The *Wu-T'ing-Hsin-Kuan* in Abhidharma Texts

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It was only in Buddhism that the meanings of “teaching” and “thing to be experienced” were applied to the word *dharma*. They have gradually become the most important meanings of the word in Buddhism. And it is very interesting that these two meanings seem to have become closely related through the tradition of Yogācāra practice.

It is well known that there are many kinds of Yogācāra practice. They are discussed in detail in *Abhidarmamahāvibhāṣa* and *Yogācārabhūmi*. In order to get a sufficient understanding of the meaning of the word *dharma* in Yogācāra practice, we must investigate how and which *dharmas* are meditated upon in each steps of the practice. However, this is far beyond the scope of this essay. Instead we will focus on the preliminary steps of practice and examine them carefully to grasp how the *dharmas* are practised.

As is generally known, Yogācāra practice begins with preliminary steps designed to prepare the mind and body for practice. They are called “the purification of the vessel” 身器清净. That is to say, the Yogācāra practitioner should live alone apart from people, and keep various kinds of passion and want away from his mind and body. He must also refrain from desires and be satisfied with little material. Thus he has to get rid of desires
and master the behavior of a saint (聖種, āryavāṃsa).

When he has completed his preparations, he undertakes seven kinds of practice (七加行) consisting successively of three steps of mokṣabhāgiya (順解脫分) and four steps of nirvedhabhāgiya (順決択分). At the beginning of the seven kinds of practice, the Yogācāra practitioner must choose a method of meditation among the five forms of contemplation according to his character and inclination. These five forms of contemplation are called the wu-t'ing-hsin-kuan (五停心觀), which we are going to examine in this essay.

The five items of the wu-t'ing-hsin-kuan are enumerated as follows in Yogācārabhūmi; āsubhā-contemplation to purify lust (rāga), maitrī-contemplation to subdue hatred (dveṣa), pratītyasamutpāda-contemplation to heal stupidity (avidyā), dhātuprabheda-contemplation to heal conceit (māna), and ānāpānasmṛti-contemplation to suppress discursive thinking (vitarka). However, as is already indicated by Dr. Sakurabe (INDIANISME ET BOUDDHISME 23, 1980) etc., these five items are not fixed, but vary in the Āgama, Nikāya and Darśana texts. Some texts have buddhānusmṛti-contemplation instead of dhātuprabheda-contemplation, others asthīsaṃkālā-contemplation instead of dhātuprabheda-contemplation or buddhānusmṛti-contemplation.

The term wu-t'ing-hsin-kuan does not appear in Indian Buddhist texts. Probably it was, as Dr. Sakurabe also pointed out, employed by Hui-yüan (慧遠, 523–592 A.D.) in his main work Ta-ch'êng-i-chang (大乘義章). In the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya Vasubandhu (4–5th century A.D.) enumerated only two of them, āsubhā-contemplation and ānāpānasmṛti-contemplation.
He calls them "the two entrance gates to the practice." It cannot be known from the *Abhidharma*kośa*bhāṣya* whether or not he chose these two contemplations from the above mentioned five items. Neither can it be known from Yaśomitra's (6-7th century A.D.) commentary on the *Abhidharma*kośa*bhāṣya*.

We suppose that Vasubandhu's enumeration is not his own innovation, but is a product of the development of the theory of the Yogācāra practice in the Sarvāstivāda school to which he belonged. This supposition can be affirmed by the facts that Dharmatrāta (4th century A.D.) also enumerated these two items as "the two gates into the beatitude" and that his enumeration was quoted in the *Mahāvibhāṣā* to which Vasubandhu referred in his *Abhidharma*kośa*bhāṣya*. It is supposed that the fivefold contemplation has been simplified into "the two entrance gates to the practice". The aim of this essay is to trace the process of the simplification.