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Dr. Edward Conze who in recent years had published a very general and readable account of Buddhism, has now given us a translation of the Abhisamayalankara which appears as vol. VI of that admirable series "Serie Orientale Roma" directed by the eminent Italian Indologist Professor Giuseppe Tucci.

~~The study of the Abhisamayalankara was initiated by~~

There exist several editions of the Skrt text of the Abhisamayalankara, and Dr. Conze's translation has been made from Wogihara's edition. The study of the Prajnaparamita Doctrine as given in the Abhisamayalankara was initiated by the late Professor Stcherbatsky and Dr. E. Obermiller who has given us a detailed Analysis of the Abhisamayalankara (Calcutta Oriental Series , I, 1933; II, 1936, III, 1943) and a general account of the Doctrine published as a separate monograph in the Acta Orientalia, vol. XI (Oslo, 1932).

The Abhisamayalankara gave rise to a voluminous exegetic literature in India and Tibet. It was commented upon by Vasubandhu's pupil Ārya-Vimuktasena (The Pancavimsati-sahasrika-aleka, Tib. Ni-khri snañ-ba), and twice commented upon by Haribhadra (X A.D.) in his Abhisamayalankara-aleka and Sphuṭārthā. The first of the above two commentaries is considered to be by far the most important and has been used ^{both} by the late Dr. Obermiller and Dr. Conze. Tibetan scholars claim that the Abhisamayalankara was written from the point of view of the Madhyamika school, or to be more precise the Madhyamika-Svātantrika school (thus Tson-kha-pa in his gSer-'phreñ).

Due to the extreme brevity of the style any attempt to translate it will necessarily assume the appearance of a detailed table of contents or index. It is a book not to be read, but to be memorized, and that is what is being done in the monastic schools of Tibet and Mongolia where the text is used as a basic text-book or mula by the students of the Paramita Class (Phar-phyin) devoted to the study of the Philosophy of the Path. The text of the Abhisamayalankara is arranged into eight chapters or subjects which are further analysed according to seventy topics.

The translation has painstakingly striven to give a literal rendering of the Sanskrit text. For Enjoyment Body (Sāmbhogakaya) the reviewer would prefer "Body of Glory" as it is the Body in which the Sage manifests himself in all his Glory in the full possession of his spiritual powers. Similarly for the five divisions of the Mahayanist Path the writer would prefer to translate mārga (alm) by "degree, stage", thus bhavana-marga , the stage of concentrated meditation. At the end of the volume, the reader will find two useful and very welcome indexes - Sanskrit-Tibetan-English and Tibetan-Sanskrit.