The Problem of the Simultaneous Arising of Six Viññānas:
In the Pañcaviññānakāyaśasamprayuktabhūmi and the Manodbhūmi

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1. Introduction

As for the cognitive theory in the Pañcaviññānakāyaśasamprayuktabhūmi (PBh) and the Manodbhūmi (MBh) of the Yogācārabhūmi, some studies have discussed the problem straightforwardly: whether or not the theory admits the simultaneous arising of six viññānas. Those studies are based on the descriptive statement in MBh 58.13–14: “na cāsti pañcānām viññānakāyānām saha dvayoh kṣaṇayor upattiḥ.” 1) YAMABE [1990], however, pointed out a problem in the text and emended it (saha to anusahitam). Although the emendation was not confirmed in the single manuscript, I have since confirmed that the manuscript also supports the reading. According to this emendation, the passage does not deal with the problem of the simultaneity of viññānas, but rather with the sequence of viññānas. There remain therefore some problems, and a new investigation is needed from a different perspective. 2)

This paper, adopting the above emendation, aims to re-examine whether or not the cognitive theory in these two bhūmis admits a simultaneity of six viññānas. The structure of this paper is as follows: first, we cite two closely related descriptions concerning the process of cognition in the PBh and in the MBh. Next, we will query whether or not the possibility of a simultaneity is assumed, in the context of the five sensory cognitions (pañcaviññānakāya) and the mental cognition (mano-viññāna) during the first three moments in the above process. Further, the same query will be examined as well in the above step, for any moments after the fourth.

2. Descriptions in the Pañcaviññānakāyaśasamprayuktabhūmi and the Manodbhūmi

PBh 10.2–7, Ms 3a5–b1:
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(X): Then, in the case where visual cognition has arisen, three minds (*cittas*) are perceived. [They are] in order, (1) the suddenly occurring [mind] (*aupanipātika*), (2) the searching [mind] (*paryesaka*), and (3) the determined [mind] (*niścita*). Of these, the first is nothing but visual cognition, and the other two are mental cognitions.

(Y): Of these, the defilement (*samkleśa*) and the purification (*vyavadāna*) can be seen [only] after *the occurrence of* (3) the determined mind. On account of this, visual cognition which flows from this also progresses as either positive or negative, but not by force of discriminating on its own part. And as long as this mental faculty is not diverted elsewhere, mental cognition and visual cognition remain either positive or defiled.

One should understand that it is the same as it is in the case where visual cognition has arisen, up to the case where tactile cognition has arisen.

MBh 58.13–19, Ms 17a4–6:

(a): A pentad of sensory cognitions cannot arise continuously (*amusahitam*) in two moments, nor can there be a mutual arising [of these five] immediately after each other [of these five].

(X'): Immediately after (1) the pentad of sensory cognitions has arisen in one moment, (2) mental cognition arises necessarily. Immediately after that [of] (2) mental cognition,

(X'-I): in a certain case [a mental faculty is] diverted [elsewhere], after that [of] (2) mental cognition, auditory cognition or any one of the pentad of sensory cognitions [arises].

(X'-II): If [a mental faculty is] not diverted [elsewhere], after that [of] (2) mental cognition, (3) exactly only a second mental cognition called ‘determined’ [arises]. And by these [two], (3) the ‘determined’ and (2) the ‘searching’ mental cognitions, the object is discriminated.

3. Examination of the First Three *Cittas*: (1) *Aupanipātika*, (2) *Paryesaka*, (3) *Niścita*

Here, concerning three *cittas* from the first moment to the third, I examine whether it is possible or not that different kinds of *vijñānas* arise simultaneously in each moment.

(1) *Aupanipātika* at the first moment (*pañcabijñānakāya*)

**Possibility of the simultaneous arising with a *manovijñāna***

In the PBh (X), it is said that the first *citta* is nothing but visual cognition. Therefore, even if the theory in these two *bhūmis* would admit a simultaneity of some *vijñānas*, here the (1) *Aupanipātika* is sensory cognition only. So a simultaneity with mental cognition cannot be assumed.

**Possibility of the simultaneous arising among *pañcabijñānakāya***

In the MBh (X'), the pentad of sensory cognitions (plural number) corresponds to the (1) *Aupanipātika* in the PBh (X). But this cannot mean that actually all five arise at any
one time. Even if we feel as if some sensory cognitions would arise simultaneously, the number and kinds of those cognitions differ depending on the situation. So the expression "a pentad of sensory cognitions" (pañcavijñānakāya) is a collective designation of possibilities rather than a designation in the strict sense. If the simultaneity is assumed, those possibilities would be that; any one, or any two, or . . . all five kinds of sensory cognitions arise. If the simultaneity is not assumed, on the other hand, those possibilities would be that; visual, or auditory, or . . . tactile cognition arises. We can know the latter case is true here because, in the MBh (X'-I): the case where a mental faculty is diverted elsewhere, the beginning of the next cognitive cycle: the Aupanipātika in the second cycle, is "auditory cognition or any one of the pentad of sensory cognitions." So the expression pañcavijñānakāya also should intend any one of the five kinds of sensory cognition. Particularly in the MBh (X'), it should intend visual cognition. When it is stated that the Aupanipātika is "auditory cognition" in the second cognitive cycle, it strongly indicates that the Aupanipātika in the previous cycle is visual cognition. Therefore a simultaneity among the five kinds of sensory cognition cannot be assumed.

(2) Paryesaka at the second moment (manovijñāna)

Possibility of the simultaneous arising with pañcavijñānakāya

In the MBh (a), it is said that the pentad of sensory cognitions cannot arise continuously in two moments, and it is also said in the MBh (X') that immediately after (1) the pentad of sensory cognitions has arisen in one moment, (2) mental cognition necessarily arises. Therefore, even if a simultaneity would be admitted at another moment, here at the second moment any sensory cognition cannot arise. A simultaneity between the (2) Paryesaka and sensory cognition cannot be assumed.

(3) Niścita at the third moment (manovijñāna)

Possibility of the simultaneous arising with pañcavijñānakāya

Above, we saw that, at the second moment (2) mental cognition should arise alone without any sensory cognition. According to this, also as far as the (3) Niścita is concerned, a simultaneity with any sensory cognition cannot be assumed, because there is no mention of sensory cognition in the MBh (X'-II).

So far, for each of three cittas: (1) Aupanipātika, (2) Paryesaka, (3) Niścita, there is no evidence for a simultaneity of any cognition. To the contrary, it decidedly seems that the cognitive theory does not assume such a simultaneity.
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4. Description and Examination of *Cittas* after the Fourth Moment

MBh 59.1-5, Ms 17a6-7:

[Continuing from the previous MBh (X'-II)] In this process, from the two causes: the discrimination and the preceding continuous force, defiled or virtuous *dharma* arises.

(Y'-I) Of these, in a mental cognition, [dharma arises] from the two causes.

(Y'-II) In a pentad of sensory cognitions, on the other hand, [dharma arises] from nothing but the preceding continuous force: from the preceding continuous force of the defiled or virtuous mental cognition, defiled or virtuous *dharma* arises in the visual cognition etc. which is immediately subsequent to [the mental cognition]. But [this dharma does] not [arise] from discrimination, because it lacks discrimination. 10

This description immediately follows the MBh (X'-II). So, in the same way as the (1) *Apanipātika*, the expression “a pentad” does not actually intend a simultaneity of five kinds of sensory cognition. In the MBh (Y'-II), in addition, there is only a description of temporal priority or posteriority regarding the relation between sensory cognition and mental cognition. There is, on the contrary, no evidence for their simultaneity. Therefore also regarding *cittas* after the fourth moment, sensory cognition and mental cognition cannot be assumed to arise simultaneously in each moment.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have re-examined whether it is possible or not that some cognitions arise simultaneously in the theory of the PBh and the MBh. As a result of the examination about individual moments, the simultaneity turned out to be completely impossible just as it is in the Sarvāstivāda-related Abhidharma tradition.

In addition, it also can be pointed out that the early Yogācāra, at least in the PBh and the MBh, was presumably unconcerned about a simultaneity of some cognitions, and their immediate interest was rather focused on the problem of the relative subsequence of cognitions: any of five sensory cognitions, whether the same kind of or a different kind of, cannot arise continuously in two moments (cf. MBh (a)). This point has become evident according to the textual emendation in Yamabe [1990].

Also, this re-examination is a preliminary consideration for further arguments, to clarify the background of above mentioned feature and the development after that.
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Notes: 1) MIKOGAMI [1965: 193b15–b20] understands that the theory in two bhūmis admits the simultaneous arising of five sensory cognitions in one moment, but does not admits the arising in two sequential moments. SCHMITHAUSEN [1969: 817.8–11], on the other hand, says that the MBh (58.13–14) states “Two moments of five [sense-]perceptions cannot arise simultaneously.” 2) YAMABE [1990] apparently assumes that the theory in two bhūmis admits the simultaneous arising of cognitions. But in this paper the discussion comes to the opposite conclusion. 3) In this paper, my translation is based on emendations according to the manuscript as noted below.

tatā cādyam PBh → tatādāyām Ms, 4) param PBh → prabhṛti Ms, 5) kāṣṭhāvatam PBh → kāṣṭhāvatam vā Ms, 6) kāyavijñānām PBh → kāyavijñāne Ms, 7) saha MBh → anusaḥitam (Ms: anusaḥita). 8) kāyavijñānānām MBh → vijñānakāyānānām Ms, 9) eva niścitam MBh → eva dvitiyam niścitam Ms, 10) avikalpāt MBh → avikalpatvāt Ms.

Abbreviations and Primary Source

Ms Manuscript (Its facsimile is at the Göttingen State and University Library. No. Xc 14/28.)


Secondary Literatures


(Key words) vijñāna, cognition, Manabhūmi, Yogācāra

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