

# Today's Lecture

- Admin stuff
- Ninth in-class quiz (it's almost over)
- A *brief* comment on Yogacara and store consciousness

# Admin stuff

- For today ONLY my office hour is moved from 1330-1430 to 1515-1615. My apologies for any inconvenience.

# Yogacara

- Yogacara Buddhism is the second of the two central philosophical ‘schools’ of Mahayana Buddhism (*Asian Philosophies*, p.218).
- Though a Mahayana Buddhist may be informed by the teachings of both Madhyamaka and Yogacara, it is possible to be a Mahayana Buddhist and informed by either one or the other (or none) of these schools of Buddhist philosophy.
- Two of the key Yogacara philosophers in Buddhist literature are Vasubandhu and Asanga (who were in fact biological brothers [Asanga played a part in Vasubandhu’s ‘conversion’ to Yogacara Buddhism] (*Asian Philosophies*, p.218)).

# Yogacara

- There are two influences that Yogacara had on Buddhism that are of note for us (i.e. in our study of Buddhist philosophy): (1) Yogacara Buddhists regard all that exists (at least as ‘objects’ of knowledge) as (expressions of) Mind (or Consciousness) (*Asian Philosophies*, pp.222 and 223), and (2) enlightenment consciousness involves an awakening to, and a ‘dwelling within’, the fundamental layer of consciousness known as “store consciousness” (*Asian Philosophies*, pp.221, 222-23).
- (1) and (2) complement each other. All that exists is held to be (expressions of) Mind because every-thing we experience arises from, is no-thing other than, store consciousness (*Asian Philosophies*, pp.222 and 223).

# Yogacara

- Think of it this way: the Perfection of Wisdom (*prajnaparamita*) is achieved or acquired in a perfected state of mindfulness. Alternatively, That which Is, That which Inter-exists, is directly experienced, is directly known, within a perfected state of mindfulness (*Asian Philosophies*, pp.193, 220, 222). At this level of awareness (the store consciousness), the knower and what is known are no longer separated by intervening perceptions, concepts, ideas, notions or sensations. Indeed there is no-thing (perceived or conceived as separately existing and enduring through time) at this level of awareness at all (*Asian Philosophies*, pp.220, 222).

# Yogacara

- But, the Yogacara add, this level of awareness IS, nevertheless, *awareness*, it IS *experience*, it *consists of being consciousness*.
- The Yogacara suggest that, if this is right so far, That which Is, or That which Inter-exists, IS (in some important sense) awareness, IS (in some important sense) experience, consists (in some important sense) of being conscious.
- But this is just to say that That which Is, or That which Inter-exists, is (in some important sense) (expressions of) Mind.

# Yogacara: Are they Metaphysical Idealists?

- A person is a Metaphysical Idealist if they think that every-thing that exists is constructed out of ideas, or consciousness, or Mind.
- A person is a Metaphysical Materialist if they think that every-thing that exists is constructed out of matter.
- The Buddhist philosophers or works we have studied so far have advocated neither Metaphysical Idealism nor Materialism.
- Traditionally, Yogacara have been regarded as Metaphysical Idealists.

# Yogacara: Are they Metaphysical Idealists?

- Koller thinks that this is not quite right.
- Instead Koller contends that the Yogacara would not admit speculation on a mind-independent Reality, choosing instead to restrict their reflections to what can be known through experience. This restriction inclined them to speak only of that which arises from experience, or the mind, rather than that which exists independently of any experience or mind. Given that, for the Yogacara, to claim knowledge of a mind-independent Reality makes no sense (any putative example, if it is to be intelligible or content-full, seems to require an appeal to that which is, at some point, experienced), a metaphysics of mind-independent Reality is ground-less (*Asian Philosophies*, pp.223-24).



# Yogacara: Are they Metaphysical Idealists?

- Koller also seems to be distinguishing Idealism as a form of subjectivism, where objects or subjects are no more than ideas in “the mind” (*Asian Philosophies*, p.225), and an intermediary between Realism and Idealism that sees objects and subjects as actually grounded in a consciousness independent of any one mind (*Asian Philosophies*, p.225).
- But it isn't clear that this would make Yogacara any less Idealist in their metaphysics than some of those in Western Philosophy (e.g. Bishop Berkeley) who are considered Metaphysical Idealists.