

Vihāra Project

JSPS KAKENHI, Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (A), Grant No. 18H03569.

“Comprehensive Studies of Indian Buddhist Monasteries from the Gupta Period Onward”

[Vihāra Project]

September
2021

Vol. 6

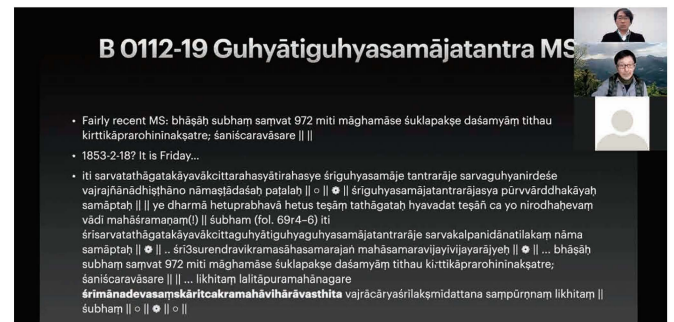
Newsletter Vol. 6

Domestic Research Meeting Held by the Team of Evaluation

On Saturday, December 19, 2020, the team of evaluation held a research meeting. Originally scheduled to be held in a hybrid online/in-person format at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS), Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, the increase in COVID-19 infection within Tokyo at the time resulted in an almost entirely online conference, with only the chief of the team Dr. Satoshi Ogura participating at the venue.

Kengo Harimoto of the University of Naples “L’Orientale” talked about “An Examination of the History of Buddhist Monasteries in the Kathmandu Basin Through Inscriptions and Manuscript Colophons.” Dr. Harimoto primarily focused on the usages of the word *vihāra* in manuscripts collected by the Nepalese-German Manuscript Cataloguing Project (NGMPP/NGMCP) and additionally reexamined the inscriptions overlooked in previous research to reconsider the history of Buddhist monasteries in the Kathmandu Basin. Of the manuscripts collected by the project, there exist some 200 examples of references to Buddhist monasteries, with almost all of them dating back from the 18th century. Elsewhere, most inscriptions are from the 5th- to 8th-century Licchavi era, raising the issue on the chronological gap between the two groups of materials. Based on the examples available for reference as of now, Dr. Harimoto examined the content of academic study among Buddhists in Nepal, including the locations of the monasteries and their relations with the monarchy. Dr. Harimoto finally suggested that further light may be shed on the aforementioned matter by mainly constructing a database of the Licchavi-era inscriptions and integrating the Nepalese manuscript data currently dispersed worldwide. The Q&A session included discussions on the potential for future research concerning clay seals and the interpretation of

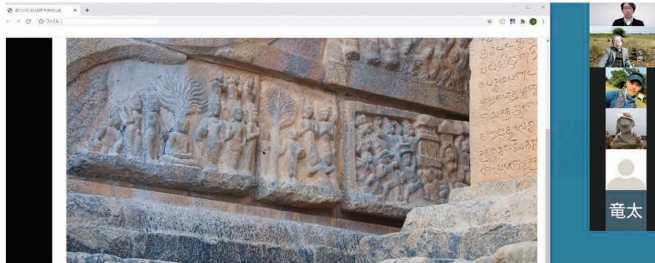
compound words formed using the word *vihāra* (*mahāvihāra*, *dakṣiṇavihāra*, etc.).



Dr. Harimoto's presentation

Jun Takashima (Prof. Emeritus, TUFS) spoke on “The Final Phase of Buddhism in South India,” with the South Indian content as a valuable extension of the perspective of the Vihāra Project, which has heretofore focused on examples of Buddhist monasteries in North India. In his own Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research, “Research on the Final Phase of Buddhism in India” (AY2017–2019), Prof. Takashima conducted extensive surveys of the remains of Buddhist monasteries in South India, photographs from which were shown during his presentation, including many examples of Buddha statues and monastery remains. In some cases, such as those at Kanchipuram, the Buddha statues are now located within Hindu temples, with some buried in the temple walls. These instances suggest that a Hindu deity became the object of worship in what was originally a Buddhist monastery, with the Buddha statues created in the past left within the Hindu temple precincts. Based on the distribution of the Buddha statues discovered, Prof. Takashima noted that until the Chola dynasty, Buddhist monasteries were thought to have been centers of marine trade and closely related to the merchant guilds involved therein. Furthermore, Prof. Takashima noted that many

examples of Buddha statues discovered exposed to the elements are thought to be due to their original placement not within shrine halls but embedded in the walls of *stūpas*. During the Q&A session, discussion covered the historical changes in the relation between Sri Lanka and Kanchipuram, its influence on Buddhist monasteries there, and the possibility of North Indian Buddhist monks having visited South India.



Prof. Takashima's presentation

In response to the two presentations, Mita Masahiko of Nagoya University acted as a commentator. First, he introduced his own research subject, the changes over time in the relations between political power and temples through donations and alms in Rajasthan and Gujarat. In response to Dr. Harimoto's presentation, he asked about the different positioning of *vihāra* and *saṅgha*. In response to Prof. Takashima's presentation, he asked whether the invasions of South India by the Khalji and Tughluq dynasties significantly impacted the decline of Buddhism there and how attitudes to Buddhism differed between the Chola dynasty and the Vijayanagar empire. After the lecturers responded, there was a lively discussion involving other participants.

International Workshops Held by the Team of Evaluation

Workshop 1

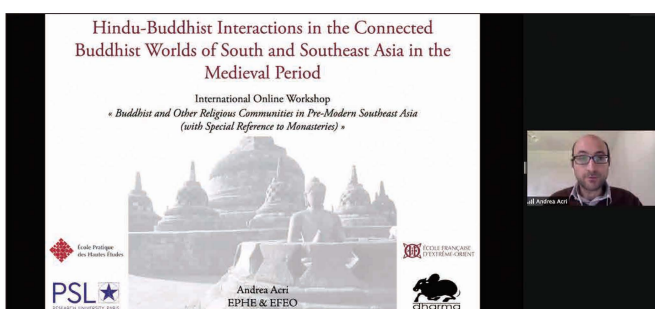
On Sunday, March 7, 2021, the team of evaluation held an international workshop entitled “Buddhists and Other Religious Communities in Pre-Modern Southeast Asia with Special Reference to Monasteries.” Following the workshop on Western Asia held on Sunday, July 26, 2020, this workshop focused on the pre-modern relationships between Buddhism and other religions in areas outside the Indian subcontinent. The online format was more than justified by the presence of participants from East Asia, Europe, Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia and Vietnam, and Japan.

The workshop presenter, Andrea Aciri (École Pratique des Hautes Études) spoke on “Hindu-Buddhist Interactions in the Connected Buddhist Worlds of South and Southeast Asia in the Medieval Period.” Prof. Aciri discussed the development of the network of Buddhism and other religions such as Śaivism and Tantrism in the post-Gupta Sanskrit cosmopolis (the regional concept proposed by Sheldon Pollock in which Sanskrit was used as a lingua franca from

Afghanistan to Southeast Asia through the movement of texts including epic poetry and Buddhist treatises). Furthermore, the presenter provided an overview of their interactions, with a large-scale focus on examples in medieval Java, Sumatra, and Bali.

Prof. Aciri began with a brisk summary of the “agonistic,” “substratum,” and “borrowing” models of Hindu-Buddhist interactions in the Indian world as discussed in previous research, further introducing the cases of South India and Bengal as examples of pre-modern religious pluralism and religious diplomacy.

Previous research has long argued that the relation between Hinduism and Buddhism in Java, Sumatra, and Bali was one example of syncretism. Prof. Aciri criticized this discussion for its lack of perspective of understanding of the information gleaned from primary sources based on the intra- and interregional political and social contexts of the time. He argued that in central Java, no cases of syncretism existed between Buddhism and Śaivism; rather, it was more in keeping with historical fact to judge that either one subsumed the other, or the two stood in opposition. The trend of inclusivism has been confirmed through documents from Eastern Java from the 13th century; King Kṛtanagara, ruler of the area from the late 13th century, was an exception in his support for syncretic thought. Prof. Aciri further argued that Buddhism was dominant in Sumatra and was integrated into the ritual system of the Śaivism dominant on Bali.



Prof. Aciri's presentation

The materials referenced in the presentation encompassed a vast range of quantity and diversity, which was greatly informative for the 60-odd participants. In addition, the perspective of “religious diplomacy” based on inter-regime relations was also innovative, particularly Prof. Acri’s point regarding how the Southeast Asia policy of the fifth Mongol Emperor, Kublai Khan (ruling 1260–1294), influenced the religious situations there, a topic on which much research is left to be done.

In response to Prof. Acri’s presentation, the commentator, Prof. Toru Aoyama of TUFS, referred to the chronological

divisions of Southeast Asian history. He indicated that while Prof. Acri used the concept of “medieval” in integration with the chronological division of the post-Gupta period in India, this concept has not necessarily been accepted within recent chronological theories of Southeast Asian history. Prof. Aoyama nevertheless noted that when considering supraregional movement and networks of people and texts, a perspective going beyond the regional is required, and it is important to prepare the tools for that, including but not limited to chronological divisions.

Work shop 2

At 20:30 JST on the same day, another international workshop was likewise held online by the team of evaluation, titled “Reading Two Persian Episodes on the Buddha Composed in Ilkhanid Iran.” Volume 2 “World History” of the *Jāmi’ al-Tawārīkh* (or Compendium Chronicles), a Persian history text presented to the 8th Ilkhanid ruler, Öljaitü (reigned 1304–1316), contains chapters on “Indian History and the Life of Śākyamuni.” Gregory Schopen indicated that some episodes of this Persian-language life of the Buddha may have been derived from the *Devatāsūtra* and *Maitreyavyākaraṇa*. Elsewhere, recent research on the Ilkhanid dynasty has found that much of the “World History” in the *Jāmi’ al-Tawārīkh* was copied from the *Zubdat al-Tawārīkh* (or the Cream of Histories) by Abu al-Qasim Qashani. This workshop read over the section of the *Zubdat al-Tawārīkh* manuscript held by Tehran University, the only extant version to include the “Indian History and the Life of Śākyamuni” chapters, covering the discussion between the Buddha and the heavenly being as well as the Buddha’s story of the *bodhisattva* Maitreya, in parallel with the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions of the *Devatāsūtra* and *Maitreyavyākaraṇa*. Both readings were led by Prof. Ogura of the team of evaluation, with support for Persian from Dr. Pegah Shahbaz of the University of Toronto and for Sanskrit from Mr. Shin’ichirō Hori of the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies. Although the workshop was held during the nighttime in Japan, many researchers from both inside and outside Japan participated.

The first session addressed the section on the discussion between the Buddha and the heavenly being in the Persian

version of the *Devatāsūtra*. The order of the questions was different from that in the Sanskrit version found among the Gilgit manuscripts and, if anything, matched the Tibetan and Chinese versions. However, the process of the discussion suggests that the archetypal Sanskrit version was in the same order as the others and that the Gilgit manuscript switched the order during copying. The Persian version included questions not in the Chinese version, remaining closer in form to the Sanskrit version. The content of the individual questions and answers was essentially the same as that of the Sanskrit version. With regard to vocabulary, ordinary Sanskrit nouns have been literally translated into their Persian equivalents: *śāstra* becomes *tīgh* (knife), *tamas* becomes *zulmat* (darkness), and *prajñā* becomes *‘aql* (wisdom). Vocabulary regarding worldviews and religious perspectives, however, reflected Islamic views of the last judgment and the next world beyond, such as *mokṣa* (liberation), expressed as *ba-Ḥaqq rasīdan* (“truth,” i.e., “attaining God”). In addition, the word *samyak-sambuddha*, not used in the Sanskrit version, notably appears in Qashani’s text as a loanword.



Text reading

The second session addressed the Buddha’s story about the *bodhisattva* Maitreya as told to Ānanda. First, Maitreya and the Buddha are both treated as *payghambhar* (prophet) in

Qashani's text, avoiding contradiction with the Islamic view that Muhammad was preceded by 124,000 prophets. As with the *Devatāsūtra*, the *Maitreyavyākaraṇa* is more or less a literal translation, with some information added that is not in the Sanskrit version, such as the seven treasures owned by King Saṅkha of Ketumati (future name of Varanasi). This information may be based on the *Cakkavatti Sutta* of the Pāli Canon.

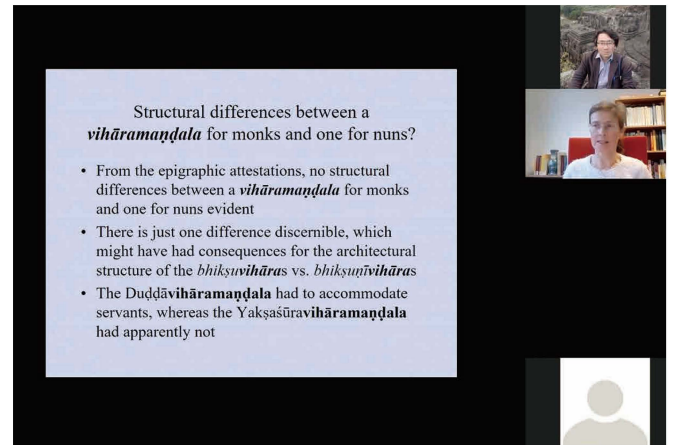
Furthermore, regarding differences between versions, it was confirmed that it is possible to reconstruct the manuscript variants likely to have entered the Ilkhanid court of the time in Tabriz from Qashani's Persian text. Because the workshop was only able to cover about half of its projected content, a second workshop was held on Sunday, June 27.

Studies on Buddhist Monastic Cultures: German-Japanese Collaboration

On March 17 and 24 (both Wednesdays), an international workshop on Buddhist monastic cultures in India was jointly held by the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg Seminar for Indology and the Vihāra Project. There were two speakers from Germany and two from Japan, both deeply connected with German academic institutions.

At the first session, held on March 17, Prof. Annette Schmiedchen of the Humboldt University Berlin and Dr. Hiroko Matsuoka of the Austrian Academy of Sciences/Leipzig University spoke. Prof. Schmiedchen's lecture, "Vihāra, Mahāvihāra, and Vihāramaṇḍala — The Terminology for Buddhist Monasteries and Nunneries in Sanskrit Epigraphy from Late Antiquity to the Early Medieval Period," examined the word *vihāra* on copper plates and inscriptions, and the content of its derivative terms. The project's domestic research meeting held in December debated the difference in the meaning of words such as *vihāra* and *mahāvihāra*, an issue to which Prof. Schmiedchen's lecture happened to provide a response. In a narrow sense, the word *vihāra* refers to a building for Buddhist monks; in a broad sense, it refers to entire complexes of buildings. On inscriptions, both senses can be found (specific buildings and complexes). Furthermore, when prefixed with *mahā* to form the compound word *mahāvihāra* or taking the suffix *maṇḍala* to form *vihāramaṇḍala*, it may have referred to a larger complex including a monastery. However, examples found at remains in the Kshatrapa territory of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh revealed no significant difference between *vihāra* and *mahāvihāra*. A difference can be found in inscriptions from the Maitraka dynasty in Gujarat: the word *vihāramaṇḍala* found in inscriptions of this era refers to facilities for both *bhikkhu* and *bhikkhunī* (respectively monks and nuns), while from the 6th to the 7th

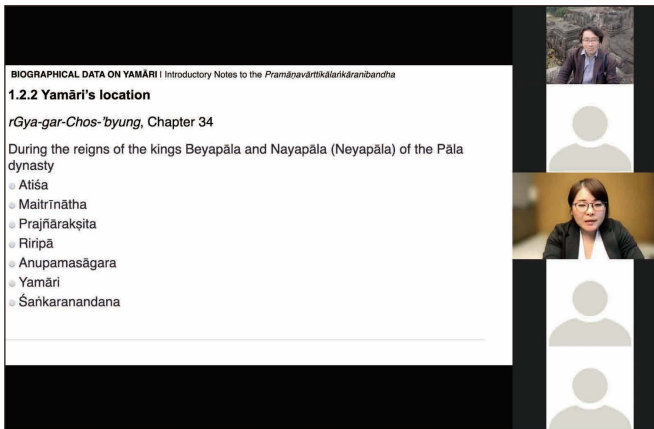
century it includes auxiliary structures as well. These facilities became larger and more complex through steady donations from ladies of the royal household, officials, merchants, priests, and villages. The structural characteristics of *mahāvihāra* can also be found in Bihar and Bengal, with diversity according to era and region.



Prof. Schmiedchen's presentation

Dr. Hiroko Matsuoka's presentation, "Biographical Data on Yamāri," was a reexamination of biographical and bibliographical information on Yamāri, one of the representative scholars who passed on the tradition of epistemology in late-period Indian Buddhism. Yamāri is known as a commentator on the *Pramāṇavārttikālaṅkāra* of Prajñākaragupta, with various theories on his area of activity and immediate teacher (sometimes identified as Jñānaśrībhadrā and sometimes as Jñānaśrīmitra). Dr. Matsuoka argued that while Theodore Stcherbatsky's theory is currently influential, it has issues concerning unclear presentation of materials and requires reexamination. A close reading of the Tibetan and Sanskrit materials providing information on the life of Yamāri indicates that his teacher was Jñānaśrīmitra, based on mentions of his name in Yamāri's writings and terminology usage. In addition, the

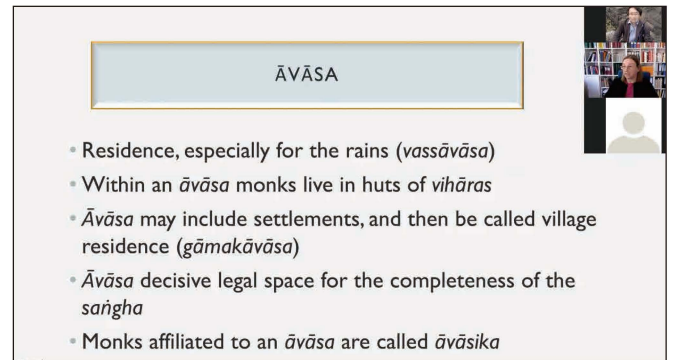
title of Yamāri’s commentary can also be confirmed as “*Pramāṇavārttikālaṅkāranibandha*.” Dr. Matsuoka also introduced the “Yamāri Project,” which has been underway at Leipzig University since 2014 (<https://www.gkr.uni-leipzig.de/institut-fuer-indologie-und-zentralasienwissenschaften/forschung/aktuelle-forschungsprojekte/#collapse224619>). This project is creating a critically annotated text of the *Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter of the *Pramāṇavārttikālaṅkāra*, in addition to clarifying Prajñākara Gupta’s position in the history of ideology through comparison with Tibetan materials. Active discussion took place during the Q&A session for the two lecturers; in response to Dr. Matsuoka’s comment that Yamāri himself was not closely involved with *vihāra*, Prof. Eli Franco of Leipzig University noted memorably that clarifying this lack of close connection can in itself be significantly related to *vihāra* studies.



Dr. Matsuoka’s presentation

The second session followed on Wednesday, March 24, with lectures from Dr. Petra Kieffer-Pülz of the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg and Prof. Ryuta Kikuya of Kyoto University. The first lecture, on “The Meaning of Vihāra in Pāli Literature,” discussed examples of words such as *vihāra*, *āmāra*, and *āvāsa* in Theravāda Pāli scriptures edited from the 4th century BCE to the 1st century CE, as well as in commentaries thereon from the 5th century. Indicating that the examination of these words is effective when considering the development of Buddhist monasteries, Dr. Kieffer-Pülz began with a consideration of monastery structure. It has been confirmed that a sufficiently equipped monastery included a dwelling area for the monks, a gathering area, a dining hall, a bath, toilets, and storehouses. In later eras, structural elements also came to include *sarīra* relics, Buddha statues, and sometimes bodhi trees. In the

Pāli Canon, the term *vihāra* was used to indicate a residential facility for one or more monks or a facility with specific functions; it did not yet mean a Buddhist sect complex. Elsewhere, the commentaries also used *vihāra* to indicate a complex, showing that its meaning had changed by this point. The term *āmāra* (a park) also referred to the residences donated to Buddhist sects for the building of *vihāra*, but in some cases, non-Buddhists were also found living there. While the word *āmāra* was overwhelmingly used to indicate Buddhist monasteries overall, stating that a given person belonged to an *āmāra* did not necessarily mean that they were Buddhist. Further, in the Pāli Canon, the word *āvāsa* (a retreat) did not refer to the dwelling of individual Buddhist monks but rather the shelter where they passed the rainy season. This word was also used as a unit of legal action in a local community: Buddhist monks were distinguished by *āvāsa*, but at some point, the word was overtaken by *sīmā* (boundary) in this sense. Thus, in the commentaries on the scriptures, *āvāsa* also acquired the meaning of individuals’ (permanent) dwellings. Dr. Kieffer-Pülz concluded from the analysis of these terms that large-scale monasteries did not exist in the centuries after the establishment of Buddhism.



Dr. Kieffer-Pülz’s presentation

In response to Dr. Kieffer-Pülz’s lecture focusing on terminology regarding monasteries, the fourth lecturer, Prof. Ryuta Kikuya, spoke on “Scripture and Commentary: The Transmission of **Mahāmantrānudhāriṇī* in Indian Tantric Buddhism,” with attention to images of Buddhist practitioners around monasteries. He focused on the formation of the (early Vajrayāna) scriptures and the establishment process of their commentaries while examining the scriptures and those responsible for them. Specifically, he noted the possibility that the Mūlasarvāstivāda school was involved in the establishment process of the *Mahāmantrānusāriṇī* (below, MA-1), one of the *Pañcarakṣā* (Fivefold Protective scriptures), and its

Future Plans

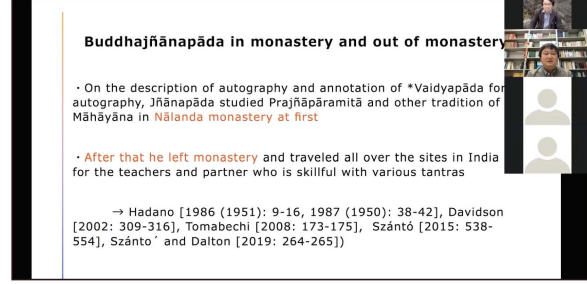
On October 28/29, 2021, the team of Indian archaeology/history of art will hold an international workshop at the University of Georgia (partially online). There will also be a general symposium on the Vihāra Project and a linked lecture session held online on weekends in mid-November.

Activity Report

On June 27, 2021, the team of evaluation held an online reading session (using the *Maitreyavyākaraṇa* Sanskrit original as well as the Tibetan and Persian translations). This was a follow-up to the session held on March 7, with an active exchange of opinions among Japanese and international scholars. On July 29 and August 3, an online international research session was jointly held with other grant projects (lead researchers: Ryugen Tanemura, Toru Tomabechi) and the team of manuscripts to read the *Pañcakramatātparyapañjikā Kramakaumudī* of Abhayākaragupta. On July 31, the first RINDAS International Symposium, “Revisiting Buddhist Monasteries in the Gupta and Post-Gupta Periods,” was held online, with presentations from Prof. Akira Shimada (SUNY New Paltz, the team of Indian archaeology/history of art) and Prof. Max Deeg of Cardiff University. Thereafter, there was a meaningful discussion considering methodologies. Thanks to the online format, participants from around the world were able to join in.

For details of the activities above, see the forthcoming Newsletter Vol. 7.

alternate version the **Mahāmantrānudhāriṇī* (below, MA-2). That is, while MA-1 was essentially extracted from the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, MA-2 underwent a more complex establishment process, with texts parallel to other protective scriptures as well as the *āgama* thought to belong to the *Mūlasarvāstivāda*. Both scriptures are thought to have been established by the 8th century at the latest.



Prof. Kikuya's presentation

In this way, both MA-1 and MA-2 are thought to have been formed originally under heavy influence from specific schools; thereafter, as the protective scriptures themselves gained great popularity, they became widely accepted beyond divisions of schools or ideological positions. In particular, the *Mahāśītavatīvidyārājñīsūtra-śatasahasraṭīkā* of Karmavajra (11th century or so), related to the Vajrāsana monastery as well, not only provides exegesis on various rituals related to the protective scriptures while editing them but also clarifies his own ideological position belonging to the (non-abiding) Madhyamaka school. While the influence of the preceding Maitreyaṅātha (Advayavajra) is thought to be significant in context, given that Atulyavajra and Amoghavajra, who were heavily involved in the translation and transmission of Karmavajra's commentary, were based at the Vajrāsana monastery, it is clear that the tradition of the protective scriptures was centered there. Prof. Kikuya also suggested that the background of this tradition might include the active involvement of the “scholar-religious” practitioners, those who studied at monasteries to become *paṇḍitas* (scholars) and then left to become *siddhas* (holy men).

This international workshop was successful thanks to the tremendous assistance of Prof. Kieffer-Pülz of the Institute for Indology at Martin Luther University, as well as many other Buddhist scholars at German universities. Buddhist studies in Germany, which have a proud pedigree, have been struggling in recent years due to budget cuts in the humanities. In this context, it is hoped that they will flourish once again through the implementation of international collaborative research such as this event.

(Report: Satoshi Ogura, Head of the Team,
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