

## GREETINGS

In January of 1994 the Soka Gakkai set up a research and editorial committee for the purpose of preparing volumes for its Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series. The aim of the series was to publish facsimile editions of texts of the Lotus Sutra that were deemed to be of outstanding academic value, along with romanized transcriptions of the texts, in the hope that, by making such texts available to scholars of Buddhism throughout the world, the Soka Gakkai could thus contribute to the advancement of their researches.

The committee proposed to focus its attention initially on Nepalese manuscripts of the Lotus Sutra since, among Sanskrit texts of the sutra, these are noted for the relatively defect-free condition in which they have come down to us. The plan was then to proceed to the study and publication of Lotus Sutra manuscripts in other languages such as Tangut.

In May, 1997, the first volume in the Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series appeared, entitled *Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Fragments from the Lüshun Museum Collection*, through the joint efforts of the Lüshun Museum of China and the Soka Gakkai. November of the following year, 1998, saw the completion of the second volume in the series, *Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscripts from the National Archives of Nepal (No. 4-21), Facsimile Edition*. The Lüshun Museum presented a copy of the first volume to President Jiang Zemin of China, and a copy of the second volume was presented to H.M. King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev of Nepal. Copies of the two volumes were also presented to specialists in Indology and Buddhist studies and other concerned scholars in Japan and abroad, where they were greeted with acclaim.

The present work, *Fragments of a Manuscript of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra from Khādaliq*, constitutes the third volume in the series. The idea for such a volume came about when, in November of 1997, members of the Soka Gakkai International and the Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP) of Tokyo visited the Seminar für Indologie und Buddhismuskunde of the University of Göttingen. At that time the director of the Seminar, Professor Heinz Bechert, informed the group that Dr. Klaus Wille had gathered together copies of fragments of a Sanskrit Lotus Sutra manuscript discovered in Central Asia that are presently preserved in four different collections in Germany and England, and had produced a romanized transcription of the text. Professor Bechert inquired whether it would be possible for the Soka Gakkai to publish the results of these researches in a work similar to the Lüshun volume. The group suggested that Dr. Wille's work be submitted to Professor Hirofumi Toda of the University of Tokushima and other specialists in Lotus Sutra manuscript studies, and a decision as to publication

be made on the basis of their opinion.

Early in 1998 Professor Bechert accordingly forwarded a copy of Dr. Wille's work to Professor Toda. After examining the romanized transcription, along with the Introduction and Concordances that accompanied it, Professor Toda concluded that the work would constitute a valuable contribution to the study of Central Asia texts of the Lotus Sutra, and recommended publication.

In March of the same year, the Soka Gakkai publication committee formally approved the publication of Dr. Wille's work as the third volume in its Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series, and it was turned over to the Institute of Oriental Philosophy for editing and management.

At the same time, a researcher of the Institute of Oriental Philosophy visited Professor Bechert at the University of Göttingen to discuss details of the process of publication, and these discussions resulted in a memorandum concerning publication drawn up on February 8, 1999.

Meanwhile, Dr. Wille set about making an English translation of his text, the original of which was in German. Professor Ronald E. Emmerick of the University of Hamburg, who, along with Professor Bechert, was acting as co-director of the Lotus Sutra studies project of the University of Göttingen, undertook to supervise the editing of the English version.

Final publication of the volume thus came about through the efforts of a number of individuals and groups. I would like here to extend my sincere thanks to Professors Bechert and Emmerick and to Dr. Wille, the author and compiler of the work, for all their labours, and to the members of the various research institutes and all others who contributed to the successful completion of the project.

Einosuke Akiya  
President  
Soka Gakkai  
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