

A Study of the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra*

—With special reference to the *Bodhyadhikāra* Chapter, vv. 1-37—

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The *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra* (MSA) is one of the important commentaries expounding early Vijñānavāda thought. The Chapter on Enlightenment (*Bodhyadhikāra*) comes first in importance of all chapters. As Li Po-yao testifies in the preface to the Chinese version, it is the “most subtle,” an evaluation which derives from the fact that its passages abound in skilful use of metaphor and literary expression, and which touch upon such key notions as Buddhahood (*buddhatva*).

For the present paper, the main reference works relied upon were: (1) S. Lévi, ed., *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra* (Paris, 1907), with reference to Lévi’s amendments of 1911; (2) G. Nagao, *Index to the Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra* (Tokyo, 1958), to which cross-reference was made to further ensure the critical interpretation of the *Bodhyadhikāra* section; (3) Bagchi, ed., *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra of Asaṅga* (Darbhanga, 1970); and (4) MSS A and B discovered by the Ōtani Expedition, which are now kept in the Ryukoku University Library.

The treatment of the topic is as follows: (1) authorship of MSA is discussed, after which vv. 1-37 comprising *Bodhyadhikāra* are dealt with thematically; (2) vv. 1-11, *Buddhatva*; (3) vv. 12-17, Tathāgata’s *āśraya-paravṛtti/parivṛtti*; (4) vv. 18-21, “The Buddha’s work which is both *anābhoga* and *apratiprasābdha*”; and (5) in dealing with the topic of

Anāsravadhātugambhīrya, the themes of: (a) *lakṣaṇa-gāmbhīrya*, vv. 22-25; (b) *sthāna-gambhīrya*, v. 26; (c) *karma-gambhīrya*, vv. 27-35; (d) *buddhāṇām gāmbhīrya*, comprised of *gāmbhīryas*, *lakṣaṇa-sthāna* and *karma*, v. 37; and (e) *tathatā* and *tathāgata-garbha* in v. 37.

With regard to the authorship of MSA, it has been proposed that the verse portions are by Maitreya or Asaṅga, while the prose portions are those of Vasubandhu or Asaṅga. On the assumption that the authors differ for the prose portions of the MSA and for the *Viṃśatikā* and *Trīṃśikā*, I present some sources in consideration of this matter.

In this connection, discussion is given to the problem of how to regard the fact that the original term “*daśavidhavikalpa*”--which appears in Asaṅga’s MSA, *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, and *Mahāyānasamgraha*--are not identical with one another. The authorship of MSA, at any rate, remains a matter of great importance which needs to be resolved.