

inscriptions supplement and enhance his lucid writing. The book is expected to be a definitive work for many years to come. Already, it is indispensable to the student of Buddhism and its culture, in general, and the magnificent architectural and artistic heritage of Nepal, in particular.

I have had a forty-three year old acquaintance with the Kathmandu Valley, commencing with the General Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists in 1956. In over twenty visits with the most recent in this year, I have seen many of the monuments so effectively discussed in this volume. Reading the book has therefore being an exceedingly rewarding experience. Gutschow's deep understanding of the artistic traditions of Nepal makes him a wonderful guide, exposing to full light what is concealed and spotlighting even the slightest detail which enables one to appreciate and admire the tireless efforts of nameless artists.

In one book, I learned more than I could over all my visits. My advice to prospective readers would be "Read it, if you have already been there. Take it with you if you are going there." I recommend it as required reading for all students of Buddhist culture.

Ananda W.P. Guruge

Śūramgamasamādhisūtra

**The Concentration of Heroic Progress
An early Mahayana Buddhist Scripture
translated and annotated by Etienne
Lamotte**

**English translation by Sara Boin-Webb
Curzon Press with The Buddhist Society,
London, 1998 Pp. xxviii and 273**

The handsome volume with a Chinese painting from 9th century Dunhuang depicting a pilgrim monk carrying sutras is undoubtedly a most noteworthy contribution to the critical study of a Mahāyāna Sūtra. The original French version by Etienne Lamotte was published in 1965 in Belgium under the title "La Concentration de la marche heroique". The title, according to

Lamotte, was a cause of difficulty. Accordingly, he had presented the opinions of contemporary scholars and left the question open. Another difficulty was that the original text in its Indian form had changed greatly in the course of time and notable divergences are observed in Iranian, Chinese and Tibetan versions. Lamotte noted, "To attempt to reconstruct the Urtext of a sūtra by submitting the material to a process of textual criticism is an enterprise which is bound to fail. Each recession requires its own study."

Lamotte translates the Sūtra from the translation of Kumārajīva from the Land of Kucha under the Late Ch'in. What is most useful to the student of the Mahāyāna Sūtra is the 106-page Introduction in two chapters: Chapter One in which the subject of Samādhi or Concentration is dealt with in great detail in respect of both Śrāvaka Yāna and Mahāyāna, besides tracing the history of the Sūtra and its sources; and Chapter Two wherein Chinese and Tibetan versions are discussed in depth.

Lamotte explained his view on the evolution of Buddhism in following terms:

"During the last five hundred years of the ancient era, the śrāvakas were the only spokesmen for Buddhism. They specified the rules of the monastic order, codified the teachings of the Buddha and systematised them in the voluminous Abhidharmas. From the third century B.C.E. onwards, they spread throughout the whole of India and became firmly established in Ceylon. Eighteen schools formed among them, but they were only opposed on points of detail and they all remained faithful to the great theses of early Buddhism: the *Pudgalanairātmya* and the *Skandha-mātravāda*.

However, towards the beginning the Common Era, effected by influence that there is no room to go into here, a new form of Buddhism appeared: the Great Vehicle (*mahāyāna*) or Bodhi-sattva Vehicle as opposed to the Small Vehicle (*hīnayāna*) or Śrāvaka Vehicle.

Without supplanting the adherents of early Buddhism who imperturbably continued on their way, the protagonists

of the Great Vehicle were inspired by a new ideal and professed more advanced philosophical theories.

By the means that we have already pointed out, the śrāvakas were inclined towards a Prajñā concerned with the general characteristics of things: impermanence, suffering and impersonality. That Prajñā constituted an 'awakening' (*bodhi*), but a limited awakening, only ensuring the personal benefit (*svārtha*) of the adherent through the acquisition of holiness (*arhattva*) and accession to Nirvāṇa.

The bodhisattva is also drawn towards a Prajñā, but a Prajñā infinitely higher, a Prajñāpāramitā or perfection of wisdom, an omniscience (*sarvajñāna*), knowing all things in all their aspects (*sarvākārajñātā*). This perfection of wisdom constitutes the awakening above all others, the 'supreme and right complete awakening' (*anuttarasamyak-saṃbodhi*) pertaining specifically to the Buddhas and ensuring not just the personal benefit (*svārtha*) of the adherent but above all the benefit of others (*parārtha*), the welfare and happiness of all beings (*sarva-sattvahitasukha*). The most important step taken by the bodhisattva, an adherent of the Great Vehicle, is therefore the 'arousal of the thought of supreme and right complete Enlightenment' (*anuttarasamyaksam-bodhicittotpāda*). In brief, the Cittotpāda: 'I, of such-and-such a name, after having confessed my faults and taken the threefold refuge, for the welfare and deliverance of the infinite world of creatures and in order to release them from the sufferings of the round of rebirth and establish them in the supreme omniscient knowledge; just as the bodhisattvas past, future and present, having aroused the thought of Bodhi, have attained, will attain and attain Buddhahood; just as all the Buddhas, through their Buddha knowledge, free of all obstacles, and their Buddha eye, know and see; just as they acknowledge the absence of the self-nature of things (*dharmāpām niḥsvabhāvatā*); so I,

having such-and-such a name, before my teacher of such-and-such a name and in the presence of all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, arouse the thought of supreme and right complete Enlightenment'. This resolve conducts the adherent into the Great Vehicle; it makes him a bodhisattva certain to reach, after a longer or shorter period of time, the supreme and perfect enlightenment which gives rise to Buddhas.

The entire work reflects the meticulous care and thoroughness which are the hallmark of Lamotte's scholarship. The translation is readable. The Sanskrit text within parenthesis reconstructs the flavor of the original text, which is found in two quotations of Śāntideva and one folio of a manuscript discovered in Eastern Turkestan. The notes and cross-references are exceedingly informative.

The English translation by Sara Boin-Webb is indeed excellent. This most important Sūtra has been made accessible to both scholar and general reader. Lamotte paid homage to her eagerness and talent and offered her his gratitude. The reader will no doubt do the same, just as I did after a rewarding study of this remarkable work of scholarship.

Ananda W.P. Guruge

Soka Gakkai in America: Accommodation and Conversion

By Phillip Hammond and David
Machacek

Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK 1999

In the preface to their book, Phillip Hammond and David Machacek grant that — as sociological observers — they are 'outsiders' who have no personal experience with Soka Gakkai practices. They state quite candidly that they had the opportunity to

* Bodhisatvaprātimokṣasūtra, ed. N. Dutt, *Indian Historical Quarterly* VII, 1931, p.274, 1-7