

Saddharma-Pundarika or The Lotus of the True Law

*Translated by H. Kern
New York : Dover Publications, Inc., 1963,
Index, XIII + pp. 454, Paperbound \$ 2.45.*

The *Saddharma-Pundarika* (*The Lotus of the True Law*) is one of the most important sutras of Mahayana Buddhism. Composed originally in India, some sections written as early as the beginning of the Christian era, *The Lotus* is held in great esteem by the northern school of Buddhism, particularly Tendai, and is the basic scripture for such new Japanese sects as Reiyū Kai, Risshō Kōsei Kai, and

REVIEWS

Sōka Gakkai.

“This sutra is essentially a collection of responses, explanations, expositions, ex-cathedra lectures, and the like, bearing chiefly upon metaphysical issues: the nature of Buddhahood, the concept of nirvana, the Boddhisattva ideal, the rewards of the faithful, and other theoretical matters that have become essential dogma in all Buddhist schools that have since arisen. A transfiguration of the traditional Buddha-situation” (which is the basis for the Nichiren Mandala) is presented: “the historical Buddha, the Tathagata of Sakyamuni, is seen in his eternal, supernatural aspect; he sits surrounded by an array of gods, arahats, demons, bodhisattvas, gandharvas, monks and nuns

— all eager to hear the infinitely wise utterances of the Great Teacher. The revelations are made sometimes by Sakyamuni, addressing his historical sangha, including Ananda, Sariputra, Kasyapa, et al., and at other times by the Buddhas of the past and future, Manjusri and Maitreya.”

This edition contains the complete unabridged and unaltered translation of *The Lotus*, rendered from the Sanskrit by Professor Kern. It was originally published in 1909 as Volume XXI of the Sacred Books of the East edited by F. Max Müller. A new translation has long been needed, but until one appears this book will be indispensable to all students of Japanese Buddhism.

(W. P. W.)