

THE YOGACARA SYSTEM (BUDDHISTIC SUBJECTIVE IDEALISM)

“Here the Yogacarin declares that the world does not exist, the Sautrantikan declares that the world is apprehended through inference through the modifications of consciousness.

¹Tiruvaymoli : I.i.2

“Whether said to be existing or non-existing. He is having both the existing and the non-existing as His qualities. He is having those that have form and those that have no form as his gross and subtle bodies, He having these two nature pervading all is Absolute (purna) Existence). 2Śrī-Rangarajastava: II.6.

If it be said that all is non-existent (is void), the fact of being non-existent cannot apply to all things, for *who* is to refute? (He at least must be existent). Therefore unconditional negation is unacceptable. The negation “It is not here” means only that *another* is here, as in the case of the pot which breaking the potsherd results. In the doctrine which rejects reality (*prama*) even the authority of Veda triumphs. As for the Vaibhasika, he says that the perceived world is momentary. These three decide also the knowledge-self is being destroyed every moment. These do we refute.” - (Śrī-Rangaraja stava: 11.7.1)

1. We now proceed to refute the Yogacaras who seeking to avoid the faults of the carvākas, who deny the cause-effect relation, and the Madhyamikas, who affirm universal non-existence, accept only Knowledge self (Jñānātma), within which they seek; to implicate the cause-effect relation (s existing between the knowledge-continuum), and postulate multiple consciousness-continua (*Jñānā Santana*). They say thus:

“Knowledge-self (consciousness), even though undifferentenced, is seen as if differenced into subject and object consciousness by those knowers who are deluded- -*avibhagopi buddhyatma viparyasita darsanaih grahya-grahaka samvitti bhedavan iva laksyate.*”¹

and” Because of the invariable togetherness (lit. supporting) both blueness and its (idea), they re identical.”²

Those who approve of the above say also thus:

“In our system, s for the supreme substance it is Pure self (consciousness). Therefore, due to confusion in the beginningless samsāra owing to manifold causes, by the tendencies manifested manifoldly, which are due to modifications, by being according to its own nature (as consciousness-self), the blueness and others (the subject and object distinctions, or blueness and its (idea), which are subject and object are given up. No other substance is being sought.”

¹Dharmakirti’s verse

¹cf. *Sarvadr̥sana Sangraha*, p.25. (Gough’s trans)

“Matpakse yadyapi svacchojñānātma paramarthatah, tathapy anadou samsare purvajñānā-prasutibhih, citrabhis citrahetuavad vasanabhir upaplavat, svanurupena niladi grahya grahaka dusitam, prvibhaktamivot-pannam nanyamartham apeksate.

This doctrine he establishes by means of perceptual efficacy and inference.

The liberation, *moksa*, he mentions, is the attainment of idea of non-existence of mental series due to influence of objectivity. The means (*upaya*) to attain this state consists in knowing in this manner¹.

REFUTATION

2. He (the Yogacarin) cannot substantiate his claim that his acceptance of cause-effect relation distinguishes him from the carvākas. Because, if he proves his cause-effect relation on the basis of the principle of *momentary self-nature* of the *particulars*¹ (*svalaksana vyakti*), it would lead to the statement that a donkey and smoke stand in the relation of cause and effect. In which case, it would also follow that all the prior instants will be causes of all the latter instants, and thus the inference that has been accepted (in regard to cause-effect) would get contradicted². Nor is it possible to determine anything regarding the (nature of the) identity of the series (*santanaikya*) (either as due to *jati*, class, or place, *desa*). Therefore the compared and the comparison in the following passage

“In which series alone karma-vasana inheres, therein alone the fruits are realized, even like the redness in cotton”³, cannot apply.

3. The acceptance of causes etc., by means of the principle of generality (*samnya*) determined by the method of agreement and differences (*anvayvytireka-siddha*) and the understanding of the form of generality and its

¹Svalaksans is the nature of a particular that has been apprehended in the first perception, the advaitic *nirvikalpaka*. It is translated by Prof. Th.Stcherbatsky, s ‘manifestation’. In accordance with the dynamic view of Buddhistic thought. This is the truth of the thing. This is found to be momentary since the moment it ceases to be svalaksana but *kalpana*. Hence its momentary nature has to be accepted. But the implications of this position refute causality.

² This argument is repeated under Vaibhasika. Sec.ii.

³ The example here is that when red colour is treated to the roots of a plant, cotton in this case, it is said to finally show itself not in the intermediate stages but in the final stage on the flower of that treated plant. The differences in karma-tendencies thus will show themselves not immediately in the following moments but at some future moment and by chance.

invariable concomitance character (*vyapti*) cannot happen in so far as a unitary knower (who is not momentary) is not admitted. Since the cause-effect relation itself, the existence of consciousnesses, the non-existence prior and after and future existence, are merely illusory imaginary creations (mental constructions), either the Māyāvādins' eternal and unchangingness or the Madhyamikan's chimericalness (*tuccatva*) cannot but be predicated of the (subjectivistic) consciousness.

4. If consciousness (*jñānā*) is self-knowing (*alīne*) (*svayampakasatva*), since it cannot reveal its self-knowingness, its non-knowing-anything-else-ness and its momentariness (which are all different from the self), and since it must know these only by means of a consciousness which grasps all that are *other than itself*, its (Yogacara) position that it grasps only its own being is a self-contradiction. That the other series and the consciousness (*jñānā*) that shows them in one series are prior and latter moments are truths contradicting its own self nature, (and) are implications of this position.

5. When the other series are not grasped, the relation between the teacher and the taught, friend and foe, arguers for and against, activities of life cannot happen; and therefore, one must be forced to remain either in a single (fluxional) stream (absolutely), or, as the Advaitin says, in one single unchanging Consciousness.

6. All the false arguments advanced to refute other doctrines (by these thinkers) so as to make them unacceptable, will be refutations of their own doctrine! To him who seeking to establish his thesis, says in regard to his own doctrine that that is true, our refutation of the Madhyamikan cannot be escaped.

7. The statement that we do not perceive any difference between the knowing and the known, is also refuted by statements vouchsafed for by the experiences of all persons and by one's own, such as "*This Know*", which reveals the three terms (knower, known and knowing).

8. If this be not accepted, it is impossible (for the Yogacarin) to substantiate (the passage already quoted) “that consciousness though undifferented is seen *as if* distinguished into subject and object consciousness by those cognizers who are deluded”.

The attempt to reduce the number of terms which are experienced with the help of the above deduction to Knowing alone is also refused.

9. As between that which has been agreed upon by all of us (*sampratipannam*) and that which has not been so agreed upon (*vipratipannam*), to say that knowing alone is that which of accepted by all of us, is a perverse statement (*viparitam*).¹

¹The point here is that on the one side we accept three terms of which knowing is one. The Yogacarin accepts only knowing. Knowing thus is accepted by all of us, the common denomintor of acceptance by all, so to speak, however much we may differ regarding, the other two. Therefore, this is most real, because most agreed upon. Śrī Vedānta

Since an object is that which is accepted by all persons (*sampratipannam*), and since, in the apprehension of that (object), knowing cannot be had except s a *function* of a knower, it is impossible to annul there two (knower and the known) by merging them in knowing (jñānā) which is proved by them. At this point, (we hve also to say) that it is agreed to by all thinkers that what is not accepted by all (*vipratipanna*) cannot be a refutation. [i.e. refutations must proceed on agreed principles, Mere refutation based on private fancy or peculiar creed that does not claim veracity or approval from world experience cannot be a refutation at all, It can refute nothing].

To refute in this manner, by means of false arguments the knower and the known, will lead finally to the refutation of Knowing itself on the basis of Madhyamika-logic (of indefinability).

10. If it be said that since the Vedantins themselves say that there is no authority for the acceptance of objects which have parts, since there is no substance called a compound (*sanghata*) other than the *sanghati* (the parts) of which it is the compound, when these parts are probed into (that is, analysed) there remain the atoms (*parama-anu*), and these themselves must possess

Desika points out that *sampratipannam* and *vipratipannam* have reference not to the combatants or disputants but to the world t large. Consensus of Opinion must be measured in terms of all word experience, and therefore, when a reference is made to that, we find that the so-called agreement is valueless and is contradictory to the world-experience, hence *viparitam*.

Distinctions into six faces¹ (as combination is impossible with other atoms in order to yield bigger sizes unless contact is linear and directional and not merging) and so on *regressus ad infinitum* (till we arrive at that atom which has no faces at all, which is impossible), and since these (atoms) are not perceptible, therefore, the perception of a outer object cannot be treated as authority, (**we reply**) it is only if we treat the *paramanu* (atom) as that which is perceptible (minutest thing as the mote in the sunbeam) according to actual experience, that they do possess faces; and since, in them, due to combination there occur all the peculiar qualities available in the Universe, and differences in knowledge (*upalambha*), and since, there is no effort made to *imagine* the imperceptible atom, and since, all the sciences of sculpture and social science (ethics and economics and politics) etc, accepting the perceptible atoms, only *imagine* he other ones, and in them (the *sastras*) the imperceptible divisions spoken of by them are not facts which have any value (to their sciences, that is, being mere theory), they are not results of authority (*apta-vakya-siddha*).

¹ Cf. *Bodhicharyavatara* Verse 503. *Satkna yugapadyogatparamanossadsata sannain samanadesatve pindah syad anumatrakah*. The six faces are the four sides, above and below. Quantity means extraneity, and this is possible only through contact not coalescence. Even gross coalescence involves in the arrangement of the parts contact, and displacement of sides and arrangement.

If the atom has no size and no faces, then it cannot be combined also. If it has 1 is divisible still further till it has no sides. This is the antimony of infinite divisibility. *Sarvadarsana sngraha* Trans. Gough. P.25. According to Buddhist thought however see. *Central conception of Buddhism* p.14 and *Abhidharmakosa, ii.220*

11. Even when they have accepted the imperceptible atom, it is just possible that it (atom) might in combination (with others) (due to summation) become perceptible¹. Since this view is upheld on the strength of the scriptures, we can say that, as in the case where the unmanifest primordial Prakrti and other evolutes are imperceptible, (when unmanifest) but when manifesting, the elements and objects (arising from them) become perceptible to the senses, it is not impossible for the outer objects and their qualities to become objects of right knowledge (under different conditions). Whether the self is atomic or cosmic (*vibhu*), its I-ness cannot be refuted; so in the case of cognitive consciousness (*jñānā*), so even the I-ness has to be accepted as reality (*satya*). Further, where it is said that because of being together, the knowing and the known are identical, there happens self-contradiction in one's own doctrine. *Svavacana, svapratipatti, sva-siddhānta*. If the knower and known are made identical with cognitive consciousness (*jñānā*), there results identity between truth and falsity, and consequently, the theory will end in Nihilism or in the doctrine of manifold prediction (of the Jainas).

12. If it be said that there will result too-wide application (*atiprasanga*) if the cognitive consciousness, *jñānā*, were to reveal that which is other than itself

(i.e. knower and the known) (on the principle that consciousness alone can be revealed by consciousness, nothing else), it will be seen that according to actual experience (*yatha-darsana*), that this perception of objects is seen in true objects even as in dreamcreations (which are said to be mental).

13. By this is also refuted the view that we do not perceive any objective character in the cognitive consciousness.

14. The effort to establish non-existence of all (objective) knowledge on the basis of the example of dreamcognitions contradicts the experiences of all persons and also one's own statements; since to these dream-cognitions objectivity is assured by means of (God) willing the truth or creating the truth etc., now (*tadatvika*) or at some previous time, this comparison is unacceptable.

If it be said that, as in the passage

“To a sanyasin, a Lover, and a dog, an identical buxom lady appears in three (different) ways: as a corpse, as a fit object of amour, and as a prey”,¹

(so also) since in outer objects mutually contradictory attributes take their rise², therefore they must be non-existent, *we reply*, that even cognitive consciousness itself since it appears to different thinkers as having a hundred attributes of truthness, chimericalness, inscientness, self-luminosity, momentariness and eternally, would become non-existent.

¹Quoted also be *Sarvadarsana sngraha*, p.23 (Gough)

² i.e. the definition of reality is surely non-self-contradiction, but contradictory attributes take their rise form what? In what lies contradiction, does it affect the nature of the substance? Or is the contradiction merely (*apparent* ?)

In one and the same thing, contradictions do not happen in the nature of the thing itself, since all attributes of contradictory genders, number and causality etc., are *relative* to particular conditions (*sopadhika*).¹

When this (sopadhika attribution of contradictory attributes) is not accepted, each and every cognitiveconsciousness (*jñānā*) being forced to possess in itself contradictory attributes (unconditionally, such as having largeness (of content) and smallness (of content), effectness and causeness, blueness and yellowness, thus becoming an illusion, will seek refuge under Nihilism.

¹Woman has two genders in Sanskrit, they are the natural feminine in *Stri* and the masculine in *Dara*. The contradictions do not affect the substance, because, in the one case, it is relative to the husband, and in the other case it is not so. Regarding Number, the reality of Brahman is Ekam, s also *trayam*, in he one case, it is relative to the three entities (*tativas*) and in the other case, it refers, to the Unity of the three under the One that is their self. A thing is at one cause and effect just like a man who is a father of one and son of another; here he contradictory attributes can inhere in one and same thing *because* these attributes have reference to conditions such s two different persons, as in the example cited above. A man cannot be father and son of a particular identical individual even though from two different stand points – a vicious fault of the *Bheda-abheda* doctrine, and of Jaina *sapta-bhangi* with which it is related by Desika, according to Desika.

Equally manyness and oneness (*samkhya*) can also inhere in the case of a man with man sons. In all these cases, the object experienced actually is *one* only, the conditions, *upandhis*, or points of reference of the attributes apparently contradictory but not essentially contradicting one another, can be predicated of it.

15. In the same manner the refutation of all small mischiefs such as Badhitanuvrtti¹, ad others have to be made.

16. Since portions of yellow-consciousness stream (*pita-jñānā-santana*) will be unconscious to a certain (other) blue-consciousness-stream (*nila-jñānā-santana*) because it illuminates itself alone, and portion of consciousness-stream will be unconscious to a certain (other) yellow-consciousness stream (2) and

¹Cf. *Sarvartha Siddhi*, p.443 (Pandit Chowkamba ed)

Badhitanuvrtti in Buddhism means something different from what it is in Advaita. The Buddhist position is this: in the perception of the second moon in the case of one who is suffering from the fault of double-moon-vision (*timiradosa*), even though this knowledge (that there are two moons) is sublated, it yet persists. In this case there is really no locus for this (second) moon (outside), nor is any cause (of its existence) perceived by us. Therefore, the correct view is that the locus, *alambana*, of this knowledge and the causality of the nearby (*samantara*) space is fit to be taken as *imagined*. This is fallacious. The *thisness* (of the moon) is what has been ascertained by the method of agreement and difference, and it is the locus of the first (i.e. prior to having the knowledge that there is only one moon) illusion alone, the illusion of the fallacious continuance (after knowing that there one and not two moons) is due to that cause alone, and the cause of the continuance (of the illusion) is due to the outer object (by the subject). The real question then is what about the first or the real amongst the two moons? Further, there re contradictory attributes of one and the many in one cognition. Hence the whole is frustrated, and must end in nihilism. Śrī Vedānta Desika shews that a real object outside is the cause and locus, *adhithana*, of the illusion, and the continuance of the illusion must be traced to organic defect rather than to knowledge itself. If it is knowledge that creates it then there arises contradiction that leads t absurdity (*badhita*). In case, on the other hand, the three terms are accepted, defects in the organism can explain the duality. The predication would be conditioned by the defect.

even, as in the case of differences in dream-consciousness-streams, differences in the blueness and yellowness which do not have reference to outer objects are said to arise alternately (and exclusive of one another, because of the manifestation of the unquestioned (*aparyanuyojya*) beginningless tendencies (*vasanas*), (3) since for this tendency (*vasana*) no permanent thing is accepted as its support (*adhara*). (4) since no such quality as tendency (*vasana*): other than consciousness, is accepted, (because consciousness is said to be devoid of any quality other than self-luminosity), after having stated that the tendency itself is only the continuous flow of pure individual consciousness (*svalaksana*¹, things in themselves) and (5) since in the beginningless *samsāra*, all individual knowledges (*svalaksanas*) must be of the form of all tendencies, giving up exclusive differences of blue and yellow etc.. each pure individual becoming the cause of all differentiations, each knowledge-series would have to become an all-knower (*sarvajna*).

17. By this (non-acceptance of knower and known and the giving up of particular causality), even Sugata's view that to foster good mental tendency

¹That is, we cannot say definitely why one thing should come into being at any one moment rather than at any other, since all are there in the matrix of *svalaksana* which is identical with *vasana* which is beginningless flow. Secondly, the claim that one series is unconscious of the other will impugn the statement that one can be *sarvajna*, (Thirdly, the view that there is no definite causality will impugn the much claimed for theory of dependent origination, *pratitya-samutpada*).

(*citta-vasana*) is dharma, will have to be given up, such that it will imperil the sastric injunctions and conduct which are established through instruction, (because *citta* is not a thing but a *vasana* a tendency, a *svalaksana*, in which all

things good and bad have their place, and as such, there is no question of having only good or right tendencies alone). If those are given up, then, the establishment of the doctrine of liberation, Moksa, hearing it and instructions in it etc, become worthless.

18. If it be said that all (the consequences above mentioned) will follow *only* when liberation has been attained in the beginning, then (**we reply** that) there will result the contradiction with the view accepted by all thinkers that “By ignorance and knowledge, bondage and liberation(respectively) (are produced)” (since you have the knowledge of reality already, it must always be realized). If it be said that it is only when the ultimate knowledge happens without any cause or effort these consequences will follow, **we reply**, then by renouncing well-defined practices like hearing (scripture) etc., you will come to the view similar to the view that all results happen without any cause¹, in which case there is no other place for you except to stand on the side of either the materialist (Carvāka) or the nihilist (Madhyamika).

19. Therefore (we conclude) (1) since we have to accept in the cognition ‘This I Know’ in which we perceive three terms, amongst which two have reality (viz. the self and knowing) and in the object (the third term), reality regarding its

¹Vaibhasika-ahetuka-vāda.

essential substrateness (*adhithanatva*), and in regard to that portion which is predicated of it (*aropita*), reality due to difference in place and (2) since we have to accept in these (three terms) the division into permanent and changing (i.e. the subject s permanent, the knowing s contracting and expanding, and the object as changing) according to actual experience, (3) since like consciousness itself, on the knower and the known arising, consciousness does not appear like a momentary-series (*ksanika-santati*), (4) since the liberation that these (yogacarins) speak of is not testified to by sources of right knowledge

(*aramanika*), (i) since we have already refuted by means of arguments in the *samudayadhikara* (chapter V of this work) that these have that causes in the anti-vedic form and conduct and method (*jñānā-yoga*), like the Carvāka and Madhyamika doctrines, the Yogacara doctrine also, is contradictory to all ideals of man (*purusarthah*) such as Heaven and Beatituted (*svargapavarga*).

20. This school has been refuted by the (Vedānta) Sūtrakara in the following two Sūtras “Nabhava uplabdheh” Not non-existence on account of consciousness” (II. li. 28).