

largely polemical nature have been produced; see, for example, ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥusaynī’s *Al-judhūr al-ta’rikhīyah lil-Nuṣayrīyah al-‘alawīyah* (Dubai, 1980), and ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Maḥdī al-‘Askari’s *Al-‘Alawīyūnaw al-Nuṣayrīyūn* (n.p., 1980), both of which quote extensively from the early heresiographical literature. Umar F. Abd-Allah’s *The Islamic Struggle in Syria* (Berkeley, 1983), with foreword and postscript by Hamid Algar, outlines the attempt by the present ‘Alawī military regime in Syria to control the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood there.

MICHEL M. MAZZAOUI (1987)

ĀLAYA-VIJÑĀNA (Tib., *kun gzhi rnam par shes pa*; Chin., *a lai ye shi*) is the Sanskrit term denoting, roughly, “storehouse” consciousness, a conception of unconscious mental processes developed by the Yogācāra school of Indian Buddhism in the third to fifth centuries CE. *Ālaya-vijñāna* appears in such “Yogācāra” scriptures as the *Samḍhinirmocana Sūtra* and the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, but is most systematically treated in the scholastic treatises of Asaṅga (c. 315–390) and Vasubandhu (c. mid-fourth to mid-fifth centuries). It originally addressed problems surrounding the continuity of karmic potential (*karma-upacaya*) and the latent afflictions (*anuśaya*) that had been generated by the *abhidharma* emphasis upon momentary, manifest processes of mind. How, after all, could these two essential aspects of one’s samsaric existence—the potential for *karma* to ripen and for the afflictions to arise—be uninterruptedly present until their elimination far along the path to liberation if one’s mind (or, more precisely, one’s “mental stream,” *santāna*) were comprised solely of whatever phenomena (*dharma*) were manifest at the present moment? Their manifest presence would preclude any salutary states of mind from arising, and thus prevent progress along the path, while their complete absence would be tantamount to liberation itself. The *ālaya-vijñāna* thus came to comprise the various potentialities that must continuously underlie each moment of the traditional six modes of cognitive awareness—now called manifest, arising, or functioning consciousnesses (*pravṛtti-vijñāna*) in contradistinction to the continuous yet subliminal *ālaya*, the home, base, or storehouse consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*).

Combining traditional analyses of consciousness (*vijñāna*) as an awareness (*not* a faculty) that arises either in dependence upon karmic formations (*samskāra*) or as a result of the concomitance of one’s cognitive faculties and their correlative objects, *ālaya* consciousness is described in classical Yogācāra treatises as arising from moment to moment in dependence on the material sense faculties and the various cognitive and affective formations (*samskāra*) that constitute one’s ongoing existence, as well as on its own subliminal cognitive object: an indistinct (*aparicchinnā*) or imperceptible (*asamviditā*) apprehension of an external world (*bhājana-loka*). *Ālaya-vijñāna* is thus a complexly conditioned mode of cognitive awareness that simultaneously sup-

ports (*āśraya*) and informs all occurrences of manifest consciousness.

Also consonant with traditional characteristics of consciousness (S II 65, 101; III 54), *ālaya-vijñāna* is said in the *Samḍhinirmocana Sūtra* to “grow, develop, and increase” due to the seeds (*bīja*) of karmic potential and the predispositions (*vāsanā*) of the afflictions that have accumulated “since beginningless time” from the karmic activities associated with the six modes of manifest cognitive awareness. The potential or “seeds” for the future arising of afflictions or of karmically resultant *dharma*s, such as sensations or consciousness itself, are thereafter “stored” in this evolving *ālaya* level of mind.

While this subliminal *ālaya* consciousness thus enjoys a simultaneous and causally reciprocal relationship with the manifest modes of cognitive awareness, it still retained, in most Indian Yogācāra treatises, its original character as the locus of accumulated karmic potential and latent afflictions, virtually defining one’s samsaric existence and serving, in effect, as the “subject” of *samsāra* (also similar to earlier notions of *vijñāna*). Sentient beings therefore typically (mis)take *ālaya* consciousness as a substantive self (*ātmadṛṣṭi*), a form of ignorance so continuously present that it too soon came to be conceived as a distinct strata of subliminal—and karmically neutral—afflictions called “afflictive mentation” (Skt., *kliṣṭa-manas*; Tib., *nyon mongs pa can gyi yid*; Chin., *ran wu yi*), now considered a “seventh consciousness,” making *ālaya-vijñāna* the eighth.

More broadly, Asaṅga’s *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha* describes how the “common aspects” (*sādhāraṇa-lakṣaṇa*) of *ālaya* consciousness help to structure the arising of our common “world” (*bhājana-loka*). Our distinctively human world appears similarly to us because we have accumulated similar *karma*, which results in both our similar cognitive faculties as well as whatever cognitive and affective formations similarly condition the arising of each individual’s *ālaya-vijñāna*, such as the impressions of language (*adbilāpa-vāsanā*). Together, these conditions delimit the range of stimuli that may instigate manifest consciousness, and thus also the very forms in which our common, species-specific world (*loka*) typically appear. In this way, the *ālaya-vijñāna*—“the mind with all the seeds” (*sarvabījaka-citta*) that represents our accumulated potentialities for karmic results—serves as the “common support” (*samāśraya*) of all phenomenal experience (*dharma*).”

Although in its systematic treatments the *ālaya-vijñāna* is largely commensurate with traditional Indian Buddhist analyses of samsaric consciousness, as we have seen, the very metaphors used to describe the *ālaya-vijñāna*—an evolving “repository” form of mind (*citta*) that receives and “stores” karmic seeds and thereby serves as both support and cause (*hetu*) of all *dharma*s—invited its interpretation as a foundational mind serving as the sole basis or ground from which the entire phenomenal world arises. These tendencies were particularly pronounced in certain Chinese and Tibetan tra-

ditions, influenced no doubt by the explicit identification—in scriptures such as the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* and, more importantly, the apocryphal *Awakening of Faith*—of *ālaya-vijñāna* with *tathāgatha-garbha*, the womb or matrix of the Tathāgatha. Although this identification went largely unchallenged in later Chinese Buddhism, it is not found in the classic treatises of Indian Yogācāra. The sixth-century Indian translator Paramārtha’s response to this discrepancy was to preserve the *ālaya-vijñāna* as a defiled eighth consciousness, which is eliminated upon awakening, while interpolating into his translations an additional, undefiled ninth consciousness, an **amala-vijñāna*, which persists after the *ālaya-vijñāna* ceases. One of seventh-century Xuanzang’s aims in retranslating Yogācāra texts was to recover the earlier, and to his mind orthodox, interpretation of *ālaya-vijñāna* as a locus of defiled consciousness unrelated to the notion of *tathāgatha-garbha*. Similar tendencies occurred in the Tibetan schools that teach “extrinsic emptiness” (*gzhan stong*), which extrapolating upon Indian Yogācāra models, posited a primordial *ālaya* wisdom (Skt., **ālaya-jñāna*; Tib., *kun gzhi ye shes*) prior to and apart from all defiled and discursive modes of consciousness (Skt., *vijñāna*; Tib., *rnam shes*), such as *ālaya-vijñāna*.

These varying notions of post- (or non-) samsaric forms of consciousness, typically expressed as transformations of *vijñāna* into *jñāna*, echo similar ideas found in the earliest Buddhist texts in which the consciousness of a buddha or arhat is no longer bound by grasping or appropriation (*anupādāna*), but is said to be “non-abiding” or “unsupported” (*appatitṭhita-viññāna*; D III 105; S I 122; S II 66, 103; S III 54).

In sum, this core Yogācāra concept touches upon some of the central concerns of Buddhist soteriology and analyses of mind, but its interpretation varies considerably depending upon which century, which school, and even which text one is investigating.

SEE ALSO Asaṅga; Dharmapāla; Soteriology; Soul, article on Buddhist Concepts; Tathāgata-garbha; Vasubandhu; Vijñāna; Yogācāra.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cook, Francis, trans. *Three Texts on Consciousness Only*. Berkeley, Calif., 1999. English translations from the Chinese of three Yogācāra treatises: two by Vasubandhu—the *Triṃśika* (Thirty verses) and the *Vimśika* (Twenty verses); and one by Xuanzang—the *Cheng wei-shi lun* (Demonstration of consciousness only).
- Hakamaya, Noriaki. *Yuishiki Shisō Ronkō*. Tokyo, 2001. A collection of fifty articles by a leading Japanese scholar analyzing many Yogācāra texts and concepts, including the *ālaya-vijñāna*, from a text-critical perspective.
- Hakeda, Yoshito, trans. *The Awakening of Faith, Attributed to Aśvaghoṣha*. New York, 1967. An apocryphal treatise immensely influential in Chinese interpretations of Yogācāra.
- Keenan, John, trans. *The Scripture on the Explication of Underlying Meaning* (The *Samdhinirmocana Sūtra*). Berkeley, Calif.,

2000. A translation of Xuanzang’s Chinese rendition of this indispensable Yogācāra text.

- Lamotte, Étienne, trans. *La somme du Grand Véhicule d’Asaṅga* (*Mahāyāna-saṃgraha*). Louvain, Belgium, 1938–1939. A definitive translation accompanied by extensive selections from its traditional commentaries.
- Pruden, Leo, trans. *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa: Treatise on Action by Vasubandhu*. Berkeley, Calif., 1980. An English translation of Lamotte’s French translation of Vasubandhu’s most abhidharmic treatment of the *ālaya-vijñāna*.
- Schmithausen, Lambert. *Ālayavijñāna*. Tokyo, 1987. This groundbreaking and painstaking philological study reconstructs the initial occurrence and subsequent development of the *ālaya-vijñāna* within Indian Yogācāra texts.
- Stearns, Cyrus. *The Buddha from Dolpo*. Albany, 1999. A study of the founder of the Tibetan *zhen stong* view and the theory of primordial *laya* wisdom.
- Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro, trans. *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. London, 1932. A translation and study of this important Yogācāra scripture.
- Waldron, William S. “Buddhist Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Thinking about ‘Thoughts without a Thinker.’” *Eastern Buddhist* 34, no. 1 (2002): 1–52. Analyzes the *ālaya-vijñāna* in relation to scientific perspectives on the evolution and arising of consciousness.
- Waldron, William S. *The Buddhist Unconscious: The Ālaya-vijñāna in the Context of Indian Buddhist Thought*. New York and London, 2003. Treats the antecedents to an early development of the *ālaya-vijñāna*, up to Asaṅga’s *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha*.

WILLIAM S. WALDRON (2005)

AL-AZHAR. Literally al-Azhar means “most luminous” (an allusion to the prophet Muḥammad’s daughter Fāṭima, nicknamed al-Zahrā’, the eponymous ancestor of the Fāṭimids). Al-Azhar is the world’s oldest mosque-university and Sunnī Islam’s foremost seat of learning. Following his conquest of Egypt, Jawhar, the Sicilian commander of the army sent by the Fāṭimid caliph-*imām* al-Mu‘izz li-Dīn Allāh (r. 953–975 CE) from North Africa, founded this mosque on Saturday, 24 Jumādā I 359/April 4, 970 CE, after having laid the foundations of a new capital, Cairo (*al-Qāhira*, meaning “the victorious”). Al-Azhar, situated near the royal palace at the southeast corner, was intended to serve as the official congregation mosque of the new dynasty, which was competing with the ‘Abbāsīd caliphs of Baghdad for control of the Muslim world. The first Friday prayer in the mosque was inaugurated during Ramaḍān 972 CE. In addition to being a house of worship and a sanctuary like most major mosques, it soon became a place of learning. Except for the eighty-year rule of the Ayyūbids (1171–1252), who supplanted the Fāṭimids, al-Azhar has remained throughout the centuries a focal point of Islamic religious and cultural life not only for Egypt but also for the entire Muslim world.

During the early period of Islamic history, memorization of the Qur’ān, the study of *ḥadīth* (traditions of the