

Yoga and Vijñaptimātra Theory

—Establishment of the *Asallakṣaṇanupraveśopāya*,
the Way to Enter into Nonexistence of Both Object and Subject—

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When we take up *Yogācāra* thought, we are apt to focus on the *ālayavijñāna* theory or the *trisvabhāva* theory. But it seems that the most important idea of the *Yogācāra* school is that of *vijñaptimātra* —that all things, including every objective thing and phenomena, are just images which appears in the mind or are made by the mind, and that nothing exist in the outer world. For this idea they have also called the *Cittamātra* school. They practised *yoga* (*śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*) in order to attain *nirvikalpa-jñāna*. And the idea of *vijñaptimātra* has an important role in *yoga*. The way to attain *nirvikalpa-jñāna* of the *Yogācāra* is called the *asallakṣaṇanupraveśopāya*, the way to enter into nonexistence of both object and subject.

The purpose of this article is to trace how in the *Yogācāra* school the idea of *asallakṣaṇanupraveśopāya* first appeared and how it developed.

The *Śrāvakabhūmi* and the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* of the *Yogācārabhūmi* do not yet mention the idea of *vijñaptimātra* in *yoga* (*śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*), although great importance is attached to the *pratibimba* (reflection or image) in *yoga*, which is a reflection of any real object in those texts.

In chapter 8 of the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, it is stated that the *prati-bimba* is a reflection of the mind itself, the *pratibimba* itself is object and

every objective thing are just mind. It explains that *nirvikalpañāna* is gained through a *yoga* grounded on the idea of *viññaptimātra*. However the *asallakṣaṇānupraveśopāya* is not yet established.

Although the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* does not use the expression *asallakṣaṇānupraveśopāya*, it is implicit in the text. It is explained as follows. Through considering the meaning of *viññaptimātra* deeply in *yoga*, bodhisattvas understand that objects of recognition do not exist; therefore when object does not exist, the subject which cognizes it, too, does not exist. The *asallakṣaṇānupraveśopāya* also is regarded as the *prayogamārga*, the way of preparation for penetration of truth, or *nirvedhabhāgiya*, the situation conducive to penetration of truth. It consists of four degrees, that is, *uṣmagata* (becoming warm), *mūrdhan* (summit), *kṣānti* (patience), and *laukikāgradharma* (most preminent degree in the worldly situation).

In the *Madhyāntavibhāṅga* the discussion of the *asallakṣaṇānupraveśopāya* is almost the same as that found in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*. However there are some differences in the way they demonstrate the nonexistence of both the object and the subject.