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The Meaning of *Vijñāpti* in Vasubandhu’s Concept of Mind

by Bruce Cameron Hall

For the Mahāyāna it is determined that the whole of the three realms is *vijñāpti-only* (*vijñāpti-mātra*), according to the sūtra: “It is thought-only (*citta-mātra*), You Sons of the Conqueror, that is the whole of the three realms.” Thought (*citta*), mind (*manas*), awareness (*vijñāna*), and *vijñāpti* are synonyms. Here “thought” (*citta*) implies “[thought itself] along with its concomitants.” The [word] “only” serves to rule out [external] referents (*arthā*).

So begins the *Vimsatikā-vṛtti* (*VV*),¹ Vasubandhu’s auto-commentary on the *Vimsatikā-kārikā* (*VK*). The first stanza of *VK* reads:²

This [universe] is certainly *vijñāpti-only*, since there are appearances of non-existent [external] referents, as when someone with an eye disease sees a non-existent “knot of hair” and so on. /VK 1/

*VK* (with *VV*) and the *Trimśikā-kārikā* (*TK*) together make up the *Vijnāptimātratā-siddhi*, or “Establishing That There is *Vijñāpti*-Only.”³ Clearly, *vijñāpti-mātra* is being equated here with *citta-mātra* (“mind-only” or “thought-only”), which is an alternate title for Vasubandhu’s Vijñānavāda philosophy. While the *Trimśikā* presents Vasubandhu’s own doctrine in some detail, the *Vimsatikā* (*VK* and *VV*) is a polemical work in the form of a dialogue between Vasubandhu and an imaginary opponent. This opponent is a fellow Buddhist, but a realist or, one might say, a literalist.

The *vijñāpti-mātra* of the *Vijñāptimātratā-siddhi* has been variously translated as “representation-only,”⁴ “ideation-only,”⁵
The controversy over whether these works were written by one or more Vasubandhus is here ignored: the author of the Vijnaptimatrata-siddhi itself, reference will be made to four other works ascribed to Vasubandhu: Abhidharmakośa-kārikā (AKK), Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya (AKB), Karmasiddhi-prakarana (KSP), and Pañcaskandha-prakarana (PSP). The controversy over whether these works were written by one or more Vasubandhus is here ignored: the author of the Vijnaptimatrata-siddhi is evidently fluent in the Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma, which is outlined in AKK and treated critically in AKB, KSP, and PSP.

I. The Term Itself

Vijñapti is a technical term of the Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma, which Vasubandhu has here appropriated and used in a special sense. An investigation of this term can illustrate in miniature the widespread appropriation and redefinition of the Abhidharma in Vijnānavāda philosophy. An interpretation of such a technical term should consider its ordinary use, its etymology, and its technical use (both in specific contexts and also in relation to a cluster of other technical terms). This ought to reveal Vasubandhu's precise intention in reapplying the term.

In ordinary parlance vijñapti (Pāli viññatti) means "information" or the act of informing someone, that is "report" or "proclamation," especially a report to a superior, and hence, "request" or "entreaty." Vijñapti is a noun of action derived from the causative stem (jianpaya- or jñāpaya-) of the verb root jñā ("know") with the prefix vi-. Etymologically the term vijñapti would mean the act of causing [someone] to know [something] distinctly, or
in a concrete sense, that which causes [one] to know distinctly. Another important term derived from the causative of jñā (with the prefix pra-) is prajñāpīti (Pāli paññatti), which means “declaration” or manifestation in words, and hence, “verbal or conventional designation,” or perhaps even “concept.” Another parallel formation which would be well known to a Buddhist monk is the unprefixed form jñāpīti or jñāpīti (Pāli ṅatti), the technical term for a formal “motion” or “proposal” in a meeting of the monastic community, for example: the motion to ordain a new monk. These three terms share the sense of a public act of “making known.”

In the Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma both vijñāpīti and its opposite, avijñāpīti, appear as technical terms, particularly in the discussion of karma. Here karma specifically means ethically significant action: acts or deeds. In chapter 4 of the Abhidharma-kosa Vasubandhu defines karma as: “volition and that derived from it,” quoting a sūtra: “there are two [kinds of] karmas: volition and the act subsequent to volition.” This two-fold karma is expanded into three types: mental (corresponding to “volition”), and vocal or bodily (corresponding to “post-volitional” action). Vocal and bodily karma is further classified as including both vijñāpīti- and avijñāpīti-karma, “manifest” and “un-manifest” acts, that is, karma manifest or not manifest to some consciousness.

One should note that, from an Abhidharmic perspective, the common-sense notion of “an act” is analyzed into a succession of momentary dharmas. In the case of vocal and bodily acts the dharmas would be moments of sound or color-shape. These audible or visible forms are understood to be dharmas included in the “aggregate of material forms” (rupa-skandha), since, given the momentariness of phenomena, the Abhidharma allows no real distinction between “acts” and “things.” So far the Abhidharmic analysis is clear. Difficulty arises in that the “unmanifest” act is also included as one of the 75 dharmas accepted by the Sarvāstivādins, and this dharma, avijñāpīti-rūpa, is also included in the aggregate of material forms.

Contrary to what one might assume at first glance, this “unmanifest” karma is not some kind of private act not observed by others, since an act is vijñāpīti (for the Sarvāstivādins) if it could be “manifest” to another consciousness. [For the Vi-
jiññānavādins *vijñāpti* means "manifest to any consciousness," including that of the agent, and in this sense mental karma would be entirely *vijñāpti*, since consciousness is, by definition, self-manifesting.] Instead, *avijnapti-rūpa* is used to explain karmic continuity in certain contexts. A "manifest" vocal or bodily act is karmic, in the sense of ethically significant, because of its dependence on volition. But, since it is also "dharmic," that is, a momentary event, how can one account for the connection between this momentary act and its future consequence? The explanation of karmic continuity is a general problem for the Sarvāstivādins, and it is in this context that *avijnapti-rūpa* is added to the list of dharmas. The following sequence is postulated: (1) [manifest, mental] volition, (2) [manifest, material] vocal or bodily act, (3) [unmanifest, material] *avijnapti-rūpa*, (4) [manifest, material] consequence [that is, a later, consequent manifestation of *rūpa*]. Since both the preceding (*vijñāpti*) act and the succeeding (*vijñāpti*) consequence are "material," it follows that the intervening (*avijnāpti*) dharmas, although imperceptible, are also "material"—that is, they belong to the *rūpa*-skandha.

This notion of *avijnāpti-rūpa* is filled with difficulties, and Vasubandhu presents it with considerable qualms in the *Abhidharmakośa*. In the *Karmasiddhi-prakarana*, the whole concept of *vijñāpti- / avijnāpti-rūpa* is rigorously criticized and finally rejected, and all karma is reduced to volition.15 Given this, it is tempting to see the title *Vijñāptimātratā-siddhi* as Vasubandhu's proclamation that he has solved this problem by eliminating the category of *avijnāpti*. In any case, the *Vijñāptimātratā* system refers the problem of karmic continuity to the concept of ālaya-*vijñāna*, the "store-consciousness" which contains the "residue" (*vāsanā*) of past acts and the "seeds" (*bijā*) of future ones. The new meaning assigned to *vijñāpti* can best be explained by considering next the other three terms equated with it in the opening passage of *VV*.

### II. The Other Terms for "Mind"

The translation of *citta*, *manas*, and *vijñāna* above as "thought," "mind," and "awareness" should be understood as merely tentative. In fact, much argument has been devoted to
the problem of translating these terms. Brian Galloway, for example, has argued that the “correct translation” is “mind” (citta), “consciousness” (manas), and “perception” (vijñāna), and that the “formerly prevailing” translations are wrong. Unfortunately, “the correct translation” is not so easy to come by. Not only do the Sanskrit terms have several meanings and various uses, but the suggested equivalents are all imprecise terms in English. Any translation will thus mean something different depending on what a vague word such as “consciousness” suggests to each translator or reader. Once again, what is needed is not simply another English equivalent, but an explanation of the actual usage of the Sanskrit term. Furthermore, one should not forget that, in any case, these three terms are here stated to be synonyms.

VV presupposes that: “citta, manas, and vijñāna have a single meaning.” All three are terms for mind, not as a substantial entity, but as a stream of momentary mental dharmas. All three signify the same dharma or dharmas. Why, then, does Vasubandhu use three different terms for the same reality? One might answer that, as a member of the Buddhist scholastic tradition that employs these three terms, Vasubandhu is obliged to explain them. One might also suggest that using three words, and thus pointing at the same reality from several perspectives, provides a depth of description that a single word could not. The Abhidharma literature consists largely of intersecting and cross-referenced lists of terms. The three main terms for mind appear traditionally in different lists, with a different connotation and context.

Citta is perhaps the most basic term for “mind” or “thought.” It is the term that signifies a single thought, or better, a single thought-moment. Citta is also used to designate a particular mind as opposed to other minds, though in this sense the proper technical term is citta-sāmtāna, “thought-series,” a synonym for vijñāna-srotas, “stream of consciousness.” Citta is the mental as contrasted with the material (rūpa), and bare consciousness as contrasted with mental states (caitasika, caitta, or citta-samprayukta-samskāra). [In the present passage, however, it is stated that citta here means consciousness along with its “concomitants,” the mental states; it is “mind” or “consciousness” in the most general sense to which the equation of citta, manas, vijñāna,
and viññāpti refers.] In the Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma, the older classification of the five “aggregates” (skandhas) is replaced (schematically at least) by the tabulation of the 75 dharmas under the five headings of “material form” (rūpa), “consciousness” (citta), “dispositions conjoined with consciousness” (citta-samprayukta-saṃskāra), “dispositions disjoined from consciousness” (citta-viprayukta-saṃskāra), and the “unconditioned” (asamskṛta). In this context, the single dharma, citta, takes the place of the “aggregate of awareness” (viññāna-skandha).

Manas, on the other hand, is the term for “mind” as the sixth of the six organs or faculties of perception (sensory or mental) in the list of twelve “sense-fields” (āyatana): the six “sense organs” (indriya) and six “sense objects” (viśaya). Here, “mental” is contrasted not with “material” but rather with “sensory.” Perception can also be analyzed into three aspects: the object of cognition (ālambana), the organ of cognition (āśraya), and the corresponding act of awareness (viññāna). In this way, the twelve sense-fields become the eighteen dhātus (elements of perception), with the addition of visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and mental viññāna (perception or awareness). “Mental perceptions” are strictly-mental perceptions—that is, perceptions of ideas, concepts, or mental objects, whether derived from previous sensory perception or not. Vasubandhu (in AKK-AKB 1.16–17) finds no “dharmic” distinction between “mind” (manas as an “organ”) and “mental perception” (mano-viññāna). Although the logic of the scheme requires a corresponding “organ” (āśraya or indriya) for each object and perception, the “organ” for mental perception is simply previous moments of awareness, which serve as a causal basis for the arisal of the present mental perception. Once again, mind is not a substantial or quasi-material entity, but a stream of causally related thought-moments.

Viññāna may be translated as “awareness,” “consciousness,” “cognition,” “perception,” and so on. Vasubandhu gives the following definition (AKK 1.16): “Viññāna is ‘respective’ viññāpti.” (AKB:) “The apprehension that is the viññāpti with respect to the various sense objects is called the viññāna-skandha.” Viññāna occurs as a term in a great number of Abhidharmic lists; for example, the fifth of the five skandhas and six of the eighteen dhātus are called viññāna. The viññāna-skandha has already been equated with citta above. In AKB on AKK 1.16, it is also equated
with manas and with the last six of the eighteen dhātus. In this last case, viññāna quite clearly means "perception." To translate caksur-viññāna and śrotra-viññāna, for example, as "eye-consciousness" and "ear-consciousness" (with the plural "consciousnesses")—rather than "visual perception" and "auditory perception"—is not simply peculiar English; it might even suggest a strangely animistic notion of consciousness.

However, "perception" or even "cognition" does not quite fit some of the other uses of viññāna. Such, for example, is viññāna as the sixth of the six dhātus—a different set of dhātus—the other five being earth, air, water, fire, and ākāśa (here meaning "ether" rather than "space," as it usually does in Buddhism). There is also the third of the twelve links in the chain of dependent arising (pratītya-samutpāda): a viññāna that arises in dependence on samskarās, and in dependence on which there arises "name and form" (nāma-rūpa). This is related to the use of viññāna as a term for that which "passes over" in rebirth. The specifically Yogācāra term ālaya-viññāna ("store-consciousness") has also been mentioned above. In these instances, where viññāna suggests something prior to or more general than perception or cognition, "awareness" or "consciousness" would seem to be a better translation.

These terms, citta, manas, and viññāna, all illuminate a concept of mind as a stream of causally related thought-moments, each of which is a specific act of bare awareness. What is it that viññāpti, which Vasubandhu here gives as the fourth synonym, adds to the picture? Viññāpti here signifies more than viññāpti-karma, but retains a sense of activity or function. Viññāpti designates the basic phenomenon of conscious experience, without requiring its separation into object, subject, and act of cognition. What then is "viññāpti-only"?

III. The Significance of "Only"

The word mātra means "measure" or "extent." It is frequently added as the second member of compounds (which may be understood as bahuvrīhis based on appositional karmadhārayas) in the form of "X-mātra" meaning "having X as its full extent," hence "only X." Often the sense is pejorative: "mere X." It is
clear, however, that in the present context no pejorative sense is required. "Mind-only" means "consisting only of mind," "nothing but mind," "bare mind," "sheer mind," and so on. A mātra compound, then, affirms one factor while denying all others that might apply. The passage itself makes clear what is denied here: objects as external substantial entities. Yet citta-mātra, the term used in the sūtra passage cited, would suffice to deny external objects. What is the point of specifically affirming vijñapti by using the compound vijñapti-mātra?

The term vijñapti signifies a "phenomenon" of consciousness, a "manifestation" to consciousness, or a "percept"—so long as one bears in mind that these terms should not be taken in a naively realistic or a naively idealistic sense. The translation "perception" is not bad, especially considering the ambiguity of the English word. "Perception" can denote a quality, a faculty, a process, or the apparently objective aspect of that process: its contents. However, it might be better to retain "perception" for translating pratyakṣa or vijñāna (at least in some of its senses). To translate vijñapti here by "representation" conveys its "public" aspect, but seems to imply representation of something, presumably of an external object or referent, which suggests a "representational" theory of knowledge. On the contrary, the purpose of the argument throughout the Viṃśatikā is to show that the concept of vijñapti suffices to make sense of perception, and that the concept of an external referent (artha) is logically superfluous. It is specifically stated in the initial quotation that "the [word] 'only' serves to rule out [external] referents." Clearly, then, when vijñapti is qualified as "vijñapti-only," it cannot be meant as a representation of anything else, especially not of an external object.

This would seem to imply that the theory of knowledge involved here, if not representational, is some sort of subjective or absolute idealism. This has, in fact, been the most common "outside" interpretation of Vijnānavāda, not only by modern writers, but by its ancient opponents, both Hindu and Buddhist. Any statement to the effect that the world is "mind-only" seems to imply that, given a set of material and mental factors, the former are denied and the latter are affirmed, or the former are reduced to the latter. Even the translation "ideation-only" for vijñapti-mātra seems to suggest that matter is unreal while
consciousness alone is real.

It is one thing to accuse the Vijñānavādins of falling into a reification of mind, and quite another to assume that such is their intention. The former position is certainly arguable, and was strongly argued by their Mādhyamika rivals. If anything, it is the concept of ālaya-vijñāna, rather than that of vijñapti-mātra, which most exposes the Vijñānavādins to the charge of turning consciousness into some kind of substance or self. Here I would argue that, as is so often the case in Buddhist philosophy, Vasubandhu is consciously navigating between two extremes, which in this case may be called realism and idealism.

In negative terms, vijñapti-mātra rules out the realist extreme: substantial external objects of cognition are denied. However, vijñapti-mātra has also a positive connotation, and the fact that Vasubandhu here affirms precisely vijñapti—rather than vijñāna or citta, which might more easily be misunderstood—seems to indicate an intent to avoid the idealist extreme as well. What is exclusively affirmed is not consciousness as an abiding entity, but the content of momentary acts of consciousness. When this vijñapti is equated with citta, manas, and vijñāna, it follows that mind itself is vijñapti-mātra: it consists of nothing else than the contents of momentary mental acts. The intention here is not to reduce the material to the mental, but to deny the dichotomy, while affirming that the basic reality is more usefully discussed in the terms belonging to a correct understanding of the mental.

**IV. The Whole of the Three Realms**

The compound vijñapti-mātra involves a denial and an affirmation. The extent of this denial/affirmation is truly universal. The term used in the passage is traidhātukam, which may be understood, grammatically and contextually, as meaning idam traidhātukam: “this [universe] consisting of three dhātus.” Here we meet a third, cosmological, sense of the term dhātu in the Abhidharma lexicon. There are three cosmological “realms.”

The “realm of desires” (kāma-dhātu) is the world of “ordinary” experience, that is to say the world experienced by beings in hell, ghosts, animals, most humans, and the lower orders
among the divinities. The two higher "realms" may be entered through either meditation or apparitional birth. The "realm of forms" (rūpa-dhātu) corresponds to the refined experiences of those in the first four levels of meditation (the four dhyānas) and the analogous experiences of certain classes of gods. The "realm of formlessness" (ārūpya-dhātu) consists of the experiences of those meditators and divinities abiding in the formless meditations. These are given as four: infinite space, infinite awareness (vijñāna), nothingness, and neither conception nor non-conception (with sometimes a fifth added: the cessation of conception and feeling).

Taken together, these three "realms" comprise the whole cosmos. "The whole of the three realms" is synonymous with samsāra and with "all conditioned (samskrta) dharmas." If Vasubandhu's statement that the whole of the three realms is nothing but vijñapti is taken in the "idealist" sense, then this implies that there is really nothing "out there"—the whole universe is in the mind. Among other consequences, this interpretation inevitably raises the problem of solipsism: "the whole universe is in my mind." On the contrary, taking the interpretation argued in this paper, Vasubandhu's statement means that the whole universe is nothing but the contents of consciousness (that is, all the contents of everyone's consciousness). Does this amount to the truism that we cannot conceive of anything that we cannot conceive of? I would argue, instead, that the intention of the vijñapti-mātra doctrine is not to draw boundaries around reality but rather to point at the nature of specific experiences.

Vasubandhu himself states the purpose of this doctrine in VK-VV 7–10. His imaginary opponent poses the scriptural objection that, if consciousness alone exists, why does the Buddha speak of all twelve sense-fields (objects and organs of perception)? Vasubandhu replies that the Buddha taught with "a special intention," depending on the needs of a specific audience. Both the teaching of the twelve āyatanas and the teaching of vijñapti-mātra involve such a special intention, being two stages in the teaching of "no-self."

The purpose of the āyatana doctrine (and, by implication, of the whole Abhidharma analysis into dharmas) is to introduce pudgala-nairatmya ("the fact that there is no self in persons"). Analysis into dharmas can dissolve the substantiality of "things"
and "beings," yet dharmas too can be reified. The purpose of the *vijñapti-mātra* doctrine is to introduce the second stage in understanding "no-self": *dharma-nairātmya* ("the fact that there is no self in dharmas"). The opponent objects that this seems to deny the existence of dharmas altogether, which would mean that *vijñapti-mātra* too is non-existent. Vasubandhu replies that what is denied is not the existence of dharmas as moments of experience, but rather "that mentally constructed self that is the intrinsic nature of dharmas imagined by naive people as object, subject, and so on." This does not deny that the dharmas themselves, as perceived by the Buddha, exist. However, the dharmas as perceived by the Buddha are inexpressible (*anabhilläpya*) by philosophy. Furthermore, Vasubandhu points out that this teaching of *dharma-nairātmya* works only when *vijñapti-mātra* itself is understood to be *vijñapti*-only. Clearly, no reification of consciousness is intended here.

One further passage may clarify Vasubandhu's intention. To the repeated assertion that dreams prove the possibility of perception without external referents, the opponent objects: "Someone not yet awakened does not understand the non-existence of a sense object seen in a dream." Vasubandhu replies that, on the contrary, we are all asleep:

In this way, the world—asleep with a sleep that is the residue of the imposition of false conceptualizing—is seeing, as in a dream, a non-existent [external] referent. Not having been awakened, it does not understand, as it is, the non-existence of that [referent]. But, when one has been awakened through obtaining the transcendental non-conceptual cognition that is the antidote to that [sleep], then—through the direct realization of the purified mundane cognition that is obtained after that—one understands, as it is, the non-existence of the [sense] object.

V. Conclusion

I find it misleading to call Vasubandhu's approach "absolute idealism." Instead, I would see Vasubandhu's argument in the *Vimśatikā* as one more attempt to find the Buddhist "middle way" between positive and negative extremes, in this case the
extremes of reification and reductionism. “Common sense” takes the objects of perception to be substantial external entities, that is, “things.” Analytical concepts such as atoms or dharmas are powerful tools that can demolish such “things,” but atoms or dharmas can themselves be reified. Vasubandhu’s argument denies the necessity to posit any entities external to perception itself, and rejects, successively, the reification of things, atoms, dharmas, and even vijñapti itself. In Vasubandhu’s Vijnānavāda, vijñaptis, in effect, take the place of dharmas in the Abhidharma: as conceptual devices to prevent the reification of objects. The doctrine of vijñapti-mātra is not the metaphysical assertion of a transcendental reality consisting of “mind-only.” It is a practical injunction to suspend judgment: “Stop at the bare percept; no need to posit any entity behind it.”

Rather than asserting “mind-only” as the true nature of unconditioned reality, Vasubandhu presents “mind-only” as a description of our delusion: the dreams of this sleep from which the Buddha has awakened. It is, after all, samsāra that is declared to be vijñapti-mātra. Yet if “mind-only” is merely skepticism about reified external entities, how does it avoid the opposite extreme of reductionism? The world is neither completely real, nor completely unreal, but like a dream. A dream has its own presence and continuity, but its objects lack the substantiality of external objects. Whether common-sense things or Abhidharmic dharmas, dream-objects are bare percepts. If the dream-world samsāra is “mind-only” then freedom and the Buddhist path are possible—we can “change our minds.” If the realms of meditation are “mind-only” then one can create a counter-dream within the dream of the world’s delusion. Most important, one can awaken from a dream.

Is it then correct to call the Yogācāra, as presented by Vasubandhu, “Buddhist idealism”? The term “idealism” designates a number of different philosophies. At the least one should be aware that the “idealism” that Vasubandhu attempts to assert and the “idealism” for which his opponents criticize him may be different “idealisms.” The argument over whether Vijnānavāda is idealistic or realisitic bears a marked resemblance to the controversy as to whether Madhyamaka is nihilism or transcendental absolutism.

Mistaking taxonomy for understanding is a fault not limited
to modern writers on Buddhism. A similar excessive concern for and trust in doctrinal labels can be seen in ancient Indian philosophers and Tibetan scholastics, and even in the Abhidharma itself. Instead of seeking the correct label for Vasubandhu’s philosophy, we would do better to try to understand it in its own terms. The identification of one school with another (such as that of Vijnānavāda with some Western form of idealism) is not only likely to be misleading; it is all too often the point at which the argument stops. A more fruitful approach to comparative philosophy would begin by tentatively accepting several comparable philosophies as coherent systems in their own terms, and would proceed to apply their several viewpoints to specific problems of philosophy.

NOTES

1. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. For the sources of Sanskrit texts here translated see below, notes 3 and 7. The passage from VV translated here is missing from the Sanskrit MS, and was reconstructed by Sylvain Lévi as follows (1925, p.3):

Mahāyāne traithātukām vyavasthāpyate / cittamātram bho jinaputra ād uta traithātukām iti sūtra / cittam mano vijnānam vijnāptiś ceti parāyāh / cittam atra sasanāprayogam abhipretam / māram ity arthapratīśedhārtham /.

2. The first kārikā of VK is still quoted or translated by some writers as it was first reconstructed and printed in Lévi 1925. As emended in Lévi 1932 (on the basis of new MSS of VK) the stanza reads:

vijnāptimātram evedam asadarthāvabhāsanā / yadvat taimirikāsākṣasāndrakādidarśanam //

3. Sources used here for the Vijnāptimātratā-siddhi are:


Clarence H. Hamilton, Wei Shih Er Shih Lun: The Treatise in Twenty Stanzas


Stefan Anacker, Seven Works of Vasubandhu: The Buddhist Psychological Doctor, Religion of Asia Series, 4 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984). [Includes English translations of Vādavidhi, Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇa (PSP), Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa (KSP), VK-VV, TK, Madhyāntavibhāgabhāṣya (MVB), and Trisvabhāvanirdesa (TSN), and reprints Sanskrit editions of VV, TK, MVB, and TSN.]

4. E.g., Hamilton (1938).
5. E.g., Chan (1957).

KSP is lost in Sanskrit, but survives in one Tibetan translation (Tōhoku 4062 = Ōtani 5563) and two Chinese translations (Taishō 1608, 1609). There is an English translation (from Tibetan) in Anacker (1984), and a French translation (with the Chinese and Tibetan texts) in Étienne Lamotte, “Le Traité de l'acte de Vasubandhu, Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa,” Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques 4 (1935–36) (Bruxelles: Institut Belge des Hautes Études
PSP is also lost in Sanskrit, surviving in one Tibetan translation (Tôhoku 4059 = Ôtani 5560) and one Chinese translation (Taishô 1612). There is an English translation (from Tibetan) in Anacker (1984), and a French translation (with Chinese and Tibetan texts) in Jean Dantinne, Le Traitè des cing agregats (Pañcaskandhaprakarana de Vasubandhu), Publications de l'Institut Belge des Hautes Études Bouddhiques, Série “Études et Texts,” 7 (Bruxelles: Institut Belge des Hautes Études Bouddhiques, 1980). PSP is discussed in V.V. Gokhale, “The Pañcaskandhaka by Vasubandhu and its Commentary by Shihamati,” Annals of the Bhandarkar Research Institute (Poona) 18.3 (1937): 276–286. There is a discussion and a Sanskrit retranslation of PSP in Shanti Bhikshu Shastri, “Pañcaskandhaprakarana of Vasubandhu,” Indian Historical Quarterly 32 (1956): 368–385. Another work by Shanti Bhikshu Shastri, which I have seen cited but have not been able to find, is Pañcaskandhaprakarana of Vasubandhu: A Restitution into Sanskrit from the Tibetan Version together with an Introduction, English translation, Notes, a Tibetan-Sanskrit vocabulary and an Index of important Sanskrit Words (Kelaniya, 1969).

9. Compare Edgerton (1953), s.v. prajñapti.
10. Compare Edgerton (1953), s.v. ṇānā, and the documents dealing with upasampadā (“ordination”) in the collection of official acts of a Sangha known as the Karmavacana (Pali Kammavacā).
11. The classic sources for the discussion of karma are AKK-AKB chapter 4, and KSP.
12. AKK 4.1b: cetanā tatāt ca tat.
13. AKK on AKK 4.1b: āce karmani cetanā karma cetojīvā ca.
15. AKK on AKK 4.4 presents the controversy between the Sautrāntika position that avijnapti does not exist as a substantial entity (dravya) and the Sarvastivādin or Vaibhāṣika position that it does. For KSP see especially Anacker’s (1984) translation and notes.
16. See two articles by Brian Galloway, “Vijnana, Samjna, and Manas,” The Middle Way vol. 55, no. 2 (1978): 72–75, and “A Yogacāra Analysis of the Mind, Based on the Vijnana Section of Vasubandhu’s Pañcaskandhaprakarana with Gunamati’s Commentary,” Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies vol. 3, no. 2 (1980): 7–20. Galloway’s very interesting argument is unfortunately weakened by the stridency of his tone, which is not justified by the limited scope of his evidence. The ambiguity of the Sanskrit and English terms involved is not exhausted by considering the Pañcaskandhaprakarana and the Oxford English Dictionary. For example, Galloway’s argument for translating vijnana as “perception” rather than “consciousness” relies very heavily on the PSP and other contexts in which vijnana clearly does mean “perception,” but rather ignores other uses of the term vijnana (discussed in the present

17. AKK 2.34a–b1: *citḍam mano ’tha vijñānam ekārtham*. Compare AKB and PSP. The equating of these three terms for mind is at least as early as *Samyutta-nikāya* II: 95 (Kindred Sayings II: 66).


19. I am indebted to Professor M. David Eckel, Harvard University, for stressing to me the non-negative connotation of *-mātra* in such contexts.

20. I have in mind here the first definition of “phenomenon” given in the *American Heritage Dictionary*: “an occurrence or fact that can be perceived by the senses”—remembering that for Buddhists “mind” (*manas*) is, of course, one of the senses.

21. I am following the excellent definition of “percept” given in J.P. Chaplin, *Dictionary of Psychology* (new revised edition, New York: Dell Publishing, 1975), p. 376; “percept: 1. that which is perceived. 2. a perceptual act. The use of the term percept refers to the conscious experience and not to the physical object. Physical objects of perception are referred to as stimuli.”

22. This is the view of Vijnānavāda held by such writers as Stcherbatsky and Dasgupta, and presented in A.K. Chatterjee, *The Yogācāra Idealism* (2nd ed., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975). One classical source for this interpretation is the hostile and wildly inaccurate chapter on Buddhism in the late Vedāntin work, *Sarvadarśana-samgraha*. However, those modern writers who interpret Vijnānavāda in this way usually consider it very similar to Vedānta. Kochumuttom (1982) strongly criticizes this idealistic interpretation, especially in chapter 6.

23. Kochumuttom (1982: 165–166) objects strenuously to the translation of *traidhātukam* here as “the three worlds.” He declares that: “This translation ignores the fact that the term ‘traidhātuka’ is an adjective meaning ‘belonging to the three worlds’, and that it is not a substantive meaning ‘the three worlds.’” He goes on to say that such an adjective must modify an understood noun, supplying “*citta* and *caittas*” as the understood noun. Accordingly (p. 260), he translates the passage: “those belonging to the three worlds are mere representations of consciousness,” and the sūtra quotation: “those belonging to the three worlds are mere mind”—“those” being *cittas* and *caittas*. As evidence for calling Vasubandhu’s philosophy “pluralistic realism” this fails to convince. Kochumuttom confuses etymology with meaning and forgets the grammar of the sentence. It is true that *traidhātuka*- is etymologically an adjective. It is a secondary derivative in *-ka* from the compound word *tri-dhātu*, and means...
"pertaining to the three realms." In the passage, however, we have *traidhatukam*, which seems in context to be a nominative singular neuter form. Theoretically it could modify *cittam*, and theoretically the passage could mean that the *citta* that pertains to the triple world is mere-*citta* or mere-*vijñapti*, but this is mere-tautology. In Sanskrit, secondary derivatives are often used as substantives. A good example is the very term *caitta*, "pertaining to *citta*." The interpretation that best fits this passage is *[idam]* or *[sarvam] traidhatukam*—"all this [universe] that pertains to the three realms."

24. *Nairatmya* is often translated "selflessness." Although the translation is etymologically correct, the English word "selflessness" connotes unselfish behaviour, which may in fact be encouraged by the philosophical idea of *nairatmya*, but is not identical with it. [I am indebted to Professor Luis O. Gómez, University of Michigan, for pointing out to me the ambiguity of "selflessness."]

25. VV on VK 10d2: *yo bālair dharmānām svabhāvo grahyagrahākādide parikalpitas*. . . .

26. VK 17cd: *svapnadvīśayābhāvam nāprabuddho 'vagacchati*.

27. VV on VK 17cd: *evam vicitathavikalpābhavyāsvāsānānidrayā prasupto lokaḥ svapna svabhūtam artham paśyan na prabuddhaś tadabhāvam yathāvam nāvagacchati / yadā tu tatpratipaksalokāntaranirvikalpaśānālābhāt prabuddha bhavati tadā tatśrithaladhdhasuddhalavikājaśānāmānāmākhibhāvād viśayābhāvam yathāvad ava-gacchati samānām etat / .