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Early Mahāyāna according to Kumārajīva's Upadeśa

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We have in the Chinese Canon a complete translation of a lost Indian work entitled *Da zhi du lun* (大智度論, *Taishō edition* vol. 25, no. 1509, p. 57c–756c). The translation is attributed to Kumārajīva (and his team) and represents the only extant version of the *Mahāprajñāparamitopadeśa*, the *Large Prajñāparamitā Commentary* by Nāgārjuna, appropriately called 'large' since (in Chinese) it has hundred scrolls. Late professor Étienne Lamotte from Belgium translated the first third of the oeuvre into French between 1944 and 1980, the other two thirds still remain untranslated. The huge compendium is also known by its short name *Upadeśa*.

The denomination *mahāyānā* appears in dozens, if not hundreds of passages of the *Upadeśa* revealing some of its early meanings and most frequent uses. In tune with the present interest in early Mahāyāna scriptures and their doctrinal developments, I will present the results of a contextual investigation: a concise overview on the subject matter in question as well as a brief doctrinal analysis.