

Memorial Note

Prof. Seishi Karashima, Director of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University, passed away on July 23, 2019, at the age of 61. We pray from the bottom of our hearts for repose to his soul and extend our sincere condolences.

Prof. Karashima specialized in Buddhist philology and earned a PhD in literature from Beijing University. With his vast knowledge of languages including Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan, Middle Indo-Aryan and ancient Chinese, Prof. Karashima took a lead in detailed analysis of Chinese Buddhist translations. He authored and edited numerous books and articles including *A Textual Study of the Chinese Versions of the Saddharmapūṇḍarīkasūtra* (Sankibo Busshorin, 1992) and *Buddhist Manuscripts from Central Asia: The British Library Sanskrit Fragments* (International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Soka University, 2006, 2009, 2015).

Prof. Karashima also long extended his support to the Institute of Oriental Philosophy's (IOP) projects such as the Buddhist Sutra exhibition and the Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series. In May 2019, he contributed a pioneering article in Japanese on the *Saddharmapūṇḍarīkasūtra to the Toyo gakujutsu kenkyu* (Japanese edition of *The Journal of Oriental Studies*), vol. 58, no. 1. He also graciously accepted our request to write on the same theme in English for this issue and tirelessly reviewed his article again and again till the last moment of his departure.

In honour of Prof. Karashima's selfless service to the study of Buddhism, especially the origin of early Mahayana Buddhism, and in deep gratitude for his great contribution to the IOP, we decided to publish his article just as he last revised it with permission of his family. We hope that this article will be globally received as an eternal relic to wisdom by as many people as possible. We are now firmly determined to inherit every slightest part of his will towards rigorous scholarly study of the *Saddharmapūṇḍarīkasūtra*.

The Importance of the Study of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* Manuscripts*

Seishi Karashima

(1) Languages used in Buddhist Texts

(1.1) From colloquial languages to Sanskrit

FROM the time of Śākyamuni Buddha, the Buddhist scriptures were transmitted, not in Sanskrit, but in Prakrit (i.e. colloquial languages) — Sanskrit did not exist at Śākyamuni's time. Probably, Śākyamuni, himself, preached in Old Māgadhī, the dialect of Magadha and encouraged his disciples to use colloquial languages in their sermons — their languages were later systematised as Pāli. Buddhist communities and those who listened to these sermons were not always particularly intellectual but merely ordinary people. If the Buddhist teachings had been preached in a formal, elaborate and high-class language, such as Sanskrit, such people would not have understood them. Therefore, the use of colloquial languages was inevitable and necessary. Thus, the Buddhist scriptures — both the so-called Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures as well as those of Nikāya Buddhism — had been composed and transmitted originally in colloquial languages so as to be understood by ordinary monks and people, but later they were translated into elaborate Sanskrit. Judging from ancient manuscripts, inscriptions and transliterations found in old Chinese translations, such colloquial Buddhist scriptures came to be translated gradually into Sanskrit from the 3rd century C.E. onwards and most likely, by the 4th century C.E., the process of sanskritisation of Buddhist scriptures had been greatly advanced.

In the Gandhāra region, whose centre was the present-day Peshawar valley in northwest Pakistan, Buddha statues came to be created by the 1st century C.E., and around the same time, many Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures were composed in that area as well. The language of such scriptures seems to have been Gāndhārī, the ancient local language of

* I am very grateful to Peter Lait and Susan Roach, who went to great trouble to check my English.

Gandhāra. In the last two decades, fragments of Gāndhārī manuscripts of various Mahāyāna scriptures have been discovered one after another. Among them is a fragmentary manuscript of the *Prajñāpāramitā*. Moreover, I have somewhere demonstrated that the underlying language of the oldest Chinese translation of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, namely the *Daoxing Banre jing* 道行般若經 translated in 179 C.E., was Gāndhārī (Fig. 1). As a language of the common people of Gandhāra, Gāndhārī seems to have been used from around the third century B.C.E. to the fourth century C.E.

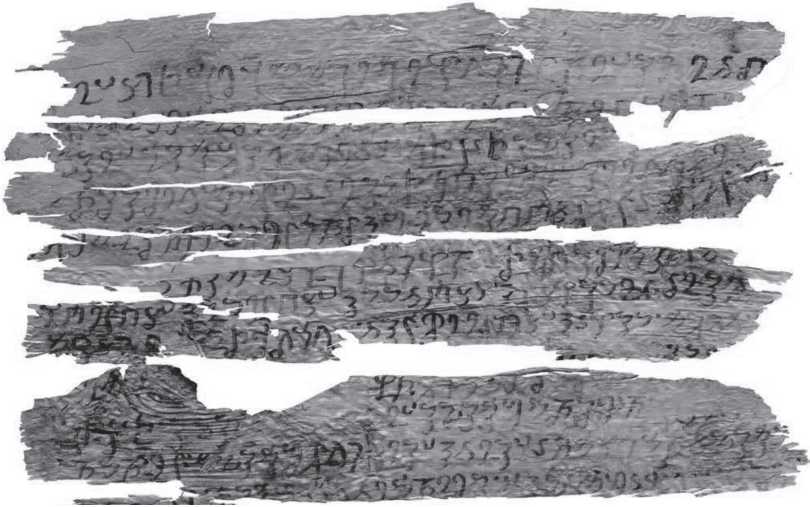


Fig. 1 A Gāndhārī fragmentary manuscript of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, (Falk/Karashima 2012, plate 5)

(1.2) From oral transmission to writing

At the time of Śākyamuni Buddha, writing/characters did not exist in India. Not only in his time but also until very late on. The earlier scriptures, preserved as the five Pāli *Nikāyas* and the five *Āgamas* in the Chinese Canons, had originally been transmitted orally by monks, who specialised in memorising and reciting each *Nikāya* / *Āgama* for several hundreds of years.

When we consider investigating the origins of Mahāyāna Buddhism, it is important to be aware that not only the Lotus Sutra but also other early Mahāyāna scriptures were composed around the time of the transition from oral transmission to writing. The Buddhist scriptures, which were transmitted orally since the time of Śākyamuni Buddha, started being written down probably in the first century B.C.E. Pāli

history texts tell us that Pāli scriptures started being written down in the first century B.C.E. in Sri Lanka. Also, Gāndhārī fragments of Hīnayāna texts, dating back to the first century B.C.E., have been discovered in Pakistan. Moreover, as stated above, fragments of Gāndhārī birch-bark manuscripts of various Mahāyāna scriptures, dating back to the first/second centuries C.E., have been also discovered in Pakistan.

Of course, not all Buddhist scriptures started to be written at that time. The Lotus Sutra consists of several layers, and Chapters 2 to 9, belonging to the oldest one, do not mention the “writing / copying” of this scripture, though it is referred to in the chapters of the newer layers. It is, therefore, evident that the composition of the Lotus Sutra spans both the times of oral transmission and writing.

(1.3) The change of languages and the ways of transmission of Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures

The change of languages and the ways of transmission of the so-called Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures probably took place as follows:

- (1) Oral transmission in Prakrit (including Gāndhārī): 1st century B.C.E.
- (2) Oral transmission in Prakrit / writing of Prakrit texts in Kharoṣṭhī: 1st–3rd centuries C.E.
- (3) Broken Sanskrit mixed with Prakrit (2nd–3rd centuries C.E.)
- (4) (Buddhist) Sanskrit; writing in Brāhmī (3rd/4th century C.E. onwards)

Of course, there must have been scriptures which did not go through these stages, as each had its own particular background and history of formation. In any case, it should be noted that it was as late as the 3rd or 4th century that the so-called Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures came to be translated or composed in Sanskrit and written in Brāhmī.

If we take these stages into account, studies on the origin and transformation (not development) of early Mahāyāna scriptures need the following three perspectives:

- (1) Early Mahāyāna scriptures had originally been transmitted and, only later, were gradually translated into Sanskrit
- (2) In the beginning, these scriptures were transmitted orally
- (3) Mahāyāna scriptures transformed (not developed) from time to time

If one does not accept this point of view, one may think that the extant complete Sanskrit manuscripts, — the oldest of which date back to the 7th though most of them do from the 11th century onwards —, are the "original texts" and regard readings in much earlier Chinese translations or Sanskrit (or Sanskrit-cum-Prakrit) fragments from Central Asia as "corrupt". An illustrative example of this sort of misunderstanding is *Avalokitasvara* and *Avalokiteśvara*. There are at least eight old Sanskrit fragments from Central Asia which bear the name *Avalokitasvara*, as well as one fragment from Kizil, which has (*Apa*) *lokidasvara*. These older forms agree with the early Chinese renderings "One Who Observes Sounds" and "One Who Observes Sounds of the World" (關音, 現音聲, 光世音, 觀世音), which were made between the 2nd and 5th centuries, while the newer form *Avalokiteśvara*, which first appears in a Mathurā inscription of the Gupta year 148 (467/468 C.E.) and later in the Gilgit manuscript of the Lotus Sutra, dating back to the 7th century, agrees with the newer Chinese renderings "One Who Observes the Sovereignty of the World" and "One Who Observes Sovereignty" (觀世自在, 觀自在) from the 6th century onwards. We cannot say for certain that the older forms are "corruptions" of the newer ones. However, the name of this *bodhisattva* has been interpreted based on the newer form *Avalokiteśvara* instead of the older, more original form *Avalokitasvara* in many reference books and research papers up to now. This is like putting the cart before the horse. The text of the Lotus Sutra, itself, has been treated in the same way.

(1.4) The Languages of the Lotus Sutra

More than 20 years ago, I demonstrated that the underlying text of Dharmarakṣa's translation of the Lotus Sutra (286 C.E.) had been transmitted in Prakrit-cum-Sanskrit, by comparing the Chinese translation with other versions, including all available Sanskrit manuscripts (Karashima 1992). I assumed further that many of the early Mahāyāna scriptures had been transmitted originally in Prakrit or in a mixed language of Prakrit with Sanskrit elements and later, translated gradually into (Buddhist) Sanskrit. This long-cherished hypothesis has been proven by newly-discovered fragments of a Gāndhārī version of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (Falk/Karashima 2012, 2013), dating back, with an 81.1 % probability, based on a C14 test, to between 47~147 C.E.

(2) Manuscripts of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*

Broadly speaking, Sanskrit manuscripts of the Lotus Sutra are classified into the following two groups.

(2.1) Gilgit-Nepalese recension

The first group consists of the so-called Gilgit manuscripts, discovered in the 1930s in Gilgit, Kashmir, dating back to the 7th or 8th century and the manuscripts from Nepal and Tibet, of which the oldest ones date back to the middle of the 11th century. The manuscript fragments, which have been discovered in the last two decades in Afghanistan, also belong to this group.

The script of the Gilgit manuscripts, dating back to the 7th or 8th century, differs from those of the manuscripts from Nepal and Tibet, dating from the 11th century onwards. However, the script of several fragments of three different much older manuscripts, preserved at the National Archives of Nepal, is similar to that of the Gilgit manuscripts. From this fact, we may assume that manuscripts, copied in ancient North-West India (incl. present-day Pakistan), had been sent to Nepal and were later there copied in the script of that time. Thus, the Nepalese manuscripts, which are preserved to this day, might have originated from those of North-West India. In the 11th century onwards, manuscripts, copied in Nepal, were sent onto Tibet. Today, four complete manuscripts of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* are preserved in Lhasa. Another manuscript of this text, which Ekai Kawaguchi had acquired in Shalu Monastery, near Shigatse in Tibet and brought back to Japan, is now preserved at Tōyō Bunko in Tokyo and dates back to the mid-11th century. Because all the above-mentioned five manuscripts from Tibet had been copied in Nepal and then sent to Tibet, they should be regarded as Nepalese manuscripts.

Thus, the manuscripts from Gilgit, Nepal (and eventually Tibet) should be regarded as belonging to one and the same recension. On this point, I shall explain in detail at the part concerning a new critical edition of this scripture.

(2.2) Manuscripts and fragments from Central Asia

The second group consists of manuscripts and fragments, discovered in Kashgar, Khotan, Khādaliq, Farhād-Bēg Yailaki — all located on the southern route of Silk Road, dating probably between the 5th and 8th centuries. These are now preserved in Russia, England, Germany, China, Japan and America. Most of them are very fragmentary, while

the following two manuscripts are well preserved and, therefore, very important for the study of the Lotus Sutra.

(1) A manuscript, discovered in Farhād-Bēg Yailaki, now kept in the British Library, dating probably back to the 5th or 6th century, preserves the part from the latter half of the 11th Chapter, the *Stūpasamdarśana*, up to the beginning of the 15th Chapter, the *Tathāgatāyuspramāṇa* (Fig. 2). This manuscript lacks the whole Chapter of Devadatta (提婆達多品), which had been lacking also in the original translation (406 C.E.) by Kumārajīva but was interpolated in the 6th century.

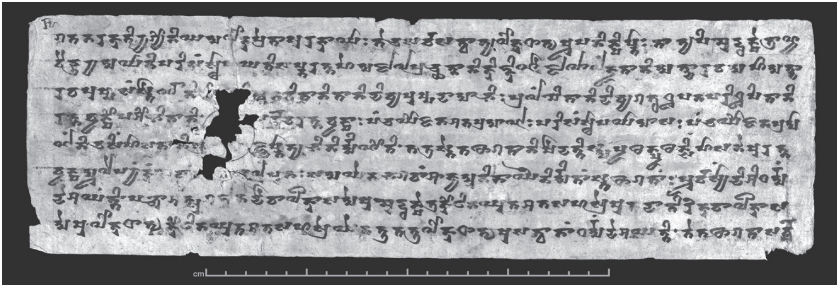


Fig. 2 A folio of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* manuscript, discovered in Farhād-Bēg Yailaki, now preserved in the British Library (IOL San 482; © British Library; BLSF I, plate 95)

(2) The so-called "Kashgar manuscript" of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* was discovered actually in Khādaliq, 115 km north of Kashgar, before being divided and sold in Kashgar, and these folios are now preserved in various places, such as the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences (St. Petersburg), the British Library, Lüshun Museum in China *etc.* This manuscript is usually abbreviated as "O" after Sergey Fyodorovich Oldenburg, who first studied it. However, I should like to rename it as the "Khādaliq manuscript" after its original place of discovery. This manuscript was probably copied in the 8th century and preserves more than 90% of the whole text. In the prose part, later additions are found here and there, while the verses have readings older than the Gilgit-Nepalese recension, which makes this manuscript the most important for the study of the Lotus Sutra.

Apart from these manuscripts, the so-called "Lüshun fragments" of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, consisting of 37 fragments, which the Japanese Ōtani Expedition acquired in Khotan and its surrounding area at the beginning of the 20th century and now preserved in the Lüshun Museum in China — their photographs along with their transcriptions are published in Jiang 1997, are also very important. These old

fragments, written in Early Turkestan Brāhmī script and probably dating back to the 5th or 6th century, preserve old colloquial word forms, such as *bhikṣave* (“O monks!”), *dīrṇa* (“given”), *tāvatrīśa* (“the heaven of the Thirty-three”), *bhāpa* (“papa!”), *ho* (“indeed”) *etc.*, and agree very well with the readings in the old Chinese translations (286 C.E. and 406 C.E.). The above-mentioned old form, *Avalokitasvara*, occurs in these fragments.

There are also quite a few fragments of this scripture from Central Asia, preserved in various collections throughout the world.

I call these manuscripts and fragments from Central Asia, as a whole, the Central Asian recension.

(2.3) Differences of readings between the Gilgit-Nepalese and Central Asian recensions

There are many cases where the Gilgit-Nepalese and Central Asian recensions read differently. I have listed such differing readings among these two versions, the Chinese and Tibetan translations exhaustively elsewhere (Karashima 1992). I give here an example:

Dharmarakṣa’s translation (*Zhengfahua jing*) 清淨無瑕 (“pure and stainless”; Taishō, vol. 9, no. 263, 98a14) = Kumārajīva’s translation (*Miaofalianhua jing*) 清淨 (“pure”; Taishō, vol. 9, no. 262, 29c10) = Khādaliq manuscript (O) *parisuddham* (“pure”); ≠ Gilgit-Nepalese manuscript *samṛddham* (“rich”)

Moreover, there are many cases, where *jñāna* (“knowledge, cognition”) and *yāna* (“vehicle, path”) interchange between the two recensions. Namely, there are at least 11 places, where verses in the Gilgit-Nepalese recension read *jñāna* (“knowledge”), *buddha-jñāna*, *bauddha~ jñāna~* (“Buddha’s knowledge”), *sarvajña-jñāna* (“knowledge of the Omniscient”), while the Central Asian manuscripts have *yāna* (“vehicle”), *buddha-yāna*, *boddha~ yāna~* (“Buddha’s vehicle”), *sarvajña-yāna* (“vehicle of the Omniscient”). The same interchange is found in the prose parts as well. Namely, there are 5 places, where the Gilgit-Nepalese recension reads *buddha-jñāna*, *tathāgata-jñāna* (“Tathāgata’s knowledge”), while the Central Asian manuscripts have *buddha-yāna*, *tathāgata-yāna* (“Tathāgata’s vehicle”).

| | Gilgit-Nepalese recension | Central Asian manuscripts |
|-------------|---|--|
| verses | “knowledge” (<i>jñāna</i>) “Buddha’s knowledge” (<i>buddha-jñāna, bauddha-jñāna</i> ~) “knowledge of the Omniscient” (<i>sarvajña-jñāna</i>) | “vehicle” (<i>yāna</i>) “Buddha’s vehicle” (<i>buddha-yāna, boddha-yāna</i> ~) “vehicle of the Omniscient” (<i>sarvajña-yāna</i>) |
| prose parts | “Buddha’s knowledge” (<i>buddha-jñāna</i>) “Tathāgata’s knowledge” (<i>tathāgata-jñāna</i>) | “Buddha’s vehicle” (<i>buddha-yāna</i>) “Tathāgata’s vehicle” (<i>tathāgata-yāna</i>) |

It is noteworthy that all the cases are of *jñāna* in the Gilgit-Nepalese recension as opposed to *yāna* in the Central Asian one, while there are no examples of *yāna* in the Gilgit-Nepalese recension as opposed to *jñāna* in the Central Asian one. The two Chinese translations agree at times with the Gilgit-Nepalese recension, while at other times with the Central Asian one.

Probably, the confusion of *jñāna* (“knowledge”) and *yāna* (“vehicle”) between the two recensions resulted from different interpretations of their common vernacular form *jāna* — there are also traces of wordplay of this double-meaning Prakrit form *jāna* in the well-known “Parable of the Burning House” in Chapter 3 “Parable” (*Aupamyā-parivarta*) of the Lotus Sutra. A certain recipient of a transmission of this scripture could have sanskritised *jāna* to *jñāna* at some stage, while another might have translated the colloquial form to *yāna*, which would have resulted in the confusion of *jñāna* / *yāna* between the Gilgit-Nepalese and Central Asian recensions. Probably, in this way, when the Lotus Sutra, which had been transmitted originally in a colloquial language, was sanskritised in the 3rd/4th century C.E. onwards, the two recensions came into being.

(2.4) The difference of metres between the Gilgit-Nepalese and Central Asian recensions

Moreover, the difference of the two recensions is found in their verses. I assume that the Lotus Sutra had been transmitted originally in verses of the *Triṣṭubh* (also called *Upajāti*)-*Jagatī* metre and then, based on them, the prose parts were composed later on.

As Edgerton (1936) clearly demonstrated, the *Triṣṭubh-Jagatī* verses in this scripture had been composed originally in accordance with Prakrit pronunciation and were “corrected” by later redactors so as to comply with Classical Sanskrit. Hence, initial consonant combinations like *jñ-*, *st-*, *sth-*, *pr-*, *br-* etc. in the present manuscripts, would have been pronounced originally as *j-*, *th-*, *th-*, *p-*, *b-*.

One *Triṣṭubh* line consists of 11 syllables (its basic form is as follows: ॐ—ॐ—ॐ—ॐ—ॐ—ॐ—ॐ—ॐ—ॐ—ॐ—ॐ), while one *Jagatī* line consists of 12 syllables (its basic form is as follows: ॐ—ॐ—ॐ—ॐ—ॐ—ॐ—ॐ—ॐ—ॐ—ॐ—ॐ—ॐ). Two lines constitute one stanza, while two stanzas constitute one verse. Interestingly enough, there are more than one hundred cases, where a stanza consists of a mixture of a *Triṣṭubh* line and a *Jagatī* one in the Central Asian recension, while its parallel in the Gilgit-Nepalese recension consists purely of two *Triṣṭubh* lines. A mixture of *Triṣṭubh* and *Jagatī* metres in one stanza is also found in verses of the old stratum of the *Mahābhārata*, while, in the newer strata of the same epic and in the *Rāmāyaṇa* as well as the Classical Sanskrit works, there are no instances of such a mixture, which agree with the metrics of Classical Sanskrit. Therefore, also concerning metres, the Central Asian manuscripts retain more archaic forms, while the Gilgit-Nepalese ones show the result of intentional standardisations (i.e. "Classical Sanskritism") of the old-fashioned verses. Therefore, a 12-syllabled *Jagatī* in the Central Asian recension is altered to an 11-syllabled *Triṣṭubh* in the Gilgit-Nepalese recension, by replacing a synonym, one syllable shorter (e.g. where the Central Asian recension reads *lokanāyaka* ["a guide of the world or people"], the Gilgit-Nepalese one has *lokanātha* ["a protector or guardian of the world or people"], which is one syllable shorter than *lokanāyaka*) or by changing the word-order.

This mixture is found very frequently in older Pali scriptures as well, such as the *Suttanipāta*, *Dhammapada*, *Theragāthā*. Also, an old Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit text of the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādins, namely the *Mahāvastu*, as well as the early Mahāyāna scriptures such as the *Samādhirājasūtra*, *Kāśyapaparivarta*, *Ratnakūṭaparivarta* contain many stanzas of this mixed type. On the other hand, in the *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra*, merely 8 out of 498 stanzas are of this mixed type. Also, the *Avadānaśataka*, *Divyāvadāna* and *Udānavarga* — these three all belonging to the Sarvāstivādins — and the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* (probably composed in the 5th century) do not contain any stanzas of such mixed metres, complying with Classical Sanskrit.

(2.5) Different sanskritisation

From the points discussed above, it is evident that the Gilgit-Nepalese and Central Asian recensions are the results of different sanskritisations of their common urtext in Prakrit. Generally speaking, the Central Asian recension retains archaic forms. It is well known that peripheral areas of a culture are often more conservative and

preserve more archaisms than the centre. Probably, the Lotus Sutra, in its colloquial language, was gradually and constantly sanskritised in the Gandhāra and Kashmir regions, which were, at that time, centres of Brahmanic culture i.e. Classical Sanskrit culture, eventually resulting in the Gilgit-Nepalese recension. On the other hand, a partially sanskritised version of the Lotus Sutra was transmitted to Central Asia as well, but people in the peripheral areas of Indian culture probably did not possess the linguistic ability nor audacity to sanskritise it further. In this context, I should like to point out that the prose parts of the "Khādaliq manuscript" (O *etc.*) and the fragmentary manuscripts, probably also from Khādaliq and now preserved in the Petrovsky Collection in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences (St. Petersburg), have supplemented readings, which are not found in the other manuscripts. Such additions, probably, had originally been comments made by scholar monks, who had given lectures on this scripture, and, later, those comments integrated into the text body while the text was being copied repeatedly. Although these inserted words are relatively new, if we ignore them, these manuscripts from Khādaliq preserve archaic forms.

(2.6) The relationship among the Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan versions

The readings of the Chinese translations of the Lotus Sutra by Dharmarakṣa (*Zhengfahua jing*, translated in 286 C.E.) and Kumārajīva (*Miaofalianhua jing*, translated in 406 C.E.) agree generally with those of the Central Asian manuscripts. Especially, the readings of the "Lüshun fragments" and these Chinese translations agree with one another very well. On the other hand, the following two versions agree with the Gilgit manuscripts. In 601 C.E., Jñānagupta 闍那崛多 and Dharmagupta 達摩笈多 translated the parts, which had been wanting in Kumārajīva's translation, and made the *Tianpin Miaofalianhua jing* 添品妙法蓮華經 ("The Lotus Sutra with Additional Chapters"), of which the supplemented parts agree well with the Gilgit manuscripts. The Tibetan translation in the Kanjur Canon and the fragmentary manuscripts, discovered in Khotan and Dunhuang, all agree with the Gilgit manuscripts as well.

(3) An ideal critical edition of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*

(3.1) Existing editions

Next, we shall review briefly various editions of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*.

The *editio princeps* by Hendrik Kern and Bunyiu Nanjio (St. Petersburg 1908~12; abbr. KN) is still the best, *even* a hundred years after its publication. After this, several editions were published, but none of them reached the standard of being called a critical edition. Strictly speaking, the Kern-Nanjio edition as well is not a critical version. When Nanjio had prepared the edition, he based it purely on six Sanskrit manuscripts, discovered in Nepal. He then sent it to Kern in Leiden, who, in turn, consulted the above-mentioned "Khādaliq manuscript" (O) and replaced readings in Nanjio's text with those found in this Central Asian manuscript in a very arbitrary way, not always indicating replacements. Therefore, this edition is principally based on the Nepalese manuscripts, mingled with readings of the Central Asian recension. The problem of its being an "amalgam" of two different recensions was pointed out long ago. Unfortunately, the original edition prepared by Nanjio has not been discovered.

The Kern-Nanjio edition was published in 1908~12 in the Bibliotheca Buddhica series in St. Petersburg. The volumes of this series had been difficult to obtain in Japan until Meicho Fukyūkai in Tokyo reprinted them in 1977. Therefore, the following Wogihara-Tsuchida edition was made in Japan.

Ekai Kawaguchi (1866-1945), who had gone to Tibet in search of Buddhist texts, acquired a palm-leaf Sanskrit manuscript of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, dating back to the mid-11th century, in Shalu Monastery and brought it back to Tokyo in 1903, which is now preserved at Tōyō Bunko in Tokyo. By consulting this manuscript and the Tibetan and Chinese translations, Unrai Wogihara and Chikao (a.k.a. Katsuya) Tsuchida corrected the Kern-Nanjio edition and published *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-Sūtram: Romanized and Revised Text of the Bibliotheca Buddhica Publication* (Tokyo 1934~35). Since then, this edition has been used commonly in Japan, though it is not well known abroad. Moreover, it has been pointed out already that this edition is not a critical one, as the authors simply corrected misprints and errors in the *editio princeps* on the basis of the above-mentioned manuscript and the Tibetan translation and their emendations are often without foundation.

Apart from them, Nalinaksha Dutt (1953) and Parasurama Lakshmana Vaidya (1960) published their own editions of the text in India. However, these are basically nothing more than copies of the Kern-Nanjio edition.

In 2008, Masatoshi Ueki 植木雅俊 published *Bon-Kan-Wa Taishā Gendaigoyaku, Hokekyō* 梵漢対照・現代語訳 法華経 [The Lotus Sutra: A Japanese Translation from the Sanskrit Text in Comparison with the Chinese Translation], in which a "critical" Sanskrit text is collated with a Japanese translation. The author maintains that he anew made this "critical" edition by consulting the Kern-Nanjio and Wogihara-Tsuchida editions. However, a critical edition is created through examining original manuscripts. In this respect, Ueki's edition is nothing other than a composite of the problematic two editions and cannot be called "critical". Also, his notes are often linguistically ungrounded.

(3.2) A new critical edition

As I have demonstrated in "A Trilingual Edition of the Lotus Sutra — New editions of the Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese versions" (Karashima 2003-2006), a critical edition of the Gilgit-Nepalese recension and the various diverse Central Asian manuscripts and fragments should be handled separately.

(3.3) A critical edition of the Gilgit-Nepalese recension of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*

A critical edition of this recension should be based mainly on the Gilgit manuscripts, which though not complete, still cover eighty percent of the whole text, while the parts, where they are not extant, are to be supplemented by the older palm-leaf manuscripts from Nepal and Tibet, dating back to the 11th century. Variant readings found in paper manuscripts from Nepal, which are relatively new, are referred to, only when those readings seem significant. It is not meaningful to refer to these numerous paper manuscripts as they are merely copies of later times.

In order to prepare a critical edition of the Gilgit-Nepalese recension of the Lotus Sutra, the new critical edition of the *Mahāvastu* of the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādins, which I myself and Katarzyna Marciniak are making (vol. 3 has been published already: Marciniak 2019), can serve as a good model. I have been demonstraing through a series of articles that Mahāyāna Buddhism originated from the Mahāsāṃghika school. In fact, in the *Mahāvastu* of its sub-school, we find vocabularies, grammar, literary styles as well as tenets in common with the Lotus Sutra and other early Mahāyāna scriptures. The *editio princeps* of the *Mahāvastu* was prepared in 1882~1897 by Émile Senart on the basis of six late manuscripts of the text, of which the oldest was dated from 1800 C.E. Since then, no fewer than sixteen complete Nepalese manuscripts have been discovered and are now available to us.

Among them, the following two are the most important for a new critical edition, namely: (1) a palm-leaf manuscript, dating back to the 12th/13th centuries and (2) the oldest extant paper copy, completed in 1657 C.E. by an eminent scribe named Jayamuni Vajrācārya. Jayamuni, working from the above-mentioned palm-leaf manuscript or its copy, sanskritised most of the colloquial forms found in the old palm-leaf manuscript, made "emendations", additions and deletions, and thus, changed the features of the language and the content of the text substantially. Marciniak discovered that the other extant paper manuscripts are all copies or "descendants" of Jayamuni's manuscript. By this discovery, to make a new critical edition has become much easier and more realistic. Therefore, a new edition of the *Mahāvastu* can be made, based mainly on the above-mentioned oldest palm-leaf manuscript of the text, while referring solely to the readings of Jayamuni's manuscript. As the other 14 paper manuscripts are just later copies of the latter, it is unnecessary to refer to readings in them.

Moreover, Senart and other authors of editions of old Buddhist texts have lacked a crucial point of view, namely, as stated above, old Buddhist texts and the early Mahāyāna scriptures had been transmitted originally in Prakrit or in a mixed language of Prakrit with Sanskrit elements and later, were "translated" gradually into (Buddhist) Sanskrit. In the case of the *Mahāvastu*, the palm-leaf manuscript, dating back to the 12th/13th centuries, still retains numerous vernacular forms, many of which were sanskritised by Jayamuni. The remaining vernacular forms were, further, sanskritised by later scribes of the paper manuscripts. The final push for this sanskritisation was undertaken by Senart. For example, the vernacular form *yeva* is found around 200 times in the palm-leaf manuscript, half of which had been sanskritised to *eva* by Jayamuni and Senart further sanskritised the remaining occurrences. As a result, there are only 40 occurrences of *yeva* in Senart's edition.

In our new critical edition of the *Mahāvastu*, we follow the readings of the palm-leaf manuscript, except where there are apparent scribal errors. A word-form, which, at first glance, seems to be a corruption or a scribal error, often reflects an archaic, vernacular form. In such a case, we describe a supposed development of forms in a footnote. It is impossible, of course, to restore the original text in Prakrit or in Prakrit-cum-Sanskrit, dating back probably to around the very beginning of the Common Era, but we try to get near to it.

In order to edit an old Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit text, one needs not only knowledge of Sanskrit but also of Pali, Prakrit as well as a command of their data.

The same is true in the case of editing the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*. Its original text had been transmitted in Prakrit (probably Gāndhārī) or in a mixed language of Prakrit with Sanskrit elements, as is assumed from an analysis of Dharmarakṣa's translation of the Lotus Sutra (286 C.E.), and later, was "translated" gradually into (Buddhist) Sanskrit. Thus, a word-form, which, at first glance, seems corrupt, may be nothing but an archaic, Prakrit form. Therefore, when an old manuscript shows an obscure form, while newer manuscripts have a familiar Sanskrit form, one should not choose the latter without careful consideration. Of course, older manuscripts also contain many corrupt forms and simple scribal errors. It is often difficult to discern a genuine vernacular form from a corruption or simple scribal error, but this is the all-important point of making a critical edition. To discern them properly, knowledge of both Sanskrit and Prakrit, their data and, above all, accurate judgement based on rich experiences are required.

In short, a critical edition of the Gilgit-Nepalese recension is to be made, based mainly on the Gilgit manuscripts, and the parts, where they are not extant, are to be supplemented by the older palm-leaf manuscripts from Nepal and Tibet, while paying attention to colloquial forms in the manuscripts.

(3.4) Critical editions of the Central Asian manuscripts and fragments

The Central Asian manuscripts and fragments of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* are to be classified into the following three groups, and critical editions of each should be made.

(1) An edition of the manuscript, discovered in Farhād-Bēg Yailaki, now kept in the British Library, dating back probably to the 5th or 6th century.

(2) A critical edition of the above-mentioned "Khādaliq manuscript" (O), referring to other fragments in the same script, dating back to the 8th century, probably also from Khādaliq, now preserved at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the British Library *etc.*

(3) An edition of other fragments from Central Asia (5th–7th centuries).

Transcriptions of the manuscript from Farhād-Bēg Yailaki and the "Khādaliq manuscript" (O) have been published by Hirofumi Toda (1983). Transcriptions of the fragments from Khādaliq have been published by Vorob'eva-Desjatovskaja (1985, 1990) and Klaus Wille (2000). Also, transcriptions of other fragments from Central Asia have been published in Toda 1983, Jiang Zhongxin 1997 and in *Buddhist*

Manuscripts from Central Asia: The British Library Sanskrit Fragments (abbr. BLSF), ed. by Klaus Wille and myself.

The book by Toda (1983) contains meticulous transliterations of most of the above-mentioned Central Asian manuscripts and fragments, which serve as a sound base for our edition. However, his attitude of transliterating manuscripts "faithfully" presents a serious problem. Those, who read manuscripts in Brāhmī script, know that *c* and *v*, *p* and *ṣ*, *ś* and *g*, *t* and *n* and *bh* resemble one another, respectively. Toda transliterated the characters in the manuscripts as they stand (or as they appear to his eyes), ignoring Sanskrit forms. Moreover, he did not add any notes. One, who is not familiar with reading a manuscript, would be at a loss with peculiar spellings, e.g. *paripā*, *grṇuyāt*, *praptobhi*. They should be transliterated as *pariṣā*, *śṛṇuyāt*, *prapnoti*, respectively.

(4) The importance of the study of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* manuscripts — the Lotus Sutra elucidates “the equality of the great knowledge”

Finally, I shall quote two examples, which illustrate how important the study of Sanskrit manuscripts, above all those from Central Asia, is.

The first one is the above-mentioned Indic original form of *Guanshiyin* 觀世音. The name of the popular Mahāyāna Bodhisatva *Avalokiteśvara* appears as *Avalokitasvara* in the old Sanskrit fragments of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* from Central Asia, dating probably to the 5th or 6th century, now preserved at the Lüshun Museum in China and at Harvard University. The form *Avalokitasvara* (“One Who Surveys Sound”?) agrees with *Guangshiyin* 光世音 (“Sounds of the World of Light”; *ava* means “light” [*<* Sanskrit *ābhā*] in Gāndhārī), *Guanshiyin* 觀世音 (“One Who Observes Sounds of the World”) and its abridged form *Guanyin* 觀音 (“One Who Observes Sounds”) *etc.* In the corresponding portions of the Gilgit manuscripts, dating probably to the 7th century, the “Khādaliq manuscript”, dating probably to the 8th century, and the Nepalese manuscripts, dating from the 11th century onwards, we find the popular form *Avalokiteśvara* instead. Without the old Sanskrit fragments from Central Asia, the derivation of the names *Guanshiyin etc.* might have remained obscure.

The second example concerns a core idea of the Lotus Sutra. As stated above, the vernacular form *jāna*, which could mean both “knowledge” and “vehicle”, was Sanskritised to *jñāna* as well as to *yāna*. In the prose version of the “Parable of the Burning House” in Chapter 3 “Parable”, there is a clear comparison between the father’s giving *mahāyāna*

(“grand cart”) to all his children, who desire the three kinds of *yāna* (“cart”), and the Buddha’s giving one single *buddha-jñāna* (“Buddha’s knowledge”) to all beings, children of the Buddha, who desire the three kinds of *jñāna* (“knowledge”). From this fact, we may assume that the word *mahāyāna* was pronounced originally as *mahājāna*, and could be understood both as “great vehicle” and “great knowledge”. In fact, the expression *mahājñāna* (“great knowledge”) does occur in the Central Asian manuscripts and the Chinese translations of this sutra. This very important fact has remained unnoticed, because this phrase is lacking in the Nepalese manuscripts and, consequently, in modern editions and translations which rely on them.

At the beginning of Chapter 11, entitled *Stūpasamdarśana* “Manifestation of a Stūpa”, it describes how a *stūpa*, made of the seven precious stones, arose from the earth. It says that a voice, praising Śākyamuni for having expounded the Lotus Sutra, issued from that *stūpa*. The Sanskrit manuscripts from Nepal and Tibet read here as follows — this part in the Gilgit manuscripts has not been discovered yet:

KN 240.3f. *sādhu sādhu bhagavañ Śākyamune subhāṣitas te ’yaṃ Saddharmapunḍarīko dharmaparyāyaḥ* (“Excellent, excellent, Lord Śākyamuni! You have well expounded this religious discourse of the Lotus of the True Dharma.”)

In contrast to this, in the Central Asian manuscript from Khādaliq (O), dating probably back to the 8th century, and a fragment, kept at the Lüshun Museum (abbr. Lü) in China, dating back to the 5th century (Fig. 3), the Lotus Sutra is defined as “an elucidation of the equality of the great wisdom”.

O *sādhu sādhu bhagavāṃ cChākyamune{r} yad imaṃ bodhisatvasaṃgrahaṃ mahājñāna-samatā-nirdeśaṃ sarvabuddha-parighrītaṃ dharmaparyāyaṃ deśayasi saṃprakāśayanti* (read °*kāśayasi*) (“It is excellent, excellent, Lord Śākyamuni, that you show and expound this religious discourse which is a compendium for *bodhisattvas*, an elucidation of the equality of the great wisdom, and which all *buddhas* embrace.”)

Lü (B-11.Recto 7) /// [v]āṃ Śākyamuniṃ ya imaṃ bo[dhi]satva[ḥ] saṃgrahaṃ mahājñāna-samata[ni](rde) /// (“[It is excellent], O Lord Śākyamuni, [that you show and expound this religious

discourse which] is a compendium for *bodhisattvas*, an elucidation of the equality of the great wisdom, ...”)

There are parallels in the Chinese translations of the Lotus Sutra by Dharmarakṣa (286 C.E.; abbr. Dr) and Kumārajīva (406 C.E.; abbr. Kj), which agree generally with those of the Central Asian manuscript and fragment:

- Dr 102c3f. 善哉！善哉！世尊、安住！審如所言。道德玄妙，超絕無侶、慧平等一，猶如虛空，實無有異（“Excellent! Excellent, O Śākyamuni, O Sugata! All what you have said is correct. The virtues of the [Buddha-]Path are deep, subtle and surpass all. Like the sky, (the) wisdom is impartial and alone, completely free from differentiation.”)
- Kj 32b28f. 善哉！善哉！釋迦牟尼世尊！能以平等大慧教菩薩法，佛所護念《妙法華經》為大眾說（“Excellent! Excellent, O Śākyamuni, O World-Honoured One, that you teach the *bodhisattvadharma* with impartial great wisdom, [and] preach the Lotus Sutra, which the *buddhas* keep in mind, to the great assembly.”)

From the third-century Chinese translation by Dharmarakṣa to the Central Asian Sanskrit manuscript (O) of the 8th century, the phrase “an elucidation of the equality of the great wisdom” exists, while this is wanting in the Sanskrit manuscripts from Nepal and Tibet, dating from the middle of the 11th century onwards. We may assume that this phrase existed from the beginning and it was deleted later.

The most important fact, which we can deduce from this phrase, is that those, who composed and transmitted the Lotus Sutra, regarded this scripture as being “an elucidation of the equality of the great knowledge” (*mahājñāna-samatā-nirdeśam*). “The equality of the great knowledge” means that “Everybody can obtain Buddha-knowledge equally”. The Lotus Sutra proclaimed that “Everybody can obtain Buddha-knowledge and should aim at obtaining it.” This slogan was the core of the oldest stratum of the Lotus Sutra. This “great knowledge” was pronounced *mahājāna* in a colloquial way at an earlier stage of the development of the Lotus Sutra, and *mahājāna* could have been understood as “great vehicle” as well, and later it was interpreted incorrectly as *mahāyāna* (“great vehicle”), which was then adopted also by the composers of other scriptures so as to define a new concept of “Mahāyāna Buddhism”.

B-11 (Recto)

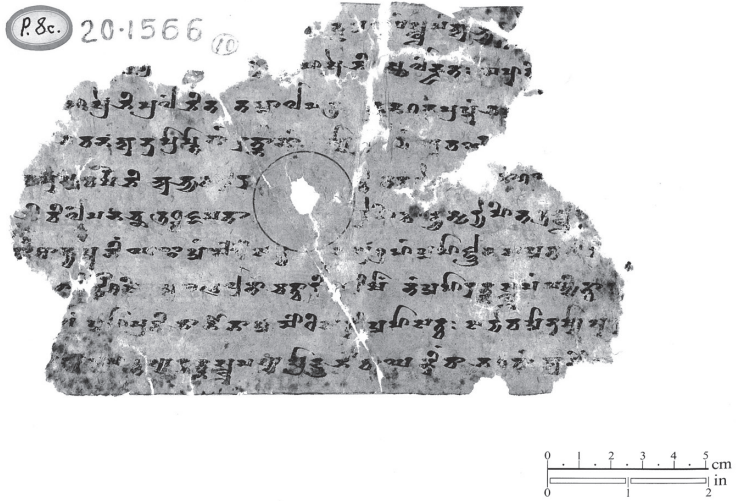


Fig. 3 A fragment of the *Saddharmapūṇḍarīka* from Central Asia, now preserved at Lüshun Museum, B-11 *recto* (Jiang 1997: 144) (The word *mahājñāna-samata* is found on the right side of the fourth line from the bottom.)

Thanks to the manuscript and fragment from Central Asia, the meanings of *huipingdengyi* 慧平等一 (“the wisdom is impartial and alone”) and *pingdeng dahui* 平等大慧 (“impartial great wisdom”) in the Chinese translations become clear, and the core idea of the Lotus Sutra becomes manifest.

(5) Conclusion

Thus, by studying manuscripts, one can take a step closer to the primordial features and original meanings of a scripture, though its true primordial form still remains far out of our reach. In order to understand properly the early Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures, which were composed and transmitted originally in colloquial languages, one needs linguistic knowledge of Sanskrit, Pāli, Prakrit *etc.* In addition to this, in order to know the backgrounds and culture of the time of composition of Buddhist texts, one needs knowledge of Buddhism, history, archaeology, art *etc.* It takes time to acquire all these. However, only by applying all this knowledge, can one make the original features of a scripture manifest from its background.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ARIRIAB = *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism at Soka University*
- BLSF = *Buddhist Manuscripts from Central Asia: The British Library Sanskrit Fragments*, editors-in-chief, Seishi Karashima and Klaus Wille, Tokyo, vol. I (2006), vol. II (2009), vol. III (2015): The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism, Soka University.
- Edgerton, Franklin
1936 “The Meter of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*”, in: *Kuppuswami Sastri Commemoration Volume*, Madras: Presidency College, pp. 39-45.
- Falk, Harry and Seishi Karashima
2012 “A first-century *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript from Gandhāra – *parivarta* 1 (Texts from the Split Collection 1)”, in: ARIRIAB 15: 19–61 + plates 5–7.
2013 “A first-century *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript from Gandhāra – *parivarta* 5 (Text from the Split Collection 2)”, in ARIRIAB 16: 97-169 + plates 52-53. (It was added by editors)
- Jiang, Zhongxin
1997 *Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Fragments from the Lüshun Museum Collection, Facsimile Edition and Romanized Text*, ed. Jiang Zhongxin, Dalian and Tokyo 1997: The Lüshun Museum and The Soka Gakkai.
- Karashima, Seishi
1992 *The Textual Study of the Chinese Versions of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra — in the light of the Sanskrit and Tibetan Versions*, Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin (Bibliotheca Indologica et Buddhologica 3).
2003-2006 “A Trilingual Edition of the Lotus Sutra — New editions of the Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese versions”, in: ARIRIAB 6 (2003): 85–182; *ib.* 7 (2004): 33–104; *ib.* 8 (2005): 105–189; *ib.* 9 (2006): 79–88.
2016 “The *Triṣṭubh-Jagatī* Verses in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*”, in: ARIRIAB 19 (2016): 193–210.
- Marciniak, Katarzyna
2019 *The Mahāvastu: A New Edition* by Katarzyna Marciniak, vol. 3, Tokyo: International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism, Soka University (Bibliotheca Philologica et Philosophica Buddhica, XIV, 1).
- Toda, Hirofumi
1983 *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra, Central Asian Manuscripts, Romanized Text*, Tokushima¹1981, ²1983: Kyoiku Shuppan Center.
- Vorob’eva-Desjatovskaja, M. I. and Bongard-Levin, Gregory M.
1985 *Pamjatniki Indijskoj Pis’mennosti iz Tsentral’noj Azii*, Vypusk 1, Moskva: Nauka (Pamjatniki Pis’mennosti Vostoka LXXIII, 1; Bibliotheca Buddhica 33).
1990 *Pamjatniki Indijskoj Pis’mennosti iz Tsentral’noj Azii*, vypusk 2, Moskva Moskva: Nauka (Pamjatniki Pis’mennosti Vostoka LXXIII, 2; Bibliotheca Buddhica 34).
- Wille, Klaus (ed.)
2000 *Fragments of a Manuscript of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra from Khādaliq*, Tokyo: Soka Gakkai (Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series 3).