

Conception of the Life Span and the Relics of the *Tathāgata* in the Second Chapter of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa*

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This paper aims at examining how the conception of the life span and the relics of the *tathāgata* has changed with its augmentation and development of the second chapter of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa* (*Suv*), the *Tathāgatāyuh-pramāṇanirdeśaparivarta*, which has four stages of the augmentation and development.

Stage 1 declares that the life span of the *tathāgata* is immeasurable, but the question why Śākyamuni has entered into *nirvāṇa* in spite of his immeasurable life span remains unsolved.

Stage 2 tries to sweep the legacy of *stūpa* worshippers completely away out of Mahāyāna *sūtra* literature and to solve the question of the Stage 1. The present author has proved in another paper that the *Mahāmeghasūtra* is a single impotent source from which this stage quotes long series of passages concerning the *buddhakāya* idea.

Stage 3 reinforces the idea of the above two stages with using similes. The conception of embodied *buddhakāya* in this stage much resembles that in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*.

Stage 4 is quite different from the above three stages in point of both the style and the idea. As for the style, it is not too much to say that this stage is not *sūtra* but *śāstra*. And as for the idea, this stage denies or devaluates the conception of the *buddhakāya* and the relics shown in above three stages. Encouragement of *stūpa*/relics worship in this stage strongly contradicts the early Mahāyāna movement which rose with the intention of shifting the central value of Buddhism from *stūpa*/relics worship to *sūtra*/*dharma* evaluation.