

Preface

My interest in Madhyamaka goes back to the early years of my graduate studies at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver, Canada, and I remember well the discussion in which my esteemed Sanskrit professor Ashok Aklujkar suggested that I consider turning my attention to the Prasannapadā, a text I was at the time familiar with by name only. Trusting the guidance of this man who seemed to know everything about the enchanting world of the language of the gods, I agreed to do so, and the first seeds for the present book were sown. I remain very grateful for Prof. Aklujkar's expert tutelage in Sanskrit and the introduction to Indian philosophical thought, as well as for his efforts in securing financial support for my studies at UBC. Just as I was commencing my doctoral work, Karin Preisendanz, who had received her training at the University of Hamburg, Germany, was hired on in the department, a lucky coincidence which would fling open for me the doors to German Indological scholarship and heralded my initiation into text-critical work. Although my dissertation topic at the time focussed on differences between the thought of Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti, Prof. Preisendanz read with me, among other texts, the section in the first chapter of the Prasannapadā on dependent-arising and a large part of the Candrakīrti-Bhāviveka debate. When she later accepted a position back in Hamburg, I was encouraged to fly off to the Hanseatic city too, because there I would be able to deepen my understanding of the Buddhist philosophical tradition with the legendary Lambert Schmithausen. It was the move to the more philologically oriented Institute for the Culture and History of India and Tibet at the University of Hamburg that motivated me to switch my dissertation topic to re-editing the first chapter of the Prasannapadā and set me, for the purpose of accomplishing my goal, on a

serious search for manuscripts of the work. More intent on gleaning knowledge than quickly acquiring a doctoral degree, I immersed myself in the German language and then took the opportunity to attend Prof. Schmithausen's classes over the next few years, and audited courses held by the Madhyamaka specialist Felix Erb, the Tibetologist David Jackson, and the Indologists Karin Preisendanz and Albrecht Wezler. I am especially grateful to Prof. Wezler for having made my stay in Germany possible by employing me in the Nepal-German Manuscript Project (NGMPP) for nearly five years, and for the happy Christmases spent with his family and troupe of Tibetan mastiffs.

The present book is the result of a comprehensive reworking and expansion of its earlier doctoral dissertation incarnation. A period of poor health prevented me from preparing the dissertation for publication once it was completed, but in the end this merely kept me from publishing prematurely, because already in 2005 Yoshiyasu Yonezawa of Taishō University, Tokyo, announced the discovery of an important and complete palm-leaf manuscript of the *Prasannapadā* preserved in the Potala Palace in Lhasa. The manuscript was not accessible to scholars, but Prof. Yonezawa informed me that he had been permitted to make a hand-copy of it, and with the hope that either a microfilm of the manuscript or the hand-copy itself would become available, I decided to refrain from publishing until I could consult its text—or until it had become clear that this would be impossible. My decision proved to be a wise one, because during a visit to Tokyo in 2011, Prof. Yonezawa very generously gave me his meticulous transcription of the manuscript's first chapter. His magnanimity allowed me to confirm previously speculative readings and to emend numerous others in my Sanskrit critical text, as well as to identify interpolations, and facilitated my understanding of the relationships between the older (extant and also some non-extant) manuscripts of the *Prasannapadā*. Access to the Potala manuscript was also crucial for gaining newfound insight into the impact on the Tibetan translation of one of the Sanskrit manuscripts relied upon by its translators, information that will be indispensable for the editing of further chapters of the work.

A good number of individuals have contributed, in myriad ways, to this book reaching its present form. I am first and foremost deeply indebted to Prof. Schmithausen, who read most of my dissertation, helped solve some knotty problems, and offered many invaluable suggestions for improvement, and who more recently read large sections of my book manuscript and again made illuminating remarks and kindly and patiently answered my questions. Any references to Chinese materials in the notes to the translation which are not attributed to another source were provided by him. It was a tremendous privilege to have studied with such a brilliant and inspiring scholar, and I express here my lasting gratitude for his instruction and for his input to the present project. I am also grateful to Prof. Preisendanz for her instruction, her help in acquiring a microfilm of ms L and a photocopy of the Rome copy of ms D, and for having fastidiously read the beginning parts of my dissertation. She was also instrumental in my move from Hamburg to Vienna, where I have been able to benefit from a uniquely rich academic environment and interaction with many excellent scholars, both in the Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies of the University of Vienna and in the Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia (IKGA) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Shortly after I arrived in Vienna to take a University position, Prof. Ernst Steinkellner, then director of the IKGA, kindly invited me to participate in his *Pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkā* project, for which I was and remain extremely thankful, not only for the exciting opportunities it brought but also for needed financial support.

It was toward the end of a delightful and profitable five-month sojourn in Kyoto, generously arranged by Prof. Shoryu Katsura, that I was able, upon the invitation of Prof. Akira Saito to Tokyo, to meet with Prof. Yonezawa and receive the all-important file of the Potala manuscript. A cursory look at the hand-copy quickly revealed that a thorough reexamination of my earlier work, and reconsideration and revision of many aspects of the critical text and related material would be necessary, but the past couple of years in the idyllic research oasis of the IKGA—thanks to the beneficence of its late director Dr. Helmut Krasser—has allowed exactly that. To all of the persons mentioned I express my sincere gratitude.

I owe thanks to the staff at the Bodleian Library in Oxford for their aid with respect to the precious palm-leaf manuscript of the *Prasannapadā* preserved there—by name I know only Gillian Evison and Doris Nicholson—who at my request arranged for the manuscript to be photographed despite initial reports that it was too fragile to be filmed. Prof. Wezler, Director General of the NGMPP from 1982 to 2002, helped procure the microfilms of the NGMPP manuscripts, and additionally arranged for a photocopy of the first chapter of the Tibetan translation of the *Prasannapadā* to be made from the copy of the *Narthang Tanjur* kept in the *Staatsbibliothek* in Berlin. Unfortunately, this copy suffered water damage during WW II, and the photocopy I received was in many places unreadable. I therefore also thank Prof. David Seyfort Rugg for having made available his photocopy of the *Narthang Tanjur*'s first chapter, and Burkhard Quessel for arranging for its copying. Dr. Susmita Mallick photocopied the first chapter of manuscript N on a visit to Calcutta, after two years of unsuccessful attempts by Wezler and Preisendanz to order a copy of it from the Asiatic Society. I am also grateful to the *Société Asiatique* librarian Marie-Claude Karunatilleke for providing me with a photocopy of manuscript M, the Cambridge Library librarian for sending a microfilm of manuscript L, the staff of the previous Institute for the Advanced Study of World Religions in New York for sending microfiches of manuscripts G and K, Dr. Mauro Maggi, previously the librarian for the Oriental Department of the *Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente* in Rome, for providing me with a photocopy of the Rome copy of manuscript D, and the late Prof. J.W. de Jong for sending me his wife's transcription of the same manuscript.

It is a privilege to acknowledge the bodhisattva-like help of other colleagues and friends, without which the quality of these pages would be greatly diminished. Prof. Jonathan Silk altruistically sent me his draft translation of the *Kāśyapaparivartasūtra*, Iain Sinclair repeatedly brought bibliographic material and other information related to manuscript production in Nepal to my attention, and Dr. Toshikazu Watanabe and Dr. Horst Lasic were always forthcoming and extremely helpful whenever I ran into obstacles related to Buddhist logic. Prof. Dorji Wangchuk, Dr. Orna Almogi and

especially Dr. Kurt Tropper kindly answered questions regarding the Tibetan edition. Dr. Helmut Krasser decided to convert my originally Roman-script Sanskrit edition into Devanāgarī, and thus took over the demanding job of formatting its text. Any problems I encountered when using the Critical Text Editor program were resolved through the sage and patient counsel of Dr. Cristina Pecchia. I additionally thank for their advice and help Dr. Ritsu Akahane, Dr. William Ames, Prof. Shobha Rani Dash, Dr. Dragomir Dimitrov, Prof. Eli Franco, Prof. Paul Hackett, Dr. David Higgins, Dr. Pascale Hugon, Prof. Birgit Kellner, Dr. Ulrich Timme Kragh, Bruno Lainé, Dr. Xuezhu Li, Dr. Hong Luo, Dr. Christian Luzcanits, Dr. Philipp Maas, Dr. Mudagamuwe Maithrimurthi, Koji Matsumoto, Dr. Yasutaka Muroya, Dr. Jundo Nagashima, Prof. Claus Oetke, Dr. Mahes Raj Pant, Dr. Carola Roloff, Prof. Alexander von Rospatt, Prof. Akira Saito, Dr. Bernhard Scheid, Kashinath Tamot, Dr. Himat Trikha, Prof. Kevin Vose, Prof. Chlodwig Werba, Prof. Chizuko Yoshimizu, and Prof. Akira Yuyama. Philip Pierce proofread the English with exceptional care, and also caught typos in the cited Sanskrit and Tibetan. Dennis Johnson checked numerous primary and secondary references and helped bring the bibliography into a presentable form, and King Chung Lo proofread the Tibetan edition. Last but certainly not least, I thank Christian Ferstel for his skillful help with formatting and Jürgen Schörflinger for finalizing the Stemma design. I apologize for any omissions, and of course take responsibility for all remaining errors. Finally, I gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) within the context of the project “Buddhist Literature and its Context” (P 23196-G15), and heartily thank the Austrian Academy of Sciences for accepting and publishing these two volumes.

This book is dedicated to my beloved parents Rev. Freda and Rev. W. Graham MacDonald, who have supported this endeavour from the start with unflagging interest, munificence and encouragement.

