POSTSCRIPT</b>		543
<b>PLATES</b>		1–123

## FOREWORD

The present volume begins a series of publications of Sanskrit fragments from Eastern Turkestan collected in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg.

Since the end of nineteenth century, the world academic community has appreciated the value of manuscripts from Central Asia for Buddhist cultural studies. An invaluable contribution to the research of cultures and languages of that region was made by expeditions led by outstanding scholars: Aurel Stein, Paul Pelliot, Sergey Oldenburg, Sven Hedin and Ōtani Kōzui. Russian diplomats, army officers and scholars who contributed greatly to the academic study of the region included Nikolay F. Petrovsky (1837–1908), consul-general in Kashgar; his successor Sergey A. Kolokolov; Sergey V. Sokov, consul in Kashgar; Nikolay N. Krotkov (1869–1919), consul in Urumqi, as well as Ivan P. Lavrov; Yakov Ya. Lutsch, secretary of the consulate in Urumqi; Alexey A. Dyakov, secretary of the consulate in Kuldja; consuls Boris and Vladimir Dolbezhev; Alexander I. Kokhanovsky, medical officer of the consulate in Urumqi; travelers, military topographers Vsevolod I. Roborovsky (1856–1910) and Petr K. Kozlov (1863–1935); ornithologist, archaeologist and ethnographer Mikhail M. Berezovsky (1848–1912); anthropologist and ethnographer Dmitry A. Klementz (1847–1914); orientalists Sergey Ye. Malov (1880–1957) and Sergey F. Oldenburg (1863–1934). Petrovsky, who held his post in Turkestan from 1867, collected manuscripts and art objects, obtained by buying them from the local people and carrying out archaeological excavations. According to Oldenburg, “Petrovsky’s brilliant finds ushered in a new era in the archaeological study of Eastern Turkestan.”<sup>1</sup>

Russian scholars’ large-scale investigations on vast territories in Central Asia made a most significant contribution to world learning that is still valid today. A substantial increase in the amount of scholarly material provided new points of reference for a wide range of major historical, archaeological and linguistic disciplines. The study of manuscripts and objects of art from Eastern Turkestan acquired by Russian expeditions caused a sensation in the scholarly world and determined the vector of Russian Oriental Studies for many decades. The deciphering of manuscripts in dead languages of Central Asia made it possible to recreate almost two thousand years of the history and culture of this multiethnic region.

In the early stages of the study of the Central Asian manuscript legacy, a need to combine the efforts of scholars around the world became evident. In 1899, Academicians Vasily Radlov and Sergey Oldenburg spoke at the 12th International Congress of Orientalists in Rome on the ancient Uighur and runic monuments as well as art objects discovered in Turfan. This led to the establishment, on 2 (14) October 1899, of the International

---

<sup>1</sup> S.F. Oldenburg, “Issledovaniye pamiatnikov starinnykh kultur Kitaiskogo Turkestana” [‘An Inquiry into the Monuments of Ancient Cultures in Chinese Turkestan’], in: *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniya*, part CCCLIII, 1904, No 6, section II. p. 373.

Association for Central and Eastern Asian Studies, which set itself the task of geographic, ethnographic and archaeological research of the relevant regions. Among other things, there were plans to organize joint expeditions in Eastern Turkestan within the framework of the association. The Russian Committee for Middle and Eastern Asian Studies was established in 1903. Over the years such notable scholars as Sergey Oldenburg, Nikolay Mironov, Rudolf Hoernle, Alexander Staël von Holstein, Paul Pelliot, Édouard Chavannes, Louis de La Vallée Poussin, Émile Senart, Sylvain Lévi and Heinrich Lüders joined their efforts in the study of the manuscript heritage of Eastern Turkestan

Several generations of Russian orientalists – researchers at the Asiatic Museum – Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, RAS devoted their lives to the study of the written monuments of Eastern Turkestan. Representatives of the Russian, mainly St. Petersburg, school of Central Asian manuscript studies contributed much to an increase of interest in Buddhist culture within Russian society. A thorough analysis of the Sanskrit part of the N.F. Petrovsky Collection enabled Dr. Margarita Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya to distinguish three groups of texts. The first and most numerous group contains Vajrayāna texts that include many invocations — *dhāraṇī* and *mantras*. The texts of these manuscripts reveal the connection of the Buddhist tradition with local folk beliefs as well as pre-Buddhist, Brahmanic, invocations of Indian origin. The second group comprises twenty-seven versions of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* – Lotus Sutra. The third group contains twenty-four versions of the Scriptures of *Prajñapāramitā* (Transcendent Wisdom).

The study of the manuscripts from Eastern Turkestan over the past hundred years has led to a remarkable breakthrough in our understanding of the history, society, literature, religion and culture of ancient and medieval Central Asia. These magnificent achievements of past years established a solid base for the development of Central Asian studies in the coming second century of research. At the moment, the new research environment is aiming to rethink the academic targets and use newfound, effective patterns for the comprehensive scrutiny and study of sources. The present volume prepared by an international team of brilliant scholars is a very important example of the new updated approach.

*Irina Popova,*  
*Director,*  
*Institute of Oriental Manuscripts,*  
*the Russian Academy of Sciences*

## PREFACE

Margarita I. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya

The present volume includes some of the most significant Sanskrit manuscripts from Central Asia preserved in the Serindia Manuscripts' Collection of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, RAS. The publication of the texts of manuscripts included in the first volume of the series *Buddhist Manuscripts from Central Asia. The St. Petersburg Sanskrit Fragments (StPSF)* is extremely important for the fruitful study of the cultural heritage of Eastern Turkestan. I take this opportunity to sincerely thank my long-time friend and colleague Prof. Seishi Karashima for many years of friendship and support.

The publication of a text of the *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna* opens this volume. On leaf 36 verso we find the colophon – *puṣkalasāricandraagrahavyākaraṇa* ('The prediction by means of the Moon and planets, [given to] Puṣkarasārin').

The Ancient Indian ideas on astronomy incorporated in the narrative structure of the *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna* form a significant part of this manuscript. Not only does the text reflect the level of Indian astronomical knowledge in the Buddhist period but it repeats almost entirely the set of ideas expounded in Brahmanic treatises of the 5th century BCE to 2nd century CE (*Vedāṅgajyotiṣa*, *Yājñavalkya-smṛti*, *Ātharvaṇa-nakṣatra-kalpa*, *Śānti-kalpa*) that represent traditional Indian astronomy and sum up the development of astronomical knowledge in the Vedic period.

Speaking about the history of this text's existence, it is necessary to note that the *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna* existed in several versions:

1) a short version, without the astronomical inclusion, that in the first centuries of the Common Era, perhaps, spread across India (where it was preserved in Pāli Canon) and Central Asia and became the basis for the first Chinese translations of the *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*;

2) the complete Central Asian version that is presented in this manuscript; two similar versions, perhaps, formed the basis for Dharmarakṣa's Chinese translation and also for a Tibetan one;

3) the complete Indian version, which is presented in a Nepalese manuscript.

The Central Asian version preserved the astronomical text in its most ancient form. The version in the Nepalese manuscript contains a large number of later additions associated with the calendar and was obviously created in the period after the 9th century.

The second manuscript presented in this volume is the *Ajitasenavyākaraṇanirdeśa nāma mahāyānasūtra*. This manuscript was first presented in 1995 in the second volume of *Памятники индийской письменности из Центральной Азии* ('Monuments of Indian Writing from Central Asia') under the title *Авадана о gaṇḍī* ('*Avadāna on gaṇḍī*'). This title has a history that dates back to academician Sergey Oldenburg.

The fact of the matter is that during preliminary study of this manuscript Oldenburg wrote on the paper that served as a wrapping for the manuscript: ‘*Avadāna* or *jātaka*’. Separately, opposite those words, there is a pencil note ‘about *gaṇḍī*’ and that is almost certainly the reason for the attribution of manuscript SI 2085 from Nikolay Petrovsky’s collection as ‘*Avadāna* on *gaṇḍī* (gong)’.

The next manuscript presented in this volume was found in 1966 in the Merv oasis, not far from the small town of Bairam-Ali (Turkmenistan). The story of its discovery is like an Oriental fairy tale. A peasant using a bulldozer to level a field razed a hillock. The bulldozer blade struck something hard and the peasant spotted a broken jar among the clods of earth. That jar turned out to contain a treasure – ancient copper coins, a skillfully made ceramic figurine and a clump of agglutinated birch bark sheets bearing ‘strange inscriptions’.

The manuscript from this hoard was sent to the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences (now the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, RAS). Restoration work that lasted a year succeeded in recovering 150 leaves of the manuscript. Preliminary research showed that the text was written in black ink using the Brāhmī script and palaeographic examination suggested that the manuscript had been created over a period of several centuries – from the 100s to the 400s CE.

Analysis of the manuscript’s pagination has identified three parts. The first contains 68 leaves, forming the most extensive text, which is an anthology of briefly outlined narrative plots that belong to the *avadāna* and *jātaka* genres of Buddhist literature. Both of these genres have a didactic purpose and were used by preachers as illustrations of certain aspects of the Teaching. In stating that the anthology contains summaries of didactic tales, we would point out two typological features specific to this text. Firstly, for the majority of the tales only the names of the personages and a few brief details of the plot are given. Secondly, in some cases the ‘compiler’ restricted himself still further, giving just an the aphoristic summary of the sense of a tale, quoting either a *gāthā*, a *sūtra* or a proverb, but making no mention of the characters or the details of the narrative.

These features tend to suggest that this anthology was compiled by a Buddhist preacher as an aid to larding a sermon with edifying stories relevant to its message organized in a manner that would help fellow preachers quickly recall the plots of such tales.

The last manuscripts presented in this volume are fragments of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, part of which is in the Indian Office Library collection (the A. Stein Collection). The discovery of fragments of the same text of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* in the Stein and Petrovsky Collections is another testimony to the fruitful international collaboration among scholars in the study of Buddhist Sanskrit texts from various Central Asian collections.



## POSTSCRIPT

One year after the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology (IRIAB) had been founded at Soka University and I had come to Hachioji, an exhibition entitled, “The Lotus Sutra and Its World – Buddhist Manuscripts of the Great Silk Road”, organised by the Institute of Oriental Philosophy, was held in November 1998 in Tokyo, in which precious manuscripts and fragments of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, *Ratnakūṭasūtra* (= *Kāśyapa-parivarta*), *Mahā-parinirvāṇa mahāsūtra*, *Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra* etc., all discovered in Central Asia and preserved at the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences (presently, the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts), were on display. While looking at them, I realised the richness of the collections of Sanskrit manuscripts in St. Petersburg, and I came to realise that it is outstandingly important for Buddhist studies to do research on those manuscripts from Central Asia. Soon afterwards, I resumed learning Russian and also invited Dr. Margarita I. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya to IRIAB. She accepted our invitation and has visited us several times since 2001 to conduct joint research on various manuscripts from Central Asia. I, myself, have also visited St. Petersburg twice. One of the results of our collaborations has been the publication of *The Kāśyapaparivarta: Romanized Text and Facsimiles*, IRIAB 2002. In addition to this, we have jointly published a few articles on Buddhist fragments in our Annual Report. As I wrote in the postscript to *Buddhist Manuscripts from Central Asia: The British Library Sanskrit Fragments* (BLSF), vol. 1, IRIAB 2006, p. 271, I had to cancel my trip to St. Petersburg in December 2004 whilst I was in transit in London and instead, I visited the British Library only to discover a great number of unstudied Central Asian Sanskrit fragments there. We started the BLSF project and since then, we have published three volumes so far in 2006, 2009 and in this year. When Margarita visited us in 2006, I had the idea of starting a similar series, namely *Buddhist Manuscripts from Central Asia: The St. Petersburg Sanskrit Fragments* (StPSF), and she agreed with me. On her visit in autumn 2007, she entrusted me with black-and-white photos of various manuscripts, including those of the Merv *Avadāna* together with her transliteration and Russian translation of it. I was greatly moved by her trust in me. In 2011, she kindly sent me colour photos of a part of the Sanskrit manuscripts and fragments from Central Asia, including those, which are presently published in this volume. She wished me to launch the StPSF series. I was again touched by her trust in me and her sincere wish to promote Buddhist studies by publicising the treasures of Buddhist culture which she had protected during difficult times. Thus, we, Buddhist researchers, are greatly indebted to her.

The Director of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts (IOM) in Russia, Prof. Irina Popova is a world-famous sinologist, who speaks Chinese fluently, and as I work also on the language of the Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures, I occasionally meet her at international conferences on Sinology and I am always impressed by her scholarship. When she visited Kyoto in 2009 for the opening ceremony of the exhibition entitled, “On the Trail of Texts Along the Silk Road: Russian Expedition Discoveries of Manuscripts in Central Asia”, held at Kyoto National Museum, my friend, Rev. Eikei Akao, who is curator there, arranged our meeting at his office. Daringly, in my poor Russian, I explained to her about the StPSF project and she accepted my proposal without any conditions. We agreed to publish the series jointly under the names of IOM and IRIAB. My emotion at that time was beyond words and it remains so even today. Thus, we are greatly indebted to her as well.

Having received the photos from IOM in 2011, I asked my colleague, Dr. Tatsushi Tamai to transliterate them preliminarily, which he did in an incredibly short time. Soon afterwards in the same year, we started reading the manuscript of the *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna* at the Brāhmī Club, comparing it with another Sanskrit version and the Chinese and Tibetan translations. I, immediately, realised that this text, which deals with ancient Brahmanical astrology and thus cannot be originally a Buddhist text, is very important, not only for the cultural relationship between India and China — which was a life-long theme of my Chinese “guru”, the late Prof. Ji Xianlin — but also for the research on the origin and development of Esoteric Buddhism. I advised Dr. Zhou Liqun, who was looking for a theme for her dissertation at Beijing University, to undertake this research and she actually submitted a dissertation concerning this text in 2014.

Having read through the *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna* manuscript, we started upon the *Ajitasenavyākaraṇa* at the Brāhmī Club. By chance, I came to know that Mr. William B. Rasmussen wrote his MA thesis on the Gilgit manuscript of this text at the University of Texas in 1995. Therefore, I asked my friend, Prof. Oliver Freiberger of that university, to send me a copy of it after obtaining the author’s permission. He found both the thesis in the library and Mr. Rasmussen, who had by that time become a lawyer. I am grateful to both Prof. Freiberger for this and to Mr. Rasmussen, who allowed us to use his work including his English translation for this volume. However, I must apologise to him for not being able to give him — who is fully occupied as a lawyer — enough time to revise his translation. The *Ajitasenavyākaraṇa* is a unique and very problematic text. It contains a good many corrupted forms and grammatically-clumsy sentences, which made me assume immediately that it could not have been composed by a native Indian but by somebody in the Indian cultural periphery — I felt a similar “taste” in it as in Chinese poems by Japanese people. The corrupted forms in this text are neither Prakrit nor hyper-sanskritisms from Prakrit, but they seem to have been corrupted from the start. As I mentioned above, there is another manuscript from Gilgit. Usually, readings in a Central Asian manuscript and a Gilgit manuscript of a same text differ from one another, which I know only too well from my previous studies on the Lotus Sutra and the *Prajñāpāramitā*. However, in the case of the *Ajitasenavyākaraṇa*, both manuscripts from Gilgit and Central Asia surprisingly agree with

each other. Both have the same *genuine* corrupted forms. For these and other reasons, I came to assume that this text was composed in Khotan possibly as late as the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century. In any case, it cannot be an early Mahāyāna text as some scholars have maintained. Further linguistic research of these two manuscripts is a *desideratum*.

After the *Ajitasenavyākaraṇa*, we read the *Avadāna* Anthology from Merv together at the Brāhmī Club from summer 2013 until January 2015. Besides this, I read it through with my German “guru”, Prof. em. Oskar von Hinüber during his stay at IRIAB in 2012 and 2013 as well. I am greatly indebted to him and the members of the Brāhmī Club as well as to Margarita, who entrusted me with her preliminary transliteration and Russian translation.

Soon after I had received the photos from St. Petersburg and identified several fragments as belonging to the *Mahāparinirvāṇa mahāsūtra*, I sent them to Dr. Hiromi Habata, who specialises in the research of this scripture and I am grateful to her for contributing a meticulous article on these fragments in this volume.

I should like to apologise to my colleagues and readers as well as to Margarita for the delay of this publication, which is solely due to the fact that I had been pursuing several projects at the same time. I do hope that I can publish the next volume without too great an interval in between.

I should like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Safarali Shomakhmadov of IOM, who not only read the manuscripts and fragments with us through Skype, but also helped me in various ways during the preparation of this volume. I am also indebted to all the participants of the Brāhmī Club, who have been sharing with me, not only information and PDFs, but also the enjoyment of reading ancient Buddhist manuscripts. As I usually work alone, conversations with the participants have given me a great deal of joy and stimulation.

I am also very grateful to my colleague, Prof. Noriyuki Kudō, the institute’s staff, Ms. Hisako Hayashi and Ms. Hiroko Matsui, who encouraged me throughout the preparation process of this volume and helped me in various ways. I should also like to express my gratitude to the former president of Soka University, Hideo Yamamoto, to the present president, Yoshihisa Baba, to the Board of Trustees Chair of Soka University, Yasunori Tashiro and to the Chair of the Steering Committee of IRIAB, Hiroto Teranishi, for their understanding, encouragement and generous support in our various research projects.

Thanks are due to my friends, Rev. Peter Lait and Ms. Susan Roach, who went to great trouble to check my English.

Without the unselfish endeavours and generosity of all these people, this volume could never have been possible.

Seishi Karashima

Hachioji, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2015