

The Vimalakirti Sutra

*Translated by Burton Watson
from the Chinese version by Kumarajiva*

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INTRODUCTION

Among the numerous sutras or sacred texts of Mahayana Buddhism, some, such as the Lotus Sutra, are noted for the majestic scale and sweep of their narrative and their devotional chapters, others like the Heart Sutra for their extreme conciseness, and still others such as the Amidist sutras for their vivid depictions of the Pure Land or paradise of a particular Buddha. The Vimalakirti Sutra, one of the most famous and influential works of the Mahayana canon, is outstanding for the eloquent and orderly manner in which it expounds the basic tenets of Mahayana, the liveliness of its episodes, and its frequent touches of humor, these last a rarity in a religious work of this type. The Vimalakirti Sutra is also unusual in that its central figure is not a Buddha or Buddhas but a wealthy townsman of Shakyamuni's time, Vimalakirti, who in his religious understanding and practice epitomizes the ideal lay believer. For this reason, and because of the sutra's remarkable literary appeal, it has enjoyed particular popularity among lay Buddhists in China, Japan, and the other Asian countries where Mahayana doctrines prevail and has exercised a marked influence on their literature and art. Highly regarded by nearly all branches of Mahayana Buddhism, it has held a place of particular importance in the Ch'an or Zen sect.

The Vimalakirti Sutra appears to be a product of the early years of the Mahayana movement, though just where, when, or by whom it was composed is unknown. The earliest Chinese translation, now lost, was done in 188 C.E., so the sutra must predate that year, originating probably around 100 C.E. It was translated into Chinese six more times, the last translation done

by Hsüan-tsang in the years 627–648 C.E.. By far the most popular and influential Chinese translation is the sixth, done by the Central Asian scholar-monk Kumarajiva in 406 C.E., from which the present English version has been made.

The sutra was later translated into Tibetan, probably in the early eighth century, and also into Sogdian, Khotanese, Mongolian, and Manchu, these last in all likelihood being done from a Chinese or Tibetan translation of the work. The original Sanskrit text of the sutra was lost long ago, though brief quotations from it are preserved in other works.

The Sanskrit title of the text, *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, which is translated here as *Sutra on the Expositions of Vimalakīrti*, clearly indicates that Vimalakīrti is to be the principal proponent of the doctrine, with Shakyamuni Buddha playing a secondary role, while the sutra itself in its closing chapter offers an alternative title, *The Doctrine of the Emancipation Beyond Comprehension*. It is also sometimes referred to in Chinese as the *Cheng-ming ching*, Cheng-ming or “Pure Fame” being the Chinese translation of the name *Vimalakīrti*. For convenience sake I have at most times referred to it simply as the *Vimalakīrti Sutra*.

2 The sutra, which consists of fourteen chapters in Kumarajiva’s Chinese translation, opens with a scene in the Amra Gardens in the city of Vaishali in northeastern India, where Shakyamuni Buddha is expounding the Law to a vast assembly of monks, nuns, bodhisattvas, and lay believers, as well as various gods and other nonhuman beings. Chapter 2 introduces the figure of Vimalakīrti, a rich layman residing in Vaishali who in his daily life represents a paragon of Buddhist enlightenment and practice. In order to further his propagation of the Buddhist doctrine, he has made it appear that he is ill; when the ruler of the region, the officials, and other residents of the area call on him to inquire about his condition, he then utilizes the opportunity to lecture them on the sacred teachings.

Shakyamuni Buddha, learning of this situation, requests one after another of his ten major monk disciples to go inquire about Vimalakirti's illness. But each in turn declines to do so, relating an incident in the past when he was reproved by Vimalakirti for some fault in his understanding or practice of the doctrine. The Buddha then asks various outstanding bodhisattvas to carry out his request, but they too express reluctance to do so for similar reasons. Finally the bodhisattva Manjushri, who in Buddhist lore symbolizes the perfection of wisdom, agrees to carry out the Buddha's request. Countless members of the assembly, eager to witness the encounter between these two renowned figures, Manjushri and Vimalakirti, accompany Manjushri on his mission.

The scene then shifts to Vimalakirti's sickroom, a narrow cell that nevertheless is miraculously able to accommodate the vast throngs who have come to visit him. In the chapters that follow, Vimalakirti, Manjushri, and other members of the group are shown engaging in discussions of the Dharma or Buddhist truth.

In chapter 11 the scene shifts back to the Amra Gardens, where Vimalakirti and Manjushri join Shakyamuni Buddha for further expositions of the doctrine and various astonishing demonstrations of their supernatural powers. The work concludes with conventional praises of the sutra itself and an "entrustment" scene in which Shakyamuni calls on the bodhisattva Maitreya, who is destined to be the next Buddha to appear in this world, to guard the sutra and insure that it is widely propagated.

3

Early Buddhism

In order to fully understand the events narrated in the sutra, particularly those relating to the monk-disciples of the Buddha, we must briefly survey the early history of the Buddhist religion.

Shakyamuni Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, who is also known by the name *Gautama*, appears to have lived in India sometime around the sixth or fifth century B.C.E. Though it is

difficult to describe his doctrines in detail, Buddhologists customarily accept several formulas as representative of his teachings. Most famous of these are the so-called four noble truths, which are referred to in several places in the Vimalakirti Sutra. These teach that (1) all existence in the saha world,¹ the world in which we live at present, is marked by suffering; (2) that suffering is caused by craving or desire; (3) that by doing away with craving one can gain release from suffering and reach a state of peace and enlightenment known as nirvana or tranquil extinction; (4) that there is a method for achieving this goal, namely, the discipline known as the eightfold path. This is a set of moral principles enjoining one to cultivate right views, right thinking, right speech, right action, right way of life, right endeavor, right mindfulness, and right meditation.

Another doctrine, also referred to in the Vimalakirti Sutra and at one point negated by it, is that of the twelve-linked chain of causation or dependent origination, which step by step illustrates the causal relationship between ignorance and suffering. The purpose of the doctrine, like that of the four noble truths, is to wake one to the true nature of reality and help one to achieve emancipation from ignorance and suffering.

4 Buddhism took over from earlier Indian thought the concept of karma, the belief that the deeds done in present or past existences will determine the circumstances into which one will be reborn in the future. According to the Indian view, living beings pass through an endless cycle of death and rebirth, and the ill effects of an evil action in one lifetime may not become evident until some later existence; but that they will appear eventually is inescapable.

The Buddha's eightfold path, as we have seen, offers a prescription for freeing oneself from ignorance and evil, advancing

1. See the glossary for further information on the saha world and other technical terms used in the *introduction* and translation.

one's level of spiritual attainment, and perhaps even escaping the cycle of birth and death entirely. But in order to pursue that path with appropriate zeal and concentration, it was thought all but imperative that one leave secular or household life and become a member of the Buddhist order, which consisted of both monks and nuns. There, free from family entanglements and mundane concerns, one could devote oneself to a life of poverty, celibacy, and religious study and discipline, supported by the alms of the lay community. Lay believers could acquire religious merit by assisting the order, observing appropriate rules of moral conduct, and carrying out devotional practices. But it was thought that they would have to wait until some future existence, when they too could become members of the order, before they could hope to gain full release from the bonds of suffering.

In early Buddhism, the ultimate goal of religious striving was to reach the state of arhat, a "worthy" or "saint," one who has overcome desire; passed beyond samsara, the world of suffering and cyclical birth and death; and entered nirvana. But as the monastic community labored in the centuries following the Buddha's demise to systematize his teachings and clarify points upon which, perhaps intentionally, his pronouncements had been vague, a number of doctrinal problems arose. Just what were the characteristics of an arhat, of a Buddha, or of the state of nirvana? What is the exact nature of the dharmas, the myriad objects and phenomena that make up the world as we know it through the senses? If, as the Buddha taught, there is no such thing as an individual self or ego, then what is it that is the recipient of karmic retribution? The members of the order, in their efforts to settle questions such as these, became increasingly occupied with codification of the tenets and doctrinal issues, and the religious body split up into a number of sects or schools that differed in matters of interpretation and practice.

These tenets and practices of early Buddhism that I have been describing are often referred to as Hinayana or the "Lesser

Vehicle," a derogatory term applied to them by a rival group within the religion that labeled itself Mahayana or the "Great Vehicle" and represented its doctrines as superior to and superseding those of earlier Buddhism. The Mahayana movement appears to have begun in India around the first or second century of the Common Era. In part it was probably a reaction against the great emphasis upon monastic life that marked earlier Buddhism and against the arid psychological and metaphysical speculations that characterize much of early Buddhist scholasticism. It sought to open up the religious life to a wider proportion of the population, to accord a more important role to lay believers, and to give more appealing expression to the teachings and make them more readily accessible.

In earlier Buddhism, as I have already noted, the aim of religious practice was to achieve the state of arhat, one who has gained release from suffering and passed beyond the confines of this world. But to the members of the Mahayana movement this seemed too selfish an objective, one that was too at variance with the spirit of compassion and concern for all living beings that they regarded as the soul of Buddhist teachings.

6 In contrast to the state of arhat, they chose as their goal and ideal the figure of the bodhisattva, one who vows not only to achieve enlightenment for himself but to assist all others to do likewise. He advances stage by stage in his spiritual progress until he has reached the point where he could, if he wished, enter nirvana. But he—or she, since Mahayana largely disregards distinctions of gender—out of motives of compassion deliberately elects to remain in the realm of birth and death, permitting himself to be reborn as a human being, an animal, or even a dweller in hell in order to assist others and guide them on the path to salvation. It is this spirit of altruism that most of all distinguishes the bodhisattva from the follower of Hinayana teachings.

Earlier Buddhism often described Shakyamuni Buddha as a bodhisattva in his previous existences, when he was still

advancing toward enlightenment. But in Mahayana texts such as the Vimalakirti Sutra the bodhisattvas are depicted as limitless in number, all-seeing and all-caring, capable of extending unbounded aid to others in the search for enlightenment. Indeed, this great emphasis on the role of the bodhisattva is one of the main characteristics that distinguishes Mahayana thought from that of earlier Buddhism, and much of the present work is devoted to descriptions of the bodhisattva ideal.

Vimalakirti himself, as revealed in chapter 12 of the Vimalakirti Sutra, in his previous existence had been a bodhisattva in the realm of a Buddha named Akshobhya or Immovable. But he abandoned that land of purity and deliberately chose to be reborn in our present saha world in the time of Shakyamuni Buddha so that he could assist in expounding the Law of the Buddhas. He speaks from a level of wisdom and authority equal to that of the Buddhas themselves, and his expositions are aimed at expounding the ideals of Mahayana Buddhism and refuting the views and practices of the Hinayana followers.

These latter are represented in the sutra in particular by Shakyamuni's ten major disciples, who are referred to as voice-hearers. The term originally designated persons in Shakyamuni's lifetime who had entered the monastic order and had heard the teachings directly from him, though later it came to refer to those monks and nuns who adhered to Hinayana beliefs and strove to attain the state of arhat.

A second and less important target of Vimalakirti's criticism is the pratyekabuddhas, "private Buddhas" or "self-enlightened ones," beings who have won an understanding of the truth through their own efforts but who make no attempt to teach others or assist them to enlightenment. These two groups, the voice-hearers and the pratyekabuddhas, are the frequent objects of Vimalakirti's reproaches, and at times even ridicule, because of their limited and self-centered aims and procedures, as contrasted with those of the bodhisattvas.

The sutra as a whole, then, represents both a critique of earlier Buddhist doctrines and an exposition, as vivid and compelling as the author or authors could make it, of those of the newly risen Mahayana movement. They did not hesitate to set the scene of their exposition back in time, in the era of Shakyamuni Buddha, no doubt because in the fervor of their faith they were convinced that they were conveying to the world the true meaning of Shakyamuni's message.

Though the sutra ostensibly depicts events taking place in Shakyamuni's lifetime, it makes no pretense at conforming to historical reality, or even to conventional concepts of time and space. According to the Mahayana conception of the universe, the world we live in at present is made up of four continents ranged around a great central mountain, Mount Sumeru. We live in the continent located to the south, known as Jambudvīpa or the "continent of the *jambu* trees." Underneath it are various hells where beings who have committed particularly evil deeds must suffer for a time, and above it a series of heavens occupied by the gods who, though happier than human beings, are bound like them to the cycle of birth and death.

8 Outside of our present world there exist countless others spread out in all directions, some similarly made up of four continents, others fabulous realms presided over by various Buddhas, for in the Mahayana teachings, Buddhas as well as bodhisattvas have become infinite in number. Through their supernatural powers, the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and guardian deities such as the Brahmas, Indras, and Four Heavenly Kings of these various worlds can travel at will from one world to another. Thus in the opening chapter of the Vimalakīrti Sūtra we find Shakyamuni addressing a staggering multitude of listeners that includes Brahmas and Indras who have come from other worlds to listen to his message, as well as various nonhuman beings such as dragons, garuda birds, and other figures drawn from Indian mythology. The Mahayana version of the

Dharma, we are to understand, is addressed not to humans alone but to all beings whatsoever.

The events depicted in the sutra represent a mixture of realistic scenes from early Indian life—the Buddha's monk disciples begging for alms in a nearby village, practicing meditation in the forest, or fetching fresh milk for the Buddha when he is indisposed—and a bizarre assortment of *Alice in Wonderland*-like personages and happenings that display the Mahayana imagination at its most fertile. These include a mischievous goddess, invisible at most times, who inhabits Vimalakirti's room and has overheard and profited from his teachings, a phantom bodhisattva who journeys to a realm "beyond Buddha lands numerous as the sands of forty-two Ganges" to beg for leftover food, five hundred little parasols that are combined to form one parasol so big it can spread over the entire universe, or thirty-two thousand large chairs somehow fitted into Vimalakirti's tiny sickroom. This juxtaposition of mundane and fantastic elements is meant to point up the contrast between the earnest but circumscribed goals and ways of thought characteristic of the Hinayana school, and the incomparably freer and loftier ones of the Mahayana. To understand the contrast, and the Mahayana claims to superiority that it represents, we must turn now to the doctrine of emptiness on which such claims rest.

9

The Doctrine of Nondualism

Vimalakirti's criticisms of Hinayana and his own expositions of the Dharma center around the concept of emptiness or nondualism, a key tenet in Mahayana thought. Like so much in Mahayana, it represents an extension and elaboration of ideas already present in early Buddhism. The Buddha had taught that all things in the phenomenal world are conditioned in nature, brought into being and governed by causes and conditions. They are thus in a state of constant flux and are destined to change and pass away. They may therefore be designated as "empty" or

“void” because they lack any inherent characteristics by which they can be described, changing as they do from instant to instant. At best they can be delineated by what they are not—not permanent, not possessed of any fixed form or self-nature.

The formulators of Mahayana doctrine, while taking over these ideas, preferred to emphasize not the negative but rather the positive aspects or import of this concept of emptiness. If all phenomena are characterized by the quality of emptiness, then emptiness must constitute the unchanging and abiding nature of existence. Seen from the point of view of differentiation, things fall into numberless different categories. But looked at from the point of view of emptiness, they are seen to have one quality they all share: that of forming a single entity, one that is beyond the power of language to describe because language can deal only with distinctions, a point that Vimalakirti dramatically emphasizes at the end of chapter 9.

To help the reader visualize the concept more clearly, I would like here to offer an analogy. Experts may object that my analogy is theoretically unsound. But that could probably be said of any analogy that attempts to convey in words a truth that is beyond verbal expression, so I will venture it anyway.

10 Let the reader imagine a round paper fan. One face of the fan is covered with an infinite number of tiny dots representing all the multiple objects and ideas that make up our ordinary world, the endless dualisms of here/there, now/then, big/little, beautiful/ugly that confront us daily, dots that are continually shifting, appearing and disappearing in an unending cycle of change. This is the phenomenal world, brought into being, says the Buddha, by causes and conditions, undergoing a ceaseless process of arising and cessation, the world of samsara or cyclical birth and death.

But now turn the fan over. The other face is a complete blank, every trace of differentiation obliterated. This is the world of emptiness, of nondualism, the transcendent realm as opposed to

the imminent. The two worlds are one: everything that was present on the other face of the fan is encompassed within the blank one, but everything has become "equal" or fused with everything else, because everything is identical with emptiness. "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form," says the Heart Sutra, a statement that is found in the Vimalakirti Sutra as well, and the same equation applies to perception, conception, volition, and consciousness, the other terms that make up the five aggregates or components of existence in the phenomenal world.

In this world of emptiness, the dimensions of space and time no longer exist, since all distinctions between here and there, now or never have been wiped out. Nothing comes into existence or passes into extinction, because there is no other place to come from or go to, because terms such as being or nonbeing have no meaning here. Because of its underlying unity, all things in it interpenetrate with one another and share one another's identity, which leads the Mahayana proponents to assert that all beings partake of the Buddha nature and hence have the potential to attain Buddhahood. And the same reasoning leads them to proclaim that earthly desires are none other than bodhi or the state of enlightenment, and that samsara, the ordinary world of suffering, is none other than nirvana.

Vimalakirti, in his expositions of the Dharma and particularly when he is addressing the voice-hearers or representatives of Hinayana thought, lays great emphasis upon the doctrine of emptiness, deliberately employing expressions that he knows will seem paradoxical or shocking to them. It is his method of jarring them, and readers as well, out of their habitual modes of thinking. 11

But Buddhism in all things stresses moderation or the Middle Way, the path that lies between two extremes. Because the followers of Hinayana seem too engrossed with distinctions between pure and impure, common mortal and enlightened being, the monastic community and the laity, Vimalakirti calls

their attention to the realm of nondualism where all such distinctions are transcended. But he is not asking them to abandon all distinctions unconditionally. What he is calling for is an outlook that will somehow balance or hold in suspension the two seemingly contradictory views of reality and prevent either from becoming unduly dominant.

As frequently pointed out, the concept of emptiness or nondualism, if carried to its logical extreme, will effectively wipe out the foundations upon which the religion rests. One can hardly urge people to observe difficult precepts or codes of moral behavior while assuring them that in the end there is no difference between right and wrong, or expect them to strive to attain religious goals that one has declared to be nonexistent. And simply as a matter of common sense, it is obvious that one cannot hope to carry out daily activities on the basis of nondualistic principles alone. No pedestrian in a modern city, for example, who thinks that red lights and green lights are all one and the same will survive for long. But the nondualistic outlook can be used to leaven and enlarge our everyday ways of thinking, to warn us away from excessive emotional involvement in our undertakings, from excessive pride in our achievements, or to help us resign ourselves to ills that are beyond our control.

12 The doctrine of nondualism is not intended to be an objective description of the true nature of reality, but rather a recommendation as to how one can best view reality in order to advance one's religious aims, a tool to assist one in realizing the Middle Way. Like all doctrines in Mahayana, it is provisional in nature, and to cling to it too tenaciously would be as reprehensible as any other form of clinging or attachment. Yet without it, one cannot hope to view the everyday world in its proper perspective.

In Mahayana Buddhism, one does not "grasp" or acquire anything new when one attains enlightenment, since according

to Mahayana belief all beings have from the beginning been endowed with the Buddha nature. One does not migrate to some new realm or life condition, but simply comes to realize the true nature of the realm one is in. As the Vimalakirti Sutra states in one of its most famous pronouncements: "When the mind is pure, the Buddha land will be pure." And it is the doctrine of nondualism that guides one to this understanding.

This doctrine, seeming as it does to contradict all the assumptions of our everyday modes of thought, is not easy to visualize, however, and there will perhaps be things about the figure of Vimalakirti and about his teachings that, initially at least, puzzle the reader. His pronouncements, though deliberately couched in paradoxical language, appear logical enough if we consider them in the light of nondualism. And the exhilarating freedom from limitations of time and space experienced by one who has broken through into this realm of emptiness or the absolute are given striking symbolic expression in the sutra by the various miracles or displays of supernatural powers performed by Vimalakirti or the Buddhas. But the reader might well wish to know more precisely just how one goes about practicing the six paramitas or "perfections"—almsgiving, keeping of the precepts, forbearance, assiduousness, meditation, and wisdom—a prime requirement for bodhisattvas, while holding fast to the doctrine of nondualism. Or, to put it in more specific terms, to learn how Vimalakirti manages to combine true Buddhist wisdom and detachment with the life of the layman, how he can head a family, conduct business affairs, and fulfill his other obligations as a citizen of the city of Vaishali and still remain faithful to the bodhisattva ideal.

13

The Vimalakirti Sutra, however, seems to delight more in confronting us with contradictions and dilemmas than in offering easy answers. It is a deliberately challenging text, one that utilizes all the drama, wit, humor, and persuasiveness of lan-

guage it can summon up in order to waken us to new dimensions of thought, new levels of religious understanding and action of which we had previously been unaware. In doing so, it vividly reflects the spirit of the Mahayana movement in one of its most creative and inspired moments.

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Chapter XXXIX. Explanation of the Three Hundred Terms

"This chapter deals with the concepts enumerated...in a catechetical method in the style of the Pāli Abhidhammapiṭaka. It opens, e.g., with the question 'what is purity in deeds?' The answer given is that 'it produces non-attachment to the three worlds, which have no more existence than that of a dream.'" (D 3, xxvi)

Chapter XL. Transmission

"This is the concluding chapter eulogizing the present text and adducing reasons for describing it as a *Vaipulyasūtra*." (D 3, xxvii)

46. AUTHOR UNKNOWN, *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra*.²⁰⁰

Summary by A. K. Warder

²⁰¹"The hero of the present *Sūtra*, the *bodhisattva* Vimalakīrti...is a Licchavi householder in Vaiśālī in the time of the Buddha, living very much in the world, even to the extent of visiting the geisha girls, taverns and casinos and indulging in all the pleasures of life. However, he is in reality a model *bodhisattva*, even a *śramaṇa* (ascetic-philosopher), and mixes with worldly people in order to show them the disadvantages of pursuing pleasure. He is universally respected and his conversation is in conformity with his doctrine as well as skilful, so that his activities in the world serve to ripen people's understanding and draw them away from attachment to pleasures."

"One day Vimalakīrti gives out that he is ill, though this is only another expedient. According to Indian custom many people go to visit him and inquire whether he is feeling better, to which inquiry he replies with discourses on the impermanence, unhappiness, etc., of the elements of which the body is composed and the diseases to which it is subject. Naturally, when the Buddha...knows of Vimalakīrti's illness he wishes to send a monk to visit the sick man...In turn he asks Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, Subhūti, Ānanda and many others to go. All refuse, on the ground that they are incapable of holding conversation with Vimalakīrti, having been humiliated by him on some previous occasion, when they were each

reduced to silence. For example the *bodhisattva* Maitreya had been told by the Buddha that he will be the next *buddha*, after one more birth. Vimalakīrti found him discussing the stage he had reached with the Tuṣita gods and took him up on this question of 'birth': it is only by non-birth that one can reach this stage, Maitreya's thusness is only the thusness of all phenomena, there is no duality between him and all other living beings, so that when he becomes enlightened all beings will become enlightened; anyway, all beings are extinct already, this is their thusness, so Maitreya ought not to deceive the gods with this talk about his going to attain enlightenment. Maitreya could think of nothing to say to this on that occasion and declares himself now incapable of asking Vimalakīrti about his illness."

"At last the *bodhisattva* Mañjuśrī agrees to go, though the task is difficult. Many monks, *bodhisattvas* and gods go with him to hear what promises to be a remarkable conversation. They find the house appropriately empty and Vimalakīrti tells Mañjuśrī he is well-come, especially as he has not come...As to his illness, it will last as long as living beings are ignorant and desire existence. Starting thus, the conversation and the episodes which follow express in narrative and dramatic form the main teaching of the Madhyamaka. Śāriputra plays the part of the clown who asks foolish questions (i.e., at the concealing level), complaining that there are no seats for the visitors, not enough food for them, etc. The house-goddess of Vimalakīrti's house makes game of him with displays of magic. Seeing that she has made such progress on the way Śāriputra is foolish enough to ask her why she does not change her female sex (traditionally regarded as a disadvantage, at least by monks), evidently having the power to do so. The goddess replies that so far she has not been able to discover what this 'female sex' is: like all phenomena it is only an artifice or illusion (*māyā*), it is not real (is nothing in itself), so there isn't anything to change. However she punishes Śāriputra for his suggestion, making a woman of him by her magic: he finds he has the body of the goddess whilst she appears like the elder Śāriputra and asks him why he does not change his 'female sex.' She restores him after a sufficient lecture, adding that ultimately no changes take place."

"Vimalakīrti explains to Mañjuśrī how a *bodhisattva* lives in the world without being attached to it, conforming to passion and

aversion, though being free from these, and to delusion though he has understanding. He asks Mañjuśrī to tell him what the 'clan of the thus-gone' is--a new concept...This 'clan', says Mañjuśrī, is that of ignorance, desire for existence, passion, aversion, delusion, error, the obstacles, etc., in other words of all bad phenomena which lead to transmigration. Asked what this signifies he explains that the thought of enlightenment can occur only in transmigration (among synthesized phenomena), as lotuses grow only in the mud."

47. AUTHOR UNKNOWN, *Śālistambasūtra*

Summary by Karl H. Potter

Noble Ross Reat,²⁰² who has made a life's work out of the study of this text, believes it may be the earliest Mahāyāna *sūtra*. However, its earliest known translation dates from the fourth century, though a closely related work was translated by Ji Zhan in 220-252 (T.708). Although commentaries ascribed to "Nāgārjuna" are available in three Tibetan versions (P.5466, 5485-5486) it is fairly clear none are by the Nāgārjuna we just finished reviewing. Nevertheless, it cannot be doubted that the work is a rather early one. Reat ascribes to it Mahāyāna leanings on the grounds that the text argues "that enlightenment represents a realization of *Dharma-kāya* Buddha"²⁰³, but admits that the language and style is reminiscent of Theravāda.

Reat's text is necessarily a combination of several sources, but he manages to reconstruct about 90% of the Sanskrit text on the basis of quotations found elsewhere in the literature. He also provides a Tibetan text and an English translation, referred to below as "ET".²⁰⁴

In addition to ET Jeffrey D. Schoening has recently edited and translated this work with its commentaries in two volumes as *Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde*, Heft 35.1, Wien 1995.

1-6 (ET26-31) Maitreya advises Śāriputra on dependent origination, the nature of *dharma*, and why it is that on seeing dependent origination one sees *dharma* and sees the Buddha.

The twelve-fold chain of dependent origination is stated. Each

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The Vimalakīrti-Nirdeśa Sūtra

Stefan Anacker

INTRODUCTION

The *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, the "Sūtra of the Teachings of the Layman Vimalakīrti," is one of the most sublime of the Mahāyāna sūtras, showing early Mahāyāna anti-institutionalism at its highest. A sūtra of the extremely varied *Ratnakūṭa* collection, it has been of tremendous value in many aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism. In Japan, for example, Prince Shotoku Taishi regarded Vimalakīrti as the second rebirth of the *Taihōgata Kenzoku*, and the sūtra later had a profound influence on Zen. The Sanskrit original is lost, but a Tibetan, a Sogdian, and three Chinese versions survive.

SYNOPSIS OF THE SŪTRA

The scene of the sūtra is set in *Vaiśālī*, where the Buddha *Śākyamuni* meets with 8,000 great *bhikṣus* and 32,000 *Bodhisattvas*. The latter are characterized as being fitted out with all the *pāramitās*, having gone to all parts of the world to all sentient beings in the hope of making them their friends and bringing them peace, as having peeled away all attachment to the ego and having reached the calm that comes in the cognizing of all *dharma*s as nonarising, as possessing great constancy, and with an intuitive insight into the dispositions of sentient beings, which allows them to always provide the right antidotes for all beings' sufferings. Upon being asked how one should attain the purity of the Buddha-realm, Śākyamuni replies that the Buddha-realm lies within each sentient being, that the Bodhisattva sets up a Buddha-realm according to the dispositions of beings (and this only to help them), and that the purity of the Buddha-realms consists of the *pāramitās*, the 37 limbs of enlightenment (*bolhipakṣya dharmas*), subjecting oneself to a moral code and yet never criticizing others, showing the way to others, and helping them in all ways. To *Śāriputra*'s question on how this Buddha-realm can be called pure, Śākyamuni says, "Are sun and moon impure, because the blind

man can't see them? The Buddha-realms are always pure—it's only you who can't see them in their fundamental purity."

The great layman Bodhisattva Vimalakīrti has taken on a sickness, to aid sentient beings. Śākyamuni sends various disciples to see him, but all refuse, finding themselves unworthy because Vimalakīrti has chided them on various occasions. For example, Śāriputra finds himself unworthy because once, when he was sitting in meditation, Vimalakīrti came up to him and told him that the way he was sitting was not necessarily the only way to meditate—that meditating means never leaving the way of emptiness and yet still acting like a normal being; not freeing oneself from all worldly passions and still going into *nirvāṇa*. The great Bodhisattva *Prabhavayūha* feels equal to Vimalakīrti. For example, the Bodhisattva *Prabhavayūha* feels himself unworthy because when he once asked Vimalakīrti where he came from, Vimalakīrti answered, "From the *bodhi-maṇḍala*." When *Prabhavayūha* asked where that was, Vimalakīrti said that it was in the body itself because one can see the irreality in it, and that all dharmas are the *bodhi-maṇḍala* because one recognizes the emptiness of all dharmas.

The Bodhisattva *Mañjuśrī* finally goes. Vimalakīrti tells him that he has become sick because all sentient beings are sick and afflicted, and because he has feelings of compassion for all sentient beings. When *Mañjuśrī* asks him why his room is empty, Vimalakīrti tells him that all Buddha-lands are empty. When *Mañjuśrī* asks why, Vimalakīrti says that emptiness is empty because there is no discrimination in emptiness. Discrimination is emptiness too, and emptiness can be found in the 62 heresies. Asked where these can be found, he says, "In the emancipation of all Buddhas." When *Mañjuśrī* asks him where this occurs, Vimalakīrti replies, "In the volitions and actions of all sentient beings."

Vimalakīrti further says that the body is a collection of dharmas that have haphazardly come together into a kind of unity. However, this thought of the reality of dharmas is also an error. To get rid of the notions of "I" and "mine" one must be totally unconcerned with the factors of the inner and outer world. One has to deal with everything without discrimination. In other words, "I" and *nirvāṇa* are identical. And why? Because both "I" and *nirvāṇa* are empty. In what way empty? Through provisional naming; both have no graspable nature.

The Bodhisattva should reject all compassion that is bound to attachment. A compassion with attachment brings fear of transitoriness, and besides, it is nonsense for someone who is himself bound to tell others to free themselves. Engaging in meditation because one has a desire to meditate is a form of bondage; having all necessary *upāyās* is liberation. *Upāyās* without *prajñā* are bondage; *upāyās* with *prajñā* are liberation. The Bodhisattva is

neither constantly in the state of nonmastery, like a fool, nor constantly in the state of mastery, like a *śrāvaka*. The actions of a Bodhisattva are thus neither fully pure nor impure. He will strive for all-knowledge, but not crave it before he is ready. He will know dependent origination and yet enter into all sorts of false views; work for the good of all sentient beings and yet not be attached to it. He knows that there is no arising of anything in the world, and he will not stay on the threshold of enlightenment. He will be free from all worldly concerns, and still not annihilate his own body. Truth is that central calm; it is nonattachment.

The Bodhisattva is to regard others as a magician does the phantoms he has created; as the wise man does the moon in the water or the reflection of his own face in a mirror; or as a blind man sees colors. When Mañjuśrī, at this point, asks Vimalakīrti how friendly love can be practiced, Vimalakīrti replies that after one has regarded all beings as phantoms (etc.), one should reflect that one has to teach such a teaching for the sake of delivering beings, and that this is true compassion. He should practice the compassion of absolute calm, the compassion of nonduality, the compassion of limitlessness, the compassion of openness. Two more of the unlimited are thus defined: sympathetic joy (*pramuditā*) is being happy at all joys of others, and equanimity (*upekṣā*) is remaining without desire for oneself.

Craving is traced to erroneous discrimination, and ultimately all discrimination rests in the impermanence of things. What conditions this impermanence? Nothing, for it is the beginning of all things.

At this point in Vimalakīrti's exegesis, a divine girl throws flowers all over the room. They stick fast to the robes of the śrāvakas, but glide off the robes of the Bodhisattvas. When Śāriputra tries to pluck off the flowers, because they are contrary to *Vinaya*, she says to him, "You shouldn't think that flowers are against the Dharma. This is all the result of discrimination. If one has gone to the extent of leaving one's home for the religion of the Buddha, and one is still stuck in discriminations, then *that* is against the Dharma." When Śāriputra later insists that emancipation is freedom from greed, hate, and delusion, she says that greed, hate, and delusion are themselves already enlightenment. Śāriputra is angry at this "mere woman," and asks her what she has attained, as well as what she has proved by being so talkative. She replies that she has attained nothing and proved nothing, and that is why she is so loquacious. She adds that if somebody is attaining something, or proving something, then he is a stubborn person, as far as the Dharma of the Buddha is concerned. Śāriputra says that if she is so smart, why doesn't she change herself into a man. Instead, she changes him into a woman.

Vimalakīrti and Mañjuśrī continue their discussions on the activities of

the Bodhisattva. The Bodhisattva may appear to be angry, lazy, greedy, etc., but is really free from these afflictions. The seeds of Buddhahood are the afflictions, for it is only there that the thought of enlightenment (*bodhicitta*) can grow, just as a lotus grows from muck. When one sees that everything that has arisen by dependent origination is empty and without a self, then there is no difference between a Bodhisattva and a non-Bodhisattva because all dualities vanish. There is no joy in nirvāṇa or fear of saṃsāra. Mañjuśrī finally free, so there will be no joy in nirvāṇa or fear of saṃsāra. Mañjuśrī finally says that one cannot really validly say anything about anything, as emptiness lies apart from all discourse. Vimalakīrti seconds this by becoming silent. Stories on the innate purity of the Buddha Śākyamuni's realm, and admonitions on the superiority of understanding the Dharma over all external worship close the sūtra.

SUGGESTED READING

Lamotte, Étienne, tr. *L'Enseignement de Vimalakīrti*.
Robinson, Richard H., tr. *The Vimalakīrti Sūtra* (typescript).

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26. The Bodhisattva Samantabhadra charges himself with the task of being a protector to the preachers of religion in after-times after the Lord's *nirvāṇa*."

104. AUTHOR UNKNOWN, *Sāharanāgaraparipṛchāsūtra*²⁹⁵

105. AUTHOR UNKNOWN, *Samantamukhaparivartasūtra*²⁹⁶

106. AUTHOR UNKNOWN, *Sarvapuṇyasamuccayasamādhisūtra*²⁹⁷

107. AUTHOR UNKNOWN, *Sarvavaipulyavidyāsiddhasūtra*²⁹⁸

108. AUTHOR UNKNOWN, *Siṃhaparipṛchāsūtra*²⁹⁹

109. AUTHOR UNKNOWN, *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanādasūtra*³⁰⁰

Summary by Alex and Hideko Wayman

"The scripture opens in Śrāvastī. King Prasenajit and his Queen Mallikā move to interest their daughter Queen Śrīmālā in the Buddha's doctrine."

"Chapter One. Eliminating All Doubts. 1. Śrīmālā evokes the Buddha, who approaches in his inconceivable body. She praises his two bodies which are bodily form and the knowledge body. The Lord prophesies that Queen Śrīmālā will attain the incomparable right perfected enlightenment. 2. Queen Śrīmālā takes ten great vows, the first five constituting Hīnayāna ethics, the second five, Mahāyāna ethics..."

"Chapter Two. Deciding the Cause. 3. Queen Śrīmālā forms three great aspirations: to always comprehend the Illustrious Doctrine; to teach unweariedly the Illustrious Doctrine; and to protect and uphold the Illustrious Doctrine without regard to body, life force, or possessions. These three comprise all Bodhisattva aspirations. 4. She prays for the Tathāgata's power to make her eloquent when teaching in the scope of the great aspirations;..."

"Chapter Three. Clarifying the Final Meaning. 5. The queen eloquently preaches the embrace of the Illustrious Doctrine that was held by all the Buddhas. The "Illustrious Doctrine" is a term for the

Great Vehicle...The Arhats and the Pratyekabuddhas with fear take refuge in the Lord. What they call "*nirvāṇa*" is a means belonging to the Tathāgatas, because the Arhats and the Pratyekabuddhas do not have all merits, have measurable and conceivable merit, have a remainder of faults, and so are far away from the *nirvāṇa*-realm. Concerning the liberation of Arhats and Pratyekabuddhas, there are two kinds of passing away--discontinuous passing away of ordinary sentient beings, and the inconceivable transference of the Arhats, Pratyekabuddhas, and Bodhisattvas who have attained power. The Arhats and the Pratyekabuddhas have neither eliminated all defilements nor avoided all rebirth...The vehicles of the Disciples and the Self-Enlightened are included in the Great Vehicle. "Great Vehicle" is an expression for the Buddha vehicle, and so the three vehicles are counted as one vehicle (*ekayāna*)...6. The four Noble Truths do not belong to the Disciples and the Self-Enlightened, for these persons do not have the supramundane knowledge of the non-progressive Noble Truths. The four Truths belong to the Tathāgatas, who eliminate the store of all defilements by inconceivable voidness knowledge. 7. The Tathāgatagarbha is covered by the defilements' store; when liberated from this store it is the Dharmakāya of the Tathāgata...8-9. The cessation of suffering is the Tathāgata's Dharmakāya, or Tathāgatagarbha freed from defilement by the two kinds of voidness knowledge of the Tathāgatas, namely, the Tathāgatagarbha is void of the stores of defilement, and the Tathāgatagarbha is not void of the Buddha natures. 10. The Noble Truth "Cessation of Suffering" is the true refuge. The other three Noble Truths...are not the true refuge. 11-12. Immature ordinary persons have the wayward views of the two extremes. When they think "The constructions are impermanent" it is their eternalistic view. This is because they have four wayward ideas that the impermanent is permanent, suffering is pleasure, nonself is self, the impure is pure...13. The Tathāgatagarbha is the base either of non-discrete constructed Buddha natures or of discrete constructed defilements. The Tathāgatagarbha experiences suffering, is the reason for aspiration towards *nirvāṇa*, and the reason for "cyclical flow" (*saṃsāra*); it is not a "self". There are two difficult doctrines: that consciousness is intrinsically pure, and that intrinsically pure consciousness can be defiled."

"Chapter Four. Entering the One Vehicle Path. 14. By two

discipleship levels, a third with a knowledge in the precincts of the Dharma involving five visions, and a fourth reaching certainty in the two difficult doctrines, the Disciples can then enroll others in the Great Vehicle. 15. The queen gains eloquence for further explanations of the faultless meaning...As queen she converts the women in the capital, and as king he converts the men."

110. AUTHOR UNKNOWN, *Śrīmatībrāhmaṇipariṇchāsūtra*³⁰¹

111. AUTHOR UNKNOWN, *Strīvivartyavyākaraṇasūtra*³⁰²

112. AUTHOR UNKNOWN, *Sumatidārikapariṇchāsūtra*³⁰³

Advice issued by the Buddha to an eight-year-old girl named Sumati.

113. AUTHOR UNKNOWN,
*Susthitamatidevaputrapariṇchāsūtra*³⁰⁴

114. AUTHOR UNKNOWN, *Svapnanirdeśasūtra*³⁰⁵

115. AUTHOR UNKNOWN, *Tathāgatacintyaguhyānirdeśasūtra*³⁰⁶

116. AUTHOR UNKNOWN, *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra*³⁰⁷

117. AUTHOR UNKNOWN, *Udayānavatsarājapariṇchāsūtra*³⁰⁸

118. AUTHOR UNKNOWN, *Upāyakauśalyasūtra*³⁰⁹

119. AUTHOR UNKNOWN, *Vaiduryarājasūtra*³¹⁰

120. AUTHOR UNKNOWN, *Vidyutprāptapariṇchāsūtra*³¹¹

121. AUTHOR UNKNOWN, *Vīradatta(grhapati)pariṇchāsūtra*³¹²

122. AUTHOR UNKNOWN, *Vimaladattapariṇchāsūtra*³¹³

123. AUTHOR UNKNOWN,
*Viśeṣacintā(brahma)pariṇchāsūtra*³¹⁴

THE LION'S ROAR OF QUEEN ŚRĪMĀLĀ

A Buddhist Scripture
on the Tathāgatagarbha Theory

Prepared for the Columbia College Program of
Translations from the Oriental Classics

has renounced "body, life force, and possessions," which our preceding discussion indicates to be a reference to the last three Bodhisattva stages. When the *Śrī-Mālā* allows that a good daughter of the family, by renouncing possessions (having previously renounced body and life force) is endowed with uninterrupted, permanent, and inconceivable merits that are unshared by other sentient beings, it apparently makes her equivalent in the terminology of other scriptures to a Bodhisattva of the Tenth Stage.

Granted that the *Śrī-Mālā* permits women such status, the question arises: What status does the sūtra intend Queen Śrīmālā to have? Prince Shōtoku's commentary on the *Śrī-Mālā* introduced the interpretation that the queen is a Bodhisattva of the Seventh Stage, inspired by the Tathāgata to be eloquent even about the higher stages, but also able to express that doctrine which ordinary persons can grasp.

However, the scripture itself has some indications. In section 13, the Lord is made to say, "Queen, you as well as the Bodhisattvas possessed of the great Dharma are able to hear these two Doctrines. Queen, the rest, the Disciples, accept the two Doctrines only through faith in the Tathāgata." The "Bodhisattvas possessed of the great Dharma" are evidently those elsewhere referred to as having attained power, hence on the Eighth or higher Stages in the ten-stage terminology. The passage shows that the queen is not in that group, and so is beneath the Eighth Stage.

A further evidence is found in Chapter Four when the queen mentions the three kinds of good son or daughter of the family. She herself seems to fit the third kind: "who shrinks from gaining the knowledge of the profound Dharma by himself, thinking, 'I cannot possibly know it; this meaning can only be understood by the Tathāgata himself,' and so keeping the Lord in mind obtains the mental presence of the Lord."

Finally, the Prologue of the sūtra represents the queen in a situation consistent with the "Bodhisattva newly entered in the Great Vehicle." It does not seem to have been the intention of the sūtra to suggest an exalted status for Queen Śrīmālā. The problem of her Bodhisattva Stage seems immaterial to the message of the *Śrī-Mālā*, which teaches that the queen has been inspired to have eloquence about the entire Bodhisattva path and about the "One Vehicle" as it was understood by the Tathāgata, because the queen has obtained the mental presence of the Lord.

III. Doctrine of *Śrī-Mālā*

VEHICLE AND NIRVĀNA

One Vehicle

The theory of "One Vehicle" is so important in *Śrī-Mālā* that in the original text prior to the imposition of chapter divisions fully half of the entire scripture, namely, our Chapter Three, "Clarifying the Final Meaning," can be considered as the development of "One Vehicle" theory.

According to the *Śrī-Mālā*, the "One Vehicle" (*ekayāna*) is the Great Vehicle (*mahāyāna*) which incorporates all vehicles. The *Śrī-Mālā* agrees with the Lotus Sūtra that the "Great Vehicle" is the Buddha Vehicle which has discovered and taught all Buddhist truth. Another important agreement with the Lotus Sūtra is the application of "One Vehicle" to the nirvāna doctrine. The two scriptures agree that there is only one complete nirvāna, which belongs to the Tathāgatas; but that there are also partial nirvānas which are shown by the Tathāgatas as a means for promoting persons spiritually.⁶⁸ The *Śrī-Mālā* takes the "embryo of the Tathāgata" (*Tathāgatagarbha*) as the basis of "One Vehicle." That "embryo" potentiality is not predestined to various enlightenments; rather all sentient beings arrive at an identical enlightenment or nirvāna, because their "species" (*gotra*) is precisely that "embryo of the Tathāgata." Accordingly, the theory of One Vehicle rivals the Prajñāpāramitā exegesis of radically different paths and fruits for the Disciples, the Self-Enlightened, and the Bodhisattvas.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ *Lotus Sūtra*, chaps. VII, "Ancient Devotion," and VIII, "Destiny of the Five Hundred Monks." In the *Śrī-Mālā*, the Tibetan expression for "partial nirvāna" is *yan lag gi mya ñan las bñas*, which probably has the original Sanskrit of *aṅganirvāna*. The same Tibetan expression occurs in Asaṅga's *Samāhitābhūmi* portion of the *Togācāra-bhūmi*, for which his explanation (PTT Vol. 109, p. 269-5 to p. 270-1) should here be cited: "Dhyanā [meaning the four standard *dhyāna* of Buddhist meditation] is called 'one's partial nirvāna' (*adanāganirvāna*); it is also called 'a sort of nirvāna' (*pariyā-nirvāna*). It is 'one's partial nirvāna' because one's nirvāna is partial by eliminating only the side of defilement and because one lacks the side of certainty; and it is 'a sort of nirvāna' because it is not the complete nirvāna." Mr. Wayman maintains in the Introduction that the *Śrī-Mālā* is a product of the Mahāśāṅghika sect and also maintains in *Analysis of the Śrīnālābhūmi Manuscript* (pp. 25-29) that Asaṅga belongs to the Later Mahīśāsaka sect. The apparent agreement about a "partial nirvāna" is consistent with André Bareau's finding (*Les sectes*, p. 292) of a remarkable doctrinal agreement of the Mahīśāsaka with the Mahāśāṅghika as well as with the Andhaka who are the Mahāśāṅghika of South India.

⁶⁹ This exegesis is clearly portrayed by the *Abhiyamayālaṅkāra* and affiliated commentarial literature; cf. E. Obermüller, *The Doctrine of Prajñā-pāramitā as Exposed in the Abhiyamayālaṅkāra of Maitreya*, reprint from *Acta Orientalia*, Vol. XI, 1932.

Śrī-Mālā's section on "One Vehicle" quickly gets to the heart of the matter with the important phrase "mundane and supramundane virtuous natures," and the section itself exemplifies the meaning in various ways. The *Śrī-Mālā* contrasts those who distinguish superior and inferior natures (*dharmā*) (and who do not attain the nirvāṇa-realm) with those who experience the single taste of wisdom and liberation (and who do attain the nirvāṇa-realm). Again, the *Śrī-Mālā* uses the expression "supramundane knowledge" for the nonprogressive form of the four Noble Truths, and by implication classifies as "mundane knowledge" the progressive form of the four Noble Truths whereby one understands natures as superior, middling, and inferior. In the case of resorts, the *Śrī-Mālā* speaks of four mundane resorts⁷⁰ which the Lord taught so as to lead beginners in the right direction, and contrasts those resorts with the supramundane resort, the Truth as Cessation of Suffering.

The expressions "mundane" (*laukika*) and "supramundane" (*lokottara*) are ancient in their Pāli forms (*lokiya* and *lokuttara*). However, their use in the Theravādin Buddhism as well as in Aśaṅga's Yogācāra system especially based on the Mahīśāsaka school, is quite different from what we find in the *Śrī-Mālā*. For example, in the *Samādhirimocana-sūtra*, the basic scripture of the Yogācāra, the "Maitreya chapter" contains the passage, "Maitreya, one should understand that all the virtuous natures—mundane and supramundane—of either the Disciples, Bodhisattvas, or Tathāgatas, are the fruit of calming (*śamatha*) and clear vision (*vipaśyanā*)" (as cited in Tson-kha-pa's *Lam rim chen mo*, beginning of *śamatha* [calming of the mind] section). In Aśaṅga's exposition, the mundane fruits of "calming" are the meditative attainments of the four Dhyāna levels; the supramundane fruits of "clear vision" are the result of pondering the four Noble Truths.⁷¹ The disagreement is immediately apparent: Aśaṅga considers the contemplation of the four Noble Truths to be the supramundane path, whereas the *Śrī-Mālā* has both a mundane and a supramundane "four Noble Truths." Besides, the *Śrī-Mālā* maintains that the Disciples and the Self-Enlightened ones have not eliminated all the secondary defilements on calming and clear vision; hence, in their case, these two procedures are not completely pure and cannot yield the supramundane natures.

The difference between the two approaches lies in the fact that Aśaṅga and his ancient tradition employ the terms "mundane" and "supramundane" to apply to various objective domains, while the *Śrī-Mālā* employs those terms for

⁷⁰ The four resorts are listed in n. 95 to the translation.

⁷¹ This is the topic of the Fourth Yogasthāna of Aśaṅga's *Śrāvakabhūmi*; cf. Alex Wayman, *Analysis of the Śrāvakabhūmi Manuscript*, pp. 125 ff.

the varying subjective consciousness. When the terms have objective application, such language as "I shall proceed by either the mundane or the supramundane route" can be employed.⁷² The "mundane route" turns out to be aimed at "freedom from passion" by meditative ascension through the four Dhyāna heavens of the "realm of form" with consequent endowment of the "five supernormal faculties." The "supramundane route" amounts to realizing the four Noble Truths by pondering certain characteristics of each one, with consequent endowment of the sixth supernormal faculty, "knowledge of flux destruction." In contrast, the *Śrī-Mālā* includes all the religious paths in its One Vehicle; none is superior or inferior from the standpoint of the nirvāṇa-realm or Tathāgata's Enlightenment, accompanied by nondiscrete Buddha natures; and from this nirvāṇa standpoint both the above-mentioned routes are supramundane. But again, from the graded saṃsāra-standpoint accompanied by discrete defiled natures, both those routes are mundane. The *Śrī-Mālā* insists that as long as consciousness is defiled everything is mundane. And according to the Mahāśāṅghika *Mahāvastu*, everything the Tathāgata does—walking, eating, and so forth—is supramundane.⁷³

Nirvāṇa and Enlightenment

There is an historical evolution in the concept of nirvāṇa. "Nibbāna" is the Pāli language equivalent of the Sanskrit word "nirvāṇa." In the Abhidharma tradition, nibbāna (later referred to as the Hīnayāna nirvāṇa) contrasts with the phenomenal world (*saṃsāra*). It is usually identified with *pratisaṃkhyā-nirodha* (cessation through understanding each element), which Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* explains as an unconditioned (or unconstructed, *asaṃskṛta*) fruit of the ascetic life or human agency. The freedom from all phenomenal taints, and even from the subtle forces of sublime meditation itself, is called nirvāṇa without remainder. The one who attains this nirvāṇa is called the Arhat.

The development of early Mahāyāna thought in the form of the Prajñāpāramitā scriptures eroded the clear contrast between nirvāṇa and saṃsāra, so that Nāgārjuna (2d cent. A.D.) could write in his famous *Mūlhyamaka-kārikā* (XXV, 20):

Where is the limit of saṃsāra,
there is the limit of nirvāṇa;
Not the slightest thing
whatsoever is between them.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁷³ J. J. Jones, tr., *The Mahāvastu*, I, p. 132.

The implication of the *Śrī-Mālā* is understood by the *Ratnagotravibhāga* is to explain nirvāṇa and saṃsāra in a manner whereby they can be mixed (*saṃṛṣṭa*, “brought forth together”) in a “pure and impure state,” where purity is the participation of nirvāṇa and impurity the participation of saṃsāra. In our previous discussion of stages of the bodies made of mind, we observed that, in the theory of Bodhisattva stages, the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth are each a stage in which the person is delicately balanced between nirvāṇa and saṃsāra in the sense that he could enter a quiescent nirvāṇa but stays in saṃsāra in pursuance of his Bodhisattva vow. The Bodhisattva has reached the very state from which the Arhat passes into fractional nirvāṇa but the Bodhisattva avoids that supposed escape and starts a new spiritual life toward the lofty goal of the nirvāṇa-realm which is the Revelation-Enlightenment.

The *Śrī-Mālā* does not deny the early view of Buddhism that the Arhat reaches the unconstructed nirvāṇa, but does deny that this attainment is complete or constitutes the final release from the phenomenal world (*saṃsāra*). Toward the end of the scripture we learn that the one having “knowledge in the precincts of the Dharma” has the “vision of the sleep of the Arhats,” a remark consistent with earlier information that the Arhats, the Pratyekabuddhas, and even Bodhisattvas in their last life have a remainder to cultivate of the path leading to the cessation of sufferings, and so the Arhats have a remainder of rebirth. Only the Tathāgatas realize the nirvāṇa-realm in the ultimate sense.

The *Śrī-Mālā* insists that what the Arhats believe to be nirvāṇa is in fact a means belonging to the Tathāgatas. The *Ratnagotravibhāga* (p. 56) says that this statement of the *Śrī-Mālā* refers to the *parinirvāṇa* of the Arhats and Pratyekabuddhas: it is a means to keep them from retreating (*avivartana-upāya*), which is a means the complete Buddhas who are sovereign over *dharmas* utilize; it is like the magical city in the midst of a forest appearing to travelers weary from a long journey. This explanation is consistent with the queen’s “One Vehicle” theory, since the followers of the Buddhist path are all included in the Great Vehicle, and need only take the Bodhisattva vow to continue beyond the Arhat attainment as Bodhisattvas who have postponed the entrance into the quiescent nirvāṇa. This new theory of nirvāṇa required a metaphysical formulation, and the *Śrī-Mālā* may well be the preeminent early scripture which appropriately states the case.

The *Śrī-Mālā* summarizes its view of nirvāṇa and saṃsāra by positing a constructed and an unconstructed nirvāṇa as well as a constructed and an unconstructed saṃsāra. The *Ratnagotravibhāga* (p. 8) explains, “The ‘unconstructed’ (*asaṃskṛta*) should be understood as the opposite of the ‘constructed.’ Here, the ‘constructed’ (*saṃskṛta*) is said for whatever thing one recognizes as having

birth (*upāda*), continuation (*tthiti*), and destruction (*bhaṅga*).” The closest the *Śrī-Mālā* comes to explaining that passage about nirvāṇa and saṃsāra is when it reports that the Tathāgata transcends the constructed realm and is the base of constructed Buddha natures as well as the base of external constructed natures that are defilement stores. This confirms that the constructed nirvāṇa is the constructed Buddha natures and that the constructed saṃsāra is the constructed defilement stores. The *Śrī-Mālā* also maintains that the truth Cessation of Suffering is unconstructed; this in effect equates the unconstructed nirvāṇa with the Truth Cessation of Suffering. Only the unconstructed saṃsāra is left unexplained in the *Śrī-Mālā*, although this text implies a connection here with the Tathāgatagarbha, which experiences suffering.

The *Ratnagotravibhāga* (p. 50) quotes that *Śrī-Mālā* passage on the two kinds of both nirvāṇa and saṃsāra, but seems to take for granted that its readers already understand these on an elementary level, for it launches into a subtle discussion about the three bodies made of mind. It represents the “constructed” and the “unconstructed” in terms of the agent by which the body made of mind is both impure and pure, the impurity from saṃsāra and the purity from nirvāṇa. Thus, it explains regarding those three bodies that their saṃsāra is by reason of their being impelled by nonfluxional roots, and that their nirvāṇa is by reason of their not being impelled by fluxional action (*karma*) and defilement (*kleśa*).

The *Śrī-Mālā* means that the unconstructed nirvāṇa is accompanied by the constructed nirvāṇa, and the unconstructed saṃsāra is accompanied by the constructed saṃsāra. There is a special case for bodies made of mind belonging to the Arhats, Pratyekabuddhas, and Bodhisattvas who have attained power. Their constructed saṃsāra is gestation by reason of the nescience entrenchment as the defilement and by reason of nonfluxional action. Their unconstructed nirvāṇa is the freedom from the four static defilements but it is still fractional, a limited vision (like the Zen Buddhist *Satori*), because these persons have not yet gained the innumerable Buddha natures constituting the constructed nirvāṇa.

Now that we understand what the *Śrī-Mālā* means by nirvāṇa, we can appreciate the identification of nirvāṇa with enlightenment. The *Ratnagotravibhāga* appeals to this scripture to illustrate the fifth of its seven “diamond topics,” namely, enlightenment as explained by the queen: “Lord, ‘incomparable rightly completed enlightenment’ is an expression for the nirvāṇa-realm.” Here “enlightenment”—the fifth “diamond topic”—is the unconstructed nirvāṇa, which is accompanied by the Buddha natures—the sixth “diamond topic.” The *Ratnagotravibhāga* (p. 56) explains the identification of enlightenment

with nirvāṇa as follows: "What is called Buddhahood through the Revelation-Enlightenment toward all natures (*dharmas*) and [the best of] all aspects, and what is called nirvāṇa through the elimination of impurity along with its flux when there is the great Revelation-Enlightenment—these two are inseparable and indivisible because nondual in the nonfluxional realm."

The *Śrī-Mālā* is not the only Mahāyāna scripture that identifies nirvāṇa-realm with enlightenment. One of the scriptures affiliated with the Tathāgata-garbha literature, called *Jñānālokāṃkāra-sūtra*, takes a similar position when it states (Narthaṅg, Kg., Mdo, Ga, 446a-5 ff.): "Mañjuśrī, enlightenment is the inseparable ground. Of that, what is the 'ground' and what is the 'inseparable'?" The passage continues with thirteen explanatory pairs of synonymous nature. Thus, when nirvāṇa is the "ground," then it is quiescent as "inseparable"; when enlightenment, it is inactive; when the unconstructured, it is incessant; when Thusness, it is nameless; when the Dharmadhātu, it is abodeless; when true limit (*bhūtakoti*), it is not different.

That emphasis on "inseparable ground" is consistent with the remark in the *Śrī-Mālā*, "Therefore the nirvāṇa-realm has a single taste (*ekarasa*). That is to say, the tastes of wisdom and liberation are identical."

TATHĀGATAGARBHA

The Tathāgatagarbha Theory and Scriptures

The Tathāgatagarbha theory is anticipated by the ancient doctrine held by some old Buddhist sects, especially the Mahāsāṅghika, that consciousness is intrinsically pure and defiled by adventitious defilements, and that there is a substratum consciousness (*mūlavijñāna*).⁷⁴ The next stage in the development of the theory is found in the Mahāyāna scriptures such as the *Avatamsaka*, where it is taught that the Buddha's divine knowledge pervades sentient beings, and that its representation in an individual sentient being is the substratum consciousness. When this intrinsically pure consciousness came to be regarded as an element capable of growing into Buddhahood, there was the "embryo (*garbha*) of the Tathāgata (=Buddha)" doctrine, whether or not this term is employed.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ André Bareau, *Les sctes*, pp. 67–68, 72; also Appendix, p. 277. See Lamotte, *L'Enseignement de Vimalakīrti*, pp. 51–54, for early views on the "pure mind."

⁷⁵ In the present work, the word *garbha* in the term *tathāgatagarbha* is rendered "embryo" in the sense of causal potentiality for becoming the Tathāgata. The principal meanings of the Sanskrit word *garbha* are "womb," "interior," and "embryo." The "womb" interpretation is prevalent in Chinese translations of the term

In the *Mahāvastu*, the "Vinaya" of a Mahāsāṅghika subsect, it is written, regarding the mother of a Buddha, "Today, O queen, you will give birth to a good youth (*sukumāra*) of immortal embryo (*amara-garbha*), who destroys old age and illness, celebrated and beneficial in heaven and on earth, a benefactor of gods and men."⁷⁶

The scriptures authoritative for the "embryo of Tathāgata" theory in Buddhism are known principally from the treatise edited by E. H. Johnston under the title *Ratnagotravibhāga-Mahāyānottaratantra-lātra*, and referred to in its Tibetan translation by a portion of that title, *Mahāyānottaratantra-lātra* or in abbreviation as the *Uttaratantra*. The only scripture alluding to the doctrine by its own title is the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra*. Other works concerned with various aspects of the theory are the *Ārya-Śrīmālā-sūtra*, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (its Tathāgatadhātu chapter), the *Ārya-ṅgulimālīya-sūtra*, the *Anūratvapūrnāva-nirdēśaparivarta* (in Chinese but not Tibetan), and the *Mahābherihāraka-sūtra*. In addition, certain works are closely related in subject matter, even when not expressly employing the term "embryo of the Tathāgata," and so are utilized in the *Ratnagotravibhāga*. Here there are the *Dhāraṇīśāraṇārājapariprcchā* (= *Tabhā-gatamāhākaraṇūnirdēśa-sūtra*), the *Jñānālokāṃkāra-sūtra*, and the *Sāgaramatipariprcchā*.⁷⁷

None of the Tathāgatagarbha scriptures had its own Indian commentary known by translation into Chinese or Tibetan,⁷⁸ although as was observed earlier

tathāgatagarbha beginning with those scriptures which identify this term with the *ālayavijñāna*, a term usually rendered as "store consciousness," where the "store" is understood to be a store of seeds remaining from past actions. The Chinese of the *Śrī-Mālā* employs this "womb" rendition. However, the *Śrī-Mālā* and its associated *śāstra*, the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, are silent on the term *ālayavijñāna*. The Tibetan translation, *stūn po*, which means "heart," "pith," "essence," seems to agree with the "interior" interpretation of *garbha*. It should be emphasized that neither the Tibetan nor the Chinese translations of the term *tathāgatagarbha* as found in the *Śrī-Mālā* clarifies the intention of the unknown author of the *Śrī-Mālā*. This is because the translators of the Buddhist canon use standard or stereotyped equivalents for certain Sanskrit technical terms in text after text. While the Asian renditions of Sanskrit terms are sometimes suggestive, in the end we must learn how a given term is employed in the particular text being studied. For more information about the term *ālayavijñāna*, see Ruegg, *La théorie*, pp. 499–516.

⁷⁶ Basak, ed., *Mahāvastu* I, 266.

⁷⁷ Cf. Takasaki, *A Study*, pp. 34–35; also Ferdinand D. Lessing and Alex Wayman, eds. and trs., *Mkhas grub rje's Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*, pp. 49, 97.

⁷⁸ While the Tibetan Jonaña school included the *Avikalpapravṛtadhāraṇī* in the group, and this work has a commentary by Kamalaśīla translated into Tibetan, examination of the work and its commentary in the Narthaṅg Kanjur and Tanjur discloses no reason for counting it as a Tathāgatagarbha scripture. And of course the Jonaña's inclusion of the *Saṃdhirimocana-sūtra* was properly rejected by the Gelugpa, per Mkhas grub rje's work as referred to in the preceding note.

Paramārtha attributed such a commentary to Vasubandhu. It seems that none of the scriptures counted in the group aimed at presenting a complete, coherent picture of the Tathāgatagarbha doctrine, and so the author of the *Ratnagotravibhāga* (Discrimination of the jewel species) found it necessary to write a comprehensive treatise for the topic rather than to compose a commentary on one particular scripture.

Those are not the only scriptures which employ the term "Tathāgatagarbha." Both the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* and the *Ghanavyūha-sūtra* employ the term, but identify it with the "store consciousness" (*ālaya-vijñāna*), avoided in the *Ratnagotravibhāga*. Presumably that is why these two sūtras are not included among the standard "Tathāgatagarbha scriptures." Besides, both the *Caṇḍottarādārīkā-sūtra* and the *Samādhirāja-sūtra* apparently refer to the Tathāgatagarbha,⁷⁹ but not with sufficient emphasis to be included in the group of such scriptures.

Also, the Tathāgatagarbha doctrine is associated with the theory of stages (*bhūmi*), particularly as set forth in the *Mahāvastu* and the *Datābhūmika-sūtra*. This is the implication of *Śrī-Mālā*, and the *Mahābhāṣā-sūtra* (Narthaṅg Kg, Mdo, Tsa, 203a) expressly mentions the Seventh, Eighth, and Tenth stages.

Synonyms and Alternate References to the Tathāgatagarbha

Abhayākara Gupta (*Muni*, p. 205-2) provides these synonyms for the "embryo of the Tathāgata": "species intrinsically abiding" (*prakṛtiṣṭha-gotrā*), "support" (*nīrāya* and *pratisarāṇa*), "cause" (*hetu*), "holder" (*ādhāra*), "place of adherence" (*pratyupasthāna*), "antecedent" (*pūrvagama*), "base" (*pratiṣṭhā*), "seed" (*bija*), "element" (*dhātu*), and "the self-existent" (*svabhāva*). The *Śrī-Mālā* has the set "support, holder, base" (*nīrāya*, *ādhāra*, *pratiṣṭhā*), original Sanskrit in *Ratnagotravibhāga*, p. 73).

Some other terms from the list are found in the *Ratnagotravibhāga*. This text is based on what it calls the "seven adamantine topics," which are (1) Buddha, (2) Dharma, (3) Saṅgha, (4) Element (*dhātu*), (5) Enlightenment (*bodhi*), (6) Merit (*guṇa*), and (7) Act (*karma*). The first three are of course the Three Jewels of Buddhism, here treated as effects or fruits. The fourth, "element," is the "embryo of the Tathāgata" and is "what is to be enlightened" as the "cause" (*hetu*) or the "seed" (*bija*) of supramundane natures for originating

79 For the *Caṇḍottarādārīkā-sūtra*, cf. Nakamura, "A Critical Survey," p. 66; and for the *Samādhirāja-sūtra*, cf. Guenther, *Sgām. Po. Pa: The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, p. 2.

the Three Jewels. The remaining three adamantine topics are (5) Enlightenment, (6) its ancillaries, which are the immaculate Buddha natures, and (7) the activity of the Buddha as the Tathāgata acts said to number thirty-two. The last three topics are the condition (*pratyaya*) for originating the Three Jewels by purifying the embryo.⁸⁰ Abhayākara Gupta (*Muni*, p. 229), while referring to the "seven adamantine topics," explains the "cause" as "cause for achieving" (*upādāna-kāraṇa*) and the "condition" as "associative condition" (*śabakāri-pratyaya*).⁸¹ The Sanskrit term for the "cause" shows that it is the material cause for achieving (as clay for the pot). Hence, the associative conditions are to be considered as the purifying agents of that "material" (as the working over and treating of the clay).⁸²

The term "Thusness" (*tathatā*) is also employed in a qualified way for the Tathāgatagarbha. According to the *Ratnagotravibhāga* (1, 23), Thusness defiled is the Tathāgatagarbha, and Thusness undefiled is Enlightenment. The *Śrī-Mālā* states, "Lord, 'incomparable rightly completed enlightenment' is an expression for the nirvāṇa-realm. 'Nirvāṇa-realm' is an expression for the Dharmakāya of the Tathāgata." In the *Śrī-Mālā* there are two main conditions for the "embryo of the Tathāgata": either covered by defilements, when it is called only "embryo of the Tathāgata"; or free from defilements, when the "embryo of the Tathāgata" is no more the "embryo" (potentiality) but the Tathāgata (=the Dharmakāya) (actuality).

There are four stock terms applied to the Tathāgatagarbha in *Śrī-Mālā* and affiliated scriptures: "permanent" (*nitya*), "steadfast" (*dhruva*), "calm" (*śiva*), and "eternal" (*ānanta*). This terminology is especially applied to the Tathāgatagarbha in conditions free from defilement. For example, the *Mahābhāṣā-sūtra* states at one point (Narthaṅg, Mdo, Tsa, 191b-4): "Kāśyapa, accordingly at the time one becomes a Tathāgata, a Buddha, he is in nirvāṇa, and is referred to as 'permanent,' 'steadfast,' 'calm,' 'eternal,' and 'self' (*ātman*)." The same sūtra states (Tsa, 148b-3, 4): "These Disciples, Self-Enlightened ones, and Bodhisattvas newly entered in the Mahāyāna are incapable of understanding the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha Lords as permanent, steadfast, calm, and eternal."

80 E. H. Johnston, ed., *The Ratnagotravibhāga Mahāvāyānotaratantrāsūtra*, text (1, 23, 26) and commentary.

81 The Sanskrit words are based on the Skt. -Tib. equivalences of *Mahāvayupatti*, No. 4491 and 4492.

82 Cf. Takasaki, *A Study*, pp. 150-52, for the illustration of purification in the case of a precious stone.

The *Anūnatāpūratra-nirdeśa-parivarta* supplies reasons for using the four terms:

This Dharmakāya, Śāriputra, is permanent, by reason of being the unalterable true nature with boundless natures (*dharmā*). This Dharmakāya, Śāriputra, is steadfast, by reason of being the steadfast refuge at the uttermost limit. This Dharmakāya, Śāriputra, is calm, by reason of being the nondiscursive true nature with nondual natures. This Dharmakāya, Śāriputra, is eternal, by reason of being the unfabricated true nature with indestructible natures.⁸³

Queen Śrīmālā also stresses that the Dharmakāya as the purified Tathāgatagarbha has the four exclusive attributes of permanence, pleasure, self, and purity, which are conventionally the four wayward views. According to the *Ratnagoṭṭravibhāga* (pp. 31–3), these four fruits issue from the four kinds of Bodhisattva practice, to wit: permanence through contemplation of great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*), pleasure through contemplation of the *saṃādhi* Gaganagāṇī and so on (usually four in number), self through contemplation of Perfection of Insight (*prajñā-pāramitā*), and purity through contemplative conviction (*adhimukti*) in the Doctrine of the Great Vehicle.

Universality of Tathāgatagarbha

A striking feature of the Tathāgatagarbha scriptures is their theory about the universality of Buddhahood potentiality. The *Ratnagoṭṭravibhāga* (p. 25) states: "Now, with reference to 'Thusness' (*tathatā*) when stained, it was said, 'All sentient beings have the embryo of the Tathāgata.' The *Ratnagoṭṭravibhāga* (p. 26) presents three senses in which it is said that all sentient beings have the embryo of the Tathāgata: (1) the Tathāgata's Dharmakāya permeates all sentient beings; (2) the Tathāgata's "Thusness" is omnipresent (*avyatibheda*) in them; (3) the Tathāgata's species (*gotra*) occurs in them.

The first sense is derived from the *Tathāgatoparisaṃbhavanirdeśa* chapter of the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* as cited in the *Ratnagoṭṭravibhāga* (p. 22): "There is no sentient being in the class of sentient beings in whom the Tathāgata's Knowledge (*jñāna*) does not penetrate at all."⁸⁴ The second sense is set forth in the *Mahāvāyana-Sūtrālaṃkāra* (IX, 37): "Although without distinction in any (being),⁸⁵

⁸³ Johnston, ed., *Ratnagoṭṭravibhāga*, text p. 54.

⁸⁴ Takasaki, *A Study*, p. 189, has determined the scriptural source of the passage, but as usual our translation is from the original Sanskrit.

⁸⁵ Note that the *Mahāvāyana-Sūtrālaṃkāra* does not apparently accept the differing manifestation of Thusness as set forth in our introductory section "Persons on Stages" on the basis of the *Śrī-Mālā*.

'Thusness,' having gone to purity, is the state of 'Thus-gone' (Tathāgata). Therefore, its embryo belongs to all body-holders (*dehin*).⁸⁶ The third sense is given by the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra* as quoted in the *Ratnagoṭṭravibhāga* (p. 73): "Good son of the family, this is the true nature of the *dharmas*: whether Tathāgatas arise or do not arise, these sentient beings always have the embryo of the Tathāgata."

The *Śrī-Mālā* stresses the difficulty of appreciating the presence of the embryo: "The Tathāgatagarbha is something not seen before or understood before by any Disciple or Self-Enlightened one. It has been seen directly and understood by the Lord." The *Ratnagoṭṭravibhāga* mentions as the reason the fact that the embryo is in the condition of defilement and cites two scriptural passages, so far not identified:

Just as gold is not seen when covered by pebbles and sand and is seen by due purification, likewise the Tathāgata in the world.⁸⁶

Intrinsically pure, endowed with steadfast nature; covered without by the beginningless sheath which although not originally real, has a limit—it is not seen, like gold covered (by pebbles and sand).⁸⁷

According to the *Ārya-Aṅgulimālīya-sūtra* (Narthaṅg Kg., Mdo, Ma, 248b-2 ff.), it can be seen directly beginning with a Bodhisattva of the Tenth Stage: "Accordingly, only the Bodhisattvas who have reached the Tenth Stage can see by themselves that there is the element of Self in their own bodies." But according to the *Śrī-Mālā*, only the Lord understands it.

Naturally the doctrine of an element of Buddhahood being present in all sentient beings led in some quarters to a viewpoint that all sentient beings are already Buddhas. Hence we read in the *Ārya-Aṅgulimālīya-sūtra* (Narthaṅg Kg., Mdo, Ma, 310a-3 ff.):

Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta said the following to [the good son of the family] Aṅgulimālīya: "What is the sense of the 'Tathāgatagarbha' explanation? If there is the embryo of the Tathāgata in all sentient beings, would not all sentient beings be Buddhas no matter if all those sentient beings kill, tell lies, drink to intoxication, engage in unlawful sex, steal, and commit all unvirtuous deeds?" . . . The Lord spoke: "Indeed, the embryo of the Tathāgata is in all sentient beings; but being surrounded by myriads of defilements, it abides like a lantern within a flask."

⁸⁶ Johnston, ed., *Ratnagoṭṭravibhāga*, p. 6, in Prakrit.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 37, in Sanskrit.

The Gelugpa school of Tibet treats this topic in terms of the distinction between a Buddha and a Complete Buddha, referred to respectively as “awakened” (*buddha*) and “expanded” (*ribuddha*). If “embryo of the Tathāgata” had meant the same as “Intrinsic-nature Body” (equivalent to Dharmakāya) and were in the stream of consciousness of all sentient beings, these would all be “expanded” from the outset, and so could not be “awakened” (as we would say of a lotus that if it were already full-blown it could not reach the stage of bud-opening). On the other hand, if there were no embryo of the Tathāgata in their streams of consciousness, there would be no cause (*betu*) for their becoming “fully expanded” after being “awakened.”⁸⁸

By our previous indications, the embryo of the Tathāgata is the material cause, which is sometimes the finished product, just as clay is always clay and is sometimes a pot. And while that embryo is the cause of the Three Jewels, it does not reach fulfillment by itself, because three associate conditions are necessary, as has been stated: enlightenment, merit, and act.

Voidness Knowledge of the Tathāgatagarbha

This is the most difficult aspect of the Tathāgatagarbha doctrine and our conclusions here have a bearing on how to translate certain disputed sentences in the *Śrī-Mālā*.

It has already been pointed out that when the Tathāgatagarbha is free from adventitious defilements, it is the Dharmakāya. Now, Abhayākara Gupta (*Muni*, p. 232-2, 3) mentions the position of Vasubandhu that the Dharmakāya is of two kinds, constructed and unconstructed (*saṃskṛta* and *asaṃskṛta*). Also Tsoṅ-kha-pa contrasts an “unconstructed Dharmakāya” with a “Knowledge Dharmakāya.”⁸⁹ In the terminology of the Tathāgatagarbha doctrine, the unconstructed Dharmakāya is “Thusness undefiled”; and the constructed Dharmakāya, evidently also the Knowledge Dharmakāya, is the set of Buddha natures, which are the Ten Powers, Four Confidences, and so on. The *Śrī-Mālā* reserves the term “Dharmakāya” for the unconstructed kind. The queen mentions that it is accompanied by constructed Buddha natures more numerous than the sands of the Ganges, but does not call these the “constructed Dharmakāya” or “Knowledge Dharmakāya.” We have seen in a prior section that the queen calls them the “constructed nirvāṇa.”

⁸⁸ *Mkhas grub rje's Fundamentals*, . . . , pp. 49 ff.

⁸⁹ Tsoṅ-kha-pa, *Zab lam nā-robi chos drug gi sgo nas bblbrid pabi rim pa* “Yid ches gsum ldan,” PTT, Vol. 161, pp. 12-13. Here the “unconstructed Dharmakāya” is identified with the objective clear light (*gyul gyi bod gyal*) and the “Knowledge Dharmakāya” is identified with the subjective clear light (*gyul can gyi bod gyal*). The term “clear light” is employed with its tantric meaning.

Both the Tathāgatagarbha and its ultimate condition of Dharmakāya are credited with knowing in the sense of experiencing. Along these lines, the *Śrī-Mālā* teaches that the Tathāgatagarbha experiences suffering, and alone has “aversion toward suffering as well as longing, eagerness, and aspiration towards nirvāṇa.” The *Mahābhārata-śāstra* (Narthaṅg Kg., Mdo, Tsa, 183b-2) holds that defilements distort this experiencing power: “Just as a film over a man's eyes gives a yellow or a blue obscuration, so it is with defilements. The embryo of the Tathāgata is certainly like an eye.”

Again, the *Anūratyāpūṇatpanirdeśa* introduces a factor of knowledge:

Sāriputra, that which has been taught by the Tathāgata to be the Dharmakāya, that is this, possessing nondiscrete *dharmas*, and possessing the merit of knowledge that it is not separate, namely, from Tathāgata natures more numerous than the sands of the Ganges.⁹⁰

The point of that passage is that the Dharmakāya is not only not separate from Tathāgata natures but also knows that it is not separate from them. This feature of nonseparate natures along with knowledge occurs in a disputed context of the *Śrī-Mālā*. The translation problem especially devolves about two sentences which are found in sections 8-9 of the *Śrī-Mālā*: “The Dharmakāya and the Meaning of Voidness.” They happen to be quoted in the *Ratnagotravibhāga* (p. 55, 76) in striking disagreement with the form of the Tibetan translation of the *Śrī-Mālā-śūtra*:

/ tata ucyate / śūnyas tathāgatagarbho vinirbhāgair muktajñaiḥ sarva-
klesakośaiḥ / aśūnyo gaṅgānadivālikāvṛtyatīrtair avinirbhāgair amuktajñair
acintyair buddhadharmair iti /

The Ratnakūṭa version of the *Śrī-Mālā*, both Tibetan and Bodhiruci Chinese, contains these sentences in a form whereby one would understand the original Sanskrit to read **amuktajñaiḥ* and **muktajñair* where the *Ratnagotravibhāga* has respectively *muktajñaiḥ* and *amuktajñair*. In their uninflected forms, the Sanskrit expressions *muktajñā* and *amuktajñā* are adjective compounds, and -*jñā* here as final member has a standard meaning of “knowing” (something or about something), whence *muktajñā* (“knowing that it is liberated or dropped off”) and *amuktajñā* (“knowing that it is not liberated or not dropped off”). In the *Śrī-Mālā*'s two sentences, the compound -*jñā* agrees with *buddhadharma* (Buddha natures) or with *sarvākṣakola*.

⁹⁰ Johnston, ed., *Ratnagotravibhāga*, p. 2; the passage is cited as authority for the sixth adamantine topic, “merits.”

The solution of the difficulty comes by noticing that the Sanskrit word *mukta* has been translated differently by the Guṇabhadra and the Bodhiruci versions. Ui has shown that the Guṇabhadra Chinese text of *Śrī-Mālā* has rendered the word *mukta* by a character meaning “dropped off” (but this text omits an equivalent to the “knowing”).⁹¹ On the other hand, the Bodhiruci text renders *mukta* as “liberated,” as does the Tibetan version. Accepting Ui’s suggestion that the Guṇabhadra version agrees with the *Ratnagotravibhāga* wording of the sentences, we would translate the two sentences as follows:

Lord, the Tathāgatagarbha is void of all the defilement-stores, which are discrete and knowing as dropped off.

Lord, the Tathāgatagarbha is not void of the Buddha natures, which are nondiscrete, inconceivable, more numerous than the sands of the Ganges, and knowing as not dropped off.

We would translate the Ratnakūṭa form of the sentences as follows:

Lord, the Tathāgatagarbha is void of all the defilement-stores, which are discrete and knowing as not liberated.

Lord, the Tathāgatagarbha is not void of the Buddha natures, which are [nondiscrete,] inconceivable, more numerous than the sands of the Ganges, and knowing as liberated.

In fact, both translations suffer from obscurity: “knowing as dropped off” is as opaque as “knowing as not liberated.”

We appeal to the *Ratnagotravibhāga* (II, 23), which mentions two levels of the Tathāgata’s knowledge:⁹²

[His] knowledge (*jñāna*) is held to be without flux by reason of cessation of defilements together with impregnations; and held to be pervasive because neither attached nor impeded.

⁹¹ Hakuji Ui, *Hobōron kenkyū*, pp. 463–64. The translation of the Sanskrit sentence has also been discussed in the article by Ryūshin Uryūzu, “Shōmangyō no chibetto-yaku to kūshō.” A Western treatment is in David Seyffert Ruegg, *La tibétologie*, “Avinirbhāga, sambaddha et amuktajña comme épithètes des qualités de l’Absolu,” pp. 257–361.

⁹² Of these two levels, the first, as pointed out in our earlier introductory material, pertains to the body made of mind belonging to the Bodhisattva who has attained power and who is thus on the pure and impure stages which are the last three Bodhisattva stages. The second aspect pertains to the Buddha stage. Concerning the flux (*āvaraṇa*) mentioned in the first half of the verse as well as a number of times in

Accordingly, in the above translation of the *Ratnagotravibhāga* form of the sentences, where *mukta* is rendered “dropped off,” the meaning is that the Lord’s knowledge pervades the defilement-stores with the knowing that they are dropped off from the Tathāgatagarbha, and pervades the Buddha natures with the knowing that they are not dropped off from the Tathāgatagarbha. On the other hand, in the above translation of the Ratnakūṭa form of the sentences, where *mukta* is rendered “liberated,” the meaning is that the Lord’s knowledge pervades the defilement-stores with the knowing that they are not in the state of liberation, and pervades the Buddha natures with the knowing that they are in the state of liberation. In this light, even though the *Ratnagotravibhāga* and the Ratnakūṭa disagree in the literal wording of the sentences, it is possible to understand them in a mutually consistent manner. The real difference is in the translation of the word *mukta*.

But then it might be asked, which is the earlier—the form of the sentences in the Ratnakūṭa or the form cited by the *Ratnagotravibhāga*? This is a difficult question, but two sorts of consideration for reply occur to us. As the consideration of context, we notice that the *Ratnagotravibhāga* does not cite the two sentences on account of the expressions *muktajña* and *amuktajña* but for the sake of other expressions in those sentences. That is, it quotes (at p. 55) one of the sentences to show “the meaning that the Buddha natures are nondiscrete” (*buddhadharmānirbhāgārthah*), and (at p. 76) both sentences in a discussion about defilement and voidness. However, the *Śrī-Mālā* itself at that place in the scripture speaks about two voidness knowledges of the Tathāgata. The queen clarifies these two as belonging not to the Tathāgatagarbha but exclusively to the Tathāgata, who thus knows the Tathāgatagarbha. In the two sentences revealing these two knowledges, the disputed phrases are the only expressions that contain any word meaning “knowledge” or “knowing.” It follows that the *Śrī-Mālā* context, while somewhat obscure, does indeed apply to the disputed phrases; and this fact does suggest a priority for the Ratnakūṭa wording of the sentences. As the consideration of doctrine, it seems to us that the Ratnakūṭa interpretation of *mukta* as “liberated” stresses religious values, while the other interpretation of *mukta* as “dropped off” or “detached” is contrary to a famous verse included by the *Ratnagotravibhāga* (p. 76):

the present work, there are four kinds in a traditional list (Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, p. 122): that of desires (*kāma*), of generation (*bhava*), ofnescience (*avidyā*), and of views (*dṛṣṭi*). The knowledge that these fluxes have ceased (*āvaraṇa-ksayejñāna*) is the sixth in the traditional list of six supernatural faculties (*abhijñā*). Edgerton also (*Dictionary*, p. 122) cites *Lalitavistara* 351.1, *śuklā āravā na puna īraṇṭī*, which means, “the fluxes, dried up, flow no more.”

So there is nothing to be removed
and nothing to be added;
Reality should be seen as Reality,
and the seer of Reality is liberated.⁹³

Therefore, we have accepted the Ratnakūṭa reading in our translation of the *Śrī-Mālā*.

Tathāgatagarbha and Ālayavijñāna

Two works that were very influential in Chinese Buddhism, the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* and *The Awakening of Faith* identify the Tathāgatagarbha with the *ālayavijñāna* (store consciousness). The *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* (pp. 222-223) has a remarkable passage appealing to Queen Śrīmālā's authority:

Mahāmāti, if there were no Tathāgatagarbha referred to as *ālayavijñāna*, then, in the absence of the Tathāgatagarbha referred to as *ālayavijñāna*, no evolution, no deterioration would take place. But evolution and deterioration belong to both the immature and the noble ones. Also, while abiding in a pleasant state during the present life and future noble destiny due to their inner consciousness, the yogins do not cast off their burden and are hard to deflect. Mahāmāti, this domain of Tathāgatagarbha "*ālayavijñāna*" is intrinsically pure, but is impure because it has been defiled by the adventitious defilements going with the discursive views of all the Disciples, Self-Enlightened ones, and heretics. Not so the Tathāgatas! They have direct perception of that domain, like a myrobalan fruit [manifesting (itself)] on the palm of the hand.⁹⁴ This, Mahāmāti, I revealed in connection with Queen Śrīmālā and I empowered other Bodhisattvas of subtle, wise, and pure discrimination [to know] that there is the Tathāgatagarbha referred to as *ālayavijñāna*, along with seven perceptions (*vijñāna*), for the sake of revealing the egolessness

⁹³ Takasaki, *A Study*, pp. 300-1, repeats the nine occurrences of the verse reported by La Vallée Poussin in *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques*, I, 394; and adds to the list the mention of the verse in the *Buddhagotrāśāstra*.

⁹⁴ The word "myrobalan" stands both for a certain tree indigenous to India and for its fruit. There are three varieties of myrobalan, known in Sanskrit as *vibhīṭakī* (*Terminalia bellerica*), *baritakī* (*Terminalia chebula*), and *amalakī* (*Phyllanthus emblica*), the berry-type fruits of which are employed in traditional Indian medicine which ascribes to them wondrous healing properties, as discussed in Alex Wayman, "Notes on the Three Myrobalans," *Pbi Theta Annual* (Oriental Languages Honor Society, Berkeley), no. 5 (1954-55), pp. 63-77. The myrobalan also figures as a stock illustration, as in this passage of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*, for the creative power of thought, which in high levels of meditative praxis can materialize the unseen worlds in the manner of the myrobalan berry concretized upon the palm of the hand.

of *dharma*s to the Disciples attached to its evolution. The Tathāgata realm that was revealed when I empowered Queen Śrīmālā is not a realm accessible to the Disciples, Self-Enlightened ones, heretics, and logicians.

Despite this identification of the two terms, in India they were distinguished as cardinal doctrines of rival schools of thought. According to the *Śrī-Mālā* and consistent tradition, the permanent Tathāgatagarbha is both the reason for phenomenal life (*saṃsāra*) and the aspiration toward and attainment of nirvāṇa. Asaṅga and his followers of the Yogācāra school teach that the *ālayavijñāna* is responsible for phenomenal life and ceases when there is "nirvāṇa without remainder." Asaṅga mentions that the persons who lack the *ālayavijñāna* are the Arhat, the Pratyekabuddha, the nonregressing Bodhisattva, and the Tathāgata.⁹⁵ According to *Śrī-Mālā* all these beings have the Tathāgatagarbha, with the difference that only the Tathāgata both sees and understands it. It is plain that when the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* identifies the two terms, this scripture necessarily diverges in the meaning of one or both of the terms from the usage of the term Tathāgatagarbha in the earlier *Śrī-Mālā* or of the term *ālayavijñāna* in the subsequent Yogācāra school. Johnston, in the Foreword (p. xiii) to his edition of the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, takes note of that *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* passage "which is avowedly based on the *Āryaśrīmālāsūtra*," and concludes, as we are forced to do, "The difference between the two doctrines is as obvious as the fact there is some genetic relationship between them."

A direct relationship between the two doctrines is established by their both citing this verse from among the few verses preserved of the lost *Mahāvijñāna-Abhidharma-sūtra*:

The element from beginningless time is the substratum of all the dharmas. Owing to its existence, there is every [phenomenal] destiny as well as the attainment of nirvāṇa.⁹⁶

In the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, the "element" (*dhātu*) is explained as the Tathāgatagarbha, while in Asaṅga's Yogācāra school the "element" is explained as the *ālayavijñāna*.

The most challenging sentence in the above passage from the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* is the one containing "the Tathāgatagarbha referred to as *ālayavijñāna*,

⁹⁵ *Vinīścaya-saṃgrahaṇī*, PTT, Vol. 110, p. 238-3.

⁹⁶ As is pointed out by Takasaki, *A Study*, p. 290, this verse, which is cited in the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, p. 62, is also quoted in the *Mahāvijñānasamgraha-bhāṣya* of Vasubandhu and in Shīramatī's commentary on Vasubandhu's *Triṃśikā*. A discussion of the verse from the Vijñānavādin standpoint is found in Louis de La Vallée Poussin, *Vijñāpī-māratāśiddhi*, I (Paris, 1928), 169-72.

along with seven perceptions." This is evidently intended as a solution for *Śrī-Mālā*'s obscure passage about a sixfold group of perceptions (*viññāna*) and a further perception, unnamed by the scripture, in all constituting the seven momentary natures. In the Yogācāra-type terminology of the *Laṅkāvatāra*, the seven momentary natures are the "evolving perceptions" (*prāṇīti-viññāna*), namely the five based on the outer sense, the sixth perception based on the mind itself, and the seventh one called the "defiled mind" (*kliṣṭa-manas*). Previously ("Stages of the 'Bodies Made of Mind'") we have shown how the doctrine of Dependent Origination is essential to understanding the *Śrī-Mālā*. Now we can further suggest that the queen's terminology of an undefined *viññāna* is consistent with early Buddhist terminology of Dependent Origination, the famous twelve-membered formula in which an undefined *viññāna* is the third member. While the Chinese and Japanese commentaries that we utilized did not, when commenting on that passage of the *Śrī-Mālā*, mention what we take as a solution, we are reasonably certain that the queen intends the further *viññāna* to be that member of Dependent Origination, momentary in its application to the ordinary person who has "discontinuous passing away," and intends the sixfold group to constitute the *viññāna* as one of the five personality aggregates.

However, there is no reason for identifying the Tathāgatagarbha with the third member of Dependent Origination, and to the extent that the Yogācāra school identifies this member with the *ālayavijñāna*, to that extent the *ālayavijñāna* must diverge from the Tathāgatagarbha. Indeed, in the Yogācāra school, the *ālayavijñāna* was understood to be the equivalent of the "appropriating consciousness" (*āśāna-vijñāna*) of a celebrated verse in the scripture *Samdhinirmocana*:

The "appropriating consciousness," profound and subtle, proceeds with all seeds like a violent stream. I did not teach it to the spiritually immature, lest they would imagine it to be a self.⁹⁷

While Asaṅga was apparently silent about assigning his *ālayavijñāna* (= *āśāna-vijñāna*) to a member of Dependent Origination, his later school definitely implies the identification with the third member and thus seals the difference with the

⁹⁷ For this verse, see *ibid.*, pp. 173-74, where it is mentioned as being quoted by Sthiramati on the *Trīṃśikā* as well as in the *Togalātra*. It is also quoted in Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakavatāra* (PTT, Vol. 98, p. 136-1) and in Abhayākara's *Mahā-PTT*, Vol. 101, p. 265-5). The earliest quotation of it would be in Asaṅga's *Mahāyānasamgraha*, chap. I, p. 4; cf. Etienne Lamotte, *La Somme du Grand Véhicule d'Asaṅga*, pp. 14-15.

Tathāgatagarbha.⁹⁸ If the Yogācāra school had identified the third member of Dependent Origination with their "defiled mind" (*kliṣṭa-manas*), this would have left their *ālayavijñāna* free to approach the Tathāgatagarbha in usage. Perhaps Yogācāra, like the school of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*, had such a view when it identified the two doctrines.

However, the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* and the *Ratnagotravibhāga* are not necessarily at odds in the usage of two important terms, the *āśāna-parāṇīti* in the former and the *āśāna-parāṇīti* in the latter. The *Laṅkāvatāra* (p. 81) teaches that there is a "revolution of the basis" (*āśāna-parāṇīti*), referring to the *ālayavijñāna*, in the Eighth Stage of the Bodhisattva, where according to the implication of the *Śrī-Mālā* one obtains the body of a Buddha. The *Ratnagotravibhāga* (p. 21) teaches that there is a "reversion of the basis" (*āśāna-parāṇīti*), referring to the Tathāgatagarbha, in the Buddha Stage, where according to the *Śrī-Mālā* the Tathāgatagarbha is accompanied by the innumerable Buddha natures. The Tathāgatagarbha does not employ either of those two terms and does not directly say that the Tathāgatagarbha reverts to a pregenetic condition of Dharmakāya. This is part of the mystery of the Tathāgatagarbha; and the *Śrī-Mālā* concludes, "The Lord alone has the Eye for it."

⁹⁸ Asaṅga in his *Mahāyānasamgraha* (*idem*) identifies the "appropriating consciousness" (*āśāna-vijñāna*) with his *ālayavijñāna*. It is called "appropriating consciousness" because it appropriates and holds together the material organs in all embodiments (*ātmabhāva*). Vasubandhu's commentary (*La Somme* . . .) chap. I, p. 15, takes the decisive commentarial step by explaining its role at the time of rebirth (*pratiṣṭhābandha*) as being the "stream of consciousness" (*saṃtāna-vijñāna*). Consistent with this position, Vasubandhu in his commentary *Pratītyasamutpāda-vibhāga-nirdeśa* (PTT, Vol. 104, p. 286-4) explains that the *viññāna* being reborn is not the group of six *viññānas* (*ṣiṣṭa mūlakaṃ tīyogā na nāma parāṇīti pa gāṇī yin pa de rnam par les paṇi tīyogā drug ma yin par*); and since he has this discussion in his commentary on *viññāna* as the third member of Dependent Origination, it is obvious that he intends this third member called *viññāna* to be the *āśāna-vijñāna* of the *Samdhinirmocana-sūtra* verse.

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The *Tathāgatarbhasūtra*: Its Basic Structure and Relation to the Lotus Sūtra

Michael Zimmermann

In his comprehensive study of the development of the *tathāgatarbha* teaching, J. Takasaki also deals with the sūtra which bears the name of this Mahāyāna philosophical current.¹ The *Tathāgatarbhasūtra* (*TGS*) has

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The following abbreviations are used in this paper:

- Bth* Ms Kanjur from 'Ba' thang in Tibet, now in the Newark Museum
- Ch₁* *Da fang deng rulai zang jing* 大方等如來藏經 (T 666)
- Ch₂* *Da fang du rulai zang jing* 大方廣如來藏經 (T 667)
- D₁, D₂* MSS A and B of the *SP* discovered in Gilgit; romanized texts in: Shoko Watanabe (ed.), *Saddharmapuṇḍarika Manuscripts Found in Gilgit*, Part Two: Romanized Text, Tokyo 1975 (The Reiyukai)
- K* *Saddharmapuṇḍarika*, eds. H. Kern & B. Nanjio, St.-Petersbourg 1912 (Bibliotheca Buddhica X)
- O* Petrovsky MSS of the *SP* discovered in Kashgar; romanized text in: Hirofumi Toda (ed.), *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra, Central Asian Manuscripts, Romanized Text*, Tokushima 1981 (Kyōiku Shuppan Center)
- Q* Peking xylograph Kanjur-Tanjur (Ōtani reprint), Kangxi edition of 1717-20 with missing parts supplied from the Qianlong edition of 1737; the *TGS* is found in vol. 36, *mDo sna tshogs Zhu* 259b4-274a1, no. 924
- RGV(V)* *Ratnagotravibhāga(vṛtti)* (Sāramati?), ed. E. H. Johnston (*The Ratnagotravibhāga Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra*), Patna 1950
- SP* *Saddharmapuṇḍarika*
- T* *The Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō (The Tripiṭaka in Chinese)*, eds. J. Takakusu & K. Watanabe, Tokyo 1924ff.
- TGS* *Tathāgatarbhasūtra*
- TGS₁* The first recension of the *TGS* represented by *Ch₁*
- TGS₂* The second recension of the *TGS* represented by *Ch₂*, *Tib* and *Bth*
- Tib* Translation of the *TGS* as contained in the main Kanjurs
- TUSN* **Tathāgatopattisambhavanirdeśa* (part of the *Avatamsakasūtra*)

generally been referred to as the earliest expression of this doctrine and the term *tathāgatagarbha* itself seems to have been coined by this very sūtra. In this paper I intend to introduce the textual history and doctrinal content of the *TGS* and offer some speculations concerning the possible motivations lying behind its compilation. By pointing out some interesting parallels concerning the structure and formulations in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra* (*SP*), I shall then suggest that the *SP* and the *TGS* carry a similar compositional line. Finally, I shall determine the position and role of the *TGS* in Mahāyāna Buddhism as a sūtra presupposing the doctrine of the *SP* and providing its metaphysical foundation.

The textual history of the *TGS*

The *TGS* is a relatively short sūtra. It covers about 15 folios or six complete pages in the Peking Kanjur corresponding to less than four or, depending on the recension, six pages in the Chinese Taishō.² No Indian manuscript has been found until now. In 1959 a critical Tibetan edition collated with the two Chinese translations was established.³ However, as many new materials have become accessible since then, a more comprehensive textcritical edition remains a desideratum. My study of the textual history of the *TGS* has so far yielded the following general conclusions.⁴

¹ Jikidō Takasaki 高崎直道, *Nyoraizō shisō no keisei (Formation of the Tathāgata-garbha Theory)* 如来藏思想の形成, Tokyo 1974 (Shunjū-sha): pp. 40-68.

² *Q*: vol. 36, *mDo sna tshogs Zhu* 259b4-274a1, no. 924; *Ch*₁: 457a-460b; *Ch*₂: 460b-466a.

³ The edition of the *TGS* collates only the Kanjurs from Derge, Peking and Narthang and is not always reliable: Kyōshun Tōdō 藤堂恭俊, *Nyoraizōkyō — kan zō san yaku taishō (Comparative Study in Chinese and Tibetan Texts of Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra)* 如来藏經 — 漢藏三訳対照, (Bukkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo 仏教文化研究所), Kyoto 1959.

⁴ A critical edition of the *TGS* is part of a Ph.D. dissertation to be submitted at the University of Hamburg. The collation comprises the versions of the *TGS* as contained in the Kanjurs from Berlin, Derge, Lithang, London, Narthang, Peking (Ōtani reprint), Phug brag (three versions), Stog, Tabo (fragmentary) and Tokyo (Tōyō Bunko) compared with the two Chinese translations and the translation from Bathang, now in the Newark Museum. The following is the result of my research on the *TGS* so far. The full philological details shall be given in the above mentioned Ph.D. dissertation.

It is now clear that we can speak of two recensions of the *TGS* which are different in length and wording. The first recension (*TGS*₁) is represented by the Chinese translation of Buddhahadra done in 420 CE (*Ch*₁).⁵ All other three existent translations are based on the second recension (*TGS*₂). They are:

- a. the Chinese translation by Amoghavajra dating from the middle of the 8th century (*Ch*₂),⁶
- b. the apocryphal Tibetan translation from the period before the compilation of bilingual compendiums like the *Mahāvyūtpatti* or the *sGra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*, as found in the Newark Manuscript Kanjur from Bathang (*Bth*),⁷ and
- c. the canonical Tibetan translation as found in the “common” Kanjurs (*Tib*) which was done, or at least revised, on the basis of the compendiums mentioned in b.

Two earlier Chinese translations of the *TGS* done in the Western Jin 西晉 Dynasty, between the end of the 3rd and the beginning of the 4th century, are mentioned as lost by the catalogues and have not come down to us.⁸

A philological analysis of the two recensions shows that there are several passages in *TGS*₂ which are not found in *TGS*₁. That these passages must be judged as later interpolations becomes clear by their “redundant” character: omitting these passages, the immediate sections before and behind the inserted element join smoothly. In general *TGS*₂ is more extended and detailed than *TGS*₁, which in many instances appears to show less vividness and distinctness in the

⁵ The date of translation is according to the *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶記 (T 2034, 71a13): 元熙二年.

⁶ For Amoghavajra's (不空) life data (705-774 CE) cp. Shinkō Mochizuki 望月信亨, *Bukkyō daijiten* (*Buddhist Dictionary) 佛教大辭典 s.v. Fukū.

⁷ For more information about this translation cp. the author's “A Second Tibetan Translation of the *Tathāgatarbhasūtra* in the Newark Manuscript Kanjur from Bathang: A Translation of the Early Period (*snga dar*)”, in *Transactions of the International Conference of Eastern Studies*, No. XLIII, 1998: 33-50.

wording of the similes. This, as well as its comparatively early date of translation would naturally suggest *TGS*₁, i.e., the translation of Buddhahadra, as the archetypal recension. The situation is not, however, so simple. Besides the obvious interpolations, the relation between the two recensions is not an ancestral one. Neither of the two can be said to have grown out of the other recension. In many instances the recensions are simply different in content – sometimes so different that it is hard to imagine that a common archetype had ever existed.

That the earlier date of translation of *TGS*₁ is not a proof of a higher degree of “originality” is further documented by another observation: if we turn to the verses of the *Ratnagotravibhāga* (*RGV*) reproducing the nine similes of the *TGS*, it becomes evident that this reproduction is based on, or has at least partly made use of, *TGS*₂ or a version close to *TGS*₂.⁹ The date of the compilation of the *RGV* is, again, unknown. However, the year 443 CE functions as a *terminus ante quem*. This is the year in which the first translation of the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* by Guṇabhadra is said to have been completed.¹⁰ The *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* in its Chinese version translated by Guṇabhadra presupposes doctrinally the existence of the *RGV*.¹¹ It thus becomes obvious that the translation of *TGS*₁ by Buddhahadra in 420 and the first evidence for the existence of *TGS*₂ in 443 are practically contemporaneous. This fact rather seems to suggest that the two recensions of the *TGS* circulated among Indian speaking Buddhist communities from a more or less early date on.

⁸ The relevant catalogue entries regarding these 3rd and 4th century translations are cited and discussed in the work of Kyōshun Tōdō (see n. 3), pp. 1f. It remains an open question how reliable the information of the catalogues are.

⁹ This is clear as the reproduction of the *TGS* in the *RGV* (I.96-126) shows contents which are not attested in *Ch*₁ but appear in *TGS*₂.

¹⁰ *T* 670; for the year of translation cp. Mochizuki (op. cit.) s.v. *Nyūryōgakyō*.

¹¹ The *RGV* itself consists of several textual layers. However, as L. Schmithausen has shown, the reproduction of the *TGS* is already part of the oldest stratum of the *RGV* (“Philologische Bemerkungen zum Ratnagotravibhāga”, in *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* XV, 1971: 123-177, mainly p. 129).

The two recensions differ minimally in the overall doctrinal message. They contrast more in the choice of specific Buddhist technical terms and, as mentioned above, in the degree of explicitness.¹² Yet the relative briefness of the sūtra does not allow an easy determination of an underlying tendency in each of the recensions or even the socio-religious background of their respective proponents.¹³

The content of the *TGS*

Let me now shortly turn to the content of the *TGS* and sketch its line of composition:

- A. Description of the setting in Rājagṛha. The Tathāgata with his supernatural power creates lotuses in the air with buddhas seated in their calyxes. Then he lets the flowers wither. The buddhas seated within remain unaffected. Vajramati, the representative of the participating bodhisattvas, inquires about the reason for this supernatural manifestation. (*Q* 259b5-262a3)
- B. Then the Tathāgata starts to expound the *TGS*. Beginning with the scenery of the lotuses he expounds eight further similes in order to illustrate how all living beings contain a buddha within themselves. (*Q* 262a3-269a7)
- C. He continues to speak about the enormous amount of merit resulting from the propagation of the *TGS* and its joyful approval (*anumodanā*). (*Q* 269a7-270b4)

¹² As for the technical terms, *Ch*₁ does not show a rendering for *dharmatā* in the sense of True Nature of living beings. But in this sense it is frequently attested in *TGS*₁. Also the term *bodhisattva* appears in the similes twice as often in *TGS*₂ as in *Ch*₁. In these passages *Ch*₁ does not mention anything corresponding to *bodhisattvas* or speaks of “living beings” (衆生) instead.

¹³ For the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, which is a much longer text, such an analysis has been done by M. Shimoda. He concludes that its two main parts as well as the three extant translations can be connected to different socio-religious groups. (Masahiro Shimoda 下田正弘, *Nehangyō no kenkyū – daijō kyōten no kenkyū hōhō shiron* (*A Study of the Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra with a Focus on the Methodology of the Study of Mahāyānasūtras*) 涅槃經の研究 — 大乘經典の研究 方法試論, Tokyo 1997 (Shunjū-sha)).

D. He then tells the story of *Sadāpramuktaraśmi and *Anantaraśmi. Still in the womb of his mother the bodhisattva Sadāpramuktaraśmi emitted light with a highly beneficial effect on all living beings. He continued to emit this light throughout his life and even after, with his relics still shining. Having become a tathāgata, at the request of the bodhisattva Anantaraśmi, he expounded the *TGS* for ages. Just by listening to him, all but four bodhisattvas attained awakening. Three of them are identified with the bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī, Mahāsthāmaprāpta and Avalokiteśvara. Anantaraśmi himself is said to be now the bodhisattva Vajramati. (*Q* 270b4-273a3)

E. Ānanda questions the Tathāgata from how many buddhas one has to hear the Dharma in order to attain perfection. In his answer the Tathāgata does not restrict their number, but stresses the importance of generating the aspiration for awakening immediately. (*Q* 273a3-273b4)

Section E can be said to be an interpolation and is not found in *TGS_J*.

F. The Tathāgata describes the praise and virtue obtained by holding the *TGS* in the hands. (*Q* 273b4-273b7)

G. Description of the praise and joy of the audience. (*Q* 273b7-273b8)

It is a typical feature of many Mahāyāna sūtras that the main actor delivering the sermon, be it the Tathāgata himself or one of his main disciples, refers to the same sūtra during his sermon. For the main actor and narrator, in our case the Tathāgata, the *TGS* can only be section B, i.e., the nine similes, which the Buddha introduces in the following way:

① *rigs kyi bu dag de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po zhes bya ba'i mdo shin tu rgyas pa yod de / de rab tu bstan pa'i phyir / de bzhin gshegs pas snang ba'i mtshan ma 'di lta bu 'di byas so // de'i phyir legs par rab tu nyon la yid la zung shig dang bshad do //* (*Q* 262a3f.)¹⁴

¹⁴ For citations of the *TGS* I shall refer to the “standard” Tibetan translation as contained in the main Kanjurs (*Tib*). Only if the transmission of *Tib* is obviously not based on the Indian or in case that *Bth* or the Chinese translations show relevant divergences, (also) these readings shall be given. The citations themselves are taken from the already prepared critical edition which is part of my doctoral dissertation (see

Sons of good family (*kulaputra*), there is a sūtra of great extent (*vaipulya*) called *Tathāgatagarbha*. In order to teach it the Tathāgata has produced these signs (*nimitta*) [which have] appeared [to you]. Listen therefore closely, be attentive, and [I] shall teach [you].

It is only this section B which contains the message centering around the term *tathāgatagarbha* and it can only be this section which, under the name *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra*, has already been taught by the tathāgata Sadāpramuktaraśmi (section D). The similes are the actual sūtra within the sūtra. They alone embody the new and central message of the text, embedded in the more or less standard framework consisting of the setting, a passage expounding the merit of propagating the sūtra and a story of the past.

The doctrine of the TGS

What now is the doctrine exposed in section B? After the initial fragment with withered lotuses in the sky with buddhas sitting in their centers, unaffected by the putrid petals around, the Tathāgata, as the narrator of sections B to F, proclaims that the same is true for all living beings: though they are wrapped in different kinds of *kleśas*,¹⁵ all living beings carry a tathāgata within themselves. This could be the birth hour of the term *tathāgatagarbha* which, after all, in the TGS appears only in this first of the nine similes. S. Matsumoto is definitely right, when he suggests a close connection between the terms *padmagarbha*, the “lotus calyx”, in which the buddhas are found, and *tathāgatagarbha*, which according to my understanding should be analyzed as *bahuvrīhi* relating to living beings as “containing a tathāgata” or even “having a tathāgata [as their essence]”.¹⁶ Right

n. 4). I have indicated after the quotation where the correspondent passage in *Q* can be found.

¹⁵ Whereas *TGS*₂ describes living beings themselves as wrapped in *kleśas*, *Ch*₁ speaks of the wrapped tathāgatas within living beings.

¹⁶ The interpretation as *bahuvrīhi* has been questioned recently by S. Matsumoto’s analysis of the compound as *tatpuruṣa* in the sense of [*Living beings are*] containers of a tathāgata. However, even if this analysis does not seem completely impossible, I still prefer to stick to the more natural *bahuvrīhi* alternative. No early uses of *-garbha* at the

in the middle of this introductory simile appears also what one could call the sūtra's condensed doctrinal essence:

② *rigs kyi bu dag 'di ni chos rnam kyi chos nyid de / de bzhin gshegs pa rnam byung yang rung ma byung yang rung / sems can 'di dag ni rtag tu de bzhin gshegs pa 'i snying po yin na*¹⁷

Sons of good family, the True Nature (*dharmatā*) of the *dharmas* is this: whether or not tathāgatas appear in the world, all these sentient beings continuously contain a tathāgata (*tathāgatagarbha*).

Once this fundamental definition is established, the Tathāgata goes on to illustrate it by making use of eight further similes. The relation between the tathāgata, found within living beings, and the enveloping *kleśas* functions as the *tertium comparationis*, when comparing it to (2) honey protected by bees, (3) kernels enclosed by their husks, (4) a gold nugget in excrement, (5) a hidden treasure beneath the house, (6) a sprout in the seed becoming a huge tree, (7) a tathāgata image wrapped in rotten rags, (8) a *cakravartin* in the womb of a despised, orphan woman and (9) a golden figure within a burned clay mold.

Each of the similes accentuates different aspects associated with the *tertium comparationis*. A very important element seems the fact that living beings are unaware of their inherent tathāgata. It is only through their encounter with the Buddha that they can find out this truth. Just to mention the main points, similes (4) and (6) stress the indestructibility of the buddha-nature in living beings, (7) highlights the complete unexpectedness of a precious image in rotten rags

end of a compound indicating his understanding in Buddhist literature have been pointed out by Matsumoto. On the other hand, we can find plenty of examples with *-garbha* at the end of bodhisattva names (*Ratnagarbha*, *Vajragarbha*, *Śrīgarbha* etc.) which are most likely to be analyzed as *bahuvrīhi* referring to *bodhisattva*. Of course the two alternatives still suggest the same relation between the living being and the embraced tathāgata and consequently only differ from a grammatical point of view. (Shirō Matsumoto 松本史朗, *Zen shisō no hihanteki kenkyū* (*A Critical Study of Zen Thought) 禅思想の批判的研究, Tokyo 1994 (Daizō Shuppan); pp. 485ff., 498ff.).

I admit that for my second rendering of the compound designating the tathāgata as essential I cannot submit any philological proofs. However, the context of the introductory simile itself and the statement that the *kleśas* of living beings are only accidental (*āgantuka*) imply such an understanding (cp. Q 265a5f.).

¹⁷ Q 263a1f.; for the citation in the *RGVV* cp. ⑧.

whereas (8) concentrates on showing that the woman's defeatism is without any reason and admonishes to strive energetically after awakening.

The similes reveal the basic pattern how the relation between sentient beings and buddhahood has to be imagined: an already fully developed, perfect tathāgata is found inside them. He constitutes the nature of living beings. This does not allow any doubt that the Tathāgata and living beings have the same nature:

③ *nyon mongs pa thams cad kyis nyon mongs pa can du gyur pa de dag gi nang na / de bzhin gshegs pa'i chos nyid mi g.yo zhing / srid pa'i 'gro ba thams cad kyis ma gos pa dag mthong nas / de bzhin gshegs pa de dag ni nga dang 'dra'o zhes smra'o // (Q 262b3ff.)*

[The Tathāgata], having perceived inside those [sentient beings] defiled by all defilements (*kleśa*) the True Nature of a tathāgata (*tathāgatadharmatā*) motionless and unaffected by any of the states of existence, says: 'Those tathāgatas [within sentient beings] are just like me!'

That there is absolutely no room to conceive the nature of living beings as something not yet complete is further shown by the terminology chosen for its designation.¹⁸ Among them are, depending on the recension, terms as *tathāgatajñāna*, *tathāgatajñānadarśana*, *tathāgatadhātu*¹⁹, *dharmatā*²⁰, *buddhātva*, *buddhabhūmi* and *svayambhūtvā*. They all are related to the state of being a buddha, the ultimate form of realization in Mahāyāna Buddhism. We must therefore conclude that according to the TGS buddhahood is inherent in all living beings. However, though buddhahood is the nature of living beings, yet they cannot be designated as buddhas as long as their nature is hidden in the *kleśas*. Only by the process of purification shall their buddhahood become manifest and efficacious. That is to say, the conception of becoming a buddha is that of a **manifestation process** of something living beings have always been equipped

¹⁸ Though the similes of the sprout in the seed becoming a huge tree (6) and of the *cakravartin* embryo in the womb of a despised, orphan woman (8) could easily imply the connotation of a transformational process of growing, yet the terminology employed in the sūtra clearly shows that this is not at all the intention of the author(s)'.

¹⁹ Tib (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i rigs*; Q 267b8-268a1): *tathāgatagotra*; the passage has no direct parallel in *Ch*₁. *Ch*₂: 如來界 (463c15). Bth: *de bzhin gshegs pa'i kham*s (252a8).

²⁰ Cp. n. 12.

with. It cannot be interpreted as the acquisition of something they do not have from outside, an essential transformation or even ripening process of a yet embryonic nucleus as implied by the later interpretation of the term *tathāgatagarbha* as “buddha embryo”.²¹ Characteristic for this process of manifestation are the words of the Tathāgata in the simile of the orphan woman:

④ *rigs kyi bu dag khyed bdag nyid sro shi bar ma byed par khyed brtson
'grus brtan par gyis shig dang / khyed la de bzhin gshegs pa zhugs pa
yod pa dus shig na 'byung bar 'gyur te / (Q 268a2)*

Sons of good family, apply energy without giving in to despondency! It shall happen that one day the existence of the tathāgata [who has] entered within you shall become manifest.

Concerning the purification of buddha-nature the *TGS* gives most weight to the *kleśa* destroying activity of the Tathāgata. By an often repeated set phrase throughout the nine similes we understand that the Tathāgata perceives the true nature of living beings and thereupon destroys their *kleśas*. This activity, though not always without ambiguity, should probably be identified with the Tathāgata's engagement in revealing the Dharma.²² As a representative example of this kind we find:

⑤ *de bzhin du / rigs kyi bu dag de bzhin gshegs pas kyang sangs rgyas kyi
mig gis sems can thams cad de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying por mthong nas /
sems can de dag gi 'dod chags dang / zhe sdang dang / gti mug dang /
sred pa dang / ma rig pa'i nyon mongs pa'i sbugs dbye ba'i phyir chos
ston te / (Q 262b8-263a1)*

In the same way, sons of good family, with the vision of the Buddha, also the Tathāgata perceives all sentient beings as containing a tathāgata (*tathāgatagarbha*), and [therefore] teaches the Dharma [to them] in order to peel off the covering of those sentient beings [encased in such] defilements (*kleśa*) [as] passion, hatred, wrong orientation, longing and ignorance.

²¹ Cp. *RGVV* 72.8f.: *trividhabuddhakāyotpattigotrasadbhāvārtham adhiḥkṛtya tathāgataadhātur eṣāṃ garbhaḥ sarvasattvānām iti paridīpitam /*.

²² This is explicitly stated in *Q* 268b7f., where the Tathāgata is said to eliminate all outer defilements in order to entirely purify the precious tathāgata-knowledge of the bodhisattvas by using the “*vajra*[-like] hammer of the Dharma” (*chos kyi rdo rje'i tho ba*).

It goes without saying that this conception of purification of living beings' buddha-nature by an almighty Tathāgata does not grant much importance to the individual striving of living beings. As a matter of fact, throughout the section of the similes, passages pointing to the active participation of living beings are rare. Such statements seem somehow sporadic and much more a lip service rather than an organic part of the basic idea expressed by the nine similes. As one of these passages we find:

- ⑥ 由聞法故則正修行即得清淨如來實體* [*禮 emended to 體 according to the Jin Edition (金藏廣勝寺本) to be found in the *Zhonghua dazangjing* 中華大藏經 and according to the Korean Edition of the Chinese Canon (高麗藏)] (*Ch*₂: 461c18-19)²³

Because [sentient beings] listen to the Dharma [they] accordingly practice in the right way and then gain the pure real essence of a tathāgata.

The view of the composer(s) of the *TGS* on the role of living beings in their own liberation is expressed in the following section C, where we find a long description of the merit accumulated through the propagation of the *TGS* and its joyful approval (*anumodanā*).

The rare mentioning of living beings' role in the liberation process in the similes is paralleled by another aspect: throughout section B we find a great number of statements stressing the fact that living beings who have manifested their true nature, in other words, who are tathāgatas, will perform the tasks of a tathāgata. With that the *TGS* once again proves the enormously important role attributed to the Tathāgata and future tathāgatas considering the benefit of all sentient beings.

Possible motivations for the composition of the *TGS*

The employment of similes aims in general at the elucidation of an unfamiliar point in terms of commonly known, more familiar situations. That the main

²³ I am here citing *Ch*₂ as *Tib* does not show an intelligible wording. In *Ch*₁ the passage is abbreviated to the statement that the Tathāgata manifests the buddhahood (of living beings): 顯現佛性 (*Ch*₁ 457c7).

section B of the *TGS* consists exclusively in similes indicates that the author(s) considered their message of the hidden buddha-nature in all living beings as something requiring concrete illustration. It is obvious that the triviality of the chosen similes is directed towards an ordinary audience, an audience probably not quite versed and interested in scholastic matters. We may not have any problems to think about the nature of living beings, as we are used to express our beliefs in abstract terms. The situation about 1700 years ago might have been different and we should probably not take for granted the fact that abstract ideas like the innateness of buddhahood or *dharmatā* were easily understandable for the Buddhist believers of that time. As mentioned at the beginning, the *TGS* is most likely the earliest text in the corpus of the *tathāgatagarbha* thought. Without doubt, this rendered the author(s) task still more difficult.

However, as a matter of fact, we do not know what the Buddhist community of that time really looked like. It was perhaps a less “pure” Buddhist environment than we would expect today. Our (mis-)conception of Buddhism tends to overlook the fact that the average Buddhist follower probably knew very little of the doctrinal issues of his religion. We forget that the Indian believer lived in a cultural environment which can only be called multireligious, making it sometimes difficult to draw sharp borderlines between single beliefs and cults. Speaking from a doctrinal point of view, the *TGS* certainly shall not be easily subsumable under what we consider mainstream Mahāyāna tenets. It seems that the composer(s) of the *TGS* were less guided by questions concerning what might be doctrinally Buddhist or not, than rather by their concern for the well-being of other sentient beings. Most probably the main motive to compose the sūtra was the earnest wish to let people know that there is nobody excluded from buddhahood, to strengthen their soteriological self-confidence, and to encourage them to a Buddhist practice leading finally to the manifestation of what was believed to be their true nature.²⁴

²⁴ The *RGV* seems to confirm such an analysis at least partly by stating that one of the motifs for the exposition (*deśanāprayojana*) of the buddha-nature doctrine is the

That the *TGS* is operating with the powerful image of buddhahood invariably innate in living beings is therefore not surprising. To simply set free something that is already there, sounds definitely the easier task than the vague future perspective of attaining buddhahood through a gradual transformation along a difficult path of spiritual and ascetic practices. Not making use of such a precious essence might evoke the feeling of wasting one's most fundamental potential. On the contrary, a less definite formulation of buddhahood as something still to be attained might easily lead believers to ignore that that possibility applies also for them and thus remain without consequences for their soteriological striving.

The *TUSN* and the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* – two predecessors of the *TGS*

As mentioned above, the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine as revealed in the *TGS* can hardly be considered to belong to the mainstream of Mahāyāna thought. Already the first and only *sāstra* dealing systematically with this teaching offers also a different interpretation of the compound *tathāgatagarbha*, which relegates buddhahood as the nature of living beings to a mere germ for future awakening.²⁵ J. Takasaki refers to a passage of the *Tathāgatotpattisambhavanirdeśa* (如來性起品) of the *Avatamsakasūtra*, which is also quoted by the *RGVV*, as a direct predecessor of the *TGS*.²⁶ There, also in form of a simile, the idea that all living beings carry the *tathāgatajñāna* within themselves is expressed. It is beyond any doubt that the passage of the *TUSN* had a crucial impact on the doctrine and the composition of the similes of the *TGS*.²⁷ However, Takasaki

abandoning of a depressed mind (*līnam cittam*) and of self-contempt (*RGV* I.156f.; I.161). As I shall suggest below, to explain **why** all living beings can attain buddhahood might have been felt as a theoretical need.

²⁵ Cp. n. 21.

²⁶ Cp. Takasaki (op. cit.), pp. 46ff.; also Matsumoto (op. cit.), pp. 478ff. The passage is quoted in *RGVV* 22.10-24.8.

²⁷ This holds true for the basic structure of the simile as well as for the emphasize of the usefulness of the *tathāgatajñāna* for the world after its manifestation. The term *tathāgatajñāna* appears also frequently in the *TGS*. Even the same verb *bhinatti* ("to split, to break"; *RGVV* 23.12), in the *TUSN* used to describe the splitting of the atomic

classified also the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra* (*SP*) as one of the two main doctrinal sources for the formation of the *tathāgatagarbha* teaching.²⁸ In the following I shall attempt to show that the influence the *SP* had on the composer(s) of the *TGS* might have been even stronger than believed until now. We can thus understand against this background that the doctrine of the *TGS* was developed as a metaphysical foundation for the *ekayāna* concept, which is characteristic for the *SP*.²⁹

Structural and formal parallels between the *TGS* and the *SP*

I shall start with some observations concerning the general structure and line of composition of the sūtras.

It is common to *TGS* and *SP* that they both repeat in verses what appeared immediately before in prose. The *TGS* follows rigidly this scheme throughout the whole text while in the *SP* this pattern is less used especially in the chapters towards the end.

Both settings are located on the Gṛdhrakūṭa mountain near Rājagṛha. After the enumeration of the names of the attending bodhisattvas, by means of his supernatural power, the Tathāgata, withdrawn for meditation, produces myriads of huge lotuses in the sky (*TGS*). In the *SP* such a supernatural manifestation is

particle containing the whole universe in painted form, occurs in the *TGS* ('byed; in *Q* (262b7) it appears erroneously as 'phyed) in the first simile as part of the description of the liberation of the petal-wrapped buddhas inside the disgusting lotuses.

²⁸ Cp. Takasaki (op. cit.), pp. 412-445; for the *SP* as a predecessor of the *TGS* see p. 441. Matsumoto (op. cit.) describes the relation of the sūtras in terms of the common imagery of the lotuses rising into the sky (pp. 447ff.; 526f.). I shall deal with this point later. For a stimulating treatment of the relation between the *SP* and the *TGS* cp. Sadahiko Kariya 荻谷定彦, "*Hokkekyō to nyoraijōkyō – issaishujō kaishitsu bosatsu to shitsuubusshō*" (*"The Lotus Sūtra and the Tathāgatagarbhasūtra – 'All Living Beings are Bodhisattvas' and 'All Living Beings have Buddha-nature'") "法華經と如來藏經 — 一切衆生皆悉婆さつと悉有佛性 —", in *Mori Mikisaburō Hakase Shōju Kinen Jigyōkai, Tōyōgaku ronshū* 森三樹三郎博士 頌壽記念事業會, 東洋學論集, 1979: pp. 1127-1140.

²⁹ It shall not be possible to take into consideration theories about the textual history of the *SP*. Though the *SP* definitely consists in different textual strata, there are no indications suggesting that the *TGS* might be influenced just by a certain part of the *SP*.

formed by a ray of light issuing from between the eyebrows of the Buddha illuminating many buddha-fields. Also the tathāgatas seated within the lotuses of the *TGS* emit rays of light that shine on the buddha-fields. Finally, the bodhisattvas Maitreya (*SP*) and Vajramati (*TGS*) respectively ask for explanation. In both texts the supernatural manifestations are said to be signs announcing an exposition of the Dharma.

The following disclosure by the Tathāgata can be labeled the central doctrinal part in both sūtras.³⁰ In the *TGS* it comprises the analogy between the tathāgatas in the lotus calyxes and living beings' buddha-nature culminating in the statement cited in ②. As the central passage in the *SP* is too long to be quoted completely I have to limit my quotation to the most relevant parts:

⑦ *ekakṛtyena śāriputraikakaraṇīyena tathāgato 'rhan samyaksambuddho loka utpadyate ... yad idaṁ tathāgatajñānadarśanasamādāpanahetunimittam sattvānāṁ tathāgato 'rhan samyaksambuddho loka utpadyate / ... ekam evāhaṁ śāriputra yānam ārabhya sattvānāṁ dharmam deśayāmi yad idaṁ buddhayānam / na kiṁcic chāriputra dvitīyaṁ vā tṛtīyaṁ vā yānam samvidyate / sarvatraiṣā śāriputra dharmatā daśadigloke / ...*³¹

With a single duty, Śāriputra, with a single task the Tathāgata, *Arhat* and Perfectly Awakened One appears in the world ... Namely, in order to inspire living beings to the mental vision of a tathāgata (*tathāgatajñānadarśana*), the Tathāgata, *Arhat* and Perfectly Awakened One appears in the world ... With reference to only a single vehicle, Śāriputra, I teach the Dharma for living beings, namely, the vehicle of the buddhas. Śāriputra, there is not any second or third vehicle. This, Śāriputra, is the True Law everywhere in the worlds of the ten regions.

Let us recollect the corresponding central doctrine ② of the *TGS* as it is cited in *RGVV* 73.11-12:

³⁰ *TGS*: Q 262b5-263a2; K 39.7-41.9.

³¹ (All citations of the *SP* are taken from *K*. Variants of *D*₁, *D*₂ and *O* are only given if they substantially affect the understanding of the passage or throw light on the comparison with the *TGS*.)

K 39.13-40.15; the text between the arrows in *O*: *dharmāṇāṁ dharmatā daśasu dikṣu loke sarvabuddhakṣetreṣu*; here the Tibetan translation in the Peking Kanjur (Ōtani reprint) follows *K* (vol. 30, Chu 19b6).

⑧ *eṣā kulaputra dharmāṇām dharmatā / utpādād vā tathāgatānām
anutpādād vā sadaivaite sattvās tathāgatarbhā iti /*

As a matter of fact ⑧ represents a traditional Buddhist formula found in many other texts, originally associated with the law of *pratītyasamutpāda*.³² The authors of the *SP* must have had this formula in mind, too, when they first speak about the Tathāgata's appearance (*utpadyate*) and then declare the Dharma of a single *buddhayāna* to be the True Law (*dharmatā*). The surprising fact now is not that both sūtras operate with this common formula but rather their similarity in structure: at the beginning of the Tathāgata's sermon we find a kind of a summary of the main tenets, interwoven with the known formula. The following similes in both texts just serve to illustrate these main tenets.³³

Besides the sections on the merit resulting from the propagation of the sūtra and the joyful approval (*anumodanā*), which are found in the *TGS* as well as in the *SP*, the *TGS* tells us also a story of the past (section D). In the story no reason is given why four bodhisattvas did not awake and one is immediately reminded of the narration in the first chapter of the *SP* in which one of eight sons is equally said not to have attained awakening. The *SP*, however, tells us why. He did not attain awakening because of his desire for fame and his slothfulness.³⁴ The *TGS* identifies three of the figures who have not reached awakening with Mañjuśrī, Mahāsthāmaprāpta and Avalokiteśvara, who all maintain an eminent position in the *SP*. It then states that the fourth is now Vajramati, the main representative of the bodhisattvas, acting as the questioner of the Tathāgata. The same circumstance, i.e., the identification of Maitreya, to whom the sermon of Mañjuśrī in this first chapter of the *SP* is directed, with the slothful son, is, again,

³² For the appearance of this formula in other Mahāyāna texts, cp. David Seyfort Ruegg, *La théorie du tathāgatarbhā et du gotra*, Paris 1969 (École Française d'Extrême-Orient): pp. 330f.

³³ It is true that in the *TGS* this summary is found in the middle of the first simile of the lotuses. However, the first simile functions also as the introductory scenery and basic pattern for the *tertium comparationis* of all following similes. It can therefore duly be considered the "guideline" for the whole sūtra.

³⁴ The story is expounded in *K* 18.2-22.13 (in particular 22.4-13) and I.90-95.

found also in the *SP*. Besides, it is striking that the name *Mati* of the bodhisattva not yet awakened in the *SP* is also part of the name *Vajramati* in the *TGS*. This could at least partly be the reason why the non-prestigious name *Vajramati* was chosen for the main character in the bodhisattva congregation in the *TGS*.

However, the same story in the *TGS* has further particularities which show certain affinities with the *Sadāparibhūtaparivarta*, chapter XIX of the *SP*. Again, it is not the story as such but rather several formal elements that are worth our attention. The bodhisattva *Sadāparibhūta* as the main character of the story gained his name due to his habit of declaring to all monks and nuns as well as lay devotees that they were not despised (*aparibhūta*) because they were all following the course of conduct of a bodhisattva (*bodhisattvacaryā*) and should eventually become a buddha.³⁵ Apparently, this provoked unpleasant feelings in the audience which sometimes escalated even into bodily attacks. *Sadāparibhūta* endured this patiently. Towards the end of his life he hears the Lotus Sūtra from a tathāgata. Whereupon he venerates myriads of tathāgatas and expounds the sūtra for aeons. *Sadāparibhūta* is finally identified with the Buddha Śākyamuni himself.

First of all, it is the name of one of the two heroes in the story of the *TGS* which might have been influenced by the *SP*. He is named **Sadāpramuktaraśmi*³⁶. As in the case of *Vajramati* and *Mati*, *sadā-* as part of the name compound is also found in *Sadāparibhūta*.³⁷

³⁵ *Nāham āyusmanto yuṣmākaṃ paribhavāmi / aparibhūtā yūyam / tat kasya hetoḥ / sarve hi bhavanto bodhisattvacaryāṃ carantu** / bhaviṣyatha yūyaṃ tathāgatā ... (*K* 378.1-3). **O: caratha*; *O* so also in the parallel 378.7 against *K*, *D*₁, *D*₂: *caradhvam*. In the corresponding verse XIX.3d *D*₁, *D*₂, *K* and *O* all coincide in the form *caratha*. All these forms, typical for Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit, most probably represent the imperative mood (cp. F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, Vol. I: Grammar, §26.12f.).

³⁶ *Tib, Bth: rtag tu 'od zer gtong*; *Ch*₁, *Ch*₂: 常放光明.

³⁷ Another, though less probable reconstruction of the name, based on the Tibetan and Chinese, could be *Sadāraśmimukta* (instead of *Sadāpramuktaraśmi*). *Bahuvrīhi* compounds with perfect passive participles at the end are frequently attested in Pāli and Buddhist Sanskrit (cp. J. S. Speyer, "Über den Bodhisattva als Elefant mit sechs

Also the otherwise rare introductory formula of both stories agrees nearly perfectly:

- ⑨ *anenāpi tāvan*³⁸ *mahāsthāmaprāpta paryāyeṇaivaṃ veditavyaṃ yathā ya imam evaṃrūpaṃ dharmaparyāyaṃ ...* (K 375.1-2)

The parallel of the story in the *TGS*:

rdo rje'i blo gros rnam grangs 'dis kyang 'di ltar chos kyi rnam grangs 'di ji ltar ... rig par bya'o // (Q 270b4-5)

Vajramati, also through this [following] kind [of exposition] (*paryāya*) thus (*evam*) it is to be known that (*yathā*) this Dharma discourse ...

The end of the prose section of the chapter in the *SP* agrees less literally but carries the same thoughts as the final part of the corresponding section in the *TGS*. The benefit of preserving, preaching, etc. the *sūtra* is first expounded, followed by an exhortation directed to the bodhisattvas:

- ⑩ *evam iyaṃ mahāsthāmaprāpta mahārthasya dharmaparyāyasya dhāraṇā vācanā deśanā bodhisattvānāṃ mahāsattvānāṃ anuttarāyāḥ samyak-sambodher āhārakā saṃvartate* /³⁹ *tasmāt tarhi mahāsthāmaprāptāyaṃ dharmaparyāyo bodhisattvair mahāsattvais ... dhārayitavyo vācayitavyo deśayitavyaḥ saṃprakāśayitavya iti //* (K 383.3-6)

The end of the prose in the *TGS*:

Hauzählen", in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Bd. 57, 1903, pp. 305-310: pp. 309f.). The prefix *pra-* of *pramukta* may not be part of the name as the reading *rah (tu) gtong* for **pramukta* in *Bth* in other passages of the *TGS* is testified. If we assume the name *Sadāraśmimukta* as original, its similarity to the name in the *SP* is even more striking because both names show a nearly identical sequence of vowels.

A similar slightly modified adoption of a name from the *SP* may be *candanagarbha* from *candanagandha*, as pointed out by Matsumoto (op. cit., p. 413 n.5). The term *-candanagandha* appears in the *SP* (239.5) as an attribute of the rising stūpa at the beginning of chapter XI (cp. n. 44). Matsumoto discusses as one alternative that the name of the *kūṭāgāra Candanagarbha* (Tib: *tsan dan gyi snying po*; Ch₁: 梅檀 (*candana*); Ch₂: 梅檀藏), which serves as the location where the Buddha teaches the *TGS*, might have been inspired by that description in the *SP*.

³⁸ *Tāvat* is missing in *D₁*, *D₂*, *O* and the Tibetan (Peking (Ötani) vol. 30, *Chu* 159a8): *mthu chen thob rnam grangs 'dis kyang 'di ltar rig par bya ste ...*

³⁹ The syntax of *D₁* and *D₂* differs as the subject is *puṇyaskandha* (also in the Tibetan) to which the compound *dhāraṇādeśanāsahagata* is attributed. The term *mahārtha(ka)* appears in the nominative referring to *puṇyaskandha*. Instead of *āhārakā*: *D₁*, *D₂*: *āharaṇatāyai*; *O*: *āharaṇatāyai*.

*rdo rje'i blo gros de ltar de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po'i chos kyi rnam
grangs 'di thos pa tsam gyis byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po
rnams la / sangs rgyas kyi ye shes sgrub pas don che ba yin no // (Q
272b4-5)*

Vajramati, thus this Dharma discourse (*dharmaparyāya*) [called] *Tathāgata-garbha* is of great benefit (*mahārtha(ka)*) since just listening [to it leads to] the realization of buddha-knowledge (*buddhajñāna*) for the bodhisattvas *mahāsattvas*.

In the final *pādas* of the verse section the *TGS* adds:

de bas byang chub sems dpa' mkhas rnams kyiis //
rtag tu mdo mchog 'di ni gzung bar bya // (Q 273a3)

Therefore wise bodhisattvas should always adopt (**udgrhṇāti*) this excellent sūtra!⁴⁰

As another formal element common to both stories, the question why *Sadāparibhūta*/*Sadāpramuktaraśmi* were called like this functions as the starting point for the actual core of the stories. These cores, i.e., the description of the somehow provoking activities of *Sadāparibhūta* and of the beneficial radiation of light of *Sadāpramuktaraśmi* are in a way isolated. The connection with the following narration of the sūtra-teaching activities of the two is loose. In both cases it is not at all evident, why these two core stories have been chosen. Also surprising and sudden is the identification of one of the main characters with persons being present at the time of narration (cp. above). It is obvious that the authors of the sūtras somehow felt the necessity to weave a more interlocked tie between the two main units: a core story, probably taken from a common pool of more or less mahāyānized narrations circulating among preachers and story-tellers, and a second part serving as the authorization of the sūtra by locating it into the historic context created by the first unit.

It goes without saying that also in the *SP* the similes play an important role and have considerably contributed to the sūtra's popularity. Of the eleven similes in

⁴⁰ *Ch₁* exhorts also to teach the *TGS*: 是故諸菩薩 應持說此經 (460b11).

the *SP*,⁴¹ that of the man carrying a jewel in the hem of his garment without knowing it, appears to originate in a compositional environment close to the *TGS* similes.⁴² When later the man faces some serious difficulties in life, he has to wait for his former friend to be told about the jewel in his garment and to be able to exchange it for money in order to overcome the difficulties. The similarity to the similes of the *TGS* is obvious: this simile operates with the topos of the precious hidden in the soiled. The carrier of the jewel is completely unaware of it. The simile shows about the same length as the ones of the *TGS* and perfectly matches their worldly, simple and concrete character.⁴³ It could easily be applied

⁴¹ The number of similes found in the *SP* gives rise to questions. Whereas the only Indian commentary on the Lotus Sūtra (*T* 1519, 1520), ascribed to a Vasubandhu, mentions only seven similes, the impartial reader of the sūtra counts eleven. The two similes in the later half of chapter V, missing in Kumārajīva's translation, the simile of the man digging for water on waste-land in chapter X and, finally, the simile of the young man with hundreds of children older than himself (XIV), are not taken into consideration by the commentator. There is thus no reason to speculate that the number of similes in the *SP* had any influence on the total of nine similes in the *TGS*, a number otherwise not very common.

⁴² *SP* 210.5-212.2 and VIII.36-45.

⁴³ This easily understandable, concrete character of the similes is in opposition to, e.g., the simile of the *TUSN*, which can be called a forerunner of the *tathāgatagarbha* thought in the *TGS* (see above). The similes of the *TUSN* as a whole show quite a different compositional line. Their world consists of the nature with its elements, the sphere of divinities, spirits, supernatural manifestations, fantasy and the universe. This might be partly due to the fact that the *TUSN* is mainly dealing with the description of the wonderful characteristics of the Buddha. However, it is hardly imaginable that the author(s) of the *TGS* got their inspiration for their similes from the *TUSN*.

The close relation between the simile of the *SP* and the *TGS* becomes also evident in some formulations. So for instance when the friend calls upon the man unaware of the jewel in the hem of his garment to make use of it:

a. *gaccha tvaṃ bhoḥ puruṣaitan maṇiratnaṃ grahāya ... / tena ca dhanena sarvāṇi dhanakaraṇīyāni kuruṣveti* // (*K* 211.6f.)

The parallel in the *TGS* is the direct speech of a divinity urging a man to take out a nugget of gold which had fallen into a heap of excrement and remained hidden there for many hundreds of years:

kye mi khyod song la 'di ni / rin po che 'i mchog gser ... de byi dor gyis la gser gyis gser gyi bya ba gyis shig ces ... (*Q* 264b8)

In its second simile, the *TGS* also speaks about the honey after the bees have been expelled:

... bung ba de dag thabs mkhas pas bskrad nas / sbrang rtsi des sbrang rtsi 'i bya ba byed do // (*Q* 263b3)

as an illustration of the buddha-nature of living beings. In the *SP*, however, it aims at elucidating the fact that *arhats* are not aware of their earnest wish (*praṇidhāna*) for *sarvajñatā* made a long time ago and erroneously contend to the miserable life with only limited knowledge (*parīttena jñānena*).

Finally, when speaking about non-doctrinal resemblance, we should not forget that the imagery of the lotus bears a central role in both sūtras. It is part of the title of the *SP*. In the *TGS* it forms the central imagery of the introductory scene which is also the first simile. The formation of the term *tathāgatagarbha* and thus also the title of the *TGS* is probably due to this introductory description. The imagery of the lotus with the buddhas sitting in their centers can therefore be considered the departure point for all further similes of the *TGS*. It functions as joint between the wondrous, fantastic world so typical for Mahāyāna sūtras and the more realistic terms of the following similes.⁴⁴

When the friend realizes that the man has not made use of the jewel though he is badly suffering, he remarks:

b. *na ca nāma tvaṃ bhoḥ puruṣa pratyavekṣase / kiṃ mama baddhaṃ kena vā
baddhaṃ ko hetuḥ kiṃnidānaṃ vā baddham / etad bālajātiyas tvaṃ bhoḥ puruṣa
yas ...* (K 211.4f.)

In the simile of the depressed woman who carries a *cakravartin* embryo (*sattva*; *sems can*) in her womb without knowing it, it is also described that she does not try to understand what she carries inside her body:

*bud med de mngal na 'dug pa'i sems can de la bdag gi mngal du zhugs pa'i sems
can 'di ci 'dra ba zhig snyam du yang yid la mi byed / bdag gi mngal du zhugs
sam / ma zhugs snyam du yang de de na yid la mi byed kyi /* (Q 267b5f.)

⁴⁴ As I already mentioned in n. 28, Matsumoto (op. cit.) considers the lotuses rising into the sky as the common link between the two sūtras (pp. 447ff.; 526f.). According to him, the *TGS* followed the descriptions in the *Stūpasamdarśanaparivarta* of the *SP*. There, in two passages, large lotuses rise into the sky with bodhisattvas seated inside (pp. 446f.). He relates this scenery, which he claims to be evolved against the background of the Pure Land Sūtras (pp. 451; 526), to the main theme in the same chapter, i.e., the rising stūpa with the tathāgata Prabhūtaratna seated within (pp. 448f.). It is, in fact, interesting that the term *padmagarbha* does not appear in any of these passages. On the other hand, it is probably an oversimplification to assign the “discovery” (発見) of the *padmagarbha* “concept” (概念) to the *TGS* (p. 526) and to base an important part of his argumentation for the chronology of the sūtras involved in the formation of the *tathāgatagarbha* teaching on this observation. Leaving aside the frequent appearances of the compound *padmagarbha* in other early texts (e.g. *Rāmāyaṇa* 3.50.18d; *Mahābhārata* (crit. ed.) VI.61.44, XIII.17.103, XIII.17.131, XIII.135.51), his *padmagarbha*-based chronology would compel him to assume that the

I am aware of the problems involved when arguing that the *TGS* is related to the *SP* based on non-doctrinal observations. Mahāyāna sūtras draw from a common pool of patterns, imageries, stories, similes and other literal elements. It is therefore difficult, if not impossible, to determine the degree of stylistic, formal or structural similarities which allows us to suppose a relation going beyond the general scope of similarities characteristic of a certain textual class. Yet it seems that within this category of Mahāyāna sūtras the *TGS*, though much shorter and plain in its structure, shows the same compositional line with some parts of the *SP*. They both are sūtras within a sūtra and start with a doctrinal exposition in which a traditional Buddhist formula is interwoven. The doctrine is illustrated with similes. Both texts try to strengthen their authoritative status by embedding the “core sutra” in a historical context, that is its history of transmission and

Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra, which “most probably knew the concept of *padmagarbha*” (p. 445), must also be of later origin than the *TGS*.

Nevertheless, I surely agree with Matsumoto that the descriptions in the *Stūpasamdarśanaparivarta* of the *SP* might have been an important source of inspiration for the main imagery of the rising lotuses in the *TGS*.

For a similar attempt to trace the introductory scenery of the *TGS* back to the *SP*, Kariya (op. cit., cf. n. 28) refers to the *Nidānaparivarta* and chapter XX, the *Tathāgata-rddhyabhisamśkāraparivarta*. There it is described how from the rays of light issued from the tongues of the tathāgatas Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna, myriads of bodhisattvas come forth, seated on a “lion throne [consisting in a] lotus calyx(?)” (*padmagarbhe simhāsane*). Even if the passage that contains the term *padmagarbha* does not appear in Dharmarakṣa’s and Kumārajīva’s translations and is most likely a later interpolation, it might well be the case that also this description had an inspirational effect on the author(s) of the *TGS*. The fact that it follows immediately the story of Sadāparibhūta which, as I have tried to point out, probably had an impact on the *TGS*, makes this assumption even more plausible. Furthermore, as a part of this possible “inspirational block” consisting of chapters XIX and XX we find another element which appears slightly modified in the *TGS*: at the end of chapter XX there is a number of verses (XX.5, 6, 9, 10, 11) in which the qualities and benefits of those who preserve (*dhārayati*) the sūtra are praised. In all these verses the preservers of the sūtra are referred to in a relative clause: *ye dhārayiṣyanti ’maṁ sūtram agraṁ* (5c), *ye sūtra dhārenti idaṁ śubhaṁ sadā* (6d), *bhaveyu yo dhārayi sūtram etat* (9d), *yo dhārayet sūtr’imu bhūtaḍḍharmam* (10d), *yo dhārayet sūtram idaṁ viśiṣṭam* (11d). In section F which originally immediately followed the story of Sadāpramuktaraśmi, the *TGS* contains a triplet verse with the same content. In all the three verses those who hold the sūtra in their hands are referred to by making use of a stereotyped relative clause: *gang gi lag na mdo sde ’di yod pa* // (Q 273b5-6).

propagation. Both rely on the practice of the propagation of the sūtra and joyful approval (*anumodanā*) as the main means for attainment of merit. The similes of both sūtras testify the same concrete and vivid character and their target is rather the faithful believer than the scholastically versed specialist or mystic. Due to these structural and formal similarities it seems plausible to assume that the *SP* must have had a strong impact on the composition of the *TGS* and that, consciously or unconsciously, various topics and features of the *SP* were eclectically incorporated in a more or less modified form. First and foremost, the common points are the imagery of the lotus, the simile of the jewel in the hem and the story of Sadāparibhūta.

The *TGS* as a doctrinal successor of the *SP*

Doctrinally speaking, it is even more obvious that the *TGS* must be seen as having close relations with the *SP*.⁴⁵ In particular the enormously important role of the Tathāgata, repeatedly represented as a father in the similes of the *SP*,⁴⁶ and the concept of buddhahood as the only valid soteriological goal for all the children of the Tathāgata, i.e., all living beings, are clearly presupposed in the *TGS*. The *SP* authors appear to have set as their main task the creative formulation, establishing and eloquent defense of these doctrines in a religious environment that most probably did not always heartily welcome them. The composer(s) of the *TGS*, on the other hand, could build their idea of an inherent

⁴⁵ For the question how far the *SP* can be seen as a doctrinal predecessor of the *TGS* cp. Takasaki (op. cit.) pp. 412-445.

⁴⁶ Cp. Takasaki (op. cit.) pp. 430ff. A similar important role of the Tathāgata in the *TGS* is shown by the fact that only the Tathāgata himself can see the buddha-like character of living beings with his supernatural vision. It is therefore accurate to speak of the *tathāgatagarbha* teaching as a form of “downwards Buddhism that views living beings from the enlightened position of a Buddha” (Kyōkō Fujii 藤井教公, “*Nyoraizō kei no bukkō*” (“Buddhism of the Tathāgatagarbha Line”) “如来蔵系の仏教”, in *Bukkyō no tōzen – higashi ajia no bukkō shisō I* (*The Eastwards Transmission of Buddhism – Buddhist Philosophy of East Asia I) 仏教の東漸 – 東アジアの仏教思想 I (シリーズ・東アジア仏教 2), eds. Jikidō Takasaki (高崎直道) and Kiyotaka Kimura (木村清孝), Tokyo 1997 (Shunjū-sha), pp. 153-202: p. 157).

buddhahood on this already prepared ground. No mentioning is made anymore of the insufficiency of other means of deliverance. Their categorization as mere *upāya* of the Tathāgata becomes naturally unnecessary. The target group might have been different from the one of the *SP*, rendering a contentious style superfluous. However, it seems more reasonable to me that by the time the *TGS* was composed, the idea of buddhahood as the general goal evoked less objections and one was ready to think about the implications of this idea. In other words, the *TGS* would be a typical case of a subsequent theory for a doctrine vehemently put forward. The impetus of the *TGS* is thus rather to explain **how** buddha-nature relates to all living beings than to maintain **that** all living beings can become a buddha. It answers their doubts whether the *ekayāna* theory includes them too and if it does, what is the main mechanism which accounts for it. It may not be meaningless that the story of the bodhisattva Sadāparibhūta appears in the *SP* and that the *TGS* seems to show common elements in particular with this chapter. Sadāparibhūta had to face unpleasant reactions when confronting monks, nuns and lay Buddhists with the statement that all of them should become buddhas. The fact that he could not justify his words with a convincing reason made his message difficult to believe. As the narrative proves, his approach was widely felt as a provocation and in some way he can be called a forerunner of his time. The *TGS* clearly goes beyond the frame of the *SP* and elucidates the reason why all living beings can realize buddhahood.⁴⁷ It provides an explanatory mechanism

⁴⁷ I cannot follow S. Kariya (op. cit., cf. n. 28) in the reasons for his evaluation of the *TGS* as a text reflecting the “step towards a polished and intellectual, philosophical thought” which he connects with a “process of increasing monastic features” (pp. 1136-1139). As for the “fundamental difference” (p. 1136) between *SP* and *TGS*, he claims it to be the complete lack of any discussion regarding the elimination of *kleśas* and consequently the missing reference to a personal practice of deliverance in the *TGS*. I cannot deal here in detail with the arguments why Kariya, on the contrary, tends to consider the *SP* a typical proponent of texts proposing such a practice. However, none of the similes of the *SP* puts weight on such a personal practice. They rather operate with the almighty figure of the protecting father (burning house), the rich nobleman and father (the prodigal son), the guide through a waste-land (VII), the man who put a jewel in his friend’s garment (VIII), the king and general of the army (XIII), the 25 years old father of hundreds of grown up men (XIV) and the physician and father who lets his

for the general allegation of the *SP* that *tathāgatajñāna* is the ultimate goal for all living beings.⁴⁸ Of course, strictly speaking, the buddha-nature theory is not a proof and it becomes nothing but another allegation of the Tathāgata. A supernatural vision is necessary in order to perceive it so that in the end, as in the *SP*, the follower had no other way but to have faith in the authoritative words of the Buddha. However, the representation of the matter by easily understandable, this-worldly similes definitely invited to take the analogy in the metaphysical realm for granted. In other words, to understand how buddha-nature relates to living beings overshadowed the axiomatic question if such buddha-nature can really be found in living beings.

children believe that he was dead (XV). All these figures are, as a matter of fact, then compared to the Tathāgata. For me it seems quite obvious that the *SP* as well as the *TGS* in the first place prescribe the practice of faith in the Tathāgata's teaching and the propagation of the sūtra as means leading to buddhahood, elements found abundantly in both texts.

As I have pointed out above, the *TGS* does not treat the participation of living beings in their own process of liberation at great length in the similes. The main goal there is rather to provide living beings with an encouraging reason why their striving makes sense at all. Of course this does not mean that living beings have to be passive and it is therefore not adequate to impute to the *TGS* the idea that the *klesas* would "vanish naturally" (p. 1136).

Finally, that the *TGS* is not a text with a "polished and intellectual, philosophical thought" is clear from the fact that two of the similes could easily be interpreted in a divergent way (cp. n. 18). Such a lack of distinctness would hardly occur if the *TGS* were based on a well-grounded, doctrinally sophisticated background or scholastic system. The similes are nearly all taken from daily life and easy to understand. There are just a few technical terms. It is very unlikely that the similes are the product of an indifferent intellectual as Kariya seems to believe. I further think that he can equally not provide any evidence for his assertion that the step from the *SP* to the *TGS* reflects a shift from laymen to monastic Buddhism.

⁴⁸ It is symptomatic that among the similes of the *SP* in particular the one of the man unaware of the jewel in the hem of his garment shows close resemblance to the *TGS*. For it is this simile alone that not only postulates that all living beings should become buddhas but it also gives the reason why this is possible. The earnest wish from a long time ago (*prañidhānapūrvakam*, VIII.42), illustrated by the hidden jewel, is this reason. However, within the *SP* this thought cannot be called mainstream and, at least for the author(s) of the *TGS*, it was probably not believed to have enough persuasive power. Metaphorically speaking, the jewel hidden somewhere in the hem of the garment had to become a paramount tathāgata filling up the center of a lotus.

In this sense, the *TGS* establishes a kind of metaphysical axiom for the Mahāyānist ideal of buddhahood open to all living beings, in general, and the *ekayāna* theory of the *SP*, in particular.

BUDDHISM

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Yogācāra, the epistemological tradition and Tathāgatagarbha

THE DOCTRINE OF THE BUDDHA- NATURE IN THE MAHĀYĀNA MAHĀPARINIRVĀṆA-SŪTRA

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I. Introduction

In the Buddhist Canon, there are two main corpuses of texts which go by the name *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (henceforth abbreviated to *MNS*) and have as their main concern the recounting of the events and dialogues of the last days of the Buddha. The first, presumably of earlier origin, is a comprehensive compendium of Hīnayāna ideas and precepts. It exists today in its Pāli, Sanskrit and Chinese versions, and for its attention to factual details has been resorted to as the principal source of reference in most standard studies of the Buddha's life. As for the second, only its Chinese and Tibetan translations are still extant.¹ While it also relates some of the well-known episodes of the final months of the Buddha Śākyamuni, notably his illness and the last meal offered by Cunda, such narrations are treated in the work merely as convenient spring-boards for the expression of such standard Mahāyāna ideas as the eternal nature of Buddhahood and expedience as method of instruction. Both in style and content, this corpus exhibits the disregard of historical particulars and the fascination with the supernatural and the ideal which characterize Mahāyāna writings in general. As a Mahāyāna sūtra, it is of rather late date, for it mentions such influential "middle Mahāyāna" works as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* and the *Śūraṅgamasamādhi-nirdeśa* in its text, and so could not have been compiled before the second century A.D.² It is this Mahāyāna version of the *MNS* which we are going to examine in our present study.

At present, there are three extant Chinese translations of this Mahāyāna version of the *MNS*, the earliest being the one completed by the famous pilgrim Fa-hsien 法顯 and Buddhahadra (359–429) in the southern capital of Chien-k'ang 建康 in 418. The second translation, undertaken almost simultaneously by Dharmakṣema (385–431) in the northern kingdom of Pei Liang 北涼, was finished in 421. Comparison of the two translations shows that Fa-hsien's version

corresponds in the main with the first five chapters of Dharmakṣema's version, and since the *MNS* is known to have existed in separate parts, posterity often calls Fa-hsien's translation and the first five chapters in Dharmakṣema's translation the "first portion" (*ch'ien-fen* 前分). The third Chinese version appeared in the South around 436, and as a consequence is often referred to as the "Southern edition," in contradistinction to which Dharmakṣema's version is usually designated as the "Northern edition." Compiled by the monks Hui-yen 慧嚴 (363–443) and Hui-kuan 慧觀 (?–453) and the poet Hsieh Ling-yun 謝靈運 (385–433), this Southern edition is not a new translation, but is a stylistic revision of the Northern edition. Since the Sanskrit original was not consulted in making the changes, the Southern edition, despite its great popularity, is a less reliable source in the study of the *MNS* than the Northern edition. Thus, we shall base our discussion of the *MNS* on Dharmakṣema's version of the text.³

The *MNS* attracted immediate attention on its introduction into China, and it was so widely discussed and commented on in the period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties (fifth and sixth century) that historians speak of the existence at that time of a Nirvāṇa School, which had as its main concern the exposition and the propagation of the teachings contained in the *MNS*.⁴ Even though study of the *MNS* rapidly declined with the advent of the T'ang Dynasty (7th century), a number of ideas and sayings of the *MNS* had by that time become so deeply ingrained in the minds of Chinese Buddhists that they remained permanent furniture of the Chinese Buddhist world, and continued to exert enormous influence. A good example is the doctrine of the Buddha-nature. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that the *MNS* has provided the historical starting-point as well as the chief scriptural basis for enquiry into the problem of the Buddha-nature in China, and it would be difficult if not impossible to grasp the significance of the concept and its subsequent evolution in Chinese Buddhism without a proper understanding of the teaching of the *MNS* on the subject.⁵

There are three questions which Chinese Buddhists most frequently ask when they approach the problem of the Buddha-nature, and these questions provide a convenient framework for investigating the teaching on Buddha-nature in the *MNS*:

1. What is the Buddha-nature?
2. What does the sūtra mean when it speaks of sentient beings "having" Buddha-nature?
3. Do all sentient beings possess Buddha-nature?

Since answering the last question would require exhaustive inquiry into the position of the *MNS* on the problem of the *icchantika*, i.e., the problem of whether there exist sentient beings who are deprived of the roots of goodness and so will never attain enlightenment, I prefer to postpone discussion of it to another article.⁶ Meanwhile, I take for granted the orthodox view that the *MNS* teaches

that all sentient beings possess the Buddha-nature, and will examine the answers of the *MNS* to the first two questions on that understanding.

II. What is the Buddha-nature?

1. *Buddha-nature is one of the central themes of the MNS*

Speaking of the advantages of having virtuous friends, the author of the *MNS* explains what it means by “really listening to the Dharma”:

Really listening to the Dharma means listening to and accepting [the teaching of] the *MNS*. Since one learns from the *MNS* that [all sentient beings] possess the Buddha-nature and the tathāgata does not enter the final nirvāṇa, one is said to be listening to the Dharma with one mind [when one listens to the *MNS*].⁷

In this passage, the author claims the *MNS* to be the paragon of Buddhist Dharma, and the reason given for the claim is that the sūtra teaches the eternal nature of the tathāgata and the presence of the Buddha-nature in all sentient beings. Indeed, the two theses of “the eternal and immutable nature of the tathāgata” and “the universal presence of the Buddha-nature” are repeatedly mentioned as the most fundamental tenets of the *MNS*. Thus, the *MNS* exhorts its readers to “apprehend perfectly the meaning and flavour” of the *MNS*, which consists in comprehending that “the tathāgata is eternal, immutable and perfectly blissful,” and that “sentient beings all possess the Buddha-nature.”⁸ One of the benefits of following the instructions of the *MNS*, according to its author, is the “hearing of what one formerly has not heard,” among which are the doctrines that “All sentient beings possess the Buddha-nature” and “All Buddhas do not enter the final nirvāṇa and are eternal and immutable.”⁹ Finally, its preaching of the idea of the Buddha-nature is given as the chief mark of excellence of the *MNS*:

Again, good sons! Just as all rivers flow to the sea, all sūtras and all forms of meditation lead ultimately to the *MNS*. Why? Because it expounds in the most excellent manner [the doctrine that all sentient beings] possess the Buddha-nature.¹⁰

Thus, it is abundantly clear that “Buddha-nature” is one of the central themes of the *MNS*.

2. *Buddha-nature means “the nature of the Buddha”¹¹*

We find the following definition of “Buddha-nature” in the *MNS* after an exposition on the importance of understanding the truth of dependent origination:

Good sons! That is why I teach in various sūtras that if a person perceives the twelve links of the chain of dependent origination, he sees the Dharma. To see the Dharma is to see the Buddha, and [the term] "Buddha" [alludes to] the same [thing] as [the term] "Buddha-nature." Why? Because all Buddhas have [the Buddha-nature] as their nature.¹²

When it is said that the term "Buddha" alludes to the same thing as the term "Buddha-nature" because all Buddhas become Buddhas in virtue of "Buddha-nature," "Buddha-nature" is evidently taken to mean what constitutes a Buddha, or the nature of a Buddha. That the *MNS* often uses the term "Buddha-nature" this way is attested by a number of concepts which are often cited in the sūtra as synonymous with "Buddha-nature," among which are "the realm of the tathāgatas" and "the most perfect enlightenment":

Good sons! In case there are people who can comprehend and fathom the meanings of the *MNS*, it should be understood that they perceive the Buddha-nature. The Buddha-nature is inconceivable. It is the realm of the Buddhas and tathāgatas, and cannot be known by śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.¹³

Those who really comprehend the meaning [of Dharma] know that all sentient beings possess the Buddha-nature. By Buddha-nature, we mean the most perfect enlightenment.¹⁴

Since one cannot become a Buddha without attaining "the realm of the tathāgatas" and "the most perfect enlightenment," both represent the essential conditions of being a Buddha, to which the term "Buddha-nature" refers. Furthermore, since liberation from the realm of saṃsāra and readiness for entrance into nirvāṇa are also characteristic features of Buddhahood, the *MNS* also regards them as part of the significance of the term "Buddha-nature":

"Buddha-nature" is equivalent to "tathāgata." "Tathāgata" is equivalent to "all the distinctive characteristics [of the Buddha]." "Distinctive characteristics [of the Buddha]" is equivalent to "liberation." "Liberation" is equivalent to "nirvāṇa."¹⁵

Besides such general definitions, the *MNS* also associates the "Buddha-nature" with a number of more specific attributes generally considered to be the marks of a Buddha. For example, it speaks of the six and seven aspects of "Buddha-nature":

How do bodhisattvas know the Buddha-nature? The Buddha-nature has six aspects. What are these six? [They are:] first, to be eternal, secondly, to be pure, thirdly, to be real, fourthly, to be virtuous, fifthly, to be discerned in the future [by everyone], and sixthly, to be true. It also has seven aspects: the first is "being attainable [by everyone]," while

the remaining six are the same as [the six aspects listed] above. [When bodhisattvas recognize these aspects of the Buddha-nature,] we say that they know the Buddha-nature.¹⁶

Furthermore, the Buddha-nature is equated in the *MNS* with the *ekayāna* (one vehicle), “the state of supreme excellence,” and the *Śūraṅgama-samādhi*, “the mother of all Buddhas.”¹⁷ In one passage, “Buddha-nature” is regarded as the proper designation of a series of attributes, including “the great compassion and the great pity,” “the great joy and the great abandonment,” “the great faith,” “the stage of [perfect love, in which one treats all beings like one’s] only son,” “the fourth of the ten powers,” etc., all of which are features peculiar to the tathāgata. In a similar manner, the sūtra associates the Buddha-nature with the ten powers,¹⁸ the four forms of fearlessness,¹⁹ and “mindfulness under all three conditions,”²⁰ all being perfections of the Buddha.²¹

Besides relating to us what the Buddha-nature is, the *MNS* also informs us what the Buddha-nature is not, and what it teaches in this respect also serves to indicate that in the *MNS*, the Buddha-nature is often taken to mean the essence of being a Buddha. Thus, we are told that when the tathāgata talks about the Buddha-nature, he takes heed of what it has as well as what it does not have:

As for what [the Buddha-nature] has, [they include] the so-called thirty-two marks and eighty noble characteristics [of the Buddha],²² the ten powers, the four forms of fearlessness, mindfulness under all three conditions, the great compassion, the great pity, the infinite *Śūraṅgama-samādhi*, the infinite *Vajra-samādhi*, the infinite *Upāya-sa-mādhi*, and the infinite *Pañca-jñānāni-samādhi*. These are known as what [the Buddha-nature] has. As for what [the Buddha-nature] does not have, [they include] the so-called good, bad, and neither good nor bad karmas and their fruits, defilements, the five skandhas and the twelve links in the chain of dependent origination. These are known as what [the Buddha-nature] does not have.²³

In short, what the Buddha-nature has are the distinctive marks of a Buddha, and what it does not have are the features of the realm of saṃsāra. In connection with the non-saṃsāric character of Buddha-nature, the *MNS* repeatedly notes that the Buddha-nature is not “a kind of conditioned being” (*saṃskṛta dharma*),²⁴ and that “Those who see the Buddha-nature are no longer sentient beings.”²⁵ Negative terms are frequently used in order to emphasize the transcendental nature of the Buddha-nature:

Good sons! The Buddha-nature is matter, non-matter, and neither matter nor non-matter. It is with marks, without marks, and neither with marks nor without marks. It is one, not one, and neither one nor not one. It is neither permanent, nor impermanent, nor neither permanent

nor impermanent. It is being, non-being, and neither being nor non-being. It is finite, infinite, and neither finite nor infinite. It is cause, effect, and neither cause nor effect . . .²⁶

In another instance, Buddha-nature is compared to space, which "neither is born nor originates, is neither made nor created, and is not a conditioned being."²⁷

III. Buddha-nature and sentient beings

In the previous section, we have seen that the *MNS* takes "Buddha-nature" chiefly to mean the nature of the Buddha. However, the *MNS* also frequently applies the term "Buddha-nature" to sentient beings, and speaks of all sentient beings having Buddha-nature. Since sentient beings are by definition beings of the realm of saṃsāra, it is unlikely that the sūtra would maintain that all sentient beings are in actual possession of the essence of Buddhahood. Thus, in the *MNS*, the term "Buddha-nature" must carry a peculiar connotation in relation to sentient beings, and it is the purpose of this section to uncover this special connotation as well as to explore its general significance.

1. With respect to sentient beings, to have the Buddha-nature means to be able to attain the nature of the Buddha in the future

In explaining what it means by sentient beings having the Buddha-nature, the *MNS* distinguishes three different ways of understanding the term "to have," namely, to have in the past, to have at present, and to have in the future:

Good sons! There are three ways of having: first, to have in the future, secondly, to have at present, and thirdly, to have in the past. All sentient beings *will have in future ages the most perfect enlightenment, i.e., the Buddha-nature*. All sentient beings *have at present* bonds of defilements, and so do not now possess the thirty-two marks and eighty noble characteristics [of the Buddha]. All sentient beings *had in past ages* [deeds leading to] the elimination of defilements, and so can now perceive the Buddha-nature [as their future goal]. For such reasons, I always proclaim that all sentient beings have the Buddha-nature . . . Good sons! It is just like a man who has coagulated milk at home. If someone asks him, "Do you have butter?" he will reply, "I have." Butter strictly speaking is not milk. [Nevertheless,] since using the proper method, one *will definitely obtain* [butter from milk], the man answers that he has butter, [even though all he has is milk]. The same is true of sentient beings, all of whom are endowed with a mind. Since whoever is endowed with a mind *will definitely attain* the most perfect enlightenment, I always proclaim that all sentient beings have the Buddha-nature.²⁸

Since the above passage identifies sentient beings' ways of having Buddha-nature with the third way of having, i.e., having in the future, it is apparent that in preaching the doctrine that all sentient beings possess the Buddha-nature, the *MNS* is not entertaining the idea that sentient beings are at present endowed with all the features and excellences of the Buddha. Indeed, as given in the above quotation, the doctrine is no more than the Mahāyāna way of presenting an insight which was already present in early Buddhism in the form of the last two of the four noble truths, i.e., there is cessation of suffering and there is a way leading to this cessation, so that all beings with life ("capable of thinking"), provided that they are willing to follow the way, will sooner or later achieve final deliverance. That "to have the Buddha-nature" in the case of sentient beings means "to have the nature of the Buddha in the future" is a point the *MNS* returns to again and again throughout its exposition. To cite another example:

Good sons! Since the tathāgata is eternal, we describe it as the self. Since the dharmakāya of the tathāgata is boundless and all pervasive, never comes into being nor passes away, and is endowed with the eight powers [arising from the knowledge of the pāramitā of being personal],²⁹ we describe it as the self. Sentient beings are actually not in possession of such a self and its [attending] properties. Nevertheless, since [all of them] *will definitely attain* the most supreme form of emptiness [in the future], we designate them [with the term] "Buddha-nature."³⁰

The Buddha uses the term "Buddha-nature" to describe sentient beings not because he thinks that all of them have already achieved the characters and powers of the tathāgata, but because with their ability to learn and with his own incessant effort to teach, every one of them eventually "will definitely attain the most supreme form of emptiness," i.e., the true wisdom of the Buddha.

Another proof that the *MNS* has the hereafter rather than the present in mind when it speaks of all sentient beings having the Buddha-nature is the vehement criticism it levies against those who interpret the doctrine of the presence of the Buddha-nature in all sentient beings as the teaching that all sentient beings have already achieved enlightenment, and think that, as a consequence, religious practice is no longer necessary:

Suppose someone declares that he has already attained the most perfect enlightenment. When asked for the reason, [he replies,] "It is because [the tathāgata teaches that all sentient beings] have the Buddha-nature. Since whoever is in possession of the Buddha-nature should have already attained the most perfect enlightenment, [I declare] that I have attained enlightenment now." It should be understood that such a person is guilty of the *pārājikas*.³¹ Why? It is because even though [the Buddha teaches that all sentient beings] have the Buddha-nature, they

have not yet cultivated various beneficial means, and so still have no vision of [the Buddha-nature which they are going to have]. Since they still have no vision [of the Buddha-nature], they have not attained the most perfect enlightenment.³²

The practising of various beneficial means is necessary in order to bring the Buddha-nature into view, because even though the Buddha, with his compassionate heart, profound wisdom and infinite power, is certain that he will sooner or later bring all sentient beings into his realm, and attributes the Buddha-nature to every one of them on that basis, the actual possession of the Buddha-nature in the case of sentient beings is still a matter of the far-away future; and to assure that this glorious future is not postponed forever, initiative on the part of sentient beings themselves is absolutely essential. That is why the sūtra affirms that "Even though all sentient beings have the Buddha-nature, they can perceive it only if they keep the rules of discipline."³³ The *MNS* abounds in illustrations which tell of the need of exertion on the part of sentient beings despite the universal presence of the Buddha-nature. Typical are the following comparisons:

If you say that sentient beings need not practise the holy paths [because all of them have the Buddha-nature], that is not true. Good sons! It is like a man travelling in the wilderness who approaches a well when thirsty and tired. Even though the well is dark and deep and he cannot catch sight of any water, he knows that there must be water [at the bottom]. And if with various opportune means, he gets hold of a can and a rope and draws the water up, he will see it. The same is true of the Buddha-nature. Even though all sentient beings have the Buddha-nature, they have to practise the non-defiled and holy paths before they can perceive it.

Good sons! When we have hemp seeds, [we know that] we shall see oil; and yet without [applying] various opportune means [to the hemp seeds], we shall never perceive oil. The same is true of sugar cane [and sugar]. . . . Just as sentient beings cannot see the roots of grass and underground water because they are hidden in the ground, the same is true of the Buddha-nature, which sentient beings cannot perceive because they do not practise the holy paths.³⁴

One may wonder if the *MNS* is misleading its readers when it asserts that all sentient beings have the Buddha-nature, although they are not yet in actual possession of it. The reply of the *MNS* is that in everyday conversation, we do frequently employ the term "to have" to indicate "to have in the future," so that in speaking of sentient beings having the Buddha-nature in the sense of having it in the future, it has not actually departed from the common usage of the term. We have already seen the cases of the coagulated milk and butter, the thirsty traveller and the water in the well, and the hemp seeds and oil, when people

speak of "A having B" without B being actually at hand or even in existence. Another example which the sūtra cites is the way we use the terms "beings of hell" or "beings of heaven" to call other people. When asked whether there is further need for sentient beings to follow the rules of conduct, when it is understood that the Buddha-nature refers to the realm of the Buddha and it is further understood that all sentient beings have Buddha-nature, the *MNS* explains that just as we sometimes do call a bad person "a being of hell" and a good person "a being of heaven" considering that they will fall into hell and ascend into heaven respectively *in the future*, we may also call sentient beings who have not yet got the thirty-two marks and eighty noble characteristics of the tathāgata "beings with the Buddha-nature," considering that all of them will attain Buddhahood one day.³⁵ On the other hand, the *MNS* agrees that we may also maintain that sentient beings do not have the Buddha-nature, if we restrict the sense of "to have" to mean "to have at present." Thus, in connection with sentient beings, we can assert in one breath that the Buddha-nature is both existent and non-existent, i.e., existent with respect to the future, and non-existent with respect to now. This, according to the author of the *MNS*, is an instance of the truth of the middle way:

Thus, [we maintain that with respect to sentient beings,] the Buddha-nature is neither existent nor non-existent, [or] is both existent and non-existent. Why do we say that the Buddha-nature is existent? Because all [sentient beings] *will have it* [in the future]. Since sentient beings will continue [to pass from one life to another] without interruption like the flame of a lamp until they achieve the most perfect enlightenment, we say that [with respect to sentient beings, the Buddha-nature] is existent. Why do we say that the Buddha-nature is non-existent? We say that [the Buddha-nature with respect to sentient beings] is non-existent, because all sentient beings *do not yet have* [the excellences of] being eternal, blissful, personal and pure, characteristic of all Buddha dharmas. The union of [the two aspects of] existence and nonexistence is the middleway.³⁶

2. *The Buddha-nature qua cause and effect*

As the Buddha-nature indicates the realm of the Buddha, it is not an entity of our everyday world of conditioned existence. So, strictly speaking, the category of cause and effect is not applicable to it. Nevertheless, as the Buddha-nature is not yet realized by sentient beings, and sentient beings are beings of the realm of cause and effect, the *MNS* often resorts to the terms "cause" and "effect" in discussing the fulfillment of the Buddha-nature in sentient beings. Thus, it talks of two types of causes of Buddha-nature when the Buddha-nature is considered with respect to sentient beings:

Good sons! With respect to sentient beings, the Buddha-nature also consists of two types of causes: first, direct cause (*cheng-yin* 正因), and secondly, auxiliary cause (*yüanyin* 緣因). The direct cause [of Buddha-nature] is sentient beings, and the auxiliary cause is the six pāramitās.³⁷

The *MNS* explains what it means by “direct cause” and “auxiliary cause” with an analogy:

Good sons! There are two types of causes: first, direct cause, and secondly, auxiliary cause. Direct cause is like milk which produces cream, and auxiliary cause is like warmth and yeast [which are added to milk to form cream.] Since [cream] is formed from milk, we say that there is the nature of cream in milk.³⁸

Since we can never obtain cream without milk, it is said that milk is the direct cause of cream. However, since milk will never turn to cream without being processed with warmth and yeast, we call warmth and yeast the auxiliary causes of cream. A similar relation exists between sentient beings, the six pāramitās and the Buddha-nature. Since nothing other than sentient beings who are “endowed with a mind”³⁹ can embody the Buddha-nature, we describe sentient beings as the direct cause of the Buddha-nature. Yet, this possibility of all sentient beings’ becoming the Buddha will never be realized unless every one of them follows the holy paths, such as the six pāramitās. Thus, we call the six pāramitās the auxiliary causes of the Buddha-nature.

Also significant to the later development of the Buddha-nature doctrine in China is the analysis in the *MNS* of the Buddha-nature into “cause,” “cause vis-à-vis cause,” “effect” and “effect vis-à-vis effect” in connection with its attainment by sentient beings:

Good sons! the Buddha-nature has [the aspects of] cause, cause vis-à-vis cause, effect, and effect vis-à-vis effect. The cause is the twelvefold chain of dependent origination, the cause vis-à-vis cause is wisdom, the effect is the most perfect enlightenment, and the effect vis-à-vis effect is the supreme nirvāṇa.⁴⁰

The reason for naming the twelvefold chain of dependent origination “the cause” and wisdom “the cause vis-à-vis cause” of the Buddha-nature is hinted at in an earlier passage, where it is pointed out that just as we sometimes refer to cucumber as fever on the ground that consuming cucumber is conducive to fever, we may also refer to the twelvefold chain of dependent origination as the Buddha-nature, since the wisdom arising from meditation on the twelvefold chain of dependent origination is “the seed of the most perfect enlightenment.”⁴¹ Now, both the “twelvefold chain of dependent origination” and the “wisdom” arising from the meditation on it are factors contributing to the realization of the

Buddha-nature in sentient beings, and so more exact analysis speaks of them as the *causes of* Buddha-nature rather than generally as “Buddha-nature.” Furthermore, since “wisdom” only arises with “the twelvefold chain of dependent origination” as its object, wisdom is a cause (i.e., cause of the Buddha-nature) which itself stands in need of another cause (i.e., the twelvefold chain of dependent origination). That is why the sūtra designates “wisdom” as “the cause vis-à-vis cause” of the Buddha-nature, while alluding to the twelvefold chain of dependent origination simply as “the cause.” The same principle can be applied to explain why the *MNS* draws a distinction between “the most perfect enlightenment” and “the supreme nirvāṇa” in referring to the former as “the effect” and the latter as “effect vis-à-vis effect.” As has been shown earlier, the *MNS* often identifies “the most perfect enlightenment” and “nirvāṇa” with the Buddha-nature, and when so understood, neither of them can be called “effect,” as the Buddha-nature in itself is not an effect. Nevertheless, when viewed with respect to their fulfilment in sentient beings, both are the fruits resulting from meditating on the twelvefold chain of dependent origination, and so both may be regarded as “effect.” Furthermore, since it is common practice to consider “nirvāṇa” as the final consummation of “the most perfect enlightenment,” the former is given the appellation of “effect vis-à-vis effect,” as it is an effect deriving from another effect (i.e., the most perfect enlightenment), whereas the former is simply presented as “the effect.”

Despite its frequent association of the Buddha-nature with the concepts of “cause” and “effect,” the *MNS* is careful to observe that such analysis is only applicable to “Buddha-nature with respect to sentient beings” (*chung-sheng fo-hsing* 衆生佛性), whereas the Buddha-nature in itself, understood as the essence of the Buddha, is not a mundane object susceptible of such categorization. The following remarks are found right after the afore-quoted exposition of the Buddha-nature as cause, cause vis-à-vis cause, effect and effect vis-à-vis effect:

Good sons! “To be cause and not effect” is like the Buddha-nature [considered with respect to sentient beings]. “To be effect and not cause” is like the supreme nirvāṇa. “To be both cause and effect” is like dharmas arising from the twelvefold chain of dependent origination. As for “to be neither cause nor effect,” it is what is known as the Buddha-nature.⁴²

The Buddha-nature considered with respect to sentient beings is “cause and not effect,” for the Buddha-nature remains an abstract possibility yet to be realized in the case of sentient beings. The supreme nirvāṇa is “effect and not cause,” for nirvāṇa indicates the complete annihilation of all defilements, when the bases of future rebirths finally come to an end. Dharmas arising from the twelvefold chain of dependent origination are “both cause and effect,” for as entities in the realm of saṃsāra, they are conditioned by past events as well as serving as the support for the formation of future events. Finally, the Buddha-nature,

considered in itself, is “neither cause nor effect,” for as the ultimate ideal, it is ontologically distinct from the saṃsāric world of interdependent existence, and its perfection is not contingent upon its being fulfilled by sentient beings.

3. Why all sentient beings will eventually possess the Buddha nature: an examination of a number of similes

If the *MNS* teaches that all sentient beings have the Buddha-nature because all of them are capable of achieving Buddhahood in the future, and moreover describes them as “the direct cause” of the Buddha-nature on that ground, it appears relevant to inquire on what basis such thoughts are entertained. Thus, we may ask if this belief in the future enlightenment of all sentient beings in the *MNS* is a conclusion drawn from a particular theory of their ontological structure, or if the doctrine is primarily soteriological in intent, taught out of religious rather than out of philosophical considerations.

In demonstrating how sentient beings come to realize the Buddha-nature, the *MNS* often resorts to similes; and so far as these similes are concerned, the sūtra seems to incorporate several diverse answers to the above question. One of the best known of the similes in the *MNS* with respect to the problem of the Buddha-nature is the pearl of the strong man:

Good sons! Just as there was in the royal family a very strong man who had an extremely hard pearl between his eyebrows. When he was wrestling with another strong man [one day], the other strong man struck his brow with his head, and as a consequence, the pearl sank under his skin and vanished. When a boil [began to] develop on the spot, the strong man called for good doctors to cure it. At that time, there was a clever doctor well skilled in diagnosing diseases, and he knew that the boil was caused by a pearl which had entered the body and was concealed under the skin. So the doctor asked the strong man, “Where has the pearl on your brow gone?”

In great alarm, the strong man replied to that king of doctors, “Is the pearl on my brow lost? Where is the pearl now? Has it disappeared into thin air?” And [so speaking, he began to] wail in anxiety and sorrow.

Then the good doctor consoled the strong man, “You need not be in such great sorrow! The pearl had entered your body when you were fighting, and is now dimly perceivable under the skin. Since you were in an angry and malignant mood when fighting, you did not notice even when the pearl had sunk into your body.”

At that time, the strong man did not trust the doctor’s words, [and he demanded,] “If the pearl is [hiding] under the skin, why didn’t it come out with the bloody pus and [other] impurities? If it is inside the muscle, you would not be able to see it. Why do you try to deceive me?”

Then the doctor took a mirror and showed the strong man his face; and there, the pearl appeared distinctly in the mirror. When the strong man saw it, he was greatly surprised, and a thought of wonder arose in his mind.

Good sons! The same is true of all sentient beings. Since they do not cherish virtuous friends, they cannot perceive the Buddha-nature even though [all of them] possess it . . .

Good sons! Just as the good doctor showed the strong man the hard pearl [under the skin], in the same manner the tathāgata teaches that all sentient beings possess the Buddha-nature. Sentient beings, due to the superimposition of myriad defilements, fail to realize the Buddha-nature [which they have]. When all defilements come to an end, they will be able to discern it perfectly, just as the strong man recognized the precious pearl distinctly in the bright mirror.⁴³

Since the precious pearl was initially part of the constitution of the strong man, and was never lost, even though it had disappeared under the skin, the comparison of the Buddha-nature with the pearl seems to imply that the Buddha-nature is an inborn essence of sentient beings, even though sentient beings are ignorant of it at present due to the superimposition of myriad defilements. The simile calls forth in our mind the doctrine of the intrinsically pure consciousness found in the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* 大乘起信論 and taught by masters of the Tilun School 地論宗 and the She-lun School 攝論宗 in the Northern and Southern Dynasties.⁴⁴ According to that doctrine, there is immanent in every sentient being from the beginningless past a pure mind, or the tathāgatagarbha, and so everyone is destined for enlightenment—just as the strong man was born with a precious pearl between his eyebrows, which remained his property forever. However, due to the permeation of ignorance, sentient beings do not realize this nature of enlightenment which they originally possess—just as the strong man fought with another strong man in “an angry and malignant mood,” and did not notice that the precious pearl had sunk under his skin. Religious awakening, when interpreted in the framework of this theory, would mean the coming into awareness of the intrinsic pure essence inherent in all living beings, just as the strong man, when given a mirror by the king of doctors, came to perceive the precious pearl he had deemed lost. Indeed, there is no lack of indications in the *MNS* that the attainment of the Buddha-nature by all sentient beings in the future is understood as the rediscovery of something with which everyone is initially endowed, and attainment is considered possible also on this ground. Besides the simile of the precious pearl of the strong man, the comparisons in the *MNS* of the Buddha-nature with the gold mine and the diamond buried underground also appear to carry similar connotation.⁴⁵ Repeatedly, we encounter in the sūtra the remark that all sentient beings are in actual possession of the Buddha-nature, but they fail to notice it because it is hidden by defilements.⁴⁶ And, if the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* says that the pure mind of sentient beings is “eternal and

immutable," but "being defiled by ignorance, a defiled [state of mind] comes into being,"⁴⁷ we also find in the *MNS* the statement that the Buddha-nature is "not a dharma newly created, but is kept from view due to [the presence of] adventitious defilements."⁴⁸

Nevertheless, if it is not difficult to cite passages which support the allying of the concept of Buddha-nature in the *MNS* with the idea of the intrinsically pure consciousness in the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* and in the teachings of the Ti-lun and She-lun masters, it is also easy to produce excerpts from the sūtra which prove the contrary. For instance, right after the last quotation, we find the sūtra comparing the Buddha-nature with flowers blossoming on the tusks of elephants:

All elephant tusks send forth flowers when clouds and thunders gather in the sky, and without [the quaking of] thunders, no flowers will appear, not even their images. The same is true of the Buddha-nature with respect to sentient beings (*chung-sheng fo-hsing*), which remains always out of view due to the superimposition of all forms of defilements. For this reason, I teach that sentient beings are without self. [However,] if they have the chance to listen to the profound scripture which is the *MNS*, they will perceive the Buddha-nature, just as flowers [will blossom] on elephant tusks [when roused by thunders].⁴⁹

In this passage, a parallel is drawn between the relation of the Buddha-nature to sentient beings, and the relation of flowers to the elephant tusks on which they blossom. Just as elephant tusks send out flowers when roused by thunders, sentient beings achieve the Buddha-nature when coming under the beneficial influence of the teaching of the *MNS*. However, unlike the precious pearl, which is originally the property of the strong man, flowers are clearly not part of the intrinsic made-up of elephant tusks. At most, we can only say that elephant tusks contain the potency to produce flowers. When this simile is applied to the interpretation of the relation of the Buddha-nature to sentient beings, the conclusion would be that the Buddha-nature does not pre-exist in sentient beings in the manner in which the pure mind pre-exists in all men, as expounded in the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* and the works of the Tilun and She-lun masters. The most we can infer from this comparison is that there is immanent in all sentient beings the potential to develop the nature of the Buddha when the right occasions arise. That the *MNS* conceives of the possession of the Buddha-nature by all sentient beings in the future as the actualization in the future of a latent faculty is strongly suggested by its frequent use of the seed metaphor to illustrate the Buddha-nature. Thus, the Buddha-nature is once referred to in the sūtra as "the seed of the middle-way, which is the most perfect enlightenment of all the Buddhas."⁵⁰ On another occasion, the Buddha is reported to have claimed that he had inside his body "the seed of the Buddha-nature."⁵¹

However, if we accept the above exposition as exemplifying the general

position of the *MNS*, we should be greatly puzzled when we come across later in the *sūtra* the story of the king and the lute, the overt objective of which is to controvert any pretension to base the idea of the future enlightenment of sentient beings on a particular understanding of their metaphysical made-up:

Good sons! There was a king who on hearing the clear and melodious sound of a lute was deeply attracted; and he enjoyed and longed for it so much that he could not get it off his mind. So he asked [one of his] ministers, "Where does such melodious sound come from?"

The minister replied, "Such melodious sound comes from a lute."

Thereupon, the king ordered [the minister], "Bring me the sound."

So, the minister brought a lute right away; and placing it before the king, he announced, "Your Majesty! Here is the sound you want."

Thereupon, the king addressed the lute, "Speak out! Speak out!" However, the lute remained silent. [In a fit of impatience,] the king cut the strings [of the lute], but still no sound was produced. And even though the king [proceeded] to break the cover and frame of [of the lute] in order to get at the sound, he still could not obtain [what he wanted]. Then the king [stared] angrily at the minister [and demanded], "Why do you cheat me?"

The minister explained to the king, "Your majesty! This is not the way to get the sound. The lute will only give out sound when all [needed] conditions [are fulfilled] and when it is played in the proper manner."

[Good sons!] The same is true of the Buddha-nature with respect to sentient beings. *It abides nowhere, and is apprehended when one practices the opportune means.* On apprehending it, one will attain the most perfect enlightenment.⁵²

This story draws a parallel between the sound produced by a lute and the Buddha-nature. The lesson it attempts to convey is that just as it is foolish to try to get at the clear and melodious sound of a lute by breaking down its cover and frame, it is also futile to analyse sentient beings in order to arrive at a metaphysical principle (be it in the form of a latent potentiality or in the form of an intrinsically pure consciousness) with which their eventual attainment of Buddhahood can be explained. The central theme of the story is summed up in the concluding declaration that the Buddha-nature "abides nowhere," i.e., is not immanent in some form in sentient beings, just as sound is not immanent in any part of the lute. In the same manner as sound is produced when all necessary conditions are satisfied, the Buddha-nature will reveal itself to sentient beings when they practice in earnest the way to enlightenment prescribed by the *tathāgata*.

4. *Why all sentient beings will eventually possess the Buddha-nature: the purpose of the doctrine of the Buddha-nature*

Our cursory examination of a number of similes in the *MNS* relating to the problem of the Buddha-nature has disclosed at least three possible responses to the question of why all sentient beings will eventually possess the Buddha-nature:

- a. Because all of them are endowed with an intrinsically pure essence, which they will become fully aware of when they have brought to an end the working of ignorance.
- b. Because all of them embody the potency or "the seed" of Buddhahood, which will send out fruit, when all necessary conditions are satisfied.
- c. Because the way to enlightenment is open to all to follow, and one can be certain of achieving Buddhahood if one follows this way.

Such metaphysical speculations as (a) and (b) are irrelevant to the actual fulfilment of the Buddha-nature in sentient beings in the future.

Our next task will be to determine which of the three replies is most representative of the overall standpoint of the *MNS*. While granting that all three positions have some textual support in the *MNS*, (c) should be given preference for the following reasons:

i. It is more akin to the general anti-metaphysical tone of the *MNS*. The *MNS* repeatedly enjoins its listeners to steer clear of metaphysical speculation and to concentrate their minds on the search for final deliverance. Thus, it is said that the Buddha-nature will not be perceived by bodhisattvas who harbour specific views regarding dharmas.⁵³ The well-known indeterminate questions, such as "whether the world is eternal or non-eternal," "whether the world is finite or infinite," "whether the tathāgata exists or does not exist after death," etc., appear several times in the *MNS*, and are dismissed for being conducive to attachment rather than to cessation of ills.⁵⁴ Further, non-attachment to views is pictured in the *MNS* as the distinctive mark of the sage⁵⁵ and the tathāgata⁵⁶, and is further equated with the "ultimate nirvāṇa," "the supreme form of emptiness" and "the most perfect enlightenment."⁵⁷

ii. In the *MNS*, we find statements openly refuting the idea that the Buddha-nature is an entity immanent in sentient beings.

Good sons! If it is said that the Buddha-nature abides in sentient beings [, it is wrong]. Good sons! Dharmas which are eternal abide nowhere. If a dharma abides anywhere, it is not eternal [in nature].⁵⁸

Again, it is observed:

Good sons! If someone maintains that all sentient beings definitely possess the Buddha-nature which is eternal, blissful, personal and pure, [and further maintains that the Buddha-nature] is neither produced nor

born, but is not perceived by sentient beings due to the presence of defilements, it should be understood that he has slandered the Buddha, the Dharma and the saṅgha.⁵⁹

iii. Besides the story of the king and the lute, we find in the *MNS* miscellaneous remarks and similes indicating strong opposition to any attempt to ground man's future enlightenment on the existence in him at present of a dormant principle. A well-known example is the comparison of the cream obtained from milk and the Buddha-nature to be attained by sentient beings:

Good sons! Only the ignorant will speak as you have argued: that if milk does not have the nature of cream, it cannot produce milk, just as if banyan seeds do not have the nature of being five *chang* 丈 from the ground,⁶⁰ it cannot produce concrete [trees] five *chang* tall. The wise will never speak that way. Why? For [they understand that things] do not have [definite] nature.

Good sons! If milk already has the nature of cream, it would not need the support of various conditions [to produce cream].

Good sons! Milk will never turn into cream when mixed with water even if we allow it to stand for one month, but if we add one drop of the juice of the *p'o-chiu* 頗求 tree to it,⁶¹ cream will be formed right away. If milk already has [the nature of] cream, why is it dependent on [such] conditions [as the juice of the *p'o-chiu* tree to produce cream]? The same is true of the Buddha-nature with respect to sentient beings (*chung-sheng fo-hsing*). The Buddha-nature is apprehended [by sentient beings] at the fulfillment of various conditions ... Since [sentient beings] attain the Buddha-nature dependent on various conditions, they do not have any [definite] nature; and since [sentient beings] do not have any [definite] nature, they can attain the most perfect enlightenment.⁶²

Seeing that milk, when properly processed, turns into cream, common sense usually infers that there must reside in milk the nature of cream, which explains its tendency to be transformed into cream. It is this common-sense attitude that the *MNS* is attempting to challenge, when it declares that "things do not have definite nature," and points out that if milk already possessed the nature of cream, it would not require the support of external conditions before its transmutation into cream could take place. When this argument is applied to the Buddha-nature with respect to sentient beings, it speaks against the tendency to infer from the eventual attainment of Buddhahood by sentient beings to the existence in them at present of an ontological disposition to assume the characteristics of the Buddha. Just as the transformation of milk into cream should not be understood as the actualization of the nature of cream in milk, the realization of the Buddha-nature in sentient beings also should not be construed

as the coming to fruition of an inborn faculty in sentient beings. And if the necessity of the agency of the juice of *p'o-chiu* trees is a proof against the presence of the nature of cream in milk, the existence of such prerequisites of the attainment of the Buddha-nature as the observance of monastic rules and the listening to the teaching of the *MNS* also militates against attributing to sentient beings an innate essence to become a Buddha.⁶³

This comparison of the Buddha-nature with cream is supplemented by a series of other similes, all of which convey the same lesson. What follow are some of the most prominent examples, the significance of which can easily be inferred following the line of reasoning outlined above:

Good sons! If there is [the nature of] cream in milk as you have maintained, why do milk-sellers ask for the price of milk only, and not the price of cream as well? Why do mare-sellers ask for the price of the mares only and not the price of colts [which will be born from the mares] also? A man of the world asks for the hand of a woman because he is without offspring; and once a woman gets pregnant, she would no longer be called a girl. Now, if it is said that a girl gets married with the nature of a child in her, that would be wrong. Why? For if she had the nature of a child, she would also have [the nature of] a grandchild; and if she had [the nature of] a grandchild, [her child and her grandchild] would be brothers. Why? Because both of them owe their existence to the same belly. Therefore, I assert that girls do not possess the nature of the children [to whom they will give birth]. If there is the nature of cream in milk, why can't we detect in it simultaneously the five tastes [of milk, cream, curd, butter and ghee]? If there is the substance of a banyan tree five feet tall in the seed, why can't we observe [in the seed] at once the miscellaneous forms of sprout, stem, branches, leaves, flowers and fruit? Good sons! Milk differs [from cream] in its colour, taste and products, and the same is true of ghee. How can we say that there is the nature of cream in milk? Good sons! Just as [it is absurd to maintain that] a person who will eat curd to-morrow gives out a bad smell today, equally [absurd is it to maintain that] there exists definitely the nature of cream in milk. Good sons! A person writes words with a brush, paper and ink, when there was initially no word on the paper. It is because there was at first [no word] on the paper that [we say that] words are formed dependent on conditions [such as brush and ink]. If there were originally words on the paper, why would they need [the presence of] various conditions to be formed? We mix the colours blue and yellow together to form the colour green. It should be understood that the two [colours blue and yellow] do not embody originally the nature of greenness. If [the nature of greenness] already exists [in the colours blue and yellow], why do we have to mix [the colours blue and yellow] together to form [the colour green]? Good sons! Sentient

beings are kept alive with food, but there is actually no life in food. If there is life in food initially, food would be life even before it was consumed. Good sons! All dharmas are without [definite] nature.⁶⁴

iv. The *MNS* seldom alludes to the inherent ontological structure of sentient beings when it gives its reason for believing in their eventual enlightenment. Rather, it often satisfies itself with the general observation that as sentient beings are different from non-sentient objects such as stones and walls, which are incapable of the thought of enlightenment and so can never assume the characteristics of a Buddha, the Buddha-nature is attributed to them by way of contrast. So the *MNS* asserts:

Good sons! I speak of “nirvāṇa” due to [the existence of conditions] contrary to nirvāṇa. I speak of the “tathāgata” due to [the existence of conditions] contrary to the tathāgata. I speak of the “Buddha-nature” due to [the existence of things] contrary to the Buddha-nature.

What are [the conditions] described as contrary to nirvāṇa? They include all dharmas which are defiled and conditioned. The destruction of these defiled and conditioned [dharmas] is known as “nirvāṇa.” As for [the conditions] contrary to the tathāgata, they range from [the state of] the *icchantika* up to [the state of] the pratyekabuddha. The cessation of [the state of] the *icchantika* up to [the state of] the pratyekabuddha is known as the “tathāgata.” As for [things] contrary to the Buddha-nature, they include walls, tiles, stones and all non-sentient objects. Apart from such non-sentient objects, we can apply the name of “Buddha-nature” [to the rest].⁶⁵

Thus, when it is said that sentient beings have the Buddha-nature, our attention is drawn to the fact that sentient beings, unlike non-sentient objects like walls and tiles, can win Buddhahood by means of proper religious practices. This way of thinking is perfectly illustrated by the familiar story of the blind men’s attempt to describe an elephant, found in the *MNS*.⁶⁶ The blind men have no conception of the form of an entire elephant. Nevertheless, they have some ideas of the shapes of some of its parts; and if they recover their power of vision, they can surely report in full the appearance of a complete elephant. In the same way, sentient beings, due to their ignorance, are strangers to the Buddha-nature. That does not, however, preclude them from having some vague inkling of what the Buddha-nature is like at present, and from gaining a perfect conception of the Buddha-nature in the future, when their mind’s eye is opened. It is based on this belief that sentient beings, unlike walls, tiles and stones, “are not by nature resistant to the Buddha-nature”⁶⁷ and so are forever susceptible to the influence of the salvific work of Buddhas and bodhisattvas (rather than on speculation of their ontological structure) that the *MNS* propounds the idea that all sentient beings possess the Buddha-nature.⁶⁸

v. The *MNS* stresses very much the practical implication of the teaching of the presence of the Buddha-nature in all sentient beings. Thus, it explains why bodhisattvas preach the concept of the Buddha-nature:

Even though bodhisattvas perceive the evil deeds and errors of sentient beings, they never dwell on them. Why? They are afraid that this will lead to the arising of [further] defilements [in sentient beings]. With the arising of [further] defilements, sentient beings will fall into the evil modes of existence.⁶⁹

On the other hand, bodhisattvas, on perceiving the least sign of goodness in sentient beings, praise them. What do we mean by good? It is the so called Buddha-nature. Bodhisattvas laud the Buddha-nature so that sentient beings will develop the thought of the most perfect enlightenment.⁷⁰

Of similar import is the story of the Buddha's encounter with five hundred brahmins, in which the Buddha declares explicitly that the Buddha-nature is in fact *not* the self, but is *called* the self only for the sake of instructing sentient beings:

Good sons! Once, I was bathing in the Nairājanā River . . . At that time, five hundred brahmins also came to the riverside, and approaching where I was, they talked among themselves, "What has [Gautama] done to achieve the diamond body? If Gautama has not taught that life ends with death, we shall follow him and receive the rules of discipline [of the Buddhist order]."

Good sons! At that time, I, with my power to discern others' thought, knew what the brahmins had in mind. So I spoke to these brahmins, "Why do you say that I teach that life ends with death?"

The brahmins replied, "Gautama, you have taught in various sūtras that all sentient beings are without self. If you preach [the idea of] no-self, how can you maintain that [you have not taught that] life ends with death? If there is no self, who keeps the rules of discipline, and who transgresses them?"

The Buddha answered, "Surely, I have not preached that all sentient beings are without self. [On the other hand,] I always proclaim that all sentient beings possess the Buddha-nature. What else can the Buddha-nature be if not the self? Thus, I have never taught that life ends with death . . ."

When the brahmins heard that the Buddha-nature is the self, there immediately arose in their minds the thought of the most perfect enlightenment; and soon, they left the household life to practise the path of enlightenment. All birds of the air and animals of the land and the sea [who were present at this discourse] also resolved to attain the

supreme enlightenment, and with the arising of such thought, they soon abandoned their [animal] form.

Good sons! *The Buddha-nature is in fact not the self. For the sake of [guiding] sentient beings, I described it as the self.*⁷¹

When so viewed, the tenet of the eventual Buddhahood of all sentient beings is essentially a soteriological doctrine, the primary significance of which lies in its efficacy in developing "the thought of the most perfect enlightenment" in man. As the tenet is not the outcome of a systematic investigation of the nature of reality, any wholesale attempt to interpret the Buddha-nature taught in the *MNS* as entailing either (a) a pure essence or (b) a potency, should be looked upon with some suspicion.

Notes

I would like to thank the University of Hong Kong for a research grant which has made this study possible.

- 1 Fragments of the Sanskrit original of this Mahāyāna version of the *MNS* have been recovered in recent years, and are recorded in Watanabe Kaikyoku 渡邊海旭, *Watanabe rombun shū* 渡邊海旭論文集 2nd ed. (Tokyo: 1936), pp. 570–585 and Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 & Watanabe Kaikyoku, eds., *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 85 vols. (Tokyo: 1924–1934) (henceforth abbreviated to *T*), vol. 12, p. 604. Also see G. M. Bongard Levin, "New Buddhist Sanskrit Texts from Central Asia: An Unknown Fragment of the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 4, 2 (1981), pp. 7–16.
- 2 See *T*, vol. 12, p. 388b, 1.22, p. 390a, 1.8, p. 470c, 1.14, p. 485b.11.11–12 & p.493b.11.4–5. Also consult Mochizuki Shinkō 望月信亨, *Bukkyō kyōten naritatsu-shi ron* 佛教經典成立史論 2nd ed. (Kyoto: 1946), pp. 255–273.
- 3 A very comprehensive study of the various Chinese translations of the *MNS* has been done by Fuse Kōgaku 布施浩岳 in his *Nehanshū no kenkyū* 涅槃宗の研究, 2nd ed. (Tokyo: 1973), vol. I. In this work, Mr. Fuse has made an elaborate comparative study of the three Chinese translations of the *MNS*, and has found only minor discrepancies in content. Also consult T'ang Yung-t'ung 湯用彤 *Han Wei Liang-Chin Nan-pei ch'ao fo-chiao shih* 漢魏兩晉南北朝佛教史, 2nd ed. (Peking: 1963), pp. 601–610 and Takasaki Jikidō 高崎直道 *Nyoraizō shisō no keisei* 如來藏思想の形成 2nd ed. (Tokyo: 1974), pp. 128–131.
- 4 For a detailed study of the tradition of the study of the *MNS* in China, consult Fuse Kōgaku, *op. cit.*, vol. 2. Also refer to T'ang Yung-t'ung, *op. cit.*, pp. 677–678 & pp. 832–834; Kenneth K. S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 113–116, 128–129 & pp. 180–181; and Andō Toshio 安藤俊雄 "Hokugi Nehangaku no dentō to shoki no shiron-shi 北魏涅槃學の傳統と初期の四論師" in *Hokugi bukkyō no kenkyū* 北魏佛教の研究 2nd ed. (Kyoto: 1978), pp. 179–201.
- 5 For an erudite study of the historical transformation of the concept of the Buddha-nature in India, China and Japan, refer to Tokiwa Daijō's 常盤大定, *Busshō no kenkyū* 佛性の研究 (Tokyo: 1944). Also consult *Shina bukkyō no kenkyū* 支那佛教の研究 vol. 3 (Tokyo: 1943), pp. 247–300, by the same author.
- 6 Discussion on this problem will lead to the problem of the textual development of the *MNS*. See Tokiwa Daijō, *Busshō no kenkyū*, pp. 36–66 and my paper "Do All Sentient Beings Possess the Buddha-nature?—The Problem of the *Ichchantika* in the

- Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*” (presented at the Fifth Conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, 1982).
- 7 *T*, vol. 12, p. 511a, 11.16–18.
 - 8 *Ibid.*, p. 399a, 11.5–7.
 - 9 *Ibid.*, p. 487a, 11.15–18. For similar passages, refer to p. 472b & p. 553c.
 - 10 *Ibid.*, p. 414c, 1.29–p. 415a, 1.2
 - 11 Due to limited space, we will not enter into the difficult problem of the Sanskrit original of the term “Buddha-nature” and its synonyms. For information on this much discussed subject, see Mizutani Kōshō 水谷幸正 “Busshō ni tsuite 佛性 ni tsuite,” *Indogaku bukkyōgaku no kenkyū* 印度學佛教學 no 研究 2p94,2 (1956), pp. 550–553, Okawa Ichijō 小川一乘, “Busshō to buddhatva 佛性 to buddhatva,” *Indogaku bukkyōgaku no kenkyū* 11,2 (1963), pp. 544–545 and Takasaki Jikidō, *op. cit.*, part I, chap. 2.
 - 12 *Ibid.*, p. 524a, 1.28–b, 1.1
 - 13 *Ibid.*, p. 526a, 1.28–b, 1.2
 - 14 *Ibid.*, p. 463c, 11.21–22.
 - 15 *Ibid.*, p. 576a, 1.29–b, 1.1. Also refer to p. 395c.
 - 16 *Ibid.*, p. 513a, 11.3–5.
 - 17 *Ibid.*, p. 524c.
 - 18 The ten powers are concrete manifestations of the omniscience of the Buddha, who has perfect knowledge of (1) what is right or wrong in every situation; (2) what is the karma of every deed, past, present and future; (3) all stages of samādhi and liberation; (4) the faculties and powers of all beings; (5) the desires and aspirations of all beings; (6) the nature and deeds of all beings; (7) the direction and consequence of all conducts; (8) the previous existences of all beings; (9) the birth, death and destinies of all beings; and (10) the destruction of the *āsravas* of all beings. Consult Mochizuki Shinkō, *Bukkyō daijiten*, 佛教大辭典 vol. 3 (Tokyo: 1933), pp. 2402–2404.
 - 19 The four forms of fearlessness are (1) fearlessness arising from the attainment of the most perfect enlightenment, (2) fearlessness arising from the abandoning of all defilements, (3) fearlessness regarding all anti-Buddhist teachings, and (4) fearlessness arising from the cessation of all sufferings.
 - 20 The Buddha remains undisturbed whether (1) all creatures believe in his teaching, or (2) do not believe in his teaching, or (3) some believe and others do not believe in his teaching.
 - 21 *T*, vol. 12, p. 525c, 11.3–4.
 - 22 For a detailed list of these marks and characteristics, refer to Leon Hurvitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 353–361.
 - 23 *T*, vol. 12, p. 574b, 11.15–20.
 - 24 *Ibid.*, p. 461b, 1.19.
 - 25 *Ibid.*, p. 480c, 11.13–14.
 - 26 *Ibid.*, p. 526a, 11.2–6.
 - 27 *Ibid.*, p. 447c, 11.9–12.
 - 28 *Ibid.*, p. 524b, 1.25–c, 1.10.
 - 29 The eight powers are: (1) the power of self division, (2) the power of self expansion, (3) the power of flying, (4) the power of manifesting in countless forms in one time and at one place, (5) the power of using one physical organ for the functions of all the others, (6) the power of achieving all things while remaining unattached, (7) the power of preaching for countless kalpas by expounding just one stanza, and (8) the power of being all-pervasive like space. See *Ibid.*, p. 502c–p. 503a.
 - 30 *Ibid.*, p. 556c, 11.11–14.
 - 31 The *pārājikas* refer to the most serious transgressions of monks and nuns, such as

sexual immorality, stealing, murder and false speaking, which entail expulsion from the saṅgha.

32 *T*, vol. 12, p. 405b, 11.12–18.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 405a, 11.19–20.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 555b, 11.9–18.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 524b, 11.11–21.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 572b, 11.18–23.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 530c, 11.15–17.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 530b, 11.26–29. Refer to n.62 below.

39 See n. 28 above.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 524a, 11.5–8.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 523c, 1.26–p. 524a, 1.5.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 524a, 11.12–15.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 408a, 1.9–b, 1.11.

44 The *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* (*Awakening of Faith*) is one of the most influential Buddhist texts in China, and has been translated into English several times. The orthodox view is that the work was composed by Aśvaghōṣa, and was translated into Chinese by Paramārtha in 550, but both claims have been challenged in recent years. Mochizūki Shinkō suggests in his *Bukkyō kyōten naritatsu-shi ron* that the work was the compilation of a Ti-lun master living in the second half of the sixth century. See *op. cit.*, pp. 532–641. For a list of titles of classic studies on the problem of the authenticity of the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun*, consult Yoshito S. Hakeda, trans., *The Awakening of Faith* (New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1967), pp. 119–122. The teachings of the Ti-lun and She-lun schools represented the initial Chinese interpretation of Yogācāra Buddhism when the latter was first imported into China in the sixth century. While the two schools disagreed with each other on many points, both agreed that there exists in every sentient being an intrinsically pure consciousness, which serves as the ontological basis of enlightenment as well as the metaphysical ground of the phenomenal world. Even though both schools gradually died out in the second half of the seventh century, their concept of the pure mind was passed on through the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* as well as the teachings of the Hua-yen school 華嚴宗 and certain sects of the Ch'an school 禪宗, and continued to exert enormous influence on the development of the Buddha-nature doctrine in China.

45 See *T*, vol. 12, p. 407b & p. 408c.

46 For example, see *ibid.*, p. 462c, 11.1–2.

47 Yoshito S. Hakeda, trans., *op. cit.*, p. 50.

48 *T*, vol. 12, p. 411b, 11.28–29.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 411c, 11.1–5.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 523c, 11.1–2.

51 *Ibid.*, p. 410c, 11.13–14.

52 *Ibid.*, p. 519b, 11.6–17.

53 *Ibid.*, p. 521b.

54 *Ibid.*, pp. 596c–597b.

55 *Ibid.*, p. 413a, 1.17.

56 *Ibid.*, p. 503a, 11.8–9.

57 *Ibid.*, p. 464b.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 555c, 11.27–28.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 580c, 11.2–4.

60 “*Chang*” is a Chinese unit of length equivalent to 3½ metres.

61 I still cannot find out the Sanskrit original of the name “*p'o-chiu*.”

62 *T*, vol. 12, p. 519b, 1.22–c, 1.3.

- 63 The argument above would certainly appear inconclusive to those who are sympathetic with views (a) and (b), for they also believe that the fulfilment of the Buddha-nature in sentient beings in the future requires the satisfaction of various conditions, but that has not deterred them from investigating the metaphysical basis of sentient beings' eventual deliverance. However it may be, this analogy between cream and the Buddha-nature is significant for our present purpose, for it displays in the most emphatic fashion the aversion to speculation on the ontological source of enlightenment, characteristic of the *MNS*. Several pages later, this simile of milk and cream is again picked up for similar purpose:

The Buddha explained, "I have never maintained that there is [the nature of] cream in milk. When people say that there is [the nature of] cream in milk, it is because [they see that] cream is produced from milk."

[The Bodhisattva *Simhanāda* asked,] "World-honored one! Everything produced surely must have its occasions."

[The Buddha replied,] "Good sons! When there is milk, there is no cream, and there is also no curd, butter and ghee. . . . If there is [cream in milk], why don't we give milk the double name [milk-cream], just as we call a person skillful in [making] both [articles of gold and iron] gold- and black-smith? . . . Good sons! There are two types of causes: first, direct cause, and secondly, auxiliary cause. Direct cause is like milk which produces cream, and auxiliary cause is such as warmth and yeast [which are added to milk to form cream]. Since [cream] is formed from milk, we say that there is the nature of cream in milk."

The Bodhisattva *Simhanāda* asked, "World-honored one! If there is not the nature of cream in milk, there is also not the nature of cream in horns. Why isn't cream formed from horns?"

[The Buddha replied,] "Good sons! Cream is also formed from horns. Why? I have mentioned two auxiliary causes of cream: first, yeast, and secondly, warmth. Since horns are warm in nature, they can produce cream."

[The Bodhisattva] *Simhanāda* asked, "World-honored one! If horns can produce cream, why do people who want cream look for milk and not horns?"

The Buddha replied, "Good sons! That is why I teach that there are [two types of causes:] direct cause and auxiliary cause.

(*Ibid.*, pp. 530b, 1.20–c, 1.6)

In this interesting dialogue, the bodhisattva *Simhanāda* represents the position of the ordinary man, who sees the need of postulating "occasions" to account for the production of cream from milk. Thus, it is asked, if there is nothing in the composition of milk which is especially conducive to the formation of cream, why do people who want cream look for milk, and not some other things such as horns? The Buddha, on the other hand, consistently refuses to view the matter this way. He declares that the everyday assertion that there is cream in milk should not be taken literally as indicating the presence of the nature of cream in milk, but rather as a loose way of relating the fact that cream is always formed from milk. As for the question why people look for milk instead of horns when they need cream, the Buddha answered by classifying causes into two categories: direct and auxiliary. Milk is the first thing to come to our mind in case we need cream because it is the direct cause. Furthermore, horns, being warm in nature, can serve as the auxiliary cause of cream. So it is not totally wrong-headed if a person wanting cream asks for horns, because warmth, as the auxiliary cause, is as necessary to the formation of cream as milk. This falling back on the idea of two types of causes in the reply again will not satisfy questioners like the

bodhisattva Siṃhanāda, for they can continue to beg for the principle behind the division of causes into direct and auxiliary, as well as the ontological ground for regarding certain causes as direct and other causes as auxiliary. It would take us too far afield to follow the intricate and often quite unpromising discussion which follows the above quotation, but if the two parties appear to be arguing at cross-purposes all the time, that alone suffices to demonstrate how strongly antipathetic the *MNS* is to the form of reductive reasoning exhibited in the interrogation of the bodhisattva Siṃhanāda.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 531a, 11.8–26.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 581a, 11.17–23.

66 See *Ibid.*, p. 556a, 11.8–21.

67 The story of the blind man and the elephant are preceded by the following remarks:

Good sons! As sentient beings are not [by nature] resistant to the Buddha-nature, we declare that they have [the Buddha-nature]. As sentient beings are heading straight for [the Buddha-nature], as they will some day possess [the Buddha-nature], as they will definitely attain [the Buddha-nature], and as they will definitely perceive [the Buddha-nature], we thereby say that all sentient beings have the Buddha-nature.

(*Ibid.*, p. 556a, 11.6–8).

68 Of course, to those who are accustomed to look for an explanation for everything, it would seem necessary to go on to inquire for the metaphysical basis of this peculiar propensity of the sentient to participate in the essence of the Buddha, which is not shared by the non-sentient. Furthermore, they would question the *MNS* for repeating the obvious, for is it not common knowledge that only beings with life and consciousness can be taught and so only they can apprehend the Buddha-nature? We have seen that the *MNS* has inherited the anti-metaphysical attitude inherent in the doctrine of the middle way and the discussions on the indeterminate questions in early Buddhism, and so tends to view all searches for underlying ontological principles with suspicion. As for the criticism of repeating the obvious, the reply of the *MNS* would be that what is obvious may still be of great significance, especially in the realm of practical religious life. See (v) below.

69 Of the five modes of existence in the realm of saṃsāra, those of animals, hungry ghosts and beings in hell are considered evil.

70 *T*, vol. 12, p. 517c, 1.29–p. 518a, 1.4.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 525a, 1.12–b, 1.1.

INDIAN BUDDHISM

A SURVEY

WITH

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

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16.I. The Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra and Others

After the *Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta* in Pali and its corresponding four Chinese versions, the six volume work of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* (大般涅槃經), translated by Fa-hien (法顯) into Chinese, came into existence in the latest period.¹ It must have been compiled in the period 200–400 A. D. The postscript to the “Wandering Sūtra” (遊行經) was added some time between 300 and 400 A. D.² Quite recently fragments of a Sanskrit version of the sūtra were discovered in Central Asia and published.³ There are two Chinese versions of a Mahāyāna sūtra of the same title⁴ and its Sanskrit fragments also were discovered.⁵ The sūtra seems to have been produced some time after Nāgārjuna and before Vasubandhu,⁶ probably about 300–350 A. D.⁷ An opinion has it that it saw light in the period 200–300 A. D., the place of production being Kaśmir.⁸

In the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*,⁹ i. e. “the Sūtra of Great Decease (of the Buddha)”, Śākya-muni is quoted as having said: “Seven Hundred years after my nirvāṇa the devil Māra Pāpīyas will gradually destroy my Truthful Law”.¹⁰ In fact this sūtra contains here and there passages describing the deterioration and persecution of Buddhism. As far as examination of existing archaeological findings goes, inscriptions written in Kharoṣṭhī characters are confined to those concerned with Buddhism. Most of those written in Brāhmī characters before the Gupta Dynasty are also related with Buddhism. But, along with the founding of the Gupta Dynasty, the state of things so changed that nearly all the temples newly built were Hindu, those of Buddhism being exceptions.¹¹ In fact, Buddhism was so ignored that Buddhist temples were pulled down and building materials obtained thereby were used for the erection of Hindu temples. This fact justifies one to conclude that the sūtras in which references are made to the downfall of Buddhism were written at the time of the Gupta Dynasty (320–500 A. D.) or some time after it. This is confirmed by the above-quoted prediction of Śākyamuni. With regard

¹ K. Ishikawa: *Ui Comm. Vol.*, pp. 48, 66; Ohno, p. 227 f.

² B. Matsumoto: *Hihyō*, p. 28.

³ E. Waldschmidt: *Das Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*. Abhandlungen der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 1951, 3 Teile.

⁴ [A] 大般涅槃經. 40 vols. Translated by Dharmakṣema into Chinese. Taisho, No. 374. This is called the Northern Recension. Translated into Japanese by Daijō Tokiwa in *KIK.*, Nehanbu, vols. 1, 2.

[B] 大般涅槃經 36 vols, revised by 慧嚴 etc., This is called the ‘Southern Recension’. Taisho, No. 375. vol. X, p. 605 f. This was edited in Chinese and translated into Japanese by Daitō Shimaji in *KDK.*, vols. 8, 9. Both recensions were explained in B. Shiiō: *Kyōten*, pp. 276 f. The Southern Recension was completely translated from the Chinese into English by Kōshō Yamamoto—*The Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, 3 vols. Ubeshi: Karin Bunko, 1973, 1974, 1975.

⁵ One Sanskrit fragment was found in the Kōyasan temple, the headquarters of Japanese Vajrayāna. (*Kogetsu*, p. 570 f. *Taisho*, vol. XII, p. 604.) Another fragment found in Central Asia, was published in Hoernle’s *Manuscript Remains* p. 93 (Hoernle’s Ms., No. 143, SA. 4). This is another sūtra quite different from the sūtra of the same title published by Dr. Waldschmidt.

⁶ H. Kuno: *SK.*, NS. X, No. 4, p. 45; Shioda asserts that the former half of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* was compiled before the *Buddhatva-sāstra* (仏性論). (*IBK.*, III, 1, p. 349 f.).

⁷ H. Ui: *Kyōten*, p. 82. (revised ed. pp. 130–133)

⁸ B. Matsumoto: *Hihyō*, p. 53.

⁹ H. Kuno: *SK.*, NS. X, No. 4, 45.; Mochizuki (*Bukkyō*, p. 255) asserts that the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* was compiled early in the fifth century A. D.

¹⁰ “我般涅槃七百歲後，是魔波旬漸當壞亂我之正法.” *Taisho*, vol. XII, p. 643a.

¹¹ Cf. Fleet: *Gupta Inscriptions*.

to the time of the death of Buddha, all legends conveyed in the Northern traditions agree in saying that King Aśoka appeared about one hundred years after the death of the Buddha. If this is accepted as true, the time of the death of Buddha was, as Dr. Ui has surmised, 386 B. C.¹² According to the estimation of the author, the death-year must be 383 B. C., because of a slight modification in Dr. Ui's researches.¹³ As it is certain that the writer of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* was cognizant of the legends, "700 years after my nirvāṇa" corresponds to the time of the beginning of the Gupta Dynasty.

The process of formation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* of Mahāyāna seems to have been as follows:¹⁴

- 1) First the Sanskrit original of the six-volume recension was composed in India before the formation of the *tathāgatagarbha* thought as in the *Ratnagotravibhāga* etc.
- 2) The formation of the *Tathāgatagarbha* thought.
- 3) The formation of the latter portion of the sūtra, corresponding to the latter thirty volumes.

The consciousness of crisis of the Buddhist order was very strong in this sūtra and in other sūtras relevant to it,¹⁵ and was probably due to Hindu revival and the persecution of the Buddhist order by the Hindus.

This sūtra was once very influential in ancient China, and provoked controversy among Buddhist thinkers.¹⁶

The *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*¹⁷ claims to be the last sermon before the passing away of the Buddha, saying that it reveals the secret teaching which had not been preached before (i. e., in other sūtras).¹⁸ Formerly, Buddhism, advocating the theory of Non-ego, was against the theory of *ātman*, but here in this scripture the Buddha teaches the theory of the Great Ātman.¹⁹ It was shocking to the Buddhists of that time, but the origin can be traced to ancient times.²⁰ The Cosmic Body²¹ of the Buddha is eternal. Every human being is endowed with Buddhahood.²² A precursor of the concept of Buddhahood can be noticed even in the *Abhidharma-Mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra*.²³ But here the concept was developed more extensively. It is likely that the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* of Mahāyāna was greatly influenced by the *Buddhāvataṃsakasūtra*.²⁴

¹² H. Ui: *ITK.*, vol. 2.

¹³ H. Nakamura: "On the Chronology of the Mauryan Dynasty", (*Tōhōgaku*, vol. 3, X, 1955, p. 1 ff.).

¹⁴ Kōshō Mizutani in *IBK.* vol. 11, No. 2, March 1903, pp. 250-254.

¹⁵ Kōshō Mizutani in *IBK.*, vol. 8, No. 2, March, 1960, pp. 198-201. Mappō in Mahāyāna sūtras. (Nikki Kimura in *IBK.* vol. 11, No. 1, Jan. 1963, pp. 130-131.)

¹⁶ 灌頂's 大涅槃經玄義 2 vols. translated into Japanese by S. Ninomiya in *KIK.*, Kyōshobu, vol. 10.

¹⁷ The verse known as '本有今無偈' in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* was discussed by Manto Cho, *Buddhist Seminar*, No. 4. Oct. 1966. 60-68.

¹⁸ S. Miyamoto: *Daijō*, p. 77 f.

¹⁹ Y. Kanakura: *Jiga etc.*, p. 195 f. H. Ui: *Indo Tetsugakushi*. There is a contradiction between the theory of Non-ego and that of the Great Ātman, but they are teachings for expediency, and there is no contradiction. (Miyamoto: *Daijō*, p. 138 f.).

²⁰ K. Tsukinowa in *Bukkyō Kenkyū*, vol. 3, No. 3, p. 120 f.

²¹ Buddhakāya or dharmakāya in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* of Mahāyāna was discussed by Kōshō Kawamura, *Shūkyō Kenkyū*, Nr. 190, vol. 40, No. 3, March 1967, 106-107; *Tōyōgaku Kenkyū*, No. 3, 1969, 15-39.

²² R. Kambayashi in *Kikan Shūkyō Kenkyū*, vol. 1, No. 2, p. 2 f. The Sanskrit original of 'Buddhahood' is in many cases '*buddha-dhātu*' or '*sambuddha-gotra*.' (Mizutani in *IBK.*, vol. 4, No. 2, p. 550 f.). Buddhahood is discussed by Tokugen Sakai in *IBK.*, vol. 5, No. 1, Jan. 1957, pp. 227-230; vol. 6, No. 2, March 1958, p. 130 f.

²³ Dōki Suda in *IBK.*, vol. 10, No. 2, March 1962, pp. 191-194.

This text is a synthesis of various thoughts. According to the teaching of this sūtra, the condemned men (*icchantikas*) are evil by nature and yet their Buddhahood can be realized by practice.²⁵ Its own Disciplines are ruled in this sūtra.²⁶ The Disciplines of the bodhisattva are called 'the Five Kinds of Practice' (五行), i. e. 1) the Noble Practice (聖行), i. e. keeping of precepts, practising meditation, and developing wisdom; 2) the Pure Practice (梵行), i. e. compassionate deeds for the sake of living beings; 3) the Practice by Heavenly Reason (天行), i. e. spontaneous superb acts for the sake of others; 4) the Compassionate Deeds as if for Babies (嬰兒行), i. e. the practice of secular good deeds, and 5) the Practice of Sickness (病行), i. e. the deeds of sharing sufferings with those who need help. Having practised these, one should enter into the Practice of Buddha (*Tathāgata-caryā*), which is formless (無相) and actionless (無作). (The Southern Recension, vol. 11. Taisho, vol. XII, p. 673 b.) The *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* of Mahāyāna was critical of the disciplines of Hīnayāna.²⁷ In the earlier part of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* giving (*dāna*) to the order of monks and nuns is encouraged, whereas in the latter part giving to people in general also was exhorted.²⁸

The Buddhist order represented in the former part of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* consisted of homeless monks and nuns as in Conservative Buddhism, whereas in the latter half of the sūtra the order included laymen also and the significance of faith was emphasized as a combining force of the order; punishment (including execution) of those who slander Mahāyāna is enjoined, which was an exceptional case in the history of Buddhism.²⁹

The concept of permanence of the Cosmic Body of Buddha was discussed in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*. In this connection the *Dharmasāra-sūtra* (?法身經)³⁰ explains the concepts of *dharmakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya*.

The *Tang-lai-pien-ching* (当来变經),³¹ the *Fa-mieh-chin-ching* (法滅盡經),³² the *Nandimit-rāvadāna Ta-ê-lo-han-nan-t'i-mi-to-lo-so-shuo-fa-chu-chi* (大阿羅漢難提蜜多羅所說法住記),³³ translated by Hsüan-tsang are excerpts from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* of Mahāyāna.³⁴

The Sūtra of the Teachings Left by the Buddha (遺教經 alias 仏垂般涅槃略説教誡經)³⁵ translated by Kumārajīva claims to be sermons at the death-bed of Lord Buddha. This sūtra

²⁴ Kōshō Kawamura, *Tōyōgaku Kenkyū*, No. 5, 1971, 49-66.

²⁵ *icchantika* was discussed by Kōshō Mizutani in *IBK.*, vol. 10, No. 2, March 1962, p. 110 f.; ditto: in detail in *Bukkyō Daigaku Kenkyū Kiyō*, No. 40, Dec. 1961. Daijō Tokiwa in *Shūkyō Kinen Ronshū*, pp. 713 f. Shūkō Tsuchihashi: *Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū*, vol. 7, 1952, pp. 60-75.

²⁶ Tsuchihashi in *Ryūkyō Daigaku Ronshū*, No. 345, p. 203 f.; B. Shiio: *Kyōten*, p. 308.

²⁷ Tsugunari Kubo in *IBK.* vol. 11, No. 2, March 1963, pp. 162-163.

²⁸ Tsugunari Kubo in *IBK.* vol. XII, No. 2, pp. 175-178.

²⁹ Tsugunari Kubo in *IBK.* vol. XIII, No. 2, March 1965, pp. 198-207.

³⁰ *Taisho*, No. 766. Translated into Chinese by 法賢 alias Dharmadeva. The Sanskrit title was tentatively given by U. Wogihara in *Index to Nanjio Catalogue*, p. 119. This version was translated into Japanese by Tokuton Tajima in *KIK.*, Kyōshūbu, vol. 15.

³¹ *Taisho*, vol. 12, p. 1118.

³² *Taisho*, vol. 12, p. 1118. Kōjun Mino surmises that this sūtra came into existence in the fourth century A. D. (G. Ono: *Bushō Kaisetsu Daijiten* 仏書解説大辞典, vol. X, p. 121).

³³ *Taisho*, vol. 49, p. 12.

³⁴ B. Matsumoto, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

³⁵ *Taisho*, No. 389, vol. 12, p. 1110. 仏垂般涅槃略説教誡經, tr. into Chinese by Kumārajīva. It was tr. into Japanese by Sōgen Yamagami in *KDK.*, vol. 11; tr. into Japanese by Masafumi Fukaura in *KIK.*, Kyōshūbu, vol. 3. Cf. Ohno, p. 244 f. *The Sūtra of the Teachings Left by the Buddha*, tr. into Chinese by Kumārajīva. Tr. by P. K. Eidmann. Koyata Yamamoto & Co., Ltd., 3-chome, Fushimi-machi, Higashi-ku, Osaka.

was much esteemed among Zen Buddhists of China and Japan. Some scholars hold the opinion that it is mere excerpts from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*,³⁶ whereas others hold the opinion that it is excerpts from the chapter *Mahāparinirvāṇa* of the *Buddhacarita*.³⁷ In any case, it has a close relation to the last scene of the Buddha in the above-mentioned works and 仏本行集經.³⁸ It seems to have been composed after Aśvaghoṣa. Another sūtra (略教誡經),³⁹ being similar to the *Sūtra of the Teachings Left by the Buddha* in content, teaches the proper mental attitude of monks (*bhikṣus*).

Another well-known anthology of words of the Buddha is the “*Forty-two Section Sūtra*” (四十二章經).⁴⁰ The contents of this sūtra were taken mostly from the scriptures of early Buddhism. This scripture was greatly elaborated on in China.⁴¹ Finally, this sūtra became very popular in China and Japan.

The texts of the *Mahā-parinirvāṇa-sūtra* can be used as a sort of chronological standard, by which the dates of other sūtras can be determined.⁴² The *Mahākaruṇā-puṇḍarika-sūtra* (大悲華經)⁴³ came into existence before⁴⁴ the appearance of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* of Mahāyāna, as did the *Caturdāraka-samādhi-sūtra* (方等般泥洹經)⁴⁵ and 四童子三昧經.⁴⁶ In the *Karuṇā-puṇḍarika-sūtra* Original Vows of various Buddhas including Amitāyus are set forth. These Vows are advanced further along the line of Mahāyāna than those in other sūtras.⁴⁷

The Sanskrit text of the Chinese versions of the *Sarva-puṇya-samuccaya-samādhi-sūtra* (i. e., *Têng-chi-chung-tê-san-mei-ching* 等集衆德三昧經⁴⁸ in three volumes and the 集一切福德三昧經⁴⁹ in three volumes) also came out before the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* of Mahāyāna.⁵⁰

³⁶ B. Matsumoto: *Butten*, p. 129 f.

³⁷ *Kogetsu*, p. 599 f. Cf. Ohno, p. 241 f.

³⁸ Fukaura: *op. cit.*, introd.

³⁹ *Taisho*, No. 799. Tr. into Chinese by I-tsing. Translated into Japanese by Hōkei Idzumi in *KIK*, Kyōshūbu, vol. 12.

⁴⁰ 四十二章經, *Taisho*, No. 784. Tr. into Chinese by Kāśyapa Mātāṅga and Dharmarakṣa in 75 or 76 A. D. This was tr. into Japanese by Sōgen Yamagami in *KDK*, vol. 1; translated by Fukaura in *KIK*, Kyōshūbu, vol. 3. Its Ming text (明本) seems to have been composed in c. 960–1019 and its Sui text (遂本) in c. 1019–1100. (Sōeki Suzuki in *Tetsugaku Zasshi*, No. 271, Sept. 1909, pp. 1–26.) On the prototype of this sūtra, cf. H. Hackmann, *Acta Orientalia*, vol. V, 1927, 197–237. [English translation] The Sūtra of 42 Sections and Two Other Scriptures of the Mahāyāna School. Translated from the Chinese by Chu Ch'an. London: The Buddhist Society, 1947. This book includes the English translations of The Sūtra of the Doctrine Bequeathed by the Buddha and The Sūtra on the Eight Awakenings of the Great Ones.

⁴¹ Fukaura: *op. cit.*, introd.

⁴² The chronological relation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* to other sūtras is discussed by Enichi Ōchō, *Ōtani Gakuhō*, vol. 51, No. 1, July 1971, 1–17.

⁴³ *Karuṇā-puṇḍarika*. Edited with Introduction and Notes by Isshi Yamada, 2 vols. London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1968. Reviewed by J. W. de Jong, *IJ*, vol. XIII, No. 4, 1971, 301–313; by Yūken Ujitan, *Suzuki Nenpō*, Nos. 5–7, 1968–1970, 85–87. The Chinese version: *Taisho*, vol. 12, p. 952. Cf. Ohno, p. 245.

⁴⁴ B. Matsumoto: *Hihyō*, p. 96 f. The Sanskrit title of this sūtra is given in the Tibetan version.

⁴⁵ *Taisho*, vol. 12, 911.

⁴⁶ B. Matsumoto: *Hihyō*, p. 94 f.

⁴⁷ Yūken Ujitan in *IBK*, vol. XIII, No. 1, Jan. 1965, pp. 221–226.

⁴⁸ Cf. Wogihara: *Index*, p. 98, *Taisho*, XII, p. 973. This is another version of 集一切福德三昧經.

⁴⁹ G. Ono: *Busho Kaisetsu Daijiten*, vol. V, p. 216.

⁵⁰ B. Matsumoto: *Hihyō*, p. 91 f.

16.M. Tathāgata-garbha Texts

"The Perfect One's Matrix" (*tathāgata-garbha*)¹ is, according to some later Buddhist thinkers, the ultimate reality, from which the cycle of birth and death of all living beings arises. In this principle, the mortal and the immortal coincide with each other. The term implies the meaning that the Perfect One resides latently within the existence of living beings.² It is also the source out of which the Buddha, the Law, and the Brotherhood can come out.³

The thought of the Dependent Origination from *tathāgatagarbha* developed from the combination of the idea of *tathāgata-garbha* with that of *ālaya-vijñāna*⁴

The idea of *buddhadhātu* is admitted implicitly in the Lotus Sūtra.⁵ The concept of *tathāgata-garbha* has something that can be compared to the philosophy of Schelling.⁶ Although the origin of this concept can be traced to earlier periods, it developed in later days.⁷ Scriptures explaining the concept of Tathāgatagarbha⁸ may be classified according to the following three periods:⁹—

First period: No interchange with the thought of *Ālayavijñāna* as yet took place. The sūtras produced in this period are as follows: the first outcome of the *tathāgatagarbha* thought is the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra* (大方等如来藏經 and 大方广如来藏經).¹⁰ The *Pu-tsêng-pu-chien-*

¹ David Seyfort Ruegg: *La théorie du Tathāgatagarbha et du Gotra. Études sur la soteriologie et la gnoseologie du Bouddhisme*. PEFEO, Vol. LXX. Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1969. This is a detailed study on some major concepts of the philosophical systems of Mahāyāna. It consists of four parts. The first part deals with *gotra*, the second part with *ekayāna*, the third part with *tathāgatagarbha*, and the fourth part with the natural luminosity (*prabhāsvara*) of Mind. Probably this is the first attempt of elucidating important concepts of Mahāyāna philosophy. Reviewed by Jikidō Takasaki, *IJ*, vol. XV, No. 4, 1973, pp. 292–299. Cf David Seyfort Ruegg: On the Dge Lugs Pa Theory of the *tathāgatagarbha*. *Pratidānam*, 500–509. Jikidō Takasaki: *Nyoraizō Shisō no Keisei* (如来藏思想の形成——インド大乘仏教思想研究 The formation of the Tathāgatagarbha thought). Tokyo: Shunjūnsha, March 1974. xxii+779+106 pp.

² H. Ui: *Yuishin no Jissen*, p. 68 f. The problem of faith (*śraddhā*) in the Tathāgatagarbha theory was discussed by J. Takasaki, *Komazawa Kiyō*, vol. 22, March 1964, 86–109. The history of the study on *tathāgatagarbha* was traced by Kōshō Mizutani, *Bukkyō Daigaku Kenkyū Kiyō*, Nos. 44 and 45, 245–277.

³ Zuiryū Nakamura in *Ōsaki Gakuhō*, No. 97, p. 135 f.

⁴ Shinkai Ishibashi, *IBK*, vol. 16, No. 1, March 1968, 363–366.

⁵ *IBK*, vol. XX, No. 1, Dec. 1971, 337–341.

⁶ Kōshirō Tamaki in *Shūkyō Kenkyū*, vol. 33, No. 2 (Nr. 161), Feb. 1960, pp. 12–34; No. 4 (Nr. 163), March 1960, pp. 11–35.

⁷ S. Katsumata in *Kikan Shūkyō Kenkyū*, vol. 4, No. 4, p. 288 f.

⁸ The thought of *tathāgatagarbha* is precisely explained in H. Ui: *Indo Tetsugakushi*, pp. 406 ff.; 424ff.; S. Katsumata in *Ui Comm. Vol.*, p. 143 ff.; Shōkō Watanabe in *Sekai Tetsugaku-shi Kōza* (世界哲学史講座), vol. 7, Tokyo, Hikari no Shobō, pp. 287 ff. The concept of *tathāgatagarbha* is discussed by Mochizuki in *Buttan*, p. 700 f.; Takao Kagawa in *IBK*, vol. 5, No. 1, Jan. 1957, p. 140 f.; Kōshō Mizutani in *IBK*, vol. 5, No. 2, March 1957, p. 166 f.; Kōshirō Tamaki in *IBK*, vol. 7, No. 2, March 1959, pp. 260–270; ditto (in Engl.) *IBK*, vol. 9, No. 1, Jan. 1961, pp. 386 f.; Kōkan Ogawa in *IBK*, vol. 8, No. 1, Jan. 1960, pp. 296–299, by Masashige Shinoda in *IBK*, vol. 10, No. 1, Jan. 1962, pp. 128 f. Such words as *dhātu*, *buddha-dhātu*, *tathāgata-dhātu*, *gotra*, *tathāgata-gotra*, and *buddhagarbha* are used as synonyms of *tathāgata-garbha* in philosophical texts. (Ryosai Ichikawa in *IBK*, vol. 8, No. 1, Jan. 1960, p. 184 f.). The term '如来藏' in Paramārtha's translations was examined by Yukio Hatta in *IBK*, vol. 14, No. 1, Dec. 1965, pp. 193–196.

⁹ S. Katsumata: *Ui Comm. Vol.*, p. 143 f.; Kagawa asserts that the *tathāgatagarbhasūtra* is the earliest among the scriptures setting forth the concept of *tathāgatagarbha*. (*IBK*, IV, 1, p. 196 f.).

¹⁰ Two vols. *Taisho*. No. 666. Tr. into Chinese by Buddhābhadrā. Tr. into Japanese by Daijō Tokiwa

ching (不增不減經)¹¹ is a later development of the former. The *Anuttarāśraya-sūtra* (*Wu-shang-i-ching* 無上依經)¹² sets forth the theories of the Three Bodies, the Five Gotras and the potential Buddhahood of the damned (Icchantikas). The *Śrī-mālādevī-siṃhanāda-sūtra*,¹³ the *Mahā-parinirvāṇa-sūtra*, the *Mahābherī-hāraka-parivarta-sūtra* (大法鼓經), the *Aṅgulimālīka-sūtra* (鞞掘摩羅經), etc. belong to this period. Of the above-mentioned sūtras, as the *Anuttarāśraya-sūtra* is considered to have been written around 350 or before 400 A. D.,¹⁴ the other sūtras of the first period were probably its contemporaries. It has been made clear that the *Anuttarāśraya-sūtra* is a composition based upon the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, reshaping its contents into the frame of sūtra style and keeping stress on the *bodhi* aspect which is the ultimate basis (*anut-tarāśraya*).¹⁵

The *Shēng-t'ien-wang-pan-jo-po-lo-mi-ching* (勝天王般若波羅蜜經) incorporated and modified many passages of the *Wu-shang-i-ching*. The former must have been composed posterior to the latter and also to the *Uttara-tantra-śāstra*.¹⁶

The *Candrottāradārikā-sūtra*, whose principal figure is a girl named Candrottārā, a daughter of Vimāla-kīrti, the layman, also embraces the thought of *tathāgata-garbha*.¹⁷

The *Sarvabuddhaviśaya-avatāra-jñānāloka-alan-kāra-sūtra*, alias *Jñānāloka-sūtra* is cited in the *Ratnagotravibhāga* and other texts. It exists in Tibetan, and fragments of its Sanskrit original and its Chinese version were found in Central Asia.¹⁸

The *Sthirādhyāśaya-parivartanā-sūtra* is a scripture of the same trend. It exists in Tibetan alone.¹⁹

Second period: Although both *tathāgatagarbha* and *ālayavijñāna*, are simultaneously explained, no clear explanation of their relations was made as yet. Scriptures produced in this period were the *Buddhatva-śāstra* (仏性論), the *Mahāyānasūtrālan-kāra*, and Commentaries upon the *Mahāyāna-saṃparigraha-śāstra* (攝大乘論) etc.

Third period: The doctrine of the Dependent Origination through *tathāgatagarbha* (如來藏緣起) was completed by adopting the doctrine of *ālayavijñāna*. Sūtras produced in this period were the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, the *Ghanavyūha-sūtra* (密嚴經), and the *Mahāyāna-śraddhot-*

in *KIK.*, Kyōshūbu, vol. 6. Kyōshun Tōdō edited a collated edition of the Tibetan and two Chinese versions. (*Comparative Study in Chinese and Tibetan texts of Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra*, compiled by Bukkyō Bunka Kenkyūsho. Kyoto, Bukkyō Bunka Kenkyūsho. 1959. 8+131 pp.) Translated by Jikidō Takasaki from the Tibetan into Japanese. *Daijō Butten*, vol. 12. Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, May 1975.

¹¹ *Taisho*, No. 668. Tr. into Chinese by Bodhiruci. Tr. into Japanese by Daijō Tokiwa in *KIK.*, Kyōshūbu, vol. 6. Translated by Jikidō Takasaki from the Chinese into Japanese. *Daijō Butten*, vol. 12. Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, May 1975. Discussed by Jikidō Takasaki in *Komazawa Daigaku Bukkyō Gakubu Kenkyū Kiyō*, No. 23, March 1965, pp. 88-107.

¹² *Taisho*, No. 669. Tr. into Chinese by Paramārtha. Tr. into Japanese by Daijō Tokiwa in *KIK.*, Kyōshūbu, vol. 6. D. Tokiwa asserts that this sūtra came into existence in the age of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu. (G. Ono: *Busho Kaisetsu Daijiten*, vol. X, p. 409).

¹³ Cf. *supra*. The *tathāgata-garbha* thought of this sūtra was discussed by Narita in *Bukkyō Daigaku Gakuhō*, vol. 1, p. 36 f.

¹⁴ H. Ui: *Kyōten*, p. 89. (revised ed. p. 143)

¹⁵ Jikidō Takasaki (in Engl.) in *IBK.*, vol. 8. No., 2 March 1960.

Takasaki asserts that 無上依經 did not exist prior to Paramārtha, but was composed by Paramārtha based upon the *Ratnagotravibhāga*. Jikidō Takasaki in *Yūki Comm. Vol.* pp. 241-264.

¹⁶ Masashige Shinoda in *IBK.* vol. XIII, No. 2, March 1965, pp. 195-197.

¹⁷ This point was stressed by Ninkaku Takada in *IBK.*, vol. 5, No. 1, Jan. 1957, pp. 83-86.

¹⁸ Kenryū Tsukinowa and Shūki Yoshimura in *Monumenta Serindica*, vol. 1, pp. 136-137.

¹⁹ Translated into Japanese by Ninkaku Takada in *Kōyasan Daigaku Ronsō*, No. 1, pp. 1-29.

pādaśāstra etc.

The *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*²⁰ claims that Śākyamuni went to the island of Laṅkā (Ceylon) and taught this sūtra. There are several versions of this sūtra, one fairly different in content from another.²¹ In view of the fact that it contains quotations from the *Śrīmālādevīsīṃhanāda*, *Hastikakṣya*, *Mahāmegha*, *Aṅgulimālīka-sūtras* etc.,²² it is impossible to consider that this sūtra existed before the time of Vasubandhu. Probably it was produced about 400,²³ or in the fourth century.²⁴ Some scholars say that it is likely that the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* was compiled in 350–400, and therein we find the theory of Eight Vijñānas in its incipient stage.²⁵ Another scholar holds the view that this sūtra came into existence sometime between the sixth and seventh centuries.²⁶

This sūtra claims that the Buddha taught the two dharmas, i. e. *pratyātmadharmatā* and *paurāṇasthitidharmatā*.²⁷ In this sūtra all phenomena were regarded as the manifestation of *deha-bhoga-pratiṣṭhābhāṃ vijñānam*, i. e. the manifestation of the intelligent subject in the form of *deha*, *bhoga* and *pratiṣṭhā*.²⁸ The tathāgatagarbha thought in this sūtra seems to be hybrid and inconsistent.²⁹

In the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* the basis of the Four Noble Truths was thought to be Mind.³⁰

This sūtra represents similar thought to the *Gauḍapādiya-kārikās* and the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*,³¹ and it had some contacts with the Sāṃkhya school.³²

²⁰ The Sanskrit text was edited. Bunyū Nanjio: *The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. Bibliotheca Otaniensia, vol. 1, Kyoto, 1923. Reprinted with S. Yamaguchi's preface, Kyoto, Otani University 1956. *An Index to the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra (Nanjio Edition)*. Sanskrit-Chinese-Tibetan, Chinese-Sanskrit, and Tibetan-Sanskrit. Compiled by D. T. Suzuki. Kyoto, The Sanskrit Buddhist Texts Publishing Society, 1934. Reprint, Tokyo, The Suzuki Foundation, June 1965. The Sanskrit text was translated into Japanese by Bunyū Nanjio and Hokei Idzumi (邦訳梵文入楞伽經), Kyoto: Nanjio Sensei Koki Kinen Shukugakai (南条先生古稀記念祝賀会) 4+16+222 pp. Recently an improved Japanese translation was published.—*Bonbun Wayaku Nyūryōgakyō*, (梵文和訳入楞伽經). Translated by Kōsai Yasui. Kyoto: Hōzōkan, July 1976. The *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, tr. into English by Daisetz Teitarō Suzuki. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1932; reprint 1956. Cf. *EW.*, vol. VIII, No. 1, p. 110. D. T. Suzuki: *Studies in the Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (Routledge, 1930). Reviewed by G. Tucci, *EW.* vol. 8, 1957, 110. 入楞伽經 10 vols. *Taisho*, No. 671. Tr. by Bodhiruci into Chinese. This text, which is difficult to read, was tr. into Japanese by Daijō Tokiwa in *KIK.*, Kyōshūbu, vol. 7. There exists an Old Khotanese translation of the *Laṅkāvatāra*. (*Monumenta Serindica*, vol. 4, Appendix, p. 355). Some points in the earliest Chinese version of the *Laṅkāvatāra* were examined by Jikidō Takasaki, *Rev. Jō Okuda Comm. Vol.* (Oct. 1976), pp. 959–972. Akira Suganuma: The Five Dharmas (*pañcadharma*) in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, *IBK.* vol. 15, No. 2, March 1967, 32–39 (in Engl.); also, ditto: *Tōyōgaku Kenkyū*, No. 5, 1971, 203–221. Kamalaśīla explains three verses of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* (vv. 256–258). (Takeshi Azuma, *IBK.* vol. 15, No. 2, March 1967, 152–153.)

²¹ D. T. Suzuki: *SK.*, V, 6, p. 19 f.

²² Ed. by B. Nanjio and H. Idzumi, p. 222, l, 19, p. 233, l, 4; p. 258, l, 4.

²³ H. Ui: *Kyōten*, p. 94. (revised ed. p. 149); Contrary to this opinion, Mr. Shioda thinks that the *Laṅkāvatāra* was compiled probably before the *Buddhatva-sāstra* (仏性論). (*IBK.*, III, 1, p. 249 f.).

²⁴ Winternitz, p. 337.

²⁵ Naoya Funahashi, *Buddhist Seminar*, No. 13, May 1971, 40–50.

²⁶ Takai in *IBK.*, vol. 2, p. 332. Cf. Poussin, *MCB.* vol. I, 1932, 410–412.

²⁷ Akira Suganuma, *Shūkyō Kenkyū*, Nr. 189, vol. 40, No. 2, Nov. 1966, 43–66. The term '*pratyātma-dharmatā*' in this sūtra was discussed by K. Kawada in *IBK.* vol. 14, No. 1, Dec. 1965, pp. 1–9. (in German).

²⁸ Jikidō Takasaki, in the journal *Bukkyōgaku*, the inaugural number, 1976, pp. 1–26.

²⁹ Kokan Ogawa in *IBK.*, vol. 9, No. 1, Jan. 1961, pp. 213–216.

³⁰ Kumataro Kawada in *IBK.* vol. XII, No. 2, March 1964, pp. 35–38.

³¹ *ABhOR* I, XXXVI, 1955, p. 298 f.

³² J. W. Hauer: *Die Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra und das Sāṃkhya*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, date unknown.

This sūtra was very influential in Zen Buddhism.³³

According to the *Mahāyānādhisamaya-sūtra*, (大乘同性經),³⁴ Vibhīṣaṇa, the Rāvaṇa king, comes from Laṅkā, and the Buddha teaches the Mahāyāna doctrine.

The *Mahāghaṇavyūha-sūtra*³⁵ sets forth a synthesis of the concepts of *tathāgatagarbha*, *ālayavijñāna* and *Ghaṇa-vyūha*. One scholar holds the view that this sūtra came into existence sometime between the sixth and seventh centuries,³⁶ whereas others hold that this sūtra was composed later than the *Laṅkāvatāra*.³⁷ Another scholar clearly states that it was composed in about 600–676 A. D.³⁸

The *Mahāyāna-śraddhotpāda-śāstra*, (大乘起信論) which was traditionally ascribed to Aśvaghoṣa, and whose Sanskrit original³⁹ was lost, has been used as a basic text of Buddhist philosophy in China and Japan. One scholar supposes the date of the *Mahāyāna-śraddhotpāda-śāstra* to be prior to Asaṅga.⁴⁰

In this text, Nescience (*avidyā*) is the source of all mundane existence.⁴¹ Because of Nescience, the false assumption which ascribes existence to phenomena of the objective world comes forth. False assumption is not mere non-being; being and non-being at the same time. It is without its own essence, and not apart from the fundamental Mind.⁴² The whole situation of human existence is called "suchness", which involves negation as its momentum within.⁴³ Mundane existence comes to an end by awakening to the truth.⁴⁴ Various kinds of practices⁴⁵ are mentioned in this text, but Japanese thinkers explained that, viewed from the basic thought of this text, practices are unnecessary⁴⁶ for enlightenment.

³³ The idea of *tathāgatagarbha* and Zen, discussed by Giyū Nishi, *Zen Bunka Kenkyūsho Kiyō*, No. 3, Oct. 1971, 1–20.

³⁴ Two vols. *Taisho*, No. 673. Tr. into Chinese by Jñānayaśas (闍那耶舍) into Chinese in 570 A. D. Tr. into Japanese by Hōkei Idzumi in *KIK.*, Kyōshūbu, vol. 11.

³⁵ 大乘密嚴經 3 vols. *Taisho*, No. 682. Tr. into Chinese by Amoghavajra in 762–765. Tr. into Japanese by Daijō Tokiwa in *KIK.*, Kyōshūbu, vol. 16. There is another Chinese version by Divākara (676–688 A. D.).

³⁶ Takai in *IBK.*, II, p. 332.

³⁷ H. Ui: *Kyōten*, p. 97. (revised ed. p. 153.)

³⁸ D. Tokiwa: *op. cit.*, introd.

³⁹ There exist two Chinese versions, one by Paramārtha, and the other by Śikṣānanda. The former was tr. into English by D. T. Suzuki. Recently a new translation was published. Yoshito S. Hakeda: *The Awakening of Faith, Attributed to Aśvaghoṣa*. Translated with commentary. New York and London: Columbia Univ. Press, 1967. Reviewed by Kenneth K. Inada, *PhEW* vol. XIX, No. 2, April 1969, 195–196; by Rudolf Wagner, *ZDMG*. Band 120, 1970, 426. The constituent elements of the *Mahāyāna śraddhotpāda* can be traced to earlier sūtras and treatises. Hiroo Kashiwagi in *IBK.* vol. 11, No. 2, March 1963, pp. 255–259. This treatise was discussed by Shigeo Kamata, *Toyo Bunka Kenkyūsho Kiyō*, No. 49, March, 1969, 43–116.

⁴⁰ *Matsunami Coll. Ess.* 172–189.

⁴¹ Suzuki in *IBK.*, vol. 1, No. 2, p. 122 f.

⁴² Y. Uyeda in *Ui Comm. Vol.*, pp. 99 f.

⁴³ Junshō Tanaka in *NBGN.*, vol. 8, p. 37 f.

⁴⁴ Ito in *Kikan Shūkyō Kenkyū*, vol. 5, No. 2, p. 29 f.

⁴⁵ Meditation in the *Mahāyāna-śraddhotpāda-śāstra* was discussed by S. Matsunami. *Matsunami Coll. Ess.* 190–200.

⁴⁶ Kazuo Ito in *NBGN.*, vol. 14, p. 1 f. D. T. Suzuki: "Aśvaghoṣa's Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna." Chicago: Open Court, 1900. In Japan there have been published many editions of Paramārtha's version. The best and most reliable is H. Ui: *Daijō Kishinron* (大乘起信論), ed. and tr. into Japanese and annotated by H. Ui, Iwanami Bunko, June 1936. Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten. 148 pp. Before it the text was translated into Japanese by Shinkō Mochizuki in *KIK.*, Ronshūbu, vol. 5. Formerly Senshō Murakami's *Daijō Kishinron Kōwa*, (大乘起信論講話 lectures on the *Mahāyāna-śraddhotpāda-śāstra*, Tokyo: Heigo Shuppansha, 1919. 3+289 pp.) was well known. The text was translated into colloquial Japanese by Shōkō Watanabe, in *Zaike Bukkyō*, vol. 1, Nos. 1–4. Recently a detailed exposition was published.—Shōhō Take-

The *Mahāyāna-śraddhotpāda-śāstra* was very influential in the philosophy of the Fua-yen sect of China.⁴⁷

The *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga-mahāyāna-uttaratantra-śāstra* will be discussed in the next Part.

In "the Bodhisattva Ornament Sūtra"⁴⁸ Śākyamuni, who is called by the honorific name "Bodhisattva Ornament," propounds the concept of *viññāna* grounded on nothingness.

In the *Daibucchō-shuryōgon-gyō* (*Ta-fo-ting-shou-lêng-yen-ching*)⁴⁹ also, the *tathāgata-garbha* thought is found.⁵⁰

In the *tathāgatagarbha-sūtras* our original Pure Mind (*citta-prakṛtipariśuddha*) was compared to gold (*jātārūpa*), and this metaphor can be traced back to the scriptures of Early Buddhism.⁵¹ In these sūtras the four features of the Cosmic Body of the Tathāgata are acknowledged, i. e. *nitya*, *dhruva*, *śiva*, and *śāśvata*.⁵²

The concept of *tathāgatagarbha* gave rise to the idea of *pariṇāmiki cyuti* (transmigration in the condition of not being defiled by afflictions).⁵³

In Central Asia there has been preserved an Uigurian work elucidating the Tathāgata-garbha thought.⁵⁴

mura, *Daijō Kishinron Kōwa* (大乘起信論講話 A lecture on the Mahāyāna-ś). Kyoto: Hyakkaen, Jan. 1959. 2+3+311+7 pp. The thought of this text was philosophically discussed by Shinichi Hisamatsu in his *Kishin no Kadai* (起信の課題 Problems of the awakening of faith). Tokyo: Kōbundō, July 1947. 3+123 pp. All the translations and commentaries were mentioned in Matsumoto: *Butten*, p. 49 f. Once Shinkō Mochizuki published the theory that the *Mahāyānaśraddhotpāda* was not composed by an Indian, but by some Chinese (*Shūkyō Kenkyū*, NS., vol. 3, No. 5, p. 63 f.). But this assumption was refuted by many scholars (e. g., Matsumoto in *Shūkyō Kenkyū*, NS., vol. 3, No. 4, p. 81 f.; T. Hayashiya in *Shūkyō Kenkyū*, NS., vol. 3, No. 6, p. 75 f.; ditto: *Bukkyō oyobi Bukkyōshi no Kenkyū*, vol. 1). Sōchū Suzuki held the opinion that this text ascribed to Paramārtha was not virtually translated by him, No. 2, p. 49 f. but by Bodhiruci or someone among his followers (*Shūkyō Kenkyū*, vol. 5, No. 1, p. 21 f.; vol. 5, No. 2, p. 49 f.), but this opinion also was not adopted by others. Hiroo Kashiwagi doubts the reliability of the traditional ascription of the new Chinese version of the Awakening of Faith to Śikṣānanda. (*IBK.*, vol. 10, No. 2, March 1962, p. 124 f.). In any case, it is certain that this text was composed after Nāgārjuna (Matsumoto: *Butten*, p. 35 f.). A philosophical interpretation of the teachings of the *Śraddhotpāda-śāstra* was given by Sokō Okamoto in *IBK.*, vol. 6., No. 2, 1958, March, pp. 146-149. The concept of the mundane mental function (妄念) was discussed by Y. Uyeda in *Ui Comm. Vol.*, pp. 101 f. In the *Mahāyānaśraddhotpāda-śāstra* the Awakening of Aspiration (信成就発心) is set forth as sevenfold. (Hiroo Kashiwagi, *IBK.* vol. 16, No. 1, March 1968, 58-63.)

Western scholars are very doubtful about the name and nationality of the author of the *Mahāyānaśraddhotpāda-śāstra*. Erich Frauwallner: *Texte der indischen Philosophie* B. and 2. *Die Philosophie des Buddhismus*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1958. cf. J. Rahder in *PhEW.*, vol. X, Nos. 3-4, 1960, p. 171. U. Wogihara suggests that the Sanskrit title of 大乘起信論 is *Mahāyāna-prasāda-prabhāvana*, based upon the *Mahāvvyutpatti*, (大藏經南条目錄補正索引, p. 73). In the Tibetan Tripiṭaka there is a work of the same title (Tōhoku Catalogue 144). However, the content of this work has little to do with 大乘起信論, according to my investigations.

⁴⁷ Jitsugen Kobayashi in *IBK.* vol. XIII, No. 2, March 1965, pp. 225-228.

⁴⁸ 菩薩瓔珞經 14 or 16 vols. *Taisho*, No. 656, tr. into Chinese by Buddhasmṛti in 376 A. D. Tr. into Japanese by D. Tokiwa in *KIK.*, Kyōshūbu, vol. 16.

⁴⁹ 大仏頂首楞嚴經, Its full title is 大仏頂如来密因修証了義諸菩薩万行首楞嚴經, *Taisho*, vol. XIX, p. 105 f., No. 945.

⁵⁰ The *tathāgatagarbha* thought in the 大仏頂首楞嚴經 discussed by Shū Yū-ō, *Tōyōgaku Kenkyū*, No. 7, 1973, 49-64.

⁵¹ Zuiryū Nakamura in *IBK.* vol. 11, No. 2, March 1963, pp. 116-119.

⁵² Zuiryū Nakamura, *IBK.* vol. XIV, No. 2, March 1966, pp. 138-139.

⁵³ Shunei Hirai in *IBK.* vol. 11, No. 2, March 1963, pp. 164-165.

⁵⁴ Walther Ruben: *Gesch. d. ind. Phil.*, op. cit., 299 f.

D. T. Suzuki On Indian Mahayana Buddhism

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VII

The Gaṇḍavyūha

1

WHEN we come to the *Gaṇḍavyūha*¹ after the *Lañ-
kāvatāra*, or the *Vajracchedikā*, or the *Parinir-
vāṇa*, or even after the *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka* and the *Sukhā-
vatīvyūha*, there is a complete change in the stage where the
great religious drama of Mahāyāna Buddhism is enacted. We
find here nothing cold, nothing gray or earth-colored, and
nothing humanly mean; for everything one touches in the
Gaṇḍavyūha shines out in an unsurpassable manner. We are
no more in this world of limitation, obscurity, and adumbration;
we are miraculously lifted up among the heavenly galaxies.
The ethereal world is luminosity itself. The somberness of
earthly Jetavana, the disreputableness of the dry-grass seat on
which the Lion of the Śākya probably sat when preaching, a

¹ The *Gaṇḍavyūha*, or *Avatāṃsaka*, comprehensively known as *Hua-yen-
ching* in Chinese, represents a great school of Mahāyāna thought. Tradition-
ally, the sūtra is believed to have been delivered by the Buddha while
he was in deep meditation after the Enlightenment. In the sūtra the
Buddha gives no personal discourses on any subject except giving the
sanction, "Sādhu! Sādhu!" to the statements made by the attending
Bodhisattvas such as Mañjuśrī or Samantabhadra, or emitting rays of
supernatural light from the various parts of his body as required by the
occasion. The Sanskrit *Gaṇḍavyūha* exclusively treats of the pilgrimage of
Sudhana under the direction of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. The young
pilgrim-aspirant for Supreme Enlightenment visits one teacher after another,
amounting to more than fifty in number. The object is to find out what
constitutes the life of devotion as practiced by a Bodhisattva. The sūtra
occupies more than one-fourth of the *Avatāṃsaka* and is complete in
itself, undoubtedly proving its independent origin.

group of shabbily dressed mendicants listening to a discourse on the unreality of an individual ego soul—all these have completely vanished here. When the Buddha enters into a certain kind of Samādhi, the pavilion where he is situated all of a sudden expands to the fullest limits of the universe; in other words, the universe itself is dissolved in the being of the Buddha. The universe is the Buddha, and the Buddha is the universe. And this is not mere expanse of emptiness, nor is it the shrivelling-up of it into an atom; for the ground is paved with diamonds; the pillars, beams, railings, etc., are inlaid with all kinds of precious stones and gems sparkling brilliantly, and glittering with the reflection of one another.

Not only is the universe of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* not on this side of existence, but the audience surrounding the Buddha is not a mortal one. The Bodhisattvas, the Śrāvakas, and even the worldly lords who are assembling here are all spiritual beings. Though the Śrāvakas and lords and their followers do not fully comprehend the significance of the miracles going on about them, none of them are those whose minds are still under the bondage of ignorance and folly. If they were, they could not even be present at this extraordinary scene.

How does all this come about?

The compilation of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* was made possible owing to a definite change which took place in the mind of the Buddhist concerning life, the world, and especially the Buddha. Thus in the study of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, what is most essential to know is that the Buddha is no more the one who is living in the world conceivable in terms of space and time. His consciousness is not that of an ordinary mind which must be regulated according to the senses and logic. Nor is it a product of poetical imagination which creates its own images and methods of dealing with particular objects. The Buddha of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* lives in a spiritual world which has its own rules.

In this spiritual world there are no time divisions such as the past, present, and future; for they have contracted themselves into a single moment of the present where life quivers in its true sense. The conception of time as an objective blank in which particular events as its contents succeed one after another has completely been discarded. The Buddha in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* thus

knows no time continuity; the past and the future are both rolled up in this present moment of illumination, and this present moment is not something standing still with all its contents, for it ceaselessly moves on. Thus the past is the present, so is the future, but this present in which the past and the future are merged never remains the present; in other words, it is eternally present. And at the center of this eternal present the Buddha has fixed his abode which is no abode.

As with time, so with space. Space in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is not an extension divided by mountains and forests, rivers and oceans, lights and shades, the visible and the invisible. Extension is here indeed, as there is no contraction of space into one single block of existence; but what we have here is an infinite mutual fusion or penetration of all things, each with its individuality yet with something universal in it. The general fusion thus taking place is the practical annihilation of space which is recognizable only through change and division and impenetrability. To illustrate this state of existence, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* makes everything it depicts transparent and luminous, for luminosity is the only possible earthly representation that conveys the idea of universal interpenetration, the ruling topic of the sūtra. A world of lights transcending distance, opacity, and ugliness of all sorts, is the world of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*.

With the annihilation of space and time, there evolves a realm of imagelessness or shadowlessness (*anābhāsa*). As long as there are lights and shades, the principle of individuation always overwhelms us human mortals. In the *Gaṇḍavyūha* there is no shadowiness; it is true there are rivers, flowers, trees, nets, banners, etc., in the land of purity, in the description of which the compiler taxes his human imagination to its utmost limits; but no shadows are visible here anywhere. The clouds themselves are luminous bodies inconceivable and inexpressible in number,² hanging all over the Jetavana of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*—which are described in its own terminology as “heavenly jewel palaces,” “incense wood,” “Sumeru,” “musical instruments,” “pearl nets,” “heavenly figures,” etc.

This universe of luminosity, this scene of interpretation, is

² *Acintya* and *anabhihātpya* are numbers of high denominations.

the Śrāvaka ideal. Thus they could not help reviving and upholding the Bodhisattva ideal, which marked the career of the Buddha before his attainment of supreme enlightenment; they then endeavored to unfold to its furthest limits all that was to be found in the ideal. I have therefore selected the opening chapter of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, where the Bodhisattva ideal is contrasted in strong color to the Śrāvaka ideal, to show what was in the consciousness of the Mahāyāna followers when they developed their own thoughts and aspirations.

The Zen followers in China have induced even the Buddha himself to take an active part in the common life of the masses. He no more sits on a high seat decorated with seven kinds of jewels, discoursing on such abstract subjects as Non-ego, Emptiness, or Mind-only. On the contrary, he takes up a spade in his hands, tills the ground, sows seeds, and garners the harvest. In outward appearances he cannot be distinguished from a commoner whom we meet on the farm, in the street, or in the office. He is just as hard-working a person as we are. The Buddha in his Chinese Zen life does not carry his *Gaṇḍavyūha* atmosphere ostentatiously about him but quietly within him. A Buddha alone discovers him.

The following points may then be noted in the reading of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*:

1. The one dominant feeling, we may almost assert, that runs through the text is an active sense of grand inscrutable mystery (*acintya*), going beyond the power of thinking and description. Everything one sees, hears, or observes in the Dharmadhātu is a mystery, because it is incomprehensible to the ordinary sense of logical measurement. Jetavana of so many square miles abruptly expands to the ends of the universe—does this not surpass human conception? A Bodhisattva comes from a world lying beyond even the furthest end of the universe—that is, beyond an ocean of worlds as innumerable as particles of atoms constituting a Buddha land—is this not a wonderful event? And let us remind you that this Bodhisattva is accompanied by his retinues as innumerable as the number of atoms constituting a Buddha land, and again that these visitors are coming from all the ten quarters, accompanied not only by their innumerable retinues but surrounded by luminous clouds, shining banners,

known as the Dharmadhātu, in contrast to the Lokadhātu which is this world of particulars. In the Dharmadhātu there are space and time and individual beings as in the Lokadhātu, but they show none of their earthly characteristics of separateness and obduracy as are perceivable in the latter. For the Dharmadhātu is not a universe spatially or temporarily constructed like the Lokadhātu, and yet it is not utter blankness or mere void which is identifiable with absolute nonentity. The Dharmadhātu is a real existence and not separated from the Lokadhātu, only it is not the same as the latter, when we do not come up to the spiritual level where the Bodhisattvas are living. It is realizable when the solid outlines of individuality melt away and the feeling of finiteness no more oppresses us. The *Gaṇḍavyūha* is thus known under the title "The Entering into the Dharmadhātu" (*dharmadhātupraveśa*).

2

What then are some of the chief changes of thought that have taken place in Buddhism enabling it to evolve a universe to be known as Dharmadhātu? What are those feelings and ideas which have entered into the consciousness of the inhabitants of the Dharmadhātu? In other words, what are the qualifications of Tathāgata, Bodhisattva, and Śrāvaka?

When these are specified, we shall know how the Mahāyāna came to be differentiated from the Hīnayāna, that is, why some Buddhists became dissatisfied with the way Buddhism had so far taken in its development after the passing of the Buddha himself. This development had run steadily toward exclusive asceticism on the one hand and toward the elaboration of philosophical subtleties on the other. This meant that Buddhism, instead of being a practical, social, everyday religion, had turned into a sort of mysticism which keeps its votaries on the giddy height of unapproachable abstractions making them refuse to descend among earthly entanglements. Such a religion may be all very well for the elite, for Arhats and Pratyekabuddhas, but it lacks vitality and democratic usefulness when it is kept from coming in contact with the concrete affairs of life. The Mahāyānists revolted against this aloofness and unconcernedness of

etc. Depict all this in your own minds, exercising all the power of imagination that you can command—is it not really a most miraculous sight altogether transcending human thought? All that the poor writer of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* can say is “inconceivable” (*acintya*) and “indescribable” (*anabhilāpya*). The miracles performed are not of such local or partial nature as we encounter in most religious literature. Miracles so called are ordinarily a man’s walking on water, a stick changing into a tree, a blind man being enabled to see, and so on. Not only are all such petty miracles as are recorded in the history of religion quite insignificant in scale and of no value when compared with those of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, but they are fundamentally different from the latter; for the *Gaṇḍavyūha* miracles are possible only when the whole scheme of the universe as we conceive it is altered from its very basis.

2. We are impressed now with the spiritual powers of the Buddha who can achieve all these wonders by merely entering into a certain Samādhi. What are these powers? They are defined thus: (1) the sustaining and inspiring power (*adhiṣṭhāna*)³ which is given to the Bodhisattva to achieve the aim of his life; (2) the power of working miracles (*vikurvita*); (3) the power of ruling (*anubhāva*); (4) the power of the original vow (*pūrvapraṇidhāna*); (5) the power of goodness practiced in his former lives (*pūrvasukṛitakusālamūla*); (6) the power of receiving all good friends (*kalyāṇamitraparigraha*); (7) the power of pure faith and knowledge (*śraddhāyājñānaviśuddhi*); (8) the power of attaining a highly illuminating faith (*udārādhimuktyavabhāsapratilambha*); (9) the power of purifying the thought of the Bodhisattva (*bodhisattvādhyāśayapariśuddhi*); and (10) the power of earnestly walking toward all-knowledge and original vows (*adhyāśayasarvajñatāpraṇidhānaprasthāna*).

3. The fact that the transformation of the entire city of Jetavana was due to the miraculous power of the Samādhi attained by the Buddha makes one inquire into the nature of the Samādhi. According to the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, the miracle was effected by the strength of a great compassionate heart (*mahākaruṇā*) which constitutes the very essence of the Samādhi; for

³ This is an important conception in Mahāyāna Buddhism. For explanation see my *Studies in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, pp. 202 ff.

compassion is its body (*śarīra*), its source (*mukha*), its leader (*pūrvagaṇa*), and the means of expanding itself all over the universe. Without this great heart of love and compassion, the Buddha’s Samādhi, however exalted it may be in every other way, will be of no avail in the enactment of the great spiritual drama so wonderfully described here. This is indeed what characteristically distinguishes the Mahāyāna from all that has preceded it in the history of Buddhism. Owing to its self-expanding and self-creating power, a great loving heart transforms this earthly world into one of splendor and mutual fusion, and this is where the Buddha is always abiding.

4. The *Gaṇḍavyūha* is in a sense the history of the inner religious consciousness of Samantabhadra the Bodhisattva, whose wisdom eye (*jñānacakṣus*), life of devotion (*caryā*), and original vows (*praṇidhāna*) make up its contents. Thus all the Bodhisattvas taking part in the establishment of the Dharmadhātu are born (*abhiniṛyāta*) of the life and vows of Samantabhadra. And Sudhana’s chief object of pilgrimage which is told in such detail in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* was nothing else but the identifying of himself with Samantabhadra the Bodhisattva. When after visiting more than fifty teachers of all sorts he came to Samantabhadra, he was thoroughly instructed by the Bodhisattva as regards his life of devotion, his knowledge, his vows, his miraculous powers, etc.; and when Sudhana realized what all these Buddhist disciplines meant he found himself in complete identity not only with Samantabhadra, but with all the Buddhas. His body filled the universe to its ends, and his life of devotion (*caryā*), his enlightenment (*sambodhi*), his transformation bodies (*vikurvita*), his revolution of the Dharma wheel, his eloquence, his voice, his faith, his abode, his love and compassion, and his emancipation and mastery over the world were exactly those of Samantabhadra and all the Buddhas.)

What most concerns us here is the idea of the vow (*praṇidhāna*) which is made by a Bodhisattva at the beginning of his career and which controls all his later life. His vows are concerned with enlightening, or emancipating, or saving all his fellow beings, which include not only sentient beings but the non-sentient. The reason he gives up everything that is ordinarily regarded as belonging to oneself is not to gain a

word or a phrase of truth for himself—there is in fact no such thing as truth abstractly conceived, nor is there anything that is to be adhered to as ego substance, in the great ocean of Reality; what he wants to accomplish by his life of self-sacrifice is to lead all beings to final emancipation, to a state of happiness which is not of this world, to make the light of knowledge illuminate the whole universe, and to see all the Buddhas praised and adored by all beings. This is what mainly constitutes a life of devotion as practiced by Samantabhadra the Bodhisattva.

5. When I say that the Mahāyāna or Bodhisattva ideal is contrasted with the Hīnayāna or Arhat ideal in the former's being practical and intimately connected with our everyday earthly life, some may doubt this, seeing what a mysterious world the Dharmadhātu is where all kinds of apparent impossibilities are taking place as if they were the most ordinary things, such as carrying a bucket of water, or kindling a bundle of faggots. The Dharmadhātu which is the world of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is assuredly a transcendental one standing in no connection with the hard facts of this life. But the objector must remember that the point from which we are to survey the world according to the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is not that of a mind immersed in the mire of individualization. In order to see life and the world in their proper bearing, the Mahāyāna expects us first to clear off all the obstacles that rise from our obstinacy in taking the world of relativity as the ultimate limit of reality. When the veil is lifted, the obstacles are swept away, and the self-nature of things presents itself in the aspect of Suchness; and it is then that the Mahāyāna is ready to take up the so-called real problems of life and solve them in accordance with the truth, i.e. *yathābhūtam*. Contradiction is so deep-seated in life that it can never be eradicated until life is surveyed from a point higher than itself. When this is done, the world of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* ceases to be a mystery, a realm devoid of form and corporeality, for it now overlaps this earthly world; no, it becomes that "Thou art it," and there is a perfect fusion of the two. The Dharmadhātu is the Lokadhātu, and its inhabitants—that is, all the Bodhisattvas, including the Buddhas—are ourselves, and their doings are our doings. They looked so

full of mystery, they were miracles, as long as they were observed from this earthly end, where we imagined that there was really something at the other end; but as soon as the dividing wall constructed by our imagination is removed, Samantabhadra's arms raised to save sentient beings become our own, which are now engaged in passing the salt to a friend at the table, and Maitreya's opening the Vairocana Tower for Sudhana is our ushering a caller into the parlor for a friendly chat. No more sitting on the summit of reality (*bhūtakoti*), in the tranquility of absolute oneness, do we review a world of turmoil; but rather we see both the Bodhisattvas and the Buddhas shining in the sweat of their foreheads, in the tears shed for the mother who lost a child, in the fury of passions burning against injustice in its multifarious forms—in short, in their never-ending fight against all that goes under the name of evil. This again reminds us of P'ang's reputed verse:

How wondrously supernatural!
And how miraculous this!
I draw water, I carry fuel!

Lin-chi's sermon on Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, and Avalokiteśvara may be considered also in this connection. "There are," he says, "some student-monks who look for Mañjuśrī at Wu-tai Shan,⁴ but they have already taken the wrong road. There is no Mañjuśrī at Wu-tai Shan. Do you wish to know where he is? There is something this very moment at work in you, showing no tendency to waver, betraying no disposition to doubt—this is your living Mañjuśrī. The light of non-discrimination which flashes through every thought of yours—this is your Samantabhadra who remains true all the time. Every thought of yours which, knowing of itself how to break off the bondage, is emancipated at every moment—this is entering into the Samādhi of Avalokiteśvara. Each of them functions in harmonious mutuality and simultaneously, so that one is three, three is one. When this is understood, you are able to read the sūtras."

Commenting on Lin-chi's view of "No Mañjuśrī at Wu-tai Shan," a Zen master has this verse:

⁴ The Wu-tai is the sacred abode of Mañjuśrī in China while the E-mei is consecrated to Samantabhadra and the P'u-t'o-lo to Avalokiteśvara.

had mirrors placed encircling it on all sides. The central light reflected itself in every one of the mirrors, and every one of these reflected lights was reflected again in every mirror, so that there was a perfect interplay of lights, that is, of concrete-universals. This is said to have enlightened the mind of the Empress. It is necessary to have this kind of philosophy for the understanding of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* or the *Avatamsaka*. The following extracts from the text before us will help us to have a glimpse into its deep intuition.

After describing the transformations that took place in Jetavana when the Buddha entered into a Samādhi known as Simhaviṣṭimbhita, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* goes on to say: "All this is due to the Buddha's miraculous (*acintya*) deeds of goodness, to his miraculous work of purity, to his miraculously mighty power; all this is because he has the miraculous power of transforming his one body and making it pervade the entire universe; it is because he has the miraculous power of making all the Buddhas, all the Buddha lands with their splendors, enter into his own body; it is because he has the miraculous power of manifesting all the images of the Dharmadhātu within one single particle of dust; it is because he has the miraculous power of revealing all the Buddhas of the past with their successive doings within a single pore of his skin; it is because he has the miraculous power of illuminating the entire universe with each one of the rays which emanate from his body; it is because he has the miraculous power of evolving clouds of transformation from a single pore of his skin and making them fill up all the Buddha lands; it is because he has the miraculous power of revealing in a single pore of his skin the whole history of all the worlds in the ten quarters from their first appearance until their final destruction. It is for these reasons that in this grove of Jetavana are revealed all the purities and splendors of the Buddha lands."

When all the Bodhisattvas with an inconceivable number of followers come from the ten quarters of the world and begin to get settled around the Buddha, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* explains for its readers who these Bodhisattvas are miraculously assembling here, accompanied generally by luminous clouds, and gives among others the following characterization of the Bodhisattvas:

On Indian Mahayana Buddhism

Whenever there is a mountain well shaded in verdure,

There is a holy ground for your spiritual exercises;

What then is the use of climbing up, supported by the mountain staff,

Mañjuśrī to worship on the Ch'ing-ling Peak?

Even when the golden-haired lion reveals itself in the clouds, Indeed, rightly viewed, this is no auspicious sign.

3

Reference was made to the sense of mystery which envelops the whole text of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* as one of its striking characteristics. I want now to fathom this and point out where, it originates—that is, what may be termed its fundamental spiritual insight. For the *Gaṇḍavyūha* has its own intuition of the world and the mind, from which so many miracles, mysteries, or inconceivabilities succeed one after another in a most wonderful manner—which to many may appear to be altogether too fantastic, too far beyond the bounds of common sense. But when we grasp the central fact of the spiritual experience gone through by the Bodhisattvas as narrated in the sūtra, all the rest of the scenes depicted here will suggest perfect naturalness, and there will be no more irrationalities in them. The main thing, therefore, for us to do if we desire to understand the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, is to take hold of its fundamental insight.

The fundamental insight of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is known as Interpenetration. It is, philosophically speaking, a thought somewhat similar to the Hegelian conception of concrete-universals. Each individual reality, besides being itself, reflects in it something of the universal, and at the same time it is itself because of other individuals. A system of perfect relationship exists among individual existences and also between individuals and universals, between particular objects and general ideas. This perfect network of mutual relations has received at the hand of the Mahāyāna philosopher the technical name of Interpenetration.

When the Empress Tsé-t'ien of T'ang felt it difficult to grasp the meaning of Interpenetration, Fa-tsang, the great master of the Avatamsaka school of Buddhism illustrated it in the following way. He had first a candle lighted, and then

"All these Bodhisattvas from the ten quarters of the world together with their retinues are born of the life and vows of Samantabhadra the Bodhisattva. By means of their pure wisdom eye they see all the Buddhas of the past, present, and future, and also hear the ocean of the sūtras and the revolving of the Dharma wheel by all the Buddhas. They are all masters of the excellent Pāramitās; they approach and serve all the Tathāgatas who are performing miracles every minute; they are also able to expand their own bodies to the ends of the universe; they bring forth by means of their body of light all the religious assemblies conducted by the Buddhas; they reveal in each particle of dust all the worlds, singly and generally, with their different conditions and multitudes; and in these different worlds they choose the most opportune season to discipline all beings and to bring them to maturity; emitting a deep, full sound from every pore of the skin, which reverberates throughout the universe, they discourse on the teachings of all the Buddhas."

All such statements may sound too figurative, too fantastic to be seriously considered by the so-called rationally minded. From the realistic or rationalistic point of view, which upholds objective validity and sense measurement as the sole standard of truth, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* fares rather ill. But we must remember that there is another point of view, especially in matters spiritual, which pays no attention to the rationalistic interpretation of our inner experiences. The human body, ordinarily or from the sense point of view, occupies a limited area of space which can be measured, and continues to live also during a measurable period of time. And against this body there is the whole expanse of the universe, including all the mountains and oceans on earth and also all the starry heavens. How can this body of ours be made to take in the entire objectivity? How can our insignificant, ignominious "hair hole" or "pore of the skin" (*romakūpa*) be turned into a holy stage where all the Tathāgatas of the past, present, and future can congregate for their spiritual discourses? Obviously, this is an utter impossibility or the height of absurdity. But the strange fact is that when a door opens and a light shines from an unknown source into the dark chamber of consciousness, all time- and space-

limitations dissolve away, and we make a *Simhanāda* (lion roar), "Before Abraham was I am," or "I alone am the honored one above and below all the heavens." The *Gaṇḍavyūha* is written always from this exalted point of view. If science surveys the objective world and philosophy unravels intricacies of logic, Buddhism dives into the very abyss of being, and tells us in the directest possible manner all it sees under the surface.

When we speak, as we sometimes do, of the philosophical background of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* or the Hegelian idea of concrete-universals, the reader may think that Buddhism is a system of philosophy, and the sūtras are attempts to expound it in their characteristic manner. If we have made him take this attitude toward the Mahāyāna, we must withdraw everything that was said in this connection and start afresh in our study of the sūtras. Whatever misunderstandings or misinterpretations Zen has incurred from its outside critics, its chief merit consists in clearing our consciousness of all the rubbish it has gathered in the way of philosophical explanations of existence. By its disclaiming the letter which is so apt to thwart the progress of the spirit, Zen has kept its central thought unspoiled. That is to say, it has succeeded in steadily upholding the value of experience and intuition in the understanding of Reality. The method of Zen differs from that of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, but as both agree in spirit, the one will prove complementary to the other when we endeavor to study Buddhism comprehensively as it has developed in the Far East. The sūtras and Zen are not antagonistic, nor are they contradictory. What the sūtras express through the psychology and tradition of their compilers, Zen treats after its own fashion as conditioned by the intellectual equipment and psychological and racial peculiarities of its masters. Read the following Zen sermon⁵ and compare it with the *Gaṇḍavyūha*:

"Here is a man who, even from the very beginning of things, has had no dwelling, nothing to depend on; above, not a fraction of tile is over his head; below, not an inch of earth supports his feet. Tell me where he gets his body at rest and

⁵ Given by Hsiao-ch'un of Ling-ch'üan temple, perhaps of the eleventh century. *Hsü Chuan-t'eng Lu*, XX.

his life established for the twelve periods of the day. When you understand, he is known to be gone to India in the morning and to be back here in the evening."

4

Having acquainted ourselves with the general atmosphere in which the *Gaṇḍavyūha* moves, let us now proceed to see what are the constituents of the audience—that is, what are the particular characteristics of Bodhisattvahood as distinguished from those of Śrāvakahood. In other words, the question is concerned with the differentia of Mahāyāna Buddhism. When we know how the Bodhisattva is qualified in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, we know also how Bodhisattvahood differentiates itself from Śrāvakahood and what are the Mahāyāna thoughts as they are presented in this sūtra against those of the Hīnayāna. For the opening chapter of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* emphatically sets up the Bodhisattvas against the Śrāvakas, giving reasons why the latter are unable to participate like the Bodhisattvas in the development of the grand spiritual life.

The Bodhisattvas numbering five hundred are attending the assembly which takes place under the supervision of the Buddha in Jetavana. The same number of the Śrāvakas are also found among the audience. Of the Śrāvakas such names are mentioned as Maudgalyāyana, Mahākāśyapa, Revata, Subhūti, Aniruddha, Nandika, Kapphina, Kātyāyana, Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, etc., while Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī stand out prominently as the two leaders of the five hundred Bodhisattvas. The Bodhisattvas are all said to have "issued from the life and vows of Samantabhadra," and qualified in the following way: (1) they are unattached in their conduct because they are able to expand themselves in all the Buddha lands; (2) they manifest innumerable bodies because they can go over wherever there are Buddhas; (3) they are in possession of an unimpeded and unspoiled eyesight because they can perceive the miraculous transformations of all the Buddhas; (4) they are able to visit anywhere without being bound to any one locality because they never neglect appearing in all places where the Buddhas attain to their enlightenment; (5) they are in possession of a

limitless light because they can illumine the ocean of all the Buddha truths with the light of their knowledge; (6) they have an inexhaustible power of eloquence through eternity because their speech has no taint; (7) they abide in the highest wisdom which knows no limits like space because their conduct is pure and free from taints; (8) they have no fixed abode because they reveal themselves personally in accordance with the thoughts and desires of all beings; (9) they are free from obscurities because they know that there are really no beings, no soul substances in the world of beings; and finally (10) they are in possession of transcendental knowledge which is as vast as space because they illumine all the Dharmadhātus with their nets of light.

In another place where the Bodhisattvas visiting Jetavana from the ten quarters of the universe to contribute their share in the grand demonstration of the Buddha's spiritual powers are characterized, we find among other things the following statements: "All the Bodhisattvas know that all beings are like Māyā, that all the Buddhas are like shadows, that all existence with its rise and fall is like a dream, that all forms of karma are like images in a mirror, that the rising of all things is like a *fata morgana*, that all the worlds are mere transformations; further, the Bodhisattvas are all endowed with the ten powers, knowledge, dignity, and faith of the Tathāgata, which enable them to roar like lions; they have deeply delved into the ocean of inexhaustible eloquence, they have acquired the knowledge of how to explain the truths for all beings; they are complete masters of their conduct so that they move about in the world as freely as in space; they are in possession of all the miraculous powers belonging to a Bodhisattva; their strength and energy will crush the army of Māra; their knowledge power penetrates into the past, present, and future; knowing that all things are like space, they practice non-resistance, and are not attached to them; though they work indefatigably for others, they know that when things are observed from the point of view of all knowledge, nobody knows whence they come; though they recognize an objective world, they know that its existence is something unobtainable; they enter into all the worlds by means of incorruptible knowledge; in all the worlds they reveal them-

selves with the utmost freedom; they are born in all the worlds, take all form; they transform a small area into an extended tract of land, and the latter again into a small area; all the Buddhas are revealed in one single moment of their thought; the powers of all the Buddhas are added on to them; they survey the entire universe in one glance and are not at all confused; they are able to visit all the worlds in one moment."

Against this characterization of the Bodhisattvas, what have we for that of the five hundred Śrāvakas? According to the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, "They are enlightened in the self-nature of truth and reason, they have an insight into the limit of reality, they have entered into the essence of things, they are out of the ocean of becoming, they abide where the Buddha merit is stored, they are released from the bondage of the Knots and Passions, they dwell in the house of non-attachment, they stay in the serenity of space, they have their desires, errors, and doubts wiped off by the Buddha, and they are rightly and faithfully devoted to the Buddha ocean."

When Śrāvakahood is compared with Bodhisattvahood as they are here particularized, we at once perceive how cold, aloof, and philosophical the one is, in great contrast to the spiritual activities and miraculous movements of the other. The Bodhisattva is always kept busy doing something for others, sometimes spreading himself all over the universe, sometimes appearing in one or another path of existence, sometimes destroying the army of evil ones, sometimes paying reverence and making offerings to the Buddhas of the past, present, and future. And in these movements he is perfectly at home, he goes on everywhere with the utmost ease and spontaneity as nothing impedes his maneuvering as a world savior. The Śrāvaka is, on the other hand, an intellectual recluse, his insight is altogether philosophical and has no religious fervor accompanying it; he is satisfied with what he has attained by himself, and has no desire stirred within himself to let others share also in his spiritual or rather metaphysical realization. To him the entire world of inconceivabilities is a closed book, and this world of inconceivabilities is the very place where all the Bodhisattvas belong and find the reason of their existence. However pene-

trating and conspicuous may be the intellect of the Śrāvaka, there is still a world altogether beyond his grasp.

This world, to use the *Gaṇḍavyūha* terminology, is where we find the Buddha's transformations (*vikurvita*), orderly arrangements (*vyūha*), superhuman virility (*vr̥ṣabha*), playful activities (*vikrīḍita*), miracles (*pratihārya*), sovereignty (*adhipateyātā*), wonderful performances (*caritavikurvita*), supreme power (*prabhāva*), sustaining power (*adhiṣṭhāna*), and land of purity (*kṣetraparīśuddhi*). And again here is where the Bodhisattvas have their realms, their assemblies, their entrances, their comings together, their visits, their transformations, their miracles, their groups, their quarters, their fine array of lion seats, their palatial residences, their resting abodes, their transports in Samādhi, their survey of the worlds, their energetic concentrations, their heroisms, their offerings to the Tathāgatas, their certifications, their maturities, their energies, their Dharmakāyas of purity, their knowledge bodies of perfection, their vow bodies in various manifestations, their material bodies in their perfected form, the fulfillment and purification of all their forms, the array of their boundless light images, the spreading out of their great nets of lights, and the bringing forth of their transformation clouds, the expansion of their bodies all over the ten quarters, the perfection of all their transformation deeds, etc.

5

What are the causes and conditions that have come to differentiate Bodhisattvahood so much from Śrāvakahood?

The *Gaṇḍavyūha* does not forget to point out what causes are contributive to this remarkable differentiation, to tell what are the conditions that make the Śrāvakas altogether blind to the various manifestations and transformations going on in a most wonderful way at the assembly of the Bodhisattvas in Jetavana. The *Gaṇḍavyūha* gives the following reasons:

Because the stock of merit is not the same (1); because the Śrāvakas have not seen, and disciplined themselves in, the virtues of the Buddha (2); because they have not approved the notion that the universe is filled with Buddha lands in all

the ten quarters where there is a fine array of all Buddhas (3); because they have not given praise to the various wonderful manifestations put forward by the Buddhas (4); because they have not awakened the desire after supreme enlightenment attainable in the midst of transmigration (5); because they have not induced others to cherish the desire after supreme enlightenment (6); because they have not been able to continue the Tathāgata family (7); because they have not taken all beings under their protection (8); because they have not advised others to practice the Pāramitās of the Bodhisattva (9); because while yet in the transmigration of birth and death they have not persuaded others to seek for the most exalted wisdom-eye (10).

Further, because the Śrāvakas have not disciplined themselves in all the stock of merit from which issues all-knowledge (11); because they have not perfected all the stock of merit which makes the appearance of the Buddha possible (12); because they have not added to the enhancement of the Buddha land by seeking for the knowledge of transformation (13); because they have not entered into the realm which is surveyed by the Bodhisattva-eye (14); because they have not sought the stock of merit which produces an incomparable insight going beyond this world (15); because they have not made any of the vows constituting Bodhisattvahood (16); because they have not conformed themselves to all that is the product of the Tathāgata's sustaining power (17); because they have not realized that all things are like Māyā and the Bodhisattvas are like a dream (18); because they have not attained the most exhilarating excitements (*pratiṅga-vivardhana*) of the Bodhisattva (19); in short, because they have not realized all these spiritual states belonging to the wisdom-eye of Samantabhadra to which the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas are strangers (20).

So, concludes the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, all these great *Śrāvakas* such as Śāriputra, etc., have no stock of merit, no wisdom-eye, no Samādhi, no emancipation, no power of transformation, no sovereignty, no energy, no mastery, no abode, no realm, which enable them to get into the assemblage of the Bodhisattvas and participate in the performance of the great spiritual drama that is going on in Jetavana. As they have sought their deliverance according to the vehicle and way of Śrāvakahood, what they have

accomplished does not go beyond Śrāvakahood. They have indeed gained the knowledge whereby the truth is made manifest, they are abiding in the limit of reality (*bhūtakoti*), they are enjoying the serenity of the ultimate (*atyantasānti*); but they have no great compassionate all-embracing heart for all beings, for they are too intently occupied with their own doings (*ātmakārya*) and have no mind to accumulate the Bodhisattva knowledge and to discipline themselves in it. They have their own realization and emancipation, but they have no desire, make no vows to make others also find their resting abode in it. They do not thus understand what is really meant by the inconceivable power of the Tathāgata.

To sum up: the Śrāvakas are yet under the covering of too great a karma hindrance; they are unable to cherish such great vows as are made by the Bodhisattvas for the spiritual welfare of all beings; their insight is not clear and penetrating enough to see into all the secrets of life; they have not yet opened what is designated as the wisdom-eye (*jñānacakṣus*) in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, wherewith a Bodhisattva takes in at a glance all the wonders and inconceivabilities of the spiritual realm to its deepest abyss. How superficial, compared to this, is the philosophical insight of the Śrāvakas!

6

The *Gaṇḍavyūha* gives us several parables to tell more graphically the conditions of Śrāvakahood under which its followers are still laboring. Let me quote one or two.

Along the river Gangā there are millions of millions of hungry ghosts (*preta*) all naked and tormented with hunger and thirst; they feel as if their bodies were burning; and their lives are threatened every minute by birds and beasts of prey. Thirst impels them to seek for water, but they cannot find it anywhere even though they are right close to the river. Some see the river, but for them there is no water, only the dried-up bed. Why? Because their karma hindrance lies too heavy on them. In the same way, these great learned philosophical Śrāvakas, even though they are in the midst of the large assembly of the Bodhisattvas, are not capable of recognizing the grand miracles

of the Tathāgata. For they have relinquished all-knowledge (*sarvajñatā*) owing to the ignorance cataract covering their eyes; for they have never planted their stock of merit in the soil of all-knowledge.

In the Himālaya mountains many kinds of medicinal herbs are found, and they are distinguished by an experienced doctor each according to its specific qualities. But because they have no eye for them all these are not recognized by the hunters, nor by the herdsmen, who may frequent these regions. In the same way, the Bodhisattvas who have entered into a realm of transcendental knowledge and gained a spiritual power over form are able to see the Tathāgatas and their grand display of miracles. But the Śrāvakas, in the midst of these wonderful events, cannot see them, because they are satisfied only with their own deeds (*svakārya*), and not at all concerned with the spiritual welfare of others.

To give another parable: here is a man in a large congregation of people. He happens to fall asleep, and in a dream he is suddenly transported to the summit of Mount Sumeru where Śakrendra has his magnificent palatial residence. There are a large number of mansions, pavilions, gardens, lakes, etc., each in its full splendor. There are also celestial beings incalculable in number, the grounds are strewn with heavenly flowers, the trees are decorated with beautiful robes, and the flowers are in full bloom. Most exquisite music is played among the trees, and the branches and leaves emit of their own accord pleasing sounds, and these go on in harmonious concert with the melodious singing of the celestial damsels. The dancers, innumerable and attired in resplendent garments, are enjoying themselves on the terrace. The man is now no more a bystander at these scenes, for he is one of the participants himself appared in heavenly fashion, and going around among the inhabitants of Sudarśana as if he had belonged to them from the beginning.

These phenomena, however, have never come to be noticed by any other mortals who are congregated here, for what is perceived by the man is a vision only given to him. In a similar manner, the Bodhisattvas are able to see all the wonderful sights in the world taking place under the direction of the

Buddha's power. For they have been accumulating their stock of merit for ever so many kalpas, making vows based on all-knowledge which knows no bounds in time and space. For, again, they have studied all the virtues of the Buddhas, disciplining themselves in the way of Bodhisattvahood, and then perfecting themselves for the attainment of all-knowledge. In short, they have fulfilled all the vows of Samantabhadra and lived his life of devotion, whereas the Śrāvakas have none of the pure insight belonging to the Bodhisattvas.

7

From these quotations and delineations, we have now, I hope, a general background of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* more or less clearly outlined, and from them also we learn the following ideas which are really the contents of at least the opening chapter of the sūtra, while they also give us a further glimpse into the essence of the Mahāyāna teaching generally.

1. There is a world which is not of this world, though inseparable from it.
2. The world where we ordinarily move is characterized with limitations of all sorts. Each individual reality holds itself against others, which is indeed its self-nature (*svabhāva*). But in the world of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* known as the Dharmadhātu, individual realities are enfolded in one great Reality, and this great Reality is found participated in by each individual one. Not only this, but each individual existence contains in itself all other individual existences as such. Thus there is a universal interpenetration, so called, in the Dharmadhātu.
3. These supernatural phenomena cannot take place in a world where darkness and obduracy prevail, because then a penetration would be impossible. If a penetration should take place in these conditions it would mean the general breaking-down of all individual realities, which is a chaos.
4. Therefore, the Dharmadhātu is a world of lights not accompanied by any form of shade. The essential nature of light is to intermingle without interfering or obstructing or destroying one another. One single light reflects in itself all other lights generally and individually.

5. This is not a philosophical interpretation of existence reached by cold logical reasoning, nor is it a symbolical representation of the imagination. It is a world of real spiritual experience.

6. Spiritual experience is like sense experience. It is direct, and tells us directly all that it has experienced without resorting to symbolism or ratiocination. The *Gaṇḍavyūha* is to be understood in this manner—that is, as a document recording one's actual spiritual life.

7. This realm of spirit belongs to the Bodhisattva and not to the Śrāvaka. The latter serenely abides in a world of intellectual intuition and monotony, supremely above the endlessly intermingling world of particulars and multiplicities. The Bodhisattva has a loving heart, and his is a life of devotion and self-sacrifice given up to a world of individualities.

8. A society of spiritual beings is approachable only by means of a great loving heart (*mahākaruṇā*), a great friendly spirit (*mahāmaitrī*), morality (*śīla*), great vows (*prañidhāna*), miraculous powers (*abhijñā*), purposelessness (*anabhisamkāra*), perfect disinterestedness (*anāyūha*), skillful means born of transcendental wisdom (*prajñopāya*), and transformations (*nirmāṇa*).⁵

9. As these attributes are lacking in Śrāvaka-hood, its devotees are not allowed to join the congregation of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Even when they are in it they are incapable of appreciating all that goes on in such assemblages. The Mahāyāna is more than mere Emptiness, a great social spirit is moving behind it.

10. Lastly, we must remember that there is a sustaining power (*adhiṣṭhāna*) behind all these spiritual phenomena that are going on in Jetavana, and also behind all those transformation-Bodhisattvas who have gathered around the Buddha. This power comes from the Buddha himself. He is the great center and source of illumination. He is the sun whose light reaches the darkest corners of the universe and yet leaves no shadow anywhere. The Buddha of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is, therefore, called Mahāvairocana-Buddha, the Buddha of Great Illumination.

⁵ From Maitreya's instructions given to Sudhana. MMG, pp. 1414-5.

In conclusion, let me quote the verse uttered by one of the Bodhisattvas⁷ in praise of the virtues of the Buddha, by which we can see in what relationship he generally stands to his devotees in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*:

"1. The great Muni, the best of the Śākya, is furnished with all the perfect virtues; and those who see him are purified in mind and turn toward the Mahāyāna.

"2. That the Tathāgatas appear in the world is to benefit all beings; out of a great compassionate heart they revolve the wheel of the Dharma.

"3. The Buddhas have gone through many a heart-rending experience for ages, for the sake of sentient beings; and how can all the world requite them for what it owes them?

"4. Rather suffer terribly in the evil paths of existence for ever so many kalpas, than seek emancipation somewhere else by abandoning the Buddha.

"5. Rather suffer all the pain that may befall all beings, than find comfort where there are no Buddhas to see.

"6. Rather abide in the evil paths of existence if the Buddhas can all the time be heard, than be born in the pleasant paths and never have the chance to hear them.

"7. Rather be born in the hells, however long one has to stay in each one of them, than be delivered therefrom by cutting oneself away from the Buddhas.

"8. Why? Because even though one may stay long in the evil paths, one's wisdom will ever be growing if only the Buddha is to be seen.

"9. When the Buddha, the Lord of the world, is to be seen somewhere, all pain will be eradicated; and one will enter into a realm of great wisdom which belongs to the Tathāgatas.

"10. When the Buddha, the peerless one, is to be seen somewhere, all the hindrances will be cleared away, and infinite bliss will be gained and the way of enlightenment perfected.

⁷ Dharmadhātu-tala-bheda-jñāna-abhijñā-rāja is his name; he comes from the upper part of the world to take part in the Jetavana assembly. MMG, p. 86.

the pole." As long as this rope is not cut off, we cannot be free agents. The rope has its length which is measurable, and the circle described by it has its calculable limits. We are puppets dancing on somebody else's string. But a circle whose circumference knows no limits, because of its having no central pole, and its string must be said to be a very large one indeed, and this is where a Zen master locates his residence. The circle, the field (*ching* or *gocara*), whose range is infinity, and therefore whose center is nowhere fixed, is thus the fit site for the Bodhisattva to have his abode.

In the *Aṣṭasahasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā*⁹ we have: "The Tathāgata's thought is nowhere fixed, it is not fixed on things conditioned, nor it is fixed on things unconditioned; and it is therefore never put out of fixation."¹⁰ By "thought not being fixed" is meant psychologically that consciousness rises from an unconscious source, because, according to Buddhism, there is no such psychological or metaphysical entity as that which is known as the ego-soul, and which is generally regarded as making up the basis of an individual being, and which is therefore the point of fixation for all its mental activities. But as this point of fixation is to be wiped off in order to reach the state of Buddhahood, the Mahāyāna sūtras, especially the *Prajñāpāramitā*s, lay the entire stress of their teaching upon the doctrine of Emptiness. For it is by means of this alone that one can be cut off from a fixation and free for ever from the shackles of transmigration.

Buddhism being a practical spiritual training, whatever statements it makes are direct expressions of experience, and no interposition of intellectual or metaphysical interpretation is permitted here. It may sound quaint and unfamiliar to say that thought or mind is to be set up without any point of fixation behind it, like a cloud which floats away in the sky with no screws or nails attached to it. But when the sense is grasped the idea of no-fixation is altogether to the point. It is generally better to leave the original expressions as they are, and let the

⁹ Mītra, p. 37.

¹⁰ *Apratiṣṭhitaṃ na hi tathāgato 'rhan samyaksaṃbuddhaḥ. Sa naiva saṃskṛte dhātāu sthito nāpy asaṃskṛite dhātāu sthito na ca tato vyutthitaḥ.*

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"11. When the Buddhas are seen, they will cut asunder all the doubts cherished by all beings, and give satisfaction to each according to his aspirations worldly and super-worldly."

The above is given to illustrate the attitude which is generally assumed toward the Buddha by the Bodhisattvas who come to the community from every possible quarter of the world. . . .

9

In many Mahāyāna sūtras, reference is quite frequently made to "the raising of thought unattached to anything." One of the most famous of such phrases occurs in the *Vajracchedikā*, which is said to have awakened the mind of Hui-nêng, the Sixth Patriarch of Zen Buddhism in China, to a state of enlightenment, and which has ever since been utilized by Zen masters for the exposition of their teaching. The phrase runs in Chinese, *Ying wu so chu êrh sheng ch'i hsin*, the original Sanskrit of which is, *Na kvacit pratiṣṭhitam cittam utpādayitavyam*.⁸ Freely translated, it is, "Let your mind (or thought) take its rise without fixing it anywhere." *Citta* is generally rendered as "thought" but more frequently it is "mind" or "heart." The Chinese character *hsin* has a much wider connotation than "thought" or "mind," for it also means the "center or reason of being," and is one of the most significant and comprehensive terms in Chinese philosophy as well as in conventional everyday Chinese. In this case, "to set up one's mind without fixing it anywhere" means "to be perfect master of oneself." When we are dependent on anything, we cannot be perfectly free; and it is then that the idea of an ego-soul or of a creator known as God is generally found to be taking hold of us. For this reason, we cannot act without attaching ourselves to something—a state of dependence and slavery. To the question, "Where are you?" we have to say, "I am tied to a pole"; and to the question, "What are the sights or limits (*ching*) of your monastery?" "I move within the circle whose radius is the full length of the rope which is attached to

⁸ Max Müller, p. 27. [Ch. 10c.]

Having viewed the principle of life that regulates the activities of Bodhisattvahood as it is conceived by compilers of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*, etc., let us proceed to see how it is described in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. The Zen master does not use abstract terms such as the principle of life; he always makes use of events of daily life and the concrete objects with which he is surrounded and with which his monks are quite familiar. When he asks them whence they come or whither they go, he can tell at once by the answer he gets where their abode is, that is, what is that which prompts them to a definite set of actions. This method of training may be considered too difficult for ordinary minds to grasp what is really behind it.

Nor may the doctrine of no-fixation be easy to take hold of for those who are not used to this way of expressing their spiritual conditions. To have their minds set to working without anything behind them, without anything holding them to a definite intelligible center, may sound like jargon. When we state that the abode of the Bodhisattva is really no abode, that he is fixed where he is not fixed, that he wanders or floats like a cloud in the sky without anything at its back, the statements may seem to have no meaning whatever. But this is the way the Mahāyāna Buddhists have been trained in their religious life, to which no stereotyped rules of syllogism can be applied.

We are now perhaps ready to see what we can gather from the *Gaṇḍavyūha* on this subject: "Where is the abode of the Bodhisattva?" This it has been from the first our intention to find out, especially in contrast to the Zen way of handling the same idea. In the *Gaṇḍavyūha* the question "Where?" stands out before us in the form of the Tower known as Vairocana-vyūha-alaṅkāra-garbha—that is, the "tower which holds within itself an array of brilliantly shining ornaments." Sudhana, the young pilgrim, stands before it and describes it as he looks at it, knowing that it is the site of residence for the Bodhisattva Maitya. The description is not of an objective sort, it is based on the reflections of the young aspirant after Bodhisattvahood, reflections taken from all his past experiences and whatever

reader experience them within himself. Their conversion into modern terminology may frequently be very desirable, but the intelligibility thus gained is generally the result of abstraction or intellectualization. This gain naturally means the loss of concrete visualization, a loss which may well outweigh the gain. In the *Vimalakīrti* also, we have such phrases as "Bodhi has no abode, therefore it is not to be attained"; or "Depending on a source which has no abode, all things are established"; and in the *Śūraṅgama*: "Such Bodhisattvas make all the Buddha lands their abode, but they are not attached to this abode, which is neither attainable nor visible." Expressions of this sort are encountered everywhere in the Mahāyāna texts.

The *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*, again, which are disposed to be negative in their statements, give among others the following: "The truth as given out by the Tathāgata is unattainable, it knows no obstruction, its non-obstructibility resembles space as no traces (*pada*) are left; it is above all forms of contrast, it allows no opposition, it goes beyond birth and death, it has no passageway whereby one may approach it. This truth is realizable by one who follows the Tathāgata as he is in his Suchness (*tathatā*). For this Suchness is something uniform, something beyond going and coming, something eternally abiding (*sthitiā*), above change and separateness and discrimination (*nirvikalpā*), absolutely one, betraying no traces of conscious striving, etc."¹¹ As the truth (*dharma*) of the Tathāgata cannot be defined in any positive way, the *Prajñāpāramitā* has a series of negations. The only affirmative way is to designate it *tathatā*, "state of being so," or "suchness," or "so-ness." To those who know, the term is expressive and satisfying, but from the logical point of view it may mean nothing, it may be said to be devoid of content. This is inevitable; terms of intuition are always so, and all the truths belonging to the religious consciousness, however intellectual they may appear, after all belong to this class of terminology. "What am I?" "Where am I?" or "Whither am I bound"—the questions are raised by the intellect, but the solution is not at all logical. If it is not a series of negations, it is simply enigmatical, defying the ordinary way of understanding.

¹¹ Abridged, *Aṣṭasahasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, Ch. XVI, on "Tathatā."

INDIAN BUDDHISM

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HAJIME NAKAMURA

MOTILAL BANARSIDASS

Delhi Varanasi Patna Madras

16.G. The Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra

16.G.i. Texts

The Buddhāvataṃsaka¹-sūtra has been a scripture of great importance in various cultural areas of the world.² The entire body of the huge *Buddha-avatamsaka-sūtra*,³ whose Sanskrit text has not wholly been preserved, has come down in two Chinese versions, the one translated by Buddhābhaddra⁴ together with other monks in 418–420 A. D. in sixty volumes, and the other by Śikṣānanda in 695–699 in eighty volumes, and also in the Tibetan version.⁵ The original name of the *Houa-yen-ching* (the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-mahāvaiṣṭhīya-sūtra* 華嚴經) seems to have been *Gaṇḍavyūha*.⁶ It is sometimes called 雜華經 or 百千經.⁷

The “Sūtra on the Original Action of Bodhisattva” (菩薩本業經)⁸ is very often regarded as the prototype of the *Buddha-avatamsaka-sūtra*. However, the central figure in the former is Śākyamuni with his progress to enlightenment, whereas that in the latter is Mahā-Vairocana Buddha.⁹

With regard to the problems of the date when, and the place where the sūtra was composed, the following is known. By about 350 A. D., the sūtra had been made into one complete book of 60 volumes.¹⁰ Some scholars hold the view that the sūtra came into existence before the time of Nāgārjuna, i. e., before the second century.¹¹ At any rate it preceded the Larger *Sukhāvati-vyūha-sūtra*; but, perhaps it can not be said to be older than the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*. The youth Sudhana (善財童子) is recorded to have called on Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara to be taught, but the gāthās of the 24th chapter (Avalokiteśvara-vikurvaṇanirdeśa) of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* is in a form older than that of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*.¹²

It is generally admitted that the Sanskrit text now entitled “*Gaṇḍavyūha*”¹³ and the

¹ With regard to the appellation *Buddha-avatamsaka*, cf. *Unrai*, pp. 848–849. The Chinese equivalent Hua-yen (華嚴) means “Adorned with Various Flowers”, i. e., the Lotus-Store-World (蓮華藏世界). (R. Kondō, *NB.*, Vol. XIV, p. 38 f.)

² H. Nakamura: “The Significance of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* in the World History of Ideas” in *Kegon Shisō Kenkyū*, ed. by H. Nakamura.

³ Shiio: *Kyōten*, p. 315 f., Tōhoku No. 44. In the past, however, the whole Sanskrit text of the *Buddha-avatamsaka-sūtra* was transmitted to China (Hino in *Yamaguchi Comm. Vol.*, p. 254 ff.).

⁴ 大方廣華嚴經. Translated by Buddhābhaddra into Chinese. This was edited in Chinese and translated into Japanese, by Sokuō Etō in *KDK.*, vols. 5, 6, 7.

⁵ 大方廣華嚴經 (*Taisho*, 279), 80 vols. Translated by Śikṣānanda. Translated into Japanese by Sokuō Etō in *KIK.*, *Kegonbu*, vols. 1–4. Various versions of the Kegon Sūtra, discussed by Zuiei Ito, *Suzuki Nenpō*, No. 3, 1966, 197–200.

⁶ *Kogetsu*, p. 330 f.; *Nanjio*, 87; Bagchi: *op. cit.*, p. 344.

⁷ Kondō: *SK.*, New Series X, 3, p. 110 f.

⁸ Vol. 1, *Nanjio*, 100; *Taisho*, vol. 10, p. 446 f.

⁹ Jitsugen Kobayashi in *IBK.*, vol. 7, No. 1, Dec. 1958, pp. 168.

¹⁰ Ui: *Kyōten*, p. 71. (Revised ed. p. 118 f.)

¹¹ Kondō: *SK.*, New Series X, 3, p. 108 f.

¹² H. Idzumi: *Seigo Kenkyū*, I, p. 69 f.

¹³ Cf. Winternitz: II, p. 325 f. The Sanskrit text was published: *The Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra*, critically edited, collating 6 Mss., by D. T. Suzuki and Hōkei Idzumi. 4 parts. Kyoto: The Sanskrit Buddhist Texts Pub-

"*Daśabhūmika-sūtra*"¹⁴, both of which are now included in the bulky *Buddhāvataṃsaka-mahāvaiṣṭya-sūtra*, came into existence before Nāgārjuna.¹⁵ The late Tatsuyama supposed that the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*¹⁶ was compiled in 50–150 A. D.¹⁷ The Sanskrit text now entitled "*Gaṇḍavyūha*"¹⁸ most likely belongs to the same period. In the alphabetical list (*Arapacana*) in the *sūtra*, the character "ysa" is mentioned;¹⁹ this is not of Indian, but of Khotanese origin. Sylvain Lévi believes that the character "ysa" was fixed between 100 B. C. and 100 A. D. in the alphabetical order.²⁰ The writer of the present article is brought to the following conclusion:—The chapter of *Gaṇḍavyūha* must have been first composed by the people of Southern India who were in close contact with navigators or traders. However, the final form of the chapter must have been fixed somewhere in North-West or Middle India. The *Gaṇḍavyūha* is likely to have been composed in the early reign of the Kuṣāṇa dynasty, i. e., 1–100 A. D.²¹ Scenes of the story or figures of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* are represented in the reliefs at Barabaḍur in late 8th

lishing Society, 1934–1936. The fifth part which would contain *varia lectio* was not published because its MS. was destroyed in the war. New revised edition of photographic reprint, 1 vol. 551 pp. Tokyo: The Suzuki Foundation. Recently a critical edition was edited: The *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra*, ed. by P. L. Vaidya. Buddhist Sanskrit Texts, No. 5. Darbhanga: the Mithila Sanskrit Institute, 1960. The latter was critically examined and corrected by Kazuya Haseoka in *IBK*. vol. XIII, No. 1, Jan. 1965, pp. 392 ff. Textual variations of various versions of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* were discussed by Kazuya Haseoka in *IBK*. vol. 11, No. 1, Jan. 1963, pp. 320 ff.

¹⁴ The *Daśabhūmīśvara-sūtra* was formerly published by J. Rahder and Shinryū Susa (須佐晋竜) (cf. Winternitz, II, p. 327; 626 f.). The seventh stage of the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* was edited and examined by J. Rahder, *Acta Or.* vol. 4, 1926, 214–256. Afterwards, a more critical edition based upon eight MSS. was published: *Daśabhūmīśvaro nāma Mahāyāna-sūtram*. Ed. by Ryūkō Kondō. Tokyo: The Daijō Bukkyō Kenyō-kai, Aug. 1936. vi+219 pp. It was translated into English. (Megumu Honda: Annotated translation of the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*. Śatapiṭaka, 1967, 115–276.) It was translated into Japanese with corrections on the editions and critical comments by Shōshin Tatsuyama: *Bombun Wayaku Jūji-kyō*, (梵文和訳十地經). Translated into Japanese by Yūsho Miyasaka, *Butten* (Kawade, Jan. 1969), 111–202. Translated into Japanese by Noritoshi Aramaki. *Daijō Butten*, vol. 8. Tokyo: Chūō-kōronsha, Nov. 1974. The words glorifying Bodhisattvas at the beginning of the *Daśabhūmika* with a commentary on them by Śākyamati (8 th A. D.) exist in the Tibetan Tripiṭaka. (K. Tsukinowa in *Shūkyō Kenkyū*, NS. vol. 12, No. 5, p. 76 f.). A concordance of the various versions of the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* was made by Shōhō Takemura in *Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū*, Nos. 16 and 17, pp. 71–83. Sanskrit manuscripts and various versions of the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* were collated by Shōhō Takemura (in this article).

¹⁵ Once copies of the whole text of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka* were brought to China. (Hino in *Yamaguchi Comm. Vol.*, p. 254 f.).

¹⁶ The Sanskrit text of the *Daśabhūmika* was discussed by Shōshin Tatsuyama in *Bukkyō Kenkyū*, vol. 1, No. 2, p. 120 f.

¹⁷ S. Tatsuyama: *Bombun Wayaku Jūjikyō* (梵文和訳十地經), Nagoya, Hajinkaku, Jan. 1937. (2+20+2+6+250+31 pp.) Introduction, p. 7.

¹⁸ The *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra*. Critically edited by Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki and Hōkei Idzumi. New revised edition. Tokyo: The Society for the Publication of Sacred Books of the World, Feb. 1959. 551 pp. Kazuya Haseoka, A Comparative Study of Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese Texts of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, *Tōhōgaku*, No. 33, Jan. 1967, 102 ff. Various versions of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* were examined by Kazuya Haseoka, *Suzuki Nenpō*, Nos. 5–7, 1968–1970, 20–32. In the Chinese version of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* there is a misplacement of passages on Maitreya the 52nd kalyāṇamitra. (Kazuya Haseoka, *Tōhōgaku*, No. 37, March 1969, 154–160.) Some passages of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* were translated into Japanese by Kazuya Haseoka, *Suzuki Nenpō*, Nos. 5–7, 1968–1970, 19–32.

¹⁹ *Ysākāraṃ parikīrtayataḥ sarvabuddhadharma-nirdeśaviśayaṃ nāma prajñāpāramitāmukhaṃ avakrāntam.* (*Gaṇḍavyūha*, ed. by D. T. Suzuki, p. 450. cf., 大方廣華嚴經, vol. 58. *Taisho*, IX, p. 766 f.).

²⁰ Lévi Memorial, p. 355 f.

²¹ *Kegonkyō-Kenkyū*, ed. by Nakamura, pp. 90–93.

century or early 9th century.²² At the end of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, both in Sanskrit manuscripts and in Chinese and Tibetan translations, we find the *Bhadracarī-praṇidhāna-gāthāḥ*, "the Prayer Verses concerning the Pious Acts."²³

There was an independent sūtra in which the main speaker was *Samantabhadra*.²⁴ Later, it was incorporated into the *Buddhāvataṃsaka*.²⁵ The second chapter of "The Sūtra on the Original Actions of the Bodhisattva" (菩薩本業經)²⁶ is another version of the *Daśavihāra* of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*. In the "Ornament of Enlightenment-Mind Sūtra" (莊嚴菩提心經)²⁷ the Enlightenment-Mind (*bodhicitta*) is explained with the teaching of the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*. The *Buddhāvataṃsakatathāgata-guṇajñānācintya-viśayāvatāra-nirdeśa-sūtra* (仏華嚴入如来德智不思議境界經)²⁸ is a precursor to the Great *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*. "The Chapter on the Wonderful Object in the Great *Buddhāvataṃsakasūtra*" (大方広仏華嚴經不思議境界分)²⁹ seems to be an abridgement of the contents of the text of the Great *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*.³⁰ A sūtra that exists in Tibetan alone, called the *Praśāntaviniścaya-pratihāryasamādhi-sūtra*,³¹ sets forth a kind of thought similar to that of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*.

The thought of the *Tathāgatotpattisaṃbhava-nirdeśa-sūtra*, which was composed before the third century,³² seems to have derived from the *Gaṇḍavyūha*.³³

The portions which were at first compiled as independent sūtras were finally put together.

²² The scenes were identified by Ryūshō Hikata in *IBK.*, vol. 8, No. 1, Jan. 1960, p. 366. Also Ryūshō Hikata in *Nakano Comm. Vol.*, pp. 1-50 (in Engl.).

²³ Kaikyoku Watanabe: *Die Bhadracarī, eine Probe buddhistisch-religiöser Lyrik untersucht und herausgegeben* (mit deutscher Übersetzung von E. Leumann), Diss. Strassburg, 1912. *Kogetsu*, p. 299 f. St. Jiun left a study on Sanskrit manuscripts of this text (Torikoshi in *NBGN.*, No. 9, p. 164 f.). A critical text of the *Bhadracarī-praṇidhāna-gāthāḥ* was newly edited by Atsueji Ashikaga in *Kyoto Univ. Comm. Vol.* pp. 1-16. *Āryabhadracarī-praṇidhānarāja*. Edited by Sunitikumar Pathak. Gangtok: Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, 1961 (Sanskrit and Tibetan). Cf. *Adyar LB.* vol. XXVI, 1962, 288. The transmission and composition of the *Bhadracarī-praṇidhāna* were discussed by Shindō Shiraishi in *Memoirs of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Education*, No. 12, Dec. 1961, Yamanashi University, pp. 1-6 (in German). The Sanskrit text prepared by St. Jiun was critically edited by Shindō Shiraishi with a German introduction in *Memoirs of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Education*, No. 13, Dec. 1962, pp. 1-18. The Khotanese text was found. Jes-Peter Asmussen: *The Khotanese Bhadracarīyādeśanā*. Text, translation and glossary with the Buddhist Sanskrit original. (Historisk-filosofiske Meddelelser Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab Bind 39, nr. 2, Kobenhavn 1961. Reviewed by G. Tucci, *EW.* vol. 13, 1962, 396-397. The New Khotanese text of the *Bhadracarīyā-deśanā* (普賢行願讚) was translated into Japanese by Taijun Inoguchi in *Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū*, Nos. 16-17, 1959, pp. 87-97. (Cf. *Monumenta Serindica*, vol. 4, Appendix, p. 356.) The *Bhadracarī-praṇidhāna* in Korea (10th century) was discussed by Peter H. Lee, *JAOS.* vol. 81, 1961, 409-414. The content of the *Bhadracarī* was discussed by Ryōshū Takamine in *Nanto Bukkyō*, vol. 1, Nov. 1954, pp. 13-26.

²⁴ 大方広普賢所說經, *Taisho*, vol. 10, p. 883a-884.

²⁵ Jitsugen Kobayashi in *IBK.*, vol. 8, No. 1, Jan. 1960, p. 136 f.

²⁶ 1 vol. Translated into Chinese by K'Khien. *Taisho*, No. 281. This was translated into Japanese by Sokuō Etō in *KIK.*, Kegonbu, vol. 4, pp. 197 f.

²⁷ Translated into Chinese by Kumārajīva in 384-417 A. D. This was translated into Japanese by Sokuō Etō in *KIK.*, Kegonbu, vol. 4, p. 259 f.

²⁸ 2 vols. *Taisho*, No. 303. Translated into Chinese by Jñānayaśas in 618-907 A. D. This was translated into Japanese by Sokuō Etō in *KIK.*, Kegonbu, vol. 4, pp. 223 f.

²⁹ Translated into Japanese by Sokuō Etō in *KIK.*, Kegonbu, vol. 4, p. 245 f.

³⁰ The 11th chapter of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* can be regarded as an epitome of the whole sūtra. (Hino in *IBK.*, vol. 3, No. 1, p. 305 f.).

³¹ Translated from Tibetan into Japanese by Tsukinowa in *Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū*, NS., vol. 1, p. 19 f.

³² Translated by Jikidō Takasaki from the Tibetan into Japanese. *Daijō Butten*, vol. 12. Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, May 1975.

³³ Takao Kagawa, *IBK.* vol. 15, No. 2, March 1967, 198-201.

The whole text of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* as a bulky work was fixed somewhere in Central Asia, for it refers even to China and Kashgar.³⁴ This sūtra, being introduced into China, Korea and Japan, became very influential.³⁵

³⁴ Hajime Nakamura: *Kegon Shisō Kenkyū*.

³⁵ 法藏's 華嚴經探玄記 20 vols. was translated into Japanese by Y. Sakamoto in *KIK.*, Kyōshobu, 6, 7, 8, 9a.



The Flower Ornament Scripture

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Introduction

THE FLOWER ORNAMENT SCRIPTURE, called *Avatamsaka* in Sanskrit and *Huayan* in Chinese, is one of the major texts of Buddhism. Also referred to as the major Scripture of Inconceivable Liberation, it is perhaps the richest and most grandiose of all Buddhist scriptures, held in high esteem by all schools of Buddhism that are concerned with universal liberation. Its incredible wealth of sensual imagery staggers the imagination and exercises an almost mesmeric effect on the mind as it conveys a wide range of teachings through its complex structure, its colorful symbolism, and its mnemonic concentration formulae.

It is not known when or by whom this scripture was composed. It is thought to have issued from different hands in the Indian cultural sphere during the first and second centuries AD, but it is written so as to embrace a broad spectrum of materials and resists rigid systematization. While standard figures and images from Indian mythology are certainly in evidence here, as in other Buddhist scriptures, it might be more appropriate to speak of its provenance in terms of Buddhist culture rather than Indian culture per se. *The Flower Ornament Scripture* presents a compendium of Buddhist teachings; it could variously be said with a measure of truth in each case that these teachings are set forth in a system, in a plurality of systems, and without a system. The integrity of Buddhism as a whole, the specificity of application of its particular elements, and the interpenetration of those elements are fundamental points of orientation of the unfolding of the scripture.

Historicity as such is certainly of little account in *The Flower Ornament Scripture*. This is generally true of the Mahayana Buddhist scriptures, although they usually present their teachings as having been revealed or occasioned by the meditations of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni. In the case of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, most of the discourse is done by transhistorical, symbolic beings who represent aspects of universal enlightenment. The Buddha shifts from an individual to a cosmic principle and manifestations of that cosmic principle; the "Buddha" in one line might be "the Buddhas" in the next, representing enlightenment itself, the scope of enlightenment, or those who have realized enlightenment.

Certainly one of the most colorful and dramatic rehearsals of Buddhist teachings, *The Flower Ornament Scripture* became one of the pillars of

East Asian Buddhism. It was a source of some of the very first Buddhist literature to be introduced to China, where there eventually developed a major school of philosophy based on its teachings. This school spread to other parts of Asia, interacted with other major Buddhist schools, and continues to the present. The appreciation of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* was not, however, by any means confined to the special Flower Ornament school, and its influence is particularly noticeable in the literature of the powerful Chan (Zen) schools.

The work of translating from *The Flower Ornament Scripture* into Chinese apparently began in the second century AD, and continued for the better part of a thousand years. During this time more than thirty translations and retranslations of various books and selections from the scripture were produced. Numerous related scriptures were also translated. Many of these texts still exist in Chinese. Comprehensive renditions of the scripture were finally made in the early fifth and late seventh centuries. The original texts for both of these monumental translations were brought to China from Khotan in Central Asia, which was located on the Silk Route and was a major center for the early spread of Buddhism into China. Khotan, where an Indo-Iranian language was spoken, is now a part of the Xinjiang (Sinkiang) Uighur autonomous region in China, near Kashmir, another traditional center of Buddhist activity. The first comprehensive translation of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* was done under the direction of an Indian monk named Buddhahadra (359–429); the second, under the direction of a Khotanese monk named Shikshananda (652–710). The latter version, from which the present English translation is made, was based on a more complete text imported from Khotan at the request of the empress of China; it is somewhat more than ten percent longer than Buddhahadra's translation.

The Flower Ornament Scripture, in Shikshananda's version, contains thirty-nine books. By way of introduction to this long and complex text, we will focus on a comparison of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* with other major scriptures; as well as a brief glance at the main thrust of each book.

A Comparison with Other Major Buddhist Scriptures

Due to the great variety in Buddhist scriptures, analysis of their interrelation was an integral part of Buddhist studies in East Asia, where scriptures were introduced in great quantities irrespective of their time or place of origin. In order to convey some idea of the Buddhism of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* in respect to other major scriptures, as well as to summarize some of the principal features of *The Flower Ornament*, we will begin this Introduction with a comparison of *The Flower Ornament* with other important scriptures. This discussion will be based on the

"Discourse on the Flower Ornament," a famous commentary by an eighth century Chinese lay Buddhist, Li Tongxuan. What follows is a free rendering of Li's comparisons of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* to the scriptures of the lesser vehicle (the Pali Canon),¹ the *Brahmajala Scripture*, the *Prajnaparamita Scriptures*,² the *Sandhinirmocana Scripture*, the *Lankavatara Scripture*,³ the *Vimalakirtinirdesa Scripture*,⁴ the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture*,⁵ and the *Mahaparinirvana Scripture*.⁶

The scriptures containing the precepts of the lesser vehicle are based on conceptual existence. The Buddha first told people what to do and what not to do. In these teachings, relinquishment is considered good and nonrelinquishment is considered not good. Doctrine set up this way is not yet to be considered indicative of true existence. This teaching based on existence is temporary, dealing with the delusions of ordinary feelings and the arbitrary invention of ills; this teaching is designed to stop these and enable people to live in truly human or celestial states. That is why the preface of the precepts says that if one wants to live in heavenly or human conditions one should always keep the precepts.

People's fabricated doings are unreal, and not true attainment, therefore their life in human and celestial states is impermanent, not truly real. They have not yet attained the body of reality and the body of knowledge. This teaching is not based on true existence; it is temporarily based on conceptual existence. This is the model of the lesser vehicle. As for keeping precepts in *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, it is not this way: as it says in the scripture, "Is the body religious practice? Are walking, standing, sitting, or reclining religious practice?" and so on, examining closely in search of "religious practice," ultimately finding it cannot be apprehended—this ungraspability is why it is called pure religious practice. As the scripture says, those engaged in such pure practice are said to uphold the discipline of the buddha-nature, and attain the Buddha's reality body. Therefore they attain enlightenment at the first inspiration. Because they keep the discipline of buddha-nature, they are equal to the essence of Buddha, equal in terms of noumenon and phenomenon, merging with the cosmos of reality. When they keep discipline this way, they do not see themselves keeping precepts, they do not see others breaking precepts. Their action is neither that of ordinary people nor that of saints. They do not see themselves arousing the determination for enlightenment, they do not see the Buddhas attaining enlightenment. If there is anything at all that can be grasped or apprehended—whether good or bad—this is not called enlightenment, not called pure practice. One should see in this way. Such discipline based on the essence is itself the body of reality; the body of reality is the knowledge of Buddhas; the knowledge of Buddhas is true enlightenment. Therefore this discipline of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* is not the same as the teaching of the lesser vehicle, which has choosing and rejection.

Next, the precepts for enlightening beings in the *Brahmajala Scripture* are based on presentation of both conceptual existence and real existence.

For people who have big hearts and like to practice kindness and compassion and those who seek Buddhahood, the Buddha says Vairocana is the fundamental body, with ten billion emanation bodies. To suddenly cause us to recognize the branches and return to the root, the scripture says these ten billion bodies bring innumerable beings to the Buddha. It also says if people accept the precepts of Buddha, they then enter the ranks of Buddhas: their rank is already the same as great enlightenment and they are true offspring of Buddha. This is therefore discipline based on the essence, and is thus based on reality. This scripture abruptly shows great-hearted people the discipline of the essence of the body of reality, while lesser people get it gradually. Therefore one teaching responds to two kinds of faculties, greater and lesser. The statement that the ten billion emanation bodies each bring countless beings to the Buddha illustrates giving up the provisional for the true. This is the teaching of true existence. Because in this teaching the provisional and true are shown at once, it is not the same as the lesser vehicle, which begins with impermanence and has results that are also impermanent, because the precepts of the lesser vehicle only lead to humanity and heavenly life. However, the establishment of a school of true existence in the *Brahmajala Scripture* is not the same as that expounded by Vairocana in *The Flower Ornament Scripture*. In the *Brahmajala Scripture*, by following the teaching of the emanation bodies of Buddha we arrive at the original body: in the school of the complete teaching of the *Flower Ornament*, the original body is shown all at once; the fundamental realm of reality, the body of rewards of great knowledge, cause and effect, and noumenon and phenomena are equally revealed. Also the description of the extent of the cosmos of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* is not the same as the description in the *Brahmajala Scripture*.

As for the *Prajnaparamita Scriptures*, they are based on explaining emptiness in order to show the truth. When the Buddha first expounded the teachings of the lesser vehicle to people, they stuck to principles and phenomena as both real, and therefore could not get rid of obstruction. Therefore Buddha explained emptiness to them, to break down their attachments. That is why it explains eighteen kinds of emptiness in the *Prajnaparamita Scriptures*—the world, the three treasures (the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Community), the four truths (suffering, origin, extinction, the path), the three times (past, present, and future), and so on, are all empty, and emptiness itself is empty too. This is extensively explained in these scriptures, to nullify ignorance and obstructing actions. When ignorance is totally exhausted, obstructing actions have no essence—nirvana naturally appears. This is true existence; it is not called a school of emptiness. However, though it is real true existence, many of the teachings expounded have becoming and disintegration, therefore it cannot yet be considered complete. As for *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, in it are the arrays of characteristics and embellishments that are rewards or consequences of enlightening practice—they can be empty and they

can be actual. In this scripture the teachings of emptiness and existence are not applied singly—noumenon and phenomena, emptiness and existence, interpenetrate, reflecting each other. All the books of the whole *Flower Ornament Scripture* interpenetrate, all the statements intertwine. All the sayings in the scripture point to the same thing—when one becomes all become, when one disintegrates all disintegrate. In the totality, because the essence is equal, the time is equal, and the practice is equal, every part of the scripture is equal, and so the explanations of the Teaching are equal. Therefore attainment of buddhahood in the present means equality with all Buddhas of past, present, and future: consequently there is no past, present, or future—no time. In this it differs from the *Prajnaparamita Scriptures*, in which formation and disintegration take place at separate times and thus cause and effect are successive.

Now as for the *Sandhinirmocana Scripture*, this is based on nonvoidness and nonexistence. Buddha explained this teaching after having expounded teachings of existence and of emptiness, to harmonize the two views of being and nothingness, making it neither emptiness nor existence. To this end he spoke of an unalloyed pure consciousness without any defilement. According to this teaching, just as a rapid flow of water produces many waves, all of which are equally based on the water, similarly the sense consciousnesses, the conceptual consciousness, the judgmental consciousness, and the cumulative repository consciousness are all based on the pure consciousness. As the *Sandhinirmocana Scripture* says, it is like the face of a good mirror: if one thing which casts a reflection comes before it, just one image appears; if two or more things come before it, two or more images appear—it is not that the surface of the mirror changes into reflections, and there is no manipulation or annihilation that can be grasped either. This illustrates the pure consciousness on which all aspects of consciousness are based.

The *Sandhinirmocana Scripture* also says that though the enlightening being lives by the teaching, knowledge is the basis, because the teaching is a construction. The intent of this scripture is to foster clear understanding of the essence of consciousness in the medium of consciousness. Because fundamentally it is only real knowledge, it is like the stream of water, which produces waves without leaving the body of the water. It is also like a clear mirror, which due to its pure body contains many images without discrimination, never actually having anything in it, yet not impeding the existence of images. Likewise, the forms of consciousness manifested by one's own mind are not apart from essential uncontrived pure knowledge, in which there are no attachments such as self or other, inside or outside, in regard to the images manifested. Letting consciousness function freely, going along with knowledge, this breaks up bondage to emptiness or existence, considering everything neither empty nor existent. Therefore a verse of the *Sandhinirmocana Scripture* says, "The pure consciousness is very deep and subtle; all impressions

are like a torrent. I do not tell the ignorant about this, for fear they will cling to the notion as 'self.' " The statement that the pure consciousness is very deep and subtle is to draw ordinary people into realization of knowledge in consciousness: it is not the same as the breaking down of forms into emptiness, which is practiced by the two lesser vehicles and the beginning enlightening beings learning the gradual method of enlightenment. It is also not the same as ordinary people who cling to things as really existent. Because it is not the same as them, it is not emptiness, not existence. What is not empty? It means that knowledge can, in all circumstances, illumine the situation and help people. What is not existent? It means that when knowledge accords with circumstances, there is no distinction of essence and characteristics, and thus there is no birth, subsistence, or extinction. Based on these meanings it is called "not empty, not existent."

While the *Sandhinirmocana Scripture* in this way lets us know, in terms of consciousness, that emptiness and existence are nondual, *The Flower Ornament Scripture* is not like this: *The Flower Ornament* just reveals the Buddha's essence and function of fundamental knowledge of the one reality, the fundamental body, the fundamental cosmos. Therefore it merges true essence and characteristics, the oceans of the reality body and the body of consequences of deeds, the reward body. It directly points out at once to people of the highest faculties the basic knowledge of the unique cosmos of reality, the qualities of Buddhahood. This is its way of teaching and enlightenment; it does not discuss such phenomena as producing consciousness according to illusion.

According to the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture*, Buddha appears in the world to enlighten people with Buddha-knowledge and purify them, not for any other religious vehicle, no second or third vehicle. Also it says that Buddha does not acknowledge the understanding of the essence and characteristics of Buddha by people of the three vehicles. Therefore the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture* says, "As for the various meanings of essence and characteristics, only I and the other Buddhas of the ten directions know them—my disciples, individual illuminates, and even nonregressing enlightening beings cannot know them." Because the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture* joins the temporary studies of the three vehicles and brings them ultimately to the true realm of reality of the Buddha-vehicle, its doctrine to some extent matches that of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*.

The Flower Ornament Scripture directly reveals the door of consummate buddhahood; the realm of reality, the fundamental essence and function of the cosmos, communicating this to people of superior faculties so that they may awaken to it: it does not set up the provisional didactic device of five, six, seven, eight, and nine consciousnesses like the *Sandhinirmocana Scripture* does. As for the *Sandhinirmocana Scripture's* establishment of a ninth, pure consciousness, there are two meanings. For one thing, it is for the sake of those of the two lesser vehicles who have long sickened

of birth and death and cultivate emptiness to annihilate consciousness, aiming directly for empty quiescence. Also, in the next phase, the *Prajnaparamita Scriptures* talk a lot about emptiness and refute the notion of existence, to turn around the minds of the two vehicles as well as enlightening beings engaged in gradual study. They also make the six ways of transcendence the vehicle of practice. Although some of those in the two vehicles are converted, they and the gradual-practice enlightening beings are predominantly inclined toward emptiness. This is because the elementary curative teachings for the gradual-study enlightening beings are similar to some extent to those for the lesser vehicles; they do have, however, a bit more compassion than the latter. They have not yet realized principles such as that of the body of reality, the buddha-nature, and fundamental knowledge. They only take the avenue of emptiness as their vehicle of salvation and the six ways of transcendence as their form of practice. Their elementary curative means are after all the same as the two vehicles—only by contemplation of impermanence, impurity, bleached bones, atoms, and so on, do they enter contemplation of emptiness. But while the two vehicles head for extinction, enlightening beings stay in life. They subdue notions of self and phenomena by means of contemplations of voidness, selflessness, and so on. Basically this is not yet fundamental knowledge of the body of reality and the buddha-nature; because their vision is not yet true, inclination toward emptiness is dominant. For this reason the *Sandhinirmocana Scripture* expediently sets up a pure consciousness distinct from the conceptual, judgemental, and cumulative consciousnesses, saying that these consciousnesses rest on the pure consciousness.

The *Sandhinirmocana Scripture* does not yet directly explain that the impressions in the cumulative or repository consciousness are the matrix of enlightenment. This is because the students are engaged in learning out of fear of suffering; if they were told that the seeds of action are eternally real, they would become afraid and wouldn't believe it, so the scripture temporarily sets up a "pure consciousness" so that they won't annihilate the conscious nature and will grow in enlightenment. For this reason the *Vimalakirtinirdesa Scripture* says, "They have not yet fulfilled buddhahood, but they don't annihilate sensation to get realization." Since sensation is not annihilated, neither are conception and consciousness. As for the *Lankavatara Scripture*, it does directly tell those whose faculties are mature that the seeds of action in the cumulative "store-house" consciousness are the matrix of enlightenment. The *Vimalakirtinirdesa Scripture* says, "The passions which accompany us are the seeds of buddhahood."

People who practice the Way are different, on different paths, with myriad different understandings and ways of acting. Beyond the two vehicles that are called the lesser vehicles, the vehicle of enlightening beings has four types that are not the same: one is that of enlightening beings who cultivate emptiness and selflessness; second is that of enlight-

ening beings who gradually see the buddha-nature; third is that of enlightening beings who see buddha-nature all of a sudden; fourth is those enlightening beings who, by means of the inherently pure knowledge of the enlightened, and by means of various levels of intensive practice, develop differentiating knowledge, fulfill the practice of Universal Good and develop great benevolence and compassion.

As for the *Lankavatara Scripture*, its teaching is based on five elements, three natures, eight consciousnesses, and twofold selflessness. The five elements are forms, names, arbitrary conceptions, correct knowledge, and thusness. The three natures are the nature of mere imagination, the nature of relative existence, and the nature of absolute emptiness: the imaginary nature means the characteristics of things as we conceive of them are mere descriptions, projections of the imagination; the relative nature means that things exist in terms of the relation of sense faculties, sense data, and sense consciousness; the absolute nature means that the imaginary and relative natures are not in themselves ultimately real. The eight consciousnesses are the five sense-consciousness, the conceptual consciousness, the discriminating judgemental consciousness, and the cumulative or repository "storehouse" consciousness. The twofold selflessness is the selflessness of persons and of things.

According to this scripture, there is a mountain in the south seas called Lanka, where the Buddha expounded this teaching. This mountain is high and steep and looks out over the ocean; there is no way of access to it, so only those with spiritual powers can go up there. This represents the teaching of the mind-ground, to which only those beyond cultivation and realization can ascend. "Looking out over the ocean" represents the ocean of mind being inherently clear, while waves of consciousness are drummed up by the wind of objects. The scripture wants to make it clear that if you realize objects are inherently empty the mind-ocean will be naturally peaceful; when mind and objects are both stilled, everything is revealed, just as when there is no wind the sun and moon are clearly reflected in the ocean.

The *Lankavatara Scripture* is intended for enlightening beings of mature faculties, all at once telling them the active consciousness bearing seed like impressions is the matrix of enlightenment. Because these enlightening beings are different from the practitioners of the two lesser vehicles who annihilate consciousness and seek quiescence, and because they are different from the enlightening beings of the *Prajnaparamita Scriptures* who cultivate emptiness and in whom the inclination toward emptiness is dominant, this scripture directly explains the total reality of the fundamental nature of the substance of consciousness, which then becomes the function of knowledge. So just as when there is no wind on the ocean the images of objects become clearer, likewise in this teaching of the mind ocean if you comprehend that reality is consciousness it becomes knowledge. This scripture is different from the idea of the *Sandhinirmocana Scripture*, which specially sets up a ninth "pure" con-

sciousness to guide beginners and gradually induce them to remain in the realm of illusion to increase enlightenment, not letting their minds plant seeds in voidness, and not letting their minds become like spoiled fruitless seeds by onesidedly rejecting the world. So the *Sandhinirmocana Scripture* is an elementary gateway to entry into illusion, while the *Lankavatara* and *Vimalakirtinirdesa Scriptures* directly point to the fundamental reality of illusion. The *Lankavatara* explains the storehouse consciousness as the matrix of enlightenment, while the *Vimalakirtinirdesa* examines the true character of the body, seeing it to be the same as Buddha.

The *Lankavatara* and *Vimalakirtinirdesa Scriptures* are roughly similar, while the *Sandhinirmocana* is a bit different. *The Flower Ornament* is not like this: the body and sphere of the Buddha, the doors of teaching, and the forms of practice are far different. It is an emanation body which expounds the *Lankavatara*, and the realm explained is a defiled land; the location is a mountain peak, and the teaching explains the realm of consciousness as real; the interlocutor is an enlightening being called Great Intellect, the teaching of the emanation Buddha is temporary, and the discourse of Great Intellect is selective. As for the teaching of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, the body of Buddha is the fundamental reality, the realm of the teaching and its results is the Flower Treasury; the teaching it rests on is the fruit of buddhahood, which is entered through the realm of reality; the interlocutors are Manjushri and Universally Good. The marvelous function of knowledge of noumenon and phenomena, the aspects of practice of five sets of ten stages, and their causes and effects, merge with each other; the substances of ten fields and ten bodies of buddhahood interpenetrate. It would be impossible to tell fully of all the generalities and specifics of *The Flower Ornament*.

Next, to deal with the *Vimalakirtinirdesa Scripture*, this is based on inconceivability. The *Vimalakirtinirdesa Scripture* and *The Flower Ornament Scripture* have ten kinds of difference and one kind of similarity. The spheres of difference are: the arrays of the pure lands; the features of the body of Buddha as rewards of religious practice or emanated phantom manifestations; the inconceivable spiritual powers; the avenues of teaching set up to deal with particular faculties; the congregations who come to hear the teachings; the doctrines set up; the activity manifested by the enlightening being Vimalakirti; the location of the teaching; the company of the Buddha; and the bequest of the teaching. The one similarity is that the teachings of methods of entry into the Way are generally alike.

First, regarding the difference in the arrays of the pure lands, in the case of the pure land spoken of in the *Vimalakirtinirdesa Scripture* Buddha presses the ground with his toe, whereupon the billion-world universe is adorned with myriad jewels, like the land of Jewel Array Buddha, adorned with the jewels of innumerable virtues. All in the assembly rejoice at this wonder and see themselves sitting on jewel lotus blossoms. But this scripture still does not speak of endless arrays of buddha-lands

being in one atom. *The Flower Ornament Scripture* fully tells of ten realms of Vairocana Buddha, ten Flower Treasury oceans of worlds—each ocean of worlds containing endless oceans of worlds, interpenetrating each other again and again, there being endless oceans of worlds within a single atom. The complete sphere of the ten Buddha-bodies and the sphere of sentient beings interpenetrate without mutual obstruction; the arrays of myriad jewels are like lights and reflections. This is extensively recounted in *The Flower Ornament Scripture*; it does not speak of the purification and adornment of only one billion-world universe.

Second, regarding the difference in the features of the Buddhas' bodies, being rewards or emanations, the *Vimalakirti Scripture* is expounded by an emanation Buddha with the thirty-two marks of greatness, whereas *The Flower Ornament* is expounded by the Buddha of true reward, with ninety-seven marks of greatness and also as many marks as atoms in ten Flower Treasury oceans of worlds.

Third, the difference in inconceivable spiritual powers: according to the *Vimalakirti Scripture*'s explanation of the spiritual powers of enlightening beings, they can fit a huge mountain into a mustard seed and put the waters of four oceans into one pore; also Vimalakirti's little room is able to admit thirty-two thousand lion thrones, each one eighty-four thousand leagues high. Vimalakirti takes a group of eight thousand enlightening beings, five hundred disciples, and a hundred thousand gods and humans in his hand and carries them to a garden; also he takes the eastern buddha-land of Wonderful Joy in his hand and brings it here to earth to show the congregation, then returns it to its place. These miraculous powers are just shown for the benefit of disciples and enlightening beings who are temporarily studying the three vehicles. Why? Because disciples and enlightening beings studying the temporary teachings do not yet see the Way truly, and have not yet forgotten the distinction of self and other. The miracles shown are based on the perception of the sense faculties, and all have coming and going, boundaries and limits. Also they are a temporary device of a sage, intended to arouse those of small faculties by producing miracles through spiritual powers, to induce them to progress further. Therefore they are not spontaneous powers. *The Flower Ornament Scripture* says it is by the power of fundamental reality, because it is the natural order, the way things are in truth, that it is possible to contain all lands of Buddhas and sentient beings in one atom, without shrinking the worlds or expanding the atom. Every atom in all worlds, like this, also contains all worlds.

As *The Flower Ornament Scripture* says, enlightening beings attain enlightenment in the body of a small sentient being and extensively liberate beings, while the small sentient being does not know it, is not aware of it. You should know that it is because Buddha draws in those of lesser faculties by temporary teachings that they see Buddha outside themselves manifesting spiritual powers that come and go—in the true teaching, by means of inherent fundamental awareness one becomes

aware of the fundamental mind, and realizes that one's body and mind, essence and form, are no different from Buddha, and so one has no views of inside or outside, coming or going. Therefore Vairocana Buddha's body sits at all sites of enlightenment without moving from his original place; the congregations from the ten directions go there following the teaching without moving from their original places. There is no coming and going at all, nothing produced by miraculous powers. This is why the scripture says it is this way in principle, in accord with natural law. When the scripture says time and again that is by the spiritual power of Buddha and also thus in principle or by natural law, it says "by the spiritual power of Buddha" to put forward Buddha as what is honorable, and says "it is thus in principle" or "by natural law" to put forward the fundamental qualities of reality. There is no change at all, because every single land, body, mind, essence, and form remain as they originally are and do not follow delusion—all objects and realms, great and small, are like lights, like images, mutually reflecting and interpenetrating, pervading the ten directions, without any coming or going, without any bounds. Thus within the pores of each being is all of space—it is not the same as the temporary teaching of miraculous powers with divisions, coming and going, which cause illusory views differing from the fundamental body of reality, blocking the knowledge of the essence of fundamental awareness of true enlightenment. This is why the enlightening being Vimalakirti set forth the true teaching after showing miracles. The *Vimalakirti Scripture* says, "Seeing the Buddha is like seeing the true character of one's own body; I see the Buddha doesn't come from the past, doesn't go to the future, and doesn't remain in the present."

Because those of small views studying the temporary teaching crave wonders, the enlightening being uses crude means according to their faculties to induce them to learn, and only then gives them the true teaching. One should not cling to phantoms as real and thus perpetually delude the eye of knowledge. Recognizing the temporary and taking to the true, one moves into the gate of the realm of reality.

That which is contrived can hardly accomplish adaptation to conditions, whereas the uncontrived has nothing to do. Those who strive labor without accomplishment, while nonstriving, according with conditions, naturally succeeds. In effortless accomplishment, effort is not wasted; in accomplishment by effort, all effort is impermanent, and many eons of accumulated cultivation eventually decays. It is better to instantly realize the birthlessness of interdependent origination, transcending the views of the temporary studies of the three vehicles.

Fourth is the difference in the teachings set up in relation to people of particular faculties. The *Vimalakirti Scripture* is directed toward those of faculties corresponding to the two lesser vehicles, to induce them to aim for enlightenment and enter the great vehicle. It is also directed at enlightening beings who linger in purity, whose compassion and knowl-

edge is not yet fully developed, to cause them to progress further. Therefore, in the scripture when a group of enlightening beings from a pure land who have come here are about to return to their own land and so ask Buddha for a little teaching, the Buddha, seeing that those enlightening beings are lingering in a pure land and their compassion and knowledge are not yet fully developed, preaches to them to get them to study finite and infinite gates of liberation, telling them not to abandon benevolence and compassion and to set the mind on omniscience without ever forgetting it, to teach sentient beings tirelessly, to always remember and practice giving, kind speech, beneficial action, and cooperation, to think of being in meditative concentration as like being in hell, to think of being in birth and death as like being in a garden pavilion, and to think of seekers who come to them as like good teachers. This is expounded at length in the *Vimalakirti Scripture*.

This *Vimalakirti Scripture* addresses those of the two and three vehicles whose compassion and knowledge are not fully developed, to cause them to gradually cultivate and increase compassion and knowledge—it doesn't immediately point out the door of buddhahood, and doesn't yet say that beginners in the ten abodes realize true enlightenment, and doesn't show great wonders, because its wonders all have bounds.

Fifth is the difference in the assemblies who gather to hear the teaching. In the *Vimalakirti Scripture*, except for the great enlightening beings such as Manjushri and Maitreya and the representative disciples such as Shariputra, all the rest of the audience are students of the temporary teachings of the three vehicles. Even if there are enlightening beings therein who are born in various states of existence and bring those of their kind along, they all want to develop the temporary studies of the three vehicles, and gradually foster progress; the scripture does not yet explain the complete fundamental vehicle of the Buddhas. In the case of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, all those who come are riding the vehicle of the Buddhas—enlightened knowledge, the virtues of realization, the inherent body of reality. They are imbued with Universally Good practice, appear reflected in all scenes of enlightenment in all oceans of lands, and attain the fundamental truth, which conveys enlightenment. There is not a single one with the faculties and temperament of the three vehicles; even if there are any with the faculties and potential of the three vehicles, they are as though blind and death, unknowing, unaware, like blind people facing the sun, like death people listening to celestial music.

Vessels of the three vehicles who have not yet consummated the power of the Way and haven't turned their minds to the vehicle of complete buddhahood are always in the sphere of Buddhas in the ocean of the realm of reality, with the same qualities and same body as Buddha, but they never are able to believe it, are unaware of it, do not know it, so they seek vision of Buddha elsewhere. As *The Flower Ornament Scripture* says, "Even if there are enlightening beings who practice the six ways of transcendence and cultivate the various elements of enlightenment for

countless billions of eons, if they have not heard this teaching of the inconceivable quality of Buddha, or if they have heard it and don't believe or understand it, don't follow it or penetrate it, they cannot be called real enlightening beings, because they cannot be born in the house of the Buddhas." You should know the audiences are totally different—in the *Vimalakirti Scripture* the earthlings are not yet rid of discrimination, while the group from a pure land retain a notion of defilement and purity. Such people's views and understanding are not yet true—sticking to a pure land in one realm, though they be called enlightening beings, they are not well rounded in the path of truth and they don't completely understand the Buddha's meaning. Though they aspire to enlightenment, they want to remain in a pure land, and because they set their minds on that, they are alienated from the body of reality and the body of knowledge. For this reason the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture* says, "Even countless nonregressing enlightening beings cannot know." As for the audience of *The Flower Ornament*, their own bodies are the same as the Buddha's body, their own knowledge is the same as the Buddha's knowledge; there is no difference. Their essence and characteristics contain unity and multiplicity, and sameness and distinction. Dwelling in the water of knowledge of the realm of reality, they appear as dragons; living in the mansion of nirvana, they manifest negativity and positivity, to develop people. Principal and companions freely interreflect and integrate, teacher and student merge with one another, cause and effect interpenetrate. All of *The Flower Ornament* audience are such people.

Sixth, regarding the difference in doctrines set up, the *Vimalakirti Scripture* uses the layman Vimalakirti manifesting a few inconceivable occult displays to cause those of the two lesser vehicles to change their minds. Also Vimalakirti, in the midst of birth and death, appears to be physically ill to have people know defilement and purity are nondual. Also the scripture represents the great compassion of the enlightening being, the "enlightening being with sickness" accepting the pains of the world, and extensively sets forth aspects of nonduality. It sets up concentration and wisdom, contemplation and knowledge, which it uses to illustrate that the principle of nonseeking is most essential. Thus it says, "Those who seek truth should not seek anything." Nevertheless, it is not yet comparable to *The Flower Ornament's* full exposition of the teachings of sameness and distinction and cause and effect of the forms of practice of five and six levels—ten abodes, ten practices, ten concentrations, ten dedications, ten stages, and equalling enlightenment.

Seventh, regarding the difference of the activity manifested by the enlightening being Vimalakirti, in order to represent great compassion Vimalakirti appears to enter birth and death and shows the actions of its ailments. In *The Flower Ornament Scripture* Vairocana, by great compassion, appears to enter birth and death and accomplish the practice of true enlightenment, illustrating great knowledge able to appear in the world.

Eighth, regarding the difference in the locations of the teachings, the

expounding of the *Vimalakirti Scripture* takes place in a garden in the Indian city of Vaishali and in Vimalakirti's room; the expounding of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* takes place at the site of enlightenment in the Indian nation of Magadha, and in all worlds, and in all atoms.

Ninth, regarding the difference in the company of the Buddha, at the time of the preaching of the *Vimalakirti Scripture*, the Buddha's constant company consisted of only five hundred disciples; at the time of the preaching of *The Flower Ornament*, all the Buddha's company were great enlightening beings of the one vehicle, and there were as many of them as atoms in ten buddha-fields, all imbued with the essence and action of Universally Good and Manjushri.

Tenth, regarding the difference in the bequest of the teaching, in the *Vimalakirti Scripture's* book on handing over the bequest it says that Buddha said to the enlightenment being Maitreya, "Maitreya, I now entrust to you this teaching of unexcelled complete perfect enlightenment, which I accumulated over countless billions of ages." Thus the teaching of this scripture is bequeathed to those who have already become enlightening beings and have been born in the family of Buddhas. In *The Flower Ornament Scripture's* book on manifestation of Buddha, the bequest of the teaching of the scripture is made to ordinary people who as beginners can see the Way and be born in the family of Buddhas. Why? This scripture is difficult to penetrate—it can only be explained to those who can realize it by their own experience. This represents the three vehicles as temporary, because the sage exhorts cultivation and realization in the three vehicles, and anything attained is not yet real, and because the doctrines preached are not yet real either. Therefore *The Flower Ornament Scripture* says, "The treasure of this scripture does not come into the hands of anybody except true offspring of Buddha, who are born in the family of Buddhas and plant the roots of goodness, which are seeds of enlightenment. If there are no such true offspring of Buddha, this teaching will scatter and perish before long." It may be asked, "True offspring of Buddha are numberless—why worry that this scripture will perish in the absence of such people?" The answer to this is that the intent of the scripture is to bequeath it to ordinary people to awaken them and lead them into this avenue to truth, and therefore cause them to be born in the family of Buddhas and have them prevent the seed of buddhahood from dying out. Thus ordinary people are caused to gain entry into reality. If it were bequeathed to great enlightening beings, the ordinary people would have no part in it. The sages made it clear that if there were no ordinary people who study and practice, the seed of buddhahood would die out among ordinary people, and this scripture would scatter and perish. This is why the scripture is bequeathed to ordinary people, to get them to practice it; it is not bequeathed to already established great enlightening beings who have long seen the Way.

As for the similarity of means of entering the Way, the *Vimalakirti*

Scripture says, "Those who seek the truth shouldn't seek anything," and "Seeing Buddha is like seeing the true character of one's own body; I see the Buddha does not come from the past, go to the future, or remain in the present," and so on. These doors of knowledge of elementary contemplations are about the same as *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, but the forms of practice, means of access, order, and guidelines are different.

Next, to compare the *Saddharmapundarika* Scripture to *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, the *Saddharmapundarika* is based on merging the temporary in the true, because it leads people of lesser, middling, and greater faculties into the true teaching of the one vehicle, draws myriad streams back into the ocean, returns the ramifications of the three vehicles to the source. Scholars of the past have called this the common teaching one vehicle, because those of the three vehicles all hear it, whereas they called *The Flower Ornament* the separate teaching one vehicle, because it is not also heard by those of the three vehicles. The *Saddharmapundarika* induces vessels of the temporary teaching to return to the real; *The Flower Ornament* teaches those of great faculties all at once so they may directly receive it. Though the name "one vehicle" is the same, and the task of the teaching is generally the same, there are many differences in the patterns. It would be impractical to try to deal with them exhaustively, but in brief there are ten points of difference: the teachers; the emanation of lights; the lands; the interlocutors who request the teaching; the arrays of the assemblies, reality, and emanations; the congregations in the introduction; the physical transformation and attainment of buddhahood by a girl; the land where the girl who attains buddhahood lives; the inspirations of the audiences; and the predictions of enlightenment of the hearers.

First, regarding the difference in the teachers, the exposition of the *Saddharmapundarika* is done by an emanation or phantom-body Buddha; a Buddha who passed away long ago comes to bear witness to the scripture, and the Buddhas of past, present, and future alike expound it. *The Flower Ornament* is otherwise; the main teacher is Vairocana, who is the real body of principle and knowledge, truth and its reward, arrayed with embodiments of virtues of infinite characteristics. The Buddhas of past, present, and future are all in one and the same time; the characteristics realized in one time, one cosmos, reflect each other ad infinitum without hindrance. Because past and present are one time, not past, present, or future, therefore the Buddhas of old are not in the past and the Buddhas of now have not newly emerged. This is because in fundamental knowledge essence and characteristics are equal, noumenon and phenomena are not different. Thus the fundamental Buddha expounds the fundamental truth. Because it is given to those of great faculties all at once, and because it is not an emanation body, it is not like the *Saddharmapundarika*, in which there is an ancient Buddha who

has passed away and a present Buddha who comes into the world and expounds the *Saddharmapundarika*.

Second, regarding the difference in emanation of lights, when expounding the *Saddharmapundarika* the Buddha emanates light of realization from between his eyebrows; the range of illumination is only said to be eighteen thousand lands, which all turn golden—there is still limitation, and it doesn't talk of boundless infinity. Therefore it only illustrates the state of result, and not that of cause. *The Flower Ornament* has in all ten kinds of emanation of light symbolizing the teaching, with doctrine and practice, cause and effect; this is made clear in the scripture.

Third, regarding the difference in the lands, when he preached the *Saddharmapundarika*, Buddha transformed the world three times, causing it to become a pure land; he moved the gods and humans to other lands, and then placed beings from other hands here, transforming this defiled realm into a pure field. When *The Flower Ornament* was expounded, this world itself was the Flower Treasury ocean of worlds, with each world containing one another. The scripture says that each world fills the ten directions, and the ten directions enter each world, while the worlds neither expand nor shrink. It also says the Buddhas attain the Way in the body of one small sentient being and edify countless beings, without this small sentient being knowing or being aware of it. This is just because the ordinary and the sage are the same substance—there is no shift. Within a fine particle self and other are the same substance. This is not the same as the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture's* moving gods and humans before bringing the pure land to light, which is set up for those of the faculties of the temporary teaching, who distinguish self and other and linger in views.

Fourth, regarding the difference in the main interlocutors who request the teaching, in the case of the *Saddharmapundarika*, the disciple Shariputra is the main petitioner. In *The Flower Ornament*, the Buddha has Manjushri, Universally Good, and enlightening beings of every rank each expound the teachings of their own status—these are the speakers. The Buddha represents the state of result: bringing up the result as the cause, initiating compassionate action, consummating fundamental knowledge, the being of the result forms naturally, so nothing is said, because the action of great compassion arises from uncreated fundamental knowledge. Manjushri and Universally Good represent the causal state, which can be explained; Buddha is the state of result, enlightening sentient beings. The vast numbers described in the book on the incalculable can only be plumbed by a Buddha—they are not within the scope of the causes and effects of the five ranks of stages; hence this is a teaching within the Buddha's own state, and so Buddhist himself expounds it. The book on the qualities of Buddha's embellishments and lights is Buddha's own explanation of the principles of Buddhahood after having himself fulfilled cause and effect. The teachings in this book of the perpetual power of natural suchness and the lights of virtue and knowl-

edge also do not fall within the causes and effects of the forms of practice in the five ranks of ten stages, and so the Buddha himself explains it, making it clear that buddhahood does not have ignorance of the subtle and most extremely subtle knowledge. The rest of the books besides these two are all teachings of the forms of practice of the five sets or ranks of stages, so the Buddha does not explain them himself, but has the enlightening beings in the ranks of the ten developments of faith, ten abodes, ten practices, ten dedications, and ten stages explain them: the Buddha just emanates lights to represent them. In the exposition of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* there is not a single disciple or lesser enlightening being who acts as an interlocutor—all are great enlightening beings within the ranks of fruition of buddhahood, carrying out dialogues with each other, setting up the forms of practice of the teaching of the realization of buddhahood to enlighten those of great faculties. Thus it takes the fruit of buddhahood all at once, directly taking it as the causal basis; the cause has the result as its cause, while the result has the cause as its result. It is like planting seeds: the seeds produce fruit, the fruit produce seeds. If you ponder this by means of the power of concentration and wisdom, you can see it.

Fifth, regarding the differences in the arrays of the assemblies, reality and emanations, in the assembly of the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture*, the billion-world universe is purified and adorned, with emanation beings filling it, and the Buddhas therein also are said to be emanations. In the assemblies of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, however, the congregations all fill the ten directions without moving from their original location, filling the cosmos with each physical characteristic and land reflecting each other. The enlightening beings and Buddhas interpenetrate, and also freely pervade the various kinds of sentient beings. The bodies and lands interpenetrate like reflections containing each other. Those who come to the assemblies accord with the body of embellishment without dissolving the body of reality—the body of reality and the body of embellishment are one, without distinction; thus the forms are identical to reality, none are emanations or phantoms. This is not the same as other doctrines which speak of emanations and reality and have them mix in congregations.

Sixth, regarding the difference of the congregations in the introductions, in the assembly of the *Saddharmapundarika*, first it mentions the disciples of Buddha, who are twelve thousand in all, then the nun Mahaprajapati and her company of six thousand—she was the aunt of Buddha; then it mentions Yashodhara, who was one of the wives of Buddha, then eighty thousand enlightening beings, and then the gods and spirits and so on. *The Flower Ornament Scripture* is not like this: first it mentions the leaders of the enlightening beings, who are as numerous as atoms in ten buddha-worlds, and doesn't talk about their followers; then it mentions the thunderbolt-bearing spirits, and after that the various spirits and gods, fifty-five groups in all. Each group is different,

and each has as many individuals as atoms in a buddha-world, or in some cases it simply says they are innumerable. The overall meaning of this is the boundless cosmos of the ocean of embodiments of Buddha—each body includes all, ad infinitum, without bounds. One body thus has the cosmos for its measure; the borders of self and other are entirely gone. The cosmos, which is one's own body, is all-pervasive; mental views of subject and object are obliterated.

Seventh, regarding the difference of physical transformation and attainment of buddhahood by a girl, in the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture* a girl instantly transforms her female body, fulfills the conduct of enlightening beings, and attains buddhahood in the South. *The Flower Ornament Scripture* is not like this; it just causes one to have no emotional views, so great knowledge is clarified and myriad things are in essence real, without any sign of transformation. According to the *Vimalakirti Scripture*, Shariputra says to a goddess, "Why don't you change your female body?" The goddess says to Shariputra, "I have been looking for the specific marks of 'woman' for twelve years but after all can't find any—what should I change?" As another woman said to Shariputra, "Your maleness makes my femaleness." You should know myriad things are fundamentally "thus"—what can be changed? In *The Flower Ornament Scripture's* book on entry into the realm of reality, the teachers of the youth Sudhana—Manjushri and Samantabhadra (Universally Good), monks, nuns, householders, boys, laywomen, girls, wizards, and Hindus—fifty-three people, each are imbued with the conduct of enlightening beings, each are replete with the qualities of buddhahood; while they are seen to be physically dissimilar according to the people who perceive them, it is not said that there is transformation. If you see with the eye of truth, there is nothing mundane that is not true; if you look with the mundane eye, there is no truth that is not mundane. Because the *Saddharmapundarika* addresses those with lesser, middling, and greater faculties for the temporary teaching, whose views are not yet ended, to cause them to develop the seed of faith, it temporarily uses the image of a girl swiftly being transformed and becoming a Buddha, to cause them to conceive wonder, at which only will they be inspired to aim for true knowledge and vision. They are not ready for the fundamental truth, yet they develop roots of goodness. This illustrates inducing those in the three temporary vehicles back to the one true vehicle. Also it cuts through the fixed idea of time, the notion that enlightenment takes three eons, provoking instantaneous realization that past, present, and future are in essence fundamentally one time, without beginning or end, in accord with the equality of things. It rends the net of views of the three vehicles, demolishes the straw hut of the enlightening being, and causes them to wind up at the door of the realm of reality and enter the true abode of Buddhas. This is why it has that girl become Buddha, showing it is not a matter of long cultivation in the past; the fact that she is only eight years old also illustrates the present is not past study—the time of

her transformation is no more than an instant, and she fully carries out the fruition of buddhahood without the slightest lack. Truth is fundamentally *thus*—there is no time in essence.

Those involved in temporary studies block themselves with views and miss the truth by themselves—they call it a miracle that the girl attained buddhahood, and do not know they themselves are originally *thus*; completely in the world, how can they point to eons of practice outside? If they don't get rid of this view, they will surely miss enlightenment forever; if they change their minds and their views vanish, only then will they realize their original abode. It would be best for them to stop the compulsion of views right now. They uselessly suffer through eons of pain and fatigue before they return.

As for *The Flower Ornament Scripture's* doctrine of the interdependent origination of the cosmos, it makes it clear that the ordinary person and the sage are one reality; if one still retains views, one is blocked from this one reality. If one retains views one is an ordinary person; if one forgets sentiments one is a Buddha. Looking downward and looking upward, advancing and withdrawing, contracting and expanding, humility and respect, are all naturally interdependent, and are all practices of enlightening beings—there is nothing at all with transformable characteristics having birth, subsistence, and extinction. Therefore this *Flower Ornament* teaching is not the same as the *Saddharmapundarika's* girl being physically transformed and attaining buddhahood.

Eighth, regarding the difference of the land in which the girl who becomes a Buddha dwells, in the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture* it says this is the world of nondefilement in the South, not this earth. This is interpreted to mean that nondefilement refers to the mind attaining harmony with reality, and “the South” is associated with clarity, emptiness, and detachment. However, if one abides in “the South” as a separate place, then self and other, “here” and “there” are still separate—this is still following the three vehicles to induce those with facility for the temporary teachings to develop resolution and finally come to the Buddha-vehicle. This is because the residual force of attachment to the three vehicles is hard to break. Yet there is some change of mind, and though the sense of self and other is not yet obliterated, the mind is suddenly impressed by the body of the cosmos. This is not the same as *The Flower Ornament*, in which self and other interpenetrate in each atom, standing in a universal relationship of mutual interdependence and interpenetration.

Ninth, regarding the difference in inspirations, the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture* says that when the girl attained buddhahood, all the enlightening beings and disciples on earth, seeing her from afar becoming a Buddha and preaching to the congregation of the time, were delighted and paid respects to her from afar. Subsequently it says three thousand people on earth dwelt in the stage of nonregression, and three thousand people aroused the determination for enlightenment and received predic-

tions of their future buddhahood. When these six thousand people paid honor to the girl from afar and were inspired, their discrimination between “there” and “here” was not gone—they just pursued the created enlightenment of the temporary studies of the three vehicles, and had not attained the enlightenment of fundamental awareness of the cosmos in its universal aspect, in which self and other are one being.

The Flower Ornament is not like this: in terms of the cosmos of universality, the teaching of universal vision, the realm of absorption in the body of the matrix of enlightenment, and the teaching of the array of the cosmic net of Indra, the subtle knowledge of the interpenetration of the whirls of the oceans of worlds is all attained at once—because realization of one is realization of all, detachment from one is detachment from all. Therefore within one’s own body are the arrays of oceans of lands of the ten bodies of Buddha, and within the Buddha’s bodies is the realm of one’s own body. They mutually conceal and reveal each other, back and forth, over and over—all worlds everywhere are naturally this way. It is like myriad streams returning to the ocean: even when they have yet entered the ocean, the nature of moisture is no different; and once they enter the ocean, they all are of the same salty flavor. The same is true of all sentient beings—though delusion and enlightenment differ, the ocean of original buddhahood is basically not different.

Tenth, regarding the difference of giving the prediction of enlightenment to the hearers, in the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture*, though the girl who becomes a Buddha reflects all at once the timelessness of the cosmos, completely revealing buddhahood, those in the temporary studies of the three vehicles, although they have faith, have not yet gotten rid of their residual tendencies and are not yet able to attain immediate realizations; because they can only ascend to enlightenment over a long period of time, they are given prediction of enlightenment in the distant future. This is not the same as *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, which teaches that when one is deluded one is in the realm of the ordinary, and when one is enlightened one is then a Buddha—even if there are residual habits, one uses the knowledge and insight of buddhahood to cure them. Without the knowledge and insight of buddhahood, one can only manage to analyze and subdue habits and cannot enter the rapids of buddhahood, but can only enter buddhahood after a long time.

Because the faculty of faith of beginners in the three vehicles is inferior, they are not able to get rid of their bondage; they are fully wrapped up in their many ties and are obsessed with the vicissitudes of mundane life. Though they seek to transcend the world, their capacities are inferior and they get stuck and regress. This is why the Buddha has them contemplate such points as birth, aging, sickness, death, impermanence, impurity, instantaneous decay, and continual instability to cause them to become disillusioned. When they develop rejection of the world, their minds dwell on the distinction between purity and defilement; for the benefit of this type of people, who, though they cultivate compassion

and knowledge in quest of buddhahood, still think of a pure land as elsewhere, and because they have not obliterated their partial views characteristic of the three vehicles and so always see this world as impure, the Buddha explains cause and effect and settles their doubts, and temporarily makes the world pure, and then withdraws his mystic power so they will again see defilement.

Due to the habit of those in the three vehicles of viewing everything in terms of impermanence, selflessness, and emptiness, their minds are hard to change; though the girl in the *Saddharmapundarika* shows the Buddha-vehicle all at once, and though they believe in it, yet they cannot yet realize it immediately themselves. For this reason the predictions of full enlightenment in the *Saddharmapundarika* assembly all refer to long periods of time. The *Saddharmapundarika* gradually leads to *The Flower Ornament*, whereupon they are directly taught that the determination for enlightenment is itself buddhahood.

There are two aspects of similarity between the *Saddharmapundarika* and *The Flower Ornament Scriptures*. One is that of riding the vehicle of buddhahood directly to the site of enlightenment. The vehicle of buddhahood is the one vehicle. As *The Flower Ornament Scripture* says, among all people there are few who seek the vehicle of hearers, Buddhism disciples, even fewer who seek the vehicle of individual illumination, while those who seek the great vehicle are very few; yet it is easy to seek the great vehicle compared to the great difficulty of believing in *The Flower Ornament* teaching. The scripture also says that if there are any people who are fed up and depressed or obsessed, they are taught the path of disciples to enable them to escape from suffering; to those who are somewhat clear and sharp in mind the principle of conditioning is explained, to enable them to attain individual illumination; to those who willingly practice benevolence and compassion for the benefit of many, the path of enlightening beings is explained; if there are any who are intent on the matter of greatest importance, putting the teachings of infinite enlightenment into operation, they are taught the path of the one vehicle. This is the distinction of four vehicles in *The Flower Ornament Scripture*; as for the *Saddharmapundarika*, it sets out three temporary vehicles and finally reveals the true teaching, which is the Buddha-vehicle—there is no real second or third vehicle. The four vehicles of these two scriptures coincide in their definitions, but the manner of teaching is different.

Then again in the *Saddharmapundarika* it says that “Only this one thing is true—the other two are not real.” Going by this passage, it seems to be setting up three vehicles, but actually it is four teachings: the one thing which is true is the Buddha-vehicle, while the other two refers to the great vehicle of enlightening beings and the lesser vehicles of individual illuminates and hearers, the latter being considered together because they are alike in respect to their revulsion to suffering.

Also, the girl in the *Saddharmapundarika* reflecting the nature of past,

present, and future in one instant, and the statement that there is not the slightest shift from ordinary person to sage, are about the same as the teaching of the understanding and practice and entry into the Way by the youth Sudhana in the last book of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*. As for Sudhana's attainment of buddhahood in one life, within an instant he realized the nature of past, present, and future is wholly equal. This and the girl's instant transformation to buddhahood are both in accord with fundamental truth, because this is the way things are.

As for the *Nirvana Scripture*, it is based on the buddha-nature. It has ten points of difference with *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, and one similarity. The differences are as follows: the location; the arrays of the realms; the audiences; the interlocutors of the teachings; the audiences' hearing of the teaching; the purity or defilement of the lands of reward; the temporariness and reality of the Buddha-body; the patterns of birth and extinction; the forms of practice of the teachings; and the models of companionship. The one point of similarity is illustrated by the *Nirvana Scripture's* image of an herb in the snowy mountains of such a nature that cows who eat it produce pure ghee with no tinge of blue, yellow, red, white, or black.

Regarding the first difference, that of location, the *Nirvana Scripture* is preached between the twin trees on the bank of the Hiranayavati River in Kushinagara, whereas *The Flower Ornament* is preached under a jewel enlightenment tree at the sight of enlightenment in Magadha.

Second, regarding the difference in array of the realm, when the *Nirvana Scripture* was expounded, the hallowed ground between the trees was thirty-two leagues in length and breadth, completely filled by a great congregation. At that time the places where the boundless hosts of enlightening beings and their companies sat were infinitesimal, like points: all the great enlightening beings from all buddha-lands came and assembled. Also it says that at that time, by the Buddha's power, in all the worlds in that billion-world universe the ground was soft, level, uncluttered, free from brambles, and arrayed with myriad jewels like the western paradise of the Buddha of Infinite Life. Everyone in this great assembly saw all the buddha-lands, numerous as atoms, as clearly as seeing themselves in a mirror. Also it says that the trees suddenly turned white. This is all extensively described in the scripture.

Now when *The Flower Ornament Scripture* was expounded, there were ten flower-treasury oceans of worlds, each with twenty layers above and below. On the bottom layer there are as many vast lands as atoms in one buddha-field, each with as many satellite lands as atoms in ten buddha-fields; this increases with each successive layer. All of the worlds in these oceans of worlds have adamantite soil, with trees, pavilions, palaces, mansions, lakes, seas, all adorned with precious substances. As the scripture says, "One time the Buddha was in the land of Magadha, at the site of enlightenment in a forest, having just realized true enlightenment: the ground was made of adamantite diamond, adorned with discs of

exquisite jewels, flowers of myriad jewels, and clear crystals," and so on, going on to say how all the adornments of inconceivable eons of all buddha-lands were included and revealed there. This is eulogizing the adornments of the sphere of Buddha. This is also extensively described in the book on the Flower Treasury universe: these are the adornments of the Buddha's own body of true reward, not like in the *Nirvana Scripture* where Buddha uses mystic power to temporarily purify the world for the assembly. The reason for this is that in the *Nirvana Scripture* the audience is a mixture of those with the faculties of the three vehicles, so there would be no way for them to see this purity by themselves without the support of the Buddha's spiritual power. In the case of *The Flower Ornament* the audience is pure and unmixed, being only those with the faculty for the one vehicle; the disciples of the lesser vehicle who are in the crowd do not perceive these adornments of Buddha's realm, because their faculties are different. Although the scripture says "by the spiritual power of Buddha," afterwards it says, after all, that it is by the power of natural law being so, or it is so in principle. Here, "spiritual" or "mystic" means accord with reality; it doesn't mean that someone who is actually an ordinary person is given a temporary vision. *The Flower Ornament* basically shows the true reward, while the spiritual power of the *Nirvana Scripture* is a temporary measure. Also, the *Nirvana Scripture* has Buddha's pure land in the west, beyond as many buddha-lands as particles of sand in thirty-two Ganges Rivers—it is not here. This obviously is a projection, and not real.

Third, regarding the difference in the audiences, all in the audience of the *Nirvana Scripture* are human or celestial in nature, with those of the three vehicles coming together: except for the great enlightening beings, when they remember the Buddha they weep; bringing fragrant firewood for the cremation, they grieve and lament, missing the days when they attended the Buddha. All such people are suited to hearing that the Buddha passes away; except for the enlightening beings of the one vehicle who have penetrated Buddha-knowledge, all the others are like this. The audience of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* consists of enlightening beings in the ranks of fruition of buddhahood, in the ocean of knowledge of essence, all of whom are on the one vehicle. The humans, celestials, spirits, etc. are all of the same faculties and enter the stream of Buddha-knowledge. In the first assembly it says that the enlightening beings, as many of them as atoms in ten buddha-worlds, are all born from the ocean of the roots of goodness of Buddha. The ocean of roots of goodness is the ocean of knowledge of the reality body of Buddha, born of great knowledge. All Buddhas have as their basis the fundamental knowledge of the body of reality—if enlightening beings were not born from this, all their practices would be fabricated. This congregation, from the first inspiration to the entry into the ocean of Buddha-knowledge, go through six levels, cultivating ten developments of faith, ten abodes, ten practices, ten dedications, ten stages, and equaling enlight-

enment, from shallow to deep, the forms of practice diverse. This is not like the *Nirvana Scripture*, in which the three vehicles are alike included, and the good types of humans and celestials come to the same assembly; in *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, those of the three vehicles are not in the congregation, or even if they are, they are as though deaf, not hearing. So you should know the assembly of those of the three vehicles in the *Nirvana Scripture*—enlightening beings, Buddha's disciples, humans, celestials, etc.—is not the same as that of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, which consists only of enlightening beings in the one vehicle, whose rank when they first set their minds on enlightenment is the same as the rank of Buddha, who enter the stream of knowledge of Buddha, share the same insight and vision as Buddha, and are true offspring of Buddha.

Fourth, regarding the difference in the interlocutors, in the *Nirvana Scripture* the main petitioners for the teaching are the enlightening being Kashyapa, the enlightening beings Manjushri and Sinhanada, and Shariputra, and so on, who are models of the teachings. The Devil, who is also a principal petitioner, urges the Buddha to pass away. As for *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, the leaders who set up the teachings are Universally Good, Manjushri, Chief in Awareness, Truth Wisdom, Forest of Virtues, Diamond Banner, Diamond Matrix, and so on. In this way there are ten "chiefs," ten "wisdoms," ten "forests," and ten "matrices," great enlightening beings within the ranks of fruition of buddhahood, who set up the teachings of forms of practice of fruition of buddhahood in several ranks. Thus because these ranks are identical to buddhahood and buddhahood is identical to these ranks, it shows that in each rank there is fruition of buddhahood.

The enlightening beings who carry on dialogues setting up the teachings in *The Flower Ornament* are all enlightening beings from the ten directions and from this world; all spiritually penetrate the source of reality, their knowledge is equal to the cosmos: appearing as reflections or responses in the ten directions, they arrive without coming or going. Their devices, in accord with the nature of things, are not accomplished by coming and going. Even in the minutest atomic particle there are infinite clusters of bodies; in a fine hair an inconceivable ocean of forms is manifest. All things in the cosmos are like this. In all places, the enlightening beings are suddenly there, without having come from anywhere; suddenly they are absent, without having gone anywhere. In all places and times, in the physical forms of living beings, the mountains, rivers, seas, and space of the environment, they appear in physical forms, freely being and not being, infinitely interpenetrating and interreflecting. These are all great enlightening beings, and therefore are not like the enlightening being Kashyapa or the disciple Shariputra in the *Nirvana Scripture*, who were born in human homes and appeared in the same state as ordinary people to lead the people in the three vehicles, who felt sad and wept on the passing of the Buddha.

Fifth, regarding the difference in the audiences' hearing of the teaching, the *Nirvana Scripture* is for those of the lesser vehicles and enlightening beings involved in the temporary teaching, who carry out various contemplative practices without having yet gotten rid of the obstruction of clinging, and so are obsessed with the practice and cling fast to the forms of practice; thus missing, in these forms of practice, the fundamental essence of the uncreated body of reality, which has no proof or practice; by means of practice, cultivation develops and becomes manifest, constructing realizations of the subject and object, enlightenment and nirvana: for these people the Buddha explains in this *Nirvana Scripture* that all practices are impermanent, being things that are born and perish, and that when birth and destruction die out, extinction is bliss. This is because the good conduct practiced and the realizing enlightenment are born phenomena, and the realized nirvana is the phenomenon of extinction: since the mind retains subject and object, birth and extinction do not cease, and while birth and extinction do not cease one fails to penetrate the truth. Now this *Nirvana Scripture* therefore explains that when the practices, the realizing enlightenment, and the realized nirvana all become extinct, only then does one accord with truth: so it says, "All practices are impermanent—they are born and perish. When birth and decay have passed away, silent extinction is bliss." This is why the Buddha disappeared. When the sense of subject and object is ended, that is called great nirvana.

The nirvana of the two lesser vehicles can have subject and object, and has cultivation and realization—therefore it is called created noncontamination. The nirvana of the Buddha has no subject or object: for this reason, in the *Nirvana Scripture* Cunda says to the enlightening being Manjushri, "Don't say the Buddha is the same as practices. . . . If you say the Buddha is the same as practices, then you cannot say Buddha is free." Therefore great ultimate nirvana informs those of the three vehicles that all practices, the enlightenment which realizes, and the nirvana which is realized, are all impermanent. Since that which is born is originally nonexistent, extinction is not experienced. No practice, no cultivation, is called great nirvana, and it is called complete tranquility. Therefore the *Nirvana Scripture* has those in the three vehicles who are attached to practices detach from practice and cultivation, and has those with an object of realization carry out no-realization and no-cultivation.

As for *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, the congregations from other regions and the people of this world, in the ranks of the assembly, from their very first determination for enlightenment immediately arrive at noumenal and phenomenal freedom, the merging of principle and action. Principle and action are reflected at once, without before, after, or in between. All of this is naturally so, based on the fundamental truth. If you keep thinking of beginning and end, cause and effect, before and after, this is all mundane feelings, all birth and death, having becoming

and disintegration, all a matter of breaking bonds according to faculties, not a matter of the true source of fulfillment of buddhahood.

The various teachings' methods of guiding people all lead into *The Flower Ornament's* ocean of fruition of knowledge of truth—this is their true goal. The avenues of the teaching are clear, the guiding mirror is evident; you should read through the whole scripture, with contemplative knowledge illuminating it as you go along: the mind opening up to understanding, the clouds will disperse from the sun of knowledge. Suddenly you will ascend the peak of wonder, surveying the ocean of knowledge; the two views of ordinary and holy will be washed away by the water of concentration, and the two gates of compassion and wisdom will appear through the spiritual body. This *Flower Ornament Scripture* is expounded directly to those of supremely great hearts; it is like directly bestowing monarchy on a commoner. It is like dreaming of a thousand years, all to vanish upon awakening. This is like the saying of the *Nirvana Scripture* that there is a certain herb in the snowy mountains; the cows that eat this produce pure ghee, with no tinge of blue, yellow, red, white, or black. Like this, people with the broadest minds immediately see the buddha-nature and thereupon attain true enlightenment, not coming to it gradually from lesser states. This is why we say the hearing of the audiences is different—the *Nirvana Scripture* unifies the branches and proceeds from the essence, but does not yet talk about the simultaneous operation without interference of knowledge and compassion, the real and the conventional.

Sixth, regarding the difference in purity and defilement of the lands of reward, in the *Nirvana Scripture* the Buddha's land of reward is placed in the West, past as many buddha-lands as grains of sand in thirty-two Ganges Rivers—this is said to be the land of spiritual reward of Shakyamuni Buddha. This is because those involved in the temporary studies of the three vehicles have not transcended defilement and purity and see this world as polluted, evil, and impure; the Buddha therefore temporarily points out a land of reward in the West. In the doctrine of true teaching of *The Flower Ornament*, this very world itself is pure, without defilement, and the worlds of the ten directions are pure and flawless. This is because for enlightening beings of the true teaching defilement and purity are ended, so the world is thoroughly pure; enlightening beings of the temporary teaching see defilement by themselves where there is no defilement, and therefore Buddha points out a land of reward in the West.

Seventh, regarding the difference in the temporariness and reality of the embodiment of Buddha, the Buddha in the *Nirvana Scripture* with thirty-two marks of greatness is temporary, while the true principle of complete tranquility is real. Since the measureless arrays of all marks of spiritual reward exist dependent upon the real, therefore according to *The Flower Ornament Scripture* the thirty-two marks of Vairocana Buddha enter the Buddha of nirvana—both are realm noumenon and phenomena

are nondual; without destroying the body of reality, Buddha accords with the ocean of forms, measureless, endless. Forms, essence, reward, and principle interidentify; they are like lights and reflections, freely merging.

Eighth, regarding the difference in manifestations of birth and extinction, in the *Nirvana Scripture* there is set up, for the people of the vehicles of discipleship and individual awakening, Buddha's spiritual descent from Tushita heaven, birth on earth, and so on, till his entry into final nirvana. For enlightening beings of the great vehicle it says Buddha does not descend from heaven into the mother's womb; it says Buddha is eternal, blissful, self, and pure, beginningless and endless, unborn and unperishing, yet temporarily disappears. Then it posits a land of reward, which it calls Shakyamuni Buddha's land of reward, far away in the West. It makes this earth out to be a phantom land, a realm of defilement. The *Nirvana Scripture* contains these things that are different from *The Flower Ornament*, to lead those with facility for the temporary teaching. *The Flower Ornament* is otherwise: it directly points out the teaching of the fundamental body, the fundamental reality, going beyond emotional and intellectual views, without beginning or end, void of any sign of past, present, or future, one complete real reward, unborn, unperishing, not eternal, not finite, the ocean of realization in which essence and form interpenetrate freely. The emptiness of a single atom has no difference throughout the cosmos; different types of people create hindrance and bondage, their faculties and capacities are not equal, and the temporary and the true are not the same, so as a result there are myriad differences in ways of teaching. One should know the temporary and the true, one should recognize the provisional and practice the real, and not miss the true teaching by sticking to a temporary school.

Ninth, regarding the difference in the forms of practice of the teachings, according to the *Nirvana Scripture* even enlightening beings in the tenth stage do not clearly know or see the buddha-nature. So it proceeds from the ten outgrowths of faith of the ordinary person and later comes to the ten abodes, where the enlightening beings see the buddha-nature a little bit: the *Nirvana Scripture* sets up the process of ten abodes, ten practices, ten dedications, and ten stages, to be cultivated gradually—only in the stage of equally enlightenment does it clarify the fulfillment of practice producing fruition, and only the state of ineffable enlightenment is finally buddhahood. Then again, it also says there is an herb in the snowy mountains; the cows that eat this produce pure ghee with no tint of blue, yellow, red, white, or black—so it also expounds the teachings of immediate realization.

In the *Nirvana Scripture* there are after all types of teachings of five vehicles, six vehicles, seven, eight, nine, and ten vehicles. There are three kinds of vehicles of enlightening beings beyond the two vehicles of hearers and individual illuminates—together these make five vehicles. If we include the five precepts and ten virtues, that makes a sixth and

seventh vehicle. Also, those of the three vehicles, hearing the same thing, each apprehend their own principles therein—therefore they make three times three or nine vehicles. As for the practices of the three vehicles of enlightening beings, they are: cultivating selflessness; proceeding from the ten abodes to the ten stages, gradually seeing buddha-nature; and attaining sudden realization without going through various stages.

In the *Nirvana Scripture*'s book on the buddha-nature it says that once the great enlightening beings saw the buddha-nature they all said, "We revolved in measureless births and deaths, always confused by selflessness." This is like the saying in *The Flower Ornament Scripture* that there are enlightening beings who practice the six ways of transcendence for countless eons, attain the six spiritual powers, and read, write, and master the canon of eighty-four thousand teachings, yet still do not believe in this deep scripture. This is an example of such enlightening beings; the spiritual powers they attain are not based on natural origination, but are consequences of practicing virtues and contemplations such as selflessness. It is also like the case of people living in earthly paradise: they too are born there as a result of having practiced contemplations of the nonexistence of self or possession; their material livelihood is naturally abundant, but they have no teaching of enlightenment and do not realize liberation. The problem with all of these is that in the past their action and understanding were mistaken, so they could never forget what they had gained. The *Nirvana Scripture*, after having unified humans, celestials, heretics, and those of the three vehicles, returns them all to the buddha-nature, the complete tranquility of nirvana, the true principle of naturelessness: it does not yet point out that the characteristics of reward, the consequences of enlightenment, have no self or other, but include both noumenon and phenomena, with knowledge and function interpenetrating. So it still sets up distinctions such as self-other, purity-defilement, and so on, and therefore says the land of reward of Shakyamuni Buddha is far away in the West. This is because the faculties of the people it addresses cannot yet bear the whole truth; the teaching is set up according to the faculties, to lead those of the three vehicles who have obstructions in connection to reality. The complete quiescence of the buddha-nature, the noumenal aspect of thusness, cannot show the interplay of forms; blocking perception of existents, thus producing doubts, it screens the body of reality.

Thus the *Nirvana Scripture*'s teaching of the fruition of buddhahood after the ten stages is what is seen by beginners in the ten abodes in *The Flower Ornament Scripture*. The herb in the mountains from which cows produce pure ghee is like the beginners in the ten abodes in *The Flower Ornament* seeing the Way and immediately seeing that self and other, beginningless and endless, not old or new, are originally Buddha. Because body and mind, essence and forms, are originally Buddha, this door of buddhahood is considered liberation, riding the vehicle of buddhahood directly to the site of enlightenment. In the various stations

and stages of enlightening beings, in each rank there is fruition of buddhahood, just as the ocean is in each drop. They carry out their practices within the buddha-nature, so there is progressive practice because of their buddha-nature. In *The Flower Ornament*, enlightening beings at the outset, in the beginning of the ten abodes, suddenly see the Buddha's body of reality, the buddha-nature, the uncreated fruit of knowledge, and carry out all the myriad practices of Universal Good, according with conditions without lingering, all of them uncontrived.

The *Nirvana Scripture* says that the buddha-nature is not a created phenomenon; but because it is covered by passions for outside objects, starting from the first of the ten abodes one uses uncontrived concentration so that one's essence accords with reality, where passions and objects have no inherent nature—there is only the essence and function of reality, which has no greed, hatred, or delusion, and is spontaneously Buddha. Therefore if you unite with it for a moment, you become Buddha in a moment; if you unite with it in a day, you become Buddha in a day—what's the need for gradual step-by-step accumulation of practice over eons to arrive at the fruit? When the mind is hooked onto quantification of ages, the vision is blocked—what end would there be to this? The teaching of the Buddhas is basically not contained in time—counting time and setting up ages or eons is not the buddha-vehicle.

Tenth, regarding the difference in patterns of companionship, in the *Nirvana Scripture* it says a youth of the snowy mountains met a demigod and was inspired by a half verse spoken by the demigod; valuing the half verse, he forfeited his life to hear the rest—"All actions are impermanent—this is the phenomenon of birth and death. When birth and death are extinguished, tranquil extinction is bliss." This is saying that the nirvana of buddha-nature cannot be cultivated by practices, because practices are fabricated and impermanent, and it cannot be realized by mind, because mind has subject and object. Thus its essence cannot be cultivated, its principle cannot be witnessed by the mind. Mind itself is the essence—there is no further subject or object. This is why Cunda said, "Don't say the Buddha is the same as practices."

As for *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, the pattern set by the youth Sudhana, from his first inspiration for enlightenment with Manjushri, till his final meeting with the Universally Good enlightening being, to each of the fifty-three teachers he met, he said, "I have aroused the determination for unexcelled complete perfect enlightenment—how would you have me learn the path of enlightening beings and carry out the practices of enlightening beings?" It does not say all practices are impermanent. Why? Because *The Flower Ornament* elucidates the teaching of the cosmos of interdependent origination, in which noumenon and phenomena are nondual. No condition is not quiescent, no phenomenon is not real. All worlds are one ocean of the essence of reality; the complete pervasion of great knowledge is the realm. The totality of everything is the ocean of essence, the one real cosmos. It is not explained

according to action as sentient and insentient. Therefore, since the realm of unalloyed reality in the Flower Ornament is all knowledge, the land of the enlightening beings of the ten abodes is wisdom, the land of the enlightening beings of the ten practices is knowledge, the land of the enlightening beings of the ten dedications is wonder—it doesn't express two different views of animate and inanimate.

The *Nirvana Scripture* addresses those of the temperaments of the three vehicles; because their characters and behavior are inferior, the Buddha has then harmonized by practices, to overcome their gross ills—only then can they enter the Way. But then they conceive of the practices they are taught as absolute truths, and this screens the uncreated essence and they miss out on the truth. For this reason Buddha explains that all practices are impermanent, and the realizer and the realized are also phenomena that are born and perish. This is not the same as Sudhana's instant awakening in which there is no subject or object, intuitively becoming aware that one's own mind is fundamentally Buddha. Not attaining buddhahood, not experiencing enlightenment, the body and mind, essence and form, having no realization or cultivation, not becoming or decaying, are originally *thus*, active or still according to conditions, without destroying existence or nonexistence—the practices carried out are only products of knowledge. Therefore it doesn't say that all practices are impermanent in *The Flower Ornament Scripture*.

As for the similarity between the *Nirvana Scripture* and *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, an example of this is what is illustrated by the simile of the special herb in the snowy mountains; also the *Nirvana Scripture* says that all sentient beings have buddha-nature, and that the Buddhas have no final entry into extinction. *The Flower Ornament* says, "The Buddhas do not come forth into the world, and they have no extinction." Also, the *Nirvana Scripture* criticizes those of the two lesser vehicles for the discriminating view of Buddha as descending from heaven into the womb, living as a prince, leaving home, becoming enlightened, and passing away: this is like the notion of *The Flower Ornament* that knowledge enters past, present, and future without coming or going, and all Buddhas attain great enlightenment by the timeless essence. Instantly seeing the Way, views of past and present end, "new" and "old" do not exist at all—one attains the same enlightenment as countless Buddhas of the past, and also becomes Buddha at the same time as the Buddhas of countless ages of the future, by personally witnessing the timelessness of past, present, and future. Because there is no time, there is no coming or going.

Even if people don't see or know themselves that their own body and mind are fundamentally truly enlightened, the complete qualities of the true enlightenment of one's own body and mind fundamentally have no annihilation. And if they do themselves see and know the fundamental true enlightenment of their own body and mind, their own true enlightenment has no birth, because it is originally *thus*; and basically there is

no one who awakens and nothing awakened to. If any awake, they after all awaken to this nonexistence of an awakening subject or an object of awakening. Thus the realm of the Buddha of fundamental awareness has no ordinary person, no sage, no concentration, no distraction; it is not cultivated, not proved, not knowledge, not ignorance, not born, not destroyed.

This outline of the perspective of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* in comparison with other important Buddhist scriptures generally follows the work of the earlier specialists in *Flower Ornament* doctrine. Li Tongxuan's work, with its emphasis on totality and immediate realization of the essential unity of being, was highly appreciated especially by students of the Chan school of Buddhism. The emphasis on the one vehicle and its totalistic perspective presented in Li's introduction to *The Flower Ornament Scripture* is particularly useful in view of the great variety and complexity of the contents of the scripture, which make it easy to get lost in detail and miss the overall meaning. While in a sense the specific principles and practices presented in the scripture are all contained in the one vehicle, they are also at once introductions into the one vehicle as well as outgrowths of the one vehicle. Once the fundamental premises and basic vocabulary of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* have been established, no further generalization is adequate to convey its contents.

A Thematic Summary of Each Book

The first book of the scripture, entitled *The Wonderful Adornments of the Leaders of the Worlds*, describes a symbolic assembly of various groups of beings at the site of Buddha's enlightenment. The title of this book refers to the representatives of various realms of being who appear on the scene, but it can also be read *Wonderful Adornments of the Leader of the Worlds*, referring specifically to the Buddha, the various states of being seen as adornments of the Buddha, their realizations representing aspects of Buddha's total enlightenment. Buddhahadra's translation entitles this book *Pure Eyes of the World*, which likewise may also be read *Pure Eye of the Worlds*, representing the total universal awareness of the Buddha.

In this opening book a general picture of the nature of buddhahood and the general principles and scope of the teaching is built up through the various beings' eulogies and descriptions of the liberations they have realized. What is stressed is the universality and comprehensiveness of buddhahood, which is described as both physically and metaphysically coextensive with the cosmos itself. It emphasizes that Buddha expounds the truth by various means and teaches innumerable practices for the benefit of all beings: here "Buddha" refers to reality itself, and to people who are awake to reality. The various kinds of beings that appear in this book do not in this case represent their mundane aspects as such, but

rather depict various facets of the Buddha's enlightenment, while also representing the potential for enlightenment inherent in all conscious beings, a fundamental theme of universalist Buddhism.

The second book, entitled Appearance of the Buddha, tells about characteristics of buddhahood, stressing the infinity and eternity of Buddha in the cosmic sense of being reality itself. The epithet of Buddha used in the title is Tathagata, which is understood in Chinese Buddhism to mean "one who comes from thusness," the term "thusness" referring to being-as-it-is, unpredicated reality. The human Buddha is considered in one sense as someone who is aware of fundamental continuity and identity with reality. In this scripture the term "Buddha" is commonly used for thusness or reality itself; in this book it is pointed out that Buddha, as reality, appears everywhere to all beings, but it is seen in accord with their perceptive capacities. It conveys the parallel messages that all experience reality according to their faculties and predilections, and that correlative to this, enlightened guides present various teachings to people in accord with their needs, potentials, and conditions. This accounts for the wide variety of doctrines in Buddhism, some of which may on the surface seem so different as to be even mutually opposed; underlying this variety is the fact that diverse aspects of a situation or levels of truth may be discussed separately, and that different ways of seeing, thinking, and acting may be recommended to different people, depending on the time and circumstances. This principle of adaptation and specific prescription is known as "skill in means" and is so basic and pervasive that it is impossible to understand Buddhism without a thorough appreciation of its premises, its purpose and implications.

The third book, called The Meditation of the Enlightening Being Universally Good, exposes the metaphysic of the *bodhisattva* or "enlightening being," the worker for universal enlightenment. The practical aspect of the enlightening being is here and throughout the scripture typified by a symbolic being called Universally Good, or Universal Good (Samantabhadra). The interrelatedness of all beings and the awareness of that interrelatedness on the part of enlightening beings is graphically represented in this book. By being in direct contact without "thusness" or "suchness" without the distorting influence of preconceptions and partiality, enlightening beings are, according to this book, aware of each other through being equally focused on reality. The unity of their purpose—universal liberation and enlightenment—which underlies diversity of method is emphasized strongly here. Again, it is made clear that enlightening beings may appear in virtually any form and employ a wide variety of means, according to what is useful for the liberation of people in given conditions. Universally Good, representing the enlightening work as a whole, extending throughout all places and times, therefore symbolizes a central concept of this scripture.

The fourth book, The Formation of the Worlds, presents visionary descriptions of worlds as representing the consequences of aspirations

and actions. Emphasized here is the relativity of world and mind, how the features of the world depend on the states of mind and corresponding deeds of the inhabitants. A considerable portion of the contents of this and the following book consists of a series of litanies of concentration formulae, intended to convey certain impressions to the mind and to encapsulate certain aspects of the teaching to focus attention on them. It is through transformation of the vision of the world as well as the attitudes and actions connected with that vision that the world itself is transformed. This point also is an important part of the message of the scripture.

The fifth book is entitled *The Flower Bank World*. The so-called Flower Bank World is also referred to as the Flower Bank Array ocean of worlds, and may be translated as the world adorned by treasuries of flowers. This "world" is in the scripture represented as an "ocean of worlds," and is said to be our universe. In this scripture "flowers" generally represent practices or deeds, which produce fruits and seeds of consequent states. This book presents a visionary cosmology describing this world system or universe as purified by the vows and deeds of Vairocana Buddha, the glorified or cosmic aspect of the historical Buddha. It represents the world system as resting on an ocean of fragrant water, which symbolizes what is called the "repository consciousness," which is the mental repository or "storehouse" in which all experiential impressions are stored. It is from these impressions that images of the world develop. These images of the world are represented in the scripture as features of the world system. The land masses in the world system also contain seas of fragrant water, which symbolize virtuous qualities or wholesome factors in the mind. Many varieties of adornment are described, symbolizing not only virtues but also purely aesthetic views of the world without the contamination of emotional judgements. As a further dimension, the description of unthinkableably many worlds over immensely vast reaches is calculated to foster a perspective in which any world is, as it were, reduced in size, like a pebble taken from the eye and returned to a mountain, no longer commanding the obsessive sense of unique significance that a narrow focus of attention invests in it. These elaborate descriptions allude also to the complexity of any realm, and try thereby to draw the consciousness into a broader awareness and detach it from restrictive preoccupations.

Book six, *Vairocana*, recounts illustrative tales of the development of the Buddha Vairocana in remote antiquity. The name "Vairocana" is interpreted in two senses, universal illuminator and specific illuminator, embodying both holistic and differentiating awareness. As noted, Vairocana is understood as another name for Shakyamuni in the cosmic, metaphysical sense, and also in the sense of the qualities or verities of buddhahood that are common to all Buddhas. This book describes a variety of realizations and attainments of Vairocana in the causal state, using mnemonic meditation formulae representing basic principles and

praxes of Buddhist teachings. These are suggested in terms of various spells, trances, psychic powers, knowledges, lights, activities, perspectives, and so on.

The seventh book, called *Names of the Buddha*, again emphasizes that Buddhas, enlightened people, develop profound insight into mentalities and potentials, and teach people in accord with their capacities and needs. Thus it is that all see Buddhas differently, according to their faculties and to the teachings which have been adapted to their situations. This book recites names and epithets of Buddhas to represent different perceptions or different facets of the qualities of enlightenment. Sometimes these are given from the point of view of cause, sometimes from the point of view of effect; sometimes they are explicit, sometimes they are veiled in metaphor.

The eighth book, *The Four Holy Truths*, is based on the same principle as the foregoing book, presenting Buddhist teaching in myriad different ways to accommodate various mentalities and understandings. Following the lead of the seventh book, *The Four Holy Truths* gives various names and capsule descriptions of four points that are believed to have been one of the original teaching frames of the historical Buddha. Basically, these four truths refer to the fact of suffering, the origin of suffering, the extinction of suffering, and ways to the extinction of suffering. Here again the representations of these points may be put in terms of cause or of effect. Sometimes the mundane truths—suffering and its origin—are put in terms not of conventional reality but of ultimate reality—inherent emptiness—to show a path of transition to the world-transcending truths within the mundane itself.

Book nine, entitled *Awakening by Light*, is an expanding vision unfolding within light issuing from Buddha's feet: the light progressively illumines greater and greater numbers of worlds as it travels further and further into space, radiating in all directions, revealing similar structures and parallel events in each world. In every world are immense numbers of Buddhas who each attract ten great enlightening beings, one from each of the ten directions, who in turn are each accompanied by countless enlightening beings. When the assemblies have all been arrayed, one of each group of ten great enlightening beings chants descriptive eulogies of the Buddha, alluding to the acts and realities of buddhahood. Here again is emphasized the identity of Buddha with truth and ultimate reality, the transcendental nature of the essence of Buddha.

The tenth book, called *An Enlightening Being Asks for Clarification*, follows up on the ninth, with the same interlocutors. This book goes explicitly into metaphysics, explaining the principle of the naturelessness or essenceless of all phenomena. This means that things have no individual nature, no inherent identity or essence of their own, because they are interdependent and only exist due to causes and conditions. For this reason it is repeatedly stated that the nature of things is natureless, that they have no being of their own. It points out that the seeming existence

of things as discrete independent entities is in fact conceptual, a description projected by the mind on the flux of sense data; the real nature of things, it maintains, is insubstantial, and they die out instant to instant. In this book it is restated that realms or conditions of being are consequences of action, but it goes on to say that action is fundamentally baseless, or lacking in ultimate reality—it is the mind's attachment to its own constructs that provides the sense of continuity.

Also stressed in this book is the point that the teachings of Buddhas may be manifold and different according to specific circumstances, but the essential truth is one and the various teachings and practices are all part of a total effort. To clarify this point further, the different mental conditions for which particular aspects of the teaching are recommended are noted, to give some idea of the purposes of the diverse doctrines and approaches of Buddhism. This book also emphasizes the critical importance of actual application of the teachings, without which the mere description of techniques is useless. A number of classic metaphors used in Chan Buddhism to stress the need for application are taken from this particular book of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*.

Book eleven, called Purifying Practice, was translated several times, as early as the third century. It is a litany of prayers concentrating on the development of outlook and mentality of the enlightening being. It particularly focuses on the interconnectedness of all beings and the training of this awareness. It details an elaborate scheme of thought-cultivation in which consciousness of daily activities is directed to specific wishes for universal well-being and liberation. In terms of format, much of it is based on entry into monastic life, and some of the specific actions and events on which the contemplations are based are of monastic life, but many others make no necessary distinction between lay and monastic life.

The twelfth book is called Chief in Goodness, being named after the enlightening being who expounds it. This book eulogizes the aspiration or will for enlightenment, the monumental spiritual conversion by which an ordinary person becomes an enlightening being whose life and action is based on and guided by the determination for the enlightenment and liberation of all beings. The inspiration of the genuine will for enlightenment is in a sense itself transcendence of the world, as universal enlightenment becomes the reason for being, and life itself is transformed into a vehicle of enlightenment. Following this, faith is praised for its instrumental value as a means of directing the mind and focusing endeavor. Then the book goes on to describe practices and their results, in terms of both self-cultivation and assistance to others. Again versatility is emphasized, and enlightening beings are symbolically described as presenting all sorts of displays and teachings to exert edifying and liberating influences on people.

Book thirteen is entitled Ascent to the Peak of Mount Sumeru. Mount Sumeru, the polar mountain of a world, is pictured as the abode of Indra

(or Shakra), the mythical king of the gods of the thirty-threelfold heaven, pictured as thirty-three celestial mansions on the peaks surrounding the summit of Sumeru. This book is a brief visionary welcome of the Buddha into the palace of Indra.

Book fourteen, *Eulogies on Mount Sumeru*, emphasizes the meta-physical aspect of Buddha, as being absolute truth. The thrust of this approach is to counter preoccupation with forms. Buddha is said to be the very absence of inherent existence or intrinsic nature of all conditioned things. Conventional reality is called a description consisting of habitual conceptions and views. Defining the world through verbal and conceptual representations is by its very nature limiting, restricting awareness, so this chapter stresses the need to see through, see beyond conventional reality in order to become enlightened. When the nature of perceptual and conceptual organization of experience as a mere tool is forgotten or unknown, and a particular organization hardens into an exclusive view, the mind has lost its freedom. The dependence of views on social, cultural, and psychological factors attests to their nonabsoluteness; the concern of Buddhist philosophy and meditation is to see through such conditioning and restore the mind to openness and flexibility. This book states that the basis of delusion and falsehood is reality, meaning that delusion and falsehood, being themselves conditioned, do not have any inherent reality or inevitability—this very emptiness of inherent reality is what is called absolute reality or truth. What is intended by this insight is not nihilistic extinction, but seeing delusion for what it is: the term “extinction” used in this connection essentially means the extinction of conditioned views. Here the scripture says that having no views is true seeing, which sees everything because it is seeing without the restriction of predispositions of ingrained mental habits. This philosophy of the relativity of mind and world is provided as a rational basis for dissolving clinging to views and freeing the mind from the enclosure of inflexible, set ways of seeing and thinking about things.

The fifteenth book, called *Ten Abodes*, is a brief description of ten stations of enlightening beings. The first abode is that of initial determination, setting the mind on omniscience, to broaden its horizons. Second is preparing the ground, or cultivation; here the development of universal compassion is emphasized. Also involved is learning, from people and situations as well as from formal study. Third is the abode of practice, to clarify knowledge; here various aspects of emptiness (indefiniteness, nonabsoluteness) are emphasized. Fourth is the abode of “noble birth,” which means rebirth from the enlightening teachings; here knowledge—of beings, phenomena, causality, and so on—is emphasized, as well as the knowledge, practice, and realization of the teachings of Buddhas of all times, with awareness of the essence of buddhahood, which is equal in all times. Fifth, the abode of skill in means, involves further development of knowledge and means of conveying knowledge, and working for universal salvation without attachments. Sixth, the abode of the

correct state of mind, involves developing a mind that does not waver in face of apparently contradictory aspects of things; here again the inherent emptiness of things is emphasized. Seventh, the abode of nonregression, means not regressing regardless of what one may hear in regard to different aspects of things, and learning the principles of reconciliation of oppositions through relativity. Eighth, the abode of youthful nature, involves development of impeccability, of psychic freedom, and vast extension of the range of study and application of the teachings. Ninth, the abode of prince of the teaching, is a stage of development of discursive knowledge and the particular sciences of teacherhood. Tenth is the stage of coronation or anointment, referring to the accomplishment of knowledge of all sciences and means of liberation and the development of a sphere of buddhahood.

Book sixteen, entitled Religious Practice, describes detailed analytic investigations which eventually arrive at ungraspability, systematically removing the mind from fixations, dismantling the structure of a formal religious world in order to embrace formless truth. After this the book goes on to bring up the special powers of knowledge of Buddhas as realms of deep study, and concludes with exhortations to integrate compassion with the understanding of illusoriness.

The seventeenth book is called The Merit of the Initial Determination for Enlightenment. This book describes in grandiose terms the virtues of the aspiration for enlightenment. It stresses the sense of this determination transcending all limited aspirations, being directed toward omniscience and universal liberation and enlightenment. Many points or fields of knowledge are specifically mentioned in this connection, including the "mutual containment" or mutual immanence of different quanta of being and time, alluding to the interdependence of definitions, and the interrelation of elements and structural sets. Other prominent spheres of knowledge are those involved in the study of mentalities and mental phenomena, this kind of knowledge being essential to the science of liberation. The tremendous emphasis on genuine and boundless determination for complete universal enlightenment reflects its importance as the essence of the whole enterprise of enlightening beings, who do not seek enlightenment for their own personal ends. The correct orientation at the outset is deemed essential to truly transcend the limitation of self; without this transcendent resolve, the power of spiritual exercises exaggerates and bolsters the afflictions of self-seeking and can lead to harmful aberrations.

Book eighteen, entitled Clarifying Method, presents a series of lists of elements of the path of enlightening beings. First it stresses the development of the determination for omniscience, which means knowledge of all things pertinent to liberation. Then it goes on to work on nonindulgence or heedfulness, in terms of ten items; these lead to ten kinds of purity. Following this it brings up twenty things which are congenial to enlightenment, ten things whereby enlightening beings can rapidly enter

the stages of enlightenment, ten things which purify their practices, ten results of purity of practice, ten vows, ten ways of fulfilling vows, and ten spiritual "treasuries" attained as a result of fulfilling vows. This book also talks about means of purifying the ten essential ways of transcendence, or perfections of enlightening beings, and about specific cures of spiritual ills.

Book nineteen, *Ascent to the Palace of the Suyama Heaven*, is much like book thirteen; here the Buddha is welcomed into the heaven called Suyama, without, however, leaving the foot of the enlightenment tree and the peak of the popular mountain Sumeru. This introduces the following book, in which the all-pervasiveness of Buddha is stressed.

The twentieth book is called *Eulogies in the Palace of the Suyama Heaven*. This book emphasizes the universality of Buddha in terms of metaphysical essence and in terms of practice. The spiritual body of Buddha is seen here as the cultivation of enlightenment potential inherent in all conscious beings in all times. The nature of Buddha, beings, and phenomena is spoken of in these terms: "Sentient and nonsentient beings both have no true reality. Such is the nature of all things—in reality they are not existent." Also, "Analyzing matter and mind, their nature is fundamentally void; because they are void they cannot be destroyed—this is the meaning of 'birthlessness.' Since sentient beings are thus, so are Buddhas—Buddhas and Buddhas' teachings in essence have no existence." And "The body is not Buddha, Buddha is not the body—only reality is Buddha's body, comprehending all things. Those who can see the Buddha-body pure as the essence of things will have no doubt about Buddha's teaching. If you see that the fundamental nature of all things is like nirvana, this is seeing Buddha, ultimately without abode." This book is also the source of the famous line often quoted in Chan Buddhism: "Mind is like an artist, depicting the worlds. . . . If one knows that the action of mind makes all worlds, one sees Buddha and realizes the true nature of Buddha."

Book twenty-one is entitled *Ten Practices*. These ten practices, though under different names, correspond to the ten perfections, or ways of transcendence, upon which the path of enlightening beings is based: giving, ethical conduct, forbearance, energy, concentration, wisdom, expedient methodology, power, commitment, and knowledge. The accomplishment of these is based on the relativity = emptiness equation; the first six are especially based on emptiness within relative existence, while the last four are based on relative existence within emptiness.

The twenty-second book, *Ten Inexhaustible Treasuries*, deals with ten sources of the development and activity of enlightening beings: faith, ethics, shame, conscience, learning, giving, wisdom, recollection, preservation of enlightening teachings, and elocution. Various items from these "treasuries" are explained in detail. The section on faith deals with the object of faith, mostly expressed in terms of absolute truth, as well as states of mind engendered by faith. The section on ethics deals with

general ethical principles and orientation as well as specific articles of ethical conduct. Shame refers to being ashamed of past wrongs; conscience refers to resolve not to continue to act unwisely. The section on learning deals with specifics of interdependent origination of conditioned states, and with analytic knowledge. Giving involves "giving up" in the sense of intellectual and emotional relinquishment, such as nonattachment to past and future, as well as the act of giving itself and the frame of mind of generosity. Giving is often put in hyperbolic or symbolic terms, and has the general sense of contributing one's resources—including one's very being—to the common weal rather than to purely private aims. The section on wisdom deals with both phenomena and principles, with discursive knowledge being described as leading to insight into emptiness and independent understanding. The treasury of recollection involves recollection of every moment of awareness—represented as countless ages due to the density of experience—including changes undergone as well as contents of what has been learned. Preservation means preservation of Buddha-teachings and the sciences involved therein. Elocution refers to exposition and teaching.

Book twenty-three, entitled *Ascent to the Palace of the Tushita Heaven*, describes in great detail the arrays of ornaments set out to welcome Buddha to this heaven. This is on a vaster scale than the other heavens which Buddha visits in this scripture, because the Tushita heaven, the heaven of happiness or satisfaction, represents the abode of a buddha-to-be just before manifesting complete enlightenment in the world. The assembly of enlightening beings there is also depicted in terms of the practices and qualities that developed them. After this is an elaborate description of the spiritual qualities of Buddha.

Book twenty-four, *Eulogies in the Tushita Palace*, resembles the other comparable books of the scripture, eulogizing the universality of the awareness and metaphysical reality of Buddha, reconciling multiplicity and unity, emphasizing the relativity of the manifestation of Buddha to the minds of the perceivers.

The twenty-fifth book, called *Ten Dedications*, is one of the longest books of the scripture, indicative of the great importance of dedication in the life of enlightening beings. Dedication particularly reflects two essential principles of enlightening beings' practice: giving, or relinquishment; and vowing, or commitment. The basic orientation of dedication is the full development, liberation, and enlightenment of all beings. The scope of the ten dedications is beyond the capacity of an individual to fulfill personally; it is through dedication that the individual enlightening being merges with the total effort of all enlightening beings. Forms of giving which are not literally possible, for example, are presented at great length; these represent nonattachment, both material and spiritual, particularly in the sense of dedication to the service of all life. This book recites extensive correspondences between specific contributions and the results to which they are dedicated, representing the adaptation of

enlightening beings' activity to particular developmental needs. This is often presented in spiritual or psychological terms, but also it is presented in material or formal terms of glorified images of Buddha symbolizing the perfection of the human being. This book again emphasizes the integration of wisdom and compassion, acting purposefully even while knowing the ultimately unreal nature of conditional existence. This skill of acting without attachment, without compulsion, without grasping or rejecting existence or emptiness, is presented as the essence of dedication and fundamental to the path of enlightening beings.

Book twenty-six is the famous book on the ten stages of enlightenment. The teaching of the ten stages is presented as the foundation of all Buddhist teachings, just as an alphabet is the foundation of all writings in its language. This book is of such significance that it was translated into Chinese no fewer than five times, three times as an individual scripture, over a period of five hundred years; it also exists in Sanskrit as an individual scripture.

The Flower Ornament Scripture is said to contain, in one form or another, all phases of Buddhist teaching; true to the scripture's basic structural principle of the parts reflecting the whole, this comprehensiveness is also to be seen clearly within the book on the ten stages. Of the various modes of teaching—sudden and gradual, explicit and implicit—it is the gradual and explicit that overtly dominate in the ten stages, thus making it one of the clearest and most straightforward of the books of the scripture.

Pursuing a theme of developmental progression, the ten stages encompass the course of the enlightening being from the first ecstasies of disentanglement and spiritual attraction to the final rain of teaching pouring from enlightened knowledge, thus completing and restarting the cycle of self- and other- enlightenment. Within this overall cycle are parallel cycles of elevation of self and others; as the enlightening beings progress from stage to higher stage, there is ongoing expansion not only of extent, depth, and precision of awareness and perception, but also of corresponding versatility and power in communicative outreach.

Throughout this progress, the development of awakening is prevented from halting at each stage by the overriding aspiration for complete, perfect enlightenment, the thoughts of the enlightening beings set ultimately on the attributes of buddhahood. The practitioner aspires to be the best of beings, not by comparison with others, but in terms of potential fulfillment, not limiting horizons or coveting personal satisfaction by acceptance of lesser goals.

The ten stages include phases of practice such as are usually associated with the so-called lesser vehicles of individual salvation, but the enlightening being does not take the annihilation or liberation from worldly concerns made available by these methods as the final realization. In the high stage wherein effortlessness and cessation of mental and physical action take place, it is external inspiration that motivates the practitioner

to rise even beyond this stage of personal peace. In the highest stage the cosmic awareness whose perspective pervades the whole scripture ultimately opens up explicitly, showing the "all in one, one in all" vision of the realm of reality.

An important theme in the ten stages, one that appears here and there throughout the scripture in various guises, is the cultivation of both mundane and transmundane welfare. This is presented in concrete terms in this book, as the practitioner in a certain stage engages in the development and exercise of skills in worldly occupations. The choice of activities—whether in the arts and sciences, business, crafts, literary and cultural pursuits, entertainment, or other fields—is guided not by the personal desires of the practitioners but by the current needs of the society that they are serving, according to what will be beneficial.

The development of such occupational skills is undertaken in the same stage at which meditation is the main practice among the ten transcendent ways. The balancing of work in the world and world-transcending practices, characteristic of the ideal of comprehensive Buddhist activity, functions to promote the simultaneous benefit of self and others, preventing what is called "intoxication by the wine of meditation concentration," an obstacle in the path and an indulgence forbidden by the precepts of enlightening beings. In a later stage, these worldly occupations become effortless and can be carried on spontaneously without obstruction.

A most important concept mentioned early on in the book on the ten stages is that of the "six characteristics," as it was known in the Huayan school of Buddhism in East Asia. Not explicitly developed in the scripture but rather illustrated throughout, this idea was singled out by the founders of the Huayan school in China as a major element of their philosophy. The six characteristics are totality, distinction, sameness, difference, formation, and disintegration. In the context of stages of enlightenment, or practices, this means that all together form a single totality, while each are distinct elements of that totality; all are the same insofar as they complement each other and work together to produce the total effect, while individually they have different functions within the whole work; as elements in the same one totality, they form the whole and in it reach their individual consummation, while separately they not only do not form a whole but also are not individually perfected without the others.

The philosophy of the Huayan school, based on *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, also sees the six characteristics as aspects of all phenomena. According to this philosophy, the six characteristics are a comprehensive way of viewing things so as to overcome the tendency to lapse into partial or one-sided perceptions. Considering the phenomena and principles of Buddhism in this light, for example, produces an understanding quite different from that fostered by the notion of the multiplicity of Buddhist teachings as representing rival schools and conflicting ideol-

ogies. In this sense the six characteristics provide a useful diagnostic aid for assessing movements that have actually hardened into exclusive schools or ideologies: seen in the Flower Ornament context, such movements become inwardly sterile by stabilization around temporary and partial teachings, yet outwardly contain a portion of nutrient in that they demonstrate this process. It is in this sense that the *Scripture on the Ultimate Extinction* states that even in the time of the extinction of the Teaching, the Teaching is not extinct, for its very demise is its demonstration of the causes thereof, for the edification of the perceptive.

Using the six characteristics, it is quite easy to get an overall perspective on the message of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, on the activity known as the practice of the vow of Samantabhadra, the embodiment of Universal Good. Here, all workers for enlightenment are one totality, the whole effort is one totality. Within this single overall effort, different workers fulfill different functions; these may be represented, for example, as different schools, different cycles of teaching, different modes of practice. In essence, all of these workers are the same, based on the vow of Universal Good and the aspiration for universal enlightenment. All ultimately have the same essence, which is referred to as the buddha-nature, but they are different in characteristics, in the formulations and methods that they employ. The work of all the workers forms the "body" of Samantabhadra, the multitude forms the one. No individual worker completes the entire task alone; the enlightening being "enlightens all sentient beings" and "purifies all worlds" as an operative in the whole work, the vows of the enlightening being representing attunement with this totality. If different formulae, practices, or phases of the Teaching are separately held on to as dogma, absolute and complete in themselves, the total dynamic of the Universally Good work disintegrates. The characteristics of "formation" and "disintegration" could also be seen in terms of the supersession of teachings and the spatial dispersal of schools such as illustrated by the classical Chan schools in China, with formation and dispersal part of an ongoing process. The relation to the whole work is not necessarily organizational in the conventional institutional sense, but rather is organic and functional.

The twenty-seventh book, *The Ten Concentrations*, speaks of the enlightening being breaking through the barriers of the familiar relative world—barriers of space, time, multiplicity, solidity—by mental concentration. One aspect of this practice is the entry and exit of concentration in different domains. "Entry" is interpreted as concentration, or absorption, and "exit" as insight, or knowledge; through concentration in one domain, insight into another is awakened. This is done through numerous different mediums of concentration and is connected with the development of the Flower Ornament vision of the interpretation of principles and phenomena and the interpenetration of phenomena.

Other exercises are also presented, embedded within the imagery and descriptive narrative of the book, structured to foster the fundamental

perspectives of the teaching and to guide the mental focus of development of the general and specific aspects of comprehensive knowledge for which the enlightening being strives. One characteristic of such exercises is their telescopic quality, visualizing simultaneous extension and immanence.

The Flower Ornament Scripture is like a hologram, the whole concentrated in all the parts, this very structure reflecting a fundamental doctrine of the scripture, that this is what the cosmos itself is like, everything interreflecting, the one and the many interpenetrating. In the book on the ten stages this is illustrated with the gradual mode of teaching predominant; in the book on the ten concentrations this is shown with the sudden or all-at-once mode coming strongly to the fore, paralleling the step-by-step format. Were its method unlocked, ancient research into the mental cosmos, such as reflected in *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, might have something to offer to modern investigations into the holographic nature of the brain and its linear and simultaneous modes.

An essential theme of the ten concentrations is the purpose of knowledge in the context of the life of enlightening beings; specifically, understanding the processes of development of civilizations and mentalities, and how the cycles of teaching operate in the context of these processes and their various elements.

Book twenty-eight, on the ten superknowledges, describes higher faculties, functions developed through the concentrations, said to be inconceivable to any minds except those of the fully awakened and the awakening who have attained them.

The twenty-ninth book, on the ten acceptances, deals with entry into nonconventional aspects of reality. The boundaries of conventional mental construction are penetrated but not destroyed because their ultimately illusory nature is realized. Transcendental and mundane levels of truth are both accepted: the immanence of the absolute in the relative is experienced as all-pervasive, spiritual phenomena and mundane phenomena being found to have the same phantasmagorical nature; thus the ultimate tolerance is attained whereby the mind is freed.

Book thirty, called "The Incalculable," develops the immense numbers used in the scripture. The higher numbers far exceed present estimations of the number of atoms in the universe; they are more closely approached by the numbers of potential brain operations. The Flower Ornament method of calculation includes the dimension of time as well as space, and follows the principles expounded in the scripture—for example, since everything is a series of moments, continually passing away and being renewed, each moment therefore is a new universe; also, the content of each passing moment of awareness is a universe. Furthermore, all existents are what they are in relation to all other existents; thus, in terms of the "Indra's Net" view of the Flower Ornament, the facets of existence are incalculable, interreflecting ad infinitum. This is

illustrated by the progression of squares by which the incalculable numbers are developed in this book. The book concludes with a verse declaring that the cosmos is unutterably infinite, and hence so is the total scope and detail of knowledge and activity of enlightenment.

"Life Span," the thirty-first book, presents a similar progressive generation of time frames in different "worlds," culminating in the frame of reference of the prototype of enlightening beings, in which "a day and a night" is an inconceivably immense span of time in ordinary terrestrial terms, yet is still within time. Here again is illustrated the interpenetration of cosmic and mundane planes in the perspective of the enlightening being.

Book thirty-two, called "Dwelling Places of Enlightening Beings," names centers of spiritual activity, some of which can be located in India, Kashmir, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central and East Asian China. Whatever the historical facts behind this book may be, commentary takes it to represent the manifestations of the timeless and placeless "reality body" within time and place.

Whereas book thirty-two represents buddhas in the causal state as enlightening beings in specific domains, the thirty-third book, "Inconceivable Qualities of Buddhas," deals with buddhas in the state of effect or realization, the universal attributes of buddhas. Here the "buddhas" represent attunement to the cosmic buddha, the "reality-body." The former chapter alluded to the causal state, which is there to promote effect; the present book shows how the state of effect then extends forward into cause. Thus the Flower Ornament doctrine of interpenetration of cause and effect—cause producing effect, effect producing cause—is illustrated; this is one meaning of representing the Teaching as a wheel that continually moves forward.

Book thirty-five contains a long series of visualizations. Called "The Ocean of Physical Marks of the Ten Bodies of Buddha," it also presents the state of effect or realization, in terms of comprehensive awareness, represented by multitudes of pervasive lights revealing the phenomena of the material and spiritual worlds. "The Qualities of the Buddha's Embellishments and Lights," the thirty-fifth book, presented as spoken by Shakyamuni-Vairocana Buddha in person, refers to the causal state, that is, to the Buddha as an enlightening being, illustrating the light of awakening penetrating, breaking through, the veils of the realm of ignorance.

These expositions of the qualities of buddhahood, generally showing the emanation of the universal principles of buddhahood from the state of effect into the state of cause, are followed by the thirty-sixth book called "The Practice of Universal Good," again taking up the cycle of cause to effect. Narrated by Samantabhadra, the Universally Good enlightening being, the prototype and representation of the whole body of the practical acts of enlightening beings, this book is followed by "the appearance of Buddha," in which Samantabhadra goes on at length

describing the myriad facets of the manifestation of Buddha and how it is to be perceived.

The final two books of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, "Detachment from the World" and "Entry into the Realm of Reality," deal with the development of the enlightening being. "Detachment from the World," which commentary points out has the meaning of transcendence while in the very midst of the world, is a series of two thousand answers to two hundred questions about various aspects of the evolution of enlightening beings into buddhas.

"Entering the realm of reality," the final book of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, is perhaps the grandest drama of the Buddhist canon. Known in Sanskrit as an individual scripture called *Gandavyuha*, this book describes the development of enlightenment through tales of a pilgrimage. The central character, a seeker of truth named Sudhana, is sent on a journey by Manjushri, the personification of wisdom. Initially directed by Manjushri, Sudhana calls on a number of spiritual guides, each of whom sends him on to another for further enlightenment. Eventually Sudhana comes to the abode of Maitreya, the imminent Buddha, and finally integrates with the total being of Samantabhadra, the representation of Universal Good, the activity of enlightenment.

The guides Sudhana encounters, referred to as spiritual benefactors or friends, are young and old, female and male, Buddhist and nonBuddhist, renunciates and householders, members of various classes, and experts in various professions, arts, and sciences. They are not organized in a perceptible formal hierarchy or institution and are not always known to the public for what they are. The spiritual friends are known to each other according to their own attainments, and it is through the successive direction of the guides themselves that Sudhana finds out who and where they are. None of them claims to hold the whole truth, and none tries to bind Sudhana to a given system of dogma or keep him as a follower. Many of them teach in surroundings and formats that are not overtly associated with what is conventionally thought of as religion.

The book begins with a symbolic description of manifestations of enlightened awareness, explaining that those who are within a fixed system have not the slightest inkling of the scope of consciousness that lies beyond the bounds of their perceptions as conditioned by their training and development. It suggests that all views that are conditioned by cultural and personal history are by definition limiting, and there is a potential awareness that cuts through the boundaries imposed by conventional description based on accumulated mental habit. According to the scripture, it is the perennial task of certain people, by virtue of their own development, to assist others in overcoming arbitrary restrictions of consciousness so as to awaken to the full potential of mind.

In order to carry out this task, it is necessary to operate partly within the field of these very restrictions. Those whose specific charge it was to write scriptures like this one, therefore, were working within the bounds

of language and thought to hint at realities beyond language and thought. As has been seen in earlier books of the scripture, included in the commitments of such specially dedicated people, known here as enlightening beings, is the task of purposely bridging boundaries of culture and religion. They are also committed to bridge the boundary of secular and sacred, and part of their work involves relieving mundane suffering and anxieties that would otherwise preoccupy mental energy and hinder further awakening.

Given that the specific characters of the scripture are “fictional,” the teaching indicates that in order to seek historical reflections of what the characters represent, it would be necessary to avoid being constrained by labels and definitions imposed by externalist observers. The secrecy or inaccessibility of certain aspects of spiritual teaching is due not merely to esotericism but also to the extent to which the realm and activity of the teaching is outside the system of assumptions and expectations of common convention.

Seen in this light, the scripture can foster remarkable perspectives on the history of civilization and human consciousness. Even in recorded history, there are numerous examples of people known as mystics who were also eminently practical, workers in the fields of public education, civil administration, medicine, engineering, environmental design, communications, agriculture, and so on. On the other hand, it is widely stated that many overtly religious people were in fact unregenerate worldlings; it is also on record, though less widely, that many overtly secular activities and enterprises are in fact vehicles of spiritual teaching. Given that a complete historical record is a physical impossibility, and that there is no such thing as a complete fact in itself available to the ordinary senses, it is interesting to observe how much apparently disconnected activity can be brought into coherent focus through the vision of the *Flower Ornament Scripture*.

Who were—who are—these specially dedicated and developed people whom the scripture calls enlightening beings? We have no reason to suppose that all enlightening beings are identified as such in historical records; there is more reason to suggest that their identities have in many cases been deliberately obscured. The scripture says of them:

Some appeared in the form of mendicants, some in the form of priests, some in bodies adorned head to foot with particular emblematic signs, some in the forms of scholars, scientists, doctors; some in the form of merchants, some in the form of ascetics, some in the form of entertainers, some in the form of pietists, some in the form of bearers of all kinds of arts and crafts—they were seen to have come, in their various forms, to all villages, cities, towns, communities, districts, and nations. With mastery of proper timing, proceeding according to the time, by modification of adapted forms and appearances, modifications of tone, language, deportment,

situation, carrying out the practices of enlightening beings, which are like the cosmic network of all worlds and illumine the spheres of all practical arts, are lamps shedding light on the knowledge of all beings, are arrays of projections of all realities, radiate the light of all truths, purify the establishment of vehicles of liberation in all places, and light up the spheres of all truths, they were seen to have come to all villages, towns, cities, districts, and nations, for the purpose of leading people to perfection.

This depicts the enlightening beings coming into the world, as it were, with a purpose, using the available tools of the world to accomplish their task. The versatility of enlightening beings in their modification of appearance and activity, adapting to the specific circumstances of the time—cultural, linguistic, technological, and so on—and the needs of the people they are working with, stems from a basic freedom enlightening beings cultivate, which is sometimes referred to as being beyond the world even while in the world:

Enlightening beings do not seek omniscience for their own sake, nor to produce mundane enjoyments and pleasures, nor in search of the various enjoyments of the realm of desire, nor under the compulsion of errors of conception, thought, and view. They live and work in the world without being controlled by fetters, bonds, propensities, or obsessions, without being controlled by craving or opinions, without their minds being bound up in ideas of mundane enjoyments, without being taken with the taste of pleasure of meditation, without being blocked by mental barriers.

Of course, this does not mean to say that enlightening beings all exist in conformity with stereotyped ideals. According to the scripture, the wisdom and virtues of Buddha are in all people, but people are unaware of it because of their preoccupations. Just as the scripture points out that there are lands and beings who are a mixture of impurity and purity, there are untold incipient enlightening beings always becoming manifest in every thought, word, and deed of compassion. It is the task of the more fully developed enlightening beings in every community to contact and nurture what is best in others; whether they do it through religion or art or cooperation in ordinary activities is purely a matter of local expediency. Often it is the case that preoccupation with the external face of such activity obscures its inner purpose; over a period of time this leads to elaboration of forms without their original meaning, fragmentation of the work, and mutual misunderstanding and even intolerance and hostility among members of what have now become factions. One of the functions of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* is to present a vision of the whole underlying the parts, so as to help people offset the effects of

this scattering tendency and rise above sectarianism and other forms of bigotry.

It is no secret, of course, that there have been numbers of overtly religious figures, religious leaders, who fit descriptions of enlightening beings. The potential unleashed by their appearance, however, has often been mitigated by two persistent tendencies manifested by particular types of observers. One tendency has been to absolutize even the temporal aspects of the dispensations of such leaders; the other has been to regard such people solely as products of temporal conditions. To offset the extreme view that abstracts a personality out of context, *The Flower Ornament Scripture* sometimes represents such people as kings surrounded by their retinues, showing that the activity of the teaching, which may be overtly represented by an individual, is in reality sustained by many people, who may be anonymous, and that the position and work of the king takes place within a particular context, in cooperation with a community. To counter the other extreme view of such leaders as merely the products of historical forces, the scripture uses the theme of reincarnation, depicting them as being reborn again and again in different states and circumstances, carrying out their transcendental purpose, which remains with them throughout all changes, using the means afforded by the temporal order.

Thus, while the scripture lauds the extraordinary achievements of specially dedicated individuals, it does so primarily as an inspiration to the inner sense of the potential of consciousness, and does not degenerate into personality worship or cultism. Though it recognizes the ordinarily imperative force of actions and events that continually condition the stream of existence, it also emphasizes the power of will, often referred to in terms of vows, capable of extending the awareness to reach out for latent possibilities that are not being actualized within a given set of propensities but that can become available through the exercises known as the practices of enlightening beings.

Naturally, many perceptions of the "meaning" of the scripture are possible, according to the history and condition of the interpreter. This is noted in the scripture itself and is a basic understanding of the school of hermeneutics founded on this scripture in the Far East. Each of these perceptions will have some meaning (even if it is thought of as "meaninglessness") to the perceiver, and probably to others as well, as in the case of people sharing their experience of anything, whether it is a verbalized, conceptualized, and reflective experience or an intuitive, tacitly communicative one. Whether or not particular perceptions are useful to an individual in a developmental sense is another matter; but even if they are not enlightening to the individual perceiver, they may be useful to others who observe the relation of the individual with the material. The scripture carries out its function of illustrating mentalities both directed by description and indirectly by provocation.

The provocative aspect of the scripture is not limited to bringing to

light frames of mind by provoking characteristic reactions; it includes, equally if not more importantly, the evocative function of eliciting new perspectives and perceptions from the repository of potential consciousness. It is often said that Buddhism claims the world is illusory; and indeed Buddhist writings do contain statements to that effect, although it is as common to say that the world is *in* illusion or the world is *like* illusion. What this means is that the world as we know it is a description, constructed through processes of selection and organization; the illusion, or delusion, is to imagine that the description is objective reality itself. The soft sciences of modern times have come around to the recognition of the arbitrariness, or nonabsoluteness, of world views, conditioned as they are by cultural and personal history; but it is only recently that some Western workers in these sciences have begun to consider it logical to take the next step and actually experience this fact by learning how to transform or suspend the deep structures of the description at will.

It is in this endeavor, to expand capabilities of perception and understanding, that another mode of using the scripture comes into play. The traditional practice of single-minded recitation of scripture, embodying as it does meditation's twin elements of concentration and contemplation, has long been used to effect escalation of consciousness and enhancement of mental powers.

In order to attempt rational understanding of how this can work, it is important to note that the word *illusion*, which is so commonly used in Buddhism to describe the known world, also means "magic." Knowledge and awareness are referred to as magical. Thus illusion-magic has two aspects, restrictive and expansive, conservative and creative. From the point of view of the absolute, the imagined nature of things is false, but the raw material is real; so it is said in Buddhist scripture that the sense data are the matrix of enlightenment. What is constructed from this raw material depends on biological, psychological, and social conditioning, which are variable and can be consciously modified, with the result of change in perception of the world. Alterations of diet, posture, movement, breathing, thought, attention, human contacts, and physical environment are among the techniques known to have been used since ancient times for affecting the sphere of consciousness. In Buddhism, change of state is not necessarily valued in itself so much as the experiential realization of emptiness, which means nonabsoluteness of states, on the one hand, and infinitude of possibilities, on the other. What realm of awareness is beneficial for whom at what stage of development is held to be one of the sciences of enlightenment, according to which random visions, ecstasies, or insights are not productive of true spiritual maturity, though their place as incidents along the path should eventually become apparent to the sufficiently advanced.

Insofar as it tends to keep individuals and communities within certain patterns, conditioning as an ongoing process is also in a sense self-perpetuating, in that habit reinforces itself through repetition, becoming

what is called "second nature." Certain conditioning operations, such as those used to inculcate patterns of behavior required to maintain the fabric of society, may be generally quite overt, though they might be given different names, such as "education." Often, however, the impacts and efforts involved in conditioning are almost entirely subliminal. Examples of this might be the practice, now prohibited in some places, of flashing pictures of refreshments on movie screens, so briefly as to be virtually unnoticed consciously, in order to induce viewers to crave these refreshments; or the familiar experience of having a tune keep running through one's mind in spite of the feeling that one is making no effort to repeat it.

To get out of the circle of habit, a reflection of what the scripture calls the "mundane whirl," Buddhist practice proposes a dual process of arresting involutory patterns and incorporating evolutionary patterns. In the practice of spiritual recital, the focus of concentration works to halt the wandering mind and take the attention off habitual trains of thought, while the structure and imagery of the scripture that then flow into the mind, bypassing the conditioned intellect, are able to set up new patterns of perception.

It is well known that incantation practices like this can produce ecstatic states after a time if done in a concentrated fashion. The dazzle of ecstasy induced in this way is somewhat like the torrent of noise that accompanies a rush of schoolchildren as they pour out of the classroom after six hours of confinement, and is in itself of no particular value. On the contrary, it can be harmful if it becomes an obsession, as if the ecstasy itself were the goal.

Various extraordinary powers have been associated with people who spent much time in incantational practices, but these are not thought of as mechanical techniques that automatically work for everyone at all times. In fact, the concentration that is thereby generated with relative ease can have a stagnating effect as well, in that it can give a false sense of security or freedom, and can mask—and therefore perpetuate—deep-seated propensities. Furthermore, without the inclusion of other appropriate factors, concentration can turn into obsession or rigidity, and it can also degenerate and fail to produce lasting results. As scripture points out, there is no particular method of practice that is universally valid; practices are part of a coherent whole that needs all its parts to function properly. This can be seen in the doctrine of the six characteristics as applied to the ten stages. Moreover, it is held that to approach any spiritual practices in an unsuitable state, such as a state of greed for personal gain, leads not to enlightenment but to magnification of unwholesome qualities. Hence the need for proper preparation of dedication is given tremendous emphasis in this scripture.

Another traditional use of the scripture is, like that of esoteric art, as a model for visualization practice, which is similarly designed to introduce the mind to certain patterns held to be developmental. An example of

this practice is made explicit in a short scripture of the Flower Ornament corpus, called "Section on Cultivation of Love from *The Flower Ornament Scripture*." Part of the visualization involves imagining every particle of one's own body as a buddha-land, replete with such adornments as are described at great length throughout the scripture; then one visualizes all the beings in the universe entering into those buddha-lands within oneself and consciously evokes thoughts of love and wishes of well-being for them all. Another visualization practice, as evidenced in Chinese records, focuses on the lights emanated by buddhas in various scenes of the scripture.

Yet another function of the scripture, often unsuspected or considered gratuitous hyperbole, is to affirm the infinity of the path and provide ongoing challenge and inspiration. This function is hinted at in the statement of the distinguished tenth-century Chan master Yan-shou, whose mission was to demonstrate the unity of Buddhist teachings, to the effect that nine out of ten people who only practice Chan meditation and do not study scripture become conceited and lose the way. Another indication of this is found in the book on the ten stages, according to which in the eighth stage, the stage of effortlessness, where perfect comfort and tranquillity are reached, the impulse to go on to further development in the higher stages comes from *outside* the individual. Certain parts of other important scriptures such as the *Saddharmapundarika* and *Vimalakirtinirdesha* also present prime examples of this function.

The question of uses of scripture brings into relief one of the supposedly peculiar principles of Flower Ornament Buddhism, that of the mutual causation of past, present, and future. On a microscale, the experience of the present moment is in fact an edited replay of an immediately past moment of sensation; therefore, that past moment becomes present to consciousness through a process that is in its future. On a larger scale, perceptions and interpretations of the past depend on the conditions of the perceivers in the present; the legacy of the past as it bears on the present and future depends on conditions in the present. Therefore, the past, as it exists relative to the present, is not a fixed actuality, but depends on what elements of past causes are accessible and how they are perceived and experienced, what elements are in fact being acted on in a given situation, and how they are being acted on. What the past *was* is not available to ordinary perception; what the past *is*, on the other hand, is being caused by its own future, as much as it has caused its future. Various factors in the present, including understanding, expectation, and will, enter into the manner in which past causes are selected, utilized, and become operative.

This would seem to present a closed circle of determinism—the conditions of the present that determine how the past is experienced are themselves products of that past. According to the Flower Ornament teaching, however, the mutual inherence of past, present, and future does not represent unmitigated determinism, because the past, present, and

future are all infinite. What is finite is the experience of being-time through the temporal capacity of a given range of consciousness; and insofar as that capacity may be altered, contracted, or expanded, it might be that many of the limitations regarded as real by any society or culture are in fact illusory, and the real potential of humanity is so much greater than imagined as to be virtually infinite, even if that infinity can never embrace the infinity of infinities.

This seems to be one of the pervasive themes of the scripture—that there are far vaster possibilities open to humankind than ordinarily suspected in the course of everyday life. However vital the impulses and activities involved in the search for survival, comfort, and stimulation may be, they have never been known to produce complete satisfaction or still the quest for something beyond, which is yet dimly sensed in the innermost recesses of the mind. The aim of the authors of the scripture in recording it and leaving it to posterity might be guessed from the contents of the scripture itself; its usefulness in the present and future, of course, depends on the use to which it is put.

On the premise that the scripture itself is a logical place to look for keys to its understanding and application, this translation is presented as a sort of raw material, with a minimum of external apparatus. A discussion of certain technical terms and concepts will be found in the introduction to Volume I, and a glossary is appended to each volume; the major explanatory material, however, is to be found in the context of the scripture itself.

There is really no way to explain all that is in the scripture, and it would seem a travesty to attempt to place it in some particular historical or intellectual context, when there is that in it which could be applied to any such context, and that which clearly transcends any such context. Immersing one's consciousness in an immense scripture like this by reading it repeatedly with judgment suspended may not recommend itself to the impatient; but supposing that the scripture, like a Zen koan, has in itself a quality that forces one to work through it on its own terms or lose the effect altogether, it might be better to leave its challenging open. As the Chan master Wu-men said, "Let another finish this poem. . . ."

Notes to Introduction

1. Translated and published by the Pali Text Society; some of the most important texts are included in the Sacred Books of the East Series, and some of these have been reprinted by Dover Publications. See *Buddhist Suttas* (New York: Dover, 1972) which contains several scriptures of the so-called "lesser vehicle."

2. See Edward Conze, *The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), as well as numerous other works by Conze on this class of scriptures.
3. D.T. Suzuki, *The Lankavatara Sutra* (Boulder: Prajna Press, 1978).
4. Translated into English from Tibetan by Robert Thurman (University Park: Pennsylvania State Press, 1976); from Chinese by Charles Luk (Boulder: Shambhala, 1972).
5. The most recent translation is by Leon Hurvitz; *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976).
6. Translated from Japanese to English by Yamamoto Kosho (Horinkan, 1976).

**THE GATE OF ENTRY INTO
THE LIMITLESS ACTIVITIES OF THE SUPREME NOBLE ONES**

**A SHORT COMMENTARY ON
THE ASPIRATION PRAYER FOR
THE EXCELLENT CONDUCT OF THE NOBLE ONES**

BY LOCHEN DHARMASHRI
Translated by Khenpo Gawang Rinpoche and Gerry Wiener

SUMMARY OUTLINE

I) The preliminary seven branch prayer that purifies one's being

- A) Prostration
- B) Offering
- C) Confession
- D) Rejoicing
- E) Requesting to teach the dharma
- F) Asking to remain
- G) Dedication

II) The main practice

- A) Aspiration by means of pure intention
- B) Not forgetting bodhichitta
- C) Commitments
- D) Activities
- E) Achievements
- F) Consolidating the aspirations

III) The conclusion that teaches the benefits

- A) The explanation of the benefits of aspiration
- B) Dedicating the aspirations that possess benefit