

STUDIES IN THE LANKAVATARA SUTRA

One of the most important texts
of Mahayana Buddhism, in which almost all its
principal tenets are presented, including
the teaching of Zen

DAISETZ TEITARO SUZUKI

The *Lankavatara Sutra* is one of the most important Sutras in the study of Mahayana Buddhism, particularly of Zen Buddhism, for it was this which was handed over by Bodhidharma, the Father of Zen in China, to his first disciple Hui-k'ê early in the sixth century. The Sutra contains almost all the essential teachings of the Mahayana, and this volume is an attempt to elucidate them systematically, at the same time analyzing the contents of the Sutra itself. An account of its translations in Tibetan and Chinese is also given. The Sanskrit-Chinese-English Glossary included in the book will be of help to Chinese students of Buddhism.

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STUDIES IN
THE LANKAVATARA SUTRA

楞伽經之研究

DAISETZ TEITARO SUZUKI

translated

THE LANKAVATARA SUTRA

*into English, from the original
Sanskrit. First published
in 1932, it was reprinted
in 1956 after being out
of print for many
years*

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by

DAISETZ TEITARO SUZUKI



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deliver him from that dungeon. Moreover, O Bhagavat, there is no pleasure for that prince in that dungeon, nor is he liberated, until the king shows him favour.

“The Bhagavat said: Thus, O Ajita, it is with those Bodhisattvas who, having fallen into doubt, amass a stock of merit, but doubt the knowledge of the Buddha.....”¹

It is very interesting to contrast these passages from the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* with the thought pervading the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. For the *Prajñāpāramitā* dwelling on the conception of unreality or emptiness (*śūnyatā*) seeks deliverance from the dungeon of existence, or rather interprets the Buddhist realisation purely from a metaphysical point of view. The doctrine of *Śūnyatā*² constituting the keynote of the *Prajñāpāramitā* is really the foundation of all the Mahayana schools of Buddhism including even the Yogācāra. What is known as primitive Buddhism denied the existence of an ego-substance (*ātman*), but its conception of the external world was that of the naïve realist. The *Prajñāpāramitā* philosopher insists on the non-existence of a particular body as such, that is, as an objective reality whose identity is absolute. Every being or every object, as he sees it, is relative, impermanent, and not worth attachment. This *Prajñāpāramitā* idea of unreality, or emptiness as the literal sense of the term *śūnyatā* is, is the foundation of the Buddhist theory of nature.

Thus, in the *Prajñāpāramitā*, supreme enlightenment is

¹ S.B.E. XLIX, *The Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha*, pp. 63-64.

² The theory of *Śūnyatā* (emptiness or void) is one of the best-known theories propounded by the Mahayana, but it is one of the least-understood especially by those whose thought has never run along the line of Mahayana ontology. But, even among Buddhist scholars, there are some who do not so fully comprehend the doctrine as one may expect of them, seeing that they must have been imbued with the idea since the beginning of their study. The reason is that the doctrine itself is quite liable to be wrongly or inadequately interpreted, owing to its subtlety or depth, or to its extreme simplicity, as it is variously approached and taken hold of. See also below where the doctrine of “*Anutpāda*” (no-birth) is treated.

identified with the attainment of *Sūnyatā*. In other words, the object of the Buddhist life is to find an unattached abode in this realisation. This abode is called *apratishṭhita*, not-abiding. Hence the noted phrase in the *Diamond Sūtra*, XIV: *na kvacit pratishṭhitam cittam utpādayitavyam*.¹ The Tathagata has no dwelling place in the sense that all his thoughts and doings have no exterior or ulterior objects in view to which he desires to adapt himself, and therefore that he is like the sun that shines on everybody just and unjust, or like the lily in the field that blooms in its best even when there is nobody around to admire its supra-Solomonic array. So we have again in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, Chapter II, p. 34: "A Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva should abide himself in the perfection of Prajñā by abiding in emptiness.... The Tathagata is so called because he is not abiding anywhere, his mind has no abode neither in things created nor in things uncreated, and yet it is not away from them." This is the message of all the sutras belonging to the *Prajñāpāramitā* class.

As to the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*, it is really the consummation of Buddhist thought, Buddhist sentiment, and Buddhist experience. To my mind, no religious literature in the world can ever approach the grandeur of conception, the depths of feeling, and the gigantic scale of composition, as attained by this sutra. It is the eternal fountain of life from which no religious mind will turn back athirst or only partially satisfied. It is a great pity that this magnificent literature still remains concealed in a language not so universally accessible. Here not only deeply speculative minds find satisfaction, but humble spirits and heavily-oppressed hearts, too, will have their burdens lightened. Abstract truths are so concretely, so symbolically represented here that one will finally come to a realisation of the truth that even in a particle of dust the whole universe is seen reflected—not this

¹ "A Bodhisattva should have his thoughts awakened without abiding in anything whatever." In Chinese, 應無所住而生其心.

crimination worked out in one's own mind, one does away with the terminology belonging to such false discrimination and with the signification of words such as predicating and predicated; that when one understands that the body, property, and abiding-place¹ are the particularisations of the Ālaya-vijñāna (or *citta*, mind), one is freed from [ideas such as] perceived and perceiving, attains to a state of no-image, or shadowlessness (*nirābhāsa*).² O Mahamati, such a Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva will before long realise the sameness of Samsāra and Nirvāṇa.

"O Mahamati, by deeds of great love (*mahākaruṇā*), skilful means (*upāya*), and effortlessness (*anābhogacaryā*),³ a Bodhisattva reviews all beings and knows that they are like *māyā*, they resemble shadows, they are not produced by causes; and, further, knowing that the world exists not outside the mind, he leads a life of formlessness (*animitta*). As he gradually goes up the higher stages (*bhūmi*), he will realise a state of Samādhi where he comes to the understanding that the triple world is Mind itself (*cittamātra*). The Samādhi he attains is called *Māyā-like* (*māyopama*). He will further free himself from all images, perfect his knowledge, and realise that things are unborn, and entering upon the Samādhi called Vajravimbopama, will obtain the Buddha-body. He will, always abiding in the suchness of things, manifest himself in transformed bodies, he will be endowed with the ten Powers, the six Psychic Faculties, and the ten-

¹ *Deha-bhoga-pratishṭha* is found generally in combination. It means this bodily existence with its material possessions and its physical surroundings; in short it stands for the world generally.

² This is a spiritual state of absolute purity in which one finds no traces of dualism. It is a complete identification of the self with the suchness or thusness (*tathatā*) of things, and there is no thought of birth, abiding, and disappearance, seeing that all things start from the evolution of one's own mind (*svacitta*).

³ Or purposelessness, a state of perfect adjustment, when one is not at all conscious of doing anything special for any particular individual. The sun is said to be effortless or purposeless in its work when it shines on the just and on the unjust.

fold Self-mastery. O Mahāmati, adorned with Upāya (skilful means), he will visit all the Buddha-lands; and disengaged from the philosophical doctrines as well as from the Citta, Manas, and Vijñāna, he will experience a revulsion (*parāvṛitti*) within himself and by degrees will attain the Tathāgata-body.

“Therefore, O Mahāmati, if a Bodhisattva wishes to attain the Tathāgata-body, he should keep himself away from the Skandhas, Dhātus, Āyatanas, Cittam, causation, works, discipline, birth, staying and passing, and cease from discriminating, philosophising, and abide in the thought of the “Mind-only” (*cittamātra*).

“When the triple world is surveyed [by the Bodhisattva], he perceives that this existence is due to memory (*vāsanā*) that has been accumulated since the beginningless past but wrongly interpreted. He recognises that Buddhahood is a state imageless, unborn, and to be inwardly experienced by oneself, when the mind becomes fully controlled and purposeless deeds are accomplished. Like the Cintamani (wish-gem), he will now manifest himself in a variety of forms according to the needs of sentient beings and lead them to the view that only Mind is, and then gradually compel them to ascend the stages. Therefore, O Mahāmati, let the Bodhisattva discipline himself well in the work of self-realisation (*svasiddhānta*).”

Being full of technical terms, the reader may find the import of the passage here quoted difficult to understand, but as we go on, it will, I hope, grow fully intelligible. In the meantime, the following paraphrase will help the reader to get a general idea of it.

The highest stage of Buddhist experience is reached when a man comes to realise that things are devoid of a self-substance, or that they are not after all final, irreducible realities, for they never have been created, they are what they are from beginningless past; if we say that they have come into existence, or that they exist as we perceive them

through the senses, this will imply that individualisation is ultimate fact, which, however, is contrary to the truth inwardly perceived by an enlightened mind.

Individualisation is due to discrimination (*vikalpa*), which is falsely interpreted and adhered to by a heart blinded by desires and passions, and from this fact there issue all kinds of human tragedies and comedies. What really exists is mind, which is above all discrimination, that is, above logic and analysis. When this Mind which is designated in the sutra as the Ālaya or Ālayavijñāna is discriminated by an erroneously self-created and self-reflecting agent called Manas, this world of particulars develops in its misleading fulness and richness.

Discrimination is the result of memory (*vāsanā*) accumulated from the unknown past. *Vāsanā* literally means "perfuming," or "fumigation," that is, it is a kind of energy that is left behind when an act is accomplished and has the power to rekindle the old and seek out new impressions. Through this "perfuming," reflection takes place which is the same thing as discrimination, and we have a world of opposites and contraries with all its practical consequences. The triple world, so called, is therefore the shadow of a self-reflecting and self-creating mind. Hence the doctrine of "Mind-only" (*cittamātra*).

Reality as it is, or Mind in itself, is also called the suchness (*tathatā*) or sameness (*samatā*) of things, as herein are unified all forms of antithesis which constitute our actual world of sense and logic. The Bodhisattva abides in this suchness which transcends all our reasonings and discriminations. And because he abides in this transcendental realm, his all-loving heart works without the taint of selfishness and one-sided attachment, using all contrivances (*upāya*) whereby to save his fellow-beings from pain and suffering. These works of his are called purposeless for the reason that they are not actuated by any egotistic interests or desires or motives. They are called out from the abundance of his

inner goodness which now shines forth free from all defilements of intellection as well as of conation.

The world is like *māyā*, or mirage, as his intellect is no longer snared in the meshes of dualistic logic, he intuitively perceives that the world of particularisation is no more than the reflection of his own mind. His life is thus designated as formless or imageless and his deeds effortless and purposeless. Yet he never relaxes his efforts to benefit all sentient beings. He knows from his transcendental position that *Samsāra* and *Nirvāṇa* are the same (*śamatā*), and yet he knows not when to stop working for the realisation of the highest ideals and also for universal salvation. His inner mind is then said to be abiding in the *Samādhi* known as *Māyopama* (mirage-like).

This seems to be the highest state of spiritual attainment realisable by a mind encased in a human body; but there is still a higher state to be attained by the Buddhist. There is a higher body called *Buddhakāya* which is obtained when a man enters upon *Vajravimbopama Samādhi*. When this is obtained one is endowed with the ten Powers, the six Psychic Faculties, and the tenfold Self-mastery. He is then able to transform himself into various forms in order to benefit sentient beings in accordance with their desires and circumstances. He is also able to visit all the Buddha-lands and to perform all Buddha-deeds.

The main object of the Buddhist life is thus seen to consist in having a certain spiritual revulsion, whereby we are able to leap from the dualistic shore of this individualistic world to the other shore of *Nirvana*, where there are no egoistic impulses and desires in evidence any longer, though this means not at all the death of a loving heart itself. To effect this revulsion, spiritual discipline is needed which finally leads up to a certain exalted inner condition. Enlightenment, self-realisation, or the opening of an inner eye is the name given to it. The *Laṅkāvatāra* calls it *Pratyātmāryajñā-nagocara*, or *Svasiddhānta*, and the main object of its teach-

ing is to acquaint us with the fact of an inner perception which causes a spiritual revolution in our whole life.

The reason why the *Laṅkāvatāra* is considered to be historically and doctrinally so closely related to Zen Buddhism is based on this fact that herein most emphatically asserted is the importance of an inner realisation as the source of all the religious virtues and blessings. Zen, of all the schools of Buddhism, is preëminently the religion of enlightenment. If the Buddhist life is to be regarded as consisting of Prajñā (higher knowledge) or Bodhi (wisdom), and Karuṇā (love), Zen indeed makes most of the Prajñā element at least during its first stages of training, and this Prajñā which it teaches is to be attained by transcending the relativity of worldly knowledge, which will free our desires and passions from the entanglements of the individualistic world-conception. It does not teach to destroy all the impulses, instincts, and affective factors that make up the human heart; it only teaches to clear up our intellectual insight from erroneous discriminations and unjustifiable assertions; for when this is done the heart knows by itself how to work out its native virtues. This is the position of Zen Buddhism, and in the following pages I wish to develop what the *Laṅkāvatāra* states on this subject, rather generally in the first part concerning the nature of the inner realisation, and in the second and the third part concerning its relations to logic, psychology, and the practical life.

The All-importance of an Inner Realisation

The ideas that things are devoid of self-substance (*svabhāva*), that is, they are by nature empty (*śūnya*), that the world is nothing but Mind, that in order to reach the ultimate end of Buddhahood one must transcend all the limitations of dualism and particularisation, and finally that the state of enlightenment must be realised within one's self,—these are the common property of Mahayana Buddhism; but in the *Laṅkāvatāra* these ideas are developed in a way

of to support the claims of a particular school such as the Yogācāra or the Avataṃsaka, in its connection with the doctrine of the Ālayavijñāna or Tathāgata-garbha, this connection is accidental. The thesis of the sutra must be regarded as centered upon the idea of an inner perception of the deepest truth, which goes beyond language and reasoning. The Buddhist discipline or exercise (*yoga*) as is told by the Buddha consists of two parts, philosophical and practical.¹ The philosophical discipline is to train the mind to absolute idealism and see that the world is Mind, and that there is in reality no becoming such as birth and death, and that no external things really exist; while the practical side is to attain an inner perception by means of supreme wisdom (*svapratyātmāryajñānādhigama*). Putting the practical side of Buddhist discipline first, we can say that when it is accomplished, the philosophical side follows by itself; that is to say, the world as seen in the light of self-realisation is to be interpreted in terms of absolute idealism. However this may be, the *Laṅkāvatāra* is decidedly rich in deep mystical speculations.

One thing I wish to notice in the *Laṅkāvatāra* before I proceed to describe the nature of the inner realisation, is that this sutra does not make one reference² to the awakening of the thought of enlightenment (*bodhicittotpāda*) made so much of, especially in the sutras of the *Prajñāpāramitā* group. The awakening of the thought of enlightenment

¹ P. 79 f. "To be great in the exercise that makes up Bodhisattvahood (*mahāyogayogin*), one has to be an expert in four things, [three of which are intellectual and the last one is practical]: (1) To perceive clearly that this visible world is no more than Mind itself; (2) to abandon the notion that birth, abiding, and passing-away really take place; (3) to look into the nature of things external and realise that they have no reality (*abhāva*); and finally (4) to train oneself towards the realisation of the truth in the inmost consciousness by means of supreme wisdom."

² This may not be quite an exact statement, as Mahāmāti does refer once or twice to it, but the Buddha himself does not touch the subject. He always talks about the realisation of the inner truth.

object of the sutra centres on the acquirement and cultivation of a certain general subjective attitude towards the world and life, which is not merely philosophical or conceptual, but which comes from the experience of some definite turning in the activity of the mind. Saṃbodhi or enlightenment looks more toward the cognitive aspect of the revulsion (*parāvṛitti*) one experiences. This is all well as far as it goes, which is indeed the basis of all Buddhism, be it Hinayana or Mahayana. The *Laṅkāvatāra*, however, has come to see that the whole of the Buddhist life is not in merely seeing into the truth, but in living it, experiencing it, so that there will be no dualism in one's life of seeing and living: seeing must be living, and living seeing, with no hiatus between them, except in language. Hence the *Laṅkāvatāra*'s reference so much to living or experience, Gocara or Gatigocara, that is, Pratyātmagocara.

The Inner Experience and Language

This inner perception or realisation is made possible by the presence of the Tathāgata-garbha within the heart of every sentient being.¹ The Garbha, which literally means "womb," or better, "something interiorly hidden," is the seed of Tathagatahood from which a fully-enlightened being grows up. This, however, is generally found covered up with defiled wrappings of false judgment (*parikalpa* or *vikalpa*) and irrational attachment (*abhiniveśa*). False judgment comes from not perceiving things as they are (*yathābhūtam*), that is, as not subject to the principle of individuation, which is imposed by the mind upon things considered external. As to the irrational attachment which causes in us all kinds of vexation, it is the inevitable result of false judgment. The Garbha, therefore, originally pure and immaculate, must be restored to its natural state free from attachments. It is thus generally likened to a priceless gem concealed under a soiled garment. Take the garment

¹ Pp. 77, 222.

off and the shining stone will begin to shed its natural light over things as they are. The illumination thus obtained is a state of self-realisation, and one can then see the Garbha as if held in one's own hand, even as plainly as the āmalaka fruit.¹ As the Garbha thus cleansed of its defilement is beyond the speculations of the philosophers and the attainment of the Hinayanists, the author of the *Daśabhūmika*² as well as the *Laṅkāvatāra* calls it Avikalpa, or Nirvikalpa-jñāna,³ meaning knowledge of non-judgment or non-discrimination, a kind of direct perception, or again knowledge of thusness or suchness (*tathatājñāna*).⁴

In spite of the practical end it has in view, the *Laṅkāvatāra* is filled with abstract nomenclature, which sometimes turns away those unfamiliar with Buddhist literature from further pursuing their study of it. But this is unavoidable seeing that the experience on which the *Laṅkāvatāra* discourses is not within the reach of a consciousness ordinarily suffocated with contrary notions. The sutra is quite explicit in this respect as it declares that those who are tied (*samsakta*) to words do not understand the truth (*tattvam*),⁵ or that "the superior state of self-realisation is beyond speech and analysis."⁶ In fact, in this sutra the Buddha is never tired of repeatedly reminding us of the fact that language falls far too short of adequately representing the true state of self-realisation. This is in the nature of language. Language is always discriminative;

¹ P. 222. ² Edited by J. Rahder, p. 64. ³ P. 158, etc.

⁴ See also Sthiramati's commentary on the *Trīṃśikā* by Vasubandhu, edited by Sylvain Lévi, pp. 40-41.

⁵ Pp. 223, 224; "As the ignorant seize upon the finger-tip and not the moon, so, indeed, those who are fastened to letters comprehend not my truth."

⁶ P. 148; "The truth of realisation is the superior condition of an inner attainment which goes beyond words, letters and discriminations and leads to the realm of non-outflowings; it is the ground of inner realisation itself, it has nothing to do with the reasonings of the philosophers and evil doers; destroying all these philosophers and evil doers, self-realisation shines out."

the two, a touch on either side will create a reverberation in the other. There is no power in a language as such, though we cannot dispense with it by any means.

The *Laṅkāvatāra* here makes a distinction between words (*ruta*) and meaning (*artha*),¹ and advises us not to understand meaning by merely depending upon words, to do which is quite ruinous to the comprehension of reality. A word (*ruta*) is the combination of sound and syllable, subject to our logical or intellectual understanding. (*Vāg-akshara-samyoga-vikalpa*.) It issues from the cavity of the mouth between the teeth, jaws, palate, tongue, and lips, when one is engaged in conversation; inflections, conjugations, and other grammatical and rhetorical modifications are effected according to the errors (*vikalpa*) and innate desires (*vāsanā*)² of the speaker. As to meaning (*artha*), it is an inner perception itself gained in self-realisation when one entering upon the path of Nirvana causes a revulsion (*parāvṛtti*)³ in the deepest recesses of consciousness known as *Ālayavijñāna*. To gain this inner perception, a man retires into a solitary spot all by himself, and, by applying himself assiduously to abstract meditations and deep reflections, his inner sense (*prajñā*) or self-knowledge (*svabuddhi*) begins to shine out from underneath the residual accumulation (*vāsanā*) of the past thoughts, affections, and deeds since time immemorial. The meaning,

¹ Pp. 154, 193 ff.

² *Vikalpa*, literally means "to distinguish," "to determine," or "to discriminate," and is rendered in Chinese by 分別 (*fēn-pieh*), which is the characteristic function of thinking. *Vāsanā* is a more difficult term implying the whole philosophy or psychology of Mahayana idealism. No English equivalent is found. In this book, "memory," "habit energy," or "impression," is rather loosely used for it. For fuller explanation, however, see below, pp. 128, 178, etc.

³ According to the T'ang translation, "They [the Hinayanists] do not understand that the great Nirvana is obtained when through an inner perception there takes place a revulsion in the Alaya upon which depends the existence of an external world." Vasubandhu's *Trīṃśikāvijñaptikārikā* XXIX, also makes reference to this revulsion. The *Laṅkāvatāra*, pp. 62, 108, 238, etc. More about this revulsion later.

artha, thus realised in one's inmost consciousness is something no combination of the physical organs is capable of expressing in any way adequate to the experience. But as when searching for an object in the dark one has to rely on a lantern,¹ meaning is after all to be gathered by means of words, at least it is to be thus oriented. The understanding of the relation thus existing between *ruta* (words) and *artha* (meaning) will be necessary when we wish to know the nature of the inner perception (*svapratyātmañāna*).

This relation between words and meaning, or between syllables (*akshara*) and reality (*tattvam* or *tathātvam*),² or between teaching (*deśanā*) and truth (*siddhānta*),³ is like that between the finger and the moon.⁴ The finger is needed to point out the moon but it ought not to be taken for the latter. The same disastrous result follows from regarding *akshara*, or *ruta*, or *deśanā* as the reality itself. Those who are not able to take their eyes away from the finger-tip will never realise the ultimate truth (*paramārtha*) of things.⁵ It is again like feeding the baby with uncooked food,⁶ it will be too late to resuscitate it when it has succumbed to the mother's unwise treatment. Those trained in the Buddhist doctrine ought to be quite discriminating in this respect. Naturally, we would not know what the teaching of the Buddha was if we had had no communication in words, words were very much needed, but when there is no correspondence between words and meaning the teaching itself will lose its sense. The *Lañkāvatāra* thus reiterates throughout the text that the Tathagata never teaches the Dharma fallen into mere talk (*aksharapatita*), and it was

¹ "By means of the lamp of word and discrimination, the Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas go beyond word and discrimination and enter upon the path of self-realisation." P. 155.

² Pp. 48, 196, etc.

³ Pp. 148, 172.

⁴ Pp. 196, 223.

⁵ "The ignorant clinging desperately to the finger-tip of words are unable even unto their death to reach the ultimate truth." P. 196.

⁶ P. 196.

*cheda-lakṣhaṇa*¹). When this aspect is well understood so that we shall no more be misled by wrong interpretation, we are able to get into a state of self-realisation. Individuation means to separate one object from another, and taking these separated, particular objects for final substances (*svabhāva*, or *dharmātmyalakṣhaṇa*), to cling to this notion and thereby to keep up the evil desires and passions burning all the time. According to the sutra, this wrong interpretation takes place in regard to several categories of thought and being such as (1) speech, (2) describable objects of thought, (3) appearances, (4) material wealth, (5) substance, (6) causal relations, (7) definite philosophical views, (8) reasonings as to the existence of an ego, (9) coming into existence, (10) not coming into existence, (11) dependence, and (12) bondage and release.² Logically considered, this kind of classification is baffling; but when we survey the Indian background which stimulated the Buddhist philosopher to speculate on such conglomerate subjects, we can readily enter into its spirit. For Buddhists, in fact for all Indian philosophers, there are no abstract problems of philosophy to be solved from a purely intellectual point of view. They are always tinged with religious sentiment, they have always some bearings on the most important practical question of life, which is how to get spiritual freedom. All the thinking carried on in this sutra, therefore, has always this question in view, and naturally those statements above referred to are to be explained according to the general trend of Buddhist thought.

The wrong consideration about speech (1) creates an attachment to musical or literary productions which are not always spiritually enhancing, and these are to be avoided. Objects of thought are describable and therefore are determinable (2), but the content of the inner perception forming the central theme of the *Laṅkāvatāra* is not subject to this

¹ P. 44.

² P. 128 et seq.

limitation, and if one gets a wrong idea here, there will be no salvation for him, as he takes a thing indescribable and inexpressible for a thing to be seen, to be touched, and to be possessed. Things describable have no permanency and consequently no spiritual value, but we are liable to judge them wrongly and get firmly attached to them. (3) We are in this respect like those who fancy watery appearances in the desert to be a real sheet of water. This faulty judgment may extend indefinitely over all appearances, and that the result will be ruinous goes without saying. Hence this warning. Attachment to material wealth or property (*artha*) is another case of false judgment as to appearance (4).

Substance (*svabhāva*) means in the *Laṅkāvatāra* a concrete individual object, a residue after the last analysis; and the adherents of the substance-theory maintain that there are really such things outside the mind (5). Owing to this misjudgment, the way to self-realisation is blocked. Errors of causal relation refer to the ideas of "to be" (*sat*) and "not to be" (*asat*), which are considered real inasmuch as they make it possible to establish causal relationship between things about us (6). But this idea of causality ought not to lead us to a first cause or a primary being from which all things derive their reality. As we know, Buddhist philosophy denies the existence of a first cause as such. The ideas of *sat* and *asat* are only relative and have no substantial existence besides being so named.

We next come to such philosophical views as were entertained by different schools of thought at the time of the *Laṅkāvatāra* (9); according to which such categories as "to be" (*asti*) and "not to be" (*nāsti*), as oneness (*ekatva*) and otherness (*anyatva*), or as bothness (*ubhaya*) and not-bothness (*anubhaya*), are actualities and for that reason to be adhered to. This is, however, wrong and is sure to lead one away from the inner realisation of the truth. (8) Reasoning (*yukti*) is concerned with the notion of the ego; when this is thought to be a reality our spiritual development stops

short. The *Laṅkāvatāra*, loyal to the traditional view of Buddhist philosophy, refuses to countenance the theory of ego-substance, which may be regarded as a corollary to the general substance-theory. (9) The notion of "coming into existence" (*utpāda*) is related to that of causality. When certain causes and conditions are matured, people think something comes into actual existence and continues to exist until the causes and conditions cease to operate; for coming into existence and vanishing from it are both real facts as much as is the general law of causation. (10) The "no-birth" (*anutpāda*) view of things, on the contrary, argues that nothing has ever been brought into existence through causal relations, but that things are what they are prior to the operation of the law of causation. And this is one of the characteristic views of the *Laṅkāvatāra*, and a special treatment of the subject appears below.¹

Dependence (*sambandha*) and bondage (*bandha*) are similar ideas. The relation between metal and wire is dependence, while a man tied with a cord is in bondage, from which he can later be released when the cord is broken. All such relations when conceived as real and permanent become dangerous to the spiritual growth of a true Buddhist, that is, of a Bodhisattva (11 & 12).

Words (*rūpa*) and meaning (*artha*), therefore, are to be separated, as the former generally fail to give us an exact idea of the object described with them. They are of course indicative, suggesting where to look for the meaning. Numerous indeed are close attachments (*abhiniveśasamdhī*) a man makes to things and relations on account of a wrong understanding of their true nature and value, and, owing to these mistaken attachments, he wraps himself like a silkworm in a cocoon, binding tight not only himself but others.²

¹ Pp. 183 ff, of these *Studies*.

² Pp. 161-163. "Since the ignorant, seizing upon words [as corresponding to] the knowledge of reality, do not comprehend its secret signification; they wrap themselves up like the silkworm with their own false discrimination (47)."

Imagining things where they are not, or not perceiving them where they are, men are addicted to evil desires and passions. Let them learn to look into reality, *yathābhūtam*, for to do this is to break through the net of wrong judgment and false imagination and to attain the inward perception which is emancipation.

The Meaning of Yathābhūtam and Māyā

To understand the world and selfhood as they really are —this is seeing *yathābhūtam*, one of the great trumpet-calls ringing through both Mahayana and Hinayana literature. But to know exactly what “*yathābhūtam*” means is the problem, for it does not allow of any definite description. The problem is to be settled only by appealing to experience, i.e., to direct perception when the truth has been grasped as such. In this respect Buddhist terminology is often graphic and full of power; think of such terms as *tathatā* (如如 or 眞如, i.e., suchness or thusness), *tattvam* (如實 or 眞實, thatness), or *satya* (眞諦, being-so), which are used to designate the content of the inner perception (*pratyātmajñāna*). This seeing *yathābhūtam* constitutes the mystical element of all religion; and if one is affectively inclined, “Tat” (that) will have to be taken in faith; but when the intellectual claim predominates, “Tat” will have to be perceived with “a noble eye of wisdom” (*āryaprajñacakṣus*) and not by a divine (*divya*) or human (*māṃsa*) eye.¹

The world seen through a divine or human eye is a world of *māyā*, but one disclosed to the Prajñā is the real one. Therefore, logically speaking, *māyā* is not a quality objectively attached to the world, it is not inherent in it, it rather belongs to the subject. As indeed the idealistic Mahayana does not admit the existence of an external world, whatever qualities we ordinarily think as belonging to the latter are creations or constructions of our own mind. But if we allow ourselves to be guided by the discriminating

¹ Fp. 40, 164. P. 13, *buddhyā na māṃsacakṣuṣā*.

All these realities, so called, have no objective validity; and, therefore, the world is altogether empty, void, unreal, and a mass of nothingness. To think this way, however, is not the position of the Mahayanist. What he wants us to do is that we should have a revulsion of the whole system of mentality and get a new point of view where we may survey the world *yathābhūtam*. The sutra, therefore, states a little further down¹ that the difference between the wise and the ignorant is that the former are free from the Viparyāsa (顛倒, *tiên-tao*), while the latter are not. *Viparyāsa* literally means, "inversion" or "error"; it means imagining things as they are not, taking error for truth. The wise not hampered by this imagination see that the world is like *māyā* and has no reality, but at the same time they know that it is there, that it is not pure nothingness. Why? Because they have gone beyond the relativism of being and non-being. The waters of the Ganges are not visible to the Preta, but since other people see them they cannot be said to be non-existent. In a similar way, the wise have a correct view of things for they are free from errors in their perception of an objective world, which exists only in relation to their own mind. An objective world is really an error (*bhrānti*, 妄法, *wang-fa*) in so far as it is discriminated as existing externally and individually. Or we may say that an external, particularised world is an illusion as long as the ignorant are unable to break through the fetters of Vikalpa, wrong discrimination; whereas to the wise the phenomenal world is true in its suchness (*tathatā*). What, therefore, is an error to one is truth to the other, because the latter is entirely free from all forms of discrimination (*sarvakalpanāvirahitam*).²

To repeat: the objective world is an error, there is nothing real about it, it is *māyā*, it is empty (*śūnya*); but this does not mean that it is altogether non-entity and merely

¹ Pp. 106 ff.

² P. 108.

a vast expanse of vacuity; the world, even if it is error, is there to the wise as well as to the ignorant, but the wise know that it is of an illusive nature and in this cognition they are neither perverted nor unperverted, they just see it in reality (*yathābhūtam*), they perceive the world as it truly is. And while they do this, the world or what is regarded as such by the ignorant, is eternal (*śāśvata* or *nitya*), and beyond the reach of every possible dualistic category. It is in this sense that the *Laṅkāvatāra* declares: *bhṛāntiḥ śāśvatā, bhṛāntis tattvam*,¹ "this world of error is eternity itself, truth itself." If the wise, as the sutra states, cherish even an incipient stirring of thoughts rooted in discrimination or particularisation of forms and signs (*nimitta-lakṣhaṇa-bhedatva*), they are far from the reality and thought of supreme wisdom (*āryajñāna*) and the wise fall into the rank of the ignorant.

It, however, is to be remembered that the existence of this erroneous and confusing world makes it possible for the wise to cause a revulsion (*parāvṛtti*) in their minds and awaken their supreme wisdom from the narcotic effect of evil memory (*vāsanā*) accumulated since time immemorial. This narcotic effect manifested in so many aspects of consciousness as Citta, Manas, Manovijñāna, etc., causes it to differentiate reality as in a dream into subjects and successive appearances and thus accepting them as real and final to cling to them as to the truth. But, realising the illusive nature of these intellectual discriminations, the wise rise above them and seeing them as errors transmute falsehood into truth, phantasm into reality. And on account of this realisation they know that what confront them is neither reality (*vastu*) as imagined by the ignorant nor unreality (*avastu*) as inferred by the unreflecting. The world is such as it is, it is neither existence nor non-existence, no such predicates are applicable to it, and for this reason what is to be termed an error

¹ Pp. 106, 107.

(*bhrānti*) for the ignorant is Tathatā (suchness) for the wise. Though this statement sounds paradoxical or even irrational, the position of the *Laṅkāvatāra* will readily be comprehended when we abandon our dualistic standpoint and see the world *yathābhūtam*, from its aspect of eternity (*nityatā*). So we have:

"The wise do not see the erroneous world (*bhrānti*), nor is there any reality (*tattvam*) in the midst of it. [But] since the erroneous world is reality, there is reality in the midst of it.

"If, by abandoning all that is of the erroneous world, something (*nimittam*) is to rise, this something is an error, like the cataract which has not yet been cleared off the eye."¹

In short, all such apparent paradoxes are designed to adjust our thoughts *yathābhūtam* to the actuality of existence, with which no ordinary rules of logic are compatible. To say, "It is," is eternalism (*śāśvatavāda*), to say that "It is not" is nihilism (*ucchedavāda*); and the object of Buddhist reasoning is to avoid both of these two antithetic views, though not necessarily attempting to establish idealistic monism, but to lead us to the way of experiencing it in its inwardness as well as in its totality.

"O Lord of *Laṅkā*," reads the sutra, "he who sees thus sees rightly;² if seen otherwise, it is 'carrying on discrimination' (*vikalpa*), because here is discrimination which leads to dualism. It is like seeing one's own face in water, or like seeing one's own shadow in the moonlight or by the lantern, or listening to an echo of one's own voice in the valley, wherein discrimination takes place leading to attachment. In like manner, to separate "Dharma" from "Adharma" (or *a* from not-*a*) is only due to discrimination, and on account of this one finds it impossible to do away with the distinction, thereby creating all forms of falsehood. One is thus unable

¹ P. 109. The lines are repeated in the "Sagāthakam", gg. 127 and 128.

² *Sa samyak-paśyati*, p. 20.

to realise tranquillity (*śānti*). By tranquillity is meant oneness of objects, and oneness of objects is the highest Samādhi, from which grows an inner perception by supreme wisdom. The Tathāgata-garbha is its objective."¹

As we see here, any thought that permits of opposition or antithesis such as *sat* and *asat*, *dharma* and *adharma*, is considered to be the outcome of discrimination (*vikalpa*); and as long as this is cherished, one can never realise the standpoint of pure idealism (*cittamātra*) and the *yathābhūtam* understanding of absolute oneness will never take place.

"If this world is an error as is taught by thee, is it to be regarded as existent or as non-existent?" Mahāmāti is made to ask the Buddha in the *Laṅkāvatāra*.² The natural conclusion as we ordinarily see it will be: "This erroneous world does not exist." But the Buddha says: "It exists as māyā, and no aspects of it are worth while clinging to. If there are any aspects of it worth clinging to, there can be no rejecting the notion of substance (*svabhāva*), and the theory of causation (*pratityasamutpāda*) will be upheld as is done by the philosophers who assume the existence of a final cause." If this erroneous world is like māyā, does this not lead to the creation of another error? "No, it does not, because māyā is not the cause of the error, because it does not produce faults and fallacies. Māyā, indeed, does not produce faults and fallacies. O Mahāmāti, māyā is not the product of discrimination, but evolves from the magic formulas pronounced by another person; it owes not its existence to the power of self-discrimination and fallacious habit-energy; it does not produce faults. Whatever faults there are in connection with this erroneous world come from the clinging of the ignorant to that which is nothing but the delusion of their own minds. The wise, however, are free from all this."

¹ The concluding passage of the first chapter, the *Laṅkāvatāra*, after the T'ang version.

² Pp. 108-109.

beyond opposites, we come nearer to the truth. We need an inner perception to see into the true nature of existence; otherwise, like the ignorant and confused, we see things where there is really nothing, and imagine them to be actualities though they are like the hare's horns¹ or the tortoise's hair. Vikalpa takes place here, and all looks distorted. So we read in the sutra:

"According to my doctrine, there is neither being nor non-being, for existence (*sarvabhāva*) is not to be characterised as being born, nor as disappearing. Why is there no non-being? For it is like seeing various objects created by the magician or in a dream. [As long as there are things actually seen, they cannot be said to be non-existent.] Why is there no being? For the self-nature of all things that appear to be here, is really non-existent, they are seen and yet not seen, they are taken hold of and yet not taken hold of. Therefore, I say that things are neither existent nor non-existent. If a man, realising that there is nothing but what is seen of mind, abides in the suchness of things where no individuation (or discrimination, *vikalpa*) takes place, he will see that all doings in the world cease. To discriminate is the business of the ignorant and not of the wise. O Mahāmāti, it is due to the mind that discriminates that there appears a world destitute of reality, such as the palace of the Gandharvas or the phantom creations of the magician. To distinguish between the born and the not-born, between the created and the un-created, is like talking about the works of the magician, that have never been in existence and therefore that will never disappear. The ignorant fail to see the self-nature of existence (*bhāvasvabhāva*) because their views are perverted. When they are thus perverted, they are unable to realise a state of aloofness, and as they are unable to do so, they cannot disengage themselves from false discrimination. As long as one sees things particularised in forms, there is a perception of the born and the

¹ P. 62.

unborn, and as a result discrimination goes on. Nirvana is where there is no birth, no extinction; it is seeing into a state of suchness (or thatness) absolutely transcending all categories constructed by mind; for it is the Tathagata's own inner consciousness."¹

In connection with the Anutpāda (not-being-born) idea, it may not be out of place to say a few words about the Mahayana conception of what is known as "Anutpattikadharmakṣānti." One meets with this phrase quite frequently in Mahayana sutras, though not so much in the *Lankāvatāra*. Literally rendered, it means "not-born-object-patience" and 無生法忍 (*wu-shêng-fa-jên*) in Chinese. This evidently baffled some of the European translators of Mahayana texts.² But we shall be able to understand it much better now than they as we have already explained what the Mahayanists mean by all things not being born (*sarvadharmāṇām anutpādaḥ*). The idea is simply that reality or Dharma or existence in general is beyond all predicable attributes, and therefore in the failure of language and intellect, definition is impossible, and being outside the ken of all but direct perception, all we can state of it is emptiness or unborn-ness in the absolute sense. *Anutpattikadharmakṣānti* is a statement concerning existence from the Mahayana point of view. In this connection *dharma* does not mean "la loi," nor a "consequence," nor an "idea."

But the last term of the compound, *kṣānti*, may be

¹ Abridged, pp. 198-200. For a fuller translation see pp. 265 ff.

² M. E. Burnouf has in his French translation of the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka* (p. 85), "Une patience miraculeuse dans la loi"; Max Müller in his *Sukhāvatīvyūha* (S.B.E. XLIX, pp. 39-40, and p. 51), "Resignation to consequences which have not yet arisen"; Cecil Bendall and W. H. D. Rouse in their English translation of Śāntideva's *Śikṣhasamuccaya* (p. 297), "Resignation to the idea of not being re-born"; and H. Kern in his English *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka* (S.B.E. XXI, p. 134), "Acquiescence in the eternal law." These show how these great Sanskrit scholars struggled to get at the exact meaning of *anutpattikadharmakṣānti*. Also see Sylvain Lévi's *Sūtrālamkāra*, French translation, p. 123.

somewhat puzzling. What has patience to do with this existence that is to be designated as unborn? *Kshānti*, of course, means "patience" here as when it is one of the six *Paramitās*, or resignation, or acquiescence, but not in its ordinary sense. For *kshānti* here does not mean "to endure," or "to suffer patiently"; endurance or suffering implies unwillingness and resistance to a certain extent. The sense of Buddhist *kshānti*, however, is a willing compliance or acceptance. When the *anutpanna* view of existence is truthfully recognised and accepted, it becomes the principle of one's conduct, determining the whole attitude of mind. The Chinese scholars generally take 忍, (patience) for 認 (recognition) as they are both pronounced *jên*; but, strictly speaking, the term is not an intellectual one, it belongs to the will, it is a whole-hearted acceptance of the ultimate fact (*tattvam*) as perceived by a mind free from errors or wrong judgments (*vikalpa*).

In the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*, a chapter¹ is devoted to an explanation of ten kinds of *Kshānti*.² (1) *Kshānti* in sounds means to listen to the oral teaching of the Buddha, to accept it without fear or hesitation and to abide in it whole-heartedly. (2) *Kshānti* of obedience is to reflect upon the nature of things, and, truthfully penetrating into it, to keep the mind pure and serene. (3) *Kshānti* in the unborn

¹ Śikshānanda, Chapter XXIX "On *Kshānti*."

² Cf. *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, S.B.E. XLIX, p. 51 § 32, where three kinds of *Kshānti* are mentioned: (1) *Ghoshānugā-kshānti*, (2) *anulomikī-kshānti*, (3) *Anutpattika-dharma-kshānti*. They evidently correspond to the first three of the ten *Kshāntis* here explained from the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*. In a *Śāstra* called *On the Awakening of Bodhicitta* (發菩提心論, 龍樹大藏經, 來一), ascribed to Vasubandhu, there is a chapter devoted to the explanation of "Śūnyatā (emptiness) as having no distinguishing marks," in which the author also gives three kinds of *Kshānti*: (1) *Kshānti* of faith, (2) *Kshānti* of obedience and (3) *Dharma-kshānti*. The first is to believe (信, *hsin*) in the various teachings of the Buddha, such as the Fourfold Noble Truth, the Twelvefold Chain of Origination, the Four Virtues of Infinite Greatness, (goodwill, compassion, joy, and equanimity), and the Six Virtues of Perfection which lead one finally to liberation in one form

nature of existence has already been explained. The rest of the ten are realised when one attains to the knowledge of things as like *māyā* (4), mirage (5), dream (6), echo (7), shadow (8), phenomenal (9), and empty (10)). That this way of looking at existence is generally Mahayanistic and that it is not the same as regarding existence as altogether unsubstantial from the relative point of view, has been already made clear, as I hope, in the preceding section.¹

How is Nirvana Explained?

Nirvana has been the central object of the Buddhist life ever since the Buddha's own time, though in the Mahayana we do not come across the term so much as in the Hinayana. The idea has been replaced to a certain extent by such conceptions as *Prajñā*, *Sambodhi*, *Dharmakāya*, *Tathatā*, *Pratyātmajñāna*, etc., as Buddhist thought drifted towards intellectual intuitionism. The *Laṅkāvatāra*, however, has not forgotten to make reference to Nirvana and to interpret it in its own characteristic manner. According to its author, whoever he may be, Nirvana is realised when one can see into the abode of suchness (*yathābhūtārthasthāna-darśanam*).² Here is the point the intellect as such (*vikalpa*) cannot enter; for it dissects and establishes somewhat to take hold of (*grahaṇa*), and it will then see that something coming into existence (*utpāda*) and disappearing (*nirodha* or *apravṛtti*). But Nirvana has no tangible form (*nimitta*)

or another. The (2) *Kṣhānti* of obedience (順, *shun*), is to see into the truth that there is no self-substance in any individualised object, animate or otherwise, and, therefore, that there is neither actor nor sufferer, and things are eternally such as they are. When a man comes to accept this truth though he may not yet have fully realised its meaning, he has the obedience. (3) The *Dharmakṣhānti* (法忍, *fa-jên*) which is apparently an abbreviation for *Anutpattikadharmakṣhānti* is attained when he fully realises the truth and knows that all is empty including emptiness itself.

¹ For further definition of "Anutpattikadharmakṣhānti" see below, pp. 226-227.

² P. 200; see also *supra*.

and it neither comes into existence nor ceases from working. To attain Nirvana, therefore, is to see into the truth of things yathābhūtam, that is, as unborn, as not affected by categories of intellectual construction.

To attain Nirvana which is a state of emptiness (śūnyatā) inherent in the nature of things and which again is a state of self-realisation obtained by means of supreme wisdom (āryajñāna), there must be a revulsion (parāvṛtti) at the deepest seat of consciousness known as the Ālayavijñāna.¹ The latter is a kind of mental receptacle where all the memory of one's past deeds and psychic activities is deposited and preserved in a form of energy called Vāsanā (習氣 *hsi-chi*, in Chinese, habit-energy). But as this energy is so contaminated with ignorance and wrong judgments and all sorts of attachment (abhiniveśa), it reacts upon an external world in a way detrimental to the realisation of Nirvana, and, therefore, to the perception of the truth yathābhūtam. The old conditions must now be overhauled in order to create a new situation in our consciousness. To do this, we must free ourselves from views nihilistic (uccheda) and eternalistic (śāśvata) and also from the notions of being (bhava) and non-being (abhava).

When this revulsion is effected, Nirvana is found to be devoid of all predicates. In it nothing is gained, nothing is cast aside, no extermination, no eternity, no unity, no diversity, one finds here. Nirvana is the mind of all holy ones and the goal of Buddhist discipline.²

The Hinayanists do not know this; when they realise that Nirvana is something above particular conditions and tranquil in nature, they feel that they have it in its completeness in their Nirvana, so called. But in fact they distinguish it from birth-and-death (saṃsāra), and seek it for fear of being caught up in the net of transmigration. They cherish dualism, and so long as they do so, there is no true

¹ Pp. 62, 98, etc.

² P. 99.

Nirvana for them. Nirvana, according to the *Laṅkāvatāra*, is not to be found in contradistinction to birth-and-death or Saṃsāra; for thus to distinguish one from the other is the result of a wrong judgment (*vikalpa*), which imagines a future when the world of the senses is altogether annihilated, which is their Nirvana. The Mahayanistic Nirvana goes, however, beyond the dualism of Nirvana and Saṃsāra. It is to be found where there is the identity of Nirvana and Saṃsāra.

So long as dualism is adhered to, there is no Nirvana, no self-realisation. Light and shadow, long and short, black and white—they are mutually related; when they stand alone each by itself, they have no meaning. So with Nirvana. When it is sought after in relation to Saṃsāra, we have a sort of Nirvana. But this kind vanishes when separated from the condition of mutuality in which it exists. True Nirvana is that which is realised in the oneness of Nirvana and Saṃsāra, absolute or *śūnya* in its nature, and above the relativity of eternalism and nihilism. Mahayana followers strive to realise this kind of Nirvana.¹

The following passages² from the *Laṅkāvatāra* will give us some ideas of Nirvana prevalent at the time when this sutra was compiled:

“The Buddha said, O Mahāmati, what is regarded as Nirvana by the philosophers is not in accordance with the true features of Nirvana. Listen, O Mahāmati, I will tell you what it is.

“Some philosophers, seeing how impermanent things are, do not cling to the individual conditions; to them no external world exists, nor does the subjective mind exist; they do not think of the past, present, and future. Like the light that shines no more, like the seed that has no life, like the fire that no more burns, all attachments are gone with them, no individualising reflections take place, and this they

¹ Pp. 76, 126.

² Pp. 182 ff. The translator has here mainly followed T'ang.

consider to be Nirvana. But inasmuch as they see something destroyed, their Nirvana is not a true one, O Mahāmati.

"Again, there are some who think that departing to another realm is Nirvana; there is no external world of particulars for them; it is like wind ceasing to blow.¹

"Again, some think that not to see the distinction between the knowing subject and the known object is Nirvana.

"Again there are some who, holding to the view that all individual appearances are real, cherish the feeling of pain; for they are ignorant of the truth that all is the manifestation of mind-only. And just because of this ignorance they are frightened with appearances and seek for a state where there are no-appearances. An intense longing for this is regarded by them to be Nirvana.

"Again, there are some who, reviewing things inner as well as external in their individual and universal aspects and as existing in time, think that here is self-substance, not subject to destruction; and in this they find Nirvana.

"Again, there are some who believe in the indestructibility of all things such as ego, being, life, growth, and personality, and think this to be Nirvana.

"Again, some philosophers, not being intelligent enough, imagine the reality of Prakṛiti and Puruṣa and think that the Guṇas in various transformations constitute all objects; and in this they see Nirvana.

"Again, some philosophers see Nirvana in the extinction of both merit and demerit, others in the extinction of evil passions by means of knowledge, and still others hold that Īśvara is in truth the creator.

"Again, there are some who think beings come into existence mutually conditioning and not through any other cause. As they are without wisdom, they are unable to understand rightly, and because of their not understanding rightly, they imagine Nirvana in their own way.

¹ This last sentence does not properly belong here. There must have been some transposition in the text.

"Again, there are some who, wrongly imagining what they have seen to be the true path, find Nirvana here.

"Again, some philosophers, holding to the view that quality and substance are one and yet two, and mutually related and yet not-related, think Nirvana to be in this relationship.

"Again, there are some naturalists who believe in spontaneous creation, saying of the peacock's variegated beauty, the thorn's pointedness, and the production of the various kinds of precious stones from the mine,—who is the maker of all these things? Nobody but Nature. And this is their Nirvana.

"Again, some find Nirvana in the understanding of the twenty-five principles (*tattva*).

"Again, some cherish the opinion that the looking after the welfare of the subjects by the observance of the six virtues (*guṇa*) is Nirvana.

"Again, some think time is Nirvana, from which issues the world.

"Again, there are some who see Nirvana in that the world (*bhava*) exists, or that the world (*bhava*) exists not, or that the world exists and exists not, or that the world and Nirvana are not two different things.

"Again, there are some¹ who, differing from all these philosophers, and in possession of all-knowledge (*sarvajñā*), proclaim like a roaring lion that to understand thoroughly what is meant by the manifestation of Mind itself (*citta*-

¹ This is evidently the Mahayanist view of Nirvana, though it is treated as if it were one held by the philosophers also not belonging to Buddhism. In fact, the Sung version has this entire paragraph moved towards the end of the whole section on Nirvana, and begins with, "According to my view, Nirvana is . . .," showing that this is the Buddhist conception of Nirvana. The conclusion of the paragraph is: "O Mahāmati, you and other Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas should discipline themselves in this so that they could quickly get away from all these other views of Nirvana as upheld by the philosophers." This transposition clears off the difficulty at once. The Wei version is like the T'ang and the Sanskrit.

(*mātra*), not to get attached to the external world (*bāhya-bhāva*), to be disengaged from the four propositions, to abide in the *yathābhūtam* view of things,¹ not to fall into the errors of dualism, to be free from the ideas of subject and object, to stand above all forms of knowledge, not to get attached to any one form of truth, to abide in the realisation of the truth revealed to one's inmost consciousness (*svapratyātmāryadharmādhigama*), to perceive the twofold truth of egolessness, to be devoid of the two kinds of evil passions (*kleśadvaya*), to be cleansed of the two kinds of hindrance (*āvaraṇadvaya*), to discipline oneself in all the stages [of Bodhisattvahood] one after another, whereby, entering upon the state of Buddhahood, to realise all the great Samādhis such as Māyā, and forever to go beyond the Citta, Manas, and Manovijñāna:—this is indeed to attain Nirvana.

“O Mahāmati, all these philosophers' views [except the last mentioned] are based on the imagination (*tarka*) and are not in accordance with the truth (*yukti*); they are forsaken by the wise, for they are dualistic and Nirvana is imagined where it is not. There is really no Nirvana where one may enter or come out. The philosophers each adhering to his own thesis, fall into erroneous views contrary to reason, thereby achieving nothing but the wanderings and tribulations of the mind and will. O Mahāmati, therefore, you and other Bodhisattvas should avoid them.”

To quote the gāthās attached here:

“Nirvana is variously viewed and discriminated by the philosophers, but they are no more than imaginations, there is no way in them that leads up to emancipation (*moksha*) (69).

“The philosophers who are not released from [the dualism of] fettered and fettering and who are far apart from the right way of thinking (*upāya*), imagine emancipation where there is no [real] emancipation (70).

¹ See also above, p. 123.

"All sorts of doctrines are maintained by various philosophers, but as they issue from the wrong discriminations of confused minds their emancipation is not a true one (71).

"As all the philosophers are fascinated with the ideas of something done and something doing, they are upholders of doctrines of being and non-being, and their emancipation is no true one (72).

"Those ignorant ones who delight in debating and idle talk cannot have a wider view of truth; mere talking is the source of sorrow in the triple world. It is the truth only that destroys sorrow (73).

"It is like an image reflected in a mirror, it is seen there but it is not real; the one Mind is seen as a duality by the ignorant when it is reflected in the mirror constructed by their habit-energy (vāsanā) (74).

"From not knowing that all that is seen is of mind-only, there takes place discrimination and hence duality; but when it is known that it is nothing but Mind, no discrimination evolves (75).

"It is true that mind reveals itself as multitudinousness, but in itself it is devoid of predicates (*lakshyalakṣhaṇa*); appearances are there but not to be seen in the way discriminated by the ignorant (76).

"The triple world is no more than [the product of] discrimination, there is no external world of objects; it is owing to discrimination that the multitudinousness of things appears, which, however, is not understood by the ignorant (77).

"In various sutras discrimination is the subject of discourse, it is on account of ideas and names, for apart from naming (abhidhāna) no meaning (abhidheya) is attainable (78)."¹

The Essence of Buddhahood.

The self-realisation that is to be attained by the Bodhi-sattva is none other than the Buddha's own inner con-

¹ Pp. 185-187.

sciousness, self-illuminating as well as world-illuminating. Therefore, when we know what is the nature of this enlightenment attained by the Buddha (*svabuddhabuddhatā*), we shall also have some glimpse of the content of the Pratyātmāryajñānagocara, the subject-matter of the *Lankāvatāra*. According to the sutra,¹ what constitutes the essence of the Buddhahood (*buddhatā*) is neither a thing made nor a thing not-made, it is neither cause nor effect, it is neither predicable nor unpredicable, it is neither describable nor indescribable, neither subject to perception nor beyond perception. Why? Because by applying any one of these terminological explanations (*nirukti*) to this case, we commit a logical offence. If *Buddhatā*, the essence of Tathagatahood, is something made, it is impermanent; and if it is impermanent, all things made will be Tathagatas—which is impossible. If, on the other hand, it is a thing not made, it will be without a substance (*ātmakatva*), and all efforts to realise it will be to no purpose, as it is like the hare's horns or a barren woman's child. For are they not all not-made, unreal, merely imagined?

“Again, if the essence of Tathagatahood is neither cause nor effect, it is then neither being (*sat*) nor not-being (*asat*). And this being the case it lies outside the four propositions (*catuskōṭika*). The latter belong to the worldly way of talk and what lies outside them is no more than talk, it is like speaking of a barren woman's child. This exists only in talk and does not come under the four propositions. As it does not come under them, the wise know it is beyond their logical survey (*pramāṇa*). The meaning of all the Tathagatas' words is to be thus understood by the wise.”²

This passage is taken from the Sanskrit text, which coincides with one of the Chinese versions, the T'ang; but when we weigh the meaning of the passage, we grow somewhat confused about it because it is apparent contradiction

¹ Pp. 187 ff.

² P. 188.

to the general drift of thought that has been explained above as characteristic of the *Laṅkāvatāra* teaching. For if the essence of Buddhahood is something like the barren woman's child existing only in name and placed beyond the survey of the wise in the sense that it has no truth in it, the object of all Buddhist discipline will be set at naught. If, however, it could be understood in the sense that the truth is beyond the logical survey of even the wise, and, therefore, it is an object of direct intuition, altogether beyond the reach of popular parlance which is made up of the four propositions, the quoted passage would be consistent with the rest of the text. The sentence referring to the barren woman's child as mere talk and beyond the four propositions will have to be altered. In fact, the Wei translation reads quite differently: "The four propositions belong to the worldly way of talk. O Mahāmati, if the truth does not go beyond the four propositions, it is no more than a word like when speaking of a barren woman's child. O Mahāmati, this belongs to mere speech, coming under the four propositions, and if the truth should come under them, the wise would not take it up." Evidently there is some discrepancy in the text. The earliest Chinese version in fact, that is, the Sung reads simply and is quite intelligible, showing perhaps that this is a more original text, not mixed with gloss and other addenda. "O Mahāmati, if it is neither an object (*vastu*?) nor a cause, then it is neither being nor non-being, it lies outside the four propositions. The latter belong to worldly talk. When it [or the essence of Buddhahood] lies outside the four propositions it is beyond them, and being beyond them as such the wise accept it. The meaning of all the Tathagata's propositions is to be understood by the wise thus [that is, as beyond the four propositions]."

When Buddhism speaks of the egolessness (*nirātmana*) of all things (*sarvadharma*), this must be understood in the way suggested above, that is, in the sense that while all things have their characteristic marks (*svalakṣaṇa*),

they are without self-substance (*ātman*). Inasmuch as the cow is not the horse and the horse is not a cow, they are quite distinct one from the other. Their individuality is to be reckoned with, but as to each possessing any substance in itself or anything that remains eternally so except its appearance (*lakṣhaṇa*), that cannot be. Therefore, things in one sense are as they are, but in another sense they are not. This is what is meant by Buddhist phenomenalism, but we are not to be carried away by its doctrine of emptiness as was explained before, as Buddhism has after all something to affirm. Its superficially paradoxical way of presenting the truth is often baffling to logicians. The *Laṅkāvatāra* proceeds to say that the ignorant and confused use their own way of discrimination (*vikalpa*) to grasp the theory of non-ego, but as existence is really beyond any system of categories, the Tathagata's wisdom alone is capable of penetrating into reality. It is, therefore, declared by him that he is not distinct from the Skandhas, nor is he identical with them.¹

The two horns of a cow are distinguished one from the other, for the one is longer or shorter than the other, and in colour they may differ, but they are of one nature as they are both horns. In a similar way, the Tathagata is different from what constitutes matter, and yet he is not different. Again, he is designated as one who is emancipated (*mokṣa*), but he is not one with emancipation, nor is he different from it. Therefore, the essence of Buddhahood is neither eternal nor transient, neither made nor not-made, neither composite nor un-composite, neither knowledge nor the known, neither predicable nor unpredicable, neither of the Skandhas nor not of them, neither describable nor indescribable. It is beyond all measurement, it is not to be brought under any forms of category. We may talk of it as talk we must, but we can never reach it through words. For it is unborn, and consequently not subject to destruc-

¹ P. 188.

tion. It is like unto the sky beyond logical construction, and no amount of intellectual tricks (*prapañca*) will bring it within one's grasp. The essence (*buddhatā*) transcends measurement (*pramāṇa*) and the senses (*indriya*).¹

"[The nature of enlightenment] is not limited by measurement and senses, it is neither an effect nor a cause, it is neither enlightening nor enlightened. It is neither predicated nor predicating (79).

"The Skandhas, causation, enlightenment are not visible anywhere to anybody;² how can any statement be made concerning that which is not visible anywhere to anybody (80)?

"It is neither something made nor something not made, neither an effect nor a cause, neither Skandhas nor no-Skandhas, nor indeed is it of any other composition (81).

"It is not something that is subject to discrimination and hence perceptible, nor is it for that reason to be understood as non-existent; it is the very nature of things as they are (82).

"Non-being goes along with being, and being goes along with non-being; when non-being is not knowable, being too is not to be discriminated (83).

"Those who cling to words only, not comprehending the egolessness of an ego [so called], are drowned in dualism; they destroy themselves, they destroy the ignorant (84).

"When they see any teaching shorn of all faults, they then see things rightly; they do not vilify the leaders (85)."

The *Laṅkāvatāra* is quite anxious to have us realise that the theory of non-ego does not conflict with that of the Tathagata's Womb (*tathāgata-garbha*), of which mention is made in various connections.³ When the Tathāgata-garbha is spoken of as a kind of storage where all the seeds (*bīja*) of

¹ P. 189 ff.

² Here Sung and T'ang have: The Skandhas and causation in their relation to enlightenment—whether they are one or different, nobody can see. Wei: The causal relations and the five Skandhas, the Buddha sees nothing [here].

³ See pp. 105–106, 177, etc., and also under "Ālayavijñāna."

the past deeds and psychical activities are preserved, philosophers are apt to take it for an ego-soul. But, says the *Lankāvatāra*, the Tathāgata-garbha is empty in its nature yet real, it is Nirvana itself, unborn, without predicates, without affections (*apranihita*), and, further, it is attained where no false discrimination (*nirvikalpa*) takes place, where no shadow (*nirābhāsa*) of particularisation falls. There is nothing here for the Buddhas or Bodhisattvas to take hold of as an ego-soul. They have gone beyond the sphere of discriminations and judgments, and it is due to their wisdom and skilful device (*upāda*) that they set up all kinds of names and phrases in order to save their followers from mistaken views of reality. Hence the following:¹

“O Mahāmati, it is like the potter who, out of a mass of atoms of clay of one kind, produces various kinds of vessels by applying on it his artistic skill and manual labour, knowing how to make use of the stick, water, and string; just so, O Mahāmati, is the Tathagata who points out the egolessness of things (*dharmanairātmya*)—the truth transcending everything characteristic of discrimination—by a variety of skilful means, which is joined with Prajñā, that is, sometimes by the doctrine of Tathāgata-garbha, and sometimes by the doctrine of non-ego, or sometimes like the potter by the aid of words, suggestions, and synonyms. For this reason, O Mahāmati, the doctrine of Tathāgata-garbha is not the same as the doctrine of ego as advocated by the philosophers. Thus indeed the doctrine of Tathāgata-garbha is taught by the Tathagatas in order to induce the philosophers advocating the ego-theory [which latter in a superficial way may be regarded as resembling the Buddhist conception of Tathāgata-garbha] and further indeed in order that those who have fallen into the view of discriminating an unreal ego [as real] may become possessed of the realm of the triple emancipation and speedily realise the highest supreme enlightenment. For this reason the Tathagatas who are Arhats

1. Pp. 78, 79.

and Fully-enlightened Ones talk of the doctrine of Tathāgata-garbha which is thus to be differentiated from the ego-theory of the philosophers. Therefore, O Mahāmati, in order to keep thyself away from the ego-theory of the philosophers thou shouldst seek the doctrine of the Tathāgata-garbha that is based on non-ego.

“Pudgala (soul, 人 or 士夫), Saṃtati (continuity, 相續), Skandha (aggregate 陰 or 蘊), Pratyaya (causation, 緣), Aṇu (atom, 微塵), Pradhāna (supreme soul, 勝), Íśvara (god, 自主), Kartṛi (creator, 作者):—some such ideas are entertained by the philosophers, but they are mere constructions of mind.”¹

The World-Transcending Knowledge

The inner consciousness of the Buddha, which constitutes the essence of Buddhahood (*svabuddhabuddhatā*), is the highest form of knowledge (*jñāna*). Of knowledge the *Laṅkāvatāra* distinguishes three forms: (1) worldly knowledge (*jñānam laukikam*), (2) supra-worldly knowledge (*lokottaram*), and (3) supreme supra-worldly knowledge (*lokottaratamam*). The first is relative as cherished by ordinary minds whose thinking is determined by ideas of being and non-being; the second is one possessed by Hinayanists who cannot go beyond the categories of particularity (*śvalakṣhaṇa*) and generality (*sāmānyalakṣhaṇa*); while the third and highest is the knowledge attained by the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who view the world from an absolute standpoint, for they know that the world is beyond all characteristics, that is, has never been brought into existence and will never be annihilated, that it is designable neither as being nor as non-being. It is by means of this highest knowledge that the Bodhisattva finally comes to the realisation of the egolessness (*nairātmya*) of all things, thus entering upon the path of Tathagatahood.² This

¹ Pp. 78, 79.

² P. 156 ff.

supreme supra-worldly knowledge is none other than the supreme wisdom (*āryajñāna*) of the Bodhisattva, which enables him to enter into the inmost nature (*svapratyātma*) of all the Buddhas, and which constitutes the central theme of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*. Its three aspects are now distinguished.¹ The first is its not being mere appearance (*nirābhāsa*), that it is reality, as distinguished from the way it is regarded generally by the Hinayanists and philosophers. The second is that it is awakened by the will (*pranidhāna*) and power (*adhishthāna*) of all the Buddhas. That is to say, supreme wisdom is aroused in the mind of the Bodhisattva by virtue of the Buddhas' earnest desire for universal enlightenment and salvation; their earnest desire or will sends out strong waves of vibration throughout the universe, and all sentient beings there feel its effect according to their capacities. Thirdly, sustained by this and going beyond the relative knowledge of the Hinayanists, the Bodhisattva's mind is freed from all predicable forms and is ready for realising in himself a psychic state termed Māyopamasamādhikāya (如幻三昧身). This means the body attained by a Bodhisattva when he enters into the Samādhi known as Māyā-like, that is, the Samādhi that enables one to look intuitively into the nature of existence and realise that it has no self-substance and is like māyā. The following passage² will shed light on the Māyā-like Samādhi: "The Tathagata, for the sake of the Bodhisattvas whose minds are still distracted by individuality and generality, preaches the path of particularisation based on their relative knowledge of existence. When the nature of relative knowledge and particularisation is fully comprehended, they are able to realise the egolessness of an individual person and an external object, and gain an insight into the stages of Bodhisattvahood; they will pass beyond the Dhyānas, Samādhis, and Samāpattis belonging to

¹ P. 49.

² Pp. 50-51.

the Śrāvaka, Pratyekabuddha, and philosopher, and walk on the path and enter into the realm of Tathagatahood, which is outside the ken of the ordinary understanding; they will abandon the path belonging to the five Dharmas (五法) and embellish themselves with the highest wisdom (*prajñā*) which comes from the Dharmakāya of all the Tathagatas, and entering into the realm of *māyā* will visit all the Buddha-lands, abide in the palace of Tushita and reach the highest place where they will obtain the Tathagata-body." *Māyā*, *Śūnyatā*, *Anutpatti*, *Aprāṇihita*, *Nirābhāsa*,— they are all synonymously used in the *Laṅkāvatāra*. The Bodhisattva is now fairly on the way to the final stage of Buddhist discipline.

In Buddhism no distinction is made between knowledge and knower. Supreme wisdom (*āryajñāna*) is at once the inner perception and the mental power that brings about this perception. This is quite in accordance with the general mode of thinking in Buddhism; for if there is something at the back of the knowledge, or if this is the function of a certain higher faculty of the mind, there will be a dualism which is so strongly combatted by the Mahayanists. Knowledge after all must be absolute; so *Prajñā*, which is the same thing as *Āryajñāna* is described as one of the six *Pāramitās* (virtues of perfection) in the following manner:¹ As the Hinayanists cling to the idea of Nirvana for their own spiritual enjoyment (*ātmasukha*), they are unable to think of the welfare of their fellow-beings. With the Mahayanists it is different, they are ever bent on practising the six *Pāramitās* in their highest possible form; and, therefore, in *Prajñā* their minds are free from false discrimination (*vikalpa*); because they are awake to the suchness of reality they do not fall into any of the opposing predicates; they are thus able to cause a revulsion (*parāvṛtti*) in the whole field of their consciousness, though this does not mean that they destroy the work of their own past karma. *Prajñā*

¹ P. 238.

thus leads them finally to the realisation of the inmost truth deeply concealed under the wrappings of attachment and intellectualism.

Doctrine of the Triple Body¹

When the *Laṅkāvatāra* was compiled, the doctrine of the Triple Body (*trikāya*) was apparently not yet formulated in the shape we have it today. We thus have terms corresponding to the three Bodies and the indications of the underlying idea, but no specified relationship is established between them. Only the absolute state of self-realisation is considered as belonging to the Dharmatā-Buddha, who is evidently the Dharmakāya of the later periods.

There are other forms of Buddhahood known as Nishyanda-Buddha and Nirmāṇa-Buddha. *Nishyanda* literally means "flowing down" or "flowing into," and the Nishyanda-Buddha is a Buddha into whom Dharmatā flows and who shines in splendour. The two later Chinese translators have rendered it as 報佛, *pao-fo*, 報 meaning "to requite," "to compensate"; while the Sung by Guṇabhadra has 依佛 *i-fo*, 依 meaning "to depend," "to rely upon." The latter is nearer to the sense of the Sanskrit *nishyanda*, and it is hard to know how the later translators came to have 報 *pao* for it instead of 依 *i*. Did they try to read their own thought into it? For they were doubtless acquainted in their own day with the doctrine of Trikāya, one of which, generally known as Sambhogakāya, corresponds to Vipākaja (報生),² or Vipākasthā (報住?)³ in the *Laṅkāvatāra*.

The other form of the Buddhahood mentioned in the *Laṅkāvatāra* is Nirmāṇika, or Nairmāṇika, or Nirmāṇa.⁴ This is generally done into Chinese by 化佛 or 變化佛, i.e., Transformation-Buddha, corresponding to the Nirmāṇakāya

¹ This subject is more fully treated in Section III under the same heading; see p. 308 et seq.

² P. 28.

³ P. 34.

⁴ Pp. 28, 34, 56, 93, etc.

come to the highest realisation of truth, which is known as Pratyātmāryajñānagatigocara in the *Laṅkāvatāra*.

The distinction between the Nirmāṇa-Buddha and the Nishyanda-Buddha is not quite clear as far as the *Laṅkāvatāra* is concerned. For it describes the latter as performing almost the same function as the Nirmāṇa-Buddha.¹ His teaching is said to consist of such topics as particularity, generality, habit-energy (*vāsanā*) conserved in the deep recesses of consciousness, wrong judgments about it, and their interrelations causing multitudinousness of objects to appear, and then our inordinate attachment to them, but in reality the non-existence of all these phenomena. Of these topics, the Dharmatānishyanda Buddha will speak thus: the conception of an individual ego-substance arises from our wrong judgment concerning the nature of existence and the law of causation, both of which fail to apply beyond the world of relativity which is empty (*śūnya*); it is like the creation of the magician, he knows how to produce a variety of unrealities depending upon some objects of the senses, such as plants, brick, etc.; the spectators are induced to take them for real objects, though in fact there are none such. To the ordinary mind, the law of causation is made to extend beyond the world of relativity, which is also the world of wrong judgments and attachments; whereas the world which supplies a subject-matter for the Dharmatā-Buddha is altogether unsupported (*nirālamba*) and disengaged from dependence (*ālambavigata*), that is to say, it is not to be subsumed under such notions as creation, sense-perception, inference, and others, as it is not to be found among the contents of thought cherished by ordinary ego-bound minds, in which the Hinayanists and philosophers are included. The Dharmatā-Buddha points directly to the truth of immediate perception in which the Bodhisattva stands alone detached from the hypothetical creations of the mind.

This gives us an insight into what the Dharmatā-Buddha

¹ P. 56 ff.

One thing I wish to emphasise in this statement concerning the three forms of Buddhahood is that the story of the inmost perception to be gained by the Bodhisattvas, forming the central theme of the *Laṅkāvatāra*, is told only by the Mūla-tathāgata, or true Tathagata (眞實如來) as in the T'ang version, because he is above all senses, all logical measurements (*sarvāpramāṇa*), and cannot be perceived by the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, nor by the philosophers; because he abides absorbed in the bliss of realisation and in the perfection of the highest knowledge.¹ The doctrine of the *Laṅkāvatāra* is thus seen to be the direct revelation of the absolute Buddha as he is.

This sketchy and incidental reference to the doctrine of the Triple Body is far from being satisfactory. In a chapter exclusively devoted to the treatment of the subject a fuller exposition is presented.

The Highest Knowledge and a First Cause

We know now that supreme wisdom realised in the inmost depths of consciousness (*pratyātmāyājñāna*) is something absolutely defying all description and altogether unpredicable, and that it is therefore the topic to be properly dealt with by Dharmatā-Buddha himself and not by any beings subject to the principle of relativity. This knowledge is thus eternal, unconditioned, and beyond the reach of all analysis and discursive understanding, as it belongs to the highest principle of cognition from which all relative knowledge is derivable. Now the question is, "In what respect does this differ from the first cause (*kāraṇa*) considered by the philosophers to be also eternal (*nitya*) and beyond thought (*acintya*)?" This is answered by the author of the *Laṅkāvatāra* in the following manner:²

What is claimed to be first cause by the philosophers cannot really be so, because a cause always presupposes some-

¹ P. 242.

² Pp. 59 ff.

thing beyond and cannot be its own cause. The idea of causation belongs to a world of relativity, and what is relative cannot be eternal and is always within the sphere of thought. If we take a thing belonging to the relative world and therefore to a realm of action, as a first cause from which everything else has its beginning, this will be a wrong form of inference; for we jump from relativity to transcendentality, from impermanence to eternity, from a thing that is to a thing that is on the other side of being and non-being. Therefore, what is regarded by the philosophers as the first cause eternal and beyond thinkability is not to be identified with supreme wisdom attainable by the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

That the supreme wisdom is eternal and cannot be made a subject of thought, comes from its intrinsic nature. For it is a state of mind realised personally by the Buddhas when they deeply delve into the ultimate principle itself which is not conditioned by any category of thought. It is not to be designated as a cause which is bound up with its antecedents and consequents, it stands alone "quietly" as absolute knowledge flashed through one's consciousness, it is a fact of experience which does not allow of any arguments. It is Tathatā (suchness), Tattva (thatness), perceived in the inmost consciousness of the Tathagata. As it is not an object external to him, it is a self-sufficient cause not depending on anything. We may say that this is a state of pure perception (pratyātma-gati).

And it is for this reason that the *Laṅkāvatāra* is ever persistent in making this pure perception not an object of discursive understanding for the ordinary minds, for the philosophers, for the Hinayanists. It is not only too exalted a subject for them to comprehend, but quite beyond logic and liable to be wrongly and disastrously interpreted by them. It is meant for those only who are not at all surprised, or alarmed, or frightened at hearing that there is a thing beyond one's power of thinking, for such belong

to the family of Tathāgatayāna.¹ The Mahayanist does not deny the reality of the objective world as regards its relativity, where all conditions obtain; he only refuses to extend these to a realm where they do not apply; and of the existence and reality of such a realm he is firmly convinced because his inner perception testifies to it. What stronger and more intimate and more convincing proof could one ever expect to offer for a truth? Therefore, the *Lankāvatāra* boldly declares:²

“Srotāpatti-phala (預流果), Sakridāgāmi-phala (一來果), Anāgāmi-phala (不還果), and Arhattva (羅漢果)³—they are all perturbed states of mind. Sometimes I speak of the Triple Vehicle, sometimes of the One Vehicle, and sometimes of No-vehicle; all these distinctions are meant for the ignorant, for men of inferior wisdom, or even for the noble-minded. As to the entering into the ultimate truth (*paramārtha*), it goes beyond dualism. When one is abiding where there are no images (*nirābhāsa*), how could the Triple Vehicle be established? All kinds of Dhyāna, Apramāṇa, Ārūpya, Samādhi, and the Extinction of Thoughts⁴—they do not exist where there is Mind-itself (*cittamātra*).”

The Parable of the Sands of the Gangā

From the absolute point of view, no use is apparently to be found for anything in the world; no talk is needed, no sermoning avails, and therefore, let the world go as it pleases and work out its own salvation if it ever wants; for what are the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas after all? This is then the question awaiting the absolutist's solution. The following passages concerning the parable of the sands of the Ganges will be edifying in this respect:⁵

¹ P. 64.

² P. 65.

³ These are the spiritual attainments of the Hinayanists, Arhatship being the highest of the four.

⁴ Summarily stated, these are all different forms of meditation.

⁵ P. 229 ff.

of their original vows which they cherish in the depths of their hearts in the Dharmadhātu [i.e., realm of the Dharma], so long as all beings are not led into Nirvana by the Tathagatas, and this is due to the latter's being endowed with great compassion.

"O Mahāmati, as the sands of the river Gangā flow along the banks of its water and not where there is no water, even so, O Mahāmati, all the discourses by the Tathagatas on the Buddha-dharma take place in accordance with the stream of Nirvana. For this reason the Tathagatas are said to be like sands of the river Gangā. O Mahāmati, the sense of transmigration here does not apply to the Tathagatas, O Mahāmati, decay is the sense of transmigration. And, O Mahāmati, the ultimate end of birth-and-death is not to be known. Not being known, how am I to disclose the Dharma in the sense of transmigration? Annihilation is the sense of transmigration. O Mahāmati, this is not known to stupid and vulgar people.

"Mahāmati asked: If, O Blessed One, the ultimate end is not knowable, how is it possible for all sentient beings to obtain deliverance as they are living in the midst of birth-and-death?

"Said the Blessed One: O Mahāmati, when the cause is removed which is the memory [i.e., habit-energy or *vāsanā*] or erroneous reasoning and faulty discrimination during beginningless time, and when there takes place a revulsion at the seat of discrimination by realising that external objects are appearances or manifestations of one's own mind, then there is deliverance, which is not annihilation. Therefore, O Mahāmati, there is no occasion for speaking of endlessness. An endless end is a synonym of discrimination, O Mahāmati; and apart from discrimination, there is no being whatever present. When the inner world or the outer one is surveyed with wisdom (*buddhi*), we find indeed, O Mahāmati, all objects transcending the dualism of knowing and being known. Only because of ignorance of the discriminating

mind, discrimination takes place; when this is realised, it disappears.

"On this occasion this was uttered :

"Those who perceive the Buddhas like the sands of Gangā as unrelated to destruction, or to transmigration, they truly see the Tathagatas.

"As the sands of Gangā are free from all defects, always flowing along the current, so is the substance of Buddhahood."

PART II

(A) THE INTELLECTUAL CONTENT OF THE BUDDHIST EXPERIENCE

Having elucidated to a certain extent though not so exhaustively as a thorough survey of the *Laṅkāvatāra* may require, as regards its general contents and especially the nature of the inmost consciousness of the Tathagata known as Pratyātmāryajñāgocara, let us now proceed to see what intellectual equipment is needed for a Bodhisattva before he can attain to this inner realisation so emphatically acclaimed in the sutra. This intellectual equipment consisting of two parts, logical and psychological, is in a way the philosophical content of the intuitive experience attained by the Bodhisattva. It may be regarded either as the intellectual attitude to be acquired by him before he enters upon the path of Buddhist discipline, or as the philosophy of what he has realised, which as a rational being he is to elaborate later on. In either case, the *Laṅkāvatāra* offers us a thorough-going idealism along with the message of self-realisation, and this has been the point of discussion as referred to before among the Buddhist exegetists who wished to decide which was the more important topic of the sutra. Whatever this may be, we are now prepared to see what is the philosophical background of the Buddhist experience.

Historically, the *Laṅkāvatāra* has been considered as an

exposition of the following subjects: the five Dharmas, three Svabhāvas, eight Vijñānas, and two Nairātmyas. Buddhist scholars, Indian, Chinese, and Japanese were always quite inclined to what may be termed a numerical method of analysis. The whole text was first analysed into so many parts, and each part again into so many sections, and so on; and the important ideas developed in them were picked up and gathered up numerically in order, one, two, three, and so on. They often thus failed to see one central thought running through the text, like the mountaineer whose attention is constantly arrested by the details in his way and fails to take in the mountain as a whole. Now, the *Laṅkāvatāra*'s philosophy is absolute idealism and all these numerical headings are details used to establish the main theme. But I will here first discuss each subject separately and then arrange it so as to bring out the whole system in a more centralised shape.

The Five Dharmas

To begin with, "dharma" is a very troublesome word to handle properly and yet at the same time it is one of the most essential technical terms in Buddhism. As it is used in many different senses, the serious business of a translator or a commentator is to know exactly what the term means in a given context. Etymologically, it comes from the root *dhri* "to hold," "to bear," "to exist"; there seems always to be something of the idea "to endure" also going along with it. The commonest and most important sense given to it in Buddhism is "truth," "law," "religion," as exemplified in *saddharma*, *dharmakāya*, *dharmacakra*, *dharmaparyāya*, etc. Secondly, it is used in the sense of "existence," "being," "object," or "thing," as, for instance, in *sarvadharmasūnyatā*, *dharmānairātmya*, etc. Thirdly, it is synonymous with "virtue," "righteousness," "norm," not only in the ethical sense, but in the intellectual one also. In the latter case, it is "truth," "standard,"

“category,” or a general name for a class of things or ideas. Fourthly, it is occasionally used in a most comprehensive way, including all the senses mentioned above, and it is in this case that we feel inclined so often to leave the original untranslated rather than to seek for an equivalent in a foreign language. For example, when *dharmā* and *adharma* are contrasted, *dharmā* is here used most evidently in its widest connotation; it is not especially the Buddha’s teaching, nor is it a moral standard set up against unrighteousness, nor does it refer to existence generally. In fact it includes all these. The term may be understood to mean anything of which something can be asserted; and its opposite *adharma* means everything that negates the affirmation, logical or ontological, or merely physical or ethical. *Dharma* and *adharma* are used in this sense toward the end of the first chapter of the *Laṅkāvatāra*. *Sarvadharmā* may be regarded as being just as comprehensive in its significance; indeed, it may even include *adharma* as well as *dharmā*, for *adharma*, too, is a *dharmā* so far as it is another form of assertion. *Sarvadharmā* is interchangeable with *sarvabhava*. Still another comprehensive use of *dharmā* may be found in *Buddhadharma*, for this includes not only all the teachings that go in the name of the Buddha but all the activities, institutions, physical objects, mental operations, and indeed everything that is connected with Buddhism in any possible manner. Thus “Buddhadharma” may come to include the entire universe and all that is found there. The “Dharma” in the five Dharmas may approximately be rendered as “category.”

The five Categories (*dharmā*) are Name (*nāma*), Appearance (*nimitta*), Discrimination (*vikalpa*), Right Knowledge (*saṃyagjñāna*), and Suchness (*tathatā*).¹ Those who are desirous of attaining to the spirituality of the Tathagata are urged to know what these five categories are; they are unknown to ordinary minds and, as they are unknown,

¹ Pp. 224 ff, 228.

the latter judge wrongly and become attached to appearances. Now Names are not real things, they are merely symbolical (*samketa*, 假立, *chia-li*), they are not worth getting attached to as realities. Ignorant minds move along the stream of unreal constructions, thinking all the time that there are really such things as "me" and "mine." They keep tenacious hold of these imaginary objects, over which they learn to cherish greed, anger, and infatuation, altogether veiling the light of wisdom. These passions lead to actions, which, being repeated, go on to weave a cocoon for the agent himself. He is now securely imprisoned in it and is unable to free himself from the encumbering thread of wrong judgments. He drifts along on the ocean of transmigration, and, like the derelict, he must follow its currents. He is again compared to the water-drawing wheel (*ghaṭīyantra*) turning around the same axle all the time. He never grows or develops, he is the same old blindly-groping sin-committing blunderer. Owing to this infatuation, he is unable to see that all things are like *māyā*, mirage, or like a lunar reflection in water; he is unable to free himself from the false idea of self-substance (*svabhāva*), of "me and mine," of subject and object, of birth, staying and death; he does not realise that all these are creations of mind and wrongly interpreted. For this reason he finally comes to cherish such notions as *Īśvara*, Time, Atom, and *Pradhāna*,¹ and becomes so inextricably involved in appearances that he can never be freed from the wheel of ignorance.

By Appearances (*nimitta*) are meant qualities belonging to sense-objects such as visual, olfactory, etc.; and by Discrimination (*vikalpa*) is meant the naming of all these objects and qualities, distinguishing one from another. The text reads: "Then again, O Mahāmati, Discrimination is that by which names are set up. Expressions are given to appearances, saying, 'This is such and not otherwise'; and

¹ *Pradhāna* is a kind of the Primary Germ, which, according to the Sāṅkhya philosophy, becomes the cause of all material appearances.

we have names such as elephant, horse, wheel, footman, woman, or man, wherein Discrimination takes place."¹

Right Knowledge (*samyagjñāna*) consists in rightly comprehending the nature of Names and Appearances as predicating or determining each other. It consists in seeing mind as not agitated by external objects, in not being carried away by dualism such as nihilism and eternalism, and in not falling into the state of Śrāvakahood and Pratyekabuddhahood as well as into the position of the philosopher.

When a world of Names and Appearances is surveyed by the eye of Right Knowledge the realisation is achieved that they are to be known as neither non-existent nor existent, that they are in themselves above the dualism of assertion (*samāropa*) and refutation (*apavāda*), and that the mind abides in a state of absolute tranquillity undisturbed by Names and Appearances. With this is attained with the state of Suchness (*tathatā*), and because in this condition no images are reflected the Bodhisattva experiences joy.²

The Three Forms of Knowledge.

The three forms of knowledge known as Svabhāvalakṣaṇatraya³ are more or less a recapitulation or reclassification of the five Dharmas. *Svabhāva*, or *sva-bhāva*, literally means "self-nature," "self-substance," or "existence as it is in itself," and *lakṣaṇa* is the "characteristic mark" or marks that distinguish one thing from another. The combination thus literally understood looks as if it had nothing to do with knowledge. The meaning however is this, that as existence (*bhava*) is conceived or cognised by mind, it allows itself to be understood in three different and characteristic ways, and that each of these three ways of understanding or three views of existence is taken as final

¹ P. 226.

² An English translation of a part of this section is given elsewhere in this book (pp. 25-33), where a comparison is made between the three Chinese versions and one Sanskrit text. Pp. 225-229.

³ Pp. 67, 227.

and true to the self-nature of existence by those who may hold that particular view. Thus, the phrase *sva-bhāva-lakṣhaṇa* may apply to the nature of knowledge itself and also to its object, that is, to existence in general. The motive underlying the classification is to see what knowledge or view of existence is required for the attainment of the truth that brings release from the pain and bondage of existence, and the three characteristic marks so called will more properly describe the nature of knowledge than that of its object. *Svabhāva* in this case is to be understood as an epistemological term.

The first of the three Svabhāvas is known as the Parikalpita (*pari+kalpita*, contrived or imagined), wrong discrimination of judgment, and proceeds from rightly comprehending the nature of objects, internal as well as external, and also the relationship existing between objects as independent individuals or as belonging to a genus. The second is the Paratantra, literally, "depending on another," is a knowledge based on some fact, which is not, however, in correspondence with the real nature of existence. The characteristic feature of this knowledge is that it is not altogether a subjective creation produced out of pure nothingness, but it is a construction of some objective reality on which it depends for material. Therefore, its definition is "that which arises depending upon a support or basis (*āśraya*)."¹ And it is due to this knowledge that all kinds of objects, external and internal, are recognised, and in these individuality and generality are distinguished.¹ The Paratantra is thus equivalent to what we nowadays call relative knowledge or relativity; while the Parikalpita is the fabrication of one's own imagination or mind. In the dark a man steps on something, and imagining it to be a snake is frightened. This is Parikalpita, a wrong judgment or an imaginative construction, attended with an unwarranted excitement. He now bends down and examines it closely and finds it to be

¹ P. 67.

a piece of rope. This is Paratantra, relative knowledge. He does not know what the rope really is and thinks it to be a reality, individual and ultimate.

While it may be difficult to distinguish sharply the Parikalpita from the Paratantra from these brief statements or definitions, the latter seems to have at least a certain degree of truth as regards objects themselves, but the former implies not only an intellectual mistake but some affective functions set in motion along with the wrong judgment. When an object is perceived as an object existing externally or internally and determinable under the categories of particularity and generality, the Paratantra form of cognition takes place. Accepting this as real, the mind elaborates on it further both intellectually and affectively, and this is the Parikalpita form of knowledge. It may be after all more confusing to apply our modern ways of thinking to the older ones especially when these were actuated purely by religious requirements and not at all by any disinterested philosophical ones.

The third form of knowledge is the Parinishpanna, perfected knowledge, and corresponds to the Right Knowledge (*samyagjñāna*) and Suchness (*tathatā*) of the five Dharmas. It is the knowledge that is available when we reach the state of self-realisation by going beyond Names and Appearances and all forms of Discrimination or judgment (*vikalpa*). It is Suchness itself, it is the Tathāgata-garbha-hridaya, it is something indestructible (*avināśa*).¹ The rope is now perceived in its true perspective. It is not an object constructed out of causes and conditions and now lying before us as something external. From the absolutist's point of view which is assumed by the *Laṅkāvatāra*, the rope is a reflection of our own mind, it has no objectivity apart from the latter, it is in this respect non-existent. But the mind out of which the whole world evolves is the object of the Parinishpanna, perfectly-attained-knowledge.

¹ Pp. 67, 227.

before our minds, as I stated elsewhere, which is, that Buddhist thought is always the outcome of Buddhist life; that its logic, or psychology, or metaphysics cannot be understood adequately unless we realise that facts of Buddhist experience are at its basis, and, therefore, that pure logic is not the key to the understanding of Buddhist philosophy.

The Two Kinds of Knowledge

The division of knowledge of truth (*satya*) into two forms, *Saṃvṛiti* and *Paramārtha*,¹ is also known to the author of the *Laṅkāvatāra*, but it was due to the Madhyamika school of Nāgārjuna that the distinction was thoroughly formulated into a system, and they made most of it to account for the dual aspect of experience in their treatises on the doctrine of the Middle Path. In the *Laṅkāvatāra* we may say that the idea is foreshadowed when it makes reference to "Vyavahāra" (practical experience) according to which the Buddha concedes the possibility of such concepts as being and non-being, birth and death, caused and causing, grasped and grasping, etc. "Vyavahāra"² belongs to ordinary life where rules the principle of individuation, and as long as the relative and provisional existence of *māyā* is admitted, common parlance too has to be permitted for practical purposes. When the sutra, however, goes on further down to explain the characteristic features of the Paratantra form of knowledge, the terms *Saṃvṛiti* and *Paramārtha* occur, as we have just noted in the gāthās quoted—the former as leading to particularity and the latter as a mental state when this is transcended. The gāthās throw some light on what is meant by the *Parikalpita* and the *Paratantra* view of ex-

¹ The term "Paramārtha" is sometimes (p. 87) used in opposition to the "realm of words, discrimination, and intelligence" (*vāg-vikalpa-buddhi-gocara*) or to the "discrimination of individuality and generality" (p. 89). In this case *Paramārtha* is synonymous with the supreme wisdom realised in one's inmost consciousness, which is the main thesis of the *Laṅkāvatāra*.

² *Vyavahāra* means "usage" or "worldly way." P.85.

istence and at the same time on their relationship to the Madhyamika conception of Saṃvṛtisatya. They are very complicated in meaning and difficult to expound exactly and in full. But the main idea seems to be this: Mind is set in motion when it allows itself to be conditioned by the principle of individuation. The Parikalpita and the Paratantra follow from this stirring up of mentation. The Paratantra is intellectual, for it operates depending on something outside itself. It is a kind of representation. It may not always be correct, but it does not create anything out of itself. The Parikalpita, on the other hand, weaves its own imaginative world regardless of its objective value. It is always in the wrong not only in a logical sense but psychologically. The main point about it is that it discriminates "me and mine" from what is not "me and mine," and holding this distinction to be real and final, becomes attached to it, which culminates in moral egoism. When this is once asserted, all the evils follow that are to be found in connection with life. The Paratantra which may be innocent in itself becomes the most efficient hand-maid to the Parikalpita, and what is created by it is also intellectually confirmed with all its practical consequences. The Paratantra and the Parikalpita are mutually dependent. The Parinishpanna is to go beyond both these forms of knowledge. This is Paramārtha, the highest transcendental wisdom, while the Saṃvṛiti form of truth prevails in the world of Parikalpita and Paratantra.

The two kinds of Buddhi (knowledge)¹ which are elsewhere distinguished in the sutra may be considered to correspond to Saṃvṛiti and Paramārtha. In the following lines² which are repeated in the "Sagāthakam" (gg. 54-55), truth or reality (*bhūtakoti*) is contrasted with its reflected image or semblance (*pratibimba*): "As the king or householder gives his children all kinds of playthings looking like

¹ P. 122.

² P. 88.

The Twofold Non-Atman Theory.

We now come to a third distinctive feature of the philosophy of the *Lankāvatāra*, which is known as the twofold non-Atman theory, i.e., *Nairātmyadvaya*.¹ The non-Atman or non-ego theory is known among all Buddhist students as the most differentiating mark of Buddhism, but the denial of an Atman or self-substance (*svabhāva*) in external objects is the specific property of the Mahayana and may require some explanation. To translate *ātman* always by "ego" or "self" or "soul" may not be right; and especially when its denial is applied to an objective world, egolessness has no meaning, it is merely the source of misapprehension. An Ātman means something substantial in possession of a number of qualities, and a free agent not bound by the principle of relativity. When its existence, therefore, is denied in us, it means that we have no such free agent within ourselves, enjoying a substantial existence even above the concatenation of cause and effect. When we deny its reality in the world external to us, it means that there is no self-substance (*svabhāva*) in individual objects which come into existence, abide for a while, and finally disappear according to certain laws. In this case, *nairātmya* is *niḥsvabhāva*, and when it is understood in this way, the idea falls in harmoniously with the other views maintained by Mahayanists. Though not yet formulated numerically by Buddhist scholars, there are four distinguishing marks in Mahayana ontology which constitute its very kernel. They are, (1) that all things are empty (*śūnya*), (2) unborn (*anutpanna*), (3) not dual (*advaita*), and (4) without self-substance (*niḥsvabhāva*).² This sums up the metaphysical aspect of Mahayanism, and the dual non-Atman theory is merely a partial recapitulation of it.

¹ P. 68, etc.

² Pp. 73, 138, etc. These somewhat correspond to what is generally known as the three *Samādhi* or *Vimokṣhamukha*; *śūnya*, *animitta*, and *apraṇihita*. Cf. pp. 78, 166, 163, etc.; and also pp. 138, 141 etc., of these *Studies*.

The *Laṅkāvatāra* explains the theory in the following manner:¹ The Skandhas, Dhātus, and Āyatanas have nothing personal in them, there is no "me and mine" in them, they are created by the ignorant affirmation of the desire to have,² and attachment takes place when they are comprehended by the senses. The material world as well as the physical body are manifestations of the mind known as Ālayavijñāna, and when they are discriminated as particular existences, we are discriminating our own mind-made. When thus created they are seen in constant transmigration, they never remain even for a moment as they are, they flow like a stream, they change like a seed, they flicker like a candle light, they move like the wind or like a cloud. And when affections are stirred up, they are pursued by us, we behave like the monkey who is ever restless, or like the fly that runs after filthy food, and not knowing when we are satiated, and evidently to no good purpose, we burn like fire. Owing to the habit-energy (*vāsanā*) accumulated since time immemorial through wrong reasoning and attachment, we now transmigrate from one state to another revolving like a wheel, like a machine, like a phantom creation, or like a walking ghost. When we realise this, we are said to have the knowledge of the non-existence of an individual ego-soul (*pud-galanairātmya-jñānam*).

Dharma-nairātmya-jñānam (法無我智),³ as I said before, is gained by extending the knowledge of the non-existence of an individual ego-soul to the external world. The two ideas are interrelated, and when the one is asserted the other follows inevitably. To say that all objects are devoid of self-substance is to recognise a most complicated system of

¹ P. 68 ff.

² *ajñāna-karma-trishṇa*.

³ It is sometimes argued that the Hinayana too denies the existence of Dharmātman and that Dharmanairātmya-jñānam is not the exclusive property of the Mahayana. The argument may be true as far as it goes, but what most distinguishes the Mahayana is the doctrine of Śūnyatā which necessarily follows from the egolessness of all things, and its application to the Bodhisattva's practical life.

relationship running through all existence. This was noticed by the Buddha himself when he discovered what is known as the chain of origination, but as his immediate interest was to free his disciples from ignorance and attachment, his statement stopped short at the theory of non-ego. With the development of Buddhist experience and thought, the psychology grew up into metaphysics, and the doctrine of Śūnyatā (emptiness) came to occupy the minds of Mahayanists. And this doctrine is another way of saying that all objects are without self-substance. When the theory of non-ego is once established, all these stock ideas of Mahayana Buddhism are the necessary inferences: Śūnyatā (空), Dharmanairātmya (法無我), Niḥsvabhāva (無自性), Anutpāda (不生), Anābhāsa (無影像), Nirvāṇa (涅槃), Mayopama (如幻), etc.

The denial of self-substance means that just as the Skandhas, Dhātus, Āyatanas, are devoid of an ego-soul and have no other creator than the desire to possess (*trishṇa*) which expresses itself in deeds, thereby subjecting itself to an endless concatenation of cause and effect, so all things are by nature above such categories of particularity and generality, are distinguished as concrete individuals only through wrong discrimination which is so intensely cherished by the ordinary mind. The wise are not thus confused, however, they are free from unwarranted inferences and attachments, as they know, by rightly reviewing the world of particulars (*sarvadharmas*), that the latter is devoid of mind (*citta*), will (*manas*), intelligence (*manovijñāna*), the five Dharmas, and the three Svabhāvas (self-nature).¹ When this is attained, the knowledge concerning the absence of Ātman in all things is attained.

"To be devoid of mind, etc.," means that the real nature of existence cannot be designated by any category of thought, for to be predicated means to be determined, to be limited. The truth, if it is really something that gives complete satisfaction to the yearnings of our religious consciousness, must

¹ P. 69.

be absolute, and to be absolute and thoroughly convincing such truth must be inwardly experienced. When an appeal is made to logic a statement or proposition is to be proved according to rules of thought, and these rules are sure to be conditional, and, therefore, more or less one-sided and prejudicial. When the Mahayanists have to assert (*asti*) or deny (*nāsti*), they run the risk of being judged by the rules of thought, and perhaps all they can establish in the circumstances is to say that all things are devoid of "mind, will, etc." as above referred to. This is where Mahayana philosophers are always in a quandary, and this is the reason why the Mahayana teaching looks on the surface at least as self-contradictory or full of paradoxes.

To apply the term, "ātman," ego, soul, not only to a person (*pudgala*) but to all inanimate objects may sound strange at first sight as was stated above, but when it is realised that Buddhist philosophy has no special intellectual interest in the discussion itself except from the most pragmatic point of view, i.e., as concerned with life, with this person, with its salvation and enlightenment, the extension of the term "self" or "soul" over to all existence seems justified and appropriate. At any rate the dual non-ego theory is one of the features of the Mahayana as differentiated from the Hinayana.

(B) THE PSYCHOLOGY OF BUDDHIST EXPERIENCE

The Doctrine of Mind-only

Having finished that phase of equipment which may be called logical, for the upward career of the Bodhisattva, let us now pass on to the psychological phase, that is, the doctrine of consciousness, technically known as the theory of the eight Vijnānas. As I wish to repeat, Buddhism being a religion has no abstract interest in logic, or psychology, or metaphysics *per se*, and especially in the case of the *Lañkāvatāra* the chief problem is to reach a state of self-realisa-

incidental as an introduction or as an intellectual interpretation necessitated by the rational nature of humanity. This latter phase of religious experience may be more predominant in Buddhism than in some other religions, but it is not for us to overlook the essence of the matter for the sake of its more or less unimportant accessories, however inevitable they may be in the understanding of it.

As was definitely stated, the principal theme of the *Laṅkāvatāra* is Pratyātmāryajñānagocara, the state of consciousness in which the inmost truth is directly presented in one's mind. This being an immediate perception of the truth it cannot be imparted to others by means of logic, but without it the perception itself ceases to be operative, which is the same thing as not existing at all or being unreal. The experience itself is without content, and must be given to it by the intellect to make it workable in our social living. The psychology of the *Laṅkāvatāra* is also to be treated thus, that is to say, its doctrine of "Mind-only" (*cittamātra*) with all its accompaniments is meant to explain the mental experience of the Bodhisattva. We have always to bear in mind this subordinate position of psychology or logic or metaphysics in the teaching of the *Laṅkāvatāra*.

The doctrine of the Vijñānas is described in this wise:¹

"As the waves of the ocean depending on the wind are stirred up and roll on dancing without interruption (99);

"So the Ālaya-flood constantly stirred up by the wind of individuation (*vishaya*) rolls on dancing with the waves of the various Vijñānas (100);

"As dark blue, red, and other colours with salt, conch-shell, milk, and honey; fragrance with fruits and flowers; rays of light with the sun:—they are neither different nor not-different one from another (101);

"So the seven Vijñānas which are the waves of the ocean rise in conjunction with mind (*citta*) (102);

¹ Pp. 46 ff. These gāthās are in some places not quite clear as to their meaning. Perhaps the text ought to be more thoroughly rearranged, which to a certain extent the author hopes to do later.

of the ignorant, the Ālaya is compared to the ocean, and the likeness of waves and the evolution [of mind] is pointed out by a simile (112).

“[Mahāmāti requested]:

“Like unto the sun that illumines equally above and below, thou art indeed the light of the world; announce the truth for the sake of the ignorant (113). Thou hast already begun the exposition of the Law, why dost thou not announce the truth [*tattvam*]?”

“[The Buddha then replied]:

“Even when there is a man who discourses on the truth, there is in his mind no [special object to be called] truth (114).¹”

“As the waves are stirred on the ocean, as images are seen in a mirror, in a dream, simultaneously, so is the mind in its own field (115).

“To discriminate objects, an evolution [of Vijñānas] takes place in succession: the Vijñāna distinguishes, and Manas again reflects (116).

“The visible world manifests itself to the five Vijñānas; there is no successive evolution when mind is in a state of

¹ In Bodhiruci's translation this verse is put into the mouth of Mahāmāti with all that follows; in the Sanskrit text it forms the second half of the verse (114) where *bhāṣāmi* in the footnote may be a more logical reading. My reading is here after the Sung and the T'ang version. The sense of the verse, however, as it is phrased here may not be quite clear to the reader, for it may be taken as meaning that the Buddha speaks of a thing which is not really in his mind, that is, that he is a liar and that he is confessing the fact himself. The intended idea is that the truth (*tattvam*) is something elusive and beyond specification, or that defies logical definition; when it is said that here is the truth, it is no more there, for in this case “here” fails to include what is “not-here,” and to be the truth it must transcend all possible limitations ascribed by human thought. The *Laṅkāvatāra*, in fact the whole system of Mahayana speculation, is built upon this idea of truth. Tattvam is *tathatā* (如如 or 如實) which literally means “suchness” or “thatness” or “thusness,” and is therefore said to be unattainable (*alabha*, 不可得). The reader must get used to this Mahayana way of describing the absolute character of ultimate reality when he tries to understand the psychology of the Mahayana Buddhist.

collectedness. As a painter or his disciple (117) arrays his colours in order to produce a painting, so do I preach; the picture is not in the colour, nor in the canvas, nor in the plate (118).

"In order to attract all beings, the picture is produced in colours; preaching may err, but the truth is beyond words (119).

"Being the master of all the doctrines, I preach the truth to the devotees, and the truth is to be attained by an inner perception, as it goes beyond both the distinguished [objects] and the distinguishing [subject] (120).

"I preach for the sake of sons of the Buddha, this preaching is not for the ignorant; the manifoldness of things is seen as like *māyā*, and exists not (121).

"Preaching is thus done in various ways, subject to errors; when the preaching is not in good accord [with the mentality of the hearer], it is then for him no preaching (122).

"A good physician administers medicine according to his patients; so indeed do the Buddhas discourse in accordance with the mental capacity of beings (123).

"The masters thus preach the state of consciousness attained by their inner perception, which does not belong to the realm of the philosophers and *Śrāvakas* (124)."¹

According to the *Laṅkāvatāra*, the mind, inclusive of Citta, Manas, and the other six *Vijñānas*, is in its original nature (*svabhāva*) quiet, pure, and above the dualism of subject and object. But here appears the principle of particularisation known as "*Vishaya*" (境界), which comes from the root *viśh* meaning "to act," "to work"; and with the rise of this wind of action, the waves are agitated over the tranquil surface of the mind. It is now differentiated or evolves (*vr̥tti*) into eight *Vijñānas*: *Ālaya*, *Manas*, *Manovijñāna*,

¹ In the "Sagāthakam" section all these *gāthās*, 99-124, are reproduced, but are broken up into four parts, while *gāthās* 101-123 are kept solid. See pp. 271, 272, 314-315, and 320.

and the five senses;¹ and simultaneously with this evolution the whole universe comes into existence with its multitudinous forms and with its endless entanglements. The following is indeed the constant echo reverberating through the sutra:

"The visible [world] which is mind does not exist [as seen by the senses]; but mind is set in motion by being seen [i.e., objectified]; the body, property, and the abode are the manifestations of the Ālaya [inherent in all] mankind (125).

"Citta, Manas, and Manovijñāna, Svabhāva, the five Dharmas, the two forms of Nairātmya (egolessness), purity—these are elucidated by the Buddhas (126).

"Long and short and suchlike come to exist mutually conditioned; not-to-be grows effective by to-be and to-be by not-to-be (127).

"When things are analysed into atoms, there remains nothing to be discriminated as objects. Those who hold wrong views do not believe in the ever-abiding ground where the mind-only [doctrine is established] (128).

"The masters point out the state of consciousness attained by their inner perception, which goes indeed beyond the mental calibre of the philosophers and Śrāvakas (129)."²

The Important Terms Explained

Before going further, it may be desirable to explain the more important technical terms constantly used in Buddhist psychology.

As is seen here, the conception of the Ālayavijñāna plays a chief, though silent, rôle in the evolution of the

¹ That is, Vijñānas. When *vijñāna* is used in its most comprehensive sense, it is equivalent to mind as distinguished from unthinking matter, *rūpa*. In its specific, technical sense, it is the perceiving and discriminating activity of mind. (See also *infra*.)

² Pp. 54-55. This last gāthā (129) is also found as the concluding line on the previous page. In fact, it is the favorite theme of the *Laṅkāvatāra*. This string of gāthās is repeated in the "Sagāthakam," page 320.

idealistic philosophy of the *Lankāvatāra*. It is often called simply "Citta," or "Tathāgata-garbha." *Ālaya* means a storage-house (*tsang*, 藏 in Chinese) where all kinds of goods are kept in storage, and it is the *Ālayavijñāna*'s function to store up all the memory (*vāsanā*) of one's thoughts, affections, desires, and deeds. The seeds (*bīja*) thus stored remain in the *Ālaya* perfectly quiescent and neutral.

Citta which is used as a synonym of the *Ālaya* may be translated "mind" as distinguished from *Manas*, that is, in its more specific sense. *Citta*, according to the sutra, apparently comes from the root *ci*, which has two senses, (1) "to gather," "to pile," "to acquire," and (2) "to perceive," "to look for." *Citta*, therefore, may mean either "collection" or "perception," and in the present case, that is, when it is identified with the *Ālaya*, Buddhist scholars take it in the sense of accumulation. So we read in the *Lankāvatāra*, "Citta gathers up karma," or "karma is gathered up by Citta."¹ Ordinarily, it may correctly be rendered "thought," or "mind." The great source of confusion, however, comes from *Citta* being used frequently for the whole system of *Vijñānas* as well as for the *Ālaya* alone.

Vijñāna is one of the significant terms in Buddhism, it is difficult to find one English word for it. *Jñā* means "to know," "to perceive," but *Vijñāna* in Buddhism has a technical sense; it is not mere cognition or understanding, it is a sort of principle of conscious life as distinguished from the body, and it is also the power or faculty of discrimination. It has, however, essentially an intellectual connotation, faithfully retaining its original sense. In the case of *Ālayavijñāna*, there is no discrimination in it, no intellection; for it simply accumulates all the impressions, all the memory-seeds (*bīja*) that are produced and left behind by the activities of the other *Vijñānas*.

¹ Pp. 46, 158: *cittena cīyate karmam*. Also cf. the "Sagāthakam," g. 754, *tair ācitāni karmāṇi*; and g. 829, *cittam anādi-matisamcītam*.

Tathāgata-garbha, which is another name for the Ālaya, is also a sort of store-room or receptacle where the seeds of Tathagatahood are retained and matured. It has a religious shade of meaning in contradistinction to the Ālayavijñāna which is a more philosophical term. *Garbha* is generally done into Chinese as 藏 (*tsang*), same as *Ālaya*, but literally it means "womb" (胎, *tai*). It is strange that the Chinese translators never, as far as I know, rendered *tathāgata-garbha* by 如來胎, but always, 如來藏, except when in the Shingon sect the *Garbha-kośa-dhātu* (胎藏界) is spoken of as contrasting with the *Vajradhātu* (金剛界). But the meaning is clear because the *Tathāgata-garbha* is the womb where the Tathagatas are conceived and matured, and as we are all possible Tathagatas except that we sit generally bound like mummies by the heavy intellectual and affective coverings known as *jñeyāvaraṇa* and *kleśāvaraṇa*. These two obstructions lie in our way of attaining supreme enlightenment. The intellectual one may not be so difficult to overcome as far as the intellect alone is concerned as it is detached altogether from the influence of the passions; but these passions constituting the very root of personality from the hardest knot to be untied by all earnest followers of Buddhism. The Buddhists, however, have no desire to extinguish all the affective factors that make up the human heart. What they mean when they say that one should extirpate all the passions (*kleśa*) in order to attain perfect freedom is that our passions, as they are generally harboured, are deeply rooted in the idea of self and inseparably joined with all the egotistic impulses, and that therefore they should be disjoined and set free for the working of *Mahākaruṇā* (great compassionate heart), which, in conjunction with *Prajñā*, supreme wisdom, makes up the life of the Mahayana Buddhist.

Manas (from *man*), meaning "to think," "to imagine," "to intend," is that seat of intellection and connotation, corresponding to the Western conception of mind. It is the one term in Buddhist psychology that has no *viññāna* attached

at its end. It is often confused, and justifiably, with Manovijñāna which is one of the six Vijñānas recognised by all the schools of Buddhism. In the *Laṅkāvatāra* Manas occupies a definite position and performs a specific function in the hierarchy of psychical activities, which will be described later. *Manovijñāna*, like the other five Vijñānas, has a field of its own as the perceiving of the rationality of things internal as well as external. The *Cakshur-vijñāna* is meant for the visibility of things, the *Śrotra-vijñāna* for their audibility, ad so on. The Manovijñāna functions sometimes independently of the five Vijñānas and sometimes simultaneously and conjointly with them. To a certain extent, it may be considered equivalent to the intellect, while Manas is conative and affective besides being intellectual. Therefore, it is sometimes called *Klishtāmanas*, meaning "Manas in defilement." The spiritual defilement starts nowhere else but in the Manas, the root of intellection and conation.

Vāsanā is quite a new conception in the development of Mahayana Buddhism, and the knowledge of it is indispensable to the understanding of the *Ālayavijñāna*. *Vāsanā* comes from the root *vas* meaning "to dwell," "to stay," or "to perfume," and in the Mahayana sutras it is used in the two senses combined, that is, in the sense of a perfuming energy that leaves its essence permanently behind in the things it has perfumed. The Chinese translators generally have 習氣 *hsi-ch'í*, or 薰習 *hsün-hsi*, for this term; *hsi* meaning "habit," "long usage," or "repeated experience." *Vāsanā*, therefore, is a kind of super-sensuous energy (*acintya-vāsanā-pariṇāma*, 不思議薰變) mysteriously emanating from every thought, every feeling, or every deed one has done or does, which lives latently in the store-house called *Ālayavijñāna*. It is often qualified as *daushṭhulya* whose Chinese equivalent is 惡 *wu*, or 過惡 *kuo-wu*, meaning "erroneous" or "evil." *Vāsanā* is morally evil and logically erroneous inasmuch as it creates an external world and causes us to cling to it as real and final. In modern psychology, we

from *khyā*, means "to perceive," "to manifest," and this function of the Vijñāna is to perceive or to reflect things that appear before it just as the mirror reflects all forms before it.¹ This is the function of the Ālaya. It looks into itself where all the memory (*vāsanā*) of the beginningless past is preserved in a way beyond consciousness (*acintya*) and ready for further evolution (*pariṇāma*); but it has no active energy in itself; it never acts, it simply perceives, it is in this sense exactly like a mirror; it is again like the ocean, perfectly smooth with no waves disturbing its tranquillity; and it is pure and undefiled, which means that it is free from the dualism of subject and object. For it is the pure act of perceiving, with no differentiation yet of the knowing one and the known. The waves, however, will be seen ruffling the surface of the ocean of Ālayavijñāna when the principle of individuation known as Vishaya (境界) blows over it like the wind. The waves thus started are this world of particulars where the intellect discriminates, the affection clings, and passions and desires struggle for existence and supremacy.

This particularising agency sits within the system of Vijñānas and is known as Manas; in fact it is when Manas begins to operate that a system of the Vijñānas manifests itself. They are thus called "object-discriminating-vijñāna" (*vastu-prativikalpa-vijñāna*). The function of Manas is essentially to reflect upon the Ālaya and to create and to discriminate subject and object from the pure oneness of the Ālaya. The memory accumulated (*cīyate*) in the latter is now divided (*vicīyate*) into dualities of all forms and all kinds. This is compared to the manifoldness of waves that stir up the ocean of the Ālaya. Manas is an evil spirit in one sense and a good one in another, for discrimination in itself is not evil, is not necessarily always false judgment (*abhūta-parikalpa*) or wrong reasoning (*prapañca-daushthulya*). But it grows to be the source of great calamity

¹ P. 37.

when it creates desires based upon its wrong judgments, such as when it believes in the reality of an ego-substance and becomes attached to it as the ultimate truth. For Manas is not only a discriminating intelligence, but a willing agency, and consequently an actor.

In these activities Manas is always found in company with Manovijñāna. In fact, it may be more proper to say that Manas and Manovijñāna conjointly working produce the world of particulars, and when reference is made to Vastu-prativikalpa-vijñāna it includes both Manas and Manovijñāna. The function of Manovijñāna is by hypothesis to reflect on Manas, as the eye-vijñāna reflects on the world of forms and the ear-vijñāna on that of sounds; but in fact as soon as Manas evolves the dualism of subject and object out of the absolute unity of the Ālaya, Manovijñāna and indeed all the other Vijñānas begin to operate.¹ It is like a complicated machine now, the whole system of the Vijñānas, each singly and also conjointly with others, is set in motion. When the system is thus in full swing, we cannot distinguish one Vijñāna from another, they so intimately interact, and the mirroring Ālaya is not distinguishable from the discriminating Manas and from the other Vijñānas, reflecting, reasoning, desiring, and acting. The Khyāti and the Vastu-prativikalpa have now no differentiating marks (*abhinnalakṣaṇa*),² they re-act upon each other, the one acting in turn as the cause to the other (*anyonyahetuka*).

In the beginning there was the memory amassed in the Ālaya since the beginningless past as a latent cause, in which the whole universe of individual objects lies with its eyes closed; here enters Manas with its discriminating intelligence, and subject is distinguished from object; Manovijñāna reflects on the duality, and from it issues a whole train of judgments with their consequent prejudices and attachments, while the five other Vijñānas force them to

¹ P. 44.

² P. 37, l. 18; p. 44, l. 18.

become more and more complicated not only intellectually but affectively and conatively.¹ All the results of these activities in turn perfume the Ālaya, stimulating the old memory to wake while the new one finds its affinities among the old. In the meantime, however, the Ālaya itself remains unmoved retaining its identity.

The following extracts from the *Laṅkāvatāra* elucidate for us the relation between the Ālaya and the other Vijñānas and also that between Manovijñāna, including Manas, and the remaining part of the Vijñāna system.

When the Buddha said that Buddhist Nirvana consisted in turning away from the wrongfully discriminating Manovijñāna, Mahāmati asked, "O Blessed One, dost thou not establish eight Vijñānas?" Being assured of this, Mahāmati proceeded, "If this be the case, why dost thou not speak of one's turning away from the seven Vijñānas instead of Manovijñāna?" The Buddha answered to the following effect: "With Manovijñāna as cause (*hetu*) and support (*ālabana*), there takes place the evolution of the seven Vijñānas. Further, O Mahāmati, when Manovijñāna discerns and clings to an external world of particulars, all kinds of habit-energy (*vāsanā*) are generated therefrom, and by them the Ālaya is nurtured. Together with the thought of 'me and mine,' taking hold of it and clinging to it, and reflecting upon it, Manas thereby takes shape and is evolved. In substance (*śarīra*) [however, Manas and Manovijñāna] are not different the one from the other, they depend upon the Ālaya as cause and support. And when an external world is tenaciously held as real which is no other than the presentation of one's own mind, the mentation-system (*citta-kalāpa*), mutually related, is evolved in its totality. Like the ocean waves, O Mahāmati, [the Vijñānas] set in motion by the wind of an external world which is the manifestation of one's own mind, rise and cease. Therefore, O Mahāmati, the seven Vijñānas cease with the cessation of Manovijñāna. Thus it is said:

¹ P. 235.

"My Nirvana has nothing to do with Substance (*bhāva*), nor with Action (*kriyā*), nor with Appearance (*lakṣhaṇa*).¹ With the cessation of the Vijñāna which is caused by discrimination, there is my cessation [i.e., Nirvana].

"Depending upon it as cause and support, the whole system of mentation finds its refuge here; the Vijñāna supplies cause to the mind (*citta*) and is its dependant.

"As when the great flood runs its course there are no more waves, so with the extinction [of Manovijñāna] all the Vijñānas cease to rise."²

The above shows the importance of the Manovijñāna in the body of Vijñānas including the Ālaya; let us now proceed to see what rôle the Ālaya, besides supplying material to the activity of the Manovijñāna, plays, or rather how it stands by itself especially in connection with the idea of the Tathāgata-garbha. The following will be of great help to our understanding the significance of the Ālaya, which is needed in the bringing about of an inner experience known as Pratyātma-jñānādhigama:

"O Mahāmati, the Tathāgata-garbha contains in itself causes alike good and not-good, and from which are generated all paths of existence. It is like an actor playing different characters without harbouring any thought of 'me and mine.' From not comprehending this, there arises the union and interaction of three causes producing results. The philosophers not understanding this become attached to the fixed idea of a creator. Infused with the habit-energy of various kinds of speculations and errors which have been carried on since beginningless time, the name of Ālayavijñāna obtains, [as *ālaya* means all-conserving]. It is in company with the seven Vijñānas which are generated in the dwelling-house of ignorance. The body [of the Vijñānas] is stirred uninterruptedly and all the time like the waves of the great ocean,

¹ These are the views held by the non-Buddhist philosophers of the time.

² Pp. 126-127.

but [the Ālaya itself] is free from the fault of impermanence and devoid of the thought of ego and is in its ultimate substance perfectly immaculate. As to the other seven Vijñānas beginning with Manas and Manovijñāna, they originate and come to an end and are characterised by momentariness; This is due to our erroneously discriminating things that are not; they are intimately related to and dependent upon an external world of forms and images; tenaciously attached to names and appearances, they fail to comprehend that forms and appearances are manifestations of the mind; they do not realise what is pain and what pleasure, they are no producers of emancipation; firmly standing on names and appearances [as realities], they are begotten of the desire to have (*rāga*) and further beget the same desire; [the desire and the Vijñānas are] thus mutually conditioning. When what are known as the perceiving senses are destroyed and disappear, others [Vijñānas], immediately following this, cease to function. There is [still] a self-discriminating knowledge; and seeing that no pain, no pleasure is felt, that there follows the extinction of thought and sensation, and the attainment of mental tranquillity and the four Dhyānas, together with skilfulness in [the understanding of] truth and emancipation, the devotees (*yogin*) think that they have [really] attained emancipation. But as long as the Ālaya-vijñāna known by the name of Tathāgata-garbha is not set in motion and differently oriented, the cessation of the seven evolving Vijñānas will never take place. Why? Because, depending on the Ālaya as cause, the Vijñānas are evolved; because this is not within the reach of all Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas, philosophers, and yoga-devotees; because [while] they understand that there is no ego-substance in a person, they are [still] attached to the ideas of individuality and generality as really existing in the Skandhas, Dhātus, and Ayatanas. The Tathāgata-garbha is awakened and grows quiescent as one perceives what is meant by the five Dharmas, [three] Svabhāvas, and the non-existence of ego-substance

in particular objects; and when there takes place the revolution [in the Ālaya] by gradually ascending the steps [of perfection, i.e., Daśabhūmikā], a man will never be led astray by the methods and views held by the philosophers. . . .

"The Tathāgata-garbha is found united with the seven Vijñānas: from attachment duality sets in, from knowledge (*parijñāna*) it disappears.

"The mind is to be regarded as mirror-like, perfumed by speculation [-habit] since the beginningless [past]: when things are truly (*yathābhūtam*) observed, they are not as they appear.

"As the ignorant see the finger-tip and not the moon, so those who are addicted to letters understand not the thatness (*tattvam*) of the things I teach.

"The mind (*citta*) dances like the dancer, Manas resembles the jester [or companion actor], the Vijñāna, in company with the five, imagines the visible [world] as a stage."¹

The Function of Manas

The question may rise now, What is the significance of Manas? Cannot the other Vijñānas do without this one acting, as it were, between the Ālaya and the other particularising six Vijñānas? This seems to be quite a natural question to ask, seeing that the Manovijñāna can directly deal with the Ālaya without the interference of Manas. According to my way of interpreting the *Laṅkāvatāra*, which may not be correct, the Ālaya is a sort of universal consciousness, and Manas individual empirical consciousness. In the Ālaya everything is stored, good and bad, in a state of quiescence and potentiality, but no discrimination, which latter, however, appears with the initiation of Manas. Manas is the active source of all the mental activities we ordinarily experience in this world of particulars. The possibility of consciousness lies in its dualistic nature, for without that which grasps (*grāhaka*) and that which is grasped (*grāhya*),

¹ Pp. 220-224.

there will be no conscious life. The duality of subject and object is fundamental, but this dualism is impossible without assuming behind it something which is not dual. Therefore, at the back of the six Vijñānas there must be Manas, the principle of individuation, and also the Ālaya, which goes even beyond the foundation of consciousness. When we admit that the six Vijñānas are fundamentally conditional by the principal of individuation, we admit the existence of Manas. And when Manas is admitted, we inevitably go on to the Ālaya which allows itself to be reflected by Manas as its condition and yet at the same time transcends it because the Ālaya is not an individual object of experience but universal in its nature. And it is owing to this universal nature of the Ālaya that all the individual Manas are capable of reflecting one and the same universe and of engaging in discussion. The Ālaya is thus most appropriately compared to the ocean.

This ocean of the Ālaya is disturbed by the wind of the particularising principle, psychologically known as Manas and epistemologically as Vishaya. While Manas is conceptually separable from the other six Vijñānas, it is practically involved in them. In our psychological life itself the whole Vijñāna system is engaged and we cannot very well talk individually of its components. So the *Lankāvatāra* is always careful to guard us from getting confused about this point: the Ālaya and the Vijñānas are different and yet not-different, i.e., one. Without the Ālaya, the cause disappears and the whole mental apparatus collapses; and when that which makes the cause operative ceases to react, the cause itself ceases to act though this does not mean its disappearance or destruction.

The Manas is the discriminating agency, but as this is possible only in the Ālaya, on which Manas with all its retinue of Vijñānas is dependent, the Manas and the Ālaya are in the closest possible relationship. For this reason, the Ālaya is dependent upon Manas for consciousness of itself and its unity. On the other hand, the six Vijñānas cannot