

Foreword:

“The Sutra of the Lotus Blossom”

—An Essential Key in the Study of Buddhism

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THERE are a great number of significant events on record that have taken place in the history of human cultures over the centuries. Though the initial periods of many cultures remain unknown, the bright sun of one new culture in particular suddenly appeared as if out of nowhere, illuminated the surface of its surroundings, crossed borders and spread its influence around the world. That was how Indian culture was brought together when Buddhism was transmitted to China. It was very natural that Buddhism had a great influence on the cultures of East Asia. O. O. Rosenberg (1888–1919) confirmed this in his assertion that, just as deep knowledge of Christianity is needed to understand European culture, so too is a firm grasp of Buddhism necessary to study Japan. According to official records, Buddhism arrived in Japan from Korea in the 6th century AD, though the dates appear to need further discussion.

Another point of discussion relates to those who recorded Buddhist texts as written documents. In Buddhist texts, as well as in early Indian texts such as the Vedas, the Brahmanas, and others, which formed the basis of Buddhism, there are references to the fact that discord and division have always existed. In the early stages of its development, the Buddhist community had not established its religious and philosophical system. It stood out as a community of people, free from society and all sorts of attachments, leading a pure and simple way of life. Over time, however, the monks' way of life split into branches. In Pali literature, there are descriptions of the *āraññaka* monks, who settled in the woods, and the *gāmantavihārī*, who lived in the villages or surrounding countryside. The members of each group had to live by the rules they set for themselves.

In Mahayana communities, in their initial stages, one could observe the same kinds of dichotomy. While some monks dwelled in the woods, others lived in villages among local people or in the neighboring areas, and preached to the villagers. The question is which of the two groups was in a better position to compile Mahayana sutras for the public. The most probable answer to this is that it was those who preached

to the village inhabitants. Their names are unknown and will probably remain so.

There is a famous Mahayana sutra widely venerated by Buddhists. In the sutra, the Buddha himself teaches it after informing the listeners that it was his first time to share it, and that those who hear the Buddha's voice will definitely achieve enlightenment sooner or later, depending on their behavior. This magnificent sutra that has continuously spread its blessings through the ages is the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* (Lotus Sutra of the Good Dharma). According to estimates by Japanese scholars, the text of the Lotus Sutra was not compiled over a short period, but formed over a long stretch of history. The verse (*gāthā*) portions belonging to the first half of the sutra are thought to have already existed before the common era. It is estimated that the verse text was expanded into one with supplemented portions of prose, and that the latter half of the sutra was added later. Thus, the Sanskrit Lotus Sutra became a text containing 27 chapters.

The main ideas of sutras were orally transmitted in the Buddhist tradition starting from the 6th century BC, namely from the *parinibbāna* of Shakyamuni Buddha. Various dates are referred to, depending on the traditions, but here we do not attempt to find solutions to this issue. It is important to remember that, according to its tradition, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, or the Lotus Sutra, as it is usually referred to in Japan and elsewhere, was first heard by the Buddha's disciples. They strived to transmit the teachings as faithfully as possible from the mentor to the disciples during a very long period of many centuries.

As mentioned above, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, like many other canonical texts of Buddhism, most likely originated in India, where it may also have been written. In the 3rd century AD, the sutra crossed the Indian borders and was introduced to Central Asia, China, and Korea. The direct proof of such developments is the first Chinese translation of the sutra rendered in 286 AD (*Zheng fahua jing*, by Dharmarakṣa, or Zhu Fahu, Chn). From the moment the sutra arrived in the Far East—first in China, later in Korea (in the 4th century AD), and finally in Japan—we can say that it started a new cycle of its own history and the history of Buddhism in general. However, most of the popularity the Lotus Sutra gained in China came only after being translated by Kumarajiva (Jiumoluoshi, Chn) in 406 AD (*Miaofa lianhua jing*).

The Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang and Khara-Khoto clearly show that the sutra owes its popularity in the 5th and 12th centuries AD to the Chinese version by Kumarajiva. This version was translated to Tangut (Xixia) and later to Japanese, and thus created favorable

conditions for the development of the Buddhist tradition in those regions. At the beginning of the 7th century (601), another Chinese version translated by Jñānagupta and Dharmagupta was completed. That version of the Lotus Sutra received the name *Tianpin Miaofa lianhua jing* (The Supplemented Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Dharma). It did not, however, gain as much popularity in Dunhuang as Kumarajiva's translation.

There is a Tibetan manuscript written in a Tibetan cursive script and stored in the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm as part of Sven Hedin's collection. Japanese scholar Seishi Karashima deciphered the whole manuscript and made the results public. He maintained that the manuscript is not only an original sample of one of the earliest Tibetan Buddhist writings (7th–8th centuries), but also one of the earliest versions of the Lotus Sutra translated into Tibetan. From this work, it becomes clear that the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra* was not merely one of the initial texts of the Buddhist tradition that was introduced to Tibetans at the time, but that it played a significant role in the history of the propagation of Buddhism. Needless to say, this forgotten manuscript, abandoned for so many years, was finally published and became a subject of research.¹

Many Sanskrit Lotus Sutra manuscript fragments were discovered in Central Asia—Kashgar, Khotan, Khādaliq, and Farhād-Bēg. The full text concordances of all these Central Asian Lotus Sutra manuscripts and fragments were prepared and published by the German researcher Klaus Wille in Tokyo in 2000 as part of his book.² The earliest extant Sanskrit fragments found to date are currently stored in the Lüshun Museum in China (Lüshun, People's Republic of China, was once known as Port Arthur). Another Sanskrit Lotus Sutra manuscript, which is more complete than others, is stored at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in St. Petersburg. The manuscript was obtained by the Russian consul in Kashgar, Nikolai Fedorovich Petrovsky (1837–1908), and presented by him to the Asiatic Museum (today's Institute of Oriental Manuscripts). It is thought to have been found in the vicinity of Khotan, but the exact location of the discovery remains unclear. In addition, there has been considerable controversy about the copy date of the manuscript.

Academician Sergei Fedorovich Oldenburg (1863–1934) estimated that the manuscript was written in the 5th century AD, based on a palaeographic analysis. However, Japanese scholar Hirofumi Toda (1936–2003), an authority on Lotus Sutra manuscript studies, was convinced that the manuscript was copied somewhat later. One of the

participants in the discussion on the topic was Ronald Emmerick (1937–2001), who had just published the Khotanese version of *The Book of Zambasta*. Based on an extended philological analysis of the manuscript's colophon written in Khotanese Saka, he came to the conclusion that the manuscript belonged to the period of the 9th and 10th centuries.

The manuscript, which is widely formatted (18 × 57.5 cm), contains 396 folios, while the full text of the Kashgar Lotus Sutra is thought to have originally consisted of 459 folios. The contents of the extant text show that approximately 12 folios (or fragments) were lost over the years. While describing the manuscript from St. Petersburg, it is important to mention that the scribe had attached a colophon. To be precise, half of a thin paper folio remains with part of the colophon text inscribed in a Khotanese Saka (Eastern Iranian) cursive script. In addition, we find a colophon written in Khotanese Saka at the end of each chapter.

Based on the facts referred to above, we can assume that the order of the manuscript was made by a Khotanese. The name, Jalapuña, remains in the manuscript. The part of the colophon that remains shows that the copying was commissioned by someone for the sake of all of his (or her) deceased relatives. This evidence shows that the manuscript was copied in Khotan. The name it received and has since been known by, the Kashgar Manuscript, was misnomer. The name was given based only on the fact that the manuscript was obtained by N. F. Petrovsky, who was the consul of Kashgar at the time.

It is obvious that the changes in the Sanskrit text of the Lotus Sutra made during the period in which it was popular in Central Asia were minor. This can be demonstrated by comparing the text of this manuscript from Khotan with particular fragments of other manuscripts. In our collection in St. Petersburg, there are at least 10 fragments that can be used for such text comparison. Some of them are decorated with colored miniatures.

The Lotus Sutra and Nichiren

Upon arrival in Japan in the 6th century AD, Buddhism had to face the local religious traditions. Japan is in many ways a unique and amazing country. On the one hand, it is famous for the innate courtesy and sincerity of its people. On the other hand, it is associated with the sharp sword, courage, and boldness of the samurai. The Japanese knew how to escape from the busy activity of everyday life and find peace of mind in admiring the beauty of Japan's majestic nature. From ancient times, the Japanese worshipped supernatural gods and spirits. That religion was

named Shinto or Shintoism. The history of Shintoism is a very complex process of gradual fusion between cultures of local tribes and their special admiration for and love of nature. The ancient Japanese, practicing pre-Buddhist Shintoism, respected the memory of their ancestors, protected the unity and integrity of their kin, and at the same time, worshipped the gods and goddesses of the land, rain, wind, forests, and mountains. While Shintoism experienced several transformations as a result of its coexistence with the new Buddhist religion, Buddhist teachings in Japan developed original features that turned them into unique if not phenomenal religious practices.

This was the religious situation in Japan until the reformist philosopher Nichiren (1222–1282) appeared. Even today, his name remains largely unfamiliar among European philosophers and scholars. However, in the history of the spread of the Lotus Sutra in Japan, it was Nichiren who took the lead in securing its status as a sacred text. Today, many of the philosophical principles of the Soka Gakkai, the largest Buddhist organization in Japan, are based on Nichiren's interpretations of the Lotus Sutra. It should be noted that his name itself, Nichiren, means sun (*nichi*) and lotus (*ren*).

Nichiren had pursued many years of study before concluding that the Lotus Sutra was the ultimate teaching. When he was young, he commenced learning Buddhism at the Seicho-ji temple of the Tendai school. He then learned the doctrines of Tendai, Shingon, and other schools at major Buddhist centers, including Mount Hiei, Mount Koya, and Onjo-ji, and continued perusing as many of the available sutras as possible. However, he was not satisfied with any of the teachings, and in 1253, he finally came to the conclusion that the Lotus Sutra was the only sutra that correctly transmits the Buddha's words and his teachings on attaining enlightenment.

Nichiren's life was filled with dramatic events. His interpretation of the sutra was only accepted long after he had begun propagating it. In addition, he had to endure considerable slander and false accusations. He suffered more than a few persecutions and was even nearly executed. However, the authorities were unable to kill him not because they had second thoughts, but because an unexpected natural phenomenon interrupted this injustice. At the very moment of his execution, a flying object appeared in the dark sky above the heads of those present and approached the earth at a very high speed. The guards thought it was a warning from above and ran away, leaving Nichiren behind. After this incident, he was eventually exiled to Sado Island. Nichiren interpreted the event as proof of his enlightenment and started his mission as a

preacher of the correct teachings. In the Lotus Sutra, he found the ultimate, most profound meaning of the Buddha's teachings. He preached the teachings in a way that enabled listeners to grasp the very core of the sutra's principles. It was essentially the first and most important philosophical interpretation that had ever appeared in Japan. His interpretation of the Lotus Sutra was different in many respects from those of his contemporaries. Nichiren's works have since been published in English in Japan under the title of *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, which contain 2,608 pages in two volumes. This publication helps us to gain an overview of Nichiren's basic teachings, showing how he embraced the Lotus Sutra and made it into a religious symbol. He believed and explained to his followers that every living being has the potential to attain enlightenment, that is, that every living being can become a Buddha.

This is one of the main ideas of Mahayana Buddhism, which Nichiren fully supported. To achieve the goal of attaining enlightenment, he proposed a new and innovative practice of repeating the words *Nam-myōhō-rengē-kyō*, which he considered to be the universal Law that can be summoned as life force by the chanting of this phrase. This phrase, meaning literally "Devotion to the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Dharma," was also inscribed in the form of a mandala called Gohonzon, an object of devotion through which people revere the wisdom of the Buddha.

Nichiren was constantly engaged in correspondence with many different kinds of people, explaining to them the meaning of enlightenment, and inscribing mandalas or Gohonzon. In many religions, giving physical expression to deities is treated as a deeply significant and sometimes controversial matter. In Japan, there were also numerous sculptures and images of the Buddha that were worshiped as living entities. Nichiren gave a lot of thought to this practice.

It is known that the Buddha has 32 extraordinary features attributed to him. Some of them can be replicated, but many of them can only be observed as part of the living Buddha himself. For example, how can one convey the Buddha's voice, understand his chain of thoughts, or transmit the look in his eyes that reaches people's hearts? None of the images can fully convey the actual features of the Buddha. Sutras that claim that the image of the Buddha is identical to the living Buddha himself are, therefore, obviously misleading. But, if we place the Lotus Sutra beside an image of the Buddha with 31 features, we can find the Buddha himself who embodies the pure and perfect teaching. Nichiren explains this as follows: "The written words of the Lotus Sutra express

in visible and non-coextensive form the Buddha's pure and far-reaching voice, which is itself invisible and coextensive, and so possess the two physical aspects of color and form. The Buddha's pure and far-reaching voice, which had once vanished, has reappeared in the visible form of written words to benefit the people" ("Opening of the Eyes of Wooden and Painted Images").³ For Nichiren, the words of the Buddha expressed in the sutra were equal to the living voice of the Buddha himself. In a sense, this is the 32nd of the Buddha's extraordinary features that a simple statue would not be able to express or replace. The actual living voice of the Buddha, the Buddha's words as revealed in the Lotus Sutra, no doubt were of greater significance to Nichiren than temple rituals.

This passage from Nichiren's writings can serve as a commentary on chapter 16 of the Lotus Sutra ("Tathāgatāyuspramāṇa-parivarta") in which the Buddha makes it clear that he is the universe itself and always present among the people. However, he is not usually visible and rarely appears in the form of a human body, except in cases when human beings need to be protected from harm. Rescuing people from harm and calamities is related in chapter 25 of the sutra ("Samantamukha-parivarta"). A small woodblock text of the chapter in the Tangut (Xixia) language that contains 32 illustrations of cases when people are rescued from various mortal dangers is stored in the collection of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts.

In elaborating on the extraordinary characteristics of the Lotus Sutra, Nichiren explains that one realizes the thoughts of another person through speech or verbal communication. In this way, physical phenomena, by their very nature, reflect their spiritual dimension, and thus both dimensions together form a unity. The thoughts of the Buddha, conveyed in the Lotus Sutra, appear to his listeners in an alternative physical form. When reading the text of the Lotus Sutra, one does not see the words of the Buddha, but rather feels his thoughts. Nichiren's teachings correspond to the level of consciousness during a period when sincere belief in the mystical power of words was professed. This belief in the mystical power of words still exists today.

It is known that Buddhist philosophy takes into consideration only the spiritual aspect of living beings, their state of mind, and hardly touches upon the material realm. Theory about the spiritual inner domain was developed in detail in the Tendai/Tiantai school that Nichiren had first belonged to. China's Great Teacher Tiantai, Zhiyi, (538–597) had established the theory of "three thousand realms in a single moment of life."

Nichiren used this concept to define the state of each human mind. The thoughts of living beings are never static, in every single moment they move within three thousand realms. Such an understanding is characteristically described not only in the Lotus Sutra but also in a variety of contemporary Buddhist philosophies. Every organ and cell of living beings simultaneously experience all sorts of conditions: joy, sorrow, suffering, and love, among others. One achieves growth and development, reaching a peak of mental performance, after which one finds oneself in gradual wane, and then slows down until finally experiencing extinction. Nichiren calls on us to be in control over these processes at any given moment.

He underlines that the sutra cannot make one younger but can strengthen one's spirit. It will help the practitioner to stay mentally and spiritually strong regardless of age. It does not encourage them to merely wait for the physical ending of life, but can lead to enlightenment, and can manifest the Buddha nature in every living being. This kind of explanation of mental and spiritual processes was definitely revolutionary in Buddhism, and became possible only as a result of Nichiren's advent.

The sutra was praised after practitioners began to understand its main principle correctly—that there is only One Vehicle, the Buddha Vehicle, which can save all living beings, not the Small Vehicle, nor the Great Vehicle, nor the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. The Japanese scholar Seishi Karashima, however, made the observation that an error occurred in the process of translating the Lotus Sutra from Prakrit into Sanskrit. Sanskrit words *yāna*, meaning “vehicle,” and *jñāna*, meaning “knowledge,” are expressed in the same word, *jāna*, in Prakrit, vernacular speech. From a logical point of view, the terms “little knowledge” and “great knowledge” appear more rational than the terms “Small Vehicle” and “Great Vehicle.” As a matter of course, not all scholars agree with this observation.

Chapter 5 (“Auṣadhī-parivarta”) of the Lotus Sutra relates that, as a great cloud gives rain to grow plants and trees, Buddha leads living beings to enlightenment. He preaches with a resounding voice to heavenly and human beings, and the asuras of the entire world. It is just like the great cloud that covers the whole thousand-millionfold world (the major world system) and causes roaring thunders. The Buddha transfers those to the other side of the river who have not yet been able to cross, liberates those who have not found freedom, and brings those to nirvana who have not attained it.

The Research History of the Sanskrit Lotus Sutra

Here let us take a look at the history of research on the Sanskrit Lotus Sutra, which began in Europe in the first half of the 19th century. Manuscript studies at the time had already flourished in Pali texts, India's Sanskrit texts in Devanagari script, and Persian and Arabic texts. Early Sanskrit manuscripts written in ancient Indian Brāhmī script, however, were unknown. In Europe, the textual study of the Lotus Sutra was initiated by the French philologist Eugène Burnouf (1801–1852). He was attracted to the Indian religions, Sanskrit, and in particular, Buddhism. He left a huge archive of letters to relatives, classmates, and friends, in which he shared his research plans, discoveries, and topics of interest.⁴

It was one of his British friends, Brian Houghton Hodgson (1800–1894), who played an important role in the life of Burnouf by helping him obtain manuscripts in Sanskrit. Hodgson was an employee of the East India Company, he worked in Kathmandu and Darjeeling, and was later designated as the British Resident in Nepal. Well-versed in Buddhism, he collected Buddhist manuscripts and works of art. He ordered the copying of Nepalese Buddhist texts into Devanagari script and sent them to Burnouf. These copied texts became part of Burnouf's collection. Despite his young age and poor health, Burnouf energetically worked as a specialist in Indian and Sanskrit studies. In 1832, he was appointed secretary of the Société Asiatique in Paris. In 1836, in the capacity of secretary, he wrote the first annual report on the activities of the société. At the same time, he lectured on general and comparative linguistics at the École Normale Supérieure. His interests also included Buddhist philosophy and Buddhist culture. He considered it necessary to combine these disciplines into a single general academic unit.

The Lotus Sutra, which had become familiar in Europe by that time thanks to Chinese sources and Tibetan translation, was of a special interest to Burnouf. It was a text that is a complex of general scientific values to which he had so aspired. In April 1837, he received a packet from Hodgson in Kathmandu, which included 34 Sanskrit manuscripts copied in Devanagari script. Among them was the Lotus Sutra, now preserved at the library of the Société Asiatique in Paris.

Burnouf began translating the Lotus Sutra immediately. Though he had only one manuscript of the sutra at hand around April 20, 1837, he started his work during this period. In 1845, Hodgson delivered two additional manuscripts of the sutra from Kathmandu, which became part of Burnouf's collection (later deposited in the collection of the

Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris). Unfortunately, Burnouf was only able to view them at a very late stage after the first manuscript had already been translated and part of it was ready to be printed. He was greatly shocked upon discovering the arrival of the new manuscripts. The scholar, however, made every possible effort to utilize the variant readings from the new texts and to include them in the very extensive notes and appendices to the new book, which became considerably longer than the translation itself. Despite his poor health, Burnouf worked around the clock. As if he knew that his time was limited, he rushed to finish the work that he had long dreamed of completing. In October 1837, Burnouf reported to Hodgson that he had already translated 233 of the 248 folios.

Even before the complete French version of the Lotus Sutra was published in 1852, he distributed the translation of the sutra's 5th chapter (Auṣadhī-parivarta) in 1843, which was entitled "Herb." Though the content of this chapter is fairly difficult in a philosophical sense, a skillfully related parable helps Buddhists easily understand the exact meaning of the Buddha's teaching. After submitting his translation to the printer, he thought the quality might be inadequate and he was very worried about whether he would leave behind a bad impression as a scientist. He passed away on May 28, 1852, before his book was released.

With extensive notes and appendices, Burnouf's French version of the Lotus Sutra (*Le Lotus de la Bonne Loi, traduit du sanscrit, accompagné d'un commentaire et de vingt et un mémoires relatifs au Bouddhisme*, 1852), despite the fact that it was published over one and half a centuries ago, is still considered to be one of the best translations.

In 1854, another French orientalist, Philippe-Édouard Foucaux (1811–1894), issued chapter 4 of the Lotus Sutra, "Parable of the Prodigal Son," presenting the comparative texts in Sanskrit and Tibetan (*Parabole de l'enfant égaré, chapitre IV du "Lotus de la Bonne Loi"*). His publication, however, did not enjoy the kind of success that Burnouf's translation did. In 1884, the Dutch Orientalist Johan Hendrik Caspar Kern (1833–1917), published an English translation of the Lotus Sutra (*Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka or The Lotus of the True Law*) as volume 21 of the series, "The Sacred Books of the East," which was completed under the editorship of Friedrich Max Müller (1823–1900).

In 1876, Bunyiu Nanjio (1849–1927) was dispatched by Japan's Jōdo Shin Buddhist school to Max Müller's office in Oxford to study Sanskrit under the guidance of the famous scholar. After returning home, Nanjio became the key figure in the field of Japanese Buddhology and the

founder of modern Sanskritology in Japan. He had access to the Nepalese Lotus Sutra manuscripts. He combined several Sanskrit texts into one recension and passed it on to Kern for future publication. Their joint research resulted in the publication of the first collated Lotus Sutra text in the famous “Bibliotheca Buddhica” series (vol. 10, St. Petersburg, 1908–1912) in Russia.

Since the Lotus Sutra manuscript that Petrovsky obtained in Kashgar was brought to St. Petersburg, concerns about the sutra increased significantly. The manuscript preserves the nearly complete text of the Lotus Sutra (though some fragments bear traces of fire), and is the most complete among the Sanskrit texts from Central Asia known to the world today. Most of the others, including fragments (10 units) in the Russian collection, are small pieces that separated from various manuscripts.

Incidentally, manuscripts of a completely different lineage were found in 1931 at a site near Gilgit in the Kashmir region. They came to be called Gilgit Lotus Sutra manuscripts. A color facsimile edition of the manuscripts was jointly published by the National Archives of India, the Soka Gakkai, and the Institute of Oriental Philosophy in 2012.

The manuscript, which originated from Khotan and was sent to St. Petersburg by Petrovsky, was published twice as facsimile editions. In 1955, a microfilm of this manuscript was presented to Raghu Vira (1902–1963), director of the newly founded International Academy of Indian Culture, by the government of the Soviet Union. This microfilm was used in 1976 when it was published as a facsimile edition of the manuscript in the “Śata-Piṭaka” series, but it was not entirely successful as some fragments were misplaced. In 1977, the same edition was reissued in Japan. The Japanese specialist in Lotus Sutra manuscripts, Hirofumi Toda, transliterated this Central Asian text into Roman letters and published it as *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra: Central Asian Manuscripts: Romanized Text* in 1981, a work that has since been highly acclaimed within the international scientific community.

The Lotus Sutra and the Soka Gakkai

The Lotus Sutra is a key and fundamental text for the Soka Gakkai. Daisaku Ikeda, the honorary president of the Soka Gakkai and president of the Soka Gakkai International, has explained the meaning of what Buddhism teaches in extensive and contemporary terms.

One of the books he has published in Russian is entitled *Сокровенный закон жизни и смерти: Беседы о “Сутре Лотоса”* (The

Secret Law of Life and Death: Conversations on the “Lotus Sutra”). The title of this book speaks of the necessity of achieving a harmonious world, kindness, wisdom, respect for all those who ask for help, and enlightenment that helps people to take responsibility for their lives and to help others do the same. While striving to manifest the Buddha nature in his own life, Ikeda has dedicated himself to building a new world of good, without war, and without enmity between peoples.

Earth, the planet on which we live, is a world filled with so much beauty and harmony. Is it really necessary to destroy this place of such beauty and harmony, or to destroy the verdurous ecosystem only to satisfy human greed? The Lotus Sutra relates that relief and rescue are given to people when they suffer from the myriad problems caused by the confusion of the world. As long as we put into practice various proposals Ikeda has issued on contemporary issues based on concepts from the Lotus Sutra and Buddhism, humanity will be spared from extinction.⁵

Let us look up at the sky at night and see for ourselves. When the stars light up the night sky, they tell us about the vast expanse of the universe and its harmony, and lead us to imagine that the Buddhas of the ten directions and three existences (past, present and future), and the bodhisattvas related in the Lotus Sutra, all hope for the happiness and prosperity of all living beings.

There is an unanswered question in the Lotus Sutra that the Buddha asks himself, in effect, “How can one remaining in the human body support other living beings to attain enlightenment and discover the Buddha nature within oneself?” The noble way Ikeda has lived his life is an exemplary reply to this question of the blessed teachings of the Lotus Sutra.

NOTES

¹ Seishi Karashima, “An Old Tibetan Translation of the Lotus Sutra from Khotan: The Romanized Text Collated with the Kanjur Versions” (1)–(4), *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University*, vols. 8–11, 2005–2008.

² Klaus Wille, ed., *Fragments of a Manuscript of the Saddharmapuṇḍarikāsūtra from Khādaliq* (Tokyo: Soka Gakkai, 2000), pp. 145–183, Concordances.

³ 『日蓮大聖人御書全集』(東京: 創価学会, 1952), 468–469頁 / *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Soka Gakkai, 1999), p. 86.

⁴ These materials are preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Unfortunately, however, the arranging of these materials remains incomplete. Henri Léon Feer (1830–1902) was instrumental in the research and publication of Burnouf’s letter. The Japanese scholar, Akira Yuyama published a voluminous book about Burnouf. Akira Yuyama, *Eugène Burnouf: The Background to His Research into the Lotus Sutra*, Tokyo 2000: International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Soka University (Bibliotheca philologica et philosophica Buddhica v. 3).

⁵ <http://www.daisakuikedasoka.org/main/peacebuild/peace-proposals/pp2013.html>.