

# Buddha-nature as the Principle of Discrimination

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The theory of Buddha-nature (buddha-dhātu), or Tathāgatagarbha thought, is commonly regarded as the thought of “equality.” For example, the famous statement “all sentient beings possess Buddha-nature” in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* is generally considered to be Buddhist declaration of “equality.” But, in my opinion, Tathāgatagarbha thought has functioned, in reality, as a principle of social discrimination, because its theoretical structure, dhātu-vāda (locus-theory), is inevitably discriminatory.

What then is the dhātu-vāda?<sup>(1)</sup> And why is it considered to be the theoretical ground for producing social discrimination?

## Tathāgatagarbha Thought and dhātu-vāda

It is merely my hypothesis to understand that the essential structure of Tathāgatagarbha thought is dhātu-vāda, neologism by myself. I admit that the hypothesis itself is problematic and needs careful investigations. However, because my interpretation that Tathāgatagarbha thought is theoretically discriminatory depends on my hypothesis concerning the dhātu-vāda, I would like to explain it.

It is well known that there are many sutras which advocate Tathāgatagarbha thought. For example we can name such sutras as *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra*, *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, *Śrīmālāsūtra*, *Amūnatvāpūrṇatvanirdeśasūtra* and *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*. Among them, it goes without saying that the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra* was the first sutra which employed the term “tathāgata-garbha” (storehouse of tathāgata)<sup>(2)</sup>.

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However this fact does not enable us to consider that Tathāgatagarbha thought began with the sutra, which Takasaki Jikido considers to be compiled at the middle of the third century A. D., because, I think, we cannot reach correct understanding of Tathāgatagarbha thought if we consider that the thought is solely found in the texts which employed the term “tathāgatagarbha”.

For example, Takasaki has pointed out that the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra* was under the influence of the *Tathāgatotpattisambhavanirdeśasūtra*<sup>(3)</sup>. Moreover it is generally admitted that the theory of “mind luminous by nature” (prakṛtiprabhāsvaraṃ cittam) is one of the origins of Tathāgatagarbha thought<sup>(4)</sup>.

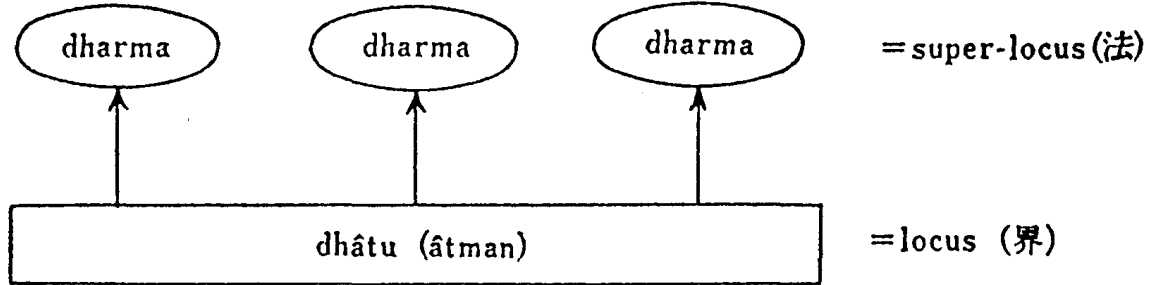
For my part, I would like to recognize the first evident trace of Tathāgatagarbha thought in the famous passage of the Saṃyuttanikāya<sup>(5)</sup> as follows:

What is Dependent-arising (paṭiccasamuppāda)? There is age-death from birth as the cause (paccaya). That locus is really fixed (ṭhitā va sā dhātu), whether Tathāgatas are born [in this world] or not. To this, Tathāgata has awakened. (SN, II, p. 25)

Therefore, we can assume that Tathāgatagarbha thought has a long history prior to the compilation of the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra*. And of course we must mention, as the treatises advocating the thought, the *Ratnagotravibhāga* and, in my opinion, the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, which is generally regarded as a work of the Yogācāras. Moreover, we have good reason to add, to the list of the texts above mentioned, the *Awakening of Faith*, the Chinese apocryphal treatise, which has been an extremely influential text in East Asian Buddhism as the main source of the so-called Original Enlightenment thought<sup>(6)</sup>.

Thus it seems evident that there are varieties of expressions of Tathāgatagarbha thought according to the varieties of the texts. So what is most important is to understand or to grasp the fundamental theoretical structure of the thought in question, not puzzled by the varieties of its expressions.

What then is the fundamental structure of Tathāgatagarbha thought? As stated above, I consider it to be dhātu-vāda. The structure of dhātu-vāda can be shown by the following chart<sup>(7)</sup>.



As is shown by this chart, everything is divided into two: the “locus” (L) existing beneath and the “super-locus” (S) located above. Here the term “dhātu”, a derivative from the verbal root “dhā” (to place) is interpreted as meaning “the place or locus on which something (S) is placed” and the word “dharma”, a derivative from “dhṛ” (to support), is considered to mean “what is supported by something (L).”

Thus the characteristic features of dhātu-vāda are as follows:

- (1) L is the basis or locus for S.
- (2) L produces S. [L is the cause (hetu) of S.]
- (3) L is one, S are many.
- (4) L is real (existent), and S are not real (non-existent).
- (5) L is the essence (ātman) of S.
- (6) Although S are not ultimately real, they have reality to some extent or have reality as their ground, because they are produced from L and have L as their essence.

To give further explanations of this hypothesis, among the six points stated above, Point (1) is the most crucial one which determines the structure of dhātu-vāda itself. Concerning Point (5), I consider that “L” is stated to be “ātman” in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*<sup>(8)</sup> and the *Śrīmālāsūtra*<sup>(9)</sup>, because both sutras admit the existence of “ātman”, “nitya”, “sukha”, and “śubha”<sup>(10)</sup>.

As for Point (6), it functions as the theoretical principle for supporting

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“fixation of difference” or “discrimination.” Here we can find the logical ground for Yogācāra theory of “difference of gotras” and perhaps also for the caste system of Hinduism. But I would like to discuss the problem of discrimination much later. What we should do in the first place is to examine the validity of the hypothesis of dhātu-vāda.

As stated above, Point (1) of the hypothesis is crucial. Then, in the Tathāgatagarbha texts, are there any passages which admit the existence of the “locus”? First, in the *Tathāgatotpattisambhavanirdeśasūtra* (Peking ed. No. 761), it is stated as follows:

As space (ākāśa) does not depend on [anything], although all actions (kriyā), depending on space, are established differently (rnam par dgod pa, vyavasthāpyate), so the cognition of Tathāgata (tathāgata-jñāna) does not depend on [anything], although all cognitions, mundane and super-mundane, depending on the cognition of Tathāgata, are established differently. (Śi, 111 a 8-111 b 1).

Here the cognition of Tathāgata, compared to space<sup>(11)</sup>, is the “locus” on which are located all cognitions as “super-loci.” The sentence “the cognition does not depend on [anything]” does not mean that the cognition is an unstable locus, but that the cognition is the final and sole locus of all things, which itself has no locus (basis) at all. So Point (1) of the dhātu-vāda hypothesis is clearly found in the passage above.

Likewise, in the *Śrīmālāsūtra* (Peking ed. No. 760), there is the following passage<sup>(12)</sup>:

As seeds (bija) of every kind, grasses (tṛṇa), trees (gulma), medicinal herbs (oṣadhi) and forest-trees (vanaspati), all of them, depending on the earth (mahāpṛthivī) and located on the earth, arise, grow, and flourish, so the vehicles (yāna) of Śrāvakas and Pratyeka-buddhas, and the good properties, mundane and super-mundane, all of them, depending on the great vehicle (mahāyāna) and located on the great vehicle, arise, grow, and flourish. (Hi, 267 b 5-7).

Here the “locus” is the great vehicle compared to the earth. Moreover,

in the *Jñānālokālaṃkārasūtra* (Peking ed. No. 768), which is considered by Takasaki<sup>(13)</sup> to be composed under the influence of the *Tathāgatotpattisambhavanirdeśasūtra*, “tathatā” and “dharma-dhātu” are called “pada” [gshi] (kha, 321 b 8). Here it is doubtless that the term “pada” means the “locus.”<sup>(14)</sup>

Thus it seems reasonable to state that the theory of the “locus” is generally found in the Tathāgatagarbha texts. It is also admitted by Takasaki<sup>(15)</sup> that the following passages in the *Awakening of Faith* (Taisho, No. 1666) correspond in content with the structure of dhātu-vāda:

There is the mind with birth and destruction, depending on “tathāgata-garbha.” (32, 576 b 8)

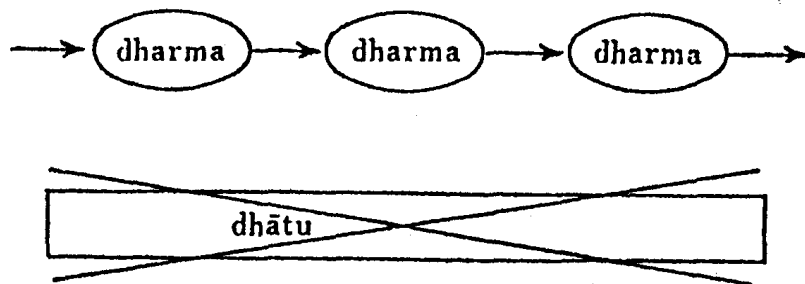
There is ignorance (avidyā), depending on the “tathatā-dharma.” (32, 578a 22)

It is evident that the “locus” is called “tathāgata-garbha” or “tathatā” here. Therefore I think that the validity of the dhātu-vāda hypothesis can be admitted for the time being. And if so, it seems that the following two theses will result:

(A) Tathāgatagarbha thought is not Buddhistic.

(B) Tathāgatagarbha thought is discriminatory.

Of these two, Thesis (A) cannot be proved to be true, unless what is Buddhistic, or What is Buddhism, is shown. On this very problem, the most important and the final problem of Buddhist studies, I simply consider Buddhism to be the thought of “Dependent-arising” (pratitya-samutpāda)<sup>(16)</sup>. Although I cannot explain here in detail my interpretation of “Dependent-arising,”<sup>(17)</sup> the crucial point is that “Dependent-arising” is considered by me to be a temporal causal sequence of “super-locus” without the “locus” (dhātu) which is “ātman.” Thus my interpretation of “Dependent-arising”



can be schematized as follows :

Thus, in my opinion, it follows that "Dependent-arising" does make sense only as the anti-thesis to dhātu-vāda. In other words, logically speaking, it seems possible to conclude that Tathāgatagarbha thought or dhātu-vāda was the very object which was denied by Buddhism or the thought of "Dependent-arising."

And if dhātu-vāda can be regarded as the object of denial by Buddhism itself, why are so many expressions of dhātu-vāda found in Buddhist literature, especially Mahāyāna literature? To this problem I have only one answer, i. e. the influence of Hinduism. Buddhism itself, I think, was at first the anti-thesis to dhātu-vāda. But as time went on, the anti-Buddhistic thought, dhātu-vāda of Hinduism, which is generally called "ātma-vāda," has very easily infiltrated into the Buddhist communities and has been reflected in Buddhist literature. Especially by the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism, the final bar, which had so far barely dammed up the influence of Hinduism, was took away, and after that, the various elements of Hinduism, of which the most important was the monism of dhātu-vāda, were almost openly taken into Buddhism.

Thus was formed Tathāgatagarbha thought in Buddhism. If that is the case, where were the origins of dhātu-vāda in Hinduism? First of all we should pay attention to the *Bhagavadgītā* (*Gītā*). It is not definite when this work was compiled. It might be at around the first century B. C. But I think it is evident that the *Gītā* was compiled at the latest prior to the appearance of Mahāyāna sutras. Therefore, as to the relation of influence between the *Gītā* and Mahāyāna sutras, only the influence of the former on the latter can be assumed.

From my point of view, the central philosophical standpoint of the *Gītā* is dhātu-vāda, because many passages, advocating dhātu-vāda, are found in the *Gītā*. The followings are some examples.

This is my lower nature (prakṛti). Know my higher nature, other than this, which is the soul (jīva), by which this world (jagat) is upheld. Oh Arjuna.

apareyam itas tv anyāṃ prakṛtiṃ viddhi me parāṃ  
jivabhūtāṃ mahābāho yayedam dhāryate jagat (VII, 5)

Here “the higher nature (prakṛti)” of Kṛṣṇa is the “locus,”<sup>(18)</sup> and “this world”, which is “upheld” (dhāryate) by the “locus,” is the “super-locus.” So Point (1) of the dhātu-vāda hypothesis is clearly found here.

The passages of the same import in the *Gītā* are as follows:

All this [world] is strung on me.  
mayi sarvam idaṃ protam (VII, 7 c)

They (all kinds of being) are on me,  
and not I am on them.  
na tv ahaṃ teṣu te mayi (VII, 12 d)

All beings are located on me.  
But I am not located on them.  
matsthāni sarvabhūtāni  
na cāhaṃ teṣv avasthitaḥ (IX, 4 cd)

In these three passages, “locus” is the “I”, i. e. Kṛṣṇa, and the “super-locus” is “all this world” or “all beings.” The latter two passages are exactly of the same meaning. By the locative case “mayi” (on me) in the former two passages, the character of “locus” is well shown. Moreover as in the passage of the *Tathāgatotpattisambhavanirdeśasūtra* cited above, the “locus” is compared to space (ākāśa) in the *Gītā*, as follows:

As the great wind, going everywhere,  
is always located on space,  
so, you should comprehend,  
all beings are located on me.  
yathākāśasthito nityaṃ vāyuḥ sarvatrago mahān  
tathā sarvāṇi bhūtāni matsthānīty upadhāraya (IX, 6)

Here also, the “locus” and the “super-locus” are the “I” and “all beings” respectively. Thus it is now doubtless that the *Gītā* repeatedly advocated dhātu-vāda.

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As for Point (2) of the dhātu-vāda hypothesis, the “locus” is stated also in the *Gītā* to be the cause or the origin of all beings or this world as follows:

Comprehend that all beings are [produced]  
from the womb (yoni), which is “this” (etat).  
I am the origin (prabhava) and the dissolution.  
of all this world.  
etadyonīni bhūtāni sarvāṇīty upadhāraya  
ahaṃ kṛtsnasya jagataḥ prabhavaḥ pralayas tathā (VII, 6)

The word “this” here refers to “the higher nature (prakṛti)” in the preceding verse (VII, 5) cited above. The meaning of the term “womb” is explained to be “cause” (kāraṇa), in the commentary by Śaṅkara.<sup>(19)</sup> So it is evident that the “locus” is regarded here as the origin or the cause of all beings. The same message is given in the following passage.

I am the origin of all. From me, all proceeds.  
ahaṃ sarvasya prabhavo  
mattaḥ sarvaṃ pravartate (X, 8 ab)

It might be totally needless to say that the “locus” is also regarded as “ātman” in the *Gītā*. But, as evidence, I will show the following passages.

I am the “ātman” seated in the hearts (āsaya)  
of all beings, oh Gūḍākeśa (Arjuna).  
aham ātma gūḍākeśa  
sarvabhūtāśayasthitaḥ (X, 20 ab)

By which (yena), you will see all beings  
without exception on “ātman”, and then on me.  
yena bhūtāny aśeṣeṇa  
drakṣyasy ātmany atha mayi (IV, 35 cd)

In the latter passage, the locative cases “ātmani” (on ātman) and “mayi” (on me) represent that both “ātman” and the “I” are the “locus.” Of course we cannot ignore the presence of the word “atha” (and then). This word



indicates the slight but important difference between the meanings of “ātmani” and “mayi.” Here Śāṅkara took the two words “ātmani” and “mayi” to be meaning “on the inner Self (pratyag-ātman)” and “on the highest Lord (parameśvara)” respectively.<sup>(20)</sup> To state very simply, the difference between “pratyag-ātman” and “parameśvara” can be regarded as the difference between “ātman” and “brahman,” which is one of the most important problems in Vedānta philosophy.<sup>(21)</sup> However, here it is sufficient for us to understand that the word “ātmani” indicates that “ātman” also is regarded as the “locus” in the *Gītā*.

It goes without saying that it is not appropriate to consider the *Gītā* to be the earliest origin of dhātu-vāda. We should search for the origin in the earliest Upaniṣads prior to Śākyamuni Buddha. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, Uddālaka Āruṇi stated as follows :

All these creatures (prajā), oh my dear son, have the existent (sat) as their root (mūla), have the existent as their resting-place (āyatana) and have the existent as their support (pratiṣṭhā).

sanmūlāḥ saumyemāḥ sarvāḥ prajāḥ sadāyatanāḥ satpratiṣṭhāḥ (VI, 8, 4; VI, 8, 6)

In this passage, the words “mūla” “āyatana,” and “pratiṣṭhā” have the same meaning, i. e. “locus.”<sup>(22)</sup> Therefore, here it is evident that the existent (sat) is considered by Uddālaka to be the “locus” of all beings. Moreover, it is known by his famous teaching that the existent (sat) is not only the “locus” but also the origin of this world. The teaching in question is as follows :

In the beginning (agra), my dear son, this (idam) [world] was the existent (sat) only, one (ekam) only without a second.

sad eva saumyedam agra āsīd ekam evādvitīyam. (VI, 2, 1)

Here it is stated that the existent is one (eka) contrasted to the plurality of the world. Thus the former four points of my dhātu-vāda hypothesis are found in the teaching of Uddālaka. Therefore, we can conclude that the teaching of Uddālaka in the sixth chapter of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* is none

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other than dhātu-vāda itself.

Then where is the earliest origin of dhātu-vāda in Indian literature? It is a difficult problem. But I would like to recognize the earliest evident trace of dhātu-vāda in the famous hymns on “skambha” (support) in the *Atharva Veda* (X, 7; X, 8). In those hymns, it is stated that “skambha” supports all the world, such as heaven, earth, space, and gods (X, 7, 7; X, 7, 22; X, 7, 35). It is doubtless that “skambha” is regarded there as the “locus” of all beings.<sup>(23)</sup> Therefore, it is reasonable to understand that the origin of dhātu-vāda dates back to the time of the formation of the *Atharva Veda*.

By means of the arguments presented above, it seems to have been clearly shown that dhātu-vāda, which is the fundamental theoretical structure of Tathāgatagarbha thought, has the long history and the origin in the philosophy of Hinduism. Therefore, it can be concluded that Tathāgatagarbha thought was formed under the influence of Hinduism. In other words, Tathāgatagarbha thought is not Buddhism itself, but a form of dhātu-vāda, which is nothing other than the central philosophy of Hinduism.

**Is Tathāgatagarbha thought discriminatory?**

Now we will discuss the relation between Tathāgatagarbha thought and discrimination. First of all, we must understand correctly the meanings of the following two passages in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* (Peking edition No. 788):

- (A) There is Buddha-nature (buddha-dhātu, saṅs rgyas kyi khams) within all sentient beings. The nature (dhātu) is provided within each of their bodies. After eliminating the form of defilement, they will attain Buddhahood, except the icchantikas. (Tu, 99 a 6-7)
- (B) Although the icchantikas also possess tathāgatagarbha, ..... they will not attain the cause of enlightenment (bodhi-hetu) until the end of transmigration. (Tu, 134 b 2-3)

The Passage (B) reads in the Dharmakṣema's translation as follows:

(B') Although the icchantikas possess Buddha-nature, ..... they cannot produce the excellent cause of enlightenment and their transmigration will be endless. (Taisho, 12, 419 b)

Takasaki interpreted the expression "except the icchantikas" in Passage (A), often found in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, to be meaning the exception qualifying the claim that "all sentient beings possess Buddha-nature" or that "there is Buddha-nature within all sentient beings."<sup>(24)</sup> But I do not think that this interpretation is proper.

As is shown by Passage (B), the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* clearly states that the icchantikas also possess Buddha-nature ("tathāgatagarbha" in the Tibetan). Thus, it is clear that the expression "except the icchantikas" in Passage (A) does not mean the exception from possession of Buddha-nature, but the exception from the attainment of Buddhahood, referring to the sentence "after eliminating the form of defilement, they will attain Buddhahood."

Therefore the famous declaration in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* that "all sentient beings possess Buddha-nature" does not necessarily mean that "all sentient beings will attain Buddhahood." And if the attainment of Buddhahood is never allowed to the people called "icchantika" in the sutra, can we consider the famous declaration in question to be a declaration of the ideal of "equality"?

The same can be said as to the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (MSA). In the eleventh chapter of this work, the Yogācāra theory of the reality of the three vehicles (yāna-traya) is fully explained.<sup>(25)</sup> But how can we understand its assertion that "all sentient beings are tathāgatagarbhas"? The text does indeed declare it as follows:

tadgarbhāḥ sarvadehinaḥ (MSA, IX, 37)

sarve sattvās tathāgatagarbhā ity ucyate (MSA-*bhāṣya*, ad IX, 37)

However, the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* clearly states, at the same time, the existence of "those lacking the cause" (hetu-hīna, MSA III, 11). Here "the cause" (hetu) can be interpreted as "the cause of enlightenment" (bodhi-

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hetu) stated in Passage (B) of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*. Thus to use the term of the sutra, “those lacking the cause” are “the icchantikas” who can never attain Buddhahood. This interpretation can be ascertained to be valid by the commentary, because it explains “those lacking the cause” as “those lacking forever the quality for nirvāṇa” (atyantāparinirvāṇadharman, MSA-*bhāṣya* ad III, 11).<sup>(26)</sup>

Thus, I think, we can reach the following conclusion :

The thesis that “all sentient beings possess Buddha-nature” or that “all sentient beings are tathāgatagarbhas” is not contradictory to the notion that “there are some people who can never attain Buddhahood.”

If this notion is common to the texts advocating Tathāgatagarbha thought, we cannot but consider the thought to be inevitably discriminatory.

In order to validate the arguments above, we will investigate the Tathāgatagarbha thought in the commentary on the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra* by Vasubandhu, i. e. the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikopadeśa* (Taisho No. 1519, No. 1520), extant only in Chinese translation.

First of all, it should be noted that the text admits the thesis that “all sentient beings possess Buddha-nature” (Taisho, 26, 9 a). However, this commentary also states the Yogācāra theory of “the four kinds of śrāvakas”<sup>(27)</sup> (Taisho, 26, 9 a 15–19). According to the theory, the śrāvakas are divided into two groups, i. e. those who have been predicted by the Buddha to attain Buddhahood and those who have not been predicted by the Buddha to attain Buddhahood. Thus, it follows that this text, while asserting the thesis that “all sentient beings possess Buddha-nature,” admits, at the same time, the thesis that “there are some people who can never attain Buddhahood.”

Why then are these two theses not contradictory to each other? The answer lies in the correct understanding of the term “Buddha-nature” (buddha-dhātu) in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikopadeśa*. As noted by Takasaki,<sup>(28)</sup> one of the most important passages for understanding the central idea of the text is as follows:

The Tathāgata has taught “the teaching of One-vehicle” (ekayānadharmā),

depending on the three kinds of “equality” (平等 samatā). He has given the prediction to attain Buddhahood [to the Śrāvakas], because the “fa shen” (法身) of the Buddhas and the “fa shen” of the Śrāvakas are equal and non-different (平等無差別). (Taisho, 26, 8 c 29–9 a 2)

Here the word “fa shen” (法身) should be normally considered to be the translation of the Sanskrit term “dharma-kāya.” But Takasaki doubts it, because he thinks that there is not such expression in Indian Buddhist texts as “the dharma-kāya of the Śrāvakas.” So he suggests that the original word of “fa shen” might be “dharmatā.”<sup>(29)</sup>

These arguments by Takasaki are very important. But I cannot accept his assumption that the original word of “fa shen” is “dharmatā.” It goes without saying that Takasaki’s study of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkopaśeṣa*<sup>(30)</sup> is excellent. But, in his study, he does not refer to the arguments by Vasubandhu on “One-vehicle-ness” (ekayānatā) in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkārabhāṣya* (ad XI, kk. 53–59). The sentence of crucial importance in the arguments is as follows:

Because the “dharma-dhātu” of the Śrāvakas etc. is not different.

śrāvakādīnāṃ dharmadhātor abhinnatvāt (MSA-*bhāṣya* ad XI, k. 53)<sup>(31)</sup>

When we take into consideration the parallelism in the arguments by the same author, i. e. Vasubandhu, in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkopaśeṣa* and in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkārabhāṣya* (ad XI, kk. 53–59), it seems quite evident that the original word of “fa shen” in question is not “dharmatā” but “dharma-dhātu.”

This assumption, I think, can be validated by the following two passages:

The “fa shen” (法身) is equal, because the Buddha-nature (buddha-dhātu), or the “fa shen,” is not different. (Taisho, 26, 7a27)

Because he does not know that the Buddha-nature (buddha-dhātu), or the “fa shen,” of this and that is entirely equal. (Taisho, 26, 8c22)

In these two passages, the meaning of “Buddha-nature” (buddha-dhātu) is equated with that of “fa shen” which is equal and is not different. I un-

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derstand that this equation is possible only when the original word of “fa shen” is “dharma-dhātu,” because I think that this equation is founded on the identity of the latter components of the two compounds, i. e. “buddha-dhātu” and “dharma-dhātu.” Moreover, as quoted above, it is stated by the same author in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkārabhāṣya* that “dharma-dhātu” is not different (abhinna).

Thus, I think, we can conclude that, in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikopadeśa*, the meaning of “Buddha-nature” is nothing other than “dharma-dhātu.” And if so, we can understand the reason why the thesis that “all sentient beings possess Buddha-nature” does not exclude the assertion that “there are some people who can never attain Buddhahood” in the text. In short, the possession of “Buddha-nature” (buddha-dhātu), or the possession of “dharma-dhātu,” does not guarantee us the attainment of Buddhahood. On the contrary, “Buddha-nature” (buddha-dhātu), or “dharma-dhātu,” serves as the ground or the basis (dhātu, locus) for supporting the fixed difference between those who can attain Buddhahood and those who can never attain it. Here it is clear that “Buddha-nature” functions as the principle of discrimination.

Here we must be back to the dhātu-vāda hypothesis above mentioned. Especially Point (6) of the hypothesis makes clear the reason why Tathāgata-garbha thought is inevitably discriminatory, because Point (6) shows that the reality and the plurality (difference) of S (super-loci) is essential to the structure of dhātu-vāda and can never be eliminated. In other words, the equality (non-difference) of L (locus) does not serve to eradicate the plurality (difference) of S, but rather acts as the basic support to maintain that plurality, that is to say, discrimination.

In order to confirm the validity of this argument, I will quote the following verse from the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* (ASA):

Because the “dharma-dhātu” (the locus of all properties) is non-different, the difference of “gotras” (lineages) is not reasonable. However (tu),<sup>(32)</sup> because of the difference of the properties (dharma) located [on the locus], the difference of those [gotras] is stated.

dharmadhātor asaṃbhedād gotrabhedo na yujyate  
 ādheyadharmabhedāt tu tadbhedah parigiyate (ASA, I, 39)

This verse clearly indicates the discriminatory idea, common to the Tathāgatagarbha tradition, which, while stating at first the equality of the locus, ultimately ends with affirming the actual difference of “gotras” (lineages) among people. Here we can find the logical reason of the Yogācāra theory of the “fixed difference of five gotras (lineages)” including the “agotra” (lineageless), or the “icchāntika” to use the term of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*. Moreover, it should be noted that the *Ratnagotravibhāga* also admits the existence of “agotra,” as is shown by the following verse:

There is the understanding of the suffering and the fault of life (bhava) and of the happiness and the merit of Nirvāṇa, when the “gotra” exists. This understanding does not exist for those lacking the “gotra” (agotra).  
 bhavanirvāṇatadduḥkhasukhadosaḡuṇekṣaṇam  
 gotre sati bhavaty etad agotrāṇaṃ na vidyate (I, 41)

Thus it is evident that the dhātu-vāda, the essentially discriminatory theory, is the common property of both Yogācāra philosophy and Tathāgatagarbha thought.

As stated above, I consider dhātu-vāda to be the central philosophical structure of Hinduism. If this is the case, how should we understand the “equality” emphasized in Hinduism? In order to answer the question, we will consider the problem of equality and discrimination in the *Gītā*, the philosophical structure of which is, as shown above, dhātu-vāda itself.

First, it should be noted that many words, meaning “equal” or “equality,” are employed in the *Gītā*. According to Jacob’s *Concordance*,<sup>(33)</sup> there are fifteen examples of “sama” (same, equal) and two examples of “sāmya” (sameness, equality) in the *Gītā*. Besides these, we should add the examples of “samacittatva,” “samadarśana,” “samadarśin,” “samaduḥkhasukha,” “samatā,” and “samatva.”

Then, why are there so many examples of the words meaning “equal” or “equality” in the *Gītā*? It is only because “equality” is the central idea

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of the *Gītā*, as is shown by the following verses:

Right in this [world], the created [world] is conquered by those whose mind is established on equality (sāmya).

Because the Brahman is faultless and equal (sama).

Therefore, they are established on the Brahman.

ihaiva tair jitaḥ sargo yeṣāṃ sāmye sthitaṃ manaḥ

nirdoṣaṃ hi samaṃ brahma tasmād brahmaṇi te sthitāḥ (V, 19)

He, whose self (ātman) is united by yoga, and who sees the equal (sama) in all [beings], sees the “ātman” abiding in all beings and all beings on the “ātman.”

sarvabhūtaṣṭham ātmānaṃ sarvabhūtāni cātmani ikṣate yogayuktātmā sarvatra samadarśanaḥ (VI, 29)

Thus it is clear that “equality” is the central message of the *Gītā*. If so, does the message act as a principle for eliminating social discriminations? I think otherwise. I understand that the message of “equality” in the *Gītā* is the theory of discrimination. I will quote the two verses:

The system of four classes (cāturvarṇya) was created by me (Kṛṣṇa).

cāturvarṇyaṃ mayā sṛṣṭaṃ (IV, 13)

Sages see the equal (sama) in a learned and good Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and an outcaste (śvapāka).

vidyāvinayasampanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini

śuni caiva śvapāke ca paṇḍitāḥ samadarśinaḥ (V, 18)

In the first verse, it is stated that the “four varṇa” system was created by Kṛṣṇa. It must be admitted that the “four varṇa” system is not the caste system itself, generally considered to be a later development. But, I think, the discriminatory idea, which supports both systems, is the same.

In the second verse above quoted, the existence of “outcaste” people is admitted. The English word “outcaste” is Radhakrishnan’s translation<sup>(34)</sup> of “śvapāka,” literally meaning “one who cooks dogs.” These “outcaste” people are mentioned after “a dog” in the verse. It goes without saying that the “outcaste” people are considered there to be inferior even to dogs.



Nevertheless, the *Gītā* enhances the message of “equality” of all beings, because, according to the text, there is the equal (sama) [substance] in all beings. Śāṅkara interprets “sama” in the second verse above cited (V, 18) as meaning “the single and changeless Brahman”(ekam avikriyaṃ brahma).<sup>(35)</sup> This interpretation by Śāṅkara agrees well with the content of the passage “the Brahman is equal” (samaṃ brahma) in the next verse (V, 19) in the *Gītā*, quoted above.

In the verse, the passage “they are established on Brahman” (brahmaṇi te sthitāḥ) and, especially, the locative case “brahmaṇi” clearly indicate that the Brahman is the locus of all beings. And this locus, often called “ātman” elsewhere (“ātmani” VI, 29; IV, 35), is equal (sama) and single (eka). So it is quite clear that what is stated here is the typical dhātu-vāda itself. Thus the “equality” emphasized in the *Gītā* is merely the “equality” or the “oneness” (ekatava) of the locus, on which all beings are located differently. Here we can find the same discriminatory structure of dhātu-vāda as explained before. In other words, the equality or the oneness of the locus (dhātu) never functions to eliminate the actual difference of the super-loci, but rather supports or maintains the difference. Thus I consider the dhātu-vāda of the *Gītā* to be inevitably discriminatory.

According to my understanding, the idea of “equality” and the expression of “sama,” not separated from the dhātu-vāda monism, were introduced into Mahāyāna Buddhism and reflected in the Mahāyāna sutras.<sup>(36)</sup> For example, there is the following sentence in the Sanskrit text of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitāsūtra* (Vaidya ed.):

Oh Bhagavat, the vehicle (yāna) is equal (sama).  
atha samaṃ bhagavaṃs tad yānam (p. 12, l. 21)

This sentence, which contains the word “sama,” is clearly a later interpolation, because the first Chinese translation (Taisho No. 224), generally considered to be achieved in 179 A. D., lacks the sentence,<sup>(37)</sup> while it is preserved in the second Chinese translation (Taisho No. 225) done about a half century later.

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As is shown by this example, there are not a few cases where the expressions containing “sama” in the Mahāyāna sutras are later interpolations. Generally speaking, we can say that the frequency of employing the term “sama” gradually increased with the development of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

For example, the texts of the early Yogācāras, who are believed to have acted at around the fifth century A. D., abounds in the expressions containing the word “sama.” In the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (Wogihara ed.) we can find the following passage:

He [i. e. the Bodhisattva], engaged in the highest aim, sees exactly by insight that all properties (sarva-dharma) are quite equal (sama-sama) to the “suchness” (tathatā). And he, seeing the equal (sama) in all [properties] and having the equal (sama) mind, obtains the highest indifference (upekṣā).  
arthe parame caraṃ sarvadharmāṃs tayā tathatayā samasamān  
yathābhūtaṃ prajñayā paśyati. sarvatra ca samadarśī samacittaḥ san paramāṃ  
upekṣāṃ pratilabhate. (p. 41, ll. 20-23)

In this short passage, the term “sama” is employed four times in very important senses. The phrase “sarvatra ca samadarśī” (seeing the equal in all) here almost agrees in meaning and in expression with “sarvatra samadarśanaḥ” of the *Gītā* quoted above (VI, 29). Moreover, as shown above, the *Gītā* also uses the word “sama-darśin” (V, 18). So the correspondence between the *Gītā* and the passage of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* cited above seems quite evident.

While the “sama” or equal in the *Gītā* means the Brahman or the “ātman,” the “sama” here means the “suchness” (tathatā). So can we understand that what is meant by “sama” (equal) differs fundamentally in both texts? I do not think so, because I consider that the “sama” or what is equal in the Yogācāra philosophy is none other than the “ātman” itself.

Here we must consider the problem concerning the following verse of the *Mahāyānābhidharmasūtra*:

The locus (dhātu), which has not the time of beginning, is the equal basis (sama-āśraya) of all properties. If that (dhātu=āśraya) exists, there exists

all forms of life and the attainment of Nirvāṇa also.

anādikāliko dhātuḥ sarvadharmasamāśrayaḥ

tasmin sati gatiḥ sarvā nirvāṇādhigamo 'pi ca

Because this verse is the main ground for my framing the dhātu-vāda hypothesis,<sup>(38)</sup> it is needless to say that what is meant by the verse is dhātu-vāda itself. Here the “sama” or what is equal is the locus (dhātu) or the basis (āśraya) of all properties (sarva-dharma). The word “sama” here indicates the oneness of the locus in contrast to the plurality of the super-loci, and also shows that the locus is the basis not only for the properties which are considered to be good (i. e. the attainment of Nirvāṇa) but also for those not considered to be good (i. e. all forms of life).<sup>(39)</sup>

Moreover, the equal (sama) locus is stated here to be “beginningless” (anādikālika). I understand this adjective to mean that the locus is the ultimate beginning (ādi) of the world, which itself has no beginning at all. In other words, the locus (dhātu) is the sole origin or cause (hetu) of the world.<sup>(40)</sup> Thus we have good reason to understand that the “sama” or the equal locus in the verse in question has the same meaning as that of the Brahman or the “ātman” in the *Gītā*. But if so, why does it follow that the “sama” or what is equal in the Yogācāra philosophy is none other than the “ātman”?

Here we must point out the close relation between the verse of the *Mahāyānābhīdharmasūtra* and the Yogācāras. Basically, the existence of this sutra is only known from the quotations in the Yogācāra texts. So Shinjō Suguro even suggests that the sutra might have been composed by Asaṅga himself as the scriptural evidence to show that the doctrines of the *Mahāyānasamgraha* derive from Buddhist sutras.<sup>(41)</sup> I consider this opinion to be basically right. Thus the verse in question of the *Mahāyānābhīdharmasūtra* is, as it were, a common authority for the early Yogācāras.

Therefore, the verse is quoted on the one hand in the *Mahāyānasamgraha* as the scriptural evidence of “ālayavijñāna”<sup>(42)</sup> which is stated there to be the locus (āśraya) of what is to be known (jñeya), and on the other

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in the prose commentary in the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* as the scriptural evidence of “tathāgata-dhātu” and “tathāgata-garbhā.”<sup>(43)</sup> Takasaki considers the commentary to be written by Sāramati,<sup>(44)</sup> while Zuiryū Nakamura understands its author to be Vasubandhu.<sup>(45)</sup> Considering the existence of the similar expressions in the commentary in question and in Vasubandhu’s commentaries on the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* and the *Mahāyānasamgraha*,<sup>(46)</sup> I would rather like to support Nakamura’s opinion. Anyway, Takasaki also admits that the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* as a whole is a product by the Yogācāras.<sup>(47)</sup>

Thus we can say that the locus (dhātu), which is “sama” (equal), is the central conception of the Yogācāras in the fifth century. The significance of the word “sama” for the Yogācāras is well expressed also in their theory of “samatā-jñāna” (wisdom of equality)<sup>(48)</sup> Contrary to that, the word “sama” has no such significance in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* by Nāgārjuna, who is believed to have lived from the second to the third century. In this work, the word “sama” is employed only ten times, as follows:

- gateḥ samā (II, 17)
- samaḥ kramaḥ (IV, 7)
- samaṃ sādhyena (IV, 8)
- samaṃ sādhyena (IV, 9)
- ākāśasamā dhātavaḥ pañca (V, 7)
- samaḥ kramaḥ (VI, 2)
- samaḥ kramaḥ (XVI, 1)
- ahetupratyayaḥ samāḥ (XX, 4)
- pratibimbameṣu (XXIII, 9)
- atītenādhvanā samam (XXVII, 14)

As is seen from the above examples, the word “sama” is employed here not in the sense of dhātu-vāda but in logical sense only. So we cannot find, in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, the idea of the locus (dhātu) which is “sama” (equal), in other words, dhātu-vāda.

Because the philosophical position of the Mādhyamikas is “śūnyatā-vāda,” which asserts that all properties (sarva-dharma) are empty and unreal, it goes without saying that their position is contradictory to the dhātu-vāda of

the Yogācāras, which claims the reality of the locus (dhātu). But what I would like to state here is that the difference of the philosophical positions between the Mādhyamikas and the Yogācāras reflects the development of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Generally speaking, the philosophical position of Mahāyāna Buddhism has shifted from “non-existence” to “existence,” or precisely from “sūnyatāvāda” to “dhātu-vāda,” due to, I think, the influence of Hinduism. Accordingly, as Mahāyāna Buddhism has developed, the degree of discrimination, side by side with the emphasis on the dhātu-vāda idea of “equality,” has been intensified.

In this respect, I cannot but argue the problem of the historical formation of the text of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*. Basically speaking, I consider that the oldest portion of the sutra is the prose parts of the second chapter, i. e. the chapter on Expedient Devices (Upāyakauśalya).<sup>(49)</sup> What is quite unique to the chapter is that the word “mahāyāna” (great vehicle) is never employed there at least in the Sanskrit text (Kern & Nanjio ed.). Moreover, as far as the prose parts of the chapter are concerned, the word “bodhisattva” cannot be found in the Sanskrit text. So, because we can find neither the word “mahāyāna” nor the term “bodhisattva” in the Sanskrit text of the portion, which I consider to be the oldest in the sutra, I think that we cannot understand the message of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* in terms of “mahāyāna” and “bodhisattva.”<sup>(50)</sup>

As for the word “sama” (equal), in the twenty seven chapters of the Sanskrit text, only six chapters (II, IV, XV, XVII, XVIII, XXVII) lacks the word “sama.” The chapter on Expedient Devices is one of them. In the Chinese translation achieved by Kumārajīva in 406, one example of the word “ping deng” (平等, equal) is found in the chapter (Taisho, 9, 8 a 25). But, because the word has no equivalent in the Sanskrit text (p. 47, l. 3) as well as in the first Chinese translation (Taisho, 9, 70b23–24) done by Dharmarakṣa in 286, it seems adequate to consider that the word “ping deng” might be the addition by Kumārajīva who thinks highly of the idea of

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“equality.”

On the other hand, the chapter which has the greatest number of the examples of the word “sama” in the sutra is the fifth chapter, i. e. the chapter on Medicinal Herbs (Oṣadhi). This chapter, which in fact has seventeen examples of “sama,” is, as I argued elsewhere,<sup>(51)</sup> one of the earliest origins of the dhātu-vāda tradition in Buddhist literature. So the word “sama” plays a decisive role in the dhātu-vāda structure of the chapter, as is seen from the following passage:

Kāśyapa, just as a great cloud, having covered the whole thousand-millionfold world, pours out the equal(sama) water(rain) and satisfies by the water all grasses(ṭṛṇa), shrubs(gulma), herbs(oṣadhi), and trees(vanaspati).

And the grasses, shrubs, herbs, and trees drink the water according to their power, sphere, and strength, and grow to the sizes of their own kinds (jāti).

tadyathāpi nāma kāśyapa mahāmeghaḥ sarvavatīm trisāhasramahāsāhasrām lokadhātum saṃchādyā samam vāri pramuñcati sarvāms ca ṭṛṇagulmauṣadhi-vanaspatin vāriṇā saṃtarpayati yathābalaṃ yathāviśayaṃ yathāsthāmaṃ ca te ṭṛṇagulmauṣadhivanaspatayo vāry āpibanti svakasvakām ca jātipramāṇatām gacchanti (p. 123, l. 13–p. 124, l. 2)

Here the word “sama” qualifies the single existence, which is not exactly the locus, because the existence is not beneath the four things exemplified by the four kinds of plants but above them. So what is stated here is not dhātu-vāda itself in exact meaning. But when we read the following sentence, we can understand that the central philosophical structure of the chapter in question is dhātu-vāda:

All those groups of plants and seeds are located on the same(eka) earth and are drenched by the water of the same(eka) taste(rasa).

ekadharanīpratiṣṭhitās ca te sarva oṣadhigrāmā bijagrāmā ekarasatoyābhiṣyanditāḥ (p. 122, ll. 7–8)

It is needless to say that the meanings of “sama” and “eka” are equal. So, in this sentence, the earth is stated to be the locus of all beings, which is “eka” (same, single) and “sama” (same, equal). And the earth, i. e. the

locus, corresponds in meaning to the equal (sama) water, or the water of the same (eka) taste. Thus what is meant by the parable on the plants and the rain is none other than dhātu-vāda itself.

Moreover, as already pointed out by Hendrik Kern a century ago,<sup>(52)</sup> the relation between the parable and the *Gītā* is evident. He referred to the following half verse in the *Gītā*:

I am equal (sama) to all beings. None is hateful (dveṣya) to me, none beloved (priya).  
 samo 'haṃ sarvabhūteṣu  
 na me dveṣyo 'sti na priyaḥ (IX, 29 ab)

In addition, we can further point out the similarity of expression between the passage above and the following verses in the chapter on Medicinal Herbs:

I preach the “dharma” with the same (eka) voice, constantly making the enlightenment (bodhi) its subject. For this is equal (sama), and unequalness does not exist. There is no hatred (vidveṣa), no affection (rāga). There is for me no attachment, no love (preman), and no hatred (doṣa, i. e. dveṣa) towards anyone. And yet, I preach the equal (sama) “dharma” to creatures.  
 svareṇa caikena vadāmi dharmam  
 bodhiṃ nidānam kariyāna nityam  
 samam hi etad viśamatva nāsti  
 na kaści vidveṣu na rāgu vidyate (V, 21)  
 anunīyatā mahya na kācid asti  
 premā ca doṣaś ca na me kaḥiṃcit  
 samam ca dharmam pravādāmi dehinām (V. 22 abc)

It is evident that the words “sama,” “[vi-]dveṣa,” “preman,” and “me” are employed here in correspondence to the words “sama,” “dveṣya,” “priya,” and “me” in the half verse of the *Gītā* above cited (IX, 29 ab). We cannot but consider the correspondence to be due to the influence of the *Gītā* on the chapter on Medicinal Herbs.

Thus in both texts, i. e. the *Gītā* and the chapter in question, which have many examples of the word “sama” (equal), the “equality” is the cen-

tral idea. However, just as the idea is discriminatory in the *Gītā*, the chapter on Medicinal Herbs does not exclude discrimination but rather maintains it. In fact, the four things exemplified by the four kinds of plants in the parable of the chapter means the four vehicles (yāna), i. e., the vehicles of Bodhisattva, Pratyeka-buddha, Śrāvaka, and Men and Gods.<sup>(53)</sup> So it is clear that the difference of the vehicles is affirmed and fixed there. In other words, the chapter does assert that some people can never attain Buddhahood.

In conclusion, we can say that the “equality” stated in the dhātu-vāda tradition is merely the equality of the locus (dhātu), and that the actual difference of the super-loci is ultimately affirmed. Thus we can understand that the theory of Buddha-nature or Tathāgatagarbha thought, in that it is a form of dhātu-vāda, is intrinsically discriminatory.

In spite of the arguments above, it might be still insisted that Buddha-nature is the Buddhist principle of “equality,” by which we can fight against social discrimination. For those holding this opinion, I will quote the following passage from the first Chinese translation (Taisho, No. 376), i. e. the oldest version, of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* :

A good man (kulaputra) or a good woman (kuladuhitṛ) should, in the Mahāyāna-parinirvāṇasūtra, make efforts in expedient devices (upāya) and has the wish to be a man (puruṣa), because the “Tathāgata-nature” (tathāgata-dhātu) is the nature (dharma or svabhāva) of a man.

A woman, giving rise to attachments abundantly to all things, cannot produce the excellent taste of the deep Mahāyānasūtra.

Just as the urine of a mosquito cannot drench the earth, the nature of a woman, possessed of desires abundantly, is like the earth.

Just as the ocean cannot be satisfied by those rains, rivers, and streams which flow into the ocean, the nature of a woman attaches to the objects of five kinds of desire, and is never satisfied. (Taisho, 12, 894c17-24)

The discriminatory tone of this passage is further intensified in the corresponding passage in the second Chinese translation<sup>(54)</sup> (Taisho, No. 374, No. 375), where is found the following sentence:

Every woman is, without exception, the place where all evils inhabit.



(Taisho, 12, 422a16-17)

Anyway, it is clear that the attainment of Buddhahood is considered here to be the unique privilege of men.

Moreover, it should be noted that the passage in question is found in the seventeenth chapter, or the chapter on Questioning Bodhisattva (Taisho, 12, 891b-896a), of the first Chinese translation. What is emphasized in this chapter is that the "icchantikas" can never attain Buddhahood.<sup>(55)</sup> So passage (B') of the second Chinese translation above cited, where it is stated that the "icchantikas," although they possess Buddha-nature, cannot attain Buddhahood, has the corresponding passage in this chapter of the first Chinese translation. So the discriminatory character of the chapter on Questioning Bodhisattva of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* cannot be doubted.

But what is more important is that the chapter begins with the question about what Bodhisattva<sup>(56)</sup> is, as is clearly shown by the title of the chapter. In other words, the philosophical position of the chapter is included in the general stream of Buddhist philosophy in those days, which is "praising Bodhisattvas." But I consider this stream to be discriminatory.

Praising Bodhisattvas results in blaming non-Bodhisattvas. Or rather, praising Bodhisattvas is inseparable from blaming non-Bodhisattvas, as is evidently shown by the verses (III, 114-134) in the third chapter, or the chapter on Parable (Aupamya), of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*.<sup>(57)</sup> In those verses, a multitude of discriminatory expressions especially concerning physical disabilities are used in order to blame non-Bodhisattvas. Thus we can understand that the idea of praising Bodhisattvas, in that it makes the severe distinction between Bodhisattvas and non-Bodhisattvas, is inevitably discriminatory.

It goes without saying that this distinction is the central idea for the Yogācāras. For example, the distinction is well expressed in the following two sentences of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* :

Bodhisattvas, possessed of that lineage (gotra), surpass all Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas.

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tena khalu gotreṇa samanvāgatā bodhisattvāḥ<sup>(58)</sup> sarvaśrāvaka-pratyekabuddhān atikrāmyanti. (p. 3. ll, 10-11)

Moreover, the distinction (viśeṣa) of Bodhisattva from Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas is to be known by the four forms.

api ca caturbhir ākārair bodhisattvasya śrāvaka-pratyekabuddhebhyo viśeṣo veditavyaḥ. (p. 3. ll, 20-21)

Here the word “viśeṣa” (distinction) means also “superiority.” So it is clear that the distinction between Bodhisattvas and non-Bodhisattvas stated here is based on the idea of praising Bodhisattvas on the part of the Yogācāras, who affirm the difference of the three vehicles, and therefore assert that non-Bodhisattvas cannot attain Buddhahood.

But what I would like to ask here is whether Tathāgatagarbha thought is exempt from the idea of praising Bodhisattvas or not? As shown above, the theory in the chapter on Questioning Bodhisattva of the *Mahāparinivāṇasūtra* is based on the idea and, as such, quite discriminatory.

Moreover, also in the prose commentary contained in the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga*, “the distinction of qualities between Bodhisattvas and Śrāvakas” (bodhisattva-śrāvaka-guṇa-antara) [p. 16, l. 16] is stated. As is noted by Takasaki<sup>(59)</sup>, the Chinese translation of this portion has two verses and the prose commentary on them, concerning the ten kinds of superiority of Bodhisattvas to Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas. Thus it is quite evident that the philosophical position of the prose commentary in the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga*, whose author might be Vasubandhu, is not different from that of the Yogācāras, who hold that there are some people who can never attain Buddhahood.

In addition, it is needless to say that praising Bodhisattvas is inseparable from praising Great vehicle (mahā-yāna). If so, does it not follow that the latter also is not free from being discriminatory in that it blames other vehicles? In this respect, we must recall the fact that the word “mahā-yāna” (Great vehicle) is never employed in the chapter on Expedient Devices of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra*, at least in the Sanskrit text. As is generally admitted, the main message of the chapter is the attainment of Buddhahood

by all sentient beings, which seems to be expressed by the word “one vehicle” (eka-yāna). And this “one vehicle” is stated to be “the Buddha Vehicle” (buddha-yāna) in the chapter, as follows:

Śāriputra, the vehicle is only one, i. e. the Buddha vehicle.

ekam evedaṃ śāriputra yānaṃ yad idaṃ buddhayānam. (p. 44, l. 4)

Thus, I think, the position of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* must be “buddha-yāna,” and not “mahā-yāna.” Nevertheless, in the chapter on “One Vehicle of the *Śrīmālāsūtra* (Peking ed., No. 760), we can find the following sentence<sup>(60)</sup>:

Bhagavat, “the Great vehicle” (mahā-yāna) is a synonym of “the Buddha vehicle” (buddha-yāna). (Ḥi, 274b3)

Here we can recognize the author’s intention to substitute “mahā-yāna” for “buddha-yāna” advocated in the chapter on Expedient Devices of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*. So it is doubtless that the *Śrīmālāsūtra*, which is clearly later than the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, shares the general idea of those days, i. e. praising “mahā-yāna.” In fact, the sutra has the following passage:

Then the Queen Śrīmālā made her husband, i. e. the King Yaśomitra, enter into the Great vehicle (mahā-yāna).

Thus all the people in the city were made to turn towards the Great vehicle. (Ḥi, 284a1-3)

Moreover, in the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, there is no example of the words “eka-yāna”<sup>(61)</sup> and “buddha-yāna,” while the term “mahā-yāna” is employed in the prose commentary in the text. For example, in the following passage, the term is used in order to explain what “icchantikas” are.

The opposition to the doctrine of the Great vehicle (mahāyāna-dharma) is the obstruction (āvaraṇa) for the “icchantikas,” of which the antidote (pratipakṣa) is the practice of the faith in the doctrine of the Great vehicle (mahāyāna-dharma) by the Bodhisattvas.

mahāyānadharmapratigha icchantikānām āvaraṇam yasya pratipakṣo mahāyānadharmādhimuktibhāvanā bodhisattvānām. (p. 29, ll. 8-9)

(28) Buddha-nature as the Principle of Discrimination (Matsumoto)

What is stated here is, as it were, the definition of the “icchantikas.” So they are simply called “those who oppose to the doctrine of the Great vehicle” (mahāyāna-dharma-pratihata) [p. 31, l. 7]. Thus, in the passage above, I understand that the “icchantikas” are defined as those who oppose to the Great vehicle (mahā-yāna) in which the Bodhisattvas have faith.

Thus, we have the three discriminatory concepts united here, i. e. “icchantika,” “mahā-yāna,” and “bodhisattva.” So it seems evident that the message of the passage above cited is quite discriminatory in that it makes the severe distinction between the Bodhisattvas, the upholders of the Great vehicle (mahā-yāna), and the “icchantikas,” praising the former and blaming the latter. The idea of praising the Great vehicle in the Tathāgatagarbha tradition is also evident in the *Awakening of Faith*, because the treatise defines itself as “that which is capable of giving rise to the roots of the faith in the Great vehicle” (Taisho, 32, 575b15).<sup>(62)</sup>

Thus, I think, we can understand that the Tathāgatagarbha tradition, as a whole, is not free from the discriminatory idea of praising the Bodhisattvas and the Great vehicle (mahā-yāna). Therefore, it seems that our conclusion above stated has been verified also in this respect.

Finally, I would like to end this paper with repeating the conclusion:

The theory of Buddha-nature or Tathāgatagarbha thought is a form of dhātu-vāda, which itself is none other than the monism of Hinduism.<sup>(63)</sup>

Because, in the dhātu-vāda structure, the equality of the locus (dhātu) rather supports the actual difference of the super-loci, the theory of Buddha-nature inevitably results in the principle of discrimination.

### Abbreviations

- FT: *Formation of the Tathāgatagarbha Theory* (Nyoraizō shisō no keisei), Jikido Takasaki, Shunjū-sha, 1974.
- JR: *A Japanese Translation of the Ratnagotravibhāga* (Hōshōron), Jikido Takasaki, Kōdan-sha, 1989.
- DE: *Dependent-arising and Emptiness* (Engi to kū), Shiro Matsumoto, Daizō Shuppan, 1989.

### Notes

- (1) On dhātu-vāda, cf. DE, pp. 5–7; pp. 67–68; pp. 312–334.
- (2) On the meaning of the word “tathāgata-garbha” in the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra*, cf. *A Critical Study of Zen Thought* (Zen shisō no hihanteki kenkyū) Matsumoto, Daizō Shuppan, 1994, pp. 412–543.
- (3) Cf. FT, pp. 46–48; JR, p. 248, n. 3.
- (4) Cf. FT, pp. 397–404.
- (5) Cf. DE, pp. 46–52.
- (6) On the meaning of the Original Enlightenment thought, cf. *Critique of Original Enlightenment Thought* (Hongaku shisō hihan), Noriaki Hakamaya, Daizō Shuppan, 1989.
- (7) Cf. DE, pp. 5–6.
- (8) Cf. Taisho, 12, 862a13; “The Nirvāṇa-sūtras and Ātman” (Nehangyō to aatman), Matsumoto, *Ātmajñāna* (Ga no shisō), Shunjū-sha, 1991, p. 150.
- (9) Cf. Peking ed., Ḥi 276a2; DE, pp. 306–309.
- (10) Cf. Taisho, 12, 862a13–14; Peking ed., Ḥi, 280a6–b1.
- (11) On the example of space, cf. DE, pp. 234–236.
- (12) This passage has the close relation to the passage in the chapter on Medicinal Herbs (Oshahi) of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra*, which will be quoted below. Cf. DE, pp. 302–303; p. 320.
- (13) Cf. FT, p. 632; *The Sūtras of the Tathāgatagarbha Tradition* (Nyoraizōkei kyōten), Jikido Takasaki, Chuōkoron-sha, 1975, p. 284.
- (14) The word “pada” means the “locus” also in the *Ratnagotravibhāga* (Johnston ed.), where the word is interpreted as “sthāna” (p. 2, l. 6) or “pratiṣṭhā” (p. 2, l. 8).

- (30) Buddha-nature as the Principle of Discrimination (Matsumoto)
- (15) Cf. *Reading the Awakening of Faith* (Daijōkishinron o yomu), Jikido Takasaki, Iwanami Shoten, 1991, p. 207.
- (16) Cf. DE, pp. 1-2; "Critical Considerations on Buddhism" (Bukkyō no hihanteki kōsatsu), Matsumoto, *Formation of Images of the Word* (Sekaizō no keisei), Series Asian Perspective (Ajia kara kangaeru) No. 7, University of Tokyo Press, 1994, pp. 132-165.
- (17) Cf. DE, pp. 11-97; "Critical Considerations on Buddhism," pp. 165-177.
- (18) I understand that "prakṛti" is the "locus" also in the *Ratnagotravibhāga*. For example, the following sentence is found:

The nature (prakṛti) neither depends nor relies on them, just as the realm (dhātu) [locus] of space.

tadamūlāpratiṣṭhānā prakṛtir vyomadhātuvat. (I, 59cd; p. 43, l. 2)

Here "prakṛti" is stated to be the final basis or locus of all beings, which itself has no basis (mūla, pratiṣṭhāna) at all. The word "dhātu" of "vyoma-dhātu" means here not only "realm" but also "locus." So "prakṛti" is equated here with "dhātu."

Moreover, this equation can be found also in the compound "cittaprakṛti-vaimalya-dhātu" (I, 49cd; p. 41, l. 9), which means "the nature (prakṛti) of mind, i. e. the locus (dhātu) of purification."

- (19) Cf. *Śrībhagavadgītā*, Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series, No. 34, p. 113, l. 2.
- (20) Cf. *Śrībhagavadgītā*, p. 77, ll. 8-9.
- (21) Cf. *A Critical Study of Zen Thought*, pp. 380-386.
- (22) See the quotation from the *Ratnagotravibhāga* in the note (18) above where "mūla" and "pratiṣṭhāna" are synonymous.
- (23) The locative case of the relative pronoun "yat", i. e. "yatra" or "yasmin" meaning "on which," which is employed in the verses of the seventh chapter of the tenth book (kāṇḍa) of the *Atharva Veda* (Devi Chand ed.), indicates well that "skambha" is the "locus," on which all beings are located.

In fact, the following verses of the chapter contains the examples of "yatra" or "yasmin" concerning the "skambha" (only the verse numbers are mentioned below):

"yatra".....4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 22, 24.

"yasmin".....7, 12.

- (24) Cf. FT, p. 161, ll. 3-4; p. 166, l. 6.
- (25) On the One vehicle (ekayāna) theory in the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkārahāṣya* ad XI, kk. 53-59, cf. "On the One Vehicle Theory of the Vijñānavādins" (Yui-

shikiha no ichijō shisō nitsuite), Matsumoto, *Komazawa Daigaku Bukkyōgakubu Ronshū*, No. 17, 1982, pp. (1)-(23).

(26) Thus the following expression of inequality can be stated:

“bodhi-hetu  $\neq$  dhātu”

It goes without saying that to grasp this distinction between “bodhi-hetu” and “dhātu” is the key to the correct understanding of Tathāgatagarbha thought. Cf. DE, p. 9, n. 11.

(27) On this theory, cf. “On the One Vehicle Theory of the Vijñānavādins,” pp. (8)-(19).

(28) Cf. FT, p. 418.

(29) Cf. FT, pp. 418-419.

(30) FT, pp. 415-427.

(31) Lévi ed., p. 68, l. 17.

(32) On the significance of the word “tu” (however), cf. DE, p. 332, n. 31; pp. 141-143; p. 184, n. 25.

(33) *A Concordance to the Principal Upaniṣads and Bhagavadgītā*, G. A. Jacob, 1981, reprint, 1963, pp. 971-972; p. 1022.

(34) Cf. *The Bhagavadgītā*, S. Radhakrishnan, Second edition, 1949, p. 181, l. 2.

(35) Cf. *Śrībhagavadgītā*, p. 89, l. 14.

(36) Not only “sama” but also “avikalpa” (nirvikalpa) and “advaya” are the concepts inseparable from the dhātu-vāda monism of Hinduism. On this problem, cf. DE, pp. 239-249.

(37) Cf. DE, pp. 244-245.

(38) Cf. DE, p. 7.

(39) The idea of “the equal locus for the two contradictory super-loci” is more evident in the dhātu-vāda of Jizang 吉藏, where the locus (C) is considered to be neither A (a super-locus) nor B (non-A, the other super-locus), and is called “Buddha-nature” and “Middle Way” and so on. Cf. *A Critical Study of Zen Thought*, pp. 549-552.

(40) Cf. DE, pp. 95-97.

(41) Cf. *Studies on Early Vijñaptimātra Philosophy* (Shoki yuishiki shisō no kenkyū), Shinjō Suguro, Shunjū-sha, 1989, pp. 193-194.

(42) Cf. Derge ed., Ri, 3a6-7; FT, p. 95, n. 42; JR, p. 329, n. 4.

(43) Cf. *Ratnagotravibhāga*, p. 72, ll. 13-14; FT, p. 95, n. 42.

(44) *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga*, Jikido Takasaki, 1966, p. 62. But Takasaki’s view seems to have changed slightly. On his new view, cf. JR. pp. 392-397.

- (32) Buddha-nature as the Principle of Discrimination (Matsumoto)
- (45) Cf. *The Ratnagotravibhāga-mahāyanottaratantra-śāstra, Compared with Sanskrit and Chinese* (Bonkan taishō Kukyōichijōhōshōron kenkyū), Zuiryū Nakamura, Sankibō-busshorin, 1961, pp. 58–61.
- (46) The “icchantika” is explained in the commentary in RGV (*Ratnagotravibhāga*) as follows:
- “icchantiko ’tyantam aparinirvāṇadharmeti (p. 37. ll. 1–2)
- The explanation in the commentary on MSA is as follows:
- “atyantāparinirvāṇadharmā tu hetuhīno yasya parinirvāṇagotram eva nāsti. (p. 13, ll. 1–2)
- Moreover, the explanation of the meaning of the word “dhātu” in the commentary in RGV is as follows:
- “hetvartho ’tra dhātvarthaḥ (p. 72, l. 10)
- The same explanation is given in Vasubandhu’s commentary on the *Madhyantavibhāga* (Nagao ed.), as follows:
- “hetvartho hy atra dhātvarthaḥ. (p. 24, l. 2)
- Also in the *Mahāyānasamgrahabhāṣya* (Derge ed., No. 4050) by Vasubandhu, the same explanation is stated as follows:
- “dbyiṅs shes bya ba ni rgyuḥo. (Ri, 126a3–4)
- On the Vasubandhu’s authorship of the commentary on MSA, I rely on the comments by Noriaki Hakamaya. Cf. *The Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra* (Daijōshōgonkyōron), Noriaki Hakamaya & Hiroaki Arai, Daizō Shuppan, 1993, pp. 17–24.
- (47) Cf. JR, p. 397.
- (48) Cf. *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra* (IX, k. 70).
- (49) I must admit that my view on the sutra has changed considerably, because I considered before the oldest portion of the sutra to be the verse parts of the second chapter. On my new view, cf. “The Doctrines of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*” (Hokekyō no shisō), Matsumoto, *Annual Bulletin of the Buddhist Studies, Graduate School of Komazawa University* (Komazawa Daigaku Daigakuin Bukkyōgaku Kenkyūkai Nenpō), No. 28, 1995, pp. 1–27.
- (50) My arguments here stated is based on my paper mentioned in the previous note.
- (51) Cf. DE, pp. 319–324. But I must make a little correction of the arguments presented there. I now understand that the chapter on Medicinal Herbs is one of the earliest origins of the Buddhist dhātu-vāda tradition, and not the earliest origin itself.
- (52) Cf. *The Saddharma-puṇḍarīka or the Lotus of the True Law*, Hendrik Kern,



SBE, XXI, 1884, p. xxix, n. 2.

(53) Cf. DE, pp. 323–324.

(54) The following passage is found in the second translation :

“Even if a woman has intercourse with so many men as the poppy seeds produced by crushing the ball into which the whole earth is wadded up, still she cannot be satisfied.”

(Taisho, 12, 42218–20)

(55) Cf. *Studies on the Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (Daijō Nehankyō no kenkyū), Ryōkō Mochizuki, Shunjū-sha, 1988, pp. 404–451.

(56) Cf. Taisho, 12, 891b19.

(57) Cf. “The Doctrines of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra*,” pp. 24–27.

(58) Originally “bodhisattvānām” in the text. Cf. p. 3, n. 3.

(59) Cf. JR, pp. 237–238, n. 4.

(60) Cf. DE, p. 305.

(61) Cf. FT, p. 118.

(62) Cf. *Reading the Awakening of Faith*, pp. 30–31.

(63) The similar opinion is stated by Akira Hirakawa as follows :

Buddhism has asserted, from the time of Original Buddhism, “no-self” (anātman), but this [assertion] has opposed to the traditional Indian religion which advocates “self” (ātman).....The ideas of “store-consciousness” (ālaya-vijñāna) of the Vijñānavādins and “tathāgata-garbha” or “Buddha-nature” of the Tathāgatagarbha thought are quite similar to that of “self.”.....

At the youthful times when Buddhism flourished, the doctrines of “no-self” and “emptiness” (śūnyatā) were strongly asserted. But, as time went on, the doctrines [of Buddhism] have changed and gradually have been assimilated to the theory of “self.” I consider that the main reason of the [final] disappearance of Buddhism in India is that Buddhism was originally not the doctrine of “self.”

(*History of Indian Buddhism* [Indo bukkyō shi], Akira Hirakawa Vol. 1, Shūnju-sha, 1974, pp. 9–10)

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