

I.0 INTRODUCTION

1. Before beginning to investigate the inception of Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda, in the sense of attempting to identify the historical starting-point of a peculiar tradition within Buddhist thought as a whole, the connotative horizon of the term Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda has to be defined.

The names Yogācāra and Vijñānavāda (and also Cittamātra) on their own, as well as the compound Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda, are frequently employed in buddhological research. They have been used interchangeably in a very general sense to designate the second scholastic branch of Mahāyāna (the first branch being Madhyamaka). Though I will likewise be concerned with the second branch of Mahāyāna, for the present purpose the usual implications of these terms are too loose. They usually refer to this branch in a very unclear fashion, whereby all stages of conceptual development, not to speak of textual stratifications, are simply lumped together (not least in connection with naive ascriptions of authorship to Asaṅga). Though with the important differences worked out in this study, my historical perception of Yogācāra(-Vijñānavāda) is fundamentally related to L. Schmithausen's complex stratification of the *Yogācārabhūmi* and his historical views resulting from it. An acquaintance with Schmithausen's theories is thus presupposed on the part of the reader. [see Ex. 1]

2. As the compound Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda is particularly useful in delineating the branch of Buddhist thought, whose inception I intend to investigate, it will be employed in a more precisely defined manner.

In accordance with the general practice, the designative function of the notion of 'Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda' is to exclude other buddhological branches of thought, such as the Sarvāstivāda, Sautrāntika or Madhyamaka systems. However, to indicate this level of distinction, even the terms Yogācāra, Cittamātra or Vijñānavāda would suffice.¹

More specifically, however, the compound Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda will be used to distinguish between a pre-vijñānavāda Yogācāra stage and a Yogācāra-cum-Vijñānavāda stage. In this respect, the designative function of 'Yogācāra' is to connote the origin and early development of the tradition, while the same tradition's novel ontological and epistemological turn is connoted by the additional 'Vijñānavāda'.

Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda may not be reduced to *vijñānavāda*, that is, to something popularly referred to as 'idealism'. The phase where it becomes the prominent feature of a new philosophical turn to largely dissociate itself

¹ In fact, all these three terms have been used in classical literature (Indian, Tibetan, etc.) and are still commonly used to denote this level of distinction in modern literature concerned with Mahāyāna Buddhism. But for some reflections, see SCHMITHAUSEN (1969: 811n. 2) and DAVIDSON (1985: 50ff. and 126ff.).

from much of the traditional ballast first arises with the *pramāṇa* tradition. Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda does not dissociate itself from its traditional background, but reassimilates it. Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda thus constitutes the stage of development in this tradition which begins when the theoretical presuppositions for reassimilating older parts of the tradition had been developed. Because the *Yogācārabhūmi* is the main target of these reassimilations, it is particularly problematic to define Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda in relation to this vast textual corpus.

3. Being divided into five parts (*Maulī Bhūmi*, *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī*, **Vivaraṇasamgrahaṇī*, *Paryāyasamgrahaṇī*, *Vastusamgrahaṇī*), the two largest units of the *Yogācārabhūmi* are

(1) the *Basic Section* or *Maulī Bhūmi* (MauBh)

— consisting of 17 parts: some, such as the *Sacittikā* and *Acittikā Bhūmi* (ed. in *Ālayav.*: 221f.), forming a few lines, others, i.e., the *Śrāvakabhūmi* and *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, being lengthy books — and

(2) the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī*,

supplementing, in corresponding parts, the *Basic Section* with additional investigations.

On the whole, the *Maulī Bhūmi* represents the tradition's pre-vijñānavāda Early Yogācāra stage. But occasionally it contains interpolations of textual materials representing a novel stage of philosophical reflection. In some cases (cf. SCHMITHAUSEN 2000), this stage clearly presupposes the developments taking place in the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*. The question whether the significant *ālayavijñāna* interpolations also indicate a stage of reinterpretation-*qua*-interpolation that corresponds to the historical stage of Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda will be taken up subsequently.

Although the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī* does likewise contain older textual materials (cf. *Ālayav.* § 1.6.7), it is much more directly affected by the Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda level of reflection, and includes conceptual elaborations, which go beyond corresponding thematizations in the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* (cf. *Ālayav.* §§ 5.5.2, 5.6.2ff.). Also significant is the fact that the whole *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* is chapterwise quoted in the *Bodhisattvaviniścayasamgrahaṇī*. In contrast, the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* — being the *Maulī Bhūmi*'s Mahāyāna section — constitutes an explicit expression of Early Yogācāra philosophy.

Thus, the older stages of the *Yogācārabhūmi* can be regarded as the scriptural fundament *from which* Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda arose and to which it looked back for source materials. However, even while growing beyond the *Yogācārabhūmi*'s original conceptual framework, the Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda tradition has actually preserved the text (although in an "updated" format) as part of its identity. [see Ex. 2]

4. Whereas the demarcation of Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda with regard to the *Yogācārabhūmi* is one that is still under construction, other delimitations can be drawn with greater ease. The present demarcation shall exclude — apart from works pertaining to the *tathāgataḡarbhā*-corpus (most pertinently the Ratnagotravibhāga(vṛtti) and its sources; cf. ZIMMERMANN 2002) — later trends that assimilated Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda to Madhyamaka in the way it was performed by Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla and Haribhadra, to name only the most well known philosophers engaging in this task. Their favourite *āgama* (cf. e.g., ICHIGŌ 1985: 364f.), the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, is also a particularly problematic case for the present issue.¹

Works such as MSA, MSgr, MAV and their commentaries fall squarely within the area here demarcated by the title Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda. And the hereby intended field of philosophical dynamics may well be considered as broad enough to include what later became known (especially as labels for criticism) as *sākāra*- and *nirākāravāda*² within the classical limits of pre-madhyamaka-yogācāra assimilation. The mere occurrence of the term *cittamātra* in some early Mahāyānasūtras is, of course, not to be considered as being sufficient in itself to allow one to speak of the existence of the system of thought characteristically designated as 'Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda'. [see Ex. 3] It should be understood, however, that this designation is not meant to suggest a clearly perceptible stage of scholastic homogeneity, but to delineate a historically generated field of thought, which — though marked off by the conception of a new set of descriptive possibilities, at its beginning

¹ Already Bhavya could conclude his critique of the Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda ontology in the appendix to the 25th chapter of his *Prajñāpradīpa* with an ironic smile. Having first rhetorically introduced the LAS as an accepted *āgama* of his Y.(-V.) opponents, he finally quoted (ed. LINDTNER 1984a: 97) the following verse from the LAS (p. 167: III.48 [= X.91]):

*na svabhāvo na vijñaptir na vastu na ca ālayah |
bālair vikalpitā hy ete śavabhūtāih * kutārkikāih ||*

There is no intrinsic nature, no noetic constitution,
no something-being-present, no latency —
imagined, indeed, are these [notions]
by infantile idiots, by swollen up dead bodies.

[* Though *śava*° seems to have been a problematic reading in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* MSS, already Nanjio noted that it is clearly confirmed by the Tibetan and Chinese translations (as it is by the Tibetan text of the *Prajñāpradīpa* quotation)]. — Also Candrakīrti, at PrasP 262,4f., has quoted this verse.

² To provide some references bearing on these distinctions: HATTORI 1968: n. 1.55; KAJIYAMA 1976; MIMAKI 1976: index, s.v. and esp. p. 198ff. [= ed. & tr. of the *Jñānasārasamuccaya*: Yogācāra-section]; ICHIGŌ 1985/1989; IWATI 1991 (especially section I.C.2).

An interesting Madhyamaka refutation of Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda tenets categorized as *sākāravāda* and *nirākāravāda* is found in the *Madhyamakaratnapradīpa*, chapter IV; it has been edited in LINDTNER 1986a (section III p. 192ff.) and translated in LINDTNER 1986b (p. 246ff.). However, on the authorship of the *Madhyamakaratnapradīpa*, see SEYFORTH RUEGG 1990.

— is intrinsically complicated, heterogeneous, and full of dynamic components still little recognized.

Though the expressions 'Yogācāra' and 'Vijñānavādin' did actually come *singly* into use among the classical Indian Buddhist scholars to doxographically refer to members of particular systems of phenomenological elaboration, this seems not to have been the case before the sixth century in works of authors like Sthiramati, Bhavya and Yaśomitra. [see Ex. 4]

Moreover, this kind of loose doxographical employment of the terms did not entail any clear sense of historical demarcation.

5. As regards the historical localization of the inception of Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda, the present task is to identify the initiation of a conceptual framework as a meaningful skeleton upon which, figuratively speaking, the muscles of logical strength and flexibility, nourished by the blood of hermeneutical ingenuity, could grow as they factually did in the course of time. In other words, my question is: when, in terms of textual evidence *qua* relative chronology, did it become possible for Buddhist thinkers to reflect their phenomenologically interpreted experiences within the framework of a new ("Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda") set of technical formulations that can be identified as a self-contained system, consciously marking itself off from other trends of thought with a necessarily performed gesture of authority?

No originality for the present answer as such is claimed. Yet, unlike previous assertions pointing in the same direction, my thesis constitutes the result of a dialectical process: on the one hand, the historico-philological critique of naive traditional assumptions is necessarily supported; on the other hand, overexertions of historicizing isolated structural components is critically investigated and, where necessary, corrected.

The thesis that will be defended in the following pages is that the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* [see Ex. 5] constitutes, with sufficiently clear evidence, the birth of Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda by way of producing, as neologisms, its characteristic conceptual triplex:

svabhāvatraya - vijñaptimātra(tā) - ālayavijñāna. [see Ex. 6]

And embodying profound phenomenological theorems these neologisms formed the novel epistemological and ontological basis for ensuing scholastic efforts of integrative systematization with typical hermeneutical features, unknown before this *sūtra* had come to be promoted. This thesis may be called the '*Samdhinirmocana*-thesis'.

6. Disregarding the traditionalistic approaches, there are two main trends of historical interpretation that are distinctly related to the present question and contain elements standing in opposition to the *Samdhinirmocana*-thesis. The predicate 'main' is hereby meant in a double sense:

- (a) these two trends comprise the only two possibilities to call the 'Samdhinirmocana-thesis' in question; and they do this, methodologically speaking, in two different manners
- (b) by analyzing these *two trends in their dominant forms* — as far as the present argument is concerned — other representations following similar trends are essentially included; they need not be treated separately.

It should be made clear at this point that none of these trends have actually formulated an explicit thesis concerning the origin of Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda, but each has advanced theories on different issues with direct implications for the present question. Those two trends are incompatible with each other; both have followers, but will be analyzed only with respect to their leading exponents. The respective two trends envisaged here are:

- (A) the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*-theory promoted by C. LINDTNER;
 (B) the *Ālayavijñāna*-theory engendered by L. SCHMITHAUSEN.

7. (A) The *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*-theory is in favour of completely rejecting the *Samdhinirmocana*-thesis simply by advocating the presence of the major Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda concepts — in my view first occurring in the latter scripture — before the production of the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*. That is, these concepts are thought to have already been produced in textual materials regarded as being known to Nāgārjuna (LINDTNER 1982: 180; 1992; 1997: 161, *passim*) in form of a sort of proto-stage of the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (LAS) designated as "ur-LAS" by Lindtner (1992).

8. (B) The *Ālayavijñāna*-theory, which has been developed in a buddhological monograph of unprecedented complexity, does not imply a wholesale refutation of the *Samdhinirmocana*-thesis in the sense that it would defy the evidence that this *sūtra* stands at the very beginning of the stage where one could properly speak of a Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda stage in contrast to a pre-vijñānavāda Yogācāra stage. What happened in the case of the *Ālayavijñāna*-theory is, rather, what I would call a fragmented representation of the pertinent evidence by analytically dissecting relevant structural parts, focussing on some, while ignoring or underestimating others. At thematically significant points there is a tendency, perhaps due to the very intensity of the *historicizing* focus upon isolated elements, to lose sight of the *structural* whole. The result has sometimes been a descriptive correlation of the dissected parts in ways, which, at least in my view, are inadequate.

What has been expressed here in the few words of an all too abstract characterization is related to my observation of a methodological pattern, which will naturally be addressed at given occasions in the course of my critique of the *Ālayavijñāna*-theory (thematic occasions will include, e.g.,

discussions of the *Initial Passage*, the Early Yogācāra 'bi-polar *bīja* model', *Samdh* V.3, etc.).

The theory itself, as the designation given to it already indicates, has to do with only a part of the whole conceptual setting newly staged, as I see it, in the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*. Yet, it is a very important part of the whole, and if *ālayavijñāna* had not initially occurred in this *sūtra*, my thesis would be, if not completely invalidated, at least handicapped.

Since, however, my investigations have led me to the unavoidable conclusion that the model of epistemological and ontological integrity associated with the *Samdhinirmocana*-thesis can, and has to be, defended, attention will be drawn to perspectives in view of which this perception can be shared with greater clarity.

Explications

[Ex. 1]

Most important is Lambert SCHMITHAUSEN's monograph *Ālayavijñāna. On the Origin and the Early Development of a Central Concept of Yogācāra Philosophy*, Tokyo 1987 [henceforth referred to as: *Ālayav.*].

Cf. also below: Ex. 2.

Apart from adumbrating a wider field of Yogācāra studies, the first chapter of *Ālayav.* contains extensive introductory and methodological remarks that are valuable and generally valid also beyond the particular focus of this monograph. Encountering a critique of his methodology from the perspective of a more traditionally minded approach to Buddhist studies, Schmithausen has responded with important reflections in *Ālayav.*, chapter 8: "Reconsideration of some aspect of the methodology of exploring the history of early Yogācāra literature".

Apart from L. Schmithausen among Western scholars, also students and scholars (including Asian scholars) working under his guidance, and independently N. Aramaki (cf. ARAMAKI 2000: 39) among Japanese scholars,¹ have called attention to problems in connection with stratifying the *Yogācārabhūmi*.² Although a historical awareness with regard to the textual

¹ In view of the fact that a substantial amount of Buddhist studies is produced in Japanese, I have to apologize for my lack of acquaintance with that language, hence for probable omissions of pertinent contributions.

² While, apart from other scholars based in Asia (such as F. Deleanu and S.-D. Ahn), there are also Japanese scholars (to mention in the present connection only H. S. Sakuma and Y. G. Muroji), who have produced characteristically high-quality works under the direct umbrella of what one might call the "Hamburg School", N. Aramaki seems to have developed his theories of stratification formally independently of, though *en rapport* with, L. Schmithausen. The latter, no doubt, inherited the conception of the *Yogācārabhūmi* as a

complexities of the *Yogācārabhūmi* is still at the beginning of being more generally accepted among professionals in the field, even traditionalists may find it more difficult to disregard the fact that the pertinent elaborations providing philological evidence along with historical interpretations necessarily demand serious attention. By now,¹ a position subscribing to the fundamental validity of a historical stratification of the *Yogācārabhūmi* can actually not be "overcome" anymore by future research, because denying such a stratification can only be based on an ignorance of the pertinent research, thus indicate a regress, not a progress.²

However, questions related to the details of how the stratification³ of this textual corpus is to be mapped, or how given interpolations are to be interpreted in terms of their semantic and contextual significance, naturally form important themes of ongoing and future research. Yet all these investigations would take place within — thus reconfirming — the historical horizon generally asserted and more specifically elaborated by Schmithausen since the late 1960s.

[Ex. 2]

Apart from what has been an interchange of ideas and materials with the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, the *Yogācārabhūmi* has also, besides transmitting its elaborations of the novel Y.-V. presuppositions, continued to serve as a source of Abhidharma materials for later works pertaining to the Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda stage. But it should be clear that, even though it has been kept assimilated by the Y.-V. tradition, in historico-philological perspective, the *Basic Section*, or *Maulī Bhūmi*, of the *Yogācārabhūmi* is at best a proto-Yogācāra-

text "whose development stretched over several generations" from his teacher Frauwallner (cf. FRAUWALLNER 1958: 265). However, what Frauwallner had only hinted at has been initially elaborated by Schmithausen.

In the course of the last decade, Schmithausen's achievements, both in terms of his original contributions and in terms of the results deriving from his function as a cherished "Doktorvater", have likewise begun to be appreciatively assimilated by scholars without closer connections to the Hamburg School (cf., e.g., WALDRON 1995, 2003; KRITZER 1999: 6ff., 13ff.).

¹ Evidence for the necessity of assuming a compositional heterogeneity of the *Yogācārabhūmi* (with consequences for both its authorship and its historical stratification) had in fact already been produced in SCHMITHAUSEN 1969, a groundbreaking study demarcating the achievement of a new basis of historical presuppositions for Yogācāra studies.

² DELEANU 2002 confirms the present position already in the title of his article "Some Remarks on the Textual History of the *Śrāvaka* *bhūmi*". See also chapter five and his appendix to chapter one in DELEANU 2006; and further the pertinent introductory parts in AHN 2003.

³ Including evaluations of single instances of interpolations (especially with regard to the question of whether a possible interpolation is *de facto* one or not).