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**Descriptions of “Feeling” (*vedanā*), “Ideation” (*saṃjñā*),
and “the Unconditioned” (*asaṃskṛta*) in Vasubandhu’s
Pañcaskandhaka and Sthiramati’s *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā*¹**

Abstract

This article focuses on three passages of Vasubandhu’s “[Treatise] on the Five Constituents of the Person” (*Pañcaskandhaka*) and its commentary by the 6th-century Indian scholar Sthiramati, the *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā*. The three parts dealt with here comprise the sections on “feeling”, “ideation”, and “the unconditioned” and are compared with parallel descriptions of these concepts in other Abhidharma texts, including the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*. The treatment of the unconditioned factors is particularly notable since the lists of these factors vary strongly in the works under discussion, ranging from three to nine entities. Among the unconditioned factors the two entities “cessation [obtained through] consideration” (*pratisaṃkhyānirodha*) and “cessation not [obtained through] consideration” (*apratisaṃkhyānirodha*) are of particular interest and are analysed in detail in the present study.

Keywords: Buddhism, philosophy, Abhidharma, Vasubandhu, Sthiramati

1. Introduction

The present study continues a series of previously completed articles investigating the contents of Vasubandhu’s *Pañcaskandhaka* and its commentary by Sthiramati, the

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Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā.² The main focus of these two works is the description of the five constituents of the person (*skandha*). From the viewpoint of doctrinal development the most relevant parts of this description are the sections on “matter” (*rūpa*), “impulses” (*saṃskāra*), and “perception” (*vijñāna*). Therefore, I have dealt with these three *skandhas* in three separate publications. The present investigation focuses on three other passages of the *Pañcaskandhaka* and its commentary that have not been considered so far. These three passages include the treatment of the two *skandhas* “feeling” (*vedanā*) and “ideation” (*saṃjñā*) as well as the category of those factors that are considered to be “unconditioned” (*asaṃskṛta*). The treatment of the two *skandhas* “feeling” and “ideation” comprises only a few lines in the *Pañcaskandhaka* and around three folios in the *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā*.³ The discussion of the “unconditioned” is of similar extent.⁴ Despite the concision of these descriptions the passages are, nonetheless, worthy of closer examination. As already indicated in my study of the *Pañcaskandhaka*’s *saṃskāra* section, the comparison of the *Pañcaskandhaka* and the *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā* with other Abhidharma texts, like the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* and the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, reveals noteworthy parallels and discrepancies. Therefore, I present an overview of the contents of the relevant passages in the *Pañcaskandhaka* and its commentary in the following, and compare them with corresponding descriptions in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, and its commentary, the *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya*.⁵

2. Feeling (*vedanā*)

In the *Pañcaskandhaka* Vasubandhu explains feeling as experiencing (*anubhava*), of which he distinguishes three kinds: pleasant (*sukha*), unpleasant (*duḥkha*), and neither pleasant nor unpleasant. He then adds that a pleasant feeling is characterized by the fact that one wishes to be (re)united with it when it has ceased. In contrast, the unpleasant feeling leads to the wish of being separated from it, whereas the neutral feeling does not result in either of these two desires.⁶ The enumeration of three alternative feelings corresponds to the explanation of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*. However, the latter adds a sixfold classification into the various kinds of feeling that arise from contact of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and the mental faculty with their objects.⁷ This

² See Kramer 2008 and forthcoming A and B.

³ See *PSk* 3,10-4,2 and *PSkV* 14b2-18a1.

⁴ See *PSk* 18,12-19,7 and *PSkV* 61b4-64a1.

⁵ The quotations from the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, and *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā* given below are available in English translation in Pruden (1988), Boin-Webb (2001), and Engle (2009). These translations have been consulted for the present study and modified where it appeared necessary.

⁶ *PSk* 3,10-13: *vedanā katamā / trividhā ’nubhavaḥ sukho duḥkho ’duḥkhāsukhaś ca / sukho yasya nirodhe saṃyogacchando bhavati / duḥkho yasyotpādāḥ viyogacchando bhavati / aduḥkhāsukho yasyotpādāt tadubhayaṃ na bhavati.*

⁷ *AKBh* 10,12-14: *vedanānubhavaḥ / trividhā ’nubhavo vedanāskandhaḥ / sukho duḥkho ’duḥkhāsukhaś ca / sa punar bhīdya mānaḥ ṣaḍ vedanākāyāḥ, caḥṣuḥsaṃsparśajā vedanā yāvan manaḥsaṃsparśajā vedaneti.*

sixfold categorization is also found in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*. The latter does not refer to feeling as *anubhava* within the general definition of feeling, but the term is used in another passage of the text to describe the main characteristic of *vedanā*.⁸ The *Abhidharmasamuccaya* additionally explains that feeling can also be classified as physical (*kāyika*) or mental (*caitasika*), being either related to the five sense perceptions (and thus based on the contact of the five sense faculties with their objects) or to the mental perception (*manovijñāna*).⁹ Another distinction proposed by the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* is between feeling “associated with worldly pleasures” (*sāmiṣa*) and “not associated with worldly pleasures” (*nirāmiṣa*) or between feeling “based on craving” (*gredhāśrita*) and “based on renunciation” (*naiśkramyāśrita*). The feeling associated with worldly pleasures is explained in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* as being associated with desire for the self, whereas the feeling that is based on craving is paraphrased as relying on greed for the five sense objects.¹⁰ Interestingly, all the characterizations of feeling found in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* are not referred to by Vasubandhu in the *Pañcaskandhaka*, but are supplemented by Sthiramati in his commentary.¹¹ Additionally, Sthiramati mentions two interpretations of feeling by other scholars. The first specifies feeling as the experiencing of a desirable or undesirable contact (*sparśa*), or contact that is different from both, and is ascribed by Sthiramati to Saṅghabhadra.¹² Sthiramati rejects this view by arguing that in this case feeling as the experiencing of contact would either be used in the sense of “feeling accompanying contact” or “feeling having contact as its cause”. But both these statements are unsuitable for paraphrasing the distinct nature of feeling, as all the mental factors share the quality of accompanying contact and because contact is the cause of all mental factors.¹³ The second theory proposed by other scholars and opposed by

⁸ AS_T 52a6: *tshor ba'i mtshan nyid ci zhe na / myong ba'i mtshan nyid de.*

⁹ AS_T 54a5-b4: *tshor ba'i tshogs drug stel mig gi 'dus te reg pa las byung ba'i tshor ba bde ba yang rung / sdug bsngal yang rung / sdug bsngal yang ma yin bde ba yang ma yin pa yang rung ba dang / rna ba dang/ sna dang / lce dang/ lus dang / yid kyi 'dus te reg pa las byung ba'i tshor ba bde ba yang rung / sdug bsngal yang rung / sdug bsngal yang ma yin bde ba yang ma yin pa yang rung stel bde ba lus kyi yang rung / sdug bsngal lus kyi yang rung / sdug bsngal yang ma yin bde ba yang ma yin pa lus kyi yang rung / bde ba sems kyi yang rung / sdug bsngal sems kyi yang rung / sdug bsngal yang ma yin bde ba yang ma yin pa (D pa; P om.) sems kyi yang rung / [...] lus kyi gang zhe na/ rnam par shes pa'i tshogs lnga dang mtshungs par ldan pa'o // sems kyi gang zhe na/ yid kyi rnam par shes pa dang mtshungs par ldan pa'o.*

¹⁰ AS_T 54a8-b6: *bde ba zang zing dang bcas pa yang rung / sdug bsngal dang / sdug bsngal yang ma yin bde ba yang ma yin pa zang zing dang bcas pa yang rung / bde ba zang zing med pa yang rung (D yang rung; P dang) / sdug bsngal dang / sdug bsngal yang ma yin bde ba yang ma yin pa zang zing med pa yang rung / bde ba zhen pa rten (D rten; P brten) pa yang rung / sdug bsngal dang / sdug bsngal yang ma yin bde ba yang ma yin pa zhen pa rten pa yang rung / bde ba mngon par 'byung ba rten (D rten; P brten) pa yang rung / sdug bsngal dang / sdug bsngal yang ma yin bde ba yang ma yin pa mngon par 'byung ba rten pa yang rung ba'o // [...] zang zing dang bcas pa gang zhe na / lus la sred pa dang mtshungs par ldan pa'o // [...] zhen pa rten (D rten; P bsten) pa gang zhe na / 'dod pa'i yon tan lnga la sred pa dang mtshungs par ldan pa'o.*

¹¹ PSkV 16a4-b5.

¹² PSkV 14b6-15a1: *vedanānubhavaḥ sparśasyety ācāryasaṅghabhadraḥ / iṣṭāniṣṭobhayaviparītānāṃ sparśānām anubhavaḥ sā vedanā.* On Saṅghabhadra see Cox (1995), pp. 53–55.

¹³ PSkV 15a4f.: *sparśānubhavaś ca tatsamprayogaḥ kāraṇabhāvo vā parikalpyeta / [...] tatra na bhavet samprayogaḥ sarvacaitānāṃ sparśasamprayogāviśeṣāt / nāpi kāraṇabhāvaḥ sarvacaitānāṃ sparśasya kāraṇatvāviśeṣāt.*

Sthiramati states that feeling is the experiencing of effects of maturation of previous virtuous (*śubha*) and non-virtuous deeds. Sthiramati rejects this view by referring to the assumption that only the *ālayavijñāna* and the neutral feeling accompanying it are the results of maturation of virtuous and non-virtuous deeds and that the pleasant or unpleasant feelings are actually “arisen from the [result of] maturation” (*vipākaja*), i.e. are only secondary products of maturation.¹⁴

3. Ideation (*saṃjñā*)

Ideation is characterized in the *Pañcaskandhaka* as “the grasping of an object’s specific features (*nimitta*)”.¹⁵ This definition is similar to the explanation of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, except for the latter’s additional enumeration of six kinds of ideation depending on the five sense faculties, the mental faculty (*manas*) and their objects.¹⁶ The *Abhidharmasamuccaya* also mentions the phrase “grasping of specific features” (*mtshan mar ’dzin pa*) when defining the characteristic nature (*lakṣaṇa*) of *saṃjñā*,¹⁷ and it also explains that there are six kinds of *saṃjñā*, arising on the basis of one of the five sense faculties or the mental faculty. However, it additionally classifies ideation into another six kinds, namely ideation of an object associated with a specific feature (*sanimitta*), of an object without a specific feature (*animitta*), of a limited (*paritta*) object, of a great (*mahadgata*) object, of an immeasurable (*apramāṇa*) object, and of “the sphere of nothingness” (*ākīñcanyāyatana*).¹⁸ Remarkably, the Tibetan version of the *Pañcaskandhaka* includes the statement that *saṃjñā* is of three kinds comprising ideation of limited, great, and immeasurable objects.¹⁹ However, this explanation does not occur in the Sanskrit manuscript of the text preserved in China, nor does it have a parallel in the Chinese translation of the *Pañcaskandhaka*.²⁰ Sthiramati includes the discussion of all six kinds of objects in his commentary without mentioning that Vasubandhu enumerated only three of them.²¹ As these six kinds of *saṃjñā* are, moreover, not referred to in the form of a quotation from the root-text, it is very likely that Sthiramati supplemented – as he did in the case of *vedanā* – the root-text with the description of the six objects, presumably relying on the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*. Thus, the three kinds of ideation listed in the Tibetan

¹⁴ PSKV 15a6-b1: *evam tu manyante śubhāśubhānām karmaṇām phalavipākam pratyānubhavanty anenety anubhavaḥ* / [...] *atra cālayavijñānam eva śubhāśubhakarmavipākāḥ* / *tatsamprayuktaivopekṣā paramārthataḥ śubhāśubhānām karmaṇām vipākāḥ* / *sukhaduḥkḥayos tu vipākajatvād vipākopacārah.*

¹⁵ PSk 4,1: *viṣayanimittodgrahaṇam.*

¹⁶ AKBh 10,15-17: *saṃjñā nimittodgrahaṇātmikā* // [...] *sa punar bhidyamānaḥ ṣaṭ saṃjñākāyā vedanāvat.*

¹⁷ AS_T 52a6f.: *’du shes kyi mtshan nyid ci zhe na* / [...] *mtshan mar ’dzin pa dang.*

¹⁸ AS 15,21-23: *ṣaṭ saṃjñākāyāḥ* / *cakṣuḥsaṃsparśajā saṃjñā śrotraḡrāṇājihvākāyamaṇḥsaṃsparśajā saṃjñā* / *yayā sanimittam api saṃjñānti, animittam api, parittam api, mahadgatam api, apramāṇam api, nāsti kiñcid ity ākiñcanyāyatanaṃ api saṃjñānti.*

¹⁹ PSk_T 13b2f.

²⁰ See Li and Steinkellner 2008, p. 4, n. for line 2.

²¹ PSKV 17a5: *ālambanaṃ punaḥ sanimittam, animittam, parittam, mahadgatam, apramāṇam, ākiñcanyāyatanaṃ ca.*

text of the *Pañcaskandhaka* are possibly a later addition. However, in case they were part of the original Sanskrit text, the listing of only three items in contrast to the six kinds of objects mentioned in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* would provide another example of a divergence between the latter and the *Pañcaskandhaka*.²² As for Sthiramati's comments on the six kinds of objects, they are probably influenced by the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* and also show parallels with its commentary, the *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya*. One of the common features of the latter and the *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā* is the addition of the three arguments "because [the sphere of desire] is inferior", "because [the material sphere] is superior", and "because [the spheres of unlimited space and unlimited consciousness] are boundless." They have been introduced to explain the nature of the three kinds of objects "limited", "great", and "immeasurable". In contrast to the *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya*, Sthiramati also mentions the reason why the object of the sphere of nothingness is called "nothingness": because there is no grasping at all.²³ Sthiramati also includes explanations of the terms *sanimitta* and *animitta* in his commentary. He defines the first class of objects as follows:

Whichever [feature] is ascribed [to an object's nature] by means of a word[, this is its specific feature]. The entity's intrinsic nature endowed with this specific feature is "associated with a specific feature". The ideation which [recognizes that] this is the nature ascribed to the object [and] this is the term [referring to it] – this is the ideation which has an object "associated with a specific feature".²⁴

According to Sthiramati, the object "not associated with a specific feature" (*animitta*) refers to an object not having a feature that can be ascribed to it. This can apply to the nature of an entity (*vastusvarūpa*), *nirvāṇa*, or the peak of existence (*bhavāgra*). In the first case the object is not associated with specific features because "there is no specific feature, [in the case of *nirvāṇa*] because there is no specific feature of matter and feeling, and [in the case of the peak of existence] because there is no clarity" of the specific feature.²⁵ Sthiramati goes on to explain that in the first case someone who is inexperienced in connecting words and objects has an ideation of the nature of matter but does not

²² For other examples of differences between these two texts see Kramer (forthcoming A).

²³ *PSKV* 17b5-18a1: *parīttam kāmādhātū nīkṣṛtatvāt / mahadgato rūpadhātūḥ, utkṣṛtatvāt / apramāṇa ākāśaviññānāntyāyatane, aparyantatvāt / pariḡrahakiñcanābhāvād ākiñcanyāyatanam ākiñcanyam / tasmāt kāmādhātūdyālabanā saññā parīttādisaññītye ucyate. ASBh* 4,14-16: *parīttāḥ kāmādhātūḥ nīkṣṛtatvāt / mahadgato rūpadhātūḥ tat utkṣṛtatvāt / apramāṇe ākāśaviññānāntyāyatane 'paryantatvāt / tasmāt tadālabanāḥ saññāḥ parīttādisaññā vedītavayāḥ.*

²⁴ *PSKV* 17a5-6: *tatra śabdadvāreṇa yad artharūpam adhyāropitam, tena nimittena vastusvarūpaṃ sanimittam (PSKV_T 16af.: de la sgra'i sgo nas gang don gyi ngo bor sgro btags pa de ni mtshan ma stel mtshan ma de dang lhan cig pa'i dngos po'i rang gi ngo bo ni mtshan ma dang bcas pa'o) / tasmin vastuṇy adhyāropitam rūpam etac chabdo 'sāv iti yā saññā, sā sanimittālabanā.*

²⁵ *PSKV* 17a6-17b1: *animittam punar anadhyāropitākāram vastusvarūpam, nirvāṇam, bhavāgraṃ ca. tatrādhyāropitanimittābhāvād rūpavedanānimittābhāvād apaṭuvāc caitat trayam animittam ucyate.*

recognize it explicitly as “[this is] matter”. Therefore, the ideation having such an object is to be considered an ideation whose object is not associated with a specific feature.²⁶ As for the sphere of *nirvāṇa*, Sthiramati states that it is characterized by the cessation of all specific features of the conditioned. Thus, the ideation accompanying the person absorbed in contemplation having this object is an ideation which is “not associated with a specific feature.” In the case of the peak of existence it is, according to Sthiramati, due to its lack of clarity that it is not associated with specific features. The ideation of someone who has entered this state does not conceptualize the object. Therefore, this ideation is the one whose object is not associated with specific features.²⁷ This condition is compared with a thin woman who is described as having no waist. This state is not referred to as “not associated with specific features” in the sense that there is no specific feature at all.²⁸ Otherwise, Sthiramati explains, it would follow wrongly that there is no ideation at all (because *saṃjñā* has been defined as “the grasping of specific features”). If there was no specific feature at all their grasping would be completely impossible.²⁹ In the case of the thin woman the fact that she lacks the specific feature consisting in a (fat) waist (and in this sense is *animitta*) makes others conceptualize her as a thin woman. Except for the example of the thin woman, the explanations of the object not associated with specific features found in the *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā* closely resemble the parallel definition found in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*.³⁰

4. The Unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*)

The passages dealing with the category “the unconditioned” show remarkable divergences in the Abhidharma works under discussion. While the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*

²⁶ PSkV 17b1f.: *avyutpannaśabdārthasambandhasya hi rūpasvarūpa eva sañjñā bhavati, na tu rūpam iti / atas tadviśayasañjñā animittāmbanā.*

²⁷ PSkV 17b2-4: *nirvāṇadhātur api sarvasaṃskṛtanimittapratyastamitasvarūpa iti tadāmbanenāpi samādhinā samprayuktā sañjñā animittāmbanā / bhavāgram apaṭutvād animittam / tatsamāpannasya sañjñāmbanāṃ na nimittīkarotīty animittāmbanā.*

²⁸ PSkV 17b4f.: [...] *anudarakanyānyāyena* (read: *anudarakanyānyāyena*), *na punas tatra nimittam naivastīty animittam.*

²⁹ PSkV 17b5: *anyathā sañjñābhāvaprasaṅga iti, nimittābhāve nimittodgrahaṇābhāvāt.*

³⁰ ASBh 4,11-4,14: *avyavahāraśūlasaśikṣitabhāṣatayā rūpe saṃjñā bhavati na tu rūpam iti / tasmā animittasaṃjñety ucyate / animittadhātusamāpannasya rūpādisarvanimittāpagate 'nimitte nirvāṇe saṃjñā – animittasaṃjñā / bhavāgrasamāpannasyāpaṭutvenāmbanānimittīkaraṇād animittasaṃjñā* (“Someone who is not experienced in conventional language because he has not learnt it has an ideation with reference to matter but does not [conceptualize] it as ‘[this is] matter’. Therefore, this is called an ideation [of an object] not associated with a specific feature. Someone who has attained the sphere without specific features has the ideation with respect to the *nirvāṇa* as being without specific features because all the *nimittas*, like matter etc., are gone. [This ideation] is an ideation [of an object] not associated with a specific feature. Someone having attained the peak of existence has an ideation [of an object] not associated with a specific feature because it conceptualizes the object in an unclear way.”).

enumerates three unconditioned categories, the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* and the *Pañcaskandhaka(vibhāṣā)* mention eight and four, respectively:

*Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*³¹

1. space (*ākāśa*)
2. cessation not [obtained through] consideration (*apratisaṃkhyānirodha*)
3. cessation [obtained through] consideration (*pratisaṃkhyānirodha*)

*Abhidharmasamuccaya*³²

1. true reality of beneficial factors (*kuśaladharmatathatā*)
2. true reality of non-beneficial factors (*akuśaladharmatathatā*)
3. true reality of neutral factors (*avyākṛtadharmatathatā*)
4. space (*ākāśa*)
5. cessation not [obtained through] consideration (*apratisaṃkhyānirodha*)
6. cessation [obtained through] consideration (*pratisaṃkhyānirodha*)
7. the state of motionlessness (*āniñjya*)
8. cessation of ideations and feelings (*saṃjñāvedayitanirodha*)

*Pañcaskandhaka*³³

1. space (*ākāśa*)
2. cessation not [obtained through] consideration (*apratisaṃkhyānirodha*)
3. cessation [obtained through] consideration (*pratisaṃkhyānirodha*)
4. true reality (*tathatā*)

The last two categories listed in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, that is the *āniñjya* and the *saṃjñāvedayitanirodha*, correspond to the “equipoise of non-conception” (*asaṃjñīsamāpatti*) and “equipoise of cessation” (*nirodhasamāpatti*) respectively.³⁴ It is remarkable that these two entities are subsumed under the category “the unconditioned” after they have already been defined as belonging to the “factors dissociated from mind” (*cittaviprayuktāḥ saṃskārāḥ*) and thus as obviously being part of the conditioned.

A list of eight unconditioned factors identical with the list provided in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* appears in the *Yogācārabhūmi*.³⁵ This enumeration seems to be related to a group of unconditioned factors ascribed to the Mahīśāsakas (*sa ston pa'i sde pa*) in the **Samayabhedoparacanacakra*. According to this source the latter state that the following nine factors are *asaṃskṛta*: “cessation [obtained through] consideration, cessation not [obtained through] consideration, space, the state of motionlessness, true reality of beneficial factors, of unbeneficial factors, and of neutral factors, true reality of

³¹ *AKBh* 3,16-19.

³² *AS₇* 62a7f.

³³ *PSk* 18,12f. and *PSkV* 61b4f.

³⁴ See *AS* 18,23-27 and *AS₇* 62b6-63a1.

³⁵ *Y* 69,4-6.

the path, and true reality of the conditioned arising.”³⁶ In the following, the definitions of the four unconditioned factors mentioned in the *Pañcaskandhaka* are investigated in more detail and compared with the corresponding explanations in the other Abhidharma works.

4.1 Space (*ākāśa*)

The *Pañcaskandhaka* defines space as “the one that [gives] room for matter” (*PSk* 18,14: *yo rūpāvakāśaḥ*). The explanation found in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* is similar, but at least the wording does not appear to be directly related to that of the *Pañcaskandhaka*: “it is the absence of matter because it [gives] room for all kinds of activities.”³⁷ The terminology used in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* to characterize space seems to differ from both the *Pañcaskandhaka* and the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*: “Space is that which does not hinder. Space has for its nature not hindering [matter]. It is where matter spreads.”³⁸ Later Vasubandhu adds the “Sautrāntika” view on space: “Space is the mere absence of touchable things: for instance, when [people], in the dark, do not touch [anything that possesses] resistance they say [there is] space.”³⁹ In his commentary on the four basic elements in the *Pañcaskandhaka*, Sthiramati emphasizes that space is not to be regarded as a fifth basic element (*mahābhūta*):⁴⁰

That which is called “space” is nothing else than the mere absence of impenetrable matter. An impenetrable thing makes room in its own location for [another] impenetrable [thing] when it moves away from it. Space is not [like this], because space [can]not move from a particular place in the same way as matter [does]. Thus, it is not possible to say that [space] makes room. Impenetrable matter prevents the arising of other matter at its own place. Space [can]not [do this]. Therefore, there is no room where there is [matter], and there is room where it is not there. Thus, the departure [of matter] from a certain place is [what constitutes the action

³⁶ P5639, fol. 175b8-176a2: *'dus ma byas kyi dngos po dgu ste / so sor brtags pa ma yin pa'i 'gog pa dang / so sor brtags pa'i 'gog pa dang / (<so sor brtags pa'i 'gog pa dang /> em.; DP om.) nam mkha' dang / mi g.yo ba dang / dge ba'i chos rnam kyi de bzhin nyid dang (D nyid dang; P gshegs pa) / mi dge ba'i chos rnam kyi de bzhin nyid dang / lung du mi ston pa'i chos rnam kyi de bzhin nyid dang / lam gyi de bzhin nyid dang / rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba'i de bzhin nyid do. Remarkably, four of the five kinds of *tathatā* (excluding the true reality of neutral factors) are also mentioned in the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā* (P5188, e.g., fols. 221a and b, 258b, and 265a).*

³⁷ *AS* 62b5: *gzugs med cing byed pa thams cad kyi go 'byed pa'i phyir ro.*

³⁸ *AKBh* 3,22f.: *tatrākāśam anāvṛtiḥ / anāvāraṇasvabhāvam ākāśam yatra rūpasya gatiḥ.*

³⁹ *AKBh*, 92,4f.: *spraṣṭavyābhāvamātram ākāśam / tadyathā hy andhakāre pratighātam avindanta ākāśam ity āhuḥ.* See also Kritzer 2005, p. 117, where a description of space found in the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī* is mentioned which also brings forward the idea that space is not a real entity but only an expression.

⁴⁰ In the section of the *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā* in which the four unconditioned factors are explained only a very short commentary on space is included: “At which place impenetrable matter is not obstructed this is its room. Therefore, it is [called] ‘space’ because it gives room for material entities.” (*PSkV* 61b6: *sapratigham rūpam yatra pradeśe na prathanyate, sa tasyāvakāśaḥ / ato rūpiṇām bhāvānām avakāśadānān ākāśam.*)

of] making room by this [matter]; it is not [providing room] by space. Therefore, space is not a basic element in the same way as earth etc. is.⁴¹

4.2 Two Kinds of Cessation

The second unconditioned factor mentioned in the *Pañcaskandhaka* is *apratisaṃkhyānirodha*, “cessation not [obtained through] consideration.” This and the following category, the “cessation [obtained through] consideration” (*pratisaṃkhyānirodha*) seem to be concepts that are of particular importance mainly within the framework of the theory that all factors exist (*sarvam asti*) on the three time levels of present, past and future. If one assumes that all future possibilities are “existent,” those of them that are not to become present in the end have to be “blocked” somehow. This condition is achieved through the application of the two entities *pratisaṃkhyā-* and *apratisaṃkhyānirodha*, both of which are capable of preventing the arising of a future factor. In the case of the first entity, the non-arising (of a contaminated factor) is attained by means of an antidote produced in the personal continuum of a person, and of the insight related to it. The *Pañcaskandhaka* explains the *pratisaṃkhyānirodha* as that “which is a cessation and that [which] is a separation. It is the permanent non-arising of the constituents [caused] by the antidote against a contamination.”⁴² In the definition found in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* the meaning of the term *pratisaṃkhyā* is specified in more detail:

Cessation [obtained through] consideration is a separation. Cessation [obtained through] consideration is a separation from impure factors. The analysis [or] consideration of the [four] noble truths of suffering etc. is a particular insight (*prajñā*); the cessation obtained through this [insight] is the cessation [obtained through] consideration. [The phrase “obtained through” is not mentioned], because the middle word is elided as in the expression “ox-cart” [used instead of “ox-drawn-cart”].⁴³

Vasubandhu then goes on to explain in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* that there is more than one *pratisaṃkhyānirodha*:

⁴¹ PSkV 4a4-b1: *na hy ākāśaṃ nāma kiñcid asty anyatra sapratigharūpābhāvamātrāt / avakāśaṃ ca sapratigham eva vastu svasminn avakāśe sapratighasyaiva tasmād apasaraṃ dadāti, nākāśaṃ / na hi tasmāt pradeśād rūpavad ākāśaṃ apasrtaṃ iti tasyāvakāśadānaṃ na yujyate / sapratighaṃ ca rūpaṃ svadeśe 'nyarūpasotyotpattiṃ pratibadhnāti nākāśaṃ / tasmād yatra yasya yasmin saty avakāśābhāvaḥ, yasminn asati tasya tatrāvakāśa itī tenaiva tasmāt sthānād apasaratā tasyāvakāśo dattah, nākāśeneti / tasmān nākāśaṃ pṛthivyādivan mahābhūtam.*

⁴² PSk 19.4f.: *yo nirodhaḥ / sa ca viśaṃyogaḥ / sa punaḥ kleśapratīpakṣeṇa skandhānām atyantam anutpādaḥ.* The first part of this definition is almost identical with the explanation of *pratisaṃkhyānirodha* found in AS₇ 62b6: *gang 'gog la de ni 'bral ba'o.*

⁴³ AKBh 3.24-4.2: *pratisaṃkhyānirodho yo viśaṃyogaḥ / yaḥ sāsravair dharmair viśaṃyogaḥ sa pratisaṃkhyānirodhaḥ / duḥkhādīnām āryasatyānām pratisaṃkhyānām pratisaṃkhyā prajñāviśeṣas tena prāpyo nirodhaḥ pratisaṃkhyānirodhaḥ / madhyapadalopād gorathavat.*

Is there only one “cessation [obtained through] consideration” of all impure factors? No. Instead, each [separation occurs] separately. The objects of separation are as many as the objects of conjunction. If it were otherwise, experiencing the cessation of the defilement which is abandoned by seeing the [truth of] suffering would result in experiencing [at the same time] the cessation of all defilements. It would be useless in this way to cultivate the remaining antidotes.⁴⁴

Sthiramati’s comments on the definition of *pratisamkhyānirodha* offered in the *Pañcaskandhaka* are partly related to this explanation from the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*. Sthiramati also states that consideration is “a particular insight” (*prajñāviśeṣa*), adding that this insight “belongs to the uninterrupted path”.⁴⁵ He then continues by stating that

[the cessation obtained through consideration] is obtained by means of consideration. [The phrase “obtained” is not mentioned] because the middle word is elided. [As for the phrase] “which is a cessation”, [it could lead to] the wrong consequence that it [is to be applied to] all cessation. Therefore it is said: “and that [which] is a separation”. In this way [this cessation] is distinguished from the other four cessations, since they are not characterized as separation. [This] separation indicates [the definition:] “it is the permanent non-arising of the constituents [caused] by the antidote against a contamination”.⁴⁶

Sthiramati also explains the way in which the contaminations are hindered from arising one by one (and not all in a single moment):

This basis [of personal existence] arises accompanied by all seeds of contaminations belonging to [the world of] the three spheres. Then, when a certain moment of the path, which is an antidote for a particular [contamination], appears on this path, this moment of the basis is not capable of producing another moment of the immediately following basis that would carry on the seed of the contamination that is being abandoned by this [very moment of the path], because it is the condition that hinders the arising of this [following moment of the basis]. However,

⁴⁴ *AKBh* 4,3-7: *kiṃ punar eka eva sarveṣāṃ sāsravāṇāṃ dharmāṇāṃ pratisamkhyānirodhaḥ / nety āha / kiṃ tarhi / pṛthak pṛthak / yāvanti hi saṃyogadravyāṇi, tāvanti viśaṃyogadravyāṇi / anyathā hi duḥkharśanaheyakleśanirodhasākṣātkaraṇāt sarvakleśanirodhasākṣātkriyā prasajyeta / sati caivaṃ śeṣapratipakṣabhāvanāvaiyarthyaṃ syāt.*

⁴⁵ *PSkV* 63a1: [...] *ānantaryamārgasaṅgrhītaḥ prajñāviśeṣa ity arthaḥ.*

⁴⁶ *PSkV* 63a1-3: *pratisamkhyayā prāpyo nirodho madhyapadalopāt / yo nirodha iti sarvanirodhaprasaṅga ity āha / sa ca viśaṃyoga iti / evaṃ hi śeṣebhyaś caturbhyo nirodhebhyo vyavacchinno bhavati, teṣāṃ avisaṃyogātmakatvāt / viśaṃyogaṃ eva nirāpayati / sa punar yaḥ kleśapratipakṣeṇa skandhānāṃ atyantam anupāda iti.*

[this moment] only becomes the cause of that state which is characterized by the separation from the seed of a contamination that is being abandoned by this [very antidote] since [other] conditions that are compatible with the arising of those [seeds that are not abandoned by this moment of the path] are [still] existent. It is to be understood that this moment of the path is the condition that is incompatible with the arising of another moment that would carry on the seed of the contamination that is being abandoned by this [very moment of the path]. It is[, however,] compatible with other [contaminations]. In this way, when the antidote for the smallest of the small of contaminations of the kind that is to be abandoned through [repeated] cultivation arises, this basis [of existence] becomes the cause for another moment that is characterized by the separation from all seeds of contaminations belonging to [the world of] the three spheres that are to be abandoned through an insight or [repeated] cultivation. In this way, is achieved the permanent non-arising [caused] by the antidote against a contamination of which the seed has been removed – in the sense that the basis for the contamination does not appear – and [the permanent non-arising] of the factors related to it. And this is the cessation [obtained through] consideration, [which] is described as separation.⁴⁷

In the case of the *apratisaṃkhyānirodha*, the future factor does not arise due to other reasons than *pratisaṃkhyā*, namely because of an insufficiency of causes.⁴⁸ This situation occurs, for instance, if a potentially perceivable object is not grasped by a sense perception because the respective sense faculty is occupied with another object. In this case, the first object is “lost” as a condition for the arising of its perception in the next future moment. This is because it cannot be perceived anymore as soon as it passes from the present to the past. The *apratisaṃkhyānirodha* apparently is the entity that blocks the arising of the (potentially possible) perception of this object that did not get into the scope of the sense faculty in the present moment and therefore did not become an appropriate condition for the emergence of its perception in the future moment. This example of the functioning of

⁴⁷ PSkV 63a3-b3: *ayaṃ hy āśrayo niravaśeṣatraidhātukleśabījānusyūtaḥ pravartate / tatra yasya yasya yo yo mārgakṣaṇaḥ pratipakṣaḥ, tasmīn mārga utpanne sa āśrayakṣaṇas tatpraheyakleśabījānugatam anantaryāśrayasya kṣaṇāntaram utpādayitum na śaknoti, tadutpattiviruddhapratyayasānnidhyāt / kiṃ tarhi tatpraheyakleśabījavyāvṛtyātmakasyaiva kāraṇaṃ bhavati, tadutpatyanugunapratyayasadbhāvāt / sa eva mārgakṣaṇas tatpraheyakleśabījānugatasya kṣaṇāntarasypattaye viguṇaḥ pratyayaḥ, itarasyānugūṇo vedītavyaḥ / evaṃ yāvad bhāvanāheyaṣya ṛdumṛdoḥ kleśaparakārasya pratipakṣa utpanne sa āśrayo niravaśeṣatraidhātukadarśanabhāvanā prahātavyakleśabījavyāvṛtyātmakasyaiva kṣaṇāntarasya kāraṇībhavati / evaṃ yasya yasya kleśasyāśrayāpravrīṭtito bījam uddhṛtaṃ bhavati, tasya tasya tatsamprayuktānāṃ ca dharmāṇāṃ kleśapratipakṣeṇātyantam anutpādaḥ prāpto bhavati / sa ca pratisaṃkhyānirodho viśaṃyogaś cety ucyate.*

⁴⁸ AKBh 4,12: *na hy asau pratisaṃkhyayā labhyate / kiṃ tarhi / pratyayaivaikalyāt.* See also PSkV 62a3: “The permanent non-arising of future factors due to an insufficiency of causes – this is the cessation not [obtained through] consideration” (*pratyayaivaikalyād anāgatānāṃ dharmāṇāṃ yo tyantam anutpādaḥ, so ’pratisaṃkhyānirodhaḥ*).

the *apratisaṃkhyānirodha* appears in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and is also mentioned in Sthiramati’s *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā*. The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* explains:

For example, for someone whose visual faculty and the mental organ are occupied with one particular visible object, [other] visible objects, sounds, odours, tastes and tangibles pass [from the present into the past]. [Therefore] the five kinds of perception which have the latter as their objects cannot arise, since [these perceptions] are not able to grasp their object when it is past. There is thus a cessation of these [perceptions], which is not [obtained through] consideration [but] due to the insufficiency of the cause [of arising].⁴⁹

Sthiramati seems to have the same condition in mind (and to draw on the passage in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*) when he explains:

For example, if for someone whose eye consciousness is engaged in [perceiving] one particular kind of a visible object other objects and other kinds of visible [entities] occur, then the five kinds of sense perceptions that have [these other entities] as their objects cannot arise. [This is] because, as for the present [entities], they cannot become immediately preceding conditions and, as for the past [entities], they cannot become objective conditions (for the present perceptions). Therefore, there is an *apratisaṃkhyānirodha* of these [perceptions].⁵⁰

In their definition of *apratisaṃkhyānirodha* the *Pañcaskandhaka* and the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* explain this category as that “which is a cessation but not a separation”, the first text adding that “it is the permanent non-arising of the constituents without the antidote against contaminations (*kleśa*).”⁵¹ The *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya* comments that this cessation is not a separation, because it does not eradicate evil

⁴⁹ *AKBh* 4,12-15: *yathaiharūpavyāsaktacakṣurmanaso yāni rūpāni śabdagandharasaspraṣṭavyāni cātyayante, tadāmbanaiḥ pañcabhīr vijñānakāyair na śakyam punar utpattum / na hi te satyā atītam viṣayam āmbayitum iti / ataḥ sa teṣāṃ apratisaṃkhyānirodhaḥ pratayavaikalayāt prāpyate*. Another example for *apratisaṃkhyānirodha* is given in the second chapter of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*: “The non-arising [of factors obtained] entirely without consideration, [merely] due to the absence of conditions – this is what is called ‘cessation not [obtained through] consideration’, as for instance [the non-arising] of a remainder of [life in] a [certain] homogeneous existential class in case one dies in between” (*AKBh* 92,7f.: *vinaiva pratisaṃkhyayā pratayavaikalayād anutpādo yaḥ so ’pratisaṃkhyānirodhaḥ / tadyathā nikāyasabhāgaśeṣasyāntarā maraṇe*).

⁵⁰ *PSKV* 62b5f.: *tadyathaiharūpaprakāravvyāsaktacakṣurvijñānasya yāni viṣayāntarāṇy utpattimanti rūpaprakārantarāṇi ca, tadāmbanaiḥ pañcabhīr vijñānakāyair na śakyam utpattum, vartamāneṣu samanantarapratayābhāvāt, atīteṣv āmbanapratayābhāvāt / atas teṣāṃ apratisaṃkhyānirodhaḥ prāpyate*.

⁵¹ *PSk* 19,1-3: *yo nirodhaḥ / na ca viṣayogaḥ / sa punar yo vinā kleśapratipakṣeṇa skandhānām atyantam anutpādaḥ; AS₇ 62b6: gang ’gog la ’bral ba ma yin pa’o*.

propensities (*anuśaya*).⁵² The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* states that “[it is] a different [type of] cessation, not [obtained through] consideration, which consists of the absolute hindering of arising: cessation not [obtained through] consideration is a cessation that is different from separation [and] which consists of the absolute hindering of the arising of future *dharmas*.”⁵³ The statement that this cessation (i.e. non-arising) is not a separation refers to the concept that blocking of the arising of a certain future factor, evidently a contamination, does not mean that this (contaminated) factor has been previously removed by the application of its antidote, and the person is permanently separated from it. Instead, it only indicates that a future factor is prevented from becoming present because the conditions necessary for its arising are not available in a certain moment. In his comments on this passage of the *Pañcaskandhaka*, Sthiramati adds that

as for [the phrase] “a separation”, if a seed exists its association with future factors is determined because it is their [general] nature to arise. [Their] permanent non-arising when their antidote has removed their seed from its place is the [*pratisamkhyā*]*nirodha*. It is said that the permanent non-arising of future factors, [which occurs] even though no previous mental process towards the removal of the seed has been developed due to an insufficiency of causes, is the cessation not [obtained through] consideration.⁵⁴

Further on in his commentary, Sthiramati analyses the meaning of the phrase “[cessation not obtained through consideration] is the permanent non-arising of the *skandhas* without the antidote against contaminations.” He explains that there is permanent non-arising of the arhat’s personal constituents (*skandha*), even though he still has seeds of beneficial and neutral *skandha* associated with another (i.e. a future) existence, and that one could assume that this is also a cessation not obtained through consideration. Sthiramati objects to this idea by stating that “this [non-arising of beneficial and neutral *skandhas* associated with a future existence] in spite of the presence of seeds of beneficial and neutral *skandhas* is not obtained without the antidote against contaminations.” Thus, if the contaminations had not ceased due to a *pratisamkhyā*, the conditions for the reappearance of these seeds (of beneficial and neutral factors) in a future existence would not have been removed.

⁵² ASBh 15,3: *yo nirodho na ca viśamyoḡa ity anuśayāsamuddhātāt.*

⁵³ AKBh 4,10-12: *utpādātyantavighno ’nyo nirodho ’pratisamkhyayā // anāgatānām dharmānām utpādasyātyantavighnabhūto viśamyoḡād yo ’nyo nirodhaḥ, so ’pratisamkhyānirodhaḥ.*

⁵⁴ PSkV 62a5f.: <*viśamyoḡa iti*> *śamyogo hy anāgatāir dharmair bīje sati teṣām utpattidharmatām upādāya vyavasthāpyate / tatpratipakṣeṇa svāśrayāt teṣām bīje ’poddhṛte yo ’tyantam anutpādah <so nirodhaḥ / tad etad uktaṃ bhavati / [...?] abuddhipūrvako ’pi pratyayavaikalyād anāgatānām dharmānām yo ’tyantam anutpādah, so ’pratisamkhyānirodhaḥ*>. (After *anutpādah* a longer passage has been omitted in the manuscript, which is rendered in PSkV_T 57b as *de ’gog pa’o // de ni ’di skad du sa bon bton la blo sngon du ma btang yang rkyen ma tshang bas ma ’ongs pa’i chos rnam sgtan mi sbye ba gang yin pa de so sor brtags pa ma yin pa’i ’gog pa’o zhes bstan par ’gyur ro.*)

Therefore, according to Sthiramati, this is a *pratisaṃkhyānirodha*, not an *apratisaṃkhyānirodha*. Sthiramati concludes that in this way both the state of *nirvāṇa* with remainder (*sopadhiśeṣa*) and *nirvāṇa* without remainder (*nirupadhiśeṣa*) are a *pratisaṃkhyānirodha*.⁵⁵ The *nirvāṇa* with remainder corresponds to the state of the arhat having seeds of beneficial and neutral *skandhas*, the one without a remainder is the cessation of the arhat’s *skandhas* after his death. Finally, Sthiramati explains the single components of the phrase “[cessation not obtained through consideration] is the permanent non-arising of the *skandhas* without the antidote against contaminations” in more detail:

The antidote against contaminations is understood here as being the pure path. As for “permanent non-arising”, the term “permanent” [is used] in order to differentiate [this non-arising] from the cessation [which follows] the arising [of factors] (i.e. impermanence) and from the one which is the “equipoise [of cessation]” (*nirodhasamāpatti*). The [latter] is non-arising, but it is not permanent because the mind and mental factors arise again. “Non-arising” [is different] from cessation that is impermanence (i.e. the cessation that follows the arising of a factor). Cessation that is impermanence is [the cessation] of a present [factor]. However, [the *apratisaṃkhyānirodha*] is not the non-arising of a present, but only of a future [factor].⁵⁶

The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* includes some further remarks on the two kinds of cessation which are not mentioned in the other texts. It explains, for instance, that there are four possibilities of occurrence of *pratisaṃkhyā-* and *apratisaṃkhyānirodha*:

1. Factors of which only the *pratisaṃkhyānirodha* is obtained, namely the impure factors which are past, present and certain to arise;
2. Factors of which only the *apratisaṃkhyānirodha* is obtained: pure conditioned factors which are not destined to arise;
3. Factors of which both is obtained, *pratisaṃkhyānirodha* and *apratisaṃkhyānirodha*: impure factors which are not destined to arise;

⁵⁵ PSKV 62a6-b2: <arhato nikāyasabhāgāntarasambaddhānām kuśalāvyaṅkṛtānām skandhānām saty api bīje ’ryantam anutpādaḥ> (omitted in the manuscript and rendered in PSKV_T 57b as *dgra bcom pa la ni ris gzhan dang ’brel ba’i dge dang / lung du ma bstan pa’i phung po rnams kyi sa bon yod bzhin du gtan mi skye ba*) *pratilabdha iti so ’py apratisaṅkhyānirodhaḥ prāpnotīty ata āha – sa punar yah kleśapratipakṣeṇa vinā skandhānām atyantam anutpāda iti / etad uktaṃ bhavati – ayaṃ hi saty api kuśalākuśalāvyaṅkṛta-*(read: *kuśalāvyaṅkṛta-*) *skandhabījasadbhāve na vinā kleśapratipakṣeṇa labhyata iti pratisaṅkhyānirodha evāyam, nāpratisaṅkhyānirodhaḥ / evaṃ sopadhiśeṣo nirupadhiśeṣa ca nirvāṇadhātuḥ pratisaṅkhyānirodha ity uktaṃ bhavati.*

⁵⁶ PSKV 62b2-4: *kleśapratipakṣo ’rānāsravo mārgo ’bhipretaḥ / atyantam anutpāda ity atyantagrahaṇam upapattisamāpattinirodhavyavacchedārtham / sa hy anutpādo bhavati, na tv atyantam, punaś cittacaittoṭpādasadbhāvāt / anutpāda ity anityatānirodhāt / anityatānirodho hi vartamānasya, na ca vartamānasyānutpādo ’sti, kiṃ tarhy anāgatasyaivēti.*

4. Factors of which neither *pratisaṃkhyānirodha* nor *apratisaṃkhyānirodha* is obtained: pure factors which are past, present and destined to arise.⁵⁷

This classification shows that *pratisaṃkhyānirodha* hinders only the occurrence of impure factors. This is because it is not reasonable to assume that a *pratisaṃkhyā*, an insight, hinders the arising of pure factors. In contrast, the *apratisaṃkhyānirodha* can stop the coming into existence of both, pure and impure, entities (the impure only if they are not destined to arise). In the first case the factors have either already arisen (being past or present) or they are destined to arise (because their conditions are available). Therefore, only a *pratisaṃkhyānirodha* achieved through the application of an antidote can stop their future existence (that is, can prevent them from becoming present). An *apratisaṃkhyānirodha*, which would be a non-arising due to the lack of conditions, is impossible in this case. Factors that have already arisen or which are automatically going to arise due to the existence of appropriate conditions cannot be hindered by an *apratisaṃkhyānirodha*. The second category involves pure factors for which there are no causes enabling them to arise.⁵⁸ The impure factors referred to in the third category are not destined to arise and therefore must have been removed before by means of an antidote. Therefore, there is a *pratisaṃkhyānirodha* of their occurrence in the future. As for their *apratisaṃkhyānirodha*, it probably occurs in the moments following their *pratisaṃkhyānirodha* because then there are no causes anymore for their future arising. In the last case, *pratisaṃkhyānirodha* is not possible because the factors are pure, and *apratisaṃkhyānirodha* is not applicable since they have already arisen or are certain to arise due to appropriate conditions.⁵⁹

Other notable explanations found in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* with regard to the two cessations are concerned with the presentation of divergent positions on this topic. In this context Vasubandhu mentions that

“another school says: The capacity of insight [is decisive] for the non-arising of the evil propensities (*anuśaya*). Therefore this [non-arising] is cessation [obtained through] consideration. ‘Cessation not [obtained through] consideration’ is the non-arising of suffering, which is only an insufficiency of evil propensities as conditions for the arising [of suffering] and therefore not a capacity of insight.”

⁵⁷ *AKBh* 4,15-19: *catuṣkoṭīkaṃ cātra bhavati / santi te dharmā yeṣāṃ pratisaṃkhyānirodha eva labhyate / tad-yathāhītapratyutpannotpattidharmāṇāṃ sāsravāṇāṃ / santi yeṣāṃ apratisaṃkhyānirodha eva / tadyathānutpattidharmāṇāṃ anāsravasamskṛtāṇāṃ / santi te yeṣāṃ ubhayaṃ / tadyathā sāsravāṇāṃ anutpattidharmāṇāṃ / santi yeṣāṃ nobhayaṃ / tadyathāhītapratyutpannotpattidharmāṇāṃ anāsravāṇāṃ iti.*

⁵⁸ *AKVṃ* 18,28-30 gives the example of someone abiding on one of the six stages consisting of *anāgamya*, *dhyānāntara*, and the four *dhyānas*, who in that moment possesses the *apratisaṃkhyānirodha* of the remaining five stages.

⁵⁹ For further explanations see *AKVṃ* 18,20-19,24.

Vasubandhu objects that this non-arising of suffering is not established without consideration – therefore it is “cessation [obtained through] consideration”. After this he mentions another divergent viewpoint: “‘Cessation not [obtained through] consideration’ is the subsequent non-existence of an arisen [factor] due to its spontaneous destruction.” According to Vasubandhu, this hypothesis results in “a cessation not [obtained through] consideration” which is impermanent since it is non-existent as long as the factor has not perished.⁶⁰ In the same chapter of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* the divergent viewpoint of the “Sautrāntikas” with regard to the nature of the unconditioned factors is discussed. At first Vasubandhu presents the following view:

The nature of this [factor called “cessation obtained through consideration”] is to be recognized only by the noble ones, each for himself. It is only possible to say that it is a distinct real entity which is eternal and beneficial and which is called separation from this [contamination] and “cessation [obtained through] consideration”.

However, according to Vasubandhu, the Sautrāntikas [say] that all these unconditioned [factors] are not real entities. They are not distinct entities like matter, feeling etc. [...] Cessation [obtained through] consideration is the cessation of the (future) arising of already produced evil propensities [and] the non-arising of any other by reason of the force of consideration. The non-arising independent of [the force of] consideration [and only] due to an insufficiency of causes is the “cessation not [obtained through] consideration”.⁶¹

4.3 Suchness (*tathatā*)

The last unconditioned factor to be discussed here is *tathatā*. Unsurprisingly, this category is not mentioned in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*. As already mentioned above, in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* three kinds of the *tathāta* are indicated: the suchness of beneficial, of non-beneficial, and of neutral factors. Only the first, however, is described in more detail, whereas the other two are simply said to be understood in a parallel way:

⁶⁰ AKBh 92,8-13: *nikāyāntarīyāḥ pumar āhuḥ / anuśayānām <an>utpattau* (Tib. *mi skye bar bya ba la*) *prajñāyāḥ sāmāthyam ato 'sau pratisaṃkhyānirodhaḥ / yas tu punaḥ duḥkhasyānutpādaḥ sa utpādakāraṇānuśayavaikalāyād eveti na tasmin prajñāyāḥ sāmāthyam asty ato 'sāv apratisaṃkhyānirodha itī / so 'pi tu nāntareṇa pratisaṃkhyāṃ sidhyatīti pratisaṃkhyānirodha evāsau / ya evotpannasya paścād abhāvaḥ sa eva svarasanirodhād apratisaṃkhyānirodha ity apare / asyāṃ tu kalpanāyām anītyo 'pratisaṃkhyānirodhaḥ prāpnoty avinaṣṭe tadabhāvāt.*

⁶¹ AKBh, 92,2-7: *āryair eva tatsvabhāvaḥ pratyātmavedyaḥ / etāvāt tu śakyate vaktum nityaṃ kuśalaṃ cāsti dravyāntaram / tadvisaṃyogaś cocyate pratisaṃkhyānirodhaś ceti / sarvaṃ evāsaṃskṛtam adravyam itī sautrāntikāḥ / na hi tad rūpavedanādivad bhāvāntaram asti / kiṃ tarhi / [...] utpannānuśayaṅmanirodhaḥ pratisaṃkhyābalenānyasyānutpādaḥ pratisaṃkhyānirodhaḥ / vinaiva pratisaṃkhyayā pratyaṣayavaikalāyād anutpādo yaḥ so 'pratisaṃkhyānirodhaḥ.* For another definition of *aprasaṃkhyānirodha*, provided in the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī* which also emphasizes the concept that this category is not a real entity but only an expression, see Kritzer 2005, p. 121.

What is the suchness of beneficial factors? It is the twofold essencelessness (*nairātmya*), emptiness (*sūnyatā*), the [realm] not associated with specific features (*animitta*), limit of existence (*bhūtaakoṭi*) and the ultimate (*paramārtha*). It is also the true reality of the factors (*dharmadhātu*). Why is suchness called suchness? Because it does not become anything else. Why is it called emptiness? Because pollution does not occur [there]. Why is it called “not associated with specific features”? Because it is the tranquility of specific features. Why is it called the limit of existence? Because it is the object of the correct [insight]. Why is it called ultimate? Because it is the object of true knowledge of the noble ones. Why is it the true reality of the factors? Because it is the cause of all factors of the śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas and buddhas. The suchness of the non-beneficial and of the neutral factors is to be understood in the same way as the suchness of beneficial factors.⁶²

The definition offered in the *PSk* is far less extensive than the one in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*: “[It is that] which is the true reality (*dharmatā*) of factors, the essencelessness of factors (*dharmānairātmya*).”⁶³ Notably, the *Pañcaskandhaka* does not mention the “twofold essencelessness” (but only the *dharmānairātmya*), nor the terms *sūnyatā*, *animitta*, *bhūtaakoṭi*, *paramārtha*, or *dharmadhātu*. Thus, we may assume that Vasubandhu did not draw on the wording of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* in this case.

In Sthiramati’s commentary only the very beginning seems to rely on the explanation given in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*: “It is ‘suchness’ because it does not become anything else.”⁶⁴ The remaining comments do not appear to be related to the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*. Notably, Sthiramati does not mention the threefold classification of the *tathatā* into the suchness of beneficial factors and so on. Obviously this system of presenting the true reality did not assert itself throughout the Yogācāra tradition. Sthiramati mainly paraphrases the single terms of Vasubandhu’s definition in his commentary:

“Of factors” means of matter, feeling, ideation, impulses, and consciousness.

“True reality” (*dharmatā*) is the [true] being of factors, [their] true essence

⁶² *AS_T* 62a8-b5: *chos dge ba rnam kyī de bzhin nyid gang zhe na / bdag med pa rnam pa gnyis dang / stong pa nyid dang / mtshan ma med pa dang / yang dag pa’i mtha’ dang / don dam pa ste / chos kyī dbyings kyang de yin no // ci’i phyir de bzhin nyid la de bzhin nyid ces bya zhe na / gzhan du mi ’gyur ba’i phyir ro // ci’i phyir stong pa nyid ces bya zhe na / kun nas nyon mongs pa mi rgyu ba’i phyir ro // ci’i phyir mtshan ma med pa zhes bya zhe na / mtshan ma nye bar zhi ba’i phyir ro // ci’i phyir yang dag pa’i mtha’ zhes bya zhe na / phyin ci log med pa’i dmigs pa yin pa’i phyir ro // ci’i phyir don dam pa zhes bya zhe na / ’phags pa’i ye shes dam pa’i spyod yul yin pa’i phyir ro // ci’i phyir chos kyī dbyings zhes bya zhe na / nyan thos dang / rang sangs rgyas dang/ sangs rgyas kyī chos thams cad kyī rgyu yin pa’i phyir ro // chos dge ba rnam kyī de bzhin nyid ji lta ba bzhin du chos mi dge ba rnam dang / lung du ma bstan pa rnam kyī de bzhin nyid kyang de bzhin (D kyang de bzhin; P om.) du blta bar bya’o.*

⁶³ *PSk* 19.7f.: *yā dharmāṇām dharmatā dharmānairātmyam*.

⁶⁴ *PSkV* 63b4: *ananyathātvena tathatā*.

(*yāthātmya*), [their] ultimate being (*bhūtaprakaśa*). Since factors also have the nature of being effects, being impermanence, and so on, therefore [the root text says:] “the essencelessness of factors”. The characteristic feature through which entities become objects of knowing (= mind) and speech is their self. Therefore, they are free from a self because they do not have that [self] as [their] intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*). Due to this, they are selfless (or “essenceless”).⁶⁵

Sthiramati’s interpretation of this essencelessness is of particular interest. He understands it as the fact that the factors are empty of their “imagined nature”: “[This essenceless] state of these [factors] is the essencelessness of the factors (*dharmānairātmya*). This is the emptiness of the factors of the imagined nature (*kalpitasvabhāvasūnyatā*).”⁶⁶

5. Conclusions

The passages of the *Pañcaskandhaka* and its commentary, the *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā*, discussed in the present paper show parallels with the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, and the *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya*. At the same time they also include notable divergences from these other works. When defining the category “feeling” (*vedanā*), for instance, Vasubandhu restricts himself to the explanation of the three kinds of pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral feelings. He does not mention any of the other characterizations, as for instance “physical” and “mental” feeling or feeling “based on craving”, described in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*. As already suggested by Sthiramati, a possible explanation for this omission could be that Vasubandhu tried to give a very condensed presentation of the topic in his *Pañcaskandhaka*, and therefore limited himself to the most important information.⁶⁷ Vasubandhu’s description of “ideation” (*saṃjñā*) in the *Pañcaskandhaka* also does not fully correspond to the definitions found in the other texts under discussion. The version transmitted in the Sanskrit manuscript available through the copy preserved in the China Tibetology Research Centre is extremely short and, notably, does not contain the classification of *saṃjñā* into various kinds (as found e.g. in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*), like, for example, the ideation of objects associated with specific features (*sanimitta*) etc. Three of these classes of *saṃjñā*

⁶⁵ PSKV 63b4-6: *dharmāṇām iti rūpavedanāsañjñāsaṃskāraviññānānām / dharmāṇām bhāvo dharmatā, yāthātmyam bhūtaprakaśaḥ / dharmāṇām kāryānityatādayo 'pi dharmatā vidyanta ity ata āha dharmānairātmyam iti / dharmā hi yena rūpeṇa jñānābhidhānāyor viṣayībhavanti, tat teṣām ātmā / tasmād ātmano nirgatā atatsvabhāvatvād iti nirātmānaḥ.*

⁶⁶ PSKV 63b6-64a1: *tadbhāvo dharmānairātmyam / tat punar bhāvānām kalpitasvabhāvasūnyatā.*

⁶⁷ See PSKV 16b5f.: *iha saṅksepasya vivakṣitatvāt sarvabhedānām ca svarūpād aprthaktvād āśrayādibhedena nokta iti* (“Since [Vasubandhu] intended to give a concise [presentation] and because all the classifications [of feeling] are not different with regard to their intrinsic nature, he did not discuss the classifications with respect to [their] basis etc.”).

appear in the Tibetan translation of the *Pañcaskandhaka*. Vasubandhu's enumeration of four unconditioned entities in the *Pañcaskandhaka* is obviously a compromise between the three unconditioned factors listed in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* on the one hand and the eight entities as found in the *Yogācārabhūmi* and in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* on the other. He probably adopted this group of three and adjusted it to the Yogācāra context of the *Pañcaskandhaka* by adding *tathatā* to it, a central philosophical concept of the Yogācāra tradition. However, Vasubandhu seems not to have relied directly on the explanations of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* when he defined the *tathatā* in the *Pañcaskandhaka*. The definition of the unconditioned factor "space" (*ākāśa*) is similar in the works under discussion with regard to its contents. However, the wording does not seem to be directly related. Of particular interest are the explanations of the two cessations, *pratisamkhyā*- and *apratīsamkhyānirodha*, which are very similar in the *Pañcaskandhaka* and the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*. In the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* the discussion of these categories, which prevent future entities from becoming present, is far more extensive. This might be due to the fact that the two cessations are of crucial importance in the context of the Sarvāstivāda theory that entities exist on all three levels of time. Remarkably, Sthiramati's comments on this topic are also rather lengthy and include, for instance, the notable remark that the *nirvāṇa* with remainder (*sopadhīśeṣa*) and the *nirvāṇa* without remainder (*nirupadhīśeṣa*) are both to be classified as "cessation [obtained through] consideration."

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- P Peking
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