WEI SHIH ER SHIH LUN

唯 識 二 十 論

OR

THE TREATISE IN TWENTY STANZAS ON REPRESENTATION-ONLY

BY

VASUBANDHU
世 親

Translated from the Chinese Version of Hsüan Tsang (玄奘)
Tripiṭaka Master of the T'ang Dynasty

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AMERICAN ORIENTAL SOCIETY
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT
1938

INTRODUCTION

I

Text and Commentary

Hsüan Tsang's *Wei-shih-er-shih-lun* is the Chinese version of one of the classical texts in the philosophy of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Its Sanskrit original, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi; Viṃśatikā,* was composed by the Indian thinker Vasubandhu. It belongs to a late development [1] in the history of Indian Buddhism when interest had shifted from early emphasis on practical requirements for attaining *nirvāṇa* to concern with metaphysical explanation as the superior means for achieving enlightenment. In content it represents the system of Buddhistic idealism which Chinese pilgrims found current in India during the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries of the Christian era, the period of most active transmission of Buddhist literature to the Far East. Transplanted in China, Japan, and Tibet, Vasubandhu's organization of the ideas in two brief but pregnant treatises [2] came to be regarded as a major achievement in rational statement for the highest meaning of Mahāyāna doctrine. This result is owing, in no small degree, to the devotion of Hsüan Tsang himself to the system.

Vasubandhu's treatise in twenty stanzas, the Viṃśatikā, has long been valued as an elementary presentation of his thought. The esteem in which it has been held in China is evidenced by four extant translations; the first [3] by the Indian priest Gautama Prajñāruci in the Eastern Wei Dynasty (A. D. 534-550), the second [4] by the Indian priest Para-

[1] Buddha's dates are usually placed at about B. C. 563-483: E. J. Thomas; *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History,* pp. 1, 158. Vasubandhu, if we follow the judgment of Louis de La Vallée Poussin, belongs to the first half of the fourth century A. D.: La Vallée Poussin's *Dynasties et Histoire de l'Inde depuis Kanishka jusqu'aux invasions musulmanes,* Paris, 1935, p. 347. Japanese scholars have tended to assign Vasubandhu to the latter half of the fifth century: See the group of articles by J. Takakusu, T. Kimura, G. Ono, and H. Ui in *Indian Studies in Honor of Charles Rockwell Lanman,* 1929. Their considerations together with others are examined by Professor La Vallée Poussin in the Introduction to his L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu, pp. xxiv-xxviii.

[2] I. e. Viṃśatikā and Triṃśikā.

[3] 大乘楞伽經唯識論. In Taishô Issaikyô (the most recent Japanese edition of the Chinese Tripiṭaka) this is listed as No. 1588. In Nanjio's *Catalogue of the Buddhist Tripiṭaka* it appears as No. 1238.

[4] 大乘唯識論 Taishô, 1589. Nanjio, 1239.

mārtha in the Ch'en Dynasty (A. D. 557-589), the third [5] by Hsüan Tsang himself in the Year A. D. 661 of the T'ang Dynasty (A. D. 618-907), and the fourth [6] by a later Chinese pilgrim scholar, I-Ching, in A. D. 710 in connection with his translation of Dharmapāla's commentary on the treatise.

Of these four translations that by Hsüan Tsang is, by general consent, the acknowledged superior. Not only did the Chinese scholar know the genius of his native tongue better than his Indian predecessors; he was also unusually qualified by his long period of special study of Sanskrit sources with authoritative masters at the centers of Buddhistic learning in the India of his day (A. D. 629-645). As I have shown elsewhere,[7] through all sixteen years of his many-sided investigations abroad Hsüan Tsang maintained a central interest in the writings of the two brothers, Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, whose system of idealism had attracted him even before his departure for India. After his return to China it was to K'uei Chi, the most gifted of his many disciples, that he entrusted the transmission of the doctrines of Vasubandhu. To K'uei Chi's basic Chinese commentary on *Wei-shih-er-shih-lun* [8] we are indebted for the preservation of Hsüan Tsang's judgment on the inadequacies of previous translations of the treatise [9] as well as for the explanations accompanying the new translation which the master delivered orally to his disciple. Today, qualified Western scholars are able to discern the greater clarity and precision of Hsüan Tsang's texts as well as the lightness and esthetic grace in the flow of his sentences. So successful, in fact, was Hsüan Tsang in creating a new and consistent Chinese Buddhist terminology that for Chinese and Japanese scholars alike his works have since been directly comprehensible even without knowledge of Sanskrit.[10] This

[5] 唯識二十論 Taishô, 1590. Nanjio, 1240.

[6] 成唯識寶生論 Taishô, 1591. Nanjio, 1210.

[7] Art. "Hsüan Chuang and the Wei Shih Philosophy," *JAOS* 51, 1931, pp. 291-308.

[8] Wei-shih-er-shih-lun-shu-chi, 唯識二十論述記.

[9] See my article on "K'uei Chi's Commentary on Wei-shih-er-shih-lun" in *JAOS* 53, 1933, pp. 144-151.

[10] Cf. Otto Rosenberg: *Die Probleme der Buddhistischen Philosophie*, pp. 39-41, on the literary significance of Hsüan Tsang's translations. For Hsüan Tsang's method of translation see D. T. Suzuki's valuable note in his *Studies in the Lankavatara Sutra*, p. 7 f. Dr. Walter Liebenthal has noted significant points of comparison in his "The Version of the Viṃśatikā by I-ching and its Relation to that by Hsüan-tsang," *Yenching Journal of Chinese Studies*, No. 17. In the article referred in Note 7 I have observed points of contrast between the Paramārtha and Hsüan Tsang versions.

excellence, present no less in his version of Vasubandhu's Viṃśatikā, renders it a valuable medium of study for Western philosophical scholars interested in an approach to the Buddhistic phase of Chinese thought.

Study of the Chinese text is facilitated by the explanations preserved in K'uei Chi's Commentary. These are of more than ordinary value, for they are really notes on Hsüan Tsang's own exposition of the treatise given at the time of dictating the translation. In the introduction to his work the disciple himself tells us, "My master did not regard me as stupid. He commissioned me to make manifest his thought. While the translating was going on I received his meanings and out of them compiled a commentary."[11] K'uei Chi received this instruction in A. D. 661. He was the more fitted for his task by having previously assisted at the translation of the great *Ch'eng-wei-shih-lun* which was finished in A. D. 659.[12] This latter work, which is Hsüan Tsang's masterpiece, is the authoritative Chinese version of Vasubandhu's *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi; Triṃśikā*, or "Treatise in Thirty Stanzas on Representation-Only," with the addition of explanations digested from ten important Indian commentaries. With such a background K'uei Chi was in position to furnish a great wealth of wider reference for clarifying the brief phrases of the little treatise before us. He is at pains to specify, as the Sanskrit text does not, the schools holding the various positions refuted by Vasubandhu, thus revealing the wide array of opponents which the argument is designed to meet.[13] We find him on occasion quoting directly from the *Ch'eng-wei-shih-lun* when the argument in hand is there found differently stated.[14] After the manner of the *Ch'eng-wei-shih-lun* likewise, he refers to other scriptures of the Mahāyāna which are concerned with the conceptions of idealism.[15] He makes us aware of an older deposit of germinal intuitions in earlier literature which formed the rudimentary material for the system later articulated by Asaṅga and Vasubandhu.

Apart from its value as a repository of Hsüan Tsang's erudition K'uei

[11] 我師不以庸愚，命旌厥趣，隨翻受旨，編爲述記.

[12] 成唯識論. Taishô, No. 1585. Nanjio, No. 1197. This remarkable integration of scholastic analysis has been translated into French by Louis de La Vallée Poussin in his *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi; La Siddhi de Hiuan-Tsang.* Paris, 1928-29.

[13] Sarvāstivādins, Śūnyavādins, Sautrāntikas, Mahāsaṅghikas, Vaiśeṣikas, Sammitīyas, Vaibhāṣikas, Vātsīputrīyas, etc. have each their characteristic contentions stated in relevant passages.

[14] An example appears in Note 86, p. 51 of this translation.

[15] Twelve of these are listed in the article cited above in Note 9.

Chi's Commentary is significant also for its contribution through logical analysis. Familiar with the system of the great logician Diṅnāga,[16] to whose principles he more than once refers, K'uei Chi often restates the point of an argument in order to bring out the thesis, reason, and example involved. For the Western reader his procedure illuminates the rational process followed, even if its cogency is not of a type familiar to inheritors of the Aristotelian formal logic. From K'uei Chi's analyses we are able to see the issues at stake. He knows the recognized standards of excellence in the Buddhist universe of scholastic argument and holds clearly the distinctions between evidence from scriptural authority, from immediate perception, and from inference. His explanations often enable us to perceive what would be the linkage of ideas if restated in the more familiar thought forms of the West. Whether his grasp of Vasubandhu's meaning is complete is, of course, another matter. Indications are not wanting that he regarded his accomplishment as something less than the requirement of the profundities of the subject. In his prefatory remarks he writes, "Easy to intrust is a gem worth two cities, but difficult to glimpse is the Jewel of the Law."[17] Again in concluding his long and many-sided exposition he refers with more than conventional literary humility to the possible inadequacies of his work and to his sense of personal limitation. Nevertheless, so far as the orthodox Chinese understanding of the treatise is concerned, K'uei Chi's record is unsurpassed. Since the purpose of the present translation has been to reflect as far as possible the Chinese interpretation, main reliance for meanings has been placed upon K'uei Chi's Commentary.

Study subsidiary to work on the Chinese text has included reading the Sanskrit text as published by Sylvain Lévi in 1925 and the French translation published by the same scholar in 1932.[18] For controlling the suggestions arising from the terminology of the Chinese version these aids have been valuable. It has not been found practicable, however, to follow the specialized vocabulary developed by M. Lévi in his

[16] Hsüan Tsang had translated the Nyāyamukha of Diṅnāga in A. D. 648 with the title 因明正理門論本. See Nanjio, No. 1224, Taishô, No. 1628. An English translation of this work by Giuseppe Tucci appears in *Materialien zur Kunde des Buddhismus*, 15 Heft, Heidelberg, 1930.

[17] 連城易託,法寶難窺. In this pregnant saying the first two characters, as Dr. Hu Shih has kindly explained to me, convey the suggestion of a piece of jade in value equal to a double or "twin" city.

[18] *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi, Deux traites de Vasubandhu; Viṃśatikā et Triṃśikā*, 1925: and *Materiaux pour l'étude du système Vijñaptimātra*, 1932. Both are published by the Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, Paris.

literal fidelity to the constructions of Vasubandhu's technical Sanskrit. The expression of meanings in Chinese does not rest upon the etymological and grammatical considerations characteristic of Sanskrit and hence does not reflect many of the linguistic nuances which M. Lévi as an Indianist is careful to preserve. At the same time it retains essential philosophical ideas, often with admirable simplicity and directness. In a translation designed for a philosophical as well as a sinological public it has been thought best to follow the ideas as they appear in their Chinese medium and to find equivalents for them in appropriate English philosophical terminology. Questions of a linguistic character, however, have been discussed in foot-notes when their importance is crucial.

More especially has my whole labor been indebted to an extra reading of K'uei Chi's Commentary with Professor Louis de La Vallée Poussin in the summer of 1933. The manuscript of the translation later completed has further had the benefit of his critical examination made in the light of that mastery of Vasubandhu's total system for which he is renowned among students of Buddhism.[19] Without his sympathetic understanding and encouragement it is little likely that the task could have been completed.

The basis of the translation is the critically established text of Wei-shih-er-shih-lun published in 1930 by the Chinese Academy of Buddhist Learning at Nanking,[20]—an institution which represents the foremost school of Chinese textual scholarship in this field. In this edition the text of the Southern Sung was taken as foundation, punctuated and corrected in the light of an examination of Lévi's Sanskrit text, the Tibetan translation, the pre-T'ang Chinese versions of Prajñāruci and Paramārtha, I-Ching's Chinese translation of the Sanskrit Commentary by Dharmapāla (now lost) and the text of the new Sino-Japanese edition in Taishô Issaikyô.[21]

II

The Content of the Treatise

In his *Treatise in Twenty Stanzas* Vasubandhu does not attempt to state his full theory of representation-only. That task he reserves for his famed *Treatise in Thirty Stanzas*. Circumstances, as K'uei Chi

[19] His translations of Hsüan Tsang's 阿毗達磨俱舍論 (Nanjio, No. 1267) and 成唯識論 (Nanjio, No. 1197) are of primary importance for the Western understanding of Far Eastern philosophical Buddhism.

[20] 南京支那內學院，唯識二十論

[21] Cf. the new Nanking edition in the introductory passage entitled 唯識二十論校勘說明.

points out, called first for an elementary defense of the central proposition of the system, "The three worlds are representation-only." Since the "three worlds" of transmigratory existence, as commonly understood, embraced the total realm of objective cosmological entities, their reduction to the status of pure mental representations was an assumption of metaphysical idealism which rivaling schools of thought were from the outset ready to challenge. There were the Sarvāstivādins claiming that outer objects as well as thought were equally existent.[22] There were the Śunyavādins contending that inner thoughts as well as objects are equally non-existent.[23] There were the Sautrāntikas, refusing to distinguish between thought and the modes of its functioning.[24] There were yet others, conceiving the outer, extra-mental world as one continuous unity or as an atomistic plurality.[25] All these made necessary a preliminary effort to remove antecedent prejudices against his major position before Vasubandhu could proceed to the positive exposition of its technical detail. Thus, according to K'uei Chi, Vasubandhu first composed the *Treatise in Twenty Stanzas* in order "to refute extensively the objections of outsiders."[26] It is evident from the form of the treatise that the method followed is to state one by one the adverse arguments of opponents and then by refutation to show that the universe as representation-only is still a serious and tenable conception. Such a procedure was well calculated to arrest the attention of non-idealists in every camp. Even today Vasubandhu's answers to realism both naïve and sophisticated still serve well as an introduction to his system. In Hsüan Tsang's version we read his thoughts as they have found significant formulation for many generations of Buddhist scholars in the Far East. And in K'uei Chi's explanations we see how they have functioned in their ultimately living form.

We turn now to the course of the argument itself. For the full detail of its structure and literal expression the reader is referred to the translation and notes. The following more informal description of the ideas is given with a view to emphasizing something of their universal significance in the realm of common philosophic discourse. This is not to forget the religious aim which lies behind Vasubandhu's metaphysical reflections, which is to promote the type of mystical illumination characteristic of the Yogācāra school of Mahāyāna Buddhism to which he

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belonged. His idealistic doctrine is ultimately in the service of a supra-intellectual realization. Nevertheless his actual effort at consistent metaphysical statement, the field where ultimate hypotheses are always few, leads him to confront many of the same basic problems of idealism which have troubled powerful thinkers in both East and West. In a polemical work such as the present treatise, interest for the Western philosophical reader turns most naturally upon the emergence and resolution of these problems in the data of an Oriental reflective experience.

Vasubandhu opens his subject with the pronouncement, "In the Mahāyāna it is established that the three worlds are representation-only." This is his technically precise statement of an insight that had found various expression in older scriptures. Terms such as "thought," "mind," "consciousness," "discernment" had been used in place of "representation." These are names for useful distinctions within what we would call the process of cognition. But in one respect they are all synonymous. All are without genuinely extra-mental objects. Externality in the thing perceived is for Vasubandhu an illusion. "When inner representations arise," he says, "seemingly external objects appear: as persons having bad eyes see hairs and flies. But herein is no particle of truth."

To this position objections immediately arise from the consideration of certain characteristics in the commonly assumed world of external sense objects. As we experience them, sense objects are (1) fixed in place, (2) and in time. (3) They are public, not being the peculiar possession of a single perceiving stream of consciousness. (4) They have reliable function and use. If we regard them as dreams, mere representations without external objects, then none of these characteristics can be explained. These four points in objection to the idealistic thesis are stated in the First Stanza with its accompanying prose explanation.

In the Second Stanza and explanation Vasubandhu shows that all these characters are explicable in terms of pure mental representation. Mere fixity of objects in space and time does not necessitate externality, for dream images also have definite spatial and temporal location within the dream structure without being real objects apart from consciousness. The public character of a seemingly external object, likewise, is no conclusive objection, for (according to common conception) horrific objects seen in hell by suffering ghosts are not limited to one perceiving stream of consciousness: yet such objects are admittedly unreal, being simply the natural fruition in separate consciousnesses of the same kind of evil

deeds. As to the assumed inability of mental representations to have effective function, that too can be shattered by the reflection that even dream imagery may produce a real loss of semen. Thus the four points in objection, (1) spatial determination, (2) temporal determination, (3) indetermination of the perceiving stream of consciousness, and (4) real function, are all found explicable in terms of representations-only, without external objects.

A single illustration, Vasubandhu thinks, may serve to show how the four points together may be given an idealistic explanation. Denizens of hell, as commonly conceived by various schools, were supposed to be tormented by a class of creatures called "infernal guards." Scholastic debate had often centered on the question whether or not these infernal guards were real beings. Vasubandhu now contends that they are not independently and externally real but a phenomenon of the guilty consciousness of sinners. It is because they have committed deeds which bring on the same retributive effects that the sentient beings in hell "in the same place, at the same time, and as many streams of consciousness, collectively behold infernal guards, dogs, crows, iron hills, and other things coming to inflict their torments upon them. From this, although there are no objects apart from consciousness the four principles of spatial determination and so on are all established."

The question arises why Vasubandhu does not admit that infernal guards and other horrific creatures are real sentient beings. In reply he points out the clash of concepts involved. Supposing them to be genuine sentient beings they must, being in hell, suffer the pains of hell even as the sinners. This would assimilate them to the class of sinners. Such assimilation, however, is logically inadmissible since they are recognized as not themselves subject to the torments which they inflict upon others. On the other hand, assuming them to be subject to such torments, the infliction must be at the hands of sinners and we have the notion of infernal guards and sinners mutually torturing, and being tortured by, one another. But this wipes out the distinction between sinners as sufferers and infernal guards as tormentors. If, however, this distinction is insisted upon, then, since the tormentors are non-sinners, they are not deserving of an infernal destiny according to the law of moral retribution and hence cannot be consistently imagined in hell at all. Thus the notion of infernal guards as objectively real sentient beings breaks down.

But realism opposes yet another hypothesis. The tormentors in hell may not be real as sentient beings but perhaps they are real as some kind

of special primal elements generated by evil deeds—elements which by transformation take on the horrific forms which frighten the sinner. So say the Sarvāstivādins. Vasubandhu recognizes here a certain truth. Our deeds do indeed bring on the retributive transformations by which we suffer. But it is not necessary to assume that the seeds sown by our deeds bear fruit in the formation of imaginary external elements. It is enough to say that it is consciousness itself which, by the strength of deeds, changes with such retributory effect. Why not admit that the impressions of our deeds as well as their retributive ripenings are alike occurrences within the continuity of consciousness alone?

To this explanation of moral retribution in terms of a causal series in consciousness alone the Sautrāntikas oppose an objection based on the authority of Buddha's teaching in the sūtras. In these scriptures the common reference to five sense organs and their corresponding five sense objects implies that they are entities external to consciousness. If they are merely representations appearing in consciousness, the World-honored One would not have called them the "ten bases" (of sense cognition). In reply Vasubandhu recognizes the scriptural usage but denies that it is to be taken literally. Buddha's form of expression in this case is to be regarded as an accommodation to the understanding of his hearers. His true inner intention is that the apparent objective aspect of a given sense cognition is really an evolution from the sensory consciousness itself. Sense organs and sense objects are no more real in an extramental sense than are the "beings of apparitional birth" (also mentioned in the sūtras) real self entities instead of the series of elements and their causes which they truly are. Buddha's words must be understood in their inner meaning and intention.

The value of interpreting Buddha's teaching in this fashion Vasubandhu now goes on to explain. Take the doctrine that cognition is based upon twelve distinguishable factors, sensory and intellective, which may be called "bases" of cognition. When properly understood this leads to the insight that within the individual sentient being there is no substantial entity such as "soul" or "self." Seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, and intellection do indeed take place, but behind them there is no ego entity doing any of these things. They whose conversion depends upon this insight are aided by understanding the teaching concerning the "twelve bases." But there is a higher realization to be attained which is an extension of the insight into the "egolessness of the individual." It is the realization that all elements likewise are without inner controlling agent or substantiality. Such attainment comes

through comprehending the doctrine that representations alone exist. Mental representations arise with apparent sense qualities and functions, but in reality there is no inner substantial entity having these qualities. That is, there is no more inner core of reality in apparent things than there is in the apparent individuality of persons. To penetrate thoroughly the significance of this in terms of the doctrine that representations-only exist is the great desideratum. They who have the capacity for it, K'uei Chi explains in comment, obtain the fruit of Buddhahood.

At this point Vasubandhu recognizes that a serious misconception may arise. He expresses it in the form of a possible radical objection. If we realize the "insubstantiality of elements" by knowing that all elements of every kind are non-existent, do we not then do away with the existence of representations also? How, in that case, can the basic contention that only representations exist be sustained? The answer is to show that the objection assumes too absolute an interpretation of the phrase "insubstantiality of elements." It does not mean that every class of elements is denied. There still remains the final nature of things which is the true representation immediately apprehended in the perfect intuition of those who have become Buddhas. The nature of the elements within the domain of a Buddha's insight is indeed beyond words, but it is not inexistent. What the "realization of the insubstantiality of elements" actually denies is any and every form of element falsely conceived by the common, unenlightened consciousness. Even representation-only as conceived in the consciousness of non-Buddhas must be denied, for this is but a product of intellectual discrimination. But the true nature of representation-only remains, even if all representations of it in ordinary cognition must fail.

The idealistic interpretation of the scriptural dogma of five sense organs and five kinds of sense objects as the bases of sense cognition is now clear. Seemingly outer objects as well as inner sensory capacities are nothing but representations in consciousness itself. But can this interpretation, although conceivable, be proved truly to have been Buddha's inner intention? May it not be that these "bases" are still a realm of outer entities, possessed of various sense qualities, which become severally the objects of visual, auditory, and other forms of sensory consciousness? Vasubandhu's reply, extending through several stanzas, is a powerful destructive dialectic against the concept of an external world. Such an outer realm must be conceived either as a unity or as multiplicity but neither conception can be consistently carried through. Hence by its own failure the intellect is compelled to fall back

on the alternate hypothesis that only representations within consciousness exist. In its full subtlety and ingenuity the argument must be read in the text. In outline its course is as follows:

The general problem is first stated. An external realm, objective to consciousness, "must either be one, as in the assertion of the Vaiśeṣikas that there is form having parts; or it must be many, as in the affirmation that there are very many real atoms which in agglomeration and combination act together as objects. But the external object cannot logically be one, because we cannot grasp the substance of the whole apart from the parts. Also it logically is not many, because we cannot apprehend the atoms separately. Again, logically, they do not in agglomeration or combination make objects, because the theory of single real atoms is not proved."

The attack begins first upon the outer world as many. The method is to show the inconceivability of single atoms in combination. If one atom is joined with six others it must have at least six parts, in which case it is no longer a unity. If it is an indivisible unity, on the other hand, it can be so only by having no spatial divisions, in which case all combining atoms interpenetrate at the same point and extended visible aggregates become impossible. The Vaibhāṣikas of Kāśmīr, indeed, have attempted to maintain that aggregates join together because of having spatial divisions, or extensity, while atoms do not because of their inextensity. The inconsistency is evident, for if atoms do not join how then account for the coherence of the aggregates which they compose? If to avoid this inconsistency joining of aggregates is also denied while their spatial extension is still admitted, then non-joining is shown to be not a necessary consequence of lack of spatial extension. In that case the non-joining of atoms does not prove them to be the simple, unextended units assumed by the Vaibhāṣikas. Hence the effort to conceive the atom as a single real unit, either in or out of combination with others, breaks down.

A similar failure attends the effort to conceive the atom either with or without spatial extension. If it has spatial divisions which are different, several parts making up a body, it cannot logically be a unity. If it is assumed to have no spatial divisions, then mutual occultation of the atoms, one overshadowing another, becomes impossible. In that case, since there is no mutual obstruction, all atoms must interpenetrate in the same place, as has been noted before, and we have the absurdity of the quantity of all aggregates being the same as one atom. If to avoid this outcome the assertion is made that shadows and occultation pertain

to aggregates but not to atoms we are faced with direct contradiction. For it is admitted that aggregates are nothing apart from the atoms of which they are composed. Consequently, if atoms are without such spatial phenomena as shadows and occultation, aggregates must be devoid of them also. The lack of consistent conception is evident Not only is this true in terms of atoms and aggregates. It holds for any notion of external sense quality as well.

The errors in assuming a world of external multiple units in combination have been exposed. Vasubandhu now proceeds to shatter the assumption of an external sense world conceived in totality as an absolute unity. In a unitary world there can be no such thing as walking along the ground progressively, for if one step is taken it must reach everywhere at once. Furthermore, there can be no "here" nor "there" in the apprehension of it, for everything is obtained at once. Logically it is without plurality and discontinuity. Hence there can be no distinguishing of disconnected things within it, and big and little become of equal measure—which is of course an absurdity. If to avoid this the assertion is made that discriminated differences in the external world are merely aspects of one continuous whole, it still must be admitted that such discriminations imply a divisibility which stops at nothing short of the atomistic pluralism already rejected. Thus the assumption of an external sense world as completely one and continuous collapses.

The outcome of the dialectic against an outer real world, either as one or many, now becomes clear. Sense organs and sense objects, regarded as entities apart from consciousness, are alike unprovable. All the more then is it necessary to return to the original proposition that only representations exist.

Objection now shifts to the fact that in the evidence of immediate perception, which is on all hands regarded as the best means of proof, there is an immediate awareness of external objects. What is to be done with this evidence? If no such objects exist how is it that there is such awareness? Vasubandhu replies that this evidence is inadequate to prove externality, for in two cases we quite demonstrably have immediate awareness of outer objects without the real presence of such objects. The first is in time of dreaming. If at that time immediate awareness can be present without external objects it can be so also in time of waking. The second case is revealed by a psychological analysis of sensory experience itself. Even granting for the moment the real existence of external sense material, the awareness of such material by the sixth or intellective consciousness always takes place a moment later than the

contact of the senses with the sense objects. Recognizing momentariness, or the doctrine that all things are arising and perishing from moment to moment, it is seen that at a given moment our immediate awareness is of the sense content of the previous moment. But that sense content is by the time of awareness already perished. Thus even in waking time immediate awareness is really had without the presence of an external object.

The second consideration evokes the obvious retort that the external object must still be assumed as having been real in the previous moment before it can be remembered by the intellective consciousness in the following moment. Vasubandhu in rejoinder readily grants that in the process of sensory cognition we have the fact of "first experiencing, later remembering." This, however, does not necessitate the admission of externality in the so-called immediately perceived object. It is quite possible to maintain that what is first experienced is a sense representation appearing as a seemingly outer object, and that what is later remembered is another mental representation appearing as a seemingly former object. "Therefore to use a later memory to prove the real existence of a previously seen external object cannot in principle be maintained."

Inquiry next returns to the earlier affirmation that representations of waking consciousness are like those of dream consciousness in being without genuinely external objects. This affirmation appears to overlook an important difference between the two cases. Everybody naturally knows that dream images are not externally real. But everybody does not know the same of waking cognitions. If dream and waking cognitions are of the same order, why is it not just as spontaneously known that the objects of waking cognition are without externality? Conversely, since we are not aware that the objects of waking time are unreal, how can we be sure that dream objects, being of the same order, are not real? To these questions Vasubandhu gives the characteristic reply of a mystic. Before we have awakened from sleep we cannot know that our dreams are unrealities. Just so, before we have experienced the true awakening from the fevered dream of this world's false discriminations we cannot know their unreality. But he who has once awakened to transcendant truth, emancipatory and non-discriminative, is no longer illusioned. Thus the principle of the unreality of apparently external objects is seen to be the same for both dreaming and waking states.

The polemic against an outer sense world is now complete. More

subtle problems concerning externality, however, yet remain to be considered in the relations of personalities, or individual streams of consciousness, to one another. If every sentient individual is a stream or continuity of consciousness, and all representations simply differentiations developing within that stream, the result appears to be complete solipsism. How then is it conceivable that modifications within one stream of consciousness bear any determinative relationship to what is going on within another stream? How, for example, can it be said that the ideas or representations in one stream are changed through contact with good or evil friends or through listening to their true and false doctrines? Strictly speaking, there should be neither friends nor doctrines to determine the representations. This type of problem is always thorny, as many idealistic thinkers have discovered. Vasubandhu's solution here is to postulate a reciprocal influence between two streams of consciousness by which a particular representation in one occasions the rise of a particular representation in the other. The two representations thus achieve determination but not from an external object.

Once again a difficulty arises from the contention that representations in waking time are on an equal footing with dream representations so far as objective validity is concerned. If that is the case, why is there a difference in moral retribution between dream and waking conduct? Logically a dream murder, for example, should have consequences equally heavy with those of a murder committed in waking time. (Actually, of course, they are not equally serious, and the implication is that external objects are somehow involved.) Not so, runs the reply. In sleep the power of the mind is weakened and reduced but in waking time it is in full force. Consequently it is understandable, without the assumption of extra-mental objects, that conduct in the two states should receive differing degrees of retribution.

At this, rebellion arises from the naïve realism of ordinary man. How can a crime of murder be committed by butchers, let us say, when only representations exist, and there is no physical body nor speech either to do the killing or to receive the injury. To quiet this objection the philosopher makes appeal to commonly accepted miracle lore in the sūtras. Are not demons and other supernatural beings able, by sheer exertion of mental power, to cause loss of memory, strange dreams, and even devil-possession to arise in other sentient beings? Do we not have in specific old stories in the scriptures instances of rishis whose mental anger, without physical intermediary, affected others even to the extent of causing death? And did not Buddha, the World-honored One, him-

self refer to some of these (in the Upāli Sūtra) to prove that mental crimes are the greatest, beyond those of body and speech? All this, explains Vasubandhu, must be understood in terms of the influence of alteration of representations in one stream of consciousness upon the representations of another stream. When sufficiently inimical, such influence can bring about the discontinuance of the affected homogeneous stream, and this is what is called death. Thus it is shown possible to account for both murder and death without assuming extra-mental existences.

The last problem to be resolved is the question whether or not one mind can know the mind of another. If only representations exist, without outer objects, we seem to have a dilemma. Either the "knowledge of another's mind" conforms to nothing outside itself, in which case it is meaningless to speak of knowing the mind of another. Or such knowledge does conform to an object beyond itself, in which case the doctrine that only objectless representations exist breaks down. Vasubandhu's solution of this problem is to point a third alternative. Knowledge of another's mind knows its object, indeed, but not exactly. The same is true of knowledge of one's own mind. In both cases the knowledge does not truly conform to its object but is obscured by that ignorance which arises from the false appearing of seemingly external objects inherent in the subject-object distinction within consciousness itself. When this distinction is eliminated, as in the pure knowledge of a Buddha, the ineffable object is attained as it truly is. With this last reference to a final attainment transcending the sphere of all earthly distinctions Vasubandhu's reply to the objections of his opponents comes to an end.

The treatise concludes with an avowal of humility. The doctrine of representation-only in all its implication is infinite and unfathomable. Without being a Buddha, who can compass its total extent? According to his ability Vasubandhu the reasoner has briefly demonstrated a few principles. But complete truth transcends the domain of mere reflective activity and rests with the Buddhas alone, for "the knowledge of the Buddhas, World-honored Ones, is in all realms and in all kinds without obstacle."

III

Acknowledgments

Since 1926 when, as Professor of Philosophy and Psychology in the University of Nanking, the translator first began his investigation of Hsüan Tsang's text, the work has had the benefit of generous and valued

cooperation by others who have appreciated the historic importance of the treatise for Far Eastern Buddhism. My basic indebtedness to the sustained and active interest of Louis de La Vallée Poussin has already been expressed. To my former student, Chia Tai-ying, and to Lü Ch'eng of the Chinese Academy of Buddhist Learning at Nanking I am grateful for guidance in early stages of the study. To the late George William Brown of Hartford Seminary Foundation, who gave unstintedly of his time and Sanskrit learning to aid my reading of Vasubandhu's original text, I owe a debt which I can never repay. From Lin Mou-sheng, now of the China Institute of America, I received valuable aid in the preliminary reading of K'uei Chi's Commentary. For helping me examine the most extensive work in Japanese on the *History of Wei Shih Thought*,[27] I render a special word of thanks to my recent student, Yoshida Ryukichi, who carried through a difficult task in translating with and for me important passages relating to the metaphysics of Asaṅga.

At different stages in its progress the work has been materially facilitated by gifts of special funds for the purpose of making assistance available in details of the research. Particularly to be mentioned in this connection is the generosity of the American Council of Learned Societies through its Committee on Fellowships and Grants in 1931; and that of the Committee on Productive Work and Research at Oberlin College in 1936.

In the assembling of materials the work owes much to the ever-ready assistance of various library staffs. To Dr. Arthur W. Hummel of the Library of Congress I am indebted for the loan of important Chinese volumes from the Division of Orientalia. For placing at my disposal all the facilities of the ample Buddhistic section of the Gest Oriental Library in the summer of 1933 gratitude is hereby publicly expressed to its curator, Dr. Nancy Lee Swann. Worthy of recognition also is the kindness of Mary Charlotte Venn, chief reference librarian at Oberlin College, who engineered the detail of numerous inter-library loans, and solved sundry practical problems connected with the pursuit of the necessary data. Finally I have to thank Dr. Shio Sakanishi of the Library of Congress for reporting to me the publication of the important Japanese volume mentioned above.

[27] 唯識思想史, 結城令聞著 Published by the Academy of Oriental Culture in Tokyo, 1935. This work, which treats exhaustively of the development of certain idealistic conceptions in Buddhism prior to the time of Vasubandhu, does not deal directly with the content of Vasubandhu's treatises. For background material, however, it is a valuable reference.