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# The Bodhisattva Ideal of Theravāda\*

by *Shanta Ratnayaka*

Many detailed accounts of the bodhisattva (Pāli: *bodhisatta*) ideal of the Mahāyāna have been published by students of Buddhism. Most of these writers are so fascinated with the Mahāyāna model of the bodhisattva ideal that they pay no attention to the Theravāda teaching on this point. Sometimes they contrast bodhisattvas with arahants (arhat or arahat) and severely criticize the latter. Such a criticism is possible, from my point of view, only if the critic is either biased towards the Mahāyāna tradition, or has misinterpreted the Theravāda, or has misunderstood Buddhism altogether.

In this article, I will present the Theravāda concept of the bodhisattva ideal, and then try to correct some misunderstandings on the issue and show the unfairness of certain criticisms that have been directed towards the Theravāda position. Part I of this paper distinguishes the Theravāda from the Hīnayāna, Part II examines the bodhisattva ideal in the Theravāda texts, Part III observes the actual practice of the ideal among the Theravādins, and Part IV clarifies bodhisattvahood and arahant-hood and places them in relation to the Buddhahood and bodhi (enlightenment). Through this exposition most of the criticisms that are based on misunderstandings will be swept away. My further reflections will form Part V, the Conclusion, of this essay.

## *I. Theravāda Cannot be Hīnayāna*

The *Cullavagga* records that soon after the Buddha's demise his Elderly Disciples (Theras) met at Rājagaha (Rājagṛha) to form the First Council.<sup>1</sup> Headed by Mahākāśyapa, Ānanda, and

Upāli, all five hundred Theras of the Council agreed unanimously on the collection of the Buddha's teachings (the Dhamma or Dharma and the Vinaya), which were authoritatively chanted at this meeting. For five hundred years,<sup>2</sup> the Dharma and the Vinaya were preserved through daily chanting by successive groups of Theras, generation after generation; therefore, this earliest Buddhist tradition is called the Theravāda.

A century after the First Council, the Second Council of the Theravāda was held at Vaiśālī in order to maintain the authenticity of the teachings. During this first century of Buddhism some non-Theravāda views had been growing up within the Buddhist community. The Second Council created a chance for those who held non-Theravāda views to convene. Since the latter group could not be known as Theras, they claimed the title saṅgha (community). In the historical accounts they were referred to as the Mahāsaṅghikas.<sup>3</sup> Over a two hundred year period, the Mahāsaṅghikas developed into the Mahāyāna branch of Buddhism.

The Theravādins held their last Indian council "at Pāṭaliputra under the aegis of the celebrated Buddhist monarch, Priyadarśi Aśoka." It was their last effort in India to protect the purity of the doctrines. Immediately after this Third Council the Theravādins laid their foundations elsewhere outside India.<sup>4</sup> Thera Mahinda, the son of Emperor Aśoka, converted the king of Sri Lanka and his subjects to Buddhism, and introduced the Pāli *Tripitaka* and its commentaries into the island. From that day, Theravāda Buddhism was the most valued treasure of the kings of Sri Lanka. It was a treasure they extended to all the Southeast Asian countries: Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos; sometimes it was extended even further.

Meanwhile, the Mahāsaṅghikas had multiplied their sub-sectarian divisions, into eighteen or even more groups. Some of these minor sects were ridiculed by the Mahāyānists, who used the name "Hīnayāna," which means the "Lower Vehicle," while they themselves were distinguished as the Mahāyāna or the "Greater Vehicle." When the Mahāyānists held their first council in about 100 A.D. under the auspices of King Kaniṣka of northwest India, and wrote down the Mahāyāna sūtras, they attacked the beliefs and practices of the Hīnayānists. Had this abuse been aimed at the Theravādins, they certainly would have

replied to the Mahāyānists. But the Pāli literature and the other writings of the Theravādins mention neither the Mahāyāna nor the Hīnayāna. The obvious reason for this is that on the one hand the abusive name of Hīnayāna did not fall upon the Theravāda, and on the other hand that the contact between the Mahāyāna and the Theravāda by that time was non-existent, as the latter had taken firm root in Sri Lanka, which was to them the “*Dharmadvīpa*” (the Island of Dharma).

The Hīnayānists were criticized by the Mahāyānists for not having the bodhisattva ideal. The Hīnayānists may have lacked it, but the Theravādins were the first Buddhists to teach the bodhisattva ideal. Further, they always followed it, and they always maintained the distinction between bodhisattvas and arahants. The mistaken practice of identifying the Theravāda with the Hīnayāna results in undue criticism of the former. The following description of the bodhisattva doctrine held by the Theravāda will alone suffice to distinguish the Theravāda from the Hīnayāna.

## II. From the Theravāda Texts

### a. Anyone Can Become a Bodhisattva

The unique being for any Buddhist is neither the bodhisattva, nor the arahant, nor the *pacceka-buddha*, but the Buddha himself. The *Ānguttaranikāya* of the Theravāda teaches that a Buddha alone is omniscient and a Buddha alone has the excellent attributes unique to himself.<sup>5</sup> Besides another omniscient Buddha, no one, including the other enlightened ones, i.e., arahants and *pacceka-buddhas*, can fully comprehend an omniscient Buddha. Comparatively few of the Buddha's excellences were fathomable even to the wisest of the arahants, Śāriputra. It is said that if the whole world can be filled with *pacceka-buddhas* and if they all together think of the Buddha, still the Buddha is far beyond their measures.<sup>6</sup> As such texts vividly show, the Theravādins' “Supreme Being” is the Buddha.

Many attained Buddhahood in the past and many will still attain Buddhahood in the future. Gautama (Pāli: Gotama) is the Buddha of the present era, but by no means is the only Buddha. In the *Sampasādaniya Sutta*, Gautama Buddha has

acknowledged that there were and there will be Buddhas equal to himself in enlightenment.<sup>7</sup> The Theravāda texts mention many hundreds and thousands of Buddhas of the past.<sup>8</sup> Twenty-seven of them, beginning from Taṇhaṅkara, have been identified by name in a sequence up to Gautama Buddha. Often, Maitreya is added to this lineage as the immediate Buddha of the future.<sup>9</sup> In explaining the life stories of twenty-five Buddhas, the *Buddhavaṃsa*, a book of the *Tripitaka* itself, brings us the message that there was not only a single Buddha, but a lineage of them which runs from the past to the future.

The important point here is that there are as many bodhisattvas as Buddhas, since only bodhisattvas can become Buddhas. The Theravādins do not believe in many incarnations of the same Ādibuddha, or the same Supreme Being, as several Buddhas. Before his enlightenment, any Buddha is called a bodhisattva.<sup>10</sup> In brief, the Theravādins believe that as there were innumerable Buddhas in the past and as there will be innumerable Buddhas in the future, there were, there are, and there will be innumerable bodhisattvas as well. Furthermore, anyone can become a bodhisattva if he is willing to undertake the hardship of fulfilling the ten perfections of the bodhisattva path.

*b. Giving up of One's Own Enlightenment in Order to Save Others*

For the Theravādins, the life story of Gautama Buddha, and his bodhisattva career, serves as the best example of sacrificing one's own enlightenment to save others. Gautama the bodhisattva could have attained nirvāṇa as an arahant at his encounter with Dīpaṅkara Buddha many aeons ago, but he gave it up and remained in saṃsāra to become a Buddha and save many beings. At the time of Dīpaṅkara Buddha, our bodhisattva was named Sumedha, and his self-giving thought is mentioned in the text:

If I wish to do so, I can burn my defilements [become a holy one] today itself. But what is the use of realizing the Dharma here in a solitary form? . . . Why should a courageous person like me save myself alone? I will become a Buddha so that I will save many persons, including [even] divine beings.<sup>11</sup>

Hence he remained in saṃsāra, showing the bodhisattva example to the world and improving himself in the bodhisattva perfections. The Pāli *Jātaka* and its *Commentary* alone narrate five hundred and fifty life stories from his long career.

*c. The Bodhisattva Perfections*

In the *Tripitaka* we find a book entitled the *Cariyāpiṭaka*, which is completely dedicated to teaching the ten perfections (*dasa pāramī*). Each and every bodhisattva must fulfill the perfections to the highest degree in order to become a Buddha. In the *Cariyāpiṭaka*, the examples are drawn from Gautama the bodhisattva, but the perfections are common to *all* the bodhisattvas.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, it may be proper to say that the *Cariyāpiṭaka* is a *Bodhisattva-Piṭaka* in the Theravāda *Tripitaka*.

The ten perfections are: 1) perfection of giving (*dāna*), 2) perfection of morality (*sīla*), 3) perfection of renunciation (*nekkhamma*), 4) perfection of wisdom (*paññā*), 5) perfection of exertion (*virīya*), 6) perfection of patience (*khanti*), 7) perfection of truth (*sacca*), 8) perfection of resolution (*adhiṭṭhāna*), 9) perfection of loving kindness (*mettā*), 10) perfection of equanimity (*upekkhā*).<sup>13</sup>

A bodhisattva begins his progress in the perfections from the day he makes "the wish to become a Buddha" (*katābhinihārena mahāsattena*).<sup>14</sup> Therefore, this wish (*abhinīhāra*) is the turning point for an ordinary being to become a "bodhi-being." It is said that this wish is the "foundation of the perfections," and when one has laid this foundation, he carries out "observing, stabilizing, and accomplishing" the perfections.<sup>15</sup>

Each perfection has three stages: the ordinary level, the medium level, and the highest level. For instance in practicing the first perfection, *dāna*, giving only one's external belongings is but of the ordinary level (*dāna pāramī*). A bodhisattva may sacrifice his eye for a blind person, or his leg for a lame person. (The Pāli literature refers to some surgical performances that took place, as well as certain medical healing processes). Still, this is but of the medium level of giving (*dāna upa pāramī*). The highest stage of *dāna* is the giving of one's life for the benefit of others (*dāna paramattha pāramī*). Like *dāna*, each of the other nine perfections can be practiced in the same three stages.



Therefore, at times the perfections are enumerated as being thirty instead of ten. Further, the Theravāda teaching sums up that all the Buddhas must have fulfilled all thirty perfections, without any exceptions, during their bodhisattva careers.<sup>16</sup>

*d. Priority of Wisdom and Compassion*

The entire career of a bodhisattva is governed by two major characteristics; wisdom (*paññā* or *prajñā*) and compassion (*karuṇā*). Buddhahood is accomplished by wisdom, but the act of becoming a Buddha is accomplished by compassion. A bodhisattva's own liberation is achieved through wisdom, but his goal of liberating others is achieved through compassion. With wisdom he recognizes others' suffering and with compassion he eliminates it. Due to his wisdom, he becomes disentangled from saṃsāra, but due to his compassion he remains in it. Owing to his wisdom, the bodhisattva remains unattached to the world, but with his compassion he embraces the world. Because of wisdom he does not become conceited; because of compassion he does not become discouraged. Wisdom brings him control over himself; compassion brings him control over others. Wisdom brings self advancement, and compassion brings others' advancement. More than all else, wisdom brings him the lordship of the Dharma, and compassion brings him the lordship of the world.<sup>17</sup>

Wisdom and compassion are the major spiritual forces that run through all the ten perfections; therefore these two are not exclusively confined to the perfection of wisdom and perfection of loving kindness.

It is said that wisdom is like the life of the body of the perfections. For instance, an act of giving can become a perfection only when it is accompanied by wisdom. Again, in order to emphasize the special place of wisdom, it is said that the act of giving is like the eye and wisdom is like consciousness. Without consciousness, one's eye is of no use; similarly, a mere act is of little value if wisdom is missing. To cite another example, when morality is not accompanied by wisdom, it becomes stained with worldly desire or conceit, and it does not become a perfection. So, wisdom acts as the purifier of all the perfections.<sup>18</sup>

As far as the enlightenment itself is concerned, the perfection of wisdom excels the rest. Even if a bodhisattva constantly

performs the activities of the other nine perfections to their highest level without the perfection of wisdom, he remains unenlightened, because the latter is the fulfiller of them all.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, it is because of his unwavering and equal love for the whole world that the bodhisattva has undertaken the task of becoming a Buddha. Hence, he feels like the father of the whole world and looks upon all the beings as his own children. It is to comfort them and to liberate them that the bodhisattva walks the path of the perfections. Therefore, compassion is the cause, the root, and the ground for each and every perfection.<sup>20</sup>

*e. Very Close to Buddhahood*

The epithet, “*mahāsattva*” (Pāli: *mahāsatta*), which means the “great being,” is often used alternatively for the term “bodhisattva.” Examples are innumerable in the Pāli *Jātaka* and elsewhere. This synonym is not limited in application to one particular bodhisattva; in reference to many bodhisattvas, the plural term “*mahāsattvas* bodhisattvas” is used.<sup>21</sup> In another context, the two epithets have been combined into one in the term “*mahābodhisattva*.” The bodhisattva is the “great being” because he is the Buddha-to-be, because he is now becoming perfect through practicing the perfections.

As a “great being,” he has the greatest courage. His heroism has been described through several imaginary similes. If the whole world were to become an ocean, and the bodhisattva were asked to swim across to reach Buddhahood, he would do so without the slightest hesitation. To cite another simile, if the whole world were to become a thick forest of thorny bamboo, and if he were asked to cut across to achieve Buddhahood, he would not hesitate to do so.<sup>22</sup> So great is a bodhisattva’s effort, with which he serves the world and keeps his own spirit on the upgrade.

Whatever state a bodhisattva is born to, by his nature he becomes an example to all other beings. In the *Jātaka* stories of the Pāli *Tripitaka*, Gautama the bodhisattva repeatedly appears as a king, a minister, a social leader, an ordinary person of various occupations, and sometimes as a divine being, and even as an animal; but, all the time, he remains the savior of others and the moral example to the mass. Although the *Jātaka*

narrates the life stories of Gautama the bodhisattva, it often refers to bodhisattvas in general. The following are some remarks made by the Pāli *Jātaka* about bodhisattvas in common:

“The conduct of bodhisattvas is not mixed with craving.”

“Bodhisattvas are very alert.”

“The hopes of bodhisattvas are fulfilled.”

“Because of their great intelligence, bodhisattvas succeed in all matters.

“The expectations of bodhisattvas will be accomplished.”

“Wise thoughts of bodhisattvas never fail.”<sup>23</sup>

The success of the thought and deed of a bodhisattva is thus assured because he is equipped with the powerful instrument of *upāya*, which has been translated into English as “skillful means.” *Upāya* means; but in the Pāli accounts a bodhisattva’s *upāya* is usually associated with *kosalla* (skill) as *upāyakosalla*. Therefore, “skillful means” or rather “skill in means” is a correct rendering of the complete Pāli phrase *upāyakosalla*.

This phrase is used repeatedly in connection with the perfections.<sup>24</sup> A bodhisattva’s practice of giving is solely governed by his skillful means, as is his perfection of morality, perfection of renunciation, perfection of wisdom, and all the rest. Therefore, any action that he performs in practicing the perfections is also directed or governed by his skillful means. Thus, *upāya* or *upāyakosalla* (skillful means) is the reason behind the bodhisattva’s success in all matters.

The Theravādins believe that it is the routine of every bodhisattva to complete five extraordinary givings, to be born in the Tuṣita heaven, and to remain there until the suitable time comes for his last birth.

The five uncommon givings are that of his own 1) children, 2) wife, 3) physical members, 4) greatest treasures, and 5) kingdom. The *Jātaka* provides accounts of this sort of giving. When he was born as King Sivi, Gautama the bodhisattva endowed

his eyes; when he was born as King Vessantara, he donated his children, kingdom, etc.

Bodhisattvas' customary prolonged stay in Tuṣita heaven is possible only at the final stage of their careers. Until then, they do not remain in the heavens of very long life, such as Tuṣita, for the obvious reason that they prefer to stay among suffering beings in order to be of help to the needy ones. Even if a bodhisattva is born in a heaven of long life, he does not remain there for the whole lifespan that particular heaven would provide him.<sup>25</sup>

### *III. From the Theravāda Practices*

The previous section of this article revealed that the Theravādins' scriptures bear heavy witness to their teachings of the bodhisattva ideal. Even after this has become evident to some Mahāyāna scholars, they believe that that ideal is limited only to the Theravādins' books but is not put into practice. The following criticism is directed to the Theravādins, although the critic mistakenly calls them Hīnayānists:

. . . Let a Buddha or Bodhisattva attempt it while we may rest with a profound confidence in him and in his work. Thoughts somewhat like these must have been going about in the minds of the Hīnayānists, when their Mahāyāna brethren were making bold to strive after Buddhahood, themselves. . . . Sumedha, one of the Buddha's former incarnations, expresses his resolve to be a Buddha, [which] may just as well be considered as that of Mahāyānist himself, while the Hīnayānists would not dare to make this wish their own.<sup>26</sup>

This may be true with the Hīnayānists, but not with the Theravādins. Although a Buddha is capable of enlightening others, all the beings of the world are not able to attain nirvāṇa during the time of one single Buddha. Therefore, as we saw above, many bodhisattvas will become Buddhas; and certainly many Theravādins strive for Buddhahood, as we will see below.

Nevertheless, according to the Theravāda tradition a bodhisattva, like any other spiritual person, does not exhibit his

goal or his progress. Very seldom does a necessity arise for a bodhisattva to reveal his bodhisattvahood. On the other hand, Buddhas are rare; and so are the Buddhas-to-be. For these reasons, it may not be easy to recognize bodhisattvas on a mass scale.

At this stage of our discussion many rulers of the Theravāda countries come to our view. The author of *Religion and Politics in Burma* states: "Many Burmese kings were firmly believed to be Bodhisattvas; one of them stated in an eighteenth-century inscription 'In virtue of this my good deed, may I become a Buddha. . . .an omniscient one.'"<sup>27</sup> Similarly, another author writes: "Thus in Thailand it is generally assumed that the reigning monarch will become a Buddha in his next, or a very proximate, rebirth."<sup>28</sup> In Sri Lanka, King Siri Saṅgabo the Bodhisattva, of the fourth century A.D., sacrificed his own head as a practice of the first perfection. Later in the history, Kings Vijayabā and Perakumbā proclaimed that they were bodhisattvas. Several other kings appeared as incarnations of bodhisattvas. Gradually, an opinion grew that every king of Sri Lanka must be a bodhisattva. However, this notion did not die with the monarchy. Very recently, when S.W.R.D. Bandaranayake and Dudley Senanayake were Prime Ministers in turn, their respective followers claimed in public that each was a bodhisattva.

Besides political leaders, there were and there are many others considered bodhisattvas in Theravāda countries. To cite a few examples from the recent history of Sri Lanka, Anagārika Dharmapāla, Asaraṇasaraṇa Saraṇaṅkara Saṅgharāja, and Hikkaduwe Sri Sumaṅgala are often called bodhisattvas. The remarkable story<sup>29</sup> of a meditation teacher, Doratiyāwe by name, reveals that he refused to practice a certain method of yoga in the year of 1900, because he was on the path to the Buddhahood but not on the path of arahanthood. Occasionally, a Mahāyānist has witnessed the presence of bodhisattvas among the Theravādins. For instance, Seikan Hasegawa writes:

During my stay in a Thailand temple as a training monk, I saw there were many great Bodhisattvas, and in Japan I can find many Hinayana Buddhists. If some priest speaks of the Hinayana in reference to Southern Buddhism, he is only proving he is not

qualified as a Mahāyāna Buddhist. Furthermore, for designating Southern Buddhism now we have the correct name which is Theravada Buddhism.<sup>30</sup>

The native literary works of the Theravāda countries give abundant evidence of their adherence to the bodhisattva path. The Jātaka stories have been the most popular form of literature in their languages. The *Jātaka* is read at gatherings of their pious on religious days. Their outstanding poems are based on the Jātaka stories. A few examples from the Sinhalese literature are the *Kaṣṣilumina*, *Muvadevdāvata*, *Sasadāvata*, *Kāvyaśekhara*, and the *Guttilaya*. As does the *Jātaka*, the *Maitree Varṇaṇāva* attracts the common audience, because it tells the story of the immediate Buddha to come. The stories of both past and future Buddhas promulgate the bodhisattva career with the hope that others will follow the pattern. As a result, in some other literary works, certain individuals' wish for becoming a Buddha has been mentioned directly and publicly. Two examples of the latter are the *Pūjāvaliya* and *Budugunālamkāraya*.

The *Dasa Bodhisattuppatti Kathā*,<sup>31</sup> which is written in Pāli, the scriptural language of Theravāda, should be mentioned here. This book narrates the stories of ten bodhisattvas who will become Buddhas after the era of Gautama Buddha. The first of them, Maitreya, is mentioned above. The other nine bodhisattvas are Rāma, Dhammarāja, Dhammasāmi, Nārada, Raṁsimuni, Devadeva, Narasīha, Tissa, and Sumaṅgala. It is stated that these ten bodhisattvas had met Gautama Buddha and that they are destined to attain Buddhahood in succession.

The practice of worshipping bodhisattvas is not uncommon among Theravādins. Bodhisattva images are often found at their ruined temples, and this alone indicates the long history of bodhisattva-worship. In Sri Lanka, the bodhisattva Maitreya and the bodhisattva Nātha have been equally worshipped. Because of the popularity of Nātha, historians suggest that the Mahāyāna bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara has taken the form of Nātha; but there is little evidence for identifying Nātha with Avalokiteśvara. Whether he is another form of Avalokiteśvara or not, it is clear that the Theravādins have long respected bodhisattvas. Like Nātha, the bodhisattva Saman of Sri Pāda has been glorified. Therefore, it is unfair for any scholar to say that the Theravādins

ignore the bodhisattvas “with the solitary exception of Maitreya.”<sup>32</sup>

The admiration of bodhisattvas is, in fact, quite common among Theravādins. When someone is compassionately and courageously engaged in good work, his neighbors begin to describe him as a bodhisattva. Naturally, the more difficult tasks he undertakes, the higher is the status of bodhisattvahood attributed to him. We must note that the higher a bodhisattva goes the closer he gets to the Buddhahood; and he becomes more capable of performing outstanding tasks as well. Although to designate the best of people as bodhisattvas is very common today, this practice is not new. In the 5th century A.D. the Theras of the Great Monastery of Anurādhapura proclaimed that Buddhaghosa was, without any doubt, an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Maitreya. Buddhaghosa came to the Great Monastery in search of orthodox commentaries of the *Tripitaka*. Before having the commentaries placed at his disposal, Buddhaghosa was examined by the most authoritative of the Theras, and the result was that Buddhaghosa received the highest honour: being named as an incarnation of Maitreya Bodhisattva.<sup>33</sup> This tendency of recognizing some individuals as bodhisattvas still remains the same.

What is the highest moral conduct (*sīla*) to the Theravādins? Since the time of the Second Council, mentioned above, the Theravādins have been criticized for trying to follow the code of ethics (*vinaya*) to the letter, for being satisfied with discipline alone, and for being too emphatic about the moral side of the Dharma. Such critics may be surprised to learn that the greatest *sīla* the Theravādins advocate is that of a great bodhisattva (*mahā bodhisatta sīla*).<sup>34</sup>

In order to conclude this section, I would like to discuss one more practice of the Theravādins, i.e., transferring merits (*puṇṇyānumodanā*). At the end of any meritorious deed, Theravādins transfer their merits to all beings. Meritorious work is sometimes done in order to transfer the resulting merit to a particular person or group of beings. But after this first transfer is completed, the merit is transferred to all beings without exception and the wish “May all beings attain nirvāṇa!” is made. Sometimes, the formula is extended to “May all beings be happy, healthy, free from suffering, and attain nirvāṇa!” This offering

is practiced by the Theravādins in both the meditation of love (*maitree bhāvanā*) and in the transfer of merits (*puṇṇyānumodanā*).

Not realizing that this practice is found among all Theravādins, D.T. Suzuki states: "The doctrine of turning over (*parivarta*) of one's own merits to others is a great departure from that which seems to have been the teaching of 'primitive Buddhism.' In fact it is more than a departure. . ."<sup>35</sup> But all Theravādins do practice *parivarta*. Therefore, it is wrong to categorize the Theravāda as "primitive Buddhism" on the basis of *parivarta*. Rather, the "great departure" of which this critic speaks must be attributed to something else, perhaps the Hīnayāna. In fact, if the transfer of merit is necessarily an act of bodhisattva, then all the Theravādins are bodhisattvas.

#### IV. *Bodhisattva Versus Arahant*

##### a. *What Matters is not Yāna but Bodhi*

We have now examined the bodhisattva ideal in the Theravādins' scriptures and their practices. But this essay will not be complete unless we juxtapose the Theravādins' ideal of arahant-hood with their ideal of bodhisattvahood. Arahant-hood is highly esteemed by the Theravādins, but it has been vulgarized by some of the late Mahāyāna writings. Arahant-hood remains in its original venerated position among the Theravādins, and many modern writers have noticed only the arahant ideal but not the bodhisattva ideal of the Theravādins. Due to such partial studies of Theravāda, one critic has said: "The most obvious difference between the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna schemes lies in that the first map (sic) out the stages leading to Arhatship, the second those which lead a Bodhisattva to Buddhahood."<sup>36</sup> Such contrasts are made over and over again, necessitating an explanation of arahant-hood as well as a comparison of the two ideals.

Regardless of the different names "Mahāyāna," "Theravāda," or "Hīnayāna," all Buddhists agree that the object of their religious life is enlightenment (*bodhi*).<sup>37</sup> At his enlightenment, a bodhisattva becomes a Buddha. With the help of the Buddha, many others become enlightened ones. To enlighten others has been the bodhisattva's wish from the beginning of



his career. The disciples (*śrāvakas*, or *sāvakas*) who gain enlightenment after the Buddha are called “arahants.” Both the Buddha and the arahant have attained *nirvāṇa*. Therefore, in order to distinguish the master from the disciple the former is called a “*sammā-sam-Buddha*” and the latter an “*arahanta-Buddha*.” If an individual attains enlightenment without the guidance of a *sammā-sam-Buddha* yet does not enlighten others as a *sammā-sam-Buddha* does, he is called a “*paccekabuddha*.” Thus the fully enlightened ones are three in kind: Buddha, *paccekabuddha* and arahant. Theravādins are consistent on this point. Some Mahāyāna sūtras, too, recognize these three kinds of enlightened ones, as Edward Conze, in explaining the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā*, points out: “. . .in these Sutras it is always assumed that salvation can be won in different ways, or by different paths. Usually three such ‘vehicles’ are distinguished—that of the Arhats, that of the Pratyekabuddhas, that of the Bodhisattvas.”<sup>38</sup>

The means to enlightenment is *yāna*, i.e., vehicle. One who wishes to become enlightened as a *sammā-sam-Buddha* must take the “*mahā-bodhi-yāna*.” Likewise, one who wishes to become a *paccekabuddha* must take the “*pacceka-bodhi-yāna*”, and one who wishes to become an arahant, the “*arahanta-bodhi-yāna*.” As arahants are the disciples of a “*sammā-sam-Buddha*”, the *arahanta-bodhi-yāna* is sometimes called the “*śrāvaka-bodhi-yāna*.”

To be a disciple of the Buddha is great; to become an arahant is sacred. Therefore, the *śrāvaka-bodhi-yāna* or the Śrāvakayāna is never looked down upon by the Theravādins. Although they recognize that the vehicle taken by the master is “great” they never call the vehicle of the disciple “Lower Vehicle,” because by the *śrāvaka-bodhi-yāna* or the Śrāvakayāna one reaches the same *nirvāṇa* that the Buddha attained. If one’s disciples do not attain the same *nirvāṇa*, one’s Buddhahood and one’s whole effort in becoming a Buddha has no meaning. It is well known that a bodhisattva’s long career is directed toward saving others by making them enlightened. And his *mahā-bodhi-yāna* or the Mahāyāna fails to be the Bodhisattvayāna if the Buddha cannot make his followers fully enlightened. The Buddha and his disciples make a joint effort to attain *nirvāṇa*. Thus, the Bodhisattvayāna and the Śrāvakayāna are not contradictory but complementary to one another in the Theravāda viewpoint.

The emphasis of the Theravāda is not on the path itself, but on the achievement. It is true that the Buddha has undertaken greater tasks in treading the bodhisattva path than those of an arahant, but the latter also has fulfilled the same requisites. For instance, instead of giving his own sons, he may give all of his wealth; instead of giving his own eye, he may perform eye surgery on the blind. That is how an arahant-to-be walks his path. From these examples, it must be clear that the Buddha and his disciple arahant have followed the same path and have achieved the same Goal, nirvāṇa. Because of the Buddha's mastery over the path and his skillful means, his path can be distinguished from that of the arahant, but by no means is his Bodhisattvayāna detrimental to the Śrāvakayāna. In other words, the path of enlightenment is the same for the Buddhas as for the arahants. The scriptures state thus:

In what sense is this the path? In the sense that it is leading to nirvāṇa, and that it is sought after by those who search for nirvāṇa. . . Including many *sammā-sam-Buddhas*, from Taṇhaṅkara, Medhaṅkara, Saraṇaṅkara, and Dīpaṅkara, who were born in one single aeon one hundred thousand and four immeasurable aeons before the present era, up to Śākyamuni [Gautama], and also several hundred *paccekabuddhas*, and also innumerable noble śrāvakas—all these beings, *by this path itself*, washed their defilements and attained the supreme holiness.<sup>39</sup>

*b. The Buddha and the Arahants*<sup>40</sup>

It is obvious that Buddha, the master, excels his disciple arahants in many ways, e.g., in his skillful means in disciplining others. But as far as bodhi (enlightenment) is concerned, they are alike; a Buddha is an arahant and an arahant is a Buddha. As we saw above, one who attains *arahanta-bodhi* is an *arahant-Buddha*. On the other hand, the Buddha says about himself to Upaka Ājīvaka, "I am an arahant in the world."<sup>41</sup> In the sūtras, the epithet "arahant" often goes along with the title "*sammā-sam-Buddha*" to denote one and the same person.

Nevertheless, there is a vast difference between the Buddha and the arahant. The Buddha discovers the path to nirvāṇa, while the arahant has learned it from the discoverer. The Buddha is omniscient, while the arahant has realised nirvāṇa and only the most essential dharmas. The Buddha gains all the miraculous powers at once, while the arahant has to develop

them gradually. The Buddha can remember any of his past existences immediately, while the arahant has to trace them by going through, one by one, each of his past existences. The Buddha is unsurpassable by the arahant, while the arahant is surpassable by the Buddha. After all, there is no competition between the two; the former remains a Buddha while the latter remains an arahant. It is like the relation between a king and his ministers: on the one hand, without the Buddha there cannot be the arahants and, on the other hand, without bringing up arahants there is no purpose in the Buddha's enlightenment.

In a similar fashion, both the Buddha's arahanthood and the arahant's enlightenment are carried on to some of the Mahāyāna sūtras. The *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* adds the epithet "arahant" to the Buddha with a phrase which parallels that of the Pāli suttas.<sup>42</sup> This epithet is not an exception for one particular Buddha, because elsewhere the Mahāyāna considers all the past, present, and future Buddhas to be "arahants."<sup>43</sup> To give one example on the reverse side, the *Karuṇāpūṇḍarīka Sūtra* adds a long list of adjectives describing the disciple arahants, and this list<sup>44</sup> corresponds word-for-word to that of the Pāli suttas. There is no difference between the former list and the latter list; the arahant of the former reference and the arahant of the latter reference are the same.

### c. *The Buddha-to-be and the Arahant-to-be*

Both the Buddha-to-be and the arahant-to-be are bodhi-beings, as they are going to be enlightened ones. Therefore, both of them are bodhisattvas; one is the *Buddha-bodhisattva* and the other is the *arahanta-bodhisattva*. The Theravāda texts make a distinction between the two as *mahābodhisatta* and *sāvaka-bodhisatta*. A *mahābodhisattva* is occasionally mentioned as "*sabbaññū-bodhisatta*" (omniscient-Buddha-to-be).<sup>45</sup>

We observed above how the Buddha excels the arahant. In the same pattern, i.e., quantitatively but not qualitatively, the *mahābodhisattva* exceeds the *śrāvakabodhisattva*. The *Cariyā-piṭakatthakathā* mentions three fields in which the *mahābodhisattva* surpasses the latter: penetrating wisdom, conduct and skillfulness. Both the bodhisattvas improve in wisdom; but the *mahābodhisattva's* wisdom is capable of realizing nirvāṇa without a teacher, whereas the *śrāvakabodhisattva's* wisdom is capable of

realizing nirvāṇa only when he has been taught. A *mahābodhisattva* can help the whole world without limit, yet the other's capacity is provincial. A *mahābodhisattva*'s skillful means has been discussed in this paper in relation to the perfections. While he is equipped with an unsurpassed skill, the latter acts with a provisional skill. The important point, though, is that the *śrāvakabodhisattva* is also improving in the same perfections and other characteristics that the *mahābodhisattva* has, but in a different degree.<sup>46</sup>

As the *mahābodhisattva* improves himself through a long series of lives, so does the *śrāvakabodhisattva*. The difference between their two careers is seen mainly in the length of time involved. As examples: the *arahanta-bodhisattvas*, Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, had trodden their paths since the time of Anomadassi Buddha, while Gautama the bodhisattva had already been following his path since meeting Dīpaṅkara Buddha. To cite a few more examples of the *arahanta-bodhisattvas*, Mahākāśyapa had been on this path since the time of Padumuttara Buddha, Anuruddha since the time of Sumedha Buddha, Sopāka since the time of Siddhārtha Buddha, Suddhā since the time of Vipassī Buddha, and Ambapālī since the time of Phussa Buddha. Gautama the bodhisattva met Dīpaṅkara Buddha and began his *mahābodhisattva* career long before all of these other meetings took place, and he took a much much longer time than the others.<sup>47</sup>

#### d. Bodhisattvas are not Buddhas

G.R. Welton has made this remark concerning two interpreters of nirvāṇa: "The important point in the Mahāyāna doctrine that the Bodhisattvas have not yet entered nirvāṇa is lost to both."<sup>48</sup> In fact, this important point is lost to many other interpreters of Buddhism as well. When *mahābodhisattvas* give up earlier chances of becoming enlightened in order to be Buddhas, they do so without attaining enlightenment, and until they become Buddhas they remain Buddhas-to-be, regardless of how close they get to the Buddhahood. A dialogue from the *Prajñāpāramitā* can be shown here as an example:

Subhuti replied: "There is not any dharma by which the Tathagata [Buddha], when he was with the Tathagata Dipankara,

has fully known the utmost, right and perfect enlightenment.”—  
The Lord said: “It is for this reason that the Tathagata Dipankara then predicted of me: ‘You, young Brahmin, will be in a future period a Tathagata, Arhat, fully Enlightened, by the name of Shakyamuni!’”<sup>49</sup>

Therefore, a bodhisattva is not a Buddha; a bodhisattva has not yet attained enlightenment. But an arahant is an enlightened one; he is an *arahanta-Buddha*. When the comparison between the Theravādins’ arahant and the Mahāyānins’ bodhisattva is made, it is a matter of comparing an enlightened one with an unenlightened one. It is a comparison which cannot be justified. An unenlightened being is not worthy of being compared to an enlightened one.

According to Suzuki “As far as the enlightenment goes, both the bodhisattva and the Śrāvaka may be on the same level.”<sup>50</sup> This is true only if he, by “Śrāvaka,” means the unenlightened disciple. All the śrāvakas are not arahants. Therefore, on the basis of our long discussion it must be clear that the bodhisattva is comparable with the disciple but not with the arahant. We saw that as far as enlightenment itself is concerned, the Buddha and the arahant are equal. They cannot be compared to an unenlightened śrāvaka or to a bodhisattva of any level.

The two following examples from the Mahāyāna sūtras suffice to keep the bodhisattva and the arahant in their respective places. The *Karuṇāpūṇḍarīka Sūtra* begins with the reference to the Buddha and immediately to 1,200 arahants. Only after the preference is given to the arahants, does this sūtra bring 80,000 bodhisattvas onto the scene.<sup>51</sup> Having thus recognized the due place of the bodhisattvas, we now see through these two stanzas of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* how the bodhisattvas worship arahants:

So in this way all the bodhisattvas  
During the course of infinite ages  
With earnest mind constantly cultivate  
Each and every rudiment of goodness,  
Worshipping innumerable Buddhas,  
Solitary buddhas, and arahants,  
In order to profit living beings.<sup>52</sup>

*e. Criticisms against Arahants*

Quite contrary to the above cited Mahāyāna sūtra, bodhisattvahood has been placed above arahanthood by some later Mahāyāna writings. Both the sūtras and the followers of the Theravāda, like those of the Mahāyāna, are critical about remaining in ordinary śrāvakahood. Arahants as well as the advanced bodhisattvas have long passed the ordinary state of śrāvakahood. Therefore, the criticisms aimed at ordinary śrāvakas are not valid as far as the arahants are concerned, since the arahants have become unfathomable. But several modern critics have mistaken the arahants for ordinary disciples; hence, their effort to contrast the bodhisattvas with the arahants has no grounds whatsoever.

Although there are many unfair criticisms against the arahants, a short essay like this cannot discuss all of them. To take the strongest criticism, the arahants have been seen as selfish persons in contrast to the bodhisattvas, who unselfishly work for others. One critic believes that the arahants "are unconcerned about the possible Enlightenment of others."<sup>53</sup> Another critic states: "The idea of Arhatship, however, was considered by Mahāyānists cold, impassionate, and hard-hearted for the saint calmly reviews the sight of the suffering masses."<sup>54</sup> In the eyes of another critic, the arahants are "narrow minded," "crabbed," and "undisciplined." He adds: "The 'selfish' enlightened persons are first the *Arhants* or 'Disciples,' who are said to represent the ideal of the Hinayana, and who are aloof from the concerns of the world, intent on their own private salvation alone."<sup>55</sup>

As far as the Theravādins' arahant is concerned, none of these remarks is true. As an enlightened one, an arahant makes every effort to share his enlightenment with others. He is calm; but his calmness does not oppose his loving kindness and compassion, which have been developed with the other perfections. His discipline is second only to that of the Buddha. No enlightened one is narrow minded or crabbed. He is already saved, and he no longer has to be concerned with his own salvation at all. He does not experience even the slightest selfishness, because selfishness has been completely destroyed at his realization of nirvāna. Therefore, to talk of a "selfish arahant" is nonsense. I

will let A.K. Coomaraswamy speak on this point: "But the Mahāyānists—not to speak of Christian critics of the Hīnayāna—do not sufficiently realize that a selfish being could not possibly become an Arahāt, who must be free from even the conception of an ego, and still more from every form of ego assertion."<sup>56</sup>

The *Karaṇīyametta sutta*, one of the discourses on all-embracing loving kindness, is chanted and practiced every day by the Theravādins. Even unenlightened disciples on the way to arahant hood are not, by any means, "aloof from the concerns of the world." Pāli *suttas* teach that one's progress in morality, courage, meditation, wisdom, and realization of nirvāṇa can be expected when one has good friends (*kalyāṇa mitta*).<sup>57</sup> On one occasion, Ānanda said that half of one's religious life depends on good friends. Immediately, the Buddha corrected Ānanda by saying that not only one half but the whole of religious life depends on good friends, since it is one who has good friends that makes progress in the path of enlightenment.<sup>58</sup> All the arahants are good friends and the rest of the world looks up to them to be led on the path.

It is a grave mistake of the critics to say that the arahants are unconcerned about others' enlightenment. At the beginning of the Buddha's dispensation itself, when the number of arahants grew to sixty, they were asked to travel across the country compassionately preaching the Dharma for the benefit and happiness of the multitude. Further, each of the arahants had been instructed to take a separate path, so that people in all directions would receive the message, and many would become enlightened.<sup>59</sup> Ever since, this instruction has been followed by the arahants. Like Puṇṇa, who volunteered to live among the fierce people in order to make them realize the Dharma, arahants have been tolerant of abuse and mistreatment by ignorant people, and have accomplished their mission with kindness.<sup>60</sup> According to the *Mahāparinibbāna*, the Buddha had determined that before his demise he should educate monks, nuns, and lay disciples in such a way that they could preach, establish, and reestablish his teaching in the world.

In the dialogue with Brahmin Sela, the Buddha claimed that he was the universal emperor in the Dharma (*cakravartin dharmarāja*). Then Sela asked who was his commander-in-chief. The Buddha said that arahant Śāriputra was his commander-in-

chief, and it was Śāriputra who propelled the “Wheel of Dharma” after the Buddha set it forth.<sup>61</sup> All the other arahants followed the chief disciple, Śāriputra, in continuing to turn the wheel. To cite a single example, when Śāriputra preached the *Cha Chakka Sutta*, sixty disciples attained arahantship. Similarly, when Maudgalyāyana and each of the eighty main śrāvakas preached the same *sutta*, in each turn, sixty attained arahantship. Much later, in Sri Lanka, when the arahant Maliyadeva alone preached it at sixty different locations, sixty different groups of sixty people attained arahantship. When the same *sutta* was preached by Cullanāga, one thousand monks and innumerable others attained enlightenment.<sup>62</sup>

This altruistic character of arahants is not missing altogether in the Mahāyāna sūtras. For example, the Buddha charges in the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*: “I now command Bodhisattvas and Arhats to appear, in the Dharma ending age after my nirvāṇa, in all appropriate transformation bodies to save those caught in the wheel of saṃsāra.”<sup>63</sup> There is no evidence that the arahants ever disobeyed this command. Instead, they have faithfully kept up the command of the Buddha.

### V. Conclusion

In the first part of this paper, we distinguished the Theravāda from the Hīnayāna. Although some scholars believe that the bodhisattva ideal is exclusively Mahāyāna, the Theravāda is rich in the bodhisattva doctrine. The second part of this paper examined Theravāda texts and saw that an elaborate bodhisattva path is present there. In the third part, we observed the actual practice of the bodhisattva ideal among the Theravādins. Finally, in the fourth part, some of the criticisms raised against the Theravāda point of view were taken into consideration. As a result the Buddha, bodhisattva, arahant, and śrāvaka were seen in relation to each other, and the prevailing misunderstandings concerning arahants were clarified. By way of concluding our discussion, I would like to add three reflections.

The first is on “the Big Raft and the Little Raft.” Some writers state that because the Mahāyāna transports many to



salvation while the Theravāda a few, the former is called the “Big Raft” and the latter the “Little Raft.”<sup>64</sup> Buddhahood alone is salvation to the Mahāyāna. The Mahāyānist himself says: “However, it had long been accepted that two buddhas do not exist in one world simultaneously.”<sup>65</sup> Besides Gautama Buddha, no one else has become a Buddha since the 6th century B.C. A Buddha is very rare. But the Theravādins teach that due to one single Buddha, an innumerable number of beings become fully enlightened, and they are called arahants. Gautama Buddha and the countless arahants of the present Buddha-era illustrate this phenomenon. As we noted before, to make others enlightened is the sole purpose of one’s attaining Buddhahood. When the two schemes have been observed in this light, the Mahāyāna offers salvation only to a few while the Theravāda to many. Consequently the Theravāda becomes the Big Raft while the Mahāyāna the Little Raft.

The second reflection is on the Mahāyāna bodhisattva’s practice of remaining in saṃsāra until the last being attains nirvāṇa. This is one of the bodhisattva-vows. As the *Sukhāvati Vyūha Sūtra* states, bodhisattvas swear not to become a Buddha until this vow has been fulfilled.<sup>66</sup> The *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra* asserts “he keeps from slipping into nirvāṇa; this is Bodhisattva conduct.”<sup>67</sup>

Everyone is a bodhisattva. If everyone waits till everyone else attains nirvāṇa, no one will attain nirvāṇa. So, this principle of bodhisattvahood is unpracticable. If it is practiced totally, all beings will remain in saṃsāra. And saṃsāra is not the Goal of the Buddhist Path.

The third reflection is a reconciliation between the two: the bodhisattva path and the arahant path. In this paper, we observed on one hand bodhisattvas in the Theravāda scripture and practice, and on the other hand arahants in the Mahāyāna scripture and practice. Despite the fact that the Mahāyānists have presented themselves as “Big” and the others as “Little,” Mahāyāna sūtras teach that “The Bodhisattva mind and the śrāvaka mind are a duality. If the mind is looked into as void and illusory, there is neither Bodhisattva mind nor śrāvaka mind; this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.”<sup>68</sup> A leading Buddhist of our time in the West, Christmas Humphreys, has arrived at a similar decision:

In brief, we must all be Arhats, working diligently at the dull and tedious task of removing faults to make way for virtues, and steadily gaining control of a mind new purified. At the same time we must all be Bodhisattvas, steadily expanding the heart with true compassion, 'feeling with' those forms of life whose need is equal to our own. Both ideas are needed; neither alone is true.<sup>69</sup>

In the Theravāda system, nonduality is vivid. The Buddha himself is an arahant and arahant is (an *arahanta-*) Buddha. Both the Buddhas and arahants have been bodhisattvas, the former as *mahābodhisattva* and the latter as *śrāvakabodhisattva*, until they attained enlightenment. Thus the three ideals, Buddha, bodhisattva and arahant, are not contradictory, but complementary to each other.

## NOTES

\* It has belatedly come to my attention that a version of this article was published by Singapore University in a collection entitled *One Vehicle* (1984).

1. "atha kho therā bhikkhū Rājagahāṃ agamaṃsu dhammaṃ ca vinayaṃ ca saṃgāyitum." *Cullavagga* XI.1.5. See *The Vinaya Piṭakam*, Vols. I–V, ed. by Hermann Oldenberg (2nd–4th edd.; London: Pali Text Society, 1969, 1964), Vol. II, p. 286.

2. After the recording of the Dharma and the Vinaya in textual form, the tradition of daily chanting by the Theras gradually declined.

3. *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, ed. by T.W. Rhys Davids (London: Pali Text Society, 1889), p. 35.

4. *Mahāvamsa* 12:1–20:56. See *The Mahāvamsa*; ed. by Wilhelm Geiger (2nd ed.; London: Pali Text Society, 1958), pp. 94–163.

5. *Aṅguttara Nikāya* I. 13.1–7. See also *The Book of the Gradual Sayings*, Vols. I–V, trans. by F.L. Woodward, et al. (2nd–4th edd.; London: Pali Text Society, 1960–1973), Vol. I, pp. 14–15.

6. *The Sumaṅgala-Vilāsini*, Vols. II, III, ed. by W. Stede (2nd ed.; London: Pali Text Society, 1971), Vol. III, pp. 873–77.

7. *The Dīgha Nikāya*, Vols. II, III, ed. by T.W. Rhys Davids, et al. (3rd, 4th edd.; London: Pali Text Society, 1960, 1966), Vol. III, pp. 99–116.

8. *The Commentary on the Dhammapada*, Vol. I, ed. by H.C. Norman (2nd ed.; London: Pali Text Society, 1970), p. 11.

9. *The Sumaṅgala-Vilāsini*, Vol. II, p. 411.

10. See for instance *The Dīgha Nikāya*, Vol. II, pp. 30–35.; *The Majjhima-*

*Nikāya*, Vols. I, III, ed. by V. Trenckner, et al. (3rd ed.; London: Pali Text Society, 1964, 1960), Vol. I, p. 92.

11. My translation of the following stanzas: “. . . *icchamāno ahaṃ ajja kilese jhāpaye mama. Kiṃ me aññātaka vesena dhammaṃ sacchikaten’idha, . . . Kiṃ me ekena tiṇṇena purisena thāmadassinā? Sabbaññutaṃ pāpūṇitvā santāressaṃ sadevake.*” *The Jātaka*, Vols. I–VII, ed. by V. Fausbøll (2nd ed.; London: Pali Text Society, 1962–1964), Vol. I, p. 14.

12. *The Sumaṅgala-Vilāsini*, Vol. II, p. 427.

13. *Dānaṃ sīlaṃ ca nekkhammaṃ, / Paññā viriyena pañcamaṃ, / Khanti sacca’ madhiṭṭhānaṃ, / Mettu’ pekkhāti’ me dasa.* Note that generally Mahāyāna perfections are six: 1) *dāna*, 2) *śīla*, 3) *kṣānti*, 4) *vīrya*, 5) *dhyāna*, and 6) *prajñā*.

14. *The Commentary to the Cariyāpīṭaka*, ed. by K. Devarakkhita, Simon Hewavitarne Bequest Series, Vol. XXVI (Colombo: The Tripitaka Publication Press, 1929), pp. 212, 220, 249.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 220.

16. *The Sumaṅgala-Vilāsini*, Vol. II, p. 427.

17. *The Commentary to the Cariyāpīṭaka*, pp. 226–27.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 232–33.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 259.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 219, 222, 235, 260.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 216. The special context of the “*mahābodhisattva*” will be discussed later.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 221–22.

23. *The Jātaka*, Vol. III, pp. 282–83, 425.; Vol. V, pp. 282, 358.; Vol. VI, pp. 401, 405, 431. Translations by the author.

24. *The Commentary to the Cariyāpīṭaka*, p. 219.

25. *The Sumaṅgala-Vilāsini*, Vol. II, p. 427.

26. D.T. Suzuki, *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism* (New York: Schocken Books Inc., 1963), pp. 280–81. See *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3 for Suzuki’s definition of Hīnayāna. Hereinafter referred to as *Mahayana Buddhism*.

27. Donald E. Smith, *Religion and Politics in Burma* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 22–23.

28. Winston L. King, *A Thousand Lives Away: Buddhism in Contemporary Burma* (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer Publishers Ltd., 1964), p. 82.

29. Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, Bollingen Series LVI (2nd ed.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 194.

30. Seikan Hasegawa, *The Cave of Poison Grass* (Arlington, Virginia: Great Ocean Publishers, 1975), p. 21.

31. *Dasa Bodhisattuppatti Kathā* (Ambatenna, Sri Lanka: D.R. Perera, 1926).

32. Edward Conze, *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies: Selected Essays* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1968), p. 38. See *Ibid.*, p. 48 for Conze’s inclusion of Theravāda in Hīnayāna.

33. *Mahāvamsa* 37: 215–46. See also the *Cūlavamsa*, Part I, trans. by Wilhelm Geiger (Colombo: The Ceylon Government Information Department, 1953), pp. 22–26.

34. Dhammapāla, *Visuddhimagga Tikā*, ed. by M. Dhammānanda (Colombo: Mahabodhi Press, 1928), p. 29.

35. Suzuki, *Mahayana Buddhism*, p. 283.

36. Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India* (3rd ed.; Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1973), p. 234. See footnote 32.

37. See *Chinese Buddhist Verse*, trans. by Richard Robinson (London: John Murray Pub. Ltd., 1954), p. xv.; D.T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, in *The Complete Works of D.T. Suzuki*, ed. by Christmas Humphreys, III, (3rd ed.; London: Rider and Company, 1958), p. 164. Hereinafter referred to as *Essays in Zen*.

38. *Buddhist Wisdom Books: The Diamond Sutra and the Heart Sutra*, trans. by Edward Conze (2nd ed.; London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1975), p. 24. Hereinafter referred to as *Wisdom Books*.

39. *The Sumaṅgala-Vilāsini*, Vol. III, pp. 745–46. Translation and emphasis by the author.

40. I have not met a single Buddhist who wishes to become a *pacceka buddha*. As it is such an undesired mode of enlightenment, I will not afford much space to the discussion of the *paccekabuddhahood*.

41. "Ahaṃ hi arahā loka." *The Majjhima-Nikāya*, Vol. I, p. 171.

42. *Wisdom Books*, p. 22.

43. *Karuṇāpūṇḍarika*, Vols. I, II, ed. by Isshi Yamada (London: Luzac & Company Ltd., 1968), Vol. II, Part 2, p. 15.

44. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, Part 1, pp. 1–2.

45. *The Jātaka*, Vol. VI, p. 225.; *The Sumaṅgala-Vilāsini*, Vol. II, p. 412.; Dhammapāla, *Visuddhimagga Tikā*, p. 29.; *The Commentary to the Cariyāpiṭaka*, pp. 16, 224. In the same line the *pacceka-Buddha-to-be* is designated as "*pacceka-bodhisattva*."

46. *The Commentary to the Cariyāpiṭaka*, pp. 14, 224.

47. *Apadāna Pāli*, I, ed. by W. Somaloka Tissa, Simon Hewavitarne Bequest Series, Vol. VIII (Colombo: The Tripitaka Publication Press, 1957), pp. 16–63.; *Apadāna Pāli*, II, ed. by Buddhadatta (Colombo: The Ceylon Stationers Ltd., 1930), pp. 473–79. The twenty-four Buddhas in sequence are Dīpaṅkara, Koṇḍañña, Maṅgala, Sumana, Revata, Sobhita, Anomadassi, Paduma, Nārada, Padumuttara, Sumedha, Sujāta, Piyadassi, Atthadassi, Dhammadassi, Siddhattha, Tissa, Phussa, Vipassi, Sikhī, Vessabhū, Kakusandha, Koṇāgamana, and Kassapa.

48. G.R. Welbon, *The Buddhist Nirvāṇa and its Western Interpreters* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 97. Here Welbon refers to Philippe Edouard Foucaux and Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire.

49. *Wisdom Books*, p. 58. Shakyamuni is Gautama Buddha.

50. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen*, p. 294.

51. *Karuṇāpūṇḍarika*, Vol. II, p. 2ff.

52. *Chinese Buddhist Verse*, p. 54.

53. Richard A. Gard, ed., *Buddhism*, (3rd ed. New York: George Braziller, 1962), p. 28.

54. Suzuki, *Mahayana Buddhism*, p. 288.

55. Edward Conze, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1959), p. 128.; *Buddhist Thought in India*, p. 197.; *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies: Selected Essays*, p. 60.
56. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism* (2nd ed.; New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1964), p. 229.
57. *Āṅguttara Nikāya* IX.1.3. See also *The Book of the Gradual Sayings*, IV, pp. 236–37.
58. *Saṃyutta Nikāya* III. 2.8. See also *The Book of the Kindred Sayings*, Part I, trans. by Mrs. Rhys Davids (3rd ed.; London: Pali Text Society., 1971), pp. 112–15.
59. "caratha bhikkhave cārikam bahujana hitāya . . ." *Mahāvagga* I.11.1. See *The Vinaya Piṭakam*, Vol. I, p. 21.
60. *The Majjhima-Nikāya*, Vol. III, pp. 267–70.
61. *Sutta Nipāta* 556–57. See *The Sutta-Nipāta*, ed. by D. Andersen et al. (3rd ed.; London: Pali Text Society, 1965), p. 109.
62. *Majjhima-Nikāyaṭṭhakathā*, Part IV, ed. by Paññāsāra, Simon Hewavitārne Bequest Series, Vol. XLIX (Colombo: Tripitaka Publication Press, 1952), pp. 218–19.
63. *The Sūrangama Sūtra*, trans. by Charles Luk (3rd ed.; London: Rider & Company, 1973), p. 156.
64. Huston Smith, *The Religions of Man* (2nd ed.; New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965), p. 134.
65. *Karuṇāpūṇḍarīka*, Vol. I, p. 130.
66. *Chinese Buddhist Verse*, p. 44.
67. *The Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra*, trans. by Charles Luk (Berkeley: Shambala, 1972), p. 60.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
69. Christmas Humphreys, *Exploring Buddhism* (Wheaton, Ill: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1974), p. 91.