Chapter 2: The Yogācāra Tradition: History and Texts

2.1 Origin and Development of Yogācāra

2.1.1 Background of Yogācāra

The origins of the Yogācāra traditions in India are larges lost to us. It is true that many Buddhist scholars were participants in an ongoing conflict between Theravāda and Mahāyāna. The origin and development of the Yogācāra is concerned, is really a very difficult task to trace its exact origin. It is only the later followers of Buddha who formulated different schools of thought from the real teaching of Buddha. The Yogācāra is one of the two mainly schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India. It began in fourth century India and became one of the two principal Mahāyāna Buddhist Schools; Mādhayamika is another one, established by Nāgārjuna in 2nd century A.C. The Yogācāra is described merely as idealism. During its formative years, Vasubandhu is one of a triad of figures, including also Maitreya and Asaṅga, who developed this Indian Buddhist School during its nascent period. The exactly relationship between them is unclear. Some say that Maitreya is to Asaṅga, more of a historical influence than an active contributor to what became the Yogācārin philosophy. Here, it may be point out that recent thinking in Buddhism has been forcing the scholars to accept the view that the Maitreyanātha was the real founder of the system. The tradition goes like that live of his works were revealed to Asaṅga by Maitreya. Some of the scholars hold different view that he was a historical person and the teacher of Asaṅga and he was the real founder of the Yogācāra School.
Indian Buddhism in its long history, the development of philosophical thought may be classified into four categories\(^2\), each representing a way of interpreting the original teachings of the Buddha. These four philosophical schools in historical order were:

a) The *Vaibhāṣika*, or phenomenological school founded on the study of *Abhidharma* metaphysics, which influential in *Kashmir* and *Ghandhara* largely pertained to monks of the *Sarvāstivāda* Order, and became a fundamental study of the *Theravāda* Order.

b) The *Sautrāntika*, which felt that the exponents of *Abhidharma* had deviated from the original teachings of the Buddha as expressed in the Sutras. The school insisted upon returning to the discourses as sources for the study of the Buddhahood.

c) The *Mādhyamika* School founded by *Nāgārjuna* in the south of India in the first and second century *Abhidharma*. The *Mādhyamika* system of philosophy is famous for its dialectics. It must be observed that the critical realism of the *Sautrāntikas* led on the one hand to the dialectical absolutism and *Mādhyamika* and the idealism of the *Vijñānavāda* on the other\(^3\).

d) Finally, the *Yogācāra*/ *Vijñānavāda* School, which arose in part as a reaction against the scholasticism. After the time of *Nāgārjuna*, it tended to displace contemplative practice in the monasteries of India. This Yoga movement emerged in the third century Abhidharma.

The *Yogācāra* School is also known as *Vijñānavada* (consciousness doctrine) School\(^4\). The *Yogācāra* system of thought has traditionally been described as some form of metaphysical idealism. *Yogācāra* focused on the processes involved in cognition in order to overcome the ignorance that prevents one from attaining liberation from the karmic rounds of birth and death. *Yogācāra* introduced several important new doctrines to Buddhism, including
*vijñaptimātra*, three natures, three turnings of the Dharma-wheel, and a system of eight consciousnesses.

Asaṅga and Vasubandhu became the first identifiable Yogācārins, each having initially been devoted to other schools of Buddhism. Asaṅga attributed a portion of his writings to Maitreya, the Future Buddha living in *Tuṣita* Heaven. However, some modern scholars have argued that this Maitreya was an actual human teacher, not the Future Buddha. Maitreya appeared and transported Asaṅga to *Tuṣita* Heaven where he instructed Yogācārin works, that Asaṅga then introduced to his fellow Buddhists. All of Buddhism required a Yogācārin reinterpretation. Innovations in *Abhidharma* analysis, logic, cosmology, meditation methods, psychology, philosophy, and ethics are among their most important contributions.

However, Fernando Tola and Carmen Dragonetti have described Mahāyāna Buddhism in general as part of its doctrinal rebellion against the realist Hinayāna School. A.K. Chatterjee, defining ontological idealism from the Mahāyāna perspective as the meditation between nihilism and realism, is among those who have supported the position that Yogācāra is the absolutism and the idealism. Thomas wood, focusing on the inter-subjective aspects of Vasubandhu’s system, describes it as a doctrine of collective hallucination. David Kalupahana rejects the description of Yogācāra as any form of metaphysical idealism, absolutist or transcendentalist, and urges a psychological interpretation. Thomas Kochumuttom argues for an interpretation of Yogācāra as a kind of realistic pluralism, while Alex Wayman and Richard King have expressed reservations about the relevance of the question of idealism in Yogācāra at all.
A correct appraisement of the system is a form of absolutism. It also conceived a new philosophical system that brought Mahāyāna thought to its full scope and completion. Yogācāra sustained attention to issues such as: cognition, consciousness, perception, and epistemology, coupled with claims such, as “external objects do not exist”. This is the central problem of affecting a logical synthesis between idealism and absolutism. The Yogācāra School has established a systematic presentation of mind, a world of view based on their three-nature theory and a path system of Buddhist practice. Yogācāra itself is not a specific meditative practice, but is meant as a descriptive tool to understand situations of action and intention. The Yogācāra is wise enough to perceive that idealism, when pressed, yields the absolutism by the sheer dynamism of its own inner logic. Yogācāra is a special metaphysical teaching that gives us a unique view of the mind and the universe. This is a school of Buddhist philosophy and psychology emphasizing phenomenology and ontology through the meditative and yogic practices. The goal is the complete clarification of consciousness into wisdom. The intention of the school is not to propound a mere philosophical viewpoint, but to develop a perspective, which will facilitate enlightenment.

Yogācāra discourse is founded on the existential truth of the human condition. There is nothing that human experience that is not mediated by mind. All most of emphasis of the Buddhist philosophy has been laid on subjectivity. This one was usually linked with the concept of reality. Another important feature of the Buddhist philosophy is the realm of experience. There are different phases of it, which can easily be discerned in this connection, the realistic phase, the critical phase and the idealistic phase.

Thus, the earliest phase of the Buddhist philosophical thought begin with the Sarvāstivāda. This name is very significant on account of it’s meaning, according to which everything exists.
That really meant is all of the elements of existence. This school of thought accepted as many as 75 dharmas\textsuperscript{12}. The dharma is treated as objectively real. This school is broadly converted under \textit{Theravāda}. It may also be pointed out that \textit{Theravāda} exerted little or no influence on the later development of Buddhism. \textit{Theravāda} does not reveal any new system. The historical \textit{Sautrāntika} School is very great and important; it is this metaphysics that paved the way for the later development in Buddhist \textit{Mahāyāna}. After appearing of \textit{Sarvāstivāda}, there are emerged another school has known as \textit{Sautrāntika}. The \textit{Sautrāntika} are also understood as \textit{Sarvāstivāda} itself, aware of its own logical basis. They are not two schools, but two phases of the same metaphysical pattern. This school of thought accepted only 43 dharmas and rejected the rest as subjective. As far as the metaphysical position of this school is concerned: “In his metaphysics the \textit{Sautrāntika} maintains three theses. Everything is transient and perishing (\textit{anitya}); every thing is devoid of selfhood or substantiality (\textit{anāma}); every thing is discrete and unique (\textit{svalakṣaṇa})”\textsuperscript{13}. This school accepts the reality of the objects of the external world. This school accepted \textit{pratyaksa} as a true evidence of knowledge. The school has a historical importance because on account of its metaphysics it paved the way for the later \textit{Mahāyāna} developments in the history of Buddhism. According to A.K. Chatterjee, “the \textit{Sautrāntrika} prepared the way of the \textit{Mādhyamika} on the one hand and the \textit{Yogācāra} on the other, and is, in a sense, the parting of ways.”\textsuperscript{14}

This School pushes \textit{Mahāyāna} Buddhism to its climatic conclusion by engaging in an extensive discussion on the nature and activities of our mental life and its potential for transformation from delusion to enlightenment. It has exerted a profound impact on the overall development of Buddhist philosophical deliberations and meditative practices. \textit{Yogācāra} teach on Karma, meditation, cognition, and path theory had a powerful impact on the other
Mahāyāna schools that developed during the time of the importation of Yogācāra to Tibet and East Asia, such that much of the technical terminology on which other Mahāyāna schools based their discourse was absorbed from the various strands of Yogācāra. Although Yogācāra is not a quiet a living tradition in the way Zen Buddhism or Theravāda Buddhism is today. It is very much alive in some Asian Buddhist scholastic traditions, especially in Japan. It also remains a source of inspiration for contemporary Buddhist practitioners as well as Buddhist scholar. Even in China, where Yogācāra did no survive as a continuing scholastic tradition. Furthermore, the philosophical and psychological insights exhibited by Yogācāra have gained real traction among modern western Buddhist scholars who in turn are influenced the way Buddhism has been received in the west, where most if the dialogue between Buddhism and modern psychology has been taking place. Therefore, an engagement between Buddhism and modern psychology cannot afford to disregard the contribution of Yogācāra Buddhism. Yogācāra stands on the innovative frontier as one product of the cultural interchange. The system which Asaṅga and particularly Vasubandhu formulate, and were to present in a number of pithy treatises, not only present the Buddha’s original path of meditation in clear, scientific terms, but also delved into an analysis of the psychology of the mind.

2.1.2 Yogācāra Literature

The most that can be said with anything approaching certainty is that there begins to become apparent, in some Indian Buddhist texts composed after the second century Abhidharma. Yogācāra, school of Buddhism, eventually became virtually extinct within India. It is the development of the logic of Buddhist thought and the philosophical importance of considering and analyzing the nature of consciousness and the cognitive process. Such
questions had, naturally, been of significance for Buddhist thinkers long before the second century AD. *Mahāyānasūtras* did not begin to appear until roughly five hundred years later. New *Mahāyānasūtras* continued to be composed for many centuries. Indian *Mahāyānists* treated these *Sūtras* as documents that recorded actual discourses of the Buddha. By the third or fourth century CE, a wide range of Buddhist doctrines had emerged, but whichever doctrines appeared in *Sūtras* could be ascribed to the authority of Buddha himself. The ways, in which, adherents of the *Yogācāra* have discussed them after this period and, in many cases, the philosophical conclusions drawn by such thinkers. At this point, a historical overview of the development of the *Yogācāra* is given and designated major phases of the *Yogācāra* tradition and will outline the major textual resources available for the study of each.

Then some scholars had already been mentioned that *Vasubandhu* is the key figure as far as the *Yogācāra* system is concerned. He has contributed a lot to the development of Buddhist philosophy in more than one way. It is said about him that in the beginning he was an adherent of the *Sautrāntika* School. *ADK* is a makeable work, written from the *Sarvāstivāda* point of view by him, though the work primarily deals with the *Sautrāntika* School, but this is held in great esteem by all other philosophical schools of Buddhism.

The origin of the *Yogācāra* is shrouded in obscurity. Amongst the earliest literature, *LAS* contains some of the idealistic teachings. It contains references to ālaya, manovijñāna and to ten bhums. Another important work known as *Daśabhūmikasūtra* also contains the germs of the *Yogācāra* along with the *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra*. There is another importance *SDS*, which also has one germs of the later *Yogācāra* idealism are of the view that Asaṅga might have also written some treatises. The “nine Dharmas” accepted as canonical by the *Mahāyāna* as *Laṅkāvatāra*, *saddarma* etc. The founding of *Yogācāra* is traditionally ascribed most of its
fundamental doctrines had already appeared in a number of scriptures a century or more earlier, most notably the SDS (the first Yogācāra text, explaining the hidden intentions of Buddha). Among the key Yogācāra concepts introduced in the SDS are the notions of “only cognition” (vijñapti-mātra), three self-natures (trisvabhāva), the ālaya-Vijñāna (storehouse consciousness), overturning the basis (āśraya-parāvrtti), and the theory of eight consciousnesses.

Hence, the SDS, as the doctrinal trailblazer of Yogācāra, inaugurated the endemic categorical triune of the three turning of the wheel of dharma. Mahāyānasūtras continued to be composed for many centuries. Buddhists had always maintained that Buddha had geared specific teachings to the specific capacities of specific audiences, the SDS established the idea that Buddha had taught significantly different doctrines to different audiences based on their levels of understanding; and that these different doctrines led from provisional antidotes (pratipakṣa) for certain wrong views up to a comprehensive teaching that finally made explicit what was only implicit in the earlier teachings. In order to leave nothing hidden, the Yogācārin embarked on a massive, systematic synthesis of all the Buddhist teachings that had preceded them, scrutinizing and evaluating them down to the most trivial details in an attempt to formulate the definitive (nītārtha) Buddhist teaching. Innovations in Abhidharma analysis, logic, cosmology, meditation methods, psychology, philosophy, and ethics are among their most important contributions.

Asaṅga’s magnum opus, the Yogācārabhūmiśāstra, is a comprehensive encyclopedia of Buddhist terms and models, mapped out according to his Yogācārin view of how one progresses along the stages of the path to enlightenment. Vasubandhu’s pre-Yogācārin magnum opus, the Abhidharmakośa (abb. ADK) (Treasury of Abhidharma) also provides a
comprehensive, detailed overview of the Buddhist path with meticulous attention to nuances and differences of opinion on a broad range of exacting topics.

According to tradition Asaṅga converted Vasubandhu to Yogācāra after having himself been taught by Maitreya; he is not known to have had any other notable disciples. Tradition does assign two major disciples to Vasubandhu: Dignāga, the great logician and epistemologist, and Sthiramati, an important early Yogācāra commentator. It is unclear whether either ever actually met Vasubandhu. They may have been disciples of his thought, acquired exclusively from his writings or through some forgotten intermediary teachers. These two disciples exemplify the two major directions into which Vasubandhu’s teachings split. After Vasubandhu, Yogācāra developed into two distinct directions or phase:

a) A logic-epistemic tradition, exemplified as Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, Śāntarakṣita, and Ratnakīrti.

b) An Abhidharmic psychology, exemplified as Sthiramati, Dharmapāla, Xuanzang (Hsüan-tsang), and Viññādeva.

While the first phase focused on questions of epistemology and logic, the other phase refined and elaborated the Abhidharma analysis developed by Asaṅga and Vasubandhu. These phases were not entirely separate, and many Buddhists wrote works that contributed to both phases. Dignāga, for instance, besides his works on epistemology and logic also wrote a commentary on Vasubandhu’s ADK. What united both phases was a deep concern with the process of cognition, i.e., analyses of how we perceive and think. The former phase approached that epistemologically while the latter phase approached it psychologically and therapeutically. Both identified the root of all human problems as cognitive errors that needed correction.
Several Yogācāra notions basic to the Abhidharma phase came under severe attack by other Buddhists, especially the notion of ālayavijñāna. Eventually the critiques became so entrenched that the Abhidharma phase atrophied. By the end of the eighth century it was eclipsed by the logic-epistemological tradition and by a hybrid school that combined basic Yogācāra doctrines with Tathāgatagarbha thought. The logic-epistemological phase in part side-stepped the critique by using the term cittasantāna, “mind-stream”, instead of ālayavijñāna, for what amounted to roughly the same idea. It was easier to deny that a “stream” represented a reified self.

On the other hand, the Tathāgatagarbha hybrid school was no stranger to the charge of smuggling notions of selfhood into its doctrines, since, for example, it explicitly defined Tathāgatagarbha as “permanent, pleasurable, self, and pure (nitya, sukhā, ātman, sattva).” Many Tathāgatagarbha texts, in fact, argue for the acceptance of selfhood (ātman) as a sign of higher accomplishment. The hybrid school attempted to conflate Tathāgatagarbha with the ālayavijñāna. Key works of the hybrid school include the Lankāvatāra Sūtra, Ratnagotrabhāga (Uttaratantra), and in China the Awakening of Faith. In China during the sixth and seventh centuries, several competing forms of Yogācāra dominated Buddhism. A major schism between orthodox versions of Yogācāra and Tathāgatagarbha hybrid versions was finally settled in the eighth century in favor of a hybrid version, which became definitive for all subsequent forms of East Asian Buddhism. Yogācāra ideas were also studied and classified in Tibet. The Tibetans, however, tended to view the logic-epistemological tradition as distinct from Yogācāra proper, frequently labeling that Sautrāntika instead.

Among others, who have made significant contributions to the development of Yogācāra is, Sthiramati. He is opposed to have written commentaries on Vasubandhu’s eight works on
Thus with *Sthiramati* the first phase of *Yogācāra* idealism comes to an end. It is said that here onwards the main interest of the philosophers shifted from metaphysics to logic and epistemology and there started a new school of philosophy, which is generally known as *Vyananavada*. *Dignāga* and *Dharmakīrti* are the two important names that have contribute a lot to Buddhist logic through their works. This was the second phase in the development of Buddhist idealism. The first phase of pure idealism, represented by *Maitreyan-Asaṅga*, *Vasubandhu* and *Sthiramati*, can be called *Yogācāra* school, the second phase of idealism-cum-critical realism, presented by *Dignāga*¹⁰ and *Dharmakīrti*²⁰, can be called *Vijñānavāda* school and the whole development, the *Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda*.

Among these works, *Dignāga* had contributed the most important works is *Pramāṇasamuccaya*. Which primarily deals with Buddhist logic. *Dharmakīrti* is his pupil, who has written an important work known as *Pramanavartika*. His celebrated work is commentary on *Pramāṇasamuccaya*. Moreover, *Dharmakīrti* has written *Nyayabindu, Pramdnauiniscaya, Hetubindu* and the *Sambandhapanksa* and *Vadanyaya*. After this there emerged two important Buddhist philosophers are *Santaraksita* and *Kamalasrla*. Therein we find out another interesting development of *Mahāyāna* philosophy. It is said that among the two, *Santaraksita* tried to present a synthesis of the *Mādhayamika* and the *Yogācāra* systems. After this it is believed that there were no worthwhile doctrinal developments in the *Yogācāra* system.²¹

### 2.2 Ārya Asaṅga, Vasubandhu: Life and Works

#### 2.2.1 Asaṅga and his works

*Ārya Asaṅga* is very prominent and dominating thinker in the development of *Vijñānavāda* philosophy. He is a disciple of *Maitreyanatha*. Asaṅga attributed a portion of his
writings to Maitreya (the Future Buddha living in Tuṣita Heaven). Some modern scholars have argued that this Maitreya was an actual human teacher, not the Future Buddha, but the tradition is fairly clear. After twelve years of fruitless meditation alone in a cave or forest, during a moment of utter despair when Asaṅga was ready to quit due to his abject failure, Maitreya appeared to him and transported him to Tuṣita Heaven where he instructed him in previously unknown texts, Yogācārin works, that Asaṅga then introduced to his fellow Buddhists. Precisely which texts these are is less clear, since the Chinese and Tibetan traditions assign different works to Maitreya.

Ārya Asaṅga (315-390)22 lived in Gandhāra (modern Kandahār in Afghanistan) but his birthplace is Purushapura (Peshawar). He was born in a Kushika Brahmana family in the kingdom of Gandhāra. The scholars have neglected Asaṅga for a long time. His brother Vasubandhu has clouded him though traditionally it is believed that Asaṅga was the original propounded of the Yogācāra School. All these accounts may be the reason why modern scholars believe that Maitreyanātha propounded the Yogācāra thought. Along with his two brothers he was converted to Sarvāstivāda School of Hinayāna Buddhism, which could not give his spiritual mind any solace23.

Asanga’s important work of building Viharas, writing numerous treatises, and instructing countless monk disciples all of which was instrumental in reviving the Mahāyāna. But history remembers him chiefly for his role as founder of a new school of Mahāyāna Buddhism, the Yogācāra. Asanga’s School continued to emphasize meditation and the practice of Yoga as central to the realization of Bodhi or enlightenment. Later, this school underwent certain changes, becoming known first as the Vīñaptimātra called “consciousness-only” and then, the
Vijñaptimātravāda “representation-only” school), owing to the popularization of Asanga’s teaching through the independent works of Vasubandhu and later doctors of the lineage.

Maitreyanātha then initiated him in the “Śunya” doctrine of Mahāyāna. He mastered the spiritual contemplation and was called Sūryaprabhāsāmadhi. With this he could understand the essence of all the texts of the Great vehicle.

Tūrānātha has stated that Asaṅga was one of the sons of the Brahmana matron who was married to a member of the Kshatriya community.

Hiuen-tsang has also mentioned the fact that original birthplace of Asaṅga was Gandhāra but he goes on, without modification, to change the scene of the legend and transports it to Ayodhyā.

After receiving spiritual enlightenment from Maitreyanātha, he resided in a monastery in Dharmāṅkura aranya, a place near Magadha. Then he migrated to Uṣmapura vihāra at Sagari and succeeded in bringing king Gambhirapaksha in to the fold of his doctrine. Towards the end of his life, he remained for twelve years at Nālandā and he passed away in Rājagṛaha where his disciples erected a monument in his honour.

According to Dr. Bagchi “Asaṅga was alive and active in the fifth century A.D.”. He gives Professor Levi’s opinion that the probable date could be the first half of fifth century and Dr. Winternitz’s opinion that he “probably lived in the 4th Century and was originally an adherent of the Sarvāstivāda School”.

Mr. Bagchi in his introduction to Mahāyānasutrālāṅkāla has referred to the legend that “Asaṅga ascended the Tuṣita heaven for receiving enlightenment on the mystery of the Great
vehicle from the Bodhisattva Maitreya who used to reside in that blessed region. Furthermore it has been placed on record that Asaṅga, during his sojourn in that celestial abode received Yogācārabhumishāstra, Mahāyānasutrālaṁkāra, Madhyānta and other sacred texts from Maitreyanātha. Tārānātha has recounted the self same classical episode, with certain modifications and has reiterated that Asaṅga mastered five teachings of Maitreya by staying in the Tuṣita heaven”.

Again Mr. Bagchi has given two opposite views regarding the authorship of this great work. He has quoted C. Tucci from his article entitled “On some aspects of the doctrines of Maitreyanātha and Asaṅga”. G. Tucci has furnished fresh arguments to prove that Maitreyanātha is the author of the MSL.

Asaṅga has been attributed with the authorship of MSL. He is one of the great masters of Mahāyāna Buddhism, though there are some differences of opinion about the authorship of MSL among the scholars. Asaṅga is the author of this great book that gives us briefly all the important tenets of Mahāyāna Buddhism. He has observed that the authorship of the Kārikā portion of the six treatises belongs to Maitreya and his disciple Asaṅga composed commentaries on those works.

E. Obermiller has held the view that the five works attributed to Maitreyanātha by the Tibetan tradition were actually composed by Asaṅga and that the classical story of revelation of them to Asaṅga by Maitreya in Tuṣita heaven is intended to give a divine sanction to the works. The colophon of the work reveals that the original text has been announced by Bodhisattva Vyavadatasamaya. This was translating into Chinese and Tibetan. But the real identity of Vyavadatasamaya is not really known.
Buddhist scholars almost unanimously characterize the *Yogācāra* as being school of Buddhist idealism. *Asaṅga’s* works were aimed at correcting the mistaken views held by many Buddhist adherents of his day concerning the true meaning of the *Mahāyāna* scriptures. To be sure, the single, most misunderstood doctrine taught by these texts was that of śūnyata, “voidness” or “emptiness.” The principle of *Mahāyāna* is the perfection of knowledge. When the Madhyamika School propagated the doctrine of “śūnya” (Void) doubt was created in the minds of people and there was controversy about it. *Asaṅga* renewed his effort to propagate Buddhism and his “Vijñānavāda” was the result. So “Vijñānavāda” was a doctrine that could satisfy people mentally as well as spiritually. *Asaṅga* searches for the principle of his doctrine through “*Yogācāra*”. Time was also favorable for *Asaṅga*.

These are the fundamentals from which *Asaṅga* has deviated in his system. He is only concerned about explaining the “mind” and the reason of existence by arrangement or interpretation. In fact *Asaṅga* has taken the knowledge of these ten “Bhumis”, by Bodhisattvas as granted. In shortly, the principal works of *Asaṅga* are:

a) *Abhidharma samuccaya*: *Asaṅga* explains the principal doctrines of the *Mahāyāna* following the method already employed by the *Abhidharma* treatises of the Hinayāna. He analyzes the *dharmas* and their different kinds, the Four Noble Truths, the Nirvana, the Path, the diverse kinds of individuals, the rules of debate, etc. In this treatise there are some references to *cittamatra*, the three characteristics of being (*parikalpita, paratantra and parinispanna*).

b) *Mahāyānasamgraha*: This treatise is a summary work of the doctrines of the *Yogācāra* School. In a clear and complete way it deals with the principal themes of this school,
giving them their canonical expression: the (names, characteristics, demonstration, kinds, moral nature); the three natures (definitions, relations, subdivisions), the *Vijñaptimātra* and the inexistence of the external object; the three bodies of the Buddha.

c) *Yogācārābhūmi śāstra*: This treatise is generally considered as the *magnum opus* of *Asaṅga*, although in some sources it is attributed to *Maitreyanātha* and even it has been thought that it *is* a compilation work composed by several *Yogācāra* authors. It is a voluminous work. It comprises five major divisions of which the first, called *Daśabhūmikasūtra*, is the most important one. At its turn this first part contains seventeen sections, which describe the stages (*bhumi*) that are to be passed through by the follower of the *Mahāyāna* in order to reach the ultimate goal, the *Nirvana* also the achievements he attains in each stage. The doctrine of the Ālayavijñāna is mentioned in this treatise.

d) *Commentary on the Samdhinirmocanasūtra*

e) *Commentary on the Vajracchedika Prajñāparamitasūtra*

### 2.2.2 Vasubandhu: The Date of Problem and His Works

*Vasubandhu* (320-380)²⁷ (Sanskrit; traditional Chinese: 世親; Vietnamese: Thế Thân), the Buddhist philosopher, is one of the most prominent figures in the development of Buddhist philosophy in India. He is one of Indian Buddhism’s “six jewels”, “the writer of a thousand treatises”²⁸. Therein the question was one or two or more *Vasubandhu* may be very important. The problem of when this philosopher lived never ceased to be controversial; numerous attempts have been made subsequently to settle it without any definite result. Therefore, we now face with not only the question of when *Vasubandhu* lived, but also with the problem of
how many *Vasubandhu* in the history of Indian philosophy. However, we are comparatively well informed as regards the great philosopher, and a determination of his date, which will contradict many sources to say about his times, is manifestly possible.

*Vasubandhu*’ life are know from several biographies in Chinese and Tibetan. The earliest of which is the Chinese rendering of the life of *Vasubandhu* by *Paramärtha*²⁹, who composed it while he has been in China. However, there was apparently a previous account by *Kumarajiva*, which has not survived. The earliest Tibetan biography available to me is a good deal later, that of Buston. In addition, there are several references to *Vasubandhu* in the works of *Hsuan-tsang* and other writers. According to Chinese historical source, there are at least three different dates in which *Vasubandhu* might have been born: at 900 years after the Buddha nirvāṇa (B.N.), at 1000 B.N. or at 1100 B.N. The name of *Vasubandhu* has been associated in the history of Buddhist thought with a great work of *Hinayāna* systematics.

E. Frauwallner may have spearheaded the “two *Vasubandhu*” movement with his 1951 paper, “On the date of the Buddhist Master of the Law *Vasubandhu*.”³⁰ Therein, he presented the argument that there was “*Vasubandhu* the Old” (320-380 BCE) and “*Vasubandhu* the Young” (400-480 BCE). The former is said to be brother to *Asaṅga*, who was first a member of the *Hinayānist Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika* Buddhist sect before converting to *Mahāyāna* Buddhism under his brother’s influence. He wrote also numerous works of *Mahāyāna* inspirion. *Vasubandu* died before his brother *Asaṅga*, probably around 380 A.D.³¹ The origins of the latter alleged figure are shrouded in mystery; this *Vasubandhu* is also said to have been a member of the *Sarvāstivāda* sect, but followed the *Sauntrāntika* doctrines before his conversion. *Vasubandhu* (The Younger) was born around 400 A.D. Nothing is know about the place of his birth and about his family. He belonged to the *Sarvāstivāda* sect but gradually he became
more attached to the *Sautrāntika*’ doctrines. One of his masters was *Buddhamitra*. He was protected by King *Skandagupta Vikramaditya* of the Gupta dynasty (455-467 A.D)\(^3^2\). He was invited to the royal court in *Ayodhya* by *Baladitya* and received from him many honor. He is said to be author of the *ADK* and *Paramārthaśaptatikā* (a refutation of the *Śāmkhya* school). In contrast, Tola and Dragonetti recount the traditional view in which *Asaṅga*’s brother is the sole *Vasubandhu*, who authored the *ADK* while a young member of the *Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas*, in addition to the *Yogācārin* works considered in this project\(^3^3\).

According to *Paramārtha*, *Vasubandhu* was born in *Puruṣapura*, present-day Peshawar, in what was then the Kingdom of *Gandhāra*, around the year 316 A.D\(^3^4\). But, according to Le Manh That, both the Chinese and Indian data give us *Vasubandhu* died around 395 C.E. at the age of 80. Thus he was born around 315 C.E in a Brahmin family.\(^3^5\) He has an elder brother, the famous *Asaṅga*, and the younger one by the name *Viriñcavatsa*. All three brothers became *Sarvāstivāda Buddhism*.\(^3^6\) This school was still a stronghold in *Gandhāra*,

According to *Tārānātha*, *Vasubandhu* was born one year after his elder half-brother *Asaṅga*, who became a Buddhist monk. *Asaṅga* became the preeminent expounder of *Yogācāra* synthesis of great of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. From the internal evidence of his works, *Asaṅga* have studies mainly with scholars of the *Mahīśāsaka* School. Which denied the *Sarvāstivāda* existence of the past and future, and which posited a great number of “uncompounded events”. While learning with the *Mahīśāsaka*, *Asaṅga* came into contact with the *Prajnaparamitasutras* of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, which was completely overturning the older monastic Buddhist ideal in favor of a life of active compassion to be crowned by complete enlightenment. Not being able to understand them, and not gaining any insight into them from his teachers, he undertook lonely forest-meditations. After twelve years of meditation, he had gained nothing. Therefore,
he decided to give up seeking enlightenment. At that moment, the Bodhisattva Maitreya stood before him and dictated five works to Asaṅga. Maitreya has revealed by writing some texts him and transmitting the so-called “five treatises”. Asaṅga went on to write many of the key Yogācāra treatises such as the Yogācārabhūmiśāstra, the Mahāyānasamgraha and the Abhidharmasamuccaya as well as other works, although there are discrepancies between the Chinese and Tibetan traditions concerning which works are attributed to him and which to Maitreya. Asaṅga became the systematic of Idealist Buddhism: Vijñaptimātra (representation only) or Cittamātra (mind only). However, Buddhist learning flourished in Kashmir and Bihar, among other places. Some of whose doctrines were so near to those of the Mahāyāna that when Asaṅga converted to the “Great Vehicle”. He was readily able to complement his former beliefs with the profounder insights of the Mahāyāna Sutras. When he was advance in years, Asaṅga became worried about his younger, Vasubandhu. Asaṅga encouraged Vasubandhu to enter the Mahāyāna as well, and the latter also believed that conversion did not require him to renounce any of his previous Hinayāna convictions. Vasubandhu produced the final synthesis of Hinayāna thought, then converted to Mahāyāna and assisted his brother in the latter’s own systematic endeavors, as for Viriṇcavatsa, we know nothing of his activities, intellectual or otherwise.

In his youth, Vasubandhu may have received from his father much of the Brahamical lore so obviously at his command, and it may be from him also that he was introduced to the axioms of classical Nyaya and Vaisesika, both of which influenced his logical thought.

In the meantime, Vasubandhu has joined into the Sravastivada Order, and studied primarily the scholastic system of the Vaibhāṣika. However, it grave doubts about the validity and relevance of Vaibhāṣika metaphysics started to arise in Vasubandhu. Perhaps through the
brilliant teacher Manoratha, who had contacted with the theories of the Sautrāntika. That Buddhists who would like to reject everything that was not the express word of the Buddha. They held the elaborate constructions of the vibhasa up to ridicule. The Sautrāntika tradition in Purusapura is likely strong in view of the fact that. It was the birthplace of threat maverick philosopher of the second century.

**Vasubandhu’ Works**

Vasubandhu lived his life at the center of controversy, and he won fame and patronage through his acumen as an author and debater. His writings are an unparalleled resource for understanding the debates alive between Buddhist and Orthodox Schools of his time.

Vasubandhu’s first great works the ADK. Though it is written from the standpoint of the Sarvāstivāda School, with the Sautrāntika polemics against it, it is nevertheless an authority for all school Buddhist philosophy. Vasubandhu composed the verses of the ADK while teaching in the city of Purusapura (Peshawar), where he had gone after escaping from the confines of Kashmir. According to Paramartha, each verse was engraved in copper, and the entire collection was sent back to his former teachers for their response. Since they agreed with the substance of the verses, they requested a commentary. At that point it became evident that Vasubandhu had embraced the Sautrāntika point of view against the Vaibhāṣikas and the reaction of the latter was a vigorous repudiation of the work and its author (Anacker 1984: 16-18).

Recognizing that the ADK undermined the Vaibhāṣika system, Sanghabhadra sought to engage Vasubandhu in debate late in life, after he had embraced the Mahāyāna approach first articulated by Asaṅga. Vasubandhu declined to debate. Therefore, Sanghabhadra produced
two works of refutation, the Nyaydnusara ( Accordance with Logic) and the Abhisamayapradtpa (The Lamp of Clear Understanding). Vasubandhu had by that time little interest in defending a system that he had long since superseded in his own practice of Buddhist wisdom.

Vasubandhu composed works from the perspectives of several different philosophical schools. His works has trained and represented in the Vaibhāṣikas or Sarvāstivādins of Kashmir and Gandhāra, the Vātsiputriyas, the Sautrāntikas, and the Yogācārins. Vasubandhu’s works have often been written either from the Sautrāntika perspective or from the Yogācāra perspective. Dissatisfied with those teachings, for this reason, he wrote a summary of the Vaibhāṣika perspective in the ADK in verse and an auto-commentary, the Abhidharma kośabhaṣya, which summarized and critiqued the Mahāvibhāṣa from the Sautrāntika viewpoint.

A great number of texts of the Theravāda Abhidharma tradition are in Pāli and Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma texts exist in the Chinese translations. Vasubandhu wrote in Sanskrit, but many of his works are known from their Chinese and Tibetan translations. The purposes of this essay to summarize all of the works attributed to Vasubandhu. He composed a number of voluminous treatises, especially on Yogācāra doctrines. Vasubandhu’s most important works:

1. Abhidharmakośakārikā (Treasury of the Abhidharma)
2. Abhidharmakośabhaṣya (Commentary of the Abhidharma)
3. Viṃśatikākārikā (the Twenty Verses) with its Commentary (Viṃśatikāvṛtti),
4. Trīṃśika (the Thirty Verses)
5. Trīsvabhāva-nirdeśa (the Three Natures Exposition)
The majority of the arguments discussed below are taken from these works. *Vasubandhu* also wrote a large number of other works. He also contributed to Buddhist logic and the origin of formal logic in the Indian logic-epistemological tradition. *Vasubandhu* was particularly interested in formal logic to fortify his contributions to the traditions of dialectical contestability and debate. Anacker holds that:

“A Method for Argumentation (Vādavidhi) is the only work on logic by Vasabandhu which has to any extent survived. It is the earliest of the treatises known to have been written by him on the subject. This is all the more interesting because Vāda-vidhi marks the dawn of Indian formal logic. The title, "Method for Argumentation", indicates that Vasabandhu's concern with logic was primarily motivated by the wish to mould formally flawless arguments, and is thus a result of his interest in philosophical debate” 39.

1. The Explanation of the Establishment of Action (*Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa*).
2. The Explanation of the Five Aggregates (*Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇa*)
3. The Rules for Debate (*Vādavidhi*)

*Vasubandhu* is our leading author of the source texts of *Yogācāra* theory and practice. Other major authors were his elder brother *Asaṅga*, and *Asaṅga*’s teacher *Maitreyanātha*. *Vasubandhu*’s chief disciple *Sthiramati* also wrote several texts in the form of commentaries on his master’s works. *Vasubandhu*’s commentaries on major *Yogācāra* works wrote a number of commentaries on Buddhist scriptures.

1. *Dharmadharmaṭāvibhāgavṛtti* (Distinguishing Elements from Reality)
2. *Madhyāntavibhāgabhāṣya* (Distinguishing the Middle from the Extremes)
3. *Mahāyānasūtraṭālāṃkārabhāṣya* (The Ornament to the Great Vehicle Discourses)
5. *Vyākhya-yukti* (The Proper Mode of Exposition)

### 2.3 Historical Problems of Yogācāra

The Tibetan viewpoint presents *Asaṅga* and *Vasubandhu* as half brothers; they shared the same mother, but had different fathers. They both came from *Peshawar*, but while *Asaṅga* was ordained in the *Mahīśāsaka* Order. The younger brother Vasubandhu was ordained at Nalanda in central India and became a monk of the *Sarvāstivāda* Order. He wrote a work on the “four oral traditions of *Vinaya*.” He then transferred to Kashmir where, under *Acarya Samghabhadra*, he became a scholar of the *Abhidharma*, eventually composing an encyclopedic work known as the *ADK*. *Sanghabhadra* opened his frontal attack upon the *ADK*, *Vasubandhu*’s other works have undergone similar critical treatments. *Vasubandhu*’s philosophy is presented either based exclusively upon the *ADK* or exclusively upon his other writings such as the *Vimśatikā* and the *TSK*⁴⁰. At first Vasubandhu opposed his brother *Asaṅga*’s position, even writing a number of anti-*Mahāyāna* texts, but later he changed sides and it was from then on that he composed the famous works that teach *Yogācāra* under his name. Thus, after *Asaṅga* passed away, *Vasubandhu* assumed his brother's role as Abbot of Nalanda, where he taught his four leading students: *Sthiramati*, a leading teacher of *Abhidharma*; *Dignaga*, the exponent of Logic-theory (*Pramana*); *Gunaprabha*, excellent in monastic Discipline (*Vinaya*); and *Vimuktasenaa* scholar of transcendental wisdom (*prajna-paramita*).

If *Vasubandhu* writes the *ADK*, the question is not what leads him to write it and why, but whether or not he is correct in presenting the system, which he is said to present. We should
finds some fragmentary studies on one or a series of two or three of this works together, designated as Vasubandhu’s philosophy and the like without any substance.\textsuperscript{41}

There are some serious problems with the account. The ADK is very different in style and composition from the Yogācāra works of Vasubandhu, let alone the Abhidarmakośabhāṣya, which is a refutation of the former. It becomes evident that Tibetan historians cobbled together a variety of fragments related to several different authors all having the name Vasubandhu. When the original fragments are sorted through, we find one Vasubandhu being the contemporary of one Indian king, and another being the contemporary of another king, centuries apart.

Two works on Abhidharma exist have been written by authors called Vasubandhu. One is the famous ADK “Treasury of Metaphysics” composed in Peshawar. Another one is the Abhidarmakośabhāṣya composed some centuries later in Ayodhya. We know the Vasubandhu, who authored the latter, as having been the disciple of a renowned Abhidharma master named Buddhāmitra, and was appointed, according to Paramartha, by King Vikramaditya of Ayodhya (the fifth century) to be tutor to the crown prince Baladitya. The author of the ADK, on the other hand, resided in Peshawar, belonged to the Kashmiri Vaibhāṣika school of Sarvāstivāda metaphysics.

Vasumitra, a disciple of Gunamitra, who in turn was a disciple of Vasubandhu, the author of the Abhidarmakośabhāṣya, wrote a commentary in support of the latter work. It is said that Vasumitra belonged to the Sautrāntika School.
Vasubandhu the author of Yogācāra works and brother of Asaṅga, on the other hand, resided at Kausambhi and was contemporary with King Chandragupta I, the father of Samudragupta, which places him in the fourth century.

Disregarding the author of works on monastic Discipline, at least three distinct men named Vasubandhu begin to emerge from the various historical fragments available to scholarly research. We can clearly distinguish the author of the ADK from that of the Abhidharma-kāśabhasya by the fact that they belong to two entirely different schools. The former is an exponent of the Vaibhāṣika, teachings of the Sarvāstivāda School, while the latter was an exponent of the Sautrāntika.

Consequently when it is said that a certain person named Vasubandhu wrote a text supporting the philosophical outlook of one of these schools, while another wrote supporting the outlook of another school, it must be apparent that very different authors are involved, even though they carry the same name. The improbability of one Vasubandhu switching schools and composing a text in opposition to his earlier position is determined by the fact that the different authors in question were contemporary with or patronized by Indian Kings who lived in very different eras.

It therefore seems likely that at least three authors named Vasubandhu can be distinguished:

First: Vasubandhu, the author of the ADK. He was a monk of the Sarvāstivāda Order and lived in Peshawar. His leading disciple was Manoratha, and later another writer, Gunaprabha, author of the Vibhasha-sastra, was of the same line. Manoratha, as we know from his own works, was a confirmed follower of the author of the ADK. He apparently knew nothing of the
counter Abhidharmakośabhasya, which he certainly would have known had his teacher been the author of it.

Second: Vasubandhu, the brother of Asaṅga and the author of various works on Yogācāra. Who lived in Kausambi circa 290-370 Abhidharma. He was a contemporary of King Chandragupta I and Samudragupta. His leading disciple was Sthiramati, and a later descendant of this lineage was Gunabhadra, who traveled to China in c. 430 Abhidharma. We know from the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang⁴² that when he visited India in the seventh century, there could still be seen, in the Ghositarama of Kausambhi, the ruin of the old house where, in an upper chamber, Vasubandhu composed his famous Yogācāra treatise, known as the “Thirty Verses on Perception” (Trimsikavijnaptikarika). Hiuen Tsang also places Acarya Dharmapala, a later follower of Vasubandhu’s lineage, in Kausambhi.

Third: Vasubandhu, the author of the Abhidharmakośabhasya, who lived in Ayodhya (Saketa). He was a Sautrāntika and contemporary of King Vikramaditya (455-467 AD). His disciples were Gunamati, Vasumitra and the renowned logician Dignāga. Gunamati taught a pupil called Sthiramati who was a contemporary of King Darasena I (c. 460 AD) of Valabhi, and thus not the same as the Yogācāra author by the same name. Both Gunamati and Vasumati, from their writings, appear as staunch supporters of the Bhasya, as opposed to the ADK itself or, for that matter, the Yogācāra position. Dignāga was the teacher of two very famous scholars, Dharmakīrti and Dharmottara.

We further find that the Yogācāra outlook represented by this school later divided into two distinct systems, one that we might call the orthodox position and the other a popular offshoot. The orthodox position is that held by Vasubandhu’s direct disciple Sthiramati, who advocated
what is called nirakara-vijñana-vada (the doctrine of non-substantive consciousness) based on asserting the emptiness (śūnyata) of both external objects and consciousness. This view was eventually transmitted by Paramartha (499-590 AD) to China, and is the same as that held by Tilopa, the founder of the Kagyu school of Tibet, as expressed in his song of Mahamudra called the Ganga-ma. It is also the viewpoint expounded by Acarya Manjusrmıtra in the penultimate Yogācāra treatise, the Bodhicittabhavana.

The popular or exoteric position, which appears to deviate from Vasubandhu’s original exposition of Yogācāra theory, is that of Acarya Dharmapala. Dharmapala systematized a line of Yogācāra thought known as sakara-vijñana-vada (the doctrine of substantive consciousness) that claims, although external objects do not independently exist, the mind itself (cittamatra) does exist as such. This view, which we know as Mind-only, presents Mind as ultimate reality. Dharmapala’s line of thought has transmitted to China by Hiuen Tsang, the famous Chinese pilgrim mentioned above, in the seventh century and has since had a significant impact on the practice of Zen in Japan. Huge efforts on the part of generations of Tibetan scholars have been spent attempting to demonstrate in logical terms the impractical basis of this latter doctrine.

Regardless of scholastic efforts in whatever direction, it nevertheless appears that the original position held by the illuminated master Vasubandhu, is very much that of non-substantive consciousness, or in other words, the Nirakaravijñana view expressed by his direct disciple Sthiramati. This outlook asserts that observer and observed, or in other words, consciousness and external objects, are bound together in an indissoluble union impossible of splitting apart. Nevertheless, both lack credible claim to independent ontological existence. The term that describes this union is “simultaneous arising”, which means that consciousness and its object
arise, and can only arise, in immediate proximity. Or, in other words, one cannot come into being without the other. There are logical assumptions that follow from acknowledging this condition, that lead to what in modern terms would be called quantum theories of consciousness. Apparently practitioners of Yogācāra grasped certain insights centuries ago, which only now are being realized by the most radical discoveries in new cosmological theory.

According to tradition, Vasubandhu first studied Vaibhāṣika Buddhist teachings, writing an encyclopedic summary of their teachings that has become a standard work throughout the Buddhist world, the ADK (Treasury of Abhidharma). As he grew critical of Vaibhāṣika teachings, he wrote a commentary to that work refuting many of its tenets. Intellectually restless for a while, Vasubandhu composed a variety of works that chart his journey to Yogācāra, the best known of these being the Karmasiddhi-prakarana (Investigation Establishing Karma) and Pañcaskandhaka-prakarana (Investigation into the Five Aggregates). These works show a deep familiarity with the Abhidharmic categories discussed in the Kośa, with attempts to rethink them; the philosophical and scholastic disputes of the day are also explored, and the new positions Vasubandhu formulates in these texts bring him closer to Yogācārin conclusions.

A few modern scholars have argued, on the basis of some conflicting accounts in old biographies of Vasubandhu, that these texts along with the ADK were not written by the Yogācārin Vasubandhu, but by someone else. Since the progression and development of his thought, however, is so strikingly evident in these works, and the similarity of vocabulary and style of argument so apparent across the texts, the theory of Two Vasubandhus has little merit. The writings of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu ranged from vast encyclopedic compendiums of Buddhist doctrine (e.g., Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra, Mahāyānasamgraha,
Abhidharmasamuccaya), to terse versified encapsulations of Yogācāra praxis (e.g., TSK, TSN), to focused systematic treatises on Yogācāra themes (e.g., TSK, MDV), to commentaries on well-known Mahāyāna scriptures and treatises such as the Lotus and Diamond Sutras. Since the SDS offers highly sophisticated, well-developed doctrines, it is reasonable to assume that these ideas had been under development for some time, possibly centuries, before this scripture emerged. Since Asaṅga and Vasubandhu lived a century or more after the SDS appeared, it is also reasonable to assume that others had further refined these ideas in the interim.

2.4 Why Vijñānavāda Is Called Yogācāra

Vijñānam is one of the most important technical terms in Buddhism. This Vijñānavāda school of Asaṅga is also known as Yogācāra. The basic question here is: why is this system called Yogācāra? Yogācāra means: “practice of meditation”. The earlier phase of Buddhism was quiet familiar with the Yoga terminology. Vijñāna (Pāli: viññāṇa) mean as “Consciousness or awareness”, Vijñānavāda (Consciousness of Doctrine) is an alternate name for the Yogācāra school. Vijñānam is often translated as “consciousness” but other meanings include discernment, knowledge, judgment, faculty of knowing, and organ of knowledge, intellectual activity, and cognitive activity. It covers the responses and mental processing stimulated by all perceptual events. In both its active, discriminative form of knowing, and its subliminal or unconscious bodily and psychic functions. It is important to realize that Vijñāna means more than the stream of mental awareness. The name Vijñānavāda can be reserved for this school and the pure idealism of Maitreya, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu be called Yogācāra. The entire system may be called, as is actually done by some scholars and historians, the system of Yogācāra- Vijñānavāda.44
The system is named “Yogācāra” is preference to the more well known appellation “Vijñānavāda” merely for the sake of drawing a convenient distinction. The School of Dignāga and Dharmakirti occupies a peculiar position. They essentially accept the doctrine of Vijñaptimātra, and the unreality of the object. However, when they enter into logical discussions, they endorse the Sautrāntika standpoint of something being given in knowledge.

Moreover, the Daśabhūmikasūtra systematically proposes ten different stages (bhūmis) of meditation (Yoga) for a Bodhisattva for an overall purification. In addition, this famous work, i.e. Laṅkāvatārasūtra (LAS) also induces the Bodhisattva to follow Yoga in order to become Mahāyogin. The school of Yogācāra deals with ideas, consciousness, mind in its works in a very extensive way. This school is generally known as idealism. According to this, all existence has its center and being in mind. The Yogācāra believes that reality is a mere idea and the same has its center in consciousness or mind. Idealism consists in the assertion that there exist none but thinking entities. The other thing, we think we perceive in intuition being only presentation of thinking entity to which no object outside the latter can be formed to correspond. Things are given objects discoverable by our senses external to us but of what they may be in themselves we know nothing, we know only that phenomena. The presentation they produce in us as they affect our sense. The extensive usage of the Yogic terms in the works like Daśabhūmikasūtra and Laṅkāvatārasūtra justifies the Vijñānavāda School to be rightly called Yogācāra. Thus, the combined name of this system is properly designated as Yogācāra- Vijñānavāda.

For Asaṅga and others, the absolute truth, pure consciousness (Vijñāna) can only be realized by practice of Yoga. That indicates the practical side of this school, while the word “Vijñānavāda” bring out its speculative features. In its practical application it is described as
Yogācāra, i.e., following the path of Yoga. These philosophers thought that ultimate reality could only be realized by yogic means, by meditation and contemplation and not by mere philosophical reasoning. This is called Vijnānavāda because philosophically it propagates that the ultimate reality is only pure consciousness (Vijñāna). Looked at from the practical standpoint, in its moral and religious aspects, it is Yogācāra; in its metaphysical aspect, it is Vijnānavāda. It is already mentioned that Asaṅga’s Vijnānavāda is not merely idealism but absolutism. This MSL deals with his absolutistic. Here we can neither find criticism of Sautrāntika nor of śūnyavāda like his MDV^47. This work is completely dedicated to the absolutism of Vijnānavāda.

Maitreyanātha, a systematic expounder of Vijnānavāda school of Buddhism, was also the teacher of Asaṅga. He is mainly responsible for contributing absolutism in its fully developed form to Vijnānavāda. He has written many works, but four are well known in the Vijnānavāda circle. They are Madhyantavibhāga, Dharmadharmatāvibhaṅga, Mahāyānasūtrālāṃkāra and Yogācārabhūmiśāstra. The MSL of Asaṅga is a landmark in the development of Vijnānavāda absolutism. Here we can see Vijnānavāda in it fully developed form of absolutism. In fact this is a gigantic work on Mahāyāna Buddhism. The title itself indicates its manifold features of Mahāyāna. Putting it in Asaṅga own words, it is an embellishment of Mahāyānasūtra. There is no Buddhist topic, which is not touched by Asaṅga.

The school was also called Yogācāra because it provided a comprehensive, therapeutic framework for engaging in the practices that lead to the goal of the Bodhisattva path, namely enlightened cognition. Meditation served as the laboratory in which one could study how the mind operated. Yogācāra focused on the question of consciousness from a variety of approaches, including meditation, psychological analysis, epistemology, scholastic
Yogacāra categorization, and karmic analysis. Yogacāra doctrine is summarized in the term vijñaptimātra “consciousness only” which has sometimes been interpreted as indicating a type of metaphysical idealism.

The claim that mind only is real and that everything else is created by mind. However, the Yogācārin writings themselves argue something very different. Consciousness (Vijñāna) is not the ultimate reality or solution, but rather the root problem. This problem emerges in ordinary mental operations, and bringing those operations to an end can only solve it. Yogacāra tends to be misinterpreted as a form of metaphysical idealism primarily because its teachings are taken for ontological propositions rather than as epistemological warnings about karmic problems. The Yogacāra focus on cognition and consciousness grew out of its analysis of karma, and not for the sake of metaphysical speculation.

To sum up, the Yogacāra is one of the great philosophical schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism. It had strong influence not only in Buddhist circles but also in Brahmanical currents of thought. Many persons adhered to its philosophical points of view. The Yogacāra produced many first class philosophers, of deep and subtle insight, systematization liability, bold inspiration, logical rigout, who raised a great, all encompassing philosophical construction of well-defined lines and firm structure. It gave rise to a huge literature, many of whose works can be considered, according to universal criteria, as philosophical masterpieces, as for instance the three treatises that this volume contains.

Yogacāra hold that truly, ultimately, consciousness is non-conceptual, radiant and completely pure would hence incline towards a “without-form” perspective from the point of view of the final truth, as seen by a Buddha. As ultimate, a Buddha’s radiant pure non-conceptual
consciousness simply cannot be stained at all by forms or images of objects. The Yogācāra
showed a great capacity for change and self-enrichment, constantly adding new tenets to the
ancient ones, refining the traditional concepts, giving more subtlety to their arguments,
introducing more coherence in their classifications. A major glory of the Yogācāra is that it
gave rise to one of the most brilliant products of Indian genius: the Buddhist school of logic
and epistemology.

Besides its philosophical activity, the Yogācāra had also a religious interest centered around
the notion of Bodhisattva, the ideal of perfected man, the moral and intellectual Path he must
follow, the stages he must pass through, the goals he must reach. And in this respect the
Yogācāra revealed the same masterly qualities that it showed in the accomplishment of its
philosophical labors.
References


3 Ibid., p.14.


12 Ibid., p.5.


14 Ibid., p.6-7.


17 Chatterjee.A.K (1975), p.27.

18 It mean Treatise on the Stages of Yoga Practice.

19 Dignāga (480 –540 CE), An Indian scholar and one of the Buddhist founders of Indian logic.

20 Dharmakīrti (c. 7th century) The Buddhist founders of Indian philosophical logic.


According to Tibetan authorities, the works of Maitreyanātha are four:

i. Mahāyānasutralamkara (Skt. text edited by S. Levi, Paris 1907),
ii. Madhyantavibhanga (Skt. text edited by Yamaguchi, Nagoya 1934), and Dharmadhartavibhanga (Obermiller gives a summary analysis of this work in his translation of the Uttaratantra, 1931),
Haribhadra's Aloka, a commentary on the Abhisamayalamkara, has been published by Wogihara, Tokya, 1932-5, and by Tucci, GOS, 62, Baroda 1932).

This is five works

i. Yogacārabhumiśātra
ii. Yogavibhāgaśtra
iii. Mahāyānasūtraśāstra
iv. Madhyāntavibhāga
v. Tājračchchedikā pāramita śāstra and saptadāśabhūm


Paramartha (499-569), the Indian Buddhist Monk


Fernando Tola, Carmen Dragonetti (2004), p.56.

Ibid., p. 56.

Ibid., p. 55.


According to Paramartha, he considers that all three sons had originally been named Vasubandhu, perhaps out of reverence for a great Mahāyāna teacher of that name.


Ibid., p. 31.

41 Ibid., p.14.

42 Beal (1981), p.34.


46 Ibid., p.20.

47 Madhyantaribhāgasāṃhāryatikā of Sthriamati, p.9-22.

48 Tagawa Shun’ei (2009), p. X.