

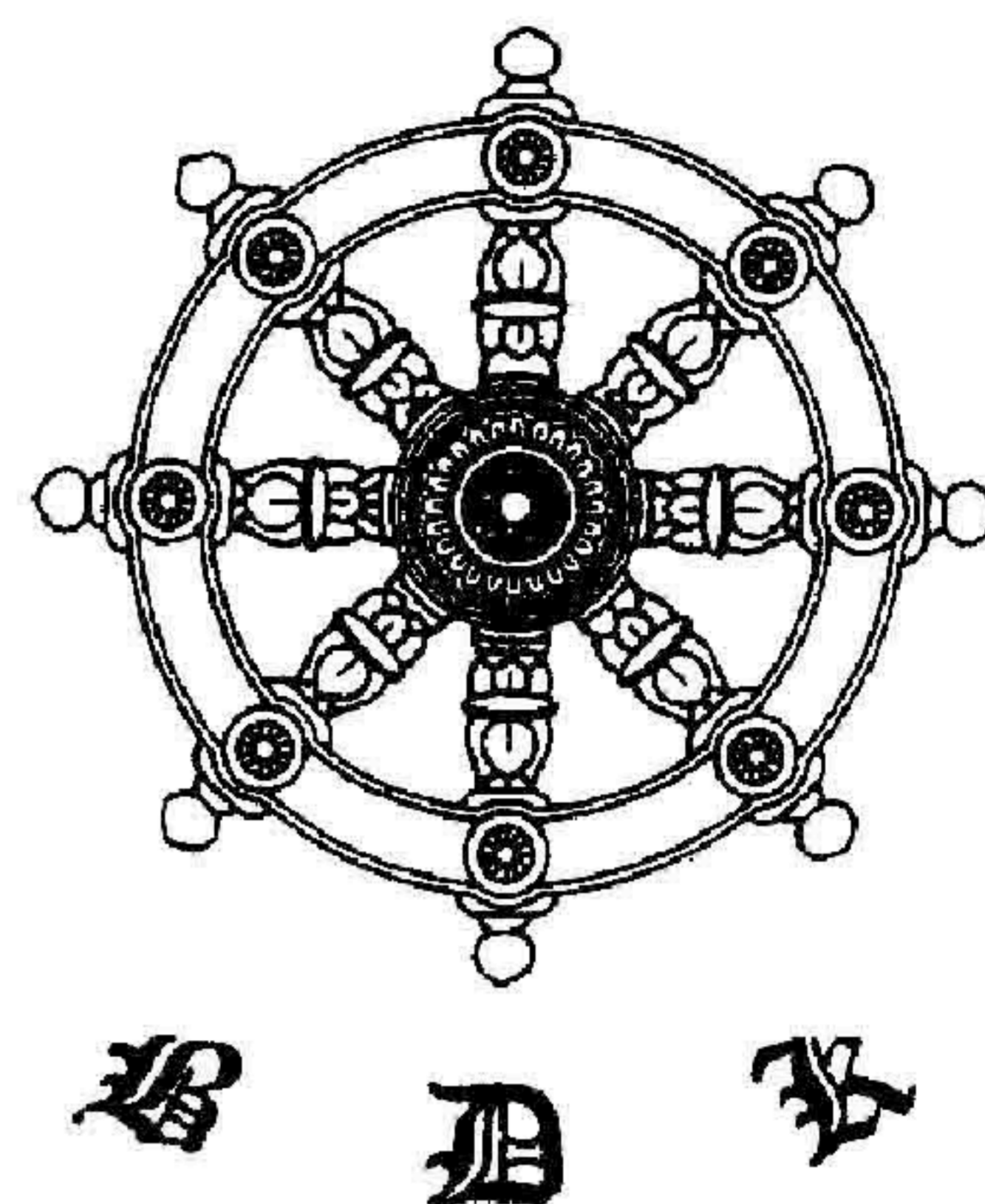
# MAHĀPIṬAKA

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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE of  
the ENGLISH TRANSLATION  
of the CHINESE TRIPITAKA  
Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai  
(Society for the Promotion of Buddhism)

Editor: MAYEDA Sengaku



## New Year Greetings for 2006

We extend our best wishes to each and everyone of you. May the light of the Buddha reach every corner of darkness and may the new year be a time of happiness and fulfillment.

MAYEDA Sengaku  
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## **Eulogy:**

### **Gadjin Masato Nagao (22 August 1907 — 13 March 2005)**

Jonathan A. Silk

UCLA

Prof. Gadjin Nagao was appointed Chairman of the Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai in 1989, serving until 1995, although his association with the organization much predates this; already ten years earlier, in 1979, he had been awarded the BDK Cultural and Service Prize (Bukkyō Dendō Bunka-shō 佛教傳道文化賞). I clearly remember when BDK representatives visited Prof. Nagao in a snowy Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he was serving as Visiting Professor. They came personally to ask him to take on the Chairmanship, since Prof. Nagao had already declined the honor by telephone and they felt, rightly it turns out, that they might nevertheless persuade him in person. Accepting their request, for the next six years he provided strong leadership and guidance to the organization.

Perhaps his greatest contribution to the BDK was his initiation in 1991 of the ongoing program which annually provides scholarships for younger foreign scholars to study at Japanese graduate schools, the Numata Fellowships (BDK Fellowship for Research in Japan). This program enables promising scholars from abroad to work with Japanese mentors, become familiar with the riches of Japanese scholarship and, not incidentally, inform their Japanese hosts of the ways Buddhist scholarship is being carried out elsewhere. The period of Prof. Nagao's Chairmanship also saw an expansion in the number of Numata Chairs in Buddhist Studies established at universities in Europe and North America, as well as the expansion of the Ekō-Haus center in Düsseldorf, Germany.

Much of the growing communication between Japanese and non-Japanese Buddhist scholars owes its vitality directly or indirectly to Prof. Nagao's efforts. As an indication of the dedication and passion he put into this project, I may mention that more than once, and even in poor health, he personally went to greet arriving young foreign students at the Kyoto train station, and he always made an effort to welcome such visitors not only into his seminars and reading groups, but into his home as well. He also, of course, took an active and leading role in the selection of those awarded the scholarship. After his impaired health made travel to Tokyo difficult, he arranged for the selection committee to convene at his home in Kyoto so that he could continue to participate directly in its deliberations.

One of Prof. Nagao's key visions for the potential of the BDK to spread and promote an accurate knowledge of Buddhism remains unrealized. Prof. Nagao felt, and strongly stated often, his belief that adequate translations of Buddhist literature require careful study and preparation. In the history of Chinese translations, early works were often unsatisfactory, and it required considerable later, careful work to produce reliable and sophisticated renderings, particularly of difficult philosophical materials. Obviously with this history very much in mind, he therefore advocated the creation of a translation center,

which he explicitly imagined as modeled on that of Xuanzang, the Yakkyōin (*yijingyuan* 譯經院) of Tang China. Here, he felt, in this modern Yakkyōin specialists, Japanese and foreign, would assemble for a period of time, working together on a specific text, which they would then translate and publish in a scientific edition. This dream remains unfulfilled. Might not its realization be the best and most enduring monument to a great scholar, translator, visionary and leader?

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