

**The Development of the *Tathāgatagarbha*
in the Early Mahāyāna Buddhism**

By

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Declaration

I declare that the thesis entitle of The Development of the *Tathāgatagarbha* in the Early Mahāyāna Buddhism is the research work under the supervision of Prof. Tilak Kariyavasam and Dr. Fa Qing, thereof represents my own work, expect where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this university or other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

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Abstract

The *tathāgatagarbha* in early Mahāyāna Buddhism along with the arising of the Mahāyāna doctrine, was one of the major doctrines of the Mahāyāna. There are many sūtra-s and Mahāyāna śāstra-s which were produced and developed in India that based on the *tathāgatagarbha* literature, such as the Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra, Aṅgulimālika-sūtra, Śrīmālā-sūtra Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra (Lkt.), Ghana-vyūha-sūtra, almost of them were translated into Chinese.

In this thesis, I will try to explore the origin of the *tathāgatagarbha* and to verify whether it is the teaching of the Buddha. My study will base on the *tathāgatagarbha* literature extant in Chinese translation.

The *tathāgatagarbha* is from the early Buddhist doctrine founded in the Chinese/Sanskrit Āgama-s and Pāli Nikāya-s. The *tathāgatagarbha* functions as *prakṛti-prabhāsvara-citta* (Pāli, *pabhassara*), the subtle of mind. The *tathāgatagarbha* is within the mind of all beings, but it is covered by the defilements explained in later Mahāyāna Buddhism.

This thesis will also explore the development of the *tathāgatagarbha* in the Mahāyāna literature and its signification, its relation with karma (*paramārtha & saṃvṛti*). It is the syncretizing of the *prajñā-parāmitā* and *śūnyatā* in Madhyamaka & Yogācāra. The importance of the *tathāgatagarbha* and its practice will be discussed.

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Abbreviations

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- ANP. *Anunatvāpūratva-nirdeśa-parivarta*. T16, No.668, p.466, trans. by Bodhiruci.
- Aṣṭa. *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra (prajñāpāramitā-sūtra)*, by Kumarajīva. T8. No. 223. trans., into English by Edward Conze. S.Antool & Co. Private Ltd.: Asiatic Society Calutta,1970.
- Abds. *Abhidhammatthasaṅgha (A Comprehensive Manual of Abidhamma)* trans. by Bhikkhu Bodhi. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2006.
- Akṣs. *Akṣobhyavyūha-sūtra*. T11, No.310.p.750.
- BŚS. *Bodhisattva-śīla-sūtra (Brahmajāla-sūtra)*. trans. by Kumarajīva, T24. No.1484.No.Vol.2.
- CEB. Lan Ji-fu 兰吉富主编. *Chinese Encyclopaedia of Buddhism 中华佛教百科全书*. Tai Nan: 中华佛教百科文献基金会, 1994.
- D. *Dīgha-nikāya*. ed. T.W. Rhys Davids and Carpenter, J.Estlin, Vol. No.86 *sūtra*.
- EAS. *Ekottarāgama-sūtra*, T2, No.125.
- Fo-Guang Ci Yi 慈怡主编. *Fo-Guang Buddhist Dictionary 佛光大辞典*. Taiwan: Fo-Guang Pub., 台湾佛光出版社, 1989.
- Lkt. *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*, trans. by D.T. Suzuki. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2003.
- MHP. *Mahābheri-haraka-parivarta-sūtra*, trans., by Gunabhadra, T9.
- MN. *Majjhima-nikāya*, Ven. Nyanamoli Thera, *A Treasury of the Buddha's Discourses from the Majjhima-nikāya (Middle Collection, Vol. I, II)* ed. and arranged by Phra Khantipalo. Thailand: Mahāmakut Rājavidyālaya, 1980.
- MPPS. *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. T 5-7. trans., by Xuazhang.
- MPPŚ. *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra*. T25.No.223. attrib., Nāgājuna.

- MPS. *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*. T1.No.7., trans., by Fa Xian. trans., into English by T. W. Rhys Davids.
- MPŚ. *Mahāyāna-sraddhopada-śāstra (The Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith)*, attrib. Aśvaghosha, T.32; trans., into En., by Yoshito S. Hakeda. New York: Columbia University, 1967.
- PTS Pāli Text Society.
- RGV. *Ratnagoṭravibhāga (vyākhyā)*. T31, attributed to Sthiramati, trans. into Chinese from Skt. by Tan Xi-yong 谈锡永. 全佛文化事业有限公司, 2006. into English by E. Obermiller. Delhi: Sri Satguru. 1997.
- SN. *Samyutta-nikāya, A Translation of the Samyuttanikāya*, trans. from the *pāli* by Bhikkhu Bodhi. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000. *An Anthology From the Samyuttanikāya*, trans. by Bikkhu Nananda. Kandy: PTS, 1983.
- SA. *Samyuttāgama*, 象跡喻经, T2. Vol. XXIX, 209c. 教诫罗侯罗大经, No.23, 24, 465. *Aṅgulimāla-sūtra* 央掘魔罗经 No.120, trans. by Guṇabhadra.
- SP. *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra*. T9. No.262.p.1.
- Śrīmālā-sūtra Śrīmālādevī Siṃhanāda-sūtra (Āryaśrīmālā-sūtra)*. T11. trans., by Bodhiruci, trans., into English by C. C. Chang, General Editor. *A Treasury of Mahāyāna Sūtras (Selections From the Mahāratnakūtra Sūtra)*. Delhi: Buddhist Association of the United States, 1991.
- TGS. *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra*, T16. No.666, trans., by Buddhahadr. T16. No.667, trans., by Amoghavajra. Trans., into En. by William H. Gosnick, ed. by Donald S. Lopes, Jr. in “*Buddhism in Practice*”. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1998.
- Vsm. *Visuddhimagga* by Buddhaghosa, trans., by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli. Singapore: Buddhist Meditation Centre, 1975.
- Vmm. *Vimuttimaggā* by Uṭṭissa, trans. by Soma Thera and Kheminda, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1977.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

1.1 The Purpose of Research

The *tathāgatagarbha* theory is one of the most important and fundamental doctrine in the development of Mahāyāna Buddhism. It was presented in the early Buddhism as luminous mind.¹ It was expounded in different form of *buddhadhātu*, *dharmakāya*, *nirvāṇa*, *bodhicitt...* and carried the *buddhadhātu pratīyasamutpāda*² doctrine in later Mahāyāna traditions. It is interesting to look at how the *tathāgatagarbha* came to appearance developing through the early Buddhism.

Systematic research on this issue began in the early twentieth century with Master Yin-Shun,³ and Japanese scholars, among them, the famous one was Takasaki, Jikido.⁴ However, there are still some important reasons that lead me to write this thesis and explaining the concept of *tathāgatagarbha*. There are four processes of manifestation of *tathāgatagarbha* to the attainment of the Buddhahood⁵ and there are many beings that do not really understand the *tathāgatagarbha*. So in order to make sentient beings understand correctly, it is necessary to repeat it. The reasons are:

(i).The first reason of and main reason is should understand the

¹ See detail in the Ch. III, 3.2.2, pp.28-29.

² *Buddhadhātu pratīyasamutpāda* 如来藏缘起, 又作真如缘起: The birth and death of sentient beings, and the ending of *samsāra* with entry into *nirvāṇa* from *tathāgatagarbha* (众生之生死流转、还灭涅槃, 皆依含真如之如来藏佛性), described in the doctrine of Aśvaghosa or the doctrine of phenomenon rising from suchness (existence as such). Ryukan Kimura. *The Original and Developed Doctrines of Indian Buddhism in Charts*. p.64. One of the four kinds of *pratīyasamutpāda* in Mahāyāna Buddhism which is explained in *Lkt. 楞伽经, Ghana-vyūha-sūtra*, 密严经, *Mahāyāna-sraddhotpāda-śāstra*, 大乘起信论, 等所论显的思想. Ci Yi 慈怡主编. *Fo-Guang Buddhist Dictionary* 佛光大辞典 (Taiwan: Fo-Guang Pub., 台湾佛光出版社, 1989) pp.1821c-1822c.

³ Yin-Shun, *A Study on the Tathāgatagarbha* 如来藏之研究 (Taipei: Zhengwen Pub., 正闻出版社, 2004).

⁴ Jikido, Takasaki, and *Formation of the Tathāgatagarbha Theory: A Study on the Historical Background of the Tathāgatagarbha Theory of Mahāyāna Buddhism Based upon the Scriptures Preceding the Ratnagotravibhāga* (Tokyo: Shunjusha, 1974) & *A Study on the RGV (Uttaratantra): Being a Treatise on the Tathāgatagarbha Theory of Mahāyāna Buddhism* (Roma: Institute Italian Reril Medio ed. Eremo Oriente, 2000).

⁵ The four processes of fruit of Buddhahood: (i). *śraddha*, (ii). *parimocana*, (iii). *caryā*, and (iv). *prapti-sākṣāt-kṛti*: “修行佛道所必经之四种过程: 信、解、行、证。” Fo-Guang, p.3721b.

tathāgatagarbha that is the encouragement doctrine for those the capacity is still slight, to cultivate their faithful mind on Mahāyāna Buddhism and cause men (Buddhists and non-Buddhist) to free themselves from all sufferings and gain the bliss in present life and the final bliss.

(ii).The second reason is to enable that those capacity has attained faith on Mahāyāna Buddhism (or goodness) maturity to keep firm un-retrogressive faith on the teaching of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

(iii).The third reason is that I wish to interpret the fundamental *tathāgatagarbha*, in order to encourage sentient beings to understand it properly and without any misconceptions.

(iv).The fourth reason is to understand the expedient means (*upāya*) of the *tathāgatagarbha*, in order to wipe out the hindrance of defilements (evil *karma*), free from the desire (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and ignorance (*moha*) and all kinds of attachments to achieve pure mind.

(v).The fifth reason is to reveal the practice of the *sīla*, *samādhi* and *prajñā/paññā* (or *śamatha & vipaśyanā*⁶) and *catvāri-apramāṇāni*.⁷ This path is practiced in Theravāda and Mahāyāna.

(vi).The sixth reason is to point out the advantage of studying the *tathāgatagarbha* of Mahāyāna and to remove those depressions of the mind, contempt regarding those that are inferior to make effort to attain enlightenment.

These reasons encourage me to write this thesis. Though this teaching is

⁶ Charles Willemsen, *Mahāyāna Literatures*, ME-6209 Chinese (Thailand: International College Korat. July-Nov. 2013), lecture: “In Theravāda Buddhism which is Noble Eightfold Path (*sīla*, *samādhi* and *prajñā/paññā*); in Mahāyāna it is *śaṭ-pāramitā*. It is *śamatha & vipaśyanā* in Chinese (止观).

⁷ *catvāri-apramāṇāni*, Pāli is *catassoappamaññāyo*: (i) loving kindness (*maitry*, *metta-apramāṇā*); (ii) compassion (*karuṇā-apramāṇā*); (iii) joy (*muditā-apramāṇā*); (iv) equanimity (*upekṣā-apramāṇā*).

present in details in the *sūtra-s*, *śāstra-s* and the discussion of scholars. Today, the capacity and deeds of sentient beings are no longer the same, nor easily accept and comprehend the transmundane dharma-s, things of the world of enlightenment, such as the six *pāramitā-s*, *nirvāṇa*...especially the *tathāgatagarbha*. In the days when the Tathāgata was in the world, sentient beings were high aptitude (more pure) and were preached in his form, mind, and deeds. So when the Tathāgata preached with his perfect voice, all different beings understood. But after the passing away of the Tathāgata, there are some who through hearing (*śruta*), thinking (*cintā*) and practicing (*bhāvanā*)⁸ by their own power to listen extensively to others and to reach understanding. There are some who by their own power could listen to very little. There are some who without any mental power. Thus, this discourse is designed to embrace, in a general way, the limitless meaning of the *tathāgatagarbha*. Therefore, it should be presented.

1.2 The Method of the Research

In this study, it will chiefly rely on the primary sources such as the early *Pāli* and Sanskrit Mahāyāna *sūtra-s*, *śāstra-s* in India, and Chinese translations. The development of the concept of the *tathāgatagarbha* will be traced from a historical perspective. Furthermore, an attempt will be made for interpretation of the development, concept, signification and activities of *tathāgatagarbha* literature.

The first chapter will be the introduction of the purpose, reasons and the method of the research, that in order to guide the reader to understand the sketch of this thesis.

The second chapter, the term of the *tathāgatagarbha* is required to explain the

⁸ *tisraḥ-prajñāḥ* or *śruta-cintā-bhāvanā*: hearing, thinking and practicing; also called “three kinds of wisdom”; *MPPS*, T 1579.30.350a, 20. It is the good friends (*kalyānamitra*) of Bodhisattva-s. It is also taught in *Abhidharmakośa*.T 29, vol.22, and p.1162C.

etymology of *tathāgatagarbha* that will be explained according to the transliteration and the acceptaion of *tathāgatagarbha*.

The third chapter will elucidate the development of the *tathāgatagarbha* as luminous mind, in *Pāli nikāya* and Sanskrit *āgama*, and appears in Abhidharma. This is considered as the period of the rise and formation of the *tathāgatagarbha*, because the nature of *tathāgatagarbha* is the essence nature of pure mind (*citta-prakṛti*), purity (*parisuddha*) of equanimity (*upekṣa*), which is born of concentration (*śamatha & vipāśyanā*), this is suggested by the Buddha.⁹ The *tathāgatagarbha* developed in later Mahāyāna Buddhism. The Bodhisattva through the *ṣaṭ-pāramitā*¹⁰, nature-thought (*prabhāsvara*) or the great perfect wisdom (*prajñā-pāramitā/ādarśa-jñāna*),¹¹ to see the defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*) which is *sūnyatā*,¹² and the practice of *brahmavihāra*¹³ to develop the state of mind to attain the luminous mind (*citta-prakṛti*) either in Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The fourth chapter will be the discussion of the composition of the *tathāgatagarbha* literature, dates back to the 200-250,¹⁴ little later than the *Aṣṭa.*; during this period the *tathāgatagarbha* developed as different literature in major stages, emerged and matured to conjoin with the later Mādhyamika and Yogācāra Schools.

The fifth chapter is the discussion of signification of the *tathāgatagarbha* which the *tathāgatagarbha* identify the absolute and phenomena in the *sūtra-s* and *śāstra-s*.

⁹ Warder A.K, *Indian Buddhism* (Delhi: Motil Banarsidass, 1991), Ch.4, p.92.

¹⁰ *ṣaṭ-pāramitā: dāna-pāramitā, śīla-pāramitā, ksānti-pāramitā, vīrāya-pāramitā, dhyāna-pāramitā, prajñā-pāramitā.*

¹¹ Suzuki.D.T, *Studies in the Lkt.* (London: George Routledge, 1999), pp.105-106. *Mādhyamika*: the *prajñāpāramitā* is the perfection of wisdom of emptiness that allows the bodhisattva to perceive reality; *Yogācāra*: the *ādarśa-jñāna* is the *avikalpa* or *nirvikalpa-jñāna/tathatā-jñāna*, which is the cognitive aspect of the revulsion (*parāvṛitti*) one experiences.

¹² Warder. A.K, p.404.

¹³ *brahmavihāra: catvāryapramāṇāni, Pāli is catassoappamaññāyo*: (i) loving kindness (*maitry, metta-apramāṇā*); (ii) compassion (*karuṇā-apramāṇā*); (iii) joy (*muditā-apramāṇā*); (iv) equanimity (*upekṣā-apramāṇā*).

¹⁴ Mithchell. Donald. W, *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience* (New York: Oxford, 2002), p.139.

The sixth chapter deals with the karma of *tathāgatagarbha*, in order to make the reader to understand the nature of *tathāgatagarbha*. The teaching of *tathāgatagarbha* is the skillful means (*upāya*), that is to guide sentient beings realize both aspects of *tathāgatagarbha*,¹⁵ to guide sentient beings to realize the Buddhahood.

The last chapter will give the conclusion, that is the summarise of the development of the *tathāgatagarbha*, in the Theravāda and Mahāyāna, that the teaching of Buddha is only one, there is no any difference, that the difference is only in different ways, different terms, to guide the different capacity of sentient beings to the same goal, that is out of suffering (*saṃsāra*) and gain the highest happiness (*nirvāṇa*).

The present research mainly focuses on the second and the third chapter that the *tathāgatagarbha* is the teaching of the Buddha which presents in early Buddhism from the beginning. It was developed to the Mahāyāna Buddhism in different way [skillful means (*upāya*)] to re-interpret the doctrine of Buddha. In this thesis, it only lists five reasons to employ this method (*saṃvṛtiyā-deśnā*) to encourage sentient beings etc., to accomplish the whole worldly salvation.

In the beginning, with the teaching of luminous mind in the *nikāya-s* and *āgama-s*, along with the development of *Abhidharma*, the mind as the *bhavaṅga-citta* (*viññāna*), the consciousness (*nāma*), and how to develop the *jhāna*, *tisraḥ-sikṣāh*¹⁶ and *brahmavihāra*,¹⁷ to remove the defilements, to attain the luminous mind, to attain *arhant* in Theravāda tradition. This theory is developed to the Mahāyāna Buddhism, that the

¹⁵ Both aspects of *tathāgatagarbha* (i). “one’s own purpose 自利 (*svārtha*), which is *svābhavikakāya*, the personal realization of a Buddha (*tathāgatagarbha*), (ii). the *saṃvṛtikāya* (conventional embodiment) as the “purpose of other 他利” (*parārtha*), the manifestation of Buddhahood to help other beings, which is the *rūpakāyas*. Makranky John J. *Buddhahood Embodied (Sources of Controversy in India and Tibet)*. Delhi: Sri Satguru, 1998. p.100.

¹⁶ *tisraḥ-sikṣāh* 三学, Pāli, *tissosikkhā*: (i) *adhiśīla-sikṣā*, (ii) *adhicitta-sikṣā*, (iii) *adhiprajñā-sikṣā*.

¹⁷ *catvāryapramāṇāni* 四梵住, Pāli is *catassoappamaññāyo*, another name is *brahmavihāra*: (i) loving kindness (*māitry*, *metta-apramāṇā*); (ii) compassion (*karuṇā-apramāṇā*); (iii) joy (*muditā-apramāṇā*); (iv) equanimity (*upekṣā-apramāṇā*). The *Loving Kindness Citta* is the basic phase of the uppermost austerity in *Udumbarika Sihanādasutta* of the *D* (vol.III).

tathāgatagarbha is covered by defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*), through the practice of *dhyāna*, *catvāri-apramāṇāni*, and *ṣaṭ-pāramitā*¹⁸ to gain the Buddhahood in the Mahāyāna tradition.

Soon with the holding of essence nature of mind is pure (*prakṛtipariśuddham-cittam*) by *Vibhajyavāda* and *Mahāsaṅghika*, the *tathāgatagarbha* literature were composed and became one line of the most important Mahāyāna (*nirvāṇavāda*),¹⁹ it claims that sentient beings fundamentally have the essential nature of the Buddha, it is the possibility of becoming a Buddha and is also the cause and condition for becoming a Buddha, which is illustrated in different meaning of literatures. There are three stages of the development in the Mahāyāna literatures conjoined with the *sūnyatā*, *ālayavijñāna*, *bodhicitta*, and developed with two major Mahāyāna Schools.

Within the development of Mahāyāna Buddhism, through the significations and activities of *tathāgatagarbha*, to state the theory of the manifestation of *tathāgatagarbha*, how the sentient beings become the Buddha that establish the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine.

The problem is the *tathāgatagarbha* of Mahāyāna Buddhism, which is different from the non-Buddhist religions of India, that is to purify the mind to achieve the wisdom and lead the sentient beings out of suffering, to gain the happiness, and to achieve the goal of deliverance of the whole world, to solve the problems of society, and built up the peaceful, friendly, perfect world.

Since the *Pāli nikāya* and Sanskrit *āgama* are used in the present thesis as the primary sources, *Pāli* terminologies are used when *Pāli* sources are consulted. But the

¹⁸ *ṣaṭ-pāramit* (sixperfection) 六度/六波罗蜜: (i). *dāna-pāramitā*, (ii). *sīla-pāramitā*, (iii). *ksānti-pāramitā*, (iv). *vīrāya-pāramitā*, (v). *dhyāna-pāramitā*, (vi). *prajñā-pāramitā*.

¹⁹ *nirvāṇavāda*: 真常唯心系. Yin-Shun 印顺, *The Way to Buddhahood* 成佛之道. trans.by H. Yeung, M. D. Wing (Boston: Wisdom, 1998). & *The Indian Buddhism* 印度之佛教 (Taipei: Zhengwen Pub., 正闻出版社, 2000), p.270.

tathāgatagarbha is the Mahāyāna Buddhism. Therefore, the Sanskrit terminologies are used throughout, because the sources are taken from the Mahāyāna *sūtra-s* of Sanskrit originals and used as evidence.

Lastly, some of the Buddhists opposed the use of the term of Hīnayāna, although the term of the Theravāda cannot cover the whole early Buddhism, but the term of Theravāda is used in its place to identify all the early Indian Buddhist schools before the rise of Mahāyāna.

CHAPTER II

The Etymology of *Tathāgatagarbha*

2.1 Introduction

The concepts of *tathāgatagarbha* are the main thought of tradition of the Mahāyāna Buddhism. But the origin of the concept of *tathāgatagarbha* can be found in the *Pāli* texts and Gadharī²⁰ texts of *āgama* (*EA* or *AN*) and in the *SA* (38th *sūtra*), it also can be found in the *Abhidharma* of *Mahāsaṅghika* and *Sarvastivāda* school.

In the later development of Buddhism, along with the Mādhyamika and the Yogācāra School, a number of Mahāyana texts were written about the *tathāgatagarbha* in Sanskrit language. The earliest texts are the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra*, and *Śrīmālā-sūtra*, and so on. The *tathāgatagarbha* literature proclaims that seed or potential (*tathāgatagarbha*) resides equally in all beings, and it needs only to be developed.²¹ Once one is free from the defilements, he will attain the *nirvāṇa*. However, the *tathāgatagarbha* literature ideas did not have a great influence on Buddhist schools in India. But they strongly influenced Mahāyāna thinking about the nature of consciousness, awakening, and Buddhahood in early period Mahāyana Buddhism in India, especially the philosophy of the major Mahāyāna schools namely Mādhyamika and Yogācāra School.

2.2 The Transliteration of *Tathāgatagarbha*

The *tathāgatagarbha* is a compound word which is Tathāgata (तथागत) + *garbha*

(गर्भ) = तथागतगर्भ. At the beginning, the Tathāgata render as the Buddha which is not to

²⁰ Charles Willemen, Lectures.

²¹ Donald S. Lopez Jr, *Buddhism in Practice* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1998), pp.23-24.

be recognized by means of the marks on his body, Buddha is the embodiment of dharma, thus the real body Buddha is the spiritual body of Buddha, it is considered to be the same as absolute reality (*tathatā*).²² So the concept of Buddha is the most important in doctrine of Buddhism. Buddha Gautama was a historical person. The *sūtrapīṭaka* affords us ample evidence of that the people of India during his time raised him as Perfect One, Enlightened One, Omniscience One, in the eyes of his followers. Similar questions were being raised even two hundred and fifty years after his death, during the reign of Asoka, the Maurya, in the third century B.C. Thus the theory of *tathatā* and the Tathāgata also became one of most important topic of discussion in the history of Buddhist thought in India, and slowly developed the term of *tathāgatagarbha* in the texts of Buddhist thoughts.

2.2.1 The Transliteration of Buddha as *Tathāgatagarbha*

One special concept was developed in India around 3rd century which is the concept of *tathāgatagarbha* during Kuṣāṇa dynasty, that claims all beings possesses the *tathāgatagarbha*, its means that all beings can develop into full Buddhahood or to be a Buddha in the future, and it was developed mature and popular around 4th-5th century.²³ It is said to consist of pure and luminous consciousness shining like a jewel same as the Buddha. Later the term of *tathāgatagarbha* of Sanskrit word is formatted and translated into Buddha Nature, and *tathāgatagarbha* is itself understood as a compound word that can be interpreted in two ways:²⁴

²² David J. Kalupahana, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (Honolulu: The University of Hawaii, 1975), p.157.

²³ Lan Ji-fu 兰吉富主编. *Chinese Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* 中华佛教百科全书 (Tai Nan: 中华佛教百科文献基金会, 1994), vol.5, 2025ba. Later this dictionary use “CEB”.

²⁴ Sallie B. King, *Buddha Nature* (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1992), p.4, for Chinese: 1. (i).乘真如之道来三界垂化之故; (ii). 乘如实道来成正觉; 2. 谓自凡位修行成正觉也, 乘如而往故曰如去; 过去之诸佛如从生死去于涅槃; 乘真如之道而往于佛果之义也. 真如之道而往于佛果之义也.

(I). *tathā* (如此) + *āgata* (a+√gam) *Pāli*, *tathā+āgato*: तथा + आगतः “Thus Come 如来”, this is a past participle word which is an epithet for Buddha who had been an Enlightenment One and had come from *nirvāṇa* to *saṃsāra* to work for the salvation of all beings, or who has arrived at the Truth, or has understood thus (the world).

(II). *tathā* + *gata* (√gam): तथा+गतः “Thus Gone 如去”, or he who has gone thus, this word is also a past participle word which identify for Buddha who had attained the Enlightenment and had gone from *saṃsāra* to *nirvāṇa*, i.e., as Buddha-s of the past did (*Pāli*, *tathā+gato*).

The term *garbha* (गर्भ) also has two meaning: ‘embryo’ and ‘womb’ which explain as below: (i). the term *tathāgatagarbha* may be “embryonic Tathāgata” (i.e., the incipient Buddha). It is often as the “cause” of the Tathāgata. This cause of Tathāgata which is the Buddha potential and it can be examined from its innate aspect and the aspect developed through practice, that the presence of certain qualities, Buddha Nature can be manifest. (ii). It also may be “womb of the Tathāgata” is understood as that possesses the essential attributes of the Tathāgata, in their fully developed form which meaning as the “fruit” of Tathāgata. At this state that it represents the fulfillment of the Buddha Path and is linked with such terms as spiritual body (*dharmakāya*), perfect wisdom, *nirvāṇa*, realization and absolute reality (*tathatā*). So the Buddha is called Tathāgata.²⁵

2.2.2 The Transliteration of *Tathāgatagarbha* in Dictionary

²⁵ *tatha* 真实的 + *āgata*: “从真理(如实而)世界來者”. 智度论二十四曰: ‘乘如实道来, 故名为如来’. Fo-Guang, vol.3, p.2346.b-c. vol.7, 6826b. vol.1, 480.

According to Buddhist Chinese-Sanskrit dictionary, there are nine kinds of translation of *tathāgatagarbha*:²⁶

- i. *Tathāgata+garbha*= (तथागत + गर्भः);
- ii. *Jina+ garbha*= (जिड + गर्भः);
- iii. *Jina+dhātu*= (जिड + धातु);
- iv. *Tathāgata+kośa*= (तथागत + कोश);
- v. *Tathāgata+dhātu*= (तथागत + धातु);
- vi. *Dhātu*= (धातु);
- vii. *Bhuddha+garbha*= (बुद्ध + गर्भः);
- viii. *Sam̐buddha+sugatātmabhāva*= (संबुद्ध + सुगतामभाव);
- ix. *Sugatāmbhāva*= (सुगतामभाव).

All these transliterations of terminologies indicate the meaning of the cause (embryo and womb) of *tathāgatagarbha* in different aspects.

According to The analysis of scholar, there are six kinds of mode of compound in Sanskrit:²⁷

- i. *Buddha + dhātu*= (बुद्ध + धातु);
- ii. *Buddha + garbha*= (बुद्ध + गर्भः);
- iii. *Buddha + gotra*= (बुद्ध + गोत्र);

²⁶ Akira Hirakawa 平川彰編, *Great Buddhist Chinese-Sanskrit Dictionary* 佛教汉梵大辞典 (Tokyo: Reiyukai, 1997), p.769.

²⁷ Ogawa Ichijo 小川一乘, *The Thought of Buddha Nature* 佛性思想 (京都: 文荣堂书店, 昭和 57 年 9 月), Ch.2.p.24.

- iv. *Tathāgata* + *dhātu* = (तथागत + धातु);
- v. *Tathāgata* + *garbha* = (तथागत + गर्भ);
- vi. *Tathāgata* + *gotra* = (तथागत + गोत्र).

These six kinds of terminologies express that the realm of the Tathāgata (Reality) which possessed by the Buddha.

According to the analysis of dictionary, there are six kinds of meaning:²⁸ *dharmānidhi*; ²⁹ *buddha-dhātu*; ³⁰ *buddha-gotra*, or *tathāgatagotra*; ³¹ *prakṛtiprabhāsvarāma-cittam*; ³² *prakṛti-visuddhi*; ³³ *citta-prakṛti*.³⁴ These six kinds of term explain the qualities of Buddha in different terminologies.

Therefore, according to the different words compound with the Tathāgata, the transliterations of *tathāgatagarbha* will embody different aspects of meanings to explain the different qualities of the Tathāgata.

2.2.3 The Transliteration of *Tathāgatagarbha* in Chinese Tradition

According to the tradition of Chinese from Indian, generally *tathāgatagarbha* is translated in the sense as “womb of the Tathāgata”. It is rendered *ru-lai-zang* (如来藏). The term *ru-lai* (如来) exactly renders Tathāgata as “Thus Come,” and (*zang* 藏) is a storehouse. Thus the Chinese translation shows a preference for conceiving the *tathāgatagarbha* as the container of the Tathāgata (i.e., the womb) rather than that which is contained (the

²⁸ Takasaki, Jikido, 如来藏思想の形成, *Formation of the Tathāgatagarbha Theory: A Study on the Historical Background of the Tathāgatagarbha Theory of Mahāyāna Buddhism Based upon the Scriptures Preceding the RVG* (Tokyo: Shunjo-sha, 东京株式会社春秋社, 1974), p.59, p.177, p.312, p.398, p.756.

²⁹ *dharmānidhi* 法藏, p.59.

³⁰ *buddha-dhātu* 佛性, p.177.

³¹ *buddha-gotra* 佛种性, p.312.

³² *prakṛtiprabhāsvarāma-cittam* 自性清淨心, p.398.

³³ *prakṛti-visuddhi* 自性清淨, p.755.

³⁴ *citta-prakṛti* 心清淨, p.756.

embryo). Until now, there are three kinds of the translation of *tathāgatagarbha* were translated into *ru-lai-zang* (如来藏) from Sanskrit.³⁵ This tradition of transliteration has a long history in Chinese Buddhism.

In the ancient translation of Chinese, the earliest period of Mahāyāna Buddhism of Lokāṣema's work [*Akṣs* which is the earliest *sūtra*, among the *sūtra-s* of the Pure Land School] which has three kinds of translation in Chinese language. (i). Translated by Lokāṣema in Han Dynasty around 2nd century;³⁶ (ii). Translated by Zhi Dao-gen in Jing Dynasty around 3rd century;³⁷ (iii). Translated by Bodhiruci in Tang Dynasty around end of 7th century.³⁸ In the text *Akṣs*, the Tathāgata, Lokāṣema translated the Tathāgata as “Thus Come,” has been standard in Buddhist Chinese for nearly two millennia. It is found in the translation of An Shigao, as well as An Xuan and Yan Fotiao and Kang Mengxiang.³⁹ During the Han Dynasty the translators Lokāṣema, alone among employs the unwieldy rendition throughout his corpus. Only in one text attributed to him, the *Akṣs* does this term Tathāgata regularly appears, and its very presence points to the likelihood, this is indeed Lokāṣema's work. The term of *tathāgatagarbha* appears in the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* firstly in the Chinese translation, but its meaning is not detail.⁴⁰ The formation of the term *tathāgatagarbha* and the title of the *TGS* are probably due to the introductory description of *Avatamsakasūtra* & *SP*. The *tathāgatagarbha* Line clearly goes beyond the frame of the *SP* and elucidates the reason why all living beings can

³⁵ Wogihara Unrai & D.T. Suzuki 荻原云来撰, 铃木学术财团编, *Great Sanskrit-Japanese Dictionary Along its Chinese Translation Equivalents* 汉译对照梵和大辞典 (Tokyo: 株式会社讲谈社出版研究所, 讲谈社出版, 1984), 从梵文译成汉文如来藏的梵文有三组: (i). *tathāgatagarbha*如来藏 p.523; (ii). *buddha-garbha*佛藏p.927; (iii). *tathāgata-kośa* 如来藏 p.522.

³⁶ Lokāṣema (Zhi Qian) in Han Dynasty, 后汉桓帝时支娄迦讖 (支讖); The early translator of Mahāyāna Buddhism of the translation in China.

³⁷ Zhi Dao-gen in Jing Dynasty, 东晋支道根: The early translator of Mahāyāna Buddhism of the translation in China.

³⁸ Bodhiruci in Tang Dynasty, 唐代菩提流志.

³⁹ An Shi-gao 安世高: a Parthian monk who is one of the earliest recorded translators and transmitters of Buddhism into China. An Xuan 安玄. Yan Fotiao 严佛调 No.T322. Kang Mengxiang 康孟祥 No.T184, p.196.

⁴⁰ *Tathāgatagarbha*: 最早用如来藏, 是十地经 *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*, 但意思不明, 作为术语用的. Zhang Mang-tao 张曼涛, 大乘佛教之发展, 现代佛教学术丛 (98) (Taipei: 大乘文化出版社, 1970), p.334.

realize Buddhahood....*tathāgatajñāna* is the ultimate goal for all living beings, Buddha Nature theory is not a proof and it becomes nothing but another allegation of the Tathāgata.⁴¹

Therefore, the term of *tathāgatagarbha* which is one compound word and itself has many meaning. When it can be compounded with other words, the meaning can not to make certain on the one hand, since only the word of Tathāgata is multivocal. For example, the word of Tathāgata in Buddhism and non-Buddhism in India, the definition is different. Since Buddhism the Tathāgata is one of the titles of the Buddha, such as the Śākya-Tathāgata can be called Śākya-Buddha. It can be the perfection of Buddha. Thus, we cannot make the certain meaning for *tathāgatagarbha*. On the other hand it can be the *ātman* of non-Buddhist philosophy in ancient India, such as *Sāṃkhya* School and Brahmanism, the “Tathāgata”, which in the context of arguments of *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra*⁴² is exchangeable for “self” or even “soul.”⁴³ But in Buddhism, the doctrine of Buddha against the *ātman*⁴⁴ (or Self of non-Buddhism), and the central doctrine is the *praṭītyasamutpāda* which sometime rendered as Reality (*tathatā*) either Theravāda or Mahāyāna Buddhism.

2.3 The Acceptation of *Tathāgatagarbha*

⁴¹ The *tathāgatagarbha*: Its Basic Structure and Relation to the Lotus *Sūtra*: “*Tathāgatotpattisambhavanireśa* of *Avatamsakasūtra* & *SP*”. The *tathāgatagarbha* Line clearly goes beyond the frame of the *SP* and elucidates the reason why all living beings can realize Buddhahood....*tathāgatajñāna* is the ultimate goal for all living beings, Buddha Nature theory is not a proof and it becomes nothing but another allegation of the *tathāgata*. Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology. Tokyo: Soka University, 1998, pp.143-168.

⁴² *Sāṃkhya*: 数论, it is the earliest school of the six non-Buddhist schools in ancient India which is influenced by the Vadic Thought. CEB., vol.8, p.5306b-5310. *Vaiśeṣika-sūtras*: 胜论经: It is one of the six non-Buddhist schools in ancient India. *Vaiśeṣika-sūtras*: It is the basical *sūtras* of *Vaiśeṣika*. CEB., vol. 9, p.5624a, vol.4095.

⁴³ Ramanan K. Venkata, *Nāgājuna's Philosophy as Presented in the MPPŚ* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1998), p.366a. *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra*, III.p.369, 胜论: “我即是如去。”

⁴⁴ *ātman*: means an eternal, unchanging “Self.”. It is the belief in such a self that Śākyamuni Buddha refuted in his teachings. There are many religions in India. The major schools are six non-Buddhit religions, their teachers who taught doctrines differing from Buddhism in middle India at the time of Śākyamuni Buddha, *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra* is one of the schools in ancient India.

The above that has discussed the term of *tathāgatagarbha* in text in India Sanskrit language in the translation of Chinese, it is complex and different from the other religions in India. Around the 200 and 250 C.E., the earliest text *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra* was composed. Soon, the most important (*Śrīmālā-sūtra*) was composed around 250 and 350 C.E.⁴⁵ Later, the *RGV (Uttatantra)* was written as a summary of *tathāgatagarbha* thought. The *tathāgatagarbha* literature of philosophy did not result in a separate philosophical school in India, but they did the strong influence in Mahāyāna thinking. Thus the acceptance of *tathāgatagarbha* of Buddhism which has its special acceptance, the bellow the acceptance of *tathāgatagarbha* of Buddhism will be discussed.

2.3.1 The Acceptation of *Tathāgatagarbha* in Texts of India

The acceptance of *tathāgatagarbha* in the texts of India can be found in the *tathāgatagarbha*, which means Thusness in all sentient beings covered by the defilements, and it is the fundamental basis of the *tathāgatagarbha*. Vasubandhu expands on the meaning of this Thusness by identifying, it as the sum of two elements: the **knowledge**, which is the kind of awareness that accords with reality (or principle), ordinarily the knowledge is the knower; it is a standard term for the subject. While the **realm** is a standard term for the objective, and the realm is cognized which is known, that accords with the reality (principle). These two “stand together,” as Thusness which is coined to embrace them simultaneously. It represents the unity of their mutuality, the Thusness with both its subjective and objective constituents, which is the “Thus” of the *tathāgatagarbha*. The thread of *tathāgatagarbha* thought which it often follows the Sanskrit etymology, that the *garbha* of Tathāgata, there are three aspects meanings.

⁴⁵ Mitchell, Donald W, *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience* (New York: Oxford, 2000), p.139.

First means “seed” or “embryo” (i.e. cause of attaining Buddhahood); another is “womb” or “matrix” (containing the various Buddha virtues; i.e., fruit or effect), that the Garbha is contained. The “Thus” of *tathāgatagarbha* is discussion of “Come” and “Gone” as above. The “Come” as meaning of coming from itself (*tathā-āgata*),⁴⁶ which indicates from Thusness, and simultaneously arriving and attaining the fruit of liberation.⁴⁷ The “Gone” as meaning of going to itself, means from *saṃsāra* to *nirvāṇa* (Tathāgata).⁴⁸ Thus where one coming already entails arrived somewhere and arriving already entails attaining (because when one arrives at a place one has attained another new place). Therefore, there is coming, there is going, or where there is cause, there is effect. The *tathāgatagarbha* would be understood as the cause of Buddhahood and the fruit of Buddhahood simultaneously.

Second is Hiddenness, that means the *tathāgatagarbha* is hidden, that the sentient beings who have not yet realized, because it is covered by the *kleśa* or defilements (*āgantukakleśa*). But Buddha Nature itself is untouched by the *kleśa*, and dwells in its full maturity, even in the person who has not yet begun to follow the path. It is the same in the causal and fruition stages.

The term Thus Come (Tathāgata) has two meanings: (1). It represents the idea that Thusness (itself) is not inverted, when there are no false thoughts, it is called Thusness. (2). It represents the idea of eternal dwelling. The Buddha Nature comes from the Buddha Nature that dwells in itself. Having come its arriving, and having arrived it attains. The essence of Thusness never changes. Thus it is eternal. When the Tathāgata

⁴⁶ The *Satyasiddhi-śāstra* 成实论, T32, attribute to Harivarman. Ch. *nirodha* (Ch.141-54). ‘thus come’: “如来谓成佛以后悲愿力故垂化也，乘如而来故曰如来。”

⁴⁷ *MPPS*: “行六波罗蜜，得成佛道…故名如来。” T25, vol.55; 454c.

⁴⁸ *The Secret Record* 秘藏记本.T86, ‘thus gone’: 如去谓自凡位修行成正觉也，乘如而往故曰如去。” p.4268.

nature dwells in the stage before Buddhist practice is begun, it is covered by *kleśa*. The sentient beings cannot see it, it is called the *garbha*.

Here, the “Come” and “Gone” of should be understood that essentially is not two, the “Come” and “Gone” of the *tathāgatagarbha* is only differentiated according to purity and impurity. In the causal stage, because it is mingled with the *kleśa*, the *tathāgatagarbha* is polluted. It cannot immediately manifest. But it is certainly to become manifest when the *kleśa* is removed. Thus it is called attainable. At the stage of fruition stage, by realize the Thusness (reality), there is no further ignorance, defilements, the *kleśa* no longer pollute, and it is called pure. When the fruit is manifest, it is called attained itself. There is no “Come” and “Gone”.

Third when the *garbha* as container, there are two kinds of acceptations: (i).when the *tathāgatagarbha* as the container or “container of a Tathāgata”. When the Tathāgata-s are seated, Tathāgata seated in the interior space (*garbha*) of living beings, which represents *garbha* as womb. The Buddha Nature Treatise likens the *tathāgatagarbha* in aspect to jewels that represent the Buddha’s merits, which endow with infinitude virtues. (ii).when the *tathāgatagarbha* as “the container” represents the fulfillment of the Tathāgata nature, the realization of Buddhahood with its infinite Buddha virtues. In real sense, the *tathāgatagarbha* is Thusness, which is equated with Buddha Nature that whether polluted or pure, is ever the same Thusness. This aspect that means the *tathāgatagarbha* at the state of cause and the state of fruition, both of them are the same Thusness, which isn’t different.

2.3.2 The Acceptation of *Tathāgatagarbha* in Indian Commentary

2.3.2.1 According to Chinese Translation

According to the ancient Chinese translation around 2nd century and follow centuries, the Buddha Nature Treatise that the term Buddha Nature is closely related in meaning to Buddha Nature (*tathāgatagarbha*), which is discussed among the Buddhist scholars. Such as Japanese scholar Takasaki explains:⁴⁹ (1). the nature (*dhātu=dharmatā*) of the Buddha, thus equivalent to the term *dharmakāya*. This meaning of *tathāgatagarbha* became well established in Chinese translation, it is the main designation for the Buddha Nature theory in East Asia. This Sanskrit citation in the *RGV* read as follows:⁵⁰ “Son of good family, the true nature (*dharmatā*) of the dharma is this: where or not Tathāgata-s appear in the world, all these sentient beings contain at all times a Tathāgata.” This passage claims that living beings are always *tathāgatagarbha* with the well-known Buddhist formula (*dharmāṇām dharmatā*), which is usually employed to introduce the fundamental law of *pratīyasamutpāda*, which is the core teaching of Buddha. (2).The cause (*dhātu=hetu*) of the Buddha. He says: “The link between the cause and the result is the nature (*dhātu*) common to both, which is nothing but the *dharmadhātu*.” So the Sanskrit *buddhadhātu* is understood as the bivalence of the Chinese (*fó xìng* 佛性), it is embracing as cause of Buddhahood and Buddhahood in fruition. It is for the translations of Buddhist texts as the indigenous Chinese Buddhist tradition developed.

According to the commentary *RGV*, there are seven topics to explain the *tathāgatagarbha*:⁵¹ (1).Buddha; (2).Dharma; (3).*Saṅgha*. These three are Three Jewels of

⁴⁹ Sallie B. King, *Buddha Nature* (Delhi: Sri Satguru. 1992), p.5.

⁵⁰ Ibid. “*eṣā kulaputra dharmāṇām dharmatā/ utpādā vā tathāgatānām anutpāda vā sadaivaite sattvās tathāgatagarbhā iti*” *RGV*, 73.11-12; p.5. Tan Xi-yong, 谈锡永, *RGV*. 宝性论: “善男子, 如来出世若不出世, 法性法界一切有情, 如来藏恒常不变.” 台北市: 全佛文化, 2006 [民 95] p.121-122; Skr., p.297, 9-11.

⁵¹ Johnston. E.H, *The RGV*, (text I, 23, and 26).七金刚句: 1.佛宝 Buddha; 2.法宝 Dharma; 3.僧宝 *Saṅgha*; 4. 如来藏 (杂垢真如) *dhātu*; 5. 证菩提 (离垢真如) *bodhi*; 6. 功德 *guṇa*; 7. 事业 *karma*. <金刚句>一词, 包含义理之难诠如金刚, 及 (如实) 表达根本义理之句义.” 其义理, *artha* 用以说明此七种证得意, *aṅśara* 即为义理. Tan Xi-yong 谈锡永. p.24-

Buddhism, which are treated as effects or fruits, and it is understood which base on the *dr̥dhādhyāśayaparivarta*.⁵² (4). Element (*dhātu*) is the “embryo” of the Tathāgata, and is “what is to be Enlightenment”, as the “cause” (*hetu*) or the “seed” (*bīja*) of supramundane natures for originating the Three Jewels, which is not increase and decrease, and it is understood base on the *ANP*.⁵³ (5). Enlightenment (*bodhi*), it is understood base on the *Śrīmālā-sūtra*.⁵⁴ (6). Merit (*guṇa*), which is the immaculate Buddha Nature, it is understood base on the *ANP*. (7). Activities (*karma*), the activity of the Buddha, as the Tathāgata acts (*32-nirmāṇakāya*), and it is understood base on the *tathāgataguṇajñānācintya-viśayāvatāra-nirdeśa*.⁵⁵ Among these seven topics, the Element, Enlightenment & Activities, are the condition (*pratyaya*) for originating the Three Jewels by purifying the embryo.

2.3.2.2 According to the Analysis of Sanskrit Grammar

According to analysis of Michael Zimmermann: there are two kinds of compound for explaining of *tathāgatagarbha*, the acceptation of *tathāgatagarbha* as bellow:⁵⁶

(I). *tathāgatagarbha* as a *tatpuruṣā* compound:⁵⁷ (1). “*garbhas tathāgataṣya*” or “*garbhas tathāgatāṇām*”. Grammatically, it is the predicate of *sattvāḥ*, and the embryo of

27.

⁵² Ibid., *dr̥dhādhyāśayaparivarta*: 坚固深心品, p.25. A. K. Warder, 渥德尔, Ch. 10; pp.403-407. *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, 现观庄严论: *dr̥dhādhy-āśaya-parivarta*: 宝手菩萨转依经.

⁵³ Ibid., *ANP*, 不增不减经, p.26.

⁵⁴ Ibid., *Śrīmālā-sūtra*, 胜鬘经, p.26.

⁵⁵ Ibid., there are three translations: (i). 度诸佛境界智光严经 T.10; No.302, already miss; (ii). 佛华严入如来德智不思议境界经, 闍那崛多译, T10, No.303; (iii). 大方广入如来智德不思议经, 实叉难陀译, T10, No.304. p.27.

⁵⁶ Michael Zimmermann, *A Buddha Within: The Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra: The Earliest Exposition of the Buddha-Nature Teaching in Indian* (Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advances Buddhology (IRIAB), 2002), pp.42-44.

⁵⁷ 依主释 *tat-puruṣā*, 又名依士释, 从所依之体, 而立能依之法之名也。例如眼识, 为依眼而生之识, 故名眼识, 是眼为所依之体, 识为能依之法也, 本为别种之法, 别法从所依之法而立能依之名, 故云依主. Lin Yi-xin and Lin Guang-ming, 林怡馨, 林光明编, *The Sanskrit-Chinese Dictionary* 梵汉大词典; Jia Feng Pub., 嘉丰出版社. 2005, vol. 1, p.238. and 释惠敏, 释斋因. 梵语初阶. Taipei: 法鼓文化, 1996. p.116. a class of compounds (formed like the word--his servant) in which the last member is qualified by the first without losing (as the last member of Bahuvrihi compounds), its grammatical indidence (whether as noun or adjtive). M. Monier Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Delhi: Metilat Banarisidass Publishers Prinate Limited, 1999), p.433.

the Tathāgatā, the *tathāgatagarbha* deals with full-fledged, Tathāgata in flowers (and in living beings). (2). living being as the “womb of a Tathāgatā”, some translate into “[living beings are] container of a Tathāgatā”. The author of the *tathāgatagarbha* had first to “invent” the concept of *padmagarbha*, the “lotus calyx” where the Tathāgata is seated, so construct *pandmagarbha* was adopted as the interior space of a lotus, and the author developed the analogy of Tathāgatas seated in the interior space (*garbha*) of living beings. So in *tathāgatagarbha*, the author operates two meanings of Tathāgata, namely “interior space” and “container.” (3). the living being as “embryo of the Tathāgata”, the idea that all living beings are penetrated by the *dharmakāya* and thus are the embryo.

(II).*tathāgatagarbha* as a *bahuvrīhi* compound.⁵⁸ (1). this compound meaning simply “to contain”. The sentence *sattvās tathāgatagarbha* is understood that “Living beings contain a Tathāgata”, or “containing a Tathāgata”, “having a Tathāgata (as their essence). They have a Tathāgata in their womb, which means Tathāgata is found in the womb.”⁵⁹ (2). It can also be interpreted in its original meaning “womb” or “embryo”. “Womb”: The inner reality is like a “womb”, it contains the potential to be a Buddha, along with the many qualities of Buddhahood. “Embryo”: it is also like an “embryo”, since it can itself develop into full Buddhahood. So the means either “womb” or “embryo” that all people can be part of this series of Buddha-s, because each person’s innermost nature, which likes a womb that holds the embryo of Buddhahood.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 有财释 *ba-huvrīhi*, 又云多财释, 此全取他之名而为自之名, 如世之有财者之有财物也。如觉者为有觉者, 故名觉者, 如唯识论, 为有唯识之理之论, 故立唯识论之名, 是有财释也。下册, 2nd vol., p.1284. and 释惠敏, 释斋因, p.119. possessing much rice, a relative or adjective compound (in which, as in the word, *ba-huvrīhi*, itself (of *tatpurusha*), the last member loses its character of a substantive and together with the first member serves to qualify a non, *ba-huvrīhi* or relative compound, e.g. *Bahavo vjhayo yassa so ba-huvrīhi* (who has a lot of paddy). M.Monier Williams.p.726.

⁵⁹ *tathāgato garbha yeṣāṃ te tathāgatagarbha*: They have a Tathāgata in their womb, which means Tathāgata is found in the womb.

Therefore, above two kinds of compound (*tatpuruṣa* and *bahuvrīhi*), it means:⁶⁰

- (i). “Living beings have an embryo of Tathāgata”.⁶¹ (ii). “Living beings have a Tathāgata in their womb (*garbha*),” and “Living beings have a Tathāgata as an embryo (*garbha*). (iii). Assuming that *garbha* can be the meaning of “core, essence,” called “Living beings have the Tathāgata core” or “Living being have Tathāgata in their core”.

The similes teaching is in *RGV*, it describes the relation between sentient beings and Buddhahood. The perfect Tathāgata is found inside living beings, which is same as the Buddha.⁶² “The Tathāgata, have perceived inside those [sentient beings], who are defiled by all defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*). The True Nature of a Tathāgata (*tathāgatadharmatā*) motionless and unaffected by any of the states of existence.

2.3.2.3 According to the Commentary of Early *Nikāyas*

In the history, the acceptance of the word Tathāgata is the epithets of the Buddha, according to the exegesis; it is set down by Buddhaghosa in his commentaries as well as others to *Pāli* Canon. The Exalted One is called “the Tathāgata” for eight basic reasons which: ⁶³(i). he has “Thus Come”,⁶⁴ (ii). He has “Thus Gone” ;⁶⁵(iii). He has come to the real characteristic (of *dhamma-s*);⁶⁶ (iv). He has awakened to real *dhamma-s* in

⁶⁰ *Buddhagotra-śāstra (Buddha Nature Treatise)* 佛性论. T31.No.1610, attributed to Vasubhandhu, trans. by Paramārtha in 557-569. Thusness *Vagga* 如来藏品 (i). 所摄藏, 一切众生悉摄于如来之智内. (ii). 隐覆藏, 如来法身无论因位、果位, 俱不改变; 然众生为烦恼所覆, 故不得见. (iii). 能摄藏, 如来果德悉摄于凡夫心中.

⁶¹ *tathāgatasya garbho (sti) yessām te tathāgatagarbhāḥ*.

⁶² *Buddhagotra-śāstra* 佛性论, p.253. “善男子, 善女人于烦恼之中如来法藏本无动摇, 诸有趣见所不能染。是故我今作如是。” Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology. Tokyo: Soka University, 1999; p.151.

⁶³ Bikkhu Bodhi, *The All-Embracing Net of Views: The BŚS and its Commentarial Exegesis*, trans. from *Pāli* (Sri Lanka: PTS, 1978), pp.331-344; pp.50-53. Toshiichi Endo, *The Buddha in Theravāda Buddhism: A Study of the Concept of Buddha in the Pāli Commentary* (Dehiwela: Systematic, 2002) pp.195-206. According to The Commentary of *D, AN, Saddhammapajjotikā, Paṭisambhidāmagga*, there are eight reasons.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, *tathā āgato ti tathāgato*.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, *tāth gato ti tathāgato*.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, *tathālakka āgato ti tathāgato*.

accordance with actuality;⁶⁷ (v). He is a seer of the real;⁶⁸ (vi). He is a speaker of the real;⁶⁹(vii).he practices what he teaches;⁷⁰ (viii). In the sense of vanquishing or surpassing.⁷¹

Therefore, the acceptance of *tathāgatagarbha* in the context of Buddhist thought springs, from the very nature of the Buddha’s teaching, from its aim and methodology, which is the attainment of *nibbhāna* (*nirvāṇa*), the un-conditioned state beyond the succession of repeated births and deaths constituting *saṃsāra* in the *tri-piṭaka*. Because sentient beings in bondage of defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*) so long, the passion, delusion...rooted in consciousness. The only way to bring the round (*saṃsāra*) to an end, which is by destroying the defilements.

2.4 Conclusion

The *tathāgatagarbha* is the important tradition, which belongs to the Mahāyana Buddhism, and developed at the later period in Indian, and its original language is Gāndhārī, later melt into Sanskrit.⁷² The Sanskrit language usage in Buddhist literature later, it became very popular and within Sanskrit, and developed in vast range, especially in Mahāyana Buddhism and *Mūlasarvastivāda* (*Sautrantika*). Scholar B.N. Puri says:⁷³ “It is not connected with any particular Buddhist school, like the association of *Pāli* with the Theravādin-s and their canonical works, but it is patronized by the *Sarvāstivādins*, *Mahāsaṅghika-s* as well as the *Dharmaguptikas*.” But the Buddhist Sanskrit literature is very important, it is greatly rich and vast literature of India, it presents many developed

⁶⁷ Ibid., *tathadhamme yathvato abhisambuddho ti tathāgato*.

⁶⁸ Ibid., *tathadassitāya tathāgato*.

⁶⁹ Ibid., *tathāvādītāya tathāgato*. *Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, 金刚经, 金刚般若波罗蜜经; T.8; 大般若波罗蜜多经; T5-7, vol.57, 能断金刚分: “如来, 真语者, 实语者, 如语者…”

⁷⁰ Ibid., *tathākāritāya tathāgato*.

⁷¹ Ibid., *abhibhavanāṭṭhena tathāgato*.

⁷² Willemen Charles. *Lectures*.

⁷³ Puri. B.N, *Buddhism in Central Asia* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1987), p.188.

doctrinal and philosophical aspects of Buddhism. Therefore, the *tathāgatarbha* literature has come down to us in Sanskrit in India.

CHAPTER III

The Development of *Tathāgatagarbha* in Early Buddhism

3.1 Introduction

The concept of *tathāgatagarbha* is one of the most important concepts of Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition, in which, almost its principle tenets are present, including all the teachings of Mahāyāna schools. But when we search the origination, it should trace back to the early teaching of the Buddha, which is the *pratītyasamutpāda*, which is seen by the pure mind of the Buddha or by the enlightened mind, means that he sees the nature of the *dharma-s* (reality) of the things.

3.2 The *Tathāgatagarbha* as Luminous Mind Appears in Early Teaching of Buddha

The early Buddhism have so far available in the *Pāli nikāya-s* and Chinese *agama-s*, during the time of the Buddha, there are many thinkers put forward a wide variety of views to discuss the mind and seek the solution of suffering, such as Vedas, *Braāhman-s*, and the *Upaniṣads*. But Buddhist ideas mainly in the non-Vedic tradition, the Buddha experience to achieve freedom (*vimukta/vimutti*) from the trammels of *saṃsāra* existence.

3.2.1 The Background of the *Tathāgatagarbha* in Ancient Indian Philosophy

The meaning of *tathāgatagarbha* thought is rooted in the Indian philosophical discussion, it is can be found in the early beginnings of this concept as early as the Vedas and the *Upaniṣadas* which is called Luminous Mind or pure consciousness

(*prakṛti/prabhāsvara*) and there is *Garbha-upaniṣad* in ancient India. Such as in *avidyā*-A Problem of Truth and Reality; Esther A. Solomon:⁷⁴ *avidyā* is a trait, innate but capable of modification and extinction. It lies outside the psyche—in *prakṛti* (as in *Sāṃkhya*), inside the consciousness (as in Buddhism and *Śaivism*), in the relation of soul and matter (as in *Jainism*), or is due to the operation of the cosmic *māyā*, which later is a real potency of Brahman...

In Buddhism, the *tathāgatagarbha* may traceable to the luminous mind (pure consciousness (*prakṛti/prabhāsvara-citta*) mentioned once in the early Buddhist *Pāli nikāya* and *āgama sūtra*, which attributed to the Buddha. The mind is said to be luminous and developed along within the *Mahāsaṅghika* and *Sarvastivāda* traditions.⁷⁵

The term of *tathāgatagarbha* is not appeared in the early teachings of Buddha, Buddha just taught the luminous mind, the originally pure mind.⁷⁶ It refers to the underlying radiant or luminous intrinsic nature of the mind (*citta*), especially when freed from the enveloping overlay of defilement (*āgantuka-kleśa*). It identified the teaching with the consciousness, *bhavaṅga*, in the Theravāda *Abhidharma*. The concept of *tathāgatagarbha* was later understood in Mahāyāna as an alternative designation for inherent Buddha-nature, *tathāgatagarbha*, which integrate with the *Garbha* of *Garbha-upaniṣad* and the Luminous Mind or pure consciousness (*prakṛti/prabhāsvara*) of *Śāriputrābhidharma-śāstra*,⁷⁷ around the 4th -5th century, the thought of the *Garbha* and

⁷⁴ Bibhu Padhi Minakshi Padhi, *Indian Philosophy and Religion: A Reader's Guide* (New Delhi- 110015.1990) P.32-43; 198-200. *Sāṃkhya* 数论派: one of the ancient Indian philosophies. *Śaivism* 湿婆教.

⁷⁵ Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teaching, history and practices* (Delhi: Munshiran Manoharlal, 1990), pp.115-116.

⁷⁶ Skt. *prakṛti-prabhāsvara-citta*, *Pāli*: *pabhassara*, 清净, 光明, 明澈. Warder, A. K. 渥尔德.p.372.

⁷⁷ *Śāriputrābhidharma-śāstra*, 舍利弗阿毗昙论: *Śāriputrābhidharma-śāstra* compare with *vibhaṅga* of *pāli*, it doesn't contain the discussion of *dhammadaya*, in its talk about the *prakṛtipariśuddham-cittam*, its ideal is similar as the *Mahāsaṅghika* school (心性本净, 与大众部所立之义相同). Fo-Guang, vol. 4; p.3500a-c.

upaniṣads were popular,⁷⁸ but the teaching of *tathāgatagarbha* which is different from the other religions in ancient India.

3.2.2 *Tathāgatagarbha* as Luminous Mind Appears in *Nikāya* & *Āgama*

The origin of the teaching of *tathāgatagarbha* is the luminous mind, which is the intrinsically luminous mind, brightly shining mind (Skt. *prakṛti-prabhāsvara-citta*). In *AN* (*EAS*), the Buddha states:

(i): The mind, monks, is luminous, but it is defiled by adventitious defilements. **(ii):** the mind, monks, luminous, but it is freed from adventitious defilements.⁷⁹

(iii): Monk, the mind is luminous, but it is defiled by adventitious defilements. The uninstructed average person does not understand this, what it really is. Therefore I say that for him there is no mental development. **(iv):** Monks, the mind is luminous, but it is freed from adventitious defilements. The instructed *ariyan* disciple understands this as it really is. Therefore I say that for him there is mental development [I. VI.1.2].⁸⁰

This discourse indicates that the mind's nature radiance itself, although it is perfumed by *avidyā* (*Pāli*. *avijjā*) or defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*), but it can be cleared by meditation. In *AN*, *Tathāgata* endowed with the *dasatathāgata-balāni*:⁸¹ “The powers

⁷⁸ 如来藏 *tathāgatagarbha*: “在印度, 如来藏说的兴起, 约在西元三世纪, 至四、五世纪中盛行, 此种思想融合了胎藏奥义书 (*Garbha-upaniṣad*) 的胎藏说及舍利弗阿毗昙论, vol.27, 〈绪分假心品〉所说的心性本净说…为大乘佛教的一支。” *The Chinese Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* (ECB) 中华佛教百科全书 (Tai Nan: 中华佛教百科文献基金会, 1994), vol.5, 2025ba.

⁷⁹ Nyanaponika Thera, *The EAS* 增一阿含经 or *AN* (I.9-10) of *pāli* canon. *The Pabhassara suttas* 49-52; p.2. Also in *AN*, ed. Richard Morris, Oxford: PTS, 1999, vol. I; p.10 (I-V). The trans., the PTS, 1995; vol. I, p.8 (Ch. V): (i): *pabhassaram idaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ, tañ ca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭhan ti*; (ii): *pabhassaram idaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ, tañ ca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi vippamuttan ti*.

⁸⁰ (iii): *pabhassaram idaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ tañ ca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭham. tam assutavā puthujjano yathābhūtaṃ nappajñāti; tasmā assutavato puthujjanassa cittabhāvanān'atthīti vadāmī ti*; 比丘众, 此心极光净, 而客随烦恼杂染, 无闻异生不如实解, 我说无闻异生无修心故. (iv): *pabhassaram idaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ tañ ca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi vippamuttam; taṃ sutavato ariyasāvako yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti; tasmā sutavato aiyasavākassa cittabhāvanā atthi ti vadāmī ti*. 比丘众! 此心极光净, 而客随烦恼解脱, 有闻圣弟子解脱, 又闻圣弟子能如实解, 我说圣弟子有修心故. 增一阿含经, T2.Vol.22, No.33. Conze Edward, *Buddhist Texts Through the Ages* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 20002) p.33; quote from *AN, the Pabhassara suttas* 49-52. Also in *AN*, ed. by Richard Morris, Oxford: PTS, 1999, vol. I; p.10 (I-VI), trans., *ibid.*, p.8 (Ch. VI).

⁸¹ *dasatathāgata-balāni*: ten powers, ten kinds of powers of awareness specially possessed by the Buddha, which are

of a Tathāgata only, as one does not have them in common with others.”⁸² The venerable Anuruddha, one of the great disciples (*mahā-sāvaka*), claimed, however, to have attained to these ten powers by his frequent cultivation of *satipaṭṭhāna*. Here the meaning of Tathāgata appears in *nikāya* is the pure mind which is developed by meditation.⁸³

In the discourse of “*All Beings Will Attain Liberation*” of *AN* (X, 95): “Tathāgata is aware that whosoever has escaped, does now escape and will escape from the world, all these will do so by removing the five hindrance that defile the mind and weaken understanding, by firmly establishing their minds in the four foundations of mindfulness, and by cultivating the seven factors of enlightenment in their true nature.”

3.2.2.1 Appears in the *Ekottarāgama* and *Samyuktāgama*

The Aṅgulimāla who was the vilest person, but he was converted by the Buddha; it is the Buddha-inspired and Buddha-guided teacher of *tathāgatagarbha* in the vigorous and vital *Aṅgulimāla sūtra*. It was in the 20th year that Buddha converted the notorious murderer Aṅgulimāla.

The Buddha knew that Aṅgulimāla was born a virtuous, noble child and had the potential innate virtues (*tathāgatagarbha*), due to his past wholesome *kamma* to attain *nibbāna* in this life. He saw that Aṅgulimāla had sufficient innate virtues as well as the potential to enter the *bikkhu Saṅgha* and attain *arhanthood* or *sainthood*.⁸⁴

perfect knowledge of the following. (1) distinguishing right and wrong; (2) knowing the karmas of all sentient beings of the past, present and future; (3) knowledge of all forms of meditation; (4) knowledge of the relative capacities of sentient beings; (5) knowledge of what sentient beings desire and think; (6) knowledge of the different levels of their existence; (7) knowledge of the results of various methods of practice; (8) knowledge of the transmigratory states of all sentient beings and the courses of karma they will follow; (9) knowledge of the past lives of all sentient beings and the nirvanic state of non-defilement; (10) knowledge of the methods of destroying all evil passions. *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāsa-sāstra*, T27, vol.30, 156c. If according to Mahāyāna Buddhism that some are different. *CEB.*, vol.2, p.238b-239b.

⁸² *Anuruddhasamyuttan*, Ch. II. *sutta*.

⁸³ Nyanaponika, *AN (The Discourse Collection in Numerical Order)*, An Anthology; Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1981, part III, p.69.

⁸⁴ Bhikkhu Nānamoli, *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*; trans. from *Pāli*, revised by Bhikkhu Bodhi,

The *Āṅgulināla-sūtra* is the *tathāgatagarbha* class of *sūtra-s* of *The EA* (31th *sūtra*) and the *SA* (38th *sūtra*) and the *MN* 86th *sutta* of *Pāli* Canon which teaches that the luminous mind (*tathāgatagarbha*, Buddha Nature) is real and immanent within all beings and all phenomena. There is a completely different work of the *tathāgatagarbha* is included in the *MN* of the *Pāli* Canon.

Therefore, in early teaching of *SN*, the *tathatā* is Suchness which is pure mind (*Pāli*: *pabhassara-citta*, *Skr.* *prakṛti-citta*), although it is contaminated by the defilements (*kleśa*, or *āgantuka-kleśa*).⁸⁵ When meditators know the nature of mind, they develop the mind to the stage of the primal mind; this will mean that all defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*) are destroyed. Therefore, its nature is pure, by developing the mindfulness (meditation/*jhāna*), or removing the hindrance, the nature of pure mind (*parisuddha*, *prakṛti*) will be attained and the (*parisuddha*, *prakṛti*) will be manifested.

3.2.2.2 Appears in the *Majjhimanikāya*

(1). In *Devadaha-sutta* of *Upari-paṇṇāska*:⁸⁶ Dialogue discourse when one has cleared away wrong views, and then follows the fruitful path of striving that leads to the happiness and pleasure of *jhāna*. Unlike worldly sensual happiness it should not be feared and avoided, but rather cultivated as the basis for liberation or *nibbāna*, this fruitful path which is the path of purification of mind.

(2). In *Anuruddha sutta*:⁸⁷ *Anurudha* discourse the difference between the defiled radiance (*sankiliṭṭhābhā*) and the pure radiance (*parisuddhābhā*). These two kinds of

(Boston: PTS, 2005), part II, pp.711-716.

⁸⁵ Ibid. *SN* says: “beings become defiled on count of defilement of their *citta*, therefore, become purified on count of the purification of their *citta*.” Part III, p.151.

⁸⁶ Ven. Nyanamoli, *A Treasury of the Buddha’s Discourses from the MN: Middle Collection*, vol., II, ed. by Phra Khantipalo (Thailand: at Mahāmakut Rājavidyālaya, 1st *sutra*. No.101), pp.250-251.

⁸⁷ Ibid., No. 127. pp.141-142.

mind which are developed through practicing *jhāna* through pervasion of people or other beings.⁸⁸ The aim of the method is removing the *āgantuk-kleśa* of mind, while illuminate the nature (*prakṛti*) of mind is pure (*pabhassara* or *śuddha-viśuddhi*), because of defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*) pollute it, and then lose the bright.

In the *Anuruddha sutta*, gives one example: Suppose the oil of a burning **lamp** is unclean and its **wick** unclean, because of its oil and wick it burns (*jhāyati*) as if darkly; here, too, if a *bhikkhu* practices *jhāna* to contemplate to remove defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*) to attain the quite tranquillized.

(3). In *Cūlāssapura sutta Dasamaṃ*:⁸⁹ The Tathāgata taught that one who has gone forth from home into homelessness and come into *dhamma* and discipline to follow the practice fitting for recluses to develop *catvāryapramāṇāni*:⁹⁰

(1): *Bhikkhus*, how does one *bhikkhu* become one following practices fitting for recluses? When covetousness is dispelled, anger, ill, hypocrisy, malice, jealousy, selfishness, craftiness, deceit, evil, wrong view..... Seeing himself pure when all these evil things of demerit are dispelled, he finds himself relieved. When released he is delighted. To the delighted arises joy. The body of one with joyful mind is appeased. An appeased body feels pleasant.

⁸⁸ *catvāri-apramāṇāṇi*, Pāli, *catasso-appamaññāyo*: Loving Kindness (*maitri*), Compassion (*karuṇa*), Gladness (*muditā*) & Equanimity (*upekṣa*) and through expanding the *kaṣiṇa*. This Contemplation is taught by Buddha in *MN, AN*, and the Concentration-the Divine Abiding (Chapter IX, *Brahmavihāra-niddesa*) of *Vism.* by Buddhaghosa, trans., by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli. Singapore: Buddhist Meditation Centre, 1975; p.321 (Loving-kindness), p.340 (Compassion), p.341 (Gladness); p.342 (Equanimity). The *Vimm.*, by Uptissa trans. by Soma and Kheminda, Ch.4-9, pp.39-206. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1977. The *Sandhāna sutta*, 散陀那经, the *DA*, Vol. VIII. 说处经 in the *MA*, Vol. XXI. The *SA*.XXIX. T2, 209c.

⁸⁹ Nyanamoli Thera, *Mahāyama-kavaggo Catuttho* of the *MN*. No.40. En., p334; Pāli, pp.281-283,

(1). *kathaṇ ca, bhikkhave, bhikkhu samaṇasāmicippaṭipadaṃ paṭipanno hoti? Yassa kassaci, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno abhijjhālussa abhijjhā pahīnā hoti, byāpannacittassa byāpādo pahīno hoti.....sukhino cittaṃ samādhīyati.*

(2). *so mettāsahagatena cetasā ekaṃ disaṃ pharivā viharati, tathā dutiyaṃ, tathā tatiyaṃ, tathā catutthaṃ. Iti uddhamadho tiriyaṃ sabbadhi sabbattatāya sabbāvantaṃ lokaṃ mettāsahagatena cetasā vipulena mahaggatena appamāṇena averena abyābajjhena pharivā viharati. Karuṇāsahagatena cetasā...pe... muditāsahagatena cetasā...pe... upekkhāsahagatena cetasā ekaṃ disaṃ pharivā viharati, tathā dutiyaṃ, tathā tatiyaṃ, tathā catutthaṃ. Iti uddhamadho tiriyaṃ sabbadhi sabbattatāya sabbāvantaṃ lokaṃ upekkhāsahagatena cetasā vipulena mahaggatena appamāṇena averena abyābajjhena pharivā viharati.*

⁹⁰ *catvāryapramāṇāni* 四无量心: Pāli is *catassoappamaññāyo*: (i) loving kindness (*maitry*, *metta-apramāṇā*); (ii) compassion (*karuṇā-apramāṇā*); (iii) joy (*muditā-apramāṇā*); (iv) equanimity (*upekṣā-apramāṇā*); it is taught in *Karaṇīya-metta Sutta* of *Khuddaka-pāṭha* translated by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli.

The pleasant mind concentrates. He abides pervading one direction with thoughts of loving kindness, so too the second, the third, the fourth, above, below and across, in all circumstances, for all purposes, entirely, the thought of loving kindness grown great limitless, free of ill will and anger.

(2):-----He abides, having suffused the first quarter with a mind of compassion....He abides having suffused the first quarter with a mind of sympathetic joy....He abides having suffused the first quarter with a mind of equanimity....without enmity, without malevolence. (p.338)

The Thatāgata says: “...having developed *catvāryapramāṇāni*, he attains inward calm...I say it is by inward calm that he is following the practices fitting for recluses.

---if from whatever family he has gone forth from home into homelessness, and by the destruction of the cankers, having realized here and now by his own super-knowledge freedom of mind, the freedom through intuitive wisdom that are *cankerless*, entering on them, abides therein---he is a recluse through the destruction of the canker.⁹¹

Here the Buddha taught the monks, if the *catvāryapramāṇāni* was practiced, their mind will be calm through wisdom.

(4). In the *Rathavināta sutta*:⁹²

(1):even so, your reverence, purity of moral habit is of purpose as far as purity of mind; (2): purity of mind is of purpose as far as purity of view; (3): purity of view is of purpose as far as purity through crossing over doubt; (4): purity through crossing over doubt is of purpose as far as purity of

⁹¹ *Cūḷāssapura sutta Dasamaṃ... yasmā kasmā cepi kulā agāasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajito hoti, so ca āsavānaṃ khayā anāsavaṃ cetovimuttiṃ paññāvimuttiṃ diṭṭheva dhamme sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharati. Āsavānaṃ khayā samaṇo hoti*’ti. (p.284). En. p.338.

⁹² The *MN, The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, trans. from *Pāli* Revised by Bikkhu Bodhi (Boston: PTS, 2005), vol. I.No.24; *Pāli*. pp.145-151; En. pp.187-94.

(1): *Evam eva kho āvuso sīlavisuddhi yāvad eva cittavisuddhatthā, cittavisuddhi;*

(2): *yāvad eva diṭṭhivissuddhatthā diṭṭhivissuddhi;*

(3): *yāvad eva kaṅkhāvitaraṇavisuddhatthā, kaṅkhāvitaraṇavisuddhi;*

(4): *yāvadeva maggāmaggañānadassana-visuddhatthā, maggāmaggañānadassanavisuddhi;*

(5): *yāvad eva paṭipadāñānadassana-visuddhatthā, paṭipadāñānadassana-visuddhi;*

(6): *yāvad eva ñānadassanavisuddhatthā, ñānadassanavisuddhi;*

(7): *yāvad eva anupādā parinibbānatthā;*

(8): *Anupādā parinibbānattham kho āvuso Bhagavati brahmacariyaṃ vussatīti.*

knowledge and insight into the way and what is not the way; (5):and insight into the way and what is not the way; (6): purity of knowledge and insight into the way and what is not the way is of purpose as far as purity of knowledge and insight into the course; (7): purity arising from knowledge and insight is of purpose as far as utter *nibbana* without attachment. (8): your reverence, the Braham-faring under the Lord is lived for the purpose of utter *nibbāna* without attachment.

The aim of teaching of Thatāgata that is liberation which is freedom of mind (*citta-visuddhi*), out of compassion, the Buddha (Thatāgata) in different words or ways to guide disciples to develop the mind to attain the freedom of mind. The path of purification of mind is taught by Buddha in *Majjhimanikāya*. Through the desires have gone, the mind is free from desire, hatred and illusion as a result of the training to attain *nibbāna*.

3.3 Tathāgatagarbha appears in Abhidharma

The teachings of Buddha are classified into three baskets, namely *sūtrapiṭaka*, *vinayapiṭaka* and *abhidharmapiṭaka*. Either in the *Pālitripiṭaka* or in the *Sarvastivāda tripiṭaka* and so on, the attempt of all the three baskets is to solve the social problems. The social sufferings are a result of the human nature and the human actions. The Buddha believed that the disciplines of mind makes man free from desire (*trṣṇā*) and it is the only way of solving these problems because such discipline is reflected in man's thought action and fellowship. Therefore, the luminous mind (*pabhassara*) is the root of continues is discussed in *Abhidharma* to guide the human being out of suffering or rebirth (*samsāra*) which is necessary.

3.3.1 Tathāgatagarbha as Bhavaṅga-citta Appears in Abhidharma

In the discus of *A Manual of Abhidharm*, about the term *Viññāna* of

paticcasamuppāda:⁹³ “The fetus in the mother’s womb is formed by the combination of this relinking consciousness (*paṭisandhi*) with the sperm and ovum cells of the parent, in this consciousness are latent all the past impressions, characteristics and tendencies of that particular individual life-flux. This relinking-consciousness is regarded as ‘radiant’ (*pabhassara*) as it is either devoid of immoral roots of lust, hatred and delusion, or accompanied by moral roots.

Again during the discussion of the stream of consciousness: “To those who have thus got rebirth, immediately after the cessation of (1) the relinking (consciousness), a similar consciousness, depending on the same object, flows on, in the absence of a thought-process, uninterruptedly like (2) a stream, until the arising of the (3) decease-consciousness (*cuti-consciousness*) is known as *bhavaṅga*. At the end, in the way of dying, it arises as decease-consciousness and others, revolving according to circumstances, like a wheel, continue to exist.” (1) *paṭisandhi*, (2) *bhavaṅga*, and (3) *cuti-consciousness* of one particular existence are identical, they have the same object. The mental states in each of these three are the same. They differ only in name and in function. Immediately after the rebirth-consciousness, *bhavaṅga* consciousness exists, one experience innumerable *bhavaṅga* thought-moments in the course of one’s lifetime.⁹⁴

Therefore, if the persons are in the circle of rebirth, the *bhavaṅga* thought-moments of person exists in the course of one’s lifetime (past, present and future) continuously, it is the mental state to relink the continuous life, its function is similar as the *tathāgatagarbha*, but used the different term.

In the Path of Purification (*Vsm*): the mind (consciousness) is regarded as the

⁹³ Nārada Mahāthera, *A Manual of Abhidharma* (Kandy: PTS, (vol.I-V), *Vāḷirāma*, 1965), pp.361-362.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.274-75.

life-continuum consciousness (*bhavaṅga-citta*). In the ultimate sense, exceedingly short indeed is the life-moment.⁹⁵ Also Vajiranana says: “*bhavaṅga-citta* is to be regard as the current of life, and consciousness (*viññāna*) as its manifestation.”⁹⁶

3.3.2 *Tathāgatagarbha* as Consciousness Appears in *Abhidharma*

On the Path of Purification of meditation, the consciousness of the genesis of aesthetic pleasure is accompanied by joy and free from evil root-causes and karma-creating effects, as *Bhikkhu* (*Pāli, Bhikkhu*) Sīlācāra once said:⁹⁷ “In the contemplation of the beautiful, if it is really pure, there are no selfish motives and man is completely free from the ‘ego’. The complete absence of the ‘ego’, if maintained, is *nibbāna*. And the man who is enabled temporarily to free from the ‘ego’ in the contemplation of the beauty, has thus temporarily experience *nibbāna* in a way which might lead him finally to the complete, beautiful mind will help man to find *nibbāna*.” The concept of the beautiful (*subha, sobhaṇa*) in Buddhism is closely related to the idea of purity....and the true in their highest aspects...is not to be separated from the laws of reality (the *dhamma* in the highest sense). Therefore, that consciousness conditioned by wholesome root-cause (, as well as those of the realm of pure form, of non-form (the state of the Fourth *jhāna*) and of supramundane consciousness is called “beautiful states of mind (*sobhaṇa-cittāni*)”.

In the *Atthasālinī* discusses the consciousness (*viññānam*).⁹⁸ It is a name for the *jhāna* which has as its object consciousness as proceeding in space. For who has attained *jhāna*, with reference to any one whatsoever of the ten fetters, to become enlightenment.

⁹⁵ Bikkhu Ñānamoli. *Vsm*; XIV. p.114; p.514.

⁹⁶ Nagendra Kumar Singh, *International Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* (Delhi: Anmo and Mehra Offset 1998), vol.19, p.119.

⁹⁷ Govinda L. Anagarika B, *The Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy* (Delhi: NAG, 1975), pp.140-42.

⁹⁸ Buddhaghosa, *Commentary on the Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, the first book of the *Abhidhamma piṭaka* (London: PTS, 1965), pp.266-283.

And this being has been declared the foul, and to be understood by virtue of the development of its intrinsic nature, and see his true nature (insight). Hence it has been said: “by wholly passing beyond all perceptions of form.”⁹⁹ The practice of the *jhāna* is described details in *Vsm.* that purify the consciousness through the *jhāna*.¹⁰⁰

In *Abhidhamāvatāra*,¹⁰¹ also talk about consciousness, and develop the wisdom through the practicing of *dhyāna*, removing the defilement. In the *Samayabhedo-paracanacakra-śāstra*: “The nature of mind is pure, which contaminated by defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*), namely, (1) *upakleśa*, (2) *mūlakleśa*.¹⁰²

In A Manual of *Abhidharma*:¹⁰³ when one who develops the consciousness into higher types of consciousness, he will attain higher, and even highest type of consciousness is called supramundane, (Skt. *lokottara*, *Pāli*, *lokuttara*) which is the fruits of transcending the world of aggregate of attachment. There are four wholesome (*kusala*) types of *lokottara* consciousness and four type of resultant, making a total of eight types of supramundane consciousness...in the *Abds.* also talks about the good types of consciousness known as *sobhana-citta*, beautiful types of consciousness. There are eight active moral (*kusala*) types known as beautiful.

Summary, the doctrine of all The *Abhidharma-s* that are taught by Buddha and carried by the disciples which is the light of the true doctrine. The *Abhidharma* functions as the pure eye within the mind, as the basis of all knowledge; it is sun illuminating the forest of things to be known, the sword that destroys heretical texts; it constitutes the

⁹⁹ Davids Rhys, *Buddhist Psychology: An Inquiry into the Analysis and Theory of Mind in Pāli Literature* (Delhi: Cosmo, 2002) Ch.VII: *Psychology Developments in the Abhidhamma-Piṭaka*, pp.134-156.

¹⁰⁰ Buddhaghosa 觉音, *Vsm., The Path of Purification* (Singapore: Buddhist Meditation Centre; 1975), vol. IV pp.160-75; vol. XI, pp.406-408, (*passaddhakāyo suvimuttscitto*: with body tranquillized and mind set free).

¹⁰¹ Buddhadatta 觉施, *The Abhidhamāvatāra* 入阿毗曇. The *Abhidhamāvatāra-śāstra* in Chinese, attributed to Skandhila 塞建陀罗, trans.in 658 by Xuanzang 玄奘, T. 1554. 28. 980-989. pp.49-59.

¹⁰² Vasumitra 世友. *Samayabhedo-paracanacakra-śāstra* 异部宗轮论 T. 49, No.2033a1-2, trans. by Paramārtha.

¹⁰³ Nārada Mahāthera, *A Manual of Abhidharma* (Sri Lanka: PTS, 1980), ch. No. 9, pp.389-394.

authority for those who open the eyes of sentient beings and is the womb of the Tathāgata-s, it is the illumination in the three realms, the path of insight; it is the light of the all factors and the ocean of the Buddha's words; it is able to issue forth highest insight and to remove all doubts.¹⁰⁴

3.4 The *Tathāgatagarbha* Appears in the *Vinaya*

In almost all forms of Buddhist religions, the practice begins with the cultivation of morality. For monks and nuns, traditional morality base on a detailed set of rules or precepts, compiled during and shortly after the historical Buddha's lifetime. One of the distinguishing moralities which are *Fan-wang* precepts (*BŚS*)¹⁰⁵ was taught by the Buddha and record in Sanskrit in India.¹⁰⁶ The contents of *Fan-wang* precepts (*BŚS*) compose a set of precepts which join monks, nuns, and lay believers, the major precepts required that a Bodhisattva always act with compassion, filial piety, and obedience in order to precept sentient beings. The *Fan-wang* precepts (*BŚS*) are called "perfect precepts", because "perfect precepts" have the same purport and profundity as the Buddha's ultimate teaching of the realization of Buddhahood with this very body.

The *Fan-wang* precepts (*BŚS*) states: "When sentient beings receive the precepts of the Buddha, they enter the ranks of the Buddha-s."¹⁰⁷ This means that those beings who are in lowest state, if they follow the precepts, they are identical to Buddha in name in this very existence. Therefore, the *Fan-wang* precepts (*BŚS*) represent the beginning of the practices that lead to the realization of Buddhahood in this existence and for people

¹⁰⁴ Devaśarman 提婆设摩, *Vijñānakāya*, 阿毗达磨识身足论 T. vol. 26, No.1593, 531a13-17.

¹⁰⁵ *Fan-wang* 梵网戒, *BŚS*, 梵网菩萨戒经, 全称梵网经卢舍那佛说菩萨心地戒品第十, T.24. No.1484, pp.997a-1010a, trans. by Kumarajīva in 406.

¹⁰⁶ Robert E. Buswell, *Chinese Buddhist Apocryphal* (Delhi: Sri Satguru, 1992), pp.252-280.

¹⁰⁷ *BŚS*: "众生受佛戒, 即入诸佛位." p.1004.

with the lowest grade of religious faculties. The *Fan-wang* precepts (*BŚS*) says:¹⁰⁸“They explain all Buddha-s’ Mind Treasure, the Ground Treasure, the Precept Treasure, the Treasury of Limitless conduct and vows, and Treasury of the cause and effect. In this way all Buddha-s explain the limitless Treasuries of all *Dharmas* to completion.”

3.5 Conclusion

According to the teaching of The concept of *tathāgatagarbha* tradition, at the time of Buddha which his teaching is the innate Pure Mind (*prakṛtipariśuddham-cittam*) that remains unchanged and undefiled mind, this pure mind itself is pure, but the ordinary mind are polluted by the defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*), if one who want to remove the defilements, one can through developing the *dhyāna/jhāna* and *catvāryapramāṇāni*¹⁰⁹...to fade away the defilement, ignorance, to achieve the deliverance of mind, to accomplish the universally salvation.

The Buddha gave the teaching to practice the *dhyāna/jhāna* to remove the defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*, etc. Five kinds of afflictions: desire, anger, dullness, agitation, and doubt) which pollutes the intrinsic mind (*pabhassara*) which is the luminous mind. The awakening is the “uncovering” the Pure Mind of the Enlightenment. Thus it is the Mind when it is defiled (*kleśa*) which is the identity of *samsāra*, and the pure mind is the identity of *nirvāṇa*. Through the path of the deliverance of mind to attain the highest enlightenment that the Tathāgata (Buddha) has practiced, it is within the mind. Therefor the spiritual goal of teaching of Buddha, that is to awaken the inner mind, but a

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., T24, 1484, 14C-16C. p1009. “一切佛心藏，地藏，戒藏，无量行愿藏；因果佛性常住藏，如是一切佛说，无量一切法藏竟。” & Hui Seng 慧僧. *The Buddha Speaks the Brahma Net Sūtra* 佛说梵网经讲录, trans. by Kuamrajīva, trans. into English by Hen Dao 恒道 (California: Dharma Realm Buddhist University 法界大学, 1981), p.110.

¹⁰⁹ Ying-Shun 印顺, *Investigation on Śūnyatā* 空之探究 (Taipei Zhengwen Pub., 199) , Ch.1: 慈、悲、喜、舍 即四无量定 *catvāryapramāṇāni*, 无量心解脱，无量心三昧，四梵住 *brahmavihāra*: Loving Kindness (*māitre/metta*), Compassion (*karuṇa*), Gladness (*muditā*) & Equanimity (*upekṣa*); see Ch.9th of Buddhagosa’s *Vsm* explains in detailed. pp.321-354.

practicing of *tisraḥ-sīkṣāh*.¹¹⁰ Thus the traditional Buddhist path is only one thing which is not to do evil, to good, to cultivate the insight meditation, to purify the mind, to perfect the mind, in the later Mahāyāna Buddhism is called the pure of *tathāgatagarbha*.

¹¹⁰ *tisraḥ-sīkṣāh*, *pāli*, *tisso-sikkhā*: (i).*adhisīla-sīkṣā* 增上戒学; (ii). *adhicitta-sīkṣā* 增上心学; (iii). *adhiprajñā-sīkṣā* 增上慧学.

CHAPTER IV

The Development of *Tathāgatagarbha* Literature

4.1 Introduction

The Mahāyāna Buddhism appeared as a new phase of the religion about the 2nd century B.C., along with a vast literature on the subject, we already discussed that *tathāgatagarbha* has been mentioned in the *nikāyas*, *āgamas* which could be trace even up to the time of Buddha.¹¹¹ After the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha, the disciples composed the words of Buddha into the *pitaka-s* so as to collect the *dhamma* and *vinaya*, because Buddha said to Ānanda just before his *parinirvāṇa* “the dharma and *vinaya* that have been preached by me will be your teacher after my death.”¹¹²

After the second council the *Saṅgha* was divided into *Theravāda* and *Mahāsaṅghika*, they both carried spiritual path of Buddha and developed in the history for helping all sentient beings to make the world a happier place to act as members of *Saṅgha* though they perform their duties separately. But they follow the different way of doctrine in their literature. As Mahāyāna scriptures point out the Southern India is the base of the development of the Mahāyāna Buddhism. At the beginning the thought of *prajñāpāramitā* was developed among the Theravāda and *Mahāsaṅghika* in a form of germs, and on the base of those germs, later developed many kinds of thoughts of Mahāyāna.¹¹³ Later the two major Mahāyāna Schools, Yogācāra and Mādhyamika were also developed into two major traditions of Mahāyāna in India. Among Mahāyāna

¹¹¹ Zhang Man-tao 张曼涛大乘佛教之发展. 现代佛教学术丛 (98)之大乘佛教导源之大乘初兴, p.11.

¹¹² D, II, p.154. Davids T. W. Rhys, *The Question of King Milinda: Milindapañha* (Kandy: PTS, 1965), p.99. This passage occurs in many places of the *nikāyas*.

¹¹³ Zhang Man-tao 张曼涛, (98); Ui Hakuji 宇井伯寿, p.17.

Literatures has been divided into three systems. The *tathāgatagarbha* literature is one of the most important works and later divided into the three systems of Mahāyāna Buddhism by some Buddhist scholars, such as Yin Shun, namely, *nirvāṇavāda* line; *vijñānavāda* line and *Śūnyatāvāda* line; among these lines *tathāgatagarbha* is included into the *nirvāṇavāda* system.¹¹⁴

4.2 The Composing of *Tathāgatagarbha* Literature

Around 2nd or 3rd century, the development of *tathāgatagarbha* literature based on the doctrine of *prakṛtipariśuddhaṃ-cittam* of *Mahāśāghika*; and the development of *ālaya* based on the doctrine of Theravāda, and that time the Vedic culture and *Sāṃkhya* were popular in India and the Sanskrit language was prominent; the text of *tathāgatagarbha* were popular in the South India and formed greatly in the Center (Kasmir) and Northern India.¹¹⁵

During the time of Mādhyamika School and Yogācāra School, a number of Mahāyāna texts were written about the *tathāgatagarbha*. Although the idea that “all sentient beings possess the *tathāgatagarbha*” is mentioned in the texts, and that is spread in every Mahāyāna school, but it is not belonging to any particular school. The earliest of these texts were composed between 200 and 250 C.E., the most important earliest texts are three *sūtra*-s: (1). *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra*, (2). *Śrīmālā-sūtra*, (3). *ANP* and one *śāstra*: *RGV (Uttaratantra)*.¹¹⁶ The *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra* established the tenet that the potentiality of Buddhahood is within sentient beings that are with defilements (*āgantukakleśa*). The *Śrīmālā sūtra* developed this above mentioned concept to the *tathāgatagarbha*-

¹¹⁴ Ibid., (99) 默如, 大乘三系商榷. 印顺, 大乘三系概观, 所宗依的法則: 1.性空-唯名; 2.虚妄-唯识; 3.真常-唯心. p.125, 170, 173. pp.59-181.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., (98) , pp.350-353, 如来藏经系与上座部的关系. 木村泰贤, 龙树, 世亲系的大乘佛教, 现代佛教学术丛刊.

¹¹⁶ Sallie B. King, *Buddha Nature* (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1992) p.12. Tibet, *Uttaratantra*: 无上续藏.

viññāna, *tathāgatgarbha-dharmakāya* etc.¹¹⁷ and *RGV* gives the extensive exposition of *tathāgatagarbha*, and those are the important source for ‘One Vehicle’. Because the difference is that when the mind is pure (out of *āgantuka-kleśa*), the attainment is the Buddhahood which is different from the *śāravaks*, *pratyekbuddhas arahants*, the ultimate of the three vehicles is Mahāyāna (*ekāyana*) and the attainment is the Buddhahood.

4.3. The Tenet of the *Tathāgatagarbha* Literature

The major doctrine of *tathāgatgarbha* texts introduces the idea that “all sentient beings possess the *tathāgatgarbha*”. It is the inner reality is like a “womb” in that it contains the potential to become a Buddha along with the many qualities of Buddhahood. It is also like an “embryo” since it can itself developed into full Buddhahood. The *tathāgatgarbha* just like a treasure of human being which is covered by the defilements, but the *tathāgatgarbha* isn’t polluted by the defilements, its nature (*prakṛti*) is pure, or luminous consciousness. If sentient beings who practice the path of Mahāyāna to attain the awakening for the benefit of others (*bodhicitta*), they will achieve the Buddhahood, even the evil being (*icchāntika*) who has cut off the good roots or lacking in the necessary faith possess the potential of Buddhahood. Ultimate the *tathāgatagarbha* is said to be identical with the *dharma*-body (*dharmakāya*). The reason is that sentient beings are unaware of the *tathāgatagarbha* within them, because it is covered by the defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*) like ignorance, hatred, greed and delusion. This unwholesome thought which is adventitious, and cover the *tathāgatagarbha*, once free from these defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*) the inner essence of Buddhahood will manifest its luminous nature and pure qualities, with attainment of *nirvāṇa*. The thought of

¹¹⁷ Fo-Guang, vol.5, p.4871.

tathāgatagarbha literature has a striking feature of the universality of Buddhahood potentiality which is for salvation of all beings who are surrounding by suffering, out of this compassion, Buddha point out the truth of the phenomena in the world.

4.4 The Development of the *Tathāgatagarbha* Literature

Within the history of Buddhism, the Mahāyāna Buddhism was developed within a long period of time, the central tenets generally is the perfection and infinity of Buddhahood, although is usually described by negative terms such as “inconceivable”, “unutterable”, “beyond the reach of thought”, but the *tathāatagarbha* literature describes positively, and cover many important teachings of Mahāyāna Buddhism. According to scholars, Yan Pei, Moti Lal Pandit & Hajime Nakamura etc.,¹¹⁸ the *tathāatagarbha* literature is divided into three stages and it was developed in Mahāyāna Buddhism in India.¹¹⁹

4.4.1 The First Stage of the *Tathāgatagarbha* Literature

The texts such as:¹²⁰ (1). *Tathātagatagarbha-sūtra*, (2). *ANP*, (3). *Śrīmālā-sūtra*, (4). *MPS*, (5). *Anuttarasraya-sūtra*, (6). *MHP*, (7). *Āṅgulimālika-sūtra*; all these texts were composed before the time of Vasubhandu and belong to the first stage of the *tathāatagarbha* literature which does not associate with the *ālayavijñānavāda*.

(1). ***Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra***: Among them, the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra* was the first one. Which point out that all sentient beings possess the *tathāgatagarbha*, although the *tathāgatagarbha* is covered by defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*), but itself is pure

¹¹⁸ Moti Lal Pandit, *Encounter with Buddhism: A Study of the Evolution of Buddhist Thought* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2005), pp.150-151. Hajime Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism: A Survey With Bibliographical Notes* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1999), pp.229-230.

¹¹⁹ Zhang Man-tao 张曼涛 (98), 演培, 大乘经典的成立年代, pp.44-45.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 如来藏说与阿赖耶说, 尚未交流, pp.44-45.

(*prakṛtipariśuddham*), it doesn't polluted by defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*). In the *sūtra*, it uses nine metaphors to explain the meaning of the *prakṛtipariśuddham-cittam* of *tathāgatagarbha*. Soon after this *sūtra*, the analysis of the Jewels and Linages *RGV* (*Uttaratantra*) was written as a summary of *Tathāgatgarbha-sūtra* thought which relates to *sūnyatā* and quote two Yogācāra School texts, namely, *Mahāyanābhīdharma-sūtra* and *Lkt*. The *Tathāgatgarbha-sūtra* says:¹²¹ “All the living beings, though they are among the defilements of hatred, anger and ignorance, have the Buddha's wisdom, Buddha's Eye, Buddha's Body sitting firmly in the form of meditation. Thus, in spite of their being covered with defilements, transmigrating from one path....to another, they are possessed of Matrix of the Tathāgata (*tathāgatagarbha*), endowed with virtues, always pure, and hence are not different from me---Having thus observed, the Buddha preached the doctrine in order to remove the defilements and manifest the Buddha Nature (within the livings)”.

(2). *Anunatvapurnatva-nirdesa-parivarta*:¹²² This is a small *sūtra* contemporary with the *Śrīmālā-sūtra*. The main point of its doctrine is the non-increase and decrease of *dharmas* or *guṇa* in both states of sentient beings and the Buddhahood (fruition). The *tathāgatagarbha* of beings covered with *kleśa-s* and to its achievement and understanding only to the Buddha. Special contributions of this *sūtra* is:¹²³ (i) the nature of *tathāgatagarbha* in the state of sentient beings is pure which is same as the Buddha, the nature of defilements itself is also pure, means the defilement is identical with *bodhi*,

¹²¹ Williams Paul, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrine Foundations, Lecture in Indo-Tibetan Studies University of Bristol* (New York: Routledge, 1958), p.51.

¹²² Shi Zhi-yu 释智谕. 佛说不增不减经讲记. Taipei: 西莲净苑出版社, 1983.

¹²³ Takasaki Jikido, *A Study on the RGV*. p.39. (i). *anādisāmnidhyāsambaddhasvabhāva-śubhadharmatā*, 如来藏本际相应体及清淨法；(ii). *anādisāmnidhyāsambaddhasvabhāva-kleśakośatā*, 如来藏本际不相应体及烦恼缠不清淨法；(iii). *aparāntakotisama-dhruvadharmatā-samvidyamānatā*, 如来藏未来际平等恒及有法。

birth and death are equal to *nirvāṇa*;¹²⁴ (ii) the *tathāgatagarbha* is covered by defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*) in the state of un-enlightenment, and it is said impure, it is only eliminated by the wisdom of the Buddha; (iii) the *tathāgatagarbha* is pure in the state of enlightenment and it is non-increase and non-decrease as the sentient beings, and doesn't get anything from outside.

Although this *sūtra* bases on the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra*, but it develops the nature of the *tathāgatagarbha* and further to explain the *dharmakāya* of Buddha is same as the sentient beings, and there are three relations with the defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*), (1). Sentient beings are covered by defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*) from innumerable aeons; (2). To practice *pāramitā*-s of Bodhisattva-s to eliminate the defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*); (3). Once the defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*) are destroyed, it is called the Tathāgata, which isn't different from the Buddha. In real sense the realm of sentient beings (*sattva-dhātu*) viz *dharmakāya*, the *dharmakāya* is (*sattva-dhātu*), the *tathāgatagarbha* is the base (*āśraya*). In the short that the potential to be Buddha which base on the inner *tathāgatagarbha*, and point the difference between the sentient beings, Bodhisattva-s and the Buddha. The *sūtra* says:¹²⁵ “The essence of the Buddha is by nature devoid (empty) of the accident (pollutions) which differ from it; but it is no means devoid of the highest properties which are, essentially, indivisible from it.”

(3).Śrīmālā-sūtra: which is based on the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra*, the name of translation is the Lion's Roar of Queen, composed between 250-350 C.E in Ayodya¹²⁶ which is the center of culture, under the 2nd emperor of Samudragupta of Gupta dynasty.

¹²⁴ Minoru, Kiyota, *Mahāyāna Buddhist Meditation: Theory & Practice* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt Ltd, 1991), p77.

¹²⁵ Williams Paul, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, p.105.

¹²⁶ Takasaki Jikido, *A Study on The RGV*, Ayodya, 阿踰闍. p.37-38. Fo-Guang, .vol.4, p.3678, 胜鬘经宝窟上本, *Śrīmālā sūtra*: ‘阿踰闍 国者, 此翻为无生; 此国往昔大乘人住, 多解无生; 国从人立名, 故云无生国也, 又翻为不可战国.’

This *sūtra* deeply investigates the characters of the *tathāgatagarbha* in a more developed form than the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra* and has a significant role for establishing the *tathāgatagarbha* theory is the *Śrīmālā-sūtra* that can see that influenced the later Yogācāra of Mahāyāna. The feature of this *sūtra* is teaching:

(i). two aspects of mind. The teaching of relations of *prakṛtipariśuddhi-citta* and *upakleśa-citta*, its meaning is same as the *cittaprakṛti* and *āgantukakleśa*, its secret meaning that the *tathāgatagarbha* is mind (*tathāgatagarbha-citta*), it is the *dharmakāya* and give it five full meaning of pure: *tathāgatagarbha*, *dharmadhātugarbha*, *dharmakāyagarbha*, *lokottaradharmagarbha*, & *prakṛti-pariśuddhagarbha*. In the *Śrīmālā-sūtra*:¹²⁷ “World-Honored One, the Tathāgata-embryo is the store of the *dharmadhātu*, the store of the *dharmā*-body, the store of the supramundane, and the store of intrinsic purity. This intrinsically pure Tathāgata-embryo, as I understand, is always the inconceivable state of the Tathāgata, even it is contaminated by defilements, the adventitious dust. Why? World-Honored One, the mind, whether virtuous or non-virtues, changes from moment to moment, and it cannot be contaminated by defilements, the adventitious dust. Why? Defilements are not in contact with the mind, the mind is not in contact with defilements. How can anything that is not in contact with the mind contaminate the mind? Yet, World-Honored One, because there are defilements there is a defiled mind. It is extremely difficult to know and understand contamination by defilements”. This explains that the *dharmakāya* of Tathāgata isn’t separate from the defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*).

(ii). The *sūnya* and *aśūnya* character of *garbha*, *sūnya* means to devoid of *kleśas* which are of unreal nature, itself is *sūnyatā*; while *garbha* is *aśūnya* which means

¹²⁷ Garma C. C. Chang, *A Treasury of Mahāyāna-sūtras: Selections from the Mahāratnakūṭa sūtras*, trans. by the Buddhist Association of the United States (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991), pp.380-381, 胜鬘经, 法身章: “如来藏者, 是法界藏, 法身藏……刹那善心非烦恼所染, 刹那非善心亦非烦恼所染…”

endowed with *buddhadharma-s* which are inseparable from the *dharmakāya* which is the reality and Tathāgata's possession of four *guṇa-pāramitās* of *nitya*, *sukha*, *ātman* and *śubha*. The *Śrīmālā-sūtra*:¹²⁸ “The Matrix of the Tathāgata is empty of all the sheath of *kleśa* which are differentiated and separated [from the Absolute Essence]. The Matrix of the Tathāgata is by no means devoid of the Buddha's Properties which are indivisible, inseparable, [from the Absolute Essence] inconceivable, and far beyond the sands of the Gaṅga in number.” And another passage to explain the four virtues: “The *Śrīmālā-sūtra* says:¹²⁹ “When sentient beings have faith in the Tathāgata and those sentient beings conceive [him] with permanence, pleasure, self, and purity, they does no go astray. Those sentient beings have the right view. Why so? Because the *dharmakāya* of the Tathāgata has the perfection of permanence, the perfection of pleasure, the perfection of self, the perfection of purity. Whichever sentient being sees the *dharmakāya* of the Tathāgata that way sees it correctly”.

(iii). The fundamental theory of this *sūtra* is Mahāyāna Buddhism, the three vehicles *sāravak*, *pratyekabuddha*, *arahant*, Bodhisattva, ascribe to One Vehicle (*ekāyāna*) which is the theory of Mahāyāna.

(iv). Finally feature of this *sūtra*, which Buddha talk with Śrīmālādevī who is a women, that means the women are same as the men who possess the possibility to attain the Buddhahood. So it is important *sūtra* among the early *tathāgatagarbha* Literatures and cover many main thoughts of *tathāgatagarbha*.

(4).Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra: The main doctrine is the *dharmakāya* which is eternal, the virtues of *nirvāṇa* are *nitya*, *sukha*, *ātman* and *śubha*, its exposition of the

¹²⁸ Ibid., p.378.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p.379. & Wayman Alex and Wayman Hideko, *The Lion's Roar of Queen Śrīmālā: A Buddhist Scripture on the Tathāgatagarbha Theory* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990).

tathāgatagarbha theory, emphasizes the innate possession of the *buddhadhātu* in every living being, even the Buddhahood (*tathāgatagarbha*) is nothing other than the Self (*ātman*), the Self is *tathāgatagarbha*. The Buddhahood exists in all sentient beings; while describes *icchāntika* who abuse the Mahāyāna doctrine, who were given no hope by *cittamātra* tradition,¹³⁰ and *śāravak*, *pratyekabuddha*, *arahat*, all can achieve the fruition of Buddhahood is discussed. It completed its present form in days a little later than those of the *Srīmālā-sūtra* and the *ANP*.¹³¹

(5).*Anuttarāśraya-sūtra*:¹³² it was composed later than the *Śrīmālā-sūtra* and *MPS*, this *sūtra* has seven chapters, but it consists four aspects:¹³³“(i). *tathāgatadhātu-parivarta*, (ii). *tathāgatabodhi-parivarta*, (iii). *tathāgataguṇa-parivarta* and (iv). *tathāgatakriyā-parivarta*, respectively”. It develops the theory of *dharmakāya* (32 marks or *mahā-puruṣa-lakṣaṇāni*) and 80 minor marks (*aśīty-anuvyañjanāni*). Buddha Nature, and transcends the defilement and the *tathāgatagarbha* as the *āśrayaparāvṛti*, that the term of *sūtra* is called *anuttarāśraya*. It was quoted in the Buddha Nature treatise and *RGV*. Therefore, this *sūtra* places an important role in the *tathāgatagarbha* literature.

(6).*Mahā-bherī-haraka-parivarta*:¹³⁴ This *sūtra* composed during the time of old age of Buddha. It is translated into Chinese by Gunabhadra who was an Indian Monk, and the doctrine is similar as the *SP*, *MPS*, and *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. Its teaching is the esoteric *dharmakāya* of *tathāgatagarbha* which is eternal that is difficult to believe and understand, it is subtle that only the Buddha, the World-Honored One whose eye, the wisdom can know the root of the *dharma*, the guide, and the foundation of the true

¹³⁰ Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, p.99.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p.39-40.

¹³² CBE: 无上依经即 (1) 校量功德品, (2) 如来界品, (3) 菩提品, (4) 如来功德品, (5) 如来事品, (6) 赞叹品, (7) 嘱累品. 佛说无上依经, T.16, 469. Fo-Guang, vol.6; p.5072.

¹³³ Jikido Takasaki, *A Study on the RGV*, p.49.

¹³⁴ Shi Zhi-yu 释智谕, 大法鼓经解义. & 大法鼓经, T.9, No.271; p.290.

dharma as it is.

(7). *Aṅguli-mālīka-sūtra* (*Aṅguli-mālīya*, *Pāli: Aṅguli-māla*): this *sūtra* is taught about the story of Aṅgulimāla which appears in the Theragata and Aṅgulimāla *sutta*. Aṅgulimāla was the robber and murderer, but the Buddha know that he is a son of good family (possess the *tathāgatagarbha*), filled with deep faith he set his mind on the right way and going forth, in *sutta*: “The Blissed One says ‘Aṅgulimāla, I have stopped for ever, violence to every living being; But you have no restraint towards things that breathe; So that is why I have stopped and you have not’.” Then the Buddha let compassion arise and for the benefit of all [beings in the] world and invited him: ‘Come!’ so he became a renouncing, [From then on] he dwelt in empty and silent places, his mind striving tirelessly, by concentration he focused his mind in true insight. He attained the enlightenment within his life. He clearly understood his nature. He knew: for me birth is ended, the holy abode is established, and done is what had to be done, there will be no further rebirth.

In Aṅgulimāla’s case:¹³⁵ the Buddha had seen his hidden potential to win freedom, Aṅgulimāla would also be able to gain the highest freedom from all suffering in this very life. This is one of the *sūtra-s* of *tathāgatagarbha* texts in *āgama* and *nikāya* which teaches in the form of story.¹³⁶ The story appears in Theravāda verses 86-91 & the *MN*, and the *āgama* tradition. It represents that even the worst of people can return to the right path, and liberates from the wheel of rebirth or attains the Buddhahood.

4.4.2 The Second Stage of *Tathāgatagarbha* Literature

¹³⁵ Hellmuth Hecker, *Aṅgulimāla: A Murder’s Road to Sainthood* (Kandy: PTS, 1984), p.4. & Fo-Guang, vol.2, p.1879c-1880b.

¹³⁶ *SA* (38th *sūtra*) which is the *Aṅgulimāla* of *EAS* (31th *sūtra*); *Pāli, MN* (86th *sutta*).

The texts of the second stage which associates with the doctrine of *ālayavijñānavāda*, but not still describe the relation between the *ālayavijñāna* and *tathāgatagarbha*, such as:¹³⁷ (1). Buddha Nature Treatise; (2).*Mahāvatasaka-sūtra-sāstra*; (3). *Mahāyāna-saṅgraha* and so on.

(1). **Buddha Nature Treatise:** it is more systematically treatise of *tathāgatagrba* than *RGV* of later time. This treatise illuminates all sentient beings possess the Buddha Nature; it rejects the concept within Buddhist; the idea of *ātman* of non-buddhist (heretical religions) that there isn't Buddha Nature; even those Mahāyānanists who hold the attachment of emptiness and lesser-vehicle practitioners are refuted. While the treatise through the three stages (intrinsic nature, actualize nature, perfect nature)¹³⁸ to explain the theory of manifestation of the *tathāgatagarbha* and so on; especially, gives the three meaning of *tathāgatagarbha*:¹³⁹ (i).container: there exists the Germ of the Tathāgata [in every living being] that all the countless merits of the fruition stage, when dwelling in the time of the cause stage, are completely enclosed, the Tathāgata nature exists. That is why it is called eternal; (ii).contained: the Absolute Body (*dharmakāya*) of the Tathāgata dwells in itself; (iii). Hiddenness: the Tathāgata being the Reality (*tathātā*) is hidden and un-manifest, that is why it is called a *garbha*. It is said by the Lord that all living beings are always possessed of the Matrix of Tathāgata; and base on the ten ideas to exposit the characters of the *tathāgatagarbha*....It is a representative literature of the theory of *tathāgatgarbha*.

¹³⁷ Zhang Man-tao 张曼涛, 大乘佛教之发展 (98), 演培, 初期大乘经典的成立年代, (如来藏与阿赖耶识并说, 但尚未阐明两者的关系), 如佛性论, 大乘华严经论, 摄大乘论等; pp.44-45.

¹³⁸ Fo-Guang, 佛性有三种: (i).凡夫生来本具之佛性 (住自性), (ii).经过修行显现之佛性 (引出性), (iii).达到佛果所具之佛性 (至得性). vol.3, 1989.p.2634c.

¹³⁹ Takasaki Jikido, (i).能摄藏: *sattvas* possessed of *garbha* of *tathāgata*, i.e. of *garbha* 'enveloping' *tathāgata*; (ii). 所摄藏: *tathāgata*, as *garbha* in which *sattvas* are 'enveloped'; (iii). 隐覆藏: *garbha* in which *tathāgata* is 'hidden'; p.198. T31, 795c-796a.

(2). *Mahāvatasaka-sūtra-śāstra*:¹⁴⁰ This text describes a cosmos of infinite realms upon realms, mutually containing each other. It develops the theory of One Mind, Dependent Arising and conjoins with the practice of Bodhisattva, the main thought is the nature of *dharma* which is pure (*prakṛtipariśuddhaṃ-dharmatā*), and all things are the Mind-only of the *samsāra*. It emphasizes that if one who wish to attain the liberation (Buddhahood) should purify the mind, while follow the path of Bodhisattva, ultimately, will be attain the realm of Buddha (*pariśuddhadhātu*).

(3). *Mahāyāna-saṅgraha*: An anthology of Mahāyāna essays, ascribed to Asaṅga. This work gives an overview of most of the important categories in the Yogācāra system, including the eight consciousness, conscious construction, the three natures, affliction, two hindrances, Buddha-bodies, and meditative practices that lead to liberation.

4.4.3 The Third Stage of *Tathāgatagarbha*

The texts of third stage which ingests the doctrine of *ālayavijñānavāda* to extensively to elaborate the doctrine of *prāṭīyasamutpāda* of *tathāgatagarbha* or doctrine of phenomenon rising from Suchness (the *bhūtatathatā prāṭīyasamutpāda* doctrine), such as:¹⁴¹ (1). *Lkt.*, (2). *Ghana-vyūha-sūtra*, (3). *MPŚ* and so on.

(1). *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*:¹⁴² It is one of the important Mahāyāna *sūtra* and composed around 4th century (420-704), deals with the Mind Only and the storehouse consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*), also containing the doctrine of the *tathāgatagarbha*. Even the Zen Buddhism it stresses the inward practicing of meditation to overcome the defilements (*lobha, dosa, moha* and so on). If one realizes a “reversion of foundation of

¹⁴⁰ Zang Man-ta 张曼涛, 大乘佛教之发展. 现代佛教学术丛(98). 演培, 初期大乘经典的成立年代; *Mahāvatasaka-sūtra-śāstra*, 大乘华严经论, pp.44-45.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.; 摄取阿赖耶识之说, 以大乘如来藏缘起说, 如楞伽经, 密严经, 起信论, pp.44-45.

¹⁴² Suzuki, D.T., *Studies in the Lkt* (London: George Routledge, 1999), pp.3-4.

the mind,” one can discover its clear, pure luminosity that is very essence of Buddhahood”. Therefore, the storehouse-consciousness is also called the “Womb of the Tathāgata” or “*tathāgatagarbha*”. *Lkt.* says:¹⁴³

Nirvāṇa is the storehouse-consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*) where a reversion takes place self-realization.... When a reversion takes place in the practitioner of yoga, the (varieties of) consciousness cast off decimation between (subject and object) in what is realized as the (nature of) mind itself. Here, one enters the Tathāgata stage, attaining the realization of noble wisdom; and in this stage, there is no thought of existence or nonexistence....when all these (varieties of consciousness) go through a reversion, I and all the Buddha-s declare that there is *nirvāṇa*. The mode and nature of this *nirvāṇa* is emptiness, which is the status of reality....(This is because the storehouse-consciousness *ālayavijñāna*) is like a great ocean in which waves roll on constantly, but the (depths) subsist unaffected, free from the faults of impermanence....thoroughly pure in its essence... The storehouse-consciousness is (thus) known by the name of the *tathāgatagarbha* (*Lkt.* stanza: 62, 93, 99, 220-221).

This inner essence of the mind is the original pure, luminous, and *nirvāṇic* nature of the storehouse-consciousness that is beyond the dualistic discrimination of the ordinary mental functioning. With this inner realization, the embryo of Buddhahood begins to be developed. This understanding consciousness is developed in the Indian Yogācāra School of Buddhist philosophy.

(2). *Ghana-vyūha-sūtra*:¹⁴⁴ it is the Yogācāra School literature that the phenomena is the projection of the *ālayavijñāna*, but it through the question of Vajragarbha Bodhisattva point out the theory of neither arising nor ceasing (*anutpāda-*

¹⁴³ Suzuki, D. T., *The Lkt.: A Mahāyāna Text* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1999), pp.55, 81, 86, 190, and 191.

¹⁴⁴ Fo-Guang, 密严经, *Ghana-vyūha-sūtra*, transla. by Amoghavajra (705-774) and Divakara (680~685). T16. No.681, 682, p.723. *Vajragarbha-bodhisattava*, 金刚藏菩萨 vol.5, 1989, p.4496b.

anirodha) of *tathāgatagarbha* which is Highest Dharma truth and the quotation of the *Śrīmālā-sūtra* and so on.

(3). *Mahāyāna-prasāda-prabhāvana-śāstra*:¹⁴⁵ a well-known systematical work of Suchness philosophy. The Sanskrit text of this book is not found; there are some disputations about it, but it is accept as the later development of Mahāyāna Literature. It means Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna attributes to Aśvaghosa around 1-2nd century. This commentary which is argued by some scholars, because the Sanskrit text is irrecoverably lost; it is one of the basic texts of Mahāyāna Buddhism which is the popularity of the text in East Asian Buddhism and translated into Chinese by Paramārtha, A.D.553, during the Lian dynasty (A.D.502-557) and by Sikṣānanda, A.D. 695-700, during the Tan dynasty (A.D. 618-907).¹⁴⁶ The commentary also describes the principle of *tathāgatagarbha*, such as:¹⁴⁷ “One Mind” as *tathāgatagarbha*, the mind of sentient beings, the essential nature of mind, etc., the mind contains Absolute and Phenomenal, the aspect enlightenment of *nirvāṇa* and the aspect of non-enlightenment of *ālayavijñāna*...and so forth. The principle is the mind of the sentient being; this mind includes in itself all states of being of the phenomenal and the transcendental world, this mind is the *tathāgatagarbha* which embraces all states of existence. In commentary, the *bhūtataṭā* is given in different names: ¹⁴⁸ (i). *tathāgata-garbha* (or the womb of Tathāgata), (ii). *bodhi-citta* (or the heart of intelligence), (iii). *paramārtha-satya* (or the highest truth), (iv). *bodhi* (or perfect wisdom), (v). *dharma-kāya* (or the source of intelligence), (vi). *kuśalamūla* (or fountain head of love and wisdom), (vii). *nirvāṇa* (or

¹⁴⁵ Paul Williams, p.105.

¹⁴⁶ Fo-Guang, vol.1, p.820b-810. & Ryukan Kimura, *The Original and Developed Doctrines of Indian Buddhism in Charts* (Delhi: Pilgrims Book, 1998), p.65.

¹⁴⁷ Hakeda, S. Yoshito, *The Awakening of Faith*, attributed to Aśvaghōṣa (New York: Columbia University, 1967), pp.31-32, & 大乘佛教の問題研究. 現代佛教学術叢 (99) (Taipei: 大乘文化出版社, 1970), pp.163-170.

¹⁴⁸ Ryukan Kimura, p.60.

the absolute peace).

The commentary also teaches Three Greatnesses, Four Faiths and Five Practices.... Especially, the theory and practice (*bhūtatathatā pratītyasamutpāda*)¹⁴⁹ to be illustrated by Aśvaghosa, or doctrine of phenomenon rising from Suchness (existence as such), which develops from the Dependent Arising (*pratītyasamutpāda*) of the early Buddha's teaching and so on. It became one of the strongly influential texts in the development of the East Asian style of Buddha Nature theory. It was studied and commented on repeatedly by a long list of East Asian scholars. So it also has its value to study though it composed in India or China.

4.5 The Importance of the *Tathāgatagarbha* Literature

The *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra* were written anonymously mainly in Sanskrit around the first century C.E. until the eighth century. The special character of this text is the view that all beings possess nature to be the Buddha, not Arhat, found in the developed Mahāyāna literature, which can help sentient beings who are suffering and in need of liberation. But the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra* texts did not present a system of philosophy and a separate philosophy school like Mādhyamika and Yogācāra, while their ideas did not have a strong influence on Buddhism in Indian; they strongly influenced Mahāyāna thinking about the nature of consciousness, Awakening, and Buddhahood in East Asia.¹⁵⁰

But it is the important character of Mahāyāna literature that the teaching is leading to attain the Buddhahood, the special theory of the essence of Buddhahood (*tathāgatagarbha*), nature of consciousness; the fundamental element of the Absolute, as

¹⁴⁹ Yin-Shun 印顺, *The Speaking of Awakening of Faith*, 大乘起信论讲记, 妙云集上编之七 (Taipei: Zhengwen Pub., 正闻出版社, 1992), pp.151-165.

¹⁵⁰ Donald W. Mitchell, pp.139-140.

exist in all sentient beings is one of the characteristic of Mahāyāna. This view can be found in the early Buddhist texts, teaches that the mind is naturally pure and clear, this pure luminosity as the true essence of consciousness gives sentient beings the potential for Buddhahood. The ordinary mind set people in un-satisfying (*duḥkha*); and it is also the mind that can set people free. Within the Buddhism, Mahāyāna movement claims that all beings possess the Buddha Nature, and have the potential nature to be Buddha and became a new tradition, thus separate from other schools, the Mahāyāna flourished in various places in India to save sentient beings out of suffering (*saṃsāra*) to achieve the worldly salvation (attain the Highest Absolute/*nirvāṇa*), from where it eventually spread into other parts of Asia, especially central and East Asia. It became the primary form of Buddhism.

4.6 The Reasons to Teach the Doctrine of *Tathāgatagarbha*

The liberation (*vimukti*) is the purpose of all Buddhist doctrines, either the Theravāda or the Mahāyāna tradition, but the Mahāyāna tradition more emphasis the skillful meaning, this teaching is taught by the Buddha, in the previous life of Buddha (*jātaka*), before attaining the Buddhahood, when he practice the path of Bodhisattva, he was Bikkhu, King, physician, *upasaka*, *upasika*, man, women....such as Sudhana, Yakṣa and so on.

At the time of Buddha, the Buddha uses many different techniques to preach the dharma because sentient beings have different attitudes, characters, concepts, and also views of individual. The main reason of the longevity of Buddha-*sāsana* is to suit the individuals' needs and the understanding of Buddha-dharma for sentient beings to gain the healthy society and free from suffering. The Buddha taught the *dharma* in different

ways in the Canon, there are four methods of *desanāvidhi* were used by the Buddha.¹⁵¹ When the *Mahsaṅghika* and other schools in order to achieve the deliverance of the whole world, they developed the skillful meaning to spread Buddhism. Why Buddha teaches the *tathāgatagarbha*, this is the compassion of Buddha's mind and the skillful meaning in Buddhism. According to the *RGV*, there are five reasons.¹⁵² When the five kinds of sentient beings heard about the existence of the element of Buddhahood (*tathāgatagarbha*) in all sentient beings, they can change their views in four kinds of correct ways.¹⁵³

Therefore, the teaching of *tathāgatagarbha* is skillful meaning for removing the wrong views of sentient beings, the purpose is to save sentient beings to the liberation, out of any kinds of attachment, and this is the most important motivation (compassion) of Mahāyāna Buddhism to accomplish the salvation of the whole world.

4.7 Conclusion

In the history of Buddhism, the development of composing of *tathāgatagarbha* literature was slow with other Mahāyāna Schools, such as Mādhyamika and Yogācāra. The teachings of *tathāgatagarbha* originate from the beginning of the Buddhist traditions. When the whole body of *saṅgha* split into separate sects and when those sects were represented the different traditions and they follow the tradition of *Pāli* and Sanskrit as

¹⁵¹ The four skillfull meaning: (i).*pariyāya-desanā*: the Buddha has adopted an applied of illustration way of similes, metaphors, anecdotes, and images amounting of figurative expressions... (ii).*nippariyāya-desanā*: the Buddha has used common examples... (iii).*sankhittena-desanā*: the Buddha explains in brief in which the meaning are not drawn neither out nor implicit... (iv).*vithhāra-desanā*: the Buddha teaches in detail...; *The Poṭṭhapāda Sutta*, and *vinay* vol. 16. PTS. p.179.

¹⁵² H.S. Prasad, *The Uttaratantra (RGV)* (Delhi: Sri Satguru 1997), pp.237-240. Tan Xi-Yong 谈锡永: (i).怯弱心者, those depression of the mind, (ii).轻慢心者, those is full of pride, (iii). 执虚妄者, those who have thoughts of extreme contempt, (iv). 谤真法(如)者, those the will of Enlightenment is not aroused,(v). 我执者, those whose correct knowledge does not arise.pp.126-128.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 于法起正勤心 (*protsaha*), 即生四种心 rising four kinds of mind: (i).信: 于有情作世尊(如佛)想 (*śāstrgausava*), is regarding all sentient beings as the teacher, (ii). 般若 (*prajñā*), the Highest Wisdom, (iii). 智 (*jñāna*), the Transcendental Intuition, (iv). 大悲, (*maître/metta*) Great Love; p.127, notes no.170.

their medium. The *Mahāsaṅgikas* were more open to develop the view of pure mind to the concept of *tathāgatagarbha*, not only the *Mahāsaṅgikas*, but also by the *Vibhajyavādins*, such as *Mahisasakah & Sarvastivāda*, they hold the essence of mind which is pure (*prakṛtipariśuddhaṃ-cittam*), which covered by defilement (*āgantukakleśa*).¹⁵⁴

The *Mahāsaṅgikas* used the concept of *prakṛtipariśuddhaṃ-cittam* which can be found in the early teachings of *āgama*-s and *nikāya*-s; for example the *Aṣṭa*. which is the earliest Mahāyāna literature, they promote the concept of *tathāgatagarbha*.¹⁵⁵ The concept of *tathāgatagarbha* all most corresponding to the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* system, such as the inherent nature is empty (*prakṛti-sūnya*, *atyanta-sūnya*), the original nature is pure (*prakṛti-visuddhi*, *atyanta-visuddhi*) are used in Mahāyāna literature (*sūtra* and *śāstra*). This is skill-fulness for those who fear the emptiness; the *atyanta-sūnya* viz *atyanta-visuddhi*.¹⁵⁶ Later the *bodhicitta* was accepted by Buddhists and it became a valuable concept. They use *bodhicitta* as the inherent nature (*prakṛtipariśuddhaṃ-cittam* or *tathāgatagarbha*). All these process of development can be seen in the development of the *tathāgatagarbha* literature that we have discussed early.

¹⁵⁴ Ying-Shun 印顺, *A Study on the Tathāgatagarbha*, 如来藏之研究, 心性本净之开展 (Taipei: Zhengwen Pub., 正闻出版社; 2004), p.67.Ch.3, *the development of prakṛtipariśuddhaṃ-cittam*, 心性本净之开展.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., Ch.3, p.67.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., Ch.3, p.67, (*prakṛti-sūnya* 本性空; *atyanta-sūnya* 毕竟空; *prakṛti-visuddhi* 本性净; *atyanta-visuddhi* 毕竟净), the quotation is in the *prajñāpāramitā-śāstra*..

CHAPTER V

The Development of the Significance of *Tathāgatagarbha*

5.1 Introduction

The concepts of *tathāgatagarbha* appears as innate purity of the mind¹⁵⁷ in early Buddhism; but along with its development is rendered as *dharmakāya*; Suchness; Buddha Nature; *dharmatā* or *bhūtatathatā*; *dharmadhātu*, *nirvāṇa* and so on in the later Buddhist tradition of Mahāyāna, which is the same essence in different ways to indicate the different aspects of Tathāgata.¹⁵⁸

In *The Mahāyāna Abhidharma-samuccaya-vyākhyā* explains the mind as the true reality and rendered as different terms, such as the Suchness (*tathatā*), Emptiness (*śūnyatā*), devoid of marks (*nirnimitta/alakṣaṇa*), *aprapaṅca*, Highest Truth (*paramārtha*), and reality realm (*dharmadhātu*).¹⁵⁹ The Chinese text in the name of *The Mahāyāna-Samatha and Vipāśyanā* mentions the *cittaprakṛti* means the Buddha Nature in another term such as *dharmakāya*, *tathāgatagarbha*, *dharmadhātu*.¹⁶⁰ In the development of Mahāyāna Buddhism:¹⁶¹ “*nirvāṇa*, *bodhi*, *dharmakāya*, *kuśalamūla*, *bhoddhicitta*, *paramārtha-satya madhaya-mārga*, *bhūta-koti*, *tathāgatagarbh*...all these are the different names of Thusness in different way.”

Therefore, according to *paramārtha-satya*, *samvrti-satya*; *lokṣana-satya* in the

¹⁵⁷ Innate purity of the mind: *citta-prakṛiti-pariśuddha*, *prabhāsvara* 自性清淨心。

¹⁵⁸ Vasubandhu, *Vimśatikā-vijñapti-mātratā-siddhi*; 唯识论, T 31. 1588. pp.63-70, trans. by Prajñāruc 般若流支, 真如: “自性清淨心, 佛性, 法身, 如来藏, 实相, 法界, 法性, 圆成实性, 皆同体异名也。”

¹⁵⁹ Sthiramati 安慧, *The Mahāyāna Abhidharma-samuccaya-vyākhyā*, T.31. 1605, trans. in 646 by Xuanzang 玄奘, 大乘阿毗达磨杂集论, vol.2: “真如、空性、无相、实际、胜义、法界等六名”。 T31.No. 606.702b4-22.

¹⁶⁰ Hui-si 南岳慧思 (515-577), *The Mahāna Samatha and Vipassana*, 大乘止观法门: “此心即自性清淨心, 又名真如, 亦名佛性, 亦名法身, 亦名如来藏, 亦名法界, 亦名法性, 如是等名无量无边”。 T.46.642a, pp.21-23.

¹⁶¹ *The Mahāyāna-Samatha and Vipāśyanā* 大乘止观, Zhang Man-tao 张曼涛, (98), p.239.

different *sūtra* & *śāstra* of Mahāyāna Buddhism, the categories of *tathāgatagarbha* which are different, they annotate the concepts of *tathāgarbha* in different ways to emphasize the different aspects of *tathāgatagarbha*.

The teaching of *tathāgatagarbha* taught by Buddha, it was interpreted by the disciples. Buddha was out of compassion, to help people overcome the defilements, such as inferior mind: arrogance, delusion, slandering the truth and attachment to self and so on; eventually to produce virtue, for example: diligent mind, reverence, wisdom (*prajñā*), knowledge (*jñāna*), and compassion (*karuṇā*). In short, that Buddha wishes to put an end of ignorance and attain enlightenment for sentient beings to cease the suffering of all. All sentient beings possess the Buddha Nature. This does not mean that persons possess something permanent similar to *ātaman*. Further this means by virtue of *tathāgatagarbha* they are able to complete the Buddha Way. According to the teachings of Buddhism, the Buddha Nature in teaching of Buddha which is different from the *ātaman* of Brahmanism.

If the Buddha says that there is no Buddha Nature, then there is un-bridgeable between the ordinary beings and the Buddha. In order to achieve this aim, the Buddha teaches the positively of pure mind, that guide human beings to realize their *tathāgatagarbha* (*citta-prakṛiti*) which is within themselves, tends to discourage them effort to attain what might be unattainable and what might be attainable. To understand the meaning of the *tathāgatagarbha*, it is necessary to verify the purification of functions of body, speech and mind; this is the all teachings of Buddha. Within this Chapter, according to the first stage¹⁶² development of *tathāgatagarbha* that already mentioned, the significations of the *tathāgatagarbha*, these *sūtra* explain Absolute (*nirvāṇa*) and

¹⁶² Ibid., p.334.

phenomena (*samsāra*); true empty (*śūnya-tathāta*) and un-true empty (*aśūnya-tathāta*) and so on.

5.2 The Double-aspects (*Śūnya & Aśūnya*) of *Tathāgatagarbha*

One skillful method of *tathāgatagarbha* which is opposite concept of *śūnya & aśūnya*, to exposit the virtues of *tathāgatagarbha*, these two concepts of *tathāgatagarbha* are in the state of enlightenment (un-defiled) and un-enlightenment (phenomena/defiled). The Buddha had attain the staut of Tathāgata many *kalpa*-s ago, and appears in the world to save sentient beings to out of suffering by two kinds of voidness (*śūnya*) knowledge, which is freed from defilement, and not voiding (*aśūnya*) of the Buddha Nature, this is one kind of Middle Way and the Real teachings of the Buddha.

In the *Śrīmālā-sūtra*, it talks about the two-aspects of *tathāgatagarbha*.¹⁶³ The translation in *Śrīmālā-sūtra*:¹⁶⁴ “Lord, the *tathāgatagarbha* is void of all the defilement, which is discrete and knowing as dropped off. Lord, the *tathāgatagarbha* is not void of the Buddha Natures, which are non-discrete, inconceivable, more numerous than the sands of the Ganges, and knowing as not dropped off.” The translation in *RGV*:¹⁶⁵

“Lord, the *tathāgatagarbha* is void of all the defilement-stores, which are discrete and knowing as not liberated. Lord, the *tathāgatagarbha* is not void of the Buddha Natures, which are (non-discrete) inconceivable, more numerous than the sand of the Ganges, and knowing as liberated.”

¹⁶³ Wayman Alex and Wayman Hideko, “*śūnya-tathāgatagarbha* and *aśūnyatā tathāgatagarbha/tata ucyate / śūnyas tathāgatagarbho vinirbhāgair muktajñaiḥ sarvakleśakosaiḥ / aśūnyo gaṅgānadīvālikāvyativṛttair avinirbhāgair amuktajnair acityai buddharmair iti /8-9, p.49.*

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p.50.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p.50.

Śrīmālā-sūtra says: ¹⁶⁶ “World-honored One, the *tathāgata*-embryo is the Tathāgata’s knowledge of emptiness. The *tathāgata*-embryo has never been seen or realized by any *śrāvaka* or *pratyekabuddha*. It is perceived and witnessed only by the Buddha.” The terms un-real or emptiness (*śūnya-tathāgatagarbha*) & real or non-emptiness (*aśūnya-tathāgatagarbha*), later these two terms are associated Buddha Nature literatures and other *tathāgatagarbha* texts, and *dharmakāya* which are said to be innately “pure” [*śūnya-tathāgatagarbha*] and [*aśūnya-tathāgatagarbha*] and the *tathāgatagarbha* which itself is empty and un-empty.¹⁶⁷

Therefore, the *śūnya-tathāgatagarbha* and the *aśūnya-tathāgatagarbha* are the two aspects of *tathatā* [Suchness (*tathatā*) is symbolic] which is the true emptiness that the mind in the terms of the Absolute [empty of all kinds of defilements (*āgantukakleśa*)] and the *aśūnya-tathāgatagarbha* truly non-empty, its essence itself is endowed with undefiled and excellent qualities. These two aspects of *tathatā* are complementary. The *śūnya-tathāgatagarbha* is the negative approach; *aśūnya-tathāgatagarbha* is the positive approach which is the skillful meaning of Buddha to lead sentient beings to attainment of liberation.

On the other hand it is the re-interpretation of the early teaching of the Buddha that to develop the qualities of wholesome mental factors of mind through removing the defilements (*lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*), and to cultivate the virtues and wisdom which are the early fundamental teachings of the Eightfold Noble Path (*śīla*, *samādhi* and *prajñā/paññā*), and it is re-emphasized in later **Mahāyana Buddhism as the six-**

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p.50; & Chang, Garma C. C. p.278. 大宝积经, No.48, 310a, p.677: “此如来藏者, 即是如来空性之智. 一切声闻独觉所未曾得, 唯佛了知及能作证. 世尊, 此如来空性之智. 复有二种, 何等为二, 谓空如来藏, 所谓离于不解脱智一切烦恼. 世尊, 不空如来, 具过恒河沙佛解脱智不思义法.” & Diana Y. Paul, *The Sutra of Queen Śrīmālā of the Lion’s Roar*; trans. from Chinese. T12, No.353 (California: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2004), p.45.

¹⁶⁷ *Śrīmālā-sūtra*, 胜鬘经: “如来藏体性毕竟空寂” T 353.12.221c16.

pāramita-s. This Path is the way of purify the mind and perfection of virtuous and wisdom either in Theravāda or Mahāyāna tradition, such as the Buddhagosa talks the path of purification in his *Vsm.* and some other volums.

5.2.1 The *Śūnya-Tathāgatagarbha*

The *śūnya-tathāgatagarbha*: When the *tathāgatagarbha* is free from adventitious defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*) which is purity, its functions are unlimited, endowed with infinite virtues, and void and tranquil. It is the unconstructed *dharmakāya* (*asaṃskṛta*) which is Thusness undefiled, this Buddha nature which abides in the state of fruition permanently. Thus a person possesses a “real” the pure *tathāgatagarbha* or Buddha Nature.

The *śūnya* is explained in the *RGV*: “The *tathāgatagarbha* is void of all the defilement and knowing.”¹⁶⁸ In *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra* that means “Thusness” which is said as the *dharmakāya*, it is the innately pure. Because of the actives of the unreal *kleśa*, such as attachments are not real. If one gives rise to these attachments, true wisdom will not arise. When one does away with attachments, the wisdom and virtues will be manifest.

Through above discusses in the *sūtra* & *śāstra*, the profound doctrine of *śūnya-tathāgatagarbha* which its nature is not the destruction, itself is the cessation of suffering and it is beginningless, un-created, unborn, undying, un-pass away to become reborn; and avoid conceptual language...that the Buddha nature are non-discrete, not dissociated, and knowing as liberated from all defilement; because the sentient beings discriminate things which is Dependent Arising as reality, but it is imagined or delusion which is against the character of purity of Buddha Nature.

¹⁶⁸ Wayman Alex and Wayman Hideko, p.50.

This terminology of *sūnya-tathāgatagarbha* is the skillful meaning that in order to avoid the attachment of object and subject and so on. If one can avoid the subject and object and so on conceptual, there is neither subject nor object, then the mind is intrinsic purity, the essence of the *tathatā* (Thusness) itself is *sūnyatā* (*nirvāṇa* or *vyupaśama*) that use the *sūnya* to show the meaning of *tathatā* which is the essence is free from the defilements.

5.2.2 The *Aśūnya-Tathāgatagarbha*

The *aśūnya-tathāgatagarbha* means that Buddha Natures itself endow with the ten powers, four infinities *catvāryapramāṇāni*,¹⁶⁹ naturally virtues. In the *RGV* describes:¹⁷⁰“Lord, the *tathāgatagarbha* is not void of the Buddha natures, which are non-discrete, inconceivable, more numerous than the sand of the Ganges, and knowing as liberated (*mukt*). The meaning that the Lord’s knowledge pervades the defilement with the knowing that they are not in the state of liberation and pervades the Buddha Nature.”

Therefore, the *aśūnya-tathāgatagarbha* is at the state of either liberated or unliberation mind, they endowed with the infinite virtues and although it covered by the defilements, which the Buddha Nature does not refer to anything substantial, but rather indicates each person’s potential to achieve Buddhahood and identifies each person as Thusness.

Another meaning of *aśūnya*, the essence of *tathāgatagarbha* itself is intrinsic purity, or those who have faith on *tathāgatagarbha* who sees things as it is, born from the mind of Buddha, born from the dharma is the son of the Buddha while as the heirs of

¹⁶⁹ *catvāryapramāṇāni*: *brahmavihāra*, *Pāli* is *catassoappamaññāyo*, (i). *maitrya-pramāṇā*; (ii). *karuṇā-pramāṇā*; (iii). *muditāpramāṇā*; (iv). *upekṣāpramāṇā*.

¹⁷⁰ Wayman Alex and Wayman Hideko, p.50.

Dharma; they attain the *dharmakāyay* of Thatāgata. Whether the Tathāgata appears in the world or not, it exists itself.

This teaching of *tathāgatagarbha* is categorized to the Mahāyāna system, only in the different way of *tathāgatagarbha* system; because it teaches that the defilement is emptiness and even itself is emptiness and the innate mind does not polluted by *āgantuka-kleśa*, the *āgantuka-kleśa* itself is empty, this skillful meaning that Buddha pointed out the teaching which void of any kinds of attachment, such as there aren't any certain defilements existence. So the double-aspects (*śūnya* & *aśūnya*) of *tathāgatagarbha* which is just the way of path to realize the things are.

5. 2. 3 The Relationship of *Aśūnya* and *Śūnya-tathāgatagarbha*

The original enlightenment contains both *aśūnya* and *śūnya*. When the *tathatā* at the state of purity of wisdom which is the *aśūnya-tathāgatagarbha*, under the state of *aśūnya* is the products of ignorance; but the ignorance does not exist apart from enlightenment, the mind of men is pure in its own nature is stirred by the wind of ignorance, they are inseparable and the ignorance is vacuous. When the *tathatā* at the state of Supranatural Functions which is uncovered by defilement, the enlightenment (*śūnya-tathāgatagarbha*) is capable of creating all manner of excellent condition, because the wisdom of *tathatā* is pure, this excellent quality is incessant in manifold and benefits for sentient beings. Because of there are men of un-enlightenment, deluded mind, for them to speak of true enlightenment.

Therefore, in real sense of the *aśūnya* and *śūnya-tathāgatagarbha*, there is nothing to do, they are in-separable. In the *Anūnatvāpūrṇatva-nirdeśa*¹⁷¹; instructs a factor

¹⁷¹ *Anūnatvāpūrṇatva-nirdeśa*: 无减具足道论.

of knowledge:¹⁷² “Śāriputra, which has been taught by the Tathāgata to be the *dharmakāya*, that is this, possess non-discrete *dharma*, and possessing the merit of knowledge that it is not separate, namely, from Tathāgata natures more numerous than the sands of the Ganges.” The meaning is also included by the *RGV*.¹⁷³

Enlightenment is the form of the mind which is in the sentient being. The essence of the pure nature of the mind is identifying the Buddhahood, when it is covered by the latent tendencies of ignorance, it could be called a “sentient being”. The time of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* appearing and being mistaken as two at that moment, it likes the teaching of The *Yuktiśaṣṭikā*.¹⁷⁴

This means that there exists absolutely no real defiling element that is removed from the essence of the Buddha. There is not the least purifying element that could be added to it, because it is the perfectly pure properties. Therefore, it is said that the Essence of the Buddha is devoid of all the coverings of defilement which can be separated (from the spiritual element), *Abhisamayālamkāra* (v, 21): “*aśūnya* stand apart from it, and that on the other hand it is not devoid of properties of the Buddha, which are indivisible, inseparable, inconceivable, and greater in number than the sands of Ganges.”¹⁷⁵

Therefore, the doctrine of *aśūnya* and *śūnya-tathāgatagarbha* is a ‘Middle Path’ which there is no-decrease and non-increase, just like the doctrine in the Heart *sūtra*

¹⁷² H.S. Prasad, p.2; p.49.

¹⁷³ Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje, *Luminous Heart: The Third Karmapa on Consciousness, Wisdom, and Buddha Nature* (New York: Snow Lion, 2009), pp.207-209; & H.S. Prasad, no.152, p.235. & E.H.Johnson’s Sanskrit Text and E. Obermiller’s English Translation, “So there is nothing to be removed and nothing to be added; Reality should be seen as Reality, and the seer of reality is liberated. The element of Buddhahood is by nature devoid of the accidental (defiling force), which are different from it, but it is by means devoid of the highest properties, which are, essentially, individual from it.” No.153. p.235.

¹⁷⁴ *Yuktiśaṣṭikā*, attribute to Nāgājuna, 六十颂如理论: “according to the dependent origination, all beings are nothing but the causes and result, apart from this, there are no sentient beings at all.” p.209.

¹⁷⁵ H.S. Prasad, p.235. 现观庄严论 *Abhisamayālamkāra*: “如来藏具足恒沙不思議佛法，与之不离、不脱、不异，称为不空如来藏。”

which is non-going and non-coming and so on. Within the bipolar of Tathāgata-embryo (*tathāgatagarbha*) as simultaneously void (*śūnya*) and not void (*aśūnya*), if practitioner emphasis one-sided (*apavāda*, or *saṃlekha*) is the failure to realize perfectly the Noble Truth, cessation of suffering and the Absolute Body (*dharmakāya*), these are the fundamental misperceptions (*viparyāsas*). If the practitioner of self-enlightened ones through the insight perceive or understand the Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering, while attain the correct perception into the voidness (*śūnyatā*), they will achieve the Absolute Body (*dharmakāya*). Both *aśūnya* and *śūnya-tathāgatagarbha* are aspects of the same essence (Suchness). All beings intrinsically abide in eternity and entered into *nirvāṇa*, the state of enlightenment is not something that is to be acquired by practice or to be created.

5.3 Different Qualities as *Tathāgatagarbha*

The terminology of the *tathāgatagarbha* as the nature of living beings, as *tathāgatajñāna*, *tathāgatajñānadarśana*, *tathāgatadhātu*, *dharmatā*,¹⁷⁶ *buddhatva*, *buddhabhūmi* and *svayambhūtvā*, *bhūtatathatā*,¹⁷⁷ they all are related to the state of quality of being a Buddha, the ultimate form of realization in Mahāyāna Buddhism.

5.3.1 *Buddhadhātu* as *Tathāgatagarbha*

Accord to the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra* and *MPS*, the term *buddha+dhātu* is synonymous with *tathāgatagarbha*. In *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*: “The *buddhadhātu* is present in all

¹⁷⁶ *The Mahāyāna Śamatha and Vipassana*, 大乘止观曰：‘此心即自性清淨心，又名真如，亦名佛性，亦名法身，亦名如来藏，亦名法界，亦名法性’.T. vol. 46.

¹⁷⁷ *bhūtatathatā* is called *bhūtatathatā*, it is the doctrine of *āgama* and *nikāya*, and it is eternal, which is *pratīyasamutpāda*, 依据阿含经典，缘起之理法乃永恒不变之真理，故称为真如.in *MPPŚ*, vol. 36: “真如，自性清淨心，佛性，法身，如来藏，实相，法界，法性，圆成实性，…皆同体异名也”. Fo-Guang vol.5, p.4197a-4199a.

living beings, the Tathāgata abides permanently.”¹⁷⁸ The term of *buddhatā*, its main meaning is to indicate the future possibility of all living beings become a Buddha. Through this understanding of *dhātu* as a cause and can be an equivalent of *hetu*.¹⁷⁹ The “*dhātu*” conveys the sense of the essential, intrinsic, inmost nature, the fundamental, ultimate essence. The basic, fundamental source of all things is what is called “*dhātu*”.¹⁸⁰

This meaning of “*dhātu*” is discussed detailed in *RGV*:¹⁸¹ “By way of this five similes of the treasure, the tree, the precious image, the universal emperor and the golden figures—with reference to fact that the disposition (*gotra*) of the threefold body of the Buddha-s to manifest (in all living beings)—it has been shown that the Tathāgata element (*dhātu*) is the embryo/germ (*garbha*) of all these sentient beings. Therefore the cause of the attainment of the Buddhahood is called the ‘element (*dhātu*) of a Tathāgata.’ ‘Element’ here ‘cause’ (*hetu*).”

The *garbha* is identified with *dhātu* which is afterwards as the “cause” (*hetu*) of the attainment of Buddhahood. Consequently *garbha* can here only has the meaning “embryo” or “germ,” which is the cause of living beings becoming Tathāgatas. Such an immature Buddha Nature would be the cause of the attainment awakening, just as the sprout in the seed generates the tree.

The term *dhātu* has two meanings: the realm and cause, here when living beings at the state of ordinary beings, the meaning of *dhātu* is cause, because they endowed with embryo/germ of Buddha Nature, it is called *tathāgatagarbha*; while at the state of

¹⁷⁸ The *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*, 涅槃经: “一切众生悉有佛性, 如来常住无有变易”. T12. vol.27, 师子吼菩萨品, p.524c.

¹⁷⁹ Michael Zimmermann: *The Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra (The Earliest Exposition of the Buddha-Nature Teaching in Indian)*. Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism (IRIAB), 2002. p.57.

¹⁸⁰ Ultimate essence: 本分种; fundamental source: 本生处; *dhātu*: 界. Ramanan K. Venkata. *Nāgājuna's Philosophy as Presented in the Mahā-prajñā-pāramitā-śāstra*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1998. p.261.

¹⁸¹ “*pañcabir nidhitaruratnavigraha-cakravartikanak-abimbadrṣṭāntais trividhabuddha-kāyotpattigotra-Sadbhā-vartham adhikṛīya tathāgatadhātur eṣām garbhaḥ sarvasattvānām iti paridīpitam / trividha-Buddhakāyaprabhā-vitatvaṃ hi tathāgatatvaṃ / atas tatprāptaye hetus tathāgatadhātur iti / hetvartho 'tra dhātvarthaḥ / yata āha / tatra ca sattve tathāgatdhātur utpanno garbhagataḥ saṃvidyate na ca te sativā budhyanta iti// RGV-yākyā, 72.7ff.*

fruition, as the realm which the living beings attain the *nirvāṇadhātu* that is the sphere a person enter after liberation or become a Tathāgata, at the same time, *tathāgatagarbha* recalls the term *nirvāṇadhātu*.

Therefore, the original terms of Buddha Nature (*tathāgatagarbha*) are: (1).*buddha-dhātu*, (2).*buddha-gotra*, (3).*buddha-garbha*, which means ground (*tathāgatagarbha*), they base on the same idea, among them the *buddha-dhātu* is extensive appearance and is the main doctrine of *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra*¹⁸² and explained in *Uttaratantra (RGV)* that all beings endowed with the same *gotra* of Buddha (*tathāgata-gotra-sambhavārtha*).¹⁸³ In one word that the mind is the all source of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, according to its purity or impurity and will produce the different results. This teaching of Buddha which is taught in early *nikāya-s* and *āgama-s*, and analysis in the Abhidharma (wholesome-*citta* and un-wholesome-*citta*).

5.3.2 Buddha Nature (*Buddhatā*) as *Tathāgatagarbha*

What is Buddha Nature? Buddha Nature (*buddhatā*): The clear light nature of mind possessed by all beings, the potential for all sentient beings to become enlightenment by removing the two obscurations (*kleśa-varaṇa* & *jñeyā-varaṇa*) to be liberation and omniscience, this is the two states of Buddha Nature which one is at the state of cause is called *buddhatā*, because it is covered by the two obscurations; and another one is at the state of fruition of Buddhahood which isn't covered by two obscurations. The Indian *tathāgatagarbha* texts, Buddha Nature are also the essence of

¹⁸² Tan Xi-yong 谈锡永: T31, 佛性, 原语主要为下列三个: (i). *buddha-dhātu* 佛界, (ii). *Buddha-gotra* 佛种性, (iii). *Buddha-garbha* 佛藏, 即如来藏, *tathāgata-garbha*; 而用得最广泛的是 *buddha-dhātu* 大乘涅槃经中所说的‘一切众生悉有佛性’的佛性原语. *buddha-dhātu* 和‘佛种性’、‘如来藏’的概念是相通的. 霍韬晦, 佛性与如来藏, 摘录自佛教的现代智慧. & Takasaki, Jikido. Ch.II.

¹⁸³ Thrangu, Khenchen, *The Uttaratantra: A Teatise on Buddha Nature*, trans. by Ken and Katia Holmes (Delhi: Sri Satguru, 1994 & Tan Xi-yong 谈锡永. No.28: “佛法身周遍, 真如无分别, 具佛性有情”. p.63.

all beings, the suchness (*tathatā*) of all existence is Buddha Nature, and everything has Buddha nature. But the living beings have for a long time been constantly overpowered by the defilements (*āgankuka-kleśa*) and beings do not realize.

When living beings hear dharma and practice the path to purify intrinsic nature (*prakṛti*), by knowing that their defilements are only accidental (*āgankukatva*), they will attain Tathāgata (*nirvāṇa*) immediately. And Buddha Nature is the *nirvāṇa* essence of Buddhahood (*darmakāya*), and then all existence (*saṃsāra*) is the manifestation of the *darmakāya* of Buddha (*nirvāṇa*). Therefore, to see the world with wisdom, itself is the functioning of Buddha Nature, is to discover the inner Buddha nature shining with luminosity in all phenomena. Awakening is the “uncovering” of the pure mind of Buddha nature, so as to find *nirvāṇa* in *saṃsāra*, Buddha Nature in all beings, even everything.

Quotation from *Samādhirāja-sūtra* when the wholesome-*citta* is developed by ethics (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) wisdom (*prajñā*), and the pure mind (or the nature of *tathāgatagarbha*) will be manifested or the enlightenment will be attained.

Samādhirāja-sūtra: “All sentient beings have the Buddha Nature, or seed of Enlightenment, the Buddha said: ‘All sentient beings are pervaded by the essence of *sugati* (the well-gone-state). For example, silver abides in its ore, oil abides in a mustard seed, and butter abides in milk. Likewise, the seed of Enlightenment abides in every sentient being. Complete Buddhahood is *dharmakāya*, which is all-pervading emptiness. And this emptiness pervades all sentient beings. For this reason, all sentient beings have the seeds of Enlightenment.

The Suchness of all reality has no differentiation. The reality-suchness of the Buddha and the sentient beings is not different. There is no better and no worse, no

higher and lower, no large and smaller. Therefore, all sentient beings have the essence of enlightenment. It is possible to extract butter from milk and oil from the sesame seed, so it is possible for sentient beings to achieve Enlightenment.

In the following texts of Mahāyāna, ‘Buddha Nature Treatise’, there are same views: (1). *Śrīmālā-sūtra* in the *parāvṛiti* chapter:¹⁸⁴ “The nature of mind is *parisuddha* which is polluted by incident defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*), the Buddha Nature does so, the sentient beings do not realize.” (2). *Lkt.*:¹⁸⁵ “Another name for *tathāgatagarbha* is consciousness, its origination is pure, and due to the defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*) becomes impure.” (3). *Śāriputrābhīdharmasāstra*:¹⁸⁶ “The nature of mind is polluted by defilement,” and *Samaya-bhedoparacana-cakra*:¹⁸⁷ “The mind naturally is pure, due to the pollution of defilement and is said it is impure.” (4). *Śūramgama-sūtra*:¹⁸⁸ “The sentient beings cannot attain the fruition due to the obstruction of incidental defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*). (5). *MPS*:¹⁸⁹ “All sentient beings have the Buddha Nature, the Tathāgata is permanent and isn’t been changed.” (6). *BŚS* of *D.*, the *Fan-wang* precepts *sūtra* states:¹⁹⁰ “When sentient beings receive the precepts of the Buddha, they enter the ranks of the Buddha-s.” The doctrine of the *BŚS* is for monks, nuns and lay disciples, the aim is to develop the Buddha Nature of practitioners and self-enlightenment; that is called the *Buddha Nature-śīla*. A quotation from the *Hevajratāntra*, a passage in the

¹⁸⁴ *Śrīmālā-sūtra*, 胜鬘经, 自性清淨章, T.12· 222b: “心性本淨, 客尘随烦恼之所杂染”. T. 12· 411b: “佛性亦尔, 烦恼覆故, 众生不见”.

¹⁸⁵ The *Lkt.*, vol.5, 大乘入楞伽经, 刹那品, T.16·619c: “此如来藏藏识本性清淨, 客尘所染而为不淨”.

¹⁸⁶ *Śāriputrābhīdharmasāstra*, 舍利弗阿毗昙论, vol.27; T.28·697b: “心性清淨, 为客尘染”.

¹⁸⁷ *Samaya-bhedoparacana-cakra*, 异部宗轮论, T.49·15c; 谓大众部等四部本宗同义, 皆主张: “心性本淨, 客随烦恼之所杂染, 说为不淨”.

¹⁸⁸ *Śūramgama-sūtra*, 首楞严经, T.19. vol. 109c: “一切众生不成菩提及阿罗汉, 皆由客尘烦恼所误”.

¹⁸⁹ *MPS*, 涅槃经: “一切众生悉有佛性, 如来常住无有变异”. 〈分别邪正品〉, T12· vol. 4, 881b.

¹⁹⁰ *BŚS* 梵网菩萨戒经, trans. by Kumarajīva in 406. T24. No.1484. 梵网戒: “并无在家与出家的区别, 而以开发自己的佛性为目的, 以佛性之自觉为其特色; 因此, 此种戒亦可谓为 ‘佛性戒’ *nature-śīla* 即以劝人孝顺父母、师僧、三宝等及重慈悲, “众生受佛戒, 即入诸佛位” T.1484, 20a. p1004. & Hui Seng 慧僧.p.109.

tantras say:¹⁹¹ “Sentient beings are Buddha-s indeed. However, they are obscured by adventitious stains. If these are removed, they are Buddha-s.” On the way of Buddhahood, there are three kinds of Buddha Nature:¹⁹² (1) before the initial Enlightenment of the Path, the Buddha Nature is called the Buddha Nature by itself, [or the immanent Buddha Nature]; (2) during the various stages of enlightenment in the Path, it is called the Disclosed Buddha Nature. (3).after the Path, it is then called the Buddha Nature of Perfect Fruit. But actually there is only one Buddha Nature, for the sake of understanding, it is divided three, according to the stages in the Path, it is the skilful means.

The *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra*,¹⁹³ gives **nine** examples for the exposition of every being possess Buddha Nature (*sarvasattvās tathāgatagarbhāḥ*), namely, **(1)**an ugly, withered lotus covering a beautiful statue,¹⁹⁴ **(2)**some tasty honey which is surrounded by swarming bees,¹⁹⁵ **(3)**a grain of rice enclosed in its husk,¹⁹⁶ **(4)** pure gold which fall into some rubbish,¹⁹⁷ **(5)** poor man living in a house built a great treasure,¹⁹⁸ **(6)** a sprout in the seed, **(7)**a Tathāgata image wrapped in rotten rags,¹⁹⁹ **(8)**the future universal emperor (*cakravatin*) in the womb of a destitute ugly woman,²⁰⁰ **(9)**golden figures within burned clay molds.²⁰¹

¹⁹¹ Rangjung Dorje, *Luminous Heart*, 大悲空智金刚王经. 2009, p.207.

¹⁹² Garma C. C. Chang, p.206. And discussed in Buddha Nature treatise vol.2. and *Avatamsaka-sūtra*, 佛性论 vol.2; 华严经, 孔目章, vol.2 etc..

¹⁹³ The *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra*, 大方等如来藏经, T 666.16.457a-460b; 大方广如来藏经, see T 667.16.460b-468a. & Michael Zimmermann, pp.105-140.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., The first example: The simile of a Tathāgata in a lotus (i. 萎花中之佛).

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., The second example: The simile of a Tathāgata of honey shielded by bees (ii. 岩树之蜂蜜).

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., The third example: The simile of a Tathāgata of kernels enclosed by husks (iii. 穢中之粳梁).

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., The fourth example: The simile of Tathāgata of a gold nugget in excrement (iv. 不净处之金).

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., The fifth example: The simile of a Tathāgata of hidden treasure beneath the house of some poor person (v. 贫家之宝藏).

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. The seventh example, the simile of a Tathāgata image wrapped in rotten rags (vii. 弊物中之金像).

²⁰⁰ Ibid. The eighth example, the simile of the future universal emperor in the womb of a poor depressed woman (viii. 贫女之贵胎).

²⁰¹ Ibid., The ninth example, the simile of golden figures within burned clay molds (ix. 模中之金像).

These nine kinds of example in the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra* which is corresponding to nine kinds of defilements in *RGV*. The characteristic of these two texts that there is intrinsic purity of the Buddha Nature within sentient beings which is covered by defilements.²⁰² They elucidate that although sentient beings reside in the innumerable *kleśa*, their Buddha Nature is not perishing, not polluted, the Tathāgata would not anymore spoil by defilements.

All the discussions have become clear that the doctrine of *tathāgatagarbha* in Mahāyāna describes that living beings as bearing a full-fledged Tathāgata-s within themselves, though this is existent, the living beings are not yet Buddha-s, since they are not aware of their own precious content, the Tathāgata-s within being covered by adventitious of *kleśa*. Nevertheless, the living beings who endowed with Buddha Nature are not different from that of Buddha and they will become Buddha-s themselves once the adventitious defilements have been removed.

5.3.3 Thusness (*Tathatā*) as *Tathāgatagarbha*

In early *tathāgatagarbha* texts, the term “Suchness” (*tathatā*) employed to convey the real meaning of the *tathāgatagarbha*. According to the *RGV*:²⁰³ “When the Thusness defiled that is known as the *tathāgatagarbha*, and Thusness is undefiled that will be Enlightenment (*samalā tathatātha nirmalā*).”

In the *Śrīmālā-sūtra*, there are two main conditions for the “embryo of the Tathāgata”: (1).when it is covered by defilement it is called “embryo of the Tathāgata”. (2).when the “embryo of the Tathāgata” is no more the “embryo” (potentiality) but the

²⁰² Ying-Shun 印顺, *A Study on the Tathāgatagarbha*, 如来藏之研究 (Beijin: Zhonghua Pub., 北京中华书局, 2011), p.101. 共同点: “在众生烦恼身中有清静如来.”

²⁰³ Tan Xi-yong 谈锡永, vol. I.23, p12; 14: “有杂垢真如, 及离垢真如...” Skt. p.249.

Tathāgata (*dharmakāya*), it is free from defilements,

Therefore, with reference to “Thusness” (*tathatā*), the *tathāgatagarbha* is stained, it was said: “All sentient beings have embryo of the Tathāgata.” The *RGV* describes three senses that all sentient beings have the embryo of Tathāgata (p.26):²⁰⁴ (i).The Tathāgata’s *dharmakāya* permeate all sentient beings. This is derived from the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*, and cited in the *RGV* (p.22). Takasaki says:²⁰⁵ “There is no one among the group of living beings in whose body, the wisdom (*jñāna*) of the Tathāgata does not penetrate at all.” (ii).The Tathāgata’s ‘Thusness’ is omnipresent in beings. This sense is set forth in the *Lkt.* (ix, 37): “Although without distinction in any (being), ‘Thusness,’ having gone to purity, is the state of ‘Thus-gone’ (Tathāgata). Therefore, its embryo belongs to all beings.” (iii).The Tathāgata’s species (*gotra*) occurs in beings. This sense is talked by the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra* and quoted in *RGV* (p.37): “Good son of the family, this is the true nature of the *dharmas*: whether Tathāgata-s arise or do not arise, these sentient beings always have the embryo of the Tathāgata.” Thus the Buddha Nature is given the different names, it is called the “Suchness” or “Thusness”. When it is tainted, it is cause, this thusness is *tathāgatagarbha*. When it is untainted, it is the result and this immaculate suchness is called *dharmakāya*.

5.3.4 Essential Law (*Dharmatā*) as *Tathāgatagarbha*

In the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra*: the essential law (*tathāgatadharmatā*) which is the Suchness (Tathāgata) or the *tathāgatagarbha* of living beings due to the *tathāgatadharmatā* endowed with infinite natural virtues, it is the essential law

²⁰⁴ Rinpoche Thrangu, Ven khenchen & Tan Xi-yong, 谈锡永, 宝性论, vol. I. 28. (i). *tathāgata-dharmakāyaparispṛhaṇārtha*: “如来法身周遍一切有情”, (ii). *tathāgatatahatāvyatirekārtha* “真如无有差别”, (iii). *Tathāgatago-trasambhāvārtha* “有情皆具如来种性”, *sadā sarve Buddha-garbhāḥ*. p63. Skt. p.254.

²⁰⁵ Takasaki Jikido, p.189.

(*pratīyasamutpāda*) of universe. For example, *RGV-vyākhyā* states:²⁰⁶ “Good son of the family, the essential law (*dharmatā*) of the dharma-s is this: whether or not Tathāgatas appear in the world, all these sentient beings always contain Tathāgata (*tathāgatagarbha*).”

This statement which has been cited word for word by *RGV*. In *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra*, the *tathāgata-dharmatā* is used to designate the Buddha Nature of living beings; this term has undergone considerable development in the history of Buddhism and can have at least three main meanings: (i). *dharmatā* as “natural and normal custom,” “habit,” “normal state” etc. it stands for the nature of *dharma-s* in the sense of the law to which all *dharma-s* are subject, primarily the law of *pratīyasamutpāda* in the *Pāli* canon. (ii).*dharmatā* can simply mean the “character, nature or essence” of somebody or something. (iii).*dharmatā* came to designate the true essence of all *dharma-s* in beings, which is developed in later Mahāyāna Buddhism; for example, in *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra* literature, it is understood as reality synonymous with *tathatā*, which penetrates all phenomena which is the absolute truth. If beings follow the path, will attain the essence of awakening (*bodhimaṇḍa*) to spontaneous knowledge (*svayaṃbhūjñāna*), realize the path of perfect awakening and liberate innumerable living beings to be the realization of the knowledge of an omniscience one (*sarvajñata*).²⁰⁷

5.3.5 *Bodhicitta as Tathāgatagarbha*

²⁰⁶ *RGV* (*vyākhyā*), attribute to Sāramati 坚慧即安慧 & E.H.Johnson, p.73. 11-12: “*esa kulaputra dharmānām dharmatā / utpādād va tathāgatānām anutpādād vā / sadāivaite sattvās tathāgatagarbha iti*” “善男子, 诸佛法尔 *dharmatā*, 若佛出世, 若不出世, 一切众生如来之藏常住不变。” & Takasaki Jikido, pp.294-295; *Sandhinirmocana-sūtra*, saying: “如来性者是真实谛, 若如来出世及不出世, 性自常然, 非虚妄法。” 812a. & Tan Xi-yong 谈锡永: “善男子, 如来出世若不出世, 法性法界一切有情, 如来藏恒常不变。” pp.121-122.

²⁰⁷ Michael Zimmermann, p.152. *svayaṃbhūjñāna*, 佛陀本来具足之智 (自然智); *sarvajñata* identify with *buddhajñana*. Fo-Guag, vol. 3, 2532c.

The *bodhicitta* is a Sanskrit term consisting of two words, “*bodhi*” and “*citta*”, *bodhi* which comes from the root “*budh*” meaning “to wake,” is generally rendered “knowledge” or “intelligence”; The “*citta*” literally means “state of mind”, thus as one word means “thought (mind) of enlightenment” is an important concept common to Theravāda, Mahāyāna and Tantric Buddhism. When *bodhi* was used by *sāravaka*, *pratyekabuddha* is easily understood. But it comes to the Mahāyāna; it bears the particular import to expression of *dharmakāya*, Suchness or *tathāgatagarbha*, Buddha Nature in the human consciousness.²⁰⁸ The *tathāgatagarbha* is the *bodhi* when it is the source of intelligence; it is the *bodhicitta* (intelligence-heart), when it is awakened of religious consciousness.²⁰⁹ In the *Bodhicittacaryāvatāra*, a work of Śāntideva is extant in original Sanskrit (Chap.1 called praise of the *bodhicitta*) describes *bodhicitta* as “the initial impulse and motive power of the religious life, when it is combed with intellectual illumination and unselfish devotion to the good of others”. Therefore, whether a monk or a layman who cultivates the *bodhicitta* (direction towards *bodhi*) has potentiality to attain Buddhahood, by developing *bodhicitta*, one can achieve Buddhahood.

For Nāgājūna, in his “Discourse on the Transcendentalists of the *Bodhicitta*”:²¹⁰ The *bodhicitta* is free from all determinations...one who understands the nature of the *bodhicitta* and sees everything with a loving heart, for love is the essence of the *bodhicitta* and is the highest essence...²¹¹ In the *Samdhanirmocana-sūtra*, is a *cittamātra* (Yogācāra) text, also that ultimate *bodhicitta* is the pure radiant mind of an enlightened being, possessed of compassion. From the point of view of Mādhyamika-s and Yogācararin-s, there are no problems in seeing the ultimate *bodhicitta* as the radiant mind

²⁰⁸ D. T. Suzuki, *Outlines of Mahāyāna Buddhism*. pp.294-306.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., pp.125.

²¹⁰ Nāgājūna, *Discourse on the Transcendentalists of the Bodhicitta* 菩提资粮论. T32.vol.6.540c.

²¹¹ D. T. Suzuki, *Outlines of Mahāyāna Buddhism*.pp.297-298.

when endowed with compassion and directly cognizing emptiness.

Especially, the main point of doctrine of *Dharmadhātvaśāstra*,²¹² the *bodhicitta* which is synonymous with *citta-prakṛti*, and hence is nothing but the *tathāgatagarbha*, the *tathāgatagarbha* is usually translated “Buddha Nature.”²¹³ The *Dharmadhātvaśāstra* describes this *bodhicitta* under twelve divisions, namely:²¹⁴ (1) *phala*, (2) *hetu*, (3) *svabhāva*, (4) *paryāya*, (5) *abheda*, (6) *avasthāprabheda*, (7) *asamklista*, (8) *nitya*, (9) *yoga*, (10) *anarthakriyā*, (11) *arthakriyā*, and (12) *ekatva* (*ekadhātu*), and is mainly based upon two *sūtra*-s, the *Śrīmālā-sūtra* and the *ANP* discuss the *bodhicitta*²¹⁵ to discuss the *bodhicitta*, which is as the *tathāgatagarbha*, it is equal as the *dhamadhātu* and is *citta-prakṛti*, it is polluted by the defilement (*āgantuka-kleśa*). And Sthiramati says: “*nirvāṇa*, *dharmakāya*, *Tathāgata*, *tathāgatagarbha*, *paramārtha*, *buddha*, *bodhicitta*, *bhūtatahatā*—all these terms signify merely so many different aspects of one and the same reality and *dhamakāya* (law-body) or *bhūtatahatā* (Suchness of existence), it manifests itself in the human heart, and its purification or negatively, it liberates from all egoistic impurities, it constitutes the state of *nirvāṇa*.”²¹⁶ Thus, for Sthiramati, the *bodhicitta* is common with the *Samdhinirmocana-sūtra*, the *bodhicitta* is equal to the *tathāgatagarbha* as it manifests itself in the human heart.

Therefore, all praise *bodhicitta* as being of nature of pure truth (*śuddhatattvārtha*), pure (*śuddhārtha*), evolving from the voidness of all phenomena

²¹² *Dharmadhātvaśāstra* 法界无差别论 which attribute to Sthiramati, or Sāramati 坚慧.

²¹³ Nagendra Kumar Singh, *International Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* (Delhi: Anmo and Mehra Offset, 1998), No.20, p.619.

²¹⁴ Ying-Shun, *A Study on the Tathāgatagarbha*, 如来藏之研究, p.141. & Takasaki Jikido p.45. Full name of *Dharmadhātvaśāstra* is *Mahāyāna-dharmadhātvaśāstra*, 大乘佛法界无差别论; T.No.31, tran., by Devaprajña 提云般若, which is Chinese tradition text: “菩提心略说有十二种义: ... ‘所谓果故, 因故, 自性故, 异名故, 无差别故, 分位故, 不染故, 常恒故, 相应故, 不作义利故, 作义利故’.” ‘分位故’ in Takasaki Jikido, which is ‘分住故’.

²¹⁵ *Śrīmālā-sūtra*: *Śrīmālā-sūtra*; *Anūnatvāpūrnatva-nirdeśa* 无减具足道论; *bodhicitta*: awakening of religious consciousness.

²¹⁶ Malalasekera, G. P, *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* (Sri Lanka: Government, the Department of Buddhism Affairs Ministry of *Buddhasasana*, 1997), vol.7, p.165.

(*dharmanairātmya-sambhūta*), fulfilling Buddhahood (*buddha-bodhi-prapūraka*), devoid of thought construction (*nir-vikalpa*), without any support (*nir-ālamba*), good in every respect (*samantabhadra*), beneficial to beings (*sattvārtha*), producer of the thought of enlightenment (*bodhicitta-pravartaka*), and practice leading to enlightenment (*bodhicaryā*).....” all these definitions and epithets to show the fact that the *bodhicitta* is the realization of all phenomena to attain the enlightenment/Suchness. It is the unity of void and compassion which penetrates in all beings.

5.3.6 *Nirvāṇa as Tathāgatagarbha*

What is *nirvāṇa*? At the beginning, when Buddha engaged in deepest meditation in the vicinity of the Bodhi tree, he attained the cessation of suffering by his awakening which is *nirvāṇa*. Later he preached Four Noble Truth to humankind who suffers from craving and ignorance. In the third noble truth, it refer the cessation of *dukkha*, some said to entail the cessation of defilement (“going out” of craving (*taṇhā*), which the life characterized by freedom, lasting state of peace, and happiness, purity... and so on. This is the early teaching of the Buddha, which equivalent the *Pāli* “*nibbāna*”, who develops insight meditation with the cessation of ignorance, craving ceases, and the meditator attains *nirvāṇa* and becomes a saint, an *arhat*.

In *Abhidharma* tradition, it is contrasts with the phenomena world (*saṃsāra*), it is usually identified with *pratisamkhyā-nirodha* (cessation through understanding each element) or the un-condition (*asamskṛta*), one who attained the *nirvāṇa* is free from all phenomenal taints, and the subtle defilement of sublime meditation itself, without remainder, is called the *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, *arhat*.

In Mahāyāna context, there are number of different types of *nirvāṇa*. In the

early Mahāyāna developed this doctrine in the form of *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* that contrasts between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, for Nāgājuna, in *Mādhyamaka-kārikā* (XXV, 19) “There is nothing whatsoever differentiating *saṃsāra* (the round of rebirth) from *nirvāṇa*. There is nothing whatsoever differentiating *nirvāṇa* from *saṃsāra*.”(XXV, 20) says: “Where the limit of *saṃsāra*, there is the limit of *nirvāṇa*; not the slightest thing, whatsoever is between them.” (XVIII, 7): “It is the result of seeing things the way they really are, a seeing which occurs through going beyond the conceptualizing activity of our everyday minds and language, which conditions us to think in terms of inherent existence “the characteristic of reality [*tattva*].” (XVIII, 9): “Nothing distinguishes *saṃsāra* from *nirvāṇa*, and nothing distinguishes *nirvāṇa* from *saṃsāra*. Between even the extremities of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, one cannot find even a subtle difference.” This non-dualism is the freedom of Absolute (*nirvāṇa*) and the ordinary world of phenomenal (*saṃsāra*). This non-dualism (non-conceptualizing mind) is emptiness (*śūnyatā*) which the phenomenal world being in its real essence nothing but the Absolute. Later the idea of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) of Mādhyamika school to a positive addition to the *tathāgata-garbha* that when one attains the purification of Mādhyamika notion of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and gain wisdom realizing emptiness, one can see this inner Buddha potential shining in all beings, and in oneself, one can realize the inner dharma-body resplendent with *nirvāṇa*. This has been stated by the Buddha himself in the following words: “Real ultimate elements can never be annihilated, the things that in this world do not exist, they never did at all exist. Those who imagine existence along with non-existence will never realize phenomenal.”²¹⁷

When the Yogācāra School came to be established, which is the *cittamātra*

²¹⁷ Stcherbatsky Theodore, *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1997), p.198.

tradition, for example, the Yogācāra School, in the *Lkt.*, the identity of *nirvāṇa* in *saṃsāra* is purity and defilements of water, *nirvāṇa* within the waves (*saṃsāra*) which is the inherent pure consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*); when on the Buddhist path, the mental defilements and afflictions are gradually eliminated, pure qualities are cultivated, the inner mind is pure and right, the storehouse (consciousness) will at its *āśraya-parāvṛtti* of basis which relates to the Buddhist practice, the *nirvāṇa* is directly identified with the practice meditation (*yoga*), with *āśraya-parāvṛtti* which the foundation of Buddhist Path, the destruction of defilements, the fruit of mature contemplation and the attainment of Thusness, and with the collection of virtues (*guṇa* or *pāli*, *puñña*) and wisdom (*prajñā/paññā*).

Thereby, one attains freedom from defilement in early Buddhism, and the doctrine of Mādhyamika and Yogācāra School agree with the concepts of *tathāgatagarbha* that the purity of spiritual life come from the inherent luminous mind that is the ultimate *dharmakāya*, which is the Awakening and *nirvāṇa*, this claim became the major development of Buddhism in *Tathāgatagarbha sūtra-s*.

The development of the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra* explains about the *nirvāṇa*. It is the base of constructed Buddha Nature, that itself is *nirvāṇa* and that the constructed defilement store is *saṃsāra*. For example, the *Śrīmālā-sūtra* and *RGV* also maintains that the truth cessation of suffering is constructed of mind which is both pure and impure, the impurity from *saṃsāra* and the purity from *nirvāṇa*. Thus, it explains that their *nirvāṇa*-realm is by reason of their pure mind with enlightenment, and their *saṃsāra*-realm is by reason of their fluxional action (*karma*) and defilement (*kleśa*), only when is able to bring the defilements to rest, this is *nirvāṇa*. The *RGV* appeals to illustrate the *nirvāṇa* by the

Śrīmālā: ²¹⁸ “Lord, ‘the *nirvāṇa*-realm is incomparable which is completed enlightenment.’”

Therefore, *nirvāṇa* as the Buddha Nature (*tathāgatagarbhā*) of Buddhahood (*dharmakāya*), and then all existence (*saṃsāra*) is the manifestation of the *dharmakāya* of Buddha (*nirvāṇa*) which are the virtues of the *tathāgatagarbha* that should be through the Buddhist practice to realize the *tathāgatagarbha* as it is, or to see the Thusness, it is permanent, remaining forever in its own nature which does not attain anything at all, since the *tathāgatagarbha* is always pure radiant never ceases, in one sense when isn’t polluted by incident defilement, it can be said to attain *nirvāṇa*, but in another sense do not”.²¹⁹

5.4 Conclusion

Through the study of the development of the signification of *tathāgatagarbha* that it is obvious to us that the *tathāgatagarbha* is the teaching of the Buddha, which is the *pratītyasamutpāda*, which is the theory of dependent origination, the *tathāgatagarbha* it alone is the source of the attainment of *nirvāṇa* and Buddhahood, endowed with two aspects of pollution and purity, the phenomena and the Absolut, the conventional aspect and ultimate aspect, un-enlightenment and enlightenment; when it is polluted by incidental defilements, it is *saṃsāra*. When the defilements are removed this is *nirvāṇa* (*dharmakāya*). The practice is itself the manifestation of an intrinsic realization; this is when one attains the purification of mental formations and gains wisdom realizing emptiness, one see this inner Buddha potential shining in all beings, including one. Therefore, the *tathāgatagarbha* theory additions to the notion of emptiness, the

²¹⁸ Wayman, Alex and Wayman, Hideko, (Ch. III), p.42, p.56.

²¹⁹ Paul Williams, pp.181-184.

tathāgatagarbha is clarified by the ultimate truth of emptiness, and realize the inner *dharmakāya* (*nirvāṇa*) and the qualities of Buddhahood, like a Buddha, this potential for Buddhahood came to be called “Buddha Nature” and is the important theory and practice of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

CHAPTER VI

The *Karma of Tathāgatarbha*

6.1 Introduction

Although the teaching of *tathāgatarbha* originated from the early teaching of *prakṛti-pariśuddham-cittam* of *āgama* and the *nikāya*, and categorized into the Mahāyāna, but the skillful meaning is different, such as the virtues of *tathāgatarbha* are ‘supreme permanent (*nitya-pāramitā*)’, ‘supreme pleasure (*sukha-pāramitā*)’ ‘supreme Self (*ātman-pāramitā*)’ ‘supreme purity (*śubha-pāramitā*). They are different from the *sarva-dharma-śūnyatā*, they can achieve inconceivable virtues (*dharmas*) more numerous than the sands of Ganges; and the *tathāgatarbha* viz Buddha Nature, which is taught in *tathāgatarbha* texts. This is the feature of the concept of *tathāgatarbha* along the development of early Mahāyāna. This is the compassion of Buddha’s skillful meaning.²²⁰

Having discussed the *tathāgatarbha* itself is in the state of purification which can be called Buddhahood (*tathatā*) in the previous chapters. But the *tathatā* is in the state of sentient beings which covered by the defilements, which is individual man; he doesn’t know that he possesses the Germ (*tathāgatarbha*). If the beings wish to attain the fruit of the purification, they should practice path and remove the obscuration of moral defilement and ignorance, finally, in the state of perfect purity (the Absolute), which abides in the blissful womb gives birth to the properties of the Buddha.

Therefore, the primary thought of *tathāgatarbha* dealing with two aspects namely, phenomenal world and the ultimate reality. Through studying the concepts of *tathāgatarbha* that lead the ignorant beings to arouse the seed of faith on the Mahāyāna,

²²⁰ Yin-Shun 印顺, *A Study on the Tathāgatarbha* 如来藏之研究, pp.141-145.

based on cultivation of wisdom and virtues that the *tathāgatagarbha* will be nourished to be Buddha (attainment of Buddhahood), this is why the spirit of the Buddha manifest itself in multitudes of living beings in the world for the welfare of living beings and declared: “All living beings are possessed of the Essence of Buddhahood.”

The action of *tathāgatagarbha* will discuss in this chapter, furthermore to understand the real teaching of *tathāgatagarbha* that all beings possess the essence of Buddha and possible to be Buddha. The Buddha mapped out the practice method to be Buddha (*nirvāṇa* or *nibbāna*), the final release from suffering. This is the state to be attained by following the method of life which leads to self-enlightenment. The Buddha encourages sentient beings and point out the Path is the purification of mind within them, they are naturally endow the virtues same as the Buddha, which does not get from somewhere.

6.2 The Four Virtues of *Tathāgatagarbha*

The virtues of *tathāgatagarbha* which endowed by all sentient beings. When one is enlightened who can see the inner Buddha potential shining in all beings and oneself, he can realize the inner *dhama*-body resplendent with *nirvāṇa* and the qualities of Buddhahood. It is called Tathāgata (*dharmakāya*), no more the “embryo” potentiality, they regard the *tathāgatagarbha* as Thusness (*tathatā*) or free from *saṃsāra* & *nirvāṇa*. It is beyond all dualities of self and non-Self, pure and impure, permanence and impermanence. At this state of *tathāgatagarbha* endowed with transcendental virtues of ‘supreme permanent (*nitya-pāramitā*)’, ‘supreme pleasure (*sukha-pāramitā*)’ “supreme Self (*ātman-pāramitā*)” ‘supreme purity (*śubha-pāramitā*). This teaching is taught in some *tathāgatagarbha* texts, such as (1). *MPS*; (2). *Śrīmālā-sūtra*; (3). *Buddha Nature*

Treaties; (4). *MHP*; (5). *Anuttarāśraya-sūtra*; (6). *Ghara-vyūha-sūtra*; (7). *ANP*, all these *sūtra*-s talk about the four virtues of *tathāgatagarbha* and explain in later *śāstra*. For example one passage from *MHP*: “Kāśyapa, accordingly at the time one become a Tathāgata, a Buddha, that is *nirvāṇa*, and is referred to as ‘supreme permanent (*nitya-pāramitā*)’, ‘supreme pleasure (*sukha-pāramitā*)’ ‘supreme Self (*ātman-pāramitā*)’ ‘supreme purity (*śubha-pāramitā*)’”.²²¹ These four virtues to positively designate the Absolute Body (*dharmakāya*).²²²

6.2.1 The Signification of Four Virtues

All beings contain the Essence of Buddha nature, when living beings finish all the course of training on the path, and the state of perfect purity is attained. The wisdom destroys all the obscuration of ignorance and defilements, the aspect of the fruition; it is the essence of the Buddha which is *dharmakāya*/Thusness, Tathāgata, *nirvāṇa*, Buddhahood and so on, These four virtuous qualities of the result of purification are different from the attachment of the individual persons, heretics and Brahmans and so on, especially, it is different from the *svabhāva-sūnyatā* or *prakṛti-sūnyatā* of Mādhyamika School.

In the *ANP* supplies reason for using the four virtues:²²³ “(1).This *dharmakāya*/Thusness, Śāriputra, is permanent, by reason of being the unalterable true nature with boundless natures (*dharma*). (2).This *dharmakāya*/Thusness, Śāriputra, is steadfast, by reason of being the steadfast refuge at the uttermost limit. (3).This *dharmakāya*/Thusness, Śāriputra, is calm, by reason of being the non-discursive true

²²¹ Wayman Alex and Wayman Hideko, p.45.

²²² Brown Brian Edward, p.39.

²²³ Ibid., & E.H.Johnson, ed., *RGV*. p.46.

nature with non-dual nature. (4). This *dharmakāya*/Thusness, Śāriputra, is eternal, by reason of being the un-fabricated true nature with indestructible nature.”

The *MPŚ* gives the detail explanation about the Four Virtues:²²⁴ “From the beginning, transcend all forms of verbalization, description, and conceptualization and are in the final analysis un-differentiated, free from alterations and indestructible; they are only of the One Mind, hence the name Suchness. Suchness in its nature is fully provided with all excellent qualities, namely, it is endowed with the light of great wisdom, [the qualities of] illuminating the entire universe, of true cognition and mind pure in its self-nature; of eternity, bliss, self, and purity; of refreshing coolness, immutability, and freedom. It is endowed with which are not independent of, disjointed from, or different from [the essence of Suchness], and which are supranational (attributes of) Buddhahood. Since it is endowed completely with all these, and is not lacking anything, it is called the Tathāgata.”

The *tathāgatagarbha* which does refer to complete emptiness--it is the twofold non-dual and non-conceptual wisdom of knowing both how things truly are and how they appear. This non-conceptual wisdom is revealed through becoming free from adventitious stains (*āgantuka-kleśa*), which are the four characteristics of conceptualizing the factors to be relinquished, the remedies, Suchness, and the fruition of the path of Mahāyāna. There are two kinds of four wayward ideas (*catuksa-viparyāsa*) of ordinary beings and less vehicle:²²⁵ These kinds of persons do not know the Tathāgata’s *dharmakāya*. Those

²²⁴ *The MPŚ*, attributed to Aśvaghosha, 大乘起信论: “真如自体相者, 一切凡夫、声闻、缘觉、菩萨、诸佛无有增减, 非前际生, 非后际灭, 毕竟常恒, 从本已来, 性自满足一切功德。所谓自体有大智慧光明义故、遍照法界义故、自性清净心义故、常乐我净义故、清凉不变自在义故, 具足如是过于恒沙不离、不断、不异、不思议佛法, 乃至满足无有所少义故, 名为如来藏, 亦名如来法身。” T.32, 579a.

²²⁵ *catuksa-viparyāsa* 四颠倒: (i). *nitya-viparyāsa*, (ii). *Sukha-viparyāsa*, (iii). *ātma-viparyāsa*, (iv). *śuci-viparyāsa*; these four wayward within the ordinary beings and *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddha*, which is taught in the *Buddha Nature Treatise*, Vol.2; *MPS*, Vol.2, *Aitanping vagga* 哀叹品, Vol.7, *catuksa-viparyāsa vagga* and so on. (i). 凡夫之有为之四颠

who have faith on the Mahāyāna, they think that Tathāgata is ‘supreme permanent (*nitya-pāramitā*)’, ‘supreme pleasure (*sukha-pāramitā*)’ “supreme Self (*ātman-pāramitā*)” ‘supreme purity (*śubha-pāramitā*), they are called sons of the lord.

The first virtue: supreme permanence (*nitya-pāramitā*) represent the identity of *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* in a non-substantially (*śūnyatā*), that transcends all dichotomic concepts of being and non-being, finite and infinite, permanence and impermanence. When one has attained the Buddhahood that he has already realized the nature (Thusness) of *tathāgatagarbha* dwells in it and eternal, it really exists and never touched by the *kleśa*, it likes the *garbha* (i.e., embryo) which is hidden and un-manifest. Thus the Buddha nature is present in all beings, its essential nature never changes or transforms into anything.

The second virtue: supreme pleasure (*sukha-pāramitā*). When the profound *prajñā* into the emptiness of all suffering as being extinguished by nature (i.e., there is no *duhkha* in the ultimate sense) occasioned the perfect joy of the *sukha-pāramitā*.

The third virtue: supreme-Self (*ātman-pāramitā*): The Highest Truth is understood as the perfection of self or supreme unity that indicated the absolute reality of phenomenal existence (i.e., *tathatā*) as the universal non-substantiality of independent, self-subsistent persons and things (i.e., *śūnyatā*).

The fourth virtue: supreme purity (*śubha-pāramitā*): when one who enjoys the freedom of *nirvāṇa*, he/she is like a lotus flower that rises out of the muddy waters, detached from the unwholesome (muddy) states of mind, a *nirvāṇic* person’s life will the

倒: because of attaching of the phenomena world, seeing impermanence where there is permanenc, seeing suffering where there is only happiness, seeing no Self where is Self, seeing impurity where there is purity.于世间之无常执常、于诸苦执乐、于无我执我、于不净执净; (ii). 二乘之无为之四颠倒: because of misunderstanding the *nirvāṇa*, seeing permanence where there is impermanenc, seeing happiness where there is only suffering, seeing Self where is no Self, seeing purity where there is impurity.于涅槃之“常、乐、我、净”妄执为“无常、无乐、无我、不净”. Fo-Guang, vol.2, 1852c.

beauty of wholesomeness, at this state, the individual has attained the Buddhahood whose mind is *sugata* mind, the mind is free from all reference points, such as beginning, end, arising, and ceasing and so on. The pure mind (*citta-prakṛti*) naturely exists (in every living being), that all living beings are without any difference, have the possibility of attaining perfect purification, the Lord said:²²⁶ “The element of phenomenal life have no beginning, but they have an end. The Absolute Essence, eternal and pure by nature, is only obscured by defilement which is beginningless; therefore it cannot be perceived, just as gold buried in mud and dust.” Because the *tathatā*, the Absolute Suchness of reality, the function of the supreme purity (*śubha-pāramitā*) similarly reflected the non-substantiality of dwelling-place of ignorance and its accompanying defilements and impressions.

6.2.2 The Cause of the Four Virtues

Sentient beings who are attached to phenomenal existence and full of great desires, fall into the *samsāra*, they rooted in error, especially the four kinds of impediments (*catuksa-viparyāsaḥ*)²²⁷ which are peculiar to the four varieties of individuals, namely: (1).The obscuration peculiar to the ordinary worldliness who is possessed of great desires; (2).The obscuration of heretics who perceive a real independent *svatantrātman*; (3).The obscuration of *śrāvakas* who cognize the phenomenal world as being mere suffering and are afraid of it; (4).The obscuration of *pratyekabudhas* who have no regard for the welfare of the living beings and turn away from the needs of others. However, the less vehicle who think that the *nirvāṇa* is

²²⁶ *Śrīmālā-sūtra*, 胜鬘夫人师子吼经; VI, 280b-281a1. & H.S. Prasad: “世法无始而有终, 胜义性常且清静, 无始时来污垢障, 致不见性如埋金.”(i). 空如来藏: 自性清净心即空性智, 由智而见其不实, 从而可以把客尘断掉. (ii). 不空如来藏: 藏与功德的关系, 被看作 ‘不俱而不离’. 佛性扩展到心性.p.308.

²²⁷ See foot note 206.

impermanent, unpleasure, non-self, impurity.

With these, there exist respectively four kinds of impediments (*catuṣka-viparyāsaḥ*),²²⁸ through which they are incapable of intuiting and realizing the *tathatā* of Buddha. In *MPS*²²⁹ and *Uttaratantra (RGV)* on Buddha Nature:²³⁰ “Because of ignorance, the ordinary person attach to (1).the conception of Matter (*rūpa*) and other evanescent things as being enduring; (2).the conception of phenomenal life which is mere suffering as something blissful; (3).the conception of the impersonal elements as constituting a real Ego; (4).the conception of the world’s impurity as pure.”

But those who desire to get free from phenomena existence, to be the son of Buddha, to attain the fruition of the Absolute (*dharmakāya, nirvāṇa, pure tathatāgatagarbha*), they should arouse the seed and faith on Highest of Vehicles (*tathāgatagarbha*) within themselves (who is full faith on Buddhahood), to antidote these four kinds of impediments (*catuṣka-viparyāsaḥ*).²³¹

In order to destroy the four kinds of error of individual person, heretics, the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*, the practitioner (Bodhisattva) should practice the four kinds of practice of Bodhisattva:²³² (i).The virtue of purity through contemplative conviction/great faith on the Highest of Vehicle (*ādhi-mukti*) in the doctrine of the Great Vehicle.²³³ (ii).The virtue of self through contemplation of perfection of insight (*prjñā-pāramitā*);²³⁴ (iii).The

²²⁸ Ibid.,

²²⁹ *MPS*, 大般涅槃经 (南本): “谓凡夫著有, 妄于无常法中计常, 苦中计乐, 无我计我, 不净计净; 及小乘之人, 但着于空, 常计无常, 乐计非乐, 我计无我, 净计不净。” T.12, vol.2·377b.

²³⁰ Tan Xi-yong, 四颠倒: “净我乐常等, 德波罗蜜果 *śubhātma-sukha-nityatva-guṇa-pāramitā-palam*”. Vol.I, No.35 verse, p.69-72.

²³¹ See foot note 206.

²³² Tan Xi-yong: “无量因有情不尽, 大悲神力智成就, 法自在及降死魔, 无自性故佛常住。” 以十因说真如/法身恒常, foot note of No.48 verse. p.64-72. 四法行: (i).信解 (*ādhi-mukti*), (ii).般若 (*prjñā-pāramitā*), (iii).三昧 (*samādhi*, 定), (iv).大悲 (*mahākaruṇā*), vol. II: No.62 verse, pp.143-144. & 山口益, 般若思想, 觉醒主编, 名誉主编季羨林.上海: 上海古籍出版社, 肖平, 杨金萍译., 2008. 如来藏之因义: (1).信大乘; (2).般若; (3).虚空藏; (4).大悲. p.40.

²³³ Ibid., (i). 信解 (*ādhi-mukti*): 謗大乘法的一闡提障, 謂諸菩薩信大乘法對治此障.

²³⁴ Ibid., (ii). 般若 (*prjñā-pāramitā*): 橫計身中有我的諸外道障, 謂諸菩薩修行般若波羅蜜對治此障.

virtues of pleasure through contemplation of concentration (*samādhis gaganagañjā-samādhi & sūraṅgama-samādhi*) ; ²³⁵ (iv).The virtue of permanence through contemplation of the great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*). ²³⁶ By practicing the great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*), concentration (*samādhi*), insight (*prjñā-pāramitā*) and conviction (*ādhi-mukti*), the Bodhisattva will accomplish the four Absolute transcendental fruitions of the Buddha’s *dharmakāya*, *nirvāṇa* and *tathatā*, Buddhahood...which are: ‘supreme permanent (*nitya-pāramitā*)’, ‘supreme pleasure (*sukha-pāramitā*)’ ‘supreme Self (*ātman-pāramitā*)’ ‘supreme purity (*śubha-pāramitā*).

This theory is to be known in detail from-*sūtra*. It is said:²³⁷ World-Honored One, concerning the five aggregates, deluded sentient beings considers the impermanent to be permanent, suffering to be joy, non-self to be self, and the impure to be pure. The *śrāvakas* and the *pratyekabuddhas*, with all their pure wisdom, never glimpse the Buddha’s *dharm*-body or the state of the Tathāgata.

If a sentient being, out of faith in the Tathāgata, regards the Tathāgata as permanent, joyous, pure, and possessing a self, he does not see (the Tathāgata) wrongly; he sees him correctly. Why? Because the *dharm*-body of the Tathāgata is the perfection of permanence, the perfection of joy, the perfection of Self, and the perfection of purity. Those sentient beings who assume such a view are said to

²³⁵ Ibid., (iii). 三昧 (*samādhi*): *gaganagañjā-samādhi* 虚空藏三昧, *sūraṅgama-samādhi* 首楞严三昧. This is the obstruction of those who belong to the vehicle of the *śrāvaka*, and its antidote is the practice of meditations, *gaganagañjā* etc., by the Bodhisattvas: “*saṃsāre duḥkhasaṃjñā duḥkhabhīrutvaṃ śrāvakayānikānām āvaraṇaṃ yasya pratipakṣo gaganagañjādisamādhībhāvanā bodhisattvānām*”. 怖畏世間諸苦聲聞人障，謂諸菩薩摩訶薩修行虛空藏首楞嚴等諸三昧對治此障，故謂三昧。

²³⁶ (iv). 大悲 (*mahākaruṇā*): Johnston, p.29, 11-12; T31, 1611, 829a23-26: “背捨利益一切眾生捨大悲心辟支佛障。此障對治，謂諸菩薩摩訶薩修行大悲”； Takasaki, pp.205-206; Wogihara Unrai & D.T. Suzuki, vol.1, p.409.

²³⁷ *Śrīmālā-sūtra*: 大宝积经，胜鬘夫人会， *Mahā-ratnakūṭadharmaparyāya-śatasāhasrikā-grantha*. T. 310, p.672-678; 48th *sūtra*, Trans. by Bodhiruci. 1991. pp.379-380. & Tan Xi-yon. p.70. & Dharmakṣema: *MPS*, trans. by Dharmakṣema, T.12, 382C26-383b14: “如来身是常住身... 469c13-18; 530b1-4; 544b9-1 3: “如来永断色缚乃至识缚，是故名常、乐、我、净...” 544c15-19: “...不作不受，故名为常，不生不灭故名为乐，无烦恼垢故名为净，无有十相故名为空，是故如来常乐我净空无诸相。”

have the right view. Those who assume the right view are called the true sons of the Buddha, born from the Buddha's mouth, born from the true *dharma*, born from the *dharma* miraculously, and heirs to the Buddha-dharma.

Therefore, the Absolute Truth does not accessible to those whose mind derivate from the principle of Relativity, and fall into the error, who are *icchantika*, heretics, even any *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*. Because they indulge in false views (*catuskaviparyāsa*)²³⁸ and cling to conception of evanescence, suffering, impersonality, and impurity. But the Bodhisattva praxis becomes the counteractive agent of its revelation. It is the Bodhisattva's practice of faith in Great Vehicle (*mahāyāna-dharmādhimukti-bhāvanā*) that serves as the antidote (*pratipakṣa* 对治) for the *icchantika*'s enmity toward it; the exercise of supremacy in the transcendental intellect (*prajñāpāramitā-bhāvanā*) is the vehicle that disperses the heretical conception of the self (*ātmadarśana*); to the *śrāvakas* fear of suffering in *saṃsāra* (*duḥkabhīrutva*),²³⁹ the Bodhisattva practice of meditations (*samādhi-bhāvanā*) is the antidote, and the *pratyekabuddha*'s indifference to the welfare of living beings (*sattvārtha-nirapekṣatā*), they do not endowed with great compassion (*mahākaruṇā-bhāvanā*) as Bodhisattvas.

6.3 The *Trimahā* (Three Greatnesses) of *Tathāgatagarbha*

All the Buddha's doctrine contain in the doctrine of *pratītyasamutpāda*, that means one who wants to attain the ultimate truth of the world, should follow the method and practice of path, this is the theory of *pratītyasamutpāda*. The *MPŚ* which is the Mahāyāna doctrine of the *tathāgatagarbha* is rendered as One Mind to exposition the

²³⁸ See foot note 206.

²³⁹ *Duḥkabhīrutva*: *duḥka+abhirutva* (*abhaya*): *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha* abide in *nirvāṇa* and do not perform actions to benefit others, fearlessness of suffering for save sentient beings in *saṃsāra*. Guang Xing, p.157.

method and practice of *pratityasamutpāda* of *tathāgatagarbha*, all contained in the *tathāgatagarbha* (mind). In *MPŚ* says: “The contents of the Awakening have traditionally been summarized as discourse on One Mind, Two Aspects, Three Greatnesses, Four Faiths, Five Practices.....”,²⁴⁰ and again, in *MPŚ* says:²⁴¹ “The Mind necessarily contains within itself two orders or aspects, namely, the transcendent aspect and phenomenal aspect, the universal and the particular, the infinite and the finite, the static and the dynamic, the Absolute and the relative, and so forth.” In the Awakening of Faith (*MPŚ*), the doctrine of the three greatness of the innately enlightened mind of sentient beings (*tri-mahā*) explains the concepts of *tathāgatagarbha* that is the important thought of the *tathāgatagarbha* literature which attribute to Āsvaghoṣa.²⁴²

The *tri*-greatness of the innately enlightened mind of sentient beings, as originally taught in the *MPŚ*: “The first is the greatness of essence (体大), which refers to the basic **quality** of the mind being suchness. The second is the greatness of attributes (相大), which refers to the myriad **virtues** possessed by the *tathāgatagarbha*. The third is the greatness of function (用大), which refers to the virtuous **function** seen in the actualization of the mind of enlightenment. The *MPŚ* says:²⁴³ “The essence of suchness knows no increase or decrease....., the attributes of suchness endowed with all excellent qualities...the function of suchness can benefit sentient beings and out of *saṃsāra*.....” These three greatnesses (*tri-mahā*) of *tathāgatagarbha* which is contained in One Mind is the *tathāgatagarbha*-mind (如来藏心); based on One Mind to explain the concepts of three

²⁴⁰ Hakeda, S. Yoshito, *The MPŚ*, attributed to Āsvaghoṣa, trans., with Commentary by Yoshito S. Hakeda (New York: Columbia University, 1967), p.7.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.7. “二门”，即“心真如门”与“心生灭门”。

²⁴² The *MPŚ*: translated by Paramārtha, A.D. 553, during Lian dynasty A.D.618-970 and another is by Sikṣānanda, A.D. 695-700, of Tan dynasty 618-907. Ryukan Kimura, *The Original and Developed Doctrine of Indian Buddhism in Chants* (Delhi: Pilgrims Book, 1998), p.65.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*: “一心”、“二门”、“三大”...之理论，修行信心分则说明“四信”、“五行”之实践法门；立义分，云何为三：一者体大，谓一切法真如平等不增减故；二者相大，谓如来藏具足无量性功德故；三者用大，能生一切世间出世善因果故。T.32.575c25-28.

greatnesses (*tri-mahā*) of two aspects (*saṃsāra & nirvāṇa*) of *tathāgatagarbha*, and the Three greatnesses are contained each other which is the character of the Awakening of Faith.

6.3.1 The Greatness of Essence

The essentials of Buddha Nature is the *tathatā*, and the signification of *tathatā* (Suchness) of *tathāgatagarbha* which is the Greatness of Essence, because of the nature of all *dharma*-s are *vyupāsama, nirodha, nirvṛta, praśānta*, (*Pāli, vūpasama*), itself is the Suchness, *śūnyatā, nirvāṇa*.²⁴⁴ So The One Mind (*tathāgatagarbha*) is an immanent aspect of the Absolute (*tathatā*) in the phenomena order, and in the transcendental aspect of the Absolute order; in short, it is the intrinsic Buddha nature in all sentient beings yet to be actualized; if the sentient beings actualize the emptiness of the phenomena to see the reality as the things are, the One Mind itself is the *tathatā*.

In the standard meaning *vagga* of *MPŚ* says:²⁴⁵“The essence of Suchness knows no increase or decrease in ordinary men, the Hīnyānist-s, the Bodhisattva-s, or the Buddha-s. It was not brought into existence in the beginning nor will it cease to be at the end of time; it is eternal through and through.” Therefore, the greatness of the essence of *tathāgatagarbha*, which is One Mind, or namely as the Suchness: “From the beginning transcend all forms of verbalization, description, and conceptualization and are in the final analysis un-differentiated, free from alterations and indestructible; they are only of the One Mind, hence the name Suchness”.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ *vyupāsama* 寂灭, *nirodha, nirvṛta, praśānta* in *SN, Pāli, SN, vol.22, T2·153c. EAS, vol.23, T2·672b, SP, vol.1, 方便品, T9·8b; 大智度论, MPSS, T25·721b.*

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.66. 立義分, T. 32. 579a: “真如自体相者, 一切凡夫、声闻、缘觉、菩萨、诸佛无有增减, 非前际生, 非后际灭, 毕竟常恒, 从本已来, 性自满足一切功德。”

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.39. 大乘起信论: “一切诸法, 从本已来, 离言说相, 离名字相, 离心缘相, 毕竟平等, 无有变异, 不可破坏, 唯是一心, 故名真如” T.32. 576a 8-13.

To summary, if the *tathāgatagarbha* mind transcend all the verbalization, description, and conceptualization....itself is the Awakening to reality (*mukta* 解脱) namely Suchness (*tathatā*); if the *tathāgatagarbha* mind polluted by the incidentally defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*), it will produce the phenomena world which is arising, residing, changing and ruining. If the *tathāgatagarbha* mind who avoid the defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*), there will be something which isn't different. This theory is *pratītyasamutpāda* which is taught by Buddha; because the *tathāgatagarbha* mind (essence nature of mind/*cittaprakṛti*) itself (Suchness) is *parisuddha*.

6.3.2 The Greatness of Attributes

The Greatness of Attributes of *tathāgatagarbha* which means when it avoids the defilements itself manifest that he endowed fully all excellent qualities. In the *MPŚ* bases on the six characterizes to exposit the Greatness of attributes of Suchness (*tathāgatagarbha*).²⁴⁷ “From the beginning, Suchness in its nature is fully provided with all excellent qualities; namely, (1) it is endowed with the light of great wisdom; (2) [the qualities of] illuminating the entire universe; (3) of true cognition; (4) mind in its self-nature; (5) of eternity, bliss, Self, and purity; (6) of refreshing coolness, immutability and freedom. It is endowed with these excellent qualities, which outnumber the sand of the Ganges, which are not independent of, disjointed from, or different from (the essence of Suchness), and which are supranational (attributes of) Buddhahood. Since it is endowed completely with all these, and is not lacking anything, it is called the *tathāgatagarbha* (when latent) and also the *dharmakāya* of the Tathāgata.”

²⁴⁷ Ibid., p.66. 大乘起信论, 解释分: “从本以来, 性自满足一切功德。所谓自体相有。 (i).大智慧光明义故; (ii).遍照法界义故; (iii).真实知义故; (iv) 自性清净心义故; (v).常乐我净义故; (vi).清凉不变自在义故。具足如是过于恒沙、不离、不断、不异、不思议佛法, 乃至满足无所有少义故, 名为如来藏, 亦名如来法身。” T. 32. 579a14-21.

All these qualities of *tathāgatagarbha* are manifested from the essence of Suchness due to the defilement (*āgantuka-kleśa*) are destroyed. If practitioners remove the obscurations, the light of great wisdom (*prajñā*) will manifest and illuminate the entire universe (all darkness of ignorance disappears), itself is purity, immutable and unconditioned, no any kinds of suffering, undisturbed of ignorance, out of circle of birth and death, its nature qualities are infinite and so on, that is called the Greatness of Attribute of Suchness (*dharmakāya*) and the *tathāgatagarbha* when latent.

6.3.3 The Greatness of Function

The *tathāgatagarbha* is possessed by all beings, when it is polluted by defilement or the stains (*kleśa*) are faded away, it is same as Buddha that endows greatness function. When it is in the state of ordinally beings, due to that it is contaminated that it presents the false imaginations. The false indicate that it does not exist as it imagines [itself] in minds and mental factors of past, present and future, which serve as cause and effect, comprise the three realms, are beginningless. When it penetrated by the wholesome (*kuśala*), its positive function will produce all the wholesome (*kuśala*) of cause and effect in the three realms, conform to *saṃsāra*, are beginningless and terminated by *nirvāṇa*. All the positive and negative functions are endowed by the *tathāgatagarbha* itself either in the state of pure or impure are beginningless.

In many scriptures and commentaries mentioned that the imagination of mind that when the *tathāgatagarbha* is contaminated by craving, hatred and delusion (*lobha, dosa & moha*), in the *Mahāyāna-sūtrālamkāra*; XI.15 states:²⁴⁸ “False imagination is

²⁴⁸ *Mahāyāna-sūtrālamkāra* 大乘庄严经论; XI.15.

explained to be just like an illusion, just as the aspect in which an illusion (appears). It is explained as the mistakenness of duality”.

When the individual realizes the reality which is within the stainless *dharmadhātu*, to attain the Buddhahood which is the profundity of the Buddha, this attainment isn't different from the Buddha which is *tathāgatagarbha*. In *Mahāyāna-sūtrālamkāra* XI.37 verse says: “Though not being different in all of them, Suchness has become pure. Therefore, it is the Tathāgata and all beings possess its heart”.

Though Suchness exists in everything, once the adventitious afflictive and cognitive obstructions have come to contaminate it, the false imagination of Tathāgata is explained to be just like an illusion which is ocean of suffering (*saṃsāra*), while it is pure in itself state. The individual is only by virtues of the Suchness become pure, when it is free from two kinds of defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*), it is pure and the imagination as all Buddha-s without difference, that is called Suchness (*tathatā*). Thus, because Suchness exists in sentient beings, while in the fruition of *dharmakāya* or Suchness, they are all said to have the *tathāgatagarbha* heart and endowed with the Greatness of functions.

Therefore, three Greatnesses (*tri-mahā*) virtues are not separated from *tathāgatagarbha*, which is used to elucidate the *tathāgatagarbha* which is possessed by all beings that imply all beings have the possibility to be enlightenment within themselves or self-enlightenment as well as the Buddha. It is **skillful** means to lead sentient beings to realize the Reality of phenomena to say that there are three Greatnesses of method.

6.4 Twi-vyūha (Paramārtha & Saṃvṛti) of Tathāgatagarbha

On the Path of Buddhahood to attain *nirvāṇa*, if all the qualities of the six

*pāramitā-s...*present, then all the conditions for reaching Buddhahood are there and the Thusness can be apprehended directly by virtues (*guṇa & jñāna*) and freedom is illustrated by the sun, the freedom from the impurities are compared to sunlight, sun rays, due to the *twi-vyūha* (*guṇa & jñāna*) of *tathāgatagarbha* is luminous, radiant and pure respectively; these qualities of the Buddha are inseparable. At the state of the fruition of *tathāgatagarbha* of Buddhahood is given four different names: the *dharmakāya*, *tathatā*, Thusness, and *nirvāṇa*. These four qualities represent the inseparable virtues of the *tathāgatagarbha* due to *kleśa-s* are destroyed, the mature virtues of the *tathāgatagarbha* manifest naturally, in *RGV* depicts “which are more numerous than the sands of the Ganges.” Therefore, according to the state of cause and fruit, the *twi-vyūha* of *tathāgatagarbha* can be categorized into dual aspects.

6.4.1 The First *Twī-vyūha* of *Tathāgatagarbha*

(i).The perfection of *jñāna* of the state of fruition (*jñānakāya*):²⁴⁹ *Jñānakāya* means the true natures of all beings, at the attainment of Buddhahood, the nature of beings are free from the impure, conceptual consciousness. This virtue naturally that endow with by the sentient beings which is covered by the defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*), but it is undetached the nature of luminous mind, this virtue exist in all beings, even before they attain the Buddhahood, if one who follows the path of six *pāramitā-s*, or the path of Mahāyāna, to destroy the defilements such as *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha* etc. dual concept (*prapañca*), the attainment of pure mind will manifest as the Wisdom-body

²⁴⁹ Fo-Guang, vol.1, 669c, 果位智德圓滿 (*jñānakāya*), the state of Buddhahood that the four perfect wisdom endow with the four virtues (*nitya-pāramitā*, *sukha-pāramitā*, *ātman-pāramitā*, *śubha-pāramitā*): (i). The Great Reflecting Wisdom; (ii). The Wisdom of the Equality in Nature; (iii). The Subtle Observing Wisdom; (iv). The Wisdom of Fulfillment of Deeds, which attains through removing the delusion or defilements (*kleśa* ‘惑’) and it is one of three virtues 三德之一 (*dharmakāya*, *mahāprajñā & vimukta*) of *mahāparinirvāṇa*, vol.1, 668c-670a; vol. 6, 5033b; vol.7, 6006a-b; and Guang Xing, *The Concept of the Buddha*: its evolution from early Buddhism to the *trikāya* theory (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005), p.93.

(*jñānakāya*), or equivalence with the *tathāgatagarbha* (*anunatvāpūrṇatv-bhūta-tathatā*), this virtue is equivalent while is at the state of sentient beings or at the position of Buddhahood.²⁵⁰ This *tathāgatagarbhajñāna* is the foundation of all other kinds of wisdom, pervading all beings, *tathāgatagarbhajñāna* itself either in the state of beings nor the Buddha has nothing as support and does not decrease and increase or diminish, *tathāgatagarbhajñāna* is equal, non-dual, beyond discrimination. It is fully present in the minds of all sentient beings, even though they are not aware of it due to the delusion and attachment. If beings, through the practice of teaching, can let go of their delusion and attachments then they will realize the infinite wisdom of the Buddha within themselves. But in the skillful meaning that use the virtue of *jñānakāya* of *tathāgatagarbha* to emphasize the fruition of wisdom (*jñāna*) of Buddhahood that is perfect and its function which can remove the defilements.

(ii).The perfection of removing of *karma* of three realms = *nirvāṇa*:²⁵¹*Nirvāṇa* which is identical with Supreme Enlightenment, with the gaining of the Threefold Body of Buddhahood, and with the cessation of birth and is the complete cessation not only of sorrow, but also of its cause. It is the cessation of delusion attachment, hatred, and of the holding of inconsistent views; it is the cessation of all clinging to the false ideas. It is the result that is attained by following the path, in the ultimate aim the getting rid of all misconceptions about the existence and non-existence of beings and things and the realization of the essentially non-dual nature of all phenomena. The *nirvāṇa* is virtue of

²⁵⁰ Ibid., *anunatvāpūrṇatva-bhūta-tathatā*: 不增不减真如:…此真如断染不减, 得净不增, original described in *ANP* 不增不减经, later the *Srlmālā-sūtra* has similar explanation, and explained by Takasaki Jikido, vol.2, p.39; & Fo-Guang, vol.1, 996a-c; vol.5, 4197a-4199a.

²⁵¹ *Nirvāṇa*: 果位断德圆满. It is virtues of *vimukta* which is one of the three virtues of (*dharmakāya*, *mahāprajñā* & *vimukta*), Vol.1668c-670a. It attained through destroy the *karma* ‘业’ of rebirth or the defilement (*kleśa*), which is band (another name of defilement ‘缚’), it endow with the four virtues (*nitya-pāramitā*, *sukha-pāramitā*, *ātman-pāramitā*, *śubha-pāramitā*). Fo-Guang, vol.7, 6006a-b.

the *tathāgatagarbha* that all defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*) are removed, the characteristic of reality, Absolute, something which reality inherently exists. It is not just any emptiness, all sentient beings have within them the Buddha-essence (*tathāgatagarbha*) that means all beings through following the path and to attain the *nirvāṇa* as the Buddha, the *tathāgatagarbha* itself endowed with the four virtue (of the *nirvāṇa* due to the calming the categorizing conceptualizing mind, at the state of perfection of path of purification of mind. This perfection of removing of defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*), misconceptions and so on is called the virtues of *nirvāṇa* (*tathāgatagarbha*). Therefore, in this case of *nirvana* is the emphasis on the disappearance or extinction (*nirodha*) of defilements (*kleśa*) and hence the term *nirvana* is much related to the purification of mind to emphasis the defilement and *karma* don't remain any more or completely removed.

6.4.2 The Second *Twī-vyūha* of *Tathāgatagarbha*

(i).The perfection of benefits for others (*parārtha*) *tathā+āgata*: “Thus Come”:²⁵²This compound word points out that the Buddha as the great master has attained the perfection of Virtues and Wisdom (*guṇa & jñāna*) who comes (appears) in the world along arrived at his goal through the same Path of the past, such as the great aspiration (compassion etc.), the six (or ten) *pāramita-s*, the thirty-seven constituents of enlightenment, etc., through the doctrine and practices to for deliverance the sentient beings. This is the perfect virtue of compassion of *tathāgatagarbha* that is emphasis on the perfect compassion of Buddha that is the important doctrine of altruism of the Mahāyāna Buddhism to achieve the deliverance of all sentient beings.

²⁵² *parārtha-guṇa* 悲德：为诸佛菩萨利他之德 (悲德他利圆满), Fo-Guang, vol.1; 242c; Vol.7, 6606a.

(ii).The perfection of self-benefit (Bodhi) ²⁵³*tathā+gata*: “Thus Gone”, “*gata*” means went, because when Buddha as soon as he was born, he went in the same way just as the previous Buddha went Thus, exactly thus did the present Exalted One (*tathā ayam bhagavā pi gato*) which is the complete practice culminating in final deliverance: the avoid of all defilements of existence, went to the accomplished fruition of enlightenment (*nirvāṇa*). This virtue of self-perfection of attainment to achieve the fruition of enlightenment (*nirvāṇa*) that is from course to fruition, or birth and death (*saṃsāra*) to *nirvāṇa* is the virtue of *tathāgatagarbha* to achieve the perfection for himself to aspiration of being Buddha (or attainment of Buddhahood).

These *twi-vyūha* also are the base of Mahāyāna Buddhism that the Bodhisattava not to abide in the *saṃsāra* due to the *jñāna*, and not to abide in the *nirvāṇa* due to the compassion, practitioner at the state of *dhamakāya*, *nirvāṇa* & (*vimukta*) endows with these *twi-vyūha* that has devoid the dual of enlightenment and un-enlightenment (extremes).²⁵⁴ When Bodhisattva attain the Buddhahood, these twi-virtues are perfect.

6.4.3 The Third *Twī-vyūha* of *Tathāgatagarbha*

(i).The perfection of the nature of the state of *tathāgatagarbha* that the Virtues possessed by nature; the possession by every sentient being of the qualities of his original nature:²⁵⁵ Thusness (*gūṇa* & *jñāna*) means the highest truth; Reality-nature; the nature of existence; universally pervading principle, the source of all existence.....all these natural

²⁵³ *bodhi* 智德: 为诸佛菩萨自利之德 (智德自利圆满) . The situation of the disappearance of ignorance due to the functioning of awakened wisdom, when the defilements are completely remove, it will be manifest who can see all *dharma-s* are unobstructed (*apratigha, anāvṛti*). Bodhi 智德: “即佛果满足一切诸智、照了一切诸法, 有无碍自在之德, 名为智德 (三德).” Fo-Guang, vol.1, 242c, 669a, vol.6, 5033b, vol.7, 6006a.

²⁵⁴ Ken and Katia Holmes, *Uttaratantra: A Commentary on The Uttaratantra śāstra of Asṅha*, trans. by Ken and Katia Holmes (Delhi: Sri Satguru, 1994), No.39, p.64.Tan Xi-yong, 宝性论:“由般若故离世法, 由悲悯故离寂灭; 智慧双运即菩提, 不捨于迷不捨觉.” p.76.

²⁵⁵ 因位性得 (德) 佛性: 指一切众生之本性具法尔本然之佛性. 佛性论: Buddha Nature Treatise Vol.1. 787c. MPS, Vol.7. MPS Vol.7: “有情众生悉有佛性, 然凡夫之佛性为烦恼所障蔽, 若精勤修行以断除烦恼, 则本然清淨之佛性随即彰显.” Fo-Guang, vol.7, 6606a; vol.43239c; 3235c.

virtues of *tathāgatarbha* are in the latent state of sentient beings which is different from the Absolute in its being actually not enlightened or polluted by the defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*); it is explained in *RGV* as *tathāgatadhātur esām garbhah sarvasattvānām (tathāgatagotra)*, but the virtue aspect of *tathāgatarbha* is fully possessed by all beings, there is not a single sentient beings is not **fully** possessed of the Tathāgata. It is only due to their false thinking, fallacies, and attachments that beings fail to realize this. If they could only abandon their false thoughts, then the all nature virtues will clearly manifest themselves as the Buddha. This *tathāgatarbha* doctrine is explained in the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*²⁵⁶: “Strange! How Strange! How can it be that although all sentient beings are fully possessed of wisdom of the Tathāgata, because of their ignorance and confusion they neither know nor see that? I should teach them the Noble Path, thus enable them to forever leave false thoughts and attachments, and perceive the vast wisdom of Tathāgata within themselves, not different from the Buddha-s....”

(ii).The perfection of the fruition of practice:²⁵⁷ The two aspects of *tathāgatarbha* namely Absolute and Phenomena, when sentient beings are in the state of defilements they are un-enlightenment (Phenomena) and opposite are the enlightenment (Absolute). The Nāgārjuna’s *MPPŚ*:²⁵⁸ “The *tathāgatarbha* is so called Tathāgata due to achieve the Buddhahood through the practicing of six *pāramitā*-s, then the *prjñāna* or *jñāna* realize the dharma-s as it is, and has come from the Suchness.” And

²⁵⁶ Cheng Chien Bhikshu, *Manifestation of the Tathāgata* 如来性起: *Buddhahood According to the Avatamsaka-sūtra* (Boston: Wisdom, 1993), p.34.

²⁵⁷ Fo-Guang, vol.4, 3235c; vol.2, 1571b, vol.3, 2633b-c; vol. 5, 4046a: 果位修得 (德) 圆满. The Buddha Nature Treatise. T31.No.1610, vol. 1.

²⁵⁸ *MPPŚ*: “行六波罗蜜, 得成佛道...故名如来; ...智知诸法如, 从如中来, 故名如来”. 55 Fasc. 454b.

the Harivarman's *Satyasiddhi-śāstra*:²⁵⁹ “The real Tathāgata has come to the enlightenment through the path of Thusness; the Buddha is called Tathāgata due to condescend to three realms to convert sentient beings through the path of Thusness.”

Therefore, although sentient beings fully possess the virtues of *tathāgatagarbha* as the Buddha, there is decrease at the state of latent beings, nor increase at the fruition of Buddhahood. If sentient beings don't follow the perfect practicing of Mahāyāna Path, e.g. six *pāramitā-s*, four unlimited mind (*catvāry-apramāṇāni*: *maitri*; *karuṇa*; *mudita*; *upeksa*), they are still covered by the adventitious defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*). This is why the sentient beings are suffering (*samsāra*); the two-virtues (*guṇa & jñāna*) of *tathāgatagarbha* are covered by the darkness of ignorance and so on. Only when they accomplish the perfection of virtues (*guṇa & jñāna*), they can be called Buddha and only the Buddha can achieve the perfections of virtues (*guṇa & jñāna*), this is called the perfect virtues of practice.

The above discussion of *twi-vyūha* (*guṇa & jñāna*) is the important doctrine of *tathāgatagarbha* that is the dual aspects of the *tathāgatagarbha* which is explained in the main point of its doctrine is the non-increase and non-decrease in *ANP* and it is the characteristics of *tathāgatagarbha* in three points:²⁶⁰ (i) the essence of inner nature of *tathāgatagarbha* which is pure that the *sattvadhātu* in the state of sentient beings is same as the *buddhadhātu*; (ii) the *tathāgatagarbha* of *sattvadhātu* is different from Buddha which is covered by defilement (*āgantuka-kleśa*) which is named impurity; (iii) the state of perfection of *tathāgatagarbha* of *sattvadhātu* isn't different from the Buddha when

²⁵⁹ Harivarman's 诃梨跋摩, 狮子恺. *Satyasiddhi-śāstra*, 成实论: “乘真如之道而来成正觉者, 是为真身如来; 而乘真如之道来三界垂化者, 是应身如来。” T. 32, Ch., *nirodha*, pp.327-333.

²⁶⁰ It is quoted from *ANP*不增不减经. T16. No. 668. & Takasaki Jikido: (i). *anādisāmnidhyasambaddhasvabhāva-śubhadhar-matā*本际相应体及清净法, (ii). *anādi-sāmnidhyā-sambaddhasva-bhāva-kleśakośatā*本际不相应体及烦恼缠不清净法, (iii). *aparāntakotisama-dhruvadharma-tā-samvidya-mānatā* 未来际平等恒及有法. p.39.

the defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*) are removed from it and that is true.

Therefore, the *twi-vyūha* of *tathāgatagarbha* which are the two aspects of *tathāgatagarbha* that is the skillful meaning, in order to exposit the qualities of the mind at the state of defiled and un-defiled to understand the *tathāgatagarbha* to courage sentient beings those who are cowhearted for attainment of Buddhahood, and despise sentient beings and so on.

6.5 Conclusion

The thought of *tathāgatagarbha*, which contains the method and practice of the teaching of Buddha, the term of Tathāgata was originally one of the epithets given to the historical Buddha, Śākyamuni, but it later comes to Mahāyāna Buddhism in a much broader sense symbolizes the receptacle of Suchness (*tathatā*) or the Absolute. It is Suchness in sentient beings, called *dharmakāya*, Tathāgata, *tathatā*, *dharmadhātu*, the *sattvadhātu*. The latter is defined as the essential nature of mind (*citta-prakṛti*), which is pure/radiant (*pariśuddha*). It is spiritual, not material, this path of realization of Suchness which is purification of mind, the essential nature of mind of sentient whether it is covered by defilement (*āgantuka-kleśa*) which is at the state of un-enlightenment or not that it has been removed the defilement (*āgantuka-kleśa*) or the state of enlightenment, itself endowed with the numerous number of sands of Ganges virtues. Buddha has experienced this practical method of way, it is only by living in accordance with the principle (*pratītyasamutpāda*) of teaching that one can realize the true signification of *tathāgatagarbha*. The great ideal is self-enlightenment/*nirvāṇa*. All the different teachings are based on the different capacity sentient beings in different ways.

CHAPTER VII

Conclusion

The *tathāgatagarbha*, Buddha Nature is the central concept of Mahāyāna Buddhism which is to begin at the same time of Mādhyamika and Yogācāra Schools, so they have close relations of the emptiness and *ālayavijñāna*, from 3rd century which developed by the *Mahāsaṅghika* and *Sarvastivāda*.²⁶¹ So the concept of *tathāgatagarbha* was rooted in the Sanskrit language; but the doctrine of *tathāgatagarbha* originated in the early teaching of the Buddha that the luminous mind or the *pratītyasamutpāda* and became one of the Mahāyāna tradition, but the development of concept of *tathāgatagarbha* was deeply rooted in *sūtra* tradition of Indian Buddhism, there is one Sāramati's *Mahāyānadharmadhātvaśāstra*²⁶² and Vasubandhu's Buddha Nature Treatise; it is central to understand the Mahāyāna Buddhism and accompanied with the doctrine of Mahāyāna Buddhism, its development and maturely with the Mahāyāna schools.

The Development of the *Tathāgatagarbha*

The development of concept of *tathāgatagarbha* is a complex issue in the history of Buddhism, most of the work done so far by Western scholars on the topic of *tathāgatagarbha*; some of them strongly criticize it as the ontology of *ātama*. In real sense the Buddhist doctrines are the practical (*paṭipatti*) and the realizable (*paṭivedha*); the doctrine of *vinayapiṭaka*, *sūtrapiṭaka*, *abhidharmapiṭaka*, either the Theravāda or the

²⁶¹ *Śāriputrābhidharma-śāstra*, 舍利弗阿毗昙论, vol.27, according to Yin-Shun's idea that it is the *Abhidharma* of the *Vātsīputrīya* sect; *Pāli*, *Vajji-puttaka*; and *Dharmaguptika* sect, *Pāli*, *Dhammaguttika*. According to the idea of Lu-Cheng 吕澂, it is the *Abhidharma* of the *Mahāsāka* sect. All these sects derived from *Sarvastivāda*; it is similar with *Mahāsaṅghika* School. They both keep the doctrine of “*prakṛtipariśuddhaṃ-cittam*”. Fo-Guang, vol.4, 3500a-c.

²⁶² *Mahāyāna-dharmadhātvaśāstra*, 大乘法界无差别论, or *RGV*, the Tibetan translation is *Uttaratantra*, 无上续论, trans., by Devaprajña 唐·提云般若译. T.31, No.1626.

Mahāyāna Buddhism, all doctrines can be put into practice to attain the happiness (*nirvāṇa/nibbāna*). The Mahāyānists interpreted the doctrine to attain the Buddhahood, or to be Buddha, the *tathāgatagarbha* that sentient beings have Buddha as their *garbha*, have the *garbha* of Buddha, or have the essence that becomes Buddha. So the *tathāgatagarbha* plays a significant role. It is on this basis that the *tathāgatagarbha* is rendered as impersonal principle supporting the Mahāyāna Buddhism in the development in the early and middle Mahāyāna *sūtra*-s. Five stages can be identified in the development of the concept of the *tathāgatagarbha*.

The Basic Stages of the Development of *Tathāgatagarbha*

The first stage is the *tathāgatagarbha* as the pure mind in the early Buddhism and identifies with the nature of the *dharma* (*pratīyasamutpāda*, *pāli*, *paṭiccasamuppāda*) which comes from the mind of the Buddha, when Buddha realized the Law of Dependent Arising (*pratīyasamutpāda*), he attained the enlightenment (*samyaksambodhi*), once the Buddha says: “In *nikāya*-s and *āgama*-s²⁶³ claim that “who sees Dependent Arising sees the *dharma* and he who sees the *dharma* sees Dependent Arising.” As discussed in the Chapter one above. The Buddha teaches the Four Noble Path or the Middle Path (*majjhima-paṭipadā*, or *śīla samādhi* (for example: *Pāli*, *mettā-samadhi*; Skt. *maitra-samadhi*²⁶⁴) and *paññā* the purification of mind for sentient beings, then can attain the liberation (*nirvāṇa/nibbāna*) which is free from all kinds of defilements, it is the absolute peace; it is identify with the fruition of *arhat*.

²⁶³ *Madhyamāgama* and the *MN*; T1, 467a, 象跡喻经, *MN*. I, 191; *SN* ii, 25; *SA*, T2, 84b; *MA*. I, 286: “若佛出世, 若未出世, 此法常住”, ‘*uppādā va tathāgatānaṃ anuppāda vā tathāgatānaṃ thinā va sā dhātu dhammaṭṭhitatā dhammanivāmatā idappaccayatā.*’

²⁶⁴ *AN*, *MN*, 教誡羅侯羅大经, *SA*, T27, 197c, and *MPS*, T12, 698b, all teach the contemplation of compassion to remove the defilements. For example the *MPS*: “The compassion is the root of the wholesome (*kuśala*, *pāli kusala*) of all the Buddha-s, to practice the compassion to remove the *kleśa*-s...”

The second stage is the *tathāgatagarbha* as the pure consciousness (*citta*) in the *Abhidharma* period, it deals with the working of the mind, thoughts, thought processes and psychic-ethical philosophy enables one to realize the ultimate goal liberation (*nirvāṇa/nibbāna*). According to the *Abhidharma*, the mind is by nature pure, bright and transparent, become dirty, defiled and poisonous by ill thought of greed, anger and ignorance, in order to cultivate our consciousness to pure and bright by culture and mental training which is developing the *jhāna* (*samatha & vipassanā*), this period is the path consciousness (*lokottara/lokuttara*), the fruition is the *nirvāṇa/nibbāna* which is the highest truth (*paramārtha-satya*), the absolute purity and so on.²⁶⁵

The third stage the *tathāgatagarbha* as the *tathatā* which is claimed by the *śūnyatāvāda* (*Mādhyamika* School), around the first century, the earliest Mahāyāna literature *Aṣṭa*. gives the definition of *tathatā* identify with the Tathāgata which is the real nature of consciousness or all *dharma*-s, when a Bodhisattva attain the highest full enlightenment by means of *tathatān* etc.²⁶⁶ This doctrine is composed in the *MPS* which has three dimensions: *dharmakāya*, *mahāprajñāna* and *vimokṣa/vimutta*.²⁶⁷ At this stage by the *dharmakāya* is the fruition of Buddhahood, the *vimokṣa* is liberation resulting from the severance of the *kleśa* through wisdom (seeing *śūnyatā*, or the *MPPS*). By these reasons of its intrinsic quiescence, the *nirvāṇa* and the four virtues of *tathāgatagarbha* are established,²⁶⁸ and the *tathāgatagarbha* as the *dharmakāya* in *Śrīmāla-sūtra*, *RGV* and so on.

²⁶⁵ Bhikkhu Bodhi, *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha: A Comprehensive Manual of Abidhamma* (Kandy: PTS, 2006), p.66-68.

²⁶⁶ Guang Xing, *The Concept of the Buddha: its evolution from early Buddhism to the trikāya theory* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005), pp.76-77.

²⁶⁷ *MPS*, *tri-guṇa* 三德: (i).法身 *dharmakāya*; (ii).般若 *mahāprajñāna*; (iii).解脱 *vimokṣa/vimutta*). It originates in the vol.2, 4th vagga of the *MPS*, trans., by Dharmarakṣa T12, p861-863, it describes the doctrine of the eternality of *tathāgatagarbha*, that all beings, even *icchantika* endow with Buddha nature and so on (the idea of Mahāyāna) “如来常住”、“众生悉有佛性”、“阐提成佛”等之教义. Fo-Guan, vol.1, pp.668c-670.

²⁶⁸ Guang Xing, p.93.

The fourth stage which is during the Vasubhandu and Asaṅga period, the concept of *tathāgatagarbha* united with the doctrine of Yogācāra (*vijñānavāda*), the *tathāgatagarbha* as the transformation of support or body (*parāvṛtti*)²⁶⁹ or the inner experience (*ālayavijñāna*), takes place a revulsion apparently within our own minds, it is known as *āśrayaparāvṛtti*, a revelation at the basis,²⁷⁰ through the realization of the essence is intrinsically pure, and all *kleśas* are originally quiescent to transform the eighth consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*) to the mirror wisdom and the seventh consciousness (*manasvijñāna*) into the equality wisdom (*samatājñāna*) and so on.²⁷¹ So at this stage the fruition of *tathāgatagarbha* identify the pure consciousness (*mahāvijñāna*).

The fifth stage, when the *Śrīmālā-sūtra*, *Lkt.* and the most important commentary *RGV* were composed, the concept of *tathāgatagarbha* became mature, especially the *RGV* is the greatest succeed commentary of concept of *tathāgatagarbha* and later than all the *Tathāgatagarbha sūtra*-s, the *tathāgatagarbha* identify with the *bodhicitta*, paved one new road for Mahāyāna Buddhism.

²⁶⁹ D.T.Suzuki, *A Studies in the Lkt.*, p.365.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.184, 185, 247,299.

²⁷¹ T.31, 606b-607b; and D. T. Suzuki, *A Study in the Lkt.*, p.105.

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