

Critical Reflections on Abiding-Places in the *Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*

TSAI Yao-ming

TSAI Yao-ming, professor of philosophy at National Taiwan University, received his Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies in 1997 from the University of California, Berkeley. His teaching and research focus on Buddhist philosophy as well as philosophy of life. He is the author of four books, *The Teachings of Prajñāpāramitā and the Purification of the Buddha-field* (2001), *An Open Path for Constructing Buddhology* (2006), *Research Methods and Academic Resources for Buddhist Studies* (2006), *Philosophy of Life and Worldview from the Perspective of Buddhist Teachings* (2012), and the translator of *Readings in World Civilizations V: Classics of Buddhist Civilizations* (2017), and *A Translation and Textual Analysis of the Sanskrit Ārya-Mahā-Māyūrī Vidyā-Rājñī* (2021). His current teaching and research are concerned with Buddhist perspectives on the tough issues of space-time, bioethics, gender, animals, and meditative practices.

E-mail: tsaiyt@ntu.edu.tw

International Journal of Buddhist Thought & Culture Vol.31. No.2 (December 2021): 29–57

© 2021 Academy of Buddhist Studies, Dongguk University, Korea

<https://doi.org/10.16893/IJBTC.2021.12.31.2.29>

The day of submission: 2021.10.29.

Completion of review: 2021.11.23.

Final decision for acceptance: 2021.12.17.

Abstract

This article focuses on the real abiding of the mind-body complex demonstrated in the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā with an emphasis on how Buddhist teachings explore the notion of abiding-places or temporary residences in one lifetime. The key findings of this article can be summarized in the following key points. First, any abiding-place enduring for long lifespans, including those temporary residences in one lifetime, are impermanent and devoid of own-being. Second, in terms of an abiding-place per se, none of the abiding-place is qualified to be real abiding-place for the mind-body complex due to the lack of own-being. Third, the misconception that the mind-body complex can permanently settle in a fixed abiding-place not only leads to emotional fluctuations, but also lays a preposterous emphasis on environmental surroundings. Fourth, bodhisattvas cultivate prajñāpāramitā so their mind-body complexes can abide rightly. Fifth, bodhisattvas channel sentient beings to the real abiding of the mind-body complex through helping sentient beings relieve suffering and abide in any of the Three Paths of cultivation, i.e., śrāvakayāna, pratyekabuddhayāna, and bodhisattvayāna.

Key words: Abiding-places, Absence of own-being, Reality, *prajñāpāramitā*, the *Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*

Introduction

This article focuses on the real abiding of the mind-body complex demonstrated in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (*Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, also *4th Assembly of the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras*), with an emphasis on how Buddhist teachings systematically investigate the notion of abiding-places or temporary residences in one lifetime. In addition, the following question is also examined: How can the mind-body complex be really abided, especially given its process of fluctuations of assemblage (*sāmagrī*) and dismantlement (*vi-sāmagrī*)?

Elucidation of Key Concepts

Three key concepts, namely abiding-places, absence of own-being, and real abiding of the mind-body complex will be defined so as to provide a solid foundation for discourse analysis.

Abiding-places and Temporary Residences in One Lifetime

Abiding-places or residing-places refer to the places or locations where sentient beings live. An abiding-place can be a piece of land, house, water region, or even the sky which might differ from nationality and cannot be automatically regarded as any nation or territory. The summation of all the abiding-places one had in one lifetime, such as the womb, birthplace, residences, offices, hotels, as well as graveyard, is referred to as temporary residences in one lifetime. Therefore, temporary residences in one lifetime can be a variety of places from womb to tomb. If the scope is grander than one lifetime, there are abiding-places in the last lifetime as well as in the numerous previous lifetimes. By the same token, there will be abiding-places after one lifetime, namely the next lifetime, and numerous future lifetimes.

Absence of Own-being (*niḥ-svabhāva*)

The requirement for own-being lies in the ever-lasting existence, i.e., the inherent existence (*sva-bhāva*) within the state of affairs, things, or components. The state of affairs can be disassembled into the transition of conditioned co-arising (*pratītyasamutpāda*) and cessation (*nirodha*). As a consequence, the state

of affairs lacks its own-being due to the fact of being constantly undergoing a process of assemblage and dismantlement. The phenomena described above are referred to as empty (*śūnya*), absence of own-being (*niḥ-svabhāva*), or empty of an inherent existence (*svabhāva-śūnya*), or in an abstract manner as emptiness (*śūnyatā*) or emptiness of an inherent existence (*svabhāva-śūnyatā*).

Buddhist perspectives on emptiness or absence of own-being can be applied to everything in the cosmos, including abiding-places. In this regard, abiding-places that are absent in own-being are called the absence of own-being in abiding-places. For the same reasons, abiding-places are also empty and thus are referred to as emptiness of abiding-places.

The Real Abiding of the Mind-body Complex

The meaning of real abiding can be approached in at least two different ways: by way of contrasting it with homelessness; and by way of deliberating on its synonyms, such as being well placed, the full and final settlement, or permanent residency. It roughly means the state of having a steady shelter to stay for activities of daily living.

Real abiding can be examined more thoroughly with the following three steps. The first step is to clarify what needs to be abided in reality. If that is the process of life, then the phrase “real abiding of the life-process” can thus be coined. The second step is to elaborate on the living entity, individual, person, or the self throughout the life-process. It seems easy at first to state such phrases as real abiding of a living entity, or real abiding of the self. Yet these phrases tend to assume a unitary connotation at the expense of neglecting the variations and dynamics of life-processes. The third step is to elucidate the fact that what will be abided during the life-process is the assemblage of the components, such as the mind-body complex (*nāmarūpa*, name-and-form) and the five aggregates (*pañcaskandha*). The phrase “real abiding of the mind-body complex” does not indicate that mind and body are two separate substances, nor does it suggest that mind and body are opposed to each other. In this regard, the real abiding of the mind-body complex appears to be the best choice among other phrases.

The Real Abiding of the Mind-body Complex as A Primary Concern

Once entering into the world, sentient beings might plunge into periods of turmoil and upheaval and become shelterless due to impermanence and suffering. A general concern about the real abiding of the mind-body complex of sentient beings consists of pondering on how to end suffering and how to properly and effectively assist sentient beings in progressing to an enduring state of well-being.

The *9th Assembly of the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras*, also known as the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā*, or *Diamond Sūtra* in short, starts with the following questions: How should (one who has set out on the bodhisattva path) abide (*katham sthātavyam*)? By directing sentient beings on to the insurmountable path, how do bodhisattvas achieve the state of abiding (*sthititā*)?¹

In response to the overall concern about wandering the world, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* promotes purposeful and systematic practices. First, a broad or infinite path, i.e., the Great Path (*mahāyāna*) is highly recommended.² With an aim for thorough enlightenment rather than being restricted to limited space and time, it is also called the path to enlightenment (*bodhimārga/ bodhipatha*).³ Second, with a clear vision and strategy to continuously develop and integrate the practice on the right track, *prajñāpāramitā* is highlighted as the main lane of Mahāyāna. Third, endowed with kindness and compassion for sentient beings, bodhisattvas will save not only themselves but all the others. bodhisattvas take special care to enable sentient beings to stay on the right track and guide them to the paths of righteousness according to their respective levels of cultivation to further pursue their real abiding of the mind-body complex.⁴

The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* shows how to cultivate *prajñāpāramitā* progressively in the quest for the real abiding of the mind-body complex. The following passage affords a good example:

For thereby you shall become a savior of the helpless, a refuge to those without refuge, a defender of the defenseless, the final relief of those who are without it, a place to rest to those without resting place, an island to those without one, a light to the blind, a guide to the guideless, and you shall guide to the path those who have lost it.⁵

The above passage uses figurative language such as “helpless, without refuge, defenceless, without relief, without a resting place, without an island, without light, and guideless” to describe those who are lost in encountering all sorts of obstacles in the world. Facing sentient beings who experience the ups and downs of daily life, bodhisattvas take a vow to extend Mahāyāna practices to become a saviour (*nātha*), refuge (*saraṇa*), defender (*trāṭṛ*), final relief (*parāyaṇa*), place of rest (*layana*), island (*dvīpa*), light (*āloka*), and a guide (*pariṇāyaka*). In short, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* expounds that the practice, vows, and career of bodhisattvas can safeguard sentient beings especially in case of adversities and provide unfailing guidance on how to achieve stability in life.

The Relationship Between the Real Abiding of the Mind-body Complex and Temporary Residences in One lifetime

If the world is regarded as being comprised of various situations, then many building blocks can be revealed, among which, locality is one of them. From the relationship between locality and a person, the relationship between real abiding and temporary residences in one lifetime can be discussed further.

The relationship between locality and a person can be viewed as multifaceted and multileveled, including the living places for the ancestors, paternal or maternal—the place where the person was born, where he/she lived in childhood, which schools he/she attended, where he/she worked, where he/she traveled, where he/she lived in old age, which hospitals he/she went to, where he/she died, where he/she was buried, the place he/she was remembered by posterity, and where his/her offspring lived. Different religions, cultures, and political ideologies might prioritize or manipulate the hierarchy of specific geological factors. As a result, the parameters for how a person should be identified, or how the mind-body complex should be settled may vary accordingly.

First of all, if, for instance, the only parameter to identify a living individual is determined solely by the main living place of the ancestors of the paternal or maternal side, or by where the living individual was born, and completely disregards the rest of the places where that individual lived his/her whole life, then the demonyms such as “people of a particular place” and “pigs of a particular place” are coined in an over-simplified way. If this convention is

taken to the extreme, it is as if the living individual is devoid of any meaning other than simple locality.

Second, concerning the real abiding of the mind-body complex in the life process, some may value only the hometown (or homeland, motherland) and regard going back to hometown as the only way to get the mind-body complex settled; some may think as long as living in the place of birth, then the real abiding of the mind-body complex is achieved; others may highlight the cemetery and believe a graveyard with good geomancy will lead to the real abiding of the mind-body complex.

Once a certain parameter had been picked out and regarded to be of higher priority, ordinary people tend to hold on to thus established belief systems. However, under further scrutiny, none of the parameters can survive the cycle of arising and crumbling of the causes and conditions. In this regard, since the parameters cannot last forever, how can they be taken as the real abiding of the mind-body complex?

From a Buddhist perspective, especially in light of impermanence, locality is nothing but a temporary manifestation and a conceptual fabrication, and certainly unsuitable for ever-lasting habitation. In the same way, both location and the mind-body complex are characterized as being conditioned (*samskrta*). The reason why anyone or anything came to the world is due to the actions of causes and conditions. The characteristic marks of conditioned phenomena (*samskrतालक्षणा*) can be roughly distinguished into arising (*utpāda*), abiding and change (*sthitanyathātva*), and passing away or breaking up (*vyaya/ bhāṅga*).⁶ Since both location and the mind-body complex are transitory phenomena in the conditioned process, how can anything abide in something such as a location that is heading toward its own disruption?

The above analysis should shed some light on the issue of the real abiding of the mind-body complex so as not to mix up different ideas or jump to conclusions. All the locations where a person had ever lived from womb to tomb can be called “temporary residences in one lifetime,” which are different from the “real abiding of the mind-body complex.”

Temporary Residences in One Lifetime From the Perspectives of Both “Rebirth” and “Reality Itself”

There are two angles the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* proposes on how to look into temporary residences in one lifetime: from rebirth and from reality itself.⁷

The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* consistently takes the five aggregates, i.e., the building blocks constituting living individuals, as the first set of factors in examining living individuals and the world.⁸ The process of the assemblage and dismantling of the five aggregates reveals both the “world in flux” and “reality of the world.”

Living individuals start and end segmented lifetimes through the amalgamation and separation of the five aggregates, and they are thus ensnared in the cycle of birth and death.⁹ None of the contingent combination of any aggregates is reliable due to the eventual parting. By the same token, all the abiding-places in one’s lifetime are merely rest stops in constant flux. In other words, the five aggregates, the world, even abiding-places of the mind-body complex in one lifetime are all temporary positions in the entire life-process. None of the above-mentioned factors can be considered as a reliable abiding for the mind-body complex.

Besides the perspective on “rebirth,” the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* also considers from the angle of “reality itself,” which can be delineated in the following six steps: The first step questions the inherent existence (*svabhāva*) of the segments; the five aggregates, the world, and rebirth. The second step explains that, under close scrutiny, what was called the five aggregates can be further analyzed into the constant arising and passing phenomena due to incessant transition of causes and conditions. Furthermore, what was analyzed as the five aggregates at any given moment resulted from related conditions that evolved from prior situations, and they cannot stay constant forever. The third step unfolds an expedient way to describe the ever-changing phenomena as “empty of the inherent existence.” The fourth step shows that not only is the reality of the five aggregates “empty of the inherent existence,” the world and even rebirth can also be revealed (*saṃdarśayati*) as “empty of the inherent existence.” The fifth step expounds further that the same “emptiness of the inherent existence” is reality itself, which is unveiled in the segments, five aggregates, the world, and rebirth. By inspecting the continuously arising and passing phenomena which is due to the incessant transition of causes

and conditions, a significant and meaningful wisdom emerges. This wisdom of looking into the reality of all things is *prajñāpāramitā*. The final sixth step concludes that through cultivating *prajñāpāramitā*, reality itself, which can be referred to as “empty of the inherent existence,” discerned from the five aggregates, the world, and rebirth, unfolds crystal clear, direct, and thorough enlightenment (*abhisambodhi*).¹⁰

In terms of reality itself, there is no such thing in itself, as either the world or the place that one has lived in a particular lifetime. In the same way, there is no such thing as “temporary residences in one lifetime,” in which the mind-body complex can rightly abide.

In conclusion, from the perspective of rebirth, temporary residences in one lifetime are nothing but transitory resting places during the entire fluctuating life-process. From the perspective of reality itself, temporary residences in one lifetime are nowhere to be found.

The Migration of Abiding-places Contextualized in Rebirth

Two types of migration can be distinguished in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*: those contextualized in rebirth, and those contextualized in continuous cultivation throughout lifetimes. The former will be explained here while the latter will be addressed in the following section.

The migration in the context of rebirth is explored and discussed in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* as well as many other Buddhist scriptures.¹¹ Rebirth can be understood as the arising and passing away of the causes and conditions, or simply the transition from one lifetime to another. The major factors of rebirth can be explained with two sets of concepts: (1) the twelve links of conditioned co-arising (*dvā-daśāṅga-pratitya-samutpāda*) from ignorance to death, and (2) defilements, misconceptions, attachments, karma, and the momentum derived from habits. Ordinary people might highly prioritize temporary residences in one lifetime. However, temporary residences play a minor role in rebirth unless they are situated with the six external sense-bases (*ṣaḍbāhyānyāyatanāni*) or with sense objects (*viśaya*). The related conditions that drive rebirth are of mental activities or living styles, rather than any materialistic items.

Regarding the impact of rebirth on the constant variation of abiding-

places, the scope is not confined to any small place such as an area or a country. It starts from a world with the three realms (*trailokya*; *traidhātuka*) and the six routes of rebirth (*ṣaḍgati*). The scope is even extended to the Great Trichiliocosm (*trisāhasramahāsāhasralokadhātu*, or 1,000³ world-systems). Then, according to the degree of pollution in the living environment and the setting for spiritual cultivation, it can roughly be distinguished into the purified and defiled worlds.¹²

Alongside rebirth, the destinations in each lifespan are different, so are abiding-places in each lifetime. Similar to water running in a river that cannot cling to anything along the riverbank, sentient beings ensnared in the cycle of birth and death inevitably fail to grasp on to the ground and will eventually be brought to the next phase of a lifespan. Regardless of the extent of manipulations on identification and segregation of the abiding-place within a given time frame, in the end, one cannot escape the trend of heading to the next destination and the cycle continues. Unfortunately, defilements and bad karmas derived from manipulating abiding-places will in turn become the factors leading to rebirth in evil destinies.¹³

The Mechanism of the Real Abiding of the Body-Mind Complex

In the *Āgama-sūtras*, and among most of Mahāyāna scriptures, including the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, the key concept in the doctrine of the real abiding of the mind-body complex is the “abiding of the dharma” or “abiding reality” (*dharmasthita*; *dharmasthiti*). The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* advocates a comprehensive concern both for the suffering of sentient beings and for the real abiding of the mind-body complex. The mechanism of the real abiding of the mind-body complex will be further elaborated in the following five subsections.

In Pursuit of the Real Abiding of the Mind-body Complex

Three steps to the real abiding of the mind-body complex can be specified as follows. First, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* confirms the possibility of the real abiding of the mind-body complex, and advocates facilitating the real abiding of the mind-body complex, which is one of its main missions. Second,

the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* discomposes all circumstances—be they concrete or abstract—into related factors that are consistently exemplified as being empty, non-obtainable, phantasmagoric, and provisional in linguistic conventions. Therefore, it is not advisable to stubbornly abide in any circumstances of the present world. In terms of locality, due to its being void of its constant own-being, the locality is empty of the inherent existence. As a result, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* does not stick to any place, nor does it proclaim that there are indestructible locations. Rather, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* demonstrates that all locations are empty of their own-beings, and hence dwells in this insight. Third, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* affirms the non-dual middle way in every nook and cranny; therefore, concerning the real abiding of the mind-body complex, there is no room for duality. In other words, looking for the absolute other or alternative abiding-places beyond this world will be lost in dualistic thinking and erroneous views.

The Basis for the Real Abiding of the Mind-body Complex

To understand the philosophical discourse of the real abiding of the mind-body complex in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, it is necessary to inquire into its underlying theoretical basis.

The real abiding of the mind-body complex is based on the following two aspects. The first aspect is the three-fold wheel or circle (*trimaṇḍala*)—the mind-body complex can rightly abide, what is being abided, and the act of abiding rightly. That is to say, for the mind-body complex to abide rightly, the three spokes of the wheel should rotate well in terms of format, correlations, and process. The second aspect is the philosophical reflections on these three spokes of where the mind-body complex can abide rightly, what is being abided, and the act of abiding rightly. The three correlated factors in the three-fold wheel are provisional and can be experientially observed. In this light, the three-fold wheel can be called the building blocks of experiential reality.¹⁴

By way of disentangling the truth from complicated situations or confusing opinions, the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras* endeavor to sort out those clues that can be connected to each other, and then direct them toward the major theme of *prajñāpāramitā* to explore and elaborate to the utmost extent. Two passages are picked out from the comprehensive teachings of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* for discussion.

A bodhisattva who thus surveys conditioned co-arising, certainly does not see any dharma that is being produced without causes nor does he see any dharma as permanent, stable, eternal, not liable to variation, nor does he see any dharma as a doer or a feeler.¹⁵

The above quotation proclaims that whatever is happening would not have happened “without causes” (*ahetuka*). Furthermore, all things happened due to related conditions, which make up the main characteristics contextualized in “conditioned co-arising” (*pratītyasamutpāda*). Because all things are generated by causes, those that are permanent (*nitya*), stable (*dhruva*), eternal (*śāśvata*), or not liable to variation (*avipariṇāma*) cannot become reality in the world. The second passage is as follows:

Śakra and the Gods: Subhūti the Elder, born after the Tathāgata, is the Disciple of the Bhagavat. For, whichever dharma he demonstrates, he always starts from emptiness.

Subhūti: Because he is not born as Subhūti, the Elder, born after the Tathāgata. He is born after the Tathāgata’s suchness. As that has neither come nor gone, so also the suchness of Subhūti has neither come nor gone. From the very beginning, Subhūti the Elder has been born after the suchness of the Tathāgata. Because the suchness of the Tathāgata and the suchness of all dharmas are the same thing, and they are both the suchness of Subhūti the Elder. Born after that suchness is Subhūti the Elder; hence born after the Tathāgata. But that suchness is also not suchness, and after that suchness, he has been born. It is in that sense that the Elder Subhūti is born after the Tathāgata, and that as a result of the abiding of the suchness of the Tathāgata. The suchness of Subhūti is immutable and unchangeable, undiscriminated and undifferentiated, just as the suchness of the Tathāgata. It is thus that Subhūti the Elder, immutable, unchangeable, undiscriminated, undifferentiated, through that suchness, is born after the Tathāgata. And just as the suchness of the Tathāgata, which is immutable and undifferentiated, is nowhere obstructed, so also the suchness of all dharmas, which is also immutable and undifferentiated.¹⁶

Several pertinent concepts in the above quotation are worth further emphasis, including “disciple of the Bhagavat (or the Venerable One)” (*bhagavataḥ śrāvakaḥ*), “with reference to (or starting from) emptiness” (*śūnyatām ārabhya*), “suchness” (or

thusness, *tathatā*), the “state of not having been born” (*ajātatva*), “born after the Tathāgata” (*anujātas tathāgatasya; tathāgatam anujātaḥ*), “born after the suchness of the Tathāgata” (*anujātas tathatām tathāgatasya; tathāgatatahatām anujātaḥ*), and the “abiding of the suchness of the Tathāgata” (*tathāgatasya tathatāyāḥ sthititā*). Out of these concepts, *tathatā* (thusness, suchness) is a prevalent and major one in the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras*, especially the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* which devotes a whole chapter, “Tathatā-parivarto Nāma Śoḍaśaḥ,” on the principle of the *tathatā* of all dharmas.¹⁷

To summarize, the abiding of the suchness of all dharmas can be the doctrinal basis for real abiding in reality itself for all things including the mind-body complex. However, in actuality, how can sentient beings achieve abiding with world-process that is conditioned co-arising, impermanent, and not-abiding?¹⁸ Simply put, how can true abiding in reality itself be realized in the actual world-process?

Being well-known for advocating continuous development of penetrating wisdom, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* lays greater emphasis on transforming cognition from ordinary to extraordinary. For example, the figure Subhūti does not stay in a static situation as an individual being in a closed system.¹⁹ Rather, the text re-conceptualizes a dynamic and open-ended becoming that reaches all over in the world to experience new processes. The irreducible openness not only unfolds the timeframe to the future and the past, but also unfolds spatial relationship networks.

Such a dynamic and open-ended becoming can be depicted in a three-step approach. The first step delineates three major points in transforming ordinary cognition: (1) When opening toward the arising of the series of related factors generated from causes and conditions, it is devoid of own-being for arising. Consequently, it is referred to as the “state of not having been born.” (2) When opening toward the emptiness of related factors generated from causes and conditions, it is referred to as “with reference to emptiness.” (3) When opening toward the related conditions regarding learning Buddhist teachings, the making of the disciples of the Buddha, it is referred to as the “disciple of the Bhagavat.”

Second, two actions are implemented in this step: (1) openness of “disciples of the Bhagavat” toward “born after the Tathāgata,” (2) openness of “born after the Tathāgata” further toward “born after the suchness of Tathāgata.” In this light, a more thorough openness with what is “born after” (*anujāta*) as the

form of becoming, and in connection with “suchness of the Tathāgata” through Subhūti. The so-called “suchness of the Tathāgata” refers to thorough suchness which manifests as the Tathāgata. However, the point of treating “suchness of the Tathāgata” as a compound does not lie in a mediocre way to grasp it as an individual being, but to highlight the suchness that manifests as the Tathāgata, and the thorough abiding (*sthititā*), immutable (or without modification, *avikārā nirvikārā*), and not discriminated (or not differentiated, *avikalpā nirvikalpā*), i.e., to reveal the thorough suchness of abiding of the dharma in terms of unconditioned reality (*asaṃskṛtadharmatā*). Through a painstaking transformation, the reason why Subhūti becomes a “disciple of the Bhagavat” lies in the cognition of “born after the Tathāgata.” Even though the core format shown out of “born after” is “born after the suchness of the Tathāgata,” the process of manifesting as such is directed to “thorough suchness of abiding of the dharma.”

Third, not only is it openness toward “Tathāgatas” or “suchness of the Tathāgata,” it is also openness equally toward Subhūti or “suchness of Subhūti.” As the concluding aphorism quoted above states, “And just as the suchness of the Tathāgata, which is immutable and undifferentiated, is nowhere obstructed, so also the suchness of all dharmas, which is also immutable and undifferentiated.”²⁰ In this light, regardless of whatever manifests as Subhūti, it fluctuates during the actual world-process, and is thoroughly “with reference to empty.” By comprehending the “thorough suchness of abiding of the dharma,” the abiding in reality itself can be realized.²¹

In summary, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* employs the concept of “suchness” with the thorough state of the dharma, emptiness, and the abiding of the dharma. Thus, the manifestation of the actual world-process is impermanent and “abides nowhere.” From the inception of any becoming in the actual world-process that leads to the manifestation of suchness will be open to the manifestation of “being generated from causes and conditions,” the “state of not having been born,” the “state of emptiness,” and the state of “born after.” The thorough abiding of the dharma manifesting “suchness” exemplifies the connection between “suchness” and abiding of the dharma. This is the doctrinal basis for mind-body complex dwelling in reality itself.

The Achievement of the Real Abiding of the Mind-body Complex Through the Cultivation of Dwelling in *Prajñāpāramitā*

In entering the world, all related factors are impermanent and abide nowhere. However, during the process of “not-abiding” (*apraṭiṣṭhāna*; *apraṭiṣṭhita*), the “absence of own-being” of the “state of the dharma” (*dharmatā*) abides thoroughly as such in the way of the “abiding of the dharma” (*dharmasthita*) and not change into something else.²² The thesis of “abiding nowhere” while “abiding in the state of the dharma” serves as the basis for reality itself. There are at least four major arguments in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* demonstrating how the real abiding of the mind-body complex can be achieved in practice.

The first argument explains that following the arising of the mind-body complex, Mahāyāna bodhisattvas dwell in the cultivation of *prajñāpāramitā*, which will in turn serve as the essential task of the real abiding of the mind-body complex in the world. There are many passages addressing this issue, among which one reads:

Bodhisattvas who want to dwell in the highest dwelling, who want to dwell in the dwelling of the Tathāgata, should dwell in the dwelling of perfect wisdom.²³

Entering the impermanent world does not lead to the exclusion of dwelling (*vi-√hr*). In fact, bodhisattvas expect to dwell in “the highest dwelling” (*uttamavihāra*) and the “dwelling of the Tathāgata” (*tathāgatavihāra*) possible through the “dwelling of perfect wisdom” (*prajñāpāramitāvihāra*). While being in the process of impermanence and considering clinging on to any area, one will eventually find it to be a disappointment. A proper way will be to take this impermanence as an opportunity for spiritual cultivation, especially the cultivation of *prajñāpāramitā*—neither ignoring impermanence nor being in conflict with impermanence, but facing impermanence wisely while becoming a bodhisattva in the Mahāyāna and experiencing the “dwelling of the Tathāgata.”

The second argument states that the most distinctive reason for the cultivation of *prajñāpāramitā*, as the essential task of the real abiding of the mind-body complex, lies in the ability to gain insight into the emptiness and not-abiding of all related factors in the world. By being unwilling to stick to any place that is absent of own-inhabitability, cultivation can be carried out

properly instead of roaming aimlessly all over the world. A passage exemplifies this point as follows:

Subhūti then said to Śakra: “Now, Kauśika, listen and attend well. I will teach you how a bodhisattva should abide in perfect wisdom. Through abiding in emptiness, should he abide in perfect wisdom. Armed with the great armor, the bodhisattva should develop so that he does not abide in any of these: not in physical form, sensation, conception, mental formations, consciousness; ... not in the fruits of Stream-winner, Once-Returner, Never-Returner, or Arhatship; not in Pratyekabuddhahood, nor in Buddhahood. He should not abide in the idea that ‘this is physical form,’ ‘this is sensation,’ etc., including ‘this is Buddhahood.’ He should not take his stand on the ideas that ... ‘a Buddha is worthy of gifts, and will attain Nirvāṇa in the Buddha-Nirvāṇa, in the realm of Nirvāṇa that leaves nothing behind, after he has risen above the levels of a common man, of a disciple, and of a Pratyekabuddha, wrought the weal of countless beings, led to Nirvāṇa countless hundreds of thousands of *niyutas* of *koṭis* of beings, assured countless beings of discipleship, Pratyekabuddhahood and full Buddhahood, stood on the stage of a Buddha and done Buddha’s work,’—even therein a bodhisattva should not abide.”²⁴

The cultivation of *prajñāpāramitā* is one type of practice. However, this does not imply that any type of practice, such as social, political, economic, environmental, or ethical, may equally lead to the real abiding of the mind-body complex. Practice alone is not enough. The key in real abiding lies in the thorough comprehension of the inhabitability of the factors related to practice. If the related factors lack the inhabitability, then practice will inevitably not progress after those associated factors are scattered away. In this light, when cultivating *prajñāpāramitā*, “how should one abide in perfect wisdom” (*yathā prajñāpāramitāyāṃ sthātavyam*) is one of the main questions to be addressed. Through abiding in emptiness (*śūnyatāyāṃ tiṣṭhatā*), *prajñāpāramitā* can also abide. To be more specific, the factors such as the five aggregates can be thoroughly examined to inspect their self-substantialities. Under further scrutiny, these factors can be realized as being devoid of own-beings, and thus unsuitable for real abiding. Based on such realization of inhabitability, the principle of cultivation can be concluded as “[the bodhisattva] should not abide in any of these: not in physical form, sensation, conception, mental formations,

consciousness” (*na rūpe sthātavyaṃ, na vedanāyāṃ, na saṃjñāyāṃ, na saṃskāreṣu, na vijñāne sthātavyaṃ*). Other than the five aggregates, all major links and stages along the path of cultivation should be treated equally in terms of examining their own-beings. As a result, the cultivation of abiding in the emptiness of all dharmas will not remain in any particular factor or stage, yet it is exactly by way of such cultivation of abiding in *prajñāpāramitā* that the mind-body complex can be abided rightly.

The third argument demonstrates that the concentrated and continuous cultivation in *prajñāpāramitā* will enable the crossing over of the migration between lifetimes as well as the crossing over of the resultant transition of the abiding-places. Therefore, it is highly possible to keep dwelling on the path of cultivation without being shaken by the turmoil of temporal and spatial transitions. Again, only one example from the scripture is quoted below:

And with any bodhisattva who courses in perfect wisdom one can be quite certain that he had, before he was reborn here among men, deceased among men or among the heavenly hosts of the Tuṣitas. For it is among men and the Tuṣita Gods that this perfection of wisdom circulates to its full extent.²⁵

Mahāyāna bodhisattvas mainly cultivate *prajñāpāramitā*, yet they are neither excluded from the transmigration from lifetime to lifetime, nor immune to the transition from one abiding-place to another. However, moving from one lifetime to another or one place to another will not be cumbersome to bodhisattvas. Not being attached to a particular lifetime or not relying on any particular abiding-place prevents bodhisattvas from changing their course or quitting their practices due to temporal and spatial transitions. bodhisattvas will continue their cultivation of *prajñāpāramitā* until culmination (*niṣṭhā*). Since the main focus of the cultivation of *prajñāpāramitā* is the mind-process, regardless of time and space, including the heavenly realm and the realm of human existence, bodhisattvas can carry forward their cultivation. Therefore, in reality itself, from the perspective of a long-term timeline or a wide range of worlds, the real abiding of the mind-body complex lies not in clinging to any particular space-time points, but in the advancement of enduring cultivation.

The fourth argument points out that the cultivation of dwelling in *prajñāpāramitā* does not capture *prajñāpāramitā* in the perfunctory way that ordinary people capture things in the world. It does not linger in any stage of

cultivation because bodhisattvas are supposed to realize that *prajñāpāramitā* does not have in itself the capturability. In this way, bodhisattvas continuously broaden, deepen, and develop *prajñāpāramitā* with a dynamic and progressive sequence of the mind-body complex.

In perfect wisdom physical form, etc., are not appropriated. But the non-appropriation of physical form, etc., is not physical form, etc. And perfect wisdom also cannot be appropriated. It is thus that a bodhisattva should course in this perfect wisdom. This concentrated insight of a bodhisattva is called “the non-appropriation of all dharmas.” It is vast, noble, unlimited and steady, not shared by any of the disciples or Pratyekabuddhas. The state of realizing all dharmas itself cannot be taken hold of, because it cannot be seized through a sigh.²⁶

Seeing from penetrating wisdom, the inherent existences of the five aggregates are in fact not capturable, i.e., “not appropriated (*aparigrhīta*).” Furthermore, the inherent existences are not fixed as what the five aggregates seem to be. By the same token, *prajñāpāramitā* is neither appropriated nor is its own-being the same *prajñāpāramitā* all the time. In practice, this way of thoroughly and meticulously examining all factors according to such realization can be developed into *samādhi*, the cultivation of meditation, which in turn aids the cognition in wisdom. This particular *samādhi* is referred to as “concentrated insight called ‘non-appropriation of all dharmas’” (*sarva-dharmā-parigrhīto nāma samādhiḥ*).²⁷ Not capturing anything in turn will prevent the cultivation of meditation and wisdom from falling into any entangled difficulties. As a result, the arising of the mind-body complex during several lifetimes and across various abiding-places can thoroughly abide in the continuous cultivation of *prajñāpāramitā* in a dynamic, not appropriated, and thriving ways.

The Migration of Abiding-places Contextualized in Continuous Cultivation

The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* reiterates that it is crucial to walk out of the vicious circle by way of continuous cultivation, life after life. In short, the relationship with abiding-places should not be passive ties from rebirth, but active engagement driven by vigorous cultivation.

The migration of abiding-places contextualized in continuous cultivation

life after life can be explored through two lenses: one, from past lifetimes to the present lifetime, and the second, from the present lifetime to future lifetimes.

From Past Lifetimes to the Present Lifetime

Seeing that continuous cultivation can pass on from previous countless lifetimes to the present one, which can be accompanied by the migration of abiding-places, this is as natural as one day follows another and one year comes after another. There are two major scenarios as below:

(a) Bodhisattvas had long been following the buddhas of the ten directions and had been cultivating bodhisattva career centering in *prajñāpāramitā*, including attending numerous assemblies of Buddhist teachings. Even in the last lifetime, the very bodhisattva was still developing a bodhisattva career with an accompanying Buddha in one of the worlds. After entering into the present lifetime, the abiding-places shall change accordingly, but the *prajñāpāramitā* cultivation carries forward without being disrupted by the transition of the course of life. Below is an example:

Śāriputra: “Bodhisattvas who are reborn here, and who will here resolutely believe in this deep perfection of wisdom, without hesitation, doubt or stupefaction, where have they deceased and for how long have they practiced, they who will follow the doctrine of this perfection of wisdom, understand its meaning, and instruct others in it both by the method which shows the meaning and by the method which shows the doctrine?”

The Venerable One: “One should know that such a bodhisattva is reborn here after he has deceased in other world-systems where he has honored and questioned the Buddha, the Venerable Ones. Any bodhisattvas who, after he has deceased in other world-systems where he has honored and questioned the Buddhas, the Venerable Ones, is reborn here, would, when he hears this deep perfection of wisdom being taught, identify this perfection of wisdom with the Teacher, and be convinced that he is face to face with the teacher, and that he has seen the teacher. When the perfection of wisdom is being taught, he listens attentively, pays respect to it before he hears it, and does not cut the story short. Such a bodhisattva should be known as one who has practiced for long, who has honored many buddhas.²⁸

(b) In the last lifetime, long-term practices might disperse into the following three spheres where bodhisattvas continued cultivating the path to enlightenment. First and the most far away, in a greater scale, bodhisattvas lived in any of the great world-systems where a Buddha taught contemporaneously. Second, in the closer sphere, the bodhisattva lived in the Tuṣita Heaven of a small world while the third one which was the closest, the bodhisattva lived in the human circle in a small world. Even though it was scattered over three spheres, when entering into the human circle with the “power of wholesome roots,” the bodhisattva can recommence the cultivation of *prajñāpāramitā*, such as:

Subhūti: “If a bodhisattva, on merely hearing it, immediately believes in this deep perfection of wisdom, does not become cowed, stolid, paralyzed, or stupefied, does not doubt or hesitate, but delights in perfect wisdom—where has he deceased, where is he reborn?”

The Venerable One: “If a bodhisattva reacts in such a way to the perfection of wisdom, ... then this bodhisattva will decease among men and will be reborn among men.”

Subhūti: “Could a bodhisattva, who is endowed with just these qualities have deceased in other Buddha-fields before he was reborn here?”

The Venerable One: “It is quite possible that a bodhisattva who is endowed with these qualities, has, before he was reborn here, deceased in other Buddha-fields, where he has honored and questioned the buddhas and the Venerable Ones. Or he may also have deceased among the Tuṣita gods. It may be that he has honored Maitreya, the bodhisattva, and persistently questioned him concerning this perfection of wisdom.²⁹”

It is not anything new that sentient beings transmigrate life after life. Therefore, one should take one step further and not limit oneself only to environmental surroundings of human communities. Regardless of the constant variation of abiding-places, the common thread among bodhisattvas is to concentrate on the bodhisattva career, build a net of Buddhist practices, accumulate wholesome roots out of good deeds life after life, and develop skillful means as well as readily transmigrate into another abiding-place when the time comes.

From the Present Lifetime to Future Lifetimes

It is possible to go through the uninterrupted extension from the previous lifetimes to the current one by cultivating the path to enlightenment. There are also excellent choices for the future. For the sake of simplicity, only two types of choices will be discussed below:

(a) In a greater scale, the future lifetime can be in any world-system in the ten directions where any buddha is setting the dharma wheel in motion. If such advanced teachings as *prajñāpāramitā* happen to be available in a certain world-system, that will be one of the great choices for those pursuing the path to enlightenment. Once transmigrating to that world-system, the bodhisattva will cherish the opportunity at hand and focus on practices leading to make significant contributions to the inhabited world-system. Obviously, the transition among life-times is not the problem, nor is the constant variation of abiding-places contextualized in transmigration. The most crucial questions are whether the path and cultivation can carry forward into the next lifetime, and whether the cumulative abilities thus cultivated can in fact be of use to sentient beings:

In consequence those sons or daughters of a good family who belongs to the path of the bodhisattvas will become so much confirmed in their faith that they will seek rebirth in other Buddha-fields, and also they will come face to face with the Tathāgatas there, who demonstrate dharma, and from whom they will hear in detail just this deep perfection of wisdom. In those Buddha-fields also they will set countless living beings advancing their way to supreme enlightenment and will help them in their quest for full enlightenment.³⁰

(b) In a smaller scale, through the virtuous affinity with the cultivation of *prajñāpāramitā* or the wholesome roots accumulated from the efforts toward the path to enlightenment, there is a strong possibility to transmigrate into either the human or heavenly realms and continue practicing. Even if dismally, Buddhist practitioners are heading to an unfortunate rebirth (*apāya; durgatī*) due to bad karmas, there are still means to redirect them to the human or heavenly realms in later lifetimes.

(1) Moreover, Kauśika, the spot of earth in which the sons or daughters of good

family take up this perfection of wisdom, bear it in mind, preach and study it, and wisely attend to it. At that spot of earth the Māras or the divinities of Māra's hosts, or the wanderers of other sects, or conceited persons cannot cause any disturbance of thought. When there is a quarrel, contention, or contradiction of this perfection of wisdom, ... they will further have other qualities and advantages, i.e., by means of listening to this perfection of wisdom. They, either after having gradually gone forth by means of the Three Paths, will end suffering, or not be trapped in the states of woe, and will be again reborn among gods or men.³¹

(2) If, after having copied out this perfection of wisdom and made it into a book, they will bear it in mind, then they will gain an abundance of resolute faith in it. If they honor, revere, and worship it, they will be known and seen by the buddhas and the Venerable Ones, and the Tathāgatas will see them with their Buddha-eye. And it will be greatly profitable to those sons or daughters of good family, a great advantage, fruit and reward that, having copied out this deep perfection of wisdom, they will bear it in mind. Through that wholesome root they will never again be deprived of the buddhas, the Venerable Ones; they will never again be reborn in the states of woe; when reborn among gods or men they will never be deprived of the buddhas and bodhisattvas, and they will transcend the irreversible stage.³²

There are choices all around Buddhist practitioners either to a world-system where a Buddha resides and preaches or to the human or heavenly realms. What really matters in life is a better future for carrying forward the ever advancing practices. The better conditions and wholesome roots accumulated through cultivation will facilitate pioneering roads to the future and achieving spiritual goals.

The above discussion clearly shows that either from past lifetimes to the present or from the present to future lifetimes, the migration of abiding-places has not been regarded as an important issue, nor would the attachment to any abiding-place be considered a right thing to do.

Having fallen to binding tightly to a specific abiding-place, manipulating national identities, and deliberately stirring up unrest among the masses; mindsets in such manner can only lead to misconceptions and prejudices regarding abiding-places. This finding can shed some light on the relationship

between the long-term migration of abiding-places and the abiding-place in one lifetime.

Properly examining the challenges facing the migration of abiding-places among lifetimes can be conducive to the realization that such notions as “returning to one’s hometown or motherland at the time of death” is pointless and that none of the abiding-places in any lifetime can persist in the life-process as the real abiding. Nonetheless, the mind-body complex will not entirely lose its abiding at all. The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* leverages clues to be free from superficial identification and misunderstanding about abiding-places. The mind-body complex should dwell on the path of cultivation toward a sublime purpose. This is the real abiding of the mind-body complex.

Guiding Sentient Beings to Approach the Three Paths as the Real Abiding of the Mind-body Complex

Mahāyāna bodhisattvas do not simply care about personal real abiding of the mind-body complex. As the name “Mahāyāna” suggests, the scale should be broad enough to include all sentient beings. bodhisattvas are supposed to extend the expertise of the real abiding of the body-mind complex for the greatest number.

A bodhisattva trains so as to save no fewer sentient beings than he should. He trains to ensure the non-interruption of the lineage of the Tathāgatas. He trains in order to open the door of the deathless realm. He trains in order to establish immeasurable, incalculable, and innumerable sentient beings in the Three Paths.³³

The cultivation of *prajñāpāramitā* enables bodhisattvas to dwell their mind-body complexes on the path to enlightenment, and furthermore to guide sentient beings on multiple paths, including *śrāvākayāna*, *pratyekabuddhayāna*, and *bodhisattvayāna*. According to various levels of faculties, motivations, preferences, habits, thoughts, purposes, and environments of sentient beings, different paths should be formulated respectively.³⁴ Regardless of the path chosen, as long as it is for a good cause, it can serve as a way to alleviate suffering, and then contribute in a positive way toward a real abiding of the mind-body complex. This is done not only by bodhisattvas’ instruction for

salvation, but also through sentient beings' efforts in spiritual disciplines. This way of engaging in the bodhisattva's deeds can finally help sentient beings open the "door of the deathless realm (*amṛtaśhāśvāra*). In brief, with *prajñāpāramitā* as the nucleus of continuous cultivation on the right path, practitioners can dwell their mind-body complexes in spiritual elevation.

Conclusion

In the *Āgama-sūtras*, Buddhist teachings lay ample emphasis on the real abiding of the mind-body complex and the solution is directed toward the "abiding of the dharma" or "the abiding reality" (*dharmas-tbīta; dharmas-tbīti*). The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* demonstrates that the real abiding of the mind-body complex can be achieved by the following implementation steps. First, under the circumstances that the mind-body complex has already risen, the dwelling in the cultivation of *prajñāpāramitā* can serve as the essential task of the real abiding of the mind-body complex in the world. Second, the reason why the cultivation of *prajñāpāramitā* is qualified for achieving real abiding lies in the ability to gain insight into the emptiness and not-abiding of all related factors in the world. It is for this reason that bodhisattvas will not hold on to any place that is absent of own-inhabitability. Third, by way of focused efforts into continuous learning to further develop and strengthen *prajñāpāramitā*, bodhisattvas can cross over the migration between lifetimes as well as the resultant transition of the abiding-places. Therefore, bodhisattvas can consistently dwell on the path of cultivation, rather than dissipating in the fluctuating turmoil of temporal and spatial transitions. Fourth, the cultivation of dwelling in *prajñāpāramitā* does not capture *prajñāpāramitā* in the superficial way as ordinary people grasp things in the world. Rather, bodhisattvas are supposed to realize that even *prajñāpāramitā* does not have in itself the capturability. In such manner, bodhisattvas keep broadening, deepening, and developing *prajñāpāramitā* with a dynamic and progressive sequence of the mind-body complex. Briefly, on the one hand, it is necessary to relinquish superficial identification and misunderstanding about abiding-places; on the other hand, the real abiding of the mind-body complex consists in persistent dwelling on the path of cultivation toward a sublime purpose.

Notes

- 1 “How should one who has set out on the bodhisattva path abide, practice, and control the mind?” Quoted from the *9th Assembly of the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras* (T 7, no. 220 (9), 980a). Cf. Harrison (2006, 142).
- 2 For example, “Made of infinite qualities, ‘Mahā-yāna’ is a synonym of immeasurableness (*aprameya*) and unlimitedness (*apramāṇa*)” (T 7, no. 220 (4), 767a). Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, p. 12; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, p. 94; PWETL, p. 91.
- 3 For example, “Mahāyāna will go forth from what belongs to the triple world (*traidhātuka*). Where the knowledge of all modes (*sarvajñatā*) is, there it will abide. And that again in consequence of non-duality, it is devoid of going forth or abiding” (T 7, no. 220 (4), 767b). Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, p. 12; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, pp. 104–105; PWETL, p. 91.
- 4 Example one: “Great being, a bodhisattva is so called; armed with the great armor is that being; he sets out in the great vehicle and is mounted on the great vehicle. That is why a bodhisattva comes to be styled a ‘great being’” (T 7, no. 220 (4), 766c). Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, p. 10; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, p. 84; PWETL, p. 90.
Example two: “The bodhisattva becomes endowed with that kind of wise insight which allows him to see all beings as on the way to their slaughter. Great compassion on that occasion takes hold of him. He surveys countless beings with his heavenly eye, and what he sees fills him with great agitation: so many carry the burden of the karma leading to immediate retribution in the hells; some have acquired unfortunate rebirths which keep them away from the Buddha and his teachings; and others are doomed to be killed, or they are enveloped in the net of false views, or fail to find the path. And he attends to them with the thought that: ‘I shall become a savior (*nātha*) to all those beings; I shall release them from all their sufferings.’ But he does not make either this, or anything else, into a sign to which he becomes partial” (T 7, no. 220 (4), 841a). Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, p. 200; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, p. 793; PWETL, pp. 238–239.
- 5 T 7, no. 220 (4), 852c. Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, p. 222; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, pp. 852–853; PWETL, p. 261.
- 6 Concerning three or four characteristics of all conditioned phenomena, see Kritzer (2005, 70–73).
- 7 See “Loka-saṃdarśana-parivarto Nāma Dvādaśaḥ” (Chapter 12: Showing the World) (T 7, no. 220 (4), 814b–818c). Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, pp. 125–137; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, pp. 529–568; PWETL, pp. 172–179.
- 8 “The five skandhas are reckoned as the ‘world’” *pañca skandhā loka iti saṃjñātāḥ* (T 7, no. 220 (4), 86c). Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, p. 134; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, p. 558; PWETL, p. 176.
- 9 For example, “Seeing sentient beings’ suffering-laden cycle of life, death, and rebirth (*saṃsāra*), bodhisattvas struggle and make efforts to help sentient beings attain liberation” (T 7, no. 220 (4), 821a). Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, pp. 146–147; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, p. 596; PWETL, p. 188.

- 10 There are many references regarding the topic on revealing reality itself in the world, especially those passages in “Loka-saṃdarśana-parivarto Nāma Dvādaśaḥ” (Chapter 12: Showing the World). For example, “It is thus that perfect wisdom acts as an instructress in the world to the Tathāgatas. And how does perfect wisdom display (*saṃ-darsayati*) the world for what it is? She shows that the world is empty, unthinkable, calmly quiet. As purified of itself she shows up the world, she makes it known, she indicates it” (T 7, no. 220 (4), 817c–818a). Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, p. 137; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, p. 567; PWETL, p. 179.
- 11 See Gethin (1994, 11–35); Karma Lekshe Tsomo, “Chapter 7: The Transition Between Life and Death,” (2006, 99–123, 236–239).
- 12 See W. Randolph Kloetzli, “Cosmology: Buddhist Cosmology,” (2005, 2026–2031); Rupert Gethin, “Cosmology,” (2004, 183–187).
- 13 There are numerous citations on this topic especially in T 7, no. 220 (4), 798c–801c; Aṣṭa-Vaidya, pp. 86–92; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, pp. 379–403; PWETL, pp. 135–141.
- 14 Regarding dharma in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, see Fujichika’s “On the Concept of dharma in *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā*,” (1992, 79–107).
- 15 T 7, no. 220 (4), 858c. Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, p. 232; PWETL, p. 272; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, p. 882: *evaṃ khalu punaḥ subhūte bodhi-sattvo mahā-sattvaḥ pratitya-samutpādaṃ vyavalokayan, na kaṃ-cid dharmam a-betukam ut-padyamānaṃ sam-anu-paśyati, na kaṃ-cid dharmam nityaṃ vā dbruvaṃ vā śāsvataṃ vā a-vipariṇāma-dharmakam vā sam-anu-paśyati, na kaṃ-cid dharmam kārakam vā vedakam vā sam-anu-paśyati.*
- 16 T 7, no. 220 (4), 823a-b. Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, p. 153; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, pp. 618–620; PWETL, p. 193.
- 17 T 7, no. 220 (4), 823a–828c. Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, pp. 153–160; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, pp. 617–664; PWETL, pp. 193–199. Also, on the *tathatā* in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, see Linnart Mäll, “3.5: *tathatā*.” *Studies in the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā and Other Essays*, Tartu: Centre for Oriental Studies, University of Tartu, 2003, pp. 85–88.
- 18 “The world is not a thing it is a process.... The world-process is one in which the component events so interpenetrate that each influences every other, and it is these influences thus received and felt that constitute the material out of which each nascent event is constructed.” See Ely (1983, 179).
- 19 In western philosophy, a well-known example, Thomas Aquinas (c. 1224–1274) defined an individual being as “a being undivided in itself but separated from other beings.” in *Summa Theologica*, Part 1, Question 29, Article 4. See Martin and Barresi (2003, 18–20); Nicholson (2004, 533–553); and Smith (1983, 195–214).
- 20 T 7, no. 220 (4), 823b. Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, p. 153; PWETL, p. 193; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, p. 620: *yathā tathāgata-tathatā ’-vikārā nir-vikārā ’-vikalpā nir-vikalpā, evaṃ hi subhūti-tathatā ’-vikārā nir-vikārā ’-vikalpā nir-vikalpā. evaṃ hi subhūtiḥ sthaviras tayā tathatayā ’-vikāro nir-vikāro ’-vikalpo nir-vikalpas tathāgatasyañujātaḥ.*
- 21 There are many more passages in “Tathatā-parivarto Nāma Ṣoḍaśaḥ” on the concept of Tathāgata. However, it would be too lengthy to quote them all here. Two related

- arguments are summarized and exemplified as follows. First, “The suchness of the Tathāgata is just the same as the suchness of all dharmas; the suchness of all dharmas is just the same as the suchness of the Tathāgata” (T 7, no. 220 (4), 823b). Second, “As for the suchness of the Tathāgata and the suchness of all dharmas, they are both one single suchness, not two, not divided, not made, not brought about” (T 7, no. 220 (4), 823b).
- 22 For example, the non-falseness (*avītatathatā*) and the unaltered suchness (*ananyatathatā*) in, “It is thus that the Tathāgata, after he has been enlightened as to suchness, cognizes the suchness of the world, its non-falseness, its unaltered Suchness. And in consequence, just because he has been enlightened about suchness is the Tathāgata called a ‘Tathāgata’” (T 7, no. 220 (4), 816c). Also see Aṣṭa-Vaidya, p. 134; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, p. 559; and PWETL, p. 177.
- 23 T 7, no. 220 (4), 854c–855a. Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, pp. 226–227; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, p. 866; PWETL, p. 266.
- 24 T 7, no. 220 (4), 770a–b. Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, pp. 17–19; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, pp. 137–144; PWETL, p. 97.
- 25 T 7, no. 220 (4), 855a. Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, p. 227; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, p. 867; PWETL, p. 266.
- 26 T 7, no. 220 (4), 764b. Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, p. 5; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, pp. 49–50; PWETL, p. 85.
- 27 It is also called the “concentrated insight called ‘not grasping at any dharma’” (*sarvadharmānupādāno nāma samādbhiḥ*). See T 7, no. 220 (4), 765b; Aṣṭa-Vaidya, p. 7; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, p. 60; PWETL, p. 87.
- 28 T 7, no. 220 (4), 800a. Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, pp. 88–89; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, p. 391; PWETL, p. 138.
- 29 T 7, no. 220 (4), 819b–c. Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, p. 142; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, pp. 581–582; PWETL, p. 184.
- 30 T 7, no. 220 (4), 809c. Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, p. 113; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, p. 493; PWETL, p. 160.
- 31 T 7, no. 220 (4), 773b. Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, p. 26; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, pp. 193–194; PWETL, p. 103.
- 32 T 7, no. 220 (4), 808b. Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, p. 112; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, p. 487; PWETL, p. 159.
- 33 T 7, no. 220 (4), 846c. Cf. Aṣṭa-Vaidya, pp. 210–211; Aṣṭa-Wogihara, p. 819; PWETL, p. 249.
- 34 Regarding multiple paths of cultivation in Buddhism, see Tsai (2014, 257–277).

Abbreviations

- Aṣṭa-Vaidya P. L. Vaidya, ed. *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā: With Haribhadra's Commentary Called Āloka*, Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute, 1960.
- Aṣṭa-Wogihara U. Wogihara, ed. *Abhisamayālamkāra'ālokā Prajñāpāramitā-vyākhyā: The Work of Haribhadra together with the Text Commented on*, Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1932.
- PWETL Edward Conze, trans. *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines & Its Verse Summary*, Bolinas: Four Seasons Foundation, 1975.
- T Taishō shinshū daizōkyō 大正新脩大藏經 [Taishō Edition of the Buddhist Canon], ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 et al. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1932[–1935].
- T 7, no. 220 (4) Taishō serial number 220, *4th Assembly of the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras (Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā)*. Trans. Xuanzang (ca. 602–664).

References

Primary Sources

- 9th Assembly of the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras (Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā)*, trans. Xuanzang, T 7, no. 220 (9).
- Harrison, Paul. 2006. “Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā: A New English Translation of the Sanskrit Text Based on Two Manuscripts from Greater Gandhāra.” In *Manuscripts in the Schøyen Collection: Buddhist Manuscripts*, ed. Jens Braarvig, vol. III. Oslo: Hermes Publishing.

Secondary Sources

- Ely, Stephen Lee 1983 “The Religious Availability of Whitehead’s God: A Critical Analysis.” In *Explorations in Whitehead’s Philosophy*, ed. L. S. Ford and G. L. Kline, 170–211. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Fujichika, Keiichi 1992 “On the Concept of Dharma in *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā*.” In *Hannya Haramitta shisō ronshū*, ed. Mano Ryūkai Hakushi Shōju Kinen Ronbunshū Kankōkai, 79–107. Tōkyō: Sankibō Busshorin.
- Gethin, Rupert 1994 “Bhavaṅga and Rebirth According to the Abhidhamma.” In *The Buddhist Forum*, vol. 3, ed. Tadeusz Skorupski and Ulrich Pagel, 11–35. London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

- 2004 “Cosmology.” In *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, ed. Robert Buswell, Jr., 183–187. New York: Macmillan Reference USA.
- Kloetzli, W. “Cosmology: Buddhist Cosmology.” In *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 3, 2nd edition, ed. Lindsay Jones, 2026–2031. New York: Macmillan Reference. 2005
- Kritzler, Robert 2005 *Vasubandhu and the Yogācārabhūmi: Yogācāra Elements in the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*. Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies of the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies.
- Martin, Raymond and John Barresi, eds. 2003 *Personal Identity*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Nicholson, Hugh 2004 “Specifying the Nature of Substance in Aristotle and in Indian Philosophy.” *Philosophy East and West* 54(4): 533–553.
- Smith, Philip 1983 “The Beginning of Personhood: A Thomistic Perspective.” *Laval théologique et philosophique* 39(2): 195–214.
- Tsai, Yao-ming 2014 “On Justifying the Choice of Mahāyāna among Multiple Paths in Buddhist Teachings: Based on the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras*.” In *Scripture: Canon::Text:Context: Essays Honoring Lewis R. Lancaster*, ed. Richard Payne, 257–277. Berkeley: Institute of Buddhist Studies and BDK America.
- Tsomo, Karma Lekshe 2006 *Into the Jaws of Yama, Lord of Death: Buddhism, Bioethics, and Death*. Albany: State University of New York Press.