

# **Buddhist Phenomenology**

**A Philosophical Investigation  
of Yogācāra Buddhism and the  
*Ch'eng Wei-shih lun***

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Vasubandhu phrase used as part of one sentence, and the next phrase of the verse, several sentences later, used as part of that other sentence. In my translation I marked these with ellipses inside square brackets. What occurs in these ellipses may be a short gloss, or an extended discussion drawing on terms or concepts not found in the *Triṃśikā*. I presented the extracted portions attributable directly to the *Triṃśikā*, not the material it is encased in (with a few exceptions that appeared in parentheses).

## Analysis of the Verses

The thirty verses of the *Triṃśikā* can be grouped as follows:

(1) **Verse 1**

Statement of the basic thesis, viz. that what we experience as self and other, me and things, subjective and objective cognitive vectors (*ātman* and *dharmā*), etc., are actually linguistic displacements (*upacāra*) produced by a threefold alteration (*pariṇāma*) of consciousness (*vijñāna*). The Yogācāra theory of Alterity.

(2) **Verses 2-16**

Abhidharmic discussion of the Eight Consciousnesses

(2a) **Verses 2-4<sup>4</sup>**

The ālaya-vijñāna

(2b) **Verses 5-7**

Manas

(2c) **Verses 8-16**

Mano-vijñāna and the pravṛtti-vijñānas

(2c.1) **Verses 8-9**

Mano-vijñāna

(2c.2) **Verses 10-14**

A listing of the caittas, i.e., the General, the Specific, the Advantageous (*kuśāla*), the basic and secondary Mental Disturbances (*kleśa* and *upakleśa*) and the Indeterminate (*aniyata*).<sup>5</sup>

(2c.3) **Verse 15**

The Five Sense-Consciousnesses: They depend on the root consciousness (*mūla-vijñāna* = ālaya-vijñāna), and they sometimes work in tandem, sometimes not

(2c.4) **Verse 16**

Conditions in which mano-vijñāna does or does not occur

(3) **Verses 17-19**

Recasting *pariṇāma* (alterity) in terms of discrimination (*vikalpa*) and karmic conditioning (*vāsanā*, *grāha-grāhya*, *vipāka*, etc.)

(4) **Verses 20-25**

The Three (non-) Self-natures (*tri-[a-]svabhāva*)

(5) **Verses 26-30**

Descriptions of the five stages of realization

Another way of grouping the verses is to graft them onto the Four Noble Truths.

1. The first Noble Truth is a statement of the problem, i.e., the symptoms. For the *Triṃśikā* that would be the *parināma* (alteration) of consciousness into self and dharmas by means of linguistic, conceptual imprecision (*upacāra*). That is the topic of v.1 of the *Triṃśikā*. Self and dharmas are set up in an appropriational economy, which for Yogācāra is the root problem, namely *grāhya-grāhaka*, grasped and grasper.
2. The second Noble Truth is the diagnosis, the reason for the symptoms. Verses 2-16 provide a detailed categorization of the various consciousnesses, their characteristics, in which conditions they cease to operate, and a classificatory discussion based on the Yogācāra abhidharma system. According to Sthiramati and *Ch'eng wei-shih lun*, vs. 1-16 are themselves *upacāra*, imprecise metaphors or metonymies.

Vs. 17-19 recast the issues raised in v. 1 in a different language, one more focused on logic and analysis than on classification. This comes as a sort of philosophical rupture, an intermission in the trajectory of the *Triṃśikā*'s presentation. Listing and sorting items gives way to thinking about the dynamics underlying them: The discriminative process that sorts, the compulsions and proclivities that motivate the discriminations, etc. Sthiramati and Hsüan-tsang call this section the 'proofs' section. Since the portion of the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* dealing with these verses is the most significant philosophically, and the aim of this work is to investigate Yogācāra philosophy, the analysis and discussion of the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* beginning in chapter sixteen will concentrate largely on this section, drawing in other parts of the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* that have bearing on the issues dealt with there.

3. The third Noble Truth offers the prognosis, i.e., a decision about whether what was diagnosed can be cured. The prognosis, according to Buddhism, is good. Vs. 20-25 deal with the trisvabhāva theory. By applying the proper antidotes (*pratipakṣa*), the problem of svabhāva can be emptied when recognized for what it is. In the jargon of trisvabhāva, *pariṇaṣpanna* is the antidote to the *parikalpic* pollution of *paratantra*; *pariṇaṣpanna* empties *parikalpita* from *paratantra*.
4. The fourth Noble Truth is the treatment plan, the prescription. Vs. 26-30 each deal with one of the five stages of Yogācāra practice.

The *Triṃśikā*, and consequently the entire *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* seeks to discuss one thing: *vijñāna-pariṇāma*, the alterity of consciousness.

## Comments on the Verses

### Verse 1

Vasubandhu and Hsüan-tsang both explain that 'due to *upacāra*' the proliferation of alterations of consciousness (*pravṛtti*) occur in the form of 'self' and 'dharma.'

*Upacāra* denotes a linguistic concoction, something which has linguistic, but not actual reality. Hsüan-tsang uses 假說 *chia-shuo* to translate *upacāra*. *Chia-shuo* is more commonly used to translate *prajñapti*. An example Hsüan-tsang gives in the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* of an *upacāra* is the term 'eye-consciousness' (*caḥsur-vijñāna*) for vision. Even though vision as a cognition is something different in kind from the physical eye, it borrows the word 'eye', according to Hsüan-tsang, imprecisely, based on association, and can serve as an understandable metonymy for vision (which in Sanskrit and Buddhist Chinese actually is referred to as 'eye-consciousness'), but should not be taken literally. The implication for this verse is that 'self' and 'dharma' are imprecise metonymies that have, through the constructive force of language (=conceptualization), acquired an erroneous sense of reality. They are metonymies, according to the second half of the verse, for three types of alterations of consciousness (*vijñāna-pariṇāma*), which the subsequent verses will define as the *ālaya-vijñāna*, *manas*, and *mano-vijñāna*.

'Dharma' here does not mean, as some translators have misleadingly suggested, 'things.' Dharma specifically refers to the abhidharmic dharma list. The classic Yogācāra version, enumerated in a text by Vasubandhu titled *The Hundred Dharma Treatise*, consists of one hundred dharmas (see appendix). The *Triṃśikā* lists many of these, but not all one hundred. These dharmas are not things, but factors of experience, from conditions or styles of cognition, to emotions, to factors with positive or negative karmic values, to felt textures framing the way one experiences.

The first thing one notes about Paramārtha's version is that he entirely omits *upacāra*. Also, instead of 'self' (*ātman*) he offers 'sentient beings.' Sentient beings may believe they have a self (at least most humans do), but these terms are hardly synonymous. Vasubandhu and Hsüan-tsang are framing a cognitive, conceptual issue; Paramārtha frames the issue in cosmological terms instead. Paramārtha uses the ambiguous word 為 *wei* which means both 'becomes' as well as 'is deemed,' so that consciousness is either (or both) *deemed* to be sentient beings and dharmas (possibly by some linguistic, conceptual means), or it 'becomes' them.

Hsüan-tsang's version more clearly stipulates that the *upacāras* proliferate through *mutual* interaction (*hsiang-chuan*). For Paramārtha consciousness is a transcendent (rather than transcendental) third term that "turns into" 轉 actual beings and dharmas so that beings and dharmas are treated as dependent by-products of three types of consciousness. The problem does not arise, in his reading, from the way selves and their experience interact, but rather by fiat or a

mere derivative of a bifurcation of consciousness. How or why consciousness should do this becomes a mystery.

Paramārtha uses 轉 *chuan* (revolving) for both *pravartate* and *pariṇāma* (or else he omits *pariṇāma* altogether). Hsüan-tsang uses 變 *pien* for *pariṇāma* and considers *chuan* 轉 (qua *pravartate*) to be a ‘reciprocal’ (相 *hsiang*) interaction between ātman and dharmas that proliferates an upacāric world.

Paramārtha talks about a threefold “subjective-condition” (能緣 *neng-yüan*). For Paramārtha there are basically two types of *chuan*: i. *chuan* as sentient beings and *chuan* as dharmas. Of these it is the ‘subjective conditions’ (*neng-yüan*) that are threefold. Hsüan-tsang draws a subjective-objective or active-passive pole by differentiating 能變 *neng-pien* (active, subjective alterations, the alterer) from 所變 *so-pien* (所變 what is altered).

## Verse 2

This verse begins the abhidharmic classification of the eight consciousnesses. The *Triṃśikā* at first characterizes the three main consciousnesses—*ālaya-vijñāna*, *manas*, and *mano-vijñāna*—by their definitive characteristics.

Paramārtha has basically ignored the semantic interpretations offered by the *Triṃśikā* for the eighth, seventh, and sixth consciousnesses, and substituted his own, albeit with common glosses. “Fruit-recompense” is appropriate for *vipāka*, but the *Triṃśikā* defines the seventh consciousness (*manas*) as (as Robinson puts it) “mentation” (*mananāca*), while Paramārtha substitutes the common characterization of it as *ādāna-vijñāna* (attachment consciousness). Hsüan-tsang renders ‘mentation’ as *ssu-liang* which can be translated literally (as I have done in the main text) “willing and deliberating,” or more loosely as “intellection” or “cogitating.” Hence Paramārtha treats *manas* as “attachment consciousness,” while Hsüan-tsang and the *Triṃśikā* define it as “mentation.” While the *Triṃśikā* defines the sixth consciousness (or possibly the six consciousnesses) as discerning (*vijñapti*) cognitive-objects (*viśaya*), Paramārtha substitutes “dust consciousness,” completely ignoring the use of *vijñapti* in this context. “Dust” is a common euphemism for sense-objects in Buddhist and Chinese literature, originally signifying the billowing dust of the bustling marketplace, i.e., being encompassed by the realm of mundane concerns that obstruct one’s vision of things as they are.

## Verse 3

For the Sanskrit *asamvid...vijñaptikam* Paramārtha offers “cannot be discriminated” (*pu-k’e fen-pieh*) and Hsüan-tsang has “unknowable... discerns” (*pu-k’e chih... liao*). Neither clearly indicates the presence of the term *vijñapti* in the Sanskrit. It becomes “discrimination” (*fen-pieh*) in Paramārtha’s version, and “discerning” (*liao*) in Hsüan-tsang’s. *Upadhi*, *sthāna*, *vijñapti* are lumped together by Paramārtha as “characteristics and sense-objects.” Paramārtha also reverses the order of *saṃjñā* (associative-thinking) and *cetanā* (volition).

*Asamviditak-* means ‘imperceptibility’ or ‘not discerned consciously.’ Hsüan-tsang’s *pu-k’e chih*, while capable of being read in the same way, more

strongly implies an utter “unknowability.” While Vasubandhu’s phrase seems only to be claiming that the *ālaya-vijñāna* operates subconsciously, Hsüan-tsang’s phrase suggests that it cannot (*pu k’e*) be known at all. Hsüan-tsang may have been influenced in this by Paramārtha, for whom the sort of cognitions the *ālaya-vijñāna* has—if any—lack sense-objects and distinguishing characteristics. Paramārtha will return to this theme of undifferentiated awareness in vs. 18 and 28-29. His is not an obvious interpretation of the *Triṃśikā* and thus represents Paramārtha’s own ideology. Significantly, even though Hsüan-tsang follows him here somewhat—including using the implications of this verse to determine that the *ālaya-vijñāna* is not directly cognizable as an object but can be known through inference because of its effects—he rejects Paramārtha’s version of undifferentiated pure consciousness emerging at the fulfillment of the path.

The issue of how something sub-conscious can be brought into consciousness goes to the heart of the Yogācāra problematic. Buddhism in fact is compelled to develop a vocabulary that describes modalities of ‘knowing’ (*jñāna*) which are not within the closure of consciousness (such as *nirvikalpa-jñāna*, *prajñā*, etc.).

None of the translations—neither Robinson’s nor the Chinese versions—preserves clearly the threefold structure of the *ālaya-vijñāna* in this verse.

Nonetheless, analyzed carefully, Hsüan-tsang’s Chinese rendition contains fundamental clues for determining what the upper three *vijñānas*, viz. [1] *ālaya-vijñāna*, [2] *manas*, and [3] *mano-vijñāna*, mean. In verse 2 they are described as:

- [1] varyingly maturing (*vipāka*),
- [2] thinking and deliberating (*mananāca*), and
- [3] discerning and distinguishing sense-objects (*vijñapti*, 了別 *liao-pieh*), respectively.

In this verse, they are described as:

- [1] grasping and ‘feeling’ things (*upadhi* 執受, *chih-shou*),
- [2] locus (*sthāna* 處, *ch’u*), and
- [3] discerning (*vijñaptika* 了, *liao*), respectively

with the point being that all three operate within *ālaya-vijñāna*, but subconsciously.

To gloss:

- [1] *ālaya-vijñāna* ‘holds’ experience,
- [2] *manas* localizes experience through thinking, and
- [3] *mano-vijñāna* is the discriminating discernment of sense objects (*viśaya*).

Connecting *manas* with localization is interesting since *manas* is also associated with self-interest, selfishness, arrogance, etc., all of which can phenomenologically derive from experiencing oneself as the center of the world,

and identifying oneself as the *place* at the center of *my* experience. This makes all experience, and the world that appears in it, *my* world, *my* experience.

Note that in the Sanskrit the term *viññapti* has been twice explicitly identified as a synonym for *mano-viññāna*. Paramārtha's version provides no indication whatsoever that the term *viññapti* plays a role here, much less what that role is. Hsüan-tsang uses two distinct terms for *viññapti*—*liao-pieh* and *liao*—which both use *liao* (discern, understand). However neither term has any obvious connection with *shih* 識, which Hsüan-tsang uses for *viññāna* as well as *viññapti* (elsewhere). Hence the close etymological link between *viññāna* and *viññapti* becomes an identity when *shih* is used, an identity that doesn't allow any differentiation between them, while *liao* and *liao-pieh* remain entirely distinct from *shih* and provide no hint that one term, *viññapti*, lies behind all three. Additionally, when speaking about *viññapti-rūpa* and *aviññapti-rūpa*, Hsüan-tsang uses 差別 *ch'a-pieh* for *viññapti*, again preventing a Chinese reader from recognizing the terminological connection. The semantic range of *viññapti* is lost in Paramārtha's text, while diffused and diluted in Hsüan-tsang's.

#### Verse 4

Paramārtha omits the term *anivṛta* (covered by obstructions). By this omission Paramārtha remains silent on whether the *ālaya-viññāna* has *āvaraṇas* (karmic obstructions) or not. Hsüan-tsang correctly translates that it doesn't. Possibly Paramārtha's stance on the question of whether the *ālaya-viññāna* is impure or not, which was a hot topic of debate in China in the sixth century when he was there, colored his translations. Paramārtha held that the *ālaya-viññāna* was impure and needed to be superseded by a ninth consciousness, a "pure" consciousness. Conceding that the *ālaya-viññāna* was *anivṛta* might have complicated his position.

The Sanskrit and Hsüan-tsang speak of the *ālaya-viññāna* as a torrential waterflow, an allusion to a perduring continuity that from instant to instant reconstitutes its identity, thus never retaining a single, self-same identity. Paramārtha substitutes an allusion to waves, an image found in many Buddhist texts. The wave metaphor is a famous feature of *The Awakening of Faith*, a text whose "translation" is attributed to Paramārtha, though current scholarship is virtually unanimous in holding it to be a Chinese creation with no Indian counterpart. The *Awakening of Faith's* wave metaphor holds that ignorance is like wind creating waves on the surface of the sea that may obscure the water's true nature of "wetness" (i.e., "original enlightenment"); when the sea becomes calm, its true nature is revealed, though it was always present. The waves also signify the mind is "moved" by adventitious conditions and ignorance, i.e., waves of thought arising and ceasing due to the winds of ignorance. This "original nature" or "original enlightenment" theory became dominant in East Asian Buddhism, but is not part of the thinking of the *Triṃśikā* and was opposed (along with the tathāgatagarbha thought that accompanied it) by Hsüan-tsang. The *Triṃśikā* does employ an image of waves later in v. 15, but there as well Paramārtha seems to be rewriting the image for a different agenda.

*Wu chi*, lit. 'non-recording,' i.e., morally neutral. 'Non-covered' (*wu-fu*) means not obstructed or impeded by the two *āvaraṇas*, viz. cognitive obstruction and affective obstruction. 'Non-recording' means that even though the *ālaya-vijñāna* is produced by karma, it does not itself produce further karma. This is derived from the Abhidhammic notion that *vipāka*, or the fruition of prior karma, is itself karmically neutral. Were it not, karma would become hard determinism since, for instance, bad karma would perpetuate itself endlessly. The analogy of a tape-deck can illustrate this. A previously recorded tape can now play back what was recorded before without at the same time re-recording any new material, i.e., making new recordings and registering new impressions. Hence, though playing something recorded previously, it is now 'non-recording.' Liberation would mean to erase the tape, i.e., put the *ālaya-vijñāna* out of commission (*vyavṛti*).

That the *ālaya-vijñāna* was defined as (1) the conveyor of karmic seeds such that its constitution is nothing but karmic continuity and process, while (2) nonetheless it was considered in itself karmically 'neutral,' led in part to the Chinese controversies over the 'nature' of the *ālaya*: Was it pure and unending or tainted and hence to be superseded by a ninth *vijñāna* which would be pure, etc.? According to the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* and numerous other Yogācāra texts the *ālaya-vijñāna* holds the karmically contaminated seeds until they are ready to sprout, but it does not become contaminated itself. It performs its functions ineluctably, mechanically, and with utter karmic neutrality.

### Verse 5

While the Sanskrit might be understood to claim that objective conditions (*ālambana*) 'develop' or 'come to operate' (*pravartate*) out of the *ālaya-vijñāna*, Hsüan-tsang's version can be understood (and I have so translated it) to be claiming that the objective conditions are in fact objectifications of the *ālaya-vijñāna* itself, objectifications produced through a process of 'turning around' (*chuan*), i.e., "reversing" the cognitive process such that, on the one hand, the object-supports (*ālambana*) are perceived as if independent of the *ālaya-vijñāna* which conditions all such cognitions, and, on the other hand, though the *ālambana* are displays of the *ālaya-vijñāna*, they shield the *ālaya-vijñāna* from being an object of direct cognition since one perceives the *ālambana* and not the *ālaya-vijñāna* in itself. In this reading *pravartate* would then refer to mistaking *interpretations* of *ālaya-vijñāna* for 'reality'; hence the *āśraya-parāvṛtti* ('turning around of the basis'), which in Yogācāra thought signifies the radical psycho-cognitive change characteristic of Awakening, would actually be an un-reversal, a removal of the interpretive projections that have been mistakenly taken for naive-realist or metaphysical grounds. *Chuan* (*pravṛtti*, *pravartate*, 流轉 *liu chuan*) is *chuan*-ed (*parāvṛtti*, 轉依 *chuan-yi*).

Paramārtha offers a somewhat inexplicable reading: he claims that objective-conditions (*ālambana*) are the conditions by which the *manas* arises, i.e., the arising of *manas* is precisely the forming of attachments to objective-conditions. This is inexplicable because Paramārtha has not explained where



these so-called objective-conditions have come from, nor in what manner or by what they have been cognized. For the *ālaya-vijñāna* to be dependent on objective-conditions, they must have originated independently of it.

### Verse 7

Vasubandhu gives the three cases in which there is no *manas*. The first is the extinction of *kleśāvaraṇa*, which defines (according to Sthiramati and the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun*) the achievement of Awakening for the 'Hīnayānic' practitioner, viz. the arhat.

The second is *nirodha-samāpatti*, the meditative attainment of cessation, which was thoroughly discussed in chapter seven, above. For Vasubandhu and Hsüan-tsang *nirodha-samāpatti* entails the absence of *manas*; *āsaṃjñī-samāpatti* suppresses *mano-vijñāna*, but not *manas*. Paramārtha says "(manas) ceases completely upon entering the *acitta-samāpatti*." Since *acitta-samāpatti* (*wu-hsin-ting*) usually includes both *nirodha-* and *āsaṃjñī-samāpatti*, Paramārtha seems to be diverging from Vasubandhu (and Hsüan-tsang) by including the *āsaṃjñī-samāpatti* in this verse. Vasubandhu and Hsüan-tsang reserve *āsaṃjñī-samāpatti* for v. 16 which lists the conditions under which *mano-vijñāna* ceases. See comments on v. 16, below.

The third, which is beyond the *ārūpya-dhātu* and hence *lokuttara*, i.e., "beyond the 'three worlds'" (viz. the worlds of desire, form, and formless), can be understood to signal a breaking out from the karmic closure. What exactly constitutes *lokuttara* is defined differently in different texts, but it plays an important role in Abhidharmic, Prajñāpāramitā, and Yogācāra literature. Some texts say that up to the eighth bhūmi (Bodhisattva stages) one is on the *lokiya* (mundane) path (*mārga*), while beyond the eighth, one practices the *lokuttara* (supra-mundane) *mārga*.

### Verse 8

This verse begins a discussion of the sixth consciousness, the *mano-vijñāna*. The *kuśala* (advantageous) group of the 100 Dharmas (#19-29) and its opposites are associated with this *vijñāna*. To summarize the basic classification so far:

- 1) *ālaya-vijñāna* is non-covered and karmically neutral ('non-recording');
- 2) *manas* is covered but karmically neutral;
- 3) *mano-vijñāna* can be either karmically advantageous, disadvantageous, or neutral.

What this apparently means is that although all three are karmically derived, *ālaya-vijñāna* is a neutral embodiment of karmic seeds, from which, within its own perspective, it remains detached (and hence offers the conditions by which one can become detached from one's karmic stream). Although *manas* is a product of negative karma ('covered'), it produces no negative karma by itself—or put another way, though its operations establish the conditions for the production of negative karma, in themselves the operations are neutral. *Mano-vijñāna* has the capacity to produce either positive, negative, or neutral karmic effects.

The ālaya-vijñāna was characterized as having only neutral vedanā. In the description of Manas, no mention of vedanā was made at all. Polarized vedanā, i.e., the bifurcating tension of conditioning/conditioned experience qua pain and pleasure, only operates in the mano-vijñāna, and by implication, in the five sensory consciousnesses which are part of its domain.

What is interesting and problematic so far is that manas, though separate from the karmic problems of conditioning, and thus logically and psychologically prior to karmic experience (kuśala, akuśala, etc.), nonetheless is karmically 'covered' (*nivṛta*, *fu*) and associated with kleśa, or, as Sthiramati writes, it is *kliṣṭamanas* ('defiled-manas'). This gives kleśa—as an abstraction—primacy over karmic conditioning understood as pain/pleasure conditioning. In fact, kleśa becomes a necessary condition for such conditioning. This reinforces that the notion of *kleśa* has replaced the notion of *āśava* expounded in the earlier Theravāda texts. This means that the definition of karmic conditioning as understood in previous schools of Buddhism, and as formalized in the pratīya-samutpāda model, underwent a serious re-evaluation leading to an investigation of the sources and origins of karmic conditioning beyond vedanic (pain/pleasure) conditioning. One result is that the status of the *bījā* ('seeds') in the ālaya-vijñāna becomes a crucial issue—do they precede the consciousness-stream (are they beginningless?) or are they produced through the stream's experiences. These abstracted issues defer investigation away from empirical experience and onto the ālaya-vijñāna, which becomes simultaneously a singular, personal consciousness stream (*saṁtāna*) and an intersubjective stream undergoing continuous rebirth. *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* addresses this most directly during its discussion of seeds and vāsanās. See comments to v. 19 below.

**Verses 9-14** enumerate dharmas from the Abhidharma list. See Appendix 1. The basic caitta categories are:

General: These caittas are always involved in every cognitive act.

Specific: These only occur in certain cognitions.

Advantageous: These are associated with positive karmic results

Mental Problems (*kleśa*): These are roots of negative karma

Secondary Mental Problems: These are components of negative karma secondary to Mental Problems

Indeterminate: For instance, initial mental application could be kuśala if applied to the right object, but conducive to negative karma if focused on a detrimental object.

#### **Verse 14**

Indeterminate, i.e., karmically indeterminate, does not mean that these dharmas cannot have karmic significance, but only that their significance is not determined by these dharmas themselves, but rather by their circumstances. They are neither advantageous (*kuśala*) nor disadvantageous (*akuśala* or *kleśa*) in and of themselves; rather their karmic value must be judged contextually,

i.e., by things or situations other than themselves. *Middha* (ch: *mien*), 'torpor,' is karmically neutral since drowsiness or tiredness may be either beneficial (e.g., when rest is needed in order to recover from an illness) or non-beneficial (e.g. when alertness is required, such as while driving). Simply put, torpor is not in itself good or bad. Its value in any situation must be judged by context. Likewise for the other three Indeterminates.

It should be noted that 'sloth' and 'torpor' were not always considered indeterminate in Buddhism. In the Pāli Abhidhamma, 'sloth and torpor' (*thīnamiddha*) were initially considered a single term but later were distinguished from each other. More importantly this term was part of the list of the Five Basic Obstructions (*pañcanīvaraṇā*), and thus negative. The five are: (1) *kāmacchanda* (eros), (2) *byāpāda* (resentment), (3) *thīnamiddha* (sloth and torpor), (4) *uddaccakukkucca* (restlessness and worry), and (5) *vicikicchā* (doubt).<sup>6</sup>

### Verse 15

Here we have a wave metaphor. The analogy of mind:thoughts::water:waves already occurs in the Pāli Nikāyas.<sup>7</sup> The wave metaphor in the *Awakening of Faith* is probably the most famous example in East Asian Buddhist literature. However, Sthiramati is probably right when he writes that Vasubandhu had in mind the wave analogy from the *Sāṅghinirmocana-sūtra* (5.5).

The *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* in fact says of this line only the following:

The so-called five consciousnesses, [in reference to the] body, internally they depend on the root consciousness; externally they accord with 'attention' [lit. 'what is intended'; *manaskāra*], 'the five sense organs,' 'sense-objects' [*viśaya*], etc.; all these various conditions intermix and coalesce in the space one projects before oneself [*chung yüan ho-ho fang te hsien ch'ien* 眾緣和合方得現前].

Dependent on these [conditions], sometimes (the five) arise together, sometimes not together, because the coalescing with external conditions may be sudden or gradual. Like water and waves, 'according to varying conditions' [*sui-yüan*] (there may be) many or few. This and similar analogies are explained in the [*Sāṅghinirmocana*] *sūtra*.

Kochumuttom has this to say on Sthiramati's technical discussion of this verse:

If sense-consciousness is the result of the co-operation of sense, object and consciousness, how can it still be called a transformation of consciousness (*vijñāna-pariṇāma*)? ...Waves arise on water only under certain atmospheric conditions. In other words, the arising of waves depends not only on water but also on the atmospheric conditions. But, that the waves arise depending on the atmospheric conditions, does not make it impossible to say that those waves are just modifications (*pariṇāma*) of water on which they arise. Similarly, consciousness depending on certain factors such as sense-organ and object, transforms itself into sense-consciousness. However, that the sense-organ and object co-operate with the consciousness in producing the sense-consciousness,

does not in any way contradict the fact that the latter is a transformation of consciousness.

Sthiramati, too, finds it necessary to refer to objects (*ālambana*) for adequately explaining the emergence of sense-consciousness. According to him the point of comparison between ‘five sense-consciousnesses on *mūla-vijñāna*’ and ‘waves on water’ is that just as waves can together or separately arise on the same water, so the five sense-consciousnesses can arise together or separately on/from the same *mūla-vijñāna*. There are two kinds of causes at work in both cases: antecedent causes (*samanantara-pratyaya*) and objective causes (*ālambana-pratyaya*). The former of these, for example, water or *mūla-vijñāna*, remaining always the same, the latter keeps changing. It is according to the number and nature of the [objective] causes available (*yathā-pratyayam*) [*Yathā-pratyayam-udbhavaḥ iti yasya yasya yaḥ pratyayaḥ sannihitas-tasya tasya niyamena-udbhavaḥ ātma-lābhaḥ*], that waves or sense-consciousness arise together or separately. By the objective cause (*ālambana-pratyaya*) of any consciousness is meant the object of that consciousness. But in the case of sense-consciousness it has got to be external objects, not the so-called internal objects such as seeds (*bīja*) left behind in the *ālaya-vijñāna* by past experiences, *saṃskāras* and *vāsanās*. For, while those internal objects remain always the same, the external objects can keep changing from time to time, and from place to place, and thus can provide for different and multiple-sense-consciousnesses... (pp. 142-144)

I’m not sure that Kochumuttom has sufficiently understood Sthiramati’s point. Kochumuttom’s attempt to explain embodied-conditioning as constant while external objects are variable is highly problematic from a Yogācāric viewpoint.

Anacker offers the following note on this line:

The multiplicity of waves in water depends on the force of the prior agitation of water: in the same way the extent to which the evolving consciousnesses occur depends on the force of prior agitation in the citta-series. (pp. 189f n. 7)

Paramārtha sharply differentiates the sea from the waves, emphasizing the *underlying unity* of the different consciousnesses, rather than accepting that sometimes they work in tandem, and sometimes they don’t. He presses as hard as he can for the primacy of unity. Vasubandhu and Hsüan-tsang seem more interested in the six senses themselves, while Paramārtha keeps his focus on the three parināmas, which he uses in part to ‘unify’ the senses. An underlying unity in consciousness is not a requisite for Vasubandhu or Hsüan-tsang, especially not in terms of the five senses. Even the wave metaphor is made to champion the idea of a unitive base by Paramārtha,

Vasubandhu’s original point may simply be the same as what, in general, *the Awakening of Faith* states. Waves (sensory experience) arise on water (deep mind) due to the interplay of conditions (*Awakening of Faith* identifies ‘wind’ with *avidyā*); they are the perceptible surgings of what lies beneath them.

This verse lists the conditions in which *mano-vijñāna* ceases. Each of the three versions gives a different list. *Paramārtha*, for instance, omits *nirodha-samāpatti*, but adds 'the moment before death.' *Hsüan-tsang* pushes *acitta* to near the top of the list (otherwise following *Vasubandhu*'s order). As we saw in the earlier chapter on *nirodha-samāpatti*, which included part of the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun*'s discussion of this verse, *Hsüan-tsang* is at pains to argue that the *acitta* mentioned in this verse does not involve the absence of the *ālaya-vijñāna* (*citta* is often a synonym for the *ālaya*), since his theory of *ālaya-vijñāna* requires that it still operate during the *samāpattis*. The following chart shows the differences in the respective lists of each text.

CONDITIONS IN WHICH MANO-VIJÑĀNA CEASES

Vasubandhu	Paramārtha	Hsüan-tsang
1. <i>asaṃjñi</i>	<i>asaṃjñi-deva</i> (mindless gods)	<i>asaṃjñi-deva</i>
2. <i>samāpattis</i> ( <i>asaṃjñi</i> )	<i>asaṃjñi-samāpatti</i>	<i>acitta</i>
3. " ( <i>nirodha</i> )	dreamless sleep	<i>asaṃjñi-samāpatti</i>
4. deep sleep	drunken stupor	<i>nirodha-samāpatti</i>
5. fainting (stupor)	when the mind is cut off ( <i>acitta</i> )	sleep
6. no awareness ( <i>acitta</i> )	moment before death	total unconsciousness

Let me summarize some of the points covered so far:

The operations of *vijñāna-pariṇāma* (the alterity of consciousness) are described in a tripartite manner. This following simplified schematic gives the basic relations between these three operations of consciousness as described in verses 1-16. Verses 17-20 clarify these distinctions and introduce the term *vijñapti-mātra*. Verses 20-24 will redescribe these operations in terms of the *tri-svabhāva* theory. Verses 25-30 will then give an account of the soteric resolution of the psycho-sophical closure.

Ālaya-vijñāna	Manas	Mano-vijñāna
differently maturing <i>vipāka</i>	willing and deliberating <i>mananākyaśca</i>	discerning objects <i>vijñaptir-viśayaya</i>
appropriating <i>upadhi</i>	localizing <i>sthāna</i>	discerning <i>vijñapti</i>
non-covered <i>anivṛta</i>	non-covered <i>anivṛta</i>	apprehending objects <i>viśayasya- upalabdhi</i>
karmically indeterminate <i>avyakṛtam</i>	karmically indeterminate <i>avyakṛtam</i>	either kuśala, akuśala, or indeterminate
neutral[ized] pleasure- pain <i>upekṣa-vedanā</i>	—————	pleasure-pain- neutral <i>tri-vedanā</i>
<b>ceases in:</b> arhathood          <i>arhattva</i>	<b>ceases in:</b> arhat, nirodha- samāpatti, Supramundane Path          <i>arhat, nirodha- samāpatti, lokuttara- mārga</i>	<b>ceases in:</b> asaṃjñi-denizen, the two samāpattis, sleep, total unconsciousness <i>asaṃjñika, samāpatti-dvaya, acittikā, mūrchā</i>
<b>caittas</b> #9-13, but only neutral <i>vedanā</i>	<b>caittas</b> #30-35, 9-etc.	<b>caittas</b> #9-13, 14-18, 30- 35, 36-55, 56-59

### Verse 17

Since this verse will be discussed in some detail in Part V, chapter 16, only a few comments will be offered here. First, while Robinson translates *vikalpa* and its derivatives in this verse as ‘imagination,’ the more common translation is ‘discrimination.’ The Chinese for *vikalpo yad vikalpyate* (discrimination and what is discriminated), used by both Paramārtha and Hsüan-tsang, is 分別 *fen-pieh* and 所分別 *so-fen-pieh*, respectively. Already in early Chinese texts, such as the *Chuang Tzu*, *fen-pieh* meant to discriminate, to cut apart (both *fen* and *pieh* contain the ‘knife’ radical).

The verse says that all sorts of things are discriminated by acts of consciousness; these things have no existence apart from those acts: Hence they ‘all belong to vijñapti-mātra’ (*sarvam vijñapti-mātrakam*). Paramārtha will continue to stress the distinction between discrimination and what is discriminated in the following verses, retaining the terms *fen-pieh* and *so-fen-pieh*, while Hsüan-tsang will use a different term than *fen-pieh* to represent *parikalpita*. See v. 19.

## Verse 18

Here Robinson and Paramārtha seem to be on the same wavelength, while Hsüan-tsang (and arguably Vasubandhu) see things differently. For Robinson and Paramārtha, consciousness is the seed of everything, or all dharmas (these are not necessarily the same thing). For Hsüan-tsang, this verse is only talking about the 'all-seeds-consciousness'—a euphemism for the *ālaya-vijñāna*—not about the seed of everything. For Hsüan-tsang the deployment of seeds by the *ālaya-vijñāna* is responsible for *discrimination*, not for that upon which discrimination acts.

To complicate matters, Anacker, who consulted the Tibetan as well as Sanskrit text, renders this line: "Consciousness is only all the seeds..." which limits, rather than unleashes the parameters of consciousness. Kochumuttom, working only from the Sanskrit, offers the neutral phrase "the consciousness contains all seeds..." Since *sarva* (all) modifies seeds (*sarva-bījam*) and not dharmas or things (neither term occurs in Sanskrit), Paramārtha and Robinson have taken some interpretive liberty with the text. Robinson's rendition sounds like idealism; but it does so by saying something the text doesn't say. Paramārtha's rendition might be idealist if all that exists are dharmas, or the dharmas that emerge from the *ālaya-vijñāna*'s seeds are the only kinds of dharmas. But Hsüan-tsang (and Vasubandhu) are talking about mental closure, not the ontological composition of the universe.

Paramārtha and Hsüan-tsang both offer interesting interpretive readings of Vasubandhu's "mutual influence" (*yāti-anyonya-vaśād...*). Paramārtha not only turns it into "constructing and revolving" (*chao-tso hui-chuan*), but adds what is constructed by the 'revolutions,' viz. 'self and other.' Hsüan-tsang renders 'mutual influence' with *chan-chuan li*, which can mean 'reciprocal, mutual,' but also strongly implies the unfolding of a sequential order. Paramārtha and Hsüan-tsang both use *chuan* 轉, which implies 'revolving, turning around.' Paramārtha reinforces that sense forcefully with the compound *hui-chuan* 迴轉, since *hui* also means 'to spin around, revolve, rotate.' See comments to v. 1 above on *chuan*.

If read in the tripartite manner laid out in the second chart under v. 16 above, this verse might be read as saying: (1) *ālaya-vijñāna* is the all-seeds consciousness (2a) which, as viewed by *manas*, is subject to perpetual active alterations, (2b) while, if *manas* 'turns around' to look at the *mano-vijñāna* and the sensorium, the *ālaya-vijñāna* unfolds its operating force, until (3) *mano-vijñāna* discriminates that from that.

If this reading is correct, then *vikalpa* (discrimination) is synonymous with *vijñapti* as the latter term functioned in earlier verses, that is, as the basic activity of *mano-vijñāna*. As the chart above makes clear, for Vasubandhu *mano-vijñāna* best exemplified the term *vijñapti*—a fact completely lost in the Chinese versions. This being the case, *vijñapti-mātra*, far from meaning 'true cognition' or 'consciousness is real' or some such valorizing affirmation, would simply mean consciousness-experience is nothing but [false] discriminations, imaginings.

Kochumuttom gives the following account of Sthiramati's interpretation:

According to Sthiramati this stanza says how the various kinds of subject-object distinctions in the absence of any extra-mental means comes to actuality from *ālaya-vijñāna*, which is itself without a basis...by referring to the context in which the subject-object distinctions arise, namely the interaction between *ālaya-vijñāna* and *pravṛtti-vijñāna*. "The consciousness that contains all seeds" is obviously *ālaya-vijñāna*; and "its such and such transformations" refer to *pravṛtti-vijñāna*. The latter keep arising by the mutual influence of itself and *ālaya-vijñāna*. This statement might sound [like] a vicious cycle. But the point is that the actual origination of *pravṛtti-vijñāna* is occasioned by the coming-together (*sannipāta = sparśa*) of *indriya*, *viśaya* and *vijñāna*.... (p.148)

In other words, *pravṛtti-vijñāna* arises from the confluence of sense-organs (*indriya*), sense-objects (*viśaya*) and their respective types of consciousnesses. The point of this interpretation, then, would be to indicate that this confluence is not a mere mechanical sensation, with consciousness merely a byproduct. Rather the confluence, as experienced in consciousness, is itself infused and deeply influenced by prior experiences ("seeds") retained and deployed by the *ālaya-vijñāna*.

### Verse 19

Kochumuttom's commentary on this verse goes right to the point:

*Vipāka*...[i.e., the *ālaya*]...gets exhausted (*kṣīṇa*) in the course of time. But it continues to exist, so to say, through the *vāsanās* (habit-energies) left behind by the deeds (*karma*) it promoted, and by the *grāha-dvaya* (the twofold grasping) it exercised. *Vāsanās* are the impressions or habits, or characters, or traces, or habit-energies, left behind by past experiences. They are also capable (*samartha*) of producing future experiences. They are like seeds (*bījas*) which are produced by trees, and are also capable of producing future trees. For Sthiramati *vāsanā* means ability (*sāmarthyam*).

There are two factors that produce *vāsanās*, namely *karma* (deed) and *grāha-dvaya* (the twofold grasping). Of them *grāha-dvaya* means the idiosyncrasy for subjectivity and objectivity. 'The two graspings are (i) the grasping of the graspable, and (ii) the grasping of the grasper. Among them the grasping of the graspable is the belief that there are graspables independent of consciousness, although in fact they are what the stream of consciousness projects itself. The belief that such graspables are apprehended or known or grasped by the consciousness is the grasping of the grasper. And the habit-energies of the twofold grasping are the seeds, which being produced by the earlier graspings of graspable and grasper, are now capable [of] engendering fresh graspings of graspable and grasper of the same kind.' [Sthiramati: *Grāha-dvayam. Grāhyo-grāho grāhaka-grāhaś-ca. Tatra vijñānāt-pṛthag-eva sva-santāna-adhyāsitam grāhyam-asti-iti-adhyavasāyo grāhya-grāhaḥ. Tac-ca vijñānena pratiyate vijñāyate grhyate iti yo'yam niścayaḥ sa grāhaka-grāhaḥ. Purvotpanna grāhya-grāhaka-grāha-ākṣiptam-anāgata-taj-jātīya-grāhaka-grāha utpatti bijam grāha-*



*dvaya-vāsanā*]...What particularly interests me at this point is Vasubandhu's suggestion that the habit-energies of karma can produce the next *ālaya-vijñāna* only in collaboration (*saha*) with the habit-energies of the twofold grasping...This implies that the continuity of *ālaya-vijñāna* and of the consequent *saṃsāric* existence depends decisively on the subject-object idiosyncrasy. Therefore no wonder that Vasubandhu is advocating its eradication as the means of attaining *nirvāṇa*. (p.150f )

Paramārtha provides a complicated (and somewhat confusing) discussion of this verse in the *Chuan-shih lun*, involving categorizing things in terms of *saṃvṛti* vs. *paramārtha* distinctions,<sup>8</sup> *neng-so* distinctions (active/passive, subjective/objective), discrimination nature (i.e., *parikalpa*) and dependent on others nature (*paratantra*), *kleśas*, objects and consciousness, *vāsanās* from past karma and attachments to those *vāsanās*, and so on. He basically asserts that past impressions (*vāsanās*) are the *kleśas* that project the objects we attach to. Cf. comments to v. 8 above.

### Verse 20

This verse again uses grammatically differentiated forms of the word *vikalpa*: *vikalpena* and *vikalpyate*. Related to other terms derived from  $\sqrt{k}lp$ —e.g., *kalpanā* ('imagination,' 'mental construction,' 'theoretical proposal'), *saṃkalpa* ('totally imagined'), *vikalpa* ('discrimination,' 'making false distinctions'), and *parikalpita*—they mean 'what is discriminated' and 'what discriminates.' *Pien-chi* is Hsüan-tsang's translation for both *vikalpena* and *vikalpyate*. He also uses *pien-chi* as the short version of *parikalpita*. Paramārtha continues to employ the *fen-pieh* and *so-fen-pieh* distinction that he has already entrenched in the *Chuan-shih lun*.

This verse concerns *parikalpita-svabhāva* so Hsüan-tsang is trying to indicate the etymological affinities between *pari-kalp-ita*, *vi-kalp-ena* and *vi-kalp-yate*.

Paramārtha indicates the affinity between the three terms by retaining *fen-pieh* throughout. For him, *parikalpita* is discrimination nature, which discriminates and then divides up the discriminations into types. For him the sheer act of discrimination is sufficient to render *parikalpita* a problem. According to Paramārtha's understanding of the first line of the *Triṃśikā*, the discrimination of consciousness into two types set all the problems in motion. This is a somewhat unsophisticated approach by *Yogācāra* standards.

In the *trisvabhāva* (three self-natures) scheme *parikalpita* signifies the delusional *svabhāva*. The *trisvabhāva* scheme, whose earliest textual appearance seems to be the *Saṅghinirmocana-sūtra*, came to be considered a fundamental *Yogācāra* doctrine. It receives significant treatment in the works of Asaṅga (e.g., the *Mahāyānasamgraha* or *She-lun*), Vasubandhu (who also devoted an entire text to it, viz. *Trisvabhāva-nirdeśa*), as well as basic *Mahāyāna* texts such as the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*, etc.

Hsüan-tsang's rendering of *parikalpita* literally reads *pien* ('everywhere,' 'generally,' 'universally') + *chi* ('calculate,' 'plan,' 'scheme'). Other Chinese translators had sometimes rendered *parikalpita* as *wang-chi* 妄計 ('erroneous

calculation'). The 'long-form' in Hsüan-tsang's Chinese for parikalpita is *pien-chi-so-chih* 遍計所執 (being attached to what is schematized everywhere). Hsüan-tsang's term implies that this 'erroneous discrimination' applies itself everywhere as a mental elaboration or as a determinative cognitive grid. It is not simply that one discriminates, or allows one's imaginative constructions to pervade one's experience. One becomes deeply attached (*so-chih*) to these constructions. In other words, parikalpita constitutes a cognitive closure that intrudes into the very process of knowing/perceiving one's self and the world, or anything in cognition. In fact, since parikalpita's basic assumption is that whatever it discriminates has substantialistic existence (*svabhāva*), it basically functions as that which 'discriminates' the world into 'self' and 'perceived components,' i.e., *ātman* and *dharma*s. What renders parikalpita erroneous is not simply the fact that it discriminates, but more importantly, that these discriminations instigate and fuel attachment to 'self' and 'dharmas.'

My term 'schema-tize' is an attempt to preserve the calculative, plotting, scheming aspects of the Chinese *chi*. However this should not be misunderstood to imply that parikalpita is always a deliberate, consciously exercised activity. The 'schemata' may be entirely presuppositional, unconscious, and yet play out as a 'rationalized,' (previously) elaborated grid that comes to be applied piecemeal by an agent who is unaware of its 'karmic' (i.e., conditioned) origins. It might also be rendered as 'rationalizations projected everywhere,' but that could be misconstrued to imply that the process is more consciously constructed than the Buddhists intend. While 'rationalizing'—both in the psychological sense and as the activity of utilizing *ratio* (reason) to construct intricate logical 'rationalizations' (*dr̥ṣṭi*)—is included in the notion of parikalpita, the term carries a much wider scope, virtually 'covering' (*saṃvṛti*) the entire range of non-Awakened human cognitions.

## Verse 21

Vasubandhu, Robinson, and Hsüan-tsang are of one mind concerning this verse, but Paramārtha has his own ideas. For all but Paramārtha this verse means that paratantra (dependent on others) is the linchpin. The 'others' that paratantra is defined by, namely causation by other-nature (*parabhāva*)—which, like *sva-bhāva*, was criticized as untenable by Nāgārjuna—are only considered truly 'others' with their own *svabhāva* if one is thinking parikalpically, if one is assuming that things have such natures as self-nature and other-nature. Paratantra, though, is simply the realm of conditional arising (*pratyaya-udbhava*), i.e., *pratītya-samutpāda*. When imagined in terms of self- and other-natures, it is infected by parikalpita. Pariniṣpanna is paratantra devoid of parikalpita. So parikalpic-paratantra is a deluded or defiled paratantra, while pariniṣpannic-paratantra is a purified paratantra from which all parikalpita has been flushed away, cleansed.

Paramārtha has a different idea. For him parikalpita and paratantra are inseparable. Recognizing their inseparability is pariniṣpanna. This is a radically different idea than the one described above. Here pariniṣpanna is a transcendent

realm, forever removed from and apart from the other two natures. They, to use his terms, are simply variations of discrimination. Pariniṣpanna, which he doesn't translate (as does Hsüan-tsang) as 'perfected or accomplished' nature, but as 'really real nature' or 'truly real nature,' signifies for him a unitive, nondiscriminative realm beyond the world of difference, cognitions, and conditions. The 'truth' for him, then, would be to float above the two lower natures, since they are forever incurably entangled in discrimination.

## Verse 22

Here again Paramārtha strikes out on his own with a unique interpretation. For Vasubandhu and Hsüan-tsang the subject of this verse is the fact that pariniṣpanna and paratantra are "neither different nor not different from each other," reinforcing the point of the previous verse, namely that pariniṣpanna is paratantra cleansed of parikalpita. Paramārtha, however, takes this verse as maintaining the non-difference of *parikalpita* from paratantra, rather than *pariniṣpanna* from paratantra. He neglects to mention that the two items are "neither different nor not different," but only points that out that they are not different, hence implying that they are the same while suppressing whatever sense differentiates them. By substituting parikalpita for pariniṣpanna, and lumping parikalpita and paratantra together, he has again privileged pariniṣpanna, keeping it aloof from the limitations of the first two svabhāvas. The Sanskrit explicitly names paratantra but refers to the remaining nature indirectly, implying the subject of the verse is the last mentioned subject of the previous verse, which was pariniṣpanna.

"On impermanence, etc." This is a standard Buddhist argument about what is neither the same nor different. Particular things which are all impermanent (*anitya*) and the principle of impermanency (*anityatā*) are neither the same nor different. The *-tā* suffix makes a term an abstract noun, comparable to *-ness* or *-ity* in English. Hsüan-tsang indicates the *tā* suffix in Chinese with *hsing* 性 (nature); 無常 *wu-ch'ang* = impermanent, 無常性 *wu-ch'ang-hsing* = impermanence. Things are neither reducible to principles, nor are principles exactly identical with things, though the intimacy of their relation is sufficient to conclude that they are not completely different from each other either. Just as 'impermanence' is an abstraction, or general category, which like all 'universals' must be unreal (according to most Buddhist schools), the categories of paratantra and pariniṣpanna are also ultimately unreal. One must be careful about applying general categories (*sāmānya-lakṣaṇa*) to unique individuals (*svalakṣaṇa*). For instance, the general category 'impermanency' is, as such, unreal—only each and every entity uniquely not being permanent can be called 'real' (at least by Sautrāntikas). A corollary is that when one says X and Y are impermanent, this cannot be taken as a statement of identity between X and Y. The Yogācāra text, *Dharma-dharmatā-vibhāga*, as its title suggests, addresses this issue in greater detail.<sup>9</sup>

Anacker (p.190 n. 11) takes a different tact:

Impermanence is neither exactly the interdependent (which looked at “as a whole” may not be impermanent), nor does it exist anywhere except in the interdependent. Actually, neither the constructed nor the fulfilled are exactly different or non-different from the independent, since the constructed is basically the interdependent constructed and constricted, and the fulfilled is basically the interdependent unconstructed and unconstricted.

### Verse 23

Hsüan-tsang follows the Sanskrit closely, but adds “secret intention (is to explain” 密義說 *mi-yi shuo*, where the Sanskrit only says *deśitā* (preach, teach). The notion that the *niḥsvabhāva* version (the non-self-natures) of the *trīsvabhāva* theory, or other doctrines in Buddha’s discourses reflect a ‘secret intention’ in Buddha’s teaching, i.e., that some doctrines give the appearance of saying something, but actually are provisional means for getting to a different, deeper point, is presented in the *Saṅghinirmocana sūtra*, and referred to by Vasubandhu in his *Viṃśatikā*. By “secret” they don’t mean esoteric, but rather a meaning not evident or explicit on the surface which accounts for the motive behind the explicit teaching.

Paramārtha neglects to mention that the principle of the three non-self-natures (*tri-niḥsvabhāva-tā*) is only taught in relation to the three *svabhāva* theory. For the *trīsvabhāva* to be effectively understood, one must avoid reifying them. The positive and negative versions of the *trīsvabhāva* are inseparable. Thus the full *trīsvabhāva* theory is neither naively affirmational, nor nihilistically negative.

### Verse 24

This verse explains how the three self-natures are also simultaneously three non-self-natures. The ‘Everywhere schema-tizing’ is by definition without self-nature, since it is pure fictitious construction. As Sthiramati points out, it is of the ‘nature’ of a purely psycholinguistic chimera, and hence is no more real than a round square or the son of a barren woman (he uses the stock example of ‘sky-flower’). Hence it lacks an ‘essence.’

Paratantra also lacks essence in that paratantric entities can’t define themselves, generate themselves, or make themselves exist independently of other ‘entities.’ They all depend on conditions other than themselves. Whatever is not self-originating cannot have its ‘own’ nature (*sva-bhāva*), since its ‘nature’ is shaped and conditioned by things external to itself.

Pariniṣpanna is without self-nature by definition, since its specific purpose is to remove the mistaken *svabhāvic* thinking of *parikalpita* from paratantra. Ultimately everything is without *svabhāva*. Pariniṣpanna functions in Yogācāra theory as the antidote (*pratipakṣa*) for *parikalpic* delusions. Initially paratantra—signifying the realm of causes and conditions, *pratītya-samutpāda*—is infected with *parikalpita*. That is ‘defiled paratantra.’ Pariniṣpanna serves as the antidote, cleansing paratantra of all *parikalpic* pollutants, resulting in ‘purified

paratantra,' which means one has become Awakened, with Awakened cognitions.

Hsüan-tsang translates *pariniṣpanna* literally as 'accomplished or perfected' (*ch'eng-yüan*) while *Paramārtha* metaphysicalizes it as 'Truly Real' (*chen-shih* 真實) or 'Really Real' (*shih-shih* 實實). This treats the notion as a substance, since *chen-shih* also is used to translate *dravya*, substance. *Paramārtha*'s term, then, implies not only 'truth', but 'substance.' Later Chinese Buddhists, such as Fa-tsang, continue in that tendency, glorifying *pariniṣpanna* as a transcendent reality divorced from *parikalpita* and *paratantra* (rather than 'remote' from *parikalpita* in *paratantra*). Note that while the Sanskrit explicitly and flatly states that the third (*pariniṣpanna*) is 'non-self-nature-hood' (*niḥsvabhāva-tā*), *Paramārtha* resists conceding that and instead asserts that "it neither has nor does not have a nature." While he avoided a neither/nor notion in the last verse that the Sanskrit did assert, here he introduces one where it is absent in the Sanskrit. This sort of neither/nor claim is common in other works by *Paramārtha*, especially when he makes ultimate claims about true reality (*chen-ju* 真如, etc.).

## Verse 25

'Ultimate Referent' is a literal translation of both the Sanskrit *paramārtha* and the Chinese 勝義 *sheng-yi*, Hsüan-tsang's rendering of *paramārtha*. *Paramārtha* uses the same term for *paramārtha* that he used for *pariniṣpanna*, 真實 *chen-shih*, reinforcing his treatment of *paramārtha* and *pariniṣpanna* as synonyms. The term *paramārtha* has suffered an unfortunate history of mistranslation and misinterpretation in much modern scholarship, East and West, and as we see here that tendency has had a long history. The term *paramārtha* does not mean 'Ultimate Truth' or 'Supreme Reality' or 'Absolute Truth,' etc., though it is usually rendered with terms such as these. Robinson uses "absoluteness" to render *paramārtha* in this verse. *Paramā-* signifies the superlative case. *Artha* can mean 'referent,' 'meaning,' 'object,' 'an objective,' or even 'attained material objectives (i.e., wealth).' In other words, it always signifies that towards which intentionality intends.

In opposition to *saṃvṛti*—which literally means 'enclosed,' 'surrounded by,' 'closure'—*paramārtha* announces the non-closure, the breaking out from *saṃvṛti*. Normal acts of referentiality—a word referring to its referent—are usually either *prajñapti* (heuristic, in which what is being referred has only linguistic reality) or *saṃvṛti* (or *vyavahāra*, conventional designation, in which a word points to something considered 'real' by conventional criteria). *Paramārtha* exceeds these conventional acts of reference. Thus it is an ironic and even paradoxical term, for it implies that its referent is beyond referentiality or at least normal reference. Hence it is always an indirect referral, or one not enacted by language. The 'ultimate referent' is thus no referent at all, since it can never be referred to directly. In part it defies reference because it is not a thing, or even a no-thing. More to the point, it exploits language's own self-referentiality to break out of language, to refer or defer language beyond itself.

This function parallels the ironic intent behind the Yogācāric term *Vijñapti-mātra*. Like *paramārtha*, it is used not to reify or self-affirm itself, but in order to expose the anxieties, needs, and resultant complexes through which a need for such a term becomes engendered.

Since, as was explained in an earlier chapter, *paramārtha* means 'explicating with total precision rather than loosely,' I have turned it into an adverb in my translation of Hsüan-tsang's verse: 'ultimately.'

Tathatā, introduced in this verse and associated with *vijñapti-mātra-tā* (psychosophical closure-hood), will be discussed in later chapters.

## Verse 26

The last five verses characterize the five stages of practice. Different Buddhist texts, and even different Yogācāra texts, offer different enumerations of stages. The *Yogācārabhūmi*, e.g., has seventeen stages. The *Ch'eng wei-shih lun*, following the *Triṃśikā*, details these five stages.

The first stage is called "provisioning" (*sambhārāvasthā*) since this is the stage at which one collects and stocks up on "provisions" for the journey. These provisions primarily consist of orienting oneself toward the pursuit of the path and developing the proper character, attitude and resolve to accomplish it. It begins the moment the aspiration for enlightenment arises (*bodhicitta*). The next stage is the "experimental" stage (*prayogāvasthā*), in which one begins to experiment with correct Buddhist theories and practices, learning which work and which don't, which are true and which are not. One begins to suppress the grasper-grasped relation and begins to study carefully the relation between things, language, and cognition. After honing one's discipline, one eventually enters the third stage, "deepening understanding" (*prativedhāvasthā*). Some texts refer to this as the Path of Corrective Vision (*darśana-mārga*). This stage ends once one has acquired some insight in nonconceptual cognition (*nirvikalpa-jñāna*).

Nonconceptual cognition deepens in the next stage, the Path of Cultivation (*bhāvanā-mārga*). The grasper-grasped relation is utterly eliminated as are all cognitive obstructions. This path culminates in the Overturning of the Basis (*āśraya-paravṛtti*), or Awakening. In the "final stage" (*niṣṭhāvasthā*), one abides in Unexcelled Complete Enlightenment (*anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*) and engages the world through the five immediate, direct sense cognitions. All one's activities and cognitions at this stage are "post-realization." As a Mahāyānist, from the first stage one has been devoting oneself not only to one's own attainment of enlightenment, but to the attainment of enlightenment by all sentient beings. In this final stage that becomes one's sole concern.

According to the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* this verse indicates the stage of 'accumulating merit,' sometimes translated 'moral provisioning' (*sambhāra*). *Sambhāra* may also be translated as 'preparation.' Cf. Kamalaśīla's *Bhāvanākrama* ch.1, where, for instance, he quotes the *Akṣayamati-nirdeśa* as saying "...even as duḥkha is the antecedent cause of the lived-body

(*jīvitendriya*), just so the bodhisattva's great compassion is the antecedent cause of 'acquiring the equipment' (*saṃbhāra*) of Mahāyāna..."

Although even in Theravādin texts śīla (behavioral self-discipline, 'morality'), samādhi (meditation), and prajñā (Awakened discernment) are given parity such that each reinforces and depends on the others for its development (i.e., developing śīla will benefit samādhi which will benefit prajñā which will benefit śīla and samādhi which will benefit prajñā and śīla, and so on), nonetheless the Abhidhamma, with some justification from the Pāli suttas, developed a progression scheme that hierarchized them. According to this hierarchy, the three jewels constitute stages: one goes from śīla to samādhi to, ultimately, prajñā.<sup>10</sup>

The 'stage of accumulating merit or moral provisioning' is a hold-over in Mahāyāna of considering śīla to be the initial stage of serious practice. However, this becomes qualified through the inclusion of samādhi and prajñā in the six pāramitās, the pāramitās being the core of Mahāyānic śīla practice. The *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* says:

At this stage [i.e., saṃbhāra], one has not yet realized vijñapti-mātra tathatā (the psychosophy of closure as-it-is). Depending on the power of 'confident resolve' [dharma #15] to cultivate the various perfecting practices...[one solidifies his faith into] the stage of understanding practice.

What are the defining characteristics of the perfecting practices (pāramitās) being cultivated?

In general there are two types, which are called 'merit' and 'discernment' (*puṇya* and *prajñā*; Ch: *fu* 福 [lit. 'happiness, felicity'] and *chih* 智). Of the perfecting practices, whichever are of the nature of wisdom (*hui*) are called 'discernment' (*chih*), and the rest are called 'merit.' The six pāramitās, at bottom, are all characterized by these two. The breakdown is: the first five are called 'meritorious virtues or qualities' (*fu te* 福德) and the sixth is called *Prajñā* (*hui-chih*). Or again, sometimes they are broken down as only the first three are 'meritorious virtue,' the last one alone is *Prajñā*, and the remaining [two, viz. (4) vigor and (5) samādhi] are a mixture [of the other] two.

According to the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* this stage is still prior to overcoming the two *āvaraṇas*, viz. *kleśāvaraṇa* (the deep-seated psychological obstructions) and *jñeyāvaraṇa* (the root-level cognitive obstructions). Since Mahāyāna generally grants the so-called 'Hīnayānic' Arhat the status of having overcome the *kleśāvaraṇa* (but not *jñeyāvaraṇa*), this would indicate that this stage is even prior to the "Lesser Vehicle's" Awakening, or in other words, this is an entirely unAwakened stage.

The Chinese terms *fu* and *mieh* used by Hsüan-tsang in his translation connote "suppress" (*prahāna*) and "cessation" (*nirodha*), respectively. These two terms are frequently distinguished in Abhidharmic literature: "suppression" meaning the temporary putting out of action of some defilement, and "cessation" meaning its ultimate, irreversible extirpation.

Paramārtha translates verses 26-30 with minimal interpolations, though some interpretive deviations will be noted below.

### Verse 27

This is the next stage, the “experimental” stage (*prayogāvasthā*).

Hsüan-tsang has *wei-shih-hsing*—implying *vijñapti-mātra-tā*—but the Sanskrit only has *vijñapti-mātra*. This again reminds us to be cautious in following Vallée-Poussin’s rendering of the title of this text as *Vijñapti-mātra-tā-siddhi* rather than using the actual Sanskrit title found on Sthiramati’s text, *Triṃśikā-vijñapti-bhāṣya* (Commentary on *Triṃśikā-vijñapti*), which is the only extant Sanskrit text. *Ch’eng wei-shih lun* would literally render into Sanskrit as *Vijñapti-mātra-siddhi-śāstra*, not *Vijñapti-mātratā*. At the end of the *Ch’eng wei-shi lun* an alternate title for the text is given (not an uncommon practice in Chinese translations), which also fails to justify *Vijñapti-mātra-tā-siddhi*. It is: *Ch’ing wei-shi* 淨唯識 (Purifying *Vijñapti-mātra*, *Vijñapti-mātra-viśuddhi*). The title of the text on which the *Ch’eng wei-shih lun* was based, according to the *Ch’eng wei-shih lun*, was *Wei-shih san-shih* 唯識三十, which literally translates as *Triṃśikā-vijñapti-mātra*, a ringer for Sthiramati’s title.

But why did Hsüan-tsang choose to add *hsing* (nature) here? That’s an intriguing question. It may be a deliberate move on his part to distinguish the reified *vijñapti-mātratā* as a “small understanding” (*shao-wu*, lit. ‘small thing’) from *vijñapti-mātra* as non-reifiable. To turn *vijñapti-mātra* into ‘something attained’ (*yu so-te*) is, according to this verse, a misguided reductionism (“small understanding”), i.e., *grasping* at abstractions. The Sanskrit verse emphasizes the inability to fixate on, or “fix” (stop) (*na-avatiṣṭhate*) *vijñapti-mātra* as an object of cognitive apprehension (*upalambhataḥ*). Interestingly, the Sanskrit does not repeat *vijñapti-mātra*—as does Hsüan-tsang—but instead uses *tan-mātra* in the second half of the verse. *Tanmātra* (*tat + mātra*) is used by Sāṃkhya and other Hindu schools to denote the subtle material elements of existence. The term *tanmātra* (lit.: nothing but that) implies nonreducibility, or what is irreducible, hence a basic element. It is these irreducible elements that are components of experience which cannot be frozen, made to stay put in an abiding present of understanding (*sthāpayan-agrataḥ kiṃ-cit tanmātre*), that remain as non-reducible to the cognitive act that declares (*eva-idam iti*) “that which I am cognizing is only nothing-but *vijñapti*.”

Paramārtha’s version emphasizes that one must get rid of the idea that everything is consciousness-only in order to actually ‘enter’ *vijñapti-mātra*, in which neither an objective-support (*ālambana*) nor a cognizer has arisen. Why is that ‘consciousness only’? Because it demonstrates that consciousness is the condition for objects to appear, be experienced. The transition from negating the object, which also negates the knower (without an object, a consciousness cannot arise), to entering where neither appears, is comparable to the first three levels of the *ārūpya-dhyānas*, i.e., in the absence of objects (equivalent to *ākāśa*), consciousness (second level) becomes Nothing (third level). This is a



repeated theme in Yogācāra texts. For instance, *Madhyānta-vibhāga*, 1:4 and 8 stress that when one negates the object, the self is also negated.

That this is the motive behind the denial of external objects is reinforced by Vasubandhu who, in two texts, offers a nearly identical formula, both hinging on two terms: *upalabdhi*, which means to ‘cognitively apprehend,’ i.e., to grasp or appropriate cognitively; and *artha*, ‘referent’ of a linguistic or cognitive act, i.e., that toward which an intentionality intends.<sup>11</sup>

Apprehending vijñapti-mātra is the basis for the arising of the nonapprehension of *artha*. The nonapprehension of *artha* is the basis for the nonapprehension of vijñapti-mātra.

*vijñapti-mātrapalabdhim niśrityārthānupalabdhir-jayate Athānupalabdhim niśritya vijñapti-mātrasyāpi-anupalabdhir-jayate. (Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya I.7)*

By the apprehending of citta-mātra, there is the nonapprehension of cognized *artha*. By nonapprehending cognized *artha*, citta also in nonapprehended.

*citta-mātra-upalambhena jñeyārthārthānupalambhatā. Jñeyārtha anupalambhena syāc-cittānupalambhatā. (Trisvabhāvanirdeśa 36)*

By recognizing that those things which appear in an act of cognition as if they were other than consciousness are actually appearing *in consciousness*, and thus cannot be cognitively ‘apart’ from it, that is, that cognitive-objects appear to exist apart from cognition only within an act of cognitive construction, one ceases to grasp at one’s own construction as if it were a graspable entity ‘out there.’ One does not reject the ‘object’ or noema in order to reify or valorize noesis or noetic constitution. On the contrary, because one ceases to grasp at the noema, noesis too ceases to be grasped. The circuit of grasped and grasper (*grāhya-grāhaka*) is disrupted, and the type of cognition that endeavors to seize and ‘apprehend’ its ‘object’ ceases. This bears repeating. Not only is the object, the *artha*, negated, but that which noetically constitutes it (*vijñapti-mātra*, *citta-mātra*) is also negated.<sup>12</sup> Vijñapti-mātra or citta-mātra are provisional antidotes (*pratipakṣa*), put out of operation once their purpose has been achieved. They are not metaphysically reified or lionized.

### Verse 28

The three versions of this verse offer some interesting differences. For Vasubandhu the argument is a simple and typical one: Since, in the absence of an object, a consciousness doesn’t arise, in the absence of grasping an object, consciousness doesn’t grasp either, hence abiding in vijñapti-mātra means here cognition devoid of attachment and grasping. For Paramārtha, the knower and its object both seem to disappear or melt into a non-cognitive state called Consciousness-only. Hsüan-tsang is closer to Vasubandhu, maintaining that at the moment one is in objective conditions (*ālabhana*) without attaching to or ‘attaining’ any of them, one has entered an understanding of psychosocial closure, since one can now cognize without grasping or attachment, having eliminated the two graspings (for self or things). While for Vasubandhu and

Hsüan-tsang cognitions continue to occur, except now devoid of attachment, for Paramārtha nothing at all seems to 'manifest' (*hsien-hsien*) or appear, so that 'consciousness-only' must signify for him either an entirely non-cognitive state or one in which only an undifferentiated consciousness exists. The latter seems closest to him. As he will comment on the next verse: "Non-discriminative cognition (*nirvikalpa-jñāna*) is when sense-object and cognition are undifferentiated" 無分別智。即是境智無差別。 This resonates with his insistence on consciousness as unitive back in v. 18.

The verse is saying there is a moment of insight in which the psychosopic closure makes itself transparent (and hence no longer en-closing) and which utterly and instantaneously neutralizes the root problematic of karmic continuity through detachment from the dual appropriations, viz. 'grasper and grasped.' In other words, the appropriational duo—by being exposed for what they are—viz. karmically potent mental fabrications, become impotent, and thus see-able as the fictitious malignancies (*āśrava*) they really are.

The structure of this sentence suggests some interesting readings. Word-for-word it reads:

*chih* 'wisdom,' '[correct] knowledge,' etc. (while often used in Buddhist texts as an equivalent for *prajñā*, Hsüan-tsang sometimes differentiates *prajñā* [wisely discerning] from *jñāna* [direct, immediate cognition] by using *hui* for the former and *chih* for the latter) +  
*tou*—'all,' 'the whole,' 'in its entirety' +  
*wu*—'nothing,' 'there is not,' 'without,' 'absence of' +  
*so*—location, 'objective' and/or passive case +  
*te*—'attain,' 'acquire.'

Hence the first two lines of this verse might also be translated 'if, at the very moment one is within objective conditions one knows that all of this, in its entirety, is nothing which is attainable or acquirable...'

What does this mean? If, during the experiential continuum, there comes a moment when the sensorium—which is inclusive of all sensations, whether pleasurable, painful or neutral, whether subjective or objective, etc.—is directly, intuitively, and without any doubt or ambivalence whatsoever, known (*jñāna*) in such a way that it is void of any appropriational characteristics, this constitutes the experience of 'consciousness-only.' 'Consciousness-only' here means that the appropriative dynamic that had pervaded and permeated cognition (reaching out toward and holding on to cognitive objects) is gone, and all that *was* nothing but the way consciousness normally acts. Entering an understanding of consciousness-only does not mean entering a realm in which consciousness exists alone by itself (how lonely and solipsistic!), but rather stepping back from consciousness' appropriational circuit, losing the *vi-jñāna* that distances itself from things in order to make them appropriatable, so that *jñāna*—direct, immediate cognition, shorn of the *vi*—emerges. The objective pole, which includes subjective 'sense-supports' that have been objectified as 'objects' of perception, is "entirely without anything to be acquired."

Does this necessitate that the *ālambana* themselves are non-existent, or that everything is created by mind? Not at all. It only means that the appropriational characteristics, i.e., those aspects of experience which perpetually, from a horizon, condition experience to present itself appropriationally—as ‘I-mine,’ as ‘my truth,’ ‘my experience,’ as things, ideas, theories and objects which can be taken to hand, which can be taken—only these appropriational characteristics are emptied from experience. One no longer grasps at anything, since everything is non-graspable, non-acquirable, in a profound way non-attainable. It is a kind of meta-objectivity that sees things as they actually are, a kind of meta-perspectivity that Sthiramati calls *sarvajñā*, ‘omniscience.’ ‘Things’ are not presented, or represented, or given to/in experience. They are directly known devoid of appropriational tendencies, and hence devoid of karmic capacity. Since nothing is acquired, no seeds can accumulate, and the *ālaya-vijñāna* is broken. The destruction of the *ālaya-vijñāna* becomes a metaphoric means of describing in experiential terms the disruption and final elimination of karma. Since language itself, in this view, is no more than an instrument and instantiation of the appropriational tendencies (*prajñapti*); whatever might be the experiential case in or subsequent to this insight must necessarily be ‘beyond’ language.

If any justification can be made for Hsüan-tsang using (*shih* 識) for both *vijñāna* and *vijñapti*, this line is it. Vasubandhu writes here that you are abiding in *VIJÑĀNA-mātra*, not *vijñapti-mātra*. This is because *vijñāna* is *not* ‘making things known’ (*vijñapti*) at this point. What was *vijñapti*—what was being made known by consciousness, i.e., posing objectifications for appropriation, i.e., *abhūta-parikalpa* (as the *Madhyānta-vibhāga* calls it)—has ceased, revealing that all that *was* only the appropriative agenda and structure of consciousness (*vijñāna-mātra*). Obviously, the Chinese reader, unaware that the original text has distinguished *vijñapti* from *vijñāna*, would have no clue at this point that *wei-shih* has switched referents.

Note, also, that one abides in consciousness-*mātra* and not consciousness-*mātra-tā*.

In the *Ch’eng wei-shih lun*, Hsüan-tsang writes of this verse:

‘You, at that moment’ refers to what is called really abiding in the truly paramārthic nature of psychosocial closure which always-already realizes as-it-is-ness. *Jñāna* and *tathatā* are thoroughly equalized because both are detached from the characteristics of grasper and grasped. The grasper-grasped characteristics (*grāhaka-grāhya-lakṣaṇa*) together constitute the discriminations (*vikalpa*) of attainable existents (i.e., the appropriational attitude), [which are actually nothing but] prapañcic mental projections.

*Vijñāna-mātra* can be understood in two ways:

- 1) that the entire experiential realm as constituted in the closure of non-Awakened experience is ‘nothing but a fabrication of the operations of consciousness,’ and since everything so far has aimed at eliminating this, the idea of ‘consciousness-only’ should not be reified, or

2) this verse signals a stage towards Awakening, but not Awakening itself, so this stage consists of the emptying of the so-called objective realm of its svabhāvic 'essences,' leaving 'nothing but consciousness remaining.' If the latter interpretation is to be followed, then the next stage would be the emptying of any svabhāvic 'essence' from consciousness itself. Finally, by neutralizing the objective and subjective poles, tathatā alone remains, that is, things are known for what they are without the slightest interpretive interpolation. The subsequent discussion in the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* gives credence to both of these readings.

In the passage just cited, the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* states that the grasper and grasped are replaced by *jñāna* (direct cognition) and *tathatā* (the experiential realm just-as-it-is, devoid of mental projections). Hence subject and object in the most general sense remain, but are purified of appropriational intent, and thus 'equalized.'

Paramārtha seems to prefer a more mystical version of the second option, understanding consciousness-only as a realm of pure, undifferentiated consciousness. While for the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* the knower and known remain as *jñāna* and *tathatā*, Paramārtha claims that the knower and known both fail to appear at all. Whereas the Sanskrit and Hsüan-tsang both state that it is the grasper-grasped relation that disappears, Paramārtha asserts that it is the nonappearance of knower and object that is called "nothing is attained." As elsewhere, the Sanskrit and Hsüan-tsang are offering psychosophical and epistemological observations which Paramārtha converts into metaphysical and cosmological assertions.

### Verse 29

Hsüan-tsang's translation of the first few words of this verse might seem problematic from the point of view of the later developments of Chinese Buddhism. *Wu-te* must be translated 'non-acquirable' because the issue here is the elimination of the appropriational attitude, not a hyperbolic genuflection to some mystical Other. It translates *anupalambho*, which means 'cannot be known through the senses or ordinary means of knowledge.' As mentioned in a note on v. 8, *upalabdhi*, at least to Hsüan-tsang, was considered in some ways synonymous with *vijñapti*. If *upalabdhi* and *upalambho* can be taken as virtually synonymous terms, then this may be tantamount to claiming that realization of *vijñapti-mātra* is itself devoid of *vijñapti* (*anupalambha*), i.e., 'discriminating-understanding-only' means no longer 'discriminating-understanding'!

The next phrase, *pu-ssu-yi*, meaning 'non-conceptual,' 'inscrutable,' translates the Sanskrit *acitta* which means absence of *citta*, 'non-citta.' *Acitta* can be understood here in at least two ways: (1) insentience in the ordinary sense, meaning the absence of a subjective vector within or behind any non-perceptual moment, such as, for instance, in deep sleep or utter unconsciousness; (2) the absence of a subjective vector within an experiential field of awareness, such that subjective and objective poles, i.e., noesis

(*grāhaka*) and noema (*grāhya*), are neither constituting experience nor being constituted by it. The 'experience' of Nirvāṇa and the not-yet-fully-Awakened experience penultimate to Nirvāṇa (i.e., nirodha-samāpatti as the experiencing of *saṃjñā-vedayita-nirodha* [#76 and #99 on the Hundred Dharma list]) are said to be this type of *acitta*. The latter signifies the release from the closure of what texts like the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* call *citta-mātra-dṛśya*, 'seeing only what is projected by mind (*citta*).'

Besides reversing the order of the terms from the Sanskrit, Hsüan-tsang has left unremarked an important aspect of Yogācāra thought which eventually came to be overlooked by many East Asian Buddhists as well as most modern scholars. This line is describing the *jñāna* that goes beyond the 'three worlds' (*jñānam lokottaram*). Since, as the famous line from the Hua-yen sūtra says (and similar lines can be found throughout this type of literature<sup>13</sup>), "The three worlds are nothing but *citta*," this line indicates that (1) *vi-jñāna* becomes just *jñāna*, i.e., 'consciousness' becomes 'direct-knowing'—and thus the assertion that Yogācāra holds a position of 'only consciousness (*vi-jñāna*) is ultimately real' becomes untenable—(2) this *jñāna* not only is no longer a *vi-jñāna*, it is also explicitly declared to no longer be a *citta*.

While Hsüan-tsang often becomes overly literal (e.g. his translation of *vīpākā*), in this case his 'non-conceptual' (*pu-ssu-yī*) for *acitta* removes the crucial term *citta*. In v.16 Hsüan-tsang does literally translate *acitta* with *wu-hsin*. 'Non-conceptual' is a justifiable reading of *acitta* if 'citta' is taken in the sense of 'generic thought;' hence *a-citta* would mean 'unthinkable.' Nonetheless, by interpreting rather than literally translating this term, Hsüan-tsang has not allowed this verse to enter into a debate that came to the fore shortly after his death between his disciple K'uei-chi and the Hua-yen patriarch Fa-tsang on the supposed distinction between *wei-shih* (consciousness-only; meaning Hsüan-tsang's 'school') and *wei-hsin* (mind-only; meaning Fa-tsang's position). Since most of the important Chinese Buddhist schools such as T'ien-t'ai, Hua-yen, and some forms of Ch'an, came to be known as *wei-hsin* (*citta-mātra*) due to their affirmation of *citta* as a metaphysical ground beyond any ultimate negation or cancellation, this crucial line of the *Triṃśikā* might have radically altered the course of Chinese Buddhism by arguing unambiguously that Awakening involves the superseding of *citta*, i.e., that Awakening consists of breaking the *ālaya-vijñāna* (by turning it into *jñāna*) and eliminating *citta*. *Citta*, in its most precise abhidharmic and Yogācāric formulation means the momentary, subjective point or vector within any cognitive moment. Some meditational practices, such as nirodha-samāpatti, aim precisely at the elimination of *citta* from the experiential stream. For Vasubandhu, this practice did not go deep enough, because the 'stream' itself, namely the *ālaya-vijñāna* which becomes the Yogācāric metaphor for 'karmic continuity,' remains unaltered and fully functioning even after this samāpatti. For Vasubandhu only the full transformation from 'consciousness' (which includes the *ālaya-vijñāna* and the 'subjective' *citta*) to 'immediate-knowing'

effectively uproots the karmic dilemma. For Hsüan-tsang, the ālaya-vijñāna operates even during nirodha-samāpatti.

While we may rely on the Sanskrit verse to conclude safely that *chih* 智 here translates jñāna, a Chinese reader necessarily would remain uncertain as to whether *chih* is translating *jñāna* (cognition) or *prajñā* (wisdom). These two terms are often conflated by Chinese Buddhists as a result.

Paramārtha's final words in the *Chuan-shih lun* are:

If cognition doesn't condition a sense-object, then both [the cognition and the sense-object] do not appear, since the sense-object is precisely a consciousness-only sense-object. This is what is confusing about consciousness-only. Since the sense-object is nonexistent, consciousness is nonexistent. Consciousness already being nonexistent, the mind of consciousness-only that is able to [produce] conditions is also nonexistent. Thus [the verse] says: THE TWO DO NOT APPEAR. The two are simply consciousness and the sense-objects that appear to it. Since the sense-object is already nonexistent, this is called 'consciousness revolving.'

Paramārtha seems to differentiate between consciousness per se (or consciousness-only) and a "mind of consciousness-only." This yields a three-tiered negation. The sense-object does not appear, and so is nonexistent (in experience—this needn't be interpreted ontologically). The object being nonexistent, its consciousness is also nonexistent, since consciousness is always *consciousness of*, and cannot arise without an object. The third tier is the *mind* of consciousness-only, which is also (亦) nonexistent since consciousness is nonexistent.

It is unclear what Paramārtha gains in this context by adding this extra tier, since he negates it as soon as he introduces it.

## Notes

1 See bibliography.

2 Chan offers a complete translation of the thirty verses in his *Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963, ch. 23.

3 See bibliography.

4 Since there are some minor discrepancies between the Chinese and Sanskrit verses as to which phrases are placed in which verse, this schematic follows the Chinese. For instance, verse 5 in the Chinese begins with the discussion of manas, whereas in the Sanskrit it first completes discussing the ālaya-vijñāna and then begins manas.

5 Following Vasubandhu's classifications in the *One Hundred Dharmas Śāstra* (*Śatadharmasāstra*, *Pai-fa lun* 百法論), Hsüan-tsang lists remorse, torpor, initial mental application and discursive thought as the four Indeterminates, whereas the *Triṃśikā* seems to include these four as part of the secondary Mental Disturbances (*upakleśa*). Sthiramati's commentary also treats them as upakleśa.

- 6 For a lucid discussion of these five *nīvaraṇas* see Henepola Gunaratana's *The Path of Serenity and Insight* (Delhi: Motilal, 1985) pp. 28-48, and my Part II, above. Also Cf. Appendices 2 and 3, below.
- 7 Cf. *Saṃyutta Nikāya* 5:121-24 (Eng. tr. Kindred Sayings, V, p.106).
- 8 He uses the term 集諦 *chi-ti* to contrast with 真諦 *chen-ti* (*paramārtha*), rather than 俗諦 *ssu-ti* (*saṃvṛti*), even though *chi-ti* usually signifies the second of the four noble truths. He also distinguishes two types of *kleśa* and then says that the two *kleśas* are *paramārtha-satya*!?
- 9 A critical edition of the Tibetan version of this text, accompanied by analysis and a German translation was announced: Klaus-Dieter Mathes, *Unterscheidung der Gegebenheiten von ihrem wahren Wesen (Dharmadharmatāvibhāga) - Eine Lehrschrift der Yogācāra-Schule in tibetischer Überlieferung* (Indica et Tibetica Verlag, Swisttal-Odendorf, 1996), but I have not seen this work, nor an earlier translation from the Tibetan, *Distinguishing Phenomena and Pure Being by Maitreya with Mipham's commentary Distinguishing Wisdom and Appearance as taught by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche*, translated by Jim Scott (Kathmandu: Marpa Translation Committee)(Printed in Singapore by International Press Co. Pte. Ltd.) 1992.
- 10 See, e.g., Lama Govinda's *The Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy*, pp. 67-70; and Gunaratana's *The Path of Serenity and Insight*, pp. 11-14.
- 11 The double sense of *artha* as both a linguistic referent ('meaning') and a sensorial object is poignantly reinforced in *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa* by the repeated use of the term *khyāti* 'cognitive appearance.' *Kyāti* actually means a 'statement,' or 'theoretical assertion,' or something asserted to be the case (Monier-Williams, p. 341a: "'declaration,' opinion, view, idea, assertion... perception, knowledge... name, denomination, title..."); in other words, something which appears to be the case because it has been linguistically, conceptually asserted as such. The explication and disruption of this linguistic-cognitive construction is one of the primary subtexts of *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa*.
- 12 While some later traditions in China and Tibet differentiated sharply between *viññapti-mātra* (Ch. *wei-shih*) and *citta-mātra* (Ch. *wei-hsin*), it is clear from passages such as these that Vasubandhu countenanced no such distinction.
- 13 Cf. *Viṃśatikā-vṛtti* 1: "...*traidhātukam viññapti-mātram*..." (the triple world is nothing but *viññapti*).