

## Some remarks on the language of Kumarajiva's translation of the Lotus Sutra

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### Abstract

In this paper a few peculiarities of the language of Kumarajiva's translation of the Lotus Sutra will be discussed. This analysis of the language of the *Miàofǎ liánhuā jīng*, the Lotus Sutra (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*), is based on a previous – more general – investigation of the temporal and aspectual structures of Early Buddhist texts in which the language of the *Miàofǎ liánhuā jīng*, a translation text, is particularly compared to the language of the *Gāosēng Fǎxiǎn zhuàn*, a text which is originally written in Chinese. This comparative study has shown that although both texts were written at the same time (at the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century), the text written by Kumarajiva is evidently more conservative in its grammatical structure than the original Chinese text written by *Fǎxiǎn*. Although Kumarajiva also regularly employs the newly developed aspectual structures which only emerged after the Han and during the Wei Jin Nanbei chao periods, his translations are apparently to a great extent influenced by his excellent knowledge of the Classical Chinese language and he frequently employs e.g. temporal adverbs which are typical for the Classical Chinese language (600 – 300 century BCE), rather than employing the typical Han period (206 BCE – 220 CE) or later variants. However, also many constructions which are typical for Han period Chinese are attested in his translation. The paper will present examples for both, the innovative structures employed by Kumarajiva, but also for the more conservative structures and it will show that although his language certainly differs from that of the Classical Chinese literature, it is considerably influenced by it.