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CONTENTS

I. ARTICLES

1. Buddhism and Political Power in Korean History, *by S. Keel* 9
2. Mahāmaudgalyāyana's Sermon on the Letting-in and Not Letting-in (of Sensitive Influences), *by E. Waldschmidt* 25
3. The Mahāsāṃghika and the Tathāgatagarbha, *by A. Wayman* 35

II. SHORT PAPERS

1. Vajrayāna in Gostana-deśa, *by H. W. Bailey* 53
2. "Our Buddha" in an Aśokan Inscription, *by A. K. Narain* 57
3. The Story of Vyāsa and Kāśīsundarī, *by L. Zwilling* 65
4. New Areas of Research for Archaeologists and Buddhologists, *by G. Tucci* 71

III. BOOK REVIEWS

1. An Anthology of Buddhist Tantric Songs: a Study of the Caryāgīti, *by Per Kvaerne* 77
2. Tibetan Medicine: With Special Reference to Yogaśataka, *by Vaidya Bhagwan Dash* 81

IV. NOTES AND NEWS

On Buddhist Text Information (B.T.I.) of the Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions (IASWR), New York, *by R. A. Gard* 87

V. OBITUARY

P. L. Vaidya, *by P. V. Bapat* 91

The Mahāsāṃghika and the Tathāgatagarbha (Buddhist Doctrinal History, Study 1)

by A. Wayman

Introduction

For the origins of the Mahāyāna we must agree with Hirakawa[1] that while some Mahāyāna doctrines are derived from the Mahāsāṃghika school, some others are derived from the Sarvāstivādin school. I would add that unless some other source can be pointed to, we may conclude that Mahāyāna Buddhism in its various forms, at least leaving out the special development of Tantrism, can be traced to either the Mahāsāṃghika or the Sarvāstivādin schools.

It is well recognized by Buddhologists that the Mahāsāṃghika sect arose by a schism from the previously undivided Buddhist *saṃgha* in the second century after the Buddha's Nirvāṇa (A.N.), leaving the other part of the *saṃgha* to be called Sthavira. As to precisely when the schism occurred, there was a difference of opinion as to whether it happened as a result of the Second Buddhist Council (about 110 A.N.) over a laxity of Vinaya rules by some monks, or happened later in the century (137 A.N.) over the five theses about Arhats and which occasioned a 'Third Buddhist Council' sponsored by the Kings Nanda and Mahāpadma. There were some other possibilities, as summarized by Nattier and Prebish,[2] who conclude that the schism occurred 116 A.N. over Vinaya rules, while the argument over Arhat attainment provoked a further split within the already existing Mahāsāṃghika sect. It is immaterial for our purposes whether the 'five theses of Mahādeva' downgrading the Arhat occasioned the schism between the Mahāsāṃghikas and the Sthaviras, or whether this downgrading was an internal argument within the Mahāsāṃghika. What is important here is that

the downgrading of the Arhat continued into a Mahāyāna scripture called the *Śrīmālā-sūtra*, and that the five theses are a characteristic of the Mahāsāṃghika, to wit: 1. Arhats are tempted by others, 2. they still have ignorance, 3. they still have doubt, 4. they are liberated by others; and 5. the path is accompanied by utterance. The fifth of these seems explainable by other Mahāsāṃghika tenets, in Bareau's listing:[3] No. 58 'morality is not mental'; No. 59 'morality does not follow upon thought'; No. 60 'virtue caused by a vow increases'; No. 61 'candor (*vijñapti*) is virtue'; No. 62 'reticence (*avijñapti*) is immoral.'

Part I of this paper attempts to relate the *Śrīmālā-sūtra* and the Tathāgatagarbha doctrine to the Mahāsāṃghika school. Part II discusses the terms *dharmatā* and *svabhāva* so as to expose an ancient quarrel.

I. Mahāsāṃghika school and the Srīmālā-sūtra

The present writer, in collaboration with Hideko Wayman, has published a translation and study of the *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda-sūtra* under the title *The Lion's Roar of Queen Śrīmālā; a Buddhist Scripture on the Tathāgatagarbha Theory,*[4] in which the position was taken that the Tathāgatagarbha theory, especially as portrayed in this scripture, is a product of the Mahāsāṃghika school. Now, referring to our work as 'Lion's Roar', a correlation will be made to tenets of the Mahāsāṃghika in Bareau's numbering, with my own captions 'Tenets on the Jewel of Buddha', etc.:

Tenets on the Jewel of Buddha:

No. 1 'The Buddhas are supramundane (*lokottara*).' 'Lion's Roar', p. 92: "the Tathāgata does not dwell within the limits of time; the Tāthagata-Arhat-Samyaksambuddhas dwell at the uttermost limit." No. 2 'The Tathāgatas are devoid of flux (*anāsrava*) and mundane natures (*laukikadharma*).' 'Lion's Roar', pp. 88-89: ". . . the natures to be eliminated, exceeding the sands of the Ganges River, which are all utterly eradicated by the enlightenment wisdom of the Tathāgata . . ." 'Lion's Roar', pp. 97-98: "all the Tathāgata-Arhat-Samyaksambuddhas eliminate every source of suffering which incorporates any defilement or secondary defilement . . ."

Tenets on the Jewel of Dharma:

No. 4 'The Buddha, by a single sound (*śabda*) expresses all the Dharmadhātu.'
No. 42 'All the Sutras promulgated by the Buddha have a final meaning (*nītārtha*).' 'Lion's Roar', p. 89: "Then, as a Tathāgata-Arhat-Samyaksambuddha, one gains the unhindered understanding of all natures (*dharma*) . . .; King of the Doctrine and Lord of the Doctrine; and, having gone to the stage which is sovereign over all natures, utters the Lion's roar . . . 'there is nothing to be known beyond this.' That being so, the Lion's roar of the Tathāgatas has final meaning (*nītārtha*) and explains this meaning straightforwardly (*ekāṃśena*, with a single part)."

Tenets on the Jewel of the Buddha as refuge:

No. 6 'The material body is truly unlimited (*ananta*).' 'Lion's Roar', p. 62: "Homage to you, whose form is limitless".
No. 7 'The power (*prabhāva*) of the Tathāgatas is also limitless'. 'Lion's Roar', p. 76: "The Lord is omnipotent, is the resort". 'Lion's Roar', p. 106: "The Lord is the omnipotent being. The Lord is the resort."
No. 8 'The longevity of the Buddha is also limitless.' 'Lion's Roar', p. 61: "Your Buddha nature does not perish; so it is right to take refuge in you, the *muni*."

Special tenets:

No. 9 'The Buddha, upon converting the living beings and making them born among those with pure faith, has no thought of satisfaction.' 'Lion's Roar', pp. 77-78: "Queen, although I have already explained for incalculable eons the merit and benefit of embracing the Illustrious Doctrine, I still have not come to the end of explaining the merit and benefit of embracing the Illustrious Doctrine."
No. 30 'There are Arhats who . . . are subject to ignorance (*ajñāna*), who have doubts (*kaṅkṣā*), who are saved by others (*paravitīrṇa*) . . .' 'Lion's Roar', p. 80: "Lord, the Arhats and the Pratyekabuddhas not only take refuge in Tathāgatahood, but also have fear

. . . they have many natures to be eliminated."
No. 44 'The self-presence of mind is bright. It is soiled (i.e. darkened) by adventitious secondary defilement.' 'Lion's Roar', p. 106: "this intrinsic purity of the Tathāgatagarbha stained by adventitious secondary defilements is the domain of the Tathāgata, who is the inconceivable master . . ." "the meaning of the defilement on the intrinsically pure consciousness is difficult to understand."
No. 49 'There is no intermediate state (*antarābhava*).' Bareau, p. 68, points out the usual explanation that this concerns the interval some Buddhist sects place between the moment of death and the moment of birth, and adds that the Māhāsaṃghika argumentation on this point is unknown. 'Lion's Roar', p. 104: "Since there is the Tathāgatagarbha, there is a reason for speaking of 'cyclical flow' (*saṃsāra*). Lord, as to 'cyclical flow,' no sooner do the sense organs for perception pass away than it [the Tathāgatagarbha] takes hold of sense organs for perception, and that is 'cyclical flow.' " Thus the *Śrīmālā* denies an intermediate state between the perishing and renewal of sense organs.
No. 78 'There is a root-consciousness (*mūlavijñāna*) which serves as the support (*āśraya*) for eye-perception and the other sensory perceptions, like the root of the tree is the principle of the leaves, etc.' 'Lion's Roar', introduction, p. 44, in reference to the Tathāgatagarbha: It is the "support, holder, base" (*niśraya, ādhāra, pratiṣṭhā*). 'Lion's Roar', p. 104: "Lord, saṃsāra is based on the Tathāgatagarbha . . . no sooner do the sense organs for perception pass away than it takes hold of sense organs for perception. . . 'Perished' is the loss of the senses. 'Born' is the renewal of the senses. But, Lord, the Tathāgatagarbha is not born, does not die. . ." The support nature of the Tathāgatagarbha apparently has the Mahāsāṃghika *mūlavijñāna* as its prototype. The connection with *vijñāna* is not lost in the *Śrīmālā*; confer passage cited partly under tenet No. 49, above, that begins with mention of the intrinsic purity of the Tathāgatagarbha and in the same paragraph switches to the intrinsically pure consciousness, where 'consciousness' represents *citta*, the Abhidharma equivalent to *vijñāna*. 'Lion's Roar', p. 44, the Tathāgatagarbha scriptures have synonyms for the Tathāgatagarbha, 'cause' (*hetu*) and 'seed' (*bīja*), that exactly fit the illustration of the *mūlavijñāna*, "like the root of the tree is the principle of the leaves, etc." The *Śrīmālā* itself emphasizes 'support'.

In short, the *Śrīmālā-sūtra* has passages consistent with most

of the first ten of the Mahāsāṃghika tenets, and has passages consistent with the most celebrated characteristic tenets of this sect among the remaining tenets of Bareau's list.

The *Śrīmālā-sūtra* happens to be the most frequently cited work in the Indian manual of Tathāgatagarbha theory, the *Ratnagotravibhāga* (as edited by Johnston; known as the *Uttaratantra* in the Tibetan canon). Among the various reviews of the 'Lion's Roar', I should not neglect one which is competent and also takes issue with our insisted-upon theory of Mahāsāṃghika origins. This is the review by Takasaki,[5] who translated the *Ratnagotravibhāga* into English (1966) and has published in Japanese a voluminous study of the Tathāgatagarbha scriptures.[6] I am grateful to Takasaki for his criticism in regard to the Mahāsāṃghika. The justification of the Mahāsāṃghika thesis was spread here and there in the 'Lion's Roar'; and while convincing to the translators, need not have been convincing to others. Consequently, the foregoing correlation of Mahāsāṃghika tenets with the *Śrīmālā* has been made to render the thesis more convincing.

But there are further difficulties, since it could be objected that a correlation with the traditional Mahāsāṃghika tenets does not *per se* prove a relation with attested Mahāsāṃghika literature. Now, I will attempt to answer the most pointed questions in this regard.

1) If the *Śrīmālāsūtra* is associated with the Mahāsāṃghika school, should it not be named in the canon of that school? Indeed it should, and indeed is included by Paramārtha (mid-sixth cent.) in the Mahāyāna canon of the Mahāsāṃghika sect, as Bareau explicitly reports.[7]

2) If the Mahāsāṃghika sect is to be implicated in the Tathāgatagarbha doctrine, should there not be some passage in a recognized Mahāsāṅghika scripture that can be reasonably identified with this doctrine? Indeed there should be. The most well-known extant work of the Mahāsāṃghika is the *Mahāvastu*, which contains the passage, 'Lion's Roar', p. 43, addressed to the mother of a Buddha: "Today, O queen, you will give birth to a good youth (*sukumāra*) of immortal embryo (*amara-garbha*), who destroys old age and illness, celebrated and beneficial in heaven and on earth, a benefactor of gods and men."[8] Notice the contrast of the word *sukumāra* ('very delicate', perhaps 'easily dying'[9]) with *amara-garbha* ('immortal embryo'), easily identifiable with the Tathāgata-

garbha which is taken as an immortal element in sentient beings, themselves mortal.

3) Is there some way of associating the *Śrīmālāsūtra* with the *Mahāvastu*? The way the 'Lion's Roar', p. 19, does it, is to take the four career-phases of Bodhisattvas mentioned at the beginning of the *Mahāvastu*, namely the 'natural career-phase' (*prakṛti-caryā*), the 'aspiration career-phase' (*praṇidhana-caryā*), the 'conforming career-phase' (*anuloma-caryā*), and the 'nonregressing career-phase' (*anivartana-caryā*); and to combine these with the traditional divisions[10] of the *Śrīmālā* by the following scheme of the first two chapters ('Lion's Roar', p. 19), whose fuller justification is in the 'Lion's Roar' itself:

> Chapter One; "Eliminating All Doubts." 1. Praises of the Infinite Merit of the Tathāgata, and 2. Ten Great Vows. These are both the 'natural career-phase' involving the planting of virtuous roots in the presence of a Buddha.
>
> Chapter Two: "Deciding the Cause." 3. Three All-inclusive Aspirations. This is the 'aspiration career-phase.' 4. Embrace of the Illustrious Doctrine. A. Teaching in the Scope of the Great Aspiration, and B. Teaching the Far-ranging Meaning. These are the 'conforming career-phase.' C. Teaching the Great Meaning. This is the 'nonregressing career-phase.' That finishes the career-phases of the Bodhisattva, namely, the causal part, aimed at the fruit, which is complete Buddhahood.

Some modern Japanese scholars have discussed these career-phases, as Shindo Shiraishi shows.[12] He points out that Ryūshō Hikata in a 1954 work on the Jātakas finds that the four careers, while not the 'consistent principle' of the *Mahāvastu*, must have been the 'fundamental idea' of the compiler of the present enlarged recension of the *Mahāvastu*; and points out that Ryūjō Yamada has found this classification in some chapters of the 'Prajñāparamitā-sūtra', suggesting the priority of the *Mahāvastu* to this 'Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra'. Shiraishi's brief article indicates the importance of the 'prophecy' (*vyākaraṇa*) aspect in the early development of the Bodhisattva doctrine, and the *Mahāvastu* system of four career-phases as a framework of early and later theories.

4) Is there any other evidence of affiliation of the *Śrīmālā* with

the *Mahāvastu*? Perhaps the most important one is the *Mahāvastu* passage (confer, 'Lion's Roar', p. 33) in the words of Mahā-Katyāyana that the Jātaka tales start from the Eighth Stage, in which stage the Bodhisattvas renounce all they possess, are regarded as Samyaksambuddhas, and thereafter do not regress. This shows the *Mahāvastu* position that the fourth career-phase called 'nonregressing' is meant to cover the last three of the ten Bodhisattva Stages; and this directly ties in with scriptural words of the *Śrīmālāsūtra* ('Lion's Roar', pp. 75-76), beginning, "Lord, the good son of the family or good daughter of the family by renouncing his body, thus obtaining the body of a Buddha, is equal to the uttermost limit of *saṃsāra*; . . ." The Tathāgatagarbha treatise *Ratnagotravibhāga* (on I, 2) quotes the *Dhāraṇīśvararājasūtra* to show the arising of the Three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma, Samgha) as the basis for the last three Bodhisattva states, thus Śākyamuni under the Bodhi tree as the Eighth Stage.

5) Well, if the *Śrīmālāsūtra* as perhaps the most important of the Tathāgatagarbha scriptures, and the manual of Tathāgatagarbha doctrine, the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, are related to the Mahāsāṃghika school in the manner you have asserted, why would not Takasaki Jikidō in his monumental study of the Tathāgatagarbha scriptures preserved in the Chinese canon and who translated the *Ratnagotravibhāga* into English, or why would not David Seyfort Ruegg in his monumental study of this topic through the Tibetan treatises (his *La théorie du Tathāgatagarbha et du Gotra*)[13]—have found this out? There are many obscure points about the early Buddhist sects, especially since a few, notably the Theravāda and the Sarvāstivādin, have extensive literary remains and have been much studied, while others are known mainly from brief lists of specialized doctrines. Since the main acknowledged treatise of the Mahāsāmghika school, the *Mahāvastu*, was not translated into either Chinese or Tibetan, its important fund of evidence could not enter into the considerations of either the Chinese or Tibetan commentators. Hence, it is conceivable that both Takasaki and Ruegg, respectively dealing with the Chinese and the Tibetan works, and also using such Sanskrit treatises as the *Ratnagotravibhāga*—which do not treat such matters as the early Buddhist sects—could produce works of deserved reference value in given manners, and still not come up with the solution based on a comparison of the *Śrīmālāsūtra* with the *Mahāvastu*, carried out in a manner different from theirs.[14]

6) Do you still claim that the *Śrīmālāsūtra* was composed in South India in the Āndhra district? The 'Lion's Roar' sets forth this theory with the stipulation of prior acceptance that the Tathāgatagarbha doctrine has a Mahāsāṃghika origin. If the preceding evidence and reasoning be deemed sufficient for establishing the Mahāsāṃghika association, the the further step of determining the provenance is a rather simple matter. The place must be definitely a Mahāsāṃghika stronghold, and one where the Buddhist institution was patronized by prominent ladies, such as queens. According to Bareau,[15] the Mahāsāṃghika initially had their chief residence in Magadha, well prior to the time of King Asoka. Inscriptions in the 2nd cent., A.D. show their presence at Mathurā, at Karle, and in the area of Kabul. The chief distribution (south of the Nerbudā River at Karle, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, etc.) and far north, toward Afghanistan) was still the case at the time of Hsüan-tsang's travels at the beginning of the 7th cent. It is clear that this must have been the situation at the time of the *Śrīmālā-sūtra* composition, namely 3rd cent., A.D. For the area near Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, there is now abundant data in Rao's *Religion in Āndhra*[16] about the great strength of the Mahāsāṃghika in this region at that time, and the role of the Mahāsāṃghika in promoting the art centers of Āndhra. These centers were especially of stūpas, preeminently Amarāvatī. This is consistent with a thesis that prominent laymen were originally charged with taking care of stūpas, but that later the Mahāsāṃghika monks came in league with these laymen and made theological justifications for stūpa worship.[17] Besides, the penchant to artistic depiction of Jātaka scenes was consistent with the Mahāsāṃghika doctrine (per *Mahāvastu*) that the Jātakas start with the Bodhisattva Eighth State, illustrated by Gautama Buddha seated beneath the Tree of Enlightenment;[18] and it is noteworthy in this regard that the three volumes of the *Mahāvastu* are replete with Jātakas. There is art historical evidence that about this time (3rd cent., A.D.) the far northern center was taking artistic inspiration from the Āndhra sites. Thus, Rosen mentions "the decorative patterns on the architecture represented at Begram display the entire repertory of motifs appearing in the works of late Amarāvatī and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa." And, "Taking into account the stylistic evidence and the vocabulary of motifs employed, we must conclude that the Begram ivories were done in the latter part of the third or early part of the fourth century A.D., by artists fully conversant

with the art of Āndhra Pradesh."[19] To this evidence, we need only add the acknowledged support by prominent ladies; confer 'Lion's Roar', pp. 1-2. Āndhra was the most creative site of the Mahāsāṃghika. Accordingly, the 'Lion's Roar' claimed, and the authors still claim, that the *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanādasūtra* was composed in the Andhra district, and in the 3rd century A.D.

II. The Tathāgatagarbha, dharmatā, and svabhāva

If the foregoing relationship between the Mahāsāṃghika school and the Tathāgatagarbha doctrine be granted, it still would have to be admitted that the relationship would have to belong to the Mahāyāna period and cannot be traced back to the early Mahāsāṃghika sect in 2nd cent. A.N. Now we shall come to grips with a disputed point of Buddhist doctrine that is older than the Mahāyāna and apparently also involves the Mahāsāṃghika and in the end leads to the Tathāgatagarbha. Accordingly, we should consider the Buddhist terms *dharmatā* and *svabhāva*. Certain modern authors seem alarmed at interpreting the term *dharmatā* as representing something that could give rise to something else, and willy-nilly they point to an ancient quarrel. *Svabhāva* is often said to have been denied in the Mādhyamika while the Mādhyamika commentator Candrakīrti takes it as the goal of the Bodhisattva. We shall see that these are related problems.

Certainly Lai[20] is right, generally speaking, in holding that the Indian Buddhist schools do not explain *dharmatā* as creating phenomena, while he finds this interpretation in Chinese Buddhsim. In any case, Indian Buddhism could not have meant by *dharmatā* the source of such things as rocks and tables. But there must have been Indian theories, even if considered deviant, that *dharmatā* could give rise to *something*, for otherwise how explain the insistent, even vehement, denials of the possibility, especially in terms of the Pāli equivalent *dhammatā*.

Thus, Jayatilleke several times alludes to a passage in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* (book of tens), cited as 'A, Vol. 3, 313'; in his rendition, "It is *in the nature of things* (*dhammatā*) that a person in the state of (meditative) concentration knows and sees what really is. . . . a person does not need to make an effort of will . . ."[21] Jayatilleke stresses that the Buddhist position denies a supernatural intervention; it is 'natural' that the next *dharma* should arise. But note that it is not 'natural' for the word *dhammatā* to be rendered

as an adverbial phrase *'in the nature of things'* (his italics), rather than as a noun.

Rahula,[22] although not referring to Jayatilleke's treatment, translates the whole scriptural passage and writes in agreement that when one does what is required, the result is natural and requires no will; and certainly there is no involvement of 'Grace'. He gives among his examples: a little snake comes to the hermitage of an ascetic *attano dhammatāya*, by "its own habit"—as Rahula properly renders it; *dhammatā* is not a supernatural power. Granted that it is not 'Grace' and the like; but it is doubtful that an *ordinary* mentality understands the snake's 'own habit'. Perhaps the yogin in the Buddhist attainment called *samāpatti* can understand it, as Candrakīrti has maintained (see below).

Kalupahana[23] also deals with this issue. He considers a well-known passage which occurs in the *Madhyamakavṛtti*, "Whether Tathāgatas arise or do not arise, there remains this (*eṣā*) *dharmatā* of *dharmas*," and properly disagrees with Stcherbatsky's rendition of *dharmatā*, to wit, 'ultimate realities'. Kalupahana goes on to a curious medley:

> As is pointed out below (chapter 5), *dharmatā* (P. *dhammatā*) refers to the causal connection between two *dharmas* rather than an underlying substratum of *dharmas*. If *dharmatā* stands for the causal connection, it cannot mean an ultimate reality (*dharmasvabhāva*) as the Sarvāstivādins understood it, because Nāgārjuna and his followers rejected the conception of *svabhāva*, using the argument that *svabhāva* is opposed to causality."[24]

Observe that Rahula has himself in that article cited the commentary on the *Dīgha-nikāya* explaining the word *dhammatā* as *sabhāvo* (which is of course equivalent to the Sanskrit *svabhāva*) and giving illustrations with the term *nyamo* ('order of things').[25] As I have elsewhere shown,[26] Nāgārjuna's commentator Candrakīrti (hence a 'follower' of Nāgārjuna) in that *Madhyamakavṛtti* and in his *Madhyamakāvatāra* takes *svabhāva* (the equivalent of *dharmatā*) as the Bodhisattva's goal realized in *samāpatti*. Hence, Candrakīrti would say that Nāgārjuna did reject (as Kalupahana and many another asserts he did) "the conception of *svabhāva*," but having rejected this *conception* did not necessarily reject *svabhāva*, any more than in rejecting various conceptions the ancients had about

blood, one thereby has to reject *blood*.

It is quite clear that Nāgārjuna and his followers denied that anything arises by reason of *svabhāva*. In doing so, by equating *svabhāva* and *dharmatā*, they were agreeing with these followers of the Theravāda tradition, such as now Rahula, who insist that whatever the term *dharmatā* (P. *dhammatā*) may have meant in the ancient texts, it does not stand for a certain something that is a source of *dharmas*. Kalupahana goes further than this by claiming that *dharmatā* refers "to the causal connection between two *dharmas* rather than an underlying substratum of *dharmas*." To assess this, let us first translate the sentence which the above-mentioned *Aṅguttara-nikāya* passage uses to summarize the *dhammatā* statements:

> iti kho, bhikkave, dhammā dhamme abhisandenti, dhammā dhamme paripūrenti apārā pāraṃ gamanāyā.[27]
>
> Thus you should know, monks, the *dhammas* flow into *dhamma*, the *dhammas* are fulfilled in *dhamma*—for going from the not-beyond to the beyond."

Then we notice that Asaṅga has a passage on this very matter in his *Yogācārabhūmi*, section on *hetuvidyā* of which I have edited the extant Sanskrit and here cite in part:[28]

> dharmato 'numānaṃ katamat / yan nānuśliṣṭena dharmasambaddhena tatsambandha [dharmatā] bhyūhanaṃ / tadyathā 'nityasambaddhena duḥkhatām anuminoti / duḥkhasambaddhena śūnyatā[nā] tmatāṃ jātisambaddhena jarādharmatāṃ jarāsambaddhena maraṇadharmatāṃ . . .

In the following translation I shall render *dharmatā* as 'underlying nature', even though Kalupahana claims that the word does not mean this:

> What is the inference from a *dharma*? The inferring of the underlying nature (*dharmatā*) of its association by an associated *dharma* that is not obviously related. For example, one infers the state of suffering (*duḥkhatā*) from one (i.e. *dharma*) associated with impermanence. One infers voidness and non-self from one associated with suffering; (infers) the underlying nature of old age from one associated with birth,

> the underlying nature of death from one (i.e. *dharma*) associated with old age. . . .

That is to say, when Buddhism explains the Truth of Suffering by the characters, suffering, impermanence, voidness, and non-self, these, suffering and so forth, amount to a metaphysical set of inferrable underlying nature to associate seemingly unrelated *dharmas*. Thus *dharmatā* as here explained is not the source of any *dharma*, nor is it the "causal connection between two *dharmas*". It is rather the whole relation as set forth in the scripture, "the *dhammas* flow into *dhamma*, the *dhammas* are fulfilled in *dhamma*," and this relation is *not obvious*: it must be inferred.

Now, while granting all the foregoing, it still is the case that the Yogācāra and the Tathāgatagarbha literature use a term that suggests production from *dharmatā*, namely *dharmatā-pratilabdha*; and the Tathāgatagarbha literature a further one, *dharmatā-niṣyanda*, as follows.

1. *dharmatā-pratilabdha* 'derived from *dharmatā*'. Ruegg has collected a number of illustrations of this expression from Sanskrit and Tibetan texts, showing that it is ordinarily employed in connection with the *gotra* (family lineage) and the *ṣaḍāyatana* (six sense bases).[29] In the case of the Yogācāra, the texts are Asaṅga's *Śrāvakabhūmi* and *Bodhisattvabhūmi*. The Tathāgatagarbha treatise *Ratnagotravibhāga* cites the lost *Ṣaḍāyatana-sūtra* for the passage:

> ṣaḍāyatanaviśeṣaḥ sa tādṛśaḥ paraṃparāgato 'nādikāliko dharmatāpratilabdha iti /[30]

> Derived from *dharmatā*, and passing from one existence to another since beginningless time, it (i.e. the *gotra*, the substrate lineage) is specialized by the six sense bases, becoming similar.

The *Śrāvakabhūmi* near its beginning states: "That seed does not have the characteristics of difference as long as it stays apart from the six sense bases (*ṣaḍāyatana*)."[31] Hence, what the *Ṣaḍāyatana-sūtra* meant by the *gotra's* being "specialized by the six sense bases, becoming similar" is being channeled through a particular sense perception (in this sense 'similar'), and thus exhibiting 'characteristics of difference', to wit, from its being channeled through a dif-

ferent sense perception. In the terminology of the Madhyāntavibhāga, being different would be the difference of subject and object, which is brought about by sense perception.[32] The *Ṣaḍāyatana-sūtra* passage may well be the prototype of the various other instances, but the interpretation of the gotra would differ. For Asaṅga, the *gotra* is that of the Śrāvaka, the Pratyekabuddha, or the Bodhisattva, and implicates the *ālayavijñāna*. For the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, the *gotra* is the Tathāgatagarbha.

2. *dharmatā-niṣyanda* 'flowing from *dharmatā*', as in 'Lion's Roar', p. 94, in the *Śrīmālā-sūtra*: "they have faith flowing from true nature (*dharmatā*)." Observe that this is the same role that the *Madhyāntavibhāga*, I, 15, and Vasubandhu's commentary, attributes to the *dharmadhātu*: ārya-dharma-hetuvād dharmadhātuḥ, "(called) 'Dharmadhātu' because it [voidness, *śūnyatā*] is the cause of the *dharmas* of the nobles." *Śrīmālā* uses similar terms for the Tathāgatagarbha ('Lion's Roar', p. 105): "Lord, if there were no Tathāgatagarbha, there would (not be) . . . aspiration towards Nirvāṇa . . . Whatever be these six perceptions . . . these are unfit for aspiration towards Nirvāṇa . . . the Tathāgatagarbha experiences suffering; hence it is worthy of . . . aspiration towards Nirvāṇa." In this case, the *Madhyāntavibhāga* appears to be an ally of the Tathāgatagarbha position.

In short, it appears that the old quarrel between the Mahāsāṃghika and the Sthavira schools was carried on in many ways. In the old days it was over the status of the Arhat. Later, when the Sthavira had itself divided into sub-sects, giving rise to the Sarvāstivādin, the argument was continued among followers of the Mahāyāna. It appears that the Mahāsāṃghika, or at least some of its sub-sects, had given rise to the Tathāgatagarbha scriptures, the theory of Bodhisattva stages, and art representations, especially of the Jātakas. The Sarvāstivādin came up with its own scriptures such as the Mahāyāna biography of the Buddha, the *Lalitavistara*, and perhaps had a hand in the Prajñāpāramitā scriptures, although the situation here requires much research. In any case, both major Mahāyāna philosophical schools, the Mādhyamika and the Yogācāra, appear to have arisen in the Sarvāstivādin tradition. However, of these two, the Yogācāra in its several forms has been variously influenced by the Mahāsāṃghika-type Buddhism, but was careful to keep a distance. If one stays in the Mādhyamika works, there is a harping on the denial that *dharmas* arise from *svabhāva* or from

dharmatā, thus in agreement with the Theravāda. The position of the Yogācāra is more subtle: It does not care to make the denials of the Mādhyamika, but neither would it take *dharmatā* as a permanent, substantial entity, since the *ālayavijñāna* itself must disappear for Nirvāṇa without remainder.[33] One may also refer to Asaṅga's statement in the *Hetuvidyā* section, as cited above. One must move entirely to the other side, the Tathāgatagarbha tradition, stemming, as we believe to have established, from the Mahāsāṃghika, to get a reinterpretation of *dharmatā* as 'thusness' (*tathatā*), the permanent Tathāgatagarbha.[34]

But since the Tathāgatagarbha doctrine was much appreciated in China, perhaps fortified by accompanying the impressive artistic representations of the school, it is reasonable that the novel interpretation of certain terms—such as *dharmatā*—would get a sympathetic hearing. While Lai is not strictly correct in claiming that the interpretation of *dharmatā* as a source of phenomena is something worked up for the first time in China, we should agree that the theory was amplified in China in a manner that had not been done in India.

In conclusion, while the deviant interpretation of important Buddhist terms understandably inspired denunciations from followers of the 'elders' (the ārya-sthāvira), if one will give fair credit to the Buddhist currents that were most instrumental in conversion to the Buddhist faith outside of India it may well be that we should give the nod to those ancient schismatics, the Mahāsāṃghikas.

NOTES\

1. Akira Hirakawa, "The Rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism and its Relationship to the Worship of Stupas," *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, No. 22, Tokyo, 1963, p. 57.

2. Janice J. Nattier and Charles S. Prebish, "Mahāsāṃghika Origins: The Beginnings of Buddhist Sectarianism," *History of Religions*, 16:3, Feb., 1977, pp. 237, ff.

3. André Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule* (École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1955), Chapitre I 'Les Mahâsânghika', pp. 55-74.

4. Columbia University Press, New York and London, 1974.

5. Takasaki, Jikidō, in *The Eastern Buddhist*, New Series, IX:1, May, 1976, pp. 135-138.

6. For thorough-going reviews of Takasaki's main works, see J. W. de Jong, in *Indo-Iranian Journal*, XI:1 (1968), pp. 36-54, for the *Ratnagotravibhāga*; and in *Indo-Iranian Journal*, XVIII (1976), pp. 311-315, for "The formation of the tathāgatagarbha theory" (in Japanese) (Tokyo, 1974).

7. Bareau, *Les sectes*, p. 296.

8. *Mahāvastu Avadāna*, ed. by Radhagovinda Basak, Vol. 1, p. 266; and Vol. 2, p. 28.

9. See Manfred Mayrhofer, *Kurzgefasstes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen* (Heidelberg, 1955), Lieferung 4, pp. 232-233.

10. Namely the 'chapters' 1 through 4 in the Guṇabhadra Chinese version of *Śrīmālā-sūtra*.

11. Compare Mahāsāṃghika tenet No. 60, cited above (Introduction), 'Virtue caused by a vow increases'.

12. "A Study of the Mahāvastu," *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* (Tokyo), VI:1, Jan. 1958, pp. 306-311.

13. École Française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris, 1969.

14. A reviewer of the 'Lion's Roar' in *Philosophy East and West* doubted the Mahāsāṃghika origin because Ruegg's book does not mention it—an unfortunate disservice to Ruegg's own work.

15. Bareau, *Les sectes*, p. 55.

16. B.S.L. Hanumantha Rao, *Religion in Āndhra* (Tripurasundari, 1973), pp. 74-83.

17. Hirakawa, "The Rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism," pp. 102-106, does not explicitly say this, but comes close. The *Śrīmālā-sūtra* does mention ('Lion's Roar', p. 76) the lay Bodhisattva group, but is silent about stūpa care and worship.

18. Cf. J.J. Jones, tr. *The Mahāvastu*, Vol. I (London, 1949), p. 83; for the illustration of Gautama Buddha, cf. J. Takasaki, *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga* (Roma, 1966), p. 147; and in comparison with Tantrism, Alex Wayman, *Yoga of the Guhyasamājatantra; the Arcane Lore of Forty Verses* (Delhi, 1977), pp. 341-342.

19. Elizabeth S. Rosen, "The Begram Ivories," *Marsyas* (Institute of Fine Arts, N.Y.U.), Vol. XVII, 1974-75, pp. 45-46.

20. Whalen Lai, "Chinese Buddhist causation theories: An analysis of the sinitic Mahāyāna understanding of *pratītya-samutpada*," *Philosophy East and West*, July 1977, p. 250.

21. K.N. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* (London, 1963), starting at pp. 420-421.

22. Walpola Rahula, "Wrong Notions of Dhammatā (Dharmatā)," *Buddhist Studies in Honour of I.B. Horner*, ed. by L. Cousins, A. Kunst, and K. R. Norman (Dordrecht, 1974), pp. 182, 185, and 186.

23. David J. Kalupahana, *Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (The University Press of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1975), p. 75.

24. Kalupahana, *Causality*, pp. 75-76. Although I disagree with him at this point, may I add that he has many fine observations in this book.

25. Rahula, "Wrong Notions," p. 183.

26. A. Wayman, "Who understands the four alternatives of the Buddhist texts?" *Philosophy East and West*, 27:1, Jan., 1977, pp. 14, 18.

27. Bhikkhu J. Kashyap, ed., *The Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Navakanipāta, Daskanipāta, and Ekādaskanipāta (Bihar Government, 1960), p. 101.

28. I have edited with translation the *hetuvidyā* section as a part of a

book under preparation. Readers of Chinese can find the passage in Taishō Vol. 30, at p. 358B-10.

29. Ruegg, *La théorie*, especially pp. 90, 92-93, 106-107.

30. E. H. Johnston, ed., *The Ratnagotravibhāga Mahāyānottaratantra-śāstra* (Patna, 1950), text p. 55.

31. Alex Wayman, *Analysis of the Śrāvakabhūmi Manuscript* (Berkeley, 1961), p. 59.

32. Cf. Gadjin M. Nagao, *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya* (Tokyo, 1964), Chapter III, 18; and Paul Wilfred O'Brien, S.J., "A Chapter on Reality from the Madhyāntavibhāgaçāstra," *Monumenta Nipponica*, X:1-2, 1954, pp. 247-248.

33. Alex Wayman, "The Sacittikā and Acittikā Bhūmi," *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies (Tokyo)*, VIII:1, Jan. 1960, p. 377.

34. Esho Mikogami makes an intriguing point in "The Problem of Verbal Testimony in Yogācāra Buddhism," *Bukkyogaku kenkyū*, Vols. 32-33, 1977, p. 3, about the passage in the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* that whether Tathāgatas arise or not, the *dharmatā* is permanent and unchanging:—the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas are limited to the world of *dharmatā*. This is consistent with the Tathāgatagarbha taken as the basis of *saṃsāra*, and as the potentiality of Buddhahood, and the not-yet Buddhahood.