STORE-CONSCIOUSNESS

(Alaya-Vijnana)

A Grand Concept of the Yogacara Buddhists

N.A. Sastri.

Mind has three designations: citta, manas and vijnana, which indicate one and the same thing (v. Pancavastuka, p. 36). Some authors distinguish as follows: What is past is manas; what is to come is citta and what is present is vijnana. They are further explained. It is called citta considering its movement to a distant past; it is manas considering its previous movement and it is vijnana considering its tendency to rebirth (v. Ibid). A similar distinction is admitted by the Yogacaras: citta is Alayavijnana; Manas is klistam manas (defiled mind) as well as the mind of immediate past moment; vijnana is what cognizes the object in the present moment (Yogacarabhumi, p.11) The Sarvastivadina too say that the immediate past moment of consciousness is manas, i.e. mana indriya, and vijnana is what cognizes its each object prativijnaptih (विज्ञानं प्रतिविज्ञप्तिः. vijnanam -Kosa.

According to the Satadharmavidyamukha citta is classified into eight as follows: five sensuous consciousnesses as related to five senses: eye, ear, nose, tongue and body, the sixth: manovijana, Seventh: Klistam manovijana and the eighth: Alayavijnana (v. Pancavastuka, Appendix. 49-50). The first six are admitted also by all early Buddhists. The last two are added by the Yogacarins. Takakusu explains the last three types thus: Sense-center, individualizing thought-center of Egotism, and store-center of ideation (Essentials, p. 37).

Alaya, store-consciousness is the seed-bed of all that exists. Every seed lies in the store-consciousness and when it sprouts out into object world a reflection returns as a new seed. This new seed lies latent in it and gets manifest when the seed becomes matured under favourable conditions (Ibid). The Yogacarabhumi comments: Defiled mind is always centre of delusion, egotism, arrogence and self-love (अविद्या आरमहिंद्दिममानतृष्णा, avidya atmadrsti asmimana trsna). The store-consciousness serves as seat of seeds, abode of all

ideations, and is counted resasultant and a new birth-taking factor (सर्वेबीजगतमाश्रयभावनिष्ठम्पादानुविपाकसङगृहीतम्,)

Yo. ch. p. 11). Sarva-bijagatam asrayabhavanistham upadatrvipaka-samgrhitam)

According to the Abhidharmasutra all elements are deposited (as seeds) in store-consciousness and the latter again in the former: thus they both go on as mutual causes and effects (M. Vibh. Tika, 28).

This means that the mind reaches out into outer world and perceiving the objects put new ideas into the mind-store. Again these new ideaseeds sprout out to reflect still newer seeds. Thus the seeds are accumulated and stored there. The old seeds and new ones are mutually depending and form ever-rotating cycle (cp. Takakusu, Essential, p. 37). This explanation comes into conflict with the established tenet of the school (Siddhanta), according to which store-consciousness is only productive cause of all other active consciousnesses (pravrtti-vijnana) which are called collectively 'enjoyable' (upabhoga). All the impure elements are stored in it by way of effects and the store-consciousness is related to them by way of efficient cause. It is indeterminate (avyakrta) as either good or bad, because it is essentially resultant of acts of previous life (vipaka). It accumulates all impressions of the effects which result from the acts of previous life and are flowing spontaneously therefrom (vipaka-nisyandaphala) because it serves as the final cause of the good and the bad elements (Kusala-akusala-dharmadhipatyat). Hence it is the efficient cause of all active impure elements as well as the final cause of all active consciousness-bodies (M. Vibh. Tika. p. 27-28).

Vasubandhu who pleads that the entire universe of the subjective and objective elements is mere transformation of one consciousness (vijnana-parinama) brings it under three heads: 1) one Resultant consciousness, 2) one thinking mind and 3) Six types of consciousness representing their respective objects, visible matter, etc. Commenting on the first, Resultant consciousness Vasubandhu says:

"It is the resultant and seat of all seeds" (**信如**新史 Vipakah sarvabijakam). It is abode of all seeds of defiling elements; hence it is termed storing centre (alaya). Or all elements are stored in it by way of effects (karya-bhava) and again the storing centre is stored in every element by way of cause (karana-bhava).¹ It is a resultant effect since it is produced in the form of different sentient beings in different

realms of existence as a result of good and bad acts of previous life. (see Trimsika, ver. 2).

Vasubandhu in his Karmasiddhi (Et. lamotte's French Translation in Melanges Chinois Et. Buddhique. Vol. IV. further remarks: It is called Adana-vijnana as it assumes the body; it is Alaya-vijnana as all seeds of dharmas are stored in it; it is Vipaka-vijnana as it is a retribution of the acts of previous life (p. 103).

It is named Bhavangavijnana in the scripture of the Tamrasatiya school, Mulavijnana in the scripture of the Mahasanghika school and Asamsarika-skandha in the scripture of the Mahisasaka school. (p.106). Note: Other two skandhas of the Mahisasaka are Ksanika-skandha and ekajanmavadhi-skandha- from Masuda. p. 63. (Ibid. p. 106 n. 13). Asanga also considers alaya as Bhavanga (v. M. sutral. XI. 32).

Alayavijnana's object and aspect or form (alambana-akara) are imperceptible. In the cessation trance (nirodha-samapatti) there is one consciousness whose object and aspect are difficult to understand; likewise are the object and aspect of Alaya too. It comes under Vijnano-padanaskandha. But the sutra speaks of the six consciousness-bodies alone and not of the Alayavijnana (separately). Why so? The intention of Buddha is explained in the Sandhinirmocana: Believing that they (ignorant) would imagine that the Alayavijnana is the soul, I have not revealed it to the ignorant people (p. 106-7) Sandhinirmocanasutra, stanza cited, p. 103. n. 108:

बादानविज्ञान गभीर सूक्ष्मो ओघो यथा वर्तति सर्ववीजो। बालान एसो मयिन प्रकासि माहैव आत्मा परिकल्पयेयु:॥

Adanavijnana gabhira suksmo ogho yatha vartati Sarvabijo/balana eso mayi an prakasi mahaiva atma parikalpayeyuh//cp. Trim. bhas. p. 34 with slight variation in the second line.

Why do they think so? Because this consciousness is beginningless (anadikalika) and continues to the end of Samsara; because it is very subtle in its aspect, it does not change. Six consciousness-bodies are gross in their support-object, aspect and model (alambana, akara, visesa) and easier to recognize; since they are associated with passions, klesa and pratipaksamarga, counteracting path and they are brought under sanklesa and vyavadana, "pollution" and "purification" they are in the nature of result-consciousness. By this reasoning one will understand

that there exists one causal consciousness (hetu-vijnana). The sutra does not speak of this consciousness because it is different from the six ones. That is the intention of the sutra for not speaking of the Alayaconsciousness. Thiswise we explain why the sutras of other schools speak of only six consciousness-bodies as Bhavangavijnana....etc.. (p. 108).

Vasubandhu pleads that there will be no harm in accepting one person having two consciousnesses together: (1) cause-consciousness and (ii) result-consciousness supporting each other. For, the retribution-consciousness (hetuvijnana) is perfumed by the active consciousness (pravrttivi). When they exist in two persons there is no such mutual relationship. Therefore we do not have any difficulty in this proposition (p. 109). Ref. also Trimsika, ver. 15.

We may note here that the position is quite different with the Satyasiddhi. According to this school one person can have only one mind at a time. The presence of two minds at a time involves two persons. This situation has been necessitated for the school on account of its refusing to support the Sarvastivadins' tenet of samprayoga, association of thoughts (v.chs. 65-76.)

We understand further that the problem of store-consciousness has also been discussed by Vasubandhu in his comment on the Dasabhumi-Sutra wherein this consciousness has ultimately been linked up with the Matrix of Tathagata as its interior source. The well-known Avatamsaka School of Buddhism (which is founded on the Gandavyuha Sutra) has sprung up absorbing much of the traditions and interpretations laid down in the Dasabhumi-Sutra and the comment thereon by Vasubandhu (Essentials, p. 110-11).

The Yogacara Idealists propounded the store-consciousness as repository of seeds of the active mind and mental states. We should remember that this parent consciousness itself a polluted and impermanent, and hence it cannot serve our urge for the spiritual goal which may act as a guiding principle in our life purpose. Some sort of this rational thinking must have led the later Idealists to postulate the theory of causation by Dharmadhatu, Foundation of Elements which is a universal principle present in every individual; it is also termed Tathagata-garbha (v. Discussion on this topic in my Bud. Idealism).

Let us take note of Takukusu's observation on the causation-theory of the later Idealists: The theory of causation by Dharmadhatu is the climax of all causation theories; it is actually the conclusion of the theory of causal origination as it is the universal causation and it is already within the theory of universal immanence, pansophism, cosmotheism or whatever it may be called. (Essentials, p. 113). The causation theory was first expressed by action-cause, since the action originates in ideation the theory was in the second stage expressed by the Ideation-store; the latter again was in the third stage expressed as originated in the Matrix of Tathagata, Tathagatagarbha (cp. Ibid).

The above process of thinking is truly a climax in the development of Buddhist thought. The theory of causation by the sole action-influence was pleaded by the early Buddhists with a view to saving an absurd situation arising out of their no-soul doctrine. The Brahmanical system pleads for the soul as a spark of divine power implying thereby the presence of God in every individual. Since God is dethroned in Buddhism the soul is also likewise dropped. Thus the doctrine of immanece (antaryami-vada) that has been emphasized in the Brahmanical and other religious scriptures was not favoured in the early stage of Buddhism. Now we find a revival in Mahayana Buddhism of the doctrinef of immance in the form of Dharmadhatu or Tathagata-garbha which is a reverse mode of store-consciousness (v. Ratnagotra for detailed elucidation of the Garbha-theory).

The transcendental knowledge which comes in the possession of a Yogin at the final stage of his spiritual endeavour has been designated by Vasubandhu as Dharmakaya, Anasravadhatu, Asrayaparavrtti. Vasubandhu speaks of it as সাম্বাদ্যালা, Asraya-paravrtti, because a metamorphosis of Asraya-store-consciousness is effected into a non-dual knowedge (which is the same as Dharmakaya) as a result of dispelling the biotic forces of dualism which are active from immemorial days (his Trimsika, ver. 29-30 with Bhasya of Sthiramati).

Vajra-Samadhi calls it Amala-jnana, immaculate knowledge. Since this knowledge flashes up trasplanting the polluted store-consciousness ithas been considered a nineth pure knowledge in the Vajra-Samadhi (r.Lie benthal, Tung pao, XLIV.p.349). The relationship between these two knowledges, may either be identity or diversity. The identity view is perhaps favoured by Vasubandhu and his school because the transcendental knowledge is not counted as the nineth in the early

texts of the school whereas the diversity view is endorsed in the V. samadhi. There is possibly a third view 2, viz. the view of indescribability which may also be the opinion of Vasubandhu (v. his Trimsika, vr. 22.)

The nomenclature 'store-consciousness', 'Alaya-vijnana' is not quite popular with the logical school of Dignaga, though the school advocates strongly in favour of the idealistic outlook of the universe. Dignaga, for example, after proving the impossibility of external objects existing either in an atomic form or aggregate form elucidates in fine how to account for our manifold experiences of things in the outside world. He says: It is the object of our knowledge which exists internally in the knowledge itself as a knowable aspects and this knowable aspect appears to us as though it exists externally (v. Alam. pariksa, ver.6). Here in this context Dignaga is not enthusiast to speak of the nomenclature of Alaya-vijnana, though his commentator, Vinitadeva makes good the lapse' (v. the forthcoming publication of this comment from Tib. version). Dignaga's reluctance might be prompted by the adverse comment from the opposite camp like the Madhyamikas and others. A similar situation may also account for the Lankavatara Sutra's cautious approach to the Yogacatas' eight-fold division of consciousness. The Sut a, though grouped under the Yogacara classics is leaned towards the Prajnaparamita doctrine as is evident from its solemn declaration that the said eight types of consciousness are not at all transformations of one basic mind. They are indistinguishable like the ocean and its waves, hence they are of one and the same trait:

> अभिन्नलक्षणान्यष्टौ न लक्ष्या नापि लक्षणम् । उदघेश्च तरङ्गणां यथा नासि विशेषणम् । विज्ञानं तथा चित्ते: परिणामो न लक्ष्यते ।।

(cp. Tucci's paper, IHQ. IV. 545, f).

The great champion of the Madhyamaka school, Candrakirti comments: The advocate of the store-consciousness pleads that it is the seat of the seeds of all active consciousnesses and it produces the appearance of the world. This advocacy resembles the Brahmanical system pleading for God as a creator of the universe. One difference between them is that God is viewed permanent and the Alaya impermanent but in other respect they differ not much. (v. my Sanskrit text, Madhi. Avatara, Ch.VI, p.42).

The same accusation has been levelled by Acarya Bhavaviveka in his Karatala-rtna.: If Dharma-kaya, Norm-body which is characterized by the Yogacara as Asraya-paravrtti, metamorphosis of the store-consciousness be admitted in an existing self-being, then it is hardly distinguishable from the soul, Atman of the Brhmanical system because the soul also is described in their scripture as something existent, but beyond the reach by word and mind (v. My skt. text, p. 75-6).

Going back still earlier we have the Satyasddhi hurling strictures on such theories thus: The concepts of Purusa (or Pudgala) and alaya are all wrong views. This tense remark reveals that this author is inclined to bring them under the category of a perverted notion (v. ch. 152).

It appears that the Alaya-doctrine does not appeal so much to the Tibetan mystics as the doctrine of Sunyata does. The Tibetan Yogin Milarepa bears witness to this own surmise.

The following statements about him may be noted here: "He was master architect, well-versed in the exposition of the science of the Clear Void Mind, wherein all forms and substances have their cause and origin" (Tibet's Great Yogi, Milarepa, W.Y. Evans-Wentz, p. 36). "He was a most learned professor in the Science of the Mind". (p.38, para.2)

It is reported that Milarepa himself uttered the following: As the mere name of food doth not satisfy the appetite of the hungry person, but he must eat food, so, also a man who would learn about the Voidness of Thought, must meditate so as to realize it In short, habituation to the contemplation of voidness of Equilibrum, of the Indescribable, of the Incognizable forms the four different stages of the Four Degrees of Initiation graduated steps in the ultimate goal of the mystic Vajra-yana. (pp.142-143).

To what particular doctrine of Mahayana Sect he belongs? Milarepa replied: It was the highest creed of Mahayana, it was called the Path of Total Self-Abnegation, for the purpose of attaining Buddhahood in one life-time(p. 186). I was perfectly convinced that the real source of both Samsara and Nirvana lay in the Voideness (of the Supra-mundane Mind). (p. 209). Noteworthy is the saying uttered on the occasion of his entering into Final Nirvana:

That which is of the nature of the uncreated, the Dharma-dhatu, the unborn, the Voidness, the Sunyata hath no beginning nor doth it evercease to be, E'en birth and death are of the nature of the Voidness. Such being the Real Truth, avoid doubts and misgiving about it (p. 288).

Sunyata, Void or Voidness in the above passages conveys the idea of an absolute and unqualified voidness which approaches nearer to the Madhyamika's conception of the term than to the Yogacara's positive one, Cfr. Notes on pp. 37, n.5, 285,n.3, 288,n.3, etc.

Here we may incidentally take note of an interesting piece of truth a common creed of the Yogacara Buddhists that is vouchsaved by Milarepa in the saying: "I understand that all sentient beings possess a ray of the Eternal and that we must work for their salvation and development" (p. 85). This confession seems to be an echo of the Garbha theory of the Yogacaras.

Et. Lamotte has drawn our attention to the fact that the term alaya can be traced to Pali canonical sources in the passages: आल्यारामा को पनायं पजा आल्यरता आल्यम्दिता, alayarama kho panayam paja alayarata alayamdita, "people are delighted in alaya, engrossed in alaya and joyous inalaya" (Ref. Digh.II.p.36,3,37,25; Majhima I, 167, 32, Samyutta I, p.136,11: Anguttara II, p.131,30; Mahavastu III, p.314,3). But its sense is pancakamaguna, five objects of five senses according to comment on Digh. later the Vijnanavadins found in the passage a justification of their theory of Alayavijnana, psychological basis of the school. He further remarks that the Vimalakirti still ignores the Vijnanavadin (Et. Lamotte op. cit. p. 246, n.4). Refer to Majh.I.190 speaking of the Alaya in parallel with chanda (wish), anunaya (pursuit) and so on. The renowned Buddhist poet Asvaghosa still ignores the later technical sense of the term in this line:

लोकेऽस्मिन् आलयारामे निवृत्तौ दुर्लभा रति:।

Loke, smin alayarame nivrrttau durlabha ratih. The taste towards the retreat is very rare in this world which is engrossed in enjoing the sensual pleasures, alaya. Sundarananda, XII,22

Some Brahmanical Parallels

The advocate of transformation-theory (parinamavada) on the Brahmanical side is the Sankhya philosopher. His eight rudimentary elements are comparable with the Vijnanavadin's groups of eight consciousnesses. The Sankhya eight rudiments are: Pradhana or Avyakrta, ahankara, buddhi and five great elements (v. Bud. carita, XII, 18, Caraka, Sarira, ch. 1 and Gita, XIII, 5). The classical Sankhya replaced the five great elements by their corresponding five subtle ones a parallel development is also noticeable in the Satya-Siddhi (Ch. 36). The Bhagavat Gita in an earlier Chap. VII, 4 declares that the Nature, Prakrti is distinguished into eight: Five great elements, mind, manas, intellect, buddhi and individuation, ahankara. The polluted mind of the Vijnanavadin may be compared with ahankara because both are sources of the I-notion, the Gita's mind with Alaya-consciousness and buddhi with mano-vijnana. Caraka assigsns to Buddhi the function of I-notion from which state are produced five great elements. The mind, manas as producer of the world has been stated in the Mundaka Up. (I. 1,8) according to the interpretation of Sri Sankara (v. his bhasya). This is probably only the passage which mentions the mind as the source of other elements, earth, etc. Let it be noted however that the mind, in turn, is a product of the personal Brahman called Prana, breath.

It has been previously stated that citta, manas and vijnana signify one and the same thing for the Buddhists. The Taittiviya Up. (II.4) mentions manas and vijnana as distinct elements (cp. Katha. III, 1,3)g Sankara takes vijnana for buddhi (v. his bhasya). The classical definition of manas and buddhi is that the former is characterized as designin(sankalpa) and the latter as deciding (axhyavasaya), (v. Sankhya-karika, 23, 27) and also accepted by Sankara (v. Taitt, bhasya, II, 3,4, and Gita II, 41,44). There are certain contexts where Sankara is obliged to identify vijnana and manas (Taitt. II, 6 Bha.) and jnana and buddhi as one element (v. katha, III, 1,13, bha.).

The Prasnopanisad, while explaining "Sarva" "all" enumerates four distinct states: manas, mind, buddhi, intellect, ahankara, individuation and citta, spirit together with their respestive objects: mantavya, boddhavya, ahankartavya and cetayitavya. The last element in this group of "all" is p ana indicating thereby that it is the source as well as the binding factor of the entire group. Incidentally we may note here that this "Sarva" may correspond roughly with the Buddhist "Sarva" which covers the entire universe grouped into twelve bases

(ayatana). This apart, the Upanisads and the Gita speak prominently of the states: manas and buddhi probably as a result of the Sankhya speculation which perhaps serves as the nucleas of the early metaphysical rackonings in India. The Buddhists nowhere mention buddhi as a distinct mental state although other states like dhi, mati meaning prajna are stated (v. Trimsika, 10, Conception of Bud. p. 84).

According to the reformed school of Buddhism, viz. Satyasiddhi one mind element alone is substantial and all other mental phenomena are only its different moods and nominal but not substantial. This school thus brings under one element all other mental states counted into sixty by the Sarvastivadins as separate substantial elements. The Vijnanavadins do not dispute with the Sarvastivadins and accept their entire list (v. Trimsika and Satadharma. in my Pancavastuka, Appendix). They both differ each other, however in their ontological outlook, i.e. one is Idealist and the other Realist. Sri Sankara once is inclined to deny distinction between manas and buddhi (v. Kena Up, I,1,5: यन्मनसा न मनते, Yan manasa na manute....manas includes also buddhi(; his authority for this opinion is the Chandogyopanisad (I, 5,3) which declares: काम: संकल्पो विचिकित्सा श्रद्धा अश्रद्धाधित: अपृति ह्री: धीरित्येतत सर्वंमन एव । Kamas sankalpo vicikitsa sraddha asraddha dhrtih adhrtih hrih dhirityetat sarvam mana eva (v. his bhasya).

Antahkarana, inner organ is a collective term favoured by the Vedantins for different mental faculties: citta, manas, vijnana and buddhi, etc. Another collective term generally found in the Upanisads is Sattva having the same idea (v. Sveta. Up. III. 12). A favourite expression in the Upanisads is Visuddhasattva to convey the idea that the person of purified mind or some inner faculty becomes fit to realize his own self, atman, Brahman (v. Mundaka III, 1,8,10, and III, 2,6, etc.). Sattva is a Sankhya terminology for buddhi, intellect according to Caraka (v. my paper on Sankhya, Bharatiya Vidya, 1952, p. 1905).

May we suggest therefore that this old idea of mind or intellect is intended in the term "Bodhi-Sattva", (Bodhi-minded) and "Mahasattva" (great-minded)?

One more interesting topic I would like to discuss in this context. The early Buddhists conceive that each sensuous consciousness has its own basis, viz. the eye for the visual conscious, the ear for auditory one

and so on. What is the basis for the mind, a sixth organ? The Sarvastivadin assumes that mind's just previous moment serves as the basis for the sub-equent thought moment. But the early Theravadin would not agree with this because a basis according to them ought to be of the material character. Hence they postulate Hadayavathu, the heart-substance as the mind's basis. It is further claimed that this postulation has been made in accordance with a popular belief. (cp. Compendium. p.279). Now wherefrom does this popular believe come? We have an interesting narrative in the Upanisad.

The Aitareyopanisad narrates the process of the world-creation as follows:- There was in the beginning one Atman alone; and no other thing there was active (misat). He thought: I shall create the world. He accordingly created these worlds: Ambhas, Maricis, Mara and Ap. Ambhas world is what is the above the heaven, Dyuloka and also a foundation of the latter. Beneath the haven is Antariksa, that is the world of Maricis -Rasmis- rays of the Sun. beneath the Maricis is the earth known as Mara: beneath the earth is Ap-water.

Then the Atman thought: I shall create the Lokapalas, guardians of the world; then he drew out the Purusa from the waters and other great elements and shaped him (with head and other parts). He heated him (by his tapas); of the Purusa so heated the mouth burst like an egg; from the mouth (came out) speech and Agni, fire, noses bursting breaths and the wind came out; the eyeballs bursting came out Caksus, eye and therefrom Aditya (Sun), the ears bursting (came out) the ear organ and therefore quarters; the skin bursting hairs and therefrom plants and trees came out: the heart bursting manas, mind and therefrom the moon came out;

When the created gods requested the Atman to provide with their own dwelling places, the Purusa was finally presented before them. They being pleased entered into their places as per His Order:

Agni becoming speech entered in the mouth, the wind becoming breath entered in the noses, Aditya becoming the eye entered in the eye-balls. Disas becoming the ear entered in the ear-holes, Osadhi and Vanaspati becoming hairs entered in the skin. Candramas becoming manas, mind entered in the heart......(v. I and II)

The above narrative makes obvious that each sense-organ has its own basis as well as its presiding diety and thus the mind has the heart as its basis and the moon as its presiding diety.

The same Upanisad declares on another occasion that the heart and the mind are identical: Yad etat hrdayam tan mana eva. (III, 1,2). It is further stated that all the mental states such as Samjnana, vijnana and prajnana and others were all one and the same. This point goes quite in agreement with the Satyasiddhi's contention of one mind becoming into several mental states.

Note I (p.6). This interpretation is quite compatible with a transformation-theorist, Parinama-vadin who is generally counted as Sat-karya-vadin, an upholder of the imperceptible presence of the effect in the cause. Thus when the effect is present in the cause, vice-verso also may be the case, i.e. the cause may be present in the effect. So this interpretation of Alaya is very convincing.

Note 2 (p.10). For the transformation-theorist the relation between the cause and the effect may be both: identity and indescribability. Vasubandhu accordingly says Paratantra is neither different from nor identical with Parinispanna (ver.22). The Advaita-Vedantin would also countenance the same view, cfr my paper on Gaudapada in the Bulletin, Vol VIII, 1, p.33 f.

Note 3 (p.16). This world of men is termed here Mara ($\pi \tau$). The Buddhists call it Maro ($\pi \tau$), i.e. the world belonging to the god of death.