

Nature Of Citta, Mano And Viññāna

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Introduction:

In Buddhism, there are at least four technical terms designating the concept of mind or consciousness in western psychology. They are *nāma*, *mano*, *citta* and *viññāna*. *Nāma* as always in the compound “*nāmarūpa*” represents the whole psychological aspect of human personality, as being different and mutually dependent on the physical part or non-conscious personality factor (*rūpa*). In so far as *citta*, *mano* and *viññāna* as “non-physical or conscious aggregate” designating both the conscious and subconscious parts of mentality of sentient beings, having the characteristic of cognizing objects, in contrast with the physical body (*cātummahābhūtika kāya*), they are interchangeably used as synonym.¹ These terms are often confusingly translated into English as “mind,” by non-Buddhist thinkers. The English “mind” does not convey adequately the connotation of the Pali *citta*, *mano* and *viññāna*.² Philosophically, in specific textual contexts, there is a variety of meanings among them indicating distinct psychological functions of human mentation. D. J. Kalupahana notes that in a limited or specific sense, *viññāna* refers to ego-consciousness, *citta* to thinking and *mano* to the faculty of the mind.³ This contention needs explanation. So far as the *viññāna* is concerned, it is *mano-viññāna* not the first five *viññānas* that has the tendency of I-making. Ego-consciousness is therefore confined to this mental consciousness only. According to W. S. Karunaratna,⁴ *citta* represents the subjective aspect of consciousness, *mano* the rational faculty playing intellectual functioning of consciousness, while *viññāna* the field of sense and sense-reaction - the sphere of sensory and perceptive activity. With reference to the *Wei-shì-luōn-zheōng-i* (唯識論證義), a commentary treatise of Yogācāra Buddhism, which admits two more consciousnesses, namely, I-making consciousness (*kliṣṭa-manas* C. 末那識) and store-house consciousness (*alāya-vijñāna* C. 阿賴耶識), W. M. McGovern⁵ notes that the Yogācārins take *alāya-vijñāna* the title *citta*, whereas the seventh consciousness (*kliṣṭa-manas*), the same *manas* and the first six sensory consciousnesses, the same *vijñāna*. Thus, to Yogācārins only *alāya-vijñāna* is interchangeably used as same as the *citta*. In the Pali Abhidhamma Buddhism, a similar position “*viññāna* as *citta*” or “*cittas* as *viññāna*” is also seen, as the Abhidhamma authors group the 89 or 121 kinds of *citta*, which is one of the four ultimate realities (*catudhā paramattha*),⁶ under the category of consciousness-personality factors (*viññāna-kkhandha*).⁷ However, the concept of *alāya-vijñāna* is comparable with the concept of *bhavaṅga-citta/viññāna* of later Abhidhamma

¹ S. II. 94: “But this, brethren, that we call thought, that we call mind, that we call consciousness” *Yañ ca kho etaṃ bhikkhave vuccati cittam iti pi mano iti pi viññānam iti pi*. Translation by Mrs. C.A.F. Rhys Davids. *KS*. II. 66.

² Piyadassi (1972): 11.

³ *EB*. s.v. *consciousness*: IV. 235a.

⁴ *EB*. s.v. *citta*: IV. 169b.

⁵ W. M. McGovern (1979): 135.

⁶ The other three being mental factors (*cetasika*), matter (*rūpa*) and *nibbāna*.

⁷ A good example of this can be seen at Bhikkhu Bodhi (1989): 25ff.; 288.

philosophy.⁸ Coming to the point, another aspect differentiating them from one another is that *mano* attaches to the feeling of I, seeking cravings for sensuality (*kāmatanḥā*), for existence (*bhavatanḥā*) and for non-existence (*vibhavatanḥā*); *viññāṇa* engages more in activities responsible for continual existence of beings in process of rebirth (*saṃsāra*), while *citta* designated for mental training leading to the realization of *nibbāna*. Accordingly, *citta*, *mano* and *viññāṇa* may be best rendered into English as “mind” (C. *xīn*, 心), “mentation” or “ideation” (C. *ī*, 意) and “consciousness” (C. *shì*, 識) respectively.⁹ They three terms are closely related but playing different functions. *Citta* has an experiential function, *mano*, as an “inner sense”¹⁰ in Johansson’s wording, has an instrumental function while *viññāṇa* sensory function. The following is an attempt to differentiate their function in Buddhist ethico-psychological analysis.

NATURE OF MANO

Mano is often translated into English “mind.” It would be a mistake to render *mano* as “the grey matter of the brain,”¹¹ because this rendering ignores the other important function of *mano* as internal sense also, as we shall see later that it plays a double function, as both internal and external senses. In Buddhist psychology, *mano* is described as a state of consciousness playing the function of ideation (*manosāṅkhāra*) and thinking (*manovittakkā*).¹² It extends to cover mental activities such as judging, evaluating and calculating of object. As a sense organ, both internal and external, *mano* is “partly physiological (as one of the sense organ) and partly ideational (as one integrator of the perceptual process).”¹³ Its most special function is, therefore, to receive sensations and impressions from the other five sense organs, a function, which is neither shared nor possessed by any of the latter. It acts as the co-ordinator of the other five senses: “Of the five senses, different in range, different in field, not reacting to the field and range of each other, *mano* is the refuge, and *mano* resonates to their field and range.”¹⁴ Its scope of functioning includes in the first five sense organs and the six sense-data or objects.¹⁵ It, therefore, becomes a great source constituting human experience and knowledge. However, having concepts, ideas, mental images (*dhammā*) as its object, *mano* is described as reflective faculty making conceptualization. In this process, it may become the source or the condition, producing the feeling of self/soul/I (*atta // ātman*) or, to some extent, giving rise to the false belief in an unchangeable personal identity or a permanently substantial self. Such a substantial feeling or belief is great deal of suffering for human beings, leading to harmful consequences. According to the Buddha, as a condition for consciousness, *mano* and its fellow-faculties are, as dependently arisen, impermanent and changing.¹⁶

NATURE OF CITTA (MIND/THOUGHT)

Translation, Definition and Function. In Buddhist psychology, *citta* as a generic term is rendered variously by scholars to mean mind, thought, heart, conception, consciousness,

⁸ See ④ 4.6.3 below for a brief discussion on *Viññāṇa*.

⁹ Cf. *KS*. II. 66; D. J. Kalupahana (1987): 31: they are rendered as thought (*citta*), mind (*mano*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*). W. M. McGovern renders them as mind, reason and consciousness, respectively (1979): 131.

¹⁰ R.E.A. Johansson (1985): 205?

¹¹ See for instance, R. G. Wetimuny (1969): 167.

¹² *S*. I. 207.

¹³ B. Matthews (1983): 41.

¹⁴ *S*. V. 218: *Imesaṃ kho... pañcannaṃ indriyānaṃ nānāvisayānaṃ nānāgocarānaṃ na aññamaññassa gocaravisaṃpāṇaṃ paccanubhontānaṃ mano paṭisaraṇaṃ, mano ca nesaṃ gocaravisaṃpāṇaṃ paccanubhotīti*. Translation by B. Matthews (1983): 39-40. For different translations, see *KS*. V. 193 and A. Tilakaratne (1993): 49.

¹⁵ See diagram ④ above.

¹⁶ For further see D. J. Kalupahana (1987): 29-31.

mood, emotion, spirit, idea and attitude.¹⁷ Buddhadatta¹⁸ renders it as both “mind” and “thought.” Rhys Davids and William Stede favour the rendering “heart” (psychologically) and “thought” (rationally).¹⁹ According to W. M. McGovern *citta* is the standard term for the whole of the subjective life, as opposed to *rūpa*, *caitasikas*, and in some ways, corresponding to the English soul, heart or spirit when these terms are de-ātmanized.²⁰ The word *citta* is, in fact, derived from the verbal root “*citi*” meaning to cognize or to know something as its object. It is defined in three ways: as an agent, as an instrument and as an activity. As the agent, *citta* is that which cognizes an object (*ārammaṇaṃ cintetī ti cittaṃ*), whether internal or external. As an instrument, *citta* is that by means of which the accompanying mental factors (*cetasika*) cognize the object (*etena cintetī ti cittaṃ*). As an activity, *citta* is itself nothing other than the process of cognizing the object (*cintanamattam cittaṃ*).²¹ *Citta* is non-material lying in the cave of heart (*guhāsaya / hadayavatthu*).²² *Citta* is the seat and organ or center or focus of man’s thought (*cetasa cītetī*). Its most primary function is to think (*cinteti*) of object of every kind. In relation to its objects, it applies to, holds up and takes up (*pagganḥātī*);²³ it also directs, applies and bends (*namati*).²⁴ It comes forth, brings to the ground and rejoices in object.²⁵ It brings together, disposes, arranges, focuses, concentrates and collects (*upasaṃharati*) the object.²⁶ As a director of human thinking, *citta* plays an important role in performing actions, whether moral, emotional, rational or intellectual. *Citta* is the refuge (*paṭisāraṇa*)²⁷ upon which the two mental properties - feeling or affective (*vedanā*) and perception or ideation (*saññā*) - depend.²⁸ Feeling is hedonic tone of the *citta* while perception is the rational concerned with knowing and reasoning. In other words, the function of *citta* is of twofold, viz., negative and positive. As regards negative function, *citta* feeling attach to, is inclined towards and indulges (*adhimuccati*)²⁹ in pleasure of senses. Due to its clinging to (*sajjati*) and getting bound up (*gayhati*) with its sensory objects,³⁰ *citta* is defiled and corrupt (*vyāsiñcati*),³¹ by hedonic tendencies, such as greed (*lobha*), ill-will (*dosa*), ignorance (*moha*), shamelessness (*anottappa*), lack of moral conscience (*ahirika*), etc. Such a negative tendency is conducive to the rebirth in *saṃsāra*. As far as its positive function is concerned, *citta* can lead one to truth (*tathattāya upaneti*)³² by its ethically positive qualities, such as powers of rational faith (*saddhā*), mindfulness (*sati*), conscience (*hiri*), moral shame (*ottappa*), non-greed (*alobha*), non-ill-will (*adosa*), equanimity (*tatramajjhataṭṭā*), etc. This anti-hedonic tendency leads to realization of *nibbāna*. Thus *citta* becomes the most prominent role in the world of activities and becoming: “Well, monks, the world is led by mind, and drawn away by mind. The world comes under the power of mind.”³³

NATURE OF *CITTA*

¹⁷ *EB*. s.v. *citta*: IV. 169b.

¹⁸ *CPED*. s.v. *citta*: 98.

¹⁹ *PED*. s.v. *citta*: 266.

²⁰ W. M. McGovern (1979): 132.

²¹ Bhikkhu Bodhi (1993): 27.

²² *Dhs*. 37.

²³ *S*. V. 9.

²⁴ *S*. I. 137.

²⁵ *S*. I. 98: *cittaṃ pakkhandati, pasīdati, santiṭṭhati*.

²⁶ *S*. V. 213ff.

²⁷ *S*. V. 218.

²⁸ *S*. IV. 293: *Saññā ca vedanā ca cetasikā ete dhammā cittapa ibaddhā*.

²⁹ *S*. V. 409f.

³⁰ *S*. II. 198.

³¹ *S*. IV. 178.

³² *S*. IV. 294.

³³ *A*. II. 171: *Cittena kho bhikkhave loko niyyati, cittena parikassati, cittassa uppannassa vasam gacchati*.

As a series of mental process, mind is constantly in a flow of flux. Its mentation in constant flux is recorded in different ways. It is trembling (*phandanam*) and wavering (*capalam*).³⁴ It travels far and moves about alone (*ekacara*).³⁵ *Citta* is the only psychic center responsible for performing human ethical behaviour (*kamma*), whether good (*kusala*), evil (*akusala*) and neutral (*avyākṛtatva/āneñjā*). It is the conscious factor carrying the traces both of purposiveness (*cetanā*) of moral actions (*kamma*) and its experience (*vipāka*). It is the stream of emotionality and intellectuality of human being. Standing for the consciousness-personality factors (*viññāṇa-kkhandha*), as opposed to matter-personality factors (*rūpakkhandha*), *citta* is the conscious stream of non-substantial continuity storing all man's karmic heritage (*bīja / vāsanā*) transmitted through the cycle of lives (*saṃsāra*). Due to moral and intellectual vices or defilements (*lobha, dosa, moha*), *citta* continuously involves in *saṃsāra*. By cultivating moral (*sīla*) and intellectual (*paññā*) virtues, *citta* frees from bondage of misery (*dukkha*) leading to enlightenment (*sambodhi*) and liberation (*nibbāna*). In accordance with the law of dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), *citta* is causally and dependently arisen on an object (*ārammaṇa*), or on the coming together (*saṅgati/contact*) of mentation (*mano*) and (*dhamma*). Its object can be a color (*rūpa*), sound (*sadda*), smell (*gandha*), taste (*rasa*), something tangible (*phoṭṭhabba*) and mental object such as ideas or concepts (*dhammā*). It is, therefore, neither permanent, nor substantial ego-entity (*akāra-kabhāvaṃ*). It is not the substantial agent that thinks, that speaks, that feels, or that experiences,³⁶ but only a series of awareness (*viñānanamattadīpanato*). In other words, it is merely instrumental and functional in nature.

Classification of Mind.

In the Pali Buddhism,³⁷ *citta* representing the whole consciousness-personality factors (*viññāṇa-kkhandha*), can be classified by different principles, namely, plane of existence, nature (*jāti*), root (*hetu*) and feeling (*vedanā*), etc.

With respect to plane of existence, *citta* can be broadly divided into four categories, viz., *citta* associated with the sensuous world (*Kāmvācāra-citta*), with the world of form (*Rūpāvacāra-citta*), with the formless world (*Arūpāvacāra-citta*) and with the transcendental (*Lokuttara-citta*). The number of *citta* is plentifully recorded as 89 or 121, according different classifications. They are: (1) 54 *citta* of the sensuous sphere (*kāmvācāra-citta*), (2) *citta* of the form sphere (*rūpāvacāra-citta*), (3) 12 *citta* of the formless sphere (*arūpāvacāra-kusala-citta*), and (4) transcendental *citta*, making 89 kinds of *citta*. Another classification further divides 8 transcendental *citta* of class (4) into 40, making 121 *citta* in total.

Cittas can also be divided in accordance to their properties in relation to the Mundane and the Supra-mundane. There are (1) 12 immoral minds (*akusala-citta*), (2) 21 moral minds (*kusala-citta*), (3) 36 resultant minds (*vipāka-citta*) and (4) 20 functional minds (*kiriya-citta*), making 89 minds. This classification is further divided in to 121 by adding 16 to class (2) and 16 to class (3).

In terms of moral nature (*jāti*), *citta* can be classified into four categories, viz., wholesome (*kusala*), unwholesome (*akusala*), resultant (*vipāka*) and functional (*kiriya*). Wholesome mind (*kusalacitta*) is that which is accompanied with unwholesome roots,

³⁴ *Dhp.* 33.

³⁵ *Dhp.* 37.

³⁶ *M.* I. 256. Cf. *S.* II. 13: "I [the Buddha] do not speak of anyone who touches (*phusati ahaṃ na vadāmi*). I do not speak anyone who feels (*vediyati ahaṃ na vadāmi*);" *M.* I. 293; *Vism.* 460.

³⁷ For example, the *Dhammasaṅgani* of Abhidhamma Piṭaka, the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* of Anuruddha, *Atthasālini* of Buddhaghosa, the *Abhidhammattha-vibhāvinī* of Buddhaddatta, etc. For a good exposition of various kinds of *citta*, see Bhikkhu Bodhi (1993): 27-73.

namely, greed, ill-will and delusion. Unwholesome mind (*akusalacitta*) is that which is accompanied with three wholesome roots, namely, non-greed, non-ill-will and non-delusion. The third class of *cittas* is that which comprises both the results of wholesome and unwholesome actions (*kamma*). Its results are other *cittas* experiencing karmic maturation. Functional mind (*kiriyaṅcitta*) is neither action (*kamma*) nor resultant (*vipāka*). It is a kind of transcendental activity of Arahant, producing no further karmic result in *saṃsāra*. Resultant mind (*vipākaṅcitta*) and functional mind (*kiriyaṅcitta*) are again classified under the category “indeterminate” (*abyākata*), which is neither wholesome nor unwholesome.

Cittas are also classified in association with roots (*hetu/mūla*). While *citta* associated with roots, it is called *sahetuka citta*, *citta* dissociated from roots, it is called *ahetuka citta*. These are rooted and rootless states of *citta* respectively. There are six roots, ethically, three wholesome (*kusala*) and the other three unwholesome (*akusala*). The three unwholesome are greed (*moha*), ill-will (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*). The three wholesome roots are greedlessness (*alobha*), hatelessness (*adosa*) and undeludedness (*amoha*). The former three manifests negative aspects of mentation, while the latter three manifesting as generosity and renunciation, loving kindness and wisdom or understanding, respectively.

Cittas are also categorized according different kinds of feeling (*vedanā*). In association with feeling (*vedanā*), *citta* differs from one another. Some *citta* accompanied by a pleasant feeling (*sukha vedanā*) is known as pleasant *citta*, by an unpleasant feeling (*dukkhā vedanā*) as unpleasant *citta*, and by a neutral feeling (*upekkhāvedanā*) as indifferent *citta*. Feeling is in fact a reaction, either acceptance (pleasure), rejection (displeasure) and indifference (neither pleasure nor displeasure). Pleasant feeling has the tendency to develop attachment leading to suffering, while unpleasant feeling to aversion leading to another kind of suffering also. With regard to indifferent feeling, there are of two kinds. The first kind is heartless indifference, a total disregard for one’s own and other’s well-being, while the other, equanimity, an attitude of mental calmness amidst the vicissitudes of life. The former as rooted in unwholesome roots should be abandoned, whereas the latter as born of wisdom should be cultivated.

NATURE OF VIÑÑĀṆA

Translation and Definition: As noted above, most of scholars translate *viññāṇa* as “consciousness.” There are, however, several English translations of the term.

Table 3: 81 and 121 *Cittas* Classified according to Their Properties, in Relation to Fourfold Sphere

81 MUNDANE CITTAS	(1-12)	SENSUOUS SPHERE CITTAS	54
	(1-8)	Unwholesome <i>Cittas</i>	12
	(9-10)	<i>Cittas</i> rooted in greed	8
	(11-12)	<i>Cittas</i> rooted in ill-will	2
		<i>Cittas</i> rooted in ignorance	2
	(13-30)	Rootless <i>Cittas</i>	18
	(13-19)	Unwholesome resultant	7
	(20-27)	Wholesome resultant	8
	(28-30)	Rootless functional	3
	(31-54)	Sensuous Sphere Wholesome <i>Cittas</i>	24
	(31-38)	Sensuous sphere wholesome	8
	(39-46)	Sensuous sphere resultant	8
	(47-54)	Sensuous sphere functional	8
	(55-69)	FORM SPHERE CITTAS	15
	(55-59)	Form sphere wholesome	5
	(60-64)	Form sphere resultant	5
	(65-69)	Form sphere functional	5
(70-81)	FORMLESS SPHERE CITTAS	12	
(70-73)	Formless sphere wholesome	4	
(74-77)	Formless sphere unwholesome	4	
(78-81)	Formless sphere functional	4	
8 or 40 TRANSCENDENTAL CITTAS	(82-89 or 121)	TRANSCENDENTAL WHOLESOME CITTAS	8 or 40
	(82-85 or 101)	Transcendental Wholesome <i>Cittas</i>	4 or 20
	(82) or (82-86)	Path of stream-entry	1 or 5
	(83) or (87-91)	Path of once-returning	1 or 5
	(84) or (92-96)	Path of non-returning	1 or 5
	(85) or (97-101)	Path of Arahantship	1 or 5
	(86-89 or 121)	Transcendental Resultant <i>Cittas</i>	4 or 20
	(86) or (102-06)	Fruit of stream-entry	1 or 5
	(87) or (107-111)	Fruit of once-returning	1 or 5
	(88) or (112-116)	Fruit of non-returning	1 or 5
	(89) or (117-121)	Fruit of Arahantship	1 or 5

In her translation of the *Majjhima-nikāya*³⁸ I.B. Horner favors the rendering “discriminative consciousness.” Some scholars render it as “discernment,”³⁹ “cognition”⁴⁰ and “awareness.”⁴¹

Compared with *mano*, *viññāṇa* has a wider scope representing discernment, awareness and experience based upon all six faculties and their six objects. According to *PTS Pali-English Dictionary* *viññāṇa* is a mental quality as a constituent of individuality, the bearer of individual life, life-force as extending over rebirths, principle of conscious life, general consciousness as function of mind and matter, or regenerative force as

³⁸ *MLS*. I. 351f.

³⁹ See, for instance, P. Harvey (1995): chs. 6-13.

⁴⁰ See e.g. *DB*. II. 60 ff.; *EB*. s.v. *dhātu* (2): IV. 571b.

⁴¹ See, for example, E. Conze (1962): 111.

transforming (according to individual kamma) one individual life (after death) into the next.⁴² In other words, *viññāṇa* is a crucial factor of animate existence without which there would be no existence of individuality.⁴³ It is used to denote the sensory or experiencing models of perception and knowing of a sentient being. *Viññāṇa* in unsubstantial sense is the receiver of or effected by moral retribution.⁴⁴ In the process of rebirth, as stated earlier, it is *viññāṇa*, or alterably *citta*, but not *mano*, is the only term exclusively mentioned.⁴⁵ It withdraws from the body at the time at death, and enters into the womb at the time of conception.⁴⁶

Origin of consciousness: According to the Buddha, consciousness cannot emerge in the absence of conditions,⁴⁷ but it is rather dependently causal process (*paṭiccasamuppannaṃ viññāṇaṃ*). The dependently causal condition of consciousness is *nāma-rūpa*. This relation is expressed in the following manner: *nāmarūpa* is the ground, the basis, the genesis or the cause of contact (*phassa*),⁴⁸ and thus of consciousness. The canonical passage runs thus:

Ānanda, this is the reason, the root-cause, the origin and condition of consciousness, namely, name-and-form. In so far, Ānanda, can one be born, or grow old, or die, or fall from one existence, or arise again, in so far are there three ways of verbal explanation, verbal expression, verbal designation, in so far is there a realm of knowledge, in so far the round of existence runs its course for the manifestation [of an individual] in these conditions, in so far as name-and-form together with consciousness are active in reciprocally being the condition for becoming of one another.⁴⁹

This is so because no consciousness would arise in absence of contact (*phassa/saṅgati*) between sense organs and sense data or objects. In a diverse manner, consciousness is the ground of *nāma-rūpa* as in the series of dependent origination: “in dependence on consciousness arise name-and-shape” (*viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ*).⁵⁰ In another Pali passage, the emergence of consciousness is expressed in the following manner:

Depending upon the eye and the visible object arises visual consciousness. The meeting (*saṅgati*) of these three is contact (*phassa*). Depending upon contact arises feeling (*vedanā*). What one feels one perceives. What one perceives, one reasons about (*vitakketi*). What one reasons about, one is obsessed with. What one is obsessed with is the origin of the number of perceptions and obsessions, which assail a man in regard to visible object cognizable by the eye, belonging to the past, future and present. This holds true with the other five triads.⁵¹

According to this statement, sense experience or consciousness as cognitive element is arisen due to the condition of the interaction or contact (*phassa*) between the sense and its object. The feeling is arisen when there is the coming together (*saṅgati*) of these three. From feeling arise perception, reasoning and obsession. The stream of

⁴² PED. s.v. *viññāṇa*: 618.

⁴³ S. III. 143; M. I. 296.

⁴⁴ S. II. 82: “If an ignorant man performs an ethically good deed, [his] consciousness will go to merit, and if he undertakes ethically evil deed, [consciousness] will go to demerit.” (*avijjāgato yaṃ... purisapuggalo puññaṃ ce saṅkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharoti, puññūpagaṃ hoti viññāṇaṃ; apuññaṃ ce saṅkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharoti, apuññūpagaṃ hoti viññāṇaṃ*). This, however, does not mean consciousness as a self-subsistent entity that speaks, that feels, that experiences... which is denied by the Buddha at M. I. 258.

⁴⁵ Only in this case, *citta* and *viññāṇa* are functionally equivalent. See S. Collins (1982): 214.

⁴⁶ D. II. 63; S. II. 101.

⁴⁷ M. I. 257: *aññatra paccayā n’atthi viññāṇassa sambhavo ti*.

⁴⁸ D. II. 62; DB. II. 59.

⁴⁹ D. II. 63; DB. II. 61.

⁵⁰ S. II. 2; KS. II. 2.

⁵¹ M. I. 111-2: *cakkhuṃ ca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuvīññāṇaṃ tiṅṅaṃ saṅgati phasso phassapaccayā vedanā, yaṃ vedeti taṃ sañjānāti taṃ vitakketi . . .* Translation after MLS. I. 145, D. J. Kalupahana (1987): 32, and EB. IV. 236.

experience thus conditioned by the stream of becoming (*bhava-sota*).⁵² It should be kept in mind that the function of consciousness, either cognizing or discriminating or being merely aware of, is in fact, a “conditioned process” rather than an entity:

In dependence on consciousness arise mind-and-matter (*viññānapaccayā nāmarūpam*), and from the ceasing of consciousness is the ceasing of the psycho-physical combination (*viññānanirodhā nāmarūpanirodho*); and again.

In dependence on *saṅkhārā* arises consciousness (*saṅkhārapaccayā viññanam*), and from the ceasing of activities is the ceasing of consciousness (*saṅkhāranirodhā viññānanirodho*).⁵³

In other words, the quoted passage shows that consciousness is generated by conditions, apart from conditions there is no origination of consciousness.⁵⁴ In addition to it, consciousness cannot have its independent existence apart from the other four aggregates. On the contrary, the five aggregates are mutual grounds for their dependently arisen existence and nourishment:

Consciousness may exist having matter as its means (*rūpupāyam*), matter as its object (*rūpārammaṇam*), matter as its support (*rūpapatitṭham*), and seeking delight in it may grow, increase and develop. Similarly, this holds true with the other three aggregates, viz., feeling, perception and disposition.

He who say that “I shall show the coming, the going, the passing away, the arising, the growth, the increase or the development of consciousness apart from physical body, feeling, perception and disposition” would be speaking of something that does not exist.⁵⁵

In this statement, the self (*ātman*) as the subject and object of the metaphysical *Upaniṣads* is denied. Here the subject is not the substantial agent that feels, that speaks, that experiences etc., but only serial flux of consciousness dependently arisen out of conditions.⁵⁶ Accordingly, human personality, experience and the experienced world are relative to one another and therefore they do not have any independent existence.⁵⁷

Nature of Consciousness:

There are three characteristics attributed to consciousness (*viññāṇa*), being (1) unextended (*anidassanam*), (2) infinite (*anantaṃ*), and (3) luminous everywhere (*sabbato pabham*).⁵⁸ According to Buddhaghosa, consciousness is one that has the characteristic of cognizing.⁵⁹ This, in fact, echoes a textual passage, where it states: “It is called cognition because it cognizes.”⁶⁰ W. Rahula⁶¹ is of the opinion that consciousness does not recognize an object. It is rather a sort of mere awareness - awareness of the presence of an object.⁶² *Viññāṇa* is characterized as playing the function of self-awareness.⁶³ This function is discussed clearly in comparison with feeling (*vedanā*) and perception (*saññā*) in the *Mahāvedalla Sutta*.⁶⁴ Here *viññāṇa* is characterized as discriminating (*vijānāti*) all kinds of feeling, *vedanā* as feeling (*vedeti*) the feelings, and *saññā* as noting (*sañjānāti*)

⁵² D. J. Kalupahana (1987): 32.

⁵³ M. I. 53.

⁵⁴ M. I. 257-9; MLS. I. 313-5.

⁵⁵ S. III. 58. Translation with modification from W. Rahula (1978): 25.

⁵⁶ M. I. 256.

⁵⁷ A. Tilakaratne (1993): 50.

⁵⁸ D. I. 223: *Viññāṇam anidassanam anantaṃ sabbato pabham*.

⁵⁹ *Vism.* IV. 452.

⁶⁰ M. I. 292: *vijānāti ti kho tasmā viññāṇan ti vuccati*.

⁶¹ W. Rahula (1978): 23.

⁶² I shall turn to this later.

⁶³ S. II. 94-5; III. 9-10; IV. 195.

⁶⁴ M. I. 292-3.

colors, such as, yellow, blue, etc. Being closely connected (*samsatṭha*), these three are stated as: “What one feels, that one notes; what one notes, that one discriminates.” Thus, in the process of being aware of an object, *viññāṇa* does not function alone, but in association with *vedanā* and *saññā* also.⁶⁵

Consciousness (*viññāṇa*) as a continual stream of becoming (*bhavasota*)⁶⁶ becomes a living bridge, a gap-bridger or a key link “between-lives existence” (to borrow a phrase from Harvey)⁶⁷ or between different lives from birth to death and from death to rebirth.⁶⁸ The Buddha, having discovered that neither is there a substantial self (*ātman* / *jīva*) surviving unchangeable after death (eternalism, *sassatavāda*), nor does death put a being to total end (annihilationism, *ucchedavāda*), expounds the middle-way *dhmma*, which goes beyond these two extremes, i.e. conditioned arising. If there were eternally substantial soul or life-principle, which is whether identical with or different from the body, there would be no living of the holy life, no spiritual progress, as it is unchangeable. Similarly, if there being no unsubstantial being survived, but destroyed at death, no one would pay his attention to moral behaviors, for the reason there being no moral retribution is possible and, therefore, moral motivation for spiritual perfection would be meaningless in the present and be cut off at death. In both cases, morality is denied.⁶⁹

The Buddha states that the physical body (*kāyo*) which has its form (*rūpī*) is basically made from the four great elements, produced by the mother and father, subject to erosion (*ukkhādana*), abrasion (*parimaddana*), dissolution and disintegration,⁷⁰ while consciousness as a stream (*viññāṇa-sota*),⁷¹ which is unbroken (*abbocchinna*) in causally conditioned process (*paṭiccasamuppanna*) continues its course in rebirth, as the generator (*janaka*) of a being (*purusa*). Unlike the scientists admitting only two purely physical factors, i.e. the father’s/male’s sperm and the mother’s/female’s egg merged at a women’s conception-period, the Buddha declares that apart from these two, there should be the third factor,⁷² which is purely conscious or psychic - *gandhabba* or *bhavaṅga-viññāṇa* - a term for consciousness (*viññāṇa*), or consciousness-element (*viññāṇa-dhātu*), or the stream of consciousness (*viññāṇa-sota*),⁷³ or rebirth consciousness (*saṃvattanika-viññāṇa*) descending into the mother’s womb, at the time of conception (*gabbhassa-avakkanti*), then psycho-physical personality (*nāmarūpa*) as an embryo would come to birth in this state of being.⁷⁴ At death, from the last thought or death-consciousness (*cuti-*

⁶⁵ Cf. *M. I.* 301: “Feeling and perception are kammic activities of mind.” (*saññā ca vedanā cittasankhāro*).

⁶⁶ *S. I.* 15.

⁶⁷ P. Harvey (1995): 89.

⁶⁸ *S. II.* 65: “Consciousness being established and growing, the comes to be renewedly continual existence in the future.” (*tasmim patitṭhite viññāṇe virūlḥe āyatim punabbhavābhiniḥḥati hoti*). Cf. *S. I.* 122; *S. III.* 124.

⁶⁹ *S. II.* 60-1.

⁷⁰ *D. I.* 76; *DB. I.* 86.

⁷¹ *D. III.* 105.

⁷² *M. I.* 265: “Monks, it is on the conjunction of three things that there is conception. If there is here a coitus of the parents, but it is not the mother’s season and the *gandhabba* is not present - for so long there is not conception. If there is a coitus of the parents and its is mother’s season, but the *gandhabba* is not present - for so long there is not conception. But if, monks, there is here a coitus of the parents and it is the mother’s season and the *gandhabba* is present, it is on the conjunction of these three things that there is a conception.” Translation by I.B. Horner, *MLS. II.* 321. It is not out of place to note here that “mother’s season” is understood as “at the right time in a women’s conceptable period.”

⁷³ This term appears in *D. III.* 105: “He understands a man’s stream of consciousness which is uninterrupted at both ends is established in both this world and the next.” (*purisassa ca viññāṇasotaṃ pajānāti ubhayato abbotchinnam idhaloke paṭṭhitaṃ ca paraloke paṭṭhitaṃ ca*).

⁷⁴ *D. II.* 63; *DB. II.* 60: “Ānanda, if consciousness were not to descend into the mother’s womb, would name-and-form form in the mother’s womb? No, Lord.” (*Viññāṇaṃ va hi Ānanda mātu kucchim na okkamissattha, api nu kho nāmarūpa mātu kucchimim samucchissatthāti? No h’eteṃ bhante.*) Also *S. II.* 101: “When consciousness is established and increases then name-and-form descends [into the womb of the mother]” (*yattha patitṭhitaṃ viññāṇaṃ virūlḥam atthi attha nāmarūpassa avakkanti*).

viññāṇa/citta) belonging to the previous life there arises the first the moment of consciousness or rebirth-consciousness (*paṭisandhi-viññāṇa*) of the present birth. Death-consciousness and rebirth-consciousness are both aspects of *bhavaṅga*.⁷⁵ Appearing at the moment of formation of an embryo, this consciousness-element (*viññāṇa-dhātu*) carries with it all the seeds (*bīja*) or *saṅkhārā* of the previous lives, forming the ground for emergence of psycho-physical personality (*nāma-rūpa*). This is called conception (*gabbhassa avakkhanti // pratisandhi*) or rebirth (*punarbhava*). To this the canonical passage runs thus: “Based on consciousness... there is descent into the womb. This descent taking place, psycho-physical personality come to pass. Conditioned by psycho-physical personality is six sense organs. Conditioned by six sense organs is contact. Conditioned by contact is feeling...”⁷⁶

In this process, there is no an agent transmigrating from one life to another, but there is only a conscious moment unbrokenly continues (*abbocchinna*) transforming ethical energies (*kamma*) or all mental disposition (*saṅkhāra*) from one life to another. During the process of continual existence between both worlds: the past and this as well as this and the next, there is no self-entity but only consciousness personality factor, which are neither the same nor different (*na ca so na ca añño*),⁷⁷ repeatedly enters womb after womb (*gabbhā gabbham*).⁷⁸ The working scope of consciousness is extended to the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana*).⁷⁹ Here the evolving consciousness (*saṃvattanika viññāṇa*) continues experiencing supreme pleasure and happiness of the *arūpa-jhāna*. Only in the state “cessation of perception and feeling” (*saññāvedayitanirodha*) all conscious experience such as perceptions and feelings are stopped functioning without remainder. This state is the highest and peaceful, which one can experiences only in *jhāna*.⁸⁰ In brief, psychologically, consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is related to kammic activities (*saṅkhāra*) associated with perceptive process; ontologically, it is responsible for continual existence in *samsāra*; and soteriologically, it undergoes transformed toward freedom, through gradual process of elimination of all unwholesome motivational forces.

As a constituent or factor (*kkhandha // skandha*) or element (*dhātu*) of human personality (*nāmarūpa*), consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is neither a permanent substance nor the self/soul/spirit. This simple truth is very difficult to realize even some of the Buddha’s own disciple. A monk called Sāti is reported to have held an eternalist theory (*sassatavāda*) of consciousness, wrongly admitting that it is the “same consciousness” that transmigrates and wanders about, and it is that consciousness that speaks, that feels, that experiences the fruition of ethical deed here and there.⁸¹ This eternalist a and empirical theories of self, identifying consciousness with a substantial soul,⁸² which is permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change and will stand firm like unto the eternal (i.e. moon, sun, sea, great earth and mountain etc.),⁸³ is refuted by the Buddha as wrong view.⁸⁴ Consciousness according to the Buddha is merely the knowing activity (*viññāṇāṭṭi... viññāṇam*)⁸⁵ without the commonly postulated existence of a permanent,

⁷⁵ E.R. Sarathchandra (1958): 26.

⁷⁶ A. I. 175; GS. I. 160. Cf. D. II. 63; S. II. 101.

⁷⁷ *Miln.* 40.

⁷⁸ *Sn.* 278.

⁷⁹ *M.* II. 264

⁸⁰ *M.* I. 398 ff.

⁸¹ *M.* I. 258; *MLS.* I. 313.

⁸² *S.* III. 56-7; *KS.* III. 48-8: The other four kinds are the identification of either the physical body or feeling or perception, or disposition with the eternal self.

⁸³ *MA.* I. 71.

⁸⁴ *M.* I. 8. This recurs at *M.* I. 258ff.

⁸⁵ *S.* III. 87.

substantial ego as the transcendent substratum of such an activity,⁸⁶ but is uniquely responsible for continual existence of sentient beings in the *samsāra*.

Kinds of Consciousness: Traditional Sixfold Consciousness

According to Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda Buddhism, there are only six kinds of consciousness (*viññāṇa*), viz., visual consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇā*), auditory consciousness (*sota-viññāṇā*), olfactory consciousness (*ghāna-viññāṇā*), gustatory consciousness (*jivhā-viññāṇā*), tactile consciousness (*kāya-viññāṇā*) and mental consciousness (*mano-viññāṇā*). The emergence of the sixfold consciousness is purely conditioned processes. Depending upon sense-organs and their corresponding sense data or objects arise corresponding consciousnesses. In other words, the presence, interaction or coming together (*saṅgati*) of these two necessary and sufficient conditions, i.e. the internal sense-organ and the external sense-object are the arising of six sense-consciousnesses. The scope of the first five sensory consciousnesses is very limited and confined to their corresponding objects only. That is to say visual consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇā*) works in the contact-field of the visible and eyes; auditory consciousness (*sota-viññāṇā*) of sounds and ears; olfactory consciousness (*ghāna-viññāṇā*) of smells and nose, gustatory consciousness (*jivhā-viññāṇā*) of tastes and tongue, and tactile consciousness (*kāya-viññāṇā*) of tangible and body; while mental consciousness (*mano-viññāṇā*) apart from its working-scope i.e. mental objects (*dhamma*) and mind (*mano*) covering also the fields of the former five. As regards the function of these consciousnesses, there is a major difference between them. The first five sensory consciousnesses are passive, whereas the mental consciousness more active. This is so because there is few mental concomitants (*cetasika*) associated with the former, while all of them found with the latter.⁸⁷ In some cases, the *viññāṇa* of the five senses are nothing but a bare awareness or sensation of a sensory object being present, without any discrimination, not producing knowledge of any sort.⁸⁸ In other cases, accompanying with the mental consciousness (*mano-viññāṇa*) the fivefold sensory consciousness is followed by a series of point-instants of attending (*āvaṭṭana*), receiving (*sampaticchana*), examining (*santīraṇa*), determining (*votthapana*), registering (*javana*), etc. until a complete act of perception is achieved.⁸⁹ In such cases, the fivefold consciousness is a bare awareness of the presence of the object plus the knowledge of which is determining or sense-modality it belongs to, working in unison with accompanying consciousness, which discriminates the object into its basic parts or aspects.⁹⁰ It would not be out of place to note here that according to Vasubandhu these six sensory consciousnesses are not six separate conscious entities, but rather various aspects of the “same conscious element” called *viññāṇa*.⁹¹

The later Theravāda adds a new concept, namely, *bhavaṅga-viññāṇa* or *bhavaṅga-citta*,⁹² or unconscious mind/continuum, which is, to some extent, similar to that of *alāya-vijñāna* of the *Vijñānavāda* or Yogācāra Buddhism.⁹³ They further differentiate it from a

⁸⁶ A. Verdu (1985): 52.

⁸⁷ For further see W. M. McGovern (1979): 133f.

⁸⁸ For different interpretations in this regard, see E. R. Saratchandra (1958): 25f; *EB*. IV. 240f.; P. Harvey (1995): 148-51.

⁸⁹ *Abhs*. 19. Quoted from *EB*. IV. 240a. Cf. *EB*. IV. 176b.

⁹⁰ P. Harvey (1995): 150.

⁹¹ *Kośa*. 1-11.

⁹² It literally meaning “conscious factor responsible for becoming” can be differently rendered as “subliminal consciousness” (S.Z. Aung & Mrs. Rhys Davids 1910: 27); “unconscious continuum” (E.R. Saratchandra 1958: 49); “infra-consciousness” (H. Saddhatissa 1970: 42); “dynamic unconscious” (K.N. Jayatilleke 1975: 226), and “life continuum” by Nāṇamoli. According to P. Harvey, the rendering “latent life-continuum discernment is the most appropriate term (1995): 161. Here I borrow a phrase used by D. J. Kalupahana, *EB*. IV. 240b.

⁹³ Walpola Rahula claims that “although not developed as in the Mahāyāna, the original idea of *alāya-vijñāna* was already there in the Pāli canon” (1978): 99.

conscious mind (*vīthi-citta*). Of these, the former is the fundamental or original and purified consciousness (*pakati-mano*), which is defiled by elements associated with the latter.⁹⁴ In the *Suttapiṭaka*, while mental consciousness (*mano-viññāṇa*) arises through and in dependence on mind (*mano*) and mental objects (*dhammā*),⁹⁵ in the *Visuddhimagga*, on the other hand, it arises in dependent on *bhavaṅga-viññāṇa*, mental object (*dhamma*) and attention (*manasikāre*).⁹⁶ According to the *Visuddhimagga*, in the period of deeply dreamless sleep, the *bhavaṅga-viññāṇa* occurs as long as no other state of mind arises to interrupt its continuity occurring endlessly.⁹⁷

Eightfold Consciousness of Yogācāra Buddhism

In Yogācāra system of ethico-psychology, the number of consciousness is known as eight (C. 八 識), namely, traditional six kinds of consciousness (C. 前 六 識) consisting the five sensory consciousnesses (C. 前 五 識) and mental or non-sensory consciousness (*mano-viññāṇa*, C. 意 識) plus two new kinds, viz., ego-consciousness (*kliṣṭa-manas* C. 末 那 識) and storehouse-consciousness (*alāya-vijñāna* C. 阿 賴 耶 識). The conscious activities of a human being, according to Yogācāra, are not only the scope of, nor amount to five senses (*indriya-vijñāna*). There are still deeper ranges of consciousness, such as mental consciousness (*mano-vijñāna*), ego-consciousness (*kliṣṭa-manas*) and storehouse-consciousness (*alāya-vijñāna*). Mental consciousness serves as the collector and integrator of the various impressions received by the five senses and produced what we may called mental image or idea. The ego-consciousness works as ego-center creating the false notion or feeling of the subject that feels, thinks, enjoys, or experiences. *Alāya-vijñāna* is a reservoir in which all ideas, impressions, perceptions and cognitions are deposited. To differentiate them from one another, we can follow the distinction made by Huì-Yuaên (慧 遠), as follows (as seen in Figure 3):

Five sensory consciousnesses (C. 前 五 識)	the senses or consciousness (C. 識)
6 th consciousness (C. 第 六 識)	the intent (C. 意)
7 th consciousness (C. 末 那 識)	the false mind (C. 妄 心)
8 th consciousness (C. 阿 賴 耶 識)	the true mind (C. 真 心)

Traditional Six Consciousnesses (C. 前 六 識) or the third manifestation (C. 第 三 能 變). According to Vasubandhu, the manifestation and function of mental consciousness (*mano-vijñāna* C. 意 識) takes place always, except in some cases. The occasions for its functions removed, either contemporary or forever, are (1) two final stages of *dhyāna*, namely, the state of neither perception nor non-perception (*naiva samjñā naivāsamjñā*) and the state of cessation of all feelings and perceptions (*samjñā-vedayita-nirodha*), (2) dreamless sleep, and (3) a state absent of thought.⁹⁸ The manifestation of consciousnesses is based upon dependence (*anyonyavaśād*) in accordance with its modes or ways. Only on the basis of mutual dependence,

⁹⁴ *Dhs.A.* 812.

⁹⁵ *M. I.* 112: *Manaṅ ca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati mano-viññāṇaṃ.*

⁹⁶ *Vism.* xv. 39: *Bhavaṅgamana dhamma manasikāre paṭicca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ.*

⁹⁷ *Vism.* xiv. 114.

⁹⁸ *Triṃś.* 16.

consciousnesses can proceed, and discriminations are born accordingly.⁹⁹ Thus, six forms of consciousness is purely functional, not an uninterruptedly eternal ego-entity.

The seventh consciousness (C. 第七識) or *kliṣṭa-manas* (C. 末那識) or the second manifestation (*pariṇāma*) or transformation/evolution (C. 第二能變). *Kliṣṭa-manas*, literally meaning “soiled-mind consciousness” can be rendered as “self-consciousness.”¹⁰⁰ In its functional meaning, I would suggest the two renderings, “ego-consciousness,” or “I-making consciousness.” This *kliṣṭa-manas* is spontaneously subtle notion or feeling of ‘I’ (*aham/aham iti*), or ‘Mine’ (*mameāti*), or ‘I-making’ (*ahamkāra / mama*), or the conceit “I am” (*asmimāna-kleśa*). It is, functionally, a form of consciousness, characterized as the one which has the form of “conceiving” (*manyānā*) by way of notion of I (*ahamkāra*) and of feeling of identity (*asmimāna*). The function of *manas*, possessing of all forms of emotion and cognition i.e. contact (*sparśa*), attention (*manaskāra*), feeling (*vit / vedanā*), perception (*saṃjñā*) and volition (*cetanā*),¹⁰¹ is defiled (*kliṣṭa*) and associated (*saṃprayukta*) with fourfold defilement (*kleśa*), viz., self-confusion or ignorance with regard to self (*ātmāmoha* C. 我癡), self-view or false view/perception of the self (*ātma-dṛṣṭi / satkāya-dṛṣṭi* C. 我見), self-pride or self-esteem (*asmimāna / ātma-māna* C. 我慢) and self-love (*ātma-sneha* C. 我愛).¹⁰² It is believed that *kliṣṭa-manas* constantly (*nityakālam*) occurs and functions simultaneously with *alāya-vijñāna* on one hand, and conceives the latter as its object, on the other, in the form of “I am [this]” (*asmīti*) and “[this is my] Self (*aham iti*).”¹⁰³ This is so because, *manas* has probably the inclination to identify (*asmīti-chanda*) *alāya-vijñāna* with the real and permanent ego-entity (*ātman*), with reference to the personal existence (*ātmabhāva / āśraya*) or resulting maturation (*vipāka*) containing all seeds (*bīja*). In fact, *alāya-vijñāna* can neither be considered as the substantial ego-entity, nor the fundamental objective basis of the notion of I or ego or the feeling of identity. Due to its attachment to the notion of I and Mine, and the feeling of identity, *manas* is regarded as the mental pollution (*saṃkleśa*). Its functional existence is not found in the state of cessation of feelings and perceptions (*saṃjñā-vedayita-nirodha*), nor in the Worthy One (*Arhat*), nor in the supra-mundane path (*lokottara-mārga*).¹⁰⁴

The eighth consciousness (C. 第八識) or *alāya-vijñāna* (C. 阿賴耶識) or the first manifestation (C. 第一能變). *Alāya-vijñāna*, etymologically meaning consciousness that dwells in and sticks to the body (*kāyālayanatām upādāya*),¹⁰⁵ is the consciousness-containing-all-seeds (*sarvabījakam vijñāna / cittam*) or store-house consciousness (藏

⁹⁹ *Triṃś.* 18.

¹⁰⁰ W. M. McGovern (1979): 134.

¹⁰¹ *Triṃś.* 7.

¹⁰² *Triṃś.* 6: *Kleśaiḥ caturbhiḥ sahitaṃ nivṛtāvyaḥkṛtaiḥ sadā, ātma-dṛṣṭy ātma-mohātma-mānātma-sneha-saṃjñitaiḥ.*

¹⁰³ *Triṃś.* 6. *Aham iti*, here, can be read as “[this is] I.”

¹⁰⁴ *Triṃś.* 7.

¹⁰⁵ Hattori Masaaki states that “*Ālaya*” is a derivative of the verb “*ā-lī*,” which means “settle down upon” or “abide in” something and connotes a “dwelling,” “receptacle” or “storehouse.” For example, “*himālyaya*” means “storehouse of snow.” The *ālaya*-consciousness is said to be a storehouse in which the residual force (*vāsanā*) of all previous experiences has been stored up as latent impressions.” *The EB.* 21. 1. (1988): 23. For detailed discussion on its etymology see L. Schmithausen (1987): I. 18-33; II. 290 n. 183.

識).¹⁰⁶ *Alāya-vijñāna* is also known as *ādānavijñāna*¹⁰⁷ in the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*¹⁰⁸ and fundamental consciousness (*mūla-vijñāna*) in some other texts. Comprising all seeds (*sarvabījaka*), *alāya-vijñāna* functions from life to life as the basis (*mūla-vijñāna* c. 根本識) of five sense-consciousnesses (C. 前五識), non-sensory/mental consciousness (*mano-vijñāna*, C. 第六識) and *kliṣṭa-mana*. The function of *alāya-vijñāna* as a base (*mūla*) of other forms of consciousness is compared with the water on which the waves arise (*taraṅgānām yathā jale*).¹⁰⁹ It is characterized as morally neutral (*abyākṛtatva*) and not obstructed (*anivṛtaāvyākṛta*) by defilements. The manifestation of *alāya-vijñāna* is a constantly uninterrupted process involving in contact (*sparśa*), mental ideation (*manaskāra*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saṃjñā*) and intention (*cetanā*). *Alāya-vijñāna* is characterized as the resultant (*vipāka*) and the container of all its seeds (*sarva-bījaka*, C. 一切種子) or dispositional tendencies/energies (*vāsanā* C. 習氣) of ethical actions (*karma* C. 業) in the previous lives, which is matured or ripen (*paripāka*).¹¹⁰ The first characterization is aimed at refuting essentialist approach to consciousness, while the second, at denouncing materialist approach to consciousness. The essentialist approach leads to eternalism (*sassatavāda*) or a kind of eternalist search of a self (*bhava-ditṭhi*), whereas the materialist approach, to annihilationism (*ucchedevāda*) or a kind of seeking to annihilate a self (*vibhava-ditṭhi*).¹¹¹ Comparatively, although their method are different, Vasubandhu's analysis of the manifestation or evolution of consciousness is, purposively, met with the Buddha's analyses of psycho-physical personality (*nāmarūpa*), of five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*), of six element (*cha-dhātu*), of twelve spheres (*āyatana*), of eighteen elements (*dhātu*), and of consciousness (*viññāṇa*) as functional process, both aiming at refuting the metaphysical and empirical self (*ātman*). Like *bhavaṅga-viññāṇa* / *citta* in Pali Buddhism, among eight kinds of consciousness (*vijñāna*), *alāya-vijñāna* is the only consciousness remained at death and then recurring at mother's womb at the time of conception. With its entering the mother's womb, the psycho-physical personality (*nāmarūpa*) would be able to function.¹¹² In the process of dying, all *vijñānas* withdraws from the body in steps and order, starting either from the upper or the lower or the middle part of the body with indication of disappearance of bodily heat. The first five sense-consciousnesses (C. 前五識) go first, next to mental consciousness (*mano-viññāṇa* C. 第六識), then *kliṣṭa-manas* (C. 末那識), and finally, *alāya-vijñāna* (C. 阿賴耶識).

Alāya-vijñāna, although being the only *vijñāna* remained functional in the absorption into the cessation of feelings and perceptions (*saṃjñā-vedayita-nirodha-samāpatti*) to keep it alive and to prevent body from dying, is entirely transformed into

¹⁰⁶ It is attributed with threefold function, namely, the container (能藏) of all seeds (*bīja*), the contained (所藏) being received all influences of all other consciousnesses, and the unavoidable object of false notion of 'I' of the *kliṣṭa-mana* (執藏).

¹⁰⁷ By using this term, it indicates the function of taking possession of a new body or basis-of-personal-existence at the moment of linking up (*pratisandhi*), a function which is expressed by "*parigraha*" or "*upādāna*" but also "*ādāna*" both in canonical and in Yogācāra texts. Reference from L. Schmithausen (1987): I. 49ff.

¹⁰⁸ *Samdh.* V. 3.

¹⁰⁹ *Triṃś.* 15.

¹¹⁰ *Triṃś.* 2: 阿賴耶識:異thūc一切種.

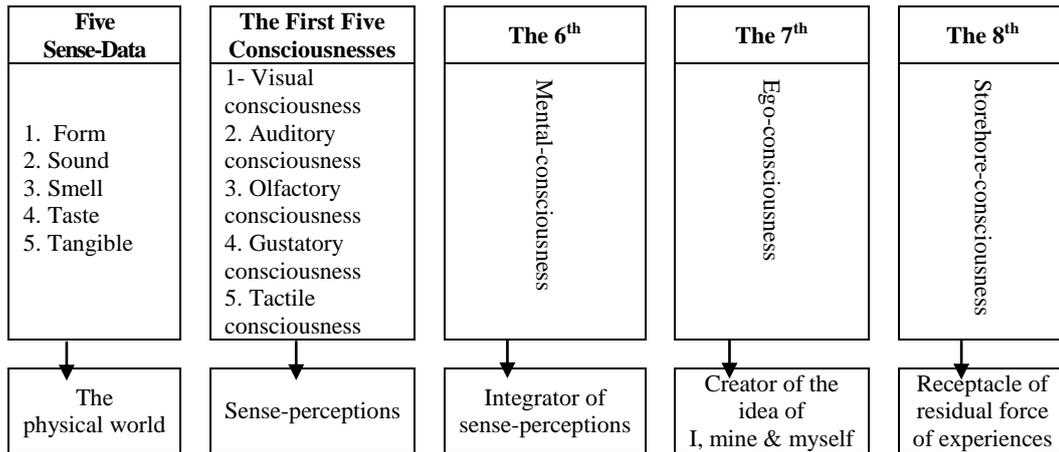
¹¹¹ *D.* I. 12-45; *DB.* I. 26-55.

¹¹² Cf. *D.* II. 63: *viññāṇa ca hi Ānanda mātu kucchi(smim) na okkamissatha, api nu kho nāmarūpaṃ mātu kucchismim samucchissatha.*

wisdom, when a being reaches the stage of attainment of sainthood (*arhat*).¹¹³

Summing up: for the Buddha, consciousness (*viññāṇa*), mind (*citta*), thought or mentation (*mano*), mental factors (*cetasika*) along with matter (*rūpa*) are merely functional. If the function of matter (*rūpa*) is “resisting” (*ruppatīti rūpaṃ*),¹¹⁴ the paradigm function of consciousness and mind is “being conscious” (*viñānāti viññāṇaṃ*).¹¹⁵ They are neither altogether nor separately considered as substantial entity-self but only a series of conscious experience. Their being functional is described in dynamic terms as a flow (*sota*), a continuum (*satāna*), a running (*javana*) or a process (*vīthi*).

Figure 3: Yogācāra System of Consciousnesses



¹¹³ *Trim* 5.

¹¹⁴ *S. III.* 86.

¹¹⁵ *S. III.* 87.