On *manojalpa* in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*

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**1. Introduction**

The Yogācāra School is well known for its idealism. They assert that objects in the outer world arise from ālayavijñāna or the mind and do not exist as real objects. Nevertheless, that does not mean that they are nihilists. In the *Mahāyānasamgraha*, it is said that objects in the outer world do not exist, but the mind that creates these objects exists as real. However, the earliest work of this school, the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* of the *Yogācārabhūmi*, asserts the real existence of the outer world, that is, vastu (true existence) or tathatā (true reality). The “Tattvārtha” chapter of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* emphasizes that when vastu is the locus of prajñapti (designation), the world appears as various things. However, when vastu is not the locus of prajñapti, the world appears as inexpressive. In other words, vastu has two aspects: one is the base of verbal designation, and the other is real existence as an inexpressive essence. In terms of what exists as real, this thought of the early Yogācāra School is completely different from the theory of ālayavijñāna, which appears in the *Mahāyānasamgraha*. It seems that the Yogācāra School changed its thought from the theory of vastu, that is, the theory of object in the outer world, to the theory of ālayavijñāna, that is, the theory of mind as our inner world. Although this fact is already well known, it has not been clarified how the Yogācāra School transformed its thought. The concept of *manojalpa* is key to finding an answer to this. In the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, *manojalpa* is stated in the context of spiritual practice, such as the cause of the manifestation of images during meditation. And in the *Mahāyānasamgraha*, *manojalpa* is mentioned as an important concept to connect spiritual practice and philosophical theory. The present paper, therefore, aims at clarifying how the Yogācāra School transformed its thought through the investigation of *manojalpa* in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*. 

— 1198 —
2. Vastu (true existence) and prajñapti (designation) in the Bodhisattvabhūmi

In the “Tattvārtha,” chapter of the Bodhisattvabhūmi, the real existence of vastu or tathatā (truth) is presented as an inexpressive essence. In the first part of this chapter, tattva (truth) is categorized by two and four ways. In one of these categories, it is stated that bodhisattvas and the Buddha-Bhagavans recognize that all dharmas have the inexpressive essential nature (nirabhilāpyasvabhāvatā).

What is [the truth, that is, the domain of knowledge completely purified of obscurations to the object (jñeyāvaranaviśuddhiṇānatattva)]? This domain (gocara-viśaya), for bodhisattvas and the Buddha-Bhagavans, is to enter into the selflessness of dharma (dharmanairātymya). This is achieved through ignorance after having gained [enlightenment] and being purified. It begins with obtaining the inexpressive essential nature (nirabhilāpyasvabhāvatā) of all dharmas and the knowledge corresponding to the perception of the object without any verbal designation (prajñapti-vādasvabhāva). This is true reality, there being nothing higher, the extreme limit of knowables, [and] from which correct analyses of all dharmas are accomplished and are not necessary to surpass.2)

After this statement, tathatā is regarded as vastu, and the relationship between vastu and prajñaptivāda is described as follows:

The one who denies (apavadamāna) vastu that is nimitta as the foundation for verbal designation destructs [everything, saying] that nothing does exist in all respects. The vastu is nimitta, the basis for verbal designation, and exists as an absolute reality (paramārthasadbhūta) of its inexpressible nature (nirabhilāpyātmaka).3)

From this statement, it can be understood that vastu is the locus of prajñaptivāda and prajñaptivāda itself exists on vastu; furthermore, vastu exists as an absolute reality.

3. Manojalpa (mental verbalization) in the context of yoga

In the “Dharmaparyēṣṭi,” the eleventh chapter of the Mahāyānasūtrālāṃkāra, manojalpa is mentioned in the context of yoga, i.e., spiritual practice.

Through the error of perceiving the [image of] skeleton in mind, duality is mentioned. As such, despite the fact that there is no duality, duality is perceived [as perceiving the image of skeleton in mind]. (MSA XI,26)4)

Through the yoga stabilizing in their own realm (svadhātu), [conceptualizations (vikalpāḥ)] attain the special object (ālambanaviśeṣa). They (conceptualizations) do appear as non-duality. It is like
skin (carma) and bone (kānda). (MSA XI.33)\(^5\)

In this verse, it is stated that conceptualizations attain the special object (ālambanaviṣeṣa). Vasubandhu comments that the special object refers to an object as dharma (dharma-lambana). The meaning of dharma-lambana is explained in verse 5.

_Dharma_ is regarded as object: the internal, the external, and the both. Further, duality is obtained as non-duality\(^6\) because duality is not apprehended. (MSA XI.5)\(^7\)

According to the comment of Vasubandhu,\(^8\) “the internal” means subject (grāhaka), “the external” means object (grāhya), and “the both” refers to true reality (tathatā) as the internal and the external get together (samasta). Therefore, “the special object” refers to these three: the internal, the external, and the both. These are perceived as dharma in the meditation of _yoga_. Further, in verses 6 and 7, manojalpa is mentioned:

Object as _dharma_ is perceived by the three wisdoms [arising from] hearing (śrūta) [reflection (cintā), practice (bhāvanā)], [that is to say,] by keeping clarity of the stated object (yathok-tārthaprasanna) [in mind] using mental verbalizations (manojalpa), by verbalization (jalpa) of objective appearance, and by fixing the mind upon the name (nāman). And perception of threefold object which is previously mentioned is based upon it (dharma which is perceived by the three wisdoms). (MSA XI.6-7)\(^9\)

Vasubandhu comments on this verse as follows:

Moreover, _dharma_ is perceived by the three wisdoms arising from hearing (śrūta) reflection (cintā), practice (bhāvanā). In these, it (object as dharma) is perceived by the wisdom arising from hearing, when one keeps clarity of stated object [in his mind] using mental verbalizations. “Using mental verbalizations” means “using correct conceptualizations (samkalpa).” “Clarity” (prasanna) means “convinced” (ādhimukta) or “determined” (niṣcita). “Keep” (pradhārana) means “investigation” (pravācayā).

It (object as _dharma_) is perceived by the wisdom stemming from reflection, when one keeps the appearance of the object [which appears] from verbalization. When one considers that the object appears solely from mental verbalization, one realizes that there is nothing other than mental verbalization in the cognition of the two stated objects.

It should be understood that it (object as _dharma_) is perceived by the wisdom arising from practice, when one fixes his mind upon the name (nāman), since there is no perception of duality in the cognition of two stated objects. Therefore, three objects which have been already explained are based upon the perceiving object as _dharma_.\(^10\)

According to Vasubandhu’s comments, especially those that were underlined, the one who practices meditation maintains clarity on the stated object in mind. It is also explained
that “clarity” (prasanna) means “convinced” (adhimukta) or “determined” (niścita). In other words, the Yogin keeps the convinced or determined object in his mind.

To understand the meaning of “convinced or determined object,” the passage found in the “Tattvārtha” chapter contains some useful information.

In these [four truths, the first is as follows]; every people shares identical opinion through the knowledge which is laid (in mind) by following acquaintance with [linguistic] signs (samketa) and conventions (samvṛti) with respect to vastu. For example, with respect to earth (prthivi), “Earth is just earth, and not fire” .... In short, “This is this, and not that” or “This is such, and not any other.” Vastu is domain (gocara) of determined confidence (niścitādhimuktigocara), and is accomplished by self-conceptualization (svavikalpapratisiddha) through the name (samjña) which is inherited by the people, without having been pondered, without having been weighed, and without having been investigated, This is the truth which is accomplished by the people.

This phrase states that a linguistic sign (samketa) as worldly consent is given on vastu, and people get linguistic consensus through it, such as “this is a book, not a pen.” This “linguistic consensus” implies “determined confidence” (niścitādhimukti). It seems that determined confidence or linguistic consensus appears from a linguistic sign (samketa) on vastu. Considering this statement in “Tattvārtha” chapter, the meaning of the statement found in Vasubandhu’s comments on verses 6 and 7, especially those that were underlined, can be made clear as follows; One takes outer-object in the mind converting it to a name or word in the stage of hearing (śrūta). This name or word in mind is called mental verbalization (manojalpa). In the next stage, reflection (cintā), the Yogin manifests the image from this mental verbalization and he considers that that object appears solely from mental verbalization, and realizes that there is nothing other than mental verbalization. After going through these stages, in the stage of practice (bhāvanā), the Yogin fixes his mind upon the name, that is, mental verbalization, and perceives true reality (tathātā) extinguishing the duality of object. As such, we can say that manojalpa is an important concept in the context of yoga: it (i.e., manojalpa) is the outer-object itself converted to a name or word in the mind and is the cause of the manifestation of images during meditation.

4. Jālpamātra (verbalization itself) and cittamātra (mind itself)

When he (bodhisattva) recognizes objects as verbalizations and dwells in the mind itself which resembles them (objects), [he] reaches direct perception of the ultimate realm (dharmanahuta), free from the characteristics of duality, (MSA (L) VI.7)
Reaching the supreme realization that there is nothing apart from the mind, he comes to understand that the mind has no existence. Reaching [the supreme realization that] duality has no existence, genius dwells in the ultimate realm which has no circumstance [of cycle of reincarnation]. (MSA (L) VI.8)\textsuperscript{15}

These verses remind us of the theories of abhūtaparikalpa and ālayavijñāna. It should be noted that, in these verses, objects themselves are verbalizations. Considering this statement, it is likely that the theories of abhūtaparikalpa and ālayavijñāna were originally used in a linguistic context. As we have already seen, the Yogin manifests the images from manojalpa during meditation: the image, originally, is a name used as a linguistic sign of the outer-object. In other words, the Yogin first takes the outer-object converting it to a name in his mind. After that, the Yogin manifests the image from the name in his mind, that is, manojalpa. Hence, we can say that this theory of manojalpa in the context of yoga developed into the theories of abhūtaparikalpa and ālayavijñāna.

\textbf{5. Conclusion}

From the above investigation, we can arrive at the following conclusions: in the \textit{Bodhisattvabhūmi}, it is stated that the existence of vastu is an inexpressive essence in the outer world. When vastu is the locus of designation, that is, prajñapti, the world appears as various things. However, when vastu is not the locus of designation, the world appears as inexpressive. The former is what we call mundane, and the latter is what we call supermundane. An investigation on the concept of manojalpa in the \textit{Mahāyānasūtrālāmākāra} reveals that manojalpa is outer-object which is converted to the name or word in mind. In other words, it is a designation on vastu, which is stated in the \textit{Bodhisattvabhūmi}. First, the Yogin takes the designation (i.e., prajñapti) on outer-object (i.e., vastu) into his mind; after that, he manifests the images from manojalpa during meditation. It seems that this theory of the manifestation from manojalpa developed into the theories of abhūtaparikalpa and ālayavijñāna. And the same time, manojalpa itself becomes a important concept to connect spiritual practice and philosophical theory in the \textit{Mahāyānasamgraha}.

\textbf{Notes:}

1) About the concept of manojalpa in the \textit{Mahāyānasamgraha}, see Watanabe [2000].

2) BBh 2.2.4.2: tat punah katamat/ bodhisattvānāṃ buddhānāṃ ca bhagavatām dharmanairāt-myapravesāya praviṣṭena suviṣuddhena ca sarvadharmanānāṃ nirabhilāpavyasvabhāvataḥ ārahya

\textbf{1202—}
praṇaṃtaivūdasvabhāvanirvikalpasamena jñānena yo gocaraviṣayah/ sāsa paramā tathaṁ
niruttarā jñayaparyantagataḥ yasyāḥ samyakasravadharma-pravīca-yā nivartante nātīvar-tante//
3) BBh 5.3.1: yaś cāpi praṇaṃtaivuddanīmitṭhaḥjñānena praṇaṃtaivuddanīmitthasamnīsrayam
nirbhidavyāmakatayā paramārthasaddhānām vastav apavadanāṁ nāsayati sarvāṇa sarvāṁ naśīti//
4) bimbhasanākalikāgrāhaharbhranter dvayam udāhrtam/
dvayam tatra yathā nāsti dvayam caiva-palaṁbhāyate// (MSA XI.26)
5) ālambana viṣeṣāptih svadhātusthānayogatāḥ/
ta eva hy advayabhāsa vartante carmakāndavat// (MSA XI.33)
6) MSA reads “labho dvayavārdhena.” I read “labho dvayādvayārdhena.” See MSA (A)
50b6, (B) 53a8.
7) ālambanaṃ mato dharmaḥ adhyātmam bāhyakam dvayam/
labho dvayādvayārthena* dvayoś cānupalambhātah// (MSA XI.5)
8) MSABh on MSA XI.5: dharmālambanaṃ yo deśitah kāyādham cādhyātmikam bāhyam adhyātmikabāhyān ca/
tatra grāhakabhātām kāyādham cādhyātmikam grāhahātum bāhyam tayoř/ eva tathādvayam/
tatra dvayor adhyātmikabāhyayor ālambanayor dvayārthena labho
yathākramanam/ yadi grāhārthād grāhakārthām abhinām pāsyati grāhakārthāc ca grāhārthām
dvayasya punah samastasyādhyātmikabāhyālambanasya tathāyā lābhāṃ tayor eva dvayor anu-
palambhād veditavyah/
(*I corrected by MSA (L), p. 55. 15)
9) manojaipalpair yathokārthaprasannasya pradhānarāt/
arthakhyānasya jałpāc ca nāmāni sthānāc ca cetasaḥ/
dharmālambanālabhāh syat triśbhir jñānaiḥ śrutādibhibhi/
trividhālambanālabhāsa ca pūrvoktas tatsamāśritah// (MSA XI.6–7)
10) MSABh on MSA XI.6–7: dharmālambanālabhāḥ punar triśbhir jñānair bhavati śrutacintāb
hāvanāmayaiḥ/ tatra samāśitena cetasa manojaipalpair yathokārthaprasannasya tatpradhānāt
śrutamayena jñānena tālābhah/ manojaipalpair iti samkalpaḥ/ prasannasyet adhīnuktasā niścī-
tasya/ pradhānaṇād iti pravicayat/ jałpād arthakhyānasya pradhānaṇāc cintāmayaṇa tālābhah/
yadi manojaipalpavāyam arthāh khyāṭīt paśyati niśyāya manojojaipalpavāyam yathoktām
dvayālambanālabhe/ cītasya nāmāni sthānāt bhāvanāmayena jñānena tālābhād veditavyo dvayānupalambhād
yatoktām dvayālambanālabhe/ atā eva ca sa pārvoktas trividhālambanālabhā dharmālamba-
nālabhasanāśrito veditavyah/
11) About the understanding of this compound “samketasamvṛtisamstava” and the meaning of
“samstava,” see Takahashi [2005: 151–152, n.3].
12) BBh 2.2.1: tatra laukikānām sarveśaṁ yasmin vastuni samketasamvṛtisamstavā
nugama-pravīṣṭayā buddhā darśanatulyaṁ bhavati/ tad yathā prthivyāṁ pṛtyeveye
nāṁganir iti// ... saṁsāta idam idam nedam evam idam niṇyate niścīdhumukti-gocaro yad vastu sarveśaṁ eva
laukgīnām paramparā-gatayā samjñāyā svavikalpaprasisddham na cintayitvā
tulayītvoparikṣyodgrhitam idam ucyate lokaprasiddham tatvam//
13) About the meaning of “adhimukti,” see Takahashi [2005: 152, n.4].
On manojalpa in the Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra (T. Motomura)

14) arthān sa vijnāya ca jalpamātrān saṃtiṣṭhate tannibhacittamātre/
    prayakṣatām etī ca dharmanātus tasmād viyukto dvayalakṣaṇena// (MSA (L) VI.7)
15) nāstīti cittat parametya buddhyā cittasya nāstivam upaiti tasmāt/
    dvayasya nāstivam upetya dhimān saṃtiṣṭhate 'tadgatidharmanātua// (MSA (L) VI.8)

Abbreviations and Bibliography:
MSA: Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra (-kārikā): See MSAbh.
MSA (A), (B): See Takeuchi etc.

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