

# On the One Vehicle Thought of the Lotus Sutra

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## I

It seems to be generally considered that the central message of the Lotus Sutra, which is expressed by the term *ekayāna*, is that all sentient beings can attain Buddhahood. However, in my opinion, this message can be found only in the prose portion of the “*upāyakauśalya*” chapter, and it is rejected in the prose portion of the following chapter, i.e. the “*aupamyā*” chapter.

In order to explain this view of mine, it would seem necessary to state my understanding concerning the problem of the historical or gradual formation of the Lotus Sutra. With regard to this problem, Akira Hirakawa 平川彰 considered that the oldest layer or stratum of the sutra is the “*upāyakauśalya*” chapter. He called this chapter “the oldest Lotus Sutra” 最古の法華経.<sup>1</sup> I agree with him in considering this chapter to be the oldest. However, even if Hirakawa’s understanding is correct, an important problem still remains. This is whether the verse portion is older than the prose portion or the prose portion is older than the verse portion.

With regard to this problem, Seishi Karashima 辛嶋静志 considers that the verse portion is older than the prose portion, for he asserts that the *triṣṭubh* verses in the chapters from the “*upāyakauśalya*” chapter to the “*vyākaraṇa*” chapter constitute the oldest layer of the sutra, which is called by him “the first layer.”<sup>2</sup> Although his philological studies on the Lotus Sutra<sup>3</sup> are excellent and his arguments on the relationship between the word *jñāna* and the word *yāna* are important, I think that, at least in the “*upāyakauśalya*” chapter, the prose portion is older than the verse portion. In other words, I consider the prose portion of the “*upāyakauśalya*” chapter to be the oldest layer of the Lotus Sutra. I will explain my reasons.

First, the following two passages in the chapter are to be considered.

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<sup>1</sup> Akira Hirakawa 平川彰, *Indo Bukkyōshi, Jōkan* インド仏教史 上巻 [A History of Indian Buddhism, I], Tokyo: Shunjūsha 春秋社, 1974, p. 363.

<sup>2</sup> Seishi Karashima, “Vehicle (*yāna*) and Wisdom (*jñāna*) in the Lotus Sutra — the Origin of the Notion of *yāna* in Mahāyāna Buddhism,” *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University*, 18, 2015, p. 163.

<sup>3</sup> Seishi Karashima, *The Textual Study of the Chinese Versions of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*, Tokyo: The Sankibo Press, 1992; id., *A Glossary of Dharmarakṣa’s Translation of the Lotus Sutra*, Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Soka University, 1998; id., *A Glossary of Kumārajīva’s Translation of the Lotus Sutra*, Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Soka University, 2001.

[1] bhagavāṃś ca tūṣṇībhāvenādhivāsayati sma// (KN, 39,2)<sup>4</sup>

[2] lokanātho 'smi dhvaṃsayi<sup>5</sup>/ (KN,44,11) [II,v. 40b]

These passages express the reaction of the Buddha when the five thousand monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen (*bhikṣu-bhikṣuṇī-upāsaka-upāsikā*) “possessed of conceit” (*adhimānika*)<sup>6</sup> retreated from the congregation before he began to preach to them the supreme dharma. In Passage [1] it is stated that the Buddha accepted their retreat by silence (*tūṣṇībhāva*), while in Passage [2], i.e. the verse corresponding to Passage [1], the Buddha is said to have expelled them from the congregation. In other words, the Buddha's reaction towards the retreating monks, etc., has become harsher in Passage [2] than in Passage [1]. In my understanding, the tendency towards exclusion and discrimination expressed in Mahāyāna sutras became, in general, more and more evident, as time went on.

For example, in the *Mahāparinirivāṇasūtra*, the following passages are found.

[3] 此摩訶衍般泥洹經說、如來性丈夫法故。(Taisho 12, 894c26-27) [法顯]

[4] 是大經典、有丈夫相、所謂佛性。(Taisho 12,422a29-b1) [曇無讖]

[5] mdo 'di ni skyes pa'i rang bzhin de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po yang dag par ston pa yin pa'i phyir rol//<sup>7</sup>

The main message of these corresponding passages seems to be that *tathāgata-dhātu*, *buddha-dhātu* or *tathāgata-garbha* belongs to men (*puruṣa*) only. In connection with this message, it is stated in Dharmakṣema's translation as follows:

[6] 一切女人皆是衆惡之所住處。… 假使男子、數如恒沙、與一女人、共爲欲事、猶不能足。  
(Taisho 12, 422a16-21)

In this passage, it is stressed that sexual desire of a woman cannot be satisfied by intercourse with an enormous number of men. In the corresponding passage of Faxian's translation, too, it is stated that the desires of women cannot be satisfied, as follows:

[7] 其女人法、猶如大地、多諸渴愛。猶如大海 … 女人之法、亦復如是、貪受五欲、而無厭足。(Taisho, 12,894c21-24)

However, in Passage [7] sexual intercourse with men is not clearly mentioned,

<sup>4</sup> For the sake of convenience, I principally use the Kern-Nanjio edition (KN, Bibliotheca Buddhica X, St. Petersburg: 1908-1912) in this paper.

<sup>5</sup> Instead of the reading *dhvaṃsi tān* (KN,44,11), I adopt the reading *dhvaṃsayi* found in the Gilgit Manuscript (Shoko Watanabe, *Saddharmapuṇḍarika Manuscripts Found in Gilgit, Part One*, Tokyo: The Reiyukai, 1972, p. 62,15b2), etc., supporting Watanabe's opinion. Cf. Shōkō Watanabe 渡辺照宏, “Shōkai Shin'yaku Hokekyō” 詳解・新訳法華經 [Detailed Explanations of the Lotus Sutra], 39, *Daihōrin* 大法輪, 1969 (June), pp. 88-90.

<sup>6</sup> For the sake of convenience, I adopt the reading *adhimānika* among the words *adhimānika*, *ādhimānika*, *abhimānika* and *ābhimānika* of the same meaning.

<sup>7</sup> Hiromi Habata, *A Critical Edition of the Tibetan Translation of the Mahāparinirivāṇa-mahāsūtra*, Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2013, p. 368, § 515.

while it is mentioned at least three times (欲事 422a20,21,24) in the corresponding passages of Dharmakṣema's translation.<sup>8</sup> In my understanding, the tendency towards discrimination and exclusion is stronger in Passage [6] of Dharmakṣema's translation compared with Passage [7] of Faxian's translation. I cannot but consider that Passage [6] was formed later than Passage [7].

Likewise, it seems natural to consider that Passage [2], in which the five thousand monks, etc., are said to have been expelled from the congregation by the Buddha, was formed later than Passage [1], in which the retreat of the monks, etc., is said to have been accepted by the silence of the Buddha. Therefore, in this respect, too, it seems appropriate to consider that the verse portion of the "*upāyakaṣālyā*" chapter was formed later than the prose portion of the chapter.

Moreover, it seems necessary to understand a quite peculiar character of the prose portion of the "*upāyakaṣālyā*" chapter. In my opinion, the peculiarity of this portion cannot be explained without considering that it is the oldest layer in the formation of the Lotus Sutra. What, then, is the peculiarity of this portion?

First, what is most important is the fact that there are no occurrences of the terms *bodhisattva* and *mahāyāna* in the prose portion of the "*upāyakaṣālyā*" chapter. This fact is quite peculiar in contrast to the other chapters. In the prose portions of all the other chapters, the term *bodhisattva* is used, but it is never found in the prose portion of the "*upāyakaṣālyā*" chapter, at least according to the Kern-Nanjio edition.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, it seems evident that the prose portion of the "*upāyakaṣālyā*" chapter has a peculiar character in contrast to the other chapters.

Moreover, the term *mahāyāna* is never used in this portion either. Therefore, if the prose portion of the "*upāyakaṣālyā*" chapter is the oldest layer of the Lotus Sutra, as I consider, it becomes difficult to assert that the original message of the Lotus Sutra can be expressed by the terms *bodhisattva* and *mahāyāna*.

In contrast, in the verse portion of the "*upāyakaṣālyā*" chapter, although there are no occurrences of the term *mahāyāna*, the word *hīnayāna* is used. This fact would seem to indicate that, although the term *mahāyāna* is not used here, the idea that *mahāyāna* is

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<sup>8</sup> Sexual intercourse with many men is mentioned in the Tibetan translation also. Cf. Habata, *ibid.*, p. 367, § 512.

<sup>9</sup> Instead of the reading *tathāgatajñānadarśanasamādāpaka* (KNP, 40, 11), the reading *bodhisattvasamādāpaka* is found in the Kashgar Manuscript (Lokesh Chandra, *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra, Kashgar Manuscript*, Tokyo: The Reiyūkai, 1977, 47a4). This reading, which corresponds to 教化菩薩 (Taisho 9, 7a29) in Kumārajīva's translation, is considered by Sadahiko Kariya 荻谷定彦 to represent the central message of the Lotus Sutra. Cf. Kariya, *Hokekyō Ichibutsujō no Shisō* 法華經一仏乗の思想 [Thought of the One Buddha Vehicle in the Lotus Sutra], Osaka: Tōhō Shuppan 東方出版, 1983, pp. 94-96.

superior to *hīnayāna* is definitely found there. Moreover, not only is the term *bodhisattva* used there, but *bodhisattvas* are also classified into the two groups, i.e. *navayānasamprasthita* (II,v.14) and *avivartika* (II,v.17). In addition, the term *buddhaputra*, which means *bodhisattva*, is used three times (II, v.50,v.68,v.133) in the verse portion, while in the prose portion even the term *putra* itself is never used except in the proper noun *śāri-putra*.

Secondly, at the beginning of the prose portion of the “*upāyakaṣālyā*” chapter, it is stated that *buddhajñāna* is difficult to understand (*durvijñeya*) [KN, 29,3] for *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*, while in the corresponding verses (II,vv.8-13) *buddhajñāna* is said to be incapable of being understood (*sugatasya jñānaṃ na hi śakya jñānitum*, II,v.9) by them. The difference between difficulty and incapability is important because, in the message that *buddhajñāna* cannot be understood by them, *buddhajñāna* seems to have been made mysterious as something which cannot be attained by human understanding. In my opinion, the tendency towards the mystification of objects of worship, side by side with the tendency towards discrimination or exclusion stated above, increased in Mahāyāna Buddhism as time went on. Therefore, in this respect too, I consider that the prose portion of the “*upāyakaṣālyā*” chapter is older than the verse portion.

Thirdly, in the prose portion of the “*upāyakaṣālyā*” chapter, the message of “awakening (*bodhi*) by means of listening to the Dharma” is taught (KN,41,7-9), while in the verse portion of this chapter, in addition to this message, the new message of “awakening by means of the six *pāramitās*” is added (II,vv.75-76). It seems evident that this new message is added from the standpoint of Mahāyāna Buddhism, according to which the six *pāramitās* are considered to be the principal means to attain awakening or Buddhahood.

In contrast, as stated above, the terms *bodhisattva* and *mahāyāna* were never used in the prose portion of the “*upāyakaṣālyā*” chapter, which seems to indicate that, although the fundamental ideas of Mahāyāna Buddhism were rejected or at least ignored in this portion, the author[s] possessed of the *mahāyāna* standpoint, dissatisfied with the purely non-*mahāyāna* message in the prose portion, added the new message of Mahāyāna Buddhism in the verse portion of the chapter.

Of course, it might be possible to consider that the prose portion of the “*upāyakaṣālyā*” chapter was formed before the ideas of Mahāyāna Buddhism were advocated in India, or that the ideas were somehow unknown to the author[s] of this portion, even though the ideas of Mahāyāna Buddhism were already being advocated when this portion was formed. However, I cannot but share the traditional understanding that *mahāyāna* was counted as one of the three vehicles (*triyāna*) [KN,43,7]

which were stated to be taught by expedient devices (*upāyakaṣālyā*),<sup>10</sup> because, if it is certain that the terms *ekayāna* and *buddhayāna* were used in the prose portion of the “*upāyakaṣālyā*” chapter, I think that these terms were not used without any relation to the term *mahāyāna* that had been already used in the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras*.<sup>11</sup>

Fourthly, the author[s] of the verse portion of the “*upāyakaṣālyā*” chapter seem to have been conversant with the contents of the prose portions in the chapters that follow the “*upāyakaṣālyā*” chapter. For example, it is stated in the verse portion as follows:

[8] ye cā śatā dvādaśime anāsravā buddhā bhaviṣyantimi loki sarve// (KN, 57, 12) [II, v. 133cd]

It seems evident that this half verse was composed by an author who knew the following passage in the prose portions of the eighth chapter, i.e. the “*pañcabhikṣuśatavyākaraṇa*” chapter.

[9] imāni kāśyapa dvādaśa vaśībhūtaśatāni yeṣāṃ ahaṃ etarhi saṃmukhībhūtaḥ sarvāṇy etāny ahaṃ kāśyapa dvādaśa vaśībhūtaśatāny anantaraṃ vyākaroṃi/ (KN, 206, 8-9)

In this passage, the Buddha’s prediction (*vyākaraṇa*) concerning twelve hundred *arhats* is stated, although it is worth noting that this prediction is not clearly stated in the verse portion of the same chapter. Therefore, it seems natural to assume that Passage [8] was composed by an author who knew Passage [9] in the prose portion of the “*pañcabhikṣuśatavyākaraṇa*” chapter.

Needless to say, it is not impossible to consider that Passage [9] was composed later under the influence of Passage [8]. However, because it seems unnatural to suppose that the main motive of the *pañcabhikṣuśatavyākaraṇa* chapter, i.e. the prediction concerning twelve hundred *arhats* or five hundred *arhats*, was drawn from a single verse of the “*upāyakaṣālyā*” chapter, I think that Passage [8] was composed under the influence of Passage [9].

Fifthly, the following words and expressions used in the verse portion of the “*upāyakaṣālyā*” chapter are not found in the prose portion of the chapter.

(a) words appealing to the senses : *ghoṣa* (II, v. 30, v. 66, v. 119, v. 123), *svara* (II, v. 30)

(b) esoteric words : *rahasya* (II, v. 140), *mudrā* (II, v. 59)

(c) discriminatory words : *vaṅka* (II, v. 66), *andha* (II, v. 114), *andhikṛta* (II, v. 111),  
*bāla* (II, v. 34, v. 39, v. 66, v. 117, v. 131, v. 141) [v. 39 = śloka], *daridra* (II, v. 110)

(d) expressions indicating a possible origin of *tathāgatagarbha* thought :

*sthītikā* --- *sada dharmanetrī prakṛtiś ca dharmāṇa sadā prabhāsvārā* (II, v. 102ab)<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Hirakawa, *Indo Bukkyōshi, Jōkan*, p. 364

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Shiro Matsumoto, *Hokekyō Shisōron* 法華經思想論 [On the Thought of the Lotus Sutra], Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan 大蔵出版, 2010, p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> I agree with Hirakawa that one of the origins of *tathāgatagarbha* thought is found in this passage. Cf. Hirakawa, *Indo Bukkyōshi, Jōkan*, p. 363.

(e) expressions praising *dhātu* worship or *stūpa* worship connected with the theory that one can attain Buddhahood by means of only very little merit (小善成仏) :

*ye cāpi dhātūna karonti pūjām --- te sarvi bodhāya abhūṣi lābhinaḥ* (II, vv.78-96)

For these reasons, I consider that the prose portion of the *upāyakaṣāya* chapter, which is quite peculiar compared with other parts of the Lotus Sutra, is the oldest layer of the sutra.

Concerning the formation of the sutra, Shinjō Suguro 勝呂信静 comments as follows:

[10] 一般に偈と長行との間に著しい相違がある場合は、偈は長行にない説をそこに加上したものと見るべきであろう。<sup>13</sup>

In general, when verse portions and prose portions are markedly different from each other [in their contents], we should understand that theories not found in prose portions have been added in the verse portions. (tr. by M[atsumoto]).

Although I do not accept Suguro's thesis that the twenty-seven chapters of the Lotus Sutra, i.e. all chapters except the "*devadatta*" chapter, which was incorporated in Kumārajīva's translation, were formed simultaneously,<sup>14</sup> I cannot but agree with his main idea, stated in Passage [10], concerning the relation between the prose portions and the verse portions of the Lotus Sutra,

Further, the following comment by Suguro on the special character of the verse portions seems important.

[11] 一般的に見て、『法華経』は長行よりも偈の方に、仏陀の人格に対する帰依・讃仰の念が一層鮮明に表明されている。これは、偈が教団の上層部の指導者に対するものであるよりも一般信者向けのものであるということができよう<sup>15</sup>。

Generally speaking, in the Lotus Sutra, the feeling of worship or adoration of the Buddha's personality is more clearly expressed in the verses than in the prose, which seems to mean that the verses were taught rather for ordinary believers than for the leaders who constituted the upper stratum of Buddhist communities. (tr. by M)

<sup>13</sup> Shinjō Suguro, *Zōtei Hokekyō no Seiritsu to Shisō* 増訂 法華経の成立と思想 [The Formation and the Thought of the Lotus Sutra, the Revised Edition], Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha 大東出版社, 1993, p. 120.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Shinjō Suguro, *Hokekyō no Seiritsu ni taisuru Shiken* — Nijūnanahon Dōjiseiritsusetsu no Teishō 法華経の成立に対する私見—二十七品同時成立説の提唱 [A Personal View on the Formation of the Lotus Sutra — Proposal of the Theory that the Twenty-seven Chapters were simultaneously formed], *Hokke Bunka Kenkyū* 法華文化研究, 12, Tokyo: Institute for the Comprehensive Study of Lotus Sutra, Rissho University, 1986, pp. 1-75.

<sup>15</sup> Suguro, *Zōtei Hokekyō no Seiritsu to Shisō*, p. 123.

Moreover, it is to be noted that Suguro even describes the character of the verses in the “*aupamyā*” chapter (III, vv. 111-136) with the words *kiwamete tsūzokuteki* 極めて通俗的,<sup>16</sup> which seem to mean not simply “extremely popular” but also “appealing to vulgar taste.” In my opinion, such a critical understanding is necessary when we try to understand the character of the verses in the Lotus Sutra, or in Mahāyāna sutras in general.

## II

Even if it is true that the original message of the Lotus Sutra is expressed in the prose portion of the “*upāyakaūśalyā*” chapter and that, as I consider, the message is transformed or even rejected in the prose portion of the following chapter, i.e. the “*aupamyā*” chapter, what precisely is to be understood as the original message? In my opinion, this message is clearly stated in the prose portion of the “*upāyakaūśalyā*” chapter as follows:

[12] aham api śāriputraikam eva yānam ārabhya sattvānāṃ dharmam deśayāmi yad idaṃ buddhayānam --- / ye 'pi te śāriputra sattvā etarhi mamemaṃ dharmam śṛṇvanti te 'pi sarve 'nuttarāyāḥ samyaksaṃbodher lābhino bhaviṣyanti/ (KN, 42,15-43,2)

[13] I too, Śāriputra, preach the Dharma to sentient beings for the sake of (*ārabhya*)<sup>17</sup> one vehicle (*ekayāna*) only, i.e. the Buddha's vehicle (*buddhayāna*). Those who listen to my Dharma now, Śāriputra, will all become attainers (*lābhīn*) of supreme, true awakening (*samyaksaṃbodhi*).

I consider that in this passage the original message of the Lotus Sutra, expressed by the terms *ekayāna* and *buddhayāna*, is given as the message that all sentient beings who listen to the Buddha's Dharma will attain Buddhahood. It does not seem improper to understand that a kind of “universal salvation” is advocated by this message.

However, in the prose portion of the “*aupamyā*” chapter, where the terms *mahāyāna* and *bodhisattva* are used, “universal salvation” seems to be rejected. First, the portion can be roughly divided into two parts. I will call the first half the “Prediction Portion” and the latter half the “Parable Portion,” because in the first half the Buddha's prediction given to Śāriputra regarding his attainment of Buddhahood is mentioned, while in the latter half the well-known parable of the “burning house” (火宅) is presented.

In the “Parable Portion” it is stated as follows:

[14] mahac cāsyā niveśanam bhaved ucchritam ca vistṛṇam ca cirakṛtam ca jṛṇam ca dvayor vā trayāṇām vā caturṇām vā pañcānām vā prāṇīśātānām āvāsah/ --- tasya ca puruṣasya bahavaḥ kumārakāḥ syuḥ pañca vā daśa vā viṃśatir vā --- // (KN, 72,3-8)

<sup>16</sup> Suguro, *Zōtei Hokekyō no Seiritsu to Shisō*, p.124.

<sup>17</sup> On the meaning of the term *ārabhya*, cf. Matsumoto, *Hokekyō Shisōron*, pp. 150-156.

[15] 有大屋宅、周匝寬博、垣牆高広、其舍久故。數百千人、而在其內、… 長者有子、若十若二十。(Taisho 9,75b7-11) [『正法華經』]

[16] 其家廣大、唯有一門、多諸人衆、一百二百乃至五百人、止住其中、… 長者諸子、若二十、或至三十、在此宅中。(Taisho 9,12b15-19) [『妙法蓮華經』]

In Passage [14], it is stated that two hundred or five hundred *prāṇins* lived in the rich man's large house, and he had five or ten or twenty sons living there. The word *prāṇin* (breathing, that which has breath) is translated as “man”人 in Passages [15] and [16]. Therefore, if *prāṇin* means “man,” it is stated that there were, roughly speaking, about five hundred people in the house, and twenty of them were the rich man's sons.

Needless to say, in the parable of the “burning house,” it is stated that the rich man's sons only were saved from the “burning house.” Then what about the other people who were possibly four hundred and eighty in number? They are not mentioned at all in the parable after the deliverance of the rich man's sons from the “burning house” has been related. It seems evident that the people left in the house are considered to have been burnt alive.

Who, then, are these people? And who are the rich man's sons? Because the rich man is a simile for the Buddha, it is evident that his sons mean *buddhaputras*, i.e. *bodhisattvas*. Therefore, in the parable of the “burning house,” it is stated, in my view, that only *bodhisattvas* can attain Buddhahood. Then who are those people left in the house? I consider them to be non-*bodhisattvas*. Thus, the message stated above is precisely the message that only *bodhisattvas* can attain Buddhahood, while non-*bodhisattvas* cannot attain it. It is clear that this message cannot be called one of “universal salvation.” Moreover, the message is sometimes discriminatory. Namely, in the “*aupamyā*” chapter, the distinction between *bodhisattvas* and non-*bodhisattvas* is sometimes stressed with discriminatory expressions. For example, the following verse is found in the verse portion of the chapter.

[17] *saṃpaśyamāno idam eva cārthaṃ tvāṃ saṃdiśāmi ahu śāriputra/  
mā haiva tvāṃ bālajanasya agrato bhāṣiṣyase sūtram im evarūpaṃ//  
ye tū iha vyakta bahuśrutās ca smṛtimanta ye paṇḍita jñānavantah/  
ye prasthitā uttamam agrabodhiṃ tān śrāvayes tvāṃ paramārtham etat//* (KN, 97,5-8)  
[III, v.136, v.137]

[18] 以是因緣、我故語汝。無智人中、莫說此經。若有利根、智慧明了、多聞強識、求佛道者、如是之人、乃可爲說。(Taisho 9,16a9-12) [『妙法蓮華經』]

In this passage, people are divided, as had originally been the case, into two groups, i.e. foolish people (*bāla-jana*) and wise people (*paṇḍita*). Needless to say, wise people are *bodhisattvas*, while foolish people are non-*bodhisattvas*, as is clearly known from



the following verse in the same chapter.

[19] *sūtram imam bālajanapramohanam abhijñā jñātvāna*<sup>18</sup> *mamaita bhāṣitam/*

*viṣayo hi naivāstiha śrāvakāṇām pratyekabuddhāna gatiṃ na cātra//* (KN,93,7-8)[III,v.109]

[20] 斯法華經、爲深智說、淺識聞之、迷惑不解。一切聲聞、及辟支佛、於此經中、力所不及。(Taisho 9,15b14-16) (『妙法蓮華經』)

In this verse, foolish people, i.e. non-*bodhisattvas*, are said to be *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*. It might be considered that the term *bāla* itself is not necessarily discriminatory. However, such an understanding would seem to be rather optimistic, for, at least in the verse portion of the “*aupamyā*” chapter, the term *bāla* is used to denote some people, or more precisely some sentient beings, i.e. non-*bodhisattvas*, who are described with physically discriminatory expressions like *kalmāṣaka* (III,v.116), *vrāṇika* (III,v.116), *jaḍa* (III,v.120,v.122,v.130,v.132) *kubja* (III,v.122), *kāṇa* (III,v.122), *laṅgaka* (III,v.122), *jaghanya* (III,v.122), *badhira* (III,v.129,v.132), *vikala* (III,v.130), *andha* (III,v.132), *kilāsa* (III,v.133) etc.

For example, among the verses (III,vv.114-135) where the retribution (*vipāka*) of the foolish people (*bāla*) who abandoned (√*kṣip*) the Lotus Sutra (*sūtram idam*), is explained, the following verse is typical in its discriminatory character.

[21] *puruṣātmabhāvaṃ ca yadā labhante te kunṭhakā laṅgaka bhonti tatra/*

*kubjātha kāṇā ca jaḍā jaghanyā āsraddadhantā ima sūtra mahyam//*(KN,95,5-6)[III,v.122]

[22] 若得為人、諸根闇鈍、矬陋癡癡、盲聾背偃、有所言說、人不信受。(Taisho 9,15c15-17) (『妙法蓮華經』)

Although I think that the verse portion of the “*aupamyā*” chapter was composed later than the prose portion of the chapter, the discriminatory expressions cited above seem to reflect rather accurately the discriminatory message stated in the prose portion of the “*aupamyā*” chapter, namely, that only *bodhisattvas* can attain Buddhahood, while non-*bodhisattvas* cannot attain it.

In this connection, the Buddha’s prediction (*vyākaraṇa*) given to Śāriputra in the “Prediction Portion” is to be examined next. This prediction is generally understood as a prediction given to a *śrāvaka*, i.e. Śāriputra, probably on the basis of expressions found in the *Fahua lun* 法華論, the Chinese translations of Vasubandhu’s commentary on the Lotus Sutra. Namely, in Bodhiruci’s translation, the following expressions are found.

聲聞等得授記(Taisho 26,8c28)

聲聞人得授記(Taisho 26,9a15)

In Ratnamati’s translation, meanwhile, the following expression is used.

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<sup>18</sup> The reading *abhijñā jñātvāna* seems incorrect. The reading *abhijñājñānāna* is proposed in the Wogihara-Tsuchida edition (88, 10). I am unqualified to suggest the original reading.

聲聞授記(Taisho 26,18a23,18b8)

Apart from Vasubandhu's interpretation stated in the commentary, I consider that the prediction was given to Śāriputra not as a *śrāvaka* but as a *bodhisattva* in the "Prediction Portion," for it is stated in this portion as follows:

[23] mayā tvam śāriputra viṃśatināṃ buddhakoṭīnayutaśatasahasrāṇāṃ antike paripācito 'nuttarāyāṃ samyaksaṃbodhau/ mama ca tvam śāriputra dirgharātram anuśikṣito 'bhūt/ sa tvam śāriputra bodhisattvasaṃmantritena bodhisattvarahasyeneha mama pravacana upapannaḥ/ sa tvam śāriputra bodhisttvādhiṣṭhānena tat paurvakaṃ caryāprañidhānaṃ bodhisattvasaṃmantritaṃ bodhisattvarahasyaṃ na samanushrasi/ nirvṛto 'smṛti manyase/ so 'haṃ tvāṃ śāriputra pūrvacaryāprañidhānājñānānubodham anusmārayitukāma imam saddharmaṇḍarikaṃ dharmaparyāyaṃ sūtrāntaṃ mahāvaipulyaṃ bodhisattvāvavādaṃ sarvabuddhaparigrahaṃ śrāvakāṇāṃ saṃprakāśayāmi/ (KN, 64,10-65,2)

[24] 我昔曾於二萬億佛所、爲無上道故、常教化汝。汝亦長夜、隨我受學。我以方便、引導汝故、生我法中。舍利弗。我昔教汝志願佛道。汝今悉忘、而便自謂、已得滅度。我今還欲令汝憶念本願所行道故、爲諸聲聞、說是大乘經、名妙法蓮華、教菩薩法、佛所護念。(Taisho 9,11b10-16) (『妙法蓮華經』)

In this passage, I think the Buddha told Śāriputra that he was not a *śrāvaka* but a *bodhisattva* who had for a long time been made to mature by the Buddha in order to attain supreme awakening, even though he considered himself to be a *śrāvaka* who had attained *nirvāṇa* because he had forgotten his *bodhisattva-caryā* (*bodhisattva*-practice) in his past lives.

In the passage that immediately follows Passage [23] the prediction itself is stated as follows:

[25] api khalu punaḥ śāriputra bhaviṣyasi tvam anāgate 'dhvany aprameyaiḥ kalpair acintyair apramāṇair bahūnāṃ tathāgatakoṭīnayutaśatasahasrāṇāṃ saddharmaṃ dhārayitvā vividhāṃ ca pūjāṃ kṛtvemāṃ eva bodhisattvacaryāṃ paripūrya padmaprabho nāma tathāgato 'rhan samyaksaṃbuddho loke bhaviṣyasi vidyācaraṇasaṃpannaḥ sugato lokavid anuttaraḥ puruṣadamyasārathiḥ śāstā devānāṃ ca manuṣyāṇāṃ ca buddho bhagavān/ (KN, 65, 3-7)

[26] 舍利弗。汝於未來世、過無量無邊不可思議劫、供養若干千萬億佛、奉持正法。具足菩薩所行之道、當得作佛。號曰華光如來應供正遍知明行足善逝世間解無上士調御丈夫天人師佛世尊。(Taisho 9,11b16-20) (『妙法蓮華經』)

The most important expression in this passage is *bodhisattvacaryāṃ paripūrya*, according to which *bodhisattvacaryā* seems to be defined as the necessary condition for attaining Buddhahood. In other words, it is stated that without fulfilling *bodhisattvacaryā* one cannot attain Buddhahood. It is to be noted that in this passage the Buddha

recommends neither that Śāriputra practice *bodhisattvacaryā* nor that he become a *bodhisattva* because, in my understanding, he was already a *bodhisattva* at the time of the prediction, as was clarified in Passage [23]. In other words, it is stated in the “Prediction Portion” that Śāriputra, as a *bodhisattva*, has been practicing *bodhisattvacaryā* for a long time, and, even after the Buddha’s prediction, he will continue to practice it, and, after fulfilling *bodhisattvacaryā*, will eventually become a Buddha.

It is also known from the following passage that Śāriputra is considered to be not a *śrāvaka* but a *bodhisattva* in the “Prediction Portion.”

[27] sa ca śāriputra padmaprabhas tathāgato dvādaśānām antarakalpānām atyayena dhṛtiparipūrṇaṃ nāma bodhisattvaṃ mahāsattvaṃ vyākṛtyānuttarāyāṃ samyaksaṃbodhau parinirvāsyati/ (KN,67,1-2)

[28] 華光如來、過十二小劫。授堅滿菩薩、阿耨多羅三藐三菩提記。(Taisho 9,11c6-7)  
〔『妙法蓮華經』〕

The most important message given in this passage is that Śāriputra is in reality a *bodhisattva*, for it is stated that the relationship between Śākyamuni Buddha and Śāriputra is to be understood as the same as the relationship between Padmaprabha Buddha and Dhṛtiparipūrṇa bodhisattva.

Śākyamuni (Buddha) → vyākaraṇa → Śāriputra (bodhisattva)

Padmaprabha (Buddha) → vyākaraṇa → Dhṛtiparipūrṇa (bodhisattva)

In other words, it is intended in Passage [27] that the person to whom the prediction to become a Buddha is given must always be a *bodhisattva*. Needless to say, this message is based on the idea that only *bodhisattvas* can attain Buddhahood, while *śrāvakas* or non-*bodhisattvas* can never attain it.

It is evident that such a “discriminatory” idea, which seems to be admitted throughout the “*aupamyā*” chapter, is contrary to the fundamental position of *ekayāna* stated in the prose portion of the “*upāyakaūśalyā*” chapter. In this respect, the following passage in the “Prediction Portion” is noteworthy.

[29] (a) so ’pi śāriputra padmaprabhas tathāgato ’rhan samyaksaṃbuddhas trīṇy eva yānāny ārabhya dharmaṃ deśayiṣyati/ (b) kiṃ cāpi śāriputra sa tathāgato na kalpakaṣāya utpatsyate/ api tu praṇidhānavaśena dharmaṃ deśayiṣyati/ (KN, 65,12-14)

[30] (a) 華光如來、亦以三乘、教化衆生。(b)舍利弗、彼佛出時、雖非惡世。以本願故、說三乘法。(Taisho 9,11b23-25) 〔『妙法蓮華經』〕

On two points the message in this passage seems to contradict the message stated in the prose portion of the “*upāyakaūśalyā*” chapter. First, in Passage [29] (a), Padmaprabha Buddha is stated to preach the Dharma for the sake of three vehicles (*trīṇy eva yānāny ārabhya*), while in Passage [12] of the prose portion of the “*upāyakaūśalyā*”

chapter Śākyamuni Buddha is said to preach the Dharma for the sake of only one vehicle (*ekam eva yānam ārabhya*), as follows:

[12] aham api śāriputraikam eva yānam ārabhya sattvānāṃ dharmam deśayāmi

[29] padmaprabhas --- trīṇy eva yānāny ārabhya dharmam deśayiṣyati

It seems evident that the expressions “*ekam eva yānam ārabhya*” and “*trīṇy eva yānāny ārabhya*” are mutually contradictory.

Second, in Passage [29] (b), it is stated that the time when Padmaprabha Buddha will appear in the world is not the epoch of defilement (*kalpakaṣāya* 惡世) and that the Buddha will preach the Dharma [for the sake of three vehicles] by virtue of his vow (*prapīdhāna*). This message is quite contrary to or even contradicts the message stated in the following passage in the prose portion of the “*upāyakaṣāya*” chapter.

[31] yadā tathāgatā arhantaḥ samyakṣambuddhāḥ kalpakaṣāye votpadyante sattvakaṣāye vā kleśakaṣāye vā dṛṣṭikaṣāye vāyuskaṣāye votpadyante/ evamrūpeṣu śāriputra kalpasamkṣobhakaṣāyeṣu bahusattveṣu lubdheṣv alpakuśalamūleṣu tadā śāriputra tathāgatā arhantaḥ samyakṣambuddhā upāyakaṣāyena tad evaikam buddhayānam triyānanirdeśena nirdiśanti/ (KN,43,4-8)

[32] 舍利弗。諸佛出於五濁惡世。所謂劫濁煩惱濁衆生濁見濁命濁。如是舍利弗、劫濁亂時、衆生垢重。慳貪嫉妬、成就諸不善根故、諸佛以方便力、於一佛乘、分別說三。

(Taisho 9,7b23-26) [『妙法蓮華經』]

In this passage, it is stated that Buddhas appear in this world during the epoch of defilement (*kalpakaṣāya* 惡世) and that, because in the epoch sentient beings are greedy and evil, Buddhas preach three vehicles (*trīyāna*) by means of expedient devices (*upāyakaṣāya*).<sup>19</sup> In Passage [29], on the contrary, it is stated that three vehicles will be preached by Padmaprabha Buddha, who will not appear in the epoch of defilement, not by means of expedient devices (*upāyakaṣāya*) but by virtue of his vow (*prapīdhāna*).

Therefore, in brief, in Passage [29] of the “Prediction Portion” of the “*aupamyā*” chapter, it seems to be stated that the three vehicles are not expedient devices (方便) but truths (真實). Thus, the following conclusion is anticipated.

prose portion of the “*upāyakaṣāya*” chapter = 一乘真實・三乘方便

one vehicle = truth, three vehicles = expedient devices

prose portion of the “*aupamyā*” chapter = 三乘真實・一乘方便<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> The exact translation of the expression *upāyakaṣāyena tad evaikam buddhayānam triyānanirdeśena nirdiśanti* might be “preach the one Buddha vehicle by means of expedient devices, i.e. the explanation of three vehicles.”

<sup>20</sup> The expression 三乘真實一乘方便, often used in Japanese Buddhist studies, is found, for example, in the *Jōyūshikiron Ryakuso* 成唯識論略疏 of Fujaku 普寂 (1707–1781) as follows: 然慈恩基公、建立三乘真實一乘方便之宗 (Taisho 68, 5c3-4).

three vehicles = truths, one vehicle = expedient device

But what is meant by the assertion that the three vehicles are not expedient devices but truths? The essence of the assertion lies in the idea that *mahāyāna* is superior to *hīnayāna* or that only *bodhisattvas* can attain Buddhahood, while non-*bodhisattvas* cannot attain it. Accordingly, the meaning of the term *mahāyāna* in the “Parable Portion” is to be examined next.

### III

To state my conclusion first, I think that the parable of the “burning house” was adroitly composed by the Mahāyānists, who considered *mahāyāna* to be superior to *hīnayāna*, in order to introduce for the first time the term *mahāyāna* into the Lotus Sutra and to replace *buddhayāna*, given as *ekayāna* in the prose portion of the “*upāyakaūśalyā*” chapter, with *mahāyāna*, and, as a result, to assert that only *bodhisattvas* can attain Buddhahood solely by means of *mahāyāna*.

The term *mahāyāna*, in my opinion, was for the first time introduced into the text of the Lotus Sutra in the following passage of the “Parable Portion”:

[33] sarva evaite kumārakā mamaiva putrāḥ sarve ca me priyā manaāpāḥ/ saṃvidyante ca ma imāny evaṃrūpāny mahāyānāni samaṃ ca mayaite kumārakāḥ sarve cintayitavyā na viṣamam/ (KN, 76,1-2)

[34] 今此幼童、皆是吾子、寵敬等愛、意無偏黨、以故賜與、平等大乘。(Taisho 9,75b28-c1) [『正法華經』]

[35] 今此幼童、皆是吾子、愛無偏黨。我有如是七宝大車、其数無量。应当等心各各與之、不宜差別。(Taisho 9,12c26-28) [『妙法蓮華經』]

As is indicated by the word 大車 of Passage [35], in Passage [33] the term *mahāyānāni* means merely “large vehicles or carts” without any Buddhist connotation. In the parable, it is stated that the large vehicles of the father, i.e. the rich owner of the house, were given equally to his sons. By merely stating that the vehicles (*yāna*) given to his sons were large (*mahat*), the composer of the parable succeeded without difficulty in introducing into the Lotus Sutra the term *mahāyāna*, which seems to have been purposely avoided by the author of the prose portion of the “*upāyakaūśalyā*” chapter.

The readers or listeners of the parable seem to have accepted, without any doubts, the term *mahāyāna* as meaning *ekayāna*, which seems to have been generally regarded as the central message of the Lotus Sutra, without noticing the important fact that the term was never used in the prose portion of the “*upāyakaūśalyā*” chapter. Thus, it seems evident that the main motive in composing the parable of the “burning house” was to replace *buddhayāna* with *mahāyāna* as the meaning of *ekayāna*.

This replacement is clearly recognized in the following passage.

[36] *ekavarṇāny ekayānāni dattāni yad uta mahāyānāni* (KN,77,2)

[37] 以一色類平等大乘、賜子不虛。(Taisho 9,75c10-11) [『正法華經』]

[38] 欲饒益諸子、等與大車。(Taisho 9,13a10) [『妙法蓮華經』]

The expression *ekayānāni dattāni yad uta mahāyānāni* is to be contrasted with the expression *ekam eva yānam --- yad idaṃ buddhayānam* in Passage [12] of the prose portion of the *upāyakaṣṣāya* chapter. The words *yad uta* and *yad idaṃ* are identical in meaning “that is” or “i.e.” Therefore, it seems possible to understand that, with Passage [36], the formula “*ekayāna = buddhayāna*” was replaced with the formula “*ekayāna = mahāyāna*,” as follows:

Passage [12] “*ekayāna = buddhayāna*” [prose portion of the “*upāyakaṣṣāya*” chapter]

Passage [36] “*ekayāna = mahāyāna*” [prose portion of the “*aupamyā*” chapter]

When the parable of the “burning house” was composed by the author who considered *mahāyāna* to be superior to *hīnayāna* and to be the sole means to attain Buddhahood, it seems that he was not able to avoid the term *ekayāna*, because the term had already been generally accepted to denote the central message of the Lotus Sutra. Therefore, he could only change the content or the meaning of the term *ekayāna* by replacing *buddhayāna* with *mahāyāna*. In this way, the composer of the parable of the “burning house” succeeded in advocating the discriminatory message that the central position of the Lotus Sutra is *mahāyāna*, which is superior to *hīnayāna*, and that, solely by means of *mahāyāna*, only *bodhisattvas* can attain Buddhahood, while non-*bodhisattvas* can never attain it.

Against these arguments stated above, it might be considered that the message of discrimination is rejected in the “Parable Portion” too, for it is stressed in Passages [33] and [36] that *mahāyānāni* or the large vehicles were given equally to all the sons without distinction. Especially the expression *samaṃ --- na viśamaṃ* in Passage [33] might be understood as the message rejecting discrimination. However, in such an understanding, the important fact that all the sons of the rich man are regarded as *buddhaputrās*, i.e. *bodhisattvas*, is ignored or forgotten. This fact, needless to say, means that only *bodhisattvas* can attain Buddhahood, while non-*bodhisattvas* can never attain it. As was stated above, I think the many people left in the burning house are considered by the composer of the parable to be non-*bodhisattvas* who can never attain Buddhahood.

Moreover, it is to be noted that in this parable even the three vehicles, i.e. ox-drawn vehicle, goat-drawn vehicle and deer-drawn vehicle, were not mentioned by the rich man to the many people left in the house because the existence of the three vehicles in front of the house-gate was mentioned by him to his sons only as expedient devices to save his sons from the “burning house.” Therefore, the many people left in the

“burning house,” whom I consider to be non-*bodhisattvas*, are totally excluded not only from the teaching of *mahāyāna* but also from the expedient devices of *trīyāna*.

One might think that it is improper to consider that in the prose portion of the “*aupamyā*” chapter one vehicle is understood as the expedient device (一乘方便), because not the one vehicle but the three vehicles are mentioned as the expedient devices in the parable of the “burning house.” That is correct as far as the outline of the parable is concerned. However, the following passage in the parable is to be understood accurately.

[39] pūrvam upāyakaśālyena trīṇi yānāny upadarśayitvā paścān mahāyānaenaiva sattvān  
parinirvāpayati/ (KN,82,7)

[40] 本現三乘、然後皆化使入大乘。(Taisho 9,76b9-10) [『正法華經』]

[41] 初說三乘、引導衆生、然後但以大乘而度脫之。(Taisho 9,13c13-14) [『妙法蓮華經』]

First, it is clear that in this passage the three vehicles are considered to be explained by expedient devices, while *mahāyāna* is regarded as *ekayāna*. However, when *ekayāna* is stated to be not *buddhayāna* but *mahāyāna* in Passage [39], what exactly is the meaning of *ekayāna*? The concept of *ekayāna*, when identified with *mahāyāna*, necessarily means that *ekayāna*, i.e. *mahāyāna*, is superior to *hīnayāna*. Such an idea, needless to say, becomes the logical ground for admitting the distinction between the three vehicles or the reality of the three vehicles. Therefore, what is really stated by Passage [39] is the discriminatory message that only *bodhisattvas* can attain Buddhahood solely by means of *mahāyāna*, which is superior to *hīnayāna*.

#### IV

In my understanding, the original message of the Lotus Sutra, stated in the prose portion of the “*upāyakaśālyā*” chapter, was fundamentally changed in the prose portion of the “*aupamyā*” chapter. In other words, the idea of *ekaṃ buddhayānam*, that all sentient beings who listen to the Dharma will attain Buddhahood, was replaced with the discriminatory idea of *mahāyāna*, according to which only *bodhisattvas* can attain Buddhahood, while non-*bodhisattvas* can never attain it. The discriminatory character of the idea of *mahāyāna* advocated in the prose portion of the “*aupamyā*” chapter seems to be fully expressed by Passages [17] and [19] in the verse portion of the same chapter. And I think such an idea was maintained throughout all the following chapters that were composed after the *aupamyā* chapter.

For example, the following passage in the “*sadāparibhūtā*” chapter is very famous.

[42] nāham āyusmanto yuṣmākaṃ paribhavāmi/ aparibhūtā yūyam/ tat kasya hetoḥ/ sarve hi  
bhavanto bodhisattvacaryāṃ carantu/ bhaviṣyatha yūyaṃ tathāgatā arhantaḥ  
samyaksambuddhā iti/ (KN, 378,2-3)

[43] 諸賢、無得憍慢自高。所以者何。諸賢、志趣當尚菩薩、如來至真等正覺。

(Taisho 9,122c24-26) [『正法華經』]

[44] 我深敬汝等、不敢輕慢。所以者何。汝等皆行菩薩道、當得作佛。(Taisho 9,50c19-20)  
[『妙法蓮華經』]

This passage, i.e. the words of Sadāparibhūta bodhisattva, seems to be often misunderstood due to the inaccurate translation by Kumārajīva. In Passage [44] of his translation, the imperative meaning of the word *carantu* is not accurately translated. The passage, I think, can be briefly translated as “I do not despise you. Why? Practice *bodhisattvacaryā*, and you will become Buddhas.” Therefore in this passage it is stated that without practicing *bodhisattvacaryā* one cannot become a Buddha or that *bodhisattvacaryā* is the necessary condition for attaining Buddhahood. Thus, I think the idea that only *bodhisattvas* can attain Buddhahood is recognized even in Passage [42], which is often considered to express the message of “universal salvation” of the Lotus Sutra.

As long as the Mahāyānist idea that only *bodhisattvas* can attain Buddhahood is admitted, it seems quite natural to consider that Śāriputra, who was given the prediction to become a Buddha, was in reality not a *śrāvaka* but a *bodhisattva*. In order to express such a “double character” of Śāriputra, I describe him as “a *śrāvaka* in appearance, but a *bodhisattva* in reality” 仮の聲聞、実は菩薩.<sup>21</sup> In my understanding, all the *śrāvakas* who were given the prediction to become Buddhas in the Lotus Sutra were considered by the author[s] to be “*śrāvakas* in appearance, but *bodhisattvas* in reality.”

Such a “double character” is expressed, though in a somewhat extreme way, by the expression *neimi pusaxing waixian shi shengwen* 內祕菩薩行、外現是聲聞 used in the translation by Kumārajīva as follows:

[45] *ajñātacaryām*<sup>22</sup> ca caranti ete vayan khalu śrāvaka alpakṛtyāḥ/(KN,204,1)[VIII,v.5ab]

[46] 身口及心、常遵所行、如是聲聞、力勢薄少。(Taisho 9,96a22-23) [『正法華經』]

[47] 內祕菩薩行、外現是聲聞、[少欲] (Taisho 9,28a17-18) [『妙法蓮華經』]

However, it is to be noted that all the *śrāvakas* who appear in the Lotus Sutra are not necessarily “*śrāvakas* in appearance, but *bodhisattvas* in reality.” For example, the people left in the “burning house,” whom I have regarded as non-*bodhisattvas*, are considered to be, as it were, “real *śrāvakas*” or “*śrāvakas* in reality” 眞の聲聞 who are totally excluded from the possibility of attaining Buddhahood. It seems necessary to understand that there are two kinds of *śrāvaka* appearing in the Lotus Sutra, as is stated in the *Dasheng xuanlun* 大乘玄論 as follows:

[48] 法華經中、內祕菩薩行外現是聲聞者、權行聲聞。故權實二種聲聞。(Taisho 45,47c20-22)

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Matsumoto, *Hokekyō Shisōron*, pp. 214-215, pp. 468-469, p. 654.

<sup>22</sup> Instead of *ajñānacaryām* (KN, 204,1), I adopt the reading *ajñātacaryām* in the Wogihara-Tsuchida edition (179, 24). Kariya also adopts this reading. Cf. Kariya, *Hokekyō Ichibutsujō no Shisō*, p. 327, n. 68.



It is evident that *quanxing shengwen* 權行聲聞 corresponds to “*śrāvakas* in appearance, but *bodhisattvas* in reality,” while *shixing shengwen* 實行聲聞 seems to mean “real *śrāvakas*.”

In the verse portion (III,vv.42-55) of the “*aupamyā*” chapter, it is stated that in the rich man’s house there lived a lot of hideous animals such as birds, snakes (*gonasaka*), rats, scorpions, dogs, foxes, wolves and centipedes, as well as demons like *yakṣas*, *pretas* and *piśācakas*. But who are the hideous animals and demons described in a very lengthy and ugly manner? The answer seems to be given in the following verses.

- [49] śatāna pañcāna anūnakānām āvāsu so tatra bhaveta prāṇinām/  
bahūni ca niṣkuṭasaṃkaṭāni uccārapūrṇāni jugupsitāni//  
gopānāsī vigaḍita tatra sarvā kuḍyāś ca bhittiś ca tathaiva srastāḥ/  
grḍhrāṇa koṭyo nivasanti tatra pārāvatolūka tathānyapakṣiṇaḥ/(KN,83,3-6)[III,vv.41-42]  
[50] 時有諸人、五百之衆、皆共止頓、於彼舍宅。有無央數、草木積聚、所當用者、滿  
畜無量、一切門戶、時皆閉塞、有諸樓閣、及諸蓮華、億千衆香、而有芬氣、若干種  
鳥、眷屬圍繞。(Taisho 9,76b21-26) [『正法華經』]  
[51] 雜穢充遍、有五百人、止住其中、鵝鴈雕鷲、烏鵲鳩鵲。(Taisho 9, 13c23-24)  
[『妙法蓮華經』]

What is to be noted in Passage [49] is that the distinction between the five hundred *prāṇins* and the various birds, which constitute part of the hideous animals, is not clearly stated in this passage. In other words, the hideous animals such as birds, snakes and scorpions, as well as demons, seem to be regarded as *prāṇins* or as part of *prāṇins*. If this understanding is correct, the people (*prāṇins*) left in the burning house, whom I consider to be “real *śrāvakas*” or non-*bodhisattvas*, who are totally excluded from the possibility of attaining Buddhahood, are scurrilously abused here as beings like the hideous animals and demons.

In fact, in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, *icchantikas*, who can never attain Buddhahood, are compared to venomous snakes, as follows:

- [52] 此摩訶衍般泥洹經、亦復如是。一切憍慢四種毒蛇犯四重禁及無間業不樂菩提未發意者、  
皆悉安立於菩提道。所以者何。此摩訶衍般泥洹經、最爲無上第一良藥故。唯除增上  
毒蛇一闍提輩<sup>23</sup>。(Taisho 12,893b19-23) [法顯]

Therefore, the idea of the *icchantika*, who can never attain Buddhahood, seems to have developed from the understanding that the people left in the “burning house,” compared to venomous snakes in the verse portion of the “*aupamyā*” chapter, are non-*bodhisattvas* totally excluded from the possibility of attaining Buddhahood.

<sup>23</sup> The word 增上毒蛇 corresponds to 大龍 (Taisho 12,420a7) in Dharmakṣema’s translation and to “*klu drag po mi bzad pa*” (Habata, *ibid.*, p. 353, § 493, 1.12) in Tibetan translation.

However, in my opinion, the first and primary origin of the idea of the “*icchantika*,” who can never attain Buddhahood, is to be recognized in the following passage of the prose portion of the “*upāyakaśālyā*” chapter.

[53] samanatarabhāṣitā ceyam bhagavatā vāg atha khalu tataḥ parṣada adhimānikānām bhikṣūṇām bhikṣuṇīnām upāsakānām upāsikānām pañcamātrāṇi sahasrāṇy utthāyāsanebhyo bhagavataḥ pādaś śirasābhivanditvā tataḥ parṣado ’pakrāṃanti sma/ (KN,38,12-14)

[54] 世尊適發此言、比丘比丘尼清信士清信女五千人等、至懷甚慢、即從坐起、稽首佛足、捨衆而退。(Taisho 9,69b18-20) [『正法華經』]

[55] 說此語時、會中有比丘比丘尼優婆塞 優婆夷五千人等、即從座起、禮佛而退。(Taisho 9,7a7-8) [妙法蓮華經]

The five thousand monks and nuns, etc., “possessed of conceit” (*adhimānika*), or more precisely *adhimānika-bhikṣu-bhikṣuṇī-upāsaka-upāsikās*, said in this passage to have retreated from the congregation, seem to be considered by the author to be deprived of the ability to attain Buddhahood because they would not listen to the Dharma that the Buddha was willing to preach.

It is to be accurately understood that the original message of the Lotus Sutra, which I consider to be stated in the prose portion of the Lotus Sutra, especially in Passage [12], is not the simple idea of “universal salvation.” As I explained above concerning Passage [12], the original message is that all sentient beings who listen to the Buddha’s Dharma will attain Buddhahood, which means that sentient beings who do not listen to the Dharma can never attain Buddhahood.

It seems that the five thousand monks, etc., “possessed of conceit” (*adhimānika*), described as *adhimānika-bhikṣu-bhikṣuṇī-upāsaka-upāsikās* in Passage [53], were later called simply *adhimānika-bhikṣu* or *adhimānika-śrāvaka*. For example, the people to whom the words of Sadāparibhūta in Passage [42] were said seem to be called, in the “*sadāparibhūta*” chapter, *adhimānika-bhikṣu-bhikṣuṇī-upāsaka-upāsikās* (KN, 379,3-4) or simply *adhimānika-bhikṣu* (KN, 377,10).

Thus, it seems possible to consider that the five thousand monks, etc., “possessed of conceit” (*adhimānika*), who are said in the “*upāyakaśālyā*” chapter to have retreated from the congregation, and who were considered to have no ability to attain Buddhahood, were granted, by the words of Sadāparibhūta in Passage [42], the possibility of attaining Buddhahood. In other words, it is admitted in Passage [42] that they can attain Buddhahood only if they practice *bodhisattvacaryā*.

It is also to be noted that *adhimānika-bhikṣu-bhikṣuṇī-upāsaka-upāsikās* in Passage [53] of the “*upāyakaśālyā*” chapter and *adhimānika-bhikṣu-bhikṣuṇī-upāsaka-upāsikās* in the “*sadāparibhūta*” chapter are considered to be identical in Vasubandhu’s commentary on

the Lotus Sutra, i.e. the *Fahua lun*, because there are the following passages in this commentary.

[56] 此因授記、皆生驚怖者、有三種義。一者欲令彼諸大衆推求甚深妙境界故。二者欲令彼諸大衆生尊重心畢竟欲聞如來說故。三者欲令諸增上慢聲聞之人捨離法座而起去故。  
(Taisho 26,6c28-7a3)

[57] 菩薩記者、如下不輕菩薩品中示現應知。禮拜讚歎作如是言、我不輕汝。汝等皆當得作佛者、示現衆生皆有佛性故。言聲聞人得授記者、聲聞有四種。一者決定聲聞。二者增上慢聲聞。三者退菩提心聲聞。四者應化聲聞。二種聲聞、如來授記。謂應化者、退已還發菩提心者。若決定者、增上慢者、二種聲聞、根未熟故、不與授記。菩薩與授記者、方便令發菩提心故。(Taisho 26, 9a12-20)

It is evident that the Yogācāra theory of “four kinds of *śrāvakas*”<sup>24</sup> is admitted in Passage [57]. This theory is stated, for example, in the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī* of the *Yogācārabhūmi* as follows:

[58] 云何名爲四種聲聞。一者變化聲聞。二者增上慢聲聞。三者迴向菩提聲聞。四者一向趣寂聲聞。…。增上慢聲聞者、謂但由補特伽羅無我智及執著邪法無我智、計爲清淨。迴向菩提聲聞者… 由此因故、便能發趣廣大菩提 …。一向趣寂聲聞者、謂從本來是最極微劣慈悲種性故、一向棄背利益衆生事故、於生死苦極怖畏故、唯有安住涅槃意樂、畢竟不能趣大菩提。(Taisho 30,744a19-b5)<sup>25</sup>

Although it is evident that the explanation of the theory of “four kinds of *śrāvakas*” in passage [57] is based on the explanation of the theory given in Passage [58] of the *Yogācārabhūmi*, there is a discrepancy between the two explanations. Namely, while it seems to be stated in Passage [58] that the 增上慢聲聞 *\*adhimānika-śrāvaka* has no ability to attain Buddhahood,<sup>26</sup> it is not clear whether the 增上慢聲聞 *\*adhimānika-śrāvaka* is said to have no ability at all to attain Buddhahood in Passage [57].

The crucial expression to be examined in Passage [57] is as follows:

[59] 二種聲聞、根未熟故、不與授記。菩薩與授記者、方便令發菩提心故。<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> On the theory of “four kinds of *śrāvakas*”, cf. Matsumoto, *Bukkyō Shisōron Ge* 仏教思想論下 (Essays on Buddhist Thought, II), Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 2013, pp. 331-341.

<sup>25</sup> The corresponding passage is found in Tibetan translation (Derge ed., zi,113b7-114a6).

<sup>26</sup> In Passage [58], the meaning of the word *adhimāna* seems to be interpreted as *asmimāna*. If so, quite differently from the interpretation given in Passage [56], it seems that *\*adhimānika-śrāvaka* in Passage [58] does not mean the five thousand monks, etc., “possessed of conceit” (*adhimānika*) who are said to have retreated from the assembly in Passage [53] of the prose portion of the “*upāyakaṣālya*” chapter.

<sup>27</sup> The interpretation of the passage has for a long time been a subject of arguments in Chinese and Japanese Buddhism. For a detailed study of the arguments, Cf. Mitsuyoshi Okuno 奥野光賢, *Busshō Shisō no Tenkai Kichizō o chūshin toshita Hokkeron Juyōshi* 仏性思想の展開 吉藏を中心とした『法華論』受容史 [Development of Buddha-nature Thought — A History of the Acceptance of the *Fahua lun* with a focus on Jizang], Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 2002, pp. 98-151, pp. 253-255, pp. 261-268.

[60] The *tathāgata* did not give the prediction to the two kinds of *śrāvakas*, while the *bodhisattva*, i.e. *Sadāparibhūta*, gave them the prediction in order to make them produce *bodhicitta* by means of expedient devices.

Namely, if the phrase *fāngbian lingfa putixin* 方便令發菩提心 means that the 增上慢聲聞\**adhimānika-śrāvaka* as well as the 決定聲聞\**niyata-śrāvaka* can produce *bodhicitta*, it seems to be clearly admitted in this expression that the 增上慢聲聞\**adhimānika-śrāvaka* will finally attain Buddhahood.

The explanation of the theory of “four kinds of *śrāvakas*” in Passage [58] of the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī* can be regarded as expressing the orthodox position of Yogācāras, according to which some people cannot attain Buddhahood (一分不成仏). However, the position of the author of Passage [57] seems to be a little different from the orthodox position. In other words, the author seems to be willing to admit the understanding that all sentient beings can attain Buddhahood (一切皆成仏), although his explanation in Passage [57] is, in its framework, based on the Yogācāra theory of “four kinds of *śrāvakas*.”

In my opinion, such an attitude on the part of the author can be recognized also in the author of the following passage of the *Ratnagotravibhāga*.

[61] yat punar idam uktam icchantiko 'tyantam aparinirvāṇadharmeti tan mahayānadharma-pratigha icchantikatve hetur iti mahāyānadharmapratighanivartanārtham uktam kālāntarābhiprāyeṇa/ (RGV, Johnston edition, 37,1-3)

[62] 向說一闡提、常不入涅槃、無涅槃性者、此義云何。爲欲示現謗大乘因故。此明何義。爲欲迴轉謗大乘心不求大乘心故。依無量時故。(Taisho 31,831b5-8)

Although the expression *kālāntarābhiprāyeṇa*<sup>28</sup> is difficult to understand, it is certain that in Passage [61] *mahāyānadharmapratigha* (aversion to *mahāyāna-dharma*) is said to be the cause (*hetu*) of *icchantikatva*, which means that *icchantikatva* can be destroyed if the cause is extinguished. In other words, because *icchantikatva*, i.e. the state of being an *icchantika*, is not permanent, an *icchantika* can attain Buddhahood in the future if he can destroy his own *icchantikatva*.

The assertion that *icchantikatva* can be destroyed is also found in the following passage of Dharmakṣema's translation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*.

[63] 一切衆生悉有佛性。懺四重禁、除謗法心、盡五逆罪、滅一闡提、然後得成阿耨多羅三藐三菩提 (Taisho 12, 488b7-9)

Although this passage has no corresponding passage in the Faxian's translation and the Tibetan translation,<sup>29</sup> it is evident that the expression *mie yichanti* 滅一闡提

<sup>28</sup> On the expression *kālāntarābhiprāyeṇa*, cf. Matsumoto, *Bukkyō Shisōron Ge*, pp. 177-183.

<sup>29</sup> This passage is found in the latter 30 volumes of Dharmakṣema's translation, which consists of 40 volumes. The latter 30 volumes correspond neither to Faxian's translation nor to the Tibetan translation, for it is considered that only the first 10 volumes

means the assertion that *icchantikā* can be destroyed.

V

The conclusions of this paper are as follows:

1. The oldest layer of the Lotus Sutra is the prose portion of the “*upāyakaṣālyā*” chapter, where the terms *mahāyāna* and *bodhisattva* are never used.
2. The original message of the sutra, stated in the oldest layer, i.e. the prose portion of the “*upāyakaṣālyā*” chapter, is that all sentient beings who listen to the Buddha’s Dharma will attain Buddhahood. The message is expressed by the term *ekam buddhayānam*.
3. In the prose portion of the “*aupamyā*” chapter, the terms *bodhisattva* and *mahāyāna* are introduced into the Lotus Sutra in order to state the message that only *bodhisttvas* can attain Buddhahood solely by *mahāyāna*, while non-*bodhisttvas* cannot attain it.
4. In the prose portion of the “*aupamyā*” chapter, Śāriputra was given the prediction of his attainment of Buddhahood because he was considered by the author[s] to be not a *śrāvaka* but a *bodhisattva*, i.e. “a *śrāvaka* in appearance, but a *bodhisattva* in reality” 仮の声聞, 実は菩薩 in my terminology.
5. In the parable of the “burning house,” which was composed by the author[s] in order to introduce the term *mahāyāna* into the Lotus Sutra and to replace *buddhayāna* with *mahāyāna*, the people (*prāpīns*) left in the “burning house” were considered by the author[s] to be non-*bodhisttvas* or “real *śrāvakas*” 真の声聞 who were totally excluded from the possibility of attaining Buddhahood.
6. The theory that *icchantikas* can never attain Buddhahood, repeatedly stated in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, as well as the orthodox Yogācāra theory of “four kinds of *śrāvakas*, can be understood as a development of the idea that the people (*prāpīns*) left in the “burning house,” i.e. non-*bodhisttvas*, can never attain Buddhahood.
7. Some efforts to rescue even *icchantikas* can be recognized in the texts which seem to reflect “later” developments.

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correspond to both translations. Therefore, the latter 30 volumes are generally regarded as a later addition. However, it is to be noted that the idea that *icchantikā* can be destroyed is recognized also in the fifth volume of Dharmakṣema’s translation, as follows: 犯重禁者不成佛道、無有是處。何以故。是人若於佛正法中、心得淨信、爾時即便滅一闍提。若復得作優婆塞者、亦得斷滅於一闍提。犯重禁者、滅此罪已、則得成佛。是故若言畢竟不移、不成佛道、無有是處。--- 又一闍提、若盡滅者、則不得稱一闍提也。(Taisho 12,393b6-13)