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Aspects of Spiritual Practice in Early Yogācāra

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As shown in detail by Jonathan SILK (2000), the term *yogācāra* occurs in post-canonical texts belonging to various Buddhist schools. In most cases, it appears to have a fairly general meaning and is often used together with the word *yogin*. Roughly speaking, a *yogācāra* seems to have been a person (mostly a monk) in whose *ācāra*, i.e. conduct or way of life, *yoga*, i.e. ascetic and spiritual effort, especially meditative and concentrative practice, plays a more or less important role. However, sometimes, and especially in doxographic contexts, the term *yogācāra* came to be used for the followers of a specific position known as *Vijñānavāda*, in the sense of “theory of *vijñaptimātra* (唯識)”, a term I propose to render as “representation-only”.² In fact, at least in the earlier period of this school, *yoga* practices, or reflections on them, were of central importance.

This is evident already from the title of the basic text of the school, which is called *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* (YBh), “Treatise on the Levels of Those Who Engage in Spiritual Training (*yoga*)”. This voluminous text seems to be a compilation³ and, to a certain extent, systematic arrangement and perhaps also

¹ It is my pleasure to thank Florin Deleanu for carefully reading this paper and for a considerable number of suggestions, concerning both contents and style.

² I prefer this rendering because it is noncommittal as to whether *vijñapti* is used for the act of cognition or for the contents appearing in it. Moreover, it does not preclude subconscious mental processes and their contents.

³ For a comprehensive discussion of the state of research on the formation of the *Yogācārabhūmi* in general and the *Śrāvakabhūmi* in particular, see DELEANU 2006: 147–246.

revision of teachings, reflections and explanations that had originated or had been handed down (be it orally or already in written form) in a certain monastic community or circle. The compilation of the text seems to have taken place in several steps, perhaps in the 4th century A.D., but the chronology of these texts is fraught with uncertainty. At any rate, the YBh is likely to contain the oldest materials of the so-called Yogācāra school. These materials are by no means homogeneous⁴; they often represent different views or approaches and different stages of development. Doctrinally, two types of discourse can be distinguished: on the one hand, those parts which share, more or less, the attitudes of the older tradition, the Vehicle (or Way) of Disciples (*śrāvakayāna*), and, on the other, those which emphatically propound the Great Vehicle (or Way), the Mahāyāna.

In this paper I am going to discuss three phases in the development of spiritual practice in early Yogācāra. *Firstly*, I shall sketch the central aspects of spiritual practice as described and systematized in the *Śrāvakabhūmi* (ŚrBh), an obviously fairly early chapter of the YBh which, as indicated by its name, accords with the traditional, Śrāvakayāna point of view.⁵ *Secondly*, I should like to contrast this type of spiritual practice with another one: one that is documented in a couple of Mahāyāna-oriented passages of the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī* ("Collection of Clarifications"), a later section of the

⁴ I admit that the use of this term may evoke a number of problems. Inhomogeneity may concern structure, style, terminology, or thought. It is not self-evident to every reader, and to a certain extent may even be a matter of opinion. A modern scholar may be more perceptive about inhomogeneity than a believer; an exegete is more easily aware of at least terminological inhomogeneity and (for him, more often than not, apparent) inconsistency of thought than a compiler. Another problem is, of course, how to interpret inhomogeneity, or, in other words, what type or degree of inhomogeneity renders the presupposition of a single author less probable than the assumption of an act or process of compilation, or redactional changes, or textual growth.

⁵ For more details, cf., especially, SCHMITHAUSEN 1982; MŌRI 1987 and 1989; HUI-MIN 1994.

YBh. *Thirdly*, I shall briefly indicate how these descriptions of spiritual practice were transformed into the peculiar delineation of the crucial phase of spiritual practice that is typical of the later Yogācāra school—a delineation which centers around the idea of “representation-only”, and which may even have been the context in which this idea, or at any rate the term ‘*viññaptimātra*’, originated.⁶

1. Spiritual Practice in the *Śrāvakabhūmi*

The presentation of spiritual practice in the ŚrBh is fairly complex, making use of various traditional as well as innovative patterns and concepts. Of basic importance is the distinction of two types of spiritual practice: the Mundane (*laukika*) and the Supramundane (*lokottara*) Path. Only the Supramundane Path leads to Nirvana, to the final liberation from rebirth and suffering; the Mundane Path leads only to a temporary ascent to (and rebirth in) higher realms of mundane existence.

1.1. The Mundane Path

The principle of the Mundane Path⁷ is a successive ascent of the yogi through a sequence of levels of deep concentration. The means for attaining a higher level of concentration consists in thoroughly meditating on the “coarseness” (*audārikatā*) of the respective lower level and the excellence and peaceful nature (*śāntatā*) of the higher one. This entails that for the time being the yogi⁸ liberates himself from attachment to the lower level and is hence, after his death, reborn in the celestial realm corresponding to the respective higher level of concentration.

⁶ I intend to return to this controversial issue on another occasion.

⁷ ŚrBhSh 35,5–36,1; 437,17–449,14 (/470,6). A carefully revised edition and a richly annotated translation of this section of the ŚrBh is contained in DELEANU 2006.

⁸ My use of the masculine form only follows that of the Sanskrit original.

In concrete terms, the *yogi* starts with meditating on the misery of the everyday world—the sphere of sensual pleasures (*kāmadhātu*)—and the excellence of the first absorption (*dhyāna*) where all evil, unwholesome thoughts have ceased. Through this meditation he attains the concentrative level of the first absorption. After his death, he will not be reborn in the sphere of sensual pleasures but rather in the celestial sphere corresponding to the first absorption. But he may as well, while still alive, continue his ascent to three further levels of absorption in which he successively removes all restless thoughts, joyful emotions and finally even the sensation of bodily comfort. The level of the fourth absorption is a state of perfect equanimity (*upekṣā*) and mindfulness (*smṛti*).⁹

Beyond the fourth absorption, there is another set of four levels, of a different type and probably also of different origin. On these levels, all forms of recognitive and notional consciousness (*saṃjñā*)¹⁰ are gradually removed.¹¹ First, the *yogi* ascends to the level of the infinity or boundlessness (*ānantya*) of space or ether (*ākāśa*): all manifold concrete material things have disappeared, and the *yogi* is aware of infinite empty space or ether only. The next level is that of the infinity of *viññāna*. The concept of *viññāna* is complex¹² and difficult to translate. In most cases it denotes acts or processes of perception and cognition, but sometimes the mere ability to perceive or cognize, or simply sentience. Therefore, *viññāna* is that which constitutes a living, sentient being as such, and that by which a living body differs from a corpse. Occasionally, *viññāna* is counted as a sixth element, along with earth, water, fire, wind and space/ether. This would also seem to hold good in the

⁹ ŚrBhSh 449,14–455,3. For a revised edition of this section see SAKUMA 1990, pt. II: 28–36, and DELEANU 2006: 330–336.

¹⁰ For this term and the various shades of its meaning see VETTER 2000: 24–27.

¹¹ ŚrBhSh 455,4–458,15; DELEANU 2006: 337–342.

¹² Cf., e.g., FRAUWALLNER 1953: 202–205; VETTER 2000: 63–73; LANGER 2001; WALDRON 2003: 9–45.

case of a sphere of infinity of *viññāna* beyond the gross elements and the sphere of the infinity of space/ether. One is tempted to refer to an idea expressed in a Brahminical source influenced by the Sāṅkhya system, viz. that the world (in the form of an egg) is on the outside enveloped by layers of ever subtler stuff: the elements, space/ether, and finally the subtle luminosity of psychic matter.¹³ One could imagine that the yogi in his yogic concentration *mentally* transcends the gross material world and ascends, successively, to the realms of the subtler elements: space/ether and *viññāna*. When he ascends even further, he, so to speak, breaks through the most subtle cosmic envelope of *viññāna* into a realm where there is nothing at all (*ākhiñcanyāyatana*); but he is still clearly aware of this very fact, realising in notional terms: “there is nothing [left]!”

The yogi can still advance one step further. This last step is no longer characterized by a reduction of the *contents* of the yogi’s consciousness (which had already been reduced to zero on the preceding level) but by a reduction of the notional consciousness *itself*. On this level, notional consciousness itself dims down, so to speak, to a state of neither consciousness nor non-consciousness (*naivasaṃjñānāsamjñāyatana*).¹⁴ Even this level is understood as corresponding to a cosmological realm where the yogi who has attained this level in concentration may be reborn after his death. This realm is the highest sphere of mundane existence, or *saṃsāra*, and hence called “summit of [the world of] becoming” (*bhavāgra*).

¹³ Cf. the text translated in HACKER 1978: 195. In a verse preserved at DN I 223, the sphere of infinite, radiating *viññāna* seems to be equated with the realm of *nibbāna* (cf. also VETTER 1988: 65 f), although one must add that the text subsequently retracts, so to speak, this idea by adding a line from the *Pārāyana* (Sn 1037ef), according to which *viññāna* is rather the deepest layer of *saṃsāric* existence.

¹⁴ Whether this state had originally been understood in a more radical sense (or represents the formalization of a more radical idea) is a problem which cannot be dealt with here; cf. VETTER 1988: 67 and 103.

The natural continuation of the process would obviously be the complete “switching off” of notional consciousness. Actually, in the canonical texts the level of “neither (clear notional) consciousness nor non-consciousness” is often followed by yet another step: the attainment of the cessation of consciousness and feeling (*samjñā-vedayita-nirodha*). In my opinion, this stage was originally understood as a mystical experience anticipating the final state of liberation attained by a liberated person at death.¹⁵ Through this experience, *any* form of mundane existence, including the most sublime one of the level of neither consciousness nor non-consciousness, was once for all revealed as ultimately worthless. If this is correct, the sequence of concentrative levels starting from the first absorption (or other practices)¹⁶ and culminating in the attainment of the “cessation of consciousness and feeling” would seem to have been originally a path towards final liberation or at least the theory of such a path.

Its problem was that it is not easy to see how an anticipatory *experience* of final Nirvana is possible *without clear consciousness*. For this reason, the predominant strand of the early Buddhist tradition, considering final liberation impossible without discriminating insight (*prajñā*), rejected this concept of a path to liberation. This main strand did not deny the possibility of attaining a state of cessation of consciousness and feeling by deep concentration, but it did reject the soteric function of this attainment. Though occasionally characterized as similar to Nirvana, this attainment is no longer understood as an anticipatory mystical *experience* of Nirvana. This being the case, it is no longer capable of experientially revealing the worthlessness of *all* mundane existence, including its highest form, i.e. the level of neither consciousness nor non-consciousness. Consequently, the path based on the

¹⁵ Cf. SCHMITHAUSEN 1981: 214–219. To the objections raised by G.A. SOMARATNE, I have briefly answered in *The Eastern Buddhist* 32.2 (2000): 39–40 (n. 69).

¹⁶ As in the pattern of the eight *vimokṣas*.

principle that one level of mundane existence after the other is experienced as worthless and thus spiritually transcended by an experience of the next higher one stops at the level of neither consciousness nor non-consciousness and does no longer lead beyond this to Nirvana. It is no longer a path to final liberation but merely a *mundane* path. This re-evaluation is not peculiar to the ŚrBh but found in other traditions as well, and its roots may be quite old.

1.2. The Supramundane Path

The Supramundane Path of the ŚrBh,¹⁷ too, is essentially a transformation of old canonical concepts, but in this case the transformation is not a different evaluation but rather a systematization and re-structuring. In the canon we frequently meet with two more descriptions of the path to liberation (in addition to the one already mentioned in section 1.1):¹⁸ According to the first one, liberation is attained by successively entering into the four absorptions (*dhyāna*) and by obtaining, in the fourth absorption, a definitive insight into the four Noble Truths (or Truths of the Nobles)¹⁹ (*ārya-satyāni*): the Truth of Suffering, of its Origin, its Cessation, and the Path leading to its cessation. In the second one, liberation is the result of insight into the impermanence, the unsatisfactoriness (*duḥkhatā*) and the not being one's self or mine of all those elements which we normally experience as constituting our self or personality or as belonging to us: body (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), notional consciousness

¹⁷ ŚrBhSh 36,2-10 (ŚrBhTai 30*,15-13); 470,7-507,6. Cf. MōRI 1987: 21-23; 1989: 43-45.

¹⁸ For details see SCHMITHAUSEN 1981: especially 203-207 and 219-227.

¹⁹ Cf. ŚrBhSh 254,5-10 (ŚrBhTai XVI [23/2001]: 283,13-17, rightly reading *nāvabodhena* for SHUKLA's [line 9] *nāvabodheta*). In line 6-7, I propose to emend the text to *āryā etāni satyāny eṣam eṣva samānāni satyato jānanti ...*, with Tib. (ŚrBht 115b2 'phags pa rnamis kyiis *bden pa de dag de kho na lta bu yin par bden pa'i sgo nas ... mkhyen cing ...*; cf. YBhc 434c27 於是諸諦. For the analysis of the compound *āryasatyāni*, cf. also *Mahāvibhāṣā* (T 27.1545) 401c29-402b6 and AKBh 328,15-20 (ad VI.2cd).

(*saṃjñā*), emotional and volitional impulses (*saṃskāra*), and awareness (*viññāna*). Here it is not stated that this type of insight is acquired only after one has entered the fourth level of absorption. Some sūtras even expressly state that such insight can be attained on any level of concentration as long as they are possessed of clear consciousness (*saṃjñā*).

In the ŚrBh these different descriptions of liberating insight and the conditions of its emerging have largely been integrated into a single pattern. On the one hand, liberating insight is understood as consisting in a definitive and direct intuition into the four Noble Truths, but its generation does not seem to require the attainment of the fourth absorption.²⁰ At the same time, impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self-ness have come to be understood as aspects of the Truth of Suffering and have thus been integrated into the pattern of the four Noble Truths. To these three aspects, being empty (*śūnya*) [of a substantial Self or Ego] has been added as a fourth aspect.²¹ To this extent, the ŚrBh is in line with what we know from the Abhidharma of the Sarvāstivādins.²² In addition, however, there is a set of *ten* aspects²³ which may be an original contribution of the ŚrBh. They are distributed over the

²⁰ Thus, at any rate, ŚrBhSh 470,12-13 and 264,18-265,1 (entrance into the basic *dhyaṇas* before embarking on the Supramundane Path is possible but not imperative; cf. also 36,2-10). On the other hand, at 262,7-11 (ŚrBhTai XVII [24/2002]: 471,10-13) the *dhyaṇas* are declared to be required as the basis for acquiring the supramundane insight, and 14,1-15,21 (ŚrBhTai 10*,20-11*,19) gives the impression of still following the old pattern according to which supramundane insight is attained in the fourth *dhyaṇa*.

²¹ In analogy to the Truth of Suffering, the other Truths, too, are assigned four aspects each, but since these are not of great import and only briefly treated in the ŚrBh, I shall not go into details.

²² Cf. FRAUWALLNER 1971. English translation in FRAUWALLNER 1995: 149-184.

²³ ŚrBhSh 471,1-6 (emend to *vināśā*^o in line 3, and read *asvātantryā*^o in line 6) and 474,6-492,16. For the aspects of impermanence, cf. VON ROSPATT 1995: 220-233.

four aspects as follows:²⁴

All conditioned things are impermanent (*anitya*), because they are subject to 1. change and decay (*vipariṇāma*), 2. annihilation (*vināśa*), and 3. separation (*vi(sam)yoga*); these three aspects are, furthermore, either 4. near (*samnihita*), i.e. actually occurring in the present, or any rate 5. in the nature of things (*dharmatā*), i.e., even if not occurring in the present, they will inevitably take place in the future. At least all *mundane* conditioned things are unsatisfactory (*duḥkha*), because they are either 6. undesired (*aniṣṭa*, e.g. painful feelings), or 7. fetters and bondage (*saṃyojana-bandhana*, e.g. sensual pleasures), or at least 8. lacking [ultimate] security (*ayogakṣema*).²⁵ Furthermore, all conditioned things²⁶ are empty (*śūnya*), because 9. no substantial Self or Ego can be observed (*anupalambha*) as the subject of cognitive processes or rebirth; and they are “non-Self” (*anātman*),²⁷ because 10. they are not autonomous (*asvatāntra*), since they depend on conditions.

In the first, fairly lengthy part of the ŚrBh’s treatment of the Supramundane Path the yogi is exhorted to contemplate these ten aspects very carefully, special attention being paid to the aspect of change-and-decay, which is, by the way, also used as a basis for inferring the momentariness of

²⁴ See the résumé at ŚrBhSh 492,8–16 (read <vināśākāreṇa> *visaṃyogākāreṇa* in line 9).

²⁵ According to K.R. NORMAN, the literal meaning is “rest-from-exertion”, interpreted as “freedom from bondage” (K.R. NORMAN, *Elders’ Verses* I, London 1969: 5 and 128 [verse 32]; id., *Collected Papers*, vol. IV, Oxford 1993: 278 f). On the meaning of *yoga* and *kṣema* in the (R̥g) vedic period, see Thomas OBERLIES, *Die Religion des R̥gveda*, pt. I, Wien 1998: 334 ff.

²⁶ ŚrBhSh 492,1: *śūnyā ete saṃskārāḥ ātmarahitā(h)*; 492,2–5: *ye punar ete saṃskārāḥ ... asvatāntrās, te nātmana(h)* It is worth noting that in these passages the qualification as “empty” (*śūnya*) and “non-self” (*anātman*) are *not* extended to the unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*). In other words: the text avoids applying them to Nirvana.

²⁷ To be taken as a *tatpuruṣa*, as at YBhc 474b18 (非是我), and against YBhc 474b19 and b24 (無我) and ŚrBht 226a3 and 7 (*bdag med pa*) where it is rendered as a *bahuvrīhi*. In this case, however, *anātman* would be practically synonymous with *śūnya*.

even apparently stable material things.²⁸ Moreover, the yogi should not confine himself to the contemplation of directly observable things. Rather, he should, by way of analogy, extend the understanding gained through this observation also to the *imperceptible* things, i.e. to the higher realms of the world and to possible future rebirths in them.²⁹ Likewise, he should realize that impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, emptiness and non-self-ness are *endless*, i.e. properties that characterize mundane existence (*saṃsāra*) essentially and for ever.³⁰ In this way, he tries to induce his mind to turn away from the world and become solely directed towards Nirvana.³¹

However, his mind is still reluctant and shrinks back from Nirvana, because his acts of contemplation are time and again interrupted by the conception of an Ego.³² His mind still imagines itself to be a permanent subject, thinking “I am the one who sees suffering as suffering, I am the one who sees the cause of suffering as the cause”, etc.³³ The yogi must counteract these upsurges of the notion of Ego by turning away from the external objects of contemplation and by making, instead, the contemplating mind itself the object of his contemplation.³⁴ In other words, the contemplating mind of the yogi

²⁸ ŚrBhSh 485,6–15. Cf. VON ROSPATT 1995: 37 n. 65; 153; 215.

²⁹ ŚrBhSh 494,20–495,13. Emend to *satyanayeno*° at 494,20; omit the dittography at 495,4–8; at 495,8 *evam* should be emended to *sarvam*, and at 495,10 *yadā vipakṣokteṣu yad aviparokṣeṣu*.

³⁰ ŚrBhSh 495,21–496,9. Text requires emendation: 495,22: *tasyāṅsevanānvayād*; 496,2: °*paryantatām* (= ms.); 496,3–5: *śūnyānāṅb māparyantatām saṃkleśāparyantatām duṣcaritāparyantatām saṃpattinām* (ms., cf. ŚrBht 228a4 'byor pa mams kyī) *vipattya*° (SHUKLA, confirmed by Ch., but ms. and ŚrBht *vipatti*°); 496,5–6: <ja>*vāvyādhi*°; 496,7: *tatrāparyantakabēti*.

³¹ ŚrBhSh 496,14–17 (delete 'py in line 17); 497,3–6.

³² ŚrBhSh 497,6–9. I suggest to emend to *tathā hy asṅty asyaudā*° in line 7 (cf. ŚrBht 228b5–229a1: *de la ... nga rgyal rags pa yod pa*).

³³ ŚrBhSh 497,9–16.

³⁴ ŚrBhSh 497,17–498,2. At the beginning of the sentence, I read the ms. as (*nirvāṅe*) *sa tv asmimānaṃ*.

turns back upon the immediately preceding moment of contemplation and realizes that even the contemplating mind itself is not permanent but merely a series of constantly changing, ever new moments.³⁵ It thus turns out that the mind, too, is impermanent, unsatisfactory, empty and conditioned, hence not an Ego or Self.³⁶ When this kind of contemplation has been practised for a sufficiently long time, at least the gross (*audārika*) conception of an Ego disappears and the mind does not shrink back from Nirvana any longer.³⁷

Thereafter, the yogi attains a state of deep tranquillity (*śamatha*), so deep that it seems as if his mind had no longer any object at all, as if his mind had entirely ceased to function and disappeared.³⁸ The ŚrBh remarks that some assume this state to be the *abhisamaya*, the liberating direct experience of True Reality, but that this is wrong.³⁹ Actually, liberating experience emerges only immediately *after* this phase of deep tranquillity in the form of a definitive

³⁵ From a structural point of view, this contemplation resembles the *apranīhitāpranīhitasamādhi* and the *śūnyatāśūnyatāsamādhi* of the Sarvāstivāda treatises (e.g. T 27.1545: 543a26 ff; T 28.1546: 350b14 ff; AKBh VIII.25c-27b), but these *samādhis* have undefiled (*anāsrava*) contemplations as their object and hence do not occur before but only after the *abhisamaya*. According to the predominant view, it is only at the level of an *arhat* that these *samādhis* can be generated.

³⁶ ŚrBhSh 498,2-16. At 498,7, read °*vakāśaḥ* ||| *punar na bhavaty utpattaye* | (ms.). In line 9, we should read °*tām ācyāpāyikatām*, at the end of line 12 *cittaavyatiriktaṁ dvitīyaṁ* (Tib., Ch.), in line 13 *idam asya* (=ms.) and *tatra yaḥ tasyā*, and in line 14 *asvatantṛabāṁ pa*°.

³⁷ ŚrBhSh 499,6-12. In line 7, read *tasyāḥ prajñāyāḥ* (ms.), in line 8 °*dārikaś cāsmi*° (ms.), in line 9 *samudācārataḥ*, in line 10 *cādhyāśayā*°, and in line 11 *paritaṣṇanām*.

³⁸ ŚrBhSh 499,17-500,3. At 499,18, read perhaps *cādhyāśayaḥ to bhīratim*, at 499,19 °*parīkṣābhisaṁskaraḥ* (cf. ŚrBht 230a4: *sems brtags par bya ba la mngon par 'du byed pa*). At 499,20 the ms. has *nirvikalpaṁ*, and at 499,22-23 the text should be emended to *na ca tad aṅvālambanām* (Tib., Ch.). At 500,2 *madhukara*° should be *madhuraka*° (a disease, viz. dengue fever, cf. J. FILLIOZAT in BRUHN and WEZLER 1981: 83-92; cf. YBhc 475c17: 美), and at the end of the line there is a gap.

³⁹ ŚrBhSh 500,4-5.

cognition (*niścaya-jñānam*) of the four Noble Truths, each realized one by one. This cognition is qualified as a non-conceptualizing (*nirvikalpaṁ*) direct perception (*pratyakṣa-jñānam*).⁴⁰ It consists in a direct perception of the four Noble Truths not only with reference to perceptible things but also with reference to those spheres which are normally imperceptible, such as the higher realms of the world (*satyeṣu ... pratyakṣaparokṣeṣu*). This insight is the first supramundane state of mind,⁴¹ usually called the ‘Path of Insight’ (*darśanamārga*). It destroys, completely and once for ever, a first set of spiritual defilements (*kleśa*), namely those of an intellectual nature, i.e. all false views and doubts, along with their latent roots.⁴² This, however, is not yet the complete liberation. In order to remove the *emotional* defilements, a repeated practice (*bhāvanā*) of the supramundane insight is required (which may be shortened if at an earlier stage the Mundane Path had been practised).⁴³

1.3. Preparatory practices

A considerable portion of the ŚrBh is dedicated to the description of practices that are, somehow, understood to be preparatory to either the Mundane or the Supramundane Path. These practices, too, are essentially canonical but have been integrated in a systematic framework which has more or less complete parallels in other sources as well. According to this framework, the different practices are suitable for different types of persons,

⁴⁰ ŚrBhSh 500,13-17. In line 14, I suggest *samanantaraṁ pūrvvicāritāni satyāny ābhujati*, and in line 16-17 °*nukramavicāri*°.

⁴¹ ŚrBhSh 500,11.

⁴² ŚrBhSh 17-19. Perhaps we should read *tasyotpādāḍyast* in line 17-18 (cf. ŚrBht Derge dzi 190b6: *gang*). In line 19, I tend to emend the text to *dauṣṭhulyam āśraya*°.

⁴³ Cf. ŚrBhSh 500,19-501,6. At 500,21 and 501,5-6 read *saha* (or *saha*-, cf. BHSD p. 587) *satyābhisamayāt*.

respectively.⁴⁴ If a disciple tends to long for the gratification of the sensual pleasures (*rāga*), he should practise the contemplation of the repulsive (*aśubhā*), i.e. either of the various more or less disgusting parts of the human body, especially its internal organs and fluids (like blood, spittle, pus, etc.), or of corpses in various phases of disintegration. If he tends to hatred (*dveṣa*), the suitable practice is cultivating benevolence (*maitrī*) towards all sentient beings, including enemies. A person whose main problem is disorientation (*moha*) should choose origination-in-dependence (*pratītyasamutpāda*) as his object of contemplation. One who tends to restless thinking (*vitarka*) is recommended to practise mindful breathing (*ānāpānasmyti*). Finally, a disciple who tends to pride should practise the analysis of the body into the six elements (*dhātuprabheda*), i.e. earth, water, fire, wind, space and *viñāna*.

The ŚrBh gives very detailed and lively instructions on how a teacher should instruct a beginner in these practices and gradually guide him to perfection. I must confine myself to outlining the *form* in which these practices are to be carried out according to the ŚrBh—a form which comprises elements of visualisation, imagination⁴⁵ and reflective contemplation. This form resembles, to a certain extent, the pattern in which these practices are stated to be carried out in other schools (e.g. Theravāda),⁴⁶ but has nevertheless its own peculiar features. The practice most explicitly developed here and best suited for this meditative pattern is the contemplation of the repulsive

⁴⁴ ŚrBhSh 198,12–20 (revised text in SAKUMA 1990, pt. II: 10–11 [§§ A.2.3.2] and ŚrBhTai XIV [17/1995]: 327,14–325,6). Cf. also ŚrBhSh 411,15.

⁴⁵ For these two terms see BRETTFELD 2003: 169–170. “**Visualization**” means that a mental image is generated by mentally reproducing an object that had been intensively contemplated. “**Imagination**” means that a mental image is construed by means of a mental process without relying on an external object, or that a mental image is altered by means of a mental manipulation. In contrast to this, “**vision**” means that some image appears without any intentional creation of an image.

⁴⁶ Cf. the analysis and comparison of various partly similar, partly different forms of practice in BRETTFELD 2003.

(*aśubhā*).

After certain preparations (intended, among other things, to create a strong motivation) the beginner must take in (*ud-grah*) the *nimitta* of the main object of contemplation. *Nimitta* means “characteristic”; what is meant here is that the beginner must interiorize the characteristic features or the typical appearance of his object of contemplation. In the case of the contemplation of the repulsive, he may do so in a charnel-ground where he can observe dead corpses in different stages of decay. But he may also take in the *nimitta* of such corpses by means of a picture or representation in wood, stone or clay,⁴⁷ and in the case of other contemplations also from his imagination based on authoritative textual descriptions and on reflection on them.⁴⁸

Having taken in the *nimitta*, the beginner (I shall simply call him yogi from now on) should move to a quiet place suitable for meditation.⁴⁹ There he should first enter into a state of non-distraction (*avikṣepa*) and not let himself be diverted by external impressions, digressive thoughts or unwholesome emotions.⁵⁰ After abiding in this state for some time,⁵¹ the yogi should *reproduce* the *nimitta* of his main object of contemplation—the decaying corpse—in the form of a visualized *mental* replica.⁵²

⁴⁷ ŚrBhSh 416,4–8 (at 416,7, I emend to *kāṣṭhāśmasāḍakṛtād*); 373,6–8.

⁴⁸ ŚrBhSh 429,10–11 (read °*tpādaprayukta ādi*°; °*kalpitam na* should probably be °*kalpitena*); 431,7–8.

⁴⁹ ŚrBhSh 416,8–12.

⁵⁰ ŚrBhSh 396,1–9 (revised text: SAKUMA 1990, pt. II: 19–20 [E.3]); 416,12–417,6 (some emendations: 416,13 °*nibandham*?; 416,14: *ṣaṭ samjñā manasikuru. nirmittasamjñāṃ nirvikalpasamjñām upa [sam] sama*°; 416,15: °*samjñān niṣ*° stands for °*samjñān niṣ*°; °*nairvṛtya-śubha*° seems correct (cf. ŚrBh 185a6 and °*nairvṛtyasukha*° at 423,17); 417,3: °*kleśā anabhyāsa*° (Tib.); 417,4–5: *mukham ādarśayanti ālambanībhavanti*(??), ... °*nneṣv asmṛty*°; 417,6: °*drṣṭam evāḍīnavam adhi*° (Tib., Ch.).

⁵¹ ŚrBhSh 419,14–16.

⁵² ŚrBhSh 396,10–12 (revised text: SAKUMA 1990, pt. II: 20 [E.4]); 419,19–22. Cf. also MōRI 1989: 40.

However, in the beginning this deliberately visualized mental replica is not yet clear and vivid and requires improvement. Apparently there are different methods for this. In one passage, the yogi is advised to intercalate the visualization of a mental replica of light (*ālokanimitta*), which he had taken in precisely for this purpose during the preparatory phase.⁵³ Under the influence of this visualization of light, the mental image of the main object of contemplation, i.e. that of the decaying corpse, brightens up.⁵⁴ According to other passages, however, the improvement of the mental replica of the main object of contemplation is achieved by effacing and re-visualizing it time and again, just as a painter copying a model wipes out the first, imperfect attempts and tries again until the copy is perfect.⁵⁵ In the same way, the yogi, too, is, finally, capable of reproducing the mental replica of his object of contemplation to such a degree of perfection that it is entirely similar to the object itself.⁵⁶ In other words, he finally succeeds in visualizing his object of

⁵³ ŚrBhSh 416,2-4 and 421,18-422,9; emendations suggested: 422,4: *'dhimokṣo*; 422,5: *mandābhāsaḥ* (ms.); 422,6-7: perhaps *bhāvanābhyāsād viśpaśtatām gamiṣyati pracurābhāsalām ca*.

⁵⁴ For another function of the visualization of light, see ŚrBhSh 106,16-20 (ŚrBhTai 81*,7-10); cf. ABE 2004.

⁵⁵ ŚrBhSh 421,3-8 (text partly unsatisfactory; at 421,8, I emend to *na balātkāra-karaṇīyam*); 395,2-7 and 397,2-19 (revised text in SAKUMA 1990: pt. II: 18 [E.0] and 21-22 [E.6]).

⁵⁶ ŚrBhSh 194,10-17 Revised text in SAKUMA 1990, pt. II: 5 (§ A.1.1.3) and ŚrBhTai XIV [17/1995]: 337,12-335,5. I favour the emendation to *adhimokṣānubhāvaḥ ... manaskāranubhāvaḥ*, proposed by SAKUMA in accordance with Tib. *mthu*: "Rather, the power of conviction (i.e., of the deliberate mental reproduction of the image), the power of the concentrative act, is such that ...". For the phraseology, cf. *Milindapañha* 148,29-30: *marāṇass' eso ... ānubhāvo yena tesam santāso uppajjati*, and *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (ed. N. DUTT, Patna 1966) 2,5-6: *tatra prakṛtistham gotraṃ yad bodhisattvānām śaḍāyatanaviśeṣaḥ sa tādrśaḥ paramparāgato ...* (no *danḍa*: *yad* requires a whole sentence; cf. YBhc 478c13-14 and *Ratnagotravibhāga* [ed. E.H. JOHNSTON, Patna 1950] 55,16-17). If the reading of the ms. (*°nubhavaḥ*, supported by YBhc) is preferred, I should propose to

contemplation perfectly.⁵⁷

But what is the purpose of this visualization practice? In the case of the contemplation of the repulsive, the practice continues with a process of visual imagination: the yogi deliberately increases the number of visualized replicas of corpses to the extent of filling the whole world with them.⁵⁸ This imagination, in its turn, forms the basis of the following reflection: The yogi envisages the fact that even the appalling number of corpses which he has just imagined is far less than the number of the corpses to which his own body was reduced during the countless births in the course of the beginningless *samsāra*.⁵⁹ And this is bound to continue also in the future unless the chain of births and deaths is brought to an end.⁶⁰ This contemplation helps the yogi

translate the respective sentence as follows: “Rather, this experience [achieved through] conviction, [this] experience [achieved through] the concentrative act, is of such a kind that (*yena*) this [visualized] appearance (*pratibhāsa*) is now exactly similar to the thing to be understood.”

⁵⁷ Kōjirō Karō, in a stimulating paper (2002: 55–56), seems to regard the images in the ŚrBh as something which common yogis mistake for the actual thing-to-be-known (*jñeyam vastu*) itself. To my knowledge, however, this is not said in the text. The text merely states that the image may be so vivid as to resemble a direct perception of the thing itself. This *may* indicate the *possibility* of a confusion on the part of the yogi, but on the whole the yogi would seem to be well aware of the difference. The images are *deliberately* visualized as *substitutes* for the things themselves, enabling their “representation” in any situation, their imaginative transformation, and the visualisation (and, eventually, direct perception) even of things-to-be-known that are inaccessible to ordinary perception (like the peacefulness of higher realms on the Mundane Path or the impermanence of the higher world spheres on the Supramundane Path).

⁵⁸ ŚrBhSh 420,1–9; I suggest *pravartate tadā lambanaḥ tadā* at 420,2–3, *vidiśas cāpṛamāṇākāreṇa pūṛṇā nirantarā adhi*^o at 420,5–6 (cf. 427,10), and *danḍakoṭīviṣṭambhanamātram* at 420,7–8 (cf. 427,11).

⁵⁹ ŚrBhSh 420,9–21. Read *sa tvam etam evādhi*^o at 420,9 and *ato 'pṛamāṇatarāṇi* at 420,12.

⁶⁰ ŚrBhSh 420,21–421,1 (at 421,1, read *kariṣyāmi* |> *evam hi tvam adhimuktimanaskāram ...*).

strengthen his motivation to strive for liberation.

An analogous visual imagination followed by reflection is also described in connection with the practice of benevolence (*maitrī*). In this case, the yogi fills the whole world with visually imagined replicas of friends, enemies and neutrals.⁶¹ Here, the subsequent reflection focuses on realizing that in the course of the countless previous existences the enemies of today had once been friends, and the friends of today enemies. The yogi comes thus to comprehend that all sentient beings are ultimately equal and deserve to be regarded with benevolence rather than with hatred.⁶²

In the examples just adduced as well as in some other cases,⁶³ the mental reproduction or visualization of the characteristic (*nimitta*) of an object of contemplation is the starting point of an *imagination* multiplying this reproduction, and this imagination is, in its turn, the basis for a *reflection*. As pointed out before, in the context of the contemplation of the repulsive, this reflection aims at motivating the yogi to strive after liberation. In the case of benevolence, however, it serves the purpose of removing hatred and enmity, which is after all the traditional and primary goal of this practice,⁶⁴ just as

⁶¹ ŚrBhSh 427,7–12. Revised text in MAITHRIMURTHI 1999: 282 (§ 2).

⁶² ŚrBhSh 428,8–20. Revised text in MAITHRIMURTHI 1999: 283 (§ 4.A).

⁶³ The structure “1. taking in of the *nimitta* and subsequent visualization, 2. imagination, 3. mental contemplation” is clearly recognizable also in the analysis [of the body] into the elements (*dhātuprabheda*) at ŚrBhSh 430,14–432,3 (where the text has a gap for which see Takayasu KIMURA in *IBK* 40.2/1992: 921,4–920,8). It is less conspicuous in the rather short treatment of mindful breathing (see *IBK* 40.2/1992: 920,8–22; it is not clear to what extent visuality is involved here), and significantly different in the case of the contemplation of origination-in-dependence (ŚrBhSh 429,10–430,13: no visual *nimitta*, no visualization, no imagination). None of these descriptions, however, contains details concerning the technique of reproducing and perfecting the *nimitta* in visualization. Such details are only given in the treatment of the contemplation of the repulsive (*aśubhā*) and in general treatments like ŚrBhSh 193,4–202,2 (cf. fn. 69) or 395,2–398,6 (revised text: SAKUMA 1990, pt. II: 18–23).

⁶⁴ Cf. ŚrBhSh 380,13–15 (text contains a lacuna, for which see ŚrBht 168b2–4 and

removing sensual desire is the original and main purpose of the contemplation of the repulsive.⁶⁵

Another important function of all these practices is, however, to train the yogi's capacity of *concentration*,⁶⁶ which is another precondition for his entering into either the Mundane or the Supramundane Path.⁶⁷ This does not necessarily imply that these two Paths, too, still make use of the technique of visualization and imagination as the basis of the reflections they involve. Actually, there is, on the whole, little evidence for this in the respective sections of the ŚrBh,⁶⁸ although the state of deep tranquillity immediately preceding the first supramundane insight (see p. 223) reminds one of the technique of effacing the visualized images in order to achieve an ever better reproduction (see p. 227).

On the other hand, a homogeneous structure of all types of practice is in fact postulated by another, more theoretical, systematizing paragraph of the ŚrBh.⁶⁹ Here, the method of contemplation by means of adequate mental images

Maithrimurthi 1999: 281,3-8 and 290,2-9.

⁶⁵ ŚrBhSh 376,14-377,7.

⁶⁶ ŚrBhSh 432,8-433,18. Revised text in SAKUMA 1990, pt. II: 26-28 (§§ G.2-3).

⁶⁷ Cf. ŚrBhSh 437,1-16; DELEANU 2006: 317 (§ 3.27).

⁶⁸ Cf. ch. 1.1 and 1.2 of this paper.

⁶⁹ ŚrBhSh 193,4-202,2. Revised text in SAKUMA 1990, pt. II, § A, and ŚrBhTai XIV (17/1995): 339-315 = (28)-(52). This systematizing paragraph differs from other parts of the ŚrBh which treat this subject (see HUIMIN 1994: 273-274). This may suggest that it belongs to a later historical stratum in the development of the ideas (see MŌRI 1989) or even the text (see DELEANU 2006: 149 and 202 f, referring also to the diverging opinion of MIHONO (2001)). I cannot see any reason why the fact that some of the terms which form part of the treatment of the *vyāpy ālambanam* (not *vyāpya*-°; it is clear from ŚrBhSh 197,12 *tena tad vyāpīty ucyate* that we have to do with *vyāpi*, neutr. sg., functioning as an attribute of *ālambanam*) in Yogasthāna 2 occur also in Yogasthānas 3 and 4, adduced by MIHONO (2001: 96) as evidence for his thesis that the latter presuppose the former, may not as well be taken, with MŌRI 1989: 48-51, as precursors from which the systematic treatment in Yogasthāna 2 was build up. The mere occurrence of such elements is hardly

(*pratibimba*)⁷⁰ produced in contemplative concentration is claimed to apply not only to the objects of the preparatory practices like the contemplation of the repulsive. Rather, it is expressly extended even to the objects of the Mundane and the Supramundane Path, viz. the coarseness of the lower and the excellence of the respective higher sphere, and the four Noble Truths.⁷¹

In this paragraph of the ŚrBh, also the alternation between reproducing and effacing the mental replicas (*nimitta*) appears in a *modified* terminology, namely as an alternation between mental images (*pratibimba*) with and without reflective activity (*vikalpa*). The former are the object of contemplation (*vipaśyanā*), the latter the object of tranquillity (*śamatha*).⁷² In the phases of tranquillity, the object is not abandoned but not actually contemplated either.⁷³ The most interesting point, however, is the statement that the contemplation process does not merely lead to a mental reproduction of the

sufficient for a decision concerning the matter. And MINOHO's (2001: 98) argument that from a systematic or pedagogic point of view the actual sequence of the ŚrBh is the only natural one does not allow any conclusion with regard to chronological priority. If materials of different origin were used, the compiler(s) may well have inserted older material into later portions of the text if they deemed this adequate from a systematic or pedagogic point of view. Yet, I admit that unravelling the textual history of the ŚrBh in detail is, if possible at all, a task for the future, presupposing a satisfactory edition of the whole text in the first place.

⁷⁰ They are not necessarily taken in from visible objects but may also be formed on the basis of what one has heard (*śruta*: obviously referring to oral instruction) or imagined (*parikalpita*) (ŚrBh 193,8-9; cf. 429,10-11 for *pratityasamutpāda* as an instance).

⁷¹ Cf. ŚrBhSh 194,4-6; 196,19-197,5; 199,2-7. Revised text: see fn. 69.

⁷² ŚrBhSh 193,7-195,12; revised text: see fn. 69.

⁷³ ŚrBhSh 195,2-3 (corrected text in SAKUMA 1999, pt. II: 6,7-8) and 195,9-10. This idea is also expressed in the context of effacing and re-visualizing the images, e.g. ŚrBh 396,14-20 (SAKUMA 1999, pt. II: 20 [§ E.4]), where "effacing the object" is defined as not actually 'taking it up' (*ud-grah*) or making it one's object (*nimitti-kr*) but not abandoning (*muc*) it either. Cf. also 421,14-16: *na ca tāni nimittāny utsṛjati savikalpāni, nāpi ca <vi?>kalpayati...*

object that is so clear and vivid as if the object itself were directly perceived.⁷⁴ Rather, the contemplation process culminates in a non-conceptualizing (*nirvikalpa*) perceptual cognition or insight (*pratyakṣam jñānadarśanam*) that transcends the mental image and directly apprehends the respective object *itself*.⁷⁵ This idea is also expressed in some other passages, but it is in connection with the Supramundane Path that it seems to be of fundamental import.⁷⁶ As pointed out before (p. 218), this Path culminates in a non-conceptualizing (*nirvikalpa*) perceptual cognition (*pratyakṣa-jñāna*) of the four Noble Truths.

2. A Mahāyānist description of the Supramundane Path in the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī*

A quite different use of mental replicas or images (not necessarily *visual* images) produced in contemplative concentration can be found in a couple of passages of the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī* (VinSg) section of the YBh. This section was compiled later than the Basic part of the YBh, and most (though not necessarily all) of the materials it contains may safely be taken to be later than most of what we find in the ŚrBh.

The passages in the VinSg that make use of mental replicas or images are much briefer than those in the ŚrBh, and they are concerned with the Supramundane Path, without clearly distinguishing it from preparatory

⁷⁴ See p. 227 with fn. 56.

⁷⁵ ŚrBhSh 196,18-19; 200,9-10 (emend to *jñeyavastupratyakṣatayā* with SAKUMA 1990, pt. II: 13). Cf. also ŚrBh 397,4-5 and 8 (*yāvaj jñeyavastupratyakṣoṣaḥgamāya*) as well as 402,20 (*◁jñeye vastuni▶ pratyakṣajñānotpattih;* cf. SAKUMA 1990, pt. II: 23-24 [F.1]). Cf. also 263,7 (*jñeye vastuni yathābhūtam jñānadarśanam*, clearly referring to the *darśanamārga* [see 263,8-9]).

⁷⁶ It does make sense in the context of the Mundane Path if the actual attainment of the higher level could be interpreted as a supranormal direct perception of this level and its excellence, but it appears somewhat strange in the case of preparatory practices like the contemplation of the repulsive (cf. SCHMITHAUSEN 1982: 73-74).

practices. They are, moreover, written from a Mahāyānist point of view, the main passage forming part of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* chapter of the VinSg.⁷⁷

The Mahāyānist point of view is also visible in the ontology of these passages. Whereas in the ŚrBh material as well as mental phenomena are impermanent but real, in the VinSg passages under discussion the world of manifold appearances is a kind of surface reality. Objective appearances (*nimitta*) are the object of mundane mental activities subsumed under the category of *vikalpa*. The concept of *vikalpa* tends to imply an element of dispersion and inadequateness. This is confirmed by its being expressly contrasted with correct knowledge (*samyagjñāna*), which is essentially the experience of undiversified True Reality (*tathatā*). Moreover, objective appearances are stated to arise both from [other] objective appearances and from mundane mental activities (*vikalpa*), just as *vikalpas* arise from [other] *vikalpas* as well as from objective appearances.⁷⁸ Unfortunately, the text offers no further explanation how, precisely, this has to be understood, but we may not be far off the mark when we take it to mean that objective appearances, though existing objectively, are nevertheless also conditioned by inadequate conceptions. Hence, they would seem to be, ultimately, a kind of objectively existing illusion.⁷⁹ True Reality (*tathatā*), on the other hand, is characterized by the essencelessness or unreality of *dharmas*, i.e. of all manifold appearances.⁸⁰ When this uniform True Reality is experienced, all manifold

⁷⁷ YBhc 695c26 ff; YBht vol. zi 302b1 ff. The Tibetan text of this section has been critically edited in KRAMER 2005 (with annotated German translation), and (partly) in TAKAHASHI 2005: 121 ff (with annotated translation into Japanese).

⁷⁸ YBhc 696b27-c1 ≈ YBht zi 304a4-6 (KR 72 §§ 6.1 and 6.3; TAK 125 §§ 1.6.1 and 1.6.3).

⁷⁹ Cf. also the idea that even for a yogi who has got rid of false imagination, the external world continues to exist because it is upheld by the imagination of the other sentient beings, and that it merely appears to him in a purified form (YBhc 700c16-26 ≈ YBht 'i 13b5-14a2; KR 90 § 2.2.3; TAK 137-8 § 1.12.10).

⁸⁰ YBhc 696a4-5 ≈ YBht zi 302b4 (KR 69 § 2.4; TAK 121 § 1.2.4).

appearances have disappeared.⁸¹ It is as when someone experiences in a dream that he is carried away by a torrent and about to be drowned. He makes a big effort to save himself, and by this very effort he awakes from the dream, and the torrent has altogether disappeared.⁸²

It is obvious that this experience does not correspond to the liberating insight as conceived of in the ŚrBh. It rather corresponds to the experience that was described there as immediately preceding this insight: the state of deep tranquillity in which it seems as if the mind had no object any more and as if even the mind itself had disappeared. The ŚrBh had criticized some people for conceiving of this state of tranquillity as being insight (*abhisamaya*) into True Reality. The VinSg passages under discussion do precisely this. For them, the decisive insight is the non-conceptual direct experience of undiversified True Reality (*tathata*).⁸³ The insight into the four Noble Truths, which is liberating insight proper for the ŚrBh, is merely a subsequent conceptual analysis of this non-conceptual experience of undiversified True Reality.⁸⁴ The VinSg passages thus presuppose the same sequence of experiences as the ŚrBh, but the evaluation of the two phases is reversed.

Let us now turn to the question of how the yogi attains direct insight into True Reality according to the VinSg passages. It is in connection with this preparatory phase that they mention mental images (**pratibimba*) produced in contemplative concentration.⁸⁵ The yogi should deliberately produce, in his

⁸¹ YBhc 701c4-5 ≈ YBht 'i 15b8-16a1 [read *bsa*] (KR 93 § 3.5.2.4.1); cf. also YBhc 701b24-26 ≈ YBht 'i 15b4-5 (KR 93 § 3.5.2.1-2).

⁸² YBhc 701c5-9 ≈ YBht 'i 16a1-3 (KR 93-94 § 3.5.2.4.2).

⁸³ YBhc 696a7-9 ≈ YBht zi 302b5-7 (KR 69 § 2.5.1; TAK 122 § 1.2.5.2); 706c9-14 ≈ YBht 'i 29b3-5.

⁸⁴ YBhc 701b9-16 ≈ YBht 'i 15a5-b1 (KR 92-93 § 3.3.4); cf. YBhc 696a11-17 ≈ YBht zi 302b7-303a2 (KR 69-70 § 2.5.2; TAK 122 § 1.2.5.3).

⁸⁵ Cf. also YBhc 668c18 ff ≈ YBht zi 235b8 ff.

contemplative concentration, mental images of the main categories of appearances and thereby supersede, or substitute, the ordinary appearances.⁸⁶ In contrast to the firmly rooted, resistant ordinary appearances, the deliberately produced mental images can be dissolved at will, and this is precisely what the yogi is expected to do.⁸⁷ The process is compared to the driving out of a big wedge by means of a small wedge, which in its turn is removed easily.⁸⁸ When the yogi thus dissolves the mental images which he has substituted for the ordinary appearances, no appearances remain and True Reality free from all appearances manifests itself.

This practice presumably requires an intense training. Precluding the emergence of the ordinary appearances can be achieved only if the concentration is sufficiently deep and if the mental images have been perfected to the extent of being as vivid as the ordinary appearances.⁸⁹ This process is similar to the ŚrBh, but there is a fundamental difference between these two parts of the YBh. In the ŚrBh, the aim is the production of fully adequate and vivid mental images or replicas (and eventually a supranormal direct perception of the respective object itself), and dissolving the replica is merely a means for improving the process of its reproduction. In the VinSg, however, the main aim is the dissolving of the images, and the attainment of a status in which this dissolution is strong enough to prevent the immediate re-intrusion of the ordinary appearances.

3. The Supramundane Path in chapter VIII of the *Samdhinirmocana-sūtra*

In the last part of my paper I shall discuss the Supramundane Path in

⁸⁶ YBhc 701b19-23 ≈ YBht 'i 15b2-3 (Kr 93 § 3.5.1).

⁸⁷ YBhc 701b23 and c15-17 ≈ YBht 'i 15b3-4 and 16a5-7 (Kr 93 § 3.5.1 [last sentence] and 94 § 3.5.4.1).

⁸⁸ YBhc 669a8-12 ≈ YBht zi 236b1-4.

⁸⁹ Cf. YBhc 701c15-23 ≈ YBht 'i 16a5-b1 (Kr 94 §§ 3.5.4.1-3.5.4.2.2).

chapter VIII of the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* (Saṃdh), more precisely, the first supramundane insight (or Path of Insight, *darśanamārga*) and the steps directly leading up to it. The Saṃdh (“Sutra of Unravelling the Deeper Meaning”) has, as a whole, been incorporated into the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* chapter of the VinSg. It may be difficult to decide whether its chapter VIII is chronologically earlier or later than the VinSg passages I discussed in the preceding part of my paper. But from the point of view of history of ideas, the position of the Saṃdh appears to be more advanced.

There can be hardly any reasonable doubt that the author(s) of chapter VIII of the Saṃdh were familiar with the ŚrBh, for they actually make use of the latter’s key terms without defining them, hence presupposing these as already well-known.⁹⁰ Like the ŚrBh, the Saṃdh distinguishes mental images (*pratibimba*) with and without reflective activity (*vikalpa*), the former being the object of contemplation (*vipaśyanā*), the latter the object of tranquillity (*śamatha*).⁹¹ But in a decisive point its use of these terms differs from that of the ŚrBh: Tranquillity is not understood as a phase of effacing the mental images that are produced and reflected upon during the contemplation phase. It is rather conceived of as a reflection upon these very acts of contemplation themselves.⁹²

⁹⁰ A. WAYMAN’S (*Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113.1/1993: 144) assertion of the priority of the Saṃdh is not convincing. He takes the mere presence of “virtually the same” passage on the three doors of *vipaśyanā* in ŚrBh (367,16 ff.) and Saṃdh (VIII.10.3) as a proof for the priority of the latter without taking a closer look at the (after all conspicuous) differences, which clearly show that the version in the Saṃdh is more advanced and technical than the one in the ŚrBh.

⁹¹ Saṃdh VIII.2.

⁹² This is most clearly expressed at Saṃdh VIII.9 (p. 91,35–92,2 and 92,9–10 ≈ T 16.676: 698b15–17 and 20–21), defining *śamatha* as the continuous contemplation of the immediately preceding [moment of] mind (*gang gi tshe ... bar chad med pa'i sems yid la byed pa'o*), i.e., of the mind which has the image as its object (*gzugs brnyan la dmigs pa'i sems*) and is itself the object of *śamatha* (*zhi gnas kyi dmigs pa*), and at VIII.3 (p.

As pointed out above (p. 222–223), the ŚrBh, too, mentions reflections upon the preceding moment of contemplation. In the ŚrBh, this reflection was practised with the aim of making the yogi aware of the fact that even the contemplating mind itself is merely a series of moments, hence impermanent. In the Saṃdh, however, this reflection has a different purpose: it is intended to reveal the *true nature of mental images*.

In order to clarify its view on the nature of mental images, the text explicitly asks whether the mental images that are contemplated in concentration are different/separate from the [respective moment of] mind or not. The answer is that they are *not* different/separate. Rather, they are mere representations (*vijñaptimātra*).⁹³ Basically, this had already been maintained in a (non-canonical) sutra quoted in the ŚrBh.⁹⁴ In this text, it is stated that the mental images or replicas experienced in contemplative concentration are nothing but cognition (*jñānamātra*), nothing but perception (*darśanamātra*), nothing but recollection (*pratismṛtamātra*).⁹⁵ The Saṃdh shares this view but uses the term *vijñaptimātra* which was to become the key-term of Yogācāra thought.

However, the Saṃdh does not stop at the mental images or replicas experienced in contemplative concentration but extends its analysis to the

89,14–18≈T 16.676: 698a5–8), where *samatha* is defined as the contemplation of the very mind by means of which one had contemplated the *dharma*s which, in the form of an image, are the object of *vipaśyanā* (*sems gang gis yid la byed pa'i sems de ... yid la byed do // ... de ni zhi gnas zhes bya ste /*). VIII.5 (p. 90,8–13≈T 16.676: 698a14–18) and VIII.6 (p. 90,27≈T 16.676: 698a25–26) are less clear as far as details are concerned, but at any rate, contrast *samatha* as taking the mind (*citta*) itself for its object with *vipaśyanā* as reflecting on an image (*pratibimba*).

⁹³ Saṃdh VIII.7 (90,33–91,3).

⁹⁴ ŚrBhSh 199,17–18: SAKUMA 1990, pt. II: 12,7–9; ŚrBhTai XIV (17/1995): 323,8–10.

⁹⁵ “Merely [something] recollected” would not be impossible either, but in analogy to *jñāna*- and *darśana*- I have taken *pratismṛta*- as an action noun. Perhaps we should even emend to *pratismṛtimātra*. Cf. SAKUMA 1990, pt. II: 109 n. 633.

objects of ordinary perception as well: even the appearances of visible things, etc., which are the object of the everyday perceptions are not different/separate from mind, are mere representations.⁹⁶

In the next paragraph (VIII.9), the Saṃdh moves on to re-draft the decisive phase of the Supramundane Path in terms of the preceding statements. The acts of contemplation (*vipaśyanā*) concentrate on the mental image or replica. The phases of tranquillity (*śamatha*) concentrate on the immediately preceding act of contemplation. This process then culminates in a

⁹⁶ Saṃdh VIII.8.—KATŌ 2002 (58–59; 99) raises the question of what should be regarded, in the Saṃdh, as the model (*bimba*) of the images (*pratibimba*) experienced in contemplative concentration. According to him, the model is mind itself. I basically agree, but the situation appears slightly more complicated. Up to the middle of Saṃdh VIII.7, a reader (or an audience) not yet familiar with the chapter as a whole would naturally have understood the expression “image (*pratibimba*) that is the object of contemplative concentration (**samādhigocara*)” in the same way as it is used in the ŚrBh. Even the statement that the image is a mere representation would hardly have made him waver, since this, too, was basically in agreement with the position of the ŚrBh (more precisely: the above-mentioned sūtra quoted there). It is only in the second half of Saṃdh VIII.7 that the perspective changes on account of the introduction of the mirror-simile. This simile is intended to explain how the image, though not different/separate from the mind, is yet perceived as something else (**arthāntara*). It is just as in the case of a face reflected in a mirror: although in reality one merely perceives the face (*bimba*=*mukhabimba*, “contour of the face”, and at the same time “model”), one imagines to perceive an image (*pratibimba*) apparently different/separate from the face/model. The text unambiguously draws a parallel between the face/model and the “mind that has arisen thus”, i.e. in the form of the object experienced. Still, there is a difference between the simile and the case which it is intended to illustrate. In the simile, there are three elements: the image, the face/model, and the mirror (and we may even add the spectator as a fourth). In the case to be illustrated, there is only the image and the mind itself. Thus, if the mind corresponds to the face/model, what would correspond to the mirror, or to the spectator? In my opinion, the most suitable candidate is, once again, the mind. If this is correct, the new perspective of the Saṃdh takes the image (*~pratibimba*) as the externalized appearance of the mind itself in so far as it contains (*~mirror*) an object-like appearance (*~bimba*=model).

state of mind where contemplation and tranquillity are 'yoked together' (*yuganaddha*).⁹⁷ In this phase, the yogi realizes that the mental image experienced in contemplation is a mere representation (*viññaptimātra*), and subsequently he realizes that precisely this being nothing but representation is True Reality (*tathatā*), i.e. the true nature of *all* experienced objects, including those of ordinary consciousness as well.⁹⁸

Thus, for the Saṃdh the images or replicas reproduced (no doubt, deliberately) in contemplative concentration have a *model function*. One might say that just as in the VinSg they are substituted for the ordinary appearances. They are not, however, substituted for the ordinary appearances because they are more easily eliminated than the latter, but rather because they are more easily *seen through*, i.e. because they are more less difficult to be realized as being nothing but representation.

The Saṃdh is, however, not the first text in which, starting from experiences in contemplative concentration, *all* objects of experience were declared to be nothing but mind. Significantly earlier than the Saṃdh is the *Pratyutpanna-buddha-sammukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra* ("Sutra on the *Samādhi* of Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present", = Praty).⁹⁹ This text¹⁰⁰ describes a contemplative concentration in which the meditator experiences a direct encounter with the Buddha Amitābha, even though the

⁹⁷ The term is also used at ŚrBhSh 404,5 (see SAKUMA 1990, pt. II: 24 [§ F.2]) and goes back to canonical texts (cf. AN II 157,16; T 2.99: 147a8–9 (no. 560)).

⁹⁸ Cf. Saṃdh VIII.20.2.3 (read *mam par rig pa tsam nyid* with YBht 'i 78b4).

⁹⁹ Translated into Chinese already towards the end of the 2nd century A.D. However, it cannot be taken for granted that the Saṃdh was familiar with this sutra (cf. IKEDA 2006: 148). On the other hand, the Praty seems to have been known to the *Daśabhūmikāsūtra* (cf. ed. RAHDER 82,17–18; ed. KONDO 179,4), which in its turn, is presupposed by the Saṃdh. Thus, one cannot exclude the possibility that the Saṃdh had some knowledge, direct or indirect, of the Praty.

¹⁰⁰ References are to the sections in HARRISON 1978 and 1990.

latter resides far away in Sukhāvātī.¹⁰¹ However, the Praty states that there is no *real* encounter. Rather, what appears to the meditator as the Buddha Amitābha is only the meditator's own mind (*cittam eva*).¹⁰² And the same is also true of all ordinary appearances: the whole world is nothing but mind (*cittamātra*).¹⁰³

Up to this point, the structure of the argument of this text coincides with that of the Saṃdh. However, the Praty does not confine itself to reduce the experienced objects to mind but adds that even the mind itself is illusory because it would not be able to perceive itself,¹⁰⁴ no more than (according to other texts)¹⁰⁵ the tip of a finger can touch itself or the blade of a sword can cut itself. This kind of argument is expressly refuted by the Saṃdh: The mind (i.e. one single moment of mind) does, to be sure, not carry out an *action* directed towards itself. Rather, it simply has arisen in such a way that it appears thus, i.e. in the form of a specific mental image.¹⁰⁶

Obviously, the Saṃdh merely intends to reduce objective entities to the mind, but not to call mind itself into question. In this point, the Saṃdh diverges from the Praty, and perhaps also from the VinSg and from most later Yogācāra works, at least as regards the description of the corresponding phase of the Supramundane Path, i.e. the Path of Insight (*darśanamārga*) and the steps

¹⁰¹ For demonstrating the illusory character of experienced objects, the text also adduces such examples as the dream experience (3B-D; 3H-I) or the contemplation of the repulsive (3J), but these paragraphs merely serve to explain the Amitābha visions, and the expression *cittamātra* occurs only towards the end of the chapter (3L) in connection with the latter.

¹⁰² Praty 3O, verse 1.

¹⁰³ Praty 3L.

¹⁰⁴ Praty 3M; 3O, verses 2d and 3ab.

¹⁰⁵ E.g. *Ratnacūḍāsūtra* quoted *Śikṣāsamuccaya* (ed. C. BENDALL) 235,6-8.

¹⁰⁶ Saṃdh VIII.7 (91,6-11), partly quoted in *Jñānaśrīmitranibandhāvali* (ed. A. THAKUR, Patna 1959) 478,3-4: *na hi tatra Maitreya kaścid <dharma kañcid> dharmam pratyavekṣate, api tu tathā samutpannam tac cittam yat tathā khyāti*]. Cf. IWATA 2004: 68.

directly leading up to it.¹⁰⁷ In the (presumably) next old text, the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, e.g., the realization that the object is nothing but mind (*cittamātra!*) is followed by the realization that mind, too, does not [ultimately] exist (*cittasya nāstitvam upaiti*), and only then True Reality (*dharmadhātu*) manifests itself.¹⁰⁸ It seems to be only in Vasubandhu's *Trīṃśikā* that the position of the Saṃdh position came to be reconfirmed in a more refined way. However, further discussion of this issue is beyond the scope of this paper.

Abbreviations:

AKBh = *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, ed. P. PRADHAN, Patna 1967.

IBK = *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* (*Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*).

K_R = KRAMER 2005.

Praty = *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra*, ed. Paul HARRISON, Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies 1978.

Saṃdh = *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, ed. Étienne LAMOTTE, Louvain/Paris 1935.

ŚrBhSh = *Śrāvakabhūmi*, ed. Karuneshā SHUKLA, Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute 1973.

ŚrBht = Tibetan translation of the ŚrBh (Peking Tanjur, vol. wi).

ŚrBhTai = *Śrāvakabhūmi*, Revised Sanskrit Text and Japanese Translation, The First Chapter. Śrāvakabhūmi Study Group, The Institute for Comprehensive Studies of Buddhism, Taishō University. Tokyo, Sankibo 1998. The 2nd Yogasthāna is being published in the *Annual of the Institute for Comprehensive Studies of Buddhism, Taisho University*, from vol. 16/1994 onward, beginning with "The Śrāvakabhūmi", pt. XIII.

¹⁰⁷ However, when describing the 'Path of [repeated] Cultivation' (*bhāvanāmārga*), the phraseology of the Saṃdh (VIII.36, especially p. 115,25 ff) is remarkably close to that of the VinSg passages treated in section 2 of this paper.

¹⁰⁸ *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* (ed. S. Lévi) VI.7-8 (read 'tadvati for 'tadgati' at VI.8d; thus also Akemi IWAMOTO in IBK 44.2/1996: 844).

TAK = TAKAHASHI 2005.

VinSg = *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī*

YBh = *Yogācārabhūmi*

YBhc = Chinese translation of the YBh (T 30.1579).

YBht = Tibetan translation of the YBh (Peking blockprint).

< > = to be added; { } = to be deleted.

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