Editor’s Acknowledgments

The object of this book is to offer readers photographic reproductions and Romanized texts of all the ancient Sanskrit Lotus Sutra manuscript fragments of Western Region origin stored at the Lüshun Museum in China. It is, in addition, to introduce in brief such circumstances of the manuscript fragments as their distinguishing features and academic value.

Over the course of the last 150 years, and particularly in this century since the 1970s, due to the efforts of scholars of various nationalities, photo reproductions and Romanized texts have been published of the more than sixty Sanskrit Lotus manuscripts and of the fragments preserved in countries around the world. In our country the task of the classification and study of Sanskrit Lotus texts, albeit late, at last commenced in the beginning of the 1980s. At the initiative of my mentor, Ji Xianlin, professor of Oriental Studies at Beijing University, and with the support of Bai Kui and Li Jiuqi, officials at the Library of the Cultural Palace of the Nationalities in Beijing, and other persons, I took on this work, and a photographic reproduction of a Sanskrit Lotus manuscript formerly kept at the then Library of the Cultural Palace of the Nationalities, today’s China Ethnic Library, was published in Beijing in 1984. The same manuscript’s Romanized text was published by the China Social Sciences Publishing House in Beijing in 1988 (actual distribution took place in early 1989). The present publication is the result of the second challenge that I, being engaged in the study of Sanskrit Lotus texts, tackled at the encouragement of Professor Ji. I hope that this book will be an aid in furthering the development of the present new surge in the continuing prosperity of Lotus Sutra studies.

According to reports by my predecessors and to common accounts from colleagues well-informed about present conditions, in addition to the Sanskrit Lotus copies whose existence is already known to the world, three more manuscripts are being preserved in the Tibetan Autonomous Region of our country, awaiting classification and publication. I intend, mustering up all my courage, within my lifetime and as soon as possible, to classify and make these three texts available to the world in order that my colleagues in other countries who are also devoted to Sanskrit Lotus studies will be able to carry out comprehensive research on an unprecedented scale, on the basis of all of the world’s extant Sanskrit Lotus manuscripts. I firmly believe that this project is bound to be welcomed and supported both within and outside of China.

I have proceeded with the editing of this book under a joint commission from the
Lüshun Museum in China and the Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP) in Japan. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to Lüshun Museum Director Liu Guangtang and the museum staff and to thank them kindly for the many accommodations they have made for me and for the assistance they lent me over many years.

I received frequent letters that gave me a great deal of encouragement from Daisaku Ikeda, founder of the IOP, president of Soka Gakkai International, and the Chinese people’s faithful friend. Under Mr. Ikeda’s guidance, I was urged on warmly and given reassuring support for my work by President Einosuke Akiya of the Soka Gakkai (SG) of Japan, SG Vice President Hisami Yamazaki, SG Vice President Toshiyuki Mitsugi, Chairman of the IOP Board of Trustees Yasuo Morita, IOP Director Yoichi Kawada, IOP Secretary-General Yoichi Ichikura, IOP researcher Noriyoshi Mizufune, Prof. Katsuhisa Yamada of Osaka Kyoiku University, concurrently a researcher at IOP, and others. For this, I humbly offer Mr. Ikeda and all these other individuals my heartiest appreciation and my highest respect.

In the process of finalizing the Romanized text, University of Tokushima Prof. Hirofumi Toda, recognized today throughout the world as an authority in the study of Sanskrit Lotus manuscripts, gave his unstinting advice and warm support and provided me with valuable suggestions. For this, I sincerely express my deep appreciation and great respect. I am also grateful to Seishi Karashima, who, sparing no effort, reviewed this book at the proofreading stage with great seriousness and concern. Also, I would here particularly like to offer my warmest thanks to Heiwa Taga for her translation of the Chinese portions of this volume into Japanese. Similarly, I am sincerely grateful to Mr. Mizufune and to Mary Blaber for their efforts in putting the Chinese into English. Also, I am indebted to Tomohiro Matsuda, Shigeki Watanabe, Motoki Kawamorita, and Celine Shinbutsu, who were responsible for the editing and proofreading of the English portions of this volume. And I would especially like to convey my heartiest thanks to Seikyo Shimbun photographer Shoichi Matsuoka, who, with his remarkably fine technique, took photographs of flawless quality for this volume.

The publication of this volume not only is significant in the field of academic studies but also is a successful project resulting from and a symbol of friendship between China and Japan. Bringing out this volume also makes a valuable contribution on behalf of the profound, noble enterprise of making public and preserving humanity’s common cultural heritage. I consider myself deeply fortunate to have been able to take part in this undertaking and to have been able to exert myself even the slightest.
May the peoples of China and Japan be friends generation after generation!
May the world be ever peaceful!
May the people be happy without end!

Jiang Zhongxin
Fang Zhuang, Beijing
February 11, 1997