

CHAPTER III

THERAVĀDA AND MAHĀYĀNA

— A COMPARISON AND CONTRAST —

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III. 1. INTRODUCTION

As a result of the orthodoxy and conservatism, Theravāda Buddhism became static and could not move further beyond central and western parts of India even four hundred years after Buddha's Mahāparinibbāna. Mahāyāna, therefore, was a natural emergence to break the dead-lock and to revive the dynamic spirit lying inherent in Buddhism for the good and welfare of the many.

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to find out the definite reasons for the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism, historical and social background behind its formulation and also to find out the basic differences between Theravāda and Mahāyāna.

III.2. RISING OF MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM

We have mentioned in the previous chapter that Theravāda Buddhism was called Hīnayāna by the Mahāyānists of the First Century A.D. The term "Hīnayāna" is, no doubt, a derogatory appellation given to Theravāda. But in their defence the present-day Mahāyānists argue that the Theravāda was called Hīnayāna due to its conservative

nature. Prof. H. Nakamura¹ explains why "Mahāyāna" is so called in comparison with Hīnayāna:

- (i) Mahāyāna has 'greater' teaching than that of Theravāda.
- (ii) Mahāyāna claims to deliver more people from sufferings, than can be expected in old-style Theravāda.
- (iii) Mahāyāna is superior to Theravāda in its scope.

The approximate time of the emergence of Mahāyāna is the First Century B.C., because the first scripture which used the term "Mahāyāna" in the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā of the First Century B.C. Mr. Masao Shizutani,² however, basing on the epigraphical records, proposes the following dates of the proto-Mahāyāna and Early Mahāyāna:

- Proto-Mahāyāna in its incipient stage: 100 - 1 B.C.
- Proto-Mahāyāna in its developed stage: 1 - 100 A.D.
- Early Mahāyāna in its incipient stage: 50 - 100 A.D.
- Early Mahāyāna in its developed stage: 100-250 A.D.

The Bodhisattva doctrine which is the fundamental doctrine of Mahāyāna is also found in the pre-Mahāyāna

1. Indian Buddhism, Tokyo, 1980, p. 149.

2. The Process of the Origination of Early Buddhism (in Japanese), Kyōto, 1974, p. 274.

literature like the Mahāvastu of the Lokottaravādin Mahāsaṅghikas, which mentions the four caryās of a Bodhisattva;³

- i. Prakṛticaryā — preliminary practice of a Bodhisattva while he is a pṛthagjana (ordinary lay man).
- ii. Pranīdhānacaryā; refers to the Bodhicitta.
- iii. Anulomacaryā — gradual progress made by a Bodhisattva upto the sixth bhūmi.
- iv. Anivartanacaryā --the practice of the last four bhūmis from which a Bodhisattva can never retrocede but must ultimately attain Bodhi.

Some of the Bodhisattva practices and philosophical expressions like śūnyatā, dharmadhātu, dharmakāya, tathātva etc. are also found in the Hīnayāna works like Mahāvastu. So there had already been a Hīnayānic Bodhisattvayāna, which can be called semi-Mahāyāna or Mañāyāna in the making.

While considering the social background of the origin of Mahāyāna, it is generally accepted that there are three reasons for the emergence of Mahāyāna Buddhism, viz., the early literatures on the life of Buddha, the faith for the stūpa-worship and the conservatism in Theravāda Buddhism.

3. Mahāvastu, I. p. 46.

There are many sūtras like Lalitavistara (P'u-yau-ching) and Kuo-chu-hsien-tsai-yin-kuo-ching, etc. depicting the life of Buddha. It is pointed out that the old literature on the life of Buddha is the forerunner of Mahāyāna Buddhism. In those literatures, the ways how he became Buddha and the means how to practice systematically were studied. Buddha's resolutions in previous births, his fulfilling the Pāramitās to become Buddha, his taking birth in the present world, his great renunciation, his preaching the Dharma (Dharma-cakra-pravartana) and his Mahāparinirvāṇa — all were studied. In the Mahāyāna sūtras, many Mahāyāna thoughts are described as they are being told by Buddha himself that one will attain enlightenment, the thought of Bodhisattva, the six stages of practices by which Bodhisattvas are able to attain enlightenment (ṣaṭ pāramitāḥ) and the practice of the ten stages of developing the Buddha-wisdom (daśa-bhūmayāḥ). They are all influenced by the teaching of the early literature on the life of Buddha. But the conception of Bodhisattva changed when Mahāyāna Buddhism emerged. In the literatures on the life of Buddha, a Bodhisattva promises to be a Buddha in his previous births. But in Mahāyāna Buddhism a Bodhisattva is an ordinary man, having no previous resolution for becoming Buddha. But he believes that he has a nature

to be a Buddha. This way of thinking developed the thought that all beings are possessed of the Buddha-nature.

The faith for the stūpa-worship gave much importance to the conception of Buddha (Buddha-vicāra) in Mahāyāna Buddhism and to the salvation of the people by Buddha.⁴ After the demise of the Buddha Śākyamuni, his dead body was cremated by the lay disciples and the relics were buried in the stūpas. These places where they were buried were flourishing as the sacred places by the believers who were longing for Buddha. Thus, the stūpas were built and kept and run by the lay disciples. Much gold, silver and the treasures were donated to the stūpas, the flowers and food were given and the music and the dancing were held. But these activities were prohibited for the bhikṣus and the bhikṣuṇīs who went from home to homelessness. On this point of view, the Buddhist rituals of holding a service to the stūpa were established under the Bhikṣu-saṅgha. The faith for the stūpa was developed among the upāsaka and the upāsikā (lay devotees — male and female). The upāsaka and the upāsikā could not observe the Vinaya. They could not get the wisdom (prajñā) too as they could not afford

4. Hirakawa, Akira, Memoires of the Research Department of the Tōyō Bunko, No. 22, 1960, pp. 57-106.

time to devote to meditation (dhyāna = jhāna). If one wants to escape from the suffering of the existence, there is no other way but to depend on the benevolence (maitrī) and compassion (karuṇā) of Buddha. So they built the stūpas in honour of Buddha and worshipped them. Thus the Buddhist laity too got interest in the Buddha's dhamma. H. Nakamura⁵ has, therefore, rightly observed: "This way of approach was efficient in making headway to spread the religion among common people, and for that purpose there was a need of glorification of Buddhas and of endowing magical character to the religion to cope with reviving Hinduism" after Asoka. The early Mahāyānists too gave considerable importance to the laity. They developed out of groups of religious people who had stūpas as the bases for their activities. They developed into the orders of Bodhisattvas, which consisted of clergy and laity. Their leader were preachers and reciters of the scriptures (dharmabhāṣakas),⁶ and those who practised meditation. Thus early Mahāyāna Buddhism emerged out of the belief and faith in the religious merit. There is, therefore, a close relation between the faith for the stūpa-worship and the origin of the Mahāyāna-sūtras.⁷ The faith for the stūpa-worship is described in many Mahāyāna sūtras.

5. Indian Buddhism, p. 151f.

6. Itō Zuiei, Ōsaki Gakuhō, Nos. 125, 126, pp. 28-46.

7. Hirakawa, Akira, op. cit.

There were some facilities for the pilgrims and the leaders for the worship and for the regular chanting of sūtras around the stūpas. The story of Buddha which was carved around the stūpa was explained. The spirit of the benevolence and compassion (maitrī-karuṇā) of Buddha and the teaching of the salvation of the people were established while those explanations were repeated. The people maintaining the stūpas could manage their life by the donation of the believers to the stūpas. Then the religious Saṅgha which belonged to the Buddhist stūpas was established which was different from the Bhikṣu-saṅgha. They did not accept the ordination (upasampadā) of a bhikṣu; they were homeless ascetics.

It cannot be ignored that some teachings of Theravāda Buddhism have influenced the Mahāyāna Buddhism. We have mentioned earlier that the Mahāvastu of the Lokottaravādin Mahāsaṅghikas of the Madhyadeśa reflects the nucleus of Mahāyānism. Daring docetic speculations concerning Buddha expounded in the Mahāvastu paved the path for the emergence of the Mahāyāna.⁸ The Mahāyānists have accepted the Vinaya of the Hīnayānists. Through a critical search H. Kimura⁹ has come to the conclusion that

8. E.R.E., 'Mahāyāna', 'Docetism'.

9. A Historical Study of the Terms Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna etc. in Journal of the Department of Letters, Calcutta University, Vol. XII, 1925, p. 56.

the seeds of the Mahāyāna are discernible in the Pāli Tipiṭaka. Nāgārjuna himself admits that both the Vehicles (= Yāna) are in accordance with the sayings of Buddha and both lead to Nirvāṇa. Theravāda or Hīnāyana represents the 'manifest' (= vyakta) teaching while the Mahāyāna represents the 'esoteric' (= guhya) teaching of Buddha.¹⁰ Virtues emphasized by the Hīnāyana were inherited by the Mahāyāna. But the Mahāyāna gave much importance to Maitrī and Karuṇā. Conception of the plurality of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas is also noticed in the early Buddhist scriptures. Only difference lies in the fact that the Mahayanists conceived the idea of the Saṃbhogakāya, an ever-present Buddha enjoying now the blissful reward for the services rendered in his Bodhisattva days in the past and preaching in his Buddha-land even at the present time.¹¹ And, as regards the Bodhisattva conception, difference lies in the fact that in the Mahāyāna, Bodhisattvas take over sufferings and afflictions of all beings to themselves, and thus they transfer their own merits to others. From this conception, most probably, the idea of 'transfer of merits' was adopted by the Theravādins in the later times. This Bodhisattvayāna of the Mahāyāna also first appeared in

10. Ibid.

11. Nakamura, H., op. cit., p. 153.

the early Avadāna literature of the Hīnāyāna. It is, therefore, said that the Avadāna literature was the matrix of Mahāyāna-Sūtras.¹² Vasubandhu, therefore, regarded the Hīnāyāna as milk and the Mahāyāna as the cream of milk.¹³ In the words of Dr. Maeda: "The teachings of Śākyamuni are the seeds, those of Hīnāyāna are the branches and leaves, those of Mahāyāna are the blossoms and fruits."¹⁴

The fundamental doctrinal ideas of the Mahāyāna are expounded in the Prajñāpāramitā group of literature. The earliest of these works is the Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā which was composed in the first century B.C.¹⁵ According to this text the Prajñāpāramitā doctrines (i.e. the Mahāyāna) will originate in the South (= Dakṣiṇāpatha), pass to the eastern countries (= Vartanyām), and prosper in the north.¹⁶ So it is clear that the Mahāyāna originated in the south and became a recognised form of Buddhism by the time of Kaṇiṣka (2nd century A.D.). The accounts of the Fourth Buddhist Council of Kaṇiṣka exhibit not only the prominence

12. Yamada, R., NBGN, Vol. 12, p. 11f.

13. Kimura, H., op. cit., p. 61.

14. Quoted by N. Dutt in Aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism and its Relation to Hīnāyāna, London, 1930, p. 58.

15. N. Dutt, op. cit., p. 40.

16. Aṣṭa, (ASB), p. 225.

of the Theravāda, Sarvāstivāda, and the Buddha-bhakti, but also allude to the appearance of the Mahāyāna as contrasted with the Hīnayāna.¹⁷

MAIN FEATURES OF THE MAHĀYĀNA¹⁸

The following features of the Mahāyāna are noticed:

- (i) the doctrine of universal emptiness;
- (ii) the doctrine of the plurality of the Buddhas;
- (iii) the ideal of the most compassionate Bodhisattva;
- (iv) the Pāramitā-cult;
- (v) the worship of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and other gods and goddesses;
- (vi) use of Dhāraṇīs and Mantras for attaining emancipation;
- (vii) adoption of Sanskrit and Mixed Sanskrit for literary purposes;
- (viii) no difference between the clergy and the laity in the development of Bodhicitta;
- (ix) laity came to play an important role in the growth of Buddhist culture.

MAHĀYĀNA -VS- HINDUISM

The growth of Mahāyāna seems to have resulted in

17. Joshi, L.M., Studies in the Buddhistic Culture of India, p. 2.

18. Ibid., p. 5.

a visible approach to Hinduism. The system of Ādi-Buddha, the cult of Avalokiteśvara, the theology of Mañjuśrī and the worship of Tārā remind the readers of the Hindu deities like Viṣṇu, Śiva, Brahmā and Śakti. In the Kāraṇḍavyūha, Avalokiteśvara is extolled just as Kṛṣṇa in the Bhagavadgītā. Dr. L.M. Joshi has rightly remarked:¹⁹ "With the growth of Buddhistic pantheon and worship, the creation of plastic Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, there came the necessity of mantras, stotras and ceremonial ritualism. Thus under the impact of 'Hinduism' the Buddhists transformed their creed to such an extent that the distinction between Buddhism and Brahmanical sects became tenuous. Gradually Buddhism was Hinduised."

III.3. DEVELOPMENT OF MAHĀYĀNA SŪTRAS

A. INTRODUCTION

The biggest complete works of the Buddhist Sūtras are Taishō-Shinshū-Daizō-kyō (The New Complete Works of the Buddhist Sūtras in the Taishō Period, Tokyo, Daizō-Shhuppan, 1924-1934, 100 Vols.). There are 17 Vols. of the Mahāyāna sūtras in it. There are complete works of Tibetan Buddhism. Most of them are the Mahāyāna sūtras and the sūtras of the secret teaching (Mantrayāna) are also large in quantity. These sūtras were written in India originally and there should have existed the Sanskrit sūtras, but the most of them are lost. A few

19. Op. cit., p. 7.

sūtras spread over Nepal and some manuscripts and some fragments are found in Kashmir, Central Asia and Afghanistan.

Generally, the history of the Mahāyāna sūtras is divided into three periods. The first one is from the beginning of the Christian era to the time of Nāgārjuna; the second one is from Nāgārjuna to the time of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, and the third one was after Vasubandhu. The Kushan period in northern India and Sātavāhana in South India cover the first period. During this period many sūtras were produced. The second period falls in the Gupta period and many sūtras were composed. The third period was after Vasubandhu and very few sūtras, except the Secret Teachings of Mantrayāna were written.

B. THE EARLIEST MAHĀYĀNA SŪTRAS

Concerning about the history of the development of Mahāyāna sūtras, many scholars have given their opinions. Here a general statement will be considered with the help of Shoki-Daijō-kyōten-no-Seiritsukatei (The Process of the Early Mahāyāna Sūtras, Kyōto, Hyyakaen, 1974) by Shizutani Masao. In this book, he distinguished the earliest Mahāyāna sūtras from the earlier Mahāyāna sūtras. The reason was that the earliest sūtras did not use the word Mahāyāna, did not preach the thought of emptiness (Śūnya, śūnyatā), did

not criticize the faith for the Stūpas and Therāvada Buddhism. It seems that they were written in the first century A.D. and at least fifty years before the earlier Mahāyāna Sūtras. Here are the Sūtras:

o [Lost Sūtras]

Only the names of the sūtras are left, Rokuharamitsu-kyō, (Ṣat Pāramitāh Sūtra), Dōchi-Daikyō, Sambon-kyō and Bosatsuzō-kyō.

o [Ashukabutsu-kyō (Akṣobhya-buddha Sūtra) and the earliest Wisdom Sūtras (Prajñāpāramitā-ṣūtras)]

In the Wisdom Sūtras (Prajñāpāramitā-Sūtras), since Dōgyō-hannya-kyō (Tao-hsing-pan-jo-ching) which are the oldest surviving translations, many articles about Akṣobhya-buddha are found. It shows that the faith for Akṣobhya-buddha was noticed even before the Wisdom Sūtras (Prajñāpāramitā-ṣūtras) were composed.

The sūtra the theme of which is the faith for Akṣobhya-buddha is Ashukubutsu-kyō (Akṣobhya-buddha-sūtra) which is translated by Lokakṣema. The faith for Akṣobhya-buddha is found in Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra, it has a close relation to the Wisdom Sūtras (Prajñāpāramitā-ṣūtras).

o [Amida-kyō (Sukhāvātī-vyūha sūtra) and Hanju-zammai-kyō (Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra)]

Amida-kyō (Sukhāvātī-vyūha-sūtra) was translated by Chih-ch'ien where the teaching of the Wisdom Sūtras (Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras) and the name of Mahāyāna are not found. There is another old sūtra named Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra concerning the faith for Amitābha-buddha. It is translated by Lokakṣema. The translation of 3 Vols. is older than the translation of 1 Vol. Only Amitābha-Buddha has been described in the translation of 3 Vols.

o [Powerful Samādhi Sūtra (Sūraṅgama-Samādhi-Sūtra) and Monjubosatsu (Mañjuśrī-bodhisattva).]

The word sūraṅgama-samādhi means the existence of Bodhisattva who is the leader of the new Buddhist movement. Mañjuśrī-Bodhisattva is that symbol. Generally, Mañjuśrī is considered to be combined with the Wisdom Sūtra (Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra), but in the earliest Wisdom Sūtras (Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras), he was not mentioned. Of the Sūraṅgama-Samādhi-sūtra, only the translation by Kumārajīva (344-413) is left. But the translation by Lokakṣema is not available.

o [Diamond Sūtra (Vajra-Pāramitā-sūtra).]

It is generally accepted that among the Wisdom Sūtras (Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras), various groups of Sūtras beginning from the Small Wisdom Sūtra were written at

first which were followed by the sūtras like the Diamond Sūtra (Vajra-pāramitā-sūtra) and Monju-hannya-kyō (Saptaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra). But in the Diamond Sūtra (Vajra-pāramitā sūtra), the expression of the teaching and the form of the Sūtra are very simple but the word 'emptiness' (śūnya or śūnyatā) are not found in it.

C. THE EARLIER MAHĀYĀNA SŪTRAS

The striking feature of the earlier Mahāyāna sūtras lies in the fact that they use the term "Mahāyāna", the faith for the sūtras and the existence of the concept of the emptiness (śūnya, śūnyatā). After the establishment of the Wisdom Sūtras (Prajñāpāramitā sūtras), the influence of that teaching became strong and all the Mahāyāna sūtras accepted the doctrine of emptiness (śūnya, śūnyatā). At the same time, the faith for the various Buddhas influenced one another. Among them, the faith for Amitābha Buddha generalized and represented the teaching of the 'Pure Land' of the Buddha. And now, the faith for Avatamsaka-sūtra (Hua-yen-ching) and for the Lotus Sūtra (Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra) expanded rapidly.

o ∟ The Wisdom Sūtras (Prajñāpāramitā sūtras). ²⁰

20. There are many Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras, viz.

i) Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā

ii) Vajracchedikā - Do -

contd ... p.99.

The number of the Wisdom Sūtras (Prajñāpāramitā sūtras) gradually increased. The Great Wisdom Discourse (Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa, Ta-chin-tu-lun) is the commentary on the Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya-sūtra consisting of knowledge of the teaching of the earlier Mahāyāna Buddhism in it. The new point of view about dharma is showed in the Wisdom Sūtras (Prajñāpāramitā) and the position of Mahāyāna Buddhism was established. At the same time, it pulled Buddha-centered Mahāyāna Buddhism back to dharma-centered religion. And they thought much of this point of view about dharma, and it became the main stream of Mahāyāna Buddhism to emphasize the practice for the enlightenment. With the Wisdom-Sūtras (Prajñāpāramitā sūtras), Mañjuśrī-sūtras like the Powerful-samādhi-sūtra (Sūraṅgama-samādhi-sūtra) emphasize the way of Bodhisattva. The Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra is one of them. There is another sūtra which has influenced the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra is the Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra (Ta-pao-chi-ching). The Great Collection Sūtra (Mahā-sannipāta-sūtra, Ta-chi-ching) was most probably composed during the end of earlier Mahāyāna Buddhism.

- iii) Satasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā
- iv) Pañcaviṃśati-śāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā
- v) Daśasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā
- vi) Saptasātikā Prajñāpāramitā
- vii) Adhyārdhaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā
- viii) Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya-sūtra
- ix) Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra

o [The Garland Sūtra (Avataṃsaka sūtra, Hua-yen-ching).]

The original name of the Garland Sūtra (Avataṃsaka sūtra) is Buddha-avataṃsaka-nāma-mahā-vaipulya-sūtra (60 Vols. translated by Buddhahadra, Fo-t'o-pa-t'o-lo). But all the contents do not belong to the earlier Mahāyāna Sūtras. Some partial translations of the Sūtra are available. It is one of the great Mahāyāna Sūtras ranking with the Wisdom Sūtras (Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras). In the Garland Sūtras (Avataṃsaka-sūtra), the ten stages (bhūmi) of developing the Buddha wisdom (daśa-bhūmayah) have been described. The main point of the preaching of the Garland Sūtra (Avataṃsaka-sūtra) is the chapter on the conception of Tathāgata. In the next period, this theory of Tathāgata became the base of the thought of the Tathāgata or Buddha-nature inherent in all sentient beings (tathāgata-garbha). Vairocana-Buddha mentioned in the Avataṃsaka-sūtra is connected with the Buddha who expounded esoteric-Buddhism (Mahāvairocana-tathāgata).

o [Sūtras of the teaching of the 'Pure Land' of a Buddha].

The Buddha of the "Pure Land Sūtra" (Sukhāvātī-vyūha-Sūtra) translated by Saṃghavarman (K'ang-seng-k'ai). Its doctrines are based on the various sects of the teaching of the "Pure Land". The thought of emptiness (Śūnya, Śūnyatā) influenced the doctrines. At the same time,

the beginning of the faith for Amitābha Buddha has become the faith of all the Mahāyāna Buddhists. Amitābha Buddha is not mentioned in the Wisdom Sūtras (Prajñā-pāramitā sūtras) and Avataṃsaka sūtra (Hua-yen-ching). Because the purpose of these sūtras was to establish the way of practice for the bhikṣu and the bhikṣuṇī. But the faith for Amitābha Buddha was accepted in the Lotus Sūtra (Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra) from the early times.

The first translation of the Sukhāvātī-vyūha (O-mi-t'o-ching) was done by Kumārajīva. And it is generally accepted that the sūtra setting forth the meditation on Amida Buddha (Amitāyur-dhyāna-sūtra, Kuan-Wu-liang-shou-ching) has been composed outside of India. There were many faiths in the "Pure Land", like the faith in the immovable Buddha (Akṣobhya-buddha), the faith in the Buddha of Healing (Bhaiṣajya-guru, Bhaiṣajya-guru-vaidūryaprabha-tathāgata) and the faith in the Maitreya Buddha. In China and Japan, the faith in Maitreya Buddha had been popular even before Amitābha Buddha.

o [The Lotus Sūtra (Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra).]

In the Wisdom Sūtras (Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras) and the Garland Sūtra (Avataṃsaka sūtra, Hua-yen-ching), the thoughts of Mahāyāna Buddhism have been emphasized as

the way of bodhisattva. But in the sūtras of the teaching of the Pure Land, the faith in the Buddha has been emphasized. The object of the Lotus Sūtra (Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra) is to emphasize Śākyamuni's passing into Nirvāṇa and the Tathāgata's deification in the Stūpa. The most striking feature of the Lotus Sūtra (Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka-sūtra) is the thought of the one vehicle (ekayāna). On the other hand, the Wisdom Sūtras (Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras) propagated the doctrine of the three vehicles (trīṇi yānāni): Bodhisattva-yāna, Śrāvaka-yāna and Pratyeka-buddha-yāna. The Lotus Sūtra (Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra) has the faith in the sūtras and at the same time, the faith in the stūpa was re-affirmed in it.

Dharmarakṣa (Chu-fa-hu) was active from the end of the 3rd century A.D. to the beginning of 4th century A.D. The main Mahāyāna sūtras were arranged in full by him. And they almost corresponded to the various sūtras quoted in Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa (Ta-chin-tu-lun). Thus, all the materials by which Nāgārjuna established the theory of Mahāyāna Buddhism were arranged by Dharmarakṣa.

D. THE MAHĀYĀNA SŪTRAS OF LATER PERIOD

There are important thoughts, like the thought of Buddha-nature inherent in all sentient beings

(tathāgata-garbha) and the thought of consciousness - only (vijñapti-mātratā) which have not been mentioned in Nāgārjuna's writings. The theories of Asaṅga (310-390) and Vasubandhu (320-400) are based on these thoughts. Therefore, it is considered that the composition of the sūtras concerning these thoughts was done in the period from Nāgārjuna to Vasubandhu, that is, during the Mid-period of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

- o [Sūtra of Buddha-nature inherent in all sentient beings (tathāgata-garbha).]

In this Sūtra it is preached that all sentient beings have Buddha-nature inherent in them (tathāgata-garbha). There are sutras like the "Sūtra of the great demise" (Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta, Ta-pan-nieh-p'anching) translated by Dharmakṣema (383-433), Suvarṇa-prabhāsottama-rāja-sūtra, Śrīmālā-devī-siṃhanāda-sūtra (translated by Guṇabhadra, Ch'in-na-pa-t'o-lo), Aṅgulimāla-sūtra, the "Sūtra on that which neither increase nor decrease" (Pu-tseng-pu-chien-ching) translated by Bodhiruci, "A Two-fascicle sutra" (Wu-shang-i-ching) translated by Chen-li. These sūtras were influenced by the Lotus Sūtra (Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra) and emphasised the thought of one vehicle (ekayāna).

- o [Sūtras of consciousness - only (Vijñapti-mātratā)].

The basic sūtra of the Vijñapti-mātratā doctrine was Samdhinirmocana-sūtra (Chieh-Shen-mi-ching).

As it was partly translated by Guṇabhadra, it seems that it was composed by the end of the 4th century. Other Sūtras are Yogācāra-bhūmi (Yii-ch'ieh-shih-ti-lun) and Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra (Ta-ch'ing-chung-yen-ching-lun). Generally, the sūtras of this period are based on logic and the theory is difficult to understand. The theory to equate Tathāgata-garbha with the store-consciousness (ālaya-vijñāna) or consciousness - only (vijñapti-mātratā) is found in the Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra.

A sixty-fascicle Mahāyāna sūtra collection (Ta-chi-ching) influenced by the thought of Buddha-nature inherent in all sentient beings (tathāgata-garbha) was also composed in the later time. But the number of the production of the Mahāyāna sutras gradually decreased in this period. In stead of them, the sūtras of the secret teaching (Tantra-yāna) were produced. Mahāvairocana sūtra (Ta-jih-ching) was produced in 650 and its theory was considered to be established by Vajraśekhara Sūtra (Chin-kang-ting-ching).

III.4. THE THOUGHT OF EMPTINESS (ŚŪNYA, ŚŪNYATĀ) IN MAHĀYĀNA

It was Nāgārjuna (150-250 A.D.) who laid the foundation of the thought of emptiness (Śūnya, Śūnyatā) philosophically. He came from Southern India and was well-versed in Buddhism and other religious studies.

The Madhyamaka-kārikā (Chung--sung), Dvādaśa-nikāya-śāstra (Shih-erh-men-lun), Śūnyatā-saptati (Kung-chi'-shih-lun), Vigraha-vyāvartanī (Hui-ching-lun), Mahāyāna-gāthā-vimśaka (ta-ching-esh-shih-sung-lun), Ārya-ratnā-valī (Pao-hsing-cheng-wang-lun), Yukti-ṣaṣṭikā-kārikā (Liu-shih-sung-ju-li-lun), Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa (Ta-chih-tu-lun) and Daśabhūmi-vibhāṣā-śāstra (Shih-chu-p'i-p'o-sha-lun) etc., are ascribed to him.

Nāgārjuna criticized the early Buddhist philosophy including the philosophy of Sarvāstivāda in his Mūla-madhyamaka-śāstra. In the real world, all things are in a flux. Therefore, all forms of existence of the world are non-substantial and cannot be described by any conception. All things exist only by the relation of the Law of Dependent Origination. Nāgārjuna called this thought of emptiness (Śūnya, Śūnyatā) to be of Dependent Origination (Pratītya-samutpāda). He regarded it as the real state of all elements and non-self (anātman, nirātman, nairātmya) and the middle path. The school of Nāgārjuna is called Mādhyamika named after his Mūla-madhyamaka-śāstra.

III.5. THEORY OF CONSCIOUSNESS-ONLY IN MAHĀYĀNA — THOUGHT OF BUDDHA-NATURE INHERENT IN ALL SENTIENT BEINGS,

All forms of existence of the world are non-substantial according to the Mādhyamika. But a

systematic explanation of the theory was not given by Nāgārjuna. It was Vijñānavādins who explained it systematically. Vijñānavāda is also called Yogācāra. The theory of consciousness-only (Vijñapti-mātratā) has already been discussed in the Sāṃdhinirmocana-sūtra (Chieh-shen-mi-ching) and Mahāyāna-abhidharma-sūtra (Ta-ch'eng-a-p'i-ta-ma-ching). But the founder of Vijñānavāda was undoubtedly Maitreya-nātha (270-350). He was equated with Maitreya-bodhisattva in the legend of the later time. His works are Yogācāra-bhūmi (Yu-ch'ieh-shih-ti-lun), Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra (Ta-ch'eng-chuang-yen-ching-lun), Madhyāntavibhāga, Abhisamayālaṅkāra and Dharmadharmatāvibhaṅga.

It was Asaṅga (310-390) who was taught by Maitreya-nātha and studied the theory of consciousness-only (Vijñapti-mātratā) systematically. Of his works Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra-śāstra, Mahāyānābhidharma-samuccaya and Mahāyāna-saṅgraha etc. are famous.

Vasubandhu (320-400) is Asaṅga's younger brother. At first he was a follower of Hīnayāna Buddhism. He studied the Mahāvibhāṣā (Ta-p'i-p'o-sha-lun) in Kāśmīra and composed his famous treatise Abhidharma-kośa-śāstra (A-p'i-ta-mo-chu-she-lun) on

the basis of the Kāśmīra-Vaibhāṣika doctrine. He criticized Mahāyāna but was influenced deeply by his elder brother Asaṅga in the later period. He was converted to Mahāyāna by Asaṅga. The Abhidharmakośa-sāstra (A-p'i-ta-mo-chu-shi-lun), Madhyāntavibhāga-sāstra (Pieo-chung-pien-lun), Viṃśatikā-kārikā (Wei-shih-sung), Daśabhūmi-vyākhyāna (Shih-ti-ching-lun), Mahāyāna-saṃgrahabhāṣya (Chi-ta-ch'eng-lun-shih) and Amitāyus-sūtrapadeśa (Wu-liang-shou-ching-yu-p'o-t'i-she), etc. are ascribed to him.

According to the theory of consciousness-only (Vijñapti-mātratā), literally nothing exists in the world (Śūnya-śūnyatā). There must be the causes (bīja) to create the various existences. This cause (bīja) is a mental effect, that is, an aspect of consciousness-only (vijñāna). Its function is to distinguish and know the object. So in the theory of consciousness-only (Vijñapti-mātratā), all the existence in the world appears by an aspect of consciousness (Vijñāna). There are three kinds of consciousness (vijñāna). The first one is ālayavijñāna which consists of various kinds of bīja. The second one is mononāma-vijñānam which has the function to ālayavijñāna. The third one is the six-consciousness (ṣaṭ vijñānāni). If there is any difficulty to recognize that all the existences are void

(Śūnya, śūnyatā), we must have to admit that they are consciousness-only (Vijñapti-mātratā). One who can realise this ultimate truth can acquire wisdom (Prajñā) of the thusness (tathatā), i.e. Prajñāpāramitā.

Some of the Mahāyāna Buddhists are of opinion that the thought of Buddha-nature inherent in all sentient beings (tathāgatagarbha) is similar to the theory of consciousness-only (vijñapti-mātratā). Shinkai Ishibashi of Japan is of opinion that the thought of the Dependent origination from Tathāgatagarbha developed from the combination of the idea of Tathāgata-garbha with that of Ālaya-vijñāna.²¹

III.6. BUDDHISM AFTER VASUBANDHU

After Vasubandhu, the theory of Vijñaptimātratā became flourishing in the field of Indian philosophy. And many scholars appeared and various streams came out of the theory. In India the theory of Vijñaptimātratā originated from Vasubandhu is called Nirākāravādi-Yogācāra.²² It was introduced to China by Paramārtha

21. IBK, Vol. 16, No. I, 1968, pp. 363-366.

22. This term is mentioned in the Tattvaratnāvalī, edited by H. Ui, in Nagoya Daigaku Bungakubu Kenkyū Ronshū, III, 1952, p. 4.

(499-569), which was developed there. On the other hand, the school which recognizes the existence of an aspect of consciousness (Vijñāna) is called Sākāra-vijñānavāda. It was founded by Dignāga (400-480) and developed by Dharmapāla (530-561) and was introduced to China by Hsuan-chuang. From China it came to Japan and became popular in the name of Hossō Sect (Fa-tsang).

The major works of Dignāga are the Nyāyamukha, Ālambana-parīkṣā (Kuan-so-yuan-lun), Pramāṇasamuccaya, Yogāvatāra, Hastavālaprakaraṇa, Prajñāpāramitā-piṇḍārtha-saṃgraha, Trikālaparīkṣā, Hetucakranirṇaya, etc. The thought of Dignāga thoroughly revised and spread by Dharmakīrti. His major works are Nyāyabindu, Pramāṇavārttika, Pramāṇaviniścaya, Hetubindu, Saṃbandhaparīkṣā, and Santānāntarasiddhi, etc.

Sthiramati (470-550) appeared at the same time of Dignāga. His works are Abhidharmasamuccaya-vyākhyā, and commentaries on "Triṃśikā", "Madhyāntavibhāgaśāstra", "Abhidharmakośa", and "Madhyamakārikā". Two of the important scholars who took the theory of Nirākāravādi-Yogācāra were Śāntiraksita (or Śāntarakṣita) (680-740) who composed the Great treatise like the voluminous Tattva-saṃgraha and Kamalaśīla (700-750) his disciple, commented on it. In the school of Mādhyamika, Buddhapālita (470-540) was confronted with

Bhavya (490-570) and each of them founded separate schools like Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika.

III.7. THE SECRET TEACHING (= Tantric Buddhism)

Nalanda became the great centre of secret teaching in the 8th century. Both the schools of Mādhyamika and of Vijñānavādin were gradually overshadowed by the secret teaching.

Dhāraṇī and Mantra were incorporated in the Mahāyāna sūtras and the secret teaching introduced by Mahāvairocana-tathāgata gradually had a firm footing. This was named as Mantrayāna. There are many sūtras of the secret teaching, which can be divided into four groups. They are Kriyā-tantra, Caryā-tantra, Yoga-tantra and Anuttara-yoga-tantra. There are Bhaisajya-guru-sūtra, Suvarṇaprabhāsottama-rāja-sūtra and Mahāmāyurī sūtra in Kriyā-tantra. There are Mahāvairocana sūtra etc. in Caryā-tantra, Tattva-saṅgraha and Prajñāpāramitānayaṣaṅkaśatikā sūtra in Yoga-tantra. There are Kālacakratantra. Saṁvarodaya-tantra, Hevajratantra and Guhyasamāja etc. in Anuttarayoga-tantra.

The secret teaching was flourishing in middle India under the protection of the Pala rulers.

The thought of nothingness (Śūnya, śūnyatā) of Mādhyamika and the theory of Vijñapti-mātratā of the Vijñānavāda were also accepted to the secret teaching. On the basis of these thoughts they should practice Yoga. For that purpose they introduced some Mudrā, chanting of Mantras and meditating on various Buddhas and gods in front of the maṇḍala. The maṇḍala is the symbolized Bodhicitta, which is to be meditated for the purpose of being fused.

Of the Mahāyāna Texts mentioned above, the following nine Texts are called Navadharmā or nine sacred texts famous and worshipped in Nepal. They are: Lalitavistara, Samādhirājasūtra, Laṅkāvatāra, Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā, Gaṇḍavyūha, Saddharmapundarīka, Daśabhūmika, Suvarṇaprabhāsa and Tathāgataguhyaka. They are also called Vaipulya-sūtras (i.e. extensive and glorious sūtras).

III.8. CONCLUSION

From the discussions we come to the following conclusions:

Theravāda Buddhism had a specialized teaching which was good for the intellectual people and therefore it was not practical for all. As a result

Theravāda Buddhism did not meet the needs of the time. So Mahāyāna Buddhism was emerged to try to get back the spirit of Buddha. Here is given the basic differences between Theravāda Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism.

A. DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES:

1) The purpose of Theravāda Buddhism is to get the enlightenment by oneself and enter into Nirvāṇa. But on the other hand, Mahāyāna Buddhism, preached that their Bodhisattva will be enlightened, but will not enter into Nirvāṇa until and unless the last being of the world does not get liberated.

2) In Theravāda Buddhism, the monks usually become hermits and spend a life of seclusion being totally absorbed in meditation. But in Mahāyāna they are wandering monks and active to help the people. And their desire for the enlightenment and the establishment of the new happy world gave the idea of the "Pure Land" (Sukhāvātī).

3) The cause of the sufferings is desire in both Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism. But in Theravāda Buddhism they took the conservative life to avoid the sufferings. On the other hand in Mahāyāna, they recognized the desire normally and religiously. They faced the sufferings as the reality.

4) In Theravāda Buddhism they recognized the existences which corrupt our minds. But in Mahāyāna they believe in the theory that all the existences are dependent in our minds only. That is to say, they are of opinion that once they are possessed with the Buddha-nature (Buddhatā) and the illusion and passions (Kleśa, kilesa) are in their minds only. According to them all the phenomena in the world are nothing but the symbol of delusions and nothingness (Śūnya, śūnyatā).

5) The Theravāda is static and suitable for a particular time only, but the Mahāyāna is dynamic and suitable to all ages to come.

6) In the Theravāda worldly happiness is discouraged having a pessimistic outlook in view, whereas in the Mahāyāna, happiness is always encouraged with a optimistic outlook. Not only that, in Mahāyāna, people are inspired to long for enjoying the utmost happiness being born in the "Pure Land" of the Buddha.

B. PHILOSOPHICAL DIFFERENCES:

Philosophically the difference between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna centres round the conception of the highest Truth. According to the Hīnayānists, the highest Truth is Pudgalaśūnyatā only, while according to the Mahāyānists,

it is both Pudgalaśūnyatā and Dharmaśūnyatā. There is also difference between the schools as regards the stages of progress. The Hīnayānists recognise four stages called Sotāpatti, Sakadāgāmi, Anāgāmi, Arahatta (the last stage attained by the Buddhas also). But the Mahāyānists recognize ten stages (= bhūmis) (twelve stages according to Bodhisattvabhūmi) of progress through which a Bodhisattva passes and ultimately becomes a Buddha. But according to the Daśabhūmika-sūtra (Chapter IV), through the practice of the first six bhūmis a Bodhisattva realises Pudgalaśūnyatā, the Truth as conceived by the Hīnayānists, while the last four bhūmis lead to the Dharmaśūnyatā, the highest Truth conceived by the Mahāyānists. Thus Pudgalaśūnyatā corresponds to the four stages (Sotāpatti etc.) of the Hīnayānists. But the second stage, i.e. Dharmaśūnyatā lies beyond their reach, as they do not also admit such a stage. This is one of the vital points by which the Mahāyānists claim their superiority to the Hīnayānists. Dr. N. Dutt is of opinion that the description of the first six bhūmis of the Mahāyānists is simply a Sanskritised form of the Pali passages, which deal with the stages of sanctification.²³ Hence the real addition of the Mahāyānists is the last four bhūmis, viz. Dūraṅgamā, Acalā, Sādhumatī and Dharmameghā.

23. N. Dutt, op. cit., p. 239,

The Saddharma-Pundarīka points out difference between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna as regards the comprehension of Truths. According to the Hīnayānists, a being, comprehending the Āryasatyas and the Pratītyasamutpāda, attains Nirvāṇa, i.e. passes from saṃsāra to nirvāṇa, from a laukika to lokottara state. But according to the Mahāyānists, a being, by comprehending the fact that there is no difference between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, that the world has only a relative existence (pratītyasamutpanna) and that it is unreal but appears real to a deluded mind, realises the true Nirvāṇa, which is nothing but the Śūnyatā or Tathatā. According to the Mahāyānists, the Āryasatyas and the Pratītyasamutpāda are unreal, but these are also necessary for the deluded beings to comprehend the Pudgalaśūnyatā through them. "In consonance with their conception of the Reality, the Mahāyānists held that Buddha had two forms of teaching, conventional (= saṃvṛti) and transcendental (= paramārtha), and that whatever he said about the Āryasatyas or Pratītyasamutpāda were conventional, his real teaching being Śūnyatā or Tathatā, which could not be imparted by one to another and could be realised only within one's own self."

Special characteristics
of Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna
(comparison and Contrast)

<u>M A H Ā Y Ā N A</u>		<u>H Ī N A Y Ā N A</u>
1. The conception of the Bodhisattva	↔	1. The conception of the Bodhisattva
2. The practice of the Pāramitās	↔	2. The practice of the Pāramitās
3. The development of Bodhicitta	↔	3. The development of Bodhicitta
4. The goal of Buddhahood	↔	4. The goal of Buddhahood
5. The conception of <u>Trikāya</u> (Rūpakāya, Dharmakāya, Sambhogakāya)	—	5. The conception of <u>Dvikāya</u> (Rūpakāya and Dharmakāya).
6. The ten <u>Bhūmis</u> of spiritual development)	—	6. The six <u>bhūmis</u> of spiritual development
7. The conception of <u>Dharmaśūnyatā</u> or Tathatā.	—	7. The conception of <u>Pudagala śūnyatā</u> .
