ON THE VIJÑAPTIMĀTRA PASSAGE IN
SAMDHIÑIRMOCANASŪTRA VIII. 7*

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1. In an earlier paper¹ I tried to show that Samdh VIII. 7-8 can be regarded as the starting point of the doctrine of 'cognition' (or-perception) only —

* This paper is due to the most stimulating effect of two terms of fruitful collaboration with my dear friend and colleague Noritoshi Aranuki.

Abbreviations:

Bh, etc. Mahāyānasamgrahabhāṣya (see § 13)
Iwata 岩田静, 初期唯識思想研究 (仏教思想研究會) Tokyo 1981.
Katsuno 片野道雄, 唯識思想の研究 (無性唯識大乗論註) ¥1975.
MAV(Bh) Madhyamakavibhāga (blāṣya) (ed. Nagao).
MSg Mahāyānasamgraha (ed. Lamotte).
MSg 2 ed. of the Tibetan text of MSg I and II with a reconstruction into Skt. in Nagao 1982 (q. v.).

Nagao 野沢静證, 大乗仏教唯識行の研究 (解密密教聖者諸氏章及び義の訳註), ¥1957.
Samdh Samdhīnirmocanasūtra (ed. Lamotte).
SamdhVy Samdhīnirmocanasūtravyākhyāna of byaṅ chub rdo rje 'phrul (see Jñāg., 4): Tj No. 5845.
Sasaki 佐野月著, 梵語之本對應拾大乗論, ¥1931.
T Taishō ed. of the Tripitaka in Chinese.
[T 1] etc. see §§ 4 and 5
U, U1 see § 14
Y Yogācārabhūmi (ed. V. Bhattacharya).
Y1 Tibetan translation of the Yogācārabhūmi: Tj Nos. 5536-5543.

(wiṣṇaptimātra) proper, documenting at the same time that this doctrine was
developed in the context of a specific yogic practice of deliberately visualizing and
contemplating, in meditative concentration, certain kinds of images and
afterwards—still in meditative concentration—effacing them. The aim was
either—as in the Śrāvakabhūmi—to achieve an even clearer reconstruction of
these images, or—in certain (mostly Mahāyāna) contexts of the Viniścaya-
samgraha—to become free from all phenomenal experience in order realize
transphenomenal True Reality (tathāta). To efface images at will is possible
because they are creations of one’s own meditative concentration—nothing
but seeing or knowing or recollecting [them] (darsanamātram và jñānamātram
vā pratisnifyāmatram vâ), as a Sūtra quoted in the Śrāvakabhūmi puts it.96
In the Śaṃdhinirmanocāra, however, what alternates with visualization-
com-comemplation of images is not so much their effacement as acts of medi-
tative contemplation contemplating these visualizations-and-contemplations
themselves.97 The idea of such “reflexive” acts of meditative contemplation can
again be traced to the Śrāvakabhūmi. But in the Śrāvakabhūmi this “reflexive”
contemplation does not seem to have any close connection with image visual-
ization, and its aim is rather to realize impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, etc.,
of even the meditating mind itself, in order to fully comprehend the four Noble
Truths. In contrast with this, in the Śaṃdhinirmanocāra “reflexive” contempla-
tion envisages the awareness of the ideality98 of the images perceived in meditative
concentration—the fact that they are not different from the com-
templating mind—in order to effect the realization of universal True Nature
(tathāta),99 understood, by Śaṃdha VIII, as the ideality of all phenomena99. It
is in the context of the Śaṃdhinirmanocāra’s setting forth its view of the
ideality of images visualized and contemplated in meditative concentration (VIII.
11) Peking Kanjur (ed. Suzuki) vol. 6a 290r.
13) Sh. Yoshimura, Comparative Study in Chinese and Tibetan Texts of the Yoga-vihāra-
parivarta in the Śaṃdhinirmanocāra, Kyoto 1959, p. 7.
14) Yij 74 b 8.
15) Jānag. 22, 3 f.
16) ŚaṃdhaVyo co 193 b 2.
17) Cp. also MSG 62+I. 3; Sasaki, 印, p. 44 (Yamaguchi’s ed.).
18) Cp. also Iwata, 78+I. 3.
19) Nozawa, 206 n. 2.
20) This is also the opinion of Nagazawa, Katano and Suguro: see Iwata, 78 n. 3. Cp. also ns.
13 and 17 of this paper.

7) and of the subsequent generalization of this view (VIII. 8) that the concept
‘wiṣṇaptimātra’—obviously alluding to the “nominalist” doctrine of ‘denomina-
tion only’ (prajñapti-mātra) of the Bodhisattvabhūmi—10—is introduced.

2. The crucial passage in which the term first appears is in the initial part of
Śaṃdha VIII. 7 where the question is put whether the images perceived in
meditative concentration (samādhigocarapratibimbha) are something different
from mind (citta) or not. The answer is that they are not, and the reason for
their non-difference is stated as follows (Lamotte’s translation and text):
“Parce que ces images ne sont rien qu’idées. J’ai dit que l’objet de la
connaissance se définit [Idée-sans-plus] (gzugs brtan de rnam par rig
pa tsam du zad pa’i phyir te . . . . rnam par les pa’i dngigs pa rnam
par rig pa’i tsam gyis rab tu phyed ba yin no les nas bsdad do).”

3. To be sure, Lamotte’s translation of the second sentence fits both Śaṃdha’s
Chinese version (see § 12. 4) and the Tibetan text as Lamotte gives it,
but the latter is not quite correct. As is clear from a look into the block-prints
of Peking11 and Derge12, the transmitted text has not rnam par les pa’i but
rnam par les pa ni, a reading confirmed by Yoshimura’s edition of Śaṃdha
VIII, by its quotation in the Yogācārabhūmi, by the commentaries of Jñā-
agarbha13 and Byaṅ chub rdu ’phrol14, and by the quotation of Śaṃdha VIII.
7 in the Mahāyānasamgraha (II. 7, where Lamotte again reads pa’i but indi-
ces in the critical apparatus that the xylograph15 as well as the Bhāṣya16 have
pa ni). In view of this almost if not altogether unanimous testimony of the
sources the reading pa’i has, in spite of the arguments adduced by Nozawa19,
to be abandoned in favour of pa ni20.
before what would correspond to Žes ŋas bṣad do. This is confirmed not only by the Chinese version of Dharmagupta (see §12: [Dh]), but also by the Tibetan version of both the Mahāyānasamgrahabhāṣya and the Mahāyānasamgraha-upānibandhana ad MSg II. 7 which contain pratikas where the word rnam par Žes pa (viṃśāṇa) immediately precedes the concluding Žes ŋas bṣad do (see §13: Bh, (3a), and §14: U (1c) [for dmigs pa see §14. 2]).
6. Accordingly, as on a previous occasion27 I suggest the following reconstruction:
[S] *alambanaviṃśāṇamprabhadvitiṣa viṃśāṇam........
Now contrasting with this, Aramaki in his reconstruction of MSg II. 728 proposes:
*(tad) alambanam hi viṃśāṇaprabhadvitiṣa viṃśāṇam ity ahaṃ vadami.

Disregarding, for the time being, the problem of the equivalent of Žes ŋas bṣad do (for which see §9), I should like to cut down, for the purposes of the present investigation, the alternative suggested by Aramaki to
[A] *alambanam viṃśāṇaprabhadvitiṣa viṃśāṇam........
6.1 I have ignored hi though it seems to be supported by the final particle in Bodhīru’s and Hsūn-tsang’s Chinese versions (see §12: [Bo] and [H]). But this may have been induced by the question “why?” preceding (in Bodhīru: immediately preceding) our sentence, or by logical considerations. Besides, there is no trace of hi in the commentaries. And even if hi had actually been there, the source material does not offer any clue as to its position29. In view of the result of the following investigation (§§13ff.) — showing that there is textual support for both [S] and[A] — it would seem that, if there was any hi, it can have followed neither alambana (impossible in [S]: compound !) nor -prabhadvīta (impossible in [A]: hi should be the second word).
6.2 As for tad(?) the fact that it is not confirmed by the Tibetan version (including the pratikas in the commentaries) which is usually quite meticulous in rendering pronouns is a strong argument against it. There is, on the other hand, evidence for tad in Paramārtha (此相思界, s. §12: [Pa]). But his version is the least literal of all and has most probably taken over tad from the Bhāṣya (see §13. 1). The same is true of Dharmagupta whose gloss 定心所縁, (s. §
28) MSg 63.
29) This is also true of the vocative indicated, for our sentence by the Tibetan translation (Mañjuśrī) and by Hsūn-tsang (kālpata).
12: [Dh.] too may be regarded as an expansion of tad(-y)30. Finally, 陂 in [Bu] (s. §5) to be sure corresponds to tad, but I wonder if it could not represent the tad of the preceding tat kasya hetoh.

The difference between [S] and [A] is thus essentially reduced to the presence or absence of the anusvāra at the end of the word alambana.

7. It may seem disproportionate to write a paper on such a trifle as one single anusvāra, and paramārthañuh. I should, of course, agree. But the question whether anusvāra or not is decisive for interpretation of the sentence, which on its part is crucial in the context of what is, in all probability, the oldest extant passage enunciating, by the very term, the doctrine of vijnaptimātra, i.e. the central doctrine of Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda. Considering the internal consistency of the passage and historical plausibility, I should not even hesitate to assume that this passage is actually the first literary expression, in Yogācāra proper, of the generalization of the ideality of images visualized in meditative concentration into an ideality of all phenomena (see § 1). Yet, the sentence under discussion the Buddha himself seems to corroborate the fact that the images perceived in meditative concentration are nothing but cognition (vijnaptimātra), i.e. do not exist apart from the mental act of cognizing or perceiving them, by the remark that he has [already] taught or explained (ses ās bhād do) something of the kind. As this sentence contains the term vijnaptimātra, it creates the impression that the Buddha refers to an earlier enunciation of the idealist doctrine of cognition-only, and this would seem to imply that Samdh. VIII. 7-9 is, against what I suggested above, not the first passage in which this doctrine was set forth. But determining the precise content of such an earlier teaching or explanation, alleged or real, depends on how one has to understand the sentence under discussion, and this again depends on whether the anusvāra was present or not.

8. Now, if the sentence had the form of [A], it would be unambiguous. From a merely formal point of view it could, to be sure, be interpreted in the sense of [T 2] (see §4). But such an interpretation does not seem to make much sense in the present context; for the thesis is not that vijnana is an object but that the object is (not different from) vijnana. Thus, alambana should be regarded as the grammatical subject, and the sentence taken to mean:

[A 1] “The object is constituted by nothing but cognition, [therefore it] is mind (vijnana).”

No doubt, such a statement is unequivocally idealist. And if the perfect bhad has to be taken seriously, [A] would seem to imply that the sentence under discussion refers to an earlier authoritative enunciation of the doctrine of vijnaptimātra, and that Samdh. VIII. 7-9 is not the literary expression of the first discovery of this doctrine.

9. The only way out of the difficulty—if [A] is to be upheld—would be Aramaki’s suggestion to understand has bhād do as corresponding not to a Skt. preterite but to a present. This suggestion can be based on Kāśyapa-parivarta §§ 64, 65 and 127 where ās has bhād do actually represents Skt. āhama...... vadāmi. Yet, bhād is, at least from a morphological point of view, a perfect (or—not applying to the present case—a future), and usually represents preterite forms. Moreover, in a passage corresponding to a pratika of the last part of our sentence in MŚgbh. (see § 13: Bh. (3a)), Hsüan-tsang’s translation (§ 13: Bh. (3a)) has the passive expression 我所 爲. Therefore, though I do not exclude the possibility of a present30, I should consider the preterite, e. g. “itī maya desitām or the like, at least equally possible. This means that with [A] the undesirable consequence indicated in § 7, viz. that there must be some earlier enunciation of the doctrine of vijnaptimātra, would at least remain a possibility.

10. On the other hand, this consequence does not at all apply in the case of [S]; for as I have already suggested previously30, [S] would allow to understand the sentence under discussion—no matter whether it contained a preterite or a present—as a skilful utilization of a widespread Abhidharmic definition of mind (vijnana). This definition, which is, in principle, etymological, defines vijnana as "the act of cognizing (lit.: making known [sc. to the cognizing 'person'] its [respective] object" (alambana- or viṣaya-(prati)vijnapti), i.e.

30) I do not dare decide whether a final ity āhama vadāmi would, from the syntactical/stylistical point of view, be impecunable (as tam āham...... iti vadāmi in Kāśyapa-parivarta § 64 etc. obviously is) if, as in the sentence under discussion, no stress on "I" is intended. —That there actually was, in the original, some form of the pronoun of the type the Samdhinirmocanṣa sentence all the versions have "I" (aus, Me) whereas in the Upāṇibandha both versions have only the verb without a personal pronoun (see § 14: U. (3)..... tes bhād do, U. (3) (missing) ..... )—a fact that seems to be explainable only by an opposition maya delitām (Samdh.) = delitām (U) or āhama vadāmi (Samdh) = vadāmi (U).
visible things in the case of visual perception, etc. If this definition is used with a view to distinguish the function of mind (vijñāna, citta) from that of mental factors associated with it (citta, caitisaka-dharma), it acquires the nuance that "mind cognizes its object as a whole" or as such, without grasping or singling out or stressing its peculiar features, and this nuance could be expressed, as is documented also in non-Yogācāra sources, by adding the word -mātra to the word for "object" (alambana, etc.) or even to the word for "cognition" (vijñāpti, etc.). Understood in this way, the sentence under discussion would not substantially depart from traditional Abhidharma, for it would mean nothing but: "I (have) declare(d) that"


33) Y 59, 16: tatra sokalāma vastukalāyaṇam vijñānām vijñānapati. vijñānapati is obviously the verbal equivalent of vijñāna, and thus to be taken as "makes known (to himself), cognizes"; cp. pratipaścyate in 1. 18 ff. of the same passage.

34) Cp., e.g., Y 59, 16 ff.; MAV(Bh) l. 8; L. de la Vallée Poussin, Abhidhamma kośa I, 30 n. 3; id., Vijñānatattavādi Abhidharma, 296 ff.

35) MAV(Bh) 20, 19: arthamatrādṛṣṭa vijñānam; Madhyāntavibhāgaḥ (ed. Yamaguchi) 31, 10: vastusvarapamātapaladārā; Prassannapāla (ed. de la Vallée Poussin) 65, 2: arthamārthāramāṇām cātārayaipyā phāraḥ; Snābhabhadra, Nyāyaśāstra (T. vol. 29) 342 a 14: महत्तात्सय, chandakā (ed. W sog·nyam skad·byin) 38, 24: (vijñānam) upalabdhir vāyustamagahanam; Skandhāla, Abhidharmavatāta (ed. vd. Velthem, Louvain 1977) 106, 1 f.: gzugs la sogs pa yul gyi dōn pa tsem so rnam par rig pa ni rnam par les pa ste (vijñānapatir vāyustamapratirpratirpratir (vijñānam). Abhidharmadūppi(-vytti) 78, 11: vastapalabhhādirnānyam hi cītām. I admit that earlier evidence would be welcome; but in any case the fact that the source just quoted is a Vaiśāliīṣka text (as are also those of some other in ns. 32 and 35) shows that the wording of the Mahāyāna Abhidharma sentence under discussion could have been easily formed as well as understood on the basis of the Abhidharmic definition of vijñāna.

37) Of course a Sūtra can have recourse to an authoritative Abhidharmic formula only by putting it into the mouth of the Buddha. There would be no need to postulate a corresponding Sūtra passage as the source of the Sūtra. But see n. 32 (end)!
After summing up the result of this investigation (§ 17), I shall, moreover, try to evaluate the readings in terms of intrinsic probability (§§ 18ff.).

12. The Chinese translations of Bodhiruci [Bo], Paramārtha [Pa], Dharma-gupta [Dh] and Hsüan-tsang [H] (for Buddha-sänta see § 5) run as follows:

[Bo] (何以故。) 我說是心意識故名色。
[Pa] (婆伽婆言。此色相境界 識所顯現。)
[Dh] (定心所緣唯識所現 我說為識。)
[H] (我說 識所緣唯識所現。)

12.1 I confess that I am unable to draw any useful information from [Bo] which remains obscure to me.

12.2 [Pa]: "I (have) declare(d) that there is only mind/cognition (→विज्ञानचर) [that] this object which appears as [something] visible is manifested by mind/cognition (→विज्ञापति)". This translation is not quite literal, but the fact that the sentence is split up into two statements points to [A]. For some reason, Paramārtha would seem to have reversed the order, i.e. placed vijñanam first and combined it with -matra while at the same time omitting -matra in the second part of his translation which would have to represent the subject (alambana) and the first predicate (vijñaptimātrarabhāvita) of [A].

12.3 [Dh]: "The object (alambana) of concentrated mind is manifested by cognition only (vijñaptimātrarabhāvita); I (have) declare(d) that it is mind (vijñāna)."

This version unambiguously supports [A], understanding it precisely in the same way as suggested in § 8.

12.4 [H]: "I (have) declare(d) that the object (alambana) of mind (vijñāna) is manifested by cognition only (vijñaptimātrarabhāvita)".

This rendering coincides neither with [A] nor with [S], but as it takes the sentence as one predication it is hardly explicable on the basis of [A] but

rb?>/p>
meditative concentration as the grammatical subject of the sentence.

Bh., here too, does not support the Chinese versions. It rather states that by using the word 'vîjñâna' (vîjñânagârahaqena?) the text refers to the vîjñâna of the objects (perceived in) meditative concentration (sâmâdhigocara).

13.3 It is rather difficult to decide which of the two interpretations of the Bhsya is the correct one as long as the Sanskrit original is not available. Till then, we are forced to conjectures.

13.3.1 As for (2), a comparison of the various versions suggests the following original:

(2a) "tad (Bh.: tad-) alambana (Bh.: na-) vîjñânimitrâprabhâvitaṃ
tad alambanaṃ. It even appears quite probable that it was precisely this interpretation of (2a) in the Bhsya that stimulated the syntactical transformation in his rendering of the basic text (cp. § 12. 4).

On the other hand, the Tibetan version (Bh.) of (2a) cannot be interpreted in the sense of (A) because as in (T(b)) (see § 4) the particle can compel us to take dmiṣṭa pa rnam par rig pa tsaṃ gyis rab tu phyre ba can as a unit, i.e. presupposes *alamanavîjñânimitrâprabhâvita* taken as a bahuvrthi compound in the sense of (S4). Therefore, in Bh, alambana cannot be the subject of (2a), and the demonstrative pronoun de cannot be its attribute but only refer to another subject which can hardly be anything but "mind" (vîjñâna).

13.2 In (3) too Bh. (Bh. deviates to the extent of being useless for our purpose) unambiguously corroborates (A) when it states that on account of its being included in mind the object (perceived in) meditative concentration (sâmâdhigocara) is mind (vîjñâna), i.e. takes vîjñâna as another predicate of the grammatical subject of which is, as in (2a), the objective support i.e. alambana, though in this place represented by *samâdhigocara*. Bh. ("Moreover: By using the word 'vîjñâna' (the Buddha) indicates *that* the object of mind in meditative concentration he has spoken of-40 is manifested by cognition only....") inspite of its different (and certainly correct) understanding of (3b) and though substituting, in the predicate, 'mind' (vîjñâna) by *vîjñânimitrâprabhâvita*, still agrees with Bh. in regarding the object of

43a) One may even get the impression that Paramârtha's rendering of *vîjñânam* in the Sîtra is influenced by Bhsya (2b) (for which see § 13. 3. 1) and that what, in Bh. at first sight seems to correspond to (3) could just as well be a rendering of (2b)–(2d).

44–44) Or: "that what has been declared by him is that the object of mind in meditative concentration....."; cp. the Tibetan translation of Yûn-tis's commentary on the Sândh (Tj. tii 118 a 3): ....nam par les pa smos pa ni las rnam par les pa'i sbyod yul ni ni les par rnam par rig pa tsaṃ la(t) snan gi.....les biad par rab tu bstan pa'o/.

45) des na (at the end of (1)) which in Bh. looks as if introductory to (2) but is missing in Bh. does not admit of a satisfactory interpretation if taken with (2). I should prefer to regard it as representing an *anena that is to be construed with the preceding sentence which I should retranslate into Skt. as follows:

(1)*Sândhinihrocansûtra* *py uktam* [alambaṇa].....] *ity anena*,

i.e.:

"[Cognition-only] has also been enunciated in the Sândhindromacansûtra, [viz:] by the [sentence]......]"

Bh. would have ignored the dâpāḥ and wrongly have understood (1) as a reason for (2) whereas in reality (2) is an explanation of the sentence quoted in (1).
satisfactory here.

On the other hand, the reading of Bhūṣṇa and Bhūṣna (*tad alambanaṃ vijñapatiṁ matra prabhāvītam) does not seem to be free of problems either. For, since in the case of these versions we have to start from (A), (2a) — leaving aside *tad* — would be nothing but a repetition of the wording of the first part of the Śūtra sentence, i.e., a quasi-pratikā to be glossed in (2b) — (2d). Now, *tad* could have been either a part of the wording of the Śūtra, or it could have been added, by the commentator, in an anaphorical function. The first possibility is rendered altogether improbable by the absence of such a pronoun in the Tibetan text (see § 6.2). As for the second possibility, I for one cannot detect any motive for the use of an anaphoric *tad* (as an attribute of *alambana*) in the present case; for it would be altogether superfluous to refer, by *tad*, to the word *alambana* in the Śūtra sentence of which (2a) is, in this interpretation, nothing but a quasi-pratikā; and there is, in the Bhāṣya, no occurrence of *alambana* or the like in the preceding context. Besides, I wonder if *arthaśānya* in (2c) can really be predicated of the objective support (*alambana*), as it certainly would have to be in this version.

This leaves us with the reading presupposed by Bhūṣṇa viz. *tad-alambanaṃ vijñapatiṁ matra prabhāvītam, tad* — representing vijñāna. This reading is, to my mind, perfectly unobjectionable. But it cannot be a mere repetition of the wording of the Śūtra sentence supplemented by *tad*, because in that sentence the noun which *tad* must represent, viz. vijñāna, fills a different syntactical position. The Bhāṣya sentence (2a) can therefore only be an explanation of the Śūtra sentence, an explanation which in its turn is further explained by (2b) — (2d). Nor would, in the case of this interpretation, the fact that *arthaśānya* would seem to be preferably taken as a predicate of vijñāna/vijñapti and not of *alambana* raise any difficulty; for as vijñāna is referred to by *tad* and as the sentence is an explanation of the whole Śūtra sentence the subject of which is vijñāna, the gloss in (2b) — (2d) — which I should prefer to take, with Bhūṣṇa, as a syntactical unit governed, as a whole, by *ity arthāḥ* — could no doubt be understood to qualify vijñāna, not *alambana*:

"(What the Śūtra says is that) its objective support (i.e. the objective support of mind, vijñāna) is constituted by cognition only; the meaning is: (mind)"

46) Cp. MSg. II. 6; II. 14.

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in) nothing but mere cognition, devoid of an (external) object (*artha*)."

This interpretation of (2) — which is, by the way, confirmed by the fact that an investigation into a similar sentence in the Upānibandhana leads to a similar conclusion (see § 14.3) — would imply that Bhāṣya (2), in spite of the fact that the reading *alambanaṃ* deserves to be preferred, yet cannot be utilized as a support for (A) but is rather an explanation of (5).

13.3.2 The original wording of (3) is difficult/reconstruct a reliable way, but as far as essentials are concerned Bhūṣṇa seems to make fairly good sense:

"I have declared mind......: What is indicated (dyotiṣṭha) or the like) by this employment of (the word) 'mind' (vijñāna-grahāha) is the mind (that cognizes) the objects (perceived in) meditative concentration (sāmadhi-gocara)."

1. c.: According to Bhūṣṇa the Bhāṣya wants to make it clear that vijñāna in the present passage does not mean vijñāna in general but refers to the special case of the cognition or perception of mental images in meditative concentration — a remark which seems to be quite to the point because it is only this specific form of mind that is treated in Śaṁdi VIII. 7, ordinary mind being discussed only later (viz. in VIII. 8). This interpretation of (3) fully accords with the fact that (2) has most probably to be understood as a complete explanation of the whole Śūtra sentence (see § 13.3.1). (3), on the other hand, would not be concerned with the explanation of the meaning of the sentence but would be an additional remark for the sake of reminding the reader of the specific context of the sentence.

As against this, the Chinese versions, esp. Bhūṣṇa, seem to be based on a different syntactical interpretation, or on a different reading, of the words sāmadhi-gocara and vijñāna (e.g. they might have read *sāmadhi-gocara vijñānaṃ dyotiṣṭha* instead of "sāmadhi-gocara vijñānaṃ dyotiṣṭam, but there are other possibilities). Such an interpretation or reading would however seem to be inseparably linked up with the assumption that the function of (3) is to repeat, and comment upon, the second part of the Śūtra sentence (by interpreting vijñāna as a second predicate). It would therefore presuppose that (2) repeats, and comments upon, the first part of the Śūtra sentence only. Thus, it would not agree with the result of the investigation of § 13.3.1 according to which

47) Cp. A. Hirakawa, Index to the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya, pt. 2 (1977), 119 f. (s. v. य); pt. 3 (1978), 97 (s. v. stot pa).
(3) *ālambana-pratibhāsamatrāprabhāvāvitaṁ vijnānam.
This is an unambiguous support for (S), and there is, from the point of view of U₄ (dmigs pa), no room left for a reading alambanam. U₄ (3) does not conflict with this since Hašan-tsang, in rendering this paraphrase, follows the same pattern as in his rendering of the Sūtra sentence itself (see § 12.4).

14.2 As for (1), it is, according to U₄, a pratika of the Sūtra sentence interspersed with glosses. In U₄ it is a pure pratika, (a part of) the glosses seemingly having been incorporated into the following explanation⁴⁹. Thus, U₄ is of little if any help here. As for U₃ (1a) dmigs pa rnam par rig pa tsam gyis dbyer phye ba can would fit only (S) (see §§ 11 and 13.1), but as the wording may have been taken over from the translation of the basic text this is not a strong argument. On the other hand, the splitting up of the pratika into the two sentences (1a)+(1b) and (1c) and the repetition of dmigs pa in (1c) would seem to support (A), provided that (1c) is understood as

“I have taught that mind is the object”,

—or, assuming a confusion of subject and predicate on the part of the translators:

“I have taught that the object is mind”.

But this would contradict the unambiguous testimony of U₄ (3). Moreover, I wonder if phyi rol gyi dmigs pa med pa (something like *bhyalambana-virahita)—like *arthaśānya in Bh (2c) (s. § 13.3.1)—can really be used as an attribute or predicate of alambana, as it would have to if the text were based on (A). Therefore, I should prefer to attribute the splitting of the pratika into two separate sentences in U₄ to the translators, and to regard dmigs pa as a gloss of vijnāna, rendering not alambana but upalabdhi which is often used as a quasi-synonym of vijnāna or vijnapti⁵⁰. The Skt. of (1) may then have run like this:

(1a) *ālambana-vijnapti-prabhāvitaṁ
(1b) bhyalambana-virahitaṁ
(1c) vijnānam upalabdhi iti maya desitaṁ (or: aham vadamī) iti.

This text would excellently fit [S].

14.3 (2) looks like another confirmation of (A), for it says, according to U₄:

“For (that) this object (tad alambanam) is constituted by cognition only
means that it has that for its nature (tatsvabhāva)."

This is interpreted by U. to mean:

"...the external (3) object of mind (→tad-alambanam) is merely manifested by internal cognition; this object has mind/cognition as its nature."

The Sanskrit original may be reconstructed as follows:

(2a) *tathā hi tadālambanaḥ (U.: tad alambanaḥ) viññāptimāttraprabhāvitaṃ.

(2b) tatsvabhāvam ity arthaḥ.

This sentence can be accepted to support [A] only if it is understood as a paraphrase of the prattha, at least of its first part, but preferably of the whole. In the latter case, ity arthaḥ would, against U., and probably also U., have to be taken to govern the whole sentence, and tat- (U.: 識) in (2b) would have to be interpreted as viññāna. In this latter case, (2) would say that the Sūtra sentence "means that this object, being constituted by mere cognition, has the nature of viññāna", which would be an excellent paraphrase of (A). But both this interpretation and the interpretation of (2) as a paraphrase of only the first part of the prattha are to be discarded because (2) is not likely to be a paraphrase of the Sūtra wording at all; for such a paraphrase is given in (3): *di ītār = tathā hi in the beginning of (2a) rather suggests an explanation or a reason. Moreover, tat- (→識) in (2b) may equally well represent viññāpti if, as is much more likely, the regimen of ity arthaḥ is, with U., and probably also U., confined to (2b), i.e. if (2b) is understood as an additional explanation of (viññāptimātra)prabhāvita in (2a). The sentence would then mean:

"I.e. (or: For) that object (or, definitely better, with U.: its object, i.e. the object of viññāna) is constituted by mere cognition, i.e. has that (viz. mere cognition) as its nature."

Understood in this way, (2) would, similar to (2) in the Bhāṣya (see § 13.3.1), explain (1) by showing that viññāna can be called *alambanaviññāptimāttraprabhāvita because (or: in the sense that) its object is viññāptimāttraprabhāvita (→consists of or is manifested by cognition only), i.e. because the compound is to be understood in the sense of [S3] or [S4]. (3), on the other hand, sums up by paraphrasing (1) in other words while retaining its construction. In this way, Asvabhāva's commentary on our sentence proves to be a consistent whole supporting [S].

15. Jñānagarbha on Śaṅkhu VIII. 756

(1) rīgaṃ paḥ basaḥ paḥ vyhir/ṛṇam parḥ ses paḥ ni......rab tu phye boṣyaṃ no ses naḥ bhiṣd doḥ ses gṣuṣaṃ soḥ

(2) dmigṣ paḥ ni yul gyi ṛṇam parḥ sans naḥ ba yin laḥ

(3) de yah ṛṇam parḥ rig paḥ daḥ tha daḥ ma ma yin teḥ

(4) eig car dmigṣ paḥ vyhir rol

(2) "The objective support (alambana) is the appearance of mind (citta) in the form of an object (viṣayakāraṇa).

(3) and this (appearance of mind in the form of an object)50 is not different from (the 'act of' cognition (viññāpti),

(4) because they are (by necessity) perceived simultaneously."

If in this text, which tries to interpret the sentence under discussion in the light of the epistemology of Dharmakīrtti and his followers (→sahopalambha-niyama argumet), (2) and (3) are actually a paraphrase of the basic text — but I am not sure they are — , a paraphrase moreover which, free though it is, will still have substantially preserved the syntactical structure of the latter, Jñānagarbha would seem to confirm [A] because dmigṣ paḥ (alambana) functions as the grammatical subject, as in [A 1]. Moreover, he would have split the sentence into two, again as in [A 1]. Perhaps Jñānagarbha has understood the sentence under the discussion as follows: The object (alambana) is mind [appearing as an object] (viññāna), [this mind-appearing-as-an-object being] characterized by [being] nothing but (→not different from) [the act of] cognition (viññāptimāttraprabhāvita). In any case, Jñānagarbha can hardly be adduced in support of [S].

16. Byaṅ chub rdzu 'phrul on Śaṅkhu VIII. 759

(1) 'o na sans daḥ gzugs brtan ses gdags su yah ji ītār ruḥ snaḥ pa las ṛṇam parḥ ses paḥ ni......ses naḥ bhiṣd doḥ ses bya ba gṣuṣaṃ teḥ

51) See n. 49.

52) Hslan-tang's 識 in (2b) is in fact rendered by ītār par ṛṇaḥ paḥ in the Tibetan translation of Yān-tī's Śaṅkhu commentary (Tj thī 117 b 8).

53) Cp. also the discussion of Bhāṣya (2a) in § 13.3.1.

54) Jñānag. 22, 3-7; Nalawa, 193.

55-56) Or: "and [being such,] the [objective support] .......


58) ŚaṅdhiVy co 193 b 1-3; Nalawa, 197.
Mahāyānasamgraha (§ 12.2 and 3) and Mahāyānasamgrahabhāṣya (§ 13.1 and 2). But as I have tried to show in my analysis of the Bāṣya passage (§ 13.3), the interpretation of these Chinese translations is not likely to represent the original meaning of the Bāṣya passage but rather is the effect of a misunderstanding of the function and wording of its statements. It is quite probable that the reading alambanam in the Śutra sentence, i.e. [A], is somehow connected with this (mis)interpretation of the Bāṣya passage. I even suppose that [A] is the result of this (mis)interpretation; for somebody who had difficulties with the rather unwieldy compound alambanavijñaptimatratrabhadvāita in the Śutra sentence and mistook the explanation of the Bāṣya for a pratika may easily have inserted, into the Śutra text, what he considered a missing anuvāra. In a similar way, the initial tad- of the Bāṣya may have come to intrude into the Śutra sentence, too. It is of course difficult to say when this happened first, but at any rate both phenomena are conspicuous in Paramārtha’s and Dharmagupta’s translations.

In the case of Hsuan-tsang, too, it is likely that his rendering of the Śutra sentence—though not his reading—which seems to have been [S] (see § 12.4)—is influenced by the explanation of the passage in the Bāṣya (§§ 13.1 and 13.3.1) and the Upanibandhana (§ 14.3).

18. This does not mean that the reading [A] could not have arisen—under the influence of this interpretation of the Śutra quotation in the Mahāyānasamgraha or, in view of the graphic insignificance of the change, even independently—also in the context of the Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra itself; for in the preceding sentence of the Śutra (see § 2), the grammatical subject qualified as viñaptimatrata is the image (pratibimba, i.e. the objective support of mind in meditative concentration). Thus, it might have seemed natural to make the objective support, and not viñapti, the subject of the following sentence, too.

19. While it is thus intelligible and, in the case of MsG II.7, even palpable how the reading [A] could arise from [S], I do not see how—if we disregard the possibility of a mere scribal error which would hardly have become so widespread—[S] could be explained as having arisen from [A]. For, as we mentioned above (§ 17.1), the predicate in [S], viz. *alambanavijñaptimatratrabhadvāita, is, from the point of view of analysis, definitely unwieldy, especially if one wants to interpret it, as the context requires it, in an idealistic sense. It is hard to imagine that anybody, even if he felt some change necessary, would have changed the wording of [A] into such a terse formulation.

17. The result of the preceding investigation is that unambiguous evidence for [A] is, except for the somewhat evasive testimony of Āṇāgarīkha (§ 15), restricted to Paramārtha’s and Dharmagupta’s Chinese translations of both

59) The commentary has, at least in the Tibetan translation, changed the construction of the Śutra sentence, viz. "A-prabhāvāsam B" (which would correspond to "A-lakṣaṇam B") into the equivalent pattern "A is the lakṣaṇa of B".

60) Cp. n. 59.
20. The originality of [S] is not only supported by the fact that the unwieldy structure of its predicate does not make sense as a secondary change but becomes perfectly intelligible if one gets to the bottom of its double entendre (see § 10) which can be appreciated as purposeful only in the context of the introduction of a new idea on which its discoverer wanted to confer as much of a traditional garb as was available. One could also point to the terminology of the sentence which diverges significantly from that of its context: alambana instead of gocara or pratibimba, and vijnana instead citta—a divergence which would not be motivated if the sentence had originally been, as it would have to if [A] were authentic, merely a more explicit and emphatic restatement of the preceding sentence. But the change in terminology, too, is natural in the case of [S] in view of the double meaning alluding to an Abhidharmic (alambana) etymological definition (vijnapti—vijnana!).

21. Another point of view is the syntactical structure of the sentence as a whole. In this regard, [S], following the pattern definiens—definiendum, is perfectly unobjectionable and unequivocal, whereas [A] (definiendum—definiens 1—definiens 2) is formally ambiguous and, to my feeling, somewhat clumsy, to say the least. This unsatisfactory character of [A] from a purely formal point of view is easily explained as an unintentional by-product of a transformation of [S] into [A]. On the other hand, had [A] been the original reading, one might, to be sure, easily have felt bound to improve its formal structure, but this would almost certainly have led to some expansion of the somewhat abrupt second predicate (vijnana ramato vijnana eva, or the like), but never to [S].

22. Finally, attention should be paid to the fact that MSG II. 7 quotes only the sentence under discussion but not the preceding one according to which the images (pratibimba) [perceived in meditative concentration] are cognition only (vijnaptimatra) (see § 2). This is strange, for one would expect that Asanga, in the context of scriptural proofs, would not have omitted this sentence without some reason, for after all it is, except for the sentence under discussion, the only one in Sandhi VIII. 7 that contains the term vijnaptimatra. As there does not seem to be any clue for regarding the sentence omitted in MSG II. 7 as a later interpolation in the Sandhinirmocanasutra (there are some more omissions in MSG II. 7 which is thus obviously an abbreviated quotation), I suppose that Asanga has omitted the sentence because it did not fit his own terminology; for in MSG II he almost invariably uses vijnapti (II. 8: vijnana) as the grammatical (or logical) subject of vijnaptimatra (tā) : it is, in his terminology, not the object or image but cognition itself that is qualified to be cognition only (because it is devoid of an external object: MSG II. 6). On the other hand, the reading [S] of the sentence under discussion (...... vijnaptimatra-prabhavitam vijnana), especially if understood in the sense of [S2], precisely corresponds to this pattern. Had [A] been its original form, it is difficult to see why Asanga should have preferred this sentence to the preceding one (as also to the occurrences of vijnaptimatra in Sandhi VIII. 8 and 9 where too vijnaptimatra qualifies the images, not vijnana).

23. Thus, both a critical examination of the source material and the cumulative evidence of intrinsic probabilities of context and style show that the original form of the sentence under discussion was [S] ("alambana vijnaptimatra-prabhavitam vijnana......"), not [A] ("alambana vijnapti"). Therefore, the interpretation proposed in § 10 being applicable, the sentence under discussion, even if pointing to a former statement (§§ 7-9), would not conflict the assumption that Sandhi VIII. 7-9 is not only the oldest extant source for the doctrine of vijnaptimatra proper but also its first literary expression.

61) Cp., e.g., MSG II. 2 (last §); II. 6; II. 7. 2; II. 9; II. 11.