

## FOREWORD

The Lotus Sutra has been recognised as one of the most important documents belonging to the Buddhist tradition since the very beginning of Buddhist studies in the West. As long ago as 1852 a translation of the Lotus Sutra by the famous French scholar É. Burnouf, who may be considered the father of Buddhology in Europe, was published under the title *Le Lotus de la Bonne Loi*. The manuscript of this translation was completed already in 1841. It was based on Nepalese tradition of the Sanskrit text of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra. Manuscripts from Nepal also form the basis of the first complete edition of the Sanskrit text of the Lotus Sutra by Hendrik Kern and Bunyiu Nanjio (Bibliotheca Buddhica, X, St. Pétersbourg 1908-1912).

The discovery of ancient Buddhist manuscripts in Xinjiang provides us with much earlier testimonies of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra. Foremost among these finds is the so-called Kashgar manuscript of the Sanskrit text of the Lotus Sutra. It was found by local inhabitants of the Khotan region and sold in pieces to members of various American, Japanese, and European expeditions to Central Asia or to diplomatic representatives from those countries. Several folios of this manuscript have been edited by scholars in Germany, Great Britain, Japan, and Russia. In the Turfan collection in Berlin, H. Bechert, co-author of this foreword, identified nine folios of this manuscript and published them in the *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, I. Philologisch-historische Klasse, Jahrgang 1972, No. 1*. The complete text of almost all folios of this codex so far known was published in facsimile by Lokesh Chandra in the Śata-Piṭaka Series, 229 (New Delhi 1976). A careful edition of this material was subsequently prepared and published by Professor Hirofumi Toda.

There have been many other discoveries of fragments of Central Asian manuscripts of the Lotus Sutra in Sanskrit and other languages. The material in the present volume was identified by various scholars, viz. the fragments in the Francke/Körper collection kept in the Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde, Munich, by R.E. Emmerick, co-author of this foreword, the material in the Turfan collection housed in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, by H. Bechert, and the material in the Hoernle collection held by the British Library, London, by Professor A. Yuyama and Professor H. Toda. It is evident that these fragments taken together are a very valuable source for the early tradition of the Lotus Sutra, supplementing the evidence afforded by the so-called Kashgar manuscript. We accordingly decided to apply to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft for financial support of the project of editing this valuable material.

We were most fortunate to be able to obtain Dr. K. Wille as the editor of the

Khādaliq manuscript and are happy that this project has now been successfully completed so that the results of his work can be published in this splendid volume in the Soka Gakkai's Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series.

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