Final Stage of Religious Awakenment
Expressed in the 7th and 8th Grade
of Bodhisattva

(A Research into the Viewpoint of Prince Shōtoku
in Reference to Daśabhūmika-sūtra)

Kizow Inazu

I Arrangement of the Ten-Grades into two Stages

The doctrine of bodhisattva’s Ten-Grades (daśa-bhūmi) as a whole may be
admitted as a systematical explanation of the growth of human spiritual life
which strives for the fulfillment of ultimate purpose, that is, to become an
enlightened person like Buddha. At the same time, however, it must be
noticed that the ten grades have not all the same neccessary meaning, because
some of them are based upon real religious experience, while others are
constructed by mere theoretical speculations, and the former alone has abiding
significance to man’s spiritual life. In short, the ten-grades’ system contains
in itself the quality of being arranged into two stages; and actually such
arrangement has been tried since the early time of Nāgārjuna.

Concerning this problem, two remarkable viewpoints were suggested; one
was by Vasubandhu of India, and the other was by Prince Shōtoku of Japan.
As I wrote in my previous paper, Vasubandhu emphasized the experience
of the sixth grade, and drawing a line between the sixth and the seventh,
arranged the whole ten grades into two stages of “āśrayasya parāvṛttiḥ
（轉依）”, that is, conversion of consciousness; while Prince Shōtoku put entire
emphasis on attainment of the eighth, named “acala（不動）”—immovable,
and reformed the ten grades into the following two stages, namely “七地以
還”—the seventh-and-below grade, and “八地以上”—the eighth-and-above

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grade.

The purpose of this paper is to make clear the essentials of the view of Prince Shōtoku in reference to the original ten-grades’ doctrine. Whether his interpretation is reasonable or not; whether his idea has any unique characteristic or not, compared with that of leading thinkers in India and China;—to solve these problems is of consequence as well as of interest especially for Japan. It is difficult to make out whether he had read any Chinese translation of the original daśabhūmika-sūtra or not, because of the insufficiency of materials; but evidently he had accurate knowledge and understanding of the ten grades’ doctrine. Above all, the similarity in the treatment of the seventh and the eighth grade is noticiable. In the first place the idea of daśabhūmika-sūtra will be examined.

II Differentia between the 7th and 8th Grade indicated in the Daśabhūmika-sūtra

In the original ten-grades’ system an essential differentia is indicated exceptionally between the seventh and eighth grade. It is mentioned as follows:

1) abhoga (effort) and anābhoga (non-effort)

“Those various practices which have been completed with effort (abhoga) by bodhisattva for the purpose of accomplishing enlightened consciousness, since his first attainment of the primary grade up to the seventh, are fulfilled with non-effort (anābhoga), after having attained the eighth grade up to the final perfection.”

(Saṃskṛt Text) yāṇī bodhisattvena prathamaṁ bodhisattvabhūmim upādāya yāvat saptami bodhisattvabhūmim ity abhinirhritāni jñānābhinirhāra-prayogān-gānīmāṇy ashtamim bodhisattvabhūmim ārabhya yāvad atyanta paryavasānām ity anābhogena parinishpadyante// (from Radder’s text)

(Chinese Text) 佛子，菩薩住初地來，乃至七地，諸智慧所行道，以是力故，從第八菩薩地，乃至第十地，無功用行，自然滿足。（菩提流支譯 translated by Bodhiruci）

Here the ten grades are divided collectively into two stages; one includes from the first to the seventh, the other includes the eighth and above. It means that those grades which are included within each stage are treated
as of common character, while an essential difference is admitted only between the seventh and the eighth. This treatment is just the same as that of Prince Shōtoku, which will be shown in next chapter.

What then is the essential difference? It consists in ābhoga or anābhoga. Ābhoga means endeavour or effort which is mingled with self-consciousness. In man’s spiritual life his mind is more or less confused by passions and agonies before he reaches a certain stage. In such circumstances man always encourages himself and desires for perfection, yet the more he may be desirous for it the more it seems to be distant. Such mental condition is called ‘ābhoga’. When suddenly comes to him true awakening, his mind being filled with immense joy, love and wisdom, he is freed from all desires and comes to be able to complete due practices without effort. Such mental condition is called ‘anābhoga’, non-effort. As a matter of fact, however, it seemed difficult to get beyond the border between the two stages, that is, ābhoga and anābhoga. As to this question it is thus given: —

2) Intermediate Sphere between the two worlds

“As it were, the intermediate sphere which lies between the two worlds, that is, the samkliśṭa-viśuddha world and the ekānta-pariśuddha world, can never be truly got beyond unless with exercise of great comprehending power: so the intermediate line between the two kinds of bodhisattva’s practices, that is, the vyāmiśra (mingled with agonies) and the pariśuddha (perfectly purified), can never be truly transcended unless with exercise of great resolution, exertion, wisdom and comprehending power.”

The mental condition of man who has attained the seventh grade is still
mingled with agonies, so it is called 'vyāmīśra' or 'saṃkliṣṭa-viśuddha'. Vyāmīśra and saṃkliṣṭa are of similar meaning, that is, being mingled with passions; and viśuddha means that whenever any passion or agony rises in his mind it is purified by the power of wisdom one after another, and there always needed a spiritual endeavour, namely ābhoga. While the mental condition of him who has attained the eighth grade is called 'pariṣuddha', fully purified, and there needed no endeavour, namely anābhoga. The ‘antarika’ (intermediate), however, is difficult to be got beyond.

As to the question in what way bodhisattva’s mind can be purified on the primary stage, the conception of ‘bodhi-parināma’ is introduced:

3) Bodhi-parināma (菩提轉換)

“Vimukticandra said, ‘Then should it be admitted that on the seventh grade all the practices of bodhisattva are stained with the movement of passions and agonies? Vajragarbha said, ‘It must be noticed that all the practices of bodhisattva, who has attained the first grade, get apart from the mixed state with agonies by the power of bodhi-parināma, converting to bodhi; and according to the same circumstances of way, it can not be said that on the seventh grade all the practices of bodhisattva are fully gone beyond the action of agonies.”

(CT) 解脫月菩薩言，佛子，七菩薩地，為是染行，為是淨行。金剛藏菩薩言，佛子，從初地來，菩薩所行，皆離煩惱染業。何以故，為向阿耨多羅三藐三菩提故。隨道所行，如分平等故，不名為過，七地煩惱行。

As soon as bodhi-citta, for bodhi aspiring mind, awakens from the innermost depth of a sattva (human being), he becomes really a bodhisattva, and filled with immense joy; it is the first bodhisattva-grade. Since then the bodhi-citta always works in him, and converts all agonies risen in his mind into the bodhi-nature, like the water-purifying jewell purifies impure
water. Such function of bodhi-citta is called ‘bodhi-pariṇāma’, translated into Chinese as 菩提圓向; and thus gradually he reaches the seventh grade, yet he is not fully freed from all kinds of agonies. Then what sort of agony does still remain in him?

4) Not Saṁkleśa and not Niḥkleśa

“Generally speaking, bodhisattva who has stood on this seventh grade is fully got beyond all of the passionate agonies, including greed and the like; and therefore he who goes about on this dūraṅgama (far-reaching) bodhisattva-grade must be called ‘neither saṁkleśa nor niḥkleśa’, that is, neither being connected with agonies nor being separated from agonies. What does it mean? On one side he must be called ‘na saṁkleśa’, not being connected with agonies, because all of the passionate agonies do not arise in his mind, and on the other side he must be called ‘na niḥkleśa’, not being separated from agonies, because he desires for tathāgata’s wisdom and not yet his intention be fulfilled.”

As the bodhi-nature ripens in the person of bodhisattva, all of agonizing passions, such as greed, anger etc., gradually vanish from his mind, and at last be extinguished; therefore he who has attained the seventh grade is called ‘a-saṁkleśa’, no more connected with passionate agonies. Still, however, remains a certain agony in him. It is no more like the passionate one, but something higher spiritual agony which is mentioned as ‘tathāgatajñānā-bhilāśa’ and ‘aparipūrṇābhiprāya’, that is, always being desirous for Buddha’s wisdom, and conscious of not yet being fulfilled. Just the same characteristic

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of the seventh grade is also remarked by Prince Shōtoku.

Such boundary of the seventh grade is explained by parables:

5) Manushya-bhāva (Human-existence)

“As it were, when the divine emperor riding on a jewelled elephant goes round the four lands and inspects the evils of men’s suffering, poverty and agonies, though he is not stained with those evils, yet he has not yet fully transcended human-existence (manushya-bhāva); but when he, leaving human-existence, comes into the Brahma-world and riding on a celestial car easily looks and watches thousand worlds, then he reveals the form of Brahma and is admitted as no more a human.”

The manushya-bhāva' (human existence or body) of the divine emperor corresponds to the ‘sattva-kāya’ (sattva-dody) of bodhisattva, which remains in the personality of bodhisattva as long as he stays in the seventh grade, and disappears on his attaining the eighth grade.

This problem is explained by another parable:

6) sattva-kaya in bodhisattva

“As it were, a person (purusha) who is asleep and getting into dream imagines himself fallen in a great flood, may begin to make great struggles with anxiety in order to across it, and by the very great struggles he may awake, and as soon as awakened he gets freed from all struggles, anxieties and fears. Similarly bodhisattva who feels within himself a sattva-kāya which is fallen in the four great floods of sufferings and agonies, begins to make a great struggles with anxiety in order to get beyond it and more-
over to achieve the wisdom of the all-knowing Buddha; and as soon as he, having had vigorous endeavour, attains this eighth acala (immovable) bodhisattva’s grade, he gets freed from all efforts, namely ābhoga. To him whatever consciousness of duality or limitation by all means does not appear.”

Here the final stage of man’s spiritual awakenmant is clearly expressed. There the ‘sattva-kāya’ of man vanishes into the bodhi-nature and changes its quality, like the river water changes into sea tide. The person of bodhisattva has two sides; one is the character of bodhi, which includes immeasurable love and wisdom and all kinds of virtues, and the other is the character of sattva, including sufferings and agonies. In the course of bodhisattva’s life, with the increase of bodhi-character, sattva-character becomes gradually lessened in his person and at last merged into the former, and thus he attains the eighth grade. On the seventh grade, his conversion not yet being fulfilled, bodhisatta feels the sattva-kāya still surviving within him, and urged by this painful feeling, more ardently he makes effort to conquer it. Fortunately for him such sattva-kāya, which seems to be unconquerable, is not real existence, but it is likened to dream. So if only the true wisdom fully awakens, sattva-kāya loses itself, and bodhisattva comes into unity, or advaitam, with tathāgata’s enlightened person; as its
result, he gets freed from all efforts (ābhoga) which are mingled with self-consciousness, and be able to fulfill what ought to be done with non-effort (anābhoga). Such way of conduct is also called “vipākatās” (異熟), meaning as natural as ripened fruit. In consequence the essential feature of this stage is mentioned as follows:

7) Jñānabhūmi (智地), Avivartya (不退轉) and Anābhoga (無功用)

“This eighth jñāna-bhūmi of bodhisattva is called acala (immovable) because it is undestroyable; it is called avaivartya-bhūmi, because it can never be withdrawn from Buddha’s jñāna; …… it is called anābhoga-bhūmi, because it is the result of what formerly accomplished.”

From above quoted sentences it is induced that in the ten-grades’ doctrine an essential differentia is remarked between the seventh and the eighth grade, and that there a real experience of spiritual awakenment is vividly expressed; and these distinctive ideas are similarly found in the ‘Commentary on Śrīmālā-sūtra’ of Prince Shōtoku. At the same time the viewpoint, which I mentioned in my previous paper, “in the original ten-grades’ system the differentiation between the seventh and the eighth is not so clear”, should be corrected.

III The View of Prince Shōtoku

(A) Subject of the ‘Commentary on Śrīmālā-sūtra

The Śrīmālā-sūtra (勝鬘經), which had been produced in India in later period in the history of mahāyāna Buddhism, was accepted by Prince Shōtoku (聖德太子) through Chinese translation perhaps in the beginning of the seventh century. The prince seemed to be inspired by this sūtra and wrote an excellent commentary, which laid foundation to later progress of Buddhism in Japan.
The subject of the original Śrīmālā-sūtra is to explain the ideal way of bodhisattva, and it is developed by dialogues between Śrīmālā and Buddha; while the Commentary of Prince Shōtoku is not a mere interpretation of sūtra, but has its own subject, which consists in expounding the profound personality of a person who has attained the eighth grade of bodhisattva. In the sūtra the idea of ten-grades does not appear, whereas in the Commentary it is adopted as an important basis. There, first of all, the whole ten-grades are reformed into two stages, namely “the seventh-and-below grade” (七地以迄) and “the eighth-and-above grade” (八地以上), and the present situation of Śrīmālā being appointed on the seventh, she aspires for the eighth-and-above, and then the final stage is clarified as a problem of human life. It is just the same idea as that of original ten-grades’ system. The following sentences selected from the Commentary will bear witness to it.

(B) Principal theses from the Commentary

1) Appointment of the situation of Śrīmālā

(a) “The metaphysical form (or body) of Śrīmālā is beyond conception, while her present appearance is situated on the seventh grade.”

(Original Text) 勝鬘本是不可思議，但迹在七地。

(b) “Being expressed as ‘acceptance of saddharma’, it can be realized alone on the eighth-and-above stage; therefore it is said that its realization is beyond her own standing for Śrīmālā. The present appearance of Śrīmālā is situated on the seventh grade, yet in Sūtra she says, ‘I would never forget to accept saddharma’: It means that, as she always aspires for attainment of the eighth-and-above stage, so would not forget the mind to accept saddharma; but it does not mean not to forget what has already been obtained.”

(OT) 既云領受正法，是八地以上行。故云他分行。今勝鬘迹在七地，而言不忘者，但願八地以上故，領受正法之心，暫不敢忘。非言自得而不忘也。

In Śrīmālā-sūtra the highest ideal of bodhisattva is expressed in one thesis of “領受正法”, which is supposed to be a translation of saṃskṛt saddharma-saṃgraha, meaning “to fully accept Buddha’s saddharma” or “acceptance of Buddha’s saddharma”. As saddharma (正法) means the truth revealed in
Buddha’s sambodha (正覺), so ‘to accept saddharma’ means to accept Buddha’s sambodha, i.e. fulfillment of bodhi. Consequently it is reasonable that the highest ideal of bodhisattva is indicated by this thesis.

In the Prince’s Commentary the significance of the very thesis is more realistically developed by adopting a new viewpoint, that is, the ten-grades’ system. First of all an unique meaning is given to the conception of 捕受 (to accept or acceptance), and it is defined that to accept Buddha’s saddharma is the realization on the eighth-and-above stage. At the same time it is also defined that Śrīmālā represents the seventh grade and her ideal way is to aspire for the eighth-and-above. Then further insight into the essential difference between the two stages is given as follows:

2) Realization and Aspiration
(a) “In the second explanation it is mentioned about three kinds of realization and three kinds of aspiration. Three realizations are fulfilled on the eighth-and-above, while three aspirations belong to the seventh-and-below. Three kinds of realization are as follows; — the first is the realization of saddharma-acceptance, the second is the realization of mahāyāna, and the third is the realization of pāramitā. It can not be said that the seventh-and-below stage is not mahāyāna, but there the significance of ‘mahā’ (great or big) not yet be manifested; because bodhisattvas who are staying in the seventh-and-below stage are similar to those who stay in the two yānas, namely the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha, in cutting off the bond of agonies and in getting beyond the three folds of worldly spheres, yet inferior to those who are standing on the eighth-and-above stage and have no other particular destination but to enter into unity with different flowings of sattvas.

(OT) 就第二釋中，凡有三行三欲。三行是八地以上行，三欲謂七地以還欲。三行者，
一捕受正法行，二大乘行，三波羅密行。七地以還，非不大乘，但大義未顯。何者，七地
以還，斷結與二乘齊，同出三界，而未及，八地以上，冥合衆流，更無異趣。
(b) “bodhisattvas who are staying in the seventh-and-below stage also exercise all of what to be done, only they can not complete them simultaneously in one mind; therefore it can not be said that they accept. Sad-
dharma-acceptance, mahāyāna and pāramitā, these three are defined to be realized on the eighth-and-above stage; while three aspirations mean the desirous mind which longs for the attainment of these three realizations, so they are admitted to be on the seventh-and-below stage. Moreover all of these three realizations are the activities in the One Heart (一心) which reveals itself on the eighth-and-above stage.”

Although three kinds of realization are displayed, after all they come into one realization, because both of mahāyāna and pāramitā are included in saddharma-acceptance; and in the course of bodhisattva’s life, which covers ten-grades, the essential differentia between two stages consists in the aspiration and the realization; that is, the best way on the seventh-and-below stage is to aspire for the acceptance of Buddha’s saddharma, which can be realized on the eighth-and-above. Then there must be the awakenment of something spiritual which comes forth from the depth of human being and makes such realization possible. It is clearly shown as the One Heart (一心).

3) Manifestation of the One Heart

“The opinion which now I adopt is as follows; — as for the saddharma-acceptance, that which is able to ‘accept’ (攝受) is the One Heart, which manifests itself on the eighth-and-above stage and fulfills all virtues simultaneously in one mind; and it is called ‘sad’ (正), meaning true or righteous, because all the virtues which are practiced accord to reason and not being wrong; also it is called ‘dharma’ (法), because they afford norm to all living being. All the virtues which are practiced on those grades, from the first to the seventh, must be also called ‘sad’ because they are truly stainless, and also called ‘dharma’ because they afford norm to men; yet can not be mentioned ‘accepted’, because on that stage man can not fulfill all virtues simultaneously in one mind and also not yet comprehend all objects from all sides.”
Saddhāmra is the truest nature of human being, and at first it is hidden deep in man's heart, like the essential sweet nature in unripened fruit. In such circumstances man's heart always feels some agonies, and on one hand being urged by those agonies, on the other hand being encouraged by love of the enlightened person, man's heart begins to aspire for its perfection. After then, at a certain stage the implicit truth, saddhāmra, reveals itself in man's heart, and it reaches its maturity; or it has been often likened to blooming flower which is promised to fruit. In this stage man's heart is at one with Buddha's saddhāmra, and it is called the One Heart, which thereafter has been inherited by Buddhists in Japan and especially by Kūkai (空海) and Shinran (親鸞) it was most clearly manifested. When this Heart reveals itself in man, he becomes the 'man of dharma-kāya (法身)', that is, man to whom saddhāmra is his body. In the Prince's Commentary it is given as follows:

4) Oneness of Heart and Saddhāmra: Dharma-kāya

"One who has attained the eighth-and-above stage is already a man of dharma-kāya; therefore in his person saddhāmra itself which includes all virtues is his heart, and his heart itself is saddhāmra. Heart and saddhāmra is at one, there is no duality: so that saddhāmra, which includes all virtues, itself is Heart, and Heart itself is saddhāmra. He who stays in the seventh-and-below stage not yet reveals dharma-kāya, and also not be able to complete all virtues simultaneously in one mind; therefore to him it can not be so, that is, his heart and saddhāmra can not be at one.

(OT) 八地以上，既是法身故，以萬行正法為心，以心為萬行正法。心法一體，更無二相，故萬行正法即是心，心即萬行正法也。七地以下，自未法身，且不能一念備修，故不得然。

Next comes further contemplation of dharma-kāya, that is, the supreme personality revealed in man.