

MANUSCRIPTS IN THE SCHØYEN COLLECTION



BUDDHIST MANUSCRIPTS

Volume IV

General Editor:
Jens Braarvig

Editorial Committee:
Jens Braarvig, Paul Harrison, Jens-Uwe Hartmann, Kazunobu Matsuda,
Gudrun Melzer, Lore Sander

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THIS VOLUME
IS DEDICATED TO

KLAUS WILLE

IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF HIS GENEROSITY TO HIS COLLEAGUES
AND HIS PRODIGIOUS CONTRIBUTIONS
TO THE STUDY OF BUDDHIST MANUSCRIPTS

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In December 1996, the Buddhist Manuscripts in the Schøyen Collection (BMSC) project was launched as the outcome of an informal meeting in Leiden (for its early history see the introduction to the first volume), and only four years later, in the year 2000, the first volume in the BMSC series was published. A grant by the Centre for Advanced Study at the Norwegian Academy of Sciences in the years 2001/2002 allowed such a concentration of forces that a second volume appeared in 2002, and the remarkable momentum created by the most generous support of the Academy led to a third volume in 2006. However, despite the best intentions of the members of the BMSC editorial group, other academic duties and commitments began to intrude upon the work, slowing down the forward advance. Although scholars were encouraged to prepare contributions to the next volume and a number of them obliged and sent us their papers in a timely fashion, the years passed by and deadlines came and went, until we realized that a fourth volume would never appear if we did not put our shoulders to the wheel with renewed determination. It is therefore with a considerable sense of relief that now, exactly twenty years after the formation of our project, we are finally able to bring the fourth volume to publication. We thank our contributors for waiting so patiently for its arrival.

However, the unduly long period between the conception of the volume and the final editorial work to bring it into the world resulted in an unforeseen benefit. Early papers grew, and in the course of time more contributions were submitted than originally expected. Their length proved far too much for one volume, and therefore, as a welcome consequence, another one is already waiting in the wings. In the present volume, the focus is on manuscripts in the Gāndhārī language and Khāroṣṭhī script. This is eloquent testimony to the growing interest in recent years in Gāndhārī literature and in the early phases of Buddhism in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent on which it throws new light. The next volume, the fifth in the series, will be dedicated primarily to popular Mahāyāna sūtras circulating in the middle of the first millennium in the area of Greater Gandhāra, most notably to the *Bhaiṣajyaguruvaiḍūryaprabharāja-sūtra*. Many of the contributions to Volume V are already at an advanced stage of preparation, and so, although it may be risky to make promises in this regard, we hope that it will appear without undue delay.

Since the publication of Volume III our editorial committee has been enlarged with the addition of Gudrun Melzer of Munich. We are delighted to welcome Gudrun to our group, and see this as the first step in passing the reins over to the next generation. Indeed, it is especially gratifying to see the numbers of young scholars embarking on their careers in this field, which is certainly not shrinking. Nor does the amount of material needing to be worked on appear to be dwindling. Far from it; the study of Buddhist manuscripts is thriving, and offering ever new perspectives on the historical development of the religion, on its literature, its ideas and its practices.

It gives us great pleasure to dedicate this volume to our esteemed colleague Klaus Wille, who has not only contributed many studies to this series under his own name, but whose preliminary transliterations of manuscripts in the Schøyen and other collections also constitute the foundation upon which the studies of most of the other contributors are built. Others may have polished the stones, but more often than not it was Klaus who first dug them out of the ground and did the preliminary sorting and cutting. We thank him here for his tireless dedication to this work and for the generosity with which he has shared the results of his labours with all of us.

Jens Braarvig
On behalf of the Editorial Committee

Oslo, November 2016

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