Review Article

Yogācāra Buddhism as Buddhist Phenomenology*

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Lusthaus, Dan. ***Buddhist Phenomenology: A Philosophical Investigation of Yogacara Buddhism and the Ch'eng Wei-shih Lun.*** London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002. xii + 611 pages. Appendices, bibliography, and index. ISBN 0-7007-1186-4. Price 65.00 GBP (cloth).

Very influential in both East Asian and Tibetan Buddhism, the Yogācāra tradition may rightly be considered, along with the Madhyamaka, as one of the two most important philosophical traditions of Indian Buddhism. But until recently, the academic study of the Yogācāra had been rather shy compared to that of the Madhyamaka. Fortunately, with his encyclopedic book, *Buddhist Phenomenology*, Dan Lusthaus remarkably contributed to redress that situation. While it may not always be easy to read through the 611 pages of that long and complex book, the reader will benefit from his effort, for Lusthaus' "philosophical investigation of Yogācāra Buddhism" is a brilliant and masterful demonstration of scholarly erudition and acute philosophical insight. The book is divided into five parts:

Part One (pp. 1–39). Buddhism and Phenomenology.
Part Two (pp. 40–166). The Four Basic Buddhist Models in India.
Part Three (pp. 167–272). Karma, Meditation and Epistemology.
Part Four (pp. 273–350). *Triṃśikā* and Translations.
Part Five (pp. 351–540). The *Ch'eng Wei-Shih Lun* and the Problem of Psychosophical Closure: Yogācāra in China.

In the Preface, Lusthaus argues that Buddhism, and Yogācāra even more so, is a type of phenomenology. The author of course does not go as far as saying that Yogācāra is identical in every respect with Western phenomenology, but he believes that the models and concerns of phenomenology are, in Western philosophy, what comes the closest to the models and concerns of Yogācāra. In fact, Lusthaus believes that "Yogācāra makes numerous distinctions that Western phenomenologists ignore or have failed to adequately thematize" (karmic and causal analysis, etc.) (p. vii).

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Aware of the differences between the two traditions, the author nonetheless attempts to "translate" Yogācāra Buddhism into phenomenology because they "both focus on very similar epistemological issues, such as perception, sensation, cognition, noetic construction," etc., in trying to resolve the "most fundamental human dilemmas and problems" (p. vii). In so doing, Lusthaus hopes to establish a dialogue between Buddhologists and Western philosophers which in my opinion is very much needed and could be very useful to both parties, especially now that there is a growing interest, perhaps more so in North America, to study Buddhism as a philosophy.

It is important to mention, however, that Lusthaus is not involved merely in comparative philosophy. He does not put Husserl and phenomenology on one side and Yogācāra on the other, comparing them point for point in order to say that they are similar in such respect, dissimilar in others. Doing so would be doing naive comparative philosophy and would not contribute in any significant way to the advance of a philosophical dialogue between the two traditions. What Lusthaus is doing, rather, is more similar to what the American philosopher and Buddhologist, Mark Siderits, calls "*fusion* philosophy" (fusion is a term borrowed from the area of music). In his own work, Siderits attempts to bring the two traditions into a dialogue by showing how the concepts and tools from one philosophical tradition can help solving the problems that arise in the other. In his case, the dialogue "over some key issues in the philosophical investigation of persons" is a dialogue between analytical philosophy and Buddhist philosophy.[1]

Part One (pp. 1–39). Buddhism and Phenomenology

The first part of *Buddhist Phenomenology* is made of two chapters where Lusthaus presents his methodology. In Chapter One, the author challenges the generally accepted interpretation of Yogācāra as a form of metaphysical Idealism by questioning some of its implications, for instance that One Mind created the whole world, that nothing exists outside the mind and that the *ālayavijñāna* (warehouse-consciousness) would function like Jung's collective unconscious (p. 4). According to Yogācāra, says Lusthaus, "consciousness itself is *ultimately* real (*paramārtha-sat*), much less the *only* reality… For Yogācāra, 'mind' is the problem, not the solution" (p. 5). "Thus the key Yogācāra phrase *vijñapti-mātra* does not mean that 'consciousness alone exists' but rather that 'all our efforts to get beyond ourselves are nothing but projections of our consciousness… [*Vijñapti-mātra*] is an epistemic caution, not an ontological pronouncement" (p. 5). If Yogācāra so concentrates on correct cognition, it is therefore because the soteric efficacy of Buddhism lies upon it (p. 6).

At the beginning of Chapter Two, Lusthaus then warns the reader that phenomenological and deconstructive terminology is used throughout his book even if Yogācāra and phenomenology (or deconstruction, etc.) are not "interchangeable or neatly reducible to each other" (p. 12). He then goes into a complex analysis of Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of the term "intentional arc," as well as into a discussion of Husserl's philosophy, especially focusing on the relation of *noesis*

(consciousness intending towards its object/meaning) to *noema* (noetically constituted meaningful object). Lusthaus' analysis of Husserl's understanding of the Greek word *hyle* ("matter," "primordial stuff," or as Lusthaus put it, "raw sensate material, e.g., colours, texture, sounds, etc." [pp. 13–14]), is especially important for it allows him to characterise Husserl's Idealism as an epistemological Idealism, as opposed to an ontological or a metaphysical Idealism. That characterisation will turn out to be crucial for the whole of Lusthaus' interpretation of Yogācāra as a type of phenomenology, or *epistemo-ethics*, as he calls Yogācāra that has affinities with the thought of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and other Western phenomenologists.

Part Two (pp. 40–166). The Four Basic Buddhist Models in India

In the second part of his book, Lusthaus discusses four basic models (chapters 3–6) used by all Buddhist schools, including the Yogācāra, in their discourse on reality. These four overlapping models are all, Lusthaus insists, phenomenological. They are: (1) the five *skandhas,* an ever-changing flow of five psychophysical, causally connected factors that together constitute a person and beyond which there is no permanent, unchanging, true Self (*ātman*) (Chapter Three); (2) the twelve links of *pratītyasamutpāda*, or causal chain of dependent arising, a most fundamental, yet difficult, Buddhist teaching that has received various interpretations (Chapter Four); (3) the *tridhātu* (Chapter Five); and (4) the praxis of *śīla-samādhi-prajñā* (Chapter Six).

These models, says Lusthaus, concern "the conditions of cognition, perception, thinking and the constitution of experience" and "underpin the Abhidharmic project upon which Yogācāra is built" (p. 42–43). It could even be said that the whole Mahāyāna philosophy, not just the Yogācāra, was built upon the philosophically important Abhidharmic framework. In the course of his discussion, Lusthaus carefully explains some of the key Sanskrit terms that the Yogācāra inherited from the Abhidharma tradition, paying attention to their etymology, their historical development, and their psychological and philosophical significance.

Of the five *skandhas*, *vijñāna* (consciousness), which is "produced by sensory activity" (p. 57), was certainly the one that Buddhists of all acceptations investigated and analysed the most (p. 50). And it came to play a central role also in the Yogācāra school. For when it was put in the context of the second model, i.e., that of dependent arising, some important philosophic-ethical questions were raised about personal continuity and the *vijñāna-skandha* that led Vasubandhu to formulate the very important Yogācāra notion of *ālayavijñāna* (warehouse-consciousness) as an original solution to those problems (p. 64). In Chapters Three and Four, Lusthaus explains how the notion of *ālayavijñāna* evolved out of the previous Abhidharma models, reminding his reader that it is itself a notion that has caused much controversy and misunderstanding within the Buddhist tradition.

With Chapter Five, the reader is presented with yet another complex Buddhist concept called "*tridhātu*," i.e., the "three realms" or "existential horizons" called

(1) the realm of desire (*kāmadhātu*), (2) the material realm (*rūpadhātu*) and (3) the formless or immaterial realm (*ārūpyadhātu*). These realms can be conceived as representing a Buddhist cosmology, as referring to meditation levels, to the different realms where beings can be reborn, etc. But in all cases, the beings from the realm of desire are bound to experience the world through their senses in the form of pleasant, unpleasant and neutral feelings, while in the material realm, they can gradually eliminate those feelings through four or five levels of meditative absorption (*dhyāna*). The formless realm in turn involves four formless meditations, where a meditator gradually attains what is first called the sphere of boundless space, and then the sphere of boundless consciousness. As his practice deepens, the meditator will reach the third sphere of nothingness, where all the contents of consciousness dissolve and nothing is left for appropriation or to give rise to suffering.[2] That sphere of nothingness is a typical Buddhist attack on substances, one according to which nothing in reality can and should be ontologized. Beyond the sphere of nothingness, the meditator can finally enter into the fourth sphere, which is characterised as "neither with nor without associative thinking," and where one is prepared for Awakening (p. 95) since all mental contents (things, conceptions, structures, etc.) have gradually dissolved. As it is written in the *Madhyāntavibhāga* 1.4, 8: "Negate the object, and the Self is also negated" (p. 107). The last and final meditative absorption (*dhyāna*) "is a switch-point where the world both is and isn't because it is in fact *always becoming otherwise*" (p. 98). It corresponds to a "cognition that can make associations without being a product of associative-thinking" (p. 98).

Chapter Six deals with the fourth Buddhist model of *śīla-samādhi-prajñā*, i.e., discipline (*śīla*), meditation (*samādhi*) and insight, or "cognitive acuity" (*prajñā*). Their gradual cultivation, which is interrelated in so far as they all need to be developed and the development of one influences that of the others, "forms," according to Lusthaus, "the bedrock of Buddhist praxis" (p. 110) and culminates in the cessation of suffering (*duḥkha*). For Lusthaus, "the path/method (*mārga*) begins and ends with *prajñā*," which refers to the attainment of insight "as well as the intellectual prerequisites needed to do that" (p. 115).

In Chapter Seven, Lusthaus then builds on the previous chapter to discuss how two different sorts of meditative attainments (*samāpatti*) are treated in the Nikāyas, which are here represented by Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*, in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*, in Yogācāra philosophy and in Hsüan-tsang's *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* (CWLS). The two types of meditative attainments are respectively *asaṃjñisamāpatti* (the attainment of the state without associational cognition) and *nirodhasamāpatti* (the attainment of cessation), which is known in the Pāli literature as *saṃjñāvedayitanirodha* (cessation of sensation and conceptualisation). These meditative attainments lead to the cessation of all mental functions and give rise to some very interesting philosophical problems, especially about the nature of Awakening and the relation between the mental and the physical (the mind-body problem).[3] Chapter Eight is a summary of the four models discussed in Part Two.

Part Three (pp. 167–272). Karma, Meditation and Epistemology

In Part Three (chapters 9–11), Lusthaus discusses the key notion of karma and "the role that mental functions (*manas*, *citta*, *vijñāna*, etc.) play in the karmic process" (p. 168).

In the Aṅguttaranikāya, the Buddha is portrayed as defining karma in the following terms: "It is 'intention' (*cetanā*) that I call karma; having intended (*cetayitvā*), one performs acts (*karma*) by body, speech and mind."[4] That definition allows Lusthaus, in Chapter Nine, to qualify as basically "cognitive" all the karmic actions (p. 171) that lead to suffering and that accordingly become of central importance in Yogācāra. He writes: "Intent is a cognitive condition [… Therefore], whatever is non-cognitive can have no karmic influence or consequence" (p. 172). But Lusthaus also seizes the opportunity to emphasise the crucial role of epistemology in Buddhism: "Awakening is, after all, a cognitive act! Without its theories of karma and cognition, Buddhism would be without a soteric dimension. Epistemology is a necessary cause of Awakening" (p. 173).

In his discussion, Lusthaus is also careful to distinguish the Buddhist theory of karma from strict determinism. For karma, as it is understood in the Buddhist tradition, leaves a room for free will and action. It has little to do with the determinism common to Stoicism, despite the parallels that one will often draw (pp. 176–77). The Mahāyāna ideal of the bodhisattva who strives relentlessly for the benefit and happiness of all sentient beings in order to relieve them from suffering illustrates very well the profound distinction between karma and determinism.

The author then discusses the somewhat ambiguous category of *rūpa* (materiality), one of the five *skandhas*, in relation to the "cognitive intentionality" (*nāma*) of karma, and the potential problem of the mind-body split that it entails. "*Rūpa*," writes Lusthaus, "means both materiality and sentient materiality… i.e., a visible object both insofar as that object is material and insofar as that object is visible, sensorial" (p. 183). It is "not a substratum or substance which has properties of sensibility; it functions as sensibility, perceivable physicality" (p. 183). In analysing *rūpa* in this way, Pāli Buddhism "avoids substance-quality metaphysics even in relation to 'matter'," but "at this stage Buddhism is still a form of naive realism" (p. 187). The later Abhidharma school of the Sarvāstivāda ("teaching that all exists") did elaborate, however, a type of ontology according to which all *dharmas* (mental or material, i.e., including *rūpa*) are substantial existents possessing their own nature (*svabhāva*) and existing really on their own right. But because their conception of *svabhāva* was in conflict with the basic Buddhist teaching about the evanescence of all existence (*anityā*), the Sarvāstivāda position was strongly attacked by Nāgārjuna, for example, and by the whole corpus of the Prajñāpāramitā sūtras. For the Sarvāstivāda, however, *dharmas* like *rūpa* cannot be evanescent or momentary and must in some sense have a stable existence. If *dharmas*, including *rūpa*, were momentary, the problem would arise as to how they could be an object of cognition, how they could bring a karmic effects, and how they could account for

the continuity of consciousness from one life to the next or for "the re-emergence of consciousness stream after it has been interrupted in deep sleep or meditation, etc." (p. 193). To answer these questions, the Yogācāra first pointed out that *rūpa,* which had long been considered as "karmically neutral," is a "cognitive mental construct" that is in fact "karmically active" since it may be "an object of appropriation and attachment" (*upādāna*, *grāhya*) (p. 188). But a substantially existing *rūpa* is not at all necessary to explain karma. Furthermore, in order to account for the continuity of consciousness, Vasubandhu rejected the Sarvāstivāda doctrine about eternal *dharmas* and elaborated instead "the Yogācāra notion of *ālayavijñāna* (storehouse-consciousness) in which the 'seeds' of previous experiences are stored subliminally and released into new experiences" (p. 193). That notion of the *ālayavijñāna* evolved from the concept of *bhavaṅga*, a consciousness, or state of mind, which in Pāli Abhidharma is at the foundation of the continuity of consciousness and all experiences (conscious and unconscious). *Bhavaṅga* there serves to explain personal identity even in the absence of a self. "The *ālayavijñāna* also eliminated the need for a theory of substantive, permanent self that is the doer and recipient of karma, since, like a stream, it is perpetually changing with ever new conditions from moment to moment" (p. 193).

In Chapter Ten, Lusthaus moves on to discuss the Madhyamaka influence on Yogācāra. In so doing, he astutely interprets some key issues from the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (MMK)*,* the most important philosophical work of Nāgārjuna (2nd century CE). Everywhere in that work Nāgārjuna criticises the Abhidharma notion of *svabhāva* (intrinsic nature), trying to cure our deluded minds from "*svabhāvic*" thinking. In his discussion of Nāgārjuna, Lusthaus comments chapters 8, 17 and 16 of the MMK, respectively dealing with the relation of the agent to his actions and their mutual dependency, with the notion of independent existence of moral karma, and with *saṃskāras*, or karmic habits. Lusthaus also discusses the important Madhyamaka conception of the two truths, especially the conventional truth (*saṃvr̥tisatya*). In that context, he writes: "The activity of consciousness and language is itself *saṃvr̥ti's* closure" (p. 228). The ultimate truth (*paramārthasatya*) is then "the clear seeing of the actuality of *saṃvr̥ti*, i.e., *saṃvr̥ti* made transparent" (p. 231).

In Chapter Eleven, Lusthaus finally investigates the tendency, already present in Pāli Abhidharma, to privilege *prajñā*, i.e., cognitional insight, over *śīla* and *samādhi*. Insisting on the importance of cognitive activity, he there strongly advocates the epistemic position. "Awakening became primarily and explicitly seen as some sort of *cognitive* acuity, a Seeing of reality just as it is (*tathatā*)" (p. 247). "Awakening involves the correct cognition of the correct cognitive object" (p. 254). "Awakening is thus an epistemic, not the ontological transformation!" (p. 265).

In the course of Chapter Eleven, Lusthaus also discusses the Chinese conflict between the so-called Essentialists (Paramārtha and others) and Progressionalists (Hsüan-tsang, etc.) about the nature of *tathatā*, "suchness." On the one hand, the Essentialists argued that the terms Buddhahood, *tathatā* and Awakening all refer to

some "ultimate, transcendental Reality," whereas the Progressionalists emphasized that issues connected with Awakening cannot be separated from the saṃsāric process. That conflict was also concerned with the problem of *sudden* versus *gradual* Awakening. If Awakening is a gradual process, then it bears on temporality. But if it is sudden, then it has no connection with temporality.

Part Four (pp. 273-350). *Triṃśikā* and Translations

The fourth part of Lusthaus' *Buddhist Phenomenology* is perhaps the most important one in the book as it deals with Vasubandhu's foundational text, the *Triṃśikā*, or *Thirty Verses on vijñapti* (consciousness). Lusthaus here includes (1) the original Sanskrit of Vasubandhu's text, (2) Richard Robinson's English translation of the Sanskrit (unpublished manuscript), (3) Paramārtha's Chinese translation, extracted from the *Chuan-shih lun* (T. 1587), of which he provides an English translation, and (4) Hsüan-tsang's Chinese translation of the *Triṃśikā* (T. 1586), of which Lusthaus also provides an English translation. In the process, the author comments on the key notions of the *Triṃśikā* and adds as many as 99 detailed notes to the text (pp. 305-317) whose central theme is the alterity of consciousness (*vijñānapariṇāma*), which is discussed in verses 1–16, and again in verses 20–24 in relation to the three self-natures (*trisvabhāva*), while the remaining verses deal respectively with *vijñaptimātra* (verses 17–20) and the five stages of the path to Awakening (verses 25–30).

In the section called "Comparative Analysis of the Three Translations," Lusthaus analyses very carefully and at great length both Chinese translations and Robinson's English translation from a philological as well as philosophical point of view. Due to the encyclopedic character of Hsüan-tsang's *Ch'eng wei-shis lun* (composed in 599), Lusthaus concedes that he cannot give us a "comprehensive analysis of the full *Triṃśikā*" (p. 318) that would be based on Hsüan-tsang's interpretation. So instead, he concentrates on the differences between Paramārtha's and Hsüan-tsang's renderings; a task which is made possible by the fact that both authors "add terms and concepts" to the *Triṃśikā* that serve as indicators of their respective interpretive approaches (p. 318).

In this regard, it should be reminded that Paramārtha (499–569) was a very important Indian translator and the founder of the She-lun Yogācāra school in China. He was responsible for adding to the traditional eight consciousnesses professed in Yogācāra, a ninth one called "immaculate consciousness" (*amalavijñāna*), which is ultimate, permanent and true Reality. But his understanding and translations of Yogācāra texts into Chinese were later rejected as incorrect by Hsüan-tsang. And in comparing Paramārtha's and Hsüan-tsang's approaches to the *Triṃśikā*, Lusthaus argues that Hsüan-tsang's interpretation is fairly close to Vasubandhu, while it is not so for Paramārtha's rendition (p. 320).

Traces of Paramārtha's influence do remain, however, in the work of Hsüan-tsang. Commenting on verse 3, for example, Lusthaus points out that whereas Vasubandhu does not claim that the *ālayavijñāna* "operates subconsciously," Hsüan-tsang argues

that "it cannot (*pu k'e*) be know at all" (p. 325). And Lusthaus sees in this divergence the influence of Paramārtha, although he notes that the question of how something subconscious can appear in consciousness was a basic problem for the Yogācāra philosophy. It is here also that Lusthaus very interestingly connects the operation of *manas* (the seventh consciousness) to that of a locus (*sthāna*), arguing that "*manas* localizes experience through thinking" (p. 325). Such an interpretation is however rejected by Waldron, for example, as unwarranted by any Yogācāra commentary.[5]

Lusthaus' interpretation of verse 18, however, is more convincing, and indeed more interesting. There, Lusthaus argues that the expression *vijñapti-mātra* was not intended by Vasubandhu as an ontological statement referring to some true cognition or to the supreme reality of consciousness, but was rather meant to express the view that "consciousness-experience is nothing but [false] discrimination, imaginings" (p. 334). Along the same line, when discussing the first part of verse 29 where *jñāna* is said to be beyond the three worlds (*jñāna lokottaram*), Lusthaus argues that the famous line of Vasubandhu's *Viṃśatikāvṛtti* ("*traidhātukaṃ vijñaptimātram*", the triple word is nothing but *vijñapti*), as well as other passages of the Buddhist literature, indicate that "*vijñāna* becomes just *jñāna*, i.e., consciousness becomes direct knowing". And this in turn enables Lusthaus to reject as not conform to classical Yogācāra the position very much widespread in the Chinese Buddhist schools according to which "only consciousness is ultimately real" (p. 348). Whereas the most important Chinese Buddhist schools, i.e., T'chian-t'ai, Hua-yen and some Ch'an schools, accepted "citta as a metaphysical ground beyond any ultimate negation and cancellation" (p. 348) and thus changed the development of Chinese Buddhism by hypostatizing the mind as some sort of metaphysical reality, Lusthaus argues, on the basis of verse 29, that "Awakening involves superseding of citta, i.e., that Awakening consists of breaking the *ālaya-vijñāna* (by turning it to *jñāna*) and eliminating citta" (p. 348). When that occurs, the Awakened person, being without any attachment, can see things just as they are.

Throughout this fourth part, Lusthaus generally prefers Vasubandhu's and Hsüang-tsang's rendering of the Yogācāra doctrine, and often rejects that of Paramārtha, claiming that "everywhere, the Sanskrit and Hsüan-tsang are offering psychosophical and epistemological observations which Paramārtha converts into metaphysical and cosmological assertions" (p. 347). That tendency for hypostatization typical of Paramārtha is perhaps most obvious in his interpretation of verses 20–24 of the *Triṃśikā* where he holds, contrary to Vasubandhu and Hsüan-tsang, that *parinispannasvabhāva* is a truly real nature (p. 338).

Part Five (pp. 351–540). The *Ch'eng Wei-Shih Lun* and the Problem of Psychosophical Closure: Yogācāra in China

In the first three chapters of Part Five of his book, Lusthaus examines the important issues and positions from Indian and Chinese Buddhism that meet together in Hsüan-tsang's *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* (CWSL), while in the remaining chapters, he proposes

a summary of the treatment of the *Triṃśikā* found in the CWSL, and a discussion of the essential Yogācāra concept of *vijñapti-mātra* (*wei-shis*) and some of the less familiar issues of the CWSL. Arriving at the correct understanding of *vijñapti-mātra* is for Lusthaus the key to making sense of the Yogācāra and answering the most important problems and questions concerning Yogācāra philosophy and praxis, i.e., "[w]hether Yogācāra is or is not a form of idealism, whether the goal of Yogācāra is the reification or erasure of mind and consciousness, and in what way or ways does Yogācāra intend its texts to be read, interpreted and used, etc." (p. 352).

In Chapter Thirteen, Lusthaus first shortly discusses the historical background of the appearance of many Buddhist schools in China between the introduction of Buddhism in the first century CE and the T'ang dynasty (618–906). For the following question had arisen among the Chinese in the sixth and seventh centuries: "If there is one Dharma, why are there so many conflicting schools, texts and doctrines?" (p. 353). Having presented the two alternative answers that were offered to that question, namely the possibility of (1) a "synthetic, syncretistic conflation of doctrine" and (2) the "hierarchical classification of doctrine" (p. 353), Lusthaus then peruses his historical investigations in Chapter Fourteen in order to explain, this time, how the different "trajectories" into which Indian and Chinese Buddhism had evolved in the sixth and seventh centuries came to converge into Yogācāra philosophy and the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun*. Lusthaus recognizes seven such "trajectories":

(1) The first consisted in the drawing of long lists of dharmas typical of Abhidharma treatises, and in the rejection of these "matrices" by the Prajñāpāramitā literature. An important example of that "trajectory" was Hsüan-tsang's huge *Yogācārabhūmi*, which the author had completed in India in the hope that, when he would later bring it with him upon returning to China in 645, he could solve some of the problems inherent to Chinese Buddhism by presenting his coreligionists with a correct understanding of the Dharma.

(2) The second "trajectory" is that of reason and logic, in relation to which the name of Hsüan-tsang can again be cited since he was the first and only person to have translated treatises of Indian logic into Chinese. Indian Buddhist logic having been so prolific, it remains quite a mystery as to why it has never taken roots in China and stopped with the two works translated by Hsüan-tsang.

(3) The third "trajectory" is what Lusthaus calls the soteric systematic, an expression meant to express the tendency, in China, to systematically describe, step by step, the path to Awakening.

(4) There was also a fourth "trajectory" corresponding to what Lusthaus calls the dialectical-deconstructive critique of the opponent's theories, a practice already known and used by Taoists masters of the likes of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, long before the introduction of Buddhism to China.

(5) With the fifth "trajectory" named psychologistic reductionism, Lusthaus calls attention to the "major internal inconsistency" of the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun*, notably on the notion of the *ālayavijñāna*, of which Vasubandhu explicitly says in the

Triṃśikā that it must be destroyed, whereas according to the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun,* "the essence of this consciousness is *not* destroyed" (p. 359). Lusthaus sees in that divergence a shift to an Idealistic position that is quite near the Essentialist position expressed in the *Awakening of Faith*, where it is said that "Only the characteristic of mind cease," not the essence (*t'i*) of the mind (p. 374, note 7).

The two remaining "trajectories" discussed by Lusthaus are those of (6) differentialism versus non-differentialism and (7) Progressionalism versus Essentialism, the latter of which is embodied in the famous Buddhist controversy concerning the *sudden* or *gradual* attainment of Awakening.

At the end of that chapter, when writing about the Prajñā schools, Lusthaus argues that if Buddhism was generally accepted in China, it was due to the expectations, on the part of the Taoists, that Buddhist teachings and meditation techniques would help them fulfilling their higher goal of becoming immortal (*hsien*).

In Chapter Fifteen, Lusthaus then offers a very interesting presentation of the historical context of the transmission of the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun*. In the course of that presentation, he casts doubt on the view that came to be accepted as orthodoxy in the East Asian Buddhist tradition according to which the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* is a summary of ten Indian commentaries to the *Triṃśikā* that grant the highest authority to the one written by Dharmapāla (530–561). Lusthaus discredits that claim, which was first developed by Hsüan-tsang's main student, K'uei-chi (632–682), and argues instead that the hermit-scholar Prasenajit, under whom Hsüan-tsang studied for two years while in India, was "the Indian teacher that most profoundly influenced Hsüan-tsang" (p. 408). Lusthaus in fact questions the very claim that Dharmapāla would have written a commentary to the *Triṃśikā*, since with the exception of K'uei-chi's reports, there is no historical evidence that such a commentary ever existed. Lusthaus moreover argues that the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* is more like a paraphrase of commentaries on the *Triṃśikā*, "a sort of Yogācāra catechism" that discusses all of the Yogācāra doctrines, using the *Triṃśikā* as "a skeleton" to the entire project (p. 413). The *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* in fact is not at all, according to Lusthaus, a commentary to the *Triṃśikā,* but rather "a hermeneutic exercise on the *Yogācārabhūmi*" (p. 414).

With Chapter Sixteen, Lusthaus has completed his historical investigations and turns to a detailed discussion of the alterity of consciousness (*vijñānapariṇāma*) which, as we already mentioned, is the central theme of the *Triṃśikā* as well as the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun*. Lusthaus there explains that in the Buddhist context, the word "alterity" (*pariṇāma*) has a different meaning from the one found in Western philosophy. For the Buddhists, the alterity of consciousness is an ongoing process due to the arising and ceasing of causes and conditions. When a stream of consciousness produces unwholesome mental events, their karmic result is suffering (*duḥkha*). But when one realizes that it is possible to alter these unwholesome mental habits and replace them by wholesome ones, then comes *cittotpāda* (*fa-hsin*), i.e., the arousing of the awakening mind (p. 429). *Cittotpāda* in fact marks the beginning of the career of the bodhisattvas or future buddhas, those key figures

of Mahāyāna Buddhism who altruistically vow to attain full and perfect awakening (*samyaksaṃbodhi*) in order to relieve all sentient beings from a suffering existence in the cycle of rebirth (*saṃsāra*). It marks the "beginning of soteric projectory" that focuses on the full and perfect awakening, "the only genuine telos" (p. 431–32), which requires uprooting all attachment to the world.

In Chapter Seventeen, entitled "Why Consciousness Is Not Empty," Lusthaus then gives consideration to the important question of determining what is real (*dravya*, *shih*) according to the *Ch'eng-wei-shis lun* and Yogācāra. In the CWSL, the word "real" refers to the opposite of the words *hsü-wang* ("unreal and false" or "erroneous") and *chia* (*prajñapti*). The real is, according to the Yogācāra, an existent (*asti*), substantial entity (*dravya*) that is nonetheless momentary. C*hia*, on the contrary, translated by Lusthaus as "nominal reality", relates to linguistic expressions and therefore refers to "cognitive phenomena" that are nominally existent but lack any substantial foundation (p. 453). If, for the Madhyamaka, *all* existence (including consciousness) is empty, according to the Yogācāra, consciousness itself is not empty (p. 459). Consciousness exists at least in an epistemological (and therapeutic) sense, for how could the world appear without consciousness? Yet, it is only conventionally real (*saṃvṛtisatya*) and does not exist in an ontological sense.

Chapter Nineteen pursues with a discussion of externality and the fact that it does not exist according to the *Ch'eng-wei-shis lun*. *Citta-viprayukta-dharmas* (for instance, language, aging, time, etc.) are not real because they are not perceived by *citta*. Lusthaus here argues that the phenomenological interest of Yogācāra lies only in the field of consciousness because *karma* (the main human problem) "is constituted entirely within and as a cognitive-mental domain." "Consciousness is never apart from its *caittas*, and thus 'consciousness only' never means that only a subjective projector exists; what is discriminated, perceived, objective, etc., also exists, but the term 'exists' will be qualified to include only that which can be experienced (directly or indirectly), i.e., only that which exerts some efficient causal effect which is (in principle) observable can be said to 'exists'" (p. 485). Having said that, the *Ch'eng-wei-shis lun* does not profess a solipsism, i.e., it does not claim that other minds do not exist, and Lusthaus warns his reader against the idealistic interpretation of Yogācāra. "There is no 'Cosmic *ālaya-vijñāna*' of which we are all parts or manifestations. There is no One mind subtending the universe." There are many sentient beings who all have their own consciousness (p. 487).

The next two chapters of *Buddhist Phenomenology* discuss the objective condition of consciousness (Chapter Twenty) and the event of Awakening (Chapter Twenty-one) in which the eight consciousnesses cease and become four *jñāna*s: "When *ālayavijñāna* finally ceases it is replaced by the Great Mirror Cognition (*Mahādarśa-jñāna*) that sees and reflects things just as they are, impartially, without exclusion, prejudice, anticipation, attachment, or distortion. The grasper-grasped relation has ceased" (p. 511). Finally, the last two very short chapters discuss the Sarvāstivāda conception of *rūpa* (Twenty-two) and the Ultimately Real (Twenty-

three), in which case we are told that unconditioned dharmas (*asaṃskṛta*) cannot be perceived because they are not causally effective, and that accordingly, they are not real. The same applies to *tathatā* which, despite its soteric function, remains like all else, a linguistic fiction (p. 530–31).

In the Conclusion (pp. 533–40) Lusthaus recapitulates the main ideas of his very useful book, which we can bring down to four points. Firstly, Yogācāra is not a form of metaphysical Idealism because it does not posit any ontology. It is rather an epistemology in which "we take our own mental constructions to be the world," but in which the world is not claimed to be a pure creation of the mind. Secondly, Yogācāra does not deny materiality (*rūpa*), which is a cognitive category. It does not reject, therefore, the object *per se*. But what it does reject is externality, i.e., any *claim* about the cognitive objects that would lie outside the cognition, since for the Yogācāra, chairs, trees, etc., are only words and concepts, mental projections. A third key element to understanding Yogācāra is certainly that of karma, which is intent *qua* cognitive condition. And finally it should be added that for the Yogācāra, the Awakening cognition is one that reflects reality as it is without any attachment and afflictions (*kleśa*) (p. 540).

In the quite useful Appendices to his book, Lusthaus finally offers tables of the dharmas posited by the Yogācāra schools and the Abidharmakośa, an extensive list of Hsüan-tsang's translations and original works, a 'select' bibliography and an index. The index, it must be said, is rather short for a book of that size and importance. And the errors with the use of Sanskrit diacritics that occur throughout the book are rather disappointing from a publisher so prestigious as Routledge for a book so unbelievably expensive. But despite those reservations, I strongly recommend Lusthaus' *Buddhist Phenomenology* to every serious student of Buddhist philosophy, for that book is a remarkable achievement and an invaluable resource for Buddhist studies. I hope that my humble summary review will have contributed to arouse the interest for the fascinating subject of Yogācāra philosophy.

Notes

1. See M. Siderits, *Personal Identity and Buddhist Philosophy: Empty Persons*, Ashgate, 2003, pp. xi–xiii.
2. Lusthaus very rightly notes that this "nothing" does not mean some mystical or cosmic voidness or voidness as essence (p. 95). This is not an Absolute or something else.
3. See P. Griffiths' very interesting study on the attainment of cessation in the Theravāda, Vaibhāṣika and Yogācāra entitled *On Being Mindless: Buddhist Meditation and the Mind-Body Problem,* first Indian edition, Sri Satguru Publications, 1999.
4. The Aṅguttaranikāya 3. 415.
5. See W. Waldron, "Précis on Buddhist Phenomenology" (http://www.acmuller.net/reviews/waldron-review1.html), as well as Lusthaus' article "What is and isn't Yogacara" (http://www.hm.tyg.jp/~acmuller/yogacara/intro-asc.htm). For Studies in Yogācāra Buddhism see also "A Seminar of the American Academy of Religion" (http://www.acmuller.net/yoga-sem).