

Acknowledgements

Since 1997, the Soka Gakkai has published romanized texts and facsimile editions of the Lotus Sutra under the title “Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series”. The publications have been greeted with acclaim by universities, academic institutions, and scholars both in Japan and abroad. As the first of the series, *Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Fragments from the Lüshun Museum Collection, Facsimile Edition and Romanized Text* was published on 3 May 1997. The publication series numbers six with eight volumes (no. 2 consists of one replica and two romanized texts), the latest publication of which was the *Xixia Version of the Lotus Sutra from the Collection of St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences* (25 March 2005).

My previous work, *Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from University of Tokyo General Library (No. 414), Romanized Text*, was published as no. 5 of the series (25 November 2003) under the guidance of the late Dr. Hirofumi Toda, Professor Emeritus of the University of Tokushima. In its appendix I, “Memorandum: A Brief History of Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript Studies”, I discussed Dr. Toda’s research in his later years, namely, the feasibility of grouping Nepalese manuscripts. My point was that the research in this field will bear fruit, not through discussions of the sutra texts, but by the constant publication of romanized texts and as a result of the meticulous efforts of transliteration within the framework of a long-term research vision.

Guided by my objective to publish at least this romanized text as a sequel to the Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series, I set out to romanize manuscript no. 6 from the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. It was also my response to Dr. Toda’s hope that R and P3 be published after T8.

At the end of March 2005, I submitted my romanized draft to the Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP), and requested Mr. Yasuo Morita, then Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and Dr. Yoichi Kawada, Director of the IOP, to publish the text. The IOP and the Soka Gakkai warmly considered the request, as part of their ongoing efforts to promote manuscript research. In the early autumn of 2006, they officially authorized a second round of publications of the Lotus texts, a project that became much larger in scale than I had originally anticipated. The project will result in the following publications within the five-year period that began in April 2006:

- (1) Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (No. 6), Romanized Text;
- (2) Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the Société Asiatique (No. 2), Romanized Text;

- (3) Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the British Library (Or. 2204), Facsimile Edition;
- (4) Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the British Library (Or. 2204), Romanized Text; and
- (5) Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from Cambridge University Library (Add. 1684), Romanized Text.

The texts covered by the project are indispensable for research on the Nepalese Sanskrit manuscripts of the Lotus Sutra because, (1) is the manuscript used as the first original text of the Kern-Nanjio edition; (2) is the manuscript used as the original of the French version by Eugène Burnouf (1801-1852); the manuscript to be published as (3) and (4) shows the typical reading of a palm-leaf manuscript from Nepal; and (5) is a manuscript used as the original for collating the Kn edition as well as the English version by Hendrik Kern (1833-1917).

The most important aspect of the new project is the arrangement and classification of the Nepalese palm-leaf and paper manuscripts into groups according to lineage and, in due course, to match to the extent possible the identification of each manuscript to its indigenous group. Through these measures, one can present a clear and long-term perspective towards the realization of a critical edition of the Nepalese Sanskrit Lotus Sutra. The conceptual foundation upon which this undertaking was based was initially created by Dr. Toda. It is, therefore, my great pleasure to present a romanized text of the Lotus Sutra in book form to experts and colleagues in Japan and abroad.

This volume has been realized as a result of the warm understanding and support from many different people. First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to Mr. Daisaku Ikeda, President of the Soka Gakkai International, whom I regard as my mentor in life. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Einosuke Akiya, former President of the Soka Gakkai, and to Mr. Minoru Harada, President of the Soka Gakkai. I also extend my gratitude to the staff of the IOP, in particular, Mr. Yasuo Morita, former Chairman of the IOP Board of Trustees, Dr. Yoichi Kawada, current IOP Director and Chairman, and Mr. Yukito Idogawa, IOP Secretary-General.

Furthermore, I am deeply indebted to Mr. Noriyoshi Mizufune of the Soka Gakkai's Office of International Affairs, concurrently IOP researcher, who kindly undertook numerous tasks related to public relations, general coordination, and the editing of the publication. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Mrs. Alison Ohta, Curator of the Royal Asiatic Society, and my deepest respect for Mrs. Kathy Lazenbatt, Librarian of the Royal Asiatic Society, who kindly granted permission to

publish the manuscript as a romanized text.

I also wish to thank Prof. Seishi Karashima and Associate Prof. Noriyuki Kudo at the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Soka University, who were kind enough to provide me with an excellent copy of the manuscript. I should report that the quality of this copy made otherwise indiscernible letters legible, an improvement which was reflected in the current edition. I am also grateful to Mr. Dylan Scudder, who kindly edited English portions of this volume.

Finally, I dedicate this edition to the late Dr. Hirofumi Toda, and report to him today that our new project has just begun.

(In his memory, I wrote a 31-syllable Japanese poem on the way home from his hometown, Chikushino, Fukuoka, in April 2004, eight months after his passing in August 2003.)

Chikaitono tanichiru sakura hirowanto

Hokkeno fumini inochi hakarite

(Out of the door / with the pledge to succeed,

I try in vain to pick up cherry petals

falling on the field,

measuring life / against the words / of the Lotus Sutra.)

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