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The *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University* (ARIRIAB), published annually since 1997, contains papers on a wide range of Buddhist studies, from philological research on Buddhist texts and manuscripts in various languages to studies on Buddhist art and archaeological finds. Also, by publishing and introducing newly-discovered manuscripts and artefacts, we aim to make them available to a wider public so as to foster further research.

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CONTENTS

• **RESEARCH ARTICLES:**

Harry FALK and Elisabeth STEINBRÜCKNER: A metrical version from Gandhāra of the ‘Miracle at Śrāvastī’ (Text from the Split Collection 4) [two figures]	3
Petra KIEFFER-PÜLZ: Some thoughts on Niḥsargikā Pātayantikā 27 (26) of the Sanskrit Sarvāstivāda <i>Bhikṣuprātimokṣasūtras</i>	43
Katarzyna MARCINIAK: Gleanings from the <i>Mahāvastu</i> (II)	57
Jonathan A. SILK: A Dunhuang Tibetan Aspirational Prayer for Rebirth in Amitābha’s Pure Land	65
James B. APPLE: Diplomatic Edition of the Dunhuang Tibetan Version of the <i>Vīradattaparipṛcchā</i> (<i>dpa’ sbyin gyis zhus pa</i>)	89
LI Xuezhu: Diplomatic Transcription of the Sanskrit Manuscript of the <i>Abhidharmasamuccayavyākhyā</i> —Folios 35v1–40r6—	117
Péter-Dániel SZÁNTÓ: A Sanskrit Fragment of Daśabalaśrīmitra’s <i>Samṣkṛtāsamṣkṛtaviniścaya</i> (Ch. 29 & 30)	129
Peter ZIEME: Buddhist <i>pāramitās</i> as seen from Old Uygur texts [two figures]	147
Haiyan HU-von HINÜBER: The Suspended Crossing (<i>śaṅkupatha</i>) in the Gorges of the Indus River as described by Chinese pilgrims Faxian, Dharmodgata and Xuanzang [one figure]	167
Peter SKILLING: Buddhism in Southernmost Maharashtra: The Brahmapuri Relic Coffin and Its Inscription	187
M. NASIM KHAN: Studying Buddhist Sculptures in Context (III): The Case of the Stair riser relief panels from the Buddhist Site of Aziz Dheri, Gandhāra-Pakistan [46 figures]	197
Katsumi TANABE: The Origin of the Amida Buddha — The concept of the Amitābha/Amitāyus Buddha arose from Gilt Śākyamuni Buddha Images of Gandhara [20 figures]	209
Brief Communication	
Noriyuki KUDO: A Newly Identified Sanskrit Manuscript of the <i>Karmavibhaṅga</i> preserved in the Cambridge University Library	229
* * *	
Obituary: Seishi Karashima, Professor/Director, IRIAB, Soka University	231
Obituary: Akira Yuyama, Professor Emeritus, IRIAB, Soka University	233

● **EDITORIALS:**

Contributors to this Issue

Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement of *ARIRIAB*

235

New Publications:

The *Mahāvastu*. A New Edition. Vol. II

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Contents of Back Issues [*BPPB*, *StPSF*, *GMNAI*]

Cumulative Index of Authors [*ARIRIAB*]

● **PLATES**

H. FALK and E. STEINBRÜCKNER: A metrical version from Gandhāra	PLATES	1–2
K. MARCINIAK: Gleanings from the <i>Mahāvastu</i> (II)	PLATE	3
P. SKILLING: Buddhism in Southernmost Maharashtra	PLATES	4–6
M. NASIM KHAN: Studying Buddhist Sculptures in Context (III)	PLATES	7–16
K. TANABE: The Origin of the Amida Buddha	PLATES	17–20

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Gleanings from the *Mahāvastu* (II)*

Katarzyna MARCINIAK

Abstract:

The article deals with some passages in the *Mahāvastu* (abbr. Mv), which were misunderstood by Émile Senart in his *editio princeps* but can be restored or considerably improved on the basis of better readings found in an old palm-leaf manuscript from Nepal (abbr. ms. Sa), dating back to the 12-13th centuries, as well as by comparison with the parallel passages found in the Sanskrit, Pāli and Tibetan texts.

Keywords:

Mahāvastu, Buddhist (Hybrid) Sanskrit, Senart

1.

In one of the chapters of the *Mahāvastu* there occurs a passage in which the complexion of the Buddha is compared to a part of a Tāla fruit:

Mv(KM) 3.414f.

pariśuddho bhagavato Gautamasya cchavīvarṇo paryavadāto¹ viprasannañ ca mukhavarṇam. sayyathāpi nāma tālasya pakvasya samprati cyutasya vṛntā bandhanāśayo² pariśuddho bhavati paryavadāto sapītanirbhāso ca evam eva bhagavato Gautamasya cchavīvarṇo pariśuddho paryavadāto viprasanno ca mukhavarṇo.³

“Pure and bright is the complexion of Lord Gautama, serene is his face. Like the part of a ripe Tāla fruit which is attached to the footstalk (*bandhanāśaya*), right after it has fallen from the stalk is bright and with a golden sheen, so is the complexion of Lord Gautama pure and bright and his face serene”.⁴

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¹ Sen. *pariśuddho parya*°.

² *āśaya* < *āśraya*; cf. Pā *āsaya* < *āśaya*, *āśraya*.

³ Cf. Sen. 3.325 *pariśuddho bhagavato Gautamasya cchavīvarṇo pariśuddho paryavadāto viprasannañ ca mukhavarṇam | sayyathāpi nāma tālasya pakvasya samprati vṛntacyutasya bandhanāśrayo pariśuddho bhavati paryavadāto sapītanirbhāso ca evam eva bhagavato Gautamasya cchavīvarṇo pariśuddho paryavadāto viprasanno ca mukhavarṇo*.

⁴ Cf. Jon. III 316 misunderstands the simile: “Very clear is the complexion of the exalted Gotama, very clear and very bright; very serene is his countenance. Like as, when a ripe palm-nut has just fallen from the tree, the



bandhanās(r)aya is the part of a Tāla fruit right underneath the husk, which is attached to the stalk. It is golden-yellow and glistening, in contrast to the remaining part of the fruit which is dark in colour.
See Plate 3.

We find the same simile also in the *Lalitavistara* (abbr. LV) 405.10:
tadyathāpi nāma tālaphalasya pakvasya samanantaravṛntacyutasya bandhanāśrayaḥ (mss. °*āśayaḥ*) *pītanirbhāso bhavati pariśuddhaḥ paryavadāta evam eva bhavato Gautamasya pariśuddhānīndriyāṇi pariśuddham mukhamaṇḍalaṃ paryavādatam*.

“Just like the part of a ripe Tāla fruit which is attached to the footstalk, right after it has fallen from the stalk is of yellow hue, in the same way the senses of Lord Gautama are pure and (his) round face is pure and bright”.⁵

The Tibetan translation of LV⁶ reads:
Lit. “Just like the immediate basis of a ripe Tāla fruit detached from the footstalk becomes yellow, pure and bright, in the same way, O Gautama, your senses are pure and your face is pure and bright”, i.e., when the ripe fruit of the Tāla tree is detached from the footstalk, the part of the fruit which has been attached to the stalk becomes golden and bright.”⁷

In SN IV 306.10f. we find the following passage:

stalk which supported it is very clear and bright with a golden sheen, just so is the complexion of Gotama the Exalted One very clear and bright and his countenance very serene”.

⁵ Cf. Foucaux 1884: 337 “Ainsi, par exemple, du fruit mûr du Tāla, aussitôt qu’il est détaché du pédoncule, le support qui l’attachait prend le brillant d’une couleur jaune ...”.

⁶ *’phags pa rGya cher rol pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po’i mdo* (*ārya-Lalitavistara nāma mahāyānasūtra*), Derge, no. 95, mDo sde, kha 194a (fol. 194a7): *’di lta ste dper na / shing ta la’i ’bras bu smin pa rtsa ba nas chad ma thag pa’i rtsa ba logs ser por gda’ ba lags te / yongs su dag cing yongs su byang ba de* (fol. 194b1) *bzhin du gau ta ma khyod kyi dbang po rnam ni yongs su dag la / zhal gyi dkyil ’khor ni yongs su dag cing yongs su byang ba’o //*.

⁷ Cf. Foucaux 1884: 379 “Ainsi, par exemple, que le fruit mûr du Tāla, aussitôt qu’il est détaché du pédoncule, se revêt d’une nuance dorée, est complètement pur, complètement achevé”.

ekam samayam Bhagavā Rājagahe viharati Veḷuvane Kalandakanivāpe || atha kho Tālapuṭo naṭagāmani yena Bhagavā tenupasāṅkami (...)

Spk III 102.7f. explains the name Tālapuṭa in the following way: *Tālapuṭo ti, evaṃ nāmako. tassa bandhanā-mutta-tāla-pakka-vaṇṇo viya mukhavaṇṇo vippasanno ahoṣi* (“like the colour of the ripe Tāla fruit detached from the stalk”).

2. Śaṅkhalikhita

There are numerous passages within the Mv in which the word *saṃlikhita* occurs: Sa 284r6 ⁸*sambādho punar ayam ḡrhāvāso rajasām āvāse⁹ abhyavakāsaṃ pravrajyā. taṃ na labhyaṃ agāram adhyāvasantena ekāntasaṃlikhitam ekāntam anavadyam ekānta-parisuddhaṃ ekāntaparyavadātaṃ brahmacaryaṃ carituṃ. yaṃ nūnāham agārasyānagāriyaṃ pravrajeyaṃ¹⁰* (= Sa 149v6, 158r5, 342r5, 342r2, 343r5, 343v3, 343v5, 344r2, 344r5, 344v2, 345r3, the mss. and Sen. each time read °*saṃlikhita*).

A very similar passage occurs also in the SBV II 231.30-232.3, where the ms. also has an incorrect form *śaṅkhālīkṛtaṃ* for *śaṅkhalikhitaṃ*:

sambādho ḡrhāvāsaḥ rajasām āvāsaḥ abhyavakāsaṃ ca pravrajyā. tad idaṃ na <suka>raṃ ḡrhinā agāram adhyāvasatā ekāntaśaṅkhālīkṛtaṃ (corr. Gnoli *ekānta-śaṅkhalikhitaṃ*), *yāvaj jīvaṃ, kevalaṃ, paripūrṇaṃ, pariśuddhaṃ, paryavadātaṃ, brahmacaryaṃ carituṃ. yaṃ nv ahaṃ keśaśmaśrūṇy avatārya, kāśāyāni vastrāṇy ācchādya, samyag eva śraddhayā agārād anagārikāṃ pravrajeyaṃ.*

Edgerton (BHSD s.v. *saṃlikhita*) suggests “adj. or ppp. (not in Skt. or Pali; = AMg. *saṃlihiya*, ppp. to the noun *saṃlehaṇā* = Jain Skt. *saṃlekhanā*; Pali has *sallekha* = *saṃlekha*, q.v., and °*lekhitācāra*), strictly, severely controlled, restricted: in a cliché describing brahmacaryaṃ, *ekānta-saṃlikhitaṃ*”, which is incorrect (so is the explanation of the form given in SWTF s.v. *śaṃkalīkṛta*).

Both *saṃlikhita* in the Mv and *śaṅkhālīkṛta* in SBV are corruptions of the same form *saṃkha-likhita* (Skt *śaṅkha*^o, MW “perfect in its kind, faultless, flawless”; Pā id., PTSD “like a polished shell”). It is also confirmed by numerous occurrences of this form in Pali, e.g.

DN I 63.2ff. *sambādho gharāvāso rajopātho abbhokāso pabbajjā. na idaṃ sukaraṃ agāraṃ ajjhāvasatā ekantaparipuṇṇaṃ ekantaparīsuddhaṃ saṃkhalikhitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ carituṃ. yaṃ nūnāhaṃ kesamassaṃ ohāretvā kāśāyāni vatthāni acchādetvā agārasmā*

⁸ Cf. Sn 406 *sambādho ’yaṃ gharāvāso rajassāyatanaṃ iti | abbhokāso ca pabbajjā iti disvāna pabbaji ||*; SN II 219.24 *sambādho gharāvāso rajāpatho abbhokāso pabbajjā*; Śbh I 16.6ff. *sambādho ḡrhāvāso rajasām āvāsaḥ | abhyavakāsaṃ pravrajya yaṃ nv ahaṃ sarvaṃ kaḍatravargaṃ dhanadhānyahiraṇyaṃ cōtsṛjya svākhyāte dharmavinaye samyag evāgārād anagārikāṃ pravrajeyaṃ, pravrajitvā ca pratipattiyā sampādayeyam iti | ya eva samutpannaś chandaḥ kuśaleṣu dharmeṣu, ayam ucyate kuśalo dharmacchandaḥ.*

⁹ Sen. °*vāso* (≠ mss.); for the nom. sg. masc. -e, cf. BHSG § 8.25; Abhis III § 6.3; Karashima 2002 § 9.2.

¹⁰ Cf. SN II 219.27f. *yaṃ nūnāhaṃ kesamassaṃ ohāretvā kāśāyāni vatthāni acchādetvā agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajjeyaṃ.*

anagāriyaṃ pabbajeyyan ti (cf. Sv I 181.1f. *saṅkha-likhitaṃ likhita-saṅkha-sadisam dhota-saṅkha-sappaṭibhāgaṃ caritabbaṃ*).

DN(F) 66.5ff. “Für jemand, der das Hausleben führt, ist es nicht leicht, den ganz vollkommenen, ganz reinen, perlmuttergleichen heiligen Wandel zu führen”.

This term might be somehow connected with the names of two brothers, great sages, who were famous for their penance and for abiding strictly by the rule in the country, namely cutting off one’s hands on a charge of theft. When Likhita ate Śaṅkha’s vegetables without asking for permission, the latter sent Likhita to the king to receive appropriate punishment (see PE, p. 453, s.v. Likhita I).¹¹ They are said to have composed the *Dharmasūtras*.

3. *Alparajaskajātīya*

Mv(KM) 3.411

atha khalu bhagavato etad abhūsi “Udrako Rāmaputro *śuddho alparajo aparokṣajātīyo so ca dūragato atikrāntagato nevasaṃjñānāsamjñāyatanasahavratāye*¹² *dharman deśayati. adya saptāhaṃ kālaṃgato*¹³ *Udrako Rāmaputro, mahājāni*¹⁴ *Udrako Rāmaputro. katamo pi khalv anyo pi satvo śuddho alparajo aparokṣajātīyo me pratibalo prathamam dharmam deśayitam*¹⁵ *ājānitum na ca naṃ*¹⁶ *viheṭṭhaye*¹⁷ *yam idaṃ dharmasravaṇāya?*

All the mss. and Sen. read *aparokṣajātīyo* for *alparajaskajātīyo*. Interestingly, *aparokṣa*^o occurs also in the parallel passage in LV 403.6, which reads: *Rudrakhaḥ khalu Rāmaputraḥ śuddhaḥ svākāraḥ suvijñāpakaḥ suviśodhako mandarāgadoṣamoho*¹⁸ *(aparokṣavijñāno)*.¹⁹

¹¹ Cf. PW s.v. *likhita* “2) m. N. pr. eines Ṛṣi, der auch als Verfasser eines Gesetzbuches fast immer in Verbindung mit Śaṅkha genannt wird. Nach MBH. 12,668. fgg. wurden dem Likhita, weil er in der Einsiedelei seines Bruders Śaṅkha ohne dessen Erlaubniss Fürchte gebrochen und gegessen hatte, vom Könige Sudjumna beide Hände abgehauen. Daher ist *śaṅkhalikhita* so v. a. "ein strenge Gerechtigkeit übender Fürst" 4252. *śaṅkhalikhitā vṛttih* so v. a. "das Ueben strenger Gerechtigkeit" 4756. *śaṅkhalikhitapriya* "ein Freund strenger Gerechtigkeit”.

¹² Na Sen. *naiva*^o; “stage of neither consciousness nor unconsciousness” (BHSD s.v.); Pā *nevasaññānāsaññā*^o.

¹³ Sen. *kālagato*; for the so-called *aluk-samāsa*, a *tatpuruṣa* compound with the case ending (here acc.) in its first element retained, cf. Whitney 1889: 483, § 1250; cf. also Oberlies 2001: 122; Sn(tr.N) 182 (*ad* Sn 168); Sadd 741, 745, 767; cf. also Merv-Av *kālaṃ-√gam* “to die”.

¹⁴ Sa Na *mahājīno* (s.e.); Sen. *mahāhānir* (≠ mss.); see DP s.v. *jāni*² “loss, deprivation”; cf. Vin I 7.33f. *atha kho bhagavato etad ahoṣi: mahājāniyo kho Uddako Rāmaputto, sace hi so imaṃ dhammaṃ suṇeyya, khippam eva ājāneyyā*.

¹⁵ Sa *deśayitum*; Na Sen. *deśitam*.

¹⁶ Na Sen. *me*.

¹⁷ Corr. Na; Sa *viheṭṭhaye*; Sen. *viheṭṭhā*.

¹⁸ Cf. Tibetan, Derge no. 95, mdo sde, kha 193a (fol. 193a3) *rnam par ses pa lkog tu ma gyur pa* “whose cognition [of phenomena] is evident, not hidden” (cf. BHSD s.v. *aparokṣa* “having not secret intelligence”).

¹⁹ Cf. Foucaux 1884: 335 “Quel est l’être pur, de bonne nature, facile à discipliner, facile à instruire, facile à purifier, ayant peu de passion, de haine et de trouble d’esprit, et ne faisant pas un secret de la science, et qui, faute d’avoir entendu la loi, a subi une grande privation?”.

On the basis of the three occurrences of the distorted form in Mv and LV, Edgerton (BHSD s.v. *aparokṣa*) suggests: “*aparokṣa-vijñāna* LV 403.5, 9 (of Rudraka Rāmaputra) and *aparokṣa-jātīya* Mv iii.322.11, 14 (of Udraka Rāmaputra), or *-jātika* Mv iii.415.10, of manifest, open understanding (LV), or manifest, open (? not obscure? precise mg. not very clear) in nature (Mv)”]; however, his observations are not correct (cf. also SWTF s.v. *aparokṣa-vijñāna*).

In fact, the correct form *alparajaska-* “of slight passion, free from passion” (BHSD s.v.) occurs three times in Mv(KM) 3.411 (note, however, that the parallel passages in the LV read *aparokṣa-*):

Mv *Ārāḍo Kālāmo śrāddho alparaḥo alparajaskajātīyo*;

Mv *katamo puna anyo pi satvo śuddho alparajaskajātīyo* (LV 403.4f. *katamaḥ sattvaḥ śuddhaḥ svākāraḥ suvineyaḥ suvijñāpakāḥ suviśodhako mandarāgadoṣa-moho ’parokṣavijñāno yo ’śrutavān dharmasya parihīyate*)

Mv *pañcakā bhadravargīyā śuddhā alparajā alparajaskajātīyo* (LV 404.7ff. *te khalu pañcakā bhadravargīyāḥ śuddhāḥ svākārāḥ suvijñāpakāḥ suviśodhakā mandarāgadoṣamohā aparokṣavijñānāḥ*).

Cf. also CPS II 116 *santi sattvā loke jātā vṛddhās tīkṣṇeindriyā api madhyendriyā spi mṛdvindriyā api | svākārāḥ suvineyā alparajaso (’)lparajaskajātīyā ye ’śravaṇād dharmasya parihīyante ||*;

as well as numerous occurrences in Pāli, e.g.

Vin I 5.6 *santi sattā apparajakkhajātīkā assavanatā dhammassa parihāyanti*

(see CPD s.v. *appa-rajakkha* “free from passions [said of a person in whom the guṇa rajas is insignificant; thus “fit for the dhamma]”]; DP s.v. *appa* “-rajakkha, with little or no passion or impurity; -rajakkhajātika, being by nature free from passion”).

It seems likely that *aparokṣa-* in the Mv and LV is a result of a series of wrong back-formations, i.e. *-kkha-* was backformed to *-kṣa-* instead of *-ska-*, *appa-* was ‘corrected’ to *apa-* instead of being backformed to *alpa-*, then the scribe seeing *aparājakṣa-* might have ‘corrected’ it to *aparokṣa-*.

4. *Bhavaṃmūlaka, bhavannetrika, bhagavantaprabhava, bhagavantapraṭiśaraṇa*

Mv(KM) 3.430

evam ukte āyusmantā paṃcakā bhadravargikā²⁰ bhagavantam etad avocat “bhavaṃmūlakā²¹ khalu bhagavāṃ²² dharmā bhavannetrikā²³ bhagavan bhagavantaprabhavā²⁴ bhagavan

²⁰ Sen. °vargīyā; for the intervocalic *k < y*, cf. Norman CP VIII 104 (e.g. *Sabhika < Sabhiya; Bhallika < Bhalliya*).

²¹ Na Sen. *bhavamūlakā*; *bhavan* = *bhagavan*.

²² Na Sen. *bhagavan*; for the voc. sg. *bhagavān*, cf. BHSG § 18.81; Abhis III § 15.4.

²³ Na Sen. *bhavanetrikā*; *bhavan* = *bhagavan*.

²⁴ Na Sen. *bhavaprabhavā*; for the stem *-nta* in composition, cf. BHSG § 18.5.

*bhagavantapraṭiśaraṇā*²⁵. *sādhu bhagavāṃ bhikṣūṇām etam arthaṃ bhāṣe. bhikṣū bhagavato sammukhāc chrūtvā sammukhā*²⁶ *pratigṛhitvā tathatvāya dhārayiṣyanti*”.

“O Lord, (our) teachings are rooted in the Lord (*bhagavaṃmūlakā*), guided by the Lord (*bhagavannetikā*), have the Lord as their source (*bhagavaṃprabhavā*), have the Lord as their resort (*bhagavaṃpraṭiśaraṇā*). It would be good if the Lord would explain the meaning (of these words) to the monks”.

The correct readings in ms. Sa *bhavaṃmūlaka* “rooted in the Lord”, *bhavannetrika* “guided by the Lord”, *bhagavantaprabhava* “having the Lord as their source” and *bhagavantapraṭiśaraṇa* “having the Lord as their resort” were changed in ms. Na. The scribe probably regarded the stems *bhavan-* and *bhagavanta-* as scribal errors for *bhava-*. Therefore, he changed the text according to his understanding, and, since all the later mss. derive from ms. Na, they all follow its readings:

Na *bhavamūlakā khalu bhagavaṃ dharmā bhavanetikā bhagavan bhavaprabhavā bhagavan bhavapraṭiśaraṇā*,

which was followed by Senart in Mv 3.337:

evam ukte bhikṣū bhagavantam etad avocat || bhavamūlakā bhagavan dharmā bhavanetikā bhagavan bhavaprabhavāḥ bhavapraṭiśaraṇā | sādhu bhagavāṃ bhikṣūṇām etam arthaṃ bhāṣe bhikṣū bhagavataḥ saṃmukhāc chrutvā saṃmukhāt pratigṛhitvā tathatvāya dhārayiṣyanti ||

Jon. III 331 “Coming-to-be, Lord, is the source of things; coming-to-be is their conduit; coming-to-be is their cause; coming-to-be is their mainstay”.

Cf. the parallel passages in Pāli, e.g.

MN I 309.30 *bhagavaṃmūlakā no bhante dhammā bhagavaṃnettikā bhagavaṃpaṭiśaraṇā. sādhu vata bhante bhagavan taṃ yeva paṭibhātu etassa bhāsitassa attho, bhagavato sutvā bhikkhū dhāressanti* (MN[tr.Ñ] 408 “Venerable sir, our teachings are rooted in the Blessed One, guided by the Blessed One, have the Blessed One as their resort”).

SN III 66.7 *bhagavaṃmūlakā no bhante dhammā bhagavannetikā bhagavaṃpaṭiśaraṇā* (SN[tr] 901 “Venerable sir, our teachings are rooted in the Blessed One, guided by the Blessed One, take recourse to the Blessed One”).

Bibliography and Abbreviations

Abhis = *Die Abhisamācārikā Dharmāḥ: Verhaltensregeln für buddhistische Mönche der Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādins*, herausgegeben, mit der chinesischen Parallel-version verglichen, übersetzt und kommentiert von Seishi Karashima, unter Mitwirkung von Oskar von Hinüber, Tokyo 2012: International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism, Soka University (Bibliotheca Philologica et Philosophica Buddhica XIII), 3 vols.

BHSD = Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, New Haven, 1953: Yale University Press.

BHSG = Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar*, New Haven, 1953: Yale University

²⁵ Na Sen. *bhavapraṭiśaraṇā*.

²⁶ Na Sen. *sammukhāt*.

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- CPD = *A Critical Pāli Dictionary*, begun by V. Trenckner, ed. D. Andersen *et al.*, Copenhagen, Bristol, 1924-2011.
- CPS = *Das Catuspariṣatsūtra, Eine kanonische Lehrschrift über die Begründung der buddhistischen Gemeinde*, hrsg. und bearb. von Ernst Waldschmidt, Teil I-III, Berlin 1952-1962 (*Abhandlungen der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Klasse für Sprachen, Literatur und Kunst* 1952, 2; 1956, 1; 1960, 1).
- DN(F) = *Dīghanikāya. Das Buch der Langen Texte des buddhistischen Kanons*, in Auswahl übersetzt, Göttingen, Leipzig 1913.
- DP = *A Dictionary of Pāli*, by Margaret Cone, Oxford 2001-: The Pali Text Society.
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- Jā = *Jātaka*, together with *Jātakatthavaṇṇanā* (ed. Fausbøll 1877–96).
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- Mv(KM) = a new edition of the *Mahāvastu*, under preparation by Katarzyna Marciniak.
- MW = Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Oxford 1899: The Clarendon Press.
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- PE = *Purāṇic Encyclopaedia. A Comprehensive Dictionary with Special Reference to the Epic and Purāṇic Literature*, ed. Vettam Mani, Delhi 1975, Motilal Banarsidass.
- PW = Otto Böhtlingk, Rudolph Roth, *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch*, 7 Bde., St. Petersburg 1855-1875.

- Sa = the palm-leaf manuscript Sa of the *Mahāvastu*; on paleographic grounds dated to ca. 12th/13th century.
- Sadd = *Saddanīti. La Grammaire Palie d'Aggavaṃsa*. Texte établi par Helmer Smith, I (1928), II (1929), III (1930), IV (1949) Tables, V 1 (1954), V 2 (1966) Vocabulaire, Lund: (*Skrifter utgivna av Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet i Lund*, XII 1-5); repr.: 3 vols., Oxford 2001: PTS.
- Sen. = *Le Mahāvastu*, texte sanscrit publié pour la première fois et accompagné d'introductions et d'un commentaire, par É. Senart, Paris 1882-1897: Imprimerie nationale (Collection d'ouvrages orientaux; Seconde série, 3 Vols.).
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- Spk = *Sāratthappakāsinī*, Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the *Samyutta-nikāya*, ed. F.L. Woodward, 3 vols., London 1929-37: PTS.
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- SWTF = *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch der buddhistischen Texte aus den Turfan-Funden*, ed. H. Bechert, K. Röhrborn, J.-U. Hartmann, Göttingen 1973ff.
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