

# Jung's Collective Unconsciousness and the *Ālayavijñāna*

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There is a growing interest in a comparative study of Jungian analytical psychology and the *vijñaptimātra* theory, because both theories deal with man's psychic phenomena, and attach importance to one's transformation. Sometimes Jung's collective unconsciousness and the *ālayavijñāna* are easily regarded as the same thing. The collective unconscious and the *ālayavijñāna* are not perceptive, to be sure, and they are the source of man's psychic phenomena, but by these common features, can we expect any resemblance between the two? This paper intends to clarify the concepts of the two, along with the logical structure of self-realization of each: 'self'—the unconscious—ego, and the *pariṇiṣpannasvabhāva*—the *ālayavijñāna*—the *manas* (the *mano-nāma-vijñāna*).

Ever since the period of Early Buddhism, which does not establish the *ātman* as an eternal, immutable principle of an individual existence, the argument about the subject of one's deeds and transmigration has become more heated and stronger, and some Buddhist schools have come to establish the *ātman* theory (the *pudgala*), so that the Vijñānavāda set up the *ālayavijñāna* to bring the long dispute to an end. The *ālayavijñāna* was, therefore, destined to include all the functions attributed to the *ātman*, from the time the *ālayavijñāna* was created. In the beginning of the *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, Sthiramati mentions his intention of writing the commentary on the *Triṃśikāvijñaptikārikā* as follows:

This commentary is written in order to teach it to those who do not understand or who misunderstand the non-*ātman* theory that the doctrine of non-selfness and non-substantiality is credible.....Some people (the Sarvāstivādins) believe in the real existence of the seen (the *vijñeya*) as well as the seer (the *vijñāna*), and the Mādhyamika school insists that the seer and the seen are temporal existences, so that they do not exist in the ultimate. This book is to be published to deny their

thoughts<sup>1</sup>).

The *Yogacārabhūmi-sāstra* testifies to the existence of the *ālayavijñāna* by one *sūtra*-proof and eight theory-proofs<sup>2</sup>). According to these proofs, the *ālayavijñāna* may be defined as follows :

1. It occupies a person's body continuously.
2. It is the third link of the twelve-linked chain of dependent origination.
3. It controls the sense functions.
4. It stores the *bījas* (the seeds ; potentialities).
5. It makes plural, complicated cognitions work together smoothly.
6. It is the cause of all psychic phenomena.
7. It is active even during meditation where the six consciousnesses cease to function.
8. When it parts from a person's body, he parts from this world.

It is then understood that the *ālayavijñāna* was set up as the spiritual body of transmigration, deeds and recognition, and as the source of life, as the place holding the *bījas*, and as the place where enlightenment and delusion take place. This *ālayavijñāna* is also subject to experiential phenomena ; it is not the ultimate principle.

The collective unconscious can be, in the main, prescribed thus :

1. It is impersonal, historical and common in all mankind.
2. It has a great life force and is always in action.
3. It is an active existence whose function influences a person's conscious structure.
4. It holds all psychic elements including good and evil qualities of man.
5. It is pure natural phenomena with no intention.
6. It is not perceived by consciousness ; it is known to us only through symbols appearing in dreams.

The above definition bring us to the conclusion that the collective unconscious is similar to the *bīja*, not to the *ālayavijñāna*. The theory of the *bīja* is indispensable to the *vijñaptimātra* theory. The *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* defines the *bījas* as the potentialities which *pañca skandhas* are endowed with, and which engender their fruits (the *phala*)<sup>3</sup>). The *bījas* are stored in the *ālayavijñāna*.

And further it reads :

The effect of man's deeds is produced from the *bījas* which are in a state of flux, being momentary, producing *bījas* similar to themselves, engendering actual *dharma*s and being permeated by actual *dharma*s. The active *dharma*s, at the moment of their birth, create and permeate *bījas*, and further maintain and increase *bījas*. The *bījas* thus have a superior power of producing actual *dharma*s. Hence the continuation (*saṃtati*), evolution (*pariṇāma*) and manifestation (*veśeṣa*) of the *bījas*<sup>4</sup>).

This *bīja*, however, is personal, not collective, so that it coincides with the personal unconscious rather than the collective unconscious.

As mentioned above, the *ālayavijñāna* is the core of apperception, therefore, is considered to be ego. Only the Vijñānavāda differentiates ego from ego-sense. The consciousness named *manas* (the seventh consciousness) is ego-sense. It arises with the *ālayavijñāna*, and always clings to it and takes it for the *ātman*, or conceives it as its object. The *manas* is regarded as the source of man's attachment, because it is connected with the four basic illusions: the false belief that there is a real *ātman* where there is not; the ignorance of the theory of non-*ātman*; arrogance; attachment to self. Therefore, it is the aim of ascetic exercises to cast the *manas* aside. Thus the existence of the *manas* is negatively admitted, and even the *ālayavijñāna*, which is the only perceptive object of the *manas*, is to dissolve into the Absolute in the end. (Vasubandhu)

On the other hand, Jung's ego is positively approved as the place in which man's reason functions. Ego is the center of the system of conscious functions, and occupies a person consistently. It is supported by and included in 'self'. 'Self' is the basis of man's mental activities.

The True Self is, in the *vijñaptimātra* doctrine, attained through *śamatha* (absolute concentration) and *vipaśyanā* (wisdom or insight gained through equanimity). When the functions of consciousnesses are ceased through meditation, and the *manas* is exterminated, the habitual way of adhering to the *grāhya* (the perceiving the objects) and the *grāhaka* (the objects perceived) is cut off, and then the *ālayavijñāna* (the *paratantra-svabhāva*), departing from false discriminations, transforms into the highest state of consciousness (the *pariṇiṣpanna-svabhāva*). The *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* names this supreme state in another expression, the

*cittadharmatā* (the state of the true nature of a person's mentality). This mental state appears when one gets to the point where recognition functions independent of dualistic opposition; it is neither the seer nor the seen.

Jung's 'self' is said to be one of the archetypes. It is defined as the core of a person's psyche including the conscious and the unconscious and as the wholeness of one's personality. Jung thinks that one penetrates into a secret of personality when 'self' and ego gradually become purified and integrated into higher wholeness through reciprocal working of ego and the unconscious which are interrelated. This is called the individuation process, which is the main theme of Jungian psychology. In the individuation process Jung puts an emphasis on the reciprocal working of the conscious and the unconscious, and says that its process must be grasped consciously, and be conceptualized. This interpretation shows that Jung treats the unconscious as the object of cognition. It may be said, therefore, that in spite of his attaching importance to experience, he stands on a point of interpretative science (*Hermeneutik*). The 'self' that ought to be realized is a harmonized personality able to adapt to circumstances. Here the emphasis is put on daily living. 'Self' seems to be a relative concept established by psychological inquiry. Though Jung explains further that the supreme ego purified by individuation is independent of the object. Then are the supreme 'self' and ego identical with the *pariṇṣpanna-svabhāva*? Jung himself regards Buddha as the true 'self' and thinks that Zen practice and the individuation process are the same. This statement brings up the question of whether Jung's true 'self' and the *Vijñānavāda*'s Pure Self are identical or not. And again is it possible to attain the state of true 'self' by conceptualizing the unconscious?

The *Vijñānavāda* aims at acquiring enlightenment and explains the mental structure with the *ālayavijñāna* as its basis. They do not interpret the mental phenomena (the *vijñapti*; representations); they only teach the reason why mental phenomena are defiled. In the *Vijñānavāda*, to cast aside the habitual way of conceptualizing and to destroy ego-sense are essential conditions to get to the state of the Real Self. When the *manas* is destroyed through meditation, the *ālayavijñāna* transforms and desolves into the Absolute, which means that the

*ālayavijñāna* is supported by the Absolute, as said in the *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, "The *pariniṣpanna-svabhāva* is the real nature of the *paratantra-svabhāva* (the *ālayavijñāna*)<sup>5</sup>." So the transformation seems to take place by the active work of the Absolute upon the *ālayavijñāna*. Among the three, the *pariniṣpanna*, the *ālayavijñāna* and the *manas*, the emphasis is put on the *pariniṣpanna*.

Jungian analytical psychology intends to cure mental diseases of patients and to make them suitable for social life. Individuation is the means. As mentioned before, the continuous confrontation of the two, ego and 'self', is very important in the individuation process, but ego is not independent within itself; it has to be supported by 'self', just as the *ālayavijñāna* is supported by the *pariniṣpanna*. In the structure of a person's transformation, it might as well be said that Jung's theory and the *vijñaptimātra* theory have the same logic.

In the beginning of this paper, it was made clear that the collective unconscious and the *ālayavijñāna* are categorically different. Other differences, which came to light in this inquiry, may be stated thus :

1. The *manas* (eggo-sense) is the origin of man's fundamental attachment, while Jung's ego is the place in which man's reason works.
2. The *Vijñānavāda* approves the *manas* negatively; it must be destroyed. Jung lays stress on the dynamic reciprocal working between ego and 'self'. Ego is also purified, in the individuation process, within 'self'.
3. In the *vijñaptimātra* theory, conception is rejected because concept is illusionary. It stands at the point of contemplation. On the other hand, Jung's theory attaches importance to expression in words. It is scientific, positivistic and interpretative.
4. The *Vijñānavāda* explains the cause of defiled mental phenomena at the time of enlightenment, while Jung's theory intends to analyze and interpret psychic phenomena as its research object.

And the similarities are :

1. They both understand and place ego in dynamic structures.
2. The source of ego is not perceptible.
3. Ego is a part of these concepts and is controlled by them.
4. Both pursue a transformation of ego.

(51) Jung's Collective Unconsciousness and the *Ālayavijñāna* (A. Ōsaki)

We have examined, in this paper, only a part of Jungian psychology, which is quite complicated, and can see that in spite of differences in both theories, Jungian psychology and the *viñaptamātra* theory provide room for fruitful research within interdisciplinary studies on mental phenomena.

- 1) The *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* (Lévi), p. 15. ll. 2-3 & 13-16.
- 2) Taisho, vol. 51, p. 579a.
- 3) The *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* (Pradhan), p. 64, ll. 4-6.
- 4) *Ibid.*, p. 477, ll. 14-18.
- 5) *Op. cit.*, p. 41, ll. 22-23.

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