

CLASS at Wisdom's Goldenrod, Hector, NY
with Anthony Damiani (AD)
March 28, 1982
BUDDHISM; YOGACARA

TOPIC: Buddhism
SUBJECT: Yogacara

SUBSUBJECT: Bodhicitta

CONTENTS:

Yogacara: first and only formulation of subjective idealism in India; everything evolves from pure intelligence (alaya-vijnana)
Is it possible to correlate bodhicitta with alaya concept?
Reading Chatterjee, *The Yogacara Idealism*, on the doctrine of vijnana (consciousness)
Contrast with realist view; no external objects, all content inherent in consciousness
Three kinds of vijnana; represent different stages of the diversifying process; correlated with Nous, Universal Soul, and individual soul
Alaya-vijnana (first consciousness): repository of karmic impressions (vasana); generator of new vijnanas through maturation of past impressions
Nature of alaya's content: indeterminate; objectivity not differentiated into specific forms; subject-object distinction only verbal; Ideas contemplate themselves; soul contemplates Nous
Manas (second consciousness): functions to transform indeterminate (seeds lying dormant in alaya) to determinate (empirical experience); comparable to intellectual imagination
Can klista-manas be correlated with reasoning soul in third quadrant?
Reading Obermiller (tr.), *The Sublime Science of Maitreya*, on bodhicitta
Bodhicitta, two aspects: 1) permanent principle of Buddhahood; 2) developmental aspect leading to cosmical body (Dharmakaya)
Two levels of the Absolute
Reading Wei Tat (tr.), *The Doctrine of Mere-Consciousness*, on bija theory
Two kinds of bija: 1) natural bijas: innate potentialities; exist since beginningless time; 2) acquired bijas: result of repeated perfuming (vasana); created through experience
Comparison to Plotinus' concept of two memories

BOOKS READ FROM OR REFERENCED:

- Ashok Kumar Chatterjee, *The Yogacara Idealism*

- Arya Maitreya, Aryasanga, *The Sublime Science of the Great Vehicle to Salvation, Being a Manual of Buddhist Monism*, tr. E. Obermiller
- Hsüan Tsang, trans. Wei Tat, *The Doctrine of Mere-Consciousness*
- Plotinus, *The Enneads* (MacKenna translation, 4th ed.)

PLOTINUS QUOTES READ OR REFERENCED: IV.3.31, V.1.6

RETYPE AND REFORMATTED by IT 2021. In 2024, IT adds TOC, Plotinus quotes section, new note inside transcript, expands Book List.

NOTES:

- **RETYPE PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT (hence V10).** From 1982 0328-06R16.PDF. THERE ARE NO AUDIO CASSETTE TAPES EXTANT.
- Note from JF: It appears that this transcript was taped together (not sure by whom) of fragments from several different papers/fragments typed by different people on different typewriters. It's possible I typed the beginning but not necessarily much of the rest. Possibly one or more pages missing at the end.
- 1982 03/28 is a Sunday.
- Abbreviations in Transcript scan 1982 0328-06R16.PDF refer to books referenced.
- All spelling, punctuation and capitalization errors have been corrected, all numbers spelled out where appropriate, all quotes looked up and made to conform to published version.

1982 03/28 at Wisdom's Goldenrod Buddhism; Yogacara

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Buddhism 3-28-1982

References: The Sublime Science of Maitreya. (Trans. Obermiller)
The Doctrine of Mere-Consciousness. Hsüan Tsang (Trans. Wei Tat)
Yogacara Idealism. Ashok Kumar Chatterjee

We find that the Yogacara system is the first and only formulation of subjective idealism in India. They take the view that everything is an evolute from and within a principle of pure intelligence termed the Alaya-Vijnana. We want to see if it is possible to take the term bodhicitta as given by some other schools and correlate it to this notion of the Alaya.

We want to see the ideas in their entirety as being present to the Alaya/bodhicitta in an intelligible form. And then as getting projected through the medium of the imagination into an imaged S+O [subject and object], or our empirical world.

The following quotes will be looked at from the context of 'mind- only', that is to say that everything comes from the mind. This first quote is directly to this notion of mind-only.

Ashok Kumar Chatterjee [*The Yogacara Idealism*, p. 65]: "It is clear that by consciousness realists and the Yogacara understand two entirely different things. Consciousness for one is a diaphanous entity through whose transparence objects pass in and out without suffering the least modification. In itself consciousness is entirely formless, neutral. The forms we perceive are those of the objects, directly and immediately revealed by consciousness. Since the idealist has no other reality but consciousness, the forms perceived must pertain to consciousness alone, there being no external object. Consciousness creates its own forms. The content of consciousness is not imported from outside, but is inherent in the states of consciousness themselves."

Ashok Kumar Chatterjee [*The Yogacara Idealism*, p. 114]: "The only existent is Vijnana, and yet what we perceive is an infinite plurality. This plurality must be reflected in Vijnana itself. Kinds of Vijnana therefore must be accepted to account for the empirical distinctions. The Yogacara accept three kinds of Vijnana. ... Nevertheless each of them is a Vijnana, being essentially creative. [Last sentence paraphrased in this transcript as: Each Vijnana is essentially creative.]"

The essence of consciousness or pure intelligence is creativity. On a cosmic scale it is like speaking about the Nous as essentially creative, as projecting the universe through the universal soul. The individual soul will then come in and elaborate that material.

Ashok Kumar Chatterjee [*The Yogacara Idealism*, p. 114]: "These three are not to be construed as distinct and static categories, but rather as so many phases of the cosmic evolution of Vijnana. Vijnana diversifies itself and gives rise to the whole panorama of empirical existence, and these three Vijnanas represent different stages of this diversifying process."

The Intellectual-Principle is an authentic essence in being. Insofar as this is true it will have an outward-facing hypostasis. It cannot be otherwise. Plotinus makes the point, if a thing is perfect it must produce and what it produces is eternal. [Note: See Plotinus, V.1.6, second to last para.]

In the West it is thought that God created because He felt a lack. No, He produced as part of His perfection. It is His abundance.

These consciousnesses are determinations and not static concepts. The Nous is a living thing which projects itself forth. The Universal Soul too is a stratification of consciousness and will project forth. That which it projects is yet another and lower stratification...and so forth. We have a series of emanations being spoken of in the text but it is not described in that way.

Ashok Kumar Chatterjee [*The Yogacara Idealism*, p. 115]: “The first and most fundamental of these three is the Alaya-Vijnana. It is the first phase in the process of differentiation of pure Vijnana. It is called Alaya, as it is the [place or the] receptum in which are contained the seeds or impressions (vasana) of any karma whatsoever, good, bad or indifferent. All dharmas ensue from it as its effects or evolutes. It is called therefore ‘sarva-bijaka,’ being the cause of everything empirical. It is vipaka because any kind of karma, done by the individual in any sphere of existence, leaves its trace in the Alaya.

“Thus the Alaya serves two functions in the cosmic process. It is the receptum of the impressions of past vijnanas, while in its own turn it gives rise to further vijnanas by maturing those impressions. The whole order is cyclic.”

A fully (developed) [one word cut off in photocopying process] it is said, turns over the totality of his experience to the Logos and this in some way modifies the contents in the Nous. This would be a very elevated interpretation of this passage.

In mysticism when you are ready to surrender the ego, what you surrender is something worthwhile, something of value. It would make a joke of surrender if you were to give up what is worthless.

Ashok Kumar Chatterjee [*The Yogacara Idealism*, p. 117]: “It has been seen before that vijnana is essentially creative. A transparent and diaphanous consciousness cannot be admitted. It must by its very nature have a content, a content projected by itself. The Alaya therefore must have a content. Its content cannot be any empirical one, since it itself nothing empirical. Its content is an objectivity not differentiated into specific forms. It is an indeterminate content, a bare otherness confronting the Alaya. The object is so pure that it is not even felt as an ‘other.’ Since the object is absolutely indeterminate, the subject is totally engrossed in a colourless contemplation of it with no idea of its own dissociation. It is not knowledge in the ordinary sense of the term. The subject is not even a subject in the sense of a self-conscious knower.”

This is similar to how we would speak of existence in the Nous, when the Subject and Object are resolved there. In the Alaya there is self-contemplation. The ideas contemplate themselves.

Here we have the emptiness of the wisdom consciousness (subject and object). What we would call the Real Ideas or Being, they would refer to as emptiness. To say that the soul contemplates the entire contents of the Nous, (giving it its partial view) would be to say that emptiness contemplates emptiness.

What kind of distinctions are to be made? Only verbal ones.

In the example of the dream, the dream contains the subject and object. When they get refunded to the unconscious they will be there in a distinctionless mode. The complex which constructed both will be unavailable to you. The complex might be seen as the seed in the Alaya which will manifest as the subject and object.

Ashok Kumar Chatterjee [*The Yogacara Idealism*, pp. 134-135]: “Manas is so-called because the process of intellection (manana) is always going on in it. The content of Alaya is indeterminate objectivity. As soon as this content is known as an other, its indeterminateness gives place to empirical determinations. ... This work of determinate categorisation is done by the manas. It actualises the empirical contents which are implicitly contained in the pure objective. Manas is not the consciousness of these contents but is the function of this actualisation itself. ... Manas is not the result of this process, which are the several object-knowledges, but is the process itself. It is the fructification of the seeds lying dormant in the Alaya into the content-consciousness.”

Ashok Kumar Chatterjee [*The Yogacara Idealism*, p. 134]: “On the one hand there is the Alaya with an indeterminate content; there are the pravritti-vijnanas with wholly determinate contents on the other: in between these is the process of determination. This transitional function is served by the manas. It makes possible the emergence of the object-consciousness out of the Alaya, and at the same time maintains the distinction between the two.”

The klista manas might be considered as equivalent to what we have called the intellectual imagination. It is the process of unfolding the ideas (held undistinguished) in the Alaya.

Could the klista manas be correlated somehow to the [missing word] in the third quadrant as the reasoning phase of the soul? If we correlate the Alaya to Buddhi and the klista manas to ahamkara, could we see at this level the determination of what is indeterminate just prior to manifestation? The klista manas would be that determining activity.

When we discuss the Alaya and its various aspects aren't we really discussing those principles which are going to constitute and eventually organize the knowledge that will be projected by the imagination? The Vijnana system is an organization directed at the production of the knowledge that you will perceive in your imagination. It will function to determine which will be the dominant archetypes in your consciousness.

From *The Sublime Science*, we read:

Maitreya, Asanga, Obermiller [*The Sublime Science*, pp. 205-206, parentheses Obermiller's]:

“The properties of the Buddha are indivisible (manifesting themselves in all that exists).

(It is the Buddha)-- [Reader adds: the Bodhicitta]

Because the Germ has developed in him into the Absolute.

(It is the Highest Truth), being neither error nor illusion,

(And it is Nirvana), being by nature quiescent from the outset.

“With regard to the indivisible properties of the Buddha it has been said:--O Lord, the Essence of the Buddha never becomes devoid of the properties of the Buddha which are indivisible, inexhaustible, inconceivable, and greater in number than the sands of the Ganges.--With reference to the Germ as being

in an inconceivable manner derived from the Absolute (and as becoming finally developed into the latter) it is said:--This (Germ) derived from the Absolute, beginningless and transferred from one existence to another, is as if it were a special property of the 6 (internal) bases of cognition.--As concerns the true, undeluding character (of the Cosmical Body) we have:--The Absolute Truth is the real (not-seeming) Nirvana. How that?--Because this Germ of Buddhahood is eternal owing to its perfectly quiescent nature.--With respect to this perfect Quiescence, (Scripture) says:--The Tathagata, the Arhat, the Perfect Supreme Buddha is, from the outset, merged in Nirvana.”

The bodhicitta is seen in two ways. One, as a permanent principle of Buddhahood. It is fully developed. Yet also it is seen as going through a development, one that will result in a cosmical body for the Buddha.

Maitreya, Asanga, Obermiller [*The Sublime Science*, p. 149-150, parentheses Obermiller's]: “The Absolute mingled with defilement is the fundamental element which is not delivered from the bonds of the passions and is called the Essence of Buddhahood (as it exists in all living beings). The Immaculate Absolute is the same thing as the exclusive property of the Buddha and consisting in a total metamorphose (of all the elements of existence). As such it is called the Cosmical Body [Reader adds: Dharmakaya] of the Buddha. The immaculate attributes of the Buddha, which essentially, are nothing but a metamorphose of the elements, are the distinctive features of the Cosmical Body. ...

“(The Absolute as the Germ) is pure, but nevertheless in contact
with the defiling (worldly) elements, (1)
(The Absolute as the Cosmical Body) is on the other hand
quite free from every defilement, (2)
The attributes of the Buddha are essentially identical with the
Absolute as contained even in every ordinary being, (3)
(And the Buddha's acts) are free from effort and [(dialectical)]
constructions.”

Here also we see the same idea of two levels of the Absolute. Rather than using the terms Cosmical Body/Absolute, we will say that there is the 1) soul rooted in the 2) Intellectual-Principle. It is a light emitted by the soul which exists in every human being. The aspect that is in contact with the defilements is this emitted light. The defilements are not to be seen as external to the subject.

This idea of a permanent principle and the evolution that (occurs/occurred) within it is similar to what we have read concerning the Alaya in its various stages.

[couple/few words cut off in photocopying process] Wei Tat we have:

Hsüan Tsang (trans. Wei Tat) [*The Doctrine of Mere-Consciousness*, p. 117]:

“Bijās are of two kinds.

“1. Natural or inborn Bijās: these refer to the potentialities which have innately existed since before the beginning of time in the Vipakavijnana [Reader adds: alaya] by the natural force of things [(*dharmata*)] and which engender Skandha-ayatana-dhatus.

“... ‘All sentient beings, since before the beginning of time, have had different kinds of *dhatus* [(bijas)] which are inherent in them and which, like heaps of myrobalan grains, exist by their own specific nature [(*dharmata*)].’ ...

“2. Bijas whose existence had a beginning:

“These Bijas have come into being as a result of perfuming (*vasana*) by actual dharmas which has been repeated and repeated since before the beginning of time.

“It is in regard to these Bijas that Bhagavat has said: ‘The mind of sentient beings is perfumed by defiled and pure dharmas.’”

Plotinus speaks of two memories. [Note: See Plotinus, IV.3.31.] These can chime together, or one can prevail over the other. He is referring to the fact that you can have certain qualities that can lead toward a virtuous life, these would be coming from the soul proper, or there are qualities which are the result of life lived. These are dispositions in the body.

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