Conceptualization and 'World-Making': A Study on Prapañca as an Imprint in Yogācāra Treatises[*]

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Abstract: The ontological reality of the world has been a controversial topic among different Buddhist schools. Specifically, the Yogācāra school interprets the question of world-making from an epistemological perspective. In the view of Yogācāra, the so-called world is not a substantial entity but rather a mental construct of the perceiver, where the process of conceptualization plays an essential role. The term *prapañca*, usually translated as 'conceptual proliferation' by scholars, refers to a proliferating process that constructs the perceptual world through discrimination and verbalization. It appears repeatedly in descriptions of defiled mentalities throughout Early to Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrines. However, its meanings do not remain consistent but change along with the philosophical development. Centring on this significant term, this paper starts with a preliminary investigation of the transformation of the connotations of *prapañca* in Mahāyāna. Then, it examines the occurrences of the term in a

peculiar imprint (*vāsanā*) in Yogācāra treatises: **nimitta-nāma-vi-kalpa-vyavahāra-prapañca-vāsanā*. An analysis of this imprint of *prapañca* demonstrates the Yogācāra account of the mechanism of the formation of a subjective world, and on top of that, the function of conceptualization and language in the establishment of intersubjective worldly experience.

1.   Introduction

The Yogācāra school is widely known as the school of 'mind-only' (Skt. *citta-mātratā*; Ch. *wei shi* 唯識; Tib. *sems tsam pa*) or 'manifestation-only' (Skt. *vijñapti-mātratā*), in which the existence of an external world is radically contested. Given the premised unreality of an outer world, the ontological discussion of world-making becomes groundless. Nevertheless, the Yogācāra school distinctively provides the answer to the topic from an epistemological perspective.

In the view of Yogācāra, the so-called world is not a substantial entity but rather a mental construct of the perceiver. Among a number of different accounts of the cognitive process, conceptualization is an essential step in forming the mental construct making up the 'world'. The term *prapañca*, usually translated as 'conceptual proliferation' by many modern scholars, refers to a proliferating process that creates the perceptual world through discrimination and verbalization. This paper deals with this term, which was already extensively used in the Early Buddhist canons, and focuses on its main connotational developments in Mahāyāna. This paper then taps into the functions of *prapañca* in the form of an imprint (*vāsanā*), as described in the Yogācāra treatises, in making a subjective world; and based on that, it examines the construction

of an intersubjective world which has shared aspects among different individuals. In short, the paper aims to demonstrate that, according to the Yogācāra account, the making of a 'world' is closely related to conceptualization and language.

The term *prapañca* (Pāli. *papañca*; Ch. *xi lun* 戲論; Tib. *spros pa*, *rnam par spros pa*) occurs throughout Buddhist doctrinal systems. Etymologically speaking, the term carries the meaning of 'spreading out' and 'manifoldness'.[1] In the Buddhist context, the term more frequently denotes a defiled mental state where conceptual activities set out and elaborate themselves without control. Ñāṇananda suggests understanding *prapañca* as a process of 'conceptual proliferation' or 'prolific conceptualization'[2], which has become the most widely adopted rendering of the term among later scholars.

A significant occurrence of the term in Early Buddhism can be found in the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta* in *Majjhima Nikāya*, in which the cognitive process is expounded to be of seven stages:

1. eye-consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇa*) arises upon the eye and the visible;
2. the sensory contact (*phassa*) of the three;
3. feeling (*vedanā*);
4. perception (*saññā*);
5. examining (*vitakka*);
6. **conceptual proliferation (*papañca*)**;
7. the overwhelming impact of conceptual proliferation (*papañca-saññā-saṇkhā*).[3]

At the sixth stage of the cognitive process, *papañca* comes up with

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[1]   Ñāṇananda, *Concept and Reality*, 4.

[2]   Ibid., 4–6, 11, 17, etc.

[3]   *MN* I 111, 35–112, 4: *Cakkhuñ-c' āvuso paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu-viññāṇaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso, phassapaccayā vedanā, yaṃ vedeti taṃ sañjānāti, yaṃ sañjānāti taṃ vitakketi, yaṃ vitakketi taṃ papañceti, yaṃ papañceti tatonidānaṃ purisaṃ papañcasaññāsaṅkhā samudācaranti atītānāgatapaccuppannesu cakkhuviññeyyesu rūpesu.*

remarkable importance to defile a bare and impersonal perception. As mentioned above, conceptual proliferation means an automatic process that sets off a variety of mental activities elaborating the bare sensation into concepts, perceptions, and objectifications based on memories from the past and imaginations for the future. It is the climax of two ripening pathways in the previous stages, i.e. ego-notion and verbal construction, leading to the mental suffering of swaying between past and future without seeing the present.[4]

As introduced above, *prapañca* expounded in the *Majjhima Nikāya* is a stage in the cognitive process that diversifies the simple sensory inputs into self-centred perception and experience, which causes suffering. This is an early account of conceptualization in the Buddhist teachings. It is particularly noteworthy that language, or verbal construction, plays an important role in the arising of *prapañca*. According to Ñāṇananda, conceptual activities presuppose the existence of language to the extent that thoughts can be regarded as sub-vocal speech.[5] Such emphasis on language in the conceptualization process is inherited and even more explicitly expressed in the Mahāyāna traditions.

2.   Transformations of the Connotations of Prapañca in Mahāyāna

Though it is clear that *prapañca* depicts a prolific process, the connotations and usages of the term transform along with the philosophical development from Early Buddhism to Mahāyāna. In the Mahāyāna context, the connotations of *prapañca* alter following two trends, as far as I observe. The first is an explicit inclination of the verbal-linguistic aspect over the mental aspect. The second is an expansion of the term *prapañca*'s scope, extending from individual mentality to the so-called 'world'.

Firstly, according to Wan, the connotation of *prapañca* in Early Buddhism is mainly focused on mental action while in Mahāyāna

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[4]   Karunadasa, *Early Buddhist Teachings*, 62.
[5]   Ñāṇananda, *Concept and Reality*, 5.

it is more on the speech act.[6] This argument can find its backing in the *Vastusaṃgrahaṇī* section of the *Yogācārabhūmi (YBh)*, where *prapañca* is explicitly defined as a type of non-beneficial verbalization:

> One should know that the utterance with regard to thinking about and conceptualizing non-beneficial [things] is called *prapañca*.[7]

Another passage from the *Cintāmayībhūmi* in the Basic Section of *YBh* also shows a close connection between *prapañca* and language:

> One should know that there are three kinds of *prapañca*, which are: three types of discourse-bases are called *prapañca*; talking about four types of conventional expressions is also called *prapañca*; the investigations that give rise to words are also called *prapañca*.[8]

Secondly, as argued by Schmithausen after examining the Yogācāra treatises from a philological approach, the term *prapañca* can be understood in both subjective and objective ways. On one hand, it indicates the action of diversification or elaboration; on the other hand, it can also be understood as the resultant product of the elaborating process per se.[9] That is to say, in Yogācāra texts, the

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6   Wan, 'Tan *zhonglun bensong* zhong "xilun" zhi sanyi (yi)', 6.

7   *Yujia shidi lun*, *T* no. 1579, 30: 91.815a27–28: 當知此中能引無義思惟分別所發語言, 名為戲論; *D* 4039, sems tsam, zi 220a7: *de la don dang ldan pa ma yin pa sems shing rtog la smra ba gang yin pa de ni spros pa zhes bya'o.*

8   *Yujia shidi lun*, *T* no. 1579, 30: 19.386c12–15: 當知戲論略有三種. 謂三種言事名為戲論. 於四種言說有所宣談亦名戲論. 能發語言所有尋伺亦名戲論; *D* 4035, sems tsam, tshi 257b7–258a1: *rtog pa de yang rnam pa gsum du rig par bya ste / bsnyad pa'i gzhi gsum po dag la yang rtog pa zhes bya'o / tha snyad bzhi brjod pa la yang rtog pa zhes bya'o / tshig 'byung bar byed pa'i rtog pa la yang rtog pa zhes bya'o.* Notably, in Tibetan, the subject under discussion is *rtog pa*, normally corresponding to *vikalpa* or *vitarka*, but not *prapañca*; such discrepancies among Chinese and Tibetan translations will be discussed in my future research.

9   Schmithausen, *Ālayavijñāna*, 509–10.

connotational scope which the term *prapañca* covers is broadened: it is not only a proliferating action but also the proliferated outcome. Against the backdrop of mind-only, the outcome of diversified perception can be appreciated as the whole world that is perceived and experienced. In this sense, conceptual proliferation is to be regarded as the very generator of a subjective world of perception and experience.

From the connotational development of *prapañca* in Mahāyāna, it can be observed that *prapañca* mediates language and the perceptual world. In Mahāyāna, the term is no longer confined to the domain of mental activities; instead, it is more frequently used concerning its verbal-linguistic aspects. Moreover, in the Yogācāra treatises, it also gains a broader meaning as being the product of conceptual proliferation, i.e. the world, which implies the significance of linguistic functions in making the experiential world. In the next section, we will take a step further and investigate a particular term to advance our understanding of the relationship between conceptualization, language, and world-making.

3. *Prapañca* as an Imprint and its Relation with *Ālayavijñāna*

Now, we will focus on a specific case in Yogācāra where *prapañca* appears in the form of an imprint (Skt. *vāsanā*; Ch. *xiqi* 習氣; Tib. *bag chags*). Our discussion will centre a 'core passage' from the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra* (*SNS*) which indicates an intimate interaction between the imprint of *prapañca* and the storehouse consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*). Investigating this imprint will proffer us further insight into how conceptualization and language facilitate the formation of a subjective world.

In the Viśālamati Chapter of *SNS*, a lengthy expression, **nimitta-nāma-vikalpa-vyavahāra-prapañca-vāsanā* (NNVVP-Imprint for short), is introduced as one of the two appropriations on which the mind-containing-all-seeds, i.e. *ālayavijñāna*, depends for incarnation and subsequent thriving:

...there is first a twofold appropriation: 1) the appropriation of the physical sense faculties together with their supports, and 2) the appropriation of mental imprints producing the elaboration of conventional expressions with regard to phenomenal appearances, names, and conceptualizations (*nimitta-nāma-vikalpa-vyavahāra-prapañca-vāsanā). In dependence upon this twofold appropriation, the mind containing all the seeds matures, merges [with the embryo], grows, increases, and expands.[10]

In this 'core passage', the NNVVP-Imprint, along with the sense faculties with supports, constitute the two appropriations that *ālayavijñāna* holds throughout its evolving and transforming. Given the Yogācāra presumption that *ālayavijñāna* is the substratum of the faculties ensuring life-continuity, it can be implied that the NNVVP-Imprint, on which *ālayavijñāna* depends, plays an indispensable role in supporting the continuity and development of the life-stream.

3.1. The Problem of the Segmentation of the Expression

So, what does the compound *nimitta-nāma-vikalpa-vyavahāra-prapañca-vāsanā* mean in and of itself? This expression stands out, for it embodies a list of linguistic and conceptual notions: *nimitta* (sign, appearance), *nāman* (name), *vikalpa* (conception, discrimination), *vyavahāra* (conventional expressions), *prapañca* (proliferation, elaboration, diversity), and *vāsanā* (imprint). Altogether, the term appears in Chinese as *xiang ming fenbie yanshuo xilun xiqi* 相名分別言說戲論習氣, in Tibetan as *mtshan ma dang ming*

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[10] *Jie shenmi jing*, *T* no. 676, 16: 1.692b11–13: 於中最初一切種子心識成熟, 展轉, 和合, 增長, 廣大. 依二執受: 一者, 有色諸根及所依執受; 二者, 相名分別言說戲論習氣執受; *D* 106, mdo sde, ca 12b1–2: *der dang por 'di ltar len pa rnam pa gnyis po rten dang bcas pa'i dbang po gzugs can len pa dang / mtshan ma dang ming dang rnam par rtog pa la tha snyad 'dogs pa'i spros pa'i bag chags len pa la rten nas / sa bon thams cad pa'i sems rnam par smin cing 'jug la rgyas shing 'phel ba dang yangs par 'gyur ro*; translated by the Buddhavacana Translation Group (Vienna) for the 84000 project.

dang rnam par rtog pa la tha snyad 'dogs pa'i spros pa'i bag chags, and is reconstructed into Sanskrit as **nimitta-nāma-vikalpa-vya-vahāra-prapañca-vāsanā*.

As an extreme example of a long-winded Sanskrit compound noun, **nimitta-nāma-vikalpa-vyavahāra-prapañca-vāsanā* demonstrates a term list of which the grammatical hierarchy is unclear. The same situation happens in the Chinese translation, which is simply a verbatim rendering of its Sanskrit counterpart. On the other hand, the Tibetan translation attempted to make clear its grammatical structure by inserting certain particles. As a result, modern scholars render the compound in various ways, relying on the different sources that they use. To avoid the potential misunderstanding caused by the ambiguity of its grammatical structure, I collect different ways of segmentation that appear in the modern translations of the expression. By comparing these translations, I aim to figure out the most plausible interpretation of the compound.

Segmentation 1: NN-V-VP-Imprint
The first segmentation of the term is found in a modern translation from Chinese.

> Keenan: 'the propensity (*vāsanā*) toward verbal (*vyavahāra*) fabrication (*prapañca*) in discriminating (*vikalpa*) images (*nimitta*) and words (*nāman*)'.[11]

This segmentation takes *vikalpa* as the action of discriminating towards *nimitta* and *nāman*. It also combines *vyavahāra* and *prapañca* together as 'verbal fabrication'.

Segmentation 2: NNV-V-P-Imprint
In contrast to the Sanskrit and Chinese, the Tibetan source provides indicative particles (underlined) to clarify the grammatical structure of the compound: *mtshan ma (nimitta) dang ming (nāman) dang rnam par rtog pa (vikalpa) la tha snyad 'dogs pa (vyavahāra)'i spros pa*

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[11]   Keenan, *Scripture*, 27–28.

(prapañca)'i bag chags (vāsanā). The particle '*dang*' linking up *nimitta*, *nāman*, and *vikalpa* shows the equivalence of the three in their grammatical hierarchy. Moreover, the genitive particle ''*i*' inserted between *vyavahāra*, *prapañca*, and *vāsanā* allows space for diverse interpretations. Below are several modern translations based on the Tibetan canon which show a homogenous understanding of the structure.

> Schmithausen: 'the impression of the diversity (/proliferous involvement in) the everyday usage of phenomena, names, and conceptions'.[12]

> 84000: 'mental imprints producing the elaboration of conventional expressions with regard to phenomenal appearances, names, and conceptualizations'.[13]

> Powers: 'the appropriation of predispositions which proliferate conventional designations with respect to signs, names, and concepts'.[14]

Segmentation 3: NNV-VP-Imprint
The following example agrees with the above translations concerning the parallel structure among *nimitta*, *nāman*, and *vikalpa*, but suggests the grammatical equivalence of *vyavahāra* and *prapañca*.

> Yamabe: 'the imprint of the designations (*vyavahāra*) and frivolous thoughts (*prapañca*) on the objective images (*nimitta*), names (*nāman*), and conceptualization (*vikalpa*)'.[15]

Comparing the three ways of segmentation, I am inclined to adopt the second one. The parallel relation between *nimitta*, *nāman*, and *vikalpa* can be justified with more certainty, for they constitute three defiled elements of the 'five *vastu*',[16] which is an early Yogācāra

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[12] Schmithausen, *Ālayavijñāna*, 71.
[13] See footnote 11.
[14] Powers, *Wisdom of Buddha*, 71.
[15] Yamabe, 'Position of Conceptualization', 479.

categorization that capsulates all aspects of existence.[17] The relation between *vyavahāra* and *prapañca* is more difficult to decide, and a closer philological examination of the two terms is required. Notwithstanding, considering the genitive particle between them in Tibetan, a parallel relation is less likely. Therefore, I understand NNVVP-Imprint in accordance with the second way of segmentation, i.e. 'the imprint of proliferation consisting in the conventional usage of signs, names, and conceptions'; in brief, 'the imprint of proliferation (**prapañca-vāsanā*)'.

Notes on Other Possibilities

Lastly, a passage from the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha (MSg)* describing *parikalpa* (illusion, imagination) might suggest another possibility:

> It imagines [in the sense of conceiving the] object by means of the name (*ming, nāman*), of grasping the characteristics (*mtshan ma, nimitta*) in the dependent nature, of sticking to them by means of wrong views, of activating speech by means of *vikalpas* (*rnam par rtog pa*), of applying conventional expressions (*tha snyad 'dogs pa, vyavahāra*) by means of the four kinds of conventions regarding seeing[, hearing, thinking and perceiving] and of superimposing existence on a non-existent object.[18]

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[16]   *Yujia shidi lun*, *T* no. 1579, 30: 13.345b19–20: 復有方廣大乘五事. 謂 相, 名, 分別, 真如, 正智; English translation: Moreover, there are five categories (*vastu*) in Mahāyāna, which are appearance (*nimitta*), name (*nāman*), conceptualization (*vikalpa*), true reality (*tathatā*), and right knowledge (*samyagjñāna*).

[17]   Kramer, *Kategorien der Wirklichkeit*, 4.

[18]   *MSg* 32 (16.3): *ming gis dmigs pa dang / gzhan gyi dbang gi ngo bo nyid la der mtshan mar 'dzin pa dang / lta bas de la mngon par zhen pa dang / rnam par rtog pa rnams kyis ngag kun nas slong ba dang / mthong ba la sogs pa tha snyad bzhi po dag gis tha snyad 'dogs pa dang / med pa'i don la yod do zhes sgro 'dogs pas kun tu rtog go*; translated by Kramer, 'Conceptuality and Non-conceptuality', 324.

In this passage, *nimitta*, *nāman*, *vikalpa*, and *vyavahāra* are equally expounded as the functions of *parikalpa*. We will introduce in Section 3.2 that the NNVVP-Imprint is also known as *parikalpi-ta-svabhāvābhiniveśa-vāsanā*, which implies that *parikalpa* embodies the characteristics of *nimitta*, *nāman*, *vikalpa*, and *vyavahāra*. This possibility then suggests a fourth way of segmentation: NNVV-P-Imprint, and the corresponding translation would be: 'the imprint of the proliferation of sign, names, concepts, and conventional expressions'. A study on the connotational relation between *prapañca* and *abhiniveśa* might provide clues for the symmetry of *nimitta-nāma-vikalpa-vyavahāra-prapañca-vāsanā and *parikalpi-ta-svabhāvābhiniveśa-vāsanā*. This will be preliminarily examined in Section 3.3.

The problem of the fourth segmentation is that it does not coincide with the Tibetan translation perfectly and that the other two functions of *parikalpa*, namely 'wrong views' and 'superimposing existence', are not taken into account. However, considering the forthcoming '*prapañca*' in the compound, we can probably make a deduction in this way: *prapañca* contains the connotations of 'wrong views' and 'superimposing existence', and this calls up a fifth possible way to segment, i.e. N-N-V-V-P-Imprint ('the imprint of sign, names, concepts, conventional expressions, and proliferation'), where the first five elements are evenly listed. More terminological evidence is nonetheless needed to support this conjecture.

Despite the abovementioned possibilities, the second segmentation still has the strongest justification from the Tibetan canon. Therefore, I will mainly adopt the second segmentation for further analysis while considering the other possibilities when appropriate.

3.2. Other Occurrences of the *Prapañca*-Imprint in Yogācāra Treatises

The same framework of the twofold appropriations, i.e. the physical faculties with their corresponding supports in the physical organs of the body and the imprint of *prapañca*, reappears in the

Viniścayasaṃgrahaṇī (VinSg) section of *YBh*. The NNVVP-Imprint is remarkably renamed into *parikalpita-svabhāvābhiniveśa-vāsanā* (PSA-Imprint for short). Here, instead of being the basis of the reincarnation and thriving of *ālayavijñāna* as indicated in *SNS*, the twofold appropriations are described as cognitive objects of the storehouse consciousness:

> ...*ālayavijñāna* processes due to two kinds of cognitive objects: the first is inwardly cognizing the appropriations, and the second is outwardly cognizing the non-delineated receptacle world. Inwardly cognizing the appropriations means that [it] can cognize 1) the imprint of falsely attaching to the imagined nature [of reality] (*parikalpita-svabhāvābhiniveśa-vāsanā*) and 2) all sense faculties and their supports... Outwardly cognizing the non-delineated receptacle world means that [it] can cognize the basis. Because of *ālayavijñāna*'s inward cognition of the appropriations, [its outward cognition] is uninterrupted all the time. The receptacle world is just like the luminosity which depends on the fat and wick when flaming...[19]

In this passage, *ālayavijñāna* is explicated to cognize objects inwardly as well as outwardly. The twofold appropriations, i.e. the sense faculties with supports and the PSA-Imprint, are the inner cognitive objects. Notably, the outward cognition of the receptacle world is said to be based on the two inner appropriations in the way that the light of a candle relies on the wick and fat. In other words, perception of an external world is not possible without the two appropriations.

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[19]   *Yujia shidi lun*, *T* no. 1579, 30: 51.580a2–12: 云何建立所緣轉相? 謂: 若略說阿賴耶識, 由於二種所緣境轉. 一由了別內執受故, 二由了別外無分別器相故. 了別內執受者, 謂能了別遍計所執自性妄執習氣, 及諸色根根所依處. 此於有色界, 若在無色, 唯有習氣執受了別, 了別外無分別器相者, 謂能了別依止, 緣內執受阿賴耶識故, 於一切時無有間斷. 器世間相, 譬如燈焰生時, 內執膏炷, 外發光明. 如是阿賴耶識, 緣內執受緣外器相. 生起道理, 應知亦爾; translated by me with reference to Schmithausen's (*Ālayavijñāna*, 90–91) and Waldron's (*Buddhist Unconscious*, 179) translations.

Along with the sense faculties and their supports, the imprint of falsely attaching to the imagined nature of reality implements a mundane cognition of a 'world'.

Two questions can be derived from this quotation: First, in what way can NNVVP-Imprint be renamed into PSA-Imprint? Second, why is the role of the twofold appropriations with regard to *ālayavijñāna* expounded differently, being the basis and the cognitive objects of the latter, respectively, in *SNS* and *VinSg*? We will come back to these questions in Section 3.3.

Within the later Yogācāra treatises, the expression NNVVP-Imprint sporadically appears wholly or partially, either as a simple quotation—such as in the *Mahāyānasaṃgrahabhāṣya*, or being further elaborated—such as in the *Cheng weishi lun* 成唯識論. Specifically, the passage in the *Cheng weishi lun* sheds light on the understanding of the NNVVP-Imprint in relation to *ālayavijñāna*:

> There are two kinds of appropriations: 1) the seeds and 2) the body with sense faculties. The seeds refer to the imprint of phenomenal appearances, names, and conceptualizations (*nimitta-nāma-vikalpa-vāsanā*). The body with sense faculties refers to the sense faculties and their supports.[20]

In the above passage, one can easily detect the framework of the twofold appropriations, where the NNVVP-Imprint is succinctly brought up as *nimitta-nāma-vikalpa-vāsanā*. It is noteworthy that Xuanzang explicitly equates the NNVVP-Imprint with 'the seeds', which corresponds with the description of *prapañca* as the synonym of 'seeds' in the Basic Section of *YBh*.[21] If the equation between the 'imprint of *prapañca*' and the 'seeds' is established, then it can be implied with certainty that conceptualization and language play a fundamental and dominant role in forming the individual consciousness of sentient beings as well as their perceptual world.

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[20]   *Cheng weishi lun*, *T* no. 1585, 31: 2.10a14–16: 執受有二, 謂諸種子及有根身. 諸種子者, 謂諸相名分別習氣. 有根身者, 謂諸色根及根依處.

3.3. Questions concerning the *Prapañca*-Imprint

In this section, I attempt to address the questions that arise.

Question 1: The symmetry between **nimitta-nāma-vikalpa-vya-vahāra-prapañca-vāsanā* (NNVVP-Imprint) and *parikalpita-sv-abhāvābhiniveśa-vāsanā* (PSA-Imprint)

In the *MSg* passage cited in Section 3.1, *nimitta*, *nāman*, *vikalpa*, and *vyavahāra* are listed as functions of *parikalpa*. Therefore, we can first find a connection between NNVV and PS.

More interestingly, a passage from a Madhyamaka commentary, *Mūlamadhyamakavṛttyakutobhayā*, sheds light on the relation between *prapañca*, *vyavahāra*, and *abhiniveśa*:

> These conceptions (*vikalpa*) arise from conceptualization (*prapañca*), because they arise from conceptualization (*prapañca*) characterized by adherence (*abhiniveśa*) to the truth of verbal habits (*vyavahāra-satya*).[22]

Thus, it is indicated that the characteristic of *prapañca* is the *abhiniveśa* towards *vyavahāra-satya* which is also known as the conventional truth. In that sense, a link between VP and A can be drawn.

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[21]   *Yujia shidi lun*, *T* no. 1579, 30: 2.284c10–14: 又諸種子, 乃有多種差別之名：所謂名'界'、名'種姓'、名'自性'、名'因'、名'薩迦耶'、名'戲論'、名'阿賴耶'、名'取'、名'苦'、名'薩迦耶見所依止處'、名'我慢所依止處'．如是等類, 差別應知; English translation: Moreover, seed (*bīja*) has a variety of different names, which are element (*dhātu*), spiritual affinity (*gotra*), self-nature (*prakṛti*), cause (*hetu*), *satkāya*, *prapañca*, *ālaya*, grasping (*upādāna*), suffering (*duḥkha*), the basis of *satkāya* (*satkāyadṛṣṭyadhiṣṭhāna*), the basis of self-conceit (*asmimānādhiṣṭhāna*), and such variety should be known.

[22]   P 5229, dbu ma, tsa 82a1–2; D 3829, dbu ma, tsa 70a4–5: *rnam par rtog pa de dag ni spros pa las 'byung ste / tha snyad kyi bden pa la mngon par zhen pa'i mtshan nyid kyi spros pa las 'byung ba'i phyir ro*; translated by Saito, '*Prapañca* in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*', 3.

Thereupon, the connotation of the NNVVP-Imprint turns out to be symmetric to that of the PSA-Imprint.

Question 2: The relation between NNVVP-Imprint, PSA-Imprint, and Seeds

It has been introduced that NNVVP-Imprint is renamed into PSA-Imprint in *VinSg* under the framework of twofold appropriations. Moreover, the *Cheng weishi lun* explicitly explicates seeds as the **nimitta-nāma-vikalpa-vāsanā*. This is not an innovative interpretation of Xuanzang, since, in *VinSg*, it is also expounded that:

> What is the concise description of *bīja*? It is the *vāsanā* of the attachment to *parikalpita-svabhāva* of all dharmas.[23]

This passage fills in the final piece of the puzzle and completes an equation:

$$\text{NNVVP-Imprint} = \text{PSA-Imprint} = \text{Seeds}$$

Question 3: The interactions between the twofold appropriations and *ālayavijñāna*

In *SNS*, the twofold appropriations are described as the basis of *ālayavijñāna* for reincarnation and further thriving, while in *VinSg*, the appropriations work as the cognitive objects of *ālayavijñāna* when it processes. In which sense are these two functions, i.e. the basis and the cognitive objectives, compatible with each other?

A passage from the *Cheng weishi lun*, which appears right after the quotation in Section 3.2, provides an answer:

> ...Appropriations and perceptual fields are both [*ālayavijñāna*'s]

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[23] **bījasamāsavyavasthānam katamat | yālayavijñāne sarvadharmāṇāṃ parikalpitasvabhāvābhiniveśavāsanā*; reconstructed and translated by Yamabe, 'Position of Conceptualization', 480.

cognitive objects. When the self-body of *ālayavijñāna* arises upon the power of causes and conditions, it transforms inwardly into seeds and the body with sense faculties and outwardly into the receptacle world, i.e. it takes what it transforms into as what it cognizes, as defining activities arise on that account.[24]

The passage significantly demonstrates a recursive three-layered relationship between the twofold appropriations and *ālayavijñāna*:

1. First, they are what *ālayavijñāna* transforms into.
2. Second, they are what *ālayavijñāna* appropriates and depends on.
3. Third, they are what *ālayavijñāna* cognizes.

Altogether, the two appropriations are performers in a monodrama of *ālayavijñāna*—they are created by it, and in return, buttress its processing and become its cognitive objects. More importantly, they work as the basis of the individual's perception of an external world. Being one of the two appropriations, the imprint of *prapañca* testifies to the significance of conceptualization and language in worldly existence, as it fuels the endless cycle of life and death as well as generates a subjective perceptual world. Although far from conclusive, this study on the imprint of *prapañca* sketches the connotational connections among several important concepts in Yogācāra which are essential for an explanation of the process of world-making.

4. Subjective and Intersubjective World-Making

In the previous sections, we have discussed the role of conceptualization and language in forming a perceptual world. Based on *ālayavijñāna*'s appropriations on the imprint of *prapañca* as well

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24   *Cheng weishi lun*, *T* no. 1585, 31: 2.10a17–20: 執受及處, 俱是所緣. 阿賴耶識, 因緣力故, 自體生時, 內變為種, 及有根身; 外變為器, 即以所變為自所緣. 行相仗之, 而得起故.

as the sense faculties with supports, perception of an outer world is constructed. Given the background of mind-only, the world-making process has been established epistemologically on an individual level.

However, different individuals have diverse imprints of conceptualization. In that case, why is there commonness in the receptacle world that we perceive? To answer this question, it is pertinent to touch on the concept of collective karma (Skt. *sādhāraṇa-karman*; Ch. *gong ye* 共業; Tib. *las thun mong ba*). According to the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*,

> What is collective karma? It is the karma which can diversify the receptacle world.[25]

The features that are commonly experienced can also be understood from the perspective of seeds, as it is said in *MSg*:

> The conspecific characteristics [of *ālayavijñāna*] are the seeds [that produce] the receptacle world.[26]

Collective karma is the cause of the receptacle world which is instantiated in geographical features such as mountains and rivers that are perceived in common by different individuals. One may further ask: how does the collective karma arise? An interesting argument made by Waldron is that collective karma is shaped by the conceptual and linguistic aspects embodied in the imprint of *prapañca*.[27] According to Waldron, intersubjectivity is due to collective karma, when collective karma is influenced by the imprint of conceptualization and language. As previously discussed, the imprint of *prapañca* facilitates the construction of a subjective world. To take a step further, this linguistic and conceptual imprint can permeate among different individuals through the communicative

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[25] *Dacheng apidamo ji lun*, *T* no. 1605, 31: 4.679b25–26: 云何共業? 若業能令諸器世間種種差別.

[26] *She dacheng lun ben*, *T* no. 1594, 31: 1.137b11–12: 共相者, 謂器世間種子.

[27] Waldron, *Buddhist Unconscious*, 168–69.

power of language, thus generating similar karma among them. Based on this collective karma, an intersubjective world is created by those sentient beings. This hypothesis may also explain why the world is differently experienced among beings in different realms: it is because they do not share the same way of conceptualization.

5.   Conclusion

In conclusion, Yogācāra provides a world-making model from the perspective of conceptualization and language. On a subjective level, the imprint of *prapañca*, the tendency to diversify and conceptualize, accompanies a being throughout the processing of *ālayavijñāna*, enabling it to perceive an external world. On an intersubjective level, conceptualization and language connect among different individuals and generate collective karma among them; as a result, a commonly shared receptacle world is made.

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Abbreviations

84000   84000 Buddhist Texts Translation Project (https://84000. co/).
D   Derge Edition of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon. Digitalized by the Buddhist Digital Resource Center (https://library.bdrc.io/).
MN   The *Majjhima-Nikāya*, vol. I. See Secondary Sources, Trenckner, eds.
MSg   *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* 攝大乘論本. See Secondary Sources, Lamotte, eds.
P   Peking Edition of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon. Digitalized by the Buddhist Digital Resource Center (https://library.bdrc.io/).
SNS   *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra* 解深密經.
T   Taishō shinshū daizokyō 大正新脩大藏經. See Secondary

Sources, Takakusu and Watanabe, eds.

VinSg *Viniścayasaṃgrahaṇī* Section of *Yogācārabhūmi* 瑜伽師地
論·攝抉擇分.

YBh *Yogācārabhūmi* 瑜伽師地論.

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