
BOOK REVIEWS

Seishi Karashima. *A Glossary of Dharmarakṣa's Translation of the Lotus Sūtra*. Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Soka University, 1998, 695 pp. — *Bibliotheca Philologica et Philosophica Buddhica*, I.

The book under review is one of the first to appear in the newly created series *Bibliotheca Philologica et Philosophica Buddhica*. The series owes its appearance to the efforts of two major specialists — Yuichi Kajiyama and Akira Yuyama whose names are well-known in the world of Oriental studies and serve as a guarantee that the series will be not only scholarly, but interesting. We find evidence of this in the book by Seishi Karashima under discussion here.

The “Lotus Sūtra”, which forms the basis for Seishi Karashima's research, is one of the early Mahāyāna sūtras. The original version arose in India, most likely in the Sanskrit language, at the beginning of the Christian era. Since that time it has enjoyed special authority among Buddhist followers of the Mahāyāna. Proof of this is found in the large number of translations into Eastern languages (Chinese, Tibetan, Tangut, Uighur, Mongolian, Oirat, Korean, Japanese) and numerous manuscript copies of its various versions made in the first millennium A.D. on the territory of Duanhuang, East Turkestan and North-West China (including the Tangut state of Xi Xia in the eleventh—twelfth centuries, where xylograph editions of the sūtra were undertaken).

The earliest translation of the sūtra was made into Chinese in approximately A.D. 286 by Dharmarakṣa, who was responsible for a large number of translations from Sanskrit. About 70 translations of the most important Mahāyāna works have survived. Dharmarakṣa was one of the first Chinese translators to acquaint the Far Eastern world with such works as the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, *Daśabhūmikā-sūtra*, *Lalitavistara*, and collections of *jātakas*.

Later, in A.D. 403, the “Lotus Sūtra” was translated into Chinese by another translator, Kumārajīva. The translation gained an enormous popularity and this version was used to translate the sūtra into Tangut, Uighur, Korean, and Japanese. Kumārajīva's translations were also well-known in Europe and served as the basis for translating the sūtra into European languages.

In this work, Seishi Karashima attempts to highlight the question of this extremely popularity of the “Lotus Sūtra”, basing his investigation on the Chinese translation made by Dharmarakṣa. He focuses mainly on the language of Dharmarakṣa's translation. The scholar analyses a number of vernacularisms and neologisms employed by Dharmarakṣa but, with few exceptions, absent in dictionaries of the classical Chinese language. Seishi Karashima comes to the con-

clusion that Dharmarakṣa tested his translation against a Central Asian Sanskrit version, translating phrase for phrase and word for word. In this initial period of Chinese readers' familiarisation with Buddhist texts, he was often compelled to create new terms for the translation of Sanskrit terms unknown to readers or to borrow Daoist or Confucian terms which distorted and encumbered the difficult Buddhist text.

The aim of Seishi Karashima's work is to determine the medieval Chinese lexicon, which has largely been lost by the present day, to investigate one of the first stages of the Mahāyāna's emergence, and, finally, to describe the principles which guided early Chinese translators in their work with Sanskrit texts and to evaluate their contribution to the formation of the Tripitaka in the Chinese language.

The work is structured as a dictionary. Seishi Karashima isolated approximately 4,000 words in the Dharmarakṣa translation as the basis for his dictionary. In selecting words, the author strove to exclude those which had already entered Chinese classical literature before Dharmarakṣa, although this was not always an easy task to make such selection. The rarest words, the usage of which is of special interest in the Buddhist context, were still included in the dictionary.

Entries are structured as follows: (i) term in Chinese character(s); (ii) Hanyu Pinyin Latin transliteration; (iii) English translation; (iv) indication of the word's location in the text of the Dharmarakṣa translation according to various editions; (v) the Sanskrit equivalent according to the Kern—Nanjio edition and the Central Asian version; (vi) contexts of usage with reference to various editions (the author provides a new lay-out for all texts of the Dharmarakṣa translation); (vii) the equivalent in the Kumārajīva translation with reference to its location in the text.

The dictionary's four indices are helpful when searching terms. These are: Hanyu Pinyin System Index; Four-Corner System Index; Radical Index; and Japanese Reading System Index.

The author has completed a titanic task which not only aids linguistic investigations but provides important material on the history of the Buddhist canon's translation from Sanskrit into Chinese. Moreover, the dictionary can be used as a practical reference to identify Chinese fragments of the “Lotus Sūtra” from Dunhuang.

Seishi Karashima hopes to undertake the work on early Chinese translations of other sūtras. Such work would be of great use for the study of how texts from another culture were translated into Chinese. The issues involved may include literal translation or paraphrase, translation with commentary, calcing of proper names and specialised terms, the development of original terminology and its eventual acceptance.