

Acknowledgements

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THE Asiatic Museum, the predecessor to the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IOM RAS), was established in 1818. From the latter half of the 19th century, the museum endeavored to research and preserve invaluable Buddhist manuscripts and other materials that were unearthed and collected in various places in Central Asia along what is known today as the Silk Road. The vast collection spans texts in over 60 languages, numbering approximately 100,000 items. In terms of content and scale, it is one of the largest in the world and has made invaluable contributions to scientific development in various fields of Oriental studies.

Among the most famous of these items, and regarded as treasures of humanity, are those collected by Nikolai Petrovsky (1837–1908), the approximately 20,000 documents (including text fragments) collected by the Sergei Oldenburg (1863–1934) expedition in Dunhuang, and the 6,000 items of Xixia (Tangut) texts unearthed by the Pyotr Kozlov (1863–1935) expeditions in Khara-Khoto.

The many years of exchange between the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, the Soka Gakkai, and the Institute of Oriental Philosophy have been especially fruitful. In 2005, the IOM RAS and the Soka Gakkai jointly published the Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series 6: *Xixia Version of the Lotus Sutra from the Collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences*, compiling the Tangut texts unearthed by the Kozlov expeditions. (The St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies was reorganized into the independent Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in 2007.) Reproducing the texts from the Petrovsky collection, “Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscripts from the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences (SI P/5, etc.), Facsimile Edition” is now being prepared for publication as Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series 13. In this connection, I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to Prof. Dr. Irina F. Popova, Director of the IOM RAS, and to all those at the IOM RAS, whose gracious understanding and generous cooperation helped make this project possible.

The SI P/5 (presently called SI 1925/1927) manuscript is often referred to as the Petrovsky Manuscript or Kashgar Manuscript because it was obtained in Kashgar in 1893 by Petrovsky, then the Russian consul-general there. It is thought that the text was originally found by a resident of Khotan, and that Petrovsky acquired major portions of it. He then sent the manuscript to the Asiatic Museum in the capital, St. Petersburg. Oldenburg, the renowned Buddhist scholar, introduced the manuscript to European academia, which caused much excitement in research circles at the time. He praised this achievement highly by saying that Petrovsky's brilliant discovery ushered in a new era of archaeological studies related to Eastern Turkestan.

Khotan, which is located in the southern periphery of the Taklamakan Desert, prospered as the largest oasis city along the southern route in the Western Region, which connected China, India, and Iran. It has been known since ancient times for its jade production, and became famous for a legend that relates the introduction of silkworms to the city by a princess who came as a bride from China. Buddhism has been practiced in Khotan since ancient times, and Mahayana Buddhism flourished there in particular.

Regarding Khotan, we should note that Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series 3: *Fragments of a Manuscript of the Saddharmapundarikasūtra from Khādaliq*, edited by Dr. Klaus Wille, a leading German philologist, is an important study of another ancient Lotus Sutra manuscript found at a ruin 115 kilometers east of the city.

The SI P/5 manuscript is an essential primary source for a wide range of Lotus Sutra studies. The availability of this text has allowed Buddhist scholars of the world to pore over its content from various viewpoints. There are four characteristics of this text that stand out:

1. From a philological point of view, the text is thought to have been copied in the 9th and 10th centuries, and preserves ancient Prakrit readings, thereby serving as an important link to older traditions.

2. The size of the folio is 18 centimeters long and 57 centimeters wide; the paper manuscript in the shape of a palm-leaf text (*pothī* style) is one of the largest of its kind.

3. While many manuscripts found in Central Asia are fragments or small numbers of folios, SI P/5 retains 396 of the extant 468 folios and fragments; many of these folios are beautiful and have been preserved comparatively well.

4. Some 50 names of people and their dedications appear in the

colophons in a mixture language of Khotanese and Sanskrit, so that the text serves as very important material for learning about what faith in the Lotus Sutra of the time might have been.

The Soka Gakkai and the Institute of Oriental Philosophy have jointly published, in the form of a series, facsimile editions and romanized texts of Lotus Sutra manuscripts, which are regarded as particularly valuable among Sanskrit Lotus Sutra scriptures.

The manuscripts can be divided into three lineages, based on where they were found or excavated: (1) Nepalese, (2) Gilgit, and (3) Central Asia. Looking over the manuscript series publications, we were able to include representative texts from the three lineages. It gives me great joy to see that we have achieved the goals we set when the Lotus Sutra publication project started 19 years ago. The following are the 14 items of the Lotus Sutra manuscripts from three lineages that have been published thus far:

(1) Nepalese manuscripts

Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the National Archives of Nepal (No. 4-21), Facsimile Edition (1998)

Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the National Archives of Nepal (No. 4-21), Romanized Text 1 (2001)

Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the National Archives of Nepal (No. 4-21), Romanized Text 2 (2004)

Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscripts from Cambridge University Library (Add. 1682 and Add. 1683), Facsimile Edition (2002)

Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from Cambridge University Library (Add. 1684), Romanized Text (2010)

Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from University of Tokyo General Library (No. 414), Romanized Text (2003)

Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (No. 6), Romanized Text (2007)

Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the Société Asiatique (No. 2), Romanized Text (2008)

Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the British Library (Or. 2204), Facsimile Edition (2009)

Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the British Library (Or. 2204), Romanized Text (2011)

(2) Gilgit manuscripts

Gilgit Lotus Sutra Manuscripts from the National Archives of India, Facsimile Edition (2012)

(3) Central Asian manuscripts

Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Fragments from the Lüshun Museum Collection, Facsimile Edition and Romanized Text (1997)

Fragments of a Manuscript of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra from Khādaliq (2000)

“Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscripts from the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences (SI P/5, etc.), Facsimile Edition” (2013)

(*Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series 6 is a 2005 publication of Xixia texts of the Lotus Sutra from St. Petersburg.)

The world’s first critical edition of the Sanskrit Lotus Sutra, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* (Bibliotheca Buddhica 10, also known as the Kern-Nanjio edition, 1908–1912) was edited by Japanese scholar Bunyiu Nanjio (1849–1927) and Dutch linguist Hendrik Kern (1833–1917) and published by the Académie Impériale des Sciences, St. Petersburg. Until today it has been used as foundational material for Lotus Sutra studies in Sanskrit. In collating the text of the Kern-Nanjio edition (hereafter “KN”), seven manuscripts and two texts (a lithographic text published by P. E. Foucaux and a wood-cut print text in the possession of A. Wylie).

The Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series has published six of the seven manuscripts that were used in the collation of the critical KN edition, including SI P/5. Since the whereabouts of the manuscript that was in the possession of T. Watters (abbreviated as “W” in KN) is currently unknown, in practice, all the related manuscripts have been covered. The following are manuscripts included in the series that were used in the collation of KN as the original and reference texts for recension.

Original text for KN:

1. *Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (No. 6), Romanized Text* (abbr. “R” in the series, “A” in KN)

Texts used for collating KN:

2. *Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscripts from Cambridge University Library (Add. 1682 and Add. 1683), Facsimile Edition* (abbr. “C3” and “C4” in the series; “C3” was not used for KN while “C4” is “Ca” in KN.)¹
3. *Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from Cambridge University Library (Add. 1684), Romanized Text* (abbr. “C5” in the series, “Cb” in KN)¹
4. *Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from University of Tokyo General*

- Library (No. 414), Romanized Text* (abbr. “T8” in the series, “K” in KN)
5. *Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the British Library (Or. 2204), Facsimile Edition* (“B” both in the series and in KN)
Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the British Library (Or. 2204), Romanized Text (“B” both in the series and in KN)
6. “Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscripts from the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences (SI P/5, etc.), Facsimile Edition” (“O” both in the series and in KN)

We are greatly indebted to the IOM RAS for its generous cooperation in publishing not only SI P/5 but also not a few other Central Asian manuscripts of the Sanskrit Lotus Sutra, and feel extremely fortunate to have been able to produce this facsimile edition. I am firmly convinced that the publication of these manuscripts will make a substantial contribution to related academic fields. In closing, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Prof. Dr. Margarita I. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, Head of the Section of South Asian Studies, IOM RAS, and Prof. Dr. Oskar von Hinüber, Emeritus Professor at Freiburg University, both of whom contributed precious introductory articles, to Prof. Seishi Karashima, Director of the International Research Institute of Advanced Buddhology at Soka University, who offered his inestimable advice and cooperation, to Mr. Noriyoshi Mizufune, a researcher for IOP’s manuscript projects, who dedicated himself as an expert in this field and editorial works, and to all other people who were involved in this publication. —January 27, 2013

NOTE

¹ Regarding Preliminary Notice, [p. XII] of KN, Add. MS. 1682 and Add. MS. 1683 should read 1683 and 1684, respectively.

Postscript

With great sorrow, we were informed that Prof. Dr. Evgeny I. Kychanov, the world-renowned Tangutologist and Sinologist, passed away on May 24, 2013. Professor Kychanov was the former director of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. He contributed greatly to the promotion of scientific and cultural exchange, including his visit to Tokyo in 1998 to participate in the opening of “The Lotus Sutra and Its World” exhibition. Together with all those who have been involved in the present publication, I would like to express our heartfelt condolences on the demise of this great scholar.