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**The Fundamental Truth of Buddhism:  
*Pratītyasamutpāda* in Mahāyāna Buddhism**

— Conditionless Being —

Noritoshi ARAMAKI

In my previous paper<sup>1)</sup> I have tried to discuss the first of the two problems raised there:

- 1) how Early Buddhists have been converted through experiencing the old history as conditioned becoming in order to be liberated therefrom and create the new history as conditionless being,

and have traced the formative process of the simplest *pratītya-samutpāda* formula: *nāmarūpa* ⇌ *viññāna* so as to define it as the fact that our present existence here and now becomes temporally and historically conditioned by our past existences ever since the beginningless past. In the present paper I will try to discuss the second problem:

- 2) how Mahāyāna Buddhists have been converted through envisaging the new history as conditionless being in order to encounter Buddhas and bodhisattvas therein and re-create the old history as conditioned becoming.

This second problem is designed to inquire into the two fundamental structures of Mahāyāna Buddhism:

- (1) the Mahāyānistic conversion through envisaging the new history as conditionless being i.e. as *śūnyatā* or the omni-

present communal essence in order to encounter the Buddhas and bodhisattvas in communion here and now — *paramārthasatya* — and

- (2) the Mahāyānistic conversion through envisaging the new history as conditionless being i.e. as *śūnyatā* in order to re-create the old history as conditioned becoming in revival (which is nothing but new cultural creations) — *saṃvṛtisatya* —.

Thus Early Buddhists are concerned more negatively to abandon the old history in order to be free therefrom, while Mahāyāna Buddhists more positively to create the new history in order to be engaged in its cultural creations. It is due to these two fundamental structures that in Mahāyāna Buddhism the fundamental truth of Buddhism: *pratītyasamutpāda* is re-interpreted as conditionless being, i.e. as *śūnyatā* or the omnipresent communal essence creating new cultures in the new history.

Here in the present paper I will confine myself to discussing the first of the two fundamental structures of Mahāyāna Buddhism with some preliminary references to the second toward the end of § 2. The discussion here will be divided into the two sections as follows:

### § 1 The Historical Presuppositions of Mahāyānistic Conversion

to explain the very complicated processes of the historical development of Mahāyānistic religious experience of conversion as briefly as possible and

### § 2 The Philosophical Essence of Mahāyānistic Conversion

to analyze a Mahāyānistic narrative as an itinerary of the deep-

ening stages of Mahāyānistic religious experience of conversion.

### § 1 The Historical Presuppositions of Mahāyānistic Conversion

It has, I think, been so even in Early Buddhism that the Buddha's *stūpas* enshrining His *śarīras* are the centres of the presence of the eternal Buddha or of the realization of His eternal truth (which fact may have been the principal reason why His images have never been expressed on the early *stūpas*, for if the Buddha Himself is there present as such, why is it necessary to show Him in human images except suggesting His presence there through relevant symbols?). It is, however, characteristically Early Buddhist that they are practising their enjoined meditative practices in lonely places far away from the *stūpas* where they may have once in a while participated in the *upavasatha* activity with lay Buddhists. But now ever since the great schism of the Buddhist *saṃgha* into the Sthaviravādins and the Mahāsaṃghikas under Aśoka<sup>2)</sup> it is among the latter progressive group that there have begun new artistic approaches to envisage Śākyamuni as the eternal Buddha within the symbol of a *stūpa* so as to recompense its degeneration in its symbolic efficacy. I may propose the four very tentative working hypotheses on the development of those new artistic approaches leading to the origin of the Buddha images and of Mahāyāna Buddhism as follows.

1) Starting with the Aśokan introduction of the Persian tradition of religious arts, Buddhist *stūpas* begin to develop not only as religious but also as artistic centres where Buddhist religious practices are so re-enforced by various forms of arts, sculptural, musical, literary etc. as to envisage the eternal Buddha more and more directly in His presence. It is noticeable that Buddhist narrative literature especially in the form of *jātakas* has developed abundantly and played the principal role in the

new artistic approaches. This stage of the *stūpa* development is the most eloquently attested in the remainings of the Bhārhut *stūpa*.

2) Probably under the influence of the Mahāsaṃghika initiatives in these artistic approaches the Sthaviravādins also adopt them to ensure the eternal Buddha's presence here and now in a *stūpa*, but they seem to have been concerned more with Śākyamuni's biographical episodes and also with the Elders' heredity from Him, rather than with *jātaka* stories. This Sthaviravādins' reorientation is evidenced in the *stūpas* at Sāñci and also in the earliest Ajanta cave no. 10 studied by Prof. D. Schlingroff.<sup>3)</sup> It seems that Gāndhāra *yogācāras* are the descendents of these Sthaviravādins, while the Mathurā Mahāsaṃghikas those of the former.

3) It is certainly under some historical influences from Gāndhāra *yogācāras*,<sup>4)</sup> but fundamentally and exclusively thanks to the new religious activities of the Mathurā Mahāsaṃghikas that Indian Buddhists have begun to encounter the emergence of Śākyamuni the Buddha in His presence from within His *stūpas* by virtue of the verbal efficacy (*śravaṇaphala*)<sup>5)</sup> of reciting an eulogy of innumerable *bodhisattva* practices and an incantation of innumerable Buddhas' names and further that they have begun to symbolize His presence there by way of the Buddha images from within *stūpas* — the origin of the Buddha images! — and finally that they have begun to envisage Śākyamuni the Buddha more and more directly in His presence in their conversion in *samādhi* to be attained through reciting Mahāyāna sūtras — the origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism! —.

4) It is in response to the new religious activities of the Mathurā Mahāsaṃghikas that the Gāndhāra *yogācāras* have begun to re-arrange the Buddha's biographical episodes into one consecutive biography of Śākyamuni the Buddha<sup>6)</sup> to be recited in order to envisage Him in His presence from within His *stūpas*.

Accordingly the formation of the Buddha's biography among the *yogācāras* may represent an initial stage of their religious activities to form their own Buddha images and Mahāyāna sūtras.

Needless to say, these four working hypotheses have been proposed here merely as such and must be substantiated by my further extensive studies that surpass the compass of the present paper. Here let me confine myself to pointing out some literary characteristics of the fundamental pre-Mahāyāna text, *Mahāvastu*, in order to support the third and central working hypothesis above. To be asked is only one question: what are the new religious activities that have been at work in the formation of the fundamental pre-Mahāyāna text, *Mahāvastu*, and, if I am right in my working hypotheses, in the origins of the Buddha images and Mahāyāna sūtras? I have hypothesized to define the new religious movements as those to envisage Śākyamuni the Buddha more and more directly in His presence from within His *stūpas*. I will try to support my working hypothesis through pointing out some literary characteristics of the text as follows.

i) *Mahāvastu* or, in full, *Mahāvastvavadāna* is designed firstly (in the first volume of E.Senart's edition) to establish the courses of *bodhisattva* practices starting with their declaration of vows and culminating in the former Buddhas' prophecies upon them and secondly (in the second and third volumes) to compile and compose any possible '*avadānas*' or '*jātakas*' (i.e. any past causal and analogical episodes) to account for any trifling present episodes of the Buddha's biography (which is the meaning of the title *Mahāvastvavadāna*) and so, as a whole, to compose an eulogizing literature to explain how *bodhisattvas* declare their vows, practise *bodhisattva* practices and are prophesied by the former Buddhas in Their presence themselves to become the future Śākyamuni in His biographical and human form. Here I

may recognize the fundamental motive of the text to combine the *bodhisattva* vows and practices narrated in the *jātaka* tradition directly with the emergence of the Buddhas taught in the Buddha's biographical tradition.<sup>7)</sup>

ii) Very characteristic is the way how the Bahubuddhasūtras are recited within the courses of *bodhisattva* practices and the accumulation of those *avadānas* of the Buddha's biography. The Bahubuddhasūtras or the incantations of innumerable Buddhas' names are principally recited in the three climaxes of the *bodhisattva* practices and His biographical episodes where the former Buddhas emerge in Their presence: firstly in the *anivartanacaryā* of the four *bodhisattvacaryās* where the *bodhisattvas* having declared their vows in Their presence, are prophesied by the former Buddhas in Their presence to become Śākyamuni the Buddha (Mv i, 47-64, especially 57. 4ff.), secondly in the eighth and the ninth *bhūmis* of the Daśabhūmikasūtra where again the *bodhisattvas* having declared their vows in Their presence, are prophesied by Them in Their presence to become Śākyamuni (Mv i, 136. 8ff.) and thirdly just after the Mahāgovindīyasūtra (Mv iii, 230. 3ff)<sup>8)</sup> where Śākyamuni emerges to propound His teachings either to ordain His son Rāhula by the *pravrajyā* ceremony or to convert the two merchants Trapuṣa and Bhallika with the three *śaraṇagamanas* or to respond to the entreating of Indra and Brahmā to His first *dharmacakrapravartana*. In these three occurrences the Bahubuddhasūtras are recited in order to encounter the emergence of the Buddha in His presence.

iii) These literary characteristics of *Mahāvastu* seem to reflect some new stage of the development of the Buddhist *stūpa* cults to encounter the emergence of the Buddha in His presence. This may be the origin of the two Mahāyānistic cults: a) the *cittotpāda* to become a *bodhisattva* through declaring *bodhisattva* vows (*prañidhānas*) in the presence of the Buddha and b) the *vyākaraṇa* to envisage the Buddha in His presence and be

prophesied by Him to become a future Buddha.<sup>9)</sup> In these new Mahāyānistic cults the Bahubuddhasūtras must have been recited in order to encounter the emergence of the Buddha in His presence from within His *stūpa*, as if He is now awakened from His meditation to expound His teachings — just in the same way as narrated in Śakrapraśnasūtra and later in the Buddha's biographical episode of the entreating of Indra and Brahmā.<sup>10)</sup>

iv) The Buddha images originate from within the Buddha's *stūpas*, when Mathurā Mahāsaṃghikas intend more directly to encounter the emergence of the Buddha in the *cittotpāda* and more evidently to be prophesied by Him in the *vyākaraṇa* in order now to be converted to be *avaivartika* (firmly established and no longer turning back) *bodhisattvas*. How much more efficacious are these Mahāyānistic *stūpa* cults, if they are practised in His presence in His human form?

v) The Mahāyānasūtras originate in search of more and more profound religious experience of conversion, when Mathurā Mahāsaṃghikas break through the new dimension of their religious experience of being converted and *avaivartikas*<sup>11)</sup> which penetrates into the ultimate philosophical truth *śūnyatā*: the omnipresent communal essence or conditionless being underlying these two Mahāyānistic *stūpa* cults.

So far I have tried to delineate the historical development of Buddhist *stūpa* cults first reinforced by artistic activities centring around *jātakas* and the Buddha's biographical episodes and then revolutionalized in the pre-Mahāyāna stage into the two Mahāyānistic cults: the *cittotpāda* and the *vyākaraṇa* — all in order to encounter the emergence of and to envisage more and more directly the Buddha in His presence there in His *stūpa*. These two new Mahāyānistic *stūpa* cults are meant to accomplish the Mahāyānistic religious experience of conversion and consequently lead to the origins first of the Buddha images and then



of Mahāyānasūtras. In the following section I will try to analyze a widely beloved Mahāyānistic narrative: Sadāprarudita narrative as a pilgrimage of soul in search of Mahāyānistic conversion and thereby to define its philosophical essence as a historical conversion to create the new history.

## § 2 The Philosophical Essence of Mahāyānistic Conversion

Now in the great historical transition from Early to Mahāyāna Buddhism pre-Mahāyāna Buddhists have been endeavouring to be converted through envisaging the Buddha in His presence and this, I would interpret, in search of the new creative principle of history. They are later on going to criticize the old Buddhist *dharmas* and re-create them as new cultural creations on the basis of this principle.

In contrast to Early Buddhist tradition of individual meditative practice Mahāyānistic practical tradition must have developed in cult-activities of an assembly of monk and lay devotees around the Buddha's *stūpas*, in which they must have experienced some lesser or greater degrees of conversion in community. The pre-Mahāyānistic *Mahāvastu* and early Mahāyānasūtras starting with Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā (AṣṭaPP) must be interpreted as devotional literature in eulogy of *bodhisattvas* and the Buddhas to be recited loudly in the lead and listened to in community in order to be concentrated into *samādhi* and converted in ecstasy. What is essentially important of this devotional literature is the fact that the more deeply monk and lay devotees are concentrated in their recitation and listening to, the more really they experience themselves to become *bodhisattvas* and the Buddhas being eulogized — the verbal efficacy (*śravaṇaphala*)! Thus in the culmination of eulogy they are concentrated into *samādhi* and converted in ecstasy themselves to be the *bodhisattvas* being eulogized as prophesied to become the future Buddhas. In the

conversion they experience themselves to be prophesied to become the future Buddhas. This devotional conversion thus being eulogized and really to be experienced, is first termed '*avaivartika*' (firmly established and no longer turning back) in the Daśabhūmikasūtra of *Mahāvastu* and then re-interpreted as '*anutpattikadharmakṣānti*'<sup>12)</sup> (the communication of the supreme truth eternal and unborn) in AṣṭaPP. The spiritual process of the Mahāyānistic religious experience of conversion is the most eloquently illustrated by the Sadāprarudita narrative<sup>13)</sup> appended to AṣṭaPP. Let me try to analyze the Sadāprarudita narrative as a pilgrimage of soul toward the Mahāyānistic conversion as briefly as possible.

The Mahāyānistic narrative has a short preface declaring the ultimate goal of all the *bodhisattva* practices: not only to encounter the emergence of the Buddha in His presence but themselves to become the Buddha as soon as possible.

- (1) Those who wish to become the Buddha as soon as possible, must practise the Prajñāpāramitā in the same way as the bodhisattva Sadāprarudita did.

What does it mean to become the Buddha in this 'Buddhaless' period? The transitional period from Early to Mahāyāna Buddhism under discussion is 'Buddhaless', not only because Gotama the Buddha has entered into His *parinirvāṇa* long time ago, but more fundamentally because Gotama the Buddha as the creative principle of history has begun to lose His creativity so far symbolized by His *stūpas* and kept alive through the Early Buddhist tradition of meditative practice. Thus the Mahāyānistic search to become the Buddha in the Buddhaless period is a historical endeavour to discover the new creativity of history so as to overcome the degeneration of the old history and to create the

new. How does a Mahāyānistic Buddhist create the new history to come? The *bodhisattva* Sadāprarudita is an archetype of the newly to develop Mahāyānistic Buddhists. How is he converted to become the new Buddha? Here begins the narrative as follows :

- (2) Once in a Buddhaless period there lived a *bodhisattva* who dreamed a deity coming down to tell him, "Wake up and search for the true *dharma*." He got up and searched for the Buddha and His true *dharma* vainly. In despair he was ceaselessly crying out. Hence his name Sadāprarudita (Ceaselessly-crying-out). In the mean time he again dreamed a deity telling him, "It is only long time ago that there existed the Buddha Dharmodgata". Exalted on hearing the Buddha's name, he went forth from household life and practised meditation in a remote mountain. There he thought, "I neither see the Buddha nor hear the Buddha's *dharma*, just because I am conditioned by an accumulation of bad *karmans*" and was again ceaselessly crying out.
- (3) Suddenly in the sky a voice sounded, "You will become the Buddha through practising the Prajñāpāramitā!" He asked, "Where shall I find out the Prajñāpāramitā?" The voice answered, "Walk east on and on. Don't stand still and never be conscious of anything on the left, on the right, in front, in behind, up or down, nor of your own existence, walking, eating, unpleasant, pleasant, interior, exterior, bodily, mental, social, historical or subconscious. Thus having abandoned any and every consciousness and subconsciousness, you will happen to listen to the Prajñāpāramitā in the due course."
- (4) Rejoiced by the answer, he walked east on and on, abandoning consciousness and subconsciousness. On his way he wondered, "How far away shall I go before I listen to the Prajñāpāramitā?" He stopped walking and was cease-

lessly crying out. Then there appeared a golden Buddha image in the sky, encouraging him to be as energetic as ever in his search for the Prajñāpāramitā. He asked the Buddha image, "Teach me the Buddha's true *dharmā*." The Buddha image taught, "You must learn and contemplate the true essence of all living existences as follows: all living existences are neither polluted by nor purified from the old degenerate history or *samsāra*, for they are void of their individualized essence [i.e. in my interpretation, are communicating in their communal essence]; they are neither individual sentient beings nor individual living beings nor individual human beings nor individual selves; they neither come from anywhere nor go to anywhere; they are like magics, like dreams etc. Thus contemplating, go east on and on 20 thousand *yojanas* and you will arrive in the city Gandhāvati (the Fragrant) — the Pure Land — where the *bodhisattva* Dharmodgata teaches the Prajñāpāramitā on the central platform in the *bodhisattva* assembly." Exalted by this teaching, the *bodhisattva* Sadāprarudita was existentially concentrated into *samādhi* envisaging the Buddhas in all the directions. The Buddhas applaud the *bodhisattva* Sadāprarudita.

Here in the three paragraphs (2), (3) and (4) the three stages of the spiritual pilgrimage of the *bodhisattva* Sadāprarudita are narrated as each time searched for in his ceaselessly crying out and revealed by some or other transcendental voices: (2) the setting out on his spiritual search for the Buddha and His true *dharmā*, (3) the abandonment of consciousness and subconsciousness of any existences, external or internal and (4) the teaching of the fundamental truth of Mahāyāna Buddhism *śūnyatā* and the existential concentration into *samādhi* envisaging the Buddhas in all the directions. Just in the same way as the *bodhisattva*

Sadāprarudita did, the newly developing Mahāyānistic Buddhists must have been energetically devoted in their spiritual search for the new creative principle of history — and now they are converted for the first time by this initial stage of conversion which may be defined as consisting of the three factors: a) their old existence has been overcome through abandoning consciousness and subconsciousness of any existences, b) they are existentially concentrated into *samādhi* through contemplating the fundamental truth of Mahāyāna Buddhism: *śūnyatā* taught in front of a golden Buddha image and c) their new historical existence will create new cultures on the basis of the creative principle of history: *śūnyatā* in flourishing cities like Gandhāvati. It is noteworthy that the fundamental truth of Mahāyāna Buddhism: *śūnyatā* is introduced in this context to effectuate the existential concentration envisaging the Buddhas in all the directions.

Now the conversion on this initial stage must further be accomplished through abandoning the deepest subconscious condition of the old historical existence: the ego-subconsciousness toward one's bodily existence in the guise of Māra or Death.

- (5) Having woken up from *samādhi* he wondered, "Where have the Buddhas come from and where have they gone to?" and was ceaselessly crying out. Remembering the Buddha's encouragement, he began to walk east on and on and come to a city called 'Māra's territory'. There after having overcome Māra's mischievous interferences, he succeeded to find a *brāhmaṇa* to whom he was going to sell his own bodily existence in order to purchase some offerings to the bodhisattva Dharmodgata in the Pure Land. Having severed his own bodily members one by one, he was at last piercing his heart. At this last moment he was saved by a daughter of a wealthy merchant who happened to look at the scene. She paid for his life and proffered to ac-

company him to the city Gandhāvati with her five hundred attendants and abundant treasures to offer to the *bodhisattva* Dharmodgata.

Here in the paragraph (5) the *bodhisattva* Sadāprarudita asking the fundamental question, “Where have the Buddhas come from and where have they gone to?”, is fundamentally converted from his old existence conditioned by the subconscious territory of Death to his new one conditionlessly to approach to the city Gandhāvati, the Pure Land. His existential conversion is at the same time his world’s conversion from the conditioned poor to the conditionless rich. So in the same way there must have been developing among Mahāyānistic Buddhists the religious experience of existential concentration into *samādhi* envisaging the Buddhas in all the directions. At this point “Where have the Buddhas come from and where have they gone to?” is the fundamental question asked on the brink of their devotional conversion to discover the creative principle of the new history. With their abandonment of the deepest subconscious condition of the old historical existence they are fundamentally converted to become the new historical existence to create the new history, just like the *bodhisattva* Sadāprarudita who now approached to the city Gandhāvati, the Pure Land.

(6) The *bodhisattva* Sadāprarudita together with the merchant’s daughter and her five hundred attendants, arrived in the city Gandhāvati, the Pure Land, embellished by all kinds of natural, jewelery and artistic beauties. After having paid homage with the offerings to the Prajñāpāramitā on golden papers in a jewelled casket kept on the central platform of the Pure Land, the *bodhisattva* Sadāprarudita reverentially approached the *bodhisattva* Dharmodgata and asked his fundamental question, “Where have the Buddhas

come from and where have they gone to?" Dharmodgata answered, "Just as all living existences, so the Buddhas are void of their individualized essence [and so are communicating in one and the same communal essence — *śūnyatā* —], neither come from anywhere, nor go to anywhere, neither are born from anywhere nor pass away to anywhere [in one and the same communal essence], and are conceptionless, positionless, formless ..... like magics, like dreams etc. ...." Listening to this teaching of the fundamental truth *śūnyatā*, Sadāprarudita was existentially concentrated into sixty thousand variations of *samādhi*.

- (7) Then the *bodhisattva* Dharmodgata having bathed and wearing new clothing, was seated motionless on the Prajñāparamitā-platform and was existentially concentrated into all variations of *samādhi* for seven years. In the seventh year the *bodhisattva* Sadāprarudita and his followers prepared for the Prajñāparamitā-assembly, overcoming all kinds of interferences of Māra or Death to pollute the clean place. Waking up from *samādhi* after seven years the *bodhisattva* Dharmodgata began to teach the Prajñāparamitā for seven days, day and night, "Oh noble son, listen. Just as all living existences, so are the Prajñāparamitās one and the same [everywhere, communicating in one and the same communal essence], ..... conceptionless, ..... omnipotent, ..... neither come from anywhere nor go to anywhere, ..... omnipresent, ...." Listening to this teaching of the Prajñāparamitā, Sadāprarudita was exalted and existentially concentrated into the sixty thousand variations of *samādhi*.....

The two paragraphs here (6) and (7) narrate how the *bodhisattva* Sadāprarudita's conversion is accomplished through two more

times of the teachings of the fundamental truth *śūnyatā* of the Prajñāpāramitā in the Pure Land. Each of the three times he was taught the fundamental truth *śūnyatā*, the *bodhisattva* Sadāprarudita was concentrated more and more deeply into *samādhi* more and more directly to envisage the Buddhas in all the directions. I think that the fundamental truth of Mahāyāna Buddhism *śūnyatā* must be interpreted as experienced in such a Mahāyānistic conversion. Let me try to interpret it as follows. In search of the creative principle of the new history Mahāyānistic Buddhists have been asking their fundamental question, "Where have the Buddhas come from and where have they gone to?" and the fundamental truth of Mahāyāna Buddhism *śūnyatā* is revealed to them as the answer. Each time the fundamental truth *śūnyatā* is revealed to them, they are existentially concentrated into *samādhi* and converted to be the new historical existence to create the new history. There is no doubt that here is the Mahāyānistic religious experience of devotional conversion termed "the communication and consent of the fundamental truth that is unborn and eternal" (*anutpattikadharmakṣānti*).<sup>14</sup> It is important to note that it is not Mahāyānistic Buddhists who communicate and consent the fundamental truth, but on the contrary, it is the fundamental truth which does communicate and consent Mahāyānistic Buddhists—the famous Japanese Buddhist philosopher Dōgen's words, "Perverted is the conception that we ourselves do know all existences; truly awakened is the reality that all existences do communicate and consent our own selves."<sup>15</sup>

The fundamental truth of Mahāyāna Buddhism *śūnyatā* that has been communicating and consenting Sadāprarudita three times so far in the narrative, may be formulated as follows: all living existences, whether the Buddhas or the Prajñāpāramitā or else, are void (*śūnya*) of their individualized essence [and are communicating in one and the same communal essence], neither come from anywhere nor go to anywhere, neither are born



from anywhere nor pass away to anywhere, omnipresent, causeless, conditionless..... Here the Mahāyānistic Buddhists who have been searching for the Buddhas and asking the fundamental problem, "Where have the Buddhas come from and where have they gone to?", are now communicated and consented (i.e. in other words, answered) by the fundamental truth *śūnyatā* in such formulation and are concentrated into deeper and deeper *samādhis* more and more directly to envisage the Buddhas. How shall we interpret the fundamental truth *śūnyatā* so that they may thus be converted? They are thus converted, just because the communal essence in which they communicate the Buddhas and the Buddhas communicate them, can only be revealed as such fundamental truth *śūnyatā* formulated in negative terms. As I have suggested so far, I would interpret the fundamental truth *śūnyatā* to be the omnipresent communal essence communicating and consenting all living existences, whether the Buddhas or *bodhisattvas* or sentient beings. I may also term this communal essence as conditionless being in contrast to conditioned becoming. This communal essence as conditionless being is the creative principle of history so far being searched for as the Buddhas which, though omnipresent, creates the new history only through those living existences who have abandoned the ego-subconsciousness or the deepest subconscious condition of the old degenerate history, and so are communicated and consented by the fundamental truth *śūnyatā* as the communal essence. Then how does the omnipresent communal essence as the creative principle of history create the new history as new cultural creations?

- (8) Waking up from *samādhi*, the *bodhisattva* Sadāprarudita penetrated into the fundamental truth *śūnyatā* and further asked the *bodhisattva* Dharmodgata, "How do the Buddhas' voices become?" Dharmodgata answered, "Just as the music of the harp or the flute or else becomes conditioned

by innumerable conditions, such as the wood parts, the strings, the player, the composer etc. etc., so do the Buddhas' voices. Just as the Buddha images become conditioned by innumerable conditions, such as stone or mud materials, the gold, the sculptors, etc. etc., so do the Buddhas' voices. .... so do the Buddhas Themselves .... The Buddhas become freely everywhere conditioned by innumerable conditions and in accordance with the spiritual aspiration of any and every living existence. You must contemplate the Buddhas to be in such a way as taught so far and you will become the Buddha soon." At this moment the Buddhas prophesy, "The *bodhisattve* Sadāprarudita will become the Buddha in a fixed future."

In the last paragraph (8) the *bodhisattva* Sadāprarudita who has been communicated and consented by the fundamental truth *śūnyatā*, is now finally prophesied directly by the Buddhas in Their presence to become the Buddha in a fixed future. He is now firmly established and no longer turning back. He has been fundamentally converted by the fundamental truth *śūnyatā* with the Buddhas' prophecy. Henceforth Sadāprarudita will accomplish *bodhisattva* practices freely and spontaneously, teaching Prajñāpāramitā and creating all kinds of cultural creations. So in the same way Mahāyānistic Buddhists having been converted within their innermost depth, will begin to convert their history from Early Buddhist to Mahāyāna Buddhist through creating new cultural creations. Here we must ask the next question, how does the omnipresent communal essence as the creative principle of history create the new history as new cultural creations? This is, I think, the problem which the Mahāyānistic philosopher Nāgārjuna undertakes to solve by his philosophy of the two truths — *paramārthasatya* and *saṃvṛtisatya* — of one and the same fundamental truth of Buddhism: *pratītyasamutpāda*. In the supreme

truth *paramārthasatya* the fundamental truth: *pratītyasamutpāda* is revealed through criticism as conditionless being or the omnipresent communal essence which is the creative principle of history and in the conventional truth *samvrtisatya* the same fundamental truth: *pratītyasamutpāda* is re-created through cultural creations as conditioned becoming or the middle path to be taught by the Buddhas and practised by all living existences. It shall, however, be a theme of another paper to interpret his philosophy of the two truths as a theory of cultural creations in history.

### Conclusion

In the two papers on the fundametal truth of Buddhism: *pratītyasamutpāda*, the previous one and the present, I have tried to discuss that (1) Early Buddhism has experienced the old history as conditioned becoming — *samsāra* — in order to be liberated therefrom and remain in the new history as conditionless being — *nirvāṇa* — and (2) Mahāyāna Buddhism has envisaged the new history as conditionless being — *śūnyatā* — in order to recreate the old history as conditioned becoming — cultural creations —. Thus Early and Mahāyāna Buddhisms have formulated the fundamental truth of Buddhism: *pratītyasamutpāda* respectively as conditioned becoming and as conditionless being in accordance with their respective meditative and devotional conversions in their creative processes of history. My thesis here is that the fundamental truth of Buddhism: *pratītyasamutpāda* is the creative principle of any transition from the old history to the new in so far as it is experienced in the Buddhist conversions which overcome the old history and create the new within their innermost depth. If I am right in this thesis, then it may also be asked: how can we be converted through contemplating the fundamental truth of Buddhism: *pratītyasamutpāda* in our contem-

porary history so as to convert it from the nature-destructive to the nature-reviving, from the mono-vital to the con-vital or from the individual to the communal?

### Notes

- 1) Noritoshi Aramaki, The Fundamental Truth of Buddhism: *Pratītyasamutpāda* — Conditioned Becoming and Conditionless Being —, *Machikaneyama Ronso*, no. 22, Faculty of Letters, Osaka University, 1988.
- 2) On the basis of my text-stratum-analytical studies of the formation of the Sūtra- and the Vinaya-piṭaka in Early Buddhism I am of the opinion that the famous schism edict of the king Aśoka can refer to the great schism of the Buddhist *Samgha* into the Sthaviravādins and the Mahāsamghikas. For details, I need a separate treatment, cf. A. Bareau, *Les Premiers Conciles Bouddhiques*, Paris, 1955; H. Bechert, Aśokas "Schismenedikt" und der Begriff *Samghabheda*, *WZSO*, Bd. 5, 1961, etc.
- 3) Cf. D. Schlingroff, *Studies in the Ajanta Paintings, Identifications and Interpretations*, Delhi, 1988, p. 9. Throughout the book Prof. Schlingroff also remarks the close relationships of the Ajanta paintings with the Mūlasarvāstivādins whom we may now identify with the *yogācāras* on the basis of L. Schmithausen's recent studies, e.g. L. Schmithausen, Beiträge zur Schulzugehörigkeit und Textgeschichte kanonischer und postkanonischer buddhistischer Materialien (in *Zur Schulzugehörigkeit von Werken der Hīnayāna-Literatur*, Zweiter Teil), Göttingen, 1987, S. 305 ff. As for the hereditary lists of the Elders of the Sthaviravādins, found in the *stūpas* at and near Sāñci, I owe the information to Genichi Yamazaki, *The Legend of Aśoka, a Critical Study*, Tokyo, 1979 (in Japanese), p. 110 ff.
- 4) The earliest Yogācāra text transmitted to us, is, I think, *Samgharakṣa's* *Yogācārabhūmi* translated into Chinese by An-shih-kaio between AD. 148–171, and their existence in Gandhāra can even be traced back to *Milindapaṇha* as transmitted in its Chinese versions. Further studies are needed in order to establish to what

extent the Buddha's biographies developing among the Gāndhāra *yogācāras* have influenced upon the formation of Mahāvastu, but I may suggest as definite Gāndhāra influences the legend of the Buddha Dīpaṅkra's prophecy upon Megha (Mv, i, 231 ff.) and the occurrence of the term *yogācāra* together with the *aṣṭamaka* (which must have been derived from Saṃgharakṣa's *Yogācārabhūmi* in the sense of the one who has attained the eighth mind of the sixteen minds of the *abhisamaya* of the four noble truths, cf. Taishō 15. 218c) in Mv, i, 120.

- 5) The concept *śravaṇaphala* is very important in understanding the religious experience to be attained by narrative and eulogizing literatures, cf. H. Lüders, *Varuna* I, 1951, SS. 18–19, P. Horsch, *Die vedische Gāthā- und Śloka-Literatur*, 1968, SS. 320–323.
- 6) It must be noted that the Buddha's biography is not a biography in the usual sense of the word — say, told or written by Himself or by His disciples who are well versed in His life. But it is a literary compilation of various quasi-biographical episodes of different origins. How and when has His biography developed into a consecutive biography — is an important problem still to be studied. Mahāvastu seems to presuppose the Buddha's biography still in the formative process and not yet completed.
- 7) E. Windisch, *Die Komposition des Mahāvastu*, Ein Beitrag zur Quellenkunde des Buddhismus, Leipzig, 1909, S. 508, "Das Mahāvastu hat die Eigentümlichkeit, daß die Grunderzählung (von dem Buddhasleben) fortwährend durch Jātakas, d. i. durch eingelegte Geschichten unterbrochen ist. .... Die Jātakas sind in der Absicht eingelegt, das Leben des historischen Buddha in Zusammenhang mit seinen früheren Existenzen zu setzen". It is not easy to establish the relationship of the Mahāsaṃghika-Lokottaravādin of Mahāvastu to the Mathurā Mahāsaṃghikas, but I would proceed on the hypothesis of their substantial identity on the basis of their linguistic compatibility pointed out by G. Roth, Particular Features of the Languages of the Ārya-Mahāsaṃghika-Lokottaravādins and Their Importance for Early Buddhist Tradition (in H. Bechert, *Die Sprache der ältesten buddhistischen Überlieferung*,

Göttingen, 1980), pp. 91-92; Th. Damsteegt, *Epigraphical Hybrid Sanskrit*, Leiden, 1978, pp. 264-265.

- 8) The Mahāgovindasuttanta in Pali Dighanikāya and the Mahāvindiyasūtra in Mahāvastu have been compared by É. Senart in his edition of the latter, by T. W. Rhys Davids in his translation of the former and H. Oldenberg in his study of the latter (Kl. Sch. S. 10), but further studies are needed in order to explain its relation with the Śakrapraśnasūtra etc.
- 9) In my present opinion the *cittotpāda* and the *vyākaraṇa* are the two principal Mahāyānistic cults which have been begun in Mahāvastu, mahāyānized in AṣṭaPP and praised in Early Mahāyānasūtras (e.g. the former in Sukhāvativyūha and the latter in Saddharmapuṇḍarika etc.).
- 10) O. Takata, *The Origin of the Buddha Image*, Tokyo, 1967, p. 358ff., points out that Mathurā Buddhists were fond of representing the earliest Buddha images on the scene of the Śakrapraśnasūtra and further J. E. van Lohuizen, New Evidence with Regard to the Origin of the Buddha Image, *South Asian Archeology*, 1979, p. 377f., points out that the earliest Buddha images in Gandhāra strongly showing the characteristics of the Mathurā images, are often represented on the scene of Brahmā's and Indra's entreating to the Buddha to preach. The Śakrapraśna and the Indra's and Brahmā's entreating to the Buddha are the two main themes which have played a decisive role in the origin of the Buddha images. The present paper is an attempt to propose the four working hypotheses to explain the phenomenon.
- 11) The concept *avaivartika* or *avinirvartanīya* signifies the fundamental religious experience of the Mahāyāna movement first established in the Daśabhūmikasūtra of Mahāvastu and then developed in AṣṭaPP. Cf. Noritoshi Aramaki, The Formation and Development of the Daśabhūmi systems (in *Koza Daijobukkyo*, vol. 3, Kegonshiso, Tokyo, 1983, p. 87 f.).
- 12) In my preliminary study on AṣṭaPP in its oldest Chinese translation I have noted that the fundamental religious experience *avaivartika* develops into the *anutpattikadharmakṣānti* in the develop-

- ment of AṣṭaPP itself. Cf. the parallel occurrence of the *avinirvartaniya* and the *anutpattikadharmakṣānti* in AṣṭaPP (Wogiwara ed. p. 692).
- 13) The Sadāprarudita narrative is quoted here with a drastic abridgement on the basis of the oldest existent version: its oldest Chinese translation. I am of the opinion that AṣṭaPP must first be studied in its oldest version prior to the revisions under the influence of the newly developing PañcaviṃśatikāPP.
- 14) The concept *kṣānti* in the *anutpattikadharmakṣānti* must be interpreted in conformity with its peculiar Ṛgvedic meaning noted in L. Renou, *Études védiques et pāṇinéennes*, Tome 6, 1960, p. 16 and with its epic meaning as found in Mahābhārata (Cr. ed.) 12, 263. 51–52, 12, 229. 21, Bhagavadgītā 11. 42 etc.
- 15) 道元、正法眼藏現成公案「自己をはこびて万法を修証するを迷とす、万法すすみて自己を修証するはさとりなり」

### 〔和文要旨〕

大乘仏教における仏教の根本真理「縁起」について  
— 条件づけられない空的存在 —

荒 牧 典 俊

前稿（『待兼山論叢』第22号所収）において原始仏教の根本真理「縁起」が条件づけられた時的生成であると理解された所以を、釈尊及び仏弟子達の根本の宗教体験からして説明しようとした。かれらは、古い墮落した歴史を「縁起」（条件づけられた時的生成）として体験することによって、深層の欲望もしくは自我意識をたちきって回心し、新しい出家苦行者文化を創造していったのであった。本稿では、大乘仏教運動において仏教の根本真理「縁起」が「即空性」であると理解されるようになる所以を、大乘仏教運動の根本の宗教体験からして説明することを試みた。第一節では、マッター大衆部の文献であると考えられる Mahāvastu に、讚菩薩し讚仏しつづけてクライマックスにおいて仏に直々にま見え「不退転菩薩」になるという宗教体験が見られることを指摘し、それがマッターにおける仏像の起源を可能にし、般若経をはじめとする大乘諸経典を創作する運動へと展開していくであろうという仮説を提言した。第二節では、大乘仏教運動の根本の宗教体験の「魂の遍歴」を物語る『常啼菩薩物語』を分析して、そこにおいて「空性」がどのよう

に体験されるかを説明した。そのような宗教体験において体験される「空性」は、いかなる存在も存在しないという虚無ではなくして、あらゆる個別存在を放捨しきったところに体得される仏・菩薩・衆生の共同体真理であり、そこにおける自由なコミュニケーションによって仏がいついかなるところにおいても説法し、衆生がいつどこにおいても仏道修行することが可能になるのである。かれら大乘仏教者達は、「空性」を宗教体験することによって、自由に新しい大乘仏教文化を創造していったのであった。

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