

**THE TREATISE IN TWENTY VERSES
ON CONSCIOUSNESS ONLY**

by

Bodhisattva Vasubandhu

Translated into Chinese
by the Dharma Teacher of the Tripiṭaka,
Hsüan-tsang of the Great T'ang Dynasty

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by

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Introduction to the Treatise in Twenty Verses on Consciousness Only

The brief verse work translated here and known commonly as the “Twenty Verses” should be read along with its companion piece, the “Thirty Verses,” which appears previously in this volume. These two short verse treatises by the Indian Buddhist scholar-monk, Vasubandhu, who lived during the fourth century, set forth the philosophical position that characterizes the Yogācāra School. But whereas the “Thirty Verses” is devoted to systematically discussing kinds of consciousness, the theory of seeds stored in the store consciousness, the nature of delusion and enlightenment, the process of eliminating false imagination and discrimination, and other aspects of Yogācāra thought, the “Twenty Verses” is devoted to defending this teaching against possible counter-arguments by Buddhists and non-Buddhist opponents.

The “Twenty Verses” is a series of hypothetical objections by possible opponents with replies by Vasubandhu. The objections of opponents are philosophically realistic arguments. In all cases, the opponent takes the realistic, no-nonsense position that the things seen, heard, smelled, etc., are real things that exist in the world outside the mind. The opponent typically offers an argument as to why it cannot be possible for perceived objects to be merely mental constructs (*viñāpti*) and nonexistent apart from consciousness, which is Vasubandhu’s position. Along with this, he offers reasoned arguments as to why perceived objects must necessarily really exist apart from consciousness. That is why he is a realist. Vasubandhu counters each argument, explaining why the realistic argument is faulty and, at

the same time, why objects of perception cannot rationally be considered to exist apart from consciousness.

Consequently, Vasubandhu's work is to respond to what may be seen as the main counter-arguments to the Yogācāra position. He responds to such arguments as the claim that if perceived events do not exist outside consciousness, we ought not to be held karmically responsible for our deeds, which do not really exist apart from mind. He responds also to the argument that since we all have diverse karmic histories, we ought not all to see the same things at the same time if these events are only mental fabrications. Commonality of experiences argues for their objective reality. Likewise, he counters the argument that if other beings are only mental constructs, either we cannot meaningfully speak of knowing another's mind or else the other really does exist outside of mind. In arguing against these and a number of other objections, Vasubandhu displays a powerful grasp of Buddhist doctrine and an impressive mastery of logical reasoning.

The "Twenty Verses" is no. 1590 in vol. 31 of the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*. The text, translated from the Sanskrit by the Chinese monk Hsüan-tsang, consists of a series of verses interspersed with prose commentary, Vasubandhu's own commentary (*vṛtti*) on his verses. I have numbered the verses for the convenience of the reader because on several occasions the verse is commented on in pieces. I have thus labeled the four naturally occurring parts of a verse "a," "b," "c," and "d." The reader will also note that the "Twenty Verses" actually contains twenty-one verses, not twenty. The final verse is not part of the arguments but rather Vasubandhu's confession of inadequacy and his praise for Buddhas, who alone know all the fine points of the doctrine. Readers who compare this translation with those made from the Sanskrit will also notice discrepancies in the number and numbering of the Chinese and Sanskrit versions. Verse number one in the Chinese text is verse number two in the Sanskrit version, which has a different first verse. The Sanskrit text thus has twenty-two verses.

The Chinese text has been translated once before, by Clarence C. Hamilton, *Wei Shih Er Shih Lun or the Treatise in Twenty Stanzas on Representation Only*, New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1938,

reprinted by Kraus Reprint Corporation, New York, 1962. The Sanskrit text was translated and discussed by Stefan Anacker, *Seven Works of Vasubandhu*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984, and Thomas A. Kochumuttom, *A Buddhist Doctrine of Experience*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1982. Hsüan-tsang's disciple, K'uei-chi, wrote an indispensable commentary on the "Twenty Verses," *Wei-shih erh shih lun shu chi*, *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*, vol. 43, no. 1834. Most writers on Buddhist teachings in general or Yogācāra thought in particular have discussed the doctrine of consciousness only to one degree of adequacy or another.

The Treatise in Twenty Verses on Consciousness Only

“The three realms are consciousness only” of the Mahayana is established through the scriptural expression, “the three realms are mind only.” “Mind,” “thought,” “consciousness,” and “perception” (*viññapti*) are different names. Here, “mind” and “thought” are lumped together with mental activities (*caitta*). “Only” excludes objects of perception (*artha*) that are external [to consciousness], not associates [of consciousness]. When internal consciousness is born, it appears resembling external objects of perception, [but] in the same way that one with diseased eyesight sees [nonexistent] hairs, flies, etc. Here there is not the slightest aspect of reality. Regarding this concept, there are some doubts. A verse says,

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If consciousness is without real objects of perception,
The restriction (*niyama*) of place and time,
The nonrestriction of mental continuity (*saṃtāna*),
And function would not be established. (1)

The Treatise asks, what does this mean? If you reject [the idea that] consciousness really has external *dharmas* such as form, and [that] consciousness of form, etc., arises conditioned by [external] form, etc., why does this consciousness arise in some places but not in all places? Why does consciousness [of form, etc.] occur in one place at one time but not at all times? When there are many mental continuities in the same single place at one time, why is [consciousness of form] not born restricted according to [just] one consciousness, just as one with diseased eyesight sees hairs, flies,

etc., but this consciousness is not born in someone without the disease? Again, [asks the realist,] why are the [imaginary] hairs, etc., seen by those with eye disease lacking in the function of [real] hair, etc.? Food, drink, swords, cudgels, poison, medicines, clothes, etc., in a dream are devoid of the function of food, etc. The Gandharva city etc., is devoid of the function of a [real] city, etc., but the function of other things such as [real] hair is not nonexistent. If [dreams and waking] are really the same, without external objects of perception such as form, and there is only internal consciousness that is born resembling an external objective realm, the restriction (*niyati*) of place and time, nonrestriction of mental continuities, and the functioning of things would not be demonstrated.

[We reply,] they are not all not demonstrated. A verse says,

Time and place are restricted as in dreams.

The body is not restricted, just as [hungry] ghosts (*preta*)

All alike see pus rivers, etc.,

And just as in dreams loss [of semen] has a function. (2)

The Treatise says, the meaning of “as in dreams” is that it is like what is seen in dreams. That is, just as in a dream there are no real objects of perception and still in one place one can see a village, garden, men and women, etc., but not in all places, and at this place at a certain time one can see a village, garden, etc., but not at all times. Consequently, although there are no real objects of perception external to consciousness, restriction of time and place are not undemonstrable.

The Treatise says, “as ghosts” means “hungry ghosts” (*preta*). The rivers [they see] are filled with pus and are therefore called “pus rivers,” in the same way one speaks of a pot filled with ghee as a “ghee pot.” This means that just as through the maturation of the same actions (*karma*) the many bodies of hungry ghosts collect together [in the nether world] and all see the pus rivers, it is not that in this [situation] it is restricted so only one sees it. The word “etc.” means that they also may see excrement, etc., and sentient beings grasping swords and cudgels, defending and guarding food and not allowing [the hungry ghosts] to get food.

Consequently, even though there are no real objects of perception apart from consciousness, still the nonrestriction of many mental continuities is demonstrated.

Also, just as in a dream the objects of perception are devoid of reality, yet there is a function for such things as loss of semen, etc., as a result of this, although there are no real objects of perception apart from consciousness, still, the concept of a function that is false [in a waking state] is demonstrated. Thus by using different similes, the four concepts such as restriction of place are demonstrated. Again, the next verse says,

All [four concepts] are like [beings in] hell
 Who alike see infernal guardians, etc.,
 And are made to be injured.
 Therefore the four concepts are all demonstrated. (3)

The Treatise says, you should know that here, the single example of hell shows that restrictions of place, etc., are all demonstrated. The words “like hell” refer to various kinds of sentient beings who reside in hell and experience injury and suffering. That is, even though in hell there are no real sentient beings that include such things as infernal guardians, still, because of the dominant power of the maturation of identical acts of those sentient beings, many [individual] mental continuities (*saṃtāna*) in the same place, at the same time, all alike see infernal guardians, dogs, crows, iron mountains, etc., coming to them to inflict injury. As a result of this [example,] even though there are no real objects of perception apart from consciousness, still, the four concepts of restriction of place, etc., are demonstrated.

[The opponent asks,] why not admit that species such as infernal guardians are real sentient beings? [We respond,] because it does not correspond to reason. Now, these [guardians] should not be included with [beings in] *naraka* (hell), because they do not experience suffering in the way the others experience it, and if they [i.e., guardians and those being tormented] harm each other, then you cannot establish some as beings suffering in *naraka* and others as infernal guardians. Since all are alike in size, shape, and

power, they would not fear each other very much. They themselves [the infernal guardians] would not be able to bear the suffering of the constant burning of the fierce fires of iron earth, etc., so how would they be able to inflict injury on others? If they are not infernal beings, they ought not to be born there.

[Objection:] How do animals appear in the celestial realm? It is the same with *naraka*. Animals, ghosts, etc., act as infernal guardians, etc. [We reply,] this remedy | to your argument | is unsuitable. A verse says,

What is true of animals in the celestial realm
Is not true for those [beings in the] hells,
Because the animals and ghosts you assert
Do not experience that suffering. (4)

The Treatise says that with regard to animals being born in the celestial realm, they must have [past] karma that enables them to experience the happiness of that world (*bhājana*), and being born in that world, they definitely experience the happiness born of that world. The infernal guardians, etc., do not experience the suffering in hell that is born of that world. Therefore we should not admit that those with the destinations (*gati*) of animals or ghosts are born in *naraka*.

[Objection:] If that is so, then you must admit that the dominant (*adhipati*) power of karma of [beings born in] *naraka* produces unusual great elements (*mahābhūta*) that give rise to special shapes that display different sizes and power and upon whom we bestow such names as “infernal guardian.” In order to generate fear in those [reborn in hell,] they have different functions such as changing and appearing in various ways and moving their hands and feet, etc., like mountains that look like rams suddenly coming together [butting horns] and separating, or like thorns in the iron forest drooping down or lifting up [to impale the unfortunate sufferer].

[We reply,] it is not that these events are totally nonexistent; however, [your argument] does not correspond to reason. A verse says,

If you admit that as a result of the power of action
 Unusual great elements are born
 And they produce such changes,
 Why not admit [that they occur] in consciousness? (5)

The Treatise asks, why do you not admit that consciousness, as a result of the power of action (*karma*), transforms like this, yet assert great elements? Again, the next verse says,

Perfuming (*vāsanā*) of action is in one place,
 And you assert that the result exists elsewhere.
 That the result exists in the perfumed consciousness
 You do not admit; why is that? (6)

The Treatise says, you assert that [beings in] *naraka* produce special great elements born of the power of their own action and give rise to changes of shapes, etc. The perfuming of their action must logically be admitted as being in their [individual] continuities of consciousness (*viññāna-saṃtāna*) and nowhere else. There is a perfumed consciousness, but then you will not admit that there is a transformation of the result. Where there is no perfumed place, you turn around and assert that the result exists. Why is this?

[The opponent replies,] scripture is the reason. That is, if there is only consciousness that appears resembling form, etc., where there is no form, etc., the Buddha would not have spoken of the sense bases (*āyatana*) of form, etc. [We reply,] this teaching is no reason [for your position,] because it has a special meaning. A verse says,

For those beings to be instructed (*vineya*),
 The World-Honored One, with a hidden motive,
 Spoke of the existence of the sense bases (*āyatana*)
 of form, etc.
 In the same way [he spoke of] beings born
 spontaneously (*upapāduka*). (7)

The Treatise says, this is just like the Buddha speaking of the existence of sentient beings who are born spontaneously. It was said only with a hidden motive regarding the noncessation of

mental continuity and its ability to continue on into a subsequent time. He did not say that there are really existent beings who are born spontaneously, because he said, "There are no sentient beings or selves, only dharmas and their causes." It is the same when the scriptures speak of the sense bases of form, etc. [The Buddha spoke with a hidden motive of there being no separate real existence [of sense bases] for those beings to be instructed who are fit to receive that teaching.

[The opponent asks,] what is the hidden motive for speaking of the ten [bases] of form, etc.? [We reply,] a verse says,

Consciousness is born from its own seeds
And transforms to resemble characteristics of objects
of perception.
In order to establish internal and external sense bases,
The Buddha spoke of them as being ten. (8)

The Treatise asks, what does this mean? [Answer:] Consciousness appearing resembling form is born from its own seeds as a special transformation [of the mental continuity] and the confluence of conditions [consisting of the apparent form and the perceiving aspect of consciousness]. On the basis of this seed and the appearing form, the Buddha spoke of [the seed and the appearing form as] sense bases consisting of eyes and sense bases consisting of form, respectively. In this way, finally, [after skipping over sense bases of sound, smells, and tastes, we come to where] consciousness resembling something tangible is born from its own seeds as a special transformation [of the mental continuity] and the confluence of conditions [consisting of the apparent tangible object and the perceiving aspect of consciousness]. On the basis of this seed and the appearing tangible object, the Buddha spoke of them respectively as the sense base consisting of the body and the sense base consisting of tangible objects. With this hidden motive, he spoke of the ten [sense bases] of form, etc.

[Question:] What is the special value of this hidden motive?

[Reply:] A verse says,

On the basis of this teaching one can enter
The [teaching of the] absence of self (*anātman*) of the
person (*pudgala*).

Later, through other teachings, one enters
The [teaching of the] absence of self of the dharmas
that are asserted. (9)

The Treatise says, on the basis of this teaching of the twelve sense bases that are discussed, one who receives instruction is able to enter [and grasp] the absence of a self in the *pudgala* (person). That is, if one thoroughly understands that the six consciousnesses [i.e., the five sense consciousnesses of sight, etc., plus mental consciousness] develop from the six pair of dharmas [i.e., the twelve sense bases] and that there is no perceiver or knower at all, then that person who should receive the teaching of the absence of self in the sentient will be able to awaken to and enter the [teaching of the] absence of self in the sentient.

“Later, through other teachings,” means the teaching of consciousness only. The one who receives instruction is able to enter the absence of a self in the asserted dharmas. That is, if one thoroughly understands the arising of dharmas that resemble form, etc., as the appearance of consciousness only, and that among these there are not any dharmas with characteristics such as form, the person who should receive the teaching of the absence of a self in dharmas will be able to awaken to and enter [the teaching of] the absence of a self in all dharmas.

[Question:] If one understands the nonexistence of the entirety (*sarvathā*) of dharmas and enters the absence of a self in all dharmas, then consciousness only is [also, by implication,] ultimately non-existent, so how can it be established?

[Reply:] It is not by means of realizing the nonexistence of the entirety of dharmas that we speak of entering the absence of self of [all] dharmas. However, when the absence of self of the dharmas of self-nature (*svabhāva*) and difference (*viśeṣa*) that are imagined by the ignorant are penetrated in this way, then it is referred to as “entering the absence of self of dharmas.” It is not called “absence

of a self of dharmas” because the Dharma nature (*dharmatā*) apart from words that is the object of perception of Buddhas does not exist at all. [Rather,] one speaks of the absence of a self in dharmas because what is grasped by another consciousness [other than that of a Buddha] is of the nature of consciousness only and its substance is also nonexistent.

Otherwise, objects of perception grasped by other consciousnesses would [really] exist and the principle of consciousness only would not be demonstrated, because it is admitted that other consciousnesses have real objects of perception. As a consequence of this reasoning, we speak of establishing the teaching of consciousness only, universally causing one to awaken to and enter [the teaching of] the absence of self of all dharmas, and not because the entirety [of dharmas] are rejected as having a nature [of any kind].

[Question:] Again, how do we know that the Buddha, on the basis of a hidden motive, said that there are sense bases of form, etc.? Are there no really existing external dharmas such as form, each of which becomes the special object of perception of consciousness of form, etc.?

[Answer:] A verse says,

That object of perception is not one thing,
Nor is it many atoms.
Also, it is not a compound, etc.,
Because atoms are not demonstrated [as real]. (10)

The Treatise asks, what is being said? It means that if there are really existing sense bases such as external form, and each [sense base] acts separately as an object of perception for consciousness of form, etc., then such an external object of perception is either a single thing, as in the Vaiśeṣika assertion of a [single] form with parts, or else it must be many [atoms], such as the assertion of really existing multiple atoms, each of which serves as a separate object of perception.

Or the object of perception must be a compound or combination of atoms, like the assertion of really existing multiple atoms all unit-

ing and combining to make objects of perception. But that external object of perception must not logically be one thing, because a substance of form possessing parts that is different from the parts cannot be grasped. It also cannot logically be many [atoms], because the atoms cannot be grasped individually. Nor, logically, does a compound or combination act as an object of perception, because the principle of a single ultimate atom (*paramāṇu*) is not demonstrated [as existing]. Why is it not demonstrated? A verse says,

If an atom is united with six [other atoms],
The one must consist of six parts.
If it is in the same place with the six,
Then the combination must be like [a single] atom. (11)

The Treatise says, if each of six sides of an atom is united with [another] atom, [the single atom] must be made up of six parts, because it is not possible for the location of one [atom] to be in the locations of the others. If there are six atoms in the location of one atom, then the combined form must resemble the mass of [a single] atom, because, being interchangeable, they do not exceed the mass [of a single atom,] in which case the combined form would be invisible.

The Kashmiri Vaibhāṣika masters say, “We do not mean that atoms unite. [Atoms] have no parts, and therefore we avoid such [logical] faults as the one above. However, the combined forms possess the characteristics of union, because these [combinations] do have parts.” [We reply,] this, too, is not correct. A verse says,

Since atoms do not unite,
To what does the union of [larger] combinations belong?
Or else, the uniting [of atoms] is not demonstrated;
It is not because they are devoid of parts. (12)

The Treatise says, we must now scrutinize this principle and its meaning. Since there is no separate combined form that differs from atoms, then if atoms do not combine, whose combined union is it? If you change [your position] and try to save it by saying that the development of combined form does not imply union, then you should not say that they do not combine because they are devoid

of parts, because a combination has parts, yet, you do not admit union. The nonunion of atoms is not a result of their being devoid of parts. Therefore, not a single ultimate atom (*paramāṇu*) is demonstrated. Also, the faults [in your reasoning] are still the same whether you admit that atoms unite or do not unite. Whether you admit that atoms have parts or do not have parts, both [positions] are big errors. Why? A verse says,

If an atom has parts,
It logically would not form a unity.
Without [parts], there would be no shadow
or concealment,
And a combination not being different [from
atoms,] it is devoid of the two. (13)

The Treatise says, the six parts [i.e., sides] of an atom being different, many parts make up its body, so how can they form a unity? If an atom does not have different parts, then how is it that when the sun rises and its light illuminates it, the other side is able to reveal shadow? Since there are no other parts unreached by the light and you are asserting atoms without parts, how can this [atom] and that [atom] successively conceal each other [from view]? And since there are no remaining parts unreached by the other, how can you say that this and that [atoms] successively conceal each other? Since they do not conceal each other, the various atoms must be interchangeable in the same place, and then the combined forms must have the same mass as a single atom. The error is the same as previously mentioned.

[Question:] Why not admit that shadow and concealment belong to combinations but not to atoms? [We reply,] can it be that you admit that there is combined form that differs from atoms that casts shadows and acts to conceal [another form]? [The questioner says,] not at all. [We reply,] in that case, the combination must be devoid of the two [i.e., shadow and concealment]. That is, if combined form is not different from atoms, then shadow and concealment must be demonstrated as not belonging to combined form. Arranging

and distinguishing, you establish [form] as atoms or you establish it as a combination [of form, but] both are unrealities.

[Question:] What is the use of choosing atoms or combination as it? You are still unable to refute the characteristics of external form, etc. [We reply,] what, again, are these characteristics? [The objector replies,] objects of perception of eyes, etc., are of the nature of being real colors such as blue, etc. [We reply,] we must ascertain together whether the true nature of blue, etc., of objects of perception of the eyes, etc., are unitary or many. [The opponent says,] suppose [either] is so; what is the problem? [We reply,] both [arguments] are faulty. The fault of there being many is as [explained] previously. The [position] of unitariness is also unreasonable. A verse says,

In the case of unity, there would be no piecemeal going;
 One could arrive and not yet arrive at all times.
 [Nor] would there be intervals between many | things|,
 [Or] tiny things that are difficult to see. (14)

The Treatise says that if there were blue, etc., that was without divisions, objects of perception reached by the eyes, etc., would be grasped as single things. There would be no principle of gradually travelling the earth, because by setting down one foot, you would arrive at all [places]. What is more, at all times, one would be [both] here and there, without arriving [here] or not arriving [there], because a single thing or single time [without divisions] would logically neither be grasped nor not grasped.

Also, there could not be disconnected things such as many elephants, horses, etc. in a single location. If one place had one, it would have the others. How would one or another be distinguishable? Or else, if there were two [of something,] how would it be possible for them to reach or not reach [a place] or for one to see an empty space between them? Also, there would be no tiny things that are difficult to see, such as small water insects, because being in the same location as something gross, their mass would be equal [and no small object would appear]. If you say that this or that

[object] has differences due to its characteristics and becomes a different thing for no other reason, then you certainly must admit that these [large] distinct things differentiate repeatedly, forming multiple atoms, and since we have argued that an atom is not a single real thing, then eyes, etc., and form, etc., apart from consciousness as organs of perception or as objects of perception, are incapable of being demonstrated. As a result of this, we have easily demonstrated the principle that only consciousness exists.

[Question:] Dharmas are determined to exist or not exist through the use of accepted means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), and the most excellent of all accepted means of knowledge is direct perception (*pratyakṣa*). If there are no external objects of perception, how can one have the awareness, “I am now experiencing such an object of perception?” [We reply:] This proof is not demonstrated. A verse says,

Direct awareness is as in dreams, etc.
At the time direct awareness has occurred,
The seeing and the object of perception are already
nonexistent.
How can you admit the existence of direct perception? (15)

The Treatise says, just as, even though when we dream, etc., there is no external object of perception, still, such direct awareness as this is possible, so, also, direct awareness at other times must be understood to be likewise. Therefore, their citation of this [example] as proof is not demonstrated.

Also, if, at that time, there is the direct awareness, “I am now directly experiencing such a form,” etc., one can see at that time, vis-à-vis the object of perception that it is already nonexistent, because it is necessarily in the mental consciousness (*manovijñāna*) that one can distinguish [visible forms], and because by that time [when awareness dawns in mental consciousness], visual and other kinds of consciousness have necessarily already ceased. Those who theorize about instantaneousness (*kṣaṇavādin*) say that when this awareness [in mental consciousness] exists, the actual object of

perception such as form has already ceased. How can you admit that at this time there is direct perception?

[The objector replies,] it is necessary that something that mental consciousness is able to remember has already been directly experienced [in the immediately antecedent mental moment], and for that reason, it is certain that there is an object of perception that has been experienced. He who sees this object of perception admits that it is direct perception. From this, the principle of an external object of perception that really exists is demonstrated.

[We reply,] the principle that one perceives that there is an external object because it is necessary that there first be an experience and then a memory is not demonstrated. Why? A verse says,

As we have said, there is consciousness that resembles
an external object of perception,
And from this is born a memory. (16a,b)

The Treatise says, as we have said previously, even though there are no external objects of perception, still, visual consciousness (*cakṣur-vijñāna*), etc., appears resembling an external object of perception. Following this, at a subsequent stage, [the object of perception] is associated with memory, and discriminating mental consciousness appears resembling the prior object of perception. Then we speak of this [process] as remembering what has already been experienced. Therefore, using a subsequent memory to prove the real existence of an external object of perception that was previously seen is not demonstrated.

[Counter-argument:] If it is just as in an awakened state as in a dream that even without real objects of perception, consciousness is still able to occur, then, just as ordinary people know that dream objects of perception are nonexistent, why, when they are awake, and it is so [that external objects are not real], do they not naturally know [they are unreal]? Since they do not naturally know that waking objects are nonexistent, how, as in dream consciousness, are real objects of perception all nonexistent? [Answer:] Neither is this demonstrated. A verse says,

When not awake, one cannot know
That what is seen in a dream does not exist. (16c,d)

The Treatise says, just as one in a not-yet-awakened state does not know that objects of perception in a dream do not really exist externally, but once awakened one knows it, in the same way, [conscious] worldly false discrimination is repeatedly confused as in a dream. None of the entities one sees really exists, and one who has not acquired true awakening cannot know this. If one acquires that supramundane antidote [to delusion] that is nondiscriminative knowledge (*nirvikalpaka-jñāna*) called “true awakening,” then the mundane pure knowledge acquired subsequent to this (*tat-prṣṭhalabha-śuddha-laukika-jñāna*) appears before one and one knows thoroughly according to reality that that object of perception is not real. The principle is the same [in both dreams and the waking state].

[Objection:] If in sentient beings there arises consciousness that resembles [external] objects of perception because of a special transformation of their own mental continuity (*saṃtāna*) and not because of external objects of perception born from conditions, how can it be demonstrated that these sentient beings are approached by good or bad companions, hear the correct or wrong teaching, and have [one of] two [kinds of] consciousness determined, since there are [in reality] no companions or teachings [outside of consciousness]?

[We reply,] we are not incapable of demonstrating it. A verse says,

By means of the interchange of dominant power,
Two [individual] consciousnesses achieve restriction
(*niyama*). (17a,b)

The Treatise says, by means of the dominant condition (*adhipati-pratyaya*), which is the interchange between various [individual] consciousnesses, which are the mental continuities of sentient beings, two [kinds of] consciousness are restricted as is fitting [to each individual]. That is, because the difference in consciousness in the

mental continuity of one causes differences in the mental continuity of another consciousness to occur, each becomes restricted [according to kind], but not as a result of external objects of perception.

[Question:] If, just as in a dream, objects of perception are devoid of reality but consciousness can occur, and the same is true of waking consciousness, what is the reason for good or bad action taking place in a dream or in a waking state not receiving the same results of action (*karma-phala*), either desirable or undesirable?

[We reply,] a verse says,

The mind is weakened by sleep,
So the results [of acts] in sleep and wakefulness are
not the same. (17c,d)

The Treatise says, in dreams the mind is weakened by sleep and its power is slight. This is not true of the awake mind. Therefore acts performed ought to receive different retribution (*vipāka*), and so weak and strong are not the same. [The reason] is not because of external objects of perception.

[Question:] If there is only consciousness and no body, speech, etc., how are sheep, etc., killed? If the deaths of sheep are not the result of someone's injury, how can the one who is a butcher commit the crime of killing beings?

[We reply,] a verse says,

As a result of the transformation of another's
consciousness,
There are acts of injury and killing,
Just as the mental power of anger of sage-immortals
(*āraṇyaka*),
Causes others to lose their memory, etc. (18)

The Treatise says, just as the mental power of a demon, etc., causes other sentient beings to lose their memory, have dreams, or bring about such strange events as possession by evil spirits; or the mental power of someone who possesses supernatural powers causes another person to see many things in a dream, just as

Mahākatyāyana's power of wish caused King Sāraṇa, etc., to see strange things in a dream; and also just as the mental powers of anger of sage-immortals caused King Vemacitra to see strange things in a dream; in the same way, the transformation of consciousness of one individual brings about events that cause injury to the life force of another person far away. You should realize that "death" refers to the severing of the personal mental continuity through changes of consciousness. Again, a verse says,

The emptiness of the Daṇḍaka [Forest], etc. —
How could it result from the anger of sage-immortals?
Mental harm is a great offense;
How, again, can this be demonstrated? (19)

The Treatise says, if you do not admit that other sentient beings die as a result of the dominant power of transformation of the consciousness of another, how is it that the World-Honored One, in order to prove that mental harm is a great offense, asked Upāli the householder, "Have you ever heard why the Daṇḍaka Forest, Mātāṅga Forest, and Kalinga Forest were all made empty and solitary?"

The householder answered the Buddha, saying, "Gotama, I have heard that it was because of the mental anger of sage-immortals (*āraṇyaka*)." If you assert that spirits or demons, respecting the sage-immortals and knowing their hatred [for the king], acted to kill the species of sentient beings, and it was not a result of mental anger [on the part of the sage-immortals], then why [did the Buddha] introduce that [story] to establish mental harm as having the nature of a major offense and surpassing physical and verbal [offenses]? Consequently, you must realize that it is well demonstrated that the death of sentient beings [in the story] resulted only from the anger of the sage-immortals.

[Question:] If only consciousness exists, does knowledge of the minds of others [really] know the minds of others or not? [We reply,] if we agree, what is the error? [The opponent argues,] if you are unable to know, how can you speak of knowledge of others' minds? If you are able to know [the minds of others,] then

consciousness only is not demonstrated [because you admit the real existence of others]. [We reply,] even though one knows the minds of others, still, it is not [knowing] according to reality (*yathā-ārtha*). A verse says,

How does knowledge of others' minds
 Not know the object of perception according to reality?
 In the same way that knowledge in knowing one's
 own mind
 Does not know it in accordance with the object of
 perception of a Buddha. (20)

The Treatise says, how can knowledge of the minds of others not know objects of perception in accordance with reality? It is like knowledge of one's own mind. [Question:] Why does knowledge of one's own mind not know the object of perception according to reality? Because of ignorance of the object of perception. Because each of the two [kinds of knowledge] is concealed by ignorance, they do not know the ineffable object of perception in accordance with a Buddha's pure knowledge. These two do not know the object of perception in accordance with reality because of false appearances that resemble external objects of perception, and because the discrimination of the grasped and the grasper is not eliminated. The principles and [numbers of] meanings of [the teaching of] consciousness only are boundless in the differences of ascertainments and kinds, and their depths are difficult to cross over. If one is not a Buddha, who can ascertain their total extent? A verse says,

According to my ability, I
 Have briefly demonstrated the principles of
 consciousness only.
 Of these, the entirety (*sarvathā*)
 Is difficult to consider and is reached [only] by
 Buddhas. (21)

The Treatise says, the kinds of principles and meanings of |the teaching of| consciousness only are limitless. I have briefly demonstrated them according to my own ability. The rest of the entirety have not been considered [by me| because they transcend the realm reached by my investigation. Such principles and meanings are only reached [in their entirety| by Buddhas, because Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, are unobstructed with regard to objects of perception and knowledge of the entirety.