

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONTRIBUTION OF MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM TO INDIAN THOUGHT AND CULTURE

#### (1) Systematization of all Thoughts of Buddhism and Brahmanism

##### The Thought of Buddhism

The system of Buddhist thoughts consists of *Hinayānic* and *Mahāyānic* ideas. Generally, *Hinayānic* thought only mentions the relative truth (*samvṛti satya*). It means that *Hinayānists* only talk about the impermanence, sufferings and selflessness of all conditioned things. The absolute truth (*Paramārtha satya*) has not been mentioned in their doctrines. The main doctrines of *Hinayāna* are Four Noble Truths, the Theory of Dependent origination, five aggregates, *karma*, rebirth and *Nirvāna*. All these doctrines are explained according to the relative aspects.

*Theravādin* school is said to be the orthodox school that was established directly by the Buddha at Deer park of *Sarnath*. *Theravādins* do not believe in the absolute truth, they only believe in the relative truth. According to *Theravādins*, the universe was made by four material elements (earth, water, fire and air) and it goes on without maker, without the known beginning, continuously exists by nature of relations of cause and effects, and man was constituted by five aggregates (*skandhas*). His body belongs to material and his mind consists of feeling, perception, mental function, and consciousness. The so-called body is subject to birth, old-age, sickness and death. Mind is always disturbed by sorrow, grief, sufferings and lamentation.

*Theravādins* regard the Buddha as a historical person, the historical *Gotama*.<sup>1</sup> *Theravāda* aims at the individual liberation and believes that only *Gotama* attained Buddhahood, and they consider *nirvana* as opposition of *samsāra*. *Hinayānists* deny the *Brahman*, *ātman*, God and soul. It only accepts gods (*devas*) as the good ones, who protect *Dharma* and to help good men. Especially they believe *Arhats* as the worthy men, who had already reached perfect *Nirvāna* and had nothing more to learn.

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<sup>1</sup> NBT, pp. 1-8.

Moreover, they believe that when desire, hatred, ignorance are absent from one's mind, he can attain *Nirvāna*, free from rebirth in the realms of existence.

The means to the liberation, according to *Theravādins*, is the practice of *sīla* (precepts) *dhyāna* (meditation) and *prajñā* (wisdom).

*Sārvastivāda* also belongs to *Hinayāna*, it branched off from *Theravāda*, the orthodox school of Buddhism<sup>2</sup>, because it did not admit the *Theravādin* theory that all things are unreal.<sup>3</sup> *Sārvastivādins* hold that all things are real and exist at all times: past, present and future.<sup>4</sup> In fact, they only mention that the attributes, which constitute all things, are permanent. For example, moisture of water, the heat of fire, the move of air, the solid of earth, all are existent according to cause and conditions but they never vanish. The self-nature or the absolute of all things has been not mentioned by the *Sārvastivāda* as yet. Moreover, it believes in the theory of non-self, the absence of any permanent substance in an individual. And it believes in the plurality of all phenomenal things in the universe.

Like *Theravāda*, *Sārvastivāda* denies the existence of God and soul. It believes that the world is constituted by cause and conditions. Especially, it does not believe *Arhat* as the worthy man, who had already reached perfect *Nirvāna*. It thinks that the life of an *Arhat* is governed by good or bad *karma* and he must have something to learn more.

*Sārvastivāda* also considers the Buddha as a historical person. He attained Buddhahood and became omniscient at *Bodh Gaya*.<sup>5</sup> Its concepts of bondage and liberation, and the means to liberation are the same as in *Theravāda*.

*Vaibhāsika* also belongs to *Hinayāna*, it branched off from *Sārvastivāda* on account of disagreement with the thought of *Sārvastivāda* such as all things are real and exist forever. It advocated that everything is momentary like a dream or a

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<sup>2</sup> AIB, p. 325.

<sup>3</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 380.

<sup>4</sup> SST, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

lightning and only the unconditioned things exist forever.<sup>6</sup> According to it, impermanence is the attribute of all conditioned things. The unconditioned thing is the inner principle of all things that exist forever.<sup>7</sup>

*Vaibhāsika* believes in the theory of causation, *karma*, rebirth, *Nirvāna* and denies the existence of *Brahman*, *ātman*, God and soul. It believes in the reality of *dharma*s in their phenomenal aspect.<sup>8</sup>

*Sautrāntika* also belongs to *Hīnayāna*, it branched off from *Sārvastivāda* on account of disagreement with the *Sārvastivāda*'s thought, that everything exists permanently.<sup>9</sup> They proclaimed on its banner a return to the genuine doctrine of *Theravāda*, denied, therefore, the permanent essence of all things that is suggested by *Sārvastivāda*. It re-established the doctrine that reality consists of momentary flashes that everything appears into life out of non-existence and returns again to non-existence after having been existent for a moment only.<sup>10</sup> It believes that all things in the universe exist by virtue of the interaction; the existence of one thing depends on others. A tree can not exist, if there are no water, soil, air and sunshine.<sup>11</sup> *Sautrāntika* maintains that there is a difference between an entity, its efficiency and its appearance. The entity emerges from non-existence, exists for a moment and then disappears. Therefore, the *Sautrāntika* developed the *Theravādin* theory of impermanence into its theory of momentariness.<sup>12</sup> Though it denies the existence of soul, it believes in the transmigration of living being from one body to another body. It holds that among five aggregates of man there is only a subtle aggregate that comes to the transmigration.<sup>13</sup>

This subtle aggregate is a real man, it corresponds with the consciousness (*patisaṇḍhi vijñāna* or *gandharva*) of *Theravāda* and this subtle aggregate also

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>7</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 614.

<sup>8</sup> SST, p. 37.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> SIP<sub>2</sub>, p. 358.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 356.

<sup>13</sup> BYB, p. 96.

resembles *ālayavijñāna* of *Yogācāra* school. Especially it believes that everybody has a potentiality of becoming a Buddha.<sup>14</sup>

By this thought, the *Sautrāntika* school is considered as the bridge between *Hīnayāna* and *Mahāyāna*. *Sautrāntika* does not consider *Arhat* as a worthy man, and *Arhat* had something to learn more.

Like *Theravāda*, *Sautrāntika* also believes that ignorance (*avidyā*) is the cause of bondage and transmigration. Living in ignorance, one is always bound and making the evil *karma* that leads him from life to lives in the circle of birth and death. The rebirth and death last until the desire or *tanhā* is rooted out from one's mind, and the liberation is attained.

The means to liberation is also the practice of *sīla*, *dhyāna*, and *prajñā*. Generally, all sects of *Hīnayāna* have not yet mentioned devotion (*bhakti*) and purposeless actions or service without rewards (*anābhogacaryā*). *Mahāyāna* Buddhism arose in the third century B.C on the basis of *Mahāsaṅghika* school.<sup>15</sup> *Mahāyānism*, at first, had not any sub-sect; towards the second century A.D., Rāhulabhadra, Nāgārjuna's master founded *Madhyamika* school in *Anga* country<sup>16</sup>, then in the third century A.D., Maitreyanātha, Asanga's master established *Yogācāra* school or *Vijñānavāda*.<sup>17</sup> Nāgārjuna was not the founder of *Mahāyāna* school, he only systematized *Mahāyāna sūtras* that were composed after the third century B.C. by some sects of *Mahāsaṅghika* school. And simultaneously he also developed the idea of *Madhyamika* that was founded by his master.<sup>18</sup>

*Mahāyāna* school mentions both the relative truth and the absolute truth while *Hīnayāna* schools mention the relative truth only. *Mahāyānists* regard the Buddha as the transcendental, eternal and absolute, who saves all living beings by his three

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>15</sup> AIB, p. 356.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> JBC, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> AIB, p. 357.

bodies, *dharmakāya*, *sambhogakāya* and *nirmānakāya*.<sup>19</sup> Apart from that, they believe in an infinite number of *Bodhisattvas*, who take vows never enter into *Nirvāna* until all living beings to be salved from the suffering world.<sup>20</sup>

*Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas* consider the suffering world as the means to the attainment of their Buddhahood.<sup>21</sup> *Mahāyānists* assert that *samsāra* is not different from *Nirvāna* because their natures are the same and they consider the *Nirvāna* of *Arhat* as the magic city.<sup>22</sup> It is like a guide, who leads a large party of travelers through a dense forest, along a dangerous and difficult road to a jewel place. On the way the travelers become exhausted and they want to turn back. Out of pity to them, the guide thereupon conjures up a magic city and invites them to rest and refresh themselves therein. Only when they have regained their strength does he cause the city to disappear and urges them to complete their journey. On the road from the renunciation of the world to the final liberation are so far, the praticians become tired and they want to return back to the secular life. So the Budha firstly teaches them the *Hīnayāna nirvāna* to console them. Only when they attain the *Hīnayānic Nirvāna*, the Buddha tells them this *Nirvāna* is not complete one and urges them to attain the complete *Nirvāna* of *Mahāyāna*.<sup>23</sup>

The Buddha, according to *Mahāyānist*, is not merely the enlightened one in old sense but an omniscient.<sup>24</sup> *Mahāyānists* deny the God, the creator of the world, and assert that the world was made by cause and conditions.<sup>25</sup> In other words, it is the creation of the universe by the universe itself.<sup>26</sup> God could not create it because he is only the imagination of mind, he is really not existent. *Mahāyānists* say that God is only personalization of the creative power of universe.<sup>27</sup> They only admit gods and

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<sup>19</sup> SSLS, p. 145.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 217-21.

<sup>21</sup> JBC, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> SSLS, p. 131.

<sup>23</sup> SEL, p. 115.

<sup>24</sup> SIP<sub>2</sub>, p. 344.

<sup>25</sup> KBC, p. 316.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 655.

goddess as the protectors of *Dharma*. They worship Buddhas, *Bodhisattvas*, gods, goddess and to have a special doctrine of salvation by faith.<sup>28</sup>

The thought of *Mahāyānism* consists of the thoughts of *Madhyamika* and *Yogācāra* schools.

*Madhyamika* school uses the term *sūnyatā* for both, the relative and absolute truths. According to it, the relative is the means to the absolute truth. In the field of relative, it admits that all things come from cause and conditions. Impermanence, suffering, and selflessness are the attributes of the conditioned things. In the *Madhyamikakārikā*, Nāgārjuna<sup>29</sup> asserts that the whole phenomenal world is always changed since it was made by causality but its real nature is absolute. The Absolute is beyond thought and conception; it is unconditioned and indeterminate truth. The Absolute is not made by cause and conditions and it exists forever. According to Nāgārjuna, the Absolute is neither existent nor non-existent, nor both, nor neither. It is the same in all positive and negative beings. It is free from sin, free from old-age, sickness, death, hunger and thirst.

It is subtle reality that nothing can destroy it, death can not touch it nor vice can dissolve it. It is a self-existent and self-complete entity and there is nothing outside it to exist, from which all things are sprung, existed and then to return back to it. It is subject sees, not the object seen.<sup>30</sup>

*Madhyamika* school considers the Buddha as the transcendental. He is neither relational nor non-relational, nor both, nor neither. The real Buddha is the real-nature of man, that is cognized by mystic intuition.<sup>31</sup> *Karma* and its result are, according to *Madhyamika* school, unreal as a dream or mirage. If *karma* persists till its fruition, it becomes permanent and if it is transient, it can not produce its fruit after an interval time. If *karma* is permanent, it can not be the result of activity and if it is not the result

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<sup>28</sup> JBC, p. 8.

<sup>29</sup> KBC, p. 85.

<sup>30</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 152.

<sup>31</sup> SIP<sub>2</sub>, p. 407.

of activity, then there will not be attainment of acquired merit and demerit and there will be no difference between the virtuous and the vicious.<sup>32</sup>

The enlightenment and liberation, according to them, does not mean simply the understanding of the Four Noble Truths in their reality but the acquisition of absolute *sūnyatā* or Buddha-nature that constitutes the original enlightenment of all creatures. The means to the final liberation is the development of wisdom in order to know the appearance and nature of all existences and to become one with the absolute *sūnyatā* (the nature of all beings).

*Yogācāra* or *Vijñāna* is the second school of *Mahāyānism*. It was founded in the third century A.D. by Maitreya-nātha, Asanga's master. It reached its climax during the *Gupta* age.<sup>33</sup>

The *Yogācāras* recognize the reality of external objects, which were constituted by consciousness (the seeds of phenomena, mental and physical), is unreal. Maitreya-nātha and Vasubandhu used the term *ālayavijñāna* for external and internal worlds. The former is the cosmic mind that contains all the seeds of material from which all things are constituted. It is *ālayavijñāna* which is the source of all existences and it is also the cosmic order.<sup>34</sup> All things exist in the cosmic mind (*ālayavijñāna*) and after perishing, they return back to their own original elements in *ālayavijñāna*.<sup>35</sup> The latter is the foundation of individual cognitions or a system of one's eight consciousnesses. Most of the scholars misunderstood the term *vijñāna*, they, therefore, hold that *vijñāna* means cognition and they come to conclusion that *Yogācāra* denies the external objects and reduced them to cognition (*vijñāna*).<sup>36</sup> *Yogācāra*, in fact, did not deny the external objects, it only says that the external objects, which were created by the seeds of phenomena, are impermanent, changing, and perishable.

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 407.

<sup>33</sup> JBC, p. 7.

<sup>34</sup> STTMC, pp. 115-6.

<sup>35</sup> LSS, pp. 73-7.

<sup>36</sup> BYB, p. 108.

The *Vijñāptimatratāridasa sāstra*, one of important works of *Yogācāra* school, regards all external objects as the manifestations of *ālayavijñāna*.<sup>37</sup>

On the basis of the *lankāvatāra sūtra*, P.V. Bapat<sup>38</sup> says that only mind or *ālayavijñāna* are real while all the external objects, which are manifested from *ālayavijñāna*, are unreal.

*Ālayavijñāna* is also considered as the substratum of individual cognition. *ālayavijñāna* is the spiritual body or subtle body of man that consists of the whole stream of consciousness (visual, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, bodily consciousnesses, *manovijñāna*, *manas* and *ālayavijñāna*).<sup>39</sup>

The *lankāvatāra sūtra*<sup>40</sup> explains that *ālayavijñāna* is originally free from attachments and defilements but it is the operation of *manas*, a system of consciousness appears and to be polluted. When six sense organs perceive their objects, *manas* edges itself between *ālaya* and five consciousnesses and causing them to attach firmly to their external objects and getting rise the thirst, wish, and seeking for pleasures. One's sorrow, grief, suffering and lamentation come from *manas* that is not only a discriminating intelligence but also an agency of affection and will. When *manas* are purified, the whole system of consciousness becomes pure. When external objects were perceived by six sense organs, their data are brought to *manovijñāna* and then they are analyzed by it, all memories are then deposited into *ālayavijñāna* and they are kept and developed there. After death, it is *ālayavijñāna* goes to transmigration according to *karma* contained in it.

*Tathāgatagarbha* is an other name of *ālayavijñāna*, which is pure, eternal and unmodifiable. It is the bode of *Tathāgatahood*, where has no defilements of discriminating intellect and affection but when *ālayavijñāna* is disturbed by *manas*, from which a system of eight consciousness appear and all attachments, discriminations, illusions, evils take shape and they constitute the roaring waves over

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<sup>37</sup> STTMC, pp. 115-6.

<sup>38</sup> BYB, p. 108.

<sup>39</sup> SSLs, p. 189.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*



the surface of *ālayavijñāna*, and *tathāgatagarbha* is covered by all habits of defilements.<sup>41</sup>

*Yogācāra* also mentions three levels of knowledge. These three levels of knowledge are sensual knowledge (*parikalpita*), logic knowledge (*paratantra*) and absolute knowledge (*parinishpana*).<sup>42</sup>

Sensual knowledge is also called illusory or imaginary knowledge. This knowledge is a false judgment to external objects and does not correspond to reality. It is possessed by all ordinary people. This knowledge can not know real-nature of all things.

Logic knowledge (*paratantra*) is knowledge of objects produced by cause and conditions. This knowledge is the relative knowledge since it only knows the impermanence, suffering, and selflessness of all conditioned things. This knowledge is possessed by *Sravakas*, *Pratyeka-Buddhas* and *Bodhisattvas* of lower stages who know things through their individualities and generalities.

The absolute knowledge (*parinishpana*) or the highest knowledge is possessed by Buddhas and *Bodhisattvas* of higher stages, who knew the essence of all conditioned things that is not made by cause and conditions, when all false discriminations are cut off, this knowledge takes shape.<sup>43</sup> This knowledge does not increase in Buddhas, *Bodhisattvas* and it does not decrease in other living beings, it transcends all apprehension of sense organs, it is attained through the self-realization. It is called by the seven names in the *Mahāyāna sūtras*, viz. *Bodhi*, *Nirvāna*, perfect wisdom, Buddha-knowledge, *sūnyatā*, the great mirror wisdom and intuition.<sup>44</sup>

When a rope is mistaken as a snake, he has imaginary knowledge; when it is known as a rope that depends on its cause and conditions, he has logic knowledge but

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 157-9.

<sup>43</sup> *SIP*<sub>2</sub>, p. 373.

<sup>44</sup> *LSS*, p. 112.

when the real nature of this rope is known, he has the absolute knowledge or intuition.<sup>45</sup>

The concept of liberation is, according to *Yogācāra*, the self-realization of the completely pure state of *ālayavijñāna* or to become one with the self nature of *tathāgatagarbha* that is free from desire, anger, and ignorance.

The means to the final liberation is the practice of *Yoga* in order to transmute one's eight consciousnesses into wisdom. When one attains the self-realization of the Absolute, his visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, bodily consciousnesses are transmuted into the perfecting wisdom, *monovijñāna* into the profound observing wisdom, *manas* into wisdom of equality and *ālayavijñāna* into the great mirror wisdom. This great mirror wisdom is possessed by the Buddha, who was sitting here, knew the whole universe and any thinking and affection of living beings.<sup>46</sup>

### **The Thought of Brahmanism**

The thought of *Brahmanism* mainly comes from *Upaniṣads* because they are the end parts of the *Vedas* that systematize the ideas of *Vedas*.

The thinkers of the *Upaniṣads* seek for truth and resolve the problems that man always thinks about. They hold that one lives here whether in pain or in happiness, all has its cause.

If one be covered by ignorance, he certainly lives in suffering whereas if he lives with knowledge, apprehends his *ātman* or inner real self, he is free from bondage.

The *Brahman*, *ātman* must be something ultimate after dissolution of things. It is a self-existent entity from which all things spring, exist and return back to it after their dissolution. The world, mind, knowledge, senses and their objects are all finite and conditioned, and they are governed by the law of impermanence.

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<sup>45</sup> SSLS, pp. 139-40.

<sup>46</sup> LCZ<sub>3</sub>, p. 122.

The pleasures of the world are transient, changed and are cut off by old-age and death. One can not find his real happiness from the finite, only the infinite gives him the eternal happiness. The infinite is the real-self, which is permanent being, a spiritual reality.

In *Rgveda*, *ātman* is understood as the breath or vital essence, gradually it is developed into the essence of soul or individual self. The self is presented through four kinds: the bodily self, the empirical self, the transcendental self and the absolute self.<sup>47</sup> The absolute self is *Brahman* or *ātman* that is the foundation of all existences.

*Chandogya Upanisad*<sup>48</sup> gives some general characteristics of *ātman* which is free from dualism and imperfection, free from old-age, sickness, and death... and nothing can destroy it. Permanence, continuity, unity and eternality are also its attributes. And there is nothing outside it to exist.<sup>49</sup> *Maitrī Upanisad*<sup>50</sup> holds that it is the self constituted all living beings, all worlds, all gods and all existences; it is the truth of truths, etc.

The *Brahman* and *ātman* in the *Upaniṣads* are synonymous with *Dharmakāya* and the Buddha-nature in the *Mahāyāna sūtras*. They are considered as the substratum of both self and no-self and nobody can be skeptical about his real nature. In the *Katha Upaniṣad*<sup>51</sup>, the self-nature is considered as the highest reality that is the boss, who is sitting on the chariot, the objects are the roads, body is a chariot, emotions are horses, intellect is the rein, wisdom is director, elemental self is the enjoyer. S.Radhakrishnan<sup>52</sup> considers *Brahman* as *ātman* that is one's own conscious principle and *Brahman* is also the supernatural ground of the universe.

The nature of *Brahman* or *ātman* is immortal and self-bright and self-demonstrated, it exists forever and it is subject of all experiences, it pervades the whole universe. It has no beginning, no end, though all things manifested from it have

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<sup>47</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 153.

<sup>48</sup> RPU, p. 501.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 842.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 623.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

beginning and end.<sup>53</sup> It is described by many ways by the Buddha, Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu, Mahāvira, Samkara, Kalpila, Patañjali, etc.

Like *Mahāyānism*, *Upaniṣads* show three sources of knowledge: The sensual perception, logic perception and the absolute perception. According to the *Upaniṣads*, the sensual perception and logic perception are relative knowledge that can know the appearance of things as well as the impermanence and selflessness of them. The real nature of all things can not be perceived by this relative knowledge, it can be perceived by intuition or absolute knowledge. Intuition is the result of meditation, which is a process by which the intellectual knowledge is transmuted into a vital power. Wishing attain intuition or absolute knowledge, one should give up the learned ignorance and meditate on the ultimate reality. By the practice of meditation or *yoga*, the mind of man becomes one with the Absolute and the final liberation is known.

*Svetasvatara Upaniṣad*<sup>54</sup> gives a meticulous guidance of the *yoga* practice when the awareness is taken shape, the *sūtras* are effectless.

*Īśvara* is also the important factor in the *Upaniṣads*. According to the *Upaniṣads*, *Īśvara* is *Saguna Brahman* that is the second face of the Absolute *Brahman* or *Nirguna Brahman*. *Katha Upaniṣad*<sup>55</sup> says that *Brahman* has both sides of peaceful stability and active energizing. In the former aspect, he is *Brahman*, in the latter he is *Īśvara*, the creator of the world, who is an active manifestation of the absolute *Brahman*.

S. Radhakrishnan<sup>56</sup> says that Nāgārjuna ridicules the idea of God; truly he only denied the deist's God, he repudiates an active manifestation of the Absolute. He is sincere in his devotion to the true God, the *Dharmakaya* of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism.

Samkara regards the indeterminate and unqualified *Brahman*, which is the transcendental Being, consciousness and bliss, as the ontological. He also regards the determinate and qualified *Brahman* as *Īśvara*, the individual souls and the world as

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<sup>53</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 161.

<sup>54</sup> RPU, p. 137.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 618.

<sup>56</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 655.

appearance<sup>57</sup> whereas Ramānuja regards the determinate and qualified *Brahman* as *Īsvara*, who has internal difference, as the ontological reality and regards the conscious souls and unconscious world as attributes, modes or accessories of God.<sup>58</sup>

*Īsvara* is said to create the world with his *māyā*. The universe is the manifestation of his glory as sparks emanate from a burning fire.<sup>59</sup> *Īsvara* is the ruler and governor of the world. The sun, moon, earth, sky are kept in their respective positions by his command.<sup>60</sup> All things in the universe, in fact, exist beyond God's wish; they exist by their powers of interaction. God certainly can not govern them.

The soul is also the important thought of *Brahmanism*. Soul is called by *Jīva* by *Upaniṣads*, it is also the empirical self<sup>61</sup> that is different from body, sense organs, mind and intellect. The individual soul is potentially infinite. It is not female nor is it male, nor yet is the neuter. Whatever body it takes to itself, by that it is held. According to his past *karma*, it assumes successively various forms in various conditions. It is without beginning and without end.<sup>62</sup> The soul is said to be master and active agent of senses, mind and intellect. It is knower, enjoyer, thinker and doer of the good and bad *karma* and experiences joy or sorrow, happiness or suffering. J. Sinha<sup>63</sup> says that the soul lives in the opening of the heart, unborn, conscious, and eternal and devoid of infinite knowledge and sovereignty, it is not perished while its body died.

*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*<sup>64</sup> asserts that when a man died, whose body is burnt, he remains only his soul. This soul then connects with father's self that is left into the mother's womb, there a new fetus takes shape and a new life is continued.<sup>65</sup> There is difference between *ātman* and soul. *ātman* is the supreme soul or self-nature of man, it

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<sup>57</sup> SIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 17.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 673.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>62</sup> RPU, pp. 740-1.

<sup>63</sup> SIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 18.

<sup>64</sup> RPU, p. 313.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 324-1.

is not only freed from *karma*, suffering, sorrow, birth and death while *jīva* or individual soul is controlled by *karma*, after death it continues to enter into the transmigration again and again and it assumes the beautiful or ugly body according to its past *karma*.<sup>66</sup> When individual soul realizes his *ātman*, he attains the immortality and unite with the *Brahman* as rivers, having different forms and names, merge in the sea leaving their names and forms.<sup>67</sup>

According to the *Upanisads*<sup>68</sup> and the *Saddharmapuṇḍārīka sūtra*<sup>69</sup> of *Mahāyāna*, the world is real though it has many imperfect manifestations.

The *Upaniṣads* hold that material is not the first principle of the universe because it can not raise itself. The first principle of all existences is an absolute *Brahman*.<sup>70</sup> Samkara points out that *Brahman* is real but the world, which issues out of *Brahman*, is unreal and it is only a manifestation of the supreme *Brahman* through his power (*māyā*).<sup>71</sup> Change is the pervading feature of the world. *Maitrī Upanisad*<sup>72</sup> asserts that everything in the world is transient, rises, grows, decays and dies.

Like Buddhism, *Upaniṣads* assert that ignorance or thirst (*tanhā*) is the cause of bondage. The *Upaniṣad* affirms that there is a succession of lives according to *karma* done by him. So long as his ignorance has not destroyed completely, he is continually reborn in the three realms of existence.<sup>73</sup> If he practises the right thought and right action, he will be freed from *karma* and the liberation is attained.<sup>74</sup>

The liberation, according to *Upaniṣads*, does not mean to renounce the world but to remain unattached to it. In other word, the renouncement of bondage is not neglectfulness of social duties but it is the perfect fulfillment of duties to the world. It is this perfect fulfillment of duties to society his mind becomes happy and tranquil.

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 921.

<sup>68</sup> RPU, p. 190.

<sup>69</sup> BFLS, p. 70.

<sup>70</sup> SIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 28.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>72</sup> RPU, p. 797.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 271.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

He is not only freed from desire, hatred, delusion, sorrow, fear but also freed from merit and demerit that are the cause of bondage.<sup>75</sup>

There are two forms of liberation mentioned in the *Upaniṣads*, that is, *jīvan mukti* and *videha mukti*.<sup>76</sup> *Jīvan mukti* is the liberation during life where one, who is freed from all desires, attains immortality. And *Videha mukti* is liberation after death. *Jīvan mukti* is synonymous with *Upādhiśesa Nirvāna* and *Videha mukti* corresponds with *Anupādhiśesa Nirvāna* of *Hīnayānism*. *Upādhiśesa Nirvāna* where only human passion is extinct but five aggregates are still present, *Anupādhiśesa* where all being is extinct.

Like *Mahāyānism*, *Brahmanism* also shows three means to the final liberation, that is *Jñānayoga*, *Bhaktiyoga*, and *Karmayoga*.

*Jñānayoga* is the means to the union of the finite self with the infinite self through intuition. The performance of sacrifice and duties without pure knowledge are unavailing. All attachments and other afflictions are rooted out by the intuitive wisdom. The indiscriminate wisdom leads to the identification of soul and God and attainment of *Brahmā-Nirvāna* after death. When a *Yogin* unites himself with *Brahman*, he is untainted by all defilements and passions, he acquires a mystic vision of the supreme self or *ātman* in all creatures and all of them in *ātman* and enters into the eternal life or *Brahmā-Nirvāna*.<sup>77</sup>

*Bhakti* or devotion is also manifested through thought, speech, and action dedicating to God. Devotion with desire leads to rebirth in the heaven states while devotion without desire itself is the untainted merit of saints.<sup>78</sup>

*Nārada Bhakti sūtra* says that: in the sacrifice, all desires are directed to God, all passions are suppressed, all actions dedicated to him, the egoism and attachment are extinguished, desires and aversions are conquered, pleasure and pain are renounced.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> SIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 27.

<sup>76</sup> RPU, p. 121.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 723.

<sup>78</sup> RPU, pp. 314, 652.

<sup>79</sup> SIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 196.

Though devotion does not lead to the final liberation, it prepares the pure mind for the liberation.

By devotion one's mind becomes pure, all sins are destroyed and renouncing all attachments to worldly objects and all actions concerning to selfish desire. In other words, *bhaktiyoga* leads to the experience of *ātman*, merging in *Brahman* and attainment of God.

*Karmayoga* is the same with *anābhogacaryā* in the *Mahāyāna sūtras*, both terms are explained as the purposeless actions or services without rewards. Through the performance of *karmayoga*, one can attain the union of the finite soul with the supreme soul or *ātman* or Buddha-nature. Performance of duties for the sake of others with perfect detachment purifies the mind, achieves the knowledge of *Brahman* and merges in the Absolute as a lump of salt is dissolved in water.<sup>80</sup>

## (2) Developing the Theory of Sūnyata and Buddhayāna

### Theory of Sūnyata

The term *sūnyatā* is variously understood. To phenomenal field, it means the ever changing attribute of conditioned things. To ontological aspect, it is a permanent principle, transcendent and indefinable, immanent in all existences. The former is true nature of the world of experience; the latter belongs to the metaphysical reality.

The concept of *sūnyatā* in Buddhism consists of the relative *sūnyatā* and the absolute *sūnyatā*. But *Hīnayāna* only mentions the relative *sūnyatā* or phenomenal *sūnyatā*. It means that they only state the attributes of impermanence, suffering, and selflessness of the phenomenal world. The absolute *sūnyatā* or the essence of all things has not yet found in any *Hīnayāna* doctrines. The doctrines of impermanence, changing, and decaying of *Hīnayāna* answers to the relative *sūnyatā* of *Mahāyānism*.

Both *Hīnayāna* and *Mahāyāna* agree that the phenomenal world is unreal and it is subject to flux and change. All things in the world are compared to dew drops, to

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.



flash of lightning or froth.<sup>81</sup> They hold that nothing to be self-existent since all are based on an endless series of cause and conditions, all properties of things are relational and changeable.<sup>82</sup> The law of causality conditions all being that is in a state of perpetual, becoming, arising, and passing away. There is sorrow and pain because all things are transient; they vanish as soon as they occur. It is the impermanence of object of desire that causes disappointment and regret.

On the other hand, both *Hinayāna* and *Mahāyāna* consider five aggregates (*skandhas*) as empty. Body, perception, mental volition, and consciousness are also impermanent and changing, none of them exists forever.<sup>83</sup>

According to them, whatever is considered as self that is only a succession of emptiness, even wife or children, fame or honour, love or worth are also governed by the law of impermanence, none of them is worth pursuing. S.Radhakrisnan<sup>84</sup> states that what is subject to origination is to destruction. So change is the stuff of conditioned reality, identity of objects is an unreality.

Again, impermanence is only another name of continuity of being, a child, a boy, a young, a man and an old man are one person. In the *Madhyanta Vibhanga*, Maitreya-nātha (Asanga's master)<sup>85</sup> calls this continuity of being is *sūnyatā* because the substance of one's body as well as the states of his mind change from moment to moment. Āryadeva<sup>86</sup> also states that the cause never perishes but only changes its appearance. Having changed its state, it becomes an effect. Clay becomes a jar having changed its state and in this case, the name of clay is lost and the name of jar comes into being.

Whatever arises from cause and conditions, is bound to perish. Anything born, brought into being and organized, contains within itself the inherent necessity of dissolution. Like the *Upaniṣads*, Early Buddhism recognizes that the whole world is conditioned by causes and things have no self-existence but are products of a causal

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<sup>81</sup> EVP, p. 92.

<sup>82</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 654.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 366.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 368.

<sup>85</sup> MVS, p. 26.

<sup>86</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 615.

series that has no beginning or end. According to *Theravāda*, this world of unresting change is no a firm resting place for man. The doctrine of relative emptiness is the common foundation of the *Upaniṣads* and Early Buddhism.<sup>87</sup> And this doctrine is developed by the *Sautrāntika* school into the view of the momentariness.<sup>88</sup> But to say that things are impermanent to be easy understood than they are momentary. The Buddha asserts that only the states of mind are momentary and not things.<sup>89</sup> It is evident that the body can last one year, two years even one hundred years but mind, intellect, and consciousness keep up only a moment and then come to perishing. When things are predicated in general feature, impermanence does not mean momentariness. Change is the common characteristic of conditioned things. If things were not changed there would have no different effects at different points of time though all are unreal, not non-existent.

*Vaibhāsika*'s idea is more progressive than the *Sautrāntika*'s. It does not agree with *Sautrāntika*'s doctrine that all things are momentary. In *Abhidharmakosa*, Vasubandhu<sup>90</sup> asserts that only the manifested principles are impermanent but the unmanifested things are not. The manifested principles are the objects of external world, which are aggregated by atoms of material, existing according to the process of production, existence, changing and destruction. According to *Vaibhāsikas*, impermanence is the general attribute of all manifested things. The existence of a jar is really the existence of a series of changed jars.

On the contrary, the unmanifested things are never changed because they are not made by the material elements. According to Vasubandhu, there are three kinds of unmanifested things that is, *āśāśa*, *pratisamkhyā nirodha* and *apratisamkhyā nirodha*.<sup>91</sup> P.V.Bapat explains that *āśāśa* or space is the limitless, free from all changes. *Pratisamkhyā nirodha* is the cessation of all defilements, attained through the power of perfect knowledge and *apratisamkhyā nirodha* is the cessation acquired without the aid

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 372.

<sup>88</sup> SIP<sub>2</sub>, p. 356.

<sup>89</sup> KS<sub>2</sub>, p. 96.

<sup>90</sup> SST, p. 103.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

of perfect knowledge.<sup>92</sup> S.Radhakrisnan<sup>93</sup> asserts that these unmanifested things never changed by any conditions.

Though *Vaibhāsika* has not yet mentioned the absolute *sūnyatā* or the self-nature of all things, it mentions both *sūnyatās*, the *sūnyatā* of the concrete and abstract principles.

Unlike *Vaibhāsika*, *Sārvastivāda* mentions *sūnyatā* of phenomenal things and that of the subtle elements of material that create all conditioned things. *Sārvastivādas*<sup>94</sup> hold that only the concrete things are impermanent but the subtle elements of material, which create all things, exist forever. The waves on the face of the sea are lower and higher, the moisture is not changed.

There is no speculation in *Hīnayāna* about what remains after dissolution of things, whereas *Mahāyāna*<sup>95</sup> believes in the essence of all things that remains forever. It means that from the doctrine of relative *sūnyatā* or impermanence of *Hīnayāna*, *Mahāyāna* develops the doctrine of absolute *sūnyatā* or the real-nature of all things and they declare that the real nature is unchanged though the form of things is changed.<sup>96</sup> According to *Mahāyānists*, the absolute *sūnyatā* is the substratum of all, from which all things spring up, exist, and returning back after their dissolutions.

The absolute *sūnyatā* answers to *Brahman* or *ātman* in the *Upanisads* and it is called by many different names in the *Mahāyāna* doctrines. It is called “the Buddha-knowledge” by the *Saddharmapuṇḍārika sūtra*. “The original *bodhi*” by the Perfect Enlightenment *sūtra*, “True mind” by the *Sūrangama sūtra*, “*Dharmakaya*” by the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*, “Buddha-mind” by the Chinese Ch’an school, “self-nature of *Amitābha*” by the pure-land school, “Absoluteness” by the *Tāntric* school, “Nature of *tathāgatagarbha*” by the *Yogācāra* school, etc.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> BYB, p. 94.

<sup>93</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 615.

<sup>94</sup> SST, p. 37.

<sup>95</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 593.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 587.

<sup>97</sup> LSS, p. 112.

Though the names of the absolute are many, its nature is one only. The *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*<sup>98</sup> determines that *Brahman* is imperishable, it is neither gross nor fine, neither short nor long, neither shadow nor dark, without taste, without smell, without eyes, without ears, without mind, no within and no without, it eats nothing and no one eats it. All things come out from *Brahman* as sparks come out from fire, as plants shoot forth the earth or as the threads come out from spider.<sup>99</sup>

In the Heart *sūtra* of *Mahāyāna*, such a similar definition is also made. Especially the Heart *sūtra* affirms that in the absolute *sūnyatā*, there is no Four Noble truths, no wisdom and no attainment of *Nirvāna*.<sup>100</sup>

The above concepts are dual; the absolute *sūnyatā* is merely *Nirvāna*, the result of practising *Dharma*. In other word, by practice of *Dharma*, man becomes one with the absolute *sūnyatā*, without attainment at all. The absolute *sūnyatā* is neither lost nor acquired, neither positive nor negative. If it is positive, it is a product that is subject to decay and death. If it is absolute negative then it is non-eternal.

Nāgārjuna<sup>101</sup> (80-120 c. A.D.), who develops the idea of *Madhyamika* school in India, described it by means of eightfold negation:

“It is neither origination nor cessation, neither permanence nor impermanence, neither unity nor diversity, neither coming in nor going out”. The absolute *sūnyatā* or self-nature of all things is free from dualism and imperfection; it is the subtle reality that nothing can destroy. Death can not touch it nor vice can dissolve it, it is free from craving, from evils, from fear and it is embraced in all.<sup>102</sup>

S. Radhakrishnan<sup>103</sup> states that the Absolute has the two states of the unconditioned and the conditioned, the realm of real being and that of birth and death.

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<sup>98</sup> RPU, p. 232.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

<sup>100</sup> SBS, pp. 134-5.

<sup>101</sup> KBC, p. 84.

<sup>102</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 153.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 593-4.

According to him, the unconditioned pervades all; everything or every individual is the manifestation of the potential whole.

Kumarajīva asserts that it is on account of *sūnyatā* that everything becomes possible, without it nothing in the world is possible.<sup>104</sup>

According to him the absolute *sūnyatā* is the synonym of that which has no cause, that which is beyond thought or conception, that which is without measure. It is a permanent principle, transcendent and indefinable, immanent in all things. He explains further that the essence of all things is called *sūnyatā* since no category used in relation to the conditions of the world is adequate. To call it being is wrong because only the concrete things are. To call it non-being is equally wrong. It is best to avoid all description of it.

Thought and language are dualistic in their functions and what is beyond any description is non dual. According to *Madhyamikas*, reason and language apply only the finite world, the Absolute is only understood by intuition.<sup>105</sup> Whoever attempts to express the true essence of existences, he contradicts himself. This ultimate truth that science also can not reach. Nāgārjuna pulls to pieces of all experience, so that he may reveal the absolute behind existences. One can not see or feel something behind existences by sense organs. The Absolute is just the Absolute and one can not say anything of it. All thinking and discussion are relative; the absolute *sūnyatā* is beyond them. One believes in the Absolute though he can not see it.

## **Buddhayāna**

*Buddhayāna* or Buddha-Vehicle is one of three vehicles of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. The *Sravaka*-vehicle and *pratyekabuddha*-vehicle of *Hinayāna* are only the means to the Buddha vehicle (*Buddhayāna*) of *Mahāyāna*. The *Saddharmapūṇḍarika sūtra*<sup>106</sup> states that as Buddha appears in the evil age of five impureness, one's mind is very vile, being covetous and envious, bringing to maturity very root of badness, he

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 663.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 664.

<sup>106</sup> BTLS, p. 61.

can not teach the teaching of one-vehicle to humankind. But he, by tactful powers (*upaya kausalya*) in the teaching of one-vehicle (*Buddhayāna*), discriminates and expounds into the teaching of three vehicles, really there is only one-vehicle without other vehicles, neither the second nor the third.

The *sūtra*<sup>107</sup> affirms that the Buddha expounds the teaching of three vehicles (*triyāna*) in order to reveal the one-vehicle (*ekayāna*) or the Buddha-vehicle.

To humor one's disposition, to the seekers of the *Svavaka-yāna*, the Buddha expounds them the Four Noble Truths and helping them to know the suffering, the cause of suffering, and the path to the cessation of suffering and the attainment of *Nirvāna*. To the seekers of the *Pratyekayāna*, the Buddha teaches them the theory of Dependent Origination to lead them to apprehension of the cause of rebirth and the cessation of it. To the seekers of *Bodhisattvayāna*, he expounds them the six perfections (*pāramitās*) to help them performing the self-benefit and the benefit of others. But after attaining some result of cultivation, they are satisfied with the achievement attained, without expectation of the higher prospects. By this reason, the Buddha expounds them the one-vehicle and to encourage his disciples to reach the *Buddhayāna* or Buddhahood.

*Mahāyānists* hold that *Hīnayānic Nirvāna* is but the means to the union with one's original enlightenment. Chapter 11 of the *Saddharmapundarika sūtra*<sup>108</sup> demonstrates this truth. In this chapter, image of the Many-Treasure-Buddha, who shares half of his lotus seat with the Sakyamuni Buddha, emphasises the union of the personal *Nirvāna* (the cultivated enlightenment) with the absolute *Nirvāna* (the original enlightenment).

It is very wrong when *Hīnayānists* consider *Arhatship* as the final liberation. Mahādeva<sup>109</sup> asserts that *Arhat* still retains a little of ignorance and passion. So he has something more to learn. N.Dutt<sup>110</sup> holds that *Arhat* just attains the emptiness of

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<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> SSLf, pp. 169-70.

<sup>109</sup> SST, p. 158.

<sup>110</sup> NMB, p. 122.

egoism to stop the rebirth in the three realms of existence. He has not yet attained the emptiness of *dharma* (*dharma sūnyatā*) and he can not become a Buddha, if he does not practise the four remaining stages of *Mahāyāna* (*Sādhumatī*, *Dharmameghā*, *Nirupamā*, *Jñānavatī*).

According to *Mahāyāna*, the Buddhahood does not come from outside but it is merely the manifestation of one's potential enlightened power. Whenever he becomes one with his original enlightenment, he is called a Buddha, who has enough compassion and wisdom.

The ideal of *Mahāyāna* is *Bodhisattva* as distinct from the *Arhat* of *Hīnayāna*. *Bodhisattva* literally means one whose essence is to benefit himself and others. In other word, *Bodhisattva* means a man, who is going on the way to the future Buddhahood. In *Hīnayānic* doctrine, the term *Bodhisattva* is only used for Gautama during the period of his search for truth. It is to say, in *Hīnayāna* doctrine, there is only one *Bodhisattva* Gautama before his becoming a Buddha while in the *Mahāyāna* doctrine this term is opened for those who render benefit to other creatures. Out of compassion for suffering humankind, *Mahāyānic Bodhisattva* denies entering into *Nirvāna* and promises himself in the task of bringing off men from the worldly sufferings.

The path to *Arhathood* is the practice of Eightfold path<sup>111</sup> while the means to Buddhahood, as elaborated in the *Avataṃsaka* and *Sūrangama sūtras*, is the practice of ten *pāramitās* (perfections)<sup>112</sup> and to attain the twelve stages of *Bodhisattva*.<sup>113</sup> In the first stage called *pramuditā* (joyful stage)<sup>114</sup>, *Bodhisattva* practises the perfection of charity. He gives creatures both his wealth and knowledge with a view to make his contribution to the happiness life of sentient beings and to help them knowing the truth of life as it is. By doing so, the *Bodhisattva* gradually destroys his egoism, develops his compassionate heart and wisdom. The recognition of the impermanent characteristic of all conditioned things enlarges compassionate nature in him.

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<sup>111</sup> BSB, pp. 135-6.

<sup>112</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 601.

<sup>113</sup> HBSL, pp. 284-91.

<sup>114</sup> NMB, p. 83.

The *Bodhisattva*, after completing the first stage of *Bodhisattva*, continues to practise the second stage called *Vimalā* (pure stage).<sup>115</sup> S. Radhakrishnan<sup>116</sup> explains that in this stage the *Bodhisattva* cultivates the perfection of morality (*pāramitā* of *sīla*), he observes all precepts and the exercises of wisdom. The insight is developed gradually so as to render his heart pure and the mind free from the illusion of self. His faith, compassion, charity and disinterestedness are developed still higher.

The *Bodhisattva*, after attaining the second stage, seeks the third stage called *Prabhākari* (luminous stage) in which he cultivates the perfection of patience and forbearance.<sup>117</sup> N. Dutt<sup>118</sup> explains that in the stage, the *Bodhisattva* gives up all traces of egoism, training himself in meditation and developing wisdom. By means of wisdom, he also realizes all phenomena being transient, changing, and momentary and he simultaneously realizes the body of man like a burning house that is burnt with the fire of passion, hatred, and ignorance. He, therefore, renounces all attachments to the material world and to abide in his real nature. S. Radhakrishnan and N. Dutt have the same opinion about this stage.

The *Bodhisattva*, after cultivating the third stage, seeks the fourth stage called *Arcismitī* (Effulgent stage).<sup>119</sup> Har Dayal explains that in this stage, the *Bodhisattva* cultivates the perfection of energy (*pāramitā* of *virya*). By his energy in cultivation of precepts and meditation, he can be free partly from desire and ignorance; his faith to Three Jewels (*Buddha, Dharma, Sangha*) becomes irreversible. He gets rid of all wrong views based on the passion and wealth.

The *Bodhisattva*, after completing the fourth stage, seeks the fifth stage called *Sudurjayā* (invincible stage).<sup>120</sup> Bhikshu Sangharakshita<sup>121</sup> explains that in the stage, the *Bodhisattva* cultivates the perfection of meditation (*pāramitā* of *dhyaṇa*). According to

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<sup>115</sup> SBSB, p. 496.

<sup>116</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 601.

<sup>117</sup> NMB, p. 111.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> HBSL, p. 286.

<sup>120</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 602.

<sup>121</sup> BSB, p. 82.



him, the *Bodhisattva* not only understands Four Noble Truths but he also known the various other aspects of truth, from the relative truth, the absolute truth up to the truth of the Origin of *Tathāgata*-knowledge. N.Dutt<sup>122</sup> adds that the *Bodhisattva* also possesses the knowledge of medicine, art and sciences and he uses them for his altruistic actions. And he also attains the *Dhāranis* for his protection.

After cultivating the fifth stage, he comes to the sixth called *Abhimukhī* (face to face with *samsāra*).<sup>123</sup> Har Dayal<sup>124</sup> explains that in the stage, the *Bodhisattva* cultivates the perfection of wisdom (*pāramitā* of *prajñā*). Through the practice of meditation and concentration, he apprehends the interdependence of all things in the universe and non-substantiality of them. And he also realizes the absolute sameness of all phenomena. He gets rid of the notions “I” and “mine” and he is free from desire. His thought now becomes firm, profound, steady, and pure. Though his wisdom is sharp, he has not yet completely free from passion.

The *Bodhisattva*, after completing the sixth stage, seeks the seventh stage, called *Dūrangamā* (stage of Far reaching).<sup>125</sup> The *Bodhisattva* is so called because he transcends the personal *Nirvāna* of *Hīnayāna*, and moves in the direction of the ontological *Nirvāna* or *Buddhayāna* of *Māhyāna*. N. Dutt explains<sup>126</sup> that, in this stage, the *Bodhisattva* cultivates the perfection of expedient (*pāramitā* of *upāya kauśalya*). He acquires great wisdom in the choice of expedients for the benefit of creatures. He has conquered all passions and sins and he is free from them.

His thoughts, words, and actions are pure and he is in possession of all factors of enlightenment. He denies entering into the personal *Nirvāna* and coming into the suffering world to salve creatures. He works for the happiness of all without rewards or ulterior grace.

The *Bodhisattva*, after completing the seventh stage and purifying his passion by means of knowledge and expedients, enters into the eighth stage, called *Acalā*

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<sup>122</sup> NMB, pp. 116-7.

<sup>123</sup> BSB, p. 498.

<sup>124</sup> HBSL, p. 286.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> NMB, p. 123.

(immovable stage).<sup>127</sup> Bhikṣu Sangharaksita<sup>128</sup> explains that in this stage, the *Bodhisattva* cultivates the perfection of aspiration. He apprehends the process of the evolution and involution of the universe even he knows the exact number of atoms in different elements, of which the universe is composed. He can assume different bodies and shows them to people as he thinks fit. He works for the happiness of others without rewards. Now he has enough powers and four fearlessness, which he has not yet acquired before. The *Bodhisattva* of immovable stage is synonymous with the immovable *Arhat* of *Hīnayāna*. It is to say that the *Bodhisattva* is completely free from passion and sin and he apprehends the thusness of all things but he does not allow himself to take rest while creatures live in suffering.

The *Bodhisattva*, after completing the eighth stage, seeks the ninth stage, called *Sādhumatī* (stage of good wisdom). S. Radhakrishnan<sup>129</sup> explains that in this stage, he cultivates the perfection of strength (*bala*). The *Bodhisattva* knows all phenomena and principles truly and certainly, whether they are mundane or supra-mundane, conceivable or inconceivable, compounded or uncompounded. He is not controlled by the thirst of passion (*tanhā*) and egoism. He works for the happiness of others without expectation of any thing.

The *Bodhisattva*, after completing the ninth stage, continues to cultivate the tenth stage, called *Dharmameghā* (the cloud of virtue). According to Har Dayal<sup>130</sup>, the *Bodhisattva* cultivates the perfection of intuition (*pāramitā* of *jñāna*). The *Bodhisattva* is so called because his virtue can be compared with the cloud of *Dharma* that always gives cover to all creatures and saves them from the worldly sufferings. At the stage, the *Bodhisattva* is considered as to complete ten *paramitās* and his power of enlightenment answers to the absolute *sūnyatā* that is the manifestation of universal love for men and animals.

The *Bodhisattva*, after completing ten *pāramitās* at tenth stage of *Bodhisattva*, seeks for the eleventh stage, called *Nirupamā* (equaled wisdom) to prepare his future

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<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>128</sup> BSB, p. 499.

<sup>129</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 602.

<sup>130</sup> HBSL, p. 291.

Buddhahood. All scholars are completely unaware of this stage, except Har Dayal<sup>131</sup> who mentions only the name of the stages. In the stage, the *Bodhisattva* simultaneously cultivates ten *pāramitās*. He is called *Nirupamā* because his wisdom can be equaled with the Buddha's wisdom but his vow of saving sentient beings has not yet completed. He, therefore, can not abandon creatures in order to enter the Buddhahood. In the *Ksitigarbha sūtra*, the Ksitigarbha *Bodhisattva* took a great vow that: "I shall not enter into the Buddhahood if all sentient beings still live in the Hells".<sup>132</sup> Similarly a great vow was also taken by the *Bodhisattva* Avalokitesvara that: "Whenever all sentient beings in ten directions live in the happiness without miseries, I will become a Buddha".<sup>133</sup>

Really, Hells are never empty and Ksitigarbha *Bodhisattva* will never become a Buddha because his vow to be too great. He can not complete his vow because living beings continue to do evil actions and they continue to enter in to Hells.

*Bodhisattva* Siddhartha<sup>134</sup> is said to fulfilled completely his great vow in the past. Though he was not controlled by *karma*, he volunteered to get rebirth in the world and becomes a Buddha in order to turn the wheel of *Dharma*, to salve sentient beings from their sufferings.

After fulfillment of the eleventh stage, he seeks for the twelfth stage of *Bodhisattva*. This is the last stage of *Bodhisattva* that is called *jñānavatī* (Buddhahood).<sup>135</sup> The *Bodhisattva* is so called because his self-enlightenment and enlightenment of others have completed in the present life. It is to say, he has passed through twelve stages of *Bodhisattva* and fulfilled ten *pāramitās*. He has apprehended the Four Noble Truths and the theory of Dependent Origination, the relative and absolute truths. He has immeasurable mercy, unlimited eloquence, ten powers, four fearlessness, concentration and emancipation. No one of *Sravakas* and *Pratyekabuddhas* is able to compare with him.

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<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> TSBKV, p. i.

<sup>133</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 601.

<sup>134</sup> SSLf, pp. 218-22ff.

<sup>135</sup> HBSL, p. 291.

After becoming a Buddha, he has enough ten noble names and the three virtues. Ten Noble names of the Buddha are known as: 1) *Tathāgata*, who realizes the real nature of all things and abides in that real nature. 2) Worthy of Offering. 3) Right and Universal knowledge. 4) Perfect Clarity and Conduct. 5) Well-Crossing over the sea of *samsāra*. 6) Apprehending the World. 7) Unexcelled Worthy. 8) Trainer of people. 9) Master of Heavenly and Human Beings. 10) Buddha and World Honoured One.<sup>136</sup>

And three virtues are: The virtue of *dharmakaya*, the Virtue of wisdom and the virtue of freedom.

According to N. Dutt<sup>137</sup>, eight previous stages of *Mahāyāna* (*pramuditā*, *Vimalā*, *Prabhakarī*, *Arcismatī*, *Sudurjayā*, *Abhimukhī*, *Dūrangama*, *Acalā*) are correspondent with eight stages of *Hīnayāna* (*Sotapanna magga*, *Sotapanna phala*, *Sakadhāgāmi magga*, *Sakadhāgāmi phala* (*Adhisīla*), *Anagāmi magga*, *Anagāmi phala* (*Adhicitta*), *Arhat magga*, *Arhat phala* (*Adhipaññā*)).

He holds that the immovable *Arhat* of *Hīnayāna* is the same with the immovable *Bodhisattva* of *Mahāyāna* because he acquires completely *pudgala sūnyatā*, stopping the rebirth in the three realms of existence, the *dharma sūnyatā* he has not yet fulfilled.<sup>138</sup> So he must practise four later stages of *Mahāyāna* to achieve *dharma-sūnyatā* or Buddhahood.<sup>139</sup>

### (3) Contribution of Mahāyāna Buddhism to Indian Civilization

#### (i) Mahāyānic Contribution to Indian literature

During the period from the first century B.C to the sixth century A.D., *Mahāyāna* has an active contribution to Indian literature with its various sources of literature. Among *Mahāyāna* literary sources, the system of *prajñā pāramitā sūtras* or the perfect wisdom *sūtras* is most important.

<sup>136</sup> BTLS, p. 127.

<sup>137</sup> NMB, pp. 108-11.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

Andrew Skilton<sup>140</sup> gives four phases of the growth of the literature. According to him, the *Aṣṭasahasrīka pāramitā sūtra* in 8000 *slokas* (lines) is the oldest *sūtra* that was composed at the first phase about 100 B.C – 100 A.D.<sup>141</sup> A.K. Warder<sup>142</sup> maintains that the *Aṣṭasahasrīka* compiled in the south of India and it was re-written from the prose part of the *Saila* text. The *sūtra*, which now extant in Nepal, includes thirty two chapters. Its content reveals the relative and absolute *sūnyatā* (emptiness) and the practice of *Bodhisattva* path.

Sangharakshita<sup>143</sup> holds that the *Aṣṭasahasrīka sūtra* constitutes the original nucleus of the whole system of the *prajñā pāramitā sūtras*. There are at least six Chinese translations of the *sūtra*<sup>144</sup>, the first is Lokaksema's version made about 179-180 A.D., the following versions are made by Dharmapriya in 382 A.D., Chih Ch'ien in 225 A.D., Kumārajīva in 408 A.D., Hsuan Tsang in 660 A.D. and Dānapāla in 985 A.D. Among these versions, Kumarajīva's one is most popular. The *sūtra* was also translated into Tibetan, Mongolian, Japanese and English. Dr Conze has produced an English version of the *sūtra* in 1958.<sup>145</sup>

The *sūtra* of this class composed in the second phase, from 100 A.D. to 300 A.D. were the *Mahā prajñā pāramitā sūtras*, e.g. the *Satasāhasrīka* or the Perfect wisdom *sūtra* in 100,000 *slokas*, the *Pañcaviṃśti-sāhasrīka* or the Perfect wisdom *sūtra* in 25,000 *slokas* and the *Aṣṭadāśa-sāhasrīka* or the Perfect wisdom *sūtra* 18,000 *slokas* (lines) and the *Vajracchedika* or the Perfect wisdom *sūtra* in 300 *slokas*.

There is a tradition that the Perfect wisdom *sūtra* in 100,000 *slokas* was brought back from the world of *Nāgas* by Nāgārjuna in the second century A.D.<sup>146</sup> But *Hīnayānists* hold that Nāgārjuna himself wrote the *prajñā pāramitā sūtra* (in 100,000

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<sup>140</sup> ACB, p. 102.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> AIB, p. 356.

<sup>143</sup> SEL, p. 137.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>146</sup> AIB, p. 356.

*slokas*).<sup>147</sup> In fact, there seems to be no reference by Nāgārjuna. He wrote simply and trying to establish the correct interpretation of the *Tripitaka* as recognized by all Buddhists. Even his *Madhyamikakārikā* is only a re-explanation of the original Middle way of *Tripitaka* and avoidance of extremes of speculative opinion and conduct. Apart from that, Sangharakshita<sup>148</sup> maintains that Nāgārjuna wrote a commentary of the *prajñā pāramitā sūtra* in 25,000 *slokas* in the second century A.D., named *Mahā prajñā pāramitopadeśa sāstra*. Nāgārjuna did not, in fact, write this commentary. It was written by Nāgārjuna II<sup>149</sup> or Nāgārbodhi (Nāgārjuna I's disciple) in the second century A.D. Nāgārbodhi's important works are *Mahā prajñā pāramitopadeśa* and *Dvādasadvāra*, now extant in Chinese translations.

As Conze<sup>150</sup> has shown these texts (the Perfect wisdom *sūtra* in 100,000 lines, the perfect wisdom *sūtra* in 25,000 lines and the Perfect wisdom *sūtra* in 18,000 lines) are really one and the same book. They only differ in the extent to which the repetitions are copied out. All three texts of large Perfect wisdom *sūtra* were translated into Chinese, Tibetan, and Mongolian in different periods.

Besides, a *Dasasāhasrika*<sup>151</sup> or the Perfect wisdom *sūtra* in 10,000 *slokas* is also sometimes classed with the large *sūtras*. The special feature of the *sūtra* is the definitions of the terms, that are scattered through three main versions of the large Perfect wisdom *sūtras*. The *Vajracchedika* or Diamond Cutter *sūtra* in which the Buddha teaches the method of subduing mind and abiding mind and avoidance of attachments of ego and *dharmas*. The last work is the Perfect wisdom *sūtra* in 100 lines that was taught by Mañjūri. It was translated into Chinese, Tibetan, and Mongolian.<sup>152</sup>

The *sūtras* of this class composed in the third phase, from 300-500 A.D., were the shorter *sūtras*, specially the *Hṛdaya prajñā pāramitā sūtra* or the Heart *sūtra* in

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<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 358.

<sup>148</sup> SEL, p. 147.

<sup>149</sup> AIB, p. 369.

<sup>150</sup> SEL, p. 10.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

which the relative and absolute *sūnyatā* are taught. Though there is some evidences to suggest that this particular text was originally written in Chinese and then translated back into *Sanskrit*.<sup>153</sup> But the *sūtra* is, in fact, an Indian *Sanskrit* text. According to Sangharakshita<sup>154</sup>, the recension of Heart *sūtra* has been found in palm leaf form in Japan, the recension of the *sūtra* has been brought into Japan in 850 A.D. There are seven Chinese translations of the *sūtra*, Kumarajīva's version in 400 A.D., Hsuan Tsang in 649 A.D., Dharmacandra in 741A.D., Prajñā in 790 A.D., Prajñācakra in 861 A.D., Fa Cheng in 856 A.D. and Dānapāla in 1000 A.D. It was translated into Tibetan by Vimalamitra. The thought of Heart *sūtra* influenced the thoughts of Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Bhāvavika, Candrakīrti and Santideva.<sup>155</sup>

According to L.M Joshi<sup>156</sup>, the classical *Vedāntists* took this twofold truth theory from the *sūtra* for the basis of their theories.

The last phase of producing *Prajñā pāramitā sūtras*, according to Andrew Skilton, was from 500 to 1000 A.D., while Sangharakshita asserts that the last phase of texts from 600 to 1200 A.D. It means that the last phase of producing texts, according to Sangharakshita, to be later than 100 years comparing with Andrew Skilton's suggestion. In this phase, most of *Prajñā pāramitā sūtras* were influenced by *Tantric* elements and so many commentaries of *Prajñā pāramitā sūtras* appeared in this phase.

The main literature, generally, used in the whole system of *Prajñā pāramitā sūtras* is the Negative-dialectical literature. The characteristic of the literature is to negate attributes and determining the real nature of all things. This is the most important literature of *Mahāyāna*, it is not found in any *Hīnayāna sūtras*. According to L.M Joshi, Gaudapāda and Saṃkara (6<sup>th</sup> CAD), the earliest and greatest masters of *Advaita Vedānta* school were influenced by the literature.<sup>157</sup> The conception of the Absolute (*Nirguna Brahman*) in *Advaita Vedānta* is similar to the absolute *sūnyatā* in

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<sup>153</sup> ACB, p. 102.

<sup>154</sup> SEL, p. 153.

<sup>155</sup> JBC, p. 345.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 341.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 344.

the *Prajñā pāramitā sūtras*. Here, the word *sūnyatā* stands for negation of all determinations. *Nirguna Brahman* is considered as *sūnyatā* because it is devoid of all attributes. On other hand, *sūnyatā* is also considered as the ground of the conditioned world. The *Madhyamikakārikā* the theories of Samkara's *Advaita Vedānta*<sup>158</sup> and Rāmanuja's *Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta* philosophy mention it.<sup>159</sup>

The impact of dialectics of *Prajñā pāramitā sūtras* is particularly predominant in the works of Srī Harsa, a *Vedāntist* of Samkara's school in the twelfth century A.D.<sup>160</sup>

Another important *sūtra* of *Mahāyāna* is the *Vimalakirtinideśa sūtra*. This *sūtra* stands for the whole system of the *sūtras* of the Realistic-critical literature. The *sūtra* was compiled some 150 A.D.<sup>161</sup>, it becomes extremely popular in the countries practising *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. The *sūtra* consists of thirteen chapters in which the non-dualism of the Absolute is revealed and the extreme actions in the practice of dharma are also criticized.<sup>162</sup>

There are two Chinese translations of the *sūtra*. The former is Kumārajīva's version in 406 A.D. and the latter is Hsuan Tsang's version in 650 A.D. Kumārajīva's version is popular in China, Japan, Vietnam, and Mongolia.

According to its own account, the *sūtra* originated in *Vaisali* where appeared the second Buddhist council. The *sūtra* not only upholds the *Bodhisattva* ideal but glorifies the role of layman in the attainment of enlightenment. An important idea of the *sūtra* that: If a *Bodhisattva* wishes to attain a pure-land, he should firstly purify his mind. When his mind is pure, his pure land will be pure.<sup>163</sup>

The Realistic critical literature is the main literature used in the *sūtra*. This is also the second important literature of *Mahāyānism*. The characteristic of the literature

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<sup>158</sup> SIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 36.

<sup>159</sup> SIP<sub>2</sub>, p. 652.

<sup>160</sup> JBC, p. 345.

<sup>161</sup> ACB, p. 105.

<sup>162</sup> RHV, pp. 73-89.

<sup>163</sup> SEL, p. 160.



is to criticize the dual actions and thoughts and revealing non-dualism of the Absolute. The doctrine of non-dual idealist absolute was developed by Maitreyanātha, Vasabandhu and Asanga. Dinnāga<sup>164</sup> has declared that “the climax of wisdom is the non-dual absolute”.

Samkara’s idea is seemingly influenced by the doctrine of *Mahāyāna* non-dualism; he regards the individual souls, God or qualified *Brahman* as the phenomenal appearances and the unqualified *Brahman* as the ontological reality or non-dualism.<sup>165</sup>

The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra* was composed between 100 BC-100 A.D.<sup>166</sup> It is a composite text that shows an overall division into two sections, the first relating to *Upāya* (skilful means) and *Ekayāna* (one vehicle)<sup>167</sup>, and the latter to life-span of the Buddha.<sup>168</sup> The *Upāya* or skilful means is the central teaching of the *sūtra*, the teachings of three vehicles (*yāna*) are only temporary expedients made necessary by the diversity of temperament among the Buddha’s disciples as well as by their varying degree of spiritual developments. In reality, there is but one vehicle, great vehicle (*Buddhayāna*) therein the Buddha himself abides and by means of which he delivers all living beings, leading them from the provisional to the final truth, from partial to complete enlightenment. The teachings of three vehicles were expounded for the purpose of revealing the one vehicle.<sup>169</sup> Andrew Skilton<sup>170</sup> maintains that the *sūtra* developed from the teachings of *lokottaravāda*, a branch of *Mahasanghika* schools. The *sūtra* consists of twenty eight chapters, each of which mentions an important factor of philosophy. There are six Chinese translations of the *sūtra*, the Kalasivi’s version made in 255 A.D., two versions of Dharmarakṣa, the first about 265-316 A.D. and the latter some 268 A.D., Zhi dao Gen’s version some 335 A.D., Kumārajīva in 406 A.D. and the version of Dharmagupta and Jñānagupta some 601 A.D. Among

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<sup>164</sup> JBC, pp. 341-2.

<sup>165</sup> RIP<sub>2</sub>, p. 468.

<sup>166</sup> ACB, p. 102.

<sup>167</sup> BTLS, pp. 15-7.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 250-3.

<sup>169</sup> ACB, pp. 102-3.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

these translations, Kumārajīva's version, Jñānagupta and Dharmagupta's version, and Dharmarakṣa's second version are extant in China, other translations are lost.

There were many commentaries of the *sūtra* in India and other countries between 200-600 A.D. specially a commentary the *sūtra* was made by Vasubandhu II about 550-600 A.D.<sup>171</sup> According to Sangharakṣita, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra* is not only a religious classic, but a masterpiece of symbolic literature.<sup>172</sup> His appreciation is entirely correct because the *sūtra* uses many philosophical images to symbolize truths. Even each *Bodhisattva*, each philosophical image stands for the characteristic of man. For example, in the chapter eleven, the Prabhūtaratna Buddha stands for the Buddha-nature or the original enlightenment or the Absolute that is potential in everybody. The Sakyamuni Buddha, in the chapter, is symbolized the enlightenment obtained by the practice of *Dharma* or the recent enlightenment or the pure soul. The image of the Prabhūtaratna Buddha, who share his half lotus throne to the Sakyamuni Buddha, stands for the union between the Absolute and pure soul. When the pure soul becomes one with the Absolute, man attains the final liberation or the immortality just in this life. The *stūpa* of seven precious things stands for the *dharmakāya* or real body of man in which has enough seven precious things, that is, faith, observance of precepts, hearing instruction, shame for self, shame for others, wisdom and renunciation.

The symbolic literature is the third kind of *Mahāyāna* literature. This literature seemingly influenced the thought of Rāmanuja, who was the founder of the *Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta* school, regards God as symbolization of truth and according to him there is no distinction between the indeterminate *Brahman* (*Nirguna Brahman*) and the determinate *Brahman* (*Saguna Brahman*).<sup>173</sup>

The *Sukhavatīvyūha sūtra* is of two versions, long and short ones. In the long version<sup>174</sup>, it talks about the *Bodhisattva* Dharmakara, who took forty-eight vows to establish the Pure-land, became a Buddha there, called Amitabha Buddha. The pure-

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<sup>171</sup> HMLJ, pp. 5-6.

<sup>172</sup> SEL, p. 106.

<sup>173</sup> RIP<sub>2</sub>, p. 661.

<sup>174</sup> SEL, pp. 170-3.

land is described by the Sakyamuni Buddha in more detail with its earth being covered by seven precious things, e.g. gold, silver, diamond and other jewels, without bumpiness of mountains, hills and stones, etc. Living beings there spend their times in pleasurable play and enjoy what they wish.

In the short version<sup>175</sup>, it aims at the practice of pure-land teachings. Faith, virtue and vow are special features mentioned in the version. It states that those who set their minds on Amitabha Buddha, cultivating unmeasured roots of good (*kusalamūla*) and vowing to be born into that world, they will be reborn there after death. Even those who have not often set their minds on the Amitabha Buddha and without cultivation of the roots of good very much, can be reborn there, if they imagine Amitabha Buddha in front of them at the moment of their death. Even those who, at the moment of their death, recite Amitabha Buddha's name only ten times with their one-minds, they can be also reborn in pure-land. Moreover, the *Bodhisattvas*, who were born in the pure-land, can become Buddha only after one more rebirth, if they wish. In the pure-land, living beings have not sense of possessing and to have no thought of pleasures or of non-pleasures.

In pure land, there is no quarrelling, dispute or opposition, their thoughts are all impartial, benevolent, mild, affectionate, unobstructed, etc.

There are three Chinese translations of the short *sūtra*, the first by Kumārajīva in 402 A.D. and subsequently by Gunabhadra and Hsuan Tsang.<sup>176</sup> The long version has also twelve Chinese translations, five of them are still extant, the earliest having done between 147 and 186 A.D. Thus the date of composition of the *sūtra* cannot be placed later than the first century A.D.<sup>177</sup>

Besides, there is another *sūtra* relating to pure-land teachings namely the 'Meditation on Amitabha *sūtra*'.<sup>178</sup> The *sūtra* is said to be expounded by the Sakyamuni Buddha at the vulture peak, *Rajagriha*, *Bihar*. The *sūtra* relates the facts of

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<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

Indian history, that after taking the throne of *Magadha*, Ajatasatru had imprisoned his father king Bimbisāra and attempted to starve him to death. The king is saved by his faithful consort Vaidehi, who secretly provides him with nutriment. On hearing of this, Ajatasatru became angry and kept her in prison. At that time, king Bimbisāra without food, his body was wicked and going to death. King prayed the Buddha, he appeared in front of Bimbisāra and taught him of Amitabha Buddha's pure-land and recitation of Amitabha Buddha name. After hearing the teaching, king Bimbisāra died with a happy mind and to be reborn in the pure-land. After the death of king Bimbisāra, the queen got suffering so much; the Buddha taught her sixteen methods of meditation on the Amitabha Buddha in order to help her free from suffering. The *sūtra* was translated into Chinese by Kālayasa, who arrived in China from India 424 A.D.<sup>179</sup>

The literature used in the *Sukhavativyūha sūtra* is the literature of self-relation. This is the fourth important literature of *Mahāyāna* that can not be found in any *Hīnayāna sūtras*. By the literature, the Buddha gives an account of his first-hand experience of the pure-land and the means to rebirth in that world.

The *Avatamsaka sūtra* and the *Lankāvatāra sūtras* are also the important works of the depictive literature of *Mahāyāna*.

The *Avatamsaka* or the Flower ornament *sūtra* or the *Buddhāvatamsaka sūtra* has been eulogized by Suzuki in the most enthusiastic terms.

It was composed between 1<sup>st</sup> CBC – 1<sup>st</sup> CAD. According to Suzuki<sup>180</sup>, there are three Chinese translations of the *Avatamsaka sūtra*, in sixty, eighty and forty fascicules respectively, the first had been made by Buddhahadra between 418-420 A.D., the second by Siksānanda between 695-699 A.D., and the third by Prajñā some 796-797 A.D.

The *Avatamsaka sūtra* in forty fascicules is mainly the *Gaṇḍavyūha sūtra* in Sanskrit source, extant in Nepal now. It describes the religious search made by the

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<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> SEZ<sub>3</sub>, p. 71.

young man Sudhana for true *Dharma* through his spiritual friends.<sup>181</sup> The Vairocana appears in the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* most notably in the *Gaṇḍhavyūha* chapter. The *Dasabhūmika* is also an independent chapter in the *Avataṃsaka* of eighty fascicules that mentions forty stages of Sage and twelve stages of Sainthoods of *Bodhisattva* corresponding with ten *pāramitās* (perfections).

The *Avataṃsaka sūtra* as a whole presents the doctrine of *Dharmadhātu* or the mutual independence of all things in the universe. According to this, all things in the universe arose simultaneously. In other words, it is the creation of the universe by the universe itself.<sup>182</sup> And the *sūtra* also teaches that everything is a manifestation of the Absolute, hence the one is the many and the many is the one, though everything remains in its own position, distinct and similar from the Absolute.<sup>183</sup> According to Andrew Skilton<sup>184</sup>, *Avataṃsaka sūtra* is highly influential in Chinese Buddhism, forming the basis of the *Hua Yen* school in China and it is popular in countries practising *Mahāyānism*.

The second *sūtra* of this class is the *Lankāvatāra sūtra* that is taught by the Buddha in Srilanka, where he visited at the request of Rāvana, king of Demons, who has his capital there. Its original *Sanskrit* text is now extant in Nepal, it contains ten chapters. The *sūtra* is a simple dialogue between the Buddha and *Bodhisattva* Mahāmati, who set 108 questions to the Buddha. The *sūtra* is concerned with the philosophical matters such as five *dharma*s, three self-nature, *tathāgatagarbha*, *ālayavijñāna*, etc. the *sūtra* was composed some the first or the second century A.D.<sup>185</sup>

According to Chinese *Ch'an* school, Bodhidharma<sup>186</sup> (the 28<sup>th</sup> patriarch of Indian meditative school) brought the *sūtra* to China in 520 A.D. and handed it to Hui Ké (Chinese monk, *Bodhidharma*'s first disciple), who was the second master of Chinese *Ch'an* school. The main doctrine of the *sūtra* is the theory of Mind-Only

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<sup>181</sup> ACB, p. 106.

<sup>182</sup> KBC, p. 316.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.

<sup>184</sup> ACB, p. 106.

<sup>185</sup> SEL, p. 204.

<sup>186</sup> KBC, p. 351.

(*cittamātratā*) that maintains that all things in the universe come from the mind; matter and other elements manifested from mind. Mind, according to the *sūtra*, includes cosmic mind and human mind. The cosmic mind is but *ālayavijñāna* that contains all the seeds of material, from which all external objects are constituted.<sup>187</sup> The *sūtra* affirms that only the cosmic mind or *ālayavijñāna* is real while all things manifested from it are unreal.<sup>188</sup> Human mind is said to be a system of eight consciousnesses, e.g. *ālaya*, *manas*, *manovijñāna* and consciousnesses of five sense organs.<sup>189</sup> After death it is *ālayavijñāna* or subtle body goes to transmigration according to *karma* contained in it. Apart from that, three kinds of knowledge are mentioned in the *sūtra*.<sup>190</sup> And meat-eating is strictly banned, occurs in the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of the *sūtra*.<sup>191</sup>

Besides, the *Sanskrit* text of the *Ārya Saddharma Lankāvatāra Mahāyāna sūtra* or 'Holy entry of the True *Dharma* into *Lankā*' which is the full title of the work, the other four Chinese translations are still extant. The earliest translation was made by Dharmarakṣa between 412-433 A.D., the work was known simply as 'the *Lankā sūtra*' (now lost). The second was Gunabhadra's version in 433 A.D. The third by Bodhiruci in 513 A.D. and the fourth by Siksānanda between 700-704 A.D.<sup>192</sup>

As known, there are 600 *Mahāyāna sūtras* exist in the original *Sanskrit* source, or in Chinese and Tibetan translations. The *sūtras*, which are mentioned above, represent five streams of *Mahāyānic* literature. These five streams of literature are known as the Negative-dialectical literature, the Realistic critical literature, the Symbolic literature, the literature of Self-relation, and the Depictive literature. By the Negative dialectical literature, the whole system of *Prajñā pāramitā sūtras* was taken shape, they deny all attributes and forms of phenomenal objects that are changing from minute to minute. Simultaneously they also reveal the real nature of all things that exist forever. The Realistic critical literature is a special feature of the *Vimalakīrtinideśa sūtras*, by which the *sūtras* criticizes the dual actions and thoughts of the Buddha's

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<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 322.

<sup>188</sup> STTMC, pp. 115-6.

<sup>189</sup> SSLS, p. 189.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 157-9.

<sup>191</sup> SEL, p. 206.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

disciples and revealing the non-dualism of their true minds. The *Saddharmapuṇḍarika sūtras* uses the external phenomena to symbolize the characteristic of man. In the *Sukhāvatīvyūha sūtra*, the literature of Self-relation is used for the Buddha's self-relation of pure-land and means to rebirth there. The *Avataṃsaka* and *Lankāvatāra sūtras* use the Depictive literature to describe the reality. The former describes the systems of world in the universe and the mutual independence of all phenomenal objects. A process of religious search made by young man Sudhana and fifty-two stages of *Bodhisattva* are also described in detail in the *sūtra*. The latter describes the cosmic mind and human mind. Simultaneously a process of cultivation and three kinds of knowledge are also described in the *Lankāvatāra sūtra*.

Thus, *Mahāyāna* Buddhism has enriched the Indian literature with its five streams of literature that are inherited and developed by scholars later-on. L.M Joshi maintains that these streams of literature have influenced on the works of Gudapanda, Saṃkara (6<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.), Rāmaṇuja (11<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.), Śrī Haṛṣa (12<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.), Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, B.R. Ambedkar and others.<sup>193</sup>

## (ii) Mahāyānic Contribution to Indian philosophy

### The Concept of Truths

It is a matter of historical truism that the doctrine of two fold truth, relative truth (*samvṛtisatya*) and the absolute truth (*paramārtha satya*) was firstly expounded by Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Bhavaviveka, Candrakīrti, Śāntideva, Maitreyaṇātha, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, etc. though its seeds be perceivable in the *prajñāparamitā sūtras*.

According to L.M Joshi<sup>194</sup>, the classical *Vedānta* schools took this twofold truth theory from *Mahāyāna* as foundations of their philosophy.

The doctrine states that this phenomenal world to be not eternal and its appearance is due to illusion (*māyā*). This thought is very well known to the Heart *sūtra* and *Madhyamikakārikā* as well as to other *Mahāyāna sūtras* and *sāstras*. In the

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<sup>193</sup> JBC, p. 347.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 341.

*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*<sup>195</sup>, the world is said to be impermanent and is compared to a house set on fire. The teaching of one vehicle is often understood as means to the extinction of this fire born out of thirst (*taṇhā*).

The *Vajracchedikā* or Diamond cutter *sūtra*<sup>196</sup> says that the conditioned world is always changing as a current and exists in four moments of production, existence, changing and destruction.

*Madhyamikas* regard external objects and subjective cognitions to be equally essenceless with the *sūnyatā* as their eternal basis. Nāgārjuna I used the word *sūnyatā* for both, relative and absolute truths. According to *Madhyamikas*, all things in the world are relative and conditional but they are depended on the absolute *sūnyatā*.<sup>197</sup>

*Yogācāras* recognize the reality of external objects, which are constituted by consciousness (the seeds of phenomena), are impermanent. According to them, only *ālayavijñāna* is real and eternal but all things manifested from it are transient.<sup>198</sup>

Though all conditioned things are impermanent and destructive, their nature exists forever. *Madhyamikas* think that the absolute *sūnyatā* or self-nature as the common source of all things. It is beyond any discrimination and discussion. The Heart *sūtra*<sup>199</sup> affirms that the Absolute is not created, not annihilated, not pure, not impure, not increasing and not decreasing, even no wisdom and not attainment of *Nirvāna*.

On the basis of the Heart *sūtra*, Nāgārjuna I (80-120 CAD), who developed the idea of *Madhyamika* school in India, describes the absolute *sūnyatā* by means of eightfold negation as follows:

“It is neither origination nor cessation,  
Neither permanence nor impermanence,

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<sup>195</sup> BTLS, pp. 85-91.

<sup>196</sup> SBS, p. 134.

<sup>197</sup> SST, p. 37.

<sup>198</sup> BYB, p. 108.

<sup>199</sup> SBS, pp. 134-5.



Neither unity nor diversity,  
Neither coming in nor going out”<sup>200</sup>

The absolute *sūnyatā* or self-nature, according to Nāgārjuna, is free from dualism and imperfection. The opposite pairs of category as above can not describe the absolute. It is the subtle reality that nothing can destroy it; death does not touch it nor vice dissolve it. It is free from craving (*tanhā*), from evil, from fear and it is embraced in all.<sup>201</sup> It is not created by material elements, it is a self-existent and self-complete entity and there is nothing outside it to exist and from which all things spring up.<sup>202</sup> All phenomenal things are manifestations of it, ceases in it and returns to it after their destructions. *Sūnyatā* or Absolute is the real nature of all existences.

The Absolute, moreover, is the self-nature of man; it does not change while his body changes. It is free from good or bad while the body is good or bad. It is not to be blind or death while the body is blind or dead.<sup>203</sup> The real-nature is immortal and self-bright and self-demonstrated. It exists forever and it is a subject of all experiences.

*Yogācāras* consider the Absolute as the nature of *tathāgatagarbha*, (the pure aspect of *ālayavijñāna*) that is foundation of one’s cognition and it is also the real essence of external objects. According to them, nothing in the universe is permanent except their real nature. One’s eight consciousnesses are also manifested from the nature of *ālayavijñāna*. In the Absolute, there is nothing to move, nothing to cultivate and to attain because it is always in the state of purity and brightness.<sup>204</sup>

The concept of Absolute of *Mahāyāna* influenced the thought of Gaudapāda, who made an attempt to harmonize *Mahāyāna* philosophy with that of *Non-dualistic Vedānta*.

In the *Āgama sūtra*, Gaudapāda makes an endeavour to synthesize and bring about a concord between *Mahāyāna* Buddhism and *Advaita Vedānta*. By this concord,

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<sup>200</sup> KBC, p. 182.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 152.

<sup>203</sup> RPU, p. 256.

<sup>204</sup> SSLS, p. 193.

the *Mahāyānic* philosophical thought seems to have crept into *Vedānta* and its result is found in *Non-dualistic Vedānta* of Samkara. It would be historically correct to say that the *Samkara Vedānta* has been influenced by the *Madhyamika* thought, and the link is preserved in the *Āgama sūtra* of Gaudapāda. Gopinātha Kavirāja<sup>205</sup> rightly maintains that the *Madhyamikakārikā* of Nāgārjuna has influenced the thought of the *Gaudapādakārikās*.

### The Concept of Ātman and Jīva

**Ātman:** The *ātman* is originally the term of the *Upanisads* but in *Mahāyāna* doctrine, this term is replaced by other terms such as *prajñā*, *sūnyatā*, self-nature, Buddha-nature, *tathatā*, absolute *Nirvāna*, true-mind, the nature of *tathāgatagarbha*, etc. *Ātman* or Buddha-nature or self-nature is known as substratum of all experiences, it is absolute nature of man.<sup>206</sup> *Hīnayānists* deny *ātman* since they only mention the relative truth; *ātman* is not found in any separate parts of transient things. For example, when the pole, axle, wheel, frame-work, spokes of the wheel are separated, the chariot is not seen but when they are combined, the chariot is seen.<sup>207</sup> *Ātman* or self-nature is not necessarily the same as egoism, even when selfishness or egoism is destroyed, the self-nature remains. *Hīnayānists* always think about the destruction of self, in reality, the self that they try to destroy is the self-attachment to external object; it is not self-nature of all things. It is this self-attachment that makes them to suffer. The real-self or *ātman* can not be destroyed. If the self-nature or *ātman* were destroyed, there would not have any existence. Owing to *ātman* or self-nature, everything exists and acts in orderly/manner. Owing to *ātman* or real-self, eyes, ears, tongue, nose, body and mind perform their functions. The affirmation of self-nature or *ātman* in all things is the specific property of *Mahāyāna*. To translate the term *ātman* always by ego or self may be wrong. The theories of ego and non-self in the *Hīnayāna* doctrine only belong to ethics, they are not the metaphysical concepts. The *ātman* is known as *sūnyatā* in the *Madhyamikakārikā*. This *sāstra* holds that *sūnyatā* is absolute, the basis of all existences. According to Nāgārjuna I, *ātman* or *sūnyatā* is wonderous and bright. If

<sup>205</sup> MSED, p. 408.

<sup>206</sup> JBC, p. 340.

<sup>207</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 302.

one tries to think about it or to describe it by any language, he is like trying to catch space with his hand because space can not be caught or touched by him.

The *Lankāvatāra sūtra*<sup>208</sup> identifies *ātman* or real-nature with *Dharmakāya*, the basis of all existences from which all things spring up, exist and to be destroyed. It is also the real body of the Buddha, his *sambogakāya* and *nirmānakāya* are the manifestations of it. *Dharmakāya* is devoid of all marks and inexpressible, it is neither spirit nor material.

**Jīva:** *Jīva* or soul is also the term used in the *Upaniṣads*. In Buddhism, it is called by many names such as consciousness, *patisaṇḍhi vijñāna*, *pudgala*, *gandhava*, etc. these terms are used for the empirical self that is the governor of body, sense organs, mind and intellect.<sup>209</sup> It is neither female nor male, nor yet is the neuter. Whatever body it takes to itself by that it holds. Owing to past *karma* it assumes successively various forms in various conditions. It is without beginning and without end; it is the knower, enjoyer, thinker and doer of the good or bad *karma* and experiences the result of *karma*. It is unborn, conscious, and eternal, it does not perish while its body dies.<sup>210</sup> When a man dies, whose body is burnt, the material elements of his body return back to the four elements in the universe and he remains only his soul or *gandhava*.<sup>211</sup>

According to the *Ksitigarbha sūtra*<sup>212</sup>, after death, one's *gandhava* (soul) is free from his body and lives continuously for forty nine days; it will then go to rebirth according to its past *karma* except the very evil and the very good men. The very evil man falls into the hells immediately after death and the very good man is reborn into the heavenly worlds just after death.

The *Upaniṣad*<sup>213</sup> says that the soul is led by *karma* into the mother's womb there it connects with the father's self that was left there, then a new fetus to be taken shape and a new life is continued. After throwing this body again, it also get an

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<sup>208</sup> SSLs, pp. 142-5.

<sup>209</sup> SIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 17.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>211</sup> RPU, p. 313.

<sup>212</sup> TSBKV, p. 9.

<sup>213</sup> RPU, pp. 324-9.

appropriate body in accordance with its *karma*.<sup>214</sup> When the thirst of lust is rooted out from one's mind, his soul becomes one with his *ātman* or self-nature and the immortality is attained.

### **The Difference between Ātman and Soul**

There is the difference of *ātman* (self-nature) and soul (consciousness). As mentioned above, the consciousness (soul) is the manifestation from self-nature (*ātman*). In other words, self-nature is the substratum of consciousness. The self-nature and consciousness exist in the same body but the self-nature is the eternal reality while consciousness comes from death to deaths and experiences the pleasant or painful fruits of its past *karma* and feels happiness or misery.

The self-nature is the inner essence of all living beings. It is like an indifferent spectator without affected by joy and sorrow. The self-nature and consciousness are unborn and eternal. In the state of liberation, consciousness (soul) is divested its name and form and attains the immortality and united with the self-nature as rivers having different forms and names, merge in the sea losing their names and forms. As water poured into water, milk poured into milk become one without differentiation, even so consciousness and self-nature become one in the liberated state of man.

### **The Concept of World and Māyā**

**World:** The world according to the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*<sup>215</sup> is real though it has its imperfect manifestations. The *Upanisads*<sup>216</sup> hold that God himself created the world with his *māyā* (power). But *Mahāyānists* deny this concept and maintain that it is creation of the universe by the universe itself. And everything in the universe is interdependent. An entity exists by the attraction of other entities and the interdependent is lengthened to the inexhaustible space.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 597.

<sup>215</sup> BTLS, p. 70.

<sup>216</sup> RPU, pp. 625, 863...

<sup>217</sup> KBC, p. 316.

It is interesting to say that the concept of universe in *Hīnayāna* doctrine is very poor. In the *Aggivacchagotta*<sup>218</sup> and the *Cūlamalunkya sūttas*<sup>219</sup>, the Buddha's disciples ask him the important questions concerning philosophy as follows: The world is eternal or the world is not eternal? The world is an ending thing or the world is not an ending thing? The life-principle is the same as the body or the life-principle is one thing and the body another? *Tathāgata* is after dying or *Tathāgata* is not after dying? The *Tathāgata* both is and is not after dying or the *Tathāgata* neither is nor is not after dying? These questions are not answered by the Buddha in the *Hīnayāna* doctrine whereas these metaphysical problems are explained clearly in the *Mahāyāna* teachings.

In the *Avatamsaka sūtra*, in sixty fascicles<sup>220</sup>, the Buddha asserts that there are innumerable systems of the world in the endless space. All phenomenal things in the universe are existing due to the interaction between them, and they always have mutual attractions.<sup>221</sup> The idea of the *sūtra* is adopted by modern scientists, who have invented astronomical telescopes and used them for exploration of universe. As a result, they have seen clearly the systems of sun in the space.<sup>222</sup> So they ask themselves that, about 2500 years ago, how could the Buddha see the whole universe clearly while humankind has not yet made any scientific instrument for exploration of universe?

About 500 years after the Buddha, Jesus, the founder of Christianity, has taught in the Old Testament<sup>223</sup>: "...The sun goes round the earth. The earth is centre of universe and it is motionless... The earth is as square as the face of a table and sky is as round as the dish-cover that covered up the table...". Jesus' idea has been denied by modern scientists. Among them, Galileo<sup>224</sup>, German scientist, in seventeenth century A.D. (1610-1642 A.D.), who has invented the telescope and used it for his discovery, saw countless other worlds in this system of sun in which thousands celestial bodies are active. And he re-declared that earth goes round the sun and receives light from the

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<sup>218</sup> MLS, pp. 162-7.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 97-101.

<sup>220</sup> FOST, Vol. 1, pp. 5-20ff.

<sup>221</sup> KBC, p. 316.

<sup>222</sup> BLG, pp. 23-34.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

sun. The moon does go round the earth; the earth is a planet like other planets and not the centre of the universe because the entire universe is full of planets, etc...<sup>225</sup>

Galileo's statements seem to be hostile to the *Bible*. So he was condemned to the stake by Inquisition of Vatican Catholic church in 1642.<sup>226</sup>

In our time, cosmonauts with their spaceships landed on the moon as well as on the venus, mars and Jupiter belonging to this system of sun and they themselves see the immense universe with their own eyes. Therefore what is taught by the Buddha in the *Avatamsaka* and *Sukhāvatīvyūha sūtras* are verified by modern cosmic science. Thus, the cosmic conception of *Mahāyānism* not only has enriched the Indian cosmic science but it is also a great contribution to human civilization.

**Māyā:** *Māyā* has three meanings, *shakti* (God's power), *avidyā* (ignorance) and *ānatta* (impermanence).

*Shakti* or God's power is identified with the creative power of *ālayavijñāna* by *Yogācāra* school.<sup>227</sup> According to this, *ālayavijñāna* is the absolute totality, originality, and creativity of universe, unconditioned itself by time and space, which are modes of existence of the concrete and empirical phenomena. The external objects are created by the seeds of material contained in *ālayavijñāna*, out of which they exist and into which they are destroyed.<sup>228</sup> God is, according to *Mahāyānist*, the imagination of thought; he was not a creator of the universe. If he was the sole cause, whether the God was Mahādeva, Vāsudeva or others, whether spirit or matter, owing to the simple fact of the existence of such a primordial cause, the world would have been created in its totality at once and at the same time. For it can not be admitted that there should be a cause without an effect, but successively some come from wombs, some from eggs, some from the wet places, some from transformation of the other species. Hence, a conclusion is made that the universe created by a series of cause and conditions and

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<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26-8.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>227</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 631.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

God is only a personalization of the creative power of the universe or *ālayavijñāna*. God is not the sole cause of all.

The second meaning of *māyā* is impermanence of the inner and outer worlds. In the phenomenal field, one's thought always changes and is attached to external objects by which the sufferings arise. Only after attaining *Arhatship*, his stream of thought just becomes pure and real happiness is attained.<sup>229</sup>

The external world is said to be created by a series of cause and conditions so it is not permanent. Change is the pervading feature of the material world; changing things imply non-existence at the beginning and non-existence at the end. The Heart *sūtra* declares that the world, which is made by five aggregates, is emptiness. In reality, there is the drying up of the great oceans, the falling away of the mountain peaks, the deviation of the fixed pole-star, the submergence of earth, the departure of men from their station, etc. From the sky, earth to the gnats, mosquitoes and ants all must die, the grass and the tree that grow will decay.

The last meaning of *Māyā* is ignorance. Ignorance, according to *Mahāyānists*, is a dark state of mind by which one can not know the essence of man and world; due to it attaches to worldly things one makes many bad actions that lead him to rebirth. Though *Mahāyānists* agree with *Hīnayānic* doctrine that ignorance is the root of rebirth, *Mahāyānists* do not advocate to destroy ignorance because it is a formless entity and it is not found in anywhere. So Zen Master Hsuan Chiao, a Chinese monk in the sixth century A.D., declares that: "The more having destruction of ignorance, the more causing the sickness (of self attachment) increases".<sup>230</sup> The *Vimalakīrtinideśa sūtra*<sup>231</sup> also says that: "desire, hatred, and ignorance are the seeds of *Tathāgata*". It is said thus because ignorance and enlightenment are two sides of an entity. If there were no ignorance, certainly there would not be enlightenment. When wisdom comes, ignorance itself disappears, no need to destroy it by any ways.

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<sup>229</sup> STTMC, pp. 87-8.

<sup>230</sup> LCZ3, p. 116.

<sup>231</sup> RHV, p. 65.

## The Concept of Bondage and Liberation

According to *Mahāyānists*, the world is really sinfulness, all things in the world do not make one to become bondage, and really they are manifestations of thusness. One is, nevertheless, bound to external world because he does not abide in his real-nature, his thinking follows external objects when his sense organs get in contact with them. So his mind, which is originally pure, suddenly gets pleasure with the beautiful and discontent with the ugly, by which he becomes ignorant and he himself is tied by the strings of defilement. It is like the silk-worms, which are co-crooning, tie themselves with the silk-threads. So long as one's mind remains attached to the external world, is bound to the endless circle of transmigration (*samsāra*). The principle, which governs the spiritual world, is *karma* that leads man from a life to lives. If he does not break it with his wisdom and energy, he never attains the freedom from bondage.

There are two forms of liberation mentioned in the *Hinayāna* teachings, e.g. *Upadhiśesa Nirvāna* and *Anupadhiśesa Nirvāna*<sup>232</sup>, the former is the liberation during the life and the latter is the liberation after death. Two forms of liberation of *Hinayāna* seems to be copied from the *jīvan mukti* and *videha mukti* in the *Upaniṣadic* doctrines.<sup>233</sup> The explanations of *jīvan mukti* and *videha mukti* in the *Upaniṣads* are the same with that of the *Upadhiśesa Nirvāna* and *Anupadhiśesa Nirvāna* in *Hinayāna* doctrines. *Mahāyānists* consider these two liberations as the partial liberation; the complete liberation is the union between one's soul or consciousness with his real-nature.<sup>234</sup>

The concept of liberation is different from *Hinayāna* and *Mahāyāna*. When an *Arhat* enters into *Nirvāna*, he enjoys happiness there and he never gets rebirth in the suffering world; whereas a *Mahāyāna Bodhisattva* needs not get *Nirvāna* as he always works for the sake of others. And to him, there is no difference between *samsāra* and *Nirvāna*. Wherever he lives and works, that place is his *Nirvāna*. According to

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<sup>232</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 447.

<sup>233</sup> RPU, p. 121.

<sup>234</sup> BTLS, p. 200.



*Mahāyānists*, the liberation is obtained just on the earth if one acquires intuition and lives up to his real-nature.

The concept of liberation of *Mahāyānism* was inherited and developed by Samkara, the great master of *Advaita Vedānta* school (9<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.). He recognizes the complete liberation and it is obtained on earth. According to him, the person, who acquires intuition of Absolute, becomes the liberator here and now.<sup>235</sup>

### The means to Liberation

According to the *Lankāvatāra*<sup>236</sup> and *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*<sup>237</sup> sūtras, the means to liberation consists of *prajñā* (wisdom), *bhakti* (devotion), and *ānābhogacaryā* (duty or purposeless actions).

The wisdom (*prajñā*) is considered as a prerequisite condition leading to liberation, without which the performances of duty and devotion will easily fall into the superstition and egoism. In *Hīnayāna* doctrine, the wisdom is especially emphasized, without mentions of the duty and devotion. There are three kinds of wisdom mentions in the *Hīnayāna* doctrine, e.g. heard wisdom, intellectual wisdom and experiential wisdom. These wisdom can destroy the self-attachment and attains non-rebirth in the suffering worlds, the *dharma*-attachment cannot be rooted out from one's mind by these wisdom.<sup>238</sup> *Mahāyānists* maintain that the intuitive wisdom is a bright state of mind in which everything is reflected.<sup>239</sup> There are four kinds of wisdom<sup>240</sup> mentioned in *Yogācāra* doctrine. *Yogācāras* hold that when one acquires self-realization of his original enlightenment, his five previous consciousness (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching consciousness) become the perfecting wisdom that can perceive all things as they are. His *manovijñāna* becomes the profound observing wisdom that can see the essence of all things. His *manas* becomes the wisdom of equality that is free from discriminations. And his *ālayavijñāna* becomes the great

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<sup>235</sup> SIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 584.

<sup>236</sup> SSLs, pp. 202-5.

<sup>237</sup> BTLS, pp. 306-11.

<sup>238</sup> SST, pp. 36-7.

<sup>239</sup> LCZ<sub>3</sub>, p. 100.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

mirror wisdom, where all things are clearly reflected. By this wisdom, the Buddha has seen everything in the universe and known what happens in one's mind clearly.

Devotion (*bhakti*) is one of the special features of *Mahāyānism*, distinguishing itself with other Buddhist sects. Devotion is said to generate knowledge that can unify one's mind with the absolute *sūnyatā* through the Other power (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of Buddhas that issue from their original vows (*praṇidhāna*). Through devotion, the devotee expresses his eager and sincere heart to the Buddha and *Bodhisattva*. Through devotion, the devotee can root out his selfishness, pride and desire from his mind.

There are two kinds devotion mentioned in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika sūtra*, the material offering and moral offering.<sup>241</sup> The former is the offering of flowers, songs, incenses, fruits and rice to the Buddha's statues. The latter is the practice of ethics, meditation and wisdom as well as working for the happiness of others.

When the devotee offers a flower or a song or a bowl of food to the Buddha's statue, he not only prays the Buddha to bestow blessing on him but he also develops his faith to the Buddha and *Bodhisattvas*, by which he can control himself from evil thoughts and actions. The *Lankāvatāra sūtra*<sup>242</sup> asserts that the material offering is only equal to 1/16<sup>th</sup> of moral offering.

Purposeless action (*ānābhogacārya*) is an impartial service of *Bodhisattva* towards all living beings. Though *Mahāyāna Bodhisattva* performs all duties for happiness of others, he never asks for gratitude or reward. He always seeks proper opportunities to serve others. Nothing can make him happier than the active service for the sake of others as their happiness is also his own happiness. The doctrine of purposeless action is built on the bases of love, kindness, and compassion. In other word, the *Bodhisattva*'s compassion is developed highly only when he works for the sake of others. By serving all living beings, the *Bodhisattva* can attain the highest enlightenment (Buddhahood). If there were no living beings, the *Bodhisattva* would not have a chance to practise the *Bodhisattva* path and the Buddhahood would never come to him.

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<sup>241</sup> SSLf, pp. 272-4.

<sup>242</sup> SSLs, p. 232.

The means to liberation of *Mahāyāna* as above influence the thought of *Viśiātādvaita Vedānta* school (1027 CAD) and Jainism. Rāmānuja<sup>243</sup>, the founder of the school, asserts that the performance of duty (*karma*), devotion (*bhakti*), and knowledge (*jñāna*) lead to liberation. On the contrary, Mahāvira<sup>244</sup>, the founder of Jainism, advocates that the liberation is the result of performing right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. According to Mahavira, devotion to an *Arhat* or *Siddhi* produces beneficial *karma* leading to the celestial happiness; it does not liberate the soul from *karmic* matter.

### (iii) Mahāyānic Contribution to Indian Psychology

Psychology is a science that studies mind (*citta*), the functions of mind (*caittas*) the sickness of mind and reduction of mind. Mind, according to Buddhism, is a system of six consciousness or a system of eight consciousness (*viññāna*).<sup>245</sup> There are two psychological distinctions in the *Theravādin* doctrine.<sup>246</sup> The former is an analysis of five aggregates (*rūpa*, *vedanā*, *samjñā*, *samskāras*, and *viññāna*). The latter is a discrimination of six consciousnesses (visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactual and mental consciousnesses).

Of five aggregates, *rūpa* or material part constitutes the body of four elements as well as external world. *Nāma* or mind is the spiritual or subtle part that consists of feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*samjñā*), mental dispositions (*samskāra*), and intelligence or reason (*viññāna*), these four principles constitute the inner world. S. Radhakrishnan<sup>247</sup> maintains that there is the difference between the outer and the inner, the subjective and objective. According to him, subjective perceives the outer world or external objects and on the contrary, the outer world or external objects are the immediate objects of perception, thought or understanding. Man, according to *Theravādas* is a combination of material (*rūpa*) and mind (*nāma*) or five aggregates. His body is created by four material elements (earth, water, air, fire). His mind is

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<sup>243</sup> SIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 36.

<sup>244</sup> SIP<sub>2</sub>, pp. 259-61.

<sup>245</sup> SSLs, p. 179.

<sup>246</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 401.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*

constituted by four mental elements (feeling, perception, mental disposition, and reason). Both his body and mind are changing as a current. In his psycho-physical organism, the part, which is relatively stable, is body; the unstable state is mind. Feeling (*vedanā*) is the sorrow, happy and neuter states of mind. When sense organs come in contact with their objects, his mind arises a good or bad feeling. The neuter feeling arises when sense organs come in contact with their objects that are neither beautiful nor the ugly. Mahāthera Narada<sup>248</sup> holds that feeling produces craving (*tanhā*), the cause of *samsāra*. Perception (*samjñā*) is the recognition of the general relations as well as the perception of all kinds, sensuous and mental. The object of cognition may be either an object of sense or of thought. Samskāra includes a miscellaneous host of tendencies, intellectual, affectional, volitional and has its specific functional synthesis. Consciousness (*viññāna*) is intelligence that comprehends abstract elements. S. Radhakrishnan<sup>249</sup> holds that consciousness (*viññāna*) is not conditioned by sense contact, while feeling, perception and disposition are conditioned.

Apart from the analysis of five aggregates, *Theravāda* analyses one's mind into six consciousnesses: visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactual and mental consciousnesses. These six consciousnesses have their objects (colour, sound, smell, taste, touch and *dharma* or images of external objects engraved upon one's sub consciousness). When eyes contact the colours, the visual consciousness arises, the image of objects is deposited into mental consciousness and its analysis yields affection and volition. Likewise, the remaining pairs such as ears and sounds, tongue and tastes, nose and smells are explained. It is the contact of sense organs gives rise to a series of feeling, perception, thought, will, concentration, and attention.

As mentioned above, *Therevāda* only analyses one's mind into six consciousnesses and their functions. *Manas*, the agency produces affection and will and *ālaya*, the subtle body, which contains all habits, both have not yet been discussed. Certainly the *Theravādin* psychology must be supplemented by *Mahāyānic* psychology later on. It means that *manas* and *ālayaviññāna* must be added into the psychology of *Theravāda* in order to complete a system of consciousness.

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<sup>248</sup> NBT, p. 246.

<sup>249</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 401.

The *Vaibhāsika* school (one of *Hinayāna* schools) made a distinction between the inner world of ideas and outer world of objects.<sup>250</sup> According to *Vaibhāsikas*, the external world belongs to material world that is known as mountains, rivers, sky, stars, earth, trees, plants, etc. The inner world consists of mind (*citta*) and the functions of mind (*caittas*). Mind, according to *Vaibhāsikas*, is also made by six consciousnesses (*viññāna*), e.g. visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactual, and mental consciousnesses.

S. Radhakrishnan<sup>251</sup> holds that mind (*citta*) is conscious of objects and *caittas* are that which arise when mind perceives its objects. The external world is open for perception and if there is no perception, there can be no inference.

The causal relation between cognition and objects is specially paid attention to. The object cognition is of two kinds, the perceived and the inferred, the sensible and the cognizable.<sup>252</sup> *Vaibhāsikas* maintain that cognition or perception is produced by objects, the object is cause and cognition is effect. According to them, the perceiver is conscious and substratum of consciousness is permanent.<sup>253</sup>

Six sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mental organ) have their respective objects. For example, eyes can perceive colours, it can not perceive sounds whereas ears can perceive sounds without perceiving colours or smells, etc. After grasping the external objects, mind arouses sense organs and excites consciousness. Sense organs, which contact objects, are material and each organ has two parts, the principal and the auxiliary.<sup>254</sup> In the case of sight, the optic nerve is the principle and eye-ball is the auxiliary though eye contacts with forms. When an object, ugly or beautiful, is perceived, its data is deposited into the sub-consciousness and after the data is analysed by mental consciousness, perception and feeling arise. Like *Theravāda*, *Vaibhāsika* also considers the sixth consciousness as mind. *Manas* and *ālaya* are not mentioned in the *Vaibhāsika* doctrine. And *Vaibhāsika* agree with

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<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 614.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 618.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 619.

*Theravāda* that sense organs can not discriminate their objects but only consciousnesses (*vijñāna*) can do. *Citta*, according to Vasubandhu I<sup>255</sup>, is one with mind, consciousness or discrimination.

The *Sautrāntika* psychology is more profound than the psychologies of *Theravāda* and *Vaibhāsika*. It agrees with *Theravāda* that perception is produced by the external object; if there is no external object, there is not perception.<sup>256</sup>

*Sautrāntikas* maintain that present cognition can not perceive past objects, they are only inferred from their cognitions and the forms of object are inferred from those of their cognitions. The result of cognitions are the copies or representations of their objects. Just as the beauty of a rose is inferred from a beautiful rose and affection arises from cognized moments. So the knowable objects are inferred from the form of cognition and cognitions are diversified by their objects. Different external objects produce different cognitions and impress their forms of cognitions. The internal forms of cognitions are representations of the external forms of object. Without external objects, the diversity of cognition will not take shape. The *Sautrāntikas* think that the stream of subject-cognitions is uniformly present in all times but the object-cognitions appear and disappear at certain times. According to *Sautrāntikas*, knowledge arises on the basis of four conditions, that is, data, suggestion, medium, and dominant organs.<sup>257</sup> For example, from a rose seen outside, the form of rose arises in the understanding; the manifestation is styled a cognition. From suggestion, a revival of old knowledge of rose takes shape and the restriction to the apprehension of that rose arises from the medium. Eye is the dominant organ for perceiving that rose. Enough three conditions (light, distance, and object) eye can perceive.

Like *Theravāda* and *Vaibhāsika*, *Sautrāntika* also considers the sixth consciousness as mind; *manas* and *ālayavijñāna* are not mentioned in their psychologies.

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<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>256</sup> SIP<sub>2</sub>, p. 352.

<sup>257</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 622.

It is interesting to say that *Hinayāna* schools do not care to present deeply a system of psychology because their main interest is ethical.

The *Upaniṣadic* psychology also consists of visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactual, mental consciousness and *manas*.<sup>258</sup>

The *Upaniṣadic* psychology is more adequate than *Hinayāna* ones because the *Upaniṣadic* thinkers have seen the important role of *manas* in the system of consciousness. But they faulted here as they consider *manas* as mind. In reality, *manas* is not mind if it is separated from system of consciousness. Mind, according to the *Lankāvatāra sūtra*<sup>259</sup>, is a system of consciousnesses. On other hand, the *Upaniṣadic* thinkers knew the role of *ālayavijñāna* or *Hiranyagarbha*<sup>260</sup> in the creation of universe but they did not know its important role in the whole system of consciousness. It is *ālayavijñāna* is a subtle body that contains all habits and defilements. And after death, it is *ālayavijñāna* comes to transmigration according to the seeds of *karma* contained in it.<sup>261</sup>

*Mahāyānic* psychology is said to be the most complete system as it mentions enough eight consciousnesses (*ālayavijñāna*, *manas*, *manovijñāna*, and five sense consciousnesses).<sup>262</sup> According to *Yogācāras*, *ālayavijñāna* is originally free from attachments and defilements but it is the operation of *manas*, a system of consciousness is taken shape and polluted. *Ālayavijñāna*, on the other hand, is polluted by *manas* that produces affection and will, it is these habits made the waves on the face of *ālaya* ocean that stirs up and rolls on dancing without interruption.<sup>263</sup> *Manas*, according to Suzuki<sup>264</sup>, is born from *ālayavijñāna* and it is also a discriminating agency by which the homogeneous, undifferentiated *citta* is divided into two parts, the one as the seer and the other as the seen, the one as the grasping ego and the other as an object

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<sup>258</sup> RPU, p. 661.

<sup>259</sup> SSLs, p. 179.

<sup>260</sup> RPU, p. 625.

<sup>261</sup> BYB, p. 96.

<sup>262</sup> SSLs, p. 248.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 190-1.

grasped. And *manas* is not only an intellective principle but also a co-native one. When six sense organs contact their objects, *manas* edges itself between *ālayavijñāna* and consciousness and causing them to attach firmly to their external objects and it leads to thirst, wish, and urges for pleasures. One's sorrow, grief, suffering, and lamentation start nowhere else but *manas* and *manovijñāna*, the root of intellection and conation. According to *Lankāvatāra sūtra*<sup>265</sup>, *manas* is not only a discriminating intelligence but also an agency of affection and will.

The function of *manas* is essentially to reflect upon *ālaya* and to create discriminations between subject and object from the pure oneness of *ālaya*. The habits accumulated in *ālaya* are now divided into dualities of all forms and all kinds. In its activities, *manas* is always joined with *manovijñāna* to create desires based upon its wrong judgments such as when it perceives the reality of an ego substance and becomes attached to it as the ultimate truth. *Manas* is of four kinds of defilement always accompany it. Four kinds of defilement, which always accompany *manas*, are "ignorance about self", "belief in self", "pride in self" and "love in self".<sup>266</sup> When *manas* is purified, the whole system of consciousness becomes pure.

*Manovijñāna* is synonymous with mental consciousness (the sixth consciousness) in the *Hīnayāna* psychology. *Manovijñāna* is said to discriminate *dharma*. It means that *manovijñāna* always analyses data of external objects that have been brought into sub-consciousness by five sense consciousnesses.

*Tathāgatagarbha* is the pure aspect of *ālayavijñāna*, which is pure, eternal and unmodifiable. The nature of *Tathāgatagarbha* is not only the substratum of *ālayavijñāna* but it also the basis of the whole system of consciousnesses. It is free from ignorance and attachment but when *ālayavijñāna* is disturbed by *manas*, *tathāgatagarbha* is covered by all habits and defilements.<sup>267</sup> The nature of *tathāgatagarbha* is equivalent with *ātman* in the *Upaniṣads*; it always lives in suchness; it is the absolute or real nature of man. The *Lankāvatāra sūtra* asserts that if

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<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>266</sup> STTMC, p. 90.

<sup>267</sup> SSLs, p. 193.



no existence of real nature, there would be no Arhat, no sufferings, no cessation of suffering, no rebirth, no *karma*, no meditation, no liberation.<sup>268</sup>

Apart from that, *Yogācāra* recognizes three degrees of knowledge: sensual knowledge (*parikalpita*), logic knowledge (*paratantra*) and absolute knowledge (*pariniṣpama*).

Sensual knowledge gives the false attribution of an imaginary idea to an object produced by its cause and conditions. The sensual knowledge exists only in one's imagination and does not correspond to reality. For example, at night, one steps on a rope and images it as a snake and gets frightened. Logic knowledge (*paratantra*) is also a relative knowledge. It is the correct knowledge of objects produced by cause and conditions. On seeing the rope that he stepped on last time, now he bends down and examined it carefully, he knows it is not a snake, it is a rope that is made by many small ramie fibers, but he does not know the real nature of the rope. The absolute knowledge (*pariniṣpana*) is the highest knowledge or intuition by which he can know the nature of the rope as well as of all things.

Generally speaking, the *Hīnayāna* psychology is limited in the analysis of six consciousness. *Hīnayānists* consider mental consciousness (the sixth *viññāna*) as mind; *manas* and *ālayaviññāna*, two most important components of a system of consciousness are still lacking. Though the *Upaniṣadic* psychology mentions *manas* in its psychological system, it continues to consider *manas* as mind. In short, *Hīnayānists* and the *Upaniṣadic* thinkers have a big mistake in their psychologies because they did not mention *manas* and *ālayaviññāna*. Whereas *Mahāyāna* psychology gives enough a system of eight consciousnesses- *ālayaviññāna*, *manas*, *manovijñāna*, and five sense consciousnesses. And *Mahāyānists* maintain that mind is a system of eight consciousnesses that is always gone on without a hitch and it is always polluted by *manas*. When *manas* are purified, the whole system of consciousness becomes pure and the Absolute is attained.

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<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256.

Thus, *Mahāyāna* psychology has already contributed to Indian psychology. It not only supplements *manas* and *ālayavijñāna* into *Hīnayāna* psychology but also re-addresses the role of *ālayavijñāna* in the *Upaniṣadic* psychology in order to complete a system of modern Indian psychology.

Many scholars have paid attention to the great psychological importance of consciousness (*vijñāna*) in the *Vijñāptimatratāridasa sāstra* of Vasubandhu that opens a new horizon for some modern scholars, who studies the universe and man. This work speaks of the truth as an infinite and limitless mass of consciousness. This statement reminds us of the psychology found in some *Pūranas* (the works of Hinduism).

#### (iv) Mahāyānic Contribution to Indian Ethics

Mahāyānic contribution to Indian ethics is manifested through four main heads, that is, the caste and gender equality, vegetarian sacrifices, impartial service of *Bodhisattva* and attainment of the Absolute.

#### Caste and Gender Equality

Special aspect of *Mahāyānic* contribution to ancient Indian ethics is based on the foundation of social harmony and racial integration on a national scale.

As known in history, the ruling class often used religion for maintaining the social order based on castes (*varna*). The caste division was further emphasized under the influence of *Vaishnavism* and *Shaivism*. A passage of the *Mahābhārata*<sup>269</sup> tells that the *sūdra* can achieve salvation only through service to the twice-born and devotion to gods. It is also especially emphasized in the *Epic* and *Pūranas*, that *sūdra* can obtain *Brahmanhood* in the next life through good conduct.<sup>270</sup>

Seemingly, the caste division of *Brahmanism* is based on the theory of *karma*. But *karma*, in fact, concerns with the goodness, badness, happiness or sorrow of a man; it does not take part in caste system of a society. Caste division certainly derives

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<sup>269</sup> DAI, p. 106.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*

from ignorance and greed of the ruling class that divided community of nation into separate castes in order to dominate effectively and easily.

Romila Thapar<sup>271</sup> says that, in the time from the first to the sixth century A.D., rate of interest was defined by regulations according to caste of person to whom money was lent, with the upper classes paying a small rate than the lower. It would have made more difficult for the lower and economically poorer castes to pay debts or to finance commercial ventures and it would be far easier for the upper castes to invest in trade.

Of disparity of wealth within society, D.N. Jha<sup>272</sup> indicates that the upper castes were very rich whereas the common people, slaves and labourers seem to have coveted this wealth. It is the rise of a new wealthy class in the villages and towns which caused economic inequalities.

Caste distinctions became fierce and rigid in the time of Guptas. It means that caste distinctions and caste rigidity became more prevalent than ever before. A *Pūranic* text<sup>273</sup>, compiled in Gupta time, associates the four colours, white, red, yellow and black, with *Brahman*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* and *Sūdra* respectively. It shows the relative status of the four orders. According to the book, *Brahmana* belongs to the highest caste who should not accept food from a *Sūdra* because it reduces his spiritual strength. Three remaining castes were *Kshatriya*, *Vaisya*, and *Sūdra*; specially *Sūdra* must serve the three above mentioned castes.

On other hand, in ancient India, women were also slighted too much. They became an item of property and came to live in the perpetual tutelage of men.<sup>274</sup> D.N. Jha<sup>275</sup> indicates that there was a ban among the *Shakyas* on the marriage of a girl even with a king of supposedly low status nor was interlining between individuals born of unequal births permitted.

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<sup>271</sup> RPHEI, p. 252.

<sup>272</sup> DAI, p. 31.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 104-5.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

Seemingly, the *Hinayānic* doctrine<sup>276</sup> has accepted the caste system of *Brahmanism*. In a Buddhist birth story, it is claimed that the Buddha was born only in the two higher castes and never as a *Vaishya* or *Sūdra*. Sometimes *Hinayānists* complain caste system of *Brahmanical* religion, but they never wages any powerful struggle against caste distinction and untouchable and seems to have recognized the phenomenon of untouchable which originated in the post *Vedic* period and remains to this day an appalling feature of Indian social life.

Apart from that, *Mahāyānists* condemn *Hinayānic* doctrine that slights the value of women since it considers women to have five impossibilities. It means that women can not become Buddhas, can not become the *Brahma* heavenly kings, *Sakra* kings, *Mara* kings, and the Wheel turning holy kings.<sup>277</sup>

*Mahāyānists* consider caste division as non-ethical because all men have the power to become perfect. As a result, all members of society were admitted into the monastic order and then they were treated equally in the true *Dharma*.<sup>278</sup>

The *Mahāyānic* theory of social harmony has gradually sabotaged the standpoint of the *Brahmanical* tradition which zealously guarded the myth of the divine origin of four castes and their duties. Though *Mahāyānists* have not continuously criticized the theory of caste and have not ridiculed the false claims to superiority based on birth (*Jāti*) and colours, they have opened the doors to higher religious life and the highest goal for those who seek for enlightenment without exclusion of lower castes of society.

L.M. Joshi<sup>279</sup> maintains that though *Mahāyāna* was not directly concerned with the abolition of castes, it strongly opposed the caste system and repeatedly taught the evils of casteism. The theory of castes, which was propounded by birth, was not sensible because by birth one cannot upgrade his castes but by action he can become low or noble. In his work, namely 'The Buddha and His Teaching', Nārada quoted a

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<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>277</sup> BTLS, pp. 213-4.

<sup>278</sup> NBT, pp. 172-4.

<sup>279</sup> JBC, p. 368.

passage from *Sutta Nipāta* (*Theravādin* doctrine) in order to explain this irrational division as follows:

“By birth is not one an outcaste,  
By birth is not one a *brahmana*,  
By deed is one an outcaste,  
By deed is one a *brahmana*.”<sup>280</sup>

In reality, birth can not change one's castes but the action determines his value, low or noble. The good action causes him to become noble whereas bad actions causes him to be slighted. Birth and colours are not the pre-requisite conditions for caste division.

S. Radhakrishnan<sup>281</sup> says that: In ancient India, the caste system was in a confused condition where the distinctions were based on birth rather than on qualities. According to him, democracy is a modern motive of social reform in which *Mahāyānists* play an important role. It is said that the Buddha, who, for the first time in the known history of humankind, attempted to abolish slavery and established the higher morality and the idea of the brotherhood of humankind and brought the happiness to them. According to *Mahāyānists*, once the human-rights is established, everybody has chance to contribute himself into the social construction and development. It is the *Mahāyānists* who contributed enormously in establishment of equal-rights between men and women. In the *Saddharmapūṇḍarīka sūtra*<sup>282</sup> men and women are equal in seeking for enlightenment and they are assured to become the future Buddhas. The equality between man and woman is universality of *Mahāyāna* from the aim of which, the status of women is raised to her highest position. In the *Saddharmapūṇḍarīka sūtra*<sup>283</sup>, woman is not only equal with man in the liberated direction but she is also equal with all Buddhas in the absolute nature. It is *Mahāyānism* that raised the status of woman and brought to a realization of her importance to society.

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<sup>280</sup> NBT, p. 17.

<sup>281</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 437.

<sup>282</sup> BTLS, pp. 215-7.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 213-4.

Nārada<sup>284</sup> maintains that before the advent of Buddhism, women in India were not held in high esteem. They did not enjoy sufficient freedom and were deprived of an opportunity to exhibit their innate spiritual capacities and the mental abilities. One Indian writer, Hemacandra<sup>285</sup>, looks down upon woman as the torch lighting the way to hell. Even celibacy was to be strictly observed by widows and the practice of self-immolation (*sati*) at the pyre of the husband also being performed. In ancient India, as is still seen today, the birth of daughter to a family was considered as an unwelcome and cumbersome addition. The innate goodness of both men and women is known by *Mahāyānists* and they are assigned their due places in *Mahāyāna* doctrine. Gender is not a barrier for purification or enlightenment. As a result, six thousand *Bhiksunis* were assured becoming Buddhas in their future lives.<sup>286</sup> The freedom of women was regarded as one of causes led to prosperity of country and national harmony. The *Mahāyānic* theory of social harmony influenced on political sphere in the time from the first to the sixth century A.D.

L.M. Joshi<sup>287</sup> asserts that it was through *Mahāyānic* influence and teachings of social harmony and tolerance that foreign invaders such as the Greek, Sakas, Kusānas and Hūnas, who came to India and settle there in the course of time immediately preceding and following the Christian era, were assimilated by Indian society.

The theory of social harmony is a positive contribution of *Mahāyāna* to national growth and its message of human-rights had left a deep impression on the mind of Indian people, which has been continued from the medieval age to this day.

### **Vegetarian Sacrifice**

The immense kindness of *Mahāyānists* is directed not only to all human beings but also to animals as well. It is *Mahāyāna sūtra* that bans the sacrifice of animals and admonishes its followers to extend their loving-kindness to all living beings. The

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<sup>284</sup> NBT, p. 172.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>286</sup> BTLS, pp. 216-7.

<sup>287</sup> JBC, p. 370.

*Lankāvatāra sūtra*<sup>288</sup> advocates vegetarianism in order to avoid killing the life of others, as life is precious to all. But in the *Jivaka sutta*<sup>289</sup>, *Hinayānists* allow monks to take meat, if it is not seen, heard and suspected to have been killed on purpose for them.

Though *Hinayānists* did not advocate animal sacrifice, they indirectly allowed their disciples to kill animals that were useful to ancient Indian agriculture.

The animal sacrifice is seen popularly in the *Brahmanical* literature. L.M Joshi<sup>290</sup> indicates that the *Vedic Brahmanism* or *Vedicism* advocated sacrifice of animals and there was no mention of the principle of non-violence (*ahimsā*) in the entire *Vedic* literature prior to the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. Through animal sacrifice, *Brahmanas* killed a heavy toll of cattle stock, therefore many movements of *Jainism* and *Mahāyānism* directed against their superstitious religion.<sup>291</sup>

Even, human sacrifices were also described in the *Vedic* literature. A sculpture from *Mathura* shows a devotee offering his head to *Siva*.<sup>292</sup> D.N. Jha raises his voice to defend that perhaps some extreme sub-sects of cult preached such extreme practice such as human sacrifice. According to D.N.Jha, *Shaivism* advocated human sacrifice; the extreme character of it explained why it was less popular than *Vaishnavism*.

D.N. Jha says that Hsuan Tsang<sup>293</sup>, a Chinese pilgrim, who came to India in seventh century A.D., was about to be immolated before the image of *Durga*, the consort of *Siva*. But a sudden miraculous storm made his escape possible.

L.M. Joshi<sup>294</sup> maintains that the *Mahāyānic* theories of *ahimsā* and *maitrī* influenced the *Brahmanical* writers. The authors of the *Manusmṛti* (200 A.D.), the *Mahābhārata* (200 B.C – 400 A.D.), and others accepted the tenet of *ahimsā* and thenceforth it became a cardinal principle in *Purānic Brahmanism (Hinduism)* also. It

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<sup>288</sup> SSLS, pp. 368-70.

<sup>289</sup> MLS, Vol. 2, pp. 64-5.

<sup>290</sup> JBC, p. 339.

<sup>291</sup> DAI, p. 52.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>294</sup> JBC, p. 340.

is impossible to deny that *Purāṇic Brahmanism (Hinduism)* had borrowed the tenet of *ahimsā* from *Mahāyāna Buddhism*.<sup>295</sup>

According to L.M. Joshi<sup>296</sup>, the Hindu ethics has been absorbed by the best of *Mahāyānic* ethics. It means that respect for life, kindness to animals, a sense of responsibility and an endeavour after high life have been brought home to the Indian mind with renewed force. By *Mahāyānic* influences, *Hinduism* has shed extreme practices of religion which were irreconcilable with humanity and reason.

Apart from that, Swami Vivekananda<sup>297</sup> has often noted the diverse *Mahāyāna* influence *Hinduism* such as stopping or lessening the customs of drinking wine and non killing of living animals for sacrifice or for food in India. He asserts that *Hinduism* was influenced by *Mahāyāna Buddhism* since the decline of Buddhism in India about twelfth century A.D., *Hinduism* took from *Mahāyānism* a few cardinal tenets of conduct such as *ahimsā*, *karunā*, *maitrī*, control of the mind, etc and made them as its own.

### **Impartial Service of Mahāyāna Bodhisattva**

*Hīnayāna* ethics aims at the practice of eightfold path (*astangamarga*), that is, right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right meditation.<sup>298</sup>

Generally speaking, the eightfold path of *Hīnayāna* only leads to the individual benefits, *Mahāyānic* ethics, on the contrary, not only serves individual benefits but it also liberates humankind from the worldly sufferings. The *Bodhisattva's* whole hearted service to humankind is the highest manifestation of *Mahāyānic* ethics. The *Bodhisattva*, who always considers living beings as the means to his liberation, sacrifices himself for happiness of others and refusing the attainment of *Nirvāna* until all creatures being salved from pain.<sup>299</sup> According to Suzuki<sup>300</sup>, a *Bodhisattva*, as a rule, makes vows before he begins his career, for his desire to attain the final stage of

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<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 347.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 348.

<sup>298</sup> NBT, p. 180.

<sup>299</sup> TSBKV, pp. 5-6.

<sup>300</sup> SSLs, pp. 205-6.



*Bodhisattvahood* not only for himself but also for all living beings. Four vows of *Bodhisattva* are known as follows:

“Living beings whose number exceeds calculation, I vow to save all,  
Defilements are inexhaustible, I vow to destroy all,  
The means to liberation are innumerable, I vow to study all,  
And the Buddhahood is the highest goal, I vow to attain it.”

Having vowed thus, *Mahāyāna Bodhisattva* performs all duties for the happiness of others without asking for gratitude or reward. He always seeks proper opportunities to serve others. He lives not only for himself but also for all. He loves all living beings like his relatives and always shares weal and woe with everybody.

The ethics of *Mahāyānism* is built on the base of love, kindness and compassion. If living beings are sick, *Bodhisattva* is a good physician to cure them. If they are sunk in poverty, he will support them with money and other things. If they are suffering, he will teach them the true *Dharma*, causing them free from bondage... It is because service to all living beings, the *Bodhisattva*'s compassionate heart is developed and his ethics is gradually advanced. If there were not living beings, the *Bodhisattva* would not have a chance to practise the *Bodhisattva* path and Buddhahood would have never come to him.

### **The Attainment of the Absolute**

The Absolute is real-nature or Buddha-nature of man that is free from dualism and imperfection, free from sin, old-age, death, grief, hunger and thirst. It is the subject which persists irrespective of the external changes. It is also the common factor in the states of waking, dream, sleep, death, rebirth and the final liberation.<sup>301</sup>

*Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*<sup>302</sup> affirms that the Absolute is free from craving (*tanhā*) from evil, from fear, it embraces all. Permanence, continuity, unity, and eternality are also its characteristics. It is a self-existent and self-complete entity and there is nothing outside it to exist. The Absolute is truth of truths, from which all

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<sup>301</sup> RPU, p. 501.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*

things are sprung up, existed and come back after their dissolutions.<sup>303</sup> Vasubandhu I<sup>304</sup> says the Absolute is the base of man's body and mind; it is not changed while his body and mind are changed. The Absolute consists in the truly subjective that can never become an object. It is the person who sees, not the object seen. The *Lankāvatāra sūtra*<sup>305</sup> considers the Absolute as *Dharmakāya* that has assumed the shape of the whole universe. It is also known as the essence of all existences.

The Absolute is also known as the Buddha-knowledge, the intuitive wisdom that constitutes the essence of the Buddhahood. It is neither a thing made nor a thing not-made, neither cause nor effect, neither predicable nor unpredictable, neither describable nor indescribable, neither subject to perception nor beyond perception. According to P.V Bapat<sup>306</sup>, the Absolute is the same between Buddhas and living beings but by ignorance, one has not yet recognized it therefore he is turned by the wheel of *samsāra*. According to the Lotus *sūtra*, the purpose of the appearance of the Buddha in the world is to open the gate and shows Buddha-knowledge to all living beings and causing them to know and to live up to it.

According to the spirit of Heart *sūtra*<sup>307</sup>, the Absolute or *sūnyatā* can not be attained since it is invisible entity that is potential in every person. This potential power can only be recognized by intuitive wisdom and when once it is experienced, one's altruistic and selfless heart is advanced and his action corresponding with ethics. In other word, the *Bodhisattva*'s ethics is complete only when the Absolute is experienced by him.

The concept of the Absolute of *Mahāyānism* influenced the philosophical thoughts of *Samkāra* and *Rāmanuja*. The former identifies the Absolute with *Nirguna Brahman* that is an unqualified non-dualism. It means that he does not admit plurality of forms as souls and matter<sup>308</sup>; while the latter considers the absolute as *Saguna*

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<sup>303</sup> LSS, pp. 73-7.

<sup>304</sup> STTMC, pp. 115-6.

<sup>305</sup> BYB, p. 140.

<sup>306</sup> SBS, p. 135.

<sup>307</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 659.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 661.

*Brahman* that is a qualified non-dualism. It means that he admit plurality since the supreme spirit subjects in a plurality of forms as souls and matter.<sup>309</sup>

#### (v) Mahāyānic Contribution to Indian Art

It is said that after advent of *Mahāyānism*, *Brahmanical* art came into existence. According to L.M. Joshi<sup>310</sup>, the worship of icons, images, and symbols in *Hinduism* seems to have been introduced after emergence of *Mahāyānism*. According to K. Antonova<sup>311</sup>, in historical times, the art and ritual of image worship was popularized first by the *Mahāyānists* and it soon became an essential feature of all sects of *Pūranic Brahmanism (Hinduism)*.

The spread of *Mahāyānism* gradually became more elaborate and abroad so monastic complex, *stūpas*, *vihāras* had to be built from its requirements.

Through the donations of wealthy merchants, guilds of handicraftmen, landlords and royal votaries as well as under patronages of Sakas, Kusānas, Sātavāhanas and Guptas, many architectural monuments were built at many places such as *Sanchi* and *Bharhut* in central India, *Amaravatī* and *Nāgārjunakonda* in south India, and *Karle* and *Bhaja* in western India, etc.<sup>312</sup> Among these monuments, *Nālandā* University, which is said to be endowed and patronized by the emperors of Gupta, was not only a centre of *Mahāyānism*, it was also an outstanding national and international educational institution from the fifth century A.D. to the thirteenth century A.D. in India.<sup>313</sup>

According to K. Antonova<sup>314</sup>, all India art schools were influenced by the ideas of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. These art schools are known as follows: *Gandhara* school in north-western India; *Mathura* school in the *Ganges* valley (north India); *Amaravatī* school in *Andhra* (south India), *Vengī* school in south India, etc.

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<sup>309</sup> JBC, p. 336.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>311</sup> KHI, p. 118.

<sup>312</sup> BYB, pp. 244-5.

<sup>313</sup> AIB, p. 442.

<sup>314</sup> KHI, p. 173.

*Mahāyānic* architectures in the period of study consisted of images of the Buddha and *Bodhisattvas*, monasteries, temples, caves and others.

### The Buddha Images of Mahāyānic Schools of Art

S. Radhakrishnan<sup>315</sup> maintains that: “Buddhism imitated *Brahmanism* in making a god of Buddha, images of Buddha were set up and thus devotion to a personal being developed.”

In fact, before the advent of *Mahāyānism* in India, there were no images of gods as well as that of the Buddha. According to L.M. Joshi<sup>316</sup> and Romila Tharpe<sup>317</sup>, all images of *Brahmanical* gods came into existence after the advent of *Mahāyānism* and *Purānic Brahmanas* imitated *Mahāyānists* to make their god images standing and sitting on the lotus seats.

It is said that from the Buddha's *Nirvāna* to the first century A.D., the Buddha was depicted by means of symbols in Indian sculptures and painting such as “a wheel” for his turning *Dharma*-wheel in *Sarnath*, “a bodhi tree” for his enlightenment, “a horse” for his renunciation of the world, “a footprint” for his super ordinary characteristics and some other symbols.<sup>318</sup>

L.M. Joshi<sup>319</sup> affirms that with the emergence of *Mahāyāna*, the Buddha image became the central object of worship and it was manufactured in thousands in plastic forms, and about the beginning of the first century A.D., images of the Buddha began to come into existence and *Mahāyānism* thus inspired the style of god images of *Brahmanism*.

There were the differences of Buddha images among the various ancient Indian schools of art. Generally speaking, it is still recognizes that the first images of Buddha were made by the *Gandhara* school of art about the first century A.D.

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<sup>315</sup> RIP<sub>1</sub>, p. 583.

<sup>316</sup> JBC, p. 348.

<sup>317</sup> RPHEI, p. 147.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>319</sup> JBC, p. 359.

Nancy Wilson Ross<sup>320</sup> asserts that the *Gandhara* image of Buddha, which was made by the artists from Mediterranean world, often resemble Greek art or the art of Roman empire in the Christian era. D.N. Jha<sup>321</sup> adds that many early *Gandhara* Buddhas had apollonian faces, their draperies arranged in the style of Roman toga. According to him, *Gandhara* images were curious mixture of abstraction and realism. The brows and eyes of the Buddha were modeled with the hard dryness of carving characteristic of late antique art, whereas the lower part of the face was sculptured with apparent concern for the realistic definition of the structure of the mouth and the chin. Similar features of the head or bust type can be visualized in various Buddhist sculptures belonging to Kusāna period. For example, the image of Buddha from *Jhajjar* in which the Buddha is seated on lotus seat, the dress worn by the Buddha known as *sanghati*, is Greek. The halo around his head is a Hellenistic feature.<sup>322</sup>

Nancy Wilson Ross<sup>323</sup> indicates that the fasting Buddha from *Madhubun* (*Maholi*) shows that the *Gandhara* artists were much careful in carving the body details to show forceful realism. The physical condition of fasting Buddha has been shown by ribs and bones, emaciated belly and sunken facial expression.

Apart from that, various heads of the Buddha found from *Kharkodda*<sup>324</sup>, *Mahamoodpur*<sup>325</sup>, *Gurgaon*<sup>326</sup>, *Brahamanāvas*<sup>327</sup> reveal the similar features of *Gandhara* art of Kusānas. Various busts such as *Bodhisattva* from *Mohanbāri*<sup>328</sup> (*Rotah*), Buddha in *vajraparyankā* pose from *Brahamavas*<sup>329</sup> (*Rotah*), and colossal bust of the Buddha from *Gurgaon*<sup>330</sup> represent the same *Gandharian* features of Kusāna times.

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<sup>320</sup> NTAE, pp. 183-4.

<sup>321</sup> DAI, p. 93.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>323</sup> NTAE, p. 147.

<sup>324</sup> Aj, Vol. IX (fig. 113).

<sup>325</sup> MO (fig. 20, 21, 23, 24, 28)

<sup>326</sup> SCGJ, pp. 378-9.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>328</sup> CIA, p. 145.

<sup>329</sup> KJI, p. 115.

<sup>330</sup> SEK, p. 76.

The images of Buddha were made by the *Gandhara* stucco school of art were more beautiful. The face was softened by an imperceptible smile. The slightly protruding eyes and fleshy cheeks differ from the classical models the manifestation of the curls on the heads. Dress and stance follow the tradition of the stone carvers but with far greater freedom and naturalness. The execution of these figures reflects the techniques imparted to stucco by importing Hellenistic pieces. The early group of the Buddha figures that belonged to the first century A.D. distinguished by clear and impressive heads with long curl and beautifully drawn carves outlining the lineaments. They show locks of hairs in wavy curls overflowing the *usnisā* wherever it is marked. The body is balanced with clear cut proportion and the attitude is realized.

The images of the Buddha made by *Mathura* school, according to P.V. Bapat<sup>331</sup>, were carved with the male shaped straight, firm and stiff with broad and masculine chest. Halo round the head of the Buddha was plain and often bears scalloped border, the head has small curls, the drapery covers only one shoulder, lower garment is seen up to the middle of legs, the right hand is raised in *abhaya mudra* (gesture of protection) with a beautiful decoration. The face bears half open eyes with a smiling expression on the face.

The *Mathura* origin has been found at a number places such as *Sanchi*, *Sarnath*, *Kosambi*, *Ahichchhatra* and *Sanghol*, etc.<sup>332</sup> And images of the Buddha and *Bodhisattvas* in seated and free-standing pose, of both normal human size and colossal stature, belonged to the period of Kusānas.

R.C. Sharma<sup>333</sup> holds that in the end of the first century B.C., the relief tradition of *Mathura* school was replaced by stereotyped images. The colossal *Bodhisattva* from *Maholi* and *Kātra* through its volume, drapery, and pose remind the early *Mathura* tradition. The great Buddha figures of *Mathura*, *Sarnath*, *Ajanta*, and *Biḥar* are immortal specimens which symbolize the ideals of a whole age. And

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<sup>331</sup> BYB, p. 250.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>333</sup> SKI, pp. 225-6.

Debala Mitra<sup>334</sup> holds that colossal copper and gold images of the Buddha were also found in *Karmir*.

The images of the Buddha in *Vengī* school of art either standing or seated are fairly common.<sup>335</sup> They appear either as free standing isolated sculptures or within the relief compositions. As a rule, they have spiral *usnīsas* (curly hair) and drapery as well as to leave the right shoulders bare. In a few images, however, the garments cover both shoulders but a number of such images is insignificant. The *Vengī* type of the Buddha images appear to be closely allied to the *Mathura* type of Buddha and *Bodhisattvas*. The style of *Vengī* art extended to *Srilanka* naturally because of commercial contacts and religious affiliation. And the *Vengī* type of sculptures have been discovered as far as *Dong Duong* in *Champā* (modern Middle of Vietnam) and Indonesia.<sup>336</sup>

The images of the Buddha in *Amaravatī* school are also highly remarked by scholars. K. Antonova<sup>337</sup> holds that the Buddha image made by the *Amaravatī* school being elaborated in more detail and being represented as a human aspect and to be depicted as the supreme deified being. In the Gupta period, the Buddha was portrayed as the embodiment of divine power. He has a broad torso and narrow waist, and hardly perceptible muscles. The whole figure is executed in a special style, the head is slightly inclined, and the right arm is bent at the elbow in the '*abhaya mudra*' pose; the figure of the Buddha is conspicuously idealized, the pose is natural and unconstrained, conveying an impression of inner concentration, the face wears a blissful smile.<sup>338</sup>

### Architectural Monuments in Mahāyānic Art

The architectural monuments concerning *Mahāyānism* consisted of *stūpas*, temples, monasteries, some free-standing and some cut into rock at hillsides.

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<sup>334</sup> DBN, p. 109.

<sup>335</sup> CAK, *op. cit.* (fig. 343).

<sup>336</sup> ABIA, p. 100.

<sup>337</sup> KHI, p. 174.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*

It is interesting to say that, there was no evidence of *Brahmanical* monasteries or any other monument of *Brahmanism* before the time of Samkara (9<sup>th</sup> CAD). According to D.N. Jha<sup>339</sup>, the *Purānic Brahmanical* religion was still in its formative stage. Art, therefore, mainly centered round Buddhism.

L.M. Joshi<sup>340</sup> observes that the monastic institutions of India seem due to Buddhism and Samkara perceived the advantage of the coenobitic life for organizing religion and founded a number of temples, subsequent religious leaders imitated him to build some other temples. Some of the centres founded by Samkara were located at *Puri* in *Orissa*.

Swami Vivekananda<sup>341</sup>, a leader of Samkara school, also maintains that the temple of *Jagannath* was an old Buddhist temple, *Hindus* took it over and hinduized it. And other temples of Buddhism were also took over by *Hindus*. For example, the temple at *Badrinath* in *Garhwar* in which even the original Buddha image was worshipped as the image of *Viṣṇu*.

Evidences above prove enough that all Hindu temples came into existence after the advent of *Mahāyānism* and they were inspired by *Mahāyānists*. Sudha Sengupta<sup>342</sup> affirms that the earliest and the major number of the temples, monasteries and caves, from the first to the sixth centuries A.D., were Buddhistical. D.N. Jha<sup>343</sup> also asserts that the artistic remains of the period consisted chiefly of Buddhist *stūpas* and Buddhist cave temples.

The *stūpa*, according to D.N. Jha<sup>344</sup>, began as earthen burial mound. It was a hemispherical dome built over the relics of the Buddha or of a sanctified monk, or sacred texts. The relic was kept in the central chamber at the base of the *stūpa* which was surrounded by a path enclosed by railings. Of the surviving *stūpa* railings, the

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<sup>339</sup> DAI, p. 91.

<sup>340</sup> JBC, p. 351.

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>342</sup> MBSB, p. 272.

<sup>343</sup> DAI, p. 91.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*



earliest came from *Bharhut* and dated to the first century B.C. At the same time, the older *Sanchi stūpa* was renovated and enlarged to twice its original size.

D.N. Jha<sup>345</sup> says that the *stūpa* of *Amaravati* was larger and more ornate than the one at *Sanchi*, it seems to have been completed about the second century A.D.

Sudha Sengupta<sup>346</sup> maintains that the great Kusāna, king Kaniska, built some new *stūpas* in many places. The *Dharmarājika stūpa*, which was built by Kaniska, was seen by Fa hien (Chinese pilgrim) in the fifth century A.D.<sup>347</sup> Hsuan Tsang, who came to India in the early seventh century A.D., reported that he saw at least one hundred *stūpas* in *Kasmir*.<sup>348</sup>

Apart from these *stūpas*, there were many *stūpas* built in *Sind*<sup>349</sup>, *Sarnath*<sup>350</sup>, *Andhra Pradesh*<sup>351</sup>, *Amaravati*<sup>352</sup>, *Nāgarjunakonda*<sup>353</sup>, *Jaggayyapeta*<sup>354</sup>, etc.

*Mahāyānic* monasteries, temples, and caves also played an important role in the ancient Indian culture. The new architecture of *Mahāyānism* would have been determined in part by religious requirements and the need to distinguish these from the architecture of *Brahmanism* and that of *Hinayānism*. There were marvelous cave temples at *Karle*, *Kanhiri*, and *Bhaja* in *Bombay* state and *Ajanta* in *Deccan*, some free standing and some cut into rock at hill-sides. Sudha Sengupta<sup>355</sup> says that there were at least 100 monasteries in *Kasmir* that had been seen by Hsuan Tsang, Wu Kung<sup>356</sup>, Chinese people, who lived at the same place about a century later, reported to have seen about 300 monasteries.

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<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>346</sup> MBSB, p. 274.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>349</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 271-80.

<sup>351</sup> DBM, pp. 198-9.

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 206-7.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>354</sup> MBSB, p. 276.

<sup>355</sup> MBSB, p. 276.

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.*

During the reign of Gupta, in the fifth century A.D., University of *Nālandā* was built.<sup>357</sup> Debhala Mitra<sup>358</sup> indicates that five kings of *Gupta* dynasty erected many monasteries at *Nālandā*.

In *Madhya Pradesh*<sup>359</sup>, there were many rock-cut monuments to have been discovered at *Bagh* and *Dhamnar*. In *H. Nasik*<sup>360</sup>, a group of twenty four caves locally known as *Pāndulena* or *Pāndava* caves was cut in a long line on the north face of a hill. These architectures represent a brilliant phase in the rock-cut architecture of the second century A.D. During this period came up the majority of the caves. Caves in *Aurangabad*<sup>361</sup> belonged to the sixth century A.D. Their architectural and sculptural features combined with the introduction of female deities. These caves are particularly interesting for the inspired orgy of the sculptural magnificence, surpassing in subtle grace and plastic treatment and effective display of varied types, even the best of *Ajanta*. In *Ellora*<sup>362</sup>, the Buddhist caves comprise twelve caves sprang up mostly in the sixth century A.D. The chief interest of this group, the last bright flame of the Buddhist rock cut architecture, lies in its having certain original forms excavated on a gigantic scale and not found elsewhere. Many monasteries, temples and *caityas* are found in the *Madhya Pradesh*<sup>363</sup>, *Bharhut*<sup>364</sup>, *Sirpur*<sup>365</sup>, *Jamalgarhi*<sup>366</sup>, *Taxila*<sup>367</sup>, etc.

According to D.N. Jha<sup>368</sup>, these magnificent monasteries were often situated near the trade routes or in the hilly areas or the main points where pilgrims and merchants often stopped.

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<sup>357</sup> ACB, p. 128.

<sup>358</sup> DBM, pp. 85-6.

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 91-2.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 168-70.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 179-80.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 181-3.

<sup>363</sup> DBM, p. 91.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 93-6.

<sup>365</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 102-3.

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 122-3.

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 123-7.

<sup>368</sup> DAI, p. 86.

## Painting in Mahāyānic Art

Painting was a developed art. D.N. Jha<sup>369</sup> indicates that apart from professional artists, men and women of the upper classes could ably handle a brush.

Jha's appraisal as above blows up abilities of upper classes. In fact everybody can not have an aptitude for paintings except professional artists. The *Mahāyānic* painting, which displays the Buddha's past and present lives and other edifying legends, became main subject of the artists in the period. The remains of *Mahāyānic* paintings, dating from the first century B.C. are found in some of *caitya* halls at *Ajanta* in the *Deccan*. P.V. Bapat<sup>370</sup> indicates that a principal wall painting of the period in cave No 10 is devoted to the illustration of *Saddanta Jataka*. According to him, *Mahāyānic* paintings had attained its maturity during the *Gupta* period (5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.).<sup>371</sup>

D.N. Jha<sup>372</sup> asserts that remains of *Mahāyānic* paintings of the *Gupta* period may be seen in the caves at *Bagh* (cave IV, 5<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.), *Ajanta* (caves I, II, XVI, XVII and XIX) and *Badami* (cave III, 6<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.). The *Ajanta* artists displayed consummate skill in delineating human and animal figures. The representation of the *Bodhisattva* announcing his renunciation (cave I) and that of Indra and his entourage flying to greet the Buddha in *Tushita* heaven (cave XVII) are only a few of the many masterpieces. Decorations in ceilings, pedestals of columns and doors and window frames speak of the artists' extraordinary powers of conception and technique. Though the theme of paintings at *Ajanta* is religious, one can see in them a dramatic panorama of the life of princes, nobles, warriors and sages. The human and animal figures display vigour, adding grace and vitality to the style which reveals great delicacy and depth of feeling. A quiet dignity, poise and detachment are the hall-marks of classical *Mahāyānic* paintings in India.

Generally, *Mahāyānic* art not only enriches Indian art but it also had influences on Buddhist arts outside India.

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<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>370</sup> BYB, pp. 253-4.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>372</sup> DAI, p. 112.

It is said that images of the Buddha, that are sitting or standing on the lotus seats, are productions of *Mahāyāna*. These images are not only worshipped by the Buddhists in the countries following *Mahāyānism* but they are also worshipped by the countries practising *Hīnayāna* doctrines like Srilanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and some *Theravāda* temples in south Vietnam.

### **Influence of Indian Mahāyānic Art on Buddhist Art of Countries Outside India**

P.V. Bapat<sup>373</sup> maintains that *Mahāyānic* art outside India has produced a magnificent wealth of sculptures and paintings, which include many unique specimens, have no parallel in India. The sculptors have often displayed great vision and thought in producing these masterpieces that compel the attention of scholars and connoisseurs of art from all parts of the world.

#### **In Afghanistan**

According to P.V. Bapat<sup>374</sup>, in *Bamiyan* (Afghanistan) there were colossal figures of the Buddha modeled on an earlier *Gandhara* type belonging to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> CAD, these figures carved out of a sandstone cliff in the region. Simultaneously many monasteries and temples, which were influenced by the Indian architectures, were found in Afghanistan by Hsuan Tsang on his way to India in seventh century A.D.

#### **In Srilanka**

P.V. Bapat<sup>375</sup> asserts that most remarkable image of the Buddha of early date is the seated one in meditation from *Anuradhapura* was influenced by *Amaravati* school. And the metal image of the Buddha from *Badulla*, which is now preserved in the Colombo museum, was modeled after the *Amaravati* bronze of the *Chola* tradition.<sup>376</sup> A standing Buddha near *Ruanweli stūpa*, dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. A.D. is an exact replica of similar figure from *Amaravati*.<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>373</sup> BYB, p. 269.

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 263.

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264.

The paintings from *Sigirya* are probably more intimately connected with the pallava paintings from *Sittanavasal*, *Panamalai*, and *Kancipuram* than any others.<sup>378</sup>

### **In Thailand**

R.C. Majumdar<sup>379</sup> holds that an early site, Pong Tuk, has yielded bronze Buddha images of the *Amaravatī* style, which may be dated in 2<sup>nd</sup> c. A.D. According to him, the Buddha images of the Gupta style both of earlier and later type have also been discovered. And many monasteries and temples have also discovered there. Especially the incident of *nāga mucalinda* protecting the Buddha from a great storm for seven days and nights after his enlightenment, a great favourite in the *Krishna* valley, is probably nowhere so prominent as in Thailand.<sup>380</sup> Another important incident from the Buddha's life, which has its earliest representation of *Bharhut* and which is also a great favourite in Gupta and mediaeval sculpture, is the descent of the Buddha from the *Trayastrimsa* heaven after his preaching the law to his mother. This is depicted in a variety of form in Thailand.<sup>381</sup>

### **In Cambodia**

P.V. Bapat<sup>382</sup> maintains that the image of Buddha, who seats on the *nāga* with the halo round his head, was influenced by *Amaravatī* school of art. Even in the earliest *Amaravatī* sculpture, where the footprints of the Buddha were represented, are seen in some temples in Cambodia.<sup>383</sup>

B.N. Puri<sup>384</sup> writes that an inscription was found at Thma puok, mentions images of the Buddha, Maitreya and Avalokitesvara. Through these evidences, *Mahāyānism* is proved to be prevailing in Cambodia from 1<sup>st</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> CAD. Apart from that, the inscription found at *Phnom Bantay* (south of *Angkar Bauray* to the west of

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<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 263.

<sup>379</sup> MBSB, pp. 313-4.

<sup>380</sup> BYB, p. 266.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>384</sup> MSBS, p. 339.

*Battambang*) invokes the images of *Mahāyānic* divinities including *Lokesvara* and *Prajñā pāramitā*. All these were influenced by India *Vengī* and *Amaravatī* schools.

### In Burma

P.V. Bapat<sup>385</sup> says that the *stūpa* of *Kuang Hmudaw* near *Sagain* hill, in upper Burma comes closest to the *stūpa* of *Sanchi* in India. The *Ngakye Nadaun stūpa* of the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. from *Pagan* is almost similar to the *Dharnekh stūpa* at *Sarnath*.<sup>386</sup> The *Mahābodhi* temple at the same place, which belonged to the 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D., resembled the *Mahābodhi* temple at *Gaya*. Other *stūpas* of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. were also influenced by Indian architecture.<sup>387</sup>

### In Malay Peninsula

R.C. Majumdar<sup>388</sup> holds that the temples, both of brick and stone, were built in *Wellesley* and *Keddah* in the fourth or fifth century A.D. are similar to Indian temples. According to him, the great *stūpa* of *Nakhon Sri Dhammarat* and a number of temples surrounding it seemingly were influenced by Indian architectures.<sup>389</sup>

### In Indonesia

Two inscriptions dated A.D. 778-782 refer to the construction of a temple *Tārā* at *Kalasan* and setting up an image of *Mañjurī* at *Kelurak* by the *Sailendra* emperors, who were in close touch with *Pala* emperor, *Devapāla*, at *Bengal* and the *Cola* emperor at *Rajaraja*.<sup>390</sup>

P.V. Bapat<sup>391</sup> says that the image of the Buddha seen in the temple at *Candi Mendut* is similar to the seated Buddha at *Ajanta* and elsewhere and it closely follows earlier Gupta sculptural type.

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<sup>385</sup> BYB, p. 265.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>388</sup> MSBS, p. 339.

<sup>389</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 317.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.

<sup>391</sup> BYB, p. 268.

## In Vietnam

*Champā* was the oldest name of Middle of Vietnam; in the later period, it was merged into North and called *Annam*, one of three countries of *Dong Duong*. Ancient south of Vietnam belonged to *Funam* and later it was merged Middle and North areas into Vietnam. According to R.C. Majumdar<sup>392</sup>, the early introduction of Buddhism in this region was indicated by an image of Buddha made in the *Amaravatī* style that found at *Dong Duong*. But there was no epigraphic reference to Buddhism before 9<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.

The long inscription<sup>393</sup> on the four faces of a stela found at *Dong Duong* records the installation of an image of the Buddha in 875 c. A.D. as well as a Buddhist monastery built by the Buddhist king Indravarman. The remains of a Buddhist temple found in the province of Quang Nam shows influences of Indian art. Specially the incident of *naga mucalinda* protecting the Buddha from a great storm for seven days and nights after his enlightenment, a great favourite in *Krishna* valley, is discovered recently at An Nhon district and now it is kept at Son Long temple, Tuy Phuoc district, Binh Dinh province, Vietnam. In the Ly dynasty (11<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.) from the image of Avalokitesvara made by the Indian *Vengī* school, Vietnamese sculptors developed into images of female Avalokitesvara with one thousand hands in which one thousand eyes were sculptured. These statues stand for strength of Vietnamese people in the heroic struggle for their independence and country defence for thousand years. Besides, images of the Buddha, which are worshipped in Vietnamese temples, have bearing of the Indian *Vengī* and *Amaravatī* styles.

## In China

P.V. Bapat<sup>394</sup> maintains that the influence of *Mahāyānic* art from India can also be traced in the figures of the Buddha in the thousand caves at *Tun Huang* in China. According to him, the wall paintings in these caves are akin to those at *Bamiyan* (Afghanistan) and may be said to be related to those at *Ajanta*. Rock carvings at *Yun*

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<sup>392</sup> MSBS, pp. 315-6.

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 316.

<sup>394</sup> BYB, p. 261.

*Kang* clearly show Indian *Mahāyānic* origin. In *Shansi-hope* province (to the west of *Peking*), twenty one big caves have been discovered. The old Buddhist monuments in china were influenced by the styles of *Gandhara* and *Amaravatī* schools. Bapat<sup>395</sup> also says that the Buddhist sculptures from the 4<sup>th</sup> c. A.D. onwards in the grottos of *Yun Kang*, *Maichishan* as well as in the caves at *Tun Huang* show the influence of the *Gandhara* school as well as of the pure Indian style of the Gupta period.

### In Japan

The image of *Vairocana* Buddha at *Nara* is certainly influenced by *Amaravatī* school. The paintings on the wall of the *Haryuji* monastery (8<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.) certainly recalls Indian influence which may perhaps have come through China.<sup>396</sup>

### In Nepal

According to P.V. Bapat<sup>397</sup>, the *Svayambhunath* and the *Bodhinath stūpas* from Nepal are influenced by Indian *Pala* art. All monasteries and temples in Nepal are certainly influenced by Indian architectures.

### In Tibet

P.V. Bapat<sup>398</sup> holds that Tibet *stūpas* are not very different from Nepalese ones, but the famous *stūpa* from *Gyan-Tse* with its unusual plan and elevation reminds one of the *Borobudur stūpa* in Java. They are also influenced by *Pala* art. The monasteries in Tibet contain stucco figures, wood carvings and *Tanka* paintings which bear Indian style.

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<sup>395</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>397</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262.

<sup>398</sup> BYB, pp. 262-3.