
Étienne Lamotte, *Śūraṅgamasamādhisūtra: The Concentration of Heroic Progress, An Early Mahāyāna Buddhist Scripture*, Translated and Annotated by Étienne Lamotte, English Translation by Sara Boin-Webb, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2003, xxviii+273 Pp., Synopsis of Formulas and Stock Phrases, Index, Rs. 295.

Before I review this book, I must confess that some complex situations lie before us. The original French version of this book by Étienne Lamotte was published in 1965 through Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, Bruxelles. In 1998 it was translated into English by Mrs. Sara Boin-Webb through Curzon Press in association with the Buddhist Society in London. This English version, which is lacking the Chinese text of the sūtra from the Taisho edition, is very useful for those who are weak in French, and they can read it without great difficulty. And here a man who is not good at French is trying to review its English version, which was reprinted through Motilal Banarsidass Publishers in Delhi in 2003, its contents identical with the former. Further we already know of an excellent review to the French version by Hajime Sakurabe in *Buddhist Seminar* 13, 1971, pp. 74-80. This means that I, the reviewer, have no ability to criticize its English translation from the French and I do not refer to the problem of its copyright.

Sara Boin-Webb, the official translator of Lamotte's works, is an Assistant editor of a journal of Buddhism in London, *Buddhist Studies Review*. She has translated not only this book, but also other works of Lamotte:

1. *History of Indian Buddhism from the Origins to the Śāka Era*, Université Catholique de Louvain, Institut Orientaliste, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1988; with Russell Webb, "É. Lamotte History of Indian Buddhism (English translation, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1988), An Additional Bibliography", in *Premier Colloque Étienne Lamotte*, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1993, pp. 161-173.
2. *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti (Vimalakīrtinirdeśa) from the French*

translation with Introduction and Notes (L'Enseignement de Vimalakīrti), Oxford: The Pāli Text Society, 1994.

3. "Vajrapāṇi in India", in *Buddhist Studies Review* 20-1, 2003, pp. 1-30, 20-2, 2003, pp. 119-144.

She has translated one other important study written in French:

4. *Abhidharmasamuccaya: The Compendium of the Higher Teaching (Philosophy) by Asaṅga*, Originally translated into French and annotated by Walpola Rahula, Fremont: Asian Humanities Press, CA 2001.

The works of this great scholar are translated also by other scholars. They are:

5. *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa: The Treatise on Action by Vasubandhu*, translated by Leo M. Pruden, Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1988,.
6. *The Six Perfections: An Abrridged Version of É. Lamotte's French Translation of Nāgārjuna's Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśaśāstra Chapters XVI-XXX*, translated by Tadeusz Skorupski, Tring: The Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2002.
7. Junsho Kato, "Les sources scripturaires de l'Upadeśa et leurs valeurs respectives", *Journal of Buddhist Studies* 5, 1978, pp. 1-25.
8. Id., "Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse de Nāgārjuna, Tome IV: Introduction", in Junsho Kato (ed.), *A Comprehensive Studies in the Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa: from its origin to its influence on Chinese Buddhism* (A Report of Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (B) (2): April 2000 through March 2003, written in Japanese and submitted to the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science), Nagoya, 2003, 102-109.

His works have been translated also into Japanese:

9. Toru Okada, "Étienne Lamotte: Introduction à *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* (I)-(II)", in *The Annual Report of Hanzōno College* 19, 1988, pp. 127-167, 20, 1989, pp. 207-239.

Further Pruden has also translated the great work of another Belgian genius, Louis de la Vallée Poussin, into English.

10. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya by Louis de La Vallée Poussin*, 4 Vols., translated by Leo M. Pruden, Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1988-1990.

We welcome these translations of Buddhist studies written in French. Of course I know that Buddhist scholars must have an ability to understand at least eight languages in order to read Buddhist texts and their secondary sources. But such works translating into English studies written in French, Russian, Japanese, etc., are very useful for those who can not understand them in their original language without effort.

Before I introduce its content, I will point out that the most important part of this book seems to be the forward to the English edition by Lamotte because he gives some new comments which were not referred to in the French version. After relating the relation between this sūtra and the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśasūtra* he discusses the etymology of the word, 'śūramgama'. He starts from a quotation of preceding opinions. According to J.C. Wright, "the term is to be accounted a Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit reflex of śūramgrāma 'with pantheon', applied in the Rigveda 9.90.3 to *sarvavira*." But R.E. Emmerick does not accept this argument.

J. May proposes that “*gama-* is an appendage and does not represent the root GAM- but the extending of a suffix *ga-* wrongly connected with that root” and “it means nothing more basically than ‘heroic’.” In Lamotte’s opinion, the *m* could be euphonious (*śūra-m-gama*) and he would be tempted to split the title into *śūraṅgamaḥ samādhiḥ*, and would see in *śūraṅgama* a Vyadhikaraṇa Bahuvrīhi, or attributive compound whose members are not in apposition to each other, i.e., are in different cases when dissolved. And he read it as follows: *śūrasya iva gamanam yasya sa śūraṅgamaḥ samādhiḥ* ‘the samādhi whose progress is like that of the hero is śūraṅgamaḥ samādhiḥ’.

Next he referred to the fragments of the Khotanese translation of this sūtra which have been edited by H.W. Bailey in 1951 and by R.E. Emmerick in 1970. Because the Khotanese translators reproduced the proper names without change any in their Indian original form, Lamotte corrects the restored Sanskrit names of the Bodhisattva and the devaputra on the basis of their Khotanese translations: in § 50 Meruśikharadhara to Meruśikharakūṭarāja and in § 136-138 Vimalacandra-garbha to Śaśivimalagarbha.

At the end of his forward to the English edition Lamotte declares that this book is the work of Sara Boin-Webb and expresses his gratitude to her. We can recognize this from her note which follows Lamotte’s preface. She adds her comments to the translation in square brackets preceded by an obelisk [†]. And she translates the citation from the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* not on the basis of this book, but of Lamotte’s five-volume translation of this work, *Le Traité de la grande vertu de sagesse*.

CONTENTS OF THE BOOK

This book consists of two parts, the introduction (pp. 1-106) and the translation (pp. 107-241). The former is his study on this sūtra and the latter is the translation from the Chinese version of the sūtra. In its ending there are also a synopsis of formulas and stock phrases (pp. 243-244) and an index (pp. 245-273). This introduction seems to be an excellent study not only of this sūtra but also of the problem of the origin of the Mahāyāna sūtras.

Chapter One: The *Śūraṅgamasamādhisūtra* (pp. 1-55). (I) The Text (pp. 1-2): *Śūraṅgamasamādhisūtra* means ‘Text of the Concentration of Heroic Progress’. It is undoubtedly of Indian origin, but there are only a few fragments of the Sanskrit original: two quotations in the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* and one folio of a manuscript discovered in Eastern Turkestan. The complete work is known at present through two translations, a Chinese translation by Kumārajīva and a Tibetan translation by Śākyaprabha and Ratnarakṣita (*sic.*). It is said that it was translated nine times into Chinese, but now they were already lost by the sixth century. We do not know where or when its Indian text was published and can say that it preceded the first Chinese translation made in 186.

(II) Setting and Persons (pp. 3-11): Place is the Gr̥dhra-kūṭaparvata which is an idealized place blessed by the presence of the dharmakāya of the Buddhas. It is not part of receptacle-world, but it is derived from a Buddha-field. Persons are: The Buddha Śākyamuni who is not the ‘historical’ Buddha but manifests himself

simultaneously in our little universe of four continents and in all the great cosmic systems and is some divinity. The śrāvakas who do not play the same role as they did in the past in the canonical sūtra but are represented as vanquished, disabused figures who have lost faith in their ideal. The devas congratulate themselves on hearing the homily on Heroic Progress. The bodhisattva in great numbers and, among them, Maitreya, Mañjuśrī and Matyabhimukha. The divisions set up here between śrāvakas, devas and bodhisattvas do not stand up to scrutiny.

(III) The Subject: Concentration. 1. Samādhi in the Śrāvaka or Small Vehicle (pp. 11-22): The path of Nirvāṇa consists on three essential elements: morality (*śīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*prajñā*). The early texts inform us about the preliminaries, stages and fruit of Samādhi. The preliminaries to samādhi are (1) the observance of morality (*śīla*), (2) watching over the senses (*indriyeṣu guptadvāratā*), (3) mindfulness and awareness (*smṛtysaṃprajanya*), (4) absolute satisfaction (*saṃtuṣṭi*), (5) the choice of a secluded residence (*vivikta senāsana*) and (6) the dispelling of the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) to meditation. Stages of samādhi are (1) the Kāmadhātu which is the world of desire or of the five senses, (2) the Rūpadhātu which is the world of (subtle) form and (3) the Ārūpyadhātu which is the formless world. The fruits of samādhi are certain great advantages of a worldly kind: the superior powers and knowledges.

2. Samādhi in the Great Vehicle (pp. 22-38): The bodhisattva denies the existence both of the individual and things: in technical terms he professes the *pudgalanairātmya* and the *dharmanairātmya*. They are also possessed of great compassion (*mahākāruṇika*). His career consists of the practice of six perfections: giving (*dāna*), morality (*śīla*), patience (*kṣānti*), vigour (*vīrya*), absorptive meditation (*dhyāna*) and wisdom (*prajñā*). The second, fifth and sixth correspond respectively to the three elements of the path of Nirvāṇa as conceived by the śrāvakas. Nonetheless, from his point of view, there is no perfection for the bodhisattva to practise. The main differences between the Śrāvaka Path and the Bodhisattva Path is that the former leads to the individual perfecting of the ascetic while the latter aims only at the welfare of others. It ensues that the Samādhi of the bodhisattvas is not merely an exercise aimed at purifying the mind. The accent is no longer placed on the technique of concentration but on the supernormal power (*rddhibala*). The difference between them are explained systematically also śāstras, namely in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa* and the *Mahāyānasamgraha*. Apart from the *Śūraṃgamasamādhisūtra*, there are some references to the Concentration of Heroic Progress in the sūtras and śāstra: the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*, the *Lalitavistara*, the *Chuang-yen p'u-t'i-hsin ching*, the *Kuśalamūla-saṃparigrahasūtra*, the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, the *Mahāyānasamgraha* of Aśaṅga, *Buddhabhūmisūtraśāstra* of Bandhuprabha and the *Dharmasamgraha*.

(IV) Historical background of the Sūtra (pp. 39-53): The *Śūraṃgamasamādhisūtra* is placed among the 'Meditation Sūtras' which are the foundation of Zen Buddhism. It can be also placed among those ten-odd Mahāyāna sūtras which contributed to the implantation of the Great Vehicle in China and which were translated several times during the second and third centuries. The essential aim of this sūtra is to inculcate into its listeners or readers the Pudgala- and

Dharmanairātmya. The first Mahāyāna sūtras - among them this sūtra - are not systematic and their literary treatment is inferior to that of the canonical sūtras which have a more pronounced scholastic character. Whether their ideas originate in the Small or Great Vehicle, Buddhist sūtras are not exempt from a certain ambiguity. Unlike the Lokottaravādins, the Sarvāstivādins and above all the Yogācārins, the Mādhyamaka does not dwell in long considerations on the nature and bodies of the Buddha. This point of view, or rather absence of view, is shared by this sūtra. The Mādhyamika radicalism is hardly conducive to devotion (*bhakti*) and in this sūtra an offering of the truth is to hear it, take it, remember it, repeat it and expound it to others. It invokes also great contingents of bodhisattva.

(V) Sources of the Sūtra (pp. 53-55): The author of this sūtra was fully acquainted with the early canonical texts and makes wide use of their formulas and stock phrases: *Āṅguttara* I, p. 22.1-4; *Samyukta*, T 99, ch.35, p. 258a23-25, c7-8; *Āṅguttara* I, p. 23 sq. It was considered authoritative among the Mādhyamika scholars who quite often quote it: the *Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa* (T 1509), pp. 92b3-6, 134b18-19, 249c11-12, 273b5-8, 303b11-12, 312a27-29, 349c19-21, 586b1-2; the *Nandimitrāvadāna* (T 2030), p. 14a16-17; the *Śikṣā-samuccaya* of Śāntideva, edited by C. Bendall, pp. 8.19-20, 91.8-92, 6; the Chinese records of the Council of Lhasa, edited by P. Demiéville, pp. 73, 141-142.

Chapter Two: The Chinese and Tibetan Versions (pp. 56-103): The Information is taken from Chinese catalogues and biographies. (I) Translation by Chih Ch'an (pp. 59-65): It was translated in Lo-yang on 16 January 186. He translated also the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā*, the *Pratyutpannabuddhasammukhāvasthitāsamādhi*, the *Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodana* and *Durmakim-nararājaparipṛcchā*. (II) & (III) Ssü-chuan translations (pp. 65-66): They were translated in Ssü-chuan, under the Ts'ao Wei (220-265), by one or several persons unknown. (IV) Translation by Chih Ch'ien (pp. 66-72): It is not a new translation but merely a revision of the translation by Chih Ch'an and was revised in Wu-ch'ang between 222 and 229 by Chih Ch'ien of the Eastern Wu. (V) Translation by Po Yen (pp. 72-74): It was translated in Lo-yang, at the Po-ma ssu, in 258 by Po Yen of the Wei. (VI) Translation by Dharmarakṣa (pp. 74-80): It was translated probably in Ch'ang-an on 23 May 291 by Chu Fa-hu (Dharmarakṣa) of the Hsi Chin. The title of the sūtra, *Śūraṅgamasamādhi*, instead of being transcribed as *Shou-lêng-yen* as previously, is translated by *Yung-fu-ting* 'Concentration of Heroic Victory'. Commentary by Po Yüan (pp. 80-81): It was compiled in Ch'ang-an between 291 and 306 by Po Yüan, cognomen Po Fa-tsu, of the Western Chin. Whether revised or not by Nieh Ch'eng-yüan, the *Yung-fu-ting* by Dharmarakṣa was highly successful and was soon commented upon by the scholar-monk Po Yüang. (VII) Translation by Chu Shu-lan (pp. 81-85): It was translated in Lo-yang in 291 by the upāsaka Chu Shu-lan of the Western Chin. This is again a matter of a translation made in the north, not by Serindians like Chih Ch'ang, Chih Ch'ien, Po-yen and Fa-hu, but by a highly sinicised layman of Indian origin. (VIII) Combined edition by Chih Min-tu (pp. 85-90): It was probably undertaken in Ch'ang-an in 301 by Chih Min-tu of the Western Chin. This is not a question of a new Chinese translation but of a combined or synoptic

edition of three Chinese translation made earlier. Commentary by Hsieh Fu (p. 90): It was composed by Hsieh Fu of the Eastern Chin. We know of the existence of this commentary through a note by Sêng-yu added to the preface by Chih Mintu (T 2145, p.49a17). (IX) Translation by Chih Shih-lun (pp. 90-93): It was translated in Liang-chou (in Kan-su) in 373 by the prefect Chang T'ien-hsi, the upāsaka Chih Shih-lun and Po Yen of the Ch'ien Liang. (X) Translation by Kumārajīva (pp. 94-96): It was translated, either in Liang-chou between 385 and 402, or Ch'ang-an between 402 and 409 by Chiu-mo-lo-shih (Kumārajīva) of the Late Ch'in. This translation is preserved (T 642). Commentary by Shih Hung-ch'ung (pp. 97-98): It was composed in 458, in Chien-k'ang (Nanking), by Shih Hung-ch'ung of the Sung. (XI) Additional Note (p. 98): It should not be confused with another *Śūramgamasūtra* composed in Chinese. It is a Chinese apocryphal work composed at the beginning of the eighth century. (XII) Tibetan translation (pp. 99-103): It was translated at the beginning of the ninth century by the Indian Pandit Śākyaprabha and the (Tibetan) corrector-interpreter Ratnarakṣita. The Tibetan version which Lamotte use in this work is the Peking Kanjur, No. 800. It contains two long, partially versified, passages which are not found in the Chinese version: § 21 and § 177.

Concordance of the translations of the *Śūramgamasamādhisūtra* (pp. 104-106): He classifies the contents of the sūtra and gives numbers of paragraphs with §. We can easily consult the Chinese translation and the Tibetan translation using his system.

COMMENTS

In the first chapter Lamotte also studies the origin and development of the idea of this texts. In recent years the topic of the origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism has been actively discussed again and the hypothesis by Akira Hirakawa that Mahāyāna Buddhism emerged from lay orders formed by groups of religious specialists living near stūpa has been reconsidered. A symposium on it was held in Tokyo and it was reported on by Akira Saito in his "Mahāyāna Buddhism: Its Origins and Reality", in *Transactions of the International Conference of Eastern Studies* 48, 2003, pp. 129-133. When we continue on in this research, the original sources of early Mahāyāna sūtras must be consulted at first. It means that this Lamotte's book is one of the important studies on the origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism. His method to study Mahāyānasūtras has been taken over and developed by Paul Harrison, Jens Braarvig, Jonathan A. Silk, Michael Zimmermann and so on.

11. Paul Harrison, *The Tibetan Text of the Pratyutpanna-Buddha-Sammukhāvasthita-Samādhi-Sūtra*, Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies. 1978.
12. Id., *The Samādhi of Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present: An Annotated English Translation of the Tibetan Version of the Pratyutpanna-Buddha-Sammukhāvasthita-Samādhi-Sūtra*, Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1990.
13. Id., *Druma-kinnara-rāja-paripṛcchā-sūtra: A Critical Edition of the Tibetan (Recension A) based on Eight Editions of the Kanjur and the*

Tibetan (Recension A) based on Eight Editions of the Kanjur and the Dunhuang Manuscript Fragment, Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1992.

14. Jens Braarvig, *Akṣayamatīrdeśasūtra* 2 vols. Oslo: Solum Forlag, 1993.
15. Jonathan A. Silk, *The Origin and Early History of the Mahāratnakūṭa Tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism with a Study of the Ratnarāśīsūtra and Related Materials*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1994.
16. Michael Zimmermann, *A Buddha Within: The Tathāgatagarbhasūtra, The Earliest Exposition of the Buddha-Nature Teaching in India*, Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism, 2002.
17. Jan Nattier, *A Few Good Men: The Bodhisattva Path according to the Inquiry of Ugra (Ugraparipṛcchā)*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003.

In 1974 Teruyoshi Tanji translated the Tibetan version of this sūtra into Japanese as the seventh volume in the series of the Japanese translations of the Mahāyānasūtras. He classified the contents of the sūtra according to paragraphing of Lamotte's translation. Recent Studies on the *Śūraṃgamasūtra* have also been published:

18. Kosho Kawamura, "Sūtra Quoted in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*" (in Japanese), in *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* 20-2, 1990, pp. 54-59.
19. Kazunobu Matsuda, "Central Asian Fragments of the *Śūraṃgama-samādhisūtra* from the Hoernle Sanskrit Collection in the Indian Office Library" (in Japanese), in *Buddhist Seminar* 46, 1987, pp. (34)-(48).
20. Yoshio Kaneko, "Śūraṃgamasamādhi in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*" (in Japanese), in *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* 39-1, 1990, pp. (55)-(59).
21. Yoshio Kaneko, "Śūraṃgamasamādhi in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*" (in Japanese), in *Memoirs of the Chūo Academic Research Institute* 20, 1991, pp. 63-126.
22. Yuichi Kajiyama, "Miraculous Manifestations of the Buddha and Bodhisattva" (in Japanese), in *Bulletin of the Research Institute of Bukkyo University* 2, 1995, pp. 1-37.

All of these studies seem to start from Lamotte's works, so it is no longer necessary to praise him for his great works.

In conclusion we must also express our gratitude to Mrs. Sara Boin-Webb for translating his superior study on the Mahāyāna sūtra by this Belgian Buddhist genius. Without her hard work we cannot read Lamotte's great studies easily.

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