

Acknowledgments

The Lotus Sutra expounds the most comprehensive teachings of Mahayana Buddhism. In East Asia, therefore, it is called “the king of sutras,” the highest of the Buddhist scriptures. The principles of life and the truths about living, as revealed in the Lotus Sutra, were clarified and transmitted by the Great Teacher T’ien-t’ai (538-597) of China in his work *Mo-ho-chih-kuan* (Great Concentration and Insight) and by Nichiren Daishonin (1222-1282) of Japan in his writings known as the Goshō.

It was Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944), the founding president of the Soka Gakkai, and Josei Toda (1900-1958), the second president, who inspired new life into the Lotus Sutra and revived its spirit in the modern world. Third president Daisaku Ikeda (1928-), who is now president of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI), has further developed the ideas of his predecessors and, defining the sutra as a body of teachings that fully elucidates the true nature of humanity and life, continues to guide our movement for peace, culture and education. Thus the Lotus Sutra is the most important sutra for the members of the Soka Gakkai. In January 1994, the Soka Gakkai established a research and editorial committee for the publication of Sanskrit and other texts of the Lotus Sutra. The committee immediately launched a project to compile facsimiles of Lotus Sutra manuscripts and their romanized texts. Our sole motivation was that the publication of these valuable resources would contribute to the advancement of Buddhist studies throughout the world.

The first volume in this series of reproductions was published in May 1997 under the title, *Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Fragments from the Lüshun Museum Collections*, as a joint undertaking by the Lüshun Museum and the Soka Gakkai. The present volume, part one of the second in the series, is a facsimile edition of the Lotus Sutra manuscript no. 4-21 from the collection of the National Archives of Nepal.

A chain of visits and meetings has led to the compilation of this Nepalese version. At their meeting in Tokyo in 1992, Prof. Soorya B. Shakya, former vice-chancellor of Tribhuvan University, presented to Mr. Ikeda a reproduction of the Lotus Sutra manuscript no. 3-678 preserved in the National Archives of Nepal. Subsequently, Keshab B. Shrestha, general director of SGI-Nepal, and Ms. Yoshiko Kawamura, deputy head of the Soka Gakkai International Division, carried on negotiations with archive officials. Representatives of the Institute of Oriental Philosophy in Tokyo also visited the National Archives.

As with the Lüshun Museum edition, the Soka Gakkai publication committee commissioned the Institute of Oriental Philosophy to compile this volume. Prof.

Hirofumi Toda of the University of Tokushima, a world-renowned authority on Sanskrit Lotus manuscripts, shared his expert knowledge in romanizing the sutra text and extending invaluable advice on other aspects of the project. We are grateful for Professor Toda for traveling to the National Archives of Nepal in November 1997 to conduct research necessary for this volume. I would also like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to His Excellency Purna Bahadur Khadka, Minister for Youth, Sports and Culture, Ms. Sanimaiya Rana, chief of the National Archives of Nepal, and other personages in Nepal for their warm support and cooperation in this project.

The present facsimile edition will soon be followed by two volumes of the romanized text. It is our sincere wish that these publications will serve as a foundation for lasting friendship between the Kingdom of Nepal and Japan and stimulate the promotion of Buddhist pacifism for the sake of peace throughout the world.

Einosuke Akiya
President
Soka Gakkai
August 24, 1998