

The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* and *Śūnyatā* Thought

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THE HISTORICAL FORMATION OF THE LOTUS SŪTRA

IN 1852 the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* (Lotus Sūtra) was translated from the Sanskrit into French by the French scholar Eugène Burnouf. In 1884 the Dutch scholar Hendrik Kern did an English translation also from the Sanskrit, and between 1908 to 1912 Kern and the Japanese scholar Bunyū Nanjō published an edited version of the Sanskrit *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*. At that time, Burnouf and Kern produced important statements on its historical formation. In subsequent years Japanese scholars who did research on the historical formation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* brought forth a prodigious number of books and studies. Noteworthy among them is the work by Kōgaku Fuse entitled *Hokekyō seiritsushi* (*The Historical Formation of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*) published in 1934,¹ whose contents, though since amended at certain points, have more or less held up to scrutiny to the present day. In 1975, Nissen Inari introduced various theories on the historical formation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* which had been published earlier by Japanese scholars;² and in 1993 a more recent presentation of the array of plausible theories on the same theme was published by Shinjō Suguro.³ We must note, however, that none of these works adequately presents the research done by such scholars as Kōtatsu Fujita,⁴ Yoshirō Tamura,⁵ Keishō Tsukamoto,⁶ and Seishi Karashima.⁷ Only rarely has the research done in Japan on the philosophy and historical formation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* ever attempted to unravel the fragile links to the Sanskrit texts or to such translations as Dharmarakṣa's *Chêng fa-hua ching/Shōhokekyō* (T No. 263); instead, the bulk of it has been centered on Kumārajīva's *Miao-fa lien-hua ching/Myōhōrengekyō* (T No. 262).

With regard to Sanskrit texts, there are three main lines of transmission: the Nepalese, the Central Asian, and the Gilgit manuscripts. These manuscripts have been revised and edited (although some lacunae remain) and published in easily accessible form; studies of various frag-

ments have also been published.⁸

Tamura, who bases his conclusions on revised findings of Fuse's work, sums up the historical formation of the sutra's contents as follows:

I would designate as the first order, chapters II to IX, from "Upāya" to "Prophecies to Adepts and Novices," as compiled around 50 A.D.; the second order, chapters X to XXI, from "Dharma Master" to "Entrustment," as compiled around 100 A.D.; and the third order, chapters XXII to XXVII, from "Former Deeds of Bhaiṣajyarāja Bodhisattva" to "Encouragements of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva," as compiled around 150 A.D.⁹

That is, excluding the "Devadatta" chapter of the popular edition and the verse section of the "Universal Gate of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva" chapter which did not exist when Kumārajīva produced his translation, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* is generally considered to consist of 27 chapters altogether.

Fuse divides the first order (in his case, chapters I to XVII, from the "Introduction" to the "Merits of Joyful Acceptance" chapter) into two periods. Regarding the gāthā or verse portion, generally assumed to be the original form of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, he places this development in the first period,¹⁰ and the expansion into the prose portion as following somewhat later, this comprising the second period. Accordingly, Fuse regards the second order to be a third period when the gāthā and prose portions were compiled together. In addition, he considers the six chapters beginning with "Former Deeds of Bhaiṣajyarāja Bodhisattva" on, to have been supplemented during a fourth period. While the view that the first order gāthā portion appeared before the prose portion has long been held, even from the time of Kern, Tamura's work demonstrates this historical formation by a different set of considerations.¹¹

Recently, Karashima set forth a dramatic thesis that takes the gradual formation theory of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* seen in the above works to its ultimate conclusion in his study, "*Hokekyō ni okeru jō (yāna) to chie (jñāna)*—daijō bukkyō ni okeru yāna no gainen no kigen ni tsuite (*Yāna* and *jñāna* in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*: with regard to the origin of the notion of *yāna* in Mahāyāna Buddhism)." While this paper does not set out to discuss the entire process of formation to the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, the author's perspective on the sutra touches on its historical formation in the following way.

With regard to the formation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, I would designate the first order as consisting of "Upāya (II)" (hereafter the chapter

titles will be those of the *Miao-fa lien-hua ching* and the chapter numbers, that is, the small roman numerals in brackets, will be those of the Kern-Nanjio edition) to “Prophecies to Adepts and Novices (IX)”; I would further divide the first order into (a) the portion consisting only of *triṣṭubh* (or *triṣṭubh-jagatī*) and (b) that consisting of *śloka* and the prose sections, which we will call the first and second periods, respectively. Next, I would designate as the second order the “Dharma Master (X)” to “Tathāgata’s Mystical Powers (XX)”, as well as “Introduction (I)” and “Entrustment (XXVII)”. All other SP (*Saddharmapunḍarīka*) chapters would belong to the third order. While absolute dates of formation are impossible to determine, to my mind they were established in the order of first period, second period, second order, and third order. Again, with regard to the problem of precedence between Z (Dharmarakṣa’s *Chêng fa-hua ching*) to L (Kumārajīva’s *Miao-fa lien-hua ching*), judging from the format (chapter divisions, etc.) of the Sanskrit original relied on by L, I would hypothesize that L is older than that of Z, but as far as lexical items go, the original of Z appears to be older than that of L and seems to contain more MI (Middle Indic) elements.¹²

In an approach that runs against most of the scholarship up to now, Shinjō Suguro in his work, *Hokekyō no seiritsu to shisō* (*The Formation and Philosophy of the Saddharmapunḍarīka*) theorized that all 27 chapters of the *Saddharmapunḍarīka* were established simultaneously. This work appeared in 1993, the same year the Karashima paper was published, hence Suguro did not have the benefit of seeing the latter (nor is the Karashima paper mentioned in a revised 1996 edition). Suguro argues that, since there has been no discovery of any manuscript or work independent of the sutra canon that would support the gradual formation theory that scholars have been working on, that theory does not go beyond sheer speculation. If that is the case, he argues, it is justified to propose another theory, the view that all 27 chapters of the *Saddharmapunḍarīka* were written at the same time. By 27 chapters he means that “Devadatta (XII)” did not exist at the time Kumārajīva did his translation, and in addition to its being appended to the end of the “Treasure Tower (XI)” (Emergence of the Treasure Tower) of the Dharmarakṣa translation, it is well known that in the history of Chinese translation texts were not infrequently enlarged by later generations; this is how he would explain why the chapter was not included in Kumārajīva’s 28-chapter translation of the *Saddharmapunḍarīka*. In arguing for the simultaneous establishment of the verse and prose portions, Suguro rejects the theory of the verse preceding the prose. Fur-

ther, he does not attach importance to the shift from the first order's performing of *pūjā* for the *stūpa* to the second order's performing of *pūjā* for a *caitya* in which the sutra is placed. Neither does he place great importance on the difference between the first order practices, which are "holding, professing, and expounding the sutra," and the second order practice of sutra copying. In short, he rejects the notion of a first and second order, saying that with both these phenomena it is conceivable that they mutually anticipated one another, hence came into being simultaneously. While space does not permit us to further discuss the arguments Suguro sets forth, he makes points that are worthy of note.

THE PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀSŪTRA AND THE SADDHARMAPUṆḌARĪKASŪTRA

With regard to the Karashima paper above, in addition to its discussion of the origin of the notion of *yāna* in Mahāyāna Buddhism and its new theory on the overall formation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, there is another important element it contains, and that is the new perspective it presents on the problem of precedence with regard to the formation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* and the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*. The Karashima paper gives seven points why the first order *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* (that is, the eight chapters beginning with "Upāya" and the gāthā portion set in *triṣṭubh* meter. Karashima's so-called old SP [*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*]) must have preceded the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (The Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Lines; Ch. *Hsiao-p'in Pan-jo ching*), the older stratum *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*, in its formation. The reason this is a new perspective is that up to now scholars who dealt with the historical formation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* have generally assumed the older stratum *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* evolved prior to the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, or if they thought otherwise, have always kept their silence as to the matter. Here we will present an extremely simplified version of the seven points made by the Karashima paper; for a more detailed argument, see pp. 177–181 of that paper, as well as the notes (the bracketed information as well as the endnotes).

(1) The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā/Hsiao-p'in pan-jo ching* (hereafter as *Aṣṭa/Hsiao p'in*) emphasizes the performing *pūjā* for sutra scrolls and rejects *pūjā* for stupas, but the first order *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* positively recommends the building and veneration of stupas. In "Dharma Master (x)" on, however, the building of sutra burial mounds (*caitya*), representing the performance of *pūjā* to sutra scrolls, is recommended.

(2) In the *Aṣṭa/Hsiao p'in*, the dharma practices of holding, professing, expounding, copying, and the performing of *pūjā* are explained, but in the first order *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* the practice of copying does not appear, and it is not until the second order on that copying is first mentioned.

(3) In the *Aṣṭa/Hsiao p'in* Mañjuśrī and Maitreya Bodhisattva appear. In the second order *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* these two bodhisattvas make an appearance, but they do not do so in the first order.

(4) In the *Aṣṭa/Hsiao p'in* the term preacher of the dharma, or *dharmabhāṇaka*, appears, and the term is used frequently in the second order *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, but in the first order there is no clear-cut instance of the term (see note 8 to section eight of his paper).

(5) In the first order *gāthās*, *śūṅhyatā* is mentioned, but since it does not go beyond the treatment found in Āgama and Sectarian literature, it is a mere artifact. The point where we find the *Aṣṭa/Hsiao p'in* clearly influenced by *śūnyatā* (emptiness) thought system is in the second half of “Parable of Medicinal Herbs (V)”; hence this verse portion, which is not found in the Kumārajīva translation, is thought to occur late in its formation.

(6) The *Aṣṭa/Hsiao p'in* from the beginning explains the *prajñāpāramitā* (perfection of wisdom) as the basis of the five *pāramitās*, but in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* the six *pāramitās* are merely enumerated. It is not until the second order, in “Merits of Distinction (xvi)”, that the *prajñāpāramitā* thought system is first presented as the basis of the five *pāramitās*.

(7) In the first order the bodhisattvas are not given a logical presentation, and it is not until the second order that this is done.

Karashima’s explanation is as follows:

What seems to have happened is this: When the *prajñāpāramitā* thought system developed in southern India, in another area completely unrelated to it the old *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* underwent formation. Sometime later in western India these two works met, with the result that the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* was impacted by *prajñāpāramitā* thought system and the second order stratum came to be appended to it. This theory would go to explain the phenomena related in the above seven points.¹³

In as much as the Karashima theory assumes a gradual formation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, it will be no easy matter to come up with a countertheory to it.

In the *T'ien-p'in miao-fa lien-hua ching* (添品妙法蓮華經, T No. 264) translated into Chinese by Jñānagupta and Dharmagupta in 601, there is

an introduction (although unsigned it is thought to be written by the Śramaṇa Shang-hsing 上行 of P'u-yao ssu 普曜寺) that contains comments that are very much like textual criticism, which is unusual for ancient times. I will translate the main portion, leaving out passages related to preliminary matter.

The Tunhuang *śramaṇa* Dharmarakṣa, during the reign of Chin emperor Wu-ti, translated the *Chêng fa-hua ching*. In the Latter Ch'in dynasty, the *Miao-fa lien-hua ching* was translated by Kumārajīva at the request of Yao-hsing. When we compare the two translations, however, it becomes clear that they could never have (been translated from) the same original text. It is said that (the original text) Dharmarakṣa relied on was written on *tāla* leaves (Indian palm leaves), while (the original text) Kumārajīva relied on was a Kucheana manuscript. I made a search of the sutra repository and at last found the two manuscripts. The *tāla* manuscript matched the *Chêng fa-hua ching* and the Kucheana manuscript was truly the same as the *Miao-fa lien-hua ching*. It cannot be said that there were no omissions in Dharmarakṣa's palm leaves, nor can it be said that there was none in Kumārajīva's manuscript either. What was missing in Dharmarakṣa's was the gāthā portion of "Universal Gate." And what was missing in Kumārajīva's was: 1) half of "Parable of Medicinal Herbs (v)"; 2) the beginning portion of "Pūrṇa (viii)" (The 500 Disciples' Prophecy of Enlightenment), 3) as well as "Dharma Master (x)"; 4) "Devadatta," and 5) the gāthā portion of "Universal Gate (xxv)" (of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva). Kumārajīva's also had moved "Entrustment" to a point just before "(Former Deeds of) Bhaiṣajyarāja Bodhisattva (xxiii)". The "Dhāraṇī" (chapter) of both texts was moved to a place after "Universal Gate (xxv)" (of Avalokiteśvara). It would be no easy matter to relate all the similarities and differences between them. As to dealing with "Devadatta" and the gāthā portion of "Universal Gate," (we should follow the example) of our learned predecessors who, coming in a constant stream, repaired what was missing, and then disseminated it in this world. It is my aspiration to live my life in that honored tradition, thus I took this role upon myself.

In Jen-shou first 仁壽元年 (601), a *hsin-yu* 辛酉 year, during the great Sui dynasty, at the request of the Śramaṇa Shang-hsing of P'u-yao ssu temple, I paid a visit to Ta hsing-shan ssu temple 大興善寺, along with the two dharma masters Jñāna(gupta) and (Dharma)gupta who were well versed in the Tripiṭaka, where we examined stacks of Indian *tāla* leaf manuscripts. When we examined the original manuscripts, the beginnings of the two chapters, "Pūrṇa" and "Dharma Master," were missing. With

regard to “Parable of Medicinal Herbs,” we revised and added the (latter) half. We placed “Devadatta” so as to make it continuous with (the end of) “(Treasure) Tower.” We made “Dhāraṇī” continuous with “(Tathāgata’s) Mystical Powers (xx).” We restored “Entrustment” to (its usual position) so as to conclude (this sūtra). We put in numerous revisions to make the terms and syntax consistent.”¹⁴

From long before the “Devadatta” chapter has been regarded as a late addition to the *Saddharmapunḍarīka*. Suguro regards the portion of the *Sa t’an fên t’o li ching* (薩曇分陀利經, T No. 265; a work that circulated independently of the 27-chapter *Saddharmapunḍarīka* prior to the compilation of the latter) that corresponds in content to “Devadatta,” as having been patched into the *Saddharmapunḍarīka* “Treasure Tower” chapter. Pointing out that the first portion of “The 500 Disciples” and the first half of “Dharma Master” respectively correspond to the eighth tale of the *Jātaka/Sheng ching* (T No. 154) and the “Pūjā” chapter of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, both of which were in prior circulation, Suguro also notes with regard to the missing gāthā portion of “Universal Gate” in both the Kumārajīva and Dharmarakṣa translations, as related in the introduction to the *T’ien-p’in miao-fa lien-hua ching* cited above, that ever since the historical account of sutras in the *Li-tai san-pao chi* (T No. 2034) the translation of the gāthās has been credited to Jñānagupta, which brings Suguro to conclude, following some rather far reaching arguments, that this portion was appended. The same author makes a detailed examination of the second half of “Parable of Medicinal Herbs.” If we disregard the gāthās at the end of the first half of that chapter in the Kumārajīva translation, says Suguro, the first half

does not deal with the *śrāvaka*’s attainment of buddhahood, nor does it take up the problem of *ekayāna* or *triyāna* (one vehicle or three). Accordingly, if we intend to view (the first order materials) from the major themes of the relationship between *ekayāna* and *triyāna* (one vehicle and three vehicles) or the *śrāvaka*’s attainment of buddhahood, we are forced to conclude that we have very little to go on as far as explanations go. . . . I would contend that the second half portions of this chapter were supplements for the express purpose of making up for these deficiencies.¹⁵

While regarding these five places as supplements to the text, he argues that the 27-chapter *Saddharmapunḍarīka*, in its historical formation, came into existence simultaneously.

Of the above five places, however, the second half of “Parable of Medicinal Herbs” is qualitatively different from the other four. “The

500 Disciples” and “Dharma Master” have their corresponding parts in other canonical works that were circulating independently, but there is no Sanskrit text for either one. Not only does the gāthā portion of “Universal Gate” not exist in either the Kumārajīva or Dharmarakṣa translation, the Sanskrit text to this portion is also corrupted. “Devadatta” was not in the original Kumārajīva translation, but was in another Chinese translation circulating independently; but in the Sanskrit text and in the Dharmakakṣa translation it is included only in the “Treasure Tower.” These features have been pointed out by numerous earlier scholars, to which Suguro adds his opinion that this portion must have been appended as a supplement. While the second half of “Parable of Medicinal Herbs (v)” does not exist in the Kumārajīva translation, the fact is it does exist in the Sanskrit text, in the Dharmarakṣa translation, and in the *T’ien-p’in miao-fa lien-hua ching*, and there seems to be no other work in circulation. As conceived in the Karashima theory, as the gāthās are in *śloka* meter rather than *triṣṭubh*, they do not earn a place in the older stratum *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*. In my opinion, though, this second half should also be included in the second period. With regard to this portion, aside from the arguments set forth by Suguro, I believe sufficient thought has not been given to its investigation, and most scholars confronting its absence in the Kumārajīva translation have been inclined to conclude this portion must have been appended in a later period, or was left out of the translation intentionally by Kumārajīva for some reason, or perchance the manuscript Kumārajīva used to make his translation was flawed at that point. We will look at the content of this portion later on, but for the purposes of this brief paper I wish to attempt a comparative study of the philosophical system of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*’s first eight chapters (from “Upāya [II]” to “Prophecies to Adepts and Novices [IX]”), inclusive of the second half of “Parable of Medicinal Herbs,” and the older stratum *Prajñāpāramitā* (*Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, or *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching*). For the present I will have to limit my remarks to these first eight chapters due to limitations of space and time.

The hypothesis I wish to propose in this study is that the second half of *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* “Parable of Medicinal Herbs (v)” had already been compiled in the Sanskrit text of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* when Dharmarakṣa made his *Chêng fa-hua ching* translation in 286. In other words, the second half of this chapter was not added on or interpolated into the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* some time after Dharmarakṣa, nor was it appended after Kumārajīva had translated it (406). If we make a comparison of the first and second half of the “Parable of Medicinal Herbs”

of the *Chêng fa-hua ching*, we would find the two are not based on different texts, nor would it strike us that its Chinese translation is the work of two different hands (see n. 18 to section fifth below). As I said before, this circumstance arises because scholars have never entertained the possibility that this might be so, at least not in any tangible way. What I intend to do, then, is to make a comparison of the first order *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, tentatively including the gāthā portion set in *triṣṭubh* (or *triṣṭubh-jagatī*) meter, and the original *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*, that is, Lokakṣema's Chinese translation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, the *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching* of 179. Ideally, we would want to constantly refer to the Sanskrit text as we read the *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching*, but as the extant text of the former is full of later interpretations, we cannot rely on the available portions of the former if they are lacking in the latter. With regard to the problem of precedence between the old *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* and the original *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*, once again we cannot allow it to bear too greatly on our discussion of the historical formation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*. As the early *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* was written in prose, this rules out any philological comparison with the verse sections of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*. Further, of the Sanskrit texts of *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* uncovered so far, all of the manuscripts presently at our disposal date to a much later period. This would eliminate Lokakṣema, since the materials do not go back even to the time of Dharmarakṣa and Kumārajīva. From that perspective, any direct comparison temporally with the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* is impossible. Accordingly, we shall, for the time being, make observations on the *śūnyatā* thought contained in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* through a comparison of Dharmarakṣa's *Chêng fa-hua ching* and Lokakṣema's *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching*. In order to clarify what the passages mean, however, we will have to make reference to the Sanskrit texts of both sutras, as well the various Chinese translations of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*.

ON THE PARALLELS BETWEEN THE SADDHARMAPUṆḌARĪKA AND THE AṢṬASĀHASRIKĀ PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ

The 5,000 Who Left

At the beginning of *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* "Upāya (II)", in response to the thrice-spoken entreaty of Śāriputra, Śākyamuni starts to deliver a profound sermon that the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* in the audience would have difficulty comprehending: that the setting up of the

three vehicles was in fact merely an *upāya* (expedient device), for in reality there is only one Buddha vehicle. It is recorded that, at this point, 5,000 members of the Assembly—*bhikṣus*, *bhikṣuṇīs*, laymen and laywomen—rose up as a body to take their leave. After Śākyamuni gave them permission with a silent nod, he turned to Śāriputra and said, “It’s a good thing those haughty ones have made their departure, as the Assembly has now gotten rid of a lot of unnecessary elements” (*Chêng fa-hua*, 69, b18 ff.; Sanskrit text, 38, 12 ff., gāthās 38–41).

A similar story is recorded in the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*. The subject here, however, is *prajñāpāramitā*, the perfection of wisdom. Śākyamuni says: “Because the capacities of bodhisattvas differ, though they see numerous Buddhas, practice austerities and uphold precepts, they are not able to arrive at a sincere understanding of *prajñāpāramitā*, nor have faith in it, hence there are those who lack an awakening.” These are people, “for instance, who are in the Assembly, and even though they hear the *prajñāpāramitā* being expounded, rise and leave (the Assembly). This is because a dharma such as this finds a home only in the great bodhisattvas (*bodhisattvā mahāsattvāḥ*). Even if I, the Buddha, expound the profound meaning of *prajñāpāramitā*, such a person will simply toss it away and leave, without any desire to hear more. As to why this is so, such a person in a previous life once had the opportunity to hear *prajñāpāramitā* expounded, but tossed it away and left, and so even now such a person has no mind (to listen). This is entirely due to the excesses of not wishing to know” (*Tao-hsing*, 441, a28 ff.; Sanskrit text, 89, 21–27). This kind of bodhisattva not only does not want to listen for his own sake, neither will he expound *prajñāpāramitā* for the sake of others; as such, he falls short of being omniscient. Thus failing to realize what all the Buddhas of past, present, and future realize, at death he tumbles into the depths of *niraya* (hell), where in the course of transmigration he continues to undergo suffering.

In the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*, the practitioners of the Buddha way are all called bodhisattvas, but it is important to note that those who are in fear of falling back into transmigration are merely called bodhisattvas, while those who never regress into transmigration and are blessed with omniscience are called *bodhisattvā mahāsattvāḥ*.

The Śrāvaka’s Attainment of Buddhahood and the Prajñāpāramitā

In the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, on the one hand there are those *bhikṣus* who rise to take their leave of the Assembly when the Buddha begins to preach the method of attaining Buddhahood, but there are also many

other *bhikṣus* like Śāriputra who listen intently to the teaching of the Buddha vehicle and receive the prediction of Buddhahood. In “Upāya (II)” (*Chêng fa-hua*, “Good Measure”), Śākyamuni says, “Seeing that the former deeds of sentient beings are not the same, I, the Buddha, observed they also differ in what their hearts desire, and thus I devised skillful means (*upāya*) to match their needs. As to the working principle of this dharma, this is the great vehicle by which all beings equally attain the highest Enlightenment; this is the way through which beings acquire divine power, wisdom and virtue. There is no second vehicle. As this principle applies equally to all beings throughout the world, there is to be no discriminating among them. If (there is no second vehicle), how can one possibly speak of a third vehicle?” (*Chêng fa-hua*, 69, c14–18; Sanskrit text G, 187, 32–189, 5). By pointing out the Buddha vehicle as the ultimate goal of the omniscient ones, the Buddha simply wishes to expound the way of bringing sentient beings to realize the insight of Tathāgatas. Those who listen to this sermon the Buddha delivers shall surely become recipients of the supreme and orthodox Awakening. Thus, it states, there is nowhere in the world where one may find a second vehicle. How much more so, then, would this apply to talk of a third vehicle.

There is only one Buddha path, never are there two. How then can a third be said to exist in the world? This is just a device (that the Buddha,) the Most Eminent among Men (人中上), employs as a skillful means, where means the most eminent among men (*Chêng fa-hua*, 70, b15–17).

The vehicle is indeed but one. No second one exists. Nor could there ever be said to be a third that exists in the world.

Saying there are various kinds of vehicles is nothing more than the *upāya* of (the Buddha,) the Most Eminent among Men (Sanskrit, *Upāya* chapter, *gāthā* 54).

In “Parable (III)” (*Chêng fa-hua*, “Suited to the Times”), Śāriputra receives the prediction from Śākyamuni that he will in the future consummate the bodhisattva practices and become a buddha by the name of Flower Light. Śākyamuni then says, “Due to my regarding all these (sentient beings) as if they were my own sons, it will simply be by means of the Buddha vehicle alone that they shall all attain perfect nirvāṇa. By this I do not mean that there is a nirvāṇa awaiting certain individual sentient beings who will each (have their own separate nirvāṇas) one by one. All sentient beings shall come into (the same) nirvāṇa as the Tathāgata; that is, it shall be nirvāṇa in the greatest and

most complete sense of the term” (*Chêng fa-hua*, 76, b3–5; Sanskrit text, 81, 13–82, 1).

What the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* calls the path to Buddhahood has its corollary in the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*’s notion of *prajñāpāramitā*. In the *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching*, the Buddha says: “Those who study *śūnyatā* will, in the end, not lose the *prajñāpāramitā*. Bodhisattvas such as these dwell in the midst of *prajñāpāramitā*. Those who desire to learn the way of the *arhat*, truly they should listen to the *prajñāpāramitā*; they should learn, hold, and protect it. Those who desire to learn the way of the *pratyekabuddha*, they should listen to the *prajñāpāramitā*; they should learn, hold, and protect it. Those who desire to learn the way of the bodhisattva, they should listen to the *prajñāpāramitā*; they should learn, hold, and protect it. The reason I say this is, the *prajñāpāramitā* as the dharma most profound is what the bodhisattva should aspire to learn” (*Tao-hsing*, 426, a5–9; Sanskrit text, 4, 1, ff. The final phrase in this text, 菩薩如学, would seem to be a transcription error for 菩薩所学, judging from the corresponding portions in the *Mo-ho pan-jo ch’ao ching* which reads 菩薩摩訶薩所学 [T No. 226, 8, 509, a2], the *Ta-ming tu ching* which has 是為菩薩大士所学 [T No. 225, 8, 479, a10–11], and the *Hsiao-p’in pan-jo ching* which shows 菩薩所應学法 [T No. 227, 8, 537, b26]. I wish to thank Seishi Karashima for pointing this out to me).

Here, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* and the *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching* may differ somewhat in their narrative modes, but what they relate is essentially the same, that is, there is a strong will to draw those who seek to pursue the practices of the *śrāvaka-pratyekabuddha* vehicle over to the side of the bodhisattva-Buddha vehicle.

The Śrāvaka and Śūnyatā Thought

In *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* “Parable (III)”, Śāriputra, while intimidated by the Buddha’s spiritual prowess but up to now satisfied with the *śrāvaka*’s *nirvāṇa* he had attained, laments not having wished for the Buddha vehicle.

“(My mistake was,) having achieved a total understanding of views and actions, I thought at that time I was on the threshold of opening up a perfect understanding of the dharma of emptiness. For that reason I believed I had arrived at *nirvāṇa*. But then I realized that, no, it was not *nirvāṇa* that I had arrived at.” This is expressed in the Kumārajīva translation, at 11, a12, as: “Obtain proof with regard to the dharma of emptiness” (*Chêng fa-hua*, 73, c21–23).

I have discarded all of my mistaken views and further, I have experienced

all things as empty (*sparśayitvā*)—these things led me to believe I had realized nirvāṇa. But this cannot be called (genuine) nirvāṇa (Sanskrit G, 204, gāthā 12).

This kind of self-reflection that the *śrāvaka* sages submit themselves to, saying they grasped the truth that all things are empty yet failed to aspire to the supreme and orthodox Awakening of the Buddha, is frequently encountered in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*. For instance, in gāthā 42 of “Belief and Knowing (IV)” (*Chêng fa-hua*: “Belief and Desire,” hsin-yao), we find Mahākāśyapa’s words of self-reflection:

Within my mind I have come to realize as a matter of course that all things pass into extinction, but never did it occur to me to wish for and willfully seek this kind of (Buddha) wisdom.

So too did I hear of (the exquisite sights) of the many Buddha worlds of the great sage, but in my heart there arose no feeling of joy or happiness (*Chêng fa-hua*, 82, c2–4. Sanskrit, section 4, gāthā 42. Note that the first half of these two works do not correspond well with one another.).

However, such instances of self-reflection by *bhikṣus* and *bhikṣuṇīs* released from the grip of their mental afflictions—this being, in other words, the Buddha’s reproof of them—are also encountered occasionally in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*. In the *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching*, for instance, the Buddha remarks to the *bhikṣus* and *bhikṣuṇīs* (referred to as bodhisattvas in the *prajñāpāramitā* literature) who, having divested themselves of their mental afflictions and realized insight into the uncreated, have become *arhats*.

They have served the 500 Buddhas well, performing acts of charity in various situations, upholding the precepts, consummated their actions with forbearance, put forth energy, and practiced meditation. But as they did so without being protected by the *prajñāpāramitā*, what they did lacked the finesse of skillful means (*upāya*). And so, Śāriputra, although these bodhisattvas apply themselves to *śūnyatā*, to grasp the formless and, distancing themselves from their desires, pursue the way forth with in that frame of mind, in their direct realization of ultimate reality (*bhūtakoṭiḥ sākāṭkṛtā*) they end up enrolled in the *śrāvaka* class, they do not (arrive at) the Buddha class because they lack the finesse of skillful means (*Tao-hsing*, 453, c3–8, Sanskrit, 155, 7 ff.).

The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*’s “experiencing that all things are empty” and the *Tao-hsing ching*’s Sanskrit text’s “direct realization of reality” are equally valuable statements. The corresponding portion of the Chi-

nese translation of the *Tao-hsing ching* even goes so far as to express this by saying, “They take up the realization of the *arhat*.” In either case, it states their satisfaction over arriving at a *śrāvaka*’s nirvāṇa, and their lack of desire for the supreme and orthodox Awakening of the Buddha. In the *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching*’s “Protecting the Empty” (this corresponds to Sanskrit text section 20 “Reflections on Skillful Means”), the Buddha says: “Contemplate (the five aggregates of) matter, perception, conception, will, and consciousness as empty, contemplate on this with single focus, without seeing any dharma (object of contemplation). When in this way you see no dharma, this means a realization from within the dharma is not to be created” (*Tao-hsing*, 458, b19–21). This “creating a realization” or at times “taking up of a realization” are rough renderings from the Sanskrit phrase corresponding to “direct realization.” Direct realization is to become attached to the object of contemplation by affirming its existence. In the *Tao-hsing ching* “Protecting the Empty,” that is, the Sanskrit text’s section 20, there is a detailed explanation of the logic that “one should become well acquainted with emptiness (*parijaya*),¹⁶ rather than cleave to a direct realization of it,” but as this falls outside our present purposes, we will not be citing this material here.

Stupa Worship and Sutra Copying

In the first order *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, the worship of the stupa in which the Buddha relics are interred, is explained, but it is not until the second order that we encounter for the first time an explanation of sutra copying and the worship of the *caitya* (sutra burial mound) in which the scrolls are interred. By contrast, in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* it is explained from the very start that there is greater merit to be had by making copies of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* and interring them in sutra mounds, than there is in the Buddha relics or worship of stupas. This is even cited by some scholars as evidence that the first order *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* historically preceded the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*. Indeed, in the prose section of *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* “Upāya (II)”, there is no mention of stupa worship, and it is only in the gāthā section that it is suddenly extolled as an *upāya* the Buddha devises for the sake of saving sentient beings. These verses support the view that they were added at some later period. Further, among scholars who contend that the entire 27-chapter *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* was established simultaneously, there is the view that since stupa worship and sutra worship are not incompatible, it presents no problem to consider them as both taking place at the same time. Be that

as it may, in the case of the *Saddharmapunḍarīka*, there is no clear-cut explanation as to why copying the *Saddharmapunḍarīka* as well as the worship of and performance of *pūjā* before the sutra mound should be superior to *pūjā* before the Buddha relics and the stupa. In “Dharma Master (x)” (*Chêng fa-hua*, “Medicine King Tathāgata”) it is simply stated that when the *Saddharmapunḍarīka* is expounded, copied, and put into written form, “you must make a large *caitya* for the Tathāgata piled up high with jewels, but in its center it is not always necessary to place the Tathāgata’s physical remains (*śarīrāṇi*). As to why this is so is because an entirely complete Tathāgata body (*śarīram*) is already enshrined therein” (Sanskrit text, 231, 9–11; *Chêng fa-hua*, 101, 19–21: Thus, in this regard, people should desire to raise a holy temple [*caitya*] to the Buddha, and use a large [number of] jewels, to build it as large and as long [as possible]. There is no need to place the Buddha’s *śarīrāṇi* in the *caitya*. Why is that so? That is because the Tathāgata’s *śarīram* is already placed).

On the other hand, in the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* there is never any indication that the Tathāgata’s relics or the stupa in which they are interred are to be taken lightly. The relationship between stupa and *prajñāpāramitā* is stressed repeatedly by Indra:

omniscience of the properly awakened Tathāgatas emerges from out of

of gods, that the *pūjā* should be performed to the relics (of the Buddha) , it also follows that the *pūjā* should be performed for the *prajñāpāramitā* from out of which the relics emerged. Accordingly this should be regarded as the center of the *pūjā* (*Tao-hsing*, 435, c4–5).

This should not be taken to mean that I do not hold the remains of those Tathāgatas in the highest of esteem. I do hold them in the highest of esteem. However, the object of the *pūjā* should be the *prajñāpāramitā* from which emerged the Tathāgatas whose remains we have. This being so, it is by *pūjā* to *prajñāpāramitā* that the Tathāgatas’ relics are worshipped in their entirety” (Sanskrit, 48, 11–14).

Śākyamuni is heard to say, as to why the *prajñāpāramitā* is more important than the Tathāgata’s relics,

The reason this is so is because there emerges from the *prajñāpāramitā* the omniscience of the Tathāgata-arhat-buddhas awakened through the supreme and perfect Enlightenment (*Tao-hsing*, 433, b3–5).

This is because the *pūjā* should pay homage to the fact that the total It is not the case that I do not respect the relics. While it follows, Oh God

prajñāpāramitā. Accordingly, the *pūjā* performed for the Tathāgata's relics also honor that from which the omniscient ones emerged (Sanskrit, 36, 1–3).

I will not make many comments at present, but I wish to mention that there is clear evidence that the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras* place greater esteem on the copying of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* and the worship of the sutra mound, even as it expresses an esteem for the stupa. Here it would seem the problem is not so much one of the historical precedence of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* versus the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras*, but can be laid down to the differences in their respective characterizations of the sutra canon; in the former we see an active drumming up of interest in the Buddha vehicle notion mediated by various kinds of *upāya*; in the latter we find an exceedingly philosophical and logical presentation of its particular thesis.

THREE VEHICLES OR ONE?¹⁷

In *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* “Upāya (II)”, Śākyamuni turns to Śāriputra and says,

To the contrary, there is just this one great vehicle of Awakening, and none beyond it I recommend. As there are no two vehicles, how then can there be three (*Chêng fa-hua*, 69, c9)?

There is only one vehicle that I expound as a way for sentient beings. As that is the teaching of the Buddha vehicle, there is then no second vehicle or third vehicle that exists (Sanskrit text, 40, 13–15).

This happens to be from the prose section, but the same intent is repeated throughout the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* in numerous places in both the verse and the prose sections. For instance, Sanskrit text gāthā 54 reads:

The vehicle is indeed but one, no second one exists. Nor could there ever be said to be a third that exists in the world. It is nothing more than an *upāya* of (the Buddha), the Most Eminent among Men, to say there are vehicles of various kinds.

There is only one Buddha way, never has there ever been a time when there was two. How in the world can it ever be said that there are three? (The Buddha) who is the (highest) among men merely employs this as a device (*upāya*) (*Chêng fa-hua*, 70, b15–17).

On the other hand, in *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* “Reality-as-

such (XVI)” (*Tao-hsing*, “Original Nothingness [XIV]),” there is a discussion on the subject of three vehicles and one vehicle. Subhūti instead of Śākyamuni explains at length that all things including the supreme and orthodox Awakening of the Buddha are empty; to this Śāriputra presents a counterargument.

According to Subhūti’s exposition of (the Buddha’s) sermon, there can be no one who attains bodhisattvahood. Although the Buddha says that there are three kinds of worthy persons, *arhat*, *pratyekabuddha*, and Buddha, these three (kinds) should not be conceived of (literally) as three. According to Subhūti’s exposition, there can be only one path (*Tao-hsing*, 454, a19–21).

The Tathāgata explains that there are three kinds of people (*śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, *bodhisattvas*) who practice in the way of the bodhisattva vehicle, but according to our Elder Subhūti’s exposition, those three kinds of distinction vanish completely and there is but one vehicle, that is, the Buddha vehicle or the bodhisattva vehicle (Sanskrit, 159, 3–4).

As explained above, in the *prajñāpāramitā* literature, though there are exceptions it was customary to call the lower grade practitioners of the Buddha way, inclusive of the *śrāvaka* and *pratyekabuddha*, by the generic term bodhisattva, while those seekers at the irreversible stage or higher were known as the great bodhisattvas. In the sequel, a rather long exchange takes place between Subhūti and Śāriputra, at the end of which Subhūti at length says to Śāriputra:

(Subhūti asks) how can there possibly be one path in original nothingness (*tathatā*)? (Śāriputra answers:) “There is no path.” (Subhūti says:) “If it is not really cognizable, why do you distinguish between *arhats*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and Buddhas in this way (*Tao-hsing*, 454, a26–28)?”

From the standpoint of reality, from the standpoint of eternity, since you have yet to have any perception as to what comprises a bodhisattva, how is it these ideas float up in your mind that this kind of seeker ought to go to the *śrāvaka* vehicle, that this kind of seeker ought to go to the *pratyekabuddha* vehicle, that this kind of seeker ought to go to the great vehicle? When seen in the light of reality-as-such, there is no distinction among these several bodhisattvas (Sanskrit, 159, 15–17).

In the unrelentingly thorough standpoint of *śūnyatā* of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*, not only are the *śrāvaka* and *pratyekabuddha* not regarded as real entities, neither are the bodhisattvas or the Buddhas;

they are all things that are empty. In the standpoint of emptiness, in the world of reality-as-such, all seekers and even the Buddha are empty. In the logic of *śūnyatā*, any distinction among seekers of the way is denied. The only thing that “is,” is simply the one truth of emptiness, reality-as-such. In the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*, it is said the great bodhisattvas alone can understand this truth. If we see things through the eyes of Śāriputra, this would mean that the bodhisattva or Buddha vehicle alone exists. In the first order *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, it is said there are not three vehicles, there is only the one Buddha vehicle; at the same time, there is no indication as to the rationale why this should be so.

PARABLE OF MEDICINAL HERBS (V)

In the first order *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* (from “Upāya [II]” to “Prophecies to Adepts and Novices [IX]”), with the exception of “Parable of Medicinal Herbs (v)” we encounter virtually no genuine *śūnyatā* thought. The only thing we find, as cited above, are repeated instances of mistaken understanding of *śūnyatā* thought as the hallmark of the *śrāvaka*’s nirvāṇa. In second section of this paper we have already touched on the fact there is a consensus among scholars that the second half of “Parable of Medicinal Herbs” is a later addition, and in the present section we will examine the first and the second half of this chapter together.

In the first half of chapter v, the analogy is made: Just as the clouds let fall the rain of one-taste that trees and medicinal herbs large and small take up and use to grow each in their own way according to their respective potentials, so, too, does the Buddha preach the dharma of one taste that sentient beings interpret each according to their own propensity to become commoners, *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddhas*, or *bodhisattvas*. As we come across phrases such as the dharma of one taste (*ekarasa*), *śūnyatā* of one taste, *prajñāpāramitā* of one taste, and so on, in the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras*, there is undoubtedly a correlation between the two. That is, in the Sanskrit text of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, chapter v, gāthās 38–39, the worldly, the *arhats*, and the *pratyekabuddhas* each attain their own respective Awakenings upon hearing the Buddha’s teaching of one taste. After this, in gāthās 40–41 (which are also verses set in *triṣṭubh-jagatī*), it says,

Many bodhisattvas are blessed with phenomenal memory and strong resolution, and rove throughout the worlds of the triple world in search of the highest Awakening. These bodhisattvas are ever like the tall trees and shall grow (to be giants).

In full possession of the divine powers by cultivating the four kinds of *dhyāna*, they rejoice when they hear of *śūnyatā*, and releasing thousands of beams of radiant light (they rescue people thereby). It is people such as these who are called the giants of the trees of this world.

The Awakening or *śūnyatā* described here is not like the *śrāvaka*'s nirvāṇa where there is "a direct realization" or a "created realization" midway, but indicates the Mahāyāna bodhisattva's Awakening of *śūnyatā*. Taken at face value we can say that these two gāthās correspond to the statements made by the novice bodhisattva and by the great bodhisattva of the irreversible state.

These places of course are also found in the Kumārajīva translation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* (20, b13–17), but in Dharmarakṣa's translation, *Chêng fa-hua* (at 85, a2–7) there is a set of passages that, with the exception of one part, correspond well contentwise with the Sanskrit text:

There are countless bodhisattvas whose wisdom is brought to completion upon hearing the import (of the Buddha's teaching), and roving the triple world freely they present themselves among those assembled to exhort them to take up the great way. Such bodhisattvas are like trees growing taller day by day.

Through their progress in culturing their divine abilities (*rddhi-pāda*), they excel especially in the four *dhyānas*. If they hear of the wisdom of emptiness, their minds are liberated on the spot, releasing countless thousands of millions beams of light. (Bodhisattvas such as) these are called the great trees.

In the Kumārajīva translation, *Miao fa-hua*, chapter v (19, c2–5), there is a statement that precedes this portion which we should take careful note of.

Knowing not whether these grasses and trees, brushes and woods, and all the various kinds of medicinal herbs are of themselves of high, middle, or low, the Tathāgata knows only that they should be regarded by a single aspect and be treated to the dharma of one taste, that is, the aspect of liberation, the aspect of separation (from suffering), the aspect of extinction, the aspect of ultimate nirvāṇa, the constant stillness of extinction that ultimately returns to emptiness.

Apart from the fact that the Sanskrit text's "returning to space (*ākāśa*)" has been rendered as "returning to emptiness" in the *Miao fa-hua* and the *T'ien-p'in fa-hua ching*, these three texts are in good agreement

with each other. As the term “space” is sometimes used in the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras* as a metaphor for emptiness or appears even as a synonym or as one of the 10 similes for emptiness, we can assume that the Chinese translators were obliged to use these forms to suit the literary demands of the four character line into which these gāthās were being rendered; thus it presents no problem to translate space as emptiness. However, at this point, only the *Chêng fa-hua* (at 83, c10–12) has:

Just as the rain falls equally on the medicinal herbs and shrubs, whether white or black or blue or red, whether high or middle or low, the World Honored One sees through all of this as one taste, and bringing them to enter the taste of liberation he wills them to cross the bar to extinction. Those who have yet to make the crossing are brought across to ultimately pass into extinction, to reach the one land of one and the same dharma taste.

This would indicate that the Sanskrit original for this work was different from that of the other two. However, what they are saying is not that different from each other, the message that all things return to emptiness being unmistakably the same, and we can also say this portion expresses a genuine sense of Mahāyāna *śūnyatā* thought.

The second half of the chapter (*Chêng fa-hua*, 85, a19 ff.) is missing in the Kumārajīva translation, but this portion exists in the three Sanskrit versions as well as the Dharmarakṣa translation. When we compare the Chinese translation of Buddhist technical terms in the second half of this chapter and that in the Dharmarakṣa translation in the first half of this chapter as well as the other chapters of the *Chêng fa-hua*, we find there is a good match between them, hence it is more or less beyond doubt that the Chinese translation of the second half is by the hand of the same translator, Dharmarakṣa, and we may assume that there existed a Sanskrit manuscript of this portion that he saw when making this translation. While the Sanskrit text would give a clearer picture of what this part contains, in the following I will give a brief synopsis of the *Chêng fa-hua* version.

The Buddha says, just as the sun does not choose whether or not to shine on the high or the low, the deep or the shallow, the fragrant or the foul, but shines down from the heavens above on all equally, so too does the light of Buddha wisdom not choose among the five strains of sentient beings, *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and Buddhas as different, and shines equally on all beings everywhere, and if all people follow that understanding, there is in it something for each person to receive (*Chêng fa-hua*, 85, a19 ff., summarized). Hereupon, Kāśyapa poses a

question to the Buddha, “If there are no three vehicles, why then are there (the distinctions of) *bodhisattva*, *pratyekabuddha*, and *śrāvaka* (*Chêng fa-hua*, 85, a24–25)?” This exchange closely resembles Śāriputra’s counterargument from *Tao-hsing* “Original Nothingness (xiv),” introduced in the present paper in the fourth section in the discussion of three vehicles or one vehicle.

In response the Buddha says that a potter throws all kinds of pots from clay that are used as containers for honey or oil or yogurt and so on. The clay is one and the same, but the containers all appear to be different. In reality, people are one and the same with no differences, but each individual has different deeds (in their former lives), and that’s the only reason for their being divided into high, middle, and low. Hereupon, Kāśyapa asks, “For instance, even if there are differences among people, ultimately is (their *nirvāṇa*) one and the same or is it different?” to which the Buddha answers with the parable of the person born blind (*Chêng fa-hua*, 85, a29 ff.).

The person born blind believes there’s no sun or moon, no five colors, no eight directions or zenith or nadir in this world, and no matter how much other people try to convince that person that these things exist, he cannot understand. A good doctor who takes pity on the blind man climbs the Himalayas in search of medicinal herbs and finds the four herbs that will cure the four diseases. As a result of taking a dose of these herbs, the blind man’s eyes are healed and he is able to see anything and everything, he can see near and far, high and low, and soon he comes to be arrogant about his ability, saying, I can see everything, there’s no one superior to me. At that point a hermit possessed of the five kinds of divine powers appears on the scene and goes to the man who once was blind and criticizes him, saying, the only thing that’s happened to you is your eyes have been endowed with sight, but as you stand inside this room you don’t know what’s going on outside, you have no idea what other people are thinking, you can’t hear the things or sounds in the distance, if there’s a place just ahead you cannot cross to on foot you can’t get there by flying, you don’t have any memory of the time you were in your mother’s womb, you haven’t the slightest of divine powers, and yet you go about all puffed up with pride. The person who once was blind but whose eyes were now open felt contrite, and becoming a disciple of the hermit, lived in the forests, practiced meditation in mountain caves, and underwent austerities, until at last he came into possession of the five kinds of divine powers, and deeply repented the fool of a person he once had been.

The Buddha then proceeds to analyze the above parable. The person

born blind is a sentient being lost on the five paths of life and death who, being based in ignorance accumulates all kinds of afflictions and karma as related in the twelve-linked chain of causation, and ends up drowning in the misery and suffering of birth, aging, sickness, and death. The good doctor is the Tathāgata. The four diseases are greed, anger, foolishness, and the 62 heretical views. The four medicines are emptiness, signlessness, wishlessness, and the gateway to nirvāṇa. To see near and far with open eyes is to see the three vehicles. To become an ascetic is to give rise to the heart of the bodhisattva and to reach the irreversible stage where, through insight into the uncreated, one becomes a Buddha. The parable of the person born blind who is made recipient to sight symbolizes that the seeker, as *śrāvaka* or *pratyekabuddha*, has already broken through the cycle of life and death and passed beyond the triple world, and as he looks back on the five paths and finds on his own there's no quarter for him here, as there's none who surpasses him he desires to enter nirvāṇa, at which point the Buddha appears to him to teach him how to begin the process of raising the bodhisattva mind.

The content of the Buddha's instructions is as follows:

Remain not in *samsāra*, dwell not in nirvāṇa, know the triple world for the emptiness it is, wherein everything everywhere is but a temporary abode, like a phantasm or a dream, like a mirage or an echo. All things being without existence, there's nothing we desire out there, there's nothing to take up or throw down, there's neither darkness nor light. At that time, if we contemplate deeply, seeing in the mode of non-seeing and not in the mode we are accustomed to seeing up to now, we realize that all we are seeing is the welling up of people's (dreams and desires) (*Chêng fa-hua*, 85, b27–c18; the Sanskrit text indicates the "welling up" means people's individual wishes and desires).

Here, we are being presented with a rather sophisticated version of *śūnyatā* thought in expressions such as, "to dwell not in life and death, to dwell not in nirvāṇa," and "to see without seeing the object of sight" (the latter expression in the Sanskrit text being "see in the mode of non-seeing").

The verses that immediately follow the prose section above are comprised of 39 gāthās set in *śloka* meter, while the *Chêng fa-hua* has 28 gāthās, if we count one gāthā as four verses of five characters per line. Since the *T'ien-p'in fa-hua ching* has 38 gāthās, at one gāthā per four verses of five characters per line, we can see that this version is rendered more meticulously than that of the *Chêng fa-hua*. Among the

verses, Sanskrit text gāthā 82,

those who are great in wisdom see the entire *dharmakāya*; the three vehicles do not exist; in all the world there is but one vehicle,

is found in the *T'ien-p'in fahua ching*, but missing in the *Chêng fa-hua* (“Those who are great in wisdom see the entire *dharmakāya*” is possibly a reference to the collection of the sutras).

In the first order *Saddharmapunḍarīka*, the only place where we come across the same genuine *śūnyatā* thought as the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* is the “Parable of Medicinal Herbs (v).” Moreover, this is not only in the second half of the chapter, but also evident in the first half. It would seem that the dharma masters must have noticed that, to reach this fifth chapter, in the process of incorporating the shift from the three vehicles to the Buddha vehicle in the second, third, and fourth chapters, the rationale set forth was insufficient to answer why there must be a progression from the three vehicles to the one Buddha vehicle, and what the Buddha vehicle is all about. It would seem to me they realized the necessity of summing up in this fifth chapter the *śūnyatā* thought that served as a hidden assumption to the chapters up to then. I will forego making any conclusions as to why Kumārajīva did not translate the second half of this chapter, although it existed in the *Chêng fa-hua*, but it would seem to me that perhaps the original manuscript that Kumārajīva saw had regional differences in the Indian palm leaf and the Kuchean manuscripts, or perhaps it was due to the document being accidentally damaged or partially lost.

Notes

Texts cited are Dharmarakṣa's 竺法護 *Chêng fa-hua ching* 正法華經 *Shōhokekyō* (T No. 263, at vol. 9: 63–134; hereafter as *Chêng fa-hua*); Kumārajīva's 鳩摩羅什 *Miao-fa lien-hua ching* 妙法蓮華經 *Myōhōrengekyō* (T No. 262, at vol. 9: 1–62, hereafter as *Miao fa-hua*). Lokakṣema's 支婁迦纖 *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching* 道行般若經 *Dōgyō hanyakyō* (T No. 224, at vol. 8: 425–478; hereafter as *Tao-hsing*); and Kumārajīva's *Hsiao-p'in pan-jo ching* 小品般若經 *Shōbon hanyakyō* (T No. 227, at vol. 8: 536–587; hereafter as *Hsiao-p'in pan-jo*). The Sanskrit text referred to in the paper is the Kern-Nanjio edition unless otherwise indicated. The Sanskrit text of the *Hsiao-p'in pan-jo* refers to P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā: With Haribhadra's Commentary Called Āloka*, Buddhist Sanskrit Texts, No. 4, Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, 1960. To locate appropriate citations in the sutra canon, the following works were used: Seishi Karashima, *A Glossary of Dharmarakṣa's Translation of the Lotus Sutra*, Bibliotheca Philologica et Philosophica Buddhica, vol. 1, Tokyo: International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology (IRIAB), Soka University, 1998; and Ryusei Keira and Noboru Ueda, *Sanskrit Word-Index to the Abhisamayālaṅkārahālokā Prajñāpāramitāvyaḅhyā* (U. Wogihara edition), Tokyo: Sankibo Press, 1998.

¹ Kōgaku Fuse 布施浩岳, *Hokekyō seiritsushi* 法華經成立史 (*The Historical Formation of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*), Tokyo: Daitō, 1934.

² Nissen Inari 稲荷日宣, *Hokekyō ichijōshisō no kenkyū* 法華經一乘思想の研究 (*Studies on the Ekayāna Thought of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*), Tokyo: Sankibo, 1975.

³ Shinjō Suguro 勝呂信静, *Hokekyō no seiritsu to shisō* 法華經の成立と思想 (*The Formation and Philosophy of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*), Tokyo: Daitō, 1993.

⁴ Kōtatsu Fujita 藤田宏達, “Ichijō to sanjō” 一乗と三乗, in Ōchō Enichi, ed., *Hokke shisō* 法華思想 (*Philosophical Studies on the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*), Kyoto: Heirakuji, 1969; published in English as “One Vehicle or Three?,” trans. Leon Hurvitz, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 3, Nos. 1/2, D. Reidel, Dordrecht – Holland; Boston, MA, U. S. A., March/April 1975, pp. 79-166.

⁵ Yoshirō Tamura 田村芳朗, *Hokekyō* 法華經 (*The Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*), Tokyo: Chūō Kōron, 1969.

⁶ Keishō Tsukamoto 塚本啓祥, *Hokekyō no seiritsu to haikai: Indo bunka to daijō bukyō* 法華經の成立と背景: インド文化と大乘仏教 (*The Formation and Background to the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka: Indian Culture and Mahāyāna Buddhism*), Tokyo: Kosei, 1986.

⁷ Seishi Karashima 辛嶋静志, “*Hokekyō ni okeru jō (yāna) to chie (jñāna)*: Daijō bukyō ni okeru yāna no gainen no kigen ni tsuite” 法華經における乗 (yāna) と智慧 (jñāna): —大乘仏教におけるyānaの概念の起源について— (*Yāna and jñāna in the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka: With regard to the origin of the notion of yāna in Mahāyāna Buddhism*), in Ryūgen Taga 田賀龍彦, ed., *Hokekyō no juyō to tenkai* 法華經の受容と展開 (*The Assimilation and Spread of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*), Kyoto: Heirakuji, 1993, pp. 137–197.

⁸ Among them we find: H. Kern and Bunyiu Nanjio, ed., *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, Bibliotheca Buddhica 10, 1908–1912 Osnabruck: Biblio, Neudruck, 1970; U. Wogihara and C. Tsuchida, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtram*, Seigo-Kenkyukai, 1934, Tokyo: Sankibo, reprint, 1994; Shoko Watanabe, ed., *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Manuscripts Found in Gilgit*, two parts, Tokyo: Reiyukai, 1975 (hereafter cited as G); Hirofumi Toda, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra, Central Asian Manuscripts, Romanized Texts*, Tokushima: Kyōiku Shuppan Center, 1981, second edition 1983; Oskar von Hinüber, *A New Fragmentary Gilgit Manuscript of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, Tokyo: Reiyukai, 1982. There are also the works of N. Dutt, P. L. Vaidya, and so on, a complete listing being impossible.

⁹ Tamura, op. cit., 44.

¹⁰ Fuse, op. cit., 214.

¹¹ Tamura, op. cit., 47.

¹² Karashima, op. cit., 138

¹³ *Ibid.*, 181.

¹⁴ This Introduction was first summarized in English in a translation by Bunyū Nanjō (Bunyiu Nanjio), *A Catalogue of the Chinese Translations of the Buddhist Tripitaka: The Sacred Canon of the Buddhists in China and Japan* (popularly known as the Nanjio Catalogue), 1883, 46a, a work reprinted in Japan as *Daimin sanzō seikyō mokuroku*, 1929. Nanjō’s translation was later cited by Michael Fuss, *Buddhavadana and Dei Verbum*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991, 62. It has been translated from the original *kanbun* text into Japanese by Kōken Sasaki 佐々木孝憲, *Tenbon Myōhōrengyō no yakushutsu* 添品妙法蓮華經の訳出 (*On the Translation of the T’ien-p’ in miao-fa lien-hua ching*), in Enshō Kanakura 金倉円照, ed., *Hokekyō no seiritsu to tenkai* 法華經の成立と展開 (*His-*

torical Formation and Development of the Lotus Sutra), Kyoto: Heirakuji, 1974, p. 222. My reading of this passage is somewhat different, and so I have provided my own translation.

¹⁵ With regard to “Parable of Medicinal Herbs (v),” we have the recent study by T. Vetter, “Hendrik Kern and the Lotus Sūtra,” *Kokusai Bukkyōgaku Kōtō Kenkyūsho Nenpō* 国際仏教学高等研究所年報 (*Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism at Soka University*) vol. 2, Tokyo, 1999, pp. 132–133. This study confirms that the translation by Kumārajīva would seem to use a Sanskrit manuscript that is even older than that used by Dharmarakṣa. Also, there is A. Yuyama, “Why Kumārajīva Omitted the Latter Half of Chapter 5 in Translating the Lotus Sutra,” *Festschrift Dieter Schlingloff*, hrsg. von Friedrich Wilhelm, Reinbek: Inge Wezler, 1996, p. 325–330. In this study, the author concludes through an examination of the meter that the latter half of this chapter was intentionally omitted by Kumārajīva.

¹⁶ cf. F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, vol. 2, London: New Haven, 1953 (reprint, 1985), q.v. *parijaya*.

¹⁷ This problem is dealt with in Kōtatsu Fujita, “Ichijō to sanjō” (one vehicle or three?), op. cit., to which I am indebted for its comparative study of one vehicle or three vehicles in the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* and the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*.

¹⁸ In *Chêng fa-hua*, “Medicinal Herbs (v),” the key Buddhist technical terms in the second half are well matched with those in the first half of the same chapter, as well as the terms in other chapters. On the other hand, in the Kumārajīva translation, *Miao fa-hua*, there are many terms that do not match. For instance, the three *samādhis* on *śūnyatā*, *animitta*, *apranihita*, in the latter half in *Chêng fa-hua* (v), 85, c9, 空無相無願 *kū, musō, mugan* = “Belief and Knowing” 80, a16; but in the Kumārajīva translation 16, b16, 空無相無作 *kū, musō, musā*. *Upāya*: at *Chêng fa-hua* 86, b8, 善權方便 *zengon hōben* = 84, c14 = 70, a15; in the Kumārajīva translation 7, c20, 方便力 *hōben riki*. *Pratyekabuddha*: at *Chêng fa-hua* 85, a24, 緣覺 *engaku* = 69, c22; in the Kumārajīva translation 7, b27, 辟支佛 *byakushi butsu*. **Tathatā*: at *Chêng fa-hua* 85, b27, 本無 *honmu*; in the Kumārajīva translation, *真如 *shinnyo*. *nirvāṇa*: at *Chêng fa-hua* 85, c9 泥洹, *naion*; in Kumārajīva it is 涅槃 *nehan*. In connection with the twelve-linked chain of causation, *avidyā*, *spārśa*, *vedanā*: at *Chêng fa-hua* 85, b28–29, 癡 *chi*, 更 *kō*, (also as 習 *shū*), 痛 *tsū* = 91, c5–7; in the Kumārajīva translation 25, a5–6, 無明 *mumyō*, 触 *soku*, 受 *ju*.