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Akliṣṭājñāna, vāsanā, jñeyāvaraṇa, and Origins of Mahāyāna*

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0. Preliminaries

In 1998, I published a paper on “The Defects in the *Arhat*’s Enlightenment: His *akliṣṭājñāna* and *vāsanā*.” Subsequently, I wrote two partially related articles: “From Abhidharma to Mahāyāna: Remarks on the Early Abhidharma Doctrine of the Three *yāna*-s” (2011), and “*Prajñā-vimukta, ubhayatobhāga-vimukta* and *vimokṣāvaraṇa*: The Sarvāstivāda Perspective” (2015).

This present paper, while recapitulating the major points in those earlier discussions, offers supplementary discussion relating particularly to the early Mahāyāna conceptions of a Buddha’s Perfect Enlightenment. It is intended to suggest that these conceptions, in the diverse Mahāyāna traditions, largely owed their inspiration to the Abhidharma doctrines of the *akliṣṭājñāna* and *vāsanā*.

1. Introduction

Shortly before the Common Era, there developed diverse doctrinal convictions and traditions of praxis, in diverse Buddhist communities, mutually impacting on one another, to eventually result in a distinct movement known as the Mahāyāna. Accordingly, it may not be meaningful to determine an exact “original source” in respect of location, community involved, and so on. These diverse, interacting traditions of doctrines and praxis must have had a common source of inspiration—inasmuch as all Mahāyāna traditions commit to the shared ideal of attainment of Supreme Enlightenment/Buddhahood (*anuttarā samyaksambodhi*). This common source, I believe, is the admiration

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for the Buddha's Perfect Wisdom, surpassing that of all his disciples. From this, further consideration of the Buddha's perfections—Great Compassion, Purity, etc.—led to the development of new and distinctively Mahāyāna doctrines.

Already in the early discourses (e.g., SN, *Nālandā-sutta*), we find Sāriputta, the foremost *arahant*, representing Wisdom par excellence in early Buddhism, acknowledging his inability to directly discern the full profundity of a Buddha's Wisdom—he knows it only through inferential knowledge (*anvaye ñāṇa*).

The stress on the superiority of the Buddha's perfection is also seen in the development of the Mahāsāṃghikas.

Mahādeva's "five points" is a clear case in point: *arhats* still have doubts (猶豫) and nescience (無知) explained as ignorance of mundane things like location of a place, etc., and can still have semblance of defilements, etc.

In the Jātaka of the various schools, this superiority is recognized in respect of the Buddha's cultivation of virtues. This is expressed through a summation of the ideal of moral practice and the yearning for the utmost spiritual perfection in the collective psyche of the ancient culture.

At the emergence of the Mahāyāna movement, the new message of "Wisdom-perfection" distinctively signifies that the Mahāyāna spiritual goal is no more just *prajñā*, as was emphasized by the early Buddhist tradition, but its very perfection (*prajñāpāramitā*) in Supreme Enlightenment or Buddhahood.

In this connection, the Sarvāstivāda tradition articulated the doctrine of non-defiled nescience (*akliṣṭājñāna*) and the related notion of the defilement-trace (*vāsanā*). Before long, the two notions came to be intermingled: The Buddha alone is perfect in wisdom, because he alone has absolutely abandoned the non-defiled nescience; or, in him alone, all *vāsanā* has been absolutely eradicated. In one form or another, this doctrine came to impact significantly on the Buddhological doctrines of all subsequent schools—*Prajñāpāramitā*, *Yogācāra* (including the Tathāgatagarbha School) and even the Pāli commentarial tradition.

2. Superiority of the Buddha's wisdom discernible in the Pāli *suttas* and commentaries

In the *Nālandā-sutta*,¹ Sāriputta expresses his profound conviction in the Buddha's Wisdom (Enlightenment):

I am deeply convinced thus about the Fortunate One: There is not another recluse or brahmin whose supramundane knowledge is superior to the Fortunate One—namely in respect of perfect Enlightenment.

Questioned by the Buddha as to whether he has directly discerned all the minds of the past, present and future Buddhas, or even the mind of the Buddha in front of him, Sāriputta admits that he does not have such a capability. But he has understood thus through *Dhamma*-consequence (*dhammanvayo vidito*).²

The commentary explains:

“*Dhamma*-consequence”: The inferential knowledge arisen following after the application to the knowledge from direct perception of the *Dhamma*; guiding inference has been understood. He says: “Basing on just the knowledge of a disciple's perfection, I understand in this manner.”³ ...

Their doubts will be abandoned when they see “even a quick-witted disciple like Sāriputta is unable to know the buddhas' mind-states (*cittācāra*).”⁴

¹ SN. *Nālandā-sutta*, 159–161: *evaṃ-pasanno ahaṃ, bhante, bhagavati: na ... añño samaṇo vā brāhmaṇo vā bhagavatā bhiyyobhiññatāro, yad idaṃ sambodhiyaṃ | ...*; Cf. DN. ii, *Samṃpasādanīya-sutta*, 81–83; SĀ, T2, 130c–131a. All references to the Pāli canon and commentaries refer to the editions of the Pāli Text Society (PTS) and do not appear in the bibliography.

² SN. *Nālandā-sutta*: *na kho me, bhante, atītānāgatapaccuppannesu arahantesu sammāsambuddhesu cetopariya-ñāṇaṃ atthi | api ca me dhammanvayo vidito |*

³ *Sāratthappakāsinī* (Burmese edn, vol. 2, 243), *Nālandā-sutta-vaṇṇanā: dhammanvayoti dhammassa paccakkhato ñāṇassa anuyogaṃ anugantvā uppannaṃ anumānaññāṇaṃ nayaggāho vidito | sāvaka-pāramiññāṇe thatvāva iminā ākārena jānāmi bhagavāti vadati |*

⁴ *Sāratthappakāsinī* (Burmese edn, vol. 2, 245): “*sāriputtasadiso pi nāma ñāṇajavanasampanno sāvako buddhānaṃ cittācāraṃ jānituṃ na sakkoti | evaṃ appameyyā tathagatāti cintentaṇaṃ yā tathāgate kaṅkhā vā vimati vā, sā pahīyissatīti |*

This commentary thus suggests that the *sāvaka*'s knowledge, even at its very peak (perfection; *sāvakaṭṭhāna*)—as in the case of Sāriputta—cannot directly discern the Buddha's mind; it can at best infer from his direct experience (*paccakkha*) of the *Dhamma*.

Another early discourse with a similar suggestion is the *Mūlapariyāya-sutta*. It states that the Tathāgata knows Earth, Water, Fire, Air, etc., truly as they are, without conceptualization. Likewise do the *arahants*. However, whereas the latter are described as “having fully known (*pariññātaṃ*),” the Tathāgata is said to “have fully known to the end” (*pariññātantam*)—clearly indicating the superiority and perfection of the Buddha's wisdom over that of the *arahants*.⁵

The commentary explains:

“Known fully to the end”—That is to say: fully known to the utmost, known fully to the final end, fully known without remainder. There is not any difference between the Buddhas and the disciples in respect of abandonment of defilements by the specific paths. However, there is [a difference] in respect of full knowledge (*pariññā*).”⁶

The doctrine that the *arahants* and the Buddha are equally liberated, but differ in respect of knowledge (wisdom), is seen to be systematically emphasized and developed in the Abhidharma tradition (particularly the Indian continental Abhidharma schools), and in the Mahāyāna. In the Pāli commentarial tradition, Ācariya Dhammapāla is also seen to contrast the Buddha's perfect wisdom with the wisdom (/knowledge) of the *sāvakas* and the *paccekabuddhas* in terms of the *vāsanā* doctrine. In fact, it appears that the buddhological doctrines in the *Aṭṭhakathā* and *Ṭīkā* have been considerably influenced by the continental development in this direction.⁷

⁵ MN, *Mūlapariyāya-vagga, sutta* no. 1, 4–6.

⁶ *Papañcasūdanī*, 52: *pariññātantam nāma pariññātapāram pariññātāvāsānaṃ anavasesato pariññānti vuttam hoti | buddhānañ hi sāvakehi saddhiṃ kiñcāpi tena tena maggena kilesappahāne viseso natthi | pariññāya pana atthi |*

⁷ Cf. *infra*, §4.

3. The Sarvāstivāda doctrine of the non-defiled nescience (*akliṣṭājñāna*)

Kātyāyanīputra's *Jñānaprasthāna* (=JPŚ, c. 150 BCE) mentions, probably for the first time, a group of five false views, famously ascribed in the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣā* (=MVŚ) to Mahādeva and said to result in the first split of the Saṅgha into the Mahāsāṃghika and the Sthaviravāda. But JPŚ does not link them up with Mahādeva nor with first Saṅghabheda. That with regard to their liberation “*arhats* can have nescience,” and “doubt” are both judged to be false views abandonable through vision (*darśanaheya*).⁸ MVŚ explains:

With regard to his own liberation, the *arhat* has seen it by means of his outflow-free knowledge and is free from nescience. Yet, this [false view] claims that he still has nescience [in this regard]. It then amounts to a denial of the outflow-free knowledge-vision (*jñānadarśana*). It is therefore a false view in its intrinsic nature (*mithyādrṣṭisvabhāva*). It is [said to be] “abandonable through vision”—this indicates that such untrue speculation is abandonable at the time when its antidote (*pratipakṣa*), the knowledge of the path (*mārgajñāna* in the *satyābhisamaya*, i.e., *darśanamārga*), is generated.⁹

This stands clearly in contrast with the developed Sarvāstivāda doctrine of the non-defiled nescience which came to be articulated to be abandonable through cultivation (*bhāvanāheya*. See §3.2).

Likewise, the Pāli *Kathāvatthu* discusses the view that *arahants* still have *aññāṇa* and *kaṅkhā*, and its *Aṭṭhakathā* ascribes them to the Pubbaseliyas; but again, with no ascription to Mahādeva. Although there a notion of “*akiliṭṭhāññāṇa*” is not attested, the Theravādins conclude that *aññāṇa* of worldly things does not affect the *arahants*' liberation.¹⁰

⁸ T26, 956b1–15.

⁹ MVŚ, 510b23–27.

¹⁰ Cf. Aung and Rhys Davids 1960: 114–119.

3.1. The Buddha's wisdom alone knows the *sāmānya-* as well as *sva-lakṣaṇas* of all existents

The *Dharmaskandha*, one of the earliest canonical Abhidharma texts, speaks of the Buddha being so called because he is “endowed with all knowledge-
vision with regard to all object-domains.”¹¹

Another early canonical text, the *Prajñāpti*, states that the *Pratyekabuddhas* are incapable of teaching the Dharma. Only the Buddha, fully endowed with both *sarvajñatā/sarvajñāna* and *sarvākārajñāna*, is truly capable of doing so.¹²

The Buddha always abides in equipoise on account of his freedom of thought (*cittavaiśitva*). He is unhindered in entering and exiting [the equipoises], at no time relinquishing the cognitive object. This is not the case with the Śrāvakas. They are unlike the Bhagavat who is fully omniscient (*thams cad mkhyen pa; sarvajña; 具一切智*); his knowledge and mental mastery of thought have reached perfection.¹³

With regard to the twelve abodes (*āyatana*), MVŚ contrasts Śāriputra's knowledge with the Buddha's perfect knowledge. The Buddha excels in having both omniscience (*sarvajñāna, sarvajñatā*) as well as the all-mode knowledge (*sarvākārajñāna*)—he knows by himself both the common characteristics (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*) as well as the specific characteristics (*svalakṣaṇa*) of each of the twelve abodes:

Q: With regard to the twelve *āyatanas* (=all knowables), does Śāriputra have only knowledge derived from teachings (教智; *āgamajñāna*) and not realization-knowledge (證智; *adhigamajñāna*)?

A: He also has realization-knowledge—he also directly knows (證知; *adhi-√gam*) each of the twelve *āyatanas* non-erroneously.

Q: Both the Buddha and Śāriputra directly know each of them non-erroneously—what difference is there between the Buddha and Śāriputra?

¹¹ T vol. 26, 461c5–8.

¹² MVŚ, 906a14–15

¹³ Cf. Toh 4087, *bstan 'gyur, mnyon pa*, vol. ai: 51a: *nyan thos ni de lta ma yin pa'i phyir ro // gzhan yang sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das ni thams cad mkhyen pa yin te / ye shes dang / dbang gi pha rol tu phyin pa yin la /*; 《施設論》 T26, 526a14–16: 世尊具一切智；智、

A: With regard to each of the twelve *āyatana*s, [i] the Buddha directly knows their specific characteristics and common characteristics. Venerable Śāriputra directly knows their common characteristics, not so their intrinsic characteristics: There are immeasurable particularities (差別; *viśeṣa*) subsumed within the twelve-*āyatana* *dharmas*. Śāriputra can only know them through others' unraveling. [ii] Moreover, it is through others' instruction that Śāriputra comes to directly know each of the twelve *āyatana*s. In the Buddha's case, he does so through his own awakening, not through others' instruction. [iii] Moreover, with regard to the twelve *āyatana*s, the Buddha possesses both omniscience and the all-mode knowledge; Śāriputra has only omniscience, not the all-mode knowledge.¹⁴

For the Sarvāstivādas, as for the Sautrāntikas, knowledge of the twelve *āyatana*s is knowledge of all existents.¹⁵ On Vasubandhu's description of the Buddha's perfect knowledge as resulting from the absolute destruction of all defiled and non-defiled nescience with regard to all knowables (*jñeya*), Yaśomitra comments:

With regard to all knowables—with regard to that having the characteristics of the twelve *āyatana*s. This follows from the [*Sarva*]-*sūtra* statement: "O brahmins, 'all,' 'all'—it is no more than just the twelve *āyatana*s."¹⁶

3.2. The non-defiled nescience is not *avidyā*; it is *bhāvanāheya*. A Buddha alone fully abandons and renders it incapable of manifestation, and is thus unhindered in his discernment of all knowables

In the context of discussing false views in the MVŚ, we get a clearer description of the non-defiled nescience. This corresponds to the second of two types of false knowledge (*mithyājñāna*) that are spoken of: defiled (*kliṣṭa*) and non-defiled (*akliṣṭa*). The Buddha alone is said to be totally free from both, as well as having rendered them absolutely incapable of manifesting:

心得自在，已到彼岸。

¹⁴ MVŚ, 382c19–383a4.

¹⁵ Cf. Sar Abhi, §2.4.1.2.

¹⁶ Vy, 4: *sarvasmin jñeye dvādaśāyatanaalakṣaṇe | sarvaṃ sarvaṃ iti brāhmaṇa yāvad eva*

Q: What is this false knowledge [which sees a non-existent as existent (無有智)]?

A: This is the non-veiled-non-defined (*anivṛtāvyaḅkr̥ta*) knowledge, to be abandoned by cultivation (*bhāvanāheya*) and pertaining to the sensuality-sphere, which operates erroneously. E.g., it generates such thoughts as a man with regard to a post, and a post with regard to a man, ...

There are two kinds of false knowledge: 1. defiled, 2. non-defiled. The defiled one is associated with ignorance (*avidyā*), the non-defiled one, such as that which generates the thought of a man with regard to a bare tree, is not.

As for the defiled one, both the disciples (*śrāvaka*) and the solitary buddhas (*pratyekabuddha*) can completely abandon it, as well as render it incapable of manifesting (現行; *saṃmukhī-√bhū*, *samudā-√car*). As for the non-defiled one, though it can be completely abandoned by the *śrāvakas* and the *pratyekabuddhas*, it can still manifest in them. It is only in the case of the Tathāgata that it absolutely (*atyantam*) does not manifest any more, as he has permanently abandoned the defilements (*kleśa*) as well as the perfuming/traces (*vāsanā*). It is for this reason that he alone is called a 'Perfectly Enlightened One' (*samyaksaṃbuddha*).

... The non-defiled false knowledge is a false knowledge from the conventional standpoint, not from the absolute standpoint, not being associated with the false *dharma*s of defilement.¹⁷

A practitioner comes to be called a “*bodhisattva*” on account of the Supreme Perfect Enlightenment (*anuttarā samyaksambodhiḅ*). Why is it that before this attainment, he continues to be called a “*bodhisattva*,” but comes to be renamed as a “*buddha*” upon its attainment? The following are among the several reasons given by MVŚ:

- [i] All defiled and non-defiled delusions are absolutely abandoned.
- [ii] He discerns all knowables (*jñeya*) pertaining to both the absolute (*paramārtha*) and conventional [levels].

dvādaśāyatanānīti sūtre vacanāt |

¹⁷ MVŚ, 42b16–42c4.

- [iii] He is capable of enlightening immeasurable sentient beings, benefitting them accordingly as their [diverse] capacities (*indriya*) and dispositions.¹⁸

There are several important points to be noted in the above two passages. Firstly, the reasons stated in the second passage as being among the unique excellences in the signification of being “enlightened,” highlight a Buddha’s absolute abandonment of the “non-defiled delusion” in addition to the defiled one—and hence his ability to discern all knowables (*jñeya*). This can be seen to echo the doctrine that Buddhahood is attained when the hindrance to the knowables is absolutely removed along with the absolute removal of the non-defiled nescience.

Secondly, the specification in the first passage that the non-defiled nescience/delusion is “abandonable through cultivation” is noteworthy. This distinguishes it from any defiled false view—such as that mentioned by JPŚ (§3 above)—which is necessarily “abandonable through vision.”¹⁹ As a matter of fact, it is a specific Sarvāstivāda doctrine that “neither the non-defiled nor matter is abandonable through vision.”²⁰ We shall return to this point after examining the doctrine of the *vimokṣāvaraṇa* in §3.4.

Thirdly, in this first passage, a Buddha’s absolute abandonment of the non-defiled nescience—such that it can never manifest in him—is further stated to be on account of his permanent abandonment of both the defilements as well as their traces/perfuming (*vāsanā*). We thus see here the Buddhological development in which perfect Buddhahood/Enlightenment is conceived in terms of both notions: *akliṣṭājñāna* and *vāsanā*.²¹

¹⁸ MVŚ, 887a24-b12.

¹⁹ MVŚ, 328c20–27, explains the different manners in which a *prthagjana* on the one hand, and an *ārya* on the other, abandon the *darśanaheya* and *bhāvanāheya* defilements. See also Dhammajoti (2021: n. 89).

²⁰ AKB, 29: *nāsti kiṃcid akliṣṭaṃ darśanaprahātavyaṃ nāpi rūpam* | . See also Dhammajoti (2021: n. 93).

²¹ For this, see further, §3.

3.3. Non-defiled nescience in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and its sub-commentaries

At the commencement of his *Abhidharmakośa* and the auto-commentary, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (=AKB), Vasubandhu expounds on the *akliṣṭājñāna* doctrine in essentially the same manner as what we have seen in the MVŚ above. Noticeably in this context, the Buddha is distinguished from the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas entirely in respect of his absolute abandonment of the *akliṣṭājñāna*.²²

Vasubandhu describes the Buddha's absolute abandonment of the *akliṣṭājñāna* and attainment thereby of perfect unhindered knowledge as constituting his "accomplishment in respect of the practice of self-benefaction" (*ātmahitapratipattisaṃpat*). His "accomplishment in respect of the practice of other-benefaction" (*parahitapratipattisaṃpat*) is described as his compassionate uplifting of sentient beings from the mire of *saṃsāra*, which qualifies him as "the teacher who accords with truth (*yathārthaśāstā*)."²³ Saṃghabhadra here correlates this twofold accomplishment with the Buddha's threefold virtues (德; *guṇa*), providing us with a clearer picture of the buddhological doctrines relating to these notions hitherto developed:

²² AKB, 1: "Who has in all ways destroyed darkness of all' (*sarvathāsarvathātāndhakāraḥ*)—who has destroyed darkness in all manners, with regard to all. Nescience (*ajñāna*) is darkness because it obstructs the seeing of things in their true nature (*bhūtārthadarśana*). And that is absolutely destroyed because the Fortunate One, the Buddha, on account of acquiring its antidote, has [realized] the state of its non-re-aring (*punaranutpattidharmatva*) with regard to all the knowables (*jñeya*) in all ways. Hence, he is 'one who has destroyed in all ways darkness of all.' Granted that the solitary buddhas and disciples too are those who have destroyed darkness with regard to all, being absolutely free from the defiled delusion (*kliṣṭasaṃmoha*); but no in every way. This is because they definitely have the non-defiled nescience (*akliṣṭājñāna*) with regard to the [unique] qualities of the Buddha (*[āveṇika-]buddhadharma*), extremely remote space and time, and things of infinite complexities."

法寶 Fabao's sub-commentary of AKB too states explicitly that the Śrāvakas' and Pratyekabuddhas' "not having abandoned the *akliṣṭājñāna*" means that they have not acquired its non-arising (T41, 461b21–23). See Dhammajoti (1998), §6.2. For mention in AKB of the Buddha's abandonment of *vāsanā*, see Dhammajoti (1998), §5.2.

²³ AKB, 1.

On account of his endowment of both the virtues of knowledge and abandonment, he accomplishes self-benefaction.²⁴ On account of his endowment of the virtue of service (*upakāra*), he accomplishes self-benefaction. Why? On account of the destruction of darkness in all ways, his knowledge-virtue is accomplished. On account of the absolute destruction of darkness with regard to all object-domains, his abandonment-virtue is accomplished. On account of uplifting sentient beings from the mire of *saṃsāra* by giving his hand of the True-*dharma* teaching (*saddharmadeśanāhastapradāna*), his service-virtue is accomplished.

The Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas have destroyed all darkness; but not yet in every way. They have therefore not achieved the all-mode knowledge. Because they have not acquired the knowledge in which all specific nesciences do not manifest, and because they lack the knowledge of the dispositions and propensities (意樂隨眠; *āśāyānuśaya*) [of all sentient beings], they cannot uplift all sentient beings accordingly as appropriate. On account of [thus] not having accomplished self-benefaction and other-benefaction, they are not called teachers despite being possessed of noble virtues. . . .²⁵

In the context of the MVŚ discussion cited above on the erroneous understanding the non-existent as existent, different views on its nature are discussed: Some opine that it is a view (*drṣṭi*); others, a knowledge (*jñāna*); yet others, a *prajñā*. The MVŚ compilers conclude that: it is “the non-veiled-non-defined knowledge, abandonable by cultivation, and pertaining to the sensuality-sphere, which operates erroneously.” (§3.2 above) It appears that even in Saṃghabhadra’s time (c. 5th century CE), various views of the *akliṣṭājñāna* still persist: Some assert that it is a merely the absence of knowledge;²⁶ some, a *citta*; some, a specific thought-concomitant (*caitta-viśeṣa*), etc. The Dārṣṭāntika master, Rāma, asserts that it is a perfuming (*vāsanā*).²⁷ Saṃghabhadra, however, distinguishes in detail the non-defiled

²⁴ Cf. Vy, 5: *ātmahitapratipattisampat phalaniṣpattir ity arthaḥ | sā ceyam sampat jñāna-prahāṇasampatvabhāvā veditavyā |*

²⁵ Ny, 329a13–25.

²⁶ Ny, 501c24–25: 不染無知唯智非有。

²⁷ Ny, 502b13–14: 大德邏摩作如是說：有不染法名為習氣；如不善因所招異熟。 See also below, §4.1

nescience from the defiled one, and articulately argues to establish that it is a real entity (not a mere concept), a distinct *dharma* (*dharmāntara*)—the universal thought-concomitant (*caitta*) *prajñā*, operating as a non-defiled inferior or weak knowledge.²⁸ His specification of the *akliṣṭājñāna* is very much in keeping with the Sarvāstivāda doctrinal system: (1) Being a universal thought-concomitant, it arises in every thought moment—until the practitioner becomes a Buddha. (2) Being *prajñā* in its intrinsic nature, it functions as an understanding. (3) Being undefiled-undefined—non-veiled-non-defined (*anivṛtāvyaḅkrta*)²⁹—it is itself not of the nature of a defilement, and in fact can continuously coexist with a mental *dharma* of any moral species.

Yaśomitra's *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* (=Vy) offers little elucidation on the doctrine, but does provide some more exemplifications of the *akliṣṭājñāna*—the cases of Maudgalyāyana not knowing the very distant location of his suffering mother; Śāriputra unable to discern the distant temporal point when a seeker formerly had planted his skillful seeds; etc.³⁰

3.4. *vimokṣāvaraṇa* and non-retrogressibility³¹

MVŚ links the non-defiled nescience to the “liberation-hindrane” (*vimokṣāvaraṇa*), a notion already attested in the Sarvāstivādin *Saṅgīti-paryāya* and other canonical Abhidharma treatises, and is therein linked to the highest of the set of Eight Noble Persons—the one “liberated in both parts” (*ubhayatobhāgavimukta*). In the *Saṅgītparyāya* discussion, we see that the hindrance in respect of liberation is distinct from that in respect of defilement. The person “liberated in both parts” is one whose thought is completely liberated from both aspects of hindrance:

Who is he called an “*ubhayatobhāgavimukta-pudgala*”?

²⁸ For details, see Dhammajoti (1998), §7.2.

²⁹ E.g., in the discussion on the *vimokṣāvaraṇa* (Ny, 724b15–17; see also §3.4 below), Saṅghabhadra speaks of it as being “a weak nescience, non-veiled-non-defiled (i.e., the *akliṣṭājñāna*) . . .”

³⁰ Cf. Vy, 5. See Dhammajoti (1998), §6.2.

³¹ Dhammajoti (2015), §4, §5.

Hindrance is of two parts (分; *bhāga*)—defilement-part (*kleśabhāga*) and liberation-part (*vimokṣabhāga*). This is called “*ubhayatobhāga*.” With regard to both these parts (/aspects) of hindrance, such a person’s thought (*citta*) is liberated, utterly liberated, absolutely liberated.³²

MVŚ records, without making judgement, several opinions on the nature of the liberation-hindrance.³³ The first opinion mentioned in that context asserts that it is a weak/inferior nescience (下無智; *mṛdvajñāna*).³⁴

Describing the seven types of Noble Person, AKB distinguishes the last two, *prajñāvimukta* (“liberated through wisdom”) and *ubhayatobhāgavimukta*, thus:

[An *arhat*] who obtains the cessation-attainment (*nirodhasamāpatti*) is called an *ubhayatobhāgavimukta*, because of being liberated from [both] the defilement-hindrance and the liberation-hindrance by the power of ‘wisdom’ (*prajñā*) and equipoise (*samādhi*) [respectively]. The other [type of *arhat*] is a *prajñāvimukta*, because of being liberated merely from the defilement-hindrance through the power of wisdom.³⁵

In Ny, Saṃghabhadra repeats Vasubandhu’s explanation above. We may understand the Vaibhāṣika view here as follows: The highest attainment of spiritual liberation consists in the absolute eradication of both the hindrance *qua* defilement and the hindrance to the mastery of the meditative attainment. The latter hindrance, referred to as the “attainment hindrance” (*samāpattya-āvaraṇa*), is in fact the hindrance to the perfect state of the *citta*—since, in the context of the threefold training (*śikṣā*) of *śīla-samādhi-prajñā* and *adhiśīla-adhicitta-adhiprajñā*, “*samādhi*” and “*citta*” are equivalent in signification.

³² T26, 436a4–10; for full description of all seven *ārya-pudgalas*, see *ibid*, 435b15–436a10.

³³ Yaśomitra (Vy, 597) too claims that “it is the inaptitude or non-pliedability of the mind and body due to which one is unable to generate the *vimokṣas*.” (*tat punaḥ kāyacittayor akarmanyatā, yayā vimokṣān utpādayituṃ na śaknoti*) This of course is quite unlike Saṃghabhadra’s view that the liberation-hindrance must be a distinct real entity, the *akliṣṭājñāna*.

³⁴ See Dhammajoti (2015), §4.1.

³⁵ AKB, 381: *yo nirodhasamāpattilābhī sa ubhayatobhāgavimuktaḥ | prajñāsamādhibalābhyāṃ kleśavimokṣāvaraṇavimuktatvāt | itaraḥ prajñāvimuktaḥ | prajñābalena kevalaṃ kleśāvaraṇavimuktatvāt |*

Samṅhabhadra, immediately after repeating Vasubandhu's explanation above, inquires into the nature of this liberation-hindrance:

What is it that is called the nature of the liberation-hindrance? An *arhat*, having liberated the *citta*, seeks further liberation, in order to be liberated from the hindrance [of liberation] (cf. end of §3): In the liberations that are hindered, there exists an inferior nescience (*ajñāna*) which is non-veiled-non-defined (*anivṛtāvyaṅkṛta*), and which is of the nature of hindering liberation. This is the intrinsic nature (體) of the liberation-hindrance. When one acquires detachment (*vairāgya*) from a particular sphere (*dhātu*), one has abandoned it without any remainder and liberation is arisen. However, it is only when it no longer becomes active (*samudā-√car*) that one is said to have been liberated from it.³⁶

As MVŚ proclaims, all Buddhas are in fact *ubhayatobhāgavimukta*,³⁷ while *arhats* may be either *prajñāvimukta* or *ubhayatobhāgavimukta*.³⁸ The highest or absolute spiritual liberation is achieved only when the non-defiled nescience—in the form of a force hindering the perfect state of the *citta* and the perfect mastery of *samāpatti/samādhi*—is not only abandoned but also rendered absolutely incapable of manifestation. This is in keeping with Vasubandhu's statement above, of the unique perfection of the Buddha's wisdom.

3.4.1. *Akliṣṭājñāna* and the retrogressible and non-retrogressible *arhats*

For the Sarvāstivādas, the possibility of an *arhat's* retrogression is on account of the possibility of his retrogressing from the abandonment of defilements. The latter fact, in turn, is necessarily linked with the doctrine of tritemporal existence of *dharmas*—in this case, of the defilements. MVŚ explains:

When an *arhat* abandons defilements, it is not that he renders them totally non-existent (全無); for, the characteristics of their [temporal] modes (性相; *bhāvalakṣaṇa*) as past and future defilements still exist truly (實有; *dravyato 'sti*). At the time when the path counteracting the defilement has not manifested in his serial continuity, the defilement is

³⁶ Ny, 724b14–18.

³⁷ E.g. MVŚ, 279a3.

³⁸ MVŚ, 553c7–8.

said to be not yet abandoned. At the time when the path counteracting the defilement has manifested in his serial continuity, he abandons the acquisition of connection (*saṃyogaprāpti*) [with the defilement] and attains the acquisition of its disconnection (*visaṃyoga*), he is not endowed (*samanvāgata*) with the defilement (i.e., he no more continues to be linked with the defilement *via* the acquisition-series), he is said to have abandoned the defilement.

It should be stated thus: The cultivation of the noble path is a marvellous thing—it results in an *arhat*'s abandonment of defilements, and yet not in their non-existence. For this reason, the Venerable Ghoṣaka asserts: “When a defilement is not active (𑖀𑖩; *samudā-√car*) in the personal being, it is said to be abandoned. It is not made totally non-existent. Just as, when one says that Devadatta is not present in the house, it does not mean that Devadatta is also not present anywhere else. The same should be understood in the case of a defilement being abandoned, since what is past is [still] existent. When the conditions for retrogression obtain, it serves as the cause inducing a future defilement to arise.³⁹ Hence, there must be the possibility of retrogression [of an *arhat*].⁴⁰

The Sarvāstivādas speak of six types of *arhats*: (1) Those susceptible to retrogression or ‘falling away’ (*parihāṇadharmān*); (2) those who can end their lives at will (*cetanādharmān*); (3) those who guard themselves (*anurakṣaṇadharmān*); (4) those who are abiding firmly (*sthitākampya*); (5) those capable of penetration (*prativēdhanādharmān*); (6) those not susceptible to being shaken (*akopyadharmān*). Of these, the first five, said to be “circumstantially liberated” (*samayavimukta*) or those “whose liberation of mind is circumstantial and dear” (*sāmayikī kāntā cetovimuktiḥ*) are susceptible to retrogression. The sixth, said to be “non-circumstantially liberated” (*asamayavimukta*), are non-retrogressible.⁴¹ In contrast, the Sautrāntikas maintain that no *arhat* is retrogressible.⁴²

³⁹ A past *dharma* continues to be existent; while no more capable of exercising its activity (*kāritra*), it can still exercise causal efficacy for the arising of other *dharmas*. Cf. Sar Abhi, §3.

⁴⁰ MVŚ, 312c10–21.

⁴¹ See AKB, 372 f.

⁴² AKB, 375: *arhattvād api nāsti parihāṇir iti sautrāntikāḥ* | See also Vasubandhu; cf. Ny, 711c2–43.

The Vaibhāṣika doctrine is that an *arhat* does not retrogress from the abandonment of the *darśanaheya* defilements. On the other hand, in the *bhāvanāmārga* subsequent to the *darśanamārga*, retrogression is possible with respect to a *bhāvanāheya* defilement if the *arhat*'s *jñāna* is weak. On account of the weak nature of the *jñāna*, a defilement, though already abandoned, can still manifest—hence, retrogression. Saṃghabhadra states:

Our school concedes that [an *arhat*] who has been a retrogressible type, has not realized the non-arising of the *kleśa*, even though he has already abandoned them, due to the feeble strength of his *jñāna*. . . .

“Abandoning” is from the point of view of the arising of the antidote-path which uproots the seed-like *prāpti* of the *kleśa*. It is not a requirement that the *kleśa* must absolutely be incapable of arising; for they will arise again for those whose *jñāna* is feeble.⁴³

“Those whose *jñāna* is feeble” are those in whom the non-defiled nescience is present. This spells out the role of the non-defiled nescience, the presence of which prevents the perfection of both equipoise and wisdom, and renders possible the retrogression from the abandonment of a *bhāvanāheya* defilement. This aligns with the doctrine that the non-defiled nescience is *bhāvanāheya* (above, §3.2). In the final analysis, it amounts to that: Although the non-defiled nescience seems to have been originated, or at least explicitly stressed, as a doctrine relating the cognitive deficiency, it had later also come to be related to the issues of meditative hindrance and of the absolute abandonment of defilements. Even though the *arhats* are said to be those “whose outflows are exhausted” (*kṣīṇāsrava*), the absolute abandonment of defilements is truly effectuated only when the non-defiled nescience is rendered absolutely incapable of further manifestation: At the culmination of the *bhāvanāmārga* and the threshold of *arhat*-hood, he abandons the remaining *bhāvanāheya* defilements when the “knowledge of exhaustion” (*kṣaya-jñāna*) is acquired along with the acquisition (*prāpti*) of the *pratisaṃkhyānirodha*. But it is only in the case of an *arhat* capable of generating the “knowledge of non-arising” (*anutpāda-jñāna*) in the immediately following moment—the case of the unshakable (*akopya*) *arhat*—that the abandoned defilements are rendered incapable of future re-manifestation by virtue of the acquisition of their *aprasaṃkhyānirodha*.

⁴³ Ny, 716a4–10.

The “knowledge of exhaustion” is immediately preceded by the *vajra*-like equipoise (*vajropamasamādhi*), so called because it is so powerful that whatever defilements remaining in the practitioners all come to be abandoned.⁴⁴ This is the last non-resistible or uninterrupted (/unhindered) path (*ānantaryamārga*) in the *bhāvanāmārga*.⁴⁵ The last liberation-path (*vimuktimārga*) that arises immediately after is the knowledge of exhaustion. Following this, the weak-faculty *arhats*, the retrogressive ones, cannot generate the knowledge of non-arising. In the case of the unshakable ones, its generation ensures non-retrogression. As to the non-defiled nescience, it can be absolutely abandoned and rendered incapable of manifestation only in the case of a Buddha through the acquisition of its *apratisamkhyānirodha* at the time of the *Vajra*-like equipoise. Puguang describes the process as follows:

In the case of the Bodhisattva, this *akliṣṭājñāna* is abandoned gradually in different stages during the three *asaṃkhyeyakalpas* (preceding his Enlightenment). It is at the stage of the *Vajra*-like equipoise that it is completely abandoned. In the case of the two *yānas* (*śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*), there can be partial, but no complete abandonment. “Abandonment” here refers to its non-arising as a result of the acquisition of its *apratisamkhyānirodha*. It is not in terms of its *pratisamkhyānirodha*—in terms of the *pratisamkhyānirodha*, the abandonment is not different among the three *yānas*.

... It is when [the Bodhisattva] attains the *vajropamasamādhi* that he abandons it in toto, and acquires its *apratisamkhyānirodha*. ... [This is because:] it is when he attains the *Vajra*-like equipoise that the specific conditions for the *akliṣṭājñāna* come to be deficient. Thus, it is at this stage that its *apratisamkhyānirodha* is acquired.⁴⁶

According to the Abhidharma doctrine of “sublimation (/refining) of faculties” (*indriyottāpana*, *indriyottāpanā*) or “progressive transformation” (*indriya-saṃcāra*), the practitioners—other than the unshakable *arhats* who regress

⁴⁴ MVŚ, 142c2–4: In fact, if a sentient who has never abandoned any bondage is capable of generating this *samādhi*, at that very moment all his defilements—whether *darśanaheya* or *bhāvanāheya*—are at once abandoned. AKB, 452: *yaś caturthadhyāne vajropamaḥ samādhiḥ sa āsraṃśayāya samādhibhāvanā* | See Sar Abhi, §12.9.3.1 f, §12.10.6, §16.1.2, etc.

⁴⁵ See also discussion on *vāsanā*, §4

⁴⁶ 《俱舍論記》 T41, 6b20–c3. Dhammajoti (2021), §4.3.

neither in respect of family (*gotra*) nor of fruit—can practice to transform an acquired inferior spiritual family (*gotra*) to one that is superior. E.g., from the *parihāṇadharmān* family to the *cetanādharmān* family, from a circumstantially liberated *arhat* to one who is unshakable, etc. Saṃghabhadra underscores its sole purpose as the ultimate achievement of the non-manifestation of the non-defiled nescience:

The great Abhidharma masters under whom I have learned unanimously assert that all sublimation of faculties is for the purpose of eliminating the manifestation of the non-veiled-non-defined (*anivṛtāvyaḅkrta*) nescience brought about by virtue of the *darśanaheya* and *bhāvanāheya* defilements. Thus, for one practicing the sublimation of faculties at the trainee stage, it is precisely for eliminating that brought about by the *darśanaheya* defilements; for one practicing the sublimation of faculties at the non-trainee stage, it is precisely for eliminating that brought about by the *bhāvanāheya* defilements. Accordingly, as the number of irresistible- and liberation-paths generated when he is abandoning those defilements that bring about it, correspondingly is the number of paths which abandon the manifestation of the nescience brought about by them. For this reason, when a non-trainee is practicing the sublimation of faculties, he uses nine irresistible paths and nine liberation-paths. For a trainee practicing sublimation of faculties, he uses one [irresistible and one liberation] path. ...⁴⁷

4. *Akliṣṭājñāna, vāsanā* and the Buddha's perfect wisdom

As we saw above (§3.2), already in the MVŚ, the Buddha alone is said to be Perfectly Enlightened because in him alone the *akliṣṭājñāna* absolutely does not manifest anymore; and this is accounted for in terms of his absolute abandonment of all defilements along with their traces (*vāsanā*).⁴⁸ No definition of *vāsanā* is found therein. But several examples are provided which suggest the notion that *vāsanā* is not defilement in nature. One is in the context of explaining why the Buddha sometimes scolds his disciples, calling them “deluded person” (*moha-puruṣa*). MVŚ states that this is for the sake of protecting them where appropriate, and spiritually benefitting them.

⁴⁷ Ny, 723a15–24.

⁴⁸ For a recent full-scale discussion on the doctrinal development of the *vāsanā* notion, see Gao (2020).

The Buddha has absolutely abandoned greed and hatred, ... destroyed the root of conceit. He is completely illumined with regard to all *dharmas*. He is free from semblances (*sādrśya*) of greed, hatred, conceit, etc, since he has absolutely abandoned defilements and *vāsanā*. This is unlike the case of the *pratyekabuddhas* and *śrāvakas* who, though having abandoned defilements still possess their traces (餘習; *vāsanā*).” The case of greed-perfuming/trace (*rāgavāsanā*) is like Venerable Ānanda who has a certain weakness (sympathetic) towards the Śākyaans. The case of hatred-perfuming (*dveṣavāsanā*) is like Pilinda Vatsa who says to the Gangā goddess: “You Vṛṣala! Stop the flow! I want to cross over now.” The case of conceit-perfuming (*mānavāsanā*) is like Venerable Śāriputra who throws away medicines. The case of delusion-perfuming is that like Gavāṃpati who spits out [the cud like a cow] before eating; he knows the food has not been digested; but not being aware of the suffering that follows, he continues to eat (chew).⁴⁹ Such examples are numerous.

Although the Bhagavat is free from *vāsanā*, he nevertheless occasionally utters words that resemble greed ...; ... that resemble hatred ...; ... that resemble conceit ...; ... that resemble delusion. ...

Q: Why does the Buddha utter words that resemble greed etc.?

A: In order to protect, [in an appropriate manner], those who are fit to be guided (所化田; *vineya-kṣetra*), and spiritually benefitting them. ...

Q: Why is it that the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, though having abandoned defilements, still possess their traces; but not so the Buddha?

A: The wisdom fire of the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* is not fierce. [With it], though the *kleśa* is abandoned, the *vāsanā* remains. It is like the case of ordinary fire in the world: Though it can consume a thing, it leaves behind ashes. The Buddha’s wisdom is fierce; it consumes the *kleśa* without leaving behind any *vāsanā*, like the fire at the end of a *kalpa* which consumes everything in its way leaving no ash behind.⁵⁰

The notion that the two *yānas*, while free from all defilements, still possess *vāsanās* which cause semblances of defilements, manifested in certain be-

⁴⁹ His story of having the *vāsanā* (餘習) derived from having been a cow for hundreds of lives found in several sources; e.g., 《佛說處處經》 T17, 527a2–5; DZDL, 252b1–2, 260c22–23; etc.

⁵⁰ MVŚ, 77a22–c8. For the simile of the fire at the end of a *kalpa*, see DZDL, cited in

havioural contortion, came to be shared by masters of other traditions, including the Theravāda commentaries (§2) and the Mahāyāna *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras* (see §5.1.2). It also reminds us of the so-called “Mahādeva’s five points” which collaterally allege that an *arhat* still possesses non-defiled type of nescience and that he can have nocturnal emissions, etc.⁵¹

The origin of the doctrine that *vāsanā*, though perfumed by defilements, are nonetheless distinct from them, is yet to be fully determined. In MVŚ, as we have seen, this doctrine is used by the Sarvāstivāda masters along with that of the non-defiled nescience. But these masters are also seen to use the term *vāsanā* in the more generic sense, as either an impregnation outside the context of defilements, or as perfuming without the said specialized sense. For instance, MVŚ speaks of the *vāsanās* (習氣) of the *mahābhūtas* as being weak and non-enduring, unlike *vāsanās* that are *kuśala* or *akuśala* which are firm.⁵² It asserts that *āhrīkyā* and *anapatrāpyā*, though exclusively *akuśala*, are not designated as among the proclivities (*anuśaya*) because their *vāsanās* are feeble and easily perishable—as the fire of grasses and leaves, generating heat that subsides easily—whereas the proclivities are characterized as having strong *vāsanās*.⁵³ In this latter case, *vāsanā* would seem to be the subtler counterpart of the associated defilement, rather than being totally different in nature from defilement—non-veiled and non-defined—as is the non-defiled nescience. In this connection, we may also notice that Saṃghabhadra also speaks of *vāsanā* as a form of *bīja* doctrine of the Dārṣṭāntika-Sautrāntikas.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the doctrine in the above-quoted passage is clear: (1) Defilement on the one hand, and *vāsanā* and non-defiled nescience on the other, are two distinct things. (2) The persistent presence of *vāsanā* in the two *yānas* even when their defilements are totally abandoned is on account of their wisdom being of insufficient strength—on account of the operation of the non-defiled nescience. We shall see that this MVŚ understanding is essentially echoed by the 5th century Saṃghabhadra (§4.1).

§5.2.

⁵¹ Cf. Dhammajoti (1998), 69f.

⁵² MVŚ, 685a25–b1.

⁵³ MVŚ, 180a6–17.

⁵⁴ Ny, 398b2–29.

When we examine the early *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, we find that the Buddha's perfection in Wisdom is almost explained exclusively in terms of his absolute eradication of the defilements along with their *vāsanās* (see below, §5.1.2). If we consider the close connection of the Mahāsāṃghikas with the *Prajñāpāramitā* development,⁵⁵ then it seems probable that the articulated *vāsanā* doctrine under discussion could have been first developed by the Mahāsāṃghikas. In any case, this Mahāsāṃghika (and Vibhajyavāda) doctrine is certainly known by the MVŚ compilers, as is evident in the discussion below on the Buddha's physical body: Is it with-outflow, or outflow-free?

The Vibhajyavādins and the Mahāsāṃghika masters maintain that the Buddha's physical body comprises outflow-free *dharmas*. . . . Moreover, they assert that since the Buddha has absolutely abandoned all defilements together with their *vāsanās* (一切煩惱并習氣皆永斷), how can his physical body be with-outflow? The [JPŚ] discussion here is for the sake of refuting their claim and make known one's own tenets.⁵⁶

However, it should be noted that the MVŚ compilers themselves too, utilize this notion of *vāsanā* to distinguish the Buddha from the *arhats*. In the above-cited discussion, MVŚ proceeds to argue that when the Sūtra speaks of the Tathāgata not being defiled by the "eight worldly *dharmas*" (*aṣṭalokadharmas*), it is not intended that his body is outflow-free. The Buddha is said to be non-conforming to them and undefiled by them; the Pratyekabuddhas and Śrāvakas are to the contrary. The major reason for this difference is that the latter still possess their semblances:

The *arhats*, though having abandoned craving and hatred, still possess the residual traces (餘習; *vāsanatā/vāsanā*) resembling craving and hatred . . . they are therefore not regarded as being undefiled by the worldly *dharmas*. The Buddha alone has absolutely eradicated the *vāsanās* of craving and hatred. . . . Moreover, when the Buddha acquires gains, he does not feel elated, because he has abandoned the *vāsanā* of

⁵⁵ Consider, for instance, the tradition that the Prakritic version of the *Aṣṭasāhaśrikā Prajñāpāramitā* was said to have been possessed by the Pūrva- and Aparā-śāilya subsects of the Mahāsāṃghikas (cf. e.g., Warder 2000: 347).

⁵⁶ MVŚ, 871c2–8.

conceit. ... When he is praised, he does not feel delighted, because he has abandoned the *vāsanā* of arrogance. ...⁵⁷

MVŚ explains that the ten powers (*daśabala*)⁵⁸ unique to the Buddha are knowledge in their intrinsic nature (以智為自性; *jñānasvabhāva*). In this discussion, the connection of complete abandonment of defilements together with their *vāsanās* with his perfect Wisdom is again underscored:

Q: The two *yānas* also possess the knowledge of recollection of former lives (*pūrvānivāsānusmṛtijñāna*) and the knowledge of the perishing and arising [of beings in *saṃsāra*] (*cyutyupapattijñāna*). Why is the Buddha's knowledge (Wisdom) alone called "power"?

A: It has been explained previously that "power" signifies non-crushability (*anavamṛdyatā*). Although the two *yānas* possess this [knowledge], it does not have this signification. For instance, Śāriputra, in spite of his entry into the fourth *dhyāna*, fails to discern the future destiny of rebirth and his background.⁵⁹

Q: The two *yānas* too possess the knowledge of the absolute exhaustion of the outflows. Why is that not a power?

A: The Buddha's knowledge is strong; it swiftly abandons defilements and their residual *vāsanās*; not so in the case of the two *yānas*.⁶⁰

AKB also discusses the Buddha's power, and likewise underscores the two *yānas'* knowledge as being hindered by the *vāsanās* of defilements:

This tenfold knowledge is not called power in the case of others. Only in the case of the Buddha is it called "power" because his knowledge proceeds unobstructed with regard to all knowables (*sarvatra jñēye*). [It is only the Buddha that has eradicated the *vāsanās* of the defilements,

⁵⁷ MVŚ, 871c19–872c19.

⁵⁸ 1. *sthānāsthānajñānabala*; 2. *karmavipākajñānabala*; 3. *nānādhimuktijñānabala*; 4. *nānādhātujñānabala*; 5. *indriyaparāparajñānabala*; 6. *sarvatragāmanīpratipajñānabala*; 7. *sarvadhyānavimokṣasamādhisamāpattisaṃkleśavyavadānavyutthānajñānabala*; 8. *pūrvānivāsānusmṛtijñānabala*; 9. *cyutyupattijñānabala*; 10. *āsravakṣayajñānabala*. Cf. MVŚ, 156c16–25; AKB, 411–413.

⁵⁹ See also the AKB passage quoted below.

⁶⁰ MVŚ, 157c29–158a7.

and is able to know all object-domains as he wishes].⁶¹ On the other hand, they are obstructed in the case of others. ... This is like the case of the Elder Śāriputra's rejection of a man seeking ordination [—because the time period in which this man planted seeds of skilfulness and aspired for liberation is beyond Śāriputra's knowledge],⁶² and his incapability to know the number of previous and subsequent births of a bird being chased by a hawk.⁶³

In Vy, the above story of Śāriputra, together with that of Maudgalyāyana's inability to locate his mother suffering in the extremely far away Mārīcī world-sphere (*ativiprakṛṣṭadeśamārīcīlokadhātu*), are cited precisely as illustration of the imperfection of the Śrāvakas' knowledge due to the very reason of the presence of the non-defiled nescience in them.⁶⁴ Here then, is another instance where the two notions—non-defiled nescience and *vāsanā*—are used interchangeably to account for the imperfection of the two *yānas*' knowledge. The Buddhological development outlined so far above in the Abhidharma tradition leads clearly to the understanding that the non-defiled nescience or *vāsanā* indeed constitutes a cognitive hindrance, the absolute eradication of which results in the Buddha's uniquely perfected Wisdom.

In MVŚ, the term “knowable hindrance” (所知障; *jñeyāvaraṇa*) does occur, albeit attested only once, juxtaposed with “defilement-hindrance” (煩惱障; *kleśāvaraṇa*):

All the four [proper abandonment (*samyakprahāṇa*)] have the meaning of abandoning (*prahāṇa*): The former two abandon the defilement-hindrance. The latter two abandon the knowable-hindrance; for when

⁶¹ This bracketed sentence is only in Xuanzang's translation, 《阿毘達磨俱舍論》 T29, 140b25–26: 唯佛已除諸惑習氣，於一切境隨欲能知。

⁶² Cf. Vy, 5; Puguang, 404b28–405a24 (with a much more elaborate narration).

⁶³ AKB, 412.

⁶⁴ Vy, 5: ... *teṣv api teṣāṃ ajñānam anekalokadhātu-antarīta-deśatvāt | śrūyate hi sthavira-maudgalyāyanasya ativiprakṛṣṭadeśamārīcīlokadhātu-jāta-svamātrdeśāparijñānam | ativi-
viprakṛṣṭakāleṣv apy atīteṣu anāgateṣu vā teṣv artheṣv atibahukalpāntarāntarītavināsa-
prādurbhavatoāt teṣāṃ bhavaty evājñānam | śrūyate hi sthaviraśāriputreṇa mokṣa-
bhāgīyakuśalamūlādarśanāt pravrajyā'pekṣa-puruṣapratyākhyānam | ...* Similar stories of Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana are also given in Sthiramati's sub-commentary 《俱舍論實義疏》 (*Tattvārtha*) on AKB, T29, 325b1–13.

the skillful *dharmas* are cultivated, nescience (無知; *ajñāna*) is abandoned.⁶⁵

That the knowable-hindrane must be gradually abandoned through cultivation is doctrinally consistent with what we saw above: it is *bhāvanāheya*.

The ultimate aim of Buddhist cultivation is not merely for the abandonment of defilements—for moral perfection *per se*—but for the perfection of wisdom through absolutely eradicating the non-defiled nescience *qua* knowable-hindrane. As we shall see below, the early Mahāyāna scriptures subsequently derived much inspiration from this Abhidharma doctrine, in which they found an adequate and satisfactory doctrinal basis for the formulation of their Bodhisattva ideal culminating in the attainment of Perfect Buddhahood—perfect wisdom in contrast to the inferior wisdom/knowledge of the two *yānas*.

4.1. Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika view on the relation between the non-defiled nescience and *vāsanā*

The above-cited MVŚ discussion (§4) on the Buddha’s sometimes scolding his disciples is followed by a discussion on the meaning of “*moha-puruṣa*.” In this context, we see that the *arhats*’ behaviour exhibiting semblances of defilements is also understood to be due to the *akliṣṭājñāna*.

Q: What is the meaning of a “deluded person”?

A: ... Some other masters assert: One is a deluded person if delusion (*moha*) manifests in him.

Q: If so, the Sūtra should not speak of the *arhats* as “deluded persons.”

A: ... Some other masters assert: The *arhats*, etc, too have manifestation of delusion, since their non-defiled nescience has not been abandoned.

...⁶⁶

The explanation in terms of the *akliṣṭājñāna* is a Sarvāstivāda view, not being contended by the MVŚ compilers. The simultaneous acceptance here, of these two notions—*akliṣṭājñāna* and *vāsanā*—as the reason for the incompleteness

⁶⁵ MVŚ, 724b25–29.

⁶⁶ MVŚ, 78a11–b8.

of an *arhat*'s perfection, compared to the Buddha's, is similar to what we saw above in §3.2, where it is claimed that the non-defiled *jñāna* (=akliṣṭājñāna) is both abandoned and rendered non-manifesting by the Buddha alone because he alone has permanently abandoned all defilements as well as their *vāsanā*.

We saw that in the context of Saṃghabhadra's discussion on the nature of the non-defiled nescience, Rāma speaks of the non-defiled nescience as being *vāsanā* (§3.3). According to him, whereas the non-defiled *vāsanā* comes to be gradually eradicated in the course of spiritual cultivation, the "white-dharma *vāsanā*" persists in the Buddha after his Perfect Enlightenment:

The Venerable Rāma claims thus: "There exists a non-defiled *dharma* called perfuming (*vāsanā*), which is like the retribution (*vipāka*) incurred by a skilful cause. Formerly, at the Bodhisattva-stage, when the Bhagavat was cultivating the various preparatory practices (*prayoga*) during the three incalculable *kalpas*, while still possessing defilements, he was able to gradually eradicate the non-defiled *vāsanā* induced by the defilements, and gradually develop the white-dharma *vāsanā*. Later, when he absolutely abandoned the acquisition (*prāpti*) of the outflows, some of his previous *vāsanās* were ceased and some were not ceased."

As a result of cultivating the preparatory practices for a long time, he attained the Supreme [Enlightenment], and the outflows were absolutely exhausted. However, the Buddha still possessed the white-dharma *vāsanās*—since he speaks of some *vāsanās* being ceased and some not being ceased. Such a claim may be considered reasonable. But he fails [therein] to clarify its nature: What constitutes the nature of this non-defiled *vāsanā*?⁶⁷

Saṃghabhadra's own explanation of the nature of the non-defiled nescience and its relation to the *vāsanā* is as follows:

Thus, it is this inferior knowledge (*jñāna*)[—a mode of *prajñā*—]induced [through a succession] by previous knowledge which repeatedly gets

⁶⁷ Ny, 502b13–21. Yinshun (1968), 572–573, suggests that Rāma's explanation on the white-dharma *vāsanā* represents a doctrine accounting for the generation of the outflow (pure) seeds (within one who has been practicing as an ordinary worldling), and may be seen as being very close to the *Mahāyānasamgraha doctrine of the new outflow-free seeds being gradually formed from the perfuming in the with-outflow process of the listening to the True *Dharma* which is the emanation

used to being incapable of understanding the objects' taste, etc—that is called *akliṣṭājñāna*. Those very *cittacaittas* co-nascent with it are known collectively as *vāsanā*.⁶⁸

Thus, according to him, on the one hand, there seems to be no objection to the non-defiled nescience being considered as the *vāsanā*. On the other hand, the two notions are not identical: the former is a real entity, *prajñā* in its intrinsic nature; the latter is a concept for the thought and thought-concomitants conjoined with the non-defiled nescience. This understanding of the distinction and relationship between the two is essentially in agreement with the MVŚ doctrine we saw above (§4).

In this very same context, and immediately following the above explanation, Saṃghabhadra also offers a somewhat differently worded explanation on the formation of the *vāsanā*:

When sentient beings are at the stage of possessing defilements, all their non-defiled *cittas* together with their series, are perfumed by defilements that comingle (間雜; **vy-ava-√kṛ*) with them, giving rise to traces (氣分; **vāsa?*) that accord with the arising of defilements. Accordingly, specific non-defiled *cittas* and their retinue (**parivāra*) arise, operating in a manner similar to the [defilements]. They arise successively by virtue of the force of repeated conditioning, for which reason those without faults [i.e. the *ārya-pudgala*] are still said to be in possession of *vāsanā*. In the case of an Omniscient One, it is absolutely abandoned and does not manifest (**samudā-√car*) any more. . . .

As the Bhagavat has acquired mastery over the *dharmas*, such [*vāsanās*] which appear like defilements absolutely never manifest. Therefore, the Buddha alone is called the “well purified serial continuity” (**suviśuddhasantati*);⁶⁹ and for this very reason, his behaviour is never amiss” (無誤失; **asampramoṣa*).⁷⁰

This second explanation entails that *vāsanā* refers to the non-defiled nescience together with the co-existent serial continuity—i.e., the co-nascent psycho-

(*niṣyanda*) of the Truth realized in the Buddha's Perfect Enlightenment.

⁶⁸ Ny, 502a24–26.

⁶⁹ Or, “Wholesome Series” (**kuśala-santati*) 善淨相續.

⁷⁰ Ny, 502a27–b13. For the full translation of his two explanations, see also, Akli, §7.2.

physical complex.⁷¹ The Buddha, totally devoid of the non-defiled nescience, is said to be the “well purified serial continuity,” without behavioral plunder. This reminds us of the MVŚ discussion on the “deluded person.” The Buddha is free from semblances of greed, etc, “he has absolutely abandoned defilements and *vāsanā*.” The *pratyekabuddhas* and *śrāvakas* display such semblances in behaviour because they “still possess the *vāsanā* [as defilement-traces].” (§4).

5. *Akliṣṭājñāna, vāsanā, jñeyāvaraṇa* in the early Mahāyāna texts

5.1. The Wisdom-perfection *sūtras*

The very first chapter of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (=Aṣṭa)—most likely its earliest core, on which the various expanded versions of the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtra* developed—is entitled “the practice of the all-mode-knowledge” (*sarvākārajñatā-caryā*). This suggests that in fact the Mahāyāna ideal, at least as discernible in the *Prajñāpāramitā* tradition, upheld the ideal of Perfect Enlightenment through the practice of the *prajñāpāramitā* —the perfection of Wisdom. Indeed, the title of the earliest Chinese translation (179 CE) by 支婁迦讖 Lokakṣema, 《道行般若經》 *Daoxing bore jing* (=DX), could well be seen as a support of this surmise.⁷²

⁷¹ Puguang (5b21–24) clarifies the difference in Saṃghabhadra’s two explanations: “According to one explanation: the *cittacaitta dharmas* co-nascent with the weak *prajñā* are collectively called *vāsanā*. According to the other explanation: *vāsanā* refers not only to the *cittacaittadharmas*, but also the serial body.”

⁷² While *dao* (道)—commonly known to translate “*mārga*,” “*patha*,” “*pratipad*,” “*caryā*,” “*dharma*,” etc—is pregnant in Chinese religious and philosophical connotations, judging by Lokakṣema’s translation style in the *sūtra*, it likely corresponds here to “Wisdom” or “Ultimate Spiritual Attainment”; and in this textual context, probably “*sarvajñatā*,” “*sarvākārajñatā*” (as in the Aṣṭa) or “Perfect Enlightenment” / “Buddhahood” / “*saṃbodhi*.” Lokakṣema’s renderings are quite inconsistent. In DX, we find *dao* used to render *jñāna* (e.g., Aṣṭa, 5: *prādeśikena jñānena* ≈ 小道); *sarvajñatā* (often transliterated in the same context as 薩芸若. E.g., Aṣṭa 6: *niryāsyati sarvajñatāyām* ≈ 致薩芸若, but *sarvajñatā āsannībhavati* ≈ 疾近作佛; Aṣṭa 20: *samyaksaṃbuddhatva* ≈ 佛道; Aṣṭa 27: *samyaksaṃbodhim abhisambhotsyate sarvajñānaṃ ca pratilapsyate* ≈ 疾成佛道; Aṣṭa 114: *saṃbodhaye pratiṣṭāpayiṣyanti* ≈ 令 . . . 學佛道; Aṣṭa 232: *sthāsyati sarvajñatāyām* ≈ 正住佛道. We also see *sarvajñatā* and *dao* forming a compound corresponding to *sarvajñatā*[phala]—Aṣṭa 140:

It has already been suggested by several scholars, including Professor Lambert Schmithausen⁷³ and Venerable Yinshun,⁷⁴ that this first chapter constitutes the urtext of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*. This is quite likely the case, especially as regards its earlier portion. For one thing, we find this text, almost at the beginning, urgently answering the question—very much to be expected by the emerging Mahāyānists proposing the new message of *prajñāpāramitā*—how is this new doctrine, expounded through Subhūti, to be accepted as genuine *Buddhavacana*? The answer is:

Whatever... the Bhagavat's Disciples teach... all that is to be known as the Tathāgata's direct effectuation (*puruṣakāra*)... It is just an emanation (/flowing-out *niṣyanda*) of the tathāgata's *Dharma*-teaching.⁷⁵

The course of this practice culminates in the attainment of the all-mode knowledge (perfect wisdom), to be contrasted with the Wisdom of the Arhats and Pratyekabuddhas. In the extant *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*, this attainment is not accounted for in terms of his absolute eradication of the non-defiled nescience, but of all defilements together with their traces (*vāsanā*). The description in the MVŚ (see §4) suggests that this is the view of the Mahā-sāṃghikas and the Vibhajyavādins.

sarvajñatāyā aparigrahāya ≈ 薩芸若道不受. The correspondence of *dao* to “spiritual fruit”/“attainment” is sometimes quite explicit; e.g., Aṣṭa 18f: *srotaāpattiphala*, *sakṛdāgāmiphala*, *anāgāmiphala*, *arhatva* correspond to: 須陀洹道, 斯陀含道, 阿那含道 and 羅漢道; Aṣṭa 93f: *phalaviśuddhi* ≈ 道...清淨. One must, however, also concede the possibility that both *dao* and *xing* equally connote “practice,” and become compounded as a correspondence to “*caryā*”; cf. Aṣṭa 199: *caryā* ≈ 所行道. This may explain why in X1 (T7, 763b6: 妙行品第一), the first chapter is entitled “妙行” (“Wonderful Practice”). Seishi Karashima, however, considers X2 to be older than X1 (see Karashima 2011: xiii.). But still, it is possible that the early *Prajñāpāramitā* tradition could have understood the “wonderful practice” as the practice leading to *sarvākārajñatā*, as indicated in the Aṣṭa's “*sarvākārajñatā-caryā*.”

⁷³ Cf. Schmithausen 1977.

⁷⁴ Yinshun 1981: 632 f.

⁷⁵ Aṣṭa, 2 f.

5.1.1. The *sarvākārajñāna* and the *sarvajñajñāna*

Besides the title of the first chapter, the term *sarvākārajñatā* also occurs in the Aṣṭa as follows :

- (1) This perfection of wisdom is a perfection of the knowledge of the omniscient (*sarvajñajñāna*) on account of its all-mode full understanding (*sarvākāraparijñānatā*) of the intrinsic natures of all *dharma*s.⁷⁶
- (2) Bodhisattvas ... training in [this Wisdom-perfection] swiftly come to attain all *buddha*-qualities accompanied with the perfection of all virtues, as well as the all-mode-knowledge (*sarvākārajñatā*).⁷⁷

For (1), the Tib version corroborates “*sarvākāra-parijñāna*” (*rnam pa thams cad yongs su mkhyen pa*).⁷⁸ However, noticeably, corresponding to (1) above: X1 has simply: “on account of this all-knowing knowledge *pāramitā*’s understanding (apparently without *sarvākārajñatā*) that all *dharma*s are devoid of intrinsic nature.”⁷⁹ Both X2 and Kumārajīva’s version too, is even simpler: “... on account of all *dharma*s being devoid of intrinsic nature.” Likewise DX, simply: “because all *dharma* has no intrinsic nature.”⁸⁰

As for (2) above: the Tib version likewise has *rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa nyid*. There is, however, no correspondence in X1 or X2, but only in the First Assembly (第一會) of 玄奘 Xuanzang’s 《大般若波羅蜜多經》 *Da bore boluomiduo jing* (=X) which has 一切智智 (*sarvajñajñāna*) instead of *sarvākārajñatā*.⁸¹ The corresponding place in K_j has “swiftly come to attain 薩婆若 (*sarvajñatā*;

⁷⁶ Aṣṭa, 103: *sarvajñajñānapāramiteyaṃ ... yad uta prajñāpāramitā sarvadharmasvabhāva-sarvākāraparijñānatām upādāya* |

⁷⁷ Aṣṭa 250 *na tvam kulaputra jānīṣe? eṣā hi sā prajñāpāramitā bodhisattvānām ... mātā ... , yatra śikṣamāṇā bodhisattvā mahāsattoḥ sarvagunāpāramitānugatān sarvabuddhadharmān sarvākārajñatām ca kṣīpam anuprāpnuvantīti* | ; Toh 12, bka’ ‘gyur, shes phyin, vol. ka: 217b: ‘di la bslabs pas byang chub sems dpa’ sems dpa’ chen po dag yon tan thams cad kyi pha rol tu phyin par rjes su ‘gro ba dang / sangs rgyas kyi chos thams cad dang rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa nyid kyang myur du thob par ‘gyur ba yin na khyod mi shes sam /

⁷⁸ Toh 12, bka’ ‘gyur, shes phyin, vol. ka: 116a: *rnam pa thams cad yongs su mkhyen pa’i slad du ‘di lta ste shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa ‘di ni thams cad mkhyen pa’i ye shes kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’o* //

⁷⁹ T7, 805b25–26.

⁸⁰ T8, 444b23: 於諸法亦無自然故。

⁸¹ T6, 1066a20–22.

not *sarvākārajñatā*⁸²).⁸³ Accordingly, we cannot be sufficiently confident of the occurrence in the early Prajñāpāramitā texts, of the term “all-mode knowledge”—so much stressed in the Abhidharma since the MVŚ—except in the Aṣṭa and its corresponding Tib version.

Another term in the Prajñāpāramitā for a Buddha’s unique Wisdom is “all-knowing knowledge,” *sarvajñajñāna*, usually rendered by Xuanzang as 一切智智. “*sarvajñajñāna*” is also attested in DX as 薩芸若智慧. But in the Aṣṭa, it seems to connote the same as *sarvajñatā*; and judging by X1, even *sarvākārajñatā*. For instance, in the Aṣṭa XII, we see *buddhajñāna* (Tib: *sangs rgyas kyi ye shes*)⁸⁴ used synonymously as *sarvajñajñāna*; in X1, also as *sarvākārajñatā*:

It is impossible that [a Bodhisattva], thus coursing, thus intensely striving, thus vigorously engaged, will not attain the supreme Buddha-knowledge, the all-knowing knowledge, the Great-Caravan-Leader knowledge.⁸⁵

X1: It is impossible that [a Bodhisattva], thus vigorously practicing, will not attain the *anuttarā samyaksaṃbodhi*, the *sarvākārajñāna* (一切相智), the great knowledge, the wonderful knowledge, the *sarvajñajñāna* (一切智智), the *mahāsārvasthāvāhajñāna*.⁸⁶

At times, one gets the impression that the notion of *sarvākārajñatā* was still being worked out. In some places, it seems to be suggested that it leads to the accomplishment of the *sarvajñajñāna*,⁸⁷ the very name conferred to the final, perfect Wisdom of a Buddha.

⁸² However, A. Hirakawa’s *Buddhist Chinese-Sanskrit Dictionary* gives *sarvākārajñatā* as one of the correspondence for 薩婆若.

⁸³ KJ, 583c1–2: 菩薩於是中學，當得盡諸功德一切佛法，疾得薩婆若。

⁸⁴ Toh 12, *bka’ ’gyur, shes phyin*, vol. ka: 222b: *de ltar spyod cing de ltar brtson te de ltar ’bad na sangs rgyas kyi ye shes bla na med pa dang ye shes chen po dang thams cad mkhyen pa’i ye shes dang ded dpon chen po’i ye shes thob par mi ’gyur ba ’di ni gnas med do //*

⁸⁵ Aṣṭa, 202: *evaṃ caran, evaṃ ghaṭamānaḥ, evaṃ vyāyacchamāno ’nuttaraṃ buddhajñānaṃ sarvajñajñānaṃ mahāsārvasthāvāhajñānaṃ nānuprāpsyatīti naitat sthānaṃ vidyate ||*

⁸⁶ X1, 842b13–15. X2 (T7, 911c20–22): 若諸菩薩勤行此道，不得無上正等覺智、大智、妙智、自然智、一切智智及如來智，無有是處。

⁸⁷ See discussion on *sarvākārajñatā* below.

Regrettably, Xuanzang's rendering is not always consistent. In the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, his “一切智智” is seen to correspond to *sarvajñajñāna*; but sometimes, also to *sarvajñatā*. E.g., Aṣṭa, 4f: *na niryāsyati sarvajñatāyām* = 不能成辦一切智智 (*sarvajñatā*); but: *sacen nimittato grahītaṅgā abhaviṣyat, na ceha śreṇikaḥ parivorājakāḥ śraddhām alapsyata | tatra hi śreṇikaḥ parivorājakāḥ sarvajñajñāne adhimucya śraddhānusārī ...* =X1: 若取相修, 得一切智智 (*sarvajñajñāna*) 者, 則勝軍梵志於一切智智不應信解。Such Examples abound in Xuanzang's 《大般若波羅蜜多經》. However, this state of affairs seems also to indicate that in contrast to Aṣṭa, in the subsequent *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, the “all-knowing knowledge” qua a Buddha's supreme Wisdom was increasingly understood to connote more than “all-knowledge” or “omniscience” (*sarvajñatā*), which is doctrinally said to be shared by the two *yānas*.

Aṣṭa teaches that this unique omniscience, also called “all-knowing knowledge,” can only be achieved by practicing Wisdom-perfection without grasping at anything, including Wisdom-perfection itself. This meditative state of non-grasping is the equipoise known as “*sarvadharmāpariḡhīta*” (Aṣṭa, 4; 於一切法無攝受定), or “*sarvadharmānupādāna*” (Aṣṭa, 7; 無所攝受三摩地)—“equipoise of non-grasping of (/non-clinging to) any *dharma*.” It is this equipoise, apparently proclaimed for the first time in the *Prajñāpāramitā*, that distinctively marks off the Bodhisattva Path, which leads to Perfected Wisdom, from the Śrāvaka-pratyeka Path. For it is here declared to be “unshared by all Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas” (*asādhāraṇaḥ sarvaśrāvaka-pratyekabuddhaiḥ*). In chapter XVIII, Aṣṭa states that the knowledge (*jñāna*) obtained by an irreversible Bodhisattva is “endless, boundless, insuperable by the Śrāvaka-pratyekabuddhas.”⁸⁸ The *Pañcaviṃśatikā* speaks of the Bodhisattva's equipoise of non-grasping at any *dharma* likewise as being “insuperable by the two *yānas*,” and in that connection significantly relates it to the all-mode knowledge:

This *samādhi-maṇḍala* of the Bodhisattva, Great Being, named “the non-grasping of any *dharma*” ... is insuperable (/incapable of being

⁸⁸ Aṣṭa, 170: *avinivartanīyena hi subhūte bodhisattvena mahāsattvena anantam aparyantaṃ jñānaṃ pratilabdham asaṃhāryaṃ sarvaśrāvaka-pratyekabuddhaiḥ ||*

eclipsed) by all Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas. The all-mode knowledge (*sarvākārajñatā*) too is not grasped. . . .⁸⁹

In brief, the doctrine that came to be formulated in the *Prajñāpāramitā* is that the Buddha's perfect Wisdom, called *sarvajñatā*/*sarvajñajñāna* and *sarvākārajñāna*, is unshared by the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, and is insuperable by them. This is to be achieved through the practice of *prajñāpāramitā* in the equipoise state of not grasping at any *dharma* at all, and this is the new Bodhisattva praxis.

Subsequent to the Aṣṭa, *Prajñāpāramitā* came to further articulate and distinguish among the three types of knowledge (Wisdom): (I) all-knowledge (*sarvajñatā*), (II) path-mode knowledge (*mārgākārajñāna*) and (III) all-mode knowledge (*sarvākārajñāna*). (I) is shared by the Buddha, Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas; but the latter two, while knowing all internal and external *dharmas*, do not know them in all-modes. (II) is possessed by the Bodhisattvas. They must fully possess knowledge of all the paths of the Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas and Bodhisattvas, and use them to cross over sentient beings—without realizing the Reality-limit (*bhūta-koṭi*).⁹⁰ (III) is unique to the Buddha: it knows all the modes (*ākāra*), distinguishing characteristics (*liṅga*) and signs (*nimitta*) of all *dharmas*; or rather, it knows all *dharmas* through a single mode, the mode of tranquillity (*śāntākāra*).⁹¹ In such articulation, it seems clear enough that *sarvākārajñatā* is the culminating Wisdom of Perfect Enlightenment. The Bodhisattva is to apply his mind (*manasi-√kr*) to *sarvākārajñatā* from the first moment of resolving for Perfect Enlightenment.⁹² Indeed, in the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* texts, *sarvākārajñatā* stands out as the key term for expressing the unique, perfect, Wisdom of a Buddha. When

⁸⁹ PSP 1:171: *idaṃ bodhisattoasya mahāsattoasya sarvadharmāpariṅhītaṃ nāma samādhimaṇḍalaṃ vipulaṃ puraskṛtam apramāṇaṃ niyatam asaṃhāryaṃ sarvaśrāvaka-pratyekabuddhaiḥ | sāpi sarvākārajñatā aparigṛhītā | . . .*

⁹⁰ PSP 5, 125; AdPP I, 146; T8, 375b23–c5.

⁹¹ AdPP I, 147. Also cf. PSP 5, 124. Also cf. explanations of the three types of knowledge in T7, 337b8–26.

⁹² PSP 5, 134: *bhagavān āha: prathamacittotpādikena subhūte bodhisattoena mahāsattoena sarvākārajñatā manasikartavyā |*; Also cf. PSP 5, 145: *bodhisattvo mahāsattvo vīryapāramitāyāṃ caran prathamacittotpādam upādāya sarvākārajñatāpratisaṃyuktair manasikārair vīryam ārabhate |*

the Bodhisattva, having transcended the Śrāvaka-pratyekabuddha stage, achieves this, he becomes a Perfectly Enlightened Buddha, whose absolute abandonment of defilements is one in which all the serial connexion of *vāsanā* is eradicated:

... a Bodhisattva, Great Being, coursing in Wisdom-perfection, transcends the Śrāvaka-pratyekabuddha stage and enters into the Bodhisattva-certainty (*bodhisattvanīyāma*). He fulfils the *buddha*-qualities and will come to attain the all-mode knowledge. Having attained the all-mode knowledge, he will become a Tathāgata, Arhat, Samyak-saṃbuddha, characterized by the abandonment of defilements along with all the serial connexion of *vāsanā*.⁹³

In another similar context, the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* likewise states:

... abiding in the *vajropamasamādhi*, he directly realises the Supreme Perfect Full Enlightenment by means of the *prajñā* conjoined with a single thought-moment. Thereupon, he is described as a “Tathāgata.” He is the knower of all *dharmas*, and hence said to be “all-seeing” (*sarvadarśin*), “all-knowing” (*sarvajña*).⁹⁴

Thus, essentially agreeing with the Abhidharma path trajectory, the absolute abandonment of all defilements—in this case including also the *vāsanā*—can only take place in the moment of the *Vajropamasamādhi*, abiding wherein all the *vāsanā* comes to be eradicated.

From §5.1.1. (1), the *sarvajñajñāna* has the capacity of knowing fully in all modes; i.e., of the all-mode knowledge. For this reason, it is mentioned, as seen above, on a par with *buddhajñāna* and *sarvākārajñatā*. However, in some places, we see the suggestion that the *sarvākārajñatā* leads to the *sarvajñajñāna* which can be rendered as “knowledge of the omniscient (/ the all-knowing),” i.e., of a Buddha.

⁹³ PSP 5:68: *atra hi kauśika prajñāpāramitāyāñ caran bodhisattvo mahāsattovaḥ śrāvakapratyekabuddhabhūmim atikrāmati, bodhisattvanīyāmam avakrāmati | buddhadharmān paripūrayati, sarvākārajñatām anuprāpsyati | sarvākārajñatām anuprāpya tathāgato 'rhan samyaksambuddhaḥ sarvavāsanānusamdhikleśaprahāno bhaviṣyati |*

⁹⁴ PSP 6-8:124: *iha subhūte yadā bodhisattvo mahāsattovaḥ ṣaṭpāramitāḥ paripūrya ... aṣṭādaśāveṇikān buddhadharmān paripūrya vajropame samādhau sthitvaikacittakṣaṇa-samāyuktayā prajñāyānuttarāṃ samyaksambodhim abhisambudhyate | tadā tathāgata iti*

In Aṣṭa, *prajñāpāramitā* is said to be the full accomplishment (perfection) of the all-mode knowledge, omniscience (*sarvajñatva*, *sarvajñatā*).⁹⁵ “Because of having abandoned all the serial connexion or succession with the *vāsanā* of the defilement- and knowable-hindrances (*sarvakleśajñeyāvaraṇa-vāsanānusandhiprahīnatām upādāya*), the *prajñāpāramitā* is non-generative of all *dharmas*.”⁹⁶ The last sentence links up the notion of the twofold hindrance with the notion of *vāsanā*, and is therefore doctrinally significant in the context of our investigation of the impact of the *vāsanā* (and *akliṣṭājñāna*) doctrine. However, this linkage is attested only in Xuanzang’s version of the third assembly (第三會):⁹⁷ “because of the absolute abandonment of all defilement serial continuity together with the *vāsanās*” It is not in the other Chinese versions, including the oldest *Daxing Bore* and Kumārajīva’s version.⁹⁸ Accordingly, the allusion to *vāsanā* here maybe a later interpolation. Elsewhere in the Aṣṭa, it is said that the *prajñāpāramitā* is said to be the *pāramitā* of *sarvajñajñāna* “because of the fact of full understanding in all modes of the intrinsic nature of all *dharmas*.”⁹⁹ Training in the *prajñāpāramitā*, the Bodhisattva swiftly attains all the *buddha*-qualities and the all-mode knowledge.¹⁰⁰ Accordingly, in such contexts, the all-mode knowledge and the all-knowing are still not properly differentiated, although we might

nirdiśyate sarvadharmān jānīta ity atah sarvadarśiṃ sarvajña iti |

⁹⁵ Aṣṭa, 170: *sarvajñajñānapariniṣpattir bhagavan prajñāpāramitā, sarvajñatvaṃ bhagavan prajñāpāramitā |*

⁹⁶ Aṣṭa, 86: *sarvakleśajñeyāvaraṇavāsanānusandhi-prahīnatām upādāya anutpādikā bhagavan sarvadharmāṇāṃ prajñāpāramitā |* For *vāsanā-anusandhi*, cf. 諸習之緒 “the continuity/succession of the *vāsanās*,” in 《放光般若經》 (Mo, T8, 116a10–11), the older translation of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā*.

⁹⁷ X, T7, 576b25–26: 永斷一切煩惱相續并習氣故；是諸菩薩摩訶薩母。However, it is the fourth and the fifth assemblies (第四會, 第五會) that properly correspond to the Aṣṭa.

⁹⁸ 《道行般若經》 T8, 440b23: 無所生無所滅，即般若波羅蜜是。；《小品般若波羅蜜經》 T8, 550a8: 般若波羅蜜，非生法者，非滅法者。；X, T7, 798c16–25: . . . 示一切法無滅無生，是諸菩薩摩訶薩母。

⁹⁹ Aṣṭa, 103.

¹⁰⁰ Aṣṭa, 250.

also infer that the “knowledge of the omniscient” is in fact the “all-mode knowledge.”

5.1.2. *Vāsanā*, its absolute eradication and Perfect Buddhahood

In the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* texts evolved from the Aṣṭa, such as *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, frequent allusion to *vāsanā* and *vāsanānusandhi* (“serial connexion or succession of *vāsanā*”) is attested. Thus, like MVŚ (§3.2 and §3.4) and the Pāli commentaries (§2), they teach that *vāsanā* serial connexion (*sarvavāsanānusandhi*) is not defilement, but exists in the two *yānas*, resulting their bodily perturbation, and is absent only in the Tathāgata.¹⁰¹ The *Aṣṭādaśasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (=AdPP):

Subhūti! The *vāsanā* serial connexion is not defilement.¹⁰² But even though the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas have abandoned greed, hatred and ignorance, certain bodily perturbances occur. These [perturbances] lead to harm in the case of the foolish worldlings; not in the case of the Śrāvakas. They are [completely] absent in the tathāgata.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Cf. PSP 5, 126: *bhagavān āha: na subhūte kleśaprahāṇasya nānātvam asti, asti punas tathāgatasya sarvavāsanānusamdhikleśaprahāṇam, na punaḥ śrāvakasya sarvavāsanānusamdhikleśaprahāṇam* |

¹⁰² I have emended *vāsanānusandhikleśo 'sti* to *vāsanānusandhiḥ kleśo 'sti*, which reads more meaningfully, and probably agrees better with Xuanzang's version. See following note.

¹⁰³ AdPP, I, 149: *bhāgavān āha, na subhūte vāsanānusandhiḥ kleśo 'sti* | *api tv asti teṣāṃ śrāvākapratyekabuddhānāṃ rāgadoṣamohaprahāṇam; kaścit tu kāyavikārās pravartante* | *te bālapṛthagjanānāṃ anarthāya saṃvartante* | *na tu śrāvakānāṃ, te tathāgatasya nāsti* |; PSP 5:126 states almost identically: *bhagavān āha, na subhūte vāsanānusamdhikleśaprahāṇam; api nu teṣāṃ rāgadoṣamohaprahāṇam asti, kāyavāgvikārās tu pravartante* | *te tu bālapṛthagjanānāṃ anarthāya pravartante, na tu śrāvakānāṃ, te tathāgatasya na santi* | But on the basis of the AdPP passage above, Xuanzang's 《大般若波羅蜜多經》 (X, T6, 872a1–19, T7, 338a4–9, and T7, 695c7–11: 佛言：「善現！習氣相續實非煩惱。然諸聲聞及諸獨覺煩惱已斷，猶有少分似貪瞋癡動發身、語。即說此為習氣相續。此在愚夫異生相續能引無義；非在聲聞、獨覺相續能引無義。如是一切習氣相續，諸佛世尊究竟無有」) as well as Kumārajīva's 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》 (Kj, T8, 376a3–621: 佛告須菩提：「習非煩惱。是聲聞、辟支佛身口有似姪欲、瞋恚、愚癡相。凡夫愚人為之得罪。是三毒習，諸佛無有」), *vāsanānusamdhikleśaprahāṇami* should be amended to *vāsanānusandhiḥ kleśo* (like AdPP).

The complete destruction (*samudghāta*) of *vāsanā* is defined in PSP as the non-manifestation (*asamudācāra*), in each and every way, of any improper behaviour resembling defilements.¹⁰⁴

In most instances, the eradication of the *vāsanānusandhi* is explicitly stated to be through the attainment of the all-mode knowledge, and sometimes indicated as the consummation or culmination of the Mahāyāna path of cultivation. Thus, a list of practices enumerating the spiritual friends and teachers of the Bodhisattvas begins with the six *pāramitās* and culminates in the all-mode knowledge and the abandonment of the serial connexion of *vāsanā*:

The six *pāramitās*, Subhūti, should be known as the spiritual friends of the Bodhisattvas, Mahāsattvas. [So are] the four abidings of mindfulness (*smṛty-upasthāna*) ... the eighteen unique *buddha*-qualities. ... The six *pāramitās* are to be known as the teachers, ... the mothers, the fathers. The four abidings of mindfulness, proper exertion (*samyakprahāṇa*) [etc. up to] the eighteen unique *buddha*-qualities are conducive to the all-mode knowledge up to the abandonment of all defilements together with their *vāsanā* serial connexion (*sarvavāsanānusandhikleśaprahāṇa*).¹⁰⁵

In Xuanzang's translation of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā*, we see “the absolute abandonment of all defilement-*vāsanās*”—alongside with *sarvajñāna*, *sarvākārajñāna*, *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*—stated to be “the teachers and the path/guide (為師為導; *sāstarah*, *mārga*) for the Bodhisattvas, great beings.”¹⁰⁶ The older translation, 《放光般若經》 *Fangguang Bore Jing* (=Mo), states: “the

¹⁰⁴ Cf. PSP 6-8:61: *katamaś ca subhūte vāsanāsamudghātaḥ? sarveṇa sarvaṃ sarvathā sarvaṃ kleśasamgāv asadrśaceṣṭo 'samudācāro 'yam ucyate vāsanāsamudghātaḥ |* Similar definition in the *Yogācārabhūmi*; cf. T30, 574a18–22.

¹⁰⁵ PSP 5:10f: *ṣaṭ pāramitāḥ subhūte bodhisattvānāṃ mahāsattvānāṃ kalyāṇamitrāṇi veditavyāni; catvāri smṛtyupasthānāni ... | catvāri smṛtyupasthānāni ... 'ṣṭādaśa-venikā buddhadharmāḥ sarvākārajñatāyai yāvāt sarvavāsanānusandhikleśaprahāṇāya samvartante |*

It seems proper to interpret *vāsanānusandhikleśaprahāṇa* as *saha vāsanānusandhyā kleśaprahāṇaṃ*. Cf. BoBh, 63: *savāsanasarvokleśaprahāṇa*; *nyon mongs pa bag chags dang bcas pa thams cad spangs ba*; 一切煩惱習氣永斷; and *savāsanappahāṇaṃ* (Pāli), understood as *saha vāsanāya kilesappahāṇaṃ* (see Akli, §1, and ns. 9 & 10.)

¹⁰⁶ Cf. T6, 709a18–29; T7, 288a1–15; T7, 652c27–653a5.

six *pāramitās* are the *sarvajñā*. The six *pāramitās* are that which eradicate the *vāsanās* of men."¹⁰⁷

In Aṣṭa, Subhūti, a prominent direct disciple of the Buddha, is presented as the disciple who properly understands and expounds the new Mahāyāna message of *prajñāpāramitā*, praised as being foremost among those dwelling in non-dispute (*araṇāvihāriṇām agrah*). When we come to the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā*, he is also described as one who dwells/abides in isolated-ness, emptiness etc., and who does not apperceive (*nopalabhate*) the six *pāramitās*. Yet, compared to the Bodhisattvas' coursing in the *prajñāpāramitā*, Subhūti's dwelling is said to be infinitely less significant. Because, except for the Tathāgata's dwelling, this Bodhisattva dwelling is supreme:

Therefore, Kausika, the Bodhisattva, Great Being, wishing to get to the highest state (*agratā*) should dwell in this dwelling, viz, the *prajñāpāramitā*-dwelling. Why? For, herein, Kauśika, a Bodhisattva, Great Being, coursing in the *prajñāpāramitā*, transcends the stage of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, enters into the Bodhisattva-certainty (*bodhisattvaniyāma*), perfects the Buddha-qualities, and will attain the all-mode knowledge. Having attained the all-mode knowledge, he will become a Tathāgata, Worthy One, Perfectly Fully Enlightened One, who has achieved the abandonment of all defilements together with their *vāsanā*-succession (*sarvavāsanānusamḍhi-prahāṇo bhaviṣyati*).¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Mo, T8, 97b23–24: 六波羅蜜者，是薩云然。六波羅蜜者，除人諸習緒。

¹⁰⁸ PSP 5:67f: *tathā hi tathāgatavihāraṃ sthāpayitvā bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya prajñāpāramitāyāñ carato yo vihāraḥ sarvaśrāvakapratyekabuddhānām ca ye vihārās teṣāṃ vihārāṇām ayaṃ bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya prajñāpāramitāyāñ carato yo vihāraḥ so 'gra ākhyāyate, ... tasmāt tarhi kauśika bodhisattoena mahāsattvenāgratām gantukāmenānena vihāreṇa vihartavyaṃ yad uta prajñāpāramitāvihāreṇa. tat kasya hetoḥ? atra hi kauśika prajñāpāramitāyāñ caran bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ śrāvakapratyekabuddhabhūmim atikrāmati, bodhisattvaniyāmam avakrāmati, buddhadharmān paripūrayati, sarvākārajñatām anuprāpsyati, sarvākārajñatām anuprāpya tathāgato 'rhan samyaksambuddhaḥ sarvavāsanānusamḍhikleśaprahāṇo bhaviṣyati.*; Cf. Kj, T8, 362a16–b15: 佛告釋提桓因：「須菩提比丘行空時，檀那波羅蜜不可得，... 四念處不可得... 何以故？憍尸迦！須菩提比丘一切法離行，一切法無所得行，一切法空行，一切法無相行，一切法無作行。憍尸迦！是為須菩提比丘所行。欲比菩薩摩訶薩般若波羅蜜行者，百分不及一，千分千萬億分乃至算數、譬喻所不能及。何以故？除佛行，是菩薩摩訶薩行般若波羅蜜，於聲聞、辟支佛諸行中最尊最妙最上。以是故，菩薩摩訶薩欲得於一切眾生中最上，當行是般若波羅蜜行。何以故？憍尸迦！諸菩薩摩訶薩行般若

Thus, in the newly emerged Mahāyāna Bodhisattva-path—conceived as transcending the “older” path of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas—Perfect Full Enlightenment is the final goal, to be achieved by the Bodhisattva through the coursing in *prajñāpāramitā*. The passage suggests that it is after the all-mode knowledge has been attained (*anuprāpya*) that the *vāsanā* serial connexion comes to be abandoned. And it is only with its absolute abandonment that this Perfect Buddhahood can finally be attained. Elsewhere it states further that they are abandoned in the manner of not being susceptible to re-arising (*sarvavāsanānusaṃdhikleśāḥ prahāsyante, anutpattikaprahāṇāḥ*).¹⁰⁹ This tallies with the Abhidharma doctrine that the Buddha’s non-defiled nescience is not only fully abandoned, but also rendered incapable of re-arising. The role of the all-mode knowledge is sometimes stated more explicitly:

The Bodhisattva, Great Being, ... having entered into the Bodhisattva-certainty (*bodhisattvaniyāma*), further abandons all defilements along with their *vāsanā* serial connexion by means of the knowledge of the all-mode knowledge.¹¹⁰

The two corresponding places in Xuanzang’s version add: “it is only then that the *sarvajñajñāna* (一切智智)” is achieved. The suggestion is: when all *vāsanās* are eradicated through the all-mode knowledge, the Bodhisattva enters into the Tathāgata-stage; only then does he arrive at the culmination of the *sarvajñajñāna*.¹¹¹ Similar statements are found in several other places of his version. The following is an example:

PSP 6–8:132f states that for the sake of Perfect Enlightenment, the Bodhisattva should train in all skilful *dharma*s; “training wherein, he will attain the

波羅蜜時，過聲聞、辟支佛地，入菩薩位，能具足佛法，得一切種智，斷一切煩惱習作佛」

¹⁰⁹ See n. 120 below.

¹¹⁰ PSP 5:155: *bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ ... bodhisattvaniyāmam avakramya sarvākārajñā-tājñānena ca sarvavāsanānusaṃdhikleśān prajahāti* | ; Cf. Toh 9, *bka’ ’gyur, shes phyin*, vol. *ga*: 158b–159a: *byang chub sems dpa’i skyon med par zhugs nas / rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa nyid kyis / bag chags kyi mtshams sbyor ba’i nyon mongs pa thams cad rab tu spong ngo //*; Tib has no equivalent to *-jñānena*; *rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa nyid kyis*.

¹¹¹ But also bear in mind our remark above on Xuanzang’s rendering of this term.

all-mode knowledge, and will abandon all the *vāsaṇā* serial connexion."¹¹² To this, Xuanzang's version immediately adds: "It is only then that he will realize the *sarvajñajñāna*."¹¹³

As regards the particular stage of the absolute eradication of the *vāsanā*, the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* is in fact quite articulate: It is abandoned by the perfected *prajñā* conjoined with the single moment of the *vajropama-samadhi*:

[Buddha to Subhūti:] Just these [*bodhisattvadharmas*] are the *buddhadharmas*. That is to say: by means of these *dharmas* he directly realizes the all-mode knowledge (*sarvākāra-jñatā*). When he has acquired the all-mode knowledge, succession of all the *vāsanās* is abandoned. The Bodhisattva, Great Being directly realizes it (the all-mode knowledge); [but] by means of the understanding/wisdom conjoined with one single moment, all *dharmas* are directly realized by the Tathāgata, the Perfectly Fully Enlightened one (Xuanzang: "The Tathāgata, ... having directly realized all *dharmas* by means of the excellent *prajñā* conjoined with a single moment, attains the Supreme Perfect Full Enlightenment."¹¹⁴). This is the difference between the Bodhisattva, Great Being, and the tathāgata, Arhat, Samyaksambuddha.

This, Subhūti, is just like the case that the candidate (*pratipannaka*) is quite another than the one abiding in the fruition (*phalastha*); and yet it is not that both are not foremost persons (*agrapudgala=āryapudgala*). Likewise, the Bodhisattva, Great Being, is the candidate in the non-hindered path (*ānantaryamārgapratipannaka*); but the tathāgata, Arhat, Samyaksambuddha is one who has acquired the hindrance-free knowl-

¹¹² PSP 6–8:132f: ... *bodhisattvena mahāsattvena prathamacittotpādam upādāya sarva-kuśaladharmaparipūryai śikṣitavayaṃ yatra śikṣitvā sarvākārajñatām anuprāpsyati sarvavāsanānusamdhim prahāsyati* |; likewise, Tib Toh 9, bka' 'gyur, shes phyin, vol. kha: 306a–306b: *dge ba'i chos thams cad yongs su rdzogs par bya ba la bslab par bya ste de la bslabs na rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa nyid rjes su 'thob bo // bag chags kyi mtshams sbyor ba thams cad kyang yongs su spong ngo* // However, this passage lacks last sentence of Xuanzang's version.

¹¹³ X, T7, 415b8–12 (=T7, 415b9–12): ... 常學圓滿一切善法，學已當得一切相智，永斷一切習氣相續，乃能證得一切智智。

¹¹⁴ X, T7, 418a28–b2: 謂：諸菩薩於一切法覺一切相，由此當得一切相智，永斷一切習氣相續。若諸如來、應、正等覺，於一切法以一剎那相應妙慧現等覺已，證得無上正等菩提。善現，是名菩薩與佛二法差別。; X, T7, 755a9–13: 謂：諸菩薩於一切法覺一切相，由此當得一切相智，永斷一切習氣相續。若諸如來、應、正等覺，於一切法以一剎那相應般若現等覺已，證得無上正等菩提。是名菩薩與佛有異。

edge (*anāvāraṇajñānaprāpta*). This, Subhūti, is the difference between the Bodhisattva, Great Being, on the one hand, and the Tathāgata, Arhat, Samyaksambuddha, on the other.¹¹⁵

We shall see below (§6) that in Yogācāra, the “hindrance-free knowledge” is directly related to the notion of overcoming the non-defiled nescience (called therein the non-defiled ignorance *akliṣṭāvidyā*—BoBh, 62). In Xuanzang’s version of the PSP (T7, 749c16–18, cited below in n.118) too, the absolute abandonment in the final *ānantaryamārga* is that of all *kleśāvaraṇa* and *jñeyāvaraṇa*; the latter being the cognitive hindrance attributable to the non-defiled nescience. As regards the last description of the difference, the several versions of Xuanzang and that of Kumārajīva, while essentially agreeing with the PSP, are more explicitly in terms of the Abhidharmic differentiation of the *ānantaryamārga* and the *vimuktimārga*. Thus, Xuanzang:

when [the practitioner] is coursing in all *dharma*s in the *ānantaryamārga*, and has not been freed from the hindrance of darkness, has not acquired mastery, has not acquired the fruit—he is known as a Bodhisattva, Great Being. When he is coursing in all *dharma*s in the *vimuktimārga*, and has been freed from the hindrance of darkness, has acquired mastery, has acquired the fruit—he is then known as the a Buddha. This is how the Bodhisattva and the Buddha differ. Because there is a difference in stage, the *dharma*s are not identical (“not without a difference”); but one cannot say that the *dharma*-nature is different.¹¹⁶

Kumārajīva’s version is similar; but more concise:

¹¹⁵ PSP 6-8:141f: ... *eta eva subhūte buddhadharmā yad ebhir dharmaiḥ sarvākārajñatām abhisambudhyate tasya sarvākārajñatāprāptasya sarvavāsanānusamdhīḥ prahīyate | tāṃ bodhisattvo mahāsattvo ’bhisambudhyate; tathāgatenārhatā samyaksambuddhena sarvadharmā ekakṣaṇasamāyuktayā prajñayā abhisambuddhā ayaṃ viśeṣo bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya ca tathāgatasyārhatāḥ samyaksambuddhasya | tad yathāpi nāma subhūte anya eva pratipannako ’nyaḥ phalasthaḥ | na ca tāv ubhāv api nāgrapudgalau | evam eva subhūte bodhisattvā mahāsattva ānantaryamārga-pratipannakas tathāgataḥ punar arhan samyaksambuddhaḥ sarvadharmeṣv anāvāraṇajñānaprāptaḥ, ayaṃ subhūte viśeṣo bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya ca Tathāgatasyārhatāḥ samyaksambuddhasya | Cf. X, T7, 418a25–b11; X, T7, 755a7–19; X, T6, 1044a6–21; Mo, T8, 138b1–10; Kj, T8, 411b15–27.*

¹¹⁶ X, T7, 418b5–10.

When the Bodhisattva, Great Being, courses in the *ānantaryamārga*, he is known as a Bodhisattva. In the *vimuktimārga*, being free from all coverings (/hindrance) of darkness, he is known as a Buddha.¹¹⁷

The above-mentioned “one single moment (*ekakṣaṇa*)” undoubtedly refers to the moment of the *vajropamasamādhi* with which the *prajñā* is conjoined. This is unmistakable in the PSP, as the following passage shows:

Here, Subhūti, when the Bodhisattva, Great Being—having fulfilled the six *pāramitās*, ... the eighteen unique *buddha*-qualities, abiding in the *vajropamasamādhi*—directly realises the Supreme, Perfect Full Enlightenment by means of the *prajñā* conjoined with a single thought-moment,¹¹⁸ he is then described as a Tathāgata.¹¹⁹

More specifically, it is after the Bodhisattva has finally achieved the all-mode knowledge that all the *vāsanā*-succession are absolutely abandoned, in the manner of their not further re-arising:

And, Subhūti, that Bodhisattva, Great Being, fully mastering (/intensely practising; *parijāyan kurvan*) the six *pāramitās* in the Enlightenment-paths, until he comes to be endowed with the eighteen unique *buddha*-qualities[, etc., up to,] endowed with the all-mode knowledge. These, Subhūti, are the paths to Enlightenment. By means of these Enlightenment-paths, he fulfils the *pāramitās*. Having fulfilled the *pāramitās*, by means of the wisdom (/understanding; *prajñā*) conjoined with a single moment, he will achieve the all-mode knowledge. In that state (*tatrāvasthāyām*), all the defilements together with their *vāsanā*-succession will be abandoned by him, as abandonment not susceptible

¹¹⁷ Kj, T8, 411b25–27.

¹¹⁸ X, T7, 749c16–18: 從此無間，用一剎那金剛喻定相應般若，永斷一切煩惱、所知二障麁重習氣相續，證得無上正等菩提，乃名如來... “When, immediately after this, by means of the single moment of *prajñā* conjoined with the *vajropamasamādhi*, he absolutely abandons all *vāsanā*-succession of the *dauṣṭhulya* of the twofold hindrance of *kleśa* and *jñeya*, and realises the *anuttarā samyaksaṃbodhi*.”

¹¹⁹ PSP 6-8:124: *iha subhūte yadā bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ ṣaṭpāramitāḥ paripūrya- ... aṣṭādaśāveṇikān buddhadharmān paripūrya vajropame samādhau sthitvaikacittakṣaṇa-samāyuktayā prajñāyānuttarāṃ samyaksaṃbodhim abhisambudhyate tadā tathāgata iti nirdiśyate sarvadharmān jānīta ity atah sarvadarśiṃ sarvajña ity abhidhīyate |*; Cf. X, T7, 749c13–19. Also, Kj, T8, 408b13–20.

to arising (無所從生故 “... abandoned in the manner of being incapable of further arising”; 以不生故 “because of their non-arising”).¹²⁰

That is: the paths leading to Enlightenment (*bodhaye mārgāḥ*) are intensely cultivated by the Bodhisattva and are fully mastered (*parijayaṃ-√kr*) only when he comes to be endowed with the eighteen unique *buddha*-qualities ... up to the knowledge that is the all-mode knowledge (*sarvākārajñatājñāna*). It is with these paths leading to Enlightenment that he fulfils the *pāramitās* and will attain the all-mode knowledge. And as Xuanzang’s version here clarifies: all *vāsanās* are not only fully eradicated, but also rendered absolutely incapable of re-arising—and this is the attainment of Buddhahood.¹²¹

To summarise: the Abhidharma teaches that a defilement is abandoned, in the *ānantaryamārga*, by the simultaneously arising *prajñā qua* counteragent. This *prajñā* is called a receptivity (*kṣānti*). In the next moment called the *vimuktimārga*, the practitioner is totally liberated from the defilement, and the corresponding *jñāna* arises. Both *kṣānti* and *jñāna* are modalities of the universal thought-concomitant *prajñā*. The *vajropamasamādhi* is the *ānantaryamārga* that cuts of the very last (ninth) division of defilement, as a

¹²⁰ PSP 5:137: *sa khalu punaḥ subhūte bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ ṣaṭsu pāramitāsu caran bodhimārgaḥ parijayaṃ kurvan, yāvad daśabhis tathāgatabalaiḥ samanvāgato bhavati, ... sarvākārajñatājñānena ca samanvāgato bhavati | ime subhūte bodhaye mārgāḥ | sa ebhir bodhimārgaiḥ pāramitāḥ paripūrayati | pāramitāḥ paripūrya sarvan tad ekalakṣaṇasamāyuktayā prajñayā sarvākārajñatām anuprāpsyati | tasya tatrāvasthāyāṃ sarvavāsanānusaṃdhiklēsāḥ prahāsyante, anutpattikaprahāṇāḥ |*; Mo, T8, 116a7–11: 菩薩行六波羅蜜與道場作因緣，至佛十力、... 一時一意，以智慧一時合，應便速薩云若。爾時所作諸習之緒悉滅已，無所從生故。...; Kj, T8, 378b17–22: 是菩薩摩訶薩行六波羅蜜修學佛道，乃至未成就佛十力、... 一切種智，是為修學佛道。能具足是佛道因緣已，以一念相應慧得一切種智，爾時一切煩惱習永盡，以不生故。

¹²¹ 一切微細煩惱習氣相續皆永不生名無餘斷，得名為佛。 Cf. Toh 9, *bka' 'gyur, shes phyin*, vol. *kha*: 222b. 142b–143a: *de'i tshes de'i bag chags kyi mtshams sbyor ba'i nyon mongs pa thams cad kyang mi skye bar spang bas yongs su spong bar 'gyur te /*

See X, T7, 342b26–c26: 若未成就如來十力、四無所畏、四無礙解、大慈、大悲、大喜、大捨、十八不共法、無忘失法、恆住捨性、一切智、道相智、一切相智及餘無量無邊佛法，皆名學菩提道未得圓滿。若學此道已得圓滿，由一刹那相應般若，便能證得一切智 (相?) 智。爾時，一切微細煩惱習氣相續皆永不生名無餘斷，得名為佛。 Also cf. X, T7, 699a27–b7: ... 波羅蜜多已圓滿故，由一刹那相應般若，便能證得一切相智。爾時，一切微細煩惱習氣相續永不生故名無餘斷，則名如來、應、正等覺。

result of which the practitioner is absolutely freed from all defilements.¹²² In attaining Buddhahood, the non-defiled nescience is completely eradicated in the last *ānantaryamārga*. Immediately after, the “knowledge of the exhaustion of outflows” (*kṣayajñāna*), following by the next moment of the “knowledge of non-arising” which ensures that all defilements along with their *vāsanās*, and the non-defiled nescience, can no more arise. This final knowledge is in nature the unique all-mode knowledge (cf. §3.4.1).

All these Abhidharmic doctrines can be seen to have impacted the Prajñāpāramitā doctrinal system. However, the apparent further articulation of the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* tenet is that it now speaks of the attainment of Perfect Buddhahood, or rather his perfect Wisdom, as being subsequent to this. The suggestion seems to be that: now, the all-mode knowledge previously intended as the Buddha’s unique final Wisdom—both in Abhidharma and a probably somewhat earlier stage of the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā*—is now, though still considered as unique to the candidate (the [*buddha-*]pratiṣṭhāna) destined to be a Tathāgata in the immediately following moment, is made comparable to the Abhidharma notion of receptivity (*kṣānti*) which absolutely abandons a defilement, in this case all defilements along with their *vāsanās* in the final *ānantaryamārga*. The PSP claims that all the preceding knowledge and abandonments (*jñānaṅ ca prahāṇaṅ ca*)—i.e. *jñānas* and *kṣāntis*—upto and including those of the Arhats and Pratyekabuddhas, are in fact

the *kṣānti* of the Bodhisattva, Great Being. In this way, ... having fulfilled all the paths of all the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, he enters the Bodhisattva-certainty. Having entered the Bodhisattva-certainty, he abandons all defilements along with their *vāsanās* by means of the knowledge of the all-mode knowledge (*sarvākārajñatājñāna*).¹²³

That is: differing from the Abhidharma doctrine, the *prajñā* that cuts all defilements and *vāsanās* are now not considered as *kṣāntis*, but a *jñāna*. The final Wisdom that issues in the very next moment now apparently receives the name “knowledge of the omniscient” (*sarvajñajñāna*; i.e., of the Buddha). As seen a few paragraphs above, the Bodhisattva in the penultimate stage is the candidate (for perfect Buddhahood) in the *ānantaryamārga*. In the final, ultimate tathāgata-stage, he acquires the “hindrance-free knowledge”

¹²² Cf. MVŚ, 264c21–23.

¹²³ PSP 5:155.

(*anāvāraṇajñāna*), which now seems—especially according to Xuanzang’s version—to be also known as the *sarvajñajñāna*. In terms of the *daśabhūmi* doctrine of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, the Bodhisattva now arrives at the tenth stage, the *buddha*-stage (= *dharmameghabhūmi*), at which he becomes no different from a Tathāgata:

In this connection, how is it that a Bodhisattva, Great Being, abiding/dwelling in the tenth stage, is to be said to be indeed a “full tathāgata” (*tathāgata eveti vaktavyaḥ*)?¹²⁴ When a Bodhisattva, Great Being, has fulfilled the ten *pāramitās*, up to the eighteen unique *buddha*-qualities, and there occurs the all-mode knowledge and the abandonment of all defilements together with their *vāsanā* serial connexion, and great compassion and all *buddha*-qualities have been fulfilled—in this way, Subhūti, a Bodhisattva, Great Being, after the tenth *bodhisattva*-stage, is to be known indeed as a “Tathāgata.”¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Cf. Xuanzang: “he should be said to be no different from a Tathāgata”; Kumārajīva: “should be understood as being like a Buddha.”

¹²⁵ PSP 1-2:102: *tatra katham bodhisattvo mahāsattvo daśamyāṃ bhūmau sthitaḥ samstathāgata eveti vaktavyaḥ? yadā bodhisattvoasya mahāsattvoasya daśapāramitāḥ paripūrṇā bhavanti, yāvad aṣṭādaśāveṇikā buddhadharmāḥ paripūrṇā bhavanti, sarvākārajñātājñānaṃ ca sarvavāsanānusanamdhiklesāprahāṇaṃ* (cf. *savāsanam kilesāprahāṇam, savāsanasarvaklesāprahāṇa*; 一切煩惱習氣永斷) *bhavati, mahākaruṇā ca sarvabuddhadharmāḥ paripūrṇā bhavanti | evaṃ hi subhūte bodhisattvo mahāsattvo daśamyāḥ punar bodhisattvabhūmeḥ paraṃ tathāgata eveti vaktavyaḥ* | ; X2, T7, 88c11–17 : 云何菩薩摩訶薩住第十地已，與諸如來應言無別？善現！是菩薩摩訶薩已圓滿六波羅蜜多，乃至已圓滿十八佛不共法，具一切智、一切相智，若復永斷一切煩惱習氣相續便住佛地。由此故說：若菩薩摩訶薩住第十地已，與諸如來應言無別。(This version seems closest to the Sanskrit version.); Kj, T8, 259c6–15 : 云何菩薩住十地中當知如佛？若菩薩摩訶薩具足六波羅蜜、... 一切種智具足滿，斷一切煩惱及習，是名菩薩摩訶薩住十地中當知如佛。... ; X T5, 309b5–16 : 「世尊！云何當知已圓滿第十法雲地菩薩摩訶薩與諸如來應言無異？」「善現！是菩薩摩訶薩已圓滿六波羅蜜多，... 十八佛不共法、一切智、道相智、一切相智，已圓滿一切佛法故；若復永斷一切煩惱習氣相續，便住佛地。是故當知：已圓滿第十法雲地菩薩摩訶薩，與諸如來應言無異」；X, T7, 497a24–b9: 「世尊！云何菩薩摩訶薩住第十地已，於前所修諸地勝法皆得圓滿，與諸如來應言無異？」「善現！是菩薩摩訶薩已圓滿布施波羅蜜多乃至般若波羅蜜多，... 已圓滿如來十力乃至十八佛不共法，具一切智、一切相智，若復永斷一切煩惱習氣相續便住佛地。由此故說，若菩薩摩訶薩住第十地已，於前所修諸地勝法皆得圓滿，與諸如來應言無異」

5.2. Discussion on *vāsanā* in 《大智度論》

《大智度論》 *Dazhidu lun* (=DZDL), purporting to a commentary on the *Mahā-prajñāpāramitā*, contains extensive discussion on *vāsanā*. Like in the *Prajñāpāramitā*, it explains the imperfection of the two *yānas*' wisdom in terms of *vāsanā*, rather than the non-defiled nescience. The Buddha alone abandons the defilement-traces (煩惱習; *kleśavāsanā*); this results in his perfect Wisdom surpassing the two *yānas*. He does so by means of his all-mode-knowledge. The nature of *vāsanā* is explained thus:

The defilement-traces are the residual impregnation/perfume (殘氣) of the defilements. They are bodily or vocal karma not conforming to wisdom (*prajñā*), and appear to arise from defilements. Those incapable of knowing others' minds, on seeing their actions generate impure thoughts. They are not truly defilements; but are actions (*karma*) arising on account of having for long habitually practiced (/been accustomed with 久習) defilements. Just as one having his feet chained up for a long time comes to be suddenly released. Even when walking without the chain, he still retains the habitual manner as when he was chained. Just as the garment of a nursing mother that has become tainted. After cleaning it with pure ashes, even though the taint has been removed, its residual trace still remains. The garment is like a Noble One's thought; the taint is like the defilements. Although it has been cleansed with the water of Wisdom, the residual trace of the taint still remains. Thus, even though the other Noble Persons [other than a Buddha] can abandon defilements, they cannot abandon their *vāsanā*.¹²⁶

Similar cases of *vāsanā* are given, as in the *Abhidharma*: those of Nanda's sensual craving, Śāriputra's anger, etc.¹²⁷ Also like in the *MVŚ*, it compares the traces of the other Noble Persons to the ashes that left behind after a fuel has been burnt, owing to the relative feebleness of the fire. A Buddha's *sarvajñatā* fire consumes all defilements without any residual traces; just as the powerful fire at the end of a *kalpa*, which consumes everything without leaving anything behind.¹²⁸ Some further explanations are given: The virtues of the two *yānas* are accumulated for one or two or three

¹²⁶ DZDL, 260c2–10.

¹²⁷ Cf. DZDL, 260c10–24.

¹²⁸ DZDL, 260c23–27.

lifetimes; but a Buddha has been impregnated/perfumed by skilful *dharmas* for immeasurable *asaṃkhyeyakalpas* and thus for him there is no residual traces of the defilements. Further, in the case of a Buddha, all virtues have been exhaustively taken up, owing to which all *kleśavāsanās* are absolutely exhausted without any residues. This is because the skilful virtues counteract the defilements. The Arhats are incapable of acquiring all these virtues; they only abandon worldly attachments and enter into Nirvāṇa straight after.¹²⁹ A Bodhisattva abandons [all] defilements when he attains the *anutpattikadharmakṣānti* [at the eighth Bodhisattva-stage]; he abandons the *kleśavāsanās* when he attains Buddhahood.¹³⁰

An important doctrine here, not visible in the Prajñāpāramitā in general, concerns the notion of transformational births of the advanced Bodhisattvas on account of their residual *vāsanā*:

When the Bodhisattva attains the *anutpattikadharmakṣānti*, he has exhausted all defilements. But since he has not eradicated the *vāsanās*, he is capable of being transformationally reborn at will—qua retribution of the *vāsanās* and as a body born of the *Dharmadhātu*. This is on account of his great compassion for sentient beings. It is also for the sake of completing his original vows, and in order to return to the world again for accomplishing the remaining *buddha*-qualities (*buddhadharma*). When the tenth stage is completed, he will be seated upon the seat of Enlightenment (*bodhimaṇḍa*). By virtue of the nonhindrance-liberation (無礙解脫; *anāvāraṇa-vimokṣa*), he will acquire the all-knowledge and the all-mode knowledge and abandon the *kleśavāsanās*.

According to the Mahāyāna people: “the Bodhisattva that acquires that *anutpattikadharmakṣānti* has exhausted all defilements and *vāsanās*.” This is also wrong! If all has been exhausted, he would be no difference from a Buddha. Hence, when the Bodhisattva acquires the *anutpattikadharmakṣānti*, he relinquishes the physical body and acquires the body born of the *Dharmadhātu*.¹³¹

According to the above doctrine. A Bodhisattva, having destroyed all defilements—as also in the case of an Arhat—has transcended saṃsāric rebirth. But he still has *vāsanā* on account of which, in Mahāyāna, he is still

¹²⁹ DZDL, 261a29–b6.

¹³⁰ DZDL, 262a14–16.

¹³¹ DZDL, 261c22–262a2.

susceptible to another type of subtle, transformational (*pāriṇāmikī*) rebirth. In fact, he needs this in order to complete his Bodhisattva vows and accomplish all the *buddha*-qualities to attain perfect Buddhahood. DZDL explicitly claims that “for the Bodhisattvas, the *vāsanās* of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas are defilements.” This notion, that outflow-free *dharma*s can be “defilements” and can also constitute *karma*, is of course a far cry from the Śrāvakayāna tenets and also Early Buddhism for whom only defilements and with-outflow *karma* can lead to rebirth. But the implication here is that such form of rebirth is not within the triple sphere of *samsāric* existence. DZDL expounds as follows:

Q: An Arhat’s body retributed by the causal conditions in his preceding existence will necessarily come to be extinguished. Where will he complete his path to buddha-hood?

A: When he attains Arhat-hood, all his outflows constituting the causal conditions [for existence] in the triple are exhausted, and he will no more be born in the triple sphere. There is, [however], a *buddha*-land beyond the triple spheres, which does not have even the name “defilements.” In this field, he will hear the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* from a buddha and complete the path to Buddha-hood.¹³²

It is interesting to see the author of DZDL here essentially agreeing to a doctrine which is usually ascribed to the Tathāgata-garbha school of thought. This school claims thus: Even the non-defiled nescience of perfuming are of the nature of defilements, albeit in a very subtle form. These *vāsanās* that still remain in the two *yānas* serve as supporting conditions for the outflow-free (*anāsrava*) *karmas* to generate a subtle, inconceivable type of birth-and-death. The birth-and-death that comes to an end as a result of the exhaustion of with-outflow (*sāsrava*) *karma* is “sectional (birth-and-)death” (*pariccheda-cyuti*). The two *yānas*, as well as the advanced *bodhisattvas*, are still subject to the “transformational birth-and-death” (*acintya-pāriṇāmikī-cyuti*), generated by the outflow-free *karma* as cause and the “ignorance-perfuming ground” (*avidyāvāśabhūmi*; *ma rig pa’i gnas kyi sa*; 無明習地/無明住地) as supporting condition.

¹³² DZDL, 714a9–15. The text here, as in many other places, quotes the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* as scriptural support.

This “ignorance-perfuming ground”—existing from beginningless time—is the most subtle and fundamental source of all defilements. “All arising of defilements has the ignorance-perfuming ground as its cause, has ignorance-perfuming ground as its condition.”¹³³ It is not conjoined with thought, and is abandonable by the Buddha alone. We thus discern here a Mahāyāna doctrinal development proposing that the ultimate obstacle—ultimate source or seed of imperfection and the biggest Evil per se, existing from beginningless time—to the attainment of the perfect Wisdom of Buddhahood is in fact this fundamental, subtlest, nescience.

Just as, the arising, establishment and growth of all seeds have the ground as support-basis. Likewise, the arising, establishment and growth of all the [defilement] dharmas, surpassing the amount of sands in the Gangā, to be abandoned by the Wisdom of the Tathāgata’s Enlightenment (菩提智), all have this ignorance-perfuming ground as their support-basis. ... If the latter is abandoned (eradicated), the former will come to be abandoned accordingly.¹³⁴

Thus, similar to the Abhidharma doctrine that a Buddha alone can absolutely abandon the *akliṣṭājñāna* and become perfectly enlightened, the Mahāyāna doctrine here claims that the *avidyāvāsabhūmi* “cannot be abandoned by the Arhats and Pratyekabuddhas; it is abandonable only by the Enlightenment-knowledge (菩提智; *bodhijñāna*) of the Tathāgata.”¹³⁵ Accordingly, only a Buddha truly transcends all births and deaths. This most subtle and fundamental ignorance-perfuming ground, which is more fundamental than all the other defilements, constitutes the knowable-hindrance. The defilement-hindrance, which is *ātmagrāha*, has the knowable-hindrance, which is *dharma-grāha*, as its support-basis. We can discern here an impact from the Abhidharma doctrine of the non-defiled nescience—constituting the inspirational source for the *avidyāvāsabhūmi* doctrine—even if it is differently interpreted by the Mahāyānists—and also an exemplification of the fusion of the latter with that of the *vāsanā*.

¹³³ Cf. SSH, T12, 220b11–24. Also see Yinshun 1951: 154a6–155a13.

¹³⁴ SSH, 220b24–c1.

¹³⁵ SSH, 220a13–15.

6. Akliṣṭājñāna, vāsanā, kleśāvaraṇa and jñeyāvaraṇa in Early Yogācāra

For the Mahāyāna theory of Perfect Buddhahood and the soteriological prescription of the path leading thereto, the early Indian Yogācāra found an important doctrinal device and inspiration in the Abhidharma doctrine of the *akliṣṭājñāna* and *vāsanā*.

6.1. Basic Section of the *Yogācārabhūmi*: Enlightenment is attained when all *vāsanās* and non-defiled ignorance are destroyed

The *Bodhi-pāṭala* in the Basic Section (本地分), among the earliest Yogācāra doctrinal strata of the *Yogācārabhūmi*, explains Supreme Perfect Enlightenment in terms of the complete destruction of all defilements together with the *vāsanā*, and the absolute abandonment of the non-defiled ignorance (*akliṣṭāvidyā*):

Herein, what is Enlightenment (*bodhi*)?

Briefly, it is the twofold abandonment and twofold knowledge.

Twofold abandonment: of defilement-hindrance (*kleśāvaraṇa*) and knowable-hindrance (*jñeyāvaraṇa*).

Twofold knowledge: [1] the taintless knowledge free from all bondages, resulting from the abandonment of *kleśāvaraṇa*; and [2] the knowledge which is unobstructed and unhindered with regard to all knowables, resulting from the abandonment of *jñeyāvaraṇa*.

Its synonyms: “pure knowledge” (*śuddhajñāna*), “omniscience” (*sarvajñāna*), and “obstacle-free knowledge” (*asaṅgajñāna*). The complete destruction of all defilements together with the *vāsanā*, and the remainderless abandonment of the non-defiled ignorance (*akliṣṭāyās cāvidyā*) is called the “Supreme Proper Perfect Enlightenment” (*anuttarā samyak-sambodhi*).¹³⁶

Thus, we see here a more explicit development in which the attainment of Perfect Enlightenment is taught to require the eradication of the twofold-hindrances: Removal of all defilements—even that along with their *vāsanā*—is not enough; the cognitive hindrance preventing the complete, all-mode knowledge of all knowables must also be removed.

¹³⁶ BoBh 62. Cf. T30, 498c20–499a15; T30, 975c11–17.

In the very first chapter, on “families” (*gotrapaṭala*), of the *Bodhisattva-bhūmi*, the Śrāvaka-pratyekabuddha-family is contrasted with the Bodhisattva-family in terms of this twofold hindrance: The former are purified only in respect of the defilement-hindrances; the latter is purified in respect of both hindrances.¹³⁷

Another example of early Yogācāra notion of the knowable-hindrances obstructing supreme perfect Wisdom is the *Tattvārthapaṭala* of the *Yogācārabhūmi*. This text enumerates the highest level of Reality (*tattvārtha*) as that accessible exclusively for those whose knowledge (Wisdom) has been purified of, and thus liberated from, the knowable-hindrances, in addition to being freed from the defilement-hindrances. This cognitive domain is the supreme, highest Suchness (*tathatā*) “at the very limit of the knowables (i.e., of knowability itself), from which proper investigations of all *dharma*s cease and proceed no further.”¹³⁸

The term “*akliṣṭāvidyā*” in the above *Bodhipaṭala* passage, rather than *akliṣṭājñāna*, is noticeable. It signifies a development in which the earlier, Abhidharma conception of the non-defiled and non-defined *akliṣṭājñāna* being now considered an *avidyā*—a Buddhist notion generally considered the fundamental source of defilement.¹³⁹ In this connection, we may also note that, in a relatively later Yogācāra text, the *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya*, Sthiramati (c. 6th century CE) in fact directly identifies the knowable hindrance with the *akliṣṭājñāna*:

The abandonment of the defilement and knowable hindrances is for realization of liberation and omniscience [respectively].

For, defilements are the hindrance to the attainment of liberation; thus, when they have been abandoned, liberation is realized.

The knowable-hindrances are the non-defiled nescience, obstructive to the operation of knowledge with regard to all knowables. When it has been abandoned, the unobstructed and unhindered knowledge arises

¹³⁷ BoBh 2. Cf. T30, 478c22–26.

¹³⁸ Takahashi 2005: 87f: ... *yo gocaraviṣayaḥ | sāsau paramā tathatā niruttarā jñeyaparyanta-gatā yasyāḥ samyaksarvadharmapracayā nivartante nātivartante ||*

¹³⁹ Cf. also the notion of the *avidyāvāsabhūmi*. However, also see §6.2 on usage of this “*avidyā*.”

with regard to the knowable in all its modes; and thus the state of omniscience is realized.¹⁴⁰

6.2. *Akliṣṭāvidyā* (不染無明) and *akliṣṭājñāna* (不染無知) in the *Madhyāntavibhāga* and its commentary

The *Madhyāntavibhāga* states that the nondefiled ignorance concerning the *dharmadhātu* constitutes the tenfold hindrance qua opposition to the ten stages (*bhūmi*) of the Bodhisattva Path. The stages serve as their counteraction.¹⁴¹

However, the *Bhāṣya* that follows uses here the term non-defiled nescience:

Concerning the *dharmadhātu* ... that which is the nondefiled nescience is the hindrance to the ten bodhisattva-stages respectively, on account of being their opposition.¹⁴²

This suggests that indeed “*avidyā*” here may not be used by Sthiramati (the commentator) not in the strict sense of ignorance that is intrinsically defiled.

It is noteworthy that the ten Bodhisattva-stages—concretely constituting as they do the path of progress toward Perfect Buddhahood (*tathāgatahood*)—are expounded as being counteraction, stage by stage, to the non-defiled ignorance/nescience. This obviously underscores the Mahāyāna doctrinal concerns on the latter as the fundamental obstacle to be overcome for the attainment of perfect Wisdom or complete Enlightenment.

6.3. **Mahāyānasamgraha*: the *akliṣṭāvidyā* is non-defiled for the *śrāvakas*, but defiled for the *bodhisattvas*

Asaṅga’s **Mahāyānasamgraha* cites the above-discussed stanza (*chos kyi dbyings la ma rig pa / nyon mongs can min sgrib pa bcu / sa bcu’i mi mthun phyogs rnam kyī / gnyen po dag ni sa yin no //*), and explains thus:

¹⁴⁰ Buescher 2007: 38: *kleśā hi mokṣaprāpter āvaraṇam ity atas teṣu prahīṇeṣu mokṣo ’dhigamyate | jñeyāvaraṇam api sarvasmiñ jñeye jñānapravṛttipratibandhabhūtam akliṣṭam ajñānam | tasmin prahīṇe sarvākāre jñeye asaktam apratihataṃ ca jñānam pravartata ity atah sarvajñatvam adhigamyate |*

¹⁴¹ Nagao 1964: 35: *dharmadhātāv avidyeyaṃ akliṣṭā daśadhāvṛtiḥ | daśabhūmivipakṣeṇa pratipakṣās tu bhūmayah || II.16*

¹⁴² Nagao 1964: 35.

This ignorance is non-defiled for the *śrāvakas* etc. But, for the *bodhisattvas*, it should be understood as being defiled.¹⁴³

The reason is not far to seek: According to the Mahāyāna, unlike the *bodhisattvas*, the *śrāvakas* do not seek the perfect all-mode knowledge (and that is why they do not attain Buddhahood). They do not embark on the bodhisattva stages wherein the non-defiled “ignorance” or “nescience” constitutes a hindrance to be counteracted. This is explained in Asvabhāva’s commentary:

“This *avidyā* is non-defiled in the case of the Śrāvakas”—This is because it is not to be abandoned [by them]. It is not to be abandoned by them because it is not their intention to enter into these [Bodhisattva-]stages which serve as its counteraction, and it does not hinder their Nirvāṇa.

“It is defiled in the case of the Bodhisattvas”—This is because it is to be abandoned [by them]. It is to be abandoned because it is their very intention to enter into these [Bodhisattva-]stages which serve as its counteraction, and because the all-mode knowledge [sought after by the Bodhisattvas] is hindered by this ignorance.¹⁴⁴

7. Conclusion

Since the Buddha’s own time, the disciples, including the foremost Arahants, had been overwhelmed by the superiority of the Buddha’s Wisdom. The continuous pondering over and search for an answer on his incomparable perfect Wisdom and the path leading thereto led to important Buddhological doctrines in the various Buddhist schools or textual traditions. In a significant

¹⁴³ Toh 4048, *bstan ’gyur, sems tsam*, vol. *ri*, 30a: *ma rig pa ’di yang nyan thos rnam kyī ni nyon mongs pa can ma yin gyi / byang chub sems dpa’ rnam kyī ni nyon mongs pa can du rig par bya’o //*

¹⁴⁴ Toh 4051, *bstan ’gyur, sems tsam*, vol. *ri*, 257b: *ma rig pa ’di yang nyan thos rnam kyī ni nyon mongs pa can ma yin gyi zhes bya ba ni spang bar bya ba ma yin pa’i phyir ro // de mi spong ba ni de’i gnyen po’i sa la ’jug pa’i skabs ma yin pa dang / mya ngan las ’das pa la bgegs mi byed pa’i phyir ro // byang chub sems dpa’ rnam kyī ni nyon mongs pa can te zhes bya ba ni spang bar bya ba’i phyir ro // spong ba ni de’i gnyen po’i sa la ’jug pa’i skabs yin pa dang / rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa nyid kyī bgegs byed pa’i phyir ro //*; 《攝大乘論釋》 T31, 423c23–28.

way, this search may be considered one of the major threads inspiring the origin of the Mahāyāna for which Perfect Buddhahood is the common ideal.

In this connection, the Sarvāstivāda formulated the *akliṣṭājñāna* doctrine. This *ajñāna* is not *avidyā*, and in fact not of the nature of defilement. It is a non-veiled-non-defined (*anivṛtāvyaḅkrta*) *prajñā*, one of the universal thought-concomitants (*caitta*), to be abandoned by the path of cultivation (*bhāvanāheya*) upon the attainment of the *Vajropamasamādhi*. The Buddha alone is capable of absolutely eradicating it, as a result of which he uniquely and permanently achieves the all-mode knowledge. More or less contemporaneous with this doctrine, was the doctrine of *vāsanā*. Before long, as attested in the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣā*, the two doctrines came to be often fused: the two *yānas* are inferior in Wisdom because their *akliṣṭājñāna* have not been absolutely eradicated; the inferiority is also said to be on account of their *vāsanās* not having been destroyed. The Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas (e.g., Saṃghabhadra) emphasize the ontological reality of the *akliṣṭājñāna*.

The Prajñāpāramitā tradition continued to be inspired in their investigation in the Buddha's Perfect Wisdom in a similar manner, and proposed that the Wisdom-perfection (*prajñāpāramitā*) is the perfect Wisdom to be sought after. It constituted both the means and the end with regard to Supreme Perfect Enlightenment. However, in contrast to the Sarvāstivāda, their texts explain the hindrance to Buddhahood in terms of *vāsanā*. This implies that the cognitive imperfection of the two *yānas* essentially results from their incomplete abandonment of defilements—having their *vāsanās* still remaining behind. In the early Prajñāpāramitā texts, such as the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, the “all-mode knowledge” stands out as the main term characterizing a Buddha's perfect Wisdom. But eventually we see the clear distinction among three relevant terms: all-knowledge (*sarvajñatā*), path-knowledge (*mārgajñatā*) and all-mode knowledge. Another important term in this context is the “knowledge of the omniscient” or “all-knowing knowledge” (*sarvajñajñāna*). It appears that this term was initially used in a more or less generic sense, sometimes seen to be synonymous with the other terms, and with *buddhajñāna* etc. But in the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā*, it is asserted—especially judging by Xuanzang's version—that the *vāsanās* are absolutely abandoned by the all-mode knowledge in the *Vajropamasamādhi* (basically echoing the Abhidharma path-structure), and this leads at the Tathāgata-stage to the “knowledge of the omniscient,” the

content and function of which must of course be the same as those of the all-mode knowledge.

Starting from the earliest Yogācāra textual stratum, Perfect Buddhahood is said to be attained only when thought is absolutely purified (*śuddha*)—fully integrated—by permanently abandoning both the defilement-hindrances and the knowable-hindrances. This came to be the standard Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrinal doctrine. Sthiramati, for one, explicitly identifies the *jñeyāvaraṇa* with the *akliṣṭājñāna*. The significant impact of the *akliṣṭājñāna* notion on the Yogācāra becomes conspicuous in texts like the *Madhyānta-vibhāga* and the **Mahāyāna-saṃgraha*, which teach that the ten *bodhisattva-bhūmis* are practiced as its counteraction. It is further taught that this non-defiled nescience/ignorance is non-defiled for the two *yānas*, but defiled for the Bodhisattvas.

In the Mahāyāna textual tradition represented by the SSH, another important impact of the Sarvāstivāda *akliṣṭājñāna* doctrine is discernible in the formulation of the *avidyā-vāsa-bhūmi*, which constitutes the most fundamental ground and subtlest source for the obstruction to the Wisdom of Perfect Enlightenment. Related to this notion is the teaching of the subtle “transformational (birth-and-)death (*pāriṇāmikī cyuti*) of the advanced Bodhisattvas (after the eighth Bodhisattva-stage) and the Arhats after they have transcended the physical births as a result of having abandoned all defilements—since their *vāsanās* still remain. Thus, the *vāsanās*, originally conceived of, in both Abhidharma and Prajñāpāramitā, as having nothing to do with defilements, are now considered—analogously to the with-outflow defilements generating impure *karma*—as capable of generating outflow-free (pure) *karma* resulting in transformational births in which the advanced Bodhisattvas can continue to accomplish their vows and the *buddha*-qualities. The same doctrine of the two types of birth-and-death is also seen in DZDL which explains that the Arhats are reborn outside the triple spheres, in some Buddha-land where they will receive the profound teachings of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*, and continue their journey toward Buddhahood.

Abbreviations

- AdPP *Aṣṭadaśasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*. Ed. E. Conze. Rome 1962–1974.
- AKB *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*. Ed. P. Pradhan. 2nd ed. Patna 1975.
- Akli Dhammajoti 1998.
- Aṣṭa *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*. Ed. P. L. Vaidya. Darbhanga 1960.
- BoBh *Bodhisattvabhūmi*. Ed. N. Dutt. Patna 1966.
- DX 支婁迦讖 Lokakṣema (trans.), 《道行般若經》 *Daoxing bore jing* [“Practice of the Way”]. T vol. 8, no. 224.
- DZDL 《大智度論》 *Dazhidu lun* [**Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa; Commentary on the Great Perfection of Wisdom*]. T vol. 25, no.1509.
- JPS 迦多衍尼子 Kātyāyanīputra’s 《阿毗達磨發智論》 *Apidamo fazhi lun* [**Jñānaprasthāna-śāstra*]. T vol. 26, no. 1544.
- Kj 鳩摩羅什 Kumārajīva (trans.), 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》 *Mohe ban ruo bo luo mi jing*. T vol. 8, no. 223.
- Mo 無羅叉 Mokṣala (trans.), 《放光般若經》 *Fangguang bore jing*. T vol. 8, no. 221.
- MVS 《大毗婆沙論》 *Dapiposha lun* [**Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣā*]. T vol. 27, no.1545.
- Ny 《順正理論》 *Shun zhengli lun* [**Nyāyānusāra*]. T vol. 29, no.1562.
- PSP *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*. Ed. T. Kimura. Tokyo 1986–2009.
- Puguang 《俱舍論記》 *Jushe lun ji* [*Commentary on the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*]. T vol. 41, no. 1821.
- SSH 求那跋陀羅 Guṇabhadra (trans.), 《勝鬘師子吼一乘大方便方廣經》 *Shengman shizi hou yisheng da fangbian fangguang jing*, T12, no. 353.
- SĀ 《雜阿含經》 *Za ahan jing* (**Samyuktāgāma*). T vol. 2, no. 99.
- Sāratthappakāsinī* Burmese edition.
- Sar Abhi *Sarvāstivāda Abidharma*. See Dhammajoti 2015.
- T 《大正新修大藏經》 *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*. Eds. J. Takakusu, et al, Tokyo 1924–1932.
- Toh Eds. H. Ui, et al., *A complete catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons. (Bkaḥ-ḥgyur and Bstan-ḥgyur)*. Sendai 1934.
- Tib Tibetan translation.
- Vy *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*. Ed. U. Wogihara. Tokyo 1971.
- X 玄奘 Xuanzang (trans.), 《大般若波羅蜜多經》 *Da bore boluomiduo jing*. T vols. 5–8, no. 220.
- X1 The 4th division (第四分) of X.
- X2 The 5th division (第五分) of X.

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