

Significance of the first chapter of the Laṅkāvatārasūtra

ලංකාවතාර සූත්‍රය - පළමු පරිච්ඡේදයෙහි විශේෂත්වය

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සාරසංකේපය

ලංකාවතාර සූත්‍රය සංස්කෘත භාෂාවෙන් රචිත යෝගාවාර නොහොත් විඤ්ඤාණවාදී සම්ප්‍රදායට අයත් බෞද්ධ ග්‍රන්ථයකි. මෙහි කතුවරයා හා කාලය පිළිබඳ නිශ්චිත නිගමනයක් නොවුවද එහි අන්තර්ගත කරුණු හා රචිත යැයි සැලකිය හැකි කාලය අනුව දකුණු ඉන්දියාවේ දී හෝ ලංකාවේ දී (අභයගිරි විහාරය) රචිත යැයි උපකල්පනය කරනු ලැබේ. මෙහි අන්තර්ගත කරුණු අතර තථාගත ගර්භ, ආලය විඥාන, ශුන්‍යතා, ධර්මධාතු ආදී කරුණු දකුණු ඉන්දීය බෞද්ධ සංස්කෘතියට අයත්ය.

ලංකාවතාර සූත්‍රයට ඓතිහාසික කරුණු දෙකක් දැක්විය හැකිය. පළමුවැන්න බුදුරජාණන් වහන්සේ ලංකාදීපයට වැඩම වීමයි. එම වැඩම වීමෙන් අනතුරුව රාවණ රජු ඇතුළු පිරිසට මෙම සූත්‍රය දේශනා කරන ලද බව සඳහන් වෙයි.

දෙවන කරුණ නම් මෙම සූත්‍රය මහායාන වෛජ්‍යලය සූත්‍ර ගණයට ඇතුළත් වන්නකි. බෝධි ධර්ම නිමියන් චිනයට රැගෙන ගිය පොත් අතර මෙම සූත්‍රය ද එකකි. මෙහි චීන පරිවර්තන හතරක් දක්නට ලැබෙන අතර ඒවායෙහි පරිච්ඡේද සංඛ්‍යාව ද වෙනස්ය. දැනට දක්නට ලැබෙන සම්පූර්ණ කෘතිය පරිච්ඡේද නවයකින් හා අවසාන ගාථා 884 කින් පරිමිතය. ඓතිහාසික පසුබිම සෙවීමේ දී පළමු හා අටවන පරිච්ඡේද ඉතා වැදගත්ය. පළමු පරිච්ඡේදය රාවණාරජු විසින් බුදුන් වහන්සේට ලංකාදීපයට වැඩම කරවීම සඳහා ආරාධනා කිරීමකි.

යතුරු පද:- ලංකාවතාර සූත්‍රය, රාවණා රජු, මහාවංශය, දීපවංශය, මහා විහාරය, අභයගිරිය

Keywords:- Laṅkāvatārasūtra, King Rāvaṇa, Dīpavaṃsa and Mahāvaṃsa Mahāvihāra and Abhayagiri

Introduction

The Laṅkāvatārasūtra (here after abbreviated as LKSU) is one of earliest and most influential texts of the last creative phase of Indian Buddhism, namely the Yogācāra School. The Yogācāras are also called Vijñāvādins and these names literally mean ‘those who practice meditation’. It represents the highest point of Mahāyāna philosophy and synthesizes the best elements of Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna doctrines. .

The title of the text which constitutes the subject of the work (Ārya Saddharma-Laṅkāvatārōnāma-Mahāyāna-Sūtram) -‘A Mahāyāna Sūtra, called the descent into Lanka, containing the noble orthodox teaching of Buddhism. The origin of the text is not certain, through the doctrine and compilation period of the text show that it was composed either South India or Sri Lanka. The doctrine of the text such as Tathāgata-garbha, Ālaya-Vijñāna, Sūnyatā, Dharmadhātu, self-lessness and self-realization were South Indian cultural milieu.

The LKSU or discourse on the entering into Lanka has twofold historical significance. First “Entering” probably refers to the Buddha’s coming over to the Island. The sūtra is supposed to have been delivered by the Buddha while staying there and there cannot be much doubt that Laṅkā refers to the Island of Sri Lanka where Buddhism was established during the reign of Emperor Aśoka in the third century B.C.

According to the Sri Lankan chronicles, Dīpavaṃsa and Mahāvaṃsa mentioned that the Buddha is said to have visited

the island three times during his preaching career. Emperor Aśōka sent his missionaries to introduce Buddhism and after that Buddhism was firmed the Island. The text itself was compiled during the fourth century A.D. Yet it is never mentioned in any literature belonging to the Sri Lankan Buddhist tradition. The chronicles such as Dīpavaṃsa & Mahāvaṃsa include some of the legendary material utilized in this sūtra itself.

Secondly the LKSU is one of the most important texts of the so called Mahāyāna, being included in the category called the Vaipulya-sūtras. In the East Asian Buddhist tradition, it became the most sacred text of the Soto Zen School, being introduced into China by Bodhidharma.

This is one of the nine principal Mahāyāna texts in Nepalese Buddhism, They are;

1. Aśṭasahasrikā Prajñāpāramitā sūtra.
2. Lalitavistara.
3. Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra.
4. Suvarṇaprabhāsa sūtra.
5. Gaṇḍavīyūha sūtra.
6. Thathāgathaguhyaka.
7. Samādhirāja sūtra.
8. Daśabhūmisvara sūtra.
9. Saddharmalañakāvātāra sūtra.

In China and Japan, the LKSU occupies an important position in the philosophy of Mahāyāna Buddhism as containing

the doctrines of mind only, Tathāgata-garbha and Ālayavijñāna, and again in the literature of Zen Buddhism.

Necessity of the study

Unfortunately, the significance of the title and the period of the compilation were ignored by the most competent authority on the text, D.T. Suzuki as well as other scholars. Regarding the title, Suzuki has the following to say;

“Lañkāvatāra literally “entering into Lañkā,” while Lañkā is one of the Islands in the south of the India. It is popularly identified with Ceylon, but scholars are not certain about it. “Entering’ probably refers to the Buddha’s coming over to the Island. The sūtra is supposed to have been delivered by Buddha while staying there. The dialogue takes place between him and Mahāmati who is the chief one of Bodhisattvas assembled there. It is unusual for a Buddhist sūtra to be delivered in such an out of the way place as Lañkā, a solitary Island in the middle of the Indian Ocean.....”

Suzuki has ignored the very title of the work and he is almost silent regarding the Philosophical and religious atmosphere in which the text was compiled. Considering the enormous impact of this work on East Asian Buddhism and controversies surrounding its history and compilation, it would seem appropriate to collect the material from scanty resources in order to determine the significance of the title and the historical context in which the text came to be compiled. In fact, the text was compiled during a rather complicated era in the history of Buddhism; hence a critical evaluation of the history of the text is very important.

Research problem

Even though those competent authorities on this text are ignorant of the kind of historical background of compilation of text, what kind of true background could it be?

Research Objectives

Considering the historical background of the text, and the extended ideological battles between the Theravādins and Mahāyānists staged in this part of the world during the third and fourth centuries A.D., it is clear that those competent authorities seem to have neglected ‘true’ background.

Research Methodology

Being a historical research it is mostly documentary in its spirit, critical analytical method used for careful examination of the content of the documents. Concerning this sūtra, many scholars have done researches on its philosophical doctrines without its historical context, to find out its historical context, I had to use the historical evidences in India and Sri Lanka to prove my side carefully.

Discussion

It is believed by all the researchers on the Laṅkāvatārasūtra that 1st & 8th chapters are latter additions. Chapter eight was probably done earlier than the first chapter because it already appears in the existence three Chinese translations in its shortest form. First chapter was not appeared in Guṇabhadra’s translation. It shows that the the Laṅkāvatārasūtra was compiled different period and it took time to complete the work totally in Sūtra form. There is no doubt that without these two chapters, the rest of the work appears to be a self-contained unit.

The first introductory chapter: Chapter one called Rāvaṇādyēsānā. Rāvaṇa the mythical King of Sri Lanka, who is said to have ruled Sri Lanka before the advent of the Sinhala race, invites Buddha to the island. The Sutra begins as follows;

“Thus have I heard. The blessed One stayed in the Castle of Lanka which is situated on the peak of Mount Malaya on the

great ocean and which is adorned with flowers made of Jewels of various kinds. He was with a large assembly of Bhikshus and with a great multitude of Bodhisattvas, who had come together from various Buddha-lands. The Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas, headed by the Bodhisattva Mahāmati, were all perfect masters of various Samādhis, the tenfold self-mastery, the ten powers, and the six psychic faculties, they were anointed by the hands of all the Buddhas; they all well understood the significance of the objective world as the manifestation of their own mind; they knew how to maintain various forms, teachings, and disciplinary measures, according to the various mentalities and behaviors of beings; they were thoroughly versed in the five Dharmas, the three Svabhāvas, the eight Vijñānas, and the twofold Non-ātman.” (Suzuki. 1999, p3)

This passage newly provided as an introduction to the whole scripture. In other words, in this opening chapter of the texts is followed by the description of how the Buddha, after seven-days’ stay with the ocean-dragon’s king, came ashore at Lañkā, looked up at the Lañkā mountain, and said to himself that former Buddhas had visited this island and taught their Awakened truth, and that he also would like to teach the same awakened truth, and that he also would like to teach the same awakened truth to Rāvaṇa, chief of yākṣās (beings of wilderness usually unseen to humans) and rākṣasas (demons devouring human flesh originally either humans or yākṣās transformed thus when cursed and infuriated) (Rāmāyaṇa-I, 2007, p.26)

Rāvaṇa hearing this, turns up, followed by his attendants, in front of the Buddha, turns round him three times, and solicits him to teach his awakened truth for the sake of ghosts of various forms in Lañkā. Rāvaṇa wants to hear from the Buddha especially on the meaning of the antithetical terms; Dharma and Adharma. He asks in which case these two should be forsaken,

what are dharmas and what are adharmas. Rāvaṇa's questions are answered by the Buddha. This constitutes the opening chapter, Rāvaṇa's Solicitation. It serves as an explanation of why the whole sūtra has the title, entering Lanka. On the other hand, Gunabhadra's Four-Fascicle text, which lacks this part, has no other passage which has anything to do with the specific geographic name Lanka. The scripture could be expounded without any reference to Lanka.

If this chapter on Rāvaṇa's solicitation serves as the introduction to the whole sūtra, then we must ask what role it plays in the whole scripture. First of all it was not very clear whether this "Lanka" had anything to do with the island now called Sri Lanka. The questions led me, through the help of several books, (Sirkar.D.C., 1942, p.316) two history books of the Theravāda in Sri Lanka: Dīpavaṃsa and Mahāvāṃsa. When we examine the first two chapters of the Dīpavaṃsa we can discover answers to the questions.

Dīpavaṃsa depicted the Mahāyāna Centre in the Lanka

The history of the island Lanka, according to the Dīpavaṃsa, began around the time when in India Gōtama Śākyamuni got Awakened, when Lanka was invested with yākṣās, and it was when the Buddha died a great death that Vijaya, who became the first king of Lanka, reached this island from India.(DV IX)

The first formal transmission to this island of the Buddha's teaching was conducted in the reign of King Devānampiyatissa,(247-207 B.C.), almost contemporary to King Aśoka's in India. In response to the messengers who brought a message of friendliness and gifts from King Devānampiyatissa, King Aśoka sent messengers to the island with gifts and a message that he took shelter in the three treasures: Buddha,

Dhamma and Saṅgha. With arrival of those messengers from India Tissa held the second coronation, and a month later King Aśoka's son Arahat Mahinda came to the island. (XI)

Mahinda had been ordained and was a thera or an elder monk of the Theravāda, and came to Lanka so as to convert the islanders under the reign of King Tissa, who vowed to take shelter in the three Treasures in response to King Ashoka's expectation. Soon after his arrival Mahinda succeeded in captivating their heart and had they converted. (XII)

King Tissa had the Mahāvihāra built in a suburb of the capital Anurādhapura as the place of practice and study for monks who gathered for Mahinda's guidance. (XIII, XIV)

In answer to King Tissa's conversion Mahinda sent a messenger to King Aśoka to have part of the bones of the Buddha sent to Lanka, and had a stūpa (dome) erected for the relics.

King Tissa's queen, Anulā, having taken deep shelter in the Three Treasures, finally expressed her wish for ordination to Thera Mahinda, though the King. The thera thought of his sister, Saṅghamittā, who had been ordained in Pāṭaliputra, and told King Tissa that his sister would be the right person to meet the queen's request. The King then dispatched his son Ariṭṭha as his messenger to King Ashoka and the Therī Saṅghamittā. The Therī accepted her brother's idea, and persuaded her father. (XV)

King Aśoka himself carried a branch of Bodhi tree up to the sea coast so that his daughter Therī Saṅghamittā and her party could take it to Lanka.

In the island the King and the queen came outside of Anurādhapura to welcome the branch of the Bodhi tree and the

Therī. The branch was planted in the wood of Mahāmegha were the Mahāvihāra was located. Queen Anulā and prince Ariṭṭha received the ordination to become nun and monk respectively. (XVI, XVII)

Thera Mahinda died in 199 B.C., eight years after the coronation of King Uṭṭiya, who had succeeded King Tissa after the latter's death, and toward the end of the sixtieth years of his ordination. (XVII) Therī Saṅghamittā died the next year, at the age of fifty-nine. (MV XX)

Later, King Vaṭṭagāminī Abhaya during his reign (29-17 B.C.) had erected the second monastery named Abhayagiri-vihāra at the site of Jaina temple in Anurādhapura. (XIX)

In the Mahāvihāra, on the other hand, the monks were afraid that the Tripiṭaka of sūtra, vinaya, and śāstra with their commentaries, which had been orally transmitted, might be lost. They decided and put into practice the decision to write them down for preservation. (XX)

The whole text of the Dīpavaṃsa ends with an expression to the effect that King Mahāsēna (334-361 A.D.) had to die under the wicked influences of those “shameless, evil monks” of the Abhayagiri-vihāra as the rewards of his deeds in life, and that one should avoid evil people like serpents and should try to benefit others as long as one lives. (XXII)

The Dīpavaṃsa is said to have been compiled on the basis of the history section of a commentary on the Pāli Tripiṭaka which had been preserved in the Mahāvihāra in Anurādhapura (Sihalaṭṭhakathā Mahāvāṃsa), (Hiramatsu.T, 1928). as well as with the use of a few other commentaries. It is also said the Buddhaghosa, who had come to Anurādhapura from India, lived close to the Mahāvihāra, and wrote a commentary on the Vinaya,

i.e., Samantapāsādikā, based on the historical statement of its introduction on the Dīpavaṃsa, and that he supplemented it with quotations from the Aṭṭhakathā. (Geiger.W., 1958)

Since the Samantapāsādikā is supposed to have been written in 429-430 A.D. (Adhikaram.E.W., 1953, p.5). one can conclude that the Dīpavaṃsa was compiled between 361 A.D., when the last of the Lanka kings alluded to in the text, i.e., Mahāsēna died, and 429 A.D., when Buddhaghosa began writing this Vinaya commentary.

As for the Mahāvāṃsa, the other dynastic history of Lanka, it was later about the middle or toward the end of the fifth century that it was written with the purpose of arranging, refining, and supplementing the style of the Dīpavaṃsa. (Tachibana.S., 1926) This time also the description ended with King Mahāsēna (XXXVII 50), as in the Dīpavaṃsa. Thus we can see more details in the Mahāvāṃsa than in the Dīpavaṃsa about the description of how King Mahāsēna was influenced by the “shameless evil monks” of the Abhayagiri-vihāra. We see in the latter vihāra, in contrast to the Theravāda centre Mahāvihāra, the Mahāyāna study and practice were being conducted in parallel with those of the Theravāda, criticizing the latter, and that the monks of the Mahāvihāra hated this to the extent that they attempted to have the political authorities reject the Mahāyānists.

Mahāvāṃsa depicted Mahāyāna as “Vētulya (Vaipulya) vāda”

Here are some examples;

King Sirināga-1 (249-268 A.D.) “Defeated the Vētulya doctrine, had his minister Kapila control the evil, and glorified the teachings”. (XXXVI 41).

King Gothābaya (309-322 A.D.) “Arrested sixteen monks of the Vētulya school, residents of the Abhayagiri-Vihāra, who were enemies to Jina’s teaching”.(XXXVI III).

The king “censured them and expelled them to the other shore”. (XXXVI III 112).

Besides, we see that one of the “shameless” monks who exercised “evil” influences on King Mahāsēna was a Saṅghamittā from the Cōla district of South India, who was said to be versed in the exorcism of spirits. He had one of the banished monks from the Abhayagiri-vihāra as his guide, and held anger against the Mahāvihāra monks. (XXXVI. III. 113).

Back to the Dīpavaṃsa, except for the first and second chapters, the text preceding the ninth chapter, which describes how the first Lanka king Vijaya had come from India, states the following items;

The legendary lineage of kings in India (III);

The first and the second councils for the collection of the Tripīṭaka, schisms into various branches, and Thera Mahinda being the authentic successor of the Theravāda transmission (IV.V);

The dhamma-King Ashoka taking shelter in the three treasures of Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha (VI);

A schism in the Theravāda and the third council held under the King Ashoka (VII).

Thera Moggaliputta, who had presided over the third council, having King Ashoka’s devout support, sending many monks, five as one unit, to foreign lands for propagating the Buddha Dhamma, and dispatching Thera Mahinda with four other theras to Lanka (VIII).

In the Mahāvāṃsa we read the same contents only more refined and better arranged in expression. In other words, the

main point described in these two dynastic histories of Lanka seems to lie in insisting that the Theravāda transmission held in the Mahāvihāra was quite authentic concerning the core of the teaching of the Buddha, and at the same time that evil views to disturb this transmission were emerging to prevail among the practitioners gathering in the Abhayagiri-vihāra, with the result that the Theravāda was facing a very critical situation.

A Chinese Buddhist monk of East Jin (317-420 A.D.), Faxian, seeking for Vinaya texts, left China in 399 A.D., and entered India through the western regions. After the long journey through India he came to Lanka, where he stayed for two years (410-411 A.D.), obtained the Sanskrit texts Dīrghāgama, Samyuktāgama and Mahīnśāsaka Vinaya, respectively, and returned home in 412 A.D., according to his own accounts. (Faxian's Autobiography, Taisho No.2085, Vol.51). (Huijiao., 1930). He writes that 5000 monks were dwelling in the Abhayagiri Vihāra, which stood near a big tower in the city of Anurādhapura, that for ninety days every year the Buddha's tooth was carried out to this monastery from the Buddhadanta Vihāra inside the city for people's free worship; that 2000 monks were dwelling in the Chetya vihāra, located east to the Abhayagiri-vihāra; and that 3000 monks were dwelling in the Mahāvihāra, located in the south within the city. In both the Chetya vihāra and the Mahāvihāra one eminent monk received special respect from people, and that the Mahāvihāra monk, after passing away, was treated in his cremation as an Arahant who had attained nibbāna, and had a stūpa built for him by the King. From Faxian's record we know that for the Lanka king and the people the Abhayagiri-vihāra was far from being a gathering place of evil monks as was claimed by the Mahāvihāra monks.

Correspondence points in the Dīpavaṃsa and the Rāmāyaṇa.

First we have to examine the following expressions in Dīpavaṃsa;

The great knower, knowing the true way of being, having thoroughly known it, got free from the destruction of attachment, and taught abandoning and the practice of the path.(12)

The great sage having realized the all-knowing best knowledge, the name, the designation, ‘Buddha’, ‘Buddha’, first came into being. (13)

Moment by moment, in a brief measure of time, the awakened one saw all the world; with his fivefold eye he looked at the multitudes of people. (16)

The best of humans used that knowledge free from hindrance;

The teacher free from defilement saw Lanka, the best of islands. (17)

A good place, equipped with seasons, food being good, a mine of precious metals, acquainted with former Buddhas and associated with many saints. (18)

In the island of Lanka at this very time are Yakkha-beings and Rakkhasa, all to be blamed by the Buddhas, their force can be crushed by me. (20)

After driving out the multitude of Yakkha, the flesh-eating goblins, those to be banished, I shall make that island a home of peace for humans to live in. (21)

Should those evil ones abide there as long as they live,

Some strange teaching would arise in that best island Lanka. (22)

I shall remove those beings and bring peace to multitudes of people and tell them the straightforward way, the Noble path, and then. (23)

I shall attain perfect death like the setting sun, with no clinging to anything. (24)

These descriptions seem to show the view embraced by the Theravāda practitioners of the Mahāvihāra that the suffering of Lanka islanders was taken up by Gōtama in his deep thought after he got awakened to the original way of being of self and the world and while he was making clear to himself the way of emancipation from the suffering of life and death for people of the world. Evil spirits yākṣās, who were said to be afflicting the people of Lanka, are usually considered unseen to humans; like the nocturnal spirits rākṣasas, they are said to suck blood and devour flesh from human corpses. But when we read a statement that the Buddha was afraid of strange teachings that might prosper should such beings strut around in the island, we cannot help understand that by evil spirits the Theravāda Buddhists meant Mahāyāna practitioners. When strange teachings were religions other than the Mahāyāna, like Niganthas', was it not the case that in the reign of King Aśoka Thera Moggaliputta dispatched Theras to foreign lands, including Lanka? This was what done by latter-day practitioners in such a large scale. Then we must ask if it was permissible to suppose that the Buddha had wanted to expel foreign teachings from the island.

The Dīpavaṃsa, after this, states to the effect that the Buddha came to the island from India by the use of supernatural power, expelled the terrible yākṣās that were groaning loudly and sucking human blood as well as furious rākṣasas by having them shift their dwelling place to Giri, a lonely island far out in the ocean, and returned to Urvela in Magadha, from where he had come. It was nine months after his attaining ultimate

Awakening, and when he had converted Uruvelakassapa. (35-81)

In Lanka, after Buddha returned to India, mountain snakes and marine snakes struggled for sovereignty over the island; both were nāgas with supernatural power, violent and cruel, arrogant and drunk with power despite the difference in size. Their struggles went to the extent that wherever they went everything got contaminated and burnt out. It was five years after his attaining Awakening that he felt he could not leave things as they were. Again he came to Lanka, the island which he had emptied of yākṣās, put both parties of snakes under his control, this time brought into reconciliation, and returned to the Jēta forest. (1-51)

Eight years after Buddha attained Awakening, Maṇiakkhika, king of the snakes, invited Buddha with his five hundred disciples to Lanka in return for Buddha's work as peace-maker. The snake-king received Buddha's party who came flying from the Jēta forest. Buddha came to the Mahāmegha forest and predicted that at the very site in Lanka where Bodhi trees had grown for those previous Buddha's would in future be planted the Bodhi tree beside which he had attained Awakening. (52-63)

Thus we know that the Dīpavaṃsa I and II insist in a mythical way that Lanka was a historic place previously chosen and arranged by the Buddha so that his teaching might be settled there later. Between the Dīpavaṃsa, a history book of the Theravāda Buddhism, and the Rāmāyana, an epic of Hindus, that had been composed earlier, many points of correspondence can be seen. The story in the former that Buddha expelled evil spirits that had been devastating Lanka seems to have its antecedent in the latter; the hero Rāma came to attack rākṣasa in Lanka, killed Rāvaṇa, their chief, and returned home with his beloved wife

Sītā, who had been taken away to the island. (Makhan Lal Sen., 1927). Buddha was a hero like Rāma, but unlike Rāma, killed none.

Now in the introduction of the Mahāyāna scripture LKSU, which seems to have been attached to the text later, the same Rāvaṇa, chief of the ghosts that had been expelled from Lanka to the lonely island in the ocean not to return again according to the Dīpavaṃsa, comes out to the shore to welcome the Buddha and ask the latter to teach his children. This shift of roles played by Rāvaṇa seem to show how the Mahāyāna practitioners in the Abhayagiri-vihāra criticized the way of thinking presented in the Theravāda history book as exclusive and religious. We can even go on to consider that this introduction shares the same standpoint with the text, and that the text had the title Entering Lanka based on the way of thinking shown in this introduction.

The way to enter Lanka

While the Lañkāvatārasūtra questions the significance and the way of Entering Lanka and presents its own view, the same thing had been questioned by the Theravāda text Dīpavaṃsa. One reading of the Dīpavaṃsa will make it clear. When the Buddha visited Lanka, told the ghosts as follows;

“Now Rākṣasa, Yakkha-groups, wicked ones, I give this island, all the ancient island of Giri, to you, the Lanka-inhabitants; all abide there and be good, free from trouble”.(I,72)

“This Lanka land has been an abode of humans since kalpa-times; Let many humans abide here like when it was called Ojā, Vara, or Maṇḍa”.(I,73)

“Endowed with various virtues, human life will be a good one in this island; it will be as the full moon in the sky on the night of upōsatha once the right teaching arrives”(I,74)

Gōtama then pulling the Giri island close to Lanka with a strong rope and placing the two island together like a couple of boats surrounded side by side,(I,76) told the ghosts thus;

“All of you Rākṣasa, live in the island of Giri, like the well-ripened beans which leave their abode’. (I, 77)

Then, Yakkha, as thirsty ones do toward a river in summer, ran to Giri to enter it; when none returned again, the Muni set the island free to go where it had been. (I, 78)

Yakkhas were pleased, Rākṣasas were gladdened, all having obtained a good island heartily hoped for, having no fear, all were extremely delighted, betaking themselves to the great star festival. (I, 79)

The Buddha, knowing the non-humans were happy, showed his friendliness toward them, and proclaimed their protection by him; he then walked around the island (of Lanka) clockwise, and said “Always rakkham and Yakkha groups be removed”.(I,80)

After satisfying goblins and non-humans, and establishing solid friendliness with Rakkham, the Tathāgata, who removed distress from the island, returned again to Uruvela. (I, 81)

According to the Dīpavaṃsa, it was supposed that after this, visitors to Lanka were to be free from afflictions by evil spirits; the latter were supposed to have been confined to a separate land.

But was it true? Have humans been liberated from yaksas and rākṣasas that devour human flesh and suck human blood? Was it not that evil spirits were none other than humans? And this was the question raised by the Mahāyāna scripture LKSU, especially its eighth chapter ‘Eating Meat’ (Māṃsabhakṣaṇa).

Without tackling this problem, there could not have been its introductory chapter ‘Rāvaṇa’s Solicitation’ (Rāvaṇādhyeṣaṇā). Before the introductory chapter was attached to the body text, a thorough inquiry had to be made into the problem of eating flesh and of an rākṣasa’s abandoning the rākṣasa nature. Investigation had to be made into the rākṣasa-nature of human beings. When considered this way, the scriptural title Entering Lanka suddenly comes to have a realistic tone.

Role of Rāvaṇa

Rāvaṇa is said to have ruled Lanka before advent of the Sinhala-Race. He is the lord of the rākṣasas, the ten headed King traveling with his floral celestial chariot accompany with his attendants.

Rāvaṇōhan dasagrøvo rākṣasasēndra ihāgatah /

Anugruhnāhi mē Laṅkā yē cāsmin puravāsinah //

(Ch-1, Vers-7)

In this chapter Rāvaṇa depicted as an extremely intelligent and pious person. He was realized the empty nature of the all phenomena without a great deal of effort. The great emptiness is well expressed in the dilemma of Rāvaṇa at the end of the first chapter.

After the discourse the Buddha and the sons of the Buddha vanished away in the air, leaving Rāvaṇa himself standing above in his mansion. Though he, ‘How is this? And by whom was it heard? What was it that was seen? And by whom was it seen? Where is the city? And where is the Buddha?’

“Where are those countries, those jewel-shining Buddhas, those Sugatas? Is it a dream then? Or a vision/ or is it

a castle conjured by the Gandharvas? Or is it dust in the eye, or a dream-child of a barren women or the smoke of a fire-wheel, that which I saw here?”

Then [Rāvaṇa reflected], “This is the nature as it is of all things, which belongs to the realm of Mind, and it is not comprehended by the ignorant as they are confused by every form of imagination”. (Nanjio., 1923, Pp.250-251)

After realizing, Rāvaṇa awakened in his mind, the world is nothing but his own mind and he was settled in the realm of non-discrimination. He acquired the cleverness of understanding all the texts, obtained the faculty of seeing things as they are, was no more dependent upon others and observed things excellently with his own wisdom. Rāvaṇa became a great Yogi of the discipline was able to manifest himself in all excellent forms. He had the knowledge of the characteristic aspects of every stage and thoroughly understood the stage of Buddhahood. Here Rāvaṇa has kept in highly venerated stage.

By entering Lanka is meant getting awakened to the original way of self and the world. Realization is what is meant by entering the rākṣasas world Lanka, according to the scripture. Though this investigation we know that the first chapter, while corresponding deeply with the eighth chapter, criticizes the Theravāda views shown in the Dīpavaṃsa, and that it plays a very important role as an introduction to developing the basic view of the mahāyāna scripture, the Lañkāvatārasūtra.

Conclusion

This investigation shows that the first chapter, while corresponding deeply with the eighth chapter, criticizes the Theravāda views shown in the Dīpavaṃsa, the history book of Mahāvihāra. The first chapter of the LKSU, the Rāvaṇa, chief

of the ghosts and that had been expelled from Lanka to the lonely island in the ocean not to return again according to the Dīpavaṃsa, comes out to the shore to welcome the Buddha and ask the latter to teach his children. The LKSU was depicted Rāvaṇa as an extremely intelligent, pious person who had no difficulty understanding the doctrine taught by the Buddha. The Rākṣasas while listening the Buddha's teaching, had abundant their Rākṣasa-nature such as killing human, eating flesh etc. This shift of roles played by Rāvaṇa seems to show how the Mahāyāna practitioners in the Abhayagiri Vihāra criticized the way of thinking presented in the Theravāda history book as exclusive and irreligious.

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