CHAPTER II
AN OVERVIEW OF THE VIJÑAPTIMĀTRATĀ
(MERE-CONSCIOUSNESS)

This chapter focuses on an overview of Vijñaptimātratā in Yogācāra Buddhism. This is because it is very difficult to understand the definition and meanings of the terms such Vijñaptimātratā. Therefore, the terms of Vijñaptimātratā, Cittamātra, Vijñāna, and Vijñapti etc. will be explained in accordance with the Yogācāra Buddhism. Moreover, this chapter is going to mention the meaning and nature of Ātman, Dharmas, and Profound Contemplation of Reality. As a general overview, Vasubandhu’s Doctrine of Consciousness and Paramārtha in the Vijñaptimātratā will be carefully discussed in this chapter.

Western students of Yogācāra Buddhism have long been in need of full-length work that analyzes the key Yogācāra problematic concepts in a comprehensive manner. Due to the lack of such a text, many non-specialists have been forced to rely on the accounts provided in reference and survey works, which have tended to offer vague and confusing interpretations of what the tradition actually represents.

Having spent decades reading descriptions of the school written by both classical and modern scholars that he considers to have missed the point in one way or another, the aim of his writing of Buddhist Phenomenology is to set the meaning of Yogācāra straight. In so doing, he provides a re-articulation of Yogācāra that amounts to a must-read for anyone with an interest in this Buddhist system. The starting point of the Consciousness-Only School is that everything is created from the mind as consciousness-only.1 Everything, from birth and death to the cause of attaining Nirvāṇa, is based upon the coming into

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being and the ceasing to be of consciousness, that is, of distinctions in the mind.

Consciousness-Only doctrine is characterized by its extensive and sophisticated inquiry into the characteristics of dharmas. For if we can distinguish what is real from what is unreal, if we can distinguish what is distinction-making consciousness and not mistake it for the originally clear, pure, bright enlightened mind, then we can quickly leave the former and dwell in the latter.

Ch’an Master Han-shan (AD 1546-1623) has said, “When Consciousness-Only was made known to them (i.e., those of the Hīnayāna vehicles), they knew that all dharmas had no existence independent from their own minds. If one does not see the mind with the mind, then no characteristic can be got at. Therefore, in developing the spiritual skill necessary for meditative inquiry, people are taught to look into what is apart from heart, mind, and consciousness and to seek for what is apart from the states of unreal (polluted) thinking.”¹

The founder of the Consciousness-Only School was the Bodhisattva Maitreya, who transmitted its teaching to the Venerable Asaṅga. He and his brother Vasubandhu were responsible for its early spread in India. The school was influential in China primarily because of the efforts of Tripiṭaka Master Sywan-Dzang.

II.1. The Definition of the Vijñaptimātratā (Mere-Consciousness)

All commentators and historians have interpreted the Yogācāra system as idealism of one kind or another. On this interpretation, there is disagreement with the past interpreters. This is because there is no reason why the Yogācāra

system should be described as idealism because Yogācāra system is especially found in Vasubandhu’s works. Reality as such yathābhūta (suchness) cannot be described at all in terms of consciousness (Vijñāna). Then how is it that the Yogācāra system came to be regarded as an idealism? This is because of a misunderstanding, and the consequent misinterpretation, of the phrases Vijñaptimātra, Prajñaptimātra and Cittamātra. For Vasubandhu, these three phrases are synonymous with each other. So they are interchangeable. They are commonly translated as follows:

\[ \text{Vijñaptimātra/Prajñaptimātra} = \text{Mere-Consciousness/ Representation-Only.} \]

\[ \text{Cittamātra} = \text{Mind-Only.} \]

Linguistically, the above renderings are sufficiently reasonable indeed. But, most of the interpreters have mistaken these phrases for descriptions of the final mode of existence. They seem to have been misled as to the descriptions of Vijñaptimātra or Prajñaptimātra or Citta-mātra.

II.1.1. The ‘Terms’ Vijñaptimātratā and Vijñaptimātra

In the Yogācāra philosophical system terms like Ālayavijñāna, Cittamātra, Vijñāna, Vijñaptimātratā and Vijñaptimātra are frequently used. They represent the central concepts in the works such as the Samīdhinirmocana Śūtra and Lankāvatāra Śūtra. Among all these terms Cittamātra is undoubtedly one of the most complex and difficult term for a number of reasons. From its various usages both in the Yogācāra and Mādhyamika works it appears to be associated with purely philosophical and the critical speculation and also with spiritual meditative practices. It was also used to emphasize the primary importance of meditative technique as a means of gaining an unimpeded view of the ultimate reality. It should be careful with regard to its

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changing context. The original concept of Vijñaptimātra can be traced back to the Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra, where Asaṅga quotes one passage in his Mahāyānasāṃgraha:

“Maitreya asked: Lord, are these images cognised in meditation different from that mind (which cognises them) or are they not different? The Lord answered: Maitreya, they are not different, and why? Because those images are nothing but conceptualization (Vijñaptimātra). Maitreya, I have explained that the meditative object (alambana) of consciousness (vijñāna) is comprised of (prabhāvita) nothing but conceptualization.”

From the above quotation of Asaṅga, it is quite clear that term like Cittamātra and Vijñaptimātra pertain to actual meditative instruction and practice. Probably this may also appear to be one of the reasons for the system of philosophy of idealism to be called Yogācāra. The Yogācāra is indeed concerned with mind (citta) its nature, development and its working.

Vijñānavāda literally means the doctrine of consciousness. The Vijñānavāda, sometimes called as the Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda, is one of the most significant schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism. According to this school, the only existent is consciousness (Cittamātra, or Vijñaptimātra). The other name of this school is the Yogācāra. It is also, at times, called the Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda. It is one of the two major schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Vijñānavāda (consciousness teachings), also Cittamātra (only spirit) or Yogācāra (Yogā means practice) mentioned, is one of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, created philosophical school of the Mahāyāna Buddhism. The central theory of this school means that all perceptible phenomena only up. For basis of the spirit develop and as such are unsubstantial. Consequently all perceptions are classified as mental projections.

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The core thread in the work lies in treating what Buddhist scholars take to be the foremost of the misunderstandings of Yogācāra, the meaning of Vijñaptimātra, commonly rendered as ‘consciousness-only’ or ‘mind-only.’ Standard introductions to Yogācāra have for several decades now, tended to explain Vijñaptimātra as either a Buddhist form of “idealism,” or as a Jungian psychologism wherein the store consciousness is equated with a collective unconscious. Most introductions to “consciousness-only” continue to explain it as a “kind of happy realization and valorizing affirmation of consciousness as a reality, meaning something like true cognition or consciousness is real.”

Lusthaus argues that Vasubandhu and his colleagues never intended such a valorizing signification, but in fact used the term Vijñaptimātra with the intent of laying out an indictment of the problems that the activities of consciousness engender. The explanation of exactly how and why this is so necessitates a re-examination of a wide array of arcane Yogācāra concepts, but in a more fundamental sense, at least for Lusthaus it implies a re-evaluation of one’s understanding of the most basic concepts of Buddhism itself, including karma, dependent origination, and selflessness. Lusthaus main vehicle for carrying out this project is Hsuan-Tsang’s Cheng Wei-Shih Lun, which Hsuan-Tsang composed for the express purpose of clarifying the meaning of Yogācāra in his own time. He has been working on the Cheng Wei-Shil Lun for decades, and so this book also represents a culmination of his studies on that text.

II.1.2. The Vijñaptimātra and the Cittamātra in Yogācāra Buddhism

In contrast to the Cittamātratā doctrine of the earlier Yogāćārins, Asaṅga and Vasubandhu expressed their basic position as Vijñaptimātratā.

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2 Ibid., p.435.
While the former doctrine focuses on the nature of the state of liberation, the latter attempts to explain the nature of the state of bondage.¹

In Kuei-Chi’s terms,² *Cittamātratā* tells us about the Absolute, while *Vijñaptimātratā* tells us about the conventional realm of experience. *Cittamātratā* is thus a more general proposition; it can be understood as an ontological assertion concerning the nature of existence. *Vijñaptimātratā*, however is a much more specific, epistemic proposition that is intended to tell us about the perceptual error that prevents us from realizing liberation. Again, its primary intention is patently stereological. It involves to some extent, ontological presuppositions regarding the nature of existence, but they are not primary and are not, for the most part, explicitly formulated.

It was *Vijñaptimātratā* that became the central philosophical principle of Classical *Yogācāra* as expressed by Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, the Indian school of *Yogācāra* thought from which the formulation of Hsuan-Tsang and Kuei-Chi was derived. It was this doctrine that provided the cornerstone of the analysis of the delusory process by which we remain bound to the world of inevitable suffering and woe, and, as such, it was taken by Kuei-Chi as the theme of his treatise translated.

**II.1.3. The ‘Terms’ Vijñāna and Vijñapti**

The Sanskrit term *Vijñapti* and *Vijñāna* are both primary derivatives of the verb “vijña”, both are verbal nouns expressing an activity. The verb “vijña” is made up of the “jña-” plus the prepositional affix “vi” which adds to the root the quality of being (or doing) asunder, apart, distinct or different, a qualification parallel in many cases by that of the Latin prefix de/dis. Thus the basic meaning of “vijña” is to know distinctly or discursively.

¹ *VB*, p.42.
² *VB*, p.42.
In a somewhat broader sense, it can mean simply to perceive, and again by extension: to be aware or to be conscious of something. Examples of all these shades of meaning, and more, can be found in the Buddhist technical literature.

The nominal forms of this verb, both Vijñāna and Vijñapti, retain the reference to an activity: they express the action specified by the verb, in somewhat the same manner as the “ing” forms in English. They do not express a state of being: hence the inappropriateness of consciousness, the most commonly encountered equivalent for Vijñāna. If we are to render these forms into English, the equivalents should properly be verbal nouns ending in “ing”, or “tion”. The “tion” forms in English are more versatile, but still retain some degree of ambiguity as they can be understood in three different ways: they can refer to the act of doing some action, they can refer to the thing that is done, and they can also express a state of being. The latter of these three categories must be excluded in the case of any “tion” equivalent for Vijñāna or Vijñapti.

What then is the range if Vijñāna as a technical term? Vijñāna certainly occurs often in Buddhist literature with the more restricted meaning of perception. In Yogācāra texts, however, and probably in earlier Buddhist writing as well, it is very often also used as a more generic designation for all forms of mental activity, conscious and unconscious. This is evident, for example, in the range of activity comprised by the eight modes of Vijñāna, a Yogācāra doctrine to be discussed.

Moreover, one finds passages where Vijñāna is said to stand for Citta (mind), Manas (thought), Vijñāna (as specifically perception, i.e., the six modes of imperical perception) and for Vijñapti as well.¹ There is no simple English equivalent that conveys this range of meaning. The best course is probably to incorporate the term Vijñāna into our technical vocabulary as has

¹ CWSL, p.321.
already been done with a number of other Buddhist concepts: nirvāṇa, karma, dharma, etc. If a simple English equivalent for Vijñāna in its broadest, generic sense is necessary, then mentation seems far preferable to consciousness.

As a technical term in the Classical Yogācāra of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, the meaning of Vijñāna seems to be derived most directly from the verbal meaning of declaring or designating, as when the Dependent (paratantra) is mistaken and then clung to in its Imaginary (parikalpita) aspect. Vijñapti thus refers generally to the act by which this is done and, perhaps, in some cases to a given, particular instance of the act. The term has been translated by using a number of different equivalents: representation ideation or identification (Levi), notation or notification (Demieville and Levi), idea (Lamote), Erkenntnis (Frauwallner).¹ None of these, however, fully conveys the particular epistemic activity the Yogācārins seem to have in mind.

Asaṅga and Vasubandhu seem to be focusing on the activity of taking one thing as another, or in a narrower, epistemological context, on the process by which we come to know the world, the process of concept formation. A better English equivalent for reflecting this aspect of Vijñāna’s meaning is conceptualization. It is through this act of conceptualization, according to Yogācārins, that we construct or constitute the world as we take it to be given in our experience; we do this in manner that allows understanding and conventional discrimination, in a manner necessary to function in the mundane world. It is in this sense that the Yogācārins assert that the world as we know it is Vijñaptimātra or conceptualization-only.

There is one possibility that may account for the attractiveness of the particular term Vijñāna, one that warrants further, more diachronic study: the possible relationship between Vijñapti and Prajñapti, a term already by Asaṅga’s time in the technical vocabulary of the Sautrāntikas and the

¹VB,p.45.
Mādhyamika. It is perhaps no coincidence that Asaṅga choose a term that was both formally and semantically parallel to the Mādhyamika term for the world-constructing process.

Prajñapti has been defined as referring to the designations or the language constructs by which we relate to the world, as the superimposition of concepts onto bare experience. The Vijñapti of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu certainly seems to have played in their system a parallel role to Prajñapti in the Mādhymika system.

The Chinese gloss of Vijñapti is in fact very close, in both form and meaning, to the Tibetan equivalent “mam par rig”, and that provides some interesting information with respect to the problems. Neither Chinese or Tibetans rendered Vijñapti with a causative form, indicating that the causative, the second person directed aspect was not a prominent feature in the gloss of the term that they received from their Indian teachers. There is one instance in the Madhyānta-vibhāga where para-vijñapti is rendered with a causative form in Tibetan. Thus in a different context Vijñapti could be and was translated with the causative in both languages.

II.2. An Overview of the Vijñaptimātratā in Yogācāra Buddhism

As one of the branches of Buddhist thought, the elaborate, and at time exceedingly intricate, theorizing of the Yogācāra school was focused on a single objective: liberation, the cessation of the suffering, both physical and psychological, that is the inevitable consequence of normal, worldly existence characterized by the cycle of continual death and rebirth (samsāra). In pursuit of this goal the various Buddhist schools sought, in different ways, to chart a practical path through the maze of our mundane experience, a course of practice that would ultimately insure the realization of this liberation.
It is usually conceived that the synonymous name for the title *Yogācāra* (school of the practice of yoga) is *Vijñānavāda* (the doctrine of consciousness). Really, the maxim “all three worlds are mind only” (its locus classicus is *Daśabhūmika Sūtra*) expresses the principal doctrinal essence of this school as a teaching which examines mainly just the problems of mind and consciousness. But not all the representatives of this school used the term *Vijñānavāda* for its self denomination (it is also true regarding another denominations of *Yogācāra* which also are conceived to be synonymous: *Vijñaptimātra, Cittamātra*, etc.).

It must be said that every outstanding representative of this school who established the subschool of his own preferred to use his own denomination of his new branch. This difference in self-denominations reflected rather subtle distinctions between the trends developing in the frames of general paradigm of the *Yogācāra* thinking. On this foundation, it seems to be possible to define the following sub traditions of this school of the Buddhist philosophy:

Subtradition of Asaṅga the exact name of which is *Cittamātra* (psychical only, or mind only); it can be qualified as psychological idealism.

Subtradition of Vasubandhu, developed by his disciples Sthiramati and especially, Dharmapala. The exact name of this trend is *Vijñaptimātra* (Conscious only), or *Vijñānavāda* (The doctrine of consciousness). It can be qualified as the Buddhist phenomenology of consciousness.

Subtradition of Dignāga (Diṅnāga) – Dharmakīrti originated from Vasubandhu’s subtradition (as it is well known, Dignāga was a disciple of Vasubandhu, and Dharmakīrti – that of Dharmapāla’s) and its proper name is *Sautrāntika* - *Yogācāra*. It can be qualified as the logico - epistemological branch of the *Yogācāra* School.
For the brief definition of these sub traditions it can be said that Asaṅga’s teaching contains in itself the tendency to ontological and metaphysical examination of the problem of Mind. It confirms the existence not only the store consciousness of ālayavijñāna which is the source of all empirical forms of consciousness and its contents as well but also supports the idea of the One and Only absolute Mind which is the same as the Dharma Body (Dharmakāya) of the Buddha itself. This Absolute Consciousness sometimes was even called “Great Self”, “Highest Self”, or “Pure Self” (mahātman; paramātman; suddhātman).

This tendency leads Asaṅga to the positions of the Tathāgatagarbha theory represented first of all by the treatise Ratnagotravibhāga (or Uttaratantra). This work was included by the Tibetans to the texts of Maitreya and Asaṅga but the Chinese tradition attributed it to a certain Sāramati. It must be added that this tendency appeared in its purity first of all in the texts included by the Indo-Tibetan tradition to the group of the so-called Maitreya – Asaṅga works (the most clear example here is Mahāyāna sūtralāmākāra śāstra).

It is possible that the position of these works of Asaṅga had played an important role in the process of integration of the Yogācāra ideas into the theory of the Tathāgatagarbha. This integration has found its most perfect expression in the famous work of pseudo Aśvaghoṣa Mahāyāna Śraddhotpāda Śāstra (it is existed only in Chinese). This position of Asaṅga supplied the reality of only psychical and was quite in accordance with the teaching of such important doctrinal text as Laṅkaṇvatāra Sūtra. It is rather important to note that in another works of Asaṅga (Yogācāra Bhūmi Śāstra, Mahāyāna Saṃgraha Śāstra, Abhidharma Samuccaya). Asaṅga’s position is looks like the position of his stepbrother Vasubandhu (but some differences still continue to exist).
Subschool of *Yogācāra* presented by Vasubandhu himself could be considered to be classical *Yogācāra*; it was just in Vasubandhu’s and his disciples’ works this school attained its perfect maturity. Unlike Asaṅga, Vasubandhu carefully reserves from the arguments of the ontological character having strong intention to keep himself exclusively in the frames of phenomenology. Developing the concept of Ālayavijñāna and the teaching about three levels of reality (*trisvabhāva*), Vasubandhu tells nothing about any Absolute, or the Only Mind, he reserves himself from discussion about the essence, or nature of consciousness examining only its phenomena (*laksana*).

Nevertheless, his disciples Sthiramati and Dharmapāla transcended the limitations of the pure empiricism and phenomenologism of Vasubandhu distinctively proclaiming the idea of the non-existence of the world outside consciousness (this position was accepted by the Chinese *Yogācārin* Hsuan-Tsang and Kuei-ji; Hsuan-Tsang was a pupil of Dharmapāla’s disciples). It can be added here that in India such words as *Vijñaptimātra* and *Cittamātra* were pure synonyms but the Chinese tradition absolutely correctly distinguishes them.

In the Chinese Buddhist parlance *Cittamātra* is the name for the *Tathāgatagarbha* theory based schools whose intention was to investigate the very nature of Mind, and *Vijñaptimātra* is a designation of the school of classical *Yogācāra* with a phenomenological approach to Mind; their intention was to investigate only phenomena of consciousness and not its transcendental nature (that is *paratantra* and not *pariniṣpanna* level). Hsuan-Tsang’s school of the Dharmic Phenomena just was a representative of this philosophical attitude.

Vasubandhu’s *Vijñaptimātra* determined the character of the Chinese school of Faxiang zong founded by Hsuan-Tsang; it was known very well in Tibet as well. Logico-epistemological trend had no followers in China or in the Far East as such but it exerted a powerful influence on the forming of the
logico-theoretical tradition in Tibet. But in any case the school of Yogācāra Buddhist philosophy is one of the most profound and subtle Indian philosophical system spreading with the Buddhist religion all along Eastern and Central Asia. And Hsuan-Tsang was the greatest exponent of this philosophical trend in China.

II.2.1. Language: A Yogācāra Explanation

The history of Mahāyāna Buddhism is full of a variety of schools and traditions which contributed widely to philosophy in Asia. One of the most debated topics in the history of Buddhist philosophy has been language. Within Mahāyāna Buddhism itself we can find many subtly different interpretations on the nature of language and how it works.

Non-Buddhist theories of language in medieval India, especially those connected with Brahmanical Hinduism, asserted that a word refers to an object through a positive connection and identification. For instance, the word “car” is connected to the object car by the positive assertion “that is a car”. The word “car” cannot refer to anything else. For instance, it is impossible to refer to a table as a “car” without knowing we are wrong.

The problem with this theory for Buddhists is that Buddhists believe the object car is empty of inherent existence. For Buddhists, what we call “car” is simply a collection of non-car parts such as wheels, axles, paint, cogs etc. It is impossible to find “car” among its parts. Therefore, what does the word “car” actually refer to? Many of the non-Buddhists posited the existence of an entity “car-ness”, an abstract quality that all cars possess. They stated that it was this abstract principle to which the word “car” referred. The Yogācāra Buddhists contended that such an essence does not exist and such a belief in the inherent existence of an object was an illusion of the mind.
Since the doctrine of emptiness meant that the object car did not essentially exist, it was difficult for Buddhists to explain why the word “car” refers to the object car. The Yogācāra Buddhist philosophers, beginning with Dignāga in the 5th century, provided a very sophisticated explanation of how words refer to things. They began with the basic point that this idea of “car-ness”, the abstract quality belonging to all cars, did not exist outside of the mind and was in fact a construction of the mind. Therefore, words refer to objects only in the mind and not to anything outside of the mind.

Even if we say that “car-ness” is merely a construction of the mind, there is still the problem of how this idea was created. How can the mind create the idea of “car-ness” when, according to the Buddhists, “car-ness” does not actually exist in reality? It was in discussing this problem that the genius of Yogācāra Buddhism really becomes evident. The Yogācāra philosophers stated that, when we experience an object, such as a car, the information that comes into our mind is simply the particular pieces that create the car. These pieces are not the wheel or axles etc. but the actual atoms that form the object. When all these minor characteristics and particulars are cognised the mind habitually compares this information with previous experience.

This collection of particular characteristics is separated from previous experience by difference. Everything that is not like this collection of particular characteristics is excluded until this body of particular characteristics appears to form a unitary thing in the mind. However, this unitary thing, for instance a car that now appears to positively exist, is actually the negation or exclusion of everything that does not share the particular characteristics of a car. In short, the object to which the word “car” refers is actually not-not-car, i.e. a negation of everything that isn’t a car.

Through this explanation Yogācāra Buddhists were able to explain how words refer to objects in the mind, without relying on a theory that would posit
an essence or an inherent existence in things. The ramifications of this viewpoint extend far beyond language.

II.2.2. Ātman and Dharmas

The basic philosophical question for the later Buddhist schools, including Yogācāra, concerned the reality status of the constituents or events of experience (dharmas) and also of the individual or the self (atman) that experiences those events. Many elements of classic appearance and reality problem of western philosophy are evident here, but always relegated to the more basic question of soteriological relevance.

For Asaṅga and Vasubandhu especially, the objective was not so much to exhaustively analyze or catalog what does exists, in the manner of classical ontology. They sought rather to show that what we conventionally take as existing does not really exist, and that it is precisely this mis-perception that perpetuates our bondage and obscures the liberation to be experienced in enlightenment.

All the constituents of our experienced, both the things experienced and also what we take to be the experiencer, both the perceiver and the perceived are, in this analysis, seem to be empty of any ultimate, unconditioned reality. They must be seen as empty of any essential, abiding substance or own-being (svabhāva) that would make them, independent of all the other manifold factors of experience, real in any ultimate sense.

II.2.3. Profound Contemplation of Reality

Sankara’s reference (vide Brahmāsūtra Śaṅkarabhāṣya) of “rope and snake” is a simple version of Vasubandhu’s elephant analogy given above. The

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1 VB, p.40.
noble 9th century mystic Śaṅkara, in introducing his system of Advaita Vedānta, suggested that the world is like falsely seeing a snake for what actually is a harmless segment of rope. The rope is lying on the ground. Dusk has gathered and it is not easy to see clearly.¹

An observer, walking along the path, mistakes a short segment of rope lying on the ground for a poisonous cobra and takes fright. In this manner, says the great sage Śaṅkara, the world and its suffering are perceived, when in reality it is the pure Absolute (brahman) alone that exists.

It is that the world is purely illusion (maya). When the illusion is seen for what it truly is, just as the snake instantly becomes again the rope which it always has been, so too the world instantly transforms back to Brahman. By this means Śaṅkara likewise posited nonduality (advaita). Hence his teaching is frequently known by the name Advaita Vedānta.

Vasubandhu’s explanation is, however, intrinsically more scientific than Śaṅkarācārya. Śaṅkara’s analogy of “rope and snake” overlooks the antithesis of an absolute reality opposed to an absolute illusion, or existence (sat) versus non-existence (asat). Although Śaṅkara and Vasubandhu are pointing in the end to the same final fact, Śaṅkara’s analysis of the problem falls short of Vasubandhu’s. If we apply Vasubandhu’s three natures to the rope and snake analogy we can arrive at a deeper insight into the whole problem.

Like the elephant that was not there, the snake is an illusion super-imposed on the rope. The rope is the Ultimate Reality not seen by us. What Śaṅkara’s explanation lacks, is in telling us how the illusion occurs. This, you might say, he takes for granted. Vasubandhu, on the other hand, makes it clear that we have to accept that the illusion itself is contingent (paratantra) on something deeper. This

something is revealed when the actual nature \((parinispanna-svabhāva)\) of the illusion is seen for what it is, i.e., as non-existent.

To say the world is an illusion is insufficient, insofar as in doing so we impart to the concept illusion a reality that is not there. It is not that the world is an illusion, rather it is that the illusion itself is unreal, which is more important. The collapse of this projection is what breaks the spell imposed by the magician over the crowd.

Chatterjee and Datta, in the work of “Indian Philosophy”, present the argument as follows: “The magician is a juggler only to those who are deceived by his trick and who fancy that they perceive the objects conjured up. But to the discerning few who see through the trick and have no illusion, the juggler fails to be a juggler. Similarly, those who believe in the world-show think of God through this show and call Him its Creator, etc. But for those wise few who know that the world is a mere show, there is neither any real World nor any real Creator.”

The key, therefore, to Vasubandhu’s message rests on contemplating the nature of \(Parikalpita\), the imposition of the illusion on the Real \((tathatā)\). Not recognizing (the hypnotic power) of finite contrivance \((vikalpa)\), living beings are seduced by these very constructs, and since the continuum of conceptual-constructs flows (temporarily), there is no turning back from the deceit \((bramti)\) later on. They who are deceived by Illusion’s \((maya)\) illusion, which is like the projected apparition of an elephant conjured up by a magician, are similar to sleepers who, drawn by the attraction of a lustful dream, are made subject to the power of that dream.

**II.2.4. The Vijñaptimātratā and The Realist Critique**

In the beginning of the \(Vimśatikā\), Vasubandhu stated his philosophical position as follows: “The three realms \((traidhātuka)\) are \(Vijñaptimātra\)

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(perception-only)."¹ As a central point of controversy, the term Vijñaptimātra not only was mistreated by Vasubandhu’s contemporaries, but also caused trouble for modern scholars. Various renditions of it have been provided, such as consciousness-only, ideation-only, representation-only, perception-only, etc., but none of them could be of much help without the whole argument being fully articulated.

Meanwhile, we need to know only that the term Vijñapti literally means proclamation or making known, and that the term mātra means only. As a compound, Vijñaptimātra in the present context means being known or presented in the consciousness only.² The whole statement means that the entire universe, which consists of the realm of desire (kāmadhātu), the realm of form (rūpyadhātu) and the realm of formlessness (ārūpyadhātu), are nothing but that which is known or presented within consciousness. “Only” is stressed in order to rule out any external referent or object (artha).

If perception occurs without referring to an external object, then there could be no determination of space and time. But then why does the perception of a certain thing occur only at a specific time and place, not anytime and anywhere? If perception arises from the consciousness without referring to any external object, then one could perceive, for instance, a table anywhere and anytime. But, in fact, consciousness is not thus arbitrary. Therefore, the existence of an external object is necessarily required for the occurrence of perception.³

Vasubandhu replied that in the case of dream a perception does occur at a specific time and place, though this does not correspond to any external

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¹ Vīm, v.1.
object. For example, I had a dream that in the morning I saw my sister on the corner of a street. In this case time and space are determined even when my sister is nonexistent.

Realists raised another question: If perception occurs without corresponding to an external object, why is it that many persons present at the specific time and space are able to have the same perception of something? In other words, if the perception depends on the consciousness only and not on the external object at all, then that specific perception could not be manifest to all observers who are present at the same time and place. But this is not the case, for all drivers can see the red light when they stop in front of the traffic light. If this is true, then there must exist a real red light corresponding to the driver’s perception.¹

Vasubandhu replied that common perceptions can occur without referring to an external object because observers share the same structure of consciousness. Vasubandhu gave an example of hell and hungry ghosts (which was popular and suitable for his contemporaries), saying that all hungry ghosts living in hell see the pus-river and the hell-guardians that in fact are nonexistent since they fall into hell because of the maturation (vipaka) of the same deeds (karmas).

According to the Buddhist tradition, the world of life and death is constituted by the experiences of those who share the same kind of karma in the past. Thus the structure of individual consciousnesses is supported by a common past. The Yogācāra coined a technical term, Vikapavijñāna (maturation-consciousness) to designate this underlying structure of consciousness which results from the maturation of past deeds.

¹ Ibid, p.18.
The most striking criticism from realists is the problem of efficacy. If perception in the waking state is the same as that in a dream, so that all perceptions do not correspond to external objects, then why does the thing perceived in the waking state have efficacy whereas that in a dream does not? For instance, the poison and knife in a dream do not possess the function of killing, while in the waking state they do.

In response to this criticism, Vasubandhu did not deny the efficacy of things and actions, but argued that efficacy is exactly prompted by perception-only without necessarily relying on an external object as its cause. A good example is a wet dream in which sexual excitement can be aroused by a sex partner who in fact is nonexistent.

Up to this point, Vasubandhu defended his position quite satisfactorily by arguing that the three pillars of realism, i.e., determination of time and space, indetermination of observers, and efficacy, cannot prove the existence of external objects because they occur also in situations in which no external object exists. Vasubandhu admitted the above three conditions of experience. However, he did not accept the realist’s theory, but argued that what is experienced or perceived is perception-only (Vijñaptimātra).¹

That Vasubandhu successfully presented counter-arguments to the realist’s criticism is not equivalent, however, to saying that his own position is demonstrated. The problem remains. Both in waking and in dreams we do have a perception of something. How is it possible that something does not exist independently of consciousness; or how is it possible that something exists as manifested by, and to, consciousness above? The clue to an answer to this question is found in Vasubandhu’s doctrine of consciousness.

¹ Ibid, p.19.
II.2.5. Vasubandhu’s Doctrine of Consciousness

In early Buddhism, consciousness (Vijñāna) is analyzed into six categories: five sense-perceptions (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touch) and mental-perception (Manovijñāna).¹ These perceptions arise when the two conditions, sense-faculties (indriya) and their respective sense-objects, are present. For instance, a visual perception arises when eyes and something visible (rūpa) are had; similarly mental perception arises when there is a mind (mano) and a mental object (dharma). The sums of six perceptions, including sensory and mental perception are named consciousness.

As conditions of perception, the five sense-faculties and the five sense-objects have never been examined as to their ontological status, but according to the early Buddhist scriptures they were considered to be real. Now, Yogācāra claims that both sense-faculties and sense-objects are merely manifestations (pratibhāsa) of consciousness: they are merely perception without referring to external objects.² How does Yogācāra justify such a deviation from the Buddha’s original teaching?

In addition to the sixfold structure of consciousness, Yogācāra added two more layers: the store-consciousness (Ālayavijñāna) and the ego-consciousness (Manas) so that in total consciousness becomes eightfold. Note that this sort of classification is purely typological and cannot be interpreted literally as meaning that there are eight consciousnesses.

First, let us look at the notion of store-consciousness (Ālayavijñāna). Etymologically the word Ālaya is derived from the verb root a-li, meaning “come

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¹ The term Manovijñāna has been rendered in various ways. K.N. Jayatilleke rendered it as “internal perception” or “introspection” in his Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge, New York: Routledge, 2008, p.436. Walpola Rahula translated it by “mental consciousness”. See his What the Buddha Taught, New York: Grove Press, 1959, p.23.
² Vim, v.9.
close to, to settle down upon, to stoop.” Thus it means “a house, a dwelling, a receptacle.” It also means “clinging” or “that to which one clings.”

Accordingly, Ālayavijñāna is usually translated as storehouse-consciousness and means a latent consciousness which functions like a storehouse where the seeds (bījas) of the previous actions (karmas) and cognition are deposited. In this sense, store-consciousness is taken as synonym of consciousness-containing-all-seeds (Sarvabījakavijñāna).

According to the Samdhinirmocana-sūtra (SNS), a fourth century Yogācāra text, the store-consciousness is characterized by two kinds of appropriation (upadana):

1. To sustain the sense-faculties.

2. To appropriate the psycholinguistic sediments (vāsanās) which result from the daily discourse.

In the SNS, the ontological status of body is not doubted, probably because there the doctrine of perception-only has not yet fully developed. But we will see later that in Vasubandhu’s philosophy the notion of body is nothing but the perception or consciousness of body: the inner consciousness of body is the base of body.

The store-consciousness consists of all sorts of seeds, a metaphorical notion which needs further exposition. Although the notion of seed can be traced back to the Nikāya and Āgama literature, it was directly inherited by the early Yogācāra thinkers of the Sautrāntika School. They contended that when the action (karma) momentarily perished it perfumes the consciousness-stream.

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or mental series (*cittasatāna:*), creating thereby a special potentiality. This potentiality ripens through a period of the evolution in the consciousness-stream.\(^1\) As a result, through the perfuming of action a seed is transformed into a sprout and finally turns into a fruit.

By adopting this mode of metaphorical thinking, the early *Yogācārina* viewed the store-consciousness as the container of all karmic and psycholinguistic seed. In given conditions, a seed can be actualized and transformed into an object-in-perception which, in turn, by the activities of the other seven consciousnesses, leaves its residual force in the store-consciousness. In the sixfold perception there exists a cycle of mutual causation: the object-in-perception results from the actualization of seed, and conversely the seeds result from the perfuming activities of the sixfold perception.

But how are the seeds as sediments of discourse in the store-consciousness transformed into all sorts of sensory and mental perceptions? That is, how is it possible for the *Yogācāra* to claim that the objects of cognition and sense-organs are merely the manifestation (*pratibhāsa*) of seeds? Vasubandhu attempted to solve this problem by introducing a new notion, i.e., transformation of consciousness (*Vijñāna-parimāṇa*). This became the core of later *Yogācāra* philosophy, though it had not been fully developed philosophically in Vasubandhu’s lifetime.

**II.2.6. Paramārtha in The Vijñaptimātratā**

There were two main streams in *Yogācāra Buddhism*. On the one hand, there was the old school of Sthiramati and Paramārtha. On the other hand, there was the new school of Dharmapāla and Hsuan Tsang. Due to the work of Yoshifumi Ueda and Gadjin Nagao in Japan, Paramārtha has been to a large extent

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extent clarified. The difference between their doctrines on Buddha-nature has been, however, relatively neglected by modern scholarship.¹

It is clear that, for the Yogācāra doctrine of Buddha-nature, the pure seeds also contribute to the attainment of Buddha-hood. According to the modern Chinese monk Master Yin Shun (1906-2005), this signifies an unnecessary complication. Mou, however, holds that this is only due to Master Yin Shun’s overlooking of the fact that there are two kinds of Buddha-nature: the rational and the practical Buddha-nature.²

As is seen above, for the Fa-hsiang School, the rational Buddha-nature is emptiness (sunyata) as an objective principle, and the practical Buddha-nature, consisting of the pure seeds, is a subjective principle. The abiding place for the pure seeds is the alayavijñana, rather than the rational Buddha-nature. As the principle of emptiness, the rational Buddha-nature is not understood as the dynamic ground for the possibility of becoming enlightened.

It is only the static principle to be witnessed. This indicates that there is a distinction between emptiness and the principle of emptiness. The efficient effort for attaining enlightenment is exclusively found in the pure seeds. The growth of the naturally inherent pure seeds is solely responsible for the activity in attaining the Buddhahood. Therefore, it is not repetitive for the Fa-hsiang School to introduce the pure seeds as the necessary condition of attaining Buddhahood.

In the Awakening of Faith, such an originally pure mind of Buddha-nature has been identified as the central reality of all reality. Paramārtha supposedly transforms the essence of the Ālayavijñāna. In particular, as Master

Yin Shun claims, Paramārtha introduces the concept of the enlightening Ālayavijñāna.

According to the original position of Yogācāra Buddhism, the Ālayavijñāna is strictly defiled.1 Under the influence of the doctrine of the tathāgatagarbha represented by the Awakening of Faith, however, Paramārtha is obliged to distinguish between two kinds of the Ālayavijñāna: the defiled Ālayavijñāna in the traditional sense, and the enlightening Ālayavijñāna. While the former is identical with the impure paratantra, the latter coincides with the pure paratantra.

Like the pure mind of the tathāgatagarbha in the sense of the Awakening of Faith, Paramārtha’s pure mind of Buddha-nature is called tathāgatagarbha when covered by obstruction. Conversely, it is called Dharmakāya when it is free from any obstruction. In itself, the pure mind of the tathāgatagarbha is said to have potentially acquired infinite virtues. Ontologically, such a pure mind functions as the transcendental ground for the possibility of both the supramundane and mundane world. On the level of praxis, it is a synonym for original enlightenment in the Awakening of Faith.

Although Paramārtha and the Awakening of Faith both employ the phrase the original pure mind in characterizing their respective conceptions of Buddha-nature, they differ in their understanding of its meaning. The same linguistic phrase should not blind us to the semantic distinction. The traditional interpretation of Paramārtha’s doctrine of Buddha-nature results from overlooking this important distinction.

In conclusion, we can say that since Paramārtha’s doctrine of Buddha-nature grants a priority to the practical, he more closely adheres to the original spirit of Yogācāra Buddhism. On the other hand, while being imprisoned in the

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primacy of knowledge, the Fa-hsiang School’s doctrines actually undermine the importance of praxis. This contrast also shows us in what ways one can achieve a Yogācāra doctrine of Buddha-nature that is compatible with the position of the ekayāna (‘only one way’ to Buddhahood).

II.2.7. The Certainty of Knowledge

For realists, the doctrine of perception-only has difficulty in explaining away the fact that in daily life we surely do, for instance, see and grasp a cup. If there does not exist a cup independent of consciousness, they argued, how can this certainty be justified?

Vasubandhu replied that he did not deny the certainty of knowledge and experience but that he does not agree to postulate external objects as the grounds of that certainty. Vasubandhu asked, how can the existence of an external object independent of consciousness be demonstrated? Obviously, for Vasubandhu, it is the realist’s postulation of external objects which needs to be critically examined.

According to the previous analysis, we conclude that the discrepancy between Vasubandhu’s and realist’s positions lies in their different conceptions of consciousness. For realists, consciousness is like a mirror that correctly reflects things out there. Between the reflection (image) and the object there is a representative relationship.

On the contrary, Vasubandhu viewed consciousness as constituting so that being conscious of something is tantamount to constituting and objectifying it: what is constituted (i.e., the object-in-consciousness) reflects that which constitutes (consciousness).
For Vasubandhu, to assert or postulate a corresponding or representative relationship between an object-in-consciousness and an external object is a perverse view of consciousness which is inter-subjective.

In the *Trīṃśatikā* and the *Viṃśatikā*, the store-consciousness is also called consciousness-in-maturation (*Vipakavijñāna*) for the store-consciousness results from the maturation of past deeds (*karmas*): “Those who have done the same kind of deeds are born into the same world, and share the same structure of consciousness.”1

Vasubandhu did not mention an a priori structure, but he did consider the present consciousness as the embodiment of the past. Due to this inter-subjective consciousness, one perceives something in the same way as do the others.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, perception is directly caused by its own seed deposited in the store-consciousness. The reason why a certain perception appears in this rather than in another way, is due to the determination of seed. Since the seed is essentially linguistic and conventional. It is due precisely to the linguisticality and conventionality of seeds that the certainty of perception is obtained.

Therefore, investigation of the nature of the object has been the focal issue in Vasubandhu's philosophy. Particularly as seen in the debate with realists, this issue is full not only of epistemological significance, but also of soteriological implications. To Vasubandhu, the realist's assertion of external existence obstructs the path of enlightenment and liberation.

Like any form of metaphysics, realism conceals more truth than it can disclose. Vasubandhu argued that object constitution is obscured by realism in the same way that the reality of the dependent is concealed by the imagined.

As far as one is directed towards the external world, one will inevitably ignore the subjective construction and fail to see how desire and power are involved in the assertion of external objects. To postulate or assert external objects is equal to making objects for grasping and desiring. For Vasubandhu, then, there is no pure epistemology or pure-science; to claim any sort of pure science or realism is absolute myth.

II.3. Some Concepts related to Vijñaptimātra

i- Four kinds of dharmas (all phenomena): (1) kuśala (good), (2) akuśala (defiled), (3) nivṛtāvyākṛta (defiled non-defined), and (4) anivṛtāvyākṛta (non-defiled non-defined/unobstructed and indeterminate).

ii- Three svabhāvas: nature or state (object): the object-component of consciousness is classified as being of the three kinds of states: (1) parinispāṇa: natural state (the state of things in themselves), (2) paratantra: state of transposed substance (the state of representations), and (3) parikalpita: state of solitary impressions (the state of mere images).

iii- Three pramāṇas: The modes of knowledge (subject or the valuable sources of knowledge). The functioning of the subject-component of consciousness is of three types, known as the three modes of knowledge or three valuable sources of knowledge: (1) pratyakṣa: direct (the veridical perception), (2) anumāṇa: inference (or indirect perception), and (3) anupalabdi: fallacy (non-cognition or wrong perception).

iv- Nine preconditions. In work ‘Verses Delineating the Eight Consciousness’, Hsuan Tsang (Xuanzang) mentioned nine necessary preconditions for the production of consciousness. They are: (1) space, (2)
light, (3) organ (4) state, (5) attention, (6) basis of discrimination, (7) basis of defilement and purity, (8) fundamental basis, and (9) seeds as basis (bījas).

V- Five stages of inner revolution were discussed in last five verses of Trīṃśatikā: (1) sambhāravasthā (moral provisioning), (2) prayogavasthā (intensified effort), (3) prativedhavasthā (stage of unimpeded penetrating understanding), (4) bhāvanavasthā (stage of exercising cultivation), and (5) niṣṭhavasthā (stage of ultimate realization). The five stages will be discussed on the next chapter.

The Chart of Necessary Preconditions for Production of Consciousness

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vi. Kuśalamūla (the root virtuous merits)

There are three kinds of merit (kuśalamūla). They are: gaining merits (punyabhāgīya), liberating merits (mokṣabhāgīya), and penetrating merits (nirvedhabhāgīya). Gaining merits are the parts pertaining to (the accumulation

of) merit that lead to the realm of gods, goddesses and human. Liberating merits are the merits leading to the state of liberation and nirvāṇa. Penetrating merits are the kinds of merit that lead to attain realization of truth, which decides and sifts the truth from the false. It is also the merit that leads to realize the Vijñaptimātratā (true nature of consciousness). Nirvedhabhāgīya is so called because it leads to pure intelligence (nirvedha). There are four levels of the training progress of penetrating merit (nirvedhabhāgīya): heat (uṣmagata), peak (mūrdhānas), patience (kṣānti), and ‘supreme mundane qualities’ (laukikāgradharmas) in order to lead to understanding directly the holy path (āryamārgas).  

   - Heat (uṣmagata) and peak (mūrdhānas) are the practices of inferior and superior reflections of non-existence of objects or without objects-grasping (grāhygrāha). In the levels the meditator begins to efforts to insight into four states of dharmas that are grasped as objects, which are name (nāman) and essence (vastu) of things together with their self-natures (svabhāva) and difference (viśeṣa). In this way the meditator discovers that all these are only supposed to exist (prajñaptisat) and that they do not exist in reality (dravyasat). Relying on the inferior reflection, he attains the state of meditation of illumination (ālokalabdha-samādhi) that is like the sunrise of wisdom (prajñā). This is the fire of illumination that guides the practitioner on the holy path, so it is called heat (uṣmagata). Moreover, relying on the superior reflection, he attains the state of meditation of ‘increasing illumination’ (ālokāvṛddhi) that means the light of illumination continues to increase. This is the highest state of reflection (paryeśaṇa), so it is called peak (mūrdhānas).

   - Patience (kṣānti) is the level of meditation in which the meditator recognizes definitely and confirms the non-existence of the perceived objects (grādyas), and also spontaneously and gladly recognizes the non-existence of

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1 The Abhidharma Mahāvibhāṣa Śāstra, Taisho Tripiṭaka, Vol.XXVII, No.1545, book.7th, p.34c27.
the perceiving subject (grāhaka). Since no real objects exist apart from the consciousness so no real consciousness itself exists apart from the objects which are taken by it. Because what is taken and what takes are in mutual dependence, one is on the other. As signifying the recognition of the emptiness of object and subject (consciousness), it is called patience (kṣānti)

- ‘Supreme mundane qualities’ (laukikāgradharmas). In the level of patience, the emptiness (śūnyatā) of object is confirmed but the emptiness of subject is only signified. Till this level the emptiness of both subject and object is confirmed, the practitioner immediately enters the ‘path of insight into truth’ or ‘path of seeing’ (darśanamārga); whence the name is called ‘without intermission’ (ānantaryasamādhi). It is the most sublime of the dharmas of prthagjanas (outflowing dharmas); hence it is called ‘supreme mundane qualities.1

vi. The Theory of the Triple Body of the Buddha

According to Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra, there are three forms (trikāya) of Buddhahood: 1. Dharmatā-Buddha, who is evidently the Dharmakāya (body of true nature). 2. Nishyanda-Buddha corresponds to Sambhogakāya (body of enjoyment). 3. Nirmāṇa-Buddha corresponds to Nirmānakāya (manifestation-body). It is like the sun or moon revealing all forms instantaneously by illuminating them with its light; in the same way, the Dharmatā-Buddha makes all beings discard the habit-energy (vāsanā) that issues from false views of the world, instantaneously reveals to all beings the realm of unthinkable knowledge (achintya-dhātu). Then the Nishyanda-Buddha instantaneously maturing the mentality of all beings, places them in his palatial abode where they will become practitioners of various spiritual trainings.2

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1 CWSL, pp.679-680.
The Ch’eng Veih Shih Lun explains in details as follows:¹

1. Dharmakāya: the body of true nature. It is pure sphere of absolute reality (Dharmadhātu) of the true suchness (Tathāgatas), the principle of Enlightenment that is embodies in the Buddha himself. This is the essence of the Buddha and is independent of the person realizing it. Here, the Buddha is equal to the Truth (Dharma), and all Buddhas are one and the same, being no different from one another in the Dharmakāya, because Dharma is on “one who sees the Dharma sees me (the Tathāgata), one who sees me sees the Dharma.”²

2. Sambhogakāya, the body of enjoyment. This is the subtle body of limitless of form. It can be considered as the body or aspect through which the Buddha enjoyed Himself in the Dharma, in teaching the Dharma, in leading others to the realization of the Dharma, and in enjoying the company of Bodhisattvas. The Buddha manifests Himself in His specific pure lands, which are created for the benefits of others. The beings in those lands are very easy to hear and practice the Dharma. The celestial Buddha Amitābha as well as the advanced Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara is said to the appearance in the body of enjoyment of the Buddha. The body of enjoyment (sambhoga-kāyas) consists of two types: svasambhoga-kāyas (the body of self-enjoyment) and parasambhoga-kāyas (the body of other-enjoyment). The former is the body of true nature (dharma-kāya), the latter is the body of enjoyment.

3. Nirmāṇakāya (manifestation-body) is the physical body of the Buddha who was born among people in the world, attained Enlightenment, preached the Dharma and got Mahaparinirvāṇa. At the first time there is only one Buddha, historical Gautama Sakyamuni Buddha. However, during His lifetime, he is the living embodiment of wisdom, compassion, happiness and

¹ CWSL, pp.793-794.
freedom; He made the distinction between Himself as the enlightened, historical individual on one hand, and Himself as the Embodiment of Truth on the other. The enlightened personality was known as the manifestation-body (Nirmāṇakāya) or Form-body (Rūpakāya).

viii. Ten bhūmis (grounds)

According to The Avataṃsaka Sūtra (The Mahāvaipulya Buddhāvataṃsaka Sūtra), there are ten levels or grounds (bhūmis) through which someone who practices the bodhisattva path. They are: Grounds (bhūmis) are the levels of mental experiences of individuals during the spiritual practicing, or meditation, or purification of mind. They comprise ten bhūmis (grounds): 1. Pramuditā (extreme Joy), 2. Vimalā (Stainless), 3. Prabhākarī (Lumious), 4. Arciṣmatī (Glowing Wisdom), 5. Sudurjayā (Difficult to Cultivate), 6. Abhimukhī (Manifest), 7. Duraṃgamā (Gone Afar), 8. Achalā (Immovable), 9. Sādhumati (Wonderful Intelligence), 10. Dharmamegha (Cloud of Doctrine).

1. Pramuditā (extreme Joy) is so called because an individual rejoices at having seen reality for the first time and he feels joy at seeing that he is close to Buddhahood.

2. Vimalā (Stainless). On this bhūmi, one who practices the bodhisattva path engages in the perfection of morality (śilapāramitā) and is unstained by even subtle types of unwholesome actions (daśa-akuśala-karmāṇi) performed by body, speech, or mind. Ten daśa-akuśala-karmāṇi are killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, divisive speech, harsh speech, senseless prattle, covetousness, harmful intent, or wrong views, even during dreams. He performs the ten virtues (daśa-akuśala-karmāṇi) of protecting life, giving gifts, maintaining sexual ethics, speaking truthfully, speaking harmoniously,
speaking kindly, speaking sensibly, nonattachment, helpful intent, and right views without the slightest taint of a conception of self (ātmagraha).¹

3. Prabhākarī (Luminous). At this bhūmi, the practitioner realizes that all phenomena (saṃskṛta dharmas) is impermanent, suffering, and no self, which bring sorrow, worry, unhappy, etc. for all sentient beings. So he tries to not grasp them but attains the light of wisdom that helps them to leave the grasping of dharmas, therefore it is called ‘luminous’.²

4. Arcismatī (Glowing Wisdom). Glowing Wisdom, so called because, at this stage, the practitioner, well installed in the most excellent dharmas of Bodhi (Bodhi-pāksika-dharma), burns up the firewood of kleśas and upakleśas emit to the increase of the glowing flame of prajñā (wisdom).³

5. Sudurjayā (Difficult to Cultivate). Difficult to Cultivate is so called because this level is very difficult to attain, it requires a great effort of a practitioner to complete. The practitioner to be required to realize that ‘this is the suffering, this is the origin of the suffering, this is the cessation of suffering, and this is the way leading to the cessation of suffering’.⁴

6. Abhimukhī (Manifest). Manifest is so called because the practitioner clearly understood the theory of Dependent Origination (pratītya-samutpāda). He realizes that all phenomena is dependent on each other to arise. When this thing is present, that thing exists; when this thing is not present, that thing does not exist. When that thing is present, this thing exists; when that thing is not present, this thing does not exist.⁵ For understanding directly on pratītya-

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¹ Ibid., p.185a21.
² MBs, p.187b18.
³ CWSL, p.709.
⁴ MBs, p.191b26.
⁵ Ibid., p.193c17.
samutpāda, which brings about and gives rise in him the supreme wisdom that is free from discrimination and speculation.\(^1\)

7. *Durāṅgamaṇḍa* (Gone Afar). This level is called Gone Afar because it is beyond all worldly paths. The practitioner who attains and abides in this stage has ability to enter all realms of the Buddhahood to listen the teachings in order to complete his higher goal; moreover he also has ability to enter to all realms of sentient beings in order to teach them to practice the suitable ways that lead to happiness.\(^2\)

8. *Achalā* (Immovable). The wisdom of non-discrimination (*nirvikalpakajñāna*) of a practitioner proceeds spontaneously in a continuous series. All *kleśas* cannot not agitate him. So it is called immovable.\(^3\)

9. *Sādhumati* (Wonderful Intelligence) is so called because, at this stage, the practitioner has successfully acquired the mysterious four unhindered powers of interpretation and reasoning, with which he can penetrate the ten regions, preaching the *Dharma* perfectly.\(^4\)

10. *Dharmamegha* (Cloud of Doctrine) is so called because, in this final stage, the clouds of *mahā-dharma-jñāna* (great dharma wisdom), bearing ‘waters of all virtues’, conceal the *dausthulya* (grossness or crude dross, i.e., inaptitudes or infirmities) of the two āvaraṇas (afflictions and knowledge are just as clouds conceal space) and fill the *Dharmakāya*.\(^5\)

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\(^1\) CWSL, p.709.  
\(^2\) MBs, p.196b07.  
\(^3\) CWSL, p.709.  
\(^4\) CWSL, p.709.  
\(^5\) CWSL, p.709.