Journal of Indian Philosophy (2005) 33: 243–284
DOI 10.1007/s10781-004-6930-8

TAO JIANG

ĀLAYAVIJÑĀNA AND THE PROBLEMATIC OF CONTINUITY IN THE *CHENG WEISHI LUN*

This essay is an attempt to look into the key Yogācāra concept of *ālayavijñāna* in its more developed form as presented in the *Cheng Weishi Lun* (*Vijñaptimātratā-siddhi-śāstra*, *The Treatise on the Doctrine of Consciousness-Only*, hereafter *CWSL*).[1] The authorship of the *CWSL* is traditionally attributed to Xuan Zang, the famous 7th century Chinese Buddhist pilgrim and translator. It is composed as an extended commentary on Vasubandhu's *Triṃśikā* by incorporating commentaries of *Triṃśikā* by prominent Indian Yogācāra Buddhists, of which only Sthiramati's survives today in Sanskrit.[2] The text sides with Dharmapāla's commentary and uses it as the ultimate authority in the interpretation of *Triṃśikā*.[3]

[1] Unless noted otherwise, the *CWSL* texts cited in this essay are my own renditions. The only complete English translation of the *CWSL* is done by Wei Tat, from which I have benefited a great deal. However, Wei Tat's translation, as impressive as it is, has made many interpretative insertions into the text which are helpful for the understanding of the text but might be too liberal as a translation. The paginations of my translations are from the Chinese portion of Wei Tat's translation of the *CWSL* for those readers who might want to check both the original Chinese text and Wei Tat's translation as well as his interpretation. Occasionally Wei Tat's interpretative translations are used due to the terseness, and therefore vagueness, of Xuan Zang's text. In other words, this essay treats Wei Tat's work more as an interpretation rather than a strict translation. Those cases are marked as Wei Tat's work.

[2] Shunkyō Katsumata's *Bukkyō ni okeru Shinshikisetsu no Kenkyū* (*A Study of the Citta-Vijñāna Thought in Buddhism*) offers a detailed comparison between Dharmapāla, as represented by Xuan Zang, and Sthiramati on their interpretations of Vasubandhu's *Triṃśikā*.

[3] Scholars have questioned various peculiar nature of the *CWSL*. For example, Shunkyō Katsumata (9–10) laments that a translator as great as Xuan Zang composes the text through a compilation of selective translations of various

In the *CWSL* Xuan Zang sets out to elaborate a key Yogācāra doctrine described in the *Triṃśikā* that all of our experience is the result of the manifold transformation of consciousness, from Dharmapāla's position. At the core of Xuan Zang's effort is the notion of *ālayavijñāna*, usually translated as the storehouse consciousness. As Lambert Schmithausen (18–19) rightly points out, *ālayavijñāna* was initially postulated to provide the support for a meditator during two deep meditative states wherein all conscious activities are supposed to have stopped. However, once formulated, the development of *ālayavijñāna* took a course of its own, and the concept was expanded to accommodate other doctrinal needs of Buddhism, the most important of which was to account for our sense of self and our cognition of external objects. Given the orthodox Buddhist doctrine of impermanence which applies to both the self and external objects, the Buddhists had to explain away identity. For this purpose, they found an appealing candidate, namely continuity. Accordingly, they argued that the self results from the misidentification of continuity as identity. That is, continuity is mistaken as identity. Now the task that faced the Buddhists was how to account for continuity without appealing to identity. This is precisely the challenge Xuan Zang takes up in the *CWSL*.

There are three ways continuity can be conceived. First, continuity is change of properties of an unchanging substance. Second, continuity is due to an entity within change persisting from one stage into the next – identity in difference. Finally, continuity is nothing but an immediate contiguity, with the immediately preceding moment being the efficient cause of the immediately succeeding moment. All three

---

(Footnote 3 Continued).
commentaries instead of translating all ten commentaries themselves, thus losing an invaluable source for us to learn more accurately about the works of the ten prominent Indian Yogācārins, even though it is still an important source for their thought. He notes that such a practice is rather inconsistent with Xuan Zang's usual practice of staying overly faithful to the original texts in his translations (9). Traditionally it is believed that the particular style of the *CWSL* was adopted at the request of Xuan Zang's favorite disciple, Gui Ji. Dan Lusthaus goes even further in claiming that "from its inception, the *Ch'eng wei-shih Lun* represents Ku'ei-chi's [Gui Ji] aspirations, not Hsüan-tsang's, and it is Ku'ei-chi who has invested it with catechismic significance" (2002, 399). Here we are not concerned with these questions.

views, with certain nuanced but important modifications, are adopted by Xuan Zang. His strategy consists of three steps. First, he adopts the Madhyamika Buddhist position that all existents are empty of any intrinsic nature,[4] and interprets this to mean that a being does not have any metaphysical identity but is itself a continuum of momentary entities. Second, he attempts to reduce the continuity of external objects to the continuity of conscious activities; this is the culmination of the idealist tendency of Buddhism. Third, once the primacy of consciousness is established, he then moves to the theorization of the possibility of enlightenment as a continuous process from the deluded state of consciousness to the enlightened one. Apparently, the second step holds the key towards a viable account of continuity for the Buddhist and in this essay we will focus on precisely this second step. We will evaluate Xuan Zang's effort to account for continuity vis-à-vis his presentation of *ālayavijñāna*.

Ālayavijñāna is conceived as a grounding but evolving consciousness, consisting of ever-changing seeds whose subliminal existence warrants a congruity between successive dharmic moments. The basic argument of this essay is that *ālayavijñāna* in the *CWSL* is a Mahāyāna Buddhist notion of the subliminal consciousness formulated to account for the continuity of our sense of self and the continuity of our experience of the world. Our attention will be focused on this question: does *ālayavijñāna* as it is presented in the *CWSL* eventually solve the problematic of continuity within the parameters of Mahāyāna Buddhist discourse, and if so, how?

THE PRIMACY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

In order to argue for continuity within the dormain of consciousness, Xuan Zang has to establish the primacy of consciousness first. His strategy is to challenge the reification of the two aspects of a cognitive experience, namely, consciousness and its object. That is to say, Xuan Zang considers conscious process and its object[5] to be two aspects of the same cognitive experience; neither one is independent of the other. However, the mutual dependency of conscious activities and external objects alone does not establish the primacy of the former

[4] According to Dan Lusthaus, Xuan Zang's effort to argue for the non-difference of Madhyamaka and Yogācāra is due to the influence of Dharmāpala while he was studying at Nālandā (2002, 404).

[5] This is what J.N. Mohanty calls "consciousing" (34).

over the latter. That is, he still has to justify his approach which prioritizes the consciousness-aspect over the object-aspect. Hence, he needs to make the argument that the existence of an object is not independent of the cognitive structure through which it is cognized and verified.

According to Xuan Zang, there are ultimately two kinds of beings, *dharma* and *ātman*,[6] corresponding to the two realms of existences, external and internal. *Dharma* refers to the external and *ātman* the internal. Let us take a look at how he makes the argument that the real existence of the two is irrelevant to our philosophical endeavor. Xuan Zang defines the way the two terms are used this way: "'*Ātman*' (Ch: *wo*) means ownership and domination whereas '*dharma*' (Ch: *fa*) means norms and grasping" (8). He contends that *ātman* and *dharma* are the result of the misidentification of a continuum as identity or substance. It is with this observation that Vasubandhu begins his *Triṃśikā*:

ātmadharmopacāro hi vividho yaḥ pravartate/
vijñānapariṇāme 'sau pariṇāmaḥ sa ca tridhā/
vipāko mananākhyaś ca vijñaptir viṣayasya ca

For the various metaphorical usage of "self" (*ātman*) and "objects" (*dharma*) is used on the basis of the transformation of consciousness.
And that transformation is threefold: retribution, intellection, and perception of the sense-field.

There are a number of points worthy of our attention here. First of all, Vasubandhu points out that self (*ātman*) and objects (*dharma*) are nothing but metaphors. As such, they have no reference to real self-contained entities. Then what are the referents

[6] Various Hindu schools have made their own list of metaphysical categories. The most famous one is given by the Vaiśeṣika school which lists seven categories: substance, quality, action, universal, individual, inherence, and absence/negation. *Ātman* is included under the category of substance. The Buddhists in general do not accept the validity of some of these categories, rejecting them as nothing more than the result of intellectual abstraction with no experiential correlates. This is evidenced in the *CWSL* where the Buddhist position is defended. The basic strategy in the *CWSL* in dealing with the opponents' views on the metaphysical categories is to link the categories to consciousness in arguing that they are perceivable only through sense organs. Hence they do not have a separate existence apart from consciousness. Since the arguments are not directly related to the theme of this essay, they will be filtered out. The Buddhists reduce these categories to two, self (*ātman*) and elements (*dharma*), namely the non-physical/internal and the physical/external, or at least they pick up these two as the representatives of metaphysical categories the treatment of which should lay to rest any lingering concerns regarding other metaphysical categories. This is the way *Triṃśikā* treats metaphysical categories.

of *ātman* and *dharma*? According to Vasubandhu, *ātman* and *dharma* correlate to no reality beyond the realm of consciousness. Instead, our sense of *ātman* and *dharma* are nothing but the result of the transformation of consciousness.[7] This transformation is threefold: the five sense-consciousnesses together with the sixth or sense-centered consciousness (*manovijñāna*) that discriminates and cognizes physical objects; the seventh or thought-centered consciousness (*manas*) that wills and reasons on a self-centered basis; and the eighth or storehouse consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*).

At first sight, the claim that both *ātman* and *dharma* are the results of the transformation of consciousness easily associates it with the position of a metaphysical idealist, if metaphysical idealism can be roughly understood as a view that holds the ultimate reality to be mental, spiritual, or mind-dependent.[8] Is Xuan Zang's Yogācāra Buddhism a form of metaphysical idealism? Let us look at how he accounts for the self and the external world by appealing to the transformation of consciousness.

He begins by investigating our cognition. An examination of our cognition would reveal a distinct structure:

> When a defiled consciousness itself is born, it is manifested in two apparent characteristics (Sk. *lakṣaṇas*; Ch. *xiang*): as the appropriated (Sk, *ālambana*; Ch. *suo yuan*) and the appropriating (Sk. *sālambana*; Ch. *neng yuan*). ... As an apparent object, the appropriated explains the perceived aspect of consciousness (Sk. *nimittabhāga*; Ch. *xiang feng*). As an apparent subject, the appropriating explains the perceiving aspect (Sk, *darśanabhāga*; Ch. *jian feng*). (Xuan Zang, 138)

To put it simply, there is a dual structure in all of our – obviously defiled – cognitive activities, namely the perceiving aspect, *darśanabhāga*, and the perceived aspect, *nimittabhāga*.

As Shunkyō Katsumata (245) acutely observes, Xuan Zang makes such a case through an adoption of Dharmapāla's controversial commentary of verse seventeen of Vasubandhu's *Triṃśikā* since it is

[7] "If such words [as *ātman* and *dharmas*] are metaphorical expressions, on what ground can they be established? They are both metaphorical postulates resulting from the transformations of consciousness" (Xuan Zang, 10).

[8] This is different from subjective idealism which emphasizes the ultimate reality of the knowing subject (and it may either admit the existence of a plurality of such subjects or deny the existence of all save one in which case it becomes solipsism). It will become clear that, to Xuan Zang neither the knowing subject nor the known object is the ultimate reality. Xuan Zang's Yogācāra idealism is also different from objective idealism which denies that the distinction between subject and object, between knower and known, is ultimate and maintains that all finite knowers and their thoughts are included in an Absolute Thought.

not clear whether *Triṃśikā* can be read in such a way if we are to be faithful to the literal meaning of the text.

vijñānapariṇāmo 'yaṃ vikalpo yad vikalpyate|
tena tan nāsti tenedaṃ sarvaṃ vijñaptimātrakam||17||

The transformation of this consciousness is imagination.
That which is imagined does not exist.
Therefore all is cognition-only.

However, as Katsumata points out (245), in Xuan Zang's commentary which follows Dharmapāla's interpretation, this verse is interpreted as stating that the transformation of consciousness is the result of its being bifurcated into the discriminating and the discriminated. Since neither of the two exists outside of consciousness, there can be nothing but consciousness. This interpretation

argues for the transformation of consciousnesses by pointing to the perceiving and the perceived aspects of the eight consciousnesses and their concomitant mental activities (*citta* and *caittas*), and as a result, the perceiving aspect of the transforming consciousness becomes the discriminating aspect and the perceived aspect the discriminated. Therefore, because the self and entities do not exist apart from the bifurcation of the transforming consciousness, it is said that all is consciousness... (Katsumata, 246)

This is an important departure from Vasubandhu's text and a key development of the Yogācāra teaching by Dharmapāla and Xuan Zang. What is significant is that to Xuan Zang this dual structure is intrinsic to consciousness. That is to say that consciousness has an inherent structure to it, or to use the traditional terminology in Indian philosophical discourse, consciousness is formed (*sākāra*) and it is not formless (*nirākāra*). The *CWSL* defends the position this way:

If the mind and its concomitant mental activities (*citta* and *caittas*) did not have in themselves the characteristics of the appropriated, they would not be able to appropriate their own objects. Otherwise they would be able to appropriate indiscriminately all objects, since they would appropriate their own objects as the objects of others and appropriate the objects of others as their own. (138)

What is being argued here is that if consciousness does not have the perceived aspect within itself, it would be impossible for consciousness either to perceive anything as its own object or to perceive discriminately. Two issues are at stake in this connection. First, how is it possible for consciousness to perceive its *own* object? If consciousness

is formless, and all the forms, namely its content, would come from without; since that which external to consciousness is publicly available, it cannot become the private object of consciousness as is required if consciousness is to have its *own* object. If, however, consciousness has an inherent form, such a problem can be easily resolved since in that case the form vis-à-vis the object/content is intrinsic to itself. Second, if consciousness is formless, how can it perceive objects discriminately instead of indiscriminately perceiving all objects? Why does it perceive some objects instead of others at one point or another? This is especially problematic when any apparent external object is absent.

As is well known, the Hindu realists, such as the Nyāya philosophers, argue that consciousness is formless and all distinction is derived from outside of consciousness (Mohanty, 34). But there are at least two difficulties associated with the realist position, namely how to account for misperception and dream experience, since in both of these cases there are no corresponding external objects. Without going into the complexities of the arguments,[9] it should be clear that formlessness or receptivity is at least not sufficient in explaining consciousness.

The realists take the view that consciousness is formless, hence receptive, whereas the Yogācārins think that consciousness has an intrinsic structure to it, hence it is formed. The realist theory of the receptivity of consciousness, such as Nyāya's, has an easier time in explaining the collectivity of experience since according to it, the foundation of the collectivity is from without, therefore independent of consciousness. However, it has a much harder time in explaining misperception, dream and the personal nature of cognitive experience. The idealist theory of formed consciousness, such as Yogācāra's, has just the opposite advantages and disadvantages. It is admittedly more successful in explaining the private aspect of our cognition, but how can an essentially private cognition become publicly available in the Yogācāra theory? We will deal with this issue later in the essay.

[9] In order to solve this problem, the Nyāya philosophers argue that misperception is not misperception of objects but rather misperception of place. In defending such a solution, they resort to rather convoluted arguments as to how that can be the case. I will not go into the details of those arguments which are interesting but unconvincing, or to use Hiriyanna's words, "subtle rather than profound" (228) (although he was not necessarily referring to this particular point when he made the comment about some of the Naiyāika theories).

On the subjective aspect of consciousness,

> If the mind and its concomitant mental activities did not have in themselves the characteristics of the appropriating, they, like space, would not be able to appropriate any object. Otherwise we would have to say that space itself can appropriate objects. (Xuan Zang, 138)

This point is less controversial since, after all, the distinguishing characteristic of consciousness is its subjectivity and cognitive ability. However, what is of special interest to us here is that Xuan Zang takes the subjectivity of consciousness as just one of its components; both subjectivity and objectivity are intrinsic to the structure of consciousness. "Therefore the mind and its concomitant mental activities must have two aspects, the perceived aspect (*nimittabhāga*) and the perceiving aspect (*darśanabhāga*)" (*ibid.*).

However, there is still a problem in this view:

> That which *nimittabhāga* and *darśanbhāga* depend on is itself called the 'thing.' This is the 'self-corroboratory' aspect, *svasaṃvittibhāga*. If this *bhāga* did not exist, there would be no recollection of the mind and its concomitant mental activities (*citta-caittas*), just as there is no memory of situations that have never been experienced. (Xuan Zang, 140)

To put it simply, according to Xuan Zang, each conscious moment has to be aware of itself so that memory or recollection of that moment can be possible. In other words, aside from the aspects of the perceiving and the perceived, there has to be an awareness of *this* perception of the perceived so that this perception can be recollected; otherwise, each perceptive moment would be self-contained. If that were the case, successive moments of perceptive experience would be rendered unrelated, resulting in the impossibility of memory and recollection of experiences.

Be this as it may, he has to address the following concern: is this self-corroboratory aspect also contained within each moment of perceptive experience or does it lie without? If it is outside of each moment of perception, it would resemble some notion of an uninvolved self, or to use Bina Gupta's word "the disinterested witness"[10] (*sākṣin*) which is the empirical manifestation of the eternal *ātman*. This would mean that some metaphysical concept of self, already rejected by the Buddhists, would sneak back into the Buddhist

[10] This is the title of her book which is a study of the concept of *sākṣin*, critical to the Advaita Vedānta epistemology. The translation of the term *sākṣin* as "disinterested witness" is attributed to Husserl's idea of the phenomenological ego as "disinterested on-looker" (Gupta, 5).

discourse. On the other hand, if the self-witnessing division is within each cognitive moment, the succession of moments becomes unaccounted for, hence defeating the very purpose of its postulation in explaining the possibility of memory and recollection.

In this connection, we find the following statement in the *CWSL*:

> Transformation (*pariṇāma*) of consciousness means that consciousness itself is transformed into two aspects, *nimittabhāga* and *darśanabhāga*. These two aspects originate in dependence upon the self-corroboratory aspect (*svasaṃvittibhāga*). (10)

What interests us in the above passage is that the perceiving and the perceived divisions originate from the self-corroboratory division of consciousness. This means that the two functional divisions of the perceiving and the perceived are within the self-corroboratory division of each conscious moment. Consequently, this third self-corroboratory division is apparently not outside of the two functional divisions. But the question remains: how can the momentary self-witness division warrant the continuity of the cognitive experience in order to account for the possibility of memory and recollection of a particular experience? On the one hand, this self-corroboratory aspect gives rise to the two functional divisions, while on the other hand it retains the effects generated by the cognitive experience of the two functional divisions of each conscious moment. In other words, the self-corroboratory division and the two functional divisions are mutually causal. Apparently, the self-corroboratory division is not simply witnessing the activities of the other two divisions, but is also involved itself. The self-corroboratory division is involved in two ways, according to Xuan Zang: it gives rise to the two divisions and receives the seeds as the effects retained from the function of the two divisions. This means that the continuity of consciousness relies on its self-corroboratory division, not the two functional divisions; even though the two functional divisions can appear to be continuous, their continuity derives from the continuity of the third division as its manifestations.

Hence, the *CWSL* concludes that "it is on the basis of these two aspects that *ātman* and *dharmas* are established, because there is no other basis" (*ibid.*). On the issue of the existence of *dharma*, the external world in this connection, a typical metaphysical idealist position, such as that held by the famous eighteenth century British philosopher George Berkeley, denies the independence of a world apart from our cognition of it. Xuan Zang's claim that *dharma* is the result of the transformation of consciousness appears to be the

quintessential metaphysical idealist position. However, the *CWSL* apparently tries to steer itself clear from the metaphysical question here. Accordingly, after carefully examining the structure of our cognitive experience of an external object, the non-controversial conclusion is that within each cognitive moment there are an experiencing subject and an experienced object, putting aside the self-corroboratory division for the moment. So far this is acceptable to Xuan Zang, and any step further is to him an unacceptable move, since it means to posit the existence of that which is independent of this cognitive structure. Here is how Xuan Zang raises the objection:

> How can we tell that there really are no external objects, but only internal consciousness appearing as external objects? It is because the existence of a real *ātman* and real *dharmas* cannot be ascertained. (12)

In fact, Xuan Zang is not denying the possibility of a real *ātman* or real *dharmas*, but is simply pointing out that their reality cannot be ascertained independent of consciousness. This means that the perception of an external world does not, by itself, warrant the existence of such a world, and that there is no *a priori* reason to either affirm or deny, within the parameters of consciousness, the existence of the "real" external world. In fact, Xuan Zang argues that to posit an external world independent of our cognition of it is an unnecessary theoretical complication insofar as the adequacy of explaining our cognition is concerned; and I call this "qualified metaphysical idealism."[11] It is not simply a reflection of the relationship between consciousness and the world, which would be epistemological, but rather how the realm of consciousness becomes the world as we experience it. Therefore, it is a form of metaphysical idealism in the sense that it holds the view that the

[11] The Yogācāra system dealt with in this essay is along the line of Vasubandhu's major works and their commentaries compiled by Xuan Zang in the *CWSL*. Regardless of whether Vasubandhu himself was an idealist or not, his teaching has been interpreted along the line of metaphysical idealism in the mainstream Indian Buddhist tradition, represented by Dharmakīrti, with only a few exceptions. As for what Vasubandhu himself advocates in this respect, there are the following positions found in modern Buddhist scholarship: Lusthaus: epistemological idealism; Kochumuttom: realist pluralism; Wood: idealist pluralism; Sharma: absolute idealism; Stcherbatsky: spiritual monism; Murti: idealism *par excellence*; Conze: metaphysical idealism. Amongst them, Lusthaus and Kochumuttom can be grouped together since both of them reject the ontological idealist interpretation of Yogācāra; the others can be viewed as variations on interpreting Yogācāra as advocating metaphysical idealism.

realm of consciousness *is* the world. It is qualified in the sense that any existence outside the realm of consciousness is neither affirmed nor denied.[12]

This qualified metaphysical idealist position is evidenced by the following remark, "In all of the graspings of *dharmas*, there might or might not be *dharmas* exterior to the mind, but there always are *dharmas* interior to the mind" (Xuan Zang, 88). It is revealing to note that Xuan Zang actually starts by conceding that in certain cases our experience of a physical object may indeed have a corresponding object exterior to the mind. The caveat in this connection is the contingent nature of such a correspondence; as he rightly observes, *not all* experience of an external object has its corresponding object external to the mind. A stock example would be dream experience, wherein the experience of an external object does not have any correspondence beyond the realm of the mind. Obviously in some of our experiences of external objects, their externality is not a necessary condition. This amounts to saying that the externality of objects is only a contingent factor in our experience of physical objects, whereas their internal representation within the realm of consciousness is a necessary component of all our experiences of physical objects. Or to be more exact, our experience of objects is real but their external existence is not necessarily so.

The opponents might argue that unless there is a real external world it would be impossible for the sense of externality to arise in the first place, including in dreams. Such an argument is a typical realist line and Xuan Zang, being an idealist, albeit a "qualified metaphysical idealist," cannot accept the realist presupposition in the argument. In any case, Xuan Zang is simply not interested in tracing the origin of our cognition, which would result in a hopelessly circular inquiry into whether it is the real existence of the external world that

[12] According to Diana Paul, Paramārtha's interpretation of Yogācāra also falls along the line of qualified metaphysical idealism although she did not use that term: "Although there are philosophical inconsistencies from one text to another, for Paramārtha, at least, Yogācāra is a system in which the world we experience evolves from acts of cognition continually in operation, and no other world is ours to *experience* (which is not the same thing as saying that no other world *exists*)" (Paul, 8). Paramārtha, as a prominent translator of Buddhist texts into Chinese during the 6th century, greatly influenced Xuan Zang's understanding of Yogācāra philosophy (Paul, 4).

gives rise to the sense of externality or the other way around.[13] What fascinates him is this question: why is consciousness able to create an external world in the absence of it? In order to respond to such a question, a thorough inquiry about the nature of consciousness is called for, and this is precisely Xuan Zang's goal. Hence we find the *CWSL* claiming that

> On the basis of the manifold activities of inner consciousnesses which serve as conditions for one another, the cause and effect are diffentiated. The postulation of external conditions is not of any use. (574)

Put simply, external objects are reduced to cognitions of them in the realm of consciousness and their actual existence is rendered irrelevant within Xuan Zang's Yogācāra paradigm.

To Xuan Zang, the same logic is applicable to both the subject and the object of our experience with regard to the positing of their existence. In other words, if the experience of an external world does not warrant the existence of one, the experiencing of a subject, cannot by the same token, be used to justify the existence of a self, either. Xuan Zang, in keeping his commitment to the Buddhist doctrine of *anātman*, rejects the existence of a self as the owner, as it were, of the experience. The line of defense launched by Xuan Zang is similar to the one against the existence of an external world. That is, the existence of the self cannot be ascertained within the parameters of consciousness. Although he agrees that there is a subject/object structure in our cognitive experience, the subject cannot be translated into a self, *ātman*, independent of the cognitive structure since the subject itself also undergoes changes in the course of experience.

In this way, Xuan Zang has successfully established the primacy of consciousness by rendering irrelevant any speculations of real existence outside the cognitive structure of consciousness. What he needs to do next is to explain the relationship amongst different kinds of consciousnesses and their transformations. The success or failure

[13] Matilal comes up with four possible positions regarding the nature of physical objects. "One is *regressive*: the physical object is there in the first place to give rise to the sense-datum, and thus we have a causal theory or representationalism. The other is *progressive*: the physical object is a construction out of these immediately given data, and thus we have phenomenalism, which says that we build up our world with these bits and pieces of what is given in immediate sensory experience. Moreover, we know that there is also a third position that is possible: physical objects do not exist, and it is a myth to assume that they do. This is the position of Vasubandhu in his *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*.... The third position may or may not be implied in the second, although the critics of the second assert, more often than not, that it leads to the third position. The fourth position is ... direct realism..." (Matilal, 232–33).

of his effort depends on whether he is able to address this critical question: is consciousness alone sufficient to account for our cognitive experience? To this end, Xuan Zang has engaged in a painstakingly detailed analysis of consciousness, centered around a new form of consciousness, *ālayavijñāna*. The significance of *ālayavijñāna* in the Yogācāra system lies in the fact that until the postulation of this consciousness the Buddhists did not really have a good and convincing explanation of the apparent continuity of our everyday experience, memory and sense of self, given the central Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine of non-substantiality of reality, *śūnyatā*. Let us now turn to this concept of *ālayavijñāna* as Xuan Zang presents it in the *CWSL*.

ĀLAYAVIJÑĀNA: A NEW FORM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The early Buddhist model of consciousness consists of five senses: visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory and tactile, and the mind whose object is mental. The Yogācāra theory of consciousness significantly revises and expands this traditional model.[14] It splits the mind in the traditional model into two: *manovijñāna* and *manas*. *Manovijñāna* is called sense-centered consciousness, and it works in conjunction with the five senses. These six, namely *manovijñāna* and the five senses, constitute one kind of consciousness which "appropriates crude objects" (Xuan Zang: 96). This means that the objects of this group of consciousnesses are external objects. Any perception of external objects requires the co-presence of "such factors as the act of attention (*manaskāras*) of *manovijñāna*, the sense-organs (*indriyas*), (whose attention is directed in accordance with *manovijñāna*), the external objects (*viṣayas*) towards which this attention is directed" (Wei Tat, 479). In other words, the role of *manovijñāna* is to direct the attention of sense organs towards their objects in order to produce *clear* perceptions of those objects. *Manovijñāna* also has a cogitative or deliberative function, but such a function is crude and unstable and it might be interrupted in certain states.[15] The uninterrupted mind is called *manas*, which "is related to the view of the existence of self"

[14] "Some *sūtras* say that there are six consciousnesses and we should know that this is only an expedient way of explanation. They pronounce six consciousnesses on the ground of six sense-organs, but the actual categories of consciousnesses are eight" (Xuan Zang, 336).

[15] Xuan Zang lists five states in which *manovijñāna* is lacking: birth among *asaṁjñidevas*, two meditation states (*asaṃjñisamāpatti* and *nirodhasamāpatti*), mindless stupor (*middha*) and unconsciousness (*mūrcchā*) (480–92).

(Xuan Zang, 314). This means that *manas* is responsible for the genesis of the idea of personhood, the essence of a person. Its function is intellection and cogitation: "It is called 'cogitation' or 'deliberation' because it cogitates or deliberates at all times without interruption in contradistinction to the sixth consciousness (*manovijñāna*), which is subject to interruption" (Wei Tat, 97). Compared with *manovijñāna*, *manas* is fine and subtle in its activities (Xuan Zang, 478). Hence the delusion it generates, namely the idea of self, is much more resistant to being transformed in order to reach enlightenment. *Manovijñāna* works with the five senses in cognizing external physical objects; *manas* works with another consciousness, which is for the first time postulated by Yogācāra, the storehouse consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*) or the eighth consciousness. *Manas* is attached to *ālayavijñāna* and regards it as the inner self (Xuan Zang, 104).

Ālayavijñāna is also known as *vipākavijñāna*, ripening consciousness, or *mūlavijñāna*, root consciousness. "[It] is the eighth consciousness, the maturing or retributive consciousness (Sk. *vipākavijñāna*; Ch. *yishu shi*) because it has many seeds that are of the nature of ripening in varied ways" (Xuan Zang, 96). This consciousness is meant to account for the karmic retribution within the doctrinal boundary of Buddhism in that it stores the karmic seeds till their fruition, and this karmic continuity is one crucial kind of continuity that the Buddhists try to explain without reification. The tactic here is to render this retributive consciousness subtle and subliminal whose activities surface only when conditions allow, that is, when karmic retribution is fulfilled. This is a completely different form of consciousness from those in the traditional model in that the traditional forms of consciousness are strictly causal, meaning they are object-dependent in their cognitive activities. *Ālayavijñāna*, by contrast, does not depend upon any specific object and it grounds the other seven consciousnesses which include *manas* as one kind and *manovijñāna* and the five senses as the other.

> These three kinds of consciousness are all called 'consciousnesses that are capable of transformation and manifestation' (*pariṇāmi vijñāna*). The manifestation (*pariṇāma*) of consciousness is of two kinds: manifestation with respect to cause (*hetupariṇāma*) and manifestation with respect to effect (fruit) (*phalapariṇāma*). (Wei Tat, 97)

The manifestation as cause refers to the seeds, *bīja*, stored in *ālayavijñāna*, and the manifestation as effect to the eight consciousnesses. In other words, according to the Yogācāra theory, the

seeds give birth to the eight consciousnesses. It is obvious that the conceptualization of *ālayavijñāna* is premised upon the theory of *bīja*. Therefore, let us continue our study of *ālayavijñāna* with a closer examination of the Yogācāra theory of *bīja*.

XUAN ZANG'S YOGĀCĀRA THEORY OF *BĪJA*

Xuan Zang defines *bīja* this way in the *CWSL*: "They are those which, found in the *mūlavijñāna* (root-consciousness), generate their own fruits" (108).[16] One point of interest in the definition of a *bīja* is the stipulation that *bījas* are in *ālayavijñāna*. This has to do with the relationship between *bīja* and *ālayavjñāna* which will be crucial in the Yogācāra effort to account for continuity without reification. We will leave this for later in the essay. What concerns us at this juncture is the point that *bīja* is a potentiality which immediately engenders an actual *dharma*. Being potential, a *bīja* is not actual, compared with the fruit to which it gives birth, a *dharma*, which is actual. Does this mean that a *bīja* does not have a real existence, but only a nominal one? Aware of such possible confusion, Xuan Zang immediately moves to clarify this by stating that "the *bījas* are real entities" and that "those which have only nominal existence are like non-existent entities and cannot be a causal condition, *hetupratyaya*" (*ibid.*). Apparently, Xuan Zang categorizes entities into two kinds, real and nominal. Both actual and potential are regarded as real by Xuan Zang, but nominal is regarded as merely fictional, hence unreal.

When we compare Xuan Zang's definition of *bīja* with William Waldron's interpretation of it – which is based on the Abhidharma literature – it may shed more light on the struggle Xuan Zang has in defining *bīja* as a potentiality. According to Waldron, *bījas* are

> not real existents (*dravya*) at all, but simply metaphors for the underlying capacities (*śakti* or *samārthya*), potentials and developments of mind in terms of the life

[16] According to Yokoyama's observation: "The view that all *bījas* were planted by linguistic activities has always been the common understanding in the Yogācāra thought since *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra*.... Later in the *CWSL* the terminology was simplified to habitual energy of naming (*ming yan xi qi*) or seeds of naming (*ming yan zhong zi*) and it became the general term for *bīja*. However, what is *bīja*? It is the potential energy planted into *ālayavijñāna* through linguistic activities, and conversely the driving force giving rise to our linguistic activities" (142). What is striking is the prominence of linguistic activity in defining *bīja*, in that the linguistic activities plant some potential energy into the storehouse consciousness which in turn generates our linguistic activities. In other words, *bīja* is essentially linguistic. However, Xuan Zang's definition of *bīja* in the *CWSL* is broader than linguistic.

processes of insemination (*paribhāvita*), growth (*vṛddha*) and eventual fructification (*vipāka-phala;* "ripened fruit"). (1994, 220)

It is conceivable that Xuan Zang would dispute the wording of Waldron's interpretation of *bīja* as "not real existents … but simply metaphors." Indeed, the *CWSL* tells us that Sthiramati maintains the view that a *bīja* has only a nominal existence. This position is shared by the Sautrāntikas, but it is rejected by Xuan Zang (108). Waldron's interpretation somewhat echoes Sthiramati's position on *bīja*. Apparently, Xuan Zang is struggling to give *bīja* a higher sense of reality than simply nominal or metaphorical. Hence, the distinction Xuan Zang makes is between potentiality and actuality, instead of reality and nominality as is the case with Sthiramati. Accordingly, there are entities that are actually real, like *dharmas,* and there are also those that are potentially real, like the *bījas*.

What kinds of potentials does the postulation of *bīja* register? *Bīja* is also called habit energy or perfuming energy (*vāsanā*) and Xuan Zang lists three kinds of *vāsanā*, namely "image (*nimitta*), name (*nāma*), and discriminating influence (*vikalpavāsanā*)" (138). The image (*nimitta*) refers to the dual structure of our perceptual activities, and discriminating influence (*vikalpavāsanā*) to the dual structure of our conceptual activities. *Nāma* refers to the linguistic activities which involve naming and conceptualizing.[17] Xuan Zang sums them up in explaining seeds as the potential proceeding from the two *grāhas* and the potential producing the two *grāhas* (580). The two *grāhas* refer to the grasping (*grāhaka*) and the grasped (*grāhya*). This means that all of our conscious activities, be they perceptual, conceptual or linguistic, share the same dual structure, the grasping and the grasped. Such a discriminatory function of our mental activities is that which produces *bījas*, and the *bījas* thus produced also perpetuate this discriminatory function, dragging us back into the transmigratory realm. Therefore we find the *CWSL* declaring that

The wheel of life and death turns by *karma* and the two *grāhas*. None of them are separate from consciousness, because they are, by nature, *dharmas* of *cittas-caittas*. (582)

[17] The *CWSL* lists two kinds of *nāma:* "One are those which express meanings: they can explain the differences in meanings and sounds; the other are those which reveal their objects: they are the mind and its concomitant activities that perceive their objects" (582).

According to the *CWSL*, *bījas* have six characteristics: they are momentary, constitute a continuous series, belong to a definite moral species, depend on a group of conditions, lead to their own fruits, and are simultaneous with their fruits (126–28). The momentariness of seeds means that they "necessarily vanish right when they are born" (Xuan Zang, 126) which makes them the most active elements capable of generative activity engendering either succeeding seeds or actual *dharmas*. Their generative activities bring about two results. First is the succession of seeds constituting a continuous series, and second is the simultaneous support as the ground for actual *dharmas*. Moreover, a seed can only give rise to a fruit, either a succeeding seed or an actual *dharma*, whose nature is similar to that of the seed itself. Otherwise, if a seed can generate a succeeding seed or an actual *dharma* of a different kind, the world would be haphazardly ordered without any regularity. Therefore, for Xuan Zang, a defiled seed can only give rise to a defiled *dharma* and a pure seed to a pure *dharma*. Hence, seeds belong to a definite moral species: defiled, pure or non-defined. For potential to become actual, there has to be a collaboration of conditions. In addition, "each *bīja* produces its own fruit whose nature is similar to its own. That is, the *bīja* of *rūpa* generates *rūpa*, and the *bīja* of *citta* generates *citta*" (128).

However, what attracts our attention is the characteristic of *bījas* being simultaneous with their fruits.

> When the *bīja* engenders the actual *dharma*, the cause is simultaneous with the fruit. When the *bīja* engenders a *bīja* which is similar to it, the cause is anterior to the fruit. But we attribute 'causal activity' only to present things, not to future things (not yet born) and past things (already destroyed) which have no specific nature (*svabhāva*, reality). Hence the name of *bīja* is reserved for that *bīja* which engenders the actual *dharma*, not for that which leads to the production of a *bīja* similar to itself. (Wei Tat, 127)

The stipulation that the cause has to be simultaneous with its effect apparently goes against our common sense which assumes that the cause precedes its effect, as Junshō Tanaka acutely points out (275).

> Furthermore, when coupled with such mutually contradictory concepts, the simultaneity of cause and effect is not limited to the generation of entities by seeds, nor is it explained merely psychologically with respect to the generation of seeds through the perfuming by entities, even though on a first look it appears to be a psychological phenomenon. This suggests that there has to be a doctrinal explanation. (Tanaka, 275)

In other words, there has to be a doctrinal consideration in Xuan Zang's counterintuitive stipulation of the simultaneity between cause

and effect. Indeed, in this regard, we find Xuan Zang contending that if the cause precedes its effect, when the effect comes into existence its cause will have been gone. If this were the case, in what sense can we claim that the cause causes the effect since the cause and the causal activity belong to the past, and hence no longer exist? By the same token, if the effect succeeds its cause, when the cause is engaged in the causal activity its effect has not yet emerged. If this were the case, in what sense can we claim that the cause causes the effect since the effect belongs to the future, and hence does not yet exist?

Such a position on causality is unique to Dharmapāla/Xuan Zang's Yogācāra system which is not necessarily accepted by other Yogācārins (Hukaura, vol.1: 353–55). Here Xuan Zang clearly has the Sarvāstivāda position on causality in mind. The Sarvāstivādins advocate that things in the past, present and future all exist. By resorting to this doctrine, the Sarvāstivādins contend that the cause and the effect are simultaneous since an existent *dharma* can always produce an effect as its cause, hence rendering the problematic of continuity irrelevant. There are numerous problems which make it difficult to defend such a position, the most important of which is its abandonment of the orthodox Buddhist teaching of the non-substantiality of *dharma*. Consequently, this view on the existence of *dharmas* in all three stages of time is rejected by the Yogācārins like Xuan Zang. However, Xuan Zang does embrace the Sarvāstivādins' stance that the cause and the effect have to be simultaneous in order for causation to take place, although in his case, the simultaneity of cause and effect is possible only when the cause is a potential and the effect is an actual *dharma*. This means that, to Xuan Zang, causality can take place only in the situation wherein potentiality causes actuality, and the two have to be simultaneous. However, it is no longer causality as we normally understand it, since the conventional understanding of causality does not require the simultaneity of the cause and the effect but their succession, although this is not to say that any succession is necessarily causal.

What, then, is the causality that Xuan Zang talks about here when he stipulates that cause and effect have to be simultaneous? If causality necessarily involves the succession of effect after cause, his insistence on the simultaneity of cause and effect actually transforms causality into grounding, with the *dharma* grounded in the *bīja*, the actual grounded in the potential. Simultaneity of the cause and the effect renders the former the ground for the latter. To quote Tanaka again,

Since the generation of entities (*dharma*) by seeds (*bīja*) does not require time, it surely has to be viewed as indicating the root of possibilities. In other words, we should not interpret it as the cause that generates seed-carrying entities, but rather as the root [or ground] for the generation of entities. (269)

Since one is potential and the other actual, there is no conflict between the two in order for both to exist at the same time and in the same place with the potential grounding the actual.

After dealing with Xuan Zang's presentation of *bīja*, we are in a position to bring in *ālayavijñāna*. Let us see how *ālayavijñāna* is presented in the *CWSL* in the following.

ĀLAYAVIJÑĀNA IN THE *CWSL*

What is *ālayavijñāna*? According to the *CWSL*, this concept has three aspects:

1. It is that which stores up *bījas* (Ch. *neng cang*).
2. It is that which is stored (Ch. *suo cang*).
3. It is that which is attached to (Ch. *zhi cang*). (104)

Put simply, *ālayavijñāna* is that which stores up seeds which are perfumed by the defiled *dharmas* and it is the object of attachment by *manas* resulting in the erroneous notion of *ātman*. Here *ālayavijñāna* is granted a sweeping role in accomplishing the objective of explaining everything from within the structure of consciousness without having to appeal to anything outside of that structure. In other words, the formulation of *ālayavijñāna* makes the Yogācāra metaphysical idealist system, albeit in the qualified sense we talked about earlier, complete by rendering consciousness alone sufficient to explain all of our experiences. Let us begin our inquiry of Xuan Zang's presentation of *ālayavijñāna* with its relationship with the *bīja*.

Ālayavijñāna and Bīja

As the bearer of seeds, *ālayavijñāna* is closely related to *bīja*, but the exact nature of the relationship is difficult to determine. Here Xuan Zang encounters a thorny issue. If *ālayavijñāna* is understood as that which stores up *bījas*, we are faced with this question: even though *bījas are* momentary, as we have discussed, does the postulation of *ālayavijñāna* as their storehouse make it a permanent dwelling place for *bījas*? As Kōitsu Yokoyama rightly observes:

Now, if we only pay attention to the point that various *dharmas* as fruits are stored in this consciousness, this *ālayavijñāna* becomes that which stores in itself the seeds which are the fruits of various *dharmas*. To use a space metaphor, *ālayavijñāna* is the storing place where *bījas* as goods are stored. However, *ālayavijñāna* and *bīja* are not material things like the storage or stored goods, but rather something spiritual. Consequently, there arises the complex question in their relationship. (148–49)

If *ālayavijñāna* is a permanent dwelling place for *bījas*, it would be against the Buddhist doctrine of impermanence and defeat the very purpose in the postulation of *ālayavijñāna*; that purpose is to account for continuity without accepting any form of substantialization in line with the general Buddhist position against reification as demonstrated in such core Buddhist concepts like *pratītyasamutpāda* (dependent origination), *anitya* (impermanence), *anātman* (no-self) and *śūnyatā* (emptiness). This is indeed a key conceptual difficulty in the Yogācāra formulation of *ālayavijñāna*. Xuan Zang is well aware of the trap in making *ālayavijñāna* into some kind of permanent entity. In tackling this critical issue regarding the relationship between *bīja* and *ālayavijñāna*, we find the *CWSL* claiming that

The *bījas* are neither identical with nor different from the root-consciousness (*mūlavijñāna*) and the fruits. This is because only such a relationship, between consciousness itself and its activities and between the cause vis-à-vis *bījas* and the fruits vis-à-vis *dharma*, is reasonable. (108)

The relationships between *bīja* and *ālayavijñāna* and between the cause (*hetu*) vis-à-vis a *bīja* and the fruit (*phala*) vis-à-vis an actual *dharma* are characterized as neither identical nor different. What is especially interesting to us here is the claim Xuan Zang makes that *bīja* is the activity of *ālayavijñāna*. Moreover, "the *bījas* depend on the eighth consciousness itself (*svasaṃvittibhāga*), but they are only the perceived aspect (*nimittabhāga*) because the perceiving aspect (*darśanabhāga*) always takes them as its objects" (*ibid.*). *Svasaṃvittibhāga* of the eighth consciousness, namely, the self-witness or self-corroboratory aspect of *ālayavijñāna* that is perfumable, refers to its susceptibility to the influence by other aspects (Wei Tat, 109). This means that *bījas* depend on the self-corroboratory division of *ālayavijñāna*. Furthermore, *bījas* are the *nimittabhāga*, the object aspect, of the eighth consciousness since they are always taken by its perception aspect as its object. We have seen in our earlier discussion that the perceiving and the perceived aspects (*nimittabhāga* and *darśanabhāga*) of *ālayavijñāna* arise out of its self-corroboratory division. When this is juxtaposed with Xuan Zang's claim that *bīja* is the activity of *ālayavijñāna*, the natural conclusion is that

ālayavijñāna is more than the collection of *bījas* and that *bīja* is only one of its aspects, namely the perceived aspect. The other aspects of *ālayavijñāna* are its perceiving aspect and its self-corroboratory aspect. This is how *ālayavijñāna* is formulated as a form of consciousness itself, instead of simply a collection of seeds.[18]

However, when Xuan Zang argues that *ālayavijñāna* is neither identical with nor different from the *bījas*, as we have seen above, he is clearly in a dilemma which he is keenly aware of. The two are obviously not the same since the latter is only one aspect of the former. However, Xuan Zang cannot make them different either, since that would lead to the subtantialization of *ālayavijñāna* against the orthodox Buddhist view that substance is itself the continuum of activities and that there is no substance separate from such a continuum. In order to find his way out of the dilemma, Xuan Zang makes *ālayavijñāna* "neither permanent nor impermanent" (170). The rationale is provided as a commentary to the fourth stanza in Vasubandhu's *Triṃśikā* – "It is in perpetual transformation like a violent torrent."

> "Perpetual" means that this consciousness has continuously evolved without interruption as a homogeneous series since before the beginning of time, because it is the basis that establishes realms of existence (*dhātu*), directions of reincarnation (*gatis*) and forms of birth (*yoni*), and because it does not lose *bījas* it holds due to its firm nature.
>
> "Transformation" means that this consciousness arises and perishes instantaneously and mutates from one moment to the next. Due to the constant extinction of cause and generation of fruit, it is never a single entity. Hence it can be perfumed by other consciousnesses to produce *bījas*.
>
> "Perpetual" states that it is uninterrupted; "transformation" suggests that it is impermanent. (170)

[18] As Schmithausen observes, this seems to be case in the *Basic Section* of the *Yogācārabhūmi* concerning the relation between *ālayavijñāna* and seeds in the "Initial Passage" identified by him: "It admits of being understood not only in the sense that *ālayavijñāna* possesses or contains the Seeds, implying that it is, itself, something more, but also in the sense that *ālayavijñāna* merely comprises them, being hardly anything else but their sum or totality. In otherwords: There does not seem to exist, in the Initial Passage, any reliable clue for assuming that it did anything else but hypostatize the Seeds of mind lying hidden in corporeal matter to a new form of mind proper, this new form of mind hardly, or, at best, but dimly, acquiring as yet an essence of its own, not to speak of the character of a veritable *vijñāna*" (30). Xuan Zang seems to be trying to strike a balance between substantializing *ālayavijñāna* and making it simply the collection of *bījas*. He appears to be cautious in making it an entity of some sort, aware of the risk involved.

Xuan Zang is trying to achieve two objectives here. One is to make *ālayavijñāna* causally connected with other consciousnesses, hence it is said to be perfumable. The other is to make it a continuous series of activities, but not a substance of some sort. The first objective is necessary because otherwise *ālayavijñāna* would be rendered unaffected by activities of the other consciousnesses, resembling the *ātman*. The second objective is needed because otherwise our experience of the world would become chaotic if the foundation of our cognition, *ālayavijñāna*, is discontinuous and haphazard. The first point addresses the self-corroboratory aspect of *ālayavijñāna*. Since it is causally connected with the other two aspects – the perceiving and the perceived aspects – of *ālayavijñāna* as well as the other seven consciousnesses, the self-corroboratory aspect of *ālayavijñāna* would not be regarded as some sort of witnessing consciousness standing apart from and unaffected by the cognitive process, like the Hindu Advaita Vedānta notion *of sākṣin*, which is the empirical manifestation of *ātman*. The second point, on the other hand, makes the activities of *ālayavijñāna* abide by the rule of dependent origination:

> Since before the beginning of time this consciousness has been of the nature that the generation of fruit and the extinction of cause take place instantaneously. It is not impermanent due to the generation of fruit; it is not permanent due to the extinction of cause. To be neither impermanent nor permanent this is the principle of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*). Hence it is said that this consciousness is in perpetual transformation like a torrent. (Xuan Zang, 172)

It is not permanent, in the sense that it is itself an activity, not a substance; it is not impermanent, in the sense that the activity is a continuous and uninterrupted process. Xuan Zang here appeals to the central Buddhist doctrine of dependent origination to account for the law regulating the activities of consciousness. In this way, Xuan Zang proves that *ālayavijñāna* is not some permanent dwelling place for *bījas* or permanent ground for the *dharmas* but rather is itself a continuum of activities.

As Katsumata (225) points out, in the above interpretation Xuan Zang follows Dharmapāla's insertion of the word "perpetual" into Vasubandhu's *Triṃśikā*. The original Sanskrit word in Vasubandhu's text that can imply such a meaning is *sroṭasā* which means "as a stream or torrent" (*ibid.*). Since "perpetual" becomes so important in Dharmapāla/Xuan Zang's commentary, we can clearly see their departure from Vasubandhu wherein their creativity lies:

In Dharmapāla's exposition, the principle of dependent origination is articulated as the successive series of *ālayavijñāna* that is neither impermanent nor permanent and is without interruption. Therefore, here, after the theories of causality held by Sarvāstivādins, Sammatīyas, Sthaviravādins, Sautrāntikas and others are tossed out, we can conclude that "the correct doctrine of dependent origination in Mahāyāna Buddhism which stipulates the succession between cause and effect is rendered credible." (Katsumata, 227)

This is how Xuan Zang uses *ālayavijñāna* to reinterpret dependent origination without having to postulate any entity that continues from one moment to the next. As a result, *pratītyasamutpāda* becomes the law that governs the activities of *ālayavijñāna*.

Ālayavijñāna and the seven consciousnesses

Since Xuan Zang has established the primacy of consciousness over the objective world, as long as he can demonstrate, first, that the continuum of the conscious activity is the result of its following the causal law and, second, that our experience of externality is the result of the self-externalizing activity of consciousness, he would succeed in explaining continuity within the confinement of the Mahāyāna Buddhist orthodoxy of non-substantiality of reality.

What is at stake in achieving the first goal is to sort out the relationship amongst the various forms of consciousness, namely the eight consciousnesses. That is, Xuan Zang has to explain that the manifestation of consciousness itself follows the causal law. In order to reach the second goal, he has to explain how the self-externalization of consciousness takes place. Let us begin our inquiry with an examination of the first question, namely how the *CWSL* makes the case that the causal law governs the various dynamics of consciousness.

(A) Causal relationship among consciousnesses. First, Xuan Zang argues what causality means in his system:

This right principle is profound and mysterious beyond words. Such words as cause (*hetu*) and fruit (*phala*) are mere metaphorical postulates. When the phenomenon that the present *dharma* produces its succeeding *dharma* is observed, the succeeding fruit is postulated so as to explain the present cause. When the phenomenon is observed that the generation of the present *dharma* is due to a preceding *dharma*, the past cause is postulated to account for the present fruit. "Metaphorical postulates" means that it is the present consciousness itself that appears as a future effect or a past cause. Thus the rationale of the causal principle is clear. It is far from the two extreme views of permanence and impermanence and is in accordance with the Middle Path. (174)

What is interesting to us in this passage is that Xuan Zang regards the principle of causality as mysterious and cause and effect as merely metaphorical postulates. He is obviously well aware of the conventional understanding of causality as the succession between cause and effect. However he claims that the cause and the effect can only be understood metaphorically since they are not simultaneous, as we have discussed previously. The true nature of causality is, according to Xuan Zang, that the present consciousness itself appears as the semblance of a future and a past, of cause and fruit.[19] In other words, there is only the activity of consciousness at each present moment, and past/future and cause/effect are nothing but the self-differentiating activities of consciousness at each present moment.

The natural question, then, seems to be: what is this self-differentiating activity of consciousness? This relates to the different manifestations of consciousness in the Yogācāra system. In this connection, we find Xuan Zang saying:

> Although consciousness can be transformed into infinite forms, what is capable of such transformations is of three kinds only. The first is the ripening consciousness (Sk: *vipāka*; Ch: *yishu*), namely the eighth consciousness, since it holds *bījas* which are of the nature of ripening in varied ways. The second is the deliberative consciousness, namely the seventh consciousness, since it is always engaged in deliberation and speculation. The third is the consciousness that discriminates spheres of objects, namely the first six consciousnesses, since the spheres of objects are crude. The word "and" in the stanza indicates that the six consciousnesses form one group. The above three kinds are all called consciousness that is capable of transformation. (96)

Put simply, the manifestation of consciousness at each moment is simultaneously a threefold process: retribution process, self-cogitation process and cognitive process of objects other than the self. The three processes are intermingled with each other[20] at each moment:

> The consciousness that perfumes (*darśanabhāga* of a *pravṛttivijñāna*) is born of *bījas*: at the moment of its birth, it is a cause capable of increasing and creating *bījas*. Hence three *dharmas* must be considered: the *bījas* that engender the consciousness, the engendered consciousness that perfumes and creates *bījas*, and the *bījas* created or caused to grow by the perfuming influence of the engendered consciousness. These

[19] This is somewhat reminiscent of the Kantian argument that causality is a form of human subjectivity since it is the way human consciousness organizes the world.

[20] In another – somewhat cryptic – passage, Xuan Zang writes, "The eight consciousnesses cannot be said to be definitely one in their nature .... Nor are they definitely different.... Thus, they are like illusory beings that have no definite nature. What was previously said with regard to the distinct characteristics of consciousnesses is the result of convention, not the ultimate truth. In the ultimate truth, there is neither the mind nor world" (498).

three revolve in a cycle reciprocally and simultaneously functioning as cause and effect, just as a candle-wick engenders the flame and the flame engenders the incandescence of the wick. (Wei Tat, 133)

Pravṛttivijñāna refers to the seven consciousnesses, namely, the five senses, *manovijñāna* and *manas*. They are born of *bījas*, but they also perfume *bījas*, resulting in either creating new *bījas* or causing the existing ones to grow. These three processes, namely the birth of the seven consciousnesses by *bījas*, the birth of new *bījas* as the result of perfuming by the seven consciousnesses and the growth of existing *bījas* as the result of perfuming by the seven consciousnesses, move in a cycle, reciprocally and simultaneously functioning as cause and effect.[21] This is what the *CWSL* means when it states that "the transformation (*pariṇāma*) of consciousness is of two kinds: the first is its transformation as cause (*hetupariṇāma*) …, and the second is its transformation as effect (*phalapariṇāma*)" (96).

However, if the three processes are going on simultaneously at each present moment, how can they account for the past and the future as Xuan Zang claims? A closer look at the threefold process will reveal to us that even though the three are in a simultaneous process, past and future are contained in each present moment. More specifically, the perfuming of *bījas* by the seven consciousnesses and the engendering of seven consciousnesses by *bījas* are processes wherein the cause and the effect are simultaneous, whereas the engendering of new *bījas* by their predecessors is a process wherein the cause and the effect are successive; as Xuan Zang explicitly points out, "in the *bījas*' generation of similar *bījas*, the cause and the effect are not simultaneous; in the mutual generation of *bījas* and *dharmas*, the cause and the effect are simultaneous" (254). Therefore, both the past and the future are contained within the present; recall Xuan

[21] According to the *CWSL*, *ālayavijñāna* is the perfumable and the seven consciousnesses are the perfumers. Xuan Zang stipulates that the perfumable has to be durable, meaning that it has to be an uninterrupted series; it has to be non-defined, hence able to be perfumed; it has to be perfumable; and it has to be in intimate and harmonious relation with the perfumer. Consequently, "Only *vipākavijñāna* has all four characteristics. *Vipākavijñāna* is perfumable, not its five *caittas*" (130). On the other hand, the perfumer has to have the following characteristics: not eternal, capable of activity and able to create and nourish *bījas*; endowed with eminent activity which rules out the eighth consciousness; capable of increase and decrease, which rules out the fruits of Buddha, in intimate and harmonious relation with the perfumed, which rules out physical bodies of other persons as well as preceding and subsequent moments (130–2): "Only the seven *pravṛttivijñānas*, with their concomitant mental activities, are conspicuous and can increase and decrease. They have these four characteristics and are thus capable of perfuming" (132).

Zang's claim, "it is the present consciousness itself that appears as a future effect or a past cause" (174). Obviously, Xuan Zang's Yogācāra theory incorporates both the Sarvāstivāda position on the simultaneity of cause and effect and the Sautrāntika view on the succession of *bījas*.

However, for Xuan Zang to explain the order in our experience by analyzing the relationship amongst consciousnesses without appealing to the existence of that which is experienced, he has to answer this question: is consciousness alone sufficient in explaining our experience? In order to deal with this, the *CWSL* further elaborates the relationship amongst the eight consciousnesses into four conditioning categories: *hetupratyaya* (condition *qua* cause), *samanantarapratyaya* (condition *qua* antecedent), *ālambanapratyaya* (condition *qua* perceived object), *adhipatipratyaya* (condition *qua* contributory factor). Let us briefly examine them one by one.

First is *hetupratyaya*, condition *qua* cause, defined by Xuan Zang as the condition under which "the conditioned *dharmas* (*saṃkṛtas*) themselves produce their own effects" (534). This refers to two kinds of causal conditions, namely the *bījas* and the *dharmas* (*ibid.*):

> The *bījas* with respect to the two following cases are *hetupratyaya*: they can generate succeeding *bījas* of the same kind and can produce *dharmas* of the same nature simultaneous with them. *Dharmas* refer to the seven transforming consciousnesses (*pravṛttivijñāna*) and their contents… (*ibid.*)

This *hetupratyaya* is basically a reformulation of our earlier discussion of the Yogācāra causality theory. As we pointed out earlier, such a causal theory is unique to Dharmapāla/Xuan Zang's Yogācāra system since it stipulates that cause and effect are simultaneous, except in the case of *bījas* engendering *bījas* wherein there is a succession between cause and effect. Since *bījas* are only potential, not actual, even though there is a succession between *bījas* vis-à-vis cause and *bījas* vis-à-vis effect, it is a succession of potentials, an undetected succession. Nevertheless this still means that true succession can only be succession of *bījas*, albeit an undetected occurrence. Dharmic moments, namely the seven consciousnesses as a group – since there is no succession amongst them – are mediated by their own *bījas*: "the successive transformations of similar *dharmas* are not *hetupratyaya* one for the other, because they are born from their own *bījas* respectively" (534–36). For Xuan Zang, the conventional understanding of causation is a mediated kind of causation, mediated by *bījas*. In other words, causation in Xuan Zang's theory looks like this:

dharma perfumes *bīja*, *bīja* creates a succeeding *bīja* of a similar kind, new *bīja* engenders new *dharma* whose nature is similar to the *dharma* of the preceding moment. Our conventional understanding of causation does not heed the mediating role played by *bījas*. Therefore, there is only succession, not direct causation, between *dharmas* mediated by *bījas*. Hukaura Seibun (Vol. 1, 354) compares the generation of *dharmas* by *bījas* to the generation of shadows by objects. Just like the causal relationship between objects and their shadows as well as their simultaneous existence, *bījas* and *dharmas* coexist simultaneously despite the causal relationship between the two.

The *dharma* of the preceding moment is, according to the *CWSL*, *samanantarapratyaya*, condition *qua* antecedent, of *dharma* of the succeeding moment. This is the second condition Xuan Zang lists, meaning that "the eight consciousnesses and their concomitant mental activities form a group in the preceding moment and pass into the succeeding group of similar kinds without any mediation" (536). Apparently "the eight consciousnesses are not *samanantarapratyaya* between themselves, because several species of consciousness coexist" (Wei Tat, 537). In other words, this condition concerns the succession between *dharmas*, not those that are simultaneous with one another, as in the case of *hetupratyaya*, condition *qua* cause. This means that the eight consciousnesses as a group at the present moment are the *samanantarapratyaya* of the eight consciousnesses of the succeeding moment. This is apparently the conventional understanding of causation, in that there is a successive relationship between the cause and the effect.

Interestingly, however, impure *dharmas* can be *samanantarapratyaya* of pure *dharmas* (538); since the impure cannot be the cause of the pure, Xuan Zang needs something else to explain the succession of the pure after the impure, namely the pure *dharma* from the *dharmadhātu*. This line of thought is a clear indication that the theorization definitely has the possibility of enlightenment in mind. He has to maintain the view that the pure can succeed the impure, otherwise there would be no possibility for enlightenment, since we are all currently in the impure state. However, Xuan Zang also wants to maintain the homogeneity between successive dharmic moments, otherwise it would lead to disorder and chaos in our experience, hence the unintelligibility of the world as we experience it, regardless of whether it exists independently of consciousness or not. Consequently, he makes a distinction between succession and causality. Since there is only a relationship of succession between two dharmic

moments, even when they are heterogeneous, the law of causality which guarantees the order of our cognition – hence of the world as we experience it – is not violated, as long as there is a causal relationship between successive *bījas* whose relationship with their respective *dharma* is also causal.

The third condition is *ālambanapratyaya*, condition *qua* perceived object, referring to "the *dharmas* upon which the mind and its concomitant activities, which perceive those *dharmas* as such, depend" (542). This condition apparently accounts for the objective grounding of our cognition and it holds the key to the success or failure of Xuan Zang's effort to explain the adequacy of cognition by appealing to the transformation of consciousness alone. He distinguishes two kinds of *ālambanapratyaya*, close (Ch. *qin*) and remote (Ch. *shu*):

> If a *dharma* is not separated from the appropriating consciousness and it is cogitated by *darśanabhāga* and taken as its inner support, we can tell that it is the close *ālambanapratyaya*. If a *dharma*, though separated from the appropriating consciousness, is the material capable of generating that which *darśanabhāga* cogitates and takes as its inner support, we can tell that it is the remote *ālambanapratyaya*. (542–44)

In Hukaura's words, "the close *ālambanapratyaya* is that which mental *dharmas* depend on directly" (Vol. 1, 375), and "the remote *ālambanapratyaya*, as the material that mental *dharmas* depend on indirectly, is manifested as the *nimittabhāga* that *darśanabhāga* relies on" (*ibid.*, 376). In other words, the remote *ālambanapratyaya* is an entity that is capable of producing the close *ālambanapratyaya* within that consciousness upon which *darśanabhāga*, the perceiving aspect, finds its support as its *nimittabhāga*, the perceived aspect. The remote *ālambanapratyaya* here refers to a dimension in our perceptual experience of an object which is not personal. Xuan Zang, in differentiating two kinds of *ālambanapratyaya*, recognizes that there are two dimensions of the perceived. The close one is the personal dimension of the perceived whereas the remote one is the non-personal dimension. The remote "generates" the close.

Xuan Zang realizes that a viable idealist theory of cognition has to be able to account for the collectivity of our experience. However, since he is a metaphysical idealist, albeit in the qualified sense which we talked about earlier, his effort to explain the collectivity of our experience has to seek that collective dimension *within* the parameters of consciousness and differentiate it from the personal dimension. There is no meaningful external world within his system to which he can appeal in explaining the collective dimension of our experience.

This is the primary reason for the postulation of the remote *ālambanapratyaya* which can account for the collectivity of our experience without going outside the realm of consciousness.

Within the domain of consciousness, what belongs to the collective dimension and what to the private dimension? In this connection, we find that

> One can experience the body and land belonging to another person, because the content of the other's eighth consciousness resulting from its transformation is the basis of the contents of one's own consciousness. On the other hand, one's own *bījas* or *indriyas*[22] are not experienced by others, since the evolving eighth consciousness of the other are not the same as one's own evolving eighth consciousness. This is because not all sentient beings' *bījas* are of the same number. Therefore it should be said that we cannot ascertain whether or not the remote *ālambanapratyaya* exists in the eighth consciousness in all cases of existents. (544)

Xuan Zang is making an unequivocal distinction between the personal dimension and the collective dimension of our experience. The first point made in the above passage is that different people share common experiences of bodies and lands (which is the realm of existence in which they are born, namely the world) as the result of the common basis in the transformations of their eighth consciousnesses. The second point is that people's sense organs are private. If this is juxtaposed with the idea of remote and close *ālambanapratyaya*, it becomes clear that in the two aspects of our cognitive structure, namely the perceiving and the perceived aspects, the perceiving aspect is the sense organ and it is private, but the perceived aspect has both a personal dimension vis-à-vis the close *ālambanapratyaya* and a collective dimension vis-à-vis the remote *ālambanapratyaya*.

However, there appears to be a conflict in Xuan Zang's discussion of the relationship between the remote and the close *ālambanapratyaya*. In one passage (Xuan Zang, 544), Xuan Zang argues that consciousness may or may not have a remote *ālambanapratyaya* but it necessarily has a close *ālambanapratyaya*, whereas in another passage (*ibid.*) he contends that the remote *ālambanapratyaya* is the cause of the close *ālambanapratyaya*, which means that consciousness cannot have the close one without the remote one. Xuan Zang appears to be struggling between an intentional analysis of consciousness and a causal explanation. Intentional analysis, as Edmund Husserl – the father of phenomenology in the twentieth century – defines it, is to see consciousness as essentially that which is *of* an object; on the other hand

[22] I am taking Wei Tat's interpretation of "one's own *bījas*" as "one's *indriyas*" (545).

causal explanation takes consciousness as that which is *by* an object which means that it is causally connected with things-events in the natural world. When Xuan Zang argues that consciousness may or may not have a remote *ālambanapratyaya*, he is clearly aware of the intentional structure of consciousness within which the remote *ālambanapratyaya*, or real object in Husserl's terminology, is not a necessary component. However, when he contends that the remote *ālambanapratyaya* is that which "produces" the close *ālambanapratyaya* he appears to resort to the causal analysis in explaining the relationship between the remote and the close *ālambanapratyaya*. The causal analysis contradicts the intentional analysis in this particular case since in the former passage the remote object is a necessary condition for the close object whereas in the latter passage the remote object is not a necessary condition for the close object. Nevertheless Xuan Zang clearly privileges the intentional analysis over the causal explanation by virtue of the fact that he devotes much of his *CWSL* to the former while paying little attention to the latter. Such a position can be justified in that the causal explanation presupposes the intentional analysis since only the intentional analysis can locate the cause in the causal explanation. Put differently, in order to locate the remote object as the cause of the correlating close object, there is no way other than an investigation into that very close object through the intentional analysis whereas the causal explanation, without the intentional analysis, falls into an infinite regress. But we are still left with this question: what is the relationship between the remote object and the close object? We will pick this up when we deal with the self-externalization of consciousness later in the essay.

The last condition that Xuan Zang talks about is *adhipatipratyaya*, condition *qua* contributory factor, defined as "a real *dharma* (conditioned or unconditioned, as opposed to imaginary *dharmas*), possessing potent energy and capable of promoting (first nine *hetus*) or counteracting (tenth *hetu*) the evolution of another *dharma*" (Wei Tat, 547).[23] Needless to say, the real *dharmas* here refer to the eight consciousnesses, and this means that the eight consciousnesses are *adhipatipratyaya* to one another (Xuan Zang, 570). This conditioning

[23] The ten *hetus* refer to the following: 1. things, names and ideas which are the bases upon which the speech depends; 2. sensation; 3. the perfuming energy that can attract its own fruit indirectly; 4. direct cause, namely matured *bījas*; 5. complementary cause; 6. adductive cause; 7. special cause: each *dharma* generating its own fruit; 8. a combination of conditions; 9. obstacles to the generation of fruits, 10. non-impeding conditions (Xuan Zang, 552–56).

factor addresses the subjective – hence the private – aspect of conditioning, which involves the support of sense organs as the perceiving aspect in the structure of our cognition. This is the simultaneous support of consciousness. Specifically, the five senses have four supports: five sense organs as the object support, *manovijñāna* as the discriminating support, *manas* as the pure-impure support and *ālayavijñāna* as the root support (Xuan Zang, 266–68). *Manovijñāna*, which normally functions with the five senses in their discriminatory cognitive function of the external world, may be functioning alone while the activities of the five senses have stopped, e.g., in a dream. It has as its support *manas* and *ālayavijñāna*. *Manas* has as its support *ālayavijñāna* while also taking *ālayavijñāna* as its object (Xuan Zang, 280). *Ālayavijñāna* has *manas* as its support. More interestingly, Xuan Zang claims that all three previous conditions are *adhipatipratyaya* (546). This means that all the causes and conditions are essentially activities of the eight consciousnesses. He needs this postulate to complete his idealist system, by bringing all the conditions back to different manifestations of consciousness itself. This is what Xuan Zang means when he states that it is the present consciousness that is manifested as the semblance of cause and effect, past and future.

To sum up,

> In the transformations of the eight consciousnesses as a group, there must be *adhipatipratyaya* amongst themselves, but not *hetupratyaya* or *samanantarapratyaya*. There may or may not be *ālambanapratyaya*. (Xuan Zang, 570)

Hetupratyaya has to do with the relationship between the eight consciousnesses and *bījas*, an intra-moment relationship, whereas *samanantarapratyaya* deals with the relationship between the eight consciousnesses as a group at one moment and the succeeding moment, an intra-moment relationship. *Ālambanapratyaya* and *adhipatipratyaya*, in explaining our sense of externality, address the internal relationship amongst the eight consciousnesses at each moment, an intra-moment relationship; the former is the perceived/objective aspect and the latter the perceiving/subjective aspect as well as the perceived/objective aspect, as expressed in the following remark: "the same *nimittabhāga* is both *ālambanapratyaya* and *adhipatipratyaya* of the *darśanabhāga* whereas the *darśanabhāga* is only *adhipatipratyaya* of the *nimittabhāga*" (Xuan Zang, 572).

Through this detailed analysis of the relationship amongst the consciousnesses, Xuan Zang has firmly established the realm of

consciousness as both necessary and sufficient in explaining our experiences, personal as well as collective. The formulation of *ālayavijñāna* as the ground of our experience not only incorporates the three kinds of continuity previously listed but also expands that scheme. As we have seen, Xuan Zang has actually accepted the Sarvāstivādins' position on the simultaneity of cause and effect, except that the Sarvāstivādins fall into the trap of substantialism in its extreme form by maintaining that *dharmas* in the past, present and future all exist simultaneously. Xuan Zang, on the other hand, interprets the simultaneity between cause and effect as the cause grounding the effect, although the ground, *ālayavijñāna*, is itself always in the process of transformation, too. Moreover, since *bījas* are potential, not actual, their causal succession takes place undetected. Due to the homogeneity between the successive *bījas*, their succession can be misidentified as some entity persisting through the change. Mediated by *bījas*, there is a congruity between successive dharmic moments, but not direct causality, as we have seen earlier. This is shared by the Sautrāntikas.

These three scenarios of continuity encapsulate the first two kinds of conditioning discussed in the *CWSL*, namely *hetupratyaya*, condition *qua* cause, and *samanantara-pratyaya*, condition *qua* antecedent. The latter two kinds, namely *ālambanapratyaya*, condition *qua* object, and *adhipatipratyaya*, condition *qua* agent, examine the causal conditioning from both the objective and the subjective sides; they enable Xuan Zang to explain our experience of externality and subject/object duality without appealing to the actual existence of any external objects independent of consciousness.

(B) The self-externalization of consciousness. Now that Xuan Zang has established that the relationship between different kinds of consciousness is governed by the causal law, the next step is to explain how an internal process vis-à-vis the mental activities can give rise to the sense of externality, so as to complete his case that the actual existence of an external world is irrelevant.[24] Two issues are at stake

[24] As Xuan Zang explains, there are two theories regarding the manifestation of consciousness: (1) that of Dharmapāla and Sthiramati, which maintains that consciousness manifests itself in two functional divisions, the perceiving and the perceived, out of the self-witness division; and (2) that of Nanda and Bandhusri, which contends that inner consciousness manifests itself in what seems to be an external sphere of objects (Wei Tat, 11). It is clear that Xuan Zang incorporates both views into his scheme in the *CWSL*. It is even conceivable that Xuan Zang's account of the collectivity of our experience might have been influenced by the latter view but since all of their works are now lost there is no way to verify such a hypothesis.

in this effort. First, he needs to make the case that externality is the result of the self-externalizing activities of consciousness. Second, he has to explain how an essentially private self-externalizating activity of an individual can account for the collectivity of our experience of the external world.[25]

On the first issue, we find the following remark in the *CWSL*:

> At the moment the perceived is apprehended, it is not grasped as external; only later *manovijñāna*, in its discriminatory function, creates the illusion of the external. Therefore, the domain of the perceived is the result of the transformation of *nimittabhāga* of consciousness itself. In this sense, the perceived exists. However, when it is grasped by *manovijñāna* as externally real objects, it does not exist. Moreover, in the domain of objects, the objects are not objects even though they appear so; they are not external even though they appear so. They are like dream objects which should not be grasped as real and external objects. (520)

According to Xuan Zang, the sense of externality does not arise at the moment when immediate perception takes place. In other words, at the moment of immediate perception, there is no differentiation between the internal and the external. There is perception *only*. The sense of externality only arises as a result of the discriminatory function of *manovijñāna*, the sixth consciousness, which transforms a percept into the image aspect of *manovijñāna*, namely *nimittabhāga*.

[25] There can be two approaches to the question of how consciousness alone can account for the collective dimension of our experience. We can either regard *ālayavijñāna* as a universal consciousness and the individual consciousness as the result of its individuation, or regard *ālayavijñāna* as essentially individualistic but having a universal dimension. Larrabee (4) summarizes the two possibilities well:

> First, the *ālaya* is one, but "materializes" at many points as individual consciousness which are empirically but erroneously viewed as individual ego-centered persons. Second, the *ālaya* is many, that is, each individual person has an *ālaya* as one of the eight consciousnesses which make up that individual. As we can see, the latter interpretation emphasizes the psychological descriptive aspect of the Yogācāra doctrine, while the former highlights the metaphysical or ontological aspect.

Larrabee rightly points out that Xuan Zang takes the view that *ālayavijñāna* is individualistic, which "militates against any monistic tendencies of the doctrine of consciousness-only, which at times seems to posit some single ultimate reality" (*ibid.*, 6). Larrabee chooses the other alternative which interprets *ālayavijñāna* as the ground for the individual ego-centers and, consequently, as a common ground for the consistency of world-experience undergone by the majority of individual human subjects, specifically the continuous yet (for Buddhists) illusory belief engendered by the *manas*-consciousness that a substantial world with substantially enduring ego-subjects exists. (*ibid.*)

Such a monistic interpretation of *ālayavijñāna* betrays a clear Advaitin influence on the part of Larrabee. Xuan Zang's individualistic interpretation of *ālayavijñāna* is more in accord with the general Buddhist tenet. The universalistic interpretation is premised on an understanding of the mind which is too much to assume in a philosophical deliberation. Hence, I will only deal with Xuan Zang's interpretation and its rationale.

Xuan Zang uses a dream as an example to illustrate his point that consciousness itself is capable of creating the sense of externality. In a dream state, even though the five senses have stopped their functions, the continued activities of *manovijñāna* still create the sense of externality (266). This is a clear indication that it is *manovijñāna* that creates the sense of externality, and that the sense of externality does not have to be premised upon the actual existence of external objects independent of consciousness.

However, what is it that *manovijñāna* externalizes which makes us experience the externality of the world? This has to do with the objectification of consciousness. We have seen earlier in this essay that two conditions are responsible for the objective dimension in our cognitive structure, according to Xuan Zang's Yogācāra scheme, namely the *ālambanapratyaya*, condition *qua* object, and *adhipatipratyaya*, condition *qua* agent. According to Xuan Zang, the *ālambana* of *manovijñāna* includes *ālayavijñāna*, *manas* and the five senses (570), and these objects of *manovijñāna* are also themselves consciousnesses, namely *adhipatipratyaya*. What is relevant to our purpose here is *ālayavijñāna*. In this regard, we find Xuan Zang stating that "[w]hen *ālayavijñāna* itself is born through the power of causes and conditions, it is manifested internally as *bījas* and a body with sense-organs and externally as the world" (136). Here Xuan Zang points out that *ālayavijñāna* manifests itself into two realms, internal and external. The internal refers to the *bījas* and the body with sense organs, and the external to the world. When this is juxtaposed with the claim that it is *manovijñāna* that differentiates the external from the internal, it is clear to us that the dual manifestation of *ālayavijñāna* is the result of externalizing activities of *manovijñāna*.

What is even more interesting, however, is that, according to the *CWSL*, there are common or universal *bījas* in *ālayavijñāna* which provide the objective basis for externality. "The word 'place' (*sthāna*) in the stanza refers to the fact that the ripening consciousness (*vipākavijñāna*) manifests as objects in the external world through the ripening of its universal *bījas*" (144). This means that there are two kinds of seeds, private and universal. Private seeds give rise to one's own body with its sense faculties, namely the seven consciousnesses, whereas universal seeds generate non-private *dharmas*, that which appear to be the external major elements and derived matter. As Junshō Tanaka rightly points out, the universal *bīja*

is postulated as the foundation for the possibility of collective experience. Collective experience means that which is manifested as an existing entity in the consciousnesses of the majority [of sentient beings] and is therefore commonly experienced, (Tanaka, 277)

He further differentiates four subcategories of entities in terms of their private and universal seeds. They are the common in the common, the non-common in the common, the non-common in the non-common, and the common in the non-common (278). Accordingly, the common in the common refers to entities like mountains and rivers, the non-common in the common private properties like houses and land, the non-common in the non-common one's own body, and the common in the non-common other people's bodies (*ibid.*).

Moreover,

Even though the consciousnesses of sentient beings are manifested differently, what are manifested are similar, with no difference in terms of locality. This is just like many lamps are lit together such that the lights appear to become one single light. (Xuan Zang, 144)

In this passage, Xuan Zang seems to backpedal from the earlier position that there are private as well as universal *bījas* by saying that the common world is the result of the manifestation of private consciousnesses. The idea of the universal *bījas* does not even appear to be necessary. The message Xuan Zang is trying to convey here, if we look at the two passages together, is that the commonness of the world as we experience it is not a real one but an apparent one. Such a common world is constituted by the manifestation of essentially individual and private conscious processes, whose *apparent* commonness is attributed to the working of the universal *bījas*. In other words, the universal *bījas* do not account for a real common world, but only an apparent one. This is tantamount to claiming that the universal *bījas* themselves do not share the same degree of reality as the private *bījas* in Xuan Zang's Yogācāra system.

If we bring in the close and the remote *ālambanapratyaya* discussed earlier, it becomes obvious that the remote object of consciousness refers to the dharmas generated by the universal *bīja* and the close object by the private *bīja*. Since the remote/universal object is only apparent, not real, its universality is then premised upon its seeming externality resulting from the externalizing activity of *manovijñāna*. In other words, the universality of *bīja* is directly linked to the externalizing activity of *manovijñāna*. This means that the universal

bīja correlates with the externalizing activities of *manovijñāna* in that there is a universal structure in what is externalized by *manovijñāna*. The *sense* of the remoteness of an object is the result of such an externalization of *manovijñāna*. Or to be more exact, the sense of the remote object is constituted by the externalizing activity of *manovijñāna* which has a universal structure. As to whether such a remote object actually exists or not, it is not a question that can be explained within Xuan Zang's qualified idealist system. Neither is he interested in such a question. This explains Xuan Zang's claim that while the close object is a necessary condition for consciousness the remote object is not. Therefore, the issue concerning the relationship between the remote and the close objects is resolved by attributing the origin of their *senses* to the operation of *manovijñāna* while shelving the metaphysical question of whether a remote object actually exists or not.

Consequently, for Xuan Zang, there are three different senses of the "world": (1) the apparent common receptacle world which is the result of the operations of all eight consciousnesses of an individual that belong to the community of individuals in the everyday waking state; (2) the private world which results from the operations of *manovijñāna*, *manas*, and *ālayavijñāna* of an individual in dreams; and (3) the world of the enlightened. He uses the second to explain the first while leaving the third out of the explanatory scheme regarding the externality and commonness of the objects of our everyday experience. What distinguishes the first from the second is the cooperation of the five senses.

At this juncture, let us focus our attention on the first sense of the "world" since this is where the issue concerning the experience of a common world is at stake. Xuan Zang enumerates three kinds of non-private *dharmas*, namely, the receptacle world, another person's mind, and another person's body. The receptacle world is what appears to be a common world, the sense of which is constituted by a community of individual consciousness. As for another person's mind, Xuan Zang treats it no differently from any external physical object, as is evident in the following remark,

> One's consciousness can comprehend another mind as a seemingly external object like a mirror where what looks like to be an external object appears. However, such a comprehension is not direct. What can be comprehended directly is the transformation of the mind itself, not another mind. (522)

In other words, another person's mind is the unfolding of one's own mental activities; it can be understood within the discriminatory cognitive structure of the grasper and the grasped in one's own conscious process.

With regard to another person's body, Xuan Zang contends that on the one hand sense faculties and their supporting physical body are the result of maturing of private *bījas* (148); on the other hand,

> Because of the power of the ripening of the universal *bījas*, this *vipākavijñāna* transforms itself in such a way that it resembles other persons' sense organs in the locus of their bodies. Otherwise, one would not be able to enjoy the sense organs of other persons. (*ibid.*)

Put simply, even though one's sense faculties or body are developed out of one's own particular series of seeds, the operations of the five sense faculties give rise to the sense of collectivity of the human body.

To sum up, in Xuan Zang's Yogācāra system, the private and the collective, the individual and the universal, are identical entities, with different senses attributed to them by the operation of *manovijñāna* and the cooperation of the five sense faculties. Thereby, Xuan Zang has made his case that the *apparent* commonness or collectivity of the world is the result of the externalization of a community of individuals each of which is constituted by eight consciousnesses.

Ālayavijñāna and the self

Finally, we are faced with the question we set out to answer: has Xuan Zang achieved his objective in explaining continuity within the Buddhist orthodoxy through his presentation of *ālayavijñāna*? In order to answer this question, we first have to know what kinds of continuity the Yogācāra Buddhists like Xuan Zang are concerned about. This can be detected in the list of logical arguments[26] Xuan Zang gives in support of the existence of *ālayavijñāna* in the *CWSL*; he states that *ālayavijñāna*

[26] As Lusthaus observes, "Eventually Buddhist epistemology would accept only perception (*pratyakṣa*) and inferential reasoning (*anumāna*) as valid means for acquiring knowledge (*pramāṇa*), and these changes were only beginning in India while Hsüan-tsang was there. They were not yet institutionalized. Prior to that shift the two acceptable means were scriptural testimony (*śruti*) and reasoning (*yukti*, *anumāna*). It was Vasubandhu's disciple, Dignāga, after all, who firmly established perception and inference as the two valid *pramāṇas*, and undermined the status of scripture" (1989, 321). Since the scriptural support Xuan Zang cites does not have a direct bearing on the philosophical argument, I will not get into it here.

(1) is *vipākacitta* that holds *bījas*;
(2) is the uninterrupted retributive mind;
(3) is the mind in the course of transmigration;
(4) is that which appropriates the body;
(5) is the support for life and heat;
(6) is the mind at conception and death;
(7) exists by reason of *nāmarūpa*;
(8) is the substance of consciousness-food on which the other three foods (food in mouthfuls, food by contact and through aspiration) depend;
(9) is the mind in *nirodhasamāpatti*;
(10) is the foundation for pure and impure *dharmas*. (202–44)

Obviously Xuan Zang is preoccupied with the continuity of subjectivity, within one lifetime and between lives. In the final analysis, his theoretical effort to explain the continuity of subjectivity is aimed at accounting for the self as a continuum; this is evidenced by the three meanings of *ālayavijñāna* given in the *CWSL*, one of which asserts that *ātman* is the result of attachment to the eighth consciousness (104), as we have seen previously. His explanation of an external object as a continuum is the extension of the continuity of subjectivity, since for him the continuity of subjectivity and the continuity of objectivity are two aspects of the same cognitive process. The former holds primacy over the latter, while the actual existence of external objects independent of consciousness is rendered irrelevant. Let us now take a closer look at how Xuan Zang explains our sense of self as a continuum within the Yogācāra theoretical edifice he has presented. Since he regards *ātman* as the result of attachment and misidentification of the continuum of *ālayavijñāna* as an identity, our effort will focus on examining how such a misidentification takes place.

According to the *CWSL*, attachment to *ātman* has two kinds: that which is innate and that which results from mental discrimination (20). The innate kind is always present in the individual and it operates spontaneously without depending on external false teachings or mental discriminations (*ibid.*). It is itself divided into two kinds:

> The first is constant and continuous, and it pertains to the seventh consciousness which arises together with the eighth consciousness and grasps the mental image of the latter as the real self.
>
> The second is sometimes interrupted and it pertains to the sixth consciousness and the five aggregates that are the result of their transformations; the mental image that arises with them individually or as a group is grasped as the real self. (*ibid.*)

Xuan Zang differentiates two senses of self here: one is constant and the other is sometimes interrupted. Such a differentiation is made with an eye on our different senses of the self in the waking state, the dream state,[27] and the deep meditative state, which, it may be recalled, is the primary concern in the initial postulation of *ālayavijñāna*. If our sense of self is limited to the waking and even the dream state, wherein the content of consciousness is recollectable, it would run the risk of being lost during the deep meditative state. This is the reason behind the differentiation made between these two senses of self. In the first case, the sense of self that is constant pertains to the seventh consciousness, *manas*, which adheres to *ālayavijñāna* as the self, since both *manas* and *ālayavijñāna* are constant and never interrupted until enlightenment is reached. In the second case, the sense of self that can be interrupted pertains to the sixth consciousness which operates with the five senses – as in the waking state – or without them – as in the dream state. The second sense of self is interrupted during certain deep meditative states.

In the case of the first sense of self, we have learned that *ālayavijñāna* has three aspects: the perceiving (*darśanabhāga*), the perceived (*nimittabhāga*) and the self-corroboratory (*sva-saṃvittibhāga*) divisions, which are manifested as the external world on the one hand and the internal *bījas* and sense organs possessed by the body on the other. Which aspect is the one to which *manas* attaches and which is misidentified as the self? In this connection, Xuan Zang says that

> *Manas* appropriates only the *darśanabhāga* of the *ālayavijñāna*, not its other *bhāgas*, because *darśanabhāga* has, since before the beginning of time, been a continuous and homogeneous series, as if it were a constant and an identical entity. Since this *bhāga* is the constant support of various *dharmas*, *manas* attaches to it as the inner self. (282)

So it is the perceiving aspect, *darśanabhāga*, of the eighth consciousness that *manas* takes as its object and misidentifies as the self, but *darśanabhāga* is a homogeneous continuum even though it appears as eternal and one. This is how continuity is misconstrued as identity.

The "self" in the second sense of the word is due to the activities of the sixth consciousness, *manovijñāna*, with or without the cooperation of the five senses. However,

[27] The Buddhists do not seem to be interested in the so-called "dreamless" state, as the Hindu philosophers do.

manovijñāna, like the visual consciousness etc., must have its own support manifesting its own name. Such a support does not arise from *samanantarapratyaya* ('condition *qua* immediate antecedent'), but from *adhipatipratyaya* ('condition *qua* agent') instead. (Xuan Zang, 328)

As Wei Tat rightly points out, such a support of *manovijñāna* is *manas*, the seventh consciousness (329). Put simply, the sixth consciousness should have its own sense-organ, just as the eye is the sense-organ for visual consciousness. Here *manas* is viewed as the sense-organ for *manovijñāna*. However, as we have previously seen, *manas* is also said to be one of the *ālambanas* of *manovijñāna* (*ibid*., 570). This means that *manas* is both the support *qua* sense-organ and the support *qua* object of *manovijñāna*. This is in line with Xuan Zang's general position, which treats subject and object as two aspects of the same experiential process. Since one of the functions of *manovijñāna* is its externalizing activities, if all these are juxtaposed side by side, the overall picture we get of the generation of the self involves the following processes: the perceiving aspect, *darśanabhāga*, of *ālayavijñāna* is an ever-evolving continuum, to which *manas* attaches and misidentifies as an identity; this identity is then externalized by the activities of *manovijñāna* as *ātman* standing outside the cognitive structure of subject and object.

There is another sense of self that Xuan Zang talks about, in contradistinction to the above two innate senses of self: it is caused by mental discrimination and derived from the force of external factors including false teachings and discriminations. This sense of self pertains exclusively to *manovijñāna*. This attachment to *ātman* is also of two kinds:

The first, preached by certain heterodox schools, refers to the aggregates that arise out of the mental images in *manovijñāna*. Through discrimination and intellection, *manovijñāna* attaches to those aggregates as a real self.

The second refers to the characteristics of the self, preached by certain heterodox schools, that arise out of the mental images in *manovijñāna*. Through discrimination and intellection, *manovijñāna* attaches to those characteristics as a real self. (22)

In the first case the self is conceived as the object of self-belief. This is the view held by the Vātsīputrīyas. Xuan Zang refutes it by stating that it is the five *skandhas*, not *ātman*, that is the object of self-belief. Since the five *skandhas* are themselves impermanent, the permanence of *ātman* is hence rejected. In the second case the self is the product of various *ātman*-concepts of a false teaching which refers to the Vedic

teaching of *ātman*. Since these typical Buddhist refutations of other views of self in defense of their own position are common knowledge to students of Buddhism, I will not go into them in detail here.

It is worthwhile to take note of Xuan Zang's own violation of suspending the judgment on the existential status of any extra-conscious entities when he declares that *ātman* does not exist, since its existential status is suspended within his philosophy. All he can actually do is to reject the existential question of *ātman* altogether on the ground that it can neither be affirmed nor denied within the structure of consciousness.

To conclude, in this essay I have tried to present the concept of *ālayavijñāna* as well as the rationale behind the Yogācārins' effort in formulating the concept as Xuan Zang presents it in the *CWSL*. Xuan Zang is very conscious of the limitations imposed by Buddhist orthodoxy on his theoretical endeavor. In my opinion, he is largely successful in explaining subjectivity as a continuum as well as the continuity of experience by analyzing consciousness alone without appealing to anything outside and by ably rendering the existential status of external objects irrelevant in his system. His effort underscores a vigorous attempt to fortify the Buddhist doctrine against any form of reification and substantialization. In explaining the self as a subliminal continuum he effectively endorses the view that our sense of self is closely related to some subliminal mental activities of which we are largely unaware in our daily life; this view is echoed by modern psychoanalysts like Freud, Jung, and others. However, *ālayavijñāna* cannot be hastily compared to the unconscious developed in modern psychoanalysis without major qualifications. But such a topic requires a separate effort.[28]

REFERENCES

Anacker, S. (1998). *Seven Works of Vasubandhu: The Buddhist Psychological Doctor*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited.

Gupta, B. (1998). *The Disinterested Witness: A Fragment of Advaita Vedanta Phenomenology*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

Hiriyanna, M. (1993). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*. Delhi, India: M/S Kavyalaya Publishers.

Hukaura, S. (1968). *Yuishikigaku Denkyū* (*A Study of Yogācāra*), 2 Vols. Kyoto, Japan: Nagata Bunshōdō.

[28] Cf. Jiang (2004).

Jiang, T. (2004). The storehouse consciousness and the unconscious: A comparative study of Xuan Zang and Freud on the subliminal mind. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* **72**(1), 119–139.
Katsumata, S. (1969). *Bukkyō ni okeru Shinshikisetsu no Kenkyū* (*A Study of the Citta-Vijñāna Thought in Buddhism*). Tokyo, Japan: Sankibō Busshorin.
Larrabee, M.J. (1981). The one and the many: Yogācāra Buddhism and Husserl. *Philosophy: East and West* **31**(January), 3–15.
Lusthaus, D. (1989). *A Philosophical Investigation of the* Ch'eng Wei-Shih Lun: *Vasubandhu, Hsüan Tsang and the Transmission of Vijñapti-Mātra (Yogācāra) from India to China*, Ph. D. Diss., Temple University.
Lusthaus, D. (2002). *Buddhist Phenomenology: A Philosophical Investigation of Yogācāra Buddhism and the Ch'eng Wei-shih Lun*. London: Routledge Curzon.
Matilal, B.K. (1986). *Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Mohanty, J.N. (1992). *Reason and Tradition in Indian Thought: An Essay on the Nature of Indian Philosophical Thinking*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Paul, D.Y. (1984). *Philosophy of Mind in Sixth-Century China: Paramārtha's 'Evolution of Consciousness'*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
von Rospatt, A. (1995). *Buddhist Doctrine of Momentariness: A Survey of the Origins and Early Phase of this Doctrine up to Vasubandhu*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.
Schmithausen, L. (1987). *Ālayavijñāna: On the Origin and the Early Development of a Central Concept of Yogācāra Philosophy*. Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies.
Tanaka, J. (1968). *Kūkan to Yuishikikan: sono genri to batten* (*Emptiness and Consciousness-only: Their Doctrines and Developments*). Kyoto, Japan: Nagata Bunshōdō.
Vasubandhu. (1988). *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*. Translated into French by Louis de La Vallée Poussin, and translated into English by Leo M. Pruden. Berkeley, California: Asian Humanities Press.
Waldron, W.S. (1990). *The Ālayavijñāna in the Context of Indian Buddhist Thought: The Yogācāra Conception of an Unconscious*, Ph. D. Diss., University of Wisconsin - Madison.
Waldron, W.S. (1994). How innovative is the Alayavijñāna? The ālayavijñāna in the context of Canonical and Abhidharma vijñāna theory. Part I. *Journal of Indian Philosophy* **22**, 199–258.
Waldron, W.S. (2003). *The Buddhist Unconscious: The ālaya-vijñāna in the Context of Indian Buddhist Thought*. London: Routledge Curzon.
Wriggins, S.H. (1996). *XUANGZANG: A Buddhist Pilgrim on the Silk Road*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
Yokoyama, K. (1979). *Yuishiki no Tetsugaku* (*Yogācāra Philosophy*). Kyoto, Japan: Heirakuji Shoten.
Xuan, Z. (1973). *Ch'eng Wei-Shih Lun: The Doctrine of Mere-Consciousness*, Trans. Wei Tat. Hong Kong: The Ch'eng Wei-Shih Lun Publishing Committee.

Department of Religion
Rutgers, The State Univerisity of New Jersey
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8525
USA
E-mail: tjiang999@hotmail.com