

A Textual Study of the Anityatā Parivarta in the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*

The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* is neither like the *Prajñāpāramitā*, a simply negative exposition of the Mahāyāna concept of śūnyatā, nor like the *Avataṃsaka*, a sūtra full of literary symbolization of Mahāyāna ideas, but is something like rather disorderly arranged memorandums containing various doctrines. As readers will see in reading the following translation of the Anityatā Parivarta, the third chapter of the Sanskrit text of the *Sūtra*, it takes up, though unsystematically, a number of problems of Mahāyāna doctrine (and of the other Indian philosophical systems as well) such as śūnyatā, vijñānamātratā, buddhakāya, nirvāṇa, etc. In short, it is an incompact summary of Mahāyāna thought.

The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* is preserved in three Chinese translations of the *Sung*, *Wei* and *T'ang* periods, all of which are of rather simple style and not easy to understand. Even the *T'ang* version, more readable than the other two, proves to be, when considered in comparison with the Sanskrit original text, not an exact but rough translation. The Tibetan translation, on the contrary, is well accordant with the Sanskrit text and proved much helpful for the present author's translation work. Moreover, in Tibetan Tripiṭaka is kept a commentary to the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* by Jñānaśrībhadrā, which is, though mixed with later elements and not necessarily regarded as an excellent work, also very useful for correct understanding of the text. Both the Tibetan version and Jñānaśrībhadrā's commentary are especially serviceable to point out errata in the Sanskrit text, and such a text-critical procedure is, the present author thinks, still necessary for the study of such a text as the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. As a matter of the fact, with the help of the above-mentioned two texts, the present translation has attained, the author believes, more readableness and accuracy than any others hitherto published. Hence his unique contribution, notwithstanding an excellent English translation by the late Dr. D. T. Suzuki.

Kōsai Yasui