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In understanding the ongoing process of the development of any doctrinal system, isolated insights into particular texts or particular doctrinal themes are not sufficient. No number of monographs on ālayavijñāna or trisvabhāva suffices, for, although such studies do clarify particular themes, no understanding is gained of the overall purpose for which these themes were developed. What is desired is an overall insight into what the system is trying to achieve. In the case of the Yogācāra system, the question of its basic intent and overall purpose is not easily determined. There are, it would appear, two reasons for this situation. The first is that the complex of questions regarding the dating, authorship, and compilation of the various textual data have not yet received definite answers in many instances, and yet each of these questions bears directly upon the understanding of the lines of doctrinal development. A second reason is that the doctrinal focuses of some of the basic Yogācāra texts appear to differ.

The intent of this paper is to treat this latter concern. It will attempt to describe the basic doctrinal focus of four early Yogācāra texts, suggest the intent of their authors, and draw a hypothesis concerning the lines of development of early Yogācāra as seen in these texts. The texts selected are the Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra, the Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra, the Mahāyānābhidharmasūtra, and the Madhyāntavibhāgaśāstra. All four texts were composed before the time of the classical formulation of Yogācāra by Asaṅga and Vasubandhu. Although it is not possible to determine with any degree of certitude the temporal relationship among these texts, insight into their doctrinal emphases would help to identify the overall problematic that led the early, pre-Asaṅgan Yogācārins to develop their thinking.
The Mahāyānasūtraśāṅkara, which in its basic verses appears to be quite early, shows close affinities with tathāgatagarbha thought. It affirms the original purity of the mind (cittaprakṛtiprabhāsvaḥ) and the adventitious nature of defilement (āgantukasaṅklesa).

When water, after having been stirred up, settles, the regaining of its transparency is not due to something other than the removal of dirt. The manner in which the mind is purified is similar. It is to be understood that the mind is originally luminous (prakṛtiprabhāsvaram) at all times, but blemished by adventitious faults. It is not to be thought that apart from this mind of dharmatā there is any other mind that is originally luminous.

This passage seems to be in full doctrinal accord with the tathāgatagarbha teachings and its content is reflected in many tathāgatagarbha texts. Again, the Mahāyānasūtraśāṅkara states:

Although tathatā is not differentiated in regard to all [sentient beings], when it has been purified, it is tathāgatahood. Therefore it is said that all sentient beings are that seed [tadgarbha].

This seems to be a clear affirmation of the basic theme of the pure garbha, and the later prose commentary of the Mahāyānasūtraśāṅkara explains that it means that all sentient beings are tathāgatagarbha.

From such passages it appears that the basic focus of the Mahāyānasūtraśāṅkara is upon the mind of original purity, the pure consciousness that is always present, even under thecoverings of defilement, and which enables one to attain purification and enlightenment.

In discussing the ultimate realm, dharmadhātu, the Mahāyānasūtraśāṅkara laments:

Indeed there is nothing else in the world, and yet the world is unconscious of it. How has this kind of worldly illusion come about, whereby one clings to what is not and entirely ignores what is?

Again, this seems to reflect the tathāgatagarbha theme that
only the pure garbha actually exists, while all else is non-existent.\textsuperscript{7}

The focus of the Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra is then upon the mind of original purity, and not upon an analysis of empirical consciousness. Thus, when it comes to an explanation of the trisvabhāva doctrine, the Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra uses this doctrine to explain just how empirical consciousness has devolved from that original purity. The emphasis is not upon consciousness as experienced, but upon the original purity of that now illusory consciousness. The three natures (trisvabhāva) are treated as marks of tathātā,\textsuperscript{8} and the reality envisaged is not the everyday consciousness of sentient beings. The three natures are described as follows:

Reality (tatvam) is that which is always void of duality, that which is the basis of confusion, and that which can never be verbally expressed, for its being is not conceptualizable. It is to be known, to be rejected, and to be purified, although it is originally undefiled. When purified from kleśa, it is like space, gold, and water.\textsuperscript{9}

These three categories correspond to parikalpita, paratantra, and parinispāna.\textsuperscript{10} The description of parikalpita as always void of duality (dvayena rahitam) emphasizes the illusory nature of empirical consciousness, which clings to the dichotomy of subject-object. The description of paratantra as the basis of confusion (bhrānteśca samniśrayah) identifies the source of the illusions of parikalpita. The description of parinispāna points to the originally pure mind, which, although undefiled (amalam), must be purified from adventitious defilements. Its being is also said to be not conceptualizable (yaccdprapancatmakam), which suggests the tathāgatagarbha tenet that only the pure garbha actually exists, and also implies that the reason why the world is unconscious of it is because it is beyond the realm of subject-object concepts. The only function of paratantra in this explanation is to identify the source of the confusion of parikalpita. When one has understood that in fact the duality of parikalpita is illusory, then its underlying source, paratantra, is to be rejected. The conversion of the basis (āśraya-parivṛtti) is then a turning around from the illusions of parikalpita to an awareness of the original purity of parinispāna that takes place through the rejection of paratantra. Because of the basic focus on original purity, the trisvabhāva doctrine is here employed in order to explain
how empirical defilement arises to cloud over that purity. The consistent tension is between the pair of parikalpita-paratantra as illusion and its source, and the purity of parinispanna.

Thus, in the Mahāyānasūtraśālmékāra the intent of the author appears to be the use of Yogācāra doctrines in order to explain just how there can be both pure consciousness and empirical defilement—for the principal weakness of the tathāgatagarbha tradition is its failure adequately to treat the causes of defiled consciousness.

The Sāṃdhinirmocanasūtra11 presents a different focus, for it does not admit the doctrine of the original purity of the mind. Rather, it focuses upon the seed consciousness (sarvabijaka, i.e., ādāna, i.e., ālaya-vijñāna) as the basis for karmic defilement.

The seed consciousness [of sentient beings in the six destinies] matures, evolves, becomes unified, grows, and reaches its development, because it makes its own two things: the physical body with its sense organs and the habitual proclivities (vāsanā) of discriminately and verbally conceptualizing (prapañca) images and names.12

The initial arising of consciousness results in prapañca, is due to the proclivities of prapañca, and does not manifest any purity whatsoever. This idea contrasts sharply with the teaching of the Mahāyānasūtraśālmékāra. The Sāṃdhinirmocana goes on to present an analysis of phenomenal consciousness and offers an explanation of the relationship between the six sense consciousnesses and the base sarvabijaka-vijñāna.13

In its explanation of the trisvabhāva, the Sāṃdhinirmocana parallels the Mahāyānasūtraśālmékāra, but the trisvabhāva doctrine is here used to explain the characteristics of the dharma (dharma-lakṣaṇa), i.e., consciousness, rather than as a description of tathatā.

The dharma [of consciousness] is of three kinds: that which has been totally imagined (parikalpitalakṣaṇa), that which arises in dependence on others (paratantra-lakṣaṇa), and that which is full perfection (parinispanna-lakṣaṇa).

That which has been totally imagined is the discrimination whereby all dharmas are conventionally held to have their
own svabhāva, and the verbal expressions that arise consequent upon this discrimination.

That which arises in dependence on others is the nature whereby all dharmas conventionally arise. For, if this exists, then that exits. If this arises, then that arises. This includes [the dependent co-arising] of ignorance up to [the dependent co-arising] of this grand mass of suffering.

That which is full perfection is the true nature of the equality of dharmas (samatātathā). It is this tathatā which bodhisattvas come to realize because of their zeal (vīrya), and their fundamental mental apprehension (aviparītā-cintana). By gradual practices until they reach this realization, they finally attain full enlightenment (anuttarasamyaksambodhi).

That which is totally imagined is like the defective vision of one who has cataracts in his eyes. That which arises in dependence on others is like the imagining of those images, such as the appearance of hairs, flies, small particles or patches of different colors before the eyes of one with cataracts. Full perfection is like the true, unconfused objects which are seen by the sound eye of one who has no cataracts.¹⁴

This passage parallels that of the Mahāyānasūtrālāṃkāra in that the function of paratantra is to account for the delusions of parikalpita. Thus the Sāmdhinirmocanasūtra later explains that wisdom enables one “to destroy paratantra.”¹⁵ Although they do agree on this point, they seem to do so from differing perspectives. The Mahāyānasūtrālāṃkāra focuses upon the mind of original purity, describes the three natures as the mark of tathatā, and sees paratantra as the basis for empirical defilement and confusion. The Sāmdhinirmocanasūtra focuses upon the mind of karmic defilement, describes the three natures as the marks of phenomenal, defiled consciousness, and sees paratantra as the basis of that defilement.

In these two early texts one can detect a Yogacāra dilemma. If the mind is originally pure, then how is one to account for empirical defilement? If the mind is not itself pure, then, being defiled, how can one ever attain purification?¹⁶

It would appear from the extant fragments that the Mahāyānābhidharmasūtra¹⁷ attempted to deal with this dilemma. In what is perhaps one of the most famous passages of Yogacāra, it writes:

The beginningless realm is the common support of all dharm-
mas. Because of this, there exist all the destinies and the access to nirvāṇa.\textsuperscript{18}

This passage appears to be an attempt to account for both defiled empirical existence (gatih sarvā) and for the possibility of nirvāṇa (nirvāṇādhitagamopī ca). Later Yogācārins offer different interpretations of this text. Asanṭa’s Mahāyānaṃsaṃgrahaśāstra,\textsuperscript{19} Asvabhava’s Mahāyānaṃsaṃgrahopaniśandha,\textsuperscript{20} and Dharmapāla’s Vijñaptimātratāsiddhiśāstra\textsuperscript{21} all interpret anādikāliko dhātuḥ to be ālayavijñāna. The Ratnagotravibhāgaśāstra cites it and interprets the beginningless realm to be tathāgatagarbha. Paramārtha’s translation of Vasubandhu’s Mahāyānaṃsaṃgrahabhāṣya, along with the other three Chinese translations of this text, gives the interpretation of anādikāliko dhātuḥ as ālaya, but then it alone appends the tathāgatagarbha interpretation.\textsuperscript{22}

These explanations all represent later forms of doctrinal development, and it would be anachronistic to follow such interpretations rigidly. Rather, it would seem appropriate to interpret the passage in the light of the problematic current at the time of the composition of the Mahāyānaṃbhīdharmasūtra and the Samādhiṃcanaśūtra. Thus, the anādikāliko dhātuḥ of the Mahāyānaṃbhīdharmasūtra can perhaps best be understood as an attempt to amalgamate the focus upon original purity and the focus upon karmically defiled consciousness into a broader synthesis that might enable one to explain both adequately.

But what precisely are we to understand by this beginningless realm? It would seem that it indicates consciousness as both pure and defiled. In another passage, the Mahāyānaṃbhīdharma says:

There are three dharmas: that which consists in the defiled aspect (samkleṣabhāga), that which consists in the pure aspect (vyavadānabhāga), and that which consists in both at the same time (tadubhayabhāga).\textsuperscript{23}

The text of the Mahāyānaṃsaṃgrahaśāstra, which quotes this passage, goes on to identify these with, respectively, parikalpita, parinispanna, and paratantra.\textsuperscript{24} Thus, paratantra is not only the underlying cause for samsāric defilement, but also includes a pure aspect.

Although paratantric consciousness does result in the defile-
ment of parikalpita, insight into its nature as dependent on others implies awareness that there are no essences (svabhāva) to be grasped nor any essence that can grasp (grāhyagrāhaka). One and the same consciousness, which, being dependent on others, has no essence that could be pure or impure, gives rise to both the defilements of all the destinies and to the access to nirvāṇa. Thus anādi-kāliko dhātuh is neither a pure mind of tathāgatagarbha nor a basically defiled ālayavijñāna. Rather, it is dependently co-arisen phenomenal consciousness as including both.

The Madhyāntavibhāgaśāstra also appears to predate Asaṅga, at least in its verse sections. It explains the trīsvabhāva as follows:

As for the three natures, one is eternally non-existent. [The second] does exist, but is not reality. [The third], since it is reality, both exists and does not exist. This is the explanation of the three natures.

The second nature, paratantra, is here accorded some degree of validity and plays a pivotal role in the development of trīsvabhāva thinking, for, although it is denied reality, it does exist and is not simply to be rejected, as in the Mahāyānasūtraṃkāra. The Madhyāntavibhāga further describes paratantra as unreal imagining (abhūtaparikalpa):

Unreal imagining exists, but in it duality [of subject-object] does not exist. However, in this [unreal imagining] emptiness exists, and moreover in that [emptiness] this [unreal imagining] exists.

Thus, paratantra is the source of the duality and illusion of parikalpita. It is not to be entirely negated, though, for it does indeed exist, and within paratantric consciousness one can discover emptiness, i.e., the absence of duality. Here again the Madhyāntavibhāga is attempting to synthesize the two emphases, on the originally pure mind and on empirical consciousness.

If defilement did not exist, then all bodily beings would then be [already] delivered. If purification did not exist, then right practice would be without result. Neither defilement nor undefilement exists. Neither purity nor impurity exists, because mind is [originally] luminous, and its defilement is adventitious.
It would thus appear that the *Madhyāntavibhāga* does admit the notion of the original luminosity and purity of the mind, but only after reworking it in the context of the *trisvabhāva*. The original luminosity of the mind does not mean that it has an impure or a pure nature, for both are *svabhāvas* that result from dualistic imagining and therefore do not exist. But, since the unreal imagining of *paratantra* does exist in emptiness, once the dichotomy of *parikalpita* has been understood and rejected, then the original luminosity and purity of the mind becomes manifest.

Thus, in parallel to the *Mahāyānābhidharmasūtra*, the *Madhyāntavibhāgaśāstra* appears to be attempting a synthesis of the doctrine of original purity within a more empirically oriented emphasis upon defiled consciousness.

The overarching hypothesis that the preceding passages seem to suggest is that early Yogācāra thinkers are indeed concerned with the question of the purity or impurity of consciousness, and this in turn would imply that they developed their thinking in the same doctrinal circles that gave rise to the *tathāgatagarbha* tradition.

Yogācāra is frequently and correctly described as having developed as a resurrection of theoretical thinking in the context of *prajñāpāramitā*, i.e., *śūnyatā*.

In its methodology, the Vijñānavāda was really a successor to the Abhidharma Buddhism, but it was the Abhidharma based upon the *śūnyatāvāda* of the Prajñā-pāra-mità, and hence deserves to be called "mahāyāna-abhi-dharma," as shown in the title of one scripture.

Although such is clearly the case, one should also be aware of the possibility of a very close relationship between Yogācāra and the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine. The earliest *tathāgatagarbha* sūtras began to appear shortly after the time of Nāgārjuna (ca. 150 - ca. 250), and thus were contemporaneous with or shortly before the above Yogācāra texts. The *tathāgatagarbha* tradition offered an alternative to what was perceived as the overly negative tone of the Mādhyamika and the *prajñāpāramitā* literature. It would thus be natural to assume some kind of connection between *tathāgatagarbha* and Yogācāra.

The fact that the five works traditionally attributed to Mai-
treyā, the putative founder of Yogācāra, include the Ratnagotra-vibhāgaśāstra, as well as the Mahāyānasūtra-laṅkāra, shows that this tradition regarded Yogācāra and tathāgatagarbha as coming from the same source. Furthermore, the presence in the Ratnagotrabhiphāga of the famous quotation on the anādikāliko dhātuḥ from the Mahāyānābhidharmasūtra suggests that the author of the Ratnagotrabhiphāga regarded the Mahāyānābhidharmasūtra as being at least consistent with tathāgatagarbha themes. It does seem clear that in some instances the Ratnagotrabhiphāga is dependent on the Mahāyānasūtra-laṅkāra. William Grosnick convincingly argues that the Ratnagotrabhiphāga's understanding of buddhādhatu as the nonduality of subject and object can be traced to the Mahāyānasūtra-laṅkāra, and Takasaki Jikidō holds that the triyāna teaching of the Ratnagotrabhiphāga is directly dependent upon the Mahāyānasūtra-laṅkāra. Although this directly shows only the dependence of the Ratnagotrabhiphāga on the Mahāyānasūtra-laṅkāra, it also suggests that this Yogācāra work was well received within tathāgatagarbha circles and was perceived as being consistent with tathāgatagarbha themes.

This does not mean that tathāgatagarbha is to be reckoned as a defined academic school in contrast to Mādhyamika and Yogācāra. As Takasaki has pointed out, such an evaluation was a peculiarity of Chinese Buddhism and is not found in either India or Tibet. This is further borne out by the complete lack of polemic against tathāgatagarbha teachings in Yogācāra works. Thus, while tathāgatagarbha and Yogācāra did exist at the same time in India, they were not rival systems.

The reason for this seems to be that the tathāgatagarbha tradition did not function on a theoretical, academic level at all, but was rather presented as a practical, religious teaching, expressed in poetic images and metaphors and aimed at the encouragement of practice. In none of the extant tathāgatagarbha texts is there a consistent development of that technical language necessary to a theoretical endeavor.

The foregoing textual data seem to suggest that the initial, pre-Asaṅgan Yogācāra thinkers represent a theoretical development from within the same circles that produced the tathāgatagarbha teaching. They appear to have taken their initial insights from the notion of the pure mind, as in the Mahāyānasūtra-laṅkāra. The exigency for theoretical development demanded a more em-
pirical approach to the analysis of consciousness, as is given in the Samdhinirmocana. The Mahāyānābhidharmasūtra and the Madhyānta-vibhāga then attempt to synthesize both purity and defilement by stressing the basic Yogācāra tenet of the paratantric nature of the mind.38

NOTES


The Chinese translation of Prabhakaramitra, who came to China in 627, contains a preface by Li Pai-yao, which says that Asaṅga compiled the text, but there is no firm evidence to uphold this claim. As the Mahāyānasamgrahasāstra of Asaṅga frequently quotes the Mahāyānasūtrālāṃkāra, it seems safe to conclude that the verse section of the Mahāyānasūtrālāṃkāra was composed before the time of Asaṅga.

2. Lévi, p. 88: yathaiva toye lute prasadite na jayate sa punaracchatañyata/l malāpukarsastu sa tatra kevalaḥ savacitāsvadhu vidhireva eva hi/ matam ca cittaṁ prákṛtiprabhāsvaram sadā taddāgantakadādauṣīlam i na dharmatācittāṃṣte nyacetasaḥ prabhāsvaratam práktīrau vidhāyate.


8. Lévi, p. 65: etena trividham laksanam tathātāyaḥ paridvipaṁ vavalaśaṁ klesaryavatadalakṣaṇamavokalpalakṣaṇam ca utkām trividham laksanaṁ.

9. Lévi p. 58; tatvam yatamatam dvayena rahitam bhārītasesa sammitraśaḥ sakyam naiva ca sarvathābhilapitum yaccāpraṣṭādānām kāryaṃ hantah suśodhyāmamāṇaḥ ya ca prakṛtya matam yaśākāsasurvarnāvārisadṛśo klesāvāśuddhirmatā.
10. See Lévi, p. 58.
16. In his *Sesshin yushiki no kenkyū*, Tokyo, 1956, pp. 168-169, Yūki Reimon argues that one of the specific characteristics of Vasubandhu was that, in contrast to earlier Yogācārins, who maintained the strict purity of the Yogācāra position in their contacts with *tathāgatagarbha* thought, he was influenced by *tathāgatagarbha* thought in a much greater degree. I rather think that, as in the *Mahāyānasūtrālāṃkāra*, *tathāgatagarbha* influence can be seen in the earliest texts of the Yogācāra tradition. This does not negate the fact that Vasubandhu was influenced by such teachings in evolving his "new understanding," but it does stress that there were already precedents available for Vasubandhu to work upon.
17. The *Mahāyānabhidharmasūtra* is extant only in fragments quoted in other texts. These have been collected in Yūki Reimon, *Yuishikiron yori mitaru yuishiki shisōshi*, (Tokyo, 1935), pp. 240-250. Six quotations appear in Aśaṅga's *Mahāyānasamgrahavāstra*, one in his *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, and one in K'uei-chi's *Wēishī hseu-chi*. The text is clearly before Aśaṅga.
20. P. Mdo hgrel LV1, 238b-8, 239a-6.
24. Lamotte's translation correctly does not include this section, which identifies the three dharmas with the *trisvabhāva*, in the quotation from the *Mahāyānabhidharmasūtra*. Yūki Reimon, *Yuishiki shisōshi*, p. 249, argues that the entire passage is from the *Mahāyānabhidharmasūtra*. But, as my friend and colleague, Professor Hakamaya Noriaki, has pointed out to me, the Tibetan text clearly refutes Yūki's interpretation.


30. See Takasaki, Study, pp. 305-306 for the section from the Ratna that treats this issue. Also confer, Keenan, Buddhābhumyupadesa, pp. 97-100.

31. Thus, I agree with the basic idea of E. Frauwallner. “Amalavijnānam und ālayavijnānam. Ein Beitrag zur Erkenntnislehre des Buddhismus,” in Beiträge zur indischen Philologie und Altertumskunde: Walter Schubring zum 70. Geburtstag dargebracht von der deutschen Indologie, (Hamburg, 1951), pp. 148-160, in emphasizing the importance of the question of the purity of the mind, against P. Demiéville, but there seems to be no firm evidence specifically to identify amala with Sthiramati, nor ālaya with Dharmapāla, nor to locate the center of each with respectively Valabhi and Nalanda.


36. Takasaki, Keisei, p. 3.

37. See Keenan, Buddhābhumyupadesa, pp. 96-116.