

Fernando Tola and Carmen Dragonetti, *Being as Consciousness: Yogācāra Philosophy of Buddhism*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004, xl + 270 Pp, Rs. 395.

Due to its radical view the *vijñaptimātra* theory of the Yogācāra school exerted a great fascination throughout history. Many great thinkers were and still are captivated by its thesis that nothing in our present world exists, and that all is like a dream. Recently, F. Tola and C. Dragonetti published a new thorough study on the *vijñaptimātra* and *cittamātra* theories.

Their work is a precious contribution and will certainly remain for a long time a valuable tool for the study of this subject. Their work has four parts: (i) a general introduction to the *cittamātra* theory of the Yogācāra school, and three texts: (ii) the *Ālambanaparīkṣāvṛtti* by Dignāga, (iii) the *Viṃśatikā Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* by Vasubandhu, and (iv) the *Trisvabhāvakārikā* (a work attributed to Vasubandhu). Each of the later three parts contains an introduction, a doctrinal commentary, a critical text edition and a translation on the respective text. I will add a few remarks regarding these texts.

The *Ālambanaparīkṣāvṛtti*: More than twenty years ago the authors already published a paper presenting a doctrinal analysis, a text critical Tibetan edition based on the sDe dge and Peking editions, and a translation of the *Ālambanaparīkṣāvṛtti*.¹ In their recent work the authors revise and improve their previous results and add a valuable new bibliography regarding other works by Dignāga.

The *Viṃśatikā Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*: This text was first made known through Sylvain Lévi's edition,² which is still the most used and best known authoritative work. It was based on a manuscript (*MS1*) which lacked the two first *kārikās* and the beginning of the commentary. Later another manuscript (*MS2*) containing only the *kārikās* was found, and thus Lévi published a further work in which he included the first two *kārikās* and added further corrections regarding his previous edition.³ Several years ago three Japanese scholars, Katsumi Mimaki, Musashi Tachikawa and Akira Yuyama, published Nepalese manuscript facsimile editions of three works by Vasubandhu.⁴ Among the included facsimiles is a manuscript of the *kārikās* of the *Viṃśatikā* (*MTY-A*) and another manuscript of the *kārikās* with commentary (*MTY-B*).

Tola and Dragonetti assume that Lévi's manuscripts *MS1* and *MS2* were copies of the two manuscripts *MTY-A* and *MTY-B* [*sic.*] (pp. 72-73). Unfortunately the authors confused the two pairs of manuscripts where they

¹ "Dignāga's *Ālambanaparīkṣāvṛtti*", *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 10(2), 1982, pp. 105-134.

² Sylvain Lévi, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi, Deux traités de Vasubandhu Viṃśatikā (la vingtaine) accompagné d'une explication en prose et Trīṃśikā (la trentaine) avec le commentaire de Sthiramati*, Paris, 1925.

³ Sylvain Lévi, *Matériaux pour l'étude du système Vijñaptimātra*, Paris, 1932, p. 175.

⁴ Katsumi Mimaki, Musashi Tachikawa and Akira Yuyama (eds.), *Three works of Vasubandhu in Sanskrit manuscript: the Trisvabhāvanirdeśa, the Viṃśatikā with its Vṛtti, and the Trīṃśikā with Sthiramati's commentary*, Bibliotheca Codicum Asiaticorum 1, Center for East Asian Cultural Studies, Tokyo, 1989.

explain the abbreviations in use (p. 77):

Sigla

MTY-A: the original of *MS1*.

MTY-B: the original of *MS2*.

MS1: copy of the manuscript of *kārikās* and commentary, sent from Nepal, known to us through S. Lévi's edition.

MS2: copy of the manuscript of *kārikās*, sent from Nepal, known to us through S. Lévi's edition.

S. Lévi: edition of *MS1*.

S. Lévi (*Matériaux*): edition of *MS2*.

The first two explanations should in fact be inverted: *MTY-A*: the original of *MS2*, and *MTY-B*: the original of *MS1*. It seems however that this confusion only happened in the list of abbreviations since in the previous page Tola and Dragonetti explain their procedure as follows:

We reproduce the Sanskrit text of *Vimśatikā* as edited by Sylvan Lévi (Paris, 1925), which we consider as a copy of the manuscript B edited by Mimaki, Tachikawa and Yuyama, but we have introduced in it some changes: 1. we have corrected some misprints or orthographic errors; 2. we have adopted some variant readings taken from *MS2* and *MTY-A* and/or *MTY-B*; and 3. we suggest some other reading (minor changes). We have indicated in the notes of the Sanskrit text these corrections, variants, and changes (p. 76).

The *Trisvabhāvakārikā*: Until Mimaki, Tachikawa and Yuyama's new work appeared, there were two manuscripts of this text. The first one was found in Nepal in 1928 by Sylvain Lévi and he transmitted a transcription of it to Susumu Yamaguchi who published the Sanskrit text in 1931.⁵ Giuseppe Tucci obtained a second manuscript also from Nepal and sent a transcription of it to Vidhushekhar Bhattacharya. This transcription was handed over by Bhattacharya to Sujitkumar Mukhopadhyaya who published the Sanskrit text in 1939.⁶ Later Susumu Yamaguchi revised his old edition with the help of Mukhopadhyaya's new edition and published a third edition in 1972.⁷

In 1983 Tola and Dragonetti published a commentary, a critical Sanskrit text edition, and a translation based on the above mentioned three critical text

⁵ Susumu Yamaguchi (山口益), "Trisvabhāvakārikā of Vasubandhu (世親造三性論偈の梵藏本及びその註釈的研究)", *Journal of Religious Studies* (宗教研究) 8(2), pp. 79-88; 8(3), pp. 86-107, 1931. Based on Yamaguchi's ed. Louis de la Vallée Poussin published "Le petit traité de Vasubandhu-Nāgārjuna sur les trois natures", *Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques*, vol. 2, 1932-1933, pp. 147-161.

⁶ *The Trisvabhāvanirdeśa of Vasubandhu*, Vishvabharati Series 4, Calcutta, 1939.

⁷ Susumu Yamaguchi (山口益), "Trisvabhāvakārikā of Vasubandhu (世親造説三性論偈の梵藏本及びその註釈的研究)", *Yamaguchi Susumu Bukkyōgaku Bunshū* (山口益仏教学文集), vol. 2, 1973, Tokyo, pp. 119-162.

editions.⁸ Now there is a third manuscript of the *Trisvabhāvakārikā* available in the above mentioned work of Mimaki, Tachikawa and Yuyama. Tola and Dragonetti notice that the three manuscripts are closely related:

In general the text of this manuscript and of those referred to as *MS1* (S. Lévi's manuscript) and *MS2* (G. Tucci's manuscripts) are very similar. In the places where *MS1* and *MS2* have different readings, this third manuscript agrees sometimes with *MS1* and sometimes with *MS2*. Very probably the manuscripts of S. Lévi and G. Tucci are copies of the manuscript edited by Mimaki, Tachikawa and Yuyama or derive from it. We have indicated in the critical *apparatus* the readings of *MS3* that are different from those of Lévi's and Tucci's manuscripts (p. 191).

Regrettably nowadays there is no way to gain access to the original *MS1* (Lévi's manuscript) and *MS2* (Tucci's manuscript), and therefore it cannot be excluded that *MS1* and/or *MS2* might be the same as *MS3*.

The authors accept the *Trisvabhāvakārikā* as an authentic work of Vasubandhu from the viewpoint of the *trisvabhāva* theory (p. 193). From the standpoint of the used technical terms one could argue however, that it might not be his composition, since, for instance, it contains the term "*khyāti*" instead of "*pratibhāsa*" usually employed in the other texts of the Yogācāra school, and "*kalpanā-mātra*" instead of "*viññapti-mātra*".⁹ The *Trisvabhāvakārikā*'s technical terms still need further studies and inquiries to solve the problem regarding its authorship.

Although I do not consider myself in a position to comment on the text critical results the authors achieved through their tireless efforts, I am sure that their text critic represent a clear improvement. Also their valuable interpretations and translations will be of good and long-lasting use for the study of the Yogācāra school. It could be, however, that an inadvertent reader might misunderstand some of their explanations regarding *viññaptimātra* and *cittamātra*, or certain of the remarks contained in the general introduction. Tola and Dragonetti's researches mainly focus on a developed stage of the Yogācāra philosophy, but the authors nevertheless know and indicate sūtras which could have influenced the Yogācāra current at an early stage. In this regard I wish to clarify some points and hope to contribute to their study with the following two explanatory additions:

I. The concepts of *viññaptimātra* and *cittamātra* constitute very important components of the Yogācāra philosophy, but at its very beginning the Yogācāra philosophy did not yet contain the *viññaptimātra* and *cittamātra* theories. The early Yogācāra school asserted the existence of *vastu* and explained it as an external object. It is only at the next stage that the concepts of *viññaptimātra* and

⁸ "Trisvabhāvakārikā of Vasubandhu", *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 11(3), 1983, pp. 225-266.

⁹ These technical terms are also used in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkārabhāṣya*. See Yasunori Sugawara (菅原泰典), "Der Zweifel am Autor von 'Trisvabhāva-nirdeśa'" (世親『三性論』の撰述に関する疑問), *Culture* (文化) 20(1/2), 1996, pp. 108-127, (summary, p. 139).

cittamātra were developed and blended into it. Very early Yogācāra philosophy was based on the *trīsvabhāva* theory and was essentially unrelated to the *viññaptimātra* and *cittamātra* theories. The *Trīsvabhāvakārikā* is a late text and treats the *trīsvabhāva* theory in combination with the *viññaptimātra* theory. The chapter *Tattvārtha-pāṭala* of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* and the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, which represent earlier stages of thought do not yet mention such a relation or combination. It seems therefore important to distinguish between different stages and to keep in mind that the *trīsvabhāva* theory does not equal the *viññaptimātra* theory.

II. The authors mention six sūtras as “Sūtras of Idealistic Tendency” in their general introduction (pp. xii-xiv).

1. *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*
2. *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*
3. *Śrīmālādevīsīmaṇādasūtra*
4. *Ghanavyūhasūtra*
5. *Daśabhūmikasūtra*
6. *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra* or *Bhadrasūtra*

In this regard I would like to specify that most probably only two of these six sūtras, the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* and the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthita-samādhisūtra*, existed before the emergence of the Yogācāra school. These two sūtras contain the word “*cittamātra*”,¹⁰ but do neither show any developed argumentation as the one found in the later Yogācāra philosophy, nor do they deny external objects. Further, none of the Yogācāra school’s texts mentions the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhisūtra*, whereas frequent reference is made to the *Daśabhūmikasūtra*. These two sūtras therefore firstly differ from each other, and secondly do not seem to have influenced Yogācāra philosophy to

¹⁰ Lambert Schmithausen pointed out that the expression “*cittamātram idaṃ yad idaṃ traidhātukam*” found in the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* was quoted from the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhisūtra*. Cf. Lambert Schmithausen, “Spirituelle Praxis und Philosophische Theorie im Buddhismus”, *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 57(3), 1973, p. 176, (English tr.: “On the problem of the relation of spiritual practice and philosophical theory in Buddhism”, *German scholars on India: contributions to Indian studies*, vol. 2, New Delhi, 1976, p. 247). The concept of “*cittamātra*” appears in different contexts in the abovementioned two sūtras. Thus it is not clear yet, why the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* would have cited the passages about “*cittamātra*” (See Ryūkō Kondō (近藤隆晃) ed., *Daśabhūmīśvaro nāma mahāyānasūtram* (梵文大方広華嚴經十地品), Tokyo, 1936, p. 98, ll. 8-9) from the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhisūtra* (Paul Harrison, *The Tibetan text of the Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra*, Tokyo 1978, p. 36 (3L), ll. 21-22). On this subject, see Yoshihito Muroji (室寺義仁), “Mahākaraṇā and *cittamātra* in the *Daśabhūmikasūtra*” (『十地經』における「大悲」(mahākaraṇā) と「唯心」(*cittamātra*)), *Buddhist studies in honour of Professor Shingen Takagi: on the occasion of his seventieth birthday* (仏教文化の諸相 : 高木神元博士古稀記念論集), 2000, Tokyo, pp. 251-267, and “On *cittamātra* in the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* in the *Buddhāvataṃsaka*” (『華嚴經』「十地品」における「唯心」(*cittamātra*) について), *Bulletin of the Research Institute of Esoteric Buddhist Culture* (高野山大学密教文化研究所紀要) 14, 2001, pp. (119)-(159).

the same extent. Moreover they much differ from the other four sūtras, for example, from the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, which was probably written by the Yogacāra philosophers themselves.

In contrast to other well known Buddhist commentaries, the *śāstras* of the Yogacāra school were not based on extant sūtras. The *Yogācārabhūmi*, for example, was not composed on the basis of any sūtra. Recent studies have even shown that the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* was most probably composed at the same time as its *śāstra*.¹¹ The founders of the Yogacāra school, Maitreya and Asaṅga, who are traditionally considered as the authors of the *śāstras* of the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, in reality might have composed at the same time the sūtra as well. If this is so, they intentionally gave to their work the traditional form and appearance of *śāstra* explanations following sūtra extracts.

The other three sūtras: the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, the *Śrīmālādevīsīṃhanādasūtra*, and the *Ghanavyūhasūtra* mainly express *tathāgata-garbha* thought blended with the doctrine of *ālaya-vijñāna*.

Although the above-mentioned six sūtras might all relate, in some way or another, to idealistic thought, it should not be inferred that they manifest a possible new tendency of idealistic thought in a similar manner. It is essential to distinguish the respective sectarian environments from which they originated: the time of their composition, and the stage of their philosophical developments.

In fact, the Yogacāra school never represented a mainstream philosophy. Since the time of its emergence it was always regarded as unorthodox, and therefore was the target of harsh criticism from the Mādhyamika school of Indian and Tibetan Mahāyāna Buddhism. It is exactly due to this opposition, that the Yogacāra philosophy offers a precious key for the understanding of Mādhyamika philosophy and that it can provide answers even regarding such great questions as "What is Buddhism?"

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11 See Lambert Schmithausen "Zur Literaturgeschichte der älteren Yogācāra-Schule", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Supplementa I, Teil 3, 1969, pp. 822-823; Shinjō Suguro (勝呂信静), *Studies on early vijñaptimātra philosophy* (初期唯識思想の研究), Tokyo, 1989, pp. 316-320.