

Chapter One

I. Introduction

1. The Concept of Bodhisattva

Generally speaking, there are two sects of Buddhism, that is, *Theravāda* (or *Hīnayāna*) and *Mahāyāna*, also referred to by other names.¹ The division ‘original and developed Buddhism’ is based on the belief that *Mahāyāna* is only a gradual development of the original doctrine which is *Theravāda*² though there is no consensus of opinions on

¹ The former as ‘Original,’ ‘Early’ or ‘Southern’ Buddhism, and the latter ‘Developed,’ or ‘Northern’ Buddhism.

² *Theravāda* (Skt. *Sthaviravāda*) means ‘the Teaching (of the Buddha) transmitted or taught orally by the *Theras*.’ It is also called ‘*Hīnayāna*’ (meaning ‘the exclusive way, little or small vehicle,’ etc.) by *Mahāyānists* contending that in the former ‘the whole emphasis of life is on acquiring merit toward one’s salvation,’ whereas the *Mahāyāna* offered, to the common people, the cure or the amelioration of the sufferings of men.’ Dr. Richard A. Gard (NFV. BPS, p.42) says that “the distinction, which appears to be *Mahāyāna*-based, ignores the common Buddhist doctrine of relational existence and the customary *Theravāda* social welfare practice of helping others (*saṅgahavatthu*).”

this. There are different points of view to approach the difference between the two sects such as the interpretation of *Pratītyasamutpāda*, the concept of *Nirvāṇa*, the Ideal, the means for the attainment of *Nirvāṇa*, the concept of *Dhamma*, *Buddhology*, and so on. Out of all these, the present work focuses on the difference in the 'Ideal' between *Theravāda* and *Mahāyāna* Buddhism.

The ideal of *Theravāda* Buddhism is *Arhatship* (or *Arhantship*), and the ideal of *Mahāyāna* is that of the *Bodhisattva* leading to Buddhahood. In other words, the former focuses the attention on individual enlightenment, and the latter on that of universal enlightenment. The origin of this difference can be traced in the literature of *Theravāda* Buddhism, and, therefore, *Mahāyāna*, which owes its existence to the former, is not an independent school completely different from *Theravāda* Buddhism.

There is a generally prevalent view that the *Bodhisattva* ideal is of *Mahāyānic* creation.³ Perhaps it is the western writers on Buddhism who are mainly responsible for the prevalence of such view. This appears to be due to the fact that the theistic and mystic ideas embodied in *Mahāyāna* were capable of capturing the interest of Westerners imbedded in similar traditions. However, it would be a mistake to assume that the

³ D. J. Kalupahana, *BTR*. (ed.) Intro. p.2; p.57.

concept of a *Bodhisattva* was a creation of the *Mahāyāna*.⁴ Till recent times, till comparative studies became popular, this view was held as the gospel truth. Now with more evidences available to the contrary, the picture is being put to right.

The terms *Bodhisattva* in Sanskrit and *Bodhisatta* in Pali are derived from the root '*budh*' denoting 'to know,' 'to wake up,' etc. *Satta* or *sattva* is derived from '*sant*,' the present participle of root '*as*,' to be, and means 'a being' or literally, '(one who) is,' a sentient being. Har Dayal, who examined this term thoroughly in the varied possibilities of interpretation, suggests that the safest way is to go back to Pali notion of the term. "Now the *bodhisatta* in the Pali texts seem to mean 'a bodhi-being.' But *Satta* does not denote a mere ordinary creature; certainly relating to the Vedic term *Satvan* which means a strong or valiant man, a hero or warrior. *Bodhisatta* would be interpreted as 'heroic being, spiritual warrior.' The word suggests the two ideas of existence and struggle and not merely the notion of simple existence."⁵ This interpretation, however, has not gone uncontested, criticizing this one writer says: "Undoubtedly, Har Dayal is reading too much into the term *bodhisatta* and impregnating the simple Pali term denoting an equally

⁴ Edward Conze, **BED**, pp.125-130.

⁵ Har Dayal, **BDBSL**, pp. 4-9. The word has been explained in different ways. But the most acceptable rendering is 'A being destined to attain perfect enlightenment.'

simple concept with *Mahāyānic* ideas of a later date. This is an unwarranted attempt at sanctification of an originally simple concept to help it to measure up to its later developed meaning.”⁶ S. N. Dube also says “the word seems to be used only in connection with a Buddha’s last life. The earliest references of *Bodhisatta* occur to denote the lives of one who eventually attained *Sammāsambhodhi* as Gautama Sākyamuni. It is not unlikely, therefore, that the idea of heroism or courage and dedication or attachment to *bodhi* or in other words the emphasis on *bodhi* came to be attached to *Bodhisattva* with the development of his later conceptive intimations.”⁷ So the significant part of the compound is *bodhi* and not *satta* as suggested by Har Dayal.

There is consensus now among scholars that the Pali term is anterior in time to the Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit term. It is pointed out that one of the earliest canonical references to the term ‘*Bodhisatta*’ is traceable to passages containing accounts of the Buddha’s recalling the life in such contexts as “in the days before my Enlightenment when as yet I was only a *Bodhisatta*” in the *Bhayabheravasutta*,⁸ the

⁶ S.K. Nanayakkara, “*The Bodhisattva Ideal*,” in **BTR**. (p.58).

⁷ S. N. Dube, **CCEB**. p.169, fn.1.

⁸ **MN**. I, 4, p.17, *Bhayabherava sutta*; *Mayhampi kho brāhmaṇa pubbe va sambodhā anabhisambuddhassa bodhisattvass’eva sato etad ahosi...*

Ariyapariyesanasutta,⁹ the *Dvedhāvitakkasutta*,¹⁰ and the *Mahāsaccakasutta*¹¹ in **Majjhima-nikāya**. This *Bodhisatta* stage of his life is qualified as an ‘*anabhisambuddha*’ and ‘*pubbevasambodhā*,’ both meaning that the *Bodhisatta* stage depict a particular period in the Buddha’s life prior to his enlightenment. Referring to the Buddha’s previous existences in his discourses to the people in order to elucidate a particular doctrinal point, the Buddha occasionally mentioned his former life stories found in **Sutta Piṭaka**¹² such as the ‘*Mahāsudassana-suttanta*,’¹³ the ‘*Mahāgovinda-sutta*’¹⁴ in **Dīgha-nikāya** and the ‘*Makhādeva-sutta*’¹⁵ in **Majjhima-nikāya**, etc.

⁹ MN. I, 26. pp.163-73. *Ariyapariyesana-Sutta: Ahampi sudam bhikkhave pubbe va sambodhā anabhisambuddho bodhisatto va samāno attanā jatidhammo...*

¹⁰ MN. I. p.114, *Dvedhāvitakka-Sutta: Pubbe va me bhikkhave sambodhā anabhisambuddhassa bodhisattass’ eva sato etad ahosi.*

¹¹ MN. I. pp. 240-9, *Mahāsaccaka-Sutta.*

¹² MN. II, p.211, *Saṅgārava-Sutta*; III, p.119, *Acchariyabbhutadhamma-Sutta*; III. p.157. *Upakkilesa-Sutta*: SN. II. p.5; III. p.27;IV. p.233;V. p.263, p.281, p.317: AN. II. p.130: III. p.240; IV. p.302, p.439: **Vism.** p.15, p.116, p.499.

¹³ DN. II, pp.169-199.

¹⁴ DN. II. pp. 220-252. Referred to as a **Jātaka** at **Jā.** I. 45, 46, and **Jā.** III. 469. cp. **Mvy.** III. pp. 197-240.

¹⁵ MN. II, p.74.

All these evidences go to prove that the concept of the *Bodhisattva* within the early Buddhist tradition began to undergo development much before the rise of *Mahāyāna*. But with the development of sectarian Buddhism, the *Bodhisattva* concept seems to have undergone rapid and very dramatic change. It seems that one of the main causes that contributed to the early division in the *Saṅgha* was the question pertaining to the status of the *Arahants* or the *Śrāvakas*. It is clearly seen that this conflict between the *Śrāvaka* concept and Buddha concept brought to forefront the *Bodhisattva* concept. In still later post-canonical literature, even the pre-enlightened stage of *Pacceka-buddhas* is referred to as *Pacceka-bodhisatta* stage.¹⁶ Perhaps both the *Mahāsaṅghika* and *Theravāda* sects contributed to this new development. S. N. Dube is of the view that the *Mahāsaṅghikas*, *Lokottaravādins*, *Ekavyāvahārikas*, *Vetulyakas*, etc. were primarily instrumental in the growth of this process.¹⁷ He says “the *Mahāsaṅghikas* and *Lokottaravādins* believed that the *Bodhisattvas* are self-born; they appear as human beings for the sake of conformity to the world (*lokānuvartana*), although their form is only mental (*manomaya*). The **Mahāvastu**, a book of the

¹⁶ “*The Paccekabuddha; a Buddhist Ascetic*”, by Kloppenborg, Ria, Leiden, 1974, Revised edition, Wheel Publication, Nos. 305-7.

¹⁷ S.N. Dube, CCEB. p.152.

Lokattaravādins, clearly says that the *Bodhisattvas* are self-born (*upapāduka*). Not only in this *Mahāsaṅghika* sect but also the *Theravādin* or even among Buddhists of pre-sectarianism times the belief that *Bodhisattva* was a supernatural being (*mānusuttara*), prevailed though they took both the Buddha and the *Bodhisatta* as strictly historical personages.”¹⁸ In spite of certain features that make the *Bodhisatta* appear special being, the *Theravādins* did not develop the *Bodhisatta* concept to the level of an ideal, a cult. According to them, there was only one *Bodhisattva* (in singular) who was regarded as the *Śākyamuni* in his previous existences. Later, those persons who make a vow to save suffering beings were called *Bodhisattvas* (in plural).¹⁹ So there were two ways of Buddhist practice, that is, *Śrāvaka-mārga* and *Bodhisattva-mārga*, the former expounding a *Hīnayānistic* way of practice which existed before *Mahāyāna*, and the latter developing later into a central concept in the formation of *Mahāyāna*. In this respect, the *Bodhisattva* ideal leading to Buddhahood and the *Śrāvaka*²⁰ ideal leading to

¹⁸ *ibid.* p. 152.

¹⁹ H. Nakamura, *IB.* p.152.

²⁰ *Śrāvaka* (Pali-*sāvaka*) literally means ‘hearer.’ this name was given to the disciple who having heard the truth from the Buddha or any of his disciples aims at *Arhantship*. And *Pratyekabuddha* (Pali, *Poccekabuddha*) is one who in ‘solitary singleness,’ in independence of all external support, attains *Arhatship*. The word

Arahanthood, show a gap between the two sects whereas the *Mahāyānists* condemned the *Theravāda* scheme of salvation as being self-centered, and considered them rather as following a 'lesser' ideal (*hīna*).

The concept of *Bodhisatta* in *Theravāda* was not open to all, though this ideal was put forward through the **Jātaka** stories for the inspiration of the devotees. The *Mahāyāna*, however, takes a different view that the *Bodhisattva* is he who has aroused the thought of Enlightenment (*bodhicitta*) by making an aspiration to attain supreme and perfect Enlightenment (*anuttarasamyaksambodhi*) one day with a view to the welfare and happiness of all beings.²¹ The path leading to enlightenment through *Bodhisattva* practices (*bodhisattva-cariyā*) gradually laid down, and therefore, the *Bodhisattva* ideal being opened to all candidates became accessible to every human being.²² E. Lamotte²³ says that through the *cittotpāda*, arousal of the thought of Enlightenment, the *Bodhisattva* is determined as to the result, but not as to the way (*gati*) towards that result. The true *Bodhisattva* is he who is determined (*niyata*) both as to

'*pratyeka*' means 'private, individual, single, solitary,' etc. He does not share with others his hard-won knowledge of the means for the attainment of *Nirvāṇa*.

²¹ E. Lamotte, **HOIB**. p.626.

²² H. Nakamura, **IB**. p.153.

²³ E. Lamotte, op. cit. p.626.

bodhi and *gati*, he who will certainly attain Enlightenment and whose way to *bodhi* is fixed as to the duration and nature of his rebirths. The *Hīnayānist* scholars are not in agreement over the precise moment of that predetermination.

Another feature that gave a new twist to the *Bodhisattva* concept is the ascendance of *Mahākaruṇā* over *Prajñā*. Virtues (*Sīla*) emphasized by *Theravāda* were inherited by *Mahāyāna*, but the virtue of benevolence or loving-kindness (*maitrī*) and compassion (*karuṇā*) was regarded as the central one by *Mahāyānists*.²⁴ It is further seen that due to changes in the attitude of the devotees, compassion (*Karuṇā*) came to be emphasized more and *Bodhisattvas* came to be represented as noble beings who have vowed to save others. This emphasis on altruism gave rise to *Bodhisattvas* such as *Avalokiteśvara*²⁵ who are more concerned with the salvation of the other beings than with their own salvation. With the development of such *Bodhisattvas*, this really became a cult and this development is well documented from the early stage in the **Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra**, the **Sukhāvativyūha**, **Amitāyurdhyānasūtra**,

²⁴ H. Nakamura, **IB**. p.152.

²⁵ The *Bodhisattva* who is most adored with devotion throughout Asiatic countries is *Avalokiteśvara*, the “lord who looks down”, i.e., who looks down with infinite pity on all beings. The best-known scripture extolling this *Bodhisattva* is the 24th chapter of the **Lotus Sūtra**.

Kāraṇḍavyūha, Gaṇḍavyūha, in which there is abundant evidence to this meteoric rise of the *Bodhisattva*.

When *Bodhisattva* concept came to be accepted as the best and noblest ideal, it became necessary to lay out in detail the path leading to it, its characteristic and its gradual elevation towards Buddhahood in which it reaches the climax. In constructing the concept, it became necessary to fuse and blend the features of the early Buddhist spiritual path, and show how it merely serves as the initial step in the march towards Buddhahood; what other higher qualifications, attributes and achievements are necessary for the practitioner of the *Bodhisattva* conduct to progressively elevate him to higher stages making him finally to be crowned as a Buddha by the other Buddhas. In developing this path, a scheme of *Bhūmi* was developed with other major ethical practices such as cultivation of *Pāramitās*, *Saṅgrahavastus*, and several forms of meditation with a view to training the mind for the realization of *Dharmaśūnyatā* or *Tathatā*. Although rare in early *Suttas* and the *Vinaya*, the *Jātaka* stories present the previous Lives of the Buddha as *Bodhisattva*. This feature is also found in the texts such as **Lalitavistara, Mahāvastu, Abhiniṣkramaṇasūtra, Jātakamālā, Avadānaśataka, Divyāvadāna, Bhadrakalpāvadāna, Vicitrakarṇikāvadāna, and Avadānakalpalatā**. These stories were soon assembled in special collections compiled in prose, in verse or a mixture of the two.

Among Pali collections, there are **Jātaka**, **Buddhavaṃsa**, **Cariyāpiṭaka**, **Apadāna**, and the similar kind of literature. All these texts have been reproduced and translated in the Tibetan, Chinese, and other collections.²⁶ Thus, it becomes apparent how did the *Mahāyānists* magnify the *Hīnayānist* conception of *Bodhisatta* on this scheme of *Bodhisattva* practices in vast literature.

It made its first appearance in **Jātakas** and **Apadāna** (**Avadāna**) literature,²⁷ which contain the *Hīnayānist* account of the various existences of the Buddha as *Bodhisattva*. Several of them occur in the canonical books such as the *Tittirajātaka*²⁸ in **Cullavagga**; *Mahāsudassanajātaka* in **Dīgha Nikāya**; **Buddhavaṃsa**,²⁹ **Cariyāpiṭaka**³⁰

²⁶ E. Lamotte, op. cit. p. 684.

²⁷ Hinüber, Oskar von, **HPL**, pp. 60-1: The **Ap.**, which corresponds to Skt. **Av.**, and which is not recognized as canonical by the *Dīghabhāṇakas*, is one of the last books added to the canon. And it seems to be younger than the **Bv.**, but much older than the commentaries. The text is divided into four parts: *Buddha-apadāna*, *Pacceka-buddha-*, *Thera-*, and *Therī-*. H. Nakamura says that the **Av.** texts stand with one foot in the *Hīnayāna* literature, and the other in the *Mahāyāna* literature (**IB**. p.137).

²⁸ **Cullavagga**, II, 1.

²⁹ This "Lineage of the Buddhas" is a description of the lives of 24 predecessors of the historical Buddha in verse, beginning with *Dīpaṃkara*, who predicted that *Sumedha* would be a future Buddha.

and **Apadāna** in **Khuddaka-nikāya** of the Pali cannon. The concept of *Bodhisattva* has been extended not only in relation to Gotama's own previous lives, but also as a general concept. Especially, in the introduction to the **Cariyāpiṭaka**, Sāriputta asks the Buddha about his resolve to become a Buddha (*abhinīhāra*)³¹ and about the ten Perfections (*pāramī*). The first enquiry is answered in **Buddhavaṃsa**, (as clearly seen in the commentary)³² and the second in **Cariyāpiṭaka**, although only

³⁰ This is the only title in the **Tipiṭaka** containing the word *piṭaka*: "Basket of Conduct."

³¹ The **Buddhavaṃsa** says (Bv. p.9) that this first resolve or *abhinīhāra* succeeds only if 'Eight Conditions' are fulfilled. The stanza reads as follows:-

*Manussattaṃ liṅgasampatti hetu satthāradassanaṃ
pabbajjā guṇasampatti adhikāro ca chandatā
atṭhadhammasamodhānā abhinīhāro samijjhati.*

They are:- ① Birth as a human being, ② Birth as a male, ③ The capacity, if one so wishes, to attain as emancipation as an *Arahant* in this very life, ④ The good fortune of meeting a Teacher who has attained full enlightenment, ⑤ Recluseship, ⑥ Mastery over the eight states of mental absorptions (*atṭhasamāpatti*) and five super cognitive powers (*pañcābhiññā*), ⑦ Readiness for self sacrifice if necessary, and ⑧ An earnest desire to realize one's aim. The *Buddhavaṃsa* commentary also cite these as preliminary requisites. The *Apadāna Atṭhakathā* further says that this *abhinīhāra* for Buddhahood should be sustained and nurtured for at least (*heṭṭhimaparichedena*) four incalculable periods (*asamkheyyas*) and one hundred thousand eons.

³² CpA. 6, 11-27.

six Perfections are actually treated in **Cariyāpiṭaka**. This is supplemented in a long appendix to the commentary³³ where all the ten *Pāramīs* are explained. This literature consists of rather popular works. More technical works like **Bodhisattvabhūmi** and **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra**, treat the subject in depth.

Then the question arises as to when the *Bodhisattva* conception as an Ideal originated. The *Bodhisattva* idea presented in **Apadāna** seems to be earlier than the **Buddhavaṃsa**, and later than the **Cariyāpiṭaka**. The title mentioned at the end of **Cariyāpiṭaka: Buddhāpadānīyaṃ nāma dhammapariyāya**, brings this text near the **Apadāna**. The initial appearance of the *Bodhisattva* conception, therefore, may be placed at the beginning of the first century A.D., that is, after *Bharhut* sculptures and before the appearance of early *Mahāyāna* scriptures.³⁴

According to N.Dutt, "It seems that only in the post-*Aśoka* days the *bodhisattva* conception was engrafted on the original teachings of the Buddha and this led to the composition of the **Jātakas** and the **Avadānas**. The **Jātaka** stories were included in the **Vinaya Piṭaka** of some of the sects other than *Theravāda*, and appear intermixed with the life of Gautama Buddha, before as well as after his attainment of *Bodhi*. In Pali

³³ CpA. 276. 22~332. 30.

³⁴ H. Nakamura, op. cit. p. 154.

Piṭakas, these have been collected to or an independent text while the *Sarvāstivādins* compiled the **Avadānas** which contained the accounts of the previous lives not only of Gautama Buddha, but also of his noted disciples and devotees. The **Jātakas** and **Avadānas** furnished the motifs to the sculptors of the *Bharhut* and *Sanchi* railings, which are dated about the second or first century B.C. So, the origin of the *Bodhisattva* conception, along with the composition of the **Jātakas** and **Avadānas**, may be placed between the third and second century B.C. It must be some time after this date that the *Mahāyānists* developed their conception of *Bodhisattva* and concerted it into a creed known as *Bodhisattvayāna*.³⁵

2. Bhūmi Doctrine and the Theravāda Scheme Leading to Nibbāna.

The word '*bhūmi*,' common to both Pali and Sanskrit, literally means 'ground', 'soil', or 'earth', etc., but figuratively it is employed in the sense of 'stage, level, place, or state of physical or mental existence.' Though the word in its literal sense is commonly found in the Pali **Nikāyas**, its use in its figurative sense is not so common. Such instance of its figurative use is found in the **Vinaya Piṭaka**:-

'Atha kho yasassa kulaputtassa pituno dhamme desiyamāne

³⁵ N. Dutt, **CHI**. vol. I, p.512. cf. S.R. Goyal, **HIB**. p. 228.

*yathādiṭṭham yathāviditam bhūmim paccavekkhantassa anupādāya
āsavehi cittam vimucchi.*³⁶

Besides such rare usage, the term is not used in the *Nikāyas* to mean a spiritual plane. Hence, the spiritual path as consisting of different 'bhūmis' in a figurative sense appears to be a sectarian development. Evidently, it is not purely a *Mahāyānic* concept, for its earliest occurrence appears in the **Mahāvastu**, a text belonging to the *Lokottaravāda* sect of the *Mahāsaṅghika*. However, it is not quite certain whether this concept of 'bhūmi' belongs to the original form of the **Mahāvastu**. It is also referred to in the **Abhidharmakośa**, a text of the *Saravāstivādins*. The **Śatasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā** which reflects a stage of transition from *Theravāda* to *Mahāyāna* also makes the reference to 'bhūmi' concept. All these suggest that this concept belongs to post-early Buddhism and pre-*Mahāyāna* period, more precisely to the period of Sectarian Buddhism.

One of the causes that led to divisions in the order of *Saṅgha* is the anti-*śrāvaka* or anti-*Arahant* attitude that was adopted by a section of monks, the *Mahāsaṅghikas*. Therefore, it is natural to see this new group putting forward novel paths and ideals, and holding the concept of 'bhūmi' as a superior path to that which was followed by the orthodox *Theravādins*. As this new doctrine along with the *Bodhisattva* ideal

³⁶ VP. I, 17.

became popular among some of the *Theravādins*, this concept has been adopted to suit their own goals.

However, it is in the texts more prone to *Mahāyāna*, that it rapidly developed. The *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, though devoting a chapter exclusively to the treatment of the *bhūmis*,³⁷ state that from the standpoint of the highest truth this concept is merely a matter of convention.³⁸ This shows that even by the time of *Prajñāpāramitās* this *bhūmi* doctrine had not become developed enough as to make it an essential and integral part of the *Bodhisattva* doctrine. Even certain subsequent *Mahāyāna* texts such as **Bodhicaryāvatāra**, **Sikṣāsamuccaya** do not pay much attention to it. Thus, it may be said that the '*bhūmi*' doctrine did not form essential feature in the spiritual path of a *Bodhisattva*, unlike the stages in the spiritual path of *Theravādins*.

Such a conclusion is strengthened by the fact that there is no uniformity in number, names, or the content of *bhūmis*. The **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** which is the most authoritative work on the subject of *bhūmi* accepted by the *Mahāyānists*, fix the *bhūmis* as ten in number. But the **Bodhisattvabhūmi** formally discusses only seven *bhūmis* and thirteen *Vihāras*; the latter are included in the former.³⁹ The

³⁷ ŚaP. chapter X.

³⁸ EOB. p.80.

³⁹ Bo.bhu. p.367.

Laṅkāvastārasūtra speaks of seven *bhūmis*⁴⁰ without specifying them. The *Mahāvastu*, though it refers to ten *bhūmis*, describes only seven. Even the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** reveals that the scheme of seven is the original one; the *Bodhisattva* can pass away in *Nirvāṇa* in the seventh *bhūmi*, if he so desires, but he follows the higher ideal of the *Mahāyāna*, which is especially realized in the 8th, 9th, and 10th *bhūmis*.⁴¹

The names of *bhūmis* in other texts are different from those occurring in the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra**. The bases on which the scheme is founded are also different; therefore, it is not an integral part of the original *Mahāyāna* Scheme of Liberation, but a development that took place gradually. With the gradual evolution of the *Bodhisattva* concept, obviously it must have become necessary to lay out the scheme for a *Bodhisattva*, who has to follow it to reach Buddhahood. The **Mahāvastu** contains the early tradition of *bhūmis* which very probably was evolved after being based on the *Theravāda* Scheme leading to *Nibbāna*. Thus, though it refers to ten *bhūmis* its real focus is on seven *bhūmis* running somewhat parallel to the *Theravāda* Scheme. This scheme got systematized and fixed out after the compilation of the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** which, therefore, undoubtedly is the most authoritative treatise on the subject.

⁴⁰ **Laṅk.** (ed.) in Nanjio. p.28.

⁴¹ Har Dayal, **BDBSL**. p.27.

It is seen that the Buddha held the view that final knowledge could not be had at the beginning of the practice itself. Thus, in the *Majjhimanikāya* the Buddha very clearly declares that:- “Do not say that one can win the emancipatory knowledge at the very beginning, it is to be obtained through a gradual training, gradual action, and gradual practice.”⁴² The content of the Enlightenment (*bodhi*) as well as the effort of the *Bodhisattva* to realize Enlightenment make this point very clear. Therefore, *Theravāda*, from very early times, speaks of the Path which leads an aspirant gradually in a four-levelled hierarchical scheme. It also speaks of a preparatory stage which is very necessary for one to enter into the scheme.

In *Theravāda* Buddhism, broadly speaking, the Buddhist community was basically divided into two categories: the *Puthujjana* and *Sāvaka*. The *Puthujjanas* are said to be unlearned or not conversant with the *Dhamma*, in the religious sense. The *Puthujjana* is defined, in stereotyped phrase that is used to describe, as follows:-

“*ariyānam adassāvī ariyadhammassa akovido ariyadhamme avinīto
sappurisānam adassāvī sappurisadhammassa akovido
sappurisadhamme avinīto.*”⁴³

⁴² MN. I, 479, 480: *nāham ādiken’eva aññārādhanam vadāmi api ca anupubbasisikkhā anupubbakiriyā anupubbapaṭipadā aññārādhanā hoti.*

⁴³ MN. I, 7; SN. III, 16, 42, 46, etc.

This means that a *puthujjana* is one who is unable to discern a noble being, not conversant in the noble teaching, not disciplined the noble teaching, not discerning a good that is a 'holy' being, not conversant with the ways of noble beings, and not disciplined in the ways of the noble beings. The **Puggala Paññatti**⁴⁴ simply says that a *puthujjana* is one who has neither got rid of the three *samyojanas* nor applied himself to get rid of them.

The *Ariyasāvaka*⁴⁵ (noble disciple) who has set himself on the Path, is contrasted with such an ordinary worldling. The texts also speak of a transitory stage between *Puthujjana* and *Ariyasāvaka*. *Theravāda* Buddhism refers to this stage as *Gotrabhū*. The term occurs in such *suttas* as the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga* of the **Majjhima-nikāya**⁴⁶ and in two other *suttas* of the **Aṅguttara-nikāya**.⁴⁷ This term, therefore, does not seem to belong to the early part of the Nikāyas, for therein such minute and subtle divisions of the spiritual path were non-existent. It is said in the **Puggala Paññatti**,⁴⁸ (a late work belonging to the *Abhidhamma*

⁴⁴ **Pug. P.** p.12.

⁴⁵ **MN.** I, p. 8, p.300; **SN.** III, p.17, etc.

⁴⁶ **MN.** III, p.256.

⁴⁷ **SN.** IV, p.373; V, p.23.

⁴⁸ **AbhiP.** p.126.

Piṭaka), that a *puṭhujjana* by developing noble qualities becomes a *Gotrabhū*, and qualifies himself to enter the scheme leading to *Nibbāna*. **Aṅguttara-nikāya** includes *Gotrabhū* among the nine persons worthy of respect,⁴⁹ the other eight being the eight persons who are at different stages of development in the Path.⁵⁰

The same is referred to as *Gotra-bhūmi* in Buddhist Sanskrit books. This is listed among the seven stages, sometimes eight or ten, of spiritual development of a *Śrāvakayānist*. The **Mahāvvyutpatti** gives the seven stages as *Śuklavidarśanābhūmi*, *Gotrabhūmi*, *Aṣṭamakabhūmi*, *Darśanabhūmi*, *Tanubhūmi*, *Vītarāgabhūmi*, *Kṛtāvinbhūmi*. Herein the first two *bhūmis* are considered as *pre-Sotāpanna*, and are the transitory stages between *Puṭhujjana* and *Ariyasāvaka*. The same *bhūmis* are mentioned in the **Śatasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā** with the addition of the *Pratyekabuddhabhūmi*, *Bodhisattvabhūmi* and *Buddhabhūmi*. This was another attempt at expanding the *Theravāda* scheme to fall in line with the *Mahāyāna* teaching.

The **Nikāyas** mention numerous qualities that are to be cultivated for one to qualify to enter into the Path. A basic requirement for this is

⁴⁹ AN. IV, p.373.

⁵⁰ For details, see EOB. V, p.380f.

faith (*pasāda*) in the Buddha, *Dhamma* and the *Sangha*.⁵¹ An *Ariyan* disciple should be endowed with this; should commence to follow the Noble Eight-fold Path; and should acquire six conditions which are constituent parts of knowledge.⁵²

This preparatory stage finds its parallel in the *Mahāyāna* Scheme. The *Mahāyāna* divides this initial preparatory stage into two namely, *Prakṛticaryā* and *Praṇidhānacaryā*. The **Bodhisattvabhūmi** also mentions this pre-stage and calls it *Prakṛticaryā* and further sub-divides it into two stages as *Gotra vihāra* and *Adhimukticaryā vihāra*. The stage next to *Puttujjana* is *Gotrabhū* corresponding in some respects to the *Gotravihāra* in the **Bodhisattvabhūmi**. The **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** without naming this stage, describes *Puthujjana* (*prthagjñāna*) in detail.⁵³ Both *Puthujjana* and *Gotrabhū* states seem to be preparatory stages the latter being more advanced than the former. In *Mahāyāna* there is reference to various other qualities that a *Bodhisattva* is required to develop. It cannot be said with any certainty as to whether it is the *Theravādins* or some other sect that first developed the concept of that

⁵¹ DN. III, p.227; SN. V. p.196; Pts.M. p.161: There is a formula for announcing the faith. Such faith is called *Saddhindriya*.

⁵² SN. II, p.69; V, p.342ff.

⁵³ Da.bhu. p.8. *Yena cittotpādena sahotpannena bodhisattva'tikrānto bhavati, prthagjñānabhūmīmavakrānto bhavati.*

preparatory stage. It is quite reasonable to accept the view that it belongs to a comparatively later period, for it is not found mentioned in the early scheme referred to in *Suttas* such as *Brahmajāla* and *Sāmaññaphala Suttas* of the **Dīgha-nikāya** which belongs to the early stage of the **Nikāyas**.

The Scheme proper in *Theravāda* Buddhism consists of four stages namely, *Sotāpanna*, *Sakadāgāmī*, *Anāgāmī* and *Arahant*. These four stages are, however, further subdivided according to the Eight Noble Beings: the four in the supramundane Paths and the other four in the supramundane fruitions of those Paths. After the acquisition of the preliminary requirements, while being in the *Gotrabhū* stage that one enters into the Path of Stream-Entrant (*Sotāpatti-magga*), gets rid of three fetters (*saṃyojanas*) which keeps one bound to *Saṃsāric* existence. These fetters are ① Personality-view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), ② Skeptical doubt (*Vicikicchā*), and ③ Attachment to rites and rituals (*Sīlabbata parāmāsa*). When, thus accomplished, he is qualified to follow the Path of Once-Returning (*Sakadāgāmī*) and becomes free of two more fetters namely, ④ Sensuous craving (*kāmacchanda*), and ⑤ Ill-will (*vyāpāda*). These first five fetters are called the lower fetters (*Oraṃbhāgīya saṃyojanas*). However, it has to be noted that by realizing the two stages one cannot completely eradicate these lower fetters. It is only through following the Path of Non-Returning (*Anāgāmī*) that these five lower fetters become totally extinguished.

There are five more fetters to be destroyed. They are called *Uddambhāgīya Samyojanas* and these are ① Craving for material existence (*rūparāga*), ② Craving for immaterial existence (*arūparāga*), ③ Conceit (*māna*), ④ Restlessness (*Uddhacca*), and ⑤ Ignorance (*avijjā*). Each of these stages is further classified. Thus, a *Sotāpanna* who is in the lowest stage of the scheme is divided into three categories. They are: having seven births at the most (*Sattakkhathuparama*), passing from one noble family to another (*kolankola*) and germinating only once (*eka-bīja*). The *Theravāda* tradition speaks also of five classes of non-retruners (*anāgāmī*).

The *Mahāyāna* 'Bhūmi' scheme completely disregards all these divisions. As shown above the main aim of the *Mahāyāna* scheme is to prove that it is far superior to that of the *Thāravāda* scheme. Hence, at the earlier stage, that is when a transition was taking place from *Theravāda* to *Mahāyāna*, the *Theravāda* scheme was adopted as a preliminary stage and the *Mahāyāna* scheme developed from where *Theravāda* scheme ended.

It is generally accepted that the preliminary pre-*sotāpanna* stage finds a parallel in the pre-*bhūmi* stage of the *Mahāyāna* scheme. The scholars, however, seem to think that there is no similarity between the *Sotāpanna* stage and the First *Bhūmi*. N. Dutt says "The *Hīnayāna* system does not offer any parallel to the first *bhūmi* of the *Mahāyānists*, for it has no concern with *Bodhicitta*, *Praṇidhāna*, *Maitrī*, *Karuṇā* and

the ten qualities needed by a *Bodhisattva* for fortifying himself to proceed along the ten *bhūmis*.”⁵⁴ Perhaps following N. Dutt, A.C. Banerjee and S.K. Nanayakkara say “As the *Theravāda* Scheme is not concerned with any of the attainments, there is in it no particular stage that could be considered as identical with the first *bhūmi*.”⁵⁵ Of these two writers,⁵⁶ the former says that there is ‘no parallel to the first *bhūmi*’ and the latter says that there is no stage ‘...identical with the first *bhūmi*.’ Parallelness and identity are widely different in connotation. It is true that the *Sotāpanna* stage and the first *bhūmi* are not identical. There is nothing wrong in it, for there is no reason why these two stages should be identical. It is not the identity that we should attempt to see in two different schemes, but the similarity if there is any between them. So, to say that there is no parallelism is not totally unacceptable.

The *Sotāpanna* stage, it should be remembered, is the first stage in the Path, the earlier stages being more preparatory stages, equipping the devotee with necessary personal and spiritual factors to break away from the gravitational pull of *Puthujjana* state. The *Sotāpanna* state, therefore, represents the initial break away, departure from the normal worldly courses, the ‘*anusotagāmī*’ way of life which draws one down-stream,

⁵⁴ N. Dutt, **MB**. p.109.

⁵⁵ **EOB**. vol. III, p.79.

⁵⁶ *ibid.* pp.74-81.

subjecting him to an endless vortex of birth and death. Yet, he is the lowest of the eight noble beings (*ariya-puggala*). He arrives at this stage by getting rid of the personality-belief (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), skeptical doubt (*vicikicchā*) and attachment to rites and rituals (*sīlabbata-parāmāsa*). The main characteristics of a *Sotāpanna* are: his unshakable faith toward Buddha, *Dhamma*, *Sangha*, and perfect morality. He is endowed with long-life, good complexion, happiness, and is described as being glorious and wealthy. He is excluded from being born in any of the bad states of existence (*avinipātadhammo*), and above all he is certainly destined to become enlightened (*niyatasambodhiparāyaṇo*).

Though it is not possible to 'identify' many of these qualities in a *Bodhisattva* presented in similar term in the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** or in any other *Mahāyāna* work dealing with the *Bodhisattva* conduct, one cannot fail to see some similarities between them.

Just as the *Sotāpanna*, the first *bhūmi* named *Pramuditā* denotes an initial stage in the long spiritual career of a *Bodhisattva*. It is clear that a *Bodhisattva* arrives at this stage just after the production of the 'bodhicitta.' This annihilates all his previous sins and takes him above the worldly level. He becomes freed from birth in any evil state of existence. Though there is no mention of the production of *Bodhicitta* in the *Theravāda* Scheme (and the reasons for this are obvious) it is accepted that one cannot break away from the normal worldly course of life unless one makes a firm resolution with conviction, that one should

‘break away.’

Once one becomes a *Sotāpanna* he devotes all his life to spiritual cultivation performing deeds which are wholesome, just as a *Bodhisattva*, in the first *bhūmi* does, for both there is no turning back; a *Sotāpanna* is definitely progressing towards *Arahantship* and a *Bodhisattva* towards the 10th *bhūmi* or Buddhahood. The qualities a *Bodhisattva* cultivates while in this *bhūmi* are listed according to the accepted beliefs found in the *Mahāyāna* Scheme. Though not so elaborately listed, a *Sotāpanna* is also expected to devote himself ardently to the cultivation of wholesome deeds. His faith in the Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Saṅgha* and his interest in developing morality are equally shared by a *Bodhisattva* in the first *bhūmi*. This clearly shows that the *Pramuditā bhūmi* is a very initial stage of spiritual development like the *Sotāpatti* stage. Thus it is seen that there are enough similarities of the two stages as initial steps in the spiritual path. However, they are not identical, for it is hardly possible for them to be identical as they are based on two different schemes.

There is consensus of opinion that a close resemblance of the two schemes is noticeable from the second stage. The **EOB**. says that, “Basically, the second *bhūmi*, *vimalā*, mentioned in the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** list is similar to the *Sotāpanna* and *Sakadāgāmī* stages. Both lay stress on the development and perfection of higher ethical conduct (*adhisīla*).” N. Dutt is also of the same opinion; for he, after summarizing the contents of this *bhūmi*, observes, “This account of the

second *bhūmi* leaves us in little doubt as to its similarity to the *adhisīla* practices of the *Hīnayānists*, without, of course, taking into account the *adhyāśayas* developed by the *Bodhisattvas*.⁵⁷

What is clear from these observations is that even this stage is not very far away from the preliminary stage. Whatever is the school of Buddhism, whether it is *Hīnayāna* or *Mahāyāna*, they all agree that *Sīla* is the foundation of *Samādhi* and *Paññā*. Both schemes agree on principle that the Path is graduated and that *sīla* enhances *samādhi*, and *samādhi* in turn enhances *paññā*. As both schools of Buddhism accept this graduated spiritual course, it is not surprising to see the few initial stages in both schemes specifically emphasizing the perfection of *Sīla*.

It is also said that the third *bhūmi*, *Prabhākarī*, corresponds to the *Anāgāmī* stage. In this stage the practice of *dhyāna*, attainment of *samāpattis*, and the cultivations of *brahmavihāras* are undertaken. Perhaps, this *bhūmi* is compared to *Anāgāmī* stage because the practices undertaken in it are more advanced and profound than those undertaken in the earlier two *bhūmis* and that he is now getting closer to the realization of truth, for it is said that ‘a *Bodhisattva* in this *bhūmi* gains the most penetrating insight into the nature of things.’ According to the *Theravāda* tradition one who is in the *Sakadāgāmī* stage becomes nearly free from sensuous craving (*kāmacchanda* or *kāmarāga*) and ill-will

⁵⁷ N. Dutt, **MB**, p.112.

(*vyāpāda* or *dosa*). The next stage, that is *Anāgāmī*, is differentiated from *Sakadāgāmī* because in the *Anāgāmī* state all five fetters get completely destroyed. Thus, it is seen that *Anāgāmī* comes closer to third *bhūmi*, as the *Bodhisattva* in this *bhūmi* is fast coming closer to the realization of the truth.

The next three *bhūmis* (*Arciṣmatī*, *Sudurjayā* and *Abhimukhī*) are involved with the further cultivation of wisdom, i.e., *Adhiprajñā*. Thus, it is seen that in the initial stage it was *sīla* that was emphasized, followed by the development of *samādhi*, and then comes the cultivation of *prajñā*. These *bhūmis* include the *adhiprajñāvihāra* and indicate the *Bodhisattva*'s cultivation of wisdom.

The final stage in the *Theravāda* Scheme is the attainment of *Arahanthood* and this is reached by the perfection of wisdom. The parallelism ends here; for the *Theravāda* Scheme reaches its climax with the realization of *Arahanthood*. This is the same state as attained by a *Bodhisattva* after reaching the 6th *bhūmi*. As pointed out before, the early *Mahāyāna* Scheme, too, may have ended at this point. The **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** in one instance mentions only six *bhūmis* supporting the view that the early *Mahāyāna* scheme of spiritual culture climaxed with the realization of the 6th *bhūmi*.

The **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** very strongly supports this conclusion. There are statements in the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** which clearly suggest

that there is a deliberate attempt in it to expand the number of *bhūmis* from six to ten. The **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** very clearly says that a *Bodhisattva* practises all the *Pāramitās* in this 6th stage. Further it says that a *Bodhisattva* in the 7th stage can pass away into *Nirvāṇa*. It is very clearly stated that all the activities of this *Bodhisattva* in the remaining stages take place spontaneously, meaning that he had already accomplished what is to be accomplished, that is, reached the goal.

The basis on which the Scheme of *bhūmis* is evolved is also a matter of contention. It is said while the **Bodhisattvabhūmi** is based on *Nirnimitta-bhāvanā*, the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** is based on the *Pāramitās*. What exactly is the rationale behind this observation is not clear. Such an assumption suggests that there are different schemes. Really, the scheme is one, a graduated one, based on the *Sīla*, *Samādhi* and *Prajñā* (*Paññā*) training, and it is the same both in *Hīnayāna* and *Mahāyāna*. All other factors are fixed into this broad scheme.

When it is said that the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** is based on the *Pāramitās* it gives the impression that the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** adopts a completely different scheme based on the *Pāramitās*. There is no scheme of salvation based on the *Pāramitās*. The *Pāramitās* are mere factors in a broader scheme based on the threefold scheme of training (*triśikṣā*) namely, *Śīla*, *Samādhi* and *Prajñā*. The **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** did not extend its scheme to ten *bhūmis* and fixed the number of *bhūmi* at ten,

because it based its scheme on the ten *Pāramitās*. It is far more reasonable to assume that when the *bhūmis* were extended to ten, the *Pāramitās* too were increased, and each *bhūmi* was allocated a *Pāramitā*.

The real reason for extending the scheme of *bhūmis* from six to ten has to be sought elsewhere. The scheme of *bhūmis* tallied with the *Theravāda* scheme, though in contents of the practices performed in the four stages in the *Theravāda* scheme and six *bhūmis* in the *Mahāyāna*, they differed. This parallelism in the two schemes may not have been liked by the *Mahāyānists*. From very early times there appear to have been attempts to show some difference between the two schemes.

One of the specific purposes of the composition of the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** may have been to show the distinction between the two schemes. This is very clearly seen from the seventh chapter onwards where the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** constantly emphasizes that its scheme surpasses the *Śrāvaka* and *Pratyekabuddha* scheme. Thus the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** explaining certain *Samādhi* attained by the *Bodhisattva* in the 7th *bhūmi* says:

*Sa eṣām samādhīnām upāyaprajñāsupariśodhitānām
pratilambhān mahākaruṇābalena cātīkrānto bhavati
śravakapratyekabuddhabhūmim, abhimukhaś sa bhavati
prajñājñānavicāraṇābhūmeḥ.*⁵⁸

⁵⁸ **Da.bhu.** p.39; **Ro-Dbh.** p.60, [I].

Again it is said:

*sahacittotpādena sarvaśrāvaka-pratyekabuddhān abhibhavaty
adhyāśayamāhātmyena, na punaḥ svabuddhivicāreṇa asyāṃ tu
saptamyāṃ bodhisattvabhūmau sthito bodhisattvaḥ.....
śrāvaka-pratyekabudhakriyām atikrānto bhavati.*⁵⁹

Such statements which are frequent in this chapter support the view that the scheme was expanded not because it was based on the ten *Pāramitās*, but for the purpose of distinguishing it from the *Theravāda* scheme, which the *Mahāyānist* considered inferior.

The *Pāramitās* were added to this expanded scheme as factors which are to be accomplished by a *Bodhisattva*. Thus four new *Pāramitās* were included further distinguishing the two schemes. The scheme of *bhūmi* in general is not formulated on any base other than the generally accepted scheme of spiritual training consisting of *Śīla*, *Samādhi* and *Prajñā*, which is common both to *Theravāda* or *Hīnayāna* and *Mahāyāna*. Schemes of *bhūmis* as presented in the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** and **Bodhisattvabhūmi** were formulated in such a way to assimilate *Nirnimitta-bhāva*, *Pāramitā*, etc. into this generally accepted plan.

⁵⁹ **Da.bhu.** p.39. **Ro-Dbh.** p.60, [J].

3. The Daśabhūmika Sūtra

3-1. Name of the Text

This text is known by variant names such as *Daśabhūmika*, *Daśabhūmaka*, or *Daśabhūmīśvara*. *Ācārya Asaṅga* in his famous treatise namely, the *Daśabhūmi* has referred to it by the name of *Daśabhūmaka*.⁶⁰ There appears the following stanza in all the manuscripts of the text before the prose portion of the introduction which provides information as to its exact title:-

*Yasmin pāramitā daśottamaḡaṇāstaistairnayaiḡ sūcitāḡ
sarvajñena jagaddhitāya daśa ca prakhyāpitā bhūmayāḡ /
ucchedadhruvavarjitā ca vimalā proktā gatirmadhyamā
tatsūtraḡ daśabhūmikāḡ nigaditaḡ śruṇvantu bodhyarthinaḡ //*

All the scholars, however, are unanimous in holding the view that the above mentioned stanza did not form a part of the text in hand in its original form.⁶¹ But it certainly proves that the name of the text was later on standardized to *Daśabhūmika*. At the same time it can be further emphasized that at the time of the composition of the text, the word *Daśabhūmīśvara* might have been popular as is evident from

⁶⁰ **Da.bhu.** P.L. Vaidya (ed.) Intro. p.1; and also *Śikṣāsamuccaya* of *Śāntideva*.

⁶¹ *ibid.* p.1, fn.1.

colophons available in all the manuscripts and versions.⁶² As regards to the meaning of the title, J. Rahder thinks that the word *Daśabhūmiśvara* stands for one who has mastered the ten stages in the career of a *Bodhisattva*, and is an epithet of *Mañjuśrī* in the *Āryamañjuśrīnāmāṣṭaśataka*.⁶³

The **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** is considered as one of the most important *Mahāyāna* Texts by its distinctive contribution hence it is put in the group of principal texts called the *Navadharmā*,⁶⁴ in Nepal. It is one of the two independent Buddhist (Sanskrit) *Sūtras* belonging to the **Buddhāvataṃsaka-Sūtra**; other one being the **Gaṇḍavyūha-Sūtra**.⁶⁵ The entire **Buddhāvataṃsaka-Sūtra**,⁶⁶ was made available into two Chinese versions in sixty volumes and in eighty volumes during 418-420

⁶² R.L. Mitra, **SBLN**. p.79; also compare Johannse Rahder, **Acta Or.** IV, p.214.

⁶³ **Acta Or.** IV, p.214.

⁶⁴ The other texts that fall into this special category, i.e., *Navadharmā* are:- **Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā**, **Saddharmapuṇḍarīka**, **Lalitavastu**, **Laṅkāvatāra**, **Suvarṇaprabhāsa**, **Gaṇḍavyūha**, **Tathāgataguhyaka**, **Samādhirāja**.

⁶⁵ The Sanskrit text was published: Gvy. critically edited, collating six MSS., by D.T. Sunuki and H. Idzumi, during 1934-36.

⁶⁶ The **Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra**, though its Sanskrit text has not wholly been preserved, has been translated into Chinese with the Chinese equivalent Hua-yen (華嚴) meaning "Adorned with Various Flowers".

and 695-699 A.D. respectively. The **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** is in the twenty-sixth chapter among thirty-nine chapters in total in the former. The **Avataṃsaka-Sūtra** speaks of fifty two stages: ten faiths (十信), ten abodes (十住), ten conducts (十行), ten returnings (十廻向), ten stages (十地), equal enlightenment (等覺), and finally, marvelous enlightenment (妙覺). It seems that these 52 stages are only a form of classification of the *Bodhisattvas* according to their qualities and that they do not indicate the gradual stages of spiritual progress except the ten stages in the fifth item, that is, the ten stages (十地), where we find mention of the *bhūmis*. Besides, between the 3rd and the 7th centuries, it has been rendered into Chinese, Mongolian, Tibetan, etc., and this bears evidence to its popularity as well as importance as a *Mahāyāna* work.

The purpose of the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** is to present the ten stages (*bhūmi*), in a systematic way, through which a *Bodhisattva* has to proceed before he finally attains *Buddhahood*. The accomplishments a *Bodhisattva* has to attain in each stage are elaborately explained in the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra**.

3-2. Manuscripts and Translations of the text

There are the Sanskrit manuscripts of **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** or **Daśabhūmīśvara** with their variant translations in different languages.

The most ancient group of the Manuscripts is:-

- ① MS. of Paris, (National Library Sanskrit Original no.51 in Nepalese newari character, 19th cent.);
- ② MS. of Paris, (National Library Sanskrit Original no. 52 in *Devanāgarī*, 19th cent.);
- ③ MS. of Cambridge, (Cambridge University Library, Add. 1618, Newari, 215pages, 38cm. by 10cm., dated N.S.967 (A.D.1847));
- ④ MS. of Cambridge, (Cambridge University Library, Add. 867, Newari, N. S. 872 (A.D. 1752);
- ⑤ MS. of London, (Royal As. Soc., Hodgson Coll. no. 3 Newari);
- ⑥ MS. of Katmandu, Royal Library, Paper MS., 215 leaves, 5 lines, 38 cm by 10 cm, Newari, dated N. S. 967 (A.D. 1847); and
- ⑦ MS. of Calcutta, As. Soc. of Bengal, B.45, Newari: it is edited by a mediocre interpreter who very rarely gives information which can be useful for a critical edition of the Text.

The *Gāthās* of the last chapter (*parīdāna*) which are missing in the older group are found in the collection of modern Manuscripts, while they are omitted in all the chapters of the fragmented manuscripts dating from the 6th century.⁶⁷

The Text is translated in almost all major languages, especially in the national languages of Buddhist countries where *Mahāyāna* flourished.

⁶⁷ **Ro-Dbh.** ed. J. Rahder, Preface of the **Da.bhu.** p.i.

They are as follows:-

(1) The Tibetan Translations:

- ① Edition by Narthang of Bkhaḥ ḥgyur, section Phal, chen, vol.3, pages 71-242: (from 8th -10th *Bhūmi*);
- ② The Peking edition, vol.3, 49a-168a: (from 1st-7th *Bhūmi*);
- ③ Edition of Peking of Bastan ḥgyur, National Library of Paris, Tibetan original no. 229 from nos. 130b-335a; text and commentary by Vasubandhu.

2) The Mongolian Translation:-

Edition of Peking of Bhaḥ ḥgyur, section Ulaṅgi, vol.3, from 59b-182a, National Library of Paris, Mongolian section no.56.

3) The Chinese Translations:-

- ① *Dharmarakṣa*, 漸備一切智德經, A.D. 294, Nanjō 110;
- ② *Kumārajīva-Buddhayaśas*, 十住經, A.D.384-417, Nanjō 105;
- ③ *Buddhabhadra*, 六十華嚴經 十地品, Chapter 22 of the **Buddhāvataṃsaka-Sūtra**, A.D. 418-420, Nanjō 87;
- ④ *Bodhiruci*, 十地經論, A.D. 508-511, Nanjō 1194;
- ⑤ *Śikṣānanda*, 八十華嚴經 十地品, Chapter 26 of the **Buddhāvataṃsaka-Sūtra**, A.D. 695-699, Nanjō 88;
- ⑥ *Śāladharma*, 十地經, Khotan, T'ang dynasty, Supplement to the Canon of Kyoto 1, 2 & 4.

4) The Japanese Translations:-

- ① Kokuyakudaizōkyō, section of *Sūtras*, vol.6, p.179-325;
- ② Section of *Śāstras*, vol.13.

5) The Korean Translation: 八十華嚴經 十地品 in the 高麗大藏經 (**Koryo Tipiṭaka**).

A detailed account of the different manuscripts and versions of the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** has been furnished by Dr. Johannes Rahder in his illuminating preface to the **Daśabhūmikasūtra et Boḍhisattvabhūmi**. He says that “The details of the original are better explained by *Śikṣānanda*, in 八十華嚴經 十地品, by translating word to word working mechanically without taking into account the finer points of Chinese grammar, then by the other Chinese translators who are bent on explaining the meaning in proper and good Chinese without bringing out the finer and subtle meanings of the Sanskrit manuscripts. In general one can confirm a certain similarity between the Tibetan-Mogol version and the ancient Sanskrit manuscripts (MS. Of Cambridge (Add. 867.2) and London) and a less evident conformity between the modern groups (MS. of Paris, Cambridge (Add. 1618) and Katmandu).”⁶⁸

In 1926, the romanized text **Daśabhūmikasūtra et Boḍhisattvabhūmi** was formerly published by J. Rahder, and he, with

⁶⁸ **Ro-Dbh.** ed. J. Rahder, p. ii.

Shinryū Susa (須佐晋龍), published **The Gāthā Portion of the Daśabhūmika Sūtra**, (Eastern Buddhist vol. V, 4 and IV, 1, Kyoto, 1931-1932).

In 1926, J. Rahder translated only the Seventh *bhūmi* of the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra**, including translation of Vasubandhu's Commentary, into English in the **Acta Orientalia** (vol. IV, p.214-256).

In 1928, the **Glossary of the Sanskrit, Tibetan, Mongolian and Chinese versions of the Daśabhūmika Sūtra**, has been published by J. Rahder in Paris.

Afterwards, a more critical edition based upon eight MSS. was published in *Devanāgarī* by Ryūko Kondo: entitled **Daśabhūmīśvaro nāma Mahāyāna-Sūtram**, (Tokyo) in 1936.

In 1937, the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** was translated from Sanskrit into Japanese by Shoshin Tatsuyama, with corrections on the editions and critical comments; (**Bombun Wayaku Jūji-Khō** (梵文和譯十地經), Nagoya, Japan).

In 1967, the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** has been published by Dr. P.L. Vaidya in *Devanāgarī* both prose and verse portions on the basis of J. Rahder's edition.

In 1968, J. Rahder's text was translated into English by Megumu Honda under the title: '*Annotated translation of the Daśabhūmika Sūtra*' in **Śatapiṭaka** (vol. 74, p.115-276, Delhi).

In 1993, the whole Chinese **Buddhāvataṃsaka-Sūtra** is translated into English by Thomas Cleary, entitled **The Flower Ornament Scripture**.

3-3. Author, Date and Place of the Text

The author of the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** is not known. The introductory part as well as the colophon of the text are silent about this matter. Likewise the later *Ācāryas* like *Asaṅga*, *Vasubandhu* and *Śāntideva* who utilized and worked on the text do not tend to mention the name of the author.

As it is usual with regard to all important *Mahāyāna* texts **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** is also regarded by the *Mahāyāna* traditions as being preached by the Buddha himself. This, however, is a mere tradition which carries no weight. What is clear from the language and the presentation of the subject matter is that the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** is a much later work and, at the most, the work of a single author.

The date of its composition also is not yet fixed. The text had already become very popular as a religious treatise by the middle of the fourth century A.D. when it was referred to by *Asaṅga*⁶⁹ and commented upon by his younger brother, *Vasubandhu*.

The doctrine presented by it is seen in its incipient form in such

⁶⁹ **Da.bhu.** Intro. p.1 (J. Rahder, *Acta Or.* IV. p.214).

texts as the **Mahāvastu**. And hence eminent scholars such as Har Dayal consider it to be anterior to **Mahāvastu**. The **Śatasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā** also treats this concept of *Bhūmi*. But a comparison of this account with that of **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** shows that the former account is much simpler. Hence, Har Dayal puts the actual composition of the work in the early 3rd century,⁷⁰ with the inevitable conclusion that **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** is later than the **Śatasāhasrikā**. Th. 10199

The fact that it was rendered into Chinese as early as 297 A.D. enables one to surmise that it is anterior to the 3rd century A.D.⁷¹ The Sanskrit verses interspersed in the main body of the 1st chapter are certainly later interpolations. In the same way, one cannot be certain about the date of composition of the *Prakrit Gāthās*. The language of the *Gāthās* is nearer the *Middle Indic* form than the language used in the prose portion. The verses are presented in a relatively Middle Indic form, but the prose is far more Sanskritic in appearance, in its phonology and morphology. This, according to F. Edgerton, is a characteristic feature of the Hybrid Sanskrit. He says "It contains large numbers of words which never occur, or do not occur with the same meanings, in standard Sanskrit. They are words of the Buddhist, that is a Middle Indic,

⁷⁰ Har Dayal, **BDBSL**. p.384.

⁷¹ Winternitz, **HIL**. p.328.

tradition, even though they may appear in a Sanskritized garb.”⁷² N. Dutt is more positive with respect to this. According to him the work, along with some other texts, can be ascribed to the first two centuries of the Christian era in view of its highly polemical nature.⁷³ S. Tatsuyama, a Japanese scholar, in his **Bombun Wayaku Jūjikyō**,⁷⁴ supposed that the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** was compiled in 50-150 A.D.

The exact place of the composition of the work is even more uncertain. The text does not have the name of any city or village which may provide any clue to solve the problem. *Hiuen-T(h)sang* states that *Vasubhandhu* became acquainted with the text for the first time at *Ayodhya*.⁷⁵ If we accept this as a historical fact we can conclude that the text was not written in North Western region, the Deccan or Gangetic Valley. The occurrence of the word ‘*Āhāra*’ in the text,⁷⁶ however, reinforce the view that the text had its origin in the Deccan. The inscriptions frequently mention ‘*Govardhama āhāra*’ and some others. Historians think that the term ‘*āhāra*’ refers to an administrative unit

⁷² F. Edgerton, **BHSD**. I. p.5. Also compare J. Rahder, **Acta Or.** IV. P.214.

⁷³ N.Dutt, **BSI**. p.278.

⁷⁴ S. Tatsuyama, **BWJ**. (梵文和譯十地經), Intro. p.7.

⁷⁵ Thomas Watters, **YCTI**. I. p.358.

⁷⁶ **Da.bhu**. p.22 : *evamgotraḥ evamjātiḥ evamāhāra evamāyuh...*

corresponding to present day district and it was commonly used in the Deccan.⁷⁷ This word does not occur in this sense in any northern Indian inscription or literary work. Hence, it is possible that text belongs to the Deccan region.

3-4. Linguistic features of the text

The text contains eleven chapters in a mixture of prose and verse, with prose predominating. The verses, however, do not seem to add anything new to the main thesis of the text, except the few verses that occur in a dialogue between *Vajragarbha Bodhisattva*, the principal character, and *Vimukticandra Bodhisattva*. The rest of the verses are meant to present in summary form the content of the prose portion.

De La Vallée Poussin thinks that the Prakrit verses were added later.⁷⁸ This is also the view of P.L.Vaidya, who remarks:- “It should be noted, that initial or introductory stanzas are not usual in these *sūtras* though the concluding ones are, and hence I am inclined to believe that the *Gāthā* portion of the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** is a positively late addition.” J. Rahder does not make any distinction between prose and *Gāthās*, and simply remarks that some manuscripts have *Gāthās* in the last

⁷⁷ R. S. Sharma, *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions*, p.202.

⁷⁸ **ERE**. ed. James Hastings, II, p.744.

chapter.⁷⁹ However, even a cursory reading of the text makes it very clear that the actual treatise is entirely in prose and the *Gāthā* portion is just a superficial, but convenient addendum.

The most conspicuous difference between the other *Mahāyāna Sūtras* and the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** is the presence of Sanskrit verses interspersed in the main body of the 1st chapter of the latter. On this point, it can be opined that these verses were added much later when Sanskrit had been accepted as the *lingua franca* among the Buddhists.

The **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** undoubtedly, is the most methodical and systematic work dealing with the *bhūmi* doctrine. As pointed out above the accounts in the **Mahāvastu** and the **Śatasāhasrikā** are in their rudimentary stages. A comparison with the **Bodhisattvabhūmi** shows that the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** is far more systematic and methodical. The two authors of these two texts appear to present their subject matter from two different perspectives. The **Bodhisattvabhūmi** appear to treat the *Bodhisattva* career according to the threefold training of *adhi-śīla*, *adhi-citta* and *adhi-prajñā* whereas the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** is basically founded on the doctrine of ten *Pāramitās*, viz. *Dāna*, *Śīla*, *Kṣānti*, *Vīrya*, *Dhyāna*, *Prajñā*, *Upāya*, *Prāṇidhāna*, *Bala*, and *Jñāna*. In spite of the fact that the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** is a more systematic work, it is seen

⁷⁹ J. Rahder, *Acta Or.* IV. p.214.

that the author or compiler has not quite well succeeded in focusing the prevalent different teachings on the subject. Though the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** adopts *Pāramitās* as the foundation, the 3rd stage shows some confusion with regard to this. It is the *Kṣānti Pāramitā* that is connected with this stage. But the accounts found in the text present attributes and qualities that accompany with *Dhyāna-Pāramitā*. Har Dayal makes the following observation regarding this anomalous situation. He says: “It seems probable that the original scheme of division was based on the three *Śikṣās*, branches of instruction, of *Śīla*, *Citta* and *Prajñā*. The **Bodhisattvabhūmi** has partially observed it, through the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** ignores it. But this third *bhūmi* appears to deal with *Citta* or *Samādhi* and recast and expanded in order to secure the symmetrical parallelism of the ten Perfections and ten stages.”⁸⁰ This attempt at deliberate expansion of the schema of progress is also seen in the accounts dealing with the 7th *bhūmi*, namely, *Dūranṅamā bhūmi*. The name itself means that it is a stage difficult to attain. It is said that in this stage one practises and fulfills all *Pāramitās*. But as the author had to expand the scheme to ten *bhūmis*, he continues allocating *Pāramitās* to the remaining three stages.

The difficulty the author had to face in expanding the scheme of

⁸⁰ *ibid.* p. 287.

bhūmis to ten is clearly seen from this chapter. The author is compelled to say that though the *Bodhisattva* in the 7th *bhūmi* is having full comprehension of all mundane defilements, yet it cannot be said that:-

“*evam eva bhoh prathamāṃ bhūmim upādāya bodhisattvaḥ pāramitāyānābhirūḍaḥ sarvajagad anuvicaran, saṃkleśadoṣān prajānāti, na ca tair doṣair lipyate samyag mārḡābhirūḍhatvāt.*”⁸¹

Similarly, he has been forced to make a subtle but somewhat artificial distinction between two stages which he refers to as ‘*asamkleśa*’ and ‘*niṣkleśa*.’ Once again he is forced to admit that a *Bodhisattva* in this *bhūmi* attains ‘*nirodha*’. If so, then he has reached the climax in his career for *Nirodha* signifies the cessation of *Dukkha*. Yet, if this is made the climax, then the author is unable to allocate the rest to the ten *bhūmis*. Hence, he says that though the *Bodhisattva* has attained *Nirodha*, it is not permanent, and that he really has not personally experienced it.

Throughout the chapters the author’s deliberate attempts to justify the extension of the scheme of *bhūmis* to ten is clearly seen. And doing so, he does not forget to say that at this stage the *Bodhisattva* surpasses *Śrāvakas* and the *Pratyekabuddhas*. It is for this purpose of taking the *Bodhisattva* beyond the stage of spiritual advancement reached by the *Śrāvakas* and *Pratyekabuddhas* that the *bhūmi* scheme had to be expanded. Other than the Buddha, two categories of spiritually perfected persons are

⁸¹ **Da.bhu.** p. 36:15-17. **Ro-Dbh.** p.58, [F].

the *Pratyekabuddhas* and *Śrāvakas* according to the *Theravāda* or *Hīnayāna* tradition. In keeping with the *Mahāyāna* tradition the *Bodhisattva* career had to be extended to take him further than the state reached by them, and consequently *bhūmis* had to be increased to ten.

In doing this, the author has been forced to use his rich imagination in adding all sorts of *Samādhis* and *Kṣāntis* as necessary provision in the spiritual journey of a *Bodhisattva*. The author quite often becomes extremely repetitious in these descriptions. Nothing new is presented, the old ideas are presented in different words and this makes the reader bored and even tired. Quite often this makes the work appear verbose and uninteresting. This even makes the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** engage in a play of words, presentation of redundant description and even mind-boggling concepts. The strain, under which the author attempts to elaborate the account, is even felt by the reader, for the reader himself often is at a loss to visualize the ideas presented in the text.

Another difficulty the author of the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** had to face in blending different views that prevailed then is seen from his description of the 10th *bhūmi*. The **Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra** says that a *Bodhisattva* in the 10th *bhūmi* is not yet a fully fledged *Tathāgata*, and that he has to reach another higher stage called the *Tathāgata bhūmi* to become a *Tathāgata*. The **Śatasāhasrikā-Sūtra**, however, says that a *Bodhisattva* in the 10th *bhūmi* is verily a *Tathāgata*. The author of the

Daśabhūmika-Sūtra makes a valiant effort, though not quite successfully, in trying to fuse these two opposite ideas and evolve a ten *bhūmi* scheme.

The account of the *Bodhisattva* practice as elucidated in the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** has much in common with the *Theravāda* practice. This similarity is clearly noticeable up to the description of the 7th *Bhūmi*. The practice of *Sangrahavastus*,⁸² *Pāramitās*, development of *Ṛddhipādas*, and *Abhijñās* are all explained just as they are explained in Pali texts. The definition of the Five Precepts also bears close resemblance to the definition found in the Pali Nikāyas. The definition of the first precept makes this quite clear. The *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* of the **Dīgha-nikāya** defines the first precept *Pāṇātipāta* as follows:-

*Pāṇātipātam pahāya pāṇātipātā paṭivirato.... nihitadaṇḍo nihitasattho
lajjī dayāpanno sabbapāṇabhūtahitānukampī viharati.*⁸³

The **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** has the following definition:-

⁸² The four *Samgahavattūnis* or objects of sympathy are *dāna*, *peyyavajja*, *atthacariyā*, and *samānattatā* (liberality, kindly speech, a life of usefulness, impartiality). The four *Sangrahavastus* in BHS are *dāna*, *priya-vacana*, *artha-caryā* (or *-kriyā*), and *samānārthatā* (or *samānasukhaduḥkhatā*). The Pali references are found in the DN., AN., Jā., SnA., etc. DN. III, p.152, 17-18: *samāno catūhi saṅgaha-vatthūhi janam saṅgahitā ahoṣi dānena peyya-vācena attha-cariyāya samānattatāya...* DN. III, p.232, 3-4: *cattāri saṅgaha-vatthūni. Dānam, peyya-vajjam, attha-cariyā, samānattatā.* AN. II. 32, 248; IV, 219, 264; Jā. V, 330.

⁸³ DN. I. 43, p.63.

*yaduta prāṇātipātāpratavirato bhavati. Nihitadaṇḍo nihitaśastro
nihitavairo lajjāvān dayāpannaḥ sarvaprāṇabhūteṣu hitasukhānukampī
maitracittah.⁸⁴*

It is almost a verbatim reproduction of the Pali, except for a few additions which is a feature common in Buddhist Sanskrit literature.

Some of the definitions agree almost word to word with the commentarial definition of the precepts. The definition of the third precept shows that it strictly follows the definition in the early Pali tradition, and that it meant sexual misbehavior and not over-indulgence in sensual pleasures in general, as some try to interpret this particular precept. The use of terms like ‘*paravittopakarāṇa*’ and the alternative term ‘*jīvitopakarāṇa*’ forces the inevitable conclusion that the compiler of the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** was quite familiar with the Pali tradition and even the Pali vocabulary. There is to be seen a deliberate attempt, as it were, on the part of the compiler of the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** to adhere closely to the Pali idiom. This is markedly seen in the account of *Dhyānas* where the description tallies with the Pali, word to word. The attainment of the four *Jhānas* are described in Pali in stereotyped phrases as follows.

(1) *viviccheva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savittakaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ*

⁸⁴ **Da.bhu.** p.15: **Ro-Dbh.** p.23 [B].



*pītisukhaṃ paṭhamamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.*⁸⁵

(2)*vitakkavicārānaṃ vūpasamā ajjhataṃ sampasādanaṃ cetaso ekodibhāvaṃ avitakkaṃ avicāraṃ samādhijaṃ pītisukhaṃ dutīyajjhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.*⁸⁶

(3)*pītiyā ca virāgāca upekkhako ca viharati sato sampajāno sukhañca kāyena paṭisaṃvedeti. Yaṃ taṃ ariyā ācikkhanti upekkhako satimā sukhavihārīti tatiyajjhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.*⁸⁷

(4)*sukhassa ca pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā pubbeva somanassadomanassānaṃ atthaṅgamā adukkhaṃ asukhaṃ upekkhāsati pārisuddhiṃ catutthajjhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.*⁸⁸

The **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** has merely Sanskritized this in the following manner.

(1)*vivikṭṃ kāmairvivikṭaṃ pāpakairakuśaladharmaiḥ savitarkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ prathamam dhyānamupasampadya viharati.*

(2)*vitarkavicārāṇāṃ vyupaśamādadhyaṭmasamprasādāccetaso ekotībhāvād avitarkam avicāraṃ samādhijaṃ pītisukhaṃ dvitīyaṃ dhyānam upasampadya viharati.*

(3)*prītervirāgādupekṣako viharati smṛtimān samprajānan sukhaṃ ca kāyena pratisaṃvedayati yattadāryā ācakṣanti upekṣakaḥ smṛtimān sukhavihārī nisprītikam tṛtīyaṃ dhyānamupasampadya viharati.*

(4)*sukhasya ca prahāṇādduḥkhasya ca prahāṇātpūrvameve ca saumanasyadaurmanasyayorastaṃgamādaduḥkhāsukham*

⁸⁵ DN. I. ii, p.75; p.73

⁸⁶ ibid. 77. p.74.

⁸⁷ ibid. 79. p.75.

⁸⁸ ibid.

*upekṣāsmṛtipariśuddhaṃ caturthaṃ dhyānam upasampadya viharati.*⁸⁹

The **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** account is a mere repetition of the *Sāmaññaphala* account, a mere Sanskritization of the Pali description. It is really a rendering of the Pali into Sanskrit; and is also very close to the standard Sanskrit, as it is a word to word rendering, the compiler has used the exact classical Sanskrit parallels. This clearly shows the author's close acquaintance with the Pali tradition, and also dependence on it. Perhaps he was having before him the Pali prototype of these accounts, for the similarities of the two are so close. This also strengthens the view that the *bhūmi* scheme was modeled on the *Theravāda* scheme, but made to deviate from it by the addition of numerous features which are forced into the scheme.

However, the compiler of the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** has not been able to Sanskritize the Pali properly, throughout the text. For example, when rendering the Pali term '*abhisajjana*' from *abhisajjati*>*abhi*+*sañja*, meaning 'to be in ill temper, to be angry, to abuse, to curse, to imprecate, etc.' an unusual term '*abhisañjanani*' is used; and in order to specify the meaning, the word is prefixed with '*para*' and the term '*parābhisamjanani*' is coined to connote, abusing or reviling others.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ **Da.bhu.** p. 20: **Ro-Dbh.** pp.33-34, [K].

⁹⁰ *ibid.* p.14.

In the place of the Pali term '*opapātika*', meaning born spontaneously, the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** has '*opapāduka*,' which certainly is a corrupt form of the Pali.⁹¹ The Pali term '*jalābuja*' meaning viviparous or womb born has been rendered by using the Sanskrit '*jarāyuja*' or '*jarāyu*' meaning sloughs or placenta, this, however, being the standard Sanskrit for this. This also shows the compilers awareness of standard Sanskrit.

While there is the use of standard Sanskrit, one finds also dialectic terms such as *cetasībahula*, meaning much enthusiastic, much elevated, much energetic.⁹² Some such usages are rather confusing and an exact meaning is difficult to get at, e.g. '*avakalpanābahulatayā*.' The term '*balikā*'⁹³ from '*bala*', is used in the sense of 'made strong or strengthened,' which it is not usually used in standard Sanskrit.

What is noticeable in the language used is that the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** compiler makes a valiant attempt to use standard Sanskrit wherever possible, though he is not been completely successful in his endeavour. This difference in the language as well as the difference in diction becomes quite apparent when compared with a text like the **Mahāvastu**. In the **Mahāvastu** the language is more akin to Middle Indian. There is Sanskritization of Pali, but use of standard Sanskrit is less frequent in the

⁹¹ *ibid.* p.10.

⁹² *ibid.* p.8.

⁹³ *ibid.* p.14.

Mahāvastu. Even the diction is simpler. Obviously by the time of the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra**, the Buddhist writers seem to have been more conversant with the use of Sanskrit, as Sanskrit was gradually becoming the accepted media of literature. As Buddhism was introduced to different regions the doctrine was soon adopted to vernaculars of the regions to which Buddhism was introduced by missionaries. So, in early Buddhist Sanskrit texts, one finds that the language used is more mixed than in later works in which there was a shift towards the use of standard Sanskrit.

Thus, the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** represents this stage of transition from the more mixed style towards the use of more standard Sanskrit. This is evident not only from the predominance of standard Sanskrit terms in the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra**, but also from the rather more ornate style and somewhat complex construction of sentences that is found in it. The lengthy sentences, long compounds, use of different figures of speech, all make it clear that it represents this transitory literary stage. This is also evidence for the comparative lateness of the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra**. As pointed out above, the compiler of the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** makes a conscious effort not only at Sanskritization and rendering into standard Sanskrit, but also at imitating the standard Sanskrit literary style. This is very clearly seen in long compounds that one often meets with in the text, from the very beginning itself. To prove this, a few such examples are as

follows:-

- i) *Sarvabodhisattvadhiyānavimsāksasamādhisamāpattiyabhijñāñānavikrīditābhiñā-sarvakriyāsamdarśanakuśalaiḥ* (p.1)
- ii) *Sarvabodhisattvaguṇapratipattisuparipārñānabhilāpya-kalpādhiṣṭhānasamprakāśanāparikṣīneguṇavarṇanirdeśakaiḥ* (p.1)
- iii) *Evampramukheirapavimāñāprameyāsamkhyeyācintyātulyāmāpyānatāprayantāsīmāprāptānabhilāpyānabhilāpyirbodhisatvairmahāsatvaḥ* (p.2)
- iv) *Yaduta niravaśeṣasarvalokadhātuvipatasamkṣiptamahadgatāpramānasuksmaudārikabyavasthāvamūrdhasamatalapraveśa... pratyakṣatāyai* (p.10)
- v) *Prañidhānasvabhinirhr̥tastathāgatādhiṣṭhānasuadhiṣṭhito 'pratiprabdhasatvārthaprayogo 'paryantalokadhātuvibhaktijataḥ* (p.46)
- vi) *Cyavanācarikramaṇagarbhasṭhitijanmābhiniṣkramaṇābhisambodhyadhyeṣaṇamahādharmaçakrapravartanamahāparinirāṇabhūmiriti* (p.62)

These instances show the author's inclination to use complex sentences in order to embellish his style of writing. Sometimes such usages, though they appear to add some weight to the style by making it look ornate, really confuse the reader. The ideas get so mixed up in trying to construct lengthy sentences, the compiler has been constrained to use peculiar terms, thus further compounding the confusion that is caused to the reader. The compiler has been so taken up by the desire to embellish the diction of his text, that he forgets to focus enough attention to see whether he clearly communicates the ideas that he desires to communicate. His eagerness to embellish the diction makes him become somewhat high-sounding and even bombastic, resulting in retarding free,

simple communication.

One notices too many repetitions in the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra**. The desire to embellish the diction perhaps is also a reason for this. The same idea is expressed by using different words. Sometimes a slightly different idea is presented. These repetitions do not seem to add to the content or to the meaning, but often sound redundant. Sometimes this sort of style sounds rather monotonous in the ear of a reader. For example:-

“Tadyathāpi bho Jinaputrā brahmalopapattisthitāḥ kāmāvacarān kleśān na samudācarati, evameva bho jinaputrā bodhisattvo acalāyaṃ bodhisattvabhūmau sthitāḥ sarvacittamanovijñānasamudācārānna samudācarati, sarvabuddhasamudācārāmapī... bodhisamudācārāmapī... bodhisattvasamudācārāmapī...śrāvakasamudācārāmapī..... śrota āpannasamudācārāmapī na samudācarati.”⁹⁴

The compiler seems to enjoy enunciating long lists of this nature, whereas he could have presented the same idea succinctly, avoiding repetition which greatly tires and fatigue the reader. Such repetitions are common in all religious literature of this nature and compiler of the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra**, too, follows the same style without using his discretion to present the ideas in a more vibrant style and to convey directly the crux of what he desires to convey without unduly repeating and tiring the reader.

⁹⁴ *ibid.* p.42 (25-31).

However, this does not by any means suggest that the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** is completely devoid of clear and lucid style of writing. There are a large number of passages which bear evidence to the writer's ability to use a very simple, but an elegant style. For example, the following is a very straight forward and vibrant piece of writing.

*“Sa bhūyasyā mātrayā asyāṃ pañcamyāṃ sudurjayāyāṃ bodhisattvabhūmau sthito bodhisattvaḥ smṛtimāśca bhavati, asampramoṣadharmatayā matimāśca bhavati, suviniścitaññānatayā gatimāśca bhavati....”*⁹⁵

While using subtle shades of meanings to give minutely differentiated concepts, the writer very directly and clearly expresses his ideas through quite a crisp style. This shows that he is quite capable of writing without becoming verbose and pedantic, and communicating forcefully.

Even when presenting subtle philosophical and psychological concepts the compiler shows his capability of using lucid and uncomplicated style of writing, using the most appropriate terminology. Thus, he Sanskritizes the Pali without spoiling his diction and without unduly complicating the ideas as follows:-

“.....dṛṣṭikṛtajālapravṛddhayā ca nāmarūpaṅkuraḥ prādurbhavati. Prādurbhūto vivardhate. vivṛddhe nāmarūpe pañcānāmindriyānāṃ pravṛttirbhavati. Pravṛttānāmindriyānāmanyonya(sam) nipātataḥ sparśaḥ. Sparśasya saṃnipātato

⁹⁵ *ibid.* p.28 (21-28).

*vedanā prādurbhavati. Vedanāyāstata uttare abhinandanā bhavati...*⁹⁶

The normal process of dependent origination is thus very clearly enunciated using the most appropriate and precise terminology. The explanation of the arising of *dukkha* and the definition of *dukkha* too is very clearly and lucidly presented. This sort of diction highlights the talent of the compiler as an effective writer. It is clear that the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** compiler is at his best when he is merely Sanskritizing the Middle Indic dialect. On such instances he appears more at home and quite sure of his vocabulary and diction, than when he is 'translating' the Middle Indic dialect into Standard Sanskrit. In the latter instances he appears to be somewhat artificial and even verbose to the extent of tiring and confusing a reader. This is mainly because he has to construct terms and even quite often repeat the ideas.

However, it is seen that the compiler of the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** is no mean a poet. To embellish his diction and add vigour and colour to expression the compiler uses various literary devices. His use of alliteration is quite noteworthy. This he uses to break the monotony and add beauty and charm to his diction. For example:-

*“Pravaravimalabuddhe svabhidhānānantaghatitapratibha
pravyāhara madhuraravarām vācam paramārthasamyuktām.
smṛtidhṛtiviśuddhabuddhe daśabalabalālābhamāśayaviśuddhiṃ
pratisaṃviddaśavicayaṃ bhāṣasva daśottamā bhūmiḥ*

⁹⁶ *ibid.* p.31 (19-29).

*śamanīyamanibhṛtasumanāḥ prahīnamadamānadr̥ṣṭisaṃkleśa
niṣkāṅkṣā parṣadiyaṃ prārthayate bhāṣitāni tava”*⁹⁷

The well spaced out repetition of ‘*pra*’ and the phrases such as ‘*smṛtidhṛtiviśuddhabuddhe*,’ ‘*daśabalabalābha*’ shows his ability to use alliteration. Onomatopoeic effect of such phrases very effectively brings out the profundity of the subject he is dealing with. The restrained use of this literary device adds variety and taste to his style of writing. Onomatopoeia seems to be his forte. Quite often he excels in this and through this one is reminded of the diction of classical Sanskrit writers. The following example also shows his apt use of onomatopoeia. For instance:- “*aśeṣaniḥśeṣānavāśeṣa....sarvakāravaramudāra.*”⁹⁸ But at times, he overdoes it thus marring his diction:- *arvakṣetraikakṣetrasarvakṣetrasamasaroṇa....*”

What is noteworthy is that the compiler, while keeping in mind that he is composing a religious text, has not forgotten the fact that it should be presented in a poetic form, and to achieve this he has done what he deemed most appropriate. Perhaps he had been influenced by the reputed scholarly writers of his time, and that very often this happens to be the reason for his overdoing this at times.

One comes across the use of similes also in the **Daśabhūmika-**

⁹⁷ *ibid.* p.5 (23-28).

⁹⁸ *ibid.* p.9.

Sūtra. The compiler has been able to use quite apt similes; however, there is not much variety in them. Some affective similes are:-
 ①“*anantarīkṣa eva raṅgacitraṇā mārutaḥ khagapathāśrito yathā.*”⁹⁹
 ②“*tadyathāpi.... karmāreṇa yathā yāthāgnau*”;¹⁰⁰ and so on. But this sort of stock similes is repeated with minor variations.¹⁰¹ Then the simile becomes stereotyped. This clearly shows the limitation of the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** as a poet. Though, at times, he shows his ability to use the language in a lucid manner, using alliteration and at times making use of onomatopoeic effect, when taken as a whole the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** does not bear evidence to bring out any remarkable poetic ability of his. However, the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra** compiler’s worth is to be measured not as a poet, but as a writer of a religious thesis. In this regard he shows that his understanding and imagination is extremely rich. He displays a very profound knowledge of both *Theravāda* or *Hīnayāna* and *Mahāyāna*. His familiarity with the *Theravāda* religious concepts and practice is very well demonstrated by the **Daśabhūmika-Sūtra**. His rich imagination is almost astonishing. If the multiplications of the *Samādhis*, *Kṣāntis*, *Dhāraṇis*, etc. are all his innovations, then it becomes evident

⁹⁹ *ibid.* p.4; verse no.10.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.* p.13.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.* p.23.

that he not only had a very profound understanding of the contemporary Buddhist thought but also had a fabulously rich imagination that helped him to coin names and designations. If they are not his innovations, but ideas taken from the current religious tradition, then they bear evidence for his versatility and learning as a religious teacher.