FROM REDUCTIONISM TO CREATIVITY

rDzogs-chen AND THE New Sciences of Mind

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Sthiramati's insight that this operator can also operate in an improper manner, as it often does, should be ample evidence that the rendering of the Sanskrit term *prajñā* by "wisdom" is contrary to textual evidence and reveals wishful thinking on the part of those who use this rendering. Moreover, such usage also contradicts the accepted connotations of the word "wisdom" in the English language. Such a translation, speaking in the context of the contemporary scene, would make wisdom a characteristic of such notorious destroyers of man and his environment as the military (government-sponsored) and the terrorists (free-lance or agency-sponsored). Both have an uncanny ability to use whatever critical acumen they have to select and act on that which is sinister, degrading, and pernicious.

"Mind" as a Self-Structuring Process

Within the framework of representational thinking so prominent in what is generally referred to as Buddhist philosophy and psychology, we have noticed that set-theoretical considerations were instrumental in the attempt to rediscover the unity of the mind that had been lost in the welter of entitatively conceived operators. We also noticed that there are sets with a plurality of members and sets with only one member. It is a matter of choice whether attention is focused on sets with many members or on a set with only one member. The Yogācāra thinkers, who continued the quest for unity within the framework of representational thought, focused their attention on a set with only one member and referred to it by the term *cittamātra*. In this technical term *citta* was understood to refer to a complex experiential (cognitive) field or situation, and *mātra* to the exclusion of everything else. In other words, *citta* was used to convey the unity of insight and action, knowledge and valuation, thinking and feeling, and much more. This is in contrast to an earlier conception of it as a granular entity among others that in one way or another were connected or associated with it.

Another term used by the Yogācāra thinkers was *vijñapti*. This term indicates information, not in the sense of a transfer of knowledge from one system to another, but in the sense of an announcing of how matters stand with regard to the system's self-organization and self-generation, through which the system renews itself in a prognostic manner specific to its niche—say, the human world—which is experienced as the sum total of all its constituents. These the experiencer describes connotatively on the communicative level and enacts, or acts upon, denotatively. In strictly philosophical terms, the followers of this new trend said unequivocally that the phenomenal world exists only as the apprehended meaning of a system of concepts externalized by language into what is believed to be a physical (and not quite so physical) reality. Since self-organization may

be conceived of as an aspect of an overall organizational dynamics that is physical and psychic at the same time, the assumption of any kind of dualism is superfluous and unwarranted. The Yogācāra thinkers who emphasized self-organization must be credited with having been the first to present a unified evolutionary (dynamic) perspective. Consequently they also understood yoga not in the sense of a particular practice but rather as an overall tuning-in to this evolutionary dynamics.

Lastly, the use of the term *vijñāna* (*vijñānamātra*) is ample proof of the fact that in spite of having glimpsed the dynamic character of all life, they were unable to break away from the limitations set by representational thinking.

The process character of the one-member set on which they focused attention was referred to by the term *ālayavijñāna*. In this technical term, *ālaya* was understood as a qualifying attribute of *vijñāna*, but since it is, grammatically speaking, a noun indicating a repository, a site, a place (with the implication of status), the static notion of "container" crept into this term. It had the dynamic character of a large-scale feedback/feedforward operation that actively "stored" initiated potentialities of experience (Skt. *vāsanā*). Statically, passively, it was these "stored" potentialities.

The decisive and truly innovative point was that the *ālayavijñāna* was seen as involving a triune transformation that ensured its own continuity in an evolutionary manner. No matter what view and interpretation the various thinkers of Yogācāra movement subscribed to, they agreed that the *ālayavijñāna* could be subsumed under three headings: *vipāka, manana,* and *vijñapti,* as indicated by Vasubandhu in his fundamental treatment of this movement, a writing called the *Triṃsikā.*

The first concurrent transformation: Vipāka. In its literal meaning this term corresponds to the static notion of "result," but it can be and is used as a process term meaning "maturation." It was this latter connotation that led to the understanding of *vipāka* as a transformation that is both a dynamic process and the outcome of the process. In its former aspect, this transformation corresponds to what in the older mechanistic terminology of structure-oriented thinking was called "cause," but which in this new perspective is better understood as the "momentum" imparted to the evolutionary process emerging from the experientially initiated potentialities of experience (Skt. *vāsanā*), which as microstructures are termed "seeds" (Skt. *bīja*).

These microstructures are of two kinds, pure potentiality (Skt. *niṣyandavāsanā*) and potentiality-in-the-process-of-becoming-actualized (Skt. *karmavāsanā*). As pure potentiality, they are the sediments of operations that reflect the nature of their origin—whether they occurred within a valuative (moral) context that could be described as healthy, unhealthy, or neutral and as having operational consequences or not. But they are

themselves amoral, because as pure potentialities, no valuation applies to them. As potentialities-in-the-process-of-becoming-actualized, they mature into healthy or unhealthy operations, which are, generally speaking, such as to have operational consequences. On the purely potential level, they merely foreshadow the "niche" in which the actual operation takes place.

The outcome of these two microstructural operations is the actual psychophysical cognitive process, the macrostructure with the two poles of the intentional experiential act, the act phase reaching toward a meaningful content, and the object phase (Casey 1976). In sum we can say that the code name *vipāka* describes the simultaneity of macro- and microevolution in the universe called experience. Macroscopic structures become the environment for microscopic structures and influence their development in a decisive manner, while the development of microscopic structures becomes an equally decisive factor in the evolution of macroscopic structures.

The term *vipāka,* which dates back to a mechanistic assessment of lived reality as a linear progression, has its shortcomings when it is used in a new context that is attempting to give a dynamic account. Thus it happened that, on the one hand, the overt (conscious) experiential operation and its macroscopic structure were understood to be the result of the maturation of the experientially initiated potentialities of experience that constitute its microstructure; on the other hand, these very microstructures and potentialities were understood as the result of the maturation of the overt operation or macrostructure. One could then choose either perspective to satisfy one's linear thinking. It seems, however, that in the dynamic interpretation of the term *vipāka* by the Yogācāra thinkers, the mechanistic notion of causality, which is valid within certain narrow limits, has been replaced by the overall evolutionary notion of homeorhesis which describes a flow-process. Or, as Vasubandhu picturesquely put it, "It (the *ālayavijñāna*) moves on like a river in spate."[43]

Metaphors are imaginative devices to assist the experiencer in his emancipation from the tyranny of the concrete. Their wide use in Buddhist thought is testimony to the intention of making people think and of making difficult problems easier to understand. Sthiramati's commentary on Vasubandhu's statement is a fine example of how this can work:

> "River" is (a metaphorical description of) a flow in which cause and effect go on without interval (or interruption). "In spate" is said with reference to the volume of water in which no separation into an earlier and later section can be introduced. Just as a river in spate sweeps along with it grass, wood, cow dung and other such stuff, so also the *ālayavijñāna* with its potentialities-in-the-process-of-becoming-actualized as meritorious, unmeritorious, or neutral operations,

> sweeps along (the five operators of) the tactile program (*sparśa*), the system-tilting (*manaskāra*), and the other programs, and moves on unceasingly as long as *saṃsāra* lasts, in the manner of a river.[44]

Apart from the dynamic character of this transformative process, which precedes, as it were, all other transformations, though no actual sequence is involved, another idea emerges clearly: the idea of *vipāka* as a dynamic field. It is only recently in the West that the notion of a field has attracted attention. The notion has come to the fore especially in quantum field theory and in works by phenomenology-oriented thinkers. In the Buddhist notion of the *ālayavijñāna,* we can also detect the modern idea of time- and space-binding. The spatial symmetry of the field is maintained at first; but then it is broken by a kind of time-binding whereby experiences of the past may be become effective in the present. These considerations will help us to understand Vasubandhu's presentation of the transformation termed *vipāka:*

> Here, the *vijñāna* which is termed *ālaya,* is a resultant (*vipāka*) and as such the sum total of microstructures in their phase of germination (*bīja*).
> Furthermore, it is such that the organization into what is to become subject, as well as the intended structure in which it will find itself, is as yet subliminal.
> It is always accompanied by the operators (initiating) the tactile program (*sparśa*), the system-tilting (*manaskāra*), the feeling tone (*vit*), the sign-symbol system (*saṃjñā*), and the project-execution operator (*cetanā*).
> Furthermore, feeling here is of a neutral character (that is, it is a feeling tone, not a judgment of feeling), and this (*vijñāna*) is as yet not confined to a particular niche and is as yet amoral.
> So are the program operators, and as such it moves on like a river in spate.[45]

The second concurrent transformation: Manana. This term is used interchangeably with *manyana* and *manas,* which in conformity with the emphasis on the system's character as *vinjāna,* is also termed *manovijñāna,* in which case *manas* is used as a quasi adjective (as was *ālaya* in the previous instance). Its Indo-European root is *men,* "thinking," and thus it is related to Latin *mens* and its derivatives "mentation" and "mind." Specifically in the Indian context, it marks the emergence of what may be described as the sense of being a subject using conceptual systems to structure what is going to be perceived and determine how to get around in the "world." This emergence as the total system's transformation is determined exclusively by the inner dynamics of the system; it introduces a directedness, a vector that clearly indicates in which direction a new structure may be expected. This is a first step toward distinguishing dif-

ferences in a universe the boundaries of which are as yet undefined and can virtually be drawn anywhere. The universe cannot be distinguished from how we "think" it and implicitly think about it. This transformation is, therefore, best understood as the system's instability phase, which may be likened to a change of state (such as that from water to ice or steam) where any modeling in terms of representational (mechanistic) thinking breaks down.

This vectorial flow, indicated by the term *manana* and linked to the notion of "subject," immediately brings up the so-called problem of the self, which in the Western world has persistently moved either in the direction of a dualism of body and mind appearing as distinct and separable substances, or in the direction of a reductive monism culminating either in some sort of reductive materialism or in some kind of panpsychism, which is in no way less reductive. Any such supposed entitative status of a self—regardless of whether we speak of a self or the Self (the capital letter added to reinforce an already prevailing obscurantism)—owes its supposed existence to the representational mode of thinking, which by no means exhausts the reach and range of what is so inadequately referred to as "mind." As an emergent vectorial flow, the so-called self cannot be equated with the privileged ego or "I" in egological philosophies, nor can it be equated with a transcendental ego or self in transcendentalist philosophies (represented in India by all those systems that advocate an *ātman* theory). No such entitative and lifeless postulate is able to account for a living system's most outstanding feature: creativity.

Any reductionism, however evocatively it may be disguised, reflects vectorial directedness and carries with it a kind of pollution that affects the whole system. Thus, this vectorial flow termed *manana* (*manas*) is always associated with four "pollutants" (Skt. *kleśa*), which, as it were, reinforce its direction and intensity. These pollutants are first the egological preoccupation with one's concrete existence as the Self (Skt. *ātmadṛṣṭi*), which is prompted by a lack of awareness of what actually is the case. Secondly, this lack of awareness is representative of a person's infatuation with a self or *the* Self (Skt. *ātmamoha*), and as such is a stepped-down version of the cognitive nature of the total system. Thirdly, in this state, the individual has lost his bearings and is quite literally groping in the dark. Hence he is prone to succumb to the lure of an overevaluated idea—the delusion of the "I am" (Skt. *ātmamāna*)—as the last word in the matter. Together, these three pollutants prompt the individual to become thoroughly immersed in the fourth pollutant, his clinging to, and craving for, this alleged Self (Skt. *ātmasneha*).

In purely psychological terms, these pollutants can be said to be emotions, but unfortunately the term "emotion" has been much abused by contrasting it with reason and rationality, overlooking the fact that emo-

tions, too, give us knowledge, knowledge that may even be very vital. As the Buddhist account shows, thought and emotion are not separable entities, and in the transformation under consideration they merely specify the vectorial flow. Although vector-specific, these pollutants are still operative in an amoral manner. Implied also is the fact that this vectorial flow prefigures the existential niche in which the individual will eventually find himself and act upon its presentation. It is obvious that this transformation contributes significantly to the formation of a personal identity, but it also entrenches the individual in his niche and prevents him from reaching beyond the limited horizon set by it. The above considerations, which attempt to clarify the global character of this *vijñāna* transformation, may assist in understanding Vasubandhu's concise statement:

> Lodged in it (the *ālayavijñāna*) and taking it as its frame of reference, this *vijñāna* called *manas* is of the nature of "thinking."
> It is always accompanied by four pollutants that are vector-specific but (otherwise as yet) amoral.
> They are known as the preoccupation with one's existence as the Self (*ātmadṛṣṭi*), the infatuation with a Self (*ātmamoha*), the megalomania of a Self (*ātmamāna*), and the attachment to a Self (*ātmasneha*).
> On whichever level or in whichever niche this (*manas*) finds itself, its associated pollutants and the other operators will share in the niche's character.[46]

The third concurrent transformation: vijñapti. This term, as has been pointed out in a previous section, refers to information in the sense of announcing the self-organization of the system as brought into a specific form. Specifically, it covers the six operations that go by the name of perception and are sense-specific. It is through the senses, which have a dual nature, a physical and a psychic one, that we encounter the world around us. But this encounter does not merely consist in passively receiving stimuli. The senses themselves are most active in determining what and how we are going to perceive and thus, according to Alexander Gosztonyi (1972, 68),[47] play a decisive role in structuring the "world" in terms of a reality value, indicating the degree to which a sense transmits material resistance; a formal evidence value, indicating the degree of insight into formal relations; and an existential-evidence value, indicating the intensity of the experience of what a sense mediates. The world we encounter is, therefore, always an informed one in the true sense of the word. In addition to the five classical senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch), the Buddhists recognize a sixth sense the domain of which is ideas or meanings. Long before Kant in the Western world, they and other Indian thinkers had already realized that no amount of association of sense data

and impressions can give us the idea of, say, an elephant. Rather this idea is brought to the contingent data of the five senses by the sixth sense, called *manas*. As a matter of fact, the Buddhists revolutionized the whole of Indian thought in that they did not speak of "things" in terms of substance, whether physical or mental, but of "meanings."

It is with this third transformation of the total system that experiential ethics as information comes into play. This is not something static or, as theistic religions claim, something "revealed," but as a dynamic principle, it is the manifestation of what is referred to as "mind." Hence this transformation is said to be involved in moral operations that may be described as healthy (positive), unhealthy (negative), or neither; and it engages the total system with its innate operators, which were already given as wide-ranging in nature (*sarvatraga*) on the level of the first transformation. It also does so with those operators which the Vaibhāṣikas had listed as also being of a wide-ranging nature, but which the Yogācāra thinkers had realized as bearing on specific, determinate aspects of the multifaceted reality that is our human world. The emphasis on the system's healthy operation, which continues the overall Buddhist concern with a human being's role in the contextuality that is his/her "world," reveals a basic attitude toward life that takes into account the system's creative processes as they unfold in what becomes a life fully lived.

Vasubandhu sums up the complexity of this transformation in the following words:

> The third (transformation) is the perceptions in a sixfold cognitive domain. They are healthy, unhealthy, or neither.
> This (transformation) is associated with the wide-ranging operators and with the topic-specific operators, as well as with those that pertain to a healthy attitude.
> It is also (associated with) the set of pollutants and the set of quasi pollutants, and it has a triple feeling quality.[48]