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Conceptuality and Non-conceptuality in Yogācāra Sources

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Abstract This paper investigates the Yogācāra notions of "conceptuality", represented by terms such as *vikalpa*, on the one hand, and of "non-conceptuality" on the other. The examination of the process of thinking as well as its absence has played a central role in the history of Yogācāra thought. The explanations of this process provided by Yogācāra thinkers in works such as the *Yogācārabhūmi*, the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* and the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* appear to be mainly concerned with the contents and the components of thoughts, categorizing them into different classes. These lists are far more than arbitrary collections. Instead they are meant to represent exhaustive summaries of a person's conceptual experience. The first part of the paper focusses on conceptuality, exploring (mostly Abhidharmic) definitions of the relevant terms and ideas. The second part is mainly an investigation of the question which parts of the Buddhist path to liberation were considered to involve conceptual activity and which were described as non-conceptual.

Keywords Conceptuality · Non-conceptuality · Yogācāra · *vikalpa* · *nirvikalpa* · Abhidharma

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Introduction

The process of thinking has repeatedly been in the centre of attention of Yogācāra authors and is discussed in some detail in works such as the *Yogācārabhūmi*, the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* and the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha*.[1] Even though the understanding of the nature of mental states, such as perceiving and conceptualizing, seems to have played a major role in the history of Yogācāra thought, it is not the examination of what thoughts are made of or what thinking is in substantial terms that is central in Yogācāra texts. From the latter we also do not learn much about how, exactly, thinking arises.[2] What Yogācāra thinkers appear to have focussed on were questions considering the contents and the components of our thoughts. The lists provided below reflect exactly these efforts of trying to arrange the vast conceptual repertoire of the human mind into a few major classes. These lists may give the impression of arbitrary collections, at first glance. However, when examined more closely, each of them is clearly aiming at offering an exhaustive summary of a person's conceptual experience. It is also noteworthy that the seven lists included below overlap only in a few categories, and thus appear to represent different approaches to the same question, namely the question of what constitutes conceptuality.

Studying the definitions of *vikalpa* and related terms, it becomes immediately obvious that the application of words and sentences has been regarded as one of the main aspects of thinking. At the same time, the texts also clearly state that the teaching bodhisattva or buddha uses language. Thus, the question arises to which extent it is appropriate to assume that his mental activity involves "thinking". It is probably impossible to find a definite answer to this question as it is not addressed directly and precisely enough in the texts under discussion. However, one possible approach may be taken from the perspective of a passage preserved in the *Yogācārabhūmi* which seems to understand correct insight (*samyagjñāna*) as a purified form of *vikalpa*. Though this idea is not expressed explicitly and *vikalpa* is even defined as being different from *samyagjñāna*, the two categories are assumed to share a number of essential qualities.[3] Both are constituted by the mind (*citta*) and mental (*caitasika*) factors (Kramer 2005, p. 77 [10.1.1]) and are attributed many common, typically "mental", characteristics. Thus, the mind seems to be present in the form of *samyagjñāna* in non-conceptual (*nirvikalpa*) states as well as in the state obtained after it, that is when the bodhisattva is teaching. The main differences between these two kinds of mental states, *vikalpa* and *samyagjñāna*, are to be found with regard to their grade of contamination and purity, *vikalpa* being contaminated and associated with passion, and *samyagjñāna* being the opposite.

This paper is devoted to the investigation of the Yogācāra notions of "conceptuality", represented by terms such as *vikalpa*, on the one hand, and of

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[1] The present study is based on two talks I gave in Berkeley: "The Process of Thinking and the Mental Factors Related to It According to Yogācāra Sources" at the conference "Terminology of Mind in Abhidharma" (Mangalam Center 2014) and "Conceptuality in Yogācāra Thought" at the conference "Conceptuality and Non-Conceptuality in Buddhist Thought" (UC Berkeley 2016).

[2] On some aspects of the thinking process, especially its threefold structure (including the steps "investigating", "determining" and "conceptualizing"), see Kramer (2016a, pp. 152ff.).

[3] For details, see Kramer (2005, pp. 43–46).

"non-conceptuality" (i.e. *nirvikalpatā*, *nirvikalpajñāna* etc.) on the other. The first part focusses on conceptuality, exploring (mostly Abhidharmic) definitions of the relevant terms and ideas. The second part is mainly an investigation of the question which parts of the Buddhist path to liberation were considered to involve conceptual activity and which were described as non-conceptual.

Conceptuality

In the first chapter of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (AKBh 22,20f.) Vasubandhu states that the five sense perceptions are "non-conceptual" (*avikalpaka*) in the sense that, in contrast to mental perception (*manovijñāna*), they do not include the "concept [which is] a recollection" (*anusmaraṇavikalpa*) and the "concept [which is] an examination" (*abhinirūpaṇāvikalpa*). At the same time the author emphasizes that the five sense perceptions are accompanied by a "natural *vikalpa*" (*svabhāvavikalpa*).[4] On another occasion, the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* states (quoting another source) that on the level of pure sense perception one only is aware of "blue" but not of "this is blue", the latter being only realized on the level of mental perception (*manovijñāna*).[5] Notably, the three kinds of *vikalpa* are also distinguished in the **Pañcaskandhabhāṣya*, the nature of *svabhāvavikalpa* being illustrated by means of the following example: "The *svabhāvavikalpa* is the awareness of bare visual matter (*rūpa*) with regard to *rūpa* by means of the visual perception."[6]

In the *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya*, the *svabhāvavikalpa* is characterized further as "a *vikalpa* [arising] with regard to [actually] experienced, present phenomena [and] having the appearance of the specific characteristic (of the object)."[7] In contrast, the other two kinds of *vikalpa*, the two which constitute the nature of *manovijñāna*, are mainly directed towards past and future phenomena and objects being out of sight (*viparokṣa*) for the senses.[8]

In Sthiramati's *Tattvārthā* commentary on the *Abhidharmakośa*, it is moreover stated that, while the sense perception perceives the own-being (*svabhāva*) of the object, only *manovijñāna* is able to connect the *svabhāva* with the name (*nāman*).[9]

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[4] This passage of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* has already been dealt with in Schmithausen (1967, pp. 122f.) and Cox (1988, pp. 36f.). For an investigation of the three kinds of *vikalpa*, see also Sharf (forthcoming, pp. 32ff.) and Kramer (2015, p. 317).

[5] AKBh 144,3f.: *cakṣurvijñānena nīlaṃ vijānāti no tu nīlam [iti] manovijñānena nīlaṃ vijānāti nīlam iti ca vijānātīti.*

[6] PSkBh 137a2f.: *de la rang bzhin gyis rtog pa ni mig gi rnam par shes pas gzugs la gzugs tsam du shes pa dang.* On the treatment of these three kinds of *vikalpa* in the **Pañcaskandhabhāṣya*, see Kramer (2015, p. 317).

[7] ASBh 16,8: *pratyutpanneṣu saṃskāreṣv anubhūyamāneṣu yaḥ svalakṣaṇākāro vikalpaḥ.*

[8] ASBh 16,9f.: *anusmaraṇavikalpo yo 'nubhūtapūrvasaṃskārākāraḥ / abhinirūpaṇāvikalpo yo 'tītānāgatapratyutpanneṣu viparokṣeṣv abhyūhanākāro vikalpaḥ.*

[9] AKTT 386b1f.: *mig gi rnam par shes pas ni sngon po rnam par shes kyi zhes bya ba ni brjod par bya ba'i rang gi ngo bo rnam par shes so // sngon po'o zhes bya bar ni rnam par mi shes so zhes bya ba ni ming gi sgo nas rnam par mi shes pa ste / mig gi rnam par shes pa ni rnam par rtog pa med pa yin pa'i phyir ro // yid kyi rnam par shes pas ni rang gi ngo bo dang ming gnyis ka'i sgo nas rnam par shes pa ste.*

Another important explanation is to be found in Sthiramati's *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā*. There the *abhinirūpaṇavikalpa* is defined as an intention (*cetanā*) or insight (*prajñā*) having the appearance of reasoning with regard to objects of the three times which are "out of sight" (*parokṣa*) (for the senses) in the form "this is like this and not like that". The *anusmaraṇavikalpa* is specified as mindfulness (*smṛti*), having the form of non-loss (*asaṃpramoṣa*) of an experienced object.[10]

It should also be mentioned that Sthiramati explains ideation (*saṃjñā*) in a way that seems related to the concept of *svabhāvavikalpa*. In his *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā* he states that *saṃjñā* is not only present during the process of determining and conceptualizing the object by the mental perception (*manovijñāna*) but also prior to this. According to Sthiramati, this "pre-conceptualizing" *saṃjñā* is characterized as grasping the characteristics (*nimitta*) of the object in the same way as the *saṃjñā* that accompanies *manovijñāna*, but, in contrast to the latter, it does not distinguish the properties of the object. The reason that Sthiramati adduces for this is the sense perception's *mandatva*, "slowness" or "dullness". Sthiramati says that *saṃjñā* must be present also at the level of the sense perception because, if one had not grasped the characteristics (e.g. "blue") on that level, one would not be able to determine later, that is on the conceptualizing level, "this is blue."[11]

Another notable characterization of the process of thinking or conceptualizing is found in a passage of the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* answering the question "How does imagining (*parikalpa*) imagine?". In his answer the author mentions a number of aspects which, from his point of view, are essential in this process:[12]

> It imagines [in the sense of conceiving the] object by means of the name, of grasping the characteristics in the dependent nature, of sticking to them by means of wrong views, of activating speech by means of *vikalpa*s, of applying conventional expressions by means of the four kinds of conventions regarding seeing[, hearing, thinking and perceiving] and of superimposing existence on a non-existent object.

In other words, *parikalpa* seems to be constituted by the activities of conceiving the object, grasping its characteristics and sticking to them, activating speech and applying conventional expressions as well as superimposing existence.

In the following, I would like to present a number of lists from various Yogācāra sources which provide different kinds of *vikalpa*s, *parikalpa*s and *vijñapti*s ("mental representations"). One of the oldest lists of *vikalpa*s might be the one found in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* including the following eight kinds (BoBh 50,25–27):[13]

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[10] PSkV 130,11f.: *traiyadhvikaparokṣārthābhyūhanākāra idaṃ evaṃ naivam iti prajñāviśeṣaś cetanā vā 'bhirūpaṇāvikalpaḥ.*

[11] PSkV 29,12–16: *evaṃ tarhi cakṣurādivijñānasaṃprayuktā sañjñā viṣayanimittodgrahaṇātmikā na syāt viśeṣāsaṃlakṣaṇāt. sāpi nimittodgrahaṇātmikaiva na paricchedikā mandatvāt / anyathā pūrvam agṛhīte viśeṣe paścād api nirūpaṇaṃ na syāt – nīlam etat pītam etad iti.*

[12] MSg 32 (16.3): *ming gis dmigs pa dang / gzhan gyi dbang gi ngo bo nyid la der mtshan mar 'dzin pa dang / lta bas de la mngon par zhen pa dang / rnam par rtog pa rnams kyis ngag kun nas slong ba dang / mthong ba la sogs pa tha snyad bzhi po dag gis tha snyad 'dogs pa dang / med pa'i don la yod do zhes sgro 'dogs pas kun tu rtog go.*

[13] See also Kramer (2005, p. 33, fn. 38).

1. *svabhāvavikalpa* (*vikalpa* of the own-being)
2. *viśeṣavikalpa* (*vikalpa* of the characteristics)
3. *piṇḍagrāhavikalpa* (*vikalpa* that grasps wholes)
4. *aham iti vikalpaḥ* (*vikalpa* of "I")
5. *mameti vikalpaḥ* (*vikalpa* of "mine")
6. *priyavikalpa* (*vikalpa* of the agreeable)
7. *apriyavikalpa* (*vikalpa* of the non-agreeable)
8. *tadubhayaviparītavikalpa* (*vikalpa* of the opposite of both[, the agreeable and the non-agreeable])

It seems that the eight *vikalpa* categories can be divided into three main groups. According to the explanation offered in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (BoBh 50,27–51,13) the first three kinds of *vikalpa* give rise to the "thing" (*vastu*), known, for instance, as (visible) matter (*rūpa*), which itself becomes the basis for *vikalpa* and proliferation (*vikalpaprapañcādhiṣṭhāna*)[14] and which is the object (*ālambana*) of *vikalpa* and *prapañca*. The *vikalpa*s of "I" and "mine" provide the basis for the wrong view of a substantial ego (*satkāyadṛṣṭi*), which is the root of all other views and for the conceit of "I am" (*asmimāna*), which is the root of all other conceits. The last three *vikalpa*s are the origin of passion (*rāga*), hatred (*dveṣa*) and ignorance (*moha*).

In another part of the *Yogācārabhūmi*, namely the *Viniścayasaṃgrahaṇī* (VinSg 76 [9.1.3]), we find a different list of *vikalpa*s, comprising seven categories:

1. *naimittika* (the one [arisen] from a [clear mental] appearance)
2. *anaimittika* (the one [arisen] without a [clear mental] appearance)
3. *svarasavāhin* (the one that arises spontaneously [with regard to an object])
4. *paryeṣaka* (the investigating one)
5. *pratyavekṣaka* (the one that looks back)
6. *kliṣṭa* (the contaminated one)
7. *akliṣṭa* (the non-contaminated one)

According to the explanation of the *Viniścayasaṃgrahaṇī* (VinSg 101 [2.3]), *vikalpa* consists in the mind (*citta*) and the mental (*caitasika*) factors (*dharma*). This means that *vikalpa* represents not only the objects of thinking or thought, but the process of thinking or the thinking mind itself. A similar understanding seems to be the background of Sthiramati's comments in the *Sūtrālaṃkāravṛttibhāṣya* (SAVBh [2] 113,14–16), in which it is stated that *vikalpa* is identical to mental perception (*manovijñāna*). Moreover, the *Viniścayasaṃgrahaṇī* states that *vikalpa* is the basis for expressions, that it includes the latent tendencies for conventional language (*vyavahārānuśaya*), and that conventional language is actually active in it (*vyavahārānubodha*).[15]

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[14] The relation between *vikalpa* and *prapañca* is not entirely obvious, but in a commentary on this passage *vikalpa* is explained as being *prapañca* (BoBhVy 73b5: *rnam par rtog pa nyid spros pa ste*). See also Engle (2016, p. 90, fn. 310).

[15] VinSg 71 (5.3): *kun nas nyon mongs pa kun nas slong ba'i phyir dang / gdags pa'i gzhi yin pa'i phyir dang / tha snyad bag la nyal ba'i phyir dang / tha snyad rjes su sad pa'i phyir ro*. See also Kramer (2005, p. 107, fn. 29).

The seven *vikalpa*s mentioned above are defined in more detail in another passage of the *Yogācārabhūmi*.[16] The *vikalpa* [that has arisen] from a [clear mental] appearance is explained as "the *vikalpa* which focusses on previously perceived objects in someone whose senses are mature." The *anaimittika* category is identified as "the *vikalpa* of future [objects] in analogy to past [objects] and the *vikalpa* of a young person who does not know the conventions of language." The *vikalpa* that arises spontaneously (*svarasavāhin*) is "the *vikalpa* that arises naturally with regard to the present object only by means of the object." The investigating (*paryeṣaka*) *vikalpa* is the *vikalpa* of a person "investigating and examining the factors", whereas the one that looks back (*pratyavekṣaka*) is the *vikalpa* of a person "looking back at what has been investigated, examined and determined." The last two *vikalpa*s, the contaminated (*kliṣṭa*) and the non-contaminated (*akliṣṭa*) refer, on the one hand, to a concept which "is associated with primary and secondary contaminations and which is accompanied by a (regretful) retrospection with regard to the past, by desire with regard to the future and by attachment to present [objects]" and to "a beneficial or neutral *vikalpa*, which is associated with beneficial factors such as faith etc." on the other hand.

The same list of seven *vikalpa*s is included in the *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya* (ASBh 16,11f.). In his comments on the seven categories, the author explains that the *vikalpa* that arises spontaneously (*svarasavāhin*) pertains to (or: consists in?) "the five sense perceptions because they emerge spontaneously with regard to their respective objects, without imagining the object."[17] Thus, it seems that the *vikalpa* characterized as *svarasavāhin* is related to the ideas of the *svabhāvavikalpa* and the "pre-conceptualizing" *saṃjñā* discussed above. At the same time, however, the *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya* (ASBh 16,14f.) defines the "*vikalpa* that [arises] from a [clear mental] appearance" as the "*vikalpa* of the own-being" (*svabhāva-*) or the "*vikalpa* [that is] a recollection" (*anusmaraṇavikalpa*). The reason for this attribution is, according to the author, the fact that this kind of *vikalpa* includes the "creating of an image" (*citrīkaraṇa*) with regard to present and future objects. It seems obvious that the *svabhāvavikalpa* mentioned in this explanation does not correspond to the *svabhāvavikalpa* that accompanies sense perception. Instead it might be related to the concept of *svabhāvavikalpa* appearing as the first category in the above-mentioned list of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*.

As for the remaining classes of *vikalpa*, the author of the *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya* (ASBh 16,16) states that the "*vikalpa* [that arises] without a [clear mental] appearance" is directed at "future objects and has the appearance of a

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[16] Y 12,12–13,3: *naimittako vikalpaḥ katamaḥ / pūrvānubhūteṣv artheṣu yaḥ paripakvendriyasya // anaimittakaḥ katamaḥ / pūrvānusāreṇānāgatavikalpo yaś ca dahrasyāvyavahārakuśalasya // svarasavāhī katamaḥ / pratyupasthite viṣaye svarasena yo viṣayabalād eva vartate // paryeṣakaḥ katamaḥ / yo dharmān mārgayato vicārayataḥ // pratyavekṣakaḥ katamaḥ / parimārgite vicārite vyavasthāpite yaḥ pratyavekṣamāṇasya // kliṣṭaḥ katamaḥ / yo 'tīte 'pekṣāsahagato 'nāgate 'bhinandanāsahagataḥ pratyutpanne 'dhyavasānasahagataḥ ... kleśopakleśena yaḥ samprayuktaḥ saṅkalpaḥ // akliṣṭaḥ katamaḥ / yaḥ kuśalo 'vyākṛtaś ca ... śraddhādikena kuśalena dharmeṇa yaḥ samprayukto vikalpa[ḥ]).* See also Kramer (2005, p. 116, fn. 75).

[17] ASBh 16,13f.: *... pañca vijñānakāyāḥ, acitrayitvālambanaṃ yathāsvaṃ viṣayeṣu svarasenaiva vahanāt.*

wish".[18] The last four categories are classified as having the nature of the "*vikalpa* [that is] an examination" (*abhinirūpaṇāvikalpa*).

A very different list of *vikalpa* categories is presented in the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* comprising ten kinds of *vikalpa* (MSg 34f. [20]):[19]

1. *mūlavikalpa* (root *vikalpa*)
2. *nimittavikalpa* (*vikalpa* of the object)
3. *nimittapratibhāsavikalpa* (*vikalpa* of the appearance of the object)
4. *nimittavikāravikalpa* (*vikalpa* of the change of the object)
5. *nimittapratibhāsavikāravikalpa* (*vikalpa* of the change of the appearance of the object)
6. *paropanītavikalpa* (*vikalpa* of what is taught by others)
7. *ayoniśovikalpa* (incorrect *vikalpa*)
8. *yoniśovikalpa* (correct *vikalpa*)
9. *abhiniveśavikalpa* (*vikalpa* of sticking to [views])
10. *vikṣepavikalpa* (*vikalpa* of distraction)

The text further specifies *mūlavikalpa* as the "store mind" (*ālayavijñāna*), *nimittavikalpa* as the representation (*vijñapti*) of visible matter (*rūpa*) etc. and the *vikalpa* of the appearance of the object (*nimittābhāsa*) as the *vijñapti* of sense perception, such as visual perception (*cakṣurvijñāna*), together with its basis (*rten*), that is, for instance, the eye faculty. The "*vikalpa* of the change of the object" refers, according to the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha*, to the modifications in the material appearance resulting from old age, positive (and negative) feelings, passion, agony, seasonal changes, from being reborn among the hell beings or from the realm of desire (*kāmadhātu*).[20] In contrast, the following *vikalpa*, namely the one "of the change of the appearance of the object" reflects the changes in the appearance of the *nimitta* brought about by the modifications just described. According to Asvabhāva's comments, this means that, for instance, the clarity of the mental appearance is diminished by the aging of the eye faculty.[21]

The following four *vikalpa*s (6–9) are concerned with hearing good and bad *dharma* and sticking to wrong views (MSg 34f. [20.6–10]). The *vikalpa* "of what is taught by others" is defined as that which depends (*anugata*) on hearing the bad *dharma* (*asaddharmaśravaṇa*) or on hearing the good *dharma* (*saddharmaśravaṇa*).[22] Similarly, the "incorrect *vikalpa*" represents concepts of non-Buddhists, while the correct one refers to the concepts of the Buddhists. The *vikalpa* of sticking to views refers to 62 wrong views, which all originate from the *satkāyadṛṣṭi*, the result of incorrect attentiveness (*ayoniśomanaskāra*). Finally, the

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[18] ASBh 16,15f.: *animitto 'nāgataviṣayo manorathākāro vikalpaḥ.*

[19] The same listing appears in AS(T) 116b5–7. See also ASBh 137,8–20.

[20] MSg 34 (20.4): *rga ba la la sogs pa dang / bde ba'i tshor ba la la sogs pa dang / 'dod chags la sogs pa dang / gnod pa dang dus kyis yongs su 'gyur ba la la sogs pa dang / sems can dmyal ba'i 'gro ba la la sogs pa dang / 'dod pa'i khams la sogs pas de 'gyur ba'o.*

[21] MSgU ri 228b4: *'di ltar rgas na mig la la sogs pa nyams pa nyid dang / rtul ba nyid ces bya ba la la sogs pa 'byung ste / gnas gyur pa'i phyir de la la sogs pa'i rnam par rig pa rnams kyang 'gyur ro.*

[22] These two are referred to as "wrongly proclaimed" (*durākhyāta*-) or "well proclaimed" (*svākhyāta*-) in ASBh 137,16.

vikalpa of distraction can be subdivided into ten different kinds of how the bodhisattva is distracted from, as Asvabhāva adds in his comments,[23] non-conceptual insight (*nirvikalpajñāna*), including the distraction through

1. *abhāvanimitta* (marking as non-existent)
2. *bhāvanimitta* (marking as existent)
3. *samāropa* (imputation)
4. *apavāda* (negation)
5. *ekatva* (identity)
6. *pṛthagtva* (difference)
7. *svabhāva* (intrinsic nature)
8. *viśeṣa* (characteristics)
9. *yathānāmārtha* ([conceptualizing] the object according to the name)
10. *yathārthanāma* ([conceptualizing] the name according to the object)[24]

In a different passage of the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* we find a list of five kinds of imagining (*parikalpa*), which seems to be related to the last two kinds of *vikṣepa*:[25]

1. Imagining the nature of an object (*artha*) based on a name, i.e. "the object [belonging to] this name is this."
2. Imagining the nature of a name based on an object, i.e. "the name [belonging to] this object is this."
3. Imagining the nature of a name based on the name, i.e. imagining the name not knowing the object.
4. Imagining the nature of an object based on the object, i.e. imagining the nature of the object not knowing its name.
5. Imagining the nature of both based on both, i.e. the object having such a nature has this name.

In the passage preceding this description of the five kinds of *parikalpa* there is a listing of four alternative categories:[26]

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[23] MSgU ri 229a3: *gang las rnam par g.yeng bar byed ce na / rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes las so.*

[24] A list of the same ten items, referred to as *vikalpa*s, not *vikṣepa*s, which are to be abandoned by a bodhisattva, is to be found in MSABh 76,6–19. See also AS(T) 116b7–117a2. The *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkārabhāṣya*, the *Sūtrālaṃkāravṛttibhāṣya* (SAVBh(3), 16,19–20,16), the *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya* (ASBh 137,21–139,3) and the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* (MSg 35f. [22]) provide further explanations of the ten categories, which all include citations attributed to the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*. While the text in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkārabhāṣya* and the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* consists almost entirely of these quotations and is very similar, the *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya* contains more extensive versions of the citations and a number of additional comments. The author of the *Sūtrālaṃkāravṛttibhāṣya* also provides his own explanations, which are not to be found in the other works.

[25] MSg 33 (19.2): *ming la brten te don gyi ngo bo nyid la kun tu rtog pa ni 'di lta ste / ming 'di'i don ni 'di'o zhes bya ba'o // don la brten te / ming gi ngo bo nyid la kun tu rtog pa ni 'di lta ste / don 'di'i ming 'di yin no zhes bya'o // ming la brten te ming gi ngo bo nyid la kun tu rtog pa ni 'di lta ste / don ma rtogs pa'i ming la kun tu rtog pa'o // don la brten te don gyi ngo bo nyid la kun tu rtog pa ni 'di lta ste / ming ma rtogs pa'i don gyi ngo bo nyid la kun tu rtog pa'o // de gnyis la brten te / de gnyis ga'i ngo bo nyid la kun tu rtog pa ni 'di lta ste / don 'di lta bu'i bdag nyid 'di'i ming 'di'o zhes bya ba'o.*

[26] MSg 33 (19.1): *ngo bo nyid du kun tu rtog pa dang / khyad par du kun tu rtog pa dang / byang ba dang / ma byang ba'o.*

1. *svabhāva* (own-being)
2. *viśeṣa* (characteristics)
3. *vyutpanna* (versed)
4. *avyutpanna* (unversed)

According to the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* (MSg 33 [19.1]), the last two categories refer to the *parikalpa* of those who are versed or unversed in conventional speech (*vyavahāra*).

Apart from these lists of different kinds of concepts, the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* (MSg 25 [2]) also includes a notable enumeration of eleven kinds of "mental representation" (*vijñapti*), which may be understood as summarizing various aspects of the personal experience of the world:

1. mental representation of the body (*lus*)
2. mental representation of the one who possesses the body (*lus can*)
3. mental representation of the experiencer (*za ba po*)
4. mental representation of that which is experienced by him (*des nye bar spyad par bya ba*)
5. mental representation of the experiencing with regard to this (*de la nye bar spyod pa*)
6. mental representation of time (*dus*)
7. mental representation of numbers (*grangs*)
8. mental representation of the abode (*yul*)
9. mental representation of conventional speech (*tha snyad*)
10. mental representation of the distinction between oneself and others (*bdag dang gzhan gyi bye brag*)
11. mental representation of the good and bad rebirth spheres, death and birth (*bde 'gro dang ngan 'gro dang 'chi 'pho dang skye ba*)

The text (MSg 25 [2]) further specifies that the first nine *vijñapti*s arise from the seed of the imprint of language (*abhilāpavāsanābīja*), whereas the tenth originates from the *vāsanā* of the "view of the self" (*ātmadṛṣṭi*) and the eleventh rises from the *vāsanā* of the (12) members of existence (*bhavāṅga*).

Vasubandhu and Asvabhāva provide additional explanations of these eleven categories in their commentaries. Thus, the "mental representation of the body" is identified by Asvabhāva with the five sense faculties (*indriya*), "the one who possesses the body" (*lus can*) with the "mental faculty" (*manas*), and the experiencer with the mental perception (*manovijñāna*). "That which is experienced by it" are, according to the same commentary, the six objects, and "the experiencing" is constituted by the five sense perceptions (*vijñāna*).[27] The mental manifestation of the abode is explained as a village (*grāma*) or a garden (*ārāma*) in

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[27] MSgU ri 220a5f.: *lus kyi rnam par rig pa ni dbang po gzugs can du snang ba ste / … lus can gyi rnam par rig pa ni yid do // za ba po'i rnam par rig pa ni yid kyi rnam par shes pa'o // des nye bar spyad par bya ba'i rnam par rig pa ni phyi'i skye mched rnams so // de la nye bar spyod pa'i rnam par rig pa ni rnam par shes pa lnga po dag go.*

Asvabhāva's comments and as the "surrounding world" (*bhājanaloka*) in Vasubandhu's commentary.[28]

Non-conceptuality

In the second part of this paper I would like to focus on the question which stages of the path to liberation include concepts and which are explicitly described as non-conceptual (*nirvikalpa*) states. The textual sources I am drawing on include the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* and its commentaries by Vasubandhu and Sthiramati, the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* as well as the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* and its commentary, the *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya*.

Starting with the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, we find a notable list of three different kinds of "non-conceptuality" (*nirvikalpatā*), differentiating between the "non-conceptuality of satisfaction" (*saṃtuṣṭinirvikalpatā*), which is experienced by a normal person (*pṛthagjana*), the "non-conceptuality of the unmistaken" (*aviparyāsanirvikalpatā*), referring to the *śrāvaka*, and the "non-conceptuality of non-proliferation" (*niṣprapañcanirvikalpatā*) belonging to the bodhisattva (AS [T] 117a2f).[29] According to the *Bhāṣya*, the *saṃtuṣṭinirvikalpatā* refers to a "normal person" who, having an insight into a certain reality, such as "impermanence", brings thinking to an end.[30] The problem seems to be that this person is satisfied with this insight and does not proceed to the next stage, the non-conceptual experience of true reality, and thus does not realize "true" non-conceptuality.

The *Abhidharmasamuccaya* (AS[T] 116a3–5), moreover, provides five categories that obviously have been associated with the idea of *niṣprapañcanirvikalpatā*, but which, according to the text, do not constitute the real state of non-conceptuality. The first of the five is "non-attention" (*amanaskāra*), which does not apply to *nirvikalpatā* because, as the commentary explains, otherwise states like sleep or intoxication would also represent "non-conceptuality", as one does not focus on the characteristics of the *dharma* in them.[31] The second aspect not pertaining to *nirvikalpatā* is the "going beyond" (*samatikrama*), which means that the state of "non-conceptuality" is not simply a surpassing of the concepts consisting in rough examination (*vitarka*) and subtle investigation (*vicāra*). If it was constituted by such a surpassing, it would be obtained everywhere from the second absorption (*dhyāna*)

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[28] MSgU ri 220a7: *yul gyi rnam par rig pa ni grong dang kun dga' ra ba la sogs par snang ba'o*; MSgBh ri 143b5: *yul gyi rnam par rig pa ni snod kyi 'jig rten no*.

[29] For the Sanskrit terms, see ASBh 139,4–13.

[30] ASBh 139,4–7: *tatra pṛthagjanā yady anityādikāṃ kāṃcid eva dharmatām ārabhya citta-paryavasānaṃ* (read: *cintāṃ paryavasānaṃ*) *nītvā labdhaparitoṣā bhavanty evam etad iti niścinvantaḥ sā teṣāṃ saṃtuṣṭinirvikalpatety ucyate, tatra sarvatarkākhyavikalpoparateḥ.* For the three kinds of *nirvikalpatā*, see also MSg 78 (19.2).

[31] ASBh 139,13f.: *yady amanaskāratas tena suptamattādīnāṃ nirvikalpatāprasaṅgaḥ, teṣāṃ dharmanimittāmanaskārāt.*

on and this would contradict the characterization of *vikalpa* as being the mind and mental factors of the three spheres (*dhātu*).[32] The third category that does not apply to *nirvikalpatā* is ceasing (*vyupaśama*), in so far as otherwise a person resting in the "equipoise of cessation of ideation and feeling" (*saṃjñāveditanirodhasamāpatti*) would have attained the state of *nirvikalpatā*, as at this stage the *vikalpas* consisting in the mind and mental factors have ceased. The latter would also result in a lack of insight (*jñāna*) within the state of *nirvikalpatā*.[33] Moreover, non-conceptuality does not exist substantially (*svabhāvatas*) because then also matter (*rūpa*), which has for its nature the "not being a *vikalpa*" would constitute *nirvikalpatā*.[34] Finally, it is stated that *nirvikalpatā* does not consist in a conceptual activity (*abhisaṃskāra*) with regard to an object, which obviously means that it does not consist in the thought "this is non-conceptual". If it were such an activity, conceptuality (*savikalpatā*) would be non-conceptuality (*nirvikalpatā*) since the conceptual activity consisting in the thought "this is non-conceptual" has the conceptualizing of characteristics as its nature.[35]

At the end of this explanation the author of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* (AS 117a5) states that the only qualification that can be applied to *nirvikalpatā* is its being an *anabhisaṃskāra*, a lack of conceptual activity. In the commentary, this state is further explained in the following way: "When the bodhisattva thinks that the characteristics of all the *dharmas* are naturally not perfect, through the arising power of cultivation with regard to this thinking [and] by means of an individually [experienced] lack of conceptual activity his mind is properly absorbed in the realm without proliferation (*niṣprapañcadhātu*), the true reality (*tathatā*) of all *dharmas*."[36]

Another source that mentions categories which do not represent non-conceptuality is the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* (MSg 75 [2]), the eighth chapter of which discusses five aspects that are almost identical to the five categories of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*. In addition, the author of the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* (MSg 75 [verse 3]) explains that *nirvikalpajñāna* is neither based on mind (*citta*) nor on the absence of mind (*acitta*). In his comments on this passage Asvabhāva explains that, even though *jñāna* is a mental factor, the word *citta* derives from "thinking" (*sems pa*) and thus *citta* cannot be the basis of non-conceptual *jñāna*.[37] At the same time neither the absence of mind can be the basis of *nirvikalpajñāna*, as otherwise it

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[32] ASBh 139,14–16: *atha samatikramatas tena dvitīyadhyānāt prabhṛti sarvatra nirvikalpatā prāpnoti, vitarkavicāravikalpānāṃ samatikramāt, tataś ca vikalpasya śarīraṃ hi cittacaittāḥ traidhātukā ity asya virodhaḥ.*

[33] ASBh 139,17f.: *atha vyupaśamatas tena saṃjñāveditanirodhasamāpattir nirvikalpatā prāpnoti, tatra cittacaittavikalpvyupaśamāt, tataś ca jñānābhāvaḥ prasajyate.*

[34] ASBh 139,18f.: *atha svabhāvatas tena rūpaṃ nirvikalpatā prāpnoti, tasyāvikalpasvabhāvatvāt.*

[35] ASBh 139,20f.: *athālaṃbane 'bhisaṃskāras* (read: *'bhisaṃskāratas*) *tena savikalpataiva nirvikalpatā prāpnoti, nirvikalpam etad ity etasyābhisaṃskārasya nimittavikalpalakṣaṇatvāt.*

[36] ASBh 139, 23–25: *yadā hy asya bodhisattvasyānulomikam avavādam āgamya prakṛtyā sarvadharmanimittāny apariniṣpannānīti vicārayatas tadvicāraṇābhyāsabalādhānāt pratyātmam anabhisaṃskāreṇaiva yathāvan niṣprapañcadhātau sarvadharmatathatāyāṃ cittaṃ samādhīyate.*

[37] MSgU ri 267a2f.: *ye shes ni sems las byung ba yin pas sems ni gnas su 'gyur pa yin no // sems gnas yin dang rnam par mi rtog pa ni mi rung ste / sems kyi sgra ni sems pa'i rgyu las byung ba'i phyir ro.*

could not be a *jñāna* and it would have to be classified as matter (*rūpa*),[38] which probably is stated in the sense that material factors are categorized as being not mental. Moreover, the absence of mind cannot be the basis for non-conceptual states because these states have the mind as their cause (*rgyu*). Finally, Asvabhāva notes that through the power of cultivation a state is reached which goes beyond the conceptualization as mind or absence of mind.[39]

Turning now to the question which part(s) of the path to buddhahood include states of "non-conceptuality", the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkārabhāṣya* and the *Sūtrālaṃkāravṛtibhāṣya* appear to be important sources insofar as they provide various detailed descriptions of the stages of the path. The structure that dominates most of these descriptions starts with the preparatory stage called "stage of the practice of faith" (*adhimukticaryābhūmi*), which corresponds to the "path of application" (*prayogamārga*) and is subdivided into the four parts "heat" (*uṣmagata*), "summit" (*mūrdhan*), "acceptance" (*kṣānti*) and "highest worldly factors" (*laukikāgradharma*), also known as the four "wholesome roots conducive to insight" (*nirvedhabhāgīyakuśalamūla*).[40] This preparatory part of the path is followed by the practitioner's entering into the first bodhisattva stage (*bhūmi*), which corresponds to the *darśanamārga*, the "path of seeing" (SAVBh[1] 56,13–15). The remaining nine *bhūmi*s, that is stages two to ten, comprise the *bhāvanāmārga*, the "path of (repeated) cultivation" (SAVBh[2] 97, 1–2, and SAVBh[D] mi 279b3). In Sthiramati's commentary (SAVBh[D] mi 280a1f.) the *bhāvanāmārga* is further divided into two parts: "cultivation involving conceptual activity" (*abhisaṃskāra*) on *bhūmi*s two to seven and "cultivation without conceptual activity" on *bhūmi*s eight to ten.

The *adhimukticaryābhūmi* is not mentioned in the root text of the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* and is referred to by Vasubandhu in his commentary only sporadically and without any further explanations. In Sthiramati's comments the *adhimukticaryābhūmi* appears very frequently and is associated with various other stages of the path. Thus, Sthiramati, for instance, combines this model with the twofold realisation in which the practitioner first gives up the perception of the object and then reaches a state in which he does not perceive the subject either.[41] According to Sthiramati's explanations in a first step, that is on the levels of "heat" and "summit", the practitioner sees all factors as "nothing but name" (*nāmamātra*). Then, on the level of *kṣānti*, he enters true reality (*tattva, vijñaptimātratā*; MSABh 66,24.) through grasping "this is nothing but grasping (*grahaṇamātra*)" and does not perceive the object any more. Finally, by way of fixing the mind in the *vijñaptimātratā* true reality (*tattva*) does not appear anymore (MSABh 66,25) on the level of *laukikāgradharma* and the subject is not perceived either (SAVBh[2]

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[38] MSgU ri 267a3: *ji ste sems med pa gnas yin na ni des na ye shes nyid du mi 'gyur te / gzugs bzhin no.*

[39] MSgU ri 267a4f.: *sems med pa yang de'i gnas ma yin te / sems kyi rgyu las byung ba'i phyir ro // 'di ltar de ni sems kyi rgyu las byung ba ste / bsgoms pa'i dbang gis gang na sems dang sems med par rnam par rtog pa las shin tu 'das pa'i gnas zhes brjod pa'i gnas skabs de 'thob bo.*

[40] The four stages are mentioned in connection with the *adhimukticaryābhūmi*, for instance, in SAVBh (1) 55,24–56,11 and equated with the *nirvedhabhāgīyāni kuśalamūlāni* in AKBh 346,1f.

[41] For the twofold realization, see MSABh 66,18–67,9.

117,6–119,2).[42] On the first *bhūmi* the practitioner achieves the state of "abiding in the realm of the mind" (*cittasya dhātau sthānam*) (MSABh 65,18f. and SAVBh[2] 108,21–23).[43]

Coming back to the topic of (non-)conceptuality, we find various ideas in the commentaries on the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* indicating which of the stages described above involve thinking and which do not. The first of them is expressed in the comments on verse 31 of the eleventh chapter of the text. Starting from the assumption that the existence perceived in everyday life is based on the "imagination of the unreal" or "incorrect imagination" (*abhūtakalpa*), the way the practitioner perceives things on the *adhimukticaryābhūmi* is classified as neither "correct" (*bhūta*) nor "incorrect" (*abhūta*) (MSABh 62,20–23). Thus, on this level objects are still perceived in a false way (i.e. not according to the way they really are) in the sense that, as Sthiramati explains, there is still the distinction between the object (*grāhya*) and the subject (*grāhaka*). But they are also seen in their real form in the sense that this stage is in accordance with and the basis for the sphere of true reality (*dharmadhātu*) and the non-conceptual insight (*nirvikalpajñāna*) that follows after it (SAVBh[2] 92,13–16).

The next step is specified as being "without imagination" (*akalpa*), corresponding, according to Vasubandhu, to "suchness" (*tathatā*) and the supramundane insight (*lokottaraṃ jñānam*), the latter being paraphrased as *nirvikalpajñāna* by Sthiramati – *nirvikalpa* in the sense that no object and subject are perceived at this level (MSABh 62,23 and SAVBh[2] 92,17–20). In another passage of his *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* commentary Sthiramati mentions that *nirvikalpajñāna* is attained (for the first time) on the first *bhūmi*, that is on the *darśanamārga*, while on *bhūmi*s two to ten it is realized completely by means of repeated cultivation.[44]

The stage achieved after the level of *akalpa* is categorized as "neither with imagination (*kalpa*) nor without imagination (*akalpa*)" and is explained to correspond to the "mundane insight obtained subsequently to the supramundane [insight]" (*lokottarapṛṣṭhalabdhaṃ laukikaṃ jñānam*) by Vasubandhu (MSABh 62,23–63,1).[45] Sthiramati adds that this state is not *kalpa* because it does not include imagination of a subject and an object. The reason for this is that it has the *nirvikalpajñāna* (experienced at the preceding stage) as its object which, in turn, takes the sphere of true reality (*dharmadhātu*) as its objective support. Sthiramati explains that, at the same time, this state is not *akalpa* since it includes the *vikalpa* of the specific (*sva-*) and general characteristics (*sāmanayalakṣaṇa*) of the *dharma*s being like illusions (SAVBh[2] 92,23–93,1).

What this description of the different mental states seems to indicate is that the bodhisattva realizes *nirvikalpajñāna* on the first *bhūmi*, that is on the *darśanamārga*,

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[42] See also Kramer (2016b, p. 59).

[43] In MSABh 56,8 this idea is expressed as *cittasya nāmni sthāna[m]* ("abiding of the mind in the name").

[44] SAVBh(D) mi 134b2f.: *rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes kyang sa dang po'i dus su thob bo // de nas sa gnyis nas sa bcu man chad ye shes de nyid bsgoms pas yang dag par 'byung ste*.

[45] Note that in the *Viniścayasaṃgrahaṇī* the *pṛṣṭhalabdhajñāna* is classified as "mundane and supramundane" (*laukikalokottara*). See Kramer (2005, pp. 46, 69, 102f.).

for the first time and subsequently enters *pṛṣṭhalabdhajñāna*, a state in which he speaks, teaches and acts and which thus cannot be completely without *kalpa*. On the *bhāvanāmārga* the phases of *nirvikalpajñāna* and *pṛṣṭhalabdhajñāna* seem to alternate,[46] which means that the bodhisattva perfects the first realization of *nirvikalpajñāna* from the second *bhūmi* on, that is on the *bhāvanāmārga*, by repeated training. He continues this practice up to the tenth *bhūmi* so that it is completely perfected on the *buddhabhūmi*.[47] Thus, in general it may be assumed that the application of pure *nirvikalpa* states refers to relatively short episodes (practised repeatedly) of the bodhisattva path and to be mainly a tool for the practitioner helping him to transform his ordinary perception and imagination, his ordinary *abhūta(pari)kalpa* state.

Another notable way of expressing the idea that the practitioner is working with concepts on the preparatory level, then goes through a non-conceptual stage and subsequently enters a state in which language and thinking seem to play a role again is found in the *Viniścayasaṃgrahaṇī*. The passage explaining the doctrine of the "five categories" (*vastu*) structures the realization of true reality (*tathatā*) into three steps. First the practitioner perceives only a (conceptual) appearance of true reality (*tathatānimitta*) on the preparatory level (Kramer 2005, p. 75 [9.1.1.3], 86 [1.3.1.1] and 114, fn. 70). Then, by means of the supramundane correct insight (*lokottarasamyagjñāna*), he sees the actual *tathatā* (he sees no *nimitta*s, but only the *tathatā*) in a non-conceptual experience. This, according to our text, can only be experienced individually, that is every practitioner has to experience it for himself (*pratyātmavedanīya*-). The reason for this is that the realization that the practitioner experiences for himself is not the basis for speech or a description (Kramer 2005, p. 69 [2.5.1 and 2.5.2], 87 [1.3.1.3] and 92 [3.3.2.6]). In another passage of the *Viniścayasaṃgrahaṇī* this idea is expressed even more explicitly: "As [appearances] like the *tathatā* can [only] be experienced individually, it is not possible to communicate [this experience of the *tathatā*] to others adequately, [for instance in

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[46] SAVBh(D) mi 279b3–7: "The [expression] 'remaining *bhūmi*s' [appearing in the root text] refers to the second to tenth *bhūmi*. These nine *bhūmi*s are called the *bhāvanāmārga* … What does [the bodhisattva] cultivate at that time? He cultivates the two *jñāna*s that arise from this. Which two *jñāna*s? The first is the *nirvikalpajñāna*. Through this *jñāna* he brings himself to maturation by means of purifying the buddha factors, such as the powers and the fearlessnesses, in his own continuum understanding that all [factors] have the nature of space … [The other] is the pure mundane insight obtained subsequently to the supramundane non-conceptual insight. Through this [the bodhisattva] brings the [other] living beings to maturation by means of teaching the doctrine and awakening to the living beings." (*lhag ma'i sa ni sa gnyis yan chad sa bcu man chad la bya ste / sa de dgu ni bsgom pa'i lam zhes bya'o // … de'i tshe ci la bsgom zhe na / de nas 'byung ba'i ye shes gnyis la bsgom mo // ye shes gnyis po gang zhe na / … ye shes gcig pa ni rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes te / ye shes des thams cad nam mkha'i rang bzhin du khong du chud pas bdag gi rgyud la stobs dang mi 'jigs pa la sogs pa'i sangs rgyas kyi chos rnams sbyong bar byed pas bdag yongs su smin par byed pa'o // … 'jig rten las 'das pa rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes kyi rjes las thob pa dag pa 'jig rten pa'i ye shes te / des ni sems can la chos bstan pa dang / mngon par 'tshang rgya ba la sogs pa bstan pa'i sgo nas / sems can rnam par smin par byed do*).

[47] This idea is also expressed in the eighth chapter of the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* (MSg). In his comments Vasubandhu states that the bodhisattva "only acquires *nirvikalpajñāna* on the first *bhūmi* [and] perfects it later for a long time" (MSgBh ri 177a5f.: … *sa dang po la ni thob pa tsam du 'gyur ro // dus phyis ni chen po nyid du 'grub par 'gyur te*), while Asvabhāva explains: "[It] is acquired on the first *bhūmi* and perfected on the *buddhabhūmi*" (MSgU ri 268b6: … *sa dang po la ni thob bo // sangs rgyas kyi sa la ni grub bo*).

the form] 'I perceive such and such appearance'".[48] This state is also referred to as an "experience" (*anubhava*) in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*: "They experience for themselves the supramundane state free of proliferation".[49]

According to the *Viniścayasaṃgrahaṇī* (Kramer 2005, p. 77 [10.1.5] and 91f. [3.3.2.1 and 3.3.2.2]), the *tathatā* realized in such a non-conceptual insight is called "non-analyzed truth" (*avyavasthāpitasatya*). The perception of this unchanging *tathatā* is described as being free of latent impressions (*anuśaya*) for linguistic conventions and is to be distinguished from everyday perception in the sense that it does not superimpose anything on its object through the process of "creating an image" (*citrīkāra*).

After the non-conceptual insight the practitioner analyzes his experience of the "real *tathatā*" by means of language and thought. This "analytical" approach to the perception of the *tathatā* corresponds to the level of *pṛṣṭhalabdhajñāna* and is referred to as "analyzed truth", the *tathatā* being analyzed into the four noble truths (Kramer 2005, p. 86 [1.3.1.1]). The idea that language is applied again in the state acquired after the non-conceptual insight is also expressed in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, which explains that the practitioner uses names, sentences and phonemes (*nāmapadavyañjana*) there.[50]

Finally, I would like to draw the reader's attention to the fact that the practices applied on the preparatory levels preceding the stage of the first *bhūmi* or the *darśanamārga* obviously do not only involve thinking and conceptualizing, but seem to be specifically devoted to the investigation of the nature of concepts, language and the relation between the object and its name. Examples of practical investigations of this kind are found frequently in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra (bhāṣya)*, for instance in the context of the so-called six "mental states" (*citta*) or eleven kinds of "[directing] attention" (*manaskāra*). Other examples are included in the group of eighteen *manaskāra*s, namely on the level of the *manaskāra* "of application" (*prayogika*), and on the second stage of the "fivefold stage of spiritual practice" (*pañcavidhā yogabhūmiḥ*).

As I have investigated these practices in some detail in two other studies (Kramer forthcoming 1 and 2), only a few examples illustrating exercises that include the observation of language and conceptualization, are given in the following. Starting with the *prayogikamanaskāra*, it is notable that its first two stages are devoted to the observation of the number (*saṃkhyopalakṣaṇa*) of phonemes, words and sentences and the finiteness or infiniteness of the three categories. On the following level the practitioner is concerned with the observation of imagination (*parikalpopalakṣaṇa*), which consists either in objects (*artha*) being imagined on the basis of names (*nāman*) or vice versa. The fourth level of this practice includes the observation of the perception of *artha* after having perceived *nāman* (MSABh 58,3–8 and SAVBh [1] 53,18–55,15).

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[48] Schmithausen (1969, pp. 46f.): … *de bzhin nyid du so so rang rig pa dang mthun pa yin pas / gzhan dag la bdag gis mtshan ma 'di dang 'di lta bu yang dag par rjes su mthong ngo zhes yang dag par brjod par mi nus pa yin no.*

[49] This passage is missing in the Sanskrit but is preserved in ASBh 78,1: *lokottaraṃ niṣprapañcāvasthāṃ pratyātmam anubhavanti.*

[50] This passage is missing in the Sanskrit, but is preserved in ASBh 77,26.

As for the *pañcavidhā yogabhūmiḥ*, its second stage, which is referred to as "correct attentiveness" (*yoniśo manasikriyā*) in the root text of the *Mahāyānasūtrā-laṃkāra*, is characterized as corresponding to the *adhimukticaryābhūmi* in Sthiramati's commentary (MSABh 65,14 and SAVBh[2], 108,15–18). Sthiramati further specifies that on the first of the *bhūmi*'s four levels, that is *uṣmagata*, the practitioner understands that names are like illusions. On the second level, *mūrdhan*, he realizes that objects are like illusions, too (SAVBh[D] mi 262a2f.).

Within the collection of the eleven *manaskāra*s, the fourth to sixth categories, that is the *manaskāra*s of calm abiding (*śamatha*), of insight (*vipaśyanā*) and of the "joint path" (*yuganaddha*), are important (MSABh 91,28–92,2). In the first step the practitioner directs his mind to the "summarized names" of the *dharma*, for instance, as Sthiramati adds, "by means of the expression *Prajñāpāramitā* many meanings and words of the *Prajñāpāramitā* are summarized." The next step, *vipaśyanāmanaskāra*, consists in an examination of the meanings of these names. Finally, on the joint path *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* are united and names and meanings are no longer observed separately, but are combined into one, as Sthiramati explains (SAVBh[D] mi 266a3–b1). Similar practices are also found in connection with the six *citta*s (SAVBh[D] mi 263b4ff.).

Conclusion

The examination of the process of thinking as well as its absence has played a central role in the history of Yogācāra thought. The explanations of this process provided by Yogācāra thinkers appear to be mainly concerned with the contents and the components of thoughts, categorizing them into different classes. These lists are far more than arbitrary collections. Instead they are meant to represent exhaustive summaries of a person's conceptual experience. One of the recurring aspects of thinking seems to be the application of words and sentences. At the same time the texts also clearly state that the teaching bodhisattva or buddha uses language. According to a passage of the *Yogācārabhūmi*, *vikalpa* and correct insight (*samyagjñāna*) both are constituted by the mind (*citta*) and mental (*caitasika*) factors and share a number of Abhidharmic qualities pertaining to the mind.

Mental perception (*manovijñāna*) comprises concepts that are either recollection or examination (*anusmaraṇa*- and *abhinirūpaṇāvikalpa*), have the nature of non-loss (*asaṃpramoṣa*) and intention (*cetanā*) or insight (*prajñā*) and are directed towards past, future and present objects being "out of sight" (*parokṣa*). At the same time the authors of the texts under discussion repeatedly emphasize that the five sense perceptions are also accompanied by a rudimentary kind of thought which is referred to as "natural *vikalpa*" (*svabhāvavikalpa*), a (pre-)form of "ideation" (*saṃjñā*) and the *vikalpa* that "arises spontaneously" (*svarasavāhin*).

The investigation of the components of language and the observation of the relation between the name and the object appear to have been important parts of the path to liberation. On the preparatory stages the practitioner investigates the nature of language and the relation between the object and its name. On the first *bhūmi* (i.e. on the *darśanamārga*) the bodhisattva realizes *nirvikalpajñāna* for the first time and

subsequently enters *pṛṣṭhalabdhajñāna*, a state in which he teaches and which thus cannot be completely without *kalpa*. On the *bhāvanāmārga* the phases of *nirvikalpajñāna* and *pṛṣṭhalabdhajñāna* seem to alternate.

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BoBh *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, ed. by U. WOGIHARA, Tokyo 1930–1936.
BoBhVy **Bodhisattvabhūmivyākhyā*, Tibetan translation, Derge 4047.
MSABh *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkārabhāṣya*, ed. by S. LÉVI, Paris 1907.
MSg *Mahāyānasaṃgraha*, ed. by É. LAMOTTE, Louvain 1938.
MSgBh *Mahāyānasaṃgrahabhāṣya*, Tibetan translation, Derge 4050.
MSgU *Mahāyānasaṃgrahopanibandha*, Tibetan translation, Derge 4051.
PSkBh **Pañcaskandhabhāṣya*, Derge 4068.
PSkV *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā*, ed. by J. KRAMER, vol. 1, Beijing/Vienna 2014.
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