

The Path Towards *A Critical Edition of the Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Based on Gilgit-Nepalese Manuscripts (C3¹ Collated Text)*

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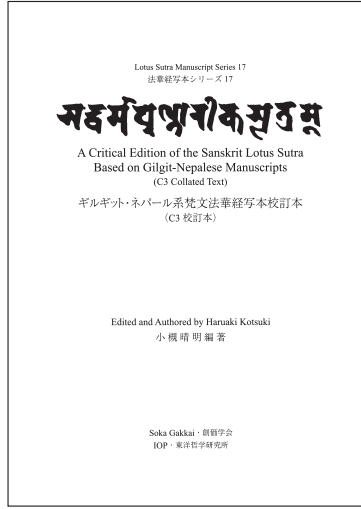
MANUSCRIPTS of the Sanskrit Lotus Sutra fall into three categories based on the places where they were found or copied: (1) Central Asian manuscripts, (2) Gilgit manuscripts and (3) Nepalese manuscripts.

(1) Central Asian Manuscripts

Among the Central Asian manuscripts are the original source texts of the Chinese versions such as the *Zheng fahua jing* 正法華經 (Lotus Sutra of the Correct Law), translated by Dharmaraksha 竺法護 in 286 CE, and the *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經 (Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law), translated by Kumarajiva 鳩摩羅什 in 406 CE, which have probably been lost. They are surmised to have been written in Prakrit or Middle Indic.² I support this view and propose tentatively calling them Central Asian prototype-archaic manuscripts.

At the beginning of the 20th century CE, several countries despatched expeditions and personnel to Central Asia who found and acquired Buddhist manuscripts including Lotus Sutra manuscripts, many of which were fragments and separated folios and were presumably copied in around the 5th–6th century CE. They were named after the sites where the texts were discovered or the persons who found or obtained them. The texts were discovered at various sites. The manuscripts are preserved today at several institutions including China’s Lüshun Museum and the British Library.³

The British Library also holds the Farhād-Beg manuscript of the Lotus Sutra (F),⁴ which was discovered by Marc Aurel Stein (1862–1943), a Hungarian-born British explorer, in 1906 at Farhād-Beg-Yailaki near Khādaliq, and long kept at the India Office Library. This manuscript only covers text from the middle of chapter 11 ‘The Emergence of the Treasure Tower’ to the beginning of chapter 15 ‘The Life Span of the Thus Come One’. I would propose tentatively calling them Central Asian neo-archaic manuscripts.



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In 1903, Nikolay F. Petrovsky (1837–1908), the Russian consul-general, purchased a manuscript of the Lotus Sutra in Kashgar, which is thought to have been discovered near Khotan. Called the Kashgar manuscript (Ka)⁵ and estimated to have been copied in around the 9th–10th century CE, many portions of the manuscript are now kept at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Russian Academy of Sciences, in St. Petersburg, some significant portions at the British Library and the rest in several other collections (see Appendix). Altogether, the Kashgar manuscript preserves sizeable portions of the text. I would also propose tentatively calling them Central Asian new manuscripts. It is not an easy task to reconstruct a critical text of the Lotus Sutra based solely on the Central Asian manuscripts discussed here.

(2) Gilgit Manuscripts

The Gilgit manuscripts were discovered in the 1930s at a site near Gilgit in Kashmir (presently in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir). They were probably copied somewhere around the 7th century CE. There are four manuscripts: Ga, Gb, Gc and Gk,⁶ and it is thought that they can be classified into two recensions: Ga in one and the other three in another.⁷ Due to the fact that not a few folios are missing and damaged portions are not rare, it is very difficult again to reconstruct a critical text based solely on these manuscripts.

(3) Nepalese Manuscripts

Among the Nepalese manuscripts, produced mostly at places in and near Nepal's Kathmandu basin, are palm-leaf manuscripts copied in around the 11th–12th century CE and paper manuscripts from the latter half of the 17th to the 20th century CE. The former include 16 palm-leaf manuscripts, which are almost complete texts except for C3. Regarding the latter, we can access the paper texts of at least 15 manuscripts today. As mentioned earlier, we need to select texts from the Nepalese manuscripts as originals to prepare a critical edition of the Sanskrit Lotus Sutra, even though they are comparatively newer than their Central Asian and Gilgit counterparts, because most of the Nepalese texts, with the exception of C3, have comparatively fewer omissions and flaws. The first step for a critical edition is to classify each Nepalese manuscript focusing on the variant readings of the texts.

Considering the manuscripts that have been transmitted, it is commonly known that the Gilgit and Nepalese manuscripts show comparatively closer readings to each other as opposed to the Central Asian manuscripts which belong to a different lineage of transmission. On this basis, we can divide Sanskrit Lotus Sutra manuscripts into the two large groups: Central Asian manuscripts and Gilgit-Nepalese manuscripts.

One of the purposes of the Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series is to identify palm-leaf manuscripts that can be relevant original texts for critical editions of the Sanskrit Lotus Sutra by carefully scrutinizing Nepalese manuscripts and classifying them into groups according to characteristics in readings. The examinations thus far conducted reveal that the Nepalese palm-leaf manuscripts can be classified into B Group, C4 Group, K Group and the independent manuscript C3 according to variations in words, phrases, declensions and conjugations.⁸

My scrutiny of C3 revealed that it is an independent manuscript since its copy date is presumed to be the 9th century CE⁹ as opposed to other Nepalese manuscripts that were produced in later years. Thus, C3 can be regarded as the oldest among the extant Nepalese manuscripts, and so it is this manuscript that fulfils the requirements of an original text for a critical edition of the Sanskrit Lotus Sutra based on the Gilgit-Nepalese manuscripts. It is unfortunate that the latter half of this manuscript is missing, but it is worth publishing this collated romanized text as Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series 17: *A Critical Edition of the Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Based on Gilgit-Nepalese Manuscripts (C3 Collated Text)*.

The Classification of the Nepalese Manuscripts

The idea of manuscript classification originated in Willy Baruch's (1900–1954) research on the text problem of the Kern-Nanjio edition (KN).¹⁰ According to my research up to now, the 16 Nepalese palm-leaf manuscripts can be classified into the following four groups:

Independent	C3
B Group	{B, C6, L1, N2, N3, T6, T7}
C4 Group	{C4, N1, Pe}
K Group	{C5, K, L2, L3, T2}

The relationship between the Nepalese palm-leaf manuscripts and paper manuscripts can be described as follows:¹¹

	Paper	Palm-leaf
(1)	A1	← N2
(2)	(A2, A3)	← C4
(3)	(T8, P3)	← N3
(4)	(C1, C2)	← Pe
(5)	(P1, P2)	← T2
(6)	T3	← T6
(7)	StP	← L1
(8)	W	missing
(9)	{(R, T9) (T4, T5)}	

'X ← Y' indicates that the paper manuscript X is thought to be copied based on the palm-leaf manuscript Y. The set '(α, β)' indicates that α and β are twin manuscripts of which the former is the original and the latter the duplicate. '{(R, T9) (T4, T5)}' are the two twin-manuscript sets whose readings show unique features of paper manuscripts that are not necessarily restricted by those of the palm-leaf texts.

It is difficult to describe the relationship between the Gilgit manuscripts and the Nepalese palm-leaf manuscripts because the former does not contain enough text to be classified as precisely as the latter. And yet, we can surmise that the two groups Ga and (Gb, Gc, Gk) might each have had some influence on the readings of the independent C3, B Group, C4 Group and K Group, respectively. This is the path I have pursued towards preparing the C3 collated edition.

Appendix

The following are the whereabouts of the Kashgar manuscript folios discovered till date:¹²

1–2	missing	349–59	Petrovsky collection
3–243	Petrovsky collection	360	Stein collection
244–52	Trinkler collection	361–66	Petrovsky collection
253–54	Hoernle collection	367–68	Otani and Stein collections
255	Petrovsky collection	369	Otani, Petrovsky and Stein collections
256–58	Stein collection	370–73	Otani and Stein collections
259–60	Hoernle collection	374–78	Petrovsky collection
261–81	Petrovsky collection	379	missing
282	Stein and Huntington collections	380	Petrovsky and Stein collections
283–311	Petrovsky collection	381–84	Stein collection
312–20	missing	385–446	Petrovsky collection
321–26	Petrovsky collection	447	Stein collection
327–48	Stein collection	448–59	Petrovsky collection

Petrovsky collection	396 folios	missing folios	12 folios
Stein collection	40 folios	Huntington collection	1 fragment
Trinkler collection	9 folios	Otani collection	6 fragments ¹³
Hoernle collection	4 folios		

Notes

¹ See Abbreviations.

² See Karashima 2001 and Verardi 2011: 183–84.

³ See Jiang 1997, Wille 2000 and BLSF.

⁴ We can see a romanized text transliterated by Toda based on black-and-white microfilm: Toda 1981 and 1983, Part II: 227–58 and another text by Karashima based on coloured photos: Karashima 2006, BLSF vol. I: 155–75.

⁵ See Appendix printed above on this page; Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya 2013: lxxix, 2014: 124–25; and Hinüber 2013: cxxiii, 2014: 134–35.

⁶ See Abbreviations.

⁷ See Hinüber 1982, Introduction.

⁸ See Kotsuki 2007 [R], 2008 [P3], 2010 [C5], 2017 [N3] and 2019 [C3].

⁹ See Kotsuki 2019, Introduction.

¹⁰ See Baruch 1938: 7–12, and Kotsuki 2003 [T8], Appendix I: ‘A Brief History of Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript Studies’: 245–50.

¹¹ Regarding the paper manuscripts, see Kotsuki 2007 [R], Introduction: xvi–xviii; regarding the relationship between the palm-leaf manuscripts and paper manuscripts, see Kotsuki 2008 [P3], Introduction: xlii–xlv.

¹² See Toda 1981, 1983: xii–xiii.

¹³ Hinüber counts seven fragments. See Hinüber 2013: cxxiii, 2014: 135.

Abbreviations

***Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* Manuscripts**

A1: No. 4079, Asiatic Society, Kolkata.

A2: No. 4199, Asiatic Society, Kolkata.

A3: No. B7, Asiatic Society, Kolkata.

Āśā: BS-83, Run. no. 2914, Micro. no. 2976, Āśā Archives, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Separated folios from N3.

B (B in KN): Or. 2204, British Library, London.

C1: Add. 1032, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge.

C2: Add. 1324, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge.

C3: Add. 1682, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge.

C4 (Ca in KN): Add. 1683, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge.

C5 (Cb in KN): Add. 1684, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge.

C6: Add. 2197, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge.

F: IOL San 482–487, Saddharmapuṇḍarīka manuscript from Farhād-Bēg in the Stein Collection, British Library.

Ga: Gilgit Lotus Sutra manuscript, Group A, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

Gb: Gilgit Lotus Sutra manuscript, Group B, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

Gc: Gilgit Lotus Sutra manuscript, Group C, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

Gk: Gilgit Lotus Sutra manuscript, Sir Pratap Singh Museum, Srinagar.

K: Kawaguchi's manuscript, Toyo Bunko, Tokyo.

Ka: (O in KN): SI P/5 (presently, SI 1925/1927), Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg; Trinkler Collection of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation; Hoernle and Stein Collections of the British Library, London, and others.

L1: Palm-leaf manuscript of the Sanskrit Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtram kept in the Potala Palace, Lhasa.*

L2: Palm-leaf manuscript of the Sanskrit Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtram collected in the Norbulingga in Tibet Written in A.D. 1065.*

L3: Palm-leaf manuscript of the Sanskrit Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtram collected in the Norbulingga in Tibet Written in A.D. 1067.*

N1: No. 4-21, National Archives of Nepal, Kathmandu.

N2: No. 3-678, National Archives of Nepal, Kathmandu.

N3: No. 5-144, National Archives of Nepal, Kathmandu.

P1: Nos. 138–139, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris.

P2: Nos. 140–141, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris.

P3: No. 2, Société asiatique, Paris.

Pe: No. 0004, Library of the Cultural Palace of the Nationalities, Beijing.

- R (A in KN): No. 6, Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, London.
 StP: No. 1059, Library of the Asiatic Department, Asiatic Museum, St. Petersburg.
 T2: No. 408, University of Tokyo General Library, Tokyo.
 T3: No. 409, University of Tokyo General Library, Tokyo.
 T4: No. 410, University of Tokyo General Library, Tokyo.
 T5: No. 411, University of Tokyo General Library, Tokyo.
 T6: No. 412, University of Tokyo General Library, Tokyo.
 T7: No. 413, University of Tokyo General Library, Tokyo.
 T8 (K in KN): No. 414, University of Tokyo General Library, Tokyo.
 T9: No. 415, University of Tokyo General Library, Tokyo.
 W: The manuscript formerly in the possession of the late Mr. Thomas Watters, ex-British Consul in Taiwan; missing at present.
 * I just saw the romanized texts of Jiang 2006a, 2006b and 2006c, not the original ones or digitalized data.

Others

- BLSF: *Buddhist Manuscripts from Central Asia: The British Library Sanskrit Fragments*.
 IOM RAS: Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences.
 IOP: Institute of Oriental Philosophy.
 KN: *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, Bibliotheca Buddhica 10.

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