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FERNANDO TOLA and CARMEN DRAGONETTI / The Trisvabhā- vakārikā of Vasubandhu	22
EDWARD HAMLIN / Discourse in the Laṅkāvatāra-Sutra	26

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THE TRISVABHĀVAKĀRIKĀ OF VASUBANDHU

INTRODUCTION

The Sanskrit Original Text

Sylvain Lévi¹ found in Nepal in 1928 a manuscript of the Sanskrit text of this small treatise in verses. The manuscript attributes the work to Vasubandhu.

On Lévi's request, Susumu Yamaguchi published in 1931 that Sanskrit text. Yamaguchi edition contains a critical *apparatus*, one of the two Tibetan translations that have been preserved (the one which attributes the work to Vasubandhu, see *infra*), a Japanese translation and a commentary also in Japanese of his own.²

In 1932–1933 Louis de la Vallée Poussin published again the Sanskrit text on the basis of Yamaguchi's edition. He added to his edition also a critical *apparatus*, the two Tibetan translations (the one which attributes the work to Vasubandhu, and the other which attributes it to Nāgārjuna, see *infra*) and a French translation.

In 1939 Sujitkumar Mukhopadhyaya published the Sanskrit text. In his Introduction, p. VI, Mukhopadhyaya expresses that Giuseppe Tucci received from Nepal a Sanskrit manuscript of this treatise and sent a transcription of it to Vidhushekhar Bhattacharya and that Bhattacharya gave to him that transcription in order to edit Vasubandhu's work. So Mukhopadhyaya's edition is based on Tucci's manuscript. Mukhopadhyaya's edition has also an introduction, a critical *apparatus*, the two Tibetan translations, an English translation, a rich selection of parallel texts, and Sanskrit and Tibetan word *indices*. It seems that Mukhopadhyaya did not know either Yamaguchi's or de la Vallée Poussin's editions.

The Two Manuscripts

The comparison of the two manuscripts, the one found by Lévi and Tucci's one, (as it is possible to judge from the editions of both by Yamaguchi and Mukhopadhyaya) allows us to think that the differences between them

are not numerous and minor ones. That can easily be seen by a revision of our critical notes to the Sanskrit text, in which we have indicated those differences.

But nevertheless these differences oblige to think, it seems to us, that Lévi's manuscript and Tucci's manuscript were not the same but two different ones. G. Tucci, "A fragment from the *Pratītya-samutpāda-vyākhyā* of Vasubandhu", expresses that the *Trisvabhāvakārikā* is another work by Vasubandhu that has been found in Nepal and that S. Lévi and himself they had copies of it, but without any indication that the copy he has is from the same manuscript found by S. Lévi or from some other one.

The Tibetan Translations

In the Tibetan Buddhist Canon, *Bstan-hgyur*, there are two metrical translations of a brief Sanskrit treatise. The first one: *Tōhoku* 3843 (*Sde-dge* ed.) = *Catalogue* 5243 (*Peking* ed.); the second one: *Tōhoku* 4058 (*Sde-dge* ed.) = *Catalogue* 5559 (*Peking* ed.).

The first translation (3843—5243) is composed by 40 *kārikās*. Its colophon attributes the work to Nāgārjuna (Klu-sgrub, in Tibetan). Its title is *Raṅ-bshin gsum la hjug paḥi sgrub pa* (*Svabhāvatrāyapravēśasādhana*, *Sde-dge* ed., *Svabhāvatrāyapravēśasiddhi*, *Peking* ed.).³ This translation was done by Zla-ba grags-pa (K.).

The second translation (4058—5559) is composed by 38 *kārikās*. Its colophon attributes the work to Vasubandhu (Dbyig-gñen, in Tibetan). Its title is *Raṅ-bshin gsum nes-par bstan-pa* (*Trisvabhāvanirdeśa*). This translation was done by Shāntibhadra and Hgos Lhas-btsas.⁴

The comparison of these two Tibetan translations with the Sanskrit text, as found in Lévi's and Tucci's manuscripts, indicates that both are translations of that same Sanskrit original text. Nevertheless, the Tibetan tradition considers one of the two translations (3843 = 5243) as the translation of one of Nāgārjuna's works and locates it in the *Dbu-ma* (*Madhyamika*) section of the Canon. The other translation (4058—5559) is considered by the Tibetan tradition to be the translation of one of Vasubandhu's works and consequently it is located in the *Sems-tsam* (*Cittamātra*) section. Both Tibetan translations differ only in some minor points and in the fact that the first one (3843 = 5243) adds two *kārikās* that are not found in the second one (4058 = 5559). The first translation, which attributes the original work to Nāgārjuna, is sometimes more faithful to the original Sanskrit text than the second one, which attributes it to Vasubandhu.

Let us say that there is no Chinese translation of this treatise.

Modern Editions and Translations of the Original Sanskrit Text

Editions 1, 2, and 3 that follow have been referred to in the first section of this article with more complete indications about their contents.

(1) S. Yamaguchi, *Shūkyō Kenkyū* (Journal of Religious Studies), 8, March-May 1931, pp. 121–130 and 186–207.

(2) L. de la Vallée Poussin, “Le petit traité de Vasubandhu-Nāgārjuna sur les trois natures”, *Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques*, Vol. II, 1932–1933, pp. 147–161.

(3) S. Mukhopadhyaya, *The Trisvabhāvanirdēsa of Vasubandhu, Sanskrit text and Tibetan versions edited with an English translation, introduction and vocabularies*, Visvabharati Series, No. 4, Calcutta, 1939.

(4) S. Yamaguchi, *Bukkyō Gaku Bunshū* (Collection of Studies on Buddhism), Tōkyō, 1972–1973, pp. 119–162. This is a revised and enlarged edition of his article indicated under number (1). Specially it contains, as additional material, the Tibetan translation that attributes the work to Nāgārjuna and numerous references for each *kārikā* to parallel texts.

(5) Thubtan Chogdub Śāstri and Rāmaśankara Tripāṭhi, in Gaṅgānāthajhā-Granthamāla, Vol. V, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhiḥ (Prakaranadvayam) of Ācārya Vasubandhu*, Varanasi, 1972, pp. 449–458, edited the Sanskrit text of Vasubandhu’s treatise, reproducing Mukhopadhyaya’s edition, with a Hindi translation.

(6) G. Nagao published in the *Daijō Butten* (Buddhist Scriptures of the Mahāyāna), Vol. 15, *Sheshin Ronshū* (Collection of Vasubandhu’s treatises), Tōkyō, 1979, pp. 191–213, a Japanese translation of the Sanskrit text, with a commentary of his own.

The Treatise’s Authorship

The Nepal manuscripts of the Sanskrit text attribute the work to Vasubandhu (*kr̥tir ācāryavasubandhupādānām*).

Of the two Tibetan translations, one attributes the original work to Nāgārjuna, the other to Vasubandhu.

From the point of view of the contents of the treatise, it is possible to affirm without doubt that it cannot belong to Nāgārjuna, since it develops a doctrine which is neither his nor of his school. On the contrary, all the subjects developed in the treatise and specially the central topic of the three

natures are characteristic of the idealistic school *Yogācāra* to which Vasubandhu belongs. Besides that, the same Vasubandhu treats in other works, as in the commentary (*bhāṣya*) of Maitreya's *Madhyāntavibhāga*, or the *Triṃśikā*, the theory of the three natures. It is then possible to say that the attribution of this work to Nāgārjuna by one of the Tibetan translations is wrong and the attribution to Vasubandhu indicated by the other is correct.

We think that the concordant testimonies of the two Sanskrit manuscripts and of the second Tibetan translation and the contents of the work, characteristic of the *Yogācāra* school, are sufficient to accept that we have in the *Trisvabhāvakārikā* an authentic work of Vasubandhu.

The modern editors and translators of the work that have been mentioned before accept that it is a genuine work of Vasubandhu. A. K. Chatterjee (1962), *The Yogācāra Idealism*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975, p. 39, and P. S. Jaini, Introduction, p. 128, of his edition of the *Abhidharmadīpa*, Patna: Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, 1977, are of the same opinion.⁵

The Work's Title

We indicate the titles under which this work appears in the colophons of the Sanskrit manuscripts and of the Tibetan translations:

Manuscript found by S. Levi: Trisvabhāvakārikā; Trisvabhāvaḥ.

Manuscript of G. Tucci: Trisvabhāvaḥ; Trisvabhāvaḥ.

First Tibetan translation (3843 = 5243): Svabhāvatrayapraveśasādhana (3843), Svabhāvatrayapraveśasiddhi (5243).

Second Tibetan translation (4058 = 5559): Trisvabhāvanirdeśa (both editions).

Owing to the divergencies of the titles attributed to this work it is difficult to decide which was the original one. We prefer to adopt the title given by the manuscript found by Sylvain Lévi: *Trisvabhāvakārikā*.

Importance of the Subject of the Treatise

The theory of the three natures has special importance in the subject matter of the *Yogācāra* school. Extrinsically, that importance is manifested in the fact that the same subject is treated in many important works of the school and many references to it are found in them. Intrinsically the importance of the three natures' theory in the idealistic school is evident, since two of these natures, the "dependent" one (*paratantra*) and the "imaginary" one (*parikalpita*), constitute the empirical reality, and the third one, the "absolute"

nature (*pariṇiṣpanna*), is the absolute reality, the Absolute. To study these three natures means to study the empirical reality and the Absolute; to define the essence of these three natures is to define the essence of the empirical reality and of the Absolute; to establish the relation between the three natures is to establish the relation that unites the empirical reality and the Absolute, and to show the mechanism through which from the dependent nature the imaginary one is produced, is to show the process through which from the empirical mind and only from the empirical mind the perceptible world is created. In this way the essential problems of the *Yogācāra* school are reunited in the theory of the *trisvabhāva*.

Importance of the Treatise

The present work is not one of the most important works of Vasubandhu, because of its brevity (38 *kārikās*), because (and this is a consequence of the previous circumstance) it leaves aside, without treating them, several questions that have to do with the subject-matter and are developed in other treatises of the school (like the *Siddhi* of Hiuan Tsang, the *Mahāyānasamgraha* of Asaṅga, and the *Madhyāntavibhāgaśāstra* of Maitreya, Vasubandhu and Sthiramati), and because no commentary of it has been found, neither by Vasubandhu nor by another author. But nevertheless the treatise is valuable and interesting, since it treats in a concise, clear and appropriate way the two principal aspects of the *trisvabhāva*'s theory: their essence and their mutual relation. It constitutes an easy and sure introduction to the study of this important theory of the idealistic school, study that can be broadened with the help of other more developed works.

*Some Works that Treat the Theory of the Three Natures or in Which References to It Are Found*⁶

Sūtras. Samdhinirmocana, Chapters VI–VII; *Lankāvatāra*, pp. 67–68 and 130–132 (Nanjio ed.) (= pp. 29, 53–54 Vaidya ed.).

Shāstras yogācāras. Asaṅga, Mahāyānasamgraha, Chapter II, paragraphs 1–4 and 15–34, Chapter III, paragraph 9 (Lamotte ed.); Asaṅga, *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, (*Tattvārthapāṭala*), pp. 37–38 (Wogihara ed.) (= pp. 25–26 Dutt ed.); Asaṅga, *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* XI, 13–30 and 38–41; Maitreya (*kārikā*), Vasubandhu (*bhāṣya*) and Sthiramati (*ṭīkā*), *Madhyāntavibhāgaśāstra* I, 6 (*Saṅgrahalakṣaṇa*) and III, 3 (*Mūlatattva*) and *passim*; Vasubandhu and Sthiramati (*bhāṣya*), *Triṃśikā*, stanzas 20–25, pp. 39–42 (S. Lévi ed.)

(= pp. 300–339, Thubtan Chogdub Śāstri and R. Tripāthī, ed.); Hiuan Tsang, *Siddhi, Taisho*, Vol. 31, No. 1585, p. 45 c, line 5 – p. 48 b, line 5 (= pp. 514–561, L. de la Vallée Poussin, trans.).

Some Modern Authors Who Refer to the Trisvabhāva Theory

We indicate also some modern authors in whose works we find references to the three natures' doctrine.

E. Conze and Iida Shotaro, "Maitreya's questions" in the *Prajñāpāramitā*", in *Mélanges d'Indianisme à la Mémoire de Louis Renou*, Paris: E. de Boccard, 1968, pp. 229–242 (in E. Conze, *The Large Sūtra of Perfect Wisdom*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975, pp. 644–652, there is the English translation of the Sanskrit text edited by Conze and Shotaro); A. K. Chatterjee (1962), *The Yogācāra Idealism*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975, pp. 150–156; L. de la Vallée Poussin, "Philosophy (Buddhist)", in J. Hastings (1917), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1961, Vol. IX, pp. 850–851; L. de la Vallée Poussin, "Madhyamaka", in *Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques II*, 1932–1933, pp. 47–54; N. Dutt (1930), *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977, pp. 281–285; Jay Hirabayashi and Iida Shotaro, "Another Look at the Mādhyamika vs. Yogācāra. Controversy Concerning Existence and Non-existence", in *Prajñāpāramitā and related systems. Studies in Honor of Edward Conze*, edited by L. Lancaster-L. O. Gómez, Berkeley: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1977, pp. 341–360; E. W. Jones, "Buddhist Theories of existents: The Systems of two Truths", in *Mahāyāna Buddhist Meditation: Theory and Practice* edited by Minoru Kiyota, Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1978, pp. 3–45, specially pp. 29–39; A. B. Keith (1923), *Buddhist Philosophy in India and Ceylon*, Varanasi (India): The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1963 (The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Studies Vol. XXVI), pp. 242–244; J. Kitayama (1934), *Metaphysik des Buddhismus. Versuch einer philosophischen Interpretation der Lehre Vasubandhus und seiner Schule*, San Francisco, U.S.A.: Chinese Materials Center, Inc., 1976, pp. 121–131; Whalen W. Lai, "Nonduality of the Two Truths in Sinitic Mādhyamika: Origin of the 'Third Truth'", in *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, Vol. 2, 1979, No. 2, pp. 45–65, specially pp. 59–61; J. Masuda, *Der individualistische Idealismus der Yogācāra-Schule. Versuch einer genetischen Darstellung*, Heidelberg: O. Harrassowitz, 1926 (Materialien zur Kunde des Buddhismus, 10. Heft), pp. 40–43; B. K. Matilal, "A critique of Buddhist Idealism", in *Buddhist*

Studies in Honour of I. B. Horner, edited by L. Cousins, A. Kunst, and K. R. Norman, Dordrecht, Holland, Boston, U.S.A.: D. Reidel Publ. Co., 1974, pp. 139–169, specially pp. 140 and 159; K. Mimaki and J. May, “Chudo”, in *Hōbōgirin* V, pp. 467 b – 470 a; Gadjin M. Nagao, “‘What remains’ in Śūnyatā: a Yogācāra Interpretation of Emptiness”, in *Mahāyāna Buddhist Meditation*, already quoted, pp. 66–82, specially pp. 71–78; E. Obermiller, “The Doctrine of Prajñāpāramitā as exposed in the Abhisamayālaṅkāra of Maitreya”, reprint from *Acta Orientalia* XI, 1932, pp. 1–133, specially pp. 97–98; Th. Stcherbatsky (1927), *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāna*, London, The Hague, Paris: Mouton & Co, 1965 (Indo-Iranian reprints, VI), pp. 32–34; D. T. Suzuki (1963), *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism*, New York: Schocken Books, 1973, pp. 87–98; D. T. Suzuki (1930), *Studies in the Lankavatara Sutra*, London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1912, pp. 157–163; Shōkō Takeuki, “Phenomena and Reality in Vijñaptimātra Thought. On the Usages of the Suffix ‘tā’ in Maitreya’s Treatises”, in *Buddhist Thought and Asian Civilisation. Essays in Honor of Herbert V. Guenther on his Sixtieth Birthday*, edited by L. S. Kawamura and K. Scott, Emeryville-California: Dharma Publishing, 1977, pp. 254–267; K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970, pp. 430–432; Sōgen Yamakami, *Systems of Buddhist Thought*, Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1972, pp. 244–246; Yoshifumi Ueda, “Two main streams of Thought in Yogācāra Philosophy”, in *Philosophy East and West*, 17, 1967, pp. 155–165.

Adopted Text

For our translation we have adopted the text of Lévi’s manuscript as it is presented by Yamaguchi’s edition (1972–1973)⁷, excepting some places in which we have followed another reading. In the critical notes we have indicated, in each case, the origin of the adopted reading and the reading whose place it takes. In these notes:

- MS1 = manuscript found by S. Lévi
- MS2 = Tucci’s manuscript
- N = Tibetan translation (3843–5243)
- V = Tibetan translation (4058–5559)
- Y = Yamaguchi
- Va = de la Vallée Poussin
- Mu = Mukhopadhyaya
- corr. = correction

We follow MS1 as we know it through Yamaguchi's edition, whenever the contrary is not indicated. And also MS2 = MS1; Y and Va = MS1; Va = Y; and Mu = MS2, whenever the contrary is not indicated.

COMMENTARY

Section A. Kārikās 1–5: The Three Natures

Kārikā 1 indicates that there are three natures, that is to say: three forms of being (*svabhāva*). Whatever exists, in the most comprehensive meaning of the word, falls under one of these three natures. They are: 1. the imaginary (*kalpita*) nature, 2. the dependent (*paratantra*) nature, and 3. the absolute (*pariniṣpanna*) nature. They constitute the object of the sage's knowledge.

The Dependent Nature, the Asatkalpa, the Mind

In *kārikā* 2 the author expresses 1. that the dependent nature is what appears and 2. that it is so called, because it exists depending on causes. Let us begin, for clearness sake, with point 2. The causes, on which the dependent nature "depends" are the *vāsanās*, mentioned in *kārikā* 7.⁸

Any representation, idea, cognition etc., which is produced in the mind, leaves in the "sub-consciousness"⁹ (*ālayavijñāna*, term to which we shall refer afterwards) a *vāsanā*.¹⁰ It is sufficient for the moment to consider these *vāsanās* as something like a weak reproduction or copy of the representations, ideas, cognitions etc., which left them. These *vāsanās* remain in the "sub-consciousness" in a latent, subliminal form, until, under certain conditions, they "reactualize" themselves, they pass into the consciousness, producing new conscious representations etc., similar to those by which the *vāsanās* were left or related to them in some way.

The dependent nature "depends" on these *vāsanās* in the sense that, if there are *vāsanās*, there is dependent nature, if there are no *vāsanās*, there is no dependent nature.

The author in *kārikā* 2 has said firstly that the dependent nature is "that what appears". He asks in *kārikā* 4: what does appear? and he answers: the *asatkalpa*,¹¹ term which we have translated by "unreal mental creation". This term designates the representations, ideas, cognitions etc. to which birth is given by the "reactualization" of the *vāsanās*.¹² These representations etc. are "what appears". The dependent nature is the whole of those representations

etc.. We must understand the expression "what appears" in two meanings: 1. those representations etc. are the only thing which appears, which manifests itself, i.e. which is known,¹³ and 2. the empirical reality, which presents itself before us, is nothing else than those representations etc. There are only representations etc.; apart from them nothing appears, nothing exists, nothing is known.¹⁴ This is the fundamental thesis of the *Yogācāra* school.

The *asatkalpa* (that is to say: the representations etc. under whose form the *vāsanās* reactualize themselves) is, according to *kārikā* 5, the mind.¹⁵ Let us remember three facts. In the first place: those representations etc. are essentially of two classes: (1) subjective, of an ego who cognizes (*aham, vijñapti*) and (2) objective, simultaneous with the previous ones, of beings (*sattva*) and things (*artha*) that are known. In the second place: according to Buddhism, the mind has had no beginning, is *anādi*. And in the third place the mind is only a series of *vijñānas*, consciousnesses, cognitions, acts of knowledge. These acts of knowledge constitute the mind; there is no entity different from them. We must discard the substantialist conception of the mind according to which the mind is a permanent entity that knows something different from it. Consequently, the dependent nature or the *asatkalpa* or the mind is only the series of representations etc., some of an ego who knows, others of beings and things, which are produced by the *vāsanās*' "reactualization" and which come from a beginningless eternity.¹⁶

Kārikā 5 explains why the mind is designated with the word *asatkalpa*. The mind, that is the series of representations etc., that are originated by the *vāsanās*, is an unreal mental creation, because of two reasons, indicated by the text:¹⁷ (1) because the image that we have of the mind ("*as it is imagined*") does not correspond to its true being, since it is conceived as a real ego which grasps an object equally real, although its true nature is (as we shall see later on) the *ab aeterno* inexistence of the subject-object duality; and (2) because the objects of those representations, which present themselves as real and external to the mind ("*as it imagines the object*"), do not exist as such, since they are only imaginations produced by the "reactualization" of the *vāsanās* without any real corresponding object.

To end this section we can indicate that, according to what has been expressed, "*dependent nature*", "*what appears*", "*asatkalpa*", "*mind*", "*representations, ideas, cognitions etc.*", provoked by the *vāsanās*' "reactualization", and "*vāsanās*" signify all the same thing under different points of view.

The Imaginary Nature

The imaginary nature, it is said by the *kārikā* 2, is the form under which the dependent nature manifests itself, appears. And *kārikā* 4 expresses that the *asatkalpa*, which is the dependent nature appears with duality, that is to say: constituted by two elements.

Effectively the dependent nature is, as we have said, the whole of the representations etc. originated by the *vāsanās*’ “reactualization”, the totality of the unreal mental creations which constitute it. Conceived in this way, the dependent nature necessarily presents itself always with duality, i.e. composed by a subject who knows opposed to an object which is known,¹⁸ because this is the essence of all cognoscitive empirical processes, because this is the unavoidable form under which all cognoscitive empirical processes come to being.

And this second nature, according to *kārikā* 2, receives the name of “imaginary”, because it is a mere unreal mental creation, since no true reality corresponds to the subject and to the object, which compose it, since they have not a counterpart, real, external to the mind, independent from it.

The Absolute Nature

The word *pariniṣpanna*, used by the original, literally means “developed”, “perfect”, “real”, “existent” (Monier-Williams, *Dict. sub voce*). We have translated it by “absolute” as it is usually translated.

Kārikā 3 indicates what is this third nature: it is the eternal not being so as it appears of that what appears. That which appears is of course the dependent nature, the *asatkalpa*, the mind. As the way in which the dependent nature appears is the subject-object duality, the absolute nature is only the eternal non existence with duality of the dependent nature.

The same *kārikā* 3 explains why the third nature is called *pariniṣpanna*: it is called so, because of its inalterability. Always it has been, is and always it will be the same thing, the inexistence of duality. It has not begun, in a certain moment, to be inexistence of duality, and never will it cease to be inexistence of duality; and its relation with the dependent and imaginary natures do not implicate any change in its authentic and proper way of being.

In *kārikā* 4 the author asks what means the not being with duality (*tena*) of the dependent nature, in what consists the eternal non existence, as it

appears, of that nature – eternal non existence with duality which, according to what has been said, is the definition of the absolute nature. That eternal not being with duality of the dependent nature is the fact that in it (*tatra*), i.e. in the dependent nature, the non-duality is the essence (*dharmatā*), that it has as essence the non-duality, in other words that its true and ultimate essence is the absolute nature which is the inexistence of duality.¹⁹

So from a beginningless eternity are opposed, on one side, the unreality constituted by the series of mental creations which manifest themselves under the form of duality and, on the other side, the absolute reality, about which it is only said, for the moment, that it is the inexistence of that duality.²⁰ See commentary of *kārikās* 13 and 25.

*Section B. Kārikā 6: The Mind's Structure*²¹

The *kārikā* 6 indicates the two great “parts” of the empirical consciousness or mind, according to its being either cause or effect: the *ālayavijñāna*, receptacle-consciousness and the *pravṛttivijñāna*, function-consciousness. This last one is divided into seven.

Of course we must not think that the consciousness is really divided into two “parts” and one of these into seven. The consciousness, although it is a complex entity, is only *one*. When we speak of its “parts” or “divisions”, the only thing that we want to indicate is that it has diverse activities, diverse forms of manifestations, in the empirical reality – empirical reality that is created by the same consciousness when it manifests itself. It is not a real concrete division; it is only a theoretical division, a product of the conceptual analysis.

The Ālayavijñāna

One of the “parts” of the mind, one of its activities or forms of manifestation is the so-called ‘*ālayavijñāna*’, because the *vāsanās* are “deposited”²² in it, until their “reactualization”. Of course, we have here only metaphors, because neither the *vāsanās* are something that can be deposited in some place nor the *ālayavijñāna* is really something that can serve as a deposit. We shall try to give an idea of the true nature of the *ālayavijñāna* and of the *vāsanās*.

The Ālayavijñāna as a Series of Subliminal Representations, Ideas, Cognitions etc.

We have said that the consciousness or mind is a series, that comes from

a beginningless eternity, of representations etc. The *ālayavijñāna*, as a "part" of the mind, participates of the same nature; it is also a series, that comes from a beginningless eternity, of representations, ideas, cognitions etc.,²³ but these representations etc. are of a certain type, they have a special characteristic: they are of subliminal nature.²⁴

These subliminal representations etc. are psychological facts or processes that are registered in the sub-consciousness without intervention of the consciousness. They are similar to the subliminal perceptions, which take place when one is perceiving something without being aware of it, to the images which are created in the mind on coming out from a swoon or from a state produced by a drug's application, to some states originated by hypnosis, or to some coma states.

The subliminal representations etc. are the *vāsanās* which "remain" in the *ālayavijñāna* or better said which constitute it — *vāsanās*, because they are like the weak scent left in a flask by a perfume which evaporates, also called *bījas*, because they are like the seed from which a new representation etc. sprouts out, and *śaktis*, because they are the potentialities or virtualities which transform themselves into new actual acts of cognition.

These subliminal representations etc., these *vāsanās*, however weak they may be, leave on their turn new *vāsanās* that replace them and which immediately become new subliminal representations.²⁵ In this way the series constituted by the subliminal representations (or what is the same, by the *vāsanās*) lasts without interruption.

The Ālayavijñāna as Cause

We have said that the dependent nature depends on the *vāsanās*; we can add now that it depends also on the *ālayavijñāna*, since this last one is nothing else than the *ab aeterno* succession of the *vāsanās*, i.e. of the subliminal representations etc. The *ālayavijñāna* is in this way the cause of the dependent nature. Besides that it is also the cause of the *pravṛttivijñāna*, since the *vāsanās*, which constitute the *ālayavijñāna*, through their "reactualization" produce the manifestation of the function-consciousness.

"Reactualization" of the Vāsanās

According to what has been said, the process, to which we have applied metaphorically the words "reactualization of the *vāsanās*", consists in reality in the *conversion* of the subliminal representations etc., which constitute the

ālayavijñāna, into new conscious representations etc., which constitute the *pravṛttivijñāna*, their *passage* from the subliminal level to the conscious level, the *replacement* of the subliminal manifestation of the *vāsanās* by their conscious manifestation.²⁶

The Importance of the Ālayavijñāna

The *ālayavijñāna* is most important, not only because of its function in the dynamics of the mind, since it provides the materials for the representations etc., that constitute the individual, but also because it is a brilliant anticipation of modern theory of the sub-consciousness.

The Pravṛttivijñāna

The *pravṛttivijñāna* is the totality of the conscious representations etc., into which the *vāsanās* are transformed. It has seven forms of manifestation.

The six forms of manifestation are the five types of sensorial cognition (visual etc.), and the mental cognition (*manovijñāna*), whose object are only ideas (*dharma*) in a broad sense. Any cognoscitive act adopts necessarily one of these six forms.

The Manas

The *manas* is the seventh aspect or theoretical part of the mind (*citta*). Of the seven aspects of the mind, it is the most difficult to define and explain.

The *vāsanās*, that are cognoscitive acts, as we have said, belong to the subliminal zone of the consciousness, to the *ālayavijñāna*. In them every element is *asamvidita*, unconscious, undeterminate (*aparicchinna*), extremely subtle (*atisukṣma*), weak: the subjective part of the cognition, the subject who has not a full and clear awareness of his condition as such; the objective part of the cognition, the object which is not clearly perceived in a determinate way (*idaṃ tat*) and consequently the cognition itself which is neither clear nor determinate. In a certain moment the *vāsanās* pass into the conscious zone of the consciousness; they are constituted, as before, by a subject who cognizes an object, but now that subject has a full awareness of his own cognoscent nature, that he is a subject, an ego which knows; now he is provided with the consciousness of himself, he possesses self-consciousness.

In the moment in which the transformation of the subliminal cognition into conscious cognition takes place, and in which the ego-consciousness, the self-consciousness is produced, the mind receives the name of *manas* or, what

means the same thing: its *manas*-aspect, its *manas*-function comes to being. The *manas* is in other words the self-consciousness, the ego-awareness. Of course this self, this ego are not real entities, but only an idea, only a perishable element of the equally perishable cognition's act.

Simultaneity of the Indicated Processes

The transformation of the representations etc. from subliminal into conscious, the birth of one of the six types of cognition or consciousness (*caḥsur-vijñāna* etc.) are not successive; they are totally simultaneous. And besides no one of the different aspects of the mind can exist without the others; they are solidary between them.

Section C. Kārikā 7: Etymologies of Citta

The *kārikā* 7 gives two "etymologies" of the word '*citta*', the first one in relation to the *ālayavijñāna*, the second one in relation to the *pravṛttivijñāna*. The *ālayavijñāna* is *citta* because it is "accumulated" (*cita*), that is to say: full of *vāsanās*, and the *pravṛttivijñāna* is *citta* because it manifests itself under different (*citra*) forms.

These two etymologies are not valid from the linguistic point of view, but they have an important functional value. They serve to an author to justify a determined interpretation or doctrine on the basis that the word, which designates a certain phenomenon (in this case: the mind, *citta*), expresses in itself the theory that the author sustains in relation to that phenomenon (in this case: the division of the mind in a part considered as receptacle, where the *vāsanās* are accumulated, and in a part, which manifests itself under the form of diverse mental processes). In the present case of *citta*, the author, to give a basis to his thesis, associates arbitrary with the word *citta*, that designates the phenomenon that interests him, two other words, '*cita*' and '*citra*', which on one side present an external (phonetical) similarity with it, and which, on the other side, designates something that he is attributing, according to his theory, to that phenomenon.

This type of etymologies as a means of demonstration was used since the most ancient *Upanishads*.²⁷

Section D. Kārikās 8–9: The Asatkalpa's Modes

Kārikā 8 indicates that the *asatkalpa* or unreal mental creation, as a whole, is of three modes; has three aspects, three attributes: (1) it is *vaipakika*,

produced by “maturation” (*vipāka*), since it comes to existence and it exists as the “fruit”, effect or result of good or bad acts done in previous existences;²⁸ when the series of these acts is stopped, when, consequently, there is no more the necessity of their moral retribution, the *asatkalpa* ceases to be; (2) it is *naimittika*, produced by causes, since the *asatkalpa* belongs to the realm of causality, by opposition to the absolute nature that is beyond causality, that is *animitta* (cf. *kārikā* 32)²⁹ and (3) it is *prātibhāsika*, consisting of representations, because the *asatkalpa* is nothing else than a series of cognition’s acts and, as happens with all cognition’s acts, its essence are the mental representations.

Kārikā 9 expresses that the first (*prathama*) mode corresponds to the *mūlavijñāna* (the *vijñāna* that is the root or origin), another name for the *ālayavijñāna*, and it expresses also that the other (*anya*) mode, that is to say the third one (as well shall see), corresponds to the *pravṛttivijñāna*.

As regards the second mode or attribute, the *naimittika*, we think that it has not been treated by the author: (1) because the word *prathama*, which is in singular, can refer only to one of the three modes and this mode can only be the *vaipakika*, since this mode is the first in the enumeration of *kārikā* 8 and since *kārikā* 9 gives the reason why to the *mūlavijñāna* corresponds the *vaipakika* mode; and (2) because in the same way the word *anya*, which is also in singular, can refer only to one of the three modes and this mode can only be the *prātibhāsika* mode, since this mode is introduced in *kārikā* 8 by the same word *anya* and since *kārikā* 9 gives the reason why to the *pravṛttivijñāna* corresponds the *prātibhāsika* mode.

Now, in the same way as the *vaipakika* mode corresponds to the *ālayavijñāna* and the third one to the *pravṛttivijñāna*, to which consciousness corresponds the *naimittika* mode? We think that it corresponds to both, to the *ālayavijñāna* and to the *pravṛttivijñāna*, since both have to do with causes, since both constitute the empirical reality and consequently, as we have said, they belong to the conditional realm, being opposed as such to the absolute nature which is beyond causes (*animitta*). Moreover the author in *kārikā* 2 says that the dependent nature, that is the *asatkalpa*, depends on causes, i.e. is *naimittika*.

We do not agree with the idea that the *naimittika* mode must be included either in the word *prathama*, together with the *vaipakika* or in the word *anya*, together with the *prātibhāsika*, and consequently has been implicitly referred to by the author.³⁰

Section E. Kārikā 10: "Coincidentia Oppositorum" in the Three Natures

Because the three natures participate (1) of being and non-being, (2) of duality and unity, and (3) because the essence of purity and the essence of impurity are identical, it is spoken about the difficulty of their being conceived and understood by a non trained mind.³¹ It is necessary to relate this characteristic of the three natures with *kārikā* 1, that affirms that the three natures are the object of the sage's knowledge. *Kārikās* 11–21 develop the ideas expressed in *kārikā* 10.

Section F. Kārikās 11–13: Being and Non-Being

These *kārikās* explain in which way the three natures participate of existence and non-existence.

(1) *Kārikā* 11. The imaginary nature is the duality subject-object and it *exists* with the illusory, unreal existence of that duality. It exists as an illusion. But it *does not exist*, since that duality lacks a true and real existence. It is not a reality.

(2) *Kārikā* 12. The dependent nature, the *asatkālpa*, the mind, is a succession of unreal mental creations. It *exists* with the existence that is possessed by a succession of unreal mental creations. It possess a mental existence. But it *does not exist*, because it is not really so as it appears: as a real subject which grasps a real object. It has not the existence of a true reality.

(3) *Kārikā* 13. The absolute nature, which is (as *kārikā* 25 will say) "the existence of the inexistence of duality", *exists* as the existence of that inexistence. And it *does not exist*, in so far it is only an inexistence, the inexistence of duality. See commentary on *kārikā* 25.

Section G. Kārikās 14–16: Duality and Unity

These *kārikās* explain in which way the three natures participate of duality and unity.

(1) *Kārikā* 14. The imaginary nature has as its essence *duality*, because of the duality (says the text) of the imagined object, since it is only the duality subject-object. And has also as its essence the *unity*, because of the unity derived from the inexistence of duality (*tadasattvaikabhāvataḥ*). The imaginary nature is indeed only non-existent duality, (because the duality subject-object is only a mere mental creation); so it can be said that the imaginary nature is really non-duality, that is to say: unity.

(2) *Kārikā* 15. The dependent nature (*kārikā* 15) has as its essence *duality*, because the duality subject-object is its form of manifestation, of existing in the empirical reality that it creates through its own manifestation. But its essence is also *unity*, because of the unity that derives from the fact that the duality subject-object is only an error, something that does not exist truly (*bhrāntimātraikabhāvataḥ*). When the error is eliminated and the illusion of the duality ceases, there remains only non-duality i.e. unity.

(3) *Kārikā* 16 says that the absolute nature has as its essence the duality. The reason of this thesis is given in *pāda a: dvayabhāvasvabhāvatvād*. We think that this word cannot be translated (1) neither by: “because duality is its nature (i.e. of the absolute nature)”, because in this case the reason would say nothing new in relation to the thesis it has to support, it would be a mere tautology; (2) nor by: “because it (i.e., the absolute nature) is the essence of duality”, because in this case the reason would contradict the definition of the absolute nature, which is “inexistence of duality”. If we do not accept either the tautology or the contradiction, we have to look for another translation. We propose: “because being a *svabhāva* (is possible for the absolute nature only) in relation to duality”. This treatise indeed gives three definitions of the absolute nature in *kārikās* 3, 13, and 25. In *kārikā* 3 the absolute nature is defined as “*the eternal non-existence with duality of the dependent nature*”; *kārikā* 13 says that the absolute nature “*exists with non-duality*”, and *kārikā* 25 expresses that it is “*the existence of the non-existence of duality*”. In these three definitions the notion of duality is always present. If we suppress that notion from these three definitions, *kārikā* 3 would say that the absolute nature is “*the eternal non-existence of the dependent nature*”; *kārikā* 13 that the absolute nature “*exists*” and *kārikā* 25 that the absolute nature is “*the existence of non-existence*”. Of these three resultant definitions, without the notion of duality, the first one and the third one would be inadmissible, since they constitute the total *apavādavāda*, that the *Yogācāras* attributed to Nāgārjuna’s school but that they did not accept; and the second one does not define anything. It is the duality’s notion that allows giving for the absolute nature a definition that does not limit itself to affirm either the existence or the inexistence. Thanks also to this notion of duality we can relate in an unique system the absolute nature, as the negation of duality, with the other two natures, that have to do with duality, even if this one is illusory. In this way duality is the element with reference to which it is possible to construct a definition of the absolute nature integrated in

a system with the other two natures. Perhaps it is with this idea in mind that the author considered duality as the essence of the absolute nature. On the other side the absolute nature is also *unity*, because it is inexistence of duality i.e. unity.

Section H. Kārikās 17–21: Identity of the Three Natures

In *kārikā* 17 Vasubandhu only affirms that the imaginary and dependent natures are the essential characteristic or essence of impurity (*samkleśa*) and that the absolute nature is the essential characteristic or essence of purity. Impurity means duality; purity, non-duality. The first two natures constitute the realm of duality, of impurity; the third one the realm of non-duality, of purity.

In *kārikās* 18–21 Vasubandhu explains how there is no difference between impurity and purity i.e. between the three natures.

(a) The absolute nature is not different from the imaginary nature (*kārikā* 18), because the first one is, by definition, inexistence of duality and the second one is in reality in-existent duality i.e. inexistence of duality, although apparently it is the duality subject-object.

At its turn the imaginary nature is not different from the absolute nature (*kārikā* 19), because the first one is in reality inexistence of duality and the second one is by definition non-duality.

(b) The absolute nature is not different from the dependent nature (*kārikā* 20), because the first one is not such as it appears i.e. it is not with duality, (which is the form which the absolute nature adopts in its manifestation as dependent nature), and the second one in reality is not as it appears i.e. it is not with duality.

At its turn (*kārikā* 21) the dependent nature is not different from the absolute nature, because the first one is not such as it appears i.e. with duality, and the second one is, by definition, in-existent duality.

In conclusion we can say that strictly speaking there is not difference between the three natures. The impurity or duality is only the purity or non-duality wrongly grasped owing to ignorance. When error, i.e. the unreal mental creation of duality, disappears, there remains only what there has really always been: the absolute nature, the non-duality, the purity.³²

Section I. Kārikās 22–25: Distinction of the Three Natures

These *kārikās* indicate the distinctive marks of the three natures: 1. from the

point of view of the empirical reality, in relation to that empirical reality, and 2. from the point of view of the understanding of the three natures.

(1) *Kārikā* 23. From the first point of view, the imaginary nature is the empirical, practical, pragmatic reality divided into a subject that knows and an object that is known; the dependent nature, as the mind which produces the unreal imaginations, is what “constitutes” or “creates” the empirical reality; and the absolute nature is the destruction of the empirical reality, because with its knowledge the duality i.e. the empirical reality is abolished.

(2) *Kārikās* 24–25 refer to the second point of view. On a first moment, one obtains the knowledge that there is no ego, no *ātman*, a permanent and eternal subject of the cognition’s acts; that there are only representations, ideas, cognitions etc. to which nothing real corresponds. The first step consists in the knowledge of the *pudgalanairātmya*. In a second moment one reaches the knowledge that it is the mind and only the mind which “creates” the beings and the things that are perceived, that consequently these beings and things do not exist with a true existence but only with the existence of mental creations. The *dharmanairātmya* constitutes in this way the second step. Finally one acquires the knowledge of the absolute nature: if duality, under which form the dependent nature appears, does not exist really, the only “entity” that remains is the inexistence of duality i.e. the absolute nature.

Essential Identity between the Three Natures

In *kārikā* 24 it is said that the imaginary nature is *in* the dependent nature (*tatra*) and in *kārikā* 25 it is said that the absolute nature is also *in* the dependent nature (*atra*). The dependent nature “contains” in this way in itself the other two natures.³³ These *kārikās* repeat in other words the idea already expressed in *kārikās* 17–21, that the three natures are identical, since they have, as a common characteristic, being inexistent duality or inexistence of duality or non-duality.

Definition of the Absolute Nature

In *kārikā* 25 we have also the most complete definition of the absolute nature. See *kārikās* 3 and 13 and their commentary. *Kārikā* 25 defines the absolute nature as: “the existence of the non existence of duality”³⁴ and it adds that “it is and it is not”. We must understand this last expression as

meaning that the absolute nature participates of being, of existence, in so far as in its essence there is the *existence* of the inexistence of duality, and it participates of non-being, non existence, in so far as in its essence there is *inexistence* of duality.³⁵

Section J. Kārikā 26: Common Characteristics of the Three Natures

This *kārikā* indicates two common characteristics of the three natures. The three natures are beyond duality and consequently cannot normally, empirically be known. (1) The imaginary nature does not exist really and therefore it cannot be duality, and it cannot be grasped, because what is inexistent cannot be dual and cannot be known. (2) As regards the dependent nature, since it is not as it appears, i.e. as dual, it is deprived of duality, in reality; and it cannot be grasped, since it is not as it appears (which is the only way in which it can be grasped) and consequently, when it is grasped, it is not known as it really is but only as it appears, which is different from its true form of being. The absolute nature is beyond duality because its essence is the inexistence of duality and it cannot be grasped because, without duality, without the opposition of a subject and an object, there cannot be knowledge, nothing can be known.

Section K. Kārikās 27–30: Analogy between a Magical Creation and the Three Natures

To make clear the meaning of the three natures and the relation that unites them, Vasubandhu resorts to a comparison of the three natures with the magical creation of the illusion of an elephant. A magician, with the help of his *mantras*, creates a representation, an idea, a cognition in the spectator's mind. This representation etc. created in the spectator's mind is what the text designates with the words '*māyākṛta*', '*ākāra*', '*ākṛti*'. The *ākāra*, that is produced in the spectator's mind, has as its contents or object the illusory image of an elephant created by the magic. The only thing we have in this case is an *ākāra*, representation, idea of an elephant; there is not a real elephant (*kārikā* 27).

In *kārikās* 28–30 Vasubandhu establishes the relations between the elements of his comparison with the three natures.

(1) The elephant corresponds to the imaginary nature i.e. to the duality subject-object. Without the elephant as contents or object of the cognition's act in the spectator's mind, there would be neither cognition nor the

opposition subject-object. In the same way without duality, the dependent nature would be unable to manifest itself. Moreover the elephant and the duality are mere imaginary creations without real existence.

(2) What the magic produces, the *ākāra*, *ākṛti*, the representation, idea or cognition in the mind of the spectator corresponds to the dependent nature, to the mental creation (*vikalpa*) to which nothing real is related.

(3) The eternal inexistence of a real elephant in all this magical process corresponds to the absolute nature, to the *ab aeterno* inexistence of the duality.

(4) The *mantra* corresponds to the *ālavavijñāna* or *mūlavijñāna*, since by means of the *mantras* the magical illusion is created; and similarly by means of the "reactualization" of the *vāsanās*, which constitute the *ālayavijñāna*, the dependent nature, the *asatkālpa*, the mind manifests itself with duality.

(5) The piece of wood, which the magician uses in his magic act, (to "transform" it into an elephant or to superimpose on it the image of an elephant), corresponds to the *tathatā* or true reality, which is the absolute inexistence of duality: in both cases there is only one real thing, the piece of wood in the case of the magical demonstration, the non-duality in the case of the three natures.

Section L. Kārikās 31–34: Knowledge, Elimination, Obtention

Kārikās 31–32 explain what happens when one perceives the true nature of the object, that is to say when one knows that the object of the knowledge lacks a true reality and is only an idea, a mental creation, an hallucination, can we say. In that moment there take place three processes or activities that correspond to each of the three natures:

(1) the process that corresponds to the imaginary nature is *knowledge* (*parijñā*) which consists paradoxically in the non-perception of the duality subject-object, in the destruction of the empirical knowledge; (2) the process that corresponds to the dependent nature is *elimination* (*prahānā*), which is the non-manifestation (*akhyāna*) i.e. the non-manifestation of the dependent nature, the non-functioning of the mind, the stopping of the series of erroneous cognitive processes which constitute it, since it is now deprived of the only form it has to manifest itself: duality; and (3) the process which corresponds to the absolute nature is *obtention* (*prāpti*), which means the intuitive knowledge (*sākṣātkriyā*) which presents the true reality, the inexistence of duality *tota et simul*, in its absolute integrity and not in a

discursive way but in a simultaneous and punctual act, and in which there is no intervention of any of the factors which usually give rise to normal knowledge, specially subject and object.

Kārikā 33 indicates that the non-perception of duality (imaginary nature) produces *ipso facto* the simultaneous disappearance of the *ākāra*, representation, idea, cognition (of duality) (dependent nature), which has that duality as the necessary condition of manifesting itself, and that with the disappearance of duality there remains only the total inexistence of duality (absolute nature), in the same way (says *kārikā* 34) as in the magic act we have simultaneously: (1) the non-perception of the illusory image of the elephant created by the magician (which corresponds to the imaginary nature), (2) the disappearance of the *ākāra*, representation, idea, cognition of elephant, which has been produced in the spectator's mind (which corresponds to the dependent nature), and (3) the perception of the piece of wood, the only existing reality which remains after the disappearance of the elephant's illusion (which corresponds to the absolute nature).

Section M. Kārikās 35–36: Traditional Arguments in Favour of the "Only-Mind" Thesis

To understand *kārikās* 35 and 36 it is necessary to refer to Hiuan Tsang, *Siddhi, Taisho*, Vol. XXXI, No. 1585, p. 37 *a* lines 8–22 (= pp. 421–423 of the L. de la Vallée Poussin's translation) and to Asaṅga, *Mahāyāsamgraha*, Chapter II, paragraph 14 (L. Lamotte's edition and translation including commentary and notes). We have here some of the arguments that were traditionally employed to establish the existence of only consciousness.³⁶

Mind is the cause of contradictory ideas. According to traditional beliefs it was accepted that the same thing is perceived in a different manner by those damned to hell, by men and by gods: what the damned people see as blood and pus, men see as clear water and gods as nectar.³⁷ This diversity in the perception of the same thing has its cause in the diversity of the *karmans* of each of these classes of beings. If one admits the existence of different perceptions of the same thing, then it is necessary to admit that there is not a real thing, which is perceived by damned, by men and by gods. If there were a real thing, it had to be perceived by them all in the same way. Blood and pus, water and nectar are mere mental creations, produced according to the *karman* of each of them and they are possible because of

the sole existence of consciousness or mind, which is able to produce out of itself, in accordance with *karman*, those diverse creations.

The vision of unreal things. As it happens in dreams, hallucinations, mirages, magical illusions etc., it is possible that the mind functions without an external object, that there are in the mind representations without anything real corresponding to them, giving rise to them.³⁸

The conformity (of things) with the three kinds of knowledge. Things manifest themselves to beings according to the kind of knowledge they have obtained in relation to the degree of spiritual development they have reached. These knowledges are of three kinds: (1) the *bodhisattvas* and the *dhyāyins*, who have obtained the power over thinking, transform things at their own will; objects manifest themselves to them according to their wishes; (2) to the *yogins* and to other people of great spiritual development, who have obtained serenity and practise the analysis of the *dharmas* or elements of existence, things manifest themselves at the moment of mind's concentration, with their general characteristics of impermanence, suffering etc.; and (3) to wise people, who have obtained the intuitive knowledge, the fundamental wisdom which presents the true nature of things, and can remain established in that intuitive knowledge, things do not manifest themselves anymore to them.³⁹

Liberation will occur without effect. If things really exist, they would be known by ignorant people as they really are; it would happen then that the knowledge of ignorant people reaches truth without effort and therefore this knowledge would produce liberation, since it is the true knowledge. Consequently no special training would be necessary to be in possession of the supreme intuitive knowledge, which according to Buddhism is the only one which grasps the true reality of things and in consequence is the only one that is able to produce liberation.⁴⁰

These arguments ablige to accept the "only-mind" thesis, according to which the empirical reality (imaginary nature), which we perceive as something external to us and real, does not really exist; there are only ideas of beings and things, of ego-s and cognition acts, to which nothing real corresponds and under which form the empirical mind (dependent nature) manifests itself; the true essence of mind is non-duality (absolute nature). When it is accepted that only consciousness exists in the above described manner, then it is known that objects created by that consciousness, do not exist as external and real objects; that there is no place for them in true existence. And with the

knowledge that objects do not exist, it is known that the empirical consciousness also does not exist, because in our empirical reality consciousness cannot exist without the support of an object that functions as its contents.

Section N. Kārikās 37–38: Dharmadhātu; Vibhutva; Oneself's and Other's Good; The Supreme Enlightenment; The Three Bodies

Through the non-perception of the subject and object of cognition, one gets the perception of the *dharmadhātu*, the ultimate fundament or essence of *dharmas*,⁴¹ of the totality of the empirical reality that is constituted by those *dharmas*. This essence is the non-existence of duality.

And when the *dharmas*' ultimate essence, when non-duality is grasped, one gets *vibhutva*, sovereignty (*kārikā* 37).⁴² By this last word we must understand the possession of several extraordinary powers⁴³ (*kārikā* 37).

And the person who has obtained *vibhutva*, those extraordinary powers, realizes his own good, by the accumulation of merits; and also the good of other beings, who have not progressed as himself, helping them to become free from their passions, to accumulate merits and to get the appropriate personal conditions necessary to be liberated, making them able in this way to progress towards liberation. Then he gets the insuperable enlightenment (*bodhi*), i.e. the buddha's condition and, as a consequence of it, the supreme liberation.

As a *buddha* he possesses the three bodies⁴⁴ : *nirmāṇakāya* i.e. the body or better said the bodies which he can create at his own will to appear in different places in order to teach the Doctrine according to the necessities and personal conditions of each class of beings; *saṃbhogakāya* i.e. the glorious body of excellent attributes which he adopts in order to reign in any of the buddhist heavens, surrounded by *bodhisattvas*, to whom he explains the Doctrine; and *dharmakāya*, the Doctrine body which is nothing else than the Absolute, the non-duality, which is the ultimate essence of beings in its totality, concealed by ignorance and passions and which is revealed by knowledge (*kārikā* 38).

SANSKRIT TEXT

TRISVABHĀVAKĀRIKĀ

trisvabhāvakārikā ācāryavasubandhukṛtā

nevārākṣaralikhitā prācīnatāpatrodgatā
 namo mañjunāthāya⁴⁵

kalpitaḥ paratantraś ca pariniṣpanna eva ca /
 trayaḥ svabhāvā dhīrāṇāṃ gaṃbhīraṃ jñeyam⁴⁶ iṣyate //1//
 yat khyāti paratantro'sāu yathā khyāti sa kalpitaḥ /
 pratyayādhīnavṛttivāt kalpanāmātrabhāvataḥ //2//
 tasya khyātur yathākhyānaṃ yā sadāvidyamānatā⁴⁷ /
 jñeyaḥ sa pariniṣpannaḥ svabhāvo⁴⁸ 'nanyathāvataḥ //3//
 tatra kiṃ khyāty asatkalpaḥ⁴⁹ kathaṃ khyāti dvayātmanā⁵⁰ /
 tasya kā nāstitā tena yā tatrādvayadharmatā⁵¹ //4//
 asatkalpo'tra⁵² kaś cittam yatas tat kalpyate yathā⁵³ /
 yathā ca kalpayaty arthaṃ tathātyantaṃ na vidyate //5//
 tad dhetuphalabhāvena cittam dvividham iṣyate /
 yad ālayākhyavijñānaṃ⁵⁴ pravṛttyākhyam⁵⁵ ca saptadhā //6//
 saṃkleśavāsanābījāis citatvāc cittam ucyate /
 cittam ādyam dvitīyam tu citrākārapravṛttitaḥ //7//
 samāsato'bhūtakalpaḥ sa cāiṣa trividho mataḥ /
 vāipākikas tathā nāimittiko'nyaḥ prātibhāsikaḥ //8//
 prathamo mūlavijñānaṃ tad vipākātmakam yataḥ⁵⁶ /
 anyaḥ pravṛttivijñānaṃ dr̥śyadr̥gvittivṛttitaḥ //9//
 sadasattvād⁵⁷ dvayāikatvāt saṃkleśavyavadānayoḥ /
 lakṣaṇābhedataś⁵⁸ ceṣṭā svabhāvānāṃ gabhīratā //10//
 sattvena gr̥hyate⁵⁹ yasmād⁶⁰ atyantābhāva eva ca /
 svabhāvaḥ kalpitas tena sadasallakṣaṇo mataḥ //11//
 vidyate bhrāntibhāvena yathākhyānaṃ na vidyate /
 paratantro yatas tena sadasallakṣaṇo mataḥ //12//
 advayatvena yac cāsti dvayasyābhāva eva ca /
 svabhāvas tena niṣpannaḥ sadasallakṣaṇo mataḥ //13//
 dvāividhyāt kalpitārthasya tadasattvāikabhāvataḥ⁶¹ /
 svabhāvaḥ kalpito bālair dvayāikatvātmako mataḥ //14//

prakhyānād dvayabhāvena⁶² bhrāntimātrāikabhāvataḥ /
svabhāvaḥ paratantrākhyo dvayāikatvātmako mataḥ //15//

dvayabhāvasvabhāvadvā⁶³ advayāikasvabhāvataḥ⁶⁴ /
svabhāvaḥ pariniṣpanno dvayāikatvātmako mataḥ //16//

kalpitaḥ paratantraś ca jñeyaṃ saṃkleśalakṣaṇam /
pariniṣpanna iṣṭas tu vyavadānasya lakṣaṇam //17//

asaddvayasvabhāvadvā tadabhāvasvabhāvataḥ /
svabhāvāt kalpitāj⁶⁵ jñeyo niṣpanno'bhinnalakṣaṇaḥ //18//

advayatvasvabhāvadvā dvayābhāvasvabhāvataḥ /
niṣpannāt kalpitaś cāiva vijñeyo'bhinnalakṣaṇaḥ //19//

yathākhyānam asadbhāvāt tathāsattvasvabhāvataḥ⁶⁶ /
svabhāvāt paratantrākhyān⁶⁷ niṣpanno'bhinnalakṣaṇaḥ⁶⁸ //20//

asaddvayasvabhāvadvā yathākhyānāsvabhāvataḥ /
niṣpannāt paratantra'pi vijñeyo'bhinnalakṣaṇaḥ //21//

kramabhedaḥ svabhāvānāṃ vyavahārādhikārataḥ /
tatpraveśādhikārāc ca vyutpattyarthaṃ vidhīyate //22//

kalpito vyavahārātmā vyavahartrātmako⁶⁹ 'paraḥ /
vyavahārasamucchedaḥ svabhāvaś⁷⁰ cānya iṣyate //23//

dvayābhāvātmakaḥ⁷¹ pūrvam paratantraḥ pravīsyate /
tataḥ pravīsyate tatra kalpamātram asaddvayam //24//

tato dvayābhāvabhāvo niṣpanno'tra pravīsyate /
tathā hy asāv eva tadā⁷² asti nāstīti cocyate //25//

trayo'py ete svabhāvā hi advayālabhyalakṣaṇāḥ⁷³ /
abhāvād atathābhāvāt tadabhāvasvabhāvataḥ //26//

māyākṛtaṃ mantravaśāt khyāti hastyātmanā yathā /
ākāramātraṃ tatrāsti hastī nāsti tu sarvathā //27//

svabhāvaḥ kalpito hastī paratantras tadākṛtiḥ /
yas tatra hastyabhāvo'sāu pariniṣpanna iṣyate //28//

asatkalpas tathā khyāti mūlacittād dvayātmanā /
dvayam atyantato nāsti tatrāsty ākṛtimātrakam //29//

mantravan mūlavijñānaṃ kāṣṭhavad tathatā matā /
hastyākāravād eṣṭavyo vikalpo hastivad dvayam //30//

arthatattvaprativedhe yugapal lakṣaṇakriyā⁷⁴ /
parijñā ca prahāṇaṃ⁷⁵ ca prāptiś ceṣṭā yathākramam //31//

parijñānupalambho'tra⁷⁶ hānir akhyānam iṣyate /
upalambho'nimittas tu⁷⁷ prāptiḥ sāksātkriyāpi sā //32//

dvayasyānupalambhena dvayākāro vigacchati /
vigamāt tasya niṣpanno dvayābhāvo'dhigamyate //33//

hastino'nupalambhaś⁷⁸ ca vigamaś ca tadākṛteḥ⁷⁹ /
upalambhaś ca kāṣṭhasya māyāyāṃ yugapad yathā⁸⁰ //34//

viruddhadhīkāraṇatvād⁸¹ buddher⁸² vāiyarthyardarśanāt /
jñānatrayānuvṛtteś ca mokṣāpatter⁸³ ayatnataḥ //35//

cittamātropalambhena jñeyārthānupalambhatā /
jñeyārthānupalambhena syāc cittānupalambhatā //36//

dvayor anupalambhena dharmadhātūpalambhatā /
dharmadhātūpalambhena syād vibhutvopalambhatā //37//

upalabdhavibhutvaś ca svaparārthaprasiddhitaḥ⁸⁴ /
prāpnoty anuttarāṃ bodhiṃ dhīmān kāyatrayātmikām //38//

iti trisvabhāvaḥ⁸⁵ samāptaḥ kṛtir ācāryavasubandhupādānām iti

TRANSLATION

KĀRIKĀS ON THE THREE NATURES

The *kārikās* on the three natures composed by Master Vasubandhu,
written in Newāri characters, coming from an old manuscript.

Homage to Mañjunātha

Section A. Kārikās 1–5: The Three Natures

1

It is admitted that the three natures, the imaginary, the dependent and the absolute one, are the profound object of the wise men's knowledge.

2

What appears is the dependent (nature); as it appears is the imaginary (nature), (the first one being so called) because it exists subordinated to causes, (the second one being so called) because its existence is only a mental creation.

3

The eternal non-existence as it appears of what appears must be known as the absolute nature, because of its inalterability.

4

And what does appear? The unreal mental creation. How does it appear? With duality.⁸⁶ What is the non-existence with this (duality) of that (dependent nature)? It is the fact that the essence (of the dependent nature) is the non-duality in it.

5

And what is the unreal mental creation? The mind, because as it is imagined and as it imagines its object, so it is not at all.

Section B. Kārikā 6: The Mind's Structure

6

It is admitted that mind is twofold, according to its being either cause or effect: the consciousness that is called '*ālaya*' (receptacle) and the consciousness that is called '*pravṛtti*' (functioning) which (at its turn) is sevenfold.

Section C. Kārikās 7: Etymologies of Citta

7

The first mind is called '*citta*' (mind), because it is *cita* (lit. accumulated = filled) by the seeds, i.e. the *vāsanās*, of the impurities⁸⁷; and the second one (is called '*citta*', mind), because of its functioning under *citra* (diverse) forms.

Section D. Kārikās 8–9: Three Modes of Being of the Asatkalpa

8

And this unreal mental creation, in a summary manner, is considered to

be threefold: *vaipākika* (produced by maturation), and also *naimittika* (produced by causes); the other one is *prātibhāsika* (consisting of representations).

9

The first (mode or aspect) is the root-consciousness, because its essence is maturation; the other one is the functioning-consciousness, because it exists as object, subject and knowledge.

Section E. Kārikā 10: "Coincidentia Oppositorum" in the Three Natures

10

It is admitted the profoundness of the (three) natures, because they are being and non-being, because they are duality and unity, and because of the identity of essence of the purity and the impurity.

Section F. Kārikās 11–13: Being and Non-Being

11

Since the imaginary nature is grasped with existence, but it is only total non-existence, therefore it is considered as something whose characteristic⁸⁸ is being and non-being.

12

Since the dependent (nature) exists with the existence of an illusion, (but) does not exist as it appears, therefore it is considered as something whose characteristic is being and non-being.

13

Since the absolute nature exists with non-duality, but it is only non-existence of duality, therefore it is considered as something whose characteristic is being and non-being.

Section G. Kārikās 14–16: Duality and Unity

14

The nature imagined by ignorants⁸⁹ is considered as something whose essence is duality and unity; (duality) because of the duality of the imagined object, (unity) because of its being one due to the non-existence of that (duality).

15

The nature that is called "dependent" is considered as something whose essence is duality and unity; (duality) because it appears with duality, (unity) because of its being one due to (duality being) a mere illusion.

16

The absolute nature is considered as something whose essence is duality and unity; (duality) because it is nature⁹⁰ (only) in relation to duality, (unity) because its only nature is non-duality.

Section H. Kārikās 17–21: Identity of the Three Natures

17

It must be known that the imaginary (nature) and the dependent (nature) are the characteristic⁹¹ of impurity; it is admitted that the absolute (nature) is the characteristic of purity.

18

It must be known that the absolute (nature) is not different⁹² from the imaginary nature, because the nature (of the first one) is the inexistence of that (duality); because the nature (of the last one) is the inexistent duality.

19

And it must be known that the imaginary (nature) is not different from the absolute (nature), because the nature (of the first one) is the inexistence of duality; because the nature (of the last one) is non-duality.

20

The absolute (nature) is not different from the nature that is called "dependent", because the nature (of the first one) is not being so (as it manifests itself); because (of the last one) being non-existent as it appears.

21

And it must be known that the dependent (nature) is not different from the absolute (nature), because the nature (of the first one) is not as it appears⁹³; because the nature (of the last one) is the inexistent duality.

Section I. Kārikās 22–25: Distinction of the Three Natures

22

The distinction, in (their) order, of the three natures is established from the point of view of the empirical reality and from the point of view of the penetration⁹⁴ into them for the purpose of (the penetration into them) being produced.

23

It is admitted that the imaginary (nature) is the empirical reality⁹⁵; the following one (the dependent nature) is the creator⁹⁶ of the empirical (reality), and the other nature (the absolute) is the destruction of the empirical reality.

24

At first, the dependent (nature), constituted by the non-existence of duality is penetrated; then what is only imagination, (which is found) there, (and which is) inexistent duality, is penetrated.

25

The the absolute (nature), (which is found) there, and (which is) the existence of the inexistence of duality, is penetrated; and so therefore it is said that only it (the absolute nature), in that moment, “is and is not”.

Section J. Kārikā 26: Common Characteristics of the Three Natures

26

Then the absolute (nature), (which is found) there, and (which is) the existence one), because of its inexistence; (the dependent one), because it does not exist as (it appears), (the absolute one), because its nature is the inexistence of that (duality).

Section K. Kārikās 27–30: Analogy between the Magical Creation of an Elephant and the Three Natures

27

In the same way as what is produced by magic, due to the mantras' power,

appear as an elephant: there is only a form there, but a (real) elephant does not exist at all –

28

The elephant is the imaginary nature, its form is the dependent (nature), and that elephant's inexistence, which is there, is considered as the absolute (nature) –

29

In the same way the unreal mental creation, due to the root-mind, appears with duality: duality does not exist in any way, there exists something that is only a form.

30

The root-consciousness is like the *mantra*; the reality is considered as the log; the mental creation is to be considered as the elephant's form; the duality is like the elephant.

Section L. Kārikās 31–34: Knowledge, Elimination, and Obtention

31

When the (intellectual) penetration⁹⁸ of the (true) reality of objects is produced, it is considered that (three) processes, corresponding to each nature⁹⁹, (take place), simultaneously, in their order: knowledge, elimination and obtention.

32

And it is admitted that knowledge is non-perception; elimination is non-manifestation and obtention is perception beyond causes, intuition.

33

Through non-perception of duality, the form of duality disappears; with its disappearance the absolute inexistence of duality is obtained,

34

As, in the magical illusion, there are simultaneously the non-perception of the elephant, the disappearance of its form, and the log's perception.

Section M. Kārikās 35–36: Traditional Arguments in Favour of the “Only-Mind” Thesis

35–36¹⁰⁰

Through the perception of “only-mind” – because (mind) is the cause of the intellect’s vision of unrealities, because of the conformity with the three knowledge, and because of the production, without effort, of liberation – there is the non-perception of the knowable object; through the non-perception of the knowable object, there is the non-perception of mind.¹⁰¹

Section N. Kārikās 37–38: Dharmadhātu, Vibhūtvā, the Own Good and Other’s Good, the Supreme Enlightenment, the Three Bodies

37

Through the non-perception of both, there is the perception of the *dharmas*’ fundament; through the perception of the *dharmas*’ fundament, there is the obtention of sovereignty.

38

And who has obtained the sovereignty, through the realization of his own good and the other’s good, reaches, wise, the supreme enlightenment, whose essence is the three bodies.

End of the *Trisvabhāva*, work of the venerable Master Vasubandhu.

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NOTES FOR THE INTRODUCTION

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¹ Cf. Yamaguchi’s and Nagao’s Introductions to their editions and/or translations, and also L. de la Vallée Poussin, “Le petit traité”, p. 147.

² See *infra* the bibliographical information about the publications mentioned in this section.

³ This title appears in the introduction of the Tibetan translation; the title of this text according to the colophon at the end of the translation (*Sde-dge* edition) is: *Mtshan ñid gsum la hjug pa*.

⁴ The Tibetan translations of this treatise are to be found of course in the different editions of the *Bstan-hgyur* and also in the quoted articles of Yamaguchi, de la Vallée

Poussin, Mukhopadhyaya, and also in E. Teramoto's edition of the *Triṃśikā* of Vasubandhu, Kyōto 1933, Tokyo 1977. Teramoto adds a Japanese translation of both works of Vasubandhu.

⁵ *Abhidharmadīpa*, p. 282 (P. S. Jaini ed.) has a reference to the *trisvabhāva* theory in relation to Vasubandhu, the *kośakāra*, which perhaps may be used as an argument in favour of Vasubandhu's authorship of the present treatise. Cf. *ibidem*, p. 128.

⁶ Cf. L. de la Vallée Poussin, *La Siddhi de Hiuan Tsang*, p. 514, note *b*, and E. Lamotte, *La Somme du Grand Véhicule (Mahāyānasamgraha)*, *Notes et Références*, p. 17 *, Chapitre II, 1.

⁷ We have adopted Yamaguchi's edition of 1972–1973, because it corrects misprints and mistakes of his former edition 1931, is more complete and offers the last opinion of Yamaguchi on this text.

NOTES FOR THE COMMENTARY

⁸ Cf. Asaṅga, *Mahāyānasamgraha* II, 15, 1: gal te rnam par rig pa tsam don snañ bañi gnas gzan gyi dbañ gi ño bo fiid yin na / de ji ltar na gzan gyi dbañ yin la / cihi phyr na gzan gyi dbañ zes bya ze na / rañ gi bag chags kyi sa bon las skyes pa yin pas de lta bas na rkyen gyi gzan dbañ yin no // skyes nas kyañ skad cig las lhaq par bdag fiid gnas par mi nus pas na gzan gyi dbañ zes byaño / (Lamotte's translation: "*Si la nature dépendante (paratantrasvabhāva) est l'idée sans plus (vijñaptimātra) support de la manifestation de l'objet (arthābhāsāśraya), pourquoi est-elle dépendante et pourquoi la nomme-t-on dépendante? – Parce qu'elle est issue (utpanna) de ses propres imprégnations-germes (vāsanābīja), elle est dépendante des conditions. Parce que, après sa naissance, elle est incapable de subsister par elle-même (svataḥ) un seul instant, elle est nommée dépendante.*"), and II, 17: gañ gis gzan gyi dbañ gi ño bo fiid la gzan gyi dbañ zes bya bañi rnam grañs gañ ze na / gzan gyi dbañ gi bag chags kyi sa bon las ḥbyuñ bañi gzan gyi dbañ gi phyr ro / (Lamotte's translation: "*En quel sens la nature dépendante est-elle "dépendante"? – En tant qu'elle dépend d'autre chose pour naître: les imprégnations-germes (vāsanābīja).*").

⁹ Cf. L. Grinspoon and J. B. Bakalar, *Psychedelic drugs reconsidered*, New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1979, p. 146: "*But in any case they (= experiences with LSD drug) suggest how much of what we have felt and thought is registered permanently in the brain and accessible to consciousness in various transmutations.*"

¹⁰ On the *vāsanās'* theory see Hiuan Tsang, *Siddhi, Taisho*, Vol. XXXI, No. 1585, p. 8 a line 5 – p. 10 a line 11 (= pp. 100–123 L. de la Vallée translation); Asaṅga, *Mahāyānasamgraha*, Chapter I (Lamotte's edition and Translation) and moreover J. Masuda, *Der individualistische Idealismus*, pp. 35–39; P. S. Jaini, "The Sautrāntika Theory of *Bīja*", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 22, (1959), pp. 236–249; D. T. Suzuki, *Studies in the Lankavatara-sutra*, pp. 178–179, 184. See also F. Tola and C. Dragonetti, "Dignāga's Ālambanaparīkṣāvṛtti", *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 10 (1982), pp. 115–116.

¹¹ It is also called, in this same treatise, '*abhūtakalpa*' (*kārikā* 8) and '*vikalpa*' (*kārikā* 30). In other texts it is also called '*abhūtaparikalpa*' like in Asaṅga, *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, commentary ad XI, 15: tathābhūtaparikalpaḥ paratantraḥ svabhāvo veditavyaḥ.

¹² Cf. Vasubandhu, *Bhāṣya* of the *Madhyāntavibhāga* ad I, 2, p. 9, line 13 (Pandeya edition): tatrā' bhūtaparikalpo grāhyagrāhākavikalpaḥ; Sthiramati, *Ṭikā ad locum*, p. 11,

last line – p. 12, lines 1–2 (Pandeya edition): kaḥ punar asau (= abhūtaparikalpaḥ)? . . . viśeṣena tu grāhyagrāhakavikalpaḥ / tatra grāhyavikalpo' rthasattvapratibhāsam vijñānam/grāhakavikalpa ātmavijñaptipratibhāsam; Vasubandhu, *Trīṣikā* 21: *paratantrasvabhāvas tu vikalpaḥ pratyayodbhavaḥ*; and Sthiramati, *Bhāṣya ad locum*: atra vikalpa iti paratantrasvarūpam āha.

¹³ In other terms the only thing that comes to existence in the empirical (unreal) domain.

¹⁴ The *Ālambanaparīkṣā* of Dignāga explains very clearly in which way knowledge arises by the sole mechanism of the “re-actualization” of the *vāsanās*, although there is no external object of the cognition's act. Cf. F. Tola and C. Dragonetti, “Dignāga's *Ālambanaparīkṣāvṛtti*”, *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 10 (1982), pp. 105–134.

¹⁵ Cf. Sthiramati, *Ṭikā ad Madhyāntavibhāga* I, 2, p. 11, the last two lines (Pandeya edition): kaḥ punar asau (= abhūtaparikalpaḥ)? atītānāgatavartamānā hetuphalabhūtās traidhātukā anādīkalikā nirvāṇaparyavasānāḥ saṃsārānurūpās cittacaitā avīśeṣeṇābhūtaparikalpaḥ.

¹⁶ Cf. F. Tola and C. Dragonetti, “*Anādītva* or beginninglessness in Indian Philosophy,” *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, 1980, Vol. LXI, Parts I–IV, pp. 1–20.

¹⁷ Cf. Sthiramati, *Ṭikā ad Madhyāntavibhāga* I, 2, p. 11, lines 31–33 (Pandeya edition): abhūtavacanena ca yathā' yaṃ parikalpyate grāhyagrāhakatvena tathā nāstīti pradarsāyati/parikalpavacanena tv artho yathā parikalpyate tathārtho na vidyate iti pradarsāyati.

¹⁸ Cf. Vasubandhu, *Bhāṣya* of the *Madhyāntavibhāga ad* I, 2, p. 9, line 13 (Pandeya edition): tatrā' bhūtaparikalpo grāhyagrāhakavikalpaḥ/dvayaṃ grāhyaṃ grāhakaṃ ca.

¹⁹ Cf. Sthiramati, *Ṭikā* of the *Madhyāntavibhāga ad* I, 6, p. 19, lines 20–22 (Pandeya edition): sa (= abhūtaparikalpaḥ) eva grāhyagrāhakarūpeṇa svātmany avidyamānena prakhyānāt parikalpitāḥ sa eva grāhyagrāhakarāhitatvāt pariniṣpannāḥ. Also Asaṅga, *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* commentary ad XI, 13: satataṃ dvayena rahitaṃ tattvaṃ parikalpitāḥ svabhāvo grāhyagrāhakaḥ lakṣaṇenāntyantaṃ asattvāt.

²⁰ Cf. F. Tola and C. Dragonetti, “*Anādītva* or beginninglessness in Indian Philosophy”, pp. 1–2.

²¹ On the structure of the mind or consciousness according to the *Yogācāra* school see specially Hiuan Tsang, *Siddhi, Taisho*, Vol. XXXI, No. 1585, p. 7 c line 12 – p. 38 c line 13 (= pp. 94–415 L. de la Vallée Poussin translation); Asaṅga, *Mahāyānasamgraha*, Chapter I (E. Lamotte's edition and translation); Maitreya-Vasubandhu-Sthiramati, *Madhyāntavibhāgaśāstra* I, 10; Vasubandhu, *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa*, Paragraphs 33–40 (E. Lamotte's edition and translation); and moreover L. de la Vallée Poussin, “Note sur l'Ālayavijñāna”, *Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques* 3, (1934), pp. 145–168; D. T. Suzuki, *Studies in the Lankavatara-sutra*, pp. 169–199; D. T. Suzuki, *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism*, pp. 125–139; P. Masson-Oursel, “Tathāgatagarbha et Ālayavijñāna”, *Journal Asiatique* 210, (1927), (*Mélanges*), pp. 295–302; E. Frauwallner, “Amalavijñānam und Ālayavijñānam. Ein Beitrag zur Erkenntnislehre des Buddhismus”, *Festschrift Walther Schubring, Beiträge zur indischen Philologie und Altertumskunde*, Hamburg, 1951, pp. 148–159 (= *Kleine Schriften*, Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1982, pp. 637–648); J. Masuda, *Der individualistische Idealismus*, pp. 27–29; Yamakami Sōgen, *Systems of Buddhist Thought*, pp. 210–216 and 236–244; A. K. Chatterjee, *The Yogācāra Idealism*, pp. 87–107; *Hōbōgin* I, pp. 35–37 sub *Araya*; E. Lamotte, *Mahāyānasamgraha*, Tome II, *Notes et Références*, Chapitre 1, p. 3*; S. Weinstein, “The Ālaya-vijñāna in Early Yogācāra

Buddhism – A Comparison of Its Meaning in the Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra and the Vijñapti-mātratā-siddhi of Dharmapāla – ”, *Kokusai Tōhō Gakusha Kaigikiyo*, 3, (1958), pp. 46–58.

²² Etymologies of *ālayavijñāna* in Sthiramati, commentary on the *Triṃśikā* 2, Vasubandhu, *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa*, Paragraph 33 (E. Lamotte's edition and translation); Asaṅga, *Mahāyānasamgraha* I, 2 and 3; Hiuan Tsang, *Siddhi, Taisho*, Vol. XXXI, No. 1585, p. 7 c line 21 (= p. 96 L. de la Vallée Poussin translation).

²³ This is confirmed by the texts quoted in the next note, and by the fact that several *caittas* (*sparśa, manaskāra, vedanā, saṃjñā, cetanā*) accompany the *ālayavijñāna*, according to Vasubandhu, *Triṃśikā* 3 and Sthiramati, *Bhāṣya ad locum*; and also to Hiuan Tsang, *Siddhi, Taisho*, Vol. XXXI, No. 1585, p. 11 b line 13 – p. 12 a line 19 (= pp. 143–151 L. de la Vallée Poussin translation). Sthiramati, *Bhāṣya ad Triṃśikā* 2 (in the beginning), giving the meaning of *ālayavijñāna*, says that it is *vijñāna* because it knows: *vijñātīti vijñānam*; and Vasubandhu, *Triṃśikā* 4, explicitly says that the *ālayavijñāna* “flows like the current of a river” (*tacca vartate srotasaughavat*); cf. Sthiramati, *Bhāṣya ad locum* and Hiuan Tsang, *Siddhi, Taisho*, Vol. XXXI, No. 1585, p. 12 b line 28 – p. 12 c line 15 (= pp. 156–157 L. de la Vallée Poussin's translation).

²⁴ Cf. Sthiramati, *Bhāṣya* of the *Triṃśikā* 2: *yadi pravṛttivijñānavyatiriktam ālayavijñānam asti, tato' syālabhanam ākāraś ca vaktavyaḥ / na hi nirālabhanam nirākāraṃ vā vijñānam yujyate / naiva tat nirālabhanam nirākāraṃ veṣyate / kiṃ tarhi? aparicchinnālabhanākāram / kiṃ kāraṇam? yasmād ālayavijñānam dvidhā pravartate / adhyātman upādānavijñaptitaḥ, bahirdhā' paricchinnākārabhājanavijñaptitaś ca / tatrādhyātman upādānam parikalpitasvabhāvābhiniveśavāsanaś sādhiṣṭhānam indriyarūpaṃ nāma ca / asyālabhanasyātisukṣmatvāt*

asaṃviditakopādīsthānavijñāptikaṃ ca tat /

*asaṃviditaka upādir yasmīn asaṃviditakā ca sthānavijñāptir yasmīn tad ālayavijñānam asaṃviditakopādīsthānavijñāptikaṃ / upādānam upādīḥ / sa punar ātmādivikalpavāsana rūpādīdharmavikalpavāsanaś ca / tatsadbhāvād ālayavijñānena ātmādivikalpo rūpādivikalpāś ca kāryatvenopātta itī tadvāsanaś ātmādivikalpānāṃ rūpādivikalpānāṃ copādir ity ucyate / so' smin idam tad itī pratisaṃvedanākāreṇasaṃviditā ity atas tad asaṃviditakopādīty ucyate / āśrayopādānam copādīḥ / āśraya ātmabhāvaḥ sādhiṣṭhānam indriyarūpaṃ nāma ca / . . . tat punar upādānam idantayā pratisaṃvedayitum āsakyam ity ato' saṃviditā ity ucyate / sthānavijñāptir bhājanalokasaṃniveśavijñāptiḥ / sa'py aparicchinnālabhanākārapravṛttatvād asaṃviditety ucyate / kathaṃ vijñānam aparicchinnālabhanākāraṃ bhaviṣyatīti? anyavijñānavādinām api nirodhasamāpattyādyavasthāsu tulyam etat / na ca nirodhasamāpattyādyavasthāsu vijñānam naivastīti śakyate pratipattum, yuktivirodhāt sūtravirodhāc ceti. Also Vasubandhu, *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa*, Paragraph 36: *ho na deḥi dmīgs pa daṅ / rnam pa ci yin zhe na // dmīgs pa daṅ / rnam pa ma chad pa yin no / ji litar na rnam par çes pa yaṅ yin la / de daṅ hḍra ba yaṅ yin zhe na // de ni ḥgog paḥi sñoms par ḥjug pa la sogs paḥi gnas skabs na rnam par çes pa yod par smra ba gzhan dag daṅ yaṅ mtshuṅs so / ho na de ñe bar len paḥi phuṅ po gaṅ du gtogs ce na // don gyis na rnam par çes paḥi ñe bar len paḥi phuṅ por ro / (E. Lamotte's translation: “Quel est l'objet (ālambana) et l'aspect (ākāra) de cette connaissance? Son objet et son aspect sont imperceptibles (asaṃviditā). Comment une connaissance peut-elle être ainsi? Vous admettez bien que, dans L'état de recueillement d'arrêt, etc., il y a une connaissance spéciale dont l'objet et l'aspect sont difficiles à connaître. Il en va de même ici (pour la connaissance-réceptacle). Cette connaissance, dans quel agrégat (upādānaskandha) rentre-t-elle? En vérité (arthena), on doit dire qu'elle rentre dans l'agrégat connaissance (vijñānopādānaskandha).”)*. Also Hiuan Tsang, *Siddhi, Taisho*, Vol. XXXI,*

No. 1585, p. 11 b lines 3–9 (= pp. 141–142 L. de la Vallée Poussin's translation: "L'ākāra (c'est-à-dire le darśanabhāga, la Vijñapti ou acte de connaissance) du huitième Vijñāna est extrêmement subtil (anusūkṣma), donc difficile à percevoir. – Ou bien le huitième Vijñāna est dit asaṃvidita parce que son objet intérieur (les Bījas et les organes que prend-tient le huitième) est extrêmement subtil, parce que son objet extérieur (le monde réceptacle), dans sa "magnitude", est insondable. Cependant les Sautrāntikas et les Sarvāstivādins demandent "Si l'ākāra du huitième Vijñāna est asaṃvidita, comment le huitième est-il un Vijñāna?" Nous répondrons aux Sautrāntikas-branche qui, comme les Sthaviras, croient à un Manovijñāna subtil: "Vous admettez bien que, au cours de la Nirodhasamāpatti, un certain Vijñāna ne quitte pas le corps, dont l'ākāra est asaṃvidita. Admettez donc que le huitième Vijñāna est toujours de cette sorte de Vijñāna". – Et, quant aux Sarvāstivādins qui nient l'existence du Vijñāna au cours de la Nirodhasamāpatti, nous leur dirons: "Le Vijñāna demeure certainement pendant la susdite Samāpatti, puisque l'ascète qui y est plongé est compté parmi les "êtres" (sattva), comme quand il est, à votre avis, muni de pensée (sacitta). De même les dieux inconscients (asaṃjñin)".). Cf. L. de la Vallée Poussin, "Note sur l'Ālayavijñāna"; and A. K. Chatterjee, *The Yogācāra Idealism*, p. 89.

²⁵ This is deduced from the nature (of being mental facts) and from the characteristics of the *vāsanās* or *bījas* (they are momentary; simultaneous with their fruits; they proceed in a continuous way; they are determined; they depend on conditions and they produce their own fruit). Cf. the Chinese translation by Hsuan Tsang of the *Bhāṣya* of Asaṅga's *Mahāyānasamgraha*, *Taisho*, Vol. XXXI, No. 1597, p. 329 c lines 11–12, where it is said that "the *bījas* of the *ālayavijñāna* produce only *ālayavijñāna*".

²⁶ According with this last explanation it is necessary to complete what we said before – that the *asatkalpa* or mind is composed by the representations etc. produced by the "reactualization" of the *vāsanās*; we must add now that the *asatkalpa* or mind is also composed by the subliminal representations etc., that constitute the *ālayavijñāna*, which is a part of the mind.

²⁷ See J. Gonda, "The etymologies in the ancient Indian Brāhmanas", *Lingua*, Amsterdam, 1955–1956, Vol. V, pp. 61–85.

²⁸ In relation to this meaning of "*vaipākika*" cf. Hsuan Tsang, *Siddhi*, *Taisho*, Vol. XXXI, No. 1585, p. 7 c line 25 (= p. 97 L. de la Vallée Poussin's translation: "Il (the *ālayavijñāna*) est le vipākaphala, le "fruit de rétribution" des actes bons ou mauvais qui projettent (ākṣip) une existence dans une certaine sphère d'existence, dans une certaine destinée, par une certaine matrice (dhātu, gati, yoni)."; Stiramati, *Bhāṣya ad Trīṃśikā* 2, (*ālayākhyam vijñānam*): sarvadhātugatyonijātīṣu kuśalākuśalakarmavipākatvād vipākaḥ. Besides that we can also understand that *ālayavijñāna* is *vaipākika* because the *vāsanās*, as germs (*bīja*) "remain" in it until they "mature" to transform themselves into new actual representations or cognitions. So the *ālayavijñāna* is both the result of the necessity of a moral retribution and the means to realize that retribution.

²⁹ In Śāṅkara's *Upadeśasahasrī* II, 2, 45, 46, 47, and 73 (S. Mayeda edition, Tokyo: The Hokuseido Press, 1973) *naimittika* is employed with the meaning of "contingent", as opposed to an own being (*svabhāva*); in Sureśvara, *Sambandhavārtika* 66 it is employed with the meaning of "caused" as opposed to *nimitta* "cause". We can also understand *naimittika* as "related to marks", "provided with marks". In this case, in *kārikā* 32 we must translate *animitta* by "deprived of marks". With this interpretation there remains anyhow the opposition between the *asatkalpa*, that, as a whole, is characterized by individualizing marks or distinctive signs or attributes and the absolute nature, that is completely deprived of such.

³⁰ This idea inspires the translations and interpretations of the previous translators.

³¹ "Trained mind" is the mind which has fulfilled the moral, intellectual and yogic discipline taught by the *Yogācāra* school and Buddhism in general and thanks to which it is possible to get the intuition of the true nature of things.

³² Cf. texts quoted in note 19.

³³ Cf. Sthiramati, *Ṭīkā* of Maitreya's *Madhyāntavibhāga* ad I, 6, p. 19 line 22 (Pandeya edition): evañ cābhūtaparikalpa eva hetupratyayapāratantryāt paratantraḥ / sa eva grāhyagrāhakārūpeṇa svātmany avidyamānena prakhyānāt parikalpitaḥ / sa eva grāhyagrāhakarāhitavād pariniṣpannaḥ / evam abhūtaparikalpe trayāḥ svabhāvaḥ saṅgrhītāḥ.

³⁴ Cf. Maitreya, *Madhyāntavibhāga* I, 14: dvayā' bhāvo hy abhāvasya bhāvaḥ śūnyasya lakṣaṇam; Vasubandhu *ad locum*: dvayagrāhyagrāhakasyā' bhāvaḥ / tasya cābhāvasya bhāvaḥ śūnyatāyā lakṣaṇam . . . ; Sthiramati *ad locum*: dvayasya grāhyasya grāhakasya cā'bhūtaparikalpe' bhūtaparikalpena vā parikalpitātmakatvād vasturūpeṇa' bhāvaḥ / tasya ca dvayābhāvasya yo bhāva etac chūnyatāyā lakṣaṇam.

³⁵ Cf. Sthiramati, *Ṭīkā* of Maitreya's *Madhyāntavibhāga* ad III, 3, last paragraph: pariniṣpannalakṣaṇaṃ sadasattattvatāś ceti / sadasac ca tattvaṃ pariniṣpannalakṣaṇam / dvayā' bhāvabhāvātmakatvāt sattvam / dvayā' bhāvātmakatvād asattvañ ca.

³⁶ See other arguments in favour of the "only-mind" thesis in Dignāga, *Ālambanaparīkṣā*, who develops a strictly logical demonstration; Vasubandhu, *Viṃśatikā* and *Trimśikā*; Hiuan Tsang, *Siddhi, Taisho*, Vol. XXXI, No. 1585, p. 39 a line 4 – p. 39 c line 29 (= pp. 419–432 L. de la Vallée Poussin's translation); Asaṅga, *Mahāyānasamgraha*, Chapter II, Paragraphs 7–8 (E. Lamotte's edition and translation). Also A. K. Chatterjee, *The Yogācāra Idealism*, Chapters III and IV; D. T. Suzuki, *Studies in the Lankavatara Sutra*, pp. 267–276.

³⁷ Cf. Sthiramati, *Ṭīkā* of Maitreya's *Madhyāntavibhāga* ad I, 4, p. 16 lines 14–16 (R. Pandeya's edition): tathāhi pretā apaḥ pūyapurīṣamūtrādīpurṇā dhṛtadaṇḍapāṇibhir ubhayataḥ puruṣaiḥ samrakṣyamāṇāḥ pāsyanti, manuṣyādayaḥ punaḥ svacchāśītalodakapariṣpūrṇā nirvibandhā ity upalabhante.

³⁸ Vasubandhu, in his *Viṃśatikā* develops this argument.

³⁹ This argument is based in the experiences and phenomena which take place during yogic concentration.

⁴⁰ See in Sthiramati, *Ṭīkā* of Maitreya's *Madhyāntavibhāga* ad I, 2, p. 11 line 10 (R. Pandeya's edition) another example of *prasaṅga* of liberation without effort (*aprayatnena mokṣaprasaṅgaḥ*).

⁴¹ Factors of existence, elements that constitute what exists. See F. Tola and C. Dragonetti, "La doctrina de los *dharma*s en el Budismo", *Boletín de la Asociación Española de Orientalistas*, Año XIII–1977, Madrid, pp. 105–132 (= pp. 91–121 F. Tola and C. Dragonetti, *Yoga y Mística de la India*, Buenos Aires: Kier, 1978).

⁴² We think that *kārikā* 37 refers to the condition of *Bodhisattva* and the next one to the condition of *Buddha*. Cf. H. Dayal (1932), *The Bodhisattva doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975; L. de la Vallée Poussin, "Bodhisattva", J. Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. II, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1964, pp. 739–753; D. T. Suzuki, *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism*, Chapters XI and XII; "Bosatsu", *Hōbōgin* II, pp. 136–142.

⁴³ Like the powers mentioned e.g. by Asaṅga, *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* IX, 38–48, and *Mahāyānasamgraha* X, 5 and the Chinese translation of the *Bhāṣya* of this last text (done by Hiuan Tsang), *Taisho*, Vol. XXXI, No. 1597, p. 371 c line 23 – p. 372 a

line 21; and by *Upanibandhana, Taisho*, Vol. XXXI, No. 1598, p. 437 c line 18 – p. 438 a line 26.

⁴⁴ On the three bodies of Buddha see: D. T. Suzuki, *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism*, Chapter X; *Studies in the Lankavatara Sutra*, pp. 308–338; P. Demiéville, “Busshin”, *Hōbōgirin, Dictionnaire Encyclopédique du Bouddhisme d’après les sources chinoises et japonaises*, publié sous le haut patronage de l’Académie Impériale du Japon et sous la direction de Sylvain Lévi et J. Takakusu . . . , Rédacteur en chef P. Demiéville; *Deuxième Fascicule*, Tōkyō: Maison Franco-Japonaise, 1930, pp. 174 b – 185 a; L. de la Vallée Poussin, “Note sur les Corps du Buddha”, *Le Muséon*, 1913, pp. 257–290; P. Masson-Oursel, “Les trois corps du Buddha”, *Journal Asiatique*, 1913, pp. 581–618; Chizen Akanuma, “The triple body of the Buddha”, *The Eastern Buddhist*, May-June, July-August, 1922, pp. 1–29; N. N. Dutt, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, Chapter V.

NOTES FOR THE SANSKRIT TEXT

- ⁴⁵ MS2: Trisvabhāvaḥ namo Mañjunāthāya. Mu corr.: trisvabhāvaḥ unto trisvabhāvanirdeśaḥ.
⁴⁶ MS2: gambhīrajñeyam.
⁴⁷ MS2: sadā’ vidyamānatā.
⁴⁸ MS2: pariniṣpannasvabhāvo.
⁴⁹ asatkalpaḥ: Va corr.; MS1: asaṅkalpaḥ; MS2: asatkalpaḥ.
⁵⁰ dvayātmanā: Va, Y 1972–1973 corr. (N: gñis dag gis); MS1: dvayātmatā; MS2: dvayātmanā.
⁵¹ MS2: tatrā’ dvayadharmatā.
⁵² MS2: asaṅkalpo’tra; Mu corr.: asatkalpo’ tra.
⁵³ MS2: yatas taṃ kalpyate yathā; Mu corr.: yatas tena hi kalpyate.
⁵⁴ MS2: ālayākhyam vijñānam.
⁵⁵ MS2: pravṛttyākhyāñ.
⁵⁶ yataḥ: Va, Y 1972–1973 corr. (N: gañ phyir); MS1: mataḥ; MS2: yataḥ.
⁵⁷ MS2: medasattvād; Mu corr.: sadasattvād.
⁵⁸ MS1 has lakṣaṇā° according to Y 1931 and probably to Y 1972–1973 (critical annotation); Y corrects: lakṣaṇa°; MS2: lakṣaṇā°.
⁵⁹ MS1 has rūte (instead of gṛhyate) according to Y 1931, which Y and Va correct unto gṛhyate, but according to Y 1972–1973 MS1 has gṛhyate; MS2: śaṃhṛte (śaṃhṛto?); Mu corr.: gṛhyate.
⁶⁰ MS1 has yasmād according to Y 1931, which he corrects unto yat tad, but according to Y 1972–1973 MS1 has yat tad, which he adopts; Va following the indication of Y 1931 adopts yasmād (N: gañ phyir); MS2: yasmād.
⁶¹ tadasattvāikabhāvataḥ: Va corr. (N: de yod ma yin); MS1: sadasattvāika°; MS2: sadasattvāika°; Mu corr.: tadasattvāika°.
⁶² MS2: prakhyānadvayabhāvena; Mu corr.: prakhyānād dvaya°.
⁶³ Mu corr.: dvayābhāva°.
⁶⁴ advayāikasvabhāvataḥ: Va corr. (V: gñis su med par gcig gyur pas); MS1: advayāikatvabhāvataḥ; MS2: advayāikasvabhāvataḥ.
⁶⁵ kalpitāj: Va corr.; MS1: kalpito; MS2: kalpitāj.
⁶⁶ MS2: tathā’ sattva°.
⁶⁷ paratantrākhyān: Va corr.; MS1: paratantrākhyo; MS2: paratantrākhyān.
⁶⁸ niṣpanno’ bhinnalakṣaṇaḥ: Y, Va corr.; MS1: niṣpannobhinna°; MS2: niṣpanno’ bhinna°.

- 69 MS2: vyavaharttātmake; Mu corr.: vyavaharttrātmake.
 70 vyavahārasamucchedaḥ svabhāvaś: Va corr.; MS1 and MS2: vyavahārasamuccheda-
 svabhāvaś.
 71 dvayābhāvātmakeḥ: Va corr. (N: gñis med bdag ñid; V: gñis po bdag med); MS1
 and MS2: dvayabhāvātmakeḥ; Mu corr.: dvayā°.
 72 MS2: tathā; Mu corr.: tadā.
 73 MS2: advayālamalakṣaṇāḥ.
 74 Va corr.: lakṣaṇatraye (N: mtshan ñid gsum la; V: mtshan ñid gsum); Mu corr.:
 °trayam.
 75 prahāṇam: Va corr.; MS1: prahāṇaś; MS2: prahāṇañ.
 76 MS2: pariññā' nupalambho' tra.
 77 MS1 has upalambho' nipnagnas tu according to Y 1931, which he corrects unto
 upalambho' saddvayas tu and Va unto upalambho' nimittas tu (following and
 correcting N: dmigs pa dag ni mtshan ma ste), but according to Y 1972–1973 MS1 has
 upalambho' saddvayas tu; MS2: upalambho nimagnas tu; Mu corr.: upalambhanimittā tu.
 78 hastino' nupalambhaś: Y, Va corr.; MS1: hastinonupalambhaś; MS2: hastino'
 nupalambhaś.
 79 tadākṛteḥ: Va, Y 1972–1973 corr.; MS1: tadākṛtaḥ; Y 1931 corr.: tadākṛtiḥ;
 MS2: tadākṛteḥ.
 80 yugapad yathā: Va, Y 1972–1973 corr. (N: dus gcig); MS1: gāyed yathā; Y 1931
 corr.: (mār)gāyed yathā; MS2: gāyad yathā; Mu corr.: yugapad yathā.
 81 MS2: viruddhadhīkāraṇatvād; Mu corr.: viruddhadhīvāraṇatvād.
 82 buddher: Va, Y 1972–1973 corr.; MS1: buddhair; MS2: buddher; Mu corr.: buddhyā.
 83 MS2: mokṣāpattir.
 84 °prasiddhitaḥ: Va corr.: MS1: °prasiddhataḥ; MS2: °prasiddhitaḥ.
 85 MS2: Trisvabhāvaḥ; Mu corr.: Trisvabhāvanirdeśaḥ.

NOTES FOR THE TRANSLATION

- 86 *dvayātmanā*: instrumental of quality or attribute. Cf. Pāṇini II, 3, 21: *itthaṃbhūtalakṣaṇe*
(tṛtīyā). In the next *kārikās* there are others examples of this type of instrumental:
kārikā 4, tena; kārikā 11, sattvena; kārikā 12: bhrāntibhāvena; kārikā 13, advayatvena
 etc.
 87 Cf. *kārikā 17*.
 88 *lakṣaṇa*: characteristic mark, essential characteristic, essence.
 89 Any one who, ignorant or wise, belongs to the empirical reality creates through his
 mind an illusory world of duality. The ignorant man attributes to that world externality
 and reality. The wise man, who knows the true nature of things, knows that the world
 is a mere mental creation.
 90 Remark that the word *svabhāva* is used twice in this *kārikā* and in several others:
 it designates, on one side, the three natures and, on the other side, it indicates the nature,
 the way of being, the essence of those three natures.
 91 See note 95.
 92 *abhinnalakṣaṇa*: lit. "whose *lakṣaṇa* is not different", "which possesses different
 characteristics".
 93 *yathākhyānāsvabhāvataḥ*: lit. "because of its being a non (existing) nature as it
 appears".

⁹⁴ *praveśa*: “penetration” in the metaphorical meaning of “understanding”, “comprehending”. Cf. Vasubandhu, *Viṃśatikā* 10.

⁹⁵ *vyavahārāmā*: lit. “*ātman* of the *vyavahāra*”. We prefer to understand that “the *kalpita* is the *ātman* of the *vyavahāra*” instead of: “the *kalpita* has as its *ātman* the *vyavahāra*”, considering that in *kārikā* 17 it is said that the *kalpita* and the *paratantra* are the *lakṣaṇa* of the *saṃkleśa*, which is nothing else than the *vyavahāra*. But at bottom both translations point to the same idea: the identity of *kalpita* and *vyavahāra*. *Vyavahāra*, the empirical, practical or pragmatic reality is the totality of the unreal mental conceptions, expressed or not in conventional verbal formulations, to which nothing real corresponds, and which have duality as its essence. As such it is opposed to the absolute.

⁹⁶ *vyavahartr*, is the conceiver of the unreal mental conceptions, the formulator of the conventional verbal formulations that constitute the *vyavahāra*. So we can translate this term by “creator of the empirical reality”, without forgetting that the empirical reality has not a true existence and thinking that the empirical reality is “created” when the *vyavahartr*, the mind, conceives its unreal conceptions and formulates its conventional formulations.

⁹⁷ *advayālabhyalakṣaṇaḥ*: lit. “whose *lakṣaṇa* is non-dual and un-obtainable (i.e. that cannot be perceived or known).”

⁹⁸ *pravedha*: “(intellectual) penetration”. (F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit*, Volume II: *Dictionary*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953).

⁹⁹ *lakṣaṇa*: *svabhāva*. Cf. L. de la Vallée Poussin, translation of the *Siddhi*, p. 514 (a); *Mahāvīyutpatti* 1662–1665; Aśaṅga, *Mahāyānasamgraha* II, Paragraphs 1–4 (E. Lamotte’s edition and translation).

¹⁰⁰ We have united the translation of *kārikās* 35 and 36 to make clear their meaning.

¹⁰¹ *buddhi*, in the text synonym of *citta*.

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