

NĀGĀRJUNA'S PHILOSOPHY, AS PRESENTED IN THE MAHĀPRAJÑĀ-PĀRAMITĀ-ŚĀSTRA. By K. Venkata Ramanan. Published for the Harvard-Yenching Institute by Charles E. Tuttle Company Inc. Rutland, Vermont—Tokyo, Japan, 1966, 409 pp.

With regard to the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra* 大智度論¹ (hereafter to be called simply *Śāstra*), only Kumārajīva's Chinese translation has been transmitted up to the present day. Neither the Sanskrit original nor the Tibetan translation of that text is now extant. The Chinese translation shows it to be a voluminous work made up of 100 *chūan*, 卷 or chapters. The importance of this *Śāstra* has widely been acknowledged, but studies on it have been considerably delayed. This is true in Chinese and Japanese academic circles, where there are a number of scholars well versed in the Chinese versions of the Buddhist Canons. Therefore it is no wonder that among foreign scholars there have been very few who have ever taken this *Śāstra* under study. As an exception, Professor É. Lamotte once attempted a French translation of the *Śāstra*—with exhaustive foot-notes—and published the result² in two volumes, thereby contributing a great deal to the study of this *Śāstra* as well as to the study of Nāgārjuna, Mādhyamika, and Mahāyāna Buddhism in general. His translation, however, deals only with Chapters I-XVIII³ which comprise but about a fifth of the whole, and the publication of the remainder has now stopped for about twenty years. The present reviewer has contributed a number of articles on various items in the *Śāstra* to the *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* and other journals in Japanese, but they have been fragmentary in nature. In 1963 I presented to the University of Munich a dissertation entitled *Studien zum Mahāprajñā-pāramitā (spadeśa) śāstra* which was recently published (Hokuseido, Tokyo, 1968). Under such circumstances the author, Dr. Krishniah Venkata Ramanan, after twenty years of devoted study on the *Śāstra* during which he visited and stayed in China, Japan, India and the United States, succeeded in commanding a general view of the *Śāstra* and in clarifying its fundamental philosophy. It is indeed a matter for heart-felt congratulation that his great accomplishment has now been published.

The *Śāstra* is originally made up of a number of subjects; so extensive are its contents that it has often been called a dictionary of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Anyone attempting overall research into this *Śāstra* from a philological standpoint must—as is witnessed in Prof. Lamotte's work—be prepared to include glosses and annotations that will inevitably amount to several times the volume of the original text. Unlike dictionaries in modern times, there appear in the *Śāstra* explications of many items, not only at one place in complete form, but at a number of places, often with different modes of explication.⁴ This is because the discus-

¹ *Taisō Tripitaka*, XXV, No. 1509.

² *Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse*, 1944, 1949.

³ *Taisō Tripitaka*, XXV, 57a-197b.

⁴ *Index to Taisō Tripitaka* 大正新修大藏經索引 XIII, Section of Mādhyamika, and Commentary-Śūtra-Śāstra 中觀・般若論部, Tokyo, 1965.

sion in the *Śāstra* is ordinarily made in the form of question and answer, where answer is made according to the mode of questioning. It is for this reason that incomplete publication is nearly fatal for a study of this *Śāstra*.⁵

This book, as the author himself remarks, "is a philosophical study intended to give as far as possible an objective and complete picture of the Mādhyamika philosophy as it can be gathered from the whole of this text (*Śāstra*)." (p. 13). It can be said that regarding this intention the present book succeeds in attaining remarkable results. The author says: "The *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (abbr. *Kārikā*)," the most important of Nāgārjuna's works, "is all too abstract and (is) overwhelmingly negative in emphasis and character." (p. 16). From this the author proceeds one step further and says: "In the light of the *Śāstra*, the *Kārikā* takes its proper place and bears out its function in the total system of the philosophy of *prajñā-pāramitā*." (p. 46). The total system of Nāgārjuna's philosophy, as the author calls it, is thus clarified by him in this book, especially beginning in Chapter II.

According to the author, "Chapters II-VI deal with problems concerning concepts, knowledge, ignorance and with certain questions regarding the critical examination of categories. Chapters VII-IX deal with the actual critical examination, bearing out its import, with the roots of the life of conflict and suffering, and with the right understanding which leads to realization of the highest truth. Chapter X-XI deal with the cultivation of the Way which leads to consummation . . . The factors of the Way are the various stages and elements in the course of deepening and widening one's comprehension through the two phases: *prajñā* and *punya*. It is to an exposition of this deeper implication of wayfaring that Chapters X-XI are devoted. Throughout it is the skilfulness of non-clinging which springs from the proper understanding of things that is the pervading spirit of the philosophy of the Middle Way." (p. 18). The expositions on the above-mentioned themes form the main body of this book, where a number of passages are quoted from the *Śāstra* in English translation, with meticulous and detailed explanations supported by extensive footnotes. His quotations, English translations, explications and footnotes are not only correct but appropriate. Accordingly, with regard to his intention and treatment of the theme, the contents of the *Śāstra* and the thought in general have been adequately and deeply appreciated by the author for the benefit of the readers's understanding. Indeed, the contribution offered by this book must be said to be monumental.

The author seems inclined to apply a rather monistic interpretation to the general philosophy of the *Śāstra*, almost invariably under the notion of the Middle Way. It may be for this reason that in spite of the difference of titles of Chapters II-XI, what he discusses in these Chapters are without exception reduced to similar conclusions. Indeed in the original *Śāstra* (*Pañcaviṃśatisāvarikā Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*) repetition of the same expression often tires the reader, but as far as the *Śāstra* is concerned, the discussion is more often conducted from a

⁵ When Prof. Lamotte, in his epoch-making *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien*, referred to the *Śāstra*, he often quoted more unpublished passages than those contained in his above-mentioned French translation.

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pluralistic standpoint, so that there seems to be no special need of concentrating upon a single philosophical standpoint. For the more the author pursues this emphasis, the more frequently he is obliged to repeat such opposites as mundane-ultimate, conditioned-unconditioned, etc.

In Chapter I (Introduction) the author, without touching upon the problem of the authorship of the *Śāstra*, accepts its traditional attribution to Nāgārjuna, and makes "a short historical account of the broad lines of Buddhist philosophy." In Section I of the same chapter the "Life of Nāgārjuna" is introduced: his biography is described with the use of all philological and archaeological sources, and the author remarks: "—it could perhaps be taken as a highly probable working hypothesis that the upper and the lower limits of the philosophical activity of Nāgārjuna lay somewhere between 50 A. D. and 120 A. D." (p. 30). These dates are about one hundred years earlier than those presented by almost all preceding scholars including Winternitz, Radhakrishnan, Lamotte, and Nakamura. A question may be asked: What is the ground for the author's total neglect of past views? With the author's calculation, there seems to be much room for conflicts and incongruities when we consider Abhidharma Buddhism as well as the Sāṃkhya, Vaiśeṣika, Nyāya doctrines to which Nāgārjuna refers.

Chapter I, Section IV. Nāgārjuna and the Buddhist schools form in the history of thought a short but very precious history. In the present work the author often makes use of his previously published English translation of the *Sāmmitiya Nikāya Śāstra*,⁶ one of the comparatively rare Abhidharma-śāstra. He quotes a number of times from the *I-pu-tsung-lun-lun* 異部宗輪論, which is probably the most complete record of the history of the bifurcation of Buddhist schools. There has not appeared in English any detailed description of the thought of the various Buddhist schools similar to the present work since the appearance of N. Dutt's *Aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism and its Relation to Hinayāna* in 1930, and in this respect the present work is indeed invaluable. It has been desirable at the same time, however, that each material or each text should have been in some way or other discussed in terms of philology. For example, since the *I-pu-tsung-lun-lun* criticizes the other Buddhist schools, judging them to be far removed from the authentic doctrine or from the standpoint of Sarvāstivādins after the latter was established, the discussion of this book must be made critically as an historical source in the light of history. Incidentally the *I-pu-tsung-lun-lun* is referred to in this book simply as *Vasumitra's Treatise* or *Masuda*.⁷ These appellations are apt to confuse those readers who are not familiar with the subject. All these different appellations of the same book, as well as the numerous books appearing in footnotes, might have been exhaustively collected in the Bibliography. Though small in number, inconsistency of names [such as H'uei Chi (p. 63) and Kwei-chi (p. 64) for 龜基] is seen.

Throughout the volume, the English translation of the quotations from the *Śāstra* is

⁶ *Vitrabbarati Annals* V.

⁷ J. Masuda: *Origin and Doctrine of Early Indian Buddhist Schools. A Translation of the Hsuan-tsang Version of Vasumitra's Treatise*, 1925.

proper and excellent. As the author says, "the translation is at times somewhat free." (p. 18). For instance, 菩薩入念佛三昧 is translated as "The bodhisattva meditating on the Buddha" (p. 71). And a translation such as the following is rather hard to understand: "The real nature is that which one finds to be their ultimate nature after an examination of (every one of) these specific natures. This ultimate nature is that which cannot be seized, that which cannot be denied. . ." (p. 255). There is an inconsistency of meaning between the above two sentences. Since the original text runs thus: 實相者於各各相中分別求實不可得不可破 the following English translation would be more suitable: "The real nature is that which, while one seeks (what is to be) their ultimate (or real) nature after an examination of (every one of) these specific natures, cannot be seized, nor denied. . ." This should, at the same time, make the understanding of the English translation much easier. Generally speaking, there are very few passages in the *Sūtra* in which the meanings of the original Chinese are incomprehensible, and therefore if one finds awkwardness or incongruity in the English translation it is most probable that it is due to incorrect understanding of the original Chinese.

The author always holds to a philosophical attitude in translating into English. For instance, when he makes mention of "nine *tatbatā* 如" (p. 257), he refers to "ten *tatbatā*" appearing in the *Saddharmapundarika-sūtra* in Note 7 (p. 367 f.). Indeed, this is quite appropriate; but, holding to this attitude, he should have referred to the same sentence with the same idea appearing in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* or *Dalabbūmika-sūtra*, where he introduced the English translation of 三界所有皆心所作 on p. 71; to the points of agreement between the *Sūtra* and the Abhidharma as to the "phases in the cycle of life" (p. 245-247) mentioned in Ch. VIII; and especially to the existence of the same expression in the *Kośa* as to the translation of the passages of the *Sūtra* 100 b. (p. 247) in the footnote.

The phrase 諸法實相 often appears in the *Sūtra*. This is a very important idea in Chinese Buddhism, especially in T'ien-tai philosophy. In this book, it is translated as "the universal reality," (p. 271) without its Sanskrit original. When we examine examples of Kumārajīva's translation in the light of the *Kārikā* and the like, we find that the original term for 諸法實相 is either *dharmatā* or *satyaśya lakṣaṇa*, and is identical with 法性 which frequently appears in this book.

A few words about "*pāramitā*." The implication of this term in original Sanskrit is, as the author says, "perfection.": (*parama, pāramī* → *pāramitā*). Yet Kumārajīva changed it to 度, as is seen in the title of this *Sūtra*, and always used such translations as 到彼岸 and 度彼岸 throughout the *Sūtra*.⁸ That is to say, he understood the term as *param + i + tā*. Although this etymology may be termed, as Lamotte says,⁹ "*purement fantaisiste*," the fact remains that it has consistently been adopted and used throughout the history of Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism. It must be remembered at the same time that the Chinese term 度 in no way carries the implication of "perfection." It follows, therefore, that when we deal with

⁸ *Taiśhī Tripitaka*, 145 a-c, 174 c, 190 a, 191 a, 465 c, 466 b, 647 a, 650 a-b, 99 a.

⁹ P. 1058, n. 2.

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Mahāyāna Buddhism, Chinese and Tibetan, rather than Sanskrit Buddhism, the above-mentioned facts might be neglected altogether.

The criticisms noted above should by no means detract from the vital significance and invaluable merit of this book. Its contents show a remarkably high standard, and as stated above, it is undoubtedly a great contribution to the studies in this field. Its copious and detailed notes supplementary to the main content are indeed a wondrous accomplishment in themselves, and the index at the end could almost serve as a kind of dictionary of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Our hearty appreciation is due to the author's great and original contributions.

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ZEN PAINTING. By Yasuichi Awakawa, translated by John Bester. Kodansha International Ltd., 1970, 184 pp.

The present work covers a chronological period extending from the tenth century Chinese forerunner Shih K'o to the Japanese priest Nantenbō, who died in 1925. The great majority of the paintings reproduced are Japanese works from the 15th through the 19th centuries. The Chinese painters represented include Liang K'ai, Yū Chien, Mu Ch'i, Chih Weng and Yin-t'o-lo, whose paintings are to be found in greatest numbers in Japanese, mostly temple, collections. We may assume that there, since the Kamakura Period, they have been hung, admired, studied and sometimes copied, and that they, perhaps more than any other external factor, were instrumental in shaping the subsequent tradition of Zen painting in Japan.

It is regrettable this style of painting is not better known in the West. Works in western languages have been few; exceptions being Dr. Suzuki's various pamphlets on Sengai, and Kurt Brasch's book *Hakuin und die Zen-Malerrei*, none of which are easily obtainable at present. Of course, for the Japanese, who possess a great many of the treasures of Zen painting, it is a natural subject for study, and there is an abundance of material, much of it quite new.

For western students of Buddhism and of Oriental art, Dr. Awakawa's book is valuable if only because it makes available a selection of reproductions of Zen paintings which, with the exception of the Chinese examples, have largely been accessible only in Japanese language editions. The contribution of the text is more difficult to assess. It is not an introduction to the subject as one might have expected in such a book, but a series of short, informative essays, each reflecting the author's wide knowledge of Zen painting. They should on the whole be very useful in aiding the reader to arrive at some measure of understanding regarding this intriguing genre of Buddhist art. This is indeed a hard task, for, as Dr. Awakawa writes: "... critics are ordinarily accustomed to using their impressions of an artist's work as their means of appraising the man. With Zenga, however, such appraisals must take into account the Zen content of the work, and the critic's insight in this case is contingent on his degree of Zen experience." This is the crucial point for one