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THE CONCEPT OF *GOTRA*
IN THE *UTTARATANTRA* OF MAITREYA

The pursuit of philosophy is considered to be useful in moulding our way of life or view of life. It is considered useful for searching the underlying principle guiding our way of life. The purpose of the Buddhist philosophical thought is in general the social uplift of the masses at large. Here also the *Mahāyāna* Buddhism aims at public good rather than private good. Considered from this point of view, this branch of Buddhist religion may be treated from two different angles viz., a spiritual discipline and cultural activity. These two, when combined together serve a very useful purpose as far as the general aspirations of the masses are concerned for their social uplift. This type of the cultural activity is primarily aimed at raising the masses to a higher level of consciousness – meaning thereby that even lay man (*prthagjana*) may also attain the position of *Bodhisattva*.

The *Uttaratantra* of Maitreya fulfils these aspirations. It is a *Mahāyāna* text with Mādhyamika bearings in general. This text was upto now little known to the scholarly world but this has recently been edited by H.S. Prasad under the title *The Uttaratantra of Maitreya* – which contains a comprehensive introduction, E.M. Johnston's Sanskrit text and E. Obermiller's English translation. The *Uttaratantra* studies the concept of *gotra* in depth, suggests the way of removal of the defiling elements and proposes a new interpretation of the concepts of *Tathāgatagarbha* and *Śūnyatā*. The text is divided

into five chapters and carries a detailed commentary by Ācaryāsaṅga. The aim of the present paper is to examine *gotra* as a substantive basis of consciousness of the sentient beings, the defiling elements and the *Tathāgatagarbha* concepts. The entire paper is solely based on the commentary of Ācaryāsaṅga. In the course of our study an attempt will be made to search for a new interpretation of the concepts of the *Tathāgatagarbha* and *Śūnyatā* in the light of the *Uttaratantra*.

The transition of Buddhist philosophical thought from *Hīnayāna* to *Mahāyāna* is basically a major breakthrough in the sense that the former was more concerned with the welfare of certain individuals only whereas the latter desired the welfare of all. The *Yogācāra* and the *Mādhyamika* are the two principal schools of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. The *Yogācāra* school of philosophy while denying the reality of the external objects accepts consciousness as the sole reality. The *Mādhyamika* school believes in the reflective awareness of things and teaches *sarvadṛṣṭiśūnyatā* as an absolute mode of Reality. Both these schools i.e., *Yogācāra* and the *Mādhyamika* believe in the *gotra* (lineage) theory. The *Yogācāra* treats *gotra* as something different from the concept of *ālayavijñāna* (store house consciousness) whereas the *Mādhyamika* philosophy treats it as par with essence (*tathatā*, *dharmatā*) of the Ultimate Reality, uniform (*ekarasa*, *samarasa*), eternal (*nitya*), immutable (*asaṃskṛta*), the Absolute (*dharmadhātu*), the metaphysical principle of Absolute (*svabhavakāya*, *dharmakāya*) of spiritual nature (*cittasvabhāva*) and total essence of all the *dharmas*. It is very important to note here that the concept of *gotra* theory is of immense significance in the development of both these important schools of *Mahāyāna*, since the *gotra* is the locus of all appearances or thought constructions. It may be interpreted as a substratum (*āśraya* or *ālambana*) for all the sentient beings of the world and all the phenomenal objects of the empirical world.

Though there are frequent references to the *gotra* theory scattered in various philosophical works of Buddhism, the *Uttaratantra* deals with the *gotra* concept in a very systematic way. This is attributed to Maitreya; its other names are *Ratnagotravibhāga Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra* or simply *Ratnagotravibhāga*. The whole of the text is divided into five chapters (*paricchedas*). The first chapter i.e., *Tathāgata-*

garbhādhikāra is very important because it has an exhaustive commentary by Asaṅga.

The *Uttarantra*¹ is a text with *Mādhyamika* leanings. The main purpose of the *Uttarantra* is to explain the concept of *gotra*, which is variously translated as family, clan, spiritual lineage, germ, seed, class, category, mine and matrix. As it has already been pointed out above, this concept is interpreted as a basic substratum (*āśraya*) of all the sentient beings. According to this text, it is quite possible that all the sentient beings can attain the position of a Bodhisattva. The concept of *gotra* is equal to *tathāgatagarbha*, *dharmadhātu*, *dharmakāya*, *dharmatā*, *niḥsvabhāva* and *sūnyatā*. In the *Yogācāra Vijñānavāda* this concept is different from the concept of *ālayavijñāna* or *śadāyatana*. But if we look at the earlier schools of Buddhist philosophy, we find that there is a constant development in the name of *prāpti* theory (*sarvāstivādins*) and the *bīja* theory and *ālayavijñāna* are different theories. They are the substratum (*āśraya*) of all phenomenal objects including the sentient beings, on which all the different modes of appearances, characteristic and the like may be superimposed. According to Obermiller², the concept of *ālayavijñāna* was replaced by the idea of *gotra*. Among the numerous forms of *gotra* the two are the most important ones, viz., *Prakṛtisthagotra* and *Samudānitagotra*, (or *paripuṣṭa* or *abhisamskṛta*). When the *Samudānitagotra* is removed from all its defiling elements, it becomes *prakṛtistha gotra*, i.e., it attains a higher level of consciousness.

Coming to *gotra* itself, the *Uttarantra* right in the beginning starts with a category of the people, who may not be desirous of *Nirvāṇa*, who might have given up all aspiration for freedom, but still they might be desirous of the phenomenal world (*saṃsāra*)³. Apart from this category, the *Uttarantra* also talks of four types of people,

1. H.S. PRASAD, *The Uttarantra of Maitreya*, Bibliotheca Indo-Buddhica, No. 79, Sri Satguru Publications, Delhi, 1991, p. 2.

2. E. OBERMILLER, *The Sublime Science of the Great Vehicle to Salvation Being a Manual of Buddhist Monism*, *Ibid.*, Ed. H.S. Prasad, p. 225.

(Cf. «The conception of a store-consciousness containing the seeds of all the elements was replaced by him by the idea of Essence of buddhahood, the fundamental element of Absolute as existing in every living being»).

3. Cf. Asaṅga on *Uttarantra* 1.33, *Ibid.*, p. 96.

who are incapable of intuiting and realizing the germ of Buddhahood. They are (i) the worldlings endowed with great desires (*icchantika*), (ii) the heretics (*tīrthyas*), (iii) the *śrāvakas* and (iv) *pratyekabuddhas*. The *Uttaratantra* also elaborately discusses the four different types of defilements which are associated with the above mentioned category of people. In the four types of people there exists four kinds of impediments to the attainment of the Buddha's cosmic bodies (*dharmakāya*). These impediments are known as (i) *pratyayalakṣaṇa*, (ii) *hetulakṣaṇa*, (iii) *sambhavalakṣaṇa* and (iv) *vibhavalakṣaṇa*⁴. When all these four different types of defilements of the four types of above mentioned people are removed, they are able to achieve the *Śubhapāramitā*, the *Ātmapāramitā*, the *Sukhapāramitā* and the *Nityapāramitā*. As it has been already observed earlier, the main purpose of the *Uttaratantra* is to raise the ordinary people's consciousness to a higher degree of consciousness, by which they may obtain the knowledge of the *Tathāgata*. The *Uttaratantra* in its epistemological approach tries to enumerate all such obstructions by which the ordinary people cannot obtain the Germ of Buddhahood (*Tathāgatagarbha*).

Asaṅga in his commentary on *Uttaratantra* raises a number of issues, which are directly or indirectly related to the defiling elements. These are big hurdles in obtaining the higher degree of consciousness. Asaṅga, while talking of a number of defiling elements, first of all raises a basic issue of our obsession for the name and form of the phenomenon and that is the root cause of all our miseries⁵. Another source of moral defilement is the false doctrine and doubt which are preceded by the views maintaining the existence of a real individuality⁶. Asaṅga tries to point to out to our habit of maintaining a particular

mokṣamārgapratihatāsā aparinirvāṇagotrakāḥ sattvā ye saṃsāram
evecchanti na nirvāṇaṃ tan niyatipatitāś cehādhārmikā eva.

4. Cf. Asaṅga on *Uttaratantra* 1.36, p. 100.

āsāṃ punaś ca catasṛṇāṃ tathāgatadharmakāya... bodhisattvānām ime catvāraḥ
paripanthā bhavanti. tad yathā pratyalakṣaṇaṃ hetulakṣaṇaṃ sambhavalakṣaṇaṃ
vibhivalakṣaṇaṃ iti.

5. Cf. Asaṅga on *Uttaratantra* 1.8., *Ibid.*, p. 76.

tatra duḥkhamūlaṃ samāsto yā kācid bhaveṣu nāmarūpābhir nirvṛttiḥ.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

kleśamūlaṃ yā kācit satkāyābhiniveśapūrvikā dṛṣṭivicikitsā ca.

view point, which turns out to be a wrong view point, when it is subjected to all sorts of critical questions. This does not stop here but it constantly grows in us (like a sprout) as a part and parcel of our character. It is only the power of the sword of the Buddha's Wisdom and Commiseration which can cut down this sprout⁷. Another important defilement in our way to raise our level of consciousness to a higher degree can be understood by our excessive attachment or obsession for any nomenclature. Owing to excessive attachment towards the nomenclature, the worldly people (*bāla*), do not obtain the knowledge of *Tathāgata*, do not experience *Tathāgata*, do not directly see *Tathāgata*⁸. Then realizing the feeble character of these worldly people, the lord Buddha, through his divine knowledge, free from every kind of attachment, perceives the Absolute Essence, as it has its abode in all living beings, and becomes possessed of thoughts peculiar to the spiritual teacher. Then he thinks of coming to their rescue knowing fully well that they do not rightly possess the knowledge of the *Tathāgata*. Then by giving them the noble path he removes all the fetters of being excessively attached to the nomenclatures so that these people (*bāla*) may rightly possess the knowledge of *Tathāgata*. All these worldly people through the acquisition of the noble path (*ārya-mārga*) can remove all the bonds caused by the false conceptions⁹. Aśaṅga discusses the situation in which all the bonds caused by the false conceptions have been removed, this situation

7. *Ibid.* pp. 76-77.

nāmarūpasamgrahitaṃ duḥkham abhinirvṛtilakṣaṇatvād aṅkurasthāniyaṃ
veditavyam. tac chettrtve tathāgatajñānakaruṇayoḥ śaktir
asidṛṣṭāntenopamitā veditavyā.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.

atha ca punaḥ saṃjñāgrāhavinibaddhā bālā na jānanti na prajānanti nānubhvantī
na sāksāt kurvanti tathāgatajñānam.

Cf. also Candrakīrti on *Madhyamakāśāstra* 1.3 (*Prasannapadā*), Ed. Dwarkadas
Shastri, Varanasi, 1983, p. 18.

yo hi saṃjñāyāṃ saṃjñāṃ parijānāti saṃjñābandhanam evāsya tad bhavati.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

yan nv aham eṣāṃ sattvānāṃ āryeṇa mārgopadeśena sarvasaṃjñākṛtabandhanā-
panayanaṃ kuryāṃ yathā svayam evāryamārgabalādhanena mahatiṃ saṃjñā-
granthiṃ vinirvartya tathāgatajñānaṃ pratyabhi jānīran. te tathāgatamārgopadeśena
sarvasaṃjñākṛtabandhanāni vyapanayanti.

becomes of help to all living beings¹⁰. When all the bonds caused by the false conceptions have been removed, even the knowledge of *Tathāgata* becomes redundant (*apramāṇam*) – this is a stage in which all the sentient beings transcend both the *Sanjñā* and *Sanjñin*. It may be pointed out that when one acquires the knowledge of *Tathāgata*, the knowledge of *Tathāgata* is not perceived as a separate entity, on the contrary, when one has got rid of this conception, the Divine Spirit of the Omniscient appears without hindrance to one's own transcendental introspection¹¹.

Uptil now we have talked about a number of defilements which are hindrances in the way of realizing the Absolute. According to the *Uttaratantra* even the *Śūnyatādr̥ṣṭi* is also a great hindrance in the realization of the Absolute. While talking of those, who have an inclination towards *śūnyatā*, the *Uttaratantra* enumerates four types of people who are unable to directly see the *Tathāgata*. It may be observed that the *Uttaratantra*, while elaborately dealing with the concept of *gotra*, presents a new interpretation of the *Tathāgata* theory. We have already said that this *Tathāgatagarbha* is the substratum of the whole of the phenomena including the sentient beings. It is the foundation (*niśraya*, *ādhāra*, *pratiṣṭhā*), the support and the substratum of the immutable elements. It is also the foundation, support and substratum of the elements that are produced by causes and conditions, which are disunited (in their plurality) and are differentiated and separated from each other¹². The *Uttaratantra* in its new interpretation of the *Tathāgatagarbha* theory associates it with these new concepts i.e., (i) eternal (*nitya*), (ii) bliss (*śubha*) (iii) unity (*ātman*) and (iv) purity

10. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

apanīteṣu ca sarvasamjñākr̥tabandhaneṣu tat tathāgatājñānam apramāṇam bhavati sarvajagad upajīvyam iti.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

api tu samjñāgrāhataḥ tathāgatājñānam na prajñāyate. samjñāgrāhavigamāt punaḥ sarvajñānānam svayambhūjñānam asaṅgataḥ prabhavati.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 141.

tasmād bhagvaṃs tathāgatagarbho niśraya ādhāraḥ pratiṣṭhā sambaddhanām avinirbhāgānām amukta jñānānām asaṃskṛtānām dharmānam. asaṃbaddhānām api bhagavan vinirbhāgadharmaṇām muktajñānānām saṃskṛtānām dharmānām niśraya ādhāraḥ pratiṣṭhā tathāgatagarbha iti.

(*sukha*). As already pointed out, there are four different types of people who are unable to realize the Absolute (*Tathāgatagarbha*) because all of them are hampered by some error or the other. The *Uttarantra* describes these four types of people as: (i) ordinary worldly beings (*prthagjana*), (ii) the *Śrāvakas* (iii) the *Pratyekabuddhas* and (iv) the *bodhisattvas*, who have recently entered the vehicle. The Essence of Buddha (*Tathāgatagarbha*) is not accessible to those who have fallen into the error of maintaining the existence of real individuals, to those whose mind deviates from the principle of nothingness (*Śūnyatā*)¹³. The fault of the ordinary worldly beings is that they have fallen into the error of maintaining the existence of real individuals. Next to these, even the *Śrāvakas* and the *Pratyekabuddhas* have also fallen a prey to a misconception. In a nutshell, what the *Uttarantra* wants to convey in this discussion is like this: the *Śrāvakas* and the *Pratyekabuddhas* misunderstand the *Tathāgatagarbha* as non-eternal (*anitya*), non-bliss (*duḥka*), non-*ātman*, (*anātman*) and non-auspicious (*aśubha*). In their misunderstanding of the concept of *Tathāgatagarbha* they are endowed with an error (cf. *viparyāsa*, change), *viparyaya* (contrariety) whereas as a matter of fact, according to the *Uttarantra* *Tathāgatagarbha* should be rightly understood as eternal (*nitya*), bliss (*sukha*) *ātman* (*ātman*), and auspicious (*śubha*). It may be pointed out that in this whole discussion the term *Tathāgatagarbha* is accompanied by the above said four adjectives, i.e., *nitya*, *sukha*, *ātman* and *śubha*. The *Uttarantra* further observes in this connection that the Essence, what is characterized as the Absolute Eternity, Bliss, Unity and Purity is not accessible to any of the *Śrāvakas* and the *Pratyekabuddhas*, since they find pleasure in venturing on the path that is not favourable to the attainment of the Cosmic Body¹⁴.

In the present context, first of all, it must be observed that in the *Uttarantra* the concept of *Tathāgatagarbha* has been associated

13. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

agocarō 'yam bhagavaṃs tathāgatagarbhaḥ satkāyadr̥ṣṭipatitānāṃ viparyasābhiratānāṃ śūnyatāvīkṣiptacittānāṃ iti.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

with the positive aspect of life i.e., eternal (*nitya*), bliss (*sukha*), ātman (*ātman*) and auspicious (*śubha*). Seemingly it appears that it is a radical departure from the earlier notions of the term *Tathāgatagarbha*, though the scholars like Takasaki¹⁵ maintain that the spiritual discipline based on the *Tathāgatagarbha*, there is an entirely new and later development of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. Seen from this point of view of the *Śūnyatā* of the *Mādhyamikas* it appears that the whole exercise on their part of the dialectics in the form of a reflective awareness leads a person to a stumbling block – a point from which there is no return and which in itself is an end. A study of the *Mādhyamika* literature reveals that a sort of negative attitude towards life is contained in its philosophical ideas. That type of the negative attitude has relegated the religious and ethical ideas to a secondary position. Moreover, this type of attitude in no way helps to develop a view of life or a world view.

As far as the meaning and scope *Śūnyatā* is concerned there is a lot of literature in the *Mādhyamika* philosophy. Here we are going to examine, as to what are the views of the *Uttaratantra* with regard to *Śūnyatā*. The *Uttaratantra* maintains that there is no difference between those who believe in the substantiality of the individuality (*pudgaladr̥ṣṭayaḥ*) and those who are heretics¹⁶. According to *Uttaratantra*, there are certain sentient beings, who take pride in bolding *Śūnyatā* as view point (*dr̥ṣṭi*). They think it to be an absolute principle. According to these even the medium of salvation is also

tatra viparyāsābhiratā ucyante śrāvaka-pratyekabuddhāḥ. kasmāt. te'pi hi nitye tathāgatagarbhe saty uttaribhāvayitavye tat nityasaṃjñābhāvanāviparyeṇānityasaṃjñābhāvanābhiratāḥ. sukhe tathāgatagarbhe saty uttaribhāvayitavye tat sukhasaṃjñābhāvanāviparyeṇa duḥkhasaṃjñābhāvanābhiratāḥ. ātmani tathāgatagarbhe saty uttaribhāvayitavye tad ātmasaṃjñābhāvanāviparyeṇānātmasaṃjñābhāvanābhi ratāḥ. śubhe tathāgatagarbhe saty uttaribhāvayitavye tat śubhasaṃjñābhāvanāviparyeṇāśubha saṃjñābhāvanābhiratāḥ. evam anena paryāyeṇa sarvaśrāvaka-pratyekabuddhānām api dharmakāyaprāptividhuramārgabhiratvād agocaraḥ sa paramanīyasukhātmaśubhalakṣaṇo dhātur ity uktam.

15. TAKASAKI, JIKIDO, *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga (Uttaratantra). Being a Treatise on the Tathāgatagarbha Theory of Mahāyāna Buddhism*, Rome, 1966, pp. 32-33 (quoted by Prasad, H.S. *Ibid.*, p. 6).

16. Asaṅga on *Uttaratantra* 1.33. *Ibid.*, p. 96.

regarded as *Śūnyatā*. Here Asaṅga maintains that the substantiality of the individuality is a great blunder as great as the Sumeru mountain. However, those, who proudly cling to the conception of the *Śūnyatā* as a absolute principle are committing a greater error¹⁷. The *Uttaratantra* also observes that these are certain *Bodhisattvas*, who have recently entered the vehicle, their mind is deviating from the *Śūnyatā*¹⁸. Such people are deprived of the essence of Buddha in respect to Universal Relativity. It must be noted that the concept of *Śūnyatā* has been grossly misunderstood right from the earliest days of Buddhism because it is said that there are some, according to whom, *Śūnyatā* is to be recognized and contemplated as a separate reality, differing from matter and other elements¹⁹.

We find that the *Uttaratantra* right from the beginning has been talking about the concept of *gotra*, the *Tathāgatagarbha* theory and *Śūnyatā*. Here a question arises: what is the relation between them? From the study of the *Uttaratantra* it appears that they are two sides of the same coin. We have seen earlier in this paper that when all the defilements are removed; one reaches the stage of a *Bodhisattva*. This shows that when this stage arrives, the level of consciousness, i.e. the *gotra* reaches the higher degree of consciousness of a *Bodhisattva*. As far as the relation between *Tathāgatagarbha* and *Śūnyatā* is concerned, the *Uttaratantra* observes that the knowledge *Tathāgatagarbha* is the same as the knowledge of *Śūnyatā*²⁰.

We have studied the concept of *gotra*, defilements and the

17. *Ibid.*, p. 96.

śūnyatādṛṣṭayaś cābhimānikā yeṣāṃ iha tad vimokṣamukhe'pi śūnyatāyāṃ mādyamānānāṃ śūnyatā eva dṛṣṭir bhavati yān adhikṛtyāha. varaṃ khalu kāśyapa sumerumātrā pudgaladṛṣṭir na tu evābhimānikasya śūnyatādṛṣṭir iti.

Cf. also *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, *Anityatāparivarta* for a similar observation.

varaṃ khalu sumerumātrāpudgaladṛṣṭir na tu eva nāsti astitvābhimānikasya śūnyatādṛṣṭiḥ. Ed. Vaidya, P.L. Darbhanga, 1963, p. 59.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 143.

tatra śūnyatāvīkṣiptacittā ucayante navayānasamprasthitābodhisattvās tathāgatagarbhaśūnyatārthanayavipranāṣṭāḥ.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 143.

ye vā punaḥ śūnyatopalambhena śūnyatāyāṃ pratisaranti śūnyatā nāma rūpādīvyatirekeṇa kaś cid bhāvo'sti.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 144.

tathāgatagarbhajñānam eva tathāgatānāṃ śūnyatājñānam.

Tathāgatagarbha theory as they are expounded in the *Uttaratantra*. From the study of all these three, it is quite apparent that we may conclude that the *gotra* is the basis or the substratum of the whole of the phenomenal world including the sentient beings. As far as the sentient beings are concerned, the *gotra* can be said to be their substantive basis of consciousness, with which all of them are endowed. By their constant efforts in the removal of various types of the defilements, all the sentient beings are able to achieve the highest goal of life, i.e. the state of *Bodhisattva*. This is a higher type of consciousness which is achieved by them. The *Uttaratantra* also observes that the knowledge of *Tathāgatagarbha* and the knowledge of *Śūnyatā* is the same. This makes it very clear that *Tathāgatagarbha* and *Śūnyatā* are treated as equal in the *Uttaratantra*. Herein comes the greatest contribution made by this text where the concept of *Tathāgatagarbha* has been associated with positive aspects of life i.e. eternity (*nitya*), bliss (*sukha*), *atman* (*atman*) and auspicious (*Śubha*)²¹. As a matter of fact, the earlier discussion on the concept of *Śūnyatā* had lead the scholastic world of today nowhere. The debate has been going on for the last so many years without finding out any positive aspect connected with it in any manner, which may be either useful for our spiritual discipline of for our cultural activity. The *Uttaratantra* rightly observes in this connection that all the sentient beings are unknowingly engrossed in this misconception (*viparyāsa, viparyaya*)²². This is supported even by the Buddha when he says that all the worldly people are quite ignorant or unaware of the positive sides of these concepts. These have normally been accepted as such on their face value uptil now in the scholarly field of Buddhism; the real position is just the opposite, when they are interpreted in the light of *Uttaratantra* for the positive

21. Cf. Asaṅga on *Uttaratantra* 1.153., p. 142.

nitye tathāgatagarbhe...sukhe tathāgatagarbhe... ātmani tathāgatagarbhe ... śubhe tathāgatagarbhe.

22. An early reference in the *Uttaratantra* itself where Buddha having perceived the fundamental elements of the living beings obscured by the defilements inspires them.

Cf. Asaṅga on *Uttaratantra* 1.2. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

evam eva kulaputra tathāgato'py apariśudhaṃ sattvadhātuṃ viditvānityaduḥkhānatmā aśubhodvegakathayā saṃsārābhiratān sattvān udvejyati.

sides of life, which have been enumerated above. It is a matter of great satisfaction that the hitherto grossly misunderstood concept of *Śūnyatā*, can also be interpreted in the like manner because the *Uttarantra* treats both *Tathāgatagarbha* and *Śūnyatā* as equals. Thus the *Mādhyamika* interpretation of *Śūnyatā* of the negative attitude and its subsequent position of not leading to anywhere must be given a new orientation in the light of the fresh material supplied in the *Uttarantra*. Moreover, there is a very interesting observation made by Asaṅga in his commentary with relation to the *Bikṣus*, who might not have been able to fully grasp the true spirit of the early Buddhism because they were admonished for making a mess of everything by repeatedly saying that everything is non-eternal, painful, non-ego and inauspicious²³. They were asked to rightly understand the true spirit of the early Buddhism by giving up the misconception or error (*viparyāsa*). They were asked to interpret these often quoted concepts like non-eternal (*anitya*), misery (*duḥkha*), *anātman* (*anātman*) and non-auspicious (*aśubha*), as eternal (*nitya*) bliss (*sukha*), *ātman* (*ātman*) and auspicious (*śubha*) respectively in accordance with the *Sūtra* giving up the misconception²⁴. This in itself is sufficient evidence to prove that some of these major concepts of early Buddhism were misunderstood even by the *Bikṣus*. It may be finally concluded that thus the *Uttarantra* has made a very significant contribution to knowledge by providing fresh material on these important concepts of early Buddhism.

23. Cf. Asaṅga on *Uttarantra*, 1.153. p. 143.

evam eva bikṣavo yuṣmābhiḥ sarvaṃ anityaṃ sarvaṃ duḥkhaṃ sarvaṃ anātmakaṃ sarvaṃ aśubhaṃ iti sarvagrahaṇena bhāvitabhāviṭaṃ bahulikṛtabahulikṛtaṃ dharmatattvaṃ ajānadbhis tat sarvaṃ ghaṭitaṃ nirarthakam.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 143.

yad yad bikṣavo yuṣmābhiḥ sarvaṃ anityaṃ sarvaṃ duḥkhaṃ sarvaṃ anātmakaṃ sarvaṃ aśubhaṃ iti sarvagrahaṇena bhāvitabhāviṭaṃ bahulikṛtabahulikṛtaṃ tatra tatraiva nityasukhaśubhātmaṃ sānti itī vistāreṇa paramadharmatattvavyavasthānam ārabhya viparyāsbhūtanirdeṣo yathāsūtram anugantavyaḥ.