

Four Yoga Stages in Ratnākaraśānti's *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* —with a new synopsis—

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* This is a revised version of my paper presented at the panel, “A New Study of Ratnākaraśānti's *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*” on the occasion of XVIIIth Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies held at University of Toronto on August 25th, 2017. In that panel Kei Kataoka, Kiyokuni Shiga, Ryo Nishiyama and Satoshi Hayashima also presented papers. The final versions of their papers are also included in this issue of the journal. Unfortunately, Luo Hong, the editor of the Sanskrit version of *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*, could not make it to Toronto.

0. Ratnākaraśānti, the great eleventh century Buddhist scholar, wrote four manuals on late Yogācāra philosophy, which are available in Tibetan translation. They are *Madhyamakālaṃkāravṛtti-Madhyamakapratipatsiddhi* (Peking 5573, Derge 4072), *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* (Peking 5579, Derge 4079), *Madhyamakālaṃkāropadeśa* (Peking 5586, Derge 4085) and *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* (Peking 5756, Derge 4259).⁽¹⁾

Dr. Luo Hong (formerly China Tibetology Research Center and now Center

⁽¹⁾Two manuals of meditation practice are attributed to Ratnākaraśānti under the same title of *Prajñāpāramitābhāvanopadeśa* (Peking 5577=Derge 4076 and Peking 5580=Derge 4078), which appear to have been extracted from *Prajñāpāramitābhāvanā* section of *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* with some variations. The third text with the same title (Peking 5459=Derge 4545) is virtually identical with Peking 5577 =Derge 4076. Many other works are attributed to him, including *Antarvyāptismartha* (see Kajiyama 1999), *Sāratamā* (a commentary on *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*), *Śuddhimatī* (a commentary on *Abhisamayālaṃkārikā*), etc.; for more information, please see Seton 2015.

for Tibetan Studies at Sichuan University) identified two Sanskrit manuscripts of *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*. He transcribed and edited the text and translated it into English. I twice invited him to Kyoto to read the text with me, in 2011 and 2013. It was a fantastic experience for me because I once read the Tibetan version of the text with a group of scholars such as Profs. Masamichi Ichigo, Kazufumi Oki, Osamu Hayashima, Kenjo Shirasaki and Mamoru Namai in Kyoto in 1975 and 1976, and later published a synopsis of the text⁽²⁾ – at that time I never dreamed of reading its original Sanskrit version. I am hoping that Dr. Luo Hong will soon publish the final version of his critical edition together with an annotated English translation.

From 2014 to 2016, with the kind permission of Dr. Luo Hong, I could read his critical edition of the Sanskrit text of *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* together with both the new and the older generation of Buddhist scholars in Kyoto. We made a Japanese translation of the text with relevant references, which will be published in due course.

1. *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* of Ratnākaraśānti is a manual of both later Yogācāra Buddhist philosophy and of Buddhist practice of meditation. According to Ratnākaraśānti, a Buddhist practitioner takes refuge in the three jewels (*triratna*), becomes full of faith (*śrāddha*) and compassion (*dayālu*), aims the mind toward enlightenment (*bodhicitta*) and takes Bodhisattva precepts (*saṃvara*); having obtained the wisdom derived from learning and contemplation (*śrutamayī & cintāmayī prajñā*), he should cultivate the Perfection of Wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*) in order to accumulate and increase the provisions (*saṃbhāra*) of merits and knowledge. Furthermore, he should learn and contemplate upon two kinds of truth (*tattva*), viz., the truth related to the totality of all that exists (*yāvadbhāvikatā*) and the truth related to the nature of all things as they really are (*yathāvadhbhāvikatā*). Thus, the text consists of the following three sections:⁽³⁾

- (1) The truth related to the totality of all that exist (*yāvadbhāvikatā*)
 - (1-1) Wisdom derived from learning (*śrutamayī prajñā*) the truth related to the totality of all that exists
 - (1-2) Wisdom derived from contemplating (*cintāmayī prajñā*) the truth related to the totality of all that exists
- (2) The truth related to the nature of all things as they really are (*yathāvadhbhāvikatā*)
 - (2-1) Wisdom derived from learning (*śrutamayī prajñā*) the truth related to the nature of all things as they really are

⁽²⁾Katsura 1976.

⁽³⁾A new and more detailed synopsis of the text will be provided in Appendix.

(2-2) Wisdom derived from contemplating (*cintāmayī prajñā*) the truth related to the nature of all things as they really are

(3) Cultivation of the Perfection of Wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā-bhāvanā*).

Ratnākaraśānti discusses the four yoga stages, the main topic of this paper, in the third section. According to him, the cultivation of the Perfection of Wisdom consists of three steps, viz. (1) concentration (*śamatha*), (2) observation (*vipaśyanā*) and (3) the simultaneous cultivation of both concentration and observation (*śamatha-vipaśyanā-yuganaddha*). After having described those three steps, he goes on to elaborate the four yoga stages, which he characterizes in the following manner:

- (1) The first yoga stage takes as its object of meditation the totality of all that exists (*yāvadbhāvikatā*), the totality of things (*vastuparyantatā*), or all dharmas (*dharmānām iyattā*). In other words, the first yoga stage takes as its object the truth that all that exist are the 18 elements (*dhātus*).
- (2) The second yoga stage takes as its object of meditation the nature of all things as they really are, i.e., that things or dharmas are mind-only (*yathāvadbhāvikacittamātratā*, *dharmāṇāṃ cittamātratā*). In other words, the second yoga stage takes as its object the truth that all that exist are mere names (*nāman*) and that there being no external objects, what really exists is mind-only.
- (3) The third yoga stage takes as its object of meditation the true nature of all dharmas (*sarvadharmatathatā*), i.e., that dharmas are marked by emptiness (*dharmāṇāṃ sanimittā śūnyatā*). In other words, the third yoga stage takes as its object the truth of all dharmas, i.e., their being empty of the grasper and the grasped (*grāhyagrāhakaśūnyatā*) or being ‘luminosity-only’ (*prakāśamātra*).
- (4) The fourth yoga stage takes as its object the emptiness without marks of dharmas (*dharmāṇāṃ nirnimittā śūnyatā*), in other words, it takes no object of meditation (*nirālambana*) and has no appearance (*nirābhāsa*) of objects at all.

The first stage represents Abhidharma ontology, namely, all that exist are dharmas such as 18 elements. The second stage represents Yogācāra ontology, namely, all that exists is mind only and there is no external object; this stage probably corresponds with the position of Yogācāras who hold that the images of cognition are real (*satyākāravijñānavāda*). The third stage represents the position of Yogācāras who hold that the images of cognition are not real (*alīkākāravijñānavāda*), which is characterized by emptiness of duality of the grasper and the grasped as well as by luminosity-

only. The fourth stage probably represents the position of 'ideal' Mādhyamikas that is shared by Ratnākaraśānti, although he himself takes the position of Yogācāras of *alīkākāravijñānavāda*; at this stage there occurs no appearance of objects – the absolute emptiness.

In the following I will give a brief description of the four yoga stages in *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* and in Appendix I will present its synopsis that is somewhat more detailed than what I gave in Katsura 1976.

2. Four Yoga Stages

2.1. The First Yoga Stage

2.1.1. Concentration (*śamatha*): A *bodhisattva* practitioner who has obtained the wisdom derived from learning and contemplation (*śrutamayī* and *cintāmayī prajñā*) goes to a quiet place by himself. Sitting in a cross-legged position and keeping his body straight, he controls the five sense faculties and mind and enters into meditation (*samāhita*).

He contemplates that the whole world consists of the eighteen elements (*dhātu*), viz. the six objective spheres, the six sense faculties and the six corresponding varieties of cognition.

Having removed *manojalpa* (mental talk or imagination), he practices concentration (*śamatha*), which takes as its object the mind with the appearance of the whole world, until he obtains the calming of the body and mind (*kāya-citta-praśrabdhī*).

2.1.2. Observation (*vipaśyanā*): With reference to the conceptual images (*savikalpa-pratibimba*), i.e. the appearance of the whole world, he repeatedly observes that this world just consists of those eighteen elements.

2.1.3 The simultaneous cultivation of concentration and observation (*yuganaddha*): With reference to those conceptual images and the mind that takes them as its object, he equally and uninterruptedly cultivates the above concentration and observation.

2.2. The Second Yoga Stage

2.2.1. Concentration (*śamatha*): Focusing the mind on the appearance of the eighteen elements, he contemplates the fact that all dharmas such as visible objects (*rūpa*) are mere names (*nāma-mātra*) and non-existent.

Then he concludes that the whole world is mind only (*citta-mātra*), there is no object to be grasped by the mind, and when there is no object to be grasped (*grāhya*), there is no grasper (*grāhaka*); hence, the whole world is empty of the grasper and the grasped (*grāhya-grāhaka-śūnya*); it is indescribable (*anabhilāpya*).

Having removed all *manojalpas*, he contemplates that all dharmas are mind only and practices concentration (*śamatha*) until he obtains the calming of the body and mind.

2.2.2. Observation (*vipaśyanā*): With reference to those conceptual images (i.e. the appearance of the whole world) that constitute the objective realm of meditation (*samādhi*), he repeatedly observes that the whole world is without intrinsic nature (*niḥsvabhāva*), mind only, and empty of the grasper and the grasped; then he attains the calming of body and mind.

2.2.3. The simultaneous cultivation of concentration and observation (*yuganaddha*): With reference to those conceptual images and the mind that takes them as its object, he equally and uninterruptedly cultivates the above concentration and observation.

2.3. The Third Yoga Stage

2.3.1. Concentration (*śamatha*). Focusing the mind on the appearance of the eighteen elements, he contemplates that the whole world is without intrinsic nature (*niḥsvabhāva*), mind only, and empty of the grasper and the grasped; everything from the visible object up to all dharmas is unreal because it is the object of an erroneous cognition (*bhrānti*).

A *bodhisattva* practitioner who desires to see ultimate reality (*paramārtha*) should remove all erroneous marks (*bhrānti-nimitta*) that appear to him by attaining the stage of no appearance (*anābhāsa*).

With reference to the mind with the appearance of the eighteen elements, he enters into meditation and, by removing all *manojalpas*, he removes all erroneous marks and realizes that none of those appearances exists.

In this way, the marks of both grasper and grasped having disappeared, he sees that the true nature (*dharmatā*) of all dharmas is pure, stainless and unlimited like space, and that it is empty of the grasper and the grasped, as well as being just luminosity (*prakāśa-mātra*).

Then he concentrates upon the mind in which the emptiness of all dharmas (*sarvadharma-śūnyatā*) appears; he practices concentration (*śamatha*) until he attains the calming of body and mind.

2.3.2. Observation (*vipaśyanā*): With reference to the image of emptiness of all dharmas, he observes that all dharmas are neither associated with nor dissociated from mind (*na saṃyuktā na viṣaṃyuktāḥ*), are formless (*arūpin*), invisible (*anidarśana*), unobstructed (*apratigha*), and possessing one characteristic (*ekalakṣaṇa*), i.e. possessing no characteristic (*alākṣaṇa*); then, he attains the calming of body and mind.

2.3.3. The simultaneous cultivation of concentration and observation (*yuganaddha*):

With reference to the conceptual image of emptiness of all dharmas and the mind that takes their emptiness as its object, he equally and uninterruptedly cultivates the above concentration and observation.

2.4. The Fourth Yoga Stage

2.4.1. As long as there occurs a concept of dharma (*dharmavikalpa*), however subtle it may be, the third yoga stage is not yet perfected, but when there occurs only an extremely subtle concept of the true nature of dharmas (*dharmatā*), then the third yoga stage becomes perfect.

When a *bodhisattva* practitioner is perfectly settled in the third yoga stage, the intuition of the truth (*tathatā*) of all *dharmas* manifests itself naturally and without effort, because of the power of the preceding cultivation of meditation (*bhāvanā*).

That intuition of the truth of all dharmas is the non-dual, non-erroneous and non-conceptual cognition. It is the super-mundane and undefiled true cognition (*samyagjñāna*) that has no appearance (*anābhāsa*) of objects, in other words, no object (*anālambana*) at all, due to the absolute cessation of the marks of dharmas and the true nature of dharmas (*dharmatā*). It consists of non-conceptual concentration (*śamatha*) and observation (*vipaśyanā*) and it occurs with absolute clarity. This is the fourth yoga stage.

2.4.2. As long as a practitioner has not experienced the vision of the ultimate reality (*paramārtha-darśana*), he is still on the path of vision (*darśana-mārga*) but when he experiences it, he enters into the path of meditative cultivation (*bhāvanā-mārga*).

The cognition of the truth (*tathatā-jñāna*) in the third yoga stage is not exactly non-conceptual cognition but it leads to the arising of non-conceptual cognition. The former is mere observation of the reality (*bhūta-pratyavekṣā-mātra*) because it still conceptualizes that very truth.

Towards the end of the section on the fourth yoga stage, Ratnākaraśānti describes how to obtain non-conceptual cognition, its characteristics, signs and merits, by extensively quoting the relevant passages from *Avikalparaveśadhāraṇī*.⁽⁴⁾

2.4.3. Finally, Ratnākaraśānti quotes *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* X.256-258 and *Guhyasamājantra* X.135 and interprets them in terms of the four yoga stages. In this connection Ratnākaraśānti characterizes the four yoga stages in the following manner:

(1) In the first yoga stage, a practitioner realizes the totality of all that exists or all

⁽⁴⁾Compare Matsuda 1996 Sections 9, 10 and 16; Ratnākaraśānti's text of *Avikalparaveśadhāraṇī* is slightly different from Matsuda's edition.

dharmas.

- (2) In the second yoga stage, he is convinced that all that exists is mind only and realizes the emptiness of duality (i.e. of the grasper and the grasped) that is accompanied by the appearance of all dharmas.
- (3) In the third yoga stage, he is convinced that all that exists is mind only and realizes emptiness of duality that is not accompanied by the appearance of any dharma.
- (4) In the fourth yoga stage, he has the direct intuition that is absolutely devoid of the appearance of any marks of dharmas as well as of the true nature of dharmas (*dharmatā*).

It is well known that Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, influential Mādhyamika scholars before Ratnākaraśānti, quoted the same three verses of *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* with a slightly different reading, and it is understood that they represented their Mādhyamika way of meditation as a step-by-step progression (*bhāvanā-krama*).⁽⁵⁾ It is quite plausible that Ratnākaraśānti was acquainted with their use of the three verses of *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* and that he used the same verses to support his own theory of the four yoga stages.

As a matter of fact, Ratnākaraśānti states twice that Yogācāras and Mādhyamikas share the same view or thesis; namely, they share the understanding that in the fourth yoga stage there occurs the super-mundane cognition (*lokottara-jñāna*) that takes as its object emptiness of all dharmas, that is absolutely devoid of any appearance of objects and that is like the limitless pure sky without any stain.

According to him, however, there is a difference between them; namely, Yogācāras hold that luminosity (*prakāśa*) is the innate nature of dharmas and that luminosity really (*dravyataḥ*) exists, while Mādhyamikas do not admit that it really exists. In other words, Yogācāras consider that dharmas do not exist in the form grasped by the common people (*bāla*) because that form is not real (*alīka*), but dharmas do exist as luminosity because luminosity is governed by causality and because, in the guise of self-cognition, it is not connected with any erroneous cognition (*bhrānti*). Mādhyamikas, however, consider dharmas to be neither existent nor non-existent as luminosity, even though luminosity is not the cause of an erroneous cognition because, being the intrinsic nature (*prakṛti*) of dharmas, luminosity is not something fabricated (*asamāropita*). Dharmas are neither existent nor non-existent because neither causality nor self-cognition withstands close scrutiny.

Thus, it is clear that Ratnākaraśānti was aware that Mādhyamikas and Yogācāras

⁽⁵⁾Kajiyama 1979 (2010): 358-362.

share the same meditative practice suggested by *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* X.256-258 that progresses from Abhidharmic ontology of all dharmas to Yogācāra doctrine of mind-only and from Yogācāra to Madhyamaka philosophy of the emptiness of all dharmas. However, he distinguishes himself from Mādhyamikas by taking a Yogācāra position, admitting the reality of mind and luminosity.

3. Ratnākaraśānti and schools of Buddhist philosophy

In this paper I have not dealt with any philosophical or doctrinal discussions found in *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*. Here at the end I would like to say something about how Ratnākaraśānti understood the theories of cognition of different Buddhist schools. According to him, (1) the Vaibhāṣikas, like the non-Buddhist Naiyāyikas and Bhāṭṭa-Mīmāṃsakas, do not consider that cognition of an external object does not possess an image or reflection (*ākāra/pratibimba*) of its object (*nirākāravijñānavādin*). (2) The Sautrāntikas, on the other hand, consider that cognition possesses an image or reflection representing the external object (*sākāravijñānavādin*). (3) Among Yogācāras there are two sub-schools; namely, (3-1) some like Jñānaśrīmitra consider that there is no distinction between cognition that is essentially luminosity (*prakāśa*) and an image of an object; consequently, an image of an object in cognition is real (*satyākāravijñānavādin*) and (3-2) others like Ratnākaraśānti consider that an image of an object in cognition is not real but false (*alīkāravijñānavādin*), that only luminosity is real (*satya*); in other words, there exists luminosity only. (4) And regarding Mādhyamikas, Ratnākaraśānti recognizes three sub-schools; namely, (4-1) those who admit external objects (*bāhyārthavādin*), (4-2) those who consider that cognition possesses an image of its object, and (4-3) those who consider that there exists only cognition without an image of objects (*nirākāravijñaptimātravādin*).⁽⁶⁾

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⁽⁶⁾Regarding Ratnākaraśānti's understanding of the different sub-schools of Mādhyamikas, please see Ryo Nishiyama's paper in this issue.

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⁽⁷⁾This and the next article contain a detailed study of *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*.

想の研究), Sankibo Busshorin, Tokyo.⁽⁸⁾

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(https://www.academia.edu/2988399/Luminosity_Reflexive_Awareness_in_Ratnākaraśāntis_Pith_Instructions_for_the_Ornament_of_the_Middle_Way.)

Appendix

A General Outline of the *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*

0. Introduction
 1. *yāvadbhāvikatā*
 - 1.1. *śrutamayī prajñā*
 - 1.2. *cintāmayī prajñā*
 2. *yathāvadbhāvikatā*
 - 2.1. *śrutamayī prajñā*
 - 2.2. *cintāmayī prajñā*
3. *prajñāpāramitā-bhāvanā*
4. Closing Verse

A New Synopsis of the *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*

0. INTRODUCTION
 - 0.1. Eight Introductory verses
 - 0.2. Essence of Buddhist Practice: *śrutamayī prajñā* → *cintāmayī prajñā* → *prajñāpāramitā-bhāvanā*; *yāvadbhāvikatā-tattva* & *yathāvadbhāvikatā-tattva*
1. *YĀVADBHĀVIKATĀ*
 - 1.1. *ŚRUTAMAYĪ PRAJÑĀ*: All that exist are 18 *dhātus*, 12 *āyatanas* and 5 *skandhas*.
 - 1.2. *CINTĀMAYĪ PRAJÑĀ*

⁽⁸⁾Contains Japanese translations of *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, *Madhyamakālaṃkāropadeśa* and *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*.

⁽⁹⁾Contains English translation of *Madhyamakālaṃkāropadeśa*

1.2.1. The Buddha is the ultimate *pramāṇa*.

1.2.2. Definition of existence (*sattva=arthakriyāśakti*); All existents are momentary.

2. YATHĀVADBHĀVIKATĀ

2.1. ŚRUTAMAYĪ PRAJÑĀ

2.1.1. *nītārtha* vs. *neyārtha*: Four Refuges (*pratisaraṇa*), Definitions & Examples

2.1.1.1. *neyārtha*: Four *abhīprāyas* & Four *abhisaṃdhis*

2.1.1.2. *nītārtha*: Three Natures (*svabhāva*):

parikalpita-svabhāva=prajñaptisat=grāhyagrāhaka,

paratantra-svabhāva=dravyasat=abhūtaparikalpa=8 vijñānas;

pariniṣpanna-svabhāva=paramārthasat=śūnyatā

2.1.1.2.1. Saṃsāra: 8 *vijñānas* (esp. *ālayavijñāna-pravṛtti*)

2.1.1.2.2. Nirvāṇa: *lokottarajñāna* → *ālayavijñāna-vyāvṛtti=āśraya-parāvṛtti*; Vimuktikāya (of śrāvakas & pratyekabuddhas) vs. Dharmakāya (of buddhas)

2.1.1.2.2.1. No names and marks (*nāma-nimitta*) of any dharma appear in *lokottara-jñāna*; they are unreal because they are mere imaginations of *abhūtaparikalpa* and because they are devoid of one and many *svabhāvas*.

2.1.1.2.3. Conclusion: All *dharmas* are *cittamātra*, *vijñānamātra* and *prakāśamātra*. Three Natures again.

2.1.2. Yogācāras and Mādhyamikas hold the same *siddhānta* (Āgama: Nāgārjuna's *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā* vv. 21, 34) but there is a slight difference, namely, Yogācāras hold that all *dharmas* are existent as *prakāśaśarīra*, while Mādhyamikas consider that they are neither existent nor non-existent as *prakāśaśarīra*.

2.1.2.1. Refutation of Other Buddhist Schools

2.1.2.1.1. Refutation of some [*satyākāravādins*] who admit that *nīlādy-ākāras* also are the intrinsic nature of all *dharmas*.

2.1.2.1.2. Refutation of a certain Mādhyamika who denies both external objects and *svasaṃvedana*.

2.1.2.1.3. A Brief Description of Two *satyas*

2.1.2.1.4. Yogācāra Interpretation of Sūtra passages that appear to be anti-Yogācāra.

2.1.3. Concise Meaning of Mahāyāna (*Laṅkāvatāra* 6.5): Five *dharmas* (*nāman*, *nimitta*, *vikalpa*, *tathatā*, *samyagjñāna*), Three *svabhāvas*, Eight *vijñānas*, Two *nairātmyas*)

2.2. CINTĀMAYĪ PRAJÑĀ

2.2.1. All *dharmas* are without their intrinsic natures (*niḥsvabhāva*), i.e. empty of the grasper and the grasped (*grāhyagrāhakaśūnya*) because they are by nature *vijñānamātra*.

2.2.1.1. All *dharmas* are by nature cognition (*jñānasvabhāva*) because they are illuminating (*prakāśamāna*).

2.2.1.1.1. Refutation of Bāhyārthavādins

2.2.1.1.1.1. Refutation of the Mīmāṃsakas (nirākārajñānavādin)

2.2.1.1.1.2. Refutation of the Naiyāyikas and Others (nirkārajñānavādin)

2.2.1.1.1.3. Refutation of Others (the Prabhākaras?) (sākārajñānavādin)

Conclusion: Blue, etc., being perceived, is nothing but cognition and there is no external object to be grasped.

2.2.1.1.1.4. Refutation of the Sautrāntikas (sākārajñānavādin)

Conclusion (1): There is no external object.

Conclusion (2): All *dharmas* are empty of the grasper and the grasped and they are *vijñaptimātra*.

2.2.1.1.1.5. Refutation of the Vaibhāṣikas (nirkārajñānavādin), esp. their atomic theory.

Conclusion: 18 *dhātus* (5 *skandhas* & 12 *āyatanas*) do not exist.

2.2.1.1.2. Ratnākaraśānti's Own Position: alīkākaravāda (sākārajñānavāda)

2.2.1.1.3. Refutation of Sākārajñānavādins of the Yogācāra and the Mādhyamikas (satyākāravāda)

Conclusion: All *dharmas* are empty of the grasper and the grasped and they are *vijñaptimātra*.

2.2.1.1.4. Three *svabhāvas*; *abhūtaparikalpa* and *dvaya-śūnyatā*.

2.2.2. Four Yoga Stages (*yogabhūmi*); Yogācāras and Mādhyamikas share the same view of the Fourth Yoga Stage (Āgama = Yuktīṣaṣṭikā v. 34) with slightly different understandings, namely, Yogācāras hold that *prakāśa* really exists, while Mādhyamikas consider that even *prakāśa* does not really exist.

2.2.2.1. Refutation of Nirākāra-vijñaptimātravādins of the Mādhyamikas

2.2.2.2. Refutation of a certain Mādhyamika (Bahirarthavādin)

2.2.2.3. Six Summarizing Verses

3. PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ-BHĀVANĀ

3.1. Two kinds of practice (*prayoga*): *satkṛtya-* & *sātatya-prayoga*

3.2. Three steps of meditation (*bhāvanā*)⁽⁰⁾

3.2.1. *śamatha*

3.2.2. *vipaśyanā*

⁽⁰⁾This section is made into an independent manual of meditation called *Prajñāpāramitābhāvanopadeśa* A (Derge No. 4076) with a little variation.

3.2.3. *yuganaddha*3.2.4. Five Obstacles (*nivarana*) (Cf. *Śrāvakabhūmi*)3.2.5. Nine phases (*ākāra*) of *śamatha* (Cf. *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* 14.11-14)3.2.6. Four kinds of *vipaśyanā* (Cf. *Śrāvakabhūmi* & *Abhidharmasamuccaya*)3.2.7. Conclusion: By practicing *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* a yogin is liberated from *dauṣṭhulya*- and *nimitta-bandhanas*. *bhāvanā* and *yoga* are synonyms.3.3. Four Yoga Stages⁽¹⁾3.3.1. The First Yoga Stage: *yāvadbhāvikatā*- (or *vastuparyantatā*-) *ālambanā yogabhūmiḥ*⁽²⁾3.3.1.1. *śamatha*.3.3.1.2. *vipaśyanā*.3.3.1.3. *yuganaddha*.3.3.2. The Second Yoga Stage: *yathāvadbhāvika-cittamātratālambanā yogabhūmiḥ*⁽³⁾3.3.2.1. *śamatha*.3.3.2.2. *vipaśyanā*.3.3.2.3. *yuganaddha*.3.3.3. The Third Yoga Stage: *yathāvadbhāvikatāyāṃ tathatālambanā yogabhūmiḥ*⁽⁴⁾3.3.3.1. *śamatha*.3.3.3.2. *vipaśyanā*.3.3.3.3. *yuganaddha*.3.3.4. The Fourth Yoga Stage: *nirālambanā* (or *nirābhāsā*) *yogabhūmiḥ*⁽⁵⁾

3.3.4.1. Non-conceptual cognition

3.3.4.1.1. How to obtain non-conceptual cognition — according to the *Avikalpapraveśa-dhāraṇī* (=APDh) section 8 and its interpretation by Ratnākaraśānti

3.3.4.1.2. The characteristics of non-conceptual cognition — APDh sections 9-10 and interpretation by Ratnākaraśānti

3.3.4.1.3. The signs of non-conceptual cognition — APDh section 10 and interpretation by Ratnākaraśānti

3.3.4.1.4. The merits of non-conceptual cognition — APDh section 16 and 10 and interpretation by Ratnākaraśānti

3.4. Abhisamaya-gāthās

⁽¹⁾This section is also made into an independent manual of meditation called *Prajñāparāmitābhāvanopadeśa* B (Derge No. 4078) with a great variation.

⁽²⁾It is also called ‘*dharmāṇām iyatā*’.

⁽³⁾It is also called ‘*dharmāṇāṃ cittamātratā*’.

⁽⁴⁾It is also called ‘*dharmāṇāṃ sanimittā śūnyatā*’.

⁽⁵⁾It is also called ‘*dharmāṇāṃ nirnimittā śūnyatā*’.

3.4.1. *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* X.256–258 and a *śloka* from *Guhyasamājatantra*

3.4.2. Interpretation by Ratnākaraśānti in terms of Four Yoga stages

4. Closing Verse

keywords: Ratnākaraśānti, *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*, 4 yoga stages, the late Yogācāra philosophy.