

ANALYSIS OF YOGA IN THE *SAMDHINIRMOCANA-SŪTRA*

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(Sūtra)

The Sanskrit text of the *Samdhinirmocana-sūtra* is not extant. In Chinese there are two complete translation, one made by Bodhiruci in 514 A. D. (元魏・菩提流支訳・深密解脱経五卷 *Taisho* No. 675) and the other made by Hsüan-chuang in 647 A. D. (唐玄奘訳・解深密経五卷 *Taisho* No. 676). There are also two partial translations, one made by Guṇabhadra in some years between 435-443 A. D. (劉宋・求那跋陀羅訳・相統解脱地波羅蜜了義経一卷・相統解脱如来所作随順処了義経一卷 *Taisho* Nos. 678, 679) which corresponds to the last two chapters of Hsüan-chuang's translation, and the other made by Paramārtha in between 557-569 A. D. (真谛訳・仏説解節経一卷 *Taisho* No. 677) which corresponds to the second chapter of Hsüan-chuang's complete translation. Hsüan-chuang's translation is the most often quoted and authoritative in the Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda tradition in China and Japan.

In Tibetan, there is only one translation (*Peking ed.* No. 774, Vol. 29). Prof. Étienne Lamotte of Louvain published a French

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translation with the Tibetan text. (*Samḍhinirmocanasūtra, l'explication des mystères*, texte tibétain édité et traduit par E. L., 1935, Louvain). The Tibetan text corresponds fairly well to both of the Chinese complete translations. Hsüan-chuang's translation, however, has eight chapters, each of which is titled after the main topic discussed therein. The chapters of Guṇabhadra's 'Chinese translation and the Tibetan translation are named after the Bodhisattvas who played the important role in the respective chapters. Guṇabhadra's translation has eleven chapters, while the Tibetan translation has ten. In the Tibetan text, the introductory chapter is not independent but included in the first chapter.

This *Sūtra* is one of the six fundamental, authoritative *Sūtras* in the Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda tradition. Prof. Obermiller gives a good introduction to the significance of this *Sūtra* :

“Tradition tells us that the Saint Asaṅga, having been inspired by Bhattāraka Maitreya, has laid the foundation to the Yogācāra Vijñānavāda system in accordance with the teaching exposed in the *Samḍhinirmocana-sūtra*. He has accordingly composed his *Yogacaryā-bhūmi*, his *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha* and *Abhidharma-samuccaya*, and was followed by Vasubandhu in the *Vyākhyāyukti*, *Viṃśatikā*, *Triṃśikā*, and their commentaries. In all these works the teaching of the *Samḍhinirmocana* according to which the old and the intermediate Canon are both considered to be of conventional meaning (neyārtha) is adopted as a foundation. In particular, that section of the *Yogacaryā-bhūmi* which is called *Nirṇaya-saṃgraha* quotes passages from all the chapters of the *Samḍhinirmocana* at full length, and explains them in detail. The teaching of Non-

substantiality, in accordance with the *Samdhinirmocana*, is demonstrated in the chapter on the Absolute Truth (tattva-adhikāra) of the *Bodhisattva-bhūmi*. The teaching about the store-consciousness (ālaya-vijñāna), the negation of the reality of the external world and the teaching about the three aspects of existence (of which the causally dependent and the ultimate are treated as being real by themselves) is discussed in detail in the *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha*. The chief points thus demonstrated are, moreover, summarized in the *Abhidharma-samuccaya*, and the treatises of Vasubandhu exposed the subject on the same lines. The main texts which give a summary of the contents of the *Samdhinirmocana* and of which the treatises of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu just mentioned are considered to be the interpretation, are the *Sutrālaṃkāra*, the *Madhyanta-vibhaṅga* and the *Dharma-dharmatā-vibhaṅga*.”

E. Obermiller: “The Doctrine of Prajñāpāramitā”,
Acta Orientalia, (Uppsala, 1933), pp. 97-98.

As Prof. Obermiller pointed out above, there is a close relationship between this *Sūtra* and the *Yogācāra-bhūmi*. A long quotation in the latter begins abruptly without mentioning the name of the *Sūtra* it is quoting. A quotation from a *Sūtra* in its entirety in a *Śāstra* is quite rare in Buddhist literature. From this, Prof. S. Fukaura (深浦正文) suggested once that it is probable that the *Samdhinirmocana* might be originally a part of the *Yogācāra-bhūmi* and later on become an independent *sūtra* with the addition of the introductory verses, just as the *Pu-sa-ti-ch'ih-ching* (菩薩地持經・北凉・曇無讖訳) became independent out of the *Yogācāra-bhūmi*. Cf. A. Wayman: *Analysis of the Śrāvakabhūmi Manuscript* (Berkeley,

1961), p. 30. It might also be worth mentioning that Hsüan-chuang translated 100 volumes of the *Yogācāra-bhūmi* between May 15, 647 and May 15, 648 A.D. and the *Samdhinirmocāna-sūtra* between May 18–July 13, 647. (瑜伽論序・開元釈教錄)

(Commentaries)

There is no Sanskrit commentary extant on this *Sūtra*. Several commentaries were composed in China, Korea and Japan: Ling-yin (唐・令因), Hsüan-fan (唐・玄範), Yüan-hsiao (新羅・元曉 617.....), Ching-hsing (新羅・璟興 681.....) and Yüan-ts'e (円測 613–695). Except for the last of these, all are missing and not available. Yüan-ts'e's commentary is very important not only because of its exhaustiveness but also because of the author's importance as a direct disciple of Hsüan-chuang and his influence in the Chinese Yogācāra tradition. This Chinese commentary lacks the last chapter, but there is a Tibetan translation made from this Chinese commentary (Ven-tshig, Chos-grub tr. *Peking ed.* No. 5517, Vol. 106) so that we can tell what was written in the last, missing chapter of Yüan-ts'e's original. (西明寺沙門円測撰・解深密經疏・大日本統藏經)

In Tibetan, there are several commentaries on this *Sūtra*. The oldest Tibetan catalogue of the Buddhist scriptures (*lDan-dkar dkar-chag*), which was produced in 812? A.D., tells us that there were five commentaries on this *Sūtra* translated into Tibetan at that time. (Nos. 530, 531, 532, 533, 534 in M. Lalou: "Les textes bouddhiques au temps du roi Khri-sroñ-lde-bcan", *Journal Asiatique*, t. 241 (1953) pp. 313–353. In the Tibetan Tripiṭaka of the present-day form, however, there are only three commentaries.

- a) *Samḍhinirmocana-sūtra-bhāṣya* by Asaṅga ? (Peking ed. No. 5481, Vol. 104)
- b) *Samḍhinirmocana-sūtre Ārya-Maitreya-kevala-parivarta-bhāṣya* by Jñāna-garbha (No. 5535, Vol. 109)
- c) *Samḍhinirmocana-sūtra-vyākhyāna* by Byaṅ-chub rdsu-ḥphrul (No. 5845, Vol. 144)

(Yogācāra)

One of the early examples of this word can be found in the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* of Śāntideva.

“Tatra Kāśyapa yo *bhikṣur yogācāri* bhavati, tasya tena vaiyāvṛtya-kareṇa bhikṣunā’nulomikāny upakaraṇāny upasaṃhartavyāni glāna-pratyaya-bhaiṣajya-pariṣkāraś ca / yasmiṃś ca pradeśe sa *yogācāri bhikṣuḥ* prativasanti tasmin pradeśe nōccaśabdaḥ kartavyaḥ / rakṣitavyo vaiyāvṛtya-karena bhikṣunā *yogācāri bhikṣuḥ* / śayyāsana-upastambhanāśya kartavyā / praṇītāni ca saṃpriyāni *yogācārabhūmy-anukūlāni* khādaniya-bhojanīyāny upanāyitavyāni / (Bendall ed. p. 55)

“Then too, O Kāśyapa, in a case where a *monk practises self-discipline*, your serving monk must collect the means of assistance suitable to the occasion, and also requisites, medicaments, and appurtenances for any bodily failure; and in the place where this monk lives no loud noise must be allowed; but the serving monk must watch over *the monk under discipline*, must prop up his bed or seat, and must offer him food both hard and soft, pleasant, acceptable, and suited to the character of his *disciplinary course*.” (Bendall tr. p. 56)

We are not sure why the Chinese translator used 離垢比丘 (lit.

monk released from bondages) for *Yogācāri bhikṣuḥ*. Yoga in this sense means a bond or tie (āśrava) as in the word *yoga-kṣema* (spiritual success free from the bonds of attachment). *ASM* p. 131. An Arhat is sometimes translated as 離纏者 or 得離垢者, since he is free from four bonds of Kāma, Bhava, Dṛṣṭi and Avidyā.

Another example of the word Yogācāra is found in the more sophisticated definition given by Bodhibhadra in his commentary (*Nibandhana*) of Āryadeva's *Jñānasāra-samuccaya*.

“With a methodical mental orientation (*yoniso-manasikāra*), they put into practice, just in accordance with the natures of the things, what is meant by the scriptural sentence: ‘Jinaputra ! The three worlds are mind-only.’ (from *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*). That is why they are called *Yogācāra* alias *Yoniso-manasikāra-yoga*.”

S. Yamaguchi : *Chūgan Bukkyō Ronkō*, p. 17

Here, the Yogācāra is defined as the methodical mental orientation, in accordance with the natures of the things (*bhāva-anurūpya*). Sthiramati in his *Madhyāntavibhāga-ṭīkā* gives a definition of Manaskāra-pratipatti and Anudharma-pratipatti as follows :

“The behavior in accordance with the Dharma is a behavior following the natures of things that should be meditated on and that should be comprehended. It consists of the intense contemplation on Calming and Clear Vision already entered.” (*dhyātavya-jñeya-dharma-anugatā anupraviṣṭa-samatha-vipaśyanā-bhāvanā-ātmikā pratipattir anudharma-pratipattiḥ* // (Yamaguchi ed. p. 21)

Sthiramati more clearly defines Yoga as the intense contemplation

on Calming and Clear Vision in his commentary on the *Mahāyāna-sūtra-ālaṃkāra* :

“Yoga is a repeated exercise (abhyāsa). Yogācāra are those who, having acquired the Nirvikalpa-jñāna in the First Stage (bhūmi), intensely contemplate the same Nirvikalpa-jñāna or Calming and Clear Vision as a pair (śamatha-vipaśyanā-yauganaddha) in the way of intense contemplation (bhāvanā-mārga) in the Stages from the Second upto the Tenth Stage.”
 / rnal ḥbyor ni goms par byed pa la bya ste / sa dañ por
 rnam par mi rtog paḥi ye śes rñed nas sa gñis nas sa bcu
 man chad bsgom paḥi lam na rnam par mi rtog paḥi ye śes
 de ñid la bsgom pa ḥam shi gnas dañ lhag mthoñ zun du
 ḥbrel pa la bsgom pa ni rnal ḥbyor pa shes byaḥo // *Peking ed.* Vol. 108, p. 281-3.

As to the difference between Calming and Clear Vision, a verse of the *Mahāyāna-sūtra-ālaṃkāra* reads as follows :

“By the halting of thought in thought on the basis of the right mental station, Calming is (established). Then, by the investigation of the doctrines, Clear Vision is (established).”
 // cittasya citte sthānāc ca dharma-pravicayād api samyak-
 sthitim upāśritya śamatho’tha vipaśyanā //

Bodhipakṣa Chapter v. 66 (*Lévi ed.* p. 146)

(Cf. *ASM.* p. 93)

安心於正定，此即名為止，正住法分別，是名為觀相

Sthiramati comments on this verse as follows :

“The right mental station (samyak-sthiti) means the right concentration (samyak-samādhi). Relying on the four kinds of concentration without defilements (anāsrava-samādhi) of the

realm of forms (rūpa-dhātu), thought halts on thought. The halting of thought on such a single area of thought (ekagratā) as 'The three worlds are mind-only. There is nothing other than the mind' is Calming. Only by that extent, Calming is accomplished. When the equipoise of thought is attained, the knowledge of knowing natures just as such (yathābhūta-jñāna) will be produced. The non-discursive thought (nirvikalpa-jñāna) of knowing the meaning of the doctrines without perversion is called Clear Vision. This is, in short, an explanation of Calming and Clear Vision in the Mahāyāna."

// yañ dag par gnas pa ni yañ dag pañi tiñ ñe ḥdsin la bya ste / gzugs kyi khams kyi zag pa med pañi tiñ ñe ḥdsin la brten nas sems la sems bshag pa ste / khams gsum thams cad ni sems tsam du zad pa ste / sems las gshan med do shes sems rtse gcig tu ḥjog pa ni shi gnas shes bya ste / de tsam gyis na shi gnas yons su grub pa ste / sems mñam par bshag pa rñed na yañ dag pa ji lta ba bshin du śes pañi śes rab ḥbyuñ ste / chos gañ rnams kyi don phyin ci ma log par śes pañi rnam par mi rtog pañi ye śes la lhag mthoñ shes bya ste / ḥdi dag ni theg pa chen poñi shi gnas dañ lhag mthoñ gi mtshan ñid mdor bsten to // *Peking ed.* Vol. 109, p. 61, 1. 3.

The analysis of Yoga-praxis, in terms of Calming and Clear Vision, was made more elaborately later in the tradition of the Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda in Tibet, China and Japan. The part of the *Samdhinirmocana-sūtra* which I am going to introduce here is the most often quoted to support their standpoint. This is the part of the fourteen categorical questions made by Bodhisattva Maitreya and answered by Vairocana-Buddha in the form of Saṃbhoga-kāya.

Maitreya represents the Aparijñā's standpoint while the Buddha reveals the Parijñā's view.

TRANSLATION

SAMDHINIRMOCANA-SŪTRA

(Sūtra of the Explanation of the Profound Meaning)

Chapter IX : Questions of the Bodhisattva Maitreya
or the Analysis of Yoga

1) At that time, Bodhisattva Maitreya asked the Bhagavat :

“Bhagavat ! Relying on what (kiṃ saṃnīśritya), and standing on what base (kiṃ pratiṣṭhāya), do Bodhisattvas intensely contemplate Calming (śamatha) and Clear Vision (vipaśyanā) in the Mahāyāna ?

The Bhagavat gave this answer : “Maitreya ! Standing on the provisional establishment of the natures (dharma-prajñapti-vyavasthāpana), and relying on the non-abandonment of the vow (anirākṛta-praṇidhi) for the supreme perfection of enlightenment (anuttarā-samyaksambodhi), (Bodhisattvas intensely contemplate Calming and Clear Vision in the Mahāyāna).

(*Sūtra-ālaṃkāra* pp. 167-168, 顯揚聖教論, 大正30. p. 519b)

2) The Bhagavat taught the following four as the meditative-object elements (ālambana-vastu) of Calming and Clear Vision.

- a) the image attended with predication (savikalpa-pratibimba)
- b) the image devoid of predication (nirvikalpa-pratibimba)
- c) the limits of the entity (vastu-paryantatā)

d) the fulfillment of the requirement (kārya-pariniṣpatti)

“Among them, Bhagavat, how many are the meditative objects of Calming?

The Answer: “It is only one, i. e., the image devoid of predication (is the meditative object of Calming).

“How many are the meditative objects of Clear Vision?

The Answer: “It is only one, i. e., the image attended with predication (is the meditative object of Clear Vision).

“How many are the meditative objects of Calming and Clear Vision combined?

The Answer: “There are two sorts, i. e., the limits of the entity and the fulfillment of the requirement (are the meditative objects of Calming and Clear Vision combined).

(ASM p. 86, 阿毘達磨集論, 大正31, pp. 686-7; 阿毘達磨雜集論, 大正31, pp. 744-5)

3) “Bhagavat! Staying and relying on these four meditative-object elements of Calming and Clear Vision, how do the Bodhisattvas exert themselves in Calming (śamatha-paryeṣin)? And how are they skilled in Clear Vision (vipaśyanā-kuśala)?

The Answer: “Maitreya! The provisional establishments of the natures are as follows: i) *sūtra*, ii) *geya*, iii) *vyākaraṇa*, iv) *gāthā*, v) *udāna*, vi) *nidāna*, vii) *avadāna*, viii) *itivṛttaka*, ix) *jātaka*, x) *vaiṣṭulya*, xi) *adbhuta-dharma*, xii) *upadeśa*.

(dvādaśa-aṅga-dharma-pravacana, Cf. ASM pp. 75-78).

I have taught those (establishments) to the Bodhisattvas. They listen to them well (suśruta), keep them well in mind (susamāpta), remember them by heart (vacasā paricita), examine them by intellect (manasā anvikṣita), comprehend them well by insight

(dṛṣṭyā supratividdha). They live in solitude (ekākino rahogatāḥ), and stay mentally composed (pratisaṃlayana). They orient the mind (manasikṛ) to the Dharmas that have been well thought over (sucintita-dharma). With the mental orientation with an inner continuity (adhyātmika-prabandha-manasikāra?), they orient the mind to the thought that has the mental orientation to (the Dharmas). When (the Bodhisattvas) keep acting in this way for a long time, the bodily cathartic (kāya-praśrabdhi) and mental cathartic (citta-praśrabdhi) will be produced in them. This is what is called Calming. The Bodhisattvas are those who exert themselves for Calming in this manner.

(ASM p. 108, 成唯識論卷六, 大正31, p. 30b; 大乘阿毘達磨集論卷一, 大正31, p. 664c; 顯揚聖教論卷一, 大正31, p. 481c)

4) Having attained the bodily and mental cathartic, (the Bodhisattvas) fix themselves in this state (of Calming). They put aside the aspects of thought (citta-ākāra) (as false appearances). They inquire into (praty-avekṣ) the Dharmas that are properly thought over in the above-mentioned way (sucintita-dharma) and have a conviction (adhimuc=nirvedha) on those Dharmas as being the images in the scope of concentration inside (of the mind) (adhyātma-samādhi-gocara-pratibimba?). In this way, with the images in the scope of concentration, (the Bodhisattvas) inspect (vicaya), inspect fully (pravicaya), deliberate fully (paritarka), consider profoundly (paricāra), bear in mind (kṣānti), desire (kāma), investigate conclusively (nitīraṇa), look for (darśana), and comprehend (avabodha) the objects that should be known (jñeya-artha). This is what is called Clear Vision. The Bodhisattvas are those who are skillful in Clear Vision in this manner.

(ASM p. 110; *Lam-rim* 493a)

5) “Bhagavat ! The Bodhisattvas have the inner mental orientation (adhyātma-manasikāra) on thought which has the thought as the meditative object (citta-ālambaka-citta). While they are still unable to attain the bodily and mental cathartic what shall this mental orientation be called ?

“Maitreya ! It is not Calming. It should be called (a mental orientation) associated with a conviction consisting with Calming (śamatha-anulomika-adhimukti-samprayukta-manasikāra).

“Bhagavat ! While the Bodhisattvas are still unable to attain the bodily and mental cathartic, they may have a mental orientation reflecting inward on those properly conceived Dharmas as the images in the scope of concentration. What should this mental orientation be called ?

“Maitreya ! It is not Clear Vision. It should be called (a mental orientation) associated with a conviction consisting with Clear Vision (vipaśyanā-anulomika-adhimukti-samprayukta-manasikāra).

(ASM p. 126 ; *Lam-rim* 511a)

6) “Bhagavat ! Between the Way of Calming (śamatha-mārga) and the Way of Clear Vision (vipaśyanā-mārga), is there a difference or none ?

The Answer : “Maitreya ! There is a difference, and there is no difference.

“Why is there no difference ?

“Because (Calming) has as the meditative object the thought which is the meditative object of Clear Vision (vipaśyanā-ālambana-citta).

“Why is there a difference ?

“Because the image attended with predication (savikalpa-

pratibimba) is not the meditative object of (Calming).

7) “Bhagavat! Between the image in the scope of concentration (possessed by the Bodhisattvas skilled) in Clear Vision (vipaśyanā-samādhi-gocara-pratibimba)* and the thought (citta), is there a difference or none?

“Maitreya! There is no difference.

“Why is there no difference?

“Because the image is no more than the representation (vijñapti-mātra). Maitreya, as I taught before, the meditative object of perception becomes manifest as ‘what is represented only’ (vijñāna-ālambanaṃ vijñapti-mātra-prabhāvitam).

“Bhagavat! When the image in the scope of concentration is not different from the thought, how can the thought perceive (utprekṣate) the thought itself?

The Answer: “Maitreya! It is true that here in this world there is nothing that can perceive itself (kartṛ ≠ karman). But, the thought thus produced (evaṃ utpanna-citta) would make a manifestation of imagery in this way (evam avabhāṣate) (having double aspects of the perceiving thought and the thought to be perceived).

“Maitreya! For instance, when a form (rūpa 質) is given, on the cleaned up surface of a mirror, we would be likely to assume that we perceive not only the form itself but also the image of the form (reflected in the mirror). In that case, the image appearing in this way (on the surface of the mirror)

* rnam par lta bar bgyid pa shes bya ba ni lhag mthoñ dañ ldan pañi rnal hbyor pa rnam par mi rtog pañi śes pa rtogs paño // (One who observes (vyavalokayitṛ) means a Yogin endowed with clear vision who comprehends the things with nirvikalpa-jñāna. SNSV. p. 162a. 漢訳・毘鉢舍那。

appears as a thing completely different and independent (bhinna-arthavat) from the form itself. Just in the same manner, the thought thus produced appears itself as a thing completely different and independent from the image held in the scope of concentration (samādhi-gocara-pratibimba).

(*Mahāyāna-saṃgraha*, Taisho Vol. 31, pp. 182c-183a; p. 285bc; p. 338c; p. 400ac)

8) “Bhagavat! When sentient beings have images in thought, which appear in one form (as a blue Dravya) or another, and which stay in their intrinsic natures (svabhāva-avasthita), are those (images) not different from the thought itself?

The Answer: “Maitreya! They are not different. Ignorant people, with perverted intelligence (viparīta-mati), could not tell properly (yathābhūtam ajñātvā) that those images are no other than mental representation (vijñapti-mātra). They have a perverted understanding (about the images).

9) “Bhagavat! To what extent do the Bodhisattvas intensely contemplate Calming exclusively?

The Answer: “At the time when they orient the mind on the image of the thought (citta-nimitta) with a mental orientation without interruptions (sarita-manasikāra). (ASM p. 96)

“To what extent do they intensely contemplate Clear Vision exclusively?

The Answer: “At the time when they orient the mind on the successive thought (ānantarya-citta) with a mental orientation without interruptions.

“To what extent do Calming as well as Clear Vision occur in equal union when the pair is mixed?

(kiyatā śamathaś ca vipaśyanā cōbhe miśrībhūte samayugaṃ
vartate) (ASM p. 121)

The Answer: "When they orient the mind on a single area of thought (cittaikagratā).

"Bhagavat! What is the image of thought (citta-nimitta)?

"Maitreya! The image attended with predication (savikalpa-pratibimba), which is the meditative object of Clear Vision (vipaśyanā-ālambana) and which is in the scope of concentration (samādhi-gocara) (is the image of thought).

"What is the successive thought (ānantarya-citta)?

(Cf. ASM p. 94)

"Maitreya! Thought which has the image which is the meditative object of Clear Vision as its meditative object (is the successive thought).

"What is a single area of thought (cittaikagratā)?

"Having understood that the image in the scope of concentration (samādhi-gocara-pratibimba) is no other than mental representation (vijñapti-mātra), (the Bodhisattvas) have the mental orientation towards truth (tathatā). This is a single area of thought. (Cf. ASM p. 108)

ABBREVIATIONS :

ASM: A. Wayman, *Analysis of the Śrāvakabhūmi Manuscript*
(Berkeley, 1961).

SNSV: *Samdhinirmocana-sūtra-vyākhyāna*
(Peking ed. No. 5845, Vol. 144).

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